



Casting Guidelines

Bright Lights Theatre is a training program that strives to create fair and equal opportunities for students through casting for its shows and camps.

The Bright Lights governing board of directors has adopted this Casting Philosophy to 1) guide casting directors in creating a healthy and positive casting process and 2) provide background and context to parents and students. These are best practices, not hard and fast rules.

Casting and communicating the cast of a production or camp is a difficult and complex task. The director auditions a cast that may contain a variety of talents, role preferences, ages, genders, and abilities. At Bright Lights, we strive to cast according to what is best for the students while considering the quality of production desired for excellent storytelling and gospel communication. We strive to cast fairly, knowing that education is our driving force behind all productions and camps. In order to ensure that casting is practiced thoughtfully and without bias, Bright Lights directors will follow the following guidelines.

Fall 2025

AUDITION PROCESS

- During every audition, all directors of the show will be present, if possible.
- Auditions should be held in person, when possible, but video submissions are allowed.
- Directors may conduct callbacks when appropriate.
- Directors may continue to recruit until the 2nd rehearsal for open roles if necessary, but should cast from the current cast first before recruiting for speaking roles.

CASTING LOGISTICS

- All casting decisions must be decided by a majority. If needed, the show's lead director will serve as a tie-breaker.
- Bright Lights Theatre does not intend to double-cast the ensemble of any production.
- It is up to the directors whether or not to double-cast any speaking roles. This is an option, but not a requirement. Double-casting should only be done if it is in the best interest of the students' education and the show has an equal number of performance opportunities for both casts.
- It is up to the directors whether or not to cast understudies for specific roles. Understudies are not guaranteed the opportunity to perform for a paying audience. There should be a scheduled understudy dress rehearsal that family members could attend.

CASTING CONSIDERATIONS

- The director should follow the specific casting requirements outlined in the script. If the director chooses to disregard these specifications, they must secure a waiver from the publishing entity for any major changes.
- Gender-specific roles will not be played by opposing genders (i.e., if the script mentions a character as "he," that character must be played by a male actor).
- A director may consider a student's appearance, race, color, gender, disability, or national origin ONLY in casting roles in which these characteristics are specific to the intent of the show.
- A director may not consider a student's appearance, race, color, gender, disability, national origin, religion, or sexual orientation in casting roles that are non-specific to the intent of the show.
- Prior behavior in other Bright Lights programming will be taken into consideration when casting lead and supporting roles.
- A student's frequency of participation in any Bright Lights programming will not be considered in casting.
- Casting will not be determined by a student's parents' involvement in Bright Lights Theatre.
- Directors reserve the right to not cast a student in a supporting or lead role if the student has listed rehearsal conflicts.
- Any attempts to persuade a director's casting decisions must be reported to Bright Lights Leadership, and students whose parents are involved in this kind of behavior may be dismissed from the show.

DIRECTOR REGULATIONS

- A director should never show favoritism or give an advantage to students attending their private lessons or training in another capacity besides Bright Lights (ie, schools, church, etc.).
- A director cannot commit or promise a specific role or type of role to any student or parent, unless specifically recruiting for a needed role.
- Directors should not discuss specific casting decisions with students.

CONCERNING A DIRECTOR'S CHILDREN

- Casting decisions concerning a director's child(ren) will be agreed upon by the majority of directors involved in casting, as is done with each casting decision. The parent will step out of the room when final casting decisions are being made about their child.
- A director's child should not be elevated or demoted in the casting process based on their relationship to the director.

AUDITION FEEDBACK AND CASTING RESPONSES

- Auditions and casting are distinct in an important way: Students may change and improve what they present in a given audition, but they cannot control all the factors that go into a show's specific casting decisions (e.g., height, age, voice type/style).
 - Bright Lights offers a free audition guide as well as paid audition workshops, parent equipping panels, and specific feedback opportunities to help students learn and strengthen their audition skills. Casting directors do not have the bandwidth to provide individual audition evaluations beyond these options.
 - Bright Lights staff will not comment on callback listings or specific casting decisions. Since the reasoning most often comes down to criteria that are out of the students' control, hearing the "why" is neither helpful nor encouraging.
- Any criticism of casting decisions should be brought to the attention of the show director and Bright Lights Leadership.

STUDENT CARE

- No child should ever be compared to another in verbal or written form under any circumstance outside of the casting room.
- Lastly, Bright Lights Leadership reserves the right to relieve a director from their position if these guidelines are not upheld at any point in the show's production, up to and including live shows.