



Alice Birney Parent Organizations Guide to Events & Terms

Welcome to Alice Birney Elementary! We are glad to have you as one of our Birney families. Birney has many growing traditions. We have put together this guide in an effort to help you navigate your first year here at Birney. Parental awareness, enthusiasm, and involvement are key to our children's success. If you have a question about this packet or run into a term that you'd like to see added to this guide, please email the PTA at info@birneypta.com or FOABE at info@friendsofalicebirney.org.

This list includes Birney events and traditions that Birney families are welcomed and encouraged to participate in. A glossary of terms can be found at the end.

There are three main groups that organize, sponsor, and implement events at Alice Birney:

- **School** events are organized and run by the staff of Birney Elementary.
- **PTA**-sponsored events are community building and enriching events organized, funded, and run by the Alice Birney Parent Teacher Association (PTA), a parent teacher organization affiliated with the state and national PTA.
- **FOABE**-sponsored events are organized, funded, and run by the Friends of Alice Birney Elementary (FOABE), a non-profit 501(3)(c) foundation in order to fund the IB curriculum at Birney through Spanish, art, library, and garden science instruction, classroom supplies, field trips, assemblies, and the end-of-year attendance reward.

Early dismissal days are days that end at 1:30PM instead of 3:35PM. Wednesdays are always early dismissal days for teacher planning, as well as the weeks before Thanksgiving and Spring Breaks when parent-teacher conferences are held, and the last day of school. They are also called **minimum** or half-days.

Recurring Events & Communications

Event/Item	When to expect it	Host	Description
Family Friday	Typically the 2nd Friday of the month, beginning at 2:30PM in the auditorium, then proceeding to classrooms at 3PM.	School	Families first meet with Ms. Amanda at 2:30PM in the auditorium to hear the latest from our principal, then visit your child's classroom at 3PM for a family-friendly activity. Fiji Yogurt sells frozen yogurt after school, and the Birney Farmstand may offer student-grown produce.

Running Club	Every morning before school, beginning when gates open at 8:45AM, ending by 9:05AM	School	Coach Lord issues cards to students to keep track of their laps around the track. When students run 26 laps (5 miles), they receive a foot charm on a necklace to show their achievement.
Timed Mile	Wednesday mornings, starting at 8:50AM	School	Students sign up to run a mile (5 laps around the Birney track) and get a card and 5 sticks to keep track of their laps. It offers a staggered start to allow everyone to run at their own speed. Students' times are noted and every student who participates gets a foot with her or her name on it on the Running Club board on campus. The foot will be marked with the student's personal best time as well as a star for each time the student has run the mile. As many as 100 kids have run the mile at one time.
IB Learner of the Week & Pencil Award	Friday afternoons	School	Every week, a student from each class is identified in the Buzz as the IB learner of the week and wins a Birney pencil, delivered to classrooms by Ms. Amanda.
Extra Recess Fridays	Friday afternoons	School	The top 5 classrooms in attendance for the week get 5 minutes of extra recess time on Fridays as a reward.
Birney News Digest eNewsletter	Weekly, usually Tuesdays	PTA/ FOABE	Weekly electronic newsletter from the Birney PTA and FOABE which details all the news and events coming up at Birney. Must opt in by signing up on BirneyPTA.com or FriendsofAliceBirney.org to receive it, can opt-out at any time.
The Birney Buzz	Weekly paper newsletter from the school, issued Thursday or Friday	School	Includes information on upcoming events from Ms. Amanda, the IB learners of the week, the attendance numbers by class, as well as attachments for local community events, PTA and FOABE events, and After School Enrichment (ASE) Classes. Should be home with your child by the weekend; contact your child's teacher if you are not getting the Buzz.



Morning Buzz	Last Friday of every month at drop-off (8:45-9:15)	PTA	Hot drinks and refreshments will be provided at the front gate free to parents so parents can take a few minutes to visit and hang out with other Birney parents once a month.
Birney T-shirt Fridays	Every Friday	School	Teachers, staff, and students wear their Birney T-shirts to show their school spirit every Friday. T-shirts can be purchased from the PTA at Family Fridays and other events.
Saturday School	Specific Saturday mornings throughout the year, from 9AM-1PM	School	Saturday School is an opportunity for students who have been absent or tardy to make up these delinquencies so that they may go on the end-of-the-year limo trip for ice cream. 1 Saturday School = 1 absence made up, or 1 hour of Saturday School = 1 tardy made up. Classes are generally taught by grade level and considered enjoyable. Students should bring a lunch.
Parent organization meetings	6:30PM every 4th Thursday when school is open	PTA/ FOABE	PTA and FOABE meetings are held on the same night in the auditorium and open to the public. Childcare and a light dinner are provided.
Family Dinner Nights	Weekday evenings	FOABE	Organized by FOABE, Family Dinner Nights are fundraisers hosted by local restaurants. When a flyer is presented to the server, a percentage of the bill is donated by the restaurant to Birney. These can be a lot of fun and offer a great opportunity to socialize with other Birney families.
Mission 2 \$ave	Wednesday mornings from 8:45-9:05	PTA	Offered in partnership with Mission Federal Credit Union, opens bank accounts for all students with \$.25 and parent permission. Students make deposits on campus once a week from 8:45-9:05AM at the front gate.
Fiji Yogurt Fridays	3:35PM (dismissal) on Fridays	PTA	Fiji Yogurt brings frozen yogurt to Birney with a fun toppings bar. 8 oz. cups are sold without toppings for \$3.00, with toppings for \$4.00. 20% of the proceeds go back to the Birney PTA.



