

Competition Handbook

A Guide for Students & Parents



About This Handbook

FOR FORTY-FOUR YEARS our school has been a leader in dance education. We believe that our success comes because 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

Welcome to Concord Dance Academy's Competition Team. 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.

TECHNIQUE CLASS REQUIREMENTS:

Levels A-E: Classes are required in Ballet and Jazz, as well as a technique class for any additional subject students will compete in, which includes tap, contemporary, lyrical, and hip hop.

Levels F: Ballet, tap, and jazz technique classes are required.

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.

Students who miss more than 3 choreography classes must schedule a makeup class at the private class rate of \$80.00 per hour for all classes missed beyond the first three absences. If a student misses a 30-minute class, they will be required to schedule a 30-minute session. Missing a 60-minute class will require a full 60-minute makeup session. These private makeup sessions must be scheduled within three weeks of the missed class time. This is to ensure the students are on track with the entire team so that the choreographer may progress with the piece.

Students who miss a technique class are required to make up the class in another technique class approved by their instructor and scheduled through the office. Repeated absences in choreography and technique classes may result in the student being placed in understudy status or dismissal from the team at the discretion of the instructor and/or the studio director.

Choreography:

All solos/duos/trios require a choreography fee, which is paid to the instructor by the studio upon completion of the initial four hours of choreography instruction. This fee allows the students to use this choreography when competing on behalf of Concord Dance Academy in competitions approved by the studio director. The choreography is owned by the studio and may not be performed at unauthorized events. Should the dancer's contract with the studio be terminated, they may not utilize the choreography arranged through CDA when competing for any other dance school, or as independents.

This same rule applies to all group choreography, which is created for the sole use of Concord Dance Academy at events approved by the studio director.

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 a child's success depends on the support of his/her 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.

Failure to comply with the policies stated in this handbook by either students or parents may result in the termination of the competition contract by the studio.

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 is comfortable for him or her. No two students will progress at the same rate, even if they experience the exact same training. It is 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 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 & 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, 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.

While information regarding student and family preferences for groups and solos/duos/trios is collected at the time of competition auditions, all decisions regarding the pairings and groupings is made by the faculty in communication with the studio director. Not all family requests may be approved, and the decision of the studio is final. Any concerns or questions about this process should go through the CDA Office. It is not appropriate for parents or students to message the teachers with requests, as the director will make the final decisions.

All students who qualify to participate in a line, are expected to do so before they are allowed to accept large groups or small groups which are offered. Should a family desire to reduce the number of dances, the smallest groups will be eliminated first.

Any student selected to compete with a solo/duo or trio must compete in a line or large group in that same dance subject (i.e., a student with a tap solo must compete in a tap line or large group).

All choreography for solos, duos, trios, and groups will be completed by members of the CDA teaching faculty, or by a qualified choreographer contracted by CDA with the consent of the studio director. No self-choreography is accepted.

Dos & 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.

Parent Volunteer Requirements

As a parent, it is important to show the value of team contributions. For this reason, we require that **all parents** of competition students volunteer during the year. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Room Parent (rehearsals & shows)
- Open House Assistant
- Backstage
- Selling Raffle Tickets
- Food Tables
- Head Pieces and Costume Alterations
- Ushering
- Prop Transportation
- Christmas Parade
- Holiday Show Decorating/Cleaning
- Toys for Tots & Food Pantry Deliveries

Sign-ups will be sent out periodically throughout the year. Volunteer positions are filled on a first come-first serve basis. Parents who have not yet volunteered throughout the year will be assigned to fill remaining positions. We encourage parents to sign up early and as often as possible. We do not limit volunteer positions to one per year!

FOR DANCERS & 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. No foul language during school events.
- 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.
- While you are under contract for the dance season there should be no piercings, tattoos, or extremely unnatural dyed hair (ie. blue, pink).
- We will not tolerate any swearing, rude behavior, or alcohol consumption or vaping in the studio or at events (including parents)
- No excessive public displays of affection, male or female, at any CDA competition or studio events – remember you are representing the school.
- No use of cell phones for photos, videos, or social media in the changing rooms as a sign of respect for team-mates
- You never mistreat your parents at a CDA event. If you are cited for that behavior a written letter of apology is needed to return to the classroom.

Dress Code Requirements

GIRLS: Solid black leotard with pink tights for ballet and pointe. Hair must be in a slick performance bun for all ballet classes, with hairpins and a hairnet. Pink, black or suntan tights may be worn for all other subjects. Dress for other subjects may include black tops and black dance leggings or shorts.

