

# **SOLAR BEAR LTD COMPANY HANDBOOK**

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## **Mission Statement**

Our aim is to create exciting innovative multidisciplinary theatre. With a strong social commitment we aim to make progress in areas of accessibility, inclusion and integration and to develop and deliver a wide range of education, outreach and training programmes.

## **Welcome**

Welcome to Solar Bear. We look forward to working with you and we hope you enjoy working with us. This handbook is designed as a point of reference and to answer some questions you may have about the company.

If you have any further question or a problem at any time please speak to your project manager or the General Manager, Gillian Garrity.

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### **1. Our Commitment**

Solar Bear believes that the continuing success of the company is dependent upon the input and contributions of its Company Members.

Solar Bear will endeavour to provide its Company Members with a positive, creative and friendly working environment in which all Company Members are valued and respected.

Solar Bear undertake to fulfil all contractual obligations.

Solar Bear commits to promoting a culture within the organisation of zero tolerance of any form of discrimination.

### **2. What we expect from employees.**

A positive and professional working attitude.

Respect for other Company Members and adherence to the rules and codes of behaviour of all venues.

Confidentiality when requested.

Positive representations of the company in both attitude and behaviour.

That Company Members refrain from consuming alcohol or using non prescription drugs during working.

That Company Members remain within the law at all times.

That Company Members take particular care to respect young people and adhere to the guidelines on behaviour in our children's policy set out below.

Solar Bear operates a no smoking policy at all times. If you do smoke, you should ensure that no young person sees you smoking.

### **3. If you have a problem**

This is how we will try to resolve any problem you have when you are working for us. The process is sometimes called a 'grievance procedure'. We have tried to keep the process as simple as possible.

If you have a problem or grievance, please tell the General Manager, Gillian Garrity as soon as possible. She will attempt to address the problem and will reply to you within 7 days.

However, if the problem has not been solved to your satisfaction within this time, you may refer the matter to Peter Reid, the Chair of Solar Bear Trustees. You may write to the Chair at the office address and mark the envelope private and confidential or ask the General Manager to refer the matter to the Chair. The Chair will consider the matter and attempt to reach satisfactory conclusion, he will reply within 7days.

If the problem can not be resolved internally, it may be necessary to refer the matter to the Small Scale Theatre Council for arbitration.

### **4. Disciplinary Procedure**

Solar Bear operates a disciplinary procedure which mirrors that laid out in the ITC/Equity contract.

In the first instance the General Manager will be authorised to take disciplinary action against Company Members.

At each stage of the procedure outlined below, the Company Member will have the right to put forward their account of the matter to the Chair of Solar Bear and to be accompanied by a person of their choice to meetings.

#### Stage 1: Verbal Warning

If conduct or performance of duties is unsatisfactory the Company Member will be given a verbal warning which will be recorded and kept on record for one month after which it will be removed and destroyed.

#### Stage 2: Written Warning

In the event of a more serious problem being identified, or a recurrence of an offence following a verbal warning, a written warning will be given. This should state the conduct complained of, the improvement required and the time-scale for improvement, how long it will be kept on record and the under what circumstances the next stage of the procedure may be invoked.

#### Stage 3: Final Written Warning

If the conduct or performance of duties is still unsatisfactory, a final written warning will be given making it clear that any recurrence of the offence may result in dismissal.

## **5. Dismissal**

Any gross misconduct may result in summary dismissal without pay.

Acts of gross misconduct include, but are not limited to the following:

Theft or malicious damage to company property

Theft or malicious damage to venue property

Theft or malicious damage to touring accommodation

Incapacity to work due to being under the influence of alcohol or non-prescription drugs.

Physical assault or fighting

Sexual harassment

Abusive behaviour

Sexist, racist or any other repressive behaviour

Serious breach of confidentiality

Serious breach of safe working practices

The General Manager has the right to enter the disciplinary procedure at any of the stages listed above depending on the severity of the incident/conduct being considered.

The General Manager will notify the Company Member in writing making it clear at what stage they have entered the procedure and why.

### Absent without cause

Any absence without reasonable cause or explanation will be treated as serious misconduct and will entitle the General Manager to enter the disciplinary procedure.

If any Company Member is absent without reasonable cause or explanation, the company is entitled to dismiss the Company Member without payment.

## **6. Wages and Fees**

Your contract sets out your rates of pay. If you have any questions about your wages or fees please speak to the General Manager.

### Invoices

We can not make payments without receipt of an invoice. Please ensure that your invoices are dated, with a note of your address, and whether you are vat registered. Please also note on your invoice the name and details of the project you are working on.

### Payment details

If you are employed on a freelance basis you are solely responsible for the payment of your tax, national insurance contribution and any insurance cost relating to the use of your vehicle.

Wages and fees will be paid by cheque on receipt of an invoice or on request can be paid directly into your nominated bank account. In this case please detail your bank account number and sort code on your invoice.

## **7. Expenses**

In order to allow the company to maintain its finances in the simplest way, we would ask that members of staff differentiate when claiming expenses for different projects. Expenses can only be claimed if agreed and contracted in advance. Please invoice for expenses separately from your fee, and state which project you are claiming for.

