

Welcome to the **Wick School of Irish Dance**. This is a brief explanation of Irish dance and of what being a student in the Wick School involves.

one: introduction

Irish dance is part of a very old tradition. To learn Irish dance is to become part of that tradition. In addition to this cultural connection and awareness, there are other practical and social advantages to learning Irish dance.

physical skill: like any form of dance, Irish dance develops body control and coordination; in addition, since Irish dance emphasizes timing and rhythm, it develops an understanding of music, and relating body movement to music.

mental skills: lessons require listening, following directions, discipline, practice, and memorizing steps.

healthy competitive spirit: various competitions provide an incentive for thoroughness, and increase the desire to do well.

stage presence: performance and competition develop confidence and self-esteem.

friendship: through performance and competition, the children have the opportunity to travel all over the city, state, and country where they will develop friendships with other children also involved in Irish dance.

two: classes

Classes run all year round with the exception of July and the first days of August. The length of a class session will vary from an hour for beginners to up to two hours for the more advanced students. These classes will be held weekly with the exception of extra practices for special competitions, performances and time off during standard holidays. In the Wick School, an 11-month commitment is required. The Irish dance fiscal year is August to June. The month of July is the Wick School summer holiday. If, at any time a dancer chooses not to pay tuition for any reason not related to illness, that particular dancer will not be eligible to compete in any feisianna (competition) or to perform in any shows for the 6 months following the month(s) of tuition not paid.

three: lessons and tuition

Lessons are currently offered on a weekly basis. Lessons are to be paid for the first lesson of each month at a rate of \$50.00 per month. Tuition payments received after the 10th of the month will be assessed a \$10 late fee. Tuition payment by semester is encouraged when financially possible. For families that pay by the semester there is a monthly discount. Look for those opportunities in a biannual Wick School email. There will be an **average** of four lessons per month; but classes landing on a holiday are cancelled. Semi-private lessons are available for advanced dancers by appointment: the fee is \$80.00 for 75 minutes. **All lessons are paid for whether the student is in attendance or not.** Makeup classes are available for sickness only. A makeup class must be made up the following week or the makeup class is forfeited.

four: practice

Practice is not limited to the weekly lessons. The proper learning of Irish Dance requires practice at home. This means a dedicated slot of time, and not something that takes place during *commercials on T.V.* I recommend twenty minutes, 3 or 4 days a week, and more practice for advanced students. For young beginners, I provide a practice CD that has 4 of the first 5 dances in detail on it. The first CD is complimentary, if it needs to be replaced, the cost is \$5. Also, I try to provide incentives to practice such as practice cards, stickers, candy, etc. but nothing compares to parental help and encouragement.

five: advancement

Irish dance is a worthwhile adventure and investment. Within a short amount of time, beginners will be dancing an entire dance. This is only the beginning. After this initial, very accessible achievement, significant progress is possible for those who practice outside of class.

six: costumes

girls: a gold/yellow dress of a poly-linen material with blue celtic embroidery. Royal blue trunks, cape, a blue scrunchie and a yellow and blue headband for the hair will complete the costume. Approximate cost for the dress is \$250.00. These dresses are *washable*.

The school uniform for dancers age 12 and older is a blue gabardine dress. This dress is rather elaborate and costly and consequently not required. The current 2007 price is \$625.00. The cost includes dress, cape, headband and kick pants. An alternative to the yellow or blue dresses for all beginners is a blue skirt set for \$60.00. The skirt set includes a blue skirt, a headband, a blue scrunchie, a blue cape and kick pants. The skirt set is completed then with a pencil gold turtle neck and poodle socks that you need to purchase on your own.

boys: the gentlemen in the Wick school may wear a kilt and sport coat. The common, most popular alternative is black pants, black socks and a royal blue Wick School shirt and cummerbund. Black pants are most popular these days.

solo dresses: For prizewinner and open dancers, he/she may wish to wear a different costume from the class costume. I should be consulted before any dress is purchased or designed. These solo costumes are strictly for prizewinner and championship dancers or any dancer age 16 or older.

seven: shoes

soft shoes: At minimum beginners need a pair of *black* ballet slippers available at many local stores. If a beginner desires, a pair of "lace-up" Irish pumps (also known as Irish dance soft shoes or as gillies) may be purchased. The cost of these is about \$50.00-\$60.00 new. Although these are not required for beginners, eventually a pair will be needed.

hard shoes: These are shoes for tapping. Usually by the middle of the second year of lessons, dancers are learning percussive steps: The cost of these shoes is about \$130.00 locally.

