



Betty Ann Norton Theatre School

Guidebook for Students and Parents

2025/2026

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1 INTRODUCTION

Thank you for choosing us! We are so excited to welcome your child(ren)/teen(s) into our classes this year whether it's their first class or they've been with us for many years.

We aim to build students' confidence, help them to develop clear speech, nurture their creativity, and hope to instil a lifelong love of the literary and performing arts.

Our tagline is “serious play” as we offer a playful space for children and teenagers who are dedicated to the craft of voice and theatre performance.

Arriving for your first class

In advance of your first class with us you'll receive a welcome email with details about the class location, teachers, term overview as well as information about getting set up on the platform we use to log attendance, share documents, provide real-time notifications and ongoing payments – Teach n Go. More details about this can be found [here](#).

- Parents/guardians should accompany their child into the building for drop-off.
- A teacher will then take the students to their class.
- Parents do not remain for the duration of class.
- If anyone other than yourself is collecting your child, or if they have permission to make their own way home, this must be told to the teachers in advance.

What to wear to class

Classes involve movement so please wear comfortable clothing that is suitable:

- Leggings/shorts/tracksuit bottoms rather than skirts/dresses
- Non-restrictive materials – denim and tailored materials would not be suitable
- Shoes suitable for movement such as runners (not crocs or uggs!)
- Layers in case students become warm during exercises or cool thereafter.

What to bring to class

- In the early weeks students will receive a folder, handouts, and possibly a notebook or theory book. It's important to bring these to class each week. Students in the Junior and Teen classes should always bring a pen/pencil and a notebook.
- Students of all classes should pack a bottle of water. Students in Junior and Teen classes can pack a NUT FREE snack for halfway through the class.
- We ask that students not bring toys to class unless it is the first day in which a comfort toy may be brought.
- Mobile phones are to remain in bags and may not be used in except in emergency.

1.1 Our History

Betty Ann Norton Theatre School (BANTS) was founded in 1959 by the renowned Speech and Drama teacher [Betty Ann Norton](#), and has since become Ireland's longest-running theatre school.

About Betty Ann Norton

- Born in July 1936, Betty Ann trained at the prestigious Ena Mary Burke School and later earned her speech & drama diplomas from the Royal Irish Academy of Music and London's Guildhall School.
- Inspired by her passion for teaching, she opened the school in 1959 at 57 Harcourt Street, offering classes from film and stage acting to mime, as well as helping students to obtain diplomas in speech and drama.
- In 1967, Betty Ann married Michael J Cunneen, who had a background in drama and set design. He became co-director and helped run the school from their home in Dún Laoghaire.
- The school moved to 27 Harcourt Street in 1969, and in 2006 moved again due to the development of the Luas, finding a new home in Betty Ann's alma mater - St Louis High School, Rathmines - where we still offer classes today.
- Norton continued to teach until her passing in 2020. A larger-than-life presence, she is well remembered by her past pupils across Ireland and beyond.

Our Current Director

- In 2020, former student Ciara Feely was appointed as a company director by Betty Ann Norton shortly before Betty Ann's passing.
- At the time, Ciara was pursuing a PhD which she later finished. Betty Ann Norton Theatre School is now her primary focus.
- Over the Covid-19 pandemic the school continued to offer weekly drama classes online and has grown substantially in recent years.
- Ciara expanded the schools offering of classes in our base in Rathmines, re-opened classes in Dun Laoghaire, and opened further classes in Castleknock.
- Today, under Ciara's leadership, the team at Betty Ann Norton Theatre School, comprised largely of alumni, continue to uphold Betty Ann's legacy and high standards.

1.2 Our Team

Ciara Feely

ciara@bants.ie



Ciara has been the managing director of Betty Ann Norton Theatre School for over 5 years and has led classes for children and teenagers at our school for over 10 years. Ciara believes that drama is for everyone, and she instills this ethos through her teaching and leadership. Ciara holds a Licentiate Diploma in Teaching Drama and Communication from the London College of Music in association with UWL and has attended several training courses including the Lir Academy's Actor's Ensemble, The Shakespeare Summer School at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts (RADA) in London, and (currently) the Diploma in Acting and Theatre at the Lir Academy at Trinity College Dublin.

Evie O'Brien

evie@bants.ie



Evie May is a graduate of the [Drama \(Performance\) course](#) in the [TU Dublin Conservatoire](#). Since graduating Evie May has worked as a drama teacher/facilitator in both the Betty Ann Norton theatre school and in primary and secondary Gaelscoileanna across Ireland. Evie May also works as an actor, with particular experience performing in theatre for young audiences. Evie May was a student of Betty Ann Norton Theatre School for 10 years, and worked closely alongside Betty Ann Norton as a team tutor. Here she attained both her ATCL performance diploma (2018) with Trinity Guildhall London, and her ALCM teaching diploma (2019) with the University of West London. She has recently been appointed as a Creative Director of the school and will be working alongside the school's director Ciara Feely.

Charlotte O'Reilly

charlotte@bants.ie



Charlotte was a student of Betty Ann Norton Theatre School for 9 years. During that time she received a distinction in all grades up to and including Grade 8 Speech and Drama. From 2017-2019 Charlotte tutored mime at Betty Ann's during which time she completed her ALCM teaching diploma from the University of West London and became one of our speech and drama tutors. Charlotte attended the prestigious [L'École International de Théâtre Jacques Lecoq](#) in Paris, France. There she has studied physical theatre performance and creative practice.

Arianna Gorman

arianna@bants.ie



Arianna started in Betty Ann Norton Theatre School when she was 11 years old and has successfully obtained all of the Trinity College London Speech and Drama grades. In addition she completed her ALCM Speech and Drama teaching diploma in 2020 with the University of West London. Arianna has been teaching with Betty Ann Norton's for three years, initially as a team teacher and, now, as a tutor. Arianna is currently studying Archaeology in Trinity College Dublin and is very interested in the roots and history of the performing arts around the world.

Dan O'Farrell

dan@bants.ie



Dan was a student of the Betty Ann Norton Theatre School from 2006 where he completed his grades with Trinity College London (then Trinity Guildhall). He attained his ALCM teaching diploma from University of West London in 2017 with distinction, receiving a mark of 90 in his practical exam.

Ellen Walters

ellen@bants.ie



Ellen was a student at Betty Ann Norton Theatre School for many years and completed all of her grade examinations with Trinity College London. Ellen has been teaching Speech and Drama for 5 years and in that time has taught students age 4 to 17.

Emily McAlinden

emily@bants.ie



Emily is a graduate of TUDublin Drama Conservatoire where she attained her BA in Drama (Performance) in 2023. She has been teaching drama for three years. Emily is currently pursuing an MPhil in Theatre and Performance at Trinity College Dublin. Emily leads our Teen Youth Theatre in Rathmines.

Gavin Jennings

gavin@bants.ie



Gavin Jennings is a speech and drama teacher based in Dublin. He was a student of Betty Ann Norton Theatre School for eleven years. Gavin received an acting diploma from Trinity College London in 2021. He acquired a teaching qualification in drama and communications from University of West London, London College of Music in 2022 and has been a tutor with the school since then.

Genevieve Holmes

genevieve@bants.ie



Genevieve was a student of the Betty Ann Norton Theatre School for 9 years. During that time she completed her speech and drama exams from Grade 2-8 and obtained her Acting and Teaching Diplomas from the College of West London. Genevieve is currently enrolled in the Acting Level 2 short course in the Lir Academy. She is very interested in creative writing and encouraging students to write and perform their own work. Outside of drama, Genevieve is in her final year of studying Psychology in University College Dublin.

Kevin O'Murchu

kevin@bants.ie

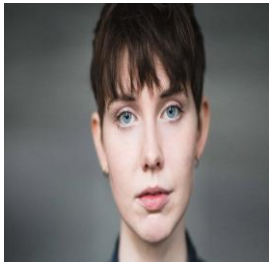


in the history of cinema.

Kevin has been our Head of Film since early 2019. He has completed his Master's degree in Contemporary Screen Industries from [Dublin City University](#) to accompany his BA (Hons) in Film. Kevin has worked for production companies such as ScreenScene and Octagon Films and the media department in Trinity College Dublin. Kevin has produced several short films, music videos and has a keen interest

Martha Breen

martha@bants.ie



Festival 2018, winner Irish Times Theatre Award Best Ensemble).

Martha is a graduate of [The Lir National Academy of Dramatic Art](#) where she attained her [Bachelor in Acting](#) in 2018. She has been teaching drama since 2012. Martha has worked as a professional actor with some of Ireland's leading production companies such as [Rough Magic Theatre Company](#) in their productions of 'Hecuba' (Dublin Theatre Festival 2019), 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' (Kilkenny Arts

Niamh McAllister

niamh@bants.ie



Port, The Lir, CAMRY and Fishamble. Niamh is a professional actress and voiceover artist and works across film, theatre, tv and radio.

Niamh hails from Bangor, Co Down and graduated from [The Lir National Academy of Dramatic Art](#) where she trained on the [Bachelor in Acting](#). In 2021, she completed the Drama Facilitation Course with Youth Theatre Ireland. She has worked as a freelance drama facilitator since 2021, delivering drama workshops in association with Dublin

1.3 Our Venues

1.3.1 Rathmines

St. Louis High School Rathmines has been our base for the past 20 years. Our founder, Betty Ann Norton, attended St. Louis High School for her secondary education. Her love for theatre was known throughout her schooling as she directed many plays during her time as a student.

[St. Louis High School](#) is located on Charleville Road in Rathmines. Entry is through the School Gate on the right hand side.

Classes take place in the Canteen, Hall, and Cuisle Arts Centre. A teacher will show you where your child's class takes place on the first day.

Occasionally due to events at St. Louis, the class will move locations within the school and you will be notified of this through the Teach n Go app.

Rathmines Timetable:

- Step 1 (Junior-Senior Infants): Thursdays 3:30-4:30pm, Saturdays 11am-12pm
- Step 2 (1st-2nd Class): Thursdays 4:30-6pm, Saturdays 9:30-11am, 12:30-2pm
- Juniors (3rd-6th Class): Thursdays 3:30-6pm, Saturdays 9:30am-12pm, 12:30-3pm
 - ◆ Junior Drama Just for Fun: Saturdays 2-3pm
- Teens (1st-6th Year): Saturdays 9:30am-12pm, 3-6pm
 - ◆ Teen Youth Theatre Wednesdays 6:30-8:30pm

Getting There By Public Transport

The school can be reached by Dublin Bus routes 14, 15/a/b/d, 65/b, 83/83a, 140, 142 and S2. Beechwood Luas stations closeby approximately 10-minute walk from the school.

Parking

There is parking available in St. Louis High School, and on-street parking nearby for short periods, as well as bicycle racks.

1.3.2 Dun Laoghaire

Our Dún Laoghaire base is the Parish Centre Hall in Dún Laoghaire Presbyterian Church on York Road. The venue is located 10 minutes from the town center and across the road from the home that our founder Betty Ann Norton and her husband Michael shared for many years. Betty Ann offered various classes in this location over the decades that she worked.

[Dun Laoghaire Presbyterian Church](#) is located on York Road in Dun Laoghaire. The Parish Centre Hall is at the back of the church on the right-hand side. When you enter the church gates, turn immediately right and continue the path to the back of the church, where you'll see the door to the parish centre on the left.

Dun Laoghaire Timetable

- Step 2 (Senior infants-2nd Class): Wednesdays 4:30-6pm
- Juniors (3rd-6th Class): Tuesdays 4:30-7pm/5:30-8pm (waitlist only)
- Teens (1st-6th Year): Wednesdays 6-9pm.

Getting There By Public Transport

The school can be reached by Dublin Bus routes E2 and L25, or by taking the 4, 7, 7a, 8, 45a, 45b, 59, 75, 111 and walking for 10 minutes. It's a 10-15 minute walk from the Dún Laoghaire DART station.

Parking

There is car parking available at the church for short periods and a bicycle rack.

1.3.3 Castleknock

Our Dublin West base is the Castleknock Parish Centre, right in the heart of the village.

Castleknock Timetable

- Step 2 (Senior Infants-2nd Class) - Fridays 3-4:30pm
- Junior (3rd-6th Class) - Fridays 4:30-7pm
- Teens (1st-6th Year) - Fridays 5:30-8pm

The Castleknock Parish Centre is located on the Main Street in Castleknock village, beside the Church of Ireland school in the white pebble-dash building. Drop off and pick up is through the Parish Centre's main double doors.

Getting There By Public Transport

The Parish Centre can be reached by Dublin Bus routes 37 and 38. It's a 10 minute walk from the Castleknock rail station, on the Maynooth line.

Parking

Limited parking is available in the church across the road from the parish centre. More spaces are available in Lidl car park or Myos Pub car park. Both located separately in the village, 2 min. Walk away.

1.4 Communication

1.4.1 How we will get in touch with you

Email: Our main mode of communication is via email and it is expected that the email address provided is checked regularly. There is also an option to add any secondary emails that you would like us to contact.

Our Admin Team will contact you regarding:

- New Term Dates and enrolment or re-enrolment in our classes
- Getting set up on Teach n Go
- Payments
- Changes to the class schedule such as cancellations
- Casting opportunities
- Important dates for upcoming events.

Our Teachers will contact with you regarding:

- Relevant feedback for your child/their class
- The provision of digital copies of handouts/documents
- Signing up for relevant grade exams, feiseanna, theatre trips.
- Important dates for in-class and external performances.

