



MHDA Guidebook for New Parents / Dancers

Welcome to highland dancing!!! We are excited that you have chosen to join our association. This package is meant to provide you with information and answer some of your questions. Your teacher is your most valuable resource and should be your first point of contact. Other dance parents are also a great resource!



About Us:

Founded in 1947 and incorporated in 1978, the Manitoba Highland Dancers' Association (MHDA) is a non-profit organization run by volunteers (mostly dance parents!). This organization provides our dancers with high caliber competitions, honoraria, scholarships and workshops.

Membership:

MHDA has four types of membership – Full, Associate, Teacher and Honourary. To dance at an MHDA Closed Competition, your family must hold a valid full MHDA membership, which is due September 30th each year for renewing members.

Activities:

Fundraising is a major part of our organization's focus. Fundraising events, together with our memberships and government grants, enables us to operate as a successful organization.

The MHDA has been constituted and formed to:

1. Promote the Scottish Culture in Manitoba through the medium of dance.
2. Preserve Highland Dancing in Manitoba.
3. Encourage opportunities for the development of skills and technical competence in the field of Highland Dancing.
4. Administer, organize and regulate competitions.
5. Ensure that the Manitoba Championships are held on an annual basis.
6. Solicit and receive financial contributions and public support in order to meet its objectives.

MHDA Board of Directors consists of:

- Five Officers – President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Competition Coordinator
- Seven Directors – the above five officers, plus the Membership Director and Fundraising Director

AGM – our Annual General Meeting is held in September each year, after our July 31st year-end.

Membership:

1. Full Membership – open to any individual or family resident in Manitoba upon completion of application, payment of fees and completion of fundraising and volunteer requirements. Full voting privileges
2. Associate Membership – open to any individual or family resident in Manitoba upon completion of application and payment of fees. Associate members cannot hold elected office, and do not have voting privileges
3. Teacher Membership – Open to any qualified highland dance teacher. Teacher members have full voting privileges but may not be elected to office in MHDA. A teacher member does not have the privilege of entering a closed competition.
4. Honorary Life Membership – Directors may bestow an Honorary Life Membership on any member who they deem has met the criteria for such an award. An Honorary Life Member has full voting privileges and may be elected to office in the MHDA.

Volunteering:

Part of MHDA's mandate is to host competitions throughout the year. These events require a great deal of work and volunteers to make them happen. As part of your general membership, we require that you provide two volunteer shifts (roughly 3 hours) throughout the year. You can sign up for your shifts online through the link provided in our website.

When volunteering at a competition, you will be required to check in with the volunteer coordinator, and sign in. Jobs include such things as working the registration desk, marshalling dancers to go on stage, and entering scoring data from the Judge's mark sheets into the computer.

Benefits of being a member of MHDA:

1. Ability to vote on all MHDA matters and eligible to sit on the Board of Directors
2. Member dancers can enter all 'closed' competitions, and avoid paying non-member fees at the open competitions
3. Eligible for annual awards and scholarships
4. Eligible to participate in dance-outs throughout the year including Folklorama
5. Subsidized/member rates for out-of-province competitions

6. Ability to participate in annual fundraisers and receive funding to help with SDCCS costs
7. Sense of community & support

Dance Competitions:

In Manitoba, we have the following regularly scheduled dance competitions:

October –	MHDA ‘Open’
November –	MHDA ‘Closed’
January –	MHDA ‘Closed’
February –	Winnipeg Scottish Festival (Open, hosted by ScotDance Manitoba)
March –	MHDA ‘Open’
April –	ScotDance Manitoba ‘Open’ (hosted by ScotDance Manitoba)
May –	MHDA ‘Closed’ – Provincial Selection Meet
June –	Mid-Canada Open Competition and Championship Lord Selkirk Premiership Manitoba Highland Gathering (non-MHDA Open held in Selkirk)

Registration for these competitions is made available online through the MHDA website roughly 3-4 weeks before the competition, closing 10 days prior to the actual competition. This allows the organizers sufficient time to prepare all materials required for the competition.

ScotDance Manitoba (SDM) is the organization representing professional highland dance teachers in Manitoba. MHDA works closely with SDM to ensure the smooth operation of all our competitions and championship events. They provide a Technical Advisor to MHDA’s Board, and attend all MHDA Board meetings.