Giving Tree	Always available in Room 1 (teachers' lounge), but brought out for Family Friday events	PTA	Wooden palm tree with Post-it notes (wishes) on it for supplies for Birney teachers and staff. If you see something on the tree you can provide, take the Post-it note, then return the item to the teacher or the box in the main office.
Birney Night Out	Typically a Friday night in October & May	FOABE	An evening just for adults (parents, friends, neighbors, and staff) at a restaurant or bar where a portion of all the food and drink sales go back to FOABE. There is often an opportunity drawing and/or silent auction as well. Usually coupled with a Kids' Night Out to provide childcare for those who need it.

One-time Events

Event/Item	When to expect it	Host	Description
Kinder/New Family Orientation	The Friday before school begins, around 5 PM	School	Parents meet with Ms. Amanda, the kinder teachers , and PTA and FOABE representatives in the auditorium for a general overview of Birney. Class lists will be posted at 6 PM.
Class List Postings	Friday before school begins, by 6PM at the latest	School	Class lists with teachers are posted in the windows of the Main Office.
International Peace Day	September 21 st , although it will be observed at the October Family Friday on October 6 th 3:00-3:30PM.	School	Since promoting world peace is one of the goals of the IB program, Birney celebrates World Peace Day by taking a whole-school photo of all the students arranged into a peace sign on the blacktop. Students are asked to wear white. Families are welcome to be a part of the photo.
School Smarts Parent Academy	7-week program of 1-2 hour sessions outside of the school day	PTA	Birney is a San Diego Unified pilot site for the CA state PTA's School Smarts Parent Academy, a program that teaches parents about the educational system and to advocate for their children's education. Offered free to parents by the PTA, including child care and light meals. Highly recommended.



School Pictures	Usually early October	School	Done during the school day, with an attempt to get younger grades done earlier in the day. If the photographers do not finish, the upper grades will have a second day scheduled. Parents pay for packages online or by returning envelopes when photos are taken; order forms come home with the Buzz or are available in the main office.
School Picture Make-up Day	After School Pictures are returned to students	School	A second photography day for students who were absent on School Picture Day or students who need re-takes of their first photos.
Fall Fundraiser	Late September/early October	FOABE	Typically a catalog sale for students to sell items with a portion of sales going back to FOABE to pay for field trips, assemblies, and classroom supplies.
Fall Playground Play Date	One of at least two a year, typically a Friday night at 6:30PM-8PM	PTA	PTA-sponsored event. Kids play (supervised by child care staff) on the playground while parents talk. Pizza and drinks are available for purchase. Note: This is not a child care event. Parents must stay on campus.
Halloween Costume Swap	October Friday afternoons at dismissal	PTA	PTA-sponsored event. Bring your old Halloween costumes to trade for someone else's new-to-you costume. Donations accepted.
Star Party	One evening in early October	PTA	PTA-sponsored free event. The local astronomers' club sets up telescopes on the Birney blacktop for students to observe the moon and other astronomical objects. Food may be available for purchase. Note: Parents must stay with students; this is not a child care event.



