



Dear Parent and Student:

I am so excited to have you as a part of China Spring Theatre. I value your membership and welcome your participation. It is my hope that your experiences in this department will be both positive, character building, and, most of all, fun.

This Student Handbook contains important information for The China Spring Theatre (CST) student. The student and parent/guardian should read and understand all of the information in this handbook. I want every student to succeed and I hope this information will help them to do just that.

This handbook has two purposes: (1) to inform the student and their parents/guardians about the expectations of China Spring Theatre; and (2) to help keep students on track.

At first reading this handbook may seem filled with many rules and regulations, saying “You can’t do this!” and “Don’t do that!” But, please keep in mind that my intention is to make each student’s time at China Spring Theatre EXCITING, REWARDING, and as POSITIVE as possible. I try to create a fun environment for learning and discovery. This can be done only with well-articulated standards and expectations.

The policies in this handbook are agreements – agreements between you and your fellow students, you and your director, and you and your work. I hope the lessons you learn and the memories we make will last a lifetime.

*Mandy Conner*

Director of Theatre  
China Spring High School

## **OVERVIEW**

China Spring Theatre (CST) offers a program geared to high school theatre students in a pre-professional environment. The program focuses on training in movement, voice, characterization, technical elements, and other aspects of theatre.

China Spring Theatre students will grow and flourish in a structured, supportive environment that requires dedication, commitment and a strong sense of responsibility. CST students will showcase their training in a series of public performances.

Theatre, as taught in high schools, is intended to fulfill four basic purposes:

**THEATRE AS CHARACTER BUILDING**, to enhance students' personal growth and development, and self discovery, developing self-confidence, empathy, team work, etc.

**THEATRE AS LIFE ENRICHMENT**, to produce aesthetically responsive citizens with lifelong interests in the arts.

**THEATRE AS A SOCIAL AND RECREATIONAL ACTIVITY**, giving the student a break from academic activities, fulfilling the same needs of a sports activity.

**THEATRE AS TRAINING**, as preparation for continued and future studies in the field.

Theatre curriculums are usually built around one of these purposes. China Spring Theatre fulfills all four.

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

China Spring Theatre's mission is to build a cohesive team of young artists to collaborate, create, and communicate in an encouraging environment, evolving through empathy and reflection, and working to be successful, respectable members of our community.

## **"THE BRAND"**

The brand of China Spring Theatre represents much more than the productions we do each year. The "brand" represents the high expectations we have for each other and defines our behavior in and out of the theatre. CST works within The China Spring community and our students are often recognized for the roles they play. Therefore, it is vital that our students recognize the responsibility that accompanies that recognition. In other words: With great power comes great responsibility. The China Spring Theatre brand is also representative of leadership to the community. CST believes that leadership is defined with service to others.

## **EXPECTATIONS** (alphabetically)

### ● **APPEARANCE**

Your “look” is an important part of your costume and is not to be altered without prior permission from the directors. Performers may not alter their personal, everyday “look” without the prior permission from the director. Altering includes but is not limited to: piercing or tattooing any part of their body, as well as shaving, growing, cutting, or dyeing your head and/or facial hair.

### ● **AUDITIONS**

Auditions are open to students in grades 9-12, unless otherwise noted. Students do NOT have to be enrolled in a theatre class in order to audition. Every student wishing to participate (cast or crew) MUST complete an audition form and list all conflicts on the attached rehearsal calendar.

Specific audition requirements vary from production to production, but will include 3 components:

1. A prepared song (Fall musical) or monologue (One Act), memorized. The Prepared portion will be performed in front of all auditioning, Director(s) and any invited guest adjudicators
2. A movement portion.
3. Cold Readings (students will receive “sides” from the selected show, be Given a few minutes to look over them and work with a partner, And then perform in front of the group.

Students should dress professionally (business casual) and bring comfortable clothing for the movement portion.

Auditions are closed to the general public. Only students auditioning and invited guest adjudicators will be allowed in the theatre space during auditions.

### ● **AWARDS**

#### **\*Letter Jackets**

To letter in theatre arts a student must

1. Be a member in good standing of the theatre department, exhibit a positive attitude; and stay academically eligible, and maintain a grade of 90 percent or above in theatre class.
2. Complete two One Act Productions (cast, crew, or alternate)
3. OR advance to the State One Act Play Meet

#### **\*Honor Cords:**

For CST Graduates to be awarded an International Thespian Festival Honor Cord, the student must have at least an Honor Thespian degree with 60 or more Thespian points and must be in good standing with CST.

