



Parent & Member Handbook

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The Footlights Story

The group was set up in March 1994 by Paul Thompson and was originally called "The EMS Footlights". However, it later severed its links with English Martyrs School and became known as Footlights Theatre Productions (FTP). In the past we have produced small and large, simple and extravagant productions catering for all ages.

The group is managed by a Board of Directors, whom also serve as the production team, which meets monthly to discuss the running and plans of the group. The Board is named overleaf.

In the autumn of 1998, FTP set up a separate branch called the School's Liaison Project. This involved the group working closely with schools and other educational establishments in order to teach topics through the medium of drama.

In January 1999, the Footlights expanded and moved into bigger premises at St. James Parish Hall. This is where the Footlight's Youth Group was based until August 1999. The Youth Group was set up in order to provide a means of educating the youngsters in Hartlepool and its neighbouring villages in the subject area of theatre production. The group not only offered stage work, (i.e. dancing, singing and drama) but also offered the back stage aspects, namely, theatrical makeup, set design, sound detail and also lighting.

In August 1999, we then moved to The Footlight Studios in York Road.

In 2000, the group received a substantial sum of funding from the Department of Education and Skills (as it was at the time) to set up and run a theatrical based alternative education programme for children and young people who were struggling at school. This programme for 3 years and achieved some amazing results with some young people with challenging behaviours and complex issues.

We soon became aware of the limitations and short comings on this property and once again moved in November 2000 to much larger 2-storey premises at Enterprise House. This building was large, spacious, well located and service, but most importantly it was central heated! We enjoyed 6 years at that site.

Between 2006 and 2008, we then had an unsettling period of moving between a few different places; The Stranton Centre, West View Baptist Church and Belle Vue Sports Centre.

However in February 2009, we formed a partnership with Hartlepool Families First which involved a permanent base within their premises. We are still based there today.



Our Structure

Hartlepool Footlight Youth Theatre is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee.

Our Objectives

The group's objectives are to encourage young people in the main, but those of any age who may be interested to get involved in all aspects of theatre production including performance, organisation, set and costume design with the aim of developing the creative abilities of the individual and entertaining and educating the wider public through performance, productions and workshops

This is taken from our constitution and may sometimes be referred to our mission statement. A copy of our recent constitution can be obtained at a nominal fee of £1 to cover the cost of photocopying.

Group Admissions Policy

We believe that every child should be given the same opportunities, regardless of previous experiences. It is the wish of Footlights, to guide these children to the path which is more suited or appropriate to them.

Any child / young person aged between 4 years and 18 years is welcome to attend our sessions. Each child is enrolled (provided that there is an available vacancy) subject to the appropriate enrolment fee, which is subject to change without notice.

A requirement of enrolment to Footlight Youth Theatre is the submission of a completed application form and a photocopy of the child's birth certificate, along with any relevant changes. Please speak to a member of staff if this information is not available.

Membership Subscriptions

The current membership subscriptions are as follows:

Munchkins Group - £6.00 per week

Seniors - £7.50 per week

These fees are required to be paid regularly on the first evening of attendance every week.

The current policy regarding membership subscriptions is that members are required to pay for all weeks of the year with the following exceptions:

- ! Footlights being closed for the Christmas period
- ! 2 weeks 'payment holidays' per year. These are set by Footlights and will be the performance week of each production (we currently do 2 productions per year)
- ! Any other circumstances beyond our control which lead to sessions being cancelled

Please note, this is a membership fee – it is not a session fee. You are not paying for each session (or not if you are absent) but paying to be a member of Footlights. There is an obvious gain for members when we put on extra sessions and the likes. All members pay the full subscription amount regardless if they attend 1 or 2 nights per week. **Please note, there are no exceptions to these rules.**

This means that ALL members are required to pay subscriptions for approx 48 weeks per year and all at the same time. We believe this to be very fair when you consider that other 'performing arts' group don't have any form of payment holiday, our subscriptions are lower than those groups. Parents may prefer to pay subscriptions by standing order each month at 4 weeks per time. This means that they still pay for 48 weeks over the course of a year. If you are interested in setting this up, please speak to a member of staff for the relevant form.

Members receive a snack during the session which there is no additional charge for.

Medication

If any member requires to take medication whilst in attendance, we obviously need to observe precautions. If your child needs to bring medication to the group, please provide a signed letter from yourself containing full directions concerning each medicament. Medication should be given to a staff member for safe-keeping on arrival at the group and will be returned at the end of the evening. **Members who are asthmatic MUST have an inhaler present at EVERY session**

All of the volunteer staff team at Footlight Youth Theatre are trained and qualified in First Aid.

