

Teaching Artist Toolkit

A COMPREHENSIVE GUIDE FOR TEACHING ARTISTS THROUGHOUT WNY



Arts for Learning WNY's mission is to inspire, expand learning,
and strengthen our community through engagement with the arts.

artsforlearningwny.org

ARTS FOR LEARNING WNY HAS DEVELOPED THIS COMPREHENSIVE TEACHING ARTIST TOOL KIT TO PROVIDE ARTISTS WITH BEST-IN-CLASS PRACTICES FOR FACILITATING ARTS INTEGRATED LEARNING PROGRAMS. AS THE LEADING ARTS EDUCATION ORGANIZATION IN WNY, WE CONTINUALLY SEEK INNOVATIVE, EQUITABLE, AND INCLUSIVE WAYS TO INFUSE THE ARTS INTO LEARNING AND EMPOWER TEACHING ARTISTS TO PROVIDE CREATIVE ARTS INTEGRATED EXPERIENCES. WHILE THIS TOOL KIT IS DESIGNED WITH OUR ROSTER ARTISTS IN MIND, ANY TEACHING ARTIST IN THE REGION IS WELCOME TO USE THIS RESOURCE TO STAY INFORMED AND CONTINUALLY EVOLVE PROGRAM OFFERINGS TO ENSURE THEY ARE MEETING THE NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND EDUCATORS.



Affiliated with the national Young Audiences Arts for Learning network

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Who We Are

For more than 60 years, Arts for Learning has been the leading arts education organization in WNY seeking innovative, equitable and inclusive ways to infuse arts into learning.

We are committed to empowering local artists to teach and inspire young people and educators through new and meaningful creative arts experiences. By serving as a reliable connector between artists and organizations and providing high quality education, we seamlessly fill a need to integrate arts into the classroom. Arts for Learning WNY is here to help you do what you do best even better. We provide support with logistics, marketing, optional professional development, financial processes, community-building, and work opportunities.

WE'RE THE CONNECTION

Schools face many challenges caused by the narrowing of the curriculum. This leaves thousands of students without exposure to arts and the benefits of creative learning. We are the conduit between Teaching Artists and children in schools, helping create a love of learning, and creative and problem-solving skills. Research shows that all children – and particularly children at risk of academic failure – are more likely to thrive in schools that make time for the arts and utilize arts integration, the practice of using the arts to teach classroom subjects.

ENHANCING STUDENT EDUCATION

We've developed and delivered education programs in all artistic disciplines – music, dance, theater, literary, visual, and multimedia arts – to more than 3 million children and families in the region.

The professional Teaching Artists on our roster engage young people in creative learning opportunities in all 8 counties of Western New York. We provide critical arts integrated learning, an essential key in the development of a young person.

EMPOWERMENT AND INSPIRATION

We are committed to empowering local artists to teach and inspire young people and educators through new and meaningful creative arts experiences. Our roster of Teaching Artists engage youth in music, dance, theatre, media, visual, and literary arts – all areas that have historically been removed from school curriculum due to budgetary constraints. These arts integrated programs cultivate children's imaginations to help develop physical, emotional, and academic capabilities for a foundation of lifelong success.

Teaching Artists*

- ▶ Exist at the intersection of the arts and education
- ▶ Demonstrate a depth of knowledge in their art form
- ▶ Are engaged in sustained creative exploration
- ▶ Teach in, through, and about the arts
- ▶ Work in a variety of environments that serve the needs of local communities
- ▶ Represent diverse backgrounds and experiences



HOW IT WORKS

Arts for Learning enlists artists from the community to join the roster of Teaching Artists as independent contractors. Once contracted as a Teaching Artist, each individual sets their own pay rate and is responsible for including any material costs in that pay rate. Arts for Learning staff will work with the Teaching Artist to advise on an equitable rate of pay if requested.

The program team at Arts for Learning will work with Teaching Artists to advertise, schedule, and coordinate all logistics between the facilitator and school or community partner. Our team will also administer evaluation tools to help ensure that programs are meeting the needs of the students, teachers, and Teaching Artist.