Mobile Notifications: Through the Teach n Go app we will occasionally provide mobile notifications for time-sensitive matters such as classroom changes, unprecedented class cancellations or reminders about an upcoming deadline. To receive mobile notifications you must have downloaded the Teach n Go app to your mobile phone, logged into your account and have notifications switched on.

Phone Calls: If there is an incident of illness, injury, or a serious behavioral issue that arises in class a teacher will phone you on the contact number provided. If they cannot reach you they will contact the secondary contact. It is expected that it will be possible to get in touch with you by phone in the case of an emergency.

Direct Communication: Our teachers may wish to speak with you after class to offer specific feedback, to let you know about an incident that happened in class or to address a behavioral issue. If for some reason they cannot address this with you immediately they may also email you to organise a phone call to discuss the matter.

1.4.2 How you can get in touch with us

Email is our main mode of communication.

Contact info@bants.ie for:

- General queries such as term dates
- Issues or information regarding payments
- Queries related to our software Teach N Go
- Questions about switching classes
- Casting agency/submitting self-tapes
- To arrange a phone call with someone on our admin team regarding the above (please site child's name, your phone number and the nature of your query in the email).

Contact your child's teacher (first-name@bants.ie) for:

- Queries related to your child's classwork
- Replacement copies of scripts (these are generally on your child's account on Teach n Go).
- Noting absence from class (or leave a note on your child's account on Teach n Go).
- Letting them know you are running late for picking your child up after class.
- If you think your child may have lost something in class.
- To arrange a phone call with your child's teacher (please site child's name, your phone number and the nature of your query in the email).

** Please be aware that our teachers are not employed on a full time basis and will do their best to get back to you in a timely manner.

Direct communication: if you have specific questions about your child's classwork then the best option would be to speak directly with your child's teacher before or after class. Sometimes the teacher may have classes running back to back and in that case they will organize a phone call with you via email.

Feedback: we welcome feedback on our service either through direct communication with our teachers after class or events, or through phone/email.

1.5 Our Software for School Management (Teach n Go)

1.5.1 What is Teach n Go?

Teach n Go is a school management system that we use to:

- Manage our student and related contact database
- Securely email and mobile notifications on a class and individual level
- Track student attendance and manage our class/events calendar
- Upload class and individual student documents like scripts/syllabi/resources for easy digital access in case your script becomes misplaced.
- Securely store contact information so teachers have quick access in an emergency
- Manage invoices and payments for continuing students and events

How do I sign up to Teach n Go?

New students will be invited to join the portal and be sent a code for their first log in. If you do not receive this, please get in touch with us at info@bants.ie

Do I need to download an app?

It is possible to use Teach n Go from your browser on your mobile phone or computer by visiting teachngo.com however we sometimes send mobile notifications in the case of time-sensitive updates such as unexpected room changes, class cancellations, or reminders for upcoming deadlines. To receive these you must have the app downloaded, be logged in, and allow notifications from Teach N Go on your device.

Can another parent/guardian or my teenager be given access?

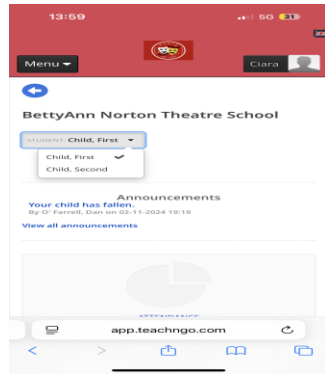
We can add as many related contacts to your child's account as you would like. At the beginning of Term we will ask you to confirm the related contacts you would like added. These might include a secondary parent, grandparent, or other guardian.

If you would like your teenager to have access to Teach n Go we can arrange this however please note that they would then receive all communication that we send out through Teach n Go about re-enrolment, enrolment for exams/feiseanna/theatre trips etc.

1.5.2 How to Use Teach n Go

For issues with payments, adding secondary contacts or logging into your account on Teach n Go contact info@bants.ie. For questions about how to use Teach n Go our teaching team have been briefed on the below and will do their best to help you if you want to ask questions in person, otherwise contact info@bants.ie.

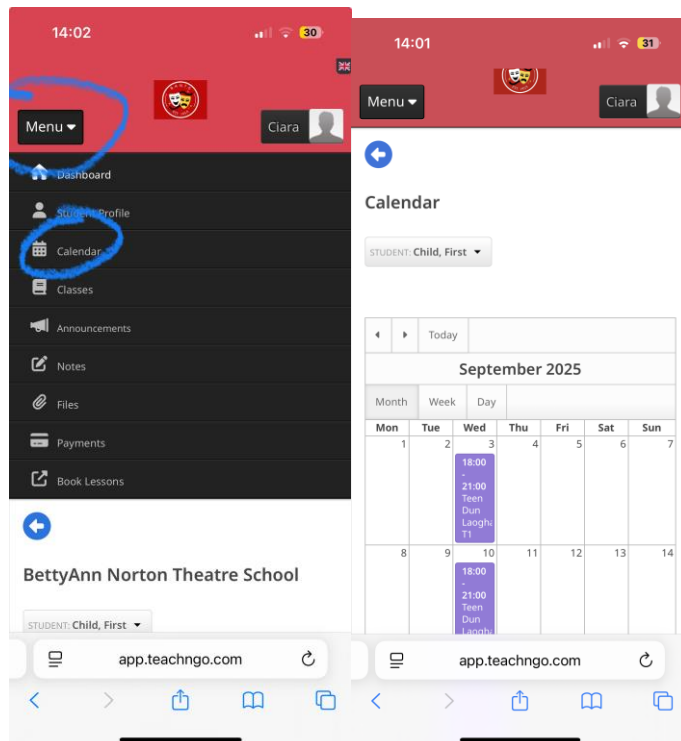
How to use if you have multiple children enrolled in classes



You will be able to do all of the below on Teach n Go if you have multiple children enrolled in classes with us but please note that you will see them individually. On each page you would see the option to toggle between your children. See the example below. Simply click and select the child who's details you would like to view. Siblings are typically linked on Teach n Go which will mean that you can make payments for all your children in one go.

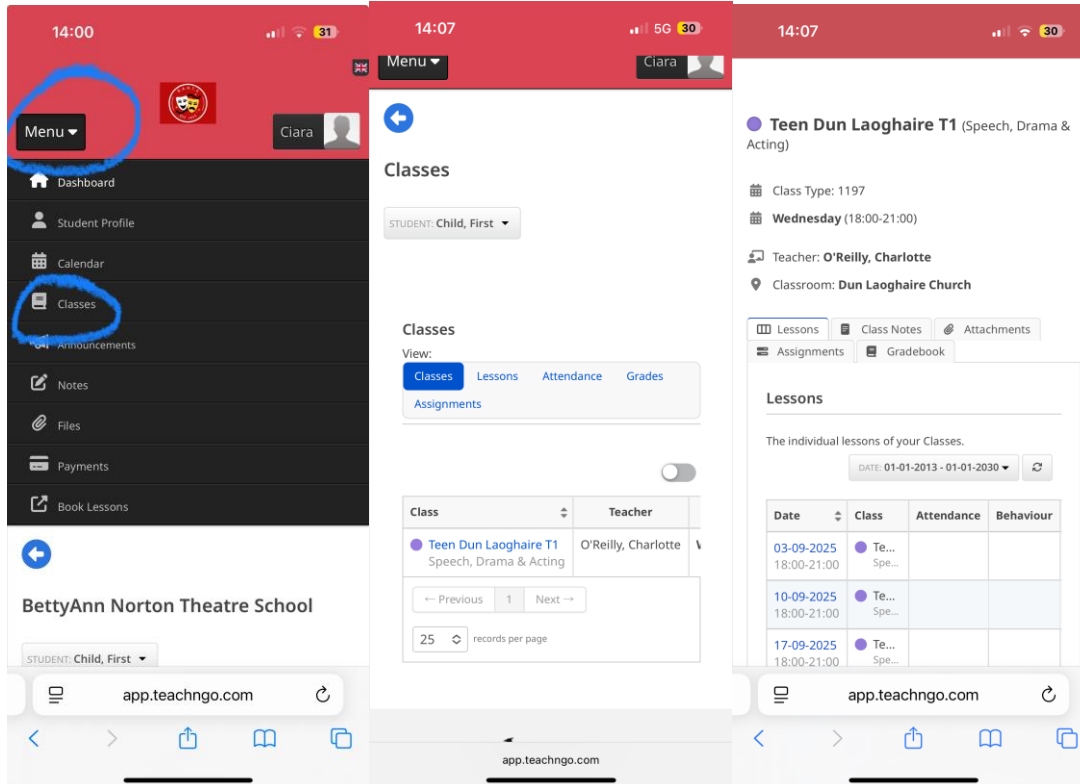
Accessing your class and event calendar

To view your child's calendar of upcoming classes and events go to Menu -> Calendar. You'll be able to view this either in Month, Week, or Day view and to different dates.



To see details about your child's class go to Menu -> Classes

When we have events like exams, productions, competitions, or theatre trips these will be added as classes for easy access.



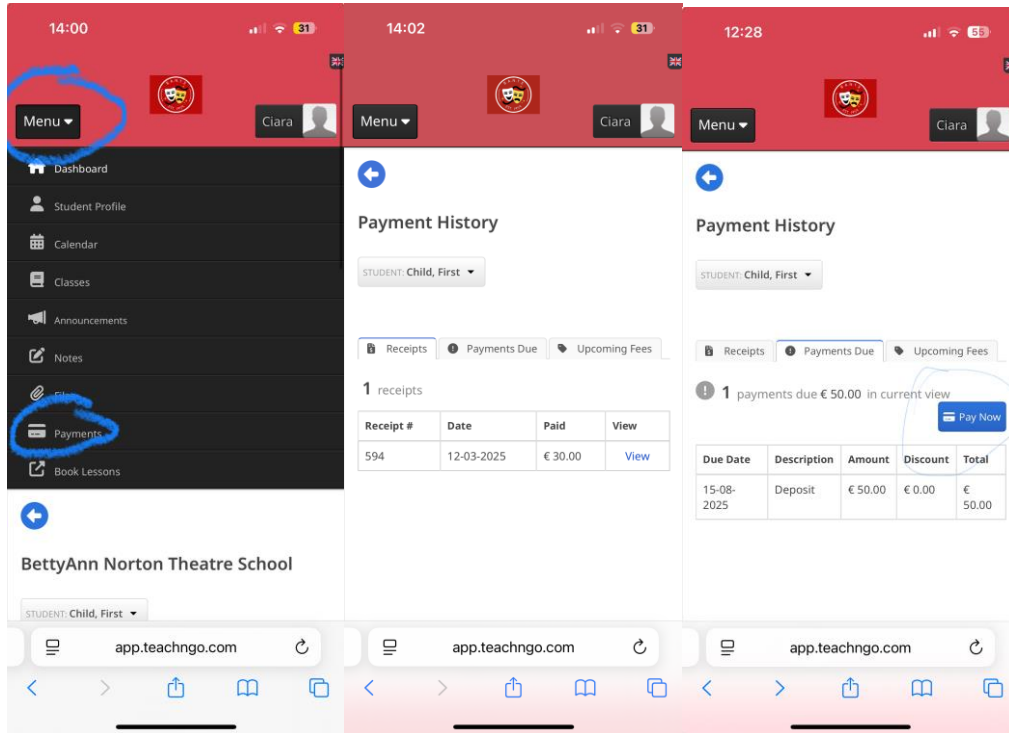
Managing your payments on Teach n Go

While new students will pay for their first term on the website, ongoing payments for further terms of classes as well as payments for events such as exams, competition fees or theatre trips will be managed through Teach N Go.

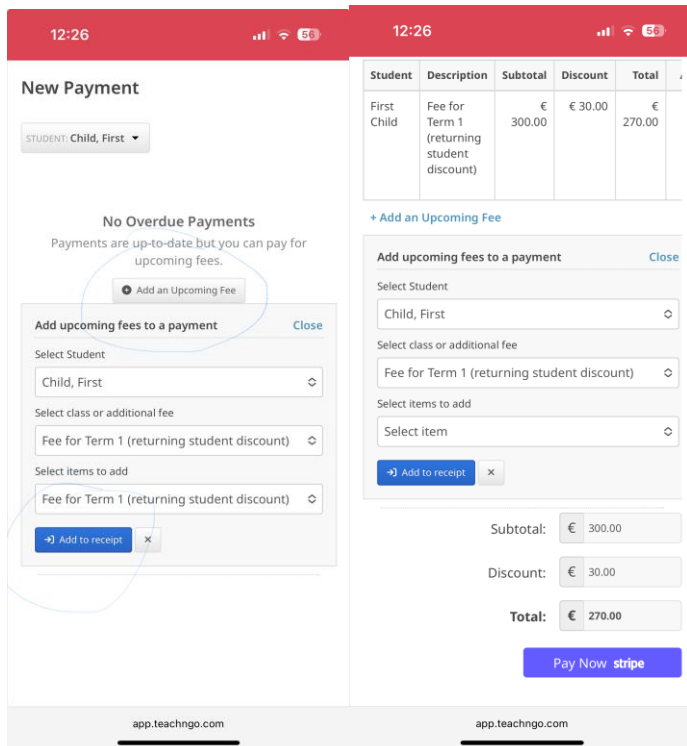
You can see your upcoming, due and previous payments if you go to Menu -> Payments.

