



# The Company Handbook

Pied Piper Players  
*seeks to strengthen self-esteem  
and community through participation  
in theater arts programs.*

Pied Piper Players  
*strives to always improve,  
never standing for the  
present, always reaching!*



[www.PiedPiperPlayers.org](http://www.PiedPiperPlayers.org)

650.992.7433

# WELCOME TO PIED PIPER PLAYERS

Welcome!

Pied Piper Players is a lively volunteer-based organization. All participants and their families are members of our community. Each member is highly valued and is needed to participate. It is our hope that you will find significant volunteer opportunities to best showcase your skills, interests, ideas, energy and enthusiasm.

This Company Handbook contains our definition of

- Volunteering
- General Guidelines
- Safety Rules and Emergency Procedures
- Participation Agreements
- Sign In/Sign Out Procedures
- Volunteer Committee Descriptions
- Theater Terms

Please familiarize yourself with this information. If you have any questions, please ask a member of the staff or speak with one of our "Pied Piper Players Pros".

Pied Piper Players Pros are veteran community members of Pied Piper Players who have volunteered to be mentors for you newer members of our group.

Newcomer or seasoned vet, we hope you enjoy your experience with Pied Piper Players!



**Scrim** A curtain, usually made of gauze that is opaque when lights strike from the front, and transparent when the primary lighting is from behind. This can be painted on to add to an illusion while front lit, such as a wall or cave opening.

**Spike** To mark the stage floor with special tape or paint to indicate the location a set piece, or actor must land.

**Spill** Unwanted light.

**Stage Left** Stage area to the left as you are facing the *auditorium*.

**Stage Right** Stage area to the right as you are facing the *auditorium*.

**Tableau** A composition of performers, typically motionless and speechless; a "picture".

**Technical Rehearsal** A rehearsal dedicated to interweaving all of the technical elements into the production.

**Thank You** The proper response to a directive or request, acknowledging that you heard the request. Example: "Ten minutes until *Places!*" "*Thank you.*"

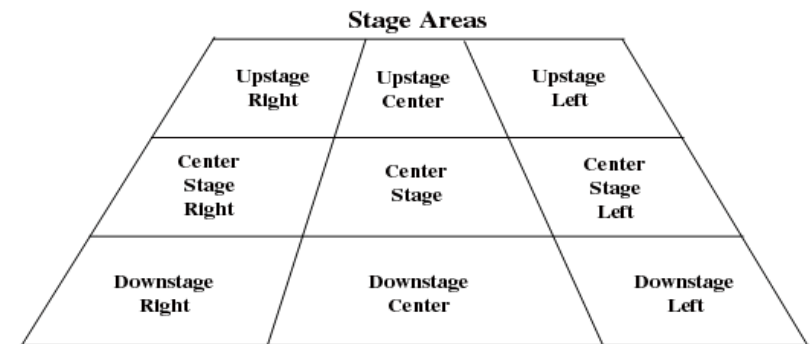
**Traveler** A stage curtain that divides in the middle to open *out*.

**Upstage** The area of the stage as you move away from the auditorium.

**Upstaging** Forcing another actor to turn to a *closed position* by moving upstage. This is generally undesirable and should be avoided unless specifically directed.

**Wings** The area to the left and right sides of the playing area of the stage.

**Work Lights** Distinguished from *house lights* and stage lights. Light for the stage area for rehearsals and construction.



## THEATER TERMS (CONT'D)

**Heads!** A warning call indicating that an object is falling from overhead, or that something is being *flown in*.

**Hold** To delay; as in “hold the curtain” or “hold for laughter/applause”.

**House** All parts of the theater in front of the *apron*. It is often used as a reference to the audience numbers, as in “How big is the house tonight?”

**House Lights** Auditorium lighting.

**Leg** A narrow drop, usually made of heavy cloth, hung from a *batten*, used for *masking* the side of the stage.

**Masking** Concealing or hiding from the audience’s view.

**Monologue** A speech given by a character, uninterrupted by others.

**Mood** The dominant emotional quality or atmosphere created by all elements of production.

All cast and crew members contribute to this atmosphere.

**Pace** Overall speed of a scene or speech. To control and change tempos.

**Pit** An area in the auditorium for musicians.

**Places!** A call to cast and crew to get in starting position for the beginning of an act or scene.

**Please** A word that accompanies every order or request given to cast and crew members. “*Thank you.*” is the proper response.

