



Fostering **CREATIVITY, CONFIDENCE, & CHARACTER** through the art of dance.

## About This Handbook

Since 2000 our studio has been a leader in dance education. At Make Your Mark Dance (MYMD), we believe that our success comes as a result of providing solid training and quality service, as well as our underlying belief in the strength of our organization. We have created this handbook to offer our students and their parents a clear understanding of their commitments and responsibility to the school.

As a registered member of Make Your Mark Dance, you agree to all policies and procedures as laid out in this document and waivers. Please carefully review the information provided within this handbook which outlines the roles, responsibilities, and obligations of the Studio, Parents and Dancers.

<b>KEY CONTACT INFORMATION</b>	
Owner/Director	Meagan McGratten
Location and Mailing	4716 - 60 Street, Red Deer, AB, T4N 7C7
Phone Number (Talk and Text)	403-877-9260
Email Contacts	<b>Main - office@makeyourmarkdance.com</b> Other - info@makeyourmarkdance.com
Instructors	Mr. Patrick, Miss Nicole, Miss Abbey
<b>DANCE SEASON OFFICE HOURS</b>	Monday - Thursday, 4:00 - 6:00 pm
<p><i>Note, as availability and office hours fluctuate in accordance with the various dance activities throughout the year, calling/texting ahead if you require in-person assistance may be prudent. Consider emailing the office for assistance first. If you are needing an in-person meeting with Meagan or Instructors, please email the office with your request and topic of discussion. Papers, messages, etc. may be submitted after office hours and placed under the office door at any time in a sealed envelope addressed to Miss Meagan.</i></p>	

*Dates and/or fees listed in this handbook are subject to change.*

<b>KEY DATES AND EVENTS</b>	<i>*Exact dates provided during season*</i>	<b><u>HOLIDAY CLOSURES</u></b>
First day of classes	Second Week of September	National Day of Truth and Reconciliation, Thanksgiving, Halloween, Remembrance Day, Christmas Break, Family Day, Spring Break, Good Friday (Open Easter Monday), Victoria Day.  <i>* Dates are subject to change and addition. Please stay informed through MYMD communications via email, website, newsletter, and social media.*</i>
Watching Week Open House	First Week of December	
Rehearsal Months	February to April	
Competition Months	April to June	
Dance Exams	Determined by attendance	
Picture Days Weekend	May	
Last of Regular Classes	First week of June	
Year-End Recital Rehearsals	Second week of June	
Year-End Recital Event	Second week of June (TBD)	

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## Section 1

# GENERAL INFORMATION FOR ALL

## 1.1 Parents, “We’re in this Together”

We believe that children’s success depends on the support of their parents or guardians. Because your commitment to the process makes an enormous difference, we encourage you to be a part of your child’s dance education.

Our programs rely on a positive atmosphere and educational experience for our faculty and students and their parents. Cooperation between all parents is expected. Showing respect – for other parents, the students and faculty – makes an important impression on the children. You are a role model for your child about how to interact with others in a professional setting.

**Your child’s presence at all classes is imperative. The spirit of teamwork and the lesson of dedication are a big part of our school’s educational process. When a student misses classes too often it can create a negative perception and resentment within the dance group.**

Parents and teachers may look at a child’s learning from different perspectives. However, we believe they share a common goal: to ensure that every child receives the best possible training, both physically and mentally. Mutual respect among our faculty and our students’ parents provide the children with the ultimate care and education.

### 1.1.1 Medical Information

Parents must notify the director/and or teachers regarding children who use an inhaler or who may require medications during their time at Make Your Mark Dance (1996547 AB LTD). It is also important to inform the director and/or teachers about your child’s existing medical conditions or learning disabilities at the time of registration and throughout the school year. Our teachers are trained professionals who are anxious to work with all children and personalities, and the more we know about your child, the better the dance experience will be for all involved. All information about our students is confidential.

### 1.1.2 Classroom Observation

**Viewing will take place for both recreation and intensive classes in December during “Watching Week”.** If bringing infants and young children into class, please have them sit quietly on your lap for Viewing Week. It is important to avoid disrupting the class. During the observation time (or at any time if the door to the classroom is open), please refrain from shouting instructions or distracting your child in any way.

### 1.1.3 Class Visitors

Safety issues and legal responsibilities make it impossible for us to allow students to bring visitors into the classroom. Students should not invite siblings, other relatives or friends to their classes with the exception of special events such as “Watching Week” or in school performances.

### 1.1.4 Emergency Evacuation

Although we have never experienced an emergency evacuation at the school, we are prepared for such a circumstance. Students are to evacuate quietly and walk in single file as quickly as possible to the designated area, where teachers will check roll. Students and teachers are to return to classrooms and buildings when the all-clear signal is given.

### 1.1.5 Dos and Don’ts

- Some parents may compare their child’s progress or class placement to another child’s. Watch for this behaviour in your children as well and encourage them to focus instead on their own accomplishments.
- Looking to other students for inspiration is good; however, making negative comparisons distracts children from focusing on becoming stronger dancers. In addition, speaking negatively about your child’s teachers, fellow students, or other parents in front of your child – or other students - could result in problems far beyond your

original concerns. Often children will imitate a parent's behaviour with other adults or authority figures.

- Children learn important lessons from their teachers and parents, acquiring behaviour patterns through their example. Our school's faculty takes that responsibility seriously. It's our philosophy to encourage our students to feel, think and act respectfully toward their peers, the adults in their lives and themselves.
- If you have questions or concerns about your child's dance education (such as progress or class placement), please discuss them with your child's teacher or the director. Talking only to other parents can lead to misinformation and confusion. Contact the office to set up an appointment; do not approach your child's teacher or the director between or during classes or make contact outside the school.
- If you do request a conference, please listen carefully to what your child's teachers have to say. They spend a significant amount of time with your child and offer expertise in the field of dance education.

