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BALLET

YARRA VALLEY BALLET

2021 Handbook

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OVERVIEW - About Us

Our Philosophy

At Yarra Valley Ballet, we believe that students of all ages experience optimal learning when their environment is safe, inclusive, team-oriented, and fun.

In practical terms, this means having:

- studio spaces that are clean, well ventilated, well lit, and suitable for jumping (to avoid injury);
- teachers who nurture the whole person rather than just teach the steps;
- lesson plans that include games, partner-work and/or group discussion depending upon the age group;
- annual events that give students goals to work towards, both individually and as a team.

We work from a 'strengths based approach,' which means emphasising a students' strengths through positive reinforcement (praise) and working quietly in the background to improve areas of weakness.

We are passionate about dance, but also aim to be realistic in our expectations of students. Not every student will be a company dancer. Not every student *wants* to be a company dancer! We aim to teach our students to be the best version of themselves they can be - technically, artistically, socially, and personally.

We also aim to foster:

- Discipline,
- Commitment,
- Resilience, and
- Self-motivation.

The willingness of a student to attend, focus, and strive for their best, class after class, can yield quite startling results. Our offering is just that - our offering. It is up to each student to grasp the opportunity with both hands and allow their world to expand. And when they do, it becomes our delight and honour to take that journey right along with them.

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Our Program

Classical ballet is the primary focus of our school. We offer additional classes in Jazz, Contemporary and National Character however these are available as complimentary styles rather than the main focus.

We commence tuition from the age of 3 years, however, we occasionally accept students younger than this depending on their social maturity and ability to focus in a class environment.

Students aged 13+ can elect to progressively advance their studies or pursue dance in a more recreational fashion. Recreational dance retains the same quality of tuition but removes the pressure of examinations, multiple classes per week, and/or a high-pressure competitive environment. Students are still welcome to participate in all school performances, to the extent that they choose to commit.

YVB's Adult School fosters joy, creativity, collaboration, friendship and life-long learning. Some of our adults have gone on to enjoy the nerves and excitement of stage performances, whilst others find solace in regular ballet classes as a form of active meditation - a chance to step out of your everyday worries and experience a complete mind-body-spirit reset.

Whatever your age, whatever your aspiration, we are here to support you in your dance journey.

YVB Junior School

Students between 3-12 years of age form our Junior School.

Classes are offered in Classical Ballet, Jazz and/or National Character dance.

Students aged 8+ are encouraged to take 2x classes per week to aid with their stamina, strength and flexibility, as technical demands become progressively challenging.

Exams are available to students from the age of 5 or 6 years, however we generally recommend waiting until the student is in Grade 1 at Primary school.

Students are offered two theatre performance opportunities and may be offered additional performance opportunities throughout the year.

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YVB Senior School

Students between 13-18 years form our Senior School.

Classes are offered in Classical Ballet, Contemporary and/or National Character dance.

Once students reach secondary school and pressures of school work, social groups and employment become life factors, students can pursue dance in a more recreational fashion.

In 2021 we will continue to offer a Recreational Program, which caters for students who wish to dance without the pressure of examinations, multiple classes per week, and/or a high pressure competitive environment.

Students wishing to undertake pointe work must do a minimum of three classes per week. Further information regarding pointe work is set out on Page 13 of this handbook.

Students are offered two theatre performance opportunities and may be offered additional performance opportunities throughout the year.

YVB Adult School

YVB's Adult School fosters joy, creativity, collaboration, friendship and life-long learning.

We offer a professional, yet inclusive working environment, where you are encouraged to 'check out' of your everyday life and manifest a little you-time magic.

Classes are offered at Beginner, Elementary and Intermediate levels. Ad-hoc classes are offered 'on demand' in Jazz and National Character dance styles.

Students are offered two theatre performance opportunities and may be offered additional performance opportunities throughout the year.

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Our Mission

"TO PROVIDE **SUPERIOR** DANCE TUITION TO PARTICIPANTS FROM EVERY WALK OF LIFE, INCLUSIVE OF ALL AGES, GENDERS AND ABILITIES."

Our Values

BE INCLUSIVE AND RESPECTFUL, CURIOUS AND CREATIVE.

BE PASSIONATE ABOUT YOUR ART FORM & AMBITIOUS IN YOUR HOPES AND DREAMS.

ALWAYS ACT WITH INTEGRITY.

"The people we surround ourselves with either raise or lower our energetic vibrations. They either help us to become the-best-version-of-ourselves or encourage us to become lesser versions of ourselves.

No man becomes great on his own. No woman becomes great on her own.

The people around us help make them great.

We all need people in our lives who raise our standards, remind us of our essential purpose, and challenge us to become the-best-version-of-ourselves."

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INSTRUCTORS, AFFILIATIONS & QUALITY

Nadia Lockwood (Kocz), Principal

Nadia commenced her classical training (aged 8) at the Victorian Ballet School. Her family moved to Canberra in 1989 and Nadia continued to study at the Dell Brady Ballet School, completing RAD Syllabus examinations to Advanced level.



