



**Communication Guide  
And  
Parent Volunteer Handbook**



**School Year 2008 - 2009**



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## Communication Guide and Parent Volunteer Handbook

Welcome to SMCA! It is our goal to provide open and honest communication at all times. We also want to provide you with the most efficient path to problem resolution by directing you to the most appropriate person to address your concerns.

### Contact Information

Classroom Teacher - _____	239-768-9375 EXT. _____ <a href="mailto:_____@sixmilecharter.org">_____@sixmilecharter.org</a>
Principal—Mrs. Sara Abraham	239-768-9375 <a href="mailto:sabraham@sixmilecharter.org">sabraham@sixmilecharter.org</a>
Principal of Curriculum—Ms. Patricia Duffy	239-768-9375 <a href="mailto:pduffy@sixmilecharter.org">pduffy@sixmilecharter.org</a>
Business Administrator—Mr. AJ Nauss	239-768-9375 <a href="mailto:anauss@sixmilecharter.org">anauss@sixmilecharter.org</a>
Dean of Students – Mr. Craig Horn Before/After Care	239-768-9375 <a href="mailto:whorn@sixmilecharter.org">whorn@sixmilecharter.org</a>
Office Manager—Mrs. Chiara Leddy Before/After Care	239-768-9375 X 128 <a href="mailto:cleddy@sixmilecharter.org">cleddy@sixmilecharter.org</a>
Registrar—Ms. Michelle Egan	239-768-9375 X 117 <a href="mailto:megan@sixmilecharter.org">megan@sixmilecharter.org</a>
School Nurse—Mrs. Kathryn Toback	239-768-9375 X 300 <a href="mailto:ktoback@sixmilecharter.org">ktoback@sixmilecharter.org</a>
Cafeteria Supervisor—Mr. Chris Savvas	239-768-9375 X 303 <a href="mailto:csavvas@sixmilecharter.org">csavvas@sixmilecharter.org</a>
Media Communication — Mrs. Colleen Reynolds	239-849-6400 <a href="mailto:edgecommunications@comcast.net">edgecommunications@comcast.net</a>

### Charter Schools USA

Mr. Richard Page, Vice President of Operations	954-202-3500 Ext. 1233 <a href="mailto:rpage@charterschoolsusa.com">rpage@charterschoolsusa.com</a>
Mrs. Sherry Hage, Vice President of Education	954-202-3500 Ext. 1208 <a href="mailto:shage@charterschoolsusa.com">shage@charterschoolsusa.com</a>



## **Parent Conferences**

### **Initial Teacher Conference**

Conferences can be set up at the request of the school or at the request of the parent. **Parents requesting conferences** with school personnel **for academic or student discipline** issues should make the request **in writing or via email directly to the teacher** using the *Six Mile Charter Academy* website [www.sixmilecharter.org](http://www.sixmilecharter.org).

Parents without computer access can request a ***Parent Conference Request Form*** available at the school's front desk. The teacher will contact the parent and arrange a mutually agreed upon time for the conference.

Conferences **requested by the school** will include a mutually agreed upon specific time and date for the meeting. All parents and visitors must sign-in at the front office upon entering the building for a visitor's pass before going to any classroom. Please be aware that teachers are not available for unscheduled conferences during the day.

If your child participates in a specific program, the teacher will arrange for appropriate additional staff to attend the meeting:

- **Exceptional Student Education—ESE Teacher**
- **English for Speakers of Other Languages—ESOL Teacher**

The teacher will complete a Parent Conference Summary form and will provide parents with a copy at the end of the meeting.

### **Administrative Intervention Conference**

Once parents have met with the teacher, should concerns still require administrative intervention, please contact the Dean of Students, Mr. Craig Horn at **239-768-9375**. The Dean of Students will contact the parent to arrange a mutually convenient time for a follow-up meeting which may include a specialist and/or the teacher. If after meeting with the teacher(s) and the Dean of Students the issues are still not resolved, parents can request a meeting with the Principal, Mrs. Sara Abraham. Please call the school's main number, **239-768-9375**, and ask to speak with Mrs. Leddy to coordinate a meeting with the Principal. A mutually convenient time will be scheduled for the meeting.



