The Ark – Fair Pay, Fair Practice Statement

At The Ark, we believe that children deserve art of the highest quality, created by professional artists who are valued and supported in their work. Fair pay and fair practice are at the heart of how we collaborate with artists, creatives and other programme-related staff.

Our Commitments

- **Parity of esteem** – We pay artists working with children on a par with, or above, those working in adult contexts.
- **Fair remuneration** – All artists are paid for the time, skills and expertise they bring, including for preparation, rehearsal, performance, and digital presentation of work.
- **Respect for rights** – Copyright is respected and licensed appropriately, and our digital licensing rates are standardised across artforms.
- **Most Favoured Nations (MFN) principle** – Designers and performers within a show are paid on equal terms.
- **Transparency** – Our rate card is published and reviewed annually to ensure fairness and sustainability.

How We Work

- We issue clear written agreements that set out expectations, deliverables and pay.
- Artists are credited for their contribution and reimbursed for reasonable expenses.
- We prioritise fairness in our budgets, sometimes turning down projects that cannot meet our standards.
- We engage artists as employees or freelancers according to the nature of the work, in line with national guidance.

Our Values in Practice

Fair Pay, Fair Practice at The Ark means recognising artists as professionals, ensuring their wellbeing, and creating the conditions for them to do their best work with and for children.

We review this policy regularly, listen to artists' feedback, and continue to advocate for better conditions across the sector.

FINAL

The Ark – Fair Pay, Fair Practice Policy

1. Introduction

The Ark is committed to ensuring fair pay and fair practice in all engagements with artists and creative freelancers. We recognise artists as professionals whose skills, time, and expertise are essential to delivering high-quality artistic experiences for children. This policy sets out the principles and practices that guide our work.

2. Context

The arts sector in Ireland has historically faced challenges including low pay, unpaid hours, and insecure working conditions. As a publicly funded cultural organisation, The Ark has a responsibility to model fair and sustainable practice. We align our approach with Arts Council guidance and national employment law.

3. Purpose

This policy:
- Defines The Ark's commitment to fair remuneration and working conditions.
- Provides a framework for decision-making in budgeting, contracting, and project planning.
- Ensures accountability to artists, funders, and audiences.

4. Scope

This policy applies to all artists, creative professionals, and contractors engaged by The Ark, whether as freelancers, employees, or under short-term contracts.

5. Principles

Note: We recognise the ongoing sectoral work to develop a national framework for Fair Pay, Fair Practice (currently in draft form). While this policy is rooted in The Ark's own commitments, we will continue to monitor and, where appropriate, align with emerging national standards as they are finalised.

The Ark is committed to:

- Parity of esteem across children's arts and adult arts.
- Equal remuneration for hours worked, taking child labour laws into account.
- Fair remuneration for both live and digital presentations of work.
- Most Favoured Nations (MFN) provision for designers and performers within a show.
- Respect for copyright and appropriate licensing across all artforms.
- Benchmarking pay against sector norms, ensuring that our rates are on par with, or exceed, those of other national organisations.
- Annual review of our rate card to ensure sustainability and transparency.

6. Practices

- Prompt payment: We pay agreed fees in line with the payment dates included in contracts and aim to pay invoices within 10 working days of receipt.
- Comprehensive fees: Fees include preparation, rehearsal, meetings, travel days, documentation, and evaluation as well as delivery.
- Instalments: For larger projects, fees may be paid in instalments, including an upfront portion and staged payments at milestones.
- Cancellation: Cancellation fees will be payable where projects are curtailed as outlined in contracts.
- Flexibility: We build flexibility into scheduling to support artists with caring responsibilities.
- Access: We discuss and support reasonable access requirements, including additional costs for artists with disabilities.
- Contracts: Written contracts are issued to all artists, setting out expectations, deliverables, fees, and rights.
- Pay and fees: Artists are always paid for their time, including preparation, rehearsal, and meetings, not just delivery.

FINAL

- Expenses: Reasonable expenses (e.g. travel, accommodation) are reimbursed.
- Credit: Artists are acknowledged appropriately in communications and presentations.
- Budgeting: Fair pay is prioritised in all project budgets; projects that cannot meet this standard may be declined.
- Employment status: In line with national guidance, we anticipate that some engagements will meet the threshold of employee status rather than freelance.
    - As a result, The Ark budgets appropriately for PRSI and holiday pay costs.
    - Auto-enrolment for pensions is expected to begin shortly; The Ark will contribute 1% of all fees for relevant employees in the first year of the scheme, increasing in line with legislation.

