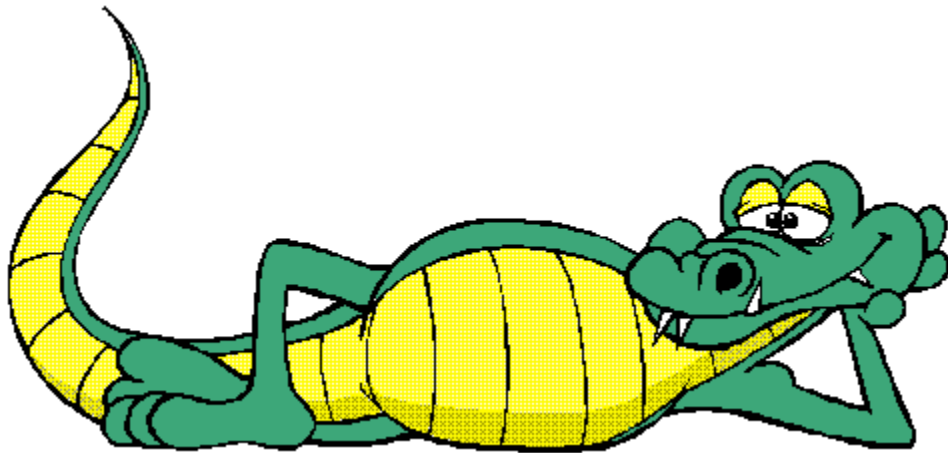




Bonita Springs Charter School
Parent Volunteer Handbook



School Year 2010 - 2011

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Parent Volunteer Handbook

Building a Strong Volunteer Community

Bonita Springs Charter School has a strong tradition of parent involvement. Because volunteers are such an integral part of BSCS, it is important to keep our standards high. BSCS is a very busy place, with over 100 staff members and over 1300 students. It is important for all volunteers to remember the following:

- ⤵ Be responsible and safe—always put children first.
- ⤵ Respect confidentiality. Students and staff have a right to privacy.
- ⤵ Be professional.
- ⤵ Communicate.
- ⤵ When things come up and you can't fulfill a promise, let someone know.
- ⤵ Ask for help—don't suffer in silence.
- ⤵ Share your experience with others and encourage new volunteers.
- ⤵ Try to replace yourself when you move on and help train the new person.

Commitment—Once you become a volunteer, others depend on you.

- ⤵ Try to pick what is manageable and interesting to you.
- ⤵ Attend training sessions. They can really help you find your feet.
- ⤵ Be prepared. Communicate with teachers and coordinators ahead of time.
- ⤵ Be on time. If you can't make it, let someone know. If necessary, try to find a substitute.

Getting Started

Before starting your first volunteer task, we ask all volunteers to be aware of the following points.

Safety—Act as a good role model for the children.

- ⤵ Always sign IN and OUT at the school's front office. It is important for staff to know that you are in the building and it makes it easier to locate you in an emergency.
- ⤵ Always wear a "Visitor" badge.
- ⤵ As a courtesy to others, please turn OFF cell phones while in the school building.
- ⤵ If you are taking food into school, please check with the class teacher because some food may be inappropriate for children with food allergies. (Always adhere to Healthy Snacks Policy).
- ⤵ Always follow the correct fire safety procedures:
 - There is NO talking during fire drills.
 - When in a classroom, follow the teacher out of the building and stay with the class.
 - When not in a classroom, quietly exit the building and remain at a safe distance until notified that it is safe to return.

Confidentiality

To make sure that students, staff and families feel comfortable, we all need to respect each other's privacy. Volunteers must be especially careful to honor confidentiality. Breaching confidentiality can be hurtful to children, their families and the staff. It can also harm the good reputation our BSCS volunteer parents have earned over the years.

To help, here are some sample issues that can arise.

"Wasn't it cute when John..." No matter how innocent, cute, funny or charming a classroom event may be, it is not okay to repeat stories about students. What happens in the classroom, stays in the classroom.

