



ODYSSEY

WELCOME GUIDE





Hello new families, and welcome to the Family Classroom!

Wait, you say, what about Odyssey? You may be amused to know that when the parent-created Odyssey program began in 1996, it went by the name of the Family Classroom. The idea was that this was a place where adults were welcome, and where kids got to know a whole community of other parents who became, in a way, their extended family. There was another key idea in there, too, namely that kids have a voice in their school. So it was the students of the Family Classroom who, after a year or so, decided that they wanted to change the name. They chose to replace it with "Odyssey," and that is what we have been, ever since.

Welcome, also, to this rather ramshackle place we call Commodore, a school hodgepodge together out of five different decades of construction. At first glance, it doesn't look all that promising, but because Odyssey is a program where boundaries are loose and power is shared, the real architecture of Odyssey is trust. It doesn't matter that the spaces we inhabit are unusual, because we fill them with the structure of human relationships, reinventing our little society every day. That's the way it has been since the beginning, a program built on the bond between the kids, the teachers, and the parents.

And, finally, welcome to being a volunteer. A sage veteran parent once said, "Odyssey –it's not meant to be convenient," and though we all laughed, we also knew it was true. There's always a lot of work to be done. It's not always tidy, and sometimes it pushes us out of our comfort zone. But, in the end, we think most families would agree that we get back more than we put into it. That's because the reward we receive is not just for our kids, who thrive in a place that believes in their ability to be independent. It's for us, too, who follow our children into their new school only to discover that this is a place where we belong as well, united by the belief that we are all here to do the very best we can by all these children that we share for these few years.

- *OPTO Leadership*



Odyssey Parent Volunteer Contract

The parent contract has been developed by the parent community as an agreement for the level of support each family will provide to enrich our children's learning environment. The fulfillment of this contract is key to creating a supportive learning environment for students, teachers, and families.

This agreement is made by:

the parents or guardians of

student(s) enrolled in Odyssey, a program of the Bainbridge Island School District, in which:

1. I (we) agree to contribute an average of ten hours per month (five for single parents) during the school year in volunteer program support activities.
2. I (we) understand that volunteer hours are defined as time spent in either the classroom or in direct support of the classroom or school activities, including committees, program retreats, all parent meetings, fundraising activities.
3. I (we) agree to attend monthly parent meetings.
4. I (we) agree to work shoulder to shoulder at home supporting our child's learning.
5. I (we) understand that the success of my child in Odyssey is directly related to creating a strong and healthy school community. I (we) will participate in the democratic decision-making process of the community and support the outcome and decisions made. I (we) agree to abide by the guidelines governing volunteer time as set forth in the Odyssey Program Handbook and will work in good faith with the Volunteer Coordinator(s) to establish a plan to meet my (our) volunteer commitment.

Signed _____ Date _____

Signed _____ Date _____



VOLUNTEERING AT ODYSSEY K-8

Parent involvement is the cornerstone of Odyssey's "family classroom" and learning model. Each family is asked to strive towards 100 volunteer hours annually (50 for single-parent households), which allows our school to perform to its values and our programs to thrive. There are almost endless ways to give of your time and talents. **Volunteer opportunities for the K-8 program fall into three main categories. Parents may choose to focus in one of these areas or across all:**

