



**MIDDLE SCHOOL
PRODUCTION HANDBOOK
2018 – 2019**

The purpose of this handbook is twofold: 1) to introduce new theatre students to the department's guidelines and customs, and 2) to serve as a ready reference text for returning students to review their duties each year. As your official guide for all activities concerning productions, it contains information of prime importance to those who hope to work effectively in the department. Complete familiarity with its contents is the first requisite for those students who are genuinely interested in learning the art of theatre.

The last page of this handbook is an acknowledgment that has a place for the student's signature and that of their parent(s). It is MANDATORY that every student and parent involved in any production sign and return their signed sheet.

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- DIRECTOR'S LETTER TO STUDENTS -

Dear Students -

In order to achieve success in our endeavors in this program, it is of primary importance that we make a firm commitment to quality in every production. Intense pride should be exhibited in our department and should burn brightly in our performances.

Bear in mind that you as an individual can, and will, control your own path in this department. You are but one link in the chain of success, and if you fail to do your part then chain cannot be strong. You will be pushed to do your best; we expect you to do work consistently, try hard, obey rules and cooperate fully with your directors and fellow performers. This will be made easier if you remember the following:

A Short Course in Human Relations

The most important six words: "I admit I made a mistake,"

The most important five words: "You did a good job,"

The most important four words: "What is your opinion?"

The most important three words: "Would you please..."

The most important two words: "Thank you,"

The most important word: "We,"

The least important word: "I."

It is a good philosophy. You are encouraged to embrace it.

On a personal note, I want to thank you in advance for the hard work you give to this department and to me. I care for you immensely and consider myself lucky to be your teacher and director. Let's have an amazing year!

Sincerely -

Mr. Jones
Theatre Director

- COMMUNICATION CHANNELS -

CALLBOARDS The callboard is located in theatre room at the middle school. This is where all calls and announcements are posted for auditions, rehearsals, crew meetings and other departmental and general theatre activities and news. **You are responsible for checking the callboard DAILY during the course of a production.**

WWW.EAGLETHEATRECOMPANY.COM Our website is always current and has valuable information for students, parents and faculty members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS Besides watching for messages on the callboard or website, you are responsible for listening to all announcements.

REMIND For updates of what's going on in our department text @ETC.RV to the number 81010

FACEBOOK www.facebook.com/eagletheatreco

TWITTER @etc_rv

INSTAGRAM eagletheatreco.rv

- ELIGIBILITY -

According to University Interscholastic League (UIL) rules and House Bill 72 (No Pass/No Play), a student must stay academically eligible in order to participate in an extracurricular activity.

Eligibility does not affect classroom work and rehearsal conducted during the school day. Extra-curricular activities are directly affected. Academic standing will be considered in casting productions, as well as may be cause for dismissal if a member is unable to maintain passing grades.

-ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY -

- A. **It is expected that you never miss a rehearsal, performance, meeting or strike. You should accept this rule without hesitation. Absences from a dress rehearsal or performance will likely prevent you from being cast in a future Eagle Theatre Company production. Two unexcused absences or three unexcused tardies from rehearsals may be considered grounds for dismissal from the company.**
- B. **If you have a valid reason for missing a call, you should notify the director at least two days in advance so that the rehearsal schedule can be modified as needed. If you should have an emergency absence the day of the rehearsal, you should first contact your director.** As an insurance measure, you should then contact the production's Stage Manager. An emergency is defined as a serious illness, a death in the family or a serious injury. You should not be in a production if you have a job that constantly interferes with the rehearsal schedule. If you are actively involved in numerous after-school activities, you need to notify the director IN ADVANCE concerning the days and times you will miss or be tardy to rehearsal. Be sure to write all rehearsal time conflicts on your audition form. Misrepresenting yourself or your obligation is grounds for immediate removal from the company.
- C. **Be on time every time. In this department, there is no rule more sacred than this one.** If you are even one minute late to rehearsal, you are still late. The later rehearsal begins, the later we will work.
- D. **During the rehearsal period for a show, your first obligation is to your grades and then to the show. If you do not pass all classes, you cannot perform. This is state law!** Grades will be checked before casting and during the rehearsal period.

