



# Family Handbook

Mind-Builders provides an exciting, nurturing and challenging learning environment that develops skills in a variety of art disciplines.

**MIND-BUILDERS CREATIVE ARTS CENTER**  
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MindBuildersCreativeArtsCenter



@mindbuilderscac



@MindBuildersArt

# FAMILY HANDBOOK

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## FAMILY HANDBOOK

### *Welcome to Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center!*

Our goal is to provide an exciting, nurturing and challenging learning environment that develops skills in a variety of art disciplines.

### **PURPOSE AND USE OF THIS HANDBOOK**

- As part of our commitment to maintain a high standard of excellence, this booklet is designed to familiarize students and parents with the basic policies and values of Mind-Builders.
- Mind-Builders reserves the right to revoke, change or supplement any information provided within this handbook at any time and without notice.
- Parents/guardians are required to read this handbook carefully and keep it for future reference.
- Clarification of any information provided in this handbook may be obtained by contacting Mind-Builders.

### **COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS**

*We show respect—for ourselves, for others, for our space, and for our work—in all we do and say.*

*Each of us will let our light shine, pay attention, and always do our personal best.*

*We help each other, work together, and welcome everyone to build a more perfect community.*

#### **At Mind-Builders We...**

**Create a community** where youth and families appreciate differences

**Celebrate** talents and uncover possibilities

**Develop** artistic, professional and life skills

**Empower** youth to be artists, advocates and leaders

**Inspire** creativity and encourage self-expression

### **STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION**

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## COVID-19 POLICIES

- **Masks:** We **no longer require** students, staff, or guests to wear masks while in the building. They are optional and we have adult and child sizes available by the front desk if needed.
- **Communication:** To prevent transmission, anyone who entered Mind-Builders within 5 days of testing positive for COVID-19 or showing symptoms, must inform a Mind-Builders staff member immediately. This is to ensure we can inform anyone who might have been exposed and for contact tracing purposes. If a staff member, student, or anyone in their household feels sick and displays typical COVID-19 symptoms, they should **NOT** come to Mind-Builders. Students may take their class virtually until they have a negative test result or after 5 days of not showing symptoms.
- **Virtual Classes:** A positive addition to our roster, virtual classes allow students to receive high quality arts instruction at home. Most classes are available online, but some classes can only be taught in-person. These classes include: Music Ensemble and APX: Beats, Rhymes, and Recording Studio Production. During recital season, students may be required to attend rehearsals in-person.

## GENERAL POLICIES

- Parents should encourage their children to practice their instruments or dance steps, providing only positive encouragement and support, which leads to better progress.
- We strongly encourage all students to participate in recitals and ensemble performances to celebrate the joy and fulfillment of diligent work.
- Students must arrive just before his/her first class and be picked up immediately after his/her final class. Mind-Builders does not have staff available to supervise unattended children outside the classroom. Please ensure your student eats a sufficient meal before coming to class. Students can bring a water bottle to class, but they cannot use the water fountain.
- Parents must wait their children in designated areas only. We have limited seating in the cafeteria for parents and students.
- Temperature checks and masks are required upon entry.
- Mind-Builders strongly encourages families with 2 or more students, to schedule their classes close to each other. Please note: **all students must be picked up at the end of their class if it is more than a 30 minute wait before their next class.**
- Mind-Builders is a place of nurture, instruction, joy and community. **We have zero tolerance for physical, verbal, social media, or any other kind of bullying or shaming, directed toward another student, individual or staff member. Such behavior can result in suspension and/or permanent termination.**
- Bullying/shaming includes harassing/talking negatively about someone based on their body, clothing, footwear, culture, appearance, language, etc. This is not acceptable behavior from Mind-Builders students.
- If there is a dispute between students, immediately bring the situation to the attention of a MB staff person. We'd like to maintain a safe, community-oriented environment where everyone feels welcomed.
- Students should arrive 10 minutes before class begins and must sign in when entering the building.
- Cell phones should be turned off, placed in bags, and kept with student at all times. Electronic games, expensive jewelry, tablets, and laptop computers should be left at home. **Mind-Builders will not assume responsibility for any loss or theft of cell phones, other mobile devices, or valuables.**
- For safety, students should take the stairs at all times.

## Attendance

- **Regular attendance is mandatory for all participants and all are expected to arrive on time.** The attendance policy at Mind-Builders is based on the belief that we can only provide the quality programming and attention your child deserves if s/he attends the program regularly and on time.
- Reasons for attendance policies include, but are not limited to:
  - There is often a wait list for the class and we want to accommodate students that will participate.
  - The program's success and the student's success depend on student attendance and participation.

