

Staar Academy Handbook



Staar Academy Offers
 Bollywood, Indian Classical Dance, Music Classes,
 Musical Instruments, Yoga, Arts & Crafts

an exploration of life through the art of dance, music, art & yoga

CLASSICAL BOLLYWOOD BHANGRA CARNATIC MUSIC POTTERY INSTRUMENTALS YOGA ARTS

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FOR REGISTRATION CALL:
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2009 / 10

Handbook contains important information about Staar Academy for students, parents and new enquiries. Read on!!



Welcome

We are pleased that you will be studying with us at Staar Academy this term. During the course of the year it will be necessary for us to keep you informed of things like rehearsal and performance dates, ticket information, changes in policy, special events, guest teachers, etc. There are several ways in which we make this information available:



- **Through your teachers.** They will explain our class and performance procedures to you at the beginning of the term, and will always be happy to answer your questions. Also, your class's teaching assistant, the administrative and production staffs of Staar Academy are here to assist you and to ensure that your participation in our program is a **fun and rewarding experience**.

- **On our Web site.** A rich source of information for our current as well as prospective students, our web-site is updated frequently with school news, timely announcements, rehearsal schedules, and the like. So add **www.staaracademy.com** to your "Favorites" list today and visit our site regularly.

- **In this Student Handbook.** This booklet contains a wealth of useful information about studying at and performing with Staar Academy, and parents and students should review these pages for a thorough understanding of how our studio works, and what we expect of our dancers.

- **Published in STAAR Newsletter.** We try to issue the Staar newsletter twice during the term. We often include news about our students and their accomplishments, special upcoming events, and some class history notes we currently have in production. Be sure to look for the latest edition on our studio "take-one board" and in the dressing rooms.

- **Posted in the studios.** At pick-up and drop-off times, you will undoubtedly see new postings on the bulletin boards, flyers in the take-one holders, and a timely reminder or two posted near the entrance of studio. Be on the lookout for new news when you are in our studios, especially postings about changes in the class schedule.



- **Sent directly home.** Account-related information (e.g. registration contracts, tuition bills, concert participation fees and policies) and placement notifications are sent to your home via the **U.S. mail**. Studio news and announcements may occasionally be mailed to you, sent home as **flyers**, or reach you in an **e-mail** if we have an

address on file (and it is a good idea to provide one as an additional means of reaching you when we need to). Parents of young dancers, please be aware that we frequently hand out notices in class to supplement our Web site updates and phone casts. If another parent or babysitter is picking up your child, ask them to be sure you get a copy of any **in-class handouts**, and check your child's dance bag after every class.

- **Over the phone.** For time-sensitive and high-priority announcements, such as weather closings, registration deadlines and special-program messages, we use our phone casting system, and you will receive a call from the studio at the number you gave us when you registered.

- **Provided by our dedicated desk staff.** Don't ever hesitate to ask us for information or bring your concerns to our attention. So that we can be there for you on a reliable basis, we try to maintain fairly regular hours of administrative support. Please note that these hours do not necessarily mirror our class schedule.

Generally the Newark Avenue desk is staffed during the fall-spring term **Monday through Friday from 6:30 pm**, and **Saturday/Sunday from 9 am to 1pm**. **Staar Academy** has a desk representative present on Saturdays/Sundays during class hours.



However these times do change during holiday periods, production weeks, between terms, etc. Administrative hours are posted at the secretary's desk and are usually stated in our phone- answering message, so call ahead if you are uncertain about the presence of support staff. All calls are returned within a business day at the latest. You can also send us an e-mail at **staaracademy@gmail.com**.

An important suggestion to *all* parents on the subject of communication: We do not recommend that you rely on other parents as your source of official Staar information, even if your child is studying at the same level as their child, and even if those parents have a long-time association with our studio. A lot changes from level to level, class to class, child to child, and our policies and procedures are continually evolving. Many of your questions will likely be answered right here in the Handbook or on our Web site. Our desk staff can direct you to the appropriate source for anything else.

Your Classes, Placement Level and Schedule

Our Web site provides a lot of information about the dance technique and **class curriculum** for each of our courses. You are encouraged to review all information pertaining to the classes on your current schedule. You will see on the site that some courses *require* your enrollment in order to qualify for other classes, and some courses are enrolled by invitation only. For example, pointe classes can only be taken as part of a specific curriculum for a student's age and placement level, and the dancer must qualify for these classes prior to enrollment. Some dancers are *invited* to take certain classes, like our Conservatory course and Children's Workshop, and only those selected for enrollment may register for these classes. You will find descriptions of all the courses we offer, and explanations of the requirements for each, in the "Training" section of our Web site. If you still have questions after reviewing our site information, parents can request a phone call from your teacher.

