



# 2022-2023 PARENT / STUDENT HANDBOOK



# DREAM. REACH. DISCOVER. CREATE.

## OUR MISSION

The Patel Conservatory provides the finest performing arts training in an inspirational setting.

## OUR VISION

The Patel Conservatory gives students the tools to: dream, reach, discover, and create the performing arts; integrate them into everyday life; and contribute to the community.

## OUR HISTORY

Built on an abandoned gravel lot in a city that was lacking cultural offerings, the Straz Center began as the dream of a community. Today the Straz Center is the largest performing arts center in the Southeast and the only venue with an on-site performing arts Conservatory. The Straz Center was incorporated in 1980 and opened in 1987.

In the early 1990s, the Straz Center (known as Tampa Bay Performing Arts Center) established arts education as a community priority, working closely with area public, private and home school programs to enhance arts education for children throughout the seven-county Tampa Bay area. Outreach programs included curriculum connectors to Florida education standards and teacher study guides in print and online. The Straz Center's extended in-school artistic residencies, summer programs and after school offerings helped to fill the increasing gaps in arts education left by budget cuts.

The Patel Conservatory was built in 2004 in response to community need for high quality arts education programs. After a \$30-million capital campaign, the Straz Center constructed and opened the Patel Conservatory without debt. The Conservatory worked to develop a progression of arts education courses and programs, allowing students to advance from discovery to mastery of artistic skills.

In 2005 the Patel Conservatory received the Annual Future of the Region Award from the Tampa Bay Regional Planning Council, and became a member of the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts.

The Patel Conservatory worked to establish affiliations with The Florida Orchestra, V.O.I.C. Experience, Orlando Ballet School and The Broadway League, bringing exceptional educational opportunities to pre-professional training programs at the Patel Conservatory.

In 2007, the Patel Conservatory formalized its extensive Arts Education School & Community Partnership program that continues to serve more than 40 Title I schools, shelters, service agencies and other community organizations throughout each season.

By the end of 2010, former Orlando Ballet School Director Peter Stark stepped into the role of Dance Department Chair at the Patel Conservatory and launched the new ballet company, Next Generation Ballet (NGB).

In 2012, the Patel Conservatory received accreditation through the Southern Association of College and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS CASI) a division of Cognia.

In 2015, the Patel Conservatory celebrated its 10th Anniversary, welcomed our new Dance Chair and NGB Artistic Director, Philip Neal, to lead our dance program. Straz Education was also reinvigorated with the naming of a Vice President of Education.

In 2017, the Patel Conservatory was awarded renewal of its Cognia Accreditation through 2023. The Patel Conservatory continues to serve as the physical location for delivering the bulk of onsite Straz Educational programming.

## ARTISTIC PHILOSOPHY

### The Patel Conservatory:

- ❖ Provides a place where creativity is celebrated, honored and revered.
- ❖ Respects traditional performing arts as well as new forms.
- ❖ Encourages students to experience all artistic disciplines while developing their own unique style.
- ❖ Listens to our students and helps them to realize the practical steps necessary to make their visions a reality.
- ❖ Instills in our students a sense of pride that accompanies disciplined work habits and self-determination.
- ❖ Offers arts opportunities for all ages and interests.
- ❖ Provides a safe space for exploration and development.
- ❖ Reinforces the guiding principle that artistic growth never ends and that unrealized ideas are natural components of artistic growth.
- ❖ Develops a common artistic vocabulary so that we may communicate across disciplines.
- ❖ Reinforces the principle that art is process, not product.
- ❖ Serves as a leader in arts education.
- ❖ Maintains these values throughout community partnership offerings.

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## CONTACT US

**Patel Conservatory**, 1010 N. W.C. MacInnes Place, Tampa, FL 33602

**Admissions Office/Chairmen's Library** 813.222.1040 and FAX: 813.222.6459

EMAIL: [Admissions@strazcenter.org](mailto:Admissions@strazcenter.org)

In-person Admissions help is available by appointment only. Contact by phone or email to schedule.

### ADMISSIONS OFFICE

#### **SCHOOL YEAR:**

MONDAY-FRIDAY

10:30 A.M. – 7:30 P.M.

SATURDAY

9:00 A.M. – 2:30 P.M.

#### **SUMMER:**

MONDAY, TUESDAY

8:00AM – 6:00PM

WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, FRIDAY

8:00AM – 5:00PM

SATURDAY

8:30AM – 10:30AM

SUNDAY

CLOSED

### SECURITY DESK HOURS

#### **PATEL CONSERVATORY LOBBY:**

MONDAY, WEDNESDAY

10:00 A.M. – 6:30 P.M.

TUESDAY

9:00 A.M. – 7:00 P.M.

THURSDAY

10:00 A.M. – 7:30 P.M.

