



Parent & Student Handbook

2023-2024

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WELCOME TO THE RIVER CITY SCHOOL OF IRISH DANCE

Hello everyone and welcome to The River City School of Irish Dance! We are thrilled to begin another productive and fun-filled dancing season with all our students and their families. Here at River City we focus on teamwork, determination, and technical skill in an encouraging and positive environment, hoping to instill in our students the foundations for a positive competitive spirit and self-confidence both on stage and off. River City is one of the longest running Irish Dance Schools in Saskatoon, officially opening its doors in 1996. The School promotes awareness, understanding, and love of Irish Dance and culture at every class. The instructors think it is of the utmost importance to teach Irish Dance as traditionally as possible whilst remaining modern and creative. Our goal at River City is to teach your child to Irish dance to the best of his/her ability while having a fun and memorable experience.

This handbook has been created to inform both new and returning students and parents of River City School of Irish Dance of the policies that all members are expected to become familiar with each year. If you have additional questions that have not been addressed, please contact one of the instructors.

Communication between students, instructors, and parents is essential for our school to run smoothly, so please check your email frequently and do not hesitate to contact us at any time with any questions you may have. We also post frequent updates about upcoming events on our social media pages (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter) as well as our website. We thank you for choosing River City as your dance school. We cannot wait to begin another fantastic year with all of you!

Sincerely,
Katie Bleakney, TCRG & Nicole Nienaber, TCRG

CONTACT INFORMATION

Studio Location

2213F Hanselman Court
Saskatoon SK, S7L 2A8

Mailing Address

21A 129 – 5th Avenue North
Saskatoon SK, S7K 2N8

Instructors

Main Email: rcsidteachers@gmail.com
Website: www.rivercityirishdance.com

Katie Bleakney, TCRG <i>Owner and Certified Instructor</i> (306) 260-5111 katiebleakney@gmail.com	Nicole Nienaber, TCRG <i>Owner and Certified Instructor</i> (306) 291-7992 nicolenien@hotmail.com
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COMMUNICATION POLICY

The main form of communication for RCSID is through email. All emails are generated through the *Jackrabbit* website so please ensure that you are registered through the site and have chosen to **opt-in to emails**. A newsletter outlining upcoming events, fundraising opportunities and any other updates will be sent through email, bi-monthly. Instructors can be contacted through email and text in regards to attendance at class and performances. If texting the instructors, please be considerate and ensure that it is during reasonable business hours. Upcoming events and Feiseanna will also be posted on our website www.rivercityirishdance.com.

This year we will be using Jackrabbit to log dancer absences, please ensure to use the website when your dancer will be away.

If parents have questions or concerns, they should talk directly to the instructors by making arrangements to meet outside of class time.

While it is our responsibility to ensure we provide accurate, up to date information to you it is your responsibility to seek assistance with any questions that you have and access and read the provided information.

ABOUT US

River City School of Irish Dance Corporation

River City School of Irish Dance Corporation was created in 2018 by Katie Bleakney and Nicole Nienaber. All fees for classes, competitions, and camps will be directed to the instructors through their corporation. They run their business through a website called *Jackrabbit Dance*. This is where you will register your dancer, set up monthly payments, and receive invoices for things such as feis registration and tuition.

River City Irish Dance Parents Association (RCIDPA)

River City Irish Dance Parents Association is a non-profit organization. The membership of the RCIDPA shall consist of regular members who have paid the annual membership fee. A regular member is entitled to one membership per family, the right to vote at meetings, the right to be elected, and the right to attend and participate in all general meetings. Membership fees payable to the club shall be set prior to each fiscal year and are payable at the time of registration. Membership fees are non-refundable and any family who is registered with River City School of Irish Dance will be a member of the River City Irish Dance Parents Association by **paying the annual fee of \$50/family**. All regular members are required to commit to fundraising at a level determined at the start of each dance year by the executive and participating in fundraising activities throughout the year (i.e. Ceili, Recital) via volunteer shifts to support the dance school. Funds raised during these events will be used to support the dancers through events such as the bi-annual workshops and new costumes.

An annual general meeting (AGM) of members shall be held in the fall for the River City Irish Dance Parents Association each year at a time and place to be fixed by the Board of Directors. In addition, the Board of Directors of the RCIDPA will meet periodically throughout the year to discuss fundraising opportunities and plan events. These meetings are open for all members of River City to attend at any time and the dates of these meetings will be published in the bi-monthly newsletter. The President may call a special meeting of members at any time but shall do so only upon the written request of at least 5 regular members. A quorum is defined as 50% plus 1 of the board members. The conduct of meetings shall be governed by the latest revised edition of Roberts Rules of Order.

TUITION

*** Please take note that GST will be applied to all dance fees*

Level	Price/Month
Beginner 1 - (1x per week)	\$70
Beginner 2 - (2x per week)	\$110
Advanced Beginner	\$200
Novice/Prizewinner	\$250
Championship	\$390
Adult	\$70/month OR \$200/8 class pack

River City Registration Fee of \$30 will be charged to each family through Jackrabbit.

