



The Dance Department staff are really excited to welcome new dancers to our BTEC Performing Arts (Dance) course in September. The next chapter of our journey together is going to be filled with new and exciting opportunities in performance, choreography and dance technique. So just to get your feet tapping, we thought we would provide you with some handy hints and tips to get you started before then. We want you to continue to stretch your bodies and minds and develop your skills. As we know, performers never really stop so we want you to work on your fitness, participate in as many online classes as you can and do something that's also out of your comfort zone! This could be commercial Jazz or even ballet, so go on have a go!

Useful Contacts

Mrs Whitehead
cwh@formbyhighschool.com
Head of Dance

Mrs Harrocks
Community Arts Co-ordinator/Dance Teacher
vha@formbyhighschool.com

The Course

At Formby High School, we follow BTEC Performing Arts (Dance) Pearson specification. Take a look at the link below and see what the course is all about. As a dancer, you will be assessed in five modules and participate in practical and theoretical classes. All of which will be taught by a dance specialist.

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/btec-nationals/performing-arts-2016.html>

Our students have plentiful opportunities in and out of the dance studio to participate, choreograph and perform. Workshops are essential to every dancer and help to develop your skills and companies such as Rambert Dance Company, Ballet Boyz, Ludus Dance Company and other cutting edge dance practitioners will help you along the way.

Technique and Performance

TECHNIQUE! Technique is the basis of all fundamentals of dance, from holding your body correctly while performing, to executing skills properly in a routine. Strong technique extends across all areas of dance, regardless of the style of your routine. Whether it's jazz, hip hop, or ballet, there is always an element of technique that can be improved upon. So continue to work on your technique and aim for at least two hours of dancing a week. There are lots online so get up and start moving.

Tips for Turn Technique

As forms of dance vary, so do the types and styles of turns. One thing, however, remains constant, and that is the basic technique elements of the turn and how to execute it.

The body needs to move as one unit, not in pieces. Body placement is of utmost importance. Your dancer's square (square formed from shoulder to hip to hip to shoulder) must always be in alignment, with your rib cage pressing together, sternum open, shoulders pressed down and arms properly placed (not thrown) for each and every turn. Here are some examples of basic elements of what is a good turn.

Handy Hints for arms on turns – in any turn you want to use centrifugal force. You want to bring your arms into the centre of your body, you don't want to push them around and make your centre in front of your body.

Handy Hints for a better **releve** in turns – You want to be up as high on the ball of your foot as you can. Use the area just behind your toes as a platform. Spread your weight equally among this area as not to be forward or back on your **releve**. All elements given are for turns on the right side – just reverse it for the left.

Rambert Dance Company are hosting a range of classes for you to get a sweat on. Time to dance....

<https://www.rambert.org.uk/>

Keeping Fit

Physical and mental well-being is essential to every dancer. And get regular exercise makes your whole system work better, from your cardio-vascular machinery to your digestion to every joint and vein in your body. It builds up your strength and pumps blood around your body, improving the flow of nutrients in and waste products out. It improves your posture and stamina and is often more effective than dieting at helping you to lose weight.

But regular exercise brings much more than physical benefits. After only a couple of sessions, the effect on your energy levels is remarkable. With regular exercise, getting out of bed in the morning seems a much easier proposition. You'll concentrate better, feel more alert, and be much calmer when dealing with problems.

This effect on stress is one of the most remarkable and rewarding results of regular exercise. Whether it's to do with the release of endorphins during exercise or just because you're standing up straight and strong, the certain fact is that you become far less prone to stress. Getting exercise helps you put things in perspective, helping you reduce seemingly unmanageable problems at work to entirely solvable challenges.

Tough problems often seem to work themselves out while you're exercising – it can be a surprisingly useful tool for creative thinking and problem solving. The other benefit of exercise, once you get over the initial shock of the first few workouts, is that it's enjoyable. Whether you're on the road, in the water, on a treadmill or on a yoga mat, you're strengthening your body, freeing up your mind, reclaiming an important part of your life and having fun too.

<https://www.youtube.com/user/thebodycoach1>

Performance

Performance will be part of your every dance life from September, whether it's in the dance studio or on the stage. Have a look at the links below and see what we do best.

<https://youtu.be/vVxWGSciWcE>

<https://youtu.be/5r26J6j3GBY>

<https://youtu.be/ZkahlUJ61ws>

<https://youtu.be/u-tcD0wKKi0>

Our annual Dance Show "The Groove" is performed every January and showcases a range of dance pieces and styles with work created by the teachers and students. Additionally, we also have our own Sixth Form company 'Eleven' who perform and devise new and challenging works with our teachers and outside practitioners.

