



NSW International Ballet Academy

Parent and Student Handbook 2025

This handbook is intended to give general information to parents and students of the NSW International Ballet Academy. Please refer to this document in the first instance and, if required, please email info@nswiba.com.au for any clarification necessary.

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Table of Contents

1 - Introduction

2 - Studio Ethos

3 - Enrolment

4 - Communication

5 - Important Dates

6 - Code of Conduct

7 - Classes Available and Age Groups

8 - Full Time Programme

9 - Safety

10 - Privacy

11 - Eisteddfod Groups

12 - Eisteddfod Solos

13 - Assessments

14 - Timetable

15 - Uniform and Grooming

16 - Fee Structure

17 - Attendance

18 - Social Media

19 - Our Teachers / Faculty

1/ Introduction

It is our absolute pleasure to warmly welcome you into the NSW International Ballet Academy family.

Our team is thrilled to see many familiar faces return to the studio and even more excited to see some new faces join our community. We have created this one-stop Handbook to shed some light on how things will run throughout the year as well as answer a lot of queries you may have before the year begins. While we would love you to take the time to read this information carefully and keep your Handbook in a safe place to refer to as you need, don't forget that our friendly office staff are always here to help and will happily answer any queries you may have. Nothing is too big or too small - we promise!

QUICK REFERENCE STUDIO INFORMATION

Address:	Level 1 25-27 Bridge Street Pymble NSW 2073
Phone Number:	+612 9144 6532
Email:	info@nswiba.com.au
Website:	www.nswinternationalballetacademy.com.au
Executive Directors:	Susan Anderssen Paul Anderssen
Teachers:	Shayarne Matheson Kim Traynor Courtney McKeown Shahnee Page Elliot Bourke Connor Barlow Millie Garrick Elysia Aravena-Woods
Administration Café Physiotherapist	Katherine Garrick Fiona Batten Simon Walsh (Pymble Physiotherapy) www.pymblephysio.com.au

2/ Studio Ethos

It is important to us at the NSW International Ballet Academy that all members of our team share our vision, our purpose and the philosophy that encompasses everything we do both in and outside of our classes. This is a vision that is shared and demonstrated by the Directors, teachers and staff members at our studio and it is the driving force behind every interaction with our students and their families.

The NSW International Ballet Academy is a place where children of all ages, shapes

and sizes learn to dance and perform. This is a studio where creativity is encouraged and we have a community of teachers, students and families who are passionate about striving for personal best. Our goal is to create a positive and happy experience for all our students. We strive to nurture and develop talent, celebrate the achievements of all students and inspire a love and appreciation of all styles of dance and the arts. We are committed to providing a safe and positive environment in which all students can feel comfortable and free to express themselves.

3/ Enrolment

Before coming to classes, it's important that all parents – whether returning or new - fill out our online enrolment forms, which include our standard terms and conditions, along with our various releases. Children cannot be accepted into classes until those enrolment steps are carried out.

Please ensure that you re-enrol early so that in the event of classes reaching capacity before the year starts, you will be guaranteed a place in the class/es of your choice. Some of our classes are already full in certain year groups and, as classes will never be overfilled, please make sure you re-enrol as soon as you can.

Private lesson requests cannot be guaranteed for night school students as we have a huge demand. Certainly, requests for certain days, times or teachers are unlikely to be available. If you wish for your child to have private lessons, please provide several day/time options, which will increase their chances of being allocated a time. Very restrictive requests are likely to result in no private lesson being available.

Private lessons will be working on technique and exam work unless solo competition work is specifically approved by the Executive Director as per section 12 of this Handbook.

Re-enrolment for 2025 will open on 28 October 2024 via our online system. All current families will receive their personalised re-enrolment link on that date. Enrolments for new families will open from 11 November 2024 and enrolment links can be accessed by emailing us at info@nswiba.com.au. Places in all classes are limited and once capacity is reached, you will be placed on a waiting list.

Our annual registration fee must be paid in full at the time of re-enrolment or on initial enrolment. Enrolments, including class allocations, will not be processed until that fee is paid. The fee is based on the level of the eldest child in the family as follows:

One class per week:	\$25 per annum
Two classes per week:	\$35 per annum
Three or more classes per week:	\$45 per annum

This fee covers an additional accidental injury insurance policy (provides a level of cover for genuine accidents that occur in the studio with no one being held responsible). Details of this insurance are available from Reception. Make sure you get your payment in via internet bank transfer, debit/credit card (plus applicable fee), cash or cheque as your places will only be confirmed once payment is received.

Free trial classes are available to all, subject to availability. Please contact Reception if you would like to try a new class and we will happily fit you in for a trial (provided the class has not reached capacity).

4/ Communication

Communication at the NSW International Ballet Academy is considered imperative. It is our promise to respond to all enquiries as soon as possible and we will never leave a query unanswered. Our friendly reception staff can be contacted on (02) 9144 6532 between 3.00pm and 6.00pm on Tuesdays and Wednesdays and between 9am and 1pm on Saturdays.

For convenience, our primary means of communication is via email. You will receive important information via email so please ensure you have provided the studio with an up-to-date email address. We are of course happy to include multiple email addresses per family if you would like your correspondence sent to numerous recipients. Please add our email address info@nswiba.com.au to your contacts so we don't end up in the dreaded Spam folder!

In the infrequent case of urgent information (for example, unexpected class cancellations or performance changes), we will send an SMS and/or telephone call to all families. So, for this reason, please make sure the mobile phone number you have provided to the studio is correct and up-to-date.

Facebook and Instagram are a great way for us to keep in touch with a large number of people at once, so we encourage all families to join our NSW International Ballet Academy Community Facebook group or to follow our Instagram page. Our Facebook page can be found at NSW International Ballet Academy – Arts and Entertainment – School and will be monitored to ensure all content is appropriate and relevant. Please follow us on Instagram at [nswinternationalballetacademy](https://www.instagram.com/nswinternationalballetacademy)

We are always happy to chat in more detail about communications you may receive from the studio, so if you need any clarification please don't hesitate to call us on (02) 9144 6532 to chat with one of our helpful team members.

