

Classroom Management Policy

This document outlines the Classroom Management Policy of Bainbridge Performing Arts Theatre School (BPATS).

This purpose of this policy is to:

- Contribute to the development of positive and effective relationships between teaching artists and students;
- Establish standards of behavior and conduct that safeguard the health, safety and wellbeing of BPATS students and staff;
- Ensure all BPATS Teaching Artists and Volunteers adopt a consistent approach to classroom management, which reflects the values of BPATS; and to
- Outline our areas of zero tolerance.

This policy includes guidance on the following areas:

- Approaches to proactive classroom management;
- Approaches to behavior management;
- Conduct with minors and vulnerable people;
- Managing emotionally sensitive situations;
- Zero tolerance.

I. Proactive Classroom Management

BPATS aims to provide a safe and nurturing environment for all program and activity participants. To foster a positive environment, we expect all teaching artists to adopt a proactive approach to classroom management. This includes implementing the following:

- **Greet all students at arrival:** Engage with students warmly, positively and address them by name;
- **Clarity of communication:** Use clear, helpful and age/ability appropriate communications to give instruction and outline expectations. Always invite questions and ensure students are clear in their comprehension of instruction;
- **Use reminders and cues:** Make use of both visual and aural reminders and cues to maintain student's attention or focus. Aural cues can be effective tools to capture students' attention (such as a rain stick or wind chime). Reminders can be verbal, or visual (such as turning lights on and off to signal it's time to be quiet).
- **Actively supervise:** Be present, active and engaged in the classroom at all times;
- **Establish, maintain and restore relationships:** Building positive relationships, holding regular check-ins, dealing effectively with conflicts when they arise, are all ways in which we can proactively manage the emotional environment in the classroom;
- **Outline classroom code:** Engage students in a discussion about our Theatre School Classroom Code, and invite conversation about why each rule is important (applies to programs for age 18 and under);
- **Model Positive Attitudes:** All expectations and rules that we ask our students to follow, must also be followed by teaching artists.

II. Behavior Management

To effectively manage challenging or disruptive behavior, we

- **Set clear expectations:** Classroom rules and expectations related to specific tasks or activities must always be made clear to students. Invite questions and facilitate positive discussion that aides students' understanding;
- **Give behavior-specific praise:** Acknowledging positive behavior and ignoring low-level disruptions can often be an effective way of encouraging behavior that you want to reinforce;
- **Be consistent:** Rules and expectations should be applied equitably to all students;
- **Lead with empathy;** when children and young people display challenging behavior, it's often triggered by an unmet need which may not be obvious to others or indeed to themselves (maybe they're struggling to

maintain concentration and need a movement break, perhaps they have sensory overload and need a quiet moment). Always meet them with kindness, and respect for their emotional experience, and try to find out what unmet needs they may be struggling with;

- **Remain calm and patient:** If we respond to students by getting angry or raising our voice, this will escalate conflicting situations. Under no circumstances is it ever acceptable to yell at or speak aggressively to our students, or any member of the BPATS community;
- **Be proactive:** if you notice trouble brewing, try to address it before it escalates, by connecting with the student/s, listening to what they are upset about and offering solutions;
- **Appropriate intervention:** In the event that a student's behavior, words or actions present an immediate threat to their own or another's safety, health, dignity or wellbeing, appropriate intervention measures must be taken. This may include use of reasonable physical restraint, separating a student from class, or removal of objects from that student's possession. Any intervention measures that are taken, must be reported immediately to the Director of Education and (where the student is a minor) to the parent/guardian of the student.

III. Conduct with Minors and Vulnerable Groups

BPATS is an educational theatre program that works with children and vulnerable groups. In accordance with our organizational values, providing participants with a safe and nurturing environment is of paramount importance. All responsible adults associated with BPATS, whether employees, independent contractors, volunteers or visitors, have a duty of care to prevent harm to, and ensure the safety of, all minors in our care.

For further details please refer to our *Conduct with Minors Policy*.

IV. Managing Emotionally Sensitive Situations

BPATS recognizes that theatre arts training and creative collaborations can often be emotionally intense and personal experiences. BPATS is committed to ensuring a safe, inclusive and non-judgmental space for all participants. Teaching Artists are encouraged to adopt the following guidance for dealing with emotionally sensitive issues in the classroom:

- **Triggering topics:** If a potentially triggering topic is planned to be covered in any class, activity or program, prior warning must be given to all participants (students and staff) and to parents/guardians of minor participants. Ensure all participants are comfortable before commencing instruction;
- **Emotional distress:** In the event of a student experiencing moderate or severe emotional distress, space, time and support must be offered. Allow the student to manage their emotional experience in a way that they are comfortable with, whilst ensuring their safety, privacy and dignity are respected. Ensure all participants are comfortable before continuing instruction;
- **Conflict resolution:** In the event of conflict arising between students, the teaching artist is expected to take measures to intervene and help resolve the conflict, or end the conversation if appropriate. Refer to above guidance on 'Appropriate intervention' and below guidance of 'Zero Tolerance'.

V. Zero Tolerance

The term Zero Tolerance refers to policies and practices that mandate predetermined consequences, typically severe, punitive and exclusionary (e.g. suspension from activities), in response to specific types of behavior, regardless of the context or rationale for the behavior. BPATS takes a zero tolerance approach to incidents that fall into the following categories:

- Racial discrimination and hate speech;
- Discrimination and hate speech on the basis of sex, gender, sexuality or gender identity;
- Any form of sexual harassment, including physical, verbal, or other forms of communication (e.g. emails, texts, photos, social media contact etc);
- Violence;
- Drug use;
- Possession and/or use of any type of weapon during a BPATS activity or on BPA premises.

In the event of any situation arising that the teaching artist, BPATS employee or volunteer considers may have breached this policy, the Director of Education must be notified immediately, and/or law enforcement authorities may be notified where appropriate. BPATS may take additional steps to investigate details of the situation before deciding on the appropriate course of action.