

# CIRCUS JUVENTAS FAMILY HANDBOOK



1270 Montreal Avenue >> St. Paul, Minnesota 55116 >> 651-699-8229  
circusjuventas.org >> 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization



Academic Year 2021-2022

Dear Circus Juventas Family Member:

At Circus Juventas (CJ), our beliefs provide the backbone of how we operate. We believe in the magic of circus. We believe in a student's ability to excel. We believe in the transformative power of performance. To sustain these beliefs, the following two pillars are crucial to all that we do:

### **1. Safety**

Safety is our most important tenet, and safety means more than feeling physically safe when doing a trick or using the equipment. It also means that our students feel safe and supported mentally in everything that they do with us so that they can succeed and do their best. Many of our core policies are related to safety, and as such, they are simply non-negotiable.

### **2. Community**

To us, circus means choosing to be a part of an intentional community and supporting all who are a part of that community. Diversity in age, skills, gender identity, nationality, race, background, and outlook only makes this community stronger. Our policies about behavior and attitude (both for students and student's families) are critically important for the success of our students and Circus Juventas as a whole.

We hope you find this guide helpful in understanding our Circus Juventas policies on safety, community, and fostering a diverse, creative, and supportive space that serves our CJ mission, vision, and values. We're sure these policies will continue to develop over time, especially with input from all of you. Thank you all for making Circus Juventas the amazing place that it is!

Dan and Betty Butler, and all at Circus Juventas

# Circus Juventas Family Handbook

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## **Mission, Vision, and Values**

**Mission:** Circus Juventas is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit performing arts circus school for youth dedicated to inspiring artistry and self-confidence through a multicultural circus arts experience.

**Vision:** To be the world's premier youth circus performing arts organization recognized for providing innovative programming, world-class training, and professional-level performances in a state-of-the-art circus center.

**Values:** Building self-confidence is an important part of our mission and is achieved through creating an environment that encourages leadership and life skills, teamwork, athleticism, artistry, pursuit of excellence, and community service. Combining athleticism with the arts, the values of Circus Juventas include the following:

- Fostering a sense of belonging so that all children and youth, coaches, staff, and collaborators feel welcome, safe, accepted, and valued for who they are.
- Creating a culture of teamwork in which all students play an equally valuable role.
- Embracing the power of mentoring in which boys and girls of all ages work side by side as equals, learning together the values of discipline and hard work.
- Training all students of all levels as a team.
- Honoring the individual by supporting self-discovery, personal development and responsibility, breakthrough achievement, enhanced self-esteem, and appropriate risk taking.
- Teaching students the value of contributing to society through performances at community and charitable events.

Circus Juventas is committed to striving for new levels of excellence in artistry, athleticism, mental acuity, and creativity.

Circus Juventas works to ensure that all people have equal access to its performing arts classes, performances, employment, and volunteer opportunities. Equal access extends to any protected class, including, but not limited to, race, religion, color, sex, marital status, national origin, disability, age, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

Upon request, information can be made available in alternative formats. Also, upon request, reasonable accommodation will be made to allow individuals with disabilities to participate in all Circus Juventas services, programs, and activities. Circus Juventas also offers specific programming for differently abled youth to participate in the circus arts (currently Wings and Out of the Chair).

## **Safety Policies and Procedures**

All students (and their parent(s)/guardian(s) if the student is under 18) must familiarize themselves with these Safety Policies and Procedures and must sign the Safety Policies and Procedures before the first day of class for the current session. By signing, students and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) attest to the fact that they have read these policies and procedures and that they agree to abide by them at all times. At the discretion of Circus Juventas, students who break these policies and procedures may face disciplinary action, which can range from a coach or staff verbal warning to a written behavior report and student/parent/staff conference or even to the extent of a suspension or expulsion from the program depending on the nature of the issue. If an infraction results in suspension, the student will not be allowed to take further classes at Circus Juventas (CJ) until a parent/staff/student conference has been attended and conditions rectifying the behavior have been agreed upon.

Families' cooperation in helping to make CJ a safe environment for the practice of circus arts is appreciated by the Board of Directors, coaches, staff, and fellow students.

The goal of our school is defined in our guiding principles and values as a youth non-profit organization that assists young people to develop circus arts and life skills in a supportive environment. The school's first responsibility is to the physical, mental, and emotional safety of the participants.

Because the activities are inherently hazardous, it is necessary that all students and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) understand and follow these policies and procedures. If a student or parent/guardian has an idea or concern to address which could enhance safety, please email your suggestion to our administrative team at [adminstaff@circusjuventas.org](mailto:adminstaff@circusjuventas.org). Any major concerns should be brought to the attention of the Directors (Dan and Betty Butler) as soon as possible.

### **Student responsibilities**

1. The student is responsible for understanding all information specific to the student's class activities. When a student does not understand directions, it is their responsibility to ask the coach prior to participating in the activity.

2. Annual Forms: All students must have a signed Circus Juventas' Consent and Release and Safety Policies and Procedures waiver form each academic year. These forms are available as part of the annual pre-registrations and must be signed by adult students (18+) or by the primary parent/guardian for students age 17 and under. Emergency contact and medical information (medical diagnoses, allergies, medications, etc.) must be updated if there is any change. All student emergency and medical information is accessible and editable on their Circus Juventas Family Account.

3. Circus Juventas building safety instructions must *always* be followed by students and families. This includes, but is not limited to, the following rules as well as any verbal instructions given by coaches and/or staff members during classes.

#### **IN THE ARENA & OTHER TRAINING SPACES**

- Never walk under a net.
- Never walk under a trapeze when someone is using it.
- Avoid walking across a crash mat; if there is a crash mat there, it is likely someone is hanging above it.

