



# Competition Dance Team Handbook

2024 – 2025

Studio Director: Megan Ellison

This handbook serves as a guide for the Competition Dance Team dancer and their parent(s).

If at any time you have questions regarding information in this handbook, you may contact Evolve Dance in one of the following ways:

Studio Phone: 616-951-7076

Studio Cell: 616-919-7921

Email: Studio: [evolvedanceinfo23@gmail.com](mailto:evolvedanceinfo23@gmail.com)

Megan Ellison: [evolvedance19@gmail.com](mailto:evolvedance19@gmail.com)

### **Purpose of the Competition Team**

The purpose of the Competition Dance Team at Evolve Dance Studio is to allow dancers the opportunity to participate in a team environment and pursue their dance education on a more competitive and professional level. The Competition Dance Team is intended for dancers who strive to push themselves and improve performance on a consistent basis. This is a learning environment for dancers to step outside the box and choose to dance beyond their annual recital, benefiting from the feedback of judges to further their technical skills and performance experience.

### **Auditions**

Current and prospective Team dancers must audition each year to be a part of the Competition Dance Team. Dancers will execute a series of technique elements as well a short combo in the styles they audition for. Dancers may be asked to perform these combos in small groups. Participation in each style's routine is based on the dancer's demonstration of skill. A dancer, therefore, is not guaranteed participation in all styles that they have auditioned for. Also, a dancer should audition for only those styles that they are interested in competing in.

### **Team Placement/Commitment**

Dancers will be placed in routines based on their strengths, routine type, ability, personality, and compatibility with other dancers of similar skill. Dancers will be given a list of dances we, as a staff, will offer them to perform the following season. The dances offered will be based on team auditions as well as team and studio commitment throughout the previous dance season.

An audition interest form must be completed for your dancer. This audition interest form will indicate to the Team Director the MAXIMUM number of routines your dancer can be placed in, keeping in mind that you may choose an unlimited number of routines, as well as the maximum

number of days a dancer wishes to be at the studio each week.

After auditions, a Team Invitation Letter will be emailed to the dancer's parent/guardian. This letter will include all routines that the dancer has been placed in. Keep in mind that your dancer may be placed in more than one routine of the same style, e.g., two different Hip Hop routines. The parent/guardian will be required to send back a confirmation email that either accepts or declines Team placement.

There is a \$200 Team fee that is due by June 21, 2024 with the email accepting the invitation to join the Team. The Team Fee will cover the cost of your dancers team jacket and team t-shirt to be worn to and from team events. The remaining team costs are broken up based on a payment schedule for the season. The annual Team fee is nonrefundable and is not included in your competition season costs. The exact due dates will be provided in the Team Invitation Letter.

### **Class Structure and Schedule**

The Evolve Dance competition season begins when the dancer accepts their invitation to join the Team and concludes after the Rockford Start of Summer, Festival of the Arts, or the final competition, whichever occurs last in the schedule. Team classes will range in time from 30 minutes to 60 minutes per class. The class schedule is distributed as soon as it is available.

Ballet and competition routines will be included in the Spring Recital. Technique classes will not have a recital performance and do not require a costume.

### **Communication Between Parent and Instructor**

DO NOT attempt to have conversations with the dance instructors between classes. This attempt only delays the commencement of class and is futile because you will not have the instructor's complete attention. If there is a concern, comment or question, please contact the instructor via the Team App AND include Megan on that communication. If a longer, face-to-face discussion is necessary, a meeting will be scheduled. If the matter is sensitive or private in nature, please state that you have a private matter that you would like to schedule a time to talk about.

It is important to include the Studio Director, Megan, in email communication, e.g., reporting an absence, so that the message is sure to reach the correct person in a timely manner.

The black drop box in the dressing room is another way to send comments, suggestions, and concerns, especially if you would like to remain anonymous. That box is checked regularly.

In the event of an emergency, please call the studio phone number, 616-951-7076, which goes directly to Megan Ellison. At times, the studio is busy enough that email does not get checked in a timely manner, but we assure you that we will communicate and check everything regularly.

## **Absence/Tardy Policies**

Attendance and punctuality are imperative for a successful dancer and team.

### ***Absences***

Attendance will be taken, and consequences implemented for absences. Attendance will be taken in ALL classes, i.e., Routine, Technique, Turns, and Ballet, Choreography Camp, and additional mandatory practices.

For every 3 Technique, Ballet, Turns, or Routine classes missed (excused and unexcused), a dancer will be required to schedule a 30-minute private lesson to review details/catch up. Technique and ballet classes may also be made up by attending a class of another level.