FRIDAY

10:00 A.M. – 6:00 P.M.

SATURDAY

9:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.

#### **TECO LOBBY:**

MONDAY-FRIDAY

4:30 P.M. until 15 MINS AFTER LAST CLASS

TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY

11:00 A.M. until 15 MINS AFTER LAST CLASS

THURSDAY

4:00 P.M. until 15 MINS AFTER LAST CLASS

FRIDAY

1:00 P.M. until 15 MINS AFTER LAST CLASS

SATURDAY

11:30 A.M. until 15 MINS AFTER LAST CLASS

**Patel Conservatory Security Desk (Patel Lobby)**

813.222.1571

**Straz Center Security Desk (Stage Door)**

813.222.1070

**Patel Conservatory Security Desk (TECO Lobby)**

813.222.1270

### **DEPARTMENT CONTACT:**

**Dance Department**

[danceprogram@strazcenter.org](mailto:danceprogram@strazcenter.org)

813.222.1079

**Theater Department**

[theaterprogram@strazcenter.org](mailto:theaterprogram@strazcenter.org)

813.222.6414

**Music Department**

[musicprogram@strazcenter.org](mailto:musicprogram@strazcenter.org)

813.222.6456

## COMMITMENT POLICIES

At the Patel Conservatory, we are committed to providing a safe, creative and learning-friendly environment to explore the arts. We depend on families, students (both adults and children) and Conservatory staff to help us meet this goal and develop positive, constructive relationships. To assist in these efforts, we have created commitment policies that outline expectations of students, families and Conservatory staff. By clearly outlining expectations and working together, we better fulfill our mission of providing the highest-quality performing arts training in an inspirational setting. All students, families and Conservatory staff members are required to abide by the commitment policies.

### STUDENT COMMITMENT POLICY

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I will:

- Review the Parent/Student Handbook and abide by the policies outlined therein.
- Make attendance, punctuality and preparation for classes a priority.
- Adhere to the policy that if I have excessive absences from classes or camps, or if I miss technical or dress rehearsals, I may be excluded from participating in the end of session performances. In addition, I understand that my attendance at all scheduled performances is mandatory if the course or program has multiple performances.
- Enter and exit through the passenger side of the vehicle when using the pick-up/drop-off lanes, as this is the safest route to avoid other vehicles and traffic. As a driving student, I will use crosswalks and intersections if I must cross the street.
- Participate fully and be supportive of my peers for the duration of each class or rehearsal, maintaining a respectful attitude toward my class, peers, instructor, security staff, administrators and the facility.
- Wear appropriate and provide necessary attire for the course/camp while maintaining appropriate modesty. I will not to wear clothing that may be offensive to others, including T-shirts with offensive graphics, language and/or sexually explicit images.
- Respect the judgment of the Conservatory's faculty regarding my progress in the program.
- Maintain confidentiality with any information regarding my financial aid, need or merit-based scholarship awards.
- Be respectful of different viewpoints, cultures and lifestyles.
- Attend performances that complement my class work and broaden my understanding of the arts as a whole.

### FAMILY COMMITMENT POLICY

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- I/We will:
- Review and abide by all Conservatory policies outlined in the Parent/Student handbook.
- Support my student in their efforts while attending the Patel Conservatory by ensuring consistent, punctual transportation for my student, supporting classroom methodology and respecting the rapport between my student and their instructor.
- Adhere to the policy that excessive absences from classes may result in my student's exclusion from end of session performances.
- Understand that my student's attendance at all technical and dress rehearsals is required to participate in the performance. In addition, I understand that my child's attendance at all scheduled performances is mandatory if the course or program has multiple performances.
- Notify the Conservatory of any anticipated absences, via e-mail or in writing, before session begins and as soon as possible if my student is ill.
- Complete a drop form and return it to the Admissions Office if my child needs to withdraw from a class. I understand that drop requests must be received by the 10th of the month in order to stop the monthly payment for that month.
- Be responsible for my student's safe and timely arrival to Conservatory classes AND their departure from the building within 15 minutes of the completion of their final class or camp. I will do so by having my student enter/exit my vehicle through the passenger side and making use of the student drop-off and pick-up lane located on Fortune Street at the

end of the TECO theater pathway. I understand that this is only a drop-off and pick-up lane, not a parking area, and is subject to ticketing fines by the City of Tampa.

- Ensure that my account is current if I am on a payment plan (school year only). I understand that tuition payments are due on the 20th of each month and it is my responsibility to keep my account current with the Admissions Office. A \$20 late fee will be assessed if my account becomes past-due. If my account remains past-due, I will be notified by email that my student has been dropped from class and will need to satisfy the balance in order for my student to return to class.
- Respect the judgment of the Conservatory's faculty regarding my student's progress in the program.
- Maintain a mature attitude in dealing with problems by contacting the instructor first, stating the problem clearly, offering potential solutions and remaining open to suggestions.
- Be respectful of different viewpoints, cultures and lifestyles.
- Keep confidential any information regarding financial aid, need or merit-based scholarship awards my student might receive.

