

RISING  TIDE
Irish Dance Academy

ACADEMY HANDBOOK

Welcome

Welcome to Rising Tide Irish Dance Academy. We're thrilled to have you.

At Rising Tide, you're not just joining a dance school, you're joining a community. We pride ourselves on offering some of the best Irish dance instruction in Atlantic Canada. Equally, we work hard to ensure our dancers, and their families, have the best experience possible too.

We created this handbook for members of the Rising Tide community. In addition to containing information about Irish dance, it contains important policies of Rising Tide that all parents and dancers need to be familiar with.

You can read the handbook from start to finish or jump to the area that has the information you need. In this handbook you'll find the following sections:

- [About Rising Tide \(page 4\)](#)
- [About Irish Dance \(page 20\)](#)
- [Dancer's Guide \(page 27\)](#)
- [Exams and Feiseanna \(page 38\)](#)
- [Costume Guidelines \(page 54\)](#)

We're more than happy to answer any questions you have if you can't find the information you're looking for here.

Welcome to Rising Tide!

Sincerely,

Becky Chapman, TCRG Laura Hopper, TCRG, ADCRG
Co-owner & coach Co-owner & coach

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We pride ourselves on offering some of the best Irish dance instruction in Atlantic Canada. Passionate about all things Irish Dance, Rising Tide's coaches tailor their teaching to each dancer through focused attention, specific feedback, and dance steps suited to each dancer's style.

We know every dancer has the potential to be a champion. Our goal is to stretch each dancer to reach their full potential in a fun and motivating way that builds a love of Irish dance and our community. Dance classes focus on giving dancers a detailed, first-rate education in Irish dance, technique, fitness and training, mental resilience, music, and Irish culture.

On top of high-caliber coaching, dancers get the opportunity to perform, compete, travel, and build life-long friendships.

Rising Tide Irish Dance Academy Incorporated, and its teachers, are registered with An Coimisiún Le Rinci Gaelacha in Dublin, Ireland.

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Rising Tide mission and values

Rising Tide Mission

Rising Tide's mission is to build a community of passionate and skilled Irish dancers, and their families, committed to exemplifying the Rising Tide values and elevating the profile of Irish dance in the region.

Rising Tide Values

Community

We are building a fun, spirited and supportive community for everyone at Rising Tide. Everyone who interacts with us can feel it. It's engaging and something people want to be part of. All are welcome and it's a community you will never leave.

Trust

We as coaches, dancers, and Rising Tide community members will do what we say. We have each other's backs and start with a positive assumption about each other's intent.

Transparency

Community members can expect open, clear and timely communication on all matters affecting dancers and the school.

Professionalism

As Coaches: In every interaction with Rising Tide community members and the broader Irish dance community, we operate with a mindset of respect, honesty and integrity. We interact with our colleagues in a friendly manner. We are gracious in victory and defeat and work to exemplify good sportsmanship at all times. We are responsible to promote the Rising Tide brand and are seen as a reputable, professional organization in our region.

As Dancers and Rising Tide Community Members: In every interaction with fellow dancers, Rising Tide community members, and the broader Irish dance community, whether in class, at a competition, or elsewhere, we operate with a mindset of respect, honesty, and integrity. We are gracious in victory and defeat. We

support our classmates and competitors, and work to exemplify good sportsmanship always.

Accountability

As Coaches: We will add our full value in every interaction with dancers and Rising Tide community members. Our aim is to help each dancer reach his or her full potential.

As Dancers: Rising Tide dancers are responsible for their attitudes and behaviours in and outside of class. Dancers represent Rising Tide. Dancers own their careers as dancers and, together with their teachers, work to reach their full potential. Dancers add their full value and actively participate in every class.

As Rising Tide Community Members: We are representatives and stewards of the Rising Tide brand. We add our full value in every interaction with each other and the wider world. We have each other's backs.

Coaches

Our highly qualified coaches bring decades of experience dancing, competing and teaching, and a strong commitment to professional development. Our classes are designed to provide dancers a first-rate education in Irish dance supported by technique, fitness, music, mental resilience and Irish culture.

Becky Chapman, TCRG, co-owner & coach



How lucky am I to have combined two of my favourite things – Irish dance and entrepreneurship – to create Rising Tide with Laura? Outside of dance, my background is entrepreneurship and public relations and I'm passionate about making Rising Tide the best experience possible for our community.

In the dance studio, my goal is to train our dancers to be the best they can be all the while making sure their experience in Irish dance is a highlight. I approach teaching from the

point of view of a dancer's whole career. More than having some choreography memorized for a competition, it's important that dancers have a holistic understanding of Irish dance, from understanding how and why to improve even the smallest of details, to the history of Irish dance. If at the end of their dancing days our dancers know more and can do more than me, I'll consider the job done.

Having danced (and lived) in Halifax and Dublin I bring many perspectives to my teaching but also a real love for Ireland which I truly enjoy passing on to our dancers. James Joyce once said "When I die Dublin will be written in my heart." and I think the same will be said of me – and maybe a few future Rising Tiders.

Laura Hopper, TCRG, ADCRG, co-owner & coach



As co-owner and coach at Rising Tide, it's no surprise that I love Irish dance and I love sharing it with others. But beyond my passion for the sport, my job as a teacher and adjudicator is to stretch each dancer to reach their full potential in a way that is challenging and fun. For me, the most exciting part about teaching is helping a dancer figure out what they want to achieve, and then working together to meet those goals.

With over 20 years of training in both Irish dance and ballet, and a background in human resources, my teaching style is grounded in technique and supported by a strong understanding of goal setting, feedback, and motivation. My aim is to help dancers uncover their strengths and develop their skills, both mentally and physically, while also learning good sportsmanship and how to support the development of their classmates. Some of my favourite moments as a coach are watching fellow dancers cheer each other on.

As the first Adjudicator (ADCRG) in Atlantic Canada, and past World Irish Dance Championship competitor, I understand the dedication required of Irish dancers. I offer our dancers a trained eye, clear feedback, passion, energy, enthusiasm (and a bit of silliness) as they work towards their goals.

Assistant coaches

Rising Tide's teaching is supported by the valuable contributions of our assistant coaches. These dancers all have unique experiences in dancing and life that they bring into the studio when they teach. We believe that the more perspectives we can bring to class, the better it is for our dancers.

- **Emma Foran, coach**
- **Quinn MacDonald, coach**
- **Blaire McKenzie, choreography assistant**
- **Brooke McKenzie, coach**
- **Stephanie McEwan, coach**
- **Connor Russell, coach**

Communication from Rising Tide

Email

It's our goal to be transparent and keep you informed. Rising Tide's primary methods of communication are email and a monthly newsletter, The Current. Please add info@risingtideacademy.ca to your safe sender contact list.

To make sure you and/or your dancer have the best experience possible, it's very important that you read all correspondence from Rising Tide and respond accordingly.

Members only

We maintain a private, [members only page](#) on our website with content just for Rising Tiders and their families. On the site you'll find links to instructional videos, practice resources, newsletter archives, exam material and more. For the current password, contact your coaches.

Social

Rising Tiders are invited to join our private Facebook group and follow our private Instagram account. These are helpful spots to get reminders, extra Irish dance information and for families to interact with each other.

To join, find [Rising Tiders - Dancers and families of Rising Tide Irish Dance Academy](#) on Facebook and request to join and request to follow [rising_tiders](#) on Instagram.

Rising Tide also has a public Facebook page, Twitter and Instagram accounts, and YouTube channel. Those links, along with our website, are listed below. We share lots of content about the school and the community so please like, follow and enjoy.

- www.facebook.com/risingtideacademy
- Twitter: @risingtideIDA
- Instagram: risingtideida
- www.youtube.com (search Rising Tide Irish Dance Academy)
- www.risingtideacademy.ca

Important dates

Throughout the year, we hold special events, performances and also recognize many holidays leading to canceled classes. A few key dates are outlined below but for an up to date list of cancelations, events and performances visit rising-tideacademy.ca/classes/schedule.

- September 12, 2020: fall term payment due
- December 4-6, 2020: Eastern Canadian Regional Oireachtas
- December 9, 2020: Holiday show (location TBD)
- January 4/5/9, 2021: winter term payment due
- March 7, 2021: Rising Tide school feis
- March 14, 2021: St. Patrick's Day Parade
- April 17, 2021: Grade exam weekend
- May 1, 2021: summer term payment due
- May 2, 2021: May feis workshops
- June 13, 2021: annual recital
- July 18, 2021: July feis workshops
- July 31-August 1, 2021: local feiseanna weekend

Each month is also designated for a specific bonus practice challenge. Bonus challenges include technique, flexibility, and strength. By participating in monthly challenges, dancers can earn points to be redeemed at a prize table

at the end of the year. Full details on monthly challenges are in the Dancer's Guide on page 32.

Classes

Rising Tide has two streams for core instruction, children's & competitive and adults, as well as extra classes to support dancers' learning and training.

Our dance calendar year starts in September and classes run at their regularly scheduled times until June. We switch to an adjusted summer schedule for July and August. For payment purposes, the year is divided into three terms: September – December, January – April and May – August.

A list of class titles is below. Class descriptions can be found at risingtideacademy.ca/classes.

Children's & Competitive Programme

Tots (2 and 3 year olds)
Beginner 1 (4-7)
Beginner 2 (8+)
Advanced Beginner
Intermediate
Advanced
Championship

Adult Programme

Adult Beginner
Adult Intermediate
Adult Advanced

Extra classes

Technique & Drills
Conditioning
Teams
Private lessons
Oireachtas prep
Feis workshop (Int. +)
Feis workshop (Adv. Beg. -)

Registration and fees

How to register

A registration form, waiver form and code of conduct must be completed and submitted prior to or at the first class for new dancers or the first class in September each year for returning dancers. Registration is first come, first served.

