



Competitive Dance Team  
Handbook for Students &  
Parents

A competitive dance team is designed for the serious dancer who is highly motivated in the performing arts. Those selected for company will need to possess the following:

- Be self-motivated and able to self-evaluate
- Have solid technical and performance skills
- Strong desire to grow and develop as a dancer
- Have a sense of humor, bright smile, and positive attitude
- Have respect for the team, staff, and parents
- Show support for the studio, teachers, and fellow dancers.

### ***The Competition Experience:***

It is important to understand that the “competition” aspect of being a member of a Competitive Dance Team should be considered a “performance” opportunity. Competition results are strictly a subjective opinion, and each dancer’s growth should not be completely gauged by their scores or achievements at competitions. It is important to keep competition experiences positive, and most importantly, be proud of the growth and development that takes place within your dancer. It is not the size of the trophy or the color of the medal that matters; it is the recognition of the growth within themselves as human beings and dancers. Team members are not in competition with each other. Students are encouraged to strive to improve themselves and to work to their full capacity. Each dancer is uniquely different, each with their own strengths and their own weaknesses and each brings their own talent to the team as a whole. Competition is an opportunity to learn more about yourself as a performer, get feedback from professionals in the field, and connect with others in the industry. It is also an opportunity to grow closer with your teammates and form everlasting memories.

### ***Attendance/Tardies:***

Attendance is mandatory for all dance classes. The studio tries its best to be flexible and accommodating with conflicts due to school and/or important family activities. However, by becoming a member of a team, you have agreed that this is a priority in your schedule. Missed classes for any reason other than illness must be approved in advance. Student absences will be recorded. If more than 3 unexcused absences have occurred, it is possible the dancer may not be able to compete in the competition OR they may be required to take some private lessons at a cost to catch up. Any time an absence occurs, students are responsible to learn what was missed before the next class, either with a private lesson, from a friend, or from videos uploaded to the band app.

Students must arrive on time for class or earlier. Missing the first part of class causes the students to become behind on stretching and warming up, which can lead to injuries. If a student arrives later than 5 minutes past the start of class, that student will be required to sit and observe class to protect from injury. Any time a competition student sits out of dance, they will be required to take notes. More than 3 tardies may result in additional classes assigned by the competition teachers to make up for the lost time. Also, frequent tardies and absences may result in students to drop their

solos, duets, or trios. Being a part of the competition team is a team effort and attendance is very important to the other dancers and the success of the team as a whole. Dance teachers do understand that they are dealing with busy children and socially active teens with many school demands; being a well-rounded individual is important, however, when it comes to participation on a competitive team, new skills are constantly being taught...students must be present!

### ***Dress Code:***

Following a Dress Code in the dance studio is important for many reasons. We want to set your children up for success and following a dress code helps accomplish that! A dress code helps to eliminate distractions in the classroom, allows dancers to move properly, increases focus, improves confidence, and creates cohesiveness. If they look the part, they will act the part!

All competition dancers are expected to show up to both classes and rehearsals in proper attire. Students will get one warning the first time they show up to class out of dress code. If they show up to class out of dress code on any other occasions, they will be asked to sit and take notes. For girls, we expect a black leotard, pink or tan tights depending on the class, proper shoes, and hair pulled back into a bun or ponytail. Girls may also wear jazz shorts or pants except for in ballet. For boys, we expect black jazz pants or shorts and a white t-shirt with proper dance shoes at all times.

### ***Required Classes:***

Each dancer is required to take a certain set of classes based on age group.

#### YOUTH (Ages 5-6)

- 1 Ballet
- 1 Tap
- 1 Jazz
- Elective (not mandatory): either Acro or Hip-Hop

#### ADVANCED YOUTH (Ages 7-9)

- 1 Ballet
- 1 Jazz
- 1 Tap
- Elective (choose at least one): Acro, Musical Theater, Hip-Hop, Strength and Stretch

#### PRE-TEEN (Ages 10-12)

- 1 Company Ballet
- 1 Ballet
- 1 Jazz
- 1 Tap

- 1 Strength and Stretch
- Electives (not mandatory): Acro, Musical Theater, Contemporary/Modern, or Hip-Hop

#### TEEN (Ages 13-18)

- 1 Company Ballet
- 1 Ballet
- 1 Jazz
- 1 Tap
- 1 Strength and Stretch
- Electives (choose at least one): Acro, Musical Theater, Contemporary/Modern, or Hip-Hop

#### SPECIALTY SOLOIST REQUIREMENTS

- Students only performing a solo must take Tap, Jazz, and Ballet.
- Must also take the class style of their selected solo. For example: If you have a Hip-Hop solo you must take a Hip-Hop class.
- Soloists will be required to schedule a 30 minute private lesson (\$20 per specialty) once a month with a Choreographer or the Director.

