

Dance – The Next Generation

Parent & Student Handbook 2024-2025

Dance – The Next Generation Studios: 500 Tallevast Road Sarasota, FL 34243

DANCE - THE NEXT GENERATION

The Sarasota Ballet greatly appreciates the support of the parents and guardians of our students. Student success in the DNG program would not be possible without the commitment of parents and guardians. We assure you that your child will be looked after by our trusted staff and faculty, and we ask that all students recognize the importance of cooperating and abiding by rules to create a positive experience for everyone involved.

ABOUT DANCE – THE NEXT GENERATION

In 1990, Jean Weidner Goldstein, founder of the Sarasota Ballet, established Dance – The Next Generation (DNG) to directly impact children of the local community. DNG continues to provide equitable access to quality dance education by offering a comprehensive tuition-free dance program to children from under-resourced areas in grades 3-12. Along with a diverse dance curriculum, DNG includes engaging life skills, mentoring, and enrichment programs that support education, community, and wellness outcomes for each student.

The Sarasota Ballet covers the cost of a complete dance education for each DNG student including class tuition, dance attire and shoes, transportation, field trips, and enrichment activities. Each year, approximately 150 Sarasota and Manatee County students enjoy dance training in a variety of techniques such as Ballet, Modern, Jazz, Contemporary, Latin Dance, Hip Hop, African Dance, and Composition. Students remaining in the program for all ten years will graduate with comprehensive dance training in all listed genres.

DNG is more than a dance program, it is a program to nurture, enrich and support the entire child. Most elementary and middle school students are transported directly from their schools to our Tallevast studios via Sarasota Ballet vans. All Faiths Food Banks assists students by providing healthy after-school snacks while volunteers and tutors provide academic support in DNG classrooms or in the DNG computer lab. Enrichment opportunities include college and career planning, health and wellness classes, community performances, and dance history to round out opportunities toward success.

IMPORTANT DATES 2024/25

The DNG Program follows the Sarasota County School District Calendar

- Aug. 24, 2024: Welcome Back Meeting DNG parents and Students
- Sept. 7, 2024: Nutcracker Auditions
- Sept. 9, 2024 through Friday Sept. 13, 2024: Fall classes begin for returning DNG students.
- Sept. 30, 2024: New 3rd grade students begin.
- Oct. 14, 2024: Manatee County Students excused for Record Day, as DNG Vans will NOT be transporting from Manatee County. (If your child can be transported by your own means they may still attend.)
- Oct. 18, 2024: NO DNG CLASSES as Sarasota County Schools are not in session.
- Oct. 31, 2024 & Nov. 1, 2024: NO DNG CLASSES, Happy Halloween!
- Nov. 6, 2024: Manatee County School Students excused for Early Release Day, as DNG Vans will NOT be transporting from Manatee County. (If your child can be transported by your own means they may still attend.)
- Nov. 11, 2024: Manatee County School Students excused for Veteran's Day, as DNG Vans will NOT be transporting from Manatee County. (If your child can be transported by your own means they may still attend.)
- Nov. 18, 2024 through Nov. 22, 2024: DNG parent observation week at DNG Studios
- Nov. 25, 2024: DNG En Pointe Event (Special Performance Opportunity)
- Nov. 25, 2024 through Nov. 29, 2024: NO DNG CLASSES, Thanksgiving Break!
- Dec. 13, 2024 & Dec 14, 2024: The Nutcracker performances at Venice Performing Arts Theater (DNG Students in Nutcracker are excused from DNG classes on Dec. 13, 2025)
- Dec. 16, 2024, through Jan. 10, 2025: NO DNG CLASSES, Winter Break!
- Dec. 22, 2025 & Dec 23, 2025: The Nutcracker performances at Sarasota Opera House
- Jan. 13, 2025 through Jan. 17, 2025: Spring 2025 DNG classes for ALL returning DNG students begin.
- Jan. 20, 2025: No DNG Classes, MLK Day!
- Feb. 17, 2025: No DNG Classes, Presidents Day!
- Mar. 5, 2025: Manatee County School Students excused for Early Release Day, as DNG Vans will NOT be transporting from Manatee County. (If your child can be transported by your own means they may still attend.)
- Mar. 14, 2025 through Mar. 24, 2025: NO DNG CLASSES: Spring Break!
- April 18, 2025: NO DNG CLASSES: Mini Break/ Good Friday!
- May 12, 2025 through May 16, 2025: Last week of DNG Classes before end of year performance and Summer Break.
- May 17, 2025: Tech and Dress rehearsal for all DNG students in the end of year performance!
- May 18, 2025: End of year performance!

STUDIO LOCATION

- All DNG dance classes are held at DNG Studios located at 500 Tallevast Road, Sarasota, FL, 34243.