- Find the class(es) that's right for you
- Download or print a [registration package](#). In the case of families with multiple dancers, each dancer must complete their own set of forms.
- Email registration forms to info@risingtideacademy.ca or bring them to your first class
- Review the fees and arrange payment. Whether paying for a whole term, drop-in lessons or 3for2, tuition payment is due by the first class.
 - We accept cash, cheque or etransfer (to info@risingtideacademy.ca)
 - Family discounts are available

Payment schedule, fees & methods

Tuition fees

Rising Tide dancers are charged mandatory annual fees for **tuition**, **tshirts** and **costumes** (costume not applicable for adults). Term payments are due Sept. 12/20, the week of Jan. 4/21 and May 1/21. Dancers should also expect to have expenses for dance shoes and equipment.

Tuition fees for the current dance year can be found online at risingtideacademy.ca/classes/fees-payment. All listed fees include HST.

Coaching Fee

So much more goes into preparing dancers for competitions and ensuring they are successful than what happens in lessons alone. Therefore, all Children's & Competitive Programme dancers who have competed in Novice (or above) are charged a coaching fee. This enables our coaches to go above and beyond for each dancer, making sure they're supported to our very best abilities. The coaching fee is to help cover things like:

- costs of having coaches attend feiseanna and major competitions
- assisting with day-of preparations
- providing support and feedback on performance throughout the competition
- attending awards and tracking results
- supporting related additional prep required outside of regular teaching hours
- contributing to competition-related overtime of coaches
 - assisting with registration and travel plans for competitions
 - arranging practices for dancers while away
 - helping dancers and families navigate feiseanna and major competitions
 - fostering a social and community environment for all Rising Tide families
- continuous professional development of coaches

By charging this fee, Rising Tide commits to having at least one coach attend all North American major competitions regardless of the number of dancers participating, and international major competitions where fiscally possible.

The coaching fee is 10 per cent of a dancer's term tuition and is due at the beginning of each term. Competitive dancers paying on a per-class basis will also pay the coaching fee. The fee is percentage based and is proportionate to the number of classes taken (and therefore competition level). The coaching fee will apply at the start of the next term following a dancer's first competition in Novice (e.g., a dancer competes in Novice for the first time in June, the coaching fee will be charged starting in September).

The coaching fee is waived for permanently recreational dancers. Dancers who are undecided about competition will be charge the fee until a permanent decision is reached. Dancers on restyling periods coming from another dance school will be charged the fee (unless permanently recreational).

Costuming Fees

All dancers in the Children's & Competitive Programme are required to have a class costume. Where inventory is available, all dancers will receive a costume in September with new dancers sometimes receiving their costume midway through their first year.

Annual rental

Skirt set: \$60

Boys set: \$60

Dress set: \$160

Costumes can be rented (or purchased) and 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).

Dancers do have the option to purchase a costume if desired and are responsible for all costs and fees associated.

If there is not a fitting costume available to rent based on inventory, dancers will not be charged a costume rental fee. Once a costume becomes available, the fee will be prorated to reflect the time rented only.

Costume refunds

If a dancer withdraws from classes and returns their rented costume within four months of signing their costume agreement, they will receive 50 per cent of any payment made back. Refunds will not be granted after four months. For more details on class costumes and what's required, see page 56.

School SWAG fees

All dancers are required to have a school tshirt. New dancers will be charged the fee upon joining the school. Returning dancers can purchase different sizes as needed at the same rate. All female dancers in the Children's & Competitive Programme are required to wear poodle socks in class which can be purchased through Rising Tide or from other Irish dance vendors..

School SWAG

Light tech tshirt: \$20

Dark blue tshirt: \$15

Poodle socks: \$15

Water bottle: \$15

Rising Tide has an online merchandise shop that is open year-round. To buy additional Rising Tide merchandise, visit shop.spreadshirt.com/risingtideida.

Tuition payment methods

Payment terms are September – December, January – April and May – August. Tuition may be paid by the term, per lesson or through 3for2 for new dancers. Some classes can also be paid for with a punch pass. Cash, cheque and e-transfers are accepted forms of payment. Receipts are available on request. Cheques are payable to Rising Tide Irish Dance Academy Incorporated and e-transfers can be sent to info@risingtideacademy.ca.

For complete details of fees and policies surrounding payment, [download the fees & payment document](#).

Term payment

Payment is due by the first class of each term. To qualify for the term rate, dancers may take the full number of weekly classes offered or one fewer. For example, Championship dancers are offered three weekly classes and will receive the term rate for taking all three or only two, those dancers taking only one class must pay the drop-in rate. The term can be paid in a lump sum by cash, cheque or e-transfer OR in four (4) cheques for one quarter of the term's tuition each, post-dated to the first day of every month in the term (e.g. Jan. 1). If payment is not received by the last day of the first month of the term (e.g. Jan. 31) dancers will not be permitted to enter class until payment is received. New dancers joining Rising Tide partway through a term will have the term rate prorated from their start date. Dancers already in the school who register late will owe the full term's tuition.

Drop-in payment

Drop-in fees are due by the end of every class attended by cash, cheque or e-transfer. Classes must be paid for one at a time and drop-in fees cannot be pre-paid in batches.

3FOR2 payment

New dancers in beginner classes (children or adults) can attend three classes for the price of two drop-ins to be pre-paid in full at or before their first class. After attending three classes, dancers wishing to join can switch to the term rate for the remaining classes of their first term or continue to pay drop-ins. 3FOR2 dancers may wait until after their trial to purchase socks, shoes and school tshirts.

Punch pass payment

Technique & drills, conditioning, and teams classes may be paid for with a punch pass (or drop-ins). Punch passes cost \$103.50, providing ten, 45 minute classes (or equivalent time) for the cost of nine. Punch passes must be pre-purchased and presented to a coach at each class attended.

Family term discount

Rising Tide is pleased to offer a discount for families registering more than one family member for a term. Order is determined by class level with the highest-level student paying full price and then going in descending order. Dancer one will pay full price. Dancer two will receive a 10 per cent discount off the full term fee before taxes. Dancer three and subsequent family members will receive a 15 per cent discount off the full term fee before taxes. Contact us for assistance with calculating your discount.

Cancellation and Refunds

Rising Tide Irish Dance Academy reserves the right to cancel classes. If your class is cancelled, a full refund for tuition paid will be given.

Refunds for tuition paid will also be granted should a dancer decide to withdraw from classes. A full refund will be given if the dancer withdraws prior to the start of a term and a partial refund for the remaining, unattended classes if withdrawal is mid-term. No refund will be provided for classes attended. If a student paying the term rate withdraws and returns to class in the same term, no refund

will be awarded and the full cost of the term will be due. Please note, non-attendance does not constitute a withdrawal. Please notify us directly if you wish to withdraw.

If classes are cancelled for weather related reasons, or coach illness, a refund will be provided to dancers that have already paid for that class. Refunds will be applied to a dancer's next term fees unless not returning in which case the refund will be paid directly.

Fundraising

Fundraising can be a great support for competitive dancers. Often Irish dancers travel to feiseanna, exams, workshops and majors in other cities and even countries and fundraising can help dancers with those costs.

Rising Tide dancers and families are encouraged to fundraise if desired but there is no school requirement to do so. Fundraising activities for dancers are initiated by dancers and families only, not Rising Tide as a business or its coaches. That said, coaches will be supportive in whatever ways they can to help fundraisers succeed.

If people fundraising want to use Rising Tide's name, images or logo please ask and we can provide files. Dancers and families are also asked to remember their Code of Conduct when out fundraising under the Rising Tide name.

Class structure and expectations

Structure

Dancers should arrive to class with their hair back, socks and, unless otherwise specified by their coaches, shoes already on, with full water bottles and having already used the washroom. All classes at Rising Tide begin with a warm up to get dancers' bodies ready to work and do so safely. Following warm-up, we huddle up for High Tide. High Tide is used to share updates, set our intentions for the class and get out mindset ready for dance.

The dancing component of class varies from learning new material, practicing steps, drilling isolated elements, focusing on technique etc. Except when a break is announced, dancers should be up and practicing the whole time during the dancing portion of class.

All classes finish with a stretch to cool dancers down and take care of their bodies. At this time, coaches will provide dancers with feedback in their notebooks or ask dancers to take notes themselves (Children's & Competitive Programme only).

Behaviour

Dancers and coaches are required to sign a Code of Conduct at the beginning of each dance year. It's expected that all dancers follow the guidelines laid out in the code. Respect towards everyone in the Rising Tide community is of the utmost importance. Although Irish dance is a competitive activity and Rising Tide is a competitive school, we value sportsmanship above winning and expect the same of our dancers and community.

We're also a school of trying and learning. We know it isn't always easy, but dancers are expected to try and participate fully in class, even if learning something brand new. We all make mistakes, but that's part of how we get better and trying is an important step.

Our coaches have an open-door policy and are always available for confidential conversation if you feel there is an issue of concern.

Attendance

Dancers are expected to attend every class for which they are registered. Although we are often learning solo choreography, we treat class and our school as a group effort where dancers learn from and support each other; it's important that dancers of all ages honour their commitment to class.

Dancers who miss class regularly will fall behind in both learning material and executing technique so it's important to avoid frequent absences. As well, at many of our performances we dance group routines and absences impact the whole group.

However, we recognize that sometimes unforeseen circumstances make that difficult. If you (or your child) are unable to attend class, please email your coaches to let us know. Refunds will not be provided for missed classes unless they are cancelled by Rising Tide (e.g., for severe weather).

If classes do need to be missed, consider dropping into an extra class or booking a private lesson to keep training and practice going.

