

Volunteer Handbook

for Forging Theater and Community



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123 E. Water Street | Charlottesville, VA | 22902

WELCOME TO LIVE ARTS

For volunteers who are new to Live Arts, welcome! For volunteers who have been with us for a while, thank you for your continued commitment to bringing compelling, high-caliber theater to Central Virginia! We are grateful for your talent, hard work, and love of theater!

About This Handbook

We prepared this handbook to help you find answers to questions you may have about your involvement with Live Arts. We'll be updating information on a rolling basis to reflect changing guidelines, laws, and policies.

About Us

Powered by more than 1,200 volunteers, Live Arts is a national model for engaged community theater. For more than three decades, we've dedicated ourselves to the mission of "forging theater and community" in Charlottesville, Virginia. Our engagement in local communities runs deep, and we happily attract participants and audiences from across the five-county region.

Live Arts is the anchor tenant in a four-story building right off of the downtown mall. In a typical year, we present a compelling season of mainstage plays and musicals. We welcome hundreds of people to our year-round education workshops and youth summer camps. We host a lab that helps local playwrights develop their work. And for nearly two decades, we have provided tech support to high school and college theater companies performing at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe in Scotland.

As a nonprofit theater, about half of our work is supported by contributed income—from sponsorships, grants, individual gifts, and events. The other half comes from earned income—mostly ticket sales, tuition, and concessions. In a normal year, this formula works. During the pandemic, we relied heavily on emergency relief funds and the generosity of individuals, foundations, and businesses to forge ahead.

Commitment to Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI)

We are committed to centering the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion in every aspect of our work. We welcome the active participation of people of color, LGBTQ+, and other marginalized members of the community. For more than 25 years, we have lowered barriers to theater by offering most of our programming on a pay-what-you-can basis. It's one way of giving back and addressing the economic inequities in our community.

We pledge to listen to previously suppressed voices, to create a community of belonging, and to be a more effective ally for all artists who wish to create, dream, inspire, and challenge the status quo. To read about our current DEI initiatives, visit www.Livearts.org.

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that we occupy the ancestral home of the Monacan and Manahoac Nations and that we are on stolen land. We recognize them as the original stewards of this land and pay our respect to their elders—past, present, and emerging.

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SECTION 1: VOLUNTEER PRINCIPLES

1-1 Equal Opportunity

Live Arts does not discriminate on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, creed, religion, national origin, ancestry, citizenship status, age, sex or gender (including pregnancy, childbirth and pregnancy-related conditions), gender identity or expression (including transgender status), sexual orientation, marital status, military service and veteran status, physical or mental disability, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal, state, or local laws and ordinances.

We are committed to creating and maintaining an environment in which all volunteers have an opportunity to participate and contribute to the success of the mission and are valued for their skills, experience, knowledge, self-expression, and unique perspectives. We embrace and encourage your differences in all areas and understand that it is through our differences that we are able to create an inclusive environment in which to forge theater and community.

1-2 Non-Harassment

Live Arts prohibits intentional and unintentional harassment of volunteers or interns by other volunteers, employees, vendors, or third parties on the basis of the “protected characteristics” listed above.

The purpose of this policy is not to regulate your personal morality but to ensure that no one harasses another individual while on Live Arts’ premises or on Live Arts business. In addition to being a violation of this policy, harassment or retaliation based on any protected characteristic also is unlawful.

Harassment Defined

Harassment is legally defined as unwelcome verbal, visual, or physical conduct that denigrates or shows hostility or aversion toward an individual because of any actual or perceived protected characteristic or has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s volunteer performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive volunteer environment.

Harassment can be verbal (including slurs, jokes, insults, epithets, gestures, or teasing), visual (including offensive posters, symbols, cartoons, drawings, computer displays, text messages, social media posts, or emails) or physical conduct (including physically threatening another). Such conduct violates this policy, even if it does not rise to the level of a violation of applicable federal, state or local laws. Because it is difficult to define unlawful harassment, we expect you to behave in a manner consistent with the intended purpose of this policy.

Sexual Harassment Defined

Sexual harassment can include all of the above actions, as well as other unwelcome conduct, such as unwelcome or unsolicited sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, conversations regarding sexual activities, and other verbal, visual, or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- submission to that conduct, those advances, or those requests is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's volunteer involvement; or
- submission to or rejection of the conduct, advances, or requests by an individual is used as the basis for decisions affecting the individual; or
- the conduct, advances, or requests have the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's volunteer performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive volunteer environment.

