

# BRIARWOOD BALLET

## Student Handbook

*Please keep for your records as long as student is taking ballet at Briarwood.*



“Praise ye the Lord...  
Let them praise His name with the  
timbrel and dance...” *Psalms 150*



# Briarwood Ballet Student Handbook

2025 edition

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## **WELCOME TO BRIARWOOD BALLET**

On behalf of our faculty and staff, I want to welcome you to our school! We believe that God has brought you to us and we appreciate the privilege of teaching you!

We believe that God has given us our commission in Colossians 3:23 "Whatsoever you do, do it heartily unto the Lord and not unto men." Through our training it is our prayer that classes and performances will enable you to develop your gifts and use them to "glorify God and enjoy Him forever."\*

You are special to us and we will be praying for you as you pursue your studies. May God bless you richly as we "praise His Name with dancing" (Psalm 149).

In His Grace,  
Peggy Townes, Executive Director

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

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Briarwood Ballet is committed to serving God by offering quality instruction in classical ballet and dance education within a Christ-centered environment.

Our school serves students of all ages, with varying goals and aspirations, who desire to study dance. Faculty members are dedicated to providing a Christian world-view of dance and to instilling in students the desire to use their talents to glorify God. They impart the love of dance and encourage each individual to reach his or her maximum potential both physically and spiritually.

This excellent training teaches discipline of body and mind, and appreciation for the beauty of art – as well as the sheer joy of dancing. Performing experiences provide a creative outlet, produce a sense of confidence and responsibility, and allow students to use their gifts to honor the Lord through dance.

*\* from the Westminster Catechism*

## STUDENT PLACEMENT

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**Class Levels:** Briarwood Ballet reserves the right to determine the class level for every student through its evaluation procedures, regardless of prior, recent, or current training.

**New Students:** Students 5<sup>th</sup> grade and above who have never trained at Briarwood Ballet will be required to take a placement class. Faculty recommendation will determine a student's placement in a class appropriate to his/her ability. Students and parents will be notified.

**Current Students:** Our teachers determine the readiness of each student to advance. Advancement occurs on an individual basis when the progress of the individual student has warranted moving to the next level technically, physically, and intellectually.

## FEES AND SCHEDULES

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**Please refer to the current year brochure for pricing.**

Tuition is based on a full school year. Payments may be made annually or in two payments. We do not send regular statements, but you may receive a reminder. You may check your account balance online through the Studio Director link on our Class Information page.

*Tuition Payment Schedule: Annual*

Payment #1 due on or before – August 15

*Tuition Payment Schedule: Split Payment*

Payment #1 due on or before – August 15

Payment #2 due on or before – January 15

*Costume and Performance/Media Fee is due on or before October 15.*

*Supervised Dressing Room Fees due August 15.*

1. Payments may be made by credit card through Studio Director. They can also be made by cash or check. Please get a receipt from the Ballet office for cash payments. Your canceled check is your receipt.
2. Please make checks payable to Briarwood Ballet.
3. Indicate name of student on the check in lower left corner memo area.

**Late Payment:** Please be aware that we do not send statements, but may send a reminder. Past Due invoices are sent out if your account is two weeks overdue. A **\$10 late fee** will be charged to all accounts with a past due balance.

**Returned Checks:** Briarwood Ballet is charged a penalty by our bank for any checks returned to us for insufficient funds. We will ask you to cover this penalty of \$12. If checks are habitually returned we will request that you pay future payments with cash only.

**Withdrawal:** If you choose to withdraw your child from ballet, please contact the Ballet Office. This cannot be done through a third party. Telling your child's teacher is not sufficient. Notification of withdrawal before October 31 will release your future tuition commitment. Full year tuition will be required if withdrawal notification occurs after October 31.

**Costume & Performance/Media Fee:** Full payment of this fee is due on or before October 15. Student will not receive their costume if there is any overdue balance at the time they are given out.

