**Student Handbook**

**About Us**

Soul Steppin’ Studio is an exciting dance studio that will offer dance instruction to children, teens, and adults. Sole Steppin’s strategy is very well defined in our mission statement, “To teach dancers how to speak from the *soul* one *step* at a time.” We offer classes for children and teens on both an open class and registration basis. We offer open classes for adults. Our curriculum will focus on social and recreational dances, fitness dance, and exploratory classes in ballet. There will be a heavy concentration of classes for preschoolers and kindergarteners, with classes offered in creative movement, creative dance, acrobatics, and ballet. Classes for older children include hip-hop, lyrical, contemporary, jazz, and acrobatics. Adult classes will focus on social and fitness dances. Courses include Xtend Barre, yoga, hip-hop and ballroom.

**1. Studio Certifications and Quality of Faculty**

Soul Steppin’ Studio ensures the quality of dance and acrobatic education they are providing to its’ students. Our studio will hold dance and acro certifications. It is our goal to provide qualified instructor(s) that understand the dance industry are teaching their children. Our instructor(s) will attend various conferences and take master classes to expand skills in dance and learn new teaching methods. Conferences can include but are not limited to:

* Dance Teacher Summit
* Dance Studio Owners Association Workshops
* Millenium Dance Complex Dance Workshops
* Monster’s of Hip Hop Conference

Our instructors will have a passion for dance that represents the mission statement. They will inspire, motivate, and instill a joy of movement in his/her classes. The instructor(s) will focus on encouraging individual expression through movement.

**2. Class Size**

Parents want smaller classes to make sure their children receive more individual attention. Our class sizes will not exceed 15 students, compared to industry average of 20-25 students.

**3. Class variety**

Parents want their children to have a choice in the classes they take. We will offer a variety of different classes to children of all ages, providing instruction for many different styles of dance.

**4. Facilities**

Soul Steppin’s facilities goes above and beyond our competition by offering a 1,200 square foot shock absorbing hardwood dance floor, glass doors to the studio for parent observation, waiting area with wireless Internet service, and sufficient lot space for future growth of studio space.

Soul Steppin’ will also be offering classes at an offsite location in Burlington, CO. We will be renting the Rec Room from the Burlington Activities Department located at the Community Center. There will be ample dance space that will allow for the proper dance and acro training. The Rec Room has marley dance floors and acro mats.

Soul Steppin’s success comes from our ability to identify and integrate the four customer needs on a daily basis. We want to ensure that every student and parent is treated with respect and dignity. Every dancer and parent will be treated equally.

**FOR THE PARENTS:**

**“WE’RE IN THIS TOGETHER”**

We believe that children’s success depends on the support of their parents or guardians. Because your commitment to the process makes an enormous difference, we encourage you to be a part of your child’s dance education.

Our programs rely on a positive atmosphere and educational experience for our faculty, students, and their parents. Cooperation between all parents is expected. Showing respect—for other parents, the students, and the faculty—makes an important impression on the children. You are a role model for your child about how to interact with others in a professional setting.

**FOR ALL PARENTS AND STUDENTS**

**Understanding Dance Education**

Dance is an individual art form and children need to be allowed to achieve at a pace that’s comfortable.

· Encourage your child to be the best that he or she can be regardless of what others may achieve. No two students will progress at the same rate, even if they experience the exact same training. It’s important to encourage children to focus on themselves, give their all, and be satisfied with their own accomplishments.

· Not all children will develop into professional dancers. One of the primary goals of our faculty is to teach life lessons and skills that offer children the best chance for success. Dance education encompasses far more than technique and the steps your children learn. We believe the discipline of dance training gives young people a better understanding of commitment through learning, experiencing the spirit of teamwork, and discovering what they can accomplish through hard work.

· Our goal is to educate the minds, bodies, and souls of our students, teaching them the skills needed for a successful life, whether or not they stay involved in dance.

**General Policies**

· Students and parents should not go behind the office desk for any reason.

· Parents and students should never interrupt a class in session.

· Children must be supervised at all times and are not free to run around the lobby, basement, or classroom

areas.

