

## Feis Tips and FAQ's

Feis (pronounced “fesh”) is the Gaelic word for “festival” (plural - “feiseanna”). Baffa Academy is a part of An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha. Teachers recognized by this association are TCRG's. Judges are ADCRG's. See [www.clrg.ie](http://www.clrg.ie) for more information.

### 1. Where do I find “feiseanna”?

Find feis listings at:

[http://www.northamericanfeiscommission.org/2015\\_NAFC\\_FEIS\\_SCHEDULE.html](http://www.northamericanfeiscommission.org/2015_NAFC_FEIS_SCHEDULE.html)

Or try the app “feisomatic”.

### 2. Where do I register?

There are three websites. Each feis will use one of the three. It is recommended to make an account at each website. This is something you can do now, before you are ready to register. On some of the sites you can request email notification when feiseanna become open to registration. Otherwise, you just have to keep checking the sites to see what is available.

### 4. How do I register?

Sign in to your account. See what feiseanna are open and click on the one you are interested in. You will be asked to select your dancer. And then you select each dance you wish to register for. You will need to check with your teacher to see what dancers your child may compete in. Typically dancers begin with soft shoe (reel, slip jig, light jig, and possibly single jig) and add dances as they progress. Dancers begin as “Beginners” and then progress according to the rules set forth by the TCRG. Some feiseanna have a “My First Feis” category for very young dancers. Once you have selected your dances, you pay (usually via PayPal). Some feiseanna require payments to be mailed in.

After you register you will receive a confirmation email. Keep your registration confirmation. Unfortunately mistakes (rarely – but sometimes) occur and you will need this for back-up.

### 5. I've registered, now what?

About a week before the feis, the feis website (check the site where you registered – they should have a link) will post a stage schedule. This tells you roughly when your child will dance. It can be frustrating, especially for new parents, because the schedule often does not include times. You can see where in the line-up your child will dance, though, and you will see when the feis begins.

Ask veteran parents to help you estimate when your first dance will be. Remember to maintain patience and a good attitude!

To read the stage schedule, find the competition number for each of the dances your child is in. (These can be found on your registration confirmation email). These are not listed in numerical order on the stage schedule, but rather listed under each stage number in the order the competitions are run.

A feis may have between 850-1250 dancers and 6 or more stages. These events are large! Usually beginners stay in the same general area, but some feiseanna have stages in multiple rooms. You will want an idea of where your events will be. Once you have stage numbers, check out the feis map (also on the website) to get an idea of where you will be.

Some feiseanna will email you a dancer card (number) a day or two before the feis. You can print it out to bring with you. You also have the option of picking up the dancer card at the feis. Your dancer will wear this number when she/he dances. (More on this further down.)

## **6. What do I pack?**

The most important thing to bring to the feis is patience. It may be a long, tiring day. But it will also be fun! See the "What to Pack" page for a complete list.

## **7. The day of the feis**

- Arrive early – plan on being there at least an hour before your child dances. They need time to get ready and warm-up.
- Go to the registration desk and get your dancer card if you didn't print it out.
- Make sure hair and costume are complete and ready to go.
- Tie the dancer card with black ribbon or yarn around dancer's waist. You can buy a plastic number holder for about \$1.00 if you would like. These are available from the feis vendors.
- Put on socks and shoes. Remember to use sock glue (also available from vendors) so socks don't slide down while dancing. Also tuck in laces so they don't distract.
- Warm-up.
- Take your child to the bathroom before they dance. The wait once you check in your child can be long!

## **8. The big moment**

- Watch stages. Each stage will be numbered. Next to each stage number will be a chart that says "Now" and "Next". "Now" refers to the competition currently on stage. "Next" refers to the competition that needs to check in.

When you see your child's competition number listed on the "next" side of the stage chart, your child may go to the stagehand and give them his/her dancer card number. Young dancers may need your assistance. After they register, the dancers WAIT THERE. Dancers should not leave the stage area after checking in or they may miss the competition. Eventually the dancers will move to chairs at the side of the stage.

