



Class Costume Guidelines

Introduction

A signature of an established Irish dance school, class costumes, or school costumes, are unique and custom to each school and honour the traditional aesthetics of Irish dance costuming. Once developed, a school will use a class costume design for years, if not decades. Class costumes are an extension of a brand, of Irish culture and of course, of the dancer.

All Rising Tide dancers in the children's and competitive program require a school costume. Male dancers will always wear the cummerbund costume and females will wear a skirt costume initially and graduate to a full school dress costume after their first year or two of lessons as per the instructions of their teachers. Note, dancers in the adult program will be provided with a skirt (skirt only) to wear on a per use basis as needed for performances.

Irish dance costumes are ornate, detailed and largely handmade garments. While impressive, special and treasured, they do come with a large price tag due to the detailed construction work and materials that go into creating and preserving them. In an effort to keep costs reasonable, Rising Tide is pleased to offer a costume rental program (with the option to purchase outright if desired) providing dance families with the ability to pay a smaller annual fee rather than purchasing several new costumes over the course of a dancer's career.

As such, it is particularly important that all dancers take exceptional care of their costumes. Please remember that you do not own these garments and that just as you want to receive a costume in good form, so too will the person who receives yours when it is passed down. In addition, these costumes are a direct extension of Rising Tide and we ask that all dancers conduct themselves in a professional and respectful manner as per the dancer Code of Conduct when in their costumes.

The guidelines in this document outline how to care for your costume, how to wear it properly, a contract that must be signed upon receipt of a costume and other helpful details. Please read in full to ensure you are clear on how to care for and wear your costume correctly. At the time of rental, a contract must be signed and payment received before dancers can receive a costume.

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Costume Overview

Rising Tide Costume Guidelines

Irish dance costumes are an essential part of the competitive experience. In the 18th and 19th century, dancers wore their Sunday best. As dancing evolved, so too did the costumes – girls began wearing simple dresses with Irish knotwork embroidery. Today boys and girls solo costumes tend to be very modern with very little to indicate their Irish heritage. However, for girl’s dresses specifically, dressmakers must still adhere to some traditional rules (e.g., keeping the collar bone covered, making the skirt a certain length).

There are two types of dresses: school dresses and solo dresses. School dresses are worn by competitors in Beginner – Novice, and by all dancers in ceili (team) competitions. School costumes are unique to each school, and tend to be fairly traditional. Solo dresses are something dancers earn when entering Prizewinner; they are unique to each dancer’s style and colour preferences. Boys costumes follow the same trajectory. Boys in Beginner-Novice wear a school cummerbund and bowtie, which complement the school dresses. Once a boy enters Prizewinner he can select a vest (and tie) or jacket that suits his personal tastes. Review the table below for Rising Tide’s costume requirements by level.

| | Beginner/ Advanced Beginner | Novice | Prizewinner | Preliminary/ Open Championship |
|-------|--|--|--|---|
| Girls | School skirt and blouse | School dress, poodle socks | School dress or solo dress (preferably 2 nd hand), tights or poodle socks | Solo dress, tights or poodle socks |
| Boys | School dress shirt, cummerbund, bowtie, navy pants, navy socks | School dress shirt, cummerbund, bowtie, navy pants, navy socks | Dress shirt, solo tie and vest/jacket, matching pants & socks | Dress shirt, solo tie and vest/jacket, matching pants & socks |

Styling

General

- Minimal jewelry should be worn. Necklaces are not encouraged, but if wearing one under your costume, tape it to your chest.
- Bracelets, watches, hair elastics should be removed from wrists.
- Rings and nail polish are acceptable.
- Hair should be tidy and off the face. For further guidance, speak to your instructor. Event specific hair instructions will be provided when needed.
- At feiseanna, make-up is not permitted for children in Beginner or Advanced Beginner in the Under 12 age group. Regardless of level, no child in the Under 10 age group or younger can wear make-up.

Dresses

These items must be worn:

| Provided | Not provided |
|----------------------------|---|
| Dress Crown Bloomers | Undershirt Poodle socks Dance shoes |

- Dresses should be fully zipped with the shawl velcroed into position.
- Bloomers must be worn at all times.
- Crown should be pinned securely in place.
- Poodle socks should be clean and glued in place.