7. Related Policies

This policy sits alongside The Ark's:

- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy
- Safe to Create Code of Conduct
- Safety Statement
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Employee Handbook

It also responds to the Arts Council's *Paying the Artist Policy* and *Fair Pay, Fair Practice Toolkit*

8. Implementation & Responsibilities

- Director: Overall responsibility for policy implementation.
- Programme Leads: responsible for ensuring fair pay principles are applied in all artist engagements.
- General Manager: ensures compliance with tax, PRSI, and pension obligations.
- Board: approves and monitors the policy as part of governance oversight.

9. Monitoring & Review

- The Ark's rate card is reviewed annually by management and approved by the Board.
- This policy will be reviewed annually, with input from staff, artists, and trustees.
- Artist feedback (via debriefs, surveys, or consultation) will inform improvements.
- Compliance with financial and legal obligations (e.g. PRSI, pensions) will be reported in annual accounts.

FINAL

Appendix: The Ark Artist Rate Card 2026

(Rates exclude PRSI)

1. Theatre, Dance & Music – Shows

Role	Fee (Overall)	Weekly Fee	Day / Performance Rate	Notes
Actor	–	€900	€300	
Adaptation (script) / Arrangement (music)	50% of full commission fee	–	–	
Assistant Director	€5,000	–	–	
Assistant Stage Manager	–	€900	–	
Child Performers	–	€15/hour (rehearsals)	Same as adult actor during show run	
Costume Designer	€5,000	–	–	
Director	€7,000–€8,000	–	–	
Lighting Designer	€5,000	–	€175 (re-plot per venue)	
Lighting / Sound Operator	–	€900	€250–€350	
Movement Director	€5,000	–	–	
Musical Director	€4,500–€7,000	–	€900	
Musician	–	€900	€300	
Producer	€8,000–€9,000	–	–	
Production Manager	€5,000–€7,000	–	–	
Set & Costume Designer (combined)	€7,500	–	–	
Set Designer	€5,000	–	–	
Sound Designer	€5,000	–	–	
Stage Manager	–	€900	€300	
Video Designer	€5,000	–	–	
Writer / Composer / Choreographer (full-length commission)	€15,000	–	–	
Writer / Composer (short piece commission)	€3,000	–	–	
Remount Fees	Negotiated in good faith (typically 1/3 of original fee)			

2. Visual Arts

Role / Commission	Fee (Overall)	Weekly Fee	Day Rate	Notes
Commission – Group Show / Single Artwork	€3,000	–	–	
Commission – Solo Exhibition	€15,000	–	–	
Commission – Video-based Artwork	€15,000	–	–	
Curator	€3,000–€5,000	–	–	VA Ireland suggests 8–25% of total budget depending on role
Exhibiting Fee (small works)	€250	–	–	For smaller commissions (e.g. portraits)

FINAL

3. Development Workshops (Studio / Commissions)

Type	Fee (Overall)	Weekly Fee	Day Rate	Notes
Studio Development	–	See performer/SM weekly rates	€300	Day rate applies only to 1–2 days. Over 2 days, weekly rates apply. Directors paid same as actors.

4. Workshops – Children & CPD

Type	Fee (Overall)	Weekly Fee	Day Rate	Notes
Assistant Artist	–	–	€150	
CPD Summer Course	€1,500	–	–	1 week
CPD Workshop	–	–	€300	
Large Workshop Programme	–	€1,000–€1,250	–	Consecutive weeks
Preparation Day	–	–	€150	
Workshop Delivery	–	–	€300	

5. Resource Creation

Type	Fee (Overall)	Notes
Activity Sheet / Trail (short)	€150 (+prep if required)	May require additional prep fee (e.g. to attend rehearsal)
Blog Writing	€300	
Classroom Activity Pack / PDST Resource	€1,000	Significant document

6. Royalties (Commissioned Artists Only)

Type	Rate
Composers / Songwriters	3% of box office (IMRO rate)
Theatre Writers	10% (can be split 50/50 if joint commission)

7. Expenses & Per Diems

Type	Rate
Accommodation (Dublin)	€150–€200 per day
Per Diem (outside Dublin, >50 miles)	€30/day
Travel	€0.41/km

8. Meetings & Speakers

Type	Fee
Chairing a Panel	€300
Meeting (in person)	€150
Meeting (online)	€100
Speaker – Keynote / Symposium	€300
Speaker – Panel / Talk (15 mins)	€200

9. Online & Digital

Type	Fee (Overall)	Notes
Creation of Workshop Video	€300	Artist delivers content; editing not included
Delivery of Online Activity	As per live fees	–
Licensing	€100 per artist or designer per 12 months	

FINAL