

HIGHLAND ★ PARK DANCE COMPANY

Highland Park Dance Company
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Competition Team Tryout Process and Member Expectations 2023-2024

Introduction

We are so glad you are interested in potentially becoming a member of a Highland Park Dance Company Competition Team. Developing and training young dancers through a team is one of our most favorite aspects of what we do. We strongly believe that being trained on and contributing to a team is one of the very best ways to grow in dance ability as well as in several vital areas of life such as character, leadership, work ethic, and integrity.

Highland Park Dance Company uses Christian values as the basis for our curriculum and instruction. We choose to glorify God in all aspects of our dance training and to show God's love to each student. It is our commitment as teachers and role models to set a positive example in action and in speech.

General Information

Anyone wishing to audition for a position on an HP Dance Co. team must read all of our Competition Team Tryout Procedures and Team Expectations fully and complete the online registration form *before* auditioning.

HP Dance Co. communicates primarily through email. Once you provide us with your email address, we can send newsletters, notes, reminders, updates, etc. directly to you. All pertinent info is sent via the HP Dance Co. *Constant Contact* account. We want to make sure that you receive all necessary information as you prepare for tryouts and other important team dates. Always check your SPAM folder and to ensure our Constant Contact emails are not being sent there automatically. We advise everyone to check email daily as we send out emails regularly.

If you are not currently enrolled as a student at HP Dance Co., and we do not have your email address on file, please email us and provide a parent name, prospective team member's name, and grade (as of Fall 2023). We will add you to our email list to keep you updated on important tryout news and reminders.

After accepting a position on an HP Dance Co. team, you will be responsible for attending all practices, competitions, and other HP Dance Co. related events. **Attendance at all HP Dance Co. practices and performances is mandatory and strictly enforced.**

Please know and understand that by registering for our program, you are committing yourself for the entire 2023-2024 dance season (June 2023-May 2024) as well as committing to attend all competitions, some of which may require travel. This is an enormous time and financial commitment that is not to be entered into lightly.

Prerequisites for Tryout Eligibility

- Must be a rising 4th-8th grader for the 2023-2024 school year.
- At least one parent must attend a mandatory parent meeting on either 5/1 or 5/6 (Required for first-time members only. Not required for parents of returning team members).
- Must fill out and submit the online registration form.
- Must submit a registration fee of \$50 (or \$100 for day-of or late registration).

Important Dates

Parent Info Meetings

- Optional for returning team parents, required for first-time team parents.
- Option 1:
 - Monday, May 1
 - 8:00-9:00pm
- Option 2:
 - Saturday, May 6
 - 9:00-10:00am

Choreography Learning Days

- Option 1 of 2 for new incoming 4-6th grade:
 - Wednesday, May 3
 - 4:00-5:00pm
- Option 2 of 2 for new incoming 4-6th grade:
 - Saturday, May 6
 - 9:00-10:30am
- Returning incoming 5-6th grade:
 - Saturday, May 6
 - 9:00-10:30am
- New + returning incoming 7-8th grade:
 - Saturday, May 6
 - 10:30am-12:00pm
- For those who are absent on this day, don't worry - videos with counts and music will be emailed out after the learning clinics are over.

Optional Open Gym Practice

- New incoming 4-6th grade + returning incoming 5-6th grade:
 - Thursday, May 11
 - 4:00-5:00pm
 - (\$30)
- New + returning incoming 7-8th grade:
 - Thursday, May 11
 - 5:00-6:00pm
 - (\$30)
- You can register for these open gyms online through your HP Dance Co. account.

Tryout Days

- New incoming 4-6th grade + returning incoming 5-6th grade:
 - Monday, May 15
 - 4:00-7:00pm
- New + returning incoming 7-8th grade:
 - Monday, May 15
 - 6:00-9:00pm
- Everyone: Please keep Tuesday, May 16 available for a potential overflow day.

New Team Meetings, Parent Meetings, and 1st New Team Practices

- Wednesday, May 17 and Thursday, May 18
- 1 hour each day.
- Dancers attend both days. Parents attend May 17 only.

Apparel Fittings

- May 22-25

Tryouts (May 2023)

Prospective team members will learn tryout choreography, some of which may come from routines that were competed in contests during the previous season. Dancers will learn different routines based on their age/ability level.