Skirt costumes

These items must be worn:

| Provided | Not provided |
|--------------------------|--|
| Skirt Blouse Crown | Undershirt Spandex shorts/bloomers Poodle socks Dance shoes |

- Shirts should be fully buttoned and tucked into the skirt.
- Skirts should sit at the natural waist, and buttoned using the tightest setting comfortable for the dancer.
- Spandex shorts or bloomers must be worn.
- Crown should be pinned securely in place.
- Poodle socks should be clean and glued in place.

Male costumes

These items must be worn:

| Provided | Not provided |
|--|---|
| Collared shirt Cumberbund Bowtie | Undershirt Navy pants Navy socks Dance shoes |

- Shirts should be fully buttoned and tucked into pants.
- Shirt sleeves should be buttoned at the wrist, not rolled up.
- Pants should be slim fitting, navy, comfortable to move in and hemmed to a proper length. Sweat pant or other athletic material is not acceptable.
- Bowtie should be securely tied under the shirt collar
- Cumberbund should be securely attached, with the elastic through the back belt loop(s), with the Prime tag facing up.
- Socks should be clean and pulled at least to the shin.

Getting Dressed

Dresses

- *Wear a tight, short sleeve shirt or tank top under the dress to help keep it fresh. Be sure the shirt is not visible at the neckline of the dress.*
- *If required, a supportive bra should be worn. Be sure bra straps are not visible at the neckline of the dress.*
- *Ensure clean dress shields are pinned in (using safety pins) on the extra seam allowance before wear.*
- *Extra care should be taken with velcro pieces when taking the costume on and off to ensure velcro doesn't come in contact with any other part of the dress.*
- *Please be careful with shoe buckles and jewelry when getting dressed to avoid snagging embroidery or dirtying the costume.*
- *If getting dressed for feiseanna, attach your competitor number with a safety pin or number clip in the loop on the dress's waist.*
- *When getting dressed and undressed, minimize the amount of time in your bloomers and undershirt. Bring another shirt (or top) and shorts (or other bottoms) to cover up when not in your costume.*
- *Once you've taken the costume off, please store according to the guidelines in "Storage & Travel".*

Skirt costumes

- *Wear a fitted, light coloured tank top under the shirt to help keep it fresh.*
- *If required, a light coloured, supportive bra should be worn. Be sure bra straps are not visible at the neckline of the shirt.*
- *Shirt should be cleaned and ironed before wear.*
- *The skirt should be lightly ironed inside out before wear. Do not iron the embroidered waistband.*
- *Wear a pair of dark spandex shorts or bloomers (available at feiseanna or online vendors) under the skirt at all times.*
If getting dressed for feiseanna, attach your competitor number using a thin navy ribbon threaded through the number, and tied securely around the dancer, under the embroidered waistband.
- *Please be careful with shoe buckles and jewelry when getting dressed to avoid snagging embroidery or dirtying the costume.*
- *When getting dressed and undressed, minimize the amount of time in your shorts and undershirt. Bring another shirt (or top) and shorts (or other bottoms) to cover up when not in your costume.*
- *Once you've taken the costume off, please store according to the guidelines in "Storage & Travel".*

Male costumes

- Wear a fitted, light coloured sleeveless shirt under the collared shirt to help keep it fresh.
- Shirt and pants should be cleaned and ironed before wear.
- If getting dressed for feisianna, pin your competitor number to the front inside lining of the cummerbund to one side of the central embroidery. Take care not to pin through to the front embroidered layer of the cummerbund.
- Once you've taken the costume off, please store according to the guidelines in "Storage & Travel".

Wearing your costume

- Rising Tide's school costumes help identify our dancers to the outside world. We expect Rising Tide dancers to adhere to the dancer Code of Conduct at all times, including when wearing the school costumes.
- With the exception of water, no eating or drinking when wearing the costume (or when the costume is out of its garment bag) is permitted.
- For dancers that apply artificial tanner, do not apply tanner while in the costume, and ensure any tanner is completely dry before putting the costume on.
- Costumes should only be worn for dancing, please do not play while in your costume or use it for purposes other than dance.
- Take care when doing make-up touch-ups in the costume and cover the shirt or collar if possible to avoid staining.
- If hair touch-ups are required (e.g., applying hairspray), cover the shirt or collar if possible to avoid staining.
- Avoid wearing costumes (or carrying them uncovered) outdoors in poor weather.
- If necessary, consider leaving the dress unzipped for a short time after use to air out before being stored.
- When the costume is not being worn it should be stored according to the guidelines in "Storage and Travel".
- If any of the embroidered pieces of your costume have a stain, please inform Becky or Laura before attempting to clean. Embroidered garments can be spot-cleaned with a cloth dampened with COLD water using a gentle detergent like Woolite to remove stains.

