

STAGES Youth Theater
Health & Safety Policies
Updated – July 6, 2020
Questions – hello@stagesacademy.com

The following are the most up-to-date health & safety policies for our summer program ahead. All recommendations are based upon the recommendations and guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the State of Maine, and developed further through discussions with peer summer camp providers in Maine and across the United States. This list is not comprehensive, and may be adjusted at any time based on new recommendations from the CDC and State of Maine.

Student and Staff Use of STAGES Spaces

This year, STAGES will make use of existing and new spaces to provide the best possible health and safety outcomes for the camp program. At this time, we expect to use the following spaces in the following ways:

Outdoors. This summer, STAGES will conduct our programs *outside* on the grounds of the Woodfords Congregational Church campus. This includes all group activities such as rehearsal/acting work – which will take place in specially created “sets” on the grassy lawn areas, the Memorial Garden, and the other (open and shaded) paved and landscaped areas of the campus. On a regular, fair-weather day, indoor use will be limited to restroom breaks, wardrobe preparations, and (if needed) for safely quarantining a student who becomes ill during a camp day.

Indoors. In addition to the spaces with which returning students may be familiar, the church has made additional, large spaces available for STAGES to use as needed, and in the event of inclement weather.

The Undercroft. The “*undercroft*” spaces are located beneath the large sanctuary (the big, steepled “church”) part of the facility. A locked exterior door will provide direct access from the outdoors into these spaces during the summer. The undercroft has large windows for ventilation, its own set of restrooms, and is closed off from the rest of the building by a long hallway on the basement level. There will be plenty of room for the cast and staff to be appropriately socially distanced for activities planned on inclement weather days.

The STAGES Theater: The STAGES Theater has been converted into 5 appropriately distanced, costume fitting/dressing room spaces. These spaces will be used by one cast-member at a time, and cleaned/sanitized (by STAGES staff members) after each use. Outside of dressing room use, the Theater space will be used only for set/props storage. (Note: there will be additional Wardrobe/Costuming details later in this document).

Memorial Hall. We expect our lobby space will only be used for potential/additional social distancing concerns on inclement weather days, and/or as a gathering space in the event of an emergency situation.

The Small Classroom (also known as the Germaine Room). The classroom will be used solely as an isolation room if a student who becomes ill during camp - a safe place for students to rest comfortably until they can be picked up by a parent/guardian/caregiver. This space has been outfitted with a cot, a cooling system, basic first aid supplies, and additional/appropriate PPE for the isolation room attendance. The isolation room will be supervised by a different staff member each week – and will be a person not assigned to directly interact with the rest of the students in the current program.

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More information about indoor spaces:

- Students will not be permitted to wander between STAGES spaces (indoors or outdoors) unless directed to do so, and/or accompanied by a STAGES staff member. Parents and community members are asked not to exit their vehicles at drop-off/pick-up times, and (barring emergency situations) will not be permitted inside any of the indoor STAGES spaces this summer.
- STAGES is the only camp program on the Woodfords Church campus this summer. There are no other students/young people on the campus. (To confirm: all other STAGES programs (for younger children) have been cancelled or moved to a virtual format). Other individuals who may be present from time to time during the summer months would be:
 - Woodfords Congregational Church staff members and custodians
 - Staff members of other building tenants - Portland Conservatory of Music, and A Company of Girls
 - Volunteers and clients of the Project FEED food pantry, which will be operating on Tuesdays and Thursdays when STAGES is not in the building. This program is accessed from the outside by a dedicated door directly into the Project FEED-specific space. This space includes its own dedicated restroom, and is in an entirely different part of the campus than the undercroft spaces STAGES will be using this summer.

Health Monitoring

STAGES asks that students and their families partner with us this summer to help ensure the safest possible environment in which these programs can take place. Our basic health monitoring expectations are:

- Students and staff members that are unwell while at home, are required to stay at home.
- Staff members who become sick while at STAGES will be required to go home immediately.
- Students who become sick while at STAGES will be supervised in our designated, safe, isolation space until they can be picked up as soon as possible by a parent/caregiver.
- Students from out-of-state would be required to observe a 14-day quarantine period before joining a STAGES program. There are no students from other states registered for STAGES programs at this time, and we do not expect there to be any new registrations from out-of-state students.

Additional Health Screening Protocols:

In an effort to promote an honest and ongoing communication between STAGES and families about health concerns and monitoring, STAGES will provide discreet opportunities to identify and report new or continuing COVID-19 exposure risks in your own household. In addition to the at-home, self-reporting tools for families, students will undergo a simple screening process before joining camp activities each day.