Nadia went on to complete a Bachelor of Arts in Dance at the Queensland University of Technology between 1997-1999. During this time, Nadia performed at public events, collaborated with numerous Independent Artists and worked closely with Expressions Dance Company, now Australian Dance Collective.

Nadia also worked with the Australian Opera Company in both Queensland and Melbourne before transitioning into business world of insurance.

After a successful decade-long career, marriage and the birth of two beautiful children, Nadia decided to make a return to dance. As an adult, Nadia realised that she understood so much more about the world of dance than she ever did as a young student. This is the understanding she seeks to share with aspiring students of the arts.

"I have become the mentor I needed most when I was an aspiring dancer, and now my desire is to share what I know."

THEREIN, YARRA VALLEY BALLET WAS BORN...

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Social Media

Yarra Valley Ballet utilises the following social media channels:

- Website <http://yvballet.com.au>
- Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/yvballet/>
- Instagram <https://www.instagram.com/yvballet/>
- Pintrest <https://au.pinterest.com/yvballet/>
- LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/yvballet/>

Yarra Valley Ballet also uses a Closed Facebook Group for all enrolled students and parents only. Upon enrolment, you may send us a request to join this group.

Quality Control

At times during the year we may call on our students and their families to provide us with their feedback. We use this information to inform and improve our teaching practices, communications, timetable, rehearsal schedule, and any other matters that arise.

We appreciate you taking the time to provide your comments, insights, or constructive criticism. Please keep in mind that it's fine to tell us about a problem, but it's even better if you can also suggest a solution.

Customer Feedback & Testimonials

If you have a positive experience to tell us about, we would love to hear from you. We would also appreciate you writing a testimonial on our Facebook page to help prospective families learn a little about our school.

Equally, if you have any concerns we would prefer that you tell us as soon as possible. A burden shared is a burden halved and we will aim to work with you to reach a satisfactory solution.

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METHOD, CURRICULUM & PROGRAMS

Method & Curriculum

Russian Vaganova Method

YVB teaches the majority of classes based on the Russian method of training called Vaganova Technique, which was developed over 100 years ago. Some of the greatest dancers, including Anna Pavlova, Natalia Makarova, Rudolph Nureyev and Mikhail Baryshnikov were trained using Vaganova technique.

The syllabus consists of 8 levels in total, with the intention that Level 1 commences at the age of circa 10 years, and by Level 8 the dancer is 18 years and prepared for entry to a professional career.

Early training focuses on precision, musicality and port de bras (carriage of the arms). There is a keen focus upon the use of the upper body, building strength and mobility through the back and arms from a young age. As the dancer matures, they learn how to use their arms, head, eyes and hands to enhance the artistic quality of their technique, often with breath-taking results.

Vaganova technique is proven to produce excellent results with both vocational and recreational students, because it teaches each dancer to move his/her body intuitively with grace, style and strength.

Curriculum

CLASSICAL BALLET IS THE MAIN FOCUS OF OUR SCHOOL.

Classical ballet is a beautiful art form providing long term benefits that extend well beyond the studio space. These include:

- Physical – increased fitness and co-ordination, greater strength and flexibility, improved postural alignment
- Mental – improved focus and concentration, increased memory recall and benefits of left/right brain interchange, gaining a growth mindset
- Emotional – greater self confidence and coping skills, developing patience and acceptance of self and others, having pride and a sense of self-achievement

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- Social – connection and acceptance, a sense of belonging to a community, social support from peers
- Energetic – dance can become a form of meditation and/or mindfulness, it encourages living in the present moment and can reinvigorate the soul
- Life Skills – organisation, independence and resilience, self discipline and self motivation, team work and leadership

We encourage all our students to take classical ballet to set and/or develop their foundation technique.

Junior School

Pre Primary and Primary Levels (Ages 3-8)

Pre-Primary and Primary Classes cover the basics of stage orientation, spatial awareness and body kinesis. We draw on elements of ballet, music, gymnastics and educational resources to inspire and instil a joy of movement in our tiny dancers. Between ages 5-6, children are introduced to a traditional classical ballet environment where they are able to develop fundamental ballet techniques.

Students are placed in classes using age as a guide. Most students between 3-8 years are at similar stages of learning both in their technical capability and their social/emotional development.

There may be occasions when we recommend a student is placed in a different age group and this could be for technical or social reasons. In these instances, we discuss the class options with the students' parent/guardian to achieve the optimum outcome for the student.

Students wishing to take examinations at Pre-Primary or Primary Levels must also take National Character classes.

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Preparatory and Level 1 (Ages 8-11)

Preparatory and Level 1 Students work towards greater physical strength and flexibility, whilst also developing their concentration span, memory recall and mental focus.

Artistic presentation becomes a key area of focus during these years and we therefore recommended that students study National Character Dance to assist with performance quality and stage presence.

