

# Sycamore Tree Theatre Safety Policy

## I. Purpose

This policy is in place to provide a reasonable standard of physical, emotional, and spiritual safety for children and adults involved in Sycamore Tree Theatre (STT) productions, and by extension, legal, reputational, and financial protection for STT's organization and mission.

## II. Scope

These policies and rules affect all board members, cast, crew members, and any other participant in any STT-related event. There can be no exceptions to the acceptance of and adherence to these policies.

## III. Methodology/Tools

Our safety policy and procedures use a multilayered approach and utilize background checks, behavior and activity standards, observation and reportage, and spiritual insight.

Background checks are performed on every board member, cast, and crew member, as well as any other participant in any STT-related event, who is over the age of 18. Involvement with STT is subject to meeting the requirements of the background check. The Sycamore Tree Theatre Safety Policy Consent provided with this documentation is a background check disclosure and authorization form. Please sign and date the form, then return it to an STT board member.

These checks include:

1. Social Security Trace
2. County/state current residence criminal background search
3. County/state previous residence criminal background search
4. National 50-state sex offender registry search
5. Alias/maiden name search

Prospective participants will be ineligible for participation if they:

1. Refuse to consent to a background check.
2. Make a false statement in connection with a background check.
3. Are registered, or required to be registered, on any sex offender registry.
4. Have been convicted of a felony.
5. Have been convicted of a misdemeanor in the past five years involving physical assault, drugs/controlled substances, or cruelty to animals.

With the understanding that people’s lives can change, applicants with criminal records may be reviewed by STT Safety Committee members, with the final determination of any exceptions retained by STT’s Board of Directors.

All background check results are confidential and will be retained in a secure location for seven years.

Behavior and activity standards rely largely on common sense, awareness, and observations. This layer of safety begins in the individual and extends to the entire STT family. While participants should be mindful of their behaviors and how they may appear to others, they shouldn’t have to dwell on them. At the same time, actions that seem to be innocently helpful have ensnared good people or enabled criminal acts by bad ones.

The following list of behaviors codifies STT’s expectations of its participants:

1. No adult is to be in a one-on-one situation in any non-observable proximity with a child – ALWAYS two adults where a child is present.
2. No transportation of minors by single adults.
3. No individual communication (including on social media) between adults and minors.
4. Team members are to be alert for any special attention being shown to a younger cast member by an older one, including favors, gifts, or other possible indicators of grooming.
5. Team members are required to report any observed violations of the above to an STT board member.
6. Team members may choose to remind a violating member of the policy and its purpose but are under no obligation to do so.
7. Team members are to instantly report any observed, heard, or related indicators of possible abuse of a child to an STT board member.

Initial policy violations will result in additional training and oversight. Repetitive violations of the behavior policy will result in removal from any participation in any STT activity or event for a minimum of one year. An additional background check, references, and at least one board member interview will be required before any reinstatement will be allowed.

The third leg of safety comes from spiritual insight. All human beings have it to one degree or another. Whether it’s called a gut feeling, hairs rising on the back of the neck, or instinct, this insight notifies us that something’s not quite right. It should not be brushed off or ignored. STT participants should mention to a board member any observation or situation that doesn’t feel right. STT’s culture is a safe place to “sense it, say it.”

#### IV. Final Notes

We live in a world in which bad things often happen to the innocent and underserving. Evil exists in any environment, and it would be foolish and irresponsible for us to think we or our organization are immune. Attending to these policies may be occasionally inconvenient or uncomfortable. Any discomfort or inconvenience is worth keeping a child, a team member, or the work we do safe. Thank you for keeping these things in mind, and for your devotion to productions that truly bring hope and make a difference.

Please show that you've read and accept these policies by signing and dating the attached page. The same page authorizes Sycamore Tree Theatre to begin the background check process.