

## Guidelines for directing with Kildare Youth Theatre

Directing with Kildare Youth Theatre is as much about teaching as it is about directing. As it is a youth project, there are overlapping roles and responsibilities that come with the job. These are explained below.

- Use the text/piece to introduce or develop performance skills (eg voice and articulation, placing emphasis, actioning, purposeful movement, etc)
- Where possible, use any opportunities that arise when interpreting the text/piece to discuss social and cultural issues relevant to the group (eg how is power structured in a classroom? Is this an accurate portrayal of life? What's the reality of similar situations for boys, and for girls? Etc). The learning in KYT is also social and political. However, be very careful exploring personal or emotional issues.
- The artistic ambition of the project should aim to be high. Allow sufficient time in the rehearsal period to develop this.
- The group making the piece of theatre is a project (as in, The 'Chatroom' project for example, or the 'Totally Over You' project, etc). You are the project manager or director of the project. As such, you need to arrange that they are supervised between shows, on trips, or in rehearsals.
- You have responsibility for the group's use of the space. Plan and book adequate rehearsal time; ensure they clean up and tidy after they've used the space; lock up after use if you're the last one in; etc.
- Sometimes, you could be the first point-of-contact for a young person in your group who reveals to you or to the group a past or current incident of bullying, abuse or trauma. You need to be familiar with our Child Protection procedures so you know what to do.
- Become familiar with our Health and Safety policy and procedure so you know what to do in the event of an accident: and also that you can prevent potential accidents from happening.
- Draw up a rehearsal schedule early in the project's life-span, ideally before auditioning, and make it available to everyone who is interested in the project. Ensure there's enough time throughout the project to achieve the outcomes you wish to achieve. Rehearsal Schedules are a form of planning that eases stress on the young people: once they know in advance how much time will be required for a project they will be better able to manage their commitment. Try to plan your schedule based on a realistic imagining of how much work can be done per individual rehearsal. Stick to it and avoid adding in extra time at the end.
- Parents and participants should be posted a copy of the schedule in advance of rehearsals and asked to commit to it.
- Parents should be emailed a copy of the script or an outline of the theme to be explored in advance so they can 'sign off' an agreement that they're happy for their son/daughter/ward to be involved in it.
- An assistant director or trainee director can help with the admin side of things as much as with the artistic side of things.
- Request help from Crooked House if you need it – don't assume we automatically know what's required. We need to know what you need and we will strive to help you in all areas (production, administration, technical, artistic, etc).
- Ideally, you should try to keep a Production Log (or blog) that will be used as an evaluation tool and will also be kept in the archives post-production. You may not have time to do this, but perhaps your AD will.

- Aim to be clear in your communication with the young people. To this end, avoid generalisations in feedback where possible. For example, comments such as “That was very good. But we need more energy there” may mean a lot to you. But someone hearing it does not know:
  - What was good (pace? Characterisation? Etc)
  - How is ‘good’ defined (is there a measuring scale?)
  - How is energy created? What behaviours do I need to show in order to create energy? Etc)

Use the *actioning* technique to help with clarity. Then both you and the company have a commonly understood lexicon and register of terms.

- Tell the truth. But do so remembering that your truth is probably different to other people’s and depends on individual taste, social background, previous experiences, gender, current perspectives and the ‘lenses’ through which you view people/situations/contexts etc. Be open to the young people’s versions of what is true, but also be alert to where cultural and other influences are shaping what they see as being true.
- View the project as a collaboration, where both you and the company are exploring the possibilities of your creativity. That means that you are trying out things to see what will happen, and so are they. Theatre is a curiosity-led discipline, so be prepared to explore the unknown. But be equally able to offer fairly objective, critical analysis of the unknown once it appears.
- Do as much research as possible into the project/scene/play before-hand. Share all of this if you can. We use closed Facebook groups to share thoughts, ideas, research, links and so on about the project at hand. This group can then become the bones of an online record of your exploration.
- Creating an atmosphere in the rehearsal room of focus, trust, and excitement, free from negative stress, is a desired ideal in the theatre-making process. It’s one we all aim for – some of us manage it better than others.