

Vernon Bear Costume Hire Guidelines

24.10.17

The costume consists of:

1x lightweight head with adjustable head harness and fan
1x hooped underbody
1x t-shirt with zip in fur arms
1x pair of fur legs on braces
1x pair of shorts on an adjustable vest
1x pair of socks
1x pair of shoes
1x tour bag

How to put the costume on:

1. Put the underbody on;
2. Put the fur legs on;
3. Put the shorts on;
4. Put the t-shirt on;
5. Put the socks on;
6. Put the shoes on;
7. Finally, put the head on – adjust head harness to fit using the adjustable knob inside the helmet – operate the fan using the toggle switch inside the helmet.

Care:

- Keep the costume hung up outside tour bag for ventilation
- Keep the head stored upright
- **Never** pick Vernon Bear's head up by his ears
- Always wear socks with feet

Character costume safety:

Minders – Vernon Bear in a meet-and-greet situation should always have a minder to act as his eyes, ears and voice.

Sign language – Vernon Bear and minder should have some hand signals to indicate that they need to exit. Something as simple as a thumb down can tell the minder that something is wrong.

Schedule - Breaks and appearances should be established before every performance. In most meet-and-greet situations a person should not be in the costume for more than 20 minutes before having a break. Remove the head to cool down quickly.

Practice makes perfect - It is a good idea for everyone performing in the costume to give it a "test drive" before going out in public. This will help the performer to be more aware of his boundaries.

Performing tips

Communication is very important with Vernon Bear. But certain kinds of communication work better than others. For example, Vernon Bear should never speak, as it ruins the illusion.

Adults and teens – Shake hands, give a big hug, laugh, and even blow a kiss. Most importantly, take notice of adults and teens as soon as they approach you. This will establish a level of authority. Your escort should make eye contact and say something like "who do we have here?" To initiate a conversation. This type of introduction and interaction with teens and adults can diffuse uncomfortable encounters.

Children – Keep the movement slower and gentle with children. Remember, some children are afraid and intimidated by character costumes. Making large fast movements can be very scary to a child. Hold your hand out and open and close your hand slowly to wave. Let the child feel how soft your hand is. Let them get to know you at their own pace. If a child is scared of you and screams you can do the same by moving away from the child, covering your eyes and shaking your knees to signal that you are also a little nervous. Try to move slowly back towards the child and build a relationship but if they're still scared, simply move on to the next child and let them observe how friendly you are. They may still come around for a big hug.

Costume gestures

Waving – Use your entire arm for a big wave in situations that you really need to stand out like a sports game or walking in a parade. Simply open and close your hand when waving to a smaller child in a meet and greet situation.

Laughing – Bring your hands up to Vernon Bear's mouth and nod his head forward in a rapid motion to signal laughing.

Blowing a kiss - Put your hand to Vernon Bear's mouth and then flat out in front of the head with the palm up.

Hugging – Be gentle when hugging. Remember that children may feel shy or intimidated!

I love you! – Point to yourself then use both hands to draw a heart in the air and point to the recipient.

I'm scared! – Run-away, cover your eyes, and shake your knees. Lifting one hand up to peek out can be very comical.

Aww, shucks! - Give a little sweeping kick forward while hooking your arm in front of you.

So you have the basics, now, get into character and have fun!!