

# Welcome to the DSHS Theatre Department!

Dear Students and Guardians,

On behalf of the DSHS Theatre Department, welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! We're thrilled to embark on this journey of creativity, growth, and camaraderie with each of you. As we kickstart the year, we're brimming with excitement for the programming ahead, and we're committed to fostering a nurturing environment where every student can explore their passion for the performing arts and discover their true potential. Please review the information in this email carefully and **have the Handbook Agreement signed and submitted no later than Friday, August 18th, 2023**. We look forward to sharing this journey with y'all. Here's to a fantastic year ahead!

## Vision & Objective

At the heart of our department's vision lies Maya Angelou's profound wisdom: **"I did then what I knew how to do. Now that I know better, I do better."** Our objective is to foster an educational environment that encourages growth, learning, and continuous improvement for all members of our community.

The DSHS Theatre Department aspires to empower students, guardians, and staff with the knowledge and tools to evolve, acknowledging that growth is a natural part of the human experience. By embracing this philosophy, we commit to nurturing an inclusive, compassionate, and supportive space where individuals are inspired to reach their full potential and make positive contributions to society. Through self-awareness, empathy, and a commitment to curiosity, we aim to cultivate an atmosphere where learning from past experiences propels us forward to become better as individuals and as a collective to create a brighter future.

## Save the Date!

On Friday, August, 18th from 4:30-5:30 pm, students are invited to a Thespians Informational session (Room F.204), followed by an open house in the theatre lobby from 5:30-6:30 pm. All DSHS, DSMS, and SSMS students/guardians are welcome to attend, and returning members are encouraged to bring friends who might want to join us. Come out and meet the directors, mingle with fellow department members, and hear about the exciting programming we're developing this year!

WHAT?	WHO?	WHEN?	WHERE?
Thespians Info Session	HS Students	FRI, Aug. 18 4:30 - 5:30 pm	Room F.204 (Branscum's Room)
DSHS Theatre Dept. Open House!	HS/MS Students & Guardians	FRI, Aug. 18 5:30 - 6:30 pm	Theatre Lobby

## Meet Your Directors



### **Daniel Baxter** | *Technical Theatre Director*

This year we welcome back Mr. Baxter! Daniel Baxter (Theatre Design and Technology, BFA - University of Evansville '11) returns for another great year at Dripping Springs. Mr. Baxter trained as a theatrical designer before working as a lighting technician, designer, and project manager for live events and televised sports nationwide. Believing in the tremendous impact of performance art on the young mind, he left the traveling life to train and inspire the next generation of technicians and artists.

## Baxter's Classes

**Technical Theatre I** | Provides a broad overview of live theatre's backstage and behind-the-scenes aspects. Students will explore the plethora of specialties that make live theatre possible and gain a deeper understanding of producing theatre, events, film, and television.

**Technical Theatre II** | Expands on the foundations of Technical Theatre I and provides students with more hands-on opportunities to develop and explore their individual interests in technical theatre. This is done through individual and group projects that directly apply technical and artistic skills required in theatre.

**Technical Theatre III/IV** | Intensive courses that prepare students for entry into post-secondary education and the workforce through the execution of the Department's productions and other events hosted in the DSHS performance spaces. Students learn and apply technical and artistic skills daily while developing the "soft skills" that lead to success on any path a student chooses to follow after graduating.



**Coy Branscum** | *Theatre Director*

This year we welcome a new Theatre Director! Coy Branscum (Musical Theatre, BFA - Millikin University '15) has never been satisfied chasing just one passion, instead choosing to embrace a career as a multi-hyphenate. Mr. Branscum has spent his career in a multitude of roles, previously serving as a producer, artistic director, director, music director, choreographer, educator, actor, model, and more. His passion for the arts has proven strong as Mr. Branscum finds joy filling any role, but he feels most at home as a director/choreographer and actor. When he isn't working, Mr. Branscum enjoys spending time outdoors with his dog, Billie.

### **Branscum's Classes**

With hands-on opportunities to participate in performance-based learning, students in Mr. Branscum's classes will cultivate essential communication skills, self-confidence, and an appreciation for the collaborative nature of theatre.

**Theatre I** | Introductory course that immerses students in the foundational aspects of acting, character development, and the art of storytelling.

**Intermediate Theatre Production (ITP)** | Mid-level course that engages students in a deep dive into the vast array of careers in the theatre arts, exploring the intricacies of each role. Each semester will culminate in a student-organized production or group project.

**Advanced Theatre Production (ATP)** | Advanced course that engages students in a deep dive into the vast array of careers in the theatre arts, exploring the intricacies of each role. Each semester will culminate in a student-organized production or group project.

**Musical Theatre I-IV** | Mixed-levels course that immerses students in the foundational elements of singing, acting, and dance as the core tools of storytelling through song. The course will culminate in a Musical Theatre Showcase presented at the end of the year.

