



2016-2017 Student Handbook

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TEELIN COMMUNICATION OVERVIEW

The primary purpose of this **2016-2017 Student Handbook** is to summarize the information that pertains to current students of the Teelin School of Irish Dance. The Teelin website is the source of these summaries.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If information in this handbook conflicts with information that has been posted on the Teelin website, please defer to the website, which is updated frequently.

Some pages within the "student info" section of the website are password-protected. The login for these pages will be sent by email in mid-September to enrolled students, and then sent again if the login is changed. Please do not share the login publicly (for example, on Facebook or a message board). If you forget the login, send an email to **info@teelin.com**.

Emails with the subject line "Teelin – Updates & Reminders" will be sent throughout the year with important information for Teelin students. A copy of each of these emails will be made available online within a password-protected section of the website - <http://teelin.com/TSID/logon/>

Please be sure to keep us informed of any changes in your email address. To make changes in your contact information, or to view current class registrations or account balance, use the "account access" link – <https://www.thestudiodirector.com/teelin/portal.jsp?page=Login>

WHO'S WHO IN TEELIN LEADERSHIP

Teelin is committed to providing top quality dance instruction, promoting Irish culture through traditional step dance, exploring innovative choreography, and increasing performance opportunities for Irish dancers. This is accomplished through the two branches of Teelin: the SCHOOL OF IRISH DANCE, and the PERFORMANCE COMPANY.

Owner/Director **Maureen Berry, TCRG**, is passionate about Irish dance, Irish music, and dance performances. Both of Maureen's sisters, Kathleen and Eileen, are also actively involved with Teelin. **Kathleen Young, TCRG**, is a Co-Owner, serves as Teelin Business Manager, and is also a Certified Instructor for Teelin School. **Eileen Narvell** is an Assistant Instructor for Teelin School and serves as Coordinator of Volunteers for events.

Joined by certified instructors **Whitney Hanson, TCRG, Shawn Stratmann, TMRF, and Gayle Shields, TMRF**, and a team of highly qualified assistant instructors, Teelin has forged a strong and dedicated teaching staff. Several enthusiastic parents and adult dancers also assist with various administrative responsibilities, thereby enhancing the "Teelin Family" atmosphere enjoyed by all Teelin dancers and their families.

2016-2017 TEELIN ADMINISTRATION

Director of Teelin School & Performance Company – Maureen Berry – maureen@teelin.com

Teelin Business Manager – Kathleen Young – kathleen@teelin.com

Communications Manager – Meg Ortel – meg@teelin.com or webmaster@teelin.com

Coordinator of Volunteers – Eileen Narvell – eileen@teelin.com

Administrative Assistant – Colleen Woodcock – colleen@teelin.com

2016-2017 TEACHING STAFF

Maureen Berry, TCRG (School Director / Owner) – maureen@teelin.com

Kathleen Young, TCRG (Co-Owner of School) – kathleen@teelin.com

Whitney Hanson, TCRG – whitney@teelin.com

Shawn Stratmann, TMRF – shawn@teelin.com

Gayle Shields, TMRF, Workshop Instructor – gayle@teelin.com

Emily Ferry, Assistant Instructor – emily@teelin.com

Saoirse DeBoy, Assistant Instructor – saoirse@teelin.com

Abby Lyons, Assistant Instructor

Caitlin Phillips, Assistant Instructor

Meg Ortel, Assistant Instructor in the Figure Teams Program - meg@teelin.com

Physical Therapy Consultant for Champ Program – Mary Laudeman – mary@teelin.com

2016-2017 TEELIN SCHOOL ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT POSITIONS

Teelin Gear / Merchandise Coordinator – Cyndi O’Brien – gear@teelin.com

Costume Coordinator – Mary Kate King – costumes@teelin.com

Performance Prop Manager – Carmina Adams – carmina@teelin.com

Studio Keycard Coordinator – Jackie Crispell

Vending Machine Restocking – Robin Miskelly

Studio Maintenance Assistant – Dave Corrigan

2016-2017 TEELIN IRISH DANCE COMPANY LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Director – Maureen Berry – maureen@teelin.com

Rehearsal Assistant – Abby Lyons

Company Manager – Angela Galoppo – angela@teelin.com

Booking Manager – Colleen Woodcock – performances@teelin.com

Troupe Coordinator – Krista Ennis – krista@teelin.com

Junior Troupe Coordinator – Catherine Pelura – dude@teelin.com

Communications / Website – Meg Ortel – meg@teelin.com or webmaster@teelin.com

Company Costumes Coordinator – Mary Kate King – costumes@teelin.com

Company Costumes Alterations Assistant – Beth Koolbeck

PARENT PRIMER ON IRISH DANCE

Irish step dancing is a niche activity. When *Riverdance* hit the world stage in 1995, it brought to public attention an aspect of Irish culture that previously had been largely confined to St. Patrick's Day celebrations, cultural events and dance competitions. Since then, the popularity of Irish dance has skyrocketed. For those who are new to the world of Irish Dance, this brief introduction may help.

In Irish dancing, a **step** is a sequence of foot movements, leg movements and leaps, choreographed to fit a certain musical cadence through 8 bars of music for the "**right foot**" and is repeated through 8 more bars of music for the "**left foot**" of the step.

Steps are choreographed for the various Irish music tempos: **reel**, **light jig**, **slip jig**, **treble jig** and **hornpipe**. There are many steps of each dance, varying in level of difficulty. Steps are created by the instructors of an Irish dance school, and are unique to that particular school (with the exception of the traditional set dances and the treble reel finishing step). For example...

For this dance :	Here is an example of 2 steps (unique to Teelin School):
Reels (soft shoe dance)	"Kyla's Reel" & "Rainbow Reel"
Light Jigs (soft shoe dance)	"Dylan's Jig" & "David's Jig"
Slip Jigs (soft shoe dance)	"Molly's" & "Sliding"
Treble Jigs (hard shoe dance)	"Stamp Down" & "4 Batters" (for fast speed music) "Steppy's" & "Toe Treble" (for slow speed music)
Hornpipes (hard shoe dance)	"Hornpipe 1" & "Hornpipe 2" (for fast speed music) "Back Front" & "Clicky's" (for slow speed music)

There are two kinds of dance shoes for Irish step dancing – **soft shoes** and **hard shoes**. (Learn more about shoes on this page - <http://teelin.com/TSID/teelin-gear/dance-shoes/>.) **Reels**, **light jigs** and **slip jigs** are performed in soft shoe. **Treble jigs** and **hornpipes** are the first hard shoe dances taught, first at traditional (fast) speed and later at a slower speed, which allows for more complicated foot-work. Experienced dancers will also learn **treble reels** and **set dances**, both performed in hard shoes.

