



COMPETITION TEAM
HANDBOOK
2023/2024



NWA REGIONAL DANCE COMPANY COMPETITION TEAM

(INTENSIVE DANCER PROGRAM)

A Guide for Students and Parents

About This Handbook

NWARDC Competition Team has been active for 5 years. It was formerly the Ballet Westside performing company which has been active for over 25 years; the director has OVER 30 years of experience in being 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 students and their parents a clear understanding of their commitments and responsibility to the Intensive Dancer Program and the school.

➤ Dates and/or expenses listed in this handbook are subject to change. Changes, rehearsals, performances, etc. will be sent out via email. Please check your email frequently to ensure you are aware of current events.

NWA Regional Dance Company:
(Located inside Ballet Westside Dance Studio)

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NWARDC

Competition Team Program

A Guide for Students and Parents For Our Dancers

Congratulations! You have been accepted into the Competition Team Dancer Program. 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 30 minutes 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.
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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, 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.

Note: Students may not be pulled from their accepted dance routine. The only excuse that will be valid is for medical reasons with a doctor's note. Too much stress on Instructors and students to re-choreograph routines has prompted this new rule.

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: Competition team jacket, black leotard, tights or leggings, black shorts or black skirt. Optional: the studio logo and student's name imprinted on them.

BOYS: Sweatpants and a plain, white T-shirt.

All team participants must have the following shoes:

- Eurotard tan tap shoes
- Pulse tan jazz shoes
- Eurotard black jazz shoes (when needed)
- Dance paws & hip hop sneakers when required
- Additional shoe styles may be required

Camisole: Nude camisole with low back and clear straps.

Tights: Euroskin brand caramel and theatrical pink for performances.
Fishnets when requested.

Ballet Westside carries all the shoes needed for performances and competition. Please see Ballet Westside for costs of shoes needed.

- Competition team dancers are required to wear appropriate shoes for all classes and rehearsals. Make sure shoes are clean, polished, and free of holes for each performance.

Classes

All dancers are expected to attend their regularly scheduled technique or combo type classes in addition to all rehearsals and performances. Dancers are allowed 12 absences from combo classes. Any team member with poor attendance will be dismissed from the program.

Dancers will receive a class schedule in August. The program includes ballet, tap, jazz, hip-hop, lyrical, and conditioning classes from Ballet Westside. All students in the Ruby or Diamond level will be required to take a conditioning/production class. This class will be held on Wednesdays from 5:30-6:30. Additional production rehearsals may be required on the weekend during the competition season. Notification for these rehearsals will be sent out on a monthly basis. Conditioning/production class on Wednesday will have a monthly fee payable to Ballet Westside. Students will need to attend a monthly dance class that is a combination of ballet, tap and jazz.

Note Requirement: All solo and duo/trio dancers must take 3 months of Ballet Technique from Ballet Westside to be eligible for a solo or duo/trio. All competition team students are encouraged to take Ballet Technique to become stronger dancers. Students may take it a month at a time.

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

Competition team students are required to attend their specialty dance routines as well as their regular scheduled technique classes. Students will be allowed a certain number of absences during summer, fall, winter, and spring. An absence policy will be announced before each season. Students failing the attendance policy will be replaced with another dancer for the routine they did not meet attendance requirements. Students must allow the substitute dancer to wear the required costume for the dance from which he or she has been excused.

Rehearsal and Other Information

Rehearsals are an important part of the commitment to the Competition Team Program. All dancers are expected to work hard and arrive early enough to give themselves time to warm up. Extra rehearsals will be called in order to prepare for special performances and competitions. These rehearsals are usually held on Saturdays. Competition Team students are required to attend. Competition Team students will only be allowed to miss a set amount of rehearsals before each event. A newsletter listing the rehearsal schedule and allowed absences will be posted before each event. There will be no exceptions to this rule. Please use your absences wisely.

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 with no big earrings, necklaces, bracelets, etc. Gum is never allowed in class.