Both the pumps and the hard shoes as well as the poodle socks and other Irish dance paraphernalia are available at the store of Kerreen O'Connor, LLC in Littleton. The address is 2595 West Alamo Ave. The number is 303.794.6388. You may also reach her on line at www.kerreen.com. You may also wish to contact Brenda Tjarks, a parent of one of our dancers, who sells such shoes on a part-time basis. Her number is 303.431.8558.

At various times during the year, the Wick School will have a "used shoes and/or costume" sale. Please look for those dates from Linnane in an e-mail message.

eight: performance

With the exception of the annual recital, after the first 9-12 months of lessons a dancer **may** be invited to participate in a show. The Wick School always strives for professionalism. Therefore, as a school of dancers and parents, we must remember that we are merely the entertainment and not guests at these functions. I will make all decisions regarding any show. Proper costumes and shoes are required - **no exceptions**.

Each year the Wick School has a recital in early December and ALL dancers are asked to participate. This is an opportunity for parents, relatives, and friends to see their favorite Irish dancer perform.

nine: competition (FEIS)

Feisianna or (feises - English plural) are competitions and are an integral part of Irish dance. Children are by no means forced, but strongly encouraged, to enter competitions each year for **their** benefit. Here in Colorado the Wick School hosts a feis in January, Colorado Winterfeis. As well as this feis there are 5 additional competitions in April, June, July, September, and November. A healthy competitive spirit is developed from participation in a feis. These competitions are held in major cities all over the U.S. almost every weekend from May through September.

The categories of competitions:

1. **First Beginner** - one who has never won a **first, second, or third** prize in the dance entered anywhere at any time or at any age.
2. **Second Beginner** - one who has never won a **first or second** prize in the dance entered, except in first beginner.
3. **Novice** - one who has never won a **first** prize anywhere, anytime, in the dance entered except in beginners.
4. **Prizewinner** - one who has never won a **first** prize anywhere, anytime in the dance entered, except in novice.
5. **Preliminary Championship** - one who has placed 1st, 2nd, or 3rd, in the reel, slip jig, treble jig and hornpipe in Prizewinner Solos, has competed in Prizewinner for at least 6 months and has Linnane's approval may choose to enter Preliminary Championship.
6. **Open Championship** - one who has placed first in 2 Preliminary Championships

Oireachtas (or-rock-tas) - this is a species of feis; there are three every year.

Regional	during November
Nationals	during 4th of July
World	during Easter

These are the big leagues for very experienced dancers. The privilege of dancing in these competitions is strictly up to me.

I am a certified teacher with the Irish Dance Commission, Dublin, Ireland. I have had a great deal of experience with all aspects of Irish dance. I have traveled to Ireland almost 30 times. I even lived in Ireland for a time during high school. Based on this experience, I will decide when dancers are ready for advancement. The best interests of the child are always considered.

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WICK *School of Irish Dance, INC*
2007 Handbook

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Please read carefully

-All families must register online with the Wick School at www.wickschool.com. Please complete the profile and student fields and click update. All communication from Linnane is done through emails from Linnane.

-Dancers must wear shorts, t-shirts, white socks and proper dance shoes for each class.

-Wick School dancers may attend only Wick School organized dance camps, workshops, lessons, and practices. Wick School dancers are not permitted to attend any outside the school dance events without prior written approval of Linnane.

-Dancers that have achieved prizewinner status in the reel, slip jig, treble jig, and hornpipe may purchase a solo dress with proof of their results to Linnane.

-All solo dress colors and fabrics must be approved by Linnane.

-Prizewinner dancers must place 1st, 2nd, OR 3rd in the reel, slip jig, treble jig and hornpipe and have Linnane's approval before entering the Preliminary Championship. Again proof of these results is mandatory Preliminary championship competitors must place 1st 2times before entering open championship..

-Preliminary Class is a dance class of preliminary championship dancers. The Open Championship class is a dance class of open championship dancers. Linnane reserves the right to allow any dancer in either of these classes at her discretion.

-Make-up classes are available for sickness ONLY! All make-up classes must be made up the following the week of the missed class.

-Tuition is due by the first class of each month. Tuition received after the 10th day of the month is assessed a \$10 late fee.

-All lessons are paid for whether the dancer is in attendance or not. Monthly tuition is never pro-rated.