

# Competition Handbook

*For Dancers & Parents*



Congratulations! You have been accepted onto our competition team this year. This means we think you are ready to make (or continue) a solid commitment to your classes, rehearsals, and performances.

Our expectations for competition dancers are:

- come to every class prepared to learn and dance to your full potential
- approach every rehearsal with full engagement and active listening
- respect your teachers and classmates and always remember that you are part of a team

This handbook will outline how our competition program works, what to expect, and how to make the year both fun and productive.

## *Dance Competitions 101*

A dance competition is a private business (there are many different ones) that runs events either in theatres or hotel ballrooms in many cities each year. Some are local to BC, most run throughout BC & Alberta, a few are across Canada. Two to three judges watch routines, giving feedback which is recorded and then passed back to each studio when the competition is over; they also assign a score to each dance.

At competition, after each performance session (typically two - three hours), all of the dancers who participated will gather on stage for awards. Judges may give out special awards with creative names for dances that particularly caught their attention. Additionally, all dancers receive a medal, pin, or ribbon based on their group's score.

Competitions have different levels based on years of training and/or hours danced each week and each competition is different in how they sort dancers by age. For instance, at one competition, your dancer may be in the "Age 8" category, while at another, they may be in the "Age 7-9" category. No competition manages their entries perfectly, and we have things we like and dislike about each one.

With so many variables, such as levels and ages, there aren't specific dance standards, and judges rely on their years of experience for scoring. Since dance combines objective and subjective elements, it can be very difficult at times for us to explain the marks. Even our faculty, which includes competition judges, might score routines slightly differently. As a general rule, consider the score a reflection of technique, unison & timing, musicality, and performance quality. Judges don't directly factor in choreography or appearance, but these elements do enhance the overall routine and can still affect the mark.

**Day of competition:** your dancer will be asked to arrive 1.5 to 2 hours before their performance time. This allows us to help our young dancers with hair and makeup, ensure that everyone looks the same, and to warm up and rehearse routines before they go on stage.

**Team jacket:** all dancers will be expected to purchase a team jacket to wear at competition at all times (we can add this to your monthly fees if you like). We are hoping to start a buy back program for our older dancers as they grow, so that we can also offer a pre-owned option for new team members.

## *A Note For Parents*

We believe that part of a dancer's success depends on the support of their parents or guardians. Our program relies on a positive atmosphere for everyone involved: dancers, their parents, and our faculty members. Showing respect for all students, parents, and staff leaves an important impression on our dancers and creates a healthy learning environment.

Please avoid comparing your dancer's progress, class levels, or choreography placements to others in the program. Watch for this behavior in your dancer as well, and encourage them to focus on their own accomplishments. While looking to others for inspiration is beneficial, negative comparisons can be distracting and stop your dancer from putting energy towards becoming stronger themselves.

Children learn significant lessons from their teachers and parents, acquiring important behavior patterns through their example. We take that responsibility seriously and it's our philosophy to encourage our students to feel, think, and act respectfully to their peers, the adults in their lives, and themselves.

After performing, your dancer may be hard on themselves for small mistakes and after awards they may be disappointed. By acknowledging their feelings and then reminding them of their accomplishments we can help them process these emotions quickly.

## *Levels & Requirements*

It's always important to remember, there is a difference between learning 'how' to dance (we call this technique) and learning a dance that goes on stage (we call this choreography), and dancers can be in different levels for each of those (for example, a Mini for technique but a Petite for their competition dance).

We assign technique levels, which bundle all of the technique classes required, so dancers of similar ages and abilities are together, and then we offer choreography groups based on many factors which change year by year. Some dancers will be offered one group, some may be offered many; we do our placements like this so that parents and dancers have flexibility in scheduling and budget.

## Requirements By Level (2024)

### Petite (grades K to 2)

Technique: 2 ballet technique, 1 jazz technique

Choreography: ballet

Optional: acro technique

### Mini (grades 2 to 3)

Technique: 2 ballet technique, 1 jazz technique, 1 acro technique

Choreography: ballet

Optional: additional ballet class, competitive jazz

### Junior (grades 3 to 5)

Technique: 3 ballet technique, 2 jazz technique, 1 acro technique

Choreography: jazz

Optional: competitive lyrical, recital hip hop, recital tap

### Intermediate (grades 5 to 8)

Technique: 3 ballet technique, 2 jazz technique, 1 contemporary technique,  
1 conditioning, 1 stretching

Choreography: jazz, lyrical, novelty

Optional: competitive hip hop

### Senior

Technique: 2 ballet technique, 1 jazz technique, 1 conditioning

Choreography: jazz

Optional: competitive hip hop, competitive contemporary

## Placements

Class placement is highly individual and the factors that go into the decision are complex; we put a lot of thought and work into our placements. We try very hard to challenge our dancers while still making sure the choreography is attainable and that they shine on stage.

Our teachers discuss each students' progress regularly and it is our policy to offer appropriate opportunities to every child. As much as we believe dancers should be challenged, some dancers who are placed in a higher level become discouraged, only to lose their passion for dance. We always aim to place dancers in a particular group or class where they will feel confident, in order to promote the development of self-esteem.

