



HANDBOOK

2023-2024

OUR PHILOSOPHY

Dance is for everyone. We are an inclusive and collaborative dance and creative movement community, where students of all ages, races, genders, religions, cultures, ethnicities, nationalities, sexual orientations, backgrounds, and abilities are welcomed, loved, and supported. Everyone involved with Prairie North Dance will work together to voice, share, create and celebrate the stories of our families and our communities through the modality of dance and creative movement. The environment of Prairie North Dance will always be safe, both mentally, emotionally, and physically, for everyone who walks in the doors. Every student will be met where they are at and supported through a variety of methods to achieve meaningful success through genuine support, camaraderie, and care from both the teachers and their classmates. Honest, effective, and timely communication between teachers and the students will be a hallmark of Prairie North Dance.

Lacey Blowers

Director/Owner, Prairie North Dance



Our Dance Curriculum

Prairie North Dance is a technique-based, skills-based, dance and creative movement program with its instructional foundation rooted in Safe Dance Practice and Brain-Compatible Dance Education. Our program is progressive and allows dancers to develop at their own pace while feeling challenged and empowered by their growth in their technical dance skill set. All dance classes at Prairie North Dance will have instructors who will:

1. Create a physically and psychologically safe and supportive environment.
2. Understand relevant anatomical principles and biomechanically sound alignment.
3. Implement effective physiological preparation and progression in dance technique and skill acquisition.
4. Minimise injury risk and understand injury management.
5. Tailor delivery of dance technique and movement instruction to the specific needs of the participants.

Currently, Prairie North Dance is offering Irish Dance classes, where students will learn a mixture of traditional, modern and performative Irish Dance. Irish Dance is very unique in the dancing world as it encompasses two complementary, yet vastly different shoe types/styles of dance: Light shoe (aka Soft Shoe) and Heavy shoe (aka Hard Shoe). For Light Shoe/Soft Shoe, dancers wear ghillies (sometimes referred to as pumps or soft shoes) and learn a series of different styled patterned dances. There are four main Soft Shoe dances that students will learn: the Reel, Single Jig, Light Jig, and Slip Jig. The style of soft shoe is characterized by a lightness on the feet, incorporating many technical skills like high kicks, jumps, and turns, and is similar to ballet in look and feel. For Heavy Shoe/Hard Shoe, dancers wear hard shoes (sometimes referred to as Jig

Shoes), which, at first glance, look similar to a tap shoe, except instead of metal plating screwed into the bottom of the shoe, a Hard Shoe/ Jig Shoe has rounded down fibre glass tips on both the tip/front of the shoe and the heel. Heavy Shoe/Hard Shoe dances differ from soft shoe in that they are a powerful, percussive style of dance made up of intricate rhythms and explosive, athletic movements. It is often compared to tap dance, as it makes sound with the shoe's tip and heel and has much of the same technique as tap. There are four main Hard Shoe dances that students will learn: Treble Reel, Hornpipe, Heavy Jig, and a Traditional Set.

The technical elements involved in Irish Dance (both Soft Shoe and Hard Shoe) include: timing, rhythm, lift, volume, crossing, turn-out, toes, extension, posture, and stage presence.

When Can I Enroll?

Enrollment occurs twice a year, In September and January, lining up with the start of the Fall and Winter Sessions. Student's can choose to enroll and attend both the Fall and Winter Sessions (for a full year of dance instruction) or opt to choose only 1 session per year (either the Fall or the Winter).

Season At a Glance

This is Prairie North Dance's first dance season and we are so excited to meet everyone and create a beautiful dance community together. Currently, we are only focusing on building a solid foundation in dance and creative movement through offering beginner Irish Dance classes, but in future seasons we hope to create a performance division where we are able to connect and collaborate with other local dance schools/studios to put together shows to



perform locally and hopefully in the future, abroad. Prairie North Dance is not a competitive dance school currently, but we would love to explore that option with our community once we have a solid footing in our dance practice. We are so looking forward to working together and seeing where this will all take us!

