**DCP Theatre**

**COVID-19 Mitigation Policy & Protocols**

(effective with MainStage, Family, and Outlet performances scheduled for 2022)

Nov 2, 2021

Approved by the Board of Directors: 11/2/2021

*Disclaimer: this is a living document. These guidelines are subject to change at any time based upon Federal (e.g. CDC), State (PA Department of Health), and Local Public Health Policies (Montgomery County Department of Public Health)*

**Definitions**

**Fully vaccinated**: Defined as more than 2 weeks past both doses of a two dose vaccine or 2 weeks past one dose of a single dose vaccine.

**Close contact/Exposure**: Defined as within 6 feet of someone for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period.

**Cast/Crew**: The only members/volunteers who would NOT be defined as Cast/Crew would be those who are able to perform their tasks masked, physically distanced, and not in contact with Cast and Crew members. Examples would include, but not be limited to: set builders, master carpenters, volunteers who perform tasks like gathering props. It should be noted that the production’s Board Advisor is considered a part of the Crew.

**Production Team:** Defined as the Director, the Producer, and the Stage Manager.

**Section 1.1**

1. Masks must be worn indoors by all audience members, box office personnel, and front-of-house personnel at all times unless:

* Wearing a face covering would either cause a medical condition or exacerbate an existing one including respiratory issues that impede breathing, a mental health condition or a disability
* When necessary to confirm an individual’s identity
* When working alone and isolated from interaction with other people with little or no expectation of in-person interaction
* If an individual is communicating or seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing-impaired or has another disability, where the ability to see the mouth is essential for communication

1. No one should attend any events at DCP if they are feeling sick or exhibiting any symptoms of COVID-19.
2. Hand sanitizer will be available throughout the building. Practicing good personal hygiene is encouraged for all DCP members and volunteers.
3. For Contract Tracing purposes, detailed attendance records with individual’s contact information must be kept for all activities held on DCP property and off-site DCP rehearsals.
4. Audience capacity will be limited to 150 audience members subject to change as Federal, State, and local guidelines suggest and as county transmission and positivity rates change.
5. Any notices of potential COVID exposures and/or confirmed COVID cases must be reported to the Board President to ensure that governmental regulations are followed and an appropriate action plan is put in place based on the individual circumstances of each situation.
6. Board Advisors (who must be fully vaccinated) are taking on the additional responsibility of overseeing the planning and execution of COVID protocols for their designated production, in conjunction with the production’s Director and Producer. Everyone involved in a production is responsible for adhering to the policy and protocols. Any concerns, complaints, or questions regarding COVID Policy and Protocols should be directed to the Board Advisor for clarification and proper followup as needed.
7. CDC signs regarding COVID mitigation protocols will be posted in public areas throughout the building including backstage and in all bathrooms.

**Section 1.2 In Person Monthly Member Meetings**

1. Members attending monthly member meetings (or DCP Committee meetings), when in person meetings resume, must be masked regardless of vaccination status.
2. All DCP-wide COVID protocols described in section 1.1 apply.
3. No food should be collectively shared at a member meeting. Members are welcome to bring their own water bottles/beverages for individual consumption.
4. A hybrid meeting options will be utilized to allow members to attend a meeting via ZOOM or live broadcast. Members who are uncomfortable attending in-person meetings should be given an option that allows them to virtually attend a meeting in some capacity, particularly if a vote is required from membership. The decision to hold an in-person monthly membership meeting will be determined on a month-by-month basis.
5. Attendance records need to be taken at all in person meetings for contract tracing purposes. These records should be maintained by the DCP Secretary.
6. All cleaning procedures in Section 5 apply.

