

# Irondale High School Drama Handbook 2020-2021

*A guide for students and parents*

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## Welcome letter

Congratulations! We're so excited that you're interested in joining the Irondale Drama Department! Irondale Drama thrives on people like you taking part in all that we have to offer. It's a substantial, but not inflexible, time commitment and it takes a lot of energy. However, it's also one of the most thrilling choices you can make in high school. Whether you become involved in set design, lighting, sound, acting, or student directing, everybody is very important to the process. We hope that you'll have a wonderful experience in the Irondale Drama Department.

---Current AND Past Drama Members

## Our season

### **Musical**

- Participation requirements: singing, dancing, and acting
- This is a varsity activity, and the cast is limited. Roles may require strong vocal ability

### **Children's Musical**

- Participation requirements: singing, dancing, and acting
- Participation tends to include a larger cast, and is open to all ability levels.

### **One Act Competition**

- Participation requirements: acting
- This is a varsity activity and the cast is selective. These actors are cast to represent Irondale at the State Level. Roles require a strong acting ability.

### **Winter One Act Showcase**

- Participation requirements may include: singing, dancing, and acting
- These shows are student directed, and designed. Everyone is encouraged to audition!
- Open to all skill levels

### **Play**

- Participation requirements: acting
- This is a varsity activity, and the cast is limited. Since this is the final play for seniors this is taken into consideration for the casting process.

## A note about artistic choice from the director

Theatre helps us to see a different perspective from our own. It promotes us to give power to truth, to take risks and to advocate for new and diverse voices. Being fully present with a group of people is important to the art of acting and for the human spirit. At Irondale our mission is to provide a wide variety of opportunities for our students both on and off stage. Every part of the theater experience is important and students are encouraged to explore all areas of the production.

**Play selection** We select plays based on the standards set out by our community and the Minnesota State High School League. We strive to provide a sampling of different styles and genres in the theater cannon. Our job is to serve our students to the best of our abilities. Parents, we ask you for your support in the process and please know that we have the students best interest with every decision we make.

## Irondale Activity Fee and Registration

Students are required to register and pay an activity fee **once they've been cast** in a show. The activity fee covers the entire year of drama, and does **not go directly to drama** but to help fund all Irondale athletics and activities. If you are interested in helping backstage, the fee is waived but you still have to fill out a registration form which you may get from the Activities Department. Registration and online fee payment can be found on the **Irondale Activities Page**

## Auditioning

Auditioning can seem intimidating, but it doesn't have to be. Remember to relax, project your voice, and don't let stage fright get in the way of giving it your best shot. Everybody has to begin somewhere, and we're here to support you. Depending on the play, the audition process may vary but generally, you can count on the following to happen:

- Complete an audition form to include name, phone, email, parent info, conflicts, etc.
- Director calls people in small groups on stage to read from pre-selected scenes. Please note:
- You may be called more than once to read so it is important you do NOT leave an audition before you are excused by a director.
- Do not be concerned if you are not called more than once – it means the director has a pretty good idea of your ability.
- Don't worry about messing up words, the director is listening to the vocal choices and looking at your physical choices.
- Musicals: the music director(s) will teach you a small part of a song in a large group and then you'll sing it alone. Don't be discouraged, we know it can be scary but everyone

has to sing. The artistic team may request you bring in 16 bars of a song you know shows off your voice, and an accompanist will be provided.

- Depending on the production, the choreographer may also teach a short, simple dance combination in order to get a good idea of how well people can move.

## Callbacks

The artistic team may have callback auditions, where they get a second look at certain actors. Plan on being available for callbacks. Callback lists and cast lists will be posted on the drama board and on the Current Irondale Drama Students page (Facebook). Callbacks may be either held at the end of an audition day or the next day. Don't worry if you aren't called back, it just means they don't need to see you again. You are still in consideration for our show.

## Auditioning Tips

- Wear clothes you are comfortable moving in to be ready for the dance audition. Don't wear flip-flops. If you have character shoes, jazz shoes or ballet slippers, you may choose to wear those.
- Show us your uniqueness and personality. Be confident and proud of who you are, and make the directors want to cast you.
- If you are asked to prepare your own music:
  - Keep your song to one verse and one chorus or 16 bars please.
  - Select material suitable to your strengths as a vocal performer.
  - Stay away from choosing songs that are out of your range.
  - Show us how you can ACT a song.
  - If you're a great singer, choose something that shows off your voice!
  - Please do not choose a song that will be difficult for the accompanist without rehearsal.
  - Bring sheet music in the correct key and with all cuts or repetitions clearly marked. Place your music in a binder or tape the sheets together.
  - Talk to the pianist to articulate the tempi If you feel comfortable, move during your song.
- It's very important to be quiet and listen, your audition starts the minute you come into the room. We want to work with people who will be focused and dedicated. Excessive talking and inattentiveness tells us you're not ready for this type of commitment and will affect your participation.

