

CONCORD DANCE ACADEMY

Competition Handbook

A Guide for Students and Parents

About This Handbook

FOR MORE THAN TWO DECADES our school has been a leader in dance education. We believe that our success comes as a result of providing solid training and quality service, along with an underlying belief in the strength of our organization. We have created this handbook to offer our dancers and their parents a clear understanding of their commitments and responsibility to the Competition Team Program and the school.

➤ Dates and/or expenses listed in this handbook are subject to change. Please check your email regularly for updates.

For Our Dancers

Congratulations! You have been accepted into the Competition Team program at Concord Dance Academy. The first step to becoming a successful dancer is making a solid commitment to your classes, rehearsals, and performances. Strong technique is a key ingredient and class is where you develop that technique. Come to each class prepared to learn and without personal distractions. Class time is your chance to focus on yourself, so try to leave your concerns or worries at the studio door. True progress is made when you look at each class, rehearsal, or performance as an opportunity to become better at what you love to do. Dance full out, stretch a little further, become more aware of your technique, and make the most of every class.

Respect for the teachers and choreographers you work with is essential. Listen to each correction given, whether it's directed to you or another dancer. A correction is an honor; it shows you how much a teacher cares about your progress as a dancer. Always say thank you when a teacher or choreographer offers you constructive criticism. Nothing can stop those students who apply themselves in every class and appreciate their teachers' knowledge and experience.

All rehearsals are dedicated to choreography or "cleaning" the choreography. A dancer who misses a rehearsal holds back the progress of the entire group. Repeating the choreography from a previous session for those who were absent takes up valuable rehearsal time, which could result in a performance that is not up to par. When we clean choreography, we may also change it. Dancers who miss a cleaning session may not be properly prepared for the upcoming performance and could end up letting themselves, their team, or the school down.

Performances and competitions are your opportunity to show the world the results of your dedication and hard work. To make the most of this opportunity:

- Arrive at performances at least two hours prior to the scheduled time, unless otherwise advised by your teachers.
- Be sure you are properly warmed up.
- Present yourself in a professional manner, with costumes pressed, shoes cleaned, and all accessories accounted for.
- Go out there and show the audience how much you love to dance!

➤ True progress is made when you look at each class, rehearsal, or performance as an opportunity to become better at what you love to do.

For the Parents: “We’re in this together”

We believe that children’s success depends on the support of their parents or guardians. Because your commitment to the process makes an enormous difference, we encourage you to be a part of your child’s dance education.

Our program relies on a positive atmosphere for our faculty, competition team participants, and their parents; it promotes a positive learning experience for all involved. Cooperation between all parents is expected. Showing respect for the other parents, along with the students and faculty, makes an important impression on the children. You are a role model for your child in how to interact with others in a professional setting.

Your child’s presence at all classes, rehearsals, and performances is imperative. The spirit of teamwork and the lesson of dedication are a big part of our school’s educational process.

Parents and teachers may look at a child’s learning from different perspectives. However, they share a common goal: to assure that every child receives the best possible training, both physically and mentally. Mutual respect between our faculty and our dancers’ parents provides the children with the ultimate care and education.

Understanding Dance Education

As a parent, the financial support of your student is important, but of equal—perhaps even greater—value is your emotional support. Encourage your child to be the best that he or she can be without regard to what others may achieve. Dance is an individual art form; each child needs to achieve at a pace that’s comfortable for him or her. No two students will progress at the same rate, even if they experience the exact same training. It’s important to encourage the children to focus on themselves, give their all, and be satisfied with their own accomplishments.

Dance education encompasses far more than technique or the steps your children will learn. We believe the discipline of dance training gives young people a better understanding of commitment by offering them the chance to learn, experience the spirit of teamwork, and understand what hard work can accomplish. Our goal is to educate the minds, bodies, and souls of our students, to teach them the skills needed for a successful life, whether or not they stay involved in dance.

➤ **The financial support of your student is important, but of equal—perhaps even greater—value is your emotional support.**

Class or Choreography Placement

The school faculty meets regularly to discuss the students’ progress and/or placement. It is our policy to offer appropriate opportunities to every child.

