



VOL. 02 · OPERATIONS EDITION

THE STUDIO OWNER'S GUIDE

Pricing, Packages & Policies

How to price classes, structure tiers, and communicate it all clearly. A planning guide for UK dance school owners who want fewer awkward conversations and stronger margins.

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WELCOME

Hello, and thanks for downloading.

Pricing is the conversation most dance school owners least enjoy having. This guide is here to make it easier, fairer, and more profitable.

Most studios undercharge. Most policies were written in a hurry, copied from another school, or never written down at all. The result is the same: too many off-platform conversations about make-up classes, costume costs and refunds, and not enough confidence at the front door when a new parent asks what it all costs.

By the back cover you will have a working model for what to charge, how to bundle it, what to write on your website, and the four short policies every UK studio needs. With real numbers, real templates, and language you can lift straight into your next parent email.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read it in one sitting with a cup of tea, or work through it chapter by chapter with your team. The worksheets at the back are designed to be filled in. The numbers throughout are UK benchmarks gathered from working studios, so use them as a starting point, not a ceiling.

WHO THIS IS FOR

- UK studio owners reviewing fees for the next term or year
- Schools considering their first price rise in two or more years
- Owners who have never written down a refund or absence policy
- Anyone whose pricing page is missing, vague, or apologetic

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PART ONE

Pricing the work

Before the discount stack, the registration fee, or the costume invoice. Decide what the work is worth, and the rest follows.

Why pricing is positioning.

Your prices say more about your studio than your About page ever will. They set the room before a parent walks in.

Most owners price by looking at the studio down the road, knocking 50p off, and hoping. The result is a market full of schools charging similar fees, all assuming the others know something they do not. Almost nobody does.

Price is one of three things a parent uses to decide quality before they have ever met you. The other two are your photography and your reviews. When all three say "premium", the right parents lean in. When they say "cheapest in town", the wrong ones do.

WHAT YOUR PRICES QUIETLY SAY

Too low

Parents wonder what is missing. Teachers wonder if they can build a career here. Costs creep up and margins quietly disappear.

Mid-market and clear

Reassures serious parents and filters out bargain hunters. Sustainable. Easy to defend on the phone.

Premium and confident

Smaller class sizes, better teachers, better venues, fewer apologies. Requires the photography and reviews to match.

Hidden

"Please enquire for pricing" reads as expensive and evasive. It does not raise enquiries. It loses the ones who needed clarity.

MINDSET SHIFT

You are not selling 45 minutes of dance. You are selling a teacher's training, a safe room, a syllabus, a community and a year of small moments. Price the whole thing, not the slot.

The three pricing models.

Almost every UK studio uses one of three structures. None is universally right. The best one is the one your families understand at a glance.

THE THREE OPTIONS

01 Per-class (drop-in)

A flat fee per class, paid weekly or in a small block. Simple to explain. Hard to forecast. Best for adult classes and casual streams, less good for committed weekly children's classes.

02 Per-term

Termly invoices billed at the start of each term, usually 10 to 13 weeks. Predictable income. Aligns with how parents already think (school terms). The default for most UK dance schools.

03 Monthly subscription

A flat monthly fee by direct debit, usually 11 or 12 equal payments a year. Smoothest cashflow for the studio, smallest single bill for the parent. Needs clear comms about what happens in school holidays.

HOW TO CHOOSE

- **Steady weekly classes.** Per-term or monthly. Drop-in pricing leaks money.
- **Adult and fitness streams.** Per-class blocks or 6 to 10 class passes.
- **Multi-class committed dancers.** Monthly subscription with a fixed cap.
- **New families nervous about commitment.** A short paid trial block, then onto your main model.
- **Older systems and software.** Per-term is easiest to manage manually.
- **Modern booking platforms.** Monthly is now genuinely easy to run.

Whatever you pick, run one model across the whole studio. Mixing per-term for ballet and monthly for street is the fastest way to confuse parents and yourself.

UK benchmark numbers.

Real prices from real UK studios in 2025. Use these as a starting point, not a target.