· Never speak negatively about teachers, students, or parents from other studios or Soul Steppin.

· All students must show respect for their teachers at all times. Inappropriate behavior could result in

dismissal from the class and/or studio.

. Do not compare your students progress to that of other students in the class. Focus on the progress and

success of your student only. Everyone progresses at their own speed and that is ok.

. Please always allow 48 hours for responses to emails and phone calls.

. Abusing any of these general policies can result in dismissal from class and/or the studio.

**Studio Etiquette**

· Students are to dispose of GUM before entering the studio. Gum is a choking hazard.

· Food and soda are not permitted in the studios. Students must eat snacks/dinner in the reception area.

· Dance Bags must be placed in the reception room, inside the cubbies, NOT in the classroom.

· **No cell phones in class. ABSOLUTELY NO EXCEPTIONS.**

**Hours of Operation**

Soul Steppin’ Studio Directors and Instructors will be available by phone or email from 8 am to 8 pm Monday - Friday. Please always allow 48 hours for responses to emails and phone calls. Our front desk at our Goodland location will be managed during the evening hours.

Monday - 3:15 - 6:45 PM

Tuesday - 3:30 - 7:45 PM

Wednesday - NONE

Thursday - 5:00 - 8:30 PM

**Class Placement**

The instructor will regularly look at the students’ progress and/or placement. It is our policy to offer appropriate opportunities to every child. Age will be used as a guideline, but does not determine the child’s final placement.

The following criteria are evaluated;

· Technique

· Body Alignment

· Flexibility

· Style

· Previous years works in the classroom

· Attitude, motivation, attendance

· Recommendation by the faculty or by the Director.

Often a child is placed in a particular group or class where he or she will feel confident, in order to promote the development of self-esteem. Some students who are placed in a higher level become discouraged only to lose their passion for dance. Others respond to the challenge of being in a class with students who are more proficient by pushing themselves to work harder.

Placement is highly individualized and the factors that go into the decision are complex. Soul Steppin’ Studio has your child’s best interest in mind. Please trust we are placing your child where they will best succeed.

**Adding or Dropping a Class**

In the interest of keeping family accounts up-to-date and accurate, students who wish to add/drop a class from which they are registered must discuss this with the instructor based on class availability and scheduling. Parents/Students wishing to drop a class will have to give a 30 day notice and will be REQUIRED to pay a $75 drop fee. It is especially important to correct changes in a student’s class schedule before costume orders are placed in late December or parents will be billed for the class costume(s). The drop fee can help cover the cost of returning the costume, reworking choreography, etc.

**Classroom Observation**

Parents may observe their child’s class through the glass windows located in the studio lobby or through our observation windows during weeks not designated as “Parent Watch Week.”

· Please refrain from shouting instructions or distracting your child in any way.

· We ask that you observe quietly. Please place all cell phones and electronic devices on silent, and ensure siblings are monitored and quiet during observations.

· Please do not walk into the class without the permission of the teacher.

**Class Visitors**

Safety issues and legal responsibilities make it impossible for us to allow students to bring visitors into the classroom. Students should not invite siblings, other relatives, or friends to their classes with the exception of special events such as “Bring a Friend Week” and in-school performances.

**Student and Parent Use of Social Media**

Use of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogging, and other online social-media vehicles is commonplace. This policy is intended to provide Soul Steppin’ students and parents with guidelines to eliminate any confusion concerning the use of social media. Failure to comply will result in termination of enrollment.

· You DO NOT have permission to reveal any information that compromises Soul Steppin’ Studio. By that we mean you are forbidden to share personal information about the Director, other students or their families, or anything that is proprietary and/or confidential to them or Soul Steppin’ Studio.

· Students and parents should neither claim nor imply that they are speaking on behalf of Soul Steppin’ Studio.

· Never post anything that could compromise the self-esteem of students who attend Soul Steppin’ Studio.

· If you post videos of class or rehearsals, don’t post any choreography in its entirety; Soul Steppin’ Studio owns the copyright to all choreography taught at the studio.

