



McConnell School of Dance

32 Barberry Rd Wpg MB R2J2G9 (204) 793-8557 Fax (204) 8373244 info@mcconnelldancers.com

Brandon Division 2011 – 2012 Student Handbook

2011- 2012 Fall Session

**McConnell School of Irish Dance Fall Session
will now be offering regular Irish dance classes in
Brandon, Manitoba.**

Dates: September 10th 2011 - May 26th, 2012

Location: Steppin' Time Dance Studio (132-9th street)

Our School

McConnell School of Dance is one of the oldest Irish dance schools in North America. Originally founded in Ballymena, Northern Ireland over 80 years ago, the school was established in Winnipeg, Canada in 1947 and was the first Irish dance school in Manitoba. The McConnell family has earned three citizenship awards for their community service work and Sam McConnell was one of the founding members of the Folk Arts Council of Winnipeg Inc. McConnell School of Dance is recognized for their unique, high calibre, performance-style dancing which encompasses both traditional and modern forms of Irish Dance. We are a non-competitive school and do not participate in Feiseanna (Irish dance competitions). Now into its third generation, McConnell School of dance is currently under the direction of accomplished dancer and choreographer, Shayleen McConnell Finucan. Shayleen's recent achievements

- 2007 - Choreographer of the international touring Irish Dance spectacular "The Magic of Ireland" The show is produced by Peter Jacobs (Gael Force) and has included performers such James Devine, who holds the current record as the fastest tap dancer in the world.
- 2009 - Choreographed "Tribute to Lord of the Dance" in conjunction with the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra for the "Under the Rainbow" Summer Presentation
- 2011- Choreographed "Legend of the Tuatha Dé Danann" for debut at the Tara Players Theatre in Wpg, MB
- Shayleen is an active in the Irish community in Winnipeg. She has served on the Board of Directors for the Irish Association of Manitoba Inc. from 2005 – 2011.
- Coordinator for the Ireland-Irish Pavilion in Folklorama for 2010 and 2011.

McConnell School of Dance has performed at the Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, and with well known performers such as "The Irish Rovers", "Tommy Makem", and "The Irish Descendants". In 2007 the group travelled to Trujillo, Peru to participate in the C.I.O.F.F. sponsored International Folk Dance Festival. In July 2009 the dancers travelled to San Jose, Costa Rica and will be heading to Sofia, Bulgaria in July 2011.

**McConnell School of Dance has also been very pleased to perform at the Irish Pavilion
(Sponsored by The Irish Society of Western Manitoba) in the
Annual Lieutenant Governor's Winter Festival in 2009, 2010, and 2011.**

McConnell's Brandon Instructor: Wendy Havens

Wendy has been with McConnell School of Dance for over 30 years. She began as an assistant in 1986 and teaches Beginner – Advanced level classes for children and adults. Wendy teaches both traditional and modern styles of Irish dance and has a flare for unique choreography.

Education: BA in Developmental Studies from the U of W (1992) and ECE Diploma from Red River College (2004) A certified ECE III and worked in Childcare outside the home for 11 years.

Wendy has two children (Ripley 8, Finn 2) and is stay at home mom (during the day) and our head instructor at McConnell School of Dance.



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Preschool - 45 minute class for dancers ages 3 – 4

This level may be appropriate for students 2 1/2 if they are capable of participating in the class without an accompanying parent. Our Preschool class is ideal for dancers who maybe too young for a full 1 hour class. Children learn the basic foot work and positions for Irish dance and learn the Beginner Reel. Warm -up, stretching, and technique is included in the program. Students also learn Irish songs and nursery rhymes.

Beginner - 1 hr class for dancers ages 5 - 6

Beginner students learn the basics of soft-shoe Irish dancing with Beginner Reel and then progress to the Light Jig (3 steps). Warm up, stretching and technique is included in the lesson. Focus is on developing technique and progressing towards hard shoe work. An introduction to Hard shoe techniques takes place the last 10- 15 minutes of our Beginner class.

Novice - 1 hour class for dancers ages 7 - 8

Novice Level students continue to progress with soft-shoe basics, learning a slip jig or hop jig and the complete Light Jig (5 steps). Novice dancers may also learn their first Ceili dance (group dance with figures). Novice dancers begin more intensive hard shoe training which extends through one half the lesson. Warm up and technique is included in the class with added focus on the more difficult moves (such as leaps, jumps, and cross keys).

