

Rinceorí Na Sléibhte *(Dancers of the Mountains)*



Missoula Irish Dancers Student & Parent Handbook

2018-2019

About The Missoula Irish Dancers	3
Mission Statement	3
Contact Information	3
Instructors	4
Introduction to Irish Dance	5
Terms Frequently Used for Irish Dance Skills and Techniques	6
Registration and Consent	6
New Student Registration	6
Registration Fee	7
Returning Student Registration	7
Classes	7
Performance Classes	7
Skills & Technique Classes:	7
Class Descriptions	8
Class Placement and Advancement	9
Advancement Expectations	9
Techniques for Individual Improvement	10
Practice Music	10
Program Rules and Expectations	11
Classroom Expectations	11
Performance Expectations	13
Performance Opportunities	14
Parades	15
Parade Attire	15
Student Safety	15
Competition	15
Tuition Policy	16
Tuition Rates	16
Tuition Due Dates	16
Accepted Forms of Payment	17
Private Lessons	17
Parental Involvement	17

ABOUT THE MISSOULA IRISH DANCERS

Rinceorí Na Sléibhte (Dancers of the Mountains), more commonly known as the Missoula Irish Dancers, is a performance based Irish Dance group founded in 2005 by Sarah Donnelly-Litz, Owner and Head Instructor, as a way to share the traditional art of Irish dance with the Missoula Community and the surrounding areas. Students who participate in Missoula Irish Dancers (MID) learn traditional and modern Irish step dancing through weekly instruction, and showcase these skills at public performances.

MID students develop strength and coordination, gain self confidence, make friends, and remain active while practicing this ancient art. The school is currently a performance based school. However, students interested in competition receive instruction and are adequately prepared to do so through the focus on choreography, steps, skills, and techniques taught during class.

Classes are offered to girls and boys ages K-12. Our program is offered during the school year (September to May) and follows closely the Missoula Public School system's official calendar.

Dancers in Rinceorí Na Sléibhte perform regularly at our annual Holiday Performance, Celtic Festivals, schools, and nursing homes in the Missoula community and the surrounding areas. In doing so, we are able share this traditional aspect of the Irish culture with the public, and teach traditional Irish step dancing to new generations of dancers and performers.

MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to preserve the Irish culture by way of teaching traditional Irish Step Dancing to new generations of dancers.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Email:

Email is our primary and preferred form of communicating with dance families. You will receive emails from the School or the Irish Dance Association (IDA), the non-profit booster club. Please add our email addresses to your contact list and check your inbox on a regular basis.

The IDA sends out a monthly newsletter via email with notices about upcoming activities and events, important dates, and other general information. If you are not currently receiving these newsletters, please contact the board at MID.Board.MT@gmail.com.

Please be sure to keep us informed of any changes in your email address. Inform an instructor if you do not have an email account.

We receive several parent emails daily. Our inbox is often swamped with parent emails on the days/weeks before a big performance. Please keep in mind that we do our best to reply to emails in a timely manner, but sometimes it may be a few days before you receive a reply.

Email: MissoulaIrishDancers@gmail.com - Instructors
MID.Board.MT@gmail.com - IDA (Nonprofit Parent Board)

Websites: www.missoulairishdancers.com

General information, performance schedules, registration forms, uniform information, and tuition payment options may all be found on our website.

Phone:

Instructors may be reached by phone in an emergency. Please be aware that instructors do not accept calls or texts during classes.

- Sarah Donnelly – Owner & Head Instructor: (406) 439-8544
- Anna Walter – Instructor: (406) 546-4020
- Katie Resch – Instructor: (406) 540-2763
- Sequoyah Jessop: Instructor (406) 381-0695

INSTRUCTORS

Our goal as instructors is to teach students the skills of traditional Irish Step Dancing and to instill confidence when performing. At the end of every class, we want our students to leave with a feeling of accomplishment, motivation to practice, and eagerness to come back and continue to advance their knowledge and skills. We are passionate about teaching and take pride in sharing our experiences and love of Irish Dance with our students.

Sarah Donnelly, Head Instructor, Owner

Sarah started dancing when she was 9 years old with the Carrigan School of Irish Dance in Helena, MT. Eventually her dance school merged with the Trinity Academy of Irish Dance from Chicago and Milwaukee, and became the Tiernan Irish Dancers. She performed in Helena for several years, and traveled to different states for competitions. She also studied with renowned teachers Peggy McTeggert and Sheila Hayes while in Ireland. While attending the University of Montana, she founded the Missoula Irish Dancers. She currently also teaches a Ceili class as part of the Irish Studies program at the University of Montana.

Anna Walter, Instructor

Anna joined the Missoula Irish Dancers at the age of 9. She developed a passion for Irish dancing and continued on as a student until graduating from high school in the spring of 2015. Upon graduation, Anna became an official instructor for the Missoula Irish Dancers. In addition to teaching dance, Anna is currently pursuing a degree in Music and Elementary Education at the University of Montana.