Dancers at Teelin begin by learning **solo dance** steps, which are dances that can be performed independently. **Figure dances** are performed in teams comprised of a set number of dancers, and are usually named by the number of dancers in the group (i.e. 4-Hand Team).

An Irish dancer's **basic skills** include (but are not limited to):

Good **timing** (meaning the dance movements match the rhythm of the music).

Pointed toes with arched feet.

Legs **crossed** (so that it looks like one knee is hiding behind the other) and legs **turned out** (so that when the legs are crossed, the inside of the ankle bone is facing forward, toes facing out).

Upright upper body carriage with **arms straight** at the dancer's sides, chin level, eyes forward, head evenly balanced atop relaxed neck, with shoulders open (down and back).

Graceful and energetic movement, including **high elevation on the toes** and snappy legs that **kick the dancer's bum** when feet move from behind to in front or vice versa.

Well-executed jumps that incorporate all of the above principles, and an overall sense of "**lift**" throughout a dance.

Confident and pleasant affect. (Dance is a performance art... please SMILE!)

Some Irish dance enthusiasts choose to dance in competition, which can be a great way to stay motivated while striving to master steps. A **feis** (pronounced FESH) is a sanctioned Irish dance competition offering dance events for multiple skill levels, each further divided by age groups. **Oireachtas** (pronounced O-ROCK-TUS) is a regional championship competition, where solo championship events are divided by age group only, and many figure team championship events are also offered. Find additional information about competitions later in this handbook, and much more within the feis info section of the website - <http://teelin.com/TSID/about-competitions/>.

Whether a dancer chooses to compete, perform, or dance recreationally, we're very glad that you've chosen to be a part of Teelin! Welcome to the FUN of Irish dance!

GENERAL OVERVIEW OF LESSON PROGRAM

Most students enter the Teelin School lesson program either through the Summer Camp program, or by enrolling in an entry-level class at the beginning of the school year. Students with previous Irish dance experience may interview for possible transfer into our program.

Class levels are defined by a dancer's ability to perform the requisite skills appropriate to that level, NOT by a dancer's number of years of experience. In May of each year, students are given a recommended class placement for the following year. Teelin teachers give a lot of thought to these recommendations. Their goal is to place each student in a class that offers sufficient training for a solid foundation in Irish dance.

Students may sometimes be asked to repeat a level in order to better support their dance training. Classes progress at slightly different paces each year, and new steps are added to the lesson program on a regular basis. Therefore, even if a dancer is repeating a level, the material taught in class will not necessarily be the same.

(Note: Conferences with teachers are very difficult to do "on the fly" due to the fact that Teelin studio space is limited and classes are scheduled back-to-back. To arrange a meeting with an instructor, please either call or email the teacher to establish a convenient day and time.)

For students who compete, class placement is determined by a dancer's current appropriate competition level. Teelin students may transfer into competition level classes midyear, if deemed appropriate by the teacher.

This cannot be stressed enough... **PLEASE read the class descriptions!** Prerequisites and expectations are listed in the description of each class – <http://teelin.com/TSID/dance-classes/class-descriptions/>

The pace of each student's progress through the lessons program varies. Some students advance more quickly than others. Usually this is because of a combination of diligent attendance and attention in class; effective independent practice outside of class; participation in summer camps; and participation in as many as possible of the extra classes provided throughout the year.

Students in Teelin Summer Camps learn a LOT of Irish dance in a short period of time. Due to this intensity, students who participate in a summer camp are often able to advance more quickly.

"Extra Classes" are supplemental opportunities for Teelin students. More information may be found on this page – <http://teelin.com/TSID/dance-classes/extra-classes/>

Independent practice is recommended for every student who is interested in competing, and is required of all advanced level students. Some tips for effective independent practice are included in another section of this handbook. Step notation (the written order of movements for a step) is offered on this password-protected page – <http://teelin.com/TSID/logon/step-notation/>

Teelin has published a DVD entitled "Practice Makes Perfect" which includes steps and drills unique to Teelin School of Irish Dance. This DVD is a very valuable resource for students working to develop effective independent practices. A new DVD was just made in summer 2014. Information about purchasing a copy of this DVD is available on the Teelin Gear page of the website – <http://teelin.com/TSID/teelin-gear/>

Private lessons are a supplemental opportunity for a student to receive more individualized instruction and feedback from a teacher. Private lessons are meant to support (not replace) a dancer's class instruction and independent practice. Because time and studio space are limited, **priority is given to those dancers who practice independently and will therefore be able to maximize the productivity of their private lesson time.**

All private lessons must first be requested through the online Private Lesson Request form, per the guidelines listed on the Extra Classes page (<http://teelin.com/TSID/dance-classes/extra-classes/>). Maureen must approve any private lessons or coaching sessions given by a Teelin Student Assistant prior to scheduling. Review of lesson plan prior to and after the lesson are also required.

The following chart offers a broad overview of the lesson program at Teelin School for 2016-2017:
(Class descriptions and offerings may change from year to year.)

