

# VARSITY BLUES HANDBOOK AND STANDING RULES

Revised September 9, 2019

## MISSION STATEMENT

- *To provide opportunities for students to develop their vocal and dance skills while they enjoy the creative process of the performing arts.*
- *To promote pride and encourage cooperation, as part of a long-standing community organization.*
- *To provide affordable community entertainment that appeals to all agegroups and varied styles of musical appreciation.*
- *Most of all, to realize the value of each Varsity Blues Cast Member, provide him/her encouragement and support, and recognize the strengths of every individual within our group.*

## GOALS

Being a Cast Member of Varsity Blues is a privilege. With this privilege, there are certain expectations and responsibilities. It takes hard work and dedication by all Cast Members and their families to remain successful.

## OUR SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

**To work with others** –Varsity Blues Cast Members should develop self-discipline, respect for those in authority, and demonstrate an ability to place group goals above individual accomplishments.

**To be successful** – In a society that is very competitive, people measure success in many ways. Varsity Blues believe you will be successful if you continually strive to do your best.

**To develop professionalism** – To accept direction and to treat fellow Cast Members, Directors, Board Members, parents, and audiences with respect.

**To persevere** –Varsity Blues Cast Members need to develop a sense of loyalty to fellow Cast Members, Directors, and most of all themselves.

## MEMBERSHIP, AUDITIONS, AND TIME COMMITMENT

Auditions for the Varsity Cast (grades 9-12) are held in September of each year. The Varsity Cast rehearsal/performance season runs from September through July.

Auditions for the Kids Cast (KC) (grades 1-4) and Junior Varsity (JV) Cast (grades 5-8) are held in March of each year. KC/JV rehearsal/performance season runs from March through July, and October through December.

## REHEARSALS

For the Varsity Cast, regularly scheduled rehearsals will take place in the evening, typically on a fixed day of the week. There may be additional/make-up rehearsals. Additional rehearsals will be scheduled prior to performances/gigs and shows as needed.

For the KC/JV Casts, rehearsals will take place in the evening, but the day of the week will vary. There may be additional/make-up rehearsals and/or added rehearsals prior to the shows as needed.

The website calendar will have all rehearsals and up-to-date information posted in advance. Please check the website ([www.salinevarsityblues.com](http://www.salinevarsityblues.com)) often for information. The VB Board can be contacted at [salinevarsityblues@gmail.com](mailto:salinevarsityblues@gmail.com).

## ATTENDANCE

All Cast Members are expected to be at all rehearsals, shows, and activities **on time**. We have strict expectations regarding attendance. We believe these are fair and protect all of our Cast Members. Like any performance ensemble, one person's absence has a negative impact on the group as a whole.

Please see Appendix A for the full Varsity Cast attendance policy.

KC/JV Cast Members are expected to attend all rehearsals and shows. If a KC/JV Cast Member will be absent, will be arriving late, or will be leaving early, the Cast Member or his/her parent/guardian must contact the KC/JV Attendance Officer in advance of the absence. Excused absences will typically include religious observance, injury/illness, funeral, required (graded) school event or other approved absence. If a KC/JV Cast Member has a pattern of absence, a representative of the Board of Directors will contact the parent/guardian to discuss the situation. If absences lead to a KC/JV Cast Member not knowing their lyrics or choreography, the Cast Member may be removed from a number or numbers at the discretion of the Artistic Director.

Varsity Cast parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to attend the Annual Voter's Meeting in September.

KC/JV parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to attend the Summer Show Parent Meeting and the Holiday Show Parent Meeting (if their Cast Member is participating in the Holiday Show).

## SHOWS

**Holiday Show** – Performances of our annual Holiday Show will be early to mid- December. This is a **mandatory event** for Varsity Cast Members. The KC and JV Casts from the previous Summer Show are invited to perform in the Holiday Show.

**Summer Show** – This is how we finish our year, with our biggest show and our best performance. **THIS IS A MANDATORY EVENT** for all Cast Members. The annual Summer Show will typically take place in July. Rehearsals are almost daily as the show approaches and are quite intense. The Summer Show is only possible with the full participation of all Cast Members and their families.

We expect Cast Members' families to volunteer during rehearsals, assist with sets/set up, and participate in Strike (tear-down) after the show. There are many volunteer opportunities for any schedule and skill set.