Teach n Go will provide an automatic payment reminder for any overdue payments on a weekly basis. If you feel there is a mistake on your child's account please contact info@bants.ie

To make a payment of a Due fee, go to Menu -> Payments -> Payments Due -> Pay Now



To make an advance payment of a fee that is not yet due go to Menu -> Payments -> Upcoming Payments -> Pay Now. Select Add an Upcoming Fee

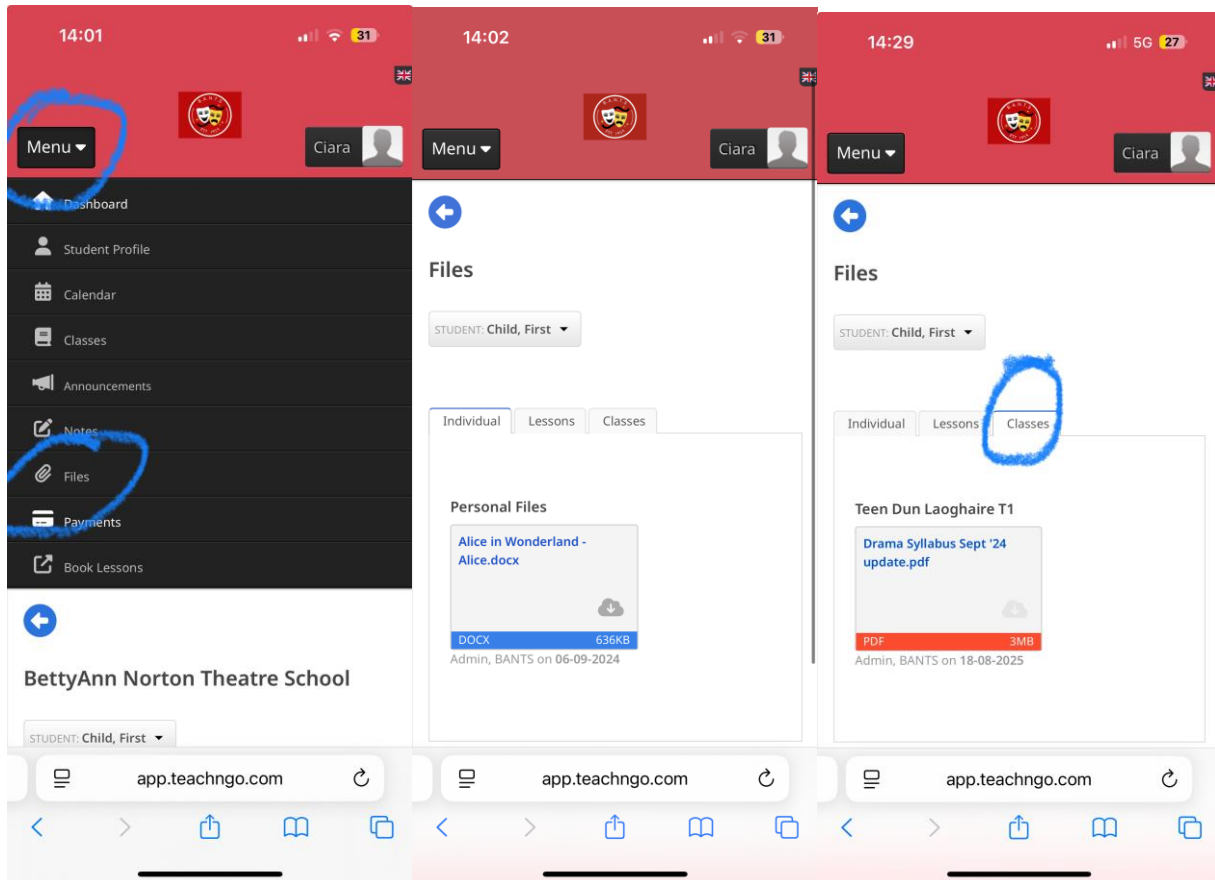


Finding documents on Teach n Go

You will receive a notification when a new document is added to your child's account or class on Teach n Go. To access this you can go to Menu -> Files.

You'll then be able to select to view Individual Documents (scripts for solo work, exam or competition feedback), Lesson Documents (used less frequently but may be used in an older student class if there was a particular resource for a specific lesson), or Class Documents (group scripts or class-wide documents like syllabi).

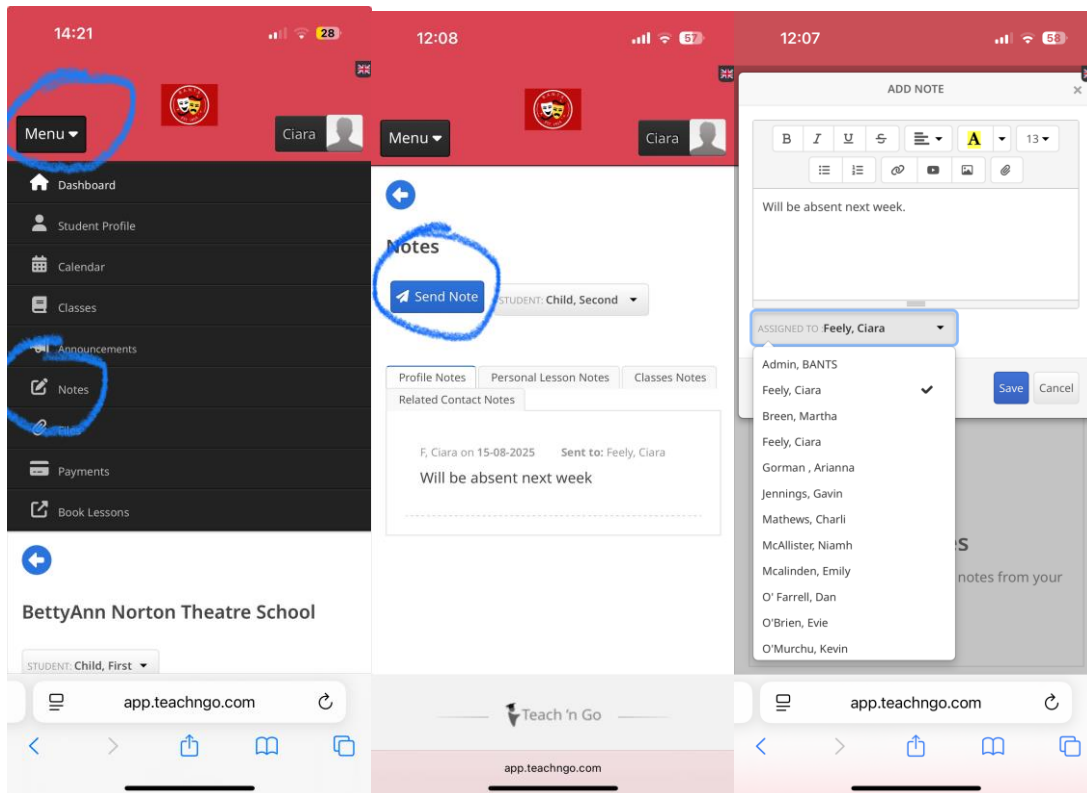
If your child's account is missing a script please contact your child's teacher at __first-name__@bants.ie or leave a note on your child's account (see below).



Adding/viewing notes on your child's account

Go to Menu -> Notes -> Send Note if you would like to send a message to your child's teacher or to our Admin Team. This is a quick and convenient way to mark an absence in an upcoming class. In the section "Assigned to" you'll be able to add your child's teacher and/or our admin team so that they receive the message on their own Teach n Go profile.

Teachers may also add notes for your child which you can view in this section.



1.6 Our Talent Agency Service

We offer a full talent agency service for all of our students. Casting agents often contact us in search of talent for television, film, theatre and commercial work. If the role suits your child, we will put them forward for consideration and act as their agent. At this point your child may be asked to audition.

How do I sign up for the agency?

At the beginning of a new term a digital form will be sent where we will ask for your details if you would like to be added to the agency.

- We will need relevant details like your child's height, eye colour etc. as well as a recent clear photograph. The photograph should be a head and shoulders shot against a plain background. Ideally two photos – one smiling (with teeth showing) and one straight faced.
- It can be very useful to have an IDENT video on hand at the start of the year as they may be asked to film these for different auditions. This would be a head to toe shot then coming closer to frame the head and shoulders and then student would then say their full name, age, height, that they are based in Dublin and that their agent is Betty Ann Norton Theatre School.
- An extended IDENT can also be filmed where you also say a little bit about yourself, why you like acting/performing, any special skills or a bit about any other hobbies you enjoy. This can give casting agents a sense of you (almost like a cover letter).

What cost is involved in the agency?

It is free for students to be part of the agency and to be put forward for jobs. Our talent agency may charge up to 10% commission on fees that students earn from booked jobs.

We will handle all of the interactions with casting directors, contract negotiations, child licensing etc. to make the process easier and to ensure you or your child's best interests are taken care of. When it comes to castings, we can arrange chaperones (at a cost) to accompany your child to in-person auditions and shoots as needed.

How does the audition process work?

Nowadays, most first round auditions will take place through self-taping, where your child would need to learn a script, film a tape at home, and submit this directly to the casting agent. Secondary auditions may take place in person depending on what is being auditioned for. Details of both of these types of auditions would be sent to you via email and will typically involve a quick turnaround.

Usually, we will only hear back from casting agents about successful applicants. There can be hundreds of other applicants for these roles so it is important to only go forward for auditions if you are prepared for possible disappointment.

See the Appendix here for our guidelines on [filming and submitting self tapes](#).

More Opportunities to Get Cast

In addition to working with our talent agency you may like to sign up to fishpond.ie which would allow you to directly apply for jobs that are relevant and would also give your child a profile that casting agents would be able to view for upcoming jobs and make requests for auditions. Note that there is a fee for fishpond full membership. This is a good option for quick turnaround jobs such as advertisements which typically offer a high payment.

Another option would be to sign up for reputable sites that offer castings for extras work such as movieextras.ie and celticcasting.ie

Additional Support

Occasionally we host casting workshops during term-time and midterm/summer courses with professional actors on audition technique, self-taping, accents, and offer guidance to help students develop their performance CVs and showreels.

At an additional cost, 1-1 coaching is available in preparation for castings, as well as auditions for conservatoires and for university courses such as the Lir Academy, Gaiety School of Acting, TU Dublin Conservatoire, RADA, LAMDA and more.

What Types of Casting Opportunities are there?

Students in our casting agency have worked on podcasts, children's animations, TV series, as featured and extra roles in films, in professional theatre productions as well as a variety of commercial advertisements. Most recently we had several students partaking in Toy Show the Musical and taking leading and supporting roles in a short film funded by Screen Ireland.

Students from the School have performed with: The Abbey Theatre, The Gate Theatre, The Olympia Theatre, The Gaiety Theatre, Project Arts Centre, R.T.E. Radio and Television, TG4, BBC, Radio 4, Royal Court Theatre, London, and numerous films and television series such as The Tudors and The Vikings.

1.7 Code of Conduct

- **Attendance:** it is expected that students will attend class each week except in extenuating circumstances. Our classes are designed to be group-based and students being absent makes it difficult for us to run rehearsals effectively and to ensure that all students are well prepared for exams and performances. Students in Junior/Teen classes who are absent for more than 2 classes in a term may risk not being able to participate in the relevant events of the term.
- **Timeliness/Leaving Early:** it is expected that students will arrive on time. Arriving late to class can mean that the student has missed important training and is disruptive for the rest of the group. Similarly, students are expected to remain for the duration of class. Students are not permitted to leave early except in extenuating circumstances. Teachers are not expected to accommodate students leaving early by rehearsing with them ahead of the other students as it is unfair on the rest of the class. Repeated instances will need to be addressed.
- **Active participation:** Students should be prepared for class, participate actively, and support their peers. Students are expected to dedicate time at home to practice each week, ideally a few minutes each day depending on the student class level and time of year. Parents/guardians are expected to help with this either through helping the students learn lines, practice or simply to encourage their rehearsals. Older students will occasionally be assigned written homework to deepen their understanding.
- **Behavior:** Students are expected to follow directions from the teachers and to approach the teacher and other students with kindness and respect. The majority of behavioral issues will be addressed by the teacher in class through a conversation with the child. If this does not resolve the behavior, the teacher will discuss this with the parent/guardian and ask that a conversation be had at home. Repeated instances of disruptive behavior may result in the child being removed from class temporarily or a full cancellation of classes.
- **Physical Violence/Bullying:** we have a zero-tolerance policy for physical violence and/or bullying. Any instance will be addressed. Parents/guardians of both parties will be informed. Any further incidents may result in a cancellation of their tuition.
- Any violent, aggressive, or harassing behavior of parents/guardians to teachers or other staff will result in cancellation of tuition.
- **Reporting concerns:** Students are encouraged to report any issues or concerns to a teacher or designated person
- **Respect for property:** Including school property, costumes, and belongings

2 CURRICULUM

2.1 Classes for Children

Step 1 Speech and Drama Classes (Age 4.5-6)

This 1 hour class provides an excellent introduction to the world of drama and theatre. We build a strong foundation in speech and drama skills through poetry recital, storytelling and mime, with exercises for speech clarity and lots of fun games.

- Available in Rathmines only on Thursdays 3:30-4:30pm and Saturdays 11 am-12pm.
- Note that in Castleknock and Dun Laoghaire venues students are welcome to join Step 2 in Senior Infants.

Events: In class sharings of work for family/friends and optional poetry competitions (T2).

Pricing: €20 per week (fees paid per term)

Step 2 Speech and Drama Classes (1st-2nd class)

This 90 minute class bridges the gap between step 1 and the junior class. Students advance by learning solo story telling and group scene work in a public performance.

