

# EKKLESIA SCHOOL OF BALLET

## HANDBOOK 2025-2026

Welcome to Ekklesia School of Ballet!

We hope you will find this handbook informative and helpful. If you ever have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Email: [admin@ekklesiaballet.org](mailto:admin@ekklesiaballet.org)

Website: [ekklesiaballet.org](http://ekklesiaballet.org)

**Founding Artistic Director, Elisa Schroth**

## **WELCOME!**

Welcome to Ekklesia School of Ballet (ESB), a renowned classical ballet school and performing company based in Middletown, Connecticut.

Since 2005, ESB has provided exceptional dance training for beginning to pre-professional dancers and has enhanced the cultural climate of the region through our ballet performances.

The philosophy of ESB is that students are dancers in the making. Our goal is to develop technical proficiency at a professional level while creating future artists with a sound work ethic. The information presented in this handbook serves to establish and maintain ESB as a place of professional dance training which also nurtures and encourages its students to grow in their character as well as their physical capabilities. The teachers and staff at ESB will make every effort to enforce the rules consistently, informatively, and with the student's overall well-being in mind.

While studying at ESB, students and their families are expected to make the most of their training and performance opportunities by recognizing the benefits of mutual encouragement, respect, courtesy, and helpfulness. Together we make Ekklesia School of Ballet a joyous place to dance!

## **MISSION**

Ekklesia School of Ballet is a pre-professional dance school composed of artistic faculty whose goal is to create spaces where art and faith can flourish. Our aim is to provide first rate instruction for professional and recreational dancers and to foster creativity which manifests love and healing into the world.

## **HISTORY**

Established in 2005 by Founding Artistic Director Elisa Schroth. Ekklesia School of Ballet was created in loving memory of Elisa's brother who passed away after a long battle with epilepsy. Joshua's life continues to be her inspiration, his tremendous love for all people, his love for God and his musical genius urged her to create a safe space where art and faith can flourish. His legacy lives on as ESB strives to serve the community through the language of dance, and to be a place where everyone knows they belong.

## **BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Ekklesia School of Ballet is a 501-C3 not-for-profit organization and is responsible to the officers and trustees who oversee this establishment.

## **STAFF**

Board of Directors - Mary Blankson, Maria Bouffard, Merly De La Hoz Cookson, Kasey Harding, Reverend Julie Hoplamazian, Elisa Schroth

Elisa Schroth - Founding Artistic Director of Ekklesia School of Ballet

Sasha Biagiarelli - Assistant Director, Company Dancer, Instructor, Business Manager

Erica West - Administrator, Rehearsal Coach, and Instructor

Niamh Rollins - Company Dancer, Instructor

Hope Blackburn - Instructor

Jacob Schoup - Instructor

Morley van Yperen - Theologian in Residence

## **CLASS/REHEARSAL OBSERVATION**

Out of respect for the instructor and students, class observation is only available with prior approval by the instructor. A visitor badge must be obtained at the office prior to observation. Photography, videography and recording of classes in any form is strictly prohibited both inside and outside the studios.

## **MISSED CLASSES**

Missed classes must be made up if the student wishes to maintain the level achieved. Limitations placed on the student by a physician are respected, but all classes missed must be made up as quickly as is reasonably possible. Students who are injured may be given credit for properly completing an observation form while observing their class. Students who are ill should be resting and are not permitted to observe class. Students who show symptoms of fever and/or vomiting are not permitted to observe class.

There are no excused absences for rehearsals once the student has been cast in a ballet and/or has agreed to be in a performance. Please note that if the dancer misses more than two rehearsals for any reason, that dancer will most likely be removed from the performance or required to share a role.

## **COSTUMING**

Costumes are provided by ESB, however, dancers are responsible for the costumes while they are wearing them.

Tights and shoes: Female dancers must provide their own pink tights and shoes (ballet, pointe). Male dancers must provide their own white or black shoes.

Dancers must provide their own appropriate undergarments (nude leotard for females and dance belt for males).

Dancers should attend all rehearsals and performances wearing their regular dancewear.

Students are not permitted to sit in costumes or eat or drink while in a costume. Water can and should be consumed!

If something is wrong with a costume or if it is damaged, tell the Costume Constructor immediately.

ESB may implement other rules as necessary to protect the costumes and dancers as well as to ensure that the backstage area runs smoothly and safely.

## **DRESS CODE FOR OUTSIDE CLASSES**

Dancewear is not appropriate attire for the street and students must wear street clothing over their leotards and tights.

## **REGISTRATION**

New students age 9 and older are required to take a placement class prior to being admitted to the school. This is to ensure that the student is placed in the appropriate level to facilitate their safety and enjoyment in the training process. All level placements are based primarily on the student's skill, not on age.

