



Play On Philly

**Student and Family Handbook
Summer 2026**

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About Play on Philly

Mission

Play On Philly provides underserved children in Philadelphia a transformative music education experience that develops and inspires the behaviors and personal skills needed for a successful life.

Vision

A Philadelphia where children and youth aspire to achieve success, realize their potential for growth, and are instruments of change in our city.

Values

- Equity and Inclusion
- Passion and Excellence
- Commitment and Accountability
- Community

History

Play On Philly (POP) was originally inspired by Venezuela's hugely successful El Sistema program that believes in equal access to music education as a social preparedness tool. Since its 1975 founding, El Sistema has served over one million youth in free orchestra programs across the country, proving that music education has a positive impact on academic and social skills, regardless of income level. Deeply inspired by El Sistema, Curtis Institute of Music graduate Stanford Thompson brought this unique and proven approach to underserved youth in Philadelphia in 2011 to help encourage successful students, citizens, and musicians.

Thompson founded POP with two guiding principles:

- regardless of economic circumstance, every student deserves access to music education
- music education is a powerful tool to change lives and uplift communities

Commitment to Cultural Equity and Anti-Racism

We are Play On Philly, an inclusive and equitable organization where all staff and stakeholders are valued and respected. Our community includes young musicians, their families, Teaching Artists, administrators, Board members, and volunteers, whatever their gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, sexual orientation or identity, education, or disability. We prioritize equity, acceptance, and empowerment as core tenets of our work. We commit to providing equal supports and opportunities and facilitating meaningful participation in all programs and across the organization. We respect and value diverse life experiences and heritage and how that impacts learning. We are committed to maintaining a safe learning environment in which our participants find unconditional positive regard and honoring of their contributions to the Play On Philly musical community.

We are committed to recognizing the ways in which racism, devaluation, marginalization, and disenfranchisement of Philadelphia's communities has created the context in which we do our work. We are committed to doing our part to dismantle these systems toward the goal of equity and we commit to modeling anti-racist principles for the entire nonprofit arts and education sector.

Play On Philly commits to:

- Increase accountability and intention to our role and responsibility in dismantling the historic and present realities of racism affecting the community we serve.
- See diversity, inclusion, and equity as mission-critical, to ensure the well-being of our participant families, staff, and the communities.
- Acknowledge and dismantle identified inequities within our policies, systems, programs, and services, and continually update and report organization progress.
- Actively combat the legacy and impact of racism on members of the POP Community.
- Practice and encourage transparency in our storytelling and communication so as to identify and eradicate coded language, saviorism, and devaluation of our community.
- Support board-level thinking about how systemic inequities impact Play On Philly’s work, and how best to address that in a way that is consistent with our mission.
- Commit time and resources to expand more diverse leadership within our board, committees, staff and Teaching Artists.
- Lead with respect and acceptance. We expect all employees to embrace this notion and to express it in workplace interactions and through everyday practices.

To read the full statement, including the ways in which Play On Philly is working to realize this commitment, please visit playonphilly.org/family.

Contact Information

General Contact Information

Email: popsummer@playonphilly.org

Phone: (484) 238-0852

Summer Program Primary Staff

Anna Negrón Community & Teacher Engagement Manager anegrón@playonphilly.org	
Ian Taylor Roman Catholic Program Manager itaylor@playonphilly.org	Karen Specht Program Manager karen@playonphilly.org
Reil Abashera Program Coordinator, ICSW reil@playonphilly.org	Kennedy Chizek Program Coordinator, SFDS kchizek@playonphilly.org
Diego Villamil Gomez Director of Education diego@playonphilly.org	Laura Kirk Senior Operations Manager laura@playonphilly.org

POP Summer Program Overview

Summers at POP are an opportunity for musical and social-emotional growth through ensemble playing and intensive group lessons. Students also spend part of their day focused on other forms of creativity and expression including dance, physical fitness, and art. Year-round POP students, as well as young musicians across Philadelphia, are eligible to join.

