

Examination information.

Please find below details on our procedure for entering children for exams

Exams at C.S.O.D. are taken from Primary up to Advanced level. The minimum age for entry for primary exams is 6yrs and most of our students would take their first exam between the age of 7 and 8 yrs. This system however is usually only the case for children who have been studying the work from Tots level and in some cases from age 5 in Primary, children who have come into the class at a later age will usually be a bit older when they take the exam.

The usual time period for moving up to a new level is 18 months to 2 years for the once a week student however sometimes certain factors can either speed up or slow down this process. For example, if your child has joined us from another school that teaches a different syllabus then more time will be required. Physical strength and technique required to pass an exam is different in all children regardless of age. Attendance to class is paramount, if a student misses a lesson then they can miss vital work and fall behind.

Some I.S.T.D. schools do have a quicker turn around time and offer exams more often, in these cases students would be taking a minimum 3 classes a week in their subject to pass an exam and often private coaching classes in the run up to the exam day. We prefer to take slightly longer, as so many lessons a week can not only be costly to the parent but we also feel the enjoyment can be taken out of the lessons with so much pressure. We also hold a large school production every other year and rehearsals for this can take a few terms therefore hindering syllabus work.

It is not compulsory to take exams. Many students for various reasons cannot take part, situations such as holiday bookings over exam time, school exams or commitment to other activities can affect this, so if your child is entered for an exam then please do think very carefully on whether or not they can commit fully.

We require 100% attendance and commitment for exam entry and expect students to make themselves available in around exam dates and for all extra coaching. For Primary to Grade 2 Students if you have been entered for an exam then you are welcome to attend the other classes at this level at no extra cost. Coaching classes are required for all grades and these details will be on your initial exam invoice. We aim for one coaching class for Primary to Grade 2 and 2 coaching classes from grade 3 and up. Coaching classes are normally set up during half term breaks and occasionally on Saturdays and sometimes during the week if we can fit them into the timetable. Each exam will also require a Mock exam and this is normally held the day before the exam and the cost is factored into the overall invoice.

The decision for exam entry lies initially with the class teacher who then discusses her entries with the Principal. The final decision lies with the Principal so if you have any queries then please speak directly to the Principal.

We stagger our exam sessions throughout the year in order to give every student the chance as some children may have been at their level longer than others and some children are quicker/slower at learning the work. Please remember, for each subject there can be up to 30 exercises as well as dances and combinations that children need to learn, alongside this, technique must be precise as well as a confident performance. In ballet, French terms need to be learned, so in total a huge amount of knowledge is required in order just to pass.

As a school we aim for high standards and high results but as in all exams all children perform differently dependant on ability, natural talent and hard work. We are not a school that demands A

grades from everyone, we enter students for exams and expect the grade that we feel they can achieve to the best of their ability however we do not just allow students to 'have a go' as a certain standard is required in order just to pass. This is why the entering of students is taken very seriously by the school and is discussed at length by all teachers and the Principal in termly meetings. Failing an exam of this nature can be disheartening for any child so we do not put them in the position to start with.

Please be aware that if your child has been in the same class for a long time it is because they are not ready to take an exam. We do not try to hold children back for any other reason other than this. In some cases this means that the exam situation may not be suitable for your child and rather than hold them back we allow them to move up with the rest of the class once we feel a certain level of technique has been achieved.

Please also be aware that if your child joined a subject at a late age or took a break for any length of time and was placed in a class of their peer group then it is **highly unlikely** that they will take an exam. As a school we allow new children who are 'older' to join the class of their age group and try to pick up the work. In many cases the children manage this and we then allow them to move up levels with their group.

All students who take grade 5 modern and above are advised to also take a ballet class if they wish to be considered for exams. This is compulsory practice in many schools and although not compulsory at C.S.O.D. it will further your chances of taking a modern exam. Please therefore be advised that if your child is not considered for a modern exam at this level and beyond it is probably due to the lack of strength, flexibility and stamina that comes with ballet training and is a requirement of modern.

All students who wish to take an exam in Grade 4 ballet and above must be doing more than one class a week to help with strength and flexibility. This can be a body conditioning, Acro or Modern class.

I.S.T.D. examinations are part of the Government National Framework of Qualifications. The I.S.T.D. is an awarding body approved and regulated by Ofqual. I.S.T.D. qualifications are therefore listed and recognised alongside G.C.S.E and A Level qualifications.

All graded examinations are accredited on the NQF as follows:

I.S.T.D. Grade 1 – 3 – NQF Level 1 (equivalent - GCSE grade 1 - 3)

I.S.T.D. Grade 4 – 5 – NQF Level 2 (equivalent - GCSE grade 4 - 9)

I.S.T.D. Grade 6 – NQF Level 3 (equivalent – A/AS Level)

Students who successfully pass Grade 6, Intermediate, Advanced 1 and Advanced 2 can gain UCAS points for University Entry.

The exam grades offered at CSOD are as follows:

Ballet	Tap	Modern
Primary	Primary	
Grade 1	Grade 1	Grade 2
Grade 2	Grade 2	Grade 3
Grade 3	Grade 3	Grade 4
Grade 4	Grade 4	Grade 5
Grade 5	Grade 5	Grade 6
Grade 6	Intermediate	Intermediate
Intermediate	Advanced 1	Advanced 1

The Marking system is as follows:

Primary – Grade 6

80 – 100 Marks – Distinction

60 – 79 Marks – Merit

40 – 59 Marks – Pass

Intermediate & Advanced

80 – 100 Marks – Distinction

65 – 79 Marks – Merit

50 – 65 Marks - Pass