Purpose and Mission Statement

Purpose

The purpose of the Theatre is to produce and perform plays and musical productions to promote the theatre arts through public education and entertainment.

Mission Statement

The overall mission of the Theatre is to facilitate the production and performance of plays, musical productions, and other artistic endeavors. The ultimate goal is to promote the arts through public education and entertainment while fostering community involvement.

Code of Conduct

Smithfield Little Theatre (SLT) is a non-profit, volunteer-run community theatre who prides itself on bringing quality live entertainment to the Smithfield, Isle of Wight, and greater Hampton Roads community. Our quality live entertainment is not only based on the performances you see on stage, but also by the quality dedication of our volunteers both on and off the stage that keep SLT the welcoming, familial atmosphere everyone who comes through our doors has learned to expect and love. In order to uphold our high standards, we expect all volunteers to follow SLT's rules and procedures. Specifically, our Code of Conduct, outlined here, applies within all theatre spaces and also applies when an individual is officially representing the theatre in public spaces, in person and online.

Board members, committee chairs, production staff members, and actors shall be required to sign an acknowledgment of the Code of Conduct upon the commencement of their volunteer service. All volunteers are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct, regardless of whether they are required to sign an acknowledgment. Participation in any volunteer capacity with the Theatre constitutes an agreement to abide by the standards and expectations set forth in this Code of Conduct.

Our Standards

Below are examples of behavior that meets our high standard and helps contribute to our welcoming, familial atmosphere:

- Demonstrating empathy and kindness toward other people - this starts with yourself and then extends to others. Give yourself and each other some grace.

- Speaking from the "I" - share your own experiences and understanding. Do not speak for others.

- Engaging with curiosity and a spirit of collaboration - be respectful of differing opinions, viewpoints, and experiences. Welcome others' ideas. Give and gracefully accept constructive feedback. If you do not understand something, ask for clarity.

- Accepting responsibility for words and actions, apologizing to those affected by our mistakes, and learning from the experience - assume the best intentions of others, but understand that intention does not equal impact.

- Focusing on what is best not just for us individually, but for the overall community - Communicate clearly about expectations and commitments. Recognize that we are all volunteers and our time and efforts deserve respect.

SLT is committed to fostering this welcoming, familial atmosphere where everyone can work and learn together with physical and emotional safety, respect, and dignity. As part of this, SLT holds the highest ethical standards and does not tolerate discrimination, bullying, or any type of harassment. All volunteers to include actors, directors, producers, designers, stage and tech crew, front of house volunteers, Board of Directors members, and committee members are expected to value each other regardless of their ability, gender, cultural background, religion, age, sexual orientation, race, national origin, size, level of experience or education, or having physical or psychological disabilities. This applies to everyone who comes to SLT. Therefore, SLT has the right to warn, remove, report, or take any other appropriate action against those found to have engaged in conduct prohibited by this Code of Conduct or which otherwise is deemed inappropriate.

The SLT Board of Directors appoints a Production Advisor & Liaison (PAL) for each Theatre production. The PAL will act as an outside third-party for a production and will be the single point of contact between the production members and the Board as well as be a resource that will also update the Board if there are any concerns during the rehearsal process and run of the show.

This Code of Conduct prohibits, but is certainly not limited to, the categories outlined below:

Discrimination is the unfair treatment based on characteristics such as race, gender, age, sexual orientation, religious creed, color, national origin or ancestry, size, physical or mental disability, medical condition, marital status, domestic partner status, and veteran or military status. Giving or withholding benefits such as casting or other opportunities will not be tolerated.

Note: SLT does recognize there are social, artistic, and/or contractual obligations to specific casting appropriate to specific scripts and those scripts only may be limited in casting as such.

Harassment is any unwelcome, threatening, or abusive conduct that demeans, intimidates, or alarms a person without a legitimate purpose. It can take many forms including physical violence, verbal abuse, or persistent digital communications. This also includes sexual harassment which is unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or offensive verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature. Any form of harassment is considered unlawful when it creates a hostile environment and will not be tolerated.

Note: SLT may stage scripts in which characters interact in abusive or intimate ways or have other characteristics that could be seen as harassment. Directors and performers are expected to be open in communication, ask permission, and remain professional as these scenes are rehearsed to ensure all participants remain comfortable and safe. Any concerns with the staging of these scenes should be brought to the Director of the production first then to the PAL if needed.