## Absence and Tardiness

- Students should arrive 10 minutes before class begins, so they can enter the classroom at start time. The class end time means students will have instruction until that time. It does not include dismissal. Please be patient and anticipate 5-10 minutes after the end of class for students to arrive downstairs.
- **If a student will be absent or late, please notify the office at (718) 652-6256 and do so at least 24 hours in advance if possible. Speak with the enrollment coordinator or the receptionist.**
- Make-up classes or credit will be arranged only in the event of teacher absence or class cancellation. There are no make-up classes for student absence or lateness.
- **After 3 consecutive absences, we reserve the right to withdraw the student from the class.**

## Visitors

- Visitors can call to make an appointment to come inside for a tour or to speak with a staff member.
- Parent conversations with teachers should be had either before or after class, so that the teacher's lesson is not interrupted.

## Tuition Payment

As a not-for-profit organization, Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center uses tuition fees, donations and grants to support the cost of staff salaries and operating costs.

- Payments are accepted in the form of credit/debit cards, checks, or money order. **NO CASH.**
- To maintain a student's space in class, tuition payments are due on the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month. Monthly tuition must be paid in full even if a student has been absent from class during the previous month.
- Mind-Builders will charge an additional \$25.00 for returned checks.
- If an account is more than 2 months in arrears, we reserve the right to suspend or terminate the student from class. **If there is a circumstance that prevents payment of fees on time, we strongly urge the account holder to discuss the circumstances with a Mind-Builders administrator, and make arrangements.**
- Parents/students are strongly encouraged to apply for tuition assistance.
- Dance recital production fees are due on or before December 1<sup>st</sup>. Students who register after December 1<sup>st</sup> must pay the dance recital fee within 30 days.
- All account balances and fees must be paid in full prior to recital performances.

## Tuition Assistance

Mind-Builders provides financial aid for those who qualify, in the form of tuition assistance, merit scholarships, and work-exchange. Student and families who could not participate without assistance may apply. Applications are available online. We also have free classes year-round:

- **Tap & African classes:** Boys ages 5-9 can take a Tap or African class for free. Boys older than 9 can take both at no additional cost and girls older than 9 can take Tap for free. [Register!](#)
- **Fit4Life community adult fitness classes** are offered daily: Soca, Zumba, and Stretch plus virtual Yoga. Ages 16+ [Register!](#)
- **PYT (Positive Troupe Theater):** Acting and theater training program for young adults ages 14-21. Perfect for students interested in drama. [Register!](#)
- **APX (Arts Passage Xpress):** Open to ages 14-21. Students learn audio production or anime/visual arts this season with professional artists. Students may receive a stipend. [Register!](#)
- **Music Theory:** To supplement music lessons, students 5 and older can enroll in our music theory classes to learn how to read music. Beginner and intermediate classes available. [Register!](#)
- **Music Ensemble:** Preparing students with at least one year of music experience for an orchestra setting. Available to students 7 and older, including adults! [Register!](#)

## **Withdrawing from a Class**

If you wish to withdraw from a class, **you must give a two week notice and inform an administrative staff member.** You can email [kseymour@mind-builders.org](mailto:kseymour@mind-builders.org) or call 718-652-6256. Verbally informing the teacher is not sufficient. Account holders will be responsible for all payments due up to the date that they withdraw.

## **Feedback**

Feedback is an essential part of progress. Twice a year, students receive a progress report from their instructors. Finally, parents are encouraged to communicate with instructors and program directors by phone or email to schedule a meeting.

We also ask parents and students to fill out a **Survey** once or twice a year to help us to evaluate and improve our services.

## **VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

We welcome parents/guardians of students attending Mind-Builders who are committed to helping facilitate and create productive programs for Mind-Builders Creative Arts Center. All on-site volunteers must be vaccinated and show proof upon entry. Remote volunteers should have Wi-Fi capabilities to complete tasks. Parents are encouraged to join the following committees:

**Family Ambassador:** Ambassadors share our programs with community members and prospective families at special events and within their networks. Should be comfortable tabling and talking to new people.

**Clerical Support:** Volunteers with administrative experience can help staff with creating reports, answering phones, on-site support, and other tasks as needed.

**Recital Preparation:** During the end of the spring season, they can help with costume distribution, escort guests and children, prepare certificates and more.