**Section 2.1 Pre-Production Events**

1. All Main Stage, Family Theatre, and Outlet productions must keep all aspects of their performances behind the proscenium line.
2. No part of the set may be on the auditorium floor unless approved by the Board of Directors. The theatre needs as much floor space as possible while audience capacity remains less than our seating maximum.
3. All blocking and actor entrances/exits should remain behind the proscenium. Actors should not use any side or lobby entrance points during a performance. This is crucial to maintaining physical distance between the cast/crew and the audience. Should a Director wish to deviate from this, the Board of Directors must approve said exception.
4. All persons performing on stage must have been fully vaccinated and must adhere to DCP Theatre masking policies in effect at the time of the rehearsals and performances based on guidelines from Federal, State, and Local health authorities. If clear masks are required, they will be provided by DCP.
5. Only designated crew/DCP Staff should be in the Roost and Light Board Control Room. This area is not to be used for extra member/volunteer seating.
6. Cast/Crew should only use the bathrooms backstage and in the Paint Room. Patrons should only use the main patron bathrooms off the auditorium.
7. The Lobby and House doors must open 1 hour before curtain time for all performances. This is to ensure Front of House staff have adequate time to seat all patrons and avoid overcrowding in the lobby and other areas.
8. Front of House staff will be emptying out the auditorium and lobby areas immediately after each performance in order to begin the necessary cleaning procedures. Cast/Crew should greet friends and family outside after the show and not congregate indoors. Cast and Crew should be masked during these interactions.

**Section 2.2 Auditions (Main Stage, Family Theatre, and Outlet productions)**

1. Audition forms must clearly state that proof of vaccination is required to perform.
2. Masks will be required for all auditions.
3. Cast and Crew must be fully vaccinated.
4. If cast, auditioners must provide proof of vaccination when other paperwork is completed (usually at Read-Through).
5. Masks will be required for all rehearsals but not performances unless a specific situation has occurred with the cast/crew that would deem wearing a mask (preferably clear if a performance) out of an abundance of caution. (example: People who are fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine after an exposure to another person with COVID-19 if they meet all of the following criteria: They are fully vaccinated AND they have remained asymptomatic since the current COVID-19 exposure. However, in this example, fully vaccinated people should get tested 3-5 days after a known exposure AND wear a mask in public indoor settings for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.

**Section 2.3 Rehearsals (applies to rehearsals at DCP Theatre and Off-Site)**

1. All production teams need to work with their Board Advisor and the Artistic Director to plan rehearsal logistics and details in advance to ensure all DCP-wide protocols are followed.
2. Directors should consider the number of people attending each rehearsal and carefully plan rehearsal schedules so unnecessary cast /crew members are not called in. The rehearsal schedule should note the cast/crew involved and will serve as an attendance record for Contract Tracing Purposes.
3. Directors should take physical distancing into account whenever possible when planning blocking. The primary concern should still be that the action of the play is executed properly.
4. Food and drink should not be collectively shared between cast and crew. All persons should bring their own labeled provisions.
5. Props and costumes should only be touched/worn/handled by the applicable actor who needs them.
6. No one should attend a rehearsal if they are feeling unwell. Directors are encouraged to use ZOOM or other virtual formats whenever possible in order to continue rehearsal schedules.
7. Encourage good personal hygiene practices. Require cast/crew wash their hands or use sanitizer upon their arrival at the theatre and periodically throughout the rehearsal time.
8. Do not allow guests and/or non-essential people to attend rehearsals or go backstage during any rehearsals or performances.
9. Consider ZOOM rehearsals whenever possible (e.g. table read, line/speed rehearsal).
10. Standard cleaning procedures are effective. Ensuring common spaces are kept tidy and cleaned/wiped down after each use is a good habit to get into.

**Section 3.1 When a Cast/Crew is exposed to someone with COVID-19**

1. If a fully vaccinated cast/crew member is exposed/comes in close contact with someone with COVID-19 the cast/crew member does not need to quarantine post exposure unless the cast/crew member has symptoms. However, fully vaccinated cast/crew members should get tested 3-5 days after a known exposure AND wear a mask indoors for 14 days or until they receive a negative test result.
2. Anyone else involved in the production (not defined as cast/crew member) who was recently in close contact with a person who has tested positive would need to follow the same quarantine protocol under **Section 3.1**.

