

# **Becoming a Successful School Volunteer**

## ***District 53 VOLUNTEER & VISITOR GUIDELINES***

### **Welcome**

The Butler School District 53 welcomes parent participation in our school programs. We enjoy a positive and beneficial partnership with our Parent Teacher Organization. We encourage every parent to become involved in the PTO and in their child's school. There are many opportunities in our schools for parents to volunteer and to actively participate in their child's educational program. Research indicates many positive outcomes for children when parents volunteer and actively participate in their child's school. We welcome you to our schools and thank you for your willingness to partner with us in providing an excellent educational program to your child and their classmates.

Volunteer guidelines are established for the benefit of our children. Volunteering and visiting within the school building is a privilege. The needs of the children are our highest priority.

### **Thank You for Your Service**

You are very important to Butler 53 and we want to celebrate your service to our students. Please check in and out at the school office and wear a [guest/volunteer] badge during all times of your visit. Whether you are volunteering on a regular basis or for a one time project or event, please arrive a few minutes early to park your vehicle in a striped visitor parking spot and enter the building through the main entrance. Please notify the school office and or PTO representative in advance if you are unable to make a prearranged volunteer event. If you are unable to reach your party, please leave a message with the school office.

### **Part of Our Team**

As a school volunteer, you are part of a team supporting student success. Every team member is a role model for students. As a school volunteer, you are part of a team supporting student success. Setting an example of professionalism and good citizenship involves interacting with students, staff, and other visitors in a respectful manner. Accepting direction and responsibility, and showing appreciation for school staff will set positive examples students will remember. School volunteer roles and participation/access to student activities are contingent upon respectful interactions with students and staff.

### **Become A PTO Member**

Many blessings await the families who become active PTO members, but it is the students of Butler 53 Schools that receive the greatest rewards. Selfless, dedicated parents who seek to do good for all children have opportunities take on leadership roles in PTO. Please reach out to a PTO representative to get started or visit the PTO website for more information about the engaging student opportunities and meaningful ways in which parents can become involved. There are opportunities for everyone, even those with minimal time to commit to their children's school. Some volunteer leadership roles and opportunities are governed by the PTO. These positions are open only to members of the PTO.

**For more information:** <http://butler53pto.com>

### **Why Volunteer?**

You have taken a step toward making a significant impact on the excellent programs offered in Butler 53 Schools: Brook Forest Elementary School (Grades K-5) and Butler Jr. High School (Grades 6-8). Your involvement helps build a school community that emphasizes academic excellence, community engagement, basic skills, individual strengths, technology integration, and a love of learning. As a volunteer, you will provide enrichment opportunities that enhance the educational experience for students while supporting teachers and staff. You also help build a strong foundation for students on their journey of excellence in education. Your participation helps us to fulfill our mission of creating a safe, positive, innovative, educational environment for all children. Your contribution of time and talents enhances our children's school experiences and helps them become truly excited about learning. When you model for students the kinds of positive behaviors and attitudes they need in order to succeed, your work as a volunteer will help them develop into the productive citizens that will result in a tremendous source of school and community pride.

### **Effective Communication**

As a school volunteer or visitor to the school, it is crucial that the lines of communication stay open and clear. If you are unsure about what is expected of you, or how to perform tasks or operate equipment, please ask someone for assistance. If you are volunteering in a classroom or activity room in the school, please ensure that you are clear on your responsibilities and that you are comfortable with your duties. If you have any questions, we are here to help. Please read and adhere to the *District 53 Effective Parent Communication Norms*.

### **Interests and Talents**

We want to make the best match we can between volunteer opportunities and your interests and talents. Please let your school contact and PTO representative know how you can best contribute. Your input may lead to the development of additional volunteer opportunities.

## **When Volunteering**

### **Student Behavior Issues**

If you notice a student acting inappropriately or have specific concerns related to a student, it is your responsibility to call such matters to the attention of the teacher or other supervising school personnel. Never take corrective measures into your own hands. Do not confront students (e.g. talk with a student about how they are treating your own child, etc.) or attempt to reprimand. Always ask a staff member for help.

### **Volunteer Learning Opportunities**

Parent and community member volunteers are asked to take time to familiarize themselves with the following:

1. The building layout and lawful parking

2. Classroom practices
3. Volunteer expectations
4. Notification procedures if you are unable to attend a prearranged volunteer activity
5. School Policies

### **Sign In**

Volunteers are required to sign in at the office and receive a volunteer or visitor badge that you are required to wear at all times while volunteering. Signing in each time you volunteer allows school personnel to locate you immediately in case of an emergency. You may be asked to show identification. Please do not be offended. We consider this a safety measure for all students and staff.

