TEXAS THESPIANS

CODE OF CONDUCT

For Students, Volunteers, and Guest Artists

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

Texas Thespians is an affiliate chapter of the Educational Theatre Association and the International Thespian Society. Its events serve K–12 students, many of whom are minors. This Code of Conduct establishes the behavioral standards that all participants—students, adult volunteers, chaperones, troupe directors, and guest artists—must follow at every Texas Thespians event, including the Texas Thespians State Festival, the Junior Thespian Festival, Troupe Day, Educator Conference, and all associated off-site activities.

These standards exist to protect minors and to ensure that Texas Thespians events provide a safe, inclusive, and educationally appropriate environment for every participant.

II. MANDATORY REPORTING

Texas law requires all persons—without exception—to report suspected child abuse or neglect. Under Texas Family Code § 261.101, any person who has reasonable cause to believe that a child's physical or mental health or welfare has been adversely affected by abuse or neglect must immediately report that belief to the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Abuse Hotline (1-800-252-5400 or www.txabusehotline.org) or to local law enforcement.

Professionals who have direct contact with children in the course of their duties—including educators, troupe directors, and other licensed or certified individuals—must make that report no later than 48 hours after first having reasonable cause to believe abuse or neglect has occurred or may occur. A professional may not delegate this duty to another person.

Persons acting in good faith when making a report are immune from civil and criminal liability under Texas Family Code § 261.106. Failure to report suspected abuse or neglect when required by law is a criminal offense under Texas Penal Code § 38.17.

If a child appears to be in immediate danger, call 911 first.

III. BACKGROUND CHECKS AND SCREENING

All adult volunteers, chaperones, troupe directors, and guest artists who will have direct contact with minors at a Texas Thespians event must complete a criminal history background check prior to participation. Texas Thespians reserves the right to deny or terminate participation on the basis of background check results.

Consistent with the standards established under Texas Education Code §§ 22.083 and 22.0835, persons with convictions involving violence, offenses against children, sexual crimes, or crimes involving moral turpitude are not eligible to participate in any Texas Thespians event in a capacity that involves contact with minors.

Texas Thespians will share background check information indicating an outstanding warrant with appropriate law enforcement agencies.

IV. STANDARDS FOR INTERACTION WITH MINORS

A. General Conduct

All participants must treat every person at a Texas Thespians event with dignity and respect. Conduct that demeans, intimidates, harasses, or endangers any participant is prohibited.

- Physical contact between adults and minors must remain appropriate to an educational setting. Adults should not initiate physical contact with minor participants beyond what is clearly incidental and appropriate to the educational context.
- One-on-one contact between an adult and a minor must not occur in a private or isolated location. Meetings, coaching sessions, and similar interactions must take place in a location visible to others or with a second adult present.
- Adults must not enter rooms assigned to minor delegates except for a verified safety or medical emergency, and only in the presence of another adult.
- Alcohol, tobacco, cannabis, and controlled substances are prohibited at all Texas Thespians events. No adult may possess or consume these substances in the presence of minors or on event premises.
- Weapons of any kind are prohibited on event premises.

B. Social Media and Electronic Communication

These standards apply to all communication through social media platforms, messaging applications, email, and any other electronic medium.

- Adults must not initiate or maintain direct electronic communication with a minor participant outside the event platform or without the prior knowledge and consent of the minor's parent or legal guardian. All substantive communication with minor participants should be directed through the troupe director or through a group channel visible to other adults.
- Adults must not share photographs, video, or other images of minor participants on personal social media accounts or through personal channels without the express written consent of the minor's parent or legal guardian. Organizational accounts may share imagery only within the scope of the consent granted in the Participant Consent and Authorization Form.
- No participant may use social media to post content that is disparaging, harassing, threatening, or bullying toward any other participant, Texas Thespians member, or affiliated organization.
- Content posted to any public channel that is associated with or reflects on Texas Thespians must be consistent with the organization's mission and must not violate applicable law or the standards set out in this Code.
- Texas Thespians reserves the right to require removal of any post, to restrict future posting, or to impose other disciplinary action, up to and including removal from the event, for violations of these standards.

C. Artificial Intelligence Tools and Platforms

AI-generated content presents distinct risks when minors are involved, including the potential for the creation of realistic but fabricated images, audio, or text associated with identifiable individuals. The following standards apply to all participants:

- No participant may use artificial intelligence tools to generate, manipulate, or disseminate images, audio, video, or other content depicting minor participants without the express written consent of the minor's parent or legal guardian, and only within the purpose for which that consent was granted.
- No participant may use AI tools to create realistic fabrications (commonly called "deepfakes") of any participant—minor or adult—whether for entertainment, demonstration, or any other purpose.
- Adults must not use AI-enabled communication tools to establish or maintain contact with minor participants outside the channels described in Section IV(B).
- Guest artists and workshop presenters who incorporate AI demonstrations into their presentations must limit those demonstrations to content appropriate for a K–12 audience and must ensure that no student's likeness is used without appropriate prior consent.

V. MEDIA, PHOTOGRAPHY, AND IMAGE USE

Photography and video recording at Texas Thespians events are subject to the following standards, which apply in addition to the consent terms in the Participant Consent and Authorization Form:

- Participants with official media credentials may photograph or record in designated areas during designated times.
- No one may photograph or record minor participants in restrooms, changing areas, sleeping areas, or any other location where a reasonable expectation of privacy exists.
- Texas Thespians events take place in shared hotel spaces, performance venues, and other public-access environments where incidental photography is unavoidable. All participants are expected to respect the privacy of minors and to comply with applicable consent requirements when sharing or publishing images in which an identifiable minor appears.
- Deliberately photographing, recording, or publishing images of an identifiable minor participant outside the scope of incidental event documentation requires prior written consent from that minor's parent or legal guardian.
- Images and recordings of minor participants may be used for organizational purposes only within the scope of the consent granted in the Participant Consent and Authorization Form.
- Third-party commercial or editorial use of images or recordings of minors requires separate written authorization from Texas Thespians and from the minor's parent or legal guardian.

VI. ENFORCEMENT AND CONSEQUENCES

Any person who observes conduct that may violate this Code should report it immediately to a Texas Thespians staff member or board representative. Reports will be handled promptly and with appropriate confidentiality.

Violations of this Code may result in any of the following, determined at the discretion of Texas Thespians:

- A warning and direction to modify conduct immediately
- Removal from the current event, at the participant's or family's expense where applicable
- Prohibition from future Texas Thespians events
- Referral to law enforcement or child protective services where applicable

Removal from an event does not entitle the removed participant or the participant's family to a refund. Texas Thespians will follow its posted refund policy in all other circumstances.

VII. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

All participants—students, adult volunteers, chaperones, troupe directors, and guest artists—must sign the applicable Acknowledgment of Receipt and Agreement included in the Participant Consent and Authorization Form or the Guest Artist Agreement. The signed acknowledgment documents that the participant has received, read, and agreed to comply with this Code as a condition of participation.

VIII. GOVERNING LAW

This Code of Conduct is governed by the laws of the State of Texas without regard to its conflict-of-laws principles. Any dispute arising out of or relating to this Code or its enforcement shall be resolved in the state

or federal courts located in Tarrant County, Texas, and all participants consent to personal jurisdiction and venue in those courts.

Effective Date: _____

Adopted by the Texas Thespians Board of Directors