

Esther F. Garrison School for the Arts



Actors Academy Handbook

DIRECTORS:

Alexandra Wambold & Glenda C. Lanier

ADMINISTRATORS:

Aysha Parks, Principal

Dan Ailes, Assistant Principal

PURPOSE

The purpose of this book is to familiarize the theatre majors and their parent(s)/guardian(s) with the rules and policies of the Esther F. Garrison School for the Arts, Actors Academy.

GOALS OF THE THEATRE PROGRAM

1. Provide students with a solid foundation of performance through Acting. This includes providing students with the tools to: dream, reach, discover, and create the performing arts, integrate them into their lives, and contribute to the community.
2. Provide students with a performance-based course with an emphasis in straight theatre and musical theatre.
3. Provide students who have interest, talent, and dedication the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge that will prepare them for progression into Savannah Arts Academy's Theatre Program.

EXPECTATION

The success and quality of the Garrison Actors Academy depends on the interest and cooperation of each academy member. You will be given a copy of the Garrison Actors Academy's Handbook and you should acquaint yourself with the policies and traditions here at Garrison School for the Arts.

As a member of the Garrison Actors Academy, you are representative of this program, the school, and the community. Your dedication and effort is needed to maintain the tradition of excellence that has come to be expected of our Actors Academy, and it is a tradition that you will take pride in now and in the future.

The arts have a unique place in the school's core curriculum. Garrison's comprehensive curriculum focuses on strong technique and incorporates the Georgia Performance Standards. The curriculum is performance and writing focused. However, while it is an academic class in the sense of having definite objectives, there are many parts of the program that require participation outside of the normal school day. Annual performances of straight and musical works, presented to the public, are an important part of training at the school. This experience allows students to develop discipline, endurance, memory skills and stage presence as they prepare for a professional life in the arts. It is our expectation that students and parents support the program through complete participation and dedication.

ATTENDANCE

Good attendance is an integral part of theatre training and is expected of the students, in order to achieve correct technical and physical development. Every absence adversely affects the rehearsal process and ultimately the performance.

- Student's attendance during school days is taken into account when casting public performances, as tardiness and absences can result in detentions which conflict with after school rehearsals.
- Rehearsal attendance is also closely monitored and may affect a student's opportunity to continue with the production. Absences from rehearsals must be accompanied with a parent notice either before or after to allow for consideration of student continuation in the production.
- It is very important that students list all conflicts with after school performance rehearsals on their audition form for each play audition.

STUDENT LEARNING PROCESS

The ideal student is healthy, creative, explorative, outgoing and willing for intense work in a disciplined learning environment. The student will follow a structural sequence of training and curriculum that is designed to increase skill, creativity, performance ability, and discipline in keeping with their age, maturity and physical development. Corrections are inherent in theatre instruction; therefore, the student will be verbally and physically guided by the teachers to ensure proper advancement and execution of work.

Complete effort is required each day in order to make the experience successful. Using energy produces more energy. It is a wonderful feeling to complete your class or rehearsal knowing that you have done your best. Every class is a performance and all activities must be completed whether or not it has gone well. Take a mental note of all corrections and go over them in your mind after each lesson so you do not have to be corrected again for the same thing.

Communication from students to teachers should be respectful. The majority of corrections from teachers will apply to all pupils in a similar situation. Observe other students, learn from them. Apply the information given whether in general and/or personally. The classroom environment is where you will learn to love the process, the frustrations as well as the achievements. Theatre students need to learn to love repetition.

Self-discipline is the only discipline. If class is something you look forward to each day, then you will be spending your energy wisely. When you feel tired or "not up to it," that is the very day that you have the greatest learning opportunity. Your effort will provide you with a feeling of accomplishment. It is extremely important that the teachers should not have to prod you into doing what you should do for yourself. Students should emphasize full participation.

CLASSROOM RULES

1. Be Respectful of all persons in the program while in and out of Theatre class.
2. Follow instructions quickly and without complaint.
3. Control yourself both verbally and physically.

CLASSROOM GUIDELINES

1. Conversations between students and playing during class will not be tolerated.
2. All questions concerning technique or activities should be directed towards the teacher.
3. Food and beverages are not allowed in the theatre rooms.
4. Water is allowed during class in a closed water bottle.
5. Litter will not be tolerated.
6. Gum chewing will not be tolerated.
7. Do not bring valuables to school. The theatre teacher is not responsible for lost or stolen property.
8. Electronic devices are not permitted in class or rehearsal unless otherwise stated by the instructor.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

1. A verbal warning is issued to the student.
2. A parent phone call, letter and/or conference.
3. A school detention. A written notice is sent home with the child to the parent and filed in the student's permanent record.
4. A school referral.
5. The teacher and/or school administrator will review the issue with the parent/guardian and discuss a strategy for improving behavior. This will be the final opportunity for behavior improvement. If the student's behavior does not improve he/she will be asked to leave the program.
6. Theft, vandalism, inappropriate language and negative behavior are grounds for immediate dismissal from the program.