- **BEHAVIOR**

As China Spring Theatre participants are in the public, whether they like it or not, they are considered role models within the community. Therefore, it is the expectation of the directors that behavior is always exemplary. (At home, school, work, or at the theatre)

\*Social Media – If you have public social media accounts (public or private), your words and actions DO represent China Spring Theatre. Therefore, cursing, vulgar or inappropriate language or photos, negativity about our program, our school, our students, our faculty, etc., are **unacceptable** and will not be tolerated and will be addressed by the directors. This includes all public AND private tik-tok, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram, and Facebook accounts.

\*In School Suspension/After School Detention – Any disciplinary action where a consequence is necessary, affects our production. Again, China Spring Theatre expects exemplary behavior. CST students should strive to make good choices each and every day. Students receiving ISS or after school detention will meet with director to discuss continuance in the production and may result in an additional consequence such as, but not limited to, removal from a current production, additional work and/or service duties, etc.

\*Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) – Behavior resulting in DAEP placement will not be tolerated and students will be removed from productions for the semester.

- **CASTING:**

Casting a production is a difficult process, as there are many variables involved. As the director, I use these six elements when considering cast & crew assignments.

**The SIX A's of Casting:**

1. Academics
2. Availability
3. Attitude
4. Adaptability
5. Appropriateness
6. Ability

**Academics**

The job of a high school student is to be a student, to complete their requirements for graduation. Participation in the UIL OAP is a privilege, not a right—and to ensure experiencing this privilege, a student MUST pass their coursework.

## **Availability**

The individual is part of the company and therefore must put aside their personal desires to the good of the production. Rehearsals and crew calls are never missed without prior permission.

Students with **MORE THAN ONE** unexcused absence or tardy will be dismissed from the company.

Rehearsals and crew calls begin and end exactly at the times indicated on the rehearsal schedule. **Due to the competitive nature of the UIL One Act Play Contest, scheduling conflicts (which include other campus activities) are rarely worked around.**

## **Attitude**

Students often lose out as contenders for roles because they represent a serious threat to the entire production due to their attitudes (towards company members, directors, expectations, or the department). A production is not made up of “stars,” but of a company of actors. The most successful UIL OAP students are those who think “we, our, ours” instead of “I, my mine.”

## **Adaptability**

There will always be students who think they should have the “lead” role. Adaptability means playing the part you are assigned...and playing it without whining, rationalizing, or backbiting. Directors look for students on whom they can depend, students who are committed to the process/production and who are able to adapt to changing circumstances.

**ALL ASSIGNMENTS WITHIN THE COMPANY ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT ANY TIME!!**

## **Appropriateness (Knowing Your TYPE)**

Fair or not, like it or not, an actor’s age, appearance, personality, skill sets, and vocal qualities are critical in casting. Not ALL actors are suited for ALL roles. However, actors can sometimes successfully play against their type with work and diligence.

It is up to the Director’s discretion to place students in the role that **best fits the director’s vision.**

## **Ability**

What is “ability?” It is that rare combination of academics, availability, attitude, adaptability and appropriateness plus an overwhelming desire to DO ONE’S BEST in the UIL OAP process. It is realizing that one’s self-esteem comes from doing well: “Act well your part; there all the honor lies.”

Ability is the maturity to place one's grades as the first priority, to accept the discipline for the time commitment involved in UIL OAP, to maintain a positive attitude, to adapt to changing circumstances without whining and complaining, and to acknowledge that there are physical and vocal requirements which must be considered when a director casts the play.

**NOTE: Casting decisions will not be discussed with students or parents. The director will not answer questions about why students were or were not cast.**

**However, if a student would like to meet with the director regarding their audition, an appointment may be requested after 3 school days from the Company Posting. At that time, here are a few appropriate questions you can ask:**

- What are some ways I can improve my audition?
- In the next production, I would like to be considered for cast/crew. What could I do to prepare for that in the meantime?
- What are some specific things I can do to continue growing and learning?

## ● COMMUNICATION

Parent/Teacher:

Parents/Guardians are encouraged to contact the Theatre Director if you have questions regarding the program, or your child's work and progress. The best way to make contact is via email at [mconner@chinaspringisd.net](mailto:mconner@chinaspringisd.net).

