

The Elizabeth School of Dance

Procedure: Pointe Policy		
Date adopted	Date of Review	Date to be reviewed on/ by
May 2021	Aug 24	Aug 26
Details of the process and milestones to achieve before starting en pointe		

Purpose and statement:

Starting en pointe work is an exciting time for our students and something that they have possibly been anticipating for some time. Pointe work however, is incredibly physically demanding and as such the Elizabeth School of Dance has outlined in this policy the milestones, commitments and indicators that will demonstrate that our students are ready to start en pointe and will be able to do this in a safe way.

Students will be *invited* by their teacher to start en pointe based on the following milestones being achieved:

To add:

- Age is not a factor in starting en pointe however the minimum age to start (provided all milestones have been achieved) is 13
- It is not the case that the whole class will start en pointe at the same time unless they all meet all milestones
- Some students may not have the physical make up to be able to start en pointe
- Students *do not have* to start en pointe, those that do not wish to do so will be able to participate in normal classes working on demi pointe

Milestones progression to en pointe:

- Students attend at minimum of two classes per week. One of these must be Ballet, the second class can be from any of the other disciplines offered by the ESOD, or a second Ballet class. This commitment underpins the seriousness of working at this advanced level and provides greater conditioning, strengthening and technical ability.
- Students must have at least three years of consistent dance training.
- Students must be working towards Level Five Ballet standard by the United Teachers of Dance (or equivalent).
- Students' feet must have stopped growing.
- Students must be well placed in their class work and show the ability to maintain a neutral pelvis, be able to correctly align and work the legs including external rotation of the hips and show sufficient core strength. They must also have stability in balancing on both flat and demi pointe
- Students must pass the pointe assessment- see next page

Students also need to be able to demonstrate the following exercises in addition to the above, exercises should be shown on both right and left foot, in bare feet where possible and any pain experienced in the calves or ankles whilst doing this should be shared with the class teacher.

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Pointe assessment

- Demi pointe test: seated, push RF into demi pointe position showing you are achieving at least a 90 degrees angle at the big toe joint. Toes must remain long on the floor; no clawing and you should not feel any pain behind the ankle.
- Pointe range test: Sit in pike, both feet stretched forwards. Check a straight line will run from below knee, through the ankle and to middle toe. Kneecaps must be pulled up, no sickling or fishing of the ankles.
- Plie depth: Stand on one foot (parallel) between 8cm and 12 cm away from a wall, plie to see if your knee touches the wall. Heels must not lift, don't let arches roll in, no pain in front of ankle.
- Single leg standing: Stand on one foot (turned out) with other in low retire and hands in bras bas. Hold for 10 seconds. Toes must not grip, foot must be stable, both big and little toe joints need to be on the floor. 60% weight should be on the ball of the foot.
- 15 perfect single leg rises in parallel, hands resting on barre. Keep chest lifted, spine neutral, tummy muscles engaged, thigh turned out from hip, toes remain long, supporting knee pulled up, hips face forwards, no leaning forwards or backwards.
- 5 perfect demi plie in first: hands on hips, keep knees pulled up, keep core tight. Heels stay in contact, arches of feet lifted, big toes and little toes stay on floor, toes remain long and relaxed, chest and upper body stay upright, no bottoms sticking out.
- Single knee bends: Stand on one leg in turned out first, place hands on hips, other foot in low retire. 5 knee bends on each leg. No leaning forwards or backwards, knee stays in line with second toe, hips level, no clawing toes, neutral spine.
- Demi pointe balance: feet in first, hands on hips, knees pulled up and core tight, keep breathing and make sure your shoulders are down. Hold for 5 seconds, repeat 3 times. No wobbling, use full height of demi pointe, no sickling in or out of the ankles, control the rise and lowering.
- Releve passe in the centre: Feet in fifth, arms in bras bas, Plie and releve bringing foot to pirouette position and arms to first (shoulders down). Hold slightly before passing the lifted leg back to 5th. 10 times in total alternating feet (5 on each leg). Achieve a good demi point, ankle must stay strong, hold turnout, land cleanly in 5th, body stays upright.

Upon achieving all milestones, students will be ready to start en pointe. Pointe shoes must be professionally fitted to avoid injury, your class teacher can advise places to go for fittings. Initially pointe work will be for 10-15 minutes at the end of the class to build up strength and technique. The class teacher will offer advice, encouragement, and tips through the transition to en pointe and will ensure a safe learning environment to reduce the risk of injury.