Nutcracker Guide 2026

Thank you for your interest in New England Academy of Dance's annual Nutcracker!

Being part of this cherished holiday tradition is an experience your child will remember for a lifetime. In addition to advancing their ballet technique and artistry, dancers will create lasting friendships while performing in a professional production accompanied by The Norwalk Symphony Orchestra.

At NEAD, we bring The Nutcracker from studio to stage with professionalism and care. To ensure a rewarding experience for all, it's important that dancers and parents understand the level of commitment required. This guide covers everything you need to know about participating in our production.

Eligibility

- Open to NEAD registered students in Ballet 1 and above who meet the required class attendance.

Auditions & Orientation

- Auditions: Saturday August 29th and Sunday August 30th (see your email for details)
- Parent Mandatory Orientation Meetings: Friday August 28th and Saturday August 29th (see your email for details)
- All dancers—whether new or returning—must audition.
- A parent is required to attend an orientation meeting, even if their child has participated in The Nutcracker before. Parents only need to attend one orientation session (choose the session of your oldest dancer)

Role Placement

Roles are generally assigned by ballet level:

Ballet 1	Angels
Ballet 2	Mice (Battle Scene)

Ballet 3	Pixies (Waltz of the Flowers), Bon Bons (Sugar Plum & Cavalier)
Ballet 4a	Ginger Cookies, Bluebell Flowers (Waltz of the Flowers)
Ballet 4b	Party Scene Kids, Waltz of the Flowers, Soldiers
Ballet 5a	Clara, Fritz, Waltz of the Flowers, Soldiers, Candy Canes
Ballet 5b	Waltz of the Flowers, Soldiers, Candy Canes, Lead Angels
Ballet 6a	Corps de Ballet, Waltz of the Flowers
Ballet 6b	Corps de Ballet, Demi-soloist Roles
Ballet Int/ Adv	Corps de Ballet, Soloist Roles, Lead Roles

Participation Fees

- Ballet 1: $225
- Ballet 2 – 5b: $300
- Enrichment & Company Members: $500 per semester

Performance fees are non-refundable.

Performance Dates

- Friday, Dec. 11 – 7:00 PM
- Saturday, Dec. 12 – 11:00 AM & 4:00 PM
- Sunday, Dec. 13 – 1:00 PM (Children's Show) & 4:00 PM

Rehearsal Commitment

- Tech Week: Monday, Dec. 7th – Thursday, Dec. 10 (Dress Rehearsal with the Norwalk Symphony Orchestra)

- Dancers should expect rehearsal every night during Tech Week.
- All dress rehearsals, tech rehearsals, and performances are **mandatory.**
- The full Tech rehearsal schedule will be posted online in mid-October.
- Weekly rehearsals begin September 5th weekend or mid October depending on role

Sample 2024 Schedule by Level (for reference only – 2026 schedule TBD):

- Ballet 1 – Angels: 10-11 rehearsals starting mid October (Sat. & Sun.)
- Ballet 2 – Mice: Sundays starting mid September
- Ballet 3 – Pixies & Bon Bons: Sat. afternoons & Sun. mornings (~11 AM)
- Ballet 4a – Ginger Cookies & Bluebells: Sat. afternoons & Sundays
- Ballet 4b – Party Scene: Sat. & Sun. afternoons (1.5–2 hrs/day)
- Ballet 5a/5b – Multiple Roles: Sat. & Sun. rehearsals
- Ballet 6a – Multiple Roles: Sat. & Sun. rehearsals
- Enrichment/Company: Sat. & Sun. rehearsals (Corps, demi-soloist, soloist, principal roles)

Attendance Policy

- All rehearsals and classes must be attended unless an unavoidable conflict arises. Notify the studio in advance by emailing the office at neadinfo@aol.com
- No excused absences—any missed rehearsal counts toward the limit.
- 3-absence limit—missing more than three rehearsals may affect casting.
- **Mandatory:** All dress rehearsals, tech rehearsals, and performances.
- No early departures from performances.
- No refunds after casting is posted.
- Rehearsal schedule will be posted on the NEAD website at the bottom of the main page by Wednesday each week. Two weeks will be posted. The tech schedule will be posted by mid October.
- Schedules are subject to change if there is a scheduling issue with any professional dancers in the show or with the leads / Company dancers. We try to limit schedule changes but sometimes it is unavoidable.