- REHEARSALS -

- A. Unless otherwise noted, night rehearsals will be from 6:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m., and afternoon rehearsals will be from 4:00 p.m. until 6:30 p.m.
- B. Rehearsal is over when the director dismisses you, not when your parents arrive to pick you up. Every effort will be made to release you on time. **If you need to leave rehearsal early, please advise the director at least one day in advance.**
- C. A production will undoubtedly necessitate some weekend rehearsals. Saturday rehearsals usually begin at 9:00 a.m. and conclude at by 12:00 p.m., although some on occasion may last until 5:00 p.m. In the event of a Sunday rehearsal, it will normally begin at 2:00 p.m. and conclude by 5:00 p.m. These dates will be posted typically a week in advance.
- D. During the last week of a production before opening night, we will likely stay later due to technical and dress rehearsals. **Be prepared to stay the length of these important rehearsals. No one will be allowed to leave until after notes are given. Missing a dress rehearsal IS NOT ACCEPTABLE and may cause for dismissal from the company. This also jeopardizes future casting.**
- E. You are required to be present for the beginning of every rehearsal, unless otherwise told by the director. A complete rehearsal schedule for the production will be given out at the Company Meeting, so you will know exact dates and times you will be needed. If you are unsure if you are needed be sure to ask and remember to keep up with your rehearsal schedule. If any additional dates or modifications are made to schedule you will be notified in advance.
- F. A production officially begins with the Company Meeting and ends with Strike following the final performance. Strike is the general clean-up of the theatre space and restoration to its original form, including returning props and costumes, removing and breaking down the scenery and repositioning lights if needed. **Attendance at both the Company Meeting and Strike is mandatory! Missing the Company Meeting and/or Strike will affect your casting in future productions.**

A NOTE ABOUT CELL PHONES:

Cell phones will be taken up by the stage manager for rehearsals and will be returned to students following rehearsal notes.

- THE COMPANY -

A. Auditions and Casting

- a. Auditions for main stage productions are open to all Rio Vista High School/Middle School students on the particular campus the production is being produced. Students do not have to be enrolled in a Theatre Arts class in order to audition for these productions
- b. Auditions for Middle School One-Act Play will be limited to academically eligible seventh and eighth graders.
- c. Auditions for theatre productions may span multiple days. The first day is usually a monologue performance or cold readings from the script. Any days needed after this will be used for callbacks, if the director would like to see the students again for any particular roles. This list is posted on the call board and website after the first day of auditions.
- d. Students interested in participating on the Technical Crew will apply by completing an application and possibly interview for available positions with the directors and stage manager (if one has been selected at the time). Most crew positions will share responsibilities with other technical areas.

B. Selection of the Company

- a. Selection of the production staff is based on the number of people needed for the crews, the abilities of the students selected and the variety of experience they have had in previous productions.
- b. Selection of the cast is based on the particular acting demands made by the production being produced, the ability an actor

reveals in auditions, the need of the individual in terms of growth, and his or her past experience on stage. This is a subjective area; please realize that your director is doing what is believed to be truly best for the production.

- c. The director will not answer inquiries about casting choices. To question the Director's choices of casting is unprofessional.
- d. The names of the entire company will be posted following the final day of auditions or callbacks.
- e. **A student shows acceptance of the assignment by initialing next to their name on the posted cast list.** Once you initial beside your name, you are expected to honor your commitment by being a productive member of the company.

Quitting because you didn't get cast or didn't get a large role is unprofessional, unacceptable, short-sighted and - quite simply - wrong.

PLEASE CONSIDER CAREFULLY BEFORE INITIALING THE COMPANY LIST!

- a) Regardless of the job, everyone is of equal importance
- b) All company assignments are tentative. Any member of the company (CAST or CREW) may be reassigned or dismissed at any time by the director if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the production.

C. Responsibilities

The performance organization is made up of production staff that is arranged in a hierarchy. Each position has certain requirements and certain people to whom they must answer. The hierarchy in our department includes the following positions: Director, Stage Manager, House Manager, Crew Heads, Crews and Actors. Please understand that when something goes wrong, nine times out of ten it is because someone failed to follow the proper chain of command. Know your job. Do it well.

Stage Manager (Report to the Director) The director may fill this position prior to auditions.

1. Assists the Director in the coordinating of auditions by organizing scripts, keeping track of names, calling up the next actor, etc. Collects all forms from the actors.
2. Distributes scripts to all cast and crew.
3. Takes roll at every rehearsal and reports all tardies and absences to the Director.
4. Keeps track of time at rehearsal, politely reminding the Director of the hour. (This will help the Director promptly release students.)
5. Takes down all blocking notation.
6. Reads for cast members who are not present at rehearsals and provides all sound effects and stage directions during read-throughs.
7. Spikes the set's ground plan on the rehearsal floor and checks all rehearsal furniture and props at the beginning and end of rehearsals.
8. Prompts actors from the Production Script.
9. Takes notes for everyone not present and makes sure the missing person receives those notes at the first opportunity.
10. Is responsible for all light cues and sound cues. Calls the technical show from Cue to Cue and Tech-throughs to all Dress Rehearsals and Performance.
11. Runs the appropriate checklists prior to performances and manages the backstage pre-show scene for all actor activities.

