



Guide to Theater Etiquette

Introduction

Learning to become a good audience member is a process. We encourage teachers and parents to model appropriate behavior masterfully and guide students carefully on their journey toward proficiency as audience members. Students need to be informed in advance about what is expected of them. They also need opportunities to practice. Practice happens in the classroom, at home as well as at the theater. We hope that each visit to the theater will help build audience skills that will maximize each student's ability to enjoy and actively engage with works of art now and in the future.

Guidelines for behavior

Students need to stay with the group at all times. Theater ushers will help with seating and make sure that everyone is in the right place.

House lights will dim as the performance is about to start, and will thereafter go to black. This is the time to **shift your attention to the stage, to sit calmly and quietly.**

Please don't talk during the performance. Thoughts that absolutely must be shared should be whispered in the softest voice possible. In the theater house, we've entered into the magic world of live performance and talking is very distracting to others.

Body movements should be kept to a minimum. Your seat is your castle during the performance. Stay and get comfortable there, but know that feet belong on the floor and not on the seat back in front of you.

Beverages or foods are not allowed in the theater. The McCallum (and any other live performance space) is very different from a movie theater in this respect. We also ask that teachers and parents ask students to give up their chewing gum at the door.



As we grow, so do our bladders and our ability to plan ahead. Older students, teachers and parents should be able to **plan bathroom breaks around performance times** as such breaks become a great distraction for other audience members. Younger students might not be able to do this as well. We ask, however, that teachers and parents help avoid bathroom breaks during a performance by planning time for visits to the bathroom prior to and after performances. Certainly, we do understand that sometimes emergencies arise.

Please refrain from wearing any type of head dress that will limit the view of the stage for other audience members.

Performers love a responsive audience, people who communicate back, in appropriate ways, that they follow and appreciate the art that is being presented. **At the theater, appreciation is, in general, shown by clapping.** Sometimes people shout bravo (excellent in Italian) and encore (again in French) at the end and rise to their feet to honor extraordinary performances. The nature of the art form may allow for whistling, shouts and other signs of approval. Being observant of what happens on stage, how the performers act, and sensitive to the overall mood of the presentation usually gives the audience clues as to what type of appreciation is suitable. However, prior knowledge is worth gold. We encourage teachers and parents to talk about the nature of the performance before visiting the theater, and to utilize the *Learning Link* study guide material to prepare your students for the performance.

We ask that teachers choose options other than "sh-sh-ing" to signal students to be quiet. Otherwise, this often becomes more distracting than the action being corrected.

Don't leave your seat until the performers take their curtain call at the end and the house lights come up. Wait patiently to exit.

Do not attend the performance with anything that flashes, beeps, rings or buzzes.

Be mindful of others and tune in to what happens onstage. Everyone comes to the McCallum with high expectations of having a good time. **Your kindness and respect toward your fellow audience members and the performers will contribute greatly to your own experience.**

Enjoy the McCallum!