- If your child has two dances on two stages at the same time (it happens), talk to the stagehand at one of the stages. They should hold the competition for you. If they don't hold the stage (which rarely happens), don't argue with the stagehands. If you run into problems, ask your TCRG to help. If she isn't there, speak with her afterwards and she will address it.
- Once your child is seated, find a spot where you can watch. Don't talk to your dancer after this point. The stage helpers are there to assist your child and talking to your dancer does not impress the judges. Your child should wait quietly and politely for their turn.
- Dancers are led onto the stage in a line. They will walk up to dance 2 or 3 at a time. (Yes – your dancer will dance at the same time as a dancer from another school. They do not do the same dance steps. It sounds chaotic, but you get used to it!) Once they walk up to dance, beginner dancers will be counted off by the stagehand. The dancers dance and then walk back to their starting position. After all dancers are finished, the judge gives a nod or rings the bell and dancers bow to the judge and then bow to the musician. They all walk off stage in a line.

## **9. After the competition is complete**

You may greet your dancer once she/he walks off stage. Remember to give them a hug and let them know you are proud of them. That may sound silly, but you will see parents yell at and/or berate their children after they dance. Don't be one of those parents. Let your TCRG give the critique. Your job is to give support.

## **9. Did my dancer place?**

There will be a "Results" wall somewhere at the venue. Results may be posted anywhere between about 15 minutes after each dance to two hours after they dance. You just have to keep checking. The results are taped onto the wall – one page for each competition. The competition number of each dance will be posted at the top of each results page. The dancers that placed will either be listed just by dance card number or by name and number. If you see your number – congratulations! If not, keep your chin up. Emotions are expected in both situations but be respectful of the people around you. Learning sportsmanship is a part of the competition.

## **10. Trophies and Medals**

If your child places, you take the dancer card to the awards table to get their award. Depending on the feis and/or level, the award will be a medal or a trophy.

### **11. After the Feis**

A few days after the feis, you will be emailed your feis results and judges comments. If feisworx was used as the registration site, you will not be emailed results. Instead, log onto the website and check under "Personal Results". You can print out the page.

Keep a binder or folder for all of your official feis results. Your TCRG will want to see these before you move up levels.

### **12. Still confused?**

The best way to see how a feis is organized is to experience one. There are several feiseanna in Virginia – McGrath (March), Old Dominion (June), Nations Capital (July) and Rhythm of Ireland (October). Go to one and just watch. This is also a good time to check out vendors and buy well-fitted shoes.

If you still have questions, veteran parents are happy to help! Just ask!

## What to Pack

### SCHOOL COSTUME

leotard  
skirt  
cuffs  
poodle socks  
headband  
cape  
kickpants/bloomers (in case the leotard unsnaps while dancing)

### SHOES

ghillies  
hard shoes  
gaffer tape (for the bottoms – it helps prevent slipping)\*  
sock glue (to hold up socks)\*

### HAIR/MAKE-UP

brush/comb  
hairspray  
bobby pins and hair clips  
ponytail holders  
make-up (U11 and older)  
lip gloss (U11 and older)  
(Absolutely no make-up is allowed for U10 dancers and under. Your child will be disqualified.)

### ACCESSORIES

safety pins  
plastic number holder\*  
black string or ribbon to secure registration number

### FIRST AID

scissors  
tape  
blister care  
band-aids  
Ibuprofen  
Tums  
sewing kit  
ice packs

### CHANGE OF CLOTHES

Baffa sweatshirt/warm ups

### EXTRAS

notebook and pen  
iPod with Irish music to practice  
snack  
water bottle

### PARENTS

registration information  
stage schedule  
directions to feis  
hotel confirmation  
highlighter  
camera – (before and after pictures only – no photos or videotaping is allowed while the dancers are dancing)

\* Available for sale at all feisanna.