## 1.2 Understanding Dance Education

As a parent, you play an important role in supporting your student financially, but your emotional support is of equal – and perhaps even greater – value. Encourage your child to be the best he or she can be regardless of what others may achieve. Dance is an individual art form and children need to be allowed to achieve at a pace that's comfortable. No two students will progress at the same rate, even if they experience the exact same training. It's important to encourage children to focus on themselves, give their all, and be satisfied with their own accomplishments.

Not all children will develop into professional dancers. One of our primary goals of our faculty is to teach life lessons and skills that offer children the best chance for success. Dance education encompasses far more than technique and the steps children learn. We believe the discipline of dance training gives young people a better understanding of commitment through learning, experiencing the spirit of teamwork, and discovering what they can accomplish through hard work.

Our goal is to educate the minds, bodies, and souls of our students, teaching them the skills needed for a successful life, whether or not they stay involved in dance.

### 1.2.1 Class Placement

The school faculty meets regularly to discuss the students' progress and/or placement. It is our policy to offer appropriate opportunities to every child.

Placement decisions are derived from many years of teaching experience. Often a child is placed in a particular group or class where he or she will feel confident, in order to promote the development of self – esteem. Some students who are placed in a higher level become discouraged, only to lose their passion for dance. Others respond to the challenge of being in a class with students who are more proficient by pushing themselves to work harder. Placement is highly individual and the factors that go into the decision are complex.

### 1.2.2 Discipline Policy

In order to maintain a happy, healthy, professional environment, students are taught the importance of being a part of the group. We encourage students to have a respect for other students, the teachers and staff, and studio property, and we foster the development of good habits and compliance with rules of conduct.

Our staff and faculty are trained to use constructive techniques of discipline to maintain class control and handle individual misbehaviour.

Children who exhibit unacceptable behaviour or attitudes are told what is wrong and directed to a positive alternative approach or behaviour. If a child strikes another child, the two are respectfully separated and each is asked to explain what happened. They are then asked to help solve the problem, talk to each other, and reconcile with one another.

Children who are disruptive will be respectfully asked to stop the behaviour. If the behaviour is repeated they will be reminded of it and told how it affects others. If the disruption continues, the children involved will be asked to sit down

for a short period of time (usually 3 to 5 minutes) before re-joining the class. If a child's misbehaviour continues to disrupt the class, the parent or guardian will be called to pick up the child.

## 1.3 Expectations and Requirements For Students

### 1.3.1 Dress Code Requirements

Make Your Mark Dance maintains a dress code to encourage concentration and a sense of inclusiveness (variations in attire can be distracting and contribute to feelings of inequality). Uniformity in dancewear allows the teachers to assess how well the students are implementing the technique being taught, problems with alignment, and other aspects of dance training.

- Students should carry their dancewear, shoes and other belongings in a dance bag. Please print your child's name on the bag as well as on all its contents.
- Dancewear is to be kept in good repair and laundered on a regular basis.
- Boys age 10 and older must wear a dance belt.
- Watches, jewelry should not be worn in class.
- Dance shoes should never be worn outside.
- Female dancers should wear their hair tightly secured and styled off their face; a neat bun is preferred and is mandatory for all ballet classes.
- Students are expected to observe good personal hygiene habits. Deodorant is required for students age 10 and older.

For a list of complete attire please refer to the pdf attached to the confirmation email you received after registration. This information can also be viewed on the tack board in the studio lobby.

### 1.3.2 Lost and Found

Please mark all dancewear, shoes, and personal items with your child's name. We will make every effort to locate and return lost items; however, we cannot be responsible for any items that your child brings to class. A bin for items found at the studio is located on the shoe rack.

### 1.3.3 Attendance

**All students are expected to attend their regularly scheduled classes.** Each class offers a step forward in the educational process. A missed class could leave a child one step behind the other students. During the months of January through May, choreography for competitions and recital will be taught and rehearsed. It is important for children to feel completely confident with the choreography and the year-end performance. Missing class during this period could result in frustration for the students, the teachers and their classmates.

#### **ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE:**

**We encourage students to arrive 15 minutes before class starts. For their safety, children under that age of 10 should be picked up immediately after class. Students ages 10 and over must be picked up no more than 15 minutes after their class is completed.**

If your dancer will be absent from their class - whether for sickness or personal reasons - we do need to know as it may effect the class being held (eg. if several students from a class are sick on the same day, the class may then be cancelled/rescheduled). **It is easy to let us know by sending a quick text message to the office stating the dancers name and reason for absence, such as "sick" or "personal". If possible, giving us sufficient advanced notice is appreciated such as a planned school event the child is attending or family holiday away.**

### 1.3.4 Arriving Late

Dancers that are late to class is not only disruptive to the other students and the teacher, but dance is also a physical activity that requires the body to be warmed up in order to execute movement safely. Late students miss the proper warm up and/or barre and therefore may sustain injury. Students who arrive more than 10 minutes late may be asked to observe class for reasons of personal safety.

#### **LATE STUDENTS:**

**Students who wish to enter a class after the lesson has started should – knock before entering, apologize for interrupting the class (a parent note would be helpful), and then take his or her place quietly.**

#### **1.3.5 Make Up Classes**

Make up classes are scheduled if an instructor is ill and we are unable to find a suitable substitute. We do our best to ensure that all students can attend, we are not responsible for the dancer's attendance and no refunds will be given.

#### **1.3.6 Weather Cancellations**

School closures due to severe weather conditions will be announced by noon on that day. Notifications of weather cancellations will be emailed, posted on the Facebook page, and sent out by text message to the mobile phone number provided on your DSP account.