£7–£13

typical per-class fee for a 45-min children's class

£85–£160

typical per-term fee per weekly class

£30–£80

typical monthly subscription per weekly class

WHAT DRIVES THE SPREAD

- **Location.** A London studio charging £17 per class is normal. A Yorkshire market town charging the same is not.
- **Class length.** 30 minutes (pre-school) sits lower. 60 to 75 minutes (seniors and exam streams) sits higher.
- **Teacher seniority.** Trainee teaching is not priced the same as a 20-year principal.
- **Venue cost.** Your own building, a hired church hall, and a leisure centre studio are three very different cost bases.
- **Syllabus and exam track.** ISTD, RAD or IDTA work commands a small premium over non-syllabus recreational classes.

A SIMPLE WAY TO SANITY-CHECK YOUR FEE

Take your hourly room cost (rent, utilities, insurance) and the teacher's hourly rate. Add 35 to 50 percent for admin, marketing, software and you. Divide by your average class size. That is your floor, not your price.

IF YOUR FLOOR IS ABOVE YOUR CURRENT FEE

You are subsidising your families with your own time. That is fine for one year. It is not a business model. Plan a rise (see Chapters 11 and 12).

Sibling and multi-class discounts.

Discounts are not a way to be kind. They are a tool to reward the families you most want to keep.

WHAT ACTUALLY WORKS

Sibling discount

10% off the second child, 15% off the third and onward. Simple to explain. Quietly significant for a family of three dancers.

Multi-class discount

10% off the second weekly class for the same child, 15% off the third. Encourages depth, not just breadth.

Loyalty rather than introductory

Avoid "first term half price" offers. They attract bargain hunters and erode your full-fee families.

Annual upfront discount

5% off if a parent pays the whole year in September. Brilliant for cashflow. Limit to a handful of families if your software cannot handle it.

DISCOUNT RULES TO KEEP YOUR SANITY

- Only one discount applies at a time (pick the largest)
- Discounts apply to tuition only, not to costumes, exams or show fees
- Discounts are listed on your website, not given case-by-case
- There is a clear cap on the total discount any one family can stack

Case-by-case discounts are the single biggest source of parent friction in studios we audit. Write the rules down once. Apply them to everyone.

Registration and admin fees, done well.

A small annual fee that covers the work parents never see. Insurance, software, admin time, safeguarding. Done right, nobody objects.

WHAT THE FEE ACTUALLY COVERS

- Public liability and teacher insurance
- Booking system and family portal software
- Safeguarding training, DBS renewals, first-aid certification
- Year-round admin: enrolments, invoices, parent emails, registers
- A digital welcome pack, uniform list and term calendar

TYPICAL STRUCTURE

£15–£25

Per child, per year.
Charged at first enrolment and again each September.

Family cap

Cap at two children.
The third child onward pays nothing. Easier conversation, smaller paperwork.

One-line on invoices

"Annual registration fee (covers insurance, software and admin)".
That is enough.

WHAT TO AVOID

- Calling it "membership" if you do not give members anything different
- Charging it twice in one calendar year because of when enrolment falls
- Failing to refund it pro-rata if a family leaves within the first month
- Hiding it. Always list it on the pricing page, never spring it on a parent

Costume, exam and show fees.

The invoices that come on top of tuition. The studios that manage these well tell parents the rough numbers up front.

TYPICAL UK RANGES

Costume per item

£35–£80 per costume. Children in multiple numbers may need 2 or 3 for a summer show.

Exam entry fees

£35–£95 per exam, depending on board and grade. Set by ISTD, RAD or IDTA, not by you.

Show tickets

£12–£25 per ticket. A £5–£10 production fee per dancer is normal for venue, lighting and programmes.

HOW TO COMMUNICATE THE BILL BEFORE IT LANDS

01 Quote a range at enrolment

"Costumes are typically £40 to £60 per item, with most children needing 2 or 3 for the summer show."

02 Confirm a hard number 8 weeks out

Once styles are chosen, email the exact figure per child. Parents need lead time, not surprise totals in March.

03 Offer a payment plan as standard

Three monthly instalments by default, not as a favour to those who ask. Embarrassment is a barrier to enrolment.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The biggest reason parents quietly leave in February or June is an unexpected costume invoice they did not feel they could question. Telegraph the numbers early.

Trial pricing and risk-free framing.

The trial is not where you make money. It is where you remove fear. Price it like you mean it.

THREE OPTIONS THAT WORK

Free first class

Lowest friction, highest conversion. Reserve spaces formally so parents take the slot seriously.

