



**PROFESSIONAL  
DIVISION  
GUIDEBOOK**

# ABOUT OUR SCHOOL



**Ashley McNeil** *Director, Alberta Ballet School*

Established in 1991, Alberta Ballet School is recognized as one of Canada's leading professional dance schools. Under the leadership of Ashley McNeil, Alberta Ballet School's Professional Division has an annual enrollment of approximately 100 local, national and international students in grades 7 through 12\*. In addition to the intensive artistic training, the school offers private on-site academic instruction, residence accommodation, summer training programs and performances opportunities to all students.

As the official training school of Alberta Ballet Company ([www.albertaballet.com](http://www.albertaballet.com)), our students are afforded the opportunity to train with the ballet's artistic staff and dance in company productions. This opportunity paired with the quality instruction provided by our acclaimed school faculty ensures our students have every opportunity to develop a professional dance career.

We consider Alberta Ballet School unique from other professional ballet schools. In addition to providing world class ballet training sought by today's professional dance companies, at Alberta Ballet School we:

- Prioritize our student's physical and emotional wellbeing over everything else.
- Develop well-rounded students who upon graduation, can pursue any career be it artistic or academic.
- Artistic and academic faculty work in unison to ensure student success while fostering a positive, healthy and inclusive environment.

On behalf of everyone here, we are thrilled you are considering our school for your future.

**If you have any questions feel free to contact us at [registration@albertaballet.com](mailto:registration@albertaballet.com) or 403.245.2245 ext. 722**

# ABOUT OUR PROGRAM



**The Professional Division at Alberta Ballet School is a harmonious balance of academic and artistic training available to young dancers who aspire to have professional dance careers.**

Each school day is divided into equal halves with students receiving both academic and artistic instruction daily. In addition to daily coursework, students plan and participate in local and school events to foster school spirit, hone leadership skills and build lifelong friendships.

Acceptance into the Professional Division consists of a successful artistic audition in addition to a personal academic review. Students of our school study artistic and academic curriculum from September to late June. Our Professional Division program is offered to students on a year-by-year basis with notice of re-acceptance provided to students and families for the following school year in early spring.



# ARTISTIC PROGRAM

**Alberta Ballet School provides rigorous dance training to create a versatile dancer, one who is capable of creating every type of movement and style sought by today's dance companies.**

## **BALLET**

Our ballet curriculum is specifically developed for Alberta Ballet School incorporating prominent influences from Cecchetti, Vaganova and French systems of training. Daily coursework includes pointe, boy's technique, pas de deux, repertoire and variations, character dance and body conditioning.

### **ASSIGNMENT OF BALLET CLASS LEVELS AND POINTE WORK**

The Director, in collaboration with faculty, makes all decisions in regards to the level placement of students, recommendations regarding exams, and the appropriate timing of pointe work training. Students may be moved to different classes when, in the school's judgment, the student's training would be improved by such a change. Each student's development as a dancer is individually assessed and tailored to accommodate varied stages of physical development, coordination, ability to assimilate instruction and degree of motivation. During full-time study, student levels are set by stage and ability to ensure a secure, proper basic technical foundation.

## **PROGRESS REPORTS**

Students in the Professional Division may be asked to participate in in-house assessment classes throughout the year. These classes are designed to help monitor the students' progress and give the students and their teachers valuable feedback. In some cases, the students may receive a mark in the class which will appear on one or more of their progress reports. Progress reports are distributed four times a year and help our teachers communicate progress to both students and parents. Parent- teacher interviews are also scheduled throughout the year in order for this progress to be further discussed.



## **CONTEMPORARY AND MODERN DANCE**

Contemporary and Modern dance classes are required programming at Alberta Ballet School. These classes ensure students are well prepared in many movement forms and have knowledge of differing idioms. Programming is customised to student's individual goals in either classical or contemporary dance. There is a strong emphasis on the learning and performing of repertoire as it serves an arena in which everything learned in technique class can be brought to the fore and realized. The program consequently includes partnering, and choreographic composition as well as discussion on the role the contemporary arts play in modern society.



## SCHOOL PRODUCTIONS AND PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

Each year, students have opportunities to perform in school-created showcases or events, including a formal Year End Performance. Alberta Ballet School's year-end production allows Professional Division students to perform at a nationally recognized venue complete with lights, costumes, stage design and the choreography of a professional level production. While younger students gain valuable experience, the audience witnesses the brilliance of our graduating students before they begin their careers at dance companies around the world.

