

Hogan School of Irish Dance

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What is a Feis?

A. A feis, pronounced (fesh), is a festival that includes figure (group) and solo Irish step dancing, crafts, instrumental, vocal and Gaelic language competitions, with medals, trophies, crystal, and occasionally money given as prizes. The plural is feisanna. Though feises are fun and enjoyable experiences, the focus is on doing your best dancing, seeing how you rank amongst fellow dancers, and watching how you improve over time (from feis to feis).

Q. What is a Performance?

A. A performance is essentially a show put on for an audience that is typically for demonstration of skill and for fun. Since performances are for exhibition, it is more acceptable for dancers to wear costumes that are less traditional, perform dances that are more creative, wear a bit of make-up, and enjoy getting applause and recognition for their dancing.

Q. What is the Performance Class?

A. The performance class is a "closed" class for a group of 8-16 dancers who will be committed to attending class on a regular basis as well as participating in as many of the performances that their schedule allows. The class is free (aside from a \$10 fee each semester from the participants to help cover the cost of the room rent) and all ages are welcome to give it a try, but there are some essentials to being a part of the group: 1) Good grasp of the basics 2) Good attitude (A MUST!) 3) Ability to pay attention and focus and behave for the entire hour. 4) Commitment to the group and to attending the class regularly 5) Willingness to perform in shows. By keeping the performance classes free I'm trying to allow families to save money that can hopefully be spent elsewhere for dance--- including costumes for performances, gas money for traveling to performances, etc.

Q. What should my dancer wear at a feis?

A. Since we are an Irish dancing school, we have a "school dress." In general there are two outfits I allow my dancers to wear at competition in the lower levels (beginner thru prizewinner) and they are either a long sleeve white blouse/green skirt or a school dress. Typically beginner's start out with the blouse/skirt combo until they are sure they want to stick with Irish dance for a while, since this outfit is very inexpensive. (I am currently working on making a jumper that

beginner/advanced beginner's can wear in place of the blouse/skirt that will have our school design on it, but that will be cheaper than the school dress.) The dancer is allowed to wear the white blouse/green skirt combo all the way up until the highest level if they want. Typically, though, a dancer has a school dress made once they are in the level of advanced beginner or novice. Dancers who want to compete in group dances will have to purchase a school dress because the dancers must be wearing matching dresses. In the preliminary and open championship categories, dancers are allowed to choose a solo costume of their choice, a right they earn by reaching such prestigious levels.

It is very important to me that our dancers look traditional, modest, neat, and classy at feisanna. Regardless of what you may hear from other dance moms or dancers as to how it's all about having the right dress, this is not true. What a dancer is wearing is only judged in terms of overall presentation---are they neat, clean, and presentable? This is all that matters. Surely, if a dancer's hair is disheveled and their stockings have a hole in them, points may be taken off, as these detract from the dancer's overall presentation. You may be tempted at times to think that your child isn't doing well because they don't have the right look---I can assure you that if your child is not placing well it is because they need to improve in their dancing to meet the challenge of the level in which they are competing, not because they don't have a sparkly pink dress.

NOTE: Dancers may NOT wear performance costumes (black leotard/skirt) for competitions.

Q. What should my dancer wear for performances?

A. Dancers in the performance class will need to get a school dress so that they all match as well as represent our Irish Dancing School. Though shows are typically danced in the school dress, since performances allow for more creativity in dress and dance, dancers will get the chance to wear a variety of costumes.

Q. How should my dancer wear her hair for a feis?

A. Again, the idea is that you want the child to look neat and tidy. There are a couple of options. You may put the child's hair in a nice bun or ponytail---you can make this a little more fun with some ribbons that match the dress tied around the bun. You may leave the child's hair down (as long as it is neat-looking/brushed) and have her wear a matching headband or one with ribbons tied around it, etc. You may curl the child's hair the night before and have her wear it down with a headband. The final option is a bun wig (sometimes called a "wiglet"). Though MANY dancers wear wigs now, I still have not taken to it as I find covering naturally beautiful hair with noticeably fake hair to be a rather ridiculous practice. I do not allow my dancers to wear long, curly wigs of any kind. I **strongly** encourage my dancers and their parents to choose real hair options over fake hair options.

Q. *How should my dancer wear her hair for a performance?*

A. Since it is important that the dancers match in costume as closely as possible, please check with me to see how I prefer the dancers to wear their hair for the particular performance. Typically I will have the dancers either wear their hair back in buns with ribbons tied around (especially on days when we have multiple performances), or in half-up/half-down fashion, again with ribbons to match the particular costume being worn.