5/ Important Dates

We understand wholeheartedly how busy the lives and schedules of our dance families can get as the year rolls on, so we have tried to get all of our important dates organised and ready for you so you can plan other commitments. Here are some of our most important “Save the Dates” with more information (including times, costumes, requirements, etc.) to be communicated via email as we get closer to the events. If you know ahead of time that your family will be unable to attend these events due to planned holidays or existing commitments, please let Reception know at your earliest convenience.

Date	Event	Description	Who it involves
Monday 28/10/2024	Re-enrolment opens for existing families	Register for your 2025 classes	Existing families
Monday 11/11/2024	Enrolment opens for new families	Register for your 2025 classes	Everyone
Friday 6/12/2024	End of Term 4 2024	Classes break for school holidays	Everyone
Monday 6/01/2025 - Friday 17/01/2025	NSW Youth Ballet Company Intensive for “Sleeping Beauty”	Full day intensive rehearsal period for “Sleeping Beauty”	All students who have been accepted to NSW Youth Ballet Company via audition
Saturday 18/01/2025	NSW Youth Ballet Company Performance Day for “Sleeping Beauty”	Performance Day – please set aside the whole day Will be held at Glen Street Theatre	All students who have been accepted to NSW Youth Ballet Company via audition
Monday 3/02/2025	Start of Term 1 2025	Classes Begin and all Term 1 payments due	Everyone

Friday 11/04/2025	End of Term 1 2025	Classes break for school holidays	Everyone
Monday 14/04/2025 - Thursday 24/04/2025 (Note - Good Friday 18/04/2025 and Easter Monday 21/04/2025) (Note - ANZAC Day 25/04/2025)	Intensive weeks	First week <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intensive classes for vocational students • Eisteddfod Group rehearsals for Open Age groups Second week <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eisteddfod Group rehearsals for 10's, 12's and 14's 	All students sitting exams in the May/June session All students participating in Eisteddfod Groups All students participating in Eisteddfod Groups
Wednesday 30/04/2025	Start of Term 2 2025	Classes recommence and Term 2 payments due	Everyone
Saturday 17/05/2025	Expected weekend for IRBD groups	To be confirmed	Eisteddfod Group students only
Saturday and Sunday 17/05/2025 & 18/05/2025	Expected weekend for TUDC groups	Saturday 17 th for 10's and 12's groups Sunday 18 th for 14's and Open Age groups	Eisteddfod Group students only
Saturday 31/05/2025 and Sunday 01/06/2025	Expected weekend for Extreme Groups	Saturday 31 st for 10's and 12's groups Sunday 1 st for 14's and Open Age groups	Eisteddfod Group students only

May/June 2025	Exams	RAD exams for vocational students	All students sitting exams in the May/June session
Monday 9/06/2025	King's Birthday Public Holiday	No classes	Everyone
Friday 4/07/2025	End of Term 2 2025	Classes break for school holidays	Everyone
Monday 21/07/2025	Start of Term 3 2025	Classes recommence and Term 3 payments due	Everyone
Friday 26/09/2025	End of Term 3 2025	Classes break for school holidays	Everyone
Tuesday 07/10/2025 - Friday 10/10/2025 (Please note no classes on Monday 06/10/2025 due to Labour Day public holiday)	Intensive week	Second week <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intensive classes for vocational and graded students 	All students sitting exams in the October/November session
Monday 13/10/2025	Start of Term 4 2025	Classes recommence and Term 4 payments due	Everyone
Friday 5/12/2025	End of Term 4 2025	Classes break for school holidays	Everyone

6/ Code of Conduct

To ensure the smooth, safe running of the NSW International Ballet Academy and an enjoyable experience for all, here is our code of conduct. As always, we are open to feedback, so if any of the requirements outlined below are unclear or concerning, please give us a call to discuss further.

Families who do not comply with their fee or costume payment obligations will be charged our usual administration surcharge of 10%. Unless formal payment arrangements are entered into via filling in, signing and returning our Payment Plan

form, external debt collection may occur when fees remain overdue and this will be at the expense of the parents as per our usual terms and conditions. Costume expenses are the responsibility of the parent and costumes will not be issued to students with unpaid class fees.

No classes (including private lessons) or teachers are to be disturbed unless it is an emergency. Parents are not to approach teachers or students during class and if messages or food/drink/medication needs to be passed on to a student, it must be done through a staff member. We have provided a wonderful café for parents and friends to use so please sit back, relax and have a coffee while you're waiting.

We have gone out of our way to provide amazing schoolwork and hang-out facilities for our students and we are very happy to have children wait in the studio in between classes or before/after their class times. Siblings younger than 5 years old are not permitted into the teacher/student areas as we are unable to provide appropriate supervision for such young children. Children are expected to behave appropriately at these times, including no running or being excessively noisy. All dishes and cutlery from the café must be returned by the child BEFORE their class starts. If any messes are left, children will be asked to leave class to clean their area before they can return to class. Please ensure you collect your child no later than 10 minutes after the last class of the day as our teachers need to go home after their long days at work.

Any questions or complaints must go through Reception – teachers are highly professional and deserve to be paid for their professional time. As such, we do not permit parents and/or students to contact them via phone/text, in person, or via email/social networking with studio issues. This includes parents and students from our full-time programs. If you need to meet directly with a teacher or the Executive Director, an appointment must be made via Reception. Please provide information as to what the meeting is to cover so that the staff member can be properly prepared. Discussion topics not previously advised will not be covered. All appointments with teachers should be made during a student's private lesson time.

In the rare case of a parent or student showing disrespect or defamation to any parent, staff member or student, a meeting will be called immediately and a resolution sought. Physical, mental, emotional or cyberbullying by parents, staff or students will not be tolerated and may result in dismissal from the studio.

The NSW International Ballet Academy takes no responsibility for any stolen or misplaced property on the studio premises and we encourage our families to avoid bringing valuable items into the studio where possible. **Please remember to label ALL items of uniform for your child.**

Only private lesson students are permitted to enter solo competitions and it must be with the permission of their teacher and choreographer. Parents are required to adhere to any decisions made by teachers regarding whether their child is able to compete in any given competition or not.

