

A PERFORMANCE ARTS ACADEMY DANCE TEAM HANDBOOK

A Guide for Students and Parents



About This Handbook

At the heart of our success as dance educators is a commitment to providing exceptional training, professional service, and a strong sense of community. This handbook has been thoughtfully created to help students, and their families clearly understand the expectations, responsibilities, and shared goals that come with being part of our Dance Team and school. We believe that when everyone is informed and aligned, we can achieve great things—together.

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, lack of or the color of the medal.

The Focus Is Not Simply on Competition

It is our goal to instill in our students a passion for performing and education rather than merely the desire to win awards. Toward that end, Intensive dancers have performance opportunities other than competitions. They perform and take part occasionally in dance conventions and in other performance opportunities. We believe the lessons learned through 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 that 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 and performances, 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!

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 at least one hour or more before the scheduled time unless otherwise advised by your teachers.
- Be sure you are properly warmed up.
- Present yourself in a professional manner, with your team jacket, costumes steamed, clean shoes, and all accessories accounted for.
- Treat competitors and teachers from other schools with respect.
- Treat the directors and staff of the competition with respect.
- Keep your area of the dressing rooms clean and never bring food or drink where it is prohibited. And ALWAYS clean up before you leave!

Program Benefits

Only a very small percentage of the dancers in our program might go 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, not just dance goals. 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 and life style;
- develop a sense of confidence when speaking or making a presentation in a public setting, which is also a great benefit in high school, college or job interviews;
- work with mentors who are focused on the students' success inside and outside of the classroom;
- enjoy friendships that can 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; and
- 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.

➤ **Dates and/or expenses listed in this handbook are subject to change. Please check e-mail and notices for updates.**

Key contact information for A Performing Arts Academy:

A Performing Arts Academy
96 Swampscott Rd. #6 – Salem, MA 01970
(978)744-8277
info@APAA-Salem.com
www.APerformingArtsAcademy.com

Studio Directors:
Seanna Chmura / Susan Faulkner

Team Instructors:

Katie Machado – Team Director/Instructor
Amy Muzarol, Diana Mason, Mackenzie Murphy, Imogene Donovan, Elloree Jennings, Molly Flynn Perlow, Carley Brown, Adriana Meechin, Alenka Swanda, Brittany Johnson, Maria Bunning

FOR OUR DANCERS

Congratulations! You have been recognized as a member of the APAA Dance Team. The first step to becoming a successful dancer and member of the team 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 more aware of your technique, and make the most of every class.

Being a member of the Dance Team 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 involved in other activities. If you choose to be a member of the team, when team schedules have been set, this comes first.

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 in the program.

Reasons why this program might not be a good fit for you:

- You're involved in too many extracurricular activities that could interfere with your class, rehearsal, or performance commitments. There is a balanced that can be reached.
- You're doing it because you want to keep up with your friends, but you are not passionate about dance, nor the commitment.
- You're only doing it because your parent(s) want you to.
- You're primarily focused on winning awards. We don't always win!
- You're not fully committed to attending all classes and rehearsals.
- You think exceptions should be made for you because you have been a student for several years and something else came up that you really want to do instead of following through with your commitment to the team.

Spring/Summer Programs

The Spring and Summer Programs are a mandatory activity for all Team Members. In the upcoming season, we plan to get all or most of the following season's extra team routines taught in May, then take time off in June, then jump back in for 6 weeks starting after the 4th of July for summer classes. These classes will be mandatory for all or part (to the best of everyone's ability) for team members so please plan accordingly! We know some dancers go away for the summer, we will work with that! Dates and times TBA!

Key event dates for A Performing Arts Academy:

Dates, times and venues are subject to change! Only book refundable hotel stays incase dates, times or venues change!

Fall Classes start: September 8, 2025

Competition #1 - All team routines except Mini Team

All Out Dance Feb 27-March 1st

East Providence HS

2000 Pawtucket Ave.

E. Providence, RI 02914

No Hotel Info Yet

Competition #2 - All Teams and team routines

Accelerate Dance Experience – **LOCATION CHANGE**

March 20-March 22

Coakley Middle School

1315 Washington St.

Norwood, MA 02062

[**HOTEL INFO**](#)

Competition #3 – All Teams and team routines

Work It Dance Challenge

March 28-March 29

Grappone Conference Center – This is a hotel

70 Constitution Ave.

Concord, NH 03301

Dance Team Showcase – At Salem High School - All Teams and team routines

Dates & Time TBA – Adult tickets \$15 / Students 18 and under Free (\$65 per dancer participation fee)

Dress Rehearsals and Recitals are all held at The Marblehead Veteran's Middle School

Dress Rehearsals: 4/27/26 & 4/28/26

Recitals: Sunday, May 3rd, 2026 @ 12:00 & 4:00 PM

APAA Dance Team Requirements & Expectations at a glance!

Please review the following carefully with your dancer.

1. Dance Team Financial Commitment

When your student is part of the dance team, there is a yearly team fee charged in September.