12. Takes roll at the Call time on performance nights and tracks down people who are missing and reports actors who are late to the Director.
13. Coordinates the start time of performances with the House Manager and Director.
14. Sweep stage pre-show.
15. Assists running crew members in their roles, especially by being a calming and supportive influence.
16. Keeps close control over headset conversations by cutting off inappropriate chatter and especially “blame-laying” for any errors made by anyone.
17. Goes over missed or flubbed technical cues with the techie in question immediately after the show. Also reports these mistakes to the Director.
18. Keeps track of actor’s deviations from the script during performances and reports this to the Director.
19. Supervises all stage crews.
20. Has complete charge backstage during rehearsals and performances.
21. Checks doors at the end of rehearsals and performances to ensure all doors are locked.

House Crew (Report to the Director)

The House Crew is at the service of the audience. Thus, they are expected to dress in nice clothes (black or dark colors please) and wear a tag identifying themselves as House Crew. They need to arrive one hour before the house officially opens. House Crew **MUST** stay to assist in cleaning up after the audience has left. In the days prior to the show, this group is responsible for preparing programs.

Responsible for selling and taking tickets for admission into production.

Crews

The crews are the people without whom a production would truly be impossible. They do the dirty work, often receiving less credit than is deserved. They are to be revered! The crews are listed below.

[Please note that crew members should not interfere with the actors backstage during a performance.]

Costume Crew (Reports to Costumer/Director)

The costume crew is in charge of all aspects of actor's costumes.

They:

- a. Assist in measuring actors for costumes.
- b. Pull appropriate costumes from stock, including anything needed as rehearsal costumes.
- c. Make minor repairs.
- d. Keep the costume storage and all costumes clean and organized during rehearsal and the production's run.
- e. At the close of the production during strike, collect and return costumes to appropriate locations.

Light Crew (Reports to the Stage Manager and Director)

The light crew's goal is to create and execute the most effective Lighting design possible for a production by operating the light board, spotlights and/or special lighting equipment during rehearsals and performances.

Sound Crew (Reports to the Stage Manager and Director)

The sound crew's goal is to prepare the sound equipment to serve the production in three ways:

1. Provide sound effects as needed by the production.
2. Establish a mood for the production

Scenery Crew (Reports to the Director)

1. The scenery crew constructs the set from the initial concept to the finished product.
2. Make sure the set is safe for actors to perform on.
3. Responsible for repairing and the maintenance of all set pieces.

Running Crew (Reports to the Stage Manager)

The running crew typically is made up of the scenery and prop crews plus any additional staff. Running crew shifts all scenery during scene changes. They must dress in dark clothing (preferably black) including close-toed shoes during a performance. **All members of the running crew must be present for every single rehearsal and ALL performances that involve getting scenery or props onto or off the set.**

Props Crew (Reports to the Stage Manager and Director)

Props crew members assist the director and actors by providing props that are safe, functional and appropriate for the given circumstances of the play. They:

1. Design, plan, envision, locate, build and otherwise arrange for all the properties that will appear on the stage and be lifted by an actor per the Director's guidelines.

2. Catalogue all of these items, noting their origin, whether pulled, borrowed, rented or bought, and keep track of them throughout the production.
3. Practice and execute the changing of all properties on the stage during the course of a production, as needed.
4. Store, care for, set-up, prepare and repair all properties used in the production.
5. Provide the Director with appropriate rehearsal props to be used at the conclusion of blocking rehearsals.

- THE COMPANY MEETING -

The Director will call an initial meeting of ALL company members. **Attendance is MANDATORY.** The following procedure will usually be followed at company meetings:

1. Roll call by the Director or Stage Manager
2. Filling out bio forms and phone list information
3. Discussion of approach to the production and to assignments
4. Announcements of rehearsal schedule and general rules for the production
5. If time allows, a full read-through of the script.
6. Separate meetings, as needed, between Directors and crews or cast.

- BASIC RULES OF THE STAGE -

A. Rehearsals

1. **Be punctual to every rehearsal.** Tardiness or absences will not be tolerated. Two unexcused absences or three unexcused tardies means potential dismissal from the company.* If you are to be absent or tardy, let the director two days in advance, in writing, otherwise it will be constituted as unexcused.

