



2019 Student Handbook

Our Core Focus

We bring joy and transformation to people using the principles of improv as a catalyst for creativity and community.

Our Core Values

Cultivate joy, freedom, discovery and childlikeness, while being a safe space to fail gloriously, learn and win.

“Honor everyone, share victories, give good gifts, & make others look good!”

This is perhaps the pinnacle of what Recycled Minds stands for. When you walk into a room of adults and ask, “Where are the artists?” You might have one person raise their hand. When you walk into a room of kids and ask the same question, everyone’s hand raises. You even get that one kid who is so excited to show you their skills that they offer to draw you a T-Rex and make it blue because that’s their favorite color! Whether your crayons were taken from you or they were just lost along the way, we at Recycled Minds, want to give your crayons back! Let’s be kids and play in the freedom of creativity! That being said, it’s important to establish that our classes are a judgement-free zone. We teach not to judge others and especially, not to judge ourselves. Which brings us to our second core value:

Make each other look good.

Improv, in its nature, is a team-based experience. It’s not about how funny you are, how witty, clever or brilliant. Sometimes we actually have to abandon our “world-changing” idea to “yes, and” our scene partner. This goes for performance as well as classroom etiquette. We want every student to feel supported, encouraged and valued.

We are storytellers.

There's many different forms of improv from competitive theater to fully-improvised Shakespearean plays! Recycled Minds chooses to focus on storytelling. As improvisers, we are the writer, director and actor all at the same time, so throughout our courses, we want to train our students how to craft good story including PLATFORM, character development, groundedness, spacework and more. It's rarely about the gimmick, although we love to discover "the game!" Our motto is "Make Me Care." We want to know the "why" of the scene. Why am I seeing this moment in time. We hope to achieve one of two audience responses: (1) Loud, fun laughter or (2) Silent delight, wonder and awe.

How We Approach Improv and Improv Training

- *We believe improv brings joy and life-change. If you're not having fun or growing, we want to know why and present solutions! Don't be afraid to share with your instructor.*
- *We believe that everyone has a unique personality and perspective that can add to the classroom, including you! Honoring your own experience and bring open with other students and the instructor leads to a highly authentic and engaging class.*
- *We play at the top of our intelligence and treat our audience like poets and scholars. Remember, you are in control of the suggestions you choose and the audience will appreciate good choices.*
- *By its nature, improv comedy often blurs the boundaries of what is deemed socially "appropriate" and/or politically correct and is subject to interpretation. Words and/or conduct that offend one person may have no effect on another. While Recycled Minds encourages the free exchange of ideas between students and their instructors, we ask that students and instructors keep to a PG-13 rating (light innuendo and no intentional swearing) in the classroom and in the class performance. That being said, improv breeds vulnerability. If a student is working through something and crosses the line, we don't reprimand, but encourage other choices and for students to exercise good judgment when participating in class activities. (If you feel that certain conduct has overstepped the bounds of what is acceptable in a learning environment, you may report the conduct to the office and the office will investigate the matter and address the issue as needed.)*
- *We never lose. We win or we learn! Failures are just as important as successes and we need both to grow.*
- *We believe students should have clear goals for what they want to accomplish in the class so their instructor can help them achieve what they're after. Sometimes we take a few steps back before one giant leap forward and it's important to have someone to encourage you in those moments.*

- *We want to apply the principles of improv to our lives outside of the classroom as much as inside the classroom. We want to write, act in and direct our own adventures!*

TRAINING POLICIES

This General Information page contains important and pertinent information regarding the Training Center and general policies for the classroom. All students should read this handbook thoroughly and keep it for reference. If you have any questions regarding this information, please contact the office at 208.450.2128 or info@recycledmindsimprov.com. Every effort is made to keep this information up to date. However, policies and procedures are subject to change without notice, at the Training Center's discretion.

ATTENDANCE

*Improv is a team-based learning experience and students rely on each other to get the most out of their class experience. We stress the importance of arriving to class on time and not being late. Missing more than 40 minutes of any class will be counted as an absence. If you miss more than two classes, you will not be allowed to advance to the next class. You may make-up one class per term if there is the same level being offered that term and there is space available. You **MUST** get permission from that class' instructor prior to the make-up class.*

AUDITING/GUESTS

For the sake of all students, visitors are not allowed in class after the first week. Our improv jams and other drop-in classes are a more suitable place to bring someone interested in our regular programs. Exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis and must be reviewed by Sean at 208.450.2128.