### **Volunteer Assignment and Visitor Access**

Please adhere to your specific volunteer assignment or designated visitor location. Visitors and volunteers may not randomly walk the building or “visit” classrooms or areas that are not specific to their volunteer or visitor assignment. Volunteers and visitors may not utilize their time in the school to interrupt instruction, hold unscheduled parent conferences, take cell phone calls, monopolize staff time, or seek answers to questions during inappropriate times. Parents are encouraged to contact their child’s teacher through a phone call or email to ensure their questions are addressed. Please follow all Effective Parent Communication Guidelines. Visitors and Volunteers should respect our teachers’ time, as they have many responsibilities to conduct. Teachers and staff are entitled to have a lunch break. Please do not attempt to use this time for your own purposes. Respectful interactions, courtesy, and being mindful of precious instructional time goes a long way to ensuring a positive, harmonious school experience for all. Volunteer, Don’t Interfere!

### **Supervision**

All volunteers perform duties under the direction and supervision of school personnel. Parents should not drop by to volunteer. Only scheduled Volunteers should be in the classroom. Volunteers should be familiar with and follow school policies and rules including maintaining complete confidentiality related to students and staff.

### **Confidentiality**

Discretion is essential. It is a requirement to continue the privilege to volunteer or visit Butler 53 Schools. There can be no discussion of any particular child’s behavior, challenge or achievement with anyone while at school, in your home, or in the community. Students have a right to privacy. Staff has a right to a bully free and harassment free work environment. Volunteers and visitors who start drama, share inaccurate or judgmental information, engage in gossip or share information about students, staff, school programs or the District will not be permitted to continue the privilege of visiting or volunteering in Butler 53 schools.

Students may disclose something about their personal lives while in school. This information should be kept confidential and not shared in any manner at any time. If you hear something

that may be a threat to students, report the matter immediately to the teacher. Such information should never be repeated to other individuals.

Illinois state laws and Butler School District 53 Policy protects children against invasion of privacy. For this reason you may be asked to sign a Confidentiality Agreement before you can begin to be a school Volunteer. Please understand that failure to follow the Confidentiality Agreement may at the discretion of the Principal result in removal as a school Volunteer.

### **Reporting Suspected Child Abuse and Neglect**

Any Volunteer or Visitor who has reason to believe that a child has been subject to abuse or maltreatment must report it to the teacher, guidance counselor, or principal.

### **Communication**

If you are unable to make it to school when you are expected, please notify the school contact or PTO representative. Please follow all Parent Communication Norms to ensure positive relationships between parents and staff.

### **Tobacco Use on School Property**

The use of all tobacco products, including cigarettes, cigars, pipes, chewing tobacco and snuff, is prohibited anywhere on school property, including school parking lots, athletic fields, playgrounds, etc. and in private vehicles while on school property.

### **Cherish our Children**

Please help us ensure a positive learning climate by showing respect for our children. It is expected that every adult in the school consistently demonstrate kindness, tolerance, and sensitivity toward all children. Butler 53 is a community that requires respect for diversity and values each and every child. When working with students, give honest praise whenever possible. Help each child to see themselves positively through your words and actions. Spread the belief that all children can thrive and excel when they have the support and encouragement of the Parents, Teachers, Administrators and Visitors.

Having you in our schools is a treat for your own child(ren). Please be mindful that your efforts need to fairly benefit all students with whom you are working. Sometimes we have found that it is not always best for family members to help in classrooms where their children are learning. Don't worry if this is the case, as there are many volunteer opportunities to available to our parents.

### **Respect for Diversity**

Families seek out Butler 53 Schools and the Oak Brook community knowing they will find a healthy appreciation and inclusion of diversity. As a Volunteer or Visitor, it is essential that you demonstrate a respect for and appreciation of the diverse cultures and backgrounds of our students. We ask that you avoid judgments and promote pride and understanding. Children will learn from your actions and words how to treat others. Please join us in our pursuit of achieving considerate and respectful global citizens.

### **Allow Students to Be Themselves**

Every student is unique. Join us in making sure each child feels that he or she is a very special person. Allow for differences and celebrate unique gifts and developing traits. Always avoid comparing students with others in their school or families. Allow students time to think about their answers. Guide them by asking questions that will lead to correct answers rather than being the one to supply the answer. Know that we are teaching students that it is acceptable to make a mistake and that learning to correct mistakes is an important part of the learning process.

