



## **FAQ for Hamilton High School's Sensory-Friendly Performance of *Little Women***

### **What type of accommodation will be made to make this a “sensory-friendly” performance?**

We have worked with the musical's directors and designers to adjust certain sensory elements to be less intense for people who are sensitive to lights and sounds. For example, we will keep the “house lights” (lights in the audience, as opposed to lights on stage) on at a low level throughout the performance. We will also lower some sound levels of the music or sound effects. You should also feel free to bring headphones or earplugs if your child is very sensitive to sound. There may also be some staging that is adjusted to make a scene feel less surprising or scary.

In addition to sensory adjustments on stage, we will also offer sensory-friendly accommodations in the lobbies such as:

- ❖ Quiet area staffed by trained volunteers
- ❖ Activity area staffed by trained volunteers
- ❖ Ability to bring snacks and drinks into the theatre
- ❖ American Sign Language (ASL) Interpretation will be provided

The main goal of a sensory friendly performance is to create a space where people with sensory needs and their families feel comfortable, supported, and free to be themselves.

### **Is this performance for children and adults with sensory needs and their families only? What if my child talks or makes noise during the performance?**

This performance is primarily offered for people with sensory needs and their families. The tickets are available to the general public, however, only at the door.

It is understood that some audience members will make noise during the show. Your child may not be the only one who talks or makes noise during the performance. If the noise gets to be too much, you are welcome to step out of the theatre for a little while so your child can settle, but this is not necessary. Use your own judgment. The actors have had training about what they can expect in terms of noise or movement in the audience, and they are excited and happy to be part of an initiative that helps children and adults with sensory needs experience live theatre.

**If my child cannot sit through the entire show, can we go in and out of the theatre during the performance (or leave the show early)?**

Yes. Our volunteers and ushers will help you find your way out of the theatre. We will have quiet areas in the lobby where your child can go to regulate before returning to the theatre. We will have puzzles, fidgets, and other items available to give your child a chance to relax. Your child can return to the theatre whenever he/she is ready.

You may leave the performance at any time for any reason. We understand that every child has different needs, and that for some children, 15 minutes of a performance can be a fulfilling and meaningful experience, while others will want to enjoy the full show.

**Will the staff at the performance be trained in assisting individuals with autism and other sensory needs?**

Yes. All of the volunteers for this performance are trained to provide support. Feel free to ask them for help or information at any time.

**Is *Little Women* the same as the book or movie?**

*Little Women* follows the same storyline as the both the book and movie with many of the same characters; Jo March, Marmee (Jo's mother), and many more. Although there are some moments of long dialogue (talking) between the characters, there are many songs interspersed throughout to help explain how the characters are feeling. There are also a lot of surprise jokes and funny little moments that will make this enjoyable for people of all ages.

**What can I do to familiarize my child with the story and the experience in advance?**

There is a Social Story on our website (<http://hawkeyetheatre.org/sensory-friendly-performances.html>). This outlines the experience of attending a play and includes photos of the High School Entrance, lobbies, restroom locations, and ushers. Our updated social story is available as a word document so you can edit and add to them as appropriate for your child.

**Are there snacks available at the theatre? Can I bring my own?**

Yes. There will be snacks available for purchase at the lobby concession stand. You are welcome to bring your own snacks and drinks, as well. Snacks and drinks can be consumed in the lobbies or in the theatre itself.

**Are there disabled parking spots available?**

Yes. There are a limited number of designated accessible parking spots outside of the theatre.

**Are service animals welcome?**

Yes. We want to accommodate your child in whatever way is necessary. If you plan to bring a service animal, please make sure to tell the box office when you buy your ticket so we can make sure to take the animal into account when seating other patrons who may have sensitivities.

**Will there be more Sensory-Friendly performances like this?**

Yes! We are hoping to include more sensory-friendly performances in our future seasons.

In New York City, the Theatre Development Fund (TDF) has led the charge to offer Autism-friendly performances of Broadway musicals including *The Lion King*, *Spiderman*, and *Elf*. TDF has been a field leader in making theatre accessible to children with Autism, and were a source of inspiration, support, and guidance as we designed our own Sensory-Friendly Performance. You can learn more about their offerings at <http://www.tdf.org/autism>.