



2021-22
Student & Parent Handbook

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Welcome to the Center for Theater Arts.

PLEASE take the time to familiarize yourself with the information in this handbook.

During this unprecedented time in our history, the CTA has remained a destination for all children. We have ALWAYS asked what's best for the kids.

Moving forward – we're continuing to follow recommended ***guidelines for children***. The CTA will continue to operate and provide instruction **while wearing masks**. It is what we need to do for our student population and also to help ensure the CTA stays open. Looking ahead – *We are excited to begin to implement some additional changes* and adjustments in our studios as we continue to take small and calculated steps toward re-opening.

We do ask that you please keep in mind the CTA is a community school that currently serves students from 6 different school districts. Depending on where the students come from, the students may be required to wear face masks for in-person classes moving into the new school year amid the coronavirus pandemic or they could be able to attend class mask-free. This can certainly be confusing for them when they come to the Center for classes. Since the pandemic remains ongoing, **we will continue to remain informed and flexible to any changes that may occur.**

We are monitoring local conditions just like the schools and we will continue to review all new federal, state and county guidelines.

Since the beginning we have made adjustments and implemented multiple strategies as needed and of course looking ahead – ***we will be paying attention to changes and potential challenges in the coming year.***

Moving forward We will NOT be lifting our mask mandate in conjunction with the ending of Pennsylvania's mask mandate.

As of this update the CDC, PA Board of Education and American Academy of Pediatrics **recommendation that unvaccinated individuals wear masks indoors.**

We have a culture of young students UNDER the age of 12 that are unable to be vaccinated. Students ages 4-18 share the CTA studios on a weekly basis.

The CTA is prepared to move forward with multiple strategies toward success! In addition to remaining focus on ways to ensure the safest environment for our students, as well as, our talented faculty and staff.

Below is an overview of the revised facility modifications, policies, and instructional programming we have instituted.

Thank you for continually entrusting the CTA with your children, rest assured we have taken extensive measures to keep them safe as we welcome our 4th decade of operation.

Find your voice. Develop your style. Reach high.

Billy Hartung
Executive Director

Mission Statement

The CTA is dedicated to offering the highest quality performing arts instruction and committed to providing all students, including those with disabilities, 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 41st year of operation, we are very proud of our history. We currently have students who enter our programs with a wide range of training, stretching from a mild curiosity to those that possess natural ability. 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 the 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 2021-22 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 teenagers at various skill levels.
- To provide the highest quality educational opportunities in dance, acting, 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:

9:00AM to 3:00PM (Monday through Friday)

Please call for all registration, class placement, and schedule information during these times

Class/Teaching Hours:

4:00 PM to 9:00 PM (Monday through Thursday)

4:00 PM to 8:30 PM (Friday)

9:00 AM to 3:00 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.***

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, (Theater Company, Showstoppers, Performance Workshop 1,2,3 and 4, High School Musical & the All School Musical) **attendance is essential**. Progress in rehearsal is impossible without regular attendance. 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 contact the Center out of respect for the director and cast. If you have *previously scheduled conflicts* due to religious holidays, required school activities, or family travel must inform the instructor before the first rehearsal.

Class Cancellations

The Center makes every effort to hold classes when possible. On days when weather may dictate class cancellation, the Center will have complete information on the school answering machine by 2 PM weekly or 8 AM for Saturday classes, KDKA, and WTAE will also broadcast information. In addition, we will send email notification to students who have provided their email and will post on our facebook and website pages. 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 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. Further, warm-up is essential to prevent injury in all dance and voice classes. Students must make every effort to be punctual. The faculty member conducting a class has the right in his/her discretion to exclude a tardy class member from the class for that period.

****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 child care 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 and Center staff cannot "baby-sit."*

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 and 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 classes for student with special needs ages 7-Adult. These classes are funded by grants from Charitable Foundations.

Productions & Special Events

All casting information for performances, special events, and more will be on the website and posted on the callboard.

Center Productions

Center productions include the High School Musical, the All School Musical, Performance Workshops, Theater Company, Students whose schedules do not permit regular attendance should not audition or register for productions.