Your age, ability, and previous training are important considerations in determining what classes are best for your development as a dancer. Our students are evaluated at the time of joining and are notified of their placement levels and their recommended curriculum for the next term. Your teachers and the Academy directors monitor **placement levels** at other times during the term and make adjustments when they feel it is warranted, to ensure that every student is progressing at an optimal rate. If there are concerns or questions about your classes, parents should request to meet the management. This can be done by calling the studio or stopping by the desk.

Changing your registration after the first day of classes, unless it is being revised at the request of the Academy directors or is



necessitated by changes in the class schedule, requires the Staars' approval and incurs a fee (\$15 for each class enrollment changed). Dropping a class incurs a drop fee and requires *written notification* to the Academy. Also note that tuition billing will continue until such notification is received. Note that **studying Bollywood, Classical Dance** at Staar requires you to take at least one class each week at the Academy .

Current students who would like to enroll in a new class—i.e. add Bollywood, Bhangra, Classical Music etc to their registration—

do not have to pay a schedule-change fee, but may need to have a placement evaluation to determine the best class for them. Current students can use a one-time **trial registration** (4 consecutive classes) to try other forms of dance. The desk staff can help you with any of these schedule changes.

Private classes are available for a min. 5 sessions in Bollywood Dance for Marriages, Anniversaries, Parties etc. The duration of each is 90 mins. The teachers help students prepare for their event. One-



time private assessment classes are made available to all students as Staar's schedule permits; make arrangements with the management if interested. Payment for private classes is made directly to Staar Academy before the class. Cancellations must be made 24 hours in advance to avoid being charged.

Your Progress and Evaluation

For information on how you are progressing, parents can ask for a call from your instructor. A scheduled phone conference will afford the teacher some preparation time and a focused environment—something that is not available in those hectic few moments between classes. In addition, one Sunday is set aside in a month for **parent/teacher conferences**. Check the "Events" calendar on the Web site for the scheduled date. If a teacher feels it is necessary to speak with you about your child for any reason during the term, a note will be sent home to you. Dates for observing in the classroom during **Open Class Weeks** are posted on our Web site "Events" calendar and in the studio. You will probably also receive an email reminder the week before. During these designated weeks in a month, family and friends are invited to attend classes and speak with teachers. These Open Weeks are the only times classes may be viewed from inside the studio.

with your passion...

Your Teachers

The **faculty at Staar Academy** is a highly experienced teaching team with an impressive history as performers. Some, in fact, still dance professionally. In the drop-down menu under "About Us" on our Web site, you will find a brief biography of each member of our faculty. We encourage you to look up your teachers and learn about their own training and stage credits.



Dressing Rooms are there at the back of the studio

The Faculty Dressing Room is for Staar instructors and visiting guest artists (except for rehearsals as noted). Fathers/male guardians **SHOULD NOT** enter either girls' dressing rooms. Lockers can be rented for a nominal fee; please ask the secretary for prices.



Lost & Found articles will be held until midyear, and then again until the end of the school year. After these dates, they will be given to charity. Staar Academy is not responsible for personal belongings left in the dressing rooms. If you forget some of your gear, you may borrow that item from the Lost & Found for your class period that day. Ask the secretary or your class assistant to help you locate what you need.

Use of Staar studio space for picture taking, videotaping, or any other purpose is available, is based on management decision & requires payment of a rental fee. Studio use must be scheduled with the secretary at least one week in advance.

Parking for the studio is available on Newark Avenue and adjacent side streets. We cannot use the parking lot behind the Academy since it is a private lot . You should take the No Parking signs seriously—traffic police do ticket vehicles parked illegally on Newark and adjoining streets. We try to reserve the No Parking area in front of the studio as a **drop-off zone** for arriving students. Please be considerate to other families and do not park or stand your vehicle in the drop-off zone while waiting to pick up a student.



