

Parent Visits and Volunteers

General entry procedures

Enter and exit by the Main Door. In order to ensure the safety of our children, the Main Office must be able to monitor who enters the school building at all times. In order to do this, all visitors must enter through the main door—even when it is inconvenient. **It is a safety necessity!** All other doors will be locked.

Sign IN and OUT. Please sign in and out at the Main Office each time you enter the school. A visitors log is conveniently located on the cabinet just inside the Main Office door. By signing in/out you ensure that we will have accurate information about who is in the building in case of emergency.

Always wear the guest badge. Please put on a Guest/Visitor Identification Badge when you sign in at the Main Office. The badge identifies you as a welcomed visitor and indicates to our teachers, support staff, and children that you have permission to be in the building. If you plan to volunteer regularly, you may have a personal identification badge prepared by contacting Elissa Ginsky, Vice President for Volunteers, at (301) 365-0143 or eginsky@aol.com.

Park in appropriate spaces. NEVER park around the circular drive as it is prohibited by the Fire Marshall at all times, including days and hours that school is not in session. Please park only in the spaces designated for visitors or in the area adjacent to the Burning Tree playing fields. Please do not park in spots designated for staff at any time.

Do not enter classrooms during the school day unless you are volunteering or coming for a pre-arranged appointment or event. Even so, you must sign in at the Main Office first. If you are picking up your child for a doctor's appointment or to deliver a forgotten lunch, please enter the Main Office only and ask the administrative staff to call your child down to the office.

Classroom visit policy

At Burning Tree, we highly value home-to-school communication through pre-arranged conferences, notes, telephone calls, and e-mails. However, unless you have made arrangements with the teacher beforehand, we ask that you do not enter the classroom for any reason. For example, when you are in the building for a scheduled volunteer appointment, please do not use that opportunity to “drop in” to your child's classroom. Any unannounced or unexpected classroom entry disrupts the flow of instruction and distracts teachers and students from their planned activities. This includes visits during student arrival and dismissal times.

You may arrange a mutually convenient classroom visit or appointment directly with the classroom teacher through a note or phone call. A visit can be an excellent way to gain a better understanding of your child's learning routine and to observe your child's interaction with his/her teacher. Pre-arranged classroom visits are an opportunity to **observe only**, they are not opportunities for impromptu conferences.

All classrooms are open to parents during a regularly scheduled Visitation Day on the Monday on which Columbus Day is celebrated.

Volunteer guidelines

Burning Tree celebrates volunteers! When you volunteer, you demonstrate to your child that you value his/her school and education and that you are proud to participate in his/her life as a student.

There are abundant opportunities for volunteering. We need volunteers inside the classroom, as well as volunteers who can do projects at home such as record classroom books on tape or help cut out bulletin board displays. Whether you have a lot of time or a little, and whether you can come into school or work only at home—you can be an active volunteer! For information about volunteering, contact Elissa Ginsky, PTA Vice President for Volunteers, at (301) 365-0143 or eginsky@aol.com.

To ensure a wonderfully beneficial experience, all volunteers are asked to follow a few guidelines:

Always sign in at the Main Office and wear a volunteer badge. If you plan to volunteer regularly, you can get a permanent identification badge prepared by contacting the PTA Vice President for Volunteers. Please keep your personal badge with you and wear it into the school building at all times, or you may pin it on our volunteer banner inside the office to the right of the front door.

Respect student confidentiality. Any information you receive while volunteering in the classroom must remain confidential. We must respect the students' privacy at all times. **Please never say anything about a child that you wouldn't want repeated about your own child.** Avoid making comparisons and placing children in competition with each other.

Stay focused on your volunteer assignment. Please resist the temptation to socialize with other parents during in school volunteer time. A background of adult chatter is distracting to the children. Please do not use your volunteer time to discuss your own child or your personal questions with the teacher. Make an individual appointment for such discussion. Also, please remember that as a volunteer you are there for all the children—please do not use this as a time for special interaction with your child alone.

Do not bring siblings with you for a volunteer appointment.

Interacting with the children. Try to learn the names of the children and address each child by name. Always be positive when explaining directions or making corrections.

Canceling your volunteer appointment. Please call (301) 320-6510 as soon as possible if you must cancel a scheduled volunteer appointment. If it is before or after school hours, leave a message on the answering machine indicating which staff member was expecting you so that he/she can be advised of your cancellation.

To volunteer for any PTA event, simply call the responsible Committee Chairperson whose name and phone number is listed on the PTA roster in the front of this Directory.