EVALUATION AND GRADING

Students will earn their grade in theatre through the mediums of projects, written tests, and performance, either as a part of a group or individually. Students will be awarded class assignment grades through participation of the normal class including any written assignments. Attitude, effort and discipline will reflect upon the student's grade. Written and in-class performances will be used as guidelines for tests. In-class performance tests will be evaluated with the usage of rubrics and/or evaluation forms.

Grading Weights

Class assignments/Etiquette and class participation 40%

Tests/Projects (written and/or performance based) 60%

AUDITIONS

Students may participate in **3** types of auditions while in the Actors Academy.

- Grade Level Performance Audition- students are encouraged to audition for this show each year. This audition will provide an audition grade based on effort as well as ability and etiquette. All students within the grade level performance will be required to complete assignments in order to meet the grade requirements of auditions, rehearsals, tech week, and performances whether it be through performing, tech responsibilities, or the alternate assignment .
- Thespian/Musical Audition- This is an optional audition and performance available to those students with good academic standing within the theatre department. Even those interested in tech positions for the show must

come and read at the audition. This is to provide opportunities to experience the audition process, cast understudy roles and broaden exposure to “all things theatre.”

- SAA Theatre Audition- Eighth grade students are encouraged to audition into Savannah Arts Academy’s Theatre Program. For one month the students will work on audition prep for the SAA audition process. Monologue selection and performance will be graded assignments in class. All other components such as resume’ formatting, cover letter review & editing, and improvisational skills will be addressed in after school coaching sessions each Friday beginning in January.
- GAA Theatre Audition- 5th grade students are expected to audition into Garrison Actors Academy’s Theatre Program. For a period of time the students will work on audition prep for the GAA audition process. Monologue selection and performance will be graded assignments in class. All other components will be addressed in after school coaching sessions each Friday beginning in January.

CASTING

Casting is always driven by the audition. A bad audition can cost the best performer a role in a play. Students are expected to be prepared once audition information is posted. Preferential treatment is not given to upper grades. We do not use any more actors than are needed for a show. This includes musicals. There is only so much room on stage and for big numbers to look their best, the amount of actors must be controlled. Casting of performance parts is to be determined by the Garrison Theatre faculty and is not up for discussion.

REHEARSALS

Rehearsals for shows take place either during class time or after school, depending on the show. Rehearsals may be up to four days a week for 2.5 hrs. each. This does not mean that all students will be called for all four rehearsals, but it is possible for leads and supporting roles.

Attendance

Grade level Performances- Rehearsals are MANDATORY and will count as an integral part of the performance grade. Unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures during all rehearsals will result in a lowered grade. There will NOT be any make-up assignments for unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures. An excuse for absence should be presented to the directors in writing PRIOR to the rehearsal date via text or email. Mandatory Rehearsal and Performance absences will affect the student’s grade. This pertains to both cast members and technical roles.

Optional Thespian/Musical Performance- Unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures during all rehearsals will result in an adjustment to the performer’s stage time. An excuse for absence should be presented to the directors in writing PRIOR to the rehearsal date via text or email. Mandatory Rehearsal and Performance absences will affect the student’s options for future casting. This pertains to both cast members and technical roles.

Unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures will incur the following:

First offense = parent phone call

Second offense = reduction of student’s role

Third offense = student abnegates role

Late Pick-up

If a student is not collected 10 minutes past the designated pick-up time the following will occur:

First offense = parent phone call

Second offense = reduction of student's role

Third offense = student abnegates role

Fourth offense = Social Worker referral

Please remember that just as it is an inconvenience for you if we release late, it is an inconvenience for us when your child is picked up late.

Scheduling

Students will receive a detailed rehearsal schedule at the first read through of the Thespian Show and Musical. This should be reviewed immediately with their parent/guardian to note any conflicts. These conflicts should be submitted to the directors straightaway, so that adjustments may be made or absences can be approved and noted. 1st and 2nd Quarter shows will have some In Class Rehearsals, but 3rd and 4th Quarter show rehearsals will always be after school as they are cast using 4th – 8th grade levels.

Scripts

At the beginning of rehearsals students will be issued one script to use for all rehearsals to write blocking in and to study for lines and lyrics. A “preparedness” grade may be taken during Grade level rehearsals in order to ensure that scripts are being brought to and from school for rehearsals. Maintaining your script is a necessity. Students must have their script in order to participate fully in the rehearsal process. If a script is lost or needs to be replaced there is a nominal fee attached as scripts were pre-ordered ahead of time based on the cast size.

Fees are as follows:

Printed, small glued or staple bound script: \$5.00

Large glued script: \$10.00

Large rental script: \$35.00 (Replacement fee of \$25 from the company included in the amount)

TECH REHEARSALS

Tech week is driven by the quality of work by the students. Each day we add a new technical element as well as finally get to build and rehearse on the stage. Rehearsals could be 4 hours or more if the show has to be run more than once or if certain areas need revisiting. We try very hard to never go past 7:00 PM. However with bell time adjustments and holiday interrupting the rehearsal week rehearsal times will be changed accordingly. Rehearsals and/or performances for extracurricular theatre venues are NOT an excuse for absences, tardiness or early departures of a Mandatory Tech Rehearsal.