Students wishing to take examinations must attend a minimum of 2x classical classes per week. National Character is not a requirement for exams at these levels.

Students are placed in classes using technical capability, strength and flexibility as a guide.

Level 2, Level 3 & 4 (Ages 10-12)

By the time students reach these mid-levels, they have a solid foundation to progress technically and artistically. The use of the heads and shoulders becomes more apparent at this level of training and professional pathways may start to be considered.

Teachers now use a combination of body conditioning, floor-barre, traditional barre and centre exercises to teach and reinforce basic ballet technique, musicality and body awareness.

Students wishing to take examinations must attend a minimum of 3x classes per week, which can include an alternative style such as National Character or Contemporary.

Students are placed in classes using technical capability, strength and flexibility as a guide.

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JUNIOR CLASSICAL PATHWAY - EXAMPLE

Level	Age Guide	Class Duration
Pre-School Ballet (Kinder Age)	3-4 Years	45 minutes
Pre-Primary (Prep Age)	5-6 Years	45 minutes
Pre-Primary Exam Level (Grade 1)	6-7 Years	60 minutes
Primary Classical Ballet	7-8 Years	75 minutes
Preparatory Level 1 Classical Ballet	8-9 Years	75 minutes x2 classes
Level 1 Classical Ballet	9-11 Years	75 minutes x2 classes
Level 2 Classical Ballet	10-12 Years	75-90 minutes x3 classes
Level 3-4 Classical Ballet	11-12 Years	90 minutes x3 classes

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Senior School

Our Senior School Program caters for students who wish to dance without the pressure of examinations, multiple classes per week, and/or a high pressure competitive environment.

Participation in the Annual Production is optional and families will be asked for their decision regarding performance work at the beginning of Term 3.

Pointe Work

There are a number of factors that contribute to a student's suitability and eligibility to commence pointe work training. These include but are not limited to:

- Minimum Age 12 years;
- Minimum of 3x classical classes per week;
- Sufficient range of flexion in the ankle joint;
- Correct core alignment and understanding of body placement;
- Able to sustain turn out and straight knees in demi-pointe work;
- Able to perform a minimum of 32 single-leg rises consecutively.

The student's teacher is the first point of contact to discuss student suitability for pointe work training.

If the teacher agrees the student is ready, the student must then undertake a pre-pointe assessment with a registered physiotherapist.

Once a student receives written approval from a physiotherapist they are then able to make an appointment for a pointe shoe fitting (the fun part!) Please note that Yarra Valley Ballet requires a copy of the written report from the physiotherapist before students may commence classwork.

For further information please speak with a Yarra Valley Ballet staff member.

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Adult School

We love our Adult Dancers. It is very rewarding for us to be part of an adult's journey into dance, or to see experienced dancers rekindle their passion for something they studied in younger years. Our adult classes are taught as Open Classes, using a combination of Vaganova, RAD and Cecchetti techniques.

Beginner Classes - 4 Week Series

Over the course of four weeks we teach brand new beginners the basic positions and set a solid foundation for progression. Classes are non-refundable but are transferrable, so you can attend a 'make up' class for any you miss.

Elementary - Class Cards

These classes are for students with 6-12 months of previous ballet experience and who are ready to be challenged. We aim to gradually scaffold and progress your technique, musicality and artistic enjoyment of classical dance. Students can purchase a 5x class card or 10x class card, or enrol for a full term at a discounted rate.

Intermediate/Advanced - Class Cards

These classes are for students who are experienced dancers and looking for a class that offers fitness, enjoyment and social connection. We aim to enhance your existing skills and add a little bit of joy to your week. Students can purchase a 5x class card or 10x class card, or enrol for a full term at a discounted rate.

Please see Fee Information on Page 22 for details on fees and charges.

CLASS PROTOCOLS

Class Etiquette & Grooming

Punctuality

Students are encouraged to arrive 10-15 minutes early to classes to allow adequate preparation and warm up prior to class.

Late arrivals disrupt the flow of the class and can break the focus of other students. If a student is late on a regular basis, he or she may be invited to watch the class to avoid disruption to other students.

Punctuality is particularly important for students in the Junior School and we ask that parents make every effort to be on time for classes.

Absence

Junior & Senior School

Please advise your teacher as soon as possible if you are unable to attend a class or if you are going to be late. If you cannot contact your teacher for any reason you can also send an email to nadia@yvballet.com.au or message Nadia on 0412 334 416.

Adult School

We understand the adult world can sometimes be demanding and unpredictable and appreciate you letting us know if you are unable to attend.

All missed classes may be made up during the term in which they occur. Missed classes do not roll over into the next term.

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Injury or Illness

Please advise your teacher prior class if you are injured or unwell.

If you are injured, teachers may adapt exercises to suit your needs and/or may advise you to sit down for a portion of the class. If dancing will exacerbate an injury then we recommend observing the class rather than participating.

