



# PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

Valley Academy for the Arts

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A Fine Arts school dedicated to providing high quality arts education to all members of the community.

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# VALLEY ACADEMY FOR THE ARTS

## PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

Welcome to Valley Academy for the Arts! This handbook has been developed to answer many of the frequently asked questions about the school. Please feel free to call us at any time with any questions.

### SCHOOL ADDRESS:

139 N. Lake St.

Neenah, WI, 54956

(920) 279-1578

[info@valleyacademyarts.org](mailto:info@valleyacademyarts.org)

[www.valleyacademyarts.org](http://www.valleyacademyarts.org)

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# School Philosophy

The goal of Valley Academy for the Arts is to provide fine arts education through classical, contemporary and foundational arts instruction, to students of all ages, with an emphasis on youth. Valley Academy for the Arts uses methods that promote holistic wellness and foster human development. Talent-discovery, professional performance, career preparation, fitness training and movement enhancement are among the benefits enjoyed by students of all levels and economic means.

Valley Academy for the Arts is a nonprofit performing and visual arts conservatory in Northeast Wisconsin specializing in classical ballet, music and the visual arts. With its depth of experienced and passionate instructors and commitment to community-accessible programming, Valley Academy for the Arts provides an environment that allows each student to discover her or his full potential.

# Mission

Valley Academy for the Arts is a premier, not-for-profit, arts organization focused on education in the greater Fox River Valley of Wisconsin. Valley Academy for the Arts is dedicated to ensuring everyone in the community has the opportunity to experience the arts. Toward this end we actively seek community involvement and partnerships.

As a 501(3c) not for profit, Valley Academy for the Arts relies on individual and organizational support to continue to provide the highest level of services to our communities. Please refer to our website for ways in which you can support the programs and initiatives at VAA.

[www.valleyacademyarts.org](http://www.valleyacademyarts.org)

## Teaching Staff

The teaching staff at Valley Academy for the Arts is chosen with great care. All of our instructors have either several years of teaching experience, a college degree in fine arts, have worked professionally or are currently working with a professional arts organization. We do allow high school students or inexperienced teachers to observe and teach classes under the supervision of lead department instructors. We have regular staff meetings where we discuss curriculum and teaching methods. Teachers monitor and discuss students' progress across each of the disciplines to make sure that each student is performing to the best of his or her ability. Our staff strives to give each student the individual attention and instruction he or she needs to reach their potential.

Each of our teachers brings a unique perspective, personality and skill set to the classroom environment. Students benefit from these differing approaches and experiences as they reflect the professional environment artists will encounter throughout their career.

Throughout the year, we offer Master Classes by local, national, and international teachers and encourage our students to take advantage of these classes. Please check out our website for information about these opportunities.

## School Design

Our studios are designed for the craft the students are learning. Our facility has 4 dance studios, each with suspended wood floors, an art studio, choir room, gallery, and 1 music room. We also offer a dressing room, 2 bathrooms, lost and found bins and chalk boards to keep you apprised of school announcements and information about the art world.

Aside from our classrooms, we offer comfortable waiting areas for parents and students. We ask that you treat these spaces with respect, and keep noise to a minimum, understanding that these common areas are used by a wide variety of people and are in close proximity to classes in session. Please remove personal waste from waiting areas. Valley Academy for the Arts is not responsible for lost items. If you have lost an item, please ask the front desk to locate the "lost and found".

Our furniture and building property were generously donated by members of the community. Please do not jump, remove, or damage our furniture/building. In the event that furniture/property is damaged, we will invoice the responsible party a repair cost.

# Class Structure

All of our classes have a consistent structure, whether it is dance, visual arts, musical theatre, or music. The instructor begins with proper warm-up techniques required for each class. All our classes are designed to allow enough time to practice each art form. Students are required to attend the entire length of the class. We encourage parents to attend our Parent/Student Orientation days which happen on the first day of class to learn more about the class structure and ask any questions you may have.

## Studio Policies

**TUITION** is payable in advance or via one of the pre-approved payment plan options. We accept MasterCard, Visa, Discover, Checks or Cash. Payment plans are available for Academy and Conservatory Divisions either by term or in 9 equal monthly installments. Monthly and term payments are invoiced at the first of the month and due by the 15<sup>th</sup> of that month. Please inquire if you are interested. Returned checks are subject to a \$30.00 fee.

