

Preparatory Dance

Online Instruction Guidelines for Students and Families

September 9, 2020

These updated guidelines will help you connect to Zoom and to improve your dancer's experience with online instruction. During this time, we know that the class experience will not be "perfect" and that families are doing what they can to enhance their dancer's experience. Our faculty are also working to improve their technology and space at home to make their instruction clearer to see and hear.

Space

The best floors for dancing at home are **hardwood** or **laminated**; a low-pile **rug** or low-pile **carpet** will also work. High-pile rugs may be okay for stretch/conditioning exercises but will not work for dance vocabulary that is done standing. Concrete or tile floors are too hard and could be dangerous to the dancer.

If possible, clear the space so your dancer has 4-6 feet past their limbs on in all directions so they can move legs and arms forward, backward, and to the side without restrictions. If you do not have space in each direction, the dancer can change the body facing to create space.

If a student happens to have a barre at home, that is wonderful, but it isn't required. Your dancer can hold onto a sturdy **chair**, a **desk**, **table**, or **counter**. If your dancer's chair has wheels on it, place them in the "locked" position so the chair does not unexpectedly move when your dancer pushes on it. You can also stack books on the chair to help keep it in place. Ideally, the chair, desk, table, or counter should come up to the dancer's chest (just lower than the shoulder but not below the rib cage), but this may not always be possible.

Lighting

If possible, turn on overhead lighting or light the dancer from the front (in other words, behind the device being used to film them). If it can be avoided, try not to position the dancer with bright light behind them. This gives the teacher and the other students in the class the best view of your dancer.

Dress

We encourage students to wear the regular dress code attire to class. This makes the class feel more "normal" and makes it easier for them to see their lines in their camera and for the teacher to see them. If your child is not able to wear dress code attire, they should wear close-fitting athletic attire, such as a t-shirt and leggings or shorts. All students must be able to bend, stretch, twist, and kick without their clothing getting in the way of their movement.

Long hair should be pulled back into a bun or similar style and secured away from the face, so it is not in the way when the child bends, turns, and jumps. We recommend removing any hair accessories that might fall off when the child is dancing.

Ballet shoes are recommended for ballet classes; if the ballet shoes are getting “stuck” on the rug or carpet, the dancer should try wearing socks instead. If your child feels that the floor is too slippery in ballet shoes or socks, they can try taking class with bare feet. Contemporary dance classes will be danced with bare feet.

Device distance

Ideally, the device connecting to Zoom should be set at 7-8 feet away from the dancer so the teacher can see the dancer’s entire body. We recommend experimenting with the video angle and different distances for a few minutes before the class begins so your dancer can spend most of the time in class moving!

If you are in a small space or have a small device, family members may be needed to make small adjustments to the video angle during the lesson with the guidance of the teacher. For example, a portion of the class might be done on the floor, and another portion standing; the teacher might request that all students adjust their cameras so the correct part of the body can be viewed for feedback.

Older dancers may wish to consider purchasing a clip-on wide-angle lens for their smart phone or laptop. These are relatively inexpensive and may be purchased online, such as the Cusimax 3-in-1 Universal Smartphone Camera Clip-on Lens Kit. This will allow the teacher to see your entire body in a smaller space.

Classroom Guidelines

Individual teachers will talk to you and the dancers in the class about procedures and etiquette. In general, dancers will get the most out of the lesson if they:

1. Use the restroom before class begins. If they need to use the restroom during the lesson, they should ask to leave the lesson so the teacher knows that they will be leaving and returning shortly.
2. Place a water bottle nearby so they do not have to leave the lesson to get a drink. Of course, this should be kept in a location where it will not be spilled by accident.
3. Have few distractions in the space where the student is practicing. Noise created by other devices, siblings, etc. can make it harder for the dancers to hear and to concentrate. We do understand that families have limited space and that there may be occasional interruptions by siblings, pets, etc.
4. Use the “mute” function on Zoom unless they have a question. This keeps background noise to a minimum for everyone in the class.
5. Use the teacher’s established signal when they need to ask a question. This ensures that all students can be called on and heard without them talking over one another by accident. For Levels 1 and higher, the best time to ask a question is between exercises.
6. Remain engaged with the assigned class material for the length of the lesson and refrain from using the chat function (unless directed by the teacher); refrain from getting on other social media or programs on their devices while class is in session; refrain from snacking or eating a meal during class; and refrain from talking to family members during the class unless there is an urgent need.

