

PTA Room Parent Guidelines 2009-2010

Thank you for volunteering to serve as the room parent for your child's classroom. The time you spend in this capacity is greatly appreciated by the teacher, the students, and the other classroom parents.

A room parent is a parent or guardian who provides essential help to teachers in organizing special activities inside and outside the classroom setting.

The responsibilities of the room parent(s) typically include:

- Meeting with the teacher on a regular basis to discuss his/her needs for upcoming activities
- Organizing volunteers for class events
- Communicating with parents
- Coordinating the purchase and/or making of class gifts and collection of funds for events
- Keeping an accounting of how collected funds are spent and periodically reporting this information to the other parents
- Participating in Staff Appreciation Week
- Fall Festival responsibilities for your classroom (coordination of gift basket for silent auction, organizing time shifts for class booths, etc.)

At the beginning of the school year, it is a good idea to send an email or letter home to the other parents introducing yourself as the room parent. You could include the events schedule and possibly a questionnaire on how other parents prefer to help. (See attached Sample Parent Letter). At this time please also schedule a meeting with your child's teacher to discuss ways you can support him or her. This is a great time to get to know each other and for you to gain an understanding of what special activities are envisioned for the year and what your role in them will be.

If there are multiple room parents for your class, it is always helpful to pick one person to serve as a liaison to the teacher to simplify communications.

Collection of funds

This year the PTA would like to suggest some guidelines for the collection of funds for teacher gifts, Fall Festival baskets, and classroom parties. The money should be collected as soon as possible at the beginning of the school year, as Fall Festival and Halloween come very quickly. **These guidelines are designed to avoid the amount collected being a hardship on any family, to help establish equality of gifts among all teachers, and to encourage involvement and participation of family "potlucking" for activities (as opposed to the room parent doing everything).**

- **Please do not circulate a list (by email, etc.) of who has and has not contributed to the classroom fund. This is inappropriate and can be embarrassing to some families.**
- This year it is recommended that the room parents collect no more than a total of **\$675** per class. Please note that the amount per family will be different for each class, depending upon how many students there are. Of course the classes with more students will collect a lesser amount per family. For example, a class with 19 students (the lower grades) would collect approximately \$35 per family. And a class with 27 students (the upper grades) would only be collecting about \$25 per family. We will be notifying families at the beginning of the year with this information to avoid people making comparisons between what is collected from one of their children's classes to the next.

Use of Funds

The breakdown of the collected funds would be as follows:

1. Teacher Gifts	\$275
2. Fall Festival Basket	\$200
3. Classroom parties	<u>\$200</u>
	\$675

Teacher Gifts: A total of approximately **\$275** should be spent on teacher gifts. It will be up to you to decide what gifts will be given and to allocate the funds among the gifts. Typically, teachers would receive gifts on their birthdays, holidays, end of year, and for Teacher Appreciation Week. Please budget \$50 of your gift fund for a Teacher Appreciation Week gift. (More information to follow as it gets closer to this event).

During the year, your teacher may also have other celebrations that come up such as a wedding or baby shower. At that time, you should consider collecting a reasonable amount from each family to cover that gift.

Please be reasonable in any collection of funds for teacher gifts. We have had feedback from some teachers about being uncomfortable receiving gifts that are too extravagant.

It would also be nice to have the teacher complete a small personal wish list such as favorite restaurant, favorite store, hobbies, etc. to help you in purchasing something they will enjoy. Please note that teacher gift money should not be used on consumable classroom supplies such as printer ink, etc.

There may be classes where a teacher needs something for the classroom that is larger or more expensive than a usual gift. Room parents can decide whether to combine gifts for several occasions into one large gift. If this is done, it would make sense to give it to the teacher earlier in the school year (such as the holidays) so that the current class can benefit from it.

Teacher's Aid/Student Teacher gifts: The situation may arise that your classroom ends up having a classroom aid or student teacher for which you would like to purchase a gift at some time during the year. This will be something you will have to decide how to handle (maybe with advice from your teacher), depending on factors such as how long the student teacher or aid serves in your classroom. In your discretion it may be appropriate in this case to take up an additional collection from the parents.

We suggest that the room parent inform the other parents when a gift is purchased, what it is, and when it will be presented to the teacher (in the event that the other parents would like to be there). You may also consider polling parents for the best date and time for presentation of the larger gifts.

Fall Festival: No more than **\$200** should be spent on the Fall Festival basket (more information to follow as it gets closer to this event). It is also acceptable to ask parents if they have donations for the class baskets (depending on the theme).