For enrollment and placement class information please contact the office at [admin@ekkesiaballet.org](mailto:admin@ekkesiaballet.org)

## **ENROLLMENT**

All dancers seeking to register for classes must create an account in [Dance Studio Pro](#). Once registered, access is granted to the ESB Parent Portal where you can manage your family's contact and payment information, add student registrations and more. **All students must have an account, be registered for their classes, and have paid the Registration Fee and first tuition payment in full prior to taking classes.** Dancers may enroll and join classes at any time of the year.

Registration for classes operates on a yearly basis. Students who are registered for the Fall Semester are automatically enrolled in the Spring Semester so that they can maintain their place in class. Parents should notify the office before the start of the spring semester if they do not wish to continue in spring. Each class meets 16 times per semester (total of 32 classes for the full year). Accounts must be current with no outstanding balances owed in order for students to participate in the fall and spring performances.

## **TUITION**

### **PAYMENT INFORMATION**

We accept all major credit cards. You must pay by credit card and sign up for Auto-Pay in Dance Studio Pro if registering for a quarterly or 8-payment tuition plan. Cash, checks and credit cards are accepted for private lessons and for annual and biannual tuition payment plans.

### **PAYMENT PLANS**

See the [Tuition Section of the Ekklesia Website](#) for payment information by level.

## **ADDITIONAL DISCOUNTS**

**Class Discount** - Students enrolled in their full class amount for their level automatically receive a discount. These discounts are already factored into the tuition amounts listed on the website.

**Family Discount** - Families with more than one family member enrolled in classes will receive a 10% discount on the tuition for one family member. The discount is applied to the family member with the lower charge. Discounts apply to tuition only. Discounts do not apply to Registration and Performance fees.

Discounts and scholarships awarded to specific students are not transferable to other family members. All family discounts and scholarships are non-transferrable.

**Full Payment Discount:** If a student pays their full year's tuition all in one payment before the start of the semester, they will receive a 2% discount on their tuition. This discount does not apply to students who start once the semester has started.

## **ADDING CLASSES**

Dancers can add a class at any point of the year. If a dancer would like to consider adding a new class, they can take one free trial of that class. If you would like to permanently add the class to your schedule, email [admin@ekkesiaballet.org](mailto:admin@ekkesiaballet.org).

## **TUITION POLICY**

ESB always accepts new students and tuition can be prorated for all students beginning after the semester start date. Please contact the office ([admin@ekkesiaballet.org](mailto:admin@ekkesiaballet.org)) for proper class placement.

Refunds and transfers are not made once the semester is underway. Students are obligated to pay for the entire semester. Students who miss class or drop a class before the end of the semester are still obligated to pay the full semester's tuition without exception unless the class is canceled by ESB.

If an injury or illness prevents a student from taking classes for a prolonged amount of time, a prorated tuition refund will be issued upon admittance of a Doctor's note.

There will be a \$25.00 charge for returned checks.

## **CLASS WITHDRAWALS**

Once the student begins taking classes, tuition is not refundable or transferable. Students who miss class or withdraw before the end of the semester are still obligated to pay the full semester's tuition without exception unless the class is canceled by ESB.

If an injury or illness prevents a student from taking classes for a prolonged amount of time a prorated tuition refund will be issued upon admittance of a Doctor's note. There will be a \$25.00 charge for returned checks.

If you would like to withdraw from the school you must notify the office via email to [admin@ekkesiaballet.org](mailto:admin@ekkesiaballet.org) and you must fill out a withdrawal form. The student is still obligated to pay for the semester.

## **REFUNDS**

There are no refunds, exchanges, or transfers for tuition and fees.

## **LATE FEES**

Any tuition payment or performance fee that is 30 days late will be charged a one-time \$15.00 late fee. Any bounced checks will be charged a \$25.00 fee.

## **SOME GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS:**

Our instructors are responsible for the children only during class. Students must be picked up promptly when the class ends. Most classes run back to back and instructors cannot monitor children in the waiting area. It is important that students are picked up promptly after class and do not loiter in the waiting room.

To maximize your child's learning experience please refrain from addressing issues with individual instructors before, during, or after class. If there is any issue, please contact Elisa

Schroth, the Artistic Director through the School Office at [elisa@ekkesiaballet.org](mailto:elisa@ekkesiaballet.org) or by phone (860 985 2085) and she will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

## **ATTENDANCE:**

All students are expected to attend classes regularly and on time. Students should arrive at least 10 minutes before the start of their class. Students who arrive more than 15 minutes late for their class may be asked to sit and observe. This policy is in place because without a proper warm-up, a student can be seriously injured. Students should be picked up within fifteen minutes of the end of their classes. Please notify the studio by emailing [admin@ekkesiaballet.org](mailto:admin@ekkesiaballet.org) in advance of a class absence.

