



*MJP Irish Dance Association
Parent Handbook*



MJPIDA
(MJP Irish Dance
Association)
Parent Handbook

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1 MJP Irish Dance Association (MJPIDA)

MJPIDA is a registered non-profit society, separate from the dance school.

Membership is open to anyone over the age of majority (Age 18 in Alberta). Parents/guardians of dancers and/or dancers who have reached age of majority may apply for family membership.

All families and dancers are required to join and participate in the MJPIDA. The Parent Handbook outlines the benefits of membership and participation requirements of parents and dancers.

MJPIDA supports all MJP dancers and their families.

2 Benefits of MJPIDA

1. Support and help from a group of knowledgeable dancers and parents for the new dancer and new dancer parents. This becomes important as your dancer learns dance skills and participates in a dance competition or “Feis.”
2. Year-End Show is presented to parents, relatives, friends and others in June of each year. The show is sponsored and organized by MJPIDA members.
3. Opportunities for your dancer to perform in shows throughout Calgary and surrounding area.
4. School dance costume program.
5. Access to the Used Dance Items Exchange Program (includes but is not limited to, shoes, wigs, bloomers etc)
6. Directory of parents and dancers for contact information.
7. Bi-monthly meetings to discuss and vote on issues related to support of dancers and the operation of MJPIDA.
8. Subsidy of dance school rental space reducing tuition fees and workshop fees for each dance student.
9. Organized fundraising opportunities; monies are used to purchase costumes, subsidize costume rentals, workshop space rental and flooring; other uses for money may be discussed during MJPIDA meetings.
10. Organize volunteers to help at events throughout the year as required.

Receiving benefits above requires assistance and participation by all member parents and dancers.

MJPIDA needs your ongoing help throughout the year.

MJPIDA’s Executive Committee sets its membership fees annually. For the current year, membership fees are \$15.00 per family.



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MJPIDA membership cheques are submitted with dancer registration and dated September 1 of the current year.

3 Knowledge, Support and Assistance

Any new activity has its own unique language. Such things as “Dance Shoes,” “Costumes,” “Class Dress,” Solo Dress etc. are new terms to new dancers and new parents. Attending your first “Feis” or Competition can be confusing and intimidating.

Many MJP dancers and parents have been involved in the Irish Dance community for several years. All you have to do is ask about wigs, costumes, competition, etc.

4 Class Angels

Each dance class has an assigned Class Angel.

Class Angels collect forms, fundraising orders etc. at each class.

Class angels are also the liason between the parents and Joelle. If you have questions for Joelle please present them to the class angel, and if they are unable to answer your question, they will have Joelle contact you. Joelle has limited class time with the kids and is unable to answer questions during class.

5 Shows and Performances

MJP Irish Dancers are often asked to present a show for entertainment at a group function. Shows are performed throughout Calgary and area. Shows usually require parents for assistance during the show and dancer transportation to and from the show.

Shows may involve group (Figure) dances or individual solo dances.

Show dance steps are learned in class. Dancers who know show steps may be asked to perform at shows anytime.

Dancers may be asked to wear their MJP dance dress/costume or a solo dress (if they own one).

Shows are voluntary and depend on dancer and parent availability. They are an opportunity for dancers to perform in front of an audience. It is good Feis practice. They are also an opportunity for dancers and parents to earn volunteer points toward their annual requirement.



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5.1 Year-End Show

During June of each year, MJPIDA sponsors the Year-End show. The show performance is presented to an audience as a demonstration and production of Irish Dance.

- Cost of theatre is subsidized by MJPIDA. Subsidy reduces ticket cost for all audience members attending
- Participation at the Year-End Show is open to all MJP dancers of every age and dance level
- MJPIDA members set up dance venue, provide props, organize dancers backstage, look after front of house and tear down/clean up after the performance
- Volunteers are required for the year end show, without them the show can not go on

5.2 St. Patrick's Day Shows

Around St. Patrick's Day (March 17), there is a demand for Irish Dance performances and shows. MJP dancers always have the opportunity to perform at numerous shows within a week or two of St. Patrick's Day.

The St. Patrick's Day Shows are for second year dancers and up only.

6 Class Dress Program

Each dance school has their own unique "class dress" worn by their dancers. MJPIDA purchases and maintains Class dresses for use by dancers. These dresses are rented to parents at an annual cost that covers maintenance and cleaning of dresses for the year.

Maintenance, cleaning and inventory of dress sizes are part of the Class Dress program and included in the annual rental cost.

Please read the Costume Rental Agreement for full details of the program.

7 Used Dance Items Exchange Program

MJPIDA maintains an exchange list of used shoes available for purchase from other parents.

