



VOL. 02 · STUDIO EDITION

THE STUDIO OWNER'S GUIDE

Social Media for Dance Schools

The weekly habit that grows your studio's reach without the burnout. A practical guide to Instagram, TikTok and the content that actually fills classes.

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WELCOME

Hello, and thanks for downloading.

This is the guide for studio owners who know social media matters, suspect they could be doing it better, and have absolutely no time spare to figure it out.

Most dance schools approach social media in one of two ways. Either they post heroically for three weeks every September, then go quiet until the summer show. Or they post every other day, exhaust themselves, and quietly wonder why none of it seems to bring in trials.

Both routes lead to the same place: a feed that looks busy from inside the studio and invisible from outside it. The aim of this guide is a third path. A simple weekly habit, four kinds of content, and a way of measuring what works that does not involve staring at vanity numbers.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Read it through once. Then come back to chapter three (the weekly habit) and chapter eleven (the content calendar worksheet). Those two pages are where most studios will make the biggest gains. Mark up the worksheets. Print them. Stick them on the studio office wall.

WHO THIS IS FOR

- Studio owners doing their own social, often at 10pm
- Office managers who inherited the Instagram login and a vague brief
- Teachers helping out with content but unsure what works
- Anyone who has ever filmed a class and felt slightly silly doing it

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PART ONE

Strategy

Before the filming and the hashtags and the worrying about what time to post. The four decisions that quietly determine whether any of it works.

Why social media still matters.

Parents do not pick a dance school from a search result alone. They pick from a feeling. Social media is where that feeling forms.

A friend mentions your studio. The parent Googles you, lands on your website, then immediately taps through to your Instagram. They scroll. They are not looking for marketing. They are looking for evidence. Real students, real teachers, real energy in the room. If they see it, they enquire. If they don't, they keep looking.

74%

of parents check a studio's Instagram before booking a trial

9s

average time spent on a feed before deciding to follow

3x

more trial enquiries from studios posting weekly vs monthly

WHAT SOCIAL ACTUALLY DOES FOR YOUR STUDIO

- **Builds the brand.** Tone, energy, values. None of it lands from a website alone.
- **Keeps you in mind.** Parents follow you for months before they enquire.
- **Reassures.** Seeing your studio in motion does what a static photo cannot.
- **Recruits.** Good teachers find good studios through the feed too.
- **Builds community.** Current parents share, save and send your posts.

MINDSET SHIFT

Social media is not advertising. It is a window into your studio. Parents are not looking to be sold to; they are looking to be reassured. Show them the place, the people, the moments. The trials follow.

The four content pillars.

Every post you make should fall into one of four buckets. If you are stuck for ideas, you are missing a pillar.

THE FOUR PILLARS

1. Show the work

Class clips, technique moments, choreography snippets. The actual product. Roughly 40% of what you post.

2. Show the people

Teachers, students, behind-the-scenes warm-ups, exam day nerves, post-show hugs. The reason parents stay. Around 30%.

3. Teach something useful

Tips, FAQs, what to wear, how exams work, parent guides. Builds trust and earns saves. About 20%.

4. Sell, gently

Trial invitations, new term reminders, holiday workshops, ticket links. Around 10%. No more.

The 40/30/20/10 split is a starting point, not a rule. The mistake to avoid is having a feed that is 80% selling and wondering why engagement is flat.

QUICK TEST

Open your Instagram grid. Tag your last twelve posts with a pillar number. Anything that does not fit a pillar is probably what is dragging the feed down. Anything you have none of is your easiest next win.

The weekly posting habit.

Consistency beats brilliance. A studio that posts three times a week for a year will beat one that posts fifteen times in September and disappears.

THE MINIMUM VIABLE HABIT

01 **Film on Monday**

Twenty minutes during a class. Phone on a tripod, two or three short clips.

02 **Edit on Tuesday**

Fifteen minutes in CapCut. Trim the strongest clip tight, add a caption.

03 **Post on Wednesday**

One reel, mid-morning or early evening. Reply to comments for ten minutes.

04 **Repeat on Friday**

One more post. Teacher feature, behind-the-scenes story, or FAQ carousel.

THE TWO-HOUR WEEK

Total time: roughly two hours, split across three days. Treat it like brushing your teeth, not like a project.

Planning monthly themes.

A theme a month removes the daily question of "what do I post today?" and gives the feed a sense of rhythm.

HOW TO SET A THEME

Pick one thing you want parents to know or feel by the end of the month. Build everything around it. The theme is the lens; the four pillars are the angles.