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

The **All School Musical** which is performed in the spring is open to any Center student who has attended classes fall and spring semesters from third grade through eighth grade. No auditions are necessary to become a cast member, and all members have guaranteed participation. 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.

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.

Musical Theater for Students with Special Needs

The Center offers free classes for students and adults with special needs ages 6 and up. They are funded by the Earl Knudsen Charitable Foundation, the McSwigan Family Foundation, The Dollar Bank Foundation, the FISA Foundation, Dollar Bank Foundation, Highmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield and BC/EFA Broad way Cares "Quality of life" Grant.

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. A year-end musical performance is held each spring that is open to family, friends, and the public. All interested students and parents should contact our offices for more information about curriculum, registration, and placement.

2. 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 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 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 interactions with other students
3. The age of the child
4. The "social dynamics" factors within the Class/performance
5. 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.

3. Dress Code

Students are required to follow the Center's dress code policy. Students may be refused admission or participation in class if the dress code is not followed.

Jazz Dress Code

Girls

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. **Absolutely no loose fitting T-shirts, shorts or sweat shirts of any kind.** 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.

Boys

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. 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 these classes, students should wear comfortable clothing that allows for movement. **Crocs, sandals, open toes shoes, jeans, 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.

COVID –19

Modifications: Studio/Equipment/Sanitation:

CTA has been stripped down and cleaned in its entirety. 5,800 square feet of studio space has been re-explored and re-imagined for our ***Better Together, Division with Vision***. The Facility is currently being “deep cleaned” by a cleaning services once a week, and the CTA acquired additional sanitizing materials that will be used after hours to safely disinfect entire studios after each use.

Additional “hand sanitizer stations” are located in each studio.

Policies and procedures have been revised, including the following:

We will NOT be lifting our mask mandate in conjunction with the ending of Pennsylvania’s mask mandate.

Currently the CDC, ACHD and the American Academy of Pediatrics recommendation is that unvaccinated individuals wear masks indoors.

The CTA will operate according to state and local regulations, and best practices as new policies are created, *we will adapt our operations to meet these new requirements.*

The CTA will also consider community transmission rates in determining which activities and instruction strategies are appropriate.

Children who are ill may not attend the CTA and must remain at home according to our center policies. Any child who becomes ill at the center will be separated from the other children and must be picked up within one hour.

Moving into the fall session we will NOT be allowing anyone into the CTA who is not participating in a class. Parents will be permitted inside the building, however social distancing protocols will be implemented as best as possible. We encourage drop off efforts.

Parents should conduct any lengthy conversations with our CTA staff by telephone. Children should wash hands before drop-off, each time they return to the Studio, after using the restrooms, and as directed by our staff.

In the event a parent, child, or staff member tests positive for Covid-19, they will not be permitted into the CTA until cleared by their physician or as directed by our local health agencies.

We will continue to adapt to Covid-19 and make additional changes as conditions warrant, and we remain committed to **responsible, disciplined and focused strategies as we move forward.**

4. 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.

5. Communication

Emails and Facebook

The Center uses email as the main form of communication. Announcements are also posted on Facebook.

Additional Communication

Please see our Website for up upcoming CTA information and events. As a reminder, notices of upcoming events. In addition, flyers may be distributed in classes; however, children do not always remember to deliver them, so please check with your children after classes to see if they have received any new Information.

Parents and students who wish to participate in Center programs, performances, and special events need to consult the Website of brochure calendar, and/or check the callboard regularly.

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 **the Center needs your working e-mail address 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 email is not provided. **www.centerfortheaterarts.org**

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. Parents who wish to discuss concerns can call the Center between 10:30-3:30 Monday through Friday to meet with the Executive Director.

Registration and Admission

**The CTA invites ALL STUDENTS to sample a class at no charge.
Please see the front office for more details**

Face masks or coverings are currently required to be worn by students, parents, and staff members at the center. In addition to face coverings, Children will have been placed in positions of social distancing throughout the class instruction. Moving forward, in all summer camps, fall camp workshops and classes face coverings will NOT be optional. Names MUST be on students' mask.