Class Types and Schedule

Beginner Irish Dance – Ages 5-9

Thursdays: 6:30-7:30pm
(Fall & Winter Sessions)

Beginner Irish Dance – Ages 10-17

Thursdays: 7:30-8:30 pm
(Fall & Winter Sessions)

Adult Irish Dance – Ages 18 and up

Thursdays: 8:30-9:30 pm
(*Tentative*: Winter Session only for the 2023-2024 Dance Year)

Closed Dates

No classes on the following dates:

- Thursday, October 12, 2023
- Thursday, December 7, 2023
- Thursday, March 28, 2024

Policies & General Information

Absences

If a student is unable to attend class please notify the studio in advance via email at prairienorthdance@gmail.com.

Behaviour

Anyone entering Prairie North Dance is expected to always demonstrate respectful behaviour. Please respect our space, instructors, students, and their

families. Bullying and/or harassment will not be tolerated.

Observation

Parents and guests will be invited to observe the Open House classes (September 14th, 2023) by coming into the hall and sitting at the tables on the carpeted area beside the dance floor. For all other regularly scheduled classes, no parents and/or guests are allowed to stay in the hall to observe while classes are running. Parents can drop their children off at the front door or choose to walk them up the stairs into the main floor hall to be dropped off 5 minutes before class begins. Doors to the Hall will be locked for the duration of the classes, for the safety and protection of our students and teachers. Parents will be invited to stay and watch for any special occasion dance classes/performances that are done in the future. This information will be communicated to parents via email.

Emails

All important information will be communicated to students and parents via email. Students and parents are responsible for checking their emails regularly.

Class Attire & Footwear

Footwear

Irish Dance shoes (Soft Shoes or Hard Shoes), or Ballet Slippers are **not** required to start dance classes with Prairie North Dance. All new students are welcome to do their first two months of classes in socks or non-slip indoor runners (or if you already have dance shoes – you are welcome to wear any type of soft soled dance shoes like a ballet or jazz slipper). After the first two months of classes, if the student would like to purchase proper dance



footwear, please let us know and we will provide information on what to purchase and from where.

Attire

All students should wear socks for dancing, although the white bubble socks that are typical for Irish dancers are not required.

It's important to wear something that is comfortable and easy to move in! The clothes you choose shouldn't restrict movement, so jeans and ankle length skirts will not work well for dance class. Some students prefer to wear athletic clothes, some wear leotards, tutus and tights, and some wear t-shirts and shorts – whatever you prefer to move your body in!

All dancers with hair longer than their shoulders, please have your hair tied back.

Class Drinks

All students should bring a water bottle for dance class. Students may also bring juice boxes, but please no pop.

Cell Phone Policy

All students who carry cell phones must put their phones on silent during class time, and store them with their other belongings (bag, coat, outdoor shoes, etc.) at one of the tables in the hall beside the dance floor. Phones will not be used during class time, but can be checked on break times.

Class Recordings

Parents, guests and students are not allowed to take photos and/or videos during class time without prior Director approval.

Student Waiver and Media Release Form

Our student Waiver and Media Release form must be completed and signed by all students/parental guardians by the second week of classes. This form

will be emailed to you directly before the start of the session, and can also be found on our website <https://prairienorthdance.ca>, on the "Our Classes" page, at the bottom under the heading "Important Forms for Dancers/Parents".

Missed Classes

There are no refunds for missed classes or make-up classes except where said class is cancelled by the studio.

Opening & Closing Time

The studio will be open 10 minutes prior to the start of class & close promptly after the last class of the evening. Please pick up your dancer on time after their class ends.

Financial Policies

Payments

Prairie North Dance accepts registration payments via online on our website secure checkout, and in person with our square card reader. Accepted forms of payment in person include debit and credit cards. Please speak to the director if you would like to pay in cash.

Session fees must be paid in full before the start of the first class of the session.

Refunds

Refunds will only be issued up until the fourth class of the applicable Session. The refund issued will be for the remaining classes that the student has not yet participated in, therefore if a student decides the class is not for them by the fourth class and chooses to withdraw their child, the parent has only paid for the classes their child has attended and will be refunded the amount for the classes the child has not attended.