DRESS CODE

- *Students must wear close-toed shoes in class (safety and respect for others). If a student is wearing flip flops, we still allow them to play, however, we strongly encourage them to wear shoes next time.*
- *Students must wear clothes that are comfortable to move in and maybe even roll around on the floor in!*
- *For class shows, we ask that students wear their Recycled Minds Comedy shirts.*

HOUSEKEEPING RULES

- **Parking** is available directly in front of the entrance to the Creative Space as well as the lot in the back. There is also free parking on the street and in the dirt lot behind Motivate Fitness.
- **Please clean up** after a class. Put chairs back where they belong, pick up trash and make sure you have all your belongings. If an item is left in class, your instructor will take a picture of it and notify the students via Remind App. It will be left in the space until the student retrieves it, however, Recycled Minds is not responsible for any items left. If the item is not claimed within two weeks, the item may be thrown out.
- **No food or beverage** other than water is allowed in the general classroom space, however, both are allowed in the lounge area. There will be water and cups provided for each class, however, we recommend that people bring their own bottles.
- **Cellphones** should be stowed away and in airplane mode while in class as to not disrupt the class. However, if a student wants to take notes using their phone, they just need to inform the instructor prior to class.
- **Doors will lock** no later than 30 minutes after class. If the students want to hangout past 30 minutes, we encourage them to hangout on the patio area around the corner of the building or go out downtown! We never want to discourage community, but we do want to lock up in good time and continue the party elsewhere.

SAFETY RULES

Here are some general guidelines to keep in mind (this is NOT an exhaustive list of what is and is not acceptable:

- It is extremely difficult to safely simulate hitting, slapping, or other violence in improvisation without stage combat training and practice with the consenting scene partners. Refrain from all actions of this type in class and in your class shows. Never slap or hit anyone ever. In the same vein, do not kiss or touch someone inappropriately.
- We always use spacework to indicate different clothing, cellphones or other external accessories.
- Never remove anyone else's eyeglasses.
- Do not jump on anyone's back, pick them up or force them to do any extraneous movement without explicit consent from them.

- *If you have any prior injuries or physical pain, notify your instructor before the start of class. They will give you a modification of participation in a game if necessary.*

SEEING SHOWS HELPS YOU GROW

Seeing improv shows, whether they are from Recycled Minds or another theater, helps you grow as a student and performer. So, we encourage you to attend shows when you are able. All students get into Recycled Minds shows for just \$5! Indicate that you are buying a student ticket online or mention at the door that you are currently enrolled to get the discount.

REGISTRATION & ADVANCEMENT

Classes are filled on a first come, first serve basis. We highly recommend that students stay in the class they registered for, however, if they have an unexpected scheduling conflict or something of that nature and request to change days, they can if there is still enough space available. Class transfers and additions will only be allowed in the first two weeks of class. Classes that do not meet the minimum enrollment of 8 students may be cancelled. RM reserves the right to change instructors when necessary. Specific instructors are not guaranteed.

Tuition and Cancellation. *Tuition for classes must be paid in full upon registration. A \$30.00 fee will be assessed for returned checks due to insufficient funds or closed accounts. Once a payment has been made, students have until 1 week before the start of class to cancel registration and receive a 100% refund. If a student cancels their registration within less than 1 week prior, 50% of the registration fee will be refunded. Students have the option of rolling over the full registration amount as a credit to a future class. A class credit is good for 12 months from when the class was purchased. Future classes, or space in classes cannot be guaranteed. Early bird registration is a \$50 discount to encourage filling classes early.*

Upon completion of a class, advancement to the next level is not automatic. Each student must be individually evaluated and given a recommendation to advance or repeat the level based on the goals of the current level and their attendance records. If a student misses more than two sessions in a class, they will be asked to repeat the level. Students may do so at a 30% discount off the full tuition. This can be done once per level.

Students who enroll in more than one class in the same term will receive a 20% discount off each additional class. Some restrictions and exceptions may apply. Contact the office for specific requests.

WORK STUDY

Work Study positions are generally given priority to our student volunteers. Volunteer positions come up regularly and are the easiest way for adult students to receive discounted tuition. Volunteers are usually sought to assist with theater operations, show operations or public events. Students must apply to be a volunteer. Have them contact the office for more information. Priority is given to students that are enrolled in Level 2 or above.

STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

ANTI-HARASSMENT POLICY

Harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment, is strictly prohibited. Recycled Minds will not tolerate harassment by anyone including instructors, staff, students, visitors, vendors, contractors and third parties.

