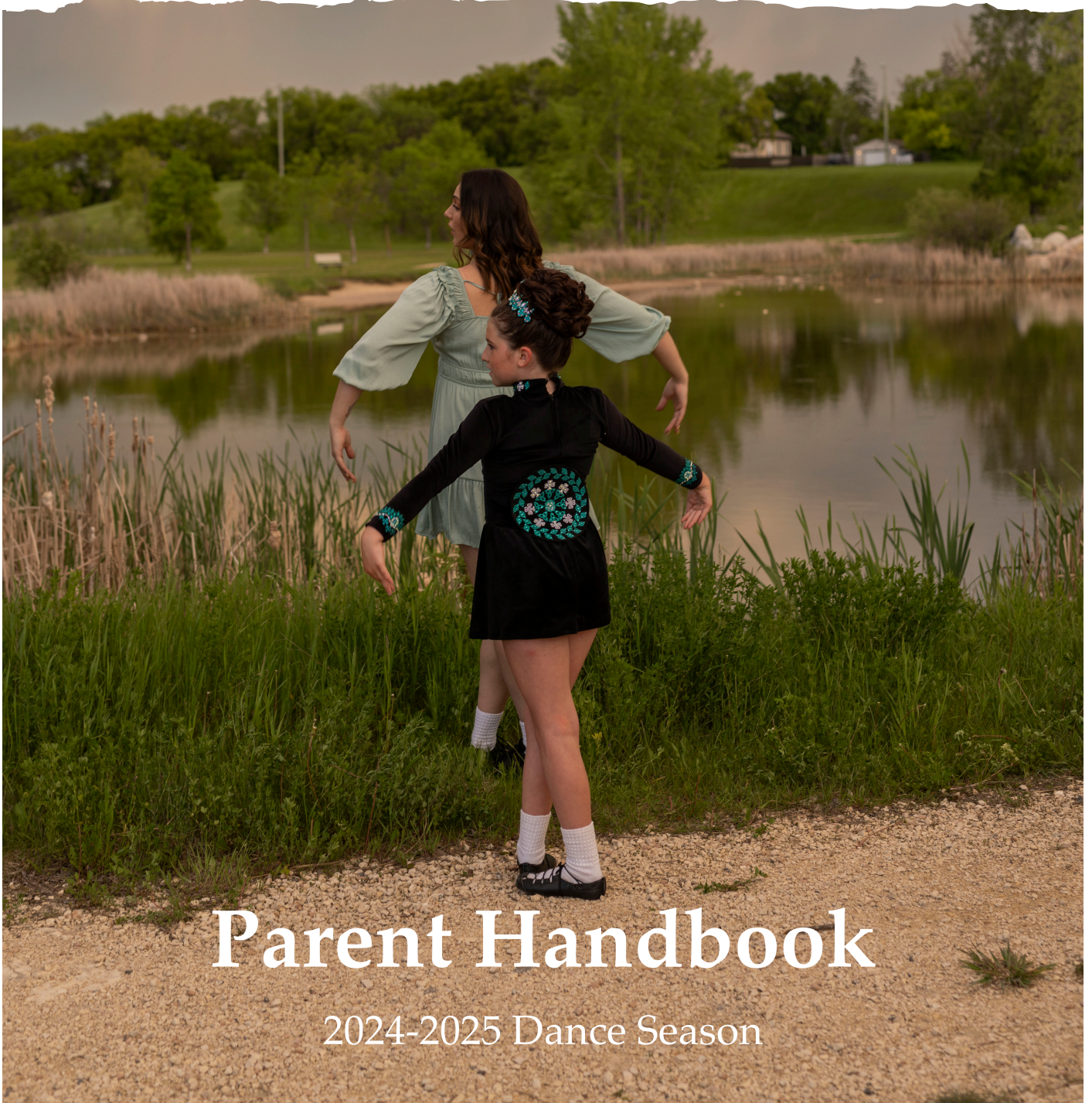




# Prairie North

Dance



## Parent Handbook

2024-2025 Dance Season

# Our Philosophy



*Dance is for everyone. We are an inclusive and collaborative movement community where students of all ages, genders, religions, cultures, ethnicities, nationalities, sexual orientations, backgrounds and abilities are welcomed, loved and supported.*

*We 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; mentally, emotionally and physically for everyone who walks through our doors. Every student will be met where they are at and supported to achieve meaningful success from both their teachers and classmates. Honest, effective and timely communication between teachers and 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 and 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 the growth in their technical dance skill set. All dance classes at Prairie North Dance will have instructors who:

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. Minimize 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 offers Irish Dance classes where students learn a mixture of traditional, modern, and performative Irish Dance. Irish Dance is unique in the dancing world as it encompasses two complementary, yet different shoe types/styles of dance: Light Shoe (Soft Shoe) and Heavy Shoe (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 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 tap shoes. Except instead of metal plating screwed into the bottom of the shoe, a Hard Shoe/ Jig Shoe has rounded down fiberglass 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 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.