Classroom Volunteering	Integrated Learning Blocks (ILBs)	Events, Programs and Activities
<p>What: Parents support students with their independent learning goals, work with small groups of children in the garden, assist specialists (Art, PE, STEM), and support classroom administrative tasks.</p> <p>When: School days throughout the year. Classroom shifts are 1-2 hours. A weekly shift is ideal. New parents begin in the classroom in late September, after Classroom Volunteer Orientation.</p> <p>Who: All Odyssey parents</p> <p>Coordinators: Your Class Rep</p> <p>How do I become involved?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the Parent Volunteer Planning Form with your classroom volunteering preferences (emailed over the summer). 2. Select your volunteer shift(s) on the Classroom Volunteer Sign-up Sheet (emailed in mid-September). 3. Attend Classroom Volunteer Orientation (mid-late September). 4. <i>Contact coordinators with any changes throughout the year.</i> 	<p>What: ILBs offer parents the chance to share their expertise, interests, and inspiration with kids in short "mini-classes". Opportunities include teaching one or more sessions, assisting with sessions, and serving on the ILB Coordination Team.</p> <p>When: Sep-May. Friday afternoons, 1:00-2:00pm. Each session is 3-4 weeks.</p> <p>Who: Students in grades 1-8 participate in ILBs. All Odyssey parents are invited to teach or assist classes and coordinate sessions.</p> <p>Coordinator: Odyssey ILB Coordinator</p> <p>How do I become involved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Parent Volunteer Planning Form (emailed over the summer) with your ILB interests or <i>reach out to the coordinators at any point with interest, ideas, questions.</i> • The ILB coordination team contacts parents throughout school year, several weeks prior to each session to recruit teachers/assistants. 	<p>What: One-time events, core school programs, and occasional projects and enrichment activities that call upon parents' interests and skills.</p> <p>When: Varies. Many need volunteers outside school hours. A calendar of events is pinned to the Slack #Volunteering channel.</p> <p>Who: All Odyssey parents</p> <p>Coordinators: Many! A complete list is pinned to the Slack #Volunteering channel.</p> <p>How do I become involved?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the Parent Volunteer Planning Form (emailed over the summer) with your interests or <i>reach out to any of the coordinators at any time!</i> • Events: Generally, coordinators recruit parents 2-4 weeks prior to the event. • Programs: Coordinators contact interested parents near the beginning of the school year or as-needed. • Enrichment activities: Teachers, leadership team, or coordinators reference "parent interest" lists (created from the Parent Volunteer Planning forms) and contact parents as-needed.

Questions? Please contact your Volunteer Coordinator. ***Please join the #volunteering Slack channel!***

✓ NEW FAMILY

Welcome Odyssey Osprey

ADMINISTRATIVE

- Complete Annual Back to School Check In on the [Family Access/Skyward Portal](#)
- Register for BISD volunteering: bisd303.org/Domain/1809
- Join us on Slack: odysseymultiage.slack.com
Primary communication space for parents and Odyssey Parent Teacher Organization.
(Commodore & BISD communications are through Family Access/Skyward Messenger)

FAMILY RESOURCES

District Family Handbook: bisd303.org/Domain/36

Helpful Osprey information: [Odyssey Parent Handbook](#)

Find all things OPTO: bainbridgeptos.org/odyssey/

VOLUNTEERING

Provide your volunteering interests to OPTO
An online form/link will be emailed to you this summer.

Check out volunteer opportunities in the included handout

Track your family volunteer hours through Track it Forward:
An online invitation will be emailed in the fall

ANNUAL EVENTS & TIMELINE

Mark your calendar for Odyssey events

Parent Meetings - Monthly

Find all events at our [website](#) and [calendar](#)

WELCOME TO
THE NEST,
OSPREYS!



Odyssey Multiage Program
Bainbridge Island

GETTING STARTED WITH SLACK

For many of us, Slack has a learning curve.

Here are some tips to get you started

JOIN our workspace on Slack, odysseymultiage.slack.com. Decide how you will check Slack and download the appropriate apps (IOS, Android, Desktop). Ask OPTO Communications co-chair [Carolyn Buractaon](#) for an invitation.

FIND THE MENU on the left-hand side on your Desktop. In the mobile app, click the Odyssey icon in the upper left corner to access the menu. You will use the menu to find your channels and direct messages (DMs).

SLACK HAS CHANNELS to keep discussions focused around a topic. To add yourself to one, click the word “Channels” in the menu, click the name of the channel, then click the “Join” button at the bottom. Find your “channels” in the menu and click to navigate between them.

CHANNELS TO FOLLOW:

(at a minimum)

Your child’s classroom

General

Parent Meetings

Calendar

ILB_miniclasses

Volunteering (K-6, 7-8)

DIRECT MESSAGES (DMs) allow you to communicate 1-on-1 or in small groups on Slack. Click on the words “Direct Messages” underneath “Channels” in the menu. A window will pop up where you can type the name(s) of your DM recipient and your message.

PARTICIPATE with your questions, ideas, comments, pictures, and reactions and get to know your Odyssey parent community!

Odyssey Yearly Events

This is a list of Odyssey's well-known events. Events are at the discretion of the teachers, administration, and parents; timing is subject to change and some events may not occur or requirements may change. It is also possible for new events to take place if someone has a great idea or is interested in getting something started! Cluster refers to one teacher's multi-grade class (ex: the one/two cluster).

SEPTEMBER

Ice Cream Social (*day before school begins*)

One of the first events of the year, the ice cream social is a way for kids to get their new school supplies into school, meet their teachers and other students and see how their class layout works. And oh yeah - there's ice cream!! One or two parent volunteers are needed to help with handing out ice cream.

