

Studio 360 Competitive Team Handbook

Our main message to our students and parents about competitions

Everyone in competition is there for the same reason: because they love to dance. It is VERY important, and we reiterate this with our students all the time, that we always encourage everyone, even if they are from another studio. We want to ensure that we have a positive energy and cheer for everyone.

We always work very hard to remind our students that it is not about what score you get or what award you receive. It is first and foremost about the fun of performing and the amazing feeling we all get as dancers when we're on stage. It's also about the hard work and dedication that goes into each of the numbers and being able to share your passion with all of the audience members and judges. It is never about competing against each other, or challenging each other for the highest score, especially within our own studio. Dancers should be encouraging each other, supporting each other and should be happy for one another regardless of what prize they receive. We truly believe that competitions should be about the individual dancer and their group and about bettering themselves at each performance. Although we reiterate this to our students all the time, we would be very grateful if parents could help us reinforce this message at home as well.

General information about competitions

- During the competitive season, we attend approximately 4 or 5 competitions per year, with 3 or 4 being in Ottawa/Gatineau and 1 or 2 being out of town.
- Competition dates are decided upon in September so you have ample notice.
- Competitions normally run from Thursday morning through to Sunday evening (so you might need to miss school or work to attend a competition).
- There is no fee or ticket required to watch the competition (with the exception of some).
- There are normally 3-4 judges with various backgrounds and expertise in dance who will provide scores and comments on each of the routines. The studio receives the comments at the end of the competition, along with a score sheet, and we review them during classes the following week.
- Many studios will register for the same competition. Once the registrations are received, competitions then schedule routines based on categories. For example, all of the intermediate level small groups ages 10 to 11 in jazz, will perform in the same category.
- At most competitions, every routine receives an award based on their score as well as a placement within their category. At some competitions there are "overalls" or "finals". For these, dancers will perform their routine again, for the chance to compete against the highest marking routines of the competition.
- Specific performance dates and times are distributed to all dancers via e-mail as soon as we receive them. We do not receive the final performance times until about 2-3 weeks before the competition.

Contact Parents

Competitions are usually very hectic, especially as the studio grows and we have more and more amazing routines! Unfortunately this means that we (Jess and France) do not have time to respond to emails or texts from everyone during competitions, so every group is assigned a contact parent known as the Team Captain. If you run into an issue, have questions or have an emergency and need to get in touch with someone, the Team Captain is who you call. You can contact them and they will get in touch with us (Jess and France) if need be.

If you'd like to volunteer to be a Team Captain for your child's group, please let us know. We will send out a sheet with contact information before the first competition.

Teachers

Teachers are only responsible for the dancers when they take them to practice, and when they take them backstage. A lot of the teachers are present from 7 a.m. to 11 p.m. for all four days of competitions, and always do everything they can to make sure they are present for the students. Although they are generally at the competition 2 hours before their routines, most teachers will have many different routines and are expected to watch all of the studio routines to encourage the students. This means that they cannot be present with their groups at all times and are not expected to be. It also gives them very short windows of time in which to eat meals. There will be times when teachers leave to eat while students are at the competition getting ready, stretching or watching the competition. Teachers are always aware of the timing and will always make sure that routines are practiced before they go on stage.

Issues or Concerns

- It happens that things sometimes don't always go as planned and it's out of our control. We expect students and parents to keep a positive outlook and try their best to roll with it. It's very important for parents to remember that their words and actions have a big influence on how your children see things. Keeping a positive and upbeat attitude, while encouraging and supporting everyone, goes a long way to ensuring the students do the same.
- Students and parents are never to discuss issues or problems with a competition directly with the competition organizers. Any scheduling matters, issues with awards, etc. will be dealt with by the studio directors or teachers.
- We strongly encourage parents to come talk to us if they have any issues. We would much rather discuss any concerns or questions you may have and avoid any further problems. Most times, it's a matter of miscommunication or misunderstandings and can easily be cleared up with a simple conversation.