## **8. Health and Safety**

Solar Bear provides and maintains safe and healthy working conditions in accordance with current Health and Safety legislation.

Any health issues that may affect your role within the company and be aggravated during your work should be reported to the Director at the beginning of the project. Solar Bear are responsible for providing all necessary protective clothing and equipment.

Solar Bear shall be responsible to insure and maintain Employers Liability Insurance for all Company Members during working hours within the dates of their contract unless otherwise stated.

Solar Bear is responsible for making Company Members aware of fire regulations and drills at all venues.

It is your responsibility to be aware of your own health and safety at all times, and you must exercise reasonable care when working with the Company.

Any accident that should occur during the working day should be reported immediately to the General Manager / Project Leader. This shall be recorded in the incident book in the presence of the injured party.

There is a first aid box in the Solar Bear office.

## **9. Insurance**

Solar Bear guarantees to cover all its employees with adequate employers and public liability insurance for the duration of their contract.

Our insurance does not cover valuables left in outside venues or left in vehicles when they are unattended or any of your personal effects and it is unlikely that any loss or theft will be covered by the venue insurance. Please make sensible arrangements for the storage of valuables or better still do not carry them with you.

## **10. Children's Policy**

Solar Bear Limited is committed to safe-guarding and promoting the interests and well-being of children and young people.

It is the aim of Solar Bear Limited to enable children and adults who work with the Company to enjoy a safe and happy environment.

Solar Bear Limited is a Registered Body with Disclosure Scotland, and Disclosure Scotland checks and references are sought for all adult employees of Solar Bear Limited who are likely to come into contact with children and young people through the Company's work.

Guidelines and codes of good practise are issued to all personnel and practitioners who come into contact with children and young people through Solar Bear. A nominated member of Solar Bear's Board of Trustees is responsible for issues relating to child protection, and will advise on procedure.

### Procedures for suspected abuse

The appropriate person to contact within Solar Bear Limited regarding any concerns about a child's welfare is Gerry Ramage.

It is the responsibility of all adults who work with children through Solar Bear to immediately inform Gerry Ramage if a child discloses anything relating to abuse that they are suffering.

The child would be made aware that this information cannot be kept in confidence and that a record of what the child says would be kept, including information on date, time and who the child spoke to. Social services and Police would then be notified. In the case of a child reporting an incident of abuse that does not pertain to any member of the Company, Gerry Ramage would discuss the decision to inform the child's parent or guardian with the appropriate agencies. If suspicions of child abuse should pertain to any member of Solar Bear, Gerry Ramage would decide on the best course of action to take. Protection of the child would take precedence. Social services, the Police and Cultural and Leisure Services would be immediately informed. Solar Bear Limited would work in tandem with the official investigation. Solar Bear Limited's Board of Directors would be informed and would investigate the concerns in accordance with appropriate disciplinary procedures. The child's parents or guardian would also be immediately informed.

Any member of the organisation can make a report to Social Work Services pertaining to another member of staff if they are unsatisfied with the outcome of Solar Bear Limited's internal inquiry.

### Appropriate behaviour

Appropriate behaviour is essential for a company working with young people and vulnerable adults. Avoid inappropriate language, gestures and physical contact when children are present or can see you. Do not make abusive, racist or other derogatory remarks or gestures at any time. Be aware of your behaviour at all times.

Children in Scotland and the Scottish Arts Council have produced a set of guidelines to assist those working in the arts to create the best possible environment in which children and young people can enjoy arts activities.

The key principles that underpin these guidelines are:

- The best interests of the child or young person must always be a primary consideration;
- All children and young people should be treated fairly and with dignity and respect;
- All children and young people have the right to protection from all forms of harm, abuse, neglect and exploitation;
- All children and young people have the right to express their views on matters that affect them;

If you are concerned that a child or young person is at risk of harm or they have made a disclosure of abuse:

- Never promise a child that you will not tell anyone;
- Your reaction should be neutral and non-judgemental;
- Do not press the child for more information;
- Keep in mind that the child may have been told not to tell anyone about the abuse;
- Write down what the child has told you as soon as you can;

This policy has been drawn up in accordance with Scottish Arts Council & Glasgow City Council's guidelines on child protection.

If you feel you need additional guidance or training, please speak to the General Manager. We also welcome ideas for improving or developing our Children's Policy.

## **11. Disclosure Scotland**

Solar Bear has a policy of checking all members of staff who will come in direct contact with children on a regular basis with Disclosure Scotland. This is part of our commitment to ensuring the safety of children.

Solar Bear will provide a form to be completed by the employee and we will also cover the costs involved.

All disclosure information is treated with confidentiality. Solar Bear policy on the handling of the information can be found under item 13 of this document.