**Section 3.2 When a Cast/Crew Member tests positive for COVID-19:**

1. The person who tested positive needs to isolate and can only be around others again after:

* 10 days since symptoms first appeared AND
* 24 hours with no fever without the use of fever-reducing medications AND
* Other symptoms of COVID-19 are improving.
* They get a negative test result.

**Section 3.3 Set Builds and Work Calls**

1. All standard DCP-wide COVID protocols described in 1.1 should be adhered to.
2. Directors or Producers should work with their Board Advisor and the Technical Director to plan out work call logistics in advance and be strategic in the amount and type of volunteers that are requested for each day. Non-vaccinated members/volunteers may participate in set construction as long as masked and physically distanced.
3. Food may be consumed for lunch or dinner breaks. Directors/Producers must consider the way food is distributed and consumed. For example, one person should plate or dish out the food in order to limit the amount of people touching the food or related containers. Physical distancing should be maintained while food is being consumed and masks cannot be worn. Eating outside whenever possible is encouraged.
4. Attendance records must be taken and sent to the Secretary for contract tracing purposes.
5. Cleaning procedures described in Section 5 apply.

**Section 4.1 Performances – (Backstage) Cast/Crew**

1. All standard DCP-wide COVID protocols described in section 1.1 should be adhered to.
2. Stage managers and other crew members are responsible for sanitizing props, high touch surfaces and other frequently handled items before and after each performance.
3. Hand sanitizer will be available backstage.
4. There should be no unnecessary visitors backstage. Cast and crew are not permitted to bring family and friends behind the proscenium for any reason before or after a performance.
5. Cleaning procedures in Section 5 apply.

**Section 4.2 Front of House and Auditorium**

1. All standard DCP-wide protocols described in section 1.1 should be adhered to by all patrons and DCP staff.
2. Audience seating capacity will be capped at 150 audience members at this time. The auditorium capacity will be regularly addressed as regulations and governmental requirements change
3. Front of House and Box Office Staff must be masked.
4. The lobby and Auditorium must open 1 hour prior to the performance time to allow the Front of House staff enough time to seat patrons, keep traffic flowing, and avoid patrons being overcrowded in the lobby for an extended period of time.
5. Opening weekend “Wine and Cheese” events are cancelled until further notice. Only individually wrapped snacks and bottled beverages will be offered to patrons pre-show and during intermission.
6. Cleaning procedures in Section 5 apply.

**Section 4.3 Box Office Policies**

1. All performances will be programmed into AudienceView (AVP) for advanced ticket sales/reservations. This includes all Main Stage, Family, and Outlet performances.
2. For Contact Tracing purposes, all tickets sold to any performance must have a Patron Name, phone number and/or email address associated with them. Even at-door sales must follow this protocol.
3. AVP will be programmed to disclose DCP’s COVID Mitigation Policy before and during their online ticketing buying process and advise patrons that masks are required in the theatre before and during the performance. There will also be questions programmed into the ticket purchase process that allows patrons to tell us how many people are in their party if they have any special seating needs.
4. Ticket Refund and Exchange policies will be temporarily relaxed in order to provide greater flexibility for Patrons who may become ill and are unable to attend a performance they purchased tickets for. This flexibility is only in place for cases of illness. Should a Patron simply decide not to come to a performance, or they make other plans, they will not be eligible for a refund.
5. Cleaning procedures described in Section 5 and apply for Box Office Volunteers after working a shift in the Box Office.

**Section 4.4 Post Production: Strike, Cast Parties**

1. All standard DCP-wide COVID protocols described in section 1.1 should be adhered to.
2. Directors/Producers should work with the Technical Director to plan Strike logistics in advance and determine if any special work calls need to go out.
3. DCP volunteers are encouraged to bring their own equipment/tools to Strike. Shared equipment should be sanitized between users.
4. Cast parties are permitted to include food and drink, but precautions and pre-planning should be taken to ensure as little as possible is shared or handled between many people. Producers/Directors and their Board Advisor should work together to plan out the food logistics in advance. Big potluck style meals are discouraged.
5. Only people directly involved in a production should attend the cast party. Extra family members and friends should be limited.
6. Clear attendance records for Strike and Cast Parties must be kept and turned into the Secretary.
7. Cleaning procedures described in Section 5 apply.

