

HIGHLAND ★ PARK DANCE COMPANY

Highland Park Dance Company
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Highland Park Dance Company Competition Team Tryout Procedures and Team Expectations 2021-2022

Introduction

We are so glad you are interested in potentially becoming a member of a Highland Park Dance Company Competitive 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. You may provide multiple email addresses if you would like (for multiple parents, work emails, etc.). All pertinent info is sent via the HP Dance *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 2020). 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 2021-2022 dance season (August 2021-March 2022) as well as committing to attend all competitions, some of which may require travel. Some teams may be required to attend additional performance, conventions, etc. that extend throughout the end of May 2022. 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 2021-2022 school year
- One parent must attend the mandatory parent meeting on Wednesday, April 28
- Must fill out and submit the online registration form
- Must submit registration fee of \$50 (or \$100 for day-of for late registration)

Important Dates

Wednesday, April 28	Mandatory Parent Meetings 9:00-10:00am - Rising 4th-6th 10:15-11:15am - Rising 7th & above <i>If you are unable to attend this morning meeting, please email hpdancefeet@gmail.com to reserve a spot in our 8pm meeting that same evening.</i>
Saturday, May 1	Tryout choreography teaching day. 9:00-10:00am - Rising 4th-6th who are NEW to team 10:15-11:15am - All returning team members PLUS rising 7th & above who are NEW to team Online registration form and registration fee is due this day.
Saturday, May 8	Optional extra practice clinics; Register online through your HP Dance account; 10:00am-11:00am - Rising 4th-6th who are NEW to team; \$30 11:15am-12:30pm - All returning team members PLUS rising 7th & above who are NEW to team; \$45
Saturday, May 15	Tryout Day; Results will be announced via email 9:00am - Arrival time for rising 4th-6th who are NEW to team 10:15am - Arrival time for all returning team members PLUS rising 7th & above who are NEW to team Students will be dismissed after callbacks are complete.
August-December	Fall semester; Practice every week and on one weekend per month
January-March	Spring semester; Practice every week and every weekend; Weekend competitions; Misc. spring events: banquet, photo shoot, feet painting, recital, etc.

Tryouts (May 2021)

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.

Saturday, May 1 – Tryout Choreography Teaching Day

On this day, 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. We will offer separate learning sessions on this day, 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.

9:00-10:00am - Rising 4th-6th who are NEW to team

10:15-11:15am - All returning team members PLUS rising 7th-8th who are NEW to team

Please arrive at your learning session at least 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 teaching sessions on May 1, 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.

Two weeks after learning, prospective team members will then 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 2021-2022 year. (See skills list located later in the packet.) In addition to the skills listed, judges will also be evaluating footwork, arm placement, arm pathways, timing, and overall athleticism and coordination.

Saturday, May 8 – Optional Extra Practice Clinic

One week after learning the tryout dance, we will offer an extra practice clinic for those interested. This is ***not a requirement*** to try out. 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 account before attending.

10:00am-11:00am - Rising 4th-6th who are NEW to team; \$30

11:15am-12:30pm - All returning team members PLUS rising 7th & above who are NEW to team; \$45

Saturday, May 15 - Tryout Day

On this day, all dancers seeking a position on an HP Dance Co. competitive team will come to the studio to audition in front of the judges and directors. Dancers will be asked to showcase their skills and the choreography taught on May 1. Please arrive at the same time you were scheduled to come for your learning session on May 1. If we finish early, we will let the girls know to call and notify parents. Please arrive 15-20 minutes early in order to allow time to warm-up and stretch before auditioning. 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. Returning team members, please wear your black catsuits, spandex, and leg warmers.

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 everyone has performed at least once, judges will then call back groups of dancers to return to the studio to be re-evaluated.

Call backs are neither a "good" nor a "bad" thing. They simply mean that the judges would like to see the dancer again. The directors and judges will be assessing each dancer's technique, skills, 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 2021-2022 year. In addition to the skills listed in this packet, judges will also be evaluating footwork, arm placement, arm pathways, timing, and overall athleticism and coordination.

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.

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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 skills and dance movements 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 2021-2022 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.

Solo & Duet Tryouts – Summer 2021

Those interested in competing a solo or duet during the 2021-2022 season will have the opportunity to submit an audition video as early as May 2021. Please email hpdancefeet@gmail.com a clear, quality video of yourself performing at least 1-minute of choreography (a jazz routine from a previous competition season or Belles Prep class will suffice). Record horizontally wearing, dance attire and footwear allowing for dance performance. Costumes and/or make-up are not necessary. Check carefully that your space is adequate for the safe execution of your dance performance. Most phone cameras produce a quality recording. For best results, go to: *Settings>Camera>* and set to record video at 1080p/30fps. Please note, you are not being judged on media capabilities. If you are interested in competing a duet, still submit a video of you dancing by yourself, since the judging criteria for solos and duets is the same. For solos and duets alike, the judges will be evaluating technique, stamina, and most importantly performance quality (posture, projection, smile, etc.). The individuals who are selected to compete a solo/duet will be notified via email within 1-2 weeks after your video submission.

If selected, all solos/duets must have their competition choreography and costume choices approved by Casey Sinclair. Solos/duets 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 should have these two items finalized and approved by the end of summer or in early fall of 2021. All solos/duets 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.

Elite Routines

All HP Dance Co. teams will compete at least three routines in the Spring of 2022. Once dancers have been placed on teams for the 2021-2022 year, some members might be asked to join an elite subgroup that will compete a 4th, more challenging and advanced routine for their team. This new approach will take the place of “Ensembles” and will serve to improve the teams’ overall scores.

