



HANDBOOK

Directors:

Brad Cummons & Samantha McManus

Bradly.Cummons@FortBendISD.com

Samantha.McManus@FortBendISD.com

www.TheAustinPlayhouse.com

General Procedures

- All theatre participants must follow all directives and meet all deadlines of the Directors, Stage Managers, Crew Heads and Thespian officers.
- Students should not take part in any action or activity that could be perceived as diminishing the integrity of TAP at Austin High School. This includes representing themselves or TAP in an unfavorable, questionable or illegal manner in public or through electronic media (i.e. websites, social networks, personal web pages, blogs, text messages; etc). Doing so will result in disciplinary actions determined by directors and/or appropriate school officials, including probation or dismissal from the organization/cast.
- All theatre students should check the callboard *daily* for crew, casting, or general departmental announcements. Negligence in reading the callboard is no excuse for missing an assignment or rehearsal. We provide the same information on our Facebook page and our website. The closed Facebook group is called AustinTheatreTroupe5448 and the website is TheAustinPlayhouse.com.
- The microwave in the Scene Shop is reserved for Thespians *only*. If a student is well involved within our theatre and displays responsible qualities, exceptions can be made.
- Theatre students are expected to work collaboratively with each other. Never should the words, "That's not my job," be uttered from anyone's mouth.
- Trash left in the Theatre area will not be tolerated. Please clean up after yourself.
- TAP offers opportunities for the students to leave the campus during rehearsals or other activities for scheduled breaks, in which case TAP will not be held responsible. Each student should get permission from their parents to ride/drive other students if that is their choice.

The Lofts and Catwalk

- The lofts and catwalk are not playgrounds, not to "hang out", and not your closet.
- Understand that the lofts have to be maintained; costumes and props should not be found on the floor.

Dressing Rooms

- Food or drink, with the exception of water bottles with sealed caps, is prohibited in the dressing rooms. Plan ahead and make sure you have time to eat before rehearsal and performances.
- Only cast members or specified crew members are permitted in the dressing room. *No visitors are allowed in the dressing room.*
- Departmental make-up and hygienic supplies are to be used *only* by the performers.
- Costumes must be treated with care. Actors must hang up all costume pieces exactly as they found them. Items worn as costumes never leave the theatre building during the dress rehearsal and performance period, except when taken for cleaning and/or repairs, and only when approved by the Director or appointed Head. The performer never takes any part of their

costume home, *even if it is their property*, until strike.

- All personal items must be removed from dressing rooms by the end of strike. After one week, they will become departmental property.
- Proper undergarments need to be worn in the dressing room and during performances at all times.
- Dressing rooms are to be cleaned after all rehearsals and performances. Should the dressing room be found unacceptable, consequences could include the privilege to use the dressing room being revoked for a time deemed appropriate by a Director or Stage Manager.
- Eating and/or drinking in costume is strictly forbidden.

Auditioning Procedures

- Once a student has accepted a role, they may not back out of the production. If this happens, the student will be *ineligible* for casting in the next TAP production. Exceptions can be determined by the Directors.
- All schedule conflicts should be reported on the audition form. Do not wait until you are cast in a role to tell us about conflicts.
- Once the cast list is posted, it is considered inappropriate and unprofessional to inform others of their parts.
- If you do not get cast in a role that you desire, learn to accept the loss with grace. Verbal attacks or gossip serve no constructive purpose. Instead, ask for a critique from the director, and spend your energies on improving your auditioning skills for the next production.
- Auditions will be run as the director chooses and auditioners are expected to follow all logistical requests, no matter how different it may be from another director.

Rehearsal and Performance Attendance

- Students must be academically eligible to perform in a production.
- Any missed rehearsals without prior approval from the show's Director (at least a week in advance) will be considered unexcused. More than 3 unexcused absences may result in removal from the show.
- Students should sign in at the beginning of each rehearsal per the Stage Manager's procedure. If you are not signed in, we will consider you absent/late. Three tardies will be considered one unexcused absence.
- Students may not leave rehearsal or performances early without the Director's permission.
- If you are going to be late to a rehearsal or a performance call, you must notify Stage Management in advance.

Actor Rehearsal and Performance Procedures

- Silence **MUST** be maintained backstage during rehearsals and performances at all times.
- The hour and a half prior to a dress rehearsal or performance should be set aside for

focusing and quiet preparation. Loud music, dancing, singing loudly, and raucous behavior will not be tolerated on stage, backstage, or in the dressing rooms.