## FACULTY AND STAFF COMMITMENT POLICY

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- We will:
- Be fully prepared for each class session and be in the classroom before class start time.
- Communicate regularly and clearly with students, parents and colleagues.
- Treat every student, parent and colleague with respect and dignity.
- Adhere to the highest professional standards regarding classroom management and professional expertise by employing teachers who are experts in their field.
- Provide quality classroom instruction in every class session.
- Provide a nurturing, encouraging environment for our students.
- Maintain a consistently positive, energetic attitude in class, providing inspiration and enthusiasm for our students.
- Exercise fairness and consistency applying rules, providing feedback and completing assessments.
- Maintain personal and professional integrity inside and outside the Patel Conservatory.
- Maintain mature attitudes in dealing with problems by stating the problem clearly, offering potential solutions and remaining open to suggestions.
- Appropriately match teachers with students of different ages, abilities and experience.
- Maintain professional standards of communication and action within the classroom and in dealing with all Conservatory business.
- Consistently seek to expand our knowledge of art forms outside our disciplines and be familiar with performances occurring at the Straz Center.
- Keep abreast of national and international art movements and performances.
- Continually develop sensitivity to the many cultures and beliefs that our students embody.
- Be respectful of different viewpoints, cultures and lifestyles.
- Clearly communicate expectations for student success.

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### COMMUNICATION

Communication between the Patel Conservatory and parents/students occurs through email and phone calls. For this reason, we ask that you maintain current email and phone number information with our Admissions Office. Text messaging with instructors is discouraged. We use this information to communicate with you regarding your household account, registration information, and reminders for upcoming events.

### WEBSITE

We encourage parents to explore the Patel Conservatory website for the most up to date information. You may register online for select courses, access the Conservatory calendar, and purchase tickets to Straz Center & Patel Conservatory events. You may also login to your account to access your student's class schedule and update your contact and billing information 24 hours a day. Please note that your login credentials may differ from your Straz Center account.

### CONSERVATORY CALENDAR

The Patel Conservatory offers two sessions each year: School Year and Summer.

- School year classes are offered from late August through May.
- Summer camps and classes are offered from June through August.

Session dates are posted in our brochure and on our website under Registration Policies.

### ACCREDITATION & MEMBERSHIP

The Patel Conservatory has received accreditation status from the Southern Association of College and Schools Council on Accreditation and School Improvement (SACS-CASI) under the division of Cognia. Maintaining accreditation status allows the Conservatory to advance in the pursuit of performing arts education excellence and deepen the fulfillment of the mission for all students.

The Patel Conservatory is a member of the following organizations:

- National Guild for Community Arts Education
- Florida School Music Association

### ORIENTATION

Orientation sessions are offered twice a year, at the start of the School Year and before Summer, to review important policies and procedures. Orientation dates are posted on our website and are mandatory for all new families and strongly encouraged for returning families.

### TOURS

Tours of the Patel Conservatory are offered by appointment only. To request a tour, call the Student Affairs Office at 813-222-1029 or email [patelconservatory@strazcenter.org](mailto:patelconservatory@strazcenter.org).

### PATEL CONSERVATORY VOLUNTEERS

For parents who would like to be involved at the Patel Conservatory, we recommend joining Patel Conservatory Volunteers. The group meets once per month during the school year and helps coordinate fundraising events, cast parties, and other Patel Conservatory initiatives. For details, email [patelconservatoryvolunteers@gmail.com](mailto:patelconservatoryvolunteers@gmail.com). A background check and proof of COVID-19 vaccination is required of all volunteers.

## ENROLLMENT INFORMATION

### ADMISSIONS

#### HOW TO REGISTER

**Online:** [patelconservatory.org](http://patelconservatory.org)

**Email:** [Admissions@strazcenter.org](mailto:Admissions@strazcenter.org)

**Phone:** 813.222.1040

**In person:** by appointment

#### REGISTRATION FEE

There is a \$35 required registration fee per student, per term, assessed with your first enrollment each term and is due at the time of registration. The registration fee is waived for all current Straz Center donors, which starts at \$100 annually. Donor information is available online at [strazcenter.org](http://strazcenter.org).

#### AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

Some Patel Conservatory classes require an audition or placement prior to registration. Auditions are held prior to each session. For audition dates, times and requirements visit [patelconservatory.org](http://patelconservatory.org) or call 813.222.1040. Those unable to attend a scheduled audition time may submit video auditions for theater and music through: <https://app.getacceptd.com/patelconservatory>, or dance through: <https://app.getacceptd.com/nextgenerationballet>, depending on class availability.