### **Backstage Volunteers:**

- Works under the direction of the stage manager.
- Helps entertain and coordinate groups of children during dress rehearsals and performances whenever the performers are not on stage.
- Maintains order in their assigned area back stage, lines up students to come on stage and make sure they have all needed items for performance.
- Never leave their designated students unsupervised.

**Other On-Site Volunteer Opportunities:** Some particular needs include enforcing safety protocols, sanitizing, monitoring the halls, supporting front desk staff and different departments.

# DANCE DEPARTMENT GUIDE

## CLASS GUIDELINES

### Levels

- Mind-Builders reserve the right to place students at their appropriate level to promote maximum learning. It is common for students to remain in the same class level for 2 or 3 years.

### Arrival time

- Please arrive for class 10 minutes early. Dance students more than ten minutes late for their scheduled class must enter quietly, warm-up and wait for directions from the instructor. This is to prevent possible injury to the late student, and further disturbance of the class already in progress.

### Absences/Make-Up Classes

- Parents MUST call the office (718-652-6256) if their child will be absent.
- **Classes are ONLY made up if the class is cancelled.**

### Dance Uniform

- In order to promote a sense of community and discipline, students must wear the proper dance uniform and dance shoes. All jewelry must be removed for safety reasons. Only small earrings (studs) may be worn. **All dancewear and accessories should be labeled with the student's name.**
- Leotards and tights may be purchased at Mind-Builders. Dance shoes should be purchased elsewhere.

### Dance Shoes

- Appropriate Dance shoes must be worn for ALL dance classes. Bare feet or sock wearing are no longer allowed. Students must "BRING" their dance shoes in a bag and change their shoes before entering the dance studio. Appropriate dance shoes include Ballet slippers, Jazz shoes or a pair of sneakers for Hip Hop that are ONLY worn in the Dance Studio.

### Parent/Student responsibility

- Parents and guardians are responsible for any property damage caused by their child.
- Volunteer parent communicators keep parents in each class informed with current events.

## RECITAL GUIDELINES

### Fees and payments

- Recital production and costume fees are due on or before December 1<sup>st</sup>. Fees for those who register on or after December 1<sup>st</sup> are due within 30 days of registration. Recital fees cover costumes for the recital. Students are responsible for providing appropriate undergarments and footwear.
- All fees must be paid in full prior to the recital in order for student to perform in the recital.
- Parents and family members must purchase tickets online to attend the recitals. MB students are free.

### Student attendance and arrival times

- If a student does not attend recital rehearsals, it is at the Dance Director's discretion to decide if that student can perform in the recital.
- Students must arrive 1 hour before recital start time to ensure a smooth running show. Late students will only be allowed to perform at the Dance Director's discretion.

### Costumes

- Students should arrive dressed in the first costume, with other costumes on a hanger. Please do not forget additional accessories. All costume pieces should be labeled with student's name and class.

### Parents Backstage

- In order to ensure an organized and smooth run of show as well as for the safety of all performers, only trained parent volunteers are allowed back stage during the rehearsals and recitals. No other parents or visitors are allowed back stage.

