



2026-2027 STUDENT HANDBOOK

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OUR MISSION



Cohesion Dance Project (CDP) is a non-profit dance production company whose mission is to create engaging performances and integrated educational experiences that enrich, inspire, and unite the community through dance. CDP envisions a community with an expanded perception of dance as an art form that fully embraces people of all ages, abilities, experiences, and backgrounds.

CORE VALUES

- **Growth:** Cohesion is committed to providing opportunities that enhance and support the creative and artistic development of each dancer in its programs.
- **Collaboration:** Cohesion creates a safe, open and welcoming culture of mentorship, trust and cooperation in which community members, dancers and artists can participate in creative dance & arts experiences.
- **Joy:** Cohesion creates engaging performances and thought-provoking learning opportunities to entertain and educate participants and audiences.
- **Well-being:** Cohesion is committed to honoring and supporting the social, emotional, cognitive and physical wellness of every participant in its programs.

Together we create a welcoming, supportive environment where everyone can learn, grow, and experience the joy of dance.

AGREEMENTS AND COMMITMENT

All participation waivers and release forms may be found in the Parent Portal, by inquiring at the office, or by emailing cohesiondanceproject@gmail.com. All dancers must have a current Liability Release form signed in order to participate in classes and performances. A full copy of our Policies and Procedures may be found on our website cohesiondance.org or by inquiring at the office.

PHOTO RELEASE

Cohesion Dance Project occasionally photographs and records classes, rehearsals, and events. These images and recordings may be used to celebrate our programs, share educational content, show evidence of programming for grants, and promote our mission. If you would like to opt out of public photos, please open the Parent Portal and navigate to Info>Waivers>Photo Opt-Out. If you would like to give Cohesion Dance Project permission to use photographs and/or video of your child (or yourself, if age 18 or older) in one or more of the following ways, please email cohesiondanceproject@gmail.com to specify permitted use.

- printed materials (posters, flyers, and/or brochures)
- digital newsletters and Cohesion Dance Project website
- grant applications and reports
- social media

IMPORTANT DATES

- Classes begin **September 8, 2026** and end **April 24, 2027**
- **NO CLASSES**
 - **November 23-27, 2026**
 - **December 7, 2026-January 1, 2027**
 - **March 29, 2027-April 2, 2027**
- Festival of Trees performance **December 6, 2026**
- End of Session Performance
 - Dress rehearsal **April 23, 2027**
 - Performance(s) **April 24, 2027**
- School conferences and other holidays **DO NOT** affect our schedule.



ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION



These expectations help create a positive, safe, and supportive environment where every dancer can thrive.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Be Kind: Treat others the way you would like to be treated. Cohesion has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying, harassment, and discrimination.

Be Respectful: Show respect for your teachers, classmates, and yourself.

Be On Time: Arrive 5–10 minutes before class, dressed and ready to dance.

Be Encouraging: Your attitude and actions help create a positive environment for everyone.

Be Open: Accept corrections with curiosity and a willingness to grow.

Be Present: Watch, listen, and learn—even when you aren't dancing.

Be Engaged: Participate fully by asking questions and responding when spoken to.



PARENT EXPECTATIONS

- To help students stay focused, parents/guardians should remain outside the dance studio during class unless invited by the instructor or participating in a designated Child/Caregiver class. You are welcome to wait in the nearest lobby area and observe young child classes through the viewing windows. Parents/guardians are not required to remain on site.
- For student safety, dancers under age 9 should be escorted into the building. Students ages 9 and older may be dropped off and picked up at the parking lot. Cohesion Dance Project is not responsible for students outside the facility.
- Please arrive and pick up your dancer on time. Students under age 9 should be picked up promptly after class. Students ages 9 and older should be picked up within 10 minutes of class ending. Due to instructors' teaching schedules, we cannot supervise students before, after, or between classes. Parents are responsible for the behavior of any student who must come early or stay late after class.
- Because instructors often teach multiple classes in a row, they may not be available to talk before or after class. If you have questions, please contact us at cohesiondanceproject@gmail.com or 406-422-0830.

ENROLLMENT

- Starting in 2026, Cohesion will run a full season from September to April. This means you only need to register once.
- Most class times will remain the same before and after Winter Break, however it is possible a class may shift day/time due to the overall schedule. Any updates will be announced 3-4 weeks prior to any changes and enrolled students will be notified.
- Cohesion has ongoing enrollment meaning students can enroll and join a class any time during the year.