CLASS SCHEDULE

At River City School of Irish Dance the Instructors set the Class Times and Fees to accommodate the needs of all varying levels of students attending the school. It is understood that the instructors will put students in the level and class that they see, in their professional opinion, best suits each individual dancer.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	SATURDAY
BEGINNER		5:00pm – 5:45pm		5:00pm – 5:45pm	
ADVANCED BEGINNER		5:00pm - 6:00pm		5:00pm – 6:00pm	10:00am – 12:30am
NOVICE		6:00pm – 7:15pm		6:00pm – 7:15pm	10:00am – 12:30pm
CHAMP		7:15pm – 9:15pm		7:15pm – 9:15pm	11:30pm – 3:00pm
ADULT	5:30pm – 7:00pm				

FEES AND PAYMENT POLICIES

Registration Fee

A registration Fee of \$30 will be charged to each family through Jackrabbit. This is separate from the RCIDPA membership fee mentioned below.

Withdrawal Policy

Should you find it necessary to withdraw, you must notify the instructors **in writing via email prior to the 1st day of the new month**. For example, if you wish to withdraw as of May 1st, you must notify instructors *before* April 1st. Non-attendance is not considered proper notice. If you do not give proper, written notice, your account will continue to be charged until formal notice has been received.

Refund Policy

Refunds will not be given for days missed due to holidays or weather-related closings. No refunds or discounts will be given to students who must miss classes for an extended period due to other engagements, injuries, etc. Credit may be given in extreme circumstances and these situations will be assessed on a case-to-case basis.

Non-Payment Policy

Fees are processed through *Jackrabbit Dance* at the start of each month, **no exceptions**. Dancers with outstanding balances will not be allowed to attend class. Dancers will not be permitted into the studio until payment has been made.

Class Cancellation Policy

Dance classes cancelled by the school may or may not be made up. The schedule is set at the beginning of the year based on school holidays and Feiseanna. The monthly fees are averaged out over the entire dance season (10 months) rather than based on the number of classes per month as some months (December) have fewer lessons. There will be no refund for missed classes.

Cleaning Policy: Each family will be assigned a week to clean the studio throughout the year. This information is included in the weekly newsletter. You will have from Monday-Sunday of your week to clean. Check the schedule for times that are available. A list of tasks is taped to the inside of the cleaning closet. Failure to clean the studio during your week will result in a **\$100 cleaning fee** being charged to your account. You may arrange to switch cleaning weeks with someone if you have scheduling conflicts, but please do so in advance and notify the instructors and cleaning coordinator by email.

Competition Fee Policy

Dancers who have been registered for a competition must pay their fees prior to the competition date.

Personal Fundraising

Personal Fundraising opportunities are made available to families to subsidize dance fees throughout the year. We try to present one fundraising opportunity/month for families to choose to participate in. These will be published in the bi-weekly newsletter. Parents must volunteer throughout the year to organize the fundraisers and credits will be applied to your tuition on your *jackrabbit* account. Please note that any amount fundraised over and above the outstanding amount owing on your account will not be carried over or refunded. Example: If Jane fundraises \$200 in May and she only has \$100 left to pay for the year, the remaining \$100 will not be returned or carried over.

School Fundraising

The River City Irish Dance Parents Association is a non-profit organization run by River City parent volunteers. The RCIDPA's primary role is to support the dancers through fundraising for workshops and costumes. As well, they organize the major fundraising events throughout the year; the Christmas Concert, Ceili and River City Feis.

RCIDPA Membership Fee

The RCIDPA have a membership fee of **\$50/family** that is to be paid annually at the beginning of every year. Payment of membership fee is expected to be paid at the start of the season by cheque along with your costume fee. Please see the Costume Guideline section for detailed costume guidelines and fees. Payment for costume requirements can be taken in the form of cheque (made payable to RCIDPA).

CLASS DESCRIPTIONS

Adult

Adult classes are conducted in a fun and easy-going atmosphere. They are designed to adjust to the different levels of ability, from beginner to advanced, based on the dancer's interest and learned experience. Beginner adults start off learning the basic soft shoe steps, technique, stretches and cardio. As an adult student progresses, hard shoe and Ceili dances will be introduced, should they wish, at the TCRG's discretion.

Beginner 1

This is a class for people just beginning Irish Dance and will occur once per week. Children may begin at age 4 and no former dance training is required. Dancers will learn the basics of Irish Dancing - jump 2,3's and sevens - along with the basic technique required for their later training. There will be an emphasis on the strong technical basics, musical timing, and proper posture. Dancers at this level may begin competing once they have learned the four basic soft shoe dances and can dance them properly. This will be at the discretion of the TCRG's.

Beginner 2

This class will be danced at the same time as Beginner 1 but will occur two times per week. No former training is required. Dancers in this class have 1) already been dancing for a year and have learned the four basic soft shoe dances or 2) have just started are eager to learn Irish Dance and want to attend class more times a week to quickly improve their skills. Dancers at this level may begin competing once they have learned the four basic soft shoe dances and can dance them properly. This will be at the discretion of the TCRG's.

