

Dear Teachers and Students,

As the date approaches for our upcoming visit to your school, we'd like to take a moment to make sure that everyone has the necessary information to make this the most enjoyable theatre experience for all. Part of the educational value in what we do is that we give the students the chance to learn what it means to be a contributing audience.

As we are used to performing for 13-17 year olds, we have set up a few guidelines to ensure an enjoyable experience for everyone. Here are the dos and don'ts of audience etiquette and discipline. **Please share this information with staff and students.**

DO:

- **Listen to and watch the play attentively. The more you do this, the better the actors will perform for you, and the better the story will be for everyone.**
- **Listen and look for the funny and naughty bits, and the parts that remind you of your life or the people in it. (Optional for schools queasy about such things)**
- **Go to the washroom before the play. (there is no intermission)**
- **Laugh at the funny bits, enjoy the fights. Cheer on the fun parts.**
- **Keep listening even if you don't understand at first. The language is a bit hard to get at first, and then somehow gets easier as you get into it and the story.**

DON'T:

- **talk to, push poke or otherwise hassle your buddies or neighbours during the play. get up and leave during the performance, move your chair around, or otherwise distract the audience and the actors.**
- **be text messaging as this is obvious and distracting for audience and actors**
- **bring cell phones, ipods, food, gum or hats into the theatre space**

Having rules is easy. Having them work is not always. To that end, we have developed a system for maintaining audience discipline. Firstly, we'll treat the audience like a normal adult theatre audience, which polices itself. However, if the students need help with this (and please give them some kind of a chance at it), then we request that the teachers step in and maintain discipline. To facilitate this, we request that teachers sit with their students, act as exemplary audience role models, and shush and/or eject students who disrupt the performance. Obviously, in a high school or multi class setting, this could be difficult, as teachers may need to leave to teach other classes. If those that must leave could sit in a place where it is easy to get out (i.e. an aisle seat), and have the teacher that is taking over the class take their recently vacated place, this would be ideal. If there will be teachers coming and going, we'd like to make sure that the noise from that, and the light coming in will not disturb the performance. If at all possible there needs to be a staff member on the door, making sure that door noise is not an issue, and preventing students from coming and going during the play.

In the unlikely event that the teachers and students have difficulty maintaining discipline, our company members will request that staff eject disruptive students quietly and efficiently. Also, if needed, the actors performing may stop the show and wait for the audience to quiet itself. Failing that they may stop the show and admonish the audience to be quiet, or request that staff remove certain students. If these actions fail, then at their discretion the actors may simply stop the show and not resume. Obviously, none of these are desirable outcomes for the actors, who do best when they are concentrating on their performances rather than on discipline. The more extreme actions are not expected. In over 200 of these performances we have never completely stopped a show and not resumed.

Also, in regards to lunch, I would like to clarify this with you. If lunch is available, will it be provided? There is no need for your school to provide our actors with a lunch, although some schools have been doing just that. Really, I'm more interested in making sure that if lunch will not be provided, that the actors know about this beforehand, so they can either provide their own lunch from home, or are able to purchase food from your school cafeteria or from a very

nearby healthy food outlet. For your information, this year's touring company has two actors who are gluten intolerant.

One last thing. If we could have someone familiar with the school's electrical system on hand for the morning while we set up, we'd appreciate it. The actors travel with their own lighting equipment, but as each school is different, sometimes we need to know where the breaker panel is located, or where we can find other power sources.

If you have any problems or concerns regarding the upcoming show, please don't hesitate to send me an email at meperley@gmail.com. I should be getting back to you within the day. If I don't, you can call my cell at 780-977-9654 or at the office 780-477-2773 ext 2 and be sure to leave a message.

We're looking forward to the show at your school!

Mary-Ellen Perley,
Tour Manager/Education Liaison
Theatre Prospero
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