Preliminary - 1 hour class recommended for dancers ages 9 - 10

This class is best suited for dancers with some previous training in soft-shoe / hard-shoe Irish dancing or dancers with previous experience in other dance styles. Private lessons are available during the summer months in order to prepare dancers for fall registration. Preliminary students learn more complex soft-shoe styles. Dancers further their hard-shoe technique with 45 minutes of training each class. Students learn dances such as the Beginner Hornpipe, Treble Jig, and Treble Reel. Dancers also learn a Ceili or group dance to develop discipline, precision, and performance skills. Warm up and hard shoe technique training is included in the lesson

Intermediate - 1 hour class for dancers ages 11 and up

This class is best suited for dancers who are well established in Irish soft-shoe and hard-shoe or who have extensive experience in other similar styles of dance. We recommend students transferring from other styles of dance schedule private lessons in order to prepare dancers for Irish dance style and basic technique. Intermediate Level students focus on developing style and technique required for more advanced levels of Irish dancing. Warm up and technique is included, and students also learn a Ceili or group dance to continue to develop their precision and performance skills

Advanced 1 hour class for dancers 12 and over

This class is best suited for dancers with a minimum of 5 years Irish dance training who are over 12. Dancers should be well established in Irish soft and hard-shoe. Students focus on developing style and technique required for more advanced levels of Irish dancing. Warm up and technique is included, and dancers also learn a Ceili or group dance to continue to develop their precision and performance skills.

Teen Introductory – 1 hour class for dancers age 9 and up

This class is best suited for dancers who have little or no previous dance experience. Dancers start with the Beginner Reel and then progress to the Light Jig at their own pace within the class. Warm up, stretching and technique is included in the lesson.

Adult Introductory - 1 hour class recommended for adults new to Irish dance

Students learn the basics of soft-shoe Irish dancing. Warm up and technique is included in the class with added focus on stretching and improving flexibility and strength in order to prepare for the rigours of Irish dance. Performance is optional for our adult students.



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Fall Lesson Schedule

Saturday Classes		
11:00 – 11:45 PM	Preschool (ages 3 – 4)	45 min
11:00 – 12:00 PM	Beginner (ages 5 - 6)	1
12:00 – 1:00 PM	Novice - Preliminary (ages 7 – 9)	1
1:00 – 2:00 PM	Intermediate – Advanced	1
2:00 – 3:00 PM	Teen – Adult Intro	1
<i>Open For Private Lessons</i>		30 Min

Irish Dance Lesson Fees

2011 - 2012 Fall Season			
Class Level	Monthly	3 Term	Full Year
Preschool	\$45.00	\$120.00	\$360.00
Beginner	\$50.00	\$150.00	\$450.00
Novice - Preliminary	\$50.00	\$150.00	\$450.00
Intermediate - Advanced	\$50.00	\$150.00	\$450.00
Teen & Adult Introductory	\$50.00	\$150.00	\$450.00
1 - Private Lesson (30 min)	\$45.00		

Irish Dance Shoes

Irish soft shoes (ghillies) are recommended for practice and required for performance. Socks, gym shoes and ballet slippers may be worn for the first few classes or duration of Summer Session. Dancers should purchase Irish soft shoes as soon as they determine they will be continuing for the Fall Season.

A full range of Irish Dance shoes and supplies are available through our studio in Winnipeg and 2nd hand shoes listings are posted on our website [CLICK HERE FOR WEBSITE](#)

Fall Season Shoe Requirements

Preschool & Beginner – Soft shoes

Novice, Preliminary, Intermediate, Advanced – Soft shoes & Hard Shoes

Teen Intro & Adult Intro – Soft Shoes

Costumes / Performance

Dancers do not require Irish dance costumes for our Summer Session.

Students who register for our Fall Session (Sept – June) and wish to perform at the **Irish Pavilion (Lieutenant Governor's Winter Festival in Feb)** and at the **Year End Recital (in June)** will require our school Costume for their registered level. **Performance is optional for all students.** Irish dance school costumes are designed to be used for more than one season and parents are always encouraged to sell their 2nd hand costumes when no longer in use.

Brandon Division Class Costume Fees

Preschool & Beginner - \$125

Novice & Preliminary - \$150

Intermediate & Advanced - \$175

Teen & Adult Intro - \$150



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Payment Policies

There will be a minimum of 5 students in a class. Classes that do not meet the minimum requirement will be combined, or the option will be offered for semi-private or private rates.

- Fees are based on average of four classes per month and include Christmas and Spring Break. Classes are cancelled on statutory holidays, March 17th, and Recital.
- To change a payment method, notification must be in writing (or e-mail) and a minimum of 7 business days before the payment due date.
- \$10.00/monthly late fee. \$25.00 NSF & Decline Credit Card Transactions

Payments and Methods of Payment

Fall Season Payment options

- 9 Monthly Payments - posted dated cheques OR credit card
- 3 Term Payments - posted dated cheques OR credit card
- 1 Full Season Payment - posted dated cheques, credit card, OR cash

Payment Methods

- Credit Card (Visa / Master Card/AMEX) - preauthorized payments processed on the 1st of the month
- Post -dated Cheques - dated for the 1st or 15th of each month (payable to McConnell School of Dance)
- Cash - *full season payment only*

Registration Fee (non-refundable)

Individual \$15 Family \$25

A yearly non-refundable Registration fee is due with Registration Form. Students registering for Summer and Fall Sessions are only required to pay registration fee once.

Receipts

Receipts for payment of lessons are sent via e-mail monthly or every term, depending on payment schedule. **Please keep your receipts if you require them record for tax purposes.**

Income Tax Summary Receipts - \$10 charge for a yearend tax summary.

