

Dear **Dance** Students,

Congratulations and welcome to the 2026 session of The Kentucky Governor's School for the Arts! We are looking forward to meeting and working with you. This summer will be jam-packed with technique classes, master classes, rehearsals, and collaborations, so be ready!

Your **Dance faculty** for GSA will be **John Cartwright (Chair), Theresa Bautista, Zenzile Pearson, and Daniel Scofield.**

Starting on day one, you will have a rigorous and intensive dance schedule. We urge you to be physically and mentally ready before the program begins. We expect **100% participation** from all dancers. You will be dancing up to 6+ hours a day, so being prepared is crucial. GSA should not be viewed as an opportunity to "get in shape." Prior to GSA, we encourage you to participate in a daily dance class, muscle/strength endurance exercises (running, swimming, Pilates, yoga, etc.), and cardiovascular exercise. This conditioning will help minimize sore muscles, help to reduce the risk of injury, and ensure that you can get the most out of your GSA experience.

Also included is this [list of injury preventing exercises](#). These exercises are meant to be guidelines. You should not have any pain with these exercises. If you are having pain, have a medical condition, or any other concerns, please consult your physician before starting any new exercise routines. **Please contact GSA at [gsainfo@kentuckyperformingarts.org](mailto:gsainfo@kentuckyperformingarts.org) if you feel that you will not be able to participate fully during the program.**

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### **STUDENT CHOREOGRAPHY PROJECT**

Each dancer attending GSA 2026 will participate in the **Student Choreography Project** either as a dancer or a choreographer. This is a wonderful opportunity for students to have a fully produced work on stage in the final day concert, in addition to building their portfolio for college applications, choreography festivals, etc. Prior to your arrival at the program, students interested in choreographing must fill out [this proposal](#) completely and thoroughly and submit it by **THURSDAY, JUNE 4**. *See form for details.* If the hyperlink above is not working, copy and paste this (<https://forms.gle/nLzxEYRnDvwqNbFT8>) into a browser window.

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### **CLASS & REHEARSAL DRESS CODE**

- **For all dance classes and rehearsals**, the base dance clothing is as follows: **female-identifying dancers** should wear a black or color leotard (please avoid neon colors) and convertible dance tights. **Male-identifying dancers** should wear any color fitted t-shirt or tank top (please avoid neon colors) and convertible men's dance tights. **Non-binary dancers** should wear a combination of the male-female binary dress codes, based on your preference. In some classes, you may be asked to wear other items (see details below). Warm-ups can only be worn in class or rehearsal *with faculty permission*. There is no time allotted in the schedule to change into or

out of dance clothing before, between, or after classes or GSA events. However, you may use meal times to switch out wet dance clothing for dry ones. While at other non-dance GSA events, dancers are **required** to wear clothing to cover dancewear and follow the standard GSA dress code.

- **For African Contemporary, all dancers** should wear black or tan jazz shoes, lace-up or pull-on. Long hair should be pulled back in a ponytail. Jazz pants, black leggings, or spandex shorts with a minimum of 6” inseam may be worn over the base dance clothing.
- **For African Dance, female-identifying dancers** should wear black tights or leggings over the base dance clothing, and a lapa (see picture and details below). Long hair should be pulled back in a ponytail and out of the face. **Male-identifying dancers should** wear the base dance clothing. **Non-binary dancers** should wear a combination of the male-female binary dress codes based on your preference. **For all dancers**, Long hair should be pulled back in a ponytail and no “foot undies” or any type of shoe/sock, barefoot only.

**FEMALE-IDENTIFYING DANCERS SHOULD BRING A MINIMUM OF 2 YARDS OF FABRIC IN A BRIGHTLY COLORED PRINT FOR A LAPA SKIRT (see below for details). Please wash fabric before bringing it to GSA (be mindful of stickers).**

- **Lapa:** Please bring a minimum of 2 yards of fabric in a brightly colored African print (<https://africanfabs.com/collections/african-fabrics>) – you will learn to wrap and tie your lapa in class at GSA. Example pictured below.



- **For Composition, all dancers** should wear the base dress code and will be barefoot, mostly. However, based on your choreographic interests, other shoes like ballet slippers, pointe shoes, sneakers, or tap shoes may be worn with the instructor’s permission.
- **For Ballet, female-identifying dancers** should wear pink or flesh colored color tights and leotard (no asymmetric designs) of any color, with hair in a neat bun. Pink or flesh-colored ballet slippers that match your tights are also required. Pointe shoes may also be worn and should also complement your tight color. Flesh colored tights and shoes should match your skin tone, to the

best of your ability. Ballet skirts are permitted for variations and repertory classes. **Male-identifying dancers** should wear black, grey, or white tights (can be convertible) with elastic belt or suspenders to hold tights up or spandex shorts with a minimum of 6” inseam, and a plain fitted t-shirt or tank of any color tucked into tights/shorts (unless you have suspenders), and a dance belt. Black or white ballet shoes are permitted, but if they don't match your tights, wear socks that match your shoe color. Hair should be neat and tidy, with longer hair secured. **Non-binary dancers** should wear a combination of the male-female binary dress codes, based on their preference. Pink, black, or flesh colored ballet shoes with matching-colored tights should be worn in accordance with a leotard or form-fitting t-shirt, and pink or flesh colored pointe shoes, if applicable. Long hair should be secured in a bun.

