

Coasting Along Theatre Society's (C.A.T.S.) Nutcracker Handbook

Policies and important Information

Please read carefully!

It is expected that parents and participants have read this handbook in its entirety, that the handbook is kept for the duration of the Nutcracker Season, and that parents and participants understand and agree to abide by all details listed within this handbook.

General Nutcracker Audition Information

Please carefully read for a detailed description of the rehearsal and performance schedule for **Nutcracker 2019**, absence policy, membership fees, etc. Below is an introduction to auditions and a brief overview of the time and financial commitments involved in taking part in *The Nutcracker*.

Nutcracker Performance Dates

Coasting Along Theatre Society's Ballet's The Nutcracker is scheduled to be performed December 14th – December 17th at the Raven's Cry Theatre for 8 shows. We have 6 public shows and 2 school shows for our Schools Outreach program in which we bus school children to the theatre to see the ballet. Older dancers will dance in all performances. There will be two casts of younger children dancing as Party Children, Angels, Pulcinelles, and Mice. Each cast of younger children will dance an evening show but not necessarily dance in all performances.

The scheduled performance dates are as follows:

Saturday December 14th (evening)

Sunday December 15th (matinee and evening)

Monday December 16th (school show, matinee and evening)

Tuesday December 17th (school show, matinee)

Dress rehearsal on Friday December 13th and Saturday December 14th.

Age at Time of Audition

Please be aware that the age groups posted for auditions are based on the age of the dancer on December 31, 2019. **To audition for CATS' Ballet The Nutcracker; a child must have been born on or prior to December 31, 2012.** ELIGIBILITY: Dancers must be at least 7 years of age by December 31, 2019, with a minimum of 1-year dance experience and currently be taking at least one Ballet class per week. No beginning dancers, regardless of age are eligible. (Exceptions are made for the Adults in the Party Scene, Boys, and Acrobats/Gymnasts).

Audition Check-In and Registration

Auditions take place at the Coast Academy of Dance in Sechelt on Sunday September 8, 2019. Please be aware that you should be at the studio at least 30 minutes prior to the time period slotted for your child's age group. We will need to check your child in, assign an audition number and measure your child's height.

Audition

Each group's audition is choreography from the Nutcracker. Once an audition has begun, late arrivals will not be admitted. In order for the artistic staff to fairly evaluate all children, it is important that your child stay for the duration of the audition. You are welcome to stay at the studio during your child's audition class, but you will not be able to view your child's audition.

Gymnasts are not required to be dancers. They should be able to complete round offs, cartwheels, multiple walkovers, flips, and additional material. Gymnasts should arrive by 4:15 - audition at 4:45 -6:00 pm.

Audition Attire

Ballet attire (leotard, tights, and ballet shoes) is preferred. Please have hair pulled back in a bun.

Posting of Audition Results

Audition results will be posted by Friday September 13th. We will email the results, or call the dancers personally.

Fees for Nutcracker

If your child auditions successfully and you choose to have him/her participate in The Nutcracker, there is a non-refundable membership fee of \$20, which must be paid by cash or check. If more than one member of an immediate family is cast in the Nutcracker, the fee is \$25/family.

The costumes supplied will remain the property of the ballet company. You will be expected to pay for your child's tights, shoes, make-up, hair products and other personal items.

Terms and Conditions, Letter of Agreement

A signed letter of agreement, including terms and conditions, and the release letter, are required for all cast members and must be turned in by the first rehearsal. The letter of agreement is included in this packet. Dancers 19 years of age and older must sign this letter. A parent or guardian must sign for each cast member younger than 19 years of age.

Child Protection Policy

Coasting Along Theatre Society (CATS) has an extensive programme that includes classes, rehearsals, and performances in which children participate.

In all our work, the children and young people involved are our primary focus and we endeavor to provide a safe, supportive and creative environment for all taking part.

In all our work with children and young people, we abide by the following principles:

- The safety and well-being of each child is our primary concern.
- Each child and young adult is unique. We treat all participants in our programme equally and with respect.
- We encourage a positive working atmosphere in which participants can feel free to ask questions and offer ideas and in which all criticism will be positive in tone.
- Any worry or concern of a child or parent/guardian will be listened to and acted upon.
- All CATS artists and staff have a responsibility to prevent the physical, emotional or sexual abuse of any child with whom they come into contact. Any suspicions or allegations of abuse are taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately.
- All staff working with children are required to consent to Criminal Records Review Program (CRRP).