- Actors are responsible for scripts (and scores if applicable) at all times. Failure to return a script or score when necessary will result in fines.
- All company members must maintain a quiet, professional attitude at all times. Talking during rehearsal will not be tolerated and will result in removal from rehearsal, thus resulting in an unexcused absence.
- Props are to be used only in the given action of a play. Actors pick up all props from the assigned prop areas and return them as directed. No actor should touch a prop that does not belong to them.
- Set pieces should not be moved, played with, touched, or sat upon except in the given action of the play.
- The actor must cooperate with the Director in the overall “look” of the character.
- Personal issues should be dealt with outside of the performing and rehearsing times.
- Actors should be in designated areas at all times at all rehearsals and performances.
- All actors and technicians are required to take notes.
- Notes are only given from a Director, Stage Manager, or other Director approved personnel. Furthermore, notes are never a reflection of the Director’s personal feelings toward you as a person; do not take them personally.
- All actors and technicians are required to bring their own note pad for note taking.
- No cell phones are permitted during rehearsals or performances.
- Any student who is not directly connected to the production through the audition, casting and technical assignment process shall not be allowed in the rehearsal or backstage.
- All people involved with the show (cast and crew) are responsible for assisting with the post-show strike.

Technical Personnel: Crew and Performance Procedures

- The technical crew is responsible for the same rehearsal and performance procedures and expectations as the actors for all rehearsals and crew for which they are called.
- Crew members must follow all orders by the Directors, Stage Managers, and Crew Heads, and cooperate with the actors, other technicians, and participants in the production.
- Technical members are required to attend all appropriate crew calls.
- Backstage behavior must be professional and silent at all times.
- Only personnel approved by a Director are permitted in the control booth, catwalk and lofts.
- Only trained and approved personnel are permitted to operate the light and sound boards, and power tools.
- Only technical personnel approved by a Director may be on headset. The conversation must be professional and limited.
- Student technicians are responsible for the proper use of all equipment.

- Crew will not be dismissed until all tools and equipment have been accounted for and returned to their proper place, and the work area is clean with Technical Director approval.

Expectations for Understudies/Alternates:

- Understudies/UIA alternates are expected to be prepared to perform their roles at an equivalent level to those whom they are assigned to understudy.
- In the event of a re-casting situation, an understudy would be considered for but not guaranteed a role; however, that role will be defined by the Director.
- All understudies/UIA alternates are called for every rehearsal/performance for which that part is called.
- Every person in the production needs to be aware of the script and be able to mark another part.
- The understudy's focus should be onstage at all times, especially when their character is performing.

Performance Etiquette

- "Breaking Curtain" (peeking out) before the show, during the show, or at intermission is considered bad etiquette and is not permitted.
- Being seen in the theatre or in the school building in costume before the performance is not permitted, even if its family.
- The lobby in front of the auditorium serves as the place where congratulations, hugs, gifts, and flowers can be exchanged after the performance. This is the most appropriate place for the cast and crew members to greet audience members. The cast may not greet audience members in the auditorium for any reason.

Travel Guidelines

- Students must maintain eligibility during the school year in order to travel with TAP. If eligibility is lost, refunds are not given.
- All FBISD rules are enforced on trips. Any serious infraction will result in immediate dismissal with the parents logistically and financially responsible for the student's immediate return.
- The student shall be on time in arriving to the designated meeting point for the trip.
- Travelers should respect the rules of the vehicle driver and be courteous at all times.
- Voices should be kept at an appropriate level for the vehicle.
- If you are ever away from a chaperone or director when we are traveling, you must be with at least 2 other people from *our* troupe.
- Any student leaving the designated campus we are visiting must be accompanied by a director or a chaperone.
- Upon returning from a trip, be sure you've made proper arrangements for a ride home.

Thespian Membership and Point Policy:

- Ten thespian points are required to be eligible to become an Official Thespian. To become an Official Thespian, you must pay dues for International Thespian Society and be inducted at the initiation ceremony.
- Points are assigned in a manner based on the intention of the International Thespian Society Points Policy, which states that one point is equivalent to ten hours of work. However, they will be adjusted and fairly distributed on a case-by-case basis.
- All hours for strike must be completed before any points will be awarded for that show.
- Any outstanding fees will result in no points being awarded until fees are paid.
- In order to attend a Thespian Convention, a student must be eligible to be a Thespian.
- Letter jackets are earned by students who have received 40 points towards their International Thespian Society membership.

PRINT Student's Name: _____

In addition, all Austin High School Student Code of Conduct Rules and Regulations are in effect for all students involved in The Austin Playhouse Activity or Production. Any infraction may receive the consequences deemed appropriate by the student's principal or local authority. Failure to fulfill the consequences given for an infraction will result in an additional, higher level consequence.

The 2015-2016 Austin Playhouse Student/Parent Commitment

I understand the rules and expectations set forth by The Austin Playhouse (TAP) Handbook are vital to the safety and success of all students involved in the TAP.

I also understand that the directors reserve the right to amend or revise this document in order to ensure the safety of each student and the standards and practices of the department.

I have read and reviewed the Handbook in its entirety. By signing this document, I understand violation of these rules may result in disciplinary action.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____