Choreography Learning Days

On these days, all dancers seeking a position on an HP Dance Co. competitive team will come to the studio to learn a piece of choreography they will later perform in front of the judges on May 15 (and potentially May 16 also). We will offer separate learning sessions, teaching separate dances to accommodate varying ability levels. All dancers must initially attend the session designated for their own age group. However, we may request that a dancer stay for an additional session if we see it best fit for her to learn a more challenging piece of choreography.

Please arrive at your learning session 15-20 minutes early to allow time to sign in, warm-up, and stretch before beginning the session. Please wear all black dance attire, preferred turning footwear (tan or black jazz shoe, half-shoe, etc.) and make sure your hair is tightly secured away from your face.

If you are unable to attend the learning session, you may also learn the tryout choreography either by watching the provided video or by scheduling a private or small group lesson to learn from an instructor. You are welcome to work with any dance teacher you would like. You are not required to take lessons from staff at HP Dance Co., but in case you would like to, you can find the contact info for all of our staff members listed online at hpdance.com/staff. If you would like to schedule private lessons with instructors, you should reach out to them directly.

Optional Open Gym Practice

A few days after learning the tryout dance, we will offer an extra practice clinic for those interested. This is **not a requirement** to tryout. It is only an added bonus for those who would like to utilize more studio space and teacher guidance to practice. You must register online through your HP Dance Co. account before attending.

Tryout Days

On May 15-16, prospective team members will perform the choreography for the HP Dance Co. directors and judges. The directors and judges will evaluate each dancer's technique, skills, and dancing ability to determine whether they will be offered a position on a team for the 2023-2024 year. In addition to the skills listed later in this packet, judges will mostly be evaluating footwork, arm placement, arm pathways, timing, and overall athleticism and coordination. While skill building is indeed important long term, at these tryouts, the judges will focus primarily on dance movement.

Please arrive 15-20 minutes early in order to allow time to warm-up and stretch before your tryout. Please wear all black dance attire, preferred turning footwear (tan or black jazz shoe, half-shoe, etc.) and make sure your hair is tightly secured away from your face.

The dancers will perform the tryout dance in front of the judges in small groups. After a group finishes dancing, those dancers will then exit the tryout room and re-enter the "holding tank." Once every group has performed at least once, judges will then call back groups of dancers to return to the judging room to be re-evaluated. If we finish early, we will let the girls know to call and notify parents.

Call backs are neither a "good" nor a "bad" thing, nor do they suggest a certain placement on a particular team. They simply mean that the judges would like to see the dancer again. The directors and judges will be assessing each dancer's technique, dancing ability, and cohesion with others of similar age in order to determine whether they will be offered a position on a team for the 2023-2024 year.

We want all dancers who would thrive and benefit from a team to have a place with us! It is always our goal to place as many dancers on teams as possible. Dancers do not tryout for a particular team. Rather, the judges will make placements based on ability level. Each year, HP Dance Co. has a different number of teams of different ability levels. The names of the teams as well as their ability levels change from year to year. (Ex. The "Blue" team might be made up of 5th and 6th graders one year, and then 7th and 8th graders the next year.) There is **no** predetermined number of teams each year, nor is there a predetermined number, quota, or number of "spots" available on any given team.

"We want all dancers who would thrive and benefit from a team to have a place with us! It is always our goal to place as many dancers on teams as possible.... There is no predetermined number of teams each year, nor is there a predetermined number, quota, or number of 'spots' available on any given team."

Not everyone who auditions is guaranteed an invitation to join a team, nor is every team member guaranteed a solo/duet. Dancers must be able to execute dance movements and some skills at an appropriate level for their age group. Anyone trying out may be placed on a team above her age group. Sometimes a director may choose to move an exceptional dancer up to the next age bracket. This is always at the director's discretion.

We will announce the 2023-2024 HP Dance Co. Competitive teams via email. The Directors' team placement decisions are not subject to appeal. If you are not extended an invitation to join a team, we would be happy to schedule a meeting to discuss how to make improvements for next year. *Note to rising 4th graders: If you are not extended an invitation to join a competition team, we strongly encourage you to consider joining our Performance Company in order to gain more experience and training in a group setting.*

Solos, Duets, & Ensembles

For more information, please see the separate **Solo, Duet, & Ensemble Information** packet (linked [here](#) as well as on the online tryout registration form). Those who want to compete a solo, duet, or small ensemble during the 2023-2024 season will have the opportunity to indicate that on your online tryout registration form. The judges will evaluate those individuals to determine YES or NO to a solo/duet/ensemble at the same time as team tryouts.

