

DOHERTY PETRI

LANCASTER BRANCH

Business Name: Paloma School of Irish Dance



GUIDE TO:

All Your Questions About Irish Dance!

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MISSION STATEMENT:

My goal as the teacher of the Doherty Petri - Lancaster Branch is to help each individual student reach their full potential as a dancer while being a positive Christian role model in their lives. I hope to use my years of experience as a dancer and competitor to help each student receive the best training possible.

Students may join the school with several goals in mind: to have Irish dance as a hobby, to experience it as a cultural or community activity, or to train for the competitive circuit and perhaps a future career. My goal is to facilitate each person's individual goals but also to train each student as if they are preparing for the rigorous competitive circuit whether they choose to compete or not.

-Esther Pujol

TCRG'S BIOGRAPHIES

Esther Pujol

I was born into an Irish Dancing family as my Grandmother & her brother had been champion Irish Dancers in Waterford, Ireland and my sisters also danced. However, I chose to compete in Scottish Highland Dancing for most of my youth, reaching the highest competitive level in that discipline.

At the age of 15, I decided to switch to Irish dancing and my love of it grew from there. By the time I was 17, I had advanced to Preliminary Championships (the 5th of 6 levels) and had qualified for the North American National Championships.

After graduating from high school, I chose to put dancing on hold to follow my true passion of serving overseas as a Missionary. The next 10 years, I spent traveling and living overseas as a missionary, getting married, and having children.

At the age of 28, I decided to come back to training for the competitive circuit. This was unheard of in the sport at that time: to be so "old" and to train at that level. I was able to come back and surpass my previous level, moving into Open Championships (the highest level.)

I have qualified for every major championship except the World Championships and have had the privilege to train at one of the top schools in North America and the World (The Broesler School of Irish Dance.) I have taught Irish dancing in many different capacities over the years but The Paloma School of Irish Dance is the only school I've ever founded as my own and I'm excited to see it grow and bless others.

Sara Locke

I started her Irish Dancing career at the age of 11, under the direction of Sheila Butler Duffy, ADCRG, and Myra Watters, ADCRG, at the Butler School of Irish Dancing where I competed several times at the Southern Region Oireachtas, the North American Championships, as well as the All-Ireland Championships and World Championships of Irish Dancing! In 2011, I finished her Irish dancing career with the McGinley Academy of Irish Dance, under the direction of Eileen McGinley Watson, ADCRG.

In August 2016, I acquired her TCRG certification and was certified through An Coimisiún le Rinci Gaelacha – CLRG in Dublin, Ireland, as an Irish Dance instructor. I currently sits on the selection committee for the IDTANA Cyril McNiff Memorial Scholarship Program.

I love to help set goals and help dancers achieve them. I would like to pursue her ADCRG in the future and advance my knowledge on personal fitness for children.

CLASS INFORMATION

VIEWING CLASSES

Any parent wishing to stay during their child's class may do so in the parent's area. *Parents are free to watch the class as long as they are not a disruption to their child or the class.*

DRESS CODE

New Students / Beginner (Level 1) Students:

1. Socks
2. Optional: Jazz shoes for boys and ballet slippers for girls
3. Loose fitting shorts
4. Loose fitting t-shirt
5. Warm-up pants may be worn during winter as long as they are taken off after warm-ups.
6. Students should not wear any type of dangling jewelry.
7. Female dancers with long hair must wear hair pulled up away from their face and neck.

Advanced Beg. & Up Students: (Transfer Students: attending longer than 6 months)

1. Socks
2. Jazz or Reel shoes (for boys) and ghillies (for girls)
3. Any **DP Spiritwear Item** (anything with a DP logo, Dutch Country Feis items, Rose & Shamrock items, Paloma Performance Troupe, Paloma items purchased from a consignment shop, etc.)
4. Warm-up pants may be worn during winter as long as they are taken off after warm-ups.
5. Students should not wear any type of dangling jewelry.
6. Female dancers with long hair must wear hair pulled up away from their face and neck.

WHAT TO BRING TO CLASS

Every student should have:

- 🔥 A water bottle for class with their name clearly printed on it.
- 🔥 Dance shoes.
- 🔥 Proper attire. Please refer to the section titled "Clothing & Footwear for Class"
- 🔥 Irish dance Copy Book & Pen or pencil.

Class Cancellation Policy

If The Doherty Petri - Lancaster Branch closes due to bad weather, we will announce it via e-mail & the facebook page. When classes are canceled due to weather, students should follow regular make-up procedures.

Make-Up Classes

Make-up classes can be made up at any equivalent class until the end of the school year (i.e. May 31st.)

OTHER POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Parent/Teacher Communication:

Our TCRG's are always willing to work with you to meet the individual needs of your child. Class time is meant for the training of the students and should not be used for parent teacher communication as time is short and parents are investing their hard-earned money into this time. Please email or call during the day with your individual questions or concerns. If you have a pressing question, you may email Esther (or any other TCRG) during class and they will attempt to respond in a timely fashion.

Important reminders, cancellations, announcements as well as dance show information will be sent to your e-mail from time to time. Please make sure you take the time to read these e-mails, and keep an e-mail address on file with us that you can be sure to check frequently.

Updating Contact Information/Emergency Contact Forms:

If at any point you need to update the information listed on your registration form/ emergency contact form, please contact me right away or as soon as you remember!

A new Emergency Contact Form must be filled out each September regardless of when you began classes with the Doherty Petri-Lancaster Branch. The signatures, dates, and contact information must be filled out again each year for legal purposes and so we can be confident we have your most current emergency data on file!

Termination Policy:

If you decide to withdraw your child from our dance school (whether permanently or temporarily) we kindly ask you to give us verbal or written notice. You may call or e-mail Esther to let her know. We appreciate your consideration in this matter.

Cost:

Please check the website for the most up-to-date costs for classes.

Family Discount:

- 1st family member pays full price
- 2nd family member pays full price
- 3rd family member pays ½ price
- All other family members are free

Referral Program:

The Student Referral Incentive Program awards a referring DP - Lancaster Branch family with a one month tuition credit for each new student that is referred to and actually enrolls in and attends DP - Lancaster Branch for one month. (Refer a family that enrolls two students and receive a 2 month tuition credit.) The referral program is for parents or guardians who are paying tuition for enrolled students. Incentive award consideration is limited to the referral of brand new students enrolling in DP and does not apply to students who are returning to DP - Lancaster Branch. The DP - Lancaster Branch family who refers a new family is responsible to let Esther know about the referral.

Lobby Rules and Etiquette

When dancers are in the lobby areas of the studio, parents must provide supervision for their children. When our staff is teaching, their attention must be on the dancers attending the class. Teachers are not responsible for supervising dancers in the lobby.

ADVANCEMENT

Levels of Irish Dance / Moving Up

A student is ready to move up to the next level after they have won the necessary placements as listed here: (These placements do not all have to be won at the same feis/competition. For example, a Beginner student might compete at their first feis and win a 1st in Reel, 3rd in Light Jig, and nothing in Slip Jig. At their next competition, they win nothing in Reel, 1st in Light Jig, and 1st in Slip Jig. Even though this student did not win 1st in each dance at the same feis/competition, they can combine their winnings and move up to Advanced Beginner.)

If a child doesn't choose to compete, a TCRG will move them up as they see that they are ready.

Level 1: Beginner Grade (a.k.a. Beginner)

Things to know about this level:

1. A beginner is a competitor who has not yet taken a full year of Irish Dance lessons, thereby giving beginners a full year with such status.
2. Beginners must use school costumes in competition.
3. Girl beginners under the age of 12 are not allowed to wear make-up in competition.

Dances for this level:

Reel (2 steps)
Slip Jig (2 steps) (This dance is for girls only)
Light Jig (2 steps)

How to move out of this level:

Take lessons for 1 year. (Some dancers may move out of this level earlier if they show above average progress.)

Level 2: Advanced Beginner Grade (a.k.a. Advanced Beginner)

Things to know about this level:

1. An Advanced Beginner is a competitor who has taken a full year of Irish Dance lessons.
2. Advanced Beginners must use school costumes in competition.
3. Advanced Beginner Girls under the age of 12 are not allowed to wear make-up in competition.
4. Dancers start hard shoe at this level!

Dances for this level:

Reel (2 steps)
Slip Jig (2 steps) (This dance is for girls only)
Light Jig (2 steps)
Traditional Treble Jig (2 steps)
Traditional Hornpipe (2 steps)

How to move out of this level:

Dancers must win a 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place in order to advance to Novice category in that particular dance. Competitions must have at least 5 competitors for the placements to count towards advancement.

Level 3: Novice Grade (a.k.a. Novice)

Things to know about this level:

1. A Novice dancer has placed 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in Advanced Beginner in a particular dance.
2. Dancers may now wear solo costumes at this level!
3. Dancers may compete in Team & Traditional Set dance competitions at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Irish Dance Championships.

How to move out of this level:

Dancers must win a 1st place in order to advance to Open Prizewinner category in that particular dance. Competitions must have at least 5 competitors for the placements to count towards advancement.

Dances for this level:

- Reel (2 steps)
- Slip Jig (2 steps) (This dance is for girls only)
- Non-Traditional Treble Jig (2 steps)
- Non-Traditional Hornpipe (2 steps)

Level 4: Open Prizewinner Grade (a.k.a. Prizewinner)

Things to know about this level:

1. A Prizewinner dancer has placed 1st in Novice in a particular dance.

Dances for this level:

- Reel (2 steps)
- Slip Jig (2 steps) (This dance is for girls only)
- Non-Traditional Treble Jig (2 steps)
- Non-Traditional Hornpipe (2 steps)

How to move out of this level:

Dancers must win a 1st place in a soft shoe dance and a 1st place in a hard shoe dance in order to move to the next level. Competitions must have at least 5 competitors for the placements to count towards advancement.

Level 5: Preliminary Championship (a.k.a. Prelims)

Things to know about this level:

1. A Preliminary Champion dancer has placed 1st in a soft shoe dance and 1st in a hard shoe dance in Prizewinner.
2. Dancers may now compete in the solo dance competitions at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Championships.
3. It is possible to qualify for the North American National Championships and World Championships at this level but it is rare.
4. This is the level where Irish Dancing can become more than a “hobby.” Dancers who achieve this level may seriously consider sitting for their Teaching Exam. Teaching for five years then qualifies a person to sit for their Judging Exam.

Dances for this level:

- Reel (3 steps) & Non-Traditional Hornpipe (2 1/2 steps)
 - Slip Jig (2 1/2 steps) (This dance is for girls only) & Non-Traditional Treble Jig (3 steps)
- *Dancers switch back & forth between these sets of dances every year.

How to move out of this level:

Dancers must win 3 overall 1st places in order to move to the next level. Competitions must have at least 5 competitors for the placements to count towards advancement.

Level 6: Open Championship (a.k.a. Open)

Things to know about this level:

1. An Open Champion dancer has placed 1st overall in 3 Preliminary Championship competitions.
2. Dancers may now compete in the solo dance competitions at the North American National Championships, All-Ireland Championships, Great Britain Championships, All-Scotland Championships, British Nationals, & New Zealand Championships.
3. It is more likely to qualify for the World Championships at this level.
4. Dancers who place well at this level may seriously consider a career as a professional dancer. There are many dance troupes (small and large) that actively recruit dancers from this level.

Dances for this level:

- Reel (3 steps) & Non-Traditional Hornpipe (2 1/2 steps) & Treble Jig Set Dance
 - Slip Jig (2 1/2 steps) (This dance is for girls only) & Non-Traditional Treble Jig (3 steps) & Hornpipe Set Dance
- *Dancers switch back & forth between these sets of dances every year.

How to move out of this level:

There is no higher level than this. Dancers at this level focus on qualifying for the World Championships and placing as high as they can in local competitions as well as major championships.

Additional Information about Moving Up:

Most students spend, on average, 1 – 2 years in each level; however, this can vary greatly depending on age, amount of practice time, and natural talent. Sometimes, a student may move up after only a few months in their level, while other times they may need 3-4 years before being ready to advance. Each level gets significantly harder, and may require significantly more time to conquer than the level before it. If a student is anxious to move into the next level, they should consider coming to class more times per week and adding to their practice time at home. Moving up levels & placing well has almost nothing to do with skills learned. It is almost entirely based on the ability to complete the skills (whether basic or difficult) with the Technique listed in the following section.

Irish Dance Technique:

- 🔥 Turn-out (feet are sideways, with toes pointed outward)
- 🔥 Cross-over (feet and knees are crossed over)
- 🔥 High on toes (keeping heels high off floor, even when landing jumps)
- 🔥 Pointed toes (always pointing feet & curl toes as hard as possible)
- 🔥 Kicking bottom (we kick our bottoms hundreds of times in 1 dance!)
- 🔥 Straight knees (keeping legs very straight except while kicking bottom)
- 🔥 Elevation (jumping and leaping high off the floor)
- 🔥 Movement (covering large areas, stretching your legs far across floor)
- 🔥 Timing/Rhythm (listening to the music and dancing directly to the beat)
- 🔥 Posture (shoulders pulled back & down, chin parallel with the floor, hands in fists, arms tucked tightly by the dancer's sides.)
- 🔥 Strength & Stamina (dancers must be in peak physical condition in order to reach their full potential. Dancing must remain strong and consistent to the end of each dance.)

Practicing at Home:

We encourage students to practice at home during the week so that they can improve the skills they are learning and be prepared to do their steps in class. A simple 10 minute review of steps and techniques every other day should be a sufficient minimum for most students. Additional practice time beyond that is optional, however students will likely find that the amount of time they put into practicing each week will correspond with how quickly they improve and move up through the levels.

Private Lessons:

Esther offers private and semi-private lessons to students who are looking for additional help outside of regular classes. You may speak with her about flexible scheduling and about what you would like to achieve through the use of private lessons. Privates can be held at the studio or at Esther's home. Costs will vary depending on the number of students attending the lesson and where it is located.

Champ Program:

🔥 The Champ Program is open to dancers who have earned a 1st place in a Prizewinner soft shoe dance & a 1st place in a Prizewinner hard shoe dance (or who have been invited to move up by Esther if a non-competitive dancer.)

🔥 The Champ Program is geared towards dancers who would like to take competition seriously and/or eventually pursue a Teacher's certificate or a Judging certificate for Irish Dancing.

🔥 Dancers at this level will begin to train for their "Grade Exams" (i.e. Teaching Exams) and will actively train for the "Majors" circuit (i.e. The Mid-Atlantic Regional Championship & later on, the North American National Championships & World Championships.)

🔥 Dancers who have reached this level but do not wish to pursue a Teaching certificate or compete seriously are encouraged to stay in Open Prizewinner which is an "Open" level meaning dancers can stay there permanently and simply pursue dance as a hobby.

🔥 Dancers who enter The Doherty Petri Champ Program will be asked to compete at the Mid-Atlantic Regional Championships in solo competitions and possibly in team competitions as well. They will also be asked to begin taking their Grade Exams (i.e. to pursue their teaching certificate.) Exceptions will be made on a case to case basis.

🔥 Please check the website for current class times and prices for Champ Program classes. Please note that Champ classes are very lengthy. The reason for this is to set aside one day a week for a long class instead of expecting dancers to come to the studio several nights a week but for shorter classes. This is with the understanding that the dancers are still practicing at home during the week and/or cross training in another sport. These helpful hints will be outlined to the Champ dancers. Before major competitions, dancers may choose to attend a class on a second night or book private lessons, as needed.

Dinner: During long, evening classes dancers are encouraged to pack a light dinner to eat during class. A light snack before class is also helpful and 2-3 water bottles for class are a good idea. ***Homework:*** Major projects should be completed in the days before class as well as major tests studied for and/or books read. Dancers should only have daily homework on a Champ Class Night and are encouraged to bring it along to class and work on it during any downtime.

PERFORMANCES & COMPETITIONS

Shows/Parades/Competitions/Recitals/Etc...

🔥 All Shows/Parades/Competitions/Recitals/Etc... are 100% optional.

🔥 Show/Parade/Recital sign-ups and information are e-mailed a sign-up link as information is attained. If your child wishes to participate, they must sign up in a timely manner, ***be able to attend all practices***, and ***have the necessary costume***. Each show sign-up will indicate who is able to participate by naming the invited class levels.

🔥 Signing up for competitions (i.e. feiseanna) is done online through various different websites (see below). Dancers may compete as soon and as often as they wish. Ask a TCRG what level and what dances your child should be competing in.

Step 1: Check the schedule of competitions on the Paloma Website on the “competitions” page under the “members” page.

Step 2: Competition sign-ups are found on www.feisweb.com, www.efeis.com, and www.feisworx.com.

COSTUMES

Important & Reassuring Notes about School Costumes:

🔥 The school costume is worn by the entire school (i.e. all ages & all levels) for group dances and/or performances.

🔥 School costumes are only updated about every 15-20 years.

🔥 It is important to note that although the initial cost of a costume can be daunting, you can hopefully re-sell items within the school, purchase items used within the school, and will get a lot of wear out of each piece of the costume.

🔥 Most Irish dance schools' costuming prices range from \$200-\$800 per school costume. The costume we will be using is one of the cheapest ones possible but also very classy and completely acceptable even at the highest levels of show & competition.