Katie Resch, Instructor

Katie joined the Missoula Irish Dancers in the fall of 2008. After participating in her first St. Patrick's Day school tour in 2009, she was officially hooked on Irish dancing. Katie became an official instructor in the fall of 2016 after graduating from high school the previous spring. Her passion of dance increased as she developed a love for teaching. Along with her involvement in the school, she juggles working as a barista and is a talented artist. Katie is currently attending the University of Montana and plans to pursue a future which will include her passions for teaching, art, and psychology.

Sequoyah Jessop, Instructor

Sequoyah began dancing with the Missoula Irish Dancers eight years ago. During that time, she has become familiar with most of the students as a Teaching Assistant before moving into her current role as an Instructor. In addition to teaching Irish Dance both in Missoula and in our newly developed sister school in Hamilton, Sequoyah is a Teaching Assistant at a private school, where she teaches first grade.

Rhian Lindhjem, Instructor

Rhian recently moved to Missoula from Seattle, where she has danced for many years. She is excited to be working with Blaze, Li'l Blaze, and Castle Mountain dancers on Tuesdays, as well as Fortress and Mystic Level dancers.

Anne-Marie Cunningham, TCRG, ADCRG, Guest Instructor

Anne-Marie studied Irish Dance under Theresa Kinsella in London, England. She has won a number of regional and national titles, and recalled at the Irish Dance World Championships. Anne-Marie joined the original cast of *Riverdance* in 1996, and toured with them for 6 years.

After passing her TCRG exam in 2001, Anne-Marie taught in England, Germany, Prague, Austria, Poland, and Japan. While in Japan, she set up the first coimisiun school in Tokyo and choreographed a show with Iwao Furosawa, the renowned classical violinist. She rejoined the cast of *Riverdance* for a brief stint.

From 2008-2011 Anne-Marie served as the president of RTME, the Registered Teachers of Mainland Europe, a group of registered Irish Dancing teachers in mainland Europe and a part of An Coimisiun le Rince Gaelacha – The Commission of Irish Dancing, the largest governing body of Irish dancing worldwide. She has since remained an officer on the RTME committee. She also served as an elected member of the Coimisiun for 4 years, during which she attended monthly meetings in Dublin in which decisions on the rules and regulations of the Irish dancing worldwide were made.

After passing her ADCRG she began adjudicating internationally. Anne-Marie's former students recalled at the Worlds and have joined both *Lord of the Dance* and *Riverdance*. She currently lives and teaches in Austria.

INTRODUCTION TO IRISH DANCE

While Irish Dance has been around for centuries, most people are unfamiliar with the unique nature of the dance form. The following overview provides a basic introduction.

In Irish dancing, a step is a sequence of foot movements, leg movements and leaps, choreographed to fit a certain musical cadence through 8 bars of music for the "right foot" and is repeated through 8 more bars of music for the "left foot" of the step.

Steps are choreographed for the various Irish music tempos: reel, light jig, slip jig, single jig, treble jig and hornpipe. There are many steps of each dance, varying in level of difficulty. Steps are created by the instructors of an Irish dance school, and are unique to that particular school (with the exception of the traditional set dances and the treble reel finishing step).

There are two kinds of dance shoes for Irish step dancing – soft shoes and hard shoes. Reels, light jigs and slip jigs are performed in soft shoe. Treble jigs and hornpipes are the first hard shoe dances taught, first at traditional (fast) speed and later at a slower speed, which allows for more complicated foot-work. Experienced dancers will also learn treble reels and set dances, both performed in hard shoes.

An Irish dancer's basic skills include (but are not limited to):

- **Timing** (meaning the dance movements match the rhythm of the music).
- **Pointed toes** with arched feet.
- **Legs crossed** (so that it looks like one knee is hiding behind the other).
- **Legs and feet turned out** (so that when the legs are crossed, the inside of the ankle bone is facing forward, heels splayed out, with toes toward the midline).
- **Straight upper body** with arms straight at the dancer's sides, chin level, eyes forward, head evenly balanced atop relaxed neck, with shoulders open (down and back).
- **Powerful footwork**, including high elevation on the toes and snappy legs that kick the dancer's bum when feet move from behind to in front or vice versa.
- **Well-executed jumps** that incorporate all of the above principles, and an overall sense of "lift" throughout a dance.
- **Confidence when on stage.** Please don't look at the floor and remember to SMILE!

Some Irish dancers choose to dance in competition, which can be a great way to stay motivated while striving to master steps. A feis (pronounced FESH) is a sanctioned Irish dance competition offering dance events for multiple skill levels, each further divided by age groups. Oireachtas (pronounced O-ROCK-TUS) is a regional championship competition, where solo championship events are divided by age group only, and many figure team championship events are also offered.