Advanced Beginner

This is a class for dancers who have mastered the four basic soft shoe dances, and/or have moved up to the advanced beginner level in competition. These dancers will begin learning the three beginner hard shoe dances and will continue focusing on basic technique and musicality. There will also be a large emphasis put on proper stage presence and etiquette. These dancers are also required to begin participating in figures - team dancing - classes and perform these dances at the competitions they attend. Figures solidify the basic technique the dancers have learned from Beginner 1 and 2 on and teach the dancers how to dance in a uniform, team setting. Competitive dancers are encouraged to attend as many Feiseanna within a dance year that they can to progress quickly through the levels and are expected to attend our own competition every February.

Novice

This is a class for dancers who have mastered all of the basic soft and hard shoe dances, have a good concept of musical timing, and have their dances in Novice or Prizewinner in competition. This is where dancers will begin their preparation for Championships which includes more complicated material, and a serious focus on stage presence and stylistic dancing. Dancers at this level are also required to participate in team classes and compete in team competitions when they attend Feiseanna. Dancers in Novice and up can wear a solo costume for their solo dances at competitions. As with all purchases pertaining to dance, a new solo costume must be approved by the instructors. Competitive dancers are encouraged to attend as many Feiseanna within a dance year as possible to progress quickly through the levels and are expected to attend our own competition every February.

Championship

This is a class for dancers competing at the highest levels of competition - Preliminary and Open Championships. These dancers will train very hard and focus on advanced steps, stage presence, and stylistic dancing to prepare them for national and international competitions. They will do workouts, both at home and in the studio that will improve their strength and stamina to execute their dances properly. Championship dancers will also participate in figure classes and compete in teams when they attend Feiseanna. Championship dancers are to have a solo costume, a team crown (made locally), certain types of Camilla Rose wig, and buckles. Please consult with the instructors about any of these purchase before they are made. Championship dancers are encouraged to attend as many Feiseanna within a dance year as possible. Championship dancers are expected to attend our own competition every September as well as any competition that precedes a major they plan to attend.

CHAMPIONSHIP GUIDELINES

Championship class is designed for students who are competing at the highest level of competition in Irish Dance. These dancers are dedicated to their performance, both onstage and in the studio. These dancers will be expected to train with the utmost discipline and focus, while taking care of themselves both physically and mentally. Parents are to support their dancer and make sure that they have all the tools necessary to succeed as a competitive Irish Dancer. Please see below for some important guidelines:

- **Class Preparedness:** Dancers in the Championship levels must always be prepared for dance class as their class times are a lot longer than the other levels. This includes, **water, braces and medical tape, band-aids, running shoes**, along with the typical class requirements as were listed earlier in the handbook.
- **Class Times:** It is incredibly important that dancers arrive **early** for Championship class so that they have time to stretch and roll out before we do our warm-up and workout.
- **At Home Training:** Dancers competing at the Championship level are expected to practice at home and do any workouts or exercises that the instructors, physio, or trainers assign. When it comes to new material, dancers will be taught the dance once and are expected to work on it both in class and at home
- **Workouts:** Most Champ classes will start with a workout. This routine will be set by the instructors at the beginning of every class. Students are asked to bring the following items for the workout portion of class:
 - **Running/Training Shoes, Hand Roller** - They can be purchased at any sporting goods store or on-line.
- **Injuries:** Irish Dance is a high impact sport so some injuries such as ankle sprains, shin splints, etc. may affect your dancer at any point throughout the year. Please make sure that dancers are telling the instructors about any injuries *as soon as they occur* so that they can provide guidance on short-term treatment and advise if a Physio should be introduced to treat the injury. We work very closely with **Trevor Donald** of Donald Physiotherapy as he has an extensive knowledge of dance injuries and rehabilitation. Dancers will be responsible for keeping up their Physio exercises and stretches once assigned.
- **Costumes:** Solo Costumes are a very important part of Irish Dance. At River City, we make sure that the dancers have an individual identity, while still looking like a member of our team using team crowns and buckles. Championship dancers are to have a modern, instructor-approved costume at all times. Dancers should aim to get a new costume every 1-2 years to ensure that they can re-sell their old costume to help fund the new one. It is *far* easier to sell a modern costume back into the market and there is less risk of you losing money if you turn over costumes quickly.
- Please Note: *If attending a major competition such as The World Championships or North American Championships, the dancer **will not be registered** unless they have an instructor approved costume either in their possession or on order*
 - **Buying New:** With the popularity of Irish Dance continuing to grow, many of the dressmakers are being booked from **6 months to 1 year ahead of time**. If you plan to have a costume made, it is important to plan ahead of time and consult with the instructors in regards to which dressmaker to go with, colours, and design elements. A couple approved dressmakers are Gavin, Rising Star Designs, ID Costumes. Your TCRG can help you choose which is the best option at the time.
 - **Buying Used:** There are many lovely used costumes available through Facebook sharing pages or at competitions. As with new, please consult with the instructors before buying a used costume.
 - **Measurements:** Make sure that you have accurate measurements to go off whether you are buying new or used. You can have your dancer measured by the instructors out of class time or we have measurement sheets that tell you exactly what needs to be measured for costume purposes.
 - **Crowns:** Champ girls will all have the same solo crown in a colour to match their solo dress, to be chosen by the TCRG's. This crown will be made by Prime Dress Designs.
 - **Buckles:** Champ girls are to wear buckles on their hard shoes when competing in solo competition. Blank buckles can be purchased from The Kilt Lady and parents/dancers can gem the buckles themselves. There should be two rows of size 34 AB crystals around the outside, and 4-5 size 34 coloured gems in the middle (depending on the dancers' solo costume colour).
 - **White Laces/White Tape:** Champ girls are to have white laces in their soft shoes and white electrical tape for the hard shoes at competition. The laces can be purchased at The Kilt Lady or a local feis, and electrical tape is available at the studio for \$2/roll or you can purchase it at any hardware store. The instructors will show the dancers how to tape their feet.