All competitions are run under the authority of the Scottish Official Board of Highland Dance (SOBHD) and ScotDance Canada (SDC) according to their rules and regulations.

You may consider registering for competitions taking place in other parts of Canada or even the world. Your dance teacher can provide you with information about out-of-province events. To compete, dancers must have a SOBHD card, which are issued annually.

Dances and Dance Categories:

Highland dance competitions recognize 5 different levels of dancers: Primary, Beginner, Novice, Intermediate and Premier. Dancers ‘progress’ their way up the ranks of these 5 levels as they gain experience and competence. As the dancer enters a new category, a new SOBHD card will be required. Dancers in the Beginner, Novice and Intermediate will earn ‘stamps’ on the back of their cards for achieving certain placings in dance competitions.

When starting, your dancer will have been entered into either Primary or Beginner category depending on their age. Primary dancers are 4-6 years while Beginner dancers 7 years & older.

Your dancer’s transition from one category to the next should be made with consultation and guidance from your teacher. Here are the technical guidelines issued by SOBHD for transitioning:

From Primary to Beginner – after your dancer turns 7 years old;

From Beginner to Novice – after your dancer a) gains a 1st, 2nd or 3rd placing in six separate competitions, or b) until twelve months following the first beginner stamp whichever is the

later, after which the dancer is classified as a Novice dancer and is not eligible to enter a Beginner's event (note - Beginners can get stamps for highland dances only).

Novice to Intermediate – after your dancer a) gains a 1st, 2nd or 3rd placing in six separate Novice competitions, or b) until twelve months following the first Novice stamp whichever is the later, after which the dancer is classified as an Intermediate dancer and is not eligible to enter a Novice event.

Intermediate to Premier – after your dancer a) gains a 1st, 2nd or 3rd placing in six separate Intermediate competitions, or b) until 12 months following the first intermediate stamp whichever is the later, after which that competitor is classified as a Premier dancer and is not eligible to enter an Intermediate event.

When registering for a competition, your dancer does NOT have to dance all the dances in their category at a competition. Your teacher will advise which dances to enter.

Primary Dances

Pas de Basques
Pas de Basques and High Cuts
Fling
Sword

Beginner /Novice Dances

<i>Fling</i>	<i>Lilt</i>
<i>Sword</i>	<i>Flora</i>
<i>Seann Truibhas</i>	
<i>Reel</i>	



Intermediate Dances

<i>Fling</i>	<i>Laddie</i>
<i>Sword</i>	<i>Barracks Johnnie</i>
<i>Seann Truibhas</i>	<i>Irish Jig</i>
<i>Reel</i>	<i>Sailor's Hornpipe</i>
<i>Lilt</i>	
<i>Flora</i>	

Premier Dances

<i>Fling</i>	<i>Village Maid</i>
<i>Sword</i>	<i>Earl of Errol</i>
<i>Seann Truibhas</i>	<i>Scotch Measure</i>
<i>Reel</i>	<i>Blue Bonnets</i>
<i>Lilt</i>	<i>Barracks Johnnie</i>
<i>Flora</i>	<i>Irish Jig</i>
<i>Laddie</i>	<i>Sailor's Hornpipe</i>

Premier Class is the highest level of advancement, and classes at competitions are divided based on the dancer's age.

At a competition, even the Pre-Premier dance categories may become further subdivided by age. These subdivisions are referred to as 'classes'. The number of dancers and ages will determine if and when a category will be split into age classes. Generally, competition organizers like to have at least 6 dancers in a class.

There are exceptions to how age categories are determined. For example, the provincial selection meet to select the representatives to the Canadian Championships (which is held at the ScotDance Canada Championship Series – SDCCS – annually). The ages for the Manitoba Closed

Championship in May are 7 & under 10 years, 10 & under 12 years, 12 & under 14 years, 14 & under 16 years, 16 & under 18 years, 18 & under 21, and 21 years and over. Note that in order to be considered a 'Championship' class, there must be a minimum of 6 dancers competing in the age category. Classes without 6 dancers will still select provincial representatives, however such a class cannot be called a 'championship'.