MISSED CLASSES

- Students may make up missed classes in another class of the same or lower level. The student's main instructor can help determine which class is appropriate for a make-up class, which must be completed by the end of the registered season.
- Classes cancelled by Cohesion due to inclement weather or teacher illness will be rescheduled.



ATTENDANCE

- If you know your student will be absent or late to class for any reason, please notify the studio either by emailing cohesiondanceproject@gmail.com or by phone at 406-422-0830.
- If a student is repeatedly tardy, they may be asked to switch to a class held at a different time
- If your student is ill or has been ill within the last 24 hours, please keep them home and contact the studio to inform us of the absence. If a student has a lingering cough or runny nose, or has been around sick people, we ask that they consider wearing a mask in order to limit spread.

CLASS PLACEMENT

Students should register for the class that best matches their age and experience level. Final placement is based on age, prior experience, and developmental readiness. Because of Cohesion's curriculum, it is common for dancers to remain in the same level for multiple years. Instructor recommendations help ensure each dancer is safe, appropriately challenged, and successful. Cohesion reserves the right to adjust class placements or class offerings based on enrollment and the needs of the class.



LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS AND GUIDELINES

- **Beginning (Youth, ages 7-8)** An introduction to modern and contemporary dance. Young dancers will develop foundational technique, movement vocabulary, musicality, and classroom skills in a supportive, encouraging environment. No prior experience necessary.
- **Intermediate I (Youth, ages 9–14)** Designed for older youth dancers who are new to modern/contemporary or progressing from Cohesion's 7-8 year old class, this class builds a strong technical foundation while developing strength, coordination, movement vocabulary, and artistry. Appropriate for dancers with little or no prior experience as well as those continuing their training.
- **Intermediate II* (Youth, ages 12–14)** For dancers ready to refine their skills and increase technical complexity through more challenging movement, choreography, and artistic exploration. Dancers should have a solid foundation in modern or contemporary dance or receive instructor approval.
- **Dance Fundamentals (Multigenerational, ages 9+)** Build a solid foundation in dance by exploring fundamental techniques of ballet and contemporary movement. Strengthen alignment, coordination, and body awareness, while developing the skills and confidence to progress into other dance styles and higher-level classes. Ideal for dancers new to dance as well as those looking to refine and build skills for continued growth. No experience necessary.
- **Intermediate I (Adult, ages 15+)** Dancers will build on foundational technique while developing greater strength, coordination, and confidence. Focus will be on refining the basics and preparing for more complex modern and contemporary movement concepts. Some prior experience recommended.
- **Intermediate II* (Adult, ages 15+)** Classes will focus on expanding technical skills through increasingly complex movement, choreography, and artistic exploration. Dancers should have recently and consistently attended Adult Intermediate I or have comparable current training in Modern or Contemporary dance. Instructor approval required.
- **Intermediate/Advanced* (Adult, ages 15+)** For experienced dancers ready to deepen their technical proficiency, artistry, and performance quality while exploring advanced modern and contemporary concepts. Prior experience and instructor approval required.
- **Advanced* (Adult, ages 15+)** For highly experienced dancers with a strong technical foundation in Modern and Contemporary dance. Classes emphasize advanced technique, artistry, performance, and nuanced movement exploration. Recent, consistent training and instructor approval required.

*Instructor approval required. See website for additional class descriptions

DRESS CODE

We recommend wearing clothing that allows you to move freely and comfortably but is not too baggy. Some suggestions are athletic wear, leggings, t-shirt, or leotards. Dancers should have their hair and attire fully prepared before class starts. Students wearing inappropriate clothing, ie jeans or overly baggy attire, may be asked to sit out of class on that day.

- Footwear: students can dance in bare feet or wear ballet slippers, jazz shoes, foot undies, or socks. Be aware instructors may ask you to remove socks for some exercises in which socks may cause slipping. Street shoes are not allowed on the dance floor unless a medical or personal need has been communicated beforehand.
- Hair: please have your hair up and out of your face (ponytails and braids work great).
- Jewelry: please remove dangling earrings, bracelets, or necklaces before class.



TUITION AND FEES



- A one-time, annual, non-refundable, registration fee of \$30 will be collected when a student enrolls anytime during the season.
- Tuition can be set up to process automatically each month, excepting the first month which will process when you enroll.
- Auto-payments will process the 5th of each month, and will be assessed surcharge fees.