Below you will find some additional details about our plans for weekly/daily health screening procedures. These processes may be adjusted at any time based on new recommendations from the CDC and State of Maine.

- **At Home Monitoring - Weekly:** On Sunday of each camp week, student families will be sent (via email) a self-reporting risk assessment survey. This survey will be an opportunity for staff members and parents of students, to report on any non-STAGES additional risk exposure in the preceding week. There will be several short/simple questions about travel, exposure to COVID-19 symptoms from family/other close community members, etc. It will take less than 2-3 minutes to complete this weekly survey.

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- **At Home Monitoring – Daily:** Parents/Caregivers are asked to be vigilant about monitoring the health of the participating student on an ongoing basis. Anyone concerned they may have developed symptoms of COVID-19 should NOT attend STAGES programming. Children or Staff Members with a fever of 99.9 or higher should not attend camp that day. Parents may contact STAGES in writing – hello@stagesacademy.com, or by phone (207) 699-3330, if a student will not be attending STAGES.
- **At STAGES - Daily:** Each day, students arriving will be greeted by a STAGES staff member who will ask students to answer a question about any COVID-19 symptoms that may have surfaced since the previous STAGES camp date; after which the STAGES staff member will do a quick fever check with a touchless, infrared thermometer. Any student with a fever of 99.9 or higher will not be cleared to attend camp that day. (Parents can support this process by taking their child's temperature at home each morning before leaving for STAGES).
- **Health Screening of STAGES Staff Members:** All STAGES staff members will undergo their own version of at-home and at-STAGES screening processes each day/week, and will be held to the same standard as students with regards to participation.
- **Health Screening at STAGES During the Day:** STAGES will not conduct additional formal health screenings during the day, unless a student appears to be unwell, or has indicated to a staff member that they are feeling unwell.

If a student becomes unwell at STAGES, they will be sent to our isolation room (described in more detail earlier in this document), under the supervision of a dedicated staff member who will contact a parent/caretaker to arrange for immediate pick-up. Students will be able to rest comfortably in this room until the pick-up takes place.

If a case of COVID-19 is reported at STAGES, (among our staff or student community) STAGES will notify all families and staff members, and immediately shut down our campus for disinfection/cleaning. If this takes place, STAGES will move some or all of the remaining program to a virtual format. STAGES may send out additional health-monitoring surveys during any period of in-person program suspension. All health screening information will remain confidential, and used only to determine any potential evidence of community transmission at STAGES, so we may assist the CDC if required, with contract tracing data.

A Note about Student/Staff Absences.

STAGES asks our students and families to remember that there may be many reasons why a student or staff member is absent from a program date, most of which may have nothing to do with COVID-19 (including appointments, scheduled conflicts, transportation issues, or (known) non-COVID-related health issues, etc). If a student or staff member is absent but returns to the program on a subsequent day, it is because STAGES believes fully there is no new COVID-19 threat to our community based on the information provided by families with regards to these absences. Thank you for respecting the privacy of fellow STAGES participants, and trusting that STAGES will act swiftly and appropriately when/if any threats to our health and safety arise this summer.

Any questions or concerns about health screening protocols at STAGES may be sent to hello@stagesacademy.com at any time.

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More Information about Social Distancing and PPE

STAGES will enforce the best practices and recommendations put forth by the CDC and the State of Maine regarding social distance and mask use. Minimum expectations are as follows:

- *Social Distancing:* For **outdoor activities**, social distancing will be observed, with the goal of a 6 foot distance between students whenever possible.
- *Social Distancing:* For **indoor/inclement weather days**, STAGES will (depending on the program size) split the cast/team in out smaller groups of fewer people to allow for maximum social distancing while indoors.
- *Masks:* For any **indoor activity** or access, a mask will be **required** of all students and staff members.
- *Masks:* For **outdoor** activities, masks will be required at almost all times except when eating lunch/snacks.

More Information about Hand-washing/Hygiene

One of the most important tools in fighting the spread of COVID-19 is still the simple act of proper hand-washing/sanitization. STAGES will provide ample hand sanitizing stations (indoors and outdoors), as well as appropriate supplies of soap and paper towels in the restrooms and at all sinks.

- Staff and students will be trained in hand-washing/sanitizing best practices informed by the CDC. These practices will be posted for reinforcement in restrooms, at hand-sanitization stations, and throughout the STAGES spaces.
- Hand-washing/sanitizing will be required after using the restroom and before/after lunch and snack breaks. Additionally, students and staff will be required to wash/sanitize hands at other regularly scheduled points during the day.