DRESS CODE

The dress code rules are established for a purpose – to have uniformity and so that the teacher is able to see the full movement of the body. This Dress Code is **Mandatory** and will reflect in the student's grade.

- No purses or lanyards should be on the body during performance activities.
- Proper shoes must be able to stay on the foot and provide for stability in movement. Shoes that are not secure can hurt your child's foot as well as hinder performance abilities.
- Ladies must have shorts or solid leggings under skirts in order to assure full participation in theatre activities. Just as they may be expected to perform on stage in skirts, they will be expected to perform in class as well.
- Students arriving unprepared for class may not be allowed to participate. The unprepared student will complete an alternate written assignment. Consistently coming unprepared to class will adversely affect the student's grade and opportunity of performing.

SUPPLIES

Grades 4-8: Each student **MUST** have his/her own ½ inch or 1 inch binder, loose leaf paper, and pencils.

COSTUME SUPPLIES

For each show students may be required to provide basic costume necessities. For example but not limited to the following:

- All Boys-
 - Solid Black Pants
 - Solid black or brown shoes (bottoms must be all black or brown no white)
 - white under shirt short sleeved or sleeveless
- All Girls -
 - White or nude colored camisole or leotard
 - Black or white short shorts
 - Tan or black character shoes or flats.
 - Nude/skin tone “dance style” tights.

INJURIES/ILLNESS

A student with an injury or illness is required to submit a note from the doctor, nurse or parent in order to be excused from participating in class. Sick or injured students are encouraged to observe class in order not to fall behind with material. Students should inform their instructors of any recent illness, injury or other medical conditions that may affect stamina or performance. **All injuries sustained during class rehearsals must be reported to the teacher before leaving the theatre room.** All classroom injuries will be documented by filling out an injury report which is available as needed. All medication is the responsibility of the student and parent(s).

DRESSING AREA/STORAGE

Students are expected to store all personal items in the storage areas designated for each theatre room. All belongings are to be taken home after classes or performances. Dressing rooms in the Yamacraw building are expected to remain free of clothing and trash strewn on the floor.

VALUABLES

The theatre faculty is not responsible for lost or stolen personal belongings. Students are strongly advised to leave personal valuables at home.

FIELD TRIPS/ PROFESSIONAL PERFORMANCES

- A. ALL payments are **NON-REFUNDABLE**, as they are factored into the overall trip total when contracting with vendors.
- B. Students with an “N” or “U” in conduct for any class, will not be permitted to attend the trip.
- C. Only exemplary conduct will be accepted from members of the Garrison Actors Academy. Members must be on their best behavior at all times, especially on the buses, in a hotel, and at all group appearances.
- D. All students must ride the buses for arrival. A student may return from any event with his or her parent only if the parents have notified the Director beforehand. Other than the exception noted above, all students must return to the destination on the buses.
- E. Students must be careful not to damage bus property or individual property, or they will be held financially responsible.
- F. All school bus safety rules must be observed while riding.
- G. Upon arrival at Garrison School for the Arts, parents should arrange transportation to individual homes.

PARENTAL CONCERNS

Parents are welcomed to share concerns. However we ask that parents follow professional protocol.

Priority Order: First speak directly to the specific class teacher, then the school's principal. Please do NOT contact faculty on their home or cell phones, unless otherwise arranged. To speak with the theatre faculty, please call the front office or email the teacher to set up an appointment. Please email your child's teacher to address your concerns, alexandra.wambold@sccpss.com or glenda.lanier@sccpss.com

ADDITIONAL COMMUNICATION

Weekly Newsletter- Each week a newsletter is emailed out with important updates and information relevant to both the school and the theatre department. Please read thoroughly as we wouldn't write it if it wasn't important. The newsletter is your first line of communication and will answer any questions you may have.

Google Classroom- Each grade level, class and production will have their own Google Classroom. **All students are required to be members and joining will count as a grade.** Parents are welcome to join and can request the invite from your child's Theater Teacher.

Facebook- Parents are encouraged to join our Facebook Page: **garrisonactors**. This is to be used for updates on rehearsals, performances and due dates. Please remember that this is a community forum and should be used as such, group administrators reserve the right to monitor and adjust posts accordingly.

Garrison Actors Academy Website- www.garrisonactorsacad.wixsite.com/mysite

Garrison School for the Arts Parent SMORE: Emailed and texted weekly by Mrs. Parks

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

The growth of the theatre program weighs heavily on the involvement of parents. The booster organization **is** established as a support system of the overall middle school theatre program: promotes the program, assists in supervision at performances, and creates mediums for financial expenses that are not ordinarily covered by the school. The organization consists of parents of the theatre students. All parents are expected to participate. Meetings are as needed. Booster parents that are consistent in participation will have first offers when attending any out-of-town field trips as well as other parent opportunities.