<p>Halloween Costume Parade</p>	<p>October 31st, beginning 3PM until 3:35 (dismissal).</p>	<p>School</p>	<p>Students change into their costumes around 3PM, then line up on the blacktop and parade around the campus. Parents are welcome to attend and help younger students with their costumes. Students are not allowed to wear their costumes all day, so children who arrive at school in costume will be asked to change. No gory or explicit costumes, weapons, or extensive makeup will be permitted.</p> <p>The event ends with a Pumpkin Walk where a few students have a chance to win a Birney-grown pumpkin.</p>
<p>Jump Rope for Heart</p>	<p>November Family Friday, 2:30-3:35 (dismissal)</p>	<p>School</p>	<p>All students jump rope on the blacktop. Students who collect pledges to benefit the American Heart Association win prizes, but all students participate, no donations required. No classroom visits or talk with Ms. Amanda. Coach Lord coordinates and plays music; families are welcome to come and turn ropes to help.</p>
<p>Fall Parent-Teacher Conferences</p>	<p>Scheduled by the student's teacher the week after Thanksgiving break, which is an early (1:30PM) dismissal week</p>	<p>School</p>	<p>Mandatory. Parents sign up for a 20-30 minute appointment with their child's teacher to receive their child's report card and discuss their child's progress and opportunities for academic or behavioral improvements. One of two conferences during the year.</p>
<p>Fall Book Fair</p>	<p>The week after Thanksgiving break, usually both during and after the school day, sometimes during Saturday School</p>	<p>PTA</p>	<p>PTA-sponsored event where books are for sale in the library, open for specific times during parent-teacher conference week. A portion of sales go back to Birney.</p>
<p>Birney Big Give</p>	<p>December</p>	<p>FOABE</p>	<p>1-day online fundraising event, often with anonymous matching donors.</p>
<p>Grade-Level Performances</p>	<p>Held during the last week of school before Winter Break at specified times: K-3 usually at a 10:15-10:30 start time, grades 4-5 at a 2PM start time. See the Buzz for specific info.</p>	<p>School</p>	<p>Each grade level gives a performance, followed by presentations by the Specials teachers and a brief award ceremony to recognize attendance. Families are encouraged to attend.</p>



Great Kindness Challenge	During the school day for an entire month, usually in late January	School/ support from PTA and FOABE	A month where acts of kindness are encouraged all over campus. Child will attend an anti-bullying assembly to reiterate how to show kindness towards others. During this time, we will have a whole-school photo on the blacktop with students wearing pink and red arranged into the shape of a heart.
International Mother Language Day	March Family Friday	PTA	Schoolwide celebration of linguistic and cultural diversity. Families are encouraged to participate by bringing a food representative of their culture to share at Family Friday.
Bedtime Stories	6:30PM in the Birney Auditorium, one in the fall, one in spring	PTA	PTA-sponsored evening where families can wear pajamas and bring blankets and pillows to the auditorium to hear stories read by Birney teachers and parents. Note: This is not a child care event. Parents must supervise children.
Run for the Green (Jogathon)	Mid-March, 2:30-3:30PM	FOABE	FOABE-sponsored event. Students collect pledges and donations for weeks before the event, then run laps on the blacktop or track. Families are welcome to come cheer on their students. No classroom visits or talk with Ms. Amanda. All students participate; students who get pledges are eligible to win prizes and a Birney T-shirt. All funds go to pay for the IB curriculum.
Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences	Scheduled by the student's teacher during the week after Spring break, which is a 1:30 dismissal week	School	Mandatory. Parents sign up for a 20-30 minute appointment with their child's teacher to receive their child's report card and discuss their child's progress and opportunities for academic or behavioral improvements. Second of two conferences during the year.
Spring Book Fair	The week after spring break, usually overlapping parent-teacher conference week.	PTA	PTA-sponsored event where books are for sale in the library, open for specific times during parent-teacher conference week. A portion of sales go back to Birney.



Grade-Level Performances	Last week of school before Spring Break at specified times; see the Buzz for more specific info.	School	Each grade level gives a performance, followed by a brief award ceremony. Families are encouraged to attend.
Teacher & Staff Appreciation Week	Usually the second week in May	PTA/ FOABE	Students make cards and notes to show their appreciation for Birney staff and teachers; the PTA organizes meals and snacks for teachers. Donations from parents gratefully accepted.
Kensington Memorial Day Parade	Memorial Day morning	PTA	PTA-sponsored contingent of Birney families march in the parade, carrying a Birney banner and handing out candy. Note: this is not a child care event. Parents must supervise children.
Spring Playground Play Date	One of at least two during the year, typically a Friday night at 6:30PM-8PM	PTA	PTA-sponsored free event. Kids play (supervised by child care staff) on the playground while parents talk. Pizza and drinks may be available for purchase. Note: this is not a child care event. Parents must stay on campus.
Chelsea King Invitational Mile	Varies, typically in May	School/ PTA provide s shirts	Running event with Birney's participation organized by Coach Lord. Students who qualify to participate are given Birney performance shirts and represent Birney.
Passport to Adventure	One Saturday in late June	PTA	PTA-sponsored international festival highlighting Birney's roots as an IB magnet. Each grade takes responsibility for researching a different country and presenting a craft, game, and food from that country. Open to families and the public. Ticketed events may include games, mystery grab bags, book exchange, (stuffed) pet adoption, and tie dye. Tickets are very budget-friendly. Food and concessions are generally available. Note: this is not a child care event. Parents must stay with children.
Spirit Week	Last week of June, sometimes in the fall as well	School	A week where each day gets a specific dress-up theme, like Birney t-shirt day.