Family commitment:

Rehearsals

We will have a rehearsal schedule emailed to each dancer, posted on our private Facebook page and posted on the website: www.CoastingAlongTheatre.org . On the registration form there is a prior commitment section. We will work around the other dance commitments in the community, and do our best to work around other schedules, i.e. soccer!

All rehearsals, including dress rehearsals, are considered “closed rehearsals,” meaning only participants (no parents) are allowed to be inside of rehearsal space.

Mandatory Rehearsals

Dancers will participate in scheduled rehearsals which are mandatory without prior permission. Dress rehearsals held during the performance week will include the entire cast. Dancers are expected to arrive and be ready to rehearse by their call time (arrival time). Dancers should arrive with hair and makeup done (based on specific guidelines given for each participant’s role), and be ready to dress in their costume (with leotard, tights, and shoes on). If a participant has multiple roles/costumes, please arrive ready for the first role rehearsed.

Special Information for Dancers

Communication will be through email. Please make sure you provide us with your current address.

Understudies

Several roles are cast with an understudy to fulfill the role in case a need arises. Understudies are expected to attend all rehearsals for any role they are cast as an understudy.

Costumes

Costumes are provided by the Coasting Along Theatre Society. These costumes are not for dancers to keep or bring home. Female dancers are required to wear light pink tights and pink ballet shoes (pointe and character shoes dependent upon role, if required), provided by the participant. Shoes and tights must be clean and without rips or stains. Tights are the responsibility of the participant. It is highly recommended to send dancers with an extra pair of tights on the performance day, and to plan ahead by purchasing extra tights during the month of November.

Make up is required for all roles. The purpose of make-up is for the audience to be able to see facial expressions clearly. Hair/makeup specifications will be given to each role along with costume specifications.

Volunteer Requirements

The Coasting Along Theatre Society is supported HUGELY by volunteers. The opportunity for your dancer, and the community, to experience the Nutcracker Ballet is only possible because of these great volunteers!

Volunteers are the key to a successful production. We have over 100 volunteer positions ranging from set and costume preparation to ticket booth sales and backstage chaperones. Volunteer positions are posted on our website. It is expected that ALL Nutcracker participant families fill at least one volunteer shift during the Nutcracker season.

Only parents who are designated as backstage volunteers (chaperones, runners) will be allowed past the security table during rehearsal and performance days. If you think your child may want you with them, please sign up for chaperone duty.

Studio Rehearsal Schedule

Since "Nutcracker" is an extra performance opportunity and not a full studio recital, several different rules apply. When selecting dancers for specific roles, we must consider many things, the most important of which is talent, ability, behavior, regular attendance, and conduct. We will be in direct communication with each of the local studios to make sure the dancers are attending their regular classes. We will also work with parents to make sure grades do not fall. Rehearsals are fairly intense. EVERYTHING must be accomplished in a very short time - only 13 weeks. Therefore, we DO NOT have time to deal with problematic dancers. Everyone must be able to stay focused during their entire rehearsal period. Your dancer should be prepared to give his/her full attention/effort to participate in "Nutcracker". No one should begin rehearsals only to drop out when something else becomes available.

Rules

Rehearsal scheduling is at the discretion of the artistic staff, and attendance is MANDATORY. NO unexcused absences will be permitted. Many roles will be understudied, so if your child is not ill and is absent, the understudy will be called and your dancer WILL BE REPLACED THAT SAME DAY. If you wait until the next time your dancer comes to class to explain an absence, it will be too late. THERE IS NO EXTRA TIME BUILT INTO THE REHEARSAL CALENDAR, SO MISSED REHEARSALS CANNOT BE MADE UP (even if the dancer is ill). UNEXCUSED ABSENCES: sleepovers, parties, shopping trips, "I forgot", "lost my schedule", no ride.

Each dancer will receive a complete rehearsal calendar and schedules will be posted on the website and via email. ALTHOUGH EVERY EFFORT IS MADE TO ADHERE TO THIS SCHEDULE, WE ASK THAT YOU CHECK YOUR EMAIL FREQUENTLY IN CASE OF NECESSARY CHANGES.

Since most of our dancers depend on parents to transport them to and from rehearsals, you should check your personal calendars against the rehearsal calendar for any possible conflicting dates as soon as you receive it. Failure to attend rehearsal because the parent forgets to check the schedule, or because the dancer does not have a ride will still result in the dancer being replaced. Please notify us IMMEDIATELY if there are problems. We truly regret having to replace any dancer, however, there is NO extra time to make up missed rehearsals.

