

Beyond the Bell Youth/Parent Handbook



Summer Hours: 8:30am - 4:30pm

School Hours: 3pm - 6pm

361-239-6631

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Dear Parents,

We are very happy to have your son/daughter attending the Beyond the Bell Program (BTB). The Beyond the Bell staff is dedicated to providing a supervised environment for your youth to participate in recreational activities, receive homework assistance, and mature emotionally through life skills programming. As part of providing a safe, supervised, and fun environment for your child, we believe your understanding and involvement in the program is essential. For this reason, we have created this handbook in order to explain the day-to-day operations of the Beyond the Bell Program.

By enrolling your youth in the Beyond the Bell program activities, it is obvious that you are a concerned parent who wants the very best for your child, including the opportunities, support, and supervision to assist him/her in dealing effectively with whatever the future holds. The Beyond the Bell staff commends you for this and looks forward to working with you and your son/daughter throughout his/her middle and high school years. If you have any questions regarding this handbook, the Beyond the Bell program, or want to know how you can become more involved, please contact me at 361-239-6631 or kthomas@healthdept.org.

Sincerely,
Kathryn Thomas
Beyond the Bell Coordinator

Site Information

- BTB is located at 1010 W. North Avenue, Flora (formerly the Flora Bank and Trust) and is open to all Clay County youth in 5th - 12th grades.
- Youth are required to enter the program through the South doors of the building and follow COVID policies as recommended by the IL Department of Public Health or the Governor's Executive Orders.
- Youth are required to sign in and out each day by recording their arrival and exit time on the daily sign in sheet, how they left programming, and with whom.
- During the school year, BTB is open every day after school until 6:00 pm. On early dismissal days, BTB will open immediately after school. Summer hours are 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., with student drop off available at 8 a.m.
- The Center will be closed on the following holidays:
 1. New Year's Day
 2. Presidents' Day
 3. Memorial Day Observed
 4. Good Friday
 5. Independence Day
 6. Labor Day
 7. Veteran's Day
 8. Thanksgiving Day
 9. Day After Thanksgiving
 10. Christmas Eve
 11. Christmas Day
- The Center may have extended hours when school is not in session for holiday vacations, teacher institute days, school improvement days, etc.
- If the Flora School District **closes due to weather**, the Beyond the Bell program will also be closed. However, if the Flora School District **dismisses early due to weather**, BTB will open early to accommodate those children who ride a school bus and use BTB as their drop-off point. Youth who ride the bus to program on those days should be picked up as early as possible so staff can get home safely. **Transportation services provided by the Health Department van will not be available during inclement weather.**
- Every month, BTB distributes a **calendar** of activities, special events, extended hours and closings via Facebook and Remind.

Typical Schedule for After School Programming

3:00- 4:00	Sign-in/Snacks/Free Time/Homework Help
4:15- 5:00	Indoor & Outdoor Recreation/Arts & Crafts
5:30- 5:45	Free Time
5:45-6:00	Clean Up/Sign-Out

Typical Schedule for Summer Programming

8:30-9:00	Sign-in/Breakfast
9:00-12:00	Organized activities/Indoor & Outdoor Recreation/Arts & Crafts
12:30-1:00	Lunch
1:00-3:00	Organized activities/Indoor & Outdoor Recreation/Arts
3:00-3:15	Snack
3:15 – 4:00	Organized activities/Indoor & Outdoor Recreation/Arts
4:00-4:30	Clean-Up/Sign-out

(time and activities may vary; this is just an approximation)

Incentive System

Daily Program

- Youth will earn incentives for daily attendance during the summer.
- Youth will be rewarded for good behavior by getting his/her name in “the bucket.”
- In some instances, a youth may be given additional incentives for extraordinary displays of good behavior. For example, volunteering his/her time for a community event may earn extra incentives.
- Youth may lose privileges for negative behavior, which may make them ineligible for upcoming field trips.
- Youth who receive multiple warnings in one day will be asked to go home for the remainder of the day. Youth who lose 20 points or more in one day (before being sent home) will also be suspended for the next day of programming. See points schedule in the Beyond the Bell Handbook.

General Behavior Rules

- The Beyond the Bell staff reserve the right to ask a youth to leave who is not willing to make good choices. Youth may be asked to leave for the following:
 1. Disregarding staff member instructions
 2. Physical fighting
 3. Destruction of property
 4. Stealing
 5. Excessive disrespectful behavior
 6. At the Coordinator’s discretion based on recent pattern of behavior
- **If a youth is asked to leave programming early, an attempt will be made by the BTB staff to contact a parent or guardian and make them aware of the situation.**

Violent Behavior Policy

- The Beyond the Bell program has a **Zero Tolerance Policy for Violence**. Any youth who commits an act of violence (regardless of how minor) will be suspended or expelled. If a physical fight takes place, **both youth will be suspended regardless of who started the fight**. One youth may receive a longer suspension than the other, solely at the discretion of the Beyond the Bell Coordinator or his/her designee.

Cost to Attend BTB

- There is no cost to attend Beyond the Bell programming.
- There may be occasional requests to contribute toward field trip expenses.
- If your son/daughter **breaks any equipment** due to vandalism and/or misuse, you may be asked to replace such equipment.
- Programming may include walks to DQ or Kiwanis Park, where students may wish to purchase Tropical Sno, in which case students would need to bring their own money.

Activities

- Staff will provide appropriate supervision for youth. The adult-to-youth ratio is a minimum of **1 adult per 15 youth**. The Program welcomes parent volunteers to help keep the ratio as low as possible.
- Activities offered throughout the year may include, but are not limited to: 4-H, Boy scouts, community band, biking, football, scrapbooking, science club, tennis, fitness, arts & crafts, photography, BTB Newsletter, cooking, dance, various team sports, community service learning, life skills, and CATCH.
- Since one of the goals of the Beyond the Bell program is to teach responsibility, if your son/daughter wishes to participate in an activity that lasts over a long period of time, we ask that he/she make a commitment to follow through until the activity has ended.

