

AUDITIONING FOR COMPETITION

It is important that each and every dancer and parent read and understand the competition team requirements and policies PRIOR TO AUDITIONING. Any dancer age 5 and up, is eligible to audition for the competitive team. Younger students are able to participate with a special invitation and permission from the studio owner. All students interested in being on the competitive team will be required to attend one of two audition dates to be placed on the correct team and determine if they are ready to be a competitive dancer. Dance teams will be split based on technique, age, ability, attitude, maturity, motivation, commitment, and strength. Please note that neither age nor friendships will be the main deciding factor or placement. We will be looking at skills, technique, flexibility, performance quality, and teamwork.

Requirements

- Students must take the required "Summer Intensive" class
- Students must send in audition form, signed policies, and audition tape to be considered.
- All dancers must turn in the audition form and signed policies on their Audition Date!
- Students and families have until July 15, to notify the studio by email what spots they have selected.
- All dancers are required to be in WME dress code for auditions (All black, tight fitted dance clothing, hair in a secure bun, tights, and proper shoes) Being out of WME dress code will be noted on your audition negatively.
- The previous year's attendance and the work ethic demonstrated in front of the judges will also be taken into account.
- **Dancers account balance must be at \$0 to be accepted onto the team.**

What to Expect and Audition Day Schedule

- Arrive promptly on arrival time (or ages 8 and under, will arrive for their mini audition) to warm up, turn in paperwork, and ask any questions.
- Pay the audition fee of \$25 in cash or check
- The audition process will begin, parent observation is prohibited.
- Judges are all non-biased judges who are not on staff at WME

Competition Team Placement

- The ruling of the guest judges is final.
- It will not be overturned by your instructors or by the studio owner.
- Placement will be determined on the Sunday after the Final Audition
- It is against the policy of WME to allow dancers to select their team placement, their duo/trio partner, their style, their song, their costume, or their instructor. We place dancers according to their skill level and who they dance best with.

OUR PROGRAM & BENEFITS

While studying in our Competition Classes will provide a much higher level of dance training as well as the opportunity to perform at competitions and get feedback from other professionals in the industry on their craft, here's what makes WME different. Our goals are to provide them with a place to call "second home" where they develop lifelong relationships with both peers and mentors, and to

work closely with our Competition kids to help them become strong, appropriately independent, responsible people in society no matter where life takes them. Here are just a few of the things you'll see develop in your dancer.

Friendships

You'll never have a closer friend than those you make in dance class. There's something about going through the experiences of getting praises and criticisms together as well as changing in tight spaces, climbing on top of each other in choreography, lifting one another, and hanging out for long rehearsals that has been proven in studies to bond kids tighter than other activities.

Problem Solving Skills

Dancers know how to think on their feet. It could be a costume piece falling off, a prop falling down on stage, or just plain forgetting the steps. They have to know how to cope on the spot with so many different situations. These skills push forward into any career they choose in the future.

Teamwork

We spend a great amount of time stressing the importance of the team. We have good days and bad days as a team. It takes the whole team to do well or not so well. We spend time bonding as a team from our 6 year olds mixing with our 17 year olds. We are 1 Team that works together.

The Ability To Accept Criticism As Well As Praise

We always praise the kids for a job well done. But nothing gets better if they don't know to fix it. Our dancers learn to accept criticism as a good thing that leads to improvements and makes them stronger in the end. A great life skill to have in any given career choice.

The Value of Hard Work and Dedication

Everything takes practice. Nothing is just handed to anyone in life. Dancers learn this in Competition classes when it takes practice, rehearsals, and 100% all the time to get where they wanna go. They'll find they want to push themselves to get that next jump or trick which will translate to a great work ethic in everything they do.

Responsibility & Discipline

Our Competition classes have rules and more structure than our recreational classes. This helps the kids grow faster in their craft. They learn to discipline themselves to these rules and think nothing of it in no time. Along with that, we will give them responsibilities at appropriate ages that alleviate them from parents. Dancers will be responsible to be dressed correctly, have their shoes, and even begin to prepare for a performance without mom or dad's help as they get older.