7th and 8th Grade Picnic (*before or around the start of school*)

Liz and Paul's cluster are invited to Fay Bainbridge for a potluck-style picnic where parents and students can meet and greet before the start of school. This is usually coordinated by a parent in conjunction with Liz. Coordination time counts toward parent volunteer commitment.

Camp Parsons (*mid-late September*)

This fun start-of-school fall event happens at Camp Parsons out on the peninsula and is a one-night all-school retreat. There are rustic cabins and camping available. At least one parent will attend for the night with their child. There will be activities planned for students and parents, including a campfire with stories and songs. Usually each cluster makes a meal for the community with the help of parent volunteers. Camp Parsons is not a required event for families but is strongly encouraged as it's a great way to meet other Odyssey families and learn more about Odyssey. There are volunteer opportunities for parents that happen at Camp Parsons. If you volunteer, the time you volunteer counts toward your 100-hour volunteer commitment; however, just attending is not considered volunteer time.

7/8 Outdoor Education

Every grade attends Outdoor Ed with the exception of the Kindergarten class. Seventh and eighth graders switch years between Camp Seymour and a Salish Sea sailing overnight. All teachers attend Outdoor Ed and parent volunteers are needed. It's a great way to get a large chunk of volunteer hours in as well as see the students thriving and having fun outside the classroom. All parent volunteer hours count toward your yearly volunteer commitment.



OCTOBER

Harvest Fair

Harvest Fair is a school day event for the K-6 grade kids. 5th and 6th graders do upfront planning of different stations and help run the stations, while the younger kids move around and participate in the games and activities. Parents are not required to come but are welcome to attend or volunteer to help or prepare something from the garden to be enjoyed at the event. If you cook something at home, that is considered volunteer time as well as helping at the event. Observation is not considered volunteer time. Parent volunteer hours count toward your family commitment.

Halloween Celebration (October 31st if it's a weekday)

Kids arrive at school with costumes in bags and change later in the day for a Halloween celebration and snacks. Costumes may not be gory or too scary in consideration of the younger students. Parent volunteers may be requested by teachers as needed.

NOVEMBER

Student Health Screenings

Annual hearing and vision screenings are typically facilitated by a BISD RN and Commodore's Health Room Para. Parent volunteers receive training to conduct the hearing portion of the screening and also help with the flow of students to and from the health room.

FEBRUARY

Science Fair

Science Fair requirements are usually sent out in January for students in grades 1-6. Each year the requirements are different than the last (ex: inventions, experiments, etc). The Science Fair usually takes the place of the February Parent Meeting. Kids set up their displays, and parents and teachers circulate discussing the work with students. After the discussion, the parent will write a positive post-it note to put on the student's board. Parents attend for observational purposes and volunteer time is usually not required.

Book Fair

The Scholastic Book Fair is a yearly fundraiser for the school and a great way for teachers to stock their classroom libraries. The library committee works with Scholastic to set up a thoughtfully planned bookstore in the hallway, and students have opportunities to browse the books. Part of the proceeds from the book fair go toward additional books for Odyssey teachers and the school library. Parent volunteers are needed.



Commodore Information Night

This is an evening open to the public to learn more about the BISD options programs: Eagle Harbor High School, Odyssey, and Mosaic. The open house typically includes presentations and Q&A by Commodore staff and teachers, as well as classroom tours. Teachers sometimes ask parent volunteers to help prepare the classrooms and/or be on-hand to answer questions during the evening.

Odyssey Tours for Prospective Families

Informal tours during the school day give families interested in the Odyssey program a sense of a typical day at our school, an opportunity to ask questions of other parents in the program, and a peek into Odyssey's classrooms and facilities. Parent volunteers lead these tours.

APRIL

Earth Day

Odyssey K-6 students partner with the BI Parks District to care for the environment and enjoy the beauty of Sakai Park. Fifth and sixth graders complete a service project while K-4 students enjoy a hike and nature stations. Parent volunteers help run and supervise the activities.

Move-a-Thon

An exciting fundraiser, the move-a-thon is a way for kids to get friends, family and neighbors to support their school by sponsoring students in doing something active including biking, roller skating, hiking, or anything our creative students dream up. Kids learn a bit about fundraising as well as being a part of a larger community event to help their school. Parent volunteers help support the move-a-thon event in a variety of ways. All parent volunteer hours go toward your 100-hour family commitment.

MAY

Staff Appreciation Luncheon

A celebration of our teachers, the luncheon usually happens in May and is a potluck from our community for our teachers and staff. Parents sign up to cook food and bring it to school to share for the celebration and luncheon. All time preparing food and coordinating the luncheon is considered parent volunteer time.

