

Policies & Procedures 2022-2023

WHY NIAGARA DANCE CENTRE?

At Niagara Dance Centre, we believe:

There is a dancer inside us all. We only have to be given the opportunity and guidance to learn, and we will grow into the dancer we want to become.

Dance is ART. Dance is more than the perfect execution of choreography. Dance is movement, music, and soul. It is finding the beauty in the hard work in classes and performances; in celebrating our successes and learning from our struggles.

Dance benefits not just the body, but also the mind. In addition to physical conditioning, strength, and flexibility, dancing and performing develop confidence, positive self-awareness, and creativity.

Life should be enhanced by dance, not stifled. We believe we can give you a quality dance education without losing anything else in your life that makes you special.

In short, we see students as individuals with different talents and needs. We continue to shape our studio around these beliefs, and hope you find as much joy in dance as we do.

APPROACH & EDUCATION

Our teachers engage in ongoing professional development—they take classes, workshops, and seminars and continue to earn professional certifications to ensure that their knowledge of best practices is up-to-date and that your dancer is in a safe and stimulating learning environment.

We also treasure our littlest dancers and are very proud of our dance program for our preschool and elementary school students. We have a great teacher/student ratio, small classes, and a specially-designed curriculum to enhance learning while having fun.

COMMUNICATION

We do the majority of our communication through e-mail. Our newsletter, *Footnotes*, is emailed out several times a year to update you on studio news and events. We also post copies of communications at the studio, on our website (www.niagaradance.com), and on our social media pages (you can find us on Facebook and on Instagram!).

CLASSES

We understand the demands and time limitations placed on families these days, and that our students and their families have lives outside of dance, too. That is why we offer back-to-back classes whenever possible. The following is intended as a guideline to determine which classes are right for your dancer.

Our youngest students (**ages 3–4**) are offered a **tap/ballet split class**: one half-hour each. They also have the option of joining our **primary acro** program.

At **age 5**, dancers may add a half-hour of **jazz** to their lesson.

Acro dance may be added at **age 6** if the student is enrolled in a jazz or ballet class, or at the teacher's discretion.

Hip-hop, cheer dance, and musical theatre are available at **age 7**.

Contemporary may be added at **age 8** if the student is enrolled in a ballet class.

As students progress, we expand their ballet, tap, and jazz classes to 45 minutes each to allow for advanced training. **Ballet technique; jump, turn, & stretch; strength & conditioning; flexibility training; adult classes; and competition-level classes** are 45–60 minutes each.

COMPETITION PROGRAM

Our competition program embodies our belief that life should be enhanced by dance. The competition track allows students more opportunities to train and perform throughout the year, and we have achieved demonstrated success, routinely winning platinum, high gold, first place, and special judges' awards. More importantly, we are a "Class Act" award-winning studio, having been recognized at national competitions for our age- and level-appropriate dances and costumes. Additionally, our dancers have been recognized for their "Backstage Sportsmanship" and their "Studio Spirit": in other words, for their consistent support and encouragement not only toward their teammates, but toward their competitors as well. At Niagara Dance Centre, our competition program helps our students to grow as dancers and as positive role models.

We do not have a formal audition process for our competition teams, and we try to find a way for every interested dancer to compete. We enroll those dancers in technique and performance classes and our teachers gauge a dancer's readiness over time, considering many factors, including, of course, technical proficiency, but also musicality, work ethic, resilience, and more.

Company and Competition students are required to spend more time in the studio throughout the year, including during the summer.

- **NDC Company:** Students with at least three (3) years of experience in ballet and tap and one (1) year of experience in jazz and/or acro can join the NDC Company. This is a precursor to the full competition team. Any student who is interested and eligible may join! NDC Company dancers will be exposed to additional training and will take a single dance to competitions.

Dancers will be required to take ballet, tap, and jazz classes, placed as they would be regularly (so they needn't worry about leaving their friends behind!). In addition to ballet, tap, and jazz, Company dancers will be required to take one technique class and one choreography class, for a total of five (5) classes. The choreography class is to learn the dance that they will take to competition.