For more detailed information on Irish Dance, speak with one of the instructors, all of whom are passionate about Irish Dance!

TERMS FREQUENTLY USED FOR IRISH DANCE SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES

- **Cross** – refers to a dancer’s legs being crossed in such a way that it looks like one knee is hiding behind the other (Note: the term “cross” is almost always used in conjunction with “turnout”)
- **Turnout** – refers to a dancer’s legs being rotated in such a way that, when legs are crossed, heels are pushed out across the midline and toes face toward midline; IMPORTANT: proper turnout comes from the hips, not from the feet – a dancer’s toes and knees should be facing the same direction
- **Point** – a basic Irish dance movement of pointing the foot in front with proper technique (hop on back foot, legs crossed and feet turned out, pointed front foot gently brushes the floor in a staccato movement); “a point” refers to the shape the foot when it shows a proper arch, with heel clearly visible to the inside, top of the foot turned to the outside, toes long and tight
- **Hop 1-2-3’s** – a basic Irish dance movement whereby, with legs crossed and feet turned out, a dancer steps moving forward “right, left, right, hop (on right foot), left, right, left, hop (on left foot), right, left, right” etc...
- **7’s & 3’s** – a series of basic Irish dance moves whereby, with legs crossed and feet turned out, a dancer steps laterally “right, left, right, left...” for seven counts, then “right back-2-3, left back-2-3” and repeats (to the rhythm of the music) through a right foot and left foot section
- **Switch** – a basic Irish dance movement whereby, with legs crossed and feet turned out, a dancer jumps straight up (in place, not traveling) and switches which foot is in front with which foot is in back
- **Over** – the basic Irish dance movement of leaping from one foot into the air with one leg extended, other leg tucked underneath, then landing on the opposite foot from that which took off; over-the- bridge refers to an over performed in reel tempo, also sometimes called “over-2-3”
- **Batter** – the basic Irish dance movement whereby, with legs crossed and feet turned out, a dancer brushes the floor using the tip of their hard shoe outward and then inward in such a way that it makes two distinct sounds; other Irish dance schools may use the terms “treble” or “rally” to refer to the same movement (note that each term is two syllables, representative of the two sounds)
- **Click** – the basic Irish dance movement of one foot passing by the other foot in such a way that the heels of the hard shoes hit each other and make a clicking sound; clicks may also be done in soft shoe, but the heels don’t actually touch

NOTE: There are MANY other Irish dance terms commonly used, but this brief list is intended to give those new to Irish dance a jumpstart.

REGISTRATION AND CONSENT

New Student Registration

New students are welcome to take classes and perform with the Missoula Irish Dancers/Rinceorí Na Sléibhte (MID) after completing an on-line registration and consent form. Forms must be filled out prior to or on a student’s first day of class by the student’s parents or legal guardians.

New students are accepted at the start of a semester (September or January), and in the spring after St. Patrick's Day.

Please be aware that our beginner classes fill quickly. After classes fill, incoming students are put on a wait list.

Registration Fee

First-year students are required to pay a non-refundable \$10 registration fee prior to or on their first day of dance class.

Returning Student Registration

Returning students must have a new registration/consent form completed and signed by their parents/legal guardians at the beginning of every dance year. Class placement information for returning students is sent out prior to registration.

Students who are 18 or older are allowed to complete and sign their own registration and consent form.

CLASSES

As Rinceoirí Na Sléibhte, or Dancers of the Mountains), our class levels are named after Montana mountains. Classes are named alphabetically, from beginner to advanced students. Climb your way up the mountains to reach the next level!

Performance Classes

Performance classes, taught to all students, teach fundamental Irish Step dancing steps and skills. The purpose of these classes is to introduce students to new steps and choreography, correct execution, proficiency, with the focus on group choreography for performances.

- Li'l Blaze (Kindergarten & 1st Grade): Tuesdays, 3:45 - 4:30 pm
- Blaze Mountain (Beginner I): Tuesdays, 4:30 - 5:30 pm
- Castle Mountain (Beginner II): Tuesdays, 5:30 - 6:30 pm
- Fortress Mountain: Mondays, 4:30 - 5:45 pm
- Mystic Mountain: Mondays, 4:30 - 5:45 pm
- Storm Mountain: Mondays, 5:45 - 7:00 pm
- Thunder Mountain: Mondays, 5:45 - 7:00 pm
- Wolf Mountain: Mondays, 6:30 - 8:00 pm

Skills & Technique Classes:

Optional Skills and Techniques classes are offered on Wednesdays for students in the Fortress - Wolf Mountain levels. These classes help students develop and improve their technique, footwork, strength and stamina, and overall execution and presentation of solo steps. These classes give students the change to learn more solo steps, and receive more individualized instruction.

