



Student & Parent Handbook 2026-2027

Welcome to our 72nd season

Margaret Carlson opened Carlson's School of Dance (then Duncan Studio of Dancing) in 1954. From teaching classes in her attic, we have grown to four studios with ballet, jazz, tap and hip hop as well as courses in musical theatre, contemporary and more. Mrs. C's amazing energy and love of dance continues on in our teachers that hold a variety of training as well as being registered with the Royal Academy of Dance and International Society of Teachers of Dancing.

We are proud to offer our students the opportunity to perform in the community, at festivals and competitions, as well as take part in examinations that are recognized worldwide. We believe in offering dance to a diverse group of students and staying inclusive to all abilities and ages. We strive to teach the love of dance.

To learn more about the studio faculty, check out our website: www.carlsons.ca

Contact Information

Our office is located at 3274 Sherman Rd.
E-mail: info@carlsons.ca Phone: 250-746-6456

Follow us on Facebook (Carlson's Dance) and Instagram @carlsonsdance for updated information.

Join our "Carlson's Daily" Facebook group where our studio community comes together for updates and sharing information.

Registration

Before getting started in class, it's important that all students and/or parents fill out and sign registration paperwork so we can ensure we have the most up-to-date contact details for you. Can't figure it out online? We believe in discussing registration with each family to find what's best for you. We hold in person registration in June, August, and September and can set up a time that works with you to discuss your class options.

How to be a good dance parent:

- follow policies and dress code
- trust the process and that our staff truly care about what's best for your child
- be encouraging, no negative speaking
- be informed and go directly to the source (the office) if something is unclear
- be positive and celebrate other dancers
- arrive at the studio 10 minutes before class - this allows you to check in with the studio and friends can chat before class (instead of in class, wasting your money!)
- always remember we are about great performing and personal improvement, not about outshining someone else

Always let them know you are proud - no matter what!

The ideal student is a good listener, always ready for class, and committed to the group with good attendance. Enthusiastic students with high energy that attend class with a positive attitude and work as a real team player will get the most out of dance.

Through participation in competitions and in our community, we hope to instill in our students an appreciation for other dancers and schools.

We all share the same passion and love of dance. It is important we work together as a team and support our community and other dancers.

*Solos, duos,
trios, and other
private lessons*

At Carlson's we encourage all our students to work privately on their skills or on competition and festival work if they wish to do so. If you take an hour a week or ten, we believe all students should be given the opportunity. Our teachers are happy to work with you, just contact the office and we can help arrange it. Solos, duos, and trios should be done with a Carlson's teacher and will be subject to an administration fee.

Studio Policies & Information

In the Studio

- Students that arrive late to class may be asked to sit and watch to protect them from injuries due to an inadequate warm up
- With the exception of Watching Week and classes with students under the age of 3, no visitors of students are permitted in the studio to watch
- No food or drink is permitted in the studio other than water
- We have students with scent sensitivities and ask no perfumes be worn to class
- Politeness and respect to everyone is expected*
- No cell phones are permitted in the studio
- Dress code must be followed
- No street shoes in the studio (indoor, non-marking sole shoes for hip hop please)
- Prompt pick ups are appreciated as we cannot monitor students

Attendance

- If a student will be away the office should be notified as soon as possible
- It is expected that missed work will be learned from another student before next class
- If your child has an injury of any sort, please inform the office. Injured students should sit in on class and take notes

Absent students hold the entire class back as lost lessons must be repeated for their benefit. The focus of our classes is learning, not repeating. If a student misses three or more lessons they may not be ready to perform with their class and could be asked to understudy. Repeat absences will result in the student being asked to leave the class. No refunds will be given under these circumstances. Private lessons may required.

Cancellation of Classes

If a class must be cancelled you will be notified via e-mail and a post will be shared in our "Carlson's Daily" Facebook Group as well as on other social media platforms. When School District 79 cancels class due to weather we do as well.

