

NATIONAL
MUSIC
THEATRE

THE RESIDENTIAL EXPERIENCE

INFORMATION
FOR PARENTS OF
UNDER-18s



THE RESIDENTIAL EXPERIENCE

Information for Parents of Under-18s

Introduction

Whether your child is joining us for a residential skills workshop or for one of our annual productions, they're sure to have a wonderful experience. Not only will they benefit from some of the best music theatre training in the UK, they'll achieve things that both they (and you!) might not have thought possible. They'll meet like-minded people and people who are different from them, and will make long-lasting friends.

As well as being incredibly rewarding, the NYMT experience is designed to challenge. There will be long days and a few late nights too. There will be good times and there might be some difficult moments; our experienced pastoral team will be with them all the way through.

Pastoral Care

We have some of the best pastoral teams in the industry. Our pastoral staff are there solely to look after the safety and wellbeing of all our Young Company Members. Our teams have years of experience looking after children for whom NYMT is their first time away from home, all the way up to young adults who are preparing for drama school, or entering the professional world of theatre. We take pastoral care very seriously and consider it a core part of the NYMT experience. In 2023, our Young Company Members rated our pastoral care an average of 4.86/5.

Residential Rehearsals & Workshops

We hold our residential rehearsals and workshops at boarding schools in the UK, where the accommodation, food and rehearsal spaces are all on the same site. Accommodation is generally in boarding houses, allocated by gender, and arranged by age group: we're used to accommodating a wide age range. Those under 18 may need to share a room – especially younger children. Each house has pastoral staff responsible for the safety and wellbeing of everyone in it.

You filled in your child's personal information when you signed up, but do let us know if anything has changed, so that we have the information we need in order to look after your child. We'll send a project Information Pack with all the information you and they need before they start with us. We're always happy to talk before the project starts with participants and parents of younger children who have any worries, concerns or requests.

During the week, each day will be similar to the example schedule below. The projects are fully catered during rehearsal periods, so at mealtimes there will be a selection of hot and cold food; dietary requirements and allergies that we've been made aware of will be catered for. If you have particularly complex dietary requirements, we ask that you discuss this with us in good time so we can make suitable arrangements.

Our pastoral team is on hand for the young people throughout the day and night. There is a dedicated email address that we monitor throughout the project, and we provide a phone number for use by parents and guardians in emergencies.

(See also 'How to communicate with us', later in this pack.)



Young Company Members rehearsing and relaxing in 2024.

A TYPICAL DAY IN REHEARSAL

- 08:00 Breakfast
- 09:00 Rehearsals
- 13:00 Lunch break
- 14:00 Rehearsals
- 18:00 Dinner break
- 19:00 Rehearsals
- 21:00 Return to boarding houses
- 22:00 First lights-off for youngest children

PRODUCTIONS

Our productions will generally have one or two weeks of residential rehearsals, which sometimes will be split between the Easter and Summer holidays. See the section above for information about the rehearsal weeks.

Following the rehearsal weeks is production week. This is when the show we're creating moves into the theatre for the first time: technical rehearsals are followed by dress rehearsals and, finally, the performances.

During production week, accommodation may be in a suitable hotel, hostel or university halls. Participants will usually be required to share a room. As with our rehearsal weeks, we'll allocate rooms based on ages, with our pastoral staff located nearest our youngest children.

There will usually be a cooked breakfast to set your child up for every day. During the daytime, we'll be at or around the theatre, so lunches and dinners will be bought or made during the meal breaks. There is usually a range of options, from supermarket meal-deals, takeaways, or preparing food the night before at the accommodation. Therefore, we ask that participants bring money or a bank card for this week so that they can purchase food for lunch and dinner during the week. During production week, children under 16 are always accompanied and helped with their meals by our staff, while 16-17 year olds are able to go together to purchase food during meal breaks as permitted by our policy for leaving site. Our staff are always on hand to make sure our under-18s (and our over-18s!) are eating properly.