It is the dancer's responsibility to learn what they missed during their absence. They are expected to come to class early and talk to a friend about what they missed and also watch the videos posted to the Team App. **IMPORTANT:** If a dancer misses any of their required classes (i.e. ballet, technique, turns, routine) during the two weeks immediately prior to a competition (not including excused absences, e.g. mandatory school events, sickness, family emergency) that dancer may be removed from a routine for that upcoming competition.

Note that if a dancer is asked to step out of class due to excessive and/or repeated behavior that does not follow the code of conduct (page 14), that dismissal from class will be marked as an absence.

At Evolve Dance, students receive support from their teachers to be involved in other extracurricular activities. Dancers involved in other activities that could conflict with their dance commitment will be required to communicate this to the studio and/or Miss Megan. A schedule will be developed, which includes compromises with their other activities and possibly the addition of private lessons charged to the dancers account if needed. A printed schedule of their other commitments must be provided, before they begin.

### ***Tardies***

A dancer is tardy if they are not in the studio dance room ready to practice and dressed appropriately when attendance is taken at the beginning of class. Please contact the studio with conflicts such as traffic, family matters, etc. that could cause dancers to be

late to class. Two tardies equal an absence.

ALL absences and tardies should be emailed to the studio [evolvedanceinfo23@gmail.com](mailto:evolvedanceinfo23@gmail.com) or posted on the team app chat and sent to both the instructor and Megan. Do NOT text or call Megan or the instructor directly.

### **Routine Classes & Additional Practices**

Dancers that audition and make the Competition Dance Team will be placed in the level, group dances, and any solo, duo, or trio based on the discretion of the instructors and Megan.

Dancers will be expected to attend additional practices throughout the season. Additional information regarding these mandatory practices will be provided at the beginning of the dance season.

ALL Competitive team members, other than mini team, are required to participate in our line/production routine.

### **Core Class Requirements**

All Team dancers are required to take the following classes which are provided with the Team Invitation Letter.

Technique These classes will be listed on the Team Invitation Letter based on the styles your dancer will be performing. These classes are open to non-team dancers as well as team dancers (no competition/recital routine)

Ballet These classes are open to non-team dancers as well as team dancers (includes the recital routine only) If a dancer only compete in the Hip Hop style they are not required to take ballet, however, they are more than welcome to sign up for the class.

Stretch/Strength and Conditioning These classes are open to non-team dancers as well as team dancers. All competition dancers are required to attend stretch/strength and conditioning.

Line – This is not a particular class but a choreography event. All competition team dancers will be required to participate in a Line group dance, which is a single dance including all competitors. The style(s) will be determined by the instructors and entered for competition.

Optional Classes Acro, pre-pointe, pointe, and any recreational class in the style your dancer is not performing in. These classes are offered at a discounted rate of \$50 a month for team dancers. These classes are open to non-team dancers as well as team dancers (includes a recital routine)

Dancers will be placed in Technique and Ballet classes based on the dance instructor's assessment of their skill during auditions. Understand that previous "levels" are not taken into consideration. Dancers are placed into a class based on the required skill set.

Note that skills are important, but a dancer's attitude, sportsmanship, and attendance also are very important in determining technique, ballet, and routine placement. This includes a demonstration of focus in class. Additional technique, ballet, and specific style work are always available via private lessons with any of the Evolve Dance instructors.

**Dancers should arrive at least 15 minutes prior to the start of their class** so that they can stretch and be ready when class begins.

### **Choreography**

The choreographers for competition routines are a choreography team. The dance instructor that teaches a routine at choreography camp may not be the instructor revising/improving that dance weekly during the dance season. All Evolve Dance instructors have the authority to make adjustments to improve the routines, and all dancers are expected to respect the decisions made by all instructors. If dancers receive conflicting feedback from multiple instructors, they should defer to the class's primary instructor for final explanation.

### **Competitions**

The team will attend 4 competitions (non-Nationals year) and 3 competitions (Nationals year) in the Michigan area during the dance season. Information regarding these competitions will be provided at the beginning of the dance season. Since each individual competition schedule is not known until approximately 10 days before the competition commences, dancers are required to leave open the entire weekend until the competition schedule is released. Do note that many competitions begin on Friday afternoon/evening, so please be prepared for that as part of the schedule.

Throughout the dance season, there will be opportunities for those dancers competing in solos/duets/trios to attend additional solo/duet/trio competitions. An Evolve Dance instructor will attend these competitions with the dancer(s) if possible. This is OPTIONAL and available for those who would like additional opportunities to compete their solos/duets/trios.