Dress & equipment

Dancers are required to wear and bring certain elements so that they have the best, and safest class possible. A detailed dress code and equipment list is provided for each class at risingtideacademy.ca/classes. Dancers should be dressed and have shoes on for the start of class as well as having full water bottles and already used the washroom.

Children's & Competitive Programme

Bring to class:

- full water bottle
- small notebook and pen/pencil (not applicable to Tots)
- dance shoes (should be on before entering the studio)
 - Tots, Beginner 1s and Beginners 2s may wear Irish soft shoes (girls), boys reel shoes (boys) OR black, cloth dance slippers (available from Twiggz)
 - Advanced Beginner dancers and above must wear Irish soft shoes (girls), boys reel shoes (boys) and hard shoes (once that level is reached)

- Dancers in Advanced and Championships should also bring sneakers and arrive with them on.

Wear at class:

- Poodle socks for girls (can be purchased through Rising Tide)
- Dark socks for boys
- Long hair pulled all the way back in ponytail, bun or braid
- Clothes appropriate and specific for exercise
 - OK: Tshirt or tank top with minimal design (e.g., Rising Tide school shirts)
 - OK: Shorts, skorts or leggings that are made for exercise
 - Note: leggings must be very fitted, particularly at the knee
 - Not OK: Dresses, jeans, cargo shorts, long sleeve shirts, sweaters, non-athletic clothing

Adult Programme

Bring to class:

- full water bottle
- Adult Beginner:
 - if desired, Irish soft shoes OR black, cloth dance slippers and hard shoes (if needed and desired) for women
 - if desired, Irish boys reel shoes OR black cloth dance slippers and hard shoes (if needed and desired) for men
 - Adult Beginners may also wear sneakers or go barefoot as desired
- Adult Advanced:
 - if desired, sneakers
 - Irish soft shoes and hard shoes for women
 - Irish boys reel shoes and hard shoes for men

Wear at class:

- Poodle socks for women (optional for Adult Beginners)
- Dark socks for boys
- Long hair pulled all the way back in ponytail, bun or braid
- Clothes appropriate and specific for exercise
 - OK: Tshirt or tank top with minimal design (e.g., Rising Tide school shirts)
 - OK: Shorts, skorts or leggings that are made for exercise
 - Note: leggings must be very fitted, particularly at the knee
 - Not OK: Dresses, jeans, cargo shorts, long sleeve shirts, sweaters, non-athletic clothing

At-home practice

Dancers of all levels and ages are expected to practice at home. In order for dancers to progress, a combination of in class practice and at home practice needs to take place. At Rising Tide, we expect dancers of all ages and levels to practice outside of classes.

Practicing, and doing it effectively, can be a skill in itself. To help dancers develop that skill, more details are provided in the Dancer's Guide starting on page 31. Resources are also available on our members only page at risingtideacademy.ca/membersonly.

To help dancers with practicing new material, emails will be sent out each time after new steps with video links of the choreography. Dancers will also be provided with written updates (or they'll write updates themselves if capable) in their notebooks when new things are learned or it's felt an aspect of their dancing needs attention.

Expectations outside of class time

The majority of dancers' time participating in dance will be spent in the studio but other activities should be expected too. In addition to attending dance classes, dancers attend feiseanna, exams and performances. Rising Tide also hosts social events throughout the year for our whole community.

Viewing policy

Parents and guests are not permitted to be in studio during classes. A waiting area is available for all of our classes for family members and friends to wait in. One exception is the Tots class. A parent or representative must be in the building for the duration of the class and be prepared to participate if needed.



ABOUT IRISH DANCE

Popularized by such shows as Riverdance and Lord of the Dance, Irish dance was originally a social form of group dancing performed at weddings, fairs and holidays. Its roots are in the dances taught by traveling dance masters throughout Ireland in the 16th and 17th centuries. Famously, Irish dancers move only their legs, keeping their arms tightly by their sides – a tradition rumoured to have begun as a way for dancers to perform in crowded pubs without the risk of knocking over pints. [Learn more about the early history of Irish Dance.](#)

Today, Irish dance is taught and performed all over the world. In addition to learning a unique cultural art form and highly effective method of fitness, dancers also learn critical life skills including goal setting, team work, listening, giving and receiving feedback, sportsmanship and confidence. Although Irish dance still has a strong cultural component, more and more dancers from non-Irish backgrounds are taking up the style and excelling.

Our governing body of Irish dance, is CLRG. To learn more about it, visit the [CLRG website.](#)

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Irish dances and music

Irish dancers learn three different styles of dance: soft shoe solo dances, hard shoe solo dances and team dances. For most of these dances, choreography is custom to each dance school and changes constantly as a dancer progresses.

Each style of dancing is done to music with unique and specific rhythms and speeds.

On top of performing the dances to the right music, dancers are also expected to carry out very specific, challenging technique. This section should help clarify some of what dancers can expect to learn throughout their dance career.

Soft shoe solo dances

Soft shoe dances can be both athletic and elegant depending on the style of the individual dancer. There are four solo soft shoe dances a dancer will learn:

- **Reel** – danced in 2/4 or 4/4 time, can be done in soft shoe or hard shoe. When boys reach championship, this is the only soft shoe dance they do in competition
- **Light jig** – danced in 6/8 time, and only performed in competition to the Open Prizewinner level, often referred to just as the jig
- **Slip jig** – danced in 9/8 time, traditionally done only by girls but now done by boys until they reach championship levels
- **Single jig** – danced in a 6/8 or 12/8 time, and typically only performed in the beginner and advanced beginner levels

Hard shoe solo dances

Hard shoe dances are what Irish dance is known for: fast feet, intricate footwork and percussive power. The hard shoe dances include:

- **Treble/heavy jig** – danced in 6/8 time, and is performed in a faster, more traditional speed by beginners, and a slower speed by more advanced dancers
- **Hornpipe** – danced in 2/4 or 4/4 time, and like the treble jig is performed in a faster speed by beginners, and a slower speed by more advanced dancers

- **Traditional sets (also called trads)** – this is a category of dance that includes both treble jigs and hornpipes. Traditional set dances have standard choreography, standard pieces of music, and are performed to a standard speed, so every dancer performs (near) identical version of these seven dances. The seven traditional sets are: St. Patrick's Day, The Job of Journeywork, The Garden of Daisies, The Blackbird, King of the Fairies, Three Sea Captains and Jockey to the Fair
- **Non-traditional sets (also called contemporary sets)** – this is another category of dance that includes both treble jigs and hornpipes. While each non-traditional set has a standardized piece of music, there is no standard choreography or standard speed. A non-traditional set is a dancer's opportunity to showcase his/her strengths, so the choreography is usually tailored to an individual dancer. Coaches are responsible for selecting the music and creating the choreography. There are 40 different non-traditional sets

Team dances

Team dances are those performed in groups. Team dances can be performed in competitions, festivals or performances. Team dances are a wonderful example of the precision and unison Irish dancing is famous for. Often in team dancing, dancers are partnered in "couples" which is a result of Irish dance's historically social roots. There are three main types of team dances in Irish dance.

- **Ceilis** – these are traditional dances with standard choreography. There are 30 ceili dances within the CLRG repertoire, some in reel timing, some in jig timing
- **Figures** – these can also be done to reel or jig timing; however, the choreography is unique to each school. The most common figures are two-hands and three-hands but can be done up 16-hands and beyond
- **Performance routines** – particularly with the popularity of Riverdance and Lord of the Dance, performance-style routines have become a popular way for dancers to try something new and expand their skills. Performance routines cannot be done at feiseanna and are only for fun or exhibition

Irish dance music

As outlined above, Irish dancing is done to specific types of tunes. These are reels, light jigs, slip jigs, single jigs, hornpipes and treble/heavy jigs. Depending on a dancer's competitive level, they will perform their steps to different speeds of music.

Below is a table outlining the speeds used in eastern Canadian feiseanna. If you feis in another region, the speeds may vary slightly; please consult your coaches for guidance.

Beginner	Reel (122), Light Jig (115), Slip Jig (122), Single Jig (124)
Advanced Beginner	Reel (122), Light Jig (115), Slip Jig (122), Single Jig (124) Treble Jig (92), Hornpipe (138), St. Patrick's Day (94)
Novice	Reel (113), Light Jig (115), Slip Jig (113), Treble Jig (92 or 73), Hornpipe (138 or 113), Traditional Set Dance (see speeds below) <i>Note: Novice dancers may choose between traditional and contemporary speeds for Treble Jig and Hornpipe</i>
Open Prizewinner	Reel (113), Light Jig (115), Slip Jig (113), Treble Jig (92 or 73), Hornpipe (138 or 113), Traditional Set Dance (see speeds below) <i>Note: Open Prizewinner dancers may choose between traditional and contemporary speeds for Treble Jig and Hornpipe</i>
Preliminary Championship	Reel (113) (boys and girls) OR Slip Jig (113) (girls only), AND Treble Jig (73) or Hornpipe (113) Preliminary Championship Set: Set Dance of Choice from the Official List (see ECR rule 8)
Open Championship	Reel (113) (boys and girls) OR Slip Jig (113) (girls only), AND Treble Jig (73) OR Hornpipe (113) AND Set Dance of Choice from the Official List
Traditional set speeds	St. Patrick's Day 94 OR Blackbird 144 OR Job of Journey-work 138 OR King of the Fairies 130 OR Jockey to the Fair 90 OR Garden of Daisies 138 OR Three Sea Captains 96 <i>Note: Novice Traditional Set must be a single competition (as must Open Prizewinner)</i>

At feiseanna, music is played live for dancers and many feis musicians sell their music for dancers to practice with. Many Irish dance musicians have music available for purchase on iTunes or Spotify. Others are exclusively available from

two Irish dance music streaming apps: [Feis](#) and [Beat](#). A list of musicians is available on [members only](#). You can search on iTunes or Spotify with the name of the tune and appropriate speed (e.g., Reel 122) to find tunes. Additionally, for beginner speeds, you can search terms such as easy, beginner or traditional (e.g., easy reel). If you would like recommendations for music, see page 34.