Counseling And Mentoring

Our job doesn't stop at, "point your toes!" Many times, we dance instructors find ourselves taking on the roll of "bartender for teens". They love to talk to us about things. And that is what we are there for in the end. It is not unusual to take 5 to address a school problem or a boyfriend issue, or just to have a group hug because someone had a bad day.

WME COMPETITION TEAM POLICIES & REQUIREMENTS

Please initial next to each policy and sign below.

TIME & FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

_____ All Dancers are required to participate in all competitions. Competitions take place in the late winter and spring. Every other year, we participate in a national competition that is mandatory as well. Competitions are mandatory – no exceptions - all dances attend all competitions!

_____ If a student is unable to perform at a competition, due to severe injury/serious illness, there will be NO refunds offered for their competition entry fees per competition company rules.

_____ We have a strict NO REFUND policy. Fees paid for tuition, costumes, competitions, and other fees will not be refunded if you are terminated from the team or choose to drop from the team.

_____ **Competition**

- Fees are due approximately 8 weeks prior to competition. If your comp fees are not paid, you will not perform.
- Fees are approximately \$75/dancer in each group; \$155/soloist; \$85/duet or trio member.
- All Competitions will be set in early fall once dates come out. Competition info will not be shared, only competition dates and locations.

_____ **Class Requirements**

- Students must take the Summer Intensive Class
 - If you cannot meet the 5 class minimum, you will be required to schedule a 1 hour private for every day missed. Please make arrangements with Miss. Jessica
- Students must attend Team Bootcamp (First week of August)
 - If you cannot attend bootcamp, you will be required to schedule a 3 hour private for every day missed. Please make arrangements with Miss. Jessica
- Students must attend their Choreography Classes (August)
- In addition to the dancer's competitive dances all Competitive Dancers are required to take a ballet technique class, tap technique class, and a jazz technique class.
- Dancers are required to be in two group dances to be eligible for a solo or duo or trio.
- Students under age 8 must be in a tap and jazz group dance.
- Students are required to be in the Jazz Large Group (Production) (this does not apply to our mini team)
- Dancers are required to arrive 15-20 minutes early to prepare for class. Change, warm up, fully stretch, and ready to go to get the most out of their class time.
- Dress Code:
 - For Ballet Technique: black leotard, pink tights, pink ballet shoes, secured ballet bun waist elastic (we will discuss this at the parent meeting).
 - For Other Classes: All tight fitted dance clothing, black in color, proper shoes for each class, secured ballet bun. Clothing must be tight to your body, leotards, sports bras, spandex shorts or pants are allowed!
 - Hip-Hop Classes may have baggy clothing
- HAIR MUST ALWAYS BE IN A SECURED BALLET BUN.

_____ **Conventions**

- Required to do 1 per year for all dancers

- Conventions are in October/November and will have a set fee (approx: \$100-\$200)
- Opportunity to learn something new from different instructors from around the USA!
- We have learned that our dancers focus better without moms in the room, so during convention we have a strict “hands off” policy, meaning if you decide to come to watch, you are only there to watch.

Attendance To Class and Competition

- 6 excused/unexcused absences per class are allowed throughout the year – including technique classes.
- Dancers may be excluded from sections of the dance if they miss choreography.
- Surpassing 6 absences will mean removal from the class.
- Excused absences include SEVERE & CONTAGIOUS ILLNESS (stay home with the flu!), significant and tragic family events (funerals, graduations, etc.), finals week (only if needed), single night school events that have a grade riding on attendance, etc.
- **PLEASE FILL OUT AN ABSENCE FORM FOR FUTURE ABSENT DATES. EMAIL OR TEXT YOUR ABSENCE IF YOU ARE SICK.**
- Dancers may be choreographed out of certain sections of a dance due to absence. This is not a punishment for missing but rather out of necessity to continue forward progress.
- Competition attendance is ABSOLUTELY MANDATORY.
- ABSOLUTELY, POSITIVELY NO: school trips, school plays, vacations, birthday parties, etc. on competition week/weekend that you intend to miss for.
- It is mandatory for students to be in all classes the week before competition. If a student misses the last class before a competition, he/she will NOT be allowed to compete and the entry fees will be forfeited. Illness with a fever will be excused by parental phone call ONLY.