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

Failure to have proper attire for class will cause the student to receive a warning for the first offense, with a note sent to the parents. Second and subsequent offenses will result in being asked to sit out of class, requiring a makeup session and putting the student's place on the competition team in jeopardy.

All students are required to have the competition team jacket for every competition, as well as plain black pants or long leggings. **NO** shorts or capris.

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 with the office for updated information. Please add your child's email as well. 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 & 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. It is expected that all students will remain physically fit to perform the technical requirements that are expected. This ensures that all dancers are committed to being a team member.

All students will be expected to take evening classes in June and July. Classes will run June 3rd through 21st and July 8th through July 26th with a two week long break in between.

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. If you insist on dropping a dance, you will be charged \$200 for the instructors to rework choreography.

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 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 always show respect for their teachers. Inappropriate behavior could result in dismissal from the program.

You must notify the office of any absences by email and phone.

Rehearsal & 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. **PLEASE NOTE: 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.

A modified schedule for June will be available in May. **All dancers must attend June and July rehearsals and team required camp or 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 black tights and a black T-shirt for the boys.

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

Tuition & Expense Policy

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

All monthly tuition payments will be auto withdrawn on the 1st of each month or paid in cash by the 5th. Any payment received after the 5th of the month is subject to a \$30 or 10% of your balance late fee, whichever is greater. Your autopay will cover all expenses and is arranged on Studio Director.

Each student must fulfill all financial obligations brought about by competition requirements, including the comp team fee, 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 delinquent in payment will be released from the competition team until tuition is current.**

*Entry fees for competitions or conventions are due 60 days prior to each event. Tentative fee schedules will be distributed at the parent competition meeting, and these fees will be added to your monthly autopay.

*All costumes must be paid for in full prior to distribution with a \$65 deposit per dance, due September 1st.

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, 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, Rhythm of the Night, and the Gala.

We believe the lessons learned through community performances are just as valuable as the competition experience!

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!

Parents are not permitted to observe comp classes while in training.

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 18. Do not schedule vacations just prior to or during competition weekends.

Photographing and videotaping are generally banned from all competitions. Check each company's website for rules and regulations and be sure to advise all guests.

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.

All competitions are open to the public at no charge.

Costumes

Costume payments are the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian.

There will be no outside contracting for the creation of costumes for any solos, duos, trios, or groups. All costumes will be ordered through CDA. All costume decisions must be approved by the studio director. Solo/duo/trio costume selection will be done in conjunction with the parents and choreographer.

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, or the student will be compensated.

COSTUME /PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES

- ✓ 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.
 - ✓ **Shine all tap shoes** and clean all other dance shoes before every performance.
- Competition costumes are presented to the students hung, steamed, accessorized and ready to be used for competitions. They are to be transported to and from competitions and performances hung in a garment bag. All parts and pieces should be **labeled** so that any items left behind may be returned to their owner. This includes all shoes, tights and headpieces.

A FINAL NOTE

Welcome to the Concord Dance Academy Competition Team!

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

All Mandatory Dates for Competition Team students:

Classes begin: **September 11 (this is one week earlier than recreational classes)**

GALA: Sunday, September 17th (Kickline and elves only)

Christmas Parade: Saturday, November 18

Holiday Show Rehearsal: Tuesday, November 28 (5:30-7:00 PM)

Holiday Show Dress Rehearsal: Thursday, November 30(5:00- 7:00PM)

Holiday Shows: Saturday, December 2 (1 and 6 PM) & Sunday, December 3 (1 PM)

Mock Competition: Sunday, January 14

Recital Rehearsal: May 28 (4:30 PM)

Recital Dress Rehearsal: May 30 (4:30PM)

Recital: June 1 (12 PM)

Tentative Competition Dates 2024

Dancers Inc. (Concord, NH): **February 2 - 4**

KAR (Nashua, NH): **February 9 - 11**

Groove (Concord, NH): **February 16 – 18**

Showbiz (Concord, NH): **March 8 – 10**

Rainbow (Nashua, NH): **March 15 - 17**

Elite Dance (Concord, NH): **April 5 - 7**

This document was updated for the 2023-2024 Competition Season in July of 2023.
All members of the competition team and their parents/guardians must sign and return the competition contract which indicates acceptance of all policies outlined in this document.