Irish dance shoes and equipment

Shoes are a dancer's most important piece of equipment. For soft shoe dances, female dancers wear soft shoes and male dancers wear boys reel shoes. For hard shoe dances, both females and males wear the same style of shoe, a hard shoe. Female dancers also wear white poodle socks.

Irish dance shoes are made of leather which means that they stretch over time. Dancers should make sure their shoes always fit snugly and replace them as needed. Details on where to buy, how shoes should fit and how to style them are in the Dancer's Guide on page 40.



**Girl's soft shoes
(pumps, poms,
lights, ghillies)**



**Hard shoes (heavies,
jig shoes)**



Boy's reel shoes



**Poodle socks – girls
only (bubble socks)**

Costuming is also an important element in Irish dancing. At Rising Tide, we have our own school costumes and as dancers progress, they start to wear custom, solo costumes as well. There are many rules and details surrounding costuming. See the costume section beginning on page 61.

There is a buy and sell bin at Rising Tide for families to use to buy and sell used dance equipment. Locally dancers can purchase used shoes from [Recalls Irish Dance Goods](#) (Dartmouth), and new and used shoes from [Sandra's Irish Dance](#)

[Shop](#) (Annapolis Valley). There are many online vendors too and a full list is linked on [members only](#).

Feiseanna, grade exams and performances

Irish dancers spend a lot of time in the studio which is rewarding on its own, but there are many places to practice and showcase a dancer's skill beyond the studio. These include feiseanna, grade exams, and performance.

Feiseanna

Irish dancers can use, and test, their skills in many ways. The primary way that dancers measure their progress in Irish dancing is through competitions called feiseanna (fesh-anna) or feis (fesh) in the singular. Competitions at feiseanna are divided by age, level and individual dance.

As competition is such a large part of Irish dancing, an entire section of this handbook is devoted to feiseanna (see the [Exam and Feiseanna section](#)). Please familiarize yourself with this resource.

Grade exams

Grade exams are one way for dancers to progress and measure their skills. It's an opportunity for dancers to demonstrate their knowledge and be evaluated against a syllabus (rather than compete against other dancers). Rising Tide dancers are encouraged to take grade exams. You can learn more about grade exams and how to participate in the [Exams and Feiseanna section beginning page 43](#).

Performances

Performing is another fantastic place for dancers to demonstrate their skills and practice dancing comfortably in front of an audience. Showcasing Irish dancing in the community is also a wonderful way to bring awareness to our dance style. Rising Tide hosts an annual recital in June which all dancers are expected to participate in as well as a holiday show in December. Additionally, throughout the year we have several performance opportunities which dancers are encouraged to participate in.

Performance expectations for each class are listed at risingtideacademy.ca/classes. Key performance dates for all in 2020/21 are:

- December 9, 2020 – Holiday show at Northwood
- December 14, 2020 – Holiday social at Rising Tide studio
- March 14, 2021 – St. Patrick's Day Parade
- June 13, 2021 – annual recital



DANCERS' GUIDE

At Rising Tide we focus on helping dancers reach their full potential. Coaching is a big part of helping dancers grow, but dancers must also take responsibility for their own dance careers through goal setting and at-home practice.

This section is filled with resources for dancers to support their development and at-home practice, as well as recommendations for dance equipment, music, and other fun products.

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Practicing

Practicing is a critical component of Irish dance for dancers of all ages and levels. Practicing is a necessary supplement to the time dancers spend in studio. It can be a tough habit to get into, but there are lots of tools to help.

When practicing at home dancers should focus on:

- Ensuring they know the material
- Practicing each step with good technique
- Drilling skills with good technique
- Incorporating strength, flexibility and stamina training

For all elements of practice, repetition is key. New skills need to be well incorporated into dancers' muscle memory and abilities and that takes practice and doing it over and over again. A dance teacher's favourite lie is "one more time" but it works!

Accepting that we all have things to improve on as dancers helps too. It can be uncomfortable to look for your faults and weak areas but every single dancer at all levels has them. Training your eye and body to look and feel for those areas will make your practice pay off!

Not sure what to practice? Check your/your dancer's notebook. Coaches and dancers will write notes after classes with feedback and suggestions for things to work. Dancers in the Children's & Competitive Programme are also provided with feedback cards every two months and will highlight areas for improvement.

Knowing your material

Knowing your choreography is step one in practicing. Before dancers can really focus on technique, they need to know what they're doing with their bodies.

Knowing choreography well means having it memorized enough to perform on time to music, and without any extra assistance like mirrors or a teacher saying the steps. Dancers should aim to perform their steps independently and comfortably even if they had an audience watching. Ideally dancers should have a step memorized the class after it has been taught. If only part of a step is taught, the part taught should be memorized for the following class.

To work on memorizing steps, dancers can use a few different tools.

- Videos: we provide instructional videos on our [members only](#) page to help dancers at home. Each time a new dance is learned, an email will go out to alert dancers and families so they can practice while the material is new.
- Written steps: some dancers prefer to use words to memorize their dances. Dancers should write their steps in their notebook or have a coach do it so they have a copy.

Practicing steps with good technique

Once dancers have steps memorized, they can work on executing them with strong technique. Irish dance is a very technical dance form and there are lots of criteria for good technique to consider. It takes a lot of practice to be able to showcase all those skills at once. Here are six core elements of technique that most judges tend to look for:

- **Carriage (posture)** – Irish dancers should have shoulders down and pulled back, their chest open, arms straight and pulled in (slightly back), hips tucked in (i.e., no bum stuck out), and head held high with chin lifted (as if you had a crown on your head). Most importantly, a dancer with good carriage is able to hold their body in perfect posture even while moving and jumping.
- **Footwork** – this is a huge part of Irish dance technique. It requires turnout (from your hips), crossed feet and legs, dancing high on your toes, and pointing through your ankles and toes.
- **Extension** – this refers to how straight your knees and legs are when dancing. Dancers must extend (straighten) their knees when moving and dancing, cross their thighs to prevent their knees from gapping (particularly when dancing on the spot), and ensuring their legs create a strong, straight line from hip to toe.
- **Elevation** - this refers to the height and lift of their legs. Dancers must kick their bums when lifting at the back, have enough power in their jumps to get high off the floor (dancers can envision getting their hips or head higher in the air), and be strong and flexible enough to lift their legs high in the air (e.g., getting your leg well above 90 degrees on clicks)

- **Timing** – this is without a doubt the most important element of Irish dance technique. A dancer with good timing understands when to start, when to finish, and ensures each step/movement lands on the beat and moves on the beat.
- **Rhythm** – this is closely tied to timing, and can often be confused with timing. While very similar, a dancer with good rhythm understands how each movement fits within the music. For example, the beats of treble jig trebles are spaced differently in the music as compared to hornpipe trebles. A dancer with good rhythm understands how to make each step/movement in the music while staying on time. A dancer with poor rhythm but good timing may start and end a treble on time, but rush the beats in between. A dancer with good rhythm and poor timing may space the beats of a treble correctly but start and end at the wrong point in the music.

As dancers compete in more advanced levels, the expectation is that all competitors will have strong technique (as listed above). As a result, judges may begin differentiating dancers based on personal preferences in areas like strength, power, speed, performance/personality, and elegance.

To work on a step's technique, dancers can:

- Break steps down into two to three bar chunks and practicing that portion focusing on technical elements (e.g., carriage and extension, or toe height and crossing)
- Record a piece of their dance on video and watch it back and look for areas to improve
- Practice in front of a mirror to assess different technical elements
- Practice with a friend and give each other feedback on what you see – this helps both dancers improve!

Drilling individual skills

Going one step further than practicing parts of a step is practicing individual moves. Maybe a dancer has learned a new trick or has a section of rhythm in one of their steps that isn't as strong. Or maybe there is a move they can perform well, but only 50 per cent of the time. Isolating individual moves is a great way to increase a dancer's overall skill and performance.

To drill specific skills, dancers should:

- Identify the skills/moves that need improvement most (switch 23s, sevens, trebles, jumps etc.)
- Understand the theory and mechanics of how the skill/move works so you're practicing the right thing
- Gradually increase the speed/intensity. If something is hard, start slowly, breaking down the movement into its basic components, working your way up to full speed and power, only moving on when you can execute it well at each interval
- Use tools (video, mirrors, friends) to check in on your progress

Incorporating other training

Irish dance has become much more athletic and powerful than it was decades ago. Dancers, especially in higher levels, are tasked with being flexible, strong, fit and controlled as well as technically precise.

To supplement dance-specific training, dancers should consider training in:

- Improving stamina
- Increasing flexibility
- Increasing strength

Dancers in the champion class are provided Training Workbooks to help incorporate cross training into their schedule. Technique Exercise Guides (available on our [members only page](#)) and Monthly Challenges are also a good resource to support cross training.

Practice resources

We offer a number of practice resources on our [members only page](#) exclusively for Rising Tiders to help make practicing easier and more productive.

- Fill-in practice sheets for all levels
 - Plus video explanation on how to use them
- Technique exercise guides for all levels
 - Plus video demonstrations
- Technique element specific cheat sheets
 - Terrific Turnout
 - Excellent Extension
 - Crazy Cross
 - Perfect Points

- Follow along stretching videos (long and short)
- Customized instructional videos for dance steps

Monthly challenges and rewards

Throughout the year Rising Tiders are encouraged to practice at home. Each day of practicing at home earns a dancer points towards prizes at the end of the year. Every month dancers will also have an opportunity to complete a bonus challenge to earn extra points. Bonus challenges will focus on one of three important areas of dance: strength, technique, and flexibility.

