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## ROOM PARENT PACKET 2018 - 2019

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### What Is A Room Parent?

#### ROOM PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The room parent facilitates communication between other parents and the teacher. Some room parents also act as the liaison with the school parent group, and very occasionally school staff. The expectations for each school and class vary slightly but for the most part you'll ask parents for donations for classroom parties and events, collect money for teacher gifts, organize volunteers for the classroom and events, and other miscellaneous tasks the teacher might request.

Most Room Parents:

- Organize class parties, usually around a specific topic or theme.
- Collect money from parents for events and gifts
- Teacher Appreciation throughout the school year (especially during Teacher Appreciation Week: 5/6/19-5/10/19)
- Recruit and coordinate volunteers for classroom support, school events, and field trips
- Send out reminders about events, activities, field trips, etc.
- Attend PTA meetings (9/25/18, 11/6/18, 1/15/19, 3/19/19, 5/28/19)
- Keep an up-to-date list of contact information for all parents

We LOVE room parents! Thanks for taking on this important role in your child's class this year. We know it can seem overwhelming right now, but it's so worthwhile to be such an integral part of the school year. You'll be working closely with your teacher, acting as a liaison between the parents in your classroom and the teacher. Enclosed in this packet is information to help you with your job.

To help you kick off the year in high gear we've put together this Room Parent Starter Kit with everything you'll need to get organized, communicate with parents and the teacher, host great classroom parties, and make awesome crafts with kids.

*Here you will find:*

*Back to School Boot-Up Camp  
Class Parties  
Cash Handling Procedures  
Throughout the School Year  
Teacher Appreciation  
TB Test Results  
Parent Diver Information  
Fingerprinting: Live Scan  
Miscellaneous Information*

**Optional Room Parent Correspondence Templates:**

*Welcome Letter to Families  
Live Scan Information  
Back to School Volunteer Recruitment Letter  
Classroom Volunteer Recruitment Letter  
Teacher Interest Survey  
Up-Front Donation Letter  
Classroom Event Donation Letter  
End of Year Teacher Appreciation Letter*

# Back to School Boot-Up Camp:

This is an important time of year as it sets the tone and a LOT of communication happens at the beginning of the year. We recommend reaching out to parents quickly to introduce yourself and get some key information from each family.



This list of communications might seem a bit daunting but just download and customize our templates and you'll be off to the class parent races!

- **Welcome Letter** to introduce yourself and request email or other contact information from parents.
- **Volunteer Recruitment Letter** to let parents know you'll be expecting their help, a good message to send right from the start. Asking for information about parents' interests and hobbies gives you an idea of how to best organize volunteer time.
- **Teacher Interest Survey** to help you learn what the teacher likes/dislikes, especially useful when putting together teacher appreciation gifts later in the year.
- **Form To Ask For Up-Front Donation** (if you choose to do this).

You'll also want to schedule some time with the teacher to review key dates and expectations. As a Room Parent, you will partner with different teachers over the years, it is likely that as a Room Parent you know best how busy teachers are. You may not want to "bother" teachers by asking too many questions, but assuming teachers like things a certain way can be a mistake. Most teachers will be more than happy to answer even the most basic of questions. And you'll find you have a much better relationship if you keep communication lines open.

## Class Parties:

A big part of the Room Parent gig is organizing classroom parties. One of the first things to organize is the date and theme for the first class party. You'll want to talk to the teacher, check your school calendar (to avoid other important activities), and maybe even get feedback from a couple of parents. Pick a date and time and be sure to confirm with the teacher before letting parents know to save the date. Each class party usually involves an activity & snack, although some schools prefer that food is kept out of the classroom, in this case a group story or extra activity is a good idea.



We have lots of ideas and tools to help you organize and manage the festivities:

- A sign-up sheet to keep track of what everyone is doing and bringing to the party. Let parents know you'll post a copy in the classroom but they can also just email or call with what they'd like to contribute. You can also use an online option like SignUp Genius and/or VolunteerSpot.com
- **Class Party Volunteer Recruitment Letter**
- **General Party Donation Request Letter** if you choose to have parents send in money to cover the costs of the class party.

You'll want to decide on the craft (or craftivity as we like to call it) a few weeks before the event so you have time to collect supplies and do a test run. (Trust us, test runs are important, no matter how simple the craft seems!)

What should you make? The KISS approach is definitely best. Simple, simple, simple. You'll have limited time, a crowd of kids, and different skill levels. You'll find lots of themed crafts on Pinterest, pick one that you're comfortable doing, fits the theme, and won't result in too much mess.