### **Follow the Teacher's Lead**

Keep the students headed in the direction set by the teacher. Hold the students to the same class standards of behavior and work. Talk openly with the teacher if you are unsure what is expected of you and the students. Be brief so teacher instructional time is not limited. Remember that the teacher has the final responsibility for all planning and activities that occur in the classroom. Discuss specific concerns with the teacher in private, but keep confidential all information about students while you are in the school and even after you leave the school within your family and community.

### **Be An Excellent Example**

Your conduct, dress, personal hygiene, and dependability will set an example for what is expected of students. Being on time and being reliable ensures tremendous support to the teacher and demonstrates to the students that you care. Choose to maintain positive dialogue at all times when speaking about students, teachers, programs and the school.

### **Behaviors that Ensure Safety**

As a Volunteer or Visitor, you must agree to follow important safety rules. Please notify staff immediately if you see something or someone that is suspicious or out of place. Volunteers must enter the school through the main door, sign in and out at the office and wear a visitor badge. Volunteers must be ready to show their ID at any time to any staff member who requests it. Volunteers may never open any school door to allow others to enter the building. Building doors must remain locked and closed at all times, with visitors and parents only entering and leaving from the main school entrance. Volunteers may not be alone with individual students who are not under the supervision of a teacher or school authorities. Volunteers may only use adult bathroom facilities. As it is with school staff members, Volunteers may not touch a student in an aggressive, disciplinary, or sexual manner. Volunteers may not contact students outside of school hours. All communication with your students' schoolmates should be through their parents. Volunteers must agree to not exchange phone numbers, emails, or any other form of communication with our students. Volunteers agree to not transport any student without the expressed written permission of the parent or guardian. Visitors and Volunteers must agree to do what is in the best personal and educational interest of every child and staff member that they are in contact with during their service in Butler 53. These safety rules and all others that involve common sense are critical to maintain the safety of all students, staff and visitors to the

school. The health, safety, and well being of every individual in Butler 53 schools are essential to achieving our mission.

### **Questions and Issues**

We do not expect Volunteers and Visitors to agree with everything a teacher does in class; but each teacher's job is to make decisions in the best interest of the whole class. If you have a problem, issue, or disagreement with a teacher or staff member, please bring it to their attention privately and at an appropriate time. Discussing an issue in the middle of class or with other staff members, parents, or community members is not appropriate at any time. Clear, open, and direct communication is vital to our shared success.

Volunteers must maintain a strict adherence to confidentiality related to any student, staff, program, or school information. Volunteers may not defame or speak derogatively about students, staff, programs or the school while at the school or in the community. Upholding Butler 53's positive reputation, and that of its students, staff and programs, is an essential requirement of serving in any volunteer capacity.

### **Fingerprinting**

Regular Volunteers and PTO Executive Board Officers are asked to complete a Fingerprint Screening that can be arranged through the Butler 53 District Office. The fingerprint screening will cost approximately \$35, which must be paid by the volunteer. Please know that all staff must also comply with these regulations. The fingerprint screening searches databases related to FBI and Illinois Federation of Police.

### **Bringing Preschoolers and Toddlers in School**

Our school staff works very hard to ensure that all children have a safe and educational school environment. Please follow these general guidelines when bringing younger children into school during your volunteer time:

- Parents must supervise their children fully at all times.
- Disruptions like loud noises or running will negatively affect student learning experiences.
- If you plan to volunteer in the classroom during instructional time, please check with the classroom teacher before bringing children to the setting.
- We love children too. We want your children who visit with you to be safe while they are in our schools.
- When possible, we ask that other arrangements be made for pre-school age children when volunteering at school.

### **Use of Technology**

As a Volunteer, you may be working with technology with students. Please ensure respectful use of the Internet. Please be familiar with the School Board's Policy on Acceptable Use of Technology. If you must accept/make a cell phone call or send/receive a text message, we ask that you step out of the classroom and away from student learning. Please keep your phone on

silent while in the school. At no time can students be photographed with or without their permission.

#### **Violation of Parent Communication Guidelines and/or Volunteer and Visitor Guidelines**

Volunteer guidelines are established for the benefit of our children. Volunteering and visiting within the school building is a privilege. The needs of the children are our highest priority. Visitors or Volunteers that violate the Effective Parent Communication Guidelines and/or Volunteer Guidelines will result in a sanction that can range between a required conversation with the building administration, and removal of Volunteer or Visitor privileges for a designated period of time. Violations may jeopardize future parent privileges. Ensuring a safe, positive learning environment for our students and staff is our highest priority.