



Nutcracker Participant Policies

Introduction

The purpose of this handbook is to inform Foothills Dance Conservatory students, performers, and parents about the policies, procedures, and etiquette expected during FCPA productions. Parents, please review this handbook with your children. Parents of younger dancers must reinforce and go over these safety issues and policies with their children. These rules and policies are intended to promote safety for the performers and enhance the overall quality of the production.

Performances for the general public are to be distinguished from recitals. Recitals are done to showcase progress the student has made over the course of the year for parents and family to see. Performances for paying audiences demand a standard of professionalism above and beyond recitals. Participation in performances provides valuable experiences for dance students because they learn about the professional behavior that is required for careers in the performing arts. Through these productions students learn the level of commitment necessary to present quality material and learn to do their best in the audition and performance setting. Students gain self-confidence and self-discipline. They learn to follow artistic direction and back-stage etiquette in a professional performing venue. Students have the opportunity to become accustomed to performing in front of large audiences. Students experience the backstage areas of a full size theater complete with rigging, fly space, wings, quality lighting, dressing rooms, intercoms, etc. These skills carry over to many other life experiences.

Auditions

FCPA casts its productions from the community. Auditions are open to anyone interested in participating. Traditionally, many students from FDC are cast in FCPA productions, but casting is not limited to FDC students and dance students from other studios are welcome to audition. Auditions for *The Nutcracker* are generally held in late August and cast lists are posted within a week or two of the audition date.



Cast Member Agreement

Participation in *The Nutcracker* requires a serious commitment and FCPA directors understand that not all students who take dance lessons at FDC desire or are able to make this level of commitment. Participation in *The Nutcracker* is a privilege and an opportunity for students to experience a professional-quality production alongside seasoned professional guest performers. Students not cast in *The Nutcracker* should be assured that all students at FDC will receive the same considerate and professional instruction whether or not they are cast in the production.

All cast members in FCPA productions and their parents are expected to sign a cast member agreement acknowledging their receipt of this handbook and their willingness to follow the policies and procedures outlined here, as well as their commitment to attend all rehearsals and training sessions.

Rehearsals and Time Commitment

Cast members must attend ALL rehearsals as posted, no exceptions. No matter how complex or simple your role, the quality of the entire production depends on teamwork. Knowing your own role, while critical, is not sufficient alone for the quality of the performance. The choreographer and other dancers depend on your presence for spacing, timing and effective rehearsals. Your absence from even one rehearsal affects everyone and the overall quality of the production.

Missing rehearsal for practice in another sport, or for a vacation or social activity of any kind is not acceptable. If you make a commitment to perform in an FCPA production it probably will not be possible for you to also commit to a full sports schedule or other outside activities at the same time.

Most Nutcracker rehearsals run from the middle of September until the final performance in early December and take place on Fridays evenings or on Saturday afternoons. However, other rehearsals may be scheduled as needed, including evening runs before, during or after regularly scheduled classes at FDC. Occasional rehearsals will also take place on Monday evenings. Rehearsals will not be scheduled on Sundays. There will also be a full dress rehearsal to be scheduled the week of the performances. All cast members must arrive for rehearsal calls on time, warmed up and ready to go.



Illness or Injury

If you are injured or sick with a non-communicable illness, you should still try to attend scheduled rehearsals unless the Artistic Director excuses your absence. You are expected, to the fullest extent possible, to participate in marking your choreography or observing rehearsals.

Should you become injured or ill such that it will affect your ability to perform in the production, it will be at the discretion of the Artistic Director in consort with the Choreographer to determine whether you are able to continue with the performance. This decision will be based on concern for your overall health and well being as a dancer as well as the quality of the overall production. While it may be frustrating and disappointing to put time and energy into rehearsing, only to be asked to step aside for an understudy to fill your shoes, all performers are expected to keep their focus on the good of the whole production and graciously step aside should the need arise.

Dance involves strenuous physical activity and performing in a large professional venue will expose all those involved to risk of injury or harm. All those involved in *The Nutcracker* acknowledge the potential for harm or risk and agree to accept this risk. FCPA, its staff, volunteers and board of directors will not be held responsible should injury or harm occur.

Emergency Absence

FCPA directors realize that occasionally emergencies do arise. Cast members must not miss rehearsals for any reason other than a true emergency. If you miss a rehearsal, you must inform the Production Manager in writing as soon as possible. Cast members who miss more than two rehearsals for any reason will be replaced at the discretion of the Artistic Director.

Full-Company Meetings

There will be at least two full-company meetings prior to the first performance. Immediately following each performance the cast will gather backstage to receive direction and notes from the Artistic Director and the stage managers.