## **Requests for General Information**

There are times when a formal Parent Conference is not necessary. Should you need information about the following topics, please call **239-768-9375** to contact the indicated staff handling these areas:

- Registration/Required Documents—Ms. Michelle Egan
- Appointments with Mrs. Abraham – Mrs. Chiara Leddy
- Intramural Sports—Ms. Joelle Frantz
- Health/Medications/Tardiness/Absenteeism—Mrs. Katie Toback (239-768-9375 EXT 300)
- Volunteer Hours—Classroom Teacher/Mrs. Chiara Leddy
- Before School/After School Care and Camp—Mr. Craig Horn/Mrs. Chiara Leddy
- State Assessments/Curriculum/Report Card—Principal of Curriculum – Ms. Patricia Duffy
- Classroom Discipline/Bus Discipline—Mr. Craig Horn
- Donations—Mrs. Chiara Leddy
- SIS-Classroom Teacher
- Bus Transportation—Mr. Michael Velez - Reception
- School Uniforms—Step Ahead, 800-582-2101
- Media—Edge Communications, Colleen Reynolds 239-849-6400

## **Additional School Communication Methods**

- Open House
- SIS
- Parent/Teacher Meetings
- End of Year Parent Surveys
- Student Agenda Books
- Friday Folders
- Suggestion Box in front lobby
- Teacher Web Sites
- Connect-Ed Telephone Communication System

The Six Mile Charter Academy monthly PTO newsletter keeps parents apprised of important school information. The newsletter is posted on the school's website: [www.sixmilecharter.org](http://www.sixmilecharter.org). Copies are also available to parents at the front desk.

As a parent volunteer, you provide an integral service to our school and are an important part of the SMCA community. When you volunteer at SMCA, you help...

- your child
- other children
- teachers
- administrators
- the community

These guidelines are intended to build your confidence and provide direction so that you feel your time spent here has been worthwhile. There are countless ways of contributing to our children's education. Whatever you do, remember that you are appreciated.



## **Building a Strong Volunteer Community**

Six Mile Charter Academy has a strong tradition of parent involvement. Because volunteers are such an integral part of SMCA, it is important to keep our standards high. 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 or not follow healthy snack 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 SMCA 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 SMCA 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 SMCA 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. 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:** SMCA 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 Fall Festival, put up a display of student art, or help improve and maintain the school building. Volunteers can help with indoor plants, flowers, bulletin boards, etc. and may assist with fundraising and celebratory activities (Honor Roll Ceremonies, Dances, Graduation, Class Picture, and Yearbook). Volunteers may also lead games at an all-school field day held in the spring, help provide refreshments for school events or help clean up after such events.

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

Examples: help at the library, lunch duty/recess, help our art teachers on one or more projects throughout the year, assist the librarian by shelving, repairing, cataloguing, checking in books and assisting during book fairs. Volunteers may also help with the SMCA monthly PTO newsletter, attend PTO meetings and events, donate refreshments, attend SAC meetings, work on school initiatives, and assist with monitoring traffic patterns at arrival and/or dismissal times.

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

Examples: help organize the classroom celebrations, process orders and arrange for the distribution of various items through the PTO.

## **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 SMCA 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.



## **Sharing Knowledge, Tips and Ideas**

Although SMCA 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.sixmilecharter.org](http://www.sixmilecharter.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.

## **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 lane in front of the school as that is needed for school buses.

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

### **School Calendar**

A school-wide calendar is available on our school website: [www.sixmilecharter.org](http://www.sixmilecharter.org) and/or from the Administrative Assistant in the front office. The aim of this calendar and website is to make sure that important school events and fundraisers are spaced evenly throughout the year.

### **Available Resources**

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.



**Parent Conference Request Form**

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I am requesting a conference with the following teacher(s): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Reason for request: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Date & Time Requested: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

**Notification**

Date & Time of Parent Conference: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Notified by: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone

E-Mail

In Person

Note



## Parent Conference Summary Form

Name of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Attendees: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Topics Discussed: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Recommendations: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Follow-Up:  Yes  No

If yes, specify follow-up action(s) and person responsible: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Administrator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_