



Society Handbook

“House Rules”

Welcome to Whitchurch Amateur Dramatics & Operatic Society

The Whitchurch Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society has been a cornerstone of the local arts scene for 100 years, dedicated to a love of theatre and providing a platform for local talent. With a diverse repertoire ranging from classic plays to modern musicals, WAODS remains committed to enriching the cultural landscape of Whitchurch.

Whether you're a seasoned performer or a newcomer to the stage, we're thrilled to have you as part of our vibrant community. Our society is a place where creativity thrives, friendships blossom, and the magic of theatre comes alive. We're passionate about storytelling, character development, and the thrill of live performances.

We have written this handbook to help you learn more about the society and better understand the expectations of each other in order to create an atmosphere where each person is respected valued and most importantly have fun.

Thank you and welcome!

Chris Hughes

Chair of the Committee

Our Values

Inclusivity: We welcome everyone, regardless of experience or background. Theatre is a place where diversity shines.

Passion: Bring your enthusiasm, dedication, and love for the stage. We're all here because we share a burning passion for the arts.

Collaboration: Theatre is a team effort. Let's collaborate, support each other, and create something extraordinary together.

Health & Safety

As a Society, we recognise and accept our responsibility for providing a safe and healthy environment for our Society activities and to avoid risks to the health and safety of our members. We will undertake risk assessments and take all reasonable steps to identify and eliminate any potential hazards.

We all have a duty to co-operate in all safety related matters, not to endanger ourselves or other members. Anyone found misusing equipment or property or acting in a way, either inappropriate to their age or likely to cause damage or harm to themselves or others will be asked to leave; if there are repeated incidents, the person may be asked to leave the Society.

Please report to the Director:

- Anything that may be dangerous to you or anyone else.
- Any medical condition which may affect your safety or the safety of others.

Please ensure that you:

- Sign the attendance register on EVERY visit - this will be used as a record should there be a fire or other incident requiring evacuation of the building.
- Report any accident so that it can be recorded in the accident book.
- Comply with any safety signs or warnings that have been given.
- Clean up or report any spillages.
- Keep your belongings tidy and avoid creating trip hazards.
- Wash your hands after using the toilet.

First Aid

- Please be aware of who the first aider is during Society activities.
- Report to the first aider if anything is used from the First Aid kit, as this will need to be replaced.
- Return any unused items, and the kit, to their correct place of storage.

Fire:

- Smoking and Vaping is not permitted at any time within the building.
- Please keep fire exits clear of all obstructions.
- Anyone discovering a fire should sound the alarm.
- On hearing the alarm, leave the building quickly but calmly, via a safe exit, and assemble in a safe place with other members, in the car park opposite the rooms, Colour Supplies Car Park.
- DO NOT GO HOME. The register will be checked to ensure everyone has left the building safely and can be accounted for.
- Please do not stop to gather your belongings.
- Please do not panic or run.
- Do not re-enter the building until the all clear has been given.
- FROM TIME TO TIME A PRACTICE FIRE DRILL WILL BE UNDERTAKEN TO ENSURE EVERYONE KNOWS HOW TO RESPOND CORRECTLY.

Child Protection & Safeguarding

We are committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment for all members, volunteers, and participants, particularly children, young people, and vulnerable adults. We believe that the welfare of the child is paramount.

Please familiarise yourself with our Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Policy for more details of how we look after children and vulnerable adults. These are available on our website.

All members and users of WAODS are required to report instances of actual or suspected child abuse to the Designated Person(s) with responsibility for safeguarding.

**The Designated Safeguarding Person is:
Jason Wainwright**

**The Deputy Designated Safeguarding Person
is: Christine Hughes**

Anti Bullying & Harassment

We are committed to providing a creative working environment free from harassment and bullying and ensuring all are treated, and treat others, with dignity and respect.

Please familiarise yourself with our Anti Bullying & Harassment Policy which sets out our standards and the reporting procedures. This can be found on our website.

Diversity & Inclusion

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion is unwavering, and we strive to create an environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and empowered.

