



VOLUNTEER & VISITOR POLICY

SECTION 1. BEN FRANKLIN ACADEMY

MISSION

The mission of Ben Franklin Academy is to develop young adults with character like America's founding Renaissance man, Benjamin Franklin: well-read, scientifically curious, and civically engaged.

VISION

Our students will excel academically through a challenging, sequenced curriculum that emphasizes math, science, the arts, and literacy. We will be a data-driven institution, focusing on individual students. Our students, teachers, parents, staff, and leaders will be held accountable for the success of our school. Finally, we recognize that an education is incomplete without fostering social emotional development, character, sports, and nature.

PURPOSE

The formation of Ben Franklin Academy (BFA) was the result of the community's tremendous grassroots effort. BFA believes that the performance and success of each student is also a shared responsibility of students, teachers, parents, staff and community leaders. Accordingly, a strong family involvement program is utilized. Volunteering not only improves students' experiences and achievements, it fosters a strong sense of community. The purpose of this policy is to set forth BFA's volunteer commitment, visitor policies, and relevant emergency procedures.

SECTION 2. VOLUNTEERING AT BFA

VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENT

BFA's students' families are accountable for the success of the school. Thus, each BFA family with student(s) in kindergarten through eighth grade commits to volunteer 30 combined approved volunteer hours each school year. Families with a single parent commit to volunteer 15 approved volunteer hours each school year.

The Principal, at his/her sole discretion, may restrict an individual's service or a family's service obligation, including, but not limited to, the scope, time, duration, activity or quantity of volunteer hours.

STUDENT FAMILY

For purposes of this policy, a “family” shall include parents, stepparents, a parent’s domestic partner¹, grandparents, legal guardians, and siblings.

VOLUNTEER CALENDAR

The volunteer school year shall coincide with BFA’s fiscal year. Volunteer hours accrue from July 1 to June 30 of the following year.

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

A Volunteer Coordinator shall coordinate with the Principal or his/her designee(s) to establish a database of approved volunteer opportunities. The Volunteer Coordinator shall work with student families to provide appropriate, approved volunteer opportunities that will be listed in a volunteer database approved by BFA.

APPROVED HOURS

The Principal or his/her designee(s) must approve all volunteer opportunities. Approved volunteer hours must directly benefit BFA, such as work in and out of the classroom, work on BFA facilities, work in the lunchroom, work in carpool, work on or with BFA’s committees (such as the Finance Committee, Grant Committee, Community Events Committee (CEC), Science, Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Committee, School Accountability Committee (SAC) or any other standing or ad hoc committee of the Board), the BFA Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) or any other service previously deemed beneficial to the school.

A family may also earn volunteer hours for watching the child or children of a different BFA family during the time they are volunteering for BFA.

A volunteer may not be compensated by a third party for volunteer service, unless the volunteer is being paid as part of a company’s pro bono or service policy.

Volunteer hours shall not be rounded up. A volunteer hour consists of a full sixty minutes of service.

BUYING VOLUNTEER HOURS

Volunteer hours shall not be sold or exchanged by the school or any individual. A proxy cannot be used. The sole exception is that at BFA’s silent auction or other similar fundraising event up to four (4) 10-hour coupons may be auctioned. These coupons can be used to deduct a maximum of 10 hours from a family’s annual volunteer commitment as tracked by family number.

¹ For purposes of this policy, a “Domestic Partner” is defined as it is defined in the Colorado Revised Statutes § 24-50-603(6.5) (2011).

REPORTING VOLUNTEER HOURS

Volunteers must report all volunteer hours. Volunteers can report volunteer hours at the front office or online through BFA's volunteer management system. Verification that the reported hours were completed may be required. All volunteer hours must be reported or logged within 48 hours of completion; otherwise it will be assumed that the volunteer did not perform his or her service.

SECTION 3. VOLUNTEER CODE OF CONDUCT

In order to promote a safe environment, it is essential for all volunteers to adhere to a professional code of ethics. In addition, prior to beginning the first volunteer assignment each school year, each volunteer is required to read and sign BFA's Volunteer Code of Conduct Agreement, provide a signed copy to the front office or Volunteer Coordinator, and follow the rules defined in this policy. The Douglas County School District Parent Volunteer Agreement (Parent Volunteer Agreement) and this policy are available on BFA's website as well as in BFA's front office.

Failure to comply with the Parent Volunteer Agreement and this policy may result in a limitation of volunteer opportunities.

