

DCMS TRUST Company Student Handbook

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What is DCMS TRUST Company?

The DCMS Speech and Theatre Arts TRUST Company is an after school club. **T.R.U.S.T.** stands for Theatre Reaching & Understanding Student Thespians.

DCMS TRUST Company Mission Statement

The DCMS Speech and Theatre Arts TRUST Company aim to promote the love of theatre amongst their members and audiences as well as to train young actors and technicians in the foundations of their craft while providing a safe environment.

The DCMS TRUST Company is currently directed by...



Ms. Ashli McDonald

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<http://www.fortbendisd.com/dcms/teacher-websites>

Ms. McDonald holds a degree in Theatre from Tarleton State University in her hometown of Stephenville, TX. She began her teaching journey in 2009 at La Porte Junior High in La Porte ISD. Beginning her sixth year of developing young actors in middle school, she is very excited to be at David Crockett Middle School and is committed to continuing to build upon the foundations and traditions here while propelling the DCMS students to new heights.

Classroom Expectations...

PROFESSIONALISM

The number one rule in Theatre Arts is **RESPECT**.

For Yourself: take pride in your behavior, work, and integrity! Do not degrade yourself physically or verbally ("I can't," etc.)

For Others: Treat others kindly. Listen and respond appropriately to teachers and peers. Do not make sarcastic, degrading, or offensive remarks to or about anyone.

For the Environment: Take care of the physical space in our classroom. Place trash in proper containers, put supplies and belongings in their places, do not write on classroom surfaces, etc.

READINESS

Another rule in Theatre Arts is **RESPONSIBILITY**.

For Yourself: Take personal responsibility and accountability for your own preparedness, behavior, and quality of work. Only YOU can control YOU—it is in your control whether you succeed or fail in class and in life!

For Others: Work cooperatively with classmates and contribute to group work and class discussions. Realize that working cooperatively is an important theatre and life skill!

For the Environment: Pick up trash, keep belongings in their place, and clean up after yourself AND OTHERS!!!

Come to class prepared with...

- All necessary materials and supplies
- All work that is due completed
- All necessary lines memorized
- An **EAGERNESS** and **EXCITEMENT** to **PARTICIPATE** and **LEARN**

ENSEMBLE

Ensemble is the direct result of being professional and ready. By being Professional and Ready that shows Ms. McDonald and your company members that you Care, you're Committed so we can TRUST you!

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Care

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Grading Guidelines...

Grading in all Theatre classes is based on:

Daily Work—50%

Includes class participation (attitude and effort count!), in-class assignments, homework, and vocabulary quizzes.

Tests, Presentations, Performances—50%

Any formal performance or presentation as well as any tests given will count as “major” grades. This will include a cumulative vocabulary test and a grade based on portfolio completion each six weeks.

Other Policies:

- Late daily work will be accepted for -10 points per day. Major grades and performances are not accepted late in most cases. After the third day, no credit will be given for the assignment.
- If a student is dissatisfied with a grade for any assignment or performance, he may request to repeat the assignment for additional credit.
- All students will have to participate fully, including working as a motivated individual and a cooperative member of any group in order to succeed in Theatre Arts.

Extra Credit Opportunities

“Bonus” points will be given for participating in TRUST COMPANY events or attending a live theatrical performance. Proof of attendance may be required.

Academic Eligibility for Extra-Curricular Activities

To participate in TRUST COMPANY activities outside of the normal school day, students must be passing all classes on the most recent report card. If a student is ineligible because of a failing grade on a report card, he or she can regain eligibility only by passing *all* classes on the following progress report. Waivers are possible for pre-AP and GT classes in certain circumstances.

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TRUST COMPANY Tournament Team Basics...

The TRUST COMPANY Tournament team will be competing this year at least two events in the spring. Dates are still being determined by the host schools at this time. Events are detailed on pages 5-6. Students placed on the Tournament Team will work with Ms. McDonald to choose scripts, prepare performances, and learn strategies for being a successful competitor.

How to Audition...