Class Name & Level:		Skill Progression:		
Beginner		For students new to Irish dance, or students who are repeating a Beginner class to build a better foundation for their training.	Tiny Toes (short session, pre-Beginner level, specifically for dancers age 4 or 5 - entering K the next school year)	
Beginner II		Students have participated in at least one Beginner level class, and are working to master the basic technique, rhythm, and timing of Beginner level reels and light jigs.	Adult Beginner	
Level 1		Students have demonstrated clear understanding and execution of hop-1-2-3's, 7's & 3's, and the basic rhythm & timing of beginner level reels and light jigs, and have been introduced to slip jigs. Irish soft shoes are necessary for this class. Students will learn additional reels, light jigs and slip jigs while focusing on the techniques of crossing, turnout, toes and posture/arms. When the students master two slip jig steps, along with mastery of their reels and light jigs, then they will begin learning basic hard shoe skills and the traditional speed (fast tempo) treble jigs and hornpipes. Hard shoes may be necessary midyear for some students, but not all students. (Check with teacher before purchasing hard shoes.)		
Performance Class (for non-Company dancers only)	Levels 2 & 3	Students have demonstrated clear understanding and execution of the Level 1 techniques and the rhythm & timing of Level 1 reels, light jigs, slip jigs, and have mastered at least one traditional speed treble jig (hard shoe) dance. Irish soft shoes and hard shoes are necessary for this class. Students will learn intermediate level soft shoe and hard shoe dances.	Adult Experienced	Various Skills & Drills Classes (designated by skill level)
	Adv Beg Competition Class	Students are actively competing (in both soft shoes and hard shoes) at either the Advanced Beginner Grade, or Novice Grade, or Prizewinner Grade. Irish soft shoes and hard shoes are both necessary for these classes. Students will focus on advancing their skills and techniques, such as clicks, butterflies, rocks, slow drums, and when ready, working to perfect the advanced tempo hard shoe dances (also called slow tempo, which allows for more complicated footwork).		
N/PW 2-day course	N/PW 1-Day Class	Note: if a Prizewinner dancer has placed out of one shoe (i.e. – won firsts in both PW soft shoe dances, or won firsts in both PW hard shoe dances), then that dancer should discuss a transition plan with Maureen to see if they are eligible to join the Champion 1-Day Class. For example, if a dancer is competing in Prizewinner Grade and has earned a PW 1st place in both hard shoe dances (treble jig and hornpipe), then that dancer may be eligible to enroll in the N/PW Soft Shoe Class, AND also in the Champ 1-Day Class, if s/he knows at least two of their three champ steps for each dance for their age group.		
	Champ 1-Day Class	Students in the Champ Program are actively competing in Preliminary Champion or Open Champion competitions. The Mon/Thr Champ Classes are a 2-day/week course with soft shoe on one day, hard shoe on the other, totaling 3 hours of weekly instruction. Practice outside of class is mandatory, and a high overall fitness level is required of each dancer.		
	Prelim Champ M/Th Classes			
	Open Champ M/Th Classes			
			Champ Power Hours	

Incident Weather/Emergencies: If the weather is questionable, please check the school website, check your email, and/or call 443-629-7808 to hear the school message. We will not always follow the public school closings.

Absence: If you miss a class, you may attend another class at the same level (or a level below), with advanced permission, and preferably within 2 weeks of your missed class. Please send an email to kathleen@teelin.com to schedule a make-up class.

Other "General Information and Policies" for Teelin School of Irish Dance are listed on the registration form. Consent to these policies is required at the time of registration.

COMMUNICATION REMINDERS

If a student will be absent from class, an email sent to info@teelin.com is appreciated, but not required, **unless** the student is on a figure team, or in the champ program, or in company.

However, if a student misses a class and would like to attend a make-up opportunity in another class, please send an email to registration@teelin.com stating the date of the class that was missed, and the requested class the student would like to attend as a make-up. Make-up opportunities are limited, in order to keep our class sizes manageable. An email reply will be sent confirming your enrollment for a particular make-up date.

Additionally, there are three particular programs within Teelin that involve special communication procedures:

- Oireachtas Figure Teams
- Teelin Champion Program
- Teelin Irish Dance Company

Specific communication protocols have been established in order to increase the efficiency of each of these programs. Maureen relies on these protocols, and the administrators within each program, to remain aware of each dancer's status (i.e. - if a dancer is injured, or is ill and will miss class, etc).

IMPORTANT: Please use email, even if you also have a phone or text conversation with Maureen about a situation. Email is much more efficient for keeping track of each dancer's status.

If a dancer...	Send an email to maureen@teelin.com AND to		
	Figure Teams	Champ Program	Company
...has a known scheduling conflict and will be absent, send asap	info@teelin.com	champteam@teelin.com	angela@teelin.com
...is sick, send email AND text if within 8 hours - 443-629-7808	info@teelin.com	champteam@teelin.com	angela@teelin.com
...is injured, send email with description of injury, the dancer's restrictions due to this injury, their treatment plan and timeline	info@teelin.com	champteam@teelin.com	angela@teelin.com

Any questions about tuition (for any program) should be emailed to kathleen@teelin.com.

Online resources are available for each program. If you have forgotten the username and password for any of these sites and would like it resent, please send an email to info@teelin.com.

Oireachtas Figure Teams (use the same login as the Teelin School password-protected pages)

<http://teelin.com/TSID/logon/oireachtas-majors/>

*Note: in the square at the bottom of each event description, there is a link to copies of all emails sent about this event. These emails are further password protected per event, and the password is noted in that square.

Teelin Champion Program (use the champ login)

<http://teelin.com/TSID/champ/wp/>

Teelin Irish Dance Company (use the company login)

<http://teelin.com/TIDC/logoncompany/wp/>

COMPETITION INFORMATION

Some students enjoy the opportunity to compete, and some students prefer to focus their efforts on other aspects of Irish dance. Choosing to compete is a personal decision; Teelin supports and respects each dancer's various interests.

All Teelin students who compete are asked to read the Teelin Guidelines for participating in Irish dance competitions – <http://www.teelin.com/pdf/Feis Rules.pdf>

For Teelin families who are new to Irish dance.... The Irish word *feis* (pronounced “FESH”) means festival, but is more commonly used to describe a sanctioned Irish dance competition. Dancers who compete must be students in good standing of a TCRG (certified instructor). With instructor's consent, these students are eligible to compete in *feiseanna* (plural of *feis*, pronounced “FESH-nah”).