Competitive Team Rules

- Competitive dancers are not permitted to miss a competition. Anyone who misses a competition without a valid doctor's note will not be able to participate in the rest of the competitions. The list of competition dates are distributed in September so that everyone can plan their schedules accordingly.
- Parents are responsible for their children **AT ALL TIMES** while in competition, except for when they are taken backstage. We are guests in the competition centres, and we should remember to act as such. Other parents and teachers are not responsible for watching your child or ensuring they behave. Any dancers caught misbehaving will not be permitted to attend the following competition.
- The 2 hour rule:
 - All dancers must arrive 2 hours in advance of their performance time with their hair and makeup ready.
 - This is to allow dancers the time to find the change rooms, set-up their things, change into their costume, and make sure they have everything they need.
 - It also gives them time to do a full stretch and practice their routine a few times before going on stage.
 - Competitions sometimes run ahead of schedule so this ensures that all dancers are present if the routine must be performed earlier than planned.
 - This rule is for the benefit of the dancers. We do not want them to have to rush or feel anxious about not being ready before going on stage.
 - If a dancer has more than one number during the day, and has already set-up their things and has their hair and make-up ready, they can leave the competition to eat, shop, etc. in between routines. As long as they are present and ready when the routine is being practiced.
- All dancers must stay for their awards.
- Dancers are encouraged to wear their studio gear, especially for award sessions.
- Dancers should remain with their group before performing.
- Dancers should either be in the "auditorium" watching the competition, or in the change room while waiting for their performance or awards. You can bring a game or a book to keep busy in the change room if you have a long period of time to wait between your performance and your awards.
- For students with cell phones: Make sure to give them to a parent/sibling/friend before going backstage. Your teachers are not responsible for holding everyone's phones.
- You are not permitted to take photos or videos (unless specified otherwise for some competitions). Competitions will disqualify groups if anyone is caught filming or taking pictures.
- It's important not to eat or drink (other than water) with your costume on unless you have something to cover it so as not to dirty your costume.

Step by Step Breakdown

1. Arrive 2 hours prior to performance time.
2. Find the Studio 360 changeroom. Changerooms are usually indicated on signs put up by the competitions.
3. You can set-up your things in the Studio 360 area, change into your first costume and find your group.
4. You can visit the auditorium, see the stage and how everything is set-up. If you'd like, you can purchase a program from the competition to follow along with the performance schedule. (The competition will have tables set-up with programs and clothing for sale.)
5. Stretch. Make sure to do a full stretch to make sure all of your muscles are warmed up. We recommend that you then put on warm clothing to keep your muscles warm.
6. You can then go watch some of the competition, or start practicing with your group in the changeroom or designated practice area. Make sure to stay with your group at all times.
7. Your teacher will come get you approximately 30 minutes before your performance time to run through the routine with you. Remember that teachers have a lot of other numbers to practice and to watch onstage so it's important that everyone is ready to go.
8. Once you've practiced, your teacher will bring you backstage 5 numbers before your routine, will check you in with the stage director backstage and will tell you where to go. Your teacher will stay with you until after you have performed.
9. After you have performed, your teacher will bring you back to the changeroom where you can meet your parents.
10. You can then go watch the competition, hang-out in the changeroom or leave the competition to do other things. You must be back/present on time for the awards session.
11. During the awards session, all of the dancers come up on stage wearing their studio gear and sit down with their group. They will usually start with special awards, which are determined by the judges as something special they enjoyed from a routine or something unique they want to recognize. Then they will go through each of the routines in order of performance to announce the award. One person from each group will go receive the award. Following the regular awards, they will conduct the "overalls". These are the awards for the broader categories.
12. Once the awards are over, you can meet your parents. Make sure to pick up all of your things from the changeroom and then you can go home.

What to pack in your dance bag for competition

**Please note, it's important that each dancer has these things as it is not up to other parents to provide them.*

- Costumes (make sure to double check all of the pieces are there)
- Accessories (earrings, headbands, gloves, etc.)
- Shoes
- Tights (and extra pairs in case you get a run in yours)
- Socks
- Competition makeup and any specific makeup the teacher has requested for the routine
- Hair brush
- Hair comb
- Hairspray
- Bobby pins
- Elastics
- Safety pins
- Double-sided tape
- Mirror
- Water bottle
- Nail polish remover
- Makeup remover (in case make-up needs to be changed)
- Kleenex
- Tylenol/Advil/Motrin and A535/I.C.E.
- Pair of flip flops or slippers to walk around with at the competition if you are barefoot or wearing foot paws
- Studio 360 gear to represent on stage! ☺

Make sure to double and triple check your bags to make sure you have every piece of your costume, your shoes, and all of your accessories before leaving the house, and again before leaving the competition. Make sure to keep your things organized in the change room, to label your things with your name, and do not leave any valuables in the changeroom.