- Skills Class 1 (Fortress, Mystic, and Storm Mountain): Wednesdays, 4:30 - 5:45 pm
- Skills Class 2 (Thunder and Wolf Mountain): Wednesdays, 5:45 - 7:00 pm

Class Descriptions

Li'l Blaze

Music: Beginner/Traditional Speed Music

Prerequisite: None. For students who are new to Irish dance. New student evaluation involves age and determining a student's present ability in light of previous dance experience, individual skill and muscle development.

Steps: Dancers will learn basic jigs, reels, and slip jigs when time allows. Students should begin to master Jig 1, North-South-East-West, Hail Mary, Blaze Reel, Skip 2-3s, Leap 2-3s, and Sevens

Blaze Mountain

Music: Beginner/Traditional Speed Music

Prerequisite: None. For students who are new to Irish dance. New student evaluation involves age and determining a student's present ability in light of previous dance experience, individual skill and muscle development.

Steps: Dancers will learn basic jigs, reels, and slip jigs when time allows. Students should begin to master Jig 1, North-South-East-West, Hail Mary, Blaze Reel, Skip 2-3s, Leap 2-3s, and Sevens

Castle Mountain

Music: Beginner/Traditional Speed Music

Prerequisites: Students have demonstrated that they have a clear understanding and correct execution of skip-2-3's, 7's, leap-2-3's and jig steps. They also understand the rhythm and timing of jigs.

Steps: Students will learn more advanced jig steps, reels, group dances, and be introduced to slip jigs and the proper technique.

Fortress Mountain

Music: Beginner/Traditional Speed Music

Prerequisites: Students are able to execute the majority of steps learned in the beginner levels to music and without the help of an instructor.

Steps: Students will learn more advanced reels, slip jigs, and group dances. They will be drilled on proper technique i.e. turnout and crossover, pointed toes, straight arms and back, etc. Students may start learning hard shoe steps. Do not purchase hard shoes without the instructors' approval.

Mystic Mountain

Music: Beginner/Traditional Speed Music, & Advanced/Open Speed Music

Prerequisites: Students have demonstrated the correct execution of Fortress level steps to music and without the help of an instructor.

Steps: Students will continue to be drilled on proper technique and more advanced jigs, reels, and slip jigs for soft shoe dances. For hard shoe, students will start learning beginner level hornpipes, treble jigs, and hard or treble reels. They will also be introduced to basic advanced movements such as swivels, quivers, birds, and hanging leap-2-3's.

Storm Mountain

Music: Beginner/Traditional Speed Music, & Advanced/Open Speed Music

Prerequisites: Students have demonstrated the correct execution of Mystic level steps to music and without the help of an instructor.

Steps: Students will continue to be drilled on proper technique and more advanced jigs, reels, and slip jigs for soft shoe dances. For hard shoe, students will master hornpipes, treble jigs, and hard or treble reels. They will also become proficient in advanced movements such as swivels, quivers, birds, and hanging leap-2-3's.

Thunder Mountain

Music: Beginner/Traditional Speed Music, & Advanced/Open Speed Music

Prerequisites: Typically students are at least 10 years old. Students have demonstrated that they can execute and remember the soft shoe and hard shoe steps from the previous levels with the proper technique and no help from an instructor. They are able to work independently on their own solo steps and work well with others when focusing on group dances.

Steps: Students will start executing all of their steps to advanced/open speed music. More advanced movements will be introduced such as bicycles, scissors, rocks, toe stands, etc.

Wolf Mountain

Music: Advanced/Open Speed Music

Prerequisites: Students are at least 12 years old, sometimes younger with instructor approval. They are able to work independently on their own solo steps and work well with others when focusing on group dances. Students are comfortable when on stage and have demonstrated above average stage presence.

Steps: Students will execute all steps in advanced/open speed music. They are introduced to more complicated choreography as they become technically proficient in bicycles, scissors, rocks, toe stands, etc.

CLASS PLACEMENT AND ADVANCEMENT

Advancement Expectations

Students in each level are expected to master certain steps before advancing to the next level. Class levels are defined by a dancer's ability to perform the requisite skills appropriate to that level, NOT by the number of years dancing. Dancers need to be comfortable, confident, technically correct, and understand the material before advancing to a higher level. Every individual dancer progresses and develops strength and coordination at their own pace. Students advance to more challenging levels as they safely master the techniques and solo steps, not specific group choreography.

The pace of each student's progress through the program varies. Some students advance more quickly than others. Usually this is because of a combination of diligent attendance and attention in class; effective independent practice outside of class; participation in summer camps; and participation in as many as possible of the extra workshops provided throughout the year.

In May of each year, instructors examine each student to determine their proficiency and confidence with each of the required steps, and make recommendations for the following year accordingly. Instructors give careful consideration in making placements. Their goal is to place each student in a class that offers sufficient training for a solid foundation in Irish Dance. Exams may be taken by special request at other times during the year, and students may be moved up to the next level at any time of the year if he/she demonstrates an ability to consistently execute steps and movements correctly.

