

BRITISH
YOUTH
MUSIC
THEATRE

2026

BYMT HANDBOOK

Welcome to BYMT



WELCOME TO BYMT!

We know that your experience with us will be rewarding, and that you'll have fun and learn from our experienced staff of directors, musical directors, writers and choreographers as you work with us to create and perform new musical theatre.

We've created this handbook to answer any questions that you may have. We hope you find this information useful. Signing the Acceptance Form means you've agreed to what is set out in this document – so it really is worth reading!

Thanks for joining us, and we look forward to meeting you.

Meet the Team

EMILY GRAY

Creative Director

CLARE RUSSELL

Finance Director

FRANCES NICHOLSON

Head of Development

MILLY SUMMER

Producer

CERYS JONES

Casting & Young Company Manager

ALEX LONSDALE

Welfare Manager & Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

NAOMI SMITH

Marketing Manager

CHARLOTTE BROWN

Marketing & Content Coordinator

ED HILL

Production & Engagement Associate



GUIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE



Let's Get Started!

Whether this is your first British Youth Music Theatre (or 'BYMT' for short) project, or you are a returning company member, welcome to BYMT. You are now part of the country's biggest and most active music theatre company for young people. This handbook will take you through what you can expect from us and, of course, what we expect from you!

It's All About Respect

The key to living and working with BYMT is mutual respect: respect for each other, respect for the staff, and respect for the venue in which you are all working. Above all, you need to have respect for yourself – the more you put in, the more you get out.

Our Values

- Being inclusive and making everything we do accessible
- Inspiring environmental responsibility within our staff and young people
- Creating space for young people and artists to value their voices
- Committing to making new work through nurturing, collaborative processes, and developing new approaches

Frequently Asked Questions

WHAT ARE MY RESPONSIBILITIES?

In general, to bring your authenticity, tenacity and generosity to the space and to have fun. As you will be working with a professional team, you will be expected to behave in a professional manner at all times. BYMT projects are very intense and you will be expected to commit to doing your best work at all times, in service to your project, your company mates, and yourself.

WHO WILL RUN THE PROJECT?

BYMT will have a team of adults who will be looking after you. These are divided into sub-teams.

- The creative team usually consists of a director, a musical director and a choreographer. They are responsible for all things creative in the project.
- The production team consists of stage management, technical leads and designers.
- The pastoral team is made up of adults who work with young people, like youth- workers, teachers, or actors. They are responsible for your welfare whilst on the course and are led by the Pastoral Lead.

Although their roles are very different, all teams work closely together to make your stay as enjoyable as possible. The pastoral team will make you aware of meal times/breaks etc. during the introductory session.

During your project, you may also have visits from BYMT's office team, who are there as additional support for whatever you need. You will receive communications from the office team before your project.

WHAT DOES A TYPICAL DAY LOOK LIKE?

08:00 - Breakfast
 09:00 - Morning rehearsals (with 15-minute break)
 13:00 - Lunch
 14:00 - Afternoon rehearsals (with 15-minute break)
 18:00 - Dinner
 19:00 - Evening rehearsals, activities or free time (dependent on schedule)
 21:00 - Free time
 23:00 onwards - lights out

WHAT TIME DO I HAVE TO GO TO BED?

Company members will be expected to adhere to different lights-out times according to their age. Don't forget that your primary reason for being with BYMT is to rehearse and perform and late nights can affect your ability to do this.

IN ROOM BY AND LIGHTS-OUT BY:

Age 11-15

In Room By 10:30pm and Lights Out By 11:00pm

Age 16+

In Room By 11:00pm and Lights Out By 11:30pm

These times should be considered part of the normal BYMT routine but can be relaxed at the discretion of the pastoral team. If the artistic or pastoral team feel that the project is suffering from too many people being tired, a curfew may be imposed on the whole company. This curfew can be called at any time and will cancel any previously agreed extension.