- **Makeup:** Dancers in the u11 age group or older can wear makeup. Please talk to the instructors about which makeup to buy and how to apply it.
- **Tanning:** There is no age restriction on tanning, so all girls are required to have tanned legs at this level of competition. You can either book a tan at the feis or use at-home tanner yourself.
- **Wigs:** Champ girls are to wear Cameila Rose loose curl wigs only – no bun wigs. Older/taller dancers may wear either the **Robyn Luxe, Amy** style for solo competition. Younger/shorter dancers are permitted to have the **Neve or Maddi** wig, with teacher approval. Please consult with the instructors about colour before you order a wig.
- **Shoes:** Dancers are required to purchase these specific brands,
 - **Soft Shoes:** Hulachan
 - **Hard Shoes:** Fays
- **Feiseanna:** As Championship dancers are competing at an elite level, it is important that they attend competitions throughout the year. This becomes essential before major competitions such as **Oireachtas, Worlds, Nationals, and North Americans**. Students attending these prestigious events are required to attend a competition that directly precedes the event. For example, students qualified for the Oireachtas are to attend the October (Casey O’Loughlin) Feis.

For your Physio needs contact:

Donald Physiotherapy

Call: **306-933-3372**

Address: **80-3211 Preston Ave., Saskatoon SK**

For your Costuming needs contact:

The Kilt Lady – **Dawn McNally**

Call/Text: **306-260-1286**

Address: **1615 Forest Drive, Saskatoon SK**

OTHER INFORMATION & POLICIES

Workshops: We have a number of workshops throughout the dance year that help the dancers expand their horizons and cross train to learn new skills and get stronger. These will be announced in the newsletter as they arise.

Private Lessons: Instructors can be contacted directly to arrange private lessons. The **rate for these lessons is \$60 per hour** with one of the TCRGs. The fee for the lesson is due upon arrival. Payment will be accepted in the form of cash, or e-transfer (Nicole: nicolenien@hotmail.com. Katie: katie.bleakney@gmail.com). **Cancellation Policy:** Private lessons **must be cancelled 24 hours in advance** unless there is an emergency. This is so the instructors can offer that time slot to another dancer that might want a private lesson. If you forget and do not show up for the lesson and do not give the instructors notice, you will still be required to pay the private lesson fee.

Drop-in classes: These are classes scheduled outside the regular practice schedule and are optional. Parents will be informed of upcoming drop-in classes via the newsletter. The current fee for drop-in classes is **\$10/dancer/class** and is payable to the instructors upon arrival. **Cash only please.**

Student Absence: Parents need to communicate their child's absence to **BOTH** instructors via email or text **PRIOR** to the start of class. For planned absences please record them through your Jackrabbit account. If a student misses a prolonged period of dance they may not be able to participate to the fullest extent in dance outs and/or team competitions. This is at the discretion of the instructors.

Dance Outs and Performances: Unless otherwise advised, dancers should be in their performance costume for every dance-out. Performance outfit consists of **black bodysuit, school skirt, shorts, and white socks** for girls and **school golf shirt and black dress pants** for boys. Championship dancers should have tanned legs for every performance unless specified otherwise. The programs of the dance performances are at the discretion of the instructors. Dance Outs will be scheduled throughout the year based on demand. Please keep an eye on your email.

At Home Practice: Students are encouraged to practice at home as often as possible. Even a few minutes each day can contribute to their progress. As parents, we simply ask that you help your child find the time and space to practice and leave the rest up to them. Please do not try to coach or teach your child as far as steps and technique are concerned, as this can un-train things the instructors have been working with your child and can confuse them.

Practice Music: Since timing is one of the core elements of Irish Dance, it is important that dancers have Irish Dance music at home to practice with. The teachers use FeisApp in the studio and you can find this on your phone's app store.

Parent Viewing: River City practices a **closed door** policy. Therefore, we ask that parents drop off and help their dancer prepare for class and then vacate the studio spaces. Please ensure their shoes are on and tied prior to the start of class.

Class Attire: Students in all class levels are required to come to class prepared to dance in proper attire consisting of:

- Shorts/skirts (proper length), a t-shirt or tank top. (*Jeans/ leggings, are NOT permitted*), white socks, hair pulled back off the face, a proper sports bra and deodorant for older dancers, dance shoes – soft and hard (if applicable), running/training shoes (levels Advanced Beginner and up)

Costuming: All performance costumes, whether school or solo, need to be approved by the TCRG's. Costuming is at the discretion of the TCRG's only as the Irish Dance Commission has strict rules surrounding them that the TCRG's have extensive knowledge of. Dancers in Novice and up are welcome to have a solo costume. Dancers in Championships are always expected to have a current solo costume. See the Championship Guidelines section for more details on dressmakers and requirements.

