



HoustonBallet
Academy

2025-2026

STUDENT HANDBOOK

PRE-PROFESSIONAL PROGRAM

HOUSTON BALLET CENTER FOR DANCE

601 Preston Street • Houston, TX 77002

CONTACT US

Tel: (713) 523-6300 • Fax: (713) 523-4038

Email: HBAcademy@houstonballet.org

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

CLICK HERE

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HOUSTON BALLET ACADEMY LEADERSHIP

Julie Kent, and Stanton Welch, AM
Sonya Kostich
Jennifer Sommers

Artistic Directors
Executive Director
Director of the Academy

ACADEMY STAFF

Yahudi Castañeda
Katie Wesche
Kaitlyn Otto Louis
Carla Cortez
Jamie Cegelski
Reagan Lynch
Angela Galvez
Kaitlyn Watson

Associate Director of Academy Artistic Operations
Associate Director of Academy Administration
Associate Director of Student Life
Academy Communications Manager
Academy Programs Manager
Academy Artistic Operations Coordinator
Academy Student Support Coordinator
Academy Administrative Coordinator

For additional faculty and staff please visit our website [HERE](#).

PRE-PROFESSIONAL PRINCIPALS

The **Lower School Principal** is **Betsy McMillan**. She is the principal and contact for Level 1 through Intermediate. Ms. McMillan can assist in directing questions regarding students in the studio to the students' teacher. You can email Ms. McMillan at emcmillan@houstonballet.org.



The **Upper School Principal** is **Cheryne Busch**. She is the principal and contact for Level 5 through Level 10. Ms. Busch can assist in directing questions regarding students in the studio to the student's teacher. You can email Ms. Busch at cbusch@houstonballet.org.

The **Boys Program Manager** is **Orlando Molina**. He is the coordinator and contact for boys in the Pre-Professional Program. Mr. Molina can assist in directing questions regarding students in the studio to the student's teacher. You can email Mr. Molina at jmolina@houstonballet.org.



HEALTH & WELLNESS TEAM

Dawn Stuckey
Akihiro Kawasaki
Emily Travis MPH, RD, LD, CEDRD
Kelsey Fyffe MA, LPC

Athletic Trainer
Head Strength & Conditioning Coach
Nutritionist
Licensed Professional Counselor

Houston Methodist Hospital Physiotherapy Sports Medicine began working with Houston Ballet in January of 2006. They coordinate with Houston Ballet team physician, Dr. Kevin Varner, to provide an entire team of health professionals to oversee dancer wellness including an onsite certified athletic trainer. Dancers also have access to Methodist Hospital's Center for Performing Arts Medicine.

ACADEMY GENERAL INFORMATION



Academy Office Hours

Mon-Fri 9:00AM – 6:00PM

Saturday 8:30AM – 4:00PM

Sunday 10:00AM – 5:00PM

LOST AND FOUND

Lost and Found is in the Academy office. All items in the Lost and Found bin are discarded monthly.



ACADEMY CALENDAR

All information relating to the Academy calendar can be found in the link [HERE](#).

ACADEMY WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Weekly schedules are posted on all call boards as well as on our Academy Google Site [HERE](#).

ENROLLMENT

The Pre-Professional Program is for **students 7+** years old as of **September 1, 2025**. An audition is required to enroll for the Pre-Professional Program. Registration is accepted on a *first-come, first-served* basis. Sections close once capacity is reached. Students interested in a closed section may be added to the [waitlist](#) by contacting the Registrar's Office.

Students enrolled in the Pre-Professional Program will be given [priority registration](#) for the Summer Program and following school year. [Placement](#) for the Summer Program is sent in December and for the following school year is sent in May.

Students who miss a semester are required to audition for re-admission.

Houston Ballet Academy maintains a policy of non-discrimination regarding race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender, gender expression, physical/neurological ability, sexual orientation, and economic status.