Placement decisions are derived from many years of teaching experience. Often a child is placed in a particular group or class where he or she will feel confident, in order to promote the development of self-esteem. Some dancers who are placed in a higher level become discouraged, only to lose their passion for dance. Others respond to the challenge of being in a class with dancers who are more proficient by pushing themselves to work harder. Placement is highly individual and the factors that go into the decision are complex. Please see the school’s director if you have questions or concerns about your child’s placement.

Dos and Don’ts

Some parents may compare their child’s progress or class or choreography placement to that of others in the program. Watch for this behavior in your children as well, and encourage them to focus on their own accomplishments. Looking to others for inspiration is a good thing; however, a negative focus or comparison distracts from the energy that could be focused on becoming a stronger dancer. In addition, speaking negatively about your child’s teachers, fellow dancers, or other parents in front of your child—or other students—could result in problems far beyond your original concerns. Often children will react to their parents in a way that imitates the parent’s behavior with other adults or authority figures.

Children learn important lessons from their teachers and parents, acquiring important behavior patterns through their example. Our school’s faculty takes that responsibility seriously. It’s our philosophy to encourage our students to feel, think, and act respectfully to their peers, the adults in their lives, and themselves.

If you have questions or concerns about your child’s dance education, don’t panic—and please don’t talk only with other parents when questions arise. Make an appointment to speak directly to your child’s teachers or the director of the school. Please conduct all communication through the school office rather than approaching your child’s teacher or the director between or during classes or calling them at home.

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 expertise in the field of dance education.

➤ **Class placement of students is highly individual and the factors that go into the decision are complex.**

For Dancers and Parents

Image

The children and parents involved in the Competition Team Program participate in many outside activities, each of which becomes a reflection of the school's philosophy.

Please keep the following in mind:

- We never speak negatively about teachers, dancers, or parents from other schools.
- We never create conflict with the directors or judges of events in which we participate.
- We never recruit dancers from other schools.
- The school director handles all communication with the directors of our outside activities.
- No parent or dancer may call or question the directors of any event. If you have a concern, please contact the director of our school.

TIPS: DRESS CODE REQUIREMENTS

GIRLS: Solid black leotard with pink tights for ballet and pointe and pink, black or suntan tights for all other subjects.

BOYS: Black Sweatpants or shorts and a plain, black T-shirt.

Hair must be in a slick performance bun for all ballet classes, with hairpins and a hairnet.

Ages 13 and over can wear pink or black tights for ballet. Tank tops and shorts may be worn for other subjects.

COMMUNICATION

1. Email is a major form of communication. It is imperative that we have your current email address and any changes to your email address that occur during the year. Please check your email DAILY! If you do not have email, or you are having problems with your computer, it is your responsibility to check in to the office for updated information. If you are allowed to accept email at your work email address, include that as well.
2. No one will take it upon themselves to contact a competition or convention directly. It is against competition company's policies to do so. If you have a question concerning a competition/convention that can't be answered by visiting the company's website, you must go through the CDA office.

➤ **Please attend all meetings and read all newsletters and postings to keep updated about any additional commitments.**

COMMITMENT

Each student must be enrolled in the required technique classes for their individual training and growth as indicated in their schedule. Some dancers may be asked to take additional technique classes to further their training. You may also request to take additional technique classes or private lessons to further your training.

Once you commit to a group or dance and begin choreography, you are not permitted to drop. If you are asked to join a group after the start of the fall dance season, it is considered an additional dance and you are not permitted to drop one in its place. If you are having financial difficulties, solos, duo/trios and small groups should be the first to go. Any changes in your schedule need to be discussed in a meeting with the studio director.

Any student who understudies for a competition class shall comply with all competition rules.

No student may compete or perform for any other dance school/ dance program, or train at another facility under teachers/instructors not affiliated with or approved by Concord Dance Academy, while training or participating on the CDA competition team. For approval for additional programs, please notify the office to set up a meeting with the studio director.