Students may sometimes be asked to repeat a level in order to better support their dance training. Classes progress at slightly different paces each year, and new steps are added on a regular basis. Therefore, even if a dancer is repeating a level, the material taught in class will not necessarily be the same.

Age is also a factor in placement at advanced levels. Typically older and more experienced dancers learn tricky steps at a faster pace and have more stamina and strength than younger dancers. Irish dance steps and group combinations get more challenging with each new level and require more strength, stamina, flexibility, coordination, and complicated footwork. There are movements in advanced steps that should

never be attempted by dancers until they are about 12 years of age, (for example, toe stands). Some dancers might be ready for advanced steps and movements before the age of 12 with instructor approval.

Generally first-year students who are new to Irish dance, regardless of age, are placed in a beginner level class level. Depending on age, development, and previous experience with other forms of dance, some new dancers may move up to a more advanced level more quickly than other students.

Techniques for Individual Improvement

We recommend the following tips for those interested in advancing at a faster rate, and for those interested in competition. Remember: Don't practice until you get it right, practice until you can't get it wrong!

1. Practice Outside of Class: Students who regularly spend time practicing at home master the material and may end up moving to the next level faster than their classmates who choose not to practice outside of class. We do not require but highly encourage all of our students to practice at home. The instructors know when students have been putting in the extra time and effort at home because it shows in their dancing. When practicing outside of class:

- Practice 30 minutes - 1 hour or more
- Commit to 2 times a week or more
- Drill the pieces of your steps that you are struggling with over and over again
- Practice in your dance shoes
- STRETCH before and after you practice
- Practice to the music at the correct speed (jigs must only be danced to a jig, reels must only be danced to a reel, etc.)

2. Use Class Time Wisely: To get the most out of your class:

- Ask an instructor to clarify a step that you don't understand.
- Don't take offense when an instructor corrects something wrong with your step or dance – we do that to help you improve.
- When practicing solo steps, don't focus on what the other dancers around you are doing, focus on yourself.

3. Consider Attending Wednesday Skills Classes (Monday dancers only):

- Wednesday classes are optional and only offered to Monday students
- Please note – Dancers attending Wednesday classes are still required to attend Monday classes

4. Attend Workshops and Summer Camps: Students who participate in Workshops and Summer Camps learn a lot of Irish dance in a short period of time. Because of their intensity, the quality of guest instructors, and increased time frame, students who participate are often able to advance more quickly.

5. Take Private Lessons: Private lessons are a supplemental opportunity for a student to receive more individualized instruction and feedback from a teacher. Private lessons are meant to support (not replace) a dancer's class instruction and independent practice.

PRACTICE MUSIC

The ability to execute Irish dance steps to the music is extremely important. For beginner dancers, understanding and feeling the music might seem difficult initially, but eventually it will click. When practicing at home, only practice dance steps to the appropriate music. Practice reels to a reel, slip jigs to slip jig music, etc.

The time signatures of the dances are the same for all of the levels, but there are typically two official speeds for most dances. Beginner/traditional speed music is faster than advanced/open speed music. There are several types of Irish dances and the levels have specific speeds. Do not practice reels to jig music, hornpipes to treble jig music, etc.

There are literally hundreds of official Irish dance music albums available. The following are some of the instructors' favorites. All are available on iTunes.

- *Sweets for Your Feet* by Feistunes - Open Speeds
- *Feistunes 2* by Feistunes – Traditional Speeds
- *The Feis Album, Vol. I & Vol. II* by Anton & Sully
- *Irish Dance World* by Bradley Brothers
- *100% Pure Irish Dance* by Bradley Brothers

BEGINNER /TRADITIONAL SPEED MUSIC

- Light Jig – 116 BPM
- Reel, Slip Jig, Single Jig – 121 BPM
- Treble Jig – 85 BPM
- Hornpipe – 138 BPM

ADVANCED/OPEN SPEED MUSIC

- Reel, Hornpipe, Slip Jig – 113 BPM
- Treble Jig – 73 BPM
- Jig (light jig) – 6/8 Time Signature
- Reel – 4/4 Time Signature
- Slip Jig (SLJ) - 9/8 Time Signature

SOFT/LIGHT SHOE DANCES

- Jig (light jig) – 6/8 Time Signature
- Reel – 4/4 Time Signature
- Slip Jig (SLJ) - 9/8 Time Signature
- Single Jig– 6/8 Time Signature (we currently do not teach single jigs)

HARD SHOE DANCES

- Hornpipe (HP) – 2/4 and 4/4 Time Signature
- Treble Jig (TJ) – 6/8 Time Signature
- Hard/Treble Reel – 4/4 Time Signature

