

Country & Western Performance Dance Teams



Guidelines

Fine Arts Department
Jeff Bradford, Executive Director

COUNTRY AND WESTERN PERFORMANCE DANCE TEAM GUIDELINES

The Country and Western Performance Dance Team is a standalone extra-curricular activity. The team guidelines are unique to team members and provide a necessary framework to aid in developing and maintaining a successful dance team. The guidelines are intended to ensure consistent and appropriate application of team expectations and standards. Any interpretation of these guidelines that works to undermine or circumvent the purpose and intention of the guidelines will be rejected.

PHILOSOPHY

The Country and Western Performance Dance Team is comprised of a group of high school students chosen through organized, competitive tryouts. The goal of instructional and performance activities is to enhance each individual member's skills and development, resulting in a highly skilled performance group. Emphasis on sound teaching and learning principles is comparable to that of any other instructional setting.

Each team member must be aware of the time commitment and the individual dedication required of each member of the dance team. Dance team members will demonstrate good citizenship and high moral standards and assume responsibility for developing school spirit. Members shall set a positive example for other students through being responsible for their actions and demonstrating appropriate conduct. Dance team must be a first priority for team members after academics.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Country and Western Dance Team is a course offered during the school day for which physical education or fine arts credit is granted as stipulated in the Richardson Independent School District's Program of Studies and Course Descriptions.

Each school team shall develop a constitution, approved by the principal, to cover procedures specific to that campus that are not specified in the district guidelines. The campus constitutions shall not conflict with or contradict any portion of the district guidelines. In the event of a conflict, the district guidelines will be followed. To ensure the district guidelines are reviewed and updated as needed, the Executive Director of Fine Arts will arrange a required annual meeting with campus sponsors.

ELIGIBILITY - TRYOUTS

ENROLLMENT: To be eligible for tryouts, a dance team candidate must be enrolled as a student in the Richardson Independent School District. Any student who was not enrolled and actually in attendance at the beginning of the school year at the RISD school where he or she desires to tryout must:

- otherwise meet the minimum eligibility criteria; and
- if a newly enrolled student, must be enrolled and in attendance in classes in the RISD school fifteen (15) calendar days prior to the tryout.

ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS: Students must have passed all subjects* with a minimum grade of 70 the preceding nine-week grading period. Tryouts for students who have failed one or more courses

are limited to the day of tryouts in front of the judges.

***EXCEPTION:** Courses that the Board of Trustees has approved for an exemption from the No-Pass, No-Play restrictions, including approved Pre-AP or AP courses, are exempt from the academic grade requirement described above.

CREDITS: Dance team members must be on target to graduate with and must have earned the minimum designated number of credits in state-approved courses towards graduation by the *beginning* of the school year: tenth grade – at least 5.0 credits; eleventh grade – at least 10.0 credits; twelfth grade – at least 15.0 credits.

PHYSICAL EXAMS & PERMISSION SLIPS: All candidates must complete and turn in required permission slips, including a medical release form, prior to participation in any tryout activities. In addition, all candidates must pass a physical exam and the record must be on file with the director before the team member can participate in any team activities. All candidates must have a medical history form and annual physical examination form on file prior to tryouts.

ORIENTATION MEETING: All candidates must attend a scheduled orientation meeting accompanied by a parent/guardian prior to the beginning of the tryout workshops. All candidates will be advised in writing of requirements, duties, responsibilities of dance team members, and consequences of rules violations prior to tryouts. All parents and students will have an opportunity to discuss concerns and ask questions with the director and/or principal prior to completing and signing the agreement form in which the parent and student confirm their understanding and willingness to comply with all applicable rules as a condition of participation in the dance team.

TRYOUT PROCESS

- Workshops and audition dates will be scheduled by the school.
- The number of workshops will be at the director's discretion.
- In order to audition students are required to attend all mandatory tryout clinic dates. Exceptions will be made for emergency situations at the directors discretion.
- Tryouts before the judges will be held on one day.
- Eligible candidates must tryout in person in front of the judges, unless an alternate tryout method is approved or a reasonable accommodation for an otherwise qualified student with a disability.
- A student may participate in the dance team tryout process at only one RISD school per school year.