*Harassment is defined as unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical or visual, that is so severe or pervasive that it unreasonably interferes with an individual's participation in our programs. Examples of prohibited harassment include, but are not limited to epithets, slurs or negative stereotyping; threatening, intimidating or hostile acts; denigrating jokes directed at an individual based on his or her personal characteristics, which **do not serve any class-related function and/or fall outside the bounds of what is acceptable in the classroom.***

SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Sexual harassment in particular is strictly prohibited. Sexual harassment encompasses a range of conduct from sexual assault (which is also a criminal act) to conduct such as unwanted touching or persistent unwelcome comments, sexual advances, propositions and/or requests for sexual favors, depending on the specific circumstances and context in which the conduct occurs. For example, sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or sexually directed remarks or behavior constitute sexual harassment when (1) submission to or rejection of such conduct is made, explicitly, or implicitly, a basis for an academic decision or professional advancement, or a term or condition of either; or (ii) such conduct is directed against an individual despite its rejection. On the other hand, sexual innuendo or suggestive comments, gestures or jokes made in the course of a class exercise or performance may not be considered impermissible sexual harassment, if they serve an educational and/or artistic purpose.

Please note that due to the unique nature of the improv comedy setting, a person's subjective belief that behavior is offensive, intimidating or hostile does not necessarily render that behavior harassment under this policy. Rather, the behavior must be objectively unreasonable in light of the surrounding circumstances and context. Such expression will not constitute impermissible harassment unless (in addition to satisfying the above definitions) it is targeted at a specific person or persons, is abusive and/or serves no educational purpose.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Any student or instructor who experiences or witnesses harassment of any kind, including sexual harassment, whether from a fellow student or faculty member, should feel free to discuss the problem with the owners, Sean and Colleen Hancock, and if desired, request that they speak informally to the person complained about. No one at Recycled Minds - whether an instructor or student - may reprimand, retaliate or discriminate against an individual for raising a concern, making a complaint and/or participating in an investigation under this policy. Any individual who believes that he or she has been retaliated against in any manner should report the matter directly to Sean Hancock.

All concerns and complaints will be treated with confidentiality to the extent practicable without compromising the investigation and/or resolution of the matter, and will be investigated thoroughly and promptly. Where possible, Recycled Minds will attempt to resolve the issue informally (for example, by speaking to the alleged harasser and/or counseling the parties). However, this does not preclude more formal corrective or disciplinary action.

CONSENSUAL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN INSTRUCTORS AND STUDENTS

It is against Recycled Minds' policy for students and instructors to enter and/or engage in romantic and/or sexual relationships with one another while the instructor is teaching the student in a class and/or supervising the student's work at Recycled Minds. Consensual romantic and/or sexual relationships between instructors and students not enrolled in a class the instructor is teaching, while not forbidden, generally are considered unwise and inappropriate. Please note that even where both parties have consented at the outset to a romantic and/or sexual involvement, such consent does not preclude a subsequent charge of sexual harassment against the instructor.

SEXUAL ASSAULT POLICY

Sexual assault is a criminal act that violates the standards of our community and is unacceptable at Recycled Minds. Recycled Minds' Sexual Assault policy applies to students, instructors, staff, and visitors, as well as vendors, contractors and third parties.

Sexual assault is defined as:

- *Any intentional or knowing touching or fondling by an individual, either directly or through the clothing, of the genitals, breasts, thighs, or buttocks of the victim*
- *without the consent of the victim;*
- *Touching or fondling of an individual by the victim when the victim is forced to do so against his or her will; or*
- *Any non-consensual acts involving sexual penetration of the sex organs, anus, or mouth.*
- *Use of alcohol or drugs may impair an individual's capacity to consent freely and may render an individual incapable of giving consent.*

REPORTING PROCEDURE

Any student who believes he or she has been sexually assaulted, whether by a fellow student, faculty member or visitor, should report the incident to Sean or Colleen Hancock. The student is also encouraged to report the incident to the police and seek medical care as soon as possible. No one at Recycled Minds – whether an instructor or student – may reprimand, retaliate or discriminate against an individual for raising a concern, making a complaint and/or participating in an investigation under this policy. Any individual who believes that he or she has been retaliated against in any manner should report the matter to Sean or Colleen Hancock.

All concerns and complaints will be treated with confidentiality to the extent practicable without compromising the investigation and/or resolution of the matter, and will be investigated thoroughly and promptly. Depending on the severity of the incident and the individuals involved, Recycled Minds may pursue the matter through internal disciplinary procedures without the cooperation of the victim. Under such circumstances, Recycled Minds will inform the victim of its decision to proceed in this manner.