## FUNDRAISING

Varsity Blues is supported by the volunteer efforts of our Cast Members, their families, and friends.

PARTICIPATION IN CERTAIN FUNDRAISING EVENTS BY VARSITY CAST MEMBERS IS MANDATORY. Funds generated through these efforts are broken down into two categories: (1) general fund - funds that benefit Varsity Blues program activities; and (2) individual Varsity Cast Member Funds - funds that are credited directly to a Cast Member's account offsetting the cost of their dues and tour.

Fundraisers are scheduled throughout the year. Information will be provided in written form and via email from the VB Board. Please contact the VB Board with any questions about fundraising at [salinevarsityblues@gmail.com](mailto:salinevarsityblues@gmail.com).

When fundraisers are announced, be sure to read all fundraising information carefully to determine when/how you will participate. Reasonable efforts will be made to accommodate Cast Members' schedules.

## RETREAT (VARSITY CAST)

**RETREAT IS MANDATORY for the Varsity Cast.** It is a time for learning and rehearsing performance programs (music and choreography) for the year, workshops, and bonding with new and returning members. Retreat sets the tone for the season, and it gives everyone the special feeling of belonging.

Retreat will typically take place in January. Fees for retreat are included in the annual Varsity Cast dues. We rely on parent volunteers (including chaperones) and food contributions to make this event a success, and your family will be asked to sign up for these in advance.

## **PERFORMANCES/GIGS**

The Varsity Cast is frequently asked to perform at various events around the community. We will notify you as soon as possible when events have been scheduled. Again, it is essential that all Cast Members are available to participate.

## **TOUR (VARSITY CAST)**

Each summer, the Varsity Cast goes on a performance tour prior to the Summer Show. Tour is a learning experience that always provides performance opportunities; it is also a chance to see and learn about different types of performances and shows. Prior tours have included Toronto, New York, Boston, Chicago, Nashville, Disney World, and a Caribbean cruise. The details for tour will be announced in the fall, and a pre-departure meeting will be held prior to tour.

Varsity Cast Members are responsible for the cost of tour. Varsity Blues may contribute to the cost of tour. In addition, Varsity Blues will provide fundraising opportunities to assist Varsity Cast Members with defraying the cost of tour. Tour must be paid in full by deadline given, or the Cast Member will be unable to attend.

## **FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS**

Varsity Blues is a non-profit organization. The financial commitment required of Cast Members covers a portion of our expenses; the remainder of our expenses are covered through volunteer time, donations, and fundraising. Varsity Blues families having difficulty meeting the financial commitment should contact the Treasurer to work out a payment schedule. However, if payment remains delinquent after a reminder letter has been sent, the Cast Member may be suspended from all Varsity Blues sponsored activities (including rehearsals, gigs, performances, tour, retreat, and social events) until the financial obligation has been met.

### Varsity Cast Financial Obligations

The following is a brief overview of the financial obligations for Varsity Cast members; the specific costs for each year will be detailed at the Annual Meeting in September.

ANNUAL DUES	Determined annually by the Board of Directors. Payment in full is preferred at the Annual Meeting in September. Retreat fees and required Holiday Show and Summer Show shirts are included in your annual membership dues. All dues must be paid in full by the date announced at the Annual Meeting.
TOUR	Varsity Cast Members must pay for the cost of tour. The tour cost, as

	well as payment schedule, will be announced at the Annual Meeting in September.
COSTUMES	A costume list will be provided for Holiday Show and Summer Show. All Cast Members must have the required costumes to participate in any performance.
DANCE SHOES	Dance shoes are MANDATORY for the safety and agility of VB dancers. All Cast Members are required to have BLACK JAZZ SHOES and ladies also require BLACK CHARACTER SHOES.
VB Buddy Gifts	For four nights of Summer Show, Cast Members participate in VB Buddies. Gifts for each night typically range from \$8-10.

### KC/JV Financial Obligations

The following is a brief overview of the financial obligations for Varsity Cast members; the specific costs for each year will be detailed at the parent meeting that precedes each show.

SHOW DUES	Determined by the Board of Directors for the Summer Show and Holiday Show. Payment in full is expected at the parent meeting.
COSTUMES	A costume list will be provided for Holiday Show and Summer Show. All Cast Members must have the required costumes to participate in any performance.
DANCE SHOES	Dance shoes are MANDATORY for the safety and agility of VB dancers. All Cast Members are required to have BLACK JAZZ SHOES.
VB Buddy Gifts	For four nights of Summer Show, Cast Members participate in VB Buddies. Gifts for each night typically range from \$8-10.