Those aged 18+ are free to have an later night but are also expected to show consideration to those who may already be asleep. Social areas are often cleared at 11.30pm to enable all buildings to be secured and for the venue to be considered 'quiet' by midnight. Liaise with your Pastoral Lead about this who will do their best to treat you as the young adults you are and accommodate you. However, do remember why you are there, be mindful that the pastoral team also need a good night's sleep and are only trying to make sure every company member is feeling their best for the next day.

WHAT WILL I NEED TO BRING?

The creatives will require you to have something to take notes with (pen and paper is preferable as we prefer there to be no phones/tablets in the rehearsal room). Any specific requests from directors will be detailed in the Information Pack about your project – you will receive this about four weeks before rehearsals start.

The venue will usually supply bedding (unless you are informed otherwise) but don't forget to pack a towel!

If you play a musical instrument, bring it! We encourage people to bring musical instruments for both the project and for social music making. Please check that your instrument is covered by your own insurance – see the Guide for Parents & Carers for information about insurance.

HOW MUCH MONEY SHOULD I BRING?

Remember all your food and accommodation is covered by the course fee so any money is just for extra snacks you think you will need and (on longer projects) for your day off – between £20 - £40 should be plenty.

However much you choose to bring, it can be looked after by the chaperones but your money, like other valuables, is not covered by BYMT's insurance.

IS THERE INSURANCE FOR MY BELONGINGS?

BYMT does not provide insurance for your personal items (including mobile phones). With this in mind, it's probably worth leaving anything of great value to you at home.

WHO ARE THE PASTORAL TEAM?

The pastoral team come from all walks of life and are experienced in working with young people, every project will have one Pastoral Lead and three pastoral team members. They act in loco parentis to all company members. Essentially this means that they will have the same rights as your parents/carers whilst you are under the care of BYMT. Licensing law requires chaperoning for under 16s, but all company members are considered to be under the care of the BYMT pastoral team. You will find the pastoral team friendly and approachable so work with them to help keep you safe.

Whatever the problem, be it personal, medical or emotional, they are the people to talk to. They are there to ensure that your time with the company is as carefree as possible. A member of the pastoral team will oversee the rehearsals during the day, checking up on your welfare and, more importantly, have the first aid kit at the ready, just in case!

They will also be on hand throughout the break-times and evenings and on any days off during a longer project.

WHO ARE THE CREATIVE TEAM?

These are industry professionals, who are there to ensure that you perform to the best of your ability and create a unique piece of work. They are supported by a production team, including a production manager, stage manager, and lighting, sound and production designers. The whole team are more than happy to share their experiences with you and answer any questions you may have about the industry.

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN I ARRIVE?

After being checked in, when everybody else has arrived, you will be introduced to the full pastoral and artistic teams. In most cases projects start by 2pm; exact details will be on your Project Pack, which you will receive nearer the time.

Pastoral staff will lead you to your first rehearsal. That evening, you will be made familiar with the venue and all procedures to follow in the event of an emergency evacuation.

HOW DOES ROOMING WORK?

The majority of the accommodation we use has shared rooms. Most young people will be in a room with one to three other people. Rooming is allocated by age and sex assumed at birth, though BYMT prioritises freedom of gender expression in all spaces. Further conversations based on individual needs are welcomed, and young people can request a single room by emailing cerysjones@bymt.org.

CAN I LEAVE THE VENUE AT ANY TIME?

Under 16s will not be allowed off-site unless they are with their parents or a member of the pastoral team. If you are 16 or 17 you will need to inform the pastoral team if you intend to go off-site and it is expected you will stay in a group. You will also be expected to inform them who you are going with, what time you expect to return and how you intend to travel. There may be occasions where the pastoral team feel that the break is too short for anyone to go offsite.

In the evenings, 16–17 year old company members may be allowed off-site at the discretion of the Pastoral Lead but will still be expected to be back onsite by 11:00pm.

Those aged 18+ can sign out in the evenings but must make specific arrangements with the pastoral team if they intend on being out later than 11:00pm, as they may need access to a secure building on their return. A signing-out record will be held by the pastoral team and must be completed by any young person leaving the venue/site.