### **Nationals Information**

Evolve Dance Competition Dance Team typically attends Nationals as a team every other year. Nationals is only mandatory every other season. Our next Nationals will be the summer of 2026.

If you have a soloist, duet, or trio that attends an optional solo/duet/trio competition and would

like to attend their Nationals, please inform the Team Director, and the registration information will be provided to you.

### **Conventions/Master Classes**

Being part of a competitive team is a commitment beyond regular classes. Conventions/master classes are designed for dancers to dance in a new environment and learn various styles from different teachers. There is extreme value in conventions/master classes. Not only do dancers learn new techniques, but they also develop skills such as learning new choreography quickly, improving stage performance, and mastering dance class etiquette.

Unless otherwise stated, participation in one convention/master class is mandatory each year. If it is a Nationals year, dancers are also expected to attend the Master Classes offered during the Nationals event. All dancers must be accompanied by a parent/guardian to conventions. An Evolve Dance Staff member or instructor will attend conventions/masterclasses to observe and support.

### **Mandatory Choreography Camp**

Mandatory Choreography camp will take place prior to the beginning of the regular dance season in August. Exact dates/times will be provided as soon as possible after auditions. All Routine dances either will be completed or close to completion during this camp. Because classes for Routines during the dance season are only 30 minutes in length, it is essential that all dancers attend camp. If there are scheduling conflicts, please contact the Studio Director, Megan, right away.

### **Team Uniform and Costumes**

Team uniforms are worn to and from competitions and other events/activities. For girls, this uniform includes a Team jacket (with names), Team t-shirt, black shorts or leggings with Evolve Dance logo, rhinestone earrings and hair in competition style. For boys, the uniform includes a Team jacket (with name) and Team t-shirt with black sweatpants or shorts with team logo.

Costumes are not always going to come directly from a costume company. Costuming will be created to fit the style of the Routine, meaning some costumes may be pieced together and some may be ordered from a catalog. Costumes are chosen to fit the style of the routine and pricing may vary accordingly. Some costumes require additional time invested creating head pieces, Rhine stoning and/or creating and building props. All dancers will pay a \$135 costume fee for each Competition Routine. These costumes will also be used for the Spring Recital.

If a dancer does not choose to wear the costume(s) given and the studio has attempted to find a replacement due to size concern, it is the cost of the parent to purchase their own replacement if

they choose and will not be reimbursed or credited by the studio. Any changes to costumes must be approved by the instructor before purchasing.

### **Hair/Makeup (Girls Only)**

A link to a hair/makeup video will be provided before the first competition so that dancers and/or parents can learn how to style hair and apply makeup properly.

*Hair:* There will be one designated hair style for the entire team. This style will be determined by teachers during the costume selection.

*Makeup:* Each new Team dancer will be required to purchase specific makeup brands/colors as specified by the Team Director.

### **Dress Code:**

*Proper dance attire must be always worn. Students' hair must be neat and in place, pulled back off their face and neck. In Ballet, a bun is ALWAYS required. Loose hair is an impediment while dancing and is a distraction to the dancer during class. When hair is secured properly, it allows the student to completely focus on their dancing. No jewelry (except for small earrings) is to be worn to class or rehearsals. The appropriate dance shoes must be worn in class. Ballet and Jazz cannot be executed properly in bare feet or tights. Elastic is to be on all Ballet shoes. Warm-ups may be worn during barre/warm-up at the teacher's discretion. To make accurate technical corrections, the teacher must be able to view the student clearly without the obstruction of extra garments. It is suggested that leotard and tights be worn without undergarments, however there are dance bras and nude dance undergarments with clear straps for the young women who need this. Please change into dance shoes when you arrive. Do not wear dance shoes outdoors!*

### **Ballet:**

- ◇ Pink Footed Tights
- ◇ Pink, Light Blue or Black Ballet Skirt
- ◇ Leotard (any style) in the graded color as follows:  
Sparkle: Solid Color (Light Blue, Black or Pink)  
Diamond/Sapphire: Black
- ALL Dancers must always have their hair in a bun for ballet off their neck.