- Available in Rathmines Thursdays 4:30-6pm, Saturdays 9:30-11 am / 12:30-2pm
- Available in Dun Laoghaire on Wednesdays 4:30-6pm (Senior-2nd class)
- Available in Castleknock on Fridays 3-4:30pm (Senior-2nd class)

Events: in class sharing for family/friends, option grade exams (T1), BANTS annual production (T2), and optional solo competitions (T2).

Pricing: €30 per week (fees paid per term)

Junior Speech and Drama Classes (3rd-6th class)

This 2.5 hour class is a jam-packed mix of fun and hard work. In this class students will take on more advanced performance material like monologues from plays and learn key vocal and physical skills for how to play a character. Ensemble work and improvisation is developed further and the students take on more stage time in the annual production.

- Available in Rathmines Thursdays 3:30-6pm, Saturdays 9:30am-12pm / 12:30-3pm
- Available in Dun Laoghaire on Tuesdays 4:30-7pm / 5:30-8pm (waitlist only)
- Available in Castleknock on Fridays 4:30-7pm

Events: in class sharing for family/friends, option grade exams (T1) BANTS annual production (T2), optional solo/group competitions (T2) and theatre trips.

Pricing: €50 per week (fees paid per term)

Drama Just for Fun (Age 8-12)

This 1 hour class offers a lower cost and lower time-commitment alternative to our Junior Drama classes. While the Junior class involves preparation of solo and group work for speech and drama exams, competitions and public performances, the focus of this class is more on the soft skills which drama offers, creating a sense of fun and play in the week. These classes build confidence, develop creativity, movement, improvisation skills.

- Available only in Rathmines on Saturdays 2-3pm.

Events: no events for this class as it is as it says, just for fun

Pricing: €15 per week (fees paid per term)

2.2 Classes for Teenagers

Teen Speech and Drama Classes (1st-6th Year)

Each weekly Teenagers' Speech, Drama and Acting Class is 2.5-3 hours long, covering three main areas of performance studies:

- Voice: vocal exercises, poetry recital, public speaking, and reading aloud;
- Acting technique: work on acting exercises, monologues and duologues;
- Ensemble: work on movement, devised and scripted group material, team-building.
 - Available in Rathmines on Saturdays 9:30am-12pm / 3-6pm
 - Available in Dun Laoghaire on Wednesdays 6-9pm
 - Available in Castleknock on Fridays 5:30-8pm

Events: in class sharing for family/friends, option grade exams (T1) BANTS annual production (T2), optional solo/group competitions (T2) and theatre trips.

Pricing: €50 per week (fees paid per term)

Teen Youth Theatre (1st-6th Year)

We also run weekly Teen Youth Theatre workshops in Rathmines. These workshops provide a collaborative space where participants can explore different aspects of theatre making including performance, devising, directing and design.

- Available on Wednesdays 6:30-8:30pm in Rathmines

Events: Variable, TBC by Youth Theatre **Pricing:** €15 per week (fees paid per term)

2.3 2025/2026 Term Dates

Note: Teen Youth Theatre and Drama Just for Fun classes may follow alternative dates.

2.3.1 Term 1 (September-December)

Starts: Monday September 1st (teen youth theatre begins 24th September)

Halloween Midterm: Saturday October 25th-Friday October 31st

Ends: Sunday December 14th (teen youth theatre ends December 17th)

Note: Saturday classes run on November 1st

Events in Term 1 (see more details in dedicated events section overleaf)

Speech and Drama Grade Exams (Step 2 classes+) TBD dates late November/early December. Location TBD.

In class sharing of work on the final week of class (all classes)

2.3.2 Term 2 (January-May)

Starts: Monday January 5th

February Midterm: Monday February 16th-Sunday February 22nd

Easter Midterm: Monday March 30th-Sunday April 12th

Ends: Sunday May 31st

Note: classes run over February and May bank holiday weekends.

Events in Term 2 (see more details in dedicated events section overleaf)

BANTS Annual Production (Step 2 classes+) TBD dates mid-late March. Location TBD.

SDTOI Hybrid Feis. Entries due in January. Online round videos due over February midterm. Live final takes place Sunday April 19th in the Talbot Hotel Stillorgan.

Feis Maitiu TBD dates mid May TBD location

In class sharing of work on the final week of class (all classes, Saturday class sharing likely the week before on May 23rd)

2.4 Events

2.4.1 Grade Exams

In Late November to Early December of Term 1, students in our Step 2 and above classes have the opportunity to take a grade examination with an external examining body. The full syllabus of available exams and additional details can be [found here](#).

More details about preparing each element as well as line learning techniques can be found in Appendix [1](#) and [2](#).

What are Grade Exams?

Grade exams in speech and drama / acting are structured assessments designed to measure a student's progress in performance, communication, and interpretation. Students present prepared work to an external examiner, who provides a mark, written feedback, and a certificate.

Why We Offer Exams

- Provide a **goal** to work towards.
- Build **confidence** and presentation skills.
- Encourage **discipline** and consistent practice.

Entry & Readiness

- Exams are **optional** but encouraged for students who have prepared the required syllabus pieces.
- The teacher will recommend entry based on a student's readiness, commitment, and confidence.
- Parents will be informed at the beginning of term what level their child is being prepared for and asked if they would like to enroll for the exams. At this point we would have a broad window of exam dates and the student will later be assigned a timeslot within that timeframe. It's important to be aware that the timetable is not made based on student availability rather it is based on the requirements of the examining body.
- Note that there is an extra fee for these exams - €50-100 depending on level.
- When entering it is important that any extenuating circumstances that might be relevant for the exam are flagged and relevant documentation provided. For

example any learning difficulties such as a dyslexia or physical disabilities. We would need to fill out a form for the student and to provide RIAM with supporting documentation so that relevant accommodations can be made. The most common accommodation is for students with dyslexia: the examiner is made aware and additional time is offered for the reading aloud section.

Exam Structure

Depending on the grade, students may be assessed on:

- Performance of **set pieces** (poetry, monologue, prose).
- Performance of **devised pieces** (mime or original scene based on a title)
- **Vocal and speech work** (projection, clarity, articulation).
- **Improvisation or sight-reading** tasks.
- Short discussion with the examiner about the work and relevant **theory** elements.

Preparation

- All material will be rehearsed in class but **additional home practice is essential.**
- Students should aim to be fully confident in their pieces several weeks before the exam date and should learn their lines as soon as possible as this is really the first step towards preparing the pieces for performance.
- Parents can support by providing a quiet space to rehearse, helping to learn lines, and encouraging performance practice at home.

Exam Day

- Exams take place at approved centres however we typically host our own exam center at St. Louis High School Rathmines.
- A few weeks before the exam you will have received your exam time slot and any other details which might be available such as room.
- Parents can wait with the student but may not enter the exam room with the student as it is a 1-1 performance with the examiner.
- Students should arrive early, with all required materials (clean copies of scripts, props if permitted).
- Dress should be neat and comfortable.
- Props/Costumes: these are not required and generally for exams the recommendation would be a subtle nod that helps you feel in character rather than

a full costume which might distract you, for example for someone playing Juliet in Romeo and Juliet they might wear a longer skirt rather than jeans. Costumes/props are not awarded extra marks though students who use them tend to feel more in character during their performances which can lead to better marks provided these have been practiced with the whole time.

Results

- Marks are awarded on a percentage basis.
- Distinction 90% or more, Honors 80% or more, Merit 70% or more, and Pass 60% or more. Note that distinctions are **rare**, only about 10% of exams achieve this.
- Certificates are issued for successful candidates.
- Written examiner feedback is shared with parents and students to guide future development.
- In rare occasions, students may be selected by the Academy for a [Spotlight Award](#). This is a recognition of outstanding achievement in a particular element of their exam. They would have the opportunity to apply to perform in a public display with other winners and to attend a prize-giving ceremony.

Keep in Mind

- **Exams are optional but valuable** – exams are generally a positive milestone, not a pass/fail judgment on ability. We emphasise to the students that the exams are measuring their technical skills – audibility, clarity, use of the space, comfort with their lines etc. but that artistic ability goes far beyond these metrics.
- **Progression is individual**; not all students will take an exam every year and at different stages we may suggest an exam at the same level but a different subject e.g. Acting Grade 3 one year and Speech and Drama Grade 3 the following when we feel there is a substantial jump in level expected.
- **Support at home is important** for confidence and preparation.

2.4.2 In Class Sharing of Work

At the end of each Term we host an informal sharing of student work in all of our classes. These take place in class on the final week of class (note for Saturday classes in Term 2 this may take place a week before the final week).

- Parents, family, and friends are welcome to attend. There is no charge for attending this event.
- The purpose of these is to perform material the students have worked on for a wider audience than they may be used to in a supportive environment.
- These performances are especially important for students who decide not to take part in the Grade Exams or competitions but equally they can be great preparation for future performances in these types of settings.
- In the final few weeks of class you will be emailed to confirm the day and time of these performances. They typically occur within the class window and will vary depending on the length of material being showcased.

2.4.3 Theatre Trips

From time to time we organize theatre trips to see a play in the theatre with the class. We will contact you about upcoming theatre trips via email and you can let us know via email if you would like your child to be included.

- Depending on the show we will either ask that you purchase a ticket (if seats unassigned) or we will purchase a ticket on your child's behalf.
- The fee will then be added to your account on Teach n Go. Costs vary depending on the show.
- Several teachers will be on site to chaperone the event however parents/guardians are welcome to join and watch the show too if you are happy to buy a ticket.
- On most occasions the theatre trip will meet outside the theatre about 30 minutes before the start of the show and pick-up/drop off happens with parents/guardians just inside the theatre.
- If students are making their own way to/from the theatre this will need to be flagged with us in advance.

2.4.4 BANTS Annual Production

In Term 2, approximately mid to late March students in the Step 2, Junior and Teen Speech and Drama classes take part in the Betty Ann Norton Theatre School Annual Production.

What is the Production?

The production is a full length stage play approximately 60-75 minutes in length featuring different scenes performed by each age group. We love having students of all ages in the same performance as it offers all students a sense of progression – to see where they are going as they move up to our next age group or indeed how far they have come.

- Takes place in a professional theatre in Dublin. Past productions have taken place in Smock Alley Theatre, Dun Laoghaire Pavillion Theatre, the Lir Academy and the Mill Theatre Dundrum.
- Students work with professional theatre technicians for their lighting, sound effects, and staging.
- This is one of our main events in the calendar year as it is a great experience for the students to perform publicly in a professional setting.
- Typically ensemble based, meaning that the scenes performed (and often the play as a whole) has a focus on groupwork and each child has an opportunity to shine.

What if my Child is Nervous About Performing?

Holding stage time in front of an audience of approximately 200 people can be nerve-wrecking for some students, particularly those with less performing experience however we generally find it is a great way to build confidence.

- We ensure ample preparation time in Term 2
- The amount of time on stage increases as the age group increases so as not to overwhelm our younger performers.
- The ensemble nature of the production means that students feel well supported.

Of course, we don't force any student to take part who doesn't want to though generally the only reason that students don't take part is due to a previously known schedule clash. In these cases, we do our best to include the student as a student director or to partake in some of the behind-the-scenes work.

When and Where is the Production?

We can usually only finalize our schedule with the venue a few months in advance but we would usually have the venue and range of dates at the beginning of the academic year.

- If you know in advance of any reason your child can't make it, please let us know as soon as possible so that we can plan accordingly.
- We usually have our production over a weekend where there are 4-5 shows taking place with 4-5 different groups of students performing the same show.
- Your child's class will be assigned a given performance day/time as soon as we can offer it with details for when to arrive etc.

Attendance, Scripts and Line Learning at Home

- In the early weeks of Term 2 students will receive a script for their scenes and lines to learn. It is essential that lines are learned early on for effective rehearsals .
- Unlike the monologues/poems that the students have learned previously, on this occasion they will often have dialogue broken by other characters and will need to learn not only their lines but their cues too.
- Help running lines at home can be very useful in the early weeks of preparation.
- **Note:** As these productions are ensemble based, everyone needs to prepare not just for themselves but for the rest of the group as well so learning lines as well as attending classes each and every week is vital.

Costumes/Props

We provide special items but we do ask students to acquire their own base layers. For example if they are playing a servant we would ask them to come wearing black trousers, a long sleeved black top and black school shoes and socks. We would provide an apron, mop cap, white gloves and relevant props. If however, you'd like to acquire your own additional props/costumes or happen to have something you think would work quite well already then we'd be delighted if you bring it to class to practice with, and on the day for the performance.

Tickets Availability and Pricing

While revenue from the Term is able to cover some of the costs of the production, renting a professional theatre with professional technicians is costly and so we do charge a fee for tickets of €15 per person.

- Tickets will typically be put online a few weeks before the performance and we will share a booking link with you thereafter.
- Occasionally we need to limit number of tickets per child depending on the capacity of the venue to ensure fair distribution of tickets.

On the Day

As we are only able to rent the venue for the dates that we are performing this means that there is no technical/costume rehearsal in the space in advance of show day.

- We will usually ask the groups to arrive about 2.5-3 hours before the show so that they can do a technical rehearsal and have a short break before their performance.
- Parents would drop students to the venue, and they would then be chaperoned backstage by BANTS staff for the duration of the rehearsal, break and performance.
- We ask that students bring with them any costume/prop items they have been asked to bring and that they arrive in costumes (base) as there would not be backstage changing facilities.
- We also ask that they pack sufficient water, a packed lunch, and a non-digital non-noise-making form of entertainment like a book, coloring book, notebook etc.
- Quiet games such as follow the leader may also be played backstage too.

