



A Guide for Students and Parents

Please read carefully

About This Handbook

FOR MORE THAN A DECADE our school has been a leader in dance education. We believe that our success comes as a result of providing solid training and quality service, along with an underlying belief in the strength of our organization. We have created this handbook to offer our dancers and their parents a clear understanding of their commitments and responsibility to the GDC Program and the school.

➤ **Dates and/or expenses listed in this handbook are subject to change. Please check the GDC bulletin board and emails for updates.**

For Our Dancers

Congratulations! You have been accepted into the GDC 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 more aware of your technique, and make the most of every class.

Respect for the teachers and choreographers you work with is essential. 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.

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 the upcoming performance and could end up letting themselves, their team, or the school down.

Performances and competitions are your opportunity to show the world the results of your dedication and hard work. To make the most of this opportunity:

- Arrive at performances at least one hour prior to the scheduled time, unless otherwise advised by your teachers.
- Be sure you are properly warmed up.
- Present yourself in a professional manner, with costumes wrinkle free, shoes cleaned, and all accessories accounted for.
- Go out there and show the audience how much you love to dance!

➤ **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.**

For the 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 program relies on a positive atmosphere for our faculty, Intensive participants, and their parents; it promotes a positive learning experience for all involved. Cooperation between all parents is expected. Showing respect for the other parents, along with the students and faculty, makes an important impression on the children. You are a role model for your child in how to interact with others in a professional setting.

Your child's presence at all classes, rehearsals, and performances 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, they share a common goal: to assure that every child receives the best possible training, both physically and mentally. Mutual respect between our faculty and our dancers' parents provides the children with the ultimate care and education.

Understanding Dance Education

As a parent, the financial support of your student is important, but of equal—perhaps even greater—value is your emotional support. Encourage your child to be the best that he or she can be without regard to what others may achieve. Dance is an individual art form; each child needs to achieve at a pace that's comfortable for him or her. No two students will progress at the same rate, even if they experience the exact same training. It's important to encourage the children to focus on themselves, give their all, and be satisfied with their own accomplishments.

Dance education encompasses far more than technique or the steps your children will learn. We believe the discipline of dance training gives young people a better understanding of commitment by offering them the chance to learn, experience the spirit of teamwork, and understand what hard work can accomplish. Our goal is to educate the minds, bodies, and souls of our students, to teach them the skills needed for a successful life, whether or not they stay involved in dance.

➤ **The financial support of your student is important, but of equal—perhaps even greater—value is your emotional support.**

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 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. Please see the school's director if you have questions or concerns about your child's placement.

Apprentice

Apprenticeships are offered to dancers that showed great promise during auditions. The judges choose dancers that they feel could benefit and succeed from our apprentice program and graduate to competition level. GDC's apprentice program offers select students the opportunity to be challenged in ADE classes with advanced training as well as gaining performance experience.

Keep in mind that all apprentices are considered a full member of GDC and will never be excluded.

- Apprentices must follow GDC set guidelines and participate in all GDC functions.
- Apprentices are to be at all the required classes and rehearsals scheduled for their group.
- Apprentices will participate in all GDC performances.
- Instructors will decide if and when an apprentice is ready to compete.

Dos and Don'ts

Some parents may compare their child's progress or class or choreography placement to that of others in the program. Watch for this behavior in your children as well, and encourage them to focus on their own accomplishments. Looking to others for inspiration is a good thing; however, a negative focus or comparison distracts from the energy that could be focused on becoming a stronger dancer. In addition, speaking negatively about your child's teachers, fellow dancers, or other parents in front of your child—or other students—could result in problems far beyond your original concerns. Often children will react to their parents in a way that imitates the parent's behavior with other adults or authority figures.

Children learn important lessons from their teachers and parents, acquiring important 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 to their peers, the adults in their lives, and themselves.

If you have questions or concerns about your child's dance education, don't panic—and please don't talk only with other parents when questions arise. Make an appointment to speak directly to your child's teachers or to Alisa. Please conduct all communication through the school office rather than approaching your child's teacher or the director between or during classes or calling them at home.

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 can offer expertise in the field of dance education.