· Respect the law, including those laws governing defamation, discrimination, harassment, and copyright and fair use. As stated in this handbook, parents and students should never post negative comments about other studios or teachers. Also, please do not post negative comments about studio activities such as competitions, conventions, and performances or about the Directors of those events.

· Ensure that your social networking conduct is consistent with all of the policies contained in this handbook.

**Services Rendered**

We have targeted our classes at those markets with the highest interest—preschool children, teens interested in hip hop, and adults interested in both dance and exercise. We have also added classes for older students so students enrolled in classes can move on to other classes.

Soul Steppin’ focuses on providing a variety of dance offerings:

· Traditional - ballet, jazz

· Specialty – pointe, hip hop, Acro

· New Age – lyrical/contemporary/modern

· Adult – fitness (yoga, barre, etc.), social

**Preschool Classes**

There will be a heavy concentration of classes for preschoolers. These classes will introduce young children to the basics of dance and movement. Because children naturally are interested in music and rhythm, there typically is a high interest in dance and dance-related activity classes among children of this age group, and we expect this segment of the curriculum to have high enrollment. Number of classes will be offered based on enrollment and demand.

Following are the planned preschool classes. Classes are for children aged 3 to 4. Classes will be 30 minutes and limited to a total of 15 students.

- Creative movement classes

- Pre-Ballet

- Acro

- Hip Hop

- Ballet/Acro Combo

**Fives & Sixes - Kindergarten Level**

Many children in kindergarten and first grade, especially girls, love to dance but generally lack the skills to dance with older children. For most, they’ve outgrown the preschool classes and are ready to tackle new challenges. For this group, we’ve created a special set of classes, called “Fives & Sixes”. These classes continue the skills introduced in the Preschool Classes, but with increased emphasis on discipline and technique.

Following are the planned Fives & Sixes classes. Classes are limited to 10 students and will be 45 minutes.

- Ballet

- Acro

- Jazz

- Hip Hop

**Kids**

This group roughly covers children aged 7 to 11. Based on skill, some students may take classes in other sections. Following are the planned Kids classes. Classes are 45 minutes. Classes are limited to 15 students. If class sizes regularly exceed 10 students, another class will be offered.

- Ballet

- Lyrical Contemporary

- Acro

- Jazz

- Hip Hop

**Twelve +**

This group is for children 12 and older. By this time, many children have lost interest in formal dance instruction but still like to dance, particularly street dances and freestyles of dance. Teen classes will emphasize dance styles popular among young people, especially boys. As enrollment grows, I plan to add additional classes to this section.

Following are the Twelve+ classes. Classes are limited to 15 students but more sections can be added if enrollment grows. Classes are 45 hour in length.

- Ballet

- Acro

- Jazz

- Contemporary (required ballet training)

- Pre-Pointe (required 4 to 5 years of ballet training)

- Solo (style of dancers choice)

- Hip Hop

**Tuition Policy**

**A. Due Date:** Full monthly tuition is **due by** **8th of each month** unless the due date falls on a Saturday or Sunday, tuition will be **due on Monday the 9th/10th**. 1st Month’s tuition is due on September 8th. Registration fees will need to be paid at the time of registration to ensure a spot. Soul Steppin’ Studio reserves the right to cancel any enrollment of any student who is 60 days delinquent in tuition payments.

· *If you know you will be gone the week tuition is due, please pay in advance.*

· *If your child is sick the week tuition is due, pay on-line, or call to make other arrangements.*

**B. First Months Tuition:** All parents are required to pay the registration fee upon registering as this payment holds your child’s place in class. Students will not be admitted to enroll without this payment. The first month’s tuition is due on September 8th and is non-refundable.

**C. Credit Card Policy:** After registering (paying your registration fee), monthly tuition must be paid by automatic credit card payment, paypal, checks, or cash. If you are paying by cash, keep in mind, the studio may not have change so please pay with exact amounts. You can set up payment arrangements on our Studio’s website. Tuition will be debited from your account between the 8th and 10th of each month (September-May).

· There will be a **3% convenience fee** on all credit or debit payments to cover the fees charged by those companies. There are no convenience fees associated with payment by check.