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

Competition Team Fees and Expense Policy

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

Yearly Competition team dues are based on which level your child has been accepted into. These fees if paid by June 16th, 2023, will be discounted by \$25.00. Payments may be made if needed for the yearly competition dues, with balances due by August 1st. Competition dues are \$375.00 for Diamond Level, \$325.00 for Ruby Level, and \$300 for Emerald Level. Competition Team fees cover all rehearsals during July and August, and any extra production rehearsals that are held on the weekends. Yearly Competition Team fees do not cover rehearsals during September through June. It does not cover the conditioning/production class held on Wednesdays. There will be no refund of yearly Competition Team dues due to dismissal or withdrawal unless the student decides not to commit to the Competition Team program prior to any classes being taken.

Each competition team dance will have a rehearsal fee of \$20 per hour beginning in Sept.

Large Group Musical Theater (Ms.Ottis Regretts) is the specialty dance this season this is half the regular rehearsal fees. Ms. Kate will work on the choreography this summer. This dance will be open to different ages and ability levels as it has many different characters.

Entry fees to competitions will now be on a payment plan beginning August through January depending on how many routines your child is in.

Important- If you drop a dance routine before August 15th there will be no charge to alter the dance routine. If you drop out after this date, you must pay \$100 to compensate extra rehearsals to be called to re-choreograph the routine that was dropped.

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. There will be performance opportunities at the Rogers Christmas Parade, Art on the Bricks, downtown performances, and various lecture-demonstrations at local schools. We believe the lessons learned through public 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!

➤ We believe the lessons learned through concert performances are just as valuable as the competition experience.

ABOUT COMPETITIONS

Attendance

Regional Competitions are mandatory. All dancers are expected to compete. Only National Competitions are optional.

Competition Entry Fees

Competition entry fees will be required to be auto debited from your account or we must have a credit card number on file to be auto debited when fees are due.

Independent Entries

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

Cash Scholarships

Soloists and duo/trios will receive a school credit for the amount of any cash scholarship awarded. It will be applied to lessons, costumes, entry fees, or other expenses related to dance training.

Group cash scholarships awarded will be deposited in the Competition Team treasury to be utilized for guest choreographers, competition videos, Competition Team needs, activities, etc.

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

Costumes

Costume payments are the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian. Additional costumes may be required for production numbers, which includes all Competition Team dancers from all levels. The costume costs are \$80.00 for child sizes and \$90.00 for adult sizes. A deposit of \$40 per costume for performances/competitions is due in July. The balance due for costumes will be posted in Competition Team newsletters.

Costume fees are payable to Ballet Westside.

If an Intensive 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.

Supplies Fee

There is a \$35 supplies fee to cover all extras needed to finish a costume such as rhinestones, headpieces that do not come with costumes, gloves, props, and items that students lose or forget that we always provide extras. Supplies fees are due August 4th.

Supply fees are payable to Ballet Westside.

Make-up

A list of certain make-up colors will be given out for students to purchase. Students will need foundation, eyeshadow, eyeliner, blush, bronzer, mascara, and false eyelashes.

TIPS: COSTUME COMMON SENSE

- ✓ Always have a second pair of tights available.
- ✓ Place costumes in a garment bag for travel.
- ✓ Hang and steam costumes before each performance.
- ✓ Place your name in all costumes and shoes.
- ✓ Shoes must be clean and in good condition (no holes) for competitions and performances

Summer Classes

Competition team classes will meet July 10th through August 4th to get dances ready for competition and performances.

Special Production Choreography

Ms. Stephanie will again be choreographing our production this year. We will begin special rehearsals in August. Production students will be required to pay \$75 towards the total cost of choreography extra rehearsals. NWA will pay the remaining balance. This fee will be due August 17th.

Fund-Raising

NWARDC will offer at least three optional fund-raisers for Competition Team dancers to defray their expenses which can be applied to their yearly competition team dues, competitions fees and costumes only. Dancers receive credit percentage from their own fund-raising efforts which will be held by NWARDC. NWARDC will keep an accounting of all funds raised and will credit each student's account. Any leftover credit will be carried over to the next competition season or added to the general fund if the student does not enroll for the next competition season.

NWARDC Scholarships- Students wishing to receive a scholarship for competition team yearly dues should fill out a scholarship form located in the office by June 13th. A

copy of the applicants 2022 tax return must be included. Students receiving a scholarship must work a total of 20 hours of fundraising to receive a scholarship.