If you withdraw your child after we have ordered costumes (by mid-December), you will still be responsible for the costume and a refund will not be issued. You will receive the costume when it comes in.

Some older students may be required to buy/rent as many as five costumes for the senior spring performance. If a student is assigned a Briarwood costume, or if one is rented from an outside source, there will be a costume rental fee in lieu of the full costume fee.

**Class Cancellation:** A minimum of 8 students is required for a class to commence. A minimum of 6 students is required for a class to continue. Should class enrollment drop below 6 students anytime during the academic year, the director will work with the parents to find suitable placement in another class within the same level.

**Refunds:** *For registration* – if a student registers for classes and we are unable to place them in a class by November 1, the full registration fee will be refunded.

*For tuition* – in the event a student is unable to continue classes due to medical reasons or a family move, please contact the ballet office to discuss the account. If a class is canceled due to low enrollment and we cannot place the student in another class, any credit balance will be refunded.

*For costumes* – Costume fees will be refunded only if costumes have not been ordered for the student.

## **ATTENDANCE**

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Excused absences are sickness, family emergency or a required-for-a-grade activity for academic school. Excused absences due to injury require a doctor's note. Injured students are required to observe and take notes.

1. We cannot stress enough the importance of **NOT MISSING CLASSES**. Regular and consistent attendance is important to prevent injuries.  
The progress of the entire class is hindered when class must be stopped to re-teach what was missed at an earlier session. We have also found that when students feel a lack of confidence in their class work because of inadequate preparation, they become discouraged with their dancing in general.
2. If a student does miss class or will be late, please use the **online Absentee Slip** on our website to notify the ballet office **prior** to class. You may also call or email. The teacher will be notified.
3. **RE: Spring Performance** - Students may have to be excused from the spring production if they incur more than two absences after March 1.
4. **RE: All performances** – Teachers reserve the right to determine a student's involvement in choreography based on absences and participation in class and rehearsals. Teachers also reserve the right to determine if an understudy is needed for any particular choreography.

### **Make-up Classes**

During the regular school year students 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and up can make up a missed class in any class of the same level or a level below until March 1 when classes begin to work on year-end dances. See the current fall brochure or website schedule of classes for days and times.

Students should fill out the Make-up Slip online or get one from the office.

### **Inclement Weather Days and Holiday Schedule**

Briarwood Ballet is closed for bad weather when Briarwood Schools are closed the whole day for bad weather. Please listen to school closing reports on the radio or TV. If classes are already in progress, please see the Facebook posts on our website for instructions regarding ballet classes.

Most of our students are not Briarwood School students, so **the Ballet follows its own holiday schedule** and sometimes still meets on days when Briarwood school is out.

### **ARRIVAL AND PICK-UP**

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For all 3-year-old through 4<sup>th</sup> grade classes, the teacher or assistant will come get students to take them to their classroom.

Following class, students will be returned to the same area for pick-up. To be sure students are accounted for, students may **NOT** be picked up at their classroom before the end of class. Contact the office for special arrangements.

Students should arrive and depart promptly. If possible, students should arrive 10-15 minutes early to prepare for class. Students may be prohibited from taking class if they arrive after the first 15 minutes of class. This is not a punishment but rather a precaution for the physical safety of the dancer. The student should remain and watch the rest of class and will be counted as present. If the student does not observe class, she/he will be marked absent.

Please do not park in the covered drive outside the Administration entrance, even for "just a minute." This is a safety/security matter.

Please pick up students promptly after class. After dusk, ALL students MUST wait indoors for their ride and should be picked up at the Ministries Lobby.

## **DRESSING ROOM INFORMATION**

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### ***For students with classes beginning before 3:00 p.m. Mon-Fri***

There is no dedicated ballet dressing room for students coming from outside Briarwood. You may use the downstairs restrooms on the Ministry hallway prior to 3:00 p.m.