Auditions for the TRUST COMPANY Tournament Team will take place on Wednesday, December 9th from 4:00-5:30 pm in the Room 301. Please plan to stay until 5:30 pm unless you have made other arrangements with Ms. McDonald *beforehand*. Please pick up an audition packet and come prepared on the date of auditions with:

- Prepared Monologue - To audition for our Tournament Team, you will need to memorize one of the monologues from the audition packet. Remember to create a distinct character and to speak loudly and clearly! Don't be afraid to take chances!
- Completed Audition Form from audition packet
- Signed Team Contract (*on the back of your Audition Form*)
- Completed and Signed Conflict Calendar

Students will not be placed on the team without a signed calendar and contract.



Tournament Event Descriptions

Poetry – One student reads a published poem or group of poems from a “black-book.” Poems may be funny or serious and may or may not rhyme. The student uses characterization, facial expression, and gestures in their performance. No movement below the waist (3-7 minutes; 30 second memorized introduction including title and author)

Prose – One student reads a published short story or “cutting” from a story or book from a “black-book.” The story may be funny or serious. The student uses characterization, facial expression, and gestures in their performance. No movement below the waist (3-7 minutes; 30 second memorized introduction including title and author)

Humorous – One student memorizes a published story (humorous in nature) and performs it using characterization and movement. (3-7 minutes; 30 second memorized introduction including title and author)

Dramatic – One student memorizes a published story (dramatic in nature) and performs it using characterization and movement. (3-7 minutes; 30 second memorized introduction including title and author)

Storytelling – One student memorizes a published story suitable to tell a young child and performs it using characterization and movement. (3-7 minutes; 30 second memorized introduction including title and author) (Wiese)

Pantomime – One student acts out a self-written scene/story with movement and performs it using no sound or mouthing of words. (2-5 minutes)

Improv. – One student draws 3 topics, decides upon 1, and then has approximately 3 minutes to “create” a scene. (2-5 minutes)

Duet Improv. – Two students draw 3 topics, decide upon 1, and then have approximately 3 minutes to “create” a scene. (2-5 minutes)

Extemp – Students research current events and create a “file” of current news articles. At tournaments, students individually draw 3 topics, decide upon 1, and then have 30 minutes to prepare a speech on that topic. (2-5 minutes)

Oratory – One student writes an original persuasive speech, memorizes it, then performs it with limited movement. (3-7 minutes)

Duet Acting – Two students memorize and act out a published scene with characterization and movement. (5-10 minutes)

Reader’s Theatre – Three to six students read/act out a published scene with characterization and little movement. (5-12 minutes)

Lip Sync – Individuals or groups “Act out” a song while lip-syncing the words. Usually, lip syncs may include costumes, sets, and props. (2-5 minutes)

Debate – Individuals or pairs prepare “cases” based on current events.

6th, 7th, and 8th graders may compete in all events. In Poetry, Prose, and Duet Acting, there are usually 2 divisions: “Jr.” for 6th and 7th graders and “Sr.” for 8th graders.

Tournament Team Rehearsal Guidelines...

After being placed on the TRUST COMPANY tournament team, students will have one week to schedule an initial rehearsal appointment with Ms. McDonald. At this initial appointment, the student and coach will discuss which events the student will compete in, find scripts, and discuss a rehearsal schedule. After this initial meeting, students will be required to:

- Rehearse at least 2 hours per week at home and document the rehearsal time on provided form.

For at school rehearsals students should:

- Be present and ready to work at their appointment time.
 - Snacks, Bathroom Visits, and Vocal/Physical Warm-ups should be completed before the scheduled rehearsal time begins.
- Cancel a rehearsal only in event of an illness or emergency
 - ALWAYS contact the coach directly as far in advance as possible if you will miss a rehearsal. Contact information can be found on page 1 of this handbook.

Tournament Dress Code

Students should arrive dressed properly for competition.

Boys should wear a collared shirt and pants. Ties, although not mandatory, are appreciated.

Girls should wear a dress, shirt or pants and a blouse. If a skirt or dress falls above the knees, leggings must be worn!

NO jeans, denim, flip flops or shorts are allowed.

ALL students should wear nice shoes (no slippers, sandals, and preferably no sneakers!)

“After Finals Dress” includes blue jeans, a TRUST Company OR DCMS T-Shirt and tennis shoes. (These are worn *after* finals when a coach has authorized the team to change!)

****Anyone not dressed properly WILL BE SENT HOME!****

Tournament Behavior

If a student is sick the night before or day of a tournament, they should try to contact a sponsor or friend who will be attending the tournament so that the sponsors will not be “expecting” them. This will also enable the sponsors to adjust for their absence.