Students with a minor illness are encouraged to watch class, as so much can still be learned through observation. Students with major or contagious illness are encouraged to remain at home. If you are unsure, please err on the side of caution.

Hair Requirements

Junior & Senior School - Classical

Boys hair must be neatly presented and out of the eyes. Long hair is not suitable for dance classes.

Girls hair must be in a neat classical bun for all ballet, body conditioning, and national character classes. Please use bun pins (also called 'hair pins' or 'french pins') and a bun net to ensure hair remains secure for the duration of the class. Suitable bun pins can be purchased from Bloch in store or online: <https://www.bloch.com.au/512-hair-bobby-pins>

Please **do not** use bobby pins to secure your dancer's bun. Bobby pins are only intended to secure 'wispy bits' and do not hold a bun in place.

Students may be asked to observe class if their hair is continuously messy or incorrectly prepared for classical classes.

Junior & Senior School - Jazz/Contemporary

Hair may be worn in a neat pony tail or braid for jazz/contemporary classes.

Adult School

Hair should be tied back neatly off the face in a pony tail, braid, or bun. Fringes may be pinned back with bobby pins.

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Hair Supplies can be purchased from Dance Art (207 Mt Dandenong Road, Croydon) or Bloch (in store or online) and include: hair elastics, hair nets, Bun pins, bobby pins, gel and/or hairspray as required.

Make-Up, Nail Polish & Jewellery

Please refrain from wearing heavy make-up or gaudy nail polish to class. Students may be asked to remove make-up or nail polish if it is deemed to be inappropriate.

With the exception of stud-earrings, no jewellery is to be worn in class.

Summary

Please make an effort to be appropriately groomed for all classes.

Not only is good grooming part of the discipline of dance, it also encourages life-long self care that extends well beyond the classroom. Students are reminded to use deodorant where necessary for hygiene and the comfort of others within the group.

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UNIFORMS & ATTIRE

Junior School

Genre	Girls Attire	Boys Attire
Classical Pre-Primary Colour - Ballet Pink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ballet Pink gathered-front leotard • Ballet Pink full circle skirt • Footed 'Salmon Pink' ballet tights • Pink leather ballet shoes with elastic • Ballet Pink crossover (optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black footless tights • White cap-sleeved leotard or close fitting white t-shirt • White socks • Black ballet shoes with elastic
Classical Primary Level Colour - Baby Blue	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baby blue gathered-front leotard • Baby blue chiffon full circle skirt • Footed "Salmon Pink" ballet tights • Pink ballet shoes with ribbons • Baby blue crossover (optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black footless tights • White cap-sleeved leotard or close fitting white t-shirt • White socks • Black ballet shoes with elastic
Classical Preparatory Level Colour - Jacaranda Purple	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jacaranda gathered-front leotard • Jacaranda chiffon full circle skirt • Jacaranda crossover (optional) • Convertible 'Salmon Pink' ballet tights • Pink ballet shoes with ribbons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black footless tights • White cap-sleeved leotard or close fitting white t-shirt • White socks • Black ballet shoes with elastic
Classical - Level 1 Colour - Jade Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jade gathered-front leotard • Jade chiffon wrap skirt • Own choice crossover (optional) • Convertible 'Salmon Pink' ballet tights • Pink ballet shoes with ribbons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black footless tights • White cap-sleeved leotard or close fitting white t-shirt • White socks • Black ballet shoes with elastic
Classical - Level 2 Colour - Burgundy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Burgundy gathered-front leotard • Burgundy chiffon wrap skirt • Own choice crossover (optional) • Convertible 'Salmon Pink' ballet tights • Pink ballet shoes with ribbons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black footless tights • White cap-sleeved leotard or close fitting white t-shirt • White socks • Black ballet shoes with elastic
Jazz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leotard in classical class colour • Black Jazz shorts worn over the top of leotard • Tan jazz tights • Tan pull on jazz shoes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own choice top • Black Jazz pants (long) • Black pull on jazz shoes
National Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leotard as per classical class level • Full circle character skirt • Convertible 'Salmon Pink' ballet tights • Bloch "Accent" Character Shoes (canvas, low heel) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black jazz tights or fitted pants • White close fitting t-shirt or leotard • White socks • Bloch Karacta Mens Canvas Shoe or Bloch Oxford Mens Stage Shoe

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Senior School

Genre	Girls Attire	Boys Attire
Senior Classical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own choice leotard • Own choice wrap skirt • Dance Woollens as required • Convertible 'Salmon Pink' ballet tights • Pink ballet shoes with crossed elastics and/or ribbons (please note that ribbons are required for all performances) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black footless tights • White cap-sleeved leotard or close fitting white t-shirt • White socks • Black ballet shoes with elastic
National Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leotard as per classical class level • Full circle character skirt • Convertible 'Salmon Pink' ballet tights • Bloch "Show Stopper" Character Shoes (leather, secure ankle support) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black jazz tights or fitted pants • White close fitting t-shirt or leotard • White socks • Bloch Karacta Mens Canvas Shoe or Bloch Oxford Mens Stage Shoe
Contemporary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leotard in classical class colour • Long black jazz pants or similar worn over the top of leotard • Socks and/or foot undies (optional) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own choice top • Long black jazz pants or similar • Socks and/or foot undies (optional)

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Adult School

Recommended Attire

We encourage our adult students to wear comfortable attire to classes. You are welcome to wear ballet leotard & skirt, gym attire or similar.