Backstage Etiquette and Safety

Before and during the dress rehearsals and performances, young performers will spend time backstage unaccompanied by their parents. Volunteer backstage chaperones will be available to assist performers and provide support. All Nutcracker participants and their parents, however, should understand that *we are guests in the performing facility and should treat the facility with the utmost respect.* There should be no horseplay, running, wandering around the building, or eating in unauthorized areas. There should be no loud noises, door slamming, or jumping up and down stairs. Children who do not follow these rules will not be cast in future productions or may even be excused from participation in the current production.

There is dangerous and expensive equipment backstage at the Brooks Center and other performance venues we may use, therefore:

Do not touch anything backstage without being instructed by the Technical Director, Production manager or a stage manager to do so. Cast members must not touch the rigging, lighting instruments or trees, props tables, or scenery elements under any circumstances. The lighting instruments are very hot and can easily burn a performer. Rigging holds thousands of pounds of scenery and must not be touched by anyone except under the direct instruction of the Technical Director. Props must not be handled by anyone except the Properties Master who will hand the props to performers as needed.

Intercom calls are made to let performers know when they are expected on stage. "Warning scene _____" means your scene is coming next. "Places scene _____" means you must be in place in the wings to go on stage at your cue.

No non-volunteer parents are permitted backstage ½-hour prior to curtain. Designated volunteer parents will help younger performers backstage and ensure that these policies are followed. At the end of the performance, parents may go to the dressing rooms to ensure their child has collected all of his/her costumes and belongings and take photographs. No photography backstage prior to or during the performance.

No guests are permitted backstage until after the performance is finished.



Performers must not go into the audience during any part of the performance. This creates unnecessary noise and movement in the backstage area and destroys the magic of the production for the audience.

In the wings, the following special rules must be observed:

Sound carries to the audience from the backstage area. There is to be *no talking* backstage. At the bottom of the stairs leading to the stage and in the wings, there should be absolutely no talking. Quiet whispers can be used and only to communicate information that is critical to the running of the production.

Only performers who are standing in place for the next scene should be standing in the wings. Standing or sitting in the wings for the purposes of watching the action on the stage, or standing around socializing in the wings, are *not permitted*.

No peeking at the audience from the wings. Remember if you can see the audience, they can see you.

Pay attention for your entrance cue. If the music is wrong, *freeze!* Do not move until you hear the correct music or are directed to move by a stage manager.

In the dressing rooms, the following special rules must be observed:

Keep dressing rooms clean and neat. Do not touch or move items that do not belong to you. Please do not bring food into the dressing rooms. Water only is allowed.

You may talk in the dressing rooms in a quiet voice, but be careful not to miss your cue over the intercom. Please do not touch, adjust or play with the intercoms. This is sensitive and expensive equipment and if you change the settings, you may miss your warning and places cues.

Quick Changes

If you must make a quick change, do not go all the way down to the dressing room. A wardrobe volunteer will assist you in the wings. Your costume, shoes, etc., should be kept on the wardrobe table in the wings.



Costumes and Make-Up

All costumes must be signed out to the performers by the Production Manager. Once issued, performers are responsible for the care of all costumes loaned to them by FCPA. Please keep costumes together and organized and please wash costumes at the end of the production and return them promptly to FCPA. It may be necessary for you to remove tacked-on appliqués and reattach them after washing. Most costumes can be washed in cold water with mild detergent and allowed to line dry. If you are unsure of washing requirements, please consult with the Artistic Director.

For the 2008 production of the Nutcracker, **all cast members are expected to pay a \$50 participation fee.** This fee helps subsidize the cost of maintaining and replacing costumes from year to year. In this way, all cast members pay the same amount for their costume and costs are spread more equitably across all performers.

A new make-up policy is in place for our 2008 production. *For reasons of economy, health and safety, all cast members will be required to provide their own make-up kit, in a Ziploc bag clearly labeled with the cast member's name.* This kit must include mascara, eyeliner, blush, and lipstick. Colors and shades of makeup will depend upon the scene, and will be announced by the Artistic Director after casting takes place. Please note that this requirement is for BOYS in the cast as well as girls. All participants wear stage make-up.

No Flash Photography

Flash photography during rehearsals or performances is strictly prohibited. Flash photography is very distracting and dangerous for dancers. Flashes cause temporary blindness in dancers, which can cause falls and injuries. No videotaping is permitted during the performances; a professional videographer will tape the performances and DVDs will be available for purchase. Parents who wish to get close-up videos of their own children may videotape during the dress rehearsal from the back of the auditorium as long as their taping is not disruptive to the rehearsal process.

Reminder for Parents

Once again, please review this handbook with your children. Children who do not follow these rules will not be cast in future productions or may even be excused from participation in the current production. These rules and policies



Foothills Conservatory for the *Performing Arts*

109 E. North 1st Street, Seneca, SC 29678 (864) 888-0300

are for the safety of the performers and for the purpose of enhancing the overall quality of the production. Following these rules will reduce the risk of injury to performers and will create a quality production that will delight our audiences and sponsors and provide a valuable dance training experience for every child.