#### **1.3.7 Illness**

Colds, flu and other contagious diseases occur frequently and spread easily among children. To help protect your own child's health and to minimize the possibility of contagion at school, please keep your child at home if you observe any of the following symptoms:

- Nasal discharge that is green or yellow
- Complaints of ear pain
- Consistent cough
- Severe sore throat
- Eyes that are pink, burning, itching, or producing discharge
- Diarrhea or vomiting
- Fever

If these symptoms or other conditions deemed contagious are observed in your child during a class, you will be called to pick your child up immediately.

When your child has a fever, please keep him/her at home until the temperature returns to normal. If there are any lingering signs of illness, such as glassy or watery eyes, listlessness, and drowsiness, please keep your child at home. This will help to ensure the illness has passed and that your child will be enough to resume class activities the following week.

#### **1.3.8 Attitude**

At MYMD, we strive to create a welcoming and safe place for all our dancers with mutual respect at the forefront. Intolerance, exclusion, and bullying of fellow students will not be tolerated. As well, students must show respect for their teachers at all times. Any inappropriate behaviour will be addressed as necessary and could result in dismissal from the school.

#### **1.3.9 Parking and Parking Lot Safety**

Our parking lot is designated from our studio to Roadata. We are permitted to use the Phone Experts Parking lot, but only after 5 pm. Please do not park at Phone Experts before 5pm.

The school is home to children of all ages so always enter and exit our parking lot with extreme caution. Never park your vehicle in any area that is not a designated parking space and do not allow siblings to play in the parking lot.

## **1.4 Information & Policies to Note**

- Parents and students are welcome to stop by the office during its regularly scheduled hours should you need assistance.
- Students will be held accountable for damage caused to studio property.
- Deadlines for entry forms must be adhered to. LATE FORMS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED. Please hand forms in early enough for errors to be detected.
- Please place boots/shoes on racks provided. This is to keep the lobby clean and also follows fire regulations.
- Use of the school telephone is limited to emergencies only.
- Parents and students should never interrupt a class in session.
- Only water is allowed in the studios. No food, drinks or chewing gum.
- Baskets are provided for dancers to use to contain all their items and take with them to class. This is to help decrease the chance of lost/forgotten items.
- **We love babies and young children and appreciate the chance to meet our student's siblings. However, our priority is the safety of every child on the school premises. Children must be supervised at all times and are not free to run around the lobby or classroom areas.**
- Please do not dispose of dirty diapers inside the school. Large trash cans outside the studio are better suited for such disposal.
- No cell phones or computers may be used during class time. (this means no emailing, Internet use or text messaging).
- Watch what you say in the lobby area, a space intended for the comfort of our students' parents and families. At no time should anyone utilize this area to commiserate with others about their dissatisfaction with the school, its faculty or choreographers, or other students and their families.
- Students and parents are restricted from contacting teachers by phone, texting or personal email. All communications with teachers or the director must go through the office or the professional email addresses provided.
- Never speak negatively about teachers, students or parents from other schools.
- Never recruit students from other schools.
- Absolutely no street shoes are to be worn in the studio.

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## Section 2

# MEMBERSHIP ACCOUNTS, FEES AND ENROLLMENT/WITHDRAWAL

## 2.1 Account Management and Fees

### 2.1.1 Membership Fee

An annual membership fee per student covers administrative costs which include the cost of mailings, insurance, handbooks and so on. Membership fees are not refundable.

### 2.1.2 Previous Season Awards and Scholarships

Awards and scholarships achieved by dancers in the previous season will have the amounts applied to their account for

October 1st tuition.

### 2.1.3 Tuition and Expense Policy

Full monthly tuition is due on the 1st of each month. An auto-pay method must be provided on all DSP accounts and tuition is processed and paid by automatic withdrawal on your credit card. If you prefer an annual payment plan for your season, please check with the office. **Credit cards are processed for tuition on the 1st of each month and any additional charges (recital fees, costumes, entry fees, etc.) are processed on the 15th each month.** E-transfers and post dated cheques are no longer accepted – with rare exceptions.

Make Your Mark Dance is a small business and appreciates all of our dancers and families. It's important our members know that our ability to operate relies heavily on our client's commitment to keeping their accounts up-to-date, so prompt payment is critical and appreciated. A \$25 late fee may be charged on accounts at the discretion of MYMD for payments that come back NSF.

**Please note that tuition is based on a 37-week season. Certain holidays, winter and spring breaks have been taken into account for these closures. All class lessons are billed, regardless of student's attendance.**

Any family with an account in arrears by 2 months will not be permitted to dance until the balance has been addressed. Payment arrangements can be made with the office. Any family with an outstanding balance at recital time will not be allowed to participate in the recital until payment/payment arrangements are made.

A thirty-day written notice (email) prior to the commencement of the next term is required to terminate registration. Terminations will not be accepted over the phone.

### 2.1.4 Termination of Enrollment

In certain circumstances, when it is in the best interest of one or more students, it may be necessary for the school owner or director to terminate a student's enrollment. Every effort will be made to correct a problematic situation before terminating enrolment. Reasons for termination of enrollment include some of the following:

- Disruptive or dangerous behaviour by students or their parents.
- Abuse of other children, staff or property.
- Inability of Make Your Mark Dance to meet the child's needs.
- Gossiping and bullying.

### 2.1.5 Withdrawals and Refunds

If you wish to withdraw your child, either completely or partially, one full month's written notice must be submitted to the director, Meagan McGratten, and this policy is strictly adhered to. Your letter of withdrawal must be dated the first day of the month and must be received by the office one full month prior to withdrawal. Recital Fees and Costume fees are non-refundable on student withdrawals after December 1, as well, competition fees must be paid for.

Competitive dancers must have their schedule finalized by October 31st. You will be penalized one additional month's fees for the classes you are making the changes to. You must understand these changes can affect choreography for recitals. We thank you in advance for your cooperation and understanding of this policy.