Non-Competitive Agreement

We ask that students taking classes at other studios or taking part in dance opportunities elsewhere let us know so we can make sure to avoid conflicts and celebrate their achievements. Students should not be competing with outside groups against their home studio.

The safety and well being of our students is our #1 priority.

If a student is injured during class, the incident will be reported to the office so we can follow up with the family. Emergency services and parents will be called immediately in the case of serious injury.

At Carlson's we also recognize mental health is important and we will be mindful of how we speak to our students.

Schedule

If enrolment is fewer than 6 students the studio reserves the right to cancel the class. The schedule is subject to change based on enrolment and demand. The studio will work with your family to find another class to suit your student should this occur.

Communication

We are BIG on communication at Carlson's. We strive to inform our dance families as best we can with what's happening at the studio. For convenience, our primary means of communication is by e-mail. You will receive regular newsletters and important information via e-mail so ensure you have provided the studio with an up-to-date address that is regularly checked. You may also need to check folders other than your inbox or add us to your contact list so things don't get sent to trash. If you would like to contact a teacher please let the office know and we can get them to contact you.

Withdrawal

Withdrawal from classes requires one month's written notice (e-mail is acceptable). Failure to notify the office will result in a charge equal to one month's payment. Any fees that are not received by the first week of classes will incur a late registration surcharge of 5%.

No refunds or withdraws are permitted after April 1st.

Class Placements

Our teachers have the student's best interest in mind when finalizing class placements. It may take time to assess a placement and students may be asked to try other classes to find their best fit. This process is important for success and we appreciate your cooperation. Students may be considered to work at a higher level than they are assessed but only under teacher permission and as an understudy.

Parking

At our Sherman Road studios we ask that students arrive through the back of the building where our waiting rooms are located. Parking is available at the back, side, and front of the building. Please do not use parking spaces in front of other establishments during their business hours.

Costumes

Costume deposits are payable no later than October 15th and cannot be refunded once the costume has been ordered. We do our best to keep within the deposit budget but there may be times that we need to collect a little extra when the costume comes in. Students must only wear their costumes for dress rehearsals and performances until the season is completed in June.

Performances

We hope all of our students will want to take part in our year end recital as this is where all the hard work they have put in through out the year is showcased in 2 or 3 exciting shows. If you do not wish to participate, please inform the studio as soon as you can. Costumes are ordered as early as November and costs will be incurred if we are not notified. Our recitals and rehearsals are held at the Cowichan Performing Arts Centre.

Show Schedules

If your child is only in two classes, or if you have siblings in two classes, we try our best to schedule the performances so that they are in the same show, though we cannot always guarantee this is possible. Show schedules come out in our May Newsletter.

Choreography

Not all classes will do performance pieces. For example, some of our students take multiple ballet classes and only one may work on choreography so that the other class can focus on syllabus and technique. Other classes that may not have performance choreography are skills, tech, and conditioning classes.

Carlson's Dance teachers are committed to keeping all choreography age appropriate.

Rehearsals

Stage rehearsals are a super important part of preparing for our recital. It gives us a chance to make any adjustments and ensure that everyone has time to get ready between their dances. We can see if any costumes are missing pieces or need last minute alterations. Even more important, it gives the stars of our show a chance to get up and rehearse on the big stage –a very different environment than they are used to within the studio walls. They can overcome some of the jitters that may hit when the bright lights come on and really prepare themselves for the show ahead. It is a fun and rewarding experience and a great chance to play with their friends and watch some inspiring dancers as they wait for their turn in the spotlight.

Please try not to bring anything valuable to the theatre, especially electronic devices. Our studio and the venue will take no responsibility if an item is damaged, misplaced, lost or stolen.