Cleaning: Each family will be assigned a week to clean the studio throughout the year. This list is made in September and posted on the bulletin board at the studio. This information is also included in the weekly newsletter. You will have from Monday-Sunday of your week to clean. Check the schedule for times that are available. A list of tasks is taped to the inside of the cleaning closet. Failure to clean the studio during your week will result in a **\$100 cleaning fee** being charged to your account. You may arrange to switch cleaning weeks with someone if you have scheduling conflicts, but please do so in advance.

FEIS TIPS

The world of Irish Dance can be rather overwhelming to new parents and dancers. Please consult with the instructors before you decide to sign up for a competition to ensure that you or your child knows the proper material. If you or your child's first Feis is coming up soon, see below for information on how the competitions run and what to do!

- **Syllabus:** This document is posted when the Feis is published online, usually to a site called Feisworx, but each competition can choose which site they use. The instructors will let you know which site to check out for each competition. It contains a tentative schedule, standard competition rules, and competition number listings.
- **Hotel Bookings:** The link for the hotel is usually posted at the same time as the syllabus. Rooms in the hotels, book up incredibly fast so it is important to book once the link is opened.
- **Program:** This document is posted to the same Feis site as the Syllabus once the entries have been closed and the Feis Committee has had a chance to rearrange the schedule, if necessary, because of entry numbers. It is often not posted until the day before the event. It contains the number your dancer has been assigned for their solo dancing and what competition numbers they have been entered in. Compare the competition numbers they have been entered into with the schedule in the syllabus and you will be able to see when they will be competing. Please ask the instructors before the day of if you have any questions.
- **Registration Table:** Visit the registration table once you get to the competition to purchase programs (most are online PDFs now) and pick up competitor numbers (found in the program). **Please know you dancers' number ahead of time.** Also go to this table if there has been a mistake in your dancers' registration that needs to be altered.
- Dancers in First Feis should be entered in any number of the following competitions:
 - First Feis Reel, First Feis Light Jig
 - First Feis Reel Trophy
 - Beginner Reel, Beginner Light Jig, Beginner Single Jig, Beginner Slip Jig (girls only)
 - Any 'Specials' – these are fun competitions for trophies and are different at every Feis.
- **Timing:** The Feis Schedule is often a difficult document to read, even for the most seasoned Feis veterans! Typically, only an 8 AM start time and LUNCH time are announced on the Schedule. The rest of the competition just runs without an exact time set. All dancers are expected to arrive down at the feis venue **at least half an hour** before their competition may begin. Most First Feis competitions are set for 8 AM or just after lunch to make it easier for First Feisers to make it to their competitions! Consult with the instructors if you are unsure about start times, but they also will be unsure sometimes as it is impossible to tell how each, individual schedule will run for the competitions. Being early is always a safe bet!
- **Costuming:** Dancers are to arrive at the feis venue with wig, crowns, socks, bloomers, and appropriate warm-up gear (i.e. sweats and a sweater). They can get into their costume and shoes when they are down there. Be sure to either buy a number holder at one of the vendors that will be at the Feis or bring a safety pin to put your dancers' number on their costume.
- **Competition Numbers:** The competition numbers will be posted on a board behind each stage (A,B,C,D,etc). The competitions will run in that order and the side-stage volunteers will remove numbers once that competition has been completed. When it is getting close to your dancers' competition, send them side-stage (parents are not allowed to sit side-stage with dancers) and they will be lined by the volunteers. Be sure to pay attention to the announcers in the room as well as they will often announce which competitions need to come side-stage as well as important information about the event, such as awards.
- **Awards:** Each competition is different, but awards for **trophy competitions (i.e. First Feis Trophy, Specials)** will be announced onstage, either at lunch and at the end of the day, or at a time set by the individual competition. When awards are called, dancers must be ready in full costume and shoes and prepared to go onstage if their number is called to accept their trophy! **Medal competitions (i.e. Beginner Reel, Light Jig, etc.)** will be posted in numerical order in a hallway or awards room. You will look for your dancers' competition number and then see if they were given a medal placing. If they did place, go up to the table with medals on it and volunteers will give ask for the competition number and the placement. Then, your dancer will be given their medals!

TERMINOLOGY

An Irish Dance competition is called a **Feis** (pronounced fesh) and is a Gaelic term referring to the festival of activities that traditionally take place there. In addition to dance, there are often art and music competitions.

The **Oireachtas** (pronounced oh-rock-tus) is the qualifying event for the World Irish Dance Championships (Oireachtas Rince Na Cruine) also known as the 'Worlds', and the North American Irish Dance Championships. This event takes place every November and is only open to dancers in the Championship levels. Although, there are often Treble Jig Trophy competitions and teams made available to students in Novice, Prizewinner, and Adult levels.

Oireachtas Rince na Cruine (Worlds) is the premier event of the year in competitive Irish Dancing. It is a week-long event that is held over Easter. The Worlds are held in Canada, the United States, Scotland, England or Ireland, on a rotating basis. This is an elite event, only attended by a select handful of students from each region and from all over the world. It is an incredibly difficult event to qualify for and it is a huge accomplishment for dancers to have the opportunity to attend.