Those selected for the 4th Elite routine will have additional weekly practices and weekend practices along with their regular team rehearsal. There is no separate tryout for these Elite routines. The advanced dancers will be selected and announced at the same time as the overall team placement decision. There is a chance some dancers may be added to the Elite routines later on in the semester.

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:

Intermediate (4th-6th) Skills:

- Single or Double pirouette
- Right Jete Leap
- Press Leap
- Chaine turns
- Toe Touch
- High Kick
- Developing a Calypso Jump
- Developing a Russian Leap
- Developing a Russian Leap
- Developing Turns in 2nd
- Developing Turning Disc Jump

Advanced (7th-8th) Skills:

- All the previously mentioned skills
- Triple pirouette
- Right Jete Leap
- Switch Leap
- Calypso Jump
- Russian Leap
- Turns in 2nd
- Turning Russian Leap
- Developing Tumbling Skills

Please note: 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 2021 Requirements

HP Dance Co. offers summer dance camps that run all throughout May, June, July, and the beginning of August. All team members are required to attend two (2) Drill Camps in order to tryout. Dancers would benefit from attending as many summer camps as possible. If you are absolutely unable to attend 2 full Drill camps in 2021, you are still responsible to pay the \$1000 summer fee, and we will supply you with online training material in lieu of in-person camp.

Fall 2021 Requirements

Weekly Requirements

INTERMEDIATE TEAMS

- ☐ 2-3 hours of Team Practices
- ☐ 1 hour Team Belles Prep Class
- ☐ 1 hour Team Ballet Class
- ☐ 1 hour Turns & Leaps Technique Class (you choose which one fits your schedule)
- ☐ 1 hour Stretch & High Kick Class (you choose which one fits your schedule)

JUNIOR TEAMS

- ☐ 2-3 hours of Team Practices
- ☐ 1.5 hours Team Belles Prep Class
- ☐ 1 hour Team Ballet Class
- ☐ 1.5 hours Turns & Leaps Technique (you choose which one fits your schedule)
- ☐ 1 hour Stretch & High Kick Class (you choose which one fits your schedule)

Monthly Requirements

- 3-4 hours of weekend practices (could be spread over multiple weekends)

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 2022 Requirements

All of the same requirements as Fall 2021, with the addition of:

- Weekly weekend rehearsals (as opposed to monthly)
- Friday/Saturday/Sunday competitions (every weekend in Feb. through the beginning of March), 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 2021-2022 season. Please read through these policies and direct any questions to hpdancefeet@gmail.com *before* auditioning.

Practice & Performance

Once a dancer accepts a position on a team, she will audition for every routine. If at any point in the year she does not know the routine or does not execute the routine up to our 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) the day of a scheduled practice, she must come to the studio anyway. If the director feels a child needs to be sent home, she may be excused *after being assessed in person*. In order to be excused from practice, dancers must first contact Casey Sinclair or Claire Smitham to schedule a time to come to the studio to be assessed. For your convenience, a dancer may contact Casey or Claire to be assessed as early as noon on the day of practice. After being assessed by Casey and/or Claire, you will then be directed on how to proceed. 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 and observing.

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.

"Tardies" will be given to dancers who arrive late to any mandatory HP Dance Co. function. Accumulating three (3) tardies warrants dismissal from performances at the director's discretion. In addition to arriving late, tardies or partial tardies will be given to dancers who misbehave, wear incorrect practice/performance attire, or consistently fail to execute routines to the expected standards.

"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 (Advanced routines may practice on Saturday mornings). 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). 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 tardies or even dismissal 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 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 ask on her behalf). Parents, the communication lines are open to you as well. However, whenever possible, we ask that you please partner with us in challenging the girls to speak for themselves.

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

- Face-to-face is the best case scenario, phone call is second best, then writing a text or email last. Writing your director to schedule a later in-person or phone conversation is great too.
- 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. Trust our years of experience and success, 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 2021-2022 Season

Summer 2021

\$1000 will be collected in May to cover your 2 (minimum) summer Drill Camps. Any additional camps you attend beyond that are \$500.

Fall 2021 and Spring 2022

Required Classes

Intermediate Teams - \$1,700 (or \$1,800 if in the Elite 4th routine) each semester, which covers all of the minimum requirements for Team. Included in this amount:

- ☐ 2-3 hours/week of Team Practices
- ☐ 1 hour/week Team Belles Prep Class
- ☐ 1 hour/week Team Ballet Class
- ☐ 1 hour/week Turns & Leaps Technique Class (you choose which one fits your schedule)
- ☐ 1 hour/week Stretch & High Kick Class (you choose which one fits your schedule)

Junior Teams - \$1,800 (or \$1,900 if in the Elite 4th routine) each semester, which covers all of the minimum requirements for Team. Included in this amount:

- ☐ 2-3 hours/week of Team Practices
- ☐ 1.5 hours/week Team Belles Prep Class
- ☐ 1 hour/week Team Ballet Class
- ☐ 1.5 hours/week Turns & Leaps Technique (you choose which one fits your schedule)
- ☐ 1 hour/week Stretch & High Kick Class (you choose which one fits your schedule)

Additional Classes (Optional)

- 1 hour/week classes = \$185, paid twice each semester
- 1.5 hour/week classes = \$195, paid twice each semester

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.)
- 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.