



Virtual Academy Policies and FAQs

Frequently Asked Questions:

Who is eligible to participate in virtual classes at American Stage?

We highly recommend students are comfortable using a computer, tablet, or smartphone in order to interact with us for virtual classes.

Youth: Students who are at least 5 years old at the time of the class and are in Kindergarten through 12th grade may register for an American Stage Education youth class/ensemble or virtual camp session.

Adult: Students who are 18 years or older are welcome to register for American Stage Education classes and Adult Virtual Programs.

What if I don't have internet access?

We want to make sure that even though we are all remote, you have access to our classes and a way to participate. Many internet providers offer discounts during this time to allow for at-home learning. Additionally, this website will provide some locations where wi-fi is free across the city of St. Petersburg, FL. http://www.stpete.org/connect/st_pete_wi-fi.php If you are logging into class from a different city, we recommend you check your city government's website for a similar list.

What kind of device should they use to take the class?

Any device with a webcam and that has access to the internet will work. The best devices we've found to use are computers (with webcams), laptops, or tablets. However, cell phones will work. There will be more information in your welcome packet about the technology you may need to set up ahead of time.

What online platforms will be used to teach this class?

Classes will be organized and managed through google classroom. Please create a free gmail account and provide it on your registration form, if you don't already use gmail.

Classes will be conducted using Zoom and occasionally Google Hangouts. You will need to download the app for Zoom, but do not to purchase or create a Zoom account.

How does a theater class work online?



We are excited to venture beyond the physical stage! Theatre does not only happen in large groups performing together on stage. Theatre is storytelling through many elements that can occur in many different ways - through puppetry, writing, music, set design, and more. Virtual classes allow us to delve into specific subjects within the artform and explore them in detail, focusing on process instead of product. Our Virtual Academy offers deep learning that can support the more performative-focused goals of in-person, physical theatre.

Classes online and classes in-person have different capabilities, accessibilities, and therefore different goals and activities. In virtual classes, activities are arranged so they can be explored and achieved at home individually, or in small digital breakout sessions through the video chat webinar platform. Session topics and expectations are defined with this in mind, so we are setting up our students for academic and artistic success.

For Virtual Camp: The virtual camp day will run from 9am-11am and 12pm-2pm with an hour lunch break in between sessions.

How many students will there be?

We limit virtual class sizes at 20 students. The Zoom platform allows for smaller breakout sessions to accommodate specific activities.

For Parents: Do I need to still be in the room while they are attending class?

We ask that you are still in the house or location where the students are and that you check in with them from time to time.

- For the K-2nd grade students, we ask that remain in the room or within earshot should they need assistance or refocusing.
- For the 3rd-5th grade students, parents/guardians please check in each hour to see if anything is needed.
- For our older group, 6-12th graders, the check-in can be at the midday break.

How can I register for classes?

You may register for classes online or over the phone. Payment for the class is due at the time of registration, either in the form of an automatic payment plan or payment in full. All registrations are subject to a handling fee.

What are my payment options?

Online purchases must be completed with a credit or debit card. When registering online, you will have the option to pay in full, or you may choose to participate in the Online Deferment Plan. Participating in the Online Deferment Plan sets up an automatic payment plan for your class with equal charges being made monthly until the first day of the class. The first installment is due at registration. Otherwise, you will be charged for the full amount of the class at the time of



registration. When registering on the phone or in person, you may pay in full with a credit or debit card, or you may set up a Deferment Plan with your credit or debit card via phone. If your balance is not paid off by the last day of the class, your card will automatically be charged for the remaining balance. If your card is declined, you will be charged a \$10 processing fee. All payment plans require an initial payment installment at the time of registration and a credit card number on file for future payments. If you have a balance on your account from a past class or purchase, you will not be able to register for or attend a new class until your balance has been paid in full.

Are there any registration discounts or financial aid available for classes?

We offer several discounts that vary depending on the program or class. Please see the class description webpage for discount details.

What happens after I have completed my registration?

For Youth: After registering for the class, you will receive an email from the Education Team with a link to our Online Enrollment Form. We require this completed form before class begins, because it includes necessary information. Your student will not be able to participate in our classes until this form has been submitted. Prior to the start of the class, you will receive a Welcome Email with information such as access to the google classroom, Teaching Artist information, and other details about the class.

For Adult: After registering for the class, you will receive a Welcome Email with information needed to access Google Classroom, the Zoom Meeting ID and other necessary information regarding class.

Will there be any video or photographs during the class?