- Be aware of other activities and never interfere with another class or training session unless specifically instructed to by a coach.
- No food or drink in the training areas of the arena excepting non-glass water bottles which are permitted.
- No cell phones on the arena floor.
- Equipment use must always be supervised by the appropriate coach for that apparatus.
- Between classes students need to be in the locker room or lobby. If students are not in class, they should not be “hanging out” by equipment, by the winch, or in the vicinity of any class in which they are not participating.
- Any injury must be immediately reported to the student’s coach and/or front office. In general, a coach will fill out an Injury Report Form before the student can return to class.
- Like our policy for physical injury, any instance of aggressive or intentionally harmful behavior should also be reported immediately to CJ staff. In general, the CJ coach or staff member will fill out a Behavior Report Form to record the incident and begin the process of laying out next steps.

#### **THROUGHOUT THE BIG TOP**

- Families and guests (including children) are not allowed on the arena floor and must stay in the lobby and/or the designated secure viewing areas, as available. Only students registered for classes during that hour should be on the arena floor.
- Put trash, recycling, and compostable items in the appropriate bin(s). Failure to clean up one’s mess will result in mandatory cleanup duty.
- Clothes, gym bags, and/or personal articles should be in the locker rooms (in lockers if applicable) or in the cubbies supplied in the front lobby. We are not responsible for any lost or stolen items; valuables should be kept at home.
- Glass water bottles and other glass containers are strictly prohibited at Circus Juventas. Much of our training is barefoot, making broken glass particularly hazardous – no glass is to be brought into the big top.
- Structures in the common areas (for example, the supports in the lobby) are not circus equipment and should never be used as such.
- Smoking is prohibited inside facility or on the grounds.
- In accordance with federal laws applied to federal grant recipients, CJ is a drug-free environment.

**4.** Inherent in learning the circus arts is taking responsibility for one’s own safety and learning the safety aspects of the equipment, as well as being prepared both mentally and physically for one’s act. As a participant in Circus Juventas classes, camps, private lessons and/or other training, it is the responsibility of the student and student’s family to review and practice the principles outlined below before participating in any Circus Juventas activity.

**Practice common sense:** Due to the variety and unpredictability of hazardous situations that could arise, preparedness, awareness, and common sense are critical to safety. If a situation or equipment problem is observed, report it to a coach or staff member immediately.

**Be mentally prepared:** Students should not try a movement they do not feel prepared to try. Students should anticipate problems, ask questions, and be responsible for themselves. Students should also understand that some classes require a high-level of physical contact between students,

and by enrolling in those acts are agreeing to participate at that level of contact. Students are always encouraged to self-advocate for their own comfort levels and personal boundaries throughout training. If a student is uncomfortable with the level of contact requested by a coach or act, the student is responsible for bringing this concern to their coach or CJ staff so we may make reasonable efforts to accommodate those needs. In some cases, it may be addressed by a simple alteration of routine, while in others it may mean the student should transfer to another act that fits within that student's personal comfort level. Students/families should thoroughly review the description of each act in the session guide to understand the training expectations. Any further questions may be directed to our front desk staff and we would be happy to help you.

**Be physically prepared:** Have adequate rest and nutrition. It is critical to warm up and stretch before class – students should arrive at least 10 minutes before normal class time and use this time to prepare for that class (change clothes, use the bathroom, fill up their water bottle, tie up hair, etc.). Wear appropriate clothing and footwear. Be aware that illness may affect one's abilities, and students who are not feeling well should stay home. If a student does not feel physically ready to engage in a trick, they should discuss the situation with their coach before participating. In case of training after injury, students must provide a doctor's note stating that they may participate and to what extent before being allowed to return to training. However, Circus Juventas has the final decision on whether a student can safely participate, and to what extent, if any, regardless of doctor recommendation.

**Know the equipment:** Circus Juventas regularly inspects its equipment, and equipment knowledge is considered a basic part of a student's circus education. Students may be asked to help set up equipment and mats at the beginning of class. If something appears worn or broken or in any way unsafe, it should immediately be reported to a coach and not used until a coach has confirmed it is safe for use. Remember to always use passive safety equipment (such as mats, crash pads, or a net) as specified for your activity.

**Be supportive of other students, staff and CJ community members:** Circus Juventas is an inclusive community and, as such, will not tolerate any type of bullying in classes, on the premises, or via social media. The mental and emotional health of our students, coaches, staff and community at large is an integral part of creating a safe and supportive circus community. Any such behavior that is deemed to be detrimental to any student, coach, volunteer, parent, or staff member will result in discipline up to and including dismissal. Continued concerns will initiate a parent/staff/student conference. CJ has a zero-tolerance policy for bullying for the safety of all participants.

### **Additional safety considerations and student/family responsibilities:**

**Medications:** Many prescription and non-prescription drugs, including herbal remedies, can affect judgement and coordination. It is the student's responsibility to know all possible side effects. For safety reasons, if in doubt, a doctor or pharmacist should be consulted. Pain killers, such as Advil and Tylenol, are available at the front desk *only* for adult use – students under 18 are not permitted access unless specially permitted by the parent/guardian on file at the time of the request.

**Drugs:** Students may not come to or participate in any activities at CJ under the influence of any drug (including marijuana). A drug is defined as: (i) illegal controlled substances as defined by Minnesota law; (ii) legal controlled substances that are being used or possessed illegally; or (iii) legal controlled substances that could adversely affect the ability of the student to participate at CJ safely. Students are

prohibited from possessing, storing, transferring, or using drugs, or attending classes or performances under their influence. The only limited exception to the prohibition against drugs is prescription drugs used in accordance with a valid prescription, and so long as one can participate safely without unsafe side effects (see above). Suspected or known use of drugs will result in suspension of all CJ activities and initiate a parent/staff/student conference, which may result in immediate dismissal. CJ has a zero-tolerance policy for drug use for the safety of all students, coaches, and staff.