Late season withdrawals (April/May/June) will be responsible for providing payment on any outstanding amounts still owed for costumes and/or competition fees.

### 2.1.6 Account Management: Dance Studio Pro (DSP)

We use a web based program for all of our invoicing, payment posting, sending statements/receipts, communications - emails, newsletters, text messaging - and class confirmations. **Dance Studio Pro** enables you to sign in and see your account with the parent portal. This gives you the ability to make sure your payments are up to date and have been posted, as well as see any new charges (such as recital fees and competition fees) that have been added. We ask all families to add the Dance Studio Pro app to their mobile phones (it is free in both Apple and Play Stores) as we use the app to send out mass notices and information.



Your account is also accessible via your internet explorer browsers from the MYMD website [www.makeyourmarkdance.com](http://www.makeyourmarkdance.com) and located at the top right MY ACCOUNT.

Instructional videos on using DSP can be found on our website blog area. If you require additional assistance, please contact the office.

## 2.2 Additional Fees

Tuition does not include: the class registration fee, dancewear, shoes, costumes, competition or exam fees, recital tickets, private lessons, or special events.

### 2.2.1 Competitive Program Students: Extra Work

Any Intensive dancer interested in participating in extra work (solos/duets/trios) may fill out an application form. The faculty will then decide if the dancer is ready for this endeavour. Extra work can be rescinded at any time if the dancer is not performing / behaving well in their group classes, this includes excessive absences from class. Teamwork comes first.

### 2.2.2 Competitive Students: Entry Fees

For dancers entering competitions, entry fees and costume deposits posted and due in installments to ease the cost impact to families - September to April - and are due on the 15th of each month. All entry fees include an additional surcharge to cover expenses associated with the school's participation in competitions, including mailings, entry processing, office staff, expenses for teachers to attend all events, etc.

### 2.2.3 Costumes

Costumes are either ordered from a professional costume company or made by a professional seamstress. For competitive dancers, costume fees are split into two (2) payments due October 15 and February 15. For recreational/pre-/non competitive dancers costumes are included within Recital Fees and are split into two payments and due at the same time as competitive dancers. The costume fittings will be arranged by the studio and it is your responsibility to attend them. Keep yourself up to date on what colour tights and which shoes are needed for your child's group. This information will be available closer recital. Each class is to have a costume mom, who works as the liaison between the teacher and the other parents in the class.

Costume costs vary due to seamstress, costume company, trim and fabric costs. If you have a credit balance remaining after the final billing in April, we will place the credit on your account for next season. These credits must be used by December 31st the following year.

In the case of injuries or withdrawals your costume will be lent to the studio for fill-ins.

## 2.3 Fundraising: Make Your Mark Dancer's Society (MYMDS)

MYMDS is an organization that was formed in 1991 by parents to raise funds to further enhance our children's dance experiences. **This is a voluntary society that operates separately from Make Your Mark Dance (1996547 AB LTD).** It is a non-profit society and exists to raise funds for the members of MYMDS. All dollars raised through fundraising efforts can be credited to your MYMDS account, and a great way to offset various expenses like dance fees, costumes and competition fees. The cost of a yearly membership is \$20.00. Info and applications can be found on the designated board in the MYMD studio lobby.

## 2.4 Summer Programming

### 2.4.1 Annual Summer Intensive Camp

An annual summer intensive camp by The Dance Initiative is held at the MYMD studio. While not required, we highly recommend all of our Intensive/Competitive dancers attend as it can be a wonderful experience and get them ready to come back to dance in the Fall. It takes place around the third week in August with exact dates provided in advance.

### 2.4.2 Recreational Summer Camps

Occur throughout the summer, offering fun daily, ½ day and weekly camps all summer long. Camp types, dates and times are available on our website closer to the summer season. **Drop-In dance is also offered and a great way for dancers to maintain their skills and conditioning through the summer months.**

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## Section 3

# COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

## 3.1 Parents and Students Use of Social Media

Use of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogging and other online social-media vehicles is common place. This policy is intended to provide Make Your Mark Dance students and parents with guidelines to eliminate any confusion concerning the use of social media.

- You DO NOT have permission to reveal any information that compromises Make Your Mark Dance (1996547 AB LTD). By that we mean you are forbidden to share personal information about the director, teachers, staff, other students or their families, or anything that is confidential to them or Make Your Mark Dance (1996547 AB LTD)
- Students and parents should neither claim nor imply that they are speaking on behalf of Make Your Mark Dance (1996547 AB LTD)
- Never post anything that could compromise the self – esteem of students who attend Make Your Mark Dance (1996547 AB LTD).
- Do not post choreography; Make Your Mark Dance owns the copyright to all choreography taught at the school.

Respect the law, including those laws governing defamation, discrimination, harassment, and copyright and fair use. As stated in this handbook, parents and students should never post negative comments about other schools or teachers. Also, please do not post negative comments about school activities such as competitions, conventions and performances or about the directors of those events.

When sharing or discussing MYMD on social networks, we do ask for the conduct to be respectful of our students, staff, and studio, in a way that is consistent with all of the policies contained in this handbook.

## 3.2 Stay Informed with MYMD

We work hard to make the dance experience organized and fun. Keeping you informed is one of our primary goals. So we do request and encourage you to read all studio communications sent to you via email, newsletters, website, lobby TV and printed outs posted on the bulletin boards.

If you have any questions regarding the information distributed, we encourage you to contact the office via call/text (403) 877-9260 during our regular office hours or send us an email and we will address as soon as we are able.

### **3.2.1 Our Website – [www.makeyourmarkdance.com](http://www.makeyourmarkdance.com)**

We are constantly updating our website. News, important parent and student information, contact information, and more available online 24 hours a day.

