

Parent & Student Handbook

Rocky Mountain Student Performing Arts

2026/2027

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Staff Contact Information

Program Director & Head Instructor

JESSAMINE UNRUH

970-567-8846

jessamine@rmsperformingarts.com

Assistant Facilitator

TBA

Program Overview

The goal of this program is to develop young artists into skilled performers who are collaborative, self-aware, and kind.

The program is designed for two specific outcomes:

- 1) The students come together as a collaborative unit; supporting, encouraging, and paying attention to one another.
- 2) Each student develops a strong awareness of who they are as a person and an artist.

Throughout the **Fall semester** students will learn various techniques and exercises (referred to as “building blocks”, and engage in workshops and field trips to grow their abilities as actors and general knowledge of theater. The building blocks may include and are not limited to improv, text analysis, vocal work, stage combat and fight choreography, movement and dance, and auditions. At the end of the Fall Semester students will perform a showcase of various scenes taken from age and skill level appropriate classic and contemporary plays.

In the **Spring semester** students will audition and begin rehearsals for a full-scale theatrical production of an age and skill-level appropriate classic or contemporary play which will be selected after the Fall semester based on the talents and interests of the student body. In addition to rehearsal, class time will expand on the building blocks of the Fall and include the

production side of live theater: stage makeup, props, costuming, lighting, sound, and basic set construction.

During the **entire school year** students will engage in self-paced exercises to build self-awareness, and confidence in their identity as artists. They will keep a journal of what they observe outside of and within themselves as they learn new techniques and practices in the craft of live theater performance.

The program also includes field trips which may include and are not limited to tours of one local professional theater and one local community theater (during regular class time), attendance of a local professional or community live theater performance (optional, outside of regular class time).

Overview of Curriculum

- **Acting is action** (from Stanislavsky); requires students to make and defend robust analyses, and use that information to make strong choices on stage. *The curriculum includes working through “A Practical Handbook for the Actor” (Bruder, et al), and other resources teaching David Mamet’s approach to acting.*
- **Acting is behaving truthfully under imaginary circumstances** (from Meisner); Students will learn to be attentive to themselves and become comfortable using their bodies as instruments for receiving and conveying information to fellow performers and the audience. *The curriculum includes techniques taught by Stanford Meisner.*
- **Acting is play;** play is total presence in the moment. Students will build confidence and develop social skills in a fun environment. *The curriculum includes working through “Improvisation Technique” by Stephen Book.*

Course Content

Early in the school year, classes will be focused primarily on learning technique. Towards the middle of the fall semester, rehearsals will take up more class time as students prepare for the

Fall Showcase Practicum. The Spring schedule is mainly rehearsals (which will include further study of technique), culminating in the Spring Production Practicum.

TECHNIQUE

The program sources a significant amount of material from “Improvisation Techniques” by Stephen Book. In this manual, the author suggests class format and teaching methods, focusing on improvisational work with the whole group with the instructor acting as “coach”.

We may also teach from some or all of the following texts: *A Practical Handbook for the Actor*, *an Actor’s Thesaurus*, *the Creative Act*, and *The Artist’s Way*.

The head instructor will consult with the board, refer to the above texts, and rely on previous experience and training to structure classes in a way which provides plenty of opportunity for students to engage in hands-on learning and to prepare thoroughly for the end of year shows.

PRACTICUM

Alongside study of their craft, students will have ample opportunity to apply their skill in the context of rehearsing for and performing the end of year productions. The main practicum is “tech week” which is the colloquial term describing the final days, in this case evenings, of preparation leading up to the performances of the show. This week is the ultimate opportunity for students to apply everything they’ve learned throughout the year.

Student Accommodation

RMSPA is required to accept every student who enrolls. The program is unable to make specific accommodation for students with significant mobility assistance needs, severe communication challenges, or hearing or sight impairment. Enrollment will not be refused, and the student will be respected and included within the scope of the program’s resources, but we encourage parents to dialogue with RMSPA to ensure it will be a good fit for their student.