#### SPECIALTY DUO/TRIO REQUIREMENTS

- Must take the team requirements as listed for age.
- Each routine will be required to schedule a 30 minute private lesson (\$20 per specialty) once a month with a Choreographer or the Director.

#### *Summer Classes:*

The students work so hard during the year to better improve flexibility, strength, etc... A lot can be lost during summer months. To make it possible to maintain strength and flexibility we offer many classes throughout the summer and ask that students take at least one maintenance class weekly. This will be a requirement to participate on the team the following year. A schedule will be released closer to the end of the year.



For competitive students who plan to compete during the 2021-2022 season – The MANDATORY choreography intensive weeks are scheduled to be August 9<sup>th</sup> – 13<sup>th</sup> and August 16<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>. (only one week may need to be used).

Solo, duo, and trio choreography will not be held during the two week choreography intensive. Instead, dancer's will sign up for a time during any week in the summer to learn their choreography. This will not be assigned so you have the freedom to pick the time that works best for you. We do not want to overwhelm the dancers with too much during those two weeks of choreography.

***Financial Commitment:***

Being in a program such as this requires a certain financial commitment. If you have not paid your competition bill by the time it is due, your dancer will not be able to compete any solos at that competition. We will also take money from your fundraising account to help cover costs. If this is a reoccurring pattern, your child's participation on the team may be put into question.

**SPECIALTY (SOLO, DUO, TRIO) CHOREOGRAPHY FEE**

- \$225 (for duos and trios, cost is split)
- Half is due before you are able to schedule your choreography practice, the second half is due on the first day that you come to learn choreography.

**GROUP CHOREOGRAPHY FEE**

- \$85 per group dance (If you are in three groups dances it \$85 x 3)
- Due: On the first day of the Choreography Intensive Week

**PRODUCTION/LARGE GROUP CHOREOGRAPHY FEE**

- \$50
- Due: On the first day of the Choreography Intensive Week

**COMPANY REHEARSAL TUITION**

- \$200/year
- This amount will be broken up into 9 installments starting in September

**REQUIRED MONTHLY PRIVATES FOR SPECIALTIES**

- \$20 per month/per specialty (This fee is split between participants)

In the 2020/2021 dance season, we are expecting to participate in 4 regional competitions and 1 national competition. There will also be 1 optional solo/duo/trio competition in January. Solo, Duos, and Trios have the option to choose whether they attend every competition. Small and Large groups will be attending the 4 regional competitions and 1 national competition.

***Competition/Convention Entry Fees***

You will be given a convention and competition schedule at the beginning of the year. Each dancer's competition costs vary based on their age, the size of the group performing each dance, and the number of dances the dancer is participating in. If your monthly company fees are not paid in a timely manner it could result in your dancer's performances not being entered into the competition.

***Travel/Hotel Expenses***

Every effort is made to select competitions that will provide our dancers and their families with the best experience possible. While we try to select "local" competitions, there are some instances where a competition will require some travel and hotel expenses. These expenses are at the cost of the families. The studio does not provide compensation for such expenses.

### ***Required Company Jacket***

Each team member is required to purchase a company jacket. This is so we can be seen and recognized at competitions as a team!

### ***Costume Expenses***

Costume charges are additional. The costume cost is \$75 per costume, due at the beginning of the year. The exception to this is if you are making your own costume or you already have a costume (it must be cleared with the director/choreographer first!) If you quit or are asked to leave a team, you are required to leave your costumes at the studio for another person to fill your spot. This is not negotiable. Your costume will be returned to you at the end of the season. If you do not leave your costumes, for each costume needed, your account will be charged a replacement cost.