**CREDITS** expire one year from date of issue and are non-transferable.

**REFUNDS** are not made once a session is underway unless the studio must cancel a class.

**ABSENCE/MAKE-UP CLASSES** We encourage consistent attendance. The curriculum is ongoing and cumulative. If a student misses too many classes, he/she will fall behind and be frustrated. We understand that conflicts or illness may cause students to miss a class and we have established a make-up policy to address this situation. Please consult your instructor for the absence and make-up policy unique to that discipline.

**MEDICAL SITUATIONS** In the case of medical condition which prevents a student from attending class for 30 days or more, a credit will be issued toward the next semester under the following conditions: 1) a letter must be presented from a doctor stating the medical condition and the number of days a student is unable to participate in class; 2) a credit, determined by the number of days as indicated by the doctor, will be issued toward tuition for the subsequent semester only and cannot be carried over to subsequent semesters; and 3) dancers, if physically unable to participate in class, must continue to attend and observe their classes so they do not fall behind in the curriculum.

**REGISTRATION** is on a first come, first served basis. Returning students are given priority during the first three weeks of fall registration. All registrations are processed in the order received. Class size limitations will be strictly observed and we do not hold spots for Returning Students, so please register as soon as possible. After the priority registration, ALL registrations (for new and returning students) are processed in the order received. Registration confirmations are not sent. You will be notified only if we cannot register you for the class your requested. For dance, we require a minimum of 5 students to run a class. Other disciplines and programs have their own class minimums and maximums.

**LOST ITEMS** Please label all belongings. A lost and found box can be found in the studio's dressing area. All valuables should be taken into the classroom with you. The studio cannot be held responsible for lost items.

**TARDINESS** All students are expected to arrive on time and in the appropriate attire. We understand that circumstances may delay you, sometimes. If you are more than 10 minutes late, you may be asked to sit and watch the class. If you are tardy, please see the instructor, apologize for your late arrival and ask him/her whether you can join the class or watch. Please respect your instructor's decision in this matter; they are only looking out for the student's best interest.

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## VALLEY ACADEMY FOR THE ARTS PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK

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**RESPECT** With the goal of creating a safe, welcoming, and positive experience for all students, Valley Academy for the Arts holds students, families, faculty, and staff to a high standards and expects individuals, at all times, to demonstrate respect for others, the facilities, and to promote an environment which is safe, positive, and welcoming of diversity

**DRESSING ROOMS** Dressing rooms are provided for all students and should be used and maintained in a responsible manner. Students are expected to use the dressing rooms (not the public restrooms or hallways) to change in and out of their ballet attire and to fix their hair. The use of improper language is inappropriate at all times. Uncooperative or disrespectful students will be reported to the Artistic Director. Students should not bring valuables to Valley Academy for the Arts. Coats, bags, and other property should be stored in the dressing rooms, within lockers. The School cannot be held responsible for any personal items left in any of its facilities. Items found at the end of classes will be placed in the “Lost and Found.” To access the “Lost and Found,” please see our School Administrator. Lost and found items will be discarded at the end of each year.

**CLASS ROOM CONDUCT** Students are expected to arrive at least five minutes prior to class time and be dressed and fully warmed up before class begins. Dance students arriving ten minutes after their class has begun will not be permitted to take the class due to risk of injury, but should remain to observe. Students should be dressed in the appropriate dress code. Chewing gum, food, and drinks, with the exception of water, are not allowed in the studio. Food and drinks are permitted in the waiting areas only. Be courteous and pick up when you have finished eating.

**SAFETY & SECURITY** Throughout our buildings safety and security procedures are in place at each studio. All hallways, and doorways must remain unobstructed at all times in order to adhere to fire code. Parents should not leave young children unattended, and are expected to pick up their children immediately after class ends. Students’ animals and pets are prohibited from Valley Academy for the Arts facilities for the safety of the faculty, staff, and students, with the exception of service animals. Please report any facility-related problems such as plumbing or equipment failure and safety issues to the Studio Administrator.