In many instances, Arts for Learning can provide free programs to schools while still paying our artists a thriving wage through the generous support of local foundations and elected officials. This allows for more sustainable booking opportunities for our artists to increase their impact on youth in the community.

*Source: [kennedy-center.org/education](https://www.kennedy-center.org/education)

Benefits of Becoming an Arts for Learning Teaching Artist

Arts for Learning believes in the transformative power of the arts. Guided by our mission – to inspire, expand learning, and strengthen our community through engagement with the arts – we serve as a reliable connector between artists and organizations by offering logistical and administrative support with school contracts, ongoing professional development, and a network of creative peers for support.

The Arts for Learning Artist Roster is composed of individual and ensemble teaching artists who sign a contract to operate as independent contractors with Arts for Learning. Our roster artists are connected to residency, workshop, and performance opportunities all year with our staff to support them every step of the way.

COMMUNITY

- **Arts for Learning roster artists are a part of a respected community of professional teaching artists,** a known brand for excellence in arts education.
- **The Arts for Learning staff are hard-working, experienced, creative professionals** dedicated to helping you succeed.
- **Arts for Learning WNY is part of the Young Audiences Arts for Learning network – the nation’s largest arts-in-education community,** with 29 sister organizations spanning the country that share ideas and resources, to which you also have access.

MARKETING

- **You and your programs are featured on our website.**
- **We frequently act as a trusted concierge to schools** who contact us looking for guidance around arts education resources
- **We help schools turn their goals into teaching artist recommendations, connecting them with you.** Our team is out in the field visiting schools and actively promoting you and your programs across the region.
- **Your work with Arts for Learning is regularly featured on our social media accounts, blog, and in our newsletters.**
- **We send e-newsletters to thousands of local educators and community members,** spotlighting you and our teaching artist roster.

PROGRAM FUNDING

- **The Arts for Learning team secures funding for free and reduced-cost programming for schools**, resulting in more paid work for Arts for Learning roster artists at no or low cost to the schools and students who need additional support.
- **Arts for Learning identifies and facilitates special opportunities** for collaborations between teaching artists and educators.
- **Arts for Learning offers additional work opportunities** in community settings outside of schools.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- **You have exclusive access to professional development opportunities and workshops** provided by Arts for Learning staff and guest experts from the community, as well as nationally recognized organizations.
- **You have priority and subsidized access to the Arts for Learning Master Teaching Artist Training Program**, our signature professional development series.
- **Arts for Learning staff is available to observe your work** in the classroom and offer feedback and advice.
- **Arts for Learning Teaching Artists learn from each other** through formal and informal networking and mentorship relationships.

LOGISTICS

- **Arts for Learning staff are available to provide support** in planning and working with schools.
- **We help you navigate school processes and culture.**
- **Arts for Learning staff help resolve problems** or miscommunications that can arise with schools.
- **Arts for Learning covers the expense and logistics of background checks** that are required by school partners.

FINANCES

- **You receive timely payment on a predictable schedule** without having to follow up with schools or districts yourself.
- **Your chosen pricing is backed by the Arts for Learning organization.**
- **You receive one 1099 tax form from us each year**, reducing paperwork.

This outline of benefits has been adopted from Young Audiences of Oregon and SW Washington.

What Is Arts Integration?

We recognize the Kennedy Center's definition of Arts Integration:

Arts Integration is an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both.



In Arts Integrated Curriculum, the arts become the approach to teaching and the vehicle for learning.

Students meet dual learning objectives when they engage in the creative process to explore connections between an art form and another subject area to gain greater understanding of both. For example, students meet objectives in theater (characterization, stage composition, action, expression) and in social studies. The experience is mutually reinforcing – creating a dramatization provides an authentic context for students to learn more about the social studies content and, as students delve deeper into the social studies content, their growing understanding impacts their dramatizations.

For Arts Integrated Curriculum to result in deep student understanding in both the art form and the other curriculum area, it requires that teachers engage in professional development to learn about arts standards and how to connect the arts to the curriculum they teach.