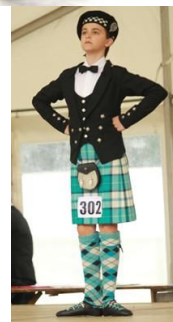
Some competitions also have 'special events'. These are dances that do not form a part of the class dances, and all dancers in a category compete against each other in the special event (i.e. all beginners regardless of age would compete against each other). Special events are usually accompanied by a special award apart from the normal competition awards.

Highland Dances:

1. Fling
2. Sword
3. Seann Truibhas
4. Reels

Traditional highland dances are danced in a kilt.

- Tartan Kilt
- Matching socks (with garters) (or white socks for pre-premier)
- Velvet jacket (or vest)
- Black / colored underwear / shorts
- White ruffle dickie (with jacket)
- White ruffle blouse (with vest)
- Ghillies



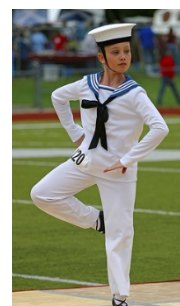
National Dances:

1. Scottish Lilt (aboyne)
2. Flora MacDonald's Fancy (aboyne)
3. Highland Laddie (danced in a kilt)
4. Barracks Johnny (danced in a kilt)
5. Blue Bonnets (aboyne)
6. Village Maid (aboyne)
7. Earl of Errol (aboyne)
8. Scotch Measure (aboyne)
9. Irish Jig (danced in a jig costume)
10. Sailors Hornpipe (hornpipe costume)



National dances are generally danced in a National costume called an Aboyne for girls, and in the kilt or trews (trousers) for boys.

- Tartan gathered skirt (boys can wear trews)
- White underskirt/petticoat
- White blouse – full sleeves to the elbow with no frills



- Velvet waist length lace-up vest with scalloped or petal design all way round
- Square or rectangular plaid pleated, fastened to the right shoulder with a Scottish brooch.
- Plain white socks or natural tights/pantyhose
- White underwear / shorts

Preparing for a Competition:

- Suggested packing for a competition:
 - A small sewing kit
 - Extra safety pins to pin the competition number on the dance outfit, fix a split seam, etc.
 - Extra bobby pins and hairspray, hair elastics, hair nets
 - Spare shoelaces
 - First aid kit
 - Crocs to wear around the venue to protect the dance shoes
 - Kleenex, small towel
 - Sandpaper or water spray bottle for bottom of shoes
- Complete dance outfits, including:
 - Black and white underwear / shorts
 - Socks / pantyhose (and extras!)
 - Elastics / garters to keep socks up
 - Jig shoes / ghillies
- Full water bottle
- Healthy snacks (nothing too messy!) – check venue rules about outside food
- Practice dance mats
- Dancer registration card (SOBHD card). **This card is very important – it must be presented at every SOBHD recognized competition worldwide.** A fee of \$5 will be charged, and any awards earned at the competition will be withheld until the card is produced for verification by the Competition Coordinator or Technical Advisor. In the event the card is lost or destroyed, a replacement fee is charged for a new card. All dancers renew their registration card annually.

While at a Competition:

- Registration table should be set up roughly 30 minutes prior to competition start. Proceed to the table with your dancer's SOBHD card to register for the competition. If you cannot attend a competition that you have already registered for, please let someone know in advance so that the competition organizers can be notified prior to the start of the competition as this affects how the dancers will be lined up to take the stage during the competition.
- Programs can be pre-ordered when registering for a competition. It is a good idea to pre-order as they are usually cheaper in advance, and may not be available at the competition. The Program will tell you the dance classes, platform schedule (order in which the dances will be performed and on which part of the stage), and will include a space for writing in results.
- Competition refunds may be provided upon request only if you can provide a Doctor's note excusing your dancer from the competition for a medical reason. Other extraordinary explanations will be considered by the board upon a written request (for example death in the family, other special extenuating circumstance).
- For a competition there will usually be 2 platforms. A platform is an area of the stage upon which the dancers compete as they dance. There will be one judge assigned for each platform, and they will alternate between platforms as the dances change so that over the

course of a competition, a dancer is seen roughly an equal amount of times by each judge. Each judge may look for slightly different things or mark in a slightly different manner.