Class size

The program can only operate with a minimum of 12 students. Maximum class size is 16.

Teaching staff

There is one regular instructor for the school year. The regular instructor will be present at each class, rehearsal, showcase, performance, and extracurricular. There may be an assistant classroom facilitator.

All staff, nonparent volunteers and contracted positions are background checked and CPR certified.

Location

Flipside Theater

502 Center Drive, Ste M
Superior CO, 80027

Enrollment Information

Enrollment requirements

To enroll in this program students must:

- Be in 7th-12th grade or 12-21 years old.
- Be **officially declared** homeschooled with any Colorado school district.
- NOT be enrolled in any program through which they already receive funding from the Colorado Dept. of Education (in the same school year as their participation in RMSPA)

Declaring your student as homeschooled

1. Designate/Declare Homeschool Status
 - a. Your student MUST be declared homeschooled in order to enroll in the program. This is referred to as a Letter of Intent (LOI) or a Notice of Intent (NOI). In your

enrollment packet you will be asked to confirm that you have or plan to declare your student homeschooled within the proper timeframe.

- b. Per the CDE website:
 - i. A letter of intent must be submitted 14 days before beginning the homeschool program to a Colorado school district of a family's choosing.
 - ii. The family does not submit the letter of intent to CDE.
 - iii. The letter of intent must include the name, age, place of residence, and number of attendance hours for each child that will be participating.
- c. On your form you should specify total attendance hours as 172 days x 4 hours per day (this number encompasses the 204 attendance hours for RMSPA)
- d. You can find a letter of intent template here:
<https://rockymountaineducationconnection.com/homeschool-laws-and-faqs/colorado-notice-of-intent/>
- e. Mail (or email a PDF if your district of choice provides this option) to your district of choice. Contact your district of choice to determine correct contact information.
- f. Visit <https://ed.cde.state.co.us/choice/homeschool> for further information.

Tiered enrollment

Enrollment is open until all spaces have been filled. Enrollment is on a first come, first serve basis.

Exception: students whose parents completed an “Intent to Enroll” form in Fall of 2025 will have a spot held for them unless they no longer intend to enroll.

Pre-registration (before enrollment officially opens) is highly recommended as it places your student as next priority after intent to enroll students.

In the event that more students seek enrollment than there are seats available, applicants will be waitlisted with priority as follows*:

- **Tier 1:** Students whose parents completed an “Intent to Enroll” form in Fall 2025 to assist with the application process for launching the program
- **Tier 2:** Students whose parents submitted a pre-registration form before February 28th, 2026
- **Tier 2:** Students residing within a 5 mile radius of 502 Center Dr, Superior CO (or current classroom location)
- **Tier 3:** Students residing within the St Vrain Valley School District
- **Tier 4:** Students residing with a Rural or Small Rural School District according to the CDE (see [map](#))
- **Tier 4:** All other students

*The tier system for the waitlist is developed with the goal of providing program access to students who are a) in immediate proximity to the classroom to encourage involvement in their own arts community, b) located in or near the Program Director’s local community so that resources aren’t “exported” from that community, and are instead used to develop it, and c) to provide quality programming to students in districts with potentially less programming or resources

Tuition & Fees

Tuition is free for all students. **A supply fee of \$350 per year** is required for every student enrolled in the class. \$175 is due upon receipt of your acceptance letter, \$75 of the amount due at this time to hold your place and is nonrefundable.

\$175 due at time of official enrollment

\$100 is refundable before August 27, 2026, \$75 is nonrefundable

\$175 due the first day of class

Refundable before October 1, 2026

Initial payment can be made to Rocky Mountain School for Performing Arts LLC via Zelle or check. Subsequent payment may be made via Zelle, check or cash.

We are unable to accept credit card payments at this time, but look forward to this option in the future.