The NSW International Ballet Academy reserves the right to change teachers or timetabling when necessary at any time throughout the year.

Choreography, costuming, music licences and studio policies remain the intellectual property of the NSW International Ballet Academy and may not be reproduced or sold by any students, parents or staff without the written permission of the Executive Director. No eisteddfod solos are permitted to be performed by students or ex-students under the direction of any other school and/or teacher.

7/ Classes Available and Age Groups

Twinkle Toes - ages 3 and 4

Twinkle Toes is an introduction to classical ballet using creative, imaginative role-playing and fun props. This class may involve pretending to be animals, playing instruments to learn rhythm, learning balancing, skipping and running and techniques using costumes and ribbons, or picking up flowers from the ground to develop their hand-eye coordination. This class is suitable for both boys and girls who are having so much fun that they don't even realise that they are learning the fundamentals of ballet technique along the way.

Royal Academy of Dance - Pre-Primary to Solo Seal

RAD classes are recommended for students who will be aged 5 or up by 1 September in any given year. The Royal Academy of Dance is one of the largest and most influential dance educational and training organisations in the world with over 14,000 members in 83 countries. Its mission is to promote knowledge, understanding and practice of dance internationally and boasts HM Queen Consort Camilla as patron.

The NSW International Ballet Academy has chosen to educate our students using the RAD syllabus and progression as we believe it is the best possible basis and foundation for training in classical ballet and provides all students with appropriate scaffolding to support their learning. The vast majority of our students study the RAD syllabus and progress through the levels over their childhood and adolescence. The exams and other assessments provide our students with wonderful opportunities to set and achieve their goals. The feelings of pride and accomplishment our students feel after their exams are wonderful to witness.

The age requirements are set by the RAD and they have made it clear that exceptions will not be made to their age requirements. Please see the table below for information:

Pre-primary	Aged 5 by 1 September	Advanced Foundation	Aged 13 by 1 September
Primary	Aged 6 by 1 September	Advanced 1	Aged 14 by 1 September
Grades 1-5	Aged 7 by 1 September	Advanced 2	Aged 15 by 1 September
Intermediate Foundation	Aged 11 by 1 September	Solo Seal	Aged 15 by 1 September
Intermediate	Aged 12 by 1 September		

Open Class - Grade 3 and up

Open Class is a traditional classical ballet class, however it consists of unseen work. Students need to engage their brains and concentrate on picking up new choreography very quickly and to perform the steps accurately and with strong technique. All vocational level students are strongly advised to attend an open class at least once a week as their exams will include significant marks allocated to unseen work. Additionally all solo students from Grade 3 and upwards are highly recommended to attend this class.

Contemporary - Grade 2 and up

We are incredibly thrilled to announce that our very own Miss Shayarne Matheson will be taking over the night school contemporary classes in 2025! Miss Shayarne was the recipient of the Most Outstanding Choreographer Award in 2023 and has been working with our day school students for several years now.

We could not be more excited about the coming year for contemporary dance, with the view of forming eisteddfod groups for 2025.

Introductory Contemporary (classical grades 2 - 4) covers the basics of contemporary technique as well as an understanding of the nature and the freedom of contemporary dance. All pure contemporary dance (as opposed to what is often seen in the media) is based on classical technique and therefore these classes are offered as an add-on to existing classical classes. We do not encourage students to attend contemporary classes without having a minimum level of classical technique as we find they struggle to gain a good understanding of the requirements and master the exercises.

Level 1 Contemporary (classical grades 5 - Intermediate) builds on the technique gained from the Introductory Contemporary Class and extends students' knowledge and confidence of contemporary technique. Jumps, floor work and more advanced

moves are taught and mastered over time so as to ensure all students progress in the safest possible manner.

Level 2 Contemporary (classical Advanced Foundation and upwards) builds again on the technique learned in Level 1 Contemporary and a high level of technique is taught. More complex and challenging choreography is mastered over time and students are prepared for more advanced levels of contemporary dance. Level 2 Contemporary is only available to students who attend our ballet classes at least twice a week.

Strength and Conditioning - Grade 3 and up

This class is compulsory for all students wishing to sit examinations from RAD Grade 3 and upwards. We believe that this is the best way to prepare our students for their exams and to protect their bodies by teaching them safe dance practices. As always, our focus on child protection informs the development of our program and we look forward to watching our students become stronger and fitter as they grow as dancers.

Students not taking this class are welcome to continue to train and progress in our RAD classes and may be assessed via RAD Assessed Class Awards.

Junior Strength and Conditioning works with our younger students to condition their bodies ready for a higher level of dance training. The more advanced study of dance requires strength in the core, the feet and ankles, the back and many other areas of the body. In addition, advanced levels of flexibility are required in order to master more advanced techniques and this class helps to prepare our young dancers for this increased level of training. This class is suitable for students in Grades 3 to 5.

Senior Strength and Conditioning builds on the work done in the junior classes and continues to build strength, particularly in preparation for and the ongoing study of pointe work. This class is vital for all vocational students to attend as the RAD syllabus is harder than it used to be and significantly increased levels of strength and conditioning are required. This class is suitable for students from Intermediate Foundation and up.

Adult Ballet

Adult Ballet is a once a week class for all ages and abilities and focuses on strengthening and toning the muscles whilst getting the heart rate up. No experience is necessary and the class is run in a relaxed environment with no need for tights and leotards.

Eisteddfod Groups

Participation in the NSW International Ballet Academy's eisteddfod groups is only available via invitation and requires a high level of commitment to the team. Our eisteddfod groups showcase our dancers and provide the opportunity for students who are dance orientated to participate in a team environment. Involvement in eisteddfod groups is a pre-requisite before solo eisteddfod dances will be given to our students. Our ethos of team involvement as a first priority is very strong and helps children to value a team over the individual – an important life lesson. Our eisteddfod groups participate at an elite level and are characterised by a sense of hard work, fun and achievement of a difficult goal. All students from Pre-primary and up will be observed in each of their regular classes and offers to join the Eisteddfod groups will be made in September each year based on the child's commitment, focus, discipline, work ethic and attendance.

