

Scoil Rince Bhríomhar

Bhríomhar School of Irish Dance

GUIDE FOR COMPETITORS

Registering for a Feis

Don't sign up for any feis, without your teacher's knowledge. Your teacher knows your dancing, so let her decide if you're ready. Once you're entered, it's time to wait (get used to this) for the big day.

Things to pack

- dance shoes (hard & soft shoe)
- poodle socks (make sure they're the same length!)
- sock glue
- Girls: School Dress/Solo Dress, Headband/Tiara, bloomers, makeup and hair accessories (hair spray, wig, bobby pins, elastics) Boys: dress shirt, tie, black dress pants, black socks & belt.
- safety pins
- black duct tape (for bottoms of hard shoes if the stage feels slippery)
- water bottle
- nutritious snacks
- registration and entry information
- directions to the feis
- a pencil/pen & highlighter to mark the stage schedule and program
- Things to do while waiting for results (crosswords, iPods, magazines etc.)

The night before

- Check the website for the feis for any last minute announcements.
- Get all of your maps, directions, hotel confirmations, syllabus, etc. ready. Get directions from your teacher, from the feis' website, or from the hotel you're staying at. Don't forget your cell phone and camera.
- If staying at a hotel, put your things in your room, and hang up your outfit for the next day. Put on socks and shoes, and go to the feis hall to practice on the stages. If registration is open, check in so that the people running the feis know who's there, and who isn't. Get your competitor's number. **BUY A PROGRAM!** The program lists all competitors, dances and is a great keepsake. See if there are practice stages. If not, find a deserted area to practice.

Feis Day

Getting ready

- Arrive at the main hall early! At least 60 minutes before the anticipated start time of your competitions. Schedules can change without notice.
- Find the Registration Table and get your "Competitor Card", a list of all the competitions you have entered, and their stage locations. Make sure that you're entered in all of the correct competitions. The card needs to be worn at the dancer's waist and can be pinned on or tied on. **GET A PROGRAM!**
- Find seats in the spectator area near one of your stages to serve as home base for the day. Note which stages you will be competing in the program book. Locate your stage(s), usually identified "A" through "D". If it's empty do a quick practice to see how it feels.

- In the program book, mark your competitions and stages so you have an idea of how long it will be until your competition begins. Note that if there are only a small number of competitors (as in most boy's competitions) they will be finished more quickly. Keep checking at the stage to see which competition is being danced.
- Practice in the designated practice area, or a quiet corner. You want to be warmed up by the time your competition starts, but not tired.
- Allow plenty of time to change into your costume and fix your hair. If you're wearing a wig and/or a tiara, use enough bobby pins to keep them securely in place. Use sock glue to keep your socks up.
- Once you are finished with your makeup and hair, put on your dress. Make sure everything is tied and fastened securely.
- Put on your dance shoes. Tie your laces in double knots! (If shoes come untied during competition, the dancer may be disqualified.) Check them between competitions.
- Put on your number, and make sure it is tied securely.
- Take any last minute bathroom and water breaks, then go to the stage(s) for your dances. The competition numbers are posted on the walls at the back of each stage. Stretch and warm up until your competition is ready.
- When your competition number is called, go to the Stage Manager and check in (parents may need to direct younger dancers). Dancers then sit or stand quietly at side stage. Parents find a seat to watch the competition.
- Be patient and stay alert for announcements! Delays and/or changes are not unusual.

The Competition

- Competitions will not wait for stragglers, so it is vital for parents and dancers to keep checking the stages and arrive at the right stage on time.
- The Stage Manager has a list of who is in each competition. At check in, give the manager your name and competitor number. The manager will line all the dancers up and the entire group will then go out on to the stage together. Quietly line up at the back of the stage.
- Dancers compete two at a time, then return to their place in line. If you are in First Feis or Beginner categories, someone will count you in when the music starts.
- When you step up to dance, make sure your arms are straight, and smile naturally.
- When it's your turn, take a step forward and move AWAY from the other dancer. Keep your eyes and chin up; don't look down or bob your head. LISTEN to your music and dance your steps. Focus on your dancing, not on the person next to you.
- Remember to MOVE the way the steps are designed, and use the stage. The judge won't see you if you dance only at the back.
- Dance with energy! Judges like that. Remember to smile, and to enjoy dancing.
- At the end of your dance, bow to the judge and return to the back stage lineup. Don't bump into the dancers that follow you.
- While waiting in line as the other are dancing, stand quietly with your feet crossed and watch (judges can take points off if you appear disrespectful to other dancers).

- Once everyone in the line has danced, and the judge nods or says thank you, you all bow together and leave the stage in single file. Boys wait until the girls have left and then follow.
- Should there be a problem, do not approach judges or musicians with questions or concerns. Talk to the Stage Manager or your teacher as only they can approach the judge or musician during a competition.

Results

- Results of each competition will be posted in the Results Area or Room. Wait until you have finished all of your dances before going to check. If you have earned a ribbon or a medal, you can claim it by showing your competitor number at the appropriate table. Once you get your placements, tell your teacher!
- Most feisanna have a sign up list to have your results, judge's scores and comments mailed to you for a small charge. These are very useful for future competitions as you can compare your actual score to the scores of the top dancers in each competition.
- If you earn a medal that's great, but the real reason you're competing is because Irish dancing is fun! Appreciate that judges are human, and results can vary.
- Always support and encourage your classmates as members of the same school. Always try your best, and remember that this will not be your only feis.

NOTES FOR PARENTS

1. A Feis is always a very exciting day, and you'll need to monitor your dancer's energy level closely. Dancers should be energetic, eager and sharp, but not nervous to the point that they can't perform at their best.
2. Pay close attention to your dancer's nutritional needs (and yours), by keeping water bottles & healthy snacks on hand through the day. Commercial food is always available on site, but a backpack/cooler of home made provisions is usually best.
3. It can be very helpful to gently remind your young dancer which dance they are competing in as they check in at the stage. *"This stage is for your reel competition. Do you know your reel steps? You dance those ones on this stage!"*
4. Be familiar with the feis rules as posted on the syllabus and in the program. Any questions or concerns on the day of the feis must be directed to your teacher, a stage manager, or another feis volunteer. Never to a judge or a musician.
5. If you're confused about something just ask. Your teachers, other Irish dance parents, volunteers and senior dancers are always very helpful. At one time or another, they've all been just as confused as you are.
6. No photography of any kind is allowed while dancers are on stage during competition, unless officially authorized by the Feis Committee. There will be plenty of time for photos when the competition is over.
7. Once your child has checked in for a competition with the Stage Manager and is waiting "side stage", you become spectators. Smile, nod, and encourage your dancer, but don't coach from the audience or become a noisy distraction during the competition. Save that wild applause for the end.
8. If your child is not ready or unable/unwilling to dance, don't insist. If time permits inform the stage manager, but if not they will simply be listed as a "no show".
9. Expect the unexpected. Things break, get forgotten and schedules change.
10. Keep criticism constructive. Healthy competition is a powerful learning experience.

11. Respectful behaviour, and “Conduct becoming a lady or gentleman” is expected of dancers at all times, along with modest attire when they are not dancing. This respects fellow competitors, and reflects positively upon the school and our dancers.

Finally, enjoy the day! It takes a lot of work and dedication to reach a competitive level in Irish Dance, so take pride in your dancer(s), and celebrate progress together.

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