



New Jersey Handbook

This document is an explanation of Irish dance and of what being a student in the Wick School involves. Please visit www.WickSchool.com for more information. Be sure to register at WickSchool.com. It is important that I have a valid email address for you from that registration. **Almost all Wick School communications are via email.**

1. 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 advantages to learning Irish dance.

Physical Skills: 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 optional 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.

2. Certified instruction

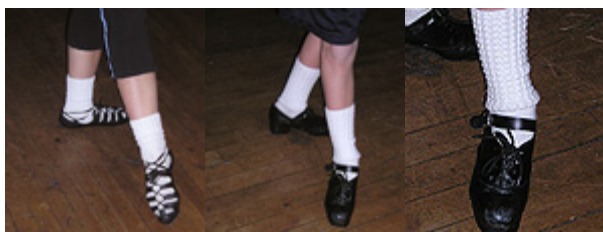
Regan Wick is an Irish dance instructor certified with the Irish Dance Commission (An Coimisiun), Dublin Ireland. This is denoted by the letters T.C.R.G. Regan earned his in 1990.

3. Classes

Classes are weekly and run from September through June. Classes last either 30 Minutes (Intro class for ages 4-6), 45 minutes for the adult class, or one hour for all other classes. **Be sure to check email each Monday after 2pm in case there is a cancellation or other scheduling information relevant for that day.**

4. Class Attire

Wear modest, lose-fitting clothes. Shorts and t-shirts are best when weather permits. No bell-bottoms and no jeans. Students must wear the appropriate socks and shoes for practice in class as well as at home. Once girl dancers are learning the reel (the 2nd dance) they should wear white "poodle socks" and proper shoes. New beginners still learning the Light Jig do not need these socks and shoes. The pictures below are excellent examples of proper footwear. Please note the ankles are free of any pants or skirts. As weather requires, dancers should wear warmer clothes over what they need for class.



5. Tuition

Tuition is \$50 per month per child based on an approximate schedule of 4 one-hour classes per month. The 30 minute Intro Class is \$35 per month per child. The Adult Classes are \$40 per month for a 45 minute class. There is a 10% discount for two immediate family members and 30% discount for 3+ immediate family members. Family max is \$120 per month. Cancellations for an instructor's personal reasons will be credited. Cancellations for general reasons such as weather are not credited. There are no rebates for missed classes. Contact Regan about special circumstances. Statements are provided via email or paper copies as needed or requested. Tuition is due the first class of each month. Please pay by check made payable to Wick School of Irish Dance, LLC. No cash payments.

6. Practice

Practice is not limited to the weekly classes. The proper learning of Irish Dance requires practice at home. This means a dedicated slot of time. Recommend minimum: twenty to thirty minutes each day, and 1+ hours for advanced students. To facilitate practice, it is best to create a wood-surface at least 8' x 8' and have a CD player always available. For the surface ¼ particle board is excellent. Masonite sheets are also acceptable. You can duct tape two 4' x 8' boards together.

7. Performance and Feis (Competition) Dress

NOTE: Colorado class dresses are different from and not interchangeable with New Jersey class dresses.

Irish dance costumes are used for performance and competition. For girls, there are three categories

(a) A dancers in her first year of lessons or under age 8 may wear a navy skirts and white blouse. In the vendor section of WickSchool.com, there is a link to JCPenny for the navy skirt and blouse.

(b) Class dresses. While the Wick School New Jersey does not enforce strict rules about class dresses, dancers in their 2nd year of dance and age 8 and older should plan to get a class dress for performance and/or feis (competition). Our class dress maker is: Elaine Benkis of D&E Embroidery (dneembroidery@optonline.net, 973-983-9128). The class dress costs \$325. More info on class dresses is available via the website NEW JERSEY RESOURCES section or this direct link: <http://www.wickschool.com/docs/NJClassDress.pdf>

(c) Solo dresses are more elaborate, expensive, and appropriate for championship level dancers.