TWELVE THEMES TO STEAL

- **September.** New term, new starters, what to expect
- **October.** Meet the teachers (one a week)
- **November.** Behind the scenes of the Christmas show
- **December.** Performances, gratitude, year in review
- **January.** Trial classes, fresh starts, new disciplines
- **February.** Half term workshops and exam prep
- **March.** Exam season, technique tips, student wins
- **April.** Easter intensives, masterclasses
- **May.** Summer show countdown
- **June.** Show week, family moments, milestones
- **July.** Achievements, photos, summer school
- **August.** Quiet but steady. Studio prep, returning soon

You do not need to invent a campaign. You need to point a camera at the thing that is already happening, and let parents see it.

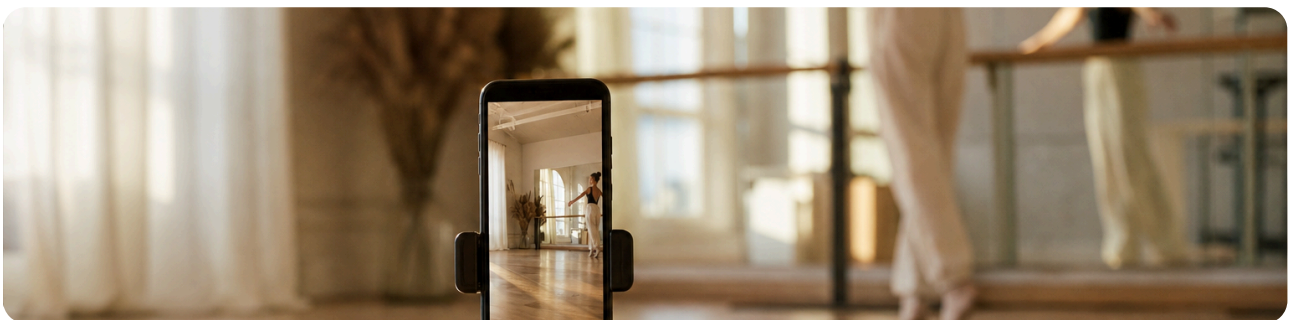
PART TWO

Craft

The bits that make a post stop a thumb. Filming, captions, hashtags, formats and the small details that quietly change everything.

Vertical video that actually works.

Reels are the biggest growth lever on Instagram, and TikTok lives or dies on vertical video. Get the basics right and you do not need to be a filmmaker.



THE SIX RULES OF A WATCHABLE CLIP

01 Vertical. Always.

9:16, full screen. Landscape on a phone is a tell-tale sign of a rushed post.

02 Steady camera

A £15 phone tripod is the best money you will spend on social this year.

03 Good light

Film by a window or with studio lights on. Backlit dancers become silhouettes.

04 Short

Seven to fifteen seconds for most clips. Even thirty is long. Trim, then trim again.

05 Hook in the first second

A move, a face, a question on screen. The first frame is the headline.

06 Caption everything

80% of viewers watch on mute. Burn captions on, even if it is just one line.

Hooks, captions and CTAs.

A clip stops a thumb. A caption keeps them reading. A call to action turns a viewer into a follower, or, sometimes, a trial booking.

HOOKS THAT WORK

- **Curiosity.** "Most parents don't know this about ballet exams."
- **Specificity.** "The three things we say to every nervous new starter."
- **Contrast.** "Week one vs week twelve. Same student."
- **Local.** "If your child is starting school in [Town] this September, read this."
- **Calendar moments.** "It's exam week. Here's what's happening behind the scenes."

CAPTION ANATOMY

01 **First line is the hook**

Same rule as the video. The first line is the only one most people read before deciding to expand. Make it count.

02 **Middle is the story**

One paragraph. The moment, the why, the small detail. Talk like a human, not a brand.

03 **End with one CTA**

Comment, save, share, follow, book. Pick one. Make it specific. "Save this for September" beats "check the link in bio".

If a caption does not have a clear job, cut it. A two-sentence caption with a job is worth more than a six-line one without one.

Hashtags and discovery.

Hashtags are no longer the main way people find you. But used well, they still nudge the algorithm in your favour.

WHAT ACTUALLY MOVES THE NEEDLE

Location tags

Tag your town, neighbouring towns and any local landmarks. Bigger gains than hashtags for most local studios.

Niche over generic

#balletteacher beats #dance.
#harrogatedanceschool beats #danceschool. Smaller pools, warmer audiences.

On-screen text

Reels with searchable on-screen text now outrank hashtag-stuffed posts. Treat the first frame as your SEO.

Topic clusters

Five to eight tags per post is plenty. Mix sizes: one big (200k+ posts), three medium (10–50k), two small and specific.