We expect you to report back to the pastoral team upon your return. Those who are 18+ are also expected to pay the pastoral team the same courtesy. This system must be adhered to for your own safety and is also a requirement of the venues we stay in.

CAN I SMOKE/VAPE?

BYMT strongly advocates not smoking. Remember, you must be over 18 before you can legally buy cigarettes, including allowing you to use a vending machine on their premises. If necessary, an outside smoking area will be allocated but you must never smoke/vape in the company of younger BYMT members. No-one under 16 can smoke under any circumstances. 16 and 17-year olds who need to smoke must talk to the Pastoral Lead who reserves the right to contact a parent/carer before giving you permission to use the designated area. No smoking/vaping is allowed in costume or whilst wearing your BYMT T-shirt. It is illegal to smoke inside any public building.

CAN I USE DRUGS?

Possession and/or supply of drugs is a criminal offence and anyone engaged in such activities will be asked to leave the project and the Police will be notified.

CAN I DRINK ALCOHOL?

During a project those old enough to drink alcohol (18+) are not permitted to drink alcohol in any venue being used by BYMT unless given permission by the Pastoral Lead in specific circumstances. This applies to any school venue or public rehearsal/performance space, such as a theatre.

Anybody under 18 is breaking the law if they buy or attempt to buy alcohol in a pub, off-licence or shop. This law extends to people under 18 drinking wine, beer or cider in a public place.

Children under 16 are allowed to enter pubs and other licensed premises that do not have age restricted entertainment (either over 18s only or over 21s only are the usual restrictions) as long as they are being supervised by a member of the pastoral team. No other adult (18+) can perform this role. Obviously, they are not allowed to have any alcohol.

If a member of the Creative/Pastoral team think you are under the influence of alcohol you will not be allowed to attend the upcoming rehearsal, nor will be you allowed on stage during a performance as a matter of safety. If your project is abroad you will be made aware of the licensing laws of the country before the start of the project.

CAN I USE MY MOBILE PHONE?

You will be required to turn off your mobile in all rehearsals. Any exceptions to this have to be negotiated with the artistic team prior to the start of a rehearsal. You will be given an emergency contact number before the start of the project should your family need to contact you urgently. See your Project Pack or ask one of the pastorals for this number. Save it to your phone as this number will be answered 24hrs a day. (Emergencies only during the night as the pastorals need their sleep too!)

CAN I TAKE PHOTOS?

Yes, but remember to check if people don't mind you taking pictures of them; some people would rather their pictures not be seen on social media sites. You are not permitted to take pictures of actual performances.

CAN I GO INTO OTHER PEOPLES' ROOMS?

This is up to the pastoral team on site but we encourage you to keep bedrooms as private/quiet spaces for you to process and decompress after a long day. Communal areas are usually available for socialising. Have respect for other people's privacy and always knock before entering a room.

SEXUAL RELATIONSHIPS

It is a criminal offence if you have sex with someone when you or they are under the age of 16, even if you have both given consent. It is also not permitted for young people to move into different rooms during the night, due to fire safety regulations.

We are aware that young people may form relationships during their time on our projects. Respect is key – respect for your fellow company members and respect for the rehearsal process. No relationship, whatever their nature, should be a distraction from putting on a wonderful show.

HOW DO I GET THERE?

We expect everyone to make their own travel arrangements and we will meet you at the project venue. If you are travelling alone we may be able to put you in touch with other young people travelling from your area. If your parents/carers are driving, there is normally parking available at the venue but contact the office in advance to double check.

CAN I USE MY CAR/MOTORBIKE?

You can, but please inform the office if you intend to bring a car as some venues require advance notification of required parking. BYMT will provide transport for any travel required during the course. If you do bring your car you will not be allowed to give lifts to people under 18 during the course unless you have prior permission from their parents/carers and adequate insurance.

WHEN SHOULD I BE PICKED UP?

Check your Information Pack for exactly where and when the project finishes. There may be parking at the school or performance venue. If parking is limited we aim to let you know in advance.

WHAT IF I'M BEING BULLIED?