# Competitive Irish Dance

Prairie North Dance is a registered member of Cumann Rince Náisiúnta (CRN), based in Dublin, Ireland. With this membership, our students have the opportunity to compete in CRN's Open Platform Feile (competitions), which take place at the Regional, National, and World Open levels.

Cumann Rince Náisiúnta, CRN, was founded in 1982 and since its formation, has grown in strength and numbers and currently has a membership base in Ireland, the UK, mainland Europe, the USA, Canada, and Australia.

As an organisation, CRN has a strong Code of Ethics and encourages fairness of competition for all dancers, teachers, and members. CRN promotes an open platform for competition allowing dancers from all over the World to compete in a safe, fair, and friendly environment.

CRN is widely known as a traditional dance organisation and has successfully maintained the integrity of traditional dances, while actively encouraging the development of new and innovative work. Great thought was put into considering the developmental

levels of students and their capacity to execute work in solo dances.

Five (5) grades/levels of dance were established. In an ongoing effort to honour tradition and continually protect the developmental process of dancers a grading system is in operation in all 5 levels and grades. This system ensures that appropriate technique is being taught at each level.

The five (5) Solo Levels of CRN are: (1) Bunghrád, (2) Ullmhúchán, (3) Meanghrád, (4) Ardghrád, and (5) Craobhghrád. Solo competitions within the CRN are offered for all ages and abilities, including adult students. Team competitions include all traditional figure dances as well as modern choreography.

CRN takes great pride that their organisation is open to new ideas, gives a voice to young teachers, and is always willing to listen to new ways of moving forward at the same time as preserving the traditions of Irish dancing, music, and culture.

## Student Dance Levels

Prairie North Dance uses a levelled organizational system to help dancers progress through our Dance Curriculum. As dancers grow and achieve success and meet the general and specific learning outcomes of each level, they move to the next level.

Prairie North Dance Levels include:

- 1. Beginner:** This level includes new students ages 5 or older, as well as existing students between the 5-9 years of age. These students are able to compete at the "First Feis" and/or Bunghrád level at CRN sanctioned competitions.
- 2. Novice:** This level includes new students over the age of 10, as well as existing students who have completed all of their Bunghrád level dances and are working on their beginner hard shoe dances. These students are able to compete at the Bunghrád and/or Ullmhúchán level at CRN sanctioned competitions.

- 3. Advanced:** This level includes dancers of all ages who have completed all of their Ullmhúchán level dances in both Soft and Hard Shoe and are currently working on their Meanghrád dances. These students are able to compete at the Ullmhúchán and/or the Meanghrád level at CRN sanctioned competitions.

- 4. Championship:** This level includes all Advanced level dancers of any age who have won their way out of ALL Meanghrád dances and are now working on custom Prairie North Dance Solo and Teams Choreography. These students are competing at the Ardghrád and/or Craobhghrád Championship levels at CRN sanctioned competitions at the national and international level.

- 5. Adult:** This level includes all new or existing students who are over the age of 18 who are wanting to dance casually OR who are wanting to compete in their age and level category at CRN sanctioned competitions.

# Enrollment

Enrollment occurs three times a year: In August/September, December/January, and March, lining up with the start of the Fall, Winter, and Spring Sessions. Students 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).

The Spring Session registration in March is only open to current dancers who have attended both the Fall and Winter sessions of that Dance Season and want to compete at local dance competitions as well as CRN sanctioned Irish Dance competitions (called “Feile” or sometimes “Feisianna” in Irish).

Registration and enrolment for dance classes is done

through the Prairie North Dance Parent Portal through Dance Studio Pro (DSP). Parents MUST download the FREE Parent Portal app via the link listed below: <https://dancestudio-pro.com/online/prairienorthdance>. This link is also listed on our website, under the “For Parents/Dancers” page.

Once parents/dancers have created their profile in the Prairie North Dance DSP Parent Portal, they can sign up for auto-pay and register and pay for classes for the selected dance session. Important documentation for each dance class is available through the parent portal. Parents and dancers can also communicate directly with their dance teacher using the in-app messaging function. Parents can also contact Prairie North Dance by email at [prairienorthdance@gmail.com](mailto:prairienorthdance@gmail.com).

# Season at a Glance

This is Prairie North Dance’s second year of operation. We are excited to see familiar faces return for this dance season, along with new faces from members of our Interlake community! Currently, we are focusing on building a solid foundation in dance and creative movement by offering both traditional and competitive Irish Dance classes. In future seasons we hope to establish a dedicated performance division where we can connect and collaborate with other local dance schools/studios to create shows and perform locally telling the stories of the people who share the land where we live.