* - *an unexcused absence or tardy is one that is not on your conflict sheet.*

2. A specific call time will be posted on the Callboard, rehearsal schedule or website. You are expected to arrive on or before that time. The call time means you are in the building, readying for rehearsal or performance. On days of a show, you are not allowed to check in and then leave. Once checked in you need to stay in facility.
3. A visitor to rehearsal will only be allowed via permission from the Director prior to the start of rehearsal. Any visitor without permission will be politely asked to leave.
4. Do not do anything that could otherwise disrupt rehearsal.
5. It is completely unprofessional and inappropriate for an actor to tell another actor how to act.
6. At rehearsals, you should either be onstage, watching intently from the house or backstage studying.
7. At all times in rehearsal, actors are to remain as quiet as possible to allow others to focus on their work onstage.
8. At the beginning of rehearsal and performance, cell phones will need to be stored on silent until the end of rehearsal.

9. Understudies/Alternates play an extremely important role in the theatre. If you are cast as such, please make certain you can take over a role with confidence should the need arise by closely following rehearsals.
10. Food, candy and gum are NOT allowed on the stage, house, or the booth! THERE WILL BE NO EXCEPTIONS FOR STUDENTS.
11. LET THE DIRECTOR DIRECT.
12. The stage manager is an extension of the director. If they request that you do something, you must respond in the same way you would to your director. This is non-negotiable; it can be cause for dismissal from the company.
13. A conflict sheet will be filled out before rehearsals begin. Although we will try to work with your schedule, we cannot guarantee it is always possible. You may have three excused absences and four tardies on your conflict sheet. If you have too many things going on, you may have to make a choice.

- PERFORMANCE INFORMATION -

1. Company members (actors or crew) should never leave the theater during a performance.
2. **Photography and video recordings are NOT allowed during the performance!** Please make sure your family and friends are aware of this. Photos of the production will be taken prior to opening night during a dress rehearsal and will be posted after the production closes. Access to the photos will be available at:
<https://eagletheatreco.shutterfly.com/>
3. All crew members must remain on duty at their station during the entire length of the production. You may take a restroom break, assuming your duties allow it.

4. Under no circumstances should actors be in the booth during performances.
5. Unless on stage, actors should be out of sightline of all audience members and should remain absolutely quiet.
6. Please inform your loved ones that flowers/gifts are not to be presented during curtain call.
7. On Performance days, only company members will be allowed into the theater prior to the official time for the house to open. No exceptions will be made for students in the department who are NOT in that particular production. Further, only people allowed backstage during a production are cast and crew members: NO parents, siblings or friends.

- MISCELLANEOUS INFORMATION -

Performance Information

Attending live performances is part of the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills for all theatre classes. **Every student enrolled in a theatre class is required to attend one performance of each production.** Theatre students will receive discounted tickets and will be expected to participate in class discussion regarding the production. Students who choose not to attend will be required to read the play and write a detailed play analysis.

Performance Information

1. Except for disabled patrons and guests of the director or administration, no seats will be roped off as "saved."
2. Please inform your family and friends that performances will begin on time, so early arrival is encouraged.

3. Company members will be required to pre-sell tickets. Please note, however, that you are responsible for their value. Treat them as if they are cash!
4. We will sell VIP Passes to family members. A VIP Pass admits the bearer to every performance in the run of the show. Prices vary depending on the number of performances and passes may not be transferred to non-family members.

Deadlines

Deadlines are set for a reason and missing deadlines is not acceptable. If you miss a deadline for a trip, you may lose your deposit and opportunity to attend.

- INTERNATIONAL THESPIAN SOCIETY -

A. What is it?

The International Thespian Society is the world's largest honor society for theatre students. The designation "Junior Thespian" includes student members who excel in technical and production fields as well as performance in their middle school theatre program.

B. How Membership is Granted

1. Junior Thespian membership is granted for the demonstration of a commitment to excellence in theatre arts that meets the Educational Theatre Association (EdTA) general guidelines. Specifically, students become members by earning points for their work and for maintaining their grades.
2. Directors maintain records of Student activities and Junior Thespian membership will be conferred when qualifications have been met. When the required number of points has been earned, an apprentice should be given a Membership Notification informing

them that they have been invited to join the International Thespian Society. No hazing of student candidates is permitted.

3. One point represents approximately two hours of excellent work.
4. To be eligible for invitation to join, a student must earn ten points, five of which must be acquired at the school where he or she is to be inducted. Students must participate in at least one Eagle Theatre Company production per year. Participation should be in at least two of the listed categories (i.e. acting and business).

