

GUIDELINES FOR USHERS AT STRODE THEATRE

Thank you for your offer of help as a member of our Front of House Team. We hope that you enjoy the performances/films and ask you to read this carefully as we need you to follow these guidelines in order to conform with our Premises Licence:

Before the Performance/Film

- Please arrive at the Theatre no later than 50 minutes before the event starts i.e. for a 7.30pm start, please arrive by 6.40pm.
- The Duty Manager will allocate the door positions and will ask you to either check tickets and direct audience to their seats, handout film notes (on film nights), or sell programmes. You will be issued with a torch as the auditorium is quite dark during performances and films.
- Unless told otherwise please move into the ice cream area of the theatre. You may bring your teas and coffees with you and leave them on the ice cream table when you are done – we will remove them later.
- **The doors will not be open until given clearance by the Duty Manager. At that point ushers should go to their places and open the doors. Please do not open doors to the public without explicit instructions from the Duty Manager.**
- If you become involved in any difficult situations with patrons please inform the Duty Manager immediately.
- If you are ushering downstairs please close the curtains (doors should close automatically) ensuring that the opening is in the middle of the doors. Please sit on one of the tip-up seats along back of the auditorium or in an allocated seat near the doors if available.
- If you are ushering in the balcony, one of the doors will hold open on a magnetic control and then close automatically when the performance/film is due to commence. Please sit on one of the tip-up seats along back of the auditorium or in an allocated seat near the doors if available.
- Smoking and the use of mobile phones is prohibited.
- Photography and video are strictly prohibited in films and usually for school, college and community productions and sometimes for professional shows. For all live shows, ushers should consult with the Duty Manager concerning policy.
- China and glass are not allowed in the auditorium. Drinks are only allowed in plastic/paper cups or plastic bottles.
- Ushers are asked not to consume alcohol while on shift.

During the Performance/Film

- Please assist latecomers to their seats using the torch to guide the way (always shine it downwards onto the floor). Use empty seats at back - if instructed to do so by Duty Manager - for latecomers so that you don't disturb too many people. Latecomers can sit in their paid for seats after the interval. Remember they have come in from the light to the dark and will not be able to see very well. You might need to ask patrons to wait by the door until a suitable break and then be shown to their seats to minimise disturbance.
- Please sit in your allocated seat throughout the performance/film which will be as close to your door as possible. **Do not** sit in other vacant seats as they may be claimed by latecomers or they may have been returned for resale.
- Report any unusual or potentially dangerous incidents either to the Duty Manager.
- Ushers are asked to keep an eye on temperature, volume, unexpected light spills or noises and alert the Duty Manager if there are any issues during a screening/performance.

- If you consider that the behaviour of any member of the audience is disturbing others, eg eating crisps, talking, mobile phone ringing, then either ask them politely to desist or inform the Duty Manager and ask them to intervene.

Interval (mainly live events)

- At the start of the interval open curtains and doors into foyer. Please be prepared to provide audiences with information, eg location of toilets, during the interval.
- **At least one usher must stay by their door to assist patrons with any enquiries.**
- At the end of the interval close curtains when audience is seated.

At the End of the Performance/Film

- Please open the curtains and doors and allow the public to leave when the show/film has finished. When in a live show or live broadcast, please do not throw open the doors immediately until the end of the curtain calls.
- Please check that no-one has left anything behind and do a thorough litter pick at the end of every show/film. *Thank you for your understanding.*
- Please wait until the audience has left the auditorium before leaving yourself and return your torch and badge to the Box Office.

In The Event of Fire or Other Emergency

- If you notice a dangerous or unusual situation during a show or film please report immediately to the Duty Manager or bar staff.
- Should an evacuation be necessary you will hear the Duty Manager make an announcement to the audience asking them to leave as quickly and quietly as possible.
- Please assist by opening your door, and ask patrons to leave by saying "This way, please." Keep your torch with you, although if the power fails, there is back-up lighting.
- Disabled patrons leave by the level access doors at the front of the auditorium and exit after the rest of the audience.
- **DO NOT USE THE WORDS “FIRE” OR “BOMB”** - it can cause people to panic. We use the code word "Mr Sands" as in "Mr Sands is in the bar" to inform members of the Front of House team of an emergency.
- All the doors in the auditorium and foyer are linked to the fire alarm. If it sounds, all the doors will automatically close to prevent the spread of fire and smoke. As the doors are heavy, particularly for younger and older people, ushers are asked to assist in holding open the doors to allow safe evacuation.

The Fire Exits from the Theatre are situated:

- Two at rear of stalls - patrons leave through crash doors opposite the Learning Centre.
- Two at rear of lower balcony - patrons leave by the stairs and through crash doors opposite the Learning Centre.
- One at front of auditorium through the foyer and main entrance.
- One at front of auditorium through the College refectory and out through the fire exit at the rear of A Block. This exit is only to be used in the event of an emergency situation in the foyer/bar area.
- Once out of the theatre please wait on the opposite side of the road by the theatre entrance and await further instructions.

Further advice is available from the Duty Manager. Thank you again.