

Communicating with Teachers

At Burning Tree, the staff works to provide a safe and motivating learning environment in which all students experience academic and social success. Teachers communicate openly with parents and value communication.

Please voice any concerns about your child's education as soon as possible. You, the parent, must bring your concern to the attention of the Burning Tree staff in order for it to be understood and addressed. DO NOT let your concerns intensify. Give voice to concerns in sufficient time to allow the teacher to act on them.

Any concerns you have should always be raised first with the appropriate staff member. Please do not go to others or to the principal until you have tried to have your concerns resolved by the staff member directly.

ATTEND BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT

During the first month of school, you will be invited to attend Back-To-School Night. Though NOT an opportunity to share or gain information about your child specifically, Back-To-School Night is designed to answer questions about your child's academic program *in general*. Back-To-School Night is an opportunity for you to visit your child's classroom and to hear from your child's teacher. At Back-To-School Night your child's teacher will discuss his/her objectives for the year and will communicate what is expected of your child at this grade level. You will have time to ask questions about the class and instructional program and to learn more about your child's daily schedule.

The teacher will also share his/her requests for volunteer assistance both inside and outside of the classroom. Room Parents, who are volunteers responsible for coordinating classroom events, will also present information about their plans for the year and will ask for your support.

WRITE A NOTE OR E-MAIL

Teachers will let parents know at Back-to-School Night how they would like to be contacted. Generally, the most effective way to communicate concerns or questions to a staff member is to write a note.

Notes should be delivered to school through your child's backpack or dropped at the Main Office. Please ensure that notes are sealed and clearly labeled with the appropriate staff member's name. A box is available on the credenza in the main lobby for any checks, notes, applications, cafeteria money, etc.

Some teachers welcome e-mail and will share their e-mail address at Back-To-School Night. Please be sure to respect the teacher's wishes with respect to e-mail.

To support and encourage a constructive and informative dialogue, please share your concerns without criticizing. Criticizing a teacher's work can diminish the relationship between parent and teacher rather than foster an educational partnership.

Please allow at least two school days for the teacher to respond recognizing the many competing demands on the teacher's time.

Also provide a phone number or e-mail address so the teacher can respond to you as easily as possible.

LEAVE A PHONE MESSAGE

You may call the school at 301-320-6510 and leave a message for a teacher to return your call. Please be aware that our teachers DO NOT have phones in their classrooms, and they are generally not available during the school day. Teachers must all share access to the few private phone lines in the building. Please allow time for the teacher to respond and please leave specific information about your availability to receive the return call.

SCHEDULE A PARENT/TEACHER CONFERENCE

During the fall semester and prior to the issuance of the first report card, you will be invited to attend a parent-teacher conference. (You will be able to sign up for your conference at Back-To-School Night.) This is an opportunity for you to meet alone with your child's teacher to discuss your child's progress and to review samples of your child's work.

At any other time of the school year, parents are encouraged to request additional conferences as needed to address concerns that cannot be effectively resolved by note, phone or e-mail. Conferences can be scheduled directly with any staff member for a mutually convenient time.

Conferences are your opportunity to:

- Share specific concerns
- Offer examples of the problem to the teacher
- Work with the teacher to generate possible solutions
- Set a time frame to implement the solutions
- Arrange a follow-up meeting or phone call to evaluate the solutions