

Dear Students & Parents!

Welcome to Theatre Arts For Kids. My name is Leah Arington. I am the Artistic Director of Theatre Arts For Kids! We are so excited to have you on board for this incredible experience!

Prepare to be overwhelmed with the total theatrical experience, as we tap into your abilities as actors, dancers, singers, and performers through activities, rehearsals, and workshops of all kinds.

Before we get to the fun stuff, we have some business to take care of. It is VERY important that you read the entire welcome letter and parent's guide so that we are all on the same page when we begin. Your registration for any musical theatre workshop indicates that you have read this parent's guide indicating that you agree to all protocol described in this document.

The libretto (script/music) and practice cd will be passed out on the first day of class or prior.

Auditions begin on the first day and can take up to two days. This is very low stress! We will all learn the audition songs, scenes, and dances as a group. You don't need to prepare anything in advance unless noted in the welcome information.

Everyone will have a special part to play in the final production. There is no "small part" and each part is crucial to the success of our show. I must ask that you accept your part gracefully and show your support and enthusiasm for everyone in the cast. We are a team. Our show will only be successful if everyone gives 100%.

Now that I have your complete commitment to this project... Our time together is never as long as it seems. With everything that we need to learn and polish before our performance, it is very important that you commit yourself not only during rehearsals at Theatre Arts for Kids, but **you must be willing to put in time at home memorizing lines, music, and dances.**

Together, we will produce a show that will leave the audience wanting more. As a performer you will learn about all the magical parts of the theatrical experience, as well as the not-so-magical parts of being a performer. We will work hard and strive to present a professional quality performance. I can guarantee you that there is a lot of fun along the way and all of the hard work along the way is well worth it in the end.

I can't wait to meet you all and be sure to read the notes below to help you prepare for this adventure.

Sincerely,
Leah Arington
info@tafk.org/402.202.1087

PHOTOGRAPHY

Enrolling your child in a TAFK production gives Theatre Arts For Kids permission to photograph (video as applicable) your child for promotional purposes. If your unique situation prevents this from being possible, please send an email to info@tafk.org to note this specifically. We are happy to oblige, but we do need to receive this request in writing prior to your child being present at TAFK.

PAYMENT/REFUNDS/DEPOSITS

Enrolling your child in a TAFK production indicates that you understand that full payment is expected at the time of registration. Please contact us to make other payment arrangements if necessary. If you are new to TAFK and would like a parent referral before registering, please let us know. We also encourage an introductory conversation by phone, email, or in person to discuss your child if there is anything we should know in advance to make your child's experience as positive as it can be. **NO REFUNDS ARE GUARANTEED.** Refunds may be made per director discretion based on class appropriateness for any child and in cases where the class is not a good match for the child per the director's experience with the child in class due to age/maturity, etc.

In some cases ("Junior" or "Kids" shows), performers receive a script that they can keep. In full show versions, the scripts are rented and must be returned to the company. In these cases, performers are required to submit a \$50 deposit to insure the safe return of their script. In instances where a performer is unable to fulfill their commitment to the show, this deposit will not be returned. The funds received will be used to cover a small portion of the expenses associated with the performer's initial commitment such as costuming, administration etc.

ARRIVAL

Please arrive on time, but not early. The TAFK staff needs time to prepare for class/rehearsal.

DISMISSAL

If you are running late, please text or call Leah at 402.202.1087.

REHEARSALS

Parents are not allowed in the rehearsal space during rehearsals.

FOOD

Bring a snack, a lunch, and a water bottle as is appropriate for the length of the class.

CLOTHES/DRESS CODE

You should always have clothes and shoes that are easy to dance in with you. No flip-flops or snow boots! Feel free to bring dance shoes with you to change into. Please dress conservatively.

- Shorts/Skirts/Dresses must be as long as the length of the fingertips when at your side.
- No Crop Tops/Tube Tops/See Through Shirts or open sided tank tops showing bare skin/sports bras.
- No make up.
- DO NOT get your hair cut or colored without asking the permission of the director first. This is standard theatre protocol as your hair may need to be a certain style for the show.