Class Attendance and Etiquette

Attendance is taken every week. If you have to miss a class, please call the office and let us know. There are no refunds for classes not taken, but **missed classes** (including snow-day cancellations) may be made up by taking any other class of the same type and level before the end of the term. However, you must schedule the makeup with the secretary at least one day before you take the class and obtain an admission slip from the desk to be given to the teacher at the start of the makeup. Students are encouraged to attend the classes on their current enrollment contract whenever possible, and the Academy reserves



the right to limit the number of makeup students in any given class, or to cap the number of makeup classes taken by an individual student in a particular class. Priority for space will be given to regularly enrolled students in any class. Makeups may not be taken during Open Class Weeks. Holiday closings are part of the term calendar and do not constitute missed classes; no makeups are given for holiday closings. An up-to-date class schedule is always available at the studio take-one board and is also maintained as a printable document on our Web site. Any temporary **changes in the schedule** are posted in the reception area and announced in class, usually with a written flyer sent home to explain the change. You will be notified by phone or mail if a permanent schedule change affects your class. Classes require consistent attendance of at least ten students to stay on the schedule, and Staar Academy cannot be held responsible for changes in instructors and schedules.

Car pools can be arranged through the office. Please see the secretary if you need assistance with this.



Weather closings are posted on the Web site and announced on the Staar answering machine. Call the studio or WBC office, or check our Web site to confirm closings.

All students are expected to arrive 10 mins before start of class and prepared. The first part of class is important for an effective warm up, and lateness is disruptive to the rest of the class.



Students

more than ten minutes late will not be admitted to their class. Parents of young dancers: It is especially important that you be **on time for class**. It is harder for a young dancer to adjust to the classroom environment when he or she is late, and it is distracting to the other children. Please **pick up your child promptly**. The Academy is not responsible for children left unsupervised before or after class. **Gum chewing** is *not* allowed in class; **no food or drinks** should be brought into the studios. And please, visit the rest room *before* class—especially important for 3- to 6-year-olds.

Tuition, Fees, and Your Staar Account

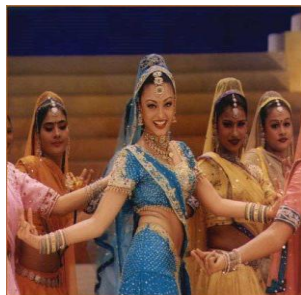
Current **tuition prices and fees** are listed on our Web site. (Go to "Enrollment>Tuition.") Your registration is subject to all the terms and conditions stated on your **registration contract**, as well as being conditional on your adherence to the policies and expectations outlined in this handbook. You should have retained a copy of your contract when you registered, or the form can be downloaded from our Web site. (Go to our website to Studio Policy page to print out the contract, which also outlines our available payment plans.)

Registrations are accepted for most classes throughout the year. We will prorate the tuition for **late registrations** accepted after the first class of a particular month.



For any additional enrollments from your household during the same term, there is a **5% sibling discount**. This may be combined with early registration discounts. Current students earn a \$20 **tuition credit** for each new student referred to the Academy. If the new student is still active and paid in full by the credit is deducted from any balance still due on that date, or a credit is posted to your account that may be used toward future tuition fees. There is no limit on the number of referral credits you may accrue.

New students and those on **payment plans** should especially note the following:



- Payments are due the first of every month. We accept cash, check, money order, Visa, or MasterCard.
- No refunds and no cash credits will be given for any reason.
- Payment Plans require a backup credit card number, which will be automatically charged on the 16th of the month if another form of

payment has not yet been received.

- Dropping a class incurs a drop fee and requires *written notification* to the Academy. Also note: tuition billing will continue until such notification is received.

Scholarship Opportunities

Scholarship would be made available for students soon. Various scholarships would be made available based on talent, and financial need. These scholarships range from partial to full assistance. Students between the ages of 8 and 18, with or without experience, are eligible to audition. The dates for this year's audition would be posted on our Web site "Events" calendar.

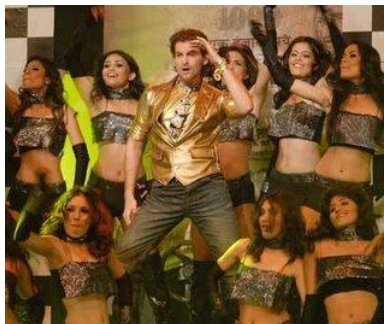
Performing Opportunities

Each spring the Academy produces **public performances** at a local stage facility .

Participation in Academy performances is *not* a requirement. If you do elect to perform, there is a fee for participation that helps cover the expenses of production, including facilities, equipment, additional staff, and costume fees. Detailed performance information is mailed to your home around mid-, with permission slips and participation costs.