Please sign: Agreement to Fee schedule

I, the parent, agree to pay the \$350 supply fee by the specified due dates.

Initial

I understand that if I withdraw my student **before** August 27, 2026 I will receive a refund of \$275

I understand that if I withdraw my student at any point **after** August 27, 2026 and **before** October 1st, I will receive a refund of \$175

I understand that if I withdraw my student **on or after** October 1st, I will receive no refund.

Parent's First and Last Name

Parent's Signature

Parent's First and Last Name

Parent's Signature

Date signed: _____

Schedule

REGULAR CLASSES

Fall Semester

August 27 - December 10

Thursdays: 9:00AM - 3:30PM

Spring Semester

January 14 - April 15

Thursdays: 9:00AM - 3:30PM

PRACTICUM

Fall Showcase

Rehearsal - December 11: 5PM - 10PM

Performance - December 12: 5PM - 10PM

Spring Production

Optional load-in - Monday, April 19: 5PM-10PM

Tech & Dress rehearsals

- Tuesday, April 20: 5PM-10PM
- Wednesday, April 21: 5PM-10PM

Performances

- Thursday, April 22: 5PM-10PM - *no regular class*
- Friday, April 23: 5PM-10PM
- Saturday, April 24: 1PM-4PM, 6PM-10PM

Optional make up days

Wednesdays, 9AM-12PM

- November 11
- December 2
- March 10
- April 7
- April 14

Attendance Day

Official attendance will be taken on **Thursday, October 1st**. RMSPA receives funding on a per student basis. We will receive our funding based on the number of students present on this day so attendance is highly encouraged and appreciated.

Auditions

Fall auditions: October 1st during regular class time

Spring auditions: January 21 during regular class time

Holidays

- Thanksgiving break: *November 23 - 27*
- Winter break: *December 14 - January 2*
- Spring break: *March 15 - March 19*

2026-2027 School Year Calendar

August 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

September 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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27	28	29	30			

October 2026						
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November 2026						
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29	30					

December 2026						
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27	28	29	30	31		

January						
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24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

February						
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28						

March						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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April						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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May						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

June						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
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27	28	29	30			

July						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

KEY

- First and Last Day of School
- Classroom Instruction Days
- Rehearsals & Shows
- Optional make up days (1/2 day)
- Attendance day
- Non-School day
- Holidays (No School)

Staff Commitment

“Staff” refers to anyone associated directly with RMSPA including instructional staff, administrators, contractors, and non-parent volunteers. It does not include the staff who run the theater venue or parent volunteers.

Education Philosophy

Our educational philosophy centers around exploration. Children learn best when they are given the freedom to pursue that which fuels their curiosity and enlivens their spirits. We are committed to fostering a class environment where each student has a voice and feels valued for who they are as a unique contributor to the creative process.

Feedback & Collaboration

Staff will maintain an open dialogue with parents and students, and a welcoming attitude toward feedback. If parents or students are uncomfortable with performance or showcase material staff will consider parental/student input if given by October 1 for the Fall showcase and November 1 for the Spring show. Additionally, as the instructor gets to know each student, and the group as whole, she may wish to add a subject of study within program scope to encourage growth and fuel creativity.

Communication

1. The staff will provide a list of their student’s out of class assignments weekly to parents at the email address listed on application.
2. The staff will provide regular feedback on their student’s performance by email or in person.
3. The staff will provide prompt communication with parents regarding cancellation or rescheduling of classes, with weather cancellations being communicated by 7AM the day of class.
4. In case of emergency, the staff will notify relevant authorities first and then contact parents as soon as it is safe/possible.

5. The staff will not contact or communicate with any student outside of class time unless the parent is also included in the text thread or email. The staff will not communicate with the student by phone. Exceptions to this rule is if the student is 18+ and prefers to receive communications pertaining to the class.