COSTUMES

Performers will need a base black outfit and specific shoes for most shows. All other costumes will be provided. Specific information about the base black outfit and shoes will be provided at the beginning of each session. Performers may have 1-6 costumes depending on the show. Performers change backstage in the dressing areas. Performers are expected to have appropriate undergarments and respect each other's space.

PERFORMANCE

- *Photography/videotaping is not allowed during the production. Since you will not be able to video or take pictures during the production. Pictures will be taken during rehearsals and dress rehearsals. Pictures will be put up on the TAFK website and Facebook page for you to download.*
- Children under the age of four years old are not allowed in the audience, so please plan accordingly for the evening. There will often be a scheduled performance for young audiences for children 4 and under.

TICKETS

Tickets can be purchased for all shows at www.ludus.com.

QUESTIONS/CONCERNS

Questions are great and help everyone stay on track! We suggest sending an email first if you have a question about protocol etc. The TAFK staff will not be available for questions at the beginning of the rehearsal process or directly following in order to be able to welcome and dismiss the performers as they arrive and depart.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

You must be able to commit to all rehearsals in order to participate in this production. Please see limited exceptions to this policy below. ***This policy is in place to set each child up for success. We are able to be flexible to a point, but believe that the children will receive the most benefit as a result of their solid commitment to this project!***

- **Excused Absences**

Exceptions may be made for known conflicts. These would be considered excused absences once approved by the director. Your known conflict must be approved by the director in writing in order for it to be considered an excused absence. Excused absences will only be considered if they are brought to the director prior to the show being cast so that your child's success in the program can be ensured through the casting and rehearsal process. There are no excused absences permitted during the tech/dress process. The tech/dress process includes the two weekends prior to the show and any additional dates noted at the beginning of the process. Tech and dress rehearsals will go as long as necessary and call times for these rehearsals will be noted at least one week prior based on the show needs. Call time for the day of the show will most often be 9am, but may, in some cases be adjusted depending on the needs of the show. This information will be confirmed one week prior.

- **Unexcused Absences**

Unexcused absences will result in being removed from the show. There will be no refunds in these cases. Every effort will be made to accommodate unpredictable illness, but the short rehearsal period may not allow for compassion to dictate solutions. Illnesses may be treated as unexcused absences as is necessary for the overall success of the show and all of its' participants.

THEATRE PROTOCOL

At TAFK, we recognize that all teachers and parents have different ideas of material appropriateness. We pride ourselves on a conservative and yet educational approach in order to expose kids to the vast array of musical theatre repertoire erring on the conservative side. We honor that parents have the

ultimate say in what their children are exposed to and even the best and most seemingly harmless Disney shows have adult content that may be questionable in some eyes. TAFK expects parents to be familiar with the show they register their child for and to read all material sent home on the first day. It is the responsibility of the parents to alert the Director to any problems they might have with the repertoire or implied stage directions. This response must happen before the show is cast in order to receive a refund based on differing vision of appropriateness, as it is rare that the staging or content will be changed unless it has been an oversight.

Once the show is cast, all children are expected to accept their roles gracefully understanding that they do not have the option to opt out of staging, choreography, or any other production decisions made by the Director. This can include dancing with same or opposite sex partners, stage combat, stage kissing, language in the script that they might not use in their daily lives. At TAFK, we stress that this is theatre and not reality. It is our job to tell a convincing story in order to touch the hearts of our audience.

CASTING THE SHOW

Theatre Arts For Kids is designed to help each child develop their skills as performers (actors, singers, dancers) and their overall theatrical knowledge by taking them through an entire production process. We aspire to help them build self-confidence, self-discipline and responsibility while developing these important skills. Each child is expected to respect the entire process.

Casting can be the most difficult and challenging part of the process for young performers and parents of young performers. It is important with this age group to encourage the children to embrace whatever role they get. If they have not been given their coveted role, it is sometimes not immediately evident to a child the potential the role they have been given has for them.

Every child cannot play the same role. We make every effort to give each child a part that suits their abilities and challenges their potential.

When we cast a show, we use several criteria to determine the role they eventually receive.