When parents ask you questions... Many parents are tempted to ask you about how their children behave at school. This is especially likely if you are friends outside school. It is not okay to put volunteers in this awkward position. Don't ask! Don't tell!

If parents do have concerns, encourage them to talk to the class teacher.

When you see or overhear something... As a volunteer, you might see or hear things from staff or students which they would not want to have repeated outside the school. What happens in the classroom (or in the hall, or the multipurpose room) stays at school.

If you have concerns about something you see or hear, please talk to the class teacher or Principal if appropriate.

When students tell you about their family, pet, vacation, etc. ... As students become comfortable working with you, they might decide to share something personal. You need to keep this information private, even if you know the child and their family outside of school.

When you have a concern... If a student tells you something that causes you concern, tell the class teacher. If you observe something that troubles you, tell the class teacher. The teacher is in the best position to deal with the issue appropriately.

Approach—Be professional and be positive!

- Strive to give each child the best you can and know that other BSCS volunteers do the same when working with your child.
- Respect each child as an individual.
- Respect your co-workers and all school employees.
- If working in your child's classroom, try not to single them out for attention as this may make them uncomfortable.
- Don't distract teachers while they are teaching. If you have questions, wait until there is an appropriate moment.
- Honor your commitments and be on time.
- Find ways to be positive and notice things that are working well.
- Try to make any criticism constructive.

Remember, your time and energy is helping to make BSCS a great place to learn.

Opportunities

Volunteer skills, interests and time commitments vary. We know you will be able to find something that you will enjoy doing.

Classroom Opportunities: Some teachers may like to have volunteers help in their classrooms or on field trips. If a teacher has volunteer opportunities, they are frequently introduced at the beginning of the year usually on or around Open House or Curriculum Night. But new projects can arise throughout the year. Check your teacher's website. If you are interested in getting involved, a great idea is to send your teacher a note.

School-wide Opportunities: BSCS has many programs geared at enriching student experience outside the classroom. Volunteers might help at arrival/dismissal times, at recess, in after-school programs, or in the library. Be sure to check out the range of opportunities, so you can find the perfect match for you!

One-shots: short time commitments; special one-time events.

Examples: help at a booth at the Spring Carnival. Help out at recess one time. Put up a display of student art or a display at the library.

Weekly/Ongoing: some programs rely on regular time commitments.

Examples: help at the library, volunteer for Math Superstars, etc.

Projects: larger commitments that may span several days/weeks.

Examples: Coordinate an anthology of school writing, help organize the classroom celebrations, help plan a talent show.

ACT (Arts Created Together)

Help ACT bring musicians, storytellers, actors, children's authors, artists and other enrichment programs to the school.

Projects

Art/Music Room

Help our art teachers on one or more projects throughout the year.

Ongoing

Beautification

Help improve and maintain the school building. Volunteers help with indoor plants, flowers, bulletin boards, etc.

Projects/One shot

K-2 Carnival

Assist with donations of baked goods, prizes, etc. or coordinate an event.

Project/One shot

Computer Labs

Assist teachers by working with students in computer lab for one hour every week. Training is offered.

Ongoing/Bi-weekly

Enrollment Sessions

Act as a host/hostess during one of our monthly enrollment sessions beginning in January.

One shot

Grade Level Activities	Projects/One shot
Help with fundraising and celebratory activities (dances, Promotion, Class Picture, Yearbook). Donate refreshments as a One shot Volunteer task.	
Field Day/Boosterthon	One shot
Volunteers lead games at an all-school field day held in the spring.	
Fundraising	Projects
Process orders and arrange for the distribution of various items.	
Hospitality	One shot
Help provide refreshments for school events or help clean up after events.	
Library	Ongoing
Volunteers are trained to assist the librarian by shelving, repairing, cataloguing, checking in books or assisting students. Choose a regular weekly or biweekly slot. Volunteers also assist during the book fairs.	
Math Superstars	Ongoing
Volunteers lead math activities.	
Newsletters	Ongoing
Help with the BSCS monthly newsletter/PTO newsletter.	
PTO Meetings/Events	Ongoing/One shot
Attend meetings and events. Donate refreshments as a One shot Volunteer task.	
Recess Helpers	Ongoing/One shot
Volunteers help with fun recess activities (e.g. obstacle course, limbo).	
School Advisory Council	Ongoing
Attend monthly meetings and work on school initiatives.	
School Folders	Ongoing
Publicize your business in our school folders.	
Family Nights	Ongoing/One shot
Coordinate and publicize the event. Donate a door prize as a One shot Volunteer task.	
Talent Show	Project/One shot
Coordinate students for the spring talent show or help as a One shot volunteer for the rehearsal or the night of the show (set-up, clean up, backstage, bake sale).	
Traffic Patrol	Ongoing
Assist with monitoring traffic patterns at arrival and/or dismissal time.	