## Communication

**EMAIL:** email is our primary way to connect with parents about the production, help, volunteering and important information. It is very important for the director to have both student and parent email addresses.

**DRAMA BOARD:** is located in the hallway outside of the theatre. There you will find the cast list, schedule and other important drama announcements.

**FACEBOOK:** parents and students can connect to the Current Irondale Students page. A Facebook page is also created for each production. This is a way for the director to provide an updated schedule, notes, announcements and general information about the current production.

**TWITTER:** @IrondaleDrama

**INSTAGRAM:** @irondale\_Drama\_

**WEBSITES:** the Irondale Drama Activities website and IHSdrama.org websites have information about current productions, online ticketing, drama handbook, past productions and photos.

## Drama Rules:

All students and parents will sign a production agreement before each show that they're involved with. This agreement is a type of contract that helps insure the full understanding and commitment required by both students and parents for the success of the production.

## Schedule

- Rehearsal schedules are issued every 2 weeks throughout our 6 week rehearsal process. These schedules are subject to change.
- Rehearsals are Monday thru Friday from 2:15 to 5pm. We do allow students who are catching the activities busses to leave earlier.
- Tech Rehearsals (MANDATORY): Tech is the 2 weeks prior to the performance. During Tech, rehearsals will extended. Tech is a crucial time in the rehearsal process and everyone must attend each rehearsal that the director calls. Parents: there will be no conflicts of any kind, including medical appointments, work commitments, family obligations or educational commitments. Students you should use your Knight Time to take care of any educational obligations. Disregard to these requests may inhibit your ability to continue participation and your letter point. Evening rehearsals may be added as needed.
- We reserve the right to call a Saturday rehearsal any time during a show. The rehearsal could be held anytime between 9am and 10pm.

## Attendance

- If you are absent from school, whether excused or unexcused (with exception of school activities) you may not participate in any extra-curricular activities for that day. We allow 3 excused absences.
- You may not miss practice without prior notification! (Prior notification is 2 business days)
- Frequent absences will result in the recasting of your role.
- Attendance is a significant part of being successful in drama and affects your castmates. Attendance speaks volumes to who you are and your level of commitment.

## During Rehearsals

- NO HIGHLIGHT OR INK may be used in a script. All scripts must be erased before returning.
- ABSOLUTELY NO GUM. Please make sure to clean up after yourself with any garbage and/or crumbs you leave.
- No unapproved visitors, including parents, during the rehearsal process.
- Students must be with an approved supervisor while working in the theatre.
- Respect other people's time. If you are rehearsing, be on time and ready to go before rehearsal starts. Please be quiet when you are not on stage.
- Cell phone usage AND texting are NOT allowed during rehearsal. Phones will be collected and returned once rehearsal has ended. Only exception is if you are asked to record something by the music directors.
- Only authorized and trained personnel will operate the light board and sound equipment; a staff member must be in the theatre when this equipment is in use. This also applies to any power tool.

## During Productions

- You WILL NOT change/remove or alter your costume/wigs/hats etc, unless you are asked costume designer. All costumes must be worn exactly as the costume designer instructs or you will be removed from the production.
- No physical alterations may be made to your natural appearance without permission. Ex. haircut, piercings, hair dye, tattoos, etc.
- If you lose, alter or damage any piece of costuming, script, and any other rental materials, you will pay a fine or replacement cost.
- No food or drink (unless its water only) in costume or near the costumes.
- Absolutely no visitors backstage before, during, or after a performance.
- Striking the set after the final performance is MANDATORY for all students involved with the production, and parents are always encouraged to help! No student is allowed to leave the strike until all tasks have been completed and you are dismissed by the set

designer/director. If you leave without being excused your points toward lettering will be affected. for that production.

## Harassment Policy

If a student uses social media to discredit, threaten, insult, or harm another person, the offending student will be dismissed from the drama program for the remainder of that production.

Individuals at Irondale High School have a right to feel comfortable and to be treated with respect. Also, harassment can interfere with a student's right to an education. Therefore, harassment will not be tolerated, and can lead to detention, assignments to the Learning Center or TRY Program, parent conferences, and/or court referrals. Mounds View Public Schools will maintain a learning and working environment that is free from hazing or violence of any type, including without limitation: disability, religious, racial, or sexual harassment or violence. Procedures will be developed consistent with MN Statutes 121A.03, 363.01 to 363.15 and District Policy EG-3104 to ensure a safe environment.