Our spring concert series includes the following:

Dance Concerts: Our dance concerts showcase the talents of students at the Staar I level and above. Intermediate and advanced students will perform with their Workshop class. In addition, current members of the Staar Dance Company can audition for the company's spring production.



Classical Performances: Classical & Folk dance students perform at all levels in our Indian classical production.



Studio Performance for Elementary and Juniors:

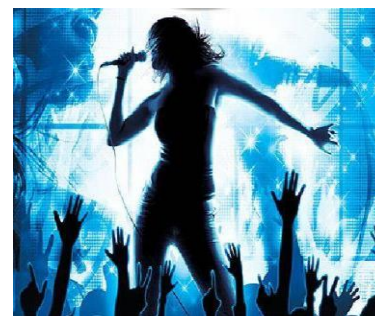
Younger students studying at the Elementary II Dance level also have the opportunity to perform for friends and family, but in a more relaxed, less intimidating venue—the spring studio performance, which makes use of our own lovely studio facilities as an intimate performance space. Pre Staar students in the 3- and 4-year old range and Elementary I Dance students appear in an open dress rehearsal with a performance atmosphere for their families to enjoy in our Staar studio



performance space. (No additional fees apply at the Pre Staar and Elementary I level. **Participation fees apply at the Elementary II level.**)



Costumes for all these performances *except* the studio performances are provided on a rental basis; there is a fee for each costume. Students will be fitted in prior months to performance. Costumes arrive at the studio for the dress rehearsal and performance in the care of our production staff. They may not be taken home. Eating or drinking in costume is not allowed. Costumes for the studio performances are the students' regular class clothes and no fee applies. (Please make sure their dancewear is clean and free from rips and tears.



Rehearsals for all performing classes at the beginning levels and above in Bollywood, Bhangra, Classical and Folk, are kept to a minimum. If extra rehearsal time is needed beyond regular class time, rehearsals

are scheduled during the month prior to the concerts, and you will be notified. *Please check your child's dance bag, the Web site, or the bulletin board at the studio for updates.* (There are never additional rehearsals for the studio Pre-Staar or Elementary I performances. *However*, there is a dress rehearsal for the Elementary II level. You will be notified of the date and time.)

Rehearsals for Staar Members in the spring production will begin in January, following an audition for senior company members and apprentices. Rehearsals are held on either Friday evenings or Saturday afternoons, and a schedule is always posted on our Web site and in the Staar reception area. The first 3 rehearsals may not be missed, and after that only 3 absences (excused or unexcused) are allowed. If your child feels he or she cannot keep this schedule, please notify the office, and the student will be placed with a different performing class that does NOT have as heavy a rehearsal schedule. (Please note, however, that their performance may not be on Pointe.)

Stage rehearsals and dress rehearsals for any of these performances—including the dress rehearsal for Elementary II level—*cannot be missed*. All students must attend their dress rehearsal in its entirety to be able to perform. There are **no exceptions** to this rule.

Tickets for dance concert and performances are reserved seating and go on sale around mid-March (depending on concert dates). Information concerning the purchase of tickets for the concert will be sent in January. General admission **tickets for Elementary II studio performances** are sent home (five per family) a few weeks prior to the date. Participation fees for Elementary II students include the cost of these tickets. Additional tickets will be offered to a waiting list at \$10 per ticket two weeks before the performance as space permits. There are no tickets required for the Pre Staar/Elementary I open class.

Videotaping is not permitted during rehearsals or concert performances because of privacy and copyright issues. (At all studio performances parents are permitted to videotape their children from the side aisles and the back of the audience.) As indicated on your signed contract form, you have given permission to Staar Academy to photograph and videotape your classes and performances and use these images for studio advertising and promotion. No other photographer or videographer besides those we employ has permission to take pictures of our facilities, our dancers, or our choreographic works.



Professionally produced videotapes and DVDs of our concert and performances are available for purchase, and order forms are available at the studio and the auditorium at concert time. Senior dancers who need to compile audition tapes for professional companies or summer and college dance programs, and who wish to videotape their performance for this purpose, should notify us at least a month in advance of their concert, so that the necessary arrangements and releases can be completed.



Dress Attire

There is a dress code for students at Staar Academy. No Shoes are allowed on the dance floor. The Students are encouraged to wear comfortable dancing clothes. **No Miniskirts or jeans.**

Hair: For all classes, hair must be pulled back, away from the face. For all Ballet classes, hair must be styled into a bun.