BYMT has a rigorous Child Protection Policy and discrimination in any form will not be tolerated. If you feel that you are being subjected to any form of bullying, please speak to a member of the pastoral team immediately.

If there is an issue you feel you cannot talk to your pastoral team about or for any issues related to welfare and safeguarding, you should contact the Pastoral Lead (using the mobile number provided) or BYMT's Welfare Manager (DSL), Alex Lonsdale (welfare@bymt.org). For questions or queries relation to the production, casting or rehearsal process please contact BYMT's Casting and Young Company Manager, Cerys Jones (cerysjones@bymt.org).

WHAT IF I'M FEELING HOMESICK?

This may be your first time away from home and it is perfectly normal to miss family and friends. If you feel homesick, speak to a member of the pastoral team or talk to other young people for support. You will find that you very quickly make friends and those feelings should soon disappear. You can support others too; if you are aware that someone else is very quiet, try to include them at break and meal times.

WHAT IF PROPERTY GETS DAMAGED?

Accidents do happen, but it will come as no surprise to learn that deliberate damage to property is considered by BYMT to be very serious. You can expect consequences and your parents/carers may well be billed for the cost of the repair.

WHAT IF I MISBEHAVE?

Please remember we will be treating you like a professional company member and we expect you to act accordingly. Should a situation arise where the pastoral team consider your behaviour to be inappropriate, action will be taken. Action can range from a polite reminder to being sent home but you will always be made aware of the options you have and the consequences of them. The pastoral team will always listen to you and talk about a situation so even if you have done something you regret it is best to be honest so a situation can be dealt with calmly and swiftly. The best advice is to make the best choices in order to make the most of this wonderful opportunity!

HOWEVER, BYMT DOES NOT TOLERATE THE FOLLOWING:

- Bullying or aggressive behaviour
- Offensive or discriminatory behaviour of any kind, whether physical, verbal or online/social media, including racism, sexism, homophobia. Rudeness, selfishness or any behavior that is not conducive to a collaborative environment
- Unauthorised smoking/vaping
- Drunkenness or encouraging under age people to drink
- Possession, use and/or supply of drugs
- Engaging in inappropriate touching or touching without consent
- Damaging premises or property
- Theft of property

- Arriving at rehearsals/workshops late, overtired or hungover
- Failure to observe the house rules set down at each venue, including curfews and rooming allocations
- Failure to comply with specific artistic or pastoral team requests
- Deliberately setting off fire alarms and using fire escapes, other than in the case of an emergency

Any of these offences could lead to disciplinary action. Normal steps in any disciplinary procedure are:

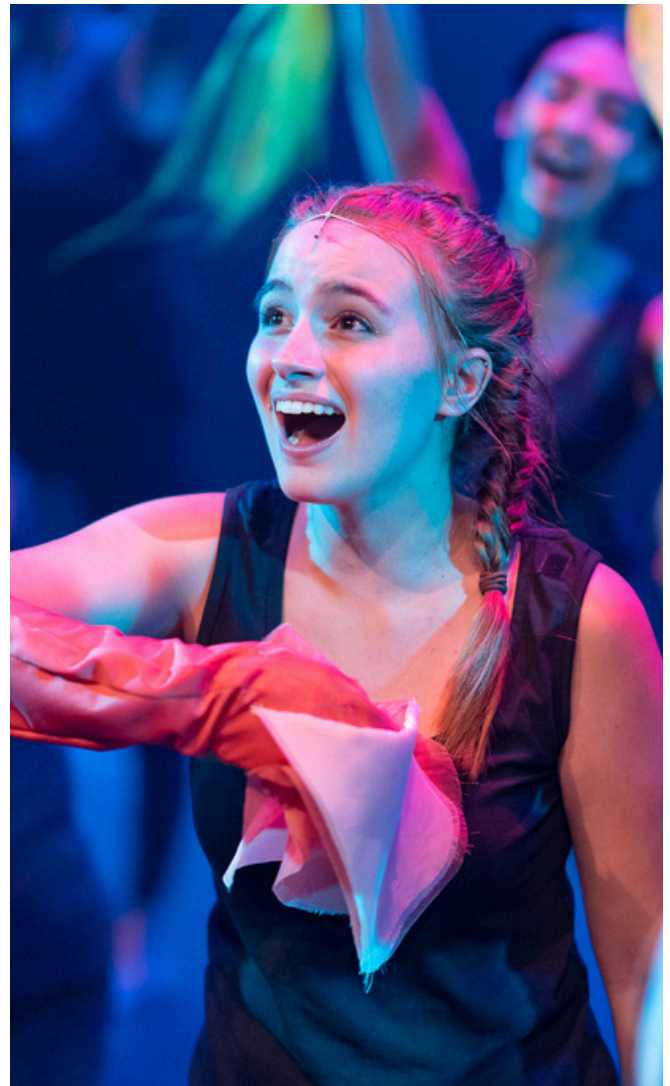
1. Informal reminder of BYMT rules you have agreed to.
2. If an informal reminder and subsequent action plan does not result in better choices, a formal verbal warning will be given. A record will be kept of all formal warnings.
3. If a formal verbal warning and subsequent new action plan are not adhered to, a formal written warning will be given. This will remain on your BYMT record for 12 months.
4. If the written warning is not adhered to, BYMT will dismiss you from the project. If you are involved in a very serious incident, BYMT also reserves the right to move straight to the dismissal stage without warning. In cases involving committing a possible criminal offence (use of illegal drugs, serious assault, etc). BYMT will also be obliged to inform the Police.