## Lettering

To receive your first letter in drama, a student must actively participate in a total of 5 Main Stage Productions. This can be achieved both backstage and on stage. Subsequent letters are earned with a 4 Production Full Commitment. The definition and tasks of "full commitment to the production" is defined below.

### On Stage Full Commitment

- Attendance and punctuality
- Meeting deadlines (ex. line memorization deadlines)
- Attitude and respect towards artistic staff and peers
- Adherence to artistic vision
- Adherence to schedule, which is being respectful to others' time
- Publicizing show (social media, print media, announcements in class)
- Participating in fundraising opportunities
- Full participation in tech week and strike is mandatory, no exceptions
- Reading all materials (posts, this handbook, etc that director assigns)
- Help with kru when asked

### Kru Full Commitment

- Attendance at all scheduled times (this includes builds, painting, pulling, lighting, etc.)
- Adhere to all posted and verbal rules

- Attitude and respect towards artistic staff and peers
- Help to execute the artistic team's vision
- Reading all materials (posts, this handbook and kru handbook, etc that director assigns)
- Full participation in strike is mandatory, no exceptions

## What is Kru?

Kru is one of the most important parts of a production. The Kru include anyone who helps with the production in a capacity other than acting or being in the pit. This includes the Student Director(s), Stage Manager, Technical Manager, Props Manager, Lighting/Sound Operators and Designers, Running Kru, and Build Kru. Building the set can be an amazing experience, not only in terms of the technical skills, but also in terms of getting to know your peers.

## How do I get involved in Kru?

We always love new faces in kru! It takes a lot to put on a production so each and every person is important to the process. Talk to Janet or any other director and they will get you in contact with a kru leader. We put on 5 productions a year and we need YOUR help with each one. The musical tends to be the one that has the highest number of people needed, however that can change year to year. You DO NOT need any prior experience, all positions can be taught to anyone who is interested. That being said, we can only have a certain amount of Kru for each show. Kru numbers will be determined by the production staff, and then students will be chosen. Kru leader positions are chosen by the artistic staff, but the only way to get there is by starting on either running kru or an aspect of the technical kru. Please continue to watch the main Facebook page (Current Irondale Drama Students) for upcoming opportunities and schedules.

## Explanation of roles

**Student Director(s):** This student or group of students help the director with various aspects of the production. They help to communicate the schedule, keep track of attendance, and communicate between the directors and technical leaders.

**Stage Manager:** This student will "call" the show, as well as oversee the running kru, and work with the director to help create the artistic vision.

**Technical Manager:** This student will oversee the technical kru and coordinate the spotlight operators, the board operators, and other other technical needs (such as mic wranglers). They may also be a board operator or visual designer, depending on the production.

**Props Manager:** handle finding all the props pertaining to the show.

**Lighting/Sound Board Operators and Designers:** These students will be tasked with operating the boards during the tech rehearsals as well as during the run of the production.



**Running Kru:** This group is backstage and handles all set piece movement as well as setting props as necessary. They take direction from the Stage Manager and Assistant Stage Manager.

**Build Kru:** This group may or may not be separate depending on interest. They are tasked with creating the actual set and other props under the direction from the set designer, and possibly other kru leaders depending on the production.

## Safety/Dress

We strive to keep every part of the theatre as safe as possible for everyone involved. That being said, closed toed-shoes are always required when working within the theatre as the possibility of nails or screws lying on the stage. When coming to help with build, make sure whatever clothes you are wearing are okay to get dirty and/or damaged. Messing around is never tolerated as someone could get seriously injured. Certain areas (such as the catwalk) of the theatre are off limits unless instructed. Failure to listen to the safety instructions may result in your removal.

## Attendance

Being on time and present is a really important part of kru, and speaks to who you are. Kru is essential to the success of the show, so not being present can affect not only the show, but your ability to participate. You may be asked to step out of a show due to have frequent absences. This is up to the discretion of the artistic staff.

**TIME:** Soon after a production is underway, Kru takes place in the auditorium and shop weekdays after school and most Saturdays from 10 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Times may vary! When the time of the production draws near, other times will be announced on the drama board and on our Facebook group linked below.

**SET STRIKE:** Strike includes tearing down the set, taking apart pieces, adjusting lighting, cleaning the shop, costumes, returning props and anything else the technical director asks for. Immediately after the last production. Strike is MANDATORY for ALL cast and kru. Parents are strongly encouraged to help with the strike! No one is done until all the work is done and you are excused by a staff member. Strike can take anywhere from 2 to 8 hours, depending on attendance and effort.