- The judges will change platforms after each dance is complete. The judges change platforms to ensure that each dancer is judged by more than one judge. Each judge, being an individual, will look for slightly different things and mark in a slightly different way.
- During a championship (highland dances) or premiership (national dances) there is only one platform and a panel of three judges will judge the dancer and scores from the three will be aggregated to determine final placings.
- Dancers are given dance points for each dance. Your teacher can explain what the judge may be looking for while judging. The judge's decisions are final.
- There are usually 2 pipers per competition, alternating between dances. Some competitions will run with taped music. Some pipers play faster or slower than others. Some pipers (or taped music) play a different tune than what your dancer practices. It is a good idea to practice to many different music selections.
- You are allowed to take photos and video of your dancer, as long as you do **not use any flash**. Please do not post video or photos of other dancers on the internet.
- Before leaving, please ensure that you have gathered up all your belongings including your dance card, and cleaned up any garbage. Any dancer who is awarded a perpetual trophy or cash must sign for same before leaving.

Awards

- Dancers are given dance points for each dance. You will not be able to see the judge's assigned dance points. At the end of the competition, awards will be handed out according to how the judges ranked the top half of the competitors in a class.
- Awards at MHDA competitions (usually medals or ribbons) are generally given to 'half plus one'. In other words, if there are 8 dancers, awards are generally given to the top 5 dancers. For a Championship or Premiership, awards are confined to the top 6 in the class.
- The older premier classes may receive money instead of ribbons or medals. Each competition's entry form will set out if that is the case.
- In addition to awards for each dance, there are also often aggregate awards (usually a trophy) for each class and for each category. These aggregate awards are determined on the basis of points gained by placing in each dance.

Points for individual placings are awarded as follows:

1st – 137 points
2nd – 91 points
3rd – 71 points
4th – 53 points
5th – 37 points
6th – 23 points

- If there are two classes in a category, each separate class will have an aggregate trophy winner. There may also be an award given to the overall category High Aggregate. That recipient will be the dancer in that category who achieved the highest points according to placings achieved in dances where there were more than 6 dancers who competed.
- Results achieved in any dances characterized as 'Special Events' are not included in determining aggregate awards.
- No trophies are awarded in the Primary class.

- A dancer who receives an aggregate award is usually given a small 'keeper' trophy that will be theirs to keep and is also given a 'perpetual' trophy that is effectively on loan to the dancer until the following year. The perpetual trophy will have plaques with the names of all prior recipients and the new winner can add their name to a plaque at their own cost. Before leaving the competition, the dancer will need to 'sign' for the perpetual trophy agreeing to keep it in good condition and to return it the following year.

Attire:

Dancers are expected to be dressed appropriately at all times. Changing in the warm-up areas, audience seating or hallways is not permitted. Proper change rooms are provided. Dancers are **not permitted to walk around in JUST sports bras or crop tops**. Dancers are expected to put on a warm-up jacket or shirt if not wearing full dance attire. The same applies for bottoms. Coloured underwear are NOT shorts. Dancers are expected to conduct themselves and represent our community with respect and dignity.

The Reel Etiquette:

In fairness to and in consideration of their fellow competitors, dancers must be prepared to completely dance the Reel and may not walk off or walk through it, given that the Reel requires the active participation of 4 dancers. The Judge(s) can and will stop the dance if a dancer is injured or conditions are unsafe. Dancers are also expected to dance as a fill in when required unless physically incapable of doing so. In the event of an injury or illness, it is best for the dance teacher to approach the Technical Advisors or Competition Coordinator to best address the situation.

Spectator, Volunteer and Parental Conduct:

Please be aware that while these events are competitions and taken seriously, we are a community. We are an organization of volunteers working together to put on the best events possible for our dancers. With that in mind, please remember:

- If a dancer or parent is in disagreement with the results, there are clear procedures for challenging the results laid out in the rules on every entry form. If a challenge is being made, it is strongly advised to consult your teacher for guidance. Under no circumstances are parents/dancers to approach and challenge judges, pipers or the scoring table directly.
- If there is a concern about someone else's conduct or a situation pertaining to the competition, please seek out the Technical Advisors or Competition Coordinator. Their names are published in every program and most of the volunteers and teachers can direct you to who you should be seeking out. It is not appropriate to reprimand someone else's dancer. Remember how you would want your dancer to be treated.
- If at any time when you are volunteering and asked for information, passed a message or a decision by a spectator, dancer, parent or judge that you are not qualified or authorized to answer, please take the time to seek out the Technical Advisors or Competition Coordinator. Please do not be afraid to say "I don't know" or "I'm not the right person to speak to about that."
- Lastly, if you are volunteering in a position that allows you to learn personal information or results prior to awards, you are expected to keep this information confidential.

