Harlequin Newsletter January 2017

Welcome Back to Harlequin SOPA. I hope you have had a wonderful Christmas and may I take this opportunity now to wish you all the best for 2017!

This letter includes information you should be aware of which you a) may not know, b) you have forgotten or c) just not realised. Please take some time to read the information and simple reminders given in order to help our classes (and our year) run smoothly:

**Procedure for Dance Queries:**

Since it is It is Miss Lauren who organises: the school timetable, exam rehearsals, Examination sessions, private classes, studio hire, dates of closure, musical edits, dance fees, all administration, uniform & stock orders, show numbers, costume selection and costings, dance partners & festival entries arranges the financial budget and pays the teachers wages etc…. In order to avoid confusion, all queries in relation to any of the above should be taken up with myself using the points of contact given below – NOT with my teachers. It is not appropriate to correspond with Harlequin teachers via personal telephone texts, calls or to use social media options.

**Communication:** All queries involving your child should be dealt with in the appropriate manner.

The following points of contact are the correct methods of communication with Miss Lauren (Principal). **Telephone contact**: 07768 765709 (for texts & calls) This is the ONLY telephone number you should be using with reference to ANY dance school business. If you leave a message, make sure you include details of your query so I can help you more readily. (please also understand that although I often check for messages received during class, I am obviously very unlikely to actually answer those calls / texts during student class time whilst im teaching)

**Email address:** harlequindanceschool@gmail.com Facebook: Harlequin Alfreton & Harlequin School Of Performing Arts. This is the ONLY facebook service you should be using for dance school business.

**Our website address** is: [www.harlequindancealfreton.co.uk](http://www.harlequindancealfreton.co.uk) you need to log into here (as requested in your annual membership agreement) to check the various pages for: payment dates, events, show info, exam info, festival info, uniform requirements and costs, cost of classes etc… The current password (which will be changed shortly) is **2015jesters** an alternative password is available for the festival page.

**Absences** (Health & Safety) it is a school rule & also just courteous to inform **THE PRINCIPAL – Miss L** of all absences):

*Unforseen Absences* (such as illness or traffic delays etc…) please simply text Miss Lauren… the information will be passed on.

*Planned Absences* (Holidays / School trips): Please write your 2017 holiday dates and other planned absences in our diary – this will enable us to plan lessons leading up to events more efficiently.

**Show / Competition Make-Up & Costumes:** The new purple make-up still needs far more attention to detail. I will try to arrange another demonstration session. Dance underwear and general care respect for costumes also needs a lot more thought please!! Costumes should only be worn in backstage areas not in your car, the audience, food halls or front of house. Please turn costumes the right way and fold / hang neatly when returning. DO NOT EAT or DRINK coloured juices or pop whilst wearing my costumes, DO NOT WASH HARLEQUIN COSTUMES.

**Class Uniform**

We have a very simple uniform and hair policy in place at Harlequin. Uniform for classes attended are colour co-ordinated according to grade levels and should be ordered through the school and worn for all core subjects. There is a **uniform requirements** list (and costs) displayed permanently on the Harlequin website. Hair should be swept back from the face and secured neatly in a ponytail, bunches or preferably a bun for all classes. From grade 1 upwards children are expected to attend all classes with hair dressed in the proper fashion this saves time in between classes. With immediate effect - Uniform will only be ordered when payment for each item is received.

**Drinks and food**

With the exception of teachers and Intermediate aged students (11+ upwards), No food & Only water will be allowed in the studios. Junior dancers will not be allowed to bring in fizzy drinks, we have had too many incidents of sticky spilages in class, plus the gas intake is not particularly beneficial during exercise. Food must be eaten in the kitchen area only – we have had problems with food detritus being squashed into carpets and chairs and transferring to students uniform. The changing areas are for CHANGING only. Please feel absolutely free to wait on site, but refrain from eating / drinking in the changing rooms. This is not a new rule (hence the lack of waste bins in the changing areas) … it just seems to have lapsed recently.

**Payments**: I believe that the current payment schedule in place is a fair one. It was designed around a six week template in order to benefit everyone when used correctly. Just to reiterate that:

Payments should be received on week 6 of the block (with a 3 week notice of termination of any one class / school membership). Cheques can be made payable to Harlequin SOPA or I will accept cash payments in a labelled envelope. This system was set up in order to a) book your childs place in the classes for the following six weeks therefore making your budgeting easy, b) so that I can co-ordinate the running & staffing of classes efficiently. Most schools do have a 12 week termly payment practise; I may consider this route if things do not improve. I am finding continually chasing payments (for fees, uniform, exams and rehearsals, festivals etc… ) tiresome. Please do not abuse the system or take advantage of my own good nature. All due dates are on the website members page.

I would like to emphasise that I am not interested in organising BACS payments for the following reasons: a) my account is not set up for it. b) it costs more - every entry accrues an extra fee c) I still have to check every payment anyway, so it doesn’t actually save me time at all and d) I can’t actually see a breakdown of what each payment entails when it comes in bulk through BACS. It quite simply doesn’t work for my business. First and foremost, I have to have a system in place which works for me.