Technology

Peabody Preparatory is using Zoom for online instruction. You can join Zoom meetings on a **computer, smart phone, or tablet**. You will need to **connect to the internet** to participate in a live Zoom meeting; additionally, your dancer will get the most out of class if she/he has access to a device with a **camera**.

If your device does not have audio output (some desktop computers may not), you can join the audio on a telephone. Please contact your teacher if you need the telephone numbers and meeting ID.

Zoom

You do not need to create a Zoom account to join a meeting; you can simply click on the link provide by your teacher, and your device will prompt you to download Zoom and join the meeting. After you join the meeting, you will be able to change the name that is displayed to the class and to control when you start the video and when you start audio. We will not see or hear your dancer until you join the meeting and enable these two options.

Gallery view versus speaker view

Once you have joined the meeting, you will see the other students who are connected to the meeting. There are two options for the view: speaker view and gallery view. In the app, you can find the view options at the top of the video image or by swiping to the side. If you are logged on through the website, you can change the view options at the top of the meeting screen.

If your device is small, we recommend using **speaker view** so your dancer can focus on following the instructor. Older students (Levels 2 and higher) may be instructed to use **gallery view** to watch the other students in the class demonstrate or apply corrections. On smaller devices, the app does not show the entire class in gallery view, but the student will be able to swipe to the video of the dancer who is demonstrating.

Mute

Mute is located on the bottom of the meeting screen. Instructors may choose to place students on mute when they enter the meeting to cut down on background noise as everyone connects. In most cases, the student will be able to control the mute function after joining the meeting. ***We recommend that students mute themselves unless the teacher directs them otherwise.*** Each instructor will review how to ask a question during the class.

Waiting Room

Most teachers have enabled the “waiting room” function in Zoom. This allows you to log into Zoom early without accidentally interrupting the earlier class, and provides an additional layer of security. When you log in, you will receive a notice to wait until the meeting host allows you in. Do not log out when you see this screen; you can simply wait until the class is supposed to begin. If the teacher does not let you in to the meeting, please contact the Preparatory Dance office at 667-208-6648 or by email: prepdance@jhu.edu and mstaffo2@jhu.edu. Ms. Rolon and Ms. Stafford will be checking email regularly and can answer the phone using their computers. They can assist you with getting in touch with the teacher.

Zoom App

Some devices may require you to download the Zoom App instead of accessing the Zoom website. The app is available for free at zoom.us (scroll to the bottom of the page for iPhone/iPad app or Android app) or through your device's app store. If you are having trouble with logging into meetings using the website, Peabody's IT team recommends using the Zoom app instead.

Help for families and students

Peabody IT has been working around the clock to facilitate the transition to online instruction and distance work for the entire Peabody Institute community. They have compiled information about how to use Zoom and to troubleshoot some common problems here: <https://peabody.jhu.edu/life-at-peabody/student-services-resources/information-technology-services/remote-teaching-and-learning-at-peabody/zoom-for-students-and-families/>.

Additionally, you can view this screenshot of tips for parents of grade-school Preparatory students:

<https://peabody.jhu.edu/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/A50A58E3-2016-4D37-9D72-C6E0AD02CBA8.jpeg>

Peabody IT is also providing support assistance for to Peabody families using Zoom during weekdays (9:00 am-9:00 pm) and on Saturdays (9:00 am-5:00 pm) and that information can be accessed on the [IT support during campus closure](#) page.