



BUDDY FAMILY GUIDE

What are Buddy Families?

Buddy Family volunteers help new students and their families integrate into the St. John community by serving as welcome ambassadors on behalf of St. John. The buddy family reaches out to the new family and provides them with support, resources, social opportunities, and familiar faces to help foster an early connection to the school. Buddy Families also help new families understand the significance of school events and how to best participate throughout the year.

How are Buddy Families selected?

St. John's Welcome Committee is responsible for pairing Buddy Family volunteers with incoming new families. All new families are automatically assigned a buddy family. Pairings are made based on the gender, age, interests, geography, and any other considerations noted by the parents.

Parents who are interested in participating in the Buddy Family Program should sign up [here](#).

How much do I need to know about St. John to be a Buddy Family?

As a St. John parent, speaking authentically about your lived experiences with the school is the most important thing you can bring to the table. As it may help you answer more detailed questions, we also recommend that you familiarize yourself with the [Family Handbook](#) and keep informed about the school's events through the [website](#), NewsViews, and [school calendar](#). This will provide you with the knowledge base to support you in your role.

Oftentimes, the most important thing you will do is connect your buddy family with where to find information, not necessarily providing answers yourself.

The Admissions Office is always available as a resource to you should you have complex questions. Contact Jonna Skokan at jskokan@st-johnschool.org at any time for additional support.

What are the time commitments and other expectations of buddy families?

As a buddy family, you can anticipate attending at least one buddy family event with your buddy family and reaching out regularly throughout the year. **We estimate the time commitment is anywhere from 5 hours a year to 15 or more.** Our hope is that you will be paired with a family and all benefit from a deeper community connection.

Contact your new family to introduce yourself. Provide your contact information. Let them know what capacity you are available to support them.

After pairing, you will:

- Receive an email introducing you to your buddy family. Please reply to introduce yourself further and start the conversation about meeting up.
- Attend the Back to School BBQ (TBD).
- Attend, plan and/or host at least one Buddy Family event (Summer Playdates, host your own event, or park meet up).
- Actively reach out to keep your new family informed of upcoming school events.
- Familiarize yourself with the school website and consistently read NewsViews each week, sharing relevant information and resources with your buddy family.
- Receive regular touchpoints from the Welcome Committee throughout the year

Why our Buddy Families love volunteering:

“Being a Buddy Family nurtured a close relationship between both children, but also between us, as parents. We remember the challenges of navigating a new school, with so much new information, and it was so helpful to have our Buddy Family reach out to support us. We especially love the inclusivity that this program cultivates. We can't wait to do it again.”

Thank you! Have fun, make friends, and welcome our newest community members!