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## **Section 4**

# **FOR NON-COMPETITIVE DANCE FAMILIES**

## **4.1 Welcome to Your Program**

The first step to becoming a successful dancer is making a solid commitment to your classes. Strong technique is a key ingredient and class is where you develop that technique. Come to each class prepared to learn and without personal distractions. Class time is your chance to focus on yourself, so try to leave your concerns or worries at the studio door. True progress is made when you look at each class as an opportunity to become better at what you love to do. Dance full – out, stretch a little further, become aware of your technique, and make the most of every class.

Respect for the teachers is essential. Listen to each correction given, whether it's directed at you or another dancer. A correction is an honour; it shows you how much a teacher cares about your progress as a dancer. Always say thank you when a teacher or choreographer offers you constructive criticism. Nothing can stop those students who apply themselves in every class and appreciate their teacher's knowledge and experience.

## **4.2 Special Information for Parents of Pre-School Students**

Our purpose is to provide the highest – quality pre-school education, in a secure, nurturing, and stimulating environment. Make Your Mark Dance (1996547 AB LTD) serves the physical, emotional and intellectual needs of the preschool students. We meet these goals with our age – appropriate curriculum and ongoing communication with parents.

The first few weeks of classes serve as an introductory phase to help students become comfortable with the overall dance experience, the classroom, their teacher, and their classmates.

Right from the beginning we focus on your child's coordination, listening skills, musical awareness, and developing imagination. We accomplish this through age-appropriate music and song, simple stretching exercises, ballet and tumbling basics, and games in an environment of creativity.

Pre-school dance is about helping children learn to tap into their imaginations and express themselves creatively, not necessarily about learning steps (although they do get introduced to some basic steps). So don't be disappointed if your child doesn't pirouette around the house or look like a budding ballerina/dancer right away.

Pre-school students perform one dance routine in our annual recital.

### **4.2.1 Separation from the Parent**

The process of separating from the parent as the child attends dance class is an important accomplishment of preschool children.

As children mature, they begin to identify themselves as independent personalities. In separating from you, the parent, your child is learning:

1. To develop an interest in the activities of the dance class.
2. To feel comfortable with other children in the class.
3. To understand that his/her parents will come back and pick him/her up.
4. To understand that all parents leave their children and come back for them.

It is important to know that, at times, young children will explore the limits of attending dance class and say they don't want to go. This period may occur anytime, but it is usually short lived. Here are some suggestions that might help you handle the situation:

- Emphasize what the child is doing at the dance class rather than what you do while he/she is in class.
- Before you leave, see that the child is involved in an activity or is in the hands of the teacher.
- Avoid prolonged good-byes.
- Ask the teacher for help in the separation. We expect the crying (and usually the tears are for the parent's benefit).

#### **4.2.2 It May Not Be the Right Time**

If your child cries or does not want to take the class, don't panic. If we push children and create more stress than they are already experiencing, they may come to perceive dance class as a bad experience. That kind of negativity could make them apprehensive about dance for a long time, which isn't good for anyone involved. Never force your child into the classroom.

We recommend that children be encouraged to practice at home, but not forced to do so. Repetition is one of the key elements for success with pre-school dance students; the more they practice, the more confident they will feel. Practicing with your child allows you to join in the dance experience.

## **4.3 Stage Rehearsals**

Stage rehearsals take place on the main stage at the Red Deer Polytechnic Arts Centre. It is important to prepare for the competition season and the recital. Each dancer pays a Recital Fee that includes stage rehearsals.

The teachers use rehearsals for staging the dance. Stage rehearsals for recreation dancers are important to help the dancers become accustomed to performing on the stage and prepare them for the year end recital.

It is the responsibility of every dancer to attend all stage rehearsals. Please be early, dressed in regular dance attire. The teachers are not able to block the dance routines on the stage if dancers are missing. If you miss your group's scheduled time, you are still billed for your portion of the rehearsal time. All schedules are posted on the bulletin board and a schedule will be emailed out for all stage rehearsals.

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## **Section 5**

# **FOR COMPETITIVE DANCE FAMILIES**

## **5.1 Welcome to Your Program**

The first step to becoming a successful dancer is making a solid commitment to your classes, rehearsals and performances. Strong technique is a key ingredient and class is where you develop that technique. Come to each class prepared to learn and without personal distractions. Class time is your chance to focus on yourself, so try to leave your concerns or worries at the studio door. True progress is made when you look at each class, rehearsal or performance as

an opportunity to become better at what you love to do. Dance full – out, stretch a little further, become aware of your technique, and make the most of every class.

The Competitive Dance Program is a privilege that dancers and their parents must appreciate and respect. Participation in the program is restricted to dancers who are ready to make achieving their personal best a priority. There will be times when classes, rehearsals or performances will be scheduled when your non-dance friends or family may be headed to the mall or the movies.

We encourage dancers to be as dedicated to their academic studies as they are to their dance training. If your participation in this program affects your grades or the expectations and goals set by your parents, we cannot allow you to continue with the program.

**Reasons why this program may NOT be a good fit for you:**

- You're involved in extracurricular activities that could interfere with your class, rehearsal or performance commitments.
- You're doing it because you want to keep up with your friends, but you are not passionate about dance or the commitment.
- You're doing it because your parent(s) want you to.
- You're primarily focused on winning awards.
- You're not fully committed to attending all classes and rehearsals.

## 5.2 Program Benefits

Only a small percentage of dancers in our Intensive Program will move on to professional dance careers; therefore, the program focuses on educating young people to strive for their personal best in anything they want to accomplish. We achieve our goals for the program by offering young people the chance to:

- Gain a sense of balance in life by managing their commitments to both dance and academics.
- Participate in a physical activity that enhances understanding of the value of a healthy body.
- Develop a sense of confidence when speaking or making a presentation in a public setting, which is also a great benefit in university or job interviews.
- Work with mentors who are focused on the student's success inside and outside of the classroom.
- Enjoy friendships that could last a lifetime and a sense of belonging to an extended family of fellow dancers, teachers and parents.
- Discover the results of hard work and determination.
- Develop a lifelong appreciation for the performing arts.

