

Dance Competition Etiquette

We are fast approaching the competition season, so here are a few reminders to parents, staff and students. Please read as it is always good to remind ourselves.

1) Sportsmanship:

One thing you have to remember is that every single dancer works very hard to perform. Every parent wants their child to do well and be noticed. Every dance teacher works diligently so that their students perform to the best of their ability. Everybody at a dance competition has at least all of that in common. Therefore, YOU, as a student, parent, or teacher should clap for every single dance and every single award given if you are present in the auditorium. Dancers, you would want to be clapped for, so do the same for others. Appreciate the art- not just when YOU are being recognized. Teachers and parents set the example. Tell your students in advance how important it is to wish others good luck and clap for other dancers. Parents, try not to live vicariously through your dancer. Instead, appreciate every child for putting effort into their hobby. And by all means....please keep all your personal comments to yourself. Sitting in an audience or chatting in the foyer, you never know who may be sitting behind or beside you overhearing your remarks. There is nothing more inappropriate or hurtful than this.

2) Theater etiquette:

- No videotaping or flash photography of any kind is allowed at dance competitions. It is for the safety of both student and teachers choreography. It can also cause disqualification. Please turn off your cell phones. And enjoy watching the wonderful world of dance.
- Please do not enter or exit between performances, wait until they have completed the routine before leaving your seat. The opening and closing of the doors can be distracting and is disrespectful to the dancer/s.
- No photography of any kind is allowed in the theater. This includes video, if you are caught you risk disqualifying the dancers you represent.
- Please be courteous in the theater: turn off cell phones do not enter the theater when music is playing do not walk up and down aisles while dancers are performing on stage please applaud everyone with the same genuine expression
- Never approach a judge with questions regarding an adjudication or mark.

3) Backstage:

- In reference to sportsmanship, wish the dances before you and after you; "good luck". When dancers come off stage, tell them that they did a "good job". These words cost you no extra effort. In fact, you may even make a few friends. It doesn't matter what studio they are from. They need encouragement just as you would. Your efforts will most likely be noticed and very much appreciated.
- Do not block the wings to watch. Dancers often have wing changes, props, and/or run of after the dance. If you are sitting in the wings, you are in the way..... Simple as that. Be at least 3 feet

away from the wings. If you are the next dance, you will most likely have time to enter the wings while you are being announced.

- Be quiet. I know dancers get nervous backstage. However, that's no reason to start laughing uncontrollably loud. Saying "shhhhhh" is a lot louder than tapping a person and whispering to them to remind them to hold the volume down.
- Know your dance and be aware of your space. Do not decide to practice your entire dance backstage. Movement backstage is extremely distracting to other dancers. Not to mention, dangerous. You could hurt yourself and others by simply doing a grande jete or a pirouette. Stretching backstage usually means you're in the way. Instead, consider stretching in the dressing room.

Backstage areas are reserved for dancers and instructors, parents are not allowed backstage for any reason, passes are required in that area of the theater.

4) Dressing Rooms:

It's common for studios to segregate themselves in the dressing rooms. That's fine. However, be mindful of everyone's space. Throw your trash away. Don't touch anything that isn't yours. Don't practice dances full out.

5) Schedule:

We do not control the schedule; we are merely participants in the event. Remember to arrive at least an hour ahead of time. This allows you to properly warm up and rehearse before you perform. It is also important to remember sometimes festivals run early, be there on time an hour ahead.

6) Awards Ceremony:

- Even at the awards ceremony, you are performing. You are on stage. Do not bring your cell phone with you. Your texts and facebook status of your results can wait a few minutes.
- Please remain in the costume you performed in (unless you have to make a quick change to another one). Do not enter onto stage in various stages of undress.
- Please stand in a proper dancers' stance for adjudications (feet together, hands behind back, pulled up tall and attentive.) Listen with respect to what your adjudicators have to say. Even if it's the end of the day, please show them some courtesy. They have had just as long a day as you!
- Leave room for the judges (or whoever is handing out awards) to walk. If you are asked to move over, please do so. There is plenty of room available.
- When you are on stage dancing silly before the awards ceremony, there is no need to dance 2 inches behind the edge of the stage. You can be seen just the same 5 feet from the edge...plus you won't break any bones from falling off.
- We know you're tired by this point, but you can be energetic for a few more minutes. This means clap for EVERYONE. Refer back to #1.