**Practical** A stage device that can actually be used. (i.e. A practical door is one that can open and shut.)

**Properties** Known as “props”. A **Props Manager**, is responsible for finding all personal props or “hand props”; props which are handled by an actor, such as a book or letter. They are also responsible for locating “stage props” (e.g. desks, stoves) that dress the stage as directed by the Scenic Designer and Director. “Costume props”, such as a pocket watch or handkerchief, are carried on the actor as part of the costume. It is the responsibility of the **Costume Committee** to secure these items.

**Run-Through** Rehearsal of a scene or act, without stopping.

## VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT

Volunteer participation is an integral part of the Pied Piper Players community. We look within our community to draw new ideas and resources. At least one Volunteer\* from each cast member's family is expected to:

1. Contribute a minimum of **20** volunteer\* hours (18 years of age or older) hours during the rehearsal period of the production. For families with multiple children in the show, **15** additional hours are required for each additional child.
2. Assist **5-10** hours during Tech Week\*\* rehearsals.
3. Work a minimum of four performances (chaperone, stage crew, house duties, etc.). Families with more than one child in the cast must work a minimum of five performances.
4. Participate in Strike\*\*\* (immediately following the final performance).

\***Volunteers** may include parents, guardians, grandparents, aunts and uncles, siblings over the age of 18, or close friends and mentors who wish to be part of the experience and who are willing to share their talents and skills.

\*\***Tech Week** is the final week of rehearsals immediately before the show opens. Working on the stage, these rehearsals focus on fine tuning and integrating all the technical aspects of the production.

\*\*\***Strike** is the period immediately after the final show. Lights, sets and other technical aspects of the production are dismantled and removed from the theater, and the theater is cleaned. Strike can also be used when something is to be removed, as in when the Director says, “Let’s strike that table”, means, remove it from the set.

**Registration in future productions will be considered based on successful completion of prior program (volunteer hours completed, behavior).**

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

- Provide all information requested on the emergency forms.
- Check the web site frequently: [www.PiedPiperPlayers.org](http://www.PiedPiperPlayers.org).
- Check the email address you provided in the registration form frequently
- Provide your actor with a nutritious meal before rehearsals.
- Provide your actor with a bottle of water to bring to rehearsal.
- For rehearsal sessions over three hours long, please provide a nutritious snack for breaks.
- Note the Pied Piper Players' voicemail number:

**650.992.PIED (7433)**

- Label all clothing and personal property with a name.
- Keep a copy of the rehearsal schedule accessible.
- Keep this handbook in a safe, accessible place for reference.

## SAFETY RULES

- While in the theater during Set Construction/Tech Week/Productions, ONLY Production Staff, Stage Crew, and Set Construction Crew are allowed on stage and backstage. Cast members under 18 years of age are allowed on stage or backstage only when under the supervision of production staff or volunteer crew members.
- Stage Crew and Set Construction Crew should wear steel-toed boots or sturdy shoes.
- Please ask for assistance whenever moving or lifting heavy objects.
- Familiarize yourself with theater terms.
- Always use caution when working with tools.

## EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

In case of emergency, the individuals designated on your emergency card will be contacted.

Please be sure your emergency card is up to date.

**911 will be called if necessary**

## THEATER TERMS (CONT'D)

**Company** Includes the cast and crew, the staff and volunteers engaged in a production.

**Crossover** Area upstage where the actors can move from *stage right* to *stage left* (or *stage left* to *stage right*) unseen by the audience.

**Cue** Signal to actor or crew member to perform a specified action or speech.

**Curtain Call** Final portion of the performance. Actors acknowledge the audience's applause. Sometimes called "Bows".

**Cyclorama** Known as "Cyc" (*pronounced "syke"*) for short. A canvas drop hung *upstage* primarily for lighting effect.

**Downstage** The stage area nearest the audience.

**Dress Rehearsal** A rehearsal run under performance conditions; i.e. as if there were an audience. This rehearsal can be run with or without makeup. A *Final Dress* requires makeup.

**Entrance** Coming into the view of the audience. The Director may say "Make an entrance from *stage right*."

**Exit** Leaving the view of the audience.

**Flat** A framed scenic piece usually covered with canvas, although wood can be used.

**Flies** The area above the stage where scenery, scenic drops, lights are hung on battens that "fly", (are raised and lowered by a system of ropes, pulleys and counterweights; known as a fly rig or counterweight system).

