

Dear Parents,

I am writing to let you know about a very exciting opportunity for your child to take part in The Shakespeare Schools Festival this year.

The Shakespeare Schools Festival (SSF) is the UK's largest Youth Drama Festival. This year they will be working with 1000 schools in 120 theatres in what promises to be their biggest and best Festival yet. The festival challenges the preconception that studying Shakespeare is difficult or dull through a combination of teacher training, workshops and student performance in a professional theatre.

I will be directing an edited (30 minutes) version of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', which will be performed at the Marine Theatre in Lyme and at school in November. The cast will also take part in a workshop run by professional Shakespearean actors.

In order to have enough time to do this I will be starting the process in a week's summer school in August, Monday 19th to Friday 23rd. In these five days the students will be introduced to a range of skills and techniques needed to tackle Shakespeare. We will also work on getting to know each other and bonding as a company. My daughter Celia will be running the summer school with me, she will have just completed her first year at drama school and will have many exciting and up to date drama exercises, games and skills to pass on to the group. She will also be able to give advice to those considering the same career path.

Rehearsals will then be every Thursday after school, 3.40-6.00pm during the autumn term and we will also have to do some rehearsals in the October half term, 28th October to 1st November.

Unfortunately there is a cost to this process and therefore we will be asking for a contribution of £100 from each participant. Blurb about not paying.

There are only 15 places available on the project and in the first instance I am inviting students who I feel have the ability to rise to the challenging experience of performing Shakespeare. Thus I need to know who would like to be considered for a place. Should your child wish to take part in the project they will need to be available for the week in August, dates above: Thursdays after school in the autumn term and during the October half term. They will also need to be free to do all final rehearsals and performances in the first half of November. Dropping in and out of rehearsals will not be an option.

SSF has a number of eminent patrons who below comment on the importance of this opportunity, I hope you will agree.

"Every child in every school ought to have the chance to experience this magical process"
Philip Pullman. Writer.

"My fascination with theatre began at an early age with Shakespeare. I am delighted that the Shakespeare Schools Festival, through its reach across the UK, is enabling new generations of young people to discover why he is still the world's greatest playwright. I am very proud to be a patron of the Shakespeare Schools Festival"

Dame Judi Dench. Actor

"I know that it is of vital importance to the future of theatre that young people have an opportunity to perform Shakespeare and discover what it is that makes him our most important playwright"

Sir Nicholas Hytner. Director, National Theatre.

Please fill out the slip below and return to me personally (not reception) if you wish your child to be considered for a place in the project.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Cruwys-Finnigan
Head of Dram and Dance.

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I would like my child (name)..... to be considered for a place in the Shakespeare Schools Festival.

I can commit them to the dates when they would be needed from August to November inclusively.

Signed.....

Date.....