### ***For classes beginning after 3:00 p.m. Mon-Fri***

Students should use the restrooms on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor hallway across from the Music office. Students are **not allowed** to change in the bathroom on the Administrative hallway or in the Ladies Robe Room bathroom.

## **Supervised Dressing Room Service**

### ***For K4 students – 6<sup>th</sup> grade***

Students using the Supervised Dressing Room or Pick-Up Service will come and go from S-200 upstairs above the Ministries lobby.

If a class gets out after 5:00 pm, a student will have their belongings with them and should be picked up in the Ministries Lobby.

1. **NO PEANUT PRODUCTS are allowed in the Supervised Dressing Room.** We have students with life-threatening allergies and want to keep them safe.
2. Students are NOT allowed to change in the restroom on the Administration hallway, or off the Ladies Robe Room.
3. Please **LABEL ALL** items belonging to your student. This includes clothes, dancewear, shoes, water bottles, and books.
4. **Valuables:** Do not bring valuables to ballet. We cannot "police" the dressing room and we are very sorry to say that we sometimes find



things missing. If money is brought to ballet, the dancer may bring a purse to the classroom.

5. Books, coats, bags, etc. should be left with parents as they take up valuable classroom space.
6. **Lost and Found** is kept in the Ballet office or in the Supervised Dressing Room if you use that service. Please check there if you are missing anything as it is cleaned out monthly and usable items given to charity. The Church and the School also keep lost and found, so don't forget to check with them as well.

## **WAITING FOR YOUR STUDENT**

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1. If you wait on premises while your child is in class, once all students have been picked up for class, you may use the upstairs lobby (aka the Lioness Lobby.) If you choose to wait in the church library, be aware that there are other people studying or reading. Also, you may want to check out the bookstore. Parents and siblings are not allowed to wait outside the Ballet office M-111 or in the upstairs hallway. Please be mindful that Briarwood School may be in session and that there are church offices on the hallways.
2. Please do not let children touch equipment or classroom supplies in the dressing and waiting rooms.
3. Small children and siblings are not permitted to run or play in the hallways. Please support this rule by keeping all small children under control. Never leave small children unattended at any time.
4. The courtyard across from the Ballet office is a lovely greenspace but is not a playground. Children are welcome to enjoy the fresh air, but must be accompanied by a supervising adult. Playing in the bushes and flowerbeds is a no-no as are balls and other toys that might damage the building or grounds.
5. Hwy 119 parents may wait in the area immediately outside the studio.

## **WEBSITE, FACEBOOK, & INSTAGRAM**

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The Briarwood Ballet website is your main source of information for everything Briarwood Ballet. This is where you can find the most recent and comprehensive information.

We also have a Facebook page. By "Liking" us, weather alerts, last-minute schedule changes, and important notices are delivered straight to your news feed. You do not have to have a Facebook account to read our status because all updates show on our website.

Follow us on Instagram @briarwoodballet for updates and notices as well.

## **STUDIO DIRECTOR**

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Briarwood Ballet uses the online student management platform Studio Director to register families and students, take roll, maintain financial accounts, and communicate via email to families. Links to the parent portal are available on our website via big red buttons that say “Studio Director for Parents.” We do not use texts as a primary means of communication.

## **YEAR-END PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES**

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Enrollment in a ballet class commits a student to all rehearsals for spring performances as a priority over all other activities the student may be involved in during the spring months. Absent dancers are ill prepared and undermine the confidence of the entire group. Also, it is very confusing to work around empty spaces.

Spring productions are considered a priority for all students and other conflicting events should be secondary to preparations for these programs.

The Joy of Movement (3-year-old) classes and Tap classes will give in-studio presentations at the end of the year. Please check the calendar on our website for these specific dates.

Spring Jr. Performances for 4-year-old through 2<sup>nd</sup> grade classes will be presented in the Briarwood Presbyterian Church Worship Center.

The annual spring Sr. Performance for students 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and up will be held at the Barbara B. Barker Fine Arts Auditorium at Briarwood High School on Hwy 119 unless otherwise noted.