Prairie North Dance offers both a recreational program and a competitive program. We are a registered member of Cumann Rince Náisiúnta (CRN), based in Dublin, Ireland. Those dancers who choose to compete with Prairie North Dance will have the opportunity to compete in CRN's Open Platform Feile (competitions), which take place at the Regional, National, and World Open levels throughout the year, in addition to any general local dance competitions, like the Rockwood Festival of the Arts.

## Class Types and Schedule

### Beginner Irish Dance Ages 5-9

Sundays: 3:00-4:00 pm  
(Fall & Winter Sessions)

### Adult Irish Dance Ages 18 & up

Fridays: 8:00-9:00 pm  
(Fall & Winter Sessions)

### Competitive Irish Dance Novice & Adult

Sundays: 4:00 – 6:00 pm  
(Spring Session ONLY)

- Friday, Oct. 11, 2024
- Sunday, Oct. 13, 2024
- Friday, Nov. 1, 2024
- Friday, Feb. 14, 2025
- Sunday, Feb. 16, 2025
- Sunday, Apr. 13, 2025
- Sunday, Apr. 20, 2025
- Sunday, May 11, 2025

### Novice Irish Dance Ages 10-17

Sundays: 4:00-5:00 pm  
(Fall & Winter Sessions)

### Competitive Irish Dance Beginner

Sundays: 3:00-4:00 pm  
(Spring Session ONLY)

### Closed Dates

No classes on the following dates:

# Policies & General Information

## Absences

If a student is unable to attend class, please notify the studio in advance through the parent portal on the Dance Studio Pro App or by email at [prairienorthdance@gmail.com](mailto: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

For all regularly scheduled dance classes, parents are required to bring their child(ren) into the dance studio waiting area 5 minutes before the start of class (the waiting area is located directly inside the backdoor to the studio – parents will see a seating area with a boot rack and bathroom). Parents are responsible for making sure their child(ren)'s outdoor shoes are removed and placed on the boot rack and assist with any clothing changes/ putting on of dance shoes IF their child is unable to do this themselves.

Parents can choose to stay in the waiting area for the duration of the class or leave once their child(ren) begin their class and return for pick-up at the end of class. For parents who choose to stay, please keep noise to a minimum, so as not to distract the students or teachers during class time. Parents will be invited into the dance floor studio space to stay and watch for any special occasion dance classes/ performances that are done in the future. This information will be communicated to parents through the parent portal on the Dance Studio Pro App or by email.

## Emails & DSP Parent Portal

All important information will be communicated to students and parents through the DSP (Dance Studio Pro) Parent Portal, as well as by email. Students and parents are responsible for checking their DSP Parent Portal and emails regularly.

## Class Drinks

All students should bring a water bottle for dance class.

## 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.) in the waiting area 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 first class of the season/session. This form is located in your DSP parent portal – you will be prompted to sign it when you register your child(ren) for their class(es). It can also be found on our website <https://prairienorthdance.ca>, on the "For Parents/ Dancers" 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 when a class is cancelled by the studio. Refunds will be processed through the DSP parent portal in the form of initial payment (the credit card on file) and will be reflected on your account page and in your Prairie North Dance invoice for the session.

## Opening & Closing Time

The studio will be open 5 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.

# Class Attire & Footwear

## Footwear

Irish dance shoes (soft shoes or hard shoes), or ballet slippers are not required to start dance classes at Prairie North Dance. All new students are welcome to do the first two months of classes in bare feet or non-slip indoor runners (or if you already have dance shoes – you are welcome to wear any type of soft-soled dance shoe like ballet or jazz slippers).

When the dancer is ready to obtain proper Irish dance footwear, please let us know and we will provide purchasing information. Students in the beginner class and the recreational adult class for fall and winter session do not have to purchase Irish dance footwear to participate in classes during these sessions.

Students who are in any other level (Novice and up, including Adult competitive) and/or are participating in the Spring Session MUST have proper Irish dance footwear to perform/compete.

## Attire

All students are asked to wear socks with their shoes (unless they are going barefoot) for dancing. The white poodle socks that are typical for Irish dancers are not required for regular classes but are required for dance competitions and performances.

It's important to wear something that is comfortable and easy to move in. The clothing shouldn't restrict movement, so jeans and ankle length skirts will not work for dance class. Students may wear athletic clothes, leotards, tutus and tights, or t-shirts and shorts – whatever they prefer for ease of movement!

All dancers with hair below shoulder length should have their hair tied back.

## Performance/Competition Costumes

All competitive dancers performing at local festivals or shows and/or competing in CRN Feile (competitions) are required to purchase a Prairie North Dance costume through our custom online e-commerce store through Malley Sport. This costume will be used for all performances and competitions until the dancer either

grows out of it and needs to replace the costume with a bigger size, or the dancer is at a championship level in competitions and is at the stage where they will be purchasing their own custom designed solo dress (female)/ vest (male) that is unique to them.

