



Competition Expectations

First and foremost...all students try out EVERY year (injury/exceptions approved by Ms. Kim). Because they were on it last year does not mean they will be on the competition team this next season...especially if there were issues with involvement, attitude, practicing, etc.

Purpose:

Competitive classes are designed to help take a dancer's skill level, technique and showmanship to the next level and give an opportunity to show that progress in a competitive environment.

Time Commitment:

***All students on the competition team must be enrolled in a minimum of 4 hours of dance per week (not including their practices for comp dances) and for the 2019-2020 season must include a form of ballet and one must include stretch/flex, ballet tech or leaps and turns (Ms. Kim will give guidance on which is most critical) (girls) or boys technique (if approved) or flex and stretch or leaps and turns (boys). The only dancers excused from flex and stretch or boys tech is if they are on high school dance team (as long as meeting expectations in flexibility/technique) or specifically with Ms. Kim's permission. In the past we have had kids just "not show up" for these classes....this will not be tolerated this season. The other should be in the genre in which the student will be competing in. (This will be adapted for the boys or youngest students who may not have 3 other classes outside of their competition hour). **You need to expect that these students will be at the studio 3-4 nights per week** because these won't all be aligned in one evening. There may also be additional practices, specifically around the first competition to ensure the dancers are adequately prepared.

***Competitions are **NOT OPTIONAL**. If you are on the team, you are required to be at all competitions that season. Ms. Kim will release the dates at the very beginning of the season. Competition days are LONG days. On competition weekends you need to be prepared for at least one parent to dedicate their weekend to this event. We normally get there around 8-9 am and will be there until 6-10 pm at night and most all of our comps this last year were Friday-Sunday. There are breaks you can take for lunch/dinner or if we have big breaks where none of our dancers are competing. All exceptions to leaving early or coming late must be approved by Ms. Kim only. **The point in this is that we need to be there to support each other...you as a parent want others there to cheer on your child and so does everyone else. The teachers almost always stay all day and they don't all have kids up there and have other responsibilities...other studios don't even require their teachers or studio directors to be there and make the parents be responsible for everything. I don't agree with this...our team will support the kids but we ask the parents to do so as well. This was not always adhered to last year. If your dancer is old enough to be there to support (over 13) and you cannot be there as a parent, they should be there...younger siblings, busy schedules, etc are not excuses for the dancer to be missing their teams dances.**

We are changing the way we do tracking of time for each comp number this season. Solos are \$60/month, duos/trios are \$30/month and group dances are \$20/month and the expectations is an average of 2 hours per month of practice for each of these or 18 hours per number. That is what we are starting as our baseline this year. We may find that solos end up needing 15 and productions need 24 so we will be tracking progression all season but are starting everyone with the average we have always kept. We are doing this because we have ran into parents asking about costs in spring after final competition because we take breaks but they don't account for the more than 2 hours per month when we add in hours in August, over

holiday breaks, dress rehearsals, added practices around first comp. So this year we will be tracking every hour each group has and it will be in a google doc that parents can always access to see where their kids dance is at. The other reason is that some groups because of attendance issues or lack of practicing or focus have ended up having to add hours on and the studio has to pay these teachers to do this but no one is actually “paying” for this additional time. This helps keep parents on top of kids ensuring they are practicing at home so that we don’t have to add on any additional practices that could end up accruing additional costs. This also helps with burnout on dances that we are not just practicing dances for the sake of putting hours in but are using our time wisely with the whole team to ensure all numbers are ready and get equal and needed attention.

Costs:

***You are responsible for all costs associated with the competition. This includes their monthly tuition, costume(s), entry fees and any fees associated with viewing, attending, parking, etc. at the competition. Entry fees for each competition are normally... solos are typically \$85-115 per competition, duos/trios are normally \$45-60 per competition and most groups are \$35-45 per competition. We normally do 3 local competitions per season plus Nationals. Last year we had some parents get behind on competition fees. If a fee is not paid by deadline, those students may be forfeiting their spot for the next competition. The studio cannot be expected to pay for and carry these balances as these entry fees are typically between \$15-20K for each competition. (Next year 2020 Nationals is being replaced by Disney!)

***All dancers should have a dance jacket/warm up and should have a studio crew t shirt (We usually get a new one each season). During the season there may be minimal costs for goodie bags, snacks, water, etc.

***Fundraising: there are fundraising events through the year that can be done...the more you put in, the more you get out. We do fundraising splits by who is involved so if you do nothing, you will get nothing. Fundraising is all optional.