## **PARENT OBSERVATION**

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There will be an opportunity for you to observe your child’s class some time during the first semester. Notification will be sent by individual teachers to their classes.

When observing, please DO NOT bring young children who CANNOT sit quietly and watch class.

## **PARENT/TEACHER CONSULTATIONS**

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If you need to speak with a faculty member, please request an appointment via email to ballet@briarwood. Please refrain from meeting with the faculty in-between classes. Teachers have very limited time before,

during, or after classes. Please give them enough notice so they will have adequate time to talk and be prayerfully prepared.

## **STUDENT GUIDELINES**

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### **Preparation for Class**

1. Students should always go to the bathroom before class.
2. Students may use the upstairs lobby and red-carpeted areas leading into the sanctuary for stretching before class. No food or drink is allowed.
3. Students should not stretch in the hallways of the church or otherwise block traffic. Keep all hallways clear of bags and put personal belongings against the wall. Please pick up stray bobby pins as they tear up the vacuum cleaners.

### **Class Etiquette**

1. Cell phones may not be used for any reason during class without specific permission from the teacher.
2. Classes may not be filmed without a teacher's specific permission.
3. No food or drink in the studios. Water breaks are given with permission of the teacher
4. No chewing gum in studios.
5. No hanging on the barres in the studio.

### **Conduct while on Church Premises**

1. Students are not permitted to run or play in or block the hallways.
2. Students are not permitted to make excessive noise in the hallways.
3. Students are expected to keep the facilities clean by picking up after themselves and throwing away all trash.

## **PARENT GUIDELINES**

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Teaching a child the meaning of commitment is another basic building block of character - and commitment takes effort! If your dancer seems discouraged, please let us know. Many times, there may be some simple solution to the problem, or an extra dose of encouragement may do the trick! Please pray for our discernment.

1. Parents of young children: When at all possible, please have student arrive dressed in class attire with hair appropriately fixed.
2. Please have students to go to the bathroom BEFORE class.
3. Please do not park in the drive-through lanes in front of the Chapel or the Ministries entrance, even for "just a minute."

4. If you move, please be sure to update your contact information through Studio Director or send us your new address and phone number.

## DRESS CODE

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A dancer's attire greatly determines the attitude toward her/his class work, and therefore we require that the standard of appropriate neatness be observed at all times. The teacher may not allow class participation by a student who regularly neglects this requirement.

1. **Cover-ups are required.** With respect for the fact that Briarwood is a church, we will require that DANCERS OF ALL AGES WEAR COVER-UPS when coming and going from the building beyond the dressing room/classroom areas. If T-shirts are worn as a cover-up, they must be worn with pants or a skirt.
2. All female students should wear pink-footed tights and pink ballet shoes in all ballet classes. Please do not wear tights with holes or bad runs and BE CERTAIN all shoes have the elastic properly sewn onto the shoe.
3. **No underwear** should be worn under tights for any age student. Both the tights and leotards have cotton lined panels. It can be compared to wearing a bathing suit.
4. **No camisole or halter leotards.** As Briarwood Ballet is a church ministry, leotard styles must reflect modesty. Backs should be no lower than the bra line. This includes sheer or lace panels. Tank, cap sleeve, short sleeve, three-quarter sleeve, and long sleeve leotards are appropriate.
5. Leotards should be plain and solid in color - without imprints or designs – and without an attached skirt or ruffles.
6. Skirts for 3 year olds-Ballet 1/USA: Skirts are NOT allowed in class. They are a distraction and are easily lost.
7. Pink or black leg warmers are permitted in Enrichment or Intensive classes **with teacher permission** and only up through dégagés.
8. In colder months, teachers may allow solid black, fitted shirts/leggings as warm-ups over ballet attire up until dégagés. Check with teacher first.
9. Stud and small earrings are the only permissible jewelry to be worn in class. Watches, necklaces, large rings and bracelets are potentially hazardous and cannot be worn in class.
10. Rehearsal dress for any dancer involved in any school rehearsal is standard class uniform.