Solos, Duo/Trios

Students wishing to compete as a solo, duet, or trio must take a weekly ballet technique class for three months from Ballet Westside and will be evaluated by the instructor to determine if the student is ready to compete in these categories. Seniors will be the only exception to this rule. Students must let us know during auditions that they wish to do a solo, duet, or trio. Most students will need to participate in a duet or trio before attempting a solo. Exceptions will only be made by the instructor for extremely advanced students.

Competition Team Try Outs (new members and returning members)

Students must be 7 years old by June 1st to audition for Competition Team. Auditions will be held June 6th at 5:30 pm at our studio location: 1200 W. Walnut (Center for Non-Profits - Northeast Entrance). All tryouts this year will be for placement in specialty dances. There is a \$15.00 audition fee payable at the audition to cover expenses related to the adjudicates. There will be a list of dances sorted by type of specialty dance and choreographer posted before tryouts. Students will be evaluated during auditions by a panel of experienced teachers. Students should be ready to give us an idea of which dances they would like to audition for. Students will be notified of acceptance and placement by assigned number that will be posted on our Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/Northwest Arkansas Regional Dance Company>

Students may refuse to accept a dance if chosen but decisions need to be made by June 16th in which dances they will perform. All auditions are closed auditions. No observers will be allowed. Students must wear black leotards and correct shoes. Hair should be secured in a ponytail or bun. Dancers must decide on which dance routines to accept by June 16th.

Summer Technique Classes Through Ballet Westside

All Competition Team students are required to take one ballet technique, one conditioning class, and either a tap technique or one jazz/hip hop technique class. Black leotards, black shorts or leggings, or tights are to be worn. There are three sessions offered this summer:

June 12th – June 23rd

July 10th – July 21st

July 24th – August 4th

A discount for multiple classes is \$75.00 per 2-week session. Students may take one week in one session and another week in different session if needed to get the required 6 lessons for each type of class required.

School Dance/Cheer Team students can skip the conditioning class as they are required to take them during the summer at school.

A Final Note

WELCOME TO THE COMPETITION TEAM DANCER PROGRAM! We look forward to an exciting, rewarding season!

Each Policy needs to be initialed by parent and student so there will be no misunderstandings.

_____ 1) Absences policies will be strictly enforced. A total of 3 absences
Parent Student will be allowed per dance routine a student is participating in Sept-Dec. A total of 2 absences per dance routine a student is participating in Jan-March. Students missing more than the allowed amount will be required to pay a \$50 fee to cover an extra rehearsal of the dance routine that they missed too many times. Other students having to attend this rehearsal will not be charged for a rehearsal fee. Please use your absences for illness and school functions. Not for forgetfulness, haircuts, eating out, shopping, etc.

We will do our best to work around school functions. Please send us your school schedule of rehearsals, performances, etc.. in advance.

We also ask that students provide emails and phone numbers so we can send rehearsal schedules as they need to be accountable as well.

_____ 2) Excessive Tardiness to the same class over 6 times from
Parent Student Sept-Dec and 4 times from Jan-March will result in an absence.

_____ 2) Students must wear correct dance attire to rehearsals. Correct
Parent Student attire is black leggings, black biker shorts, black booty shorts with a black tank top or black tight fitting dance shirt. No baggy clothes. Black leotard for ballet class and ballet rehearsals. Hair must be in a ponytail or bun. Students must step into the classroom ready to go at the required time. Failure to comply will result in extra work in the form of exercise or sitting out for repeated offences and paying for an extra rehearsal.

_____ 3) Respect and team player- Students must show respect towards
Parent Student instructors and work as a team during rehearsals. Consequences of non-compliance will result in dismissal from the competition team program.

Also, students must keep hands to themselves!

_____ 4) Payment plan- Parents will now be required to start making
Parent Student payments for competition dues August thru January. A payment plan will be posted in July of the fees that will be due monthly depending on the routines a student is in. Parents behind \$500 or more from competition team/ Ballet Westside will be required to do at least one fundraiser to get caught up.