There is one exception to the Disclosure process. If you have already been through the standard process within 6 months of starting your contract with Solar Bear you will not be required to complete a form. You will have to provide Solar Bear with a copy of the disclosure and Gillian Garrity will record the unique disclosure number for our records. If you have any queries about disclosure and whether you need to complete the form, please contact Gillian Garrity on 0141 221 3240 or look at Disclosure Scotland's website [www.disclosurescotland.co.uk](http://www.disclosurescotland.co.uk)

## **12. Policy Statement on the Use, Handling, Storage and Disposal of Personal Information Gathered in the Disclosure Process**

### General Principles

1. Solar Bear complies fully with the Code of Practice, issued by Scottish Ministers, regarding the correct handling, holding and destroying of Disclosure information provided by Disclosure Scotland under Part V of the Police Act 1997, for the purposes of assessing applicants' suitability for positions of trust. It also complies fully with the Data Protection Act 1998 and other relevant legislation pertaining to the safe handling, use, storage, retention and disposal of Disclosure information and has a written policy on these matters.

### Usage

2. We use Disclosure information only for the purpose for which it has been provided. The information provided by an individual for a position within Solar Bear is not used or disclosed in a manner incompatible with the purpose. We process personal data only with the express consent of the individual. We notify the individual of any non-obvious use of the data, including further disclosure to a third party, identifying the Data Controller, the purpose for the processing, and any further relevant information.

### Handling

3. Solar Bear recognises that, under section 124 of the Police Act 1997, it is a criminal offence to disclose Disclosure information to any unauthorised person. We, therefore, only pass Disclosure information to those who are authorised to see it in the course of their duties. Solar Bear will not disclose information provided under section 115 (8) of the Act, namely information which is not included in the Disclosure, to the applicant.

### Access and Storage

4. We do not keep Disclosure information on an individual's personnel file. It is kept securely, in lockable non-portable storage containers. Access to storage units is strictly controlled to authorised and named individuals, who are entitled to see such information in the course of their duties.

### Retention

5. We do not keep Disclosures or Disclosure information for any longer than is required after a recruitment (or any other relevant) decision has been taken. In general, this is no longer than six months. This is to allow for the resolution of

any disputes or complaints. Disclosure information will only be retained for longer than this period in exceptional circumstances, and in consultation with Disclosure Scotland. The same conditions relating to secure storage and access will apply during any such period.

#### Disposal

6. Once the retention period has elapsed, we will ensure that the Disclosure information is immediately destroyed in a secure manner i.e. by shredding, pulping or burning. Solar Bear will not keep information which is awaiting destruction in any insecure receptacle (e.g. waste bin or confidential waste sack). We will not retain any image, photocopy or any other form of the Disclosure information. We will however, keep a record of the date of issue of the Disclosure, the name of the subject, the Disclosure type, the position for which the Disclosure request, the unique reference number of the Disclosure and the details of the recruitment decision taken.

### **13. Equal Opportunities Policy and Monitoring**

Solar Bear wishes to enable equality of opportunity in all aspects of its work, either as an employer or with respect to individuals and groups taking part in activities run by the company. Solar Bear is committed to promoting theatre as an activity for all. We aim to have a positive social impact and make progress in terms of access, inclusion and integration within the arts. To this end, Solar Bear consults with a wide range of people, agencies, arts officers, special needs units and community groups.

It is our intention not only to ensure that our services are accessible, barrier-free and avoid discrimination to users and potential users on the ground of ethnicity, disability, gender, age or sexual orientation, but also to build constructive relationships and take positive action to encourage participation in our arts activities from under-represented groups.

Solar Bear offers the same opportunities to all regardless of gender, age, colour, race, ethnic origin, disability or sexual orientation. Our pay structure is based on qualifications and experience, and is equal for all employees at similar positions within the company. It is Solar Bear's policy to interview all candidates qualified for positions advertised, encouraging applications from under-represented groups. However with regards to recruitment, all decisions will be made according to experience and qualification. No other variable is considered when offering a position within Solar Bear.

#### Implementation of the Policy

It is the responsibility of the General Manager to monitor effectiveness and develop where necessary the Equal Opportunities Policy. Each member of the company has responsibility for their own compliance.

Solar Bear believes that the value of an Equal Opportunities Policy lies not merely in its intention but in its practical delivery. It is therefore important that this policy is reflected within the Company's programme of work.

#### Scope of the Policy

The policy applies to: all staff, including project/temporary staff, volunteers and job applicants.

#### Definitions

Solar Bear recognises discrimination as being a process of acting unfairly against an individual or group by exclusion, verbal comment, denigration, failure to appreciate needs or the assumption of such needs without consultation.

#### References

It should be noted that for the purposes of this Equal Opportunities Policy the term 'race' should be taken to include colour, nationality, ethnic and/or national origins as outlined by the Race Relations Act 1976.

Race Relations Act, 1976

Sex Discrimination Act, 1975

Equal Pay Act, 1970

Disability Discrimination Act, 1995

#### Behaviour of Staff

Disregard for any aspect of this statement by an employee of the company or volunteer would be considered a serious matter and disciplinary proceedings invoked as appropriate.

#### Training

It is the policy of Solar Bear to ensure that all staff have the necessary training to comply with these matters. It is the responsibility of the individual employee to draw to the attention of senior staff any training needs.

Monitoring

Solar Bear is committed to monitoring Equal Opportunities within the organisation and help ensure we offer equality of opportunity to all people.

Gillian Garrity  
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February 2009