

# The Shamrock School of Irish Dance, LLC

## School Policies

Teachers: Sheila Stevens, TCRG & ADCRG  
Shannon Barry, TCRG  
Caitriona Johnson, TCRG

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## Brief History of the Shamrock School

In 1977, Sheila Stevens TCRG/ADCRG founded the Shamrock School of Irish Dance. The first classes were held in church halls in Newington and Plainville, CT. In 1987, Shannon Barry TCRG, became a full time partner with her mother in the Shamrock School.

Dance opportunities are now available 5 nights a weeks and classes may be scheduled on Saturdays and Sundays, if needed for special events.

## Teacher Mini-Biographies

Sheila had her formal Irish dance instruction in Co. Cork, Ireland under the direction of the renowned McTaggart School of Cork.

In 1980, Sheila successfully obtained her TCRG &ADCRG certificates to teach and adjudicate Irish dancing in Dublin, Ireland. She is member of An Coimisiun le Rince Gaelacha, Dublin, Ireland, The Irish Dancing Teachers Association IDTANA, and the New England Region Irish Dancing Teachers Association IDTANE. She has served as President of the North American Irish Dancing Teachers Association and as the New England Regional Director.

Shannon is a certified TCRG by the Coimisiun in Dublin, Ireland. She is a member of An Coimisiun le Rince Gaelacha, the IDTANA and IDTANE. Shannon was a champion dancer for many years and has won numerous awards throughout North America.

Caitriona, TCRG certified with the Coimisiun in Ireland, Caitriona is an accomplished dancer. She has placed consistently in the Open Championships, and has placed in the National Championships and Worlds. Caitriona is part of the Shamrock School as a part time instructor.

The Shamrock School draws dancers from throughout the Central Connecticut area. The Shamrock dancers, through their many performances, have become an in-demand group for entertaining, especially around St. Patrick's Day. Our School has become the choice of many students, primarily due to our dancer's good sportsmanship, and the school's policy of teaching and progressing the dancers in all aspects of Irish dancing, from competitive steps for the Beginner level through Championship level and offering dancers the opportunity to experience the Traditional and Contemporary styles of dance.

## Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of the Shamrock School Policy is to outline the rules and regulations that govern our organization and to insure our continued success.

This manual is intended to be a handy reference, hopefully answering questions which may arise during the dance year.

## 1) Registration

Parents are responsible for re-registering their children by completing the official registration form annually.

- a) Forms will be available on the website and will be e-mailed to the parents and must be received by the designated date to ensure your place in the school.
- b) Registration for the new dance season will not be processed if there is a balance due from the previous season.

## 2) Class Categories

The following categories will be used for instructional purposes only.

- a) **Beginner:** A dancer who begins dancing on or after September 1<sup>st</sup> of any season.
- b) **Advanced Beginner:** A dancer who has been dancing prior to September 1<sup>st</sup> and who has won a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> in the beginner category at a dance competition/feis.
- c) **Novice:** A dancer who has won a 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, or 3<sup>rd</sup> place as an Advanced Beginner and has not won a 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Novice category.
- d) **Prizewinner:** A dancer who has won 1<sup>st</sup> place in the Novice category.
- e) **Preliminary Championships:** This competition is open to dancers who have won 1<sup>st</sup> place in Prizewinner. This category is also at the teacher's discretion.
- f) **Open Championships:** This competition is open to dancers who have won 2 first place awards in Preliminary Championships.

Your child will be placed in a class that is best suited for him/her. The teacher is the best judge of their status. Factors that influence class placement are:

- 1) The child's overall capability and understanding of their dancing.
- 2) The child's willingness to practice at home.
- 3) Overall attendance at classes, and performances.
- 4) The child's interest and dedication to their dancing.
- 5) Overall attendance and success at competitions.

## Dress Code for Dance Class

Students may wear shorts and a t-shirt, a leotard and tights or leggings. No baggy pants or jeans allowed!!!

Foot Wear: Ghillies or ballet slippers for beginners. Hard shoes will discussed with the teacher when the dancer is ready to wear them.

### 3) Class Locations and Days Offered at each location

- Monday: Plainville Studio  
75 East St.  
Plainville, CT 06062
  
- Monday: Congregation Beth Israel  
Farmington Ave.  
West Hartford, CT 06119
  
- Monday: Brass City Ballet  
1255 Middlebury Rd.  
Middlebury, CT 06762
  
- Tuesday: Plainville Studio
  
- Wednesday: Simsbury Grange No. 197  
236 Farms Village Rd.  
Simsbury, CT 06092
  
- Thursday: Plainville Studio
  
- Friday: Plainville Studio

### 4) Class Instruction

The principal instructors at the Shamrock School are Sheila Stevens TCRG/ADCRG, Shannon Barry TCRG, and Caitriona Johnson TCRG. Assistant teachers are Mairead Barry, Shaela Barry and Ashleigh Kobialka.

\*Assistant teachers work with the principal teachers and may fill in for the principal teachers on rare occasions.

## 5) Class Description

Classes are designed to be challenging and interesting. When students achieve the basic skills, they are advanced accordingly.

The following classes are available:

### a) Group:

Classes are offered for girls and boys 4 years of age and older. Adult classes are also offered.