The above steps are very rarely needed but the procedure has been made clear to you so that everyone can be treated fairly and consistently. In reality, the pastoral and artistic teams would much rather enjoy your company, attain the same goal as you and praise you for your hard work, your positive attitude, collaboration and for helping them keep yourself and others safe and happy. If information comes to light about unacceptable behaviour post-production, our Casting and Young Company Manager will be in contact to discuss this further, the outcome of which could result in a verbal or written warning for future participation in one of our projects.

SUSTAINABILITY

As a charity with a strong commitment to the environment, we ask all participants and staff to take personal responsibility towards minimizing their impact in the environment. By thinking about the following:

- Can I choose a more sustainable way of getting to and from the project?
- Do I know where to recycle items during the project?
- Will I remember to turn off lights when I leave a room?
- Do I ensure taps are off when I've finished washing?



GUIDE FOR PARENTS & CARERS



We are delighted that you are encouraging your child to take part in a BYMT project. Our aim is to provide young people with the opportunity to experience all aspects of musical theatre. We are committed to ensuring that young people are able to do this in an environment where their safety and welfare are our primary concern.

We hope you will find the information in this manual useful in addressing some of the questions you may have. Please read it carefully and do contact us if anything is unclear.

HOW WILL I KNOW MY CHILD IS SAFE?

BYMT has a robust Child Protection Policy, developed in conjunction with one of our Trustees. If you would like to read it in full, request a copy by email. Pastoral staff are all experienced in working with young people. Many are licensed to act as chaperones, and all have undergone a check with the Disclosure and Barring Service and hold a DBS certificate. The same is true for all artistic staff. The pastoral team act in loco parentis and are expected to exercise the same care and control as a responsible parent would with a view to securing your child's health, comfort and kind treatment. As a company, we retain the right to inform social services or a medical professional if we believe this to be in the best interest of the young person.

WHAT IF MY CHILD NEEDS A SPECIAL DIET?

BYMT will cater for special diets on the basis of medical and religious need or lifestyle choice. This must be clearly indicated on the Medical Form. Please return these well in advance as venues request this information from us several weeks before the start of any project. If any participant fails to disclose specific requirements in advance of the project and refuses to eat the food provided by BYMT then alternative food will be sourced at a direct cost to the participant.

HOW WILL MEDICAL ISSUES BE HANDLED?

