

*****This is your invite to be a Dance Expressions competition soloist*****

Competition Dancer Policies 2025-2026

TO BE READ BY PARENT & STUDENT

This invite is for one solo unless indicated.

Several staff members have selected all soloists, duets, trios based on several criteria such as ability, work ethic, flexibility, showmanship, memory, strong technique, dedication, attitude of the dancer & positive support by the dancer's family! If positive & easy-going support by mom/family changes, the status of the solo may change.

THESE POLICIES ARE IN EFFECT AS A DANCE EXPRESSIONS SOLOIST/DUET OR TRIO MEMBER.

Our competition cast members are traditionally on one of our teams. A team commitment improves your technique and performance value that in turn enhances your solo/duet/trio. A competition cast member must be enrolled at Dance Expressions in classical ballet all year long (w/good attendance). If you take ballet with Dayton Ballet, South Dayton Ballet or DCDC in the summer, that is not discouraged but you must also be enrolled with Dance Expressions. If you miss a ballet class, you must make that class up to keep your "soloist" status. An additional dance class is also required for the full dance year whether it is the multiple team classes (aka Jr. Elite kids on Seniors, Seniors on Contemp. as well) or a jazz, lyrical, contemporary class AND a strength and conditioning class (again w/good attendance) is a must, or probation will be a possibility. If doing 2 solos/duet/trio, an extra recital class is expected aka Contemporary class with Heather or Haleigh. If you did not make a group, perhaps taking that class will help achieve those goals & yes, we look at that initiative as a positive. All soloists must use one of our recommended present or past choreographers, alumni, unless cleared with Director.

If you have received this informational packet, then your teachers see great potential in YOU as a competition performer. A solo is a great adventure, one that will help improve self-discipline, time management, and self-esteem while pushing your dance ability to the next level!

***A chosen soloist/duet/trio dancer for one year does not mean this is automatic the next. We do re-evaluate each year. We are looking for dancers that still appreciate this privilege! We have had a handful of past soloists that become entitled & make things difficult for all involved. If that becomes the case, it's time to take a break. Outstanding behavior/leadership/attitude in & out of the studio is a must. Reputation of a soloist reflects your studio & teachers & we want our dancers to learn more than just a dance routine. Also, when looking at all the choreographer puts into a student, if the student/parent does NOT put the same amount or more effort into the experience then the soloist may have to sit out a year. If there are quite a few cancelations or no shows in a season, this does not make for a great solo candidate. Parents must make an effort to work with choreographer, or choreographer will recommend them not returning the following year. I receive feedback from choreographers regarding the scheduling of lessons and response timing & this is where we need parents to either be all in or consider taking a break if becomes too difficult to handle.*

The above paragraph must be read by the dancer & parent, Lori will be talking to the returning kids about this.

All soloists MUST compete their Dance Expressions solo/s at: at least TWO fall offered contests & at least THREE 2026 events offered. All duet/trios must compete at least one fall contest and the 3 assigned studio events.

That is the reason we created trio's/ groups, to represent the studio & to be a competitive force in the studio circuits. If you cannot commit to this expectation, then we will need to offer your spot to another dancer.

~Music – Music/vision/theme, will be decided on by the choreographer. You may make suggestions to your teacher, but they are the expert, and they have experience in what music is overused and what tempo/style suits you and your division best. Giving them a hard time will not be acceptable as the choreographer has the experience. If a parent replies "she doesn't really love that" you have to understand that they know best & you will most likely be using that song. It's just not up to mom and daughter. Please hear the vision out & support. An 8-year-old will not be doing choreo. to a break-up song or any song that is out of their realm of understanding. We feel it's best for a dancer to hold off on styles choices of lyrical or contemporary routines unless the dancer is in at least Ballet IV & has the proper technique and skill.

~Choreography – Due to the great number of students doing solos, choreographers will do their very best to create brand new choreography for each soloist. There are no guarantees that a move will not be used in more than one routine. Keep in mind that we all come from the same studio. We have our own style, and everyone should be proud of that! Just remember that the choreographers choreograph a routine to best feature and highlight the strengths of the soloist! Choreography is not to be changed by the student or parent. Please do not ask to use a move you just saw in your teammate's routine.

