



2025/26



COMPETITION TEAM
HANDBOOK



INTRODUCTION



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Congratulations! You have been accepted into the Competition Team program at Magnolia Dance Studio. 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.

Magnolia Dance Studio Competition Dance Team is a creative and performing arts program that requires dancers to be both artists and athletes. Our ultimate goal is to instill dance intensity and drive inspired by much more than trophies and sequins. We believe in building strong fundamentals, technique, and discipline through dance training and performance experience. You can count on building a respect and love for dance whether you are training for personal or professional goals.

A competitive dance team is designed for the serious dancer who is highly motivated in performing arts.



THOSE SELECTED FOR TEAM 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 POSITIVE ATTITUDE
- HAVE RESPECT FOR THE TEAM, STAFF, AND PARENTS
- SHOW SUPPORT FOR THE STUDIO AND OTHER FELLOW DANCERS

POLICIES

Attendance Policy



Attendance is mandatory for all dance classes and rehearsals. 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.

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 studio down.

Missed classes for any other reason than illness must be approved in advance. In emergency events (i.e. sickness), please notify the studio as quickly as possible. Please do not rely on other students to pass along your student’s absence.

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.

Dance instructors do understand that the students are dealing with busy schedules and many school demands; being a well rounded individual is important, however, when it comes to participation on a performance dance team, skills are constantly being taught and students are expected to be present. If one team member misses rehearsal, the entire team suffers. Illness, injury or family emergencies are allowed.

The student will participate in all scheduled competitions, except in extraordinary circumstances in which case the office must be notified in writing. Do not schedule vacations just prior to or during competition weekends

Costume Guidelines and Requirements

- 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 steam or 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 should be 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.

All tights other than black or ballet pink should be in flesh tone. This means the color of tights that best match your dancer's skin tone.

Jazz shoes (black or tan): Bloch Pulse **Lyrical Shoes** (flesh tone): Danznmotion canvas half soles

Tap shoes (Black Lace Up): We have 3 options and the price directly reflects the sound quality. Prices are estimates from The Dancer's Pointe dance supply store in Columbia, MO

So Danca Trent (\$72)

So Danca Willow (\$105)

So Danca Zenith (\$125)

If your dancer is finished growing I would recommend different tap shoes that have unbeatable sound quality and will last them a lifetime, please contact Miss Jordan.

Discipline Protocol

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

- 1st Time - WARNING
- 2nd Time - Asked to observe class
- Dancers will not participate in class until the teacher has a chance to talk to them one-on-one and decide if they are ready to rejoin the class.
- IF POOR BEHAVIOR PERSISTS (i.e. 2-3 times over a week), the director will call home to discuss behavior with parents. If deemed necessary a meeting will be set up with the director, teacher, dancer, and parents.
- IF POOR BEHAVIOR DOES NOT IMPROVE AND IS AFFECTING THE SUCCESS OF THE TEAM, dancers will be asked to leave the team.

EXAMPLES of why students would receive a warning:

- Being disrespectful to a coach (talking back, not listening in class, bad attitude, and talking)
- Constant issues with dress code and hair being in one's face.
- Lack of focus in class (talking, not giving 100% effort at all times, marking when not injured).
- Constant issues with lateness.
- Failure to email or call the office when sick/injured/late/absent.
- Talking negatively about each other, teachers, other dancers, parents, or the studio.

Choreography

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 Magnolia Dance Studio 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 Magnolia Dance Studio at events approved by the studio director.

Independent Entries

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

Communication

No one will contact a competition or convention directly. It is against the 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 Magnolia Dance Studio office.

Please attend all meetings and read all newsletters, emails & 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.

If you are having financial difficulties, solos and duo/trios should be the first to go.

No student may not compete or perform for any other dance studio/dance program while participating on the Magnolia Dance Studio competition team.

Costumes

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

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 studio office; they will be returned to the student after the last performance of the season, or the student will be fairly compensated.

Summer Classes

Each returning team member is required to take at least ballet and jazz during our June and July Summer Sessions. Athletes of all kinds lose tremendous amounts of progress by taking months off. It is important to continue our basic fundamental training during the summer months.

What to Expect at Competition

Competition Audience Etiquette



- Do not enter or exit the auditorium at any time during a performance. If you think you will be getting up and down a lot, please be seated closer to the back of the auditorium.
- Do not allow younger siblings to walk or run up and down the aisles, or wander around unattended. It is distracting to the dancers and other audience members.
- Absolutely, positively no picture taking or videotaping in the auditorium. The studio could be kicked out of the competition if anyone is caught doing it. You will have opportunities to take pictures during awards or out in the hallway.
- Keep chatter or talking to a minimum while you are seated. If you want to have a conversation with someone or use your phone, go out into the hallway. Remember to put phones on vibrate.
- Students are encouraged to watch other Magnolia dancers as they perform at competition to help support their teammates and create a sense of unity.
- After competition, all students will listen to the judges' critiques and are expected to apply the corrections suggested. Students should expect to hear the honest truth from the judges and appreciate what they have to say.

Judging



Every competition has a 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 technique and strength/stretch classes is to develop the **TECHNIQUE**. This includes: pointed feet, turn-out, extensions, proper execution of turns, use of plié, placements of hands *Technique is always at least 50% of a routine's score*
2. **Overall Performance Quality** How well each student knows their routine and how well they entertain the judges and audience with it. This is conveyed through the use of expression and showing the "feeling" of the routine.
3. **Choreography** Here the **TEACHER** is judged. Choreography scores are based on appropriate choice of music, 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. **Appearance** This pertains to costume fit, whether the 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 everyone is on the same page. Double check that you have the proper bra/tights/shoes for each dance. Wardrobe malfunctions can bring down a score quickly!

