

## ***Competition – What to Expect & What’s Expected***

### **Weekend Schedules**

- Every competition event schedule is different, and we usually don’t get specifics until approximately 5-10 days prior, so it’s important that you reserve the entire weekend (Friday through Sunday).
- We ask that you check in with a teacher of the studio 1 hour before you are scheduled to perform.
- Most events require dancers to be ready to perform 1 hour prior to the times scheduled. It is not uncommon for events to run ahead of schedule (always our preference) and, in that situation, dancers need to be prepared. With that in mind, continue to compare the dances on stage to the times they were scheduled to perform; this will give you a gauge as to the pace of the event. AFDE teachers and assistants will do their best to keep you informed, but **if a dancer cannot be found when it is their time to perform, we can’t ask for a delay...the dancer may miss her turn to dance.**
- **Be sure to coordinate an appropriate time/break to get ready to perform**, so as not to miss something required. This may mean doing hair & makeup early in the day, so you have only to “touch-up” before your dances. If you are able to support the other studio dancers, we encourage you to stay in the audience to cheer before and after your performance.
- **Anyone performing a solo/duo needs to** allow time to be warmed-up and ready to perform at least 1 hour prior to your indicated time slot. Younger members can gain a lot of inspiration from watching these dancers. Older members are key mentors to younger members, being able to offer support & encouragement and by sharing stories of their own experiences. With this in mind, all members are encouraged to be present to support dancers performing a solo or duet, specifically those of your age, however it is not required.

### **In the Dressing Room/Behind the scenes**

- We typically do not find out about a changing area/dressing room until we arrive at the event. Sometimes it’s a classroom; other times a gymnasium, cafeteria or band room. Please look for Ms. Frost or other members of the group when you arrive to get details about our designated dressing area. Also, please be prepared to be creative and flexible...dressing spaces are often less than ideal. No males are allowed in the changing areas or backstage rehearsal space.
- **Be mindful of our space.** There are more than 70 AFDE Comp members, and often times dressing space is small. Please do not set up your belongings until it’s your time in the day to be prepping/performing...and pack-up/clean-up after your awards ceremony(ies). Also, please do not use this area as a “hang-out or dining area” if it means you will be in the way of dancers who have quick changes. Also, remember to always be mindful of your dressing room “neighbors”, remain courteous and refrain from “sprawling”.
- All dancers are expected to show their professionalism by packing up belongings and **leaving the dressing area as clean (or cleaner) than when we arrived.** Be sure all costumes, accessories and shoes are labeled and double check that you have all your belongings before leaving the event.
- **Please do not wear your dance shoes until it’s time to line up backstage.** It is not hygienic to roam halls, and especially bathrooms, in bare feet or in dance shoes that will later be brought onto our dance room floors (or placed in your dance bags). Please think ahead and bring a pair of slip on shoes or slippers for easy transition.
- Prior to your first performance of the day, Ms. Frost (or another assigned teacher/Senior Comp Member) will line students up when it is time to report backstage – approximately 5 dances before your own. **Please be sure your child can be located easily** at that time, by sitting together in the auditorium, or waiting as a group in the lobby/dressing room. Once each group has been turned over to Ms. Frost for line-up, parents may go back into the audience. **Parents are not permitted in the staging or line-up area.**
- **Do not eat while wearing your costumes** – or be sure they are well covered up with a large t-shirt or other protective garment.
- **Dancers should not hang-out in the wings** unless they are assigned to help with a prop, or are lining up before their own dances. Keep in mind that the stage managers have enough to keep track of without having excess bodies backstage.
- **Dancers should stay together throughout the day**, supporting everyone equally & knowing where their teammates are at all times. This includes not leaving the dressing area during quick changes, until everyone is ready and not leaving the facility during performance time unless you have told someone where you are going. If Ms. Frost needs to locate a student or speak with a group, she should be able to do so easily.

## In the Auditorium

- Admission to competitions is free.
- Please exercise courteous audience etiquette throughout the weekend. This means **not talking or walking around in the auditorium while dancers are performing**, respectfully clapping for all entries (not just AFDE), and having all cell phones and electronics silenced.
- Showing studio spirit is important, so general cheering before and after each of our routines is encouraged. However, **shouting out a specific student's name or any other specific vocal cheer is discouraged**. While the intention is innocent, a student could easily be distracted or lose their focus with this type of support; and non-AFDE audience members can also become annoyed. In addition to supporting our own AFDE dancers, remember that all performers enjoy applause, so don't forget your standard audience manners.
- Throughout the weekend, be sure to **keep track of your belongings**, keeping everything together. It is also recommended that you do not leave valuables, such as purses or electronics, in the dressing room or auditorium, unattended.
- Please follow theater guidelines and **do not eat in the auditorium**, instead take your breaks in the lobby, dressing area (if space allows) or outside.
- Don't forget; **videography & photography during competition is not permitted, and can result in disqualification**. You may take pictures in the lobby during "wait times", however please be sure you aren't blocking traffic areas; and do not take photos in the dressing area when someone could accidentally get caught "exposed" in the background.