In addition, making a commitment to the policies set forth in this handbook teaches our young people that there are boundaries that must be respected in order to succeed in the program.

## 5.3 Upholding MYMD Values

The children and parents involved in the Intensive Dancer Program participate in many outside activities, all of which reflect Make Your Mark Dance's philosophy. Please keep the following in mind:

1. We never speak negatively about teachers, dancers or parents from other schools.

2. We never create conflict with directors or judges of events in which we participate.
3. We never recruit dancers from other schools.
4. The school director handles all communication with the directors from outside activities.
5. No parent or dancer may call or question the director of any event. If you have a concern, please contact the director of our school.
6. Dancer and parents should be properly dressed for all events. Do not arrive at or leave any event in your dancewear; always wear a cover up.
7. Go out there and show the audience how much you love to dance!

## 5.4 About Classes

### 5.4.1 Class or Choreography Placement

The school faculty meets regularly to discuss the students' progress and/or placement. It is our policy to offer appropriate opportunities to every child.

Placement decisions are derived from many years of teaching experience. Often a child is placed in a particular group or class where he or she will feel confident, in order to promote the development of self – esteem. Some students who are placed in a higher level become discouraged, only to lose their passion for dance. Others respond to the challenge of being in a class with students who are more proficient by pushing themselves to work harder. Placement is highly individual and the factors that go into the decision are complex.

The director and/or faculty are available to discuss class and choreography placement with parents and dancers. Please feel free to request an appointment with the office and a meeting will be scheduled. It is our policy to meet with each student and his or her parents at the same time unless otherwise specified.

We ask that parents refrain from discussing class placement issues with other parents or questioning the faculty between classes.

### 5.4.2 Classes (Technique Class)

All dancers are expected to attend their regularly scheduled classes in addition to all rehearsals and performances. No more than five class days per season may be missed. Any team member with poor attendance will be dismissed from the program.

We encourage all Intensive dancers to attend exam classes and any extra Master classes we may offer. There may be an additional charge for some master classes.

All dancers must show respect for their teachers at all times. Inappropriate behaviour could result in dismissal from the program.

### 5.4.3 Rehearsals (Choreography Class)

All rehearsals are dedicated to choreography or “cleaning” the choreography. A dancer who misses a rehearsal holds back the progress of the entire group. Repeating the choreography from a previous session for those who were absent takes up valuable rehearsal time, which could result in a performance that is not up to par. When we clean choreography, we may also change it.

Dancers who miss a cleaning session may not be properly prepared for an upcoming performance and could end up disappointing themselves, their team or the school.

An important lesson taught through our Intensive Dancer program is the value of teamwork. Dancers who miss a rehearsal because of a non- emergency circumstance are letting their fellow dancers down in many ways. We expect

parents to nurture the values that dance education teaches; therefore, you should never encourage your child to let the group down.

If parents have a conflict that prevents them from taking their children to a scheduled rehearsal, we will be more than happy to arrange transportation with other parents from the same group. Our goal is to help all children make their commitments.

Rehearsals are an important part of the commitment to the Intensive Program. All dancers are expected to work hard and arrive early enough to warm up.

Additional rehearsals may be scheduled at the discretion of the teacher/choreographer. All dancers are required to participate.

No Intensive dancer may miss more than four rehearsals in each discipline during the season. A season starts in September and ends at the recital in June. There will be NO EXCEPTIONS to this rule. Dancers who need to be excused are required to notify the school before the absence would occur. Any dancer excused from a rehearsal is responsible for learning any missed choreography before arriving for the next rehearsal. The consequences for missing more than 4 classes will be carried out on a case by case basis.

All Intensive Program dancers must attend rehearsals in proper dance attire and appropriate shoes. Female team members are required to have their hair tied back and in a bun for all rehearsals unless otherwise specified.

We expect all dancers to be on their best behaviour during rehearsals and work as team players at all times.

#### **5.4.4 Respect**

Respect for the school, its teachers and its choreographers is essential. Guidelines for Behaviour:

1. Leave any personal negativity at the door when entering the studio.
2. Arrive at least 15 minutes before the start of every class or rehearsal.
3. Proper dancewear and shoes are a must in every class and rehearsal.
4. Choreography must never be questioned.
5. Never attempt to contact teachers or choreographers at home. All contact can be made through our studio emails.
6. Finish every class or rehearsal with a thank-you to the teacher or choreographer.
7. When wearing your school jacket or other apparel to non-dance events, be sure that the activities and your behaviour reflect positively on you and the school.

#### **5.4.5 Appreciate the Critique**

Listen to each correction given, whether it's directed at you or another dancer. A correction is an honour; it shows you how much a teacher cares about your progress as a dancer. Always say thank you when a teacher or choreographer offers you constructive criticism. Nothing can stop those students who apply themselves in every class and appreciate their teacher's knowledge and experience.

## **5.5 The Competition Experience**

For dedicated dancers, the satisfaction of an excellent performance is all the motivation they need to work harder to continue improving. Don't judge how you feel about your performance by the size of the trophy or the colour of the medal.

### **5.5.1 The Focus Is Not Simply on Competition**

It is our goal to instill in our students a passion for performing rather than merely the desire to win awards. Toward that end, Intensive dancers have performance opportunities other than competitions. We look for opportunities to perform at events around Red Deer. We believe the lessons learned through concert performances are as valuable as the competition experience.

