

Chorus Information for *Annie*

The 2022 Grade 3-6 Pierce School Musical

Welcome to the chorus information document! It's a LOT of stuff, but I believe it's all very important.

WHAT IS THE CHORUS?

Our Grade 3 & 4 choruses rehearse on their own, then are integrated into the play production in the final week of rehearsals. Seated on a set of risers onstage and singing most of the show's songs, they are essential to the overall charm. In addition, they'll be featured performers in a song & dance number *in the show*. This is a great introduction to being in the cast someday.

HOW WE'LL DO THIS IN 2022

Statistics indicate that mitigation strategies, including masking, air filtration, and distancing, have made a tremendous difference in keeping our kids safe. And a wealth of studies indicates that the risk to children's development by not participating in social activities may be higher than the risk of Covid. We'll let you decide what you believe, but here's what we plan to do:

Chorus registration will be limited to 40 children to keep numbers reasonable. As a primary mitigation strategy, we plan to have our chorus children masked for rehearsals and performances. This is our commitment to you for this year's show. For the full rehearsal period, we'll be able to provide for 3' distance between kids at all times. On May 13, starting with dress rehearsals, we plan to seat them on risers in close proximity, still masked. This has been approved by Interim Principal Yadoff and is being closely considered by our "Covid Team" of cast parents with expertise in these matters. You can be sure that everything we do will be closely monitored and child safety is paramount.

Depending on DESE guidelines and prevailing wisdom, it is *possible* our cast members will be permitted to perform without masks in May, as they are constantly moving and not considered to be in close contact. This does not change our commitment to keep the chorus children in masks.

COVID REFUND POLICY

In 2020, as many of you know, we lost our shows to the immediate shut down of the schools. We were not able to issue refunds, as staff still needed to be paid. While highly unlikely in the current era of vaccines, testing and all the rest, it should be understood by you that our priority is to provide a complete educational and fun experience for children. While performances are one expected outcome, they are not guaranteed. If our program is shut

down early, owing to situations beyond our control, we will refund money as we are able, and after all staff have been paid for work to date. After May 12, however, we'll not be able to offer refunds for program or show cancellations.

VACCINATED, PLEASE

We strongly encourage you to get your child vaccinated.

THIS IS YOUR CHOICE!

We certainly hope you'll join us on this adventure that we believe can be both fun and safe. Our drama and arts classes, and the 7th & 8th grade musical, have not had a single infection traced to us and we plan to keep it that way. Still, registration is your choice and you register at your own risk (words we never thought we'd have to write). If this endeavor sounds risky or makes you uncomfortable, you should not register.

REGISTRATION AND FEES

Chorus registration fee is \$220, which covers the cost of directors and supervisors, and contributes to the overall expense of this PTO program. Thank you for your participation.

We also grant scholarships on a no-questions-asked basis. This can be for the full amount, a partial amount ("pay what you can") or you may ask for structured payments. If you need this support, please skip the credit card form after your registration and get in touch with us to work out a plan.

REHEARSAL DATES and TIMES

There will be two choruses, each named for our casts: Bentley and Dussenberg. Both rehearse only on Thursdays from March 31 – May 12, then follow their respective cast's schedule for dress rehearsals and shows. Thursday rehearsals will start after school (2:30) and go until 4:30pm. That time is divided into two blocks, where each gets 45 minutes learning songs in the music room then learning the dance feature in the auditorium.

After May 12, we begin our dress rehearsals, and we need the choruses to come for those. Dress rehearsals will be:

Dussenberg Cast & Chorus: Friday, May 13 and Tuesday, May 17.

Bentley Cast & Chorus: Monday, May 16 and Wednesday, May 18.

Those rehearsals are after school until 6PM, a little earlier on Friday.

SHOWS

The shows will be:

Thursday, May 19, 6:30pm, Dussenberg Cast & Chorus

Friday, May 20, 6:30pm, Bentley Cast & Chorus

Saturday, May 19, 1:30pm, Bentley Cast & Chorus

Saturday, May 19, 6:30pm, Dussenberg Cast & Chorus

The shows last about two hours. Chorus needs to arrive 30 minutes prior to show start time.