## ALBERTA BALLET SCHOOL AND ALBERTA BALLET

Alberta Ballet School and Alberta Ballet are part of one organization that collaborates on many levels creating a unique organization and the only one of its kind in Canada.

Alberta Ballet company seeks dancers from the School for many of its annual productions, offering the ability to experience the life of a professional dancer, affording students the opportunity to gain valuable experience with a professional dance company and to work with numerous acclaimed choreographers.

This close partnership between the school and the company gives students an opportunity to jump-start their performing careers. Many graduates from the Alberta Ballet School have joined Alberta Ballet as company artists.



"What I am looking for when auditioning dancers, and I have auditioned dancers from all around the world, is exactly what the school is training its students to be – accomplished in all styles of classical ballet and able to adapt. There is no ballet company in the world today that only performs classical ballet and so today's dancers need to be more versatile. The students at Alberta Ballet School receive that training, and I am proud to have them on my stage."

— **Jean Grand-Maitre,**  
*Artistic Director,  
Alberta Ballet*



"Alberta Ballet School aims to educate and train young developing artists for the dance profession. In my association with the school over the past years, development of technique and artistry is self-evident in the students and in the quality of the teaching at all levels."

— **Diane van Schoor**  
*FISTD (CB) FRSA  
Alberta Ballet School's Artistic Advisor*



# ACADEMICS

Alberta Ballet School is an accredited private school providing on-site, traditional classroom academic programming designed to allow students to complete the requirements for an Alberta High School Diploma which is internationally recognized. Students graduate with the qualifications required to enter post-secondary studies. All students study the Alberta Education curriculum including instruction in mathematics, science, language arts and social studies.

The strength of our academic program ensures that students who choose not to pursue a career in dance after graduation will meet or exceed university entrance requirements. Our school is a consistent top performer amongst schools in the province with students scoring well above average on standardised examinations.

Our students experience a positive, personalized learning environment which caters to the unique background, talent and ability of each individual student. Average classroom size is approximately 15 students with over 87% of students receiving honour roll status last year. Alberta Ballet School provides academic support services to our international students ensuring their personal and educational goals are met while studying abroad.

Our academic faculty are certified by the province of Alberta and specialists in their respective fields. Alberta Ballet School's academic program is designed to blend seamlessly with the artistic expectations required of the students.

Our academic program includes two final examination periods at the end of each semester (January and June) and multiple semester checkpoint assessments.

**For more information on the Alberta Curriculum and programs of study, visit:**  
[www.learnalberta.ca/content/mychildslearning](http://www.learnalberta.ca/content/mychildslearning)



# FACILITY INFORMATION

## SCHOOL FACILITIES

Alberta Ballet School is located in downtown Calgary boasting six large studios and six classrooms in the same building. The school is spread over 30,000 square feet and includes a library, science lab, costume room, physiotherapy room, student changing rooms with showers and lockers, a lobby and dining area for students, a store for dance apparel and supplies, staff offices and a welcoming reception area. The school is a 24-hour secured facility with access only granted to students, faculty and approved guests.

## RESIDENCE

Alberta Ballet School's Residence is located on Calgary's Mount Royal University campus only 15 minutes from the school. Our multi-cultural setting provides students with a safe and familial atmosphere with structured supervision, security and nutritional support, all of which creates a strong foundation where our students can feel at home and thrive both physically and mentally. Our Residence Program includes school transportation, dietitian approved meals and access to the University's amenities including library, athletic facilities, and ample green space with views of the Rocky Mountains.

Our Residence Program offers students the opportunity to develop skills for self-reliance and independence while receiving ample support from our full time, caring and committed Residence Team.

**To ensure the highest level of student safety, and to maintain our school's esteemed reputation, all students are required to adhere to our school's attendance, uniform and code of conduct policies.**



## UNIFORMS AND SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Artistic and academic uniforms are worn at Alberta Ballet School to create a sense of community and cohesion in a professional learning environment. Students are required to wear their uniform while in the school or while attending outside school activities. Artistic uniforms consist of leotard colours and styles set by Alberta Ballet School, whereas the academic uniform consists of traditional kilt and/or dress pant, white dress shirt with school crest and a blazer.