Examples of Past Productions

Last year, for our 65th year in business and Betty Ann's 5 year anniversary, we presented an original work titled "The Castle That Time Forgot" in the Smock Alley Theatre's Main Stage. Previous productions have included A Christmas Carol in the Lir Academy's Studio 1 in 2023, and an adaptation of Hans Christian Andersen short stories in The Dun Laoghaire Pavillion Theatre in 2022.

2.4.5 Competitions/Feiseanna

In Term 2 students have the option to participate in two competitions – the Hybrid Speech and Drama Teachers of Ireland Feis, and The Feis Maitiu Dublin. Note that both of these come with an additional cost. More details in the subsequent sections.

What are the benefits of taking part in a competition?

- Feedback from seasoned adjudicators
- Build confidence in performing in front of a live audience (Feis Maitiu Dublin or final of SDTOI)
- Learn from and meet other performers of the same age and build comradery/community (Feis Maitiu Dublin or final of SDTOI)
- In the case of pair/group entries: build a shared memory (many of our teachers have fond memories of performing at the feiseanna).

Considerations

- Performing in a competition environment can be overwhelming so we would usually recommend students have a least one year of drama experience before taking part. In their first year of drama they'll build confidence in performing in front of others in a low pressure environment through in class sharings.
- It's important to remember that while the adjudicators are looking for certain criteria in their choices, art is subjective. You may not always agree with an adjudicator's decision however their decision is final.
- Note that the SDTOI Feis (see below) has an online heat before the live final and the majority of entries will not make it to the live final since it is an all-Ireland competition with possibly hundreds of entries in certain categories. This can be disheartening and while we will stress in class that it is an all-Ireland competition and that places in the final are highly competitive, it is important to also discuss this at home.
- Our main focus in Term 2 for the majority of our classes is group work and the Annual Production so practicing at home will be essential to be prepared for solo competitions (ideally with a parent/guardian or sibling) . For guidelines on practicing different material at home and line learning see Appendix [1](#) and [2](#).

2.4.6 Speech and Drama Teachers of Ireland (SDTOI) Hybrid Feis

In Term 2 students have the option to participate in the SDTOI Hybrid Feis. Note that there is an additional cost for entry.

What is the SDTOI Hybrid Feis?

The SDTOI Hybrid Feis is an all-Ireland Speech and Drama competition. The first round is an online heat where students submit videos of their performance in a given category. From there a small number of finalists (approx 10-20) are chosen (by a panel of judges) for each category to perform in a live final. A few events are live only meaning that there is no online heat, previously reading aloud and prepared prose have been live events but this is subject to change.

Where and When is the SDTOI Feis?

- Sign up and payment in early to mid January
- Online heats (video entry) due mid February (typically during the February midterm).
- Finalists are announced and feedback given to non-finalists, typically mid March.
- In person live final for finalists will take place in the Talbot Hotel Stillorgan on Sunday April 19th 2026. Note that competitions at various stages throughout the day from about 9am to 9pm and we only receive the timetable about a week before the event so please keep the day free if you are entering.

How and when do I sign up and pay?

- In early January your child's teacher will get in touch with you to explain which categories might be suitable for your child's age group and what participation would involve.
- You will then let them know which competitions you would like to enroll your child in via email including their full name, date of birth, feis age (age they turned in the previous calendar year), and the list of competitions to enroll for.
- You will then be added to an event on Teach n Go and a fee will be added to your account to be paid within the next week.
- Sign ups are final and must be paid for even if you end up not completing the online/in-person rounds.
- Please keep in mind: This is an all-Ireland event and is highly competitive. The majority of students will not make it to the live final, so if you feel this would cause too much disappointment for you or your child then we suggest not entering this one and going for the fully live Feis Maitiu instead.

What categories of competition are there?

A full syllabus will be provided but here is a brief overview of what you can expect. Note that time / length limits apply based on age group. All competitions below are solo competitions other than the Duologue option. For details on how to perform/practice at home see the [Appendix 2](#).

- Poetry (Ages 5-18): competitors perform a poem of their choosing from memory
- Paint a Poem (Ages 5-18): competitors create a pictorial representation of a poem through drawing, coloring, painting, collage or similar. Note that the poem must be included on the art work and maximum size is A3.
- Create a Poem (Ages 8-18): competitors write their own poem (line length limits apply based on age)
- Drama (Ages 8-18): competitors perform a monologue of their choosing from memory
- Prepared Reading (Ages 8-12): competitors perform an extract from a book read aloud
- Prepared Prose (Ages 8-12): competitors perform an extract from a book from memory.
- TV Presenter (Ages 8-12): competitors perform a routine they have devised as if they are presenting on TV for example as a news reader or talk show host. Notes can be used.
- Shakespeare (Ages 13+): competitors perform an extract from a Shakespeare play.
- Duologues (Ages 10+): competitors perform a scene from a play in pairs.
- Musical theatre: perform a song from a musical. Note that we do not offer musical theatre classes however if you have a song from another activity you can enter with this.
- Mime: perform a prepared mime.

How much does it cost and how do I pay?

Cost varies depending on the competition, age group and year and a full syllabus will be provided at the time of enrollment. Fees are approximately €10-15 for poetry events, and €20-30 for drama events. Shortly after you have registered your enrollment with your teacher a fee will be added to your account on Teach n Go which will be due within the following week.

At the live final, there is also an additional fee of about €10 to pay per family for those who want to watch the competitions on the day which can be paid by cash only.

How do I film my video for the online heat?

Videos for the online heat should be filmed at home and shared with your child's teacher clearly labelled with their name and the competition that the entry is for. If the file is too large to send via email then please use MyAirBridge.com that should be used instead). Files should be sent to info@bants.ie unless otherwise directed.

- Ensure that you are well lit, ideally standing against a plain wall across from a window so there is light shining on you. Don't film standing against a window.
- A mobile phone is fine for recording – please ensure that you film landscape (horizontal) as videos will be watched on a computer screen and that your child is visible from head to toe in frame throughout the video.
- Wear neat clothing – no school uniforms with identifying information. You can wear costume providing it doesn't cover the face however no additional marks are awarded for costume.
- Ensure that you can be heard clearly throughout and that you remain in frame throughout the video even if you are moving in a drama piece for example.

See [Appendix 2](#) for an overall guide on how to perform the different types of material.

How will I know if I've made it to the live final?

Approximately mid-March we will receive a list of finalists for different categories followed by feedback for non-finalists (finalists receive their feedback at the final).

We will then email you to let you know if your child has or has not made it to the live final in a given category and again later to provide the feedback if they have not.

What happens at the live final?

- About a week before the live final we will receive a timetable of the events. We will let you know your competition time and room name within the Talbot Hotel Stillorgan that the final or live event will take place. We will also add this to your schedule on Teach n Go.
- There is limited parking available at the Talbot Hotel Stillorgan so please allow plenty of time to arrive and find a place to park before the competition.
- You will need to sign in at the desk and you will receive a competitor wrist band. Any family members who want to watch the competitions will also need wristbands and there is a fee of about €10 per family for watching the competitions on the day which can be paid by cash only.

- There are several competitions running concurrently in the Talbot Hotel so please ensure that you know your competition name, and room name and give yourself plenty of time to find the room.
- If you have a clash in your schedule through concurrent competitions let the assistant of the first competition know and they will put you at the beginning of that competition so that you can then leave to attend your next competition. If you are entering a competition late ensure that you wait for applause to enter so you don't interrupt someone's piece.
- At the beginning of the competition you will be called up to sign in and given a competitor number. When your competitor number is called you will go to the performance area and perform your piece. Always be sure to introduce your piece before you start (say the title clearly and slowly as well as the author and character name if relevant).
- Wear clothes that you can perform your pieces in comfortably and that you have practiced in. If you are wearing a costume or using props for any of your drama pieces make sure you have practiced with these.
- Be sure to stick to any time limits that are sited in the syllabus and be sure to time your entry in the lead-up to the event. Sometimes pieces performed live end up being longer so make sure that you practice keeping to the required time.
- After all of the competitors have performed the adjudicator will select a few competitors to receive prizes and all competitors will receive feedback and finalist medals as they have already had a significant feat from progressing from the online heats.
- There is a coffee dock and a restaurant/bar in the Talbot Hotel Stillorgan but we would also suggest bringing refreshments, especially water. There is a water refill station and toilets on the ground floor where all of the events take place.
- Some of our teachers may be onsite for the competitions but if we don't see you we wish you the best of luck and do let us know how you got on and share the feedback you received and any photos that you are happy for us to share.

Bring with you for the live final

- €10 cash entry fee per family to watch the competitions
- A clean copy of your performance material where relevant (not always needed but good to have just in case).
- Any props/costumes you are using if you are doing a drama/duologue provided you have practiced with these.

2.4.7 Feis Maitiu Dublin

The Feis Maitiu Dublin is a Speech and Drama Feis that has run in Dublin for many decades. Over Covid-19 the Feis had to cease operations and was unable to resume for several years. In May 2025 a group of drama teachers in Dublin (including Liz Daly from Pygmallion Drama School and Kerrie O'Reilly from Kings Hospital College, and our director Ciara Feely) banded together to organise its revival.

The event last year took place on a Sunday in May in Kings Hospital College and featured events for ages 5 to 18 in poetry, drama, Shakespeare, mime, musical theatre, duologues, and group improvisation.

It is expected that this competition will be opened up to more drama schools this year.

When and Where is the Feis Maitiu Dublin?

The dates and location of the Feis Maitiu Dublin 2026 are still to be decided however it is expected to run in May sometime between May 9th-May 17th.

The organisers felt that the event ran successfully in Kings Hospital College so it is possible that this venue would be used again.

All events take place in person in front of an audience of other performers and parents.

How and when do I sign up and pay?

- In Term 2, your child's teacher will get in touch with you to explain which categories might be suitable for your child's age group and what participation would involve.
- You will then let them know which competitions you would like to enroll your child in via email including their full name, date of birth, feis age (age they will be as of January 1st 2026), and the list of competitions to enroll for.
- You will then be added to an event on Teach n Go and a fee will be added to your account to be paid within the next week.
- Please keep in mind that the schedule will be subject to change and at the point of entry you will likely have a broad date range. Events will be scheduled depending on entries and once there is an exact date and time, we will let you know.
- Sign ups are final and must be paid even if you end up not participating on the day.

What categories of competition are there?

A full syllabus will be provided but here is a brief overview of what you can expect based on last year's syllabus. It is possible that additional solo or group events will be added this year. Note that time / length limits apply based on age group. All competitions below are solo competitions other than the Duologue and Group Improv options. For details on how to perform/practice at home see [Appendix 2](#).

- Poetry (Ages 5-18): competitors perform a **prescribed poem for their age group as per the Feis Maitiu Dublin 2026 syllabus**. Age is based on the age they are on January 1st 2026. E.g. even if a child turns 6 in February 2026 then they would be entered into the age 5 category.
- Drama (Ages 8-18): competitors perform a monologue of their choosing from memory
- Shakespeare (Ages 13+): competitors perform an extract from a Shakespeare play.
- Duologues (Ages 9+): competitors perform a scene from a play in pairs.
- Musical theatre: perform a song from a musical. Note that we do not offer musical theatre classes however if you have a song from another activity you can enter with this. This piece will not be practiced with drama teachers in our classes.
- Mime: perform a prepared mime.
- Group improvisation: (Ages 12+): groups of competitors are given a title and a few minutes to prepare an improvised scene that is performed on stage.

How much does it cost and how do I pay?

Cost varies depending on the competition, age group and year and a full syllabus will be provided at the time of enrollment. As all events are in person the fee is slightly higher for the Feis Maitiu compared to the SDTOI Hybrid Feis: approximately €20 for poetry events, and €25-30 for drama events. Shortly after you have registered your enrollment with your teacher a fee will be added to your account on Teach n Go which will be due within the following week.

What happens on the day?

- A few weeks before the Feis Maitiu we receive a timetable of the events and which specific grouping your child is enrolled in. There may be several iterations of the same category e.g. Poetry 5A Poetry 5B Poetry 5C and you must attend only the option you have been assigned. We will let you know your competition time and room name within the venue that the event will take place. We will also add this to your schedule on Teach n Go.

- There is parking available but please allow plenty of time to arrive and find a place to park before the competition.
- You will need to sign in at the desk and will be shown where to go.
- There can be several competitions running concurrently in the Feis Maitiu Dublin so please ensure that you know your competition name, and room name and give yourself plenty of time to find the room.
- If you have a clash in your schedule through concurrent competitions let the assistant of the first competition know and they will put you at the beginning of that competition so that you can then leave to attend your next competition. If you are entering a competition late ensure that you wait for applause to enter so you don't interrupt someone's piece.
- At the beginning of the competition, you will be called up to sign in and given a competitor number. When your competitor number is called, you will go to the performance area and perform your piece. Always be sure to introduce your piece before you start (say the title clearly and slowly as well as the author and character name if relevant).
- Wear clothes that you can perform your pieces in comfortably and that you have practiced in. If you are wearing a costume or using props for any of your drama pieces make sure you have practiced with these.
- Be sure to stick to any time limits that are sited in the syllabus and be sure to time your entry in the lead-up to the event. Sometimes pieces performed live end up being longer so make sure that you practice keeping to the required time.
- After all of the competitors have performed the adjudicator will select a few competitors to receive prizes and all competitors will receive feedback and a certificate of participation.
- There is a canteen at Kings Hospital College selling sandwiches, soft drinks, tea/coffee and fruit and bars but we would also suggest bringing refreshments, especially water. Liffey Valley shopping center is within walking distance or a short drive if you have a long break between competitions. There is a water refill station and toilets on the ground floor where all of the events take place.
- Some of our teachers may be onsite for the competitions but if we don't see you we wish you the best of luck and do let us know how you got on and share the feedback you received and any photos that you are happy for us to share.