North American Irish Dance Championships is another premier event that is held the first week of July each year. This event is held at various cities throughout Canada and the United States, again, on a rotating basis. Dancers must also qualify for this event at the Oireachtas or be in Open Championships.

In order to be entered into any of these competitions a dancer must practice under and be registered through a teacher certified through the Irish Dancing Commission (An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha) who hold their TCRG credentials.

We have the privilege of hosting our own Feis every year. Our Feis is the only one held in Saskatchewan all year so it is a great opportunity for all our dancers to attend a Feis. **All dancers registered with River City are required to register** for the **River City Feis**. If you are unable to make it to this competition, please speak with the instructors well in advance. Please see the Volunteer Expectations section for more information about our feis and volunteer expectations.

Grade Exams are a series of 12 examination sessions created to improve dancers' knowledge and execution of the traditional Irish dances. As of 2018, dancers will be required to have completed all their grade exams in order to take their TCRG (Irish Dance teacher certification). These exams are a couple times a year, often in conjunction with a feis.

FEIS ETIQUETTE

It is the choice of a dancer and his/her family whether they wish to compete and is entirely optional. While our classes are designed to prepare dancers for competition, it remains up to them whether they wish to do so. However, those dancers who wish to progress through the grades quickly or attend the premier events such as North Americans and Worlds are encouraged to attend as many Feiseanna as they can throughout the year to improve their on-stage performance.

Please remember that all of our behavior at Feiseanna or shows (Parents, Teachers and Students) is a reflection on our school, especially when the dancers are wearing River City attire. At River City, we value sportsmanlike behavior: Please do not speak negatively of any dancers, adjudicators, teachers or other schools. A good thing to remember is that you never know if someone's mom or teacher is sitting right behind or in front of you. At the same time, please refrain from making negative comments about our own dancers or school when you are at the Feis. We are a small community and we are here to support one another. If you have a valid complaint, please bring it to the instructors.

While it can certainly be tempting to tell your dancer to go and get first place as a pep talk, please resist. Try to ensure your dancer focuses on dancing the best they can and stays focused on having fun and completing a strong performance. Your dancer will perform better and will have a more positive experience.

Dancers at the Feis are expected to be **properly attired**. A sports bra and bloomers are not acceptable for a public event. Being properly dressed helps to represent River City in a professional manner.

Dancers and parents are **never to speak to or disturb the adjudicators at a Feis**. If you have a question at a Feis please direct it to either the side-stage volunteers or your instructors. Please remember that the side-stage volunteers are often parents of the dancers and may not have all the answers, and they are not to be addressed in any way that could be perceived as rude or abrasive. If the side-stage staff are unable to answer your question, please find your instructors.

RIVER CITY FEIS AND OIREACHTAS VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT

River City Feis

The River City Feis is held annually in February. This event is a fantastic opportunity for our dancers to compete in their home environment and it also saves our families the added cost of travelling out of province to compete.

In order to ensure a successful event, we rely on our dance families to volunteer at this event. The River City Feis is run by our RCIDPA Volunteers in conjunction with Nicole and Katie, and it is expected that each dance family volunteer their time generously. There are several different jobs to do at various times during the four-day feis weekend, as well as leading up to the event. Prior to the Feis, our volunteer coordinator will send out an email with a full list of jobs. There will be a detailed explanation of each job so each volunteer is clear what their responsibilities will be.

It is very important that our families understand that the event will require all hands on deck. This means that we ask you to do your best to clear your schedules for the entire 4-day weekend and volunteer as much as possible. We encourage you to ask your extended family and friends to help out as well either at the feis or with childcare while you volunteer.

Oireachtas (oh-rock-tus)

The Oireachtas (see pg 11 for description) was held for the first time ever in the province of Saskatchewan in 2019. Nicole and Katie took on the humungous task of hosting this event. Due to the success of the event, the Oireachtas will now be held in Saskatoon again this upcoming November.

The Oireachtas provides our dancers with the opportunity to compete at home, families to save money on travel and it also brings exposure from world class judges to our dancers and dance school. The dancers gain visibility in front of the judges and experience a level of competition that would not be seen at a local feis.

As with the River City Feis, we rely on our dance parents to volunteer and make this event a success. While the volunteer commitment is less than our feis, it is imperative that everyone volunteer over the 4-day Oireachtas weekend, regardless of whether or not their dancer is competing in the event.

RCIDPA COSTUME GUIDELINES

Rental Costs and Damage Deposits

- Costume rental is dependent on there being no outstanding monies owed to the RCIDPA
- Costumes must be returned at the end of the dance year for inspection, cleaning and inventory. Any costume deemed to be excessively worn (beyond normal wear and tear) or returned damaged will result in forfeiture of the damage deposit. If the dress is damaged beyond repair you will be responsible for the replacement cost.
***All prices are subject to change due to the changing cost of the item.*
- Each costume is numbered. Please take note of these numbers.