Schools of the Pre-Professional Program

LOWER SCHOOL

Level 1

Level 2

Level 3

Level 4

Intermediate

UPPER SCHOOL

Level 5

Level 6

Level 7

Level 8

Level 9

Level 10

REGISTRATION

2025-2026 Registration
open May-August

Summer 2026 Registration
open December-February

Registration is first come, first served.

Tuition by Level
Click Here

Pre-Professional Program Registration:

34-Week Academy Year

\$200 registration fee + $\frac{1}{4}$ of tuition due at the time of registration

How to pay
remaining tuition

Pay in Full

*Must be paid in full at
time of registration
Discount of \$100 applied*

Quarterly Plan

*Four Installments
Due dates listed below*

Monthly Plan

*Seven Installments
Fee of \$20 applied to
installments after*

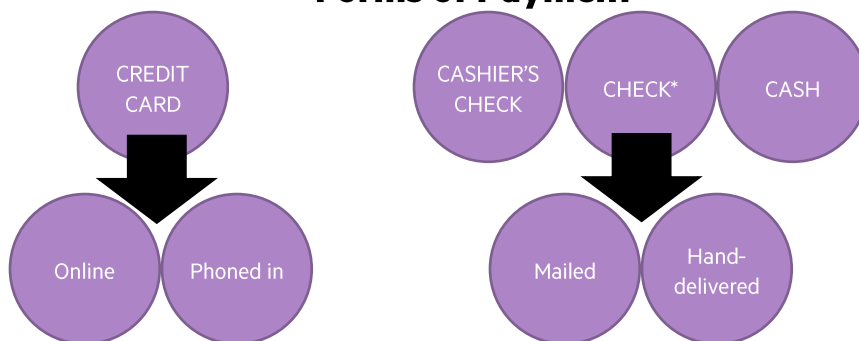
Tuition Installment Dates

Invoice Date	Due Date	Pay in Full	Four Installments "Quarterly Plan"	Seven Installments "Monthly Plan"
At Registration		100% (less \$100)	25%	25%
9/1/2025	9/15/2025		25%	12.5% + \$20
10/1/2025	10/15/2025			12.5% + \$20
11/1/2025	11/15/2025		25%	12.5% + \$20
12/1/2025	12/15/2025			12.5% + \$20
1/1/2026	1/15/2026			12.5% + \$20
2/1/2026	2/15/2026		25%	12.5% + \$20

****Please note that students with delinquent accounts will not be able to register for future programs until their account is current.**

\$25 Late Fee
applied next
business day at
4:00pm CT.

Forms of Payment



**A \$25 fee will be charged for all checks returned for any reason. The returned check fee must be paid in cash within one week from the time the owner of the account is notified.*

Scholarship Donations

Houston Ballet is dedicated to offering the highest caliber training while keeping ballet accessible. However, tuition covers only 70% of Academy costs. Gifts from parents/guardians and other supporters are vital to ensuring every professional and non-professional dancer, despite capacity, has access to the finest instruction. If you would like to make a tax-deductible donation to Houston Ballet to assist with our annual merit scholarships, please contact Erika Jordan, at ejordan@houstonballet.org or (713) 535-3241.

Section Change Request

Section change requests are reviewed by the principal for approval, and approval is not guaranteed.
Section change requests will incur a \$35 fee.

REQUEST FORM AVAILABLE ON POWERSCHOOL PORTAL

Fall Semester request dates:
August 1, 2025 – September 8, 2025

Spring Semester request dates:
December 1, 2025 – January 2, 2026

Refund Policy

TUITION AND FEES ARE NON-REFUNDABLE.

Should a student withdraw who has paid, the remaining tuition and all fees will be forfeited to Houston Ballet Academy. Forfeited tuition may not be considered a tax-deductible donation.

Withdrawal Policy

Should a parent/guardian desire to withdraw a student prior to the end of the Academy year, the Registrar's Office must receive a completed Withdrawal Form. **THE PARENT/GUARDIAN WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL TUITION PAYMENTS DUE UNTIL THE DATE THE ACADEMY OFFICE RECEIVES A COMPLETED WITHDRAWAL FORM FROM THE PARENT/GUARDIAN.** Verbal notification of withdrawal will not be accepted. Should a student withdraw in the beginning, middle, or a quarter which has been paid, the remaining tuition will be forfeited to HBA. The HBA is not liable or obligated in any way to process any refunds or issue any tuition credits.