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

For Dancers and Parents

Image

The children and parents involved in the GDC Program participate in many outside activities, each of which becomes a reflection of the school's philosophy.

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 director handles all communication with the directors of our outside activities.
- No parent or dancer may call or question the directors of any event. If you have a concern, please contact Alisa.

TIPS: DRESS CODE REQUIREMENTS

All members must follow set studio dress codes!

GIRLS: Solid leotard with pink tights for ballet/Pointe and solid leotard or tank/cami with any solid tight fitting bottoms for tap, lyrical, hip hop and jazz.

BOYS: Solid sweatpants and T-shirt.

Additional shoe styles may be required; please check with the school office. Each dancer should have two pairs of each kind of shoe, one for class and the other for performances.

➤ **GDC Members are required to wear appropriate shoes for all classes and rehearsals. Make sure shoes are clean and polished for each performance.**

GDC Dress Code Requirements

All dancers are to follow the dress code listed in the Alisa's Dance Academy Rules and Regulations. Below are specifications for GDC.

Tights: **BLOCH brand:** colors—Pink, Tan, Black (full footed, adaptatoe and hipster tights acceptable)
Body Wrappers brand: fishnet, pink seamed (Pointe students only)

Jumpstarters:

Ballet: Bloch ES0250
Jazz: Black Bloch SO495
Lyrical: Bloch Tan SO495 or ES0410L
Tap: Bloch black oxford tap SO381 or TA04

Juniors:

Ballet: Bloch ESO250
Jazz: Black Bloch SO495
Lyrical: Bloch Tan SO495 or ES0410L
Tap: Bloch black oxford tap SO381

Pre-Teens, Teens, Seniors & Elite:

Ballet: Bloch ESO250
Jazz: Black Bloch SO495
Lyrical: Bloch Tan SO495 or ES0410L
Tap: Bloch black oxford tap SO381 or SO388

You do not have to purchase these items now. There may be additional items needed for performances and competitions. Additional specific performance/competition supplies will be announced prior to each event.

GDC Encore / Recital Costume Information

GDC costumes will be worn in Encore, Competitions, Spring Recital and other performances! Costume forms will be coming home by email starting **Wednesday, September 1st** with costume fee due by **September 15th**.

Note from Dancer's Closet: Dancer's Closet will stock all items needed! Present your stamp card with each purchase to add up and receive cash back incentives on your fifth purchase!

Classes

All dancers are expected to attend their regularly scheduled classes in addition to all rehearsals and performances. **A total of THREE class days per semester may be missed.**

Students will be marked absent if they sit out of class due to minor illness or injury. Our philosophy on this matter is that if they are hurt or sick enough to sit out then they should probably stay home. Students that choose to sit out will be required to have a note from parent or may be asked by instructor to call parents to be picked up. Remember this is still considered an absence.

Parents must notify the Director of major illness and injuries as soon as possible. At which time arrangements will be made to keep the student up to speed on class and choreography. Any team member with poor attendance will be dismissed from dances or GDC.

Dancers will receive a class schedule in July. The program includes ballet, tap, jazz, and lyrical, with hip hop and Pointe as an option. There may be additional classes, including master classes, in which it is expected that all team members will participate. There is an additional charge for some master classes.

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

Rehearsal and Other Information

Rehearsals are an important part of the commitment to GDC. All dancers are expected to work hard and **arrive early** enough to give themselves time to warm up.

➤ ***Monday classes will take place on holidays when public schools may be closed.**

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

Rehearsals for the national competition will take place several days prior to national's dates. All dancers must attend.

No GDC member may miss more than three rehearsals during the season. A season starts in August and ends after the national competition in July. There will be no exceptions to this rule. Dancers who need to be excused are required to notify the school 24 hours prior to the scheduled rehearsal. Any dancer excused from a rehearsal is responsible for learning any missed choreography prior to arriving for the next rehearsal.

All GDC members must attend rehearsals in proper dance attire and appropriate shoes. Female team members are required to wear their hair pulled back for all rehearsals. Ballet rehearsals require a solid color leotard and pink tights.

