Student Handbook

THEATRE

**Guidelines for Backstage Etiquette**

**Except for those specific guidelines for going on stage as an actor, the following applies to both actors and crew.**

**Do whatever the Stage Manager tells you without arguing, especially in performance. When an ASM tells you something, assume it’s a directive from the Stage Manager.**

* The SM (and ASM’s backstage during a show) are responsible for running the show, and represent the voice of the director or faculty mentor.
* Discuss any issues with the Stage Manager AFTER that night’s production, not during set up or the show itself.

**Don’t hang out in the wings watching the show.**

* Backstage space is usually limited and the last thing needed is to have to work around an extra body.
* Things can happen pretty quickly backstage, and you could find yourself causing a disaster by blocking the view of a visual cue or being in the way of a quick entrance or exit.
* Stay at your post if you’re backstage crew; otherwise stay in the green room and out of the way. If you wish to remain in the wings to watch performances as a learning tool, ask permission of the Stage Manager and Director before production begins; if given permission, it is expected you will remain out of the way of performers and technicians and will remain quiet. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in permission being revoked.

**Don’t talk with anyone backstage unless it is essential to the show.**

* Whispered conversations are distracting to the crew waiting for cues, the actors on stage, and can even be heard in the house.
* If you have something you must communicate to a crew member because it affects the show, then do so, but make sure you’re not interrupting something else going on. If they’re on headset, assume they’re listening to the stage manager as you approach them.

**Stay put until you’re called for your cue.**

* The crew can’t call you if they can’t find you.
* Find some place where you’re comfortable and out of the way and make that your spot for the run of the show.
* If you must use the restroom or run back to the dressing room, tell someone where you’re going and let them know immediately that you’re back.

**Don’t play with or move the props, and don’t sit on the furniture backstage.**

* Never move a prop – they have specific places so they can be located in the dim backstage lighting.
* Picking up a prop and playing with it often results in it being broken.
* If you are using a shared prop, make sure who is responsible for putting it back in its place for the next actor. If that’s you, put it back as soon as possible; if it’s a crew member, hand it to him as soon as you come off stage.

**Check your props before each performance, including any that are set for you to use onstage.**

* Even if it’s someone else’s job to set that prop, you’re the one who will look foolish onstage if it’s not there.

**In rehearsal, be nice to the bookholder. The appropriate way to call for a line is, “Line” or “Line, please”.**

* It’s common courtesy.
* DO NOT get into the habit of looking at the bookholder when calling for line – this causes you to drop character and is a difficult habit to break.

**Hold your temper until you get to the green room or dressing room. Use that time to cool down and, if you must vent, do it there, but don’t upset fellow cast members waiting to go onstage.**

* You run the risk of being heard
* It’s a distraction to the crew and may compound the disaster if they miss a cue because you’re upset and they’re dealing with you.

**Don’t sleep backstage**

* It means you’re not doing your job or that you may potentially miss a cue.
* In the real world this will get you fired.

**Bathe. Applies to both cast and crew.**

* Close quarters simply require it.

**No PDF (public displays of affection)**