



*MJP Irish Dance Association*

*Parent Handbook*

*2015 / 2016*

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*Parent Handbook*

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# *MJPIDA*

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## **1 MJP Irish Dance Association (MJPIDA)**

MJP Irish Dance Association (MJPIDA) is the Parent's Association. It is a separate and independent group. 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 MJP dancers and/or MJP dancers who have reached age of majority may apply for family membership.

All families and dancers are encouraged 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 MJPIDA member dance students.

## **2 Benefits of Joining MJPIDA**

1. Support and help from a group of knowledgeable dancers and parents for the new dancer. 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. Used shoe exchange program
6. Directory of parents and dancers for contact information
7. Bi-monthly meetings to discuss issues related to support of dancers and the operation of MJPIDA
8. Organized fund raising opportunities; monies are used to purchase class dance dresses; other uses for money may be discussed during MJPIDA meetings
9. 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 2015/2016 year, membership fees are \$10.00 per family.

MJPIDA membership cheques are submitted with dancer registration and dated September 1, 2015.



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### **3 Knowledge, Support and Assistance**

Any new activity has its own unique language. Words such as “Feis,” “Reel,” “Jig,” “Class Dress,” “Solo Dress,” etc. can be confusing at first until you learn their meaning.

Attending your first Show performance or “Feis” (Competition) can be overwhelming.

AT MJP, we have dancers and parents who have been involved in the Irish Dance community for some time. All are willing to help and reduce your confusion. All you have to do is ask about wigs, costumes, competition, etc.

To further help out new parents, we hold 2 information sessions, one in October, the second in February, to explain some of these terms to new parents and dancers.

### **4 Class Angels**

Each dance class has an assigned Class Angel. Class Angels are a resource for questions about class, workshops, competitions, costumes or Irish Dance in general.

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

### **5 Shows and Performances**

MJP Irish Dancers are often asked to perform a show for entertainment at a group function. Shows are performed throughout Calgary and area. Shows usually require parents to assist 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 “Class Dress” 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, which is good practice to prepare dancers for competitions. Show performances are also an opportunity for dancers and parents to earn volunteer points toward their annual requirement.

#### **5.1 Year-End Show**

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



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- It is a fun event that showcases all dancers and finishes off the dance year
- Cost of theatre is completely paid for by MJPIDA. Ticket cost is kept low to break even on cost of the Year-End show
- 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

## **5.2 St. Patrick's Day Shows**

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

## **6 Class Dress Program**

Along with the steps of Irish Dance are the costumes and dresses worn by dancers during competition and shows. Each dance school has their own unique "class dress" worn by their dancers. MJPIDA purchases and maintains Class dresses for use by member dancers. These dresses are rented to parents at an annual cost that covers maintenance and cleaning of dresses for the year.

As your dancer grows, costumes may be traded in for a larger size at any time throughout the dance year.

Maintenance, cleaning and inventory of dress sizes are part of the Class Dress program at no further cost to parents.

## **7 Used Shoes**

Most younger dancers outgrow their shoes before they are worn out.

MJPIDA maintains a used shoe exchange available for purchase from other parents.

The Used Shoe Coordinator exchanges shoes on a consignment basis. Used shoes are usually brought to the first workshop of the dance year and to other group functions from time to time.

Irish dance shoes use different sizing than North American shoes. Soft shoes stretch over time. Shoes should be tried on for fit by a dancer before purchase.

MJPIDA provides the used shoe service to all members at no charge.



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## **8 Dance Competition (Feis)**

Dance competitions, called a “Feis,” (pronounced ‘fesh’) are held regularly in Alberta and throughout North America. Feis is a Gaelic term meaning “festival.”

In addition to dance competitions, there are often art and Irish music competitions.

The Oireachtas (pronounced oh –rock – tus) is a competition that qualifies Preliminary and Open Championship dancers from their region for the World Irish Dance Championship competition each year. In order to attend “worlds”, a dancer must first qualify at the Oireachtas in his or her region.

In order to compete at any competition, a dancer must practice under and be registered through a teacher certified through the Irish Dancing Commission (An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha), holding a T.C.R.G. credential.

It is the choice of a dancer and his/her family whether they wish to compete and is entirely optional. While our classes are designed to prepare dancers for competition, it remains up to them whether they wish to do so. Please refer to the ‘Feis Guide’ located in the ‘Members Only’ section of the MJP website for more information.

### **8.1 Parent Feis Meeting**

MJP Academy tries to have a Feis meeting with new parents about Feis competitions, competitor entries etc. The meeting is usually held early in the dance year during dance class. Parents may attend the information meeting while their dancer is at class.

### **8.2 List of Local ‘Feiseanna’**

Local Feiseanna that MJPIDA sends in group registration,

<b>Feis</b>	<b>Approximate Calendar timeframe</b>	<b>Location</b>
Irwin Feis	October Long Weekend (Thanksgiving)	Calgary
Blakey Feis	3 <sup>rd</sup> weekend of January	Calgary
Edmonton ISSS Feis	1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> weekend of February	Edmonton
Possak Feis	1 <sup>st</sup> weekend of March	Calgary
Sherwood Park Feis	3 <sup>rd</sup> weekend of April	Edmonton
Brady Feis	May long weekend (Victoria Day)	Calgary
Houston Feis	2 <sup>nd</sup> weekend of June	Calgary

The Dance Teacher maintains required information such as dance competition level in each dance and dancer age, and other information required for Feis entry.