### ***Fundraising***

All monies collected while fundraising may be used towards competition related expenses only (excluding hotel and travel expenses.) Any funds earned will be stored for you to use when you choose. You have the option to save them up or to apply a little bit to each competition. It is your money, so you may choose what you want to do with it. However, if any competition bill is delinquent, we will withdraw the money saved in your fundraising account to help pay for that competition. There will be periodical fundraising meetings to discuss new ideas and plans. You may choose not to fundraise at any event in which case you would not receive a portion. The dancers are expected to be fully involved in the fundraising because it is for them after all. The studio director/staff is not responsible for any fundraising. It is organized by the “team parents.” Please remember that while you are fundraising you are representing The Inspired Arts Company and you are to follow everything laid out in this handbook regarding etiquette, respect, and professionalism. Fundraising for the current season is closed prior to June 1<sup>st</sup>. Any fundraisers held after this date will be applied for the next competition season. If you know that you will not be competing the following season you may not participate in fundraisers such as the recital fundraisers. Any funds leftover after you depart from the team will be forfeited and dispersed among the team.

### ***Competition Judging:***

Every competition has different criteria for judging routines. The four basic things that routines are ALWAYS judged on are:

#### 1. **TECHNIQUE:**

The reason for all those extra ballet tech and stretch/strength classes is **TECHNIQUE!** This includes:

- Pointed feet
- Turn-out
- Extensions
- Proper execution of turns
- Use of Plié
- Placement of Hands

\*Technique is always at least 50% of a routine's score, so get to those ballet classes!

2. OVERALL PERFORMANCE QUALITY:

How well each student knows their routine and how well they entertain the judges and audience with it. Also, in this area, is the use of facial expression to convey the "feeling" of the routine.

3. CHOREOGRAPHY:

Here the teacher is judged! Choreography scores are based on appropriate choice of music and costumes, use of stage, difficulty of the routine and how well the movement in the dance relates to the music. This is often the smallest portion of the overall score.

4. APPERANCE:

This pertains to costume fit, whether undergarments are showing, neatness of hair and make-up. Hats and hair pieces must be securely attached and, if performing in a group, consistently placed. Costumes will be tested BEFORE the first competition to determine if you need to pin or secure it. Our "mock-competition" will be the competition showcase. This is a non-negotiable performance for all students and all teams, including solos/duets/trios. Double check that you have the proper bra/tights/shoe for each dance. Wardrobe malfunctions can bring down a score very quickly!

**Awards:**

Awards ceremonies are usually held a few times each day of competitions and are the MOST FUN time of the weekend! Students are required to wear their team jackets on stage for all award ceremonies that they attend. They will be required to attend all award ceremonies for the teams that they are on, but students often like to go on stage for others. It's a really great feeling to support your friends!

Awards are the time to:

- Hoot and holler (parents AND dancers)
- Take Pictures
- Sit back and relax.

\*The most important thing to remember about awards is that ALL scores are the opinions of 3 or 4 judges.

*"A dance competition is the way a certain set of judges view a certain set of dancers on a certain day. If we had done this competition yesterday, or if one of the judges had been someone else, chances are the results would in some way be different. It is good that we compete as dancers, because we compete every day in life. Competitions help to show us where we have been, where we are now, and where we have to aim to go in the future. But it is important to remember that the true worth of anyone, as a dancer or person, will never be measured by a trophy or cash prize." - Richard Disarno, Dance America-Dance Olympus*

### ***Trophies/Prizes:***

Solo Trophies are kept by the individual who earned them.

Duo/Trio Trophies can be brought to the studio or the dancers may decide to take turns on who gets to keep the trophies. i.e. “You can take the trophy from this competition and I’ll take the one from the next competition” \*Remember to always handle this situation with grace and it is a good idea to make this decision prior to receiving the award. .

Group Trophies will be kept at the studio. The representative from the group who went up to accept the award is responsible for taking the trophy home from the competition and returning it to the studio.

Cash Prizes Any cash prize awarded at a competition for groups will go to the studio. Any cash prizes awarded for a solo will go to the soloist. Any cash prize awarded to a duo or trio will be split between those dancers. Any cash prizes awarded for choreography will go to the choreographer.