Past summer offerings have included:

Exploratory Division

- Exploratory Music Class
- Instrumental Group Lessons
- Choir
- Art
- Dance
- Gym

Developing Division

- Instrumental Group Lessons
- Wind Ensemble
- String Ensemble
- Choir
- Playwriting
- Gym
- Dance

Dates & Times

July 6- 31, 2026

Drop Off Between 8:00am – 8:30am

Pick Up Between 4:45pm – 5:15pm

Program Location

Boyer College of Music and Dance

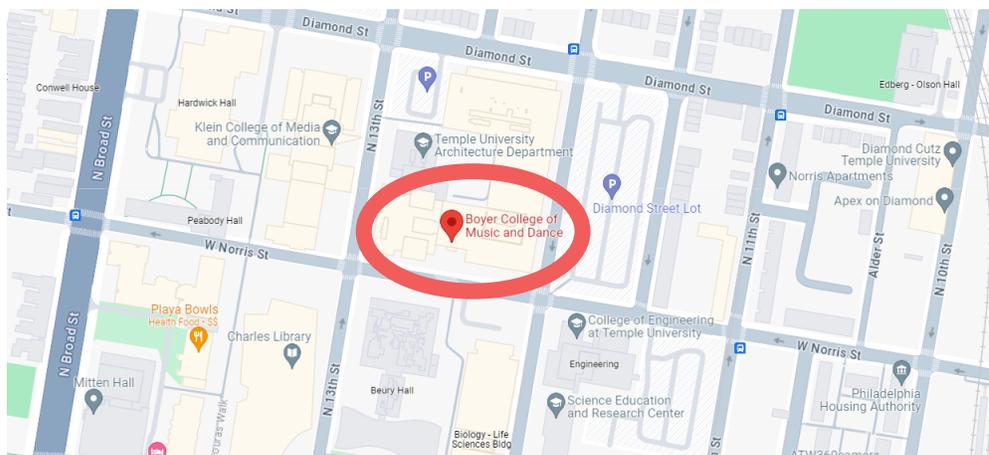
Presser Hall

2001 N. 13th Street

Philadelphia, PA 19122

Map & Directions

Boyer College of Music and Dance, in **Presser Hall**, is located on Temple University's main campus in Philadelphia, PA. The main campus is accessible by SEPTA Broad Street Line, regional rail trains, and multiple bus routes. The SEPTA subway stop is Temple University/Cecil B. Moore. The regional rail station is the Temple University stop, accessible on several rail lines. Parking is limited in and around the Temple Campus. However, you can find free parking a block or two away in the residential neighborhoods.



Policies and Procedures

Prior to the start of summer program, please ensure that you and your child have read and understand all POP guidelines and procedures. We take these policies seriously to ensure all students and families have the best experience at POP Summer Program.

Summer Attendance Policy

Students who participate in POP Summer Program must be able to commit to consistent attendance and be able to stay for the duration of all class activities; this is to ensure all students and ensembles are adequately prepared for their end of summer performances.

Students are allowed no more than 4 absences from Summer Program. Students must also be able to attend our final Summer Showcases, typically held the last week of Summer Program.

Please note that we build our summer schedule and hire Teaching Artists based on the specific students who enroll so we can ensure they have the best possible musical experience. We understand that summer plans change – if you know your student will no longer be able to attend Summer Program after enrolling you MUST notify us by April 15th. After this date, students who are enrolled for Summer Program but fail to attend or notify us may be ineligible to enroll in future POP programs.

If an absence is unavoidable, families should notify POP with as much heads-up as possible as a student's absence will have an impact on their studio and ensembles performances.

If your student will be out, you must inform POP in writing either via text to (484) 238-0852 or by emailing popsummer@playonphilly.org.

Arrival

Students should be dropped off and picked up at the front entrance of Presser, located on the Norris Street side (see *Map and Directions* section for details) and MUST be accompanied by an adult until the start of Summer Program at 8:00am. Students will proceed to the lobby for check-in with a POP staff member starting no earlier than 8:00am, after which they will report immediately to the cafeteria for breakfast and morning announcements. Students who arrive after 8:30am will not receive breakfast. All students should arrive to program no later than 8:30am so that they will be prepared to begin the day with their peers.

Please note that there is no parking at the front entrance. If you would like to escort your student inside, you will be able to find free street parking a couple of blocks away from the building in the residential section of the neighborhood.

Late Arrival

Students who arrive after 8:30am must be walked into Presser Hall by their adult. They will be checked in at the front desk and will be directed on where to join their peers.

Dismissal

- Students who have permission to leave on their own (“Leaves Alone”) will be escorted out by POP staff members at 4:45pm, after which they are officially signed out and are no longer in POP's care.

