



## Jazz Ensemble Handbook

*A Guide for Students and Parents*

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 students and their parents a clear understanding of their commitments and responsibility to Jazz Ensemble and the school.

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Dance It Out Jazz Ensemble is to provide students with an opportunity to participate in an activity and develop sportsmanship, character, dedication, performance skills, and teamwork. Participation on the Jazz Ensemble team is a privilege. As a member of this group, you represent our dance program; and your conduct and actions in the classroom, on the dance floor, and in the community should not deviate from the regulations and code of conduct set forth in our Code of Conduct. Team members must show determination, dedication, and desire to be a productive member of this team.

### **DEDICATION:**

There is a level of commitment required to be a part of the Jazz Ensemble. You must have a desired level of commitment not just for yourself, but for your ENTIRE team. Being on this team, you will depend on your other team mates to be at practice consistently and do their part in having the knowledge of their routine. If at any time, you are not doing your part as a productive member of this team you will be suspended.

Dates and/or expenses listed in this handbook are subject to change.

### **Key contact information for Dance It Out:**

18742 Hwy One  
La Crosse, VA 23950  
434-757-1029  
[danceitoutstudios@gmail.com](mailto:danceitoutstudios@gmail.com)

### **Key event dates:**

Here is a typical list of performances and approximate performance dates for your reference. I will try to communicate as early as possibly with details.

Calendar for Next Year (more to be added)

- o Taste of Brunswick (Oct)
- o Boydton Day (October 26th)
- o South Hill Christmas Parade (December 1st)
- o Pine View/Hundley Center performance (December)
- o Pine View/Hundley Center Performance (May/June)
- o Dance It Out Revue (June)

### **FOR OUR DANCERS:**

Congratulations! You have been accepted into the Jazz Ensemble. 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.

Being a member of the Jazz Ensemble is a privilege that dancers and their parents must appreciate and respect. Participation in the program is restricted to dancers who are ready to make achieving their personal best a priority. There will be times when classes, rehearsals, or performances will be scheduled when your non-dance friends or family may be headed to the mall or the movies.

We encourage dancers to be as dedicated to their academic studies as they are to their dance training. If your participation in this program affects your grades or the expectations and goals set by your parents, we cannot allow you to continue in the program. Grades must be submitted each grading period. Dancers must maintain a C or better average in their classes.

Reasons why this program might not be a good fit for you:

- You're involved in extracurricular activities that could interfere with your class, rehearsal, or performance commitments.
- You're doing it because you want to keep up with your friends, but you are not passionate about dance nor the commitment.
- You're doing it because your parent(s) want you to.
- You're not fully committed to attending all classes and rehearsals.

### **Program Benefits:**

The Jazz Ensemble focuses on educating young people to strive for their personal best in anything they want to accomplish. We achieve our goals for the program by offering young people the chance to:

- gain a sense of balance in life by managing their commitments to both dance and academics;
- participate in a physical activity that enhances understanding of the value of a healthy body;
- develop a sense of confidence when speaking or making a presentation in a public setting, which is also a great benefit in college or job interviews;
- work with mentors who are focused on the students' success inside and outside of the classroom;
- enjoy friendships that could last a lifetime and a sense of belonging to an extended family of fellow dancers, teachers, and parents;
- discover the results of hard work and determination; and
- develop a lifelong appreciation for the performing arts.

In addition, making a commitment to the policies set forth in this handbook teaches our young people that there are boundaries that must be respected in order to succeed in the program.

### **Class or Choreography Placement:**

By recommendation only.

### **Classes:**

All dancers are expected to attend their regularly scheduled classes in addition to all rehearsals and performances. No more than five class days per season may be missed. Any team member with poor attendance will be dismissed from the program. Jazz Ensemble must be enrolled in ballet and jazz.

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

### **Rehearsals:**

All classes 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 an upcoming performance and could end up disappointing themselves, their team, or the school.

An important lesson taught through our Jazz Ensemble is the value of teamwork. Dancers who miss a rehearsal because of a non-emergency circumstance are letting their fellow dancers down in many ways. We expect parents to nurture the values that dance education teaches; therefore, you should never encourage your child to let the group down.