Rehearsals are arranged around the conflicts you give us, so no one will be excused from rehearsals due to things that are added AFTER the schedule is finished. This includes extra track meets, choral and band competitions, gymnastics meets, swim meets and soccer games. (*Exceptions – other dance performing opportunities and Elves Club Telethon*) We must do this in order to ensure the quality of the best possible production. Please do not put yourself or us in the awkward position later on of asking to be excused due to changes with your other activities. Your commitment to this production is just as important as your other commitments. You are not alone; the rest of the cast rely on you.

Plan to arrive at least fifteen (15) minutes prior to rehearsal time with your dancer ready to begin at their scheduled time. We need total concentration by everyone and guests prevent this

Each dancer is expected to practice on their own between rehearsals. We schedule a MINIMUM of rehearsal time for each dance in order NOT to monopolize your spare time. This is especially important for solos and small ensemble pieces. Even though you are awarded a specific role, IT WILL BE GIVEN TO THE UNDERSTUDY IF YOU DO NOT PRACTICE ON YOUR OWN TO IMPROVE IT. Choreography for some roles can be adjusted according to the dancers who are doing those roles ~ other roles have specific requirements and more technically demanding ~ only dancers with these skills will be given those roles.

Behavior Requirement

Self-discipline is required! If your child is consistently reprimanded, he/she will be replaced. If your child causes problems backstage during Dress Rehearsal or any Performance, he/she WILL NOT PERFORM.

- Each child must pay attention and not climb or swing on barres
- Refrain from loud talking and keep hands to themselves
- Take all rehearsals seriously and respect the privilege of participating in a professional production
- Treat each other with respect - inclusive, respectful, all on the same team and all equally important

Schedule

Rehearsals will begin in early September and continue through production week. Most children will rehearse on Saturdays and/or Sundays. Usual dance class attire should be worn for all rehearsals. Please wear leotards and tights for rehearsals. We want to see the lines, and no hiding under legwarmers and sweatpants!

Theatre dress rehearsal is an open rehearsal, everyone is invited to observe this rehearsal. Photography is encouraged. It's amazing to see what happens by the evening for the public show. It is a season of miracles! Parents wishing to make their own videotape **NEED TO DO SO AT DRESS REHEARSAL ONLY**. We will have one for sale for the cast and crew. Both casts are recorded.

Committees

Parents are required to help with some aspect of "Nutcracker". Committees are:

1. SETS ~ Repair or repaint existing sets - NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY
2. PROPS ~ Repair, refurbish or replace existing props (AT HOME PROJECT)
3. MAKEUP ~ a one Performance or Dress Rehearsal commitment
4. HAIR ~ curling, fixing, making sure all heads are coiffed beautifully
5. DRESSERS ~ a one Performance or Dress Rehearsal commitment (MUST STAY BACKSTAGE)
6. PACKING ~ Several people are needed to help pack all costumes, hats, props, etc. before Load In.
7. LOAD IN/OUT ~ Man or woman-power needed to move everything to the theatre during production week. It requires several people to load the truck and unpack it at the theatre. Also need help to tear down after the final Performance. This is not so much muscle as it is lots of hands to gather everything together.
8. PUBLICITY ~ IMPORTANT COMMITTEE! We prepare flyers and necessary information for you to give to your church bulletins, civic organizations, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, church groups, nursing homes, public service announcements for local radio stations. It's more than simply hanging posters. WITHOUT PUBLICITY WE HAVE NO AUDIENCE.
9. COSTUMES ~ Make alterations, sew-on buttons, etc. (take-home projects), press costumes. Help is also needed to gather costumes after the final Performance.
10. STAGE CREW ~ Need 10 people (male or female) to pull curtains, operate "fog" machine, Snow Curtain, move scenery; must have same group for all performances and rehearsals as duties must be assigned. MEN VERY HELPFUL - NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY.
11. FUNDRAISING ~ ad selling, letter writing, helping to find additional sponsors, even organizing a Nutcracker Ball! The possibilities are endless.
12. BOX OFFICE ~ Ticket Sales – Sunshine Coast Credit Union during business hours, and man Box Office phone. Tickets will go on sale in November.
13. SCHOOLS OUTREACH COORDINATOR ~ work with the teachers, administrators, and buses to organize the school shows.