**Alcohol:** Consumption of alcohol on Circus Juventas premises (including parking lots, surrounding streets, and off-site event locations) is prohibited, except for refreshments being served by designated personnel during events to adults (not participating in any show) over the age of 21. Students may not come to CJ under the influence of alcohol. Use of alcohol by a participant before or at class may be cause for immediate dismissal. Suspected use of alcohol will result in suspension of any CJ activities and initiate a parent/staff/student conference. CJ has a zero-tolerance policy for underage drinking and/or for drinking on site, for the safety of all students, coaches, and staff.

**Smoking:** Circus Juventas is a smoke-free facility. Smoking and tobacco use in any form (including lighting, smoking, or carrying a lighted cigarette, cigar, or pipe; any electronic smoking device; and chewing tobacco) is prohibited inside the building, is not allowed in the vicinity of the front entrance at all, and is not allowed within 25' of the side or back doors. CJ has a zero-tolerance policy for underage smoking.

**Guns:** Although Minnesota is a concealed carry state, guns, firearms, or other weapons are expressly prohibited on the premises. CJ has a zero-tolerance policy for weapons (props excluded). In the case of props, they must be used for their intended purpose only and shall never be used in a joking or other manner not associated with the performance for which they are used.

**Theft:** CJ is not responsible for any lost or stolen items. However, Circus Juventas has a zero-tolerance policy for theft. This includes removal of another student's equipment, costume, footwear, or any other personal possessions from the locker rooms, cubbies, or any part of the building, hiding another's items, or otherwise moving anyone's personal items without their permission. It also includes theft from and between anyone in the viewing area, the lobby, and other public spaces.

### **Zero Tolerance Policy**

When we say "zero tolerance," we mean it. Any student or parent/guardian who commits any act that is contrary to this Family Handbook and the Safety Policies and Procedures, or who violates a rule of common sense or decency, may face discipline (e.g. removal, dismissal, suspension) and/or a parent/staff/student conference. It is in the sole discretion of CJ to determine if an incident fits within our zero-tolerance guidelines. In addition, a progressive form of discipline may not be followed in all cases. Depending on the nature of the violation and the surrounding circumstances, including, but not limited to, the nature of the conduct or the student's record and past conduct, one or more steps of the discipline process may be repeated or skipped. In some circumstances, and in CJ's sole discretion, immediate discharge may result from a single incident. In cases of suspension or dismissal, there will be no refunds or made-up classes.

### **Active and Passive Safety Equipment**



Our students' safety is our number one concern and priority. If at any time a student has any hesitation as to the safety of any equipment, that student should not use the equipment until they are personally satisfied as to the safety of the equipment and have discussed their concern with a coach. We are always happy to explain any safety equipment to students or parent(s)/guardian(s) in detail and encourage students to ask for clarification and further instruction so they are comfortable before participating in the activity. Students should not use any equipment that they feel is unsafe.

**Passive safety equipment:** This consists of runners, mats, crash pads, and nets, which must always be used. Passive equipment may decrease the severity of accidents but may not prevent injury. They are to be in place in case active spotting fails or is not being used. Proper set-up position and thickness must be used. Everyone is responsible for ensuring equipment is not modified or used in a way that compromises its effectiveness. If something is out of place, please notify a coach or staff member immediately.

**Safety belts:** The belt must fit snugly, unable to slide down over the pelvis or up to the chest. It is the student's responsibility to make sure they know how to properly use their safety belt and that their belt is checked by their coach. Safety belts should only be put on in the presence of a coach. Only approved safety belts may be used.

**Carabiners:** Several types of locking carabiners are used to secure safety lines. Students should make sure that they understand how to lock the carabiners they are using – if they do not, they should not be using that apparatus until a coach gives them proper instruction. Always double check the gate to make sure it is securely locked. If a carabineer seems to be stuck or difficult to move, notify the coach before using it. Coaches are always expected to check the equipment before a student uses it.

**Active spotting:** We have two forms of active spotting at Circus Juventas. The first form of spotting used for all activities at Circus Juventas is hand spotting. Hand spotting is when a CJ instructor uses direct physical contact to support and ensure the safety of the student through hands-on contact. All Circus Juventas participants and family members must recognize that by enrolling in these activities they agree to the use of hands-on spotting as determined by CJ instructors for safety. Secondly, we use a variety of active spotting systems such as belts, carabiners, pulleys, and spotting lines. Use of these systems will vary, depending on skill levels and act requirements. When safety lines are required, a CJ instructor must hold them.

**Shoes:** Students must wear proper footwear at all times. Proper footwear can range from barefoot to specialized sneakers – please check with the act instructor as to what is appropriate.

## **Injuries and Emergencies**

In an emergency, 911 should be called immediately. There is a phone at the front desk that can be used. Although some CJ instructors are trained and have updated certification in emergency first aid, concussion, and CPR, the school does not maintain emergency medical equipment and does not have emergency response personnel. It is important that student emergency contact and medical information (medical diagnoses, allergies, medications, etc.) is always up to date in case of emergency.

Any injury that results in a participant leaving class or receiving treatment by a physician must be reported to the office as soon as possible. The coach will then fill out an injury report form before the student may return to class.

TRIA Orthopedics staff are frequently present on a volunteer basis and may be helpful in assessing a situation. They are not, however, a substitute for emergency personnel. The presence of TRIA staff, while a great resource for CJ, does not constitute CJ's endorsement of their services over others.