· If your credit card is declined your account will be charged a **$20.00 LATE FEE** if not paid on the due date.

· When your credit card expires please be pro-active and contact us with your updated information. Tuition will be charged directly to your specified VISA, MasterCard, or Discover Card.

**D. Late Fee:** There will be a $5 late charge immediately following the due date. If the student’s account goes unpaid through the end of the month, an additional $25 late fee will be charged. If you fail to pay tuition and late fees for 2 months, your child will be dismissed from classes and will not be refunded any tuition, registration fee, costume fee, and/or recital fees paid.

**Pricing for Classes**

All children’s classes will offer early registration. If a child misses the registration date and classes are open, we will look to see what the skill level of the child is and determine if they are able to pick up the techniques that are taught in the sessions that are missed. They will have to pay the full amount of tuition for the 4 months even if they enroll during the last two. Prices per class are as follows:

 1 class- $9.50 or $38 per month

 2 classes - $8.625 or $69 per month

 3 classes - $8.25 or $99 per month

 4 classes - $8.00 or $120 per month

 5+ classes - $7.50 or $150 per month

 Solos - $25 meeting for 30 minutes twice a month

All classes will be once a week. Families that have more than one member in classes will receive a discount of total monthly tuition.

**Registration Fee**

**Registration will occur 1 time per year**. Students will need to register in advance and pay an

**annual registration fee** of $25 to enroll in the studio or $50 per family. Registration fees cover the cost of postage, insurance, taxes, on-line newsletters, handbooks, ASCAP music license fees, supplies, website maintenance fees, on-line portal fees and so on. Registration fees are not refundable with the exception of preschool students who are determined to be unready for dance and may receive a credit for the following season. Registration fees are due upon registration.

**Adult Classes**

Adult classes will be open classes. Students will not need to register. They can drop in and take a class whenever it is scheduled. This format provides many advantages. Because so many adults have hectic work and personal schedules, they often are reluctant to sign up for dance classes knowing that they may miss many of them and still have to pay for them. Open classes provide the flexibility they need.

Open classes also allow individuals to sample different classes and discover which ones best match their interests and needs. Because many adults dance for both social reasons and to get fit, we have designed a curriculum that includes dance styles that combine elements of both.

Following are the Adult classes planned for the initial curriculum. All classes will be 50 minutes and be limited in size.

- Xtend Barre

- Hip Hop Cardio Fitness

- Hatha Yoga

**Pricing for Adult Classes**

Adult classes will be $10 a class. Students can purchase passes where classes are offered a discounted rate. Passes can be used for any open class. Following are class card options:

Cost for one class:.......................................................... $10

Pass for 16 classes:...................................... $60

Pass for 96 classes: ................................... $216

Pass for 214 classes:…………………………...... $360

**Promotion**

We will run advertising in the local newspapers, radio ads, and community announcement areas such as bulletin boards and large signs. We will also advertise on the studio’s website and run ads to let people know we are taking registration. We will use dance management software that helps me keep track of customers so I can send them promotional offers and news.

**Additional Fees**

Tuition does not include the registration fee, dancewear, shoes, costumes, recital tickets, private lessons, or special events. To offset bank charges, Soul Steppin’ Studio will charge $35.00 for each returned check.

**Arrival and Departure**

We cannot provide supervision for students outside of class.

· We encourage students to arrive 10 minutes before class starts.

· For their safety, children under age 10 should be picked up immediately after class. Students, ages 10 and older, must be picked up no more than 10 minutes after their class is completed. Repeated violation of this policy will result in the cancellation of the student’s registration, forfeiture of all registration fees, costume deposits, and tuition. If you know you are going to be late to pick up your child, please call the studio and let our office manager know. We ask that Burlington Parents come in and pick your child up so that the instructor knows they are safely with the right guardian. You may pick your child up at the doors located inside the Community Center to the Rec Room. Please do not go to the East Side glass door as this can be disruptive to our class.

Please do not let your child go into the dance studio until the teacher calls them for class. Teachers are only responsible for students during class time. Our office manager is not responsible for students at any time.