C. Active Membership Requirements

Junior Thespian membership will be awarded to students who qualify and fulfill requirements. No student can be elected into the troupe. A student **MUST** maintain satisfactory standards of membership as set forth by the constitution of the troupe and by the EdTA governing board. A student may be suspended or expelled from the troupe by the sponsor, based on independent circumstances. **A suspended student may not participate in the activities of any Thespian troupe nor attend Thespian events during the period of their suspension.**

1. This organization is an **HONOR** society and will require all members to maintain satisfactory standards of conduct both on and off campus. Use of inappropriate language, skipping class or causing a class disruption are examples of behavior that will not be tolerated.
2. If a student is suspended from the troupe, he or she may reapply for an active membership at the end of the suspension time.
3. To be considered an active member of the troupe students must:
 - a. Remain active in RVMS theatrical productions each year, whether as a company member or audience member. It is expected for you to be in attendance of all Eagle Theatre Company productions and events.

b. Attend a minimum of 75% of all ITS meetings.

D. Representatives

8TH GRADE REPRESENTATIVES: Provide Council among your Troupe. Communicate class suggestions/ideas. Support and participate in Troupe sponsored activities and responsible to assist in the clean-up of all socials. (Maximum of two representatives.)

7TH GRADE REPRESENTATIVE: Provide Council among your Troupe. Communicate class suggestions/ideas. Support and participate in Troupe sponsored activities and responsible to assist in the clean-up of all socials. (Maximum of two representatives.)

6TH GRADE REPRESENTATIVE: Provide Council among your Troupe. Communicate class suggestions/ideas. Support and participate in Troupe sponsored activities and responsible to assist in the clean-up of all socials. (Maximum of two representatives.)

- AUDIENCE ETIQUETTE -

Whether attending an Eagle Theatre Company production, attending another school's production or a professional production, you are expected to serve as an example and an ambassador for the Eagle Theatre Company. Going to a play is a special experience, one that you may remember for a long time. Everyone in the audience has been looking forward to seeing the production. A production team puts in many long hours and a lot of hard work to mount a performance for an audience. If you keep in mind common courtesy for the performers as well as your fellow audience members, everyone's theatre experience will be optimized.

- Plan to arrive at least thirty minutes before the performance begins.
- Respect posting on gum, food, drinks or candy policies in the theater.
- Please go to the restroom before seating for performance or at intermission.
- TURN OFF ALL cell phones or anything that could disturb the production, actors or audience members during the performance. It is impolite to have it go off or be playing on it during the production.

- Lights will dim just before a performance and then go dark. Show your knowledge by sitting quietly and calmly.
- Refrain from talking or whispering loudly during the performance. The actors on stage can hear you which is why you can hear them so well.
- No taking of pictures or video recording is allowed during the performance. Copyright laws prohibit this.
- Refrain from leaving your seat until the company has taken their curtain call at the end of the performance.
- Show your appreciation by clapping, and if so moved, stand and clap. The actors love to hear applause. This demonstrates how much you enjoyed their performance.
- Yelling, screaming, standing on chairs and noisemakers are NOT appropriate for the theater.

- SURVIVAL SUGGESTIONS -

1. Make friends right away.
2. Say NO once in a while.
3. Don't take on more than you can handle but take on as much as you can possibly handle.
4. Stay sober. And don't smoke; it's the single worst and most preventable teenage habit.
5. Though, at times, it may seem impossible, try to get some sleep.
6. Bring your homework to rehearsal. Those students that can motivate themselves to study in any environment tend to be more successful. Use your time wisely!
7. Don't be afraid to ask a friend for a ride! But also, be willing to cough up some gas money...
8. Don't be afraid to ask for help, from both teachers and students.

What do I do if I have a question or concern that is not addressed in this Handbook?

ASK THE QUESTION! Do not assume that your teachers/directors can read minds. If there is something that you do not understand, ask about it. The only stupid question is the one that remains unasked.

Eagle Theatre Company's Handbook Acknowledgement Form

STUDENTS

I _____ have read the Eagle Theatre Company Production Handbook, and I agree to abide by its rules and regulations. I understand that failing to follow these guidelines may cause for dismissal from a production company and may affect future casting.

(Student Signature)

(Date)

PARENTS

I have read the Eagle Theatre Company Production Handbook, and I agree that my son/daughter will abide by its rule and regulations. I understand that failing to follow these guidelines may be cause for his/her dismissal from a production company and may affect his/her future casting.

Also, as a parent I understand that I play an important role in teaching my child to behave in a respectful and honorable manner; I will model a positive attitude regarding the audition process, regardless of outcome. I agree to encourage my son/daughter to behave in a respectful and honorable manner regardless of outcome of the audition and to keep at it.

(Student Signature)

(Date)