Think you can handle your own dance club? From September Year 12, students can team teach or take control of their own club. Don't worry though, one of your teachers will be on hand to play your music or even join in.

Handy Hints for Performing

If you've been dancing for a while, you may be getting to that point where you feel ready to get a routine together and perform it on stage. Performing can be an amazing and exciting experience, but the process can be a bit difficult. Your teacher is there to help you with things like choreography and technique, but there are some other aspects that you can work on yourself. Below, we've put together some pointers to help you prepare for your next show! Whether this is your first performance or your 100th, these tips should benefit you and also relieve any worries you may have about being on stage.

Practice, Practice, Practice

The first thing you're going to want to do before you perform is practice a lot. This sounds like an obvious point, but so many dancers mention that they wished they had more rehearsal time before a show. To get the most out of your performance, make sure you start rehearsing well in advance. Most people start their routines a few months before their show date, and practice at least once a week. Running your routine as many times as you can is the best thing you can do to make sure you don't forget it, too. If you're feeling nervous about being on stage, then making sure that you've gotten plenty of practice time is the remedy. If you've done the routine a billion times, there shouldn't be much need to worry!

Lots of rehearsal time will also ensure that you smooth out any problems you encounter along the way. If you find that a move or transition is causing some trouble you can use your time to work on perfecting or modifying it. Also, make sure that you practice your routine "full-out" (dancing as if you are already on stage) a few times. This is important to do so that your body gets used to how you will actually be moving on stage.

Overall, remember to be patient with yourself. If there is a step that you are not getting, or if you feel like the routine is not working out the way you want it to, take a step back and give yourself time to think and breathe. Everything will work out eventually!

Get a "Mock-Audience"

If you have most of your routine done, you might want to start running it in front of others. If you've never performed before, then this is a good way to see how it feels to have others watching

you. Running your routine in front of others before show time is also a good way to reduce any stage fright you may have.

Get Feedback

In addition to practicing in front of others, you're going to want to get some general feedback on your routine. This can be from your teacher or peer. Either way, any piece of praise or constructive criticism will be very helpful. Getting feedback will help you figure out what aspects of your dance you need to work on and you'll also see what others like best about your dance. It's always good to get an outsiders perspective of how you're doing.

If you don't have anyone immediately available to give you feedback try recording your dance and showing it to someone at a later time. You can also view that video yourself to see how you look, and take notes on things to fix.

Lose the Mirrors

Having a mirror to practice your dancing is great because you can actually see what you look like when you move. However, it is possible to become too dependent on the mirror (especially if you are in a group dance). Sometimes when people are so used to dancing in front of a mirror, they can get disorientated when they do their routine without it. If you are accustomed to dancing in one particular direction for so long, it can really throw you off when you finally face a different direction. A lot of dancers also rely too much on the mirrors when it comes to figuring out spacing. Once the mirrors are gone, it becomes harder to figure out how close or far away other dancers are to you. This is why practicing routines away from a mirror is a very good idea. The performance space definitely will not have mirrors, so it's best to practice without them as soon as you can.

Dance History

So you will look at the history of dance in several units and create presentations and performance work so let's get started.

The Origins

The origins of this popular dance movement can be traced to several influential dance masters such as Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham. They all wanted to show to the world that contemporary dancers should embrace freedom, ignore old dance conventions and explore the limits of the human body and visual expression of feelings. Also, one of the precursors to the contemporary dance can be found in the millennia's old techniques of Zen Buddhism and Indian Health, which incorporates various dancing philosophies that closely follow the principles of contemporary dance.

Time to look at 'Past and Present' dance practitioners and see how it really started.

Have a look at the links below, see what you think!!!

Martha Graham <https://youtu.be/dYYs5P-ccS4>

Merce Cunningham <https://youtu.be/yOAagU6cfBw>

Alvin Ailey <https://youtu.be/iMlq4zDo2us>

So what's going on now???

We want you to discover what today's practitioners are creating so have a look on YouTube and the link below and discover a new world of dance.

Rambert Dance https://youtu.be/hlj0_o6gcSw

Matthew Bourne <https://youtu.be/JQR5cTFCvgw>

Akram Khan <https://youtu.be/erLiIMvPUhg>

So it's over to you.

THE STAGE IS YOURS - it's time to shine.

See you in September

The Dance Department