### ***Arriving to Competitions***

All competitions dancers are **REQUIRED** to arrive to competition 2 hours before they are scheduled to dance. If you are scheduled to dance at the start of competition for that day, you must be there when the doors open. Dancers should come with hair and makeup already completed. Dance competitions will often try to run ahead of schedule if it is all possible, therefore coming ready is extremely important. You also want to leave yourself enough time to properly warm-up and review your dances. There is no reason for any dancer to be scrambling to get ready for their first dance of the day. If a competition is running very ahead of schedule, you can expect a text to be sent from a teacher or another parent as a heads up.

# *Competition Etiquette*

## 1. **Sportsmanship**

One thing you have to remember is that every single dancer works very hard to perform. Every parent wants their child to do well and be noticed. Every dance teacher works diligently so that their students perform to the best of their ability. Everybody at a dance competition has at least all of that in common. Therefore, YOU, as a student, parent, or teacher should clap for EVERY single dance and EVERY single award given if you are present in the auditorium. Dancers, you would want to be clapped for, so do the same for others. Appreciate the art – not just when YOU are being recognized. Teachers set the example. Tell your students in advance how important it is to wish others good luck and clap for other dancers. Parents, try not to live vicariously through your dancer. Instead, appreciate every child for putting effort into their hobby.

## 2. **Backstage**

A. In reference to sportsmanship, wish the dances before you and after you; “good luck.” When dancers come off stage, tell them that they did a “good job.” These words cost you no extra effort. In fact, you may even make a few friends. It doesn’t matter what studio they are from. They need encouragement just as you would. Your efforts will most likely be noticed and very appreciated.

B. Do not block the wings to watch. Dancers often have wing changes, props, and/or run off after the dance. If you are sitting in the wings, you are in the way. It’s as simple as that. Be at least 3 feet away from the wings. If you are the next dance, you will most likely have time to enter the wings while you are being announced.

C. Be quiet. I know dancers get nervous backstage. However, that’s no reason to start laughing uncontrollably loud. Saying “shhhhh” is a lot louder than tapping a person and whispering to them to remind them to hold the volume down.

D. Know your dance and be aware of your space. Do not decide to practice your entire dance backstage. Movement backstage is extremely distracting to the dancer onstage. Not to mention, dangerous. You could hurt yourself and others by simply doing a grand jeté or a pirouette. Stretching backstage usually means you’re in the way. Instead, consider stretching in the dressing room.

## 3. **Dressing Rooms**

It’s common for studios to segregate themselves in the dressing rooms. That’s fine. However, be mindful of everyone’s space. Throw your trash away. Do not touch anything that isn’t yours. Do not practice dances full out in the dressing room.

## 4. **Schedule**

Most competitions will schedule numbers in between yours or accommodate costume changes. Either way, competitions prefer to stay on schedule. If you have a decent number of dances close together, do your best to make it backstage a few numbers beforehand. If a competition runs late, it’s usually because of dancers’ changes and that time adds up. It’s up to the dancer to change quickly and report backstage. Don’t make the backstage

manager have to come find you. If you have 5-10 dances in between your numbers, now is not the time to check you cell phone, watch dances from the audience, run your dance, or sit back and relax. Change and wait backstage. Most costumes changes can be done in about 5 minutes or less if a dancer is really making the effort.

5. **Awards Ceremony**

- A. Even at the awards ceremony, you are performing. You are on stage. Do not bring your cell phone with you. Your texts and Facebook status of your results can wait a few minutes.
- B. Leave room for the judges (or whoever is handing out awards) to walk. If you are asked to move over, please do so. There is plenty of room available.
- C. We know you're tired by this point, but you can be energetic for a few more minutes. This means clap for EVERYONE. Refer back to #1.
- D. When accepting an award, an improper response would be to grab the award and walk away. You should ALWAYS say "Thank you." It doesn't matter if you get a bronze or a platinum. It's nice to show your gratitude toward the judges for taking the time to evaluate you.

