

# O'Rourke Irish Dancers, LLC

## Student Handbook

LuAnn O'Rourke-Boyd, TCRG/ADCRG

Claire Donnelly, TCRG : J.R. Vancheri, TCRG

Kelly Pappas, TCRG : Maura Zipf, TCRG

Sue Fuller, TMRF : Michael Facelle, TMRF

Michael Smith, TCRG/ADCRG (workshop instructor)

Members of: CLRG <http://www.clrg.ie/english/home.php>

IDTANA <http://www.idtana.org/> & Mid Atlantic Region <http://www.mid-atlanticregion.com/>

TCRG: Accredited Teacher of An Coimisiun Le Rinci Gaeliacha

ADCRG: Accredited Adjudicator of An Coimisiun Le Rinci Gaeliacha

**Director:** LuAnn O'Rourke-Boyd, TCRG/ADCRG Phone: 917-453-0375, [luann614@optonline.net](mailto:luann614@optonline.net)

**Associate Teachers:** Claire Donnelly, TCRG; J.R. Vancheri, TCRG; Kelly Pappas, TCRG; Maura Zipf, TCRG; Sue Fuller, TMRF; Michael Facelle, TMRF

**Assistant Teachers:** Maureen Turchioe, Mary Ryan, Emily SamZeeMoi

**Website:** <http://www.orourkeirishdancers.com/>

**Webmaster & Yahoo Group Moderator:** Sue Fuller [suefuller26@gmail.com](mailto:suefuller26@gmail.com)

**General e-mail:** [luann614@optonline.net](mailto:luann614@optonline.net)

**Studio Address:** 77 Tarrytown Rd., White Plains: 80 Triangle Center, Yorktown

**Tuition due before or at the first class of each semester:** Fall (September-December)  
Winter (January-March), Spring (April-June), Summer (July-August).

**Cancellation Policy:** If your dancer decides not to continue with classes the cancellation policy is as follows:

During the first three classes 50% refund. After the third class there is no refund. Classes will not be prorated unless due to injury. All credits are non-transferable and expire if not used within six months.

The O'Rourke Irish Dancers follows the grade structure for dancing as set forth by the Irish Dancing Teacher's Association of North America (IDTANA). At the O'Rourke school a dancer's class level is determined by their competition level.

### Preschool

This class is for three and four year olds. This class focuses on basic foot positions and introduces students to movement and Irish music.

**Classes per week: 1**

### Beginner, 5 and older (must be entering kindergarten)

This class is for students that have never taken Irish Step Dancing or have participated in our preschooler class. This level introduces students to drill exercises that concentrate on timing and technique. Students will learn the Light Jig and Reel. Students who can dance two steps in either the Light Jig or Reel can start competing in the Winter. This level dancer is expected to participate in at least two feiseanna per year. Appropriate dress for the recital and feiseanna is a black skirt, white blouse, proper Irish Dancing soft shoes and white poodle socks. If the beginner masters two steps in the Jig and Reel they progress to the Advanced Beginner class and competition level after their first year in class. Practice at home strongly suggested between classes to reinforce steps into memory at least 30 minutes per day.

**Classes per week: 1**

### **Advanced Beginner**

This level dancer will continue to reinforce their two Light Jig steps, their two Reel steps and will be introduced to the Slip Jig, and Treble Jig. This level dancer is expected to participate in at least four feiseanna a year. Advanced Beginners can continue to wear red skirts and blouses for feiseanna or purchase a school costume. An advanced beginner must place 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Advanced Beginner level in Light Jig, Reel, Slip Jig and Treble Jig in order to move to the Novice class. Practice at home strongly suggested between classes to reinforce steps and work on technique 30-45 minutes per day. **Classes per week: two**

### **Novice**

This level dancer will continue to reinforce their two Reel steps and two Slip Jig steps and incorporate more difficult material into their steps. They will also be expected to be able to execute two slow Treble Jig steps. Novice dancers will also start to learn slow Hornpipe steps and possibly a traditional set (St. Patrick's Day). This level dancer is expected to participate in at least four to eight feiseanna a year and typically owns a school costume. Novice dancers are also allowed to wear solo costumes in competition instead of school costumes. A Novice dancer must place 1<sup>st</sup> at the Novice level in Reel, Slip Jig, Treble Jig and Hornpipe in order to move to the Prize Winner class. Practice at home is strongly suggested between classes to reinforce steps and work on technique at least 45 -60 minutes per day. **Classes per week: two, workshop participation recommended**