- If you have a dancer with less than three (3) years of experience who is already asking about competition and you're looking to get them started on the pathway, we'd recommend ballet, tap, jazz, and primary acro as their core curriculum (ask us why!).
- **NDC Competition Team:** Dancers will be placed on the NDC Competition Team(s). We will use the previous year and summer to assess and place dancers and will have ongoing conversations about progress. For students new to the studio, we may ask for a demonstration. Dancers perform best when they feel confident, and that is why we are intentional about team placement. Remember: we will always try to find a place for anyone who wants to compete.

Competition dancers are typically required to take a minimum of five (5) hours of class per week: lyrical, jazz, tap, ballet technique, and jump, turn and stretch. If a dancer only wanted to (or is only deemed ready to) compete in certain disciplines, the teachers would work with the dancer to determine the best program of classes.

During the year, dancers are of course welcome to take additional classes such as competition and recreational hip-hop, competition and recreational contemporary, musical theater, acro, cheer dance, flexibility, strength & conditioning, etc. (and are highly encouraged to do so!), but those classes do not satisfy the foundational Company/Competition class requirements.

There is a higher cost associated with competing. On top of tuition, there will be competition fees, shoe requirements, jewelry, track jackets, hair and make-up tools, etc. We fundraise to help offset the expenses, and you can participate in those efforts as much or as little as you like. In general, there is a greater time commitment, too. There are weekly class hours and competition weekends, yes, but also additional rehearsals, fundraisers, and summer classes.

To offset administrative costs, we have instituted a Company/Competition Team fee, due at registration.

- **NDC Company:** \$30 // Additional Family Member \$15
- **NDC Competition Team:** \$50 // Additional Family Member \$30

COMPETITION REGISTRATION FEE DEPOSITS: There will also be an opt-in registration fee deposit system, similar to our costume deposit system. This can help offset the costs in the spring when it comes time to register for competitions.

CLASS ATTENDANCE

Only regular and timely attendance will increase a student's progress. If a student must miss a class, please notify the studio. There are no refunds or make-ups for missed lessons; however, teachers and class assistants may work with students on what was missed when it is necessary and possible, and often they will suggest alternative classes that dancers might attend in lieu of their own. If absences are excessive, dancers may not be able to participate fully in recital routines.

CLASS ATTIRE

Students must be dressed in proper dance attire for lessons. Your enrollment packet will include information on what shoes and attire are needed for each class, as well as suggestions on what and where to buy.

COSTUMES

Every effort is made to keep costume costs down and to minimize work. In the past, average costume prices have ranged as follows:

YOUNG CHILDREN: ~\$65–\$80 per costume

PRETEEN: ~\$75–\$90 per costume

TEEN/ADULT ~\$80–\$95 per costume

Two (2) costume deposit fees of \$25 per each performing class are due with September and October's tuition and will be applied to the dancer's costume balance. This amount is non-refundable after November 1st. You will receive detailed costume and accessory information and prices in November. Each routine requires a separate costume.

All costume balances are due paid in full with November's tuition and are non-refundable. If you do not pay your balance, your costumes will not be ordered until your account is settled, at which time you may be liable for rush shipping charges and/or risk access to limited inventory. Please plan accordingly.

EFFICIENT REHEARSALS

We hold dress rehearsals during normal class times right at the studio. Not only does it automatically fit your schedule, it allows us to find the best way to wear costume pieces and make sure that we clarify all the appearance and performance details.

Our stage rehearsal is held at the performance venue without costumes. This allows us to focus on staging without distractions and helps prevent the loss of costume pieces before the performance date. We also limit the hours of our stage rehearsal to prevent fatigue and get the students home at a decent time during a busy week of the year.

DIGITAL MUSIC ACCESS

In order to facilitate at-home practice, all students will receive digital access to their recital routine music.

OBSERVATION

We invite parents to observe students during the first week of classes during November, February, and May.