#### WITHDRAWAL FROM A CLASS

To withdraw from a class, or switch to a different class, the appropriate forms must be completed and returned to the Admissions Office. Requests to switch or withdraw must be submitted by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month in order to adjust monthly payments. All requests to withdraw from classes or private lessons should be directed to the Admissions Office at 813.222.1040 or [admissions@strazcenter.org](mailto:admissions@strazcenter.org). A digital form may be found on the Patel Conservatory website through the following link: [withdrawal form](#).

## FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Tuition and registration fees, including those for private lessons, are due at the time of registration. All tuition and fees are non-refundable, including those for private lessons. No refunds are offered if a student cancels a private lesson. Please see private lesson policies for additional information about private lesson payments. Additional fees, including recital fees, may be charged. Tuition and fees vary by class. Please check the brochure or the website for individual class tuition pricing.

#### PAYMENT PLANS

Payment plans are offered for School Year tuition only. Tuition is calculated based on the School Year and monthly payments are offered as a courtesy for our patrons. A \$3.00 fee will apply to all payment plans to help defray the costs incurred in processing multiple transactions. Students joining after the start of the school year pay a pro-rated tuition amount. Monthly payments are not pro-rated for holidays, scheduled breaks or missed classes.

Monthly payments must be secured by an automatic withdrawal from a bank account or charged to a credit card on the 20th of each month. Payments not cleared by the end of the month will be assessed a \$20 late fee on the first of the following month.

**PLEASE NOTE:** We do not offer payment plans for productions, workshops, intensives, summer camps, summer classes, or fees.

## RECITAL FEES

Most dance classes require a recital fee to participate in performances. Recital fees will be automatically charged to the account on file. For more details, please see the information sheet for your class on the website.

## ACCEPTED FORMS OF PAYMENT

Payments may be made by check, money order, Straz Center gift card, MasterCard, Visa, American Express and Discover Card. The Admissions Office does not accept cash. Straz Center gift cards cannot be used for online payments.

## RETURNED CHECK POLICY

A service charge of \$25 will be assessed on all returned checks.

## PAST DUES

The Patel Conservatory procedure for addressing past-due accounts is as follows:

- Households with past-due accounts will be contacted via email, telephone call and mailed invoice. After this action, the registering family will be notified by email that their student has been dropped from class, any scholarship awards will be revoked, and they will need to satisfy their balance in order to return to class.
- If the student continues to attend class, the Department Chair or Manager will inform the parent that the student will not be permitted to attend class until the balance is resolved.
- The Department Chair or Manager will intercept the student at class time and contact the parent to ask them to resolve their balance with Admissions before the student may return to class. If the parent is not available at the start of class, the student *will not attend class* but instead remain with the Chair or Manager until the parent returns for pick-up.
- If the Chair or Manager is unable to resolve the past due situation, the Admissions Manager will intervene, and actions may be taken to withdraw the student from all courses at the Conservatory.

## FINANCIAL AID

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Scholarships are available through the Straz Center's financial aid program to provide students with the opportunity to participate in our arts education programs. Scholarships are made possible through gifts from donors who believe in the Straz Center's mission and the power of the performing arts to teach and inspire.

Need-based and merit-based scholarships are awarded subject to availability of funds.

Scholarships are determined by the Scholarship Committee and typically cover a percentage of tuition. Registration and recital fees are not included.

Applications must be completed in full and submitted with all required documentation by the specified deadline for each session for priority consideration. Session deadlines are available online at [patelconservatory.org](http://patelconservatory.org) or by calling our Admissions Office at 813.222.1040.

Scholarships are generally not available for Private Lessons, Suzuki Violin, On-Camera Acting, adult classes, Fall/Spring Theater Productions or Recital Fees.

For additional information and to apply for financial aid, visit [strazcenter.org/financialaid](http://strazcenter.org/financialaid).

## DISCOUNT POLICIES

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- Discounts do not apply to Workshops, Private Lessons, Recitals or Productions, unless specifically noted.
- Some discounts are not available for online purchases.
- Discounts cannot be combined with other discounts or with scholarships.
- Discounts cannot be applied to prior purchases.

- It is the student's responsibility to be aware of any discounts for which they may qualify. They must be requested at the time of registration. Discounts requested after registration will not be honored.
- Discounts are subject to change. Please check with the Admissions Office or [patelconservatory.org](http://patelconservatory.org) for the most current information.

## 2022/2023 AVAILABLE DISCOUNTS

**Pay in Full** - Students whose session tuition is paid in full before classes start will receive a 10% discount, valid for School Year classes only. Not available for online registration.

