

Dear Parents and Guardians:

The purpose of this letter is to outline information regarding Niagara Dance Centre's Competition Team. In the past, our dancers have received numerous first place, high score, and special awards from the various competitions we attend in the area, and our hope is to keep moving forward with that success. On that note, there are a few things to be aware of if your child would like to be on competition team. Our hope is that this letter will help you make the best-informed decision.

- 1.) **Age:** Currently, the pre-competition class is ages 10+, but we are gauging interest in a "minis" pre-competition class that would be approximately ages 7–9. We firmly believe competing should be the dancer's choice, which is why we typically haven't offered options on the competition track for our younger dancers in the past. However, we've been getting some questions from dancers, parents, and guardians, and we want to make sure that we are providing a comprehensive dance education and experience for all our dancers.
- 2.) **Required Classes:** Competition students are required to take 5 hours of class per week. The classes are competition lyrical, competition jazz, competition tap, ballet technique, and jump, turn, and stretch. If your child only wishes to compete in a certain discipline, you must speak with Miss Jessica and the two (non-performance) technique classes are still required. Additional classes such as hip-hop, contemporary, musical theater, etc. can still be taken, but do not satisfy the competition class requirements.
- 3.) **Cost:** There is a higher cost associated with competing. On top of tuition, there will be competition fees, shoe requirements, hair and make-up tools, expensive costumes, etc. We fundraise actively to help offset the expense, and you can participate as much or as little as you like.
- 4.) **Time:** In general, there is a larger time commitment involved with competition. There are the 5 weekly class hours and the competition weekends, but also additional rehearsals, fundraisers and events, and summer classes. Everything is scheduled in advance and we attempt to make it as convenient as possible, but we also need to know that it will be a priority.
- 5.) **Attitude:** The BIG one! Competing can be stressful. There are long hours, lots of hard work, and high expectations. A certain level of maturity is necessary to succeed. Students need to be able to accept and apply constructive criticism and continue to work to improve their skills and technique. In addition, we are a TEAM! You need to encourage and support your teammates. Any negativity, "diva" behavior, or antagonism toward teachers or other teammates will not be tolerated.

In order to be placed on competition team, you must attend the summer session of ballet technique and jump, turn, and stretch. This allows us to evaluate progress for a longer period, a longer time to master technique and helps us create lessons to provide students with the technical skills they need to compete. **Also, a reminder for the 2018–2019 season: To be considered for competition in future seasons, you must enroll in the pre-competition class and technique classes a year before possibly joining competition team. For example, a dancer would need to take the classes in the 2017–2018 season to be considered for competition in the 2018–2019 season.**

Any student interested in competition team will be reviewed by the teachers. Students will be placed into pre- and competitive classes accordingly if they have completed the appropriate prerequisite classes, and on a temporary basis. We make our official decision in November if your child will move forward on the competition track, or if he/she needs more time to build necessary skills, maturity, and/or the proper attitude. There will be a small, informal conversation between the parent, teachers, and the student to confirm your child's readiness. We consider many factors when placing a dancer on competition team, and one of our biggest indicators is attitude and maturity. **PLEASE DO NOT GET DISCOURAGED!** We have created this system from years of experience and trial and error. If your child does not compete this year, he/she will be placed into a class at an equal, recreational level, and we encourage him/her to continue with the technique classes so they can be prepared for a competition class the next year. Again, sometimes students need a bit more time to better prepare for competition.

If your child is interested in competing, please call or send Miss Jessica an e-mail by **August 15, 2017**. If at any point you have any questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact Miss Jessica.

Thank you from Miss Jessica, Miss Amy, Miss Jennifer, Miss Katie, Miss Victoria and the Staff of Niagara Dance Centre!