

SHOWSTOPPERS

PERFORMING ARTS ACADEMY

Parent and Carers Handbook

Essential Information for Parents and Carers

Version 1.0, Effective September 2026

Welcome to Showstoppers! This handbook brings together the key things you need to know as a parent or carer, in plain terms. It covers what happens if your child isn't collected on time, what we expect in terms of behaviour, and a few other essentials. Our full policies (Safeguarding, Health & Safety, Data Protection, Complaints and Whistleblowing) are available on our website or on request, and this handbook should be read alongside them, not instead of them.

Frequently Asked Questions

What should my child wear to sessions?

Comfortable clothing suitable for movement is best, since sessions often include drama and physical activity. Where a club requires our branded Showstoppers uniform, this will be confirmed with you directly.

What does my child need to bring?

A nut-free snack and a water bottle for every session. If your child attends a musical theatre or dance session, please also make sure they have suitable footwear and clothing for movement.

How does my child get to the after-school session?

Your child's school teachers and staff are responsible for delivering children to our sessions at the end of the school day. Collection arrangements and the exact pick-up point (such as the hall door) will be confirmed for your child's specific club.

Will my child's start and finish dates be the same as other schools?

Not necessarily. Start and finish dates can vary between schools, depending on each school's own calendar, inset days and the school's discretion. We'll always confirm the exact dates for your child's specific club.

How much are the sessions?

This depends on your child's specific club and school. See the Payments FAQ later in this handbook for how billing and subscriptions work, or contact us directly for current rates.

What will my child do in sessions?

Sessions are built around drama, movement and performing arts games designed to build confidence, teamwork and creativity. Activities are varied and age-appropriate, and every child is encouraged to take part in a way that feels comfortable for them.

Do you offer performances?

Yes. Many of our clubs build towards a performance or showcase at the end of term, giving children the chance to share what they've learned with family and friends.

Keeping Your Child Safe

The safety and wellbeing of every child in our care comes first. All our staff, freelance teachers and volunteers are DBS-checked and receive safeguarding training. Our Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) is:

Chantene Hamilton, DSL

07584 281994 | info@showstoppersacademy.co.uk

If you ever have a safeguarding concern, however small it may seem, please contact Chantene directly. It is never wrong to raise a concern. When we deliver sessions in schools, we also work alongside the school's own Designated Safeguarding Lead and follow their safeguarding arrangements as well as our own.

Parent and Carer Responsibilities

Conduct

We ask parents and carers to treat all Showstoppers staff, freelance teachers and volunteers with courtesy and respect, in person, by phone, and in any written communication.

- Please communicate through the channels we've provided (phone, email, or in person at drop-off/collection) rather than via personal social media or messaging apps.
- If you have a concern, please raise it calmly with your child's instructor or with Chantene Hamilton directly, using the process in "If You Have a Concern" below. We want to hear about problems, and handling them constructively helps us sort them out faster.
- We reserve the right to limit contact with any parent or carer whose behaviour towards staff is abusive, threatening, or intimidating.

Collection and Home Time Arrangements

Please keep your child's collection details up to date in the booking system, including who is collecting them and how they are getting home each day. Our staff rely on this information at the end of every session, so if anything changes, even for a single day, please update it as far in advance as you can.

We will contact you directly to confirm the exact collection location for your child's specific club, as this can vary by school and venue.

If you need to make a change to your child's collection arrangements on the day itself, please email us to let us know.

Reporting Absences

If your child will not be attending a session, please let us know by email in advance, so we're not left waiting or trying to make contact unnecessarily. As set out in our Payments FAQ, we're unable to offer refunds for missed sessions.

Uncollected Child Policy

Occasional delays happen, and we understand that. If you know you're going to be late, please let us know as soon as you can. If a child hasn't been collected by the end of a session, here's exactly what we do:

Up to 15 minutes after finish time

- We'll contact your primary phone number straight away, and leave a voicemail if we can't reach you.
- Your child will stay in a safe, supervised space with a member of staff at all times.