Withdrawals & Refunds

Notification for withdrawal must be done in writing (or e-mail) and submitted to McConnell School of dance in order for a refund to be processed. The date of written notification (*not the date of absence*) is considered the departure date. Pupils are responsible for all outstanding monetary balances (i.e. costume orders, product orders, tuition). There will be a \$25 processing fee for all withdrawals.

N.S.F. Cheques and Declined Credit Card Transactions

A \$25.00 charge will be applied to any N.S.F. cheques and declined monthly / term credit card transactions.

Accounts with outstanding N.S.F. payments will be notified by McConnell School of Dance by phone or e-mail.

Payment will be expected within 7 business days of notification. If payment is not made within 7 business days, there is a **3% charge per day on the total outstanding bill**



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Missed Lesson and Make Up Lesson Policy

McConnell School of Dance does not reimburse for lessons missed during the month. If a lesson is cancelled by McConnell School of Dance (due to weather, etc.) , students will have the opportunity to attend a make-up class. Make up Lessons dates are announced on the website and notification is sent via e-mail.

Due to limitations of our class sizes, students cannot make up missed lessons due to illness, injury or their scheduling difficulties.

We are a performance Irish dance school and all instructors are members of our Performance Division. There are rare occasions when classes are cancelled due to our Instructor's commitment to a performance. At least 7 days notice will be given in these circumstances and students will be offered a make-up lesson.

Dress Code and Rules of Conduct

Irish Dance students should wear proper dance attire such as tights, leotard, skirts (above the knee), or short. T-shirts may be worn providing they are not baggy. Yoga pants or sweat pants are acceptable providing they are not too long (no lower than ankle bone). Hair should be tied back and no jewellery should be worn.

Poodle socks are recommended for practice with Irish dance shoes.

1. Students who have difficulty wearing their shoes due to injury should inform their instructor prior to class.
2. Students with injuries should inform their instructor prior to class. **Parents, please send a note in with your child should they be ill or suffering with an injury or condition which may affect their performance or behaviour in class.**
3. Dancers are to remain in the rehearsal studio unless excused by the class instructor.
4. Parents are not allowed in the rehearsal studio, unless during scheduled Parent's Days.
5. Only dance shoes, dance bags, purses / wallets, and water bottles may be brought into the studio **(no food or outerwear). Please bring all necessary items in to class with you at the beginning of class.**
6. **NO** cellular phones, video games, laptops, cameras, video cameras, iPods, or books allowed in rehearsal studio.
7. **Respectful behaviour and a positive attitude toward the class instructors and fellow dancers must be demonstrated by dancers and their parents at all times.**
8. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class. Parents are asked to call or email **studio@mcconnell dancers.com** or call 793-8557 to inform us of their child's absence from class

School and Parent Communication

All communication, notices, etc. from the School are distributed by email. Please provide a current email address on your registration form to receive school information throughout the dance year and notify us immediately should you have a change of e-mail.



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McConnell Practice Guide

Irish Dance is disciplined learning and requires consistent practice and effort to become proficient. Like any skilful activity, hard work is required to achieve success. In order for a dancer to progress in Irish dance, hard work, dedication, and at-home practice is essential. We encourage all students to practice at home and parental assistance is necessary.

Personal progress and performance are directly affected by practice time, attitude and effort in class and at home.

Practice Music: Practice tunes are available for listening on the member's area of the website. Due to copyright legislation, we are unable to provide dancers with music for their routines at performances. Irish dance music is timed accurately we encourage dancers to use practice music provided on the website.

How long should my child practice?

Daily practice will help dancers to remember steps and improve technique.

Dancers should try to practice at least three times a week.

Recommended practice time

(not including warm up and cool down).

Preschool /Beginner- 15 mins per day OR 1 ½ hrs. per week

Novice / Preliminary- 30 mins per day OR 4 hrs. per week

Intermediate / Advanced- 45 mins per day OR 5 hrs. per week

Teen / Adult -30 mins per day OR 4 hrs. per week

- The times listed above are minimum times for practicing dance steps and technique.
- Remember to warm up and stretch well before every practice. Don't forget to cool down.
- To increase flexibility, dancers should spend at least 10 minutes a day stretching.

Information for Parents: Supporting your dancer

Some children have a natural drive to practice on their own. These dancers need only support and encouragement to continue with their good practice habits.

Some dancers desire to progress with their dancing but have trouble understanding how to fit practice time into their day. These children often need help from their parents to set out a weekly practice plan and stick to it.

Quite often, after a month or two of help and support, these children can learn to practice diligently on their own to achieve their goals.

It is important to discover what your child's practice style is and compare that with what their goals are for their dancing. As an Irish dance parent, your most important role is to accept the character type of your child and do your best to be supportive of them and the decisions they make regarding their Irish dance.

- Only offer encouragement, especially when your child may be struggling.
- Avoid criticizing your child's practice or performance.
- Stick to your parental role. Avoid trying to be your child's coach or teacher (i.e. becoming too involved in steps or technique, etc).