CRITERIA FOR JUDGING:

- Tryouts for team membership will be closed to parents and the public. Only authorized persons may be present in the tryout room. Candidates will tryout in groups not to exceed six students. Each candidate will be scored independently by each judge.
- Callbacks will generally be at the judges' discretion; however, if unusually large discrepancies (as defined by each school's constitution) between one judge's score and the other two judges' scores exist, the administrator monitoring the tryouts may request a callback. The judges scores will be averaged to obtain a single score for each candidate.
- The categories used in judging may include any or all of the following:
 - Technique
 - Memory
 - Showmanship

JUDGES AND SCORING:

- Candidates for the Country and Western dance team will be judged by two to four qualified judges.
- An effort will be made to secure impartial judges who are not acquainted with any candidate. An individual who has attended any RISD high school during the four years prior to the school year in which tryouts take place may not serve as a judge.
- Immediately after scoring, the judges' score sheets will be turned over to a school administrator who will maintain the scores in accordance with the applicable records retention requirements.
- A candidate's scores and score sheets constitute confidential student information and score sheets will not be available for review by the candidate's parent or legal guardian until the week following the tryout announcements. A parent/guardian may request to view only the scores for his or her student.
- The list of candidates selected as dance team members normally will be posted within twenty-four hours after tryouts.

MEMBERSHIP:

- RISD District Guidelines do not specify a certain number of members for any school; however, the number will not exceed forty members and up to six officers (46). Ideally, a team should have a minimum of twenty-four members. The principal will determine the final number of members. Selection of officers and partners will be at the sole discretion of the director. To maintain membership in the Country and Western Dance Team after selection, a student must meet the requirements as outlined in these guidelines.
- Once the campus principal determines the number of team members for the school year, students will be selected based on their scores beginning with the highest score for each gender until the requisite number of candidates is selected.
- In the event of an illness or an injury that prevents a member from participating on the team, the next available student from the try-outs may be brought up at the discretion of the sponsor.

APPOINTMENT PERIOD AND PERPETUATION: Selection for membership on the dance team is for one school year only which runs from the date of selection through the date on which the next team is selected. All interested candidates (returning and new) must audition on a yearly basis.

SAFETY & CONDITIONING STANDARDS

Safe practices and adequate conditioning are of paramount importance for each dance team and are vital to efficient athletic performance. A warm up period with stretching and flexibility exercises is required and important to reduce injuries. Students who sustain injuries are encouraged to seek proper medical attention. No student will knowingly be subjected to any unsafe situation.

SUMMER ACTIVITIES

- Official summer practice may begin no earlier than three weeks prior to the opening day of school. The amount of time spent in summer practice shall not exceed a total of forty-five (45) hours in any one-week period (Monday through Saturday), and no more than six hours in any one-day. Sunday practices are prohibited.
- No required summer practices will be allowed for a minimum of six continuous weeks during the summer. Each school may designate the six-week period in which practice will not occur for that dance team. During that six-week period, the school, director, coach, or students cannot organize any practice, formal or informal

- A dance team director will supervise all required dance team practices from start to finish. At no time may dance team members be left unsupervised during practice.
- Unscheduled or informal practices of the team are not allowed.

PRACTICES

- Fall practice and performance outside the school day may begin no sooner than three weeks before the first day of school and will end no later than the last day of the performance season.
- The principal must approve all practice dates and times.
- Members must attend practice sessions as instructed by the director.
- Practice time outside the regular school day will be limited to a total of eight hours per school week. The school week is defined as beginning at 12:01 a.m. on the first instructional day of the calendar week and ending at the close of instruction on the last instructional day of the calendar week, excluding holidays.
- Morning practice for Country Western Dance Team can start no earlier than two hours before the first bell of the school day and cannot exceed the eight-hour rule during the school week, regardless of start time.
- No practices may exceed a maximum of 2½ hours in length.
- No more than two practices per day, including class time, are permitted.
- Sunday practices are prohibited.
- A maximum total of twenty hours per week participation in contests and/or practices, including Saturday, will be permitted.
- All required practices will be supervised by a director from start to finish. At no time may team members be left unsupervised during practice.
- Unscheduled or informal practices of the team are not allowed.

PERFORMANCES

- The dance team director, in cooperation with the principal, will determine the minimum number of team members for a performance.
- Dance team members may not perform at any activity unless the director or an appropriate school official is designated to oversee the activity and is present at all times during the performance.
- Attendance at all performances is required unless adequate approval from the director has been obtained in advance.
- Any member who is absent from a performance for any reason other than personal illness, religious holiday, or a death in the immediate family, without at least two weeks prior approval of the director, is subject to disciplinary consequences under the school's constitution.

TRANSPORTATION

- The school district will not provide transportation for dance team members for performances, practices, or special events.
- Teachers should not transport students in private automobiles except in emergencies or with prior written authorization from student's parent and the school principal.