***Responsibilities for dancer...

*Must show work ethic by practicing every week and **make corrections** accordingly. If student is falling behind in a group and is not fulfilling their part on their team, **they can be removed at any time** at the coach’s/Ms. Kim’s discretion. If you have a mini, there are held to the same need to practice as the older kids...they have to know their dances...period.

*Must have a positive attitude and be respectful and well behaved at competition and all classes. You are a representative of a leadership group within the studio in your classes, and of the studio when we are out in public. This includes being smart, responsible and classy on social media.

*Must be in attendance at all competition practices pending illness or emergency. **All practices/dress rehearsals the week of competition are MANDATORY.** Missing mandatory practices or run throughs at the competition can result in removal from the dance or the team. There may be additional practices scheduled the week or two prior to competitions to ensure the dancers are ready. If you miss practices that must be made up, you are responsible for the cost of that teacher’s time to hold a separate practice.

***Parent Responsibilities...

*Must help support the dancer by insisting they are practicing at home. If you have a mini, you should know the dance well enough to help them. Do not assume they are practicing on their own or that what they do in class is enough...that’s called recreational dance...that won’t cut it for competition team.

*The parents should not be in the practices unless invited by the teachers. The teachers will ask you to come in to video tape so that they can practice at home. While in practice, parents should NOT coach from the sidelines. Parents should NEVER give feedback to dancers that are not their own children.

*Make sure dancer is at all practices or competition days **on time** and have needed costumes, shoes, hair and make-up done, etc. Please ensure they have rides if you cannot get them there. If we have a 20 minute practice and your dancer is 10 minutes late, we are wasting everyone's time. Please be early so we can start on time!

*Parents will be supportive of each other and other dancers. We compete against other studios and against ourselves to do our best....we do not compete against each other, even if our child is "against" them in the age/division. We are a team and anyone who behaves in a way to cause discourse in a team will be removed from the team. This includes parents. I will remove a child from the competition team if there are constant issues with a parent. I don't do drama or gossip. If any parent has an issue, Ms. Kim is normally the only one that can fix it so talk to her about it. I wouldn't write this in the expectations if it hasn't been an issue ☺. We are not "Dance Moms" and we will not behave how they do on the show.

*This is not the environment for testing kids to make responsible decisions. It should not be up to a teen dancer to go to a comp practice. If they commit they need to complete their season. Letting them make the choice to see friends versus going to comp practice is not an appropriate test as it impacts more than just them...it's a detriment to the team and a waste of time for their coach. Please have this conversation with your dancer up front...they will sometimes miss fun with their friends because of competition dance.

*It is imperative that parents understand that this is a team and many dances rely on all members of that dance to perform for the dance to work...it isn't just about whether your dancer knows the dance...it impacts formations, movements, group work, stunts, lifts, etc. Missing practices does NOT JUST IMPACT YOUR DANCER. We had way too many absences last season by a few members and it will not be acceptable this season. All absences from comp must be submitted via email/text/facebook to both Ms. Kim and the coach teaching that number that day. Excessive absences will result in the removal of the student from the routine and there will be no reimbursement for tuition or costumes. If they miss enough that additional practices must be scheduled, you will be charged for that teacher's time personally. We had too many instances of Ms. Kim paying teachers extra last year because kids missed and we had to catch them up, they were going to be gone for an important practice or they were behind...parents were not charged for these extra practices but Ms. Kim must pay those teachers. Dancers missing practice and parents saying "it was my fault, sorry" does not excuse the dancer from practice or the same expectations that every other comp dancer has.

Tryouts:

There are two scheduled tryout dates in August. All students interested must be at one of these dates. They will be taken through several genres of dance including but not limited to ballet, tap, jazz, hip hop, musical theater and contemporary. (They do not need shoes specific to these for tryouts if they don't have them). Sometimes students may have a favorite genre but from a competition perspective it is not what they are best at. We will be making decisions based on their strengths. At the conclusion of the two days of competition tryouts, the senior dance staff will meet for placements. Once this is done, Ms. Kim will meet/call the parents and explain whether the dancer made it or not. If they didn't, you will be given feedback on what the student needs to work on to improve. Sometimes this is dance or technique focused, sometimes its ability to focus or effort or confidence. If we hear dancers saying "I'm so tired...I don't want to do it again..." etc. during the 4 hour competition tryout, they are most likely not ready because they will never make it through the long