**DROP OFF POLICY** It is the responsibility of the parent/legal guardian to escort their child to/from the building for class. Students under the age of five are required to have adult supervision during class. Please have your child ready by providing a snack and bathroom break before entering class. **Valley Academy assumes no responsibility for children on the premises before, after, or between their specified class times.**

**HARASSMENT & BULLYING POLICY** Valley Academy for the Arts is enriched by the diversity of its members. Valley Academy for the Arts recognizes and respects each individual Valley Academy for the Arts provides a welcoming environment of respect and sensitivity. It is important that all members of the Valley Academy for the Arts community (faculty, staff, students, and families) recognize that behavior, either verbal or physical, which disregards or demeans the self-esteem of others, is unacceptable. Valley Academy for the Arts reserves the right to refuse service. Some examples of misconduct include theft, vandalism, smoking on the premises, physical or verbal aggression.

**PHOTOGRAPHY & VIDEOTAPING** Parents may photograph during the several Visitors Weeks offered throughout the school year; flash photography is prohibited. For the safety of our students, videotaping is prohibited. Photography and videography are prohibited during any Valley Academy for the Arts performance or dress rehearsal.

## Inclement Weather

The safety of our student, teachers and parents is of utmost concern. If the weather is bad (snow, ice, or dangerously cold), we may cancel classes. Generally, we follow Neenah Area School District weather closures. Sometimes, however, the weather and roads may clear in time for our afternoon classes. Classes missed because of weather closures may be made up in a similar class according to our make-up policy. Classes will not be rescheduled and refunds cannot be offered.

Please check the Valley Academy for the Arts Facebook page for updates for Inclement Weather updates. We cannot make individual phone calls

## Communication

Valley Academy for the Arts uses a variety of communications to keep families up-to-date with the most pertinent school information. Email is Valley Academy's primary means of communicating information to parents and students. Please keep your email addresses updated in the school records to receive the latest Valley Academy for the Arts news. Our website, [www.valleyacademyarts.org](http://www.valleyacademyarts.org), and Facebook are also a valuable tools for communicating with parents. It includes information on classes, events, and more.

## Parental Involvement

We encourage parental involvement by sending home regular email newsletters with information about important studio news and events. Each semester, parents are invited to a Parent/Student Orientation which takes place during class time on the first day of classes for each term. Please remember that this is a class and we ask that you observe discreetly and respectfully. Younger siblings may find it difficult to sit through an entire class, so please consider making other arrangements. If a parent cannot attend the Orientation class, we encourage him/her to make arrangements with the instructor to observe another time. We want parents to observe their child's progress and to offer encouragement and praise for his/her accomplishments.

## Health

We encourage our students to be healthy. Dancers are athletes and should treat their bodies accordingly. A dancer's body is his/her instrument. The same is true of other artists. Please encourage your child to eat healthfully. We are aware of the societal pressure put on students to maintain a certain body weight and form and are diligent in watching for any potential signs of an eating disorder such as anorexia or bulimia. We strive to form a partnership with parents if any concerns surface that might negatively impact your child's health.

We also encourage our students to get the appropriate amount of sleep. Muscles are repaired during the REM cycle. Additionally, insufficient sleep reduces the blood flow that can adversely affect the student's mind and body, potentially leading to injury.

If a student is sick, please do not attend class. We do not want the student to end up sicker and we want to minimize the transmission of disease.



## Performances

**DRESS REHEARSALS** for our winter and spring dance and musical performances are scheduled prior to the performance days and are designed to help the performers understand the expectations for the performance. It helps the student get his/her bearings on stage, develop a level of comfort in front of an audience and allows teachers to set the lighting, finalize blocking and address any costuming issues. Attendance at dress rehearsal is required for participation in the performances.

**TICKETS** Each audience member is required to purchase a ticket for our performances – winter and spring dance performances, performances at the Paine and our musical theatre performances. Ticket sales cover the cost of the theater rental, stage technicians, program printing and much more. Ticket prices vary depending on the chosen venue.

# Enrollment Information

Enrollment for some dance classes are on-going throughout the year. Enrollment in any class is dependent upon availability and is at the discretion of faculty and staff. Prospective students interested in registering for classes at should contact (920) 279-1578 to request a free trial or audition placement class. Students ages 8 and older with previous ballet training are required to attend a placement audition class to determine the level of study best suited to their abilities. Once the school-year starts, new student placement classes are scheduled individually to take place in a level that is appropriate to their current training level and evaluated for placement by a faculty member.