**Fly In** Lowered toward the stage floor. Similarly, to move a set piece in means to move it on stage.

**Fly Out** Raised away from the stage floor. Similarly, to move a set piece out, means to move it offstage.

**Flyman** Crew member who operates the fly rig.

**Follow Spot** High powered spot light which when used by the **Follow Spot Operator** follows an actor's movement on stage.

## THEATER TERMS

**Ad Lib** (from the Latin *ad libitum*, "at one's pleasure"). Spontaneous dialogue not specified by the script.

**Apron** The area of the stage which extends toward the audience past the front curtain.

**Aside** Line or gesture that is heard or seen by the audience, but not other characters near the performer.

**Auditorium** The part of the theater where the audience sits. From the root "to hear". Typically referred to as "the *house*".

**Backdrop** A large scenic unit that generally hangs *upstage*. It is usually canvas, and often painted. **Drops** are canvas scenery that hang further *downstage*.

**Backstage** The areas behind and to the side of the playing area of the stage. These areas are not visible to the audience. They include dressing rooms, *wings*, and *crossovers*.

**Batten** A metal pipe or strip of wood hung above the stage upon which lights and scenery are hung. Generally, these *fly in and fly out* but can be **Dead Hung** - it doesn't move.

**Blackout** Quick extinguishing of all stage lights, leaving the stage dark.

**Blocking** The directorial process of character movement.

**Body Position** The performer's physical presence in relation to the audience. Full open, or full front, means the actor's body is square to the audience. The other positions are quarter turn, half or profile, three quarters closed, full closed. The director indicates if the actor is turned *stage right* or *stage left*.

**Border** A curtain hung above stage, usually made of heavy cloth, which *masks* the lights, battens and other above stage areas from the audience.

**Breakaway** Costumes, scenery or *properties* designed to fall apart, collapse or break on *cue*.

**Call** Announcement of time that performers and crew are required to be present at rehearsal, show or other show-related project.

## PARTICIPANT AGREEMENTS

Teamwork is key to the success of Pied Piper Players.  
Cooperation and commitment is expected from everyone.

As a Participant of a Pied Piper Players' production, you agree to:

- Not miss any of the shows performances.
- Be on time; All the time. At Pied Piper Players, **10 minutes early is on time.**
- Limit my absences to no more than 2 rehearsals.
- Sign in and out of all rehearsals. A parent or guardian must sign in and out on behalf of participants under 18 years of age.
- Leave the rehearsal/theater premises ONLY with permission of a staff or crew member and ONLY under supervision.
- Focus, pay attention and respectfully follow the requests of staff, parents and volunteer supervisors at all times.
- Display the highest standards of respect for yourself and others. Keep hands and critical comments to yourself.
- Be thoughtful of your conversation topics around younger participants. Please do not use foul or offensive language.
- Refrain from inappropriate public displays of affection.
- Consume food and drinks only in designated areas.
- Clean up after yourself or others if necessary. Participants will be allowed to leave only when the facility is clean.
- Not chew gum. Ever
- Refrain from smoking and consuming alcohol or illegal drugs. A violation of this rule will result in immediate dismissal from the production.
- Not be alone with a volunteer or staff member, if participant is under 18 (unless the volunteer or staff member is the parent/guardian of the child).
- Not be alone with any participant of the opposite sex, nor with any participant whose difference in age is three or more years, if participant is under 18.
- Follow all rules regarding safety procedures.

Chronic violations of Pied Piper Players' Participant Agreements over the course of the program will result in the following:

- **First and second offenses:** Participant receives a verbal warning.
- **Third offense:** Participant is asked to take a *Time Out* from rehearsal. They may return when they feel ready to participate within the expectations.
- **Fourth offense:** Participant is asked to take a *Time Out* and must be invited back by a staff member. Producer notifies parent/guardian advising them of the situation.
- **Fifth offense:** Parent/guardian is called and asked to take participant home. Participation in this and future productions is in jeopardy. Participant must write a letter making a case to come back to program.