- As a courtesy, POP will have a staff member outside until 5:00pm for Leaves Alone students.
- If you do not give permission for your child to leave alone, someone MUST come inside the building to pick them up from program.
- You will choose to opt in or out on the enrollment form. If you need to change your child's status during program, please email popsummer@playonphilly.org.
- Students who are picked up by parents/guardians must stay in the café until they are picked up. Parents/guardians must walk inside Presser Hall and formally check out their student from the designated dismissal person at the front desk.
- Early Dismissal: We require that you inform staff in writing if your child will need to leave early from program no later than the morning of; 24 hours' notice is preferred. This will allow us to inform the teachers of their absence for the day.

Late Pick-Up Policy

If a parent or guardian is late to pick up a student, they will be charged a late fee of \$1 per minute. As a reminder, dismissal is from 4:45-5:15pm.

- Payment of late fees must be remitted to the Summer Program front desk staff or paid online at www.playonphilly.org/pay within 3 days.
- If you have not made payment by that time, the student will not be admitted into program until payment has been received.

If a student has three late pickups, they may be unable to return to program. Any pick-ups more than 30 minutes late may lead to the students' removal from the program. If we are unable to communicate with parents/guardians, or any other individuals listed as emergency contacts, the appropriate authorities may be contacted to ensure students are properly supervised after the Summer Program day has concluded.

Pick-ups by Other Adults

If none of the individuals whose information you have provided on the enrollment form are available to pick-up your child, you must first call the Summer Program number to inform them of the change, then send a follow-up email with the name and DOB of the individual who will be picking up your child. When that person arrives, they will be asked to provide a photo ID with their name and DOB, which will be verified by the designated dismissal person.

ID Lanyards

Every student will be given an identification badge and lanyard on their first day of camp. Badges will include the Play On Philly logo, the student's name, and emergency contact information on the back of the badge. Students must wear their lanyard at all times while at program (including off-campus trips) for safety and identification.

When dismissing for the day, students should leave their lanyard at the front desk for safe keeping.

Cell Phones & Electronics

We know that almost everyone has an electronic device nowadays. However, program is a time for students to disconnect from their devices and to get to know the people around them. Cell

phones and electronics are strictly prohibited during POP time; electronics must be put away and be kept on silent. We know that sometimes families need to get in contact with their student; please call the Summer Program phone number (contact information on Page 4). The staff will get you directly in contact with your student. If a student absolutely needs to make a phone call, they must first check in with a teacher or a staff member.

Students may bring cell phones on off-site trips. However, cell phones should be kept in backpacks on silent except to coordinate pick-up/drop-off and emergencies.

Students who repeatedly violate this policy may incur consequences which will be discussed with the parents/guardians.

Daily Attire

Dress attire for summer should be seasonally appropriate. The same rules that apply during school dress down days apply for POP summer programming. Students should not:

- Wear clothing that contains obscene language, profanity, or unacceptable images
 - A student may be asked to change when, in the organization's opinion, the student is not appropriately dressed.
- Wear tops that do not fully cover from the shoulders to the waist
- Use sunglasses inside the building
- Have bare feet at any time

Meal & Snack Times

Breakfast, lunch, and a light snack are provided by POP on program days. Your child is more than welcome to bring their own meals; however, there is no refrigeration or heating available to them for meals brought from home. [POP Summer Program is a peanut-free environment](#). If your student plans to bring a meal or snack, make sure the food does not contain peanut butter, peanuts, or peanut oil.

Every student should bring a labeled water bottle with them to program every day. If the water bottle is not labeled, POP staff may label it at their discretion.

Meals will be served during the following times:

- Breakfast upon arrival in the morning
- Lunch around mid-day
- Snack at the end of program

Food/Drink and Bathroom Use

Students will not be allowed to eat food in the lobby or the classrooms of Presser at any time – eating is reserved for breakfast, lunch, and snack time in the cafeteria or patio areas only.

Bathroom and water breaks should be taken during designated bathroom breaks (about once per hour). If your child has a medical condition that may impact their need for the bathroom or for food, please indicate so on the enrollment form and notify the Summer Program staff so that we can make accommodations.

Instrument Loans

Instruments are loaned to students as needed. If students are borrowing a POP instrument, they are NOT allowed to be taken home during the summer. Any damage to the instrument must be reported to their teacher immediately.

Depending on the situation, it is possible that families will be held financially responsible for damage.

Instrument Storage

At the conclusion of program each day, students who have borrowed a POP instrument should leave their instrument in the designated storage area at Summer Program.