Resources: <https://www.kennedy-center.org/education>

Cultural Representation and Appropriation Policy

Arts for Learning WNY

Updated: 4/13/2022

Developed by: Arts for Learning Affiliate – Arts Now New Jersey; Joseph Ahmed, Artist Services and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access Manager
Collaboration and edits by: Arts for Learning's Arts United Working Group

ARTS FOR LEARNING WNY'S JUSTICE AND EQUITY COMMITMENT

The board, staff, and Teaching Artist community of Arts for Learning believe in the power of the arts to engage and empower individuals and communities. By participating in versatile and rich arts education, we believe students will creatively transform their schools, neighborhoods, and beyond. Art can be an agent of personal and social liberation, and we believe this is essential to our mission to inspire people and expand their learning through the arts.

We have a responsibility to continuously work to dismantle the barriers to the arts and arts education in our community. The impact of arts in education is especially significant for communities that often do not have equitable opportunities for discovery, exploration, and self-empowerment through the arts.

We recognize historical and current injustices and systems of oppression – both in society at large and within the fields of education, especially arts education – that have created opportunity gaps we must eradicate. We are committed to engaging in the hard work necessary to advance Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Innovation (JEDI) within our organization and across the arts and education communities. We seek to foster an atmosphere of inclusivity, empathy, and awareness that allows the community to feel safe and valued in each aspect of our work. We strive to use JEDI principles as a central point in our decision-making and program-building across the spectrum, working to enact change from the classroom to the boardroom and all spaces between!

WHAT IS CULTURAL APPROPRIATION?

“Taking intellectual property, traditional knowledge, cultural expressions, or artifacts from someone else’s culture without permission. This can include unauthorized use of another culture’s dance, dress, music, language, folklore, cuisine, traditional medicine, religious symbols, etc. It’s most likely to be harmful when the source community is a minority group that has been oppressed or exploited in other ways or when the object of appropriation is particularly sensitive, e.g., sacred objects.”

SUSAN SCAFIDI, Author of *Who Owns Culture? Appropriation and Authenticity in American Law*

Arts for Learning defines cultural appropriation in accordance with the above definition.

Understanding that whether an artist has “permission” can be difficult to establish, so Arts for Learning also investigates whether a given element of a program has implicit/explicit roots in racism, stereotype, or misinformation, or has been historically white-washed and separated from its roots in BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and people of color) communities.

We find that cultural appropriation and related issues of inaccurate and harmful cultural representation can be present in, but not limited to, the following elements:

- Communication of inaccurate or white-washed historical facts.
- Use of “general” accents, costuming, and language which necessarily draw upon stereotypes in representing people, traditions, and dress outside of the artist’s direct cultural experience, particularly when a historically marginalized group is portrayed by an artist with a less marginalized identity.
- Inclusion of program elements with roots in racist ideology, even when those roots are not widely known to modern audiences.
- Separating an artform founded in BIPOC communities and culture from its historic roots through omission or revision of context and/or failure to communicate the artist’s background and connection to the original context.

OUR STANCE

Arts for Learning believes that arts education experiences are most effective when delivered from a place of cultural authenticity and transparency.

To this end, Arts for Learning is dedicated to maintaining teaching artists with deep connections to their artforms, programs that provide accurate historical and cultural context, and internal processes that continually review and communicate the accuracy and authenticity of language, images, and programming. Arts for Learning acknowledges that cultural appropriation is most likely present where there is historic oppression of a marginalized culture. We will review all services with the understanding that artforms created by people of color are uniquely susceptible to being stripped of their original context and meaning.

Questions to ask:

- How is the artist sharing the history and cultural context of the artform, practice, or artifact being presented?
- Is the artist’s cultural background aligned with the cultural origin of what is being presented?
- What is the artist’s personal relationship, training background, and understanding of the artform, practice, or artifact? How is the artist telling the story of that relationship in the program?
- Is there a historical power imbalance between the artist’s racial and cultural background and that of the people from whom the artform, practice or artifact is sourced?
- Has the permission or consultation of experts from the cultural group on display been sought?
- Were they compensated for their expertise, and is there an ongoing economic relationship?

Best practices and contingencies:

All teaching artists should share their connection with their artform. For culturally specific programs where the indigenous culture of the artform differs from the artists' own background, this is especially important. Does the artist have a deep relationship to the culture in question, and the authority to speak as an expert in it?

