



DANCE DEPARTMENT: POLICIES & PROCEDURES

DANCE and CLASSICAL BALLET COMPANY PROGRAM 2026



The primary focus of the Dance Department at Newtown High School of the Performing Arts is to develop the talent of our high potential and gifted students and to maximise all students' achievements in the elective Dance courses and in the major public examinations. Overall success in elective Dance classes requires that students achieve at a high level in ALL AREAS of the curriculum, which includes performance, composition, writing and criticism.

The Dance Company/Ensemble Program is a co-curricular activity that focuses on one aspect of the curriculum: performance. The Dance Co-curricular program provides extension to our High Potential Gifted Dance students through:

- grouping with others of similar capabilities and developmental levels including provisions such as acceleration with age peers or into higher age year groups.
- creating a point of difference to external training (studios) that enhances dancers' versatility and exposure to a range of teachers and teaching styles and a range of performance opportunities through the focus on Dance as an Artform.

Dance and Classical Ballet Companies represent the School and Dance Department at major international, state, regional and local dance festivals, prestigious public performances and the school showcase concerts. The companies provide additional performance and training opportunities for all students who are successful by audition.

Repertory and Dance Companies

Repertory and Dance Companies provide extension performance opportunities to students who have demonstrated excellence and commitment to training by maximising their extension opportunities within the curriculum.

Classical Ballet Companies

Classical Ballet Companies provide extension performance opportunities for students with a particular interest and ability in Classical Ballet. Classical Ballet Companies should not be seen as an alternative to membership in the Dance Companies but rather an adjunct to them.

Additional Opportunity

An additional specialised ensemble may be offered if there is sufficient student interest and may vary from year to year. Students who are a member of a Dance or Classical Ballet Company and who have also consistently attended Ballet Sport are eligible to audition for this group. The genre and artistic director of this Ensemble will be dependent upon current availability of leading industry professionals in Sydney at the time.

REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS

Repertory Companies

- Rehearse twice a week
- Compulsory to attend Ballet Sport and Thursday masterclass

Dance Companies

- Rehearse once a week
- Compulsory to attend Ballet Sport
- Encouraged to attend Thursday masterclass

Classical Ballet Companies

- Rehearse once a week
- Compulsory to attend Ballet Sport
- Encouraged to attend Thursday masterclass

Specialised Ensemble

- Rehearse once a week (Semester 2) in addition to Company rehearsals
- Compulsory to attend Ballet Sport and encouraged to attend Thursday masterclass

Please note:

- To be eligible to audition for Dance and Classical Ballet Companies students must be enrolled in a Dance subject at NHSPA.
- All Year 7 Dance students are expected to be part of the Year 7 Performance Group that rehearses on Wednesday afternoons 3.30-5.30pm.
- Not every student who attends the Dance and Classical Ballet audition will be successful in obtaining a place in a Company.
- Students who are not successful are encouraged to continue to improve their technique and performance quality, in response to feedback, by the time the next series of auditions comes around.
- Attendance at Ballet Sport and rehearsals is an NHSPA expectation, and students are advised not to make appointments during these times where possible. If an appointment is undertaken at this time a Medical Practitioner's note is required to support the absence. If students have more than 2 unexplained OR 2 explained and 1 unexplained absence from these classes or rehearsals a warning letter will be issued and their place in the co-curricular program may be in jeopardy. Additionally, if students are going to be away on extended leave, they need to ensure they inform the Dance Department prior to the period of absence.
- Year 11 & 12 students who have extension curriculum commitments on Tuesday afternoons MUST see the Dance department to discuss an alternative arrangement.
- Year 12 students are encouraged to audition for a Company; however, they should be aware that by auditioning they are committing themselves to the company for the WHOLE year including (if selected) the Schools Spectacular and Semester 2 Showcase Concert.

Audition Process

Students will attend the audition in school years, they will be divided into small groups to learn a dance sequence, then perform the work in even smaller groups. The panel for the Dance Company audition will be NHSPA Dance faculty members. In the audition, the panel will assess each student's technique, performance quality, interpretation and work skills in the audition setting. Feedback forms will encompass a reflection from the student's most recent choreographer indicating their demonstration of attendance, commitment, leadership, attention to detail and focus. Final decisions will be based on the completed audition feedback form. The decision of the panel is final and cannot be appealed.

Please find the 2026 audition feedback form and performance descriptors:

AUDITION FEEDBACK FORM

Name: _____

Rehearsal Time/Day: _____

	Developing	Sound	Skilled	Outstanding
Technique: Performs combinations, phrases and sequences with due consideration of Safe Dance Practice. Demonstrates appropriate alignment, strength, flexibility and coordination.				
Performance Quality: Demonstrates performance quality and style relating to Dance Performance. Performs dance skills with confidence, commitment, focus, consistency, performance quality.				
Interpretation: Consistently able to communicate the choreographer's concept/intent when performing.				

	Rarely	Sometimes	Mostly	Always
Work Skills in Audition: Contributes to a positive audition environment, demonstrates leadership qualities, is able to pick up movement quickly with attention to detail in choreography and demonstrates the ability to maintain focus throughout the audition.				