Classes are divided into different categories. Namely, Beginner for 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year students or the youngest members, 4-6 years of age. Advanced Beginner the 3<sup>rd</sup> year through 5<sup>th</sup> year students, 7-10 years of age. Prizewinner is generally for the students who have been taking 6 years or more and are ages 11 and up. We keep in mind at all times that each student is an individual, and progresses and succeeds in competition at their own pace and thus should not be classified with other members of their family for the convenience of time scheduling and transportation.

### b) Private:

Classes are designed for students who wish to advance in technique and progress to a higher level dance category.

Private classes are not recommended for first year beginners.

A private class may be scheduled for a time that is mutually convenient for the teacher and student.

Private classes last for one half hour (1/2).

## 6) The Benefits of Irish Dancing:

1. Increased physical skills: Develop body control and coordination, a great source of exercise.
2. Increased mental skills: Listening skills, following directions, increasing attention span, increased memorization.
3. A healthy competitive spirit: Increasing desire to do well and succeed.
4. Self-esteem: Improved confidence, great stage-presence.
5. Lasting friendships: Not only with classmates, but friendships formed from competitions and traveling throughout the country.
6. Promoting the Irish culture: A revival of the Irish identity began in the 1960's. While a young dancer may not comprehend this particular benefit while trining, this revival continues.

## 7) Cancellation of Classes

Class cancellation by instructor:

1. In case of an unforeseen cancellation of group or private classes, you will be notified by email.
2. Storm days- in case of bad weather, please check your emails or our Facebook page before you leave home or work so you will know if class is cancelled.

A make-up class will be scheduled at the end of the semester.

## 8) Team Dancing Requirements

Team dancing is an extra activity we offer students and has become highlighted as one of the most enjoyable aspect of our school. Choreography, and ceili dances are classified as team dances. In order to be invited to be a member of a representing team at the New England Regional Championships, the following criteria will apply.

1. Dancing ability, experience, attitude, height and age.
2. Team dancers are required to have the complete school costume as well as all accessories. Costumes must be neat and well fitting.
3. The child's commitment and loyalty to teammates and instructors.
4. Attendance and punctuality-team members are required to travel to the studio for team practice, and are required to travel for competition when their team is requested to do so.
5. The child's willingness to work with other dancers, as well as good sportsmanship.
6. Must attend all scheduled team practices from September to the Oireachtas. Unless there is a conflict in which you must notify Shannon or Sheila one week before the practice.

## 9) Transfer of Pupil Rule

Any child transferring to the Shamrock School from another Irish dance school whose teacher is a member of An Comission le Rince Gaelacha, and the Irish Dancing Teacher Association of North America will be subjected to the following rules:

1. There will be a retraining period of 6 months where the student will be prohibited from doing competitions.
2. There will be a \$25.00 transfer fee paid by the transferee to the Irish Dancing Teachers Association of New England (IDTANE)

The IDTANE is the tracking source for all dancers in New England. Upon the receipt of the transfer, the IDTANE vice regional director will notify the previous teacher of the transfer.

#### 10) Public Appearances and Performances

The instructors of the Shamrock School must be notified in writing of all the performances a Shamrock School dancer does outside of the Shamrock School public appearances and performances we do as a group.

The students have many opportunities to perform in public. A list of opportunities to perform around March 17<sup>th</sup>, St. Patrick's Day will be given out during the second semester. Other opportunities might include benefits, wedding, and festivals. Many shows that have already been scheduled prior to September 10<sup>th</sup> are listed in our Shamrock School Calendar, available for purchase every September. It is important to have the teacher review the dances for the performances prior to the show, so group dances for the shows will be rehearsed during class, even though the dances being reviewed may not be what the dancers will be performing at the end of the year recital.

Students are **not permitted to teach their dance steps to anyone** who is not enrolled in the Shamrock School, or anyone in the school that has not learned your dancer's specific material.

Our teachers work extremely hard to create your dancer's material to suit their ability and style.

A student of the Shamrock School is **not permitted to perform a show with another dance school** or with another Irish dancer from another school.

**No parent is allowed** to personally ask any other student from the Shamrock School or from any other Irish dance school to perform at any function, unless they **first** obtain permission from Shannon Barry.

A student is required to wear an Irish dance costume either school or solo, specified by the teacher for the specific performance.

#### 11) Costumes

All students are required to wear a costume for all public events.

A solo costume may only be purchased by dancers who wish to pursue the competitive route of Irish dancing, and only when the dancer has moved up to novice level in competition can the dress be worn in competition.



**Solo dresses must be shown to and discussed with a Shamrock School teacher before purchasing it.** Especially if it is your first solo costume and if it is used.

## 12) Feis Information

A feis or feisanna is the Gaelic word for competition and is widely used in the Irish dancing community.

The Shamrock School sponsors two feisanna annually, one open to all dancers throughout North America in February and one only open to the Shamrock School dancers in April.

Feis dates are marked on the Shamrock School calendar, Feisweb and efeis, which are online websites to sign up for feisanna.

If you have any more questions not addressed in the Shamrock School Policy please email Shannon Barry at [shamrockbarry@att.net](mailto:shamrockbarry@att.net).