

Room Parent Handbook

Kenneth Culbert Elementary School



Thank you for volunteering your time to serve as the Room Parent for your child's class! A Room Parent is a very important part of our school's community. By facilitating communication with the teacher and the PTO, a Room Parent helps ensure that all families are given the opportunity to be involved in their child's classroom and school.

As a Room Parent, you will:

- ❖ Serve as a liaison between the teacher and classroom parents.
- ❖ Communicate with classroom parents and keep them informed.
- ❖ Create and distribute a class roster.
- ❖ Coordinate class parties.
- ❖ Organize parent volunteers in the classroom. The teacher will tell you of their specific needs and determine what type of assistance is needed.
- ❖ Facilitate communication between the PTO and classroom parents and help promote PTO events.
- ❖ Maintain a positive attitude among the parents in your room.
- ❖ Adhere to school policies while performing Room Parent duties.

*In the event of Co-Room Parents, only one person will serve as the primary contact to the teacher and the parents.

Getting Started

- Meet with your teacher as soon as possible (ideally within the first two weeks of school starting). Bring your calendar.
 - Discuss expectations and ideas for the school year.
 - Get class party dates and ideas of what will be expected at parties in terms of length, activities/crafts, food, and the number of volunteers.
 - Ask if the teacher wants help organizing classroom volunteers (for making copies, field trips, computer lab, etc). If so, get the schedule of dates and times

when volunteers will be needed and whether it is inside or outside the classroom. Feel free to use signup genius to assist in scheduling if it would be helpful.

- Find out the teacher's preferred method of contact and let them know the best way to reach you.
 - Find out if students have allergies.
 - See *Sample Teacher Questionnaire* at the end of this Handbook for examples of specific questions.
- Write an email introducing yourself to the class and tell the parents how and when they should expect communications from you.
 - Create a class roster and distribute it to the class. Please remember that this information is to be considered confidential unless permission is given to share the information.
 - Consider coordinating additional things during the year for the class and/or class parents such as a cake for a teacher's birthday or a joint teacher gift during Teacher Appreciation Week in May.
 - Contributions to purchase a classroom gift are appropriate but all donations should always be voluntary and at the individual family's discretion.

Communication Guidelines

- Email will be the primary source of communication between the PTO VP of Family Engagement and yourself, and with the classroom parents.
- Let parents know about events for the month. It is important to give parents a chance to be involved in the classroom and share their feedback for improvements.
- Normal everyday communication with your parents doesn't need to be reviewed by the PTO as long as you don't use a PTO logo or wording that would lead a parent or teacher to think that it is coming directly from anyone but you.
- You will receive PTO emails throughout the year that simply need to be forwarded to your classroom parents. These emails allow the PTO to further communicate with parents on a timely basis. Forward these emails as requested.
- Keep an electronic or paper copy of all communications with parents, the teacher, or PTO so you can easily reference needed information.

- Please notify the VP of Family Engagement as soon as possible if there is any change to your contact information.
 - Communication is the key to having a successful year, so make sure you “over-communicate” rather than “under-communicate.”
 - Any note or flyer that needs to go home in backpacks needs to be approved by the teacher, unless it involves a surprise for the teacher. Keep in mind that we are a green school, and paper communication should be limited.
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Tips for Organizing Classroom Parties

Before the party:

- Check-in with the teacher to confirm details prior to planning in earnest and purchasing any party supplies.
- Communicate with parents in advance to let them know the timing of the party. Ask for volunteers to help you plan, buy supplies, set-up, clean-up, etc.

Setting up the party:

- Most of the time, you will have only 10-15 minutes for setup. Use this time wisely and plan ahead so the party can start on time.

During the party:

- Remember to take pictures!
- Have a parent helper go around with a trash bag during the party to clean up after the kids.
- If you are doing a craft, make sure to write the child’s name on it so they don’t get lost or mixed up with other classmates.
- You should be the one in charge of how things progress during the party and make sure that things move along. If you can’t be there, enlist the help of another class parent to help run the party.
- This should be a fun time for the teacher, but if there are discipline problems, you should refer the student to the teacher and let the teacher resolve any issue. Parent should avoid disciplining children other than their own child.
- Watch the clock and make sure that you are finishing up on time.

After the party:

- Make sure the children have their goodie bags and take home projects as they leave to go home.
 - Use extra trash bags to pick up all the trash and leftover food. Wipe down all desks and tables and clean up the floor and take down any decorations you brought.
 - The teacher will appreciate you returning the classroom back the way it was before you got there.
 - Be sure to send thank you notes to the parents who helped during the party.
 - Share pictures with the teacher and the parents.
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Final Notes:

- For the safety of our children, you must sign in and out at the front office when visiting the school and wear a visitor's badge while in the school.
- If your class does a noteworthy activity, please contact the VP of Family Engagement to decide how to acknowledge the event.

SAMPLE TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Do any students have food allergies?

Are there any food items that aren't allowed?

Are there any decorating restrictions?

Do you have a preferred number of in-class parent helpers for each party?

Do you allow holiday-specific themed parties, or do you prefer general holiday parties?

Do you have preferred activities for parties?

Any restrictions on activities?

Are classroom supplies available to use for the party?

What time should the party start?

How long will I have to set up before the party?

What time does the party need to end?

Are younger siblings allowed to join?

Anything else I should know?