Expulsion

1. Expulsion from the program is incredibly rare.
2. The staff will make every possible effort in collaboration with the student, their parents, and Education ReEnvisioned to avoid expulsion.
3. In the case of expulsion, staff will provide written documentation specifying the offending incident(s).

Transparency

1. The staff of RMSPA agree to maintain open lines of communication with parents at all times. Contact information is provided at the beginning of the packet.
2. The Program Director agrees to be available to parents and students throughout the year to discuss concerns and ideas, and provide feedback. All staff coming into contact with the students have been thoroughly background checked in accordance with Colorado Law.
3. The staff agrees that parents may enter the classroom at any time.
4. The staff agrees to make class content and materials available upon request for parent perusal at the beginning of each semester, and anytime in the semester that new material is introduced.

Student & Parent Commitment

Parents and students must initial and sign the Code of Conduct below before turning in the enrollment packet.

Student Conduct

Students are expected to abide by the following code of conduct. Please initial after each point to indicate your understanding.

Initial

- I will arrive on time and ready to participate.
- I will put my phone away for the duration of class (with the exception of breaks)
- I will speak respectfully to my classmates, instructor, and guest instructors
- I will speak respectfully about my fellow classmates to others
- I will not provide notes on another student's performance or ability to that student or any other students, unless my feedback is focused on what that student is doing well. I will only give constructive criticism if asked to do so as part of an assignment or exercise
- I will complete out-of-class assignments in a timely manner. I will proactively communicate with my teacher if I cannot finish an assignment
- I will memorize my lines by the required deadline
- I will participate in all aspects of the program to the best of my ability
- If I do not receive the role(s) I wanted in the Fall Showcase or Spring Production I will endeavor to maintain a positive attitude during class time and do my best in whatever role I am given. *Students are always welcome to process any disappointment, concerns, or questions regarding their assigned role(s) with their Instructor.*
- If I am uncomfortable with any aspect of the program I'm expected to participate in, I will speak to my instructor honestly and we will work together to find a solution that encourages my growth while enabling me to feel confident and have fun.

Behavioral expectations will be reiterated at the beginning of each school year.

Parent Participation and Conduct

Appropriate parental involvement is a vital part of the program's success. Here is an outline of how parents can best support their student's enjoyment and growth throughout the program. Please initial each point to indicate your understanding.

Acceptable Participation

Initial

___ Working with your student outside of class; processing their experience of the class, encouraging them in their journey as an actor and an artist, and helping them memorize lines/prepare for auditions.

___ Assisting in some aspect of the showcase/spring production in an area corresponding to your interest and skill.

For example: sewing costumes, designing or constructing sets, managing ticket sales or concessions, acquiring props, running tech, providing snacks.

___ Limiting your time inside the classroom. Tech rehearsals and shows are a great time to be present with your student.

Feel free to linger for a few minutes during drop off and pick up times – and to bring your student lunch if necessary! Help us build trust and independence among the students as they work hard to hone their craft and prepare an amazing show for you.

___ Validate your child's disappointment if they aren't cast in the specific role they hoped, affirming their unique giftings and suitability for the role, while helping them move forward with a positive attitude.

— Provide insight into your child's learning process and let us know if there is anything they need to have the best experience possible.

Please share ideas, concerns, and constructive feedback with our staff anytime!

Unacceptable Participation

— Observing rehearsals and class times for extensive periods of time on a regular basis or inviting extended family/friends to observe class.

We want your student to feel confident and independent in the space, leaning on peers and staff for encouragement and support. There is a vulnerability associated with the creative process. Rehearsals and classes are crucial times for students to build trust with one another, free from outside distractions. Observation by parents, grandparents or siblings outside of performance times, can lead to pressure to perform for an "audience" before he or she is ready. Let your student surprise you with what they've been working on!

— Coaching or providing feedback to any student or the class as a whole during class time is not permitted.