### **Insurance Coverage**

Like any youth sports organization, CJ maintains general liability insurance, which is commonly referred to as "spectator insurance." In the event of an accident, this coverage may extend to some planned off-site events. This insurance is not intended to substitute for a participant's own major medical insurance, which each student must have or sign a waiver form for before being allowed to enroll in a course. Before participating in this or any activity, the participant should carefully consider their need for and adequacy of hospitalization insurance covering medical expenses, rehabilitation, long term care, and loss of income.

Again, it is the student's or parent's responsibility to always keep the emergency contact and health information up to date in the registration system.

### **Emergency Action Plans**

Circus Juventas has developed emergency plans with both evacuation and shelter-in-place options in response to a variety of emergency scenarios. At our discretion, we may periodically conduct drills of these plans. The complete Circus Juventas Emergency Action Plan guidebook is located at the front desk.

### **Inspections**

CJ conducts rigorous annual outside inspection of our equipment, seating systems, fire and safety systems, sprinklers, and alarms. If something is out of place, please notify a member of staff immediately.

## **Community**

The Circus Juventas community has an important role to play in everything we strive to create and sustain at the big top. As a non-profit youth organization, we depend heavily on the support of our community to create that supportive, close-knit, family-circus atmosphere that is at the heart of what we do. Families and community members play valuable roles at CJ as parents, volunteers, audience members, financial supporters, advocates/promoters, and so much more! The code of conduct outlined below serves as a guideline for what kind of behavioral conduct we expect from our community. We are so grateful to our students, families, and community members for all their support in keeping CJ a safe and supportive environment for all!

### **Code of Conduct**

**Behavior – Students:** Good sportsmanship, polite manners, an inclusive and supportive attitude, and a good disposition are expected at all classes, workshops, private lessons, rehearsals, and events. At Circus Juventas we strive to create a culture of mutual respect and expect all members of our community to treat each other with the respect they would expect in return.

Circus Juventas does not tolerate gossip of fellow students, coaches, or members of staff, which is considered disruptive to the learning process. Violent or aggressive behavior, malicious or discriminatory comments, and harassment of any kind is strictly prohibited. This kind of behavior at CJ is considered bullying, for which we have a zero-tolerance policy.

Negative behavior and comments, on-site or off-site via methods such as social media, quickly destroys the sense of family and community we strive to build. While a remark may seem inconsequential, there is no way to determine how hurtful it can be to others or how it can snowball.

If a behavior issue arises between students or becomes apparent during regular classes/camps, the responsible instructor will submit a behavior report to staff to initiate the proper follow-up with parents. Although each situation is unique and will be handled individually as needed, we typically have a 3-step behavior process following a behavior incident with a student:

- 1) CJ will notify the parents of the behavior issue by phone or email as a first warning with instructions to take whatever personal steps are necessary in order to resolve the issue/stop further negative behavior.
- 2) If the behavior continues, or if the initial incident was particularly concerning or severe, a parent/staff/student conference will be held to discuss appropriate next steps.
- 3) If the behavior continues to be a problem after the conference, the student(s) will be removed from the class or camp in which they are having behavioral issues.

In some cases, it may be necessary for the student to be dismissed from the Circus Juventas program as a whole. Any temporary or permanent student suspensions are determined at the sole discretion of the Circus Juventas Directors – see “Zero-Tolerance Policy.”

#### **Behavior – Parents/Guardians and Family Members:**

Circus Juventas does not tolerate gossip of students, coaches, or members of staff in our community. As with our students, negative parent behavior and comments regarding Circus Juventas, whether on-site or off-site via methods such as social media, quickly destroys the sense of family and community we strive to build. While a remark may seem inconsequential, there is no way to determine how hurtful it can be to others or how it can snowball. Remember, a strong and supportive community is the first step in creating a safe place for our students to learn and grow. Help us foster the supportive circus community our students deserve by bringing a positive and well-meaning attitude to all your interactions at Circus Juventas.

Violent or aggressive behavior, malicious or discriminatory comments, and harassment of any kind towards CJ students, staff, volunteers, coaches, or other parents/community members is strictly prohibited. This kind of behavior at CJ is considered bullying, for which we have a zero-tolerance policy. Patterns of aggressive or hostile parent communication with CJ staff, coaches, and volunteers may be grounds for the student(s)’ dismissal from the program.

We ask parents and guardians to please remember that discussions with coaches must be held at the appropriate time and place - when coaches are instructing a class they are expressly prohibited from individual parent conferences for the safety of the class. Please do not yell or call out to coaches while they are instructing. Communication intended for coaches should be sent to the school administrator

([adminstaff@circusjuventas.org](mailto:adminstaff@circusjuventas.org)) so they can pass along accordingly. For safety reasons, please also refrain from any communication with students while they rehearse or perform.

If a problem arises between parents, it is expected that it will be resolved amicably and settled outside of Circus Juventas. Disputes of this nature cannot be allowed to harm the learning environment nurtured by the CJ staff and its coaches. If a situation cannot be resolved amicably, one or both parties may be asked to leave the CJ program.

**Behavior – Coaches:** Circus Juventas prides itself on employing esteemed coaches from all over the world; we believe this makes our program better rounded and provides our students with an international perspective on the circus arts. All our coaches are fully trained, and many are considered worldwide leaders in their field.

Our coaches each have unique and individual coaching styles and techniques reflective of their training background. All training and routine decisions are left to the discretion of the coaches, though based on a CJ-developed curriculum. If a parent has questions or concerns, they may feel free request a conference with a coach or a staff member to discuss. To request a conference, simply email [adminstaff@circusjuventas.org](mailto:adminstaff@circusjuventas.org).