*Tip: It's a good idea to let the teacher know your plans for the craft and any other activities you're doing.*

Be sure to send a reminder to everyone 2-3 days before the party with the details about what everyone is bringing and the various volunteer roles.

## Cash Handling Procedures:

As Room Parents, one of your responsibilities will be to collect money for your classroom activities and maintain a record of classroom expenses. It is against the guidelines of the PTA treasurer to maintain these funds; therefore, we have designated this responsibility to you, our room parents. As always, the PTA treasurer, Brittany DeVita, will help you with this task in any way they can.

Please make photocopies of any checks received and record ALL cash donations.

Keep all store & bank deposit receipts with these records.



## Throughout the School Year:

There are a lot of events on the school calendar each year and it can be challenging for busy families to keep track of everything that is happening. One your most important responsibilities is sending advanced reminders via email, social media websites, and/or the Friday Folder of upcoming events and activities.



Please continuously check throughout the year for changes to the calendar so that automatic reminders set early in the year are accurate.

Thanks. Say it often. Don't forget to thank the parents that help you along the way. A thank you note goes a long way to expressing your gratitude and inspiring the recipient to sign up to help at the next event!

Don't overthink this one. A quick 2 sentence email is all you need to make someone feel appreciated. We put together a few ideas to get you started, please cut/paste and edit to whatever works for your situation.



## Teacher Appreciation:

Now it's time to think about teacher appreciation, this is another "biggie" for room parents.

At most schools the class parent organizes a group gift for Teacher Appreciation Week, as well as an end-of-year gift. You'll want to pull out the teacher interest survey you collected at back to school time as a reminder about what the teacher likes, hobbies, favorite restaurants, etc.



In May, we like to thank our teachers and staff for all they do with a flower from the garden, an apple, or a homemade treat. Please do not arrange to have your class buy anything for the teacher.

Coordinating a collective class gift for your teacher at the end of the year is a nice way to say "Thank You." It is very important that families feel comfortable doing "their own thing" for their teacher. While many people appreciate the convenience of a class gift, others may want to show their appreciation for the teacher individually and opt out of a class gift. The End of Year Teacher Appreciation Letter gives families both options.

## Class Photographer for the Yearbook:

Take LOTS of pictures at your class parties and field trips and turn them in for the yearbook! Group shots of the entire class are much appreciated. That way no child is missed! Watch the Friday Flash for instructions for online sharing of photographs.



# Smile

## TB Test Results:

It is a California State law that all parent volunteers must show proof that they are free from active tuberculosis (T.B. Tine test negative result) before volunteering at school.

T.B. Test results must be kept on file at our school office for all parent volunteers that have direct contact with our children. Test results are good for four years.

TB testing is an important safeguard for our children and it is the law. It is expected that all volunteers will have their testing completed with results in the school office prior to volunteering with our children.



## Parent Driver:

Parent Drivers are supportive to Rancho School by providing transportation to and from field trips and special events. Your teacher may elect to have a parent be in charge of the parent driver program for your class, or that responsibility may fall on you. Please discuss this with your teacher.

Parent drivers must complete the Parent Driver form and turn it into the school office at least 10 working days prior to the field trip. The following must be attached to the Form:

- A current copy of the driver's California Driver's License
- Proof of insurance (\$100,000/300,000 bodily injury & \$25,000 property)
- A copy of the DMV Information Request Form (obtained at the DMV for \$5.00)



Once these forms are on file and approved, the parent will be allowed to transport students on district trips throughout the remainder of the school year. Parents must submit a new form with the above required information each school year OR if there has been a change to his /her vehicle's insurance limits.

## Fingerprinting:

For everyone's safety, parent drivers and chaperones on overnight trips are required to have cleared fingerprints on file in the Rancho Office.

Fingerprinting services are available at many different locations throughout the county) including the Marin County Sheriff's Office and various UPS Store locations. Fingerprinting fees vary at different locations.



If a parent needs assistance with completing the fingerprinting process, please encourage him/her to contact the classroom teacher.

## Miscellaneous Information:

Any correspondence being sent home by the Room Parent, must first be approved by the teacher.

The Room Parent may at times be made aware of information or situations that should not be discussed with others. It is expected that the Room Parent will maintain the highest level of confidentiality.



Be sure to respond to every parent who offers to help. If you do not need help at that time, perhaps you could use their help at a later date.

Every teacher operates just a little differently. Communicate with your teacher through frequent check-ins to ensure you are both on the same page.