6. **On Stage**

- A. Unless your top falls off, don't stop dancing. And, even then, fix it quickly and keep going. You can continue dancing without a shoe or a headband.
- B. Don't lip sync unless it's choreographed. In addition to this, a huge no-no is counting on stage. You should be able to count in your head. The only mouth movements you should be making are for facials.
- C. It's ok to look at the judges once in a while, but you are performing to the audience. Don't stare the judges down. You need to perform to the back row of the audience.

7. **Competition**

Competitions aren't just about the trophies. Competitions are about bettering yourself and challenging yourself. Therefore, you should participate in all of the available workshops and seminars at competitions. You should also take the time to watch dancers from other studios. Also, when you get home, ask your teacher if you can see the critiques so you can fix your mistakes for the future.

8. **Attitude**

While a certain amount of confidence is required to perform on stage, there is a thin line between confidence and arrogance. Be gracious. Your parents and teachers have worked extremely hard to get you to where you are today. Thank them before patting yourself on the back. Stay grounded, humble, and aware of other dancer's feelings..... and after all that, THEN be proud of yourself because everyone else is.

9. **Theater Etiquette**

- A. No videotaping of flash photography of any kind is allowed at dance competitions. It is for the safety of both student and teacher's choreography. It can also cause disqualifications. Please turn off your cell phones, and enjoy watching.
- B. Please do not enter or exit between performances, wait until they have completed the routine before leaving your seat. The opening and closing of the doors can be distracting and is disrespectful to the dancer/s.

- C. No photography of any kind is allowed in the theater. This includes video, if you are caught you risk disqualifying the dancers you represent.
- D. Please be courteous in the theater: turn off cell phones, do not enter the theater when music is playing, and do not walk up and down aisles while dancers are performing on stage.
- E. Please applaud everyone with the same genuine expression.
- F. Never approach a judge with questions regarding an adjudication of mark.
- G. Never speak negatively about another dancer/routine, you never know whose family is sitting next to you. Be kind and respectful.

# *Etiquette/Code of Conduct*

## PURPOSE

The purpose of The Inspired Arts Company Dance Team is to provide students with an opportunity to participate in an activity and develop sportsmanship, character, and competitiveness. Participation on the Dance Team is a privilege, not a right. As a member of the Company you represent TIAC; and your conduct and actions in the classroom, on the dance floor, and in the community should not deviate from the regulations set forth in Code of Conduct.

## CONDUCT RULES

Be respectful and age appropriate. We expect for our dancers to uphold age appropriate and respectful behavior at all times. If your actions are not deemed respectful and do not coincide with this organization's guidelines you will be denied participation on this Dance Team.

## SOCIAL MEDIA AND STUDIO ETIQUETTE

This policy is not meant to be taken personally or lightly. If you post negative things on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. or exhibit behavior reflecting negatively on our studio, we will consider this grounds for probation or suspension from this company. This includes the behavior of the parents. If we are in a public situation (competitions, performances, conventions, etc.) the expectation is that you will conduct your behavior responsibly. Remember you are a representative of The Inspired Arts Company. If there are situations that need to be addressed, please remember that we can handle those upon return to the studio. In a public forum, it is unacceptable. Our goal is to foster a healthy competitive team environment. With so many personalities, we realize conflicts may arise, but we must be respectful to one another. Be kind to one another. There is not room for personal conflicts amongst the team. Do not bring them to the studio. It is hard to stop gossip among students and parents all together, but we do not want it to become destructive. If you have a problem with a parent of another student, please try to resolve it with the person you are having the issue with. If it cannot be resolved contact the Director to discuss your concerns and the proper corrections will be made.

## Student Contract:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to uphold all of the conditions set forth in The Inspired Arts Company Competitive Dance Team Handbook. I acknowledge that failure to uphold any of the conditions outlined in the contract could result in my probation or dismissal from the team.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Parent Contract:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, agree to uphold all of the conditions set forth in The Inspired Arts Company Competitive Dance Team Handbook. I acknowledge that failure to uphold any of the conditions outlined in the contract could result in my child's probation or dismissal from the team.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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What is the maximum number of dances that you child can participate in?

Solo: \_\_\_\_\_

Duo: \_\_\_\_\_

Trio \_\_\_\_\_

Small Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Large Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Dancer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Dancer's Age: \_\_\_\_\_