Our solid reputation for quality reflects our attitude toward competition and our goal to develop in each student a genuine respect for dance as an art form. We consider students' participation in competitions not merely part of their dance training; it's also an important part of how we influence their growth as people. With the right focus, the experience gained in competition can be an excellent source of self-confidence. If the dancers feel good about a performance and understand they become better each time they go onstage, they are truly growing through the competition experience. Hitting that stage and doing the best they can is what it's all about; whether they win – or which award they win- is secondary.

Through participation in competitions, we hope to instill in our students an appreciation for other dancers and schools. We are not out to beat anyone; instead, we hope to motivate both students and faculty by exposing them to the highest caliber of talent available. Only then can we produce the best dancers and teachers possible. For us, competition is an education.

### **5.5.2 Stage Rehearsals**

Stage rehearsals take place on the main stage at the Red Deer Polytechnic Arts Centre. It is important to prepare for the competition season and the recital. Each dancer pays a stage rehearsal fee due upon enrolment.

The teachers use rehearsals for staging the dance. Stage rehearsals for recreation dancers are important to help the dancers become accustomed to performing on the stage and prepare them for the year end recital.

It is the responsibility of every dancer to attend all stage rehearsals. Please be early, dressed in regular dance attire. The teachers are not able to block the dance routines on the stage if dancers are missing. If you miss your group's scheduled time, you are still billed for your portion of the rehearsal time. All schedules are posted on the bulletin board and a schedule will be sent home for all stage rehearsals.

### **5.5.3 General Performance and Competition Policies**

Performances and competitions are your opportunity to show the world the results of your dedication and hard work. Here's what you can do to make the most of this opportunity.

- Arrive at performances 2 hours before your scheduled time and be in the rehearsal room 1 ½ hours before your scheduled time.
- Be sure you are properly warmed up.
- Present yourself in a professional manner, with costumes pressed, shoes cleaned, and all accessories accounted for.
- Treat competitors and teachers from other schools with respect.
- Treat the directors and staff at the competition with respect.
- Keep your area of the dressing rooms clean and never bring food or drink where it's prohibited.
- Wear your Make Your Mark Dance clothing to all competition events.

### **5.5.4 Competition Scheduling**

When planning a competition trip, be prepared for performances the entire time. Once the schedule is prepared you may find that you do not have to attend the entire time, but you must be prepared to do so. There are no exceptions.

Approximately a month prior to the event, the competition company will supply our office with an itinerary. Schedules will be posted on the bulletin board as soon as they are received.

We pride ourselves on being an organized, professional school and we do not request changes to the dance competition



schedule (except in the case of emergencies).

### 5.5.5 Competition Critiques

At the competition events, the school receives performance critiques from the judges. These critiques are the property of the school and will be read for the dancers during rehearsal or class time. Extra work students will receive a copy of their critiques.

### 5.5.6 Award Presentations

When presented with the award, always show professionalism by thanking the person who presents you with the award. Unsportsmanlike behaviour will not be tolerated.

### 5.5.7 Audience Etiquette

Enthusiastic applause is encouraged; however, it is never appropriate to scream or yell out names at a competition event or in any other performance venue. When in an auditorium, remain seated whenever dancers are performing onstage.

### 5.5.8 Independent Entries

No dancer may compete in any competition as an independent entry without the permission of the school director.

### 5.5.9 Cash Scholarships

Extra work students will receive their scholarships from the competitions for the amount of any cash awarded to them. Cash scholarships awarded to groups will be used as a credit to each student to attend our annual summer camp.

## 5.6 Policy on Extra Work

It is our philosophy to instill a spirit of teamwork among the dancers in the program. A competitive atmosphere is counterproductive to what we want to accomplish in our classrooms or among the dancers.

**TOGETHER:  
WE ARE STRONGER. WE LEARN FROM EACH OTHER. WE SHARE OUR SUCCESSES.**

Dancing a solo or other extra work piece can be a wonderful and motivational experience, but it can also be devastating. We have seen dancers who lack confidence attempt their first solo only to end up running offstage. Instead of exhilaration and pride, they experience humiliation and embarrassment. In some cases, these disappointed dancers question whether they want to continue to dance. Is it worth risking that for a solo?

Students may apply for extra work, and the final decision is made by the faculty.

## 5.7 Knowing When You're Ready to Go Solo

Take a close, honest look at your dancing. You're ready to do a solo when:

- You have made a serious commitment to yourself and to dance.
- You're willing to work on your own to spend extra time on your solo.
- You are willing to take your solo apart count by count and make sure you know what needs to happen technically (where your arms are on every count, what the best lines are, and so on).
- You are willing to rehearse your solo full-out all the time to build stamina.
- You are technically ready.
- You realize your obligations to your fellow dancers is a priority.
- You are aware that solo rehearsal time will never interfere with group rehearsals, classes or performances.

You're not ready to do a solo when:

- You want to do a solo because a friend is doing one.
- You want to do a solo because your parents want you to do it.
- You do not have time to make the commitment.

### 5.7.1 Music for Solos

Put that digital download away! You are not going to use the most popular song of the year for your solo, no matter how much you love it and are dying to dance to it! Everyone will be using that song, and you don't want to be the ninth dancer performing to it.

You will work with your teacher/choreographer to determine the right music for your performance. Together you will look for something different that is not often performed at a competition and that suits your personality.

### 5.7.2 Costume Common Sense

- Always have a second pair of tights available.
- Place costumes in a garment bag for travel.
- Carry hats in a hatbox or container to prevent them from damage.
- Hang and press costumes before each performance.
- Place your name in all costumes and shoes.
- Remove all costumes from their garment bags immediately following the competition to be sure that they are not wrinkled for the next event.
- Check seams, trim, headpieces etc. for repairs that must be made prior to the next competition.

## 5.8 ADAPT Tap & Jazz Exams & RAD Ballet Exams

At Make Your Mark Dance we strongly believe in the benefits of exams. We follow and teach the Royal Academy of Dance syllabus for ballet and the ADAPT syllabus for tap and jazz. Following a syllabus and set curriculum means that each child is working to their personal potential while following safe dance practice.

