



Because of you, we are here!

Student & Family Handbook

Updated 7/1/2026

250 Mt. Lebanon Blvd.
Suite 400
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(412) 563-5080

www.centerfortheaterarts.org
info@centerfortheaterarts.org



Mission Statement

The CTA is dedicated to offering the highest quality performing arts instruction and committed to providing all students with opportunities to improve their self-image and self-confidence through artistic expression.

Find your voice. Develop your style. Reach high.

As The Center for Theater Arts enters its 45th year of operation, we are very proud of our history. We currently have students who enter our programs with a wide range of experience and interest - stretching from a mild curiosity to those that possess natural ability or previous training. By offering a curriculum that explores **expectation, investment, personal accountability** and **process**, we have an opportunity to ground our students with **training, technique, discipline** and an **experience** that will aid them in many aspects of their lives. With an ongoing commitment to best practices in education, you will find we are **student centered**, focused on exploring **multiple avenues to success**. Our **knowledgeable instructors and staff** have a **shared commitment and vision** as we move into the 2022-23 school year! With a faculty of degreed instructors and professional arts educators, the Center for Theater Arts is confident that you will find we are dedicated to our students and united by our mission.

Goals & Objectives

- To provide the highest quality of instruction in the performing arts for children and teens at various skill levels.
- To provide the highest quality educational opportunities in dance, acting, musical theater and voice for children with disabilities, utilizing other students to assist in these classes.
- To provide each student with performance opportunities.
- To offer advice to students and their families with respect to the student's skill level and potential.
- To provide information about opportunities in the arts for Center students.

Office Hours

Administrative Office Hours: 10:00am-2:00pm (Monday through Thursday)

Please call before stopping in to ensure someone is at the front desk. Occasionally, our team works remotely. You can also always reach someone at the front desk during class time. You can also email us any time at info@centerfortheaterarts.org

Class/Teaching Hours: 4:00 PM to 8:30 PM (Monday/Wednesday)
 4:00 PM to 8:30PM PM (Tuesday/Thursday)
 4:00 PM to 8:00PM (Friday)
 9:15 AM to 5:00 PM (Saturday)

***Did you know the Center can be the recipient of your United Way contribution?
Please consider electing the Donor Choice option!
The Center's United Way agency number is 967187.***

*For up to date information about classes, schedules, performances and more
be sure to visit our website at www.centerfortheaterarts.org*

Getting to Know You

Class Attendance

Regular attendance is necessary for any student to progress in a performing arts education. In classes where ensemble work or rehearsals are the focus, **attendance is essential**. Theater is a highly collaborative art form and progress in rehearsal is impossible without regular attendance, for individuals and their whole ensemble. *Students whose absences are detrimental to the project may be re-cast or dismissed from productions or performance companies.*

Students who miss a rehearsal due to illness must call or email the Center out of respect for the director and cast. If you have *previously scheduled conflicts* due to medical appointments, religious holidays, required school activities, or travel, you must inform the instructor with as much notice as possible, ideally before the first rehearsal or class.

Class Cancellations

The Center makes every effort to hold classes when possible. On days when weather may dictate class cancellation, we will use the following methods to let families know:

- KDKA and WTAE will broadcast information.
- We will send email notification to families using your JackRabbit email contacts.
- We will post updates on our Instagram account and Facebook page.

****Please note that on days when "regular" school may be cancelled, conditions may improve enough by the end of the day for the Center to hold classes. Also, the opposite may hold if conditions worsen - please be sure to check before dropping off students.****

The Center will attempt to make up cancelled instructional hours due to weather or unforeseen circumstances, but this may not always be possible. Additionally, the Center cannot be responsible for providing make-ups for missed classes when student illness or family obligations prevent attendance.

Tardiness

A major part of the study of the performing arts involves commitment and self discipline. Tardiness is disruptive to the entire class. Furthermore, warm-ups are essential to prevent injury in all dance and voice classes. Students must make every effort to be punctual.

Student Pick-up and Drop-off

Parents - please do **NOT** block the parking lot when dropping off or picking up students. Pull close enough to the building or park so other traffic can pass without disruption. *You may not stop and wait for drop off or pickup by the front door; parking spots are available to park and wait.*

Also, please note that the Center is unable to provide supervision or childcare and is not responsible for the safety and well-being of students who are dropped off more than 10 minutes before classes begin or who are picked up more than 10 minutes after a class is completed. While circumstances can occur that a parent may be late, please understand that it is often stressful and embarrassing to your child to be left waiting.

Student Information

1. Curriculum & Performance

Program Overview

The Center offers performing arts classes for students of all skill levels, from pre-school through high school graduation.