- When accepting an award, an improper response would be to grab the award and walk away. A more acceptable response is a curtsy/bow toward the judge, handshake or hug, and ALWAYS a “Thank You”. It doesn’t matter if you get a bronze or a platinum. You need to show your gratitude toward the judges for taking the time to evaluate you.

7) On Stage:

- Unless your top falls off, don’t stop dancing. If a costume piece falls off, try your best to discreetly get the piece off stage where you can fix it (if you are in a group) quickly and keep going. You can continue dancing without a shoe or a headband.
- Don’t lip sync unless it’s choreographed. In addition to this, a huge no-no is counting on stage. You should be able to count in your head. The only mouth movements you should be making are for facials.
- It’s ok to look at the judges once in a while, but you are performing to the audience. Don’t stare the judges down. You need to perform to the back row of the audience.
- Try not to hit the curtains when you are dancing. It is very distracting.
- Absolutely no gum chewing, laughing, chatting or profanity of any kind will be tolerated both on and off stage.
- Senior dancers....if you are around, it would be nice if you could assist the younger groups with their props.

8) Rehearsal Rooms:

Most competitions or festivals have an area that studios and dancers can go over their routines prior to their performance. Please be respectful of others while they are practising. Take turns and always allow those who perform on stage before you to practise first.

** Parents are not allowed in the rehearsal rooms, it is merely for students and teachers. Generally the rooms can become crowded, additional space is always helpful.*

9) Competition:

Please remember that competitions differ from festivals. Everyone receives a placement at a festival. Competitions usually only place 1st, 2nd & 3rd. Parents please make sure your younger children understand and are aware of this. It’s hard when they come from festival where they may have received a gold, to a competition where they may not place. Competitions are not just about the trophies and medals. Competitions are about bettering you and challenging yourself. Therefore, you should participate in all of the available workshops and seminars at competitions. You should also take the time to watch dancers from other studios.

Please remind your child, the color of the medal does not matter. It’s the growth and the experience that matters the most. It is not the teachers fault if the student did not get a GOLD medal today. It is someone’s opinion of how you did on this particular day. It is important to maintain a perspective.

10) Attitude:

While a certain amount of confidence is required to perform on stage, there is a thin line between confidence and arrogance. Be gracious. You parents and teachers have worked extremely hard to get you to where you are today. Thank them before patting yourself on the back. Stay grounded, humble, and aware of other dancer's feelings....and after all that, THEN be proud of yourself because everyone else is.

11) Schedule of Events:

- Competition schedules provided are approximate times for solo's/duo's/trio's and groups.
- Please try and arrive at least 1 hour before scheduled performance (even earlier if you are close to the beginning of your session or need to get hair and make-up done). You will need time to properly warm up and go over routines as well so don't leave yourself short on time. There is nothing more stressful for both your dancer , fellow group members and teachers, if a student shows up 10 mins before they are supposed to be on stage unprepared.
- Please ensure you have gone through all your various costumes and have not forgotten any shoes, tights, hair pieces , hats or costume items. Make a list and make sure to pack along extra tights, pins, bobby pins, elastic etc. Never assume someone will be able to supply you with these if you forget.
- Get dressed and apply make-up as quickly as possible so everyone can use mirrors, washrooms, etc.
- Try to keep your garbage to a minimum by cleaning up after yourselves, dispose of tissue, empty pantyhose bags, bobby-pins, ECT in garbage cans

Do not arrive or leave in costume...please change in change rooms provided. There is nothing worse than seeing someone leave or arrive in there costume. Not to mention that it will wrinkle and or get dirty. Audiences like surprises... please change in change rooms and not public washrooms. This can also lead to disqualification.

Good luck to everyone. Remember to smile and most importantly to have fun!