**CHAPERONE LICENCES:**

This year, I believe that we will need to aqquire licences for backstage show help. More details to follow when I have them. Basically I’m fairly sure it doesn’t cost you anything, although it does involve a half day course at Matlock. It is also a six – eight week paperwork / & communication process for me.

PLEASE SEE PAGE 4 FOR DATES FOR YOUR CALENDAR

**Competition Team 2017**: #CHAMPIONS TRAIN - LOSERS COMPLAIN!!!!

Team selection and dance partnerships will remain at the discretion of miss Lauren. We enter competitions as a United Team. Every 1st place is first and foremost a point for the school in solo, duet and trio sections, therefore I expect full support for every Harlequin competitor. The individual students for duet and trio work are selected in order to complement each other within the piece being choreographed. In the world of dance, this is with reference to (amongst other things): style or genre being worked with, compatibility in standard, size, physical ability, technical facility, individuals appearance & looks. Please do not ask or expect to dance with your best friend… that’s not quite how it works in a dance competition! Students are expected to work hard, raise their game, not rest on their laurels, respect their team mates (and their limitations) push themselves to achieve & perform well. As a parent I would ask you to make sure that you and your child are aware of the following points where applicable:

Dance students represent and dance under the *Harlequin Umbrella*. Exemplary behaviour is required at all times. Anti social behaviour and bad conduct will obviously not be tolerated as it reflects directly back on our school and myself**.** Our old Harlequin adage was *“be Humble in victory & Gracious in defeat,”* in simplified terms *“don’t let a win go to your head or a loss go to your heart!”*  Cocky & defeatist attitudes are NOT welcome in equal measure.

The dance numbers choreographed and performed at Harlequin remain the property of Harlequin. If a candidate (or teacher) opts out, leaves the school or is not re selected for the festival team, then the space created within that dance will be filled in duets / trios and troupes as always. Harsh but true - the team is always greater than the sum of its parts!! Successful Harlequin choreography is often passed down (although adjusted) to younger team members.

Please ensure that children are given adequate time and opportunity to practise their given numbers together. Studio hire @ £14 an hour (minimum booking) is already well under way. You can help them by looking for and checking they have the same or mirrored arm lines, foot / leg lines (bent straight & right or left), headlines (up, down, sideways) are movements performed in sync or in cannon??? It is also useful (from around age 10 ish) to get them to practise using a different part of the studio as front. It is not at all helpful, to add a few moves in or change the choreography – infact, it is just a waste of your time as it will just be removed during their next class.

Please respect the teachers involved in this procedure it is not your place to question student selection, choreography, content and music; between us we have many years of experience…. The expression “its not what you do it’s the way that you do it” is used for good reason - a badly executed move or poorly finished trick does not a good dance make.

We have a standard “be on site in the dressing area, one hour before you are due to dance.” This, is always with hair and make up done - so we can sign you in rehearse the number as a troupe going over any changes which may be necessary.

You must ensure that you are prepared to prioritise Competition team rehearsals above all other events; i.e trips out and friends birthday parties. There are very few exceptions to this rule! Please make yourself available for rehearsals 3 weeks prior to the event to finalise shape and patterns and refine details. The (£2.50) Weekly Festival classes constantly work on both current and new dance numbers 45 minutes is not a very long time to do this especially given the nature of our work – absences and illness means that the shapes are constantly changing.

**Harlequin Annual Events 2017 Currently as follows**:

**January** – March Show timetable as advertised on the website

**Feburary** – Attending Chesterfield Dance festival (half term dates Sunday 12th to Friday 17th Inclusive (Troupes on the Friday 17th) All H.Q Festival Team required.

**March** - Annual Dance Show dates (Venue provisionally 20th – 26th March rehearsals & Shows) This Year All costumes must be paid for in full before they leave the Harlequin premises.

**March** Coventry Festival (optional 18th & 19th plus 25th & 26th March – I have spoken with Charlotte and we could just do 1st weekend to avoid clashing with show?) This will be for solos, duets and trios only…. Last year girls had an excellent time!! Please et me know if you would like me to enter you.

**April** – Exam prep

**April** - Bus Trip Can You Dance Trip Worcester Sunday 9th April 2017. I have secured only 20 places for dancers and 10 adult tickets.

Student & Workshops entry £30 deposit per performer and £15 per adult spectator required by 26th January 2017. (After which, reservations will be confirmed only for places reserved via receipt of payment) This price includes your entry to CYD and the applicable workshops - plus a small amount deposit for the coach – a further balance for coach transport will be taken at a later date).

**May** – Examination Session tba

**June / July** - Co-Hosting Kings Summer Festival Of Dance (Heanor) Fri 16th Sat 17th & Sun 18th June, Fri 23rd, Sat 24th & Sun 25th, Fri 30th June, Sat 1st & Sun 2nd July 2017)

**Aug** - Exam Prep

**September** - Exam session tba

**Octobe**r – Midlands Dance Festival Day Sunday 08.10.17 (all H.Q festival team required)

**October** - Hosting Kings Dance Kamp dates tba

**November** - Exam Prep

**December** – Exam Session tba