Please review the following resources on the Teelin website (underlined words are an active link), each of which is available from <http://teelin.com/TSID/about-competitions/>

[Feiseanna 101](#) - an article written to introduce Teelin families to Irish dance competitions

[Attending Your First Feis](#) - a photo story to help prepare for the big day

[Tips for Competitors](#)

[Irish Dance Competition Levels: Information for Moving through the Ranks](#)

The following chart offers a visual summary of the information in the “Irish Dance Competition Levels” article referenced above:

Typical Solo Dance Competition Events at Feiseanna in North America			
GRADE LEVEL COMPETITIONS	Beginner Grade	Dancer has not yet taken a full year of Irish dance lessons, and must move to Advanced Beginner events as of the next year. Note: Dancers who have never competed but have taken more than one year of Irish dance lessons are not eligible for Beginner Grade.	<p>Solo dance competitors in the Grade levels will perform 2 steps of each event entered.</p> <p>Each dance is a separate event:</p> <p>reel (soft shoes)</p> <p>light jig (soft shoes; this dance is not typically offered above Novice Grade)</p> <p>slip jig (soft shoes)</p> <p>treble jig (hard shoes)</p> <p>hornpipe (hard shoes)</p> <p>(Note: A hop jig event, also called single jig, may be offered, but Teelin School does not teach steps for this dance, so Teelin students should never enter those events.)</p> <p>Some feiseanna offer other special competitions such as treble reel or set dance, however, those events do not count toward competition level progression.</p> <p>Grade level competitions require one adjudicator per event. Prizes are awarded in proportion to the number of entries and to the degree of proficiency shown.</p> <p>A competition group must have at least five competitors in order for a dancer's placement to count toward eligibility for advancement.</p>
	Advanced Beginner Grade	Dancer does not qualify as a Beginner, or any subsequent levels. A Teelin student is expected to remain in Advanced Beginner category for as long as he/she is eligible unless otherwise told by his/her teacher. An Advanced Beginner who wins 1st, 2nd or 3rd place will advance to the Novice category in that particular dance the next calendar year (January).	
	Novice Grade	Dancer has moved beyond the Beginner skills and is ready to perform more difficult steps in competition. For hard shoe dances (treble jig and hornpipe), Novice competitors are offered a choice of music tempo: “slow”, also known as Oireachtas speed, or “fast”, also known as traditional speed. (Beginner and Advanced Beginner hard shoe tempo is always traditional speed.) A Novice who wins a first place (or second place if more than 20 dancers in group, as of Jan 2013) will advance to the Prizewinner category in that particular dance.	
	Prizewinner Grade	Dancer does not qualify as a Beginner, Advanced Beginner or as a Novice. A dancer remains at Prizewinner Grade until qualified for Preliminary Championship according to official NAFC rules and his/her dance teacher's guidelines.	
	*Adult Category	Adult category events follow the descriptions above, except that an Adult Beginner is a competitor who never took Irish dancing lessons as a juvenile and is over 18 years of age. Competitors may not enter Adult category events if they have competed in Grade or Championship events within the previous five years.	
CHAMPIONSHIPS	Preliminary Champion	In accordance with NAFC rules, this event is open to a competitor who has placed 1st in both a soft shoe and hard shoe competition at the Prizewinner level. A Teelin student is expected to place 1st in EACH Prizewinner dance (Reel, Slip Jig, Treble Jig and Hornpipe) before being eligible for prelim. Dancer must win two firsts in Preliminary Championship (with five or more competitors) to be eligible to compete in Open Championship.	<p>Championship competitors will perform a minimum of two rounds of competition: one soft shoe round and one hard shoe round. Instead of the 2 steps performed for each dance at Grade levels, Championship competitors will perform either 3 reel steps or 2.5 slip jig steps for the soft shoe round (boys/men must perform reel for this round); and either 3 treble jig steps or 2.5 hornpipe steps, and/or a set dance for the hard shoe round.</p> <p>Championship events require at least three adjudicators. Scoring is based on the Irish Point System. Prizes are awarded in proportion to the number of entries and to the degree of proficiency shown.</p>
	Open Champion	In accordance with NAFC rules, a dancer must compete in Preliminary Championship in order to qualify for Open Championship, and must qualify via the method currently in place (i.e. two 1st place wins). Open Champions must perform a set dance; if the event requires three rounds then they will also perform either treble jig or hornpipe.	

Competition **age groups** are determined by the birth year of a dancer, regardless of the month the dancer was born. Irish dance competitions use the calendar year (Jan-Dec), not the school year. Therefore, the age a dancer was on January 1 of this year is her/his competition age for all of this year. The following chart is a helpful resource to decipher Irish dance competition age groups:

If a dancer was born in:	For 2016, the dancer's competition age group is:	For 2017, the dancer's competition age group is:
2011	"age 4" on Jan 1, age group is Under 5 (U5)	"age 5" on Jan 1, age group is Under 6 (U6)
2010	"age 5" on Jan 1, age group is Under 6 (U6)	"age 6" on Jan 1, age group is Under 7 (U7)
2009	"age 6" on Jan 1, age group is Under 7 (U7)	"age 7" on Jan 1, age group is Under 8 (U8)
2008	"age 7" on Jan 1, age group is Under 8 (U8)	"age 8" on Jan 1, age group is Under 9 (U9)
2007	"age 8" on Jan 1, age group is Under 9 (U9)	"age 9" on Jan 1, age group is Under 10 (U10)
2006	"age 9" on Jan 1, age group is Under 10 (U10)	"age 10" on Jan 1, age group is Under 11 (U11)
2005	"age 10" on Jan 1, age group is Under 11 (U11)	"age 11" on Jan 1, age group is Under 12 (U12)
2004	"age 11" on Jan 1, age group is Under 12 (U12)	"age 12" on Jan 1, age group is Under 13 (U13)
2003	"age 12" on Jan 1, age group is Under 13 (U13)	"age 13" on Jan 1, age group is Under 14 (U14)
2002	"age 13" on Jan 1, age group is Under 14 (U14)	"age 14" on Jan 1, age group is Under 15 (U15)
2001	"age 14" on Jan 1, age group is Under 15 (U15)	"age 15" on Jan 1, age group is Under 16 (U16)
2000	"age 15" on Jan 1, age group is Under 16 (U16)	"age 16" on Jan 1, age group is Under 17 (U17)
1999	"age 16" on Jan 1, age group is Under 17 (U17)	"age 17" on Jan 1, age group is Under 18 (U18)
1998	"age 17" on Jan 1, age group is Under 18 (U18)	"age 18" on Jan 1, age group is Under 19 (U19)
1997	"age 18" on Jan 1, age group is Under 19 (U19)	"age 19" on Jan 1, age group is Under 20 (U20)
1996	"age 19" on Jan 1, age group is Under 20 (U20)	age 20 or older on Jan 1, age group is 20 & Over (20&O)
1995	age 20 or older on Jan 1, age group is 20 & Over (20&O)	age 20 or older on Jan 1, age group is 20 & Over (20&O)

Judging is somewhat subjective, and competition results will vary. Remember that there are two or three dancers competing onstage simultaneously. Part of a judge's subjectivity is because he/she must split their attention between all dancers AND try to write comments. Dancers (and their parents!) are advised to keep their competitive drive in check. Please note that ANY derogatory comment about judges or other dancers is embarrassing to the school and completely unacceptable.