Storage & travel

General

- When storing costumes, please do your best to keep pets, smoke and other odours away.
- Costumes should be stored inside, in a safe place where they are not likely to be damaged accidentally. A common place to store costumes (particularly dresses) is under a bed where there is space to lie flat.
- All rented costumes include a garment bag and hanger with clips. Costumes should be stored in these, or a specific Irish dance costume bag. Irish dance costume bags (half-moon, padded

bags) are often available at feiseanna or from online vendors, and are an acceptable method for storing and transporting Rising Tide costumes.

Dresses

- Dresses must be stored lying flat. Do not hang the dress for storage as it will compromise the look of the costume.
- Dress shields have been provided for all rented dresses. Dress shields should be washed after each use. Do not store unwashed dress shields with the dress.
- Keep the shawl velcroed to the dress when stored or travelling to protect the fabric of the dress.
- When travelling with the dress, try to keep it flat. If necessary, hang the dress for as short a period of time as possible. If the dress must be folded (please only fold the dress for transport, not storage), fold the dress in half forward so the shawl is on the outside, not the inside (this will minimize the risk the shawl will crease).

Skirts costumes

- Skirts can be stored flat or hanging. If hung, do not fold the embroidered waist band. The skirt can be folded over the hanger so the skirt, not the embroidered waist band, is folded.
- Skirts should be buttoned to the loosest button-hole setting when stored.
- Shirts should be hung on hangers for storage and travel, and washed after each use, before being stored.

Male costumes

- Cummerbunds can be stored and transported hanging or lying flat. If hung, attach the cummerbund using hanger clips. Be sure to clip the cummerbund near the back to avoid embroidery.
- Shirts should be hung on hangers for storage and travel, and washed after each use, before being stored.

Crowns, bloomers and bowties

- Crowns should be stored flat. You may find it easier to put crown and bloomers in a small Ziploc bag that can be stored with the rest of the costume.
- Bloomers should be washed after each use, before being stored. Underwear should be worn with bloomers at all times.
- Bowties can be kept in a Ziploc bag that can be stored with the rest of the costume.

Care & cleaning

General

- *Extra care should be taken to minimize the amount of wear and tear to Rising Tide's class costumes to ensure they stay in good condition for as long as possible. Please adhere to all the guidelines outlined in this document for how to care for your costume. Remember, somebody else will receive the costume you wore when you are finished so please be considerate and treat them as carefully as you can.*
- *The costume rental period includes a few weeks gap at the end of each year for Rising Tide to launder garments and repair any normal wear and tear.*

Repairs & cleaning

- *Normal wear and tear is expected as the costumes are used. If you notice snagged fabric, loose threads etc. please inform Becky or Laura before attempting to make minor repairs. If a larger repair is required before the costume can be worn (ie. shawl detaches from dress) please contact Becky or Laura.
Embroidered garments should not be washed. If any of the embroidered pieces of your costume have a stain, please inform Becky or Laura before attempting to clean. Embroidered garments can be spot-cleaned with a cloth dampened with COLD water using a gentle detergent like Woolite to remove stains.*
- *Shirts in the skirt set and male set can be washed along with normal household laundry. Dress shields from the school dresses can also be included in normal household laundry. These items are encouraged to be washed after each use.*

Pricing & payment

Rising Tide class costumes are available to rent by way of an annual fee or purchased outright.

Rental fees

Rental fees and the items included in that rental are outlined below. Male dancers will always wear the male set, female dancers in their first year or two will wear the skirt set and all other female dancers will wear the dress set. Rising Tide instructors will advise parents of female dancers when they will progress from the skirt set to the dress set (likely within the first two years of dance).