Be sure to label everything brought to the tournament with the student’s name and “DCMS.” Please bring a ZIPPERED bag to keep personal belongings in under our team table in the commons area.

Students will need to bring food and or money for food. Most tournaments have a snack bar that provides food for students to purchase, but we recommend that students bring some “healthy snacks.” Please do not “bring in” or “deliver” food during the day...the tournament is serving as a fund-raiser for the high school speech students and it is considered “rude” to do so. (Most students find that \$20 will be more than enough money for the day.) Remember, do not leave money and other valuable out...they might be stolen.

Students should remain in the commons/cafeteria area whenever they are not in a round. I require that students go to watch rounds they are not participating in.

Anyone acting in any manner that might embarrass themselves, their team or their school will be sent home. Be polite, respectful, and quiet during performances, silence cell phones, etc.

Students should arrive on time to rounds and perform all the events they have signed up for. They should attend as many rounds as possible, acting as a spectator and supporter when not actually performing.

Students should alert sponsors (or parent “table monitors”) to any problems as soon as they arise. Sponsors may be found in the “Coaches Lounge” during the tournament.

Every effort should be made to stay for the entire tournament so that the student may attend the awards ceremony with the team. **If** students must leave, they must have a parent or guardian check them out with a sponsor. Please let the sponsors know ASAP if a student will need to be checked out for any reason.

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Production Basics and Dates...

The DCMS TRUST Company produces at least three extra-curricular plays per year:

- One in November for entry into the Fort Bend ISD Middle School One Act Play festival (auditions and rehearsals begin in September)
- A musical in early March at DCMS (Auditions in December; rehearsals begin in January)
- Our Spring Show in early May (Auditions in late March; rehearsals begin at the end of March)
- The Creative Cantina is a student showcase and dinner on April 20th.

How to Audition...

Auditions for productions will be after school from 4:00-5:30 pm in Room 301. The audition dates for future productions will be announced at least two weeks prior. Please plan to stay until 5:30 pm unless you have made other arrangements with Ms. McDonald *beforehand*. Please pick up an audition packet and come **prepared** on the date of auditions with:

- Prepared Monologue - To audition for our shows, you will need to memorize one of the monologues from the audition packet. Remember to create a distinct character and to speak loudly and clearly! Don't be afraid to take chances!
- Completed Audition Form from audition packet
- Signed Company Contract (*on the back of your Audition Form*)
- Completed and Signed Conflict Calendar

Students will not be cast without a signed calendar and contract.

How to Interview for a Technical Crew Position...

Typically, the day before auditions, interviews will be held for technical crew positions. Interested students should come prepared with their signed conflict calendar, signed company contract, and completed interview form.

Rehearsal Guidelines...

All students placed in a production company must abide by the following guidelines:



Respect

As a part of this cast or crew, you are part of a TEAM. Your work ethic, attendance, and performance affect EVERYONE on this team.

- Take your attendance and preparedness seriously.
- Take care of your props and costumes. Put things away correctly. Don't touch things that you do not personally need to use.
- Turn off all cell phones and put them in the cell phone bin every day.
- Follow instructions from directors and stage managers without complaint.
- Listen and take notes thankfully.
- Consistent displays of disrespect for rehearsal space or other company members will result in your removal from the company.



Attendance

Rehearsals begin promptly at **4:05**. At this time, students must be in rehearsal dress or costume in the warm-up circle ready to begin. Tardies will count against your absence allowance.

Throughout the entire audition and rehearsal process, you are allowed:

- **2** excused rehearsals (4 hours of time)
 - A rehearsal is only excused if the conflict is listed on the conflict schedule turned in **before** callbacks.
 - All will be discussed with directors and given **written** approval!
 - If you feel that you have a situation that warrants additional time away from rehearsal, please list the conflicts and the reasoning on your conflict schedule. Directors will discuss options with you.
 - May NOT be during the final two weeks of rehearsal.
- **1** unexcused rehearsal (2 hours of time)
 - Still must be cleared **in advance** with directors!!!
 - This is for **emergencies** that come up - being sick, ortho appointments not scheduled beforehand, etc. not parties, concerts, and social events.
- **0** No Shows!!!!!!!
 - You **may not** just "forget" to show up to rehearsal.
 - 3 tardies or early dismissals equal a no show!!!!
- Violating this attendance policy will result in your removal from the company.