- If an artist is an expert in an artform but does not share that connection, or the artform's original cultural context in the program, Arts for Learning staff will guide the artist in how to do so.
- If an artist is NOT an expert in an artform that differs from the artist's cultural background, Arts for Learning staff will point the artist toward a different programmatic choice or consider no longer presenting the program.
- In the event of more egregious racial or cultural presentations of stereotypes and offensive imagery (e.g., blackface) Arts for Learning reserves the right to immediately cancel any upcoming bookings of the program and remove the program from active presentation until the issues are addressed.

Some signs of an artist practicing positive cultural representation:

- Clear communication of personal and cultural connection, permission, and ownership.
- Accurate historical context given; respectful language used.
- Willingness to non-defensively engage in critique and adjustment of content.
- Strong relationships with members of the cultural group being represented and with the artforms, practices, or artifacts on display.
- Past or ongoing payment or sharing of proceeds with the group being represented.
- Artists sharing expertise from their own cultural, racial, and/or national backgrounds are also for the most part considered by Arts for Learning to be in the space of positive cultural representation.

Marketing:

As much as is possible in each given marketing medium, Arts for Learning will present clear language and images that reflect both the artform being presented and the story, expertise, and identity of the individuals presenting it.

- Marketing images will be up to date and feature depictions of the program that mirror what the school will see. (e.g., a program on Latinx musical traditions will not have a photo of three Latinx performers when the actual makeup of a group performing in a school might be two white and one Latinx performer.)
- Language in program and artist descriptions will make clear the relationship of the artist to the artform. If an artist has studied deeply in a culturally specific artform that is not their own, Arts for Learning will communicate that history. Arts for Learning will avoid tacitly implying in its language that a performer is of the same cultural background as the origin of their artform when this is not the case.
- Language will be examined to avoid exoticizing phrasing when describing programs highlighting non-White cultures such as "exotic" and "colorful."

Recruitment:

Arts for Learning will prioritize connecting with expert teaching artists who share the same cultural background as the artform they are presenting. If this is not possible, Arts for Learning will diligently investigate the artist's expertise in the artform and their ability to share authentic cultural context during a program. If Arts for Learning is not satisfied in either the artist's expertise or ability to communicate context, they will not pursue adding the artist to the roster.

Professional Learning:

- Arts for Learning will make available professional learning opportunities to artists, whether en masse or in focused one-on-one sessions, to continue to educate about how to avoid cultural appropriation and seek authenticity in programming.
- Arts for Learning staff will continue, with the help of the staff JEDII Task Force, to redefine and hone its understanding of how cultural appropriation can appear in Arts for Learning's programs. Best practices are periodically examined and redefined.

Sources:

Thoughtco.com – A Guide to Understanding and Avoiding Cultural Appropriation

National Art Education Association – Position Statement on Use of Imagery, Cultural Appropriation and Socially Just Practices

A main source for this document was the Anti-Oppression Resource and Training Alliance (AORTA's) worksheet on cultural appropriation. This document has since been removed from public access.



Using Inclusive and Equitable Language

Arts for Learning WNY encourages Teaching Artists to always demonstrate inclusive and equitable language practices while engaging with students and the public. Through partnership with local and national experts in racial equity and inclusion practices, Arts for Learning has developed strategies for improving inclusive language practices and a list of commonly used terms to avoid when working with students.

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Inner city▶ Poverty-stricken▶ Minority▶ At risk▶ Handicapped | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ Disabled▶ Autistic▶ “Boys and Girls” when addressing the classroom▶ Any gender coded word (e.g., rockstar, ninja, guru etc.) |
|--|---|

Every term above can easily be replaced with “students,” “kids,” or the individual’s unique, given name!

WHY SHOULD I AVOID THESE TERMS OR PHRASES?

Terms or descriptions that are commonly used for students with varied economic backgrounds put the onus of those challenges on the student being described, not the systems put in place that negatively impact that individual or group of students. For example, “at risk” has historically been used to describe students that are “at risk of dropping out of school” or “at risk of living in poverty,” etc. This terminology disregards the systemic policies put in place that impact students’ opportunities for success and implies that the student is “at risk” because of internal factors instead of correctly identifying numerous external factors imposing additional challenges for that student.