**Multi-Class Discount** - Students who enroll in three or more classes will receive 10% off the cost of each class. The discount applies to three students in one family taking one class each, or one student taking three or more classes. Classes must be registered for together in order to receive the discount on all of the classes, otherwise the discount will be applied only to the third and/or subsequent classes.

**Try Before You Buy** – Students may try one class for free before registering. Limit one class per discipline per student. Some classes may be observation only. A Pass to Class must be obtained from the Admissions Office. Pass to Class is not available for Open Dance classes.

**Patel Perks** - Patel Conservatory students may purchase a half-price ticket to select Patel Conservatory productions by purchasing in person at the Straz Center's Ticket Sales Office. Conservatory students receive discount ticket offers to select performances at the Straz Center. Offers are posted as they become available.

**Hillsborough County School Employees** - Current Hillsborough County school employees receive 20% off tuition. Must present a school ID or current pay stub. Valid for employees only, not valid for dependents.

**Partnership Schools** - Students currently enrolled in a Patel Conservatory partner school receive 20% off tuition. Some exclusions apply. Must present a student ID or letter from the lead teacher of the school on school letterhead. A list of our current partner schools may be found at [patelconservatory.org](http://patelconservatory.org).

## 2022/2023 Music Discounts

*Vocal Arts: Chorale* - Receive a \$150 discount for Vocal Arts: Chorale when enrolled in Women's or Men's Ensemble.

*Chamber Strings & Chamber Ensemble* – Students enrolled in the summer 2022 Chamber Intensive receive 20% off tuition.

## 2022/2023 Theater Discounts

*Theater Certification* - Theater Certification students receive 20% off tuition. All classes must be approved by their advisor to qualify.

### STUDENT RECORDS PRIVACY POLICY

The Patel Conservatory at the Straz Center recognizes the importance of protecting the privacy and security of your personal information. The Patel Conservatory may request personal information that could reasonably be used to identify you, including, but not limited to, your name, address, email address, birth date, financial account information and credit card information. Such information will be utilized only for the purpose stated. To accomplish such purpose, the Patel Conservatory may disclose the information to its employees, consultants and agents who have a legitimate need to know the information. Access to such information is restricted only to those users and is password protected.

The Patel Conservatory does not collect social security numbers. Any credit card information that is collected is immediately destroyed or encrypted once payment has been processed. We do not sell, rent or trade personal information for commercial purposes. We will not share your personal information with any third party without your written request to do so, unless required by law (i.e. by subpoena or court order).

Parents/guardians may access student records through the Admissions Office staff. In the instance of divorce, the non-custodial parent has the same rights to review the records unless there is a court order, or legally binding document, that specifically revokes these rights. A copy of this document must be submitted to the Admissions Office in advance.

### DEPARTMENT ADVISORS

Each artistic discipline at the Patel Conservatory has a corresponding advisor who can assist students with the best course selection for their level of training. Furthermore, these advisors are the next level of communication within the department if parents have any questions or concerns a student's instructor cannot address.

The department advisors are as follows:

- Music (Vocal) – Kavanaugh Gillespie
- Music (Instrumental) – Catherine Michelsen
- Theater – Audrey Siegler
- Dance – Claire Florio

### COLLEGE COUNSELING

The Patel Conservatory offers its students college search counseling and audition preparation for those seeking to continue their artistic training on a collegiate level. The Conservatory also offers master classes in college audition preparation that are open to all High School age students.

### CLASS CONCERNS

Students or parents who have concerns regarding their class should first speak with the instructor. Instructors may not have time between classes. Parents should contact the appropriate department advisor to set up a time with their instructor to discuss their concerns. If the situation cannot be resolved at that level, the instructor and/or department advisor may bring the concern to the department head.

### EQUITY & LEARNING DIFFERENCES

The Patel Conservatory encourages students with disabilities to participate in Conservatory programs. Please notify the Admissions Office upon registration if any learning differences exist so that program staff can make necessary accommodations applicable to your student's participation in a course.

## OPEN CLASSROOMS/SHOWCASES/PERFORMANCES

The Patel Conservatory offers students the opportunity to put into practice the skills they learn in the classroom through open classrooms, showcases or performances. Many classes will culminate in a final piece or musical number which may be shared via video recording, virtual platform, or outdoors. Performances are a natural extension of performance-based training and are open to the public. Admission charges may apply. Students are expected to participate.

## END OF YEAR CELEBRATION

At the end of our school year term, the Conservatory hosts a celebration to honor our graduating seniors and certification students. The performance is followed by a family friendly celebration with dinner and dancing. The event is open to all Patel Conservatory families. Admission charges apply to this event.