8/ Full Time Programme

Whilst the vast majority of our students dance with us for the love of it, a small number of very talented and dedicated students may wish to pursue dance as their career. For those students, we offer a full-time dancers program.

Our Full Time Programme takes one of two main forms:

1. Traditional full time training – these students generally start with us in their Year 8 academic year, upon leaving their academic school. Students attend the Academy from around 8am until 4pm each day and spend their days working primarily on ballet and contemporary dance technique. They enrol in distance education to complete their academic studies and there are several options for this. The choice of distance education provider is up to the parents, however we are happy to provide information and insight to assist with the decision. We do allow some time each week for students to complete their academic schooling, however the bulk of their work is done at home after ballet each day or on the weekends. Students need to be highly self-motivated to choose this path.

Students may enter the classical, contemporary or teacher training streams.

These students generally spend three to four years in our program and move on to pre-professional training when they are around 16 or 17 years old. Our goal is to prepare our students for life as a professional dancer or dance teacher and to make them employable in the industry.

Our program is very rigorous and students who do not have the will to succeed may find that the program is too demanding. It is a truly elite program and is not to be undertaken lightly.

Joining this program is strictly by audition or invitation only and is at the discretion of the Directors. We firmly believe that it is not in a child's best interests to leave their academic school unless we can genuinely see a pathway to their next step. We take our role in this very seriously and for this reason, we have a 100% placement rate for our full-time graduates. One look at our "Wall of Fame" will show you where our graduates have ended up and we are so very proud of each and every one of them.

2. We also offer Nationally Recognised Training - Certificate IV in Dance CUA40120 and Advanced Diploma of Professional Dance (Elite Performance) CUA60120. Our courses have been specifically developed with the whole dancer in mind and covers not only the practical components of dance but also covers areas such as nutrition, wellness, safe dance practice and anatomy.

In addition, we are also thrilled to offer a one year Certificate IV in Dance Teaching and Management CUA40320 for any student who wishes to pursue a career in dance teaching. This is a great gap year option for night school students once they have completed year 12 as it allows them to earn qualified teacher wages whilst they complete any further studies at university.

These courses will suit school leavers who have either completed the HSC or who have finished year 10 and wish to study dance in a full-time vocational environment. These vocational courses are run in partnership with Australian Teachers of Dancing (RTO 31624).

For suitably qualified students, we are also able to support them to complete their Certificate in Ballet Teaching Studies through the Royal Academy of Dance, allowing them to be an RAD Registered Teacher. This is a two-year course.

Please contact the Executive Director if your child is interested in any of these courses.

9/ Safety

The safety of our students and their families is our number one priority. The NSW International Ballet Academy is very serious about upholding Child Protection laws and policies within the studio as well as at public performances and in the online arena (website and social media).

As part of your registration, you will have read and signed a media waiver allowing us to proudly use images and video footage of your child for advertising and promotional purposes. Should you have any concerns whatsoever with signing this declaration, please see Reception who will happily assist you. If you would rather not have your child featured, it is fine not to sign the release.

All of our teachers and staff members have undergone official checks allowing them to work with children and all have the safety of each child as their number one priority. Parents are more than welcome to wait in our café area if they wish to remain close to their child's class. A full first aid kit is available and many of our staff members are senior first aid trained.

Here at the NSW International Ballet Academy, we are well aware of the negative impact of inappropriate music and costume selection when it comes to performing dance routines. We are wholeheartedly committed to ensuring children in all of our dance routines are not subjected to any inappropriate songs or costuming. We recognise that songs with sexist, explicit, violent, racist, homophobic or criminal content may influence our dancers and/or audience and will strive to avoid using such music. We will not costume any child in a way that projects sexuality.

The NSW International Ballet Academy takes no responsibility for any stolen or misplaced property on the studio premises and we encourage our families to avoid bringing valuable items into the studio where possible.

You will find within our enrolment process, a medical release clause as part of our normal terms and conditions. Please read this carefully prior to the commencement of classes so you fully understand the rights and responsibilities of your family and our studio.

10/ Privacy

When you enrol your child with The NSW International Ballet Academy, the information we may collect from you includes your name, address, telephone numbers, email addresses and medical information. It may also include details of the products and services we provide to you as well as the status of your enrolment. We only collect information directly from our students or their parents/guardians primarily for the purpose of providing services and products to you and to administer and manage invoicing and debt collection.

We may occasionally use your information to let you know of additional classes on offer which we consider may be of interest to you unless you contact us and tell us not to do so.

We will never sell or pass on any of your information to third parties unless required by government authorities or in the event of debt recovery. Any information passed on will be done so with appropriate privacy and confidentiality protection.

Information is stored securely in paper or electronic form and is accessible only by authorised personnel.

If you would like to know what information we hold about you or wish to update the information, or if you wish to be removed from all further direct marketing communications, please contact Reception on telephone (02) 9144 6532.

11/ Eisteddfod Groups

At The NSW International Ballet Academy, we take pride in our eisteddfod groups, which start from the 10 and under age group, and move through to the Open Age groups. Groups may be in classical and/or contemporary styles of dance and we make decisions each year on what groups will be available for students to enter. Students from Pre-primary and upwards are eligible for our groups and they will be assessed in Term 3 of 2025 for an invitation to the group for 2026.

The criteria the teachers will be looking for are primarily dedication, attendance, technical competence (age appropriate), performance quality and a will to work hard. Membership of the groups is a privilege that needs to be earned so all through terms 2 and 3, our teachers will be keeping an eye on the students and creating a list of invited students. We also hope that you continue to encourage those qualities in your dancer throughout the year.

For the children already participating in groups, these provide the most wonderful experiences and teach the children much about performing, and also many positive life lessons, such as teamwork, co-operation and a sense of putting your team first. This is particularly important for children who do not otherwise participate in team sports and/or activities. Our eisteddfod groups are definitely hard work and require a level of commitment required by any team that works well, but the rewards are huge.