Bring with you on the day

- A clean copy of your performance material where relevant (not always needed but good to have just in case), and any pre-rehearsed props/costumes for dramas.

3 POLICIES

3.1 Terms and Conditions

1. Fees are divided into three installments across two academic terms (September to December, and January to May) and you are committed to the full term once you enroll. If you are paying the fees in installments, then you commit to pay the full fees of the term.
2. Fees must be paid to ensure your reservation in any class and are due on the 1st of September (Term 1), 1st of January (first installment of Term 2) and 1st of April (second installment of Term 2). If you will not be continuing the full year of classes, we require 7 days written notice to info@bants.ie
3. Fees are refundable up to 7 days before class begins.
4. We do not offer trial classes as we feel one class is not enough to determine if this activity will be a good fit. Instead, we offer new students a 3 week change of mind period whereby if after 3 weeks you are not sure if after three weeks you *are* sure the class is *not* a good fit the class is a good fit for your child we will provide a refund of the remaining balance. Note that this applies to new students only.
5. We use a software called Teach N Go to manage ongoing payments, host our school calendar, share documents, and provide updates. New students will be provided details for how to set up an account and log in before the beginning of their first term and will use this for future payments.
6. Email is our main mode of communication. We will email your preferred email and any secondary email you provide with relevant updates around important dates, events such as exams, shows and competitions and so on. In time sensitive matters we also send mobile notifications through the Teach n Go app which you will receive if you have the app on your phone and notifications turned on.
7. We require that you let us know of any relevant medical, allergy or other needs that your child might have that would allow us to best support them in our teaching.
8. In Term 2 all students except Step 1 and Youth Theatre students participate in a public performance in a professional theatre. You will be given the dates of this performance at the start of term, and you are required to let us know if your child will not be available. Otherwise, they will be expected to attend and to be onsite a few hours before their show time for the technical rehearsal.

9. We offer a Talent Agency service at Betty Ann Norton Theatre School and all students have the option to be represented by our agency and put forward for auditions. A request form for casting details will be sent at the beginning of a new term and you will be required to fill this out to be registered. If you agree to be part of the agency then you agree to photos/videos/details of your child being shared with casting agents. If your child is successful in securing a role that has a fee attached then we may charge up to 10% commission from any fees they earn.
10. Please be aware that occasionally photos and videos of classes may be taken by teachers or other staff members. In class performances, footage may be taken by other parents. We may use these on our website, brochures and social media. If you do not consent to the usage of photos/videos let us know when booking through the website or write to us at info@bants.ie

3.2 Privacy Policy

This Privacy Policy describes how Betty Ann Norton Theatre School collects, protects and uses the personal information received from the Websites. The data controller for the Website is Betty Ann Norton Theatre School.

We will make every effort to protect the personal information that you provide us with and are committed to respecting your right to privacy.

If you have any requests concerning your personal information or any queries as to how we use your personal information, please contact us at info@bants.ie

1. Information We Collect

We collect personal information from visitors to the Website, through the use of online forms, every time you email us and every time you contact us. You may visit the Website without registering.

We may also collect information about your computer, including your IP address, operating system and browser type, for system administration and for some of the purposes set out in section 3 below. This is statistical data about our users' browsing actions and patterns and does not identify any individual

2. Children's Privacy

If you are under 16 years of age, please do not provide any personal information to us without the consent of your parent or guardian.

3. Use of personal information

We use the personal information collected via the Website for the purposes of:

- 3.1 providing and improving our Website;
- 3.2 dealing with your enquiries and requests
- 3.3 generating anonymous reports about the use of the Websites;
- 3.4 providing you with information and news about our programmes, events and services;

We may use the personal information we collect from you to send you information about our activities and programmes by email. You may choose not to receive information about our activities and programmes at any time by unsubscribing on the email or you can send us an email at info@bants.ie and we will unsubscribe you.

4. Use of cookies

A cookie is a small piece of information sent by a web server to a web browser, which enables the server to collect information from the browser. You can find out more about the use of cookies on <http://www.allaboutcookies.org/>. We use “personalisation” cookies to identify you when you visit the Websites (where you have given your consent) and to keep track of your browsing patterns and build up a demographic profile. We use “analytics” cookies to understand who has seen which of the pages on the Websites and to determine the most popular areas of the Websites so that we can improve and develop the Websites.

We may also use “social media” cookies to personalise your interaction with third party social media platforms such as Facebook where our Website uses such features. Such cookies recognise users of these social media sites when you view social media content on our Website. They also allow you to quickly share content across media, through the use of simple “sharing” buttons.

No personal information is stored in the cookies that are issued by the Websites. The value stored in the cookies is an anonymous identifier, which is not linked to any other personal information you may give us during your visit.

If you do not wish to receive these cookies you can disable them in your browser, though doing so may affect the functionality of our Websites. Please refer to your browser instructions or help screen to learn more about how to do this. However, should you decide to disable any cookies we place on your computer you may not be able to use certain services or facilities on the Websites. Switching off cookies will restrict your use of the Websites.

5. Other Websites

The Website may contain links to other Websites which are outside our control and are not covered by this Privacy Policy. If you access other Websites using the links provided, the operators of these Websites may collect personal information from you which will be used by them in accordance with their privacy policy, which may differ from ours. Please check these policies before you submit any personal data to these websites.

6. Access to your personal information

You have a right to access the personal information we hold about you. To obtain a copy of the personal information we hold about you, please write to us at info@bants.ie

7. Security

We endeavour to take all reasonable steps to protect your personal information. All the personal information we collect is stored securely and is password protected

8. Internet-based transfers

Given that the Internet is a global environment, using the Internet to collect and process personal information necessarily involves the transmission of data on an international basis. Therefore, by browsing the Websites and communicating electronically with us, you acknowledge our processing of personal information in this way. However, we will endeavour to protect all personal information collected through the Websites in accordance with strict procedures and security features to try to prevent unauthorised access.

9. Changes to this Privacy Policy

From time to time we may update this Privacy Policy. When we do we will publish the changes on the Websites. If you do not agree to these changes, please do not continue to use the Websites. If material changes are made to this Privacy Policy, we will notify you by email or by placing a prominent notice on the Websites.

3.3 Child Protection Policy

1. Policy Statement
2. Standards Evaluation
3. Designated Person
4. Child Protection Officer
5. Communication
6. Reporting Incidents
7. Areas of Good Practice
8. The Various Codes of Behaviour

1. Policy Statement

Children are of the utmost importance to the Betty Ann Norton Theatre School. We at the Betty Ann Norton Theatre School aim to promote the participation of children in our school by creating a culture of safety and fun. “Children have the right to be protected from all forms of violence. They must be kept safe from harm and they must be given proper care by those looking after them” (Article 19: UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). All children’s activities should be conducted in an atmosphere of fairness. The Children’s Act (2001) is based on a clear and consistent set of principles designed with the common aim of promoting the welfare of children. Children have the right to be safe. All tutors should ensure that this fundamental principle takes precedent over all other considerations.

2. Standards Evaluation

Standards set by Betty Ann Norton Theatre School will be achieved through the following:

- Awareness of the issues which lead to children being harmed
- Safe recruiting procedures for all tutors/volunteers through careful selection
- Application of codes of behaviour for all tutors/volunteers
- Application of codes of behaviour for children/young people
- Application of good and safe working/playing practices
- Establishment of procedures for dealing with child protection issues /recording of complaints/accidents, report books detailing facts, witnesses, circumstances etc.
- Procedures relating specifically to bullying and photography Identification and maintenance of parental responsibility
- Availability of information – each parent should receive a copy or have access to the Child Protection Policy

- Regular review and monitoring of Child Protection procedures by School Management
- All children are treated equally; the School will promote anti-discriminatory practices.

The policy applies to all those involved in Betty Ann Norton Theater School as Tutors, administrators, volunteers, parents/guardians and children.

3. Designated Person (with respect to Child Protection)

The 'contact person' or Designated Person within Betty Ann Norton Theatre School is:

Name: Ciara Feely

Address: Betty Ann Norton Theatre School, Cuisle Arts and Cultural Centre, St. Louis High School, Rathmines, Dublin 6

Telephone number: 087 101 1618

Email: ciara@bants.ie

The name of designated person shall be made known to all in the School. She is the person to whom child protection concerns will be addressed. The School has procedures in place for dealing with concerns or allegation of abuse or neglect either within the School or externally but the first point of contact for the child, parent/guardian or tutor is the designated person. However, any individual has the right to contact Social Services or An Garda Síochána directly if they have concern about a child's welfare.

4. Guidelines for Communication

Betty Ann Norton Theatre School shall make contact with parents/guardians regularly regarding possible casting opportunities and in relation to class and production schedules. In all cases, contact will be made with the parent/guardian of the child in accordance with the The General Data Protection Regulation 2016/679. Should any parent/guardian choose to not receive any further communication from Betty Ann Norton Theatre School, they can update their subscription settings at any time.

5. Digital and Video Images Policy

On occasion, staff will take photos for promotional purposes. Parents/Guardians will be informed when this takes place and proper procedures for seeking permission will be taken e.g. permission forms signed by guardians. You and your child have the right to opt out of official images.

Use of Images

Betty Ann Norton Theatre School's use of images can be assumed to be acceptable, providing the following guidelines are strictly adhered to.

- Permission to use any photos or video recordings should be sought in line with the school's digital and video images policy noted above. If anyone, for any reason, has asked that their children not to be filmed or photographed then their wishes should be respected.
- Under no circumstances should staff share or upload student pictures online other than via school owned social media accounts
- Staff should exercise their professional judgement about whether an image is appropriate to share on school social media accounts. Students should be appropriately dressed, not be subject to ridicule and must not be on any school list of children whose images must not be published.
- If a member of staff inadvertently takes a compromising picture which could be misconstrued or misused, they must delete it immediately.

Any breach of this policy should be reported immediately to the Designated Person for immediate action.

6. Anti Bullying Policy

Betty Ann Norton Theatre School has a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying.

All students are expected to act in a polite and courteous manner with each other. The positive atmosphere in our classes can be seriously undermined by disruptive and unreliable members. Students acting in an inappropriate manner or whose conduct could cause hurt or injury to others may not be admitted to class.

Types of Behaviour that are not tolerated:

- Physical aggression
- Damage to property
- Intimidation
- Inappropriate Gestures
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls (rude, using offensive language, prank/unsolicited phone calls)
- Abusive text messages

- Abusive email/Facebook/Social media messaging
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Isolation & exclusion
- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation
- Name calling
- A combination of any of the types listed

Steps that are taken to deal with bullying incidents include:

Where an incident of bullying is observed by or reported to a member of staff the following measures will be taken:

- The Tutor will speak with the accuser to ascertain what has taken place
- The Tutor will monitor closely the activities of the respective students and their classmates
- Persons involved in or witnessing alleged incidents of bullying are asked to write an account of the incident. This does not necessarily imply that these persons have engaged in bullying behaviour.
- The investigation and questioning will be sensitive to the needs of those involved
- The Tutor will bring their findings to the attention of the Designated Person who will then take appropriate action
- Those who have been found to have engaged in bullying will be encouraged to recognise the inappropriateness of such behaviour and the seriousness of its effects on others
- They will also be encouraged to apologise for their behaviour to the victim in question
- A record of the bullying incident will be maintained in the incident book and retained in the school's files.

Where bullying behaviour has been established as having taken place and where there is a repeated or serious offence, the parents/guardians will be notified. Parents/Guardians are expected to co-operate with these policies and to re-enforce them in the home.

Appropriate sanctions will be imposed which may ultimately result in exclusion from the school. Retaliation against students or others, following or during an investigation will be regarded as a very serious breach of discipline and will merit the most serious of sanctions.

7. Guidelines for Reporting Accident

In the event of an accident the following procedure will be followed:

- Contact parents/guardians in the event of all accidents
- Fill in details to the incident book
- For more serious accidents:
 - Contact emergency services/G.P. if necessary
 - Record detailed facts surrounding accident, witnesses etc.
 - Complete accident book

8. Guidelines for Reporting Allegations/Incidents

- Record all incidents reported or observed in incident book
- Ensure confidentiality – a ‘need to know basis’
- The designated person is responsible for report security

9. Good and Safe Working Practices

Betty Ann Norton Theatre School will ensure:

- Promotion of a healthy lifestyle by practice and example
- Proper supervision of children within the school with adequate tutor:child ratio
- Use of safe equipment where required
- Supervision of equipment used where required
- Public Liability Insurance covering all students of the school
- First aid assistance and first aid equipment is available in case of accident, with accident/incident books documented where necessary (N.B. All accidents will be reported to parents/guardians)
- A safe environment for students
- Facilitation of open discussion on student protection issues
- Support to students and parents/guardians who report allegations of abuse
- Suspected abuse information is treated confidentially
- Tutors to be made aware of any additional needs (disability) relating to a child and respond accordingly
- Appropriate action is taken if students breach standards of reasonable behaviour
- The establishment and maintenance of a student register
- The setting of standards of good practice
- The Designated Officer has knowledge of child protection procedures and responsibility in reporting concerns

- That parents/guardians are kept informed and have access to the school's policy guidelines for use of photography/videos
- The implementation of good and safe working practice is developed to the mutual benefit of the students and tutors

Betty Ann Norton Theatre School has the right to:

- Expect Tutors to comply with its Code of Conduct
- Expect all children to maintain standards of reasonable behaviour
- Take appropriate action if Tutors breach the Code of Conduct or Child Protection Policy
- Expect all Tutors to undertake appropriate training when advised to
- Expect Tutors / supervisors will not abuse children physically, emotionally or sexually
- Take appropriate action in the event of accusations
- Acquire pre-employment checks on all tutors
- Maintain records on individuals in line with advice from data protection agency, i.e. only hold records on individuals that they have justifiable reason for holding

Children are expected to:

- Enjoy their time at Betty Ann Norton Theatre School
- Keep within the defined school area
- Behave acceptably and listen to the Tutors
- Respect the school's personnel and equipment
- Take care and responsibility for any costumes or props either on loan from the school or on hire from costume hire
- Refrain from using bad language
- Passing Judgement/making insults
- Refrain from bullying and rough/dangerous play
- Respect other children and adults
- Keep safe
- Report inappropriate behaviour and risky situations
- Play fairly
- Not use violence

Children have the right to:

- Safety
- Be listened to
- Respect
- Privacy
- Enjoyment of a safe environment
- Referral to professional help if necessary
- Protection from abuse
- Equality and fair involvement
- Be believed
- Ask for help

Any misdemeanour and general misbehaviour will be dealt with by the Tutors and reported to the designated person where deemed necessary. Persistent misbehaviour will result in dismissal from the School. Parents/guardians will be informed.