Highlights of the practice programme are included below. For complete details and exact instructions, download the [Monthly Challenge Booklet](#).

Core focus: Practicing at home

Dancers are strongly encouraged to practice at home (or rent the studio or book private lessons). Dancers should track any practice they complete outside of regular dance classes, which could include practicing their dances, drilling specific moves or parts of their dances, completing technique exercises from their Technique Cheat Sheets, or completing strength exercises from their Technique Cheat Sheets. **Dancers must practice for a minimum of 20 minutes in a day** and have their practice signed off by a parent for that practice to count towards points (dancers in Advanced Beginner and below should practice for a minimum of 15 minutes). Here's how points are assigned:

- 1 day of practice in a week – 1 point
- 2 days of practice in a week – 3 points
- 3 days of practice in a week – 5 points
- 4 days of practice in a week – 8 points
- 5 days of practice in a week – 9 points
- 6 days of practice in a week – 10 points

To record practice, dancers can use the blank practice template at the end of the booklet, write their practice down (including the date and what was practiced) in a notebook or on a piece of paper, or on a cell phone. All practice records must be submitted [by email](#) only at the end of each month.

Bonus challenges

Each month dancers can complete optional bonus challenges focused on strength, technique, or flexibility. Bonus challenges are meant to be tricky but still achievable. Dancers must complete the full challenge to earn the points, but it's a big payout. Bonus challenges are worth 50 points!

Prizes

Below are some sample prizes you can purchase with your points. Points can be pooled with other dancers and must be redeemed by the end of August.

0-99 points	100-199 points	200-299 points	300-399 points	400-499 points	500-699 points	700+ points
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pens • Stickers • Small candy • Stickers • Awkward coach photo • Healthy snack • Slightly bruised fruit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candy • Colouring book • Stool for class 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small stuffie • Note-book • Bulk candy • Crazy straws 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coach for a day • Studio rental 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judge the coach • 12 home-made cookies from Laura (only 3 available) • Poodle socks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Private lesson • Water bottle • Tea party with Becky (only 3 available) • Serenade from Laura • Dress the coach for the recital (only 3 available) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$75 gift certificate (700 pts) • Class ice cream party (1500 pts) • Class pizza party (3500 pts)

Music

Music is a critical component of Irish dance. To help with practice and preparations for shows and competitions, dancers should practice with proper music. Dancers should use different songs and artists to become skilled with a variety of players.

For reference, here are the speeds each dance should be practiced to:

- Reel – 122 (beg. & adv. beg.) or 113 (novice & up)
- Light jig – 116 (all levels)

- Slip jig – 122 (beg. & adv. beg.) or 113 (novice & up)
- Single jig – 124 (all levels)
- Treble/heavy jig – 92 (adv. beg & novice; traditional/fast/easy) or 73 (novice & up; slow)
- Hornpipe – 138 (adv. beg & novice; traditional/fast/easy) or 113 (novice & up; slow)
- Treble reel – 113-116 (or faster as desired)
- Traditional sets – St. Patrick's Day 94, Job of Journeywork 138, Garden of Daisies 138, Blackbird 144, Jockey to the Fair 90, Three Sea Captains 96, King of the Fairies 130

Many Irish dance musicians have music available for purchase on iTunes or Spotify. Others are exclusively available from two Irish dance music streaming apps: [Feis](#) and [Beat](#). A list of musicians is below and all are accordion unless otherwise indicated. While this list may not be perfectly comprehensive, this should give you lots of artists to choose from.

Feistunes (Cormac O'Se and Brian O'Sullivan), Sean O'Brien, Anton & Sully, Pat King, Katie Grennan (fiddle), Sean Softly (fiddle), Tina Jordan Rees, Christopher McGrory, Marney McCague (flute), Billy Furlong (fiddle), Darren Checkley, Stephen Carolan, Gerry Conlon, Colm Keogh and Mark Arrington.

Resources

Goal setting worksheet

For all dancers but especially those involved in competition, setting goals is a helpful way to direct practice and energy. Our [goal setting sheets](#) ask dancers to consider both performance and skill goals.



Feedback sheet

[Feedback sheets](#) are used occasionally in class to provide dancers with feedback. They're a handy list for technique elements to think about when practicing.



Dance products and equipment

Dance shoes and socks

Dancers' most important pieces of equipment are good fitting dance shoes and for girls, poodle socks. Poodle socks can be purchased through Rising Tide. Locally, dance shoes and gear can be purchased at [Sandra's Irish Dance Shop](#) or through [Recalls Irish Dance Goods](#). There is also a buy and sell bin at Rising Tide for families to use to buy and sell used dance equipment. Online vendors are also available offering a wider variety of products as do feiseanna events.

Dancers should have fitting shoes at all times. Keep an eye on shoe fit and order replacements when needed.

Girl's soft shoes (pumps, poms, lights, ghillies)



Soft shoes should be very fitted to the foot to allow for definition and control. Soft shoes will stretch over time. The best way to break in a new pair of soft shoes is by wearing them.

Dancers can wear black or white laces. Black is more traditional but white is growing in popularity due to its tidy look.

When lacing soft shoes, pull each criss cross tight beginning at the toe and working towards the ankle, then wind excess lace around the ankle (overlapping in the same spot each time) and tie in a bow. Tuck bows under other portions of lace to keep tidy.

Do not wrap lace under arches, this can lead to damage later.

Popular brands: [Hullachan](#), [Fays](#), [Rutherford](#), [Antonio Pacelli](#), [Celtic Choice](#), [Ryan & O'Donnell](#)

Boy's reel shoes



Boys reel shoes should fit the foot tightly and must include a heel piece.

Once laces are tied, tuck excess away under the tongue to keep tidy.

Many dancers will use electrical tape to help secure shoes if your heel is too narrow to keep the shoe in place.

Popular brands: [Hullachan](#), [Rutherford](#), [Capezio](#), [Ryan & O'Donnell](#)

Hard shoes (heavies, jig shoes)



Hard shoes must fit closely to the foot. If shoes are too big, dancers won't be able to execute movements properly. Hard shoes will stretch over time. There are a few ways to break in new hard shoes. In addition to wearing them (try wearing them with extra thick socks too), bending them back and forth with your hands or leaving them in a folder position (folding the bottom of the toe toward the bottom of the heel) can accelerate breaking in.

Many dancers will use electrical tape to help secure shoes if your heel is too narrow to keep the shoe in place.

If dancers are on a slippery surface, black gaffers tape is a popular choice to provide some grip on the bottom of shoes.

Dancers can wear their hard shoes all black which is the traditional look. As with soft shoes, white is growing in popularity so dancers may wear black and white pairs or use white electrical tape around the strap and upper part of shoe if desired.

Loose lace bows should be tucked in to keep tidy.

Popular brands: [Rutherford](#), [Feis Fayre](#), [Fays](#), [Hullachan](#), [Antonio & Pacelli](#), [Ryan & O'Donnell](#)

Poodle socks (bubble socks) – girls only



Poodle socks worn for feiseanna, exams and performances should be very clean and bright white, if not brand new. Socks worn in class are ok to be of worn condition.

Poodle socks come in many lengths but at Rising Tide we prefer dancers wear a shorter length sock to accentuate legs and footwork.

Preferred brand: Katie Luck. Available for purchase through Rising Tide.

Vendors

There are many vendors out there providing products just for Irish dancers. Most have online shops and set up stalls at feiseanna and major dance events. Below are some well-known brands.

Local

Nova Scotia
[Dance Nova Scotia \(free, beginner slippers program\)](#)
[Heart of the Highlands](#)
[Recalls Irish Dance Goods](#)

Canada
[Faery Reel](#)
[Feis Fayre \(Eastern Canada\)](#)

- [Gold and Shamrock](#)

Dance shoes

Irish
[Antonio Pacelli](#)
[Fays](#)
[Feis Fayre](#)
[Hullachans](#)
[Rutherfords](#)
[Ryan & O'Donnell](#)

Dance sneakers
[Antonio Pacelli](#)
[Bloch](#)
[Capezio](#)

Dance accessories

[Camelia Rose](#)
[Emerald Key](#)
[Faery Reel](#)
[Gold and Shamrock](#)
[Head for the World](#)
[Paula's Wigs and Bling](#)

Fitness

[Celtic Core Pilates](#)
[Feis Fit](#)
[KiloGear](#)
[Podium](#)
[Reaching New Heights](#)
[Target Training](#)

Other products you may like

- Dance sneakers – great to wear when your feet need a break or you're dancing on a less supportive surface (see above)
- Practice pads and dance dots – helpful to provide a more supportive floor at home and protect what's underneath
 - [Practice Pads](#)
 - [dot2dance](#)
- Fitness programs – useful for dancers looking to improve their strength, flexibility and stamina in a way that's targeted to Irish dance (see vendor list above)
- [Irish Dancing Magazine](#) – monthly magazine that covers Irish dance around the world
- Feis gear – there are so many items that making feising easier and more fun
 - [Zuca bags](#)
 - [Snoozies](#)
 - Bling – for [your shoes](#) or for [your hair](#)



Rising Tide is a competitive Irish dance school (with recreational opportunities available) and all dancers are encouraged to compete and take exams. In Irish dancing, competitions are the primary way dancers measure progress and advance. Exams are a secondary method that also allow for growth and development.