15 to 30 minutes late

- If we still can't reach you, we'll try the emergency contacts on your registration form.
- Chantene Hamilton (our DSL) will be made aware of the situation.

Over 30 minutes late

- We'll keep trying to reach you or your emergency contacts.
- If we still can't reach anyone after around 60 minutes, we may seek advice from Children's Social Care or the police, in line with safeguarding guidance.
- Our staff are not able to drive children home or take them anywhere in a personal vehicle. A member of staff will stay with your child throughout until they're safely collected.

How you can help

- Keep your contact details and emergency contacts up to date, and let us know straight away if anything changes.
- Let us know as soon as possible if you expect to be delayed.
- Make sure we have a full list of anyone else authorised to collect your child. We won't release a child to anyone not on this list, so please tell us in advance if someone new will be collecting.
- If a child is repeatedly collected late without warning, we may need to apply a late collection charge, or in serious or ongoing cases, review their place at the club. Specifically, if you are late collecting more than once, an additional £5 will be added to your account from the second late collection onwards. We'll always talk to you first, and we understand genuine emergencies happen.
- Where collection is unreasonably late on any occasion, reflecting the additional staff time required, we reserve the right to apply a fee based on how late collection was, at our discretion.

Behaviour Policy

As performing arts practitioners, we want every child to feel safe, included and able to be themselves. We ask children to:

- Treat other children and staff with dignity, kindness and respect
- Follow instructions given by their instructor
- Avoid any behaviour that could put themselves or others at risk
- Tell an instructor straight away if something has happened or if they're worried about anything

If behaviour becomes a concern

If a child's behaviour puts themselves or others at risk, the instructor may need to pause or end the activity for everyone's safety. Any serious or ongoing behavioural concern will be reported to Chantene Hamilton and discussed with you as a parent or carer.

Bullying and behaviour between children

We take bullying and unkind behaviour between children just as seriously as any other concern. This includes physical behaviour, name-calling, exclusion, and anything that happens online or via messaging. Staff are trained never to dismiss this kind of behaviour as normal 'banter' or 'kids being kids'.

If your child is affected by another child's behaviour, we will:

- Respond promptly and take the concern seriously, however it's raised
- Look into what happened and speak with everyone involved
- Keep you informed and offer your child appropriate support, including help rebuilding friendships where needed

Where a child has displayed harmful behaviour towards another, we'll also work with that child and their family to understand and address what's happened, alongside any necessary sanctions.

Physical contact during sessions

As a performing arts school, there are moments where appropriate physical contact may form a natural part of a session, such as a teacher demonstrating a movement, comforting a distressed child, or choreography and drama activities between children. This is always kept to the minimum necessary, always visible to others, and never happens in a private, one-to-one setting. If you'd ever like more detail on this, just ask and we can share our full Safeguarding Policy.

Health, Medical Information & Allergies

At registration, we'll ask you for full and up-to-date health information for your child, including any allergies, medical conditions, medication needs (such as an inhaler or EpiPen) and any SEND or learning needs relevant to their safety. This is shared only with the instructor responsible for your child's session, kept confidential, and used solely to keep your child safe.

Please let us know straight away if anything changes, and we'll ask you to confirm this information is still accurate at the start of each new term.

Allergies and Anaphylaxis

We take allergy safety seriously, in line with the Department for Education's statutory guidance and Benedict's Law. Allergy isn't limited to food allergy and anaphylaxis; it also includes conditions such as asthma, eczema and hay fever, which can co-exist with a food allergy, so please tell us about any of these too.

Where your child has a diagnosed allergy, we ask for full details at registration, and we'll check with the host school whether an Individual Healthcare Plan is in place. If your child carries their own adrenaline auto-injector (AAI) or antihistamine, please make sure it travels with them to every session, clearly labelled and in date.

In an emergency, our staff will call 999 immediately, follow the emergency instructions for your child, and contact you as soon as possible without delaying treatment. Every child who receives adrenaline must go to hospital by ambulance, even if they seem to recover.