The Used Shoe Coordinator exchanges shoes on a consignment basis. Parents set the price of the item and will be paid once sold. Items to be sold can be dropped off to the Used Shoe Coordinator at classes, workshops or upon arrangement with the coordinator. (Please email using the email provided in the contact information.)



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8 Dance Competition (Feis)

Dance competitions, called a “Feis,” are held regularly in Alberta and throughout North America.

It is your choice as a parent and dancer if you want to compete in Irish Dance.

The teacher will advise your dancer when they are ready for competition at their first Feis.

Your dancer may compete in solo dances (can be up to 9 different dances), trophy dances (another solo dance) and figure (group dances) at a competition.

8.1 Feis Entry Fees

Feis entry fees are charged by the Feis Organizing Committee for every Feis. Entry fees are charged per solo dance, per trophy dance and per figure dance. Fees can be up to \$150 (approximately) per dancer per Feis. Fees are paid to the Feis organizer / sponsoring school to cover the various costs of holding a Feis, including location rent, musicians and adjudicators. Most people seen at a Feis are volunteers, however, there is a significant cost to put on a Feis, which is paid by Feis entry fees.

You may see a Registration fee charge as part of your Feis entry fee. A fee is charged to each family by the Feis for entrance by other family members. If you have siblings in a competition, this fee should only be charged once for each family.

Feis registration fees, once submitted to a Feis, are non-refundable.

8.2 Registering for a Feis

The following is the sequence of registration events prior to a Feis. Note that some Feiseanna have very tight registration deadlines. Communication is by email; ensure your email address is current and checked regularly.

1. Email will come out from Joelle asking if your dancer will be attending the feis. Response must be made by email within the required time.
2. Teacher sends your dancer’s Feis entry summary listing all solo, figure and trophy or special dances in their competition. They also send:
 - a. cutoff date for Feis registration
 - b. amount of fees owing
 - c. Feis Syllabus (Feis rules)
3. Review the Feis entry with your dancer. Your dancer knows their competition dances, competition level and age category. If there are corrections, advise the teacher of changes **before the cutoff date** so that the entry may be corrected.
4. **If you miss the registration cut-off date you can sign up for a late registration on the day of the feis.** You may still enter the Feis, however, you must submit your own registration including Feis



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fees owing (plus a late fee), dance levels and competitive age to the Feis committee before their cutoff date.

5. Refer to the first feis document for more information.

8.3 Other Feiseanna

Dancers may register and compete at any Feis with their dance teacher's permission. If a dancer is competing at a non-local Feis, distant from Calgary, you must complete your own registration and submit the Feis registration fee before the Feis registration deadline. If you are registering on your own, please ensure that you have registered for a feis that is part of the Irish Dancing Commission.

9 MJPIDA Parent and Student Directory

Information supplied on the membership application is published in the MJPIDA Parent/Student directory. The directory is for dancer and parent use to contact other dancers for information and questions, car-pooling to dance class, shows, workshops or other contact between parents and /or dancers.

Information supplied on this membership application is for the sole use of MJPIDA and is not shared, distributed or published outside MJPIDA. Due to the Canadian Privacy Laws, MJPIDA asks your permission to publish your phone number. If you do not wish to have your contact info included in the directory, you must opt out on the registration form. Email addresses are required, as this is our primary form of contact. If you choose not to allow your phone number for contact purposes, it is your responsibility to provide contact info when carpooling etc. is needed.

10 Communication and Information

All communication from MJPIDA is by email; please ensure you have supplied a current and valid email address on the registration form. If your contact information, address, cell, or home phone changes, please fill out a new registration form with updated information and give to your Class Angel at class.

Visit MJP Academy of Irish Dance website for current activities, schedule and other information.

<http://www.mjpacademy.com>

11 MJPIDA Meetings

Meetings are open for attendance by all member parents and dancers. Meetings are democratic and operate using Robert's Rules of Order.

Each member family has 1 vote for any motion requiring a vote.



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Meetings are chaired and operated by the MJPIDA Executive, consisting of:

- President
- Vice President
- Secretary
- Treasurer

An Agenda is circulated to all members before each meeting. Minutes of meeting are taken and circulated to members after the meeting. Past meeting minutes are available on request to any Executive Member. **We ask that you please bring a copy of the agenda and/or minutes with you in efforts to help reduce the printing costs to MJPIDA and to be more environmentally friendly. LIMITED quantities will be available at the meeting.**

MJP Irish Dance Association Calgary is an Incorporated Society. Bylaws are available by requesting a copy from any Executive Member.

Meetings are typically held bi monthly from September through June.