Participating in Irish dance competitions offers many benefits, and some benefits are more tangible than others. Keep it fun. Even the most skilled dancer is not going to compete well if he or she is not having fun. **The life skills of good sportsmanship, resiliency and a positive attitude are infinitely more important than any medal or trophy.**

Dancers are asked to report all competition results by email to **competitionstuff@teelin.com**. An easy way to do this is simply to forward the emailed results received from a feis. Meg Ortel answers the competitionstuff emails and marks a spreadsheet noting the competitions a dancer has entered, and any eligibility for advancement based on placement results. The spreadsheet is an important tool for Maureen to track each dancer's progression through competitions, and also for Teelin administration to be aware of approximately how many students are competing at each level so that Teelin class sizes can be predicted. Please remember to send results after every feis!

Dancers need to check with Maureen before advancing to the next competition level. (Note: If a dancer wins first in a Novice event, or 2nd place in a Novice event with over 20 dancers, be sure to check with Maureen right away as they typically move that dancer up to Prizewinner at the very next feis.)

Preliminary Champion and Open Champion dancers are asked make a copy of their score sheets and bring to class to put in the folder for the champ instructional team to review.

For information about competition costumes, please refer to the following pages on the website –

Competition Costumes – <http://teelin.com/TSID/about-competitions/competition-costumes/>

Teelin School Dress – <http://teelin.com/TSID/teelin-gear/school-dress/>

Alternate School Dress - <http://teelin.com/TSID/teelin-gear/alternate-school-dress/>

NOTE REGARDING GRADUATING STUDENTS

There are a few important things for students to know if they would like to continue their Irish dance training on a "part time" basis, especially if they are moving away for college.

According to CLRG (the Irish dancing commission) rules, any student who enters a sanctioned competition (i.e. - a feis) must be a student in good standing with a registered Irish dance school. Ultimately, every dancer in competition is a representative of their dance school. Dancers may only compete under the Teelin name with Maureen's knowledge and permission.

If a Teelin college student would like to compete, but will be too far from Teelin to take classes on a regular basis during the school year, then they will need to take classes at Teelin when home on breaks, summer time, etc. They can sign up for studio use when they are home, and do drop-in classes (send an email to registration@teelin.com to drop in on classes).

If a college student will be practicing with a different Irish dance school near their college, but would like to remain a Teelin student instead of transferring to that school, then please discuss this with Maureen. It is certainly possible to do, but it is important to be aware that CLRG has strict rules related to a dancer's association with teachers and judges from different schools, and will require that Maureen communicate directly with the owner/director of that Irish dance school. These situations can be explained in more detail as needed.

We wish our dancers all the best in the continued pursuits of their passion for Irish dance!

TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE INDEPENDENT PRACTICE

Independent practice is a chance to take what you've learned in class, and to figure it out. It feels different to dance on your own than it does in class. This is an opportunity to apply the lessons you've learned in class, rather than just following instructions with a group.

Teelin recommends that all dancers, regardless of current level, work to establish effective independent practice habits. **For dancers who aim to dance at a championship level, effective independent practice outside of class is mandatory.**

As a general rule of thumb, there are four parts to a good independent practice:

1. Warm up and stretch well.
2. Choose a set of skills to focus on for this practice session and DRILL the details by focusing on doing the skills correctly, not by doing unfocused repetitions.
3. Apply the drills to the specific sequences in your steps.
4. Cool down and stretch well.

This basic structure allows for a huge range of options. Keep a personal "Practice Journal" so that you can log your sessions and your progress. Bring your journal to class, and have a page for recording comments that you receive from teachers about skills that need some extra work. These notes will help guide your subsequent independent practices.

A common question about independent practice is "How much?" Quality of practice is as important as quantity of practice. There is certainly not a set formula for quantity, but in general, champion dancers should be practicing a **minimum** of 1-2 hours per day, 4-5 days per week in order to **maintain** skills. Champions working to advance their skills, and those training for an upcoming competition will practice more than that independently, in addition to classes or private lessons.

Learning how to have a focused and productive independent practice is an important skill to develop. Younger dancers may need some guidance from their parents, but should be encouraged to work towards being able to lead their own practices. If more direction is needed, consider scheduling a private lesson to ask your teacher for specific suggestions to apply during independent

practices. Attend as many Extra Classes as possible for feedback on your progress, and consider videotaping your practices to critique yourself and to get feedback from your teachers.

Studio time is available for independent practice with a studio usage fee of \$50 per 6-months. More information is available here – <http://teelin.com/TSID/logon/studio-calendar/> – which is the Studio Calendar page (password-protected). When you practice at the studio, please mark the Studio Log, which is on a clipboard hanging on the wall in the studio.

Small group practice sessions are an opportunity for dancers to encourage each other, to increase stamina by feeding off of each other's energy, and to share peer feedback.

Make wise decisions regarding the quality and quantity of your dance practices to avoid injuries. Additionally, complementary activities such as Pilates or yoga are recommended to supplement Irish dance training.

The healthy habit of independent practice is not only a great way to improve your dancing skills, it also develops self-discipline and personal initiative. Continue to nurture your passion, Teelin dancers, and use your time outside of dance class wisely!

A note about music.... If you do not yet have appropriate music for your dance practice at home, a good first purchase is "Music for Irish Dancing" by Chris and Michelle McLoughlin, which is available from iTunes. If you are purchasing only certain tunes from that album, new dancers should start with music for the soft shoe dances: Reels, Light Jigs and Slip Jigs. Dancers practicing in hard shoes will need music for Treble Jigs and Hornpipes. (Note: The first hard shoe steps are traditional speed.)

There are several other very good albums for practice music. If you need suggestions, please ask. Most Irish dance shoe vendors also sell a wide variety of practice CD's.