## Requirements (Please check website for most recent dress code.)

Level	Leotard - with no attached skirt	Footed Tights	Shoes	Skirts
3-5 year olds	Pink	Pink	Pink ballet <sup>1,3</sup>	None
1st - 2 <sup>nd</sup> grade	Light blue	Pink	Pink ballet <sup>1,3</sup>	None
3 <sup>rd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> grade	Black	Pink	Pink ballet <sup>1,3</sup>	None
USA, Ballet 1	Black	Pink <sup>2</sup>	Pink ballet <sup>3</sup>	None
USB-D Ballet 2-4	Black	Pink <sup>2</sup>	Pink ballet <sup>3</sup> ; Pink pointe shoes as required	Must be designated style. Order form on website

Boys	White T-shirt, black gym shorts	White socks	White ballet	-
Tap classes	Leotard per ballet level	Pink	Black patent tie-on tap shoes	None
Modern	Black leo for all	Black tights or black jazz or yoga pants as prescribed by teacher		None
Jazz or Theater Dance	<b>Black</b> tights, capri pants or jazz pants; <b>Black Leotards</b> w/ modest coverups <b>Jazz shoes</b> are recommended but not required			None
Mommy & Me	Comfortable clothes to move in			
Adult	Ballet shoes and yoga, Pilates, or traditional ballet attire			

<sup>1</sup> full-sole shoes required

<sup>2</sup> Convertible tights are acceptable.

<sup>3</sup> **Capezio freeform shoes (#FF01) are NOT allowed.** We ask that dancers stick with classic styles of soft shoes. Split-sole ballet shoes are acceptable for USB-D & Ballet 2-4.

***No T-shirts, boxers, shorts, or baggy outerwear is to be worn in class.***

### Dance Attire may be purchased from the following stores:

Applause Dancewear      1629 Oxmoor Road      205-871-7837  
Dance-N-Things      7954 B Crestwood Boulevard      205-956-8495  
Forte Dance Essentials      1960 Braddock Dr. Ste 100      205-639-1267  
Academy Sports, Wal-Mart, & Target often stock appropriate leotards and tights. However, you should only get your shoes from a dancewear retailer.

We will gladly receive any out-grown dancewear or shoes for our borrower's box for emergency use by our students.

## **SHOES: THE DANCER'S TOOLS**

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1. **Do not wear dance shoes outside!** Oils and dirt are hazardous when tracked into the studios and are damaging to the shoes.
2. Shoes must fit properly. Dance shoes fit snugly and are **not** fitted with room to grow. Gaps and bagging are signs of an improper fit.
3. Toenails should be trimmed regularly and cut straight to avoid ingrown nails.
4. Do not sew elastic or ribbons on the shoes if you are unsure of the fit or do not know where or how to sew them on. Have your teacher check and approve the shoes first. Elastics may **never** be knotted and wrapped around the bottom of the foot.
5. Leather shoes will stretch. Canvas shoes do not.
6. Cross the drawstring to pull taunt around foot, then tie and tuck into the shoe. Never use the drawstring to fit the shoe. This could injure the skin or tendon.
7. Laces, ribbons and ties must be neatly secured or tucked in.
8. A small crochet hook is helpful in retrieving a drawstring that has withdrawn into the casing.

### **Pointe Students**

1. **Do not purchase pointe shoes before consulting with your teachers.**
2. Do not sew ribbons or elastic onto shoes until the faculty confirms the fit and gives instructions on how to sew them.
3. Dancers should learn to sew their own shoes. This is their responsibility - not their parent's. If they are ready for pointe - they're ready to sew! Look for the sewing workshop for all pointe students.
4. Experienced dancers should pre-tape their toes prior to technique class to limit the amount of time taken to put on pointe shoes for pointe class.
5. Convertible tights must cover the entire foot for pointe. Mid-calf tights are not appropriate for pointe technique class.
6. Each dancer must dispose of his/her own Band-Aids, Band-Aid wrappers, and discarded tape to ensure cleanliness and a healthy workspace. Toenail polish is detrimental to toenail strength needed for pointe work and not recommended.
7. Follow the instructions of the faculty as to the care, longevity techniques and storage of the pointe shoe.