- **For Modern, all dancers** should wear the base dress code and are required to have dance knee pads (no sport knee pads). Here’s a link to a good option: <https://dancekneepads.com/products/natural-kneepads-pair>. Black leggings or spandex shorts with a minimum of 6” inseam may be worn over the base dress code. No “foot undies” or any type of shoe/sock in class, barefoot only. Long hair should be neatly pulled back in a high or low ponytail or bun so that spinal alignment can be maintained when lying on the floor.
- **Tablet or laptop for class and rehearsals.** Each student should bring a tablet or laptop to use during class and rehearsals. These will be utilized to access music, video, instructional documents, and for special research and seminar classes. Your device should have access to some form of word processing software like Microsoft Word or Google Docs and should be able to download and open PDF files. **If you do not have access to a tablet or laptop, please contact GSA IMMEDIATELY at [gsainfo@kentuckyperformingarts.org](mailto:gsainfo@kentuckyperformingarts.org) and we will assist you gaining access to one for the duration of the program.**

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## WHAT TO BRING

This is a checklist of **required** items/supplies you should pack for dance classes and performances (in addition to your regular street clothes, toiletries, dorm room items, etc.). You will need plenty of **convertible tights, leotards, warm-ups**, socks to keep your feet warm between classes, etc. Due to the considerable amount of distance between dance studios, please bring comfortable **walking shoes** (flip-flops are **strongly** discouraged).

In addition, you will need:

- **All dance attire mentioned per above dress code**
- **Easy-to-put-on casual clothing for warmups/coverups to wear between classes and rehearsals while not in dance studio spaces.** Please note that you will have to cover up to go to public restrooms.

- **Minimum 2 yards of brightly colored fabric** for lapa.
- **Jazz shoes** – black or tan, lace-up or pull-on – *NO Capezio “Hanami” Pirouette Shoes or similar style permitted; NO Capezio “Pedini Femme Lyrical Teaching Sandal” or similar style permitted; NO jazz/dance sneakers permitted.*
- **Ballet slippers** (for colors see dress code), *NO Bloch “Elastosplit” X ballet slippers or similar style permitted.*
- **Pointe Shoes** – If you’ve had at least two years of pointe technique, you will need to bring at least two pair of pointe shoes for class and rehearsal (more if you think you will need them) and an additional pair of ‘clean’ pointe shoes for potential performance.
- **Knee pads** – purchase your size **here:**  
<https://dancekneepads.com/collections/frontpage/products/black-knee-pads-pair>
- **Black camisole leotard** – any brand for female and non-binary identifying students.
- **Appropriate undergarments for class and potential performances** such as nude camisole leotard, bra, underwear, and/or dance belt.
- **Hairnets, bobby pins, hairpins, ponytail holders, headbands** and/or **hairspray/gel**
- **Note about Nails** – Students will not be permitted to have any nail polish on fingers or toes for the final day performance. Students are **required** to arrive to the program without nail polish, especially as gel nail polish can be difficult to remove prior to performance. Overly long nails can also hinder partnering classes.
- A **notebook and writing utensil** for composition classes, journaling, and note taking.
- **Headphones**, wired or Bluetooth (smart phones are not permitted in the studio unless authorized by faculty and staff).
- **Tablet or laptop.**
- An **umbrella and/or rain jacket** with hood.
- A **water-bottle** or two... in case you lose one.
- **Stage Make-up and tools** for men, women, and non-binary students for performance.

**This is a checklist of items that are optional, but might be very beneficial to you:**

- **Dance related therapy tools:** yoga mat, foam roller, TheraBand, tennis or lacrosse ball, Pilates resistance ring, resistance bands, etc.
  - **Spending money** – Though room and board are covered by GSA, you might want a little extra money for GSA merch on-campus or souvenirs during field trips.
  - **Face Masks/Coverings:** GSA is not currently planning to require face masks, but if a student would like to wear one at any time, they are welcome to do so. If you would prefer to wear masks while at the program, please pack enough to last all three weeks.
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***We've also included a brief message from our counselors-in-residence:***

GSA is an experience like no other, with opportunities to make memories and be part of an arts community to cherish for a lifetime. In preparation for your time with us, please keep in mind a few important points for both your physical and mental health.

- Even though your brain might go into “summer mode” after wrapping up the school year, please know that the 3 weeks of GSA aren't like a typical summer camp. Every day you will work and play hard and, along the way, be challenged and inspired!
- Because our days are full of activity, be sure to try your best to prioritize rest, healthy eating, and opportunities to recharge when you can. Quite honestly, I recommend making these priorities right now in preparation, so it's a smoother adjustment.
- The GSA staff, faculty, and counselors are available to help if you ever feel out of balance while on campus. We're your go-to people to help you find the best fit in our unique community and to help with any adjustments that are needed. Don't wait to reach out because we're there to help from Day 1!
- As it applies to you, don't forget to bring any prescribed medication (we can help with reminders but do not administer) and know that we can help with coordination of telehealth therapy sessions (with your already established provider) while at GSA as long as it's not overly disruptive to your studio schedule.

Please feel free to contact us if you have any thoughts or questions about the Dance experience at GSA prior to the beginning of the program. We want you to feel prepared for your GSA experience this summer. Once again, congratulations and welcome to the GSA family!

**GSA Dance Faculty**

[info.kygsadance@gmail.com](mailto:info.kygsadance@gmail.com)

**CHECKLIST OF ITEMS TO TURN IN AND DUE DATES**

- **Student Choreography Proposal** – Due **Thursday, June 4<sup>th</sup>** (via Google Form)