WITHDRAWAL FORM AVAILABLE ON POWERSCHOOL PORTAL

CLASS ATTIRE REQUIREMENTS

Click links below to purchase.

Skin Tone-Inclusive Tights & Shoes

Informational Video

Click to View

Female-Identifying Dancers

Level 1 - Intermediate

Leotard: [Galate - Sky Blue](#)
Tights: [Body Wrappers style C81 – theatrical pink](#) OR [Skin-tone convertible](#)
Shoes: [Bloch style S0203G or S0203L – pink](#) OR [Blendz leather](#)

Level 5 – Level 7

Leotard: [Galate – Cornflower Blue](#)
Tights: [Zarely style Z2 – stage pink performance](#) OR [Skin-tone convertible](#)
Shoes: [pink](#) OR [skin-tone ballet slippers & pointe shoes](#)

Level 8 – Level 10

Leotard: [Galate – Royal Blue](#)
Tights: [Zarely style Z2 – stage pink performance](#) OR [Skin-tone convertible](#)
Shoes: [pink](#) OR [skin-tone ballet slippers & pointe shoes](#)

Male-Identifying Dancers

Level 1 – Level 2

Shirt: [Conrad White Crew Shirt](#)
Shorts: [Black bike shorts](#)
Shoes: [Bloch style S0284G or S0284L – black & white crew socks](#)

Level 3 – Level 10

Shirt: [Conrad White Crew Shirt](#)
Tights: [Slate/Gray tights](#)
Belt: [Discount Dance Supply style 62S – black](#)
Shoes: [white ballet slippers & crew socks](#)

HOUSTON BALLET ACADEMY SHOE MATCHING GUIDE

Click boxes below to access websites to purchase shoes and tights.

	Blendz Tights	Shoe Options
Confident Cocoa		Blendz Confident Cocoa Spray Fashion Brown
Brazen Brown		Blendz Brazen Brown Capezio Mocha Spray Tan
Maven Mahogany		Blendz Maven Mahogany Spray Bark
Tenacious Tan		Blendz Tenacious Tan Capezio Light Suntan Capezio Nude Spray Chamois

	Capezio Tights	Shoe Options
Maple		Blendz Brazen Brown Blendz Maven Mahogany Capezio Mocha Spray Tan or Bark
Lt Tan		Blendz Tenacious Tan Capezio Light Suntan Capezio Nude Spray Chamois
Nude		Blendz Tenacious Tan Capezio Light Suntan Capezio Nude Spray Chamois

Where to Purchase Class Uniforms & Attire**Leotards & Shirts**

HB Academy Online Store

Leotards, Shirts, Tights & Shoes

Dance Trends
14520 Memorial Drive Suite 106
Houston, TX 77079
281-558-1400

Apollo Dancewear
3120 SW Freeway Office 575-1
Houston, TX 77098
835-205-1524

Tights & Shoes

Jazz Rags
25701 Interstate 45 N #10A
Spring, TX 77380
281-364-1600

* We recommend calling before going to the stores to ensure stock is available.

Hair Requirements for Class

*Ballet Bun
Tutorial Video
Click Here*

Female-Identifying Students

- Ballet bun - pulled away from face and nape of neck
- Short hair - wear headband and secure hair at the back
- Textured hair - secure hair at the back with loose ends off the nape of the neck

Male-Identifying Students

- Neatly groomed haircut - off the face
- Long hair - pulled away from face and nape of neck
- Textured hair - secure hair at the back with loose ends off the nape of the neck

**Performance hair: All students will be required to conform to the hair requirements for each piece performed. Their teacher will approve styles, cuts, and color up to three weeks before any performance. Once approved, no changes may be made.*

Class Uniform Etiquette

- Wear a cover-up to and from class. Class uniform should not be worn as street wear.
- Wear the required class uniform as listed above. No rubber pants, leg warmers, sweatpants, etc.
- Do not wear jewelry in class or rehearsal. Only pierced ear studs are permitted in class.
- Do not apply lotion to the skin on dance days. Lotion and oils can create slick spots on the dance floor.