It is important to note that students who are not in attendance on days where choreography is occurring will not be included in that part of the performance. This is purely because we do not have time to re-teach choreography, nor is it fair to the students who were in attendance on the day in question.

12/ Eisteddfod Solos

For students who already participate in relevant eisteddfod groups, attend all required ballet and strength and conditioning classes each week, and demonstrate their dedication to their dance, we offer the opportunity to take on eisteddfod solos. These solos are considered a reward for the hard work put into their classes and

group(s) and are a wonderful way for students to hone their technical and performance skills. Many of our students have had the most wonderful times of their lives participating in these competitions. Our aim is for each student to achieve their personal best as many of the eisteddfods are highly competitive and we demand good sportsmanship from all teachers, students and parents. Not all results will be what the student would like however resilience and a determination to keep working hard are the qualities needed from these dedicated students.

In order to participate in eisteddfod solos, private lessons will be required - the number and duration to be determined on a case-by-case basis.

It needs to be clearly understood by parents that private lessons must be maintained for the entire time a student is competing in eisteddfod solos. If private lessons are not attended for any reason, your child may not participate in any competitions, regardless of any entry fees or costume expenses you may have outlaid. Further, contemporary or lyrical solos are not to be performed unless your child attends all available ballet classes for their level in addition to their contemporary class each week. The safety of your child is of the utmost importance to us and solos are an added stress on their bodies. If your child does not or cannot attend their usual ballet classes and/or private lessons (even if they are sick) they are likely to lose the physical strength needed to perform to their best. In this event we require them to refrain from competition until their teacher advises them that they are physically cleared to return to competition.

If your child would like to participate in eisteddfod solos, please contact Susan Anderssen on (02) 9144 6532 to discuss what will be required.

13/ Assessments

As a studio which values the growth and commitment of our dancers from all ages, it's our pleasure to offer exams and class awards to students in classical ballet as a part of our program. In 2025 our assessments will be held in May/June and October/November with the exact dates to be confirmed at a later date via formal notification. We encourage all students who attend the required classes each week to enter for an assessment as we feel they give the students a huge sense of accomplishment.

While exams and class awards are not compulsory, our program through the RAD is the most highly recognised ballet syllabus worldwide. If your child is considering

continuing to dance as they grow older, we strongly recommend completing their assessments as suggested by our teachers.

On a side note, our vast experience shows that formal exams and class awards present a unique opportunity for the children to demonstrate their individual advancement and take pride in how hard they work. Our assessment students always find their experience to be uplifting, beneficial and rewarding.

As part of the exam and class award preparation, students need to attend a minimum of 2 classes per week from Primary to Grade 5, and 3 classes per week from Intermediate Foundation and upwards. From Grade 3 and up, exam students must also attend the relevant Strength and Conditioning class for their level. Exam and class award students will also need to attend an intensive vacation/holiday workshop on the dates and times advised in our calendar in section 5.

The cost of assessments each year is set by the examining body and you will be advised of the cost prior to entering for an exam or class award. Payment is due no later than the date noted on your entry form by cash, cheque, credit card or direct bank transfer. If you have not paid by this date, your child will not be entered.

What happens in a ballet exam or class award?

The students are required at the Studio an hour and a half before their assessment begins.

Their hair will be done by our teachers and helpers, and uniforms with hair pieces will be provided by the studio at a small hire fee.

In groups of 2-4 students, they will enter the studio (with or without their teacher, depending on the type of assessment) and greet their examiner.

Students will learn their examiner's name prior to the exam so they can greet them by name. For example: "Good Morning Ms Hartley."

Over the course of between 30 minutes and an hour and a half (depending on the assessment taken), they will perform their entire syllabus for the examiner, both as a group and individually.

It usually takes several weeks for all assessment data to be compiled, but once the examining body has completed the marking process your child will be presented with their assessment grade and their certificate.

Your child's results and certificate will be awarded in class once they are received by the studio.

14/ Timetable

Timetabling our classes is a huge task and we take all care to ensure that children are given classes at an age-appropriate time without long hours that may lead to fatigue or disrupt home and school life. Our detailed timetable is available in our enrolment pack.

Whilst we endeavour to schedule private lesson times when students request them, it does need to be understood that timetabling for the very large number of students who participate in private lessons is a huge task. We can never guarantee particular times and/or days. We ask that you provide us only with times and days that you absolutely CANNOT DO. Overly restrictive requests are likely to mean that a private lesson cannot be allocated to your child.

Please also note that private lesson times are re-allocated each year as most students move up a grade and their lesson times change.

15/ Uniform and Grooming

At the NSW International Ballet Academy we believe that wearing studio uniforms gives students a sense of belonging to our family as well as creating an identity for our studio in the greater community.

The study of dance, and classical ballet in particular, is a discipline that involves so much more than learning the actual steps. Ballet teaches children important life lessons such as a respect for their teachers, self-discipline, the benefits of working hard, how to deal with successes and disappointments in life, perseverance and the joys of accomplishing a difficult goal. Part of the rich history of ballet includes the wearing of a particular uniform and a need for a minimum level of grooming. Following these rules of the classroom is a major part of learning these life lessons and sets children up well for their later lives - be they in ballet or elsewhere.

Students who learn dance with these requirements are much more likely to grow into well-adjusted young adults who are respectful of themselves, their peers, their elders, and are more than ready to take their chosen place in society, whatever that may be.

Please ensure all parts of your child's uniform are clearly labelled. This includes individual shoes, socks, underpants. You'll be amazed at the amount of lost property we generate! All too often a parent will telephone us about a lost item and when we ask if it is named, we find the answer is "no". Please understand that we have absolutely no chance of returning lost items to you unless they are clearly named.

All uniform items (except pointe shoes) are available for sale from our shop 'Ballet Bling', located in the studio foyer for your convenience. Appointments are required.