## SIGN IN/SIGN OUT PROCEDURES

- A parent, guardian or other authorized adult must sign in and sign out for each cast member under the age of 18.
- Allow enough time to arrive at rehearsal, park, walk your child into the building and sign your child in. Remember, at Pied Piper Players, *10 minutes early is on time.*
- After signing in, please conduct any business or conversations outside so that rehearsal can begin on time.
- If the person responsible for picking up your child is not listed on your contact card, they must provide us with a note, signed by you, granting them your permission to pick your child up. Advise them that we may ask to see identification.
- To allow the cast and staff to focus and maintain full concentration on their activities, rehearsals are closed to non-cast members. *We ask that you please remain outside of the rehearsal space while waiting to pick up participants.*
- It is important to pick up participants on time. Childcare is not available during, in between or after rehearsals.
- Cast members will be dismissed only after the rehearsal facility is clean and orderly.

## ILLNESS GUIDELINES GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS (CONT'D.)

### ASTHMA

Children on chronic medications for asthma must bring their “reliever” inhalers to rehearsal (e.g. albuterol, proventil). Pied Piper Players’ Volunteers and staff cannot be responsible for storing or administering medications. **Please note:** The stage and backstage areas of the theater are often *very* dusty.

### DIABETES

A child with insulin dependent diabetes must be able to test his/her own glucose level, adjust insulin dosage and/or operate his/her insulin pump without adult supervision in order to attend rehearsals.

### OTHER

The parents of children with special health needs should discuss these conditions directly, in confidence, with the production managers. The production managers may, at their discretion, require a note from that child’s physician stating whether it is safe for that child to continue to attend rehearsals.

## ILLNESS GUIDELINES GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Children should not attend rehearsal if they:

- Show signs of a communicable illness
- Are sneezing or coughing excessively
- Are too sick or uncomfortable to participate in regular activities
- Have symptoms of "stomach flu" (vomiting, diarrhea)
- Have a fever over 100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees centigrade. A child who has had a fever should be fever free for 24 hours before attending rehearsal.
- Require frequent doses (more than 2 times a day) of prescription medication to treat an unstable condition, e.g. asthma. However, please see additional notes below.

### **COLDS**

Children with minor colds may attend rehearsals, provided they are able to participate in regular activities. Please keep in mind that colds are most contagious when they are just starting. Frequent hand washing for all participants is the best way to prevent passing colds to others.

### **RASHES**

A child with a "weeping" rash (e.g. impetigo), chicken pox, or rashes due to scarlet fever or hand, foot and mouth disease should not attend rehearsal.

### **STREP THROAT, TONSILLITIS EAR INFECTIONS, PINK EYE**

A child should be on antibiotics and be fever-free for at least 24 hours before returning to rehearsal. Additionally, for "pink eye", eye/eyes should be clear for 24 hours.

### **HEAD LICE**

A child with visible hair nits (lice eggs) or active infestation should not attend rehearsals or performances until the condition is cured. Please provide a note from the child's physician indicating the condition has been effectively treated.

## VOLUNTEER COMMITTEES

A volunteer for each actor is required to sign up for:

1. At least one volunteer committee or committee chair position for the rehearsal period prior to Tech Week.

**AND . . .**

2. Either Stage Crew or a House Duties committee during Tech Week and performances.

Any number of family members may participate. Volunteer hours will be accumulated and credited per family.

Committee Chairs will coordinate activities of committee members; work with the production staff and Pied Piper Players Volunteer Chair; record volunteer hours; turn in volunteer hour logs on a weekly basis; track expenses incurred by the committee; and submit to the production managers, in a timely manner, all receipts for reimbursement. They will also be responsible for filling out the post-production Committee Feedback Form.

### **STAGE CREW**

**DESCRIPTION:** Assist with all backstage and technical tasks including moving sets, props, operating sound and lighting equipment, opening and closing the curtain, and assisting with actor movement. It is the most fun you can have in black!

**TIME COMMITMENT:** Attend a scheduled run-through of the show prior to Tech Week. Attend 1-2 hours of production meetings prior to Tech Week. Attend a minimum of 2 **tech** rehearsals. Stage crew must be available up to 2 hours prior to and up to 1 hour after performances.

### **HOUSE DUTIES**

You will be assigned to help with any one of the following committees:

#### ***Ushering***

Take tickets when the house opens for seating; direct audience to seats; distribute programs. After performances, go through the theater to clean up and recycle programs. One usher needs to remain in the lobby after curtain to greet late-arrivals.