Dress Set (\$160/year)

- Dress
- Crochet collar
- Bloomers
- Headband
- Dress shields
- Garment bag
- Hanger

Skirt Set (\$60/year)

- Skirt
- Shirt (girl's)
- Headband
- Garment bag
- Hanger

Male Set (\$60/year)

- Cummerbund
- Shirt (boy's/men's)
- Bowtie
- Garment bag
- Hanger

The annual rental period is from the first Saturday of fall term in September to the second Saturday of August each year. This provides Rising Tide with a couple of weeks gap to clean costumes, repair any minor wear and tear and reorganize sizes to distribute costumes to dancers each fall.

Payment can be made by cash, cheque or e-transfer. If paying by cash or e-transfer, payment must be received in full along with fall tuition on, or before, the first Saturday of fall term in September. If paying by cheque, payment can be made in full or in two cheques with each cheque being for 50 per cent of the total cost. Both cheques are due on, or before, the first Saturday of fall term in September with one dated for that first class and the other postdated for the first Saturday of Winter term in January (note this is four months apart, not six).

If a dancer withdraws from classes and returns the costume within four months of signing their costume agreement, they will receive 50 per cent of any payment made back.

Purchase costs

Purchase costs and the items that must be included in that purchase are outlined below. Please note that most elements of our costumes come from the U.S.A. and therefore only an approximate cost is provided below, primarily in US dollars. Rising Tide will order costumes on behalf of dancers wishing to purchase to coincide with vendor order schedule. Dancers will be responsible to pay the Canadian purchase price at the time the order is placed and all applicable shipping and duties when delivered.

A \$300 (CND) deposit is due prior to a dress set being ordered and a \$60 (CND) deposit is due prior to a skirt or male set being ordered. The remaining amount owed is due on arrival of the costume (after applicable shipping, duty and exchange have been applied) before it is exchanged.

- | Dress Set | Skirt Set | Male Set |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dress, bloomers and headband (\$593-\$613US)• Crochet collar (\$10CND) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Skirt, headband and shirt (\$149US) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cummerbund, shirt, and bowtie (\$100US) |

When a dancer finishes with a costume they have purchased (e.g., dancer outgrows it, or retires), they can sell the dress back to Rising Tide if it is in reasonable condition, cared for according to the Class Costume Guidelines, and Rising Tide needs it in its stock. Price will be agreed upon at time of purchase. Owners of costumes also have the option to sell their costume to another dancer if there is interest. However, as these are school costumes, they cannot be sold to anyone outside of Rising Tide Irish Dance Academy.

Trading-up

If a dancer grows at any point during their annual rental period, they will receive a new costume in a size that fits without additional fees. We hope that this structure will be to the benefit of families and will keep costume costs as low as possible and ensure that dancers are always in proper class costumes.

Growing dancers are encouraged to try on their costumes with some frequency throughout the year to ensure they still fit. If a costume has gotten too small please notify Becky or Laura as soon as possible so arrangements for an alternative can be made. These garments are custom made, come from the U.S.A. and have a minimum order number, therefore, it is of particular importance to give as much notice as possible when a new costume is required.

Please note that in the early years of this class costume rental program we will need time to accumulate inventory. Therefore, there may be times when a dancer has outgrown their current costume and a new one is not available and will need to be ordered. We will do our best to grow our inventory as quickly as possible but please be assured that if we do not have a replacement costume available for a dancer, fees will be adjusted so that you are not paying for a time when you have no costume. Thank you for your patience and support as we grow this program.

Damage & loss

Please note that as per the costume agreement form, if any pieces of your rented costume are damaged or lost while in your care, you are responsible for all costs associated with repair or replacement.

Solo costumes

All Rising Tide dancers in the children's and competitive program require a school costume for their entire dancing career at Rising Tide. In addition, dancers that participate in feiseanna and advance through the competitive levels will also need to acquire a solo costume once they have reached a certain level. A solo costume is a one-of-a-kind garment (a dress for female dancers and a vest/ jacket/ cummerbund for male dancers) that is unique in design and often incorporates much more elaborate and embellished elements in comparison to class costumes.

At Rising Tide, dancers competing in the Prizewinner category, after consultation with their instructors, are eligible for solo costumes. Please note, that dancers must maintain both costumes as class costumes will be used for team competitions and performances.

Advice and instruction for solo costumes will be provided to dancers and families on an as-needed-basis.