An Irish dance competition is called a feis, pronounced fesh (plural is feiseanna pronounced fesh-ah-na), and is the Irish term for festival or gathering. In addition to dance, there are often art, music, and baking competitions.

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Grade exams

In addition to feiseanna, grade exams are another way for dancers to progress and measure their skills.

For many years, grade exams were offered primarily in countries around the world that had little to no access to feiseanna. Hard working dancers were looking for feedback and a tangible goal to work towards and so grade exams were offered as a way to improve and advance when feising wasn't possible. More recently, the grade exams have become a prerequisite for anyone wishing to take the TCRG (Irish dance teacher) exam and so have become an important staple in Irish dance curriculum.

There are 12 grades (plus an optional preliminary level) that increase in difficulty and breadth as dancers advance. Great exams test dancers in all levels of solo dancing as well as knowledge of ceilis and traditional sets. To view the current syllabus, visit clrg.ie. Unlike feiseanna where dancers compete against others and are ranked, in exams dancers are only marked against the set-out syllabus.

Participating in grade exams

We have defined expectations for participating in exams for each class. Dancers in Tots, Beginner 1 and Beginner 2 are likely not going to be ready for exams and are therefore not included.

- **Advanced Beginner**
Dancers in Advanced Beginner are welcome to participate in grade exams provided they are ready and capable.
- **Intermediate**
Dancers in Intermediate are welcome to participate in grade exams.
- **Advanced**
Dancers in Advanced are encouraged to participate in grade exams.
- **Championship**
Dancers in championship class are expected to participate in grade exams.
- **Adult beginner**
Dancers in this class are welcome to participate in grade exams as desired.

- **Adult Intermediate**

Dancers in this class are welcome to participate in grade exams as desired.

- **Adult advanced**

Dancers in this class are welcome to participate in grade exams as desired.

Preparing for grade exams

Practicing

Dancers should practice and prepare for exams the same as they would for feiseanna. Making sure choreography is well memorized and rehearsed is key to giving the best performance possible.

Exam format

It's our experience that the examiner will do whatever they can to put the dancers at ease and bring out their best performance.

Dancers should be prepared to dance by themselves – including counting themselves in – and it's likely other candidates will be in the room at the same time. Dancers will be marked by an examiner who will likely have at least one person in the room assisting them with music and paperwork.

Coaches and parents will be asked to wait outside so dancers should be prepared enough that they can be independent during the exam process.

Dances will likely be performed in the order outlined in the exam syllabus, but the order is ultimately up to the examiner. Candidates typically stay in the exam area until all grades are complete. Certificates are handed out before leaving so it is always an exciting reunion when the dancers come back out to the family/teacher waiting area with their new credentials.

More than anything, dancers should expect the unexpected and be well prepared. Each exam is run by a different school/group and a different examiner. As long as dancers know their material confidently and are prepared to go with the flow, all will go well.

What to wear

Grade exam candidates need to look clean and polished. Dance costumes aren't allowed in exams, instead candidates should wear sports clothes, simple dresses, school spirit wear or something similar. If you're not sure whether something is appropriate, check with your coaches.

Exam results

Dancers will be provided with a marks sheet and a certificate for each exam passed. It is very important to keep these and store them somewhere you can retrieve them. In order to take future grades, a dancer must prove they have passed the previous ones. Dancers will be asked to present previous marks at future exams. Hold onto your certificates, grading sheets, and make sure your coaches take a photo of all paperwork.

Competitive dancing at Rising Tide

As mentioned, competitions are the primary way dancers measure progress and advance in Irish dancing. Where piano players and ballet dancers take exams, we feis. Where baseball players play games and golfers play tournaments, we feis. You get the idea.



A feis is a unique experience which can take getting used to. They're also where wonderful memories are made, lessons are learned and talent shines. We're here to help make a dancer's (and their family's) journey through feiseanna be the best it can be.

Attending feiseanna

Each dance class has certain expectations for participating in feiseanna based on level.

- **Tots (2- and 3-year olds)**

Dancers in Tots are welcome to participate in local feiseanna (Irish dance competitions) towards the end of their first year in the Tir na Nog category.

- **Beginner 1 (4-7)**

Dancers in Beginner 1 are encouraged to participate in local feiseanna (Irish dance competitions) towards the end of their first year.

- **Beginner 2 (8+)**

Dancers in Beginner 2 are encouraged to participate in local feiseanna (Irish dance competitions) towards the end of their first year.

- **Advanced Beginner**

Dancers in Advanced Beginner are encouraged to participate in local feiseanna (Irish dance competitions) and welcome to start exploring feiseanna in other cities.

- **Intermediate**

Dancers in Intermediate are expected to participate in local feiseanna and encouraged to attend feiseanna in other cities.

- **Advanced**

Dancers in Advanced are expected to participate in local feiseanna and feiseanna in other cities. Participation in the Oireachtas premiere competition is encouraged.

- **Championship**

Dancers in Championship are expected to participate in local feiseanna and feiseanna in other cities as well as our regional Oireachtas and where qualified, in the North American Irish Dance Championships and World Irish Dance Championships.

- **Adult beginner**

Dancers in this class are welcome to participate in feiseanna as desired.

- **Adult Intermediate**

Dancers in this class are welcome to participate in feiseanna as desired.

- **Adult advanced**

If dancers in this class would like to compete in feiseanna, please speak to your coaches.

Commitment and practice

No matter what the level, dancers participating in feiseanna should be practicing to prepare. Dancers, families and coaches all invest time, money, resources and emotion into attending feiseanna so it's important that dancers are working to prepare themselves. That won't always guarantee a winning outcome, but there are no regrets if dancers and supporters have done everything in their control to prepare.

Behaviour

While dancers are at feiseanna, they are representing themselves, their family and Rising Tide. Above all else, we expect Rising Tide dancers to try their best and demonstrate good sportsmanship. We expect that all dancers and families will be good sports to classmates, competitors, organizers, and patrons, and be gracious in both victory and defeat.

Good sportsmanship also includes keeping your feis area clean, leaving space for others, and having fun. It's important to note that being a good sport also encompasses how we conduct ourselves online. Rising Tide dancers and community members are expected to be sportsmanlike in all aspects of dance, whether at a feis or online.

First time feisers

Irish dance competitions can be incredibly fun and exciting but also confusing for new competitors. This section provides details for those dancers who are new to Irish dance competitions.

Entering feiseanna

Any Rising Tide dancer may enter any feis (but double check with your coaches before submitting an entry). If you're interested in entering a competition, speak to your coaches, they'll help determine when you're ready to begin competing and how to get started. Most new dancers will be technically ready to compete towards the end of their first year.

Where to find feiseanna

Locally we only have one weekend of feiseanna each year. Feis Nova Scotia and Fundy Feis run on the Natal Day weekend in August. The next closest options are Boston, Connecticut, Maine, Quebec, Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, etc.

All feiseanna in North America are registered with the North American Feis Commission (NAFC). Visit northamericanfeiscommission.org for a full listing of feiseanna and links to relevant information.

Many feiseanna also have their own websites and social media accounts so once you find one to attend, follow them to stay up to date.

How to register for feiseanna

Each feis will have a syllabus – a document outlining all the competitions they're offering, the prices and registration deadlines. Most feiseanna will open for registration several months in advance. Be sure to register early as some feiseanna have maximum registration caps and will close when full.

Most feiseanna will also use an outside company to manage registrations online. A feis's NAFC listing or website will say which company is responsible for registration but here is a list of commonly used sites.

- [eFeis](#)
- [Feisweb](#)
- [FeisWorx](#)
- [Feis.link](#)
- [iFeis](#)
- [QuickFeis](#)

Once you know you want to enter a feis, review the syllabus then go online and follow the steps for that particular feis to complete your registration.

Planning tips

Feiseanna are full day affairs and often in our part of the world, they're also overnight trips. Here are some tips for getting the most out of your feising experience and money.

- Find back-to-back feiseanna to attend. Sometimes a feis is just one day but sometimes there will be two in one weekend that are in close proximity to each other (e.g., Montreal and Ottawa on May long weekend). Getting two opportunities to compete doubles the value!
- Carpool and split rooms. There are lots of dancers competing at Rising Tide. Sharing driving and rooms is a great way to meet others in the community and lower costs. Put a message in the [Facebook group](#) if you're thinking of traveling.
- If you've traveled all the way for the feis, make the most of it and stay the whole day. Watching other dancers and meeting new friends is a great way to get extra value out of feising. We also love when Rising Tiders cheer each other on no matter what class they're in.



Competition region & levels

Rising Tide dancers will most often compete in Eastern Canada and New England due to proximity, however, dancers are welcomed to attend feiseanna in other regions. As set out by our governing body, CLRG, Canada is divided into two competitive regions, Western Canada (all provinces Manitoba-west) and Eastern Canada (all provinces Ontario-east). The United States is divided into seven regions.

In North America, there are six levels of competition. A description of the levels, as well as rules for advancement are outlined below. The Irish Dance Teachers' Association of Eastern Canada (IDTACE) and the North American Feis Commission (NAFC) define the rules that determine when dancers can advance through each level of competition. These rules represent a minimum requirement, and each region leaves it up to individual schools to follow these guidelines and augment them as needed. Included below are the Rising Tide's guidelines for advancing through competitive levels.

