

THE GDC BIBLE - Dancers and Parents - What You Need To Know

Class Rules

1. Be ready before the class is due to start. i.e. correct clothing, shoes and use the toilet before class
2. Please pay before the lesson
3. Bring your attendance card with you and have it ready when you pay
4. Bring a bottle of water, no other drinks are allowed in the classes
5. Never leave the class without asking your teacher first
6. Wear the correct shoes. i.e. Juvenile girls wear white ballroom shoes only, Boys ballroom shoes are black. Girls should wear white socks and boys black socks see dress codes for more info
7. Hair should be tied back, or put up
8. Wear practice wear, girls should wear skirts or leggings, boys should wear trousers. NO Jeans
9. Every class will start with a warm up, and finish with a bow/curtsey. Please be ready, spread out appropriately, feet together and arms up at the start and finish of every lesson.
10. Fill in a registration form
11. Bullying/harassment will not be tolerated. May result in a ban from classes.

Competitions/Exams

1. Tickets will be available before every competition. Order your tickets in advance. Some extra tickets may sometimes be purchased later. Friends/Family are welcome to come and watch. One ticket per person, no concessions on prices.
2. You will need the correct attire, hair, make-up etc. See dress code below
3. Ballroom will be danced first, so you will need to be in the correct outfit for the start of the day. There will be time given to change to latin when all of the ballroom section has finished.
4. Competitions mostly run in the following order - ballroom solos, ballroom couples, latin solos, latin couples, prize presentation.
5. Before every competition/exam you will be working on the dances you need. We will never take you to an event unprepared. This means you do not need to keep asking your teacher which dances you will be dancing as you will be told several times BEFORE the event day.
6. Be aware of what dance grade you are dancing in. Again, you will be told before the event what level you are. See dance terms below for more info. Most competitions do NOT have a running order. So you will need to listen for your event. If your event is coming up soon, be ready at the front to enter the floor promptly. If you are slow to the floor you could end up with a bad position on the floor, or miss your event.
7. When you arrive, the seating blocks will be labelled with GDC, Grafty Dance Club, or Karen Day. Find any seat in that area. Note the front seats are for teachers and partners only. We only get a few chances to stop and rest, so please do not use these. We are often too tired or polite to keep asking, but those seats should always remain clear.
8. Seats are often taken up by people's belongings and people end up standing in aisles and in front of our view. If you want our coaching we need an uninterrupted view. Also, you may be stopping us from getting onto the floor promptly. Please try to get as many bums on seats as possible, right into the block. We notice that there are usually a lot of spare seats in the centre of the block, if you are not dancing, please take these seats. Parents, we mean you. All of you!
9. You will be given a number which you will need to place square and level on your back. Fastened with two safety pins each side to keep it flat. Boys place between the shoulder blades, girls a little lower or it'll be covered by your partner's hand. You will also need to remember and listen out for your number. If you hear it, you have made it through and will be dancing again, NOW.
10. When you first collect your number, go straight to the teacher with the clipboard, usually Emma or Antony, and say your name and show your number. Wait for confirmation we have your number before you go. We need this number as it will help us keep track.

11. In Couples, only the person dancing as “boy” wears the number. The “girl” should not have a number. Not even folded! It gives a bad impression.
12. When TO fold your number. If you are partnering someone for THEIR solos, and you also will be dancing yourself soon, you may fold your number to prevent your number being marked in the wrong event. And always make sure you unfold your number ready for your own event.
13. Competitions rarely have a running order. There’s no need to keep asking your teacher when you will be dancing next. A competition will usually run from the lowest grades to the highest. So, if you are under 8, and they have just run the under 6, you’ll most likely to be next. Be ready. See grades listed below for the order.
14. Your teachers are there to help. We are listening out for what’s next and when. If you are not constantly asking us questions, we will be able to hear the call outs and then we will let you know if it is you dancing next. It is better that we are all listening out for your call, as teachers are usually still exiting the floor with the previous dancer when the call goes out. Please do as your teacher says. If we say stand by, don’t disappear.
15. If you need to go to the toilet, change outfits, or leave the room for any reason, it is usually best to check with your teacher first. However, if again you can make the decision yourself without interrupting your teacher it will be more helpful. For instance, if an event has just begun that is NOT your event, as it has been put into 3 or more “heats”, you will know that if you are quick you are likely to have enough time go. Also going immediately after you have danced will usually give you time.
16. Never run or walk across the floor, always walk around the edge and behind the judges, never in front.
17. If practice music playing, even if it’s not the music you need. Use the time and space to go and practice with your couples’ partner, and go to your teacher for a practice with them too. It’s a good way of getting used to the different venue and going over any last minute worries. We will try our best to practice with everyone, but you must be ready for us as we will have a lot to fit in.
18. When asked to go onto the floor for the first time for each event. You will be expected to line up, backs to the stage, so that the organisers can take down the entries. Stand directly next to the other GDC dancers in that event. That way you will be split into different heats. While you are standing, make a good impression. Stand still and straight with feet together.
19. Never run on/off the floor, and always walk correctly holding your partners hand all the way to your place. You never know, there may be a judge who hasn’t finished and will look for someone giving a good impression.
20. If you have made a final, do not change before your prize presentation. “Onesies” do not make for good presentation photos!
21. If you are collecting a prize, shake the hand of the person handing you the trophy and then continue to the line-up. If you are 1st, stand to the side and wait for the other finalists to join you. If you are any other placing, start with the person in 1st and shake their hand and say “well done”, continue to follow down the line until you reach your position and stand close to the others. Your body should be angled towards the front of the line, feet neatly in place, standing still holding trophy to your front. Smile for the photos. Only leave when everyone has made it into the line-up and photos finish.
22. For exams, always bow/curtsey to the examiner and say “good morning/afternoon *their name*.” If they ask you a question, answer them. After you have danced, bow/curtsey again and say “thank you.”
23. EVERYONE needs to listen to what we have asked you to do. If we are asking you to move, be ready, even parents!
24. Smile and enjoy yourself. It all seems daunting now, but with our help you will find the day runs smoothly and easily. A smile always goes a long way with the adjudicators too.

