

# GUIDANCE FOR UNIFORM/COSTUME FITTINGS

When conducting uniform or dance costume fittings for performers, it's essential to establish clear boundaries and follow best practices to protect performers and ensure a safe, respectful environment. Additionally, the fitting time is where performers should feel empowered and voice what they need to be successful comfortably and confidently. This guide outlines best practices for safe uniform and costume fittings, designed to protect the physical and emotional well-being of all participants while supporting the highest standards of professionalism and care.

## PREPARE AND COMMUNICATE EXPECTATIONS

**Written Policies:** Have a policy outlining procedures for fittings, including who is allowed to conduct them and how they are done. Share this policy with parents of minor participants, participants, and staff.

**Parental Involvement:** Notify parents or guardians of minor participants with the fitting dates and encourage them to be present if possible. Provide details about the process.

**Consent:** Obtain written consent from parents/guardians for minor participants for the fittings, explicitly outlining the procedures.

## ENSURE TRANSPARENCY

**Open Spaces:** Conduct fittings in an open, visible, and supervised area, not in private or isolated spaces. Dressing or changing areas should be private for all individuals regardless of comfort level.

Private changing areas will eliminate the most obvious opportunities for potentially harmful behaviors to a person's mental and physical health and safety.

**Two-Adult Rule:**

Always have at least two adults present during fittings. Ideally, one of these adults should be the same gender as the performer.

**Participant's Choice:**

Allow minor participants to have a parent, guardian, or trusted individual accompany them if they choose.



## CREATE A SAFE AND RESPECTFUL ATMOSPHERE

**Body Positivity:** Use positive, respectful language about body sizes and shapes to avoid making performers feel uncomfortable or self-conscious. Additionally, don't downplay the feelings of any performer verbalizing body image issues.

**Gender Affirmation:** Obtain the performer's preferred pronouns before the fitting starts. Be aware of gender bias in yourself and all participants. Comments to avoid include the ability for a person to "pass" as their gender identity, implying that being cisgender is more favorable, or comments about the difficulty of costuming the individual because of their gender identity.

## ESTABLISH BOUNDARIES FOR PHYSICAL CONTACT

**Minimal Contact:** Limit physical contact to only what is absolutely necessary for the fitting, such as adjusting a hem or checking a waistline.

**Verbal Cues:** Always explain what you are doing before making any adjustments (e.g., "I'm going to measure the inseam now. Can you stand still for a moment?"). Seek verbal agreement from the performer before proceeding.

**Self-Adjustment Option:** Instruct the performers to make adjustments themselves whenever possible (e.g., "Can you pull the waistband up a little higher?").

## USE PROPER TOOLS

**Measuring Over Clothing:** Use measurements taken over regular clothes to reduce direct contact. For costumes requiring close fits, consider fitting over thin, non-revealing undergarments or dancewear.

**Fit Kits:** Provide modesty covers or fitting garments like bodysuits, tank tops, or leggings for minors to wear during fittings.

## DOCUMENTATION AND FEEDBACK

**Records:** Keep records of fittings, including dates, times, who was present, and what adjustments were made. Reference photos can be taken for the purpose of the production but be sure the participant is comfortable with having their photo taken and if they are a minor be sure to obtain parental consent and encourage the parent to attend the fitting.

**Feedback Channel:** Provide a clear way for parents or participants to report any concerns or discomfort without fear of retaliation.

Adhering to these practices ensures the safety and comfort of performers and can protect the organization and staff from potential misunderstandings or allegations.