I do, however, ask all parents refrain from sending emails, texts, or notes to get your child out of rehearsals early. Taking students out of rehearsal early often brings the entire rehearsal to a standstill. We work as an ensemble and all members of the cast and crew are needed to meet our goals and deadlines. Scheduling conflicts should be addressed through approved departmental protocol. If there is an emergency, please let us know. We simply ask all parents to respect, observe, and value the rehearsal process. Additionally, we want to empower our students to serve as their own advocates when working out rehearsal conflicts.

It should also be noted that casting decisions will be discussed only with the student involved according to the guidelines described.

Student/Teacher:

Students may communicate with the teacher by setting up an appointment and/or via email. If an emergency arises and the student cannot attend rehearsals, the student must contact the director by 10:00 am the day the rehearsal is to be missed or 24 hours prior depending on the emergency. Other students may not speak on behalf of the

student. Please accept the responsibility of your commitment.

CST does utilize the GroupMe & Remind101 app to communicate with students as a whole. If parents do not want their child to utilize this app, please notify the director.

If a student would like to meet with the directors regarding casting decisions, an appointment should be set after 3 school days from the Company Posting. Casting decisions will not be discussed with anyone other than the student involved. It is always permissible and advisable to schedule an appointment to obtain feedback from the directors.

## ● **COVID 19 awareness and CDC recommendations**

To prevent the spread of COVID-19 and other such illnesses or diseases, CST must be vigilant in all practices ensuring we are doing all we can to keep each other safe.

Practices include, but are not limited to:

- Observing all cdc, state, county, city, and district guidelines
- Do not attend school or rehearsal if you are sick, have a fever, chills, coughing, sneezing, nausea/vomiting, new loss of taste or smell, etc.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands
- Washing hands often for at least 20 seconds
- Wearing a mask or face covering
- Covering coughs and sneezes
- Maintaining social distancing of 6 feet
- Not eating or drinking after anyone at any time
- Cleaning and disinfecting our space often

## ● **FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS**

### **Production fees:**

Production fees are charged for all shows at China Spring Theatre. These fees cover production t-shirts, production costs, dry-cleaning, etc. All production fees should be paid in full by the deadline. Students with financial issues may work out a payment plan or possible scholarship opportunities with the directors.

In some instances, the students will need to purchase shoes specific to their character.

### **Equipment:**

Students are financially responsible for items assigned, checked out, or utilized. Students are responsible for any damages or loss.

## ● **GRADES**

We do not sacrifice academics for the arts. Remember our goal is to help you achieve your career goals – and academics are an important part of this.

Academic grades must be kept in good order during the period of participation in extracurricular activities. Students must pass all classes (including AP classes) to participate in any production. No grade lower than a 70 is acceptable. Grades will be checked often and study halls will be held if a student is in danger of failing a class. Excessive absences during the school year will not be tolerated. Students are expected to be in all classes and to be prepared for each class. Students enrolled in advanced theatre courses (production class) must maintain a passing average in theatre to remain in the class.

\*State law requires that you pass to play\*.

Keep the director posted on academic difficulties for they will always find ways to help. Do not wait until the last minute to take care of academic challenges. Stay on top of grades. Attend tutoring sessions offered by individual teachers as often as possible. Do not use theatre as the excuse for failing a course. We are willing to help with academic courses and tutoring.

## ● PARENT/GUARDIAN INVOLVEMENT

We value parents'/guardians' involvement and hope you will be an integral part of your students' progress and the China Spring Theatre family.

Any successful theatre needs everyone working together and doing his or her part. No group can operate the Theatre Department program by itself – be it teacher/artists, students, or parents/guardians. It needs all of us helping however we can.

A Theatre Department Parent/Guardian volunteer form will be distributed at our first mandatory parent meeting by the staff or The China Spring Theatre Booster Club membership chair. Please fill out the questionnaire and return it to us. Please fill it out even if you have no experience or extra time to offer.

## **China Spring Theatre BOOSTER CLUB (CSTBC)**

The China Spring Theatre Booster Club was established to support the Theatre Department. Members in this organization will have a variety of options to choose from when selecting levels of participation. Options will include working on committees within the general membership or serving as an officer or Board Member. If your time is limited, numerous options exist for you as well. Please don't hesitate to contact our staff ([chinaspringtab@gmail.com](mailto:chinaspringtab@gmail.com)) to find out how you can be a part of this great group of parents.