Classes in our **Musical Theater** Department allow students a chance to discover their individual talents and interests while exploring the basics of singing, dancing, and acting. Musical Theater classes focus on fundamental performing arts skills, emphasizing creative expression and fun.

Classes in **Voice, Dance, and Acting** emphasize skill development and are intended for those students who wish to increase their mastery in these areas.

Junior Division classes are offered for beginning students **ages 4–7**. Higher level placement is available for those who progress in their studies.

Student Division classes are offered for students **ages 7-13**.

High School Division classes are offered for students **grades 8-12**.

Performance Classes require regular attendance and outside preparation.

Special Actors Program: a full year of musical theater performing arts program for **students with special needs ages 7 - Adult**. These classes are funded by grants from Charitable Foundations.

Center Productions

Center productions include the High School Musical, the All School Musical, as well as our Performance Workshop classes.

Participation in these groups requires commitment to the company and an understanding that an individual's involvement impacts the entire ensemble.

Students whose schedules do not permit regular attendance for rehearsals or classes should not audition or register for these programs.

The **All School Musical**, which is performed in the spring, is open to any registered Center student in third grade through eighth grade. No auditions are necessary to become a cast member, and all members have guaranteed participation however, you must be registered in a class to participate.

The Center's **High School Musical** is open to all students eighth grade through twelfth grade, and like the All School Musical, does not require auditions to become a cast member, however, you must be registered in a class to participate.

Musical Theater for Students with Special Needs

Classes meet weekly and follow a musical theater format. Students are placed in age appropriate levels and work with a qualified team of teachers, assisted by student aides in some cases. A year-end musical performance is held each spring that is open to family, friends, and the public.

Casting Policy

It is the policy of the Center to provide performance opportunities that give all students a place to reach for a star.

All casting decisions are made by the director of a specific production or performing company with the final approval of the Executive Director. These decisions incorporate many considerations. We strive to make the best possible choice for the project, the students, and the school. It is improper for any parent or student to seek to overrule a director's casting choices. All decisions of the director are final.

Student Conduct and Policies

Class and Performance Guidelines

The study of the performing arts teaches respect for individuals and the ensemble. It is expected that all students will treat each other and staff members with kindness, consideration, and respect. The Center seeks to create a nurturing environment for all of our students. **Lack of respect or bullying of any kind will not be tolerated.**

Should a student become disruptive or have a discipline problem, the instructor will ask the student to correct the undesirable behavior.

If the student fails to do so, he or she will be sent to the reception area and a parent/guardian will be notified by phone to pick up the student.

To re-enter the class, the student and a parent must meet with the Executive Director to address any future inappropriate conduct. In cases where disruptive or disrespectful behavior continues, the student will be dismissed from the program and must apply for re-admission.

Class Placement Policy

Our goal is to establish a placement for each child that affords the greatest chance of success and opportunity.

The Center appreciates each family's busy schedule, yet placement with an inappropriate age or level will not afford a positive experience, The faculty and Executive Director consider the following factors in no specific order:

1. The child's intellectual emotional and behavioral development, stage presence, and needs
2. The child's physical and social maturity
3. The child's interactions with other students
4. The age of the child
5. The "social dynamics" factors within the Class/performance
6. The number of years of performance experience

While the Executive Director considers the needs of each student, along with faculty input and parental guardian requests, the Executive Director has the final decision on all student placements.

HARASSMENT POLICY

All CTA students and faculty have a responsibility for maintaining high standards of conduct and ethical behavior. Conduct, which violates these standards, will not be tolerated.

The Center is committed to a educational & performance based learning environments that are free from any form of harassment. Harassment (inappropriate comments and actions) adversely affects performance and social conditions for students and is unacceptable. Any incident of harassment will be regarded very seriously and may be grounds for disciplinary action by the Executive Director. Persistent or gross harassment and, in particular, bullying, sexual or racial harassment will be treated as grounds for disciplinary action including dismissal or expulsion from the Center. CTA is committed to having students "reach for a star" and we want to ensure all of our students have that opportunity.

Equal Opportunity Policy

CTA prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, veteran status or disability. All students are guaranteed the same performance opportunities. No person, no matter his/her title or position, has authority, expressed, actual apparent or implied, to discriminate against another person at the Center.

DRESS CODES

Ballet/Intro to Dance Dress Code

Solid colored leotards and tights in student's choice of color, ballet shoes.

OR:

Solid colored T-shirts, slim fitting sweat pants or jazz slacks in gray or black. Ballet shoes.

Hair should be pulled back off the face, in a bun if possible.

Jazz/Dance/Musical Theater Dress Code

Solid colored leotards and tights in student's choice of color; unitards and jazz pants are permitted, jazz oxfords or ballet slippers are all permitted.