ATTENDANCE

Prompt and regular attendance at all practices and team activities is essential to a high functioning organization. Absences and tardiness will be handled consistently with school policy. However,

subject to principal approval, the director reserves the right to remove a member from the program for excessive absences and tardiness. A member who is truant from one performance will be placed on a three week probation. A member who is truant from a second performance will be removed from the team.

MAINTAINING ELIGIBILITY

CREDITS: At the beginning of the school year, dance team members must have earned the designated number of credit in state-approved courses towards graduation at the scheduled time: 10th grade – at least 5.0 credits; 11th grade – at least 10.0 credits; 12th grade – at least 15.0 credits. Failure to obtain the required number of credits will result in automatic dismissal from the team.

GRADES: Dance team members must maintain a minimum grade average of 70 in all classes.*

*EXCEPTION: This requirement does not apply to a grade below 70 in a course designated as exempt from the No-Pass, No-Play rule.

CONTINUOUS MEMBERSHIP: Continuous enrollment during the school year is an additional requirement to remain eligible for dance team membership. A student who breaks enrollment for any reason forfeits membership on the dance team that school year. Upon reenrollment during the same school year, the director in consultation with the campus principal will consider a request for reinstatement. If reinstatement is granted, conditions of reinstatement may be imposed.

PROBATION AND REMOVAL

- Participation in dance team and other extracurricular activities is a privilege. Certain standards are necessary to maintain the integrity and reputation of any organization. Team members represent the school and district at all times. Each member must conduct him or herself in an exemplary manner at all times, whether during school, at a performance, or during leisure and social activities. The behavior, character, and personal appearance of each member should set a positive example for others at all times.
- In addition to expected adherence to other conduct and behavioral expectations established for the team, members
 - Should never be in possession of or using alcohol, tobacco products, or drugs,
 - Be seen using or in possession of such items or substances, or
 - Engaging in any unlawful or prohibited activity.
- Students who fail to meet expected standards of conduct and behavior will be subject to disciplinary consequences, which could include probation, suspension, or removal from the team. Refer also to the RISD District-Wide Guidelines for Extracurricular Students: Alcohol & Illegal Drugs for a detailed description for the consequences for alcohol and illegal drug possession.
- Each high school may develop local rules and expectations for dance members and may establish disciplinary consequences for violation of those rules and expectations. In the event of any conflict with the local rules/expectations and these guidelines, the District guidelines will prevail.

PROBATION: If the length of the probation is not specified in these guidelines for a particular disciplinary infraction, the campus principal, in consultation with the director will determine the conditions and length of the probationary period.

Failure to Demonstrate Expected Behavior and Conduct (Disciplinary Probation)

Specific Infractions:

- ISS/OSS: Violations of the RISD Student Code of Conduct for which a member is assigned to In-School Suspension (ISS) or Out-of-School Suspension (OSS) will result in a three-week probation.
Violations of the RISD Student Code of Conduct for which a member is assigned to CMLC will result in a six-week probation after returning to campus.
- Engaging in disrespectful conduct or speech toward the director, assistant director, or another team member will result in a three-week probation.
- Observation of a member smoking, either tobacco products or electronic cigarettes, by faculty or staff member on or off school property while attending any dance team event, practice, or other activity will result in a three-week probation.
- Publication or dissemination via print or electronic media of a lewd or sexually suggestive picture or a picture of the member engaging in inappropriate or illegal activities will result in a three-week probation.
- Repeated violations of the school and/or dance team constitution policies and procedures.

CONDITIONS OF DISCIPLINARY PROBATION:

During disciplinary probation, a dance team member:

- Must attend class, work periods, and all practices as scheduled during the probation unless excused by the director.
- May not participate in any dance team performances.
- Must sit with the director during any performance until the dance team director releases or otherwise dismisses the team.
- May not wear the team uniform to school the day of the performance/activity and not wear the team uniform during the performance/activity.
- May not travel with the team and may not represent the team in any fashion

Failure to Maintain Academic Standards

Eligibility: All students will adhere to the UIL/RISD Eligibility Calendar.

CONDITIONS OF ELIGIBILITY:

When a dance team member becomes ineligible:

- Must attend class, work periods, and all practices as scheduled during the ineligibility period unless specifically excused by the director.
- May not participate in any dance team performances.
- May not wear the team uniform to school the day of the performance/activity and may not wear the team uniform during the performance/activity.
- May not travel with the team and may not represent the team in any fashion

REMOVAL: A student may be removed from the dance team for serious or persistent misconduct that violates school rules, team rules, these guidelines, and/or the *Student Code of Conduct*. The conduct listed herein for which removal may occur is not complete and is intended to provide examples of only some of the reasons for which a team member may be removed. Serious misconduct and illegal actions may result in immediate and permanent removal from the team.

