

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



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**Student Theater Festival Handbook**

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The logo for Bucks County Playhouse, featuring the text "BUCKS COUNTY PLAYHOUSE" in white, stacked, sans-serif capital letters on a red square background.

**BUCKS  
COUNTY  
PLAYHOUSE**

The logo for Newtown Arts Company, featuring three stylized theater masks (tragedy, comedy, and neutral) in grey, positioned to the left of the text "Newtown Arts Company" in a black serif font.

**Newtown  
Arts  
Company**

## **Welcome!**

The Student Theater Festival at Bucks County Playhouse is in its 54th 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.

The network of Bucks County Playhouse Student Theater Festival alumni is ever expanding and we are excited to welcome you and your show to the stage!

## About the Day

### Payment

Payment is required to reserve a slot for STF, on a first-come, first-served basis. Final payment is due two weeks before your designated day, which includes student fees.

### Sample Daily Schedule

8:30 am-9:00 am-Arrival/Registration  
9:15 am-9:30 am-Welcome  
9:45 am-12:00 pm-Workshops  
12:00 pm-12:45 pm-Lunch  
1:00 pm-4:30 pm-Performances/  
Feedback  
4:30 pm-5:30 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. Upon check in teachers/directors will receive a welcome packet which includes playbills of the Festival with the day's schedule, wristbands and tickets to the workshops. Welcome remarks begin at 9:15 am and then students are dismissed for the morning's 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 must park off-site following drop off. Further information about bus parking will be provided closer to the Festival dates.

### Workshops

- Each student may take two one-hour-long workshops in the morning. There are three to four 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.
- Teachers/Directors receive tickets to distribute to students upon check in. Each student should receive two tickets from their teacher. Tickets are labeled clearly with session 1 and session 2 along with the name of the workshop.

### 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.

### COVID-19 Safety Protocols

- Everyone in the theatre and workshop spaces must wear acceptable face coverings at all times, regardless of vaccination status, except while eating or drinking in designated locations.
- All face coverings must cover the nose and mouth and comply with the CDC guidelines for acceptable face coverings.
- Vaccines are required for students, teachers, and chaperones will be asked for proof of vaccination upon arrival for check in.
- We will accept a paper vaccination card, a photocopy of your card, a photo of your card on your phone, a digital vaccine app (such as

Excelsior or Docket), as well as other international vaccine records.

- Children under 12 and people with a medical condition or closely held religious belief that prevents vaccination may show proof of a negative COVID-19 PCR test taken within 72 hours of the date. Rapid antigen tests will NOT be accepted
- The Playhouse's full COVID policy can be found here on our website: <https://bcptheater.org/covid-19-precautions>
- Students performing on stage may remove their masks for the duration of their performance. Masks must be worn as soon as students are finished performing
- Plastic clear face shields are not required for performers. Schools are welcome to have their students wear clear face shields while performing.
- Schools are welcome to have students wear their masks during the performance if that is their safety preference. Masks must be worn as soon as students are finished performing

## About the Performances

Schools perform segments of plays and musicals with casts of varying sizes. Guest Artists provide feedback on each performance.

To limit the number of people backstage at one time, only one school will be permitted onstage and backstage at a time. The changeover time between each performance will therefore be extended to 15 minutes, allowing the onstage school to clear and return to the theater and the next school to go backstage to prepare for their performance. Schools will be adjudicated one at a time during the

changeover.

This year there will be three to five schools per day with a maximum of 6 performance

## 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 per segment 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.
- **Prior to the Festival**, teachers/directors will receive a tech rider from BCP staff. This tech rider is a form that teachers/directors will fill out that includes basic information about your production, such as title, run time, size of cast and crew, a list of lighting and sound cues, and list of props and set pieces you plan to bring to the Festival. **Schools must return this completed tech rider one week before their date at the Festival.** These tech riders allow BCP technical staff to prepare for

performances in advance and are integral to making the day run smoothly.

## 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.
- There will be a 15-minute changeover between each performance. The onstage school will clear the stage and return to the theater and the next school will go backstage to prepare for their performance. Once the first school has returned to the house, the adjudicators will give them notes during the remaining time left in the changeover.
- 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 time 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 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 Emily Anacker 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 three musicians if using live music.
- A piano or keyboard will be available. Please notify Emily Anacker if you require a keyboard, piano or projector.

## 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.*

## FAQs

### What is the cost of the festival?

- \$60 per 20-minute segment
- \$25 per student
- Free for teachers and advisors

### Do I bring costumes?

Schools may bring costumes, but they are not judged on them. Please remember that storage is very limited backstage.

### Can I bring two 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 over the phone with credit card, or mail a check or money order. 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. Please refer to the Festival registration form for details.

### Can I buy tickets?

#### Is it open to the public?

- The Student Theater Festival afternoon performances (generally beginning at 1pm) are 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!
- Performances take place at Bucks County Playhouse in the afternoon.
- 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 to 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, acting for the camera, audition prep, and more. In recent years we have also offered workshops in technical theater like costume design and rigging.

## **CONTACT**

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### **Bucks County Playhouse**

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