Attendance

Due to the fact that the group has a regular commitment to public performance, a high level of attendance is required in order that the members are able to participate in all rehearsals and/or auditions.

When attendance becomes irregular and causes disruption to rehearsals, continued membership will become the subject of discussion for the Board of Directors, with the possible outcome of loss of membership, unless the Board of Directors is advised of a reason, which it finds acceptable.

Members who are unable to pay their membership subscriptions for 3 weeks risk having their membership cancelled.

Child Welfare And Conduct

Due to the very nature of the group's activities, members do become highly spirited and staff allow for this.

However, in situations, where a member causes disruption, discontent or bullies, there is a set process for managing this situation.

1. Informal talk by staff member in the presence of staff responsible for member conduct.
2. Formal talk by member of staff responsible for member conduct.
3. Formal talk by chairman with the addition of loss of membership if there are further occurrences.

We endeavour to make parents and guardians aware and up to date of all such occurrences.

Communicating with Parents and Members

We produce regular newsletter to parents with information on the day to day running of the group, events, productions and developments.

As of April 2011, these will be sent to parents via email to parents and members. If you don't have an email address, copies of the newsletter will be left in reception for parents and members to collect.



Child Protection Policy

Nominated Person – Paul Thompson

Parents and guardians should be aware that Footlight Youth Theatre has a duty to take reasonable action to ensure the welfare and safety of its group members. In cases where The Footlight's staff have cause to be concerned that a member may be subject to ill-treatment, neglect or other form of abuse, staff will follow the Hartlepool Borough Council Child Protection Procedures and inform the Social Services of their concern. This may involve a visit to home by a social worker.

If a problem should arise, then Paul will then contact the Designated Officer for Child Protection for advice.

If the Child Protection Officer cannot be contacted, we get advice from the Duty Officer at Social Services.

The Child Protection Unit have issued us with a guidance document. It provides step by step guidance through the process of Child Protection.

All staff and Board members receive annual training on Child Protection and Welfare.

Footlights Uniform / Costumes

Presently, members of Footlights Youth Theatre are not required to wear any form of uniform. However, it is the intention of the group to introduce distinctive clothing at a later date.

In the meantime, members are expected to wear attire which is suitable for the task in hand. (i.e. It is not considered fitting nor safe, for a member to wear skin tight jeans whilst rehearsing for a dance troupe.) Jewellery is also not allowed whilst taking part in any activities.

The group is continually working towards productions while providing tuition and advice on the many facets of theatre production to each individual member. In order to enhance the delivery of each production and exhibit a professional persona, members of the group who are participating in the productions can be required to wear costume.

It is the responsibility of each member to provide their own costume as detailed by the relevant tutors.

Footlight Youth Theatre will endeavour to restrict costs as far as possible, but as previously stated the financial responsibility rests with each individual group member.

Hartlepool Footlight Youth Theatre is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity

Charity Registration No: 1109367 Company Registration No: 04856667

Registered in England and Wales – Registered Office Address: 6-7 Belle Business Park, Greatham Street, Hartlepool, TS25 1PU

Volunteer Staff List

Teaching Team	
Nicola Thompson	Dance Tutor
Terri Ryan	Dance Tutor
Paul Thompson	Drama and Singing Tutor
Gemma Miller	Street Dance Tutor
Ashleigh Pearce	Singing Tutor
Lauren Fleet	Dance Tutor
Toni Elwin	Dance Tutor
Finance and Admin Team	
Sylvia Elwin	Finance and Admin Officer
Paula Hume	Tuckshop
Technical Team (as and when needed)	
Steve Glanville	Graham Bryson
Bob Ferry	James Flanagan
Nathan Storm	Stuart Elwin

Board of Directors

Board of Directors	
Paul Thompson	Chairman and Managing Director
Sandra Pearce	Member Services Director
Stuart Elwin	Musical Director
Nicola Thompson	Creative Director
Val Whitelock	Fundraising Director
Debbie Bee	Parental Director
Gaynor Parkinson	Director of Quality and Standards
Jasmine Hewitt	Member Representative

All of the above appointments are correct at the point of printing (March 2011)
All directors are voluntary positions and are not paid at all



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- 1st Edition - July 1999
- 2nd Edition – July 2000
- 3rd Edition – April 2001
- 4th Edition – August 2001
- 5th Edition – January 2002
- 6th Edition – September 2002
- 7th Edition – January 2003
- 8th Edition – August 2003
- 9th Edition – September 2003
- 10th Edition – January 2005
- 11th Edition – October 2005
- 12th Edition – February 2007
- 13th Edition – May 2010
- 14th Edition – March 201

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