July 2025

Dear Head Teacher

Irish Dancing Championships 2025

I am writing to you in my capacity as Chair of the Southern England Regional Council, a subsidiary body of the Irish Dancing Commission, an organisation with charitable status, based in Dublin. The Regional Council is responsible for the organisation and promotion of Irish Dance in the Southern Counties of England, on behalf of its parent body.

As we are commencing the current academic year for so many children and young people, it is my pleasure to write to you to remind you of the extracurricular activity many of these students engage in, after school hours and at weekends – the world of Irish Dancing.

Your cooperation in past years has enabled many of these students attending your school, and their dance teachers, to progress onto the international stage in World, All Ireland, Great Britain & Regional Qualifying Championships, which is to their credit, and I should also mention their parents and others who support their endeavors, not forgetting their teachers in school.

As I write this letter, we see before us the following Championships, along with relevant dates:

Great Britain Championships, London – 16th to 19th October 2025
Regional Oireachtas, Broxbourne – 14th to 16th November 2025

It is a fact that a pupil (s) who attends your school may be entered into some of these Championships, by their Dance Teachers, having attained the standard to compete at such prestigious events. These Championships are annual events, and obviously as young children and adults develop their skills, every year we see new faces, as they develop to compete at the very top in this activity; this may only be possible with the support of the students' school staff and Board of Governors, as appropriate.

You will no doubt be aware that as in any sporting or like activities, much is gained, by those who participate, by way of dance skills, fitness, attitude, and learning of the cultural and traditional history and music of Ireland as well as the ability to develop their social skills, often with others from countries around the world.

These dancers work extremely hard in these areas, as well as maintaining their academic work and commitment in school, not easy you may agree, but such is their love for dancing.

At all Irish Dancing Championships, the local organisers, as well as Irish dancing teachers, encourage dancers to share their experiences with their school community and I know would be more than happy to provide photographs or other information, should you wish to mention your pupil (s) in a newsletter or during school assembly, when we would like to think, the school could celebrate their achievement in reaching this very high standard, and who knows what place they may gain, in the competitions!

I understand that time off school for extracurricular activities is a sensitive area, but we are of a belief that there are benefits for both the children and your school, as I have mentioned. With this in mind, the parents of the pupils mentioned will be applying to you to enquire whether you can formally excuse their son or daughter from school to allow him / her to travel and compete, to their full potential, in one or more of these prestigious and important events, for them.

We have heard from parents that some schools include their competitive Irish Dancers on their Gifted & Talented Registers, for the purposes of sharing and celebrating their achievements with the school community and can also be mentioned as part of your OFSTED inspections. We have also noted that students include their certificates of participation in major Championships, within their Record of Achievements or similar documents, to form part of their Curriculum Vitae.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me; I will be pleased to assist.

Yours faithfully,

Declan Carroll

Chair - Southern England Regional Council
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