MJPIDA fiscal year runs from September 1 to August 31.

12 Volunteer Points

MJPIDA requires all families to participate in our volunteer program. We expect assistance from all members of MJPIDA with various activities throughout the year. To ensure participation by all members, a volunteer point system is in place.

Operation is simple,

1. We require a \$200 deposit cheque (post-dated for June next year) at the beginning of the dance year (September).
2. Earn the number of points required by the end of the dance year (June) and your cheque is returned.

Volunteer Points are very easy to earn. We prefer your assistance and participation, however there is an opt out option if you are unable to fulfill your volunteer requirements.

1. Volunteer Point count is set to 0 at the beginning of the dance year (September 1).
2. Points are earned per family. All dancers and parents in a family contribute towards the family point total.
3. Each dance show performance earns points. Several dance shows during a day (St. Patrick's Day for example) each earn points toward the family total.



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4. Volunteer points can be earned in a variety of ways (fundraising participation, dance shows, committee members, attend a meeting etc.)
5. If your dancer changes dance level at a competition during the year, the point requirement does not change from the level set in September at registration.

All families are required to earn points based on their dance and competition level. It gives parents the opportunity to become familiar with the dance school and MJPIDA.

12.1 Volunteer Deposit Cheques

At registration in September, a Volunteer deposit cheque for \$200 is collected from each member family. The cheque is postdated for June 15th of the following year. Deposit cheques will be returned to members who have met their full volunteer point requirement at the end of the dance year (June).

Families may opt out of the volunteer requirements by paying \$300 per membership year. If the “opt out” fee is paid, that dancer has full membership benefits of MJPIDA for that year.

12.2 Volunteer Points Annual Requirement

The following chart indicates required point levels, based on the highest competitive dance level of any dancer in your family:

First Year Dancers	10 Points
Non-Competitive	25 Points
Beginner/Advanced Beginner	50 Points
Novice/Prize Winner	75 Points
Preliminary/Open	100 Points

12.3 Earning Volunteer Points

Members may earn points in many different ways; the following chart outlines suggested activities and Volunteer Points earned. MJPIDA may revise this list from time to time.

Other activities may earn volunteer points on a case-by-case basis as determined by the Executive.

Families shall keep track of their own Volunteer points and submit at least 1 Volunteer Point Record sheet to the Volunteer Point Coordinator before the end of the dance year. Their deposit cheque is returned before the end of the fiscal year provided:

- Volunteer Points are earned and submitted
- Minimum Volunteer Point requirement for the family is met

The Volunteer Point Record sheet is available on the MJP Academy website



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Serving as a member of the MJPIDA executive for a year	75 Points
Costume Coordinator	75 Points
Serving as a committee coordinator for a year (volunteer, fundraising, ceili, year end show, communications officer, newsletter etc.)	50 Points
Volunteering on a committee for a year	25 Points
Volunteering and assisting at a Feis	15 Points
Serving as Class Angel for the year	15 Points
Volunteer and assist at Year-End Performance, backstage, lighting, lining up dancers, etc.	15 Points
Assist with flooring installation and removal at a show (Points are earned for each show performance)	10 Points
Assist as a committee member with a fundraising campaign	10 Points
Assist at a Dance Show, tying shoes, operating music, lining up dancers, etc.	10 Points
Dancer Performing at Year-End Show or dance out (points are earned for each show performance)	5 Points
Participating in a fundraising event	5 Points
Attend an MJPIDA meeting	5 Points
Various incentives or informal volunteer opportunities throughout the year discussed and assigned by MJPIDA	TBA

13 Volunteer Position Job Descriptions

13.1 Volunteer Points Coordinator

The Volunteer Points Coordinator maintains a current master record of each member family's yearly Volunteer Point expectation and collects submitted Volunteer Point Record sheets.

Volunteer Point Record sheets shall be sent to the Volunteer Coordinator generally 2 or 3 times each year to maintain an ongoing Volunteer Point record. The Volunteer Point Coordinator assists with point totals at the end of each year, provided points have been submitted and recorded throughout the dance year.

The Volunteer Points Coordinator will provide periodic updates of each families Volunteer Point record, provided the submitted Volunteer Points sheet was submitted to and received by the Volunteer Points Coordinator.

13.2 Class Angels

Class Angels must be present to assist with form distribution, event communication, fundraising etc.

Class angels need to be present during their class time for the month of September and then for the first



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15 minutes of class time on the first class of each month thereafter, and during fundraising or event campaigns.

If you are unable to attend a required class, please arrange to have another class angel cover your required time.