If parents have a conflict that prevents them from taking their children to a scheduled rehearsal, we will be more than happy to arrange transportation with other parents from the same group. Our goal is to help all children make their commitments.

□ Dancers: 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.

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

All Jazz Ensemble dancers must attend rehearsals and classes in proper dance attire and appropriate shoes. Female team members are required to wear their hair pulled back or in a bun for all rehearsals. Ballet rehearsals require black leotard and pink tights for girls and black tights and a white T-shirt for boys.

□ We expect all dancers to be on their best behavior during rehearsals and work as team players at all times.

### **Performances:**

Members of the Jazz Ensemble must give notice of missing a performance at least 4 weeks in advance. Dancers will be dismissed from the program if performances are missed. The objective of this program is to perform so dancers must be present. Dancers are expected to arrive prepared!

### **Respect:**

Respect for the school, its teachers, and its choreographers is essential.

The teachers and choreographers selected to work with our Jazz Ensemble dancers are among the finest and most experienced available. They are selected because of their professionalism and knowledge of what is technically and emotionally right for the dancers.

Guidelines for behavior:

- Leave any personal negativity at the door when entering the studio.
- Arrive at least 10 minutes before the start of every class or rehearsal.
- Proper dancewear and shoes are a must in every class and rehearsal.
- Choreography must never be questioned.
- Never attempt to contact teachers or choreographers at home. All contact must be made through the school office.
- Finish every class or choreography session with a thank-you to the teacher or choreographer.
- When wearing your school jacket or other apparel to non-dance events, be sure that the activities and your behavior reflect positively on you and the school.

### **Image:**

The children and parents involved in the Jazz Ensemble program participate in many outside activities, all of which reflect Dance It Out'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 the director of our school.
- Dancer and parents should be properly dressed for all events. Do not arrive at or leave any event in your dancewear; always wear a cover-up.
- Go out there and show the audience how much you love to dance!

### **Dress Code Requirements:**

<b>Class</b>	<b>Boys</b>	<b>Girls</b>
Jazz	Black sweatpants or tights, white T-shirt, black jazz shoes	Black leotard; black or tan tights; black & tan jazz shoes. Character Shoes.

### **Additional Shoe/Dancewear Requirements:**

All Jazz Ensemble program participants must have the following:

- Black slip on jazz shoes
- Tan slip on jazz shoes
- Black leggings or pants
- Black short sleeve leotard
- Black shorts
- Possible addition – character shoes

### **Additional Cost:**

We do require a team jacket and some miscellaneous costume fees may occur throughout the year. We try to keep costs as minimal as possible.

### **Summer Program:**

Jazz Ensemble members must attend summer classes or camps to be eligible. The summer intensive meets these criteria.

### **Jazz Ensemble “Pay It Forward” Mandatory Participation:**

Members of the Jazz Ensemble are required to participate in the Pay It Forward Challenge. Each member is responsible for earning 150 service points. **The service points of 150 must be earned by May 1<sup>st</sup> in order to participate in the revue or audition next year.** If you do not reach this goal, you will not be allowed to audition for the Jazz Ensemble the following year. Please see the Pay It Forward Challenge packet for more info.

Pay It Forward project ideas:

- Think pink week - \$2 to wear pink to raise money for breast cancer.
- Toys for Tots
- Breadbox Food Drive
- Bun-Raiser – Older team members will do buns for younger students during the revue or costume picture day. Can charge \$10 per bun.
- Collect hotel toiletry items and donate to shelters.
- Pet food and blanket drive
- Have a bake sale and donate money to the Artbank of Southside.
- Collect items for the local nursing homes and annex.

**The points must be earned by May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025 or the student will not be allowed to perform in the revue or audition for next year.**

**General Performance Policies:**

Performances and competitions are your opportunity to show the world the results of your dedication and hard work. Here's what you can do to make the most of this opportunity.