Similarly, when describing a student with differentiated abilities, whether learning or physical, it is important to recognize that the student should not be defined by their diagnosis. It is important to always use person first language. A great example of this is the term “autistic.” Instead of saying “Ken is autistic,” the proper phrasing would be “Ken has autism.” The only exception to this rule of person first language is if an individual with a diagnosis specifically asks you not to use person first language. For example, if Ken directly asks you to refer to him as autistic then it is OK to refer to him in that way. However, you must continue to use person first language with other individuals that have not made a direct request about how to refer to them individually. Person first language is the legal standard for describing a person with differentiated abilities.

WHERE SHOULD YOU LOOK TO INCLUDE INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE PRACTICES?

- ▶ Artist biography
- ▶ Program descriptions
- ▶ Spoken words during program facilitation
- ▶ ALWAYS!

Belonging Practices

At Arts for Learning WNY, we believe it is critical to foster a sense of belonging in every classroom a Teaching Artist enters. Building a sense of belonging in the classroom is proven to lead to high academic engagement and overall student well-being. In order to promote diversity and inclusion to build a culture of belonging, Arts for Learning, in conjunction with Gigi Gilliard Development, has created this rubric for Teaching Artists to use as a framework for building belonging. Teaching Artists are strongly encouraged to incorporate the techniques in this rubric into each of their lesson plans.

Elevating Belonging Rubric

| | Diversity | Inclusion | Building Belonging | You as Teaching Artists |
|------------|---|--|--|---|
| SCENARIO | How to ensure that students feel celebrated for their unique identities? | How can we use the ACTION of inclusive behavior to pull students “in”? | How can you regulate, spot, and course correct microaggressions in your classroom? | Do YOU feel as if YOU belong? |
| TECHNIQUES | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Referring to students by their unique names. Taking the time to learn the correct pronunciation of their names. Use small group dynamics as much as possible to create small “circles of trust” of vulnerability. Re-direct comments or students who are harsh but encourage different ideas and difference of opinion. How can you use your unique art form or your unique curriculum to celebrate or encourage cultural expression? Can assignments be crafted that call on students’ experiences that they can safely share? Conducting classroom exercises in a way that considers non-neuro normative learning styles. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> DISCOURAGE (prohibit if possible) gossip or talking about others in any assignment or learning circumstance. Encourage a sense of community among the students where they feel safe to interact with others as much as they do with the TA. This can happen by overtly letting students know that they are safe to speak and underscoring that there will be no punishment or risk. Encourage sharing relevant personal stories and examples as much as possible (to the extent that a student feels comfortable to do so). Invite every student to speak or use their voice as much as possible relative to the curriculum. Create “moments of connection” between students as much as possible. Use techniques like “rallying conversation” to spark and ignite engagement between students. The goal is to build community.² | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Be (or become) aware of my own biases – what are they? How do they show up in my thoughts, my conversations, and in my teaching style? Fight any instances of exclusion by maintaining a high state of alertness. Is any child left out or excluded in any way? Use language to make each student feel “seen” and essential. When physically engaging, use body language to lean in, create safety, and make it “OK” for each student to show up as themselves, learn, and challenge what they hear. Conduct classroom exercises in such a way that considers social and religious concerns (e.g., not all students can sing happy birthday, consider styles of dress, etc.). | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Do YOU feel seen by other artists and other staff members? Do YOU feel safe to learn, contribute, or challenge the status quo? Look for opportunities (as a dynamic group of independent contractors) to build trust and comfort when (and as much) as you can. Trust and comfort are built with time and effort. Create opportunities for team feedback. Openness about learning dynamics can build vulnerability and deepen trust between teaching artists. |

Completing Your Program Outline

Arts for Learning uses the following template to review new programs and to market its annual offerings online and in printed materials. All new programs must be submitted using the following format to be considered for inclusion on the roster. Approved programs will be listed on the Arts for Learning website, and the corresponding program outline will be available for download as a PDF for teachers and administrators to access.