TRADITIONAL SET DANCES

Traditional set dances are hard shoe dances that are only danced to a tune of the same name. They include:

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| • St. Patrick's Day ~ 92-96 BPM | • Garden of Daisies ~ 138 BPM |
| • Job of Journeywork ~ 138 BPM | • Three Sea Captains ~ 96 BPM |
| • Jockey to the Fair ~ 90 BPM | • King of the Fairies ~ 130 BPM |
| • Blackbird ~ 144 BPM | |

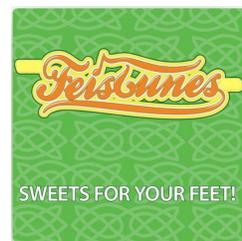
PROGRAM RULES AND EXPECTATIONS

Classroom Expectations

In order for each class to be successful, we ask that each student adhere to the following classroom rules and expectation.



Suggested Beginner Album



Suggested Advanced Album

- 1. Attend class!**
 - It is essential that students attend class regularly to improve their dancing abilities and understand the choreography of group dances for performances.
 - Each class has its own unique choreography, and others students are relying on your attendance.
 - Students are required to attend classes on a regular basis to be eligible to participate in shows and performances.
 - If your child is not performance ready due to poor attendance, he/she may be unable to participate in all or some of the choreographed pieces.
- 2. Wear appropriate attire**
 - Shorts, leggings, skirt, etc.
 - No baggy pants of jeans - Baggy or loose pants may only be worn during stretching
 - Dance shoes must be worn during class
 - Long hair should be pulled back
- 3. Bring your dance bag into the classroom.** It should have the following inside:
 - Water bottle (Trips to the drinking fountain are time consuming and an inefficient use of class time.)
 - Dance shoes (both pairs if you have reached hard shoe level)
 - Notebook and pen/pencil
 - Black duct tape for hard shoes
 - Street shoes may remain in the hallway.
- 4. Do not leave the studio.** Students are not allowed to leave the studio during class without the consent of an instructor. We need everyone to be safe which means we need to know where all students are at all times.
- 5. Arrive at class promptly.**
 - Enter and exit through the double doors on the south side of the building off Adams Street. Handicap entry is available through the box office entrance.
- 6. Wait quietly in the hallway for your class to begin.**
 - Please be considerate of other classes and events taking place in the Missoula Children's Theater during our classes.
- 7. Put your ghillies/soft shoes on on the hallway.**
 - Do not wear street shoes in the dance studio. This is particularly important during winter or rainy days, as street shoes bring mud and water with them.
 - If you are running late please put your dance shoes on in the hallway and quietly enter the studio.
 - If you are unfamiliar with how to lace your dance shoes, ask an instructor for help after your class has entered the studio.
- 8. Pay attention when teachers are speaking.** Don't even whisper to others when the instructor is talking.
 - Please do not interrupt when an instructor is giving individual or small group instruction. Wait your turn.
- 9. Be respectful and supportive of fellow dancers.**
 - Rude or disrespectful behavior toward others will not be tolerated.
 - Inform an instructor of rude or inappropriate behaviors.
- 10. Put away cell phones and toys!**
 - Cell phones should be silenced and put away during class.
 - Please leave toys at home. If a toy comes with you to dance class, please stow it in your dance bag where your classmates can't see it.
 - If an instructor sees you with a cell phone or toy during class the toy will be taken from you and given back when class ends.
- 11. Treats and chewing gum are not allowed in the studio.**
 - We are not technically allowed to bring food into the dance studio however, we allow our students to bring treats to class for their birthdays or on other special occasions. **Parents of the dancer who**

brings treats MUST help us clean up after treats have been distributed. We practice a leave no trace policy with treats.

- If you are bringing treats please tell an instructor before class starts so that we can work it into that day's class schedule. Usually we'll have treat time during the last 5-10 minutes of class.
- Just to be safe, try to refrain from using nuts or nut products. If your child would like to bring treats that are made with nut products, you may inquire with an instructor prior to bringing or making the treats to find out if nut allergies are a concern for your dancer's classmates.

12. Leave the mirrors alone. There is no reason to touch the mirrors, and the janitors really dislike it.

13. Students are excused when class dismisses.

- When class is over students are expected to sit quietly in the hallway or outside the South entrance while waiting for their ride.
- The following class will start promptly, which means the teachers are unable to monitor the students who have been dismissed.
- Please discuss pickup times, rules, where you are to meet your parent/guardian, etc. prior to arriving to class.
- If you are running late and your child's class is the last class of the day and we have already closed the dance room, we will wait with him/her by the South side entrance until you arrive.

14. Parents should refrain from entering the classroom or looking in the window during class.

- It is very distracting when parents are present in the studio or at the window during classes. If your dancer needs your assistance with lacing his/her dance shoes, please do this in the hallway before sending your dancer into the classroom.
- Please approach instructors with questions before or after class to minimize interruptions.