## Student Director Responsibilities

- Reports to Artistic Director
- Creates contact sheet from the audition forms
- Creates attendance sheet (can be combined w/ contact)

- Makes sure to take accurate and detailed daily attendance and let the director know of any issues.
- Handles assigning and keeping track of scripts.
- Makes copies of the script for the various kru leaders.
- Help director keep everyone focused, so rehearsal can be as efficient as possible
- Check-in with the director each day to ask what they would like of you, that way you are proactive and that makes a huge difference!
- Be a support personnel to the techs and the parent volunteers, help wherever is needed.
- Handle front-of-house duties, unless onstage
- Help with coordinating strike

## Stage Manager/Asst. Stage Manager Responsibilities

- Reports to Artistic Staff
- Oversees running kru
- Assign any set movement
- Makes the kru schedule with the technical manager
- Works with build kru and set designer to keep things on track
- Takes notes during the tech weeks to be able to call the show
  - “Call”- term used for when the Stage Manager uses a two-way communication device to direct the kru when to hit certain cues
- Attends Production Meeting

## Technical Manager Responsibilities

- Reports to Artistic Staff, usually the Technical Director
- Oversees Sound and Light Board Operator, Lighting and Sound Designers, Spotlight Operators, Mic Wranglers, and any other tech positions
- Depending on the production, they may also be the operator/designer
- They work with the tech students to hang and focus the lights for the productions/other events
- Work with the technical director and artistic director to make sure the overall design and operation is following the vision
- Help resolve any challenges that come up
- Attend Production Meeting

## Props Manager Responsibilities

- Reports to Artistic Staff
- Oversee all the props
- Makes sure all the props are made or purchased so they are ready for tech week

- Meet with the technical director/artistic director to determine what props are needed
- Attend Production Meeting

## Lighting and Sound Board Operator Responsibilities

- Report to the Technical Manager and Artistic Staff
- Operate the boards for the shows and for any other special events, as available
- Light Board operator must be available for hang and focus
- Sound Board operator may help find/create sound effects, depending on the show
- There may also be an additional position of Sound Effects
- This position will be opened up to new students for the Children's Show, and Winter One Act Showcase.

## Lighting and Sound Designer Responsibilities

- These positions are available depending on the production, and may be combined with another role
- Lighting- Work with the Technical Director to create a light plot and facilitate the light hand and focus
- Sound- Work with the Technical Director to make sure all sound is in working order and nothing needs to be adjusted
- Work with the other kru leaders and artistic staff to make sure the design aligns with the rest of the production
- Attend the Production Meeting

## Running Kru Responsibilities

- Report to the Stage Manager and Assistant Stage Manager, as well as the Artistic Staff
- Responsible for executing any scene changes, as well as any additional duties assigned by the Stage Manager or the Artistic Director
- Expected to help build kru and artistic staff with set construction
- May also assist the technical kru with light hang and focus and cleaning lights

## Parent Involvement

### A note to parents

We appreciate parental interest, and encourage you to support your students from home. We believe it is important for students to learn to advocate for themselves. The artistic team will answer them with honest and constructive feedback. Our goal is to help your students broaden

themselves and be as successful as possible. All casting and play choice are made by the artistic team, who have many professional years of experience in theater. They always use their best judgement to keep up the integrity of the department and the district, and we ask you to respect their decisions.

## Parent Expectations

- Be supportive of your student. Help them memorize lines and work on songs
- Leave the constructive criticism to the artistic team.
- Respect and support all casting and play selection made by the artistic team.
- The Booster club will not be used as a way to promote your student. We are here to provide opportunities for everyone.

For those who like to plan ahead, the concert and play calendar is available online each year on the Irondale website. There are 5 different events in drama each year:

1. Musical (early November) 2. Children's Show (Early January) 3. Competitive One Acts (Later January to Early February) 4. One Act Festival (late February, early March) 5. Spring Play (late April)

## Why is a Booster Club Necessary?

All co-curricular clubs and sports at the high school level are only partially funded by the high school co-curricular budget. In order to be successful, activities are supplemented through fundraising and parent volunteers. The success of the department depends in part on the participation of the parents. All parents (cast AND kru) are welcome to come. Parents will help with: concessions, ticketing, set building, set strike, transportation for furniture and prop rental\return, publicity, fundraising, etc. Your ideas and input are always welcome! If you would like to help, please email Sandra Bockenbauer, '20-'21 Booster Chair. (irondalehsdrama@gmail.com)

Drama Booster Club Mission: To support the Irondale Drama Department so that each participant can learn and grow to their fullest potential.

## Contact Information

Email: [irondalehsdrama@gmail.com](mailto:irondalehsdrama@gmail.com)

Please join our Facebook group "Current Irondale Drama Students". Both parents and students are greatly encouraged to participate. Here you'll get up to the minute updates on schedule, events, and changes.