### **Jazz**

- ◇ Leotard or Dance Camisole – any style or color
- ◇ Jazz Pants, Capri pants, shorts, or leggings (tights must be worn with leos and short “booty” shorts) ◇ Tan Jazz Shoes
- ◇ Hair pulled back off face and neck in a low ponytail – neat and secure – NO loose hair or



flyways

### Tap

- ◇ Leotard or Dance Camisole – any style, any color
- ◇ Jazz Pants, Capri pants, shorts, or leggings with tights
- ◇ Black Tie Tap Shoes (Sapphire/Onyx) - Tan Buckle Tap Shoes (Sparkle/Diamond) ◇ Hair pulled back off face and neck – neat and secure in a low ponytail- NO loose hair or flyways

### HIP HOP

- ◇ Girls and Boys: comfortable clothing or dancewear and dance sneakers or athletic shoes. NO street shoes in class. Make sure you have a separate pair of tennis shoes for hip hop class specifically.
- ◇ Hair pulled back off face and neck – neat and secure in a low ponytail- NO loose hair or flyways

### Solos

Dancers who are offered to compete in a solo routine must earn that placement by attending auditions along with many factors throughout the season. such as attendance, behavior and attitude, maintaining team requirements, etc. As our team expands, solos, duets and trios are prestigious earned opportunities available by invitation only. Consequently, not all dancers will be offered a solo each season. This approach aims to motivate dancers to strive for excellence and earn their spots as they grow individually. Additionally, we want to foster a strong team mentality and encourage collaboration, challenging dancers to perform with new team members each season in different ways. Dancers may request choreographer, music, style, partner. However, the Studio and Team Director reserves the final decision for all solos/duets/trios, including choreographer, partners, style, music, etc.

### Solo/Duo/Trio Choreography and Practice

- Dancers will learn their solo/duo/trio during a time that works for both the choreographer and the dancer/parent.
  - The instructor that choreographs the dance may or may not be the one who then polishes the routine so that it is ready for competition. Other instructors will most likely be involved in the polishing process.
  - It is not the job of any instructor to reteach the choreography that should have been previously learned. It is the dancer's responsibility to remember the dance. Some ways to accomplish this is to record the dance, watch it repetitively, and practice often. •
- Choreography will begin once the following criteria are met:

- 1) previous year balance is paid in full,

- 2) the Team Fee (\$200)
- 3) the solo/duet/trio choreography fee is paid in full.

- The solo/duet/trio choreography fees are as follows: Solos, \$350; Duets, \$175 per dancer; Trios, \$125, Group \$40 per dancer. The choreography fee covers the cost of developing a choreographed dance, class time to teach choreography to the dancer, and administrative time during the dance season. ○ The solo/duet/trio choreography fee does not include monthly practices (see below for those requirements).
- Solos will be required to attend AT LEAST two 30-minute private lessons per month, October through April (minimum 16 lessons). The practice fee for the entire dance season for solos is \$500 This fee includes 16 30-minute practices. This fee cannot be discounted when calculating tuition.
- It is the responsibility of the dancers to sign up for private lessons on the Google Doc they will be provided with their Team Invitation Letter. There will be availability Monday – Saturday for private lessons.
- Duets and trios will be scheduled to meet once a week throughout the season for a 30 min class.
- Additional lessons after your required 16 lessons are \$35 per half hour or \$75 an hour.

### **Additional Team Activities/Events**

Additional team activities and events will be planned throughout the dance season. Participation in these activities is highly encouraged as they offer opportunities for team bonding and community outreach. These activities may include charitable projects, team bonding activities and social gatherings. A schedule of these activities/events will be provided at the beginning of the dance season or as they become available.

### **Parent Volunteering**

Parent involvement is important to the success of the Competition Dance Team. Committees will be developed. The Team Director, Miss Megan will be available for questions, concerns and an additional vote if a committee cannot come to a conclusion. Each committee will follow an outline of responsibilities/roles. This information will be released at the start of the dance season. Parents are highly encouraged to join a committee. A full list of committees available will be sent with Team Invitation Letters. Examples of committees include Costume (helping with rhinestoning, organization when costumes arrive, head pieces, etc.), Prop, Food (for competitions), team parties and events, etc.

Additional information, committee descriptions and opportunities for parent involvement will be forthcoming.

## **Studio Merchandise**

The Evolve logos are the sole property of Evolve Dance Studio. Any use, reproduction or printing of the logo will require Megan's prior approval.

## **Payment Policy**

All accounts MUST have a credit/debit card on file with Evolve Dance in order to participate on the Team and enroll in classes. Evolve Dance will be happy to add your card information to your account or you may add card information via your parent portal. If you have not already done so, you will need to activate your account in order to add card information as well as make payments online. Please refer to the Evolve Dance tuition and fees policy for all details related to financial expectations.

Briefly, following are payment options for tuition and other team-related fees.

### **Tuition**

- One-time full year payment (5% discount on class fees only if paid with cash or check NO LATER THAN the first day classes in September);
- 3 equal payments made by the September 1, October 20, and December 1 of the season.
- Monthly

Evolve Dance will charge tuition fees to the credit card on file on the 20<sup>th</sup> of each month unless payment is made prior to the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month using cash, check, venmo or credit/debit card.