Additionally, each dance team routine—whether a group, solo, duet, or trio etc...has a monthly tuition charge per routine in addition to your regular dance class tuition.

2. Attendance & Commitment

All dance team members must consistently attend their required weekly dance classes and team rehearsals. Excessive absences may affect a dancer's eligibility to remain on the team or in certain routines.

3. Core Team Requirement

To be a part of the dance team, each student must first participate in their primary team class/routine for their designated age group. Additional routines may only be considered after this core team requirement is fulfilled.

4. Competition Participation

Participation in scheduled competitions is mandatory:

- *Mini Team:* 2 competitions
- *All Other Teams:* 3 competitions

5. Awards Ceremonies

While not required, it is strongly encouraged that dancers attend the awards ceremonies associated with their competition time block whenever possible. This helps build team spirit and shows support.

6. Team Warm-Up Jacket

All team members are required to have the official APAA Dance Team Logo Warm-Up Jacket. If your dancer does not already own one, it must be purchased at the start of the season. Please reach out to place your order.

7. Dance Team Showcase

All team routines will perform in our Annual Dance Team Showcase, held before the spring recital.

- *Ticket Prices:* \$15 per adult; students 18 and under attend free
- *Showcase Fee:* A \$65 per dancer fee will be added to your account in mid-March to cover production costs and complimentary student tickets

8. Spring Recitals

Each primary group routine will perform in one or both of our Annual Spring Dance Recitals.

9. Spring Extension & Summer Session

Most extra team routines will be taught in May after the recital and to keep technique and stamina at a competitive level, all dance team members are expected to participate in our summer programs.

- We understand that some dancers attend summer camps; if less than 4 weeks can be attended, tuition will be prorated
- Exceptions may be made if a dancer is away the entire summer, but must be discussed in advance

10. Choreography & Extra Routines

Choreography assignments (solos, duets, trios, etc.) are thoughtfully planned by Miss Seanna, Miss Katie and the staff.

- Please do not reach out to choreographers directly to request routines or private choreography lessons.

FOR THE PARENTS: “WE’RE ALL 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 the 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.

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 provides the children with the ultimate care and education.

Understanding Dance Education

As a parent, you play an important role in supporting your child financially, but your emotional support is of equal—and perhaps even greater—value. Encourage your child to be the best that 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 help your child understand that and encourage them to focus on themselves, give their all, and be satisfied with their own accomplishments.

Dance education encompasses far more than technique and the steps your 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.

Do's and Don'ts

Some dancers/parents may compare progress or class placement to another child's. Watch for this behavior 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 and/or comments 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 behavior with other adults or authority figures. We witness this firsthand.

Children learn important lessons from their teachers and parents, acquiring behavior 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), discuss them with your child's teachers, coaches or directors. Talking only to other parents can lead to misinformation and confusion. **Please contact Miss Jeana, Miss Seanna or Miss Katie to set aside some time to have a conversation if you have questions or concerns.**

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.

Class Placement

The school faculty meets to discuss the students' progress and/or placement. It is our policy to offer appropriate opportunities to every child. We gain nothing from holding a child back, so we do not do that.

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 dancers 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 dancers who are more proficient by pushing themselves to work harder. Placement is highly individual and the factors that go into the decision are complex. It is not always age/grade specific.

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

- Class placement of students is highly individual and the factors that go into the decision are complex.

Classes

All dancers are expected to attend their regularly scheduled classes in addition to all team rehearsals and performances. Excessive absences are not allowed. Any team member with poor attendance will be dismissed from the program.

Dancers will receive a class schedule for September and are encouraged to take all classes offered for their age and level. **Team members are also required to participate in additional classes, including choreography sessions and summer intensive classes** There is an additional charge for these summer intensive classes. If students want to be a member of the team, they must meet all of the requirements not just the ones that are convenient for them. We offer an array of classes to keep students engaged if the team requirements are too demanding of their time.

Rehearsals

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 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. Everyone makes sacrifices at times to attend classes and rehearsals. We expect parents to nurture the values that dance education teaches; therefore, you should never encourage your child to let the group down and make excuses for their non-essential absences.

If parents have a conflict that prevents them from taking their children to a scheduled rehearsal, we encourage you to contact another parent/student in the group. Most parents are usually more than happy to help with transportation. Our goal is to help all children make their commitments.

Respect

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

Guidelines for behavior:

- Leave any personal negativity at the door when entering the studio.
- Arrive at least 10 minutes before the start of every class or rehearsal.
- Proper dancewear and shoes are a must in every class and rehearsal.
- Choreography must never be questioned.
- Finish every class or choreography session with a thank-you to the teacher or choreographer.
- When wearing your school jacket or other apparel to non-dance events, be sure that the activities and your behavior reflect positively on you and the school.

Appreciate the Critique

Listen to each correction given, whether it's directed to you or another dancer. A correction is an honor; 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 teachers' knowledge and experience.

FOR DANCERS AND PARENTS

Image

The children and parents involved in the Intensive Dancer program participate in many outside activities, all of which should reflect A Performing Arts Academy.