**Section 5 Cleaning Procedures**

* 1. **General Cleaning Practices**

1. High touch surfaces such as counters, tables, door handles, light switches should be sanitized before and after each performance/event.
2. Bathrooms should be given extra care and cleaning before and after each performance/event.
3. Dishes/shared containers should be thoroughly washed after use.
4. Trash and recyclables should be promptly emptied and taken outside to their appropriate bins.
   1. **Special Cleaning Notes**
5. Specific cleaning instructions will be posted in common spaces.
6. Deep cleaning of the building will occur on a regular basis and will be coordinated by the Patron Services Director.
7. All cleaning procedure questions should be directed to the Patron Services Director.
8. Requests for purchasing cleaning supplies should be directed to the Patron Services Director.

**Section 6 Chain of Command/Communication**

1. There needs to be a clear chain of command within each production or chaos will ensue the moment a COVID concern pops up.
2. The Director, Producer and Stage Manager of a production are the top leaders and primary “boots on the ground” at all events related to the production. All three positions should be safe contacts for a cast or crew member to come to with COVID related concerns or questions.
3. In general, the Director is the captain of the ship and needs to set the tone for everyone involved in the production. If the Director is unwilling to abide by established COVID policies, clearly communicate protocols to anyone at any time, or tactfully enforce and correct any non-compliance with the stated policies, then the Board should consider removing that Director.
4. Between the Director, Producer, and Stage Manager, they should be primarily responsible for one of these umbrella categories:
   1. Communication and Education regarding COVID policies to everyone involved in the production. This also includes any updates or adjustments that may come up during the production process. For example, notifying the appropriate parties if a rehearsal is switched to ZOOM; if changes to the masking or food consumption policies are required, etc.
   2. Collecting, Tracking, and Reporting any COVID-related paperwork and information such as waivers, health screen forms, COVID test results, proof of vaccinations. All paperwork should be sent to and retained by the Secretary.
   3. Enforcing the policies and serving as the conflict and concerns mediator. This responsibility could also include being the primary liaison to the Board/designated Board Advisor.
   4. The production team can determine who is best suited to take on each of the above responsibilities based on the individual skills of each production’s Director, Producer and Stage Manager.
5. The Board Advisor does need to take on a larger role and involves more responsibility than previously defined. It is impossible to plan for every possible scenario of how things could go wrong and what solutions would be best for each issue. The Board Advisor will be vital to troubleshooting and should be kept informed of any COVID related development so they can report back to the Board President or the full Board regarding any major issues.
6. No one should be expected to make big, snap decisions alone. For example, if someone involved in the production thinks they were exposed to COVID, that individual is responsible for reporting that information ASAP to the “Collecting, Tracking, and Reporting” leader within the production team. That leader will, in turn, inform the Board Advisor and the two other production team leaders (Director, Producer, Stage Manager) so they can collectively decide next steps.
7. A decision as big as fully cancelling a production or even cancelling one performance, cannot be made by just one person Should that situation arise, the Board needs to have an emergency meeting to vote on the issue.

# Section 7 - Misc. Items:

* *Clear is Kind*. Clearly communicating Covid policies and expectations up front to anyone considering being involved in a production (actor or otherwise) will help to eliminate surprises down the road.
* Anyone auditioning for a show should completely understand what will be expected of them if they are cast. For example, they should not get to the first rehearsal and then find out that they will be required to wear a mask for most of the rehearsal process.
* If an actor is being offered a role that requires physical touch and/or kissing, they should have an explicit discussion regarding those moments and what will be expected of them.
* The more information DCP can provide before and during the audition process, the better. We should empower people to make informed choices and decide what is best for them and their families by giving them the COVID policy and protocols document at auditions or prior to their involvement in a production.

This policy will be periodically reviewed based on Federal, State, and Local Government recommendations and requirements.