Registrations for all classes are accepted on a rolling admissions basis (first come, first serve). All class sizes are limited and may be closed without notice. The Center reserves the right to cancel, re-schedule, or change classes and/or instructors as necessary.

- Tuition is per 10-week session.
- Classes are running 3 sessions for a combined 30 weeks.
- You do not need to be in every session.
- Classes meet once a week unless otherwise noted.
- Registration for one session will continue into the next session unless we are otherwise notified. Please add each session to your cart to register up front for all three sessions.

To secure enrollment in a selected class, please complete the online registration and payment.

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

Monday - Friday: 9AM –3 PM.

Please call (412) 563-5080 during that time.

Admission into any class beyond those clearly noted as "entry level" is subject to the consent of the instructor. Placement will be determined by the faculty and/or the Executive Director by audition, interview, or during the first two classes.

Please note that certain extra criteria concerning regular attendance, additional class study, dress code, and outside work may govern participation in higher level classes.

Payment of Tuition

Tuition for all classes, workshops, and performance fees are payable to "**Center for Theater Arts**" online, by mail, or in person. Parents are responsible for full payment of tuition regardless of attendance **unless** the student withdraws before the third class, at which time refund is prorated. All class fees and registrations are listed per semester. Payment can be made by check, cash, Visa, MasterCard, Discover or American Express.

The following payment plans are available:

PLAN I - Payment in full at time of registration, **\$10.00 registration fee is waived.**

PLAN II - Payment of half tuition, with equal monthly payments until paid in full.

Refunds

Before the first day of class, the **Center** will refund 100% of the payment. If a student withdraws *before* the third class, a pro-rated refund will be given.

No refunds will be granted after the third week of the semester. Any balance due after withdrawal must be paid in full.

Tuition Assistance

Financial aid is available for students who qualify for the school lunch program under federal and state guidelines. One class per student per semester is covered at a cost of \$25.00.

Parents must complete a Center registration and a scholarship form along with a letter from the school district stating qualification of lunch program.

***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.***

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Additional effort to communicate:

If you have NOT read this on our website - we invite you to take a moment to **read and sign** this waiver. Please send it back to the Center for Theater Arts.

**COVID-19**

The novel coronavirus, COVID-19, has been declared a worldwide pandemic by the World Health Organization. COVID-19 is extremely contagious. People reportedly can be infected and show no symptoms and therefore spread the disease. Evidence has shown that COVID-19 can cause serious and potentially life threatening illness and even death. The Center for Theater Arts ("CTA") cannot prevent you from becoming exposed to, contracting, or spreading COVID-19 while visiting our premises. Although we have taken recommended precautions and preventive measures, it is not possible to guarantee that we have fully eliminated the presence of COVID-19 in our studios. Therefore, individuals choosing to participate in classes and programs may be increasing their risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19.

ASSUMPTION OF RISK: I have read and understood the above warning concerning COVID-19. I hereby choose to accept the risk of contracting COVID-19 for myself and/or my children in order to participate with the classes and programs at the CTA.

WAIVER OF LIABILITY AND RELEASE: I hereby expressly waive and release any and all claims, now known or hereafter known, against the CTA, its Board of Directors, officers, directors, teachers, employees, or other representatives (collectively, "Releasees") in connection with exposure, infection, and/or spread of COVID-19 related to participating in CTA classes and programs. I understand that this waiver and release means I give up my right to bring any claims against the CTA or any Releasees for personal injuries, death, disease or property losses, or any other loss, including but not limited to claims of negligence and give up any claim I may have to seek damages, whether known or unknown, foreseen or unforeseen.

CHOICE OF LAW: I understand and agree that the law of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will apply to this waiver.

I HAVE CAREFULLY READ AND FULLY UNDERSTAND ALL PROVISIONS OF THIS DOCUMENT, AND FREELY AND KNOWINGLY ASSUME THE RISK AND WAIVE MY RIGHTS CONCERNING LIABILITY AS DESCRIBED ABOVE.

Signature of Parent

Date

Student Printed Name

Signature of Student If Over 18

Date