

Newry Musical Feis - Child Protection Policy 2024-25

The British and International Federation of Festivals for Music, Dance and Speech work for amateur festivals everywhere to help create thousands of educational performance opportunities for children and young people each year.

The Federation, and our member Festivals, are committed to ensuring safe environments for children and young people and believe that it is always unacceptable for a child or young person to experience abuse of any kind. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard the welfare of all children and young people, by a commitment to recommend best practice which protects them.

This policy applies to our Board of Trustees, paid staff, Adjudicator, members, volunteers, students or anyone working on behalf of the Federation and our member Festivals.

We recognise that:

- * the welfare of the child/young person is paramount.
- * all children, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious belief, sexual orientation or identity, have the right to equal protection from all types of harm or abuse.
- * working in partnership with children, young people, their parents, carers and other agencies is essential in promoting young people's welfare.

The purpose of the policy:

- * to provide protection for the children and young people who participate in our festivals, including the children of festival members.
- * to provide staff and volunteers with guidance on procedures they should adopt in the event that they suspect a child or young person may be experiencing, or be at risk of harm.

We will seek to safeguard children and young people by:

- * valuing them, listening to and respecting them
- * adopting child protection guidelines through procedures and safe working practice for staff and volunteers
- * recruiting staff and volunteers safely, ensuring all necessary checks are made
- * sharing information about child protection and safe working practice with children, parents, staff and volunteers
- * sharing information about concerns with agencies who need to know, and involving parents and children appropriately
- * providing effective management for staff and volunteers through supervision, support and training.

The Federation will review this policy each year in November in line with Safe Network guidance or sooner in light of any changes in legislation or guidance. All changes will be communicated to our member in time for the start of the new Festival year.

Creating a Safer Feis for Everyone

The Federation and its member Festivals use the following policies and procedures to create **Safer Festivals** for everyone:

1. A single, definitive Child Protection Policy adopted by all Federation Festivals.
2. One or more designated Festival Safeguarding Officers (FSO) appointed for each Federation Festival. (Newry Musical Feis FSO Dr Mary Goss, phone: 028 3026 2849)
3. Best practice advice in the form of **Safe Working Practice** and **Festival Child Protection leaflets**, with support and training for all Feis staff and volunteers. Including clear reporting procedures for anyone with a concern about a child.
4. Appropriate recruitment and induction procedures for all new Feis staff and volunteers responsible for providing safe environments for everyone attending / performing at a Federation Festival.
5. All our stewards wear a Feis identity badge. All teachers/parents/guardians/carers are asked to report all incidents of any nature to anyone wearing a Feis identity badge. All reported incidents will be handled in accordance with the **Safe Working Practice** and **Festival Child Protection** best practice advice. In addition we will ensure the availability of a quiet area / room where concerns can be expressed in private.
6. For the duration of the Feis all teachers/parents/guardians/carers are responsible for the continuous care and supervision of their own children/pupils/vulnerable adults. If they are unable to attend personally, they must delegate their responsibilities to an identified adult and ensure that their children/pupils/vulnerable adults are aware of the identity and name of the person responsible for their care. This includes supervision throughout all Feis venues, performance, backstage and dressing room areas that may be provided.
7. Parents, or the responsible adult delegated by parents, should be satisfied that all children or members of vulnerable groups in their care are adequately supervised throughout their time in performance and dressing room areas and make themselves known to a Feis official on entering the vicinity of the dressing room area. All unauthorized adults in these areas will be challenged.
8. No unauthorised photography, audio or video recording is allowed at the Feis including all performance spaces, halls, backstage and dressing-room areas. Where parents/guardians/carers do not wish photos to be taken at all, then the responsible adult attending should ensure that their child/pupil/vulnerable adult is not included in official authorised photos.
9. Some children and vulnerable adults may have specific needs in order to take part. If this is the case we ask the responsible teachers/parents/guardians/carers to contact the Feis prior to arrival. The Feis actively seeks wherever possible to meet these needs, but must know beforehand in order to prepare support - or to advise that help cannot be provided on this occasion.
10. The Feis's Child Protection Policy and approach to Creating a Safer Feis for Everyone is published explicitly in our Syllabus, Programme and on our website. By completing and signing the entry form (or ticking the appropriate box for online entries) all parents / guardians / carers and teachers of entrants under 18 (or vulnerable adults of any age) confirm that they give (or have obtained) the necessary consents for the entrants to take part in the Feis. Without consent the entry to the Feis cannot be accepted.