

The CONSERVATORY AT HARKER

The Conservatory Casting and Placement Policy for Upper School Students

First and foremost, all performer placement for Harker productions is fair. Whether for chair position in the orchestra, solos in choir or dance productions, or a role in a play or musical, all performers will be considered for all roles or placement. Casting and placement is decided regardless of any exterior factors outside of each student's effort and abilities relative to their peers.

What is not considered in Casting or Placement in our ensembles & productions:

- Age
- Race or color
- Sexual orientation
- Membership in The Certificate Program or any Ensemble
- Relationship with directors or Harker staff
- Annual giving contributions

There are no 'favorites' in the Harker Conservatory at the middle or upper school level. While we cannot cast more students than will fit into a production or ensemble, we make every effort to offer as many opportunities as possible.

Conversations After Casting

Directors will not reconsider casting or placement decisions after results are posted.

However, students are encouraged to schedule a private conversation with a director, 72 hours after casting results are posted, to reflect on the audition experience and receive suggestions for future growth.

Casting Philosophy

Auditioning is an act of courage. Professional actors hear 'no, thank you' often, and all artists must develop resilience in facing casting outcomes. If you have prepared thoughtfully and done your best, you have succeeded, regardless of outcome.

- The two things you can control are:
 - Your preparation
 - Your attitude

Considerations for Casting in a Play or Musical

- Minimal scheduling conflicts (Tech Week is mandatory).
- Positive attitude and ability to collaborate within an ensemble.
- Facility with text: diction, phrasing, and vocal commitment.
- Physical characterization: movement, gestures, and posture.
- Preparedness: memorized, rehearsed, and clearly thought-out auditions.
- Student's artistic growth arc in the Conservatory.
- Age and character type (though directors may cast against type).
- Comic timing, if required.
- Chemistry with scene partners.
- Courage: taking risks in classes, auditions, and performances.
- Professionalism: punctuality, memorization, preparedness.

Considerations for Instrumental Group Placement and Solos

- All students who play an approved instrument are welcome in Orchestra and Lab Band.
- Jazz Band requires an audition, which usually occurs in the Spring of the previous school year.
- Auditions include repertoire excerpts and sight-reading (provided in advance).
- Evaluations focus on articulation, phrasing, tone, and rhythmic accuracy, and are assessed by a team of music educators and adjudicators.
- Grade, experience, and leadership level may influence placement.
- Seating is organizational only and does not impact involvement in the program.

Considerations for Choir Placement and Solos

- Music reading skills (pitch and rhythm).
- Pitch accuracy and tonal memory.
- Vocal maturity and tone quality.
- Vocal technique and breathing.
- Posture, diction, and dynamics.
- Ability to balance within an ensemble.
- Ability to hold a part independently in mixed formation.
- Intermediate dance skills (for Downbeat).
- High-performance energy.

Choir solos are treated like auditions. Students are evaluated for appropriateness of voice. Sometimes solos stretch a singer, sometimes they highlight existing strengths.

Considerations for Dance Placement and Solos

- Minimal scheduling conflicts (Tech Week is mandatory).
- Dance technique and flexibility.
- Experience with style (jazz, hip-hop, lyrical, etc.).
- Energy and commitment to performance.
- Professionalism and positive attitude in rehearsals and backstage.
- Ability to learn quickly and practice outside rehearsals.

Considerations for Theater Technology Assignments

- Minimal scheduling conflicts.
- Positive, collaborative attitude.
- Assignments consider certificate requirements, student growth, and production needs.
- Final decisions are made by staff, without bias or favoritism.

Approach casting as seriously and with care. You are welcome to drop out of auditioning for a show or ensemble before or during the audition process, but dropping after casting will result in repercussions, including SAT 5 and probation from The Certificate Program.

The Harker Conservatory offers a wide variety of exciting opportunities. We look forward to seeing you at auditions!