Examples of conduct that violate this policy include:

1. unwelcome flirtations, leering, whistling, touching, pinching, and assault;
2. requests for sexual favors or demands for sexual favors in exchange for favorable treatment;
3. obscene or vulgar gestures, posters, or comments;
4. sexual jokes or comments about a person's body, sexual prowess, or sexual deficiencies;
5. propositions or suggestive or insulting comments of a sexual nature;
6. derogatory cartoons, posters, and drawings;
7. sexually explicit emails, text messages, or voicemails;
8. uninvited touching of a sexual nature;
9. unwelcome sexually related comments;
10. conversation about one's own or someone else's sex life;

11. conduct or comments consistently targeted at only one gender, even if the content is not sexual; and
12. teasing or other conduct directed toward a person because of the person's gender.

Reporting Procedures

If you have been subjected to or witnessed conduct which violates this policy, you should immediately report the matter (either orally or in writing) to the executive director. If you are unable for any reason to contact this person, or if you have not received an initial response within five (5) business days after reporting what you perceive to be harassment, you should contact the artistic director. If the subject of the complaint is one of these two of the individuals, you should contact the president of the Board of Directors.

Investigation Procedures

Every report of perceived harassment will be fully investigated, and corrective action will be taken where appropriate. All complaints will be kept confidential to the extent possible, but we can't guarantee confidentiality. All volunteers must cooperate with all investigations conducted related to this policy.

Retaliation Prohibited

Live Arts will not tolerate any form of retaliation against individuals who report unwelcome conduct to the leadership team or who cooperate in the investigations of such reports. If you have been subjected to any such retaliation, you should report it in the same way you would report a claim of perceived harassment.

1-3 Complaint and Grievance Procedures

Complaint Procedure

If you believe that you have been subject to or have witnessed unlawful discrimination, including sexual or other forms of unlawful harassment, or other inappropriate conduct, we encourage you to make a complaint. You may complain directly to the executive director, the artistic director, or any other supervisor to whom you feel comfortable bringing such a complaint. Similarly, if you observe acts of discrimination toward or harassment of another volunteer or employee, we encourage you to report this to one of the individuals listed above.

All complaints will be investigated promptly, and confidentiality will be protected to the extent possible. We will communicate the timely resolution of each complaint to the individuals involved.

Grievance Procedure

This procedure provides a means for resolving Live Arts-related problems, issues, or difficulties that cannot be solved through normal channels of communications. You will not be discriminated against for using this procedure.

- When a problem arises, you should try to resolve it directly with the individual involved.
- If you're not comfortable speaking with the individual about the issue, you should present the problem to the director, producer, or stage manager, who will try to clarify and resolve the problem.
- If you're not comfortable speaking with the show leadership about the issue, you should present the problem to the executive director or artistic director, who will try to clarify and resolve the problem.

1-4 Drug-Free and Alcohol-Free Workplace

To help ensure a safe, healthy, and productive work environment for our volunteers, employees, teaching artists and interns, Live Arts maintains an environment free of drugs and alcohol. This policy applies to all volunteers who are engaged with the organization.

The unlawful or unauthorized use, abuse, solicitation, theft, possession, transfer, purchase, sale or distribution of controlled substances (including medical marijuana), drug paraphernalia, or alcohol by an individual on organization premises, on organization business, or while representing the organization is strictly prohibited. You also are prohibited from volunteering at Live Arts while under the influence of alcohol or any controlled substances which may impact your ability to perform your volunteer job or otherwise pose safety concerns. The exception is when use is prescribed by a licensed medical practitioner and that practitioner authorized the individual to report to work. However, this exception does not extend any right to report to work under the influence of medical marijuana or to use medical marijuana as a defense to a positive drug test, to the extent the employee is subject to any drug testing requirement, except as permitted by and in accordance with applicable law.

This restriction does not apply to responsible drinking of alcohol at Live Arts meetings and related social outings or the sale of alcohol during performances.

Live Arts will strive to make reasonable accommodations to assist individuals recovering from substance and alcohol dependencies, and those who have a medical history which reflects treatment for substance abuse conditions.