If you have concerns or ideas regarding any aspect of the program as whole please speak to the Instructor privately. Of course, collaboration with parents is encouraged and staff will maintain full transparency with regards to class content and subject matter, but we invite you to trust the Instructor as he or she guides your student on this exciting, and sometimes messy, journey! Program Director, Jessamine Unruh, would love to discuss with you any questions that arise during the program. Staff contact information is listed at the beginning of this handbook.

— Complaining to Staff about or contesting your child's role(s) in end of semester productions.

We are deeply committed to each student's success in the program. As part of their journey as young performers, each student will need to learn how to do their best in an audition and practice resilience when they aren't cast in the role they hoped for. We will pick scripts that give each student the most stagetime possible, but the reality of theater is that roles are not always equally large. The team responsible for casting the shows will do their absolute best to place each student in a role that highlights their giftings while contributing to a fantastic overall production that each student will be proud to be a part of. When parents undermine the Production Team's decision it can lead to a negative experience for the whole class of students, as well as cause embarrassment to your student. Again, trust us, and be delighted by how well your student handles their role!

Attendance

Please provide advanced notice (preferably 7 days) if the student will be absent from class. Make up class dates are listed in the schedule portion and will be available for the student if they will be unable to meet their 90 hours per semester due to absence from class.

Fall showcase and Spring Production rehearsals and performances are mandatory. Please review the schedule before committing to the class and ensure that you are able to make all dates. These events take place outside of regular class time and are an integral part of the program. We cannot practice acting or learn about live theater unless we put on a show. Theater is a team-sport and each person's commitment to being present at every rehearsal and show is crucial to each student's positive experience and success in the program.

Please do your absolute best to be present on October 1. This is the day we report our attendance to the BOCES and it is crucial that all students are present, so that we may receive the amount of funding required to operate the program.

Corrective action, expulsion

In cases of a student showing disrespect to instructors or fellow classmates, incessant interruption to class agenda, repeated refusal to participate, or refusal to uphold the "student commitments", a written warning will be issued via email to the parents. In collaboration with parents and the student, the instructor will outline a written plan to help the student refocus on learning objectives. If disruptive behavior continues, the Program Director will meet with the student and parents to discuss next steps. Expulsion is rare; students may be suspended while a corrective plan is developed.

In the event that a parent is repeatedly disrespectful to instructors, classmates, or anyone associated with RMSPA, or disrupted of class time (ie, giving constant feedback during class time, undermining or correctly the Instructor publicly, or violating the parental participation and conduct outlined above) the Program Director will request a private meeting with the parent to discuss how to correct these behaviors and find a way forward that is acceptable to all parties. If problematic behavior is repeated, a written warning will be issued to the parent, outlining specific instances of problematic behavior, and stating that their child is at risk of being suspended or (in rare, extreme cases) withdrawn from the program.

RMSPA's code of conduct will specify zero tolerance for sexual harassment, slurs, threats of violence, violence to persons or damage to property from Students or Parents of Students. Any such incident will result in the immediate expulsion and exclusion from the program, without refund of any fees paid, and with no recourse for returning to the program at any point in the future.

Please Sign: Student & Parent Conduct

I, the student, agree to abide by the student conduct outlined above.

Student's First and Last Name

Student's signature

I, the parent, agree to abide by the parent participation and conduct outlined above. I understand the corrective action and disciplinary procedure outlined above and agree to participate in it in the event such action is necessary. By signing below, I authorize RMSPA staff and volunteers to agree to emergency treatment and/or emergency transportation of the above student in the event that neither the emergency contact nor I am able to be reached.

Parent's First and Last Name

Parent's signature

Parent's First and Last Name

Parent's signature

Today's date: _____

Please email your completed enrollment packet, including pages 7 and 12-16 of the Parent & Student Handbook to staff@rmstudentperformingarts.com

OR mail to

*RMSPA
PO Box 246,
Firestone CO 80520*