Students who bring their own instrument instead of borrowing one from POP are responsible for the care of their instrument. Such students should bring their instrument home with them at the end of each day; **POP will not be responsible for storing personally owned instruments overnight.**

Respecting Spaces/Vandalism

The spaces we will be occupying in Presser and the greater Temple Campus are rooms that are loaned to us by Temple. As guests at a college, students are expected to always leave spaces neater and cleaner than they found them. This includes:

- Trash disposal at appropriate locations
- Keeping classrooms, walls, music stands, and all other property free of damage and destruction.
- Returning shared materials to their proper place and in good condition
- Cleaning up spaces after meals

Students who intentionally destroy property including, but not limited to: loaned instruments, equipment, music stands, facilities and bathrooms, Temple's furniture, etc., will be held responsible for the payment of the damaged property and will be dismissed immediately.

Medical Information

Families who indicated in their enrollment form that their child has any special medical needs must return a completed Student Medication Information form by Friday, July 3rd. All relevant TAs and staff will be made aware of their students' medical information, including medication administration, before program begins. Staff will review the information carefully to anticipate any needs their students might have.

If you have indicated that your child has any emergency medication, it must be brought in a clear bag that is labeled with their first and last name. A POP staff member will take the medication and ensure that it is stored properly. Students cannot attend program if they do not bring their emergency medication.

We have staff members on site who are certified to administer CPR and First Aid and can use AED machines.

Illness: If a student falls ill during program, POP staff will call all points of contact in a student's file until a parent/guardian is reached. In the unlikely occurrence that a child requires medical assistance, the staff will call 911 and the emergency contacts. A POP staff member will accompany the child while they receive medical services until such time that a parent/guardian can arrive.

Medication: For those students who can self-administer necessary medications, we require that you provide information concerning medication type, dosage recommendations, and any storage requirements on the Student Medication Information form which should be updated as needed and reviewed at least once per year.

Emergency Information

As part of the enrollment form, all families provide emergency contact information. If there are any changes to that contact information between the completion of that form and the start of summer program, you are solely responsible for communicating those changes to the Summer Program staff.

Emergency Plans: Play On Philly follows all the shelter-in-place and emergency plans recommended by Temple University's Boyer College of Music and Dance. For more details, you can reach out to our Summer Program staff.

Family Communication

POP has an ambitious schedule of activities. For students to receive the maximum benefits from being involved with POP, we need to be able to contact families. POP communicates in many formats to ensure that information is shared with everyone in a timely manner.

We send e-newsletters to parents/guardians to share information about upcoming events, POP news, and programming updates once a month in the lead up to Summer Program, and then once a week for the duration of Summer Program.

We use texts, emails, and calls to parents/guardians to communicate about individual student updates, late arrivals and pick-ups, behavior issues, and special event reminders.

Please reach out to Summer Staff with any questions or concerns.

Citizenship Program

POP holds all students, teachers, and staff members to the highest standards of integrity and citizenship. To be contributing members of their groups, POP musicians should strive to be:

- Good citizens for themselves, their peers, and the Summer Program community.
- Prepared every day with their instrument, instrument accessories, water bottle, and a positive attitude so that the Program can be an opportunity for children to learn, try their best, and have fun!

Citizenship Infractions

At some point, students may struggle to meet POP's citizenship standards. POP has a program-wide system which allows for the student, the family, the TAs, and the POP staff to be clear on expectations and consequences. This includes verbal warnings, opportunities for breaks and resets, and chances to try again. If a student needs multiple resets a day, families will be made aware and could be requested to have a formal meeting with staff and TAs.

Positive Behavior Incentives

To help create a warm and welcoming environment for all students, we also employ a Positive Behavior Incentive System. Throughout the day POP staff, TAs, and interns may give students raffle tickets for their eager participation in class, attentiveness during transitions, helpfulness during meal clean up, and kindness shown to peers. Students who receive raffle tickets will then have the opportunity to have their names drawn for positive recognition and small prizes throughout Summer Program.

Students are prohibited from "selling" both raffle tickets or any prizes to other students.

Zero-Tolerance

The following behaviors have zero-tolerance at POP Summer Program and will result in immediate suspension or expulsion:

- Threatening violence
- Fighting/unwelcome physical contact
- Leaving the designated POP Program area without permission (eloping)
- Inappropriate language
- Sexual harassment
- Instrument damage due to neglect
- Stealing (if proven)
- Bullying

These policies and procedures are in place to ensure the safety and well-being of all students while in our care.