1-5 Workplace Violence

Live Arts is strongly committed to providing a safe place to volunteer. This policy is intended to minimize the risk of personal injury to individuals and the damage to personal property.

We do not expect you to become an expert in psychology or to physically subdue a threatening or violent individual. In fact, we discourage you from engaging in any physical confrontation with a violent or potentially violent individual. Instead, we encourage you to exercise reasonable judgment in identifying potentially dangerous situations.

Prohibited Conduct

Threats, threatening language, or any other acts of aggression or violence made by any individual will not be tolerated. A threat includes any verbal or physical harassment or abuse, any attempt at intimidating or instilling fear in others, menacing gestures, flashing of weapons, stalking, or any other hostile, aggressive, injurious, or destructive action undertaken for the purpose of domination or intimidation.

To the extent permitted by Virginia law, employees, volunteers, and visitors are prohibited from carrying weapons onto organization premises.

Reporting Procedures

You should immediately report all potentially dangerous situations, including threats, to a member of the leadership team. All threats will be promptly investigated. Reports of threats will be kept confidential to the extent confidentiality does not impede our ability to investigate and respond to the complaints. All volunteers and employees must cooperate with all investigations. No one will be subjected to retaliation, intimidation, or disciplinary action as a result of reporting a threat in good faith.

If we determine, after a good faith investigation, that someone has violated this policy, we will take swift and appropriate corrective action.

If you are the recipient of a threat made by an outside party, you should follow the steps detailed in this section.

1-6 Reasonable Accommodation for Persons With Disabilities

In accordance with the Virginia Human Rights Act (the “Act”), Live Arts employees have the right to reasonable accommodations for disabilities and to be free from unlawful discriminatory practices based on disability. Live Arts will do its best to extend those accommodations and protections to volunteers. To request a reasonable accommodation, you should contact the executive director.

Reasonable Accommodation

Live Arts will make a reasonable accommodation of an otherwise qualified volunteer related to an individual’s physical or mental disability; sincerely held religious beliefs and practices; and/or any other reason required by applicable law, unless doing so would impose an undue hardship upon the organization.

Any individual who needs an accommodation to perform their volunteer role should request one from the executive director.

1-7 Pregnancy Accommodations

In compliance with Virginia law, Live Arts will provide reasonable accommodation to the known physical limitations of a person related to pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions, unless we can demonstrate that the accommodation would impose an undue hardship on the organization.

Reasonable Accommodations

Reasonable accommodations may include, but are not be limited to:

1. more frequent or longer bathroom breaks;
2. breaks to express breast milk;

3. access to a private location other than a bathroom for the expression of breast milk;
4. acquisition or modification of equipment or access to or modification of volunteer seating;
5. a temporary transfer to a less strenuous or hazardous role;
6. assistance with manual labor;
7. role restructuring;
8. a modified volunteer schedule;
9. light duty assignments.

Any questions about or requests should be directed to the executive director.

1-8 Intimacy Training

To protect the emotions and dignity of every volunteer actor during scenes that involve sex, nudity, or kissing, Live Arts engages an intimacy consultant. That consultant adheres to five “pillars” of intimacy training during rehearsals and performances: context, consent, communication, choreography, and closure.

First, the needs of the intimate scene are established. Once these needs are understood, the actors must consent to the specific actions they are comfortable receiving. After the groundwork is laid, the intimacy coach creates a roadmap for how the scene will play out: where the actors can place their hands, how they kiss, etc. It’s much more effective than simply forcing actors to feel it out in the moment. Finally, a ritualistic closing moment is practiced among the performers so the actors know when they are officially tapping out of a scene. This intentional exercise helps the actor establish a distinction between real life and the production. And most importantly, any conduct consented to during the scene does not carry over once the performance is complete.

SECTION 2 - OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

2-1 Definitions

Volunteers - People who perform work for Live Arts without the expectation, promise, or receipt of any compensation for their work. Volunteers may receive an expense stipend to cover some costs related to volunteering. "Paid volunteers" may receive a modest production stipend for their work.

Leadership Team - The executive director and artistic director of Live Arts. The executive director reports to the Board. The artistic director reports to the executive director.

Patrons - People who give financial or other support to Live Arts or are customers or audience members of Live Arts.