Genre	Girls Attire	Boys Attire
Classical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Own choice leotard or fitted t-shirt • Sport Bra (optional) • Ballet Skirt (optional, students choice) • 'Salmon Pink' Convertible Ballet tights • Pink ballet shoes with elastic • Comfortable warm-up attire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fitted white t-shirt or white leotard • Black or Navy tights or bike shorts, or similar • White socks (optional) • Black ballet shoes with elastic • Support belt or suitable undergarments • Comfortable warm-up attire

Adult Shoes

Ballet shoes are a world unto themselves, as you will soon discover. Leather vs Canvas, Bloch vs MDM vs Energetiks, split sole vs full sole, elastics vs ribbons, pre-sewn vs sew your own, and so the list goes on!

We recommend that you make an appointment to be properly fitted and take your time trying on different shoes until you find the pair that fit like a glove.

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FEE POLICY

All students must be financially viable in order to participate in classes, examinations, community performances, or the annual production. Students may be asked to observe classes if their fees remain outstanding.

Please take some time to familiarise yourself with the following:

- Term Fees are invoiced at the end of the preceding term or at the beginning of the calendar year for Term 1
- We offer a 5% sibling discount or 10% family discount when more than two children are enrolled in the school
- Late payments will incur a \$15.00 administration fee
- Fees are subject to change if/as required
- Term Fees **do not** include Examination Fees, Costume Levies, or Annual Production Fees

Our preferred payment methods are cash, credit card, or direct deposit.

Bank Details

Account name: Yarra Valley Ballet Pty Ltd
BSB: 013 278
Account Number: 2244-33446

Refunds

We offer a 100% money back guarantee for:

- any student who does not wish to continue their tuition for any reason during Term 1, Term 2 or Term 3,
- for all future scheduled classes only.

We do not offer refunds for:

- the Beginner 4-Week Series,
- classes that have already been taken,
- classes missed due to illness/injury/choice/circumstance.

We do not offer refunds for enrolled classes during Term 4, or for Annual Production fees.

Missed classes may be made up during the term in which the absence occurs. They do not roll over to the next term.

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Fee Schedule (as at January 2021)

Please note: These costs are exclusive of GST.

FEE SCHEDULE		
Class Duration	Fee Per Class	Term Fee (based on a 10 week term)
45 mins	\$20.00	\$200.00 + Gst
60 mins	\$24.00	\$240.00 + Gst
75 mins	\$27.00	\$270.00 + Gst
90 mins	\$30.00	\$300.00 + Gst

PRIVATE LESSONS	
Duration	Fee
30 mins	\$45.00
45 mins	\$65.00
60 mins	\$80.00

OTHER FEES / LEVIES	
Type of Levy	Fee
Annual Theatre Levy Pre-Primary	\$70.00 + Gst
Annual Theatre Levy All Other Levels/Students	\$90.00 + Gst
Costume Levy (per costume) Pre-Primary	\$30.00 + Gst
Costume Levy (per costume) All Other Levels/Students	\$40.00 + Gst
Exam Rehearsal (per rehearsal)	\$20.00 + Gst
Exam Cost (depending upon level)	\$85.00-\$120.00

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DISCOUNTS	
Type of Discount	Percentage
Sibling Discount	5%
Family Discount (3 or more family members)	10%
Loyalty Discount (for families enrolled since 2017)	5%
2x Classes Per Week	5%
3+ Classes Per Week	10%

Please Note: The maximum discount we will apply to an individual student's account is 10%.

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EXAMINATIONS

Yarra Valley Ballet participates in External Examinations through the Australian Conservatoire of Ballet.

Exams are not compulsory, however students benefit in numerous ways by having a personal & achievable goal to work towards. Exams are an objective and measurable achievement of a student's progress and learning. They also provide an opportunity for teachers to receive constructive criticism from an external party.

Examinations begin at Pre-Primary Level and can be taken as young as 5 years. Due to the intense nature of exams, we generally recommend students wait until they have completed their first year of schooling before sitting their first exam.

When undertaking an exam, students will be asked to:

- attend all scheduled classes wherever possible,
- practice specific steps or exercises at home, and
- attend 3x exam rehearsals in the lead up to the examination.

Students who fail to attend classes and/or rehearsals and who may therefore be under-prepared may not be permitted to participate in examinations and will forfeit any fees paid.