## Judging & Awards

- There is no standardized format to the scoring systems of dance competitions. **Each event has their own award titles, scoring breakdown, and judging criteria**. Some offer Gold, Silver, Bronze; others offer Platinum, High Gold, Gold, etc. It's not realistic to compare the results between events, and if you try you'll only confuse & frustrate yourself and your child. Please treat each competition as a separate entity, and rather than looking for a "higher trophy", look at the growth of the routine as the year progresses (more confidence, cleaner formations, better applied technique, etc.)
- Routines are adjudicated independently and will receive their award based on where they fall into the scoring system. For example, if 10 routines fall into the score range representing a 'Platinum', then they will all get 'Platinum'. In addition to this base award, most competitions also offer 'High Score Awards' to better represent how those 10 routines may have placed within that 'Platinum' range. Other awards could include 'judges' awards' (to acknowledge special aspects of dances that caught their eyes) & choreography awards.
- Dance is a creative art, and cannot be measured on a stop-watch, or scored based on goals. When performing at a competition it's critical to remember that the **judging is subjective!** Some competitions score with an emphasis on technique while others look more for performance skills. An end result will also vary based on judges varied backgrounds & preferences, whether they happened to be looking at a specific dancer during a strong moment or a mistake. Scoring higher at one event doesn't necessarily represent a better performance and in turn scoring lower doesn't mean a weaker performance. **We never question the decision of the judges**. The studio directors and instructors will review the critiques after the event and share them with students to ensure the best benefit from this experience.
- Participating in competition is not about comparing our routines to other schools. It is important to remember that you will be seeing groups that may have many more (or less) hours of class/rehearsal time per week, or could have many more (or less) years of competition experience. **To us, competition is about education and performance exposure, not merely about winning trophies**. Our priorities are to gain stage experience; to set individual goals and see them realized as the year progresses; to stay motivated & inspired; to accept & apply the corrections given on Judges' critique notes; and to learn about ourselves through every experience (the highs & the lows).
- When dancers have completed their last routine, they may get changed into their studio wear. Students are expected to be present for each of their **own corresponding awards ceremonies** and will be welcomed on stage. Dancers should designate one "captain" from their group to be responsible for collecting awards. This captain is responsible for knowing the entry number and name of the routines. The captain is also responsible for being sure that everyone in her group receives their award (pin/ribbon). This should take place as soon as possible at the conclusion of the awards ceremony. If the group was shorted, or if anything extra is left over, they are expected to address it with Ms. Frost or another AFDE staff member.

**During awards, students should apply the following etiquette:**

- Dancers are expected to have their studio wear on
- Pay attention & be aware of what's going on
- When your routine awards are announced, **STAND** up quickly to receive your award – don't make them look for you or expect them to hand it to you while you remain seated. Please bow after receive your award as a 'Thank You'
- Be respectful by **THANKING** the representatives for your awards, by clapping for everyone's awards (not just AFDE; and even if you did not receive what you would like to have received). Also be mindful of your facial & body-language.
- Congratulate your fellow team-mates, as well as other studios for a job well done.
- Any disappointment should be met with professionalism; keep your opinions to yourself, your mood in check, and move on. Today might not have been 'your moment to shine' but the surest path to reach the spotlight is to stay positive, passionate and patient!
- Each group routine will be awarded **just one trophy/plaque**. For group routines, this will become the property of AFDE. (Many events will also provide pins or ribbons for each participant of group routines so dancers will have some momento to keep.) For solos, the performer may keep the trophy/plaque presented.

**Other Notes:**

- **Parents are responsible for their children during all event weekends.** If you are unable to be present with your child throughout the competition weekend, please be sure to make arrangements with another parent who may take responsibility for your daughter in your absence or let us know and we can help out.
- Be sure to maintain a positive and supportive attitude throughout the weekend – to AFDE families and to other attending schools. You can help ensure that we are not negatively perceived as "that school" by being aware of the space you are taking up, the noise level, etc. Remember that all your actions are a reflection of AFDE and should represent the highest professional, respectful and positive standard!
- **Please be sure to check and double-check that you have everything you need during your packing time.** (And we support the lesson of personal responsibility...therefore suggesting that you involve your child with this responsibility) Be sure you have all costumes, accessories, shoes, tights, studio wear, performance/makeup & emergency kits.
- **Remember to remove the 'extras':** No nail or toe polish, no jewelry (other than pieces required for specific routines), no special hair colors or extensions, body/hair glitter, no temporary tattoos. Please use hair elastics the colour of your hair.
- **"Please replace what you take".** It seems that there are always a handful of 'go-to' dancers/parents that come prepared enough to help those who get caught in a jam; bun covers, back-up tights, earrings, ice pack, etc. If you end up being the recipient of someone else's generosity & preparedness, please remember to replace the items at your earliest convenience.
- Most competition/dance events sell merchandise; sweatpants, t-shirts, etc. Just something to keep in the back of your mind, since it's fairly certain that most dancers will request a 'momento' from each performance. In addition, most sell programs. These are helpful to keep track of time throughout the weekend, to record awards for later review and/or to save as momentos.
- Many competitions will offer professional action photography, taken while dancers are performing. They may also offer videos of each routine. These are typically sold at a per routine price.

***As participants in any outside activities, each of you becomes a reflection of AFDE Please keep the following in mind at all times:***

- *The AFDE director handles all communication with the staff of our outside activities.*
- *We never create conflict with the coordinators or judges of events in which we participate, nor do we question the results of any competition.*
- *We never speak negatively about teachers, dancers or parents from AFDE or any other school.*
- *We are a "drama free" school...no "Dance Moms" here!*

***Thank you for taking the time to read/review this information! We appreciate your support and look forward to an exciting year of dance competition.***