Being Late to Class Or Competition

- Be On Time
 - Students must arrive 20 minutes early to class to be able to do a full warm-up and stretch so the class time is taken for class instruction and technique.
 - Students MUST arrive on time to their “CALL TIME” for competitions, every minute a student is late, they will need to perform that many push-ups right then and there.
- Don't be late
- Of course we understand during bad weather or the rare traffic back ups that occur
- Missing 1/2 the class or more is considered an absence.

Extras

Any dancer who wishes to do more conventions or competitions must register through WME. Just let Miss. Jessica know, and she will get you registered. Registering under another studio name is disloyal, against what it means to be a team/family, and forbidden. Dancers who want to attend any extra events must have a zero balance.

BEHAVIORAL GUIDELINES

Observing Dress Code

- Students are expected to set the example for our recreational dancers.
- Black leotard, shorts, pink/skin tone tights pending class. Very fitted black tanks allowed.
- We do allow special WME comp wear as an alternative for all classes except ballet.
- Dancers should always have proper shoes for the right class.
- Ballet Class Dress Code is strictly Pink Tights/Black Leotard/Ballet Shoes/hair in bun/dance belt.
- **NO T-SHIRTS ALLOWED. NO SOCKS ALLOWED.**

Competitive dancers are expected to be an example for all other students to follow by setting the standard for them to follow. If students break the dress code, they will perform 25 push-ups at the beginning of class.

Classroom & Event Behavior

- Attend class ready to work.
- Socialize before and after class only. NO SOCIALIZING DURING CLASS. Students may be asked to leave class if it gets out of hand, as this is disrespectful behavior.
- Always be respectful to their instructors. Instructors will alert the parents if any issues persist that aren't manageable in class.
- Dancers should always be kind to one another as well as other dance teams at competitions. You never talk bad about ANY OTHER dancer!
- Dancers should follow their competition etiquette rules handed out at all times.
- Dancers are responsible for getting dressed at competitions on their own. When quick changes arise, we may only need 2-3 moms to help. The more moms, more stress we create for our dancers. Our younger dancers will need their moms backstage helping.
- WME has a zero tolerance policy for any bullying or mean girl activity on the team. Meaning talking bad about another dancer, rude looks, rude comments, etc. inside the studio and outside the studio. They will get two warnings, and if the behavior persists, they will be removed from the team.
- Comp dancers should be positive representatives of our studio at all times whether in our building or in public venues. Our staff will correct any dancer that fails to do so at all times. Parents are expected to support this.
 - Working together as a team
 - Gossip is forbidden
 - Displaying good sportsmanship at all times to everyone
 - Keeping positive attitudes regardless of awards
 - Showing team spirit by wearing a WME team jacket at awards.
 - ALWAYS respecting WME staff and other adults in charge.
 - Staying with your team at events
- If any problem persists, the student will be reminded twice, then removed from our competitive program.

Maintaining Competitive Dancer Status And The “Everyone Gets A Trophy Syndrome”

Society today has done a disservice to the younger generations by taking away differentiation and declaring that everyone is always a winner; that everyone is equally special. In life, we know that this is not true. Someone is always more qualified for the job. Not everyone can be an NBA All Star or a Pop Superstar. The same is true in any art, including dance. We do not operate under, nor do we promote the “everyone gets a trophy” standard. This does not mean that a group cannot have dancers with different strengths in it. We frequently have groups with some who are better at jumping, others who are more flexible, and some who are better turners amongst the class. And they all blend together beautifully. But it also means that every group member must work hard to maintain their spot in the group. And if they don't, they could lose it.

If, at any time during the year, an instructor feels that a student is not keeping up with the rest of the class (whether it be falling behind in technique, failing to practice choreography, attendance, or behavioral issues), they have the authority to remove said student from that class. All students and parents will be notified ahead of time if the dancer is not working up to par and given a fair amount of time to change their habits assuming this is the student's desire. Sometimes students just change their mind – especially at a young age. And we

want them to enjoy what they're doing. If that means doing dance at the recreational level again, we want to move them there so they still love dance.