### **Other Team-related Fees**

You may choose to use the card on file to pay for other items including, but not limited to, annual enrollment fee, annual team fees, competition fees, costume fees, uniform fees etc.

If any Tuition or dance-related fees are not paid by the stated due date, the credit/debit card on file will be charged for those fees. There is a \$35 late fee if the card is declined, and alternate payment is not made immediately. A dancer may be ineligible to participate in class or perform in the annual recital due to unpaid balances.

## **Cost of Participation in Competition Dance Team**

The annual Team fee is \$200 per dancer. This fee covers the costs of team first time jacket or a replacement if needed (or as determined by the studio when new team jackets are forthcoming) and team t-shirt along with administrative costs for students throughout the season. The annual Team fee is nonrefundable. ***Your dancer CANNOT participate in Choreography camp without ANNUAL Team fees paid in full and signed handbook page 14 on file.***

Please Note: Competitive dancers may also have the opportunity to travel to locations overnight or even over a full weekend. Please be aware of any extra expenses that may occur due to this commitment.

Drop-outs: A \$250 fee per dance applies to any student who drops out of the Company/Competition team during the dance season, for the instructor to re-choreograph and rearrange the competition routines.

Additional costs to participate in the Competition Dance Team can only be estimated until specific competitions have been scheduled. We will try to have all events scheduled and costs determined by the beginning of the dance season. Each dancer will receive a letter with their estimated season costs. Note that from time to time unanticipated costs may arise. Evolve will do everything possible to keep those at a minimum and will provide as much notice as possible in the unlikely event that it does occur.

### **Agreement to Commitments, Expectations and Policies**

**In addition to the terms outlined in this handbook**, dancers and parents must agree to the following additional terms outlined below:

- **Code of Conduct:** Team members are required to uphold the high standard of morals/commitment in and out of the studio. This includes no smoking, drinking, or illegal substances. If a team member is found involved in these activities a parent/dancer/director/owner meeting will be held immediately.
- **Code of Conduct:** Dancers will demonstrate dedication and hard work, showing respect to their peers, and all staff and guest instructors in and out of the studio.
- **Code of Conduct:** While attending events and competitions, dancers and parents are expected to represent Evolve Dance Studio with integrity, grace and courtesy by respecting fellow team members and parents, instructors, other studios, and the staff of the event. Dancers and parents should never make disparaging or negative remarks about another dancer or studio during a competition.
- Dancers follow the dress code completely. This includes girls wearing a leotard (or fitted tank top, NO crop tops, sports bras must be covered), tights, leggings or dance shorts with the correct shoes for all classes. Hair must be pulled up and back for all classes, and a leotard, tights, and bun are required for Ballet. Boys dress in pants or shorts in which they can comfortably move in, wear a T-shirt or tank, and wear the correct shoes for their class(es).
- **Event/Competition Special Dress Code:** Dancers must follow exact outfit and hair guidelines (specified prior to each event). For competitions, dancers cannot have painted fingernails/toenails or colored dyes in hair.

Body piercings must have a clear stud or nothing. Dancers will wear only the required earrings during competitions.

- Dancers are allowed a closable water bottle into the studio space as directed by their teacher. If students are at the studio for a length of time, please pack snacks/dinner for dancers to eat in the lobby area. A refrigerator and microwave are available for your convenience. Please keep this space clean for all dancers to use.
- A team photo shoot will be scheduled during the season. This may include additional attire not covered by costumes or team jackets. We will attempt to keep this cost minimal. This photo shoot is mandatory for all dancers.
- Dancer's pictures/images/video can be used in any Evolve Dance Studio advertising and promotion. • Dancers should plan to attend their teammates' dances and awards at all competitions to support and be part of the team. Exceptions may be considered and/or approved by Megan only.
- Parents of competition dancers must volunteer for recital assistance. The studio will open the volunteer opportunities to recreational families, however, this is often their only opportunity to watch their dancer perform. Evolve will do everything possible to ensure that competition parents may watch their child dance during the recital without interfering with the volunteer position.
- We recognize that individual family situations may vary. The parent signing the handbook for the competition season is the one that the studio will correspond with regarding all information and events. Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate individual arrangements for payment or scheduling due to divorced or non-traditional family structures.

I have read, understand, and agree to adhere to all dance team commitments, expectations and policies listed in Evolve Dance Competition Dance Team Handbook 2024-2025 and above.

Dancer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Dancer's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ ]