

# ***BOWS AND TOES***

## **IRISH DANCE INFORMATION AND POLICY SHEET**

**Beginner 1 and 2 – 3:30-4:20**

**Performer 1 and 2 – 5:00-6:30**

**Private Lessons – 3:10-3:25 and 4:30-5:00**

### **Locations:**

**Santa Paula - Mondays  
St. Paul's Episcopal Church  
117 N. 7th St.  
Santa Paula, CA 93060**

**Ojai - Wednesdays  
Grange Hall  
381 Cruzero St.  
Ojai, CA 93023**

## **Rates**

- 1st Child - **\$50 per month** (class only, does not include private lessons)
- Siblings (same immediate family) - **\$40 per month**
- Private lessons (one required each month) **\$10 per 15 minute lesson**
- **\$15 registration fee** per family billed annually
- **Make checks out to “Deirdre Becher” not to “Bows and Toes”**

We will invoice you for each month, and payment is due in full by the end of the month.

## **Contact**

- 805-640-1279 (Deirdre)
- 805-646-8414 (During Ojai class only)
- [Deirdre@bowstoes.com](mailto:Deirdre@bowstoes.com) (Class or Dance Questions)
- [MBecher@bowstoes.com](mailto:MBecher@bowstoes.com) (Billing or Website Issues)

## **Online Account**

**Every student must be registered through our online system.** When you register, you will be given an online account with a password that gives you access to the calendar of events. You will use this calendar to view recital and performance dates which your child has been invited to participate in. The link to register can be found on the website.

## **Required to Purchase**

- *Bows and Toes Dance CD* (\$15 – available at class)
- Black soft dance shoes. Beginner 1 and 2 students can provide their own ballet, jazz or Irish dance shoes, provided they are black. If you do not have them, you can buy them from the links on our website.

- Irish Hardshoes (black tap shoes are sufficient for the Beginner Levels, but Irish hardshoes are required for the Performance levels. All links are on the website.)
- Performance Costume: See the website for links to purchase the required costume for your level.

## Class Rules

- Wear shorts or leggings, and other such exercise wear (no jeans, long skirts/dresses, sandals).
- Girls wear hair tied back.
- Bring a water bottle.
- Please wear dance shoes to class (sneakers are fine for the first couple weeks while you buy dance shoes).
- **Be attentive at all times; No goofing off during class!!** This is extremely important, and if a child continually needs to be corrected on his/her behavior, we will notify the parent, and eventually remove the child from class if they show no change in behavior.
- **Only students allowed in the hall** Parents are welcome to observe from the outside. All others, including siblings, must use either the Grange kitchen in Ojai, or the children's room next to the hall in Santa Paula. We must keep a distraction-free environment for the students and teachers to focus. We know that we have been lax on this in the past, and have let many non-students into the hall, but we feel that we need to stick to this rule to keep class focused.
- Be quiet and respectful of the properties we rent for class. Any siblings that are not students must be well-behaved while on the premises. No wild activities such as running and chasing each other is allowed at the Grange or at St. Paul's Church. Please help us maintain a good reputation with our wonderful, gracious landlords!
- Practice assignment sheets, initialed by parents, must be turned in at dance class each week. More details below...

## Private Lessons

In addition to the group classes, every student in **Beginner 1 and 2** is required to take at least one 15 minute private lesson per month. The cost per lesson is \$10. Students, especially beginners, are encouraged to sign up for optional private lessons over and above the one required lesson. Additional private lessons will be required of students who fall below the monthly practice expectation (described below.) Private lessons are also available throughout the summer, and are highly recommended for students who want to make quick improvement and advance to the Performer levels faster!

## Cancellation Policy

For any private lesson that is scheduled for a student, you can cancel for a full refund if you give 24 hours notice. Cancellation within 24 hours of the lesson time forfeits the refund.