	Level	Advancement	Format
Grade Levels	Beginner	A Beginner will advance to Advanced Beginner at the coach's discretion or after they have completed one year of Irish dance lessons	In solo competitions, grade level dancers perform two steps together in each dance, and each dance is its own competition.
	Advanced Beginner	An Advanced Beginner who wins 1 st , 2 nd , or 3 rd will advance to Novice in that particular dance (reel, light jig, slip jig, single jig, traditional treble jig, traditional hornpipe as a minimum requirement).	All dancers in a competition are on stage together and two (or three at some feiseanna) dancers step forward to perform at a time, with the next dancers beginning immediately following. The musicians accompanying the dancers do not stop playing in between pairs or tri-os.
	Novice	A Novice who wins 1 st will advance to Open Prizewinner in that particular dance	Grade level competitions are marked by one adjudicator.
	Open Prize-winner	An Open Prizewinner who wins 1 st in soft shoe (reel and/or slip jig) and two 1sts in hard shoe (treble jig and/or hornpipe) will advance to Preliminary Championship	The number of awards varies, and placements are often posted on the wall near the results table.
			A competition must have at least five dancers in order for a placement to count towards advancement.

Championship Levels

<p>Preliminary Championship</p>	<p>A Preliminary Champion who wins two 1sts will advance to Open Championships at the next feis they enter, unless both 1sts are won in the same calendar year, in which case the dancer can move to Open Championship the next calendar year.</p>	<p>In Preliminary Championship, dancers perform a hard shoe dance (treble jig or hornpipe) and a soft shoe dance (reel or slip jig). In most regions a Preliminary Championship contemporary set is a separate competition.</p> <p>In Open Championship, dancers perform a hard shoe dance, a soft shoe dance, and a set. In some regions, Open Champions will only perform a soft shoe dance and a set.</p>
<p>Open Championship</p>	<p>Open Championship is the highest feis level and dancers do not advance out of it. Dancers who have one an Open Championship competition are eligible for the North American Feis Commission Belt events.</p>	<p>For both levels, marks from all dances are combined for an overall mark and placement.</p> <p>Dancers performing a reel and treble jig will perform three steps in each dance. Dancers performing slip jig and hornpipe will dance 2.5 steps in each dance.</p> <p>Dancers take the stage in twos (or threes depending on age and feiseanna), and the musician accompanying the dancers starts and stops for each pair/trio.</p> <p>Championship level competitions are marked by three adjudicators.</p> <p>The number of awards will vary based on the size of the competition. Placements are often announced live as part of an awards ceremony.</p> <p>A competition must have at least five dancers in order for a dancer's placement to count towards advancement.</p>

Oireachtas and major competitions

In addition to feiseanna, dancers in higher levels can compete at major competitions including their regional Oireachtas.

Oireachtas

Oireachtas (pronounced Or-ock-tahs) is a regional event where dancers compete in solo and team events for their regional ranking as well as for a chance to qualify for their national championships and the World Irish Dance Championships. Each region has its own Oireachtas and ours is held for dancers in Eastern Canada. The Oireachtas is typically held in November or December each year.

Solo competitions at the Oireachtas are only divided by age and gender, not level. Therefore, only high-level dancers are typically sent to compete.

Qualifying for solo competitions with Rising Tide

All Rising Tide dancers in Preliminary Championships and Open Championships are eligible to compete in Oireachtas solo competitions.

It will be up to the discretion of the coaches as to whether dancers in Open Prizewinner can compete in solo competitions at the Oireachtas. Rising Tide's coaches will consider a dancer's goals, potential, and competition record when making the decision.

Qualifying for the Oireachtas Premiere competition with Rising Tide

The Oireachtas also hosts a Premiere competition for dancers not yet eligible for solo competitions. This competition runs in the same format as the solo championships but does not allow dancers to qualify for any other events. Any Open Prizewinner dancer may compete in the Premiere competition (unless competing in the solo competitions). It will be up to the discretion of the coaches as to whether dancers in Novice and Advanced Beginner can compete in the Oireachtas Premiere event. Rising Tide's coaches will consider a dancer's competitive interest, skill, potential, and competition record when making the decision.

Qualifying for Oireachtas team events with Rising Tide

Competing in Oireachtas team events will be by coach invitation. Coaches will create teams based on skill, age, availability of dancers, and team needs.

Dancers competing in solo events will be strongly encouraged to participate in team events.

Major competitions

National level and world championship events are considered 'majors' in Irish dancing. Generally, the countries with large Irish dance populations have their own national events. Some national events are open to dancers around the world and others are closed to residents only. Open competitions for Canadian Dancers include:

- North American Irish Dance Championships (note, this is the secondary qualifying event for Canadians for the World Irish Dance Championships)
- All Irelands
- Great Britains
- British Nationals
- All Scotlands

To qualify for the North American Irish Dance Championships, dancers must be in Open Championship or have earned a qualifying place at the Oireachtas. Qualifying for the World Irish Dance Championships must take place at either the Oireachtas or North Americans. Rising Tide dancers interested in attending other majors should speak to their coaches for advice and guidance.

First feis FAQs

It's our first feis, what will it be like?

Fun, loud, and probably a little confusing at first. Most feiseanna are run in school gyms, with multiple stages with multiple musicians playing different tunes all at once. You may find it difficult to figure out where to go, or what to do, but rest assured the Rising Tide community is here to support you. The Irish dance community is also incredibly welcoming and supportive, anyone would be happy to help you out, point you in the right direction, or answer your questions.

It will also be filled with school spirit, support, and love of dance. Feiseanna are a wonderful opportunity to spend time with dance friends outside of class, make new friends, and build memories and experiences that last a lifetime.

Most feiseanna are very generous with awards for beginner dancers but keep in mind it's still a competition so it's possible not every dancer will win a medal. This is all part of the journey and everyone's journey in Irish dance is a little different.

What should we do the night before the feis?

Take it easy. Make sure your dancer has a good meal, drinks lots of water and gets a good night's sleep. Double check your dancer has everything they need and that everything still fits so there are no surprises on the day.

How much time should I schedule for the feis?

There is no straightforward answer to this question. Feiseanna timing can be difficult to predict and depend on the number of dancers, stages, judges and a number of other factors.

Budget more time than you think you need, and plan to arrive early. While you are only required to stay until your dancer's competitions are complete and results awarded, we encourage everyone to stay and support their fellow classmates. Feiseanna are a wonderful opportunity to have fun, celebrate dancing, and build school spirit.

What time should I arrive?

Earlier than you think. Particularly if you have a dancer in Beginner, Advanced Beginner or dancing teams, we would encourage you to arrive 15-30 minutes before the feis starts. The more time you give yourself when arriving, the more time you will have to get a feel for the space, figure out where you need to be, and get ready to dance without feeling rushed. Each feis releases a stage schedule in the week leading up to the feis.

What should I do when I get there?

The first step will be to pick up your dancer's number card at the registration table. Next, you'll need to check the schedule to find out which of the stages (if there is more than one) your dancer will be doing each of their dances on, and where you can set up camp and monitor the schedule.

How do I know what age group my dancer is in?

Your dancer's age group is determined by how old they were on January 1st. A dancer who was 10 years old on January 1 will be under 11 (U11) for the whole year (even after their birthday). A dancer who is 15 on January 1 will be in under 16 (U16) all year.

How do I know what level my dancer is in?

Your coaches will help you with that. Until dancers get into Preliminary Championships, they will advance in each of their dances individually. Your dancer could be in Advanced Beginner for their hornpipe, Novice for their reel, and Open Prizewinner for their slip jig.

How will I know when my dancer will be dancing?

There is no specific answer to this question. The stage schedule will let you know when your dancer's competitions occur in the schedule, and how many groups will be before them. As dance competitions are grouped by age, level and type of dance (e.g., U8 light jig), they'll be listed competition by competition in the order that they'll be run. Your coaches, more advanced dancers and other feis parents can help you interpret the stage schedule if you get stuck.

Once you know where and (roughly) when your dancer will be competing, it will be important to keep an eye on that stage/those stages (your dancer may compete on different stages for different dances). When it's nearly time for the competition, the stage managers will raise a sign with that competition number to call them side stage - that's when it will be time to go up. This will happen once for each dance they entered.

How will my dancer know what to dance?

The dance competition numbers are labelled so you can tell which dance is which. Generally speaking, they all start with a letter to indicate the level, a letter and number to indicate the age group, and then a letter to indicate the dance. For example: BU10R. The B represents the Beginner Level, the U10 indicates the age group, and R represents the Reel.

If you are unsure, check with a coach, or more advanced dancer before going side-stage. The stage managers can also let your dancer know what dance it is, however, would not be able to remind them of the specific steps of that dance.

Once my dancer is side stage, what happens next?

Once all the dancers are side stage, the stage managers will line them up. Some feiseanna line dancers up in numerical order, others random order and others the order dancers arrive in. Dancers should avoid standing beside classmates in line. Once lined up, someone will walk them out on stage. In Beginner and Advanced Beginner, someone will stand behind them to count the music and tell each dancer when to start. Some feiseanna will have dancers perform two at a time, others three at a time.

Once your dancer is done their two steps, they should stop (just like we practice in class). Dancers should bow to the adjudicator and walk back to their starting spot and stand in dancer's feet. They're still on stage and in view so it's important to be still and quiet but maintain good form.

They'll keep everyone who is in their competition on stage until they've all danced. The adjudicator will ring a bell or otherwise indicate the dancers can leave the stage. All will bow to the adjudicator and the musician, and then walk off stage.

Can I take photos or videos while my dancer performs?

Unfortunately, no photos or videos are allowed of dancers who are performing on stage. It's against the rules to capture "dancers in motion" but you are definitely able to take pictures anywhere else in the venue or even on stage if there is a break and no competitions are running for any reason.

Can I interact with the adjudicators and musicians?