The art of dance also requires strict grooming requirements. All students are expected to come to our classes in clean and tidy uniforms, and without any other items of clothing on once they enter the studio rooms. Please note that undergarments, crossovers in non-uniform colours and other warm-up tops are not permitted to be worn. If your child is cold, then the ONLY outer clothing piece allowed to be worn is our navy blue uniform crossover.

All hair needs to be kept neat and tidy and should be brushed and styled before coming to class. In particular, ballet buns are required for all girls in every class from Primary and up. Please do not bring your child with messy hair that is left hanging over their face. If your child has hair that is too short to be put into a bun, then it must be pulled into a ponytail, or at a minimum, held back by a turquoise or navy blue headband. Children arriving for classes with hair in their faces will not be permitted into class until their parent or carer has done their hair appropriately. Please be aware that this is a parent/carer responsibility. Our helpful staff are happy to assist you by providing lessons but are not available to do hair before classes.

16/ Fee Structure

Our price list is available in our enrolment pack. We offer the following options for fee payment:

Term Fees will be invoiced prior to the commencement of each term and you have until the first class of that term to pay these fees in full. Payment options include cash, cheque, debit/credit card (plus applicable fee) or internet bank transfer.

Bank transfers can be made into the following bank account (which has not changed with the new name):

Account Name: NSW International Ballet Academy

BSB: 083-088

Account Number: 74-200-3227

Overdue fees will accrue an administration fee of 10% of the outstanding amount if fees remain unpaid at the end of week 2 of classes, unless a specific payment plan is entered into by filling in, signing and returning a payment plan form. All payment plans are to be cleared no later than the end of the term in question.

Please note: All students are invoiced based on a term so your invoice will be the same each term unless you change classes. One term's notice MUST be received in order to withdraw from or change classes. Unfortunately, due to a very large number of parents causing significant lost administration time as a result of giving insufficient notice, we will again be enforcing this condition, without exception, in 2025.

Refunds will not be issued for missed classes, however make-up classes can happily be arranged through Reception.

If you wish to withdraw from classes at the NSW International Ballet Academy it is a requirement that you notify the studio in writing, giving a full term's notice.

Private Lessons may be paid for at the beginning of the term, or at the time of the lesson, as long as payment is made on or before the lesson occurs. Payment options are the same as for term fees. Private lessons not paid for on or before the day of the lesson will automatically incur our 10% administration fee.

Holiday Classes, whether privates, exam intensive sessions, workshops or ongoing ballet fitness sessions, must be paid for by the date on your form. This is to allow our administrative staff a few days off as these can be very hard to come by.

17/ Attendance

Your child's attendance in class is very important to their peers and our teaching staff. As a member of the team, it is a commitment for you to ensure your child attends their classes on time each week and attends all lessons planned for them. Not only do absences impact the learning of the students, it also impacts the social and confidence-building principles we work hard to foster in each age group.

If you know ahead of time that your child will be absent due to holidays/vacations, commitments or school trips, please let us know ahead of time so the class impact is minimal. If your child is too unwell to attend class, we ask that you inform our Reception as soon as you can so they can let the teachers know and preparations can be made to catch up on any missed work.

If, in the opinion of the teaching faculty, a student has attended too few classes to enable them to perform to the best of their ability, the taking of exams and other assessments will not be permitted. Exams at the NSW International Ballet Academy are meant to be a positive and rewarding experience for all and this is simply not possible if a student is not confident with their work. If absences are due to genuine and unavoidable issues, it is possible to arrange make up private lessons through Reception to allow a student to catch up.

At the NSW International Ballet Academy, we present our concerts once every two years. The next concert will be held in August 2026.

18/ Social Media

The NSW International Ballet Academy has a Social Media Policy that refers to all social networking sites, video/photo sharing sites, blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, podcasts, forums, instant messaging and geo-spatial tagging (for example, Facebook check-ins). Please see below for our regulations regarding social media and feel free to contact Reception if you have any questions.

-Please remember that your anonymity on social media is never guaranteed and to exercise particular caution when posting images or videos that identify children in your care.

-Remain mindful that your behaviour on social media remains in keeping with our code of conduct as outlined in section 6 of this Handbook.

- Any comments or posts perceived to be obscene, defamatory, threatening, harassing, discriminatory or hateful towards our staff, students or families are not acceptable in any way.

- Should you wish to engage on social media while identifying as a studio volunteer or employee, you may only do so with integrity and respect whilst adhering to our privacy and confidentiality policy.

- Any content revealing or referring to sensitive studio information is not allowed to be shared online.

- Intellectual property laws (for example, costume design and choreography) must be observed by all studio patrons when posting online.

- While affiliated with our studio, (for example, images of your child in the NSW International Ballet Academy uniform) we will not tolerate any posts that are racially, sexually, physically or religiously offensive.

- All matters pertaining directly to the studio - whether it be fees, scheduling, placements or performance opportunities - may not be communicated via social media. We have an open-door policy and encourage all communication, complaints and feedback to be communicated to the Executive Director who will deal with them in a timely manner.

- We discourage parents, students and teachers from becoming 'friends' or 'followers' on social media, unless there is an existing relationship. We consider all studio members to be family and as such feel the obligation to respect and monitor

personal boundaries.

- Photos or videos taken from performances or rehearsals may NOT be posted online.

- You may not post photographs/videos that feature The NSW International Ballet Academy dancers other than your own online without the consent of their parent/guardian.

19/ Our Teachers / Faculty

Finally, it's our pleasure to introduce our hand-picked faculty for 2025! Our enthusiastic, passionate and dedicated teachers are thrilled to be a part of your family's dance journey this year. We are truly looking forward to growing together to train this generation of skilled, confident, genuine and unique performers.

Susan Anderssen Executive Director

Susan began dancing at the age of 3 with Gail Meade Performing Arts Centre in Perth, studying a combination of classical ballet, theatrical dance and tap. At 13 she was accepted into the Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts part time program, studying ballet, contemporary and Spanish dance under the direction of Lucette Aldous.