Bullying is extreme rudeness, insulting, belittling, threatening (actual or threatened violence), humiliation, physical and/or emotional intimidation, or use of offensive language.

Misuse of Authority is any person who could be seen as a person of power or control such as a director, producer, or Board member leveraging his/her position to improperly influence someone he/she supervises, oversees, or directs.

Retaliation against anyone making a complaint as well as knowingly making a false complaint under this Code is also prohibited.

Safety and Security

Possession of dangerous, unauthorized, or illegal materials such as explosives, real firearms (even if one possesses the correct license), weapons, drugs, or other similar items are prohibited on SLT premises.

Enforcement Responsibilities

This document shall be distributed by the PAL for production volunteers requiring signature and by the Board President for non-production volunteers requiring signature. Signed acknowledgments shall be maintained by the Board Secretary.

A signed acknowledgment shall remain valid for a period of three (3) years, regardless of the volunteer role under which it was originally executed. Volunteers required to sign the acknowledgment must execute a new acknowledgment every three (3) years or whenever the Code of Conduct is substantially revised.

SLT's Board of Directors is responsible for clarifying and enforcing our standards of acceptable behavior and will take appropriate and fair corrective action in response to any behavior that they deem inappropriate, threatening, offensive, or harmful as outlined in this Code of Conduct, and will communicate reasons for decisions when appropriate.

Complaint Process

SLT encourages immediate reporting of any incident or behavior that may be inconsistent with the Code of Conduct so that concerns may be addressed quickly and fairly. Complaints should generally be submitted within thirty (30) days of the most recent occurrence. SLT recognizes that there may be circumstances in which a person is unable or unwilling to report a concern within this timeframe. Accordingly, SLT reserves the discretion to consider complaints submitted after thirty (30) days when circumstances warrant, particularly when the complaint involves safety, harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or other serious misconduct.

Anyone who is the target or witness of behavior should make a complaint directly to the PAL of the show, or to the President of the Board if it occurs outside of the production process. If the President is of concern or unavailable, complaints should be directed to the Vice President or another available Board member.

When a complaint is made to the PAL, the PAL will consult with the President and decide appropriate next steps which could include making reasonable inquiries regarding the specific issue. The SLT Board of Directors is committed to undertaking prompt, thorough, objective, and good faith investigations of any complaints. In handling a complaint, the PAL, President, and/or Board will maintain confidentiality for all parties to the extent practical, but we cannot guarantee to process purely anonymous complaints.

Following any needed investigation, if the complaint is of an exceptionally egregious nature or there are multiple similar complaints within the same show, the PAL or President will bring it to the Board's attention and they will collectively decide the action to be taken. This will help ensure fair and consistent resolution for similar offenses.

Informal Approach - If the accuser feels comfortable going directly to the director or producer for action, they may discuss the issue with the accused and attempt a resolution. However, the director or producer must share the incident with the PAL in case there are repeat offenses. If the accuser does not feel the issue has been addressed, the accused should go directly to the PAL.

Formal Approach - If a suitable resolution cannot be reached or fails, the incident must be elevated to the PAL who will then consult with the President for appropriate resolution or need for full Board involvement.

While the below levels of resolution will typically be followed in order, certain egregious behavior may result in skipping lower levels of resolution.

Levels of Resolution

1. Impose a verbal warning and receive adequate assurance that the issue will not reoccur.
2. Impose a written warning and receive appropriate training and/or guidance on how to avoid the issues from recurring again.
3. Suspend the offending individual for a specific period of time.
4. Terminate the offending individual from further volunteer opportunities similar to the role in which the issue happened.
5. Terminate the offending individual from all further volunteer opportunities.

I have read and I understand the Smithfield Little Theatre Code of Conduct. I agree to abide by the expectations described above and understand that I may be removed as a volunteer for the show or committee I am participating in, and that, at the discretion of the show Production Advisor & Liaison and/or Board of Directors, I could be subject to warnings, further training, suspension, and/or termination from future involvement related to Smithfield Little Theatre if I violate any of these expectations.

Printed Full Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature (if participant is under 18): _____

Date: _____

PAL or President Signature: _____

Date: _____