Reflection

	Rarely	Sometimes	Mostly	Always
Attendance: Including performances, technical rehearsals, co-curricular rehearsals, ballet sport and masterclass.				
Commitment: Consistently contributes to a positive learning environment within the curriculum and co-curricular program.				
Leadership: Demonstrates leadership qualities within the curriculum and co-curricular program.				
Attention to Detail: Ability to pick up movement quickly with attention to detail and strong kinaesthetic awareness in choreography within the curriculum and co-curricular program.				
Focus: Demonstrates the ability to maintain focus within the curriculum and co-curricular program.				

CRITERIA DESCRIPTORS - CO-CURRICULAR DANCE AUDITION PROCESS

Outstanding Technique

Performs choreography with highly accomplished Dance Technique and a consistent application of Safe Dance Practice incorporating consistent control of alignment, strength, flexibility and coordination.

Outstanding Performance Quality

Effectively manipulates the three Elements of Dance (space, time and dynamics) with a high level of sophistication in applying projection, focus, commitment, quality of line and kinaesthetic awareness.

Outstanding Interpretation

Consistently able to communicate the choreographer's concept/intent when performing to achieve a sophisticated and engaging interpretation of the choreography.

Skilled Technique

Performs choreography with proficient Dance Technique and an application of Safe Dance Practice incorporating control of alignment, strength, flexibility and coordination with some inconsistencies evident at times.

Skilled Performance Quality

Combines and applies the Elements of Dance (space, time and dynamics) with a proficient level of projection, focus, commitment, quality of line and kinaesthetic awareness with minor inconsistencies evident at times.

Skilled Interpretation

Is able to communicate the choreographer's concept/intent when performing to achieve a strong interpretation of the choreography.

Sound Technique

Performs choreography with sound Dance Technique and Safe Dance Practice incorporating aspects of alignment, strength, flexibility, control and coordination with inconsistencies evident.

Sound Performance Quality

Able to apply aspects of Performance Quality such as projection and/or focus and/or commitment and/or quality of line and/or kinaesthetic awareness with inconsistencies.

Sound Interpretation

Communicates the choreographer's concept/intent when performing to achieve a sound interpretation of the choreography, however, is unable to maintain this consistently throughout the performance.

Developing Technique

Performs choreography with a limited application of all aspects of Dance Technique and Safe Dance Practice impacting control of movement.

Developing Performance Quality

Performs choreography with a limited application of all aspects of Performance Quality impacting the achievement of an interpretation.

Developing Interpretation

Attempts to communicate the choreographer's concept/intent showing some understanding of aspects of Interpretation with inconsistencies in application.

CO-CURRICULAR CONTRIBUTIONS

- NHSPA COMPANY/ENSEMBLE LEVY \$400/year
- COSTUME LEVY
 - One Dance or Classical Ballet Company \$150/year
 - Dance AND Classical Ballet Company \$200/year
 - Specialised Ensemble \$100/semester

These levies will be applied to cover the hire, cleaning and purchase of dance costumes. The Dance Department retains ownership of the costumes enabling them to be reused as situations warrant.

SCHOOLS SPECTACULAR

Dance students at NHSPA can be involved in Schools Spectacular in 2 ways:

1. As a member of the NHSPA Combined Dance Ensemble
2. As a Featured Artist under the direction of the Arts Unit.

Schools Spectacular Combined Dance Ensemble:

As a further extension of the Co-Curricular program, Newtown High School of the Performing Arts is granted the opportunity for our Dance students to be involved in the Schools Spectacular. The Dance Department is not able to decide how many students will be involved; our involvement is coordinated by The NSW Department of Education's Arts Unit and can fluctuate from year to year.

Expressions of interest and/or auditions take place Term 1. Depending on the number of students interested compared to the number of places available to Newtown students as dictated by the Arts Unit an audition may need to take place. Final decisions for student inclusion and total numbers for the NHSPA combined Dance ensemble for the Schools Spectacular will be based on the results of the audition process and the student showing evidence of the Criteria Descriptors outlined above.

- **Only students in Years 8, 10 and 12 who are involved in the Dance co-curricular program are eligible to audition for the Schools Spectacular combined dance item.**

The above stipulation is in place to foster opportunity and equity within our unique selective school context. The number of School Spectacular dance places The Arts Unit offers NHSPA is not comparable to the number of outstanding dancers we have. Therefore, we have ensured the limited number of places offered to us each year are shared across a wider range of our students over their years at NHSPA.

Year 9 Dance students who are members of the Dance Co-Curricular Program have the opportunity to audition for the Schools Spectacular Featured Artist program, allowing them the opportunity to still be involved in the Schools Spectacular in a year when they are not eligible to audition for the school's combined dance ensemble.

Due to the stage of their educational trajectory within a selective performing arts high school context, additional academic and wellbeing considerations are taken into account for Year 7 and Year 11 Dance students.

Our priority is to enable Year 7 students to settle into the new routine of a selective performing arts high school education, and to enable students to manage the challenges of increased activities, workloads and performance commitments. Talent development and the academic and emotional wellbeing of our students is paramount.