Embracing Diversity: We actively seek members and audiences that reflect the vibrant tapestry of our community. We welcome individuals of all backgrounds, abilities, and identities.

Neurodiversity Support: We recognise the unique perspectives and talents of neurodiverse individuals. We provide reasonable adjustments to ensure their full participation, both on and off the stage.

Safe and Inclusive Space: We strive to remove barriers and foster a safe environment. Discrimination, harassment, and exclusion have no place here.

Our Commitment to Reasonable Adjustments:

Auditions and Rehearsals: We accommodate different communication styles, sensory needs, and processing speeds during auditions and rehearsals.

Communication: We adapt communication methods to suit individual preferences, whether it's written instructions, visual cues, or verbal prompts.

Flexible Roles: Everyone has a place—whether on stage, backstage, or in administrative roles. We tailor tasks to individual strengths.

Code of Conduct

Rehearsals: There will be times where your scene is not being rehearsed. You will be required to sit in silence. You may wish to consider bringing a book, homework or phone if you get bored easily. If you using your phone please make sure they operate without sound. Anyone disturbing the rehearsal for others, including running around, play fighting etc, will be given a warning.

Mobile phones: should be turned off or muted except during breaks.

Sweets/Gum: Please make sure you are not chewing gum or eating sweets while rehearsing.

Rubbish: Please do not leave any rubbish on the floor in the rehearsal room, please place rubbish in the bins provided.

Junior Members: DO NOT leave the rehearsal rooms/premises without the permission of the Director.

Bullying & Harassment: Will not be tolerated.

Contact with Children: Adults should have no unsupervised contact with children, at least two adults should always be in the room. If unsupervised contact is unavoidable, steps will be taken to minimise risk. For example, work will be carried out in a public area, or in a designated room with a door open. Adults will only touch children when it is absolutely necessary in relation to the particular activity to support the performance. Adults will seek the consent of the child prior to any physical contact and the purpose of the contact shall be made clear. (e.g helping to alter costumes or help put make up on)

Alcohol: The Society operates a zero tolerance policy towards under-age drinking and would appreciate parental/guardian co-operation in this matter. Any incidents of this nature will be regarded very seriously and will result in an immediate written warning.

Complaints, Discipline and Appeals

We want to ensure all of our members enjoy being part of the Whitchurch Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society however we recognise there are times where there you may have concerns you wish to share with us.

- If you have concerns about the running of the Whitchurch Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society we encourage you to raise it to a member of the committee.
- If the concern is regarding a member of the society in the first instance we ask that you raise the matter with the Directors of the show. If the concern relates to a Director then we ask that you raise your concern to the Chairperson, President or Vice President.
- Should you raise a formal complaint of misconduct regarding the behaviour of members or officers it will be dealt with by the society in accordance our Complaints, Discipline and Appeals Procedure to find out how we deal with your concerns. This can be found on our website.

For behaviour issues relating to junior members under the age of 18 a warnings procedure is in place to ensure the society's high standards are maintained. The stages are as follows:

- Stage 1 = Verbal warning
- Stage 2 = Verbal Warning
- Stage 3 = Written warning with the parents right to respond
- Stage 4 = Removal from the production and membership of Society to be discussed by the Committee

Official warnings, including the nature and date of the incident, will be recorded on the reverse of the 'Information and Declaration' form.

If there are any reasons that may impact on your behaviour or performance you feel you should be aware of please speak to a Director or Chaperone in confidence.

Membership

All performers must be paid up members of the Society. The current membership subscriptions are as follows:

- for children aged 8 to 14 years, a £5 payment, on a show-to-show basis will be required.
- for young people aged 15 to 17 years, an annual subscription fee of £15 will be charged.
- For those over the age of 18, an annual subscription fee of £30 will be charged.

On top of the above we ask you to pay £1 at each rehearsal per person to support the costs of the room hire.

A card machine is available if you do not have cash

Social Events

From time to time we arrange social and fundraising events as a society. Junior members will be invited to take part in social events at the discretion of the Committee.

Publicity

We rely on each member's active involvement in promoting our shows. Here's why your support matters:

Ticket Sales: Selling tickets is essential for our financial sustainability. Your enthusiasm encourages others to attend, ensuring full houses and memorable performances.