VIOLENCE

Recycled Minds maintains a zero tolerance policy for violence. Acts or threats of physical violence which involve or affect Recycled Minds' instructors, students and staff or which occur on

Recycled Minds' property and its vendors' property, will not be tolerated. Examples of prohibited threats or acts of violence include, but are not limited to, the following:

- *Hitting or shoving an individual*
- *Physically injuring another individual*
- *Threatening an individual or his/her family, friends, or property with harm, or otherwise engaging in behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury in another person*
- *Intentional destruction or threatening to destruct Recycled Minds' and/or their vendors' property*
- *Making/sending harassing or threatening phone calls, text messages, and emails*
- *Harassing surveillance or stalking*
- *Unauthorized possession or use of firearms or weapons*
- *Every student is encouraged to report incidents of threats or acts of physical violence of which he/she is aware. The report should be made to Sean or Colleen Hancock. Please note that this policy does not apply to fictitious "threats" or simulated "acts" of violence made in the course of your work at Recycled Minds.*

WEAPONS

Recycled Minds prohibits all persons who enter Recycled Minds' and their vendors' property from carrying a handgun, firearm, knife, explosive, or other prohibited weapon of any kind regardless of whether the person is licensed to carry the weapon or not.

The only exception to this policy will be police officers, security guards or other persons who have been given written consent by Recycled Minds and/or are permitted by law to carry a weapon on the property.

Violation of this policy is grounds for discipline, including immediate dismissal.

DRUG AND ALCOHOL POLICY

The use, sale, manufacture, cultivation, distribution, dispensation, possession of illegal drugs or other unauthorized or controlled substances while on Recycled Minds' and their vendors' property, or while otherwise engaged in Recycled Minds activities, is strictly prohibited. The term "controlled substances" is defined as any substances that are illegal or controlled by federal and/or state law, including lawful substances (such as prescription drugs) which have been improperly obtained and/or used in violation of their lawful prescription.

Students are prohibited from having any such illegal or unauthorized controlled substances in their systems while attending class and/or engaged in Recycled Minds activities. Outside alcohol consumption or illegal drug activity that impacts a student's class work or participation in Recycled Minds activities and/or threatens the reputation of Recycled Minds will not be tolerated.

The only exception to this policy applies with respect to alcoholic beverages served at approved social or business related functions or meetings, provided that the student consumes alcohol responsibly and in moderation and does not become intoxicated or otherwise impaired. Alcohol consumption by Recycled Minds employees, contractors, volunteers, students or guests who are under the age of 21 is strictly prohibited.

Students or Instructors who violate Recycled Minds' Drug and Alcohol policy may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including permanent expulsion from Recycled Minds' classes and/or referral for prosecution of criminal violations.

OPEN DOOR POLICY

Recycled Minds is committed to providing a safe, productive and fun educational environment for all students and instructors. Part of this commitment is encouraging an open and frank atmosphere in which any problem, concern or question can be addressed and discussed.

Students who have a question, problem, suggestion and/or complaint should feel free to discuss the issue with Sean or Colleen Hancock. There will be no retaliation for raising a concern under this policy. Any issues raised or discussions held pursuant to Recycled Minds' Open Door Policy will be treated with confidentiality unless the student agrees to include others in the discussion or an investigation into the matter is warranted, in which case, confidentiality will be maintained to the extent practicable without compromising the investigation.

Please note that Recycled Minds' Open Door policy does not apply to complaints of harassment or sexual assault. Students who wish to report an incident of harassment or sexual assault must follow the complaint procedures set forth in Recycled Minds' Anti-Harassment and Sexual Assault policies.

DISCIPLINE POLICY

Immediate Dismissal or Expulsion

If at any point during class, the instructor feels that a student is engaging in behavior which is threatening, dangerous and/or highly disruptive to the classroom ensemble, the instructor may require that the student leave the classroom for the remainder of that day's class. Students

dismissed from class in this manner may not return to their regular class until they have spoken with someone from the Recycled Minds office. Behavior which would result in immediate dismissal includes, but is not limited to threats or acts of violence, inebriation and/or severe impairment due to use of drugs and/or other controlled substances, violation of the Anti-Harassment and/or Civility policies or other actions which are disruptive to the work of the class, in the discretion of Recycled Minds. If behavior is deemed excessively disruptive or dangerous to the Recycled Minds environment, Recycled Minds reserves the right to permanently expel a student from the program as well as the extended Recycled Minds property.

Warnings

Students who display behavior which an instructor deems to be detrimental to the progress of their ensemble may be issued a warning. The instructor gives the warning verbally and then notifies the Recycled Minds office. If a student receives more than one warning for similar issues, Recycled Minds will be notified and appropriate action will be taken. Depending on the circumstances, students may be required to transfer classes, repeat a term, take a leave of absence from Recycled Minds or to leave Recycled Minds permanently. Examples of conduct considered detrimental to the progress of the ensemble include, but are not limited to, excessive lateness, inappropriate classroom behavior (including being under the influence of drugs and/or other controlled substances), harassment of another student or Recycled Minds' employee or contractor, and/or inability to keep up with class progress.

If any of the information above is unclear or you have questions, please contact Sean or Colleen Hancock at 208.450.2128 or email the office at info@recycledmindsimprov.com.