Students may register for classes at Valley Academy for the Arts by attending our Open House or through our online registration system. For registration forms, please contact [office@valleyacademyarts.org](mailto:office@valleyacademyarts.org) or (920) 279-1578. To register online, go to [www.valleyacademyarts.org](http://www.valleyacademyarts.org), which provides the most up-to-date registration information, including class schedules, school events, and faculty information. Parents will be notified via email to confirm their child's enrollment. Switching Classes Your child may switch from one class section to another (i.e. from a Monday to a Thursday class) only if there is space still available in the alternate class. Please call the office at (920) 279-1578 to request a switch.

Enrollment for our other programs is listed on our website and determined by the department directors. Contact [office@valleyacademyarts.org](mailto:office@valleyacademyarts.org) if you have questions.

# Financial Information

**Payment Plan Information** Tuition may be paid in full, or by installments. We offer two payment plan options for Academy and Conservatory Students: 3 term payments or 9 monthly installments, the first payment is due at registration, subsequent payments are due on the 15th of every month beginning in September, through and including the month of April. Email invoices will be mailed home on or around the first of every month before the payment is due.

**Registration Fee** All students (new and returning) are required to pay an annual, non-refundable registration fee per school-year. All fees are due with the first tuition payment at the time of registration. \$ 10 per child.

**Late Fees** A \$10 late fee will be charged each month for as long as the account is delinquent. Payments that fall up to two months behind for each account may result in your child(ren) being temporarily withdrawn from Valley Academy for the Arts and may jeopardize future enrollment. This may also prohibit participation in any Valley Academy for the Arts or Vision Dance Theater programs or productions

**Declined Credit Card** A \$20 fee will be administered for any credit card that declines and is not remedied within 5 days. Please take note of any changes to your credit card information and notify the Office of Administration prior to the next date when your card will be charged.

**Returned Checks** A \$35 fee will be charged for all checks returned to our office for insufficient funds. Replacement funds must be a certified bank check, money order, or cash. If financial difficulties arise, please call Anne Marie Abderholden at [info@valleyacademyarts.org](mailto:info@valleyacademyarts.org). Accounts that fall six months or more in arrears will be submitted to a collection agency and assessed collections fees at no more than 33%.

**Withdrawing your student** Full refunds will not be issued past the second week of classes. Please provide 30-day advance written notification to the founder/artistic director if you are withdrawing your student from classes. Parents are responsible for payment on classes that occurred prior to withdrawing. If written notification is not received, we assume that your student is still enrolled and tuition will be charged accordingly. A doctor's note is required in the case of a medical withdrawal in order to waive an early withdrawal fee.

# Tuition Relief and Work Exchange

Valley Academy offers financial aid as part of its mission to provide greater access to arts and dance education. Valley Academy for the Arts is a non-profit educational organization dedicated to making a quality dance education available to students and families for the Fox Valley and surrounding areas. Tuition Relief funds are limited and are awarded based on a comprehensive need-based scale. Students wishing to apply for financial aid must return the Tuition Relief application form along with supporting documentation by the stated deadline to guarantee consideration. An interview will be scheduled to meet with the student and family requesting tuition relief and tuition relief awards are determined by the interview committee. Valley Academy for the Arts also provides a variety of Work Exchange opportunities which can help to defray the cost of tuition. Work Exchange opportunities are also limited and are based on the need of the organization. Please contact [info@valleyacademyarts.org](mailto:info@valleyacademyarts.org) to inquire about these opportunities. Work Exchange and Tuition Relief funding may be withdrawn at any time based on the discretion of Valley Academy for the Arts faculty or staff if it is found that the student or family have not complied with the terms and conditions with which they have agreed to abide. In cases of suspension or dismissal, tuition will not be refunded. Please note that tuition relief and work exchange awards apply only to the core curriculum and not towards Master classes.

# Faculty and Staff Support

Faculty and staff members are readily available to address any questions or concerns that you may have regarding your child. Please contact [info@valleyacademyarts.org](mailto:info@valleyacademyarts.org) and appropriate action will be taken.