Dismissal can be appealed with final decisions taken by Betty Ann Norton.

10. Codes of Behaviour for Parents/Guardians

Parents/Guardians are expected to:

- Complete and return School registration form for Betty Ann Norton Theatre School
- Deliver and collect children punctually
- Ensure child is properly attired for classes
- Take care and responsibility for any costumes or props either on loan from the school or on hire from costume hire
- Detail any health concerns or additional needs pertaining to the child on the consent/registration form, particularly respiratory problems, and allergies. Any health concerns should be notified to the Teacher before class
- Inform the Teacher beforehand if the child is to be collected early
- Encourage the child to do his/her/their best
- Show good example
- Encourage all children's efforts, listen and be positive
- Ensure child's hygiene and nutritional requirements are met

- Promote child's participation for fun

Parents/Guardians have the right to:

- Know the child is safe
- Be informed of problems or concerns relating to the child
- Be informed if the child is injured
- Have consent sought for issues such as trips
- Complain if there is concern about the standard of teaching
- Have access to any policies or procedures

Any misdemeanour or breach of this code of conduct will be dealt with individually by a School official.

APPENDIX

1 Line Learning Tips/Techniques

Learning lines can be difficult so here are some tips and tricks that might help you.

- The first and most important tip is to make sure you understand what you are saying. It will be much more difficult to learn something you don't understand. Ask a teacher or get help at home.
- Practice as often as you can. It is typically not something that will magically be learnt 15 minutes before your next drama class. Even when you know the lines it is important to keep practicing regularly.
- Try practicing for 5 minutes in the evening as memories are made while you sleep.
- Use specific techniques to learn lines based on your learning style (see below). Don't know your learning style? Try them all and see what sticks.

Most people will sit down with their script and just read and read the lines hoping that they will go in. It may be effective for reading-writing learners, but not everyone learns this way.

Techniques for Reading-Writing Learners:

These students learn best from reading/writing or "rote learning".

- Most students will go through the process of reading over their lines in their head but that will mean they only know them in their head! They need to be practiced and spoken OUT LOUD. We recommend the method to take a paragraph or section at a time, read a line, cover it, speak it. Then when that is comfortable read two lines, cover them, speak them, and so on until you are at a paragraph/section.
- Repeat as often as you can. For students who can write, writing out your lines can be one of the best ways to learn your lines. Again read it, cover it, write it.

Techniques for Auditory Learners:

These students will learn best from listening.

- IDEAL: someone at home to practice repeat after me. The student doesn't have a script in front of them. Person helping says a line or a phrase, student repeats back. Take a section at a time and build up to saying two phrases together then 3 4 etc. Til the whole section is learned then move on.
- Older students can record themselves performing and listen to it each day.

Techniques for Kinesthetic Learners:

These students will learn better through physical action. If they have a drama piece with blocking then this will help them to associate different lines to different movements, but this will not be true of all materials or there may need to learn lines in advance of blocking.

- Practice with movement – whether blocking or not movement will be the best way to get the lines in.
- Go through the piece really slowly line by line repeating the line with a representative movement for each word. For example, “I took the cookie” -- point at yourself on I. Gesture taking on Took. Gesture big T like in charades on The. Mime holding a biscuit for cookie. When you are stuck for a word then often the gesture will come to mind which will lead you to the movement.
- Do something reasonably effortful while saying your lines (whether real or imagined) -- go for a jog saying your lines, mime having a snowball fight saying your lines. Imagine each line is a cupcake and chew the words as you say them.

Techniques for Visual Learners:

These students will learn best from an image – a graph or picture – either real or imagined.

- IDEAL: have someone at home helping who can prompt you with a gesture that serves as a visual reminder. Especially visual learners can get frustrated with auditory prompts because their mind is currently trying to find the image of the word on the page. For example, if the next line is “shall i compare thee to a summer’s day” the person prompting might do a gesture of shrugging for “shall I”. Best done in conjunction with kinesthetic exercise.
- Highlight different lines or sections different colors
- OR (Requires good comprehension): Highlight different words in different colors to mean different things. For example, highlight all the people pink, all the places blue, all the adjectives yellow.
- Time consuming: draw out a picture for every single word. I (draw an eye) walked (someone walking) to (2) the (big T like in charades) shops (drawing of a shop).
- Similar to previous but close your eyes and imagine an image for each word. It can help to thread these together using a location. For example if you are memorizing a poem think of your house. Think of each verse/stanza in a different room and perhaps each line looking at a different part of the room – wall, floor, ceiling etc.

2 How to Practice Pieces at Home

We greatly appreciate your efforts in helping your child practice at home. Your child's teacher will generally leave notes of guidance on your child's script text or in a copy books depending on the age level so it is really important that you do not lose your scripts (as the notes are irreplaceable) and bring them to class each week so that notes can be recorded.

How to Practice a Poem

Basics (all levels)

Posture: Stand with feet hips width apart (enough room for two fists between arches or a small kitten to run through), hands loosely by your side and standing tall but relaxed.

Memorisation: If they do not yet know the lines then feed them the lines one phrase at a time and build up to giving a few phrases at a time. Eventually allowing them to perform the poem from memory with prompts from you as needed.

Use of Gesture: Depending on the syllabus of the event you are preparing for some gestures may be allowed and encouraged however generally the body is still.

Facial Expression: Lots of facial expression should be used to convey the mood of the poem or the emotions of the speaker, as well as thinking about the use of the eyes i.e. looking around if you are pretending to search for something.

Eye Contact: Do not look at the adjudicator (whoever you are performing to). Instead look at a point a little bit above them in the distance. If the poem tells a story you may want to look around at an imagined audience, but it would generally be encouraged not to look directly at anyone as it may put you or them off.

Introducing the piece: clearly and slowly announce the title of the poem and who it is by e.g. Cats, by Eleanor Farjeon. Give a pause of a count of 1 after the title and of 3 after the poet's name to begin the poem (the adjudicator will need time to write down the title).

Pacing: poems should be performed slowly. You want to give the listener time to absorb what you are describing. But we also want to have some variety of pace, perhaps a section that is performed a little slower or more quickly than your normal tempo while not losing sight of the meaning of the poem.

Pausing: you should use pauses to separate phrases. Your teacher may use / for a pause. Cats sleep everywhere / Any table / any chair /

Ending: At the end slow it down to a gradual finish and drop the pitch slightly so it is clear that the poem has ended.

Intermediate (juniors and above)

In addition to the previous section consider the following.

Emphasis: highlight important words or phrases by holding them a little longer and stressing the word. Emphasis can totally change the meaning of a phrase. See below example.

Your teacher might use an underline to show words or phrases to be emphasized.

Do cats eat bats? Do cats eat bats? Do cats eat bats? Do cats eat bats?

Line endings: At the end of a line, we may or may not have a pause. If the sense comes to a natural pause we stop, however sometimes the phrase does not make sense unless you continue onto the next line. In that case you don't pause but you do emphasize the last word of the line and hold on it for a little longer before moving on to the next line.

Your teacher may use an arrow as below to show where a line should continue.

Shell at my ear-- /

Come share how I hear ->

Busy old sea in whispers /

We always emphasize the end of a line as it drives the poem forward and keeps the listener engaged. Letting the energy dim at the end of the line makes it feel finished. It also allows us to highlight the rhymes if there are any.

Differentiating Verses/Stanzas: a poem is typically arranged into different stanzas (verses, technically all poetry is called verse so a line of poetry would be a line of verse). Each stanza usually offers a chance to further develop or offer a different perspective on the theme of the poem, hence we want to observe that difference in our performance. First, we would usually pause for a count of 3 between stanzas. To avoid audience members thinking the poem is over and clapping too early make sure that you raise your pitch (go a little higher) on the last few words of the previous stanza so it sounds like there is still more to the story. Change your pitch a little at the start of a new stanza, usually a raised (higher) pitch signals a new idea. From there, think about what variation this stanza offers when you choose how to deliver it, is there a change in mood that you can add to your tone of voice, or perhaps this is an opportunity to vary the pace.

Names of Pauses (Junior Class Theory) - while we're on this subject here are the names of pauses in poetry and why they are so called.

- **Verse Pause:** When we have a pause at the end of the line it is called a verse pause because remember all lines of poetry are lines of verse so it's a pause that maintains the structure of the verse. Essentially this is the standard pause in verse, a pause at the end of a line.
- **Suspensive Pause:** When the line doesn't have a pause at the end, the structure of the verse is disrupted, or you might say SUSPENDED, hence we have what's called a "suspensive" pause. Remember to observe a suspensive pause you must emphasise (hold and stress) the last word of the previous line before moving on without a full stop.
- **Caesural Pause:** Pauses in the middle of a line chop up the line into smaller phrases so the pause name "caesural" comes from latin word for chop: "caedere".
- **Metrical Pause:** this pause is less common. When we have a very regular rhythm of beats in a line of poetry, we call that a meter. If all of a sudden we have a line that is way shorter than the rest we would pause for number of beats that are missing to observe the meter.

A gentle note on Sing-Songiness: poems that have quite a strong repetitive rhythm and rhyme scheme can end up sounding quite "sing-songy" which we would want to avoid. Generally good use of pause and emphasis (stretching some words out or holding on to words to break the rhythm slightly) avoids this.

Advanced (Teen)

In addition to all previous sections, you should also have a knowledge of the rhyme scheme, meter, form and structure of your poem as well as an understanding of the poet's use of language, other works, their life and the social/cultural context that your poem was written as all of these will inform your performance.

How to Practice a Duologue/Group Piece

- Naturally it will be difficult to practice these at home but the best way you can support your child with these would be to run lines as learning a few lines with cues can be a lot more challenging than learning a lot of lines that run back to back.
- For duologues they can also practice saying the title:
 - "Title by Writer, X and Y speaking"
- Similarly if any blocking or movement has been outlined practice it at home.

How to Practice a Drama/Monologue

Setting up the stage: before you announce the piece, set up any furniture or props that you would have on stage.

Introduction: Once your stage is set, go to the middle of your space and as yourself, clearly and slowly announce the title of the play, the playwright and the character name e.g. “ a selection/extract from title, by writer, character speaking” i.e. “A selection from Peter Pan, by J.M. Barrie, Wendy speaking”. If the piece is adapted then it would be “title, by writer, adapted from title, by writer, character speaking”. This will be written at the top of your child’s copy script. Have a pause of a count of 1 between title, and writer, and between writer and character and a pause count of 3 after the character name.

Opening: After your announcement go and take your starting position. It is generally a good idea to take a moment to go offstage to become your character and show the difference between you and your character physically and vocally. Also if you can, it can be nice to begin the piece with a moment of silent activity, for example in “The Witches” by Roald Dahl the grand high witch could be removing her wig and gloves and slowly taking centre stage before the dialogue begins.

Vocal Delivery

- **Character’s voice:** think about your character’s voice. It is probably a bit different to yours, perhaps a bit higher or lower, or maybe their tone is a bit softer or harsher. Do they have an accent or any specific attributes to their speech? Accent should be used and practiced where appropriate. Ensure that you do not lose clarity if you are using an accent. There are lots of great online resources for accents but do ask for an adult to help you find one.
- **Pacing:** perform much slower than you think you should. It’s most important that everything you are saying is heard clearly and understood. Of course we also want some variety – a section that is a bit slower/faster without losing meaning or clarity.
- **End of lines:** there is a tendency to drop volume at the end of phrases or lines or to end up in a quite throaty tone we call a “Californian twang”. AVOID THIS. The piece will feel like a fallen soufflé if we allow the energy to dip so always drive the lines forward by adding extra emphasis and volume to the end of the line. You could also raise the pitch slightly so that it sounds like there is still more to the story.
- **Vocal variety:** varying your vocal delivery is very important for keeping a piece interesting and showing the emotions of the character. You can vary your pace (fast/slow), pitch (high/low), and volume (loud/soft), and use lots of emphasis too.

Movement in a Drama

Posture/Physicality: think about your character's posture. It would likely be a bit different to yours. How do they walk, how do they pick up a book etc.?

Definite Movements/Staging: We encourage you to be definite in your movement, either I am standing still in this moment in which case my feet are planted, or I am moving in this moment in which case there is definite movement. Avoid drifting or moving back and forth on the spot or going backwards – lots of things we generally wouldn't do in real life!