Special Opportunity – Senior Fathers in the Party Scene

Dads of graduating seniors are invited to join the Party Scene!

- Rehearsals begin mid October
- Saturdays & Sundays, typically after 3:00 PM
- Your dancer will sign you up—no dance experience needed!

Costume Information

All costumes belong to NEDT. Some costumes will be sent home prior to the shows while others will be kept at the NCHS for dress rehearsal and the shows. Dancers will have fittings as part of the rehearsal process and times will be posted on the rehearsal schedule. All dancers should have new pink tights, new ballet slippers or pointe shoes and hair should be in a perfect ballet bun (unless specified). Specific costume / make-up needs will be communicated prior to dress rehearsal. Dress rehearsal requires full performance hair, make-up and costumes. All costumes are returned to NEDT after the last show on Sunday afternoon. Dancers should make sure to bring clothes to wear home after the final show. Headpieces remain at the theater for the entire weekend and will be put on by our Make-up Committee at each performance including dress rehearsal.

Special costume needs:

- Party scene children - black single strap ballet slippers
- Party scene moms - black character shoes
- Angels - white camisole leotard
- Older dancers with multiple costumes may want a nude leotard to wear under costumes

Special hair / make-up:

- Angels - hair down with soft curls, light make-up
- Mice - whiskers will be applied at the backstage make-up table
- All other dancers (not in Enrichment or Company) - slick bun, no part, hair net on bun

- Party scene girls - hair information will be sent out prior to tech week with specific instructions for creating rag curls / ringlets

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Parent Volunteer Requirement

Producing The Nutcracker takes many hands. Parents are expected to:

- Join a volunteer committee
- Complete at least 2 shifts within that committee

Committees include:
Costume Maintenance • Costume Management • Load In/Out • Poster Distribution • Chaperones • Boutique • Concessions • Flowers • Ushers • Hair & Make-up

For questions / issues with any volunteer commitment, please email:

NEDTvolunteercoordinator@gmail.com

Backstage Rules for Success

Snacks: Please be sure to pack water in a leak-proof container and a costume-safe snack for your dancer. Suggestions include pretzels, green grapes and crackers. Nothing greasy, sticky, or chocolate! We need to keep our costumes clean!

Backstage Entertainment: Think good, clean fun! Pipe cleaners, card games, and colored pencils are good examples. Please avoid crayons and markers as they can leave marks on costumes.

Please do not send make up for girls in ballet 1-3, if they need a touch up the chaperones can take them to the make up table.

The only parents allowed backstage (including backstage, the Wagner Room and the “dungeon”) are official chaperones. For safety reasons we cannot allow anyone else backstage, so please plan to pack food, drinks, etc with your girls ahead of time or between shows. In addition to safety concerns, girls in the Wagner Room may get upset if they see parents backstage who aren't chaperones—they start to wonder why their own families aren't

there. Dancers in the dungeon will check themselves in and out so please choose a meeting place to meet them after the performances are over.

Performance Length

- Full-Length Shows: ~2 hours
- Children's Show (Act II only): ~1 hour

Order of the Show:

ACT I

Party Scene

Battle Scene (Soldiers, Mice, Big Rats)

Clara & the Nutcracker

Waltz of the Snow

Intermission

ACT II

Waltz of the Flowers (Pixies & All Flowers)

Spanish

Chinese

Candy Canes

Arabian

Mother Ginger & Ginger Cookies

Marzipan

Sugar Plum & Cavalier (Bon Bons)

Finale

Bows

Contact Information

📞 Phone: 203-972-3265

📧 Email: neadinfo@aol.com (primary mode of communication)

💻 Website: www.neadance.com

📍 Address: 231 Main Street, New Canaan, CT 06850

⏱️ Office Hours: Mon–Fri 10:00 AM–6:00 PM | Sat 9:00 AM–2:00 PM | Sun Closed