

Musical Cast & Company Handbook

2026–2027

Professional expectations • Student-friendly guide • Family agreement

READ THIS BEFORE AUDITIONS

Students and a parent/guardian should review this handbook together. A completed audition sheet, conflict list, and signed handbook agreement are required to audition.

Our goal: a high-quality production and a positive, safe, memorable theatre experience for everyone.

1. Start Here: What You Are Committing To

The Southwestern High School Musical is a high-expectation extracurricular theatre experience. Every person on stage, in the pit, backstage, and on the production team matters. By auditioning or joining the company, you are agreeing to be prepared, dependable, respectful, kind, and committed to the full production process.

Before You Audition

- Review the production calendar carefully and list every known conflict honestly.
- Read this handbook with a parent/guardian.
- Submit the completed audition sheet, conflict list, and signed handbook agreement.
- Prepare for an audition process that may take 3–4 days.
- Come ready to sing, dance, and/or read dialogue, depending on the role and audition process.
- Memorize and rehearse required songs and lines. In musical theatre, perform the song—do not simply sing it.

Where Information Will Be Shared

Students are responsible for checking the official school musical website and designated communication platforms frequently. Rehearsal dates, times, call lists, and production information will be posted there. Vocal/music audition materials may also be shared through the vocal director's teacher page or the platform announced for the current season.

Dance Auditions

- Wear comfortable clothing that allows you to move safely. Avoid jeans or restrictive clothing.
- Wear dance shoes, character shoes, or another appropriate smooth-soled shoe. Do not audition barefoot.

Callbacks & Casting

A callback is not a promise of a role, and not receiving a callback does not mean you will not be cast. The number and type of roles are determined by the script and the needs of the production, so we may not be able to cast everyone.

- Casting involves many factors and is ultimately a director decision.
- Students may respectfully ask for audition feedback and suggestions for growth.
- Directors will not debate or justify individual casting decisions.
- Students are strongly encouraged to consider crew, technical, pit, and other production opportunities. These roles are essential—not secondary.
- The cast list and posting method/time will be announced with the current season's audition information.

A Note for Families

Please help students see the value of every assignment. A strong production depends on leads, featured roles, ensemble members, musicians, technicians, crew members, designers, and volunteers working together. Supporting the role your student receives helps build the collaborative culture we want for the entire company.

2. Rehearsal Attendance & Reliability

Attendance is one of the most important responsibilities in a musical. Rehearsals are collaborative: when one person is missing, the work of many other people may be affected.

- Attendance will be taken at the beginning of every rehearsal.
- If you must miss rehearsal, clear the absence personally with the lead director BEFORE the absence.
- Do not leave rehearsal early without prior written permission from the lead director. This is required for safety and accountability.

- An absence that has not been approved is unexcused.
- Unexcused absences may result in being replaced in a song, scene, dance, or role. Three unexcused absences are considered excessive and may result in removal from the production.
- Repeated tardiness or excessive absences may also result in removal from the cast/company.
- Make every effort to attend every rehearsal for which you are called. Check the production calendar before auditioning.

FINAL TWO WEEKS = FULL COMMITMENT

No absences are accepted during the final two weeks of rehearsals. All students must remain for the full rehearsal and assist with setup and cleanup. Conflicts during this period can affect casting, so clear these dates now.

Strike

All cast and crew members are required to participate in strike on the Sunday after the final performance. The current season's exact start time will be listed on the production calendar. Plan for approximately three hours. Parent/guardian help is also needed.

Drop-Off & Pick-Up

Directors will work to begin and end rehearsals on time. Families are expected to be punctual for drop-off and pick-up so students can begin safely and leave promptly.

3. Rehearsal Readiness & Professional Behavior

Treat rehearsal like a professional workspace. Be ready to work when rehearsal begins.

- Bring your script, music, a pencil, water bottle, and any requested rehearsal materials.
- Wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Never rehearse barefoot.
- Be on time and ready to work. Eat before rehearsal or during an approved time when you are not needed on stage.
- No gum on stage.
- Cell phones should be put away during rehearsal unless a director gives permission for a production-related use. Phones are never appropriate on stage during rehearsal.
- Listen to and follow directions from directors and approved volunteer staff.
- Respond respectfully—no arguing, eye rolling, rude comments, or disruptive behavior.
- Public displays of affection are not appropriate during rehearsal.
- Keep up with schoolwork and remain academically eligible.

Kindness Is a Requirement

Professionalism includes how you treat people when directors are present and when they are not. Cruelty, harassment, malicious gossip, or behavior that harms another member of the company will not be tolerated. This expectation also applies to group chats, texts, posts, and social media. Serious harmful behavior may result in dismissal from the production and/or referral to school administration.