Exam Rehearsal Costs

Exam rehearsals are an important part of exam preparation. They imitate the exam setting and help students prepare and anticipate the formality and structure of the actual event.

Exam Rehearsals cost \$20.00 (plus Gst) per rehearsal.

On average, students need three (3) rehearsals prior to their exam.

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PERFORMANCES

Dance is a Performing Art and we strive to give our students opportunities to shine during the year.

Theatre Events

Each year we hold two theatre events. Our first theatre event is an informal theatre presentation. Students are introduced and guided onto the stage, the curtain remains open throughout and lighting is simple and unrefined (ie, no blackouts). The purpose of this event is to ease students into the feel of the theatre, build confidence and encourage positive anticipation for future performances.

Our second theatre event is a fully costumed, stage-lit, curtained and formal performance. This event takes place towards the end of Term 4, in late November/early December. This performance represents the culmination of the year's work and is usually a highlight of the year for teachers and students alike.

The lead-up to the EOY Performance is a time of extra pressure with additional classes, rehearsals, and emphasis on memory recall. Please take the time to familiarise yourself with our Term 4 expectations early in the year, so that you are well prepared when we ask you to bring your dancer for additional rehearsals, costume try-ons, hair and make up tutorials, or send home videos for your dancer to review and practice at home.

If you become aware of a scheduling conflict please speak with your class teacher as soon as possible so that we can work together to find a solution for your family.

Community Events

Students of Yarra Valley Ballet perform annually at the Yarra Glen Christmas Carols. This event takes place in mid-late December and is a casual, relaxed atmosphere - a bit of a last hurrah before we head into holidays.

YVB also looks for community performance opportunities and welcomes your input or invitation to perform at a public venue or event.

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Timetable Variations

Students commence work on their EOY Performance in Term 3. Weekend schedules will be set and published on a weekly basis if/as required.

We recommend that you reserve Saturdays 9am-5pm in your Calendar from Term 3 onwards to avoid scheduling conflicts.

Mandatory Rehearsals

During Term 4, students are expected to attend:

- All usual scheduled classes;
- All scheduled Saturday classes;
- 2x General Rehearsals (held on a Saturday or Sunday) - these are compulsory for all students, no exceptions*
- Dress Rehearsal - Compulsory for all students, no exceptions*
- Concert Day, all day as required.

*Long rehearsal days will be shortened for students in Pre-Primary up to Preparatory levels. A timetable of the day is published in closer to the event.

Please note that ill or injured students are asked to attend to observe and/or mark their place wherever possible.

DANCERS COMMITMENT & ATTENDANCE POLICY

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

These requirements apply to all students.

Preparing for the production is a team effort and we do require 100% commitment from all dancers, and the support of each dancers' parents to ensure their child's attendance and punctuality.

Late or absent dancers slow down the progress of the whole production and make it difficult for their classmates to learn and practice patterns, partner work and spatial

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formations. We thank you in advance for your understanding and ask that you ensure you/your child are able to meet the attendance requirements before continuing with enrolment.

Please Note: Any student who misses the General Rehearsal or the Dress Rehearsal for any reason may be immediately dismissed from the concert and will forfeit the fee paid. It is unsafe and unprofessional for dancers to go on stage without attending these two very important rehearsals.

Dismissal from EOY Performance

Under some circumstances dancers may be removed from sections of dances or whole dancers. These include but are not limited to:

- A students' absence rate reaching or exceeding 20% of all scheduled classes.
- Recurring absences during Term 4 deemed to limit a student's ability to perform and/or absence that causes detriment to other students in the class.
- Absence from General Rehearsal
- Absence from Dress Rehearsal

Whilst it is not our preference to remove any dancer from the EOY Performance, there is an inherent requirement for teachers to show consistency in their approach towards attendance and commitment from our students and families.

Remedies for missed classes include:

- Private Lesson(s) to make up for missed time and/or catch up on missed;
- Attendance at a suitable alternative class;
- In the case of very young students, arriving early or remaining late after class.

Please communicate with your class teacher as early as possible regarding any concerns you have regarding commitment or attendance in the second half of the year.

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Costumes

Wherever possible costumes will be made, purchased, or hired each year and may be sent home with students following the Dress Rehearsal.

From time to time we may require small amounts of hand-sewing. Detailed information will be sent home with students in these instances.

PLEASE DO NOT WEAR THE COSTUMES AROUND THE HOUSE OR EAT OR DRINK IN COSTUME.

We understand that it is exciting to have costumes at home and by all means, put them on and take some photographs, but please do not wear them otherwise. Please note that damaged or dirty costumes will incur repair or cleaning charges.