Traditional school supplies are required for academic classes at Alberta Ballet School. A complete list of supplies is available in advance of the school year however supplies can be arranged and purchased through an organized program between the school and a reputable supplier.



# HEALTH AND WELLNESS

## Students' physical and mental health is of the utmost importance in meeting the demands of professional training.

Alberta Ballet School, in partnership with local health-care professionals, provides optional wellness services such as physiotherapy, massage, naturopath, and chiropractic care. Confidential, sport and personal psychological services are provided by an on-site school psychologist should students benefit. As well, our Registered Dietitian provides nutrition workshops for students and parents, as well as individual on-going consultations with students.

Our health care team works in tandem with our faculty to ensure each student's physical and mental health concerns are understood and all rehabilitation requirements are adhered to. All students are required to have private health care while enrolled at Alberta Ballet School.



"While attending Alberta Ballet School, Jamie received the dance training that she needed to pursue her career aspirations and the academic guidance that left her solidly prepared to enter University if, and when, she chose to. After her first year of professional dance upon graduation, Jamie decided that while she loved dance, she no longer sought a career as a ballerina and decided to head to University. As Jamie starts her second year of University studying a double major in Math and Chemistry, her father and I are thrilled that through your school she was able to pursue her passion for ballet while receiving the strong educational background required for life after the stage. We truly believe that the ballet and education she received at Alberta Ballet School has made her into the strong, independent and determined young woman she is today."

— **Susan Stark**, mother of Jamie Stark, alumna



# COMMUNICATION



**Alberta Ballet School provides several forms of communication with our student's families, both local and international.**

- A designated Parent Portal on the school's website, allowing families to stay abreast of all formal announcements and schedules.
- Weekly updates, delivered by email, including specific information regarding day-to-day activities and events students and the school are participating in.
- Student progress reports.
- Private Facebook group.
- Academic and Artistic parent teacher interviews.
- Scheduled parent viewing weeks (*live and live-streamed for out of town parents*).
- Parent Advisory Council — parents and faculty who to work together to promote the well-being and effectiveness of the entire school community.

# ADMISSION PROCEDURES

## Students interested in auditioning for the Professional Division of Alberta Ballet School attend our Summer Intensive program held annually in July.

Participation in the Summer Intensive allows artistic faculty the ability to assess how a student performs in class, reacts to corrections and adapts to the Professional Division environment.

A refundable fee of \$1000.00 is required to secure a student's admission into the Professional Division. Successful auditions will see the deposit automatically applied to the student's first year tuition, and a full refund will be issued for an unsuccessful audition.

In addition to the deposit, Alberta Ballet School also requires students to submit their most recent academic report cards to ensure appropriate academic programming and support services, if required, will be available to the student upon enrollment.

During Summer Intensive, students and families will be notified of their acceptance status to the full-year Professional Division program. Upon acceptance, a formal response by the student is required in order to officially register him/her for the program. At this time, students will receive an Alberta Ballet School registration package to complete and return in addition to the official student handbook.

## SCHOLARSHIPS, FINANCIAL AID

Alberta Ballet School offers talent-based scholarships to outstanding dance students in the Professional Division. Additionally, there are scholarships awarded on a combination of aptitude, deportment and financial need. Such applications are due prior to May 1 of each year and are evaluated by our third-party financial service, Apple Financial.

To start the application process, visit: [applefinancialservices.ca/apply](http://applefinancialservices.ca/apply).

Find out more about our scholarships, contact [registration@albertaballet.com](mailto:registration@albertaballet.com).

*Please note the School does not award funding for Summer Intensive.*

The Province of Alberta and the Government of Canada offers numerous grants for tuition assistance.



## LEARN MORE

Visit: [www.albertaballetschool.com](http://www.albertaballetschool.com)  
for additional information about our  
Professional Division program.

## COME SEE US

We would be delighted to give you and your  
family a tour of our facility and residence, meet  
our faculty, allowing you to ask any questions  
and get to know us better.

Please contact our Admission Manager to arrange  
a private tour: [registration@albertaballet.com](mailto:registration@albertaballet.com)







## **SCHOOL INFORMATION**

### **Alberta Ballet School**

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[\*\*www.albertaballetschool.com\*\*](http://www.albertaballetschool.com)

**Ashley McNeil**, Director, Alberta Ballet School

Funded by the Government of Canada  
Financé par le gouvernement du Canada

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