Sharing Knowledge, Tips and Ideas

Although BSCS has many special traditions, new ideas arise each year. To make the best of both, we encourage volunteers to share their insights with one another, with staff, SAC and PTO.

If you see a better way to do something, don't be shy to come forward. Names and contact details can be found on our school website: www.bonitaspringscharter.org. Similarly, if you have a great experience from another school, share with the PTO your ideas about a potentially great fundraiser or exciting school-wide project.

After you work as a volunteer, you might decide to take on the role of a project/committee chairperson. As a chairperson, it is helpful to keep notes on your events and to pass these along to future project leaders.

Ongoing School Improvement

The role of School Advisory Council (SAC) is to help advise our Principal in the creation of an annual School Improvement Plan (SIP). The SIP is presented to the Lee County School District Superintendent and the BSCS Board of Trustees. Parents, teachers, other staff and community representatives work together to identify goals.

Volunteers can provide valuable feedback in this process. All volunteers are welcome to attend SAC meetings and learn more about the process. For a schedule of meetings, refer to the SIS Events Tab.

Miscellaneous

Clean up

After you have finished any activity within the school, it is important to tidy up afterwards. For obvious reasons scissors, glue guns, etc. should not be left lying around. Classrooms and other public areas should be left clean and tidy.

Parking

Unfortunately, the school does not have a huge amount of space for parking. If you park at the school, please park in a designated parking spot. Please **do not** park in the fire lane or in the bus ramp in front of the school as that is needed for school buses.

Funding

If you need PTO funds for an activity, please contact the PTO for approval before you go out and buy supplies. The PTO will be able to supply you with a reimbursement form for all approved spending.

Publicity

Only flyers **approved** by Lee County School District/principal will be sent home on Wednesday and Friday.

Space

BSCS has wonderful spaces for volunteers to share. These include the multipurpose room, the library, and cafeterias. If you want to use any of these spaces for events or meetings, please contact the Administrative Assistant in advance to request your space.

School Calendar

A school-wide calendar is available on SIS and/or from the Administrative Assistant in the front office. The aim of this calendar and website, www.bonitaspringscharter.org is to make sure that important school events and fundraisers are spaced evenly throughout the year. Please ensure that any new events that you plan are included on this calendar.

Available Resources

- PTO—The PTO helps provide funds for many of the activities listed in this handbook. Some programs do independent fundraising. If a program you are involved in would like to start a new fundraiser, please contact the PTO to find an appropriate place on the school calendar.

2 Hour Power

Perhaps you are unable to find an appropriate match to an activity listed above. We have started a program called **2 Hour Power** that emphasizes that all help, any help makes a huge difference for our school. With this in mind, BSCS will be accepting monetary contributions for parental volunteer commitment in amounts of \$20 per month for families having one student attending our school (\$30 per month for families having more than one student). You may send your first contribution into your student's homeroom teacher by September 30th.

PLEASE DETACH AND RETURN TO HOMEROOM TEACHER

I have read, discussed and will abide by the policies and procedures outlined in the BSCS Parent Volunteer Handbook. I understand that a monetary contribution of \$20 (or \$30) per month is acceptable in lieu of participating in a volunteer opportunity.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Student: _____ Homeroom Teacher: _____

Please detach and return to your homeroom teacher for **1 hour** of volunteer service.