

McHenry County College Theatre Department

Theatre Intimacy Guidelines

Purpose

The Theatre Department at McHenry County College is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and professional environment where students, faculty, and guest artists may engage in the study and practice of theatre. This policy establishes guidelines for the use of nudity, simulated sexual activity, and other intimate content in classroom, rehearsal, and performance settings. While theatre often addresses mature themes, the College recognizes its responsibility to uphold community standards, student rights, and personal boundaries.

I. General Principles

- **Educational Mission First:** All artistic decisions involving intimacy or nudity must align with the educational goals of the program. Gratuitous, exploitative, or unnecessary use will not be permitted.
- **Respect and Consent:** Participation in scenes involving simulated intimacy is strictly voluntary. No student or community member will ever be required to perform nudity or intimate physical contact as a condition for casting, class credit, or departmental opportunities.
- **Professional Standards:** The department follows best practices set forth by professional organizations such as the **Intimacy Directors & Coordinators (IDC)** and the **Theatre Communications Group (TCG)** regarding staging intimacy.

II. Definitions

- **Nudity:** Full or partial removal of clothing that reveals private areas of the body.
- **Simulated Sexual Intimacy:** Stage action that suggests sexual activity but does not involve actual sexual contact.
- **Intimacy Direction:** The structured, choreographic process of safely staging moments of physical closeness, such as holding hands, kissing, or simulated sex.

III. Use of Intimacy in Production or Classwork

- **Faculty Review:** Any proposed use of nudity or sexual intimacy must be reviewed and approved in advance by the Theatre Department Chair.
- **Intimacy Coordinator/Director:** Productions that include sexual intimacy will employ a trained intimacy coordinator when feasible. At minimum, an instructor with training in intimacy direction will supervise all processes.
- **Alternatives to Nudity:** Full nudity will not be allowed in MCC theatre productions. Costumes, suggestive staging, or non-explicit alternatives will be used to convey narrative or thematic elements.
- **Age Requirement:** Only students and community members over the age of 18 will be considered for participation in productions involving scenes of staged intimacy.

IV. Consent and Boundaries

- **Informed Consent:** Before casting or assignment, students and community members must be fully informed of all scenes involving intimacy. Students and community members will provide written consent, which may be withdrawn at any time without penalty.
- **Right to Decline:** Students and community members may opt out and request alternative assignments or adjustments without academic or artistic penalty.
- **Choreography and Rehearsal Process:** All physical intimacy will be choreographed carefully, rehearsed step-by-step, and never improvised. Scripts will not be altered to introduce intimacy without full approval of the director, chair, and performing students.

V. Environment and Safety

- **Closed Rehearsals:** Rehearsals involving intimate content will be closed to essential personnel only.
- **Supervision:** A faculty member or designated intimacy coordinator must be present during all rehearsals involving intimate content.

- **Reporting Concerns:** Students and community members have the right to report discomfort, boundary violations, or misconduct to the director, department chair, or the Code of Conduct Officer. Reports will be investigated promptly under college policy and the Student Code of Conduct.
- All complaints alleging sexual discrimination, sexual harassment, and/or sexual misconduct that involve a college student as the victim and/or complainant or as the respondent will be fully investigated by the Title IX Coordinator.
- To report an incident, please go to <https://www.mchenry.edu/concern/>.

VI. Public Performance Considerations

- **Audience Advisory:** All productions that contain mature themes, sexual references, or simulated intimacy must include advisories in programs and promotional materials.
- **Community Standards:** As a publicly funded institution, productions must balance artistic expression with the responsibility to maintain community trust. Explicit nudity or sexual acts will not be presented in public performances at MCC.

VII. Training and Education

- Faculty, staff, and students will receive orientation on this policy and on professional intimacy best practices.
- The department may host workshops on safe intimacy coordination to build awareness, skill, and professionalism.

VIII. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every three years by the Theatre Department in consultation with the Office of Academic Affairs and Student Affairs to ensure alignment with evolving best practices and community standards.