### **A note about corrections:**

A correction is help, not a criticism. It shows a dancer that a teacher cares about their progress and wants them to succeed. We ask our dancers to listen to each correction given, even those given to your classmates, and always say thank you when their teacher gives them this personal feedback.

## *The Commitment*

- Dancers in our Petite, Mini, and Junior programs attend 3 competitions per year while those in our Intermediate, & Senior programs attend 4 competitions per year, one of which may be a travel competition (traditionally this has been a weekend in Whistler).
- Each dancer must be enrolled in the required technique classes for their individual training and growth as indicated on their schedule.
- We release competition dates in September and we kindly ask that you do not schedule vacations just prior to or after, since the dates can sometimes change.
- Specific competition days & times are usually given to us between 3 - 6 weeks before each competition.
- Dancers may be required to miss school to attend a competition. Those with more than one routine may not have them both on the same day.
- It is the responsibility of each dancer to learn all that is presented, even when not in class, and to ensure they are prepared each week. This means a solid commitment to practicing at home.
- Sometimes competitions have an extra show or final dance-off on their last day for groups with the highest marks. For groups that qualify, dancers will be expected to be available.
- All dancers will be required to take summer technique classes to ensure they come back in September ready to move forward. We will try to be flexible about summer classes and provide as much notice as possible about the dates.
- Once a dancer commits to a group and begins choreography, we need them to make the full commitment, unless there is a serious injury or health issue. Dancers that leave a routine mid-year will be charged \$200 in order for the instructor to change the choreography.

## *Class Uniforms*

**Girls:** Solid black leotard with pink convertible tights for ballet. Black shorts may be worn over the bodysuit for other classes. Hair must be in a bun (or if too short for a bun, then pulled back off the face).

**Boys:** Black leggings or shorts and a plain, black T-shirt.

\*\*Dancers are encouraged to leave a spare uniform at the studio for days they may not make it home after school to change. All dance shoes should stay at the studio unless needed for competition.

## *Class Attendance*

A dancer who misses class holds back the progress of the entire group. **Repeating the learning from a previous week for those who were absent takes up valuable time when the group should be moving forward.**

Our Google drive will have updated choreography every week for dancers to review and practice, but they should never view it as a substitute for attending class. We insist that our dancers are able to keep up and dancers that fall behind may be asked to schedule private practices at \$65.00/hour. This is to ensure that the dancer is on track with the entire group so that the choreographer may progress with the piece.

Repeated absences in choreography and technique classes may result in the student being removed from dances prior to competition. Attendance is very important to us and is a very significant factor in our placements each year.

## *Communication*

Email is our major form of communication. It is very important that we have a current email address for at least one parent (and dancers once they are old enough to check it reliably). Please also ensure you have joined us on the Band app. Updates will be sent via email, Band, and posted at the studio. Please attend all meetings and read all newsletters & postings to keep current about commitments.

If you have a question about your dancer, please conduct all communication through the office rather than approaching your child's teacher between or during classes. If you do request a conference, please listen carefully to what your child's teachers have to say. They spend a significant amount of time with your child and can offer insight into their progress and development.

## *Social Media*

Please remember you are a representative of Danzmode, even on social media, and we ask that whenever posting anything studio related (including competitions) that you please tag us in it. Our goal is to foster a healthy competitive team environment and we want all team members to be mindful of their online presence, including interactions with their teammates and dancers from other studios.

## *Being a Good Team Member*

We pride ourselves on our dancers' positive attitudes and encouragement for all competitors, and we ask our audience members to role model that behavior as well. We have a zero tolerance policy for criticism at competition. Parents might not agree with scores or placings, may think other studio dancers are entered in the wrong level, or may see a routine that has music or movement they think is inappropriate. While we may not agree, we also may not voice our disagreement publicly, and we ask that all of our audience members (including guests you bring) are mindful that competitive dance is subjective, judges are human, and that everyone needs to support each other.

Please also remember that our studio will have lots of routines and it's always appreciated if you watch/cheer for them as well. It helps us build a sense of community and you will get to know other members of the team and their families. Although we have many levels, groups, and ages, we are still one team.

## *Audience Etiquette Reminders*

- Please only enter the theatre between routines, it can be very distracting to both dancer and audience if theatre doors are opening and closing.
- Please turn off your cell phone (or keep it in airplane mode).
- Please stay in your seat (and keep your dancer in their seat) while dancers are performing.
- Please no talking while dancers are performing. Every parent wants to enjoy their child dancing and we want to do our best to give everyone the same respect we would like while our own dancers are on stage.
- Absolutely no photographs or recording while dancers are performing, this may get our dancers disqualified. Many competitions are now including the photos and videos in your entry fees and you are always welcome to take pictures of or record the award sessions; we also love group photos taken in the lobby and competitions have backdrops & props you can use for these photos.
- We never speak negatively about teachers, dancers, or parents from other schools.
- We will not tolerate any swearing, rude behavior, or alcohol consumption and/or vaping in the studio or at events (including parents).
- Please respect that change rooms are meant to be private and do not take photos or videos.
- Please do not contact a competition directly. It is usually against each competition's policies to talk to anyone except a studio representative. If you have a question concerning a competition that can't be answered by visiting the company's website, please allow us to ask for you.
- ***Dancers:*** *please remember you represent Danzmode at every competition: treat your parents with the same respect and kindness as you would for any of our faculty.*