## Home Practice Commitment

Part of being an Irish dance student is making a strong commitment to practicing at home. **Students who do not practice will not progress, will get bored with class, and hold other students back.** We want dance to be a positive experience, and practice is the key! We have many ways to encourage practice, namely:

- A detailed written practice assignment after every class
- **Videos of steps and moves on our website for reference**

- An incentive system that rewards students every 20 days practiced
- An end-of-semester special award to the top 3 most practiced students

The expectation for all students is a minimum of 4 days per week practicing for at least 10 minutes in level one, and at least 15 minutes in level two. This requires only 40-60 minutes per week, but it is vital for moving forward. We track this by recording the days practiced **initialed by the parent** on each students' practice sheet, which they are required to bring back to class each week. It is the parent's responsibility to see that your child practices, and to initial each day practiced on their sheet.

If a student practices fewer than 13 non-class days in any month, he will be assigned an extra mandatory private lesson to bring him up to speed in class. These extra lessons are required if the student wants to remain in class. If a student practices less than 13 days per month multiple times in a semester, they will be asked to take a break from dancing until they can make the necessary commitment. **The only way we can know if a student has practiced enough is if you the parent initial their practice sheets and turn them in each week. Please help us do this!!**

## Class Levels and Advancement

There are four skill levels of advancement in Bows and Toes that determine which class you are in, and which performances you are able to participate in. All students are invited and encouraged to perform at our two annual recitals. More advanced level students will have additional performance opportunities. Advancing to the next level should always be a goal for each student.

1. Beginner 1 (1<sup>st</sup> class)
2. Beginner 2 (1<sup>st</sup> class)
3. Performer 1 (2<sup>nd</sup> class)
4. Performer 2 (2<sup>nd</sup> class, most advanced)

All students start at Beginner 1. In order to advance to Beginner 2, students must:

- Not be delinquent in practice days (at least 13 parent-initialed practice days per month, and class days do not count.)
- Maintain good behavior in class on a regular basis.
- Master basic good dancing form.
- Know the 1<sup>st</sup> four reels, Light Jig 2, Stamp Step, and basic dance moves.

Advancing to Performer 1 means moving up to the 2<sup>nd</sup> class, and is a bigger accomplishment. These students must:

- 9 years old or older
- Not be delinquent in practice days (at least 13 parent-initialed practice days per month, and class days do not count.)
- Maintain good behavior in class on a regular basis
- Pass an audition to show they can dance the following steps. For soft shoe steps, **they need to stay with the music**. For hardshoe, this is not necessary.  
All four beginner reels, all three light jigs, Slip Jig 1, Single Jig 1 and 3, Stamp Step, Front Back Step
- Finally, dancers moving into Performer 1 must show significant improvement in dancing form and bodily control. It is not enough to have the steps memorized – they need to be able to dance them with a basic degree of fluency.

In order to advance to Performer 2, the highest level of dancer, students must:

- Dance at the level of Performer 1 for at least 1 year.
- Practice at least 13 days/month (must not be delinquent in practice day). We expect dancers at this to level to practice more than the required minimum.
- Know all reel steps, the Cape Breton A Capella dance, Slip Jig Routine, and the Ojai Treble Reel.
- Demonstrate excellent dancing form in all steps.

## Recitals and Performances

We have two annual recitals in Ojai for the whole school, December 12<sup>th</sup> 2015 and the Spring recital at the end of May. These are not strictly required, but are greatly encouraged. Students who are not able to participate are still welcome in class, but during the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the semester, class will focus mostly on preparing for the recital. Students must have their full costumes in order to perform, or be part of the recitals. No exceptions! Students must commit to the recitals by the beginning of October / March. **Once committed, it is absolutely mandatory to attend every class the month before the recital, and also the mandatory dress rehearsal on December 9<sup>th</sup>.**

Students are encouraged to participate in additional performance opportunities that come up throughout the semester. The more students advance, the more they will be invited to join in these extra performances. Which students participate in performances is left to the discretion of the teachers, and performance is by invitation only.

## Have Fun!

Last but not least, make sure to have fun! If students and parents put in the effort we outline here, students will become good, proficient dancers, and parents will have the joy of seeing their children thrive in an athletic art form rooted in folk tradition. The policies outlined above are the framework necessary to make dancing a rewarding experience for everyone!

Thanks for being part of Bows and Toes!

Deirdre and Max