## DANCE DEPARTMENT DRESS CODE

| <b>Dance Type</b>                       | <b>Females</b>  | <b>Males</b>   | <b>Footwear</b>  |
|---|---|--|--|
| <b>Adults</b>                           | <p><b>Clothes:</b> Adults should wear comfortable, loose fitting clothing of choice.</p> <p><i>*Wear Lapas for African Classes.</i></p>   | <p><b>Clothes:</b> Adults should wear comfortable, loose fitting clothing of choice.</p>   | <p><b>Shoes:</b> Appropriate footwear by class type</p>                                    |
| <b>African</b>                          | <p><b>Clothes:</b> <u>Levels A, Fundamentals, Pre:</u> Light Blue Leotard, Lapa and Suntan Color Convertible Tights.</p> <p><u>Levels B, C, D, Teen:</u> Black Leotard, Lapa and Suntan Color Convertible Tights.</p> | <p><b>Clothes:</b> Black Form fitting T-Shirt (MB T-shirt suggested) and loose fitting black sweat pants or dabbas.</p> <p>* Athletic Supporter/ Dance Belt</p>            | <p><b>Shoes:</b> Jazz shoes or thin-soled sneakers</p>                                     |
| <b>Ballet</b>                           | <p><b>Clothes:</b> <u>Levels A, Fundamentals, Pre:</u> Light Blue Leotard and Suntan Color Convertible Tights.</p> <p><u>Levels B, C, D, Teen:</u> Black Leotard and Suntan Color Convertible Tights.</p>             | <p><b>Clothes:</b> Black Form fitting T-Shirt (MB T-shirt suggested) and loose fitting black sweat pants or stretch pants.</p> <p>* Athletic Supporter/ Dance Belt</p>     | <p><b>Females:</b> Pink Ballet Slippers.</p> <p><b>Males:</b> Black Ballet Slippers.</p>   |
| <b>Creative Movement /Young Dancers</b> | <p><b>Clothes:</b> Light Blue Leotard and Suntan Color Convertible Tights.</p>  | <p><b>Clothes:</b> Black Form fitting T-Shirt (MB shirt suggested) and loose fitting black sweat pants or stretch pants.</p> <p>* Athletic Supporter/ Dance Belt</p>       | <p><b>Females:</b> Pink Ballet Slippers.</p> <p><b>Males:</b> Black Ballet Slippers.</p>   |
| <b>Hip Hop</b>                          | <p><b>Clothes:</b> Black or Dark Blue T-Shirt (MB T-shirt suggested) and black sweat pants or stretch pants. <b>(NO JEANS)</b></p>  | <p><b>Clothes:</b> Black or Dark Blue T-Shirt (MB T-shirt suggested) and black sweat pants or stretch pants. <b>(NO JEANS)</b></p> <p>* Athletic Supporter/ Dance Belt</p> | <p><b>Shoes:</b> Non-Marking Sneakers.</p>   |
| <b>Modern/ Jazz</b>                     | <p><b>Clothes:</b> <u>Levels A, Basics, Pre:</u> Light Blue Leotard and Suntan Color Convertible Tights.</p> <p><u>Levels B, C, D, Teen:</u> Black Leotard and Suntan Color Convertible Tights.</p>                   | <p><b>Clothes:</b> Black Form fitting T-Shirt (MB T-shirt suggested) and loose fitting black sweat pants or stretch pants.</p>   | <p><b>Modern:</b> Jazz Shoes or Thin-Soled Sneakers</p> <p><b>Jazz:</b> Tan Jazz Shoes</p> |
| <b>Tap</b>                              | <p><b>Clothes:</b> <u>Levels A, Fundamentals, Pre:</u> Light Blue Leotard and Suntan Color Convertible Tights.</p> <p><u>Levels B, C, D, Teen:</u> Black Leotard and Suntan Color Convertible Tights.</p>             | <p><b>Clothes:</b> Black Form fitting T-Shirt (MB T-shirt suggested) and loose fitting black sweat pants or stretch pants.</p>   | <p><b>Shoes:</b> Black Tap Shoes</p>   |



## **Important Dress Code Notes**

- All dance students MUST adhere to the dress code in order to be permitted to participate in class.
- Absolutely NO Jeans
- For their safety, all male students are required to wear an athletic supporter or a dance belt.
- For all dance classes, students may add a dark form-fitting t-shirt or sweater for warmth.
- If a student is in a combination class, select uniforms from each dance type.
- A Lapa is a tied skirt of 1-2 yards of African fabric that wraps 1 ½ times around the waist and reaches below the knee.
- Non-Marking sneakers have white soles or are sneakers that do not mark the studio floors. All dance shoes must be worn only during class in the studio. Street shoes or any kind of shoes worn anywhere outside of our studios are NOT allowed. Students should bring their shoes exclusively for our classes in a separate bag and change before entering the studios.
- The Mind-Builders T-shirt is suggested for classes requiring black. These can be purchased in the first floor office.

# MUSIC DEPARTMENT GUIDE

## **Instruments and Music**

- Students provide their own instruments. Instruments can be rented or purchased from music stores.
- Students are responsible for purchasing music books chosen by teachers.
- Drums and piano students do not have to bring their instruments to class. All other students should always bring their instrument and music to class.

## **Instrument Rental or Purchase**

- Bronnen's Music ~ 2462 Webster Ave. (at 188<sup>th</sup> St. near Fordham Rd.) ~ (718) 364-3350  
\*Mention Mind-Builders and receive a special discount
- On-line Stores : <http://www.musiciansfriend.com/> <http://www.sweetwater.com/>

## **Arrival Time**

- Students should arrive at least 15 minutes before the lesson begins.
- Music lessons begin and end on time. If you arrive late, your lesson time will be reduced, so that the next lesson will begin on time.
- Music students more than 10 minutes late for their group lesson must enter and sit quietly until the teacher is ready for them to enter the group.