Dress Codes

Juvenile Girls

Girls need a ballroom dress and a latin dress, with white shoes (juvenile, low cuban heel only) and plain, white socks.

The ballroom dress must be level with the bottom of the knee. Ballroom dresses are usually more “floaty” than latin dresses and typically have sleeves.

Latin dresses must be level with the top of the knee. The dress style is much sharper and less fussy than ballroom. No sleeves suit latin better.

Both dresses should be made from dance lycra and are one solid colour (no prints etc). There are NO diamantes, sequins or beads allowed for juveniles.

The dresses are also limited on how revealing they must be. No open/low backs or large cut outs etc.

Before buying a dress it is always best to consult with your teacher. Even a dress that meets regulation may not be the best “look” for the best results.

If you are in a girl-girl partnership, dresses should be matching.

Hair – Hair should be in a low bun at the back of the head. Hair should be very sleek with no loose hairs, and no fringes. You may have a centre or side parting, and you may have a gelled quiff. A doughnut also makes for a very neat and easy to do bun. There are some fancy things you can do, but it’s best to stick to simple sleek styles until you have seen for yourself what works and what doesn’t.

Accessories - You may like to add a hair clip or flower to the hair. Make sure the colour of the flower matches your dress, with the exception that if you have a black dress, a red or white flower adds contrast. If you choose to go with a clip, keep it plain and simple, again match the colour or go for a clear diamante design. NO scrunchies!!! Often accessories can be bought at events and sometimes this is better as the items offered will be for dancers.

Keep jewellery to a minimum, simple stud diamante earrings are all you need, if anything.

Make-up – Children should always look like children. However, with the lighting and the brightly coloured dresses, a small amount of make-up is needed to prevent them looking washed out. If your child has fair skin they may need a touch of bronzer just to give them a touch of colour. A tiny bit of blush may be used. Keep eyes simple, just a little mascara and perhaps just a line of eyeliner on the top lid. Keep it thin. Lips, a light lipstick or gloss. They should never be over-done. Nails can be painted a colour that goes well with the dress, or a French manicure.

Fake Tan – If your child is very pale you may consider getting a fake tan done. Most dancers wear tan once they are older but not all children do, so it is up to the individual to decide if it is suitable to wear tan. You could always alternatively use bronzer to just dust over the areas required. If dancing at a high level, you may be required to tan.

Juvenile Boys

Boys should wear a crisp, white lycra shirt with a good collar, and buttons to the top. Shorts need to be attached to prevent riding up.

Black dance trousers with elastic that hooks under the shoe at the bottom of each leg to prevent flapping.

Ballroom requires a black tie. Latin requires a black bow tie.

Black ballroom shoes and black socks

Hair – kept short and gelled

Juniors & Above

Ladies will need ballroom Shoes (court shoes) in tan, and latin shoes (sandals with stiletto heels) in tan. Ballroom dresses must be full length. There are no restrictions on decorations or heel height. Before buying a dress, it is recommended that you show your teacher first. We can give you advice on whether it has the right “look”.

However, for exams and open beginner’s events and you will need to be in practice wear or a plain dress. Long skirt for ballroom, short for latin. No decoration allowed.

Hair, Make-up & Fake Tan – see “Hair” in the juvenile section. Make up should be striking. lipstick, eyebrows pencilled, blusher, eye shadow, liquid eyeliner, false lashes and false nails. Make sure you are tanned, and your face blends in well. No white faces with orange skin. It is best to tan your face to get an even colour. You should avoid tights, make sure you are clean shaven and tan your legs instead.

Accessories – No restrictions, however, make sure you match appropriately to your outfit. Most dresses bought 2nd hand come with hair pieces, sometimes even necklaces ready to match.

Men will need Ballroom shoes (low heel) and Latin Shoes (high Cuban heel). For ballroom men will need black ballroom trousers, and a white or black, long sleeve shirt, (no pockets) and a tie (either black, or a colour matching partner's dress). For latin, men need black latin trousers and a latin shirt.