How to Do a Bun: Pull hair back into a high ponytail and fasten with a ponytail holder. Twist the tail into a spiral and wind it around the holder in a circular path, securing it with bobby pins and hair pins as you go; cover the bun with a hair net and anchor the net with pins. If too short for a bun, secure hair away from the face with barrettes.

Eyeglasses: It is always preferable to take class without wearing eyeglasses, not simply for aesthetic reasons but for safety issues as well. If your child must wear glasses in class, they must be adequately secured. Please be aware your child will be asked to rehearse and perform without glasses. If your child must wear glasses in performance, we request a doctor's note.

The Staar Production

WHAT TO EXPECT IF YOUR CHILD IS SELECTED FOR THE Staar Annual Festival

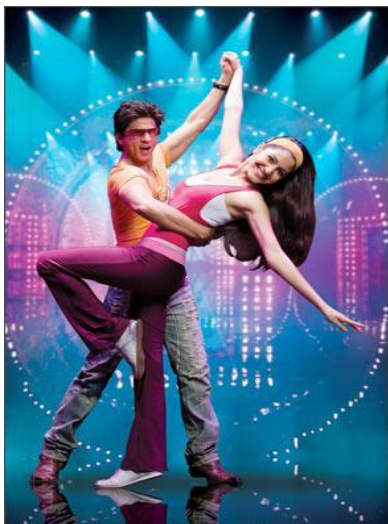
Junior Company members are chosen on the basis of ability and must be at least 8 years old with a minimum of 2 plus years of dance training.

Senior Company members are chosen on the basis of ability and must be at least 12 years old, at Pointe B level, and following the required pointe curriculum for the Intensive Program. These dancers will perform in Staar Fest as well as other performances during the year.

Student dancers must be at least 7 years old, in second grade, and at the Staar II level. Students 7 years old and in first grade may audition for a waiting list. Student dancers will perform only at In House Staar Productions and not at other events.

Casting decisions are made by the Artistic Directors and are final. Please be aware that dancers are given roles suitable to their age, level, ability, and size. Dancers may be asked to perform the same role for several seasons if the Artistic Directors deem them to be the best dancer for the role. Dancers have the right to decline an invitation to be a member of the Staar Dance Company and perform in the Staar Dance Company's *annual* production. However, no alternate roles will be found for them, and they will not perform with the company that season. The Artistic Directors must be notified that a role has been declined before rehearsals begin. Details of these policies are communicated on the day of the audition.

Your commitment: At least one parent of each dancer (company members and student dancers) must attend the initial parent volunteer meeting. Additionally, one parent of each dancer



appearing in *The Staar Fest* must commit to a volunteer position requiring at least 4 hours of their time. Volunteer forms will be sent out with your child's contract. Please note that your child will not be allowed to participate in the production unless one parent has volunteered to help during *The Staar* production period. For safety reasons, parents of children under 12 must supervise their child's



dressing room during at least one performance or rehearsal in addition to their 4-hour volunteer commitment.

Staar Dance Company membership involves **dues** for all Junior, Senior, and Student dancers, plus a contribution to the costume fund. In addition, each family, regardless of the number of children participating, is required to join the Staar Dance Company for the season at the minimum level of family membership. Fees are posted with all audition information on the Staar Web site. The cost usually includes your family's copy of a professionally recorded VHS tape or DVD of the production.

Rehearsals: Rehearsals will be on Fridays, Saturdays, and/or Sundays, depending on your role(s), for the 12 weeks preceding *The Staar Fest*. Only 3 absences are allowed for company dancers and 3 absences for student dancers. All dancers must attend the first 3 rehearsals for their role—these are setting rehearsals.

The two weeks before the performance, all rehearsals are mandatory. If absences exceed these limits, the dancer will become the understudy for that role. No dancer will be allowed to perform without attending the stage rehearsals and the final stage, tech, and dress rehearsals in their entirety. **There are no exceptions.**

Performances run Friday to Sunday over one December weekend at the Staar Studio. All performers must miss two days of school for final rehearsals and performing. The Friday performance is attended by children from area schools and so must be held during school hours.

Full details of your participation commitment if you are cast in the production, as well as information about applicable fees, are given out at the audition. Policies and procedures are reviewed at a mandatory parents' meeting prior to the first rehearsal.