As our school grows, we hope to be able to facilitate a sale every fall for dancers and their families to buy/sell/swap their dance costumes and shoes that no longer fit with other dance school families who are in the market for different sized costumes/shoes for their dancers.

Female competition dancers are required to purchase the Malley Sport Shortsleeve Dress (\$155). Male competition dancers are required to purchase the Malley Sport Rugby Polo (\$69) and provide their own black dress pants.

In addition, ALL CRN competition students who are competing at the Ullmhúchán level or higher will need to purchase the custom Prairie North Dance Malley Sport Tracksuit jacket and matching Leggings or Skinny Pants (\$199 for both) that must be worn at every competition or event where dancers are representing Prairie North Dance in a public setting.

While these purchases are a requirement for our competition dancers, any dancer, regardless of whether they will be performing or competing, can purchase custom Malley Sport wear or costumes from the online e-commerce store.

Our Prairie North Dance custom Malley Sport e-commerce store will be open for orders TWICE throughout the 2024-2025 dance season, so parents will have two different opportunities to purchase the required costumes/tracksuit should their dancer(s) decide to compete in the 2025 Spring Session competitions.

The first opening of the e-commerce store for orders is from October 21 – November 3rd, 2024. Orders will be distributed to dancers and families during the FIRST class of the Winter Session.

The second opening will be sometime in February for a

March 2025 delivery date (exact dates TBA by the end of December 2024).

Parents are notified through the DSP Parent Portal and by email when the store is open online, and provided with a link to the site. Parents can order and pay directly through the site. **ORDERS WILL BE SENT TO PRAIRIE NORTH DANCE IN BULK** for distribution during regular class time once the orders arrive. All orders made through the site are packed and labelled individually within the bulk shipment, helping to ensure everyone receives the correct order.

In addition to required costumes and tracksuits, several garments are available for purchase in the online store. Parents can choose to purchase additional Prairie North Dance garments when they are placing their compulsory orders. There is a lookbook of available garments in the DSP Parent Portal app.

The list of available garments for purchase includes:

Shortsleeve Dress (costume for girls), Regular fit hoodie, round neck tee, training shorts, Rugby polo (costume for boys), skinny pants (joggers), full zip tracksuit top, full length leggings, tank top, shorts, studio skort, gym sac bag, and Polar fleece jacket.

Size charts will be available in the DSP Parent Portal as well as on the site. Please note, the Malley Sportwear sizes are not standard so we advise measuring against the size guide and not go by your "standard size" or age. The garments are slim fitting, so if you are in between sizes, we recommend you size up.

More information about costumes and custom Prairie North Dance wear will be directly communicated to you by email and through the DSP Parent Portal by the beginning of October 2024, before the opening of the e-commerce site on October 21, 2024.

---

## Financial Policies

### Payments

Prairie North Dance accepts registration payments through the DSP Merchant Services Auto Pay, accessible through the DSP Parent Portal app. Accepted forms of payment through Auto Pay include debit and credit cards. Please speak to the Director prior to the first class of the session if you would like to pay in person for the session via cash, e-transfer, debit or credit.

There is a one-time \$20 registration fee per family, per year (the year includes the Fall, Winter, and Spring sessions) that will be added to your session payment at your initial registration. For example, if the registration fee is paid in the Fall session, it is not paid again when the student registers for the subsequent Winter or Spring session.

Families with more than one dancer registered in any given dance session will receive a 15% multi-student discount off tuition for that session.

Prairie North Dance offers a multi-class discount in all sessions of the dance season. If a dancer registers for 2 classes in a session, they will receive 10% off the total tuition amount. If a dancer registers for 3 or more classes in a session, they will receive 15% off the total tuition amount.

If the full session tuition payment is received before the start of the first class of the dance session (Fall, Winter, or Spring), the student will receive 10% off the total tuition amount for the session.

While sessions must be paid for in full in order to register for a class in a specific session (Fall, Winter or Spring), there is an option for a monthly payment plan through the DSP Merchant Services Auto Pay in the DSP Parent Portal. If you opt to pay monthly instead of in full, please contact us directly at [prairienorthdance@gmail.com](mailto:prairienorthdance@gmail.com).

### Payments con't

Please be aware, monthly payment plans are not eligible for the 10% full session payment discount (discount received when you pay for your dance session in full BEFORE the start of the first class of that dance session).

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

### Refunds

Refunds are issued up until the fourth class of the applicable session and covers the remaining classes the student has not yet participated in.

If a student decides the class is not for them by the fourth class and the parent 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. Refunds will be issued using the same payment method used for the initial session payment.

