

www.spatheatre.com

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Spa Theatre Company

Welcome Booklet



Introduction

Welcome to Spa Theatre Company. We are so pleased you are joining us, and we hope that you enjoy your time with us.

This booklet provides lots of useful information about Spa Theatre Company to parents, families and your children. It tells you most of what you need to know for your child to enjoy the opportunities we offer.

It describes some important “policy” information, which is presented in summary form, with the full policy statements linked below. We ask that you read this booklet and the associated policies in full as it contains important information to help keep your child safe and make the most of their time with our company.

There is a form for you to complete at the end of this booklet confirming that you have read and understood the contents.

History of the Company

In summary, the roots of Spa Theatre Company go back to 1980, when the Leamington Spa Opera Group performed “The King and I” at the Royal Spa Centre. The show was produced by Phyl Harris. A number of young people filled the roles of the Siamese children. Following the show, these youngsters asked Phyl to form a young persons’ theatre group. The Company began to undertake weekly training/tuition sessions, and putting on a series of shows, starting with “Oliver” in 1982. This basic format of the Company – weekly rehearsals and an annual show – has continued to this day.

By 1991, the Company decided to be more ambitious, by lifting the age limit. The intention was to allow the youngsters to continue their theatrical interests by forming a Senior Company. The first Senior show, in 1991, was “West Side Story”. The Senior Company ran until 2013, when financial pressures forced the temporary suspension of its activities. The Junior Company continued.

You can [read the full history of the Company by clicking here](#)

We hope you enjoy learning about us.



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Section 1: Artistic / Production Team

The Artistic / Production Team is appointed by the Management Committee.

The team consists of the Artistic Director, the Musical Director, and the Choreographer, often supplemented by trainee personnel.

We try, as far as possible, to maintain the continuity of the team, but they too are volunteers, and have to follow their career and educational paths which may take them away from our area. We then advertise widely, and interview, potential applicants.

[Click here to meet the production team.](#)

Section 2: Attendance at Rehearsals

Because theatrical performance is a team effort, it is necessary for your child to attend all our training sessions. Attendance is even more pressing for rehearsals for our show, otherwise the production team has to repeat work instead of making progress on new scenes etc.

When your child is not able to attend, please advise our Membership Manager or our Director so that we can plan accordingly. We believe it is unfair on children who do attend regularly if their learning is disrupted by non-attendance of others. You should give us 4 weeks' notice of intended absence. If a child is absent without explanation for more than three sessions, we will begin dismissal proceedings in accordance with our Constitution. Of course, we recognise emergency situations, when non-attendance and advising us beforehand might not be possible, but we would appreciate an explanation after the event.

Timekeeping is highly important. Your child should be ready to start rehearsing promptly at the starting time, so please arrange for them to be delivered in sufficient time that everyone is in the rehearsal room.

Section 3: Charity Status

In recognition of our teaching status, and our work with children, we achieved charitable status in February 2001. This provides not only status, but financial advantages in respect of using Gift Aid to enhance the child's membership fees. We ask all parents to sign up for the Gift Aid scheme.

The Charity Commission has approved our Constitution, our governance and working practices, and our financial management systems. We have to provide an Annual Report and Accounts; these are accessible on the Charity Commission's website www.charitycommission.gov.uk

Our Registered Charity number is 1092861. Please feel free to look at the details there.

Section 4: Choosing our Annual Show

We perform an annual show at a local theatre.

The Management Team and the Artistic Production team are in constant dialogue about forthcoming shows, taking into account the availability of the show, and the talents and ages of the children we have. Because of the relatively wide range of ages (8 - 17) there is usually a compromise choice.

Section 5: Communications with You

From time to time, you will receive communications from the Company, generally by email. Please ensure that you check your spam folder for any emails from us and add @spatheatre.com to your contacts.

In general, the Director will email you details about rehearsals, the show and its requirements.

Our Membership Manager will email you with details of general applicability.

Our Secretary will send more formal notices to you, such as the arrangements for the Annual General Meeting, and in respect of disciplinary matters.

Section 6: Conflicts of Interest

We stress the need for children to resist conflicts of interest if they are tempted by offers of appearances in other organisation's shows. We believe 100% dedication is necessary if we are to achieve the standards of performance we seek.

Please discuss with us any potential conflicts so that we can either plan accordingly, or if we have to ask the child to temporarily leave the Company

Section 7: Consent Forms

We require your consent for a number of activities, such as photography etc. Please click the link at the end of this booklet below to complete our consent forms digitally.

The information we request within the forms is essential to enable your child to become a member of the Company.

Section 8: Constitution

Spa Theatre Company is governed by a Constitution, approved by the Charity Commission. for England and Wales.

In summary, the constitution describes how the Company is governed, and the place of parents / children within the organisation. Particularly, it describes how you, as a parents, can appoint or remove members of the management committee by voting at an Annual General Meeting.