**Attendance**

All students are expected to attend their regularly scheduled classes. Each class offers a step forward in the educational process. A missed class could leave a child one step behind the other students. If you know your child will be absent from class please call the studio and we will relay the message to your child’s instructor.

During the months of September through May, choreography for the recitals will be taught and rehearsed. It is important for children to feel completely confident with the choreography and the performance. Missing class during this period could result in frustration for the students and their teachers and classmates.

· If students are excessively absent and miss more than **(4)** rehearsals in the same class between October and December or March to April, the instructor **may** have the option to pull the student from their recital piece. **Families will not be reimbursed for any fees associated with the recital or monthly tuition.**

**Tardiness**

Dance is a physical activity that requires the body to be warmed up in order to execute movement safely. Late students miss the proper warm-up and/or barre and therefore may sustain injury. Students who arrive more than 10 minutes late may need to sit out and observe class for reasons of personal safety.

**Makeup Classes**

Students who miss a class for illness/inclement weather closing will have the opportunity to make it up with another similar class within 4 weeks of the absence. Monthly tuition payments will not change in the event of any missed lesson. Please check with the office to determine the best makeup class for your child.

**Medical Information**

· Parents must notify the Director/and or teachers regarding children who use an inhaler or who may require medications during their time at Soul Steppin’ Studio.

· It is also important to inform the Director and/or teachers about your child’s existing medical conditions or learning disabilities at the time of registration and throughout the school year. All information about our students is confidential.

**Illness**

Colds, flu, and other contagious diseases occur frequently and spread easily among children. To help protect your own child’s health and to minimize the possibility of contagion at studio, please keep your child at home if you observe any of the following symptoms:

· Nasal discharge that is green or yellow

· Complaints of ear pain

· Consistent cough

· Severe sore throat

· Eyes that are pink, burning, itching, or producing discharge

· Diarrhea or vomiting

· Fever

If these symptoms or other conditions deemed contagious are observed in your child during a class, you will be called to pick up your child immediately. When your child has a fever, they must be fever free for **24 hours** before returning to dance. If there are any lingering signs of illness, such as glassy or watery eyes, listlessness, and drowsiness, **please keep your child at home**. This will help to ensure that the illness has passed and that your child will be well enough to resume class activities the following week.

**Lost and Found**

Please mark all dancewear, shoes, and personal items with your child's name. We will make every effort to locate and return lost items; however, we cannot be responsible for any items that your child brings to class. Please do not bring expensive items such as I-Pods/I-Pads/DS Systems to the studio. All misplaced unlabeled items will be placed in our lost and found bin in the dressing room. Please check the lost and found bin frequently. Items not claimed by end of each month will be donated to the Goodland Thrift Store.

**Photos**

Individual, group, and class photos taken by us or an outside company may be used in any or all forms of media advertising. If you do not want your child photographed for media advertising, please tell our office manager at the front desk.

**Substitute Teachers**

We reserve the right to provide a substitute teacher if the regularly scheduled teacher is ill or otherwise unable to teach class. Furthermore, we encourage our instructors to continue their training by attending workshops, classes, and seminars. Hence, an instructor may request a substitute in order to attend such functions. Students should not “Skip” class because they know a substitute teacher will be covering their class. Tenured dancers know that the more teachers they are exposed to, the better they will be able to perform at auditions as they are adept at picking up multiple styles quickly.

**Emergency Evacuation**

Although we have never experienced an emergency evacuation at the studio, we are prepared for such a circumstance. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in all classrooms. Students are to evacuate quietly and walk in single file as quickly as possible to the designated area, where teachers will check roll. Students and teachers are to return to classrooms and buildings when the all-clear signal is given.

**Parking Lot Safety**

Our studio is located on two busy streets. Please enter and exit our parking lot with extreme caution. Please cross the street after looking both ways. Always attend your child walking to and from the studio. Students ages 9 and under will not be admitted to leave the studio without a parent. Students will be instructed to stay in the office until a parent comes to get them. Soul Steppin’ will not be held liable for injuries incurred inside/outside of the building.