## **MAKE-UP CLASSES:**

Make-up classes for Ballet 1 and up are allowed for the following circumstances:

- If class time is available
- If the student is enrolled in the full requirement of classes for their level

If a student would like to make up a class, please email the office ([admin@ekkesiaballet.org](mailto:admin@ekkesiaballet.org)) about make-up class options.

## **CANCELLATIONS**

ESB will make a decision to cancel classes due to inclement weather as the need arises. Cancellations will be emailed by noon of the date canceled. Cancellation notices will also be posted on the school's instagram page (Ekklesia School of Ballet).

## **CLASS ABSENCE**

If planning a class absence, please **notify the ESB office via email** ([admin@ekkesiaballet.org](mailto:admin@ekkesiaballet.org)) in advance of a class missed. Attendance is a key factor in determining level advancement and billing.

## **REHEARSAL ABSENCE**

If planning a rehearsal absence, please notify the ESB office in advance via email ([admin@ekkesiaballet.org](mailto:admin@ekkesiaballet.org)). **Two (2) missed rehearsals regardless of the reason may cause the student to lose their role in the performance.**

## **REHEARSAL SCHEDULE**

ESB reserves the right to change production schedules as needed and it is the parents' responsibility to check the website for updates.

## **BUILDING USAGE AND ETIQUETTE**

### **ARRIVAL**

Use the **side entrance with the red double doors** when arriving for classes. All other entrances are locked.

Creative Movement, Pre-Ballet, and Ballet 1 students should arrive no earlier than 10 minutes before the start of their class. Creative Movement, Pre-Ballet, Ballet 1 and Ballet 2 students are not allowed in the studios until invited by an instructor. For these levels (Creative Movement, Pre-Ballet, Ballet 1 and Ballet 2), one parent or guardian must stay in the waiting area while the child is in class.

If your student needs to use the restroom, becomes upset, or disrupts the class, they will be sent out of class for you to take care of their needs, after which time they can return to class. Students ages 10 and up may arrive up to 30 minutes before class begins. After the student has dressed and prepared for class, they should wait in the waiting area until their class begins.

### **DEPARTURE**

Please pick up your child promptly when class ends. ESB is not responsible for your child outside of class time. Please use the **side entrance with the red double doors** only to pick up your child.

Students are not allowed in the parking area unsupervised.

Students are not allowed to wait outside or leave the premises until parents retrieve them.

Students should always be picked up by their parents or legal guardian. If you are unable to pick up your child, please notify the office ([admin@eklesiaballet.org](mailto:admin@eklesiaballet.org)) the morning of.

## **STUDIO ETIQUETTE (FOR STUDENTS)**

### **ESB School Rules**

In this environment you are physically demonstrating the esteem in which you hold your art, teachers, and fellow students. Polite, respectful behavior is expected of all students, parents and siblings at all times.

Students are held accountable for behaviour through a warning system. If a student misbehaves, they will receive a warning from the teacher. After three warnings, the student will be sent out of class to sit in the ESB office and a parent will be notified.

1. Behave respectfully and courteously at all times.
2. Follow dress code for all classes and rehearsals.
3. All missed classes must be made up promptly at the student's level or at a lower level.
4. Do not offer medicine to anyone. Do not take medication from anyone except a parent or guardian.
5. Show respect for the property of others and for the facilities. Pick up after yourself. Throw away trash and recycles in appropriate containers.

6. Put belongings in designated areas.
7. ESB is not responsible for any lost or stolen items.
8. ESB shall not be liable for injuries sustained during attendance at the ballet school or any of its related functions.
9. Animals (other than service animals) are not allowed in ESB buildings.
10. Alcohol, smoking, gum chewing, and foul language are prohibited.
11. Fireworks, explosives, candles, and highly flammable materials are prohibited.
12. The use or possession of weapons of any type is prohibited.
13. Public displays of affection amongst students is prohibited.
14. Students are not allowed in the office space unless given permission by a member of ESB faculty or staff.
15. Students are expected to practice healthy behaviors.
16. ESB faculty has the right to dismiss any student if they are disrupting the class.
17. Cell phones are prohibited during rehearsals and classes.
18. Respectful behavior is expected (this includes not leaning on barres or sitting during class).
19. Always be on time. If late, students must ask permission to enter.
20. Students must be clean and air out their shoes.
21. Ask permission: Wandering in and out of the room is not allowed.
22. No excessive noise.
23. No street shoes on the marley floor.
24. No food or drinks (except water bottles) in the studios.

### **Warm-Ups**

During the summer months warm-ups are only allowed for the first two combinations. Warm-ups must be tight fitting and appropriate for dancing for example: leg warmers (not bulky), dance sweaters, black leggings are examples of appropriate attire. Please ask the Artistic Director if you have any questions.