If interested in a duet or ensemble, please indicate the *specific names* of the other girls you would like to potentially participate with. **Important:** Please **communicate** with these girls **ahead of time**, *before* submitting your registration, about dancing together, and **mutually** agree and confirm that you would like to participate together. In other words, do not indicate, "I'm interested in doing a duet with Susie" on your registration form without talking to Susie and her parents first.

Bear in mind that the team members who participate in solos/duets/ensembles are a very small minority. These routines are extra and supplemental for those dancing above either age level and team requirements. Dancers must first master the team requirements before adding a solo/duet/ensemble routine.

If selected, all solos/duets/ensembles must have their competition choreography and costume choices approved by Casey Sinclair. Later in the season, solos/duets/ensembles must provide another video of themselves doing their competition choreography and a photo of their costume and receive approval in writing before proceeding. Solos/duets/ensembles should have these two items finalized and approved by the end of summer or in early Fall 2023. All solos/duets/ensembles will be required to wear BODY TIGHTS with whatever costume they choose. HP Dance Co. reserves the right to require modifications to costumes and/or choreography as we see best fit and most appropriate.

New this year: solos/duets/ensembles will compete at separate competitions than the rest of the teams. That said, solos/duets/ensembles could be required to attend twice the amount of competitions (team competitions as well as solo/duet/ensemble competitions). Please keep this extra time commitment in mind before accepting an additional routine.

What The Judges Look For at Tryouts

Expectations for all prospective team members (regardless of age):

- The ability to execute provided dance movement with proper technique, timing, placement, pathways, and overall athleticism and coordination.
- The ability to blend alongside other dancers of similar age and ability level when executing choreography.
- Strong performance presentation (projection, posture, energy, smile).

Expectations for certain age groups:

****The judges recognize that these are developing skills, and they will be looking for and discerning potential rather than perfection on all of these skills listed below.**

Intermediate (4th-6th) Skills:

- Chaine Turns
- Right Kick (standing and/or on the floor)
- Single or Double pirouette
- Right Leg Leap
- Press Leap
- Chaine turns
- Toe Touch
- X-Jump
- **Developing** a Russian Leap
- **Developing** a Switch Leap
- **Developing** Turns in 2nd

Advanced (7th-8th) Skills:

- All the previously mentioned 4th-6th skills
- Extensions/Kicks
- Triple turn/Quad turn
- Double Toe Touch
- Firebird
- Russian
- Switch Leap
- Belles Seconds
- Axel
- Calypso
- Turning Russian
- Right Splits
- **Developing** Switch Tilt
- **Developing** Acro Skills
- **Developing** all of the skills listed above on the left

AGAIN: While it is **not** required for these skills listed to be **perfected** at the time of tryouts, dancers should be **working towards** mastering these expectations in order to improve.

Requirements and Time Commitment

Summer 2023 Requirements

HP Dance Co. offers summer dance camps that run all throughout June, July, and the beginning of August. All team members are required to attend 8 full days of **Drill Camp** (either "Intermediate" or "Advanced"). Drill Camp is distinct from "4th-5th Grade Camp." Dancers would benefit from attending as many summer camp days as possible. If you are absolutely unable to attend 8 full days of Drill Camp in 2023, you are still responsible to pay the \$1000 summer fee.

CORRECT (Fully satisfies the Summer requirement for team):	Summer offerings that are beneficial, but do <u>NOT</u> count towards the summer requirement for team:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 days of Drill Camp ("Intermediate" or "Advanced") 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "4th-5th Grade Camp" • Intermediate CLINICS • Advanced CLINICS

Fall 2023 Requirements

Weekly Requirements

INTERMEDIATE TEAMS

- 2 hours of Team Practices
- 1 hour Team Belles Prep Class
- 1 hour Team Ballet Class
- 1 hour Stretch, Strengthen, & Kick Class (you choose which one fits your schedule)

JUNIOR TEAMS

- 2 hours of Team Practices
- 1.5 hours Team Belles Prep Class
- 1 hour Team Ballet Class
- 1 hour Stretch, Strengthen, & Kick Class (you choose which one fits your schedule)

While this is the bare minimum number of hours required, team members may need more instruction in more areas in order to improve. Please ask your directors if you would like some guidance about which classes would best supplement your training (Turns & Leaps, Contemporary, etc.)