- The child's ability to perform the part (singing, reading lines, acting, etc.)
- The child's experience, confidence level, and reliability (as we see it) as applicable to the given show.
- The group! TAFK casts every child in the program in the session's show. No one is turned away as often happens in school productions, community theatres, and

professional theatre companies. We work very hard to find the right solution to the casting puzzle to ensure everyone's success.

As we consider these variables, there are no steadfast rules in the casting process. We must make judgment calls to try to benefit each child and the production. For children who participate in multiple TAFK productions, we are able to help them grow from small roles to bigger roles as they refine their skills throughout the years.

As parents, you have an important role in this process. Please reinforce with your child the importance of every role, and the satisfaction that comes with participating in the production process. It is natural for parents to feel disappointment for their children, but please do not instigate frustration and disappointment in your child. Be a role model and demonstrate to your child that acknowledging the successes of others does not take away from their own success.

Theater is about community and every cast member is important to the final production. We recognize how important this experience is to your child and we will respect them and give them our very best! Most importantly, encourage your child to have fun and enjoy watching them grow in this experience!

Please take a moment to discuss with your child how important it is that they understand that VERY few students will receive the part they are hoping for. They should be prepared to have a fantastic attitude about whatever part they receive. All students must be ready to accept the challenge and put forth 100% effort to make our show the best it can be. Tears and bad attitudes are unacceptable. Please help your student prepare for whatever the outcome is.

Parents sometimes have questions about their child's performance during the audition process or about the outcome of the role assignments. We are happy to answer questions regarding this process at the completion of the program. Feel free to email the director following our performances if you would like to discuss what areas your child would benefit from improvement in to help them in future auditions. Roles will not be reassigned or altered after the cast list is announced.

Performer Etiquette

The rules outlined below are part of the training that the children are receiving here at TAFK to be as professional as possible which directly impacts the quality of the theatrical experience they have. It is our hope that these values will carry over into their participation in other theatrical endeavors as well as life experiences.

- Performers will treat fellow performers and production staff with the utmost respect. This included avoiding backstage “drama” of any kind.
- Performers will not break the “fourth wall” by acknowledging the audience. This includes responding to friends or family who make the unfortunate decision to wave at or call out to a performer.
- Performers will not talk backstage during a rehearsal or performance.
- Performers will not have cell phones on during rehearsals or performances.
- Performers will check their props before the show begins and will never touch someone else’s prop(s).
- Performers will not break character or acknowledge mistakes on stage. Performers will not engage in non-directed or non-character related conversations or “stage business” onstage.
- Performers will change out of costumes before meeting fans in the lobby following the performance.
- Gum is not allowed backstage or onstage.
- Parents will not be allowed in the backstage area prior to or following the show.
- Performers will not be allowed out of the backstage area in costume prior to the show beginning.
- Performers will not plan or present “thank you’s” for production staff including the director onstage in costume. These “thank you’s” are encouraged and very much appreciated and very appropriate at cast parties etc.
- Performers will participate in “strike” following performances to clean and organize all props and costumes.

Audience Etiquette

In addition to teaching your children performance etiquette, we also emphasize excellent audience etiquette. We hope they will take these values with them as they become the audiences of the future. Please take a moment to read through the values we consider important and help us to offer the performers on our stage the same respect they have learned to treat others with.

Photography & Video is not allowed.

Audience members are asked to not get up and move around or leave the theatre during the performance. If you must leave for an emergency, please do so during a scene change or during intermission.

Audience members of all ages should save all comments and questions until after the performance. Talking of any kind during the performance is distracting to the performers and other audience members.

Children under four years of age are not permitted in the audience.

Audience members arriving late to the performance will be asked to stand at the entrance until a scene change or intermission as directed by the usher or house manager. Please do not walk into the audience during a performance as it is very distracting to the performers and the audience.

Audience members are asked to not wave to or call out to their child as their child walks onto the stage or at any time during the performance. The children have been strictly told to focus on the performance at all times. They are not allowed to acknowledge the audience at any time.

The performers welcome your applause at the end of songs and scenes. Please save all verbal encouragement such as whistling and yelling for the curtain call (bows).

Thank you for helping us make this performing experience the best that it can be.

Enjoy The Performance!