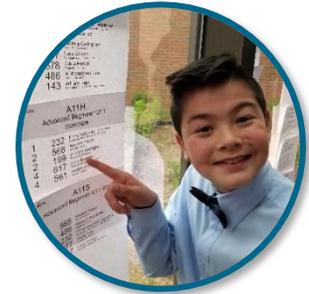
The short answer is no. Irish dance is a subjective sport with live accompaniment and sometimes that means placements don't go the way we hope or the music wasn't what we expected. Whether delighted or disappointed with a situation, it's not acceptable for dancers and families to approach adjudicators and musicians at a feis. They are there to work and focus and it's important that they are able to maintain as unbiased an opinion as possible so they should be left alone.

If you need help with something related to the feis, ask the stage manager or a volunteer. If you feel something needs to be addressed related to a competition

or rule, speak to your coaches and they can help you take the right steps to address your concerns.

How will we know how my dancer did?

Once a competition is complete, the adjudicator's results will be tabulated, and then a list of dancers that placed will be posted on a wall somewhere in the venue for you to check or occasionally announced at a designated time. Keep your eye on the results wall, and be sure to check it periodically throughout the day.



My dancer placed - what do I do?

Celebrate! Then tell your coaches so they can celebrate with you! You will be able to pick up your medals or trophies near the posted results by presenting your competitor number card.

Once all your dances are complete, you'll also need to collect your results. Some feiseanna give these away for free in paper form, some charge and some send them through email after the feis. Check how they're doing it and make sure you give your coaches a copy of your full results (phone pictures work great).

My dancer didn't place - what do I do?

Celebrate! Every opportunity to dance is worth celebrating and learning from whether you win, lose, or draw. Results not going as expected can be tough but it's going to happen and everyone's dance journey is different. If you're dancer has a tough day, talk with them and talk with the coaches to see what take aways from the day can be brought forward to class and the next feis. As long as Rising Tiders have fun and do the best they can on a given day, it's a win in our books. There will always be another feis to try again.

Even if you don't place, once all your dances are complete, you'll also need to collect your results. Some feiseanna give these away for free in paper form, some charge and some send them through email after the feis. Check how they're doing it and make sure you give your coaches a copy of your full results (phone pictures work great).

Feis packing list (basic version)

Boys

- School costume (check for all pieces)
- Solo costume (if applicable)
- Dance shoes (check for all shoes)
- Navy blue or black socks
- Hair brush/comb
- Hairspray (if needed)
- Scissors
- Hole punch
- Safety pins for number
- Water bottle
- Black electrical tape (if needed)
- Gaffers tape (optional)
- Shoe polish
- Rising Tide SWAG clothing

Girls

- School costume (check for all pieces)
- Solo costume (if applicable)
- Dance shoes (check for all shoes)
- New or very clean poodle socks
- Sock glue
- Wig/ hair kit
 - Wig
 - Brush/comb
 - Hair elastics
 - Bobby pins
 - Hair spray
- Scissors
- Hole punch
- Safety pins or ribbon for number
- Water bottle
- Black electrical tape (if needed)
- White electrical tape (if needed)
- Gaffers tape (optional)
- Shoe polish
- Rising Tide SWAG clothing
- Dark tights (just in case)



Like all art forms that take to the stage, costuming is an important aspect of Irish dancing. Two main costume styles are seen in Irish dance: class costumes and solo costumes.

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.

By contrast, solo costumes are unique to the individual dancer and no two are the same. Solo costumes are worn as dancers advance through the levels and play to the dancer's own look and style, enhancing their advanced skill even further.

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Class costumes

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 for class costumes (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.

Rules for wearing your class 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** in the costume and cover the shirt or collar to avoid staining.
- If **hair touch-ups** are required (e.g., applying hairspray), cover the shirt or collar to avoid staining.
- Avoid wearing costumes (or carrying them uncovered) **outdoors in poor weather**.
- If necessary, **leave the dress unzipped** for a short time after use to air out before storing.

- If any of the embroidered pieces of your costume have a stain, please inform coaches 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.

Getting dressed

Dresses

- Dresses should be fully zipped with the shawl velcroed into position
- Bloomers must be worn at all times and must be worn with underwear
- Crown should be pinned securely in place
- Poodle socks should be clean, bright white and glued in place (not included in rental)
- 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.
- Ensure **clean dress shields are pinned in** (using safety pins) on the extra seam allowance before wear. Shields may be removed and washed as desired.
- 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** on page 66.



Skirt costumes

- Shirts should be fully buttoned and tucked into the skirt
- Skirts should sit at the natural waist, 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, bright white and glued in place (not included in rental)
- 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.
- 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** 1) using a thin navy ribbon threaded through the number, and tied securely around the dancer, under the embroidered waistband or 2) using a number clip or 3) a large safety pin. Do not put pins through embroidery.
- 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.
- Always return the **button loop elastic in the waistband** to its loosest setting and fasten around the button after use.
- Once you've taken the costume off, please **store according to the guidelines** on page 66.



Male costumes

- 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 (not included in rental)
- Bowtie should be securely tied under the shirt collar
- Cummerbund 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 (not included in rental)
- 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 feiseanna, **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** below.



Storage and 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. If they fit, 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 damage the skirt. **Some dresses will be too wide for their garment bags and should be stored out of them if so.** Storing them in a bag that is too narrow will cause the dress's edges to curl.
- 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.
- Crowns and headbands should be stored flat and off of the headband frame if included.
- 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.
- Headbands should be removed from the frame and stored flat.
- 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 and should be left undone. If hung, attach the cummerbund using hanger clips but do not put clips on embroidery.
 - Attach provided loose velcro pieces to the exposed parts of velcro on the cummerbund when not in use.
- Bowties should be stored in provided bag.

- Shirts should be hung on hangers for storage and travel, and washed after each use, before being stored.

Care and 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 are expected as the costumes are used. If you notice snagged fabric, loose threads etc. please inform coaches before attempting to make minor repairs. If a larger repair is required before the costume can be worn (e.g., shawl detaches from dress) please contact coaches.

Embroidered garments should not be washed. If any of the embroidered pieces of your costume have a stain, please inform coaches 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 and payment

All dancers in the Children's & Competitive Programme are required to have a school costume, inventory permitting. Beginner dancers will receive their costume midway through their first year, all returning dancers will receive theirs at fall registration.

The annual rental period is from the first Saturday of fall term in September to the second Thursday 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. Any dancers that return their costume after the assigned deadline for that year will be charged a \$30 late fee.

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 two-three years will wear the skirt set and all other female dancers will wear the dress set. Rising Tide coaches will advise parents of female dancers when they will progress from the skirt set to the dress.

Dress Set (\$160/year)	Skirt Set (\$60/year)	Male Set (\$60/year)
Dress	Skirt	Cummerbund
Crochet collar	Shirt (girl's)	Shirt (boy's/men's)
Bloomers	Headband	Bowtie
Headband	Garment bag	Garment bag
Dress shields	Hanger	Hanger
Garment bag		
Hanger		

Costumes can be rented (or purchased) and 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).

Dancers do have the option to purchase a costume if desired and are responsible for all costs and fees associated.

If there is not a fitting costume available to rent based on inventory, dancers will not be charged a costume rental fee. Once a costume becomes available, the fee will be prorated to reflect the time rented only.

Costume refunds

If a dancer withdraws from classes and returns their rented costume within four months of signing their costume agreement, they will receive 50 per cent of any payment made back. Refunds will not be granted after four months of rental.

Purchase costs

Most elements of our costumes come from the U.S.A. and therefore costs fluctuate based on currency exchange. 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 (CDN) deposit is due prior to a dress set being ordered and a \$60 (CDN) 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.

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 and Rising Tide wants 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 coaches as soon as possible so arrangements for an alternative can be made. These garments are custom made in 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 our class costume rental inventory is constantly growing and changing, as are our dancers. 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 do our best to grow our inventory to cover all dancers but please be assured that if we don't have a replacement costume available for a dancer, fees will be adjusted so that you aren't 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.

Styling

General

- Minimal jewelry should be worn. Necklaces should not be worn.
- Bracelets, watches, hair elastics should be removed from wrists.
- Rings and nail polish are acceptable.

Accessories

Female dancers will wear poodle socks or tights. Most Children & Competitive Programme dancers will wear poodle socks unless otherwise indicated for a performance. Poodle socks should be clean and bright white and must be glued up (using sock glue/body adhesive). Adult dancers will typically wear navy tights and must wear tights if competing in an adult category competition.

Additional accessories dancers can wear include hard shoe buckles, number clips, and sparkly earrings. All of these are acceptable but not required elements in early levels.

Hair and make-up

Hair should be tidy and off the face. It's traditional for female Irish dancers to have curly hair. This can be done with rollers or a curling iron but more commonly will be achieved by wearing a wig. Dancers aren't required to wear wigs

but they are a great time saver to achieve the same look and are very commonplace, particularly in advanced levels. For more hair guidance, speak to your coaches. Occasionally, performance-specific hair instructions will be provided.

At feiseanna, make-up is not permitted for children competing in Under 10 age groups. Additionally, dancers in the Under 12 age group in Beginner and Advanced Beginner in the Under 12 are also not allowed to wear make-up. Dancers competing in higher levels and at majors should consider wearing make-up to compliment a stage performance.

Many dancers in older age groups and Novice/Open Prizewinner levels and above will use artificial tanner. Many dancers choose to do this to define leg muscles and match the embellishment of their costumes. This is not required but dancers are welcome to do it if it is level appropriate. Please speak to your coaches if you have questions.

Solo costumes

All Rising Tide dancers in the Children's and Competitive Programme 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 coaches, are eligible for solo costumes. **Dancers may wear a solo costume for any dances competed in the Open Prizewinner level. Dancers who have three of their five core dances (reel, slip jig, treble jig, hornpipe and traditional set) in Open Prizewinner may wear a solo costume for any and all competitions regardless of level (excluding dances in Advanced Beginner).** Please note, that dancers must maintain both costumes as class costumes will be used for team competitions and performances.