*\*Juniors and Seniors wishing to pursue post-secondary education in theatre will follow a College Audition Prep track, separate from the main course.*

## Productions

We've made some adjustments to the Production Schedule to ensure opportunities are available to as many students as possible while allowing each production to reach its full potential. Audition announcements will be posted with ample time for students to prepare. *Rehearsal schedules TBD.*

→ **Mean Girls (HS Version)** | SEPT. 28-29

*\*This production was auditioned and cast in the Spring of the 2022-23 school year.*

→ **Clue: On Stage** | OCT. 26-28

*\*This is included in our mainstage season, all DSHS students are encouraged to audition and apply for crew/production positions.*

→ **Mamma Mia!** | JAN. 18-22

*\*This is included in our mainstage season, all DSHS students are encouraged to audition and apply for crew/production positions.*

→ **UIL One Act Play** | Show TBD

*\*All DSHS students are encouraged to audition/interview for UIL One Act Play.*

## Final Thoughts

We can't wait to see the halls filled with students again! And please remember: If you ever need guidance, inspiration, or just a chat, our doors are always open. Here's to a year filled with growth, creativity, and new beginnings.

With gratitude and excitement for the journey ahead,

Branscum & Baxter

**DRIPPING SPRINGS HIGH SCHOOL  
THEATRE DEPARTMENT HANDBOOK**



**2023-2024**

# DSHS Theatre Department Handbook

## Introduction

Welcome to the DSHS Theatre Department, we're excited to have you join us for the 2023-2024 school year! Please take some time to review the DSHS Theatre Department Handbook and **return a signed copy of the Handbook Agreement on page seven (7) by Friday, August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023.**

The DSHS Theatre Department Handbook serves as a guide for all members of our educational community, outlining the policies, procedures, and expectations that govern our shared journey of learning and personal development. It is a comprehensive resource designed to promote a safe, respectful, and nurturing environment where students, parents, and staff can thrive. By providing clear guidelines and fostering open communication, the Handbook empowers individuals to understand their rights, responsibilities, and the collective values we cherish. With its emphasis on accountability and mutual respect, the Handbook plays a pivotal role in shaping a cohesive and harmonious community, ensuring that every participant can actively contribute to our pursuit of knowledge and growth while embodying the values of integrity, empathy, and lifelong learning.

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## Vision & Objective

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## Contact

**Coy Branscum** | Theatre Director  
[coy.branscum@dsisdtx.us](mailto:coy.branscum@dsisdtx.us)

**Daniel Baxter** | Technical Theatre Director  
[daniel.baxter@dsisdtx.us](mailto:daniel.baxter@dsisdtx.us)

## Social Media

**Website\*** | [DSHStheatr.com](http://DSHStheatr.com)

**Instagram** | @DSHStheatr

**TikTok** | @DSHStheatr

**Threads** | @DSHStheatr

*Please follow us on social media! :)*

*\*Website will be live soon!*

# DSHS Theatre Department Policies & Procedures

## Production Auditions & Technical Interviews

The audition/interview process is designed to be inclusive, fair, and fun. We support non-traditional casting in order to represent the unique talents and backgrounds of our students, and we strongly encourage all students to audition/interview for cast and crew positions in our productions, regardless of prior experience or training. We are committed to continuous improvement, ensuring an audition/interview process that fosters a positive and supportive theatre community at Dripping Springs High School.

*\*All auditions, callbacks, and interviews will be scheduled so as to provide ample time for interested students to prepare.*

## Rehearsals, Crew Calls & Performances

All students selected for cast, crew, or production teams are required to sign a production agreement, detailing a commitment to attendance, punctuality, and respectful behavior expected from every participant throughout the production process.

*\*We understand that students engage in multiple extracurricular activities, and are committed to working around conflicts that may arise during productions. We request all conflicts to be presented prior to the start of rehearsals. In the case of emergency conflicts, we ask for a 48-hour notice whenever possible, supported by a note from a guardian or doctor.*

Additionally, a dress code is enforced during class, rehearsals, crew calls, and performances:

- Rehearsals: Athletic/Dancewear and Jazz Sneakers/Shoes or Character Shoes (depending on production). Avoid jeans and other restrictive materials.
- Crew Calls: Work clothes (ok to be stained), close-toed shoes.
- Open-toed shoes and flip-flops are never allowed on stage, in the tech shop, or in the classrooms.
- **Failing to adhere to proper attire may result in a student's inability to participate.**

## Practicum Hours

**All students enrolled in a course offered by the DSHS Theatre Department are required to complete a minimum of 10 practicum hours per semester**, which will count toward their final grade. These may be done before or after school and can be completed by working on sets, lights, costumes, props, and other technical and production elements of department productions. Students may complete their hours over the course of each semester, or fulfill their semester requirements by interviewing for and committing to a crew position for the duration of an entire production.



## Discipline Policy

The DSHS Theatre Department adheres to the DSISD Student Code of Conduct and follows all district disciplinary policies. Inability to adhere to department standards and/or the DSISD Code of Conduct may prevent students from participating in department-hosted events, including but not limited to department productions, UIL One Act Play, Thespians membership, and department-sponsored trips. Severe actions may result in dismissal from the program.