Please keep the following in mind:

- We never speak negatively about teachers, dancers, or parents from other schools.
- We never create conflict with the directors or judges of events in which we participate.
- We never recruit dancers from other schools.
- The school directors / office manager handles all communication with the directors of our outside activities.
- No parent or dancer should call or question the directors of any event. If you have a concern, please contact the director of our school.
- 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.
- Go out there and show the audience how much you love to dance!

Student and Parent Use of Social Media

Use of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogging, and other online social media vehicles is commonplace. This policy is intended to provide A Performing Arts Academy 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 our studio. By that we mean you are forbidden to share personal information about the director, other students or their families, or anything that is proprietary and/or confidential to them or the studio.
- Students and parents should neither claim nor imply that they are speaking on behalf of APAA.
- Never post anything that could compromise the self-esteem of other students.
- If you post videos of class or rehearsals, don't post any choreography in its entirety; APAA 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.
- Ensure that your social networking conduct is consistent with all of the policies contained in this handbook.

Costumes

Costume payments are the sole responsibility of the parent or guardian. Intensive dancers compete in a variety of routines; several costumes are required. The typical cost of a costume can be \$75 to \$125.

At the start of the season we will choose team costumes and would like payment in full for those.

Summer Program

The Summer Intensive Program is a mandatory activity for all Intensive dancers. Classes will take place at the school.

We will offer a variety of classes to fit into busy schedules.

A lot of progress is made over the summer so it is important to participate.

➤ All Summer Intensive Program tuition is due upon summer registration.

Dance Team Showcase

This is a special performance for family and friends to celebrate and watch the Intensive Dancer program participants and their choreography at the end of the competition season before the recital. A casual event that builds morale leading up to the recital.

The Dance Team Showcase takes place at the Salem High School auditorium (date and time TBA.) There is a \$15 dollar admission fee for adults. Children and students up to age 18 attend free.

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 color of the medal.

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. They perform [insert types of performances, lecture-demonstrations at local schools, etc., here] and take part in other performance opportunities. 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 that 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.

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➤ **We believe the lessons learned through concert performances are just as valuable as the competition experience.**

Competition Scheduling

When planning a competition weekend, be prepared for performances on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. Once a schedule is prepared you may find that you do not have to attend the entire weekend, but you must be prepared to do so. There are no exceptions.

Approximately one to two weeks prior to the event, the competition company will supply our office with an itinerary. Schedules will be emailed to all dancers and their parents as soon as they are received.

Competition Critiques

At many of the competition events, the schools receive performance critiques from the judges. These critiques are the property of the school and will be played for the dancers during rehearsal or class time. Soloists will hear their critiques during their rehearsal sessions.

Award Presentations

When presented with an award, always show professionalism by thanking the person who presents you with the award. Unsportsmanlike behavior is not welcomed.

Audience Etiquette

When in an auditorium, remain seated whenever dancers are performing onstage.

Know When You're Ready for extra routines

Take a close, honest look at yourself and your dancing. You're ready to do an extra when:

- you meet all requirements to participate on dance team
- you have made a serious commitment to yourself and to dance;
- we find a good fit for a duo, trio or small group
- you're willing to work on your own to spend extra time practicing;
- you are willing to rehearse your routine full-out all the time in order to build stamina;
- you are technically ready; at the discretion of the teachers/directors, not parents
- you realize that your obligation to your fellow dancers is priority; and

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.

POLICIES AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION

General Policies

- Parents and students should never interrupt a class in session.
- Only water is allowed in the studios. No food, drinks, or gum.
- 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.
- Never speak negatively about teachers, students, or parents from other schools.
- Never recruit students from other schools.
- All students must show respect for their teachers at all times. Inappropriate behavior could result in dismissal from the school.

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 enrollment. Reasons for termination of enrollment include the following:

- Disruptive or dangerous behavior by students or their parents
- Abuse of other children, staff, or property
- Inability of A Performing Arts Academy to meet the child's needs

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 “Peek Week” or “Bring a Friend Week” and in-school performances.

Parking Lot Safety

The school is home to children of all ages. Please enter and exit our parking lot with extreme caution. Never park your vehicle in any area that is not a designated parking space. If you park in a space that is very close to the building or its windows, please do not leave your car idling. Please do not allow siblings to play in the parking lot.

Staying Informed

We work hard to make the dance experience organized and fun. Keeping you informed is one of our primary goals. Please read all newsletters and other school information.

Newsletters and important updates are printed and handed out to our students at the conclusion of class. The same newsletters and updates are emailed to you and posted on the [ABC School of Dance] website and Facebook page.

If you have any questions regarding the information distributed, we encourage you to contact the office at 978-744-8277 or e-mail Miss Miss Jeana.

Website www.APAASalem.com

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

Facebook Page www.facebook.com/APAASalem

Instagram www.Instagram.com/APAASalem

Please like and follow our socials!

Happy Dancing!

Miss Seanna, Miss Susan, Miss Katie & Miss Jeana