## BROADWAY BALL

Each fall, the Straz Center presents a spectacular fall fundraiser hosted by the Board of Trustees. This black-tie event features live and silent auctions, a gourmet dinner on Morsani Hall stage and show-stopping entertainment. The evening culminates in the Morsani lobby with desserts and dancing at the hip and fresh Broadway Ball After Dark. In its 17-year history, Broadway Ball has raised more than \$3 million to benefit the non-profit Straz Center's many artistic, education and community outreach programs including an annual scholarship drive which directly supports scholarships to study at the Patel Conservatory.

# ATTENDANCE AND CONDUCT

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

- The performing arts are collaborative. Each person's contribution directly affects classroom experiences, the rehearsal process and the success of performances. To achieve and maintain the highest caliber of student experience, mandatory attendance is expected. Absences negatively impact individual and collective program experiences and progress. Parents and students should review their school and club calendars carefully before signing up for classes.
- Students are expected to be in class, ready to work, at the scheduled class starting time. In other words, students are responsible for dressing out and/or readying themselves for class before class start time.
- Class specific attendance guidelines will be communicated through your instructor. Please understand that if you have excessive absences from classes, you may be excluded from participating in performances. No refunds will be provided. Instructors will consistently enforce the attendance policy, and performance privileges will be at the discretion of the department head. Exceptions will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Instructors are not required to make up a student's missed lessons or classes.
- Some classes may offer a virtual option if a student is not able to make an onsite meeting. This will be communicated through your instructor. Tuition pricing will not be pro-rated for students who enroll in an onsite synchronous class and later choose to shift to virtual.
- Parents are responsible for notifying the Patel Conservatory in writing if they are aware of an upcoming absence. Please provide as much notice as possible and submit your request for an excused absence via email to your instructor.
- Tardiness may be counted as an absence.
- Failure to adhere to these attendance policies could adversely affect student performance and/or result in the loss of Patel Conservatory scholarships as deemed appropriate by department chairs.
- If a student needs to leave class early, notify the instructor upon arrival. Some programs will not allow participation that day if the student is leaving early.
- For an unexpected absence or tardy, notify the Admissions Office as soon as possible by calling 813.222.1040 or emailing [patelconservatory@strazcenter.org](mailto:patelconservatory@strazcenter.org).

CONDUCT POLICY

Performing arts classes provide students with a unique opportunity to develop important work habits and life skills. It is the policy of the Conservatory to maintain a positive, safe and secure learning and working environment. Conservatory staff members strive to teach the whole person. To that end, students are expected to conduct themselves appropriately at all times.

- Successful performing arts programs instill in students a mature, responsible and accountable approach to their work. Troublesome student or parent behavior impedes the individual student as well as the overall goals of the program. The Conservatory relies on parents to set appropriate guidelines and codes of behavior for their children. The Conservatory views consistently troublesome student or parent behavior as an indication that the self-discipline necessary for successful performing arts training is lacking. Every effort will be made to correct such problems, but students or parents who continue to display behavior in conflict with Conservatory policies are subject to dismissal from the program without refund.
- Patel Conservatory students and Straz Center employees have a right to learn and work in a safe environment. Violent behavior against students, staff or employees will not be tolerated. The Conservatory has a zero-tolerance policy for any form of violence. Any form of violence or aggression is grounds for immediate dismissal from class/program at the sole discretion of Conservatory administration. If any student is found with drugs or alcohol, it is grounds for immediate dismissal from class/program at the sole discretion of Conservatory administration.
- Classrooms are shared spaces used by many groups. Students are expected to handle equipment respectfully and to store it properly, leaving the classroom ready for the next group.
- The Conservatory’s student and family commitment policies are stated at the beginning of this handbook.

BULLYING POLICY AND STATEMENT

It is the policy of The Patel Conservatory that all of its students and school employees deserve an educational setting that is safe, secure, and free from harassment and bullying of any kind. The Conservatory will not tolerate bullying or harassment of any type. Conduct that constitutes bullying or harassment, as defined herein, is prohibited.

“Harassment” includes, but is not limited to, slurs, jokes, and other verbal, graphic, or offensive conduct relating to gender, race, religion, color, sex, sexual orientation, national origin, citizenship, or disability. It also includes unwanted, offensive sexual conduct. “Bullying” means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees. It is further defined as unwanted and repeated written, verbal, or physical behavior, including any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by a student or adult, that is severe or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual’s school performance or participation; and may involve but is not limited to:

teasing	social exclusion	sexual, religious, or racial harassment
threats	intimidation public	humiliation
stalking	cyberbullying	destruction of property
theft	cyberstalking	physical violence

All acts of bullying or harassment should be immediately reported to a teacher, staff member or administrator and will be kept strictly anonymous. All reports will be taken seriously. A student who through investigation is found to have engaged in any act of bullying is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including suspension, expulsion, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. The severity and pattern, if any, of the bullying behavior shall be taken into consideration when disciplinary decisions are made.