Lower School Students:
Bring a notebook and pencil to each class!

Shoe Policy for Company Performances

Students who perform in company performances will receive one pair of shoes for a given number of performances.

CLASS ATTIRE FOR ADJUNCT CLASSES

Female-Identifying Dancers

Modern/Contemporary

Leotard: uniform leotard as listed above
Tights: uniform tights as listed above or black
Shoes: bare feet

Jazz

Leotard: uniform leotard as listed above
Pants: black jazz pants or shorts
Shoes: black jazz shoes

Pas de Deux

(for Level 8-10)

Uniform: uniform leotard, tights, and shoes as listed above
Shorts: black bike shorts *optional*

Male-Identifying Dancers

Modern/Contemporary

Shirt: uniform shirt as listed above
Tights: uniform tights as listed above or black
Shoes: bare feet

Jazz

Shirt: uniform shirt as listed above
Pants: black jazz pants or shorts
Shoes: black jazz shoes

Pas de Deux

(for Upper School)

Uniform: uniform leotard, tights, and shoes as listed above

Beginning Pointe

- Students in Level 4 and Intermediate will go through pointe assessments – a series of exercises that provide feedback on pointe preparedness. The decision to start pointe work will be made on an individual basis with the advice of the instructors and feedback from the assessment, even if a student has been on pointe at a previous studio.
- Students purchase pointe shoes only AFTER being permitted by their instructors. Instructors will check the fit of the shoes to ensure the students purchase proper shoes for their feet. Students should sew ribbons and elastics on their shoes AFTER they receive approval from their instructors.
- The Academy faculty discourages students from practicing pointe work outside the Academy studios unless otherwise approved. **Pointe work is difficult and can be dangerous if practiced unsupervised and on improper floors.**

Variation and Repertory Class

- Female-identifying students in Level 7-Level 10 should order their own practice tutu for variation and repertory classes. Please use the link [HERE](#) to order and have delivered to the student's address. Please note that delivery takes up to 6-8 weeks.

Character Class

- Female-identifying students in Intermediate should wear black character skirt and black character shoes.
- Male-identifying students in Intermediate should wear black tights and black character shoes.

Class Etiquette

1. Bring energy, enthusiasm, and eagerness to learn in classes.
2. Students should arrive on time.
 - Injuries can be caused by insufficient warm-up, and interruptions are distracting to the other students in class. If a student is more than 10 minutes late, the teacher must give permission for the student to participate in class.
3. Students may bring water in a resealable plastic or metal bottle.
4. Students should refrain from distracting others during class and playing the piano.
5. Students should arrive wearing a cover-up over their class uniform, including proper hair.
6. Parents/Guardians are permitted to wait in the lobby area during their student's class.

Attendance/Absences/Make-Up Classes

- Students should attend classes regularly.
 - Students who miss two (2) weeks of consecutive classes may be withdrawn from the program if notification has not been provided to the Registrar's Office.
 - Students who have more than three (3) absences in a semester may be ineligible for advancement to the next level.
 - Students who miss a semester are required to audition for re-admission.
- Make-up lessons will be scheduled as below. Registration for these classes will be sent prior to the classes being held.
 - Fall Semester: Monday, November 24th
 - Spring Semester: Monday, May 18th

Absence Notifications
should be submitted in
PowerSchool.

Communication Methods

- [Email](#)
- [Academy Google Website](#)
- [Academy Facebook page](#)
- [Academy Instagram page](#)

Virtual Town
Halls

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

Teachers will familiarize students with emergency procedures, including fire, tornado, and lockdown, at the beginning of each semester.