Field Days	Early July	School	4 th and 5 th graders lead the K-3 rd grades from station to station in a series of short fun games. Parents are welcome to come help volunteer.
Pride Parking	Day of the Hillcrest Pride Parade, beginning early in the day and wrapping by 11AM or noon	FOABE	FOABE rents the SD USD parking lot and parks cars for donations. Typically a very fun 4-hour event.
Perfect Attendance Limo Trip for Ice Cream	During the school day in late July	School/ support from FOABE	All students with perfect attendance take a limousine trip to Mariposa Ice Cream for an ice cream cone. Typically numbers in the hundreds. Attendance is very important to Birney since it directly affects our funding and attendance is one of the top indicators of academic success; our attendance is traditionally one of the best in the district.
End of the Year Performances	Last week before summer break. The last day of school is an early dismissal day.	School	Each grade level does a performance, followed by presentations by the Specials teachers and a brief award ceremony. Families are encouraged to attend. Big deal for all, but such a big deal for the kinders and 5 th graders that we're calling those out separately.
Last Day of School for Kinders	Last day of school, typically AM.	School	Students do a performance, followed by award ceremonies and lots of picture taking. Then families and teachers celebrate with a picnic on the green until the end of the day. Typically a special day for all.
Last Day of School for 5 th Graders	Last day of school, typically around noon	School	Promotion to 6 th grade and awards, followed by lots of picture taking. Typically a special day for all.



Glossary of Terms

Terms are listed in alphabetical order.

After School Enrichment	Also known as ASE, these are extra-curricular enrichment classes offered after dismissal at Birney through outside organizations. The classes are arranged in three sessions: Fall, Winter, and Spring.
Blue bars	The playground play structure painted blue, used by 1 st & 2 nd graders at recess.
District	Shorthand for our school district, the San Diego Unified School District (SD USD). The headquarters are right next door to Birney.
ELAC	English Learning Advisory Council. This state-mandated group of parents of English Language Learners advises the principal on issues relating to programs and services for English Learners.
EL or ELL	English Learners or English Language Learners, students whose primary language is not English who are receiving extra programs and services to develop English fluency.
IB	International Baccalaureate, the guiding educational philosophy at Birney, governed by an international not-for-profit organization. The IB's mission statement: <i>The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment. These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.</i>
IS	International Studies. May refer to the International Studies IB program at San Diego High School.
FOABE	Acronym for Friends of Alice Birney Elementary, a 501(3)(c) non-profit organization solely dedicated to funding the IB education at Birney. Also called the Foundation. Website: friendsofalicebirney.org
the Foundation	Nickname for the Friends of Alice Birney Elementary. See <i>FOABE</i> .
GATE	Gifted and Talented Education. Second graders and older students new to Birney as well as identified older students are all GATE-tested; however, since Birney teachers are all GATE-qualified and our curriculum encompasses GATE aspects, there are no separate GATE curricula or classes at Birney.
Kinder playground	Kindergarteners have a separate playground from all other grades, located in a separately fenced area in front of rooms K-1 and K-2. Also called the kinder yard.
MYP	Middle Years Programme, the IB curriculum taught at Roosevelt.
Parent Organizations	Collective name for PTA and FOABE. Host joint general monthly meetings.



Prime Time	Extended day childcare on Birney campus, eligibility determined by application. Limited number of spots available; see application for priority rankings.
PTA	Parent Teacher Association. The Birney PTA is a part of the California PTA and the national PTA organization, the largest and most respected children's advocacy group in the country. The PTA is a non-commercial, nonpartisan, and nonsectarian organization. Membership at Birney is \$10 per person per year. At Birney's site, the PTA focuses on creating community-building events and classes.
PYP	Primary Years Programme, the IB curriculum taught at Birney specifically designed for elementary-aged students. From the IB PYP website: <i>It focuses on the development of the whole child as an inquirer, both in the classroom and in the world outside. It is defined by six transdisciplinary themes of global significance, explored using knowledge and skills derived from six subject areas, with a powerful emphasis on inquiry-based learning.</i>
Red bars	The playground play structure painted red. Used by 3 rd , 4 th , and 5 th graders.
Roosevelt	Theodore Roosevelt Middle School, the IB middle school Birney feeds into.
San Diego High	High school that Roosevelt (and Birney) feeds into. The School of International Studies at San Diego High is an IB program.
SAY San Diego	Birney's extended day (AM and PM) paid child care provider. Applications are available in the office.
SD USD	San Diego Unified School District. The body responsible for school governance, led by a five-member elected school board and the district superintendent.
Specials	Supplemental classes that complete the IB curriculum which the school district and state do not financially support: Spanish, art, and garden science. These are required for our IB certification and are funded by FOABE.
SSC	School Site Council, composed of the principal, parents, staff, and community members. Discuss the Plan for Student Achievement, which drove budget priorities until the LCFF/LCAP funding changes in 2014, specifically looking at the budget to align it with school goals.