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### 8.3 Other Feiseanna

If you are interested in travel, there are Feiseanna competitions just about every weekend somewhere in North America. To see a list of Feiseanna, look on the North American Feis Commission website, [www.northamericanfeiscommission.org](http://www.northamericanfeiscommission.org) Look for “Schedule” for the current year.

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, please contact your dance teacher to discuss how to proceed with registration. Your dance teacher will either register the student herself, or provide further instructions for registration.

### 8.4 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. Cost of Feis entry will vary depending on the Feis. Feis fees will usually include a family entrance and results fee allowing entry for all family members. If you have siblings in a competition, this fee should only be charged once for each family.

Feis entries are submitted on a cost recovery basis by MJPIDA. When you acknowledge the Feis entry that was sent to you by email about your dancer’s Feis entry, you also agree to submit Feis fees to MJPIDA, **whether or not you actually compete at that competition.**

**If you choose not to compete at that Feis, reply to the email to let the teacher know to remove you from the Feis competition. Otherwise, you are responsible for the cost of Feis registration.**

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

### 8.5 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. Feis Registrar or 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 MJPIDA Feis registration
  - b. amount of fees owing to MJPIDA
  - c. Feis Syllabus (Feis rules)
2. Review the Feis entry with your dancer. Your dancer knows their competition dances, competition level and age category. If there are corrections, advise the Feis Registrar of changes **before the cutoff date** so that the entry may be corrected.
3. Submit your Feis Registration cheque (payable to MJPIDA) by mail to the MJPIDA Feis Registrar address on the Feis entry email.



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4. **If the Feis Registrar does not hear from you by the MJPIDA Feis cutoff date, your registration is deleted.** You may still enter the Feis, however, you must submit your own registration including Feis fees owing, dance levels and competitive age to the Feis committee before their cutoff date.
5. **If you register for a Feis and do not submit your Feis fees due to MJPIDA, you will not be registered for any future Feiseanna until your Feis fees owing are paid in full.**

### **8.6 Feis Registration Questions**

If you have questions about your Feis entry, please ask. It is a complicated process, particularly for new parents and new dancers. Ask the Class Angel, assistant teachers or dance teacher for an explanation of your Feis entry.

## **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.

## **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 to all MJPIDA 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.

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





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- 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 and Bylaws of Society Incorporation are available on request to any Executive Member.

Bylaws of Society Incorporation for the society are available on request from any Executive Member.

Meetings are typically held bi monthly from September through May.

MJPIDA fiscal year runs from September 1 to August 31.

Contact information for MJPIDA Executive and other key members and volunteers is at the end of the handbook.

## **12 Volunteer Points**

The benefits of MJPIDA membership requires work on the part of member parents and dancers. 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. A \$200 deposit cheque (post-dated for June next year) is required 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 at the end of the dance year.

Volunteer points are earned per family. Number of points required each year is set at the beginning of each year (September) by competition dance level of the most senior dancer in your family.

**Volunteer Points are very easy to earn. We want your assistance and participation, not your money.**

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. Points are earned throughout the dance year, September 1 through August 31.



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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.
4. Points are not cumulative and must be earned during each dance year.
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.

First year dancers are not required to earn points. It gives parents a year to become familiar with the dance school and MJPIDA. Parents are encouraged to participate in activities and events to get to know other parents and dancers and see how easy it is to earn Volunteer Points.

During a dancer's second year, parents and dancers are required to earn Volunteer Points determined by their competitive dance level.

### **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 15<sup>th</sup> 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	0 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 points on a case-by-case basis as determined by the Executive.



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Serving as a member of the MJPIDA executive for a year	75 Points
Serving as a committee coordinator for a year	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 a special or out of town show	10 Points
Dancer Performing at Year-End Show	5 Points
Dancer Performing at a Show (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

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 dance 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.

The volunteer 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 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.



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## 13 MJPIDA Contact List

### 13.1 Executive

Position	Contact	Contact email
President	Tim Braden	<a href="mailto:tbraden@shaw.ca">tbraden@shaw.ca</a>
Vice President	Matt Millard	<a href="mailto:mmillard00@gmail.com">mmillard00@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer	Jennifer Warren	<a href="mailto:jarwarren77@gmail.com">jarwarren77@gmail.com</a>
Secretary	Brian Henderson	<a href="mailto:hendersb@telus.net">hendersb@telus.net</a>

### 13.2 Other Contacts

Position	Contact	Contact email
Teacher	Joelle Sheppard, T.C.R.G.	<a href="mailto:mjpacademy@hotmail.com">mjpacademy@hotmail.com</a>
MJP Accounting		<a href="mailto:mjpacctsreceivable@hotmail.com">mjpacctsreceivable@hotmail.com</a>
MJPIDA Communication	Deb Braden	<a href="mailto:mjpida@hotmail.com">mjpida@hotmail.com</a>
Class Dress	Leta Thiessen OPEN	<a href="mailto:mjpdress@hotmail.com">mjpdress@hotmail.com</a>
Feis Registrar		<a href="mailto:mjpfais@hotmail.com">mjpfais@hotmail.com</a>
New Parent Liaison		<a href="mailto:mjpnewparent@hotmail.com">mjpnewparent@hotmail.com</a>
Used Shoe Exchange	Karen Russell	<a href="mailto:mjpshoes@hotmail.com">mjpshoes@hotmail.com</a>
Volunteer Points Coordinator	Julia Day	<a href="mailto:mjpvolunteers@hotmail.com">mjpvolunteers@hotmail.com</a>