

Norwich Theatre

Learning and Participation Participant Guidance



Welcome

Norwich Theatre is one of leading and most innovative theatres in the Eastern Region. We offer a broad range of courses, classes and workshops for all ages.

What you can expect from us

The Learning and Participation team at Norwich Theatre is based at Stage Two, a creative hub where you can explore, experience and be inspired by art and learning. As a team, we strive to offer our participants engaging and rewarding creative courses and workshops of high quality. Therefore, we aim to be:

Inclusive and welcoming: of artistic ideas, forms and collective learning, and the diversity and difference of our artists and audiences.

Inquisitive: reflective and questioning, pushing boundaries and challenging our preconceptions of the world in which we live.

Collaborative: with artists, arts organisations, communities and other stakeholders in pursuit of mutual goals.

Mindful: valuing the quality of the process by which we create work, as well as that of the product of work created.

Relevant: merging digital and new technologies with those seen as more traditional; encouraging a creative hybridity in our work which explores the world we live in today.

Humble: characterised by an emphasis on participation in both learning and leadership, with genuine opportunities for ownership throughout our work.

Honest: transparent and truthful about everything we do. Accountable for our actions and open about both our ambitions and limitations.

Staff and Creative Practitioners

Our training courses, community programmes and activities are led by our own theatre professionals, freelance creative practitioners and professionals from our partners, such as the Royal Shakespeare Company. All of our Creative Practitioners have relevant training, experience and the necessary background checks to work with our participants.

Commitment Agreement for Training Courses & Productions

Joining one of our training programmes is a commitment whether you take part in a single class or workshop, a term or a year-long course.

As part of our commitment agreement, we ask participants to carefully consider personal commitments such as family events, holidays, school and work commitments before signing up to a course or auditioning for shows.

It is very difficult for other participants and practitioners to develop group activities, learning and performances without the whole class or cast present. Let us know in advance of joining a course /cast of any sessions you will be unable to attend. Once the course/rehearsal process has started we ask that you prioritise this over other personal activities.

We do understand that some absences are unavoidable but we ask for as much prior warning as possible so practitioners can organise sessions accordingly.

To ensure our courses and activities are enjoyable and safe for all participants taking part we ask that you arrive on time with the appropriate clothes and equipment; are friendly and helpful towards other participants; respect participants, our staff and volunteers, and the venue as a working theatre; let us know if you have any worries about the training activities.

PLEASE NOTE: Two or more weeks' absence, whether consecutive or not, or persistent lateness, may result in removal from the course. This is at the discretion of the relevant Manager of the programme.

By signing up to a course you are accepting our commitment agreement.

Participant behaviour

Participant behavior is something we take serious to consider fairness, inclusivity and equality at all of our events, workshops and courses at Norwich Theatre. Therefore, we have a procedure to ensure that we can address behaviours which may adversely affect others within our groups. This includes persistent absence/lateness, and inappropriate behaviour. Actions taken within these procedures are recorded and regularly reviewed.

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| First Tier | A discussion will take place with the individual after the session. |
| Second Tier | There will be a further discussion which may involve the relevant Manager, if appropriate. If the participant is age 16 or under, an parent/guardian will need to be present. |
| Third Tier | We will arrange a third meeting. This meeting will also be attended by the relevant Manager, and we aim to discuss the best way forward. This may include a participant being asked to leave a course. |

Policies and Procedures

Norwich Theatre takes the safety and privacy of our participants seriously, therefore, we have developed a series of policies and procedures to ensure we offer a safe and enjoyable environment for you to experiment with your creativity.

The following policies are available for you to view on our website. If you would like an accessible or printed version of any document or have any questions regarding this, please contact us.

- Safeguarding
- Risk Assessment
- Anti-Bullying
- Equality
- Youth Participation
- Terms and Conditions

Fees

Fees are payable to secure your place on courses and workshops and can be made in person at our box office, online, or over the telephone. Fees for some courses can be paid in installments. Those paying for courses in instalments need to ensure payment is made by the specified deadlines or your place may be made available for others.

If you are experiencing financial difficulties, please contact us as soon as possible so we can make necessary arrangements. Where possible we will do our best to support you in these circumstances.

Refunds

No refunds will be given unless the activity or event is cancelled. In exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Learning and Participation Director we may be able to offer a place on a future activity of the same value. This must be used within six months.