Safe progression is so important in dance, as we are dealing with young minds and bodies. We want them to progress safely for both their physical and mental health. Having a certified and professional dance teacher is of the utmost importance. They are trained to understand what is healthy development for each age and the differing abilities of each child. Injuries can occur when a dancer is working on technical elements that are too much for their body to handle. Correction from the teacher is key, so the dancer can gain the muscle memory needed to perform each new step properly.

### Why Examinations?

1. Examinations are a memorable experience and present an opportunity for students to be critiqued and evaluated by professional dance masters examiners on a regular basis.
2. Examinations encourage each and every student to work harder, in order to develop their own, best personal potential and to help them maintain that potential throughout the dance training years.
3. Examinations are certified and successful candidates receive certificates.
4. Examinations help a student to develop better technical discipline and encourage proper and professional grooming.

5. Examinations allow students to enjoy a better sense of dance and help to develop a positive attitude, supports good competitive values along with enhancing stronger performance abilities.
6. Examinations offer young dancers the opportunity to gain recognized qualifications that will serve them well in a career in dance as well as being of value later in life when considering further career development.
7. Examinations are not mandatory but are recommended and encouraged by all teaching staff.

### **How are exam candidates chosen?**

Exam candidates are chosen using the following criteria as a guide:

- Class attendance
- Positive attitude
- Body placement and alignment
- Control of turn out (R.A.D)
- Ability and willingness to take corrections

#### **5.8.1 R.A.D. (Royal Academy of Dance) Ballet Exams**

Extra hours of exam preparation are required before taking exams. There simply is not enough time during regular classes to prepare all dancers. These classes will run Saturdays beginning in January.

Please refer to the ballet exam package available at the office for important information regarding preparatory class costs, exam costs and attire. These packages will be available for our students and families once the exam schedule has been set and students have been notified by our ballet instructors.

#### **5.8.2 Tap and Jazz Exams**

Extra hours of exam preparation are required before taking exams. There simply is not enough time during regular classes to prepare all dancers. These classes will take place on weekends.

## **5.9 Additional Policies and Important Information**

### **5.9.1 inclement Weather and Health and Safety Policy**

For health and safety reasons, the studio reserves the right to close the studio at any time with minimal notice.

### **5.9.2 Right to Substitution**

For health and safety reasons MYMD reserves the right to substitute services. Should the government require from time to time that we adjust the delivery of services you will be provided with progressive instructor led programming through alternative means. This will be considered delivery of services.

### **5.9.3 Photography and Videography Usage**

Members of MYMD understand that 1996547 Alberta LTD O/A Make Your Mark Dance may use photographs of their child on the website, social media and in advertising (no names posted) and within its premises. Members also understand that videotaping of their child may occur as part of lessons, rehearsals, and shows and grant Make Your Mark Dance permission to use these photos and videotaping as advertising and learning tools (without compensation).

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## **Section 6**

# MYMD CLIENT AGREEMENT AND WAIVERS

As a Client of Make Your Mark Dance, I accept on behalf of the parties registered, confirm that I have read, understand and agree to all policies, guidelines, and philosophies of the studio provided herein.

(Acceptance given by Electronic Signature (required) via the Client's Dance Studio Pro account creation)

## 6.1 Health and Safety Waiver Agreement

I am aware that the use of the studios and the participation in Make Your Mark Dance lessons involves inherent risks and hazards. I freely accept and fully assume all such risks, dangers, hazards, and the possibility of personal injury, sickness, death, property damage, or loss resulting from such risks and hazards.

I voluntarily agree to release Make Your Mark Dance from any and all liability for any loss, damage, injury, or expense that I, or my next of kin, successors, or dependents may suffer or incur as a result of my use of the Make Your Mark Dance facilities due to any cause whatsoever including negligence on the part of Make Your Mark Dance.

As the Parent or Guardian of the registered participant, if I cannot be contacted, I authorize Make Your Mark Dance to seek medical services in case of serious injury or illness. I further agree to accept financial responsibility in excess of the benefits allowed by my health plan.

I understand that Make Your Mark Dance and its Directors/Faculty/Staff will not assume responsibility for any lost or stolen property, or for any bodily or personal injury consisting of or arising out of any participant practicing in any physical training, athletic activity, or contest.

## 6.2 Payment Policy Agreement

MYMD fees are based on a 37-week season and divide into 10 equal payments. These payments are paid through autopay which you will set up through Dance Studio Pro. This must be set up BEFORE your child begins classes in September. Please note that e-transfers and post-dated cheques are no longer accepted. A non-refundable registration fee of \$30.00 (GST included) must accompany each registration.

\*\*\*All monthly fees must be received BEFORE classes begin in September\*\*\*

Make Your Mark Dance is a small business and appreciates all of our dancers and families. It's important our members know that our ability to operate relies heavily on our client's commitment to keeping their accounts up-to-date, so prompt payment is critical and appreciated. NOTE: For accounts in arrears up to 2 months, the enrolled dancer(s) will not be eligible to attend class until the family's balance owed has been addressed. If account balance is not paid prior to the recital the dancer may not participate.

## 6.3 Withdrawal Policy Agreement

If you wish to withdraw your child, either completely or partially, one full month's written notice must be submitted to the director, Meagan McGratten, and this policy is strictly adhered to. Your letter of withdrawal must be dated the first day of the month and must be received by the office one full month prior to withdrawal. Recital Fees and Costume fees are non-refundable on student withdrawals after December 1, as well, competition fees must be paid for.

Competitive dancers must have their schedule finalized by October 31st. You will be penalized one additional month's fees for the classes you are making the changes to. You must understand these changes can affect choreography for recitals. We thank you in advance for your cooperation and understanding of this policy.

