

**BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE**  
**student**  
**THEATER FESTIVAL**



**Bucks County Playhouse**  
**Student Theater Festival Handbook**

# BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE student THEATER FESTIVAL

## Bucks County Playhouse Student Theater Festival Handbook

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**BUCKS  
COUNTY  
PLAYHOUSE**



**Newtown  
Arts  
Company**

## **Welcome!**

The Student Theater Festival at Bucks County Playhouse is in its 51st year! Originally known as Dramafest for one act plays, the Student Theater Festival has evolved into a multi-week celebration showcasing talented student performers from all over the region. Students perform on the historic stage, take workshops to develop their knowledge and skills in the arts and receive feedback from theater professionals.

When the Playhouse closed in 2010, Newtown Arts Company, located in Newtown, PA, hosted the Festival for the next two years. After a lavish \$6 million renovation, the Playhouse reopened its doors in 2012 and welcomed the Student Theater Festival back to its stage along with a partnership with Newtown Arts Company; a relationship that remains a strong component of the Festival to this day.

Top performances are selected at the end of the Student Theater Festival to participate in Best of Fest. Best of Fest celebrates outstanding student performances in a one night showcase for friends, family and the community. Best of Fest concluded its 4th year in 2018.

The network of Bucks County Playhouse Student Theater Festival alumni is ever expanding and we are so glad to welcome you to the family!

## About the Day

### Sample Daily Schedule

8:30 am-9:00am-Arrival/Registration  
9:00 am-9:30 am-Welcome  
9:30 am-11:45 am-Workshops  
11:45 am-12:45 pm-Lunch  
1:00 pm-4:30 pm-Performances/  
Feedback  
4:30 pm-5:00 pm-Load-Out/Awards

### Arrival/Registration

Schools and groups arrive at the Playhouse, unload props at the loading dock and check in at our theater lobby. Welcoming remarks begin at 9:00am and then students are dismissed for their morning workshops.

### Our Parking Lot

Parking in our lot is \$3 per hour or \$20 for the entire day (CARS & VANS ONLY, LIMITED AVAILABILITY). It is a public lot, so it is open to other visitors to New Hope. Please note buses CANNOT park in our parking lot. However, we welcome buses to pull into our lot to drop off group members before finding additional parking.

### Parking for Motor Coaches and Mini Buses

If you are bringing a bus, you can park it in the New Hope Shopping Center (by Staples/CVS/Cornerstone). You can drop your party off and then park the bus. It is approximately a 15-minute walk from the Shopping Center parking lot down to the Playhouse.

- 1) Head out of the parking lot towards Martine's Restaurant (the yellow riverfront house on your right.)
- 2) Turn left, continue to the stop sign (next to New Hope Apparel Company.)
- 3) At the stop sign, go straight onto West Ferry Street (There will be a

cannon across the street on your right-hand side.)

- 4) Continue on West Ferry St until it turns into West Bridge Street.
- 5) Continue onto West Bridge Street. After you pass St. Martin of Tours Church you will see on the right the New Hope Shopping Center (Staples/CVS/Cornerstone). Make the next right into the shopping center's parking lot.

### Workshops

Each student may take two hour-long workshops in the morning. There are three workshops offered which may include, but are not limited to: movement, dance, tap/jazz, improv, theater games, Shakespearean acting, audition technique and a variety of other subjects.

### Lunch

- Participants are welcome to bring their own lunches and sit in our spacious courtyard. There are ample tables, chairs and benches. There are also many quaint restaurants in New Hope for participants to explore during the lunch break.
- We are pleased to announce that Student Theater Festival participants will receive a discount for purchases made at The Ferry Market. The Ferry Market is a casual fresh food market with indoor and outdoor seating just down the street from the Playhouse. To receive the STF discount, please show your wristband upon ordering.

## About the Performances

Schools perform segments of plays or musicals with casts of varying sizes. Guest Artists provide feedback after the 1st session of performances and

again after the 2nd session. Typically, there are 4-5 schools per day with 8-9 performances.

### Teching

- During the morning while students attend their workshops, a designated person (teachers, advisers, directors and/or student directors) will work with Bucks County Playhouse production staff to prepare the technical elements of their performances. Each school will program their lighting and sound with Bucks County Playhouse production staff including reviewing any needs such as: keyboard, chairs, tables, etc.
- Shows will be teched in the order of performances in the afternoon. Each school will receive approximately 15 minutes to work with Bucks County Playhouse production staff to tech their performance(s).
- Teachers, advisers and directors must tech during their allotted time in the morning. All shows must be teched before the lunch break and before performances begin in the afternoon.

### Time Limit

- Performance slots are 20 minutes. Performances must be 20 minutes in length or shorter. Performances will be timed by Bucks County Playhouse staff.
- Five minutes are allotted between each performance for change over.
- If a performance goes over the allotted time, there will be a 2-minute warning from the Stage Manager, followed by a dimming of the lights and fade out. This is to ensure that all performances receive the same amount of time on stage and to keep the festival on

schedule.

- Schools may sign up for a maximum of two times slots per day. Schools can perform two 20-minute segments of their show, for example an Act 1 and Act 2, but they will not be performed consecutively.

## Content

- Selected material can be from published sources and/or student-written/ directed.
- To make the BCP Student Theater Festival enjoyable for all participants, material should be suitable for a public performance before a general audience at your own school. We ask that selections contain no extreme adult language, nudity, sex, violence or other content that, in the view of the festival, could be considered offensive.