Year 11 begin their HSC studies in Term 4 which is when most disruptions occur due to the Schools Spectacular. Our focus is on supporting Stage 6 students in their increased level of HSC curriculum

requirements and prior school commitments. The demonstrable impact of our policies is evident in the increased confidence and focus of students when they commence their final year of schooling.

Talent development and the academic and emotional wellbeing of our Dance students is our prime focus. The impact of NHSPA's Dance curriculum and procedures is evident in our outstanding skill level demonstrated at the numerous school performance events and public performances such as the Regional and State Dance Festival, and our increasingly high HSC Dance results.

- Costume fee - \$150 (paid by parent/carer and set by The Arts Unit - subject to change).

SCHOOLS SPECTACULAR FEATURED DANCE ENSEMBLES

- Although dancers may audition successfully for multiple featured dance ensembles, **students may only accept places in TWO groups**. The reason for this is:
 - Impact on school attendance and maintaining school-based outcomes.
 - Significant financial cost to families. There is a costume fee of approximately \$150 per featured artist ensemble, set by The Arts Unit.
- Therefore, students in **Years 10 and 12** can either accept placement in TWO Featured Artist ensembles OR ONE Featured artist ensemble and also the school's Combined dance ensemble.
- Additionally, **Year 9** students can audition as a featured dance artist if they are a member of the NHSPA Dance Co-Curricular Program.
- **Year 7 and 8** students are not eligible to audition as a featured dance artist, as stipulated by The Arts Unit's policy.
- **At NHSPA Year 11** students are not permitted to audition as a featured dance artist – for the reasons explained above.
- All dancers auditioning for featured artist dance ensembles must have their paperwork signed by a member of the DANCE department for approval before submitting. Endorsement by the NHSPA Dance Faculty will be dependent on the individual student's participation and commitment to NHSPA programs.

Exemptions:

- Aboriginal Ensembles. Please contact the Head Teacher Dance
- Individual or family circumstances. Please contact the Head Teacher Dance

NEWTOWN HIGH SCHOOL OF THE PERFORMING ARTS - DANCE DEPARTMENT

DANCE COMPANY AUDITION FORM

I am auditioning for a (please circle):

REPERTORY COMPANY

DANCE COMPANY

Name: _____

School Year: _____

PLEASE READ AND SIGN THE TERMS OF AGREEMENT BELOW:

I have read the information concerning the level of commitment required for membership of a Repertory and Dance Company and if selected:

- I will attend the full duration of performances, technical rehearsals, co-curricular rehearsals and ballet sport for the entire year.
- I will consistently contribute towards a positive learning environment within the curricular and co-curricular programs.
- I will demonstrate leadership qualities within the curricular and co-curricular programs.
- I will strive to pick up movement quickly with attention to detail and strong kinaesthetic awareness in choreography within the curricular and co-curricular programs.
- I will strive to maintain focus within all Dance department lessons, rehearsals, backstage and in performance.
- I will notify the Dance department in writing or by phone **prior** to rehearsal/class if any extenuating circumstances arise.
- I will **not make any appointments** at times that conflict with my Company/Ensemble/Ballet Sport commitments.
- I understand that there are fees associated with my position in the co-curricular program that need to be **paid by Friday 27 February 2026.**
- I am aware and will be available for the following Performance Dates:
 - Lighthouse Dance Project: TBC
 - In The Spotlight Dance Festival: 9 - 17 June 2026 (TBC specific dates)
 - NHSPA Dance Showcase Semester 1: Saturday 13 June 2026 (Students required ALL Day)
 - NHSPA Dance Showcase Semester 2: Wednesday 2 December 2026
 - Finale Showcase: Thursday 10 December 2026
 - understand that failure to uphold the above commitments will result in letters home and may jeopardise my place within the co-curricular program.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

NEWTOWN HIGH SCHOOL OF THE PERFORMING ARTS - DANCE DEPARTMENT

CLASSICAL BALLET AUDITION APPLICATION

Name: _____

School Year: _____

PLEASE READ AND SIGN THE TERMS OF AGREEMENT BELOW:

I have read the information concerning the level of commitment required for membership of a Classical Ballet Company and if selected:

- I will attend the full duration of performances, technical rehearsals, co-curricular rehearsals and ballet sport for the entire year.
- I will consistently contribute towards a positive learning environment within the curricular and co-curricular programs.
- I will demonstrate leadership qualities within the curricular and co-curricular programs.
- I will strive to pick up movement quickly with attention to detail and strong kinaesthetic awareness in choreography within the curricular and co-curricular programs.
- I will strive to maintain focus within all Dance department lessons, rehearsals, backstage and in performance.
- I will notify the Dance department in writing or by phone **prior** to rehearsal/class if any extenuating circumstances arise.
- I will **not make any appointments** at times that conflict with my Company/Ensemble/Ballet Sport commitments.
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- I understand that failure to uphold the above commitments will result in letters home and may jeopardise my place within the co-curricular program.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

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Rehearsal Time/Day: _____

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Outstanding Technique

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Outstanding Performance Quality

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Outstanding Interpretation

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Skilled Performance Quality

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Skilled Interpretation

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Developing Performance Quality

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Developing Interpretation

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