Preparation for Rehearsal

We have a limited amount of time to work and prepare together. Because of this...

- Your notebook and pencil **must** be at rehearsal every day!
- Lines must be memorized **on time!** Remember that being off book is the very first step towards really being prepared for a role.
- Repeatedly being unprepared for rehearsal will result in your removal from the company.

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Performance Day Guidelines

- **BE ON TIME!!!** (or early!) We are counting on you to be here so that we can get started on the long list of things we need to do in preparation for our performance. For certain events, we will be traveling and have a set time we need to leave.
- **BE PROFESSIONAL!!!** The DCMS TRUST Company will have a reputation of having a remarkably mature and professional attitude. It is important that you embody that in everything you do. Other schools and groups will be playing, laughing and talking loudly, etc. Your job is to be BETTER than that. Keep voices low, be respectful to all adults, etc.
- **LISTEN!!!** The schedule is often tight on performance days. It is important that you listen to any instructions given to you by Ms. McDonald and follow them as efficiently as possible.
- **SILENCE IS GOLDEN!!!** There will be MANY times when we ask you to be SILENT. This includes during other plays, backstage, during tech rehearsal, and many other situations. Please understand that this is part of professionalism and conveying a positive company image.
- **BE PREPARED!!!** Make sure you are taking care of everything you are responsible for. This includes any personal costume/hair/makeup items as well as the set pieces or props you have been assigned to.
- **KEEP IT POSITIVE!!!** At no time on a performance day should you make any negative comment about other plays, the judge, the venue, etc. It takes your mind away from where it should be (focused on YOUR show!) and makes our company appear petty and judgmental (the opposite of professional!) Attitude is of utmost importance in the theatre and talking badly about others in our little world is never acceptable.

Parent Survival Guide: Theatre Glossary

Auditions: The selection process that determines our casts and Tournament team. Usually, the term is used to describe the first round of the audition process in which students perform a memorized monologue.

Callbacks: The second phase of the audition process. Certain students are asked to return (usually the day after auditions) to read scenes from the play.

Call: The time that company members are asked to be at a certain location for a rehearsal, event, or performance. (i.e. "call is at 5:00 for the show tomorrow).

One Act Play (OAP): a 40 minute play (in our department usually cut from a longer play). Often rehearsed for use in a festival or competition (such as the Fort Bend ISD Middle School OAP Festival in the fall).

Magic Circle: a DCMS tradition that is held before a performance or tournament. Members of the production or tournament team are invited to join in the magic.

DCMS TRUST Company: The DCMS Speech and Theatre Arts TRUST Company. A collective name for our theatre department including our classes, extracurricular companies and casts, and other groups like Thespians.

Thespian: The International Thespian Society is an honor society for the theatre. Students earn points based on participation in tournaments, productions, etc.

This list is a work in progress... please let us know of terms that come up throughout the year that you think should be included here for next year's parents!

Parent Contact Information

Student's Name: _____ Grade Level: _____

Parent/Guardian Name (PRINT): _____

Phone (Please circle the BEST way to reach you.):

Cell: _____ Work: _____ Home: _____

Email (Please write **clearly**): _____

I would like to volunteer (optional):

_____ Snack Donations for rehearsals (chips, crackers, bottled water)

_____ Chaperone/Drive for theatre field trips/competitions (Do you have daytime availability? Y or N)

_____ Ushering/Selling Tickets or Concessions/Helping on production nights

_____ Costumes | Props | Set Construction | Publicity (**Please circle areas of interest)

_____ Feeding kids after school for late rehearsals or show nights.

I would like to donate (optional):

_____ A monetary amount: \$ _____ (PLEASE ENCLOSE WITH THIS FORM)

_____ Items such as costumes, props, or set pieces. Please describe: _____

_____ Concessions items (snacks, sodas, water, etc.) to be sold at performances

My student and I have read the guidelines and expectations outlined in the TRUST COMPANY Handbook together. We understand and agree that following these guidelines is necessary to success this year in Theater Arts and agree to adhere to them to the best of our ability..

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

YES, The DCMS TRUST Company may use photographs or videos of my student and their work in publicity materials, online, etc.

NO, The DCMS TRUST Company may NOT use photographs or videos of my student and their work in publicity materials, online, etc.

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