SAFE ENVIRONMENT

In order to promote a safe environment at BFA, all volunteers must adhere to the following:

Confidentiality

Volunteers may have access to grades, records and personal information. Any information pertaining to a student must remain in the classroom.

Dependability

Volunteers must be reliable. The teachers/staff have planned activities for volunteers and the students. The same is true for all volunteer opportunities. If unable to make it to a committed activity, please be considerate of others by arranging for a replacement and calling the office. All volunteer work at the school and in the classroom must be scheduled in advance. It is never appropriate to drop-in to volunteer, with the exception of lunchroom and carpool.

Communication

Volunteer work should be a learning experience for everyone involved. When you have questions about policies and procedures, ask the appropriate staff member for clarification.

Support

As a volunteer, you will be in a support position. Your role is to support the classroom teacher and administration at all times. The administration, teachers and staff are responsible for the education and safety of the students at BFA, and they have asked for your help in achieving their objectives.

Consistency

Be consistent with BFA's and the teachers' rules for behavior and the policies of the school. Always remember that the teacher is the authority in the classroom and must be supported by all the volunteers. Never assume responsibility of discipline of students.

If you witness inappropriate behavior or other infraction of school rules, please report it to a teacher/staff member as set forth in the Student Discipline Policy.

Respect for Learning Process

Do not use your time at the school for an informal parent-teacher conference. This can be disruptive to the learning process for all students. Please make arrangements to discuss your child's progress with the teacher at a different time. While in the classroom, please be as discreet as possible and do not interrupt the teacher.

Role Model

You are a role model for the students when you volunteer. Please act accordingly and dress appropriately (see the Employee Dress Policy for guidelines).

Siblings

In order to give your full attention to your volunteer responsibilities, please make other arrangements for younger children when you volunteer at the school.

Building Access

Please do not enter areas at BFA designated as "Staff Only" unless given explicit permission to do so. The Staff Lounge is a place for the staff to be able to freely collaborate on their curriculum delivery including the needs and performance of specific students. It is inappropriate for volunteers to overhear or be involved in discussions involving specific students.

Representation

As a volunteer, you are not an authorized agent of BFA. In the course of your volunteer work, at no time may you imply or state that you are an approved agent of BFA. You may not make commitments on behalf of BFA, unless given express written authorization, direction and terms by the Board.

FIELD TRIP SUPERVISION

In addition to these policies, please refer to the Field Trip Policy for additional guidelines regarding volunteering on a field trip.

SECTION 4. VISITORS

A "visitor" is defined as any person seeking to enter the school building who is not an employee of BFA, a member of the Board or a student currently enrolled in BFA. All volunteers at BFA are visitors.

ALL VISITORS MUST CHECK IN AND OUT

All visitors shall report to the front office when arriving or leaving the school premises. Notices are displayed at the school entrances indicating that all visitors are required to register with the front office and obtain authorization in order to remain on the school premises. All visitors are required to wear appropriate school-issued identification when on school premises.

Any visitor without proper identification will be directed to the front office.

VISITORS MAY BE GIVEN RESTRICTED ACCESS

Access to particular classrooms or other instructional areas of the school may be restricted at the discretion of the Principal or his/her designee.

Because classrooms and other instructional areas are particularly vulnerable to disruption, visitors to one of those areas must carefully follow the instructions of the staff in charge of that area; failure to follow such instructions may result in the revocation of visiting privileges.

RIGHT TO DENY ACCESS

The Principal, or his/her designee, has the authority to deny visiting privileges to any individual if it is deemed to be in the best interest of the students and/or employees. Any such individual shall be directed to leave the school premises immediately; failure to leave the school premises upon direction may result in the involvement of law enforcement authorities.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Subject to this policy, both custodial and non-custodial parents of a student have the right to visit their child's classroom unless BFA receives a court order restricting such contact.

SECTION 5. EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

EMERGENCIES

Visitors should report emergencies or dangerous situations of any kind immediately to a staff member. In the case of a medical emergency, the visitor should first call 911. BFA has specific procedural guidelines for emergencies. Please see the Ben Franklin Academy Emergency and School Safety Handbook.

SUPERVISION OF STUDENTS

A single visitor shall never be alone with a student or a group of students. If a visitor is working one-on-one with a student, it must always be within an area where at least one other adult is present or in an open area (or with the door open). This policy helps to protect the students, as well as adult volunteers, and will help ensure that BFA will always be a safe environment for its students.