Bursaries

Norwich Theatre believes that everyone should have the opportunity to experience and participate in the arts. The Theatre's bursary fund is set up to provide financial assistance to those who need it. Money for the bursary fund comes from the generous support of our funders. We do our best to spread this across activities, and to ensure that we are fair in its allocation. In most instances, a part-bursary (equating to 10 - 40% of the activity fee) is offered, with participants being requested to meet the remaining cost.

For further information on bursaries, please visit our website or call our reception on 01603 598600.

Productions

Our training theatre companies and Silver Stage Company offer opportunities to become involved in performances throughout the year at any three of our venues: Norwich Theatre Stage Two, Norwich Theatre Royal, or Norwich Theatre Playhouse. Where possible and appropriate, we also offer other opportunities to perform at festivals or events, both regionally and nationally. All productions are supported by a professional team involving directors and technicians.

Some productions are by audition and require at least 2 terms of experience as a company member. All information will be passed to the relevant companies at the appropriate time.

Whilst some productions will have rehearsals within course times, others will be in addition to participants regular classes. We will always let you know in advance what additional rehearsal time may be needed. We subsidise these additional costs as much as we can, however, we may ask for small contributions to cover some production costs.

How are the productions cast?

It is important to stress that all of our work is ensemble focused which means we do not refer to roles as 'main', 'principal', 'leading' or 'big and small' roles.

Parts are allocated to our members on a variety of factors.

These can include:

- Previous attitude in classes.
- Commitment and attendance record.
- Suitability for the role.
- Technical ability to handle the responsibility required.
- A way of developing skill set/potential for a participant.
- Enthusiasm.

Additional opportunities

In addition to performance opportunities, we aim to offer our participants some non-performance related opportunities where possible. They will be offered throughout the year and these will be on a first come, first served basis.

Other non-performance opportunities might include:

- Free or subsidised tickets to shows at Norwich Theatre Royal, Norwich Theatre Playhouse, or Norwich Theatre Stage Two.
- Backstage tours.
- Workshops with visiting theatre companies.
- Theatre trips.

Applications

Some of our courses are by application. Places are strictly limited. Once the application date has passed our team will consider all applications and invite those we believe most suitable to an open evening. This gives applicants an opportunity to meet the course leader and take part in a workshop, with a view to understanding more about the course, and if it is right for you. Applicants will then receive an email a few days after the open evening that will inform you if you have been successful.

Places are offered for a variety of reasons:

- Skills. Experience. Passion for the subject.
- How being part of the group will help you as an individual.
- How you work with other people.
- The number of applicants.
- Your ability to commit both inside and outside the class.

Subject Matter and Challenging Topics

As drama is a reflection of lives and societies, we may sometimes work with members on plays and subjects which contain bad language and challenging topics. Please be assured our Creative Practitioners will always approach these in an appropriate way and discuss themes and language with participants. If you have any concerns about topics being covered, please do not hesitate to get in touch with us. We also encourage our members to discuss any problems with their practitioners. In addition to this, we would urge members or parents/carers of members to inform us on the registration form of any pre-existing issues where particular themes may trigger a negative emotional or psychological response.

External auditions

From time to time, we are contacted by other organisations about auditions for theatre or film projects, which we will pass onto our participants where appropriate. We do not have the time to investigate all of these ourselves, therefore, we would ask you to approach these opportunities with a sense of caution and never go to any audition that charges you a fee. We are not an agency and cannot be held responsible for these auditions.

Communication

We do our best to ensure all sessions go ahead as planned. However, there may be rare instances when sessions have to be cancelled due to circumstances beyond our control. If we have to cancel a session, we will endeavor to notify you with as much notice as possible. In circumstances such as bad weather, we will also provide notices on our Facebook and Twitter pages.

If one of our Creative Practitioners falls ill, we will always attempt to find a replacement. If we are unable to arrange cover, we will make every effort to contact all participants in time, but cannot promise to do so in the case of very short notice.

If you have changed your contact details, please let us know as soon as possible to ensure we can keep you informed or contact you in an emergency by emailing stagetwo@norwichtheatre.org or phoning 01603 598600.

The majority of our communication is done via email. Therefore, please ensure you add stagetwo@norwichtheatre.org to your address book and safe senders list.