Word of Mouth: Spread the word! Tell your friends, family, and colleagues about our upcoming productions. Personal recommendations go a long way.

Posters and Flyers: Help us decorate your town, workplace, school with eye-catching posters and distribute flyers.

Social Media: Share our event pages, teasers, and behind-the-scenes glimpses on social platforms. Engage with our online community.

Communication Channels

We communicate using the following platforms:

Website: <https://www.waods.net/>

Box Office: <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whitchurchamateuroperaticanddramaticsociety>

Facebook: Search for: Whitchurch Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society

Instagram, Tik Tok: Search for: WAODS 1924

WhatsApp

Please speak to a director to be added to our Whats App Community. We have various groups in our community depending on your role, the show and membership status.

Junior members aged 13 and under are unable to join this community due to WhatsApp restrictions. Those over 13 require parental permission to join the community. Parents are able to join this community to get the latest show information.

Social Media Guidelines

Here's some guidance for our members on using social media effectively while representing our drama society:

Be Enthusiastic: Share your passion for theatre! Highlight rehearsals, backstage moments, and exciting updates.

Celebrate Achievements: Post about successful performances, workshops, and community involvement.

Avoid Negativity: Refrain from public complaints on society-related issues.

Engage with Followers: Interact with comments, messages, and tags. Show appreciation for support.

No Unauthorized Material: Avoid sharing copyrighted music, scripts, or images without proper permissions.

Promoting Shows and Events: Share official event pages for our productions, Include direct links to ticket booking platforms, build excitement.

Remember, your social media presence reflects our society.

Show Rules

Maintaining a positive reputation within our local community is crucial for our society. To achieve this, we've established the following guidelines that cast and crew members must adhere to during performances:

- **Professional Conduct:** All members should conduct themselves professionally both on and off the stage. Respect fellow performers, crew, and audience members.
- **Punctuality:** Arrive on time for performances. Being punctual shows commitment and respect for everyone's time.
- **Positive Attitude:** Maintain a positive and supportive attitude. Encourage fellow performers and contribute to a harmonious environment.
- **Respect for Property:** Treat props, costumes, and set pieces with care. Our reputation also depends on how well we care for our resources.
- **Costumes:** Members of the cast will wear the costumes, wigs, shoes and make-up allocated to them without deviation, addition or alteration, unless first passed by the Costume Mistress or Make-up Mistress (or Producer/Director) as being relevant to the time period and character of the show. Any costume or part of costume brought in by a cast member must first be checked by the Costume Mistress (or Producer/Director) as being in the correct time period and character of the show. Members of the cast will wear the costumes, wigs, shoes and make-up allocated to them without deviation, addition or alteration, unless first passed by the Costume Mistress or Make-up Mistress (or Producer/Director) as being relevant to the time period and character of the show. Any costume or part of costume brought in by a cast member must first be checked by the Costume Mistress (or Producer/Director) as being in the correct time period and character of the show.
- **Accessories:** Please ensure that any accessories you wear i.e. watches, rings, etc are appropriate both to the period and to your character. i.e. don't wear a wedding ring if your character is unwed.
- **Smoking and Vaping:** Smoking and vaping is not allowed in or around the dressing rooms, toilets, stage or backstage. This is a legal requirement.

- **Mobile Phones:** Mobile phones are not allowed to be switched on anywhere in the auditorium, or backstage areas. Or be in your pocket when onstage. They can cause interference with the radio microphones.
- **Visitors:** Anybody not involved in the production, are not allowed in dressing rooms or backstage during performances or during the interval or on stage at any time, without the express permission of the Stage Manager. This is a Health and Safety requirement and a condition of Insurance cover.
- **Fire Register:** A register will be maintained for Fire Regulation purposes during the show. It is everyone's individual responsibility to make sure they sign in/out.
- **Junior Cast Members:** An appointed and approved chaperone will be responsible for the welfare of children during show week. Please ensure children follow the instructions of the chaperones at all times.

Remember, our actions reflect not only on ourselves but also on our entire society. Let's uphold our reputation with pride!