A STARTER SET FOR UK DANCE SCHOOLS

- #danceschool[town]
- #balletclasses[town]
- #[town]kids
- #[county]mums
- #ukdanceschool
- #istdballet (or your exam board)
- #dancestudiolife
- #behindthebarre

QUIETLY IMPORTANT

Save your hashtag set as a note in your phone. Tweak it once a quarter. Anything that drives no impressions over three months gets swapped out.

Stories vs reels vs posts.

Three formats, three jobs. Stop using them interchangeably and the whole thing starts working harder.

WHAT EACH ONE IS FOR

Reels

Reach. New eyes. Anyone not yet following you. The growth engine. Vertical video, captioned, hooked, 7–30s.

Stories

Existing audience. Behind the scenes, polls, daily updates, gentle reminders. Disappears in 24 hours, which is the point.

Grid posts

The shop window. The grid is what a parent scrolls when deciding whether to follow. Curate it like the front of your studio.

A SENSIBLE WEEKLY MIX

- **2 reels.** Your reach play. One class clip, one teach/teacher feature.
- **3 to 5 stories.** Behind-the-scenes, polls, reposts of parent tags, term reminders.
- **1 carousel or single post.** A useful guide, FAQ or milestone. The thing parents save.

Carousels are the most underused format in dance school marketing. A "what to wear to your first ballet class" carousel gets saved and shared for years.

Photography and consent done right.

You are filming other people's children. The consent process should be at least as careful as your teaching.

THE CONSENT BASELINE

- Written consent on every enrolment form, with separate boxes for social, website, print and press
- A clear, easy way for parents to withdraw consent at any time, recorded the same day
- An up-to-date list every teacher and admin person checks before posting
- A child's first name only, never surname or class time, never location-specific captions tied to an individual

PRACTICAL RULES OF THUMB

- If in doubt, leave them out. A great clip is not worth a parent's concern.
- Group shots and wider angles raise fewer issues than tight close-ups
- Never post anything that shows the outside of the studio with identifiable children
- Review your stored consent list every September, when classes shuffle
- Keep a separate "no social" folder. Even shadows and silhouettes off the list.

THE GROWN-UP VERSION

Treat consent as a relationship, not a tick box. Parents who feel asked, not assumed, share your posts more, recommend you more, and almost never complain. The small admin pays itself back many times over.

Repurposing one idea into five.

The fastest way to post more without working more is to stop inventing new content. Take one good idea and walk it through five formats.

ONE TOPIC, FIVE POSTS

01 **Start with a question parents ask**

Pick something you answer over and over. "What does my child need for their first ballet class?" works.

02 **Make a carousel**

Five to seven slides. One tip per slide. Save-worthy. Lives on your grid for years.

03 **Cut a reel from the carousel**

Same content, vertical video, on-screen text, fifteen seconds. New reach, same idea.

04 **Run a poll in stories**

"Did you know all this before your child's first class?" Engagement, plus future post fuel from replies.

05 **Turn it into a blog post**

Eight hundred words on your website. Now Google can find it too.

Most studios produce one piece of content for one platform and move on. The compound effect comes from one idea, several formats, and a few weeks apart.

PART THREE

Channels & Measurement

Which platforms to use, how to involve your team,
and how to know whether any of it is actually
working.

Instagram vs TikTok vs Facebook.

You do not need to be on every platform. Pick one main channel, one supporting channel, and ignore the rest until you have the bandwidth.

Instagram

Almost certainly your main channel. Parents live here. Reels reach new audiences, stories keep current ones warm, the grid is the shop window.

TikTok

Where dance lives, where students hang out. Best for older teens, technique content and showing the lighter side. Bonus reach if you have the time.

Facebook

Older parents and grandparents, local community groups, event listings. Less day-to-day, more useful than you think for trial enquiries.

A SENSIBLE SETUP

- **Main:** Instagram. Three posts a week minimum.
- **Supporting:** Cross-post your reels to TikTok (one tap). It costs you nothing.
- **Local:** Facebook for term announcements, show ticket links, local groups.
- **Ignore:** Threads, X, LinkedIn. They are unlikely to bring you a trial.

CROSS-POST CAREFULLY

TikTok's algorithm penalises videos with a visible Instagram watermark. Use a free tool like SnapTik to remove it before uploading. Five seconds of effort, much better reach.

Working with your team and students.

If social is one person's full-time worry, it will eventually stop. The studios that keep going are the ones where the whole team plays a small part.

WHO DOES WHAT

Teachers

Send a single clip a week from their class. Voice notes for caption ideas. They know which moments matter; they just need permission.

Office / admin

Schedule, monitor replies, handle DMs, keep the consent list up to date. The hub everything moves through.

Senior students (with consent)

Brilliant on TikTok and Stories. Authentic, fast, on-trend. Brief them lightly and trust them.

