

# SYDNEY NORTH PUBLIC SCHOOLS DANCE FESTIVAL PARTICIPATION CRITERIA 2024

## MISSION STATEMENT

The Sydney North Public Schools Dance Festival's mission is to provide public school students the opportunity to perform Dance in a professional theatre environment. To this end, the festival is guided by the following principles

- \*inclusivity, \*a reflection of the ethos and standards of public education, \*an understanding of dance as a performing art, \*an appreciation for collaborative endeavour and \*aspiration for excellence.

## FESTIVAL APPLICATIONS

Schools seeking to participate in the **Sydney North Public Schools Dance Festival** must apply **online by the due date**. This is not negotiable. **The application must be approved by the school's principal.**

- Items must contain **no fewer than 6 and no more than 24 dancers for Primary and 20 dancers for Secondary**. Please note this does not mean 24 or 20 dancers on stage at any one time; it means items must have no more than 24 or 20 performers **in an item in total**.
- Schools can apply for **2 items**. **This is the same for Primary and Secondary Schools. If schools wish to make an application for a third item, they must make a case for consideration** to the SNPSD Executive on the basis of their special circumstances.
- Secondary School items should cover a period of **between 2 and 6 minutes duration** only.
- Primary School items should cover a period of **between 2 and 4 minutes duration** only.
- Individual students are to appear in only one item per school.

## CHOREOGRAPHERS

Items for the Festival should be choreographed by one or more of the following:

- Department of Education teachers
- Students who are currently attending a government school
- Non-Departmental dance teachers who conduct dance programs within the school
- Volunteers with dance experience (parents/ex-students/older siblings)

Choreography by non-Departmental dance teachers and students must be developed with the supervision of a Departmental teacher at that school. Choreography must be original and in accordance with copyright laws.

**Schools that use non-Departmental teachers to choreograph their festival item must complete the relevant section of the online application in order to have their item considered for inclusion.**

## ITEM CONTENT

All items should exemplify the objectives of the Department of Education Creative Arts and Dance Syllabuses. Choices made by the choreographer should be appropriate to the age, gender and stage of development of the students.

Items that do not adhere to the SNPS Dance Festival Participation Criteria, will not be included.

The following should be considered in the presentation of all items -

### **Intent**

- Items should be developed with a clear intent/theme in mind. This should relate to how the audience is meant to think, feel or imagine in response. Intent will often involve a thematic approach or the presentation of a theme.
- Intents/themes should be consistent with item titles, program notes and movement, music, costume and prop choices.
- Portrayal of some themes is inappropriate for school-aged students - for example - (but not limited to) sexual or suggestive content, physical infatuation, depression, suicide, sexism, violence, and drug and alcohol use.
- Sensitivity should be displayed in the treatment of cultural appropriation and adaptation.

### **Movement**

- All items should adhere to the accepted **Safe Dance Practice** as outlined by the SNPSD Executive. **See Appendix I of this document.**

- Movement should explore the elements of dance - space, time and dynamics and the relationships between performers (including a variety of formations and the optimal use and variation of the stage space.)
- Movements of a suggestive nature such as chest and pelvic thrusts, running hands down the body and movement that inappropriately focuses attention on parts of the body must be avoided.
- Acrobatic movement or tricks that are uncontrolled, unsuited to the age and experience of the students, and/or unrelated to the intent of the dance should not be part of the choreography.
- Extended focus on individual performers/soloists within an item is to be avoided.

### **Music**

- Please read all lyrics thoroughly and be aware of their meaning, intent and subject matter.
- Items containing songs with inappropriate lyrics, themes, context and/or sub-context **will not be accepted** (please note this includes edited tracks where offensive lyrics are removed or where a “clean” version has been obtained).
- Songs represented by video clips that contain adult themes or are otherwise inappropriate for students, **will not be** accepted.
- Some examples of songs with inappropriate themes and/or lyrics include (but are not limited to) Uptown Funk by Bruno Mars, Smooth Criminal by Michael Jackson, Starships by Nicki Minaj, Gangnam Style by Psy or Greased Lightning from Grease. If you are unsure about your song choice, **please ask for clarification**.
- Top 40 hits or current popular songs should be avoided, unless they are relevant to the intent/theme of the item.
- For questions or information concerning Music copyright refer to - [www.smartcopying.edu.au](http://www.smartcopying.edu.au).