Paid trial (£5–£10)

Filters out the casual browsers. Slightly fewer trials, slightly higher show-up rate. Often a wash on conversions.

Two-class taster block

A small flat fee for two consecutive weeks. The second class is where commitment actually forms.

RISK-FREE FRAMING THAT CONVERTS

- "Try one class for free, with no commitment to enrol."
- "Your space is held for two weeks while you decide."
- "If your child is not smiling by the end of the trial, we have done something wrong."
- "Half-term refund window: if the first month is not right, full refund, no questions."

Whichever model you choose, name it on the homepage in eight words or fewer. "First class free. Book your trial." beats a paragraph every time.

PART TWO

The policies parents need

Four short documents that prevent ninety percent of the awkward conversations. Plain English, no legalese, written once.

The four policies every studio needs.

These are not contracts. They are short, plainly-worded answers to the questions every new family will ask, hopefully before they have to.

THE CORE FOUR

Cancellation, notice and refunds

How a family leaves, how much notice they give, and what (if anything) they get back. The single most important policy you will write.

Absences and make-up classes

What happens if a child misses a class. Whether make-ups are offered. How long a make-up credit lasts.

Photography and consent

How you use images of children, what parents can opt out of, and how you handle social media posts.

Safeguarding

Your designated lead, how concerns are raised, and how they are handled. Often required by venues and by some exam boards.

FIVE RULES FOR WRITING THEM

- **Plain English.** No "hereinafter". No "the Company". You are a dance school, not a law firm.
- **One page each.** If it does not fit, it is too long.
- **Linked, not buried.** Linked from the pricing page and from the enrolment email.
- **Reviewed annually.** A 20-minute job each August. Mark the date.
- **Signed off once.** Parents tick a box at enrolment confirming they have read them. Keep the record.

Cancellation, notice and refunds.

If you write only one policy this year, write this one.

THE QUESTIONS IT MUST ANSWER

- How much notice is required to leave (typically one half-term or four weeks)
- Whether mid-term fees are refundable, pro-rata or otherwise
- What happens to costume payments already taken if a child leaves before the show
- Your position if a class is cancelled by you (illness, venue, weather)
- How long credits last and whether they transfer between siblings

SUGGESTED WORDING (LIFT AND ADAPT)

SAMPLE POLICY

We ask for four weeks' written notice (by email) to end classes. Fees paid up to that point are not refundable but unused costume payments will be returned in full if costumes have not been ordered. If we have to cancel a class, we will offer a make-up date or a credit toward next term. Credits last twelve months and can be used by any child in the same family.

Show this draft to two parents you trust before publishing. "Would you find this fair?" tells you more than three rounds of internal edits.

Absences and make-up classes.

Make-up classes are kind. Done badly, they are also a quiet operational nightmare. Decide the rules now.

THE THREE WORKABLE OPTIONS

01 No make-ups, no refunds

Simplest. Best for studios on per-term or monthly billing. Frame it as the cost of holding a space, not a punishment for missing.

02 Make-ups on request, capped

Two make-up classes per term, in any class of the same level, booked through the office. Workable. Adds admin.

03 Credits for advance notice only

Miss with 24 hours' notice, get a credit. No-shows do not. Sets a healthier tone, encourages communication.

WHICHEVER YOU CHOOSE, WRITE IT DOWN

- The rule is the same for every family, every time
- It is linked from the pricing page and the welcome email
- Staff know it word-for-word and never invent exceptions on the spot
- There is a clear escalation route if a family disagrees

HOLIDAY AND ILLNESS

Short bouts of seasonal illness, family holidays and exam weeks are part of every dance school. Do not promise to credit any of them and you will save yourself a hundred small disputes a year.

Communicating a price rise.

Almost every studio is overdue a fee review. The way you announce it matters more than the percentage itself.

THE FIVE RULES

01 **Six weeks' notice, minimum**

Earlier in the term than feels comfortable. Parents need time to plan, not to react.

02 **From the principal, in writing**

An email signed by the principal, not a notice taped to the studio door. Personal accountability calms a lot of nerves.

03 **Explain the why in one paragraph**

Venue rent, teacher wages, safeguarding, software. One real sentence per cost. Honest, not apologetic.