CHAMP PROGRAM / CHAMPIONSHIPS

The move from Prizewinner Grade competitions to Preliminary Championships is significant. Each dancer transitioning into the Teelin Champion Program will attend the next available orientation meeting, which will offer the dancer and her/his family an overview of the program and access to additional resources on the Teelin website.

Champion level Irish dancers are top-level athletes, and it is important for each dancer to be aware of her/his own body's strengths and weaknesses. A high overall fitness level is **required** of each dancer. Teelin will recommend certain stretches and exercises to dancers to support Irish dance training and to help counteract potential repetitive motion effects. However, every dancer's body is different. Consultations with and routine visits to medical professionals are highly recommended.

There are several championship events in which Teelin School dancers participate. The Southern Region Oireachtas (pronounced "O-ROCK-tus") is a regional championship. Much more information about Oireachtas may be found in the following documents:

[Everything You Need to Know About an Oireachtas](#)

[Oireachtas Figure Teams: Considerations for Participation](#)

In Teelin School, Open Champion and Preliminary Champion dancers are usually eligible to compete in solo championships at Oireachtas, if they participate in the mandatory Oireachtas Summer Camp. Teelin may also allow Prizewinner Grade dancers who have earned consistent placements (including at least one first place win in each of the dances that will be performed in their age group that year) to compete at the Oireachtas, if teacher discretion determines that the dancer has a high likelihood of obtaining a recall to the final round.

Team entries may include dancers who are not yet competing in solos at championship level, but have demonstrated very good technique, good dynamics with their team, and outstanding work ethic in class and practices. In order for a dancer to be considered for this opportunity, he or she must be willing to dedicate significant time and effort to the team's objectives.

Whether participating in solo championships, teams, or both, dancers (and their parents) should carefully consider how to balance a commitment to a championship event with all other time commitments, namely academics, other sports or extra-curricular activities, and performance company commitments. (Additionally, family finances need to be considered, as these events are a significant financial commitment.)

Oireachtas is a qualifying event for other "majors". Majors are championship events with entry restricted to dancers who have qualified for Open Champion level, and/or who have qualified from a prior championship event. A few of the common majors in which Teelin dancers participate are the North American Irish Dance Championships (NAIDC, aka "Nationals"), the All Ireland Irish Dance Championships (*Oireachtas Rince na Eireann*), the All Scotland Championships and the Great Britain Championships. The World Irish Dance Championships (*Oireachtas Rince na Cruinne*) require eligibility for participation by sufficient placement at a qualifier event (i.e. at regionals or nationals).

There are also three NAFC Championships (sponsored by the North American Feis Commission): the Senior Belt (for ages 17&Over), the Junior Trophy (for ages 13-17) and the Minor Trophy (for Under 13). The date and venue of each of these annual championships is printed on the syllabus of each NAFC feis. Dancers are eligible to compete in this event only if they have won 1st place of an Open Championship competition at a sanctioned NAFC feis within one calendar year of the Belt/Trophy Championship.

Additional information for dancers participating in championship events may be found on this password-protected page – <http://teelin.com/TSID/logon/oireachtas-majors/>

GRADE EXAMS

The Irish Dancing Commission (CLRG) has established 12 Grade Exams (plus an optional preliminary exam) for the purpose of offering a structured framework within which dancers can progress toward an achievable goal. Grade exams are NOT competitions. Each candidate is individually examined and receives a detailed written assessment of their performance and knowledge of the grade being attempted. Candidates do NOT wear a competition costume for the examination.

(Note: For those families who are still fairly new to Irish dance, please be careful to not confuse Grade Exams with Grade Level Competitions at a feis... they are not the same thing!)

Grade Exams are not new to the Irish dance world; however, they are currently a hot topic due to a recent ruling by CLRG. For any Irish dance students who may be interested in eventually taking the TCRG Exam (to become a certified Irish dance teacher), **all 12 Grade Exams must be completed to be eligible to apply for the TCRG Exam effective from January 1, 2018.**

More information about Grade Exams may be found on the Teelin website.

COMPANY (PERFORMANCE TEAMS)

The **Teelin Irish Dance Company** is an advanced level performance team comprised of students auditioned from the Teelin School of Irish Dance. Being a member of company requires significant commitment, probably best comparable to the commitment required of a travel soccer team. (Note: Many students in company also participate in Irish dance competitions, but the Teelin Irish Dance Company is a performance team, NOT a competition team.)

Each year, as the Teelin School of Irish Dance grows and develops, the Teelin Irish Dance Company also evolves. **Company dancers must excel in four areas: excellent dance technique, excellent stage presence, reliability, and a positive attitude, which includes excellent team spirit.** (Excellent team spirit means that dancers are required to exude considerate behavior; prima donna attitudes or behaviors are not tolerated.)

Auditions for Teelin Irish Dance Company are held in late spring, if there are any openings. Positions

are limited, and openings vary each year. Auditions are open to advanced level Teelin dancers (or intermediate level with great potential) who share a passion for performing and perfection, and exhibit strong treble reel skills and a good work ethic.

Each dancer invited to the Teelin Irish Dance Company is required to sign a contract accepting a position on their assigned team, to purchase certain costumes, and to commit to a rigorous schedule of rehearsals and performances in addition to their upper level dance classes at Teelin School, including a mandatory Company Summer Camp.

A Performance Handbook is published annually, and there is a password-protected section of the website specifically for members of Teelin Irish Dance Company. The login for this section of the website is not the same as the login for the password-protected section of the Teelin School. Dancers who are considering auditioning are welcome to review this section of the website. To request access, send an email to webmaster@teelin.com.

TEELIN EVENTS / IMPORTANT DATES

Teelin is dedicated to developing a family friendly environment with a strong sense of community by hosting events that promote Irish culture through dance and music. Teelin sponsors many events throughout the year to achieve this mission, and would like to invite your family to participate fully.

Our Teelin events would not be possible without our wonderful volunteers. If you are interested in becoming more involved, there are many different ways to volunteer throughout the year, whether by networking or organizing or working a shift at an event. Please browse the Teelin website, and keep an eye out for volunteer announcements in the Teelin Updates & Reminders emails. We're glad that you're part of the Teelin Family... thank you!

Here is a brief description of several annual Teelin events. (Note: These web pages may each display last year's information until updated, so be sure to note the year of the date listed on the web page.)