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AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS

Awards and Scholarships are a tangible recognition of student's efforts over the course of the year. We use the following Award Criteria to guide student nominations:-

Quality	Considerations / Observations
Punctuality	Being on time, ready to start the class at the designated time.
Attendance	Being present for the whole class (not leaving early). Attending to observe if injured or have a minor illness. Arriving early to stretch/warm up/mentally prepare for class.
Grooming	Correct and clean uniform (including tights, shoes with elastics/ribbons) Hair correctly prepared (in a bun, fringe off face)
Attitude	Towards peers - makes an effort to interact with others and/or contribute to the group with smiles, ideas, questions, enthusiasm Towards teacher - listening to and following teachers instructions, maintaining a pleasant countenance (ie a pleasant face and body language) To class - being a part of the class, co-operating with the teacher and peers to contribute to a positive working environment for everyone.
Determination	Self Motivated - will take corrections and apply them, will practice when waiting for a turn, will listen to corrections given to others and apply them. Asks for feedback and demonstrates practical application of the feedback provided. Open to and appreciative of receiving corrections (corrections are a positive, not a negative) Being willing to practice a step over and over to get it right.
Presence	Ability to project in performance situations (including improvisation) Projecting confidence and certainty in the classroom and on stage.
Purpose	Demonstrating a clear focus whilst in class (eg, is the student focused on class, or are they thinking about what's for dinner)
Technical	Technical proficiency and accuracy (eg, correct placement is more desirable than the height of the leg in a grand battement)
Artistic	Ability to apply artistry to movements (uses the upper body well) Demonstrates musicality, understanding of different dynamics, mime and facial expression.

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Awards

We aim to distribute a broad cross-section of awards to include as many students as possible. The current list of awards includes:

Award for Excellence	Students who excel across all criteria.
Award for Effort	Students who have made an effort across some criteria.
Encouragement Award	Students who have shown the greatest effort to improve in multiple criteria over the course of the year.
Other	Other awards may be given as the situation/need arises.

Scholarships

Please Note: Due to Covid-19 circumstances, no scholarships are currently being awarded. Yarra Valley Ballet will resume awarding scholarships as soon as it is financially viable to do so.

Scholarships are awarded using our Award Criteria as a point of reference, following which we consider each individual student, their technical and artistic achievements, their contribution to the group, their representation of self and their personal growth and development.

Scholarships are awarded Per Term so that we have many students receiving the benefit of the award. Each term we may distribute:

- 2x Junior Scholarships
- 2x Senior Scholarships

For Scholarship purposes only, Adult Students are considered under the Senior School bracket and are also eligible for term scholarships.

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Eligibility: To be eligible for a term scholarship, students must have been continually enrolled at Yarra Valley Ballet for a minimum period of 6 months.

Students may only receive one term scholarship per calendar year.

Forfeit: If a student leaves Yarra Valley Ballet after being awarded a scholarship, they forfeit the scholarship. They do not receive the funds in lieu.

Deferral: Scholarships may not be deferred.

Value: The value of the scholarship is the equivalent of classes taken by the student in the previous 6 month period.

For example, a student taking 2x classes per week will receive a scholarship that covers 2x classes per week. A student taking 1x class per week will receive a scholarship that covers 1x class per week.

Announcements: Scholarship recipients are announced as follows:

Term 1 - announced and awarded at the end of the previous year.

Term 2 - announced at the end of Term 1 and awarded on stage at the mid-year performance.

Term 3 - announced and awarded on stage at the mid-year presentation.

Term 4 - announced at the end of Term 3 and awarded on stage at the end of year performance.

Decisions: Decisions regarding scholarship recipients are final and no correspondence will be entered into regarding these awards.

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ENROLMENT

Junior School

Please contact us to discuss your child and situation. It is helpful for us to know the following information about your child:

- age
- previous experience (if any)
- what has sparked their interest in ballet,
- how long have they shown an interest in learning ballet,
- general temperament,
- social/emotional development,
- ability to focus and follow instruction.

This information helps us pre-determine which class might be the best fit for your child.

Once you have trialled / observed a class and made a decision about enrolment we:

- request that you complete an enrolment form (available online),
- confirm uniform requirements,
- send you an electronic invoice for payment.

Senior School

Please contact us to discuss your dancer and their goals. It is helpful for us to know the following information about your dancer:

- age
- previous dance school and reason for leaving (if applicable)
- what your dancer is looking for in a class/school,
- what you (parent/guardian) are looking for in a class/school,
- your dancer's temperament,
- social/emotional development,
- any behavioural concerns or recent changes.

This information helps us prepare for meeting with your dancer and integrating them into a class situation.

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Once you have trialled / observed a class and made a decision about enrolment we:

- request that you complete an enrolment form (available online),
- send you an electronic invoice for payment.

Adult School

Please contact us to discuss your aspirations. It is helpful for us to know the following information:

- previous dance experience (if any)
- what you are looking for in a class/school,
- whether you have any particular goals or expectations of classes.

An initial discussion is also an opportunity for you to ask questions. Some of our FAQ's are:

Q: Am I too old?

A: Never

Q: Does it matter that I'm not 'fit'?

A: Not at all, we will support you to work at your own pace.