	Costume Rental	Damage Deposit	Purchase Requirements
Girls	\$100 per dancer Cheque made out to RCIDPA Payment plans available	\$125 total deposit Cheque dated June 1 to RCIDPA	Capezio high neck bodysuit Black shorts Malley golf shirt
Boys	\$100 total rental Cheque made out to RCIDPA Payment plans available	\$125 total deposit Cheque dated June 1 to RCIDPA	Black dress pants Black long sleeve dress shirt Malley golf shirt
Adults	\$40 total rental Cheque made out to RCIDPA Payment plans available	N/A	Capezio high neck bodysuit Black shorts Black tights (See below)

COSTUME REQUIREMENTS (all prices subject to change based on actual costs)

- All **female dancers** are **required** to purchase a bodysuit, shorts and golf shirt as specified by the teachers for performance purposes. The cost of these items varies. (Estimated cost: Bodysuit - \$60, Shorts \$20, Golf shirt - \$80)
- All **male dancers** are **required** to purchase a Malley Sport golf shirt for performance purposes. Boys are also required to have black dress pants, black long sleeve dress shirt and black socks. Please ask us for suggestions on brand and style.
- All **Adult women** are **required** to wear **black tights** with their costumes. Further, they will need to purchase a bodysuit and shorts as listed above. Please speak with Nicole Stevenson prior to purchase.

COSTUME CARE

- Please store skirts/vests on the hanger that you were given. We want to keep everything looking brand new for many years to come so crumpled in a ball at the bottom of your dance bag is not where to keep it! Hang it up in a closet to keep it wrinkle and pet hair free. Dancers may not dance in wrinkled or dirty costumes.
- Costumes should always be transported in a garment bag, once home make sure to open it up so they can air out.
- DO NOT eat or drink anything except water in your costume
- The new skirts are very adjustable, you will notice they came with a safety pin attached at the back as well as a few extra ones in the Ziploc bag. Make sure once you have the skirt on and adjusted that you pin it closed. If you need more safety pins please ask.
- Skirts/vests may be steamed if wrinkled, we have a steamer at the studio if you don't have access to one. DO NOT iron your skirt/vest. Skirts/vests can be spot-cleaned with a damp cloth and a little COLD water. If your skirt/vest has any stains that COLD water won't remove please bring it to the studio for cleaning.
- **Any costume that is in need of repairs or alterations should be brought to the attention of Nicole Stevenson ASAP, do not make alterations yourself.**
- Contact Nicole Stevenson if you have any question or concerns about the care your costume.
- Costumes are not to be lent to anyone outside of our school for any reason and you must have permission to lend to any dancers within our school.
- If washing is required, wash on a cold cycle using Woolite or similar gentle cleaner for dark fabrics.
- The rest of the skirt can be ironed with normal heat/steam

Nicole Stevenson, RCIDPA Costume Coordinator nm.stevenson@hotmail.com

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT

River City School of Irish Dance Corporation places the highest emphasis on Health and Safety in conducting all daily operations.

This policy applies to all employees and students of the River City School of Irish Dance, whether volunteer or paid, and to all visitors.

River City School of Irish Dance Corporation is committed to ensuring, so far as reasonably practicable, that all employees and contractors are adequately informed, trained, and are able to work in an environment that is free of hazards that may cause personal injury.

This can only be achieved through constant promotion of safe working practices, safety awareness and a commitment to safety on the part of all employees and others associated with the River City School of Irish Dance.

In working to fulfil this commitment, River City School of Irish Dance Corporation shall;

- Maintain so far as reasonably practicable a safe environment at all studios and performance sites;
- Consult with our employees on all matters that may affect their personal safety;
- Ensure appropriate procedures exist for the reporting and review of all safety incidents that were hazardous or had the potential to be hazardous to the safety of our employees or others working in our area of operation.

The Directors of the Corporation have the responsibility and authority to ensure that the River City School of Irish Dance health and safety objectives are achieved. They will identify and support measures to eliminate unsafe acts, procedures, conditions, equipment, and hazards of all kinds.

Instructors and Assistants are responsible for the prevention of accidents and illness arising from work methods and the working environment. Their performance as a Class Leader includes their ability to identify, reduce, and prevent accidents and potential hazards.

Students and Parents while attending the River City School of Irish Dance must assume responsibility for their own safety and for that of their peers by following general reasonable instruction and by taking corrective action to halt or prevent unsafe acts and conditions within their control.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR DANCE TEACHERS

River City School of Irish Dance endorses the following Code of Ethics. The aim of this Code is to inform teachers and the public of the ethical standards expected by the profession of those who teach within it.

Individual teachers will use adequate and flexible teaching skills to create a productive learning environment. Individual teachers will:

- strive to communicate love of dance
- demonstrate professional attitudes, including punctuality, reliability and responsible care of students
- strive to develop self-discipline and self-motivation in the students
- encourage and support the individual within the class situation
- Transmit general concepts of movement in addition to those of a particular dance style.

Individual teachers will recognise the role of dance in the development of the whole person. They will also seek to recognise and develop each student's potential, while being respectful of students.

Individual teachers will endeavour to recognise physical anomalies, modifying the teaching and seeking medical advice when necessary. The teaching and choreography must be anatomically safe, and teachers must be prepared to deal with medical emergencies. Teachers must have current First Aid and CPR certification.

Individual teachers will strive to develop in the students an appreciation of the characteristic style of each specific technique taught.

Individual teachers take responsibility for seeking further knowledge in all aspects of their work.