ZERO-TOLERANCE DISCRIMINATION POLICY

The Patel Conservatory does not discriminate against any person because of race, color, gender, sexual orientation, national origin, disability, marital status, age, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law.

## DISCIPLINARY PROCESS

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- Upon first offense of inappropriate conduct, a verbal warning is issued to the student.
- Upon second offense, a written warning is filed with the appropriate manager/director, who contacts the parent/guardian and discusses the student issue. The manager/director will explain to the parent/guardian that if the student's behavior does not improve, he/she will be asked to leave the class/program.
- If a third incident occurs, the student will be asked to leave the class/program.

Depending on the severity of the student issue, the Patel Conservatory reserves the right to inform the student/parent that they will be asked to leave the class/program. This will be at the sole discretion of Conservatory administration.

## OTHER POLICIES

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### DRESS CODE

Students are expected to dress appropriately for each class while maintaining a basic level of decency and appropriate modesty. Students are not to wear clothing that may be offensive to others, including T-shirts with offensive graphics and/or language and sexually explicit clothing that is revealing. Excessive jewelry inhibits most artistic disciplines. Proper shoes are necessary, no bare feet. Sneakers are recommended for summer programs (no flip-flops). Additional program requirements are available through our Admissions Office and/or online on department-specific pages.

### PERSONAL ITEMS

Students are encouraged to attend classes without backpacks, duffle bags or other extraneous items as there is no dedicated storage for such items. Cell phones must be turned off in class. The Conservatory is not responsible for lost or stolen personal items. Items that are found in the lobby and in classrooms will be given to security to be added to the Straz Center lost and found. You may be able to recover lost items at the lost and found, located at the Security Desk by the Stage Door entrance.

### TECO LOBBY POLICIES

- Show courtesy toward others by keeping voices low and avoiding horseplay.
- Show respect for the security guards and staff, they are here for our safety.
- Avoid making cell phone calls in the TECO lobby.
- Clean up after yourself and dispose of any trash in the appropriate receptacles both in the lobby and in lobby bathrooms.
- Schedule meetings with instructors rather than addressing issues in the lobby.
- Children under the age of 10 should not be left unattended in the lobby.

### PROHIBITED ITEMS

To ensure the highest level of safety and security for students at the Patel Conservatory, the following items are prohibited:

- Weapons of any kind, including pocket/utility knives or cutting instruments
- Illegal drugs or substances including cigarettes and vaping devices
- Fireworks, pyrotechnics, flares or incendiary devices
- Animals, other than service dogs

### ELEVATOR

Elevators are for staff use only and all Conservatory students should use the stairs. Children are not permitted to use the elevators without staff supervision. Students with special needs are granted elevator access as needed and should visit the Admissions office to secure a temporary elevator pass.

## FIELD TRIP POLICY

Students who have demonstrated good conduct, at the administration's sole discretion, will be permitted to attend day and overnight field trips. Proper behavior during the trip is required, and parents of any student who fail to follow the given guidelines will be notified. In severe cases, the parent will be requested to come and/or provide transportation home for the student. A condition of a student's or parent's participation in any field trip is the execution of the Conservatory's Participation Release. For any students whose parents have not executed the release, the student will not be allowed to participate in the field trip.

**Overnight Policies** – any student permitted to attend overnight field trips must abide by the following policies:

- At no time will it be permitted to have members of the opposite sex in the same room without direct supervision of a chaperone, and only then for the purposes of a team or leadership meeting.
- At no time will it be permissible for students to be in possession of tobacco products, drugs, alcohol, fireworks or weapons of any kind.
- Students taking medication must submit medication in its original prescription container to a chaperone. Such container must have only the dosage necessary to cover the duration of the trip.
- All Parent/Student Handbook student behavior expectations must be followed while on the trip. Failure by a student to follow Patel Conservatory guidelines may result in the early return of a student and/or dismissal from school or trip location, at the expense of the parent(s).

## SELF-INJURY AND SUICIDE PREVENTION POLICY

The Patel Conservatory is committed to protecting the health, safety and welfare of our students. Self-injury occurs when an individual chooses to inflict wounds upon themselves because of psychological distress. Although it is difficult to understand, this behavior becomes a coping mechanism for some people. Feelings of anxiety and distress, being "outside" one's body, and a need for self-punishment are among the reasons self-injurers cite for their behavior. All acts should be immediately reported to a teacher, staff member or administrator and will be kept strictly anonymous. All reports will be taken seriously. In cases where a student has engaged in a self-injury incident, to include a suicide attempt, immediate care for any physical injuries will be assessed by medical personnel. The parents of any student who through investigation is found to have engaged in self-injury will be notified immediately. This ensures the student's overall safety and can prompt additional help outside of the Conservatory.