SPECIALTY ROUTINES

Solo, duets, trios, quartets, and other specialty recital routines are arranged by teacher approval only. And remember, they won't know that you're interested unless you ask! Teachers base their decisions on a student's ability, showmanship, attendance, positive attitude, and progress made in class from week to week.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Because we believe there is a dancer inside us all, no matter our age or ability, it is imperative that you disclose any injuries, medical, and health conditions, including allergies and learning disorders. We would never turn a dancer away, but our teachers need that information to be able to fully meet your dancer's needs! In some cases, we may require more information or a doctor's permission. Niagara Dance Centre carries *no* medical insurance, so it is *required* that students are covered under a family policy. If injury does occur, it is understood that the family's policy is the *only* source of reimbursement.

FACILITY

We are conveniently located near the Niagara Falls Airport, minutes from LaSalle, Wheatfield, the Town of Niagara, and the Grand Island Bridge.

We have two studio rooms, both of which have been outfitted with a professionally-designed O'Mara sprung floor, customized for our studio and installed by experts, which reduces the risk of injury to our dancers.

TENATIVE 2022-23 DANCE CALENDAR

Our dance season typically runs from mid-September through the beginning of June, including holiday breaks.

Classes Begin	M Sept. 12 th
Costume Deposit 1 Due	Th Sept. 15 th
Indigenous Peoples' Day	M Oct. 10 th
Costume Deposit 2 Due	Sa Oct. 15 th
Costume Balance Due	Tu Nov. 15 th
Thanksgiving Break	W Nov. 23 rd —Su Nov. 27 th
Winter Break	M Dec. 19 th —Su Jan. 1 st
MLK, Jr. Day	M Jan. 16 th
Presidents' Day	M Feb. 20 th
Spring Break	M Apr. 10 th —Su Apr. 17 th
Dance Pictures	Late April
Dress Rehearsals	M May 1 st —Sa May 13 th
Memorial Day	M May 30 th
Stage Rehearsal	Late May/Early June
Recital	Early June

TUITION AND FEES

Because we charge a course fee per *total hours* on a descending scale, not per *class lesson*, you get more value for your dollar. We add up the total class hours of immediate family members taking lessons to take full advantage of the discounts.

Tuition is due on the 15th of each month and can be paid in monthly installments, 3-month installments, or in one annual payment. Prepay discounts are available if you choose the 3-month or annual plan and pay by September 15th. Please note that if you choose to alter your payment plan after that date, the prepay discount will no longer apply.

A \$15 cumulative late fee will be added to your monthly tuition if payments are missed. There are no refunds for missed classes.

Monthly payments are due on the 15th of each month. 3-month installments are due September 15th, December 15th, and March 15th. The annual payment is due on September 17th.

Hours	Per Month // Season	3-Month // Season (5% Discount)	Year-in-Full Prepaid (10% Discount)
1	\$30 // \$270	\$85.50 // \$256.50	\$243.00
2	\$58.50 // \$526.50	\$166.73 // \$500.18	\$473.85
3	\$85.50 // \$769.50	\$243.68 // \$731.03	\$692.55
4	\$111.00 // \$999.00	\$316.35 // \$949.05	\$899.10
5	\$135.00 // \$1215.00	\$384.75 // \$1154.25	\$1093.50

REGISTRATION FEE: \$25 (\$12.50 for each additional family member) is due upon registration and is non-refundable.

We accept cash, checks, and major credit cards (subject to an additional processing fee). Checks must be made payable to "Niagara Dance Centre." A \$30 fee will be applied to all returned checks.

DROP-IN RATES

Not sure if you want to commit to a class full-time? You can take any of our non-performance classes* at our drop-in rate! We ask that drop-in dancers email or call ahead to ensure we can accommodate you!

Number of Classes	Cost
1	\$10
5-Class Pack	\$45
10-Class Pack	\$80

*Non-performance classes include Strength & Conditioning; Flexibility; Ballet Technique; and Jump, Turn, & Stretch.

OUR DANCE FAMILY

Thank you to those of you who return each year. Your support has helped us become what we are today! If you know anyone who is interested in dance lessons, ask us about our referral bonus.

If you are new to Niagara Dance Centre, we wish to extend a warm welcome! We appreciate the opportunity to work with you and your children and hope you will join our family.