## **CONDUCT**

Varsity Blues Cast Members are to represent the organization in an honorable manner at all times. Actions by a Cast Member that violate any criminal laws, or the expectations and rules outlined in this Handbook could be cause for discipline, and/or expulsion from Varsity Blues.

1. If a Cast Member possesses or uses illegal drugs, alcohol, tobacco (including e-cigarettes), or any other controlled substance, s/he may face expulsion from the group.

2. If a Cast Member destroys any property that is not their own, the Cast Member and their parent/guardian will be held financially responsible for damages.
3. If a Cast Member is convicted of committing a felony, s/he **will** face expulsion from the group.

It is the responsibility of all Board Members to ensure that each Cast Member is following these rules. If a violation is reported, the Board will investigate the alleged violation and notify the Cast Member's parent(s)/guardian(s) immediately. The Cast Member and a parent/guardian will typically be required to appear before the Board of Directors.

## **BEHAVIOR**

1. Cast Members are expected to behave in a manner that allows for efficient and orderly rehearsals, performances, gigs, and all other activities and events.
  - a. Any Cast Member disrupting rehearsals, performances, gigs or any mandatory activity or event is subject to warning from the Artistic Director, Board Member, or other representative in charge.
  - b. Upon the second warning in the same rehearsal, performance, gig or mandatory activity or event, the Cast Member will be required to "sit out" (i.e., remain at rehearsal but not participate).
  - c. After being required to sit out, the Attendance Officer will be notified. If this happens more than once, an unexcused absence will be recorded and reported to the Board of Directors, which could result in a suspension from any/all VB functions until review or meeting with Cast Member and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s).
2. Behavior at Varsity Blues social events, retreats and tours will comply with the law. Cast Members shall conduct themselves with consideration for others at all times. Cast Members shall follow all rules established for a specific event.
3. When Saline Area Schools facilities are used, Cast Members must follow all school rules and treat all school property with respect.
4. Cast Members are expected to be cooperative, thoughtful, and respectful and to put forth their best effort.
5. Behavior not connected with, but reflecting negatively on, Varsity Blues, may make the Cast Member subject to immediate review by the Board of Directors. Review by the Board of Directors involves a mandatory meeting with the Cast Member and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s), and may result in the establishment of the Probationary Guidelines or immediate expulsion from VB. The consequences imposed will be at the discretion of the Board of Directors. The Cast Member and parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing of the final decision within seven (7) days after the meeting.

## **MEDICAL INFORMATION**

Please inform the Artistic Director and Board of Directors if you take medications or have a medical condition of which we should be aware. We spend a lot of time together, and we need to know about any possible problems that could arise. Medications should be given to the Director or VB Emergency Parent to keep/administer during VB events, practices, tour, etc.

## **VB LICENSED DRIVERS**

Varsity Blues **does not** provide transportation to or from any event (except tour). Transportation is the responsibility of our Cast Members and their parent(s)/guardian(s). The Artistic Director, Emergency Parent, and Attendance Officer **will not** remain after an event (including rehearsal) to coordinate or provide transportation for any Cast Member

## **VOLUNTEER/CHAPERONE GUIDELINES**

All adults interacting or working with any Cast Member are expected to conduct themselves professionally and adhere to all Varsity Blues rules and expectations. If a chaperone or volunteer has any questions about VB's expectations for their role, please contact any member of the Board of Directors for clarification.

### **Tour Chaperones**

In order to serve as a chaperone, the chaperone must have at least one member in the cast.

The Board will determine the number of chaperones needed for tour; the default, absent Board action to accommodate unusual circumstances, will be one (1) chaperone per eight (8) Cast Members. The Artistic Director is counted as a chaperone.

Priority for serving as a chaperone is as follows:

1. Board Member parent of a senior
2. Board Member parent of a junior
3. Board Member parent of a sophomore
4. Board Member parent of a freshman
5. Non-Board Member parent of a senior
6. Non-Board Member parent of a junior
7. Non-Board Member parent of a sophomore
8. Non-Board Member parent of a freshman
9. Board member parent of a JV Cast Member
10. Board member parent of a KC Cast Member

Should more parents volunteer within a category than there are available slots, chaperones will be selected by lottery.