Awards



Enjoy the process!

Award 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 and black leggings/dance pants/shorts on stage for all award ceremonies that they attend. They are required to attend all award ceremonies for the teams that they are on. NO PHONES are allowed on stage during award ceremonies. Students are expected to listen and be respectful, always say thank you when receiving an award, regardless of how you feel about it.

AWARDS ARE THE TIME TO:

- Hoot and Holler (parents AND dancers)
- Take pictures
- Sit back and relax
- Clap and cheer for all studios attending at competitions

The most important thing to remember about awards is that ALL the scores are opinions of 3-4 judges and it does not show your value as a dancer.

"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



Solo trophies are kept by the individual who earned them. Any cash prizes awarded for a solo will go to the soloist.

Duo/Trio trophies can be decided amongst dancers to take turns on who's going to keep the trophies. I.e "You can take the trophy from this competition and I'll take the next one." Remember to always handle this situation with grace. Any cash prize awarded to a duo/trio will split evenly between dancers.

Group Trophies will be kept at the studio. The instructor will choose a representative from the group to accept the award. Any cash prize awarded for groups will go to the studio.

DANCE TEAM ETIQUETTE/ CODE OF CONDUCT

HOW WE SHOW UP AS A TEAM



Purpose

The purpose of Magnolia Dance Studio Competition 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 team, you represent Magnolia Dance Studio; and your conduct and actions in the classroom, dance floor, and in the community should not deviate from the regulations set forth in our code of conduct. Team members must show determination, dedication, and desire to be productive members of this team.

Conduct Rules



Be respectful and age appropriate. We expect our dancers to uphold age appropriate and respectful behavior at all times. If your actions are not deemed appropriate and 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 the team. 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 Magnolia Dance Studio. 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 that conflicts may arise, but we must be respectful of one another. Be kind to one another. There is no room for personal conflicts among the team. Do not bring them to the dance 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 or another student please try to resolve it with the person you are having the issue with. If it cannot be resolved, contact the studio director to discuss your concerns and the proper corrections will be made.

HOW WE SHOW UP TO EVENTS



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. Warm up will be done as a team whenever possible.
- 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!

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.

Backstage



In reference to sportsmanship, wish the dancers 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.

Do not block the wings to watch. Dancers often have quick 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.

Be quiet. Dancers get nervous backstage, however, that's no reason to start laughing or being uncontrollably loud. Saying "shhhhhh" is a lot louder than tapping a person and whispering to them to remind them to hold the volume down.

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

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. Don't touch anything that isn't yours. Don't practice dances full out.

Schedule

Please note that the majority of competition schedules get released the week before the event, so it's important to block the entire weekend on your calendar. 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 the fault 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 your cell phone, watch dances from the audience, run your dance, or sit back and relax. Change and wait backstage. Most costume changes can be done in about 5 minutes or less if a dancer is really making the effort.

Awards Ceremony

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.

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.

We know you're tired by this point, but you can be energetic for a few more minutes. This means clapping for EVERYONE. Do not sit down when the stage manager asks everyone to stand up, dance and have fun.

When accepting an award, an improper response would be to grab the award and walk away. A more acceptable response is a handshake, and ALWAYS a thank you. It doesn't matter if you get a gold or a double platinum. It's nice to show your gratitude toward the judges for taking the time to evaluate you.

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 and/or conventions. 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.

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.

Theater Etiquette



No videotaping or photography of any kind is allowed at dance competitions. It is for the safety of both student and teacher choreography. If you are caught you could cause disqualification of the whole studio. Please turn off your cell phones, and enjoy.

Please do not enter or exit during performances. Do not enter the theater when music is playing. Wait until they have completed the routine before entering the theater or leaving your seat. The opening and closing of the doors can be distracting and is disrespectful to dancers. Do not walk up and down aisles while dancers are performing.

Please applaud everyone with the same genuine expression

Never approach a judge with questions regarding an adjudication or mark.

Never speak negatively about another dancer or routine, you never know whose family is sitting next to you. Be kind and respectful.

FOR OUR PARENTS

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 studio'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 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 and Choreography Placement

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 studio 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 are 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 Magnolia Dance Studio Office. It is not appropriate for parents or students to message the teachers with requests, as the director will make the final decisions.

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 studio'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.

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 will have performance opportunities other than competitions. We believe the lessons learned through community performances are just as valuable as the competition experience!

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 studios. 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!



A Final Note:

We are thrilled to have you on board for an extraordinary dance journey filled with passion, growth, and possibilities.

Our team of dedicated, enthusiastic, and talented teachers considers it an honor to be part of your family's dance education. We are wholeheartedly committed to supporting and guiding you every step of the way. Whether you have questions about registration, tuition, or recital, we are here for you. Let's maintain open lines of communication and work together to ensure a positive and uplifting dance experience for everyone involved.

Thank you for choosing Magnolia Dance Studio as your dance home. We are dedicated to providing a joyful, enriching, and empowering experience for all our students and families. Together, let's embark on this incredible dance journey!

Get ready to shine, express yourself, and embrace the magic of dance and the arts at Magnolia Dance Studio. Welcome to our family, where talent blossoms!

WELCOME TO THE MAGNOLIA FAMILY!



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