Bike-to-School Day

A Bainbridge Island event that happens across schools, bike-to-school day is a fun event where kids bike to school with parent volunteers leading groups from different areas of the island, then receive a snack or prize at school for their efforts. Some parent volunteers are needed to lead bike trains and run the snack/prize table as well as give high fives and help make sure bikes aren't blocking pathways. All parent volunteer hours count toward your yearly commitment.



1-6 Outdoor Ed

Every grade attends Outdoor Ed with the exception of the Kindergarten class. First and second graders stay one night at Camp Indianola. Third and fourth graders stay two nights at Nature Bridge. Fifth and sixth graders stay two nights at Camp Seymour. Outdoor Ed locations may be reviewed as needed for cost or availability. All teachers attend Outdoor Ed and parent volunteers are needed. It's a great way to get a large chunk of volunteer hours in, as well as to see the students thriving and having fun outside the classroom. All parent volunteer hours count toward your yearly volunteer commitment.

JUNE

Field Day

This is an informal event where kids play fun games outside during the school day. Teachers, parents and students work together to create a fun day of games. Parent volunteers are needed to run some of the field day stations and help with set up and clean up.

5th and 6th grade play and movie

It is a tradition for the 5th and 6th graders to have a performance of some sort at the end of the year. It could be skits, a play, or a movie production. It is at the discretion of the teacher, parents, and students what the performance looks like and what it entails. Parent volunteers are usually required to help things run smoothly as well as to procure items for it and help as needed. Parent hours count toward your yearly commitment.

K-8 Picnic

During the last week of school, the whole of Odyssey heads to Fay Bainbridge to have fun in the sun on the beach. Food is organized by teachers, parents and students. Parent volunteers are needed to help drive students to the beach as well as stay and help supervise. All families are welcome to come by and observe/participate.

8th Grade Graduation and 6th Grade Celebration

A moving up ceremony for our 8th graders, graduation is a celebration where the community comes together to acknowledge and appreciate the contribution our students have made in their tenure at Odyssey. We also celebrate our 6th graders as they move on to middle school. All Odyssey students are invited, though it is mostly attended by students, friends, and family members who have close connections to those students. Feel free to attend if you want to get a feel for what graduation looks like! Usually 5th and 7th grade parent volunteers are needed to help organize the presentation as well as serve the cake. All hours coordinating and helping count toward your yearly commitment.



8th Grade Overnight

A beautiful end to the 8th grade student's journey, the 8th graders attend Camp Indianola again (as they did when they were in first and second grade) on a relaxed and fun overnight with their fellow classmates before they head out for the summer and high school. Students can opt to have s'mores, swing on the big swing, play outdoor games and just generally enjoying being with each other before moving on to high school. It's a lovely way for the students to end their time at Odyssey. This event is not school sponsored, so it requires parents to coordinate and chaperone. Parent coordination hours count toward your family commitment.

PERIODIC

Parent Meetings *(monthly)*

Parent meetings happen once a month and are a mix of cluster time and larger group time. At least one parent from each family should attend every meeting. Topics for the larger meeting are at the direction of OPTO leadership while cluster time is more focused on what is happening in your child's classroom and is led by the teacher. Classroom representatives should attend both meetings and will send out notes and important information to all parents in the cluster. Time at parent meetings counts toward your 100-hour family commitment. Meeting dates are set at the beginning of the year, so please mark these important dates on your calendar for the year when they are released.

Coffee Fridays *(check slack, scheduled based on volunteer availability)*

Coffee Fridays are a great, casual way to connect with other parents at Odyssey! After drop-off, parents can linger for coffee and conversation with other Odyssey parents. This is optional and requires volunteer parents to get the coffee and help with cleanup. If you help with setup or cleanup, these hours count toward your family commitment.

Music Performances *(at discretion of music teacher)*

Ms. Tolley may have concerts at her discretion during the year. Often there is either a holiday concert, a spring concert or both. Concerts may be divided by age group. The 7th and 8th grade students can volunteer to play marimbas at the BSF auction and the Woodward cultural night and get service credit for participating.

Art Fair *(at discretion of art teacher)*

The art teacher, Siri, may have art displays and get-togethers during the year at her discretion. She may also submit student art to be displayed at local community displays.

Conference Treats & Lunch *(October & February)*

Parents provide simple potluck meals to sustain the teachers and staff during long conference days biannually. Parent volunteers help with set-up, clean-up, and/or bring food.

