

## **IN-PERSON ADJUDICATION**

### **COVID-19 SAFETY REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

As of March 2, 2021

Safety is Des Moines Performing Arts' top priority. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Iowa High School Musical Theater Awards issues the following requirements and recommendations for schools and adjudicators participating in the in-person adjudication process. Requirements will be modified as COVID-19 conditions evolve.

#### **BACKGROUND**

We recognize that each school and geographic location face unique circumstances when it comes to their virus mitigation response. The IHSMTA-issued COVID-19 Safety Guidelines and Requirements are meant to give schools flexibility, while also giving adjudicators a minimum amount of assurance of the precautions that will be taken in front-of-house spaces when adjudicating in-person.

In-person adjudication requirements and recommendations are rooted in the [Recommendations for Reopening School Theatre Programs: Theatre Education in the Time of COVID-19](#) issued by the Educational Theatre Association. We encourage all directors to review the entirety of the EDTA recommendations with their administrations, as they put in place school-specific plans to safeguard the health of students, faculty, staff, volunteers and audience members – including adjudicators.

#### **CURRENT COUNTY CONDITIONS AND ELIGIBILITY**

For the safety of adjudicators and communities at large, in-person adjudication will not be allowed in counties with a current 14-day positivity rate at 15% or above. Program staff will monitor current county conditions for scheduled shows and work with school contacts to cancel in-person adjudication if necessary. (Schools in this category are still welcome to have their production adjudicated virtually, if allowed by their licensing arrangements.)

See current Iowa conditions by county [HERE](#).

If your school meets the current acceptable rates for county positivity, see the next section for additional requirements and recommendations for in-person adjudication.

#### **REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IN-PERSON ADJUDICATION**

The mitigation efforts listed below are primarily based on the Live Performance section of the above-mentioned report from the Educational Theatre Association (page 4), with additional influence from the CDC.

For IHSMTA in-person adjudication purposes, the recommended mitigation efforts are separated into categories: Minimum Requirements for Schools, Minimum Requirements for Adjudicators, and Additional Recommendations for Schools to Consider:

##### **Minimum Requirements for Schools**

- Require all audience members (ages 2 and above) and front-of-house personnel to wear masks from the time of audience member arrival through departure
- Provide adjudicator seating that has at least 6-foot social distancing from other audience members
- Provide a pathway for audience members to maintain social distancing while within your venue and front-of-house spaces
- Educate all audience members on health rules and expectations through channels, such as:
  - school or program website;
  - social media channels;
  - online ticket purchasing;
  - emails and push notifications;

- signage leading to and at the event site.
- *Note: schools are asked to share their audience expectations on the Adjudication Form in order to also inform adjudicators of any additional school-specific expectations.*
- If staging includes performers in the aisles or the house, performers should also be masked and follow 6-foot social distancing from where adjudicators are seated.

### **Minimum Requirements for Adjudicators**

- Wear a mask from arrival through departure
- Exhibit no signs of illness
- Adhere to all school-specific audience requirements/directions issued by the school, as communicated in the school's Adjudication Form and any directions given on-site whether verbally, through signage, etc.
- *Note: these requirements also apply to adjudicator guests, if applicable*

### **Additional Recommendations for Schools to Consider**

- Schools are encouraged to follow all CDC, Iowa Department of Public Health, Educational Theatre Association and local health guidelines.
- From the Educational Theatre Association:
  - Whenever possible, students, staff, and volunteers should wear masks when backstage, in the green room or other theatre related spaces, and adhere to the CDC guidelines for handling and sanitizing the masks.
  - Calculate acceptable audience attendance based on house capacity that ensures 6-foot social distancing (<https://www.banquettlespro.com/social-distancing-room-space-calculator>).
  - Require volunteers—parents, ushers, box office staff, etc.—to follow the same safety guidelines as all other school personnel.
  - Require all patrons to:
    - undergo temperature checks before entering the theatre;
    - follow a pre-marked pathway of entrance in and out of the theatre.
  - Provide hand sanitizer in the lobby and restrooms.
  - Sanitize all public areas prior to and after a performance—seats, rails, restrooms, back of house, and other high-touch surfaces, using CDC-approved disinfectants.
  - Sanitize all set pieces and props before and after the performances.
  - Advise audience members to limit clustering in groups before the production begins, during intermission, and afterwards.
  - Limit bathroom occupancy to a designated number by applying the room capacity calculator (<https://www.banquettlespro.com/social-distancing-room-space-calculator>).
  - Limit concession stand sales to pre-packaged beverages and food or eliminate concessions
  - Backstage:
    - masks should be worn at all times by all students, teachers, and volunteers in the backstage area;
    - sanitize all technical hardware--microphones/headsets, sound and light boards, lights, and rigging before and after the performance or rehearsals, per manufacturer instruction;
    - Sanitize all surfaces in the control booth, using CDC-approved disinfectants;
    - Limit the number of students in the control booth, based on social distancing rules.
  - Be prepared to assist in contact tracing, per district health guidelines.

## **JUDGEMENT CALLS AND FLEXIBILITY**

The 2020-2021 program incorporates the following points of flexibility for schools and adjudicators:

### **Virtual Adjudication**

Schools unable to meet the minimum safety requirements are invited to have their production reviewed virtually, assuming appropriate rights are attained for digital viewership.

### **Advance Changes**

If an assigned adjudicator becomes ill or wishes to recuse themselves due to new information (such as changing case counts in either the county/community where the adjudicator or school resides), they are to alert program staff as soon as possible that they are no longer able to adjudicate in-person. IHSMTA staff will honor this request and make best efforts to arrange for an alternative adjudicator.

Similarly, if a school has to switch their format from in-person audience to virtual audience (or virtual audience only), or change their dates, etc. they should alert program staff as soon as possible.

### **On-Site Judgment**

The cooperation of audience members, students, and staff/volunteers is essential for safety precaution implementation. In the event an adjudicator arrives on-site and judges their personal safety compromised by a lack of adherence by others, the adjudicator is under no obligation to stay.

Adjudicators should alert program staff as soon as possible in this unfortunate situation. Staff will alert the school contact of this development as soon as possible, but schools should note that it is unlikely that program staff will be able to arrange for an alternative adjudicator on such short notice. The school will still be eligible for awards and honors, with calculations adjusted for the total number of completed adjudications.

Note: Des Moines Performing Arts does not assume responsibility for insuring that individual schools or adjudicators do or do not comply with the stated requirements and recommendations.