GENERAL POLICIES

Every DNG student is an ambassador of the Sarasota Ballet. Ballet is a disciplined art form and requires a high standard of behavior for success. When attending a Sarasota Ballet function, DNG classes and performances, and in the Sarasota Ballet vans, all students are expected to display appropriate behavior.

- Students must be prepared to begin class on time.
- Please use the restroom prior to entering class.
- No food or drinks (except water) inside the dance studios.
- No gum is permitted in the studios or other locations where rehearsals, performances, and classes are held.
- Talking is not permitted during class (unless directed to do so by the teacher)
- Ask permission from the teacher to leave the classroom.
- Disruptive students will be removed from the class.
- Keep the dressing rooms, classrooms, and other areas of DNG Studios neat and tidy by picking up after yourselves and taking belongings with you.
- Aggressive behavior and bullying will not be tolerated. Violations will be addressed between the Program Staff and Parents. Consistent disruptive behavior could mean dismissal from the DNG program.

ATTENDANCE

Strong student attendance at DNG classes is MANDATORY! Attendance issues can result in dismissal from the DNG program.

Absences fall into two categories:

1. Excused absences
2. Unexcused absences

Excused absences:

- Excused absences are granted when students miss classes due to illness or emergency.
- Emergencies include such situations as death in the immediate family, car accident, hospitalization, natural disaster, or other extreme situations.
- If students surpass more than two last minute cancellations due to illness in a short period of time, they may be asked to provide supporting documentation such as a doctor's note

Notification for excused absences:

- To be granted an excused absence – parents/guardians **MUST** notify DNG staff **via email** as soon as possible when they know a student will be absent from class. Phone calls are not preferred for absence notifications.
- Email dng@sarasotaballet.org with the subject line “Excused Absence for ---Student First/Last Name”.

Unexcused Absences:

- An Unexcused absence is an absence that occurs for ANY REASON other than illness or emergency (i.e. schedule conflicts, last minute travel, sporting events, birthday parties etc.)
- Unexcused absences are very disruptive to class structure and student progress and will be considered according to strict guidelines in the DNG program. More than two unexcused absence for any reason results in consequences for the student and a persistent issue with unexcused absences will result in dismissal from the DNG program.
- Unexcused absence consequences:
 - 1-2 unexcused absence – no consequence
 - 3-4 unexcused absences – parent/guardian and student are required to attend a meeting to address the issue and student might not be allowed to participate in DNG performances
 - 5 unexcused absences – written warning of suspension from the DNG program, possible loss of special performance opportunities
 - 6 or more unexcused absences – immediate suspension from the DNG program

ARRIVAL & DISMISSAL

Arrival

- It is crucial for students to be on time for class! Students must follow the check-in procedure every time they arrive at the DNG studios.
- Attendance will also be taken by DNG faculty during each dance class.
- Students who are late for class may be asked to observe that class instead and may not be allowed to actively participate in class.
- Consistent lateness is a significant problem and will result in consequences including but not limited to being ineligible for performance opportunities and being dismissed from the DNG program.
- Upon arrival, students should wear additional clothing that covers their dance attire.

Dismissal

- It is the responsibility of the student and his/her parent/guardian to know his/her DNG schedule and to adhere strictly to pick-up times.
- It is crucial to be on time when picking up your child from dance class. If an emergency arises: please call the DNG office IMMEDIATELY: (941) 351-2877.
- A record will be kept of any late student pick-ups.
- Being late for pick-up more than once (especially if the DNG office was not contacted) could result in your child(ren)'s dismissal from the DNG program as it causes serious staffing and security problems.
- If you need to send someone else to pick up your child:
 - 1. Email or Call the DNG office with the name of the individual who will be picking up your child. As much notice as possible of an alternate pick-up person is appreciated.
 - 2. Be sure that your child knows the individual.
- Upon dismissal, students should wear additional clothing that covers their dance attire.

THE SARASOTA BALLET VAN RULES

- Passengers on The Sarasota Ballet Vans MUST REMAIN SEATED WITH THEIR SEATBELTS SECURELY FASTENED AT ALL TIMES
- Passengers on The Sarasota Ballet Vans must comply with driver instructions - our DNG drivers are carefully background-checked and trusted members of our staff who are responsible for DNG students' safety while aboard the DNG vans.
- No food and drink are allowed on The Sarasota Ballet Vans (students will have time to have a snack once they arrive at the DNG building).
- All other rules, regulations, and guidelines regarding student behavior in the DNG building and DNG program ALSO apply while students are passengers in The Sarasota Ballet vans.

