

Effective Parent Communications Norms

A Commitment to Build Positive Partnerships

Butler 53 Faculty, Staff and Administration are committed to building positive partnerships with parents/guardians and all stakeholder groups including Oak Brook Education Association (OBEA), Butler 53 PTO, and the Board of Education. We believe positive communications between all stakeholders lead to effective outcomes. Together, we can work to meet realistic, but challenging goals for academic achievement. Our partnership is a two-way street. We share a vision for competent and confident Butler School District 53 graduates to succeed in future academic and social endeavors as curious and persistent scholars, caring human beings, and community-minded individuals.

Parents/guardians and all District staff agree to child-centered practices, including:

- Effectively engaging with the school community through trust-based collaboration.
- Communicating the needs of their children to the school.
- Encouraging well-balanced children.
- Celebrating children's unique gifts and talents.
- Supporting student academic achievement by sending students to school ready to learn.
- Partnering together to monitor student academic growth.

Desired Outcome

Butler 53 strives to provide an excellent educational experience for all students. To achieve our mission, we are charged with hiring and maintaining an exceptional workforce. Significant District resources are dedicated to recruiting, training, and retaining our professional staff. Staff members who work in a respectful environment are more likely to invest fully in their jobs, extend themselves beyond basic job functions, and commit their skills and talents to Butler 53 for many years. A respectful environment can be achieved by parents and teachers seeing and treating one another as partners and engaging in collaborative and positive interactions.

When parents and teachers function as partners in the educational process, the results for children are optimal. We ask that parents choose to be very intentional about building positive, respectful interactions with their children's teachers. Respectful interactions are characterized by trust, kindness, and open communication. By modeling effective problem-solving behaviors, parents and teachers are strengthening students' interpersonal and communication skills to prepare them to demonstrate personal and social integrity. In turn, children can apply these skills to their peer relationships, maintain a positive mindset, and increase their independence.

Parental Involvement

In order to facilitate collaborative relationships between students' families and the School District personnel, and to enable all parents/guardians to become active partners in education, the school personnel will:

- Keep parents and guardians informed about their child's school and education.
- Encourage involvement in their child's school and education.
- Establish effective two-way communication between all families and the District's personnel.

- Seek input from parents and guardians on significant school related issues.
- Inform parents and guardians on how they can assist their children's learning.

Parent and Visitor Code of Conduct and Communication

School is a place of learning; therefore, there must be an atmosphere based on mutual respect and trust. We expect all stakeholders to adhere to the following behavior code:

- Be courteous when communicating and always assume positive intention.
- Recognize the value of instructional time and activities during the school day. Refrain from disrupting or interfering with instruction.
- Demonstrate respect for the learning environment and school property.
- Promote the dignity and self-worth of others.
- Demonstrate respect for the rights, property and feelings of others.
- Avoid confrontations, profanity, threats and aggressive behavior.
- Avoid negative behaviors which detract from a productive and positive learning environment:
 - Bullying, vandalism, slander, intimidation and harassment, including but not limited to the use of racial comments and obscene language, are not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

Additional information regarding visitor conduct and prohibited behaviors on school property and school-related events can be found in Board Policy 8:30; *Visitors to and Conduct on School Property*.

Annual Parent Teacher Communication Commitments

We believe in conducting positive communications that lead to effective outcomes. Therefore, we have instituted ways to provide regular communications about student performance to families.

- Returned schoolwork
- Parent Teacher Conferences, 1-2 per year
- PowerSchool Gradebook (Grades 4-8)
- Google Classroom and/or teacher webpage updates (Grades K-8)
- Teacher contact through personal communications (emails, phone calls, meetings)
- Reports of standardized testing results
- Student Progress Reports (Three times per year grades K-5; four times per year grades 6-8)

Respectful Use of Staff Time

Teachers have approximately 30-45 minutes per day for instructional planning and returning all parent communications (phone and email messages). We ask parents to consider these constraints when formulating their communications, so as not to take away from instructional planning and communication with other families unnecessarily.

We ask parents to consider the following before reaching out to teachers:

1. Is this communication necessary? Has the information already been shared or is it available on Google Classroom or the teacher's webpage?

2. Can the teacher respond to this email or phone inquiry in five minutes or less?
3. Have I sent an extraordinary number of emails or are my emails so complex that they will require significant teacher's time in drafting a response?

The District Office and each school sends critical group communications on a regular basis. Taking time to read these communications before stopping by the school, picking up the phone, or sending an email, can save staff members a considerable amount of time each day.

We want staff members to manage time effectively, and we hope that parents will contribute to this goal. We ask parents to work with us to show care and appreciation to our staff, so they return to school refreshed and energized each day.

Appropriate Conflict Resolution

Parents are encouraged to communicate with their child's teachers regarding all aspects of the school program. If a specific concern arises, it is required that the parent first discuss the concern with the teacher before approaching the Administration. A time may come when a parent has concerns or questions related to a specific staff member or teacher. On such occasions, parents are to follow the communication protocol outlined below:

1. The first interaction must be directly with the individual staff member or teacher in question with the goal of gathering additional information to ensure parents have all the information related to the situation in question. The discussion should be calm and respectful. Taking time to welcome input and gather the teacher's (or staff member's) perspective before reacting will contribute to a positive resolution.
2. If the issue remains unresolved, the building principal should be informed. Principals will refrain from meeting with parents regarding a staff-specific issue if the parent has failed to first contact the staff member directly.
3. Unresolved issues at the building level, which have involved previous communications with the teacher/staff member and principal, may be taken for further review to the Superintendent. The Superintendent will redirect parents back to the school if the previous communication steps were skipped.

Negative Behaviors

Negative behaviors are counterproductive to the educational experience and will not be tolerated. Negative behaviors include, but are not limited to harassment, intimidation, bullying, raised voices, disrespectful tones, untrue statements, unkind statements, careless gossip, slander, lies, and/or angry dialogue. We ask that parents refrain from speaking in a derogatory manner about staff and/or in a manner that is harmful to their relationships with other families and staff. These behaviors set a poor example for children and create a harmful work environment making teacher retention difficult.

Actions to Address Harassing and Intimidating Behavior

Butler School District 53 is a Nationally Acclaimed School District with an impeccable reputation for excellence and consistent delivery of quality instruction.

Much effort is taken to recruit the best teachers and administrators. We ask that parents understand and help us uphold a positive work environment so that retention of quality staff is achieved. Parents who choose to engage in harassing, intimidating and/or aggressive behaviors may be subject to the enforcement steps outlined below.

Enforcement Steps to Address Unresolved Conflict & Harassing, Intimidating or Aggressive Behavior

The Butler 53 Administration will employ responsive measures should a parent/guardian choose to disregard the guidelines set forth herein or engage in other behavior that violates District policy. Such measures may include, but are not limited to the following:

1. A meeting may be held between the parent and the administration to review communication expectations.
2. The administration will send a letter or email to the parent formally documenting the concerns and outlining the restrictions to be implemented if negative and/or inappropriate communications continue.
3. A parent may be removed from a leadership role in the district (e.g., room parent, committee participant, PTO position).
4. A parent may be restricted from accessing school activities and/or facilities, communicating with teachers and staff, and/or barred entirely from school grounds for up to one calendar year.

While the above steps are intended to be progressive, the Administration reserves the right to take appropriate action in response to any conduct that violates the norms set forth herein or that otherwise violates District policy. In determining appropriate action, the Administration will consider the seriousness of the individual's conduct and whether the individual has engaged in prior behavior that violates these communication norms or other District policy.