Homework

- Homework help is available **Monday through Thursday** during the school year from 3:00 pm-4:30 pm. There is no (scheduled) homework on Fridays; however, if a youth requests help, we will do our best to provide them the help they need.
- Many of our participants do not get all of their work completed at the program, so **additional time** may need to be spent **at home** to complete all work. We encourage you to check over your child's homework.
- It is **your child's** responsibility to do his/her homework. If they do not ask for help or tell us they have homework, we cannot assist them. For this reason, we hope you encourage your son/daughter to ask for help and take full advantage of homework time.
- Parents are encouraged to ask staff on any given day if their son/daughter worked on homework.

Transportation

- If youth who attend school in the Flora School District qualify to ride the bus home from school, parents may designate the Beyond the Bell as their **permanent** drop off location by following the school district procedure for establishing a drop off location.
Note: the Flora Bus Barn will NOT allow children to switch return buses from day to

day. If you designate BTB to be your child's drop-off point, that is where your child MUST go after school unless you choose to pick him/her up directly from school.

- Please understand that it is often necessary for participants to be **transported** to and from the BTB in the health department van by staff/volunteers as part of normal activities.
- Transportation arrangements to and from BTB are the responsibility of the parents.
- During the school year, transportation is provided from Full Armor Christian Academy, North Clay Elementary, and Clay City Schools to the program. During summer programming, transportation is provided to and from a central site in Xenia, Louisville, and Clay City. Arrangements must be made for transportation through the BTB Coordinator. Unregistered students will not be transported.
- Transportation will be provided on early dismissal days.
- **Please pick up your son/daughter no later than 6:00pm (school year) or 4:30pm (summer) at the Beyond the Bell program site.**
- The following transportation issues will result in a minimum of a **1 day suspension** from BTB.
 - If a youth is not picked up within 15 minutes of closing time **two times**
 - If a youth is not picked up by closing time on a regular basis
 - In addition, parents who chronically leave their children at BTB past closing time may be referred to the proper authorities for neglect issues.

Attendance

- Youth who are absent from school for a full day or for the last half of the school day are not permitted to attend Beyond the Bell that day.
- Participants must sign out to leave the premises. Once signed out, youth **may not return** unless given permission by the Beyond the Bell Coordinator or designee.
- While attendance is not mandatory, youth are encouraged to attend BTB as often as possible in order to be eligible for field trips and other special activities. **Furthermore, low attendance seriously affects the ability of the BTB program to continue to receive funding for years to come.**

Field Trips/Special Activities

- The Beyond the Bell program arranges special activities or field trip approximately once per month during the school year and each Friday during the summer.
- Field trips may be recreational (Go-Karts, camping, bowling) or educational (zoo, Science Center, museums) in nature.
- Youth are eligible to participate in field trips based on:
 - 1) Space availability on bus/van
 - 2) Behavior and attitude toward BTB staff and youth

4) Participation in organized activities while at BTB

- Staff may create additional rules and disciplinary action for each trip based on need and the type of activity. Youth will be made aware of additional information prior to each trip.

Family Events

Family involvement is encouraged and all family members (parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings...) are welcome to attend. These events may have important educational/informational material as well as provide opportunity for you to engage with your student. Please try to attend these events. Beyond the Bell youth truly enjoy (even though they may not admit it) participating in activities and games with their family members.

Conferences with Beyond the Bell Staff

- Parents are encouraged to drop in at any time to volunteer and engage with their child or help them with homework.
- It is expected that parents will act as **positive role models** when visiting the program.
- Please note that Beyond the Bell has rules to games and other activities that you may not be familiar with. Parents who advise youth to play games in a manner that does not promote good sportsmanship, parents who yell at youth, challenge staff members' judgement during sporting events, or otherwise contradict the goals of BTB will be asked to leave the premises.
- To provide a safe environment, all available staff should be supervising and interacting with the Beyond the Bell participants during program hours. For this reason, please **schedule an appointment** for hours outside of programming if you wish to speak with a supervisor about your son/daughter or any other issues regarding the Beyond the Bell program.
- If you need to speak with the BTB Coordinator or another BTB staff member over the phone, please do your best to call prior to 3:00 pm. Similar to schools, calls to staff members after youth have arrived are challenging because our attention is directed to the youth.

Miscellaneous

- Youth are welcome to bring games, iPads/tablets, cards, or other personal property to BTB; however, youth are responsible for their belongings. Belongings may not be stored inside BTB cabinets or offices. Clay County Health Department and Beyond the Bell Staff will not be responsible for lost or stolen property.
- **At certain times during program youth may be asked to put their electronic devices & phones away.** It is our goal to offer quality programming for students in attendance. Students and staff members enjoy programming much more when they are engaged with the activities being offered and thus may be asked to store their electronic devices, phones, or other distractions at certain times. Misuse of phones during programming –

accessing inappropriate content, taking unconsented videos, cyber-bullying, etc. – will result in BTB revoking phone privileges.

- It is our priority to supervise youth at all times and do not want to leave youth waiting alone. If you call ahead to let your youth know you are on your way, you will still have to come inside and pick him up or call/text the cell phone again once you get here to let him know to come outside.

By signing below, I acknowledge that I received a copy of the Parent Handbook and will ensure my child understands the rules of the center. I understand that if I have any questions, I may contact the BTB Coordinator.

Youth's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____

Please return this page to BTB.