Employees - Full-time, part-time, and short-term employees who are compensated for their work.

2-2 Accidents and Injuries

If you incur an injury while volunteering at Live Arts, you must notify the technical director, stage manager, or volunteer coordinator immediately and complete all requested documents regarding the reported injury. Virginia Workers' Compensation does NOT cover volunteers, and Live Arts assumes no responsibility for injuries that occur as a result of reasonably recognizable unsafe behaviors.

2-3 Stipends

Expense Stipends and Benefits

To lower financial barriers to participation, Live Arts will provide volunteers with parking vouchers for Water Street or Market Street Garage; light snacks; and a meal during all-day builds or rehearsals.

We will also provide select show volunteers with "expense stipends" to partially offset the cost of volunteering. The size of the expense stipend is based on the volunteer's level of

involvement and may vary from show to show. Expense stipends are not considered “compensation” and generally are not taxable.

Live Arts does not reimburse volunteers for other personal expenses incurred while volunteering.

Production Stipends

Live Arts provides modest “production stipends” to volunteers taking on significant positions in a production, including but limited to:

- Director
- Stage Manager
- Assistant Stage Manager
- Choreographer
- Videographer
- Music director
- Board operator
- Intimacy consultant

Stipend amounts vary by production and may be considered taxable income.

2-4 Confidentiality

As a volunteer, you are prohibited from using or disseminating Live Arts’ confidential business information. We ask you to take all appropriate steps to safeguard our confidential business information, including separating it from personal documents and not allowing other volunteers to access such information.

2-5 Benefits

Volunteers are not eligible for supplemental benefits including paid time off; medical, dental and vision coverage; paid holidays; workers’ compensation; Employee Assistance Program; and Virginia unemployment compensation.

SECTION 3 - GENERAL STANDARDS OF CONDUCT

3-1 Volunteer Bill of Rights

Live Arts requires every volunteer to sign a Volunteer Bill of Rights and Code of Conduct at least once a year. It says that as a volunteer at Live Arts, you have the right to:

- A safe and supportive creative environment free from harassment, intimidation, discrimination, or violence of any kind, including racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ageism, and ableism.
- Be treated as a whole person, and with respect.
- Ask for what you emotionally and physically need in order to work, and for those needs to change during the creative process.
- Speak up if you witness or otherwise experience inappropriate or harmful behavior from volunteers, staff members, board members, or patrons.
- Stay home when you're sick.
- Acknowledge how personal, local, or world events are impacting you and your capacity to be fully present in your work, and to have needs resulting from that impact met.
- Turn down any direction, note, role, or suggestion that makes you uncomfortable.
- Stop any meeting or rehearsal if you feel something dangerous or harmful could occur.
- Have your stated pronouns used at all times in all spaces, and to correct those who get them wrong.
- Have your name pronounced correctly, and to correct those who get it wrong.
- Exercise any of the above without fear of repercussions or impact on any possible future opportunities with Live Arts.

As a volunteer at Live Arts, we ask that you:

- **Recognize and speak up** if you witness bullying, sexual harassment, racism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, ageism, xenophobia, and other forms of discrimination.
- **Report to Live Arts staff** (production manager/volunteer coordinator, education director, artistic director and/or executive director) if you experience or encounter discrimination, harassment, or other oppressive behaviors (such as inappropriate physical contact, inappropriate language, dismissive and/or disrespectful behaviors). If

you prefer, you have the option to report securely and anonymously online at livearts.org/volunteer.

3-2 Code of Conduct Related to Working with Minors

As a Live Arts volunteer, you may occasionally work with persons under the age of 18. To protect you, the minors, and us, we ask that you abide by this Code of Conduct related to minors:

- Immediately upon arrival, you will sign in at the designated volunteer sign-in station, or notify another adult that you are in the building.
- You agree to never be alone with individual minors without written permission from a parent or guardian. The education director must have written permission on file.
- You will not contact minors outside of Live Arts without permission from the minors' parents/guardians. The education director must have written permission on file.
- You agree not to exchange telephone numbers, home addresses, e-mail addresses, social media handles, or any other home directory information with students for any purpose unless it is required for your role and you obtain written permission from their parents/guardians. The education director must have written permission on file.
- You will maintain confidentiality outside of Live Arts and will share any concerns that you may have related to a minor's welfare and safety with the director of education. You will not disclose, use, or disseminate student photographs or personal information about students or yourself without permission from Live Arts staff or the minor's parent or legal guardian.
- You agree not to transport students without the written permission of the minor's parents or guardian. The education director must have written permission on file.
- You agree to do only what is in the best personal and educational interest of every child with whom you come into contact.