COMMUNICATION

- Communication between DNG program staff and parents is key to the success of the student.
- Emails are the DNG office's primary means of communicating with parents.
- It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to provide their correct email address(es) and to make sure they receive and read Sarasota Ballet DNG emails.
- Please check your provided email address at least once per week to stay up to date regarding DNG information.
- Please notify the office if there is a change in email, phone numbers, and addresses. WE MUST BE ABLE TO REACH YOU!
- DNG Office contact information:
 - Email: dng@sarasotaballet.org
 - Phone: (941)351-2877

- For your convenience, we are also communicating via the app Remind.
 - This app is used by many teachers/administrators within the Sarasota and Manatee County School systems.
 - Directions and codes are distributed at the start of each semester; if you need them outside of those dates, please email the DNG office (dng@sarasotaballet.org). Please note that the codes will change each school year.

CLASS LEVELS/GROUPS

DNG students are sorted into levels based on grade and ability level. Levels are used to help determine the class schedule and make sure every student is being supported in their optimal development. Classes will typically consist of a single level, sometimes more than one level will be combined for a given class. All level placement is at the discretion of the DNG Director and faculty. Level placements can change at any time - a student can be moved to a different level based on a variety of factors including behavior and effort in class. Level changes are entirely at the discretion of the DNG Director and Faculty.

DNG Levels

- Level A1: 3rd grade students
- Level A2: 3rd grade students
- Level A3: 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students
- Level A4: 3rd grade students
- Level B1: 4th grade students
- Level B2: 4th grade students
- Level C1: 5th grade students
- Level C2: 5th grade students
- Level D1: 6-8th grade students
- Level D2: 6-8th grade students
- Level E1: 9-12th grade students

DANCE ATTIRE & HAIR RULES AND REGULATIONS:

General Attire & Hair Rules

- DNG students are required to dress in proper dance attire and shoes and follow rules for hair style when they attend their DNG dance classes.
- Hair and attire requirements are highly important for the overall safety of each student. Baggy clothes, misfitting shoes, and loose hair all interfere with quality dance training.
- Dance attire is provided to students FREE OF CHARGE!
- Please take good care of your provided dance attire. New shoes will be provided if original shoes are outgrown or worn out during the DNG classes.

- Students should wear additional clothing that covers their dance attire upon arrival and dismissal
- DO NOT wear dance shoes outside of the studios.
- DO NOT wear street shoes inside the studios.
- It is each student's and parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that the student has all of the dance attire required for each class - there are strict rules about borrowing attire if you forget your attire on a class day (see section below on "borrowed attire")

Specific Attire Requirements:

- Female students
 1. Attire: wear DNG assigned leotard, tights, and ballet shoes for all classes.
Students may wear fitted black leggings for jazz, contemporary, modern, West African, hip hop, Latin, composition, etc.
 2. Hair: must be secured and away from the face.
 - a. For ballet and contemporary ballet: hair in a bun (all hair off face and neck)
 - b. For jazz, contemporary, modern, hip hop, West African, Latin, composition: hair in a ponytail (high ponytail is preferred)
- Male students
 1. Attire: wear DNG assigned white T-shirt, black bike shorts, thin white socks, and black ballet shoes.
 2. Long hair must be secured away from the face.

Borrowed Attire

- A student forgetting to bring their dance attire to class is considered a misdemeanor for that student. Caring for and remembering to bring your provided dance attire and shoes is each student and parent/guardian's responsibility.
- The DNG office has a limited amount of substitute attire which can be borrowed by students AS A BACK-UP AND ON A VERY LIMITED BASIS. Using borrowed attire in place of your own provided dance attire is a last resort and WILL NOT be allowed to happen regularly.
- Rules regarding borrowed attire are as follows:
 - Each student is allowed to borrow attire a maximum of THREE TIMES PER SCHOOL YEAR. (Note: this counts for ANY item of borrowed attire. For example, if a student borrows only tights on a given day, that counts as one of the student's allowed borrows for the year).
 - After a student has borrowed attire three times, they will not be allowed to borrow any additional attire.
 - If a student does not have proper dance attire for class (and is not allowed to borrow attire) they will not be allowed to participate in class and must observe class instead.
 - Multiple instances of missing class due to inadequate attire could result in additional disciplinary action..

CONFERENCES

If you would like to discuss your child's progress, conferences can be scheduled anytime by contacting the DNG staff:

- Phone: (941)351-2877
- Email: dng@sarasotaballet.org

HEALTH & WELLBEING

The health and well-being of our students is our top priority!

- Parents, please inform the program staff of student health conditions, food allergies, illnesses, and injuries.
- Protocols related to communicable diseases are at the discretion of the Sarasota Ballet and could be revised periodically. Parents will be updated via email to changes as they occur.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

- No bullying, laughing, or negative comments toward another student's person or movement abilities will be tolerated. Violations will be immediately addressed between DNG staff, students and parents. Violations can result in dismissal from the DNG program.
- We have a Zero Tolerance Policy for physical violence, and aggressive behavior will not be tolerated. Any physical violence will result in a student's dismissal from the DNG program, even for a first offense.