Each student must follow all directions given by instructors and chaperones while under CDA competition team care, both on CDA and other premises.

If there is an extenuating circumstance and you must miss a mandatory activity it must be in writing and submitted to the office. **Please do not rely on other students to pass along your student's absence.**

Classes

All dancers are expected to attend their regularly scheduled classes (competition routine and all technique classes) in addition to all rehearsals and performances, including competitions, holiday shows, charity events and recitals. Any team member with poor attendance risks being prohibited from participating in an upcoming competition and may also be released from the competition team.

Illness, injury or any extended absences result in the teacher's discretion of placement and understudy status. It is the responsibility of each student to learn all that is presented.

Anyone who misses any technique class for any reason (including illness, school function, etc) MUST make up the class regardless of the dancer's level. Our dancers are in training and it is important that they stay in shape. Any dancer that misses their assigned technique class and fails to make up the class as required, will risk being prohibited from participating in upcoming competitions and also may be designated an understudy at the teacher's discretion.

Dancers will receive a class schedule in August. This will include all competition routine times and required technique class times.

All dancers must show respect for their teachers at all times. Inappropriate behavior could result in dismissal from the program.

All dancers will continue their training throughout the month of June and during designated times in the summer. Some dancers will be required to attend a week long intensive in lieu of evening classes.

➤ You must notify the office of any absences, either by email or phone.

Rehearsal and Other Information

Rehearsals are an important part of the commitment to the Competition Team. All dancers are expected to work hard and arrive early enough to give themselves time to warm up. Emergency Saturday rehearsals may be called to finalize choreography or clean a routine.

➤ *Rehearsals may take place on holidays when public schools may be closed.

Additional rehearsals may be scheduled at the discretion of the teacher/choreographer. All dancers are required to participate.

Rehearsals for nationals will take place during the month of June. A different schedule for June will be available in May. All dancers must attend June rehearsals and technique classes.

All Competition Team dancers must attend rehearsals in proper dance attire and appropriate shoes. Female team members are required to wear their hair pulled back or in a bun for all rehearsals. Ballet rehearsals require a black leotard and pink tights for the girls (hair in a slick performance bun) and a black T-shirt for the boys.

➤ It is expected that all dancers will be on their best behavior during rehearsals and work as team players at all times.

Tuition and Expense Policy

Part of the commitment to the Competition Team Program is being up-to-date with all accounts related to participation.

All monthly payments are due the first week of the month. Any payment received after the 15th of the month is subject to a \$20 or 10% of your balance late fee, whichever is greater.

Each student must fulfill all financial obligations brought about by competition requirements, including choreography fees, if applicable, class tuition, competition fees by the due date, costume and prop fees, fees for theater use and any other fees incurred. ANYONE WHO IS CONTINUOUSLY TWO OR MORE MONTHS DELINQUENT IN PAYMENT WILL BE RELEASED FROM THE COMPETITION TEAM.

There are 2 payment options:

1. **PAYMENT PLAN** The office will calculate your monthly payment, which will include ALL fees (monthly tuition September through June, **estimated** competition entry fees, including Nationals, **estimated** costume costs, rehearsal and recital fees). Your first payment will be due the day of your first class. All other payments are due the first full week of the month. Any payment not paid by the 15th of the month will incur a \$20 late fee (or 10% of your balance if the amount is greater than \$200). Any other purchases/payments not listed above, such as dancewear, shoes, school jackets, videos, t-shirts, recital tickets, registration, dance camp, workshops, etc., must be paid for at the time of purchase.

Competition fees are based on last year's fees and are subject to change. Costume prices are estimates only.

If you have other children enrolled in the school, their tuition, costumes, etc., are also figured into the payment plan amount.

2. You may continue to pay your fees as they are due, i.e., tuition each month, costume deposits, balances and competition fees when due. Again, a late fee of \$20.00 per month (or 10% of your balance if the amount is greater than \$200) will be assessed after the 15th of the month. Please be aware that **any amount** overdue

(tuition, costume, comp fees) will incur a late fee. Anyone who has had financial difficulties this past year must use this option.