Class Observation

FALL SEMESTER DATES

October 13th – December 2nd

SPRING SEMESTER DATES

April 27th – May 17th

Evaluations

LOWER SCHOOL

(Level 1-Intermediate)

- Evaluations distributed in December and April
- Intermediate students receive three (3) pointe assessments in August, September, and October

UPPER SCHOOL

(Level 5-Level 10)

- Students will complete an evaluation class in March
- Evaluations distributed in April
- Consultations held in January and May with Academy artistic staff

Level Placement

The Academy artistic staff determines the class placement of each student. Faculty members evaluate students on artistry, physicality, maturity, and technical ability.

Each student progresses at a different pace; therefore, students in the same level may be progressed at different times.

Academy artistic staff will meet with families prior to placement and registration being sent to discuss any concerns of student progression.

Master Class Series

We are excited to offer master classes to Level 3-Level 10 students during the spring semester. Each three-week session includes classes such as Ballet Technique, Classical Coaching, Intro to Pas de Deux and so much more! Master classes are taught by guest teachers, including current Company Dancers.

Registration opens in October, and the first session begins in January.

ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

To maintain a safe environment, families should always follow instructions by class monitors, security guards, and HPD officers.

All classes are held at 601 Preston Street, Houston, TX 77002.

Students should enter Preston Street entrance as seen below.



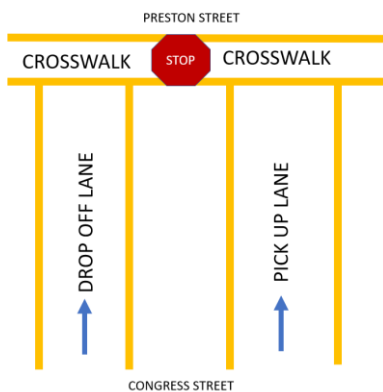
Park & Walk

- Street Parking: FREE after 6pm on Monday-Saturday & all day on Sunday
 - Lyric Center Garage*: 2-hour complimentary with Lyric Market purchase OR receive \$2 off parking via ticket validation from the receptionist
- *Event parking may affect pricing and validation.



Driveway

- Students must be able to exit and enter the vehicle on their own without assistance from an adult.
 - See image to the right for flow of traffic.
 - Display car tag* with student's full name on car dashboard
- *Car tags will be available from class monitors



Driveway cont.

- Arrivals: Families should park and walk their student to the Preston Street entrance if they are arriving late to class.
- Departures: Families may be asked to circle the block to avoid congestion on the roads surrounding the Center for Dance.

LOBBY ETIQUETTE

- Families should arrive no more than 15 minutes prior to the start of class.
- Students may have up to two (2) guests, such as guardian and sibling, wait in the lobby during the student's class.
- Students will wait in line by level for class upon arrival.
- All guests who wait in the lobby should remain properly seated. Please do not leave your children unattended.

STUDENT BENEFITS

Physical Education Class Credit

Several Houston area schools recognize a student's hours spent at Houston Ballet Academy as an alternative to regular PE classes at the school.

To participate complete the following steps:

1. Contact your student's school to confirm HBA as an acknowledged program partner
2. Request necessary paperwork from school to register student for the program
3. Email the Academy Student Support Coordinator at hbacademy@houstonballet.org to request off-campus PE credit (OCPE)
4. Pay \$50.00 OCPE fee through Houston Ballet Academy
5. Follow up regularly with the Academy Student Support Coordinator to complete grade reports and other necessary paperwork for your student's credit

Please note: Houston Ballet Academy will pay the annual application fee for any school district of a student requesting OCPE in order to approve our facility. Also, students may be required to sign up for teaching assistance hours to meet the required hours to be fulfilled weekly.

Health & Wellness

Available to students in Intermediate through Level 10

- Body Conditioning classes are offered weekly as part of their class schedule.
- At an additional fee, students may register for:
 - Private or semi-private health & wellness sessions – Body Conditioning, Pilates, Yoga, and Gyrokinesis.
 - Body Conditioning workshops
- Contact hbacademy@houstonballet.org for more information.