The coaches reserve the right to stop training at any time for any reason during class. Additionally, our coaches may dismiss a student from class if their behavior is physically or emotionally harmful to their classmates and/or other coaches. Please understand that a coach would not make these decisions unless they had deemed it necessary, and we support our coaches in these decisions. It is CJ policy that a coach is never to be alone with a student.

### **Sexual Behavior**

All forms of inappropriate behavior of a sexual nature will not be tolerated on Circus Juventas property or at any location where CJ performances, trips, or activities are taking place. Any incidences reported to Circus Juventas will be taken very seriously and may instigate a parent/staff/student conference. Please remember that CJ students may be as young as two years old, and older students serve as role models for younger students. As such, public displays of affection are not tolerated on the premises.

### **Communications**

It is the primary parent/guardians' responsibility to know what is going on with their student's classes. Please check emails, newsletters, and the website regularly for updates and notices. Our system allows for one primary parent/guardian and one secondary parent/guardian to be associated with a student account. Email communications will always be sent to the primary parent/guardian email and will also be sent to the secondary contact as much as possible. Typically, communications sent directly from Active Network can be sent to both emails, while communications through outside processes or manually sent by a staff member may not include the secondary email.

Families may access student registration information, pay bills online, and so much more from the Family Account available online at <https://campsself.active.com/circusjuventas#/>. The email and password used to first create the family account during pre-registration is the key to all student records thereafter. CJ staff does not have access to parent passwords – please use the “forgot my password” link

if needed. It is the responsibility of the primary parent to share login information or pass along any pertinent information to the secondary parent or student as needed. Circus Juventas staff is not responsible for arranging multiple points of contact or mediating communications between parents/guardians.

As mentioned, the email used to first create a family account must *always* be used to login, register, and access important student information. If the login email needs to be changed, families must contact [adminstaff@circusjuventas.org](mailto:adminstaff@circusjuventas.org) to request the change and follow further instructions from staff. Do NOT register your student using a different email (or the secondary parent's email address); this will create a duplicate account that must be removed, and the registration will need to be resubmitted.

If a parent or guardian that is not currently listed as the primary contact is requesting to be set up as the new primary contact, written approval must be given by the current primary contact holder before we are able to make those changes.

**Email:** The majority of the communication we do is via email. It is EXTREMELY important that we have an updated and accurate primary parent/guardian email address for each family account that is checked often. This is especially important during the registration process. Care should be taken to ensure that all emails are set to arrive in one's inbox, not junk mail. We do our best to include the secondary parent email on all communications; however, we can only guarantee the primary parent/guardian will receive all information.

**Social Media:** Circus Juventas is active on both Facebook and Instagram. We use these platforms to communicate upcoming events, performances, and notices. We also have a Twitter account, which is most active as a show log during Spring Celebration Performances. Please follow us!

**Weekly Family E-Newsletter:** We communicate with our families regularly via our weekly family e-newsletter, which is delivered most Thursdays. In this newsletter, we share pertinent information regarding classes, performances, volunteer opportunities, etc. This is the best way to get detailed information on everything Circus Juventas!

**Phones:** Circus Juventas front desk staff may be reached at 651-699-8229 during CJ business hours. Please recognize that some information may not be shared by phone and must be submitted in writing. Where student privacy is concerned, staff is not permitted to share information by phone. Student-specific information (such as class schedules, performances, etc...) should be shared by the parent/guardians amongst family/friends rather than directed to contact CJ for information.

### **How We Communicate & Resolve Problems**

CJ has an open-door policy and is firmly committed to maintaining open lines of communication with all of our students and parents/guardians. We encourage suggestions, ideas, questions, or concerns. Class-related questions should initially be discussed with the student's coach. If a problem or question was not satisfactorily addressed, or a student is uncomfortable discussing a particular issue with their coach, staff is always available to talk, including the Executive Director. To arrange a meeting with a coach or staff member, contact [adminstaff@circusjuventas.org](mailto:adminstaff@circusjuventas.org) and we will be happy to assist you.

**Problem Resolution:** If there is an immediate and pressing concern (such as an urgent safety issue), it should be brought up to a coach or staff person immediately. For other issues, the process should begin



with an email to a staff person, clearly stating the suggestion, idea, question, or concern. This is important as we want to give all issues our full attention, but to do so with coaches while classes are going on is extremely difficult. Accordingly, as much detail as possible should be provided so we can either look into a suggestion or idea, fully answer a question, or investigate a concern, whatever the case may be. If an email is not possible, the administrative staff should be called.

CJ will do its best to respond within a week of the issue being brought to our attention. However, keep in mind that not every idea or complaint is the same; some may be resolved the same day, and others may take more time. Please be patient with us and the process, and feel free to follow up if we have not acknowledged a concern within a week. We may need to hold meetings in order to resolve the situation. However, please respect that once Circus Juventas has determined a resolution, the decision is final.

Circus Juventas **may not be able to** respond to anonymous complaints as they are hard if not impossible to fairly investigate and resolve. We take complaints very seriously and would expect any issues and concerns to be brought to our attention immediately. By owning a complaint, we can get to the root of the problem and work together to resolve it. **Please submit all concerns via the procedures listed above.**

### **Gender Identity**

Diversity is an important value to Circus Juventas, and we include gender identity as a part of that. This exists in dynamic contrast with the fact that the circus tradition, worldwide, comes from roots that are highly gender influenced.

At our big top, we've found the best way to address this is on a case-by-case basis so we can best accommodate the individual student's needs. Should a student want to go by a different name than registered, or a different pronoun, parents may update this information in the student's annual pre-registration or notify administrative staff who can then update the student account and speak to the coach. Part of our registration software update in 2020 included the ability for students to specify gender as either male, female, or non-binary.

