



**Dale Street PTO  
Room Parent Handbook  
2017 -2018**

Revised October 2017

## **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

### **TOWN WIDE ROOM PARENT COORDINATOR**

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## **TOWN WIDE ROOM PARENT COORDINATOR**

### **Responsibilities of the Town Wide Room Parent Coordinator**

1. Oversee the selection of the Room Parent Coordinators and assist in any issues that arise throughout the year
2. Track all parents who submit a request to be a room parent and present the requests to all Room Parent Coordinators at the Room Parent Lottery
3. Oversee the Room Parent Lottery and ensure that all rules and regulations are followed
4. Contact Principles and coordinate the Room Parent Teas for Memorial, Wheelock and Dale
5. Oversee the Room Parent Teas
6. This position is held for 5 years

## **ROOM PARENT COORDINATOR**

### **Responsibilities of Room Parent Coordinators**

1. Act as a liaison to the school/teacher
  2. Act as a resource for the Room Parents
  3. Plan and organize initial meeting with Room Parents well before Halloween parties.
  4. School specific responsibilities – Memorial: Organize Field Day, Memorial/Wheelock: assist with Winter Carnival Booth staffing
  5. Handle the lottery to select Room Parents and choose Head Room Parents
- \*\*\* Room Parent Coordinators may bypass the Lottery and place their names at the top of the list as Room Parent for their child's classroom if they wish to be a Room Parent in addition to being a Room Parent Coordinator\*\*\*

If more than two (2) parents volunteer to be a Room Parent in any one classroom, the Room Parent Coordinators will conduct a lottery. (See Lottery Guidelines) The Coordinators will notify each teacher of the Room Parents selected before the parents are notified. A Head Room Parent will be assigned after which time those chosen by lottery will be called to confirm their assignment. An e-mail should notify those selected and not selected through the lottery. Here are the emails to be sent:

### **Lottery Guidelines**

- Those interested in being a Room Parent volunteer must complete