*\*The DSHS Theatre Department is committed to upholding the principles of due process when addressing disciplinary matters involving our students. We believe in fairness, transparency, and ensuring that every student has the right to be heard and understood.*

## Eligibility

The DSHS Theatre Department adheres to the eligibility rules and regulations set forth by the UIL and DSISD. Students deemed ineligible to participate in school-sponsored extracurricular activities will be placed on probation and given an opportunity to regain and maintain eligibility.

*\*Repeated failure to maintain eligibility may result in dismissal from the program.*

## Grading

All DSHS Theatre Department courses adhere to the following grading structure:

- **30% Formative** | Including, but not limited to class participation, group projects, and daily grades.
- **70% Summative** | Including, but not limited to performances, projects, tests, and major group assignments.

## Missing/Late Assignments

- If a student is absent on the day of a group presentation/performance, it is the responsibility of the students to collaborate on an alternative performance time and present a solution to the director leading the class.
- Individual assignments that are not submitted on time are considered missing until the assignment is submitted.
- If a student is absent from class, it is the student's responsibility to connect with department directors about missed assignments and other pertinent information from the day of the absence.

## Thespian Troupe 6261

The Texas Thespian Society is an organization that celebrates and promotes excellence in theatre arts among high school students across the state. As a member of this society, Troupe 6261 plays a vital role in the DSHS Theatre Department, offering a platform for students passionate about drama, performance, and technical theatre to come together, learn, and grow as artists. Through a variety of theatrical experiences and community engagement, Troupe 6261 nurtures creativity, collaboration, and artistic expression, inspiring its members to excel both on and off the stage.

*\*Those interested in joining Thespian Troupe 6261 should contact a theatre director.*

## Department Fees & Fundraising

### Fees

Production fees are required for participation in each production and help cover the essential cost of items like rights and licensing, show shirts for cast and crew, meals for long rehearsal days, and other expenses associated with the cost of the production.

Additional fees and supplies may be required for class assignments, trips, or extracurricular activities hosted by the Theatre Department. **Participation in department productions, trips, or activities is not required. Additionally, no student will be turned away due to an inability to pay.**

*\*Financial aid is available on a case-by-case basis, but is not guaranteed. If cost is ever a barrier to participation, please reach out to a department director to discuss financial assistance options.*

### Fundraising

In collaboration with the Dripping Springs Theatre Boosters, our department will engage in several fundraisers throughout the school year, including but not limited to concessions for department productions and other DSHS events, concerts/revues, etc.

*\*Additional opportunities may become available for students to engage in specific fundraising events to fund their participation in department-sponsored trips and events.*

## Parent Engagement

Any parent or guardian wishing to volunteer with the DSHS Theatre Department in a capacity involving children must complete an annual application and background check, per DSISD policy. If you are interested in becoming a volunteer in the department or joining the Booster Club, please speak with a theatre director or reach out to one of the following:

### Theatre Boosters DSHS Production Liaisons 2023-24

**Sharla Tilley** | *Clue: On Stage*  
[sharladione@gmail.com](mailto:sharladione@gmail.com)

**Melinda Hooks** | *Mamma Mia!*  
[jmhooks@gmail.com](mailto:jmhooks@gmail.com)

**Jessica Hall** | *Mean Girls (HS Version)*  
[jmarcouxhall@gmail.com](mailto:jmarcouxhall@gmail.com)

**Shellie Derouen** | *UIL One Act Play*  
[artzysdd@gmail.com](mailto:artzysdd@gmail.com)

## DSHS Theatre Department Handbook Agreement

The final page of this document is an agreement between the DSHS Theatre Department and all students/guardians participating in department-sponsored classes, productions, and events.

**Please ensure both the student and guardian sign and return the Handbook Agreement no later than **Friday, August 18<sup>th</sup>, 2023**.** Students who fail to complete this assignment will receive a zero Daily Grade until the document is submitted.

## DSHS Theatre Department Handbook Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read and understand the policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in the DSHS Theatre Department Handbook. I hereby agree to abide by the rules and guidelines set forth in this document throughout my participation in any department-related activities during the \_\_\_\_\_ school year.

I understand that adherence to these policies is essential in fostering a positive and supportive environment for all members of the theatre department. By signing this agreement, I commit to upholding the values of respect, collaboration, and curiosity, which are integral to the success of our productions and the growth of our community.

I also acknowledge that any violation of the policies and procedures may result in appropriate disciplinary actions, as per the guidelines in the handbook and the standards set by DSISD.

I recognize that it is my responsibility to keep myself informed about any updates or revisions to department policies that may be communicated by the DSHS Theatre Department directors.

This agreement is effective as of the date of my signature below and shall remain valid for the duration of my involvement in any and all DSHS Theatre Department activities.

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Parent/Guardian Consent

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the parent/guardian of the above-named student, have read and understood the policies, procedures, and expectations outlined in the DSHS Theatre Department Handbook. I consent to my child's commitment to adhering to these guidelines and supporting the objectives of the department.

Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**DUE FRIDAY, AUGUST 18<sup>TH</sup>, 2023**