### **Prizewinner**

This level dancer will focus on perfecting their advanced Reels, Slip Jigs, Treble Jigs and Hornpipes. Prizewinner dancers will also learn lead rounds for their respective age group in order to prepare for Preliminary Championships. In addition, they will learn another traditional set or contemporary set based on their age. This level dancer is expected to participate in at least six - twelve feiseanna a year and should own a solo costume. A Prizewinner dancer must place 1<sup>st</sup> at the Prizewinner level in Reel, Slip Jig, Treble Jig and Hornpipe in order to move to the Preliminary Championship class. Practices at home is strongly suggested between classes to reinforce steps and work on technique at least 60 minutes per day. **Classes per week: two plus Open Studio, workshop participation recommended**

### **Preliminary Championship**

This level dancer has mastered three steps in the Reel, three steps in the Slip Jig, three steps in the Treble Jig and three steps in the Hornpipe. Preliminary Championship students are expected to also know both a traditional and contemporary set and will continue to increase the difficulty of their dancing material. This level dancer is expected to participate in a minimum of eight - twelve feiseanna a year and at least eight in order to compete at the Oireachtas. Preliminary Championship dancers should own a solo costume. Students dancing at the Preliminary Championship level and placing on a consistent basis are eligible to compete in the Mid Atlantic Regional Championships also known as The Oireachtas. Through the Oireachtas students may qualify for The North American Nationals and World Championships. Preliminary Championship dancers must obtain at least three firsts in Preliminary Championships in one calendar year in order to move to Open Championships. If the three firsts are achieved over more than one calendar year they must move immediately to Open Championships after the third win. Practice at home is strongly suggested between classes to reinforce steps and technique at least 60 minutes per day. **Classes per week: two plus Open Studio, workshop participation recommended**

## **Open Championships**

This level dancer has reached the highest level of competition in Irish Dancing and demonstrates a mastery of skills in both hard and soft shoe dances. This level dancer is expected to participate in a minimum of eight - twelve feiseanna a year and at least eight in order to compete at the Oireachtas. Open Champions should own a solo costume. Open Champions are eligible to compete in both the Mid Atlantic Regional Championships also known as The Oireachtas and are eligible to compete at The North American Nationals. Through the Oireachtas and North American Nationals dancers may qualify to compete at The World Championships. Some students may also be asked to represent the school at international competitions such as The All Ireland, All Scotland and Great Britain Championships. Practice at home is strongly suggested between classes to reinforce steps and technique at least 60 minutes per day. **Classes per week: two plus Open Studio, workshop participation recommended**

## **Championship Ceili Class**

All dancers in the Preliminary and Open Championship classes are required to compete on an 8-hand Ceili team at our Regional Oireachtas in order to be entered in solos based on age, height, and ability **if needed**. Dancers in this class prepare year round to compete at the Mid Atlantic Regional Oireachtas, North American Nationals, The All Irelands and if qualified the World Championships. There is a high level of commitment expected of dancers on a Ceili team. Dancers on Ceili teams are expected to attend all scheduled classes and workshops. A position on a team one year does not guarantee a position on a team the following year. Dynamics of the teams are examined each year by the director of the school and Ceili teams may change based on age, ability, commitment and team collaboration. Attendance on a weekly basis is mandatory. All age groups for Ceili teams are required to wear a school costume, specific wig, makeup and tanner.

**Classes per week: 1 (2 if preparing for the World Championships)**

**workshop participation mandatory**

## **Adult Competition Ceili**

This class is by invitation only. Dancers in this class prepare year round to compete at the Regional Oireachtas and North American Nationals. They may also be asked to represent the school at international competitions such as The All Ireland, All Scotland and Great Britain Championships. There is a high level of commitment expected of dancers on a Ceili team. Attendance on a weekly basis is mandatory. This student must own a school costume.

**Classes per week: 1, workshop participation mandatory**

## **Adult Beginner**

Students 16 and older with no Irish Step experience. This class is for students that have never taken Irish Step Dancing. This level introduces students to drill exercises that concentrate on rhythm and technique. Students will learn the Light Jig, Reel and will be introduced to Ceili dancing.