Substances

The production maintains zero tolerance for student drug, alcohol, narcotic, or vaping use connected to participation in the musical. Violations may result in immediate removal from the production and school disciplinary action consistent with school policy.

4. Costumes, Hair & Makeup

Stage costuming is different from everyday clothing. Actors are portraying characters from another time, place, or world, and costume decisions are made to support the production as a whole.

- After casting, speak with the lead director before making a major haircut or hair-color change that could affect your character's look.
- You may be asked to style, cut, or grow your hair in a way appropriate to the production.
- You may be asked to purchase personal makeup/hygiene supplies such as mascara, cold cream, cotton balls, or makeup sponges. A specific list will be provided.
- You may be asked to wear a costume you would not personally choose. Communicate immediately if a costume is painful, unsafe, or restricts movement.
- Take excellent care of every assigned costume. Hang and store pieces correctly after every rehearsal and performance.
- Students may be asked to purchase specific costume items. Historically, the program has tried to keep these purchases around \$50-\$75; current-season needs will be communicated as early as possible.

5. Student & Family Participation

A musical is a large community project. Cast, crew, pit, directors, and families all contribute to a successful production. Parent/guardian volunteers are especially important during the rehearsal and performance process. Volunteer needs and sign-ups will be shared with families.

Mandatory Company Information Meeting

After auditions, there will be an informational meeting for cast, crew, pit, and parents/guardians in the high school auditorium. This meeting is considered the first rehearsal and is mandatory for participating students and a parent/guardian. The date and time will be announced with the current production calendar.

6. Accountability & Consequences

Most concerns can be solved through clear communication and changed behavior. When a student's choices conflict with production expectations, the directors may use the following progression when appropriate:

1. Director/staff conference: The student meets with the directing staff to discuss the concern, expectations, and possible consequences if the behavior continues.
2. Family contact: A parent/guardian is contacted to discuss the concern and the change that is needed.
3. Role or participation change: The student may be reassigned, removed from a scene/dance/number, or removed from the production.

Some serious situations may require immediate action rather than the full progression above. This includes substance violations, malicious or cruel behavior, serious safety concerns, or damaging conduct involving cast, crew, directors, or staff—including conduct on social media.

7. Grades, Citizenship & School Attendance

- Grade checks may occur before casting and throughout the production according to Southwestern Central School policies.
- Cast and crew members must meet the school's academic eligibility requirements. Failing grades require immediate intervention; students earning a D may be monitored closely.
- Musical participants are held to the same student-handbook and extracurricular expectations as other school activities and sports.

- Students must meet the school's attendance requirements in order to rehearse or perform. Students and families should follow the official 2026–2027 school attendance rule communicated by the school.

8. Communication & Questions

Questions and concerns should be addressed early and respectfully. Students are encouraged to speak directly with the lead director when an issue arises. For 2026–2027.

The directors invest significant time and care in creating both a strong production and a positive experience. Students are expected to respect the staff, the process, and final production decisions while also communicating genuine concerns appropriately.

9. Quick Student Checklist

- ☐ I checked the production calendar before auditioning.
- ☐ I submitted my audition sheet, conflict list, and signed agreement.
- ☐ I understand that casting is a director decision and that every company role matters.
- ☐ I will attend every rehearsal for which I am called and communicate conflicts in advance.
- ☐ I have cleared the final two weeks and strike from my schedule.
- ☐ I will arrive prepared, on time, and ready to work.
- ☐ I will treat cast, crew, pit, directors, staff, and volunteers with respect and kindness.
- ☐ I will use my phone and social media responsibly.
- ☐ I will care for costumes, props, scripts, equipment, and shared spaces.
- ☐ I will maintain academic and school-attendance eligibility.

2026–2027 Musical Handbook Agreement

Please return this page as directed before auditions. Keep the handbook for reference throughout the production.

STUDENT AGREEMENT

I have read and understand the Southwestern High School Musical Cast & Company Handbook. I understand the expectations for attendance, preparation, behavior, academics, communication, costumes, and participation. By signing below, I agree to follow these expectations and contribute to a safe, respectful, positive, and high-quality production.

Student name (print): _____

Student signature: _____ Date: _____

PARENT/GUARDIAN AGREEMENT

I have read and understand the musical procedures and expectations. I will help my student meet attendance, communication, academic, behavior, and production responsibilities, and I will support the collaborative nature of the casting and production process.

Parent/guardian name (print): _____

Parent/guardian signature: _____ Date: _____

Best phone/email for production communication: _____

Thank you for helping us build a company where students can work hard, take creative risks, and make theatre they are proud of.