## **Absences**

- Parents MUST call the office if their child will be absent.

## **Visitors in the Classroom**

- For Suzuki Violin, parent/guardian presence and active participation as directed by the teacher is required. This promotes the family's ability to reinforce the weekly lesson at home. Parents and students are required to meet with the instructor prior to the start of classes.

## **Practicing your instrument at home**

- In general, a student who has a 30-minute lesson should practice 30 minutes a day; a 60-minute lesson, at least 60 minutes, etc. It is very important that students practice every day, even if their schedule does not allow them to practice for the full desired amount of time.
- Practice time can be divided up into ten or fifteen-minute intervals, with the student setting a specific goal to be accomplished in each time period.
- Try practicing at different times of the day, and find the time that is most productive for you.
- The student should strive for beauty, no matter how elementary the musical task.
- Strive for tone quality and smoothness of rhythm by practicing slowly, then gradually increasing the tempo. Make up little games to make practice more fun.
- The student should be patient with him or herself. With practice, results will come over time.

## **Our music lessons**

- Music lessons should spark the interest of students by being fun and well-balanced.
- Lessons will include improvisation and playing together.
- Lessons will include music theory and the history of the piece or the composer.
- Music lessons will be varied and diverse—with contemporary music as well as classical.
- Teachers will strive to appeal to the learning style and interests of the students.

## **Recitals**

- We strongly encourage all students to participate in recitals to experience the joy and fulfillment of diligent work and ensemble performance.
- Teachers will announce recital dates once the dates are solidified and students and parents will be informed.
- Parents, family members, and friends must purchase tickets online to attend the recitals. MB students are free.

## **MARTIAL ARTS/KARATE PROGRAM**

The Martial Arts Program at Mind-Builders features Goju Ryu Karate for students ages 5-18. The program helps students develop the skills to enhance their lives through the discipline and challenges of martial arts training. Classes are offered for beginners and more advanced students, and allow students to safely advance to whatever level they wish to achieve in martial arts.

- Students should arrive for class on time wearing the karate “gi” or uniform.
- The uniform or “gi” is a white jacket and pants, karate shoes, and an “obi” or belt in the color signifying their karate level. Beginners wear a white belt.
- As students achieve higher levels, they are awarded the colored belts for those levels.
- Students are encouraged to do the basic stretching and class techniques every day to increase flexibility and martial arts skills.
- The program year will close with a Presentation and Belting/Certificate Ceremony.

## **POSITIVE YOUTH TROUPE (PYT)**

Positive Youth Troupe (PYT) is a free theater program for youth between the ages of 13 and 21. Workshops meet on Wednesdays and Thursdays during the school year. Free training is provided by professional actors, directors, writers, composers, and choreographers who strengthen students’ performance skills and support them in the development of compelling theater productions that bring today’s issues and hope to other young people in performances throughout the city.

### **Guidelines for PYT Students**

- Required to maintain passing grades in all school subjects to continue in the PYT program. Academic support will be provided for students who are experiencing difficulty in any school subject.
- Must maintain good attendance and effort in order to participate in performances and receive a stipend for the program.

## **ARTS PASSAGE XPRESS (APX)**

Arts Passage Xpress (APX) is an arts exploration program for ages 12 and 21. We currently offer two classes throughout the year: Anime/Visual Arts & Beats, Rhymes, and Recording Studio Production. Industry professionals provide individual coaching and small group workshop training. Opportunities to socialize, invite guests, discuss, perform or present their works if you choose, are also scheduled through the popular Freestyle Fridays events. Students present their work to staff and their families at the end of year ceremony. Registration is open throughout the year.

## **DR. BEVERLY ROBINSON COMMUNITY FOLK CULTURE PROGRAM**

### **Cultural Internships**

The Dr. Beverly Robinson Community Folk Culture Program at Mind-Builders trains young people ages 14 to 21 to identify, document, and present the traditions and folk artists “discovered” in their families, community, the borough, and city. Workshops take place 3 days/week for 5 weeks during the summer, and continue two evenings per week from November to May. New applications are accepted April through June for the intensive summer program. Students who complete the program and assignments satisfactorily are paid a stipend.

**We thank you for your cooperation in ensuring you and your children will have an enriching, fun-filled and memorable experience with the Mind-Builders community.**

**[www.mind-builders.org](http://www.mind-builders.org)**