Monthly Requirements

- 3-4 hours of weekend practices (could be spread over multiple weekends; could include Saturdays or Sundays)

Miscellaneous Requirements

- Extra practices (as needed)
- Private Lessons (as needed)
- Community performances (if applicable; Ex. basketball halftime shows, tree lighting, HP Village LOCAL, etc.)

Spring 2024 Requirements

All of the same requirements as Fall 2023, with the addition of:

- *Weekly* weekend practices (as opposed to monthly)
- Friday/Saturday/Sunday competitions (every weekend in Feb. through the beginning of April), some of which require overnight travel
- Year-End Celebration Banquet
- Commemorative photo shoot
- Year-End Recital

Policies

The following policies will be implemented for the 2023-2024 season. Please read through these policies and direct any questions to info@hpdance.com *before* auditioning.

Practice & Performance

Each team will compete 3-4 routines at every contest. Once a dancer accepts a position on a team, she will then tryout for every routine that her team will compete. If at any point in the year she does not know the routine or does not execute the routine up to the expected standards, she will sit out and become an alternate for that dance. Any team member may be added or removed from a dance when necessary. Dancers are constantly moved within a routine. There are no guaranteed positions for any routine and a position within a routine is subject to change at any time. Team members may be removed from a dance or a team due to injury, attitude, commitment level, or lack of skill. Only dancers and directors are allowed inside of the studio during team practices. Parents are not permitted to watch practices.

Directors can and may call extra practices at any time. Dancers are expected to attend. Directors can require individual members to attend additional private lessons if the director thinks the dancer is falling behind.

Costumes, team warm ups, and practice attire are expected to be clean and tidy for all performances and competitions. Each team member will be responsible for having on the *correct* attire for practice and performances. Team warm ups are required for all competitions. Parents are responsible for their children at competitions and special events. Each parent must make sure their child is dressed and where they are supposed to be at all times during competition.

Attendance

Dancers are not permitted to miss any mandatory team practice (not even one)! Absences from practices may warrant dismissal from performances at the director's discretion. Homework, projects, trips, birthdays, illness etc. are not excuses to miss practice. Every child has homework as well as other things she would like to do. All team members are expected to learn to manage their time and to balance school work along with being committed to the team.

Any dancer who feels too sick to participate in team practice must come to practice with a doctor's note in order to sit out and observe. Otherwise, she will be asked to participate at the director's discretion. Dancers may not sit out more than three (3) times per year.

If a dancer is ill (to the point of being a contagious hazard to other students, as determined by a doctor) the day of a scheduled practice, she must contact her director as early as possible, so the director can assess and give further instructions. **Please do not assume that your child can stay home from practice because she missed school.** Oftentimes, sick dancers are very capable of attending practice, even if they are just sitting down, observing and absorbing the corrections and changes made to the routines.

If a dancer has an illness emergency within one hour of the beginning of team practice, keep in mind that directors will most likely not see any messages, as they will be occupied teaching and/or preparing for practice. Please contact Casey or Claire in the case of such emergencies.

Demerits may be given to dancers who arrive late to mandatory practices, misbehave, wear incorrect practice/performance attire, or consistently fail to execute routines to the expected standards. Accumulating too many demerits warrants removal from performances at the director's discretion.

A note about 5th grade Cotillion: Each year, we generally *do* have a large number of 5th grade team members who also participate in Cotillion. While it is possible to do both, **we cannot guarantee that team members will be able to attend Cotillion every week.** We will try our best to take Cotillion into consideration when scheduling Sunday practices, but know that if it is not possible to accommodate both, **dance must come first.** In order to aid in this scheduling, we ask that everyone who plans on taking Cotillion please sign up for the **5:30pm** class.

“Every team will practice every weekend in the Spring (including holiday weekends) until the last contest is over.”

Unless otherwise stated, teams will hold their weekend practices on Sunday afternoons. If there is an HPISD holiday creating a long weekend, then all weekend practices will be shifted to the last day of the weekend (i.e. If HPISD is closed for a Monday holiday, then teams will practice on that Monday. If HPISD is closed Monday *and* Tuesday, then teams will practice on that Tuesday, the last day of the weekend), and so on. Please take this into account as you plan family trips. Every team will practice every weekend in the Spring (including holiday weekends) until the last contest is over.

Discipline

HP Dance Co. parents are very important to the program. However, in order to run an effective program that is designed to meet the needs of many dancers, the team must come first. The best interest of the team will always take priority over an individual, and all decisions will be made accordingly. We kindly ask that every parent and student that is a part of the HP Dance Co. program show complete support. Please allow us to mold and shape your child even when that process is sometimes trying. The road to success is filled with bumps that must be overcome.