## **UNIFORMS & MATERIALS**

All Cast Members are expected to bring a 3-ring binder to keep music organized and a writing utensil (pen/pencil) to rehearsals.

Cast Members are responsible for the purchase of their own dance shoes, show shirts, show costumes, and any other necessary items not provided by Varsity Blues.

For the Varsity Cast, uniforms ensure the group's professional appearance; one person's non-compliance can affect the onstage presence of the entire ensemble. No Varsity Cast Member will be allowed to perform without a complete uniform – NO EXCEPTIONS.

Uniforms for Varsity Cast Members will be distributed shortly after the Annual Meeting. The Uniform Coordinator will notify Cast Members of distribution dates/times. Uniforms will remain the property of Varsity Blues and will be maintained by the Cast Member while in their possession. Cast Members and their parents/guardians are responsible for the replacement cost or repair of the uniform if it is lost, stolen or damaged. A deposit, refundable upon return of the Cast Member's uniform in good condition, may be required.

Uniforms that are the property of Varsity Blues must be turned in at the end of a show or at the conclusion of participation. Each Cast Member is required to return his or her uniform in the condition it was received.

If a Cast Member fails to return his or her uniform, or returns it in unacceptable condition, the Cast Member and/or their parents/guardians will be held financially responsible. Further Varsity Blues participation may be denied until the uniform has been replaced or repaired at the Cast Member's and/or parent's/guardian's expense.



## APPENDIX A: VARSITY CAST ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

1. The following are mandatory events/activities for Varsity Cast Members:
  - a. Retreat (January)
  - b. Tour (June)
  - c. VB Summer Show (July)
  - d. Production/Rehearsal Weeks (preceding Summer Show Week)
  - e. Summer Show Week, including Strike
  - f. Holiday Show Week, including Strike
  - g. Specified Fundraisers

REQUIRED DATES are posted on the website ([www.salinevarsityblues.com](http://www.salinevarsityblues.com)).

2. Varsity Cast Members are expected to arrive early to all required events: at least five minutes for rehearsals, at least one hour for performances, gigs and other mandatory events.
3. If a Varsity Cast Member has an absolutely unavoidable conflict with a mandatory event (including rehearsal), the Cast Member must notify the Attendance Officer within 12 hours of the event. This includes arriving late and leaving early. All absences, late arrivals and early departures must be reported to the Attendance Officer, whether the absence is excused or unexcused. The Attendance Officer will apprise the Board of all absence at the Board's regularly scheduled meetings.
4. While all absences must be reported to the Attendance Officer in advance, advance reporting does not mean the absence is excused. Excused absences will be limited to the following circumstances: religious observance, severe injury/illness, funeral, or required (graded) school event. Other unavoidable absences will be considered on a case-by-case basis but will typically be unexcused.
5. If a Cast Member misses a rehearsal, it is the Cast Member's responsibility to the group to learn what was missed.
6. If a Cast Member desires to be in one or more numbers and knows he or she will be absent when the number(s) will be rehearsed, the Cast Member must prove to the Artistic Director that he or she knows the number(s). Participation in the number is then at the Artistic Director's discretion.
7. Cast Members should arrange work hours around regularly scheduled rehearsals, performances, gigs or other mandatory VB activities or events. Absences due to work schedules will not be considered excused absences if repeated incidents occur. It will be documented (as with any other excuse for an absence), and reported to the Board of Directors, monthly. Such absences could potentially affect a Cast Member's standing in the group.
8. Cast Members and their parent(s)/guardian(s) are expected to participate in **all fundraising events**. Failure by the Cast Member to participate in a mandatory fundraising activity may be considered an unexcused absence for the Cast Member. The Board will make reasonable

efforts to allow Cast Members to select the shift/time that they would prefer to work. However, if assigned time is not possible, the Cast Member is responsible for finding a replacement for their scheduled work times. Excused absences could include an illness, or other unforeseen circumstance, which must be reported to the Attendance Officer in advance of the fundraising event. Tardiness or early departure during scheduled fundraiser work time by either the Cast Member or their substitute, without prior arrangement, may be considered an unexcused absence for the Cast Member.

### **Varsity Blues Attendance Records**

1. The Attendance Officer or designee will take attendance at every scheduled rehearsal, performance, gig, and mandatory activity/event.
2. The Board of Directors will maintain an ongoing attendance record, including stated reasons for Cast Members' absences, tardiness, and early departures.
3. The Attendance Officer will provide these attendance records for review by the Board of Directors monthly.