CODE OF CONDUCT

FOR DANCE STUDENTS:

I will:

- Arrive on time to each class to avoid disrupting my teachers and other students, and begin to warm up athletically **10 – 15 minutes** before the start time of my class;
- Wear appropriate clothing and shoes to each class in accordance with the uniform requirements, (see below for specific uniform requirements) including wearing my hair in the appropriate style and removing all jewelry before each class;
- Be polite, courteous and respectful to my instructor(s);
- Treat all others as I like to be treated, being polite, courteous and respectful to other students and other people in the dance environment, regardless of ability, and strive to create a positive environment at all times;
- Be honest in my attitude and preparation to group work, by working equally hard for myself and my peers;
- Be frank and honest with instructor(s) concerning illness, injury, and my ability to participate in each class;
- Control my temper when things don't go the way I hoped;
- Respect the Dance Studio, performance environments, and competition venues, putting all garbage away and keeping the waiting areas neat and clean for the safety of myself and others;
- Respect and care for all Costumes as outlined by the costume policy which will be distributed with the dresses.

I will not:

- Bully, gossip about, or isolate other students;
- Chew gum in class or eat food in classrooms or on any performance space;
- Use my mobile phone in class, in the foyer during my allocated class time, or in any change room environment;
- Leave the Dance Studio premises without a parent/guardian or parental permission;

I understand:

- The River City School of Irish Dance Corporation reserves the right to ask any Student to leave the School for inappropriate behaviour as outlined in the student handbook.

FOR PARENTS & OTHERS:

I will:

- Encourage my child to dance so long as he/she is interested in dancing;
- Focus on my child's performance rather than the overall outcome of the competition, or performance;
- Teach my child that an honest effort is as important as a victory, so that the results of each competition, or performance are accepted without undue disappointment;
- Teach my child to respect their peers and their Teachers, and lead by example;
- Help my child to set realistic goals based on his/her individual ability and experience;
- Encourage my child to follow the rules of the dance studio and any competition or performance they enter into;
- Applaud good performances by all of the performers, not only my own child;
- Remember that my child learns best by example, and that I need to practice what I preach;
- Support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from all dance activities;
- Respect and follow advice and direction provided by TCRGs;
- Remember that my child and their friends are dancing for *their* enjoyment, not my own;

I will not:

- Ridicule or yell at my child, or any other child;
- Raise an issue with or question a teacher, a performance or an official's judgment in public, instead raising any issue or disagreement directly with the instructors, as is outlined in the student handbook.

I understand:

- The River City School of Irish Dance Corporation reserves the right to ask any Parent or Other to leave the School for inappropriate behaviour as outlined in the parent handbook.

PREVENTION OF BULLYING POLICY STATEMENT

River City School of Irish Dance places the highest emphasis on Health and Safety in conducting all daily operations. This policy applies to all employees, students, and parents of the River City School of Irish Dance, whether volunteer or paid, and to all visitors.

The River City School of Irish Dance expects that all employees and other people associated with River City School of Irish Dance shall treat each other with respect and dignity, in an effort to provide a working environment that is cohesive and comfortable for all. Specifically, the River City School of Irish Dance will not tolerate any Bullying in the workplace.

Bullying behaviour can include but is not limited to

- Verbal abuse or shouting;
- Physical Abuse;
- Excluding or isolating a person;
- Psychological harassment;
- Humiliating a person through sarcasm, criticism or insults (including bullying through on-line systems);
- Ignoring or belittling a person's contribution or opinion.

The River City School of Irish Dance encourages the early reporting of any allegations of bullying.

Where any persons feel that they are the victim of bullying, they should discuss the matter directly with the person/people concerned and request an end to the behaviour. Should this approach fail or be inappropriate, the victim can raise the matter with the TCRGs.

Disciplinary action will be taken against anyone who victimises or retaliates against a person who has made a complaint.

The TCRGs have the responsibility and authority to ensure that River City School of Irish Dance health and safety objectives are achieved. They will identify and support measures to eliminate bullying of any kind within the River City School of Irish Dance.

Students and Parents of the River City School of Irish Dance are responsible for their own behaviour and may face disciplinary action if they engage in bullying behaviour of any form.

Discipline Policy: The goal of the TCRGs is to make the dance class a fun, positive experience that is supportive of individual and group setting. Our expectation is that every dancer will treat others the way they would like to be treated, but in a situation where a dancer's behaviour or conduct is not appropriate, discipline will be enforced that is appropriate to the age group of the dancer involved. Younger dancers may be put in a *time out*, older students may be given a warning and then asked to leave the studio for the remainder of the class if the behaviour persists. Parents will be informed any time that a student is disciplined for poor conduct. Disciplinary action is applicable to the usage of profanity, bullying, verbal or physical altercations, or where continued disregard and disrespect towards an instructor, classmate, parent, or visitor is evident.

Should any dancer commit one of these offences during class time or any dance-related activity the following measures will be taken:

1st Offence – Parents notified and verbal apology to classmate, instructor, parent, or visitor will be required;

2nd Offence – Parents notified and 2-week suspension from class and dance activities;

3rd Offence – Parents notified and the potential that the dancer will be dismissed from the school.