### **Costume**

- Costumes should respect the dignity of all performers at all times. Sensitivity should be shown to all students and all body types.
- Unacceptable costumes include bare or cut-out midriffs, low necklines or V-neck leotards, overly brief shorts, sheer or see-through tops or bottoms, costumes which reveal underwear etc.
- Please consider how costumes can become see-through under stage lights, and how they may shift as dancers move.
- Costumes with a “leotard bottom” should be worn with stockings or tights underneath.
- Please be aware that costumes ordered online or not custom fitted, may need adjusting and need to be organised well before auditions.

### **Props**

- Props (hand-held or free-standing) should be integral to the item’s intent, comply with WHS guidelines and be safe to load, set, strike and store.

## **AUDITION PROCESS in 2024**

**Schools will need to submit a video of their item to be considered for selection for the festival in 2024, in the Stage 3 Application.** This is not negotiable. The audition is an integral step in the planning process for schools, teachers, students and the Festival organisers and the organisers will endeavour to make this process as valuable as auditions have been in the past.

- A panel comprising Sydney North Public Schools Dance representatives will view all audition submissions.
- All items should be as near to completion as possible at time of filming (one minute minimum).
- Audition feedback should be considered and acted upon.
- One student in full costume for each “character” in your item should be presented in your audition video if possible.
- Auditioning groups must be prepared to make changes to choreography and/or costumes that do not follow the criteria above.

**Sydney North Public Schools Dance has the responsibility for the organisation of the festival and reserves the right to insist upon adherence to the criteria at any time, up to and including the dress/technical rehearsal and stage performance.**

ALL TEACHERS PLEASE READ

**Safe Dance Practice**

Amongst the responsibilities of the teacher's ongoing duty of care is to consider accepted principles of safe dance practice. All movement activity entails potential risk of injury and the teacher cannot eliminate it altogether, but should mitigate it in class and choreographic scenarios.

The Australian Curriculum defines Safe Dance Practice as '*the practice of selecting and executing safe movement. The focus is on providing dance activities and exercises which allow students to participate without risk of injury. All dance movement should be performed relevant to an individual's body type and capabilities*'.

Certain movement done by certain individuals is often deemed "**contra-indicated**" – i.e. **should not be attempted**. This will depend on the age, experience, skill level, alignment, strength, flexibility and control of the individual. Given that teachers work with students who often lack in these qualities **there are many movements**, which are contra-indicated.

**The main areas, which are at risk of injury**, are –

- **the knee**, which is susceptible because it is a hinge joint, which works optimally in one plane.
- **the foot and ankle**, which are relatively small structures which bear large loads, particularly when they leave and return to the ground.
- **the back**, because it is susceptible to injury, because it is structurally complex, with its network of bones, cartilages (discs), muscles and nerves and its great potential for movement.

**Unsafe Movements** include (but are not limited to) –

- **Forced extension of muscles** (stretching) in manoeuvres like full splits, leg mounts, reverse leg mounts, penchés
- **Full head or neck** rolls
- **Hyper-extension** of the back – in elements like back arches, bridges, walkovers (forward or Backward)
- **Any form of "knee drop" or "toe-over"** – single leg or two-legged, "Sarah Jane", "Toe-breaker"
- **Any uncontrolled or unaligned landing from a jump**, (frequently as a result of poor "form" in the air)
- **Hyper-flexion** (extreme bending) of the knees (under load) i.e. deep knee bends
- **Loading the back with weight** (lifts or weight-sharing) where the shoulders, hips, knees and feet are not aligned.
- **Movements** which involve **ballistic (bouncing) stretching of muscles**
- **Acrobatic elements** – cartwheels, aerial cartwheels, biranis, somersaults, flips, assisted flips, fly-rolls. Frequently these are poorly performed and controlled and when executed in a space full of other bodies, represent a risk to other performers.

Please note that much of the movement noted above often has very little relevance to the theme or intent of the dance work presented. These are the "Ta Da!" or "Look Mum, No Hands!" moments and relevant, interesting and impressive alternatives are always available.

**The SNPS Dance Committee reserves the right to prohibit the use of unsafe, high-risk or poorly executed movements or elements.**