Class Angels are the face of the dance school. We ask that you please be polite, collect any questions for Joelle, make sure people know who you are (use the signage), and PLEASE DO NOT leave the binder unattended at any time. If you need to leave before the next Angel arrives, please slip the binder into the classroom for safe keeping.

13.3 Fundraising Coordinator

The Fundraising Coordinator is responsible for:

1. Helping with organized fundraising events
2. Communicate with fundraising companies
3. Organize pick-up dates around workshop dates
4. Organize volunteers for fundraising
5. Organize communication to go out for circulation
6. Collect \$ and provide to the treasurer
7. Provide a fundraising de-brief at parent meetings

Any new fundraising ideas must be passed through the Executive. We have chosen high grossing events to help limit how many events we need to hold through the year.

13.4 Year End Show Coordinator

The Year End Show Coordinator can be done as a single person position or is best shared between 2 people.

1. Organize the printing and selling of tickets
2. Organize volunteers for front and back of house
3. Arrange for printing and selling of tickets
4. Coordinate with communications officer about ticket seating
5. Arrange for videographer and follow up with orders
6. Purchase items for concession, table clothes and other odds and ends
7. Assist with venue arrangements as needed

13.5 Ceili Coordinator

The Ceili Coordinator is responsible for:

1. Coordinating a venue



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2. Organizing the potluck
3. Coordinating volunteers
4. Organizing volunteer job list
5. Purchase any necessary items for the event
6. Coordinate decorations etc.
7. Print and sell tickets

13.6 Volunteer Points Coordinator

The volunteer coordinator is responsible for:

1. Collecting and recording family volunteer points on the membership spreadsheet
2. Communicate with families about volunteer opportunities as needed
3. Tally the points to determine if families meet their points requirement
4. Responsible for keeping the deposit cheques, and returning at the end of the year

13.7 Costume Coordinator

1. Manage the MJPIDA Rental Costume Inventory (kept at the rented storage locker space)
 - Tiny Toes skirts and shawls
 - Beginner Competitive skirts and shawls
 - Team Competitive skirts, pinnies, and shawls
 - Queen of Hearts Skirts, jackets and shawls
 - Grey Dragon school dresses
 - Updating the Costume Inventory spreadsheet
 - Providing Joelle with the information on what the dancers currently have or is being ordered
 - This could grow to include Vest, Ties, and Class Dresses or costume items
 - Assist with the handout, or provide to the Class Angel
 - Responsible for having all rented costume pieces appropriately cleaned after the Year End Show
2. Manage the Costume Rental contracts for all costume pieces
3. Manage the mjpdress@hotmail.com email account
4. Be available for costume fitting sessions, often one in September and one in January
 - measuring
 - handing out and collection of contracts
 - handing out of costumes
 - collecting rental payments and yearly deposit
 - advising dancers of seamstresses that can be used for needed alterations
5. Be available for Year End show to collect all costumes and return deposit cheques. Assess any damage to costumes and retain deposit funds accordingly.
6. Communications with Joelle:
 - Which costumes the dancers require when uncertain or new to the school



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- Copying Joelle on emails to the seamstress(es)
 - To be notified when a dancer will be moving up into the next costume level
7. Communications with the Treasurer:
- Treasurer’s questions surrounding rentals, deposits, and/or contracts
 - Additional amount owing for a dancer if their costumes is upgraded
 - Monies and/or deposit requiring to be returned (ie: dancer dropped out/Year End Show)
 - Copying the Treasurer on emails to the seamstress(es)
 - Treasurer collects and holds the deposit cheques and contracts
8. Communications with the Parents
9. Ability to carry-out minor sewing/seamstress work is desirable, but not essential
- Sewing on snaps
 - Labelling
 - Repairing gems
 - Ongoing maintenance of costumes
 - Minor alterations

14 MJPIDA Contact List

14.1 Executive

Position	Contact	Contact email
President	Sarah Johnston	leafsfamily@gmail.com
Vice President	Sue Kryway	skryway@me.com
Treasurer	Jennifer Warren	mjptreasurer@hotmail.com
Secretary	Dawn Coulter	dmcoulter@telus.net

14.2 Other Contacts

Position	Contact	Contact email
Teacher	Joelle Sheppard, T.C.R.G.	mjpacademy@hotmail.com
MJPIDA Communication	Deb Braden	mjpida@hotmail.com
Costume Coordinator	Leta Thiessen	mjpdress@hotmail.com
Used Dance Item Exchange	Karen Russell	mjpshoes@hotmail.com
Volunteer Points Coordinator	Julia Day	mjpvolunteers@hotmail.com
Fundraising Coordinator	Donna Schmidt	donnafalls@gmail.com