



St. Jude of the Lake Catholic School

Dear St. Jude of the Lake Parents,

Please read this letter in its entirety before sharing your child's part in the musical with them.

Firstly, I would like to formally introduce my new assistant director for our all school musical, Mr. Paul Gutmann. Paul is a graduate of Lawrence University; he has a degree in music performance and has performed in many impressive theatres, including, but not limited to the Minnesota Opera, Ashland Productions, and other various theatre groups throughout the Twin Cities. I had the pleasure of meeting Paul when he was my student at St. Jude during my very first year of teaching. He was an impressive student then, and now is even more dazzling. Paul and I have worked together with students at Ashland Productions summer camps where it was evident that his skills also extended to mentoring, encouraging, and nurturing growth in kids. He's a wonderful teacher and is excited to work with your sons and daughters. All the students at St. Jude have now met "Mr. Paul" and seem to be excited to work with him on the musical.

We are both really looking forward to working with all of the St. Jude students in "Mary Poppins Jr." We have had the pleasure of seeing each child sing, dance, and speak during class this past week. There is so much talent and potential in each student that was a difficult and complex task to assign parts that help each child shine on stage. The actual cast list will be sent out to your email later this evening.

Feelings about roles

Whenever a cast list comes out, some students are thrilled with the part they receive and some feel disappointment. The students were given a chance to let us know which role(s) they preferred, but also understood that the directors have the final say in which role was best for each person. Please help remind your children that their feelings about their role are acceptable, whatever they are. It is also especially important that they treat other students with respect in the coming few weeks, whatever their feelings about their roles are.

Communication with children

Paul and I ask for your support in communicating to the children that each role and each person is important in the play, whether they play the title role of the show or they sing and dance in a group and do not speak any lines. We made our casting decisions based on what each child showed of their singing, projection, acting, memorization, and teamwork skills in auditions, as well as age appropriateness; larger roles tend to go to the older students. We have seen time and again that the ability of students to be open minded to their roles, whatever the size, and to have a good time and learn and grow as a person while rehearsing and performing the musical is strongly linked to their parents' attitude. Kids need to hear from their parents that they have an important part in the play no matter the size of their role. Kids whose parents consistently and genuinely communicate to them that it can be a fun learning experience to take part in a play in *any* role do a lot better than kids whose parents undercut the directors by telling their kids, "You should have been cast as a different role." We ask that although you may or may not agree with our casting decisions, you support and respect them. If you would like to better understand our decisions about your child's role, please contact Mrs. Chapel privately.

What's happening in music class?

As you probably know, Spring is a busy time of year in the music room at St. Jude! For the next few weeks, all grades of students will be busy getting ready for our upcoming Senior Day/Spring Concert on April 25th. As our Senior Day/Spring Concert event approaches, most music class time will be focused on preparing for that. However, students with speaking lines and solos will be able to bring home a "Mary Poppins Jr." script and start working on memorizing lines. After April 25th, we will focus our full attention on preparing "Mary Poppins Jr." in music class.

After-School Rehearsals

After-school rehearsals will take place on Mondays and Thursdays in the music room or the upper commons (right outside the music room) from 3:30 to 4:30pm starting in April. A detailed rehearsal schedule of which students will be needed at each rehearsal will be sent this week. Not every student will be called to every after-school rehearsal. The more demanding the part a student has (more or more difficult lines or singing) the more rehearsal time will be needed. Students that have speaking lines, solos, or small group solos will be called to at least one after school rehearsal. Please make every attempt to ensure your child can be at each rehearsal they are called to. If conflicts come up, please let Mrs. Chapel know as soon in advance as possible so we can plan around students that are unable to attend.

With excitement,
Annie Chapel
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