We also want every child with an allergy to feel included, not singled out. Any teasing or exclusion relating to a child's allergy is treated as bullying under our Behaviour Policy.

More generally, our staff will not administer any medication, whether prescribed, over-the-counter, or otherwise, without your explicit written consent given in advance.

If Your Child Is Unwell

Please keep your child at home if they're unwell, and let us know by email as set out in "Reporting Absences" above. As a general guide, children should not attend if they have had a temperature, vomiting or diarrhoea within the last 48 hours, or have a contagious illness. If you're ever unsure whether your child is well enough to attend, please just ask us.

SEND and Additional Needs

We want every child to take part safely and enjoyably, whatever their needs. We'll make reasonable adjustments to our sessions where we can, and where your child has a school-based support plan or Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP), we'll liaise with the school to understand it. Please let us know about any SEND, disability or additional needs at registration, or speak to us directly, so we can discuss what support looks like for your child before they start.

Insurance

Showstoppers holds public liability insurance covering all activities we deliver. Details are available on request.

Fire Safety

Wherever we deliver a session, whether in a school or another venue, our staff follow that venue's own fire safety and evacuation procedures. Before each session, the instructor familiarises themselves with the fire exits and assembly point.

If an alarm sounds or a fire is discovered, your child's instructor will calmly lead the group out of the building to the venue's designated assembly point, keeping the group together and taking the register where possible. No one will re-enter the building until it's been confirmed safe to do so.

Photographs and Videos

We will only take or use photographs or videos of your child where consent has been given through our booking system at registration. Even with consent, we will never publish your child's full name, address or school alongside their image. You can withdraw this consent at any time, and we'll stop using and delete the image promptly.

Online and LAMDA Sessions

Where your child attends a 1:1 online LAMDA session, some additional arrangements apply, in line with our Safeguarding and Health & Safety Policies.

- Sessions take place on an approved, encrypted video platform, never via social media.
- A parent or carer must be contactable and aware the session is taking place, and must be responsible for ensuring your child has a suitable, safe space to take part in, such as somewhere with adequate lighting and away from a kitchen or bathroom.
- Sessions are only recorded with your prior written consent, and recordings are never shared without your consent or a legal requirement to do so.
- Our staff will conduct a brief wellbeing check at the start of every online session, and will never ask your child to change their camera angle or move to a different room.
- If there's a technical issue that seriously disrupts a session, we'll decide whether it should be rearranged, treated as cancelled, or counted as delivered, depending on how much of the session went ahead.
- If you need to cancel an online LAMDA session, please give us as much notice as possible. Cancellations made within 24 hours of the scheduled session will still be charged.

Fire and general safety during an online session at home is your responsibility as a parent or carer, in the same way it would be for any other activity taking place at home.

Your Data and Privacy

We collect personal data about your child (such as registration and medical details) and about you as a parent or carer (such as contact and payment details), in order to run our sessions safely and keep in touch with you. We never sell, rent or share your data for marketing purposes.

Under UK GDPR, you have the right to access the data we hold about you or your child, ask us to correct or delete it, and withdraw consent (such as for photographs) at any time. To exercise any of these rights, contact Chantene Hamilton at info@showstoppersacademy.co.uk, and we'll respond within one month.

If You Have a Concern

We want to hear from you if something isn't right. Most concerns can be sorted out quickly with a conversation with your child's instructor or with Chantene Hamilton directly. If you'd like to raise something formally, you can email info@showstoppersacademy.co.uk, and we'll acknowledge it within 3 working days and respond in full within 15 working days.

Any concern involving your child's safety or welfare will always be treated as a safeguarding matter first and prioritised accordingly.

Raising a more serious concern

If you believe there's serious wrongdoing, rather than a day-to-day concern, you're welcome to raise this directly with Chantene Hamilton as Director. If your concern involves her directly, or you don't feel able to raise it with us, you can contact the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO), Ofsted, or the NSPCC Whistleblowing Helpline on 0800 028 0285.

Frequently Asked Questions: Payments

How do the monthly payments work?