· Never park your vehicle in any area that is not a designated parking space. Please park your car in the

parking lot.

· The front curb is not a drop off zone.

· If you park in a space that is very close to the building or its windows, please do not leave your car idling.

· Please do not allow siblings to play in the parking lot.

**Discipline Policy**

In order to maintain a happy, healthy, professional environment, students are taught the importance of being a part of the group. We encourage students to have respect for other students, the teachers and staff, and studio property, and we foster the development of good habits and compliance with rules of conduct.

Soul Steppin’ students are expected to respect and willingly abide by all rules and regulations of the studio. Students are to conduct themselves in a courteous manner in the studio and at studio sponsored activities. Misconduct or poor attitude will result in the student’s dismissal so that those who are interested in learning may do so without interruption.

Our staff and faculty are trained to use constructive techniques of discipline to maintain class control and handle individual misbehavior.

· Children who exhibit unacceptable behavior or attitudes are told what is wrong and directed to a positive alternative approach or behavior.

· If a child strikes another child, the two are respectfully separated and each is asked to explain what happened. They are then asked to help solve the problem, talk to each other, and reconcile with one another.

· Children who are disruptive will be respectfully asked to stop the behavior. If the behavior is repeated, they will be reminded of it and told how it affects others. If the disruption continues, the children involved will be asked to sit down for a short period of time before rejoining the class.

· If a child’s misbehavior continues to disrupt the class, the parent or guardian will be called to pick up the child.

· If problems continue to persist a meeting will be scheduled with the parent and Director.

**Termination of Enrollment**

In certain circumstances, when it is in the best interest of one or more students, it may be necessary for the studio owner or director to terminate a student’s enrollment. Every effort will be made to correct a problematic situation before terminating enrollment. Reasons for termination of enrollment include the following:

· Disruptive or dangerous behavior by students or their parents

· Abuse of other children, staff, or property

· Inability of Soul Steppin’ Studio to meet the child’s needs

· Participation in drug and Alcohol Abuse

· Family Accounts are **60 days delinquent** in tuition

· Parents/Students negatively impact the studio atmosphere

**Annual Spring Recitals**

Soul Steppin’ will hold a Spring Annual Recital each year. Each student will be charged a $25 Recital Fee to cover the costs of renting the venue, liability insurance, and any other costs. The recital will consist of class costume orders. Each class will have a costume in which the student will be required to purchase. Depending on the number of classes the student is enrolled in, they could have a few different costumes. The director will decide which costume best fits the performance number. Costumes will be ordered in early January to ensure timely delivery for recital time.

Recital and Dress Rehearsal dates will not be the same every year due to availability of facility and schedules. The director will have Recital and Dress Rehearsal dates posted at the beginning of every year. Please see our website or office for this information. **Every student will be required to attend Dress Rehearsal to participate in recital. There will be no exception to this policy.**

**A big part of dance training includes learning through performance. The experience helps build self-esteem and confidence, which can result in better in-studio presentations, improved social skills, and strong college and job interview skills.**

**Costume Orders**

Parents/Student will be responsible for the full costume cost. There may be an occurrence where a prop is necessary. In some instances, the director may have the prop on hand and the student will borrow it for that performance but other times, the parent will be responsible for purchasing and handling the prop. We will take measurements for costumes in **December**. Costume deposits will be due in **November** and full payment will be due in **February**. We will not order costumes that have not been paid for. Soul Steppin’ is not responsible for costumes that do not arrive in time for recital due to late payment.

· Costumes are delivered in March-April.

· Once costumes arrive we will try them on during class time to ensure a proper fit. If a costume does not fit, we are able to exchange within one week of receiving it at no cost to you, if it is returned in its original packaging.

· Some classes may require additional costume accessories. These accessories include, but are not limited to tights, gloves, socks, props, etc. **Parents are responsible for purchasing these items.**

In an effort to ensure that costumes are delivered in time for recital photographs and an organized distribution to our students, costume orders are placed during the December winter break. Costume manufacturers do not accept cancellations or offer refunds; therefore the studio does not refund costume balances.