Performance Expectations

Performances and shows are exciting and fun! We understand that most dancers are anxious and excited prior to a performance. We have basic performance rules and requirements for all of our performances that students need to adhere to. Students who repeatedly break the rules might lose their privilege to participate in future performances.

1. Attend weekly classes and rehearsals!

- Dancers without adequate prior attendance may not be allowed to perform due to challenges in accommodating choreography.

2. Commit to attending performances!

- No-shows at performances negatively impact the dance choreography and fellow dancers, and creates undue stress on instructors and performers as they struggle to improvise to account for missing dancers.
- Canceling less than two weeks prior to performances may affect invitations to participate in future performances.

3. Arrive in time and in uniform

- Be in school dress with makeup, shoes, hair, etc. at the designated time.
- If you are unable to get ready at home, arrive at the venue early enough to change before we get started.
- We quickly review and run through all of performance pieces before taking the stage. All of our dancers must be present in order to run through our choreography.
- For additional information on uniforms and school dress, refer to the *Uniform Handbook*.

4. Be respectful of others's belongings.

- If it doesn't belong to you, please don't touch.

5. Be respectful of the venue.

- Do not touch anything in the performance building that doesn't belong to you.
- If we damage, move, or play with something that belongs to the venue, we might not be invited back again, and it reflects poorly on the image of our dance school.

6. **Follow the directive of the backstage moms and helpers.**
 - During performances, the instructors often have as much stage time as the students. Because of this, the instructors are not able to help keep track of the students.
7. **Stay in your designated area.**
 - Please stay with your group in the area you are assigned.
 - Don't wander, and don't go to talk to your parents or friends unless you are dismissed.
8. **Focus on the show, not socializing.**
 - When lined up backstage, try to remember to keep quiet and quietly run through your next dance in your head while waiting to take the stage.
 - When a group of students start socializing backstage it often causes chaos, a loss of focus, and distracts the audience from focusing on the performers.
9. **Be still and quiet.**
 - For many of our performances at schools, nursing homes, festivals, etc. we don't have an actual "backstage." Our dancers sit off to the side of the performance area with their groups. In these settings, the audience can see all of our dancers, not just the ones onstage.
 - Please don't talk to your friends "backstage." It is not only distracting to the audience, but it is extremely disrespectful to your fellow dancers who are onstage.
10. **Don't peek out at the audience from behind the curtain, the stage, etc.**
 - If you can see the audience, the audience can see you.
11. **Be a good representative for our school.**
 - Demonstrate proper behavior and dance to the best of your abilities.
12. **Be a strong ambassador for Irish Dance and Irish Culture.**
13. **Smile and have fun!!**
 - Dancing and performances should be, first and foremost, fun!
14. **Dismissal**
 - After our final bow or performance piece, please stay with our group until you are dismissed.

PERFORMANCE OPPORTUNITIES

Dancers in Rinceorí Na Sléibhte perform regularly at our annual Holiday Performance, Celtic Festivals, schools, and nursing homes in the Missoula community and the surrounding areas. In doing so, we are able share this traditional aspect of the Irish culture with the public, and teach traditional Irish step dancing to new generations of dancers and performers. These performances include, but are not limited to the following:

- Missoula Irish Dancers Holiday Recital
- Friends of Irish Studies St. Patrick's Day Banquet & Auction
- St. Patrick's Day School Tour
- Missoula Celtic Festival
- Bitterroot Celtic Games and Gatherings
- Flathead Celtic Festival
- IDA Fundraiser performances

Information on specific dates, locations, and rehearsal times for each of these events will be sent out via email prior to the performance.

Volunteers are needed at all of our performances, and are coordinated through IDA. Please see the *IDA Handbook* for information on where and how you can help!

PARADES

We participate in the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade. Other parades may include the Homecoming Day parade, the Day of the Dead parade, or the Holiday parade as deemed appropriate by IDA and the School.

IDA oversees registration and parent volunteers for the parades. Depending on the size of our group and whether or not we have a float, we usually require 3 to 5 parent helpers to help/walk with us in a parade. Please contact IDA to volunteer. Please do not plan to walk in the parade with our group unless you are the designated volunteered.

Parade Attire

- Boys – Black pants, black dress shirts or MID shirt, sweatshirt, or camp shirt.
- Girls – Practice or Black Skirt, with black leotard, MID shirt, sweatshirt, or camp shirt. If it is cold or rainy, wear black leggings or black tights under your skirt.
- Sneakers (or runners as the Irish say). No dance shoes.

We allow our students to wear fun St. Patrick's Day gear such as green hats, green necklaces, shamrock tights (St. Pat's Parade only), shamrock stickers, etc., just no Guinness or beer attire.

For the most part, we've been lucky with the majority of our parades when it comes to having decent weather. However, we have had a few bad experiences with rain and snow. Layer up as much as you need to underneath your parade uniform.