Your subscription covers 36 sessions across the academic year. Instead of paying a different amount each month, the total cost is split into 11 equal monthly payments, with no payment taken in August. This means your payment stays the same each month, making it easier to budget.

Why am I paying the same amount if there is only one session this month?

The monthly payment is not based on the number of sessions in that particular month. For example, September may have 4 sessions, October may have 5, and December may only have 2. Rather than charging different amounts each month, the cost is spread evenly across the whole year.

My child has only attended a certain number of sessions. Have I been overcharged?

No. The subscription covers the total number of sessions offered throughout the year, not the number of sessions in one month or term.

What if my child joins part-way through the year?

Children who join part-way through the year will still pay the same monthly subscription amount. If a child joins midway through a month and attends additional sessions before their subscription begins, these sessions may be added separately to a future payment or bank transferred in advance to ensure all attended sessions are covered.

We would encourage parents to work out which option is most beneficial for them financially, whether that is a monthly subscription or a full-term payment. We are always happy to discuss the available options and explain your individual payment schedule to help you decide what works best for you.

Why don't I pay in August?

There are no sessions in August, so no subscription payment is taken during that month.

When are payments taken?

Monthly subscription payments are taken on the 1st of each month and are collected in advance. If the 1st falls on a weekend or bank holiday, the payment may be processed on the nearest working day.

Can I pay for the full term instead?

If your club operates on the subscription model, you can choose to pay for a full term in advance instead of monthly, if you'd prefer. However, at some schools, full-term payment is the only option available, with no monthly subscription offered. This is down to the individual school's discretion. Please contact us to check which applies to your child's club.

If a term ends up running fewer sessions than expected, for example due to an inset day, we'll either refund the difference or add a session onto the end of term to make it up, whichever is possible at the time.

If I'm currently on a subscription, can I move to full-term payments?

Yes, you can. We'll work out what you've already paid and bill you for the remaining sessions in the term accordingly.

What if I want to cancel my child's place for September?

If you wish to cancel your child's place for September, please inform us via email, including your child's full name and school. If you have already done this you do not need to inform us again.

Please note that many of our clubs operate with waiting lists, so if you choose to cancel, we cannot guarantee that a space will still be available should you wish to rejoin at a later date.

How much notice do I need to give to cancel my child's place?

If you wish to cancel your child's place during the year, we require one month's notice. Notice must be given in writing (email is fine). It takes effect from your next billing date, not the date you send it.

For example, if you give notice in September, your October payment will still be taken and your child can continue attending sessions as normal throughout October, with their place ending from November onwards.

What happens if Showstoppers or the school cancels a session?

If a session is cancelled, for example due to an inset day or school closure, that month's payment amount will be adjusted to reflect this, or a session will be added onto the end of term where possible.

What if my child misses a session?

Unfortunately, we cannot offer refunds for sessions missed due to illness, holidays, school trips or other personal circumstances.

What happens if my payment doesn't go through?

If your payment has not been made successfully, your child will not be able to attend the session, and you will need to collect them from school at the end of the school day as normal. Please make sure your payment details are kept up to date to avoid this.

Our booking system will automatically retry the payment several times over the course of a week. You'll be prompted by email to rectify the issue, so please keep an eye on your inbox and update your payment details as soon as possible. If you do not want us to continue trying the card on file, please let us know, and you will need to arrange an alternative payment method instead.

Our Full Policies

This handbook summarises the key points parents and carers need to know. Our full policies, including Safeguarding, Health & Safety, Fire Safety, Uncollected Child, Complaints, Whistleblowing, Data Protection and Allergy & Anaphylaxis, are available in full at www.showstoppersacademy.co.uk/policies, or on request at any time.

Getting in Touch

Showstoppers Performing Arts Academy

Chantene Hamilton, Director & DSL 07584 281994 info@showstoppersacademy.co.uk

Thank you for being part of the Showstoppers family. If anything in this handbook is unclear, or you'd like to see any of our full policies, just get in touch.