- **Entry fees for competitions or conventions are due 60 days prior to each event. Tentative fee schedules will be distributed when available.**
- **All costumes must be paid for in full prior to distribution.**

The Focus Is Not Simply on Competition

Since it is our goal to instill a passion for performing rather than merely the desire to win awards, Competition Team dancers have performance opportunities other than competitions. They perform at our Holiday Spectacular, which benefits the Friends of the City Auditorium, and also the Friendly Kitchen of Concord and Toys for Tots, as well as Rhythm of the Night, which also benefits the Friends of the City Auditorium. There are also community performance opportunities, such as Market Days.

Our solid reputation for quality reflects our attitude toward competition and our goal to develop in each student a genuine respect for dance as an art form. We consider participation in competitions not simply part of our students' training as dancers; it's also an important part of how we influence them as people. With the right focus, the experience gained in competition can be an excellent source of self-confidence. If the dancers feel good about a performance and understand that they become better each time they go onstage, they are truly growing through the competition experience. Hitting that stage and doing the best they can is what it's all about; whether they win—or which award they win—is secondary.

Through participation in competitions, we hope to instill in our students an appreciation for other dancers and schools. We are not out to beat anyone; instead, we hope to motivate both students and faculty by exposing them to the highest caliber of talent available. Only then can we produce the best dancers and teachers possible. For us, competition is an education!

- **We believe the lessons learned through community performances are just as valuable as the competition experience.**

ABOUT COMPETITIONS

Attendance

The student will participate in **all** scheduled competitions, except in **extraordinary circumstances** in which case the office must be notified in writing by September 1. Please avoid scheduling vacations during competition weekends.

Independent Entries

No dancer may compete in any competition as an independent entry without the permission of the school director.

Monetary Awards

All monetary awards received at competitions belong to the studio. These monetary awards offset administrative costs, contribute to program development and improvements, and cover expenses for teachers to attend all events.

- **Entry fees are due in the school office 8 weeks prior to each event. (All competitions are open to the public at no charge.)**

Costumes

Costume payments are the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian. The average cost of a costume is \$75 to \$125. A deposit of \$25 per costume is due by August 1. The balance due for costumes must be paid in full by November 1. Costumes will remain at the school, until all balances are paid in full. **THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY.**

If a competition team dancer is dismissed or leaves the program, an understudy will replace him or her. The student leaving the team is expected to turn in all costumes to the school office; they will be returned to the student after the last performance of the season.

TIPS: COSTUME COMMON SENSE

- ✓ Always have a second pair of tights available.
- ✓ Place costumes in a garment bag for travel.
- ✓ Carry hats in a hatbox or container to prevent them from damage.
- ✓ Hang and press costumes before each performance.
- ✓ Place your name in all costumes and shoes.

A Final Note

WELCOME TO THE CONCORD DANCE ACADEMY COMPETITION TEAM!

We are looking forward to another wonderful year with wonderful students!!

COMPETITION TEAM CONTRACT 2010-2011

NAME _____

BIRTHDATE _____

AGE _____

EMAIL _____

We, _____ (parent) and _____(student), have read the Competition Team Handbook and agree to abide by the Rules, including fulfillment of financial obligations in a timely manner and understand that late fees and finance charges will be charged if payments are delinquent. We understand that failure to comply will result in the student's termination from the Competition team. The student further agrees to approach each competition class/session/event with a positive attitude, leaving daily problems behind, and do his/her absolute best no matter what the circumstances. We also understand that the Competition Team is an additional part of CDA and not all competition dances will participate in the June recital. We understand that all monetary prizes won at competitions belong to CDA. We understand and agree to participate in all National competitions in the summer of 2011.

Please indicate which payment plan you would prefer:

Option 1 (Payment plan) _____

Option 2 (Pay by due date) _____

Student's Signature:_____ Date:_____

Parent's Signature:_____ Date:_____

Please return this page only to CDA on or before August 1, 2010 along with a \$25 deposit per competition dance