Teelin Ceili – <http://teelin.com/TSID/teelin-events/teelin-ceili/>

The Teelin Ceili (pronounced "KAY-lee") is essentially a family-style dance party, typically held in November on the weekend before Thanksgiving. Ceili dancing is Irish social dancing, not step dancing. Participation is encouraged for all – dancing experience not required!

Teelin Irish Dance Company Stage Show – <http://teelin.com/TIDC/show>

Each year, the Teelin Irish Dance Company is featured in a stage production at a professional theater. You won't want to miss this show! See the reason that Director Maureen Berry was the top recipient of the an Individual Artist Award for Dance Choreography presented by the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC). Visit the Performance Company website for ticket information - <http://teelin.com/TIDC/show>

(Note that this show is comprised of a cast of auditioned Company Dancers and guest artists, including some professional dancers. It does not include performances by Teelin School classes.)

Baltimore Parade – <http://teelin.com/TSID/teelin-events/baltimore-parade/>

ALL Teelin students are encouraged to participate in the Baltimore St. Patrick's Day Parade! Parents are also welcome to learn the Teelin Parade Dance in class with their children and to participate in the parade. Participants need to wear any RED Teelin shirt, sweatshirt or jacket offered. (Visit the Teelin Gear page of the website for ordering options – <http://teelin.com/TSID/teelin-gear/>). Enjoy the exhilaration of dancing for a mile down Charles Street!

Teelin Party – <http://teelin.com/TSID/teelin-events/post-parade-party/>

This is a purely social opportunity... head to the pub after the parade, stay for as long as you like, and enjoy the company of your Teelin friends! Food and drink are "on your own tab".

Teelin Spring Show – <http://teelin.com/TSID/teelin-events/spring-show/>

The Teelin Spring Show is an opportunity to present dances from each of the classes at Teelin School of Irish Dance and from the Teelin Irish Dance Company. There will be two shows (on the same day), and each class is scheduled to perform in ONE of the shows.

Costume information for each class will be published on this password-protected page of the school website – <http://teelin.com/TSID/logon/spring-show-resources/>

IMPORTANT: Any student unable to perform in the Spring Show must inform Teelin administration in writing by December 1, 2016. After December 1, 2016, the costume fee is non-refundable.

IMPORTANT DATES FOR 2016-2017 – <http://teelin.com/TSID/student-info/school-calendar/>
(Please check the website for updates.)

Note: This listing does not include Partial Year classes (abbreviated sessions). For a listing of those classes, please see this page of our school website - <http://teelin.com/TSID/dance-classes/extra-classes/>

Sep 6 (Tue) – First Day of classes for 2016-17 Teelin school year

Oct 31 (Mon) – Halloween – **NO CLASSES**

Nov 14-18 (Mon-Fri) – Parent Week – observations welcome!

Nov 20 (Sun) – TEELIN CEILI

Nov 22-25 (Tue-Fri) – **Fall Break** (some classes will be held for Oireachtas dancers)

Dec 1 – Second Installment of Tuition Due

NOTE: Any student unable to perform in the Spring Show must inform Teelin administration in writing by December 1, 2016. After December 1, 2016, the costume fee is non-refundable.

Dec 2-4 (Fri-Sun) – Southern Region Oireachtas, held in Baltimore, MD

Dec 19-30 (2 weeks) – **Winter Break** – **NO CLASSES**

Jan 2 (Mon) – Classes Resume per full-year schedule

Feb 25 (Sat) – Teelin Irish Dance Company Show – Celtic Storm!!

Mar 1 – Final Installment of Tuition Due

Mar 12 (Sun) – Baltimore Parade & Teelin Party

Mar 17 (Fri) – **NO CLASSES due to performances** – Happy St Patrick's Day!

Apr 9-16 (Sun-Sun) – World Irish Dancing Championships (in Dublin, Ireland)

Apr 10-21 (2 weeks) – **Spring Break** – **NO CLASSES**

Apr 24 (Mon) – Classes Resume after Spring Break

Apr 24-28 (Mon-Thr) – "Costumes in Classes" Week

May 6 (Sat) – Dress Rehearsals at Jim Rouse Theatre

May 7 (Sun) – TEELIN SPRING SHOW (1pm & 5pm, each class performs in ONE of the shows)

Jun 1 (Thr) – Last day of classes for 2016-17 Teelin school year

GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ACRONYMS

The following lists of terms and acronyms are, obviously, not comprehensive. The intention is simply to offer a few helpful references for those who are new to Irish dance. As always, if you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to ask.

TYPES OF DANCES:

Reel – a lively dance performed in soft shoes, characterized by a rhythm with an even 1-2-3-4 count; musical cadence is either 4/4 or 2/4 time, tempo is approximately 113 on a metronome

Light Jig – a bouncy dance performed in soft shoes, characterized by a rhythm that can be counted aloud as ONE-2-THREE or 1-2-3-FOUR; musical cadence is 6/8 time, tempo is approximately 113 on a metronome

Hop Jig (Single Jig) – IMPORTANT NOTE: Teelin does not teach a Hop Jig dance in the early level competition classes, so when entering a feis, do not register for a hop jig competition

Slip Jig – a graceful, flowing dance performed in soft shoes, characterized by a rhythm that can be tricky to count until familiar, ONE-2-THREE-4-FIVE-6; musical cadence is 9/8 time, tempo is approximately 113 on a metronome

Treble Jig – an energetic dance performed in hard shoes, characterized by a 1-2-THREE-1-2-THREE rhythm; musical cadence is 6/8 time, tempo is approximately 92 on a metronome for "fast speed" (aka "traditional speed") dances, and approximately 73 on a metronome for "slow speed" dances

Hornpipe – a catchy, rhythmic dance performed in hard shoes, characterized by a 1-TWO-1-TWO rhythm; musical cadence is either 2/4 or 4/4 time, tempo is approximately 138 on a metronome for "fast speed" (aka "traditional speed") dances, and approximately 113 on a metronome for "slow speed" dances

Treble Reel – performed in hard shoes, and just as with soft shoes, characterized by a rhythm with an even 1-2-3-4 count, but with seemingly "reely" fast feet!