**Classes per week: see schedule**

**Advanced Adult Step** Students 18 and older with at least one or two years of previous Irish Step experience. This student is capable of executing Light Jigs, easy Reels, Slip Jigs and some hard shoe. This student is interested in learning more advanced material. This student will also learn Treble Jigs, Hornpipes and traditional sets.

**Classes per week: 1**

## **Private Lessons**

Private lessons are available with Michael Smith if you sign up for them. In addition, private lessons can be booked with the assistant teachers. They are strongly recommended to help polish and reinforce new choreography. Please contact LuAnn or one of the instructors in your class to book a private lesson.

## **Oireachtas Qualifications for Solo Competition (Mid Atlantic Regional Championships):**

Starting in 2009 students of the O'Rourke school must be competing at the Preliminary Championship level and placing on a consistent basis in order to qualify for the Oireachtas. Participants in the Under 8 age category at the Oireachtas are "at the teacher's discretion". All students of the O'Rourke school should attend as many workshops as possible throughout the year, must participate in Summer Camp and must compete in at least eight feiseanna during the calendar year in order to be entered into the Oireachtas.

**Workshop participation and Summer camp mandatory**

## **North American Irish Dance Championships (North American Nationals)**

Dancers must be qualified for Open Championships or qualify at our Regional Oireachtas in order to compete at the North American Irish Dance Championships.

**Workshop participation and Summer camp mandatory**

## **All Ireland Championships**

Dancers must be in Open Championships in order to qualify for the All Ireland Championships.

**Workshop participation and Summer camp mandatory**

## **Irish Dancing World Championships**

Dancers must qualify for the World Championships at their Regional Oireachtas or at the North American Championships.

**Workshop participation and Summer camp mandatory**

## **Dress Code**

All students, beginner and above, are expected to wear black shorts with a white or black leotard or t-shirt with hair pulled back in a ponytail. White poodle socks with black soft shoes or hard shoes. Beginners may use black ballet shoes if they already own them. When purchasing shoes please do not buy shoes that are too big. Soft shoes stretch and if purchased too large will not form to the foot and will not help the dancer point and arch. Hardshoes purchased too large will cause the dancer to dance flat footed.

## **Practice**

All students should practice their steps at home to music. It is helpful if there is an area in your house that you can dedicate for practice (basement or garage). There are many steps taught during the school year and they become increasingly complicated. Practice at home is important for the dancer to remember their steps and master them.

## **Costumes for competing:**

**Beginners:** Plaid skirt or O'Rourke Beginner skirt with a white blouse or long sleeve black leotard, poodle socks and soft shoes. Curly bun or wig to finish the look is suggested. We also have many beginner and team costumes available for resale. Please check our website for previously owned costumes that are available.

**Advanced Beginners:** Red or black skirt with a white blouse or school costume, poodle socks, soft shoes and hard shoes. Curly bun or wig to finish the look is suggested with a red bow.

**Novice:** red skirt with a white blouse, school costume or solo costume, poodle socks, soft shoes and hard shoes. Curly bun or wig to finish the look is strongly suggested with a red bow.

**Prize Winner, Preliminary & Open Championships:** Solo costume with wig or bun and appropriate shoes.

**Ceili Team Members:** School costume and wig that is selected for the team.

### **School Costumes:**

We use Shamrock Stichery for our school costumes. They currently cost approximately \$750. If you are interested in ordering a school costume please see LuAnn. You can also purchase previously owned costumes through current or former students of the school.

### **Solo Costumes:**

When starting to explore options for solo costumes it is imperative that you involve LuAnn in the decision regarding the dress you select. LuAnn has expertise in helping your dancer gain superior stage presence by selecting the latest dance fashions, materials and colors that are appropriate for your dancer. There are several avenues to take when purchasing a solo costume and a consultation with LuAnn can help you choose the appropriate option for your budget.

<http://www.dance-again.com/index.html> (for Novice through Preliminary dancers)

<http://www.elevationdesign.ie/> (for the Preliminary and Open Champion)

### **Master Workshops:**

In order to enhance our students Irish Dancing experience and bring your dancer to "the next level" we strongly encourage students in the Novice level and above to participate in Master Workshops. Our school is involved in Master Class workshops with Michael Smith, ADCRG of the acclaimed Smith-Houlihan School from Boston, Massachusetts. The material and experience passed on is invaluable. There is an additional fee for workshop participation.