## Set, Props and Projections

- Storage, wing and dressing room space is extremely limited backstage at the Playhouse. Set pieces, backdrops, flats and large furniture pieces cannot be used. Only handheld props and smaller furniture pieces can be brought to the Playhouse.
- Participating schools will be provided with a list of furniture that will be available at the Playhouse for their use. The purpose of this is to limit the quantity of set pieces, furniture and props being stored backstage.
- Each participating school will have access to a small table to store props, costumes and supplies backstage.
- No liquids are allowed on stage.
- Use of the projector may be available to schools during the Festival. For more information

about availability of the projector and for specifications, please contact Joann Bull to discuss your school's needs.

## Weapon Policy

- Safety for all students, teachers, staff and guests participating in the Student Theater Festival is of the utmost importance. Please read our weapon policy carefully:\*
  - BCP defines a weapon as: "Any object used in a staged fight for attack or defense" and "Any implements fashioned or used in a threatening manner, whether capable of inflicting actual bodily harm or not."
  - BCP staff must be notified by the teacher, advisor or director of use of any and all weapons used in a performance upon registering for the Festival.
  - All weapons must be presented upon load-in to Playhouse staff on the day of the Festival.
  - Bucks County Playhouse reserves the right to deny the use of any and all weapons used on our stage and in our facilities at any time.
  - The following are never allowed at the Festival: real blades or guns of any kind, guns with blanks, retractable knives or swords, blunted blades of any kind.
- \*In accordance with the Actors' Equity Association Agreement and Rules Governing Employment in Small Professional Theaters Stage Fighting Policy and the Yale School of Drama Prop Weapon and Stage Combat Policy.

## Sound

- Schools need to provide a CD, flash drive or file of their musical tracks.
- Schools may have no more than 3 musicians if using live music.

- A piano or keyboard will be available. Please notify BCP Education Staff if you require a keyboard.

## Stage Dimensions

- The stage depth is 30' with about 15' of wing space on either side.
- The proscenium height is 19'3" and width 29'9".

## Feedback

- Typically, the teaching artists who lead the morning workshops will give feedback at the afternoon performances. This is done so the guest artists have a chance to meet the students in the morning and to provide continuity for the students throughout the day.
- Feedback is positive in nature, designed to enhance the performance and provide insight on how students and teachers may improve future productions.

## Awards

- Each day of STF culminates with a short awards ceremony. Daily awards are given out to schools and individuals that show excellence in their performances.
- Guest Artists deliberate following the final performance of the day and award the schools and individuals that stood out to highlight their performances.
- Daily awards are subject to change and categories vary year to year and day to day during the Festival.

***Please Note: The festival does not focus on competition, but rather on a supportive environment to share talent, collaborate with theater students that they would not normally meet and to encourage their fellow performers.***

## OTHER

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### Best of Fest

Several outstanding performances from the Student Theater Festival are invited back to perform in Best of Fest. Best of Fest is a one night showcase performance for friends, family, and the community.

- Schools invited to Best of Fest may be asked to cut the run time of their 20-minute segment down or perform specific numbers from their musical.
- Schools participating in Best of Fest will have 30 minutes to tech their piece earlier in the day.
- Pending ticket sales, students performing in Act 2 will sit in the audience and watch Act 1, then switch with the students who performed in Act 1 during intermission.

***PLEASE NOTE: Daily awards at the Student Theater Festival do not correlate to whether a school or performance will be invited to Best of Fest. Schools are selected under the advice of the guest artists, Bucks County Playhouse and Newtown Arts Company staff.***

## FAQs

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### What is the cost of the festival?

\$50 per 20-minute segment  
\$20 per student  
Free for teachers and advisors

### Do I bring costumes?

Schools may bring costumes, but they are not judged on them.

### Can I bring 2 segments of the same show?

Yes, schools can perform 20 minutes of Act 1 and Act 2 – but they will not be performed consecutively.

### How many performances can I bring?

We limit schools to two performances per day.

### How do I pay?

Schools may pay for their initial registration with a money order or check. Upon arrival to the Festival any additional payments may be made at the Box Office with cash, check, credit card or money order. Please do not send cash in the mail. Bucks County Playhouse is not responsible for the loss of cash sent in the mail.

### Can I buy tickets?

#### Is it open to the public?

- The Student Theater Festival is free and open to the public! Parents and members of the community are welcome to come watch their students perform on the historic Playhouse stage free of charge!
- A schedule of performances will be listed in the Student Theater Festival program which will be distributed to participants when they arrive.
- Parents please note: While we

do our best to stay on schedule, your child's performance may not happen at the exact time it is listed in the program. We recommend that you arrive before your child's schedule time and prepare for the possibility that we may be slightly ahead or behind schedule.

### How do I sign up?

The registration form is available to download on our website. Registration is on a first-come, first-served basis and we try and accommodate each school and their schedules. We ask that schools give us several choices of dates.

### What if my students don't want to take a dance class?

There are several options for workshops and they change each year – improv, theater games, movement, dance, tap/jazz, Shakespeare, audition prep, and more.

## CONTACT

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### Bucks County Playhouse

Box Office: 70 S. Main St., New Hope, PA 18938  
(215) 862-2121 • [www.bcptheater.org](http://www.bcptheater.org)

### Joann Bull, STF Coordinator

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