CONNECTING TO NYS EDUCATION DEPARTMENT LEARNING STANDARDS:

All programs on the Arts for Learning roster must connect to at least 1 NYS Arts Standard. When considering new programs, priority will be given to programs that connected to both arts and one other educational area (e.g., STEM, Social Studies, ELA, Physical Education). Programs should not connect to more than 2-3 standards to meaningfully connect to curriculum. By clearly indicating curriculum ties for each program, Arts for Learning ensures that teachers and administrators can easily find a program that fits their needs, and can justify the time and budget spent on bringing an Arts for Learning teaching artist into their classroom.

NYS Education Department Standards and Instructional Resources by subject:

<http://www.nysed.gov/curriculum-instruction>

ELA Next Generation Standards

[PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12](#)

[Next Generation Mathematics Learning Standards](#)

NYS Learning Standards for the Arts

[Dance](#)

[Media Arts](#)

[Music](#)

[Theater](#)

[Visual Arts](#)

[Social Studies](#)

Science Standards

[PK-2, 3-5, 6-8, 9-12](#)

[Physical Education Standards](#)

[Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks](#)

WRITING YOUR ARTIST BIO

This is a biography of you as an artist, covering career highlights, education, and a summary of your work and major accomplishments.

Why do we need it?

Teachers, administrators, and funders will all see your artist bio. Grants often ask for artist bios to be included in requests for funding. Think about what your bio is telling our audience, and what kind of message you would like to share about your work.

PROGRAM

Program Name Here



ARTIST NAME

Firstname Lastname

AVAILABLE FORMATS

- ☐ Performance
- ☐ Single Workshop
- ☐ Multi-Session
Residency Workshop

GRADE LEVELS

- ☐ Pre-K
- ☐ K – 2nd
- ☐ 3rd – 5th
- ☐ 6th – 8th
- ☐ 9th – 12th

MAX NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

In-Person: XX
Virtual: XX

PROGRAM LENGTH

X minutes

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

CURRICULUM STANDARDS

This program supports these NYS or Next Generation Learning Standards:

Contact Arts for Learning WNY for more information.
(716) 881-0917 | info@artsforlearningwny.org

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EDUCATIONAL OBJECTIVES

LOGISTICS/EQUIPMENT

VOCABULARY

POST-PROGRAM ACTIVITIES & RESOURCES

ARTIST BIO

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Personal Safety and Liability

Your safety, as well as that of the students, is our paramount priority. Don't do anything that puts you or a participant at risk. As an independent contractor, safety is your responsibility. In order to avoid any problems, please adhere to the following guidelines.

- ▶ **When visiting a school, report to the office at least 20 minutes prior to the start of the program.**
If there is a sign-in log, please register. If you are offered a "visitor badge," wear it. Plan to arrive early to give yourself time to sign in and set up.
- ▶ **Never be alone with a student.**
- ▶ **Never leave students unattended.**
- ▶ **Do not remove a student from a classroom or away from other adults and discipline them yourself.**
- ▶ **Leave all disciplinary measures to the designated room authority.** If you are having a problem with a student, ask the teacher/counselor/parent to assume responsibility.
- ▶ **Never allow students to ride in your car.**
- ▶ **Be cautious when touching students.** It is advisable to restrict touching to the hands and upper back. Some students may have adverse reaction to contact.
- ▶ **Do not lift students.**
- ▶ **Do not use the student restrooms.** Use the teachers' facilities.
- ▶ **If you observe what you consider to be inappropriate behavior by an adult on site, please report the incident to Arts for Learning staff as soon as possible.** Do not report the incident to the school/site staff unless a student is in imminent danger.
- ▶ **In case of fire drill, follow the school's instructions,** then adapt your program to the remainder of the time allotted.
- ▶ **Let the designated room authority handle all medical emergencies within a classroom.**
- ▶ **Many schools have emergency codes to alert teachers when there is potential danger on campus.**
Please observe all codes and follow the site staffs' directions.
- ▶ **Leave your valuables at home.**
- ▶ **Do not bring your own children to an Arts for Learning program you are teaching.**
- ▶ **Keep your eyes open and remain alert to your environment.**
- ▶ **Always notify Arts for Learning staff of any concerns that may arise.**