You, the owner

Tone of voice, monthly theme, sign-off on anything sensitive. Not the daily poster. Stop being the bottleneck.

A SIMPLE SHARED WORKFLOW

01 Shared album

One iCloud or Google Photos folder. Anyone in the team can drop clips and photos into it.

02 Weekly fifteen-minute meeting

Pick three to post next week. Assign captions. Done.

03 One scheduler

Meta Business Suite is free and handles Instagram and Facebook. Schedule a week ahead, breathe out.

Engaging with your community.

Posting is half the job. The other half is what happens after the post goes live. Most studios skip it. It is where the trials actually come from.

THE FIRST HOUR MATTERS

Most platforms decide how far a post travels in the first sixty minutes. Comments, shares and saves in that window tell the algorithm this is worth showing to more people. Be present. Reply quickly. Even an emoji counts.

WHERE TO SPEND YOUR ENGAGEMENT TIME

- Reply to every comment on your own posts within 24 hours, ideally the same day
- Reply to DMs within one working day, with a warm human note (not a copy-paste)
- Comment on five local accounts a week: schools, parent pages, dance bloggers, your students' tagged posts
- Repost stories that tag you. It costs nothing and rewards the parent who shared.

DMS ARE THE NEW ENQUIRY FORM

A growing share of trial enquiries now come through Instagram DM, not the website. Treat your inbox like a phone line. Set expectations on response times in your bio. Reply with warmth, not template energy.

Measuring what actually matters.

Likes and follower counts are the wrong numbers to obsess over. Three measurements tell you whether social is doing its job.

THE THREE NUMBERS

Saves and shares

The honest signal. People save what they want to refer back to, and share what makes them look good. Both are quietly bullish for your studio.

Profile visits

How many people clicked through from a post to your actual profile. The bridge between a passing view and a real interest.

Trial enquiries citing social

Ask every new family how they heard about you. "Instagram" should appear in your top three sources within twelve months.

WHAT TO IGNORE

- Likes, mostly. They are the vanity metric. A reel can flop on likes and still earn five enquiries.
- Follower count week to week. Look quarterly, not daily.
- Comparing to studios bigger or with a longer head start than you
- Anything from a self-styled "viral" coach selling you certainty

QUARTERLY HABIT

Once every three months, sit down with one cup of tea and ask: what were our three most-saved posts? Our three with the most profile visits? Make more like those. Drop the formats that did neither. Repeat.

The seven mistakes we see every week.

Almost every studio that thinks social isn't working is making at least three of these. Most are easy to fix in an afternoon.

01 Posting landscape video

Vertical. Every time. Landscape clips on Instagram and TikTok look like an afterthought, because they are.

02 No captions on video

Most viewers watch on mute. If your clip needs sound to land, you have lost most of the audience already.

03 Hiding the studio

Generic quotes, stock graphics, motivational nothings. Parents follow studios because they want to see the studio. Show it.

04 Selling on every post

"Book now" three times a week is not marketing, it's noise. The 40/30/20/10 split exists for a reason.

05 Ghosting on engagement

Posting and walking away. Engagement is half the algorithm. Stay for the first hour. Reply for the next 24.

06 Treating each platform identically

Instagram, TikTok and Facebook have different audiences and different rhythms. Cross-post the video, rewrite the caption.

07 Quitting too soon

Most accounts take six to twelve months of consistent posting before reach really takes off. Three weeks of effort and a sigh of defeat is the most common error of all.

Content pillar audit.

Open Instagram. Look at your last twelve posts. Tag each one with a pillar. Then add them up below.

SHOW THE WORK _____	SHOW THE PEOPLE _____
TEACH SOMETHING _____	SELL, GENTLY _____
DOESN'T FIT _____	NOTES _____

WHAT DOES THE MIX TELL YOU?

Target: 40 / 30 / 20 / 10. Anything in "doesn't fit" is probably the content that is quietly dragging your feed down.

THE PILLAR I NEED MORE OF

THE FIRST THREE POSTS I'LL PLAN FOR THAT PILLAR

Your 4-week content calendar.

Pick a monthly theme. Plan one big post a week. Write it in. Stick the page above your desk.

THIS MONTH'S THEME

Week 1 SHOW THE WORK	The post idea <hr/> <hr/>
Week 2 SHOW THE PEOPLE	The post idea <hr/> <hr/>
Week 3 TEACH SOMETHING	The post idea <hr/> <hr/>
Week 4 SELL, GENTLY	The post idea <hr/> <hr/>

FILMING DAY

WHEN I'LL FILM THE CLIPS FOR THIS MONTH



Want a website that turns your followers into trial bookings?

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

[Book a free 30-minute consultation](#)

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