Classroom parties: A total of approximately **\$200** should be spent on classroom parties. There is significant variation as to what kinds of parties are held in each different class. Some classes have more parties and some have less but more elaborate parties. Some parties have little or no expense such as the holiday international potluck (notice on attached sample parent letter that a small amount was budgeted for this party), and others will cost more. Talk to your teacher at the beginning of the year to get an idea of what kinds of parties the class will have so you can budget accordingly. You may consider "potlucking" to offset the costs of some parties. If you do this, it is a good idea to have a deadline (possibly 2 days before the party) for delivery of non-perishable supplies so you are not left in a bind with missing items. Perishable items should preferably be brought to school right before the party, as refrigerator space on campus is very limited, especially on party days.

Parent party helpers are responsible for all after-party clean-up.

It is also a good idea to notify all parents when a party is taking place in case they would like to attend.

You will meet with the teacher to plan each party's activities, food, supplies needed, extra volunteers needed, etc. It is fun to try to involve as many parents as possible, throughout the year, and consider keeping a record (privately) of who has and has not had a chance to help at parties, provide food/supplies, etc.

Sage Canyon is trying to focus on nutrition per the District Wellness Policy. (See the front office if you would like more information about this). Please decide with your teacher what healthy party snacks might be appropriate and pass this along to the parents who sign up to bring snacks.

Thank you so much in advance, for all of your efforts in this capacity! Please do not hesitate to call me with **any** questions or concerns you might have. I am here to help you **any time**, especially those who are new to this!

Joan Nichols
VP of Volunteers

My contact info is:
joanknichols@gmail.com
Home phone: 858-755-7887

*And one small personal note: I was the room parent for my son Kyle's 2nd grade class last year. I just wanted to pass on an idea. For our winter (holiday) party this last year, we decided to do a service project instead of the traditional international potluck that has been done for many years in the Del Mar District. At the beginning of December, our class made blankets (the very simple flannel kind where you tie the edges). Some friends of our family delivered them to a very poor village in Mexico the next week – it was their son's Eagle Scout project, and they have had connections with this village for many years. They took wonderful pictures of the people receiving the blankets. Our holiday party (2 weeks later) was to look at the pictures, do a very small craft and have a little treat. The kids so enjoyed seeing these people (mostly elementary school aged children and babies) with the blankets they had tied themselves. I have a photo of Kyle holding the blanket he made in the classroom (we took pictures the day we were making them) and then a photo of a boy his age standing in front of the church in Mexico, holding up the same blanket after receiving it – tear jerking to say the least. Anyway, it was a fun holiday party activity and seemed to please everyone, as service is universal, especially at the holidays.

Sample Parent letter

Dear Parents,

We hope the 2008/2009 school year has gotten off to a great start for everyone! We are excited to be the room parents for Mrs. Jones' second grade class. We met with her last week and discussed the fun and educational events she has planned for the students this year. There are many celebrations and events throughout the year that need parent participation and support. This letter is to let you know about these events and how you can help. Expenses for our class parties will be mostly covered using class funds, but on occasion we may ask for items to be contributed.

Sage Canyon Fall Festival – October 21

Each class is asked to put together a gift basket that is auctioned off during the Fall Festival. Let us know if you are interested in helping out with this project! We are asking for a \$10 per family contribution to cover the gift basket cost.

Halloween Party - October 31

There will be a party for students (around 10:30). There will be snacks, crafts and fun activities. Parents are welcome to attend and we need 4 parents to help supervise the different activity centers.

Multicultural Celebration - Week of December 10 or 17 (specific date TBA)

All families are invited to attend and asked to bring in a dish to share that is from their ethnic or cultural background.

Valentines Day Party - February 14

Students will pass out cards, make crafts and enjoy snacks. Parents are welcome to attend and we need 4 parents to help supervise the different activity centers.

3 Piggy Opera “Pig Out” Party - February 20

This party will be held after our “3 Piggy Opera” performance. Again, all parents are invited to attend.

Gifts for Mrs. Jones:

Holiday (presented before the holiday break), Birthday (April 24), Staff Appreciation Week (May) and Year End. These are provided using class funds.

All of the parties and gifts that require class funds are noted. We are hoping that every family can contribute **\$35** so our kids can have these fun classroom events and we can show our appreciation to Mrs. Jones. We believe it is easier to collect one amount for the whole year rather than having to ask for multiple contributions. An estimated cost breakdown is shown below. Please make any checks payable to Mary Smith. We will put a manila envelope on the inside of Mrs. Jones's classroom door for donations to this fund. If you do choose to contribute, we would appreciate receiving your check by October 1st.

Thank you in advance for your help and generosity. Please feel free to email us with any questions or concerns.

Mary Smith (Bobby's Mom)	marysmith@yahoo.com	555-5555
Linda Nelson (Susie's Mom)	lindanelson@yahoo.com	666-6666

Here is a breakdown of our costs for the school year:

Fall Festival basket: \$200

Parties:

Halloween party 55

Winter party 25

3 Piggy Opera party 55

Valentine's Day party 55

End of year popsicles 10

Total \$200

Teacher Gifts:

Birthday 75

Holiday 75

Staff Appreciation Week 50

End of Year 75

Total \$275