Having suffered an injury in her late teens, Susan made a dramatic career change and trained as both a Chartered Accountant and in the legal profession. Her experience includes working in a broad range of industries in Australia and Internationally for over 25 years with the last 8 focused on the education industry.

Susan began teaching ballet again 22 years ago and took ownership of the NSW International Ballet Academy ten years ago. Since then, the Academy has gone from strength to strength. Happily, this dual background in ballet and business makes her uniquely qualified to lead the NSW International Ballet Academy.

Courtney Fitzgerald (nee McKeown) Senior Classical Teacher

Courtney began her ballet training at the age of four under Simone Conlan at the NSW International Ballet Academy where she completed all her RAD examinations up to and including Advanced 2.

Courtney competed in a variety of Eisteddfods including the McDonalds Challenge where she had tremendous success. She was the winner of the Robert & Elizabeth Albert Junior Classical Ballet Scholarship in 2007. She won first place for Classical Ballet in 2007 & 2008 along with first place for Demi-character in 2005, 2006, 2007 & 2008. Courtney also competed in the Society of Dance Arts Ballet Scholarship (SODA) which she won in 2008 and was runner up in 2007.

She commenced training at the Australian Ballet School at the age of 11 in Level 1 as an Interstate Associate in 2005. Courtney received a four year full Scholarship to the Australian Ballet School and began her fulltime training in 2009 commencing in Level 5. Courtney received the Award for Excellence in Classical Ballet and Character Dance in 2010.

Courtney represented the Australian Ballet School at the Prix De Lausanne, Switzerland in 2011. She danced with the Australian Ballet Dancers Company in 2011 and 2012; Ai Gul Gaisina's Don Quixote where she performed Queen of the Dryads. While at the school, Courtney was chosen for the Student Exchange Program to the Canadian National Ballet School in Toronto where she spent a term in early 2012. In 2012 she was contracted to the Australian Ballet Company for the season of Swan Lake as a Swan.

Courtney completed Certificate III in Dance in 2009 and her Diploma in Dance in 2011. In 2012 she completed her Vocational Graduate Certificate in Classical Ballet. She completed her Certificate in Ballet Teaching Studies through the RAD in 2019 and is an RAD Registered Teacher.

Courtney and her husband Michael have two beautiful children, Lily and Lachlan.

Shayarne Matheson
Senior Classical and Contemporary Teacher

Shayarne Matheson trained in Sydney in her youth and completed all of her RAD examinations including her Solo Seal. Shayarne was a finalist of the Genee in Singapore and the Sydney Eisteddfod McDonald's Classical Ballet Scholarship. Shayarne was awarded the Supreme title at the Alana Haines Awards in New Zealand and received a full scholarship to further her training at the Royal Ballet School in London.

After graduating from the Royal Ballet School, Shayarne worked with The Queensland Ballet and then furthered her training in contemporary dance with Sydney Dance Company's Pre-professional Program.

Shayarne's passion for choreography has seen her award winning pieces performed all over Australia, New Zealand, America, Europe and Asia.

Shayarne is excited to be a part of the faculty of the NSW International Ballet Academy and sharing her passion for dance in all its forms.

Kim Traynor
Senior Vaganova Classical and Character Teacher

Kim trained at Scully-Borovansky, completing her RAD exams and attaining her RAD Solo Seal award. She continued her studies at The Royal Ballet School in London and then joined the Deutsche Opera Am Rhein in Dusseldorf.

Upon her return to Australia, she joined the Australian Ballet Company and toured extensively through China, the Middle East and Europe.

Together with Mr Kelvin Coe OBE and Miss Donna Traynor, Kim founded the NSW College of Dance, servicing the professional dance community with their junior school in Sydney. She has lectured at the Victorian College of the Arts in classical dance and currently freelances throughout Sydney, Newcastle, Victoria and New Zealand. She also adjudicates senior eisteddfods.

Kim has taught at the NSW International Ballet Academy for over 20 years and is a valued member of our professional faculty, teaching the Russian Vaganova method.

Connor Barlow
Senior Classical and Contemporary Teacher

Connor Barlow originally trained in Sydney from the age of 6. He then moved to London to attend the English National Ballet School in 2011 where he graduated with a Diploma in Professional Dance.

He worked with The English National Ballet before moving to Switzerland to dance as a soloist with the Bejart Ballet Lausanne. He performed his first Soloist role at 19 and his first Principal role at 21 In Brussels, headlining Beethoven's 9th symphony with the Tokyo Ballet.

At 23 he had his first ballet choreographed on him titled 'Éclats' by Julio Arozarena which debuted in the Beaulieu Theatre de Lausanne in 2018.

Other highlights from his professional career include guesting with the Bolshoi Ballet, Tokyo Ballet, Stuttgart Ballet and The Mariinsky Theatre. Dancing numerous principal roles for Maurice Bejart and Gil Roman and performing in many classical galas across Europe. He toured the world extensively, performing in over 30 countries through Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

Connor is excited to be joining the faculty of the NSW International Ballet Academy to help train the next generation of artists.

Shahnee Page **Senior Classical Teacher**

Shahnee Page trained in the full-time program at the NSW International Ballet Academy from 2011. She was accepted to Joffrey Ballet School where she trained for 2 years before being accepted into the studio company.

Shahnee received an invitation to perform Gerald Arpino's 'Kattentanz' in the Beijing Ballet Gala, as well as compete in the International Beijing Ballet competition where the director from Teatrul de Balet Sibiu, Romania approached her and offered her a contract. She danced with Teatrul de Balet Sibiu for 3 years and was promoted after just one year to go on and perform soloist roles in Paquita, Swan Lake, The Nutcracker, Giselle, Don Quixote, 4 Seasons, Anna Karenina and more, including her dream role of Myrtha in Giselle.

She then joined Theater Plauen-Zwickau, Germany under Annett Göhre. She worked personally with many choreographers including Ihsan Rustem and Guillaume Hulot who created pieces specifically on her. She also danced choreographies from Cayetano Soto and Oded Ronan. She performed multiple soloist roles with the company as well as choreographing her own duet with her partner, Elliot Bourke, also a NSW International Ballet Academy teacher.