- Routines will begin in the summer -not necessarily the 1st day of summer vacation but completed by end of September. Choreographers will make a game plan & every teacher is different. No panic if you start in August.

~Costume - Choreographer will have a vision. Choreographer will set up a time for you to see their thoughts after the costume books arrive or when they find an idea online. Costumes need to be chosen quickly & usually the deadline is mid-September. You will be billed for your costume at the end of September. This must be paid quickly so please plan for that in your calendar. Dancer will not receive costume until payment is made. Your choreographer may have your costume made & if so, fabric hunting and ordering of crystals may be required by parent & it might be pricey. Borrowing may also be suggested if the vision matches a previous costume worn by a soloist or class. Ordering on your own (discount dance supply etc) you do take a risk that someone else will have same pieces. Must have director approval before ordering. **NO accessories/glitter/gems** will be added to hair, face, costumes unless approved by choreographer and Ms. Lori. Sometimes the trends come

and go and we want to avoid things that no longer trendy so please make sure to check in with choreographer when adding anything to your look. The choreographers seek advice from each other too. We want them to represent us all. **This applies to pageant gowns as well.**

~**Leveling** – for studio contests leveling will be completely up to Ms. Lori & a few veteran teachers. The level of your child will be determined by a few things but going forward it will be based on where they **should** be, not where they are at now. If you have a dancer in year 5-6, they should not be in level 1! When a parent tries to talk us back down to a previous level, we have to say....”at this point they need pushed, it’s up to them to grow, put the work in, stay consistent” etc. Winning the level is not the ultimate goal, it’s dancing to their full potential. That’s on them. If we hear parent rumblings/gossip, the dancer goes on immediate probation because it’s just not up for discussion. All 12 & up dancers, with even a couple years of experiences are going straight into level II automatically because we want our group routines to land in level II or III.

~**Gown** (for solo pageant participants)– All formal gowns must be chosen by beginning of January. Remember that there is no need to spend hundreds of dollars on a dress! Borrowing is always a great option or offering to buy from teammates. Gown must be age appropriate! Choreographer and/or Lori MUST approve & will not hesitate at all to have you choose another gown! You send pic to your choreographer, and they share it with our choreographer group chat, whoever sends first has dibs. We cannot have 4 royal blue dresses in the same level and division, you will not be memorable. We will be firm on this. It happens every year. We also need to approve shoes and jewelry.

~**Choreographer** or Ms. Lori has the final say in everything! Music, costumes, dance shoes and gowns all need to be approved. If you are representing our dance studio you want to put together the best overall package. Teachers have the experience with this so please trust your teachers. Ms. Lori will place new soloists with the best possible fit in a choreographer. To do two solos, you must receive an invite. Much is considered with this privilege but mainly work ethic and balancing group routines with your solo as well the strong appreciation for all things dance. Dancers receiving two solos must also be taking a non-team dance class (new policy 2025-26) and not just team classes. Those doing 2 solos, if we feel it didn’t go as smoothly as it could have, we may go back to just one.

**Choreographers include ~Ms. Lori, Miss Sarah, Ms. Amy J, Miss Amy K., Ms. Lauren D., Miss Torre, Ms. Megan, Miss Taryn, Miss Heather, Miss Haleigh, Miss Brienne, Miss Kiki, Miss Carlee, Miss Reagan, Miss Alyssa H.

Some choreographers will have assigned mentors that assist in cleaning their younger dancers. Some of our teens are not employed by Dance Expressions so please check in with Lori first before asking them for a private lesson. A soloist is not limited to working w/only one choreographer; you can seek other studio teachers/student teachers to clean your routines.

Solo payment breakdown~ \$415.00 or \$440.00

\$175 (choreographers 21 & under) **\$200.00** (22 & older)-> will be paid to choreographer for vision, choreography, music selection/cutting & 2 hours of instruction, costume selection or design.

***\$75.00 ->** will go to Dance Expressions for studio rental during initial instruction, possible music editing, future editing/speed changes and registration/music upload for all studio contests & other administration duties.