We believe in teaching dancers to take ownership of their team experience and to learn how to overcome obstacles *themselves*. We want to encourage parents and dancers to be involved in communication whenever possible.

Code of Conduct

All HP Dance Co. team members are expected to uphold our standards and code of conduct at all times (both inside and outside of practice). Failure to comply will warrant demerits or even removal from performances or from the entire HP Dance Co. program.

All HP Dance Co. members are expected to be courteous and respectful to all HP Dance Co. staff, team members, and other teams you are competing against (Philippians 2:3). Team members will behave with good sportsmanship at all times. Team members will cheerfully and faithfully execute all requirements involved with being a team member.

Team members will use self-control in their speech (Proverbs 25:28). Cursing, gossiping, or bullying will not be tolerated and could result in removal from the team. This applies to speech in person, as well as on the phone, and over social media (Ephesians 4:29, 32).

Team members will remain in their classroom at all times unless they have specific permission from the director. All team members will maintain classroom discipline as required by HP Dance Co. If a child becomes a disruption, they will be removed from class or practice and given an unexcused absence (Romans 14:13, 19). A follow up conference with a parent and the student will be required for the student to be able to attend class again.

Communication with Directors

We are big supporters of open and transparent communication. If you have questions or feedback, we are eager to listen. That said, one of our goals in training young girls is to train *them* up in the skill of advocating *for themselves*. If a *student* has a question or a concern, we want to encourage her to be brave and have confidence to *personally* ask her director *herself* (rather than sending her parents to speak on her behalf). Parents, the communication lines are open to you, however, whenever possible, we ask that you please partner with us in challenging the girls to speak up and advocate for themselves.

Anyone who reaches out to a director (student or parent), should always follow these guidelines:

- Face-to-face is always the most effective form of communication. Outside of emergencies, please only use email or text messaging as a means of scheduling an in-person meeting or phone call.
- Please keep communication within reasonable and respectful hours of the day. If you reach out after 9:00pm or on the weekend or on a holiday, you should expect a response on the next business day.
- Parents, students, and staff members, remember to be respectful, kind, and thoughtful with your words, even when you are confused or possibly upset. Be sure to address others in a professional manner, speaking to one another as people who are made in God's image. The training journey is sometimes challenging and may not always make sense in the moment. Please trust our years of experience, and remember to operate under the assumption that we want what is best *long-term* for all of our dancers and the team as a collective.

“Please trust our years of experience, and remember to operate under the assumption that we want what is best long-term for all of our dancers and the team as a collective.”

Tuition for 2023-2024 Season

Summer 2023

\$1000 will be collected to cover your 8 days of Summer Drill Camp. Any additional camp days you attend beyond that are \$125 each. Even if you fail to attend the minimum required days of Summer Drill Camp, you are still responsible for the full \$1000.

Fall 2023 and Spring 2024

INTERMEDIATE TEAMS - \$1,700 per semester, which covers:

- 2 hours of Team Practices
- 1 hour Team Belles Prep Class
- 1 hour Team Ballet Class
- 1 hour Stretch, Strengthen, & Kick Class (you choose which one fits your schedule)

JUNIOR TEAMS - \$1,800 per semester, which covers:

- 2 hours of Team Practices
- 1.5 hours Team Belles Prep Class
- 1 hour Team Ballet Class
- 1 hour Stretch, Strengthen, & Kick Class (you choose which one fits your schedule)

Additional classes and routines (Optional)

- 1 hour/week classes = \$185 per session*
- 1.5 hour/week classes = \$195 per session*

* 1 session = 8-9 weeks

Other fees to be collected throughout the year (**not** included in the team tuition amount mentioned above):

- Team apparel (includes practice attire, warm ups, team bag, costumes, props, etc.)
- Travel fees (bus travel, restaurant reservations, etc.)
- Contest entry fees (includes team entry fees, ensemble entry fees, and solo entry fees, etc.); **Avg = \$1,200**
- Extra team practices and choreography learning sessions
- Solo/duet choreography (if applicable)
- Meals while traveling
- Team banquet fees
- Photo shoot fees
- Gym reservation fees

Once payments are made, there are no refunds. Failure to submit payments on a timely basis warrants removal from performances or from the team.

Please keep a copy of this document for reference.

After reading this document fully, you must submit the **online sign-up form** to complete your registration for tryouts.