



## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **BOOKING:**

#### ***I'm having trouble submitting the online form? Can I book over the phone?***

First, be sure you click "Submit" at the end of the form. Then, please give us a call if you've submitted a form and haven't heard back from us within a couple of days. If you're having trouble with the form, we want to know about it, and can usually talk you through a solution. In very rare cases, the filters between your system and ours simply prevent your form from going through, no matter how many times you send it. In that case we can gather basic information over the phone, but we do need to have a form on file for our touring team, so we can either e-mail or fax you a form which you can then mail or fax back to us.

### **PERFORMANCE LOGISTICS:**

#### ***What kind of space do you require? Can you perform in our library (multi-purpose room, cafeteria, etc.)? Is the gym okay?***

Our actors require a space at least 20' x20' for their performance. This is IN ADDITION to the space for your students to sit. We perform primarily in gyms and cafeterias. We do NOT require a stage, in fact the gym is often preferable as it works well for the students if the actors can perform as close to their seating area as possible. If you have an auditorium or cafeteria with a stage we are happy to perform on it, as long as it's large enough and well illuminated. We are sometimes asked to perform in open common areas, libraries, or similar spaces where other students, teachers or staff need to pass through or accomplish other tasks. These are not appropriate performance spaces for "Texting the Sun". Note that if you have a large gym, your students will have a better view of the performance if they sit narrower and farther back, rather than across the full length of the gym due to the size of the playing area.

#### ***What are the technical requirements of the performance?***

We bring our own sound equipment with us and the actors wear body mikes for larger audiences. All we require is access to an electrical outlet near the stage.

#### ***How long is the performance?***

The running time for the performance is approximately 55 minutes. When requesting a performance time for your school please leave *at least 5-10 minutes* before a school bell would ring (e.g. performing from 1:20- 2:20 if the final bell rings at 2:25). That way students and performers won't risk having the ending of the show interrupted if the start of the assembly is delayed a few minutes. Please allow for as much time for seating as needed in order for your assembly to start on time.

***Is it o.k. to schedule a performance for just my 6<sup>th</sup> (7<sup>th</sup>, or 8<sup>th</sup>) graders?***

Because we offer our programs for free, it's important that we make the best possible use of our resources. For that reason, we like to perform for as many grades as possible when we visit your school.

***What happens if we can't fit all grades in one assembly?***

We're happy to perform more than once on a single visit to accommodate all of your students. Just let us know you'd like more than one performance and we'll help you work out the timing.

***We can't schedule all our students on the same day. Can you come back to our school more than once?***

Unfortunately our resources are such that we can only offer a single visit per school at this time. You can, however ask to be put on our waiting list. If we have a last minute cancellation in your area we may be able to return.

***We don't have the minimum audience size of 50. Is there any way our students can see "Texting the Sun"?***

There are a couple of options in this situation. First, please notify us of your interest. We keep a waiting list in the event we have a last minute cancellation near your school, and we can notify you if we schedule any public performances. Second, contact a school near yours and ask them if they'd be willing to book a performance and allow your students to attend, or, if you have a suitable performance space, invite another school to attend a performance at your school (if you do this, be sure they or you let us know – it's always helpful to know the schools willing to create these kinds of partnerships).

## **INTENDED AUDIENCE**

***What grades should attend?***

With the consultation of educators and health experts, "Texting the Sun" was designed specifically for middle school students (grades 6, 7, 8). This is a thoughtful exploration of the complex subject of media literacy: how media saturation impacts interpersonal communication, relationships, health, connection with family, school, and the world around us. "Texting the Sun" is a mix of both drama and comedy that focuses on the journey of two middle school students, along with their parents & teachers as they navigate the complexities of a media obsessed culture.

***Can I include my 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders?***

We are designing a new program for upper elementary students that will be introduced next school year. For now, we prefer to limit attendance to the grades this show was designed for. "Texting the Sun" definitely addresses media literacy from the perspective of middle school students. If you feel like your 5<sup>th</sup> graders are particularly sophisticated and have experience attending theatre, please contact us to discuss special accommodations.

***Will my 8<sup>th</sup> graders feel the show is too young for them?***

Definitely not; "Texting the Sun" has comedic elements, but is a sophisticated, age-appropriate exploration of media literacy. This is not a "cartoon" or game show approach, but a narrative, theatrical, story and relationship-based investigation of the challenges of finding balance in a dizzying storm of media influences.

## **RESOURCES AND PREPARATION**

### ***How can I prepare my students for seeing “Texting the Sun”?***

We strongly encourage you to have a discussion with your students before they see “Texting the Sun.” If you need suggestions for how best to facilitate this discussion, we will be offering a guide, and we also offer reading lists and other resources on our website: [www.etpnorthwest.org](http://www.etpnorthwest.org).

### ***How do we continue the conversation after our students see “Texting the Sun”?***

We will be offering a comprehensive teacher resource guide that will include activities and discussion guides to facilitate a thoughtful follow-up to the production. This guide will be available soon. Keep checking [www.etpnorthwest.org](http://www.etpnorthwest.org) for updates.

## **CONTENT**

### ***Does “Texting the Sun” tell our students to turn off their cell phones (TV, Computer, etc.)?***

“Texting the Sun” is not a “message-based” production, but rather a narrative that addresses media literacy through story and relationships. It is designed to raise questions and inspire conversations. While we all have moments where we’d like to tell someone to get off their cell phone, take off their headphones, or shut off the T.V., “Texting the Sun” is not a vehicle for that message. Rather, our hope is to inspire a movement of balance, awareness, critical thinking, and empowered decision making.

### ***What themes are addressed in “Texting the Sun”?***

“Texting the Sun” will inspire an infinite variety of themes. Some of the questions likely to be raised by the production include:

How can young people and adults learn to experience media in a balanced way?

Is there “good” and/or “bad” media?

How does our media-saturated culture impact interpersonal communication and relationships?

What are some of the potential health impacts (mental, physical, and emotional) of media absorption?

How does the agenda behind some sources of media (money, fear, conformity) alter its reliability and does that influence whether or not it should be viewed, read, listened to?

## **WORKSHOPS**

### ***What’s this I hear about workshops?***

We have designed a variety of optional workshop to accompany performances of “Texting the Sun”. These will be taught by our teaching artists (the performers in the show) offered, through an application process, to a limited number of schools. If you’re interested in scheduling workshops at your school, contact Bridie at 503-228-9571 x116, [Bridie@octc.org](mailto:Bridie@octc.org).

### ***Why do I have to apply to have workshops?***

Of course we’d love to offer these workshops to every school that asks, but because we have limited resources, a large service area, and finite tour dates, we will not be able to accommodate every request. Your application also helps us get to know your school better and prepare the teaching teams to visit your students.

***What happens if I'm not selected for workshops?***

In addition to the workshops we have a variety of media literacy related resources for educators (see the "Educators" page on our website) to explore the themes in "Texting the Sun." Our study guide installments contain writing and discussion prompts, and activities—like creating a school cyber-bullying code—which teachers can select to suit their needs and available class time. A number of schools have participated in a follow up activity (see study guide installment #4) which asks students to write a brief letter of advice to one of the characters in the play. Not only is this a way for students think critically about the performance and reflect on what they've seen, but it's a valuable tool for us, revealing what issues resonate most with our audiences.