## EMERGENCIES

**Weather** - In the event of weather-related or other unexpected cancellations, the Conservatory will follow the Hillsborough County School District decision. If school is cancelled because of any emergency, Conservatory classes are also cancelled. Students will be notified via email and on social media outlets. Every endeavor will be made to reschedule any unexpected cancellation.

**Medical** - In the event of a severe allergic reaction, select Conservatory staff members are trained on the administration of emergency treatment. The Patel Conservatory requires students with known life-threatening medical conditions to complete a signed copy of the Straz Center's physician's orders for self-administration of medication by student and parent/guardian authorization and release for self-administration of medication by student. to request the form, email [Admissions@strazcenter.org](mailto:Admissions@strazcenter.org).

**COVID-19** - In the event of COVID-19 exposure among students or staff, or at the direction of health officials, most on-site and hybrid classes provide a virtual contingency to continue training on a virtual platform. These classes will only move to full virtual in extenuating circumstances. Please see COVID ADDENDUM for more details on how the Patel Conservatory is handling COVID-19 Mitigation.

**Personal** - In case of emergency and you need to reach your student, please contact the Admissions desk in the Chairmen's Library at 813.222.1040 during library hours. If you need to contact someone outside of the scheduled library hours, call the Patel Conservatory security desk (TECO Lobby) at 813.222.1270. Please note the library hours on page five of this handbook. Upon registration, an emergency contact telephone number as well as student-specific medical information should be provided to the Admissions staff.

## SECURITY

The Straz Center has a security station set up at all times to control the flow of visitors, employees, performers and guests. In order to provide a safe learning environment, the Conservatory is equipped with security staff and video surveillance of the campus facility. Parents and students are encouraged to report any suspicious or inappropriate behavior. The Patel Conservatory Security Desk (TECO Lobby) may be reached at 813.222.1270 and the Straz Center Security Desk (Stage Door) may be reached at 813.222.1070

## ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE

Parents are responsible for their child's safe and timely arrival to Conservatory classes AND their departure from the building. Students should not be onsite more than 15 minutes before class begins or more than 15 minutes after class ends. Parents will be contacted when students are on-campus prior-to or after these times and fees may be assessed for unsupervised students. The Patel Conservatory CANNOT maintain responsibility for students who arrive or depart outside of these time parameters or upon leaving the school premises.

A student drop-off and pick-up lane is located on Fortune Street at the end of the TECO Theater pathway. This is only a drop-off, pick-up lane, not a parking area and is subject to ticketing fines by the City of Tampa. Students are required to exit their vehicles using the passenger side doors. If travelling from across the street, students are expected to use designated crosswalks and heed traffic.

## PARKING

The Conservatory is fortunate to be a part of a busy, downtown performing arts complex. To help ensure your students' safety, parents should review personal safety and traffic rules with their children on a regular basis. Parking in downtown Tampa can be a challenge. Parking is the parent's/student's responsibility. The Straz Center does not provide onsite parking.

## UBER

We are not permitted to release students to an Uber or other ride-sharing service.

## DROP OFF

A lane along Fortune street is designated as a main drop-off/pick-up lane for the Conservatory. This street is an active road and parking is not permitted in this zone. Drivers are encouraged to line up for drop-off/pick-up just after your student's class has ended and a member of the Straz Center security team will monitor students to and from the cars to the TECO Lobby. If the driver chooses to park, the driver will need to use one of the pay lots, metered spaces or garages in the area.

As an added safety measure due to the COVID-19 pandemic, only staff and registered students are permitted to enter the building. Parents, siblings and other guests are not permitted until further notice.

## DIRECTIONS

Due to the existing traffic flow, drivers will need to approach the building using one of the recommended routes below.

**From Northbound I-275:** Take the Howard/Armenia exit. Go straight through the lights on Howard and Armenia and stay on Laurel Street (do not get back on I-275). Cross Boulevard and the Laurel Street drawbridge. Turn right onto Doyle-Carlton.

**From Southbound I-275:** Take the Howard/Armenia exit. Turn left at the second light (Armenia). Then turn left at the first light (Laurel). Go straight through the lights on Howard and stay on Laurel Street (do not get back on I-275). Cross Boulevard and the Laurel Street drawbridge. Turn right onto Doyle-Carlton.

If you use another route to the Straz Center, you will approach Tyler Street. Go past the Straz (do not turn right onto MacInnes), cross the Cass Street drawbridge, and turn right onto N. Boulevard. Turn right onto Laurel Street and cross the Laurel Street bridge. Turn right onto Doyle-Carlton.

**Remember, U-turns are not permitted on Fortune Street or Doyle-Carlton.**