Social Media

Whilst we appreciate many participants want to use social media to discuss their involvement with Norwich Theatre, we would like you to make some particular considerations before posting anything online:

- Remember that even though you are acting in your own personal capacity, you are still a representative of a Norwich Theatre course or programme.
- Make it clear that any views you express about the Norwich Theatre are personal and not held by the organisation as a whole.
- Refrain from criticizing other participants of any Norwich Theatre courses on social media sites. If you have a problem with how someone is treating you, please come and talk to us about it so we can help you.
- Whilst we appreciate your enthusiasm, please do not set up a group or event to advertise any show that you are in – we have a fabulous marketing team at Norwich Theatre who will arrange this for us.

Publicity photos

Upon registration, you will be asked to give consent for our marketing team to take photos during lessons and performances. These photos will be kept in accordance with data protection laws and may be used as part of our publicity campaigns and documents such as programmes and information booklets being produced by Norwich Theatre.

Popular Q&As

Can I use my mobile phone during class?

To ensure sessions run smoothly and uninterrupted, we ask all participants to switch off their mobile phones, tablets, and other devices during classes or workshops and keep them either in their pockets or in a safe place at the side of the room. If you need to be contacted during a session in an emergency this can happen via Stage Two reception.

Can I take photos and selfies in class?

To maintain the privacy and safety of everybody taking part in activities at Norwich Theatre Royal, it is important that all participants understand that taking photos or recording videos of others within sessions is strictly forbidden.

Can I bring visitors to class?

To ensure the safety of participants, we are unable to allow any guests or friends to sit in on classes or workshops to watch. We would appreciate your co-operation in this, as we cannot be responsible for participants, including children who are not on our registers. Essential carers are considered a member of the group and therefore are allowed in sessions – we will need to have prior notice of essential carers attending, and information should be disclosed on your registration form.

What if I have additional needs or am disabled?

Get in touch, tell us about your circumstances and needs, and if necessary we will organise a discussion about how to best accommodate your needs.

What should you bring to a session?

Creativity is a thirsty process and a water bottle would be an excellent idea. There is a water fountain available to fill them up. When you're working on a scripted performance, a pencil is essential for you to write character notes and stage directions. Your Creative Practitioner may ask you to bring along something to the workshop, such as props or pieces of costume. Please note that we cannot take responsibility for any personal belongings brought to our venues and would ask participants to ensure they are kept safe and secure.

What should you wear?

The clothes and footwear you wear need to be appropriate for the activity you are doing. You should be comfortable and able to move around easily. T-shirts and sweatshirts are ideal. Short skirts, dresses, tights or tight trousers are not appropriate. Please avoid wearing jewellery in classes.

What if I'm ill or cannot attend a class?

Please notify Stage Two reception of any absences as soon as possible. This can be done in person, by emailing stagetwo@norwichtheatre.org, or telephoning 01603 598600 (there is a voicemail).

What do you do if you're not happy?

As a participant, parent or guardian, if you are unhappy, concerned, or want to make a complaint you should speak with the Creative Practitioner running your course in the first instance. They will listen to your concern and talk through any possible solution. If the issue hasn't been resolved or if it's not appropriate to discuss it with the Creative Practitioner, please contact the appropriate Manager

Jo Reil	Training and Skills Development Manager	01603 598600
Sam Patel	Community Participation Manager	01603 598600

We aim to respond to all correspondence within 5 working days.

What do you do if you have a safeguarding concern?

Norwich Theatre takes the safety of our participants seriously. To ensure we offer a safe and enjoyable environment for all participants, we have policies and procedures in place. All our staff and volunteers have received the level appropriate training to ensure these are followed.

Designated Safeguarding Officer

Wendy Ellis	Learning & Participation Director
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Deputy Safeguarding Officers

Jo Reil	Training and Skills Development Manager
John Simpson-Wedge	Learning & Education Manager
Sam Patel	Community Participation Manager

Senior Lead for Safeguarding

Stephen Crocker	Chief Executive Officer
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While Stage Two is open, our safeguarding team can be contacted via Stage Two Reception on 01603 598600.

Any other questions?

If we have not been able to answer your questions in this document, please do get in touch and ask. We will do our best to answer you promptly and honestly. We look forward to you starting your journey with us.