No loose fitting T-shirts, shorts or sweat shirts. This is so the instructor is able to see the proper alignment of the body. During the winter months, close-fitting layers or leg warmers and dance sweaters may be worn. Hair is to be clipped or pulled off the face.

OR:

Solid colored T-shirts, slim fitting sweat pants or jazz slacks in gray or black. Jazz oxfords permitted.

Hip-Hop Dress Code

Leotards or close-fitting tee's and camis are permitted and jazz pants or comfortable pants may be worn, no jeans. Sneakers or jazz sneakers may be worn with hair off the face.

Tap Dress Code

Same dress code as jazz/musical theater dance. Tap shoes are required. Flat tap shoes for girls under the age of 12 unless special permission is granted by the instructor for heeled tap shoes.

Voice Dress Code

There is no specific dress code for voice. Students should dress in a comfortable and appropriate manner.

Acting/Musical Theater/Performing Arts Dress Code

Although there is no specific dress code for Acting, students should wear comfortable clothing that allows for movement.

Cross, sandals, UGGS, clogs, open toes shoes, dresses, and skirts are not appropriate. Physical exercise and dance movement are elements of these classes; therefore, soft soled shoes are needed, dance shoes are preferred. Tennis shoes are also acceptable.

Health & Safety

We strive to be sensitive to individual health concerns and to ensure student's safety and well-being while participating in Center programs. We make every effort to maintain our property, to communicate with public agencies, and to understand the special needs of our students.

If there are any special considerations, conditions, needs, concerns or other information that may impact your child experience in the classroom please feel free to communicate with the CTA office.

It is in the best interest of the student if the Center is made aware of any medical or behavioral conditions which may require additional attention. All information is confidential.

For safety, parents should note that siblings who are waiting must be supervised at all times in the hallways of the building.

Please be alert to the drop off and pick up area of the parking lot and entrance area so your child does not run out into traffic in the lot.

Medical Emergency

In the event of a medical emergency, the student will be brought to the front desk, if possible. If the student's condition can be managed by the office, (i.e. band aides or ice), Center staff will handle the problem.

If the emergency requires immediate professional medical attention, the following sequence will occur:

- 1.911 will be notified.
- 2.Parent/guardians will be notified.
- 3.Faculty or staff member will remain with student until help arrives.

The Center uses information provided from current registration forms. It is therefore essential for all registration forms be filled out completely with phone contact information.

Each student is required to have completed an Emergency Contact on their registration form. Should your child become ill, we will refer to this form to contact you. It is important that you provide the names of adults who are able to provide transportation for your child on the card if we are not able to reach you. If this information changes during the school year, it is important that you notify the front desk as soon as possible.

Physical Site Safety

The Center is located in a building inspected and certified by the Department of Labor and Industry, which assures compliance with fire and safety codes in general building operations.

The Center's main program site is accessible to the physically handicapped, (ADA compliant) in all classroom and restroom facilities. All efforts will be made to accommodate students with special medical or physical handicaps, specified in a physician's statement or waiver of participation.

Communication

Emails and Facebook

The Center uses **emails and sent-home flyers as our main forms of information and communication.** Announcements are also posted on Facebook and Instagram, as well as our website.

Additional Communication

We always have informational handouts at the front desk and posted on our bulletin board in the lobby. Please pop in and/or call if you have any questions! This is the best way to stay in-the-know.

We do our best to keep our website's calendar updated and use Facebook and Instagram for updates, as well.

In addition, flyers may be distributed in classes; however, we know students do not always remember to deliver them, so please check with your children after classes to see if they have received any new info, especially as the end of each semester draws closer.

Our answering machine also contains information and announcements of upcoming projects and events at the Center.

Although all of these efforts to communicate are taken, email remains our PRIMARY mode of communication.

****Please be sure to provide the Center with your best, working e-mail address via your JACKRABBIT PORTAL to maximize the opportunity for you to receive all information.****

The Center cannot be responsible for the failure of any individual or family to receive information if an accurate email address is not provided.

Lobby Etiquette and Supervision

Students and siblings must be respectful of other families, office staff, building tenants, and property while waiting in the lobby or in the building hallways. Young children must have a parent or guardian with them at all times **for their own safety**. Children are not to be unattended in the hallways of the building. For your child's safety this policy will be strictly enforced. **The Center does not assume any responsibility for unattended children.**

Class Observation

In order to enhance student creativity and interaction, we ask visitors to refrain from observing classes except for scheduled observation weeks. During these scheduled times, visitors are invited to sit in the classroom to observe their child's progress. These are at the end of semester 1. Sustained "peeking" through the windows and waiting in the hallways disrupts class continuity, inhibits participation of the students, interferes with other business in the building, and often embarrasses the child. Please wait in the Center's lobby area.