- Arrive at performances at the designated time.
- Be sure you are properly warmed up.
- Present yourself in a professional manner, with costumes pressed, shoes cleaned, and all accessories accounted for.
- Treat competitors and teachers from other schools with respect.
- Treat the directors and staff of the competition with respect.
- Keep your area of the dressing rooms clean and never bring food or drink where it is prohibited.
- Wear your school uniform to all competition events and during the award presentations.

**Costume Common Sense:**

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>✓ Always have a second pair of tights available.</li><li>✓ Place costumes in a garment bag for travel.</li><li>✓ Carry hats in a hatbox or container to prevent them from damage.</li><li>✓ Hang and press costumes before each performance.</li><li>✓ Place your name in all shoes.</li><li>✓ Remove all costumes from their garment bags immediately following the competition to be sure that they are not wrinkled for the next event.</li><li>✓ Check seams, trim, headpieces, etc. for repairs that must be made prior to the next competition.</li></ul> |
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**POLICIES AND IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**General Policies:**

- Parent and students should not enter the office space of the school. Please feel free to communicate through the office.

- Use of the school telephone is limited to emergencies only.
- Parents and students should never interrupt a class in session.
- Only water is allowed in the studios. No food, drinks, or gum.
- No cell phones or computers may be used during class time. (This means no emailing, Internet use, or text messaging.)
- Students and parents are restricted from contacting teachers by phone, email, text messages, etc. All communication with teachers or the director must go through the Dance It Out's office.
- Watch what you say in the lobby area, a space intended for the comfort of our students' parents and families. At no time should anyone utilize this area to commiserate with others about their dissatisfaction with the school, its faculty or choreographers, or other students and their families.
- Never speak negatively about teachers, students, or parents from other schools.
- Never recruit students from other schools.
- All students must show respect for their teachers at all times. Inappropriate behavior could result in dismissal from the school.

### **ATTENDANCE:**

Only the reasons listed below are excused from any practice or activity.

1) Personal illness

2) Funeral

3) Special school activity - Must be discussed and approved by the instructors in advance.

- Please note that even an excused absence could cost you a performance depending on the date and length of the absence. A team member who is excused from a practice or event will not be permitted to perform with the team until he/she knows the routine to the instructor's satisfaction.
- A Dancer CANNOT miss more than five practices throughout the year (use them wisely)!
- It is required that each dancer and a parent/guardian be present for all parent meetings.
- If a member knows in advance that they will be late or will be missing a practice/performance, they are to contact the instructors immediately. Team members must be present at every mandatory practice for the entire practice time in order to be eligible to participate in upcoming events.
- If you miss a practice you must make up the material you missed BEFORE the next practice. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY TO CATCH UP!
- Team members must stay with the team during all practices, performances, and competitions unless given permission by the coach to do otherwise!
- All dress rehearsals are mandatory!

### **NON-PERFORMERS:**

The following reasons determine whether or not a dancer will be allowed to perform. There will be NO exceptions to these factors, so please read carefully.

- Lack of knowledge of a routine

- Lack of ability to perform at required skill level for said routine
- Attitude not promoting teamwork/sportsmanship
- Lack of dedication/commitment being shown toward Dance Team
- Lack of improvement shown over time in a given routine
- Disregard for the code of conduct and the rules and guidelines governing this organization
- Absences the week prior to a performance - Tardiness is also a factor.
- Missing more than the allotted 4 practices.
- Dancer's that are on suspension/probation
- Not being in proper uniform to perform and performance ready by the arrival time listed on the performance sheet
- Not being in attendance for required parent meetings/information sessions
- A dancer will not be allowed to practice/perform if an injury occurs for which that dancer is unable to perform at their normal level. Dancers will not be allowed to participate until written clearance is obtained from a doctor.

### **Termination of Enrollment:**

One verbal warning will be given for any unruly behavior in practice. This includes talking, nonparticipation or any behavior disruptive to the team. A dancer will be asked to leave practice in lieu of any other warning.