#### ***Concessions***

Pick up ice and refreshments. Set up tables, arrange food, ice beverages. Sell refreshments prior to show/during intermission. Clean up and store concession supplies after intermission.

#### ***Flower Sales***

Purchase flowers and prepare them for sale.

## VOLUNTEER COMMITTEES (CONT'D)

### ***Raffle Sales***

Sell raffle tickets during intermission and before and after performances.

**TIME COMMITMENT:** All house duties volunteers must be available 1 hour prior to performances up until 1 hour after performances.

### ***Chaperoning***

Supervise cast during Tech Week rehearsals and performances as they wait to go onstage. Supervise clean-up of dressing rooms. Must be very familiar with the show.

**TIME COMMITMENT:** 1-2 hours for meetings prior to Tech Week. Must attend at least two tech rehearsals. Available 1 hour prior to performances up until 1 hour after performances

### ***SET CONSTRUCTION***

**DESCRIPTION:** Construction of all sets using flats, stage trucks and forms. Volunteers of all skill levels are welcome, but carpentry skills are a plus. Put your power tools to work!

**TIME COMMITMENT:** Approximately 8 hours per week (weekends and/or weeknights) beginning two months prior to tech week.

### ***PAINTING***

**DESPRIPTION:** Paint sets and flats following the designs traced onto set pieces. It's as simple as "paint by numbers".

**TIME COMMITMENT:** Approximately 6 hours per week (weekends and/or weeknights) beginning two months prior to tech week.

### ***CAST PARTY***

**DESCRIPTION:** Plan and coordinate the cast party, typically held after strike. Develop the theme, secure the location, arrange for food and beverages, design and distribute fliers, collect funds from cast members and supervise set up and clean up.

**TIME COMMITMENT:** 1 hour per week plus duration of the cast party

### ***COSTUMES***

**DESCRIPTION:** Assist production staff with assigning, approving, and sewing costumes for the cast. Rent costumes as needed. Committee members must be able to create and sew simple designs.

**TIME COMMITMENT:** 2-3 hours per week.

### ***PLAYBILL***

**DESCRIPTION:** Assist production staff with the design of the playbill. Responsible for layout and format, collecting cast member kudos and bios, as well as soliciting print bids and managing print production. Occasionally called upon to design advertisements. Computer/graphic skills a must.

**TIME COMMITMENT:** 3-4 hours per week beginning three months prior to tech week. Increased time commitment during print production.

### ***PLAYBILL ADVERTISING***

**DESCRIPTION:** Solicit advertising for the production playbill. This position could coordinate with the raffle sales effort. Potential advertisers include cast-member families' businesses and services as well as business/services at large.

**TIME COMMITMENT:** 2-3 hours per week beginning three months prior to tech week.

### ***PROPS***

**DESCRIPTION:** Secure all furnishings, set dressings and other items not included in the sets or scenery. Secure rehearsal props. Have fun shopping at garage sales and second hand stores. Create props if necessary. Manage props during shows.

**TIME COMMITMENT:** 1-2 hours per week beginning two months prior to tech week. Attend a minimum of two tech rehearsals. Prop Masters are included in Stage Crew as they work backstage during shows. At least one prop master must be present at every performance.

### ***PUBLICITY***

**DESCRIPTION:** Write and distribute press releases, arrange for printing and distribution of show flyers and posters throughout the local community, including local merchants and schools. Provide schools with copy appropriate for individual school newsletters. Contact media/solicit PR for the show.

**TIME COMMITMENT:** 2-3 hours per week beginning 3 months prior to show.

### ***TICKETS***

**DESCRIPTION:** Develop and implement incentive program to meet ticket sales goals. Responsible for selling tickets before the show opens as well as during the run of the show. Track ticket sales to aid in future ticket sales strategies.

**TIME COMMITMENT:** 1-2 hours per week beginning two months before the show opens. Time commitment increases significantly 2-3 weeks prior and during the run of the show. Must be available one hour prior to curtain time for each show.

### ***RAFFLE***

**DESCRIPTION:** Solicit local businesses for raffle prizes. Send letters, make phone calls, collect prizes and coordinate raffle ticket sales by the cast. The raffle is held after the last show.

**TIME COMMITMENT:** 1-2 hours per week beginning two months before the show opens. Raffle manager is automatically included in House Duties to supervise raffle ticket sales during performances.