***\$165.00 ->** required full cast participation at specific studio circuit contest X 1 deposit to come out later for specific full studio contest.

This lump sum MUST be paid to your choreographer at your FIRST lesson by check made out to Dance Expressions & your choreographer will write you a receipt, please keep. Do **not** pay now and do **not** pay the desk and do **not** mail and do not venmo. Cannot be paid in partial payments. Again, please budget & plan for this to occur mid-summer. **A second solo subtract \$50.00**= no need for 2nd round of administration fees, \$25.00 of the admin fees still covers a discount rated for studio use during that initial choreo.

Trio payment breakdown per individual~ **\$405.00** (\$150.00 trio choreo fee & \$255.00 seed money for your portion of 3 studio contests paid in full based on last year’s 2023/24 comp fee’s) your trio fee will cover 3 days of 2-hour lessons (there is no charge for studio use while learning as a privilege to the trios for going above and beyond). Seed money=This means once this is paid this summer you do not owe for ANY studio contests (unless we end up at a contest that is awkwardly more expensive). You are automatically registered for all 3 aka no more money due all year with the exception of cleaning private lessons. <helpful hint> Stay on top of the choreography and technique and you won’t need a ton of these since you are a select group. All duet/trios must COMMIT to working on own, understanding that extra time will be a must on occasion & you cannot make it difficult when scheduling or we will have to replace you in the trio.

***While judging for NEXSTAR I’ve talked shop with phenomenal artistic directors all over the country ...The average those other dancers pay JUST for initial solo is \$600.00, costuming usually a set fee of anywhere from \$200.00 to 300.00 plus stones, several required conventions, all expenses paid for up to 3 instructors on site at every contest. We by far are the cheapest with a SOLID product. Other studios fly well-known choreographers in with all expenses paid BY the student’s family and we are finding ourselves ranking higher than they do at contests on many an occasion. I’m extremely proud of that fact. Ms. Lori will guide each choreographer to make sure each student is receiving the best possible experience. Under special circumstances we might try an outside choreographer. During the upcoming summer choreographer meeting several guidelines will be set for the staff.

SOLO CONTEST REGISTRATION***We will send out a schedule in mid-August, of ALL events for the year (team included) with a payment deadline for solos. This form will need to be filled out in completion and turned in at one of the Open House events. Once this is filled out, it’s a done deal, you are quickly registered in all studio events with a deposit made by the studio. This is the only time you can pre-register for Title. You cannot add to your paperwork later. Payment dates will be included. Reminder you are paying seed money, so one contest is paid for in the summer. This will go into your account & come out in December when we start to pay for our studio contests. I will let you know the specific contest that is a must (Platinum this past season) & this is where your seed money will go. We try to

spread out all dance & team fees & we understand it can be difficult. Please understand that Dance Expressions cannot pay ahead for you. We hope that you take every advantage of the fundraisers we offer. The solo entry free money is due when it's due, the studio cannot pay \$2500.00 without all \$ collected & late fees will apply. Showcase contests are approx. \$75.00 a piece and for those you register yourself. More details during the summer that will help you prepare for the entire season.

We can offer any fundraiser at any time if any parents want to head up! I'm open to anything that will earn the dancer money as long as it's a nice percentage and it's not in direct competition with another fundraiser we might already be doing or that we know the schools are doing.

Additional Studio Time: To be paid at time of session with private lesson form!

1-hour w/choreographer cleaning routine & making any tweaks and adjustments...

\$45.00 60 minutes, \$37.00 45 minutes, \$30.00 30 minutes

<certain choreographers private lesson fees are different, slightly higher>

*1-hour w/ choreographer outside of studio (gym or stage or house) – choreographer decision

*1 hour - \$25.00 studio rental (session can be shared, with ONE other dancer) no choreographer in attendance

We have a private lesson folder on the desk for payments without a teacher, do not throw on the desk. Please pay for any lessons you have with your instructor AT the time you have them BY CHECK. If you don't pay, the choreographer doesn't get paid. Please don't make the individual choreographers chase payments. It's due at the time of service or a \$15.00 late fee will apply. I have to make things simpler for all involved. Venmo is reserved for other types of payments. Need all solo lessons paid by check!