## ● PRODUCTION CONTRACTS

Know what you are taking on BEFORE you take it on. A “Production Contract” that cites their obligations to the production will be signed by all students and parents as part of the audition process. No student will be cast or considered for crew without this parental agreement. Violation of the contract can lead to dismissal from the production, the class, and/or the department. A detailed rehearsal schedule will be distributed to cast, crew, and parents allowing for enough advance time to adjust personal schedules. Students involved in OAP will be rehearsing and competing, therefore attendance will be required throughout the week. **Make sure you are available for all dates before signing the production contract.**

## ● REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS:

### Rehearsal Clothes:

1. Required rehearsal attire (cast & crew): navy sweatpants, plain gray tshirt, Black or navy soft soled shoes (such as: toms/bobs, keds, dance shoes, etc.)
2. Hair should be worn out of your face at all times. No hats or decorative headbands should be worn.
3. Personal hygiene is important. Please shower daily and use deodorant/antiperspirant daily.
4. Your arrival time should include time to put on your rehearsal/performance costume. If you need to put a costume on, you should arrive early so that you may start rehearsal on time.
5. For all work calls: dress code enforced, closed-toed shoes, no dangling jewelry and all hair tied back.

### Attendance:

1. Please try and schedule personal appointments after rehearsal or on a day you are not called for rehearsal. Work is not an excuse for missing a rehearsal without prior permission. Rehearsal, crew calls, and tech rehearsals are NEVER to be missed without prior permission. Failing to comply with this procedure will result in probable cause dismissal from the production.
2. If an emergency arises, call Mrs. Conner at 254-744-0957 or email her at [mconner@chinaspringisd.net](mailto:mconner@chinaspringisd.net) as soon as possible.
3. Never leave the rehearsal space or the theatre until you have been released by the directors or the stage manager. Only these people have the authority to release you.

### Punctuality:

1. All rehearsals and crew calls begin exactly on the time indicated.
2. All cast and running crew will be required at every rehearsal, unless otherwise indicated by the director.

3. All cast and crew must sign in/out on the callboard in the Green Room at the beginning and end of every rehearsal. You must sign yourself in. No one should sign in for you and you should not sign in for someone else.
4. It is best to arrive at rehearsal AT LEAST fifteen minutes prior to call. It is mandatory that you are ready to work on time.

### **Script:**

1. Keep your script with you all day and night during the rehearsal period.
2. Put your name in your script. Highlight all your lines, write in pencil, and make any necessary changes as rehearsal progresses.
3. All blocking and stage business should be marked in your script as it is given to you.
4. Take thorough notes on anything told to you by the directors or stage manager concerning your performance. If you have questions about your character and his/her motivations, double check your notes BEFORE asking the director.

### **Learning Lines:**

1. Lines and blocking should be memorized by the date specified on the rehearsal schedule or by the director. This is typically the rehearsal following a scene being blocked.
2. When you drop a line on stage, simply hold your character position and characterization and say, "Line!" in character. The stage manager should not feed you your line until you indicate that you need help remembering the line.
3. Being "off book" means that you have memorized your lines and can proceed through a scene without the help of the script. After you are off book, be sure you have read through your part and have someone run lines with you at least once a day. Never get too comfortable! Comfort can hinder discoveries.
4. Always bring your script to rehearsal ... even after you have learned your lines.
5. All cell phones will be placed in the SM's Cell Phone Box. Students will not have access to their phones during the rehearsal. If there is an emergency, please contact the director.
6. Always say, "Thank you" to your directors and stage manager after notes or directions are given to ensure the direction was heard and understood.

### **Relationship to Director:**

1. Unless you are in a scene being worked on and have a pertinent question, avoid approaching or speaking to the director while they are working with, listening to, or watching a scene in progress. I will make every effort to answer your question just as soon as we are finished.
2. Please do not offer directorial suggestions during the rehearsal time. If you have an idea and would like to share that idea with the director, write it down and

talk with the director concerning your idea AFTER the rehearsal.