Set Dance – a dance performed in hard shoes and choreographed for a specific piece of traditional music (either treble jig or hornpipe tempo); a **traditional set** is a specific dance sequence performed at a specific speed to a specific piece of traditional music; a **non-traditional set** (also called **contemporary set**) is original choreography developed by a TCRG and performed at an optional speed to a specific piece of traditional music

Solo Dances (aka solos) – choreography that can be performed individually

Figure Dances (aka figures) – choreography that is performed in teams

TERMS FREQUENTLY USED FOR IRISH DANCE SKILLS AND TECHNIQUES:

Cross – refers to a dancer's legs being crossed in such a way that it looks like one knee is hiding behind the other (Note: the term "cross" is almost always used in conjunction with "turnout")

Turnout – refers to a dancer's legs being rotated in such a way that, when legs are crossed, heels are pushed out across the midline and toes face toward midline; IMPORTANT: proper turnout comes from the **hips**, not from the feet – a dancer's toes and knees should be facing the same direction

Point – a basic Irish dance movement of pointing the foot in front with proper technique (hop on back foot, legs crossed and feet turned out, pointed front foot gently brushes the floor in a staccato movement); "a point" refers to the shape the foot when it shows a proper arch, with heel clearly visible to the inside, top of the foot turned to the outside, toes long and tight

Hop 1-2-3's – a basic Irish dance movement whereby, with legs crossed and feet turned out, a dancer steps moving forward "right, left, right, hop (on right foot), left, right, left, hop (on left foot), right, left, right" etc...

7's & 3's – a series of basic Irish dance moves whereby, with legs crossed and feet turned out, a dancer steps laterally "right, left, right, left..." for seven counts, then "right back-2-3, left back-2-3" and repeats (to the rhythm of the music) through a right foot and left foot section

Switch – a basic Irish dance movement whereby, with legs crossed and feet turned out, a dancer jumps straight up (in place, not traveling) and switches which foot is in front with which foot is in back

Over – the basic Irish dance movement of leaping from one foot into the air with one leg extended, other leg tucked underneath, then landing on the opposite foot from that which took off; **over-the-bridge** refers to an over performed in reel tempo, also sometimes called “over-2-3”

Batter – the basic Irish dance movement whereby, with legs crossed and feet turned out, a dancer brushes the floor using the tip of their hard shoe outward and then inward in such a way that it makes two distinct sounds; other Irish dance schools may use the terms “treble” or “rally” to refer to the same movement (note that each term is two syllables, representative of the two sounds)

Click – the basic Irish dance movement of one foot passing by the other foot in such a way that the heels of the hard shoes hit each other and make a clicking sound; clicks may also be done in soft shoe, but the heels don’t actually touch

NOTE: There are MANY other Irish dance terms commonly used, but this brief list is intended to give those new to Irish dance a jumpstart. The Teelin Practice Makes Perfect DVD has loads of dance movements and techniques demonstrated and explained. This DVD is a great resource for terminology related to dance technique. As always, if you have any additional questions please ask!

TERMS RELATED TO IRISH DANCE COMPETITIONS:

Feis – (pronounced “FESH”) an Irish word that means festival, but is more commonly used to describe a sanctioned Irish dance competition

Feiseanna – plural of feis, pronounced “FESH-nah”

Oireachtas – (pronounced “O-ROCK-tus”) an Irish word that means gathering, but within the context of Irish dance generally refers to the Regional Championships

Southern Region Oireachtas (SRO) – the regional championship competition in which eligible dancers from Teelin School of Irish Dance compete; this event is a qualifier for other majors

Majors – championship events with entry restricted to dancers who have qualified for Open Champion level, and/or who have qualified from a prior championship event

North American Irish Dancing Championships (NAIDC) – one of the majors; sometimes referred to as “Nationals” or “North American Nationals” (NANs), which is a conundrum since North America is a continent, not a nation

Teelin School Dress – the official competition costume for dancers representing the Teelin School of Irish Dance in solo dance competitions at a feis, and in figure dancing competitions at championships (or feiseanna); for more information, visit this page – <http://teelin.com/TSID/teelin-gear/school-dress/>

Alternate School Dress – slightly less formal dress than the School Dress, often worn by Teelin dancers in the Beginner, Advanced Beginner or Novice Grade levels of competition; a good option for dancers who are new to competing, or young Advanced Beginners who are growing quickly – <http://teelin.com/TSID/teelin-gear/alternate-school-dress/>

Solo Dress – a unique costume (and quite an expensive one) worn for champion level solo dance competitions; please read the guidelines regarding Teelin dancers and solo dresses on this page – <http://teelin.com/TSID/about-competitions/competition-costumes/>

ABBREVIATIONS OFTEN USED FOR COMPETITION LEVELS OR TEELIN COMPETITION CLASSES:

Beg – Beginner Grade competition level

Adv Beg (AB) – Advanced Beginner Grade competition level

AB/N – Advanced Beginner Grade and/or Novice Grade competition level

Nov (N) – Novice Grade competition level

N/PW – Novice Grade and/or Prizewinner Grade competition level

PW – Prizewinner Grade competition level

Prelim – Preliminary Championship competition level

Open – Open Championship competition level

ACRONYMS FOR ORGANIZATIONS AND CERTIFICATIONS:

CLRG – *An Coimisiun le Rinci Gaelacha* – the Irish Dancing Commission based in Dublin

TMRF – a teaching certificate awarded by CLRG to candidates who have shown a competence in teaching ceili dances as described in *Ar Rince Foirne* (the official guide to ceili dances)

TCRG – a teaching certificate awarded by CLRG to candidates who have shown a competence in teaching the ceili dances as described in *Ar Rince Foirne* and have also shown a competence in teaching solo dancers

ADCRG – a certificate awarded by CLRG to candidates who already hold TCRG certification and have shown a competence in adjudicating (judging) at official competitions

IDTANA – Irish Dance Teachers Association of North America

NAFC – North American Feis Commission

CCE – *Comhaltas Ceoltóirí Éireann* (bonus points if you can pronounce it: “KUHL-tus kul-tahri air-in”) – international organization of traditional Irish music enthusiasts; there is a feis in Maryland sponsored by the local branch of CCE (O’Neill Malcolm Branch), typically held the Sunday of Memorial Day, called the Comhaltas Irish Dance Festival (in Irish Gaelic, if a consonant is followed by “h” then that consonant is usually silent; thus the correct pronunciation of “Comhaltas” is “KUHL-tus”)