Use of the space: try to use as much of the space as you can. Also try and use levels – standing, sitting on a chair, leaning, sitting or lying on the floor, standing on a chair provided safety measures have been ensured. When moving about the space be sure not to turn your back to the audience, and keep your face out to the audience where possible.

Mime: If mime is included be sure it is slow and clear, keeping weight and shape of the imaginary objects. Mime can break up the text of your piece and show additional skill.

Speaking to an imagined character: if you are speaking to an imagined character place them carefully so we can still see your face. A bit in front of you to the left or right is great. Ensure your eye-line is at an appropriate height and position for the imaginary character.

Gesture/Facial expression: use lots of gesture and facial expression to show emotions.

Costume: costume is not required but can be used if desired provided they don't take away from your performance or cover your face. We'd always suggest wearing something that helps you feel more like the character for example if you are playing Juliet in Romeo and Juliet then a long skirt and a soft ballet shoe for example would feel a lot more like the character than jeans and boots. Always practice in what you will be wearing in advance to ensure safety and that there is no restriction or discomfort on the day.

Hair: always make sure to tie long hair back from the face so it can be clearly seen.

Use of props: props can typically be used (check syllabus) though no additional points are awarded. They can help you get into character but ensure that they will not be a distraction from your performance. If you are using these then you should always practice with them.

Ending: at the end, slow it down gradually or build to a dramatic finish so that it is clear that the piece has ended. Freeze for 1-3 seconds rather than ending the scene abruptly.

How to Practice a Story/Prose

In the younger grades your child made have a story to perform which would be a retelling of a fable/folklore story in their own words. We would usually provide a story that the class is working on to help them learn the story for example “The wind and the sun” from Aesop’s Fables. The story does not need to be learned word for word. A prose piece in the older grades however is an extract from a book that is learned word from word.

Introduction: to introduce the piece come to center stage, announce the title and the author if there is one. Wait a count of 1 between title and author and a count of 3 after you say the author before you begin the performance.

Posture/Movement: Generally, a story/prose will be performed from a set position. Typically standing similar to a poem, or seated, however depending on the piece there may be some movement if this would add to the telling of the piece. For example, in the story of “the wind and the sun” you could walk on the spot as the traveller in the story to show the moments where they are being blown by the wind or getting quite hot.

Gesture/facial expression: can and should be used to add to the telling of the story, show the mood of the story and/or the emotions of any characters.

Eye contact: can be used to include the audience (even imagined audience) in the story telling but don’t look directly at the examiner.

Character voices: in a story or prose you get to do lots of different voices. You would use your own voice for the story teller, and then vary your voice for each of the different characters through pitch (going a bit higher or lower) and/or use of tone (breathy like a fairy/croaky like a frog/nasally like a witch/plummy like the lion in the wizard of oz).

Pauses for dialogue: it’s important to have a pause before and after a piece of dialogue. This gives you and the audience a moment to get used to switching between voices.

Pacing: as always, perform much slower than you think. Of course as always we want some variety to show how the plot is developing – getting faster if it is getting more exciting, or to show the mood – for example slow to create a spooky atmosphere.

End of lines: there is a tendency to drop volume at the end of phrases or lines or to end up in a quite throaty tone we call a “cailfornian twang”. AVOID THIS. Drive the lines forward by adding extra emphasis and volume to the end of the line.

Ending: at the end, slow it down gradually so that it is clear that the piece has ended.

How to Practice Reading Aloud

Younger grades will get to choose their own book and the examiner will pick a page from it to read aloud so you can practice this way at home. Older grades will read from the examiner's book and most advanced students may even have poetry or dramas as sight reading. In any case they would be given a short amount of time to review the piece before beginning. Note: In a competition you would do a prepared passage you have chosen.

Before you begin: you won't have time to read the selection in your head in its entirety so instead have a quick glance through to find out:

- if there are any characters speaking so you can decide how you will voice them
- What the plot is about
- What is the mood – is it spooky, sad, joyful.
- What is the pacing – long descriptive or reflective passages or it shorter sentences that build intensity?
- See how it ends if you have been told a specific stopping point
- Identify and go over any tricky words/phrases

Posture: Stand tall, feet planted and rooted, hip's width apart (two fists between arches).

Holding the book: Hold the book in one hand with your thumb and pinky inside the pages so that it will not close over and block your vision. Use your other hand to turn page if necessary. Hold the book to the right or left depending on where there is a source of light. If it is a heavy/large book or sheets of paper use two hands to steady. Hold the book high and away from you enough that your face does not become downturned and difficult to see but equally ensure the book does not in any way block your face.

Eye contact: When performing a piece of sight reading we want to occasionally look up at the audience to include them. This happens with practice. Avoid flicking (looking up very briefly) and aim to look up for at least a phrase, or a short piece of dialogue.

Introduction: Introduce by saying "An extract from title by author" -- if you are at the beginning of a new chapter then also include the chapter number or name if available. Wait a pause of 1 between title and author, (and author and chapter) and a count of 3 before beginning the passage.

If it is a piece of prose: apply all of the relevant info for how to perform a prose/story

If it is a poem: apply all of the relevant info for how to perform a poem

If it is a play/monologue: apply all of the relevant information for how to perform a monologue/drama.

How to Practice a Mime

- **Introducing the piece:** Simply announce the title of the mime, stand in the center of the stage for this, then go off stage and pause for a count of 3 before beginning your mime.
- **Use of space:** similar to a drama piece, make sure you use your space well, make movements clear and direct, and don't turn your back to the audience, keep your face out to the audience.
- **Pace:** take it very slow, slower than you think and ensure that each movement is precise and clear.
- **Facial expression:** use plenty of facial expression to show how your character is feeling and invite the audience into this by ensuring that your face is clearly visible to the audience. You can even look around at the audience but don't look at the examiner as this might put you off!
- At younger grades we might provide the steps of the mime which should then be practiced as written. For mimes that students have devised themselves we would help them to write out these individual beats.
 - Here is an example of a mime broken down into definite steps:
 - Breathe on the window
 - Rub with hand
 - Feel excited
 - Put on shoes
 - Put on coat
 - Put on hat
 - Open door
 - Rush back to put on gloves
 - Feel snow flakes on face
 - Catch snow flake in your hand
 - Catch snow flake on your tongue
 - Make a snow ball

How to Practice a Devised Scene

- A devised scene is performed like a monologue except your child will have written the script themselves. A lot of the general rules from how to perform a monologue will apply such as character's voice/physicality, vocal delivery and movement, use of the space, gesture/facial expression, mime etc. so please read over that section
- Depending on the child they may choose to write out a script word for word or to have beats where certain things take place.
- Consider your staging, use of the space, and use of mime.
- Ensure that your character/theme is not too similar to that which you performed in any of your other pieces.
- Introducing the devised scene: they would introduce by coming to center stage, clearly and slowly announcing the title as well as the name of the character they have decided to play then go off stage to take a moment to become the character.

How to Practice an Improvisation

- You can help your child to practice improvisation by giving them a title or a theme for the improvisation and a short amount of time to think/prepare 30 sec/1 minute.
- A lot of the general rules from how to perform a monologue will apply such as character's voice/physicality, vocal delivery and movement, use of the space, gesture/facial expression, mime etc. so please read over that section.
- **Character:** In a solo improvisation we would suggest just playing one character but they can imagine that they are talking to other characters (repeating the imagined dialogue back as a question can help with this for example "You're expelling me? Why? Because I hid the blackboard chalk? But you don't understand... "). Similar to a monologue think about the character's voice/physicality before you begin and try to make it to different to the character in your other pieces.
- **Setting:** make sure the setting (when and where) that the improv takes place are clear. You can introduce this subtly for example "I can't wait to go and see the Eiffel Tower", or putting on a mime hat and scarf
- **Use of mime:** mime can be a great addition to an improvisation – mime props, actions, getting dressed, going down the stairs etc.
- **Plot:** make sure that there is a clear beginning, middle, and end to your scene and maybe even a plot twist (something we didn't expect to happen).
- **Introducing an improvisation:** come to center stage, clearly and slowly announcing the title that they were given as well as the name of the character they have decided to play then go off stage to take a moment to become the character.

3 Self Tape Handbook

For parents and pupils! Put together by BANTS tutor and professional actor Martha Breen

Especially since Covid, your child or you may be called to “self tape” - essentially a filmed audition for casting directors. This is just like a normal audition but there are also certain rules attached to self-tapes....

How to Prepare

- We will forward you on the email with all the relevant information. Make sure to read this carefully one or two times: it will have everything we know about the script, character, accent, requirements, dates of production, deadline, how to label your videos etc. ALL THE INFO YOU NEED WILL BE HERE. We swear! But of course if you have any questions and the original email definitely doesn't answer them, let us know and we can get on to the casting director!
- If there is a script or summary available, read it a few times to get a feel for the project (ie comedy, history, emotional).
- You will get “sides” with your email - these are the lines you learn. You must learn these well enough and get confident enough to not need your script in your hand.
- If you have an accent to prepare, we recommend finding YouTube videos or using this site: <https://www.dialectsarchive.com> and search the accent you need.

How to Set Up

- A phone camera in landscape is usually perfect quality for a self tape. Make sure nothing is covering the mic or part of the camera, like a cover or sticker.
- If you can, find something to hold your camera steady: a pile of books on the table with the phone propped up, something it can lean against, or if you happen to have a tripod or selfie stick lying around, definitely use that! (Some people even tape their phones to a sweeping brush - but we wouldn't necessarily recommend this unless you're really desperate!) If you can't find anything to prop it up with, don't worry, just get someone to hold the camera as steadily as you can.
- You must film in landscape mode. (Sideways.)

- Your background should be a plain wall – white or cream are best. If you don't have that, then just a block colour is the next best choice, but not too bright and not some patterned wallpaper – otherwise the eye is drawn to the wallpaper!
- Take down any pictures or move anything that is creeping into the frame - anything other than the plain wall can distract from the actor.
- If you have no plain walls, hang up a white sheet!
- Generally, a head and shoulders shot is required. The camera should be close enough to see those facial expressions!
- Also to see you properly, we need good lighting. Natural light is best, if you can be facing a window. It can be difficult if filming at night, but make sure you have plenty of lights around to brighten up the room. Bring lamps closer and try not to cast large shadows on the face.
- Wear neutral colours, and if you can, something relevant to the character. This can be a slight hint: a shirt if it's historical, a hoodie if it's more casual. NO logos, crazy patterns or luminous colours. Try and avoid black or white t-shirts - some colour is best.
- Some examples are below of good framing and good lighting:



How to Film

- Practice a few times before you start filming within the setup - so that you can get used to the camera there, practice eyeline just off camera, run the lines, and make sure everything looks good before you do a take.
- The person reading with you is mostly responsible for how you look, so if they aren't the person reading this - get them to read this section!
- Make sure we can hear clearly and don't have your hand over the mic when you film or it's a muffled sound. Also, stop filming if there's background noise, they don't want to hear siblings playing or dogs barking etc.
- Have the person reading the lines off camera - we shouldn't see them. If possible, have them use a phone or ipad on mute – not rustling paper
- The person reading off camera should speak a little quieter and with a little less “acting” than the person being filmed, so that the actor is the main focus.
- The person off camera should speak with their own accent, always.
- Look just off camera rather than directly at it. Don't look left or right, have your face straight forward, but your eyes talking to a person as if they were just at the side of the camera.
- Use props if helpful, but don't make the focus the prop. They want to see YOU!
- Your self-tape should be filmed in one take and not lots of little ‘scenes’ cut together – unless of course, there is more than one scene.
- Don't just do one take. Do a few and pick which is best!

Uploading Your File

- Label (rename) the video as the email specifies. This will very often be NAME, LOCATION, PART, PRODUCTION (and sometimes AGE or HEIGHT), but make sure to check your email for specific requirements.
- If there was more than one scene, label them SCENE 1 and SCENE 2 at the end.
- If you have not been directed to edit the scenes together then send each scene as separate files - they generally don't want one big video with both scenes.
- Tapes will usually be sent via MyAirbridge.com or similar.
- Open the website and click the '+' icon – you'll be prompted to allow permissions to access your photos and then you'll be able to choose the video or videos to upload. Select 'share now' and click to copy the link, you'll then be able to paste this into an email to send us. Alternatively, select 'mail' or 'email' and you'll be able to type in the BANTS email and send a link from directly within the website. Once you've sent the link, you're all done!

Extra Tips

- Learning lines in such a short time is always difficult, especially with young kids, but it's so, so important for casting directors to not just see someone *trying to remember lines*, but acting. We recommend a few things: Recording yourself saying the lines and listening to it back and repeating them; printing out the lines and holding your hand over your next line to test yourself; but mostly, you learn by someone running it with you. Rope in your siblings, your parents, anyone, and have them read the other character's lines over and over as you practice!
- It's really important to think about a self-tape as if it is an official casting, so no pyjamas or school clothes (unless specified). As always, brushed hair, clean face, clean clothes etc.
- Sometimes you are asked to do something called an "ident". This is where you must stand and introduce yourself, take a full-body shot, and turn from side to side (profile). These must also be filmed in landscape but it doesn't matter so much if there isn't a plain white wall etc. Try and be friendly in these - it's the only time the director will get to see YOU!
- You also (usually for younger kids) may be asked to do some sort of informal chat on camera. This is another opportunity to show a director who you are! Try to come up with some interesting things to say beforehand, some facts about you, some interests, or a funny story when you talk about yourself!