Conduct for which a student may be removed from the team:

- Being observed by a staff member engaging in sexual or lewd acts on or off school property;
- Being arrested for any illegal activity, excluding minor traffic violations, on or off school

- property;
- Using, possessing, selling, furnishing to another, or being under the influence of illegal drugs or alcohol (Refer to the District-Wide Guidelines for Extracurricular Students: Alcohol & Illegal Drugs);
 - Receiving a second failing grade in any subsequent nine-week grading period;
 - Receiving a second probation for any reason;
 - Unless the removal was categorized as permanent at the time of removal, a student who is removed from the team may tryout to participate the following school year under the same conditions that any other student may try out.

Procedures for Probation and Removal:

- Before a dance team member is placed on probation or removed from the team, the director will notify the student in writing of the reason(s) for the proposed action.
- The director and campus principal (where appropriate) will offer to meet with the student and parent to provide the student the opportunity to discuss the proposed action and present information about his/her situation.
- The meeting should occur promptly following the conduct giving rise to the probation or removal and a student/parent may not avoid the action by refusing to meet with director and principal. A student/parent who refuses to cooperate with the school in promptly scheduling a meeting waives the opportunity to meet with the principal and sponsor before the disciplinary action becomes effective.
- Following the meeting, the director, in consultation with the principal, will assign an appropriate disciplinary consequence.

FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

All anticipated costs for dance team membership will be discussed at the student/parent orientation meetings prior to tryouts.

REQUIRED EXPENDITURES: Required expenditures for dance team shall not exceed \$600 per member per dance team school year.

OPTIONAL EXPENDITURES: Expenses for trips, pictures, summer camp, and social events are considered optional, as students are not required to participate. A student's decision not to participate will not result in any adverse consequences.

FUNDRAISING

Country and Western Dance Team organizations and their parent booster groups may conduct fundraising events in accordance with the RISD and campus policies and guidelines. Funds may be used to pay for a recognition banquet for members, team uniform shirts, and to assist team members and/or the team to purchase additional items necessary for special events.

AWARDS AND GIFTS

- Team awards will be determined by the director and approved by the principal.
- If a student chooses to give gifts to other students or district employees, those gifts should only be an expression of appreciation, rather than a gift of significant monetary value. Expenditures by each student for gifts shall not exceed \$25 per year (all gifts).

UNIFORMS

- Country and Western Dance Team members must wear uniforms as designated by the director.
- The team will furnish shirts used in public performances.
- The student will provide personal items such as socks, boots, hats, belts, jeans, etc.
- A record will be kept of all uniforms and equipment issued to members.
- All items issued by RISD must be returned in good condition with normal wear and tear excepted.
- A dance team member will be assessed the replacement cost of items not returned, items with excessive abuse, and/or items that might be unusable or destroyed due to improper use.

TRIPS

Country and Western Dance Teams may take an approved out-of-state trip no more than once every two/three years (BHS/RHS = 10-12 graders: once every 3 years; LHHS/PHS = 11-12 graders: once every 2 years). Trips will not be mandatory for any member and the member's status on the team will not be negatively affected in any way if he or she chooses not to participate in the trip. Exceptions must be approved by the Executive Director of Fine Arts and the Deputy Superintendent.

APPROPRIATE SONG SELECTION FOR DANCE ENSEMBLES

It is the expectation of the RISD Athletic and Fine Arts Departments that directors, sponsors and the staff be mindful of appropriate content when selecting music to perform at public events. Music selections involving suggestive lyrics need to be screened by campus administration prior to performance at any public event involving RISD students or ensembles. This applies to campus and off-campus performances.

Please take the following steps before selecting or choreographing a routine:

- Any lyric or suggestive content referencing alcohol, drugs, or sexual content will not be allowed.
- Profanity of any kind will not be allowed. Bleeping or using the clean versions is acceptable as long as the content and message is appropriate.
- When in doubt, contact your campus administrator for approval.
- If you run into an issue with limited song selection, please contact your campus principal and/or the District Athletics/Fine Arts office for support and guidance.
- Songs without lyrics may be used at each sponsors discretion. There is no approval process needed.
- Campus administration will have the final say in appropriate content and song selection.