It is your duty as a parent or guardian to fully complete and submit an acceptance which includes any necessary medical details. Please make a full disclosure of any information relevant to us. This form also gives us permission to have 24-hour duty of care for the young person as failing to do so may hinder our ability to offer full support. In addition, on the Medical Form you are requested to give consent enabling chaperones to agree to medical treatment on your behalf in the event of an emergency. You should also indicate if you give consent for pastoral staff to administer paracetamol or ibuprofen. No other routine medication would ever be provided by a member of the pastoral team without further consent from a parent/guardian. If your child takes prescribed medication, the pastoral team is happy to take responsibility for this if you supply them with clear instructions. The pastoral staff are on call 24 hours a day to provide practical and emotional support in the event of any issues and you will be kept suitably informed.

WHAT DOES THE BYMT INSURANCE COVER?

BYMT has Employers' and Public Liability Insurance through Zurich Insurance. The company cannot cover insurance of personal items and assumes no responsibility for damage, loss or theft of personal property on any BYMT premises. It is advisable to ensure that musical instruments or any other items of value, including mobile phones, are covered by your household insurance policy. Expensive jewellery, cameras etc. are better left at home!

WHAT IF MY CHILD HAS TO CANCEL OR WITHDRAW FROM THE PROJECT?

BYMT's full terms and conditions can be read [here](#).

Course fees are non-refundable if you leave during the camp/production – a percentage may be creditable towards a camp/production, this must be used the same year. Please note, a possible credit is dependent on how much of the course was completed. BYMT will consider additional credits in exceptional circumstances, wholly at the discretion of the Casting and Young Company Manager.

WHAT IF MY CHILD MISBEHAVES?

All young people involved in BYMT are ambassadors for the company and are expected to act accordingly. A list of unacceptable behaviour and how this is addressed is detailed in the GUIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE in Section 2. Experienced staff are on hand to provide support and will offer clear, consistent boundaries. Where behaviour endangers the safety and welfare of the young person or that of others they may be asked to leave the project. Where behaviour is potentially criminal the police will be notified. Beyond a formal verbal warning, you will be kept fully informed by telephone during any disciplinary process.

WHAT IF I NEED TO CONTACT MY CHILD?

You will be given an emergency contact number to use for the duration of the project, this will be emailed to you a few days before the course starts. This mobile phone is staffed by a member of the pastoral team 24 hours a day. Your child will not be allowed to have their mobile phone switched on in the rehearsal room. On arrival at the venue young people are informed of break/meal/finish times, which they can pass onto you. We would request that you do not call their personal mobiles during rehearsal times. Pastoral phones will be switched on the day that the project is due to start.

WHAT IF I HAVE A COMPLAINT/COMPLIMENT?

We welcome your feedback as this enables us to constantly review and improve the services that we provide to young people. For any issues related to welfare and safeguarding, you should contact the Pastoral Lead (using the mobile number provided) or BYMT's Welfare Manager (DSL), Alex Lonsdale (welfare@bymt.org). For any questions or queries relation to the production, the casting or rehearsal process then please contact BYMT's Casting and Young Company Manager, Cerys Jones (cerysjones@bymt.org).

I HAVE ANOTHER QUESTION WHICH IS NOT ANSWERED HERE

Please give us a call on 0208 563 7725 and we'll direct you to the most relevant member of our team for advice.

FUNDRAISING

We are aware that the fees of BYMT courses can seem expensive. We fundraise all year round to keep the course fees as low as possible, and the course fee represents only about half of the cost of taking part in a production.

Many young people will fundraise for some or all of their course fees.

The Good News

BYMT members are brilliant fundraisers! On average our young people raise nearly £20,000 amongst them each year towards their course fees, ranging from those who raised the whole lot to those who managed to fundraise the amount they needed to make up to afford the course.



The Most Important Thing

At BYMT, we want opportunities to be limitless. We are therefore committed to assist every young person remove any barrier they may face, including financial. If you are having trouble with your course fee, or even if you suspect that you might have trouble at some point in the future, please get in touch!

For those on productions BYMT operates a Bursary Scheme. This scheme is for young people who fall into the criteria referred to in your offer letter.

To discuss financial support options, our Bursary Scheme or payment plans, please contact BYMT's Casting and Young Company Manager, Cerys Jones cerysjones@bymt.org.

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