For costuming purposes in spring show acts, where the costumes tend to be gendered, parents should let administrative staff know by December 1 if a student's gender is different than that listed in our registration system. Non-binary students will need to choose which gendered costume they would prefer for each performing-level class and communicate that choice to the artistic team by the December 1 deadline. Due to act style and unity, we cannot have a performing student wear a completely different costume (for example, a student cannot choose a black unitard over the costumes chosen for the act). Summer show costumes are each individually made for the performer and are not categorized by gender.

With regard to spring show makeup, it has long been our policy, again for act style and unity as well as circus tradition, that female-identifying youth wear "circus eyes" makeup, and male-identifying youth generally do not. We are happy to change this for individual cases — any student, from one person in an act to the whole group — may request makeup. If a student is non-binary or gender fluid, please let us know their preference with regard to makeup. This is not a concern for summer shows as all characters received individualized contoured makeup regardless of gender.

While we understand that some families may prefer a broader-brush method of addressing gender differences, we strongly feel that individual attention is the best way to respect our students' gender identities at Circus Juventas.

## **Scholarship and Work-Study Leadership Programs**

Each year, CJ provides over \$200,000 in work-study and scholarship funds!

CJ offers a need-based scholarship program to families looking for financial support to cover the cost of classes. Scholarships are not applicable to registration fees, toddler & kinder classes, costumes, adult classes, workshops, private lessons, or summer camps. Please see the scholarship program page of our website for more information: <https://circusjuventas.org/scholarship-program/>.

The Work-Study Leadership Program is available to intermediate/advanced-level students age 14+ who are interested in participating in this unique program. Students may participate in exchange for tuition credit, or (for those without financial need) join as a pay-it-forward work-study student where credits are retained by the organization. Work-study students give back by coaching alongside seasoned/mentor coaches, cleaning, assisting in the office, and performing other administrative and facility maintenance tasks. Please see the work-study section of our website for more information: [www.circusjuventas.org/workstudy-program/](http://www.circusjuventas.org/workstudy-program/)

## **Circus Juventas Structure**

### **Classes, Registration, and Advancement**

**Circus Juventas Academic Year:** CJ has four seasons of classes during our academic year: fall, winter, spring, and summer. Each season typically has 7-9 weeks of class with an additional week-long session break. There is usually another week-long break between each season. Exact annual schedule may vary from year to year. Our academic year begins September 1 and ends on August 31.

New class schedules are released each fall and summer season. The winter and spring seasons generally follow the fall schedule. Once a student has registered and paid for a class, their spot in that class is "saved" for the next season, provided the student is registered on-time.

Students may add a performing class, if available, in the summer, fall, or winter season but not during the spring season as it is too close to the performance dates. It is expected that students commit at the time of winter registration to performing in the Spring Celebration Performances if registering for a performing-level class. If your student does not want to commit to performing in the Spring Celebration Performances, please register for one of our non-performing classes instead in winter and spring seasons.

Due to scheduling, some families choose to opt out of summer season classes. Though this is understandable, please know that it may then preclude a fall move up in class level, or a student may lose their space in class due to a summer registrant taking their spot. We always recommend registering for the student's key class(es) to ensure this doesn't happen. Please note that summer camp does not

stand in for summer season classes, and keep in mind that the summer season typically runs mid-May through the end of June or early July.

**Registration:** Circus Juventas registrations must be submitted online by the student's parent/guardian. Staff is not able to submit registrations on a guardian's behalf over the phone, in person, or by email. In case of issues with the registration process we recommend parents first thoroughly read the "How To Register" page of our website. If questions remain, families are welcome to call our front desk or come in person during business hours to use one of our computers to submit the registration. It is always better to register earlier rather than later, as the system does date/time stamp registrations, and open spots in some classes are filled based on submission dates. Additionally, each student returning from the previous session that misses the online registration deadline is charged a late registration fee. Once the online registration window has closed, please be patient! It is CJ's policy not to confirm registration for a student until all of their classes are set; thus, if a specific class placement is at all challenging, it can delay confirmation for an entire slate of classes. The "unwind" process for class registration takes nearly 500 person-hours per season; we promise to let families know their classes as soon as we can! Unwind requires communication between staff and families – families should watch email and respond promptly!

We take care to communicate placement notes for returning students based on coach recommendations and feedback and to ensure that every student is placed in the appropriate acts/levels. New students can always be evaluated pre-registration to determine the best fit (act and level). If a student is proceeding with classes as recommended by the coach, their likelihood of getting into those classes is almost 100% (it's getting into the specific times requested that's the biggest struggle).

**Classes:** Classes may be changed or added each season to meet CJ needs. If a student's class is eliminated, we will do our best to provide a reasonable alternative. Although exact coach-student ratios will vary, we strive for a 3:1 ratio in Toddler/Kinder programming, and 4:1 ratio for our youth programming.

**Advancement:** Students are chosen to move up based on the coach's recommendation and room in the next class, but above all due to their own individual merit, including strength, flexibility, work ethic, and participation.

Please note it is never appropriate to call or text the personal phone of a coach, staff, or volunteer about a student's class placement.

## **Student Finances**

A student taking several classes may be eligible for a multi-class discount. Please see our website or enquire at the front desk for more information. Unfortunately, there is no multi-student discount for several members of the same family.

Registration must be accompanied by full payment or 50% down-payment with valid card information provided to auto-charge on future payment date(s).

CJ offers payment plans to all families for all regular classes. These payment plans allow a family to make payments in installments throughout the season for the year, with no additional finance or interest fees.

