



DIVERSITY & INCLUSION POLICY

January 2025

Overall Intent

Vale Musical Society believes that musical theatre is for absolutely everyone regardless of personal circumstance, gender, age, sexual orientation, religious beliefs, marital status, physical ability or cultural background. The Society recognises its duty of care under The Equality Act 2010 which legally protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society.

The Society strives to create an inclusive community where everyone is welcomed, respected and feels accepted irrespective of ability, if members are semi-professionals, beginners or have no previous experience and just want to have a go. Where possible the Committee will aim to accommodate members with any visible and/or invisible disability and accommodate for those who are physically, visually or audibly impaired.

Under the Equality Act 2010, the Mental Health Act 1983 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, anyone with a registered medical assistance animal or registered service animal can have their animal with them at any time as required. The Society will accommodate the animal during rehearsals, backstage and / if necessary on stage as required by the individual circumstances. Regrettably, for safeguarding reasons, all pet animals cannot be admitted to any rehearsals, backstage, on-stage, in or around the theatre. The only exception to this will be should a show require an animal to perform, and the Committee will consider all suitable scenario's whilst ensuring that the welfare and safety of all its members are upheld at all times.

Musicals

- The musicals the Society puts on are carefully selected by the Committee who ensure feedback from members is included. The Committee strives to ensure all are accessible to a broad range of abilities, covering a variety of musical styles, some with religious references, abilities, experience, likes and interests.
- The Society's inclusive approach ensures that no particular religion, belief or musical style is prioritised, whilst ensuring that the music, themes, topics, narrative and characters suit the members of the Society in their ability, experience & overall enjoyment.
- From time to time the Society may choose to use local church and/or religious premises to stage performances because of the space and acoustics they offer, however we remain a non-religious organisation and are not affiliated to any other particular group/organisation.

Social Activities

- The social activities the Society puts on are carefully selected by the Committee based on members feedback to ensure a wide range of activities meet our broad and diverse membership base.

- All members are welcome to participate in the Society's social activities with friends and family members who are non-members (subject to the fee for the particular activity).
- Members or guests pet animals are welcome to social events which are held outside provided they are properly under the control of their handler at all times, eg: on a lead.

Participation in musicals

- The core mission of VMS is to produce musicals that bring people together. We are committed to ensuring there is a role for everyone who wishes to participate in our productions, whether on stage or behind the scenes.
- Chorus auditions will only be conducted when deemed necessary by the committee and in alignment with the guidelines outlined below. Our aim is to provide opportunities for all individuals who wish to perform on stage and demonstrate the capability to do so, fostering an inclusive environment that celebrates diverse talents and contributions.
- All members and any non-members (who must pay a show fee) are welcome to join auditions which will be held for all shows in an open, safe and inclusive environment.
- The Director and Musical Director will always be present at auditions with an external 3rd party adjudicator to provide impartiality, perspective and to assist should there be a tie decision. Where possible, members of the Society will be prioritised over non-members, however the audition panel's decision will be final.
- There will be limited numbers to some shows based on scripting, size of venue, budget limitations, performance rights, insurance requirements, availability of suitable cast etc. It will be at the sole discretion of a unanimous decision from the Director, Musical Director and Show Producer to limit members partaking in a show for the reasons stated above (or otherwise).
- Should members wish to apply to partake in a show after auditions and/or casting has taken place, it will only be considered at the sole discretion of a unanimous decision from the Director, Musical Director and Show Producer, based on needs of the production and if there is space for the member to participate. An audition may be required to ascertain the suitability of the member. Non-members will not be considered to join a production after auditions have taken place.
- Members & non-members who cannot make auditions will be invited to submit a video recording and if they cannot do this then point above applies.
- All members are encouraged to participate with backstage if they are not on-stage. There are many opportunities for members to collaborate in a safe, fun and inclusive environment working with the creative team who produce the shows.

Any concerns regarding any part of this policy should be brought to the attention of the Chair of the Society and/or Society Safeguarding Officer. In the case of any dispute the Committee shall intervene as necessary.

The Committee will at all times respect the dignity of all its members by striving to uphold the values of the organisation – kindness, respect, understanding, inclusivity and tolerance - and ensure that it's members act accordingly at all times

Agreed by Committee	January 2025
Updated by Committee	August 2025
Agreed at AGM	August 2025
To be reviewed	January 2026