### **Attendance Consequences**

1. Attendance will be heavily weighed when casting small groups and solos.
2. When a Cast Member misses a rehearsal, performance, gig or mandatory activity or event, and has not complied with the advance reporting requirement above, the absences will automatically be considered unexcused.
3. When a Cast Member arrives late or leaves early from a rehearsal, performance, gig or mandatory activity or event, and has not called the Attendance Officer, the tardiness or early departure is considered unexcused.
4. Any Cast Member who misses any mandatory event or activity, or who indicates the intention to miss any event or activity, may be subject to immediate review by the Attendance Committee and/or the Board of Directors.
5. After three (3) unexcused absences, the Cast Member will be subject to immediate review by the Attendance Committee and/or the Board of Directors.
6. Review by the Attendance Committee and/or the Board of Directors involves a mandatory meeting with the Cast Member and at least one of his or her parent(s)/guardian(s). (*Please see the section on "Attendance Committee" below for a further description on this Committee's responsibilities*). This may result in the institution of the Probationary Guidelines (see below) or immediate expulsion from the group. The consequences imposed will be at the discretion of the Attendance Committee and/or Board of Directors. The Cast Member and his or her

parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing of the final decision within seven (7) days after the meeting.

### **Probationary Guidelines**

1. The Attendance Committee and/or the Board of Directors will help the Cast Member to re-examine his or her commitment to the group, and list specific expectations for improvement. These expectations can be tailored to the Cast Member's individual circumstances, at the discretion of the Attendance Committee and/or the Board of Directors. Thereafter, the Cast Member's attendance situation will be carefully monitored to make certain these expectations are being met.
2. The following guidance will assist the Attendance Committee and/or the Board of Directors in assessing situations in which a Varsity Cast Member has more than three (3) unexcused absences. In such a situation, expectations for improvement will be established and can be tailored to the member's individual circumstances and the best interest of the organization. By way of example, and in no particular order, the following actions may be implemented to address attendance violations:
  - a. Community Service within the VB community- examples include helping a Board Member with duties involved in preparing for a show or running the organization, helping at a practice with younger cast members, etc. The service will be chosen by the Attendance Committee or the Artistic Director, and must be completed in the timeline put forth;
  - b. Removal from a number within the show, at the discretion of the Artistic Director or the Attendance Committee;
  - c. Ineligibility to audition for a solo or small group number;
  - d. Placement on probation;
  - e. Expulsion from the Varsity Blues organization.
3. The Cast Member and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing of the Attendance Committee's and/or the Board of Directors' final decision within seven (7) days after the meeting.
4. If a Member does not meet the specific expectations established for such Cast Member, he or she is subject to immediate expulsion from the group.

### **Attendance Committee**

The Attendance Committee will consist of the Attendance Officer, the Artistic Director, and the President of the Board of Directors, but may also consist of any one or all of the Members of the Board of Directors.

The Attendance Committee will assume the following duties/responsibilities:

1. Conduct individual meeting(s) with any Cast Member, and at least one parent/guardian, who are in violation of the Attendance Policy.
2. The Committee may impose probation, penalties, and/or recommend expulsion from the group as deemed necessary.
3. Ensure consistency and equal treatment for all Cast Members.

A Cast Member who is in violation of the Attendance Policy and is called before the Attendance Committee, and/or the Board of Directors, will be subject to the following procedures:

1. Any one of the Board Members will notify the Cast Member.
2. A meeting before the Attendance Committee and/or the Board of Directors will be scheduled for the earliest convenient date.
3. An email notification will be sent to the Cast Member and his or her parent(s)/ guardian(s) informing them of the Attendance Policy violation and the date, time and location of the Attendance Committee meeting.
4. The Cast Member and at least one parent/guardian must appear at the scheduled meeting. The Cast Member and parent/guardian will be given the opportunity to speak.
5. The Attendance Committee and/or the Board of Directors shall reach a decision by majority of the Members present.
6. The Cast Member and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing of the final decision of the Attendance Committee and/or the Board of Directors within seven (7) days after the meeting.

Standing Rules adopted 4/92, revised 8/94, 11/96, 2/97, 3/98, 10/02, 9/10, 3/12, 9/19