OUTSIDE ACTIVITIES & CONFLICTS

- Participation in the DNG Program requires meaningful commitments from parents and students.
- Please let us know about scheduling conflicts such as student outside activities, school events, and athletics that could interfere with attendance. Scheduling conflicts will be handled on a case-by-case basis between program staff and parents. It is not guaranteed that schedule conflicts will be accommodated.

PHONE USE

- Student cell phones must be turned off or turned to silent while attending classes and programming.
- If there is an emergency and a parent needs to reach their child, please call the studio phone: (941) 351-2877.

PARENT OBSERVATION WEEK

- Parents are invited to observe their child's dance classes – once during the school year. Dates are announced prior to the event. Thank you for making this a priority when it comes as parental interest and support of dance education is a key element in the success of DNG students.
- 2024-25 dates for parent observation week are:
 - **November 18 through November 22, 2024**

REHEARSALS/PERFORMANCES

Performance opportunities may be available throughout the year. Traditionally, performances take place in December for some students and May for all students!

Please note these important reminders regarding Performance Opportunities:

- All eligible students are expected to participate in DNG performing opportunities. Students not engaging in this aspect of the DNG Program may be excused as it is a key component of student success.
- Performing on stage, in a true pre-professional environment, is a privilege.
- Students are expected to commit to performing opportunities by following these guidelines:
 - Attend all their regularly scheduled DNG classes
 - Give effort in every DNG dance class
 - Practice your choreography and dance steps throughout the week – try teaching the dance to a parent, aunt, grandparent, or sibling!
- **IMPORTANT:** A student's performance eligibility can be revoked at any time as a result of behavioral issues, attendance issues, tardiness to class, issues with forgetting dance attire, or any other violations of the rules governing student conduct. Revoking performance privileges is entirely at the discretion of the DNG faculty and program director.

SCHOOL REPORT CARDS

- As DNG is a scholarship program, DNG staff must be granted access to each DNG student's report card.
- Parents may sign a release with the School Board of Sarasota County to have their child's report cards accessed electronically. Alternatively, parents may provide a hard copy to DNG personnel.
- Copies of student reports will be reviewed by the DNG program director quarterly.

INCLEMENT WEATHER (TROPICAL STORMS/HURRICANES)

- If **Sarasota County Schools** are canceled due to a storm, we will also cancel our classes on that day. Check your email. Parents can always email to confirm if DNG classes are being held on a given day.
- IMPORTANT NOTE: DNG serves students in both Manatee AND Sarasota counties HOWEVER - the DNG calendar follows the SARASOTA COUNTY SCHOOL CALENDAR. I.e. if school is not in session in Sarasota County on a given day ALL DNG STUDENTS do not have class on that day (even if the students attend school in Manatee County and do attend school that day).

PROGRAMAS DE MENTORES

Como parte de DNG, los estudiantes tienen la oportunidad de participar en programas de tutoría a través de nuestras organizaciones asociadas: PlanIT Sarasota, Take Stock in Children y The Society, Inc. A través de estos programas de tutoría, los niños reciben orientación sobre temas tales como planificación universitaria y profesional y otras habilidades vitales para la vida. Todos los estudiantes mentores están capacitados y certificados a través de nuestras respectivas organizaciones asociadas. Puede encontrar información adicional sobre nuestras organizaciones asociadas y sus programas en los sitios web vinculados a continuación.

PlanIT Sarasota <https://edfoundationsrq.org/planit-sarasota/>

Take Stock in Children <https://www.takestockinchildren.org/>

The Society, Inc. <https://www.thesocietyinc.org/>

DNG students are highly encouraged to take advantage of the free mentoring resources provided to them. However, **parents CAN OPT OUT** of mentoring programs if they do not wish their child to participate. To opt out of mentoring programs, parents should simply select the opt out option in the digital acknowledgement forms accompanying this handbook. If we do not receive an OPT OUT form from parents, DNG students WILL participate in mentor programs.

Please direct any questions you may have regarding student policies to the DNG staff as soon as possible. You can reach us at dng@sarasotaballet.org; (941)351-2877.

Charmaine Hunter

Community Engagement Director

Sabrina Ortiz

Dance-The Next Generation, Program Facilitator

Hannah Lanese

Community Engagement Program Administrator

I acknowledge receiving the Dance – The Next Generation Parent & Student Handbook 24/25. I have read these materials and understand all the rules, responsibilities, and expectations. I understand that the Parent & Student Handbook policies may be amended during the year and that such changes will be communicated to families via email.

I understand that my failure to thoroughly read and return this acknowledgement will not relieve me or my child from being responsible for knowing or complying with the Dance – The Next Generation policies and procedures.