Student Safety

Typically parents wait for their children at the end of the parade. Once we dismiss students they are free to go. Unless you inform us ahead of time, we assume that we are no longer responsible for your child after they've been dismissed. If you would prefer to check in with us before letting your child leave our group, please inform us prior to the parade day.

COMPETITION

While the school is currently a performance based school, competition is an important part of the Irish Dance world. A number of dancers with the School have expressed an interest in competing at Feiseannas. For students to compete at a feis (Irish dance competition) they are required to register under a certified Irish dance instructor (TCRG). Students may register, with permission from Sarah and Anne-Marie, under Anne-Marie Cunningham's name.

Prepping for a feis requires a lot of extra work outside of class time, but competing can be an extremely fun and satisfying experience.

While most dances, skills, and techniques are taught to the dancers during the regular weekly classes, with particular emphasis on drills and techniques occurring during the Wednesday skills classes, additional Feis prep may be required. Please contact an instructor if you are interested in competing.

Upcoming Feis Opportunities include:

- Portland: October 5-6, 2019
- Salt Lake City, October 26, 2019
- Portland, OR: January 2020 (date TBD)
- Seattle, WA: March 2020 (date TBD)
- Seattle, WA: April 2020 (date TBD)

- Casper, WY: April 2020 (date TBD)
- Salt Lake City, UT: June 2020 (date TBD)
- Wenatchee, WA: June 2020 (date TBD)

TUITION POLICY

Tuition Rates

The Missoula Irish Dancers' program is held during the regular school year and is split into two semesters.

Tuition is due monthly. Monthly tuition is as follows:

- Li'l Blaze: \$55
- Blaze & Castle Mountain: \$60
- 1 class/ week for Fortress, Mystic, Storm, Thunder, or Wolf: \$65
- 2 classes/ week for Fortress, Mystic, Storm, Thunder, or Wolf: \$115

Tuition Discounts are available. Family may select only one of the two available tuition discounts.

- Family Discount: Families with more than 1 student enrolled received a tuition discount of 10% off for 2 dancers, 15% off for 3 dancers.
- Pre-Paid Semester Discount: A 10% tuition discount may be applied to those who pay for the semester in full. Payments are due in September and January.

No monthly refunds are given due to absences or if a student decides to discontinue classes mid month.

Occasionally unexpected personal conflicts arise such as illness or injury that may allow for a partial monthly refund at the head instructor discretion.

Families have the option to pay for the fall or spring semester in full. If a student discontinues classes mid-semester and his/her tuition has already been paid in full, a partial refund will be considered depending on the situation.

If new students are accepted after September, they will have their class charges pro-rated from the time they join.

Tuition Due Dates

Depending on class level, all payments are due on either the first Monday or Tuesday of each calendar month.

- For students attending Monday classes, tuition is due on the first Monday of the dance month.
- For students attending Tuesday classes, tuition is due on the first Tuesday of the calendar month.
- For families who have children at various levels attending class on different days, tuition is due on the first Tuesday of the calendar month.

A \$5 late fee will be applied if tuition has not been paid by the second dance class (Monday or Tuesday) of the month. If tuition remains unpaid by the end of the month, the late fee is increased to \$10, with an additional \$5 late fee added for each month tuition remains unpaid thereafter.

You will not receive a bill/statement for your monthly tuition. We will be in contact with you if we have not received your tuition by the 2nd to last class of the month.

The quality of our program depends upon a system of mutual respect and cooperation. If a personal conflict arises regarding tuition fees and due dates, please inform the head instructor of your situation privately. Please do not address the situation in the presence of other students or parents.

Accepted Forms of Payment

- Cash
- Check made out to Missoula Irish Dancers
- PayPal via missoulairishdancers.com/pay-tuition
- If paying by cash or check please deposit your payment in the tuition drop box, which will be located inside room 305 on the floor to the right of the door.
- If paying by mail, or through automatic on-line bill payment through your bank, please send checks to:

Missoula Irish Dancers
2025 Altura Dr.
Missoula, MT 59802

PRIVATE LESSONS

Private and semi-private lessons with Instructors are available upon request. Private lessons can be arranged to help a dancer perfect a challenging technique, in preparation for a Feis, or on a more regular basis to help a student develop the skills needed to advance more quickly. Please contact individual Instructors to arrange times and locations.

Private Lesson Fees are due at the time of the lesson. Fees are as follows:

- \$25/60 minute session
- \$35/75 minute session

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Dance parent and family involvement is an important and much appreciated part of our program. Our school would not function without the strong support and help from dance families. If you are interested in volunteering or helping with fundraisers, performances, uniforms, advertising, etc., or joining our booster club, the Irish Dance Association (IDA), please talk with an IDA member. Additional information on IDA and volunteer opportunities can be found in the *IDA Handbook*.