Parent/Teacher Conferences

A parent may request to meet with the Executive Director any time during the year. Parents should call the office to schedule an appointment.

Registration and Admission

The Center's year consists of our after school programs from September–April/May, broken up into two semesters, as well as 3 discrete 2-week summer sessions throughout June-August. The All-School Musical takes place in the month of May; The High School Musical rehearses September-February.

Registrations for all classes are accepted on a rolling admissions basis (first come, first served). All class sizes are limited and may be closed without notice. We highly recommend joining the online waitlist for classes you are interested in if they are sold out. *The Center reserves the right to cancel, re-schedule, or change classes and/or instructors as necessary.*

To secure enrollment in a selected class, please complete the online registration and payment. Enrollment and payment can also be done in person at the CTA's front desk.

Center office hours for all business such as class registration, schedule information, student placement:

Administrative Office Hours (School Year):

10:00am-2:00pm (Monday through Thursday)

Please call before stopping in to ensure someone is at the front desk. Occasionally, our team works remotely. You can also always reach someone at the front desk during class time.

Class/Teaching Hours (School Year):

4:00 PM to 8:30 PM (Monday/Wednesday)

4:00 PM to 8:30PM PM (Tuesday/Thursday)

4:00 PM to 8:00PM (Friday)

9:15 AM to 5:00 PM (Saturday)

Tuition

Tuition for all classes, workshops, and performances may be paid through the CTA's website or in person at the CTA.

Payment for School Year classes is due the Monday before classes start each semester.

If you have not paid your semester balance in full by the Monday before classes start, your online payment method will be auto-charged, but Payment Plans are also available upon request.

Payment can be made as soon as you register, but you must initiate this payment yourself.

You can adjust the amount paid to pay in installments, but the full balance is due the Monday before the first class each semester.

Families/Guardians are responsible for full payment of tuition regardless of attendance unless the student withdraws before the third class, at which time refund is pro-rated.

All class fees and registrations are listed per semester. Payment can be made by check, cash, PayPal, Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express. Payment plans are available at the time of registration. **Summer camps must be paid for in full two-weeks before the first day of camp.**

Registration Fee

Each order (online or in person) is subject to a \$15 registration fee to help cover administrative and technology expenses. This is not per student/class or semester, but rather per order. Register for all classes for both semesters in one order to maximize savings.

Surcharge

In an effort to cover the costs of online credit card processing fees, there is an additional 2.89% charge to each transaction paid online with a Visa, Mastercard, or Discover credit card. This does not apply to debit cards or other forms of payment.

Refunds

School Year/After School Programs

Before the first day of class, the Center will refund 100% of your tuition less a \$15 registration/processing fee. If a student withdraws before the third class, a pro-rated refund will be given, less \$15 registration fee. **No refunds will be granted after the third week of the semester.** Any balance due after withdrawal must be paid in full.

Summer Camps

Due to their immense popularity, limited inventory, and the quick timeline of our summer camps - we have a different policy for payment and refunds for our summer programs. This allows us to ensure we are able to serve as many students as possible.

Up until two weeks before the start of your camp, the Center will refund 100% of your tuition less a \$15 registration/processing fee.

Within two weeks of your camp starting, if we are able to fill your child's spot, the Center will refund 100% of your tuition less a \$15 registration/processing fee. If we are unable to fill your child's spot within these two weeks, the Center will refund your tuition less the \$15 registration/processing fee and a \$50 fee.

After the first day of camp, no refund will be granted.

Tuition Assistance

The Center for Theater Arts is dedicated to serving students who are interested and excited about experiencing our unique programming.

We encourage families who are considering not participating in our programs because of monetary issues or financial constraints to apply for financial aid.

Your application will be considered and responded to in a timely fashion. Scholarships will be awarded based on financial need only.

To apply for a scholarship, you will need to submit a full SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION. This can be accessed here: <https://centerfortheaterarts.org/financial-aid-and-discounts/>

Please complete and email the above requirements to info@centerfortheaterarts.org with the subject line "Scholarship Candidate" OR deliver/mail them to:

The Center for Theater Arts
250 Mt. Lebanon Blvd Suite 400
Pittsburgh, PA 15234

All students must re-apply for financial aid each year before the start of class. Family registration fees may still apply.

The CTA has NEVER turned a student away due to an inability to pay.

Did you know that as a non-profit organization, the Center can be the recipient of your United Way contribution? Please consider electing the Donor Choice option! The Center's United Way agency number is 967187.

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