Boys wear navy trousers, white oxfords, and a Wick School tie available from the dress maker, Elaine Benkis.

Be sure to check the WickSchool.com Dancewear Exchange for used items.

The Wick School of Irish Dance, New Jersey Class Dress is pictured below.



8. Music

The proper learning of Irish dance requires practice to music. There are several CD recordings available. An excellent starter CD is "One More Time" produced by the Culkin School of Irish Dance: <http://www.culkinschool.com/music.htm>. As the dancer progresses, plan to buy other CDs to familiarize her/him with different music.

9. Shoes



Soft Shoes for Girls



Soft Shoes for Boys



Hard Shoes for Boys and Girls

Socks: Girls wear white “poodle socks”.

Soft Shoes: Initially, beginners can dance in black ballet slippers. Once girl dancers are learning the reel, they will need the lace-up gillies pictured above. Boys wear a soft-sole jazz shoe with some specific differences for Irish step.

Hard Shoes: Once a dancer begins to learn the percussive steps, s/he will need hard shoes. Hards shoes are easily distinguished by the fiber-glass tips and heels.

Where to buy socks and shoes:

- (1) First check the WickSchool.com Dancewear Exchange for used items
- (2) Emerald Gifts at 137 Parsippany Road, Parsippany, NJ 07054, (973) 887-2445.
- (3) Check the WickSchool.com Vendors section for more options.

10. Performance

In addition to competition, performance is a wonderful outlet for the dancers to perform. Currently we perform at local nursing homes on the first Tuesday of every month except summer. Please feel free to suggest any other opportunities you know of. Also there are social dances called ceilis (kay-lees) where dancers often have an opportunity to perform a few steps. An excellent resource for local events is the Irish programs on WFUV 90.7 on Saturday morning 9am to noon, and Sunday noon to 4pm. This is a wonderful resource unique to this part of the country and is a great way to expose your children to Irish music and become connected to the Irish community. Check the WickSchool.com calendar for upcoming events.

11. Competition

A competition is called a feis (fesh). Feisianna (Irish plural or feises as the common English plural) are very common and popular among Irish dancers -although not required. There are many feisianna in the tri-state area every year. Schedules and more information are available at www.northamericanfeiscommission.org

The categories of competitions:

1. **Beginner:** A dancer who has not taken Irish dancing lessons from a registered teacher prior to September 1 of the previous year.
2. **Advanced Beginner:** Dancers remain in this category until they win a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in a given dance. For that dance only they then advance to the Novice category.
3. **Novice:** Dancers remain in this category until they win a 1st place in a given dance. For that dance only they then advance to the Open category.
4. **Open (also called Prizewinner):** This is the last solo category. After this dancers move into Preliminary and then Open Championship competitions.
5. **Preliminary Championship:** A dancer who has placed 1st, 2nd, or 3rd, in the reel, slip jig, treble jig and hornpipe in Prizewinner Solos may choose to enter Preliminary Championship.
6. **Intermediate Championship:** A recently added category to bridge a growing gap between Preliminary and Open Championship dancers.
7. **Open Championship:** A dancer who has placed first in 3 Preliminary Championships

Oireachtas (or-rock-tus)

This is an official championship level feis. These competitions for very experienced dancers are annual events.

Regional
North American
World

during November (We are in the mid-Atlantic Region)
during 4th of July
during Easter (usually in Ireland)

12. Communication.

Email is the primary means of communication for the Wick School including tuition and payment statements, class schedules, and performance opportunities. Please be sure I have a valid email address that you check regularly. If you

are not receiving emails from WickSchool.com, you may need to check your junk mail filters and/or add WickSchool.com to your trusted list.

Be sure to check email each Monday after 2pm in case there is a cancellation or other scheduling information relevant for that day.

Proper Technique Overview

1. Listen to the music
2. Dance to the music
3. Feet turned out
4. Feet crossed
5. On toes
6. Knees and ankles straight whenever possible
7. Feet hit backside whenever possible
8. Arms straight down at sides hands lightly cuffed, thumbs forward.