

footlights

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A proven model. A creative future.

Franchise with Footlights

A stage school franchise created by professionals, inspired by children

Why franchise with Footlights?

When people first speak to me about franchising with Footlights, they often say it doesn't feel corporate. That's intentional.

I founded Footlights in 2005 with a simple belief that every child, regardless of background, deserves the chance to grow through creativity and performance, in an environment that is safe, inclusive and genuinely enjoyable, with high standards that put their confidence and development first.

Two decades on, I remain hands-on in the day-to-day running of the business, continuing to run my own schools and working directly with franchisees across the network.

Footlights has been running **high-quality stage schools for over 20 years**, offering acting, singing and dance training for children and young people aged 3–18. What began as a single school has grown into a national franchise network, expanding carefully while holding onto the values and ways of working that shaped Footlights from the outset.

This overview is here to give you a clear and honest picture of what franchising with Footlights looks like in practice, the support we provide and whether running a Footlights stage school could be the right next step for you.



Jo Fisher - Footlights Away Day 2025

Jo Fisher, BA (Hons), PGCE
Founder & Managing Director

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What sets Footlights apart

Footlights combines a **values-led ethos** with a **professionally run operating model**, shaped by **experienced educators** working alongside **industry professionals**. Decisions are informed by real experience of education, current creative practice and **sound business judgement**.



The franchise model is **established, realistic and designed for long-term sustainability**, with **ongoing support built into the structure** rather than added as extra cost. Refined over more than two decades of delivery, it supports franchisees in building **financially viable schools rooted in their local communities**.

As a franchisee, you benefit from a **clear and structured support framework**, including:

- **Guidance on selecting a suitable territory**, grounded by demographic insight
- **Structured pre-launch training** covering creative and operational foundations
- **A comprehensive Operations Manual** setting out systems and processes
- **Ongoing guidance across safeguarding, staffing, marketing and enrolment**
- Access to an active and **collaborative franchise network**

Footlights has been recognised for:

- **Impact with young people**
- **Business performance**

Including awards at the British Franchise Awards and the Salford Business Awards.

What running a Footlights stage school looks like

Running a Footlights stage school is a **hands-on ownership role**. You operate **your school as your own business** within an agreed territory, supported by a **proven framework developed through years of delivery**.

You set the creative direction of the school, uphold standards and support your staff, **ensuring a high-quality experience** that families trust and return to week after week.

Most schools operate at **weekends during term time**, with **additional opportunities** through holiday provision and after-school clubs. Delivery is typically concentrated at weekends, with administrative work planned around that rhythm.

You are not required to teach classes yourself.



For many franchisees, the role is **demanding but deeply rewarding**, centred on seeing **children and young people grow in confidence** and skill, and **building a school that becomes an established part of its local community**.

“ Opening my Footlights franchise has been nothing short of a dream come true. The personal and professional support from Jo and the Head Office team has been outstanding throughout the entire process. The training gave me the confidence and tools I needed to launch successfully, and within 12 months my school was at full capacity. ”

Anna Morgan, Franchisee – Footlights Sale & Altrincham

Our journey

2005

Where it began

One school
15 children
Strong foundations

Growth & National Expansion

Building momentum

Solid North West base
Expansion into the Midlands, South West
& London
A truly national network takes shape

2025

Evolving the brand

New Identity
Clearer Voice
Same Values



A Franchisee's Perspective

Aaron's journey reflects what happens when Footlights is experienced not just as a brand, but as a deep-rooted community.

“From the moment they walked through the doors, it felt different — safe, welcoming, and genuinely invested in every child.”

I first encountered Footlights in 2013 when my younger siblings attended an open day.

Over time, I watched both of them grow in confidence, resilience, and independence. What once felt challenging for my brother became something he could approach through learned skills that carried far beyond Saturday classes.



That long-term impact stayed with me. In 2018, I opened my first Footlights franchise. Today, I operate multiple schools and continue to see that same transformation in students, teachers, and families every week.

Aaron Doherty, Franchisee — Footlights Rossendale, Rochdale & Pendle

Training, guidance and the Footlights network

All Footlights franchisees receive **structured initial training** and ongoing guidance, covering both the creative and operational aspects of running a stage school.

The systems and resources provided allow franchisees to focus on **leadership, quality and sustainable growth**.

As a Footlights Franchisee, you will have access to:



Marketing Manager

Hands-on support with marketing campaigns, messaging, and enrolment strategy to help you grow your school confidently.



WhatsApp Support

An active franchise WhatsApp group used daily for advice, problem-solving, and sharing successes across the network.



Connect In-Person

Regular opportunities to meet, share ideas, and learn together — including in-person events and annual network days.



Head Office

Ongoing access to Head Office for guidance, reassurance, and operational support as your business develops.

What sets Footlights apart is that this **guidance is shaped and delivered by people who continue to run Footlights schools themselves**. The founder remains directly involved in delivery, alongside franchisees who actively **share ideas, successes and learning across the network**.



Franchise Lifestyle

Build a flexible, rewarding business that fits around your life

Operating Model

Saturday mornings | 9.15am–1.15pm contact time
36 weeks per year | Start small | Grow when ready

Why Footlights?

Footlights is designed for people who want **flexibility, purpose, and financial reward** — without sacrificing family time.

With full training and ongoing Head Office support, you don't need previous business experience to succeed. A passion for children and young people is essential — this is a face-to-face business, not an investment opportunity.

Getting Started

Start-up cost: £4,794 – £15,900

Low overheads. Manageable risk.