## HAIR

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3-year – 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade Girls: Ballet buns are preferable BUT ponytails are acceptable with teacher approval. Hair should be secured away from the face with clips or barrettes.

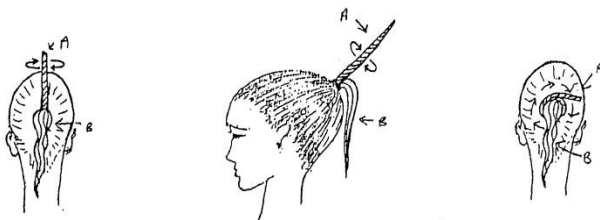
3<sup>rd</sup> Grade and Up Girls: Always wear hair neatly in a ballet bun with loose hair pinned or clipped away from the face. Hairspray or gel can help.

**Dance Bag Supplies (for all ages):** brush & comb, nylon hair net, braided elastic band, barrettes/clips, hair & bobby pins, hair spray

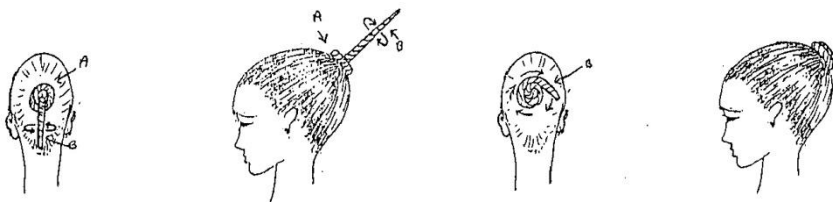
### Instructions for Styling Hair

Buns should be as flat to the head as possible. NO “doorknob” buns!

1. Brush hair smooth. Remove all tangles.
2. Spray hair lightly with hair spray. Smooth hair with hands and secure wisps, layers or short ends into a ponytail and secure with a braided elastic band. (Do not use rubber bands. They tear hair.)
3. Secure sides and back hair with clips or barrettes
4. Divide ponytail into two sections and twist or three sections and braid.



5. Wrap each section of twisted or braided hair clockwise around the braided elastic band secure with hair and bobby pins as you wrap



6. Place the hair net over the bun; twist the net over the bun at least two times. Tuck ends of hair net into the bottom of the bun and secure with hair or bobby pins.
7. Spray hair and bun with hair spray to set. Smooth with hand or comb. Bun should be as flat to the head as possible. NO “doorknob” buns!

**Shorter Hair:**

1. Chin length hair - This length is difficult to place hair in a bun. Pull hair into a ponytail, securing the sides back away from face with clips or barrettes. Spray heavily with hair spray to set.
2. Very short hairstyles should pull sides away from face. Long bangs secured back with clips to keep from eyes.

**Why do dancers wear their hair this way?**

Credible professional dance schools require their students to wear their hair up for class. The correct use and placement of the head and neck are very important in dance for concentration and balance. Hair must be removed from these areas to allow instructors to see the development, technique and growth of the head, neck and shoulders so they can give proper corrections to achieve the desired results.

Unsecured hair is distracting and can throw a dancer off balance, especially when turning. Bangs and wisps can cause shadowing on the face and create a short look to the forehead. A uniformed look is desired in class and is essential for neat grooming and for confidence and conscientiousness. This demonstrates the value of being prepared, encourages individual artistic expression and provides visual ease for the teacher's corrections.

**SNACKS AND USE OF BREAK ROOM**

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The Staff Break Room, located next to the Bookstore, is ALWAYS OFF LIMITS to all ballet students before 3:30 pm. Briarwood Church is gracious to provide facilities for the Ballet school and we want to cooperate in every way possible by respecting the staff's privacy and the building and grounds.

