THE STUDIO

at Shakespeare by the Sea

2026/2027 Handbook

STUDIO LINE: 902-449-9878

WELCOME TO THE STUDIO!

We are so excited to embark on another fabulous year-long training journey with you. This handbook details all of our various policies to ensure that you know exactly what to expect, and how we plan to keep you safe and informed between now and Spring of 2027! Please read through this handbook, and let us know if there's anything more we can do to support you this year.

DROP-OFF

All classes this year will be taking place at **St. Matthew's United Church, 1479 Barrington Street.** You'll be able to enter right through the sanctuary doors from Barrington Street. There is limited street parking on Barrington heading south, and on the surrounding streets within a short walk…we've had luck on Hollis St., Bishop St., and Granville St.

LATE ARRIVALS

The Studio at SBTS has a dedicated phone line, which can be reached at **902-449-9878.** Please send the Studio Line a text message if you're going to be late. We lock the front door to keep the building safe during classes and lessons (especially now that we are in a busy pedestrian area!), and while we usually do have desk staff, they frequently assist in the classroom once the class is underway. Once class has started, if we haven't heard from you, we may lock the door. If you arrive and the door is locked, please call the Studio Line.

DURING CLASS

We thank you in advance for exercising caution when it comes to keeping our community healthy. Please stay home if you are sick.

Here's what you should **bring with you** whenever you come to class:

1. Wear clothing you can move comfortably in, and bring a warm layer like a sweater or hoodie.
2. **Indoor shoes in the winter months or when it rains. This is a safety concern. If you arrive without indoor shoes, you'll be required to change into Studio-provided slippers, as we can't have wet shoes in the rehearsal space.**
3. A hair elastic or headband (for students with long hair)
4. Binder or duotang with your name on it (for scripts, sheet music, etc.)
5. Pencil
6. Water bottle labelled with your name

PICK-UP

Students should be picked up promptly after their class. Staff may need to leave promptly after class, so please ensure your child is picked up no later than 10 minutes

after the class has finished. Please text the Studio Line if you get stuck and are having trouble getting to the Studio within the specified timeframe.

CODE OF CONDUCT

The Studio is committed to providing a safe, welcoming, inclusive, and respectful environment for all students, staff, teaching artists, volunteers, and guests. Everyone has the right to be treated with kindness, dignity, and respect.

Students are expected to:

- Treat others with kindness and respect, and respect their physical and emotional boundaries, privacy, and personal property.
- Refrain from bullying, harassment, discrimination, intimidation, threats, physical aggression, or any behaviour intended to harm, demean, or exclude another person.
- Use appropriate and respectful language and behaviour, both in person and in communications with other members of The Studio community.
- Follow reasonable instructions from Studio staff, particularly those relating to safety and the wellbeing of others.
- Not photograph, record, or share images or personal information about another student without appropriate consent.
- Not possess, use, distribute, or be under the influence of alcohol, cannabis, illegal drugs, or other intoxicating substances while participating in a Studio program or activity.
- Not possess weapons or other items that could pose a danger to themselves or others.

Students are encouraged to speak with a staff member if they experience or witness behaviour during a Studio activity that compromises their safety. Staff will respond to concerns as appropriate; information shared may need to be disclosed where someone's safety or wellbeing is at risk.

The Studio recognizes that young people are still learning and, where appropriate, may address minor concerns through conversation or other reasonable interventions. Serious or repeated violations may result in suspension or removal from a program. Behaviour that presents an immediate risk may result in immediate removal and notification of a parent or guardian.

This Code of Conduct applies to behaviour occurring during Studio programs and activities while participants are under the supervision of Studio staff. The Studio does not monitor students' behaviour or relationships outside of these activities.

By participating in The Studio's programs, students and their parents/guardians agree to uphold this Code of Conduct.

COMMUNICATION

The Studio at SBTS has a dedicated phone line, which can be reached at **902-449-9878**. It is an on-site mobile phone which can receive text messages. When you text us for the first time, please include your name as well as your child's so we can accurately save you as a contact.

When there's important information to communicate for the first time, you'll still receive an email, but we're switching minor reminders to text. **Please let us know if you do not wish to receive text messages.**

Teachers have a company email address that is monitored during their working hours.