During the winter months our studios are kept at a minimum of 68 degrees. Students are permitted to wear warm-ups until the teacher feels that students are properly warmed up with the combinations. Warm-ups must be tight fitting and appropriate for dancing. Leg warmers (not bulky), dance sweaters, and black leggings are examples of appropriate attire. Please ask the Artistic Director if you have any questions.

### **WATER BOTTLES**

Students need to stay hydrated. We encourage the use of reusable water bottles. Please plan to bring enough water with you and label your water bottle. The tap water at the studio is safe and drinkable, so you are welcome to fill your water bottles up at the tap.

### **APPROPRIATE CONTACT:**

ESB expects all students to behave in a manner that respects both personal boundaries and professional standards. This refers to relationships of all kinds. Dance is an art form where physical contact is necessary and it is important to maintain professional contact. Any displays of personal affections or exclusive relationships are not permitted when participating in any ESB class or function.

## **GUESTS**

It is not permitted to invite any guest unless approved by the Artistic Director prior to class arrival. Email the office at [admin@ekkelsiaballet.org](mailto:admin@ekkelsiaballet.org) if you would like to ask to bring a guest.

Students in the Children's Division must have one caregiver in the waiting room while they are in class.

## **RECORDING DEVICES**

The use of photography and video recording devices during classes without the permission of the Artistic Director is strictly prohibited. Posting photographs and/or video recordings on any social network without the consent of the Artistic Director is strictly prohibited. The use of photography and video recording devices are strictly prohibited backstage at all performances. The use of photography and video recording devices is strictly prohibited for all tech, dress and on-stage performances.

## **CLASS PLACEMENT**

Initial class placement for new students for all levels will be based on skill, not age. Promotions are considered for each student based on mastery of skills, attendance, participation in performances, and behavior.

## **EVALUATIONS**

Students enrolled in the Student Division will receive a progress report at the end of the year. The progress report will notify parents when the student is permitted to advance to the next level.

## **OBSERVATION**

There is one parent observation week per year. We feel that students achieve the most success when parents don't observe each class. It is important for the student to develop a sense of independence and build a relationship with the teacher.

During parent observation week, parents and extended family will have the opportunity to sit in on their child's class and observe the students as they train. We strongly encourage at least one parent to attend classes during parent observation week.

The use of photography and recording devices is strictly prohibited.

## **BIBLICAL APPLICATION**

At ESB, all are welcome whether you come from a religious background or not. You are not required to participate or adhere to any beliefs in order to take part in any of our programs. ESB does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, or religion. One class per week will begin with the first 5 minutes being dedicated to a prayer and a reflection on how we can best love our neighbor as ourselves. In the first semester, we talk about the story and meaning behind the scenes from our Christmas show, Ahavah. Students in Ballet 4 and up are

invited to take part in a more in-depth discussion of the show on Saturday's Theology and Dance class. This class is free and optional for students.

## **LOST & FOUND**

Ekklesia School of Ballet is not responsible for items lost, misplaced, or left unattended in the studio. Put your name in ALL of your belongings. Items found in the studio at the end of the day will be placed in the Lost and Found box, which is located in the school office. Unclaimed Lost and Found items will be donated to charity at the beginning of each month.

## **CELL PHONES**

### **NO CELL PHONE USE IN STUDIOS**

**Calls, texting, e-mailing and use of social media platforms are not permitted in class or rehearsal.** Electronic devices will be taken from the student and kept in the office until the end of the day. Calls to parents may be made from the office.

Any phone cameras or recording devices may not be used at any time in class, dressing rooms, bathrooms, rehearsal facilities, or theatres where ESB performs. If you are found to be using a photographic or recording device in violation of this policy, the device may be confiscated and returned to your parent or guardian.

All choreography is the intellectual property of ESB and the choreographer and should be respected by not taking unauthorized photography or videography.

## **CONTACT US**

Please do not contact instructors for any questions or concerns. Refer all questions through the ESB office ([admin@ekkleziaballet.org](mailto:admin@ekkleziaballet.org)). We will respond promptly! Thank You!

This handbook is an informational guide, not a legally-binding contract. This Handbook is not an exhaustive list of all the school rules. Updates may be necessary to ensure compliance with federal, state, and local regulations, and to ensure the safe and effective operation of the school. Ekklesia Contemporary Ballet reserves the right to amend, modify or revoke any policy at our discretion, at any time, with or without notice.

Elisa Schroth Cell: 860.985.2085

Artistic Director, Elisa Schroth: [elisa@ekkleziaballet.org](mailto:elisa@ekkleziaballet.org)  
Administrator, Sasha Biagiarelli: [admin@ekkleziaballet.org](mailto:admin@ekkleziaballet.org)