Be sure to PICK UP ALL TRASH leaving no candy and chip wrappers and drink cans ANYWHERE around the building.

Use of the red-carpeted areas, upstairs and down, by older students is a privilege that can be revoked at any time if ANY food or drink is found in these areas.



## **IN CLOSING...**

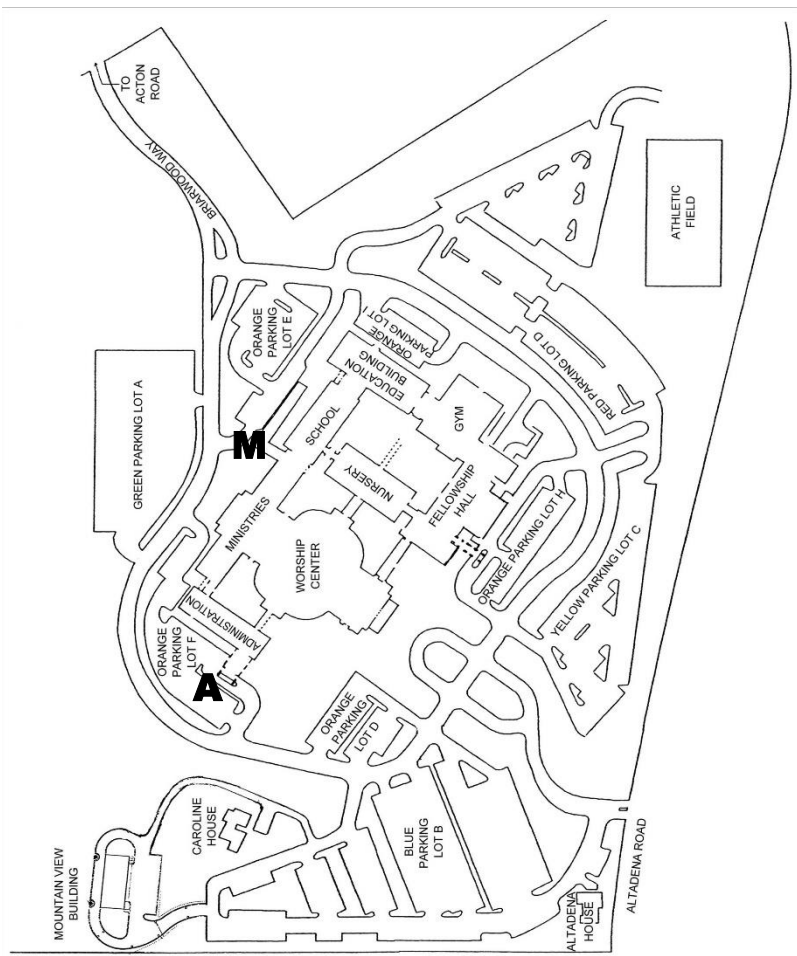
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We want to once again tell you how much we appreciate your being with us this year. We are praying that the ministry of the Briarwood Ballet will bless your entire family and be a joy in your life - "He has turned my mourning into dancing!" (Psalm 30:11)

Please pray for us as we endeavor to pursue excellence in the training that we offer your children.

In Christ,

The Faculty and Staff of the Briarwood Ballet



**A** = ADMINISTRATION entrance - Entry point for families and students after 6:30 p.m.

Once inside, take a left past reception down a short hallway to access the Ministries hallway.

**M** = MINISTRIES entrance – Entry point for Ballet Office and all classrooms before 6:30 p.m.

To get to the office, go through the lobby and up steps to the right. You will see our pink sign hanging from the ceiling by our customer service window.





Briarwood Ballet  
2200 Briarwood Way  
Birmingham, AL 35243

(205) 776-5284

[briarwood.org/ballet](http://briarwood.org/ballet)

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