More Information about Cleaning/Sanitization

STAGES is committed to an ongoing rigorous approach to keeping our spaces clean/sanitized and as disinfected as possible. We are supported in this effort by the Woodfords Congregational Church staff, which will provide the ongoing support of additional supplies & materials, as well as the services of a sexton/custodian.

Areas of specific attention include:

- *The Undercroft.* These spaces will be fully cleaned by STAGES staff at the end of each camp day. Undercroft restrooms will be thoroughly cleaned/sanitized by the Woodford's custodian before each camp day begins, will be cleaned/sanitized by STAGES at regular intervals throughout each day, and at the end of each day.
- *The Theater & Memorial Hall.* While we expect the use to be minimal, these spaces will be cleaned after days when spaces are used, and will otherwise be checked and cleaned daily as needed. Wardrobe areas in the Theater space will be cleaned/sanitized after each use.

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- *The Classroom.* This quarantine/safe space will be locked and off-limits to students and non-camp staff members this summer, will be cleaned and sanitized after any time it is used.
- *Other STAGES Spaces & Equipment.* All other typical STAGES spaces (workshop spaces, offices) will be cleaned regularly. These spaces will be locked and off-limits to students and non-camp staff members this summer. Any program-related equipment will be disinfected after use.
- *High-Touch Surfaces.* Following CDC guidelines, and the existing protocols outlined by the Woodford's Church community, all high-touch surfaces (light-switches, door handles/crash-bars, keyless entry pin-pads, window latches, elevator buttons, etc) will be cleaned at regular intervals.

Program-Specific Concerns

STAGES continues to identify health and safety concerns that are unique to the type of theater program we provide. As these concerns come up, we are developing processes to address them. While the following list is not comprehensive, we wanted to provide some reassurance about the following topics our staff has identified in our early planning meetings.

Singing – Singing together in person provides an extremely high risk of exposure to COVID-19. As described in an earlier program communication, all music direction will be done virtually, and all singing will be recorded for use in the final presentation of our work. There will be no singing, or in-person music instruction that requires singing, on campus during the summer.

Costumes – Given the unique challenges of social distancing with regards to the costuming process, STAGES will be implementing a series of new protocols to eliminate the need for up-close interaction between the Costumers and the students. We are working toward a goal of one base costume for each cast member with just accessories or other small pieces that can be added quickly, so there are no “full” costume changes during the show.

As indicated earlier in this document, students will try on costumes in a private dressing area, and will also be taking more responsibility for the storage and care of their own costumes while at STAGES. All interactions with the costumer will be from an appropriate social distance, with additional tutorials and manuals provided to students to help with things that are often a bit tricky (for example, how to tie a neck-tie, or how to attach suspenders, etc).

More detailed information will be coming soon - we are testing a rigorous set of fitting room policies during SWEENEY TODD and will report back on our final ONCE UPON A MATTRESS protocols based on what we learn during this first summer production.

Stage Intimacy – The directing team is working on stylized and appropriately distanced ways of addressing the different types of intimacy that might take place in ONCE UPON A MATTRESS. For example, there will be no stage romantic contact, and no contact between cast-members during scenes that may include ballroom/partner dancing. We're learning about many film-making tricks of the trade that will help us to represent these types of moments, while keeping students at a safe social distance from one another.

There may be other things that come up in the days ahead - we're excited for this challenge, and look forward to being creative in our approach to putting this show together this summer!

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What to Bring From Home

More information will be included in upcoming program communications, but for advance planning purposes, we offer the following information at this time. STAGES will be providing one plastic bin with a lid for each student to use during the day. This bin will be collected, sanitized and ready for use again on the next camp date. This bin will be large enough to carry the following items:

- Lunch/Snacks – To reduce risk of virus exposure, STAGES will not be providing snacks this summer. Please bring all food needed for the entire day.
- A mask – for your student’s own personal use
- A refillable, re-sealable water bottle
- The ONCE UPON A MATTRESS script (once it has been distributed)
- Sunglasses or a sun hat (for outdoor time)
- If you must bring a cellphone for communicating with parents/caregivers, it should be in a sealed plastic bag. Your student will not be permitted to use this phone unless there is an emergency or they need to communicate with someone about a transportation concern.

Please Label Everything. Items left behind that are not labeled may be disposed of as part of the cleaning/sanitizing process. Please do not bring items that are not listed above. More information about STAGES clothing guidelines and other considerations (sunscreen, insect repellent, medications, etc) will be sent before the program begins.

THANK YOU, FAMILIES!

Thank you for your attention to all of the information provided in this document. We look forward to releasing more information soon. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to ask by email hello@stagesacademy.com