04 **Name the exact new figure**

"Per-class fees will rise from £11 to £11.75 from January". Numbers, not percentages. Specific, not vague.

05 **Open the door for questions**

End with a real reply route: principal's email, drop-in evening, anything that signals you are not hiding.

HOW OFTEN, HOW MUCH

- **Annually, in line with costs.** A small yearly rise is easier to absorb than a 15% jump every three years.
- **Round numbers.** £11 → £12 reads better than £11.50 → £11.85.
- **September, not April.** Aligns with the new dance year, not the financial year.
- **3 to 6 percent** is typical for a yearly review. Above 8 percent in one go is the threshold at which families flinch.

The price-rise letter, line by line.

A template to lift, adapt and send. Five short paragraphs.

SUBJECT LINE

An important update on our fees for September

1 • THE WARM OPEN

"Dear [Parent], thank you for being part of [Studio]. I am writing today with an update on our fees for the new term."

2 • THE HEADLINE

"From September, our weekly class fee will rise from £11 to £11.75. Sibling and multi-class discounts continue to apply as they do today."

3 • THE HONEST WHY

"Our venue rent has increased by 9 percent this year, and we have given every teacher a wage rise. This is our first fee increase in two years."

4 • THE PROMISE

"This rise lets us hold our small class sizes, invest in safeguarding and training, and keep your child in the same teaching team they know."

5 • THE DOOR OPEN

"If you would like to talk this through, please reply or come and see me before or after class."

PART THREE

On the website

Where most parents will actually read your prices. The page itself, what goes on it, and a worksheet to draft yours.

What goes on your pricing page.



Most studio pricing pages are missing, vague or buried. The ones that work share a small set of features.

THE STRUCTURE THAT CONVERTS

01 **A specific number, above the fold**

"From £11 per class" beats nothing. "Please enquire" loses the parents who needed certainty.

02 **Three pricing scenarios**

Most studios fit into 'one class a week', 'two classes a week', and 'committed dancer'. Show all three.

03 **What is included, by line**

Tuition, registration, show participation, exam entry (or not). A short bullet list per tier.

04 **Sibling and multi-class discounts**

Stated plainly: '10% off the second child, 15% off the third'. Not in a footnote.

05 **Costume and exam estimates**

"Costume fees typically run £40 to £80 per item. Exam fees are paid separately."

06 **Policies linked, not pasted**

A short "Cancellation, absence and refund policies" link keeps the page scannable.

The pricing page checklist.

Print this. Walk through your existing pricing page (or your draft) with a pen. Tick what is true today.

CLARITY

- A specific price (or 'from' price) appears above the fold
- Two or three pricing scenarios are shown side by side
- The annual registration fee is listed openly, not hidden
- Sibling and multi-class discounts are stated in plain numbers
- Costume and exam fee ranges are mentioned, with the words 'estimated' or 'typically'

TRUST

- A short reassurance sentence appears: free trial, refund window, or both
- A real review from a current parent sits next to the price
- The four policies are linked at the bottom of the page
- There is a clear next step (book a trial) immediately after the prices

MAINTENANCE

- Prices on the page match the prices in your booking system
- The last-updated date or term reference is current
- A diary reminder exists to review the page every August

Your fee structure.

Sketch the structure you will publish next term. One row per scenario. Keep it tight.

MY PRICING MODEL (PER-CLASS, PER-TERM, MONTHLY)

TIER 1: ONE CLASS A WEEK

TIER 2: TWO CLASSES A WEEK

TIER 3: THREE OR MORE CLASSES (COMMITTED DANCER)

SIBLING DISCOUNT

ANNUAL REGISTRATION FEE (AND WHAT IT COVERS)

ESTIMATED COSTUME COST PER SHOW ITEM

ESTIMATED EXAM ENTRY FEE RANGE

TRIAL OFFER (FREE, PAID, OR BLOCK)

Policy outlines.

One short paragraph per policy. Lift the sample wording from Chapter 09 and adapt for your studio.

CANCELLATION, NOTICE AND REFUNDS

ABSENCES AND MAKE-UP CLASSES



Want a pricing page that does the talking for you?

Vector Web Design builds beautiful, hard-working websites exclusively for UK dance schools. Pricing, policies, photography direction and launch, all in one place.

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