All classes will be recorded for our internal records, training, and security. Some short clips may be shared on social media platforms. Photographs may be taken from time to time throughout the class to promote our virtual academy programming. When you enroll, you sign a release giving permission for your child's image to be used. Please contact education@americanstage.org if you have any questions.

Will there still be a final sharing/showcase?

A final sharing is a small presentation or example of some exercises that have been worked on in class. Some sessions may have final sharings via Zoom or pre-recording, depending on the subject or topic of the course.

Youth: Details will be provided in your welcome email and google classroom throughout the week.

Adult: Instructors will make a decision with students/education staff towards the end of the class series as to the best format in each case.



Why isn't my Zoom video working?

Here are some helpful tutorials and articles about how to operate zoom.

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/206618765-Zoom-Video-Tutorials>

We will be having a parent orientation at 8:00am each Monday of a new camp session, where we can help to answer any additional questions.

Attendance and Participation Policies:

Attendance:

Regular, punctual attendance is essential for your success in the class. Excessive tardiness and/or absences may result in dismissal from the class. If your student will be late or absent from class for any reason, please contact your student's Teaching Artist directly on the google classroom. Be sure to arrive in the virtual classroom at least 5 minutes before the class is scheduled to begin so that class can start on time. Teaching Artists will open the virtual classroom when class is ready to begin, about 15 minutes before the start of class. Only students who have registered and paid with American Stage Education and completed the enrollment process may attend American Stage Education Classes.

Cancellation Policy:

You may only withdraw from a class up until 72 hours before the class begins. There will be no refunds within 72 hours of the class starting. If you would like to withdraw or cancel your registration within the cancellation window, there will be a \$25 Cancellation Fee and all other monies will be refunded. If enrollment for a specific class does not reach the required minimum for that class, American Stage will cancel the class and fully refund any previously enrolled students.

Standards of Conduct Class Conduct Policy:

We believe a safe environment is essential so students can freely play and explore this art form. It is our priority to provide a safe educational and artistic environment in which students and instructors/directors can build trust. We expect all involved to demonstrate respect for one another because it is essential for any collaboration. American Stage reserves the right to remove a student, performer, director, or teacher from a class or program if they demonstrate conduct that we deem physically or emotionally disruptive or harmful to others. Conduct that may result in removal or suspension includes, but is not limited to:

- A pattern of verbal disruptions
- Repeated disregard of the teacher or director's directives in class or rehearsal



- Verbal or emotional abuse, bullying, or violence
- Physical or verbal threats
- Repeated or excessive tardiness or absence
- Cyberbullying or inappropriate communication on social media or through texting or in the chat.

If the Conduct Policy is being broken among your child's classmates and you are concerned, please communicate with either your student's Teaching Artist or the Youth Education Associate. See contact information at the end of this document.

Discipline Policy:

Immediate Dismissal or Expulsion can occur if at any point during class or rehearsal the instructor/director feels that a student or performer is engaging in behavior which is threatening, dangerous, and/or highly disruptive to the classroom ensemble, the instructor/director may require that the student leave the virtual room for the remainder of the day's class or rehearsal. Students/performers dismissed in this manner may not return to their regular class/rehearsal until they have spoken with a member of the Education staff. Behavior which would result in immediate dismissal includes, but is not limited to, threats or acts of violence, bullying, or emotional abuse. If behavior is deemed excessively disruptive or dangerous to the classroom environment, American Stage Education reserves the right to permanently expel a student or performer from the program.

Warnings:

Students who display behavior that a Teaching Artist deems to be detrimental to the progress of their ensemble may be issued a warning. The Teaching Artist gives the warning verbally and then notifies the parent either verbally or via email. If a student receives more than one warning for similar issues, the Youth Education Associate and Director of Education will be notified and appropriate action will be taken. Depending on the circumstances, students may be dismissed from the class.

Anti-Harassment Policy:

Harassment of any kind is strictly prohibited. American Stage will not tolerate harassment by anyone, including instructors, staff, performers, students, visitors, vendors, contractors, and third parties. Harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical, or visual, that is so severe or pervasive that it unreasonably interferes with an individual's participation in American Stage Education programs, or creates an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational or artistic environment.



Tips for harassment/bullying:

If you are being bullied or harassed:

- Calmly ask the bully to stop
- If speaking up seems too hard or not safe, walk away and stay away
- Stay near other people as most bullying happens one on one.

Tell your child's instructor or American Stage Education staff member so we can help you or other who might be affected now or in the future.