Many franchisees start alongside other work or family commitments.

Investment is often recovered within the first year.

How You Earn

- Weekly Saturday classes
- Holiday workshops & camps
- Performances & shows
- After-school clubs included

You choose how much you work — and how much you grow

Your Earning Path

- **Saturday mornings only: £13,250+ per year**
- **Maximise your territory & holiday schools: £80,000+ per year**

More Than Income

You'll build confidence, creativity, and life skills in children and young people — while creating a business that works for you.

What does it cost?

Investment from as little as £7,000

We offer two start-up options, allowing you to choose the option that best suits your circumstances: both options require £2,000 working capital.

Option 1
£4,794 inc VAT
On the lower start-up fee you pay 20% royalty from trading (this reduces to 10% after 3 years).
Best for: Getting started with lower initial investment

OR

Option 2
£15,900 inc VAT
You can trade royalty-free for the first six months. After that, you pay a 10% royalty.
Best for: Keeping more income in the first six months

What do I get for my initial investment?

- Turn-key business model
- Territory finding and mapping
- Location sourcing
- Intensive full training with Head Office
- Marketing campaign and social media support
- Access to our full operational systems
- Merchandise and front-of-house materials
- Access to the franchise support network and a dedicated mentor

What is a royalty fee?

A royalty fee (also known as a management service fee) is a monthly payment that covers continued brand support, training, systems, and operational guidance — helping you run your business successfully.

How much can I earn?

Franchisees can realistically earn:

- £13,250 per year working 6–8 hours per week
- Over £80,000 per year from a single territory

Example earning scenarios

KEY FACTS

<p>Initial investment: Franchisees typically recover their investment within the first year to 18 months.</p>	<p>Key Factor: The speed of return depends on the franchisee's commitment, consistency, and the work they put in.</p>
<p>Earning Potential: High-performing franchisees can achieve six-figure annual turnover.</p>	<p>Profitability: Our top franchisee operates with a substantial profit margin.</p>
<p>Scalability: Income can grow significantly as classes, venues, and student numbers increase.</p>	

We are the only children's stage school franchise offering integrated after-school clubs alongside weekend classes

What you could earn as a franchisee

Your Time Commitment	What You Can Achieve	Annual Profit
Saturday Mornings Only	Run a school for 36 weeks of term plus 2 weeks full-time in the summer . With a school just 60% full, this model offers an accessible, low-risk entry into franchise ownership.	£13,250 per year
Booked & Scaled	Operate Saturday mornings , commit to one admin day per week , and maximise income through half-term clubs and summer holiday provision . Ideal for franchisees ready to grow and maximise returns.	£35,000 + per year

Illustrative examples – figures vary by location and time

Who Footlights franchisees are

Footlights franchisees come from a **wide range of backgrounds**, reflected across the network.

What they share is a **genuine enthusiasm for the performing arts** and a **desire to build a high-quality, people-centred business**. Many bring creative, educational or leadership experience, while others develop these skills through the role itself.

You do not need prior franchise or business ownership experience, or a formal teaching qualification. **What matters is readiness to take ownership** of building and leading a school, grounded in high professional standards and a genuine interest in working with young people through the performing arts.

Footlights franchisees remain in their territories long term, **building schools that become trusted parts of their communities**, with some choosing to expand further as their schools grow.

A small snapshot of franchisees from across the Footlights network.



Anna
Footlights Sale & Altrincham



Khara
Footlights Old Trafford



Aydin
Footlights Epsom



Vicki
Footlights Bury & Middleton



Richard and Debbie
Footlights Worcester



Serena and Alex
Footlights Bracknell



What kind of Footlights Franchisee are you?

Example 1: Part-Time Franchise Operator (£35k Turnover)

①

Perfect for parents or career-balancers

Maria runs her franchise alongside family life and other commitments.

- **Saturday mornings:** One stage school
- **Holiday programmes:** Two weeks per year
- **Admin:** One weekday morning from home

This model generates around **£35,000 annual turnover** while keeping the working week light and predictable. Maria enjoys **most weekdays free**, school-friendly hours, and the flexibility to scale up when the time is right.

“I love that my business fits around my life, not the other way round.”

Example 2: Expanding Franchise Operator (£65k Turnover)

②

A balanced, flexible main income

James has built a strong local presence while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

- **Saturday mornings:** One stage school
- **Midweek:** One evening class
- **Holiday programmes:** Three weeks in summer + one half term
- **Admin:** Two weekdays

This structure delivers approximately **£65,000 annual turnover** and allows James to keep **most daytime hours free**, with evenings and weekends carefully planned. It's a great example of a franchise that grows without becoming overwhelming.

“I choose when to be busy and when to switch off.”

Example 3: Established Franchise Operator (Six-Figure Turnover)

③

Maximising territory without burning out

Priya runs a highly successful franchise while still protecting her personal time.

- **Weekends:** Two stage schools
- **Midweek:** Two evening classes
- **Holiday programmes:** Four weeks in summer + one half term
- **Admin:** Three structured weekdays

By fully utilising her territory, Priya achieves a **six-figure annual turnover**, supported by strong systems and efficient scheduling. Despite the scale of the business, her workload is **planned, sustainable, and flexible**.

“The business works hard — so I don't have to all the time.”

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Thank you for taking the time to read this overview.

You may find it helpful to reflect on:

- Why you would like to run a Footlights stage school
- Which area you would be interested in operating
- How much time you are able to commit

If you would like to explore the opportunity further, the next step is an **initial conversation**.

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