



YOUTH PROTECTION POLICY

I. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Cottage Theatre seeks to support youth in their artistic and personal growth through instruction and mentoring and by providing opportunities to perform and participate in theatre programming. Cottage Theatre seeks to assure participants, parents, and the community that the environment, employees, and volunteers are safe for youth and that safety for youth is a shared responsibility between Cottage Theatre and families. Youth shall be considered anyone under 18, or under 21 when alcohol is present.

II. YOUTH WHO ARE IN SHOWS (CAST AND CREW) OR THEATRE CAMPS

- Youth must be committed to attending all or most rehearsals and all performances. Scheduling conflicts must be communicated ASAP with Directors or Stage Managers.
- Youth who are cast members must be committed to learning their lines, music, and choreography, and participating fully in the rehearsal process, as outlined by the Director(s).
- Parents/guardians are agreeing to the photography of their youth and the use of those photos in marketing, both on-line and printed, unless a restriction is given to the Executive Director in writing.
- Youth will be assigned chores that are appropriate for their age. All cast and crew, including youth, are expected to fulfill their chores as outlined by the Director or Stage Manager. All cast and crew are required to help with show strike following the final performance.
- Youth are expected to behave appropriately, responsibly, and maturely for their age.

III. YOUTH: PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

- Be committed to supporting your youth in their show. This includes: Communicating effectively with the Director and Stage Manager; helping your youth learn their lines; providing encouragement; sending snacks, water and quiet activities for your youth for rehearsals and performances; notifying the Director if any issues arise; and providing or arranging for reliable transportation for rehearsals and performances.
- Be prompt when dropping off and picking up your youth from rehearsals and shows. Parents/guardians who are habitually late in dropping off or picking up their youth may jeopardize their youth's participation in the show. When

parents/guardians are late dropping off youth, it affects the entire rehearsal process. When parents/guardians are late picking up their youth, two members of the production team must wait outside (rehearsal space or theatre) with them until their parent arrives to ensure the child's safety. We ask that parents/guardians please prioritize picking up their youth **on time**.

- If parents/guardians are unable to provide prompt rides or help youth learn their lines, please contact the Director or Stage Manager for support with ride sharing, strategies for learning lines, etc. Written authorization from the parent/guardian is needed if parents/guardians are unable to provide rides for youth.
- Notify the Director or Stage Manager if youth have mental or physical health conditions or behavioral concerns that may affect their participation or require vigilance on the part of the production team. Examples include allergies, anxiety disorders, school suspensions, etc.

IV. YOUTH: DIRECTOR AND STAGE MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES

- The show's Director and Stage Manager are responsible for ensuring that all youth involved in the show are safe, respected and supported.
- The Director and Stage Manager must be respectful of schedules for youth and their families; please avoid last-minute schedule changes if at all possible. Please end rehearsals on time, especially on school nights and/or schedule scenes with child actors early in the evening and then dismiss them.
- The Director or Stage Manager must ensure that he/she has contact information for the parents/guardians of all youth in the show. This information should be available at the read-through if not sooner. The Director and Stage Manager must be committed to communicating promptly, consistently, and clearly with parents/guardians at all times. Please use one standard form of communication (preferably email) for notifying cast/crew/parents about schedules.
- If an issue arises that could affect a child's safety or wellbeing, the Director or Stage Manager should notify immediately the parents/guardians, production team members, and Executive Director.

V. BACKGROUND SCREENING

All CT employees and volunteers over age 18 are subject to the Background Screening Policy, which states that everyone who participates at Cottage Theatre on a Regular Basis must undergo a background check every three years.

VI. INFORMAL SOCIAL EVENTS

- At various times, parties and/or informal social events are held as an important way for the cast and crew to connect and celebrate their work. These are optional events. Parties usually are held at someone's home (cast/crew) or at a

restaurant where alcohol may be present. Parents/guardians of youth may attend any of these events.

- As long as these parties are held off site (i.e., not on Cottage Theatre property), these are not “Cottage Theatre events” and the theatre bears no responsibility for the conduct of volunteers/participants.

VII. CODE OF CONDUCT

- No employee or volunteer should be alone with a youth in an isolated area. Two adults should be present at all times. If it is necessary for an employee or volunteer to meet individually with a youth, it should be done in an area in which all are clearly visible by others.
- Youth may be released from activities only to individuals designated by the parents. Parents shall provide, and update as needed, a list of persons authorized to transport their child, with a record of the date, time, and participants being maintained by Cottage Theatre
- Employees or volunteers will “friend” youth on social media sites only after communicating with and securing approval of parents/guardians.

IX. REPORTING PROCEDURES

- Employees and volunteers should immediately report any instance in which he/she has reason to suspect that a youth has been the victim of physical or sexual abuse or neglect.
- Any report should be made to the Oregon Department of Human Services at **1-855-503-SAFE (7233)**. If a report is made to Oregon DHS, the fact of such a report should be shared with the Executive Director as soon as possible.
- For matters not involving physical or sexual abuse or neglect, reference the Cottage Theatre Complaint Procedure.

X. TRAINING AND EDUCATION OF EMPLOYEES AND VOLUNTEERS

- All employees shall annually review Cottage Theatre policies pertaining to youth safety and must acknowledging receipt and understanding of Cottage Theatre policies. The acknowledgment will be kept in the employee’s Personnel File.
- All volunteers must acknowledge receipt and understanding of the Youth Protection Policy.