THE BOY WHO SAILED THE OCEAN IN AN ARMCHAIR, 2023



A free morning for the cast of LEGEND TRIPPERS, August 2019

A TYPICAL DAY IN PRODUCTION

- 08:00 Breakfast
- 09:00 Travel to theatre & free time to buy food & drink for the day
- 10:00 Called to the theatre for rehearsal or notes
- 13:00 Lunch
- 14:00 Prepare for matinee performance
- 14:30 Matinee performance
- 17:00 Break
- 19:00 Prepare for evening performance
- 19:30 Evening performance
- 22:00 Return to accommodation

This is only a guide and is not an actual schedule. Under-16s have a slightly adjusted schedule during production weeks, which may mean that they are called to the theatre later or leave earlier.

COMMUNICATION

WITH US AND YOUR CHILD

Communicating with us

The best way to communicate with us on pastoral matters is via email to our pastoral team: pastoral@nymt.org.uk. This is monitored by our team all through the day and late into the evenings. It's best to contact us this way because it allows us to share information with the right staff in a timely manner, and putting things in writing helps us to avoid miscommunications.

We also provide an emergency number. We ask that you use this only in an emergency. Please do not ask individual members of pastoral staff for their personal numbers, or try to call or text members of staff directly, as this can make it more difficult for our teams to look after all the Young Company Members in their care effectively.

Communicating with your child

All Young Company Members are able to bring mobile devices to NYMT, and although we help younger children look after their belongings, we can't accept responsibility for expensive devices. There is no requirement for a child to bring a phone, and we can make provision for calling home if they don't have one. Please discuss this with us on arrival at the course.

Young Company Members are usually asked not to use phones in rehearsals, so don't be surprised if you don't hear from them during these times. We will also sometimes collect in the devices of younger children at bedtime to encourage going to sleep on time; please don't text or call past their bedtime. Sometimes they get swept up in an activity and forget to reply or call – if you can't get hold of them, feel free to drop us an email and we'll ask them to call you.

If your child tells you that something's gone wrong, or that they don't feel well, please encourage them to speak to one of the pastoral staff – it's much easier for us to help them if they do!



HOMESICKNESS

Homesickness is normal – particularly for younger children for whom this might even be their first time away from home for any length of time. A new place, with new people and a new routine can be a challenge for those of any age.

Our team is experienced at dealing with homesickness. Here are some of the ways you can support your child overcome the challenges of homesickness:

- Explain that homesickness is normal; while it's a horrible feeling, tell them you're confident they can get through it.
- Although it might be tempting, please don't offer to collect them at the first signs of homesickness, as this will make it harder for them to integrate and is disruptive to other children, particularly those with whom they're sharing a room.
- Agree a schedule of phone calls home – this can be multiple times a day during their breaks if you like – but don't allow them to call home outside of this schedule.
- Keep text conversations short: long text chats encourage them to separate themselves from the group and make it harder for them to build relationships with the children around them.
- If you get a phone call from them in tears, don't panic! Try to distract them. Ask them what they've done during the day, what they've enjoyed, what they're expecting to do next, and what new people they've met. Distraction is a great medication for homesickness.
- Phone calls at the end of the day are when homesickness and other problems are the mostly likely to come up, even if they've had a great day. If you've had a teary phone call, let us know by emailing pastoral@nymt.org.uk. It's likely that we've already spotted it, but we'll check in on them and let you know when they're safely in bed.



QUESTIONS?

We understand that sending a young child off to NYMT for the first time might not be easy for you either!

If you have any questions about life as part of NYMT for an under-18 and their family, please write to us at pastoral@nymt.org.uk to arrange a call with our Head of Pastoral Care, or look out for one of our optional pre-course Zoom drop-in sessions for parents of under-18s.

SAFEGUARDING

Our safeguarding policy is available on our website: you can read it [here](#).



NATIONAL
YOUTH
MUSIC
THEATRE

nymt.org.uk