Shahnee is excited to be back at the NSW International Ballet Academy and looks forward to sharing her passion for dance with our students. Shahnee and her husband, our very own Mr Elliot, have a toddler son, Leo and a newborn baby boy, Coen!

Millie Garrick **Senior Classical and Contemporary Teacher**

Millie began her training at the NSW International Ballet Academy at the age of 5 in our night school. At the age of 13 she commenced vocational training in our day school going on to perform the lead role of Alice in our production of "Down the Rabbit Hole" in her graduating year.

She has passed all of her RAD exams, including Advanced 2, with Distinction and has achieved many successes in Eisteddfods and competitions both locally and internationally. She was selected to be a part of The Australian Ballet Schools interstate training program from 2009-2013 and also attended the Royal Ballet Summer School in 2015.

In 2016, after graduating from The NSW International Ballet Academy, she was offered a place in the Bachelor program at Ballett Akademie Hochschule für Musik und Theater in Munich, Germany. Whilst there she performed many classical and contemporary pieces at the National and Prinzregenten Theatres. She was also invited to perform at a gala performance in Krakow, Poland. Millie is delighted to return to Australia and her ballet family as part of our faculty of amazing teachers. To compliment her teaching, she has now completed her Certificate IV in Fitness and she is a qualified nutrition coach.

Millie has completed her Bachelor of Human Sciences, majoring in Human Movement at Macquarie University and has also recently been awarded her Certificate in Ballet Teaching Studies by the Royal Academy of Dance. Next year will be Millie's seventh year of teaching at the NSW International Ballet Academy and we are so lucky to have her with us.

Elliot Bourke
Senior Classical and Contemporary Teacher

Elliot Bourke was RAD trained and spent time in the full-time program at the NSW International Ballet Academy. He then went on to study at the Akademie des Tanzes Mannheim under the directorship of Birgit Keil where he received a Master of Arts Degree. After his studies he received an apprenticeship with the Badisches Staatstheater Karlsruhe, where he performed in choreographies such as Christopher Wheeldon's Swan Lake, Frederick Ashton's Giselle and Youri Vamos' The Nutcracker.

He then joined Teatrul de Balet Sibiu, Romania and was promoted to Soloist after only one year in the company. He stayed there for 4 years dancing various classical and contemporary soloist roles, some of his favourites were Hilarion in Giselle, Lankodem In Le corsaire and the main role in the contemporary piece Nu mai sunt eu. Afterwards he joined Theater Plauen-Zwickau, Germany under Annett Göhre where he worked personally with many choreographers including Cayatano Soto, Phillip Taylor and Ishan Rustem. He had many roles created on and for him.

Elliot has now returned to Australia with his wife, our very own Miss Shahnee, and they have two sons together, Leo and Coen! Elliot looks forward to sharing his passion for dance with our next generation of students.

Elysia Aravena-Woods
Senior Classical Teacher

Elysia started ballet at the age of 5. She studied ballet under the guidance of Jo-Anne Ansell, Joanne Hocking, Julie Wells and Kim Traynor. As a young dancer, Elysia suffered a dramatic dance injury which meant she had to diversify. She was trained to become an assistant teacher and threw herself into helping students with exam preparation, rehearsals & productions.

With her passion for ballet still firmly in place, she decided to improve her skills and studied the Certificate of Ballet Teaching Studies (CBTS) with The Royal Academy of Dance. Elysia travelled to London in 2016 to complete and receive her qualification.

As an RAD Registered Teacher, Elysia has been freelance teaching for the past 7 years, teaching at several academies. Elysia has a love for preparing students for RAD Ballet exams and a particular enthusiasm about creating programs and doing whatever it takes for students to reap rewards.

She has had a high Distinction rate with students entered for RAD exams under her guidance. Elysia intends on continuing her studies with the Royal Academy of Dance and eventually becoming an RAD examiner.

Elysia is thrilled to have joined the faculty at the NSW International Ballet Academy and looks forward to sharing her experience with our students.

AND NOT TO MENTION OUR FABULOUS ADMIN TEAM....

Paul Anderssen
Executive Director - Finance

Paul has over 30 years of experience in the accounting, banking and finance industries. He began his career with the world's largest accounting firm, qualifying as a chartered accountant in 1994. Since then, he has worked for two global banks in senior finance positions, eventually leaving State Street in the role of CFO Australia, in early 2016. He now dedicates his time to helping to make the NSW International Ballet Academy a brilliant place to be.

Paul's interests include golf and swimming, but he is also an A1 ballet dad, and is happy to answer any "dad" questions about having a child who dances! Paul has never danced (unless you count "Dad Dancing") but is quite simply, the best ballet Dad around!

Katherine Garrick
Administrative Assistant

Katherine is a Ballet Mum Extraordinaire and has been since her daughter, Millie, was 5 years old. Having been a ballerina herself (taught by our very own Miss Traynor!), a ballet mum and part of our family for so long, there's not much Katherine doesn't know about ballet.

Please feel free to have a chat with Katherine if you have any questions at all.

AND LAST BUT MOST IMPORTANTLY....

Fiona Batten
Café Manager

Fiona is probably the most important person at the NSW International Ballet Academy as she makes sure we are all fed and watered on a regular basis!!! Fiona has previously run the Abbotsleigh Junior School canteen and, as the mother of two elite athletes, is the perfect person to make sure our dancers are well fuelled. *Of course*, she's always on hand for parents, siblings, friends and relatives, all of whom are welcome to come and enjoy our wonderful café facilities, including our new alfresco area!

Fiona can provide snacks, drinks, lunches, dinners and is always happy to do whatever she can in the way of special requests.

And FINALLY!

We hope you've found this Handbook helpful. We welcome any comments or suggestions for improvement. We hope you and your families enjoy being part of the amazing NSW International Ballet Academy community and that the study of dance is something that carries our students through the rest of their lives....whether they make a career out of it, become an enthusiastic audience member, or simply look back one day at their time with us at the NSW International Ballet Academy with joy in their heart!



**NSW International
Ballet Academy**