CLASS RATES AND FEES

Class length	Tuition
45 min	\$52/mo
60 min	\$64/mo
75 min	\$76/mo

We accept cash, check, credit and Venmo. All credit card payments will be assessed a 3% surcharge. All other online payments will be assessed a 1.5% surcharge.



FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

- Any student may apply for financial assistance through Cohesion Dance Project's Scholarship Exchange Program. To learn more and apply, please visit cohesiondance.org/scholarship-exchange. We will reach out to you once we have received your application to follow up and register you/your student.
- Cohesion also offers a Student Internship Program which can help with tuition. More information and application may also be found on our website, cohesiondance.org/dance-internship-helena-montana.

REFUNDS

- If a class is cancelled due to low enrollment, a refund may be issued.
- If a student is unable to complete the session, a refund for paid, unused classes may apply on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the office at cohesiondanceproject@gmail.com or call 406-422-0830.



OTHER STUDIO POLICIES AND DISCLAIMERS



- Cohesion is a smoke, alcohol, & drug free environment. There are no exceptions to this rule.
- Cohesion is a nut-free facility.
- Please limit use of fragrances when in the facility.
- Gum must be spit out before class.
- No food or any drink other than clear liquids are allowed in the studios.
- Cell phones and other electronic devices should be turned off and put away during class.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Please obtain permission in advance from the instructor before filming or posting anything to social media as some families may prefer not to have their dancer's photo on social media. For Cohesion's policy, please see page 4.

LOST AND FOUND

We know how easy it is for dance and personal belongings to be misplaced. We kindly ask that you label your dancer's belongings in an effort to keep lost items to a minimum. Please note Cohesion is not responsible for items your student brings to the studio. Lost and Found items are located in the lobby; please check frequently - all remaining items will be donated twice a year in December and in April.

PARKING

Because we share our parking lot with neighborhood businesses, parking may be limited at times. There is additional parking in the lot on the north side of the building, as well as on-street parking throughout the neighborhood. The neighborhood can be dark in the evening and during winter months, please walk with a buddy to/from your vehicle during these times and report any issues.

COMMUNICATION

Cohesion uses email and text messaging to communicate with families. We kindly ask that you confirm your opt-in choices so that you stay up to date with all pertinent information being shared.



ACCESSIBILITY



Cohesion Dance Project is committed to making its programming and facility accessible to anyone and everyone in the community of all abilities. While there is no 'perfect' way to provide access to all, we continually strive to improve accessibility and welcome your feedback or accommodation requests/suggestions. If you or your dancer have auditory or visual sensitivities, please let us know with at least one week's advance notice so we can do our best to accommodate your needs.

- **Accessible Parking:** accessible parking is reserved on the North and South ends of the Cohesion parking lot and with additional spaces in the parking lot directly to the North of the building. Ramped access is available into all of the studios, office, and lobby.
- **General Access:** Cohesion Center is one level, with all entrances fully accessible. The two main entrances (blue door into the south studios and Main Lobby double-glass doors at north end of the building) are equipped with ramps and push-button or wave-activated automatic doors. Two gender-neutral bathrooms are available in the facility, along with three wheelchair-accessible bathrooms with grab bars. Drinking fixtures are also wheelchair accessible.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



Cohesion Dance Project is helped out greatly by our volunteers. We appreciate the skills and talents our community brings to Cohesion throughout the year. Cohesion retains the right to engage volunteers as we see fit. Volunteers over the age of 18 may be subject to a background check to determine qualifications for volunteering with certain activities. Please visit cohesiondance.org/volunteer-helena-montana to sign up.



PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES / INFORMATION



Students enrolled and consistently attending classes are invited to perform at performance events during the fall and spring.

- Fall Performance Opportunity – Intermountain Festival of Trees (first weekend of December)
- Spring Performance Opportunity – End-of-Session Showcase (last Saturday of April)

Additional opportunities may be available depending on the class and instructor preference. Details about class performances and accompanying rehearsals will be shared with the primary contact in the registration system via email and paper or text notices from instructors approximately one month prior to each performance.

Cohesion does not charge a costume fee or performance fee to participate in class performances. Costume details will be included in performance notices.

Cohesion will take video recordings of all performances and share them privately with participating students/families. If your student needs to opt out of these recordings, please contact us at cohesiondanceproject@gmail.com.

2026-27 full performance season schedule can be found at cohesiondance.org/performances-helena-montana