However for exams and open beginner's events you will need to be in "practice wear". This is usually the same outfit for men but make sure you have no sequins or diamantes.

Tails and Lounge suits will only be allowed at some events/levels, please check before the event with your teacher if you are planning on wearing these.

Dancewear sites:

www.dsi-london.com

www.topline-ballroom.com

www.supadance.com

www.freedoflondon.com

www.chrisanne.com

Dance Terms explained

Juvenile - Under 12 years old

Junior - Over 12 years old

Adult - Over 16 years old

Senior – Over 50s

Ballroom – Waltz, Quickstep, Foxtrot, Tango and Viennese Waltz

Latin – Cha Cha Cha, Rumba, Samba, Jive and Paso Doble.

Section – ballroom section, latin section, and also solo section and couples section

Events – The individual dances at a competition. I.e. event 1 might be solo ballroom juvenile under 8's

Heats – some events have too many competitors to dance on the floor at the same time. So the dancers will be divided into heats by being given a number. "heat 1, heat 2, heat 3, heat 1....etc". Heats are then danced in order, so if you are heat 1 you remain on the floor and dance, heat 2 onwards leave the floor but wait at the side ready for the swap over. Never go all the way back to your seat. The amount needed to go through to the next round will be divided evenly between the heats, so being in heat 3 will not mean that the places have already been taken.

Partner Change – sometimes we have more entries in an event than partners (teachers). So, two dancers may have to share a partner by doing a partner change. If you have a partner change and dance first, you will dance as normal, but stop when the compare says "change". You will need to exit the floor while the other dancers are STILL dancing, so be careful and don't run, go to the nearest side and walk the rest of the way around the floor. Do not run through the middle. If you are going second, wait at the edge of the floor until you hear "change" then try to get to your partner as quickly and as safely as you can. You will then dance as normal until the music has finished.

Couples – this is where both dancers in the partnership are being judged together. You will therefore be dancing with another pupil, not a teacher.

Solos – this is where you are the only one in the partnership being judged. You will be dancing with your teacher or one of our "partners".

ISTD/UKA/EADA/BDC – these are different dance societies/boards. We will take exams and compete in both ISTD and UKA. Some grade names/syllabuses will be different, but we will always let you know any changes that affect you.

Medallist – This means that you are a part of a school and have to take exams to compete or take part in these competitions/events

Open – you are independently dancing. You dance under a teacher/coach name rather than a school. Usually the standard is higher and you need to be experienced to compete in this way. These events are couples only and your teachers will not be with you to help you. There may be international dancers competing against you.

Grades – the age/level you are at. You will progress through the grades by taking exams.

Grades go as followed :

Under 6/6 and Under – note the wording at different competitions, but if you are below the age of 6, then you are always in this grade. If you are 6 you will need to listen to the wording, under 6 does not include age 6. 6 and under does include age 6. Some competitions do not offer this age group at all, in which case you will be in the under 8/8 and under grade.

Under 8/8 and Under – note the wording at different competitions. You will need to be less than 8 for under 8, and you can be 8 for 8 and under. Some competitions do not have this grade, you will then be dancing in the Social Dance Test or Below Bronze grade.

Social Dance Test/STD – this grade is for anyone who is new/has not taken an exam yet/taken only the social dance test exams. Some competitions join this event to the other lower grades. i.e. STD/Pre-Bronze otherwise known as “Below Bronze”.

First Timers – This is only used at some competitions. It is designed for those who have never competed in a ballroom/latin competition, or have competed up to 3 times. You can compete in this event as well as your grade.

Pre-Bronze – You have taken a pre-bronze medal test. Sometimes joined with the other grades, see STD above.

Bronze – You have taken a bronze medal test. Sometimes joined with the other grades, see STD above.

Silver/Gold/Gold Star/Gold Awards – These are the higher grades. If you don't know what these are, you are not at this level.

Tips

Do your hair the night before – use plenty of hairspray and gel, helps with those early starts.

Bring a dressing gown to protect your outfit while you eat and drink.

Spare safety pins, hair pins, plasters, pain killers and socks etc are always handy.

Bring a fan to keep cool.

Bring snacks and drink – sweets, such as jelly babies for instant energy.

Keep what you bring to a minimum due to limited space. If you take up a chair with bags then I suggest you give your seat up to someone who needs it. But don't block the aisle or the front, you'll have to stand at the back or outside.

Bring some entertainment for between dances. A book, DS/PSP/Ipad etc help keep children happy. However the seating is tight, so keep it small/hand held. Make sure the volume is on mute. Avoid headphones as you will need to be listening for your call!

Talk to the other GDC members – most of our dancers/families will be experienced enough to help you out and give you advice when we are not available. We pride ourselves on our friendly pupils who will be more than happy to help.

Enjoy it!!

Any questions visit our website or contact us:

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Don't forget to like us on www.facebook.com/gdcschoolofdancing (and you can add us on facebook Emma E Valls-Russell, Karen Day)