



Birch Buddies

An After School Program

Program Handbook

Birch Grove Community School
"Where Roots Grow Deep and Branches Reach High!"
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Welcome to Birch Buddies...

A before and after school program!

Participation:

To participate in this program, children must be currently enrolled in Kindergarten- 5th grade. Any outstanding fees from other BGCS programs must be paid in full prior to attendance at Birch Buddies.

Program Description:

Birch Grove Community School has created Birch Buddies (BB), an after school program that is designed to provide a safe and fun environment for children after the normal school hours.

The program (3:15 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. except for Wednesdays- no Birch Buddies on Wednesdays) will include a healthy snack (children may bring their own if they choose) and planned activities by the BB staff. Activities/interactions may include: outside time, gym time, on-going art projects, and hands on activities that are exciting to young children. At 4:45, activities/interactions will be quiet and relaxing until close at 5:00.

Homework help: Homework help may be available to your child on an as needed basis during program hours. Licensed teaching staff may be available to assist children in understanding **how** to complete homework assignments; however, students/parents are responsible to see that assignments are completed. If your child

needs help in understanding how to complete homework assignments, please call the school office.

Tutoring: Tutoring may be available during program hours for an additional fee. To make arrangements, please call the school office.

Program Location

The Birch Buddies program will be held at Birch Grove Community School located in Tofte. Please check to see what room will be used, as it may vary from year to year. Participants will also have access to the playground, tennis courts, ice skating rink, warming hut, pavilion and nature trails located at the Birch Grove Center.

Program Availability

Birch Buddies is available every day that BGCS is in session, except for Wednesdays. Please see the school calendar for specific dates. If BGCS is closed, the BB program is closed as well.

Birch Buddies Staff

Only qualified and caring staff will work at the BB program! Our staff will work hard to ensure that your child's participation in the program is a positive growth experience. Staff will have experience working with children and will be certified in CPR and first aid.

Participation Fees

Birch Buddies is funded by **participation fees alone!** We have set the participation fee with varied incomes in mind. Fees can vary from year to year. There is no registration fee for the Birch Buddies program.

Rates:

The rate is approximately \$3.00 per hour– a \$3.00 fee will be charged each hour for children present at any time from 3:15p.m.-4:00p.m. and again from 4:00p.m.-5:00p.m.

A late fee of \$1.00 per minute can be charged, so make sure that you are on time to pick up your child.

Billing

Parents/Guardians will be sent an invoice every two weeks for program use. Payment is expected upon receipt. Check should be written out to Birch Grove Community School. If you are having difficulties making payments, please speak to the school director. Payment plans and other options can be explored. Failure to pay upon receipt without contacting the school office may result in suspension from the BB program.

Pick up policy

You are responsible for signing your out daily. If someone other than a parent is picking up a child, we ask that you please let staff know in writing. (Notes can be sent to school in Take Home Folders.) The non-parent will be asked to show photo identification prior to picking up a child. We have the safety of our students in mind!

We strongly urge you to pick up your child in a timely manner. Children remaining at the program after 5:00 can be charged an additional late fee of \$1.00 per minute.

After picking your child up from the program, don't forget to stop at student lockers to pick up your child's belongings.

Bus Passes

When your child is enrolled in the BB program, please be sure to send a note in Take Home Folders to your child's teacher indicating

your child's schedule. If the schedule is consistent, you need only send one note indicating what the regular schedule is. You must then send a buss pass to school if this regular schedule changes.

Mistakes Happen!! If there is ever any question as to where your child should go (miscommunication, a forgotten bus pass, etc.), and we can't contact you, staff will always send your child to the after school program versus sending children home on the bus (not knowing if anyone is home). If the school is responsible for the error, you will not be charged for the after school care that particular day.

Medications

We can only administer medication if they are in the original container and a Permission To Administer Medication form has been filled out.

Supplies Needed:

- ❖ Sufficient warm clothing for the season so that we can go outside and expend some energy!
- ❖ Please make sure your child has a pair of inside shoes. We use inside shoes to reduce the spread of snow and water on the carpet in the winter. Please send shoes that your child can take off and put on with minimal assistance.
- ❖ A container of disinfectant wipes

The BB Calendar

The BB calendar will run on the same calendar as Birch Grove Community School. If there is no elementary school in session, there is no BB program. Please let us know if you need a copy of a calendar. School closings are posted on channel ten and on Boreal.

Also, home and cell phone numbers listed on your child's enrollment paperwork will be included in the school voice messaging system – this is a recorded message that will reach you at home or work to notify you of any closings/late starts/early releases.

Bad Weather Closure

If Birch Grove Community School is closed, the BB program will be closed as well. If Birch Grove is closing early, the BB program is canceled. Telephone calls will be made to both the homes and work places of parents to notify them of the early closing. You may also call the Birch Grove Community School office at 663-0170 to check on the status of the program if the weather looks questionable.

Contact Information

The school main line is (218) 663-0170. The extension for the BB program has yet to be determined.

Health Matters

If your child is not present at school, we will assume that they will not attend the after school program.

Every effort is made to reduce the communication of germs at the Birch Grove Community School. High use areas such as tables and faucets are cleaned daily. While it is inevitable that children will experience some illness, we appreciate your assistance in keeping the spread of illness to a minimum! The BB staff will perform a visual check of your child each morning upon arrival.

Please do not send your child to Birch Buddies while sick—even if it is a special occasion that he/she doesn't want to miss. Your child probably won't enjoy themselves, and he/she will infect other children. Please assure your child that there will be plenty of other

special occasions for him/her to experience another day when they feel better.

Parents will notify the school office of any contagious condition. Failure to report a diagnosed condition to the teacher/director poses a serious risk to the students and adults in the building.

Children should be kept home if they have any of the following symptoms:

- Fever over 98.6 degrees
- Impetigo
- Mouth sores
- Strep throat
- Tuberculosis
- Pink eye
- Flu
- Unexplainable rash
- Severe cough
- Rapid or labored breathing
- Severe cold
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea
- Yellowish skin or eyes
- Head lice
- Illness of any sort where child is lethargic and/or listless

A child that has vomited or had the flu, a fever, etc, should not attend Birch Buddies for 24 hours after their last episode.

Behavior

The Birch Buddies program is committed to an environment of care and concern for one another! We celebrate and appreciate our individual differences and expect the following behavior:

- *Treat yourself, others, and property with respect!*

Positive behavior will be reinforced at the BB program on a daily basis. Children will be recognized for positive behavior!

If a serious behavior issue does arise however, the staff member, parent and child will work together to resolve the issue. We want to work with you for the benefit of your child!

Items from Home

We do not encourage bringing toys/items from home. The BB program has everything that your child will need!

Parent Involvement

This program was developed because parents have asked for a quality child program in our area. Parents are *always* welcome at the BB program! If you would like to volunteer time at the program, or would like to donate needed items, please make arrangements with BB staff or the school director. Our staff will be glad to accommodate you in whatever way you would like to give to the program!

Parent concerns and comments are always welcome. Please let us know how we can improve this new program! You can direct issues, concerns, and comments to the BB staff or the Birch Grove School Director.

If you know of a child that could benefit from this program, please refer the BB program and let other

parents know that this opportunity is available. If this program is fully utilized, it will be around serving children for years to come!

Agreement to the Birch Buddies Handbook Terms and Conditions

I have read and understand the Birch Buddies Parent/Guardian Handbook in whole, and I agree to abide by its terms, conditions and policies.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