In certain circumstances, when it is in the best interest of one or more students, it may be necessary for the school owner or director to terminate a student's enrollment. Every effort will be made to correct a problematic situation before terminating enrollment. Reasons for termination of enrollment include the following:

- Disruptive or dangerous behavior by students or their parents
- Abuse of other children, staff, or property
- Inability of Dance It Out to meet the child's needs

### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION:**

Failure to follow the policies may result in but is not limited to the following actions:

- Sitting out a practice, performance, or competition
- Suspension/Probation from team
- Removal from team

### **Student and Parent Use of Social Media:**

Use of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, blogging, and other online social media vehicles is commonplace. This policy is intended to provide Dance It Out students and parents with guidelines to eliminate any confusion concerning the use of social media.

- You DO NOT have permission to reveal any information that compromises Dance It Out. By that we mean you are forbidden to share personal information about the director, other students or their families, or anything that is proprietary and/or confidential to them or Dance It Out.
- Students and parents should neither claim nor imply that they are speaking on behalf of Dance It Out.



- Never post anything that could compromise the self-esteem of students who attend Dance It Out.
- If you post videos of class or rehearsals, don't post any choreography in its entirety; Dance It Out owns the copyright to all choreography taught at the school.
- Respect the law, including those laws governing defamation, discrimination, harassment, and copyright and fair use. As stated in this handbook, parents and students should never post negative comments about other schools or teachers. Also, please do not post negative comments about school activities such as competitions, conventions, and performances or about the directors of those events.
- Ensure that your social networking conduct is consistent with all of the policies contained in this handbook.

### **Class Visitors:**

Safety issues and legal responsibilities make it impossible for us to allow students to bring visitors into the classroom. Students should not invite siblings, other relatives, or friends to their classes with the exception of special events such as "Bring a Friend Week" and in-school performances.

### **Emergency Evacuation:**

Although we have never experienced an emergency evacuation at the school, we are prepared for such a circumstance. Emergency evacuation routes are posted in all classrooms and in the lobby. Students are to evacuate quietly and walk in single file as quickly as possible to the designated area, where teachers will check roll. Students and teachers are to return to classrooms and buildings when the all-clear signal is given.

### **Parking Lot Safety:**

The school is home to children of all ages. Please enter and exit our parking lot with extreme caution. Never park your vehicle in any area that is not a designated parking space. If you park in a space that is very close to the building or its windows, please do not leave your car idling. Please do not allow siblings to play in the parking lot.

### **Weather Cancellations:**

School closures due to severe weather conditions will be announced by noon on that day. Notifications of weather cancellations will be emailed, posted on the website and the Facebook page.

### **Staying Informed:**

We work hard to make the dance experience organized and fun. Keeping you informed is one of our primary goals. Please read all newsletters and other school information.

The newsletters and updates are emailed to you and posted on the Dance It Out website and Facebook page.

If you have any questions regarding the information distributed, we encourage you to contact the office at 434-757-1029.

We answer emails on a daily basis, except on weekends. Feel free to email questions to the office at [danceitoutstudios@gmail.com](mailto:danceitoutstudios@gmail.com)

### **Website**

**[www.danceitoutva.com](http://www.danceitoutva.com)**

We are constantly updating our website. News, important parent and student information, contact information, and more are available online 24 hours a day.

### **Facebook Page**

“Like” the Dance It Out page on Facebook to receive daily updates on school events. Please invite your family and friends to “like” the school. Parents will also be invited into a Jazz Ensemble private Facebook page to keep current with events.

Please do not post questions on the school’s Facebook page. Instead, please email them directly to [danceitoutstudios@gmail.com](mailto:danceitoutstudios@gmail.com). Find our private Facebook group!

**A Final Note**

WELCOME TO THE JAZZ ENSEMBLE! We look forward to an exciting, rewarding season!

DANCE IT OUT, LLC

PLEASE KEEP A COPY OF THIS HANDBOOK FOR YOUR RECORDS.

Team Member's Name \_\_\_\_\_

I, the parent/guardian of the above named, have read the handbook, and understand all of the requirements in order for my dancer to continue participation as well as the ramifications if this contract is broken. I fully comply with all rules and regulations within this handbook. I also realize this is a team effort and I will be called upon to help in some way throughout the year with things that are within my capacity to help. I will make every effort to do my share of assisting on behalf of my dancer. I understand I am required to be present for parent meetings or have someone present on my behalf.

Student's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_