ATTENDANCE

Please attend! There's no point in doing this if the kids can't come. Plan for them to be at all rehearsals and shows, of course. We know these are children, and we won't deny them their performance because of a missed rehearsal. (It does become a bigger issue when they're in the cast someday, so keep this in mind: we're grooming you for the future!) The dress rehearsals are long, we know, and sometimes kids need to leave early. This is *fine*.

SUPERVISION, CHECK-IN, AND CHECK-OUT

We'll have a paid supervisor on hand to check in students at the beginning of rehearsal. the supervisor is CPR certified and can assist with emergencies, calling parents if the child needs to leave early, etc.

We give kids a snack when they show up for rehearsal right after school in the back of the cafeteria. We are not a nut-free or gluten-free environment, although we don't serve nuts directly. If your child has allergies or other dietary restrictions, it's best that you plan for snacks on your own.

We do not check children out! It is up to you to make pick-up arrangements when they are finished. Kids can be released into the amphitheater to meet you, as parents still aren't allowed inside the building.

Any children enrolled in PSED need to check in there first, then come to us. After rehearsal they must return to PSED to be checked out, even if you're there waiting for them.

VOLUNTEERS

We need 3-4 volunteers per rehearsal day to help with check-ins, facilitate transitions, help tamp down restless kids, and ensure a quality learning environment. We also need a Chorus Coordinator to help with family communication.

MEDICAL/EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

Please note that the school does not provide nursing staff to after-school activities. We are not providing certified medical readiness, but we will have a first-aid kit on hand, and we do follow these procedures:

- If a situation arises that involves injury to a student and the parent or supervisor deems it an emergency, 911 will be called first, and the parent will be called second.
- If a situation arises that is significant but does not appear to be an emergency, the parent will be called, and a decision will be made (including whether you need to come to pick up your child).
- You agree that it shall be the judgement of the parent volunteer or supervisor as to the severity of the situation and shall support whichever decision is made. Further, you'll agree (at registration) to hold harmless our staff, and members/officers of the PTO. The same as for everything else you do these days...

Also, you'll be asked to provide us with any relevant information about your child's ongoing medical conditions that could arise during a rehearsal and let us know your preferred action plans. Please keep in mind that the school cannot provide us with this information because of confidentiality rules.

A FEW IMPORTANT WORDS

The Pierce School Musical is a PTO program, and is entirely funded through registration fees, tickets and concessions sales. We hire paid staff to manage and facilitate learning and supervision, and we charge the amount that makes it possible to do this without having to fundraise. We believe strongly in our mission but also recognize that this is a large undertaking and control of every situation is impossible. We thank you for supporting the community nature of this endeavor.

By registering for the show, you agree to take part in helping to make it a success with your volunteer hours.

There are no refunds after rehearsals begin on March 31, unless your family is suddenly relocated overseas. (Yes, it happens!) But seriously, once you register, we've already begun spending your money, so please be "all-in" when you hit that button.

Children at this age have a lot of energy and we rely on parent volunteers to help settle them down in rehearsals. Real discipline issues with chorus members are extremely rare, but if any occur, they will be handled by the supervisor or parent volunteers in the room. If there is behavior that cannot be contained, our first step is to remove the child from the rehearsal for

a “time out,” then try to re-engage. If the issue is bigger, parents will be contacted and may need to come pick up the child.

JOIN THE FUN

Year in and year out, families tell us how much their child enjoyed their time in the chorus. We regularly enroll 3rd graders who usually become cast members through their 8th grade year, making this one of the most unique programs offered by a public school anywhere. It's also a fantastic way for parents to feel more connected to Pierce, especially at a time when we can't all go inside. Friendships are made here, and we look forward to having your family with us.

Any other questions? Feel free to contact [Phil Schroeder](#).