- You understand that Live Arts may use the personal information you have provided to conduct a background check, to include a criminal background check and other records required for working with youth.

3-3 Punctuality and Attendance

We ask that you sign in and out when you volunteer so we can track volunteer hours for grant application purposes.

Like most nonprofit theaters, Live Arts experiences periods of extremely high activity. During these busy periods, we may request additional time from volunteers and employees. When that's the case, we will strive to provide adequate advance notice.

As with any group effort, producing a play takes cooperation and commitment from everyone. Unnecessary absences and lateness are disruptive and place an unfair burden on other volunteers, so we ask that you are on time for meetings, rehearsals, and productions.

We also recognize that there are times when absences and tardiness cannot be avoided. In such cases, volunteers are asked to notify the stage manager as early as possible.

3-4 Use of Communications and Computer Systems

No one volunteering at Live Arts business may use any communication or computer system in a manner that may be construed by others as harassing or offensive based on race, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, disability, religious beliefs, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local law.

Unauthorized duplication of copyrighted computer software violates the law and is strictly prohibited.

3-5 Use of Social Media

Live Arts respects the right of any volunteer to maintain a blog or web page or to participate in a social networking site, including Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, and LinkedIn. However, we ask that you follow these guidelines when posting:

- If you mention Live Arts and also express a political opinion, please include a disclaimer that states that the opinion expressed is your personal opinion and not that of Live Arts.
- Refrain from posting conduct that is impermissible under the law, including material that is discriminatory, obscene, defamatory, libelous, or violent.

3-6 Mobile Device Use While Driving

Volunteers who drive on Live Arts business must abide by all state or local laws prohibiting or limiting mobile device use while driving.

Under no circumstances should you feel that you need to place yourself at risk to fulfill your volunteer duties at Live Arts.

Texting and emailing while driving is prohibited in all circumstances.

3-7 Smoking

Smoking, including the use of e-cigarettes, is prohibited indoors on Live Arts premises.

3-8 Use of Equipment and Property

When using Live Arts equipment and property, we ask that you exercise care and follow all operating instructions, safety standards, and guidelines. You should notify the technical director if any equipment, machines, or tools appear to be damaged, defective, or in need of repair. Prompt reporting could prevent possible injury to you and other volunteers. Materials, including keys and tools, should be returned to Live Arts upon the completion of a show or project.

Live Arts is not responsible for any damage to your personal property.

3-9 Health and Safety

To comply with all applicable health and safety laws, Live Arts relies upon you to ensure that work areas are kept safe and free of hazardous conditions. We ask you to be conscientious about workplace safety and recognize dangerous conditions or hazards. Please report any unsafe conditions or potential hazards to the technical director immediately, even if the problem appears to be corrected.

Periodically, Live Arts may issue rules and guidelines governing workplace safety and health, especially during COVID-19. For your safety, we require strict compliance.

Any onsite injury, accident, or illness must be reported to the technical director, stage manager, or volunteer coordinator as soon as possible, regardless of the severity of the injury or accident.

3-10 Statements to the Media

All media inquiries regarding Live Arts' position on any issue must be referred to the executive director. No volunteer, unless specifically designated by the executive director, is authorized to make those statements on behalf of the organization.

This policy does not apply to program or event-focused interviews or social media that happens in the normal course promoting a show, program, or event.

3-11 Operation of Vehicles

You must have a valid driver's license in your possession while operating a vehicle off or on organization property. Every volunteer is responsible for driving safely and obeying all traffic, vehicle safety, and parking laws or regulations.

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Please read the following statements and sign below to indicate your receipt and acknowledgment of this handbook.

I have received and read Live Arts' Volunteer Handbook, including the Volunteer Bill of Rights and Code of Conduct Related to Working with Minors. I understand that the policies, rules, and benefits described in the handbook are subject to change at the sole discretion of the organization at any time.

Volunteer's Printed Name: _____

Volunteer's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please give the signed original copy of this acknowledgment to the production manager.