Adult Classes

Available to students ages 14 and up

- Drop-in Ballet and Yamuna classes are available at an additional fee
- Pre-Professional Program students will receive a \$10 discount on all drop-in classes
- Create a Mindbody account [HERE](#)
- Schedule of classes is available [HERE](#)
- Contact hbacademy@houstonballet.org for more information.

Complimentary Tickets

Available to students in Level 8 through Level 10

Students may receive one (1) ticket for a performance of a Houston Ballet Company program if the Ticket Services Managers determines that there is enough availability. Seating is dependent on inventory available, and Houston Ballet Academy students may be seated in areas of the theater such as Grand Tier or Balcony.

Academy students may not go to ticket services and ask for free tickets under any circumstances! Any complimentary ticket offers will be communicated via email and distributed by the Academy Artistic Operations Coordinator in the Academy office.

PERFORMANCES

The Nutcracker

Auditions: August 23rd for Pre-Professional Program students
August 24th for non-HBA students

Rehearsal Dates: Early September through November
Students must be available during Thanksgiving Holiday

Rehearsal Location: Margaret Alkek Williams Center for Dance

Performance Dates: November 28th through December 28th
Students must be available during Winter Holiday

Performance Location: Wortham Theater Center Brown Theater

Casting: Nightly casting released mid-Fall semester and is subject to change. *Placement and casting are at the discretion of the Academy artistic staff and will be made with attention to Company casting requirements and Houston Ballet health policies.*

Academy Spring Showcase

Who: Students in Pre-Professional Program & Professional Program

Casting Dates: Students in the Lower School will have required casting sessions outside their regular class hours on Fridays & Saturdays from February 6th through February 14th

Rehearsal Dates: Students in the Lower School will have required rehearsals outside their regular class hours weekly starting February 27th

Students in the Upper School will have required rehearsals during their regularly scheduled class times until the week of the performances

**A maximum of two (2) absences from rehearsals are permitted, after which participation in the Spring Showcase may be revoked.*

Rehearsal Location: Margaret Alkek Williams Center for Dance

Performance Dates: April 24th & 25th

Performance Location: Wortham Theater Center Cullen Theater

Casting: Casting will be released mid-Spring semester with ticketing information and is subject to change. *Casting for the Spring Showcase is at the discretion of the Academy artistic staff.*

Tickets to Houston Ballet Performances

Single tickets	(713) 227-ARTS (713-227-2787)
Subscription	(713) 5-BALLET (713-522-5538)
Group Sales	(713) 523-6300 ext. 409

SUMMER PROGRAMS

CHILDREN'S WORKSHOPS

- Workshops are theme-based and are aligned with Houston Ballet's scheduled repertoire
- One-week sessions in June & August
- Learn the ballet & explore and create movement and crafts
- Workshops for ages 4-7
- Age groups based on age as of start of workshop

BOYS WORKSHOPS

- Learn necessary skills to become strong male dancers
- One-week session in June
- Workshop for ages 7-15
- Groups based on experience

YOUTH SUMMER TRAINING PROGRAM

- Two-week sessions in June & July/August
 - Lower School students continue in same level as 2025-2026 Academy Year
 - Upper School students attend placement class in December
- Attendance Requirement*
- Summer Level 1-Level 3 are highly encouraged to attend at least one (1) session
 - Summer Level 4 & Intermediate are required to attend one (1) session
 - Summer Advanced are required to attend both sessions

SUMMER INTENSIVE PROGRAM

- Five-week session in June/July
 - Upper School students attend placement class in December
- Attendance Requirement*
- Summer Level 5-Level 8 are required to attend the Summer Intensive Program unless they have received permission to attend a different program

Summer registration is emailed in December for students enrolled in the 2025-2026 Academy Year. Students who attend a summer program will receive priority registration for the 2026-2027 Academy Year. Students who do not attend a summer program will not need to audition for the following year placement and registration.

Partial attendance of a session is not allowed.

Students must obtain permission from the Academy artistic staff before attending another audition or program. Requests to attend auditions may be granted if the audition does not interfere with Houston Ballet rehearsals, performances, or the Academy Spring Showcase. Student should contact the principal of their school.