

## Using Google Docs

We are training all our room reps as well as our committee chairs to use Google Docs when signing up volunteers. If we all use this one simple system across the PTA, it will make life easier for parents and PTA volunteers alike!

### **How it works:**

Google Docs is a free web-based document system that allows you to create documents that you can share with others and allow them to edit.

### **When to Use Google Docs:**

- For events requiring volunteers
  - Bobcat Chase, Witches Delight, Spellathon, Hot Lunch, Junior Olympics, Science Fair, Book Fair, Lunch Time Science, Striders, etc
- To view and edit documents within your committee
  - Budgets, advertising ideas, meeting agendas, etc.

### **Getting Started:**

- Go to docs.google.com
  - If you already have a Gmail account, or a Google Account, put in your email and password
  - If you do not have an account, click on the "Get Started" button on the right side
    - Fill out the required information – YOU DO NOT NEED TO HAVE A GMAIL ACCOUNT TO ACCESS GOOGLE DOCS – YOU CAN USE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS WHEN CREATING YOUR GOOGLE ACCOUNT
- Once you are signed in, you will be on the Google Docs page

### **Creating a Document:**

- You need to choose what type of document you want to create – you will only want to use either a document (similar to a Word document) or a spreadsheet (similar to Excel).
- Go to the "New" button and there will be a drop-down box with choices
- Choose "spreadsheet" and a new window or tab will open with a spreadsheet
- Populate your spreadsheet with information and sign up areas
- Save your spreadsheet by hitting the "save" button on the upper right of the screen (you may want to do this from the beginning – then it auto saves after that). Give your spreadsheet a name – i.e. Witches Delight 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Booth Volunteers

### **Sharing Your Document:**

- Click on the "Share" button on the upper right and a drop down appears. There are two ways to share your spreadsheet:
  - **Small group share (one classroom):** choose "invite people" from the dropdown and a box will appear for you to put email addresses. **Then you need to select if you want these emails to be able to edit the spreadsheet or just view it.** You will also be able to write an email message. When you hit "send" on the bottom, an email message will be sent to all the emails you listed with your message and a link to the spreadsheet.
  - **Large group share (grade level or school level):** choose "get the link to share" from the drop down and a box will appear. **You will need to choose permissions (click both boxes)** and then the link will appear in the line below. Copy this link and then you can paste it in an email to the principal, who can approve and send it either to a grade level, or school-wide. You can also paste the link in an email to the webmaster for use on the website, or the Bobcat Tracker editor for publication (this would be for school-wide events only).

- Once you have shared the spreadsheet, then everyone who gets the email can click on the link to view and edit. The spreadsheet will be stored in your Google Docs and you can access it on-line from any computer. As the "owner" of the spreadsheet, you will be notified when it has been edited, which helps keep you up-to-date on sign ups.

### **Getting Parents to Sign Up:**

- Send out an email to all of your committee members and make sure they have a Google Account - if they don't, have them sign up for one. Remember - YOU DO NOT NEED TO HAVE A GMAIL ACCOUNT TO ACCESS GOOGLE DOCS – YOU CAN USE YOUR CURRENT EMAIL ADDRESS WHEN CREATING YOUR GOOGLE ACCOUNT
- Here is a sample paragraph you can send with your first email to help the parents understand about using Google Docs:
  - Dear Parents, Committee Members, etc.  
In order to make communications and sign-ups easier at Santa Rita, the PTA is encouraging us to use the Google Docs system. Google Docs is a free, web-based document system that allows you to create documents that you can share with others and allow them to edit. By using Google Docs, we will be able to email parents a link to volunteer spreadsheets so they can sign up easily to help at events or classroom activities. To use Google Docs, you simply sign up for a Google account. This is free and does not require you to have a gmail address - you can simply use your existing email address. Go to docs.google.com to sign up.

### **IMPORTANT TO NOTE**

**When you share a document through on the school website for volunteer sign-ups, be aware than anyone coming to the website could click on that link and view the spreadsheet. This is why it is a good idea to use the "small group share" listed above for classroom level sign-ups as it will only allow those you email to view or edit the document. Until we have a chance to create a secured area of the website for parents to put these links, please be diligent in checking on your school-wide sign-up sheets frequently and saving a copy to your desktop. Then go through and remove any email or phone numbers from these lists. Once your event is done, please have the webmaster remove your link from the website.**

If you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact Ann Enthoven at: [ann.enthoven@gmail.com](mailto:ann.enthoven@gmail.com).