[Click here to read our full Constitution Document.](#)



Section 9: Data Protection and GDPR

The Government has adopted the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) to protect the data privacy of its citizens and reshape the way organisations approach data privacy. GDPR requires us as an organisation to describe to you how we store, manage, and secure personal and sensitive data.

In summary, all of the data about you and your children is limited only to committee members, and only particular committee members have access only to the particular aspects of data that are relevant to their function. No external person can access this data.

[Click here to read our full privacy policy.](#)

Section 10: Discipline and Bullying

A major part of our child protection / safeguarding arrangements is that we do not tolerate any form of bullying, harassment, or “picking on people”. We ask all children to report any concerns to the Artistic / Production Team, who will take the initial steps to address the behaviour. Any concerns can be escalated to the management committee.

In order for all children to benefit from their time at Spa Theatre Company, we do not tolerate any disruptive or disrespectful behaviour towards each other, or the artistic / production team.

Should any child repeatedly cause disruption they may be asked to leave the company.



Section 11: Diversity and Inclusivity

At Spa Theatre Company we strive to provide a place where our members feel valued, appreciated, and free to be who they are.

We work hard to prevent discrimination against our members, their families and our volunteers, regardless of gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, religion, ethnicity, age, neurodiversity, disability status, citizenship, or any other aspect which makes them unique.

[Click here to view our Diversity and Inclusivity policy.](#)

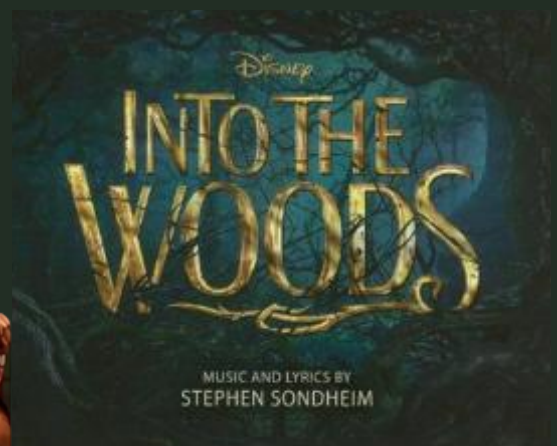
Section 12: Fees for Membership

The fees for membership of the company are set by the management committee.

We are a “non-profit” organisation, so we can maintain the lowest possible fee levels consistent with the costs we face. In broad terms, we aim to break-even on each year, while maintaining a level of reserve sufficient to ensure our continuity.

[The fee structure is outlined on our website](#) and can be paid monthly via standing order, or each term may be paid in full at the start of each term.

The committee can take action against non-payers or late payers. If you are experiencing financial difficulties, then please contact our Membership Manager. We have limited funds for a small bursary and may be able to support you.



Section 13: Gift Aid

Because Spa Theatre Company is a Registered Charity, if you are a UK taxpayer, we can reclaim 25p from the Inland Revenue for every £1.00 you pay in your child's membership fees.

It is also a benefit to you, as it allows you to reduce your income tax bill, by declaring the payment in your annual tax return. Both of us benefit if you sign up. You have to sign the form only once in your lifetime, not for every term or for every fee.

Please complete the gift aid section of the form in section 7 of this booklet.

Section 14: Libs and Deposits

For the annual show, we receive a "lib" book (the spoken words for each part, and the words of the songs) and we give the children a copy. This lib must not be written in, except by means of a soft pencil such that you can clean it before returning it to us at the end of the show.

We will charge a returnable deposit of £25 for each lib, as, if it is damaged, or lost and not returned, we will have to pay that penalty. We will return your deposit when we receive the lib back in good order.

The returnable deposit can be made by providing us with cash in an envelope with your child's name, or a post-dated cheque made payable to Spa Theatre Company.

Section 15: Management Committee

The Company is run by an entirely voluntary management committee, made up of a mix of parents, and other people with longer-term interests in young peoples' theatre. We have no paid members of staff.

The team is elected by you, our members, at an Annual General Meeting (AGM), at which you can question their performance. At the AGM, you can vote to remove someone from their post for inadequate performance.

To find out how you can become involved with the Management Committee, please see Section 25: Volunteering for the Company.

Section 16: Membership

Entry to the Company is by audition. We hold a waiting list, and demand usually exceeds the places available. When children are admitted, they become permanent members of the Company; they do not need to re-audition for membership every year. They are also guaranteed a place in our annual production, albeit that they will need to audition for named parts.

Section 17: Mobile Phones

Children are obviously encouraged to bring their phones, particularly to help in in case an emergency arises. However, the phones will be taken from them on arrival at rehearsal and returned at the end.

Phones must not be used for private photography during the rehearsals.