competition days. **Competition is not a way to “build confidence or become a better dancer” ...this will happen naturally but competition is for good dancers that want to be great.** Not making the team does not mean they are not a good dancer...it may just mean they are not ready. It may also mean we don't have a place to put them. For example, if we have a 4 year old try out who is fantastic but we have no one else their age and she is not ready to do a solo, there just may not be a place for her for this year. If we have someone who is amazing at acro but we don't believe a solo is best for her and we don't have a group, there just may not be something this year. We don't have a limited amount of spots, but we do have limited teachers and studio space/time. Realistically speaking, it is difficult to make the team for dancers under the age of 8...kids from age 2-9 all compete against 9 year olds...as you can imagine the group of 5-6 year olds are cute, but when they go head to head against a small group of 9 year olds that have aeriels and can nail a triple turn, cute doesn't cut it. If we see above average potential in a mini, we will try hard to find a spot that makes sense for them to start dancing at a competitive level.

If the staff deems that they are ready and we have a place for the student, we will let the parents know what our plan for their dancer is...for example we would like Mary to be in a tap group. The parents then choose yes or no. There is no negotiation on “I'm okay with her doing a group but I want her to do hip hop instead of tap...” etc. There may be some students that we come back and say we would like her to do a musical theater solo, a tap trio and a hip hop group. In this case, you can choose which you want her to be involved in for cost reasons. We are trying to have times for all comp practices before you accept....any that get added at tryouts that are surprises may not be decided yet but as of June 1st we have 50 dances built into the schedule already. All productions will be two Saturdays a month for sure...there is no way to have them at the studio during a weekly dance night.

Please respect any decisions the competition staff makes. We will not put a child who is not emotionally or developmentally ready to perform in a competitive environment. Please trust that if we deem your dancer is not ready, it does not mean they will never be, but we want to keep dance a healthy and happy place for them. If they are constantly frustrated because they are behind, they will learn to resent dance. Please also understand that all students are not meant to be competition dancers. Ms. Kim herself didn't do competition until she was in high school because I wasn't READY until then...it didn't mean I didn't have a future in dance if I chose that ☺ Also, because they made the team once, does not mean they will make it again. If we struggled with focus, or practice or we struggled with behavior, we may feel that they need a break from comp to decide that they are willing to work for it. Almost every year we have a handful that start on probation meaning we want to see them on it but have concerns (behavior or skill) and they have to be able to have certain goals met in a certain time frame to come off probation.

Please feel free to email Ms. Kim with any questions you have. Please do not ask “Is it worth it for my student to try out? If you don't think he/she would make it, I don't want him/her to go through that.”. If this is the case, they aren't ready for tryouts. We look at students from a completely different perspective for competition than we do for class so for many I couldn't even answer that accurately. I also believe if you have a student who says that if they don't make competition team, they are quitting dance...these kids are not the right kids for competition either. They should want to do competition because they are passionate about their sport and for the art of dance and if they are willing to quit that sport for not making it then that passion isn't really there.

I know this overview is more direct than most of the documents you will get from the studio but we “keep it real” during competition. Competition team is **NOT EASY**....but if they work hard it can totally be worth it. The fun doesn't happen at practices, they are hard...the fun happens when they rock their competitions...when

they win scholarships and titles...when they score higher than they did at the last one and showed improvement. I would rather be realistic and scare kids away from this than they think it's easy and we have to make the very uncomfortable decision to remove them later in the season because they aren't willing to put the work in.

I hope this helps put competition team into context. If they can work hard and meet these expectations and make the team...they will make friends and memories for a lifetime! Again, Let me know if you have questions! Ms. Kim kim@thestudioldg.com

Example cost breakdown:

Amy is a 10 year old girl that tries out for competition team and makes it! She is invited to a duo, 2 small groups and 2 productions and accepts all of them.

She takes for classes her required ballet tech class, and decides to take lyrical 3, musical theater 4, a tap/ballet combo class.

So her tuition alone for classes would be $40 + 25 + 25 +$ (she is in more than 3 comp pieces so her ballet tech is free) = 90

Plus her comp number fees....duo is 30 plus 2 groups is 20(2) and two productions 20(2) = 110 so her tuition plus her comp fees is \$200/month.

She will have 5 competition costumes to purchase if she is in 5 comp pieces...those could range from \$45-100 each.

Entry fees for each of the 3 competition (these are averages...each comp is a little different and are subject to change each year)...duo (45) plus 2 production (35) (35) and 2 groups (38) (38) = . So each of the 3 competitions she would have fees of around 191.00.

If they go to Disney this year, there will be a whole separate meeting regarding these costs, etc. This is optional and is a fun break from Nationals for us this season.