**It's up to you to remember routines, clean routines and listen to judges' critique. Choreographer will also do their best to listen to the critique. Those dancers that don't do this will NOT improve, it's not an option, you must listen to and be able to tell us what the judges said. We ask them if they listened & they often say, "no".

A 1-hour session is not required. Choreographer may set up only 30-minute etc. sessions. Choreography changes may occur throughout year, esp. once we start competing. Your choreographer will always be watching for ways to improve your routine & your performance. It's their name; it's the studio name; they'll see it through. If they do not, please contact me. We will set up a mentor & mentor will make tweaks, or another choreographer can do this for you too.

**Choreographer may set up times with you for cleaning sessions or you may contact your choreographer. You do not have to work with your teacher every single time they offer but you must be prepared for your first preliminary contest, or the choreographer will recommend that you should not attend. This goes for those times between competitions in Feb-May when the choreographer is trying to work with your child, if it becomes too difficult then the dancer will have to sit out.

**Use a variety of teachers, student teachers/choreographers to clean. The more eyes the better!

Additional information:

- Choreographers will walk you through the whole experience and let you, the parents & the performer know what to expect.
- If you commit to a solo and have a change of heart, partial payment will still have to be made depending on what choreographer has completed... to be decided on by Ms. Lori and this will be noted in contract.
- If team routines suffer, solo lessons will pause. If individually your child cannot balance team and solo, the solo may be pulled from a competition. Group routines come first.
- If you were a Dance Expressions soloist the previous season it does not necessarily mean you will be one the next year. It depends on the commitment the family made to working with the choreographer. Those that make it hard on the teacher & do not always have the dancer prepared may not be ready for this dance commitment.
- Congeniality toward your fellow soloists & families is a must. Will not tolerate gossip or put down of any of our students, dancers AND parents. This is sometimes a hesitancy with inviting dancers to become soloists because we see an issue with parent gossip or non-conformity to team rules.
- Must remain in good standing with behavior, attendance & studio class fees or will be put on probation as a soloist. I will use seed money toward studio tuition before I pay it toward an event!! I have had to do this several times in the past.
- DUET/TRIO members hand selected based on compatibility. Additional soloists may be chosen by invite over the next month after team tryouts. Certain individuals may be offered a **2nd solo**. If you are not and it's discussed that others have an advantage, your child will go on probation. Again, some things are not up for parent discussion.

Being a Dance Expressions soloist is a privilege so please remember regular dance class attendance, strong dedication, work ethic & a great attitude 24/7 is

REQUIRED. Going on this journey is a big commitment for everyone involved so please give this some thought.

~~~~Please fill out if you and your family are excited about the solo journey & please turn in 7 days prior to team auditions.

Dance NAME (print)\_\_\_\_\_

Dancer signature\_\_\_\_\_

Parent signature\_\_\_\_\_

Family EMAILS\_\_\_\_\_

PHONE #1\_\_\_\_\_ #2 \_\_\_\_\_ (student cell if applies)

BIRTHDATE (month/day/year) \_\_\_\_\_

SCHOOL\_\_\_\_\_ 2025-2026 GRADE\_\_\_\_\_

I accept my invite & have read & completely understand what is expected of me in order to be a (circle)  
**SOLOIST** **DUET/TRIO MEMBER (if previously invited)**

CHOREOGRAPHER/S\_\_\_\_\_

\*You will traditionally have the same choreographer unless we feel someone is a better fit or possibly someone closer to home if you have had a college teacher. Another possible switch will occur if we feel your style is now better suited for a choreographer with a similar or older style. Lori will contact you or has contacted you already if we feel a switch of choreographer for this season is a possibility.

*Invites to do a second solo will still be limited to only a handful of dancers and be discussed after team auditions and after all group routines are finalized. This could be same or a different choreographer. Remember Team & Tuition Fees are the priority over a solo lesson or a solo entry and will always be emphasized as such.*