(In the event of a default on these payments, CJ reserves the right to immediately forfeit future payment plans and request the immediate balance of the tuition due.) Payment plans can be set up at the front desk or online during the registration process.

We credit for overlapping classes of more than 15 minutes, but do not credit for classes missed due to outside conflicts. Spring show costume fees are collected in winter season as part of the winter registration.

Any questions about student finance or billing can be directed to our student finance manager, [ariel@circusjuventas.org](mailto:ariel@circusjuventas.org). Any discrepancies regarding class costs/expected credits/etcetera should be addressed within the season that the discrepancy occurs. Once a season is past, we may not be able to go back and adjust the finances of a prior season. Once we enter a new fiscal year (September 1<sup>st</sup>) we will be unable to make any financial adjustments to previous fiscal years.

### **Private Lessons, Workshops, and Guest Artists**

Fee-based private lessons are an option for all students. Private lessons are scheduled through Rachel Butler, Assistant Artistic Director/Coach. Email requests to [rachel@circusjuventas.org](mailto:rachel@circusjuventas.org).

We are committed to giving our students the opportunity to train with artists from all over the world and bring guest artists in several times a year to work with our most advanced-level performers. We try to offer opportunities for our beginning students to participate as well, depending on demand and capacity. Throughout the year, we try to offer a wide variety of workshops and additional opportunities.

### **Attendance**

Students are expected to attend all classes, practices, rehearsals, and performances. Failure to do so will impact student development and could result in preventing a student from performing or moving up, or even result in dismissal from class. For safety reasons, Circus Juventas reserves the right to remove a student from a class if the coach feels that repeated student absences will prevent that student from safely performing. This is particularly true for advanced summer show and/or holiday show performers.

If a student misses class, we do not offer opportunities for makeups. If a student misses class during evaluation period, they may not receive evaluations.

Attendance is taken in class every week and recorded. Please let us know in advance of any absence by emailing us: [absences@circusjuventas.org](mailto:absences@circusjuventas.org).

If a student is too sick to attend class, they should not attend for both their safety and that of others. We understand that occasionally classes are missed due to unavoidable life events; we simply ask the student and their family to take into account the consequence of missing class.

Any work-study funds, scholarships, or summer show ad sales costume reimbursements received during a session may be lost/denied as a result of missing excessive class or rehearsal time. Students and families should be aware of program participation requirements, if applicable.

As stated, students are expected to arrive at scheduled practices 10 minutes prior to start time, dressed appropriately and ready to participate.

**Religious Holidays:** Circus Juventas has a highly diverse staff and student base who celebrate a number of different cultural holidays and events. This diversity is one of our strengths, but it also means that we cannot always accommodate these observances in our class scheduling.

If a student needs to miss a class for a religious holiday or observance, this is considered an excused absence; please follow normal absence policies to let us know. We do not offer makeup classes or credit for missed classes, but the front desk can help inform students on what was covered in the class that was missed.

### **Class Make-Up Policy and Bad Weather**

While Circus Juventas rarely cancels classes due to weather, there are circumstances where it may happen. We will post all class cancellations on our Facebook page, and will send an email to all registered families. CJ policy is that classes will not be made up or refunded for cancellations due to weather.

Should your child not be able to attend class due to poor road conditions or traffic, just email our absence line: [absences@circusjuventas.org](mailto:absences@circusjuventas.org).

If a student misses class for any reason, make-up classes are not offered.

### **Performances**

Circus Juventas produces three major shows annually: The Spring Celebration Performances (a.k.a. spring show), the Holiday Show (*NEW* as of 2020!) and the summer show (titled differently each year).

#### **Spring Show**

The Spring Celebration Performances showcase our beginning- and intermediate-level students. Performances typically take place at the end of April into early May. Spring show parent meetings typically happen at the end of February; this is when families are provided with all the detailed information on what to expect.

For the spring show, students are divided into show teams (yellow, blue, purple, and green) which determine their specific performance dates and times. Students registered for non-performing classes do not perform. Parents are given the opportunity to express to staff conflicts they have with certain spring shows; however, we are not always able to accommodate those conflicts.

Students are asked to commit at the time of winter registration to performing in the Spring Celebration Performances if registering for a spring show performing class. Losing performers during winter or spring sessions makes it very hard for teams to come together and finalize routines. Students must enroll in both winter and spring seasons in order to perform. Costume fees are charged as part of winter season registration and are non-refundable after the start of winter classes.

**Costumes, Shoes and Accessories:** Costumes, shoes, and accessories are additional expenses to consider when committing to a performance class. Cost per costume is currently \$95, and the average



cost of shoes/accessories are typically \$25+ (if needed). Students are typically measured for costumes the first week of winter season so costumes may be purchased over the holiday break.

**Costume Pick Up (Post Performance):** Spring show costumes are available for pickup two weeks after performance ends. If costumes are not picked up within that time, a parent may still inquire about getting a costume back but Circus Juventas is under no obligation to locate, return, or refund missing items. Families should notify us in advance if they will be unable to collect within that time.

**Extra Practices:** Throughout the course of the spring season, we host extra practices on Saturday for those acts that need additional rehearsal prior to the spring show performances. All extra practices are communicated as part of the spring show parent meeting.

### **Advanced-Performer Productions**

The advanced-performer productions includes three performances per year, all of which feature our most advanced-level students. Typically, all 1000-level classes are linked to advanced-performer productions.

The holiday show (*New as of 2020!*) performs in December at the big tip, while the summer show performances take place at the end of July into August. In addition to these two major performances, our advanced students perform a portion of the previous summer show at the annual gala in the fall.