Jade Douris-O'Hara (Studio Director): jade@shakespearebythesea.ca
Drew Douris-O'Hara (Instructor): drew@shakespearebythesea.ca

There is a Google Calendar for each of our classes. You can find yours at https://www.shakespearebythesea.ca/studiocalendar

FOOD

There are no breaks in the Junior Shakespeare & Musical Theatre Class, or in Senior Musical Theatre Class, so there is no need to send a snack for those classes. The Shakespeare Pre-Company Class will take one 5-minute break. Any food that enters our facility must be nut-free.

PAYMENT

As many of you know, we have just this year switched our management system for the whole company to a new platform, called **VBO.** If you don't already have one, you'll have to create an account with us on VBO in order to complete payment.

Every class has the option to pay either the full amount upfront or a $200 deposit to start. If you pay a deposit, the balance will sit on your account and you can go in and pay the balance, including making partial payments, on whatever schedule works best for you. **The full balance must be paid by December 31, 2026**, or I get in trouble with the accountant. Thank you for your support, I hate being in trouble with the accountant.

UNFORESEEN CANCELLATIONS

The safety of our students, families, and staff is our highest priority.

If Halifax Regional Centre for Education (or Halifax Rec programs on the weekend) cancels school or after-school activities due to weather, The Studio may also close. However, final closure decisions are made by the Studio Director based on conditions

at the rehearsal/performance site.

Notice of closures will be sent by text, email, and posted on our social media channels no later than **2 hours before class start time** whenever possible.

In the event of an unexpected closure (power outage, building emergency, public health concern, etc.), families will be notified as quickly as possible by email and text message.

When classes are cancelled due to weather or emergency, The Studio will:

- Attempt to reschedule the class or rehearsal when feasible, to one of our designated “snow dates” (details below).
- Combine or extend future classes to make up for lost time if possible.
- For performance-based classes, ensure that any essential rehearsals missed are prioritized for rescheduling.

Please note that while every effort will be made to provide make-up opportunities, they cannot always be guaranteed due to scheduling constraints.

CASTING POLICY

One of the most challenging parts of theatre training is the necessary practice of casting the play. Some students will get a role they want or expect, others will get something different. It is Shakespeare by the Sea's policy to only allow the number of students into a class that there are sufficient roles for. If there are 12 speaking roles in the play, there will be a maximum of 12 students in the class. Casting is left to the discretion of the director/instructor, and they are doing the best possible job they can, taking all the students' needs and strengths into account. All available roles offer an opportunity for learning, practicing technique, and imaginative character creation. All available roles have lines to learn. We support all students in finding what is exciting and challenging about the role they are given, even if it is different from what they expect. Casting is final, and refunds will not be given if a student withdraws because they are unsatisfied with their casting.

REFUND POLICY

At The Studio, we understand that plans can change. Our refund policy is designed to be fair to families while also ensuring the sustainability of our programs. Please read carefully before registering your child.

Withdrawal & Refunds

- 7 days or more before the first class: Full refund, less a $25 administrative fee.
- After the first class: Refund of fees paid, less a $25 administrative fee and a $200

non-refundable deposit.
- After up to 3 classes: Pro-rated refund of remaining classes, less a $25 administrative fee and a $200 non-refundable deposit.
- After the 4th class has taken place: No refunds will be issued.

Special Circumstances
- Refunds or credits due to illness, family emergency, or other extraordinary circumstances may be considered at the discretion of the Studio Director.
- When possible, families are encouraged to accept a credit towards a future program. Refunds may also be issued back to the original method of payment if necessary.

Transfers
- Registrations may be transferred to another Studio class (space permitting).
- A registration may also be transferred to a sibling if the original registrant is unable to participate.

LOST & FOUND

The Studio is not responsible for lost or stolen items. Please label all belongings. Any found items will be kept for 30 days before being donated.

ATTENDANCE POLICIES

We want you to stay home if you don't feel well! We will always work to be as flexible as possible in accommodating make-up classes for any student who stays home from class due to illness.

At The Studio, every student is an important part of our ensemble, and we value the time we spend learning and creating together. While we understand that life happens, regular attendance helps students feel confident, stay connected, and get the most out of their experience.

Absences
- If your child needs to miss a class, please let us know by email ahead of time whenever possible.
- Occasional absences for illness, family events, or other commitments are understandable. We just ask that you keep us in the loop so instructors can plan accordingly.
- If a student is absent more than three times in the Winter/Spring session, they may only participate in the recital at the discretion of the Studio Director. This isn't punitive: it's about setting up everyone for success.
- Attendance at all dress rehearsals and performances is mandatory in order to participate in the recital.

Thanks for making it to the end of the Handbook! We are excited for a fantastic year.