Q: Do I have to wear a leotard?

A: No, your attire is your choice.

Q: Do I have to participate in performances?

A: No, these are completely optional. However, they are a lot of fun!

Once you have made a decision about enrolment we:

- request that you complete an enrolment form (available online),
- send you an electronic invoice for payment.

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Trial Classes

Pre Primary

We allow Pre-Primary students to trial a class at the nominated fee level until the end of Term 2. We do not run any further trial classes after this time.

Junior & Senior School

Prospective students are welcome to attend a trial class until the middle of Term 2 (early-mid May). The cost of the class is as per our Fee Schedule and will be deducted from term fees if you proceed with enrolment.

Thereafter, prospective students are welcome to observe one of our classes in progress to help gain an understanding of our class structure and environment.

This approach ensures that our currently enrolled students continue to learn and focus in a stable environment, and new students benefit by knowing what to expect before they commence studies with our school.

We regret that we are unable to accept new enrolments from the end of Term 2, unless under exceptional circumstances. This is due to a number of factors, including student group cohesion, paced learning during the first part of the year, concert planning, and examinations.

Yarra Valley Ballet reserves the right to vary this enrolment procedure at any time.

Adult School

Prospective students are welcome to attend a trial class at any time during the year. The cost of the class is as per our Fee Schedule.

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Open Days

YVB extends a warm invitation to students' family and friends to view classes in the final week of Term 1, 2 and 3. This is a wonderful opportunity for you to observe your dancers' progress, for the students to perform informally to an adoring audience, and we would love to get to know you!

DANCING PATHWAYS

Supplementary Information

The "Pathways" are six aspects of learning that we believe contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual/energetic development of the aspiring dancer. They encourage teacher and student to consider the dancing individual, not just as a body that can do tricks, but as a thinking, creative, evolving human being.

Lesson plans can be adjusted according to the needs of the group or individual to accommodate areas needing improvement, or to focus on a specific skill set or concept. It is our ultimate aim to produce confident, conscious, adaptable human beings who can also dance up a storm!

1. Artistic Excellence

Dancers must learn to reach their audience through expressive facial control, mime and gesture. Much as an actor or actress, they must learn to truly 'feel' the emotion and use their own experiences to communicate the intent behind the movement.

In performance, the dancer must also learn to tap into the energetic field that exists between them and their audience. This is no small task and whilst it comes naturally to some dancers, for some the mastery of artistic expression can require specific training.

2. Technical Precision

The body is a carefully honed product of intense and targeted training. From the angle of the head right down to the strength of the little toe, each component of the body has a specific job to do, depending upon the sequence of movement.

Young dancers are encouraged to exercise patience as they wait for each aspect of their body to develop strength and flexibility in equal measures, until they can execute advanced movements with ease, style and grace.

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3. Improvisation

Company dancers are increasingly required to contribute to choreography through improvisation. Improvisation can be difficult for many dancers, professional and amateur alike. Dancers must be able to disconnect from their ego, which can be difficult with a room full of onlookers.

Through exposure and repetition, students can become desensitised to the raw process of improvisation and find internal focus that allows them to move freely and with confidence when required.

4. Choreographic Skills

Choreography is the art or design of steps and movements to create a sequence. Whether or not a dancer aspires to become a choreographer, it is important that he/she has a basic understanding of the multiple demands that go into the production of a creative work.

5. Personal Growth & Wellbeing

A dancer's mental state and emotional well-being have an immense impact on his or her ability to learn, dance, perform, and sometimes just 'be'.

Mental growth – or 'mindful' growth – is about expanding the knowledge base. This might be through academic schooling (reading, writing, arithmetic), extra-curricular activities (piano, basketball, study of other languages) or life experience (conflict resolution, negotiation, compromise). As we come to know more about the world around us, our ability to discern and recall information naturally expands.

Emotional well-being refers to our ability to identify, allow, and self-regulate our own emotional states. Emotional literacy expands our knowledge into identifying and allowing the emotional states of others, and with time, learning how to respond appropriately. The ability to regulate our emotional state is an invaluable life skill.

At YVB we teach our students to nurture their mental and emotional well-being in the hope that these will become skills for life.

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6. Energetic Awareness

Energy is vast, ever-present, and ever-changing. Energy is also a source of information we can learn to access. Have ever walked into a room and felt like you wanted to leave right away, or met a person you have instantly liked? This is what it means to access energetic information.

YVB students are taught to be respectful of energy, to bring 'good' energy to the classroom for the benefit of themselves and others. Amazing heights can be achieved when a group of people work together towards a common goal.

Summary

A dancer's journey is most profound when they learn to balance the mind, body and soul.

Our job as teachers is to optimise the learning environment so that each student can transform into the best version of him or her self.

We hope you enjoy the YVB Journey.

"When you Dance, your purpose is not to get to a place on the floor. It's to enjoy each step along the way."

Wayne Dyer