Code of Conduct

GENERAL BEHAVIOUR:

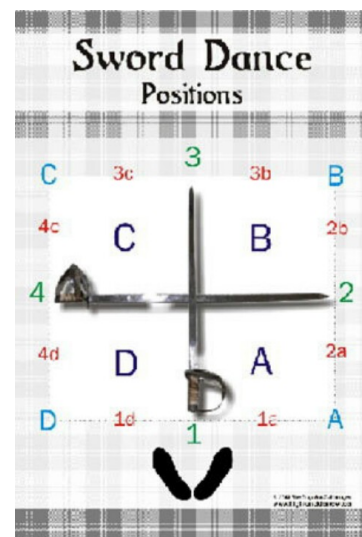
Participants will display honesty, fairness and equality of opportunity in all relationships in association with Highland Dancing. This includes but is not limited to social network communications (e.g. Facebook).

1. Participants will not engage in behaviour which undermines the status and esteem of Highland Dancing;
2. Participants will recognize the authority of judges and other officials and treat them with courtesy and respect;
3. Participants will treat all other participants with courtesy and respect, whether successful in competition or not;
4. Participants will not discriminate between other participants on the grounds of sex, ethnic background, religion, or ability;
5. Participants will respect the competence of teachers and judges and will not engage in public criticism; nor will participants be exposed to adverse public criticism. This includes but is not limited to verbal, textual or social networking communication;
6. Participants will not compromise the integrity of any competition result by seeking to influence any judge's decision;
7. Participants will not actively persuade dancers to change teacher nor will participants seek to influence other participant's choice of teacher;
8. Participants are responsible to maintain trophies and return them in the same condition as received.

ScotDance Canada Code of Ethics can be found on their website – www.scotdancecanada.ca.

MEDAL TESTS

- Medal tests are examinations scheduled usually twice a year to assess the dancers' proficiency against a standard. It is a non-competitive progression and grading system set out by the Scottish Dance Teachers Alliance (SDTA) in Scotland, or other highland dance organization.
- For each medal test an examiner is appointed to test local dancers. Your teacher will advise which level your dancer should dance, in each category of Highland, Nationals, Jig, Hornpipe and Theory.
- The dancer will be provided with a remark sheet telling him/her what was done well and tips to work on.
- Each dance is scored according to a scale – Highly Commended, Commended Plus, Commended, Pass Plus, Pass or Fail.
- Dancers who pass will receive a certificate and a medal from SDTA in Scotland. Fees are set by SDTA and will be collected before the tests. Each dance school is tested on its own individual day.



Non-Competitive Performances

Dance-Outs:

- Periodically, MHDA is asked to perform at events. This is a non-competitive and fun environment for the dancers and an excellent way to meet other dancers.
- A call-out for dancers to participate will be made, and the Dance-Out Coordinator will advise of the location and format of the event. Normally it is traditional dances performed at these events, and dancers of all ages and abilities are encouraged to attend.
- This is an excellent exposure for all dancers and MHDA, and a source of additional revenue for our organization.

Folklorama:

- Held in August each year, this is an excellent opportunity to showcase our dancers and their talents. Dancers perform various shows each night at the Pavilion of Scotland in a fun non-competitive environment. The shows consist of traditional dances done with dancers from a mixture of dance schools.

Tartan Tea:

- Each December, MHDA hosts our major fundraiser which requires a lot of organization and volunteers. It is an afternoon of dancing (usually fun choreography dances), coffee/tea and dainties, face painting, silent auction, bake table, etc.
- As part of your membership, you will receive 5 Tartan Tea tickets (at \$10 each) to sell to your family and friends (unless you opted for a tax receipt). Additional tickets may also be available from the Tartan Tea coordinator or at the door on the day of the Tea.
- Each dance school is responsible for one aspect of the Tea – for example running the silent auction table, bake table, craft table, etc.
- We hope that all members participate in the Tartan Tea – it really is a fun family day, and a great way to for dancers to perform for friends, family and relatives who would not normally attend a competition.

Contact Information

This publication was prepared by the Board of Directors of MHDA for its members. Should you have any additions, suggestions, questions or corrections, please contact:

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