### **Relationship to other company members:**

1. Do not offer a suggestion, chastise, argue with, or prompt another actor under any circumstance.
2. Never speak to or approach another actor in a social context who is waiting for an entrance.
3. Do not talk backstage during rehearsal and/or performance unless it is mandatory and concerns the integrity of the production.
4. Be ready for your entrance. This is your responsibility during rehearsals and performances. During the run of the show, you are never to be seen by a member of the audience beyond the execution of the show outside of the theatre.
5. Never peer at the audience while on or off stage. If you can see the audience, they can see you.
6. Do not loiter in the wings.
7. Do not enter the stage from the house or the house from the stage before, during, or after a performance while the audience members are in the theatre unless you have been directed to do so.
8. Never play tricks or joke backstage or onstage.
9. Public Displays of affection to another cast or crew member backstage is inappropriate and is not tolerated.
10. After rehearsal, clean up everything on the stage, dressing rooms and in the house ... EVEN IF IT IS NOT YOUR MESS.

### **Relationship with the crew and equipment:**

1. During a scene shift, an actor should completely clear off the stage space unless he/she is involved in the change or about to make an immediate entrance.
2. At the same time, the crew must not distract the actors.
3. Never touch a piece of lighting, sound or stage equipment, or prop unless assigned to do so.

### **Guests in the Theatre:**

1. Only people called or invited by the directors will be allowed to attend auditions or rehearsals.
2. No unauthorized people are permitted backstage. Authorized people are those that are members of a particular production in progress that evening or those who have obtained permission by the directors.
3. No company member is allowed to receive guests backstage at the theatre.

- **SCHEDULES**

Students with multiple scheduling conflicts (which include other campus activities) are to provide all schedules to directors PRIOR to auditions (see audition information).

The director will take into consideration these conflicts when deciding upon casting. She will do her best to work around other activities, but because of limited rehearsal time, it may not be possible in all instances.

**NOTE: Due to the competitive nature of the UIL One Act Play Contest, scheduling conflicts (which include other campus activities) are rarely worked around.**

**Protocol for Conflicts:**

Prior to auditioning and/or signing up for a production, a rehearsal schedule will be provided. Include all conflicts in your audition/cast/crew paperwork. If the director chooses to work with a student with numerous conflicts, a personalized student schedule may be arranged. However, upon signing the production contract, additional conflicts (with the exception of an emergency) are rarely allowed. Should conflicts arise, students may present the director/staff with a written email request to be excused from an entire or partial rehearsal as quickly as possible. A written email response allowing or disallowing the request will follow. It is never appropriate to send messages concerning attendance through friends or outsiders. Please take care of all attendance responsibilities personally.

In order to make CST as successful as possible, long-term planning is the norm rather than the exception. It is best to notify Mrs. Conner of any trips (especially during winter & spring breaks), college visits, appointments, etc. as soon as it is scheduled so that it may be added to her calendar. Doing so will ensure that the director knows of potential conflicts before a conflicting event is scheduled.

- **TERMINATING PRODUCTION CONTRACT/COURSE**

Students are expected to honor contracts as signed. Contracts between the student and the department are taken very seriously. It is the responsibility of the student to honor and fulfill all commitments as agreed to within the contract. Should a student void any contractual agreement, future relationships within the department may be voided.

Students who do not fulfill contracts will not be cast in future productions and are expected to select a new course of study. If a student voids the contract in the middle of a semester and cannot drop the class, the student will be given individual course studies until the end of the semester. If the possibility exists for students to be removed

from the class, removal will take place immediately. Once a student ends the relationship, the decision is final.

We hope all parents will work with students in teaching the value of honoring commitments and the importance of fulfilling contracts.

## ● **THEATRE PRODUCTION**

Theatre Production is an audition based class, focused solely on building a production. Students audition the prior semester to be in the Theatre Production Class. Students who are chosen for the production class will be a part of the production, whether cast or crew, the following semester.

Students enrolled in this class must participate to the fullest for every production, no matter their assignment. (see termination of contract)

Required performances:

FALL: the Fall Musical and the Winter production

SPRING: the UIL One Act Play and Student Directed Showcase (May)

Although students are highly encouraged to take this class, I understand that course scheduling can pose irreconcilable conflicts; therefore, it is not a REQUIREMENT to be in this course in order to be in the UIL One Act Play.

# China Spring Theatre Handbook Receipt

I have read the 2021/2022 CST Handbook. I understand the expectations of the CST Director and will work to fulfill these expectations so that we may accomplish the China Spring Theatre mission.

I understand I will be held accountable for the expectations as outlined in this handbook and that this receipt will serve as my production contract.

---

Student Name (PRINTED)

---

Grade

---

Student Signature

---

Date

---

Parent/Guardian Signature

---

Date