**Resolving Grievances** Should you have a concern associated with your child's or your own experience at Valley Academy for the Arts, please explain the nature of your concern verbally or in writing to Valley Academy for the Arts Assistant Executive Director. This course of action should take place no more than fifteen (15) business days after the incident. Please take into consideration that any action taken, whether formal or informal, should be handled in a private, cooperative, and respectful manner. If unable to rectify the issue directly, you are also provided with the option of reporting a formal grievance. This act should take place no more than fifteen (15) business days after the occurrence that produced the grievance, or no more than five (5) business days after an attempt at the informal reconciliation described above. To report your/your child's grievance in a formal manner, contact the Schools Administrator where your child is enrolled. The Administrator will refer the complaint to the appropriate staff member who will then review your complaint and contact you.

# Support Valley Academy for the Arts

Valley Academy for the Arts is a non-profit organization that is committed to excellence, in the studio, and in the community. Revenue from school tuition alone cannot cover the full cost of the artistic and educational experiences enjoyed by Valley Academy for the Arts students. To provide the highest level of arts education and performance opportunities, Valley Academy for the Arts relies on the support of individuals like you, who value and benefit from Valley Academy for the Arts mission and programs.

**YOUR SUPPORT IS ESSENTIAL** Your support helps maintain tuition at affordable levels; provides deserving students from the Fox Valley and surrounding areas with access to the highest quality arts education available; and provides educational and performance opportunities of the highest caliber for students. These performances provide opportunities for students to develop as artists in front of a live audience. In addition to excellence in arts education, Valley Academy for the Arts is committed to serving the community, making arts education and programs accessible to underserved populations.

**HOW TO GIVE** Every gift counts. In whatever way or level you choose to support Valley Academy for the Arts, your generosity is deeply appreciated. For more information, or to make a gift, please contact Anne Marie Brunner-Abderholden at [info@valleyacademyarts.org](mailto:info@valleyacademyarts.org) or call (920) 279-1578.

## Frequently asked questions

**Question:** My child has enrolled at Valley Academy for the Arts. What do we do on the first day of class?

**Answer:** We recommend that students arrive 15 minutes prior to the start of class to allow for ample time to prepare. All students are encouraged to use the bathroom and wash their hands prior to class. Children should remain in the lobby and the instructor will collect them when it is time for class to begin. Our facilities have a waiting area. We kindly ask that all students be picked up immediately following the end of class.

**Question:** Where can I park when I arrive for class with my child?

**Answer:** We have a large parking lot in front of the building. Children can also be dropped off in front of the door. There is an additional parking lot on the North side of the building. No street parking is allowed.

**Question:** Are there dressing rooms my child can use to prepare for class?

**Answer:** Locker rooms are available at the school. Students are permitted to bring locks for day use only. Students are urged not to leave valuables unattended.

**Question:** Whom do I contact with questions about Valley Academy for the Arts?

**Answer:** You may contact our Office of Administration at [info@valleyacademyarts.org](mailto:info@valleyacademyarts.org) or call (920) 279-1578.

**Question:** How do I report an absence and can my child make it up?

**Answer:** We understand that circumstances may arise that prevent students from attending class. We ask that the student's absence is called in so that the faculty and administration may accurately track attendance. To report an absence, please leave a message at (920)279-1578. You may at that time schedule a make-up class as well. Please see our make-up policy.

**Question:** What if I need to switch my child's class time?

**Answer:** Your child may switch from one class section to another (i.e. from a Monday to a Thursday class) only if there is space still available in the new class. Please email [info@valleyacademyarts.org](mailto:info@valleyacademyarts.org) to submit your request.

# Staff Directory

**Anne Marie Abderholden** - Artistic Director/Lead Instructor for Conservatory Ballet Program

920-279-1578

info@valleyacademyarts.org

**Katharina Abderholden** - Assistant Director/Program Director

**Carrie Cooper** - Office Manager/

office@valleyacademyarts.org

**Tracy Krause** - Lead Teacher for Open Division/Recreational Dance

Please see our website: [www.valleyacademyarts.org](http://www.valleyacademyarts.org) for complete staff and faculty bios.