➤ **It is expected that all dancers will be on their best behavior during rehearsals and work as team players at all times.**

Monthly Tuition	TBD Individually
GDC Membership Dues	\$125 / per semester
Recital Performance Fee	\$50 per student / \$80 per family

The Focus Is Not Simply on Competition

Since it is our goal to instill a passion for performing rather than merely the desire to win awards, Intensive dancers have performance opportunities other than competitions. We believe the lessons learned through concert performances are just 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 participation in competitions not simply part of our students' training as dancers; it's also an important part of how we influence them 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, 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!

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

ABOUT COMPETITIONS

Attendance

When a competition runs over the entire weekend, we expect our GDC members to attend the full event whether or not they are competing on a particular day. We work as a team, always available to support each other.

Independent Entries

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

Cash Scholarships

Soloists will receive a school credit for the amount of any cash scholarship awarded. It will be applied to lessons, costumes, entry fees, or other expenses related to dance training.

Tuition and Expense Policy

Part of the commitment to the GDC Program is being up-to-date with all accounts related to participation. Parents must fill out a *GDC Credit Card Authorization Form* to be kept on file for every GDC member. This is to ensure that students accounts stay current with accounting. Credit cards will automatically be run for any fees that parents are responsible for accordingly. If you do not wish for your credit card to be run on a specific due date, be sure to drop off another form of payment to the front office prior to any given due date or deadline.

Competition Entry Fees (approx) Competitions TBA

Competitions	Solo	Duo/Trio	Small Group	Large Group
Regionals	\$85	\$100	\$35	\$35
Nationals	\$105	\$110	\$40	\$40

(All competitions are open to the public at no charge.)

Activity Agenda 2010 (subject to change)

DATE	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	TIME
August 16th	Fall Semester Begins	Alisa's Dance Academy Lakeway	
August Date TBA	Gravity Member & Parent Meeting	Lakeway Studio	evening
August 28th	GDC Party	TBA	11:00am-4:00pm
September 11th	Nutcracker Auditions	Alisa's Dance Academy Westlake Location	TBA
February 10th 11th 12th	ENCORE (ADE & GDC Show)	Westlake High School Performing Arts Center	
May 28th & 29th	Recital	Westlake High School Performing Arts Center	

- **Please attend all meetings and read all newsletters and postings to keep updated about any additional commitments.**

Convention Tuition (approx)

GDC members are required to attend one convention during the year

Entry fees are due in the school office 5 weeks prior to each event.

Convention	Tuition	Location
Co. Dance	12yrs & Up \$199 6yrs-11yrs \$189 Observers \$35	San Marcos Embassy Suites
NYCDA	13yrs & up \$215 7yrs -12yrs \$190 Observers \$35	Hilton Houston North
West Coast Dance Explosion	12yrs & up \$190 6yrs-11yrs \$165 Observers \$35	Westin Galleria Houston TX

Event	Current Admission Charges
Toros Half Time Performance	\$7 approx. per person
Trail Of Lights	No Charge
ENCORE	\$13 per person, reserved seating Dancers are required to sell 10 tickets

Costumes

Costume payments are the sole responsibility of the parent/guardian. Team members may compete in all their subjects. An additional costume will be required for the production number. Older dancers might have specialty numbers. The average cost of a costume is \$70, **Due September 15th.**

THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS TO THIS POLICY.

If a GDC member is dismissed or leaves the program, an apprentice may replace him or her. If needed the student leaving the team is expected to turn in all costumes to the school office; they will be returned to the student after the last performance of the season.

TIPS: 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 steam costumes before each performance.
- ✓ Place your name in all costumes and shoes.

Summer Programs

FOCUS All Gravity Dance Company members may attend one session of the FOCUS intensive in the summer.

JULY 12-16

AUGUST 2-6

Fees: Early Bird Registration (by April 1st) \$345 (jr int) \$405 (high int & adv)

Registration after April 1st \$370 (jr int) \$430 (high int & adv)

Walk-ins \$395 (jr int) \$455 (high int & adv)

Self Fund-Raising

The school offers one optional fund-raising & sponsor programs for GDC dancers to defray their expenses throughout the year.

A Final Note

WELCOME TO Gravity Dance Company! We look forward to an exciting, rewarding season!