Section 18: Organising our Year

We meet on an academic year basis, consisting of rehearsing on Tuesday evenings at Aylesford School in Warwick, and commencing in September each year. The year culminates in the public performance of a musical at a local theatre, usually in May or June.

In order to produce the highest quality work, we often need to supplement the Tuesday training with additional rehearsals, usually on a Sunday afternoon. We do not have our own premises, and rent out space from schools and theatres.



Section 19: Photography at Shows and Concerts

We are often asked if it is permitted to take video recording or mobile phone footage of our shows. For most shows where we obtain the performing rights, these expressly prohibit such recording (whether by us or you), and we would be in breach of our contract if photography was permitted. Some shows do allow video recording, and as a company we would normally do this at the dress rehearsal, and sell DVDs to parents. But you are still not allowed to do personal filming during the public performances.

For internal shows such as our Christmas Concert, we do allow photography, but on the express understanding that it is for personal use, and the images should not be shared on social media.

Children are also not permitted (in rehearsals or elsewhere) to use their own mobile phones for photographing their fellow performers.

Section 20: Purpose of the Company

Spa Theatre Company is primarily a “teaching” organisation. We aim to offer a high standard of teaching in speech, drama, music and dance.

We employ (not in the strictest sense of paid employment) directors, choreographers and musical directors who have appropriate qualifications and experience.



Section 21: Safeguarding and Child Protection

Theatre work has to be on a safe and disciplined basis; children must do what the Director wants in order to realise their potential. We obviously want children to enjoy the experience, and we try our best to keep them safe while doing so, but our primary concern is to develop skills in the performing arts.

In particular, parents must be aware of what it is like backstage at a theatre. The space is usually congested, with a number of trip hazards, and there is considerable activity. Many adults will be present; there will be the production team, make-up personnel, wardrobe staff, theatre staff, parents and other helpers. Children will be getting changed, putting on costumes, having make-up applied, having microphones put on etc often in a rush between scenes. There will inevitably be physical contact between adults and children, and between children, and there will be partially-dressed children in the changing rooms. The back of a theatre is often poor in terms of physical access.

In recognition of all these issues, we take all reasonable steps to protect the children from danger, harm or abuse. We have careful vetting procedures for the staff we use, all approved by Warwickshire County Council (WCC) through the means of a Child Protection Policy.

The Council also uses a licensing procedure to ensure that children are not over-committed and we have to abide by strict rules on the number and duration of performances they are involved in. We have satisfied WCC as to the integrity of our processes, and they in turn have recognised us as a Body of Persons Approved (BOPA). Our BOPA certificate is renewed annually.

We say these things only to let you know what you are letting your child in for. We cannot protect them from every risk, but our procedures seek to reduce risks to the lowest practicable level.

[Click here to read the full copy of our Child Protection Policy.](#)

Section 22: Showcase

From time to time, usually annually, we hold a small “concert” to show you what the children have been learning with us.

This showcase demonstrates their progress across all the disciplines. We try to ensure that the children showcase what they have learned with us, rather than what they have already learned elsewhere.

We charge a modest fee for admission to the showcase.

Section 23: Signing Children in and out of Rehearsals

A particular safeguarding issue that we need to draw to your attention is the need for you to sign your child into our care, and then sign them out again at the end of the rehearsal. We cannot allow children to wander in and out at will, particularly as the rehearsal spaces are often in buildings used by other people at the same time.

If your child is over the age of 16, then you may give us written consent for your child to sign themselves in and out, but we do not encourage this practice and would much prefer that a young person was signed out by a parent/carer.

Section 24: Uniform and Dress Code

Children will be expected to attend all rehearsals in a T-shirt provided by the Company within the first few weeks of rehearsals. Appropriate footwear, typically soft shoes, are expected.

On occasions the company is invited to perform at external venues, and we ask that your child wears their Spa Theatre T-shirt at these events too.



Section 25: Volunteering for the Company

We are an entirely voluntary organisation. The management committee is a mixture of parents of current members, and other people who have a longer-term interest in young peoples' theatre. and helpers are parents.

By accepting a place in the Company for your child or young person, you acknowledge that you will offer your services in a role appropriate to your skills. Particularly, you will be expected to act as a chaperone at our shows, or take some other active role in supporting the Company. Without your support in these important roles, we would not be able to continue running the company.

The management committee is always looking for new members, and there are a number of roles available including fundraising and marketing. For more information about these roles and how you can get involved and make a difference to young people in our local area, please contact Vicky by emailing vicky.burford@spatheatre.com

Registration and Consent Form

Please follow this link to complete the registration form for your child. We require all forms to be completed fully in order to be able to admit your child to the company.

If you have any questions or difficulty accessing the forms, please contact Vicky by emailing vicky.burford@spatheatre.com

[PLEASE CLICK HERE TO COMPLETE OUR REGISTRATION FORM](#)

Contact Details

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