_____ Parents Responsibilities

Competitive dance requires a positive atmosphere from all involved. Cooperation between parents is expected at all times. Please show respect for our teaching staff, the other parents, and all of our dancers, as well as, our competitors. A positive and enthusiastic outlook extends to your child. Negative comments and feedback can be harmful to the progress and education of our students, and will not be tolerated

- Parents, dancers, and families will be committed and loyal to this team. This means no sharing information with other studios or dancers, staying with your team at events, etc.
- Parents must support all competitive dancers and make sure their kids support each other. We do not condone unhealthy rivalry between our own dancers or jealousy amongst our parents.
- All competitive parents must volunteer once during the season. Help with lunch planning, help with event planning, help in coordinating fundraising, help at recital.
- Competitive parents are also expected to set an example for other parents just as competitive dancers set the example for other dancers. This means stepping up and volunteering at other times we need help throughout the year if you're available, being our spokesperson if other parents are being negative about something, or simply following studio policy.
- For our younger dancers, parents should encourage and remind dancers to practice at home regularly and extra whenever necessary.
- Parents must learn to trust us as the dance professionals with ALL things dance just as you trust your doctor with all things medicinal. Please do not offer dance corrections to your child or anyone else's child. Let the instructors handle that and be the cheerleader we need you to be for our dancers.
- Parents agree to put in the extra time when needed by driving their students to and from extra practices, performances, and activities.
- Parents must keep their accounts up to date with auto pay information. It is studio policy that accounts all have a card on file. If payments are not paid on the 10th of the month, your card will then be charged.
- Parents are NEVER to contact a competition directly unless Miss Jessica has given specific instructions to do so. All necessary communication happens with the studio owner to competition.
- Be kind and say positive things to ALL DANCERS FROM ALL STUDIOS at competition. It makes a huge difference to any kid. NEVER TALK BAD ABOUT ANOTHER DANCER OR DANCE! You never know who is listening!
- Please clean up after yourselves and teach your children to do the same both in our studio and at events. It shows great disrespect to throw trash around and leave it there. We don't want to be "that studio".
- *No "DANCE MOMS" allowed. Constant complaining or negativity towards the studio or it's instructors will get your child removed from the program.
- If what you're about to say isn't nice, don't say anything at all. We don't build up our own kid by tearing someone else's down
- If there is a misunderstanding and feelings are hurt between your student and an instructor, go immediately to that instructor to talk it out. DO NOT discuss with other parents.
- It is not acceptable to gossip about others in or out of the studio. Miss Jessica has super ninja skills and is usually right there listening without being noticed. She'll find out. Don't do it.
- It's never okay to post negative comments about our studio, our dancers, or other studio's dancers on Social Media.
- Dances and any Choreography MAY NOT BE POSTED ON SOCIAL MEDIA. This opens the door for others to steal choreography.

- Moms are not allowed in the dance room. Please congregate into the office to watch on the TV. Being in the room is a distraction for our dancers and takes away from them learning. This will also be applied during conventions, no moms in the convention rooms. We have learned that dancers learn much better without you watching. We will be there to watch over them, and call you if there are any problems.
- Competition dances may not be performed outside of studio events.
- A dancer who dances at WME, will only dance at WME and no other dance school. A Ballet only Company is allowed.
- All questions go directly to Miss Jessica: wmepdance@gmail.com
- **ALWAYS READ YOUR EMAILS THOROUGHLY BEFORE EMAILING A QUESTION BACK.**

THE AGREEMENT

Everyone has a right to attend recreational classes, but those selected should consider it an honor and privilege to be in our competitive classes and understand that breaking of the above guidelines by either parent or student will result in removal from our competitive dance program.

By auditioning for any Competitive Class, both student and parent agree that they have read thoroughly and agree to all the above policies and guidelines and will follow them to the best of their ability with the understanding that if they fail, it can result in removal from our competitive team.

The studio director may dismiss any student at any time throughout the competitive season for the student or parent failing to meet WME standards on any guideline listed above with no questions asked.

This contract is entered into by and between (Parent/Guardian) _____, (Student) _____, (Financially Responsible Individual) _____, and West Michigan Elite Pom & Dance. The terms of this contract shall begin July 15, 2020 and continue through June 30th, 2021. By signing this contract, all persons are bound by the terms of the contract

Student Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____