

## **NAIDF Feis Information**

A feis (pronounce "fesh") is an Irish Dance Competition, plural feisanna.

**Competitive Levels** New dancers start at the beginner level and move up when they have achieved 80 or above in ALL of the required dances for that level. The levels for competition are Beginner (first 12 months), Advanced Beginner [2 soft shoe], Intermediate [3 soft shoe], Novice [2 soft shoe, 2 heavy dances of contrasting tempo, one of which is a traditional set], Prizewinner [2 soft shoe, 2 hard shoe, 1 traditional set], Junior Champion [2 soft shoe, 2 hard shoe, traditional set, contemporary set] and Senior Champion.

**Dances** The number next to listed dances is its metronomic speed. These speeds are given on dance music CDs that you purchase for practice. It is a good idea to get a variety of CDs so your dancer will be familiar with different tunes & styles of playing. Check the feis syllabus for correct speeds for each level.

### **Dancing in a Feis**

Your instructor will need to fill out competition entry forms for all video feiseanna. Live feiseanna registration is through Feis Keeper. There is an entry fee for all competitions.

Dancers wear a competition number to identify them to the adjudicator. The number is either pinned to the costume or held on with string. In a live feis, dancers may dance with someone NOT from our school, and the other dancers will be doing different steps. Dancers must learn to focus on their own steps without getting distracted by other dancers.

Remember, Irish Dance is a subjective sport. What is important to one judge may not be the focus of another. Stay positive, work hard, and keep the awards and placements in perspective.

**Costuming** Beginner and Advanced Beginner dancers wear the school uniform to compete. Solo costumes are not recommended until dancers reach the novice level. Dancers must have curled hair, either through the use of curlers or wigs.

### **For Parents: Getting the balance right**

Please remember that all dancers progress differently. Some dancers are very focused and practice diligently; others may practice but not enough to be competitive. Parents must remember that your child needs to want to compete and understands that not everyone wins. Your child may dance really well, but some other children may just be better. In order that your dancer(s) get the most enjoyment from their time dedicated to dancing it is imperative that you get the balance correct. Please read and follow these tips:

- Offer encouragements, especially when your children face hard times. Do not use punishment and withdrawal of love, affection and warmth to get your children to try harder or perform better.
- Ask questions such as, "How was the feis? How did you dance? Did you enjoy it?" which shows you care about your child rather than the result. Avoid focusing on placement after your child comes back from a feis.
- Make your child feel valuable and reinforce his/her self-esteem, especially when he/she loses. Avoid criticizing your child's results. Emphasize that, "Win or lose, I love you just the same." Do not get upset or treat your child differently when she/he loses.
- Stick to your parental role. Avoid trying to be your child's coach.
- Be generous in recognizing the performance and effort of your child's fellow competitors. Do not criticize them or their school.

## FEIS TIPS FOR DANCERS

### **The Night Before A Feis**

- Put your costume & dance bag by the front door so you don't forget them.
- Practice each of your dances 3-4 times to music. It's the display of your steps that matters now (are your feet crossed? Are your toes pointed?) and your timing.
- Go to sleep a little earlier than usual in case you're really worked up (as most dancers get!)

### **Event Time**

- Take things slow. Get up early enough so that you don't have to rush.
- Eat something for breakfast and try to keep yourself as calm as possible.
- Pack your car: Dress and Dance Bag
- Fill up your water bottle with ice and water, then stick it by the door so you don't forget it.
- To save time, put on your socks, make-up and wig before leaving the house.
- Leave your house early, giving yourself enough time to reach the event at least 1 hour before you are scheduled to check in.

### **When it's your turn to dance:**

- Try to look as secure as possible walking onto the dance floor; don't look like you're about to pee your pants, even if you feel like you are! ;)
- Walk onto the stage with your feet crossed, one in front of the other. This makes you look more confident and tells the judge that you know what you're doing.
- Stand in line with your feet crossed, your back straight and your shoulders back. Look like the winner you are!
- DON'T TALK IN LINE!!!
- When it's your turn to dance a solo step, step forward and to the side with your feet crossed one in front of the other. Try to smile. Remember to point your toe on the 4th beat and get up onto your tippy toes on the 8th beat. Then dance your heart out!
- Don't look at anyone dancing next to you because it might mess you up.
- Eye contact with the judge is important. This shows confidence on your part.
- RELAX! Smile and have a good time! Put some serious spirit in your dancing! You're doing something you love so show it!
- When you finish dancing, make sure you're facing the adjudicator. Give a nice deep bow with a great big SMILE and walk back into line with your feet crossed one in front of the other.
- Walk off the stage with your feet crossed and straight arms. Never let yourself look sloppy.

### **Things to always remember:**

- Dance for the fun of it. Always tell yourself, "Even if I make a mistake, I'll still have fun." If you have your heart in it, you're a champion!
- Try to relax and have a good time while you're dancing. No one is watching you to laugh at you. The audience and the other dancers watching you are mentally cheering you on!
- If you're a beginner, don't be intimidated by more advanced dancers. With practice, you can be as good or better than them!
- Harder steps don't mean winning steps. It's important to master the steps you have before moving on to harder material.