**Costumes, Shoes and Accessories:** Costumes, shoes, and accessories are additional expenses to consider when committing to the summer show. All costumes are custom designed and built by Circus Juventas designers and can cost anywhere from \$300 - \$550 per costume.

Students in the annual summer show have the option to sell program ads to help with the cost of the summer show costume fees. Fifty percent of ad sold by the student, up to the total cost of their costume(s), will go back to the performer as a reimbursement to their costume costs. Information on this is available in the summer show packet distributed annually and upon request.

## **Miscellaneous**

### **Representation**

Parents, relatives, and friends are never allowed to represent Circus Juventas under any circumstances concerning outside events, performances, or any other situation without prior approval from the Artistic and/or Executive Directors. Students and coaches are allowed strict representational terms applied to their acts and roles.

The Circus Juventas logo and name are a trademark, and it may not be used without the written permission of the Artistic and/or Executive Directors.

Screenshots of the Circus Juventas logo/image or text, unless expressly made shareable, are not to be used without the written permission of the Artistic and/or Executive Directors.

### **Lockers**

Circus Juventas has a limited number of lockers to offer to our students. As a result, we ask that students only request locker space if they meet the following criteria:

1. Are at least 13 years of age

2. Are enrolled in four or more classes per season
3. Those classes are dispersed amongst two or more days

Lockers are available for signup by completing a locker form at the beginning of fall season. Students should inquire at the front desk if they are interested in a locker.

We additionally ask that locker users adhere to the following rules:

1. Students are expected to supply their own locks and must provide the combination to CJ staff.
2. Should students choose to decorate the inside/outside of their assigned locker, they will do so only with items that can be easily removed and don't leave permanent markings/residue behind.
3. Students should not tamper with other lockers or in any way damage the locker room space.
4. Students will, as needed, empty out their lockers to allow for cleaning and/or reassignment.
5. Students and parents/guardians will be held accountable should the student cause any permanent damage to his/her locker. Punishment for defacing lockers will be loss of privileges and reasonable financial penalty.
6. Students are not allowed to hand down their locker to another student. Should a student decide to surrender their locker, they must notify the administrative staff who will reassign the space as appropriate.
7. Students are permitted to share lockers with the understanding that both parties are expected to sign and submit a locker contract. Additionally, staff will not police this relationship: details of the shared space should be worked out by the students involved, not by CJ staff.
8. Students will recognize locker usage as a privilege and act in a respectful manner accordingly.

Circus Juventas is not responsible for any stolen or misplaced items in lockers or the locker room at large, especially if students neglect to attach a lock to their lockers. As much as possible, students should be prepared to leave valuable items at home. If students have valuable items they would prefer not to leave in their lockers/locker room, they are permitted to bring those items to the front desk for storage during class time. Items will only be stored until 8:30 p.m. (when the last staff person leaves for the day). Items left overnight will need to be picked up the following day.

### **General Lobby and Public Area Rules**

Building elements (such as the lobby supports) are not circus equipment and should not be treated as such. The tables and chairs in the lobby area are for public use (homework, eating, etc.) Everyone needs to pick up after themselves and use trash/recycling/compostable bins provided. We have a robust recycling program in our building; please help us distribute waste accordingly.

If there is a spill in any public area, please see the front desk staff for assistance in cleaning it up to prevent falls.

Internet access is freely available via our wireless system. CJ reserves the right to turn off or otherwise make internet unavailable at any time.

Time between classes may be spent in the locker room or in the lobby; however, students 10 years old and under are not to be left unsupervised.

### **Pick Up/Drop Off and Parking**

Please exercise caution in the parking lot at all times. This is a public space under the auspices of the City of St. Paul. We are not responsible for lost/stolen items, damage to cars/other property, etc. Please do not leave valuables on display and be sure to lock any bicycle or vehicle.

Please do not park, block, or stop for an extended period of time in the main drop-off space, at the rear of the building, or in the lot access onto Montreal Avenue.

Handicapped spaces are indeed regulated.

Do not park on Montreal Avenue, unless during performance times and when a permit is on display.

### **Photos/Videos**

In order to take photographs, including on cell phones, a form must first be filled out at the front desk. After initially filling out the form, one only needs to sign in at the front desk on subsequent days to receive a photo pass. Please do not share these photos on social media without the permission of everyone involved in the photo or video. Flash photography is never allowed as it can create a very dangerous situation for our students and performers.

Circus Juventas contracts with photographers and videographers for performances. Photos and DVDs can be purchased if desired.

These restrictions are important because of privacy issues, copyright, and for the safety of our students.

### **Volunteering**

Participation in the Circus Juventas volunteer program is optional, but HIGHLY encouraged and GREATLY appreciated. With over 3,000 volunteer slots needed each year — mainly focused around the spring and summer shows — this volunteer commitment allows us to keep tuition and ticket prices as low as possible. It's also a fun way to meet and get to know other parents and family members, and the volunteer party each fall is a highlight of the year! Please see the volunteer section on our website for more information: [www.circusjuventas.org/volunteer-info/](http://www.circusjuventas.org/volunteer-info/) or contact our volunteer coordinator at [volunteer@circusjuventas.org](mailto:volunteer@circusjuventas.org).

### **Summary**

Circus Juventas would like to thank you for taking the time to read and familiarize yourself with our family handbook. These guidelines and policies are in place to nurture and develop our community, making us the best version of ourselves. As well as creating a safe and secure environment, we value transparency and collective participation in achieving our overall mission, vision, and values. We very much view this handbook as a working document and intend to update and refresh our policies and procedures as we evolve and continue to grow together. We are grateful to you all for your continued support and dedication to the organization.

*May all your days be circus days!*