The opportunity to perform in a recital is an exciting, empowering and confidence building part of the training process. This is where we love to watch our students learn about the theatre, rehearsals and teamwork while they enjoy the opportunity to showcase their skills in a professionally run production. We love giving all students the chance to perform for their family and friends in this supportive and fun environment and encourage even our youngest and newest performers to be involved.

required dress code



Preschool, Pre-Primary & Primary

Sleeveless, tank style ballet pink bodysuit, ballet pink tights, pink leather full sole ballet shoes. Circular chiffon skirt in pink to match bodysuit.

Grade 1 Ballet

Sleeveless, tank style ballet pink bodysuit, ballet pink tights, pink leather full sole ballet shoes. Character shoes and skirts are necessary for exam work



Grade 2 & 3 Ballet

Sweetheart leotard in burgundy, pink ballet tights, pink leather full sole ballet shoes. Character shoes and skirts are necessary for exam work.



Grade 4 & 5 Ballet

Sweetheart leotard in royal blue, pink ballet tights, pink leather full sole ballet shoes. Character shoes and skirts are necessary for exam work.

Grade 6-8 Ballet

Sweetheart leotard in navy blue, pink ballet tights, pink ballet shoes. Chiffon skirt, character shoes and skirts are necessary for exam work.

Vocational Grades Ballet

Black sleeveless bodysuit, pink ballet tights, ballet shoes and it may also be necessary to have softened pointe shoes for class work.



Pointe shoes purchased only as advised by ballet teacher.

Modern

Ballet bodysuit with black leggings or shorts over tights. No shoes for class but jazz shoes may be required for performance.

Tap

Black bodysuit or black fitted top with black leggings. Students over the age of 7 should have lace up tap shoes.

Musical Theatre

Black bodysuit or black shirt with black shorts or leggings and black jazz shoes.

Jazz

Black bodysuit or black shirt with black shorts over tights or black leggings and black jazz shoes.

Acro Dance

Bodysuit with shorts or leggings, bare feet and hair back off the face

Contemporary

Bodysuit with tights, shorts, or leggings. Barefeet and socks. Jazz shoes may be required for performance.

Hip Hop

Comfortable clothing that doesn't restrict movement and clean, non-marking *indoor* sneakers.

**NO SHOES WORN OUTDOORS
PERMITTED IN THE STUDIO**

Carlson's Calendar

2026/2027

- August 26 – Open House & Registration
- September 9 & 10 – Ballet Bootcamp – All Ballet Students Ballet 1+
- September 9 & 10 - In person registration 3:00-6:30
- September 12 – In person registration 9:00-12:00
- September 12 – CPT Kickstart!
- September 14 – Classes begin
- September 30 - No classes
- October 8/10 - 8 week session classes begin (no classes Oct 23/24)
- October 12 - Thanksgiving, no classes
- October 15 – Costume deposit deadline
- October 24/25 – Groove Street Convention
- October 22 - Solo costume order deadline
- November 11 – Classes as usual
- November 23-28 - Watching Week
- December 1- All festival & competition entry fees due
- December 7 – Tentative Winter Tea
- December 19 - Last day of classes before break
- January 4 - Classes recommence
- January 14/16 - 8 week session classes begin (no classes Feb 19/20)
- February 6 – Tentative Solo/Duo/Trio Gala
- February 7 - Festival Rehearsal & Photos
- February 15 - Classes as usual for Family Day
- February 16 - Start date for Cowichan Music Festival
- February 25-March 1 - Synergy Nanaimo
- March 15-28 - Spring Break, no regular classes
- March 29 – Classes as usual
- April 15-18 - Phoenix Competition in Nanaimo
- April 8/10 - 8 week session classes begin (no classes May 13-15)
- May 13-16 – Summit Dance Challenge in Duncan
- May 24 - No classes for Victoria Day
- May 30 - Photo Day (Sherman Rd Studios)
- May/June TBA – RAD & ISTD Exams
- June 8-10 - Recital rehearsals (approx 3-9pm each day)
- June 11 & 12 - Recitals
- June 14-19 - Registration & last week of classes
- June/July/August- Summer performances, parade, open house and more!

**classes are as usual on Professional Development & Non-Instructional Days*