### **Summer Camp**

Each Summer we host a week long Irish Dance Camp under the direction of LuAnn and Michael. Students at the Advanced Beginner level and above are encouraged to participate. Summer camp is mandatory for the dancers competing on teams and solo at the Oireachtas (Mid Atlantic Championships).

## Competitions

Competitions in Irish Dance are referred to as “Feiseanna” or “A Feis” (festival). There are feiseanna held throughout the world just about every weekend of the year. Students are encouraged to participate in feiseanna to obtain the placing they need to move up in class at the school. Participation in feiseanna can be fun and will also encourage the dancer to practice. You can get a listing of all feiseanna in the tri-state area at <http://www.feis411.com>.

**Wigs:** Jean from Head for the World is our wig supplier and can also make custom headbands to match your dancers solo costume.

**Music:** Music can be purchased from Pat Fay when he comes to the school or at feiseanna. Beginners should practice to Reels and Light Jigs.

**Transfers:** Dancers coming into or leaving our school must notify their current teacher either in person or writing that they are transferring to a new school. There is a one time \$25 transfer fee that the parents are responsible to pay to the new school. The fee is submitted to the Mid Atlantic transfer secretary on the dancer’s behalf. The new teacher fills out the mandatory transfer form and submits it to the Mid Atlantic transfer secretary. There is six month suspension/restyling period that is effective on the date of the post mark of the transfer form. Upon completion of the six month suspension/restyling period the dancer can then start competition again.

## Events

- O’Rourke School Feis is hosted annually by our school. This is a large event that is hosted by our school and all parents will volunteer and assist at the feis.
- St Patrick’s Day Events in Westchester. All students are invited to participate.
- Dance-outs are dance performances at dinners or other events held outside of the studio. Participation is by invitation. Participation in extra practices is required.
- Annual Rectial held in the Spring (usually May) for all students to participate in.

## Release, Waive, Hold Harmless Agreement

I acknowledge that this activity involves exertion and carries with it the potential for injury. I hereby agree to waive the right to take legal action or join in any actions against O’Rourke Irish Dancers, LLC, The O’Rourke Irish Dance Foundation, LuAnn O’Rourke-Boyd, Suzanne Fuller and/or any affiliates and associates for injuries incurred during practice and/or performance in any location. I hereby agree to indemnify, protect and save harmless the parties above or any of them from all judgments, cost and expenses whatsoever arising on account of any action, claim or demand by the minor child of mine, or any child for which I am acting in guardianship or supervisory capacity. It is understood and agreed that the participant is physically fit and prepared for participation in the activities, which will be undertaken, and any doctor or other medical person that participation in these activities should be avoided and/or limited has not advised the participant. Participation in any competition or performance is at the sole discretion and decision of the parent. I hereby give permission to the school and the parties to use my name and/or my child’s name, photographic likeness in all forms and media for advertising, trade and any other lawful purpose without any remuneration.

## **O'Rourke Irish Dancers, LLC Code of Conduct**

It is important that all teachers, students and parents of O'Rourke Irish Dancers, LLC represent the school in a positive manner. Everything we do in public reflects not only on the dancer but on the teachers and parents as well. It is expected that students, parents and teachers of the school will exhibit conduct becoming of a lady or gentleman in public. Conduct will also include any activity on public forums such as the Internet message boards and social networks such as FaceBook.

### **Proper feis etiquette.**

- Preliminary and Champion dancers should always arrive to accept an award in full costume.
- Do not leave the awards area until all of the awards have been given out.
- Congratulate your fellow placers.
- Smile and be thankful for your award. Remember that 50% of the dancers in your competition did not place and are going home empty handed.

It is disappointing to not place or recall at a competition but one should do so graciously. Please refrain from crying, or displaying bad behavior in public. This is better to be done in private (car, hotel room, home). The Irish Dance community is a small one and you never know who is standing next to you or behind you. Your behavior is being monitored on and off stage whether you know it or not. I do not condone public displays of poor sportsmanship nor will I tolerate them in the school. Poor behavior is a reflection on all of us as teachers, parents and students and can be detrimental to the school's reputation.

### **Penalty Policy**

Displays of poor sportsmanship at feisanna can result in the suspension of a dancer from competition for at least six months or expulsion from the school.

Public defamation of O'Rourke Irish Dancers, LLC can result in suspension of a dancer from competition for at least six months or expulsion from the school.