Complaint Procedure:

If you or your child would like to report, file a complaint, or seek guidance, please speak with a Teaching Artist in your classroom, a member of the American Stage Education staff, or the Producing Artistic Director. Contact information is at the end of this document. Any student who experiences or witnesses harassment of any kind, whether from a fellow student or a faculty member, should discuss the problem with American Stage Education Staff and, if desired, request that staff speaks informally to the person complained about. No one at American Stage – whether faculty member or a student – may reprimand, retaliate, or discriminate against an individual for raising a concern, making a complaint, and/or participating in an investigation under this policy. Any individual who believes that he or she has been retaliated against in any manner should report the matter to American Stage Education staff. All concerns and complaints will be treated with confidentiality to the extent practicable without compromising the investigation and/or resolution of the matter, and will be investigated thoroughly and promptly. Where possible, American Stage will attempt to resolve the issue informally (for example, by speaking to the alleged harasser and/or counseling the parties). However, this does not preclude more formal corrective or disciplinary action.

Zero Tolerance Policy:

American Stage maintains a zero tolerance policy for violence. Acts or threats of physical violence which involve or affect American Stage faculty, students, and staff will not be tolerated. Examples of prohibited threats or acts of violence include, but are not limited to, the following: Threatening an individual or his/her family, friends, or property with harm, or otherwise engaging in behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury in another person - Intentional destruction or threatening to destruct property - Making/sending harassing or threatening phone calls, text messages, emails, and social media posts/comments - Harassing surveillance or stalking - Unauthorized possession or use of weapons or replica weapons Every student/parent is encouraged to report incidents of threats or acts of physical violence of which he/she is aware. The report should be made to American Stage Education staff or the Producing Artistic Director.



Student Whistleblower Policy:

Students, performers, instructors, and directors must immediately report to American Stage Education Staff any activity or conduct that they suspect is:

- Illegal, or a violation of any state or federal law and/or regulation
- A serious violation of American Stage Education policy and/or procedure, including the above stated policy regarding violence
- Otherwise inappropriate and/or unethical

American Stage will not retaliate against any student as a result of his or her report of inappropriate conduct under this policy, or because he or she has refused to follow an illegal, inappropriate, and/or unethical request. Confidentiality Reports of inappropriate conduct under the policy may be submitted on a confidential basis by the student directly or may be submitted anonymously. American Stage will endeavor to investigate the reported conduct as discreetly as possible under the applicable circumstances. Reports of violations or suspected violations will be kept confidential to the extent possible, consistent with the need to conduct an appropriate investigation.

Handling of Reported Violations:

Upon receipt of a report of inappropriate conduct under this policy, American Stage shall conduct a prompt and thorough investigation and appropriate corrective action will be taken, if/as warranted.

Open Door Policy:

American Stage is committed to providing a safe, productive, and educational environment for all students. Part of this commitment is encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, concern, or questions can be addressed and discussed. Students who have a questions, problem, suggestion and/or complaint should feel free to discuss the issue with a member of the American Stage Education staff. There will be no retaliation for raising a concern under this policy. Any issues raised or discussions held pursuant to American Stage's Open Door Policy will be treated with confidentiality unless the student agrees to include others in the discussion or an investigation into the matter is warranted, in which case, confidentiality will be maintained to the extent practicable without compromising the investigation.

Contact Information:

Please direct communication and requests surrounding these policies and procedures to one or more of the following American Stage employees:

1) Youth Education Associate

Marissa Nicole Koch. mkoch@americanstage.org, 727-823-1600 ext 204



2) Director of Education; Director of Improv

Tiffany Ford tford@americanstage.org, 727-823-1600 ext 201

3) Adult Education Associate

Patrick Jackson pjackson@americanstage.org, 727-823-1600 ext 213

4) Community Engagement Associate

Sadie Lockhart slockhart@americanstage.org, 727-823-1600 ext 212

5) Producing Artistic Director

Stephanie Gularte. sgularte@americanstage.org

Failure to comply with these policies may result in action up to and including dismissal from American Stage programs and activities.

Agreements Hold Harmless Policy:

By registering in an American Stage Education class, I agree to hold American Stage Theatre Company and St. Petersburg College harmless from any and all claims, loss or damage to my own or my enrolled child's personal property, liabilities and costs, as a result of participation in classes and performances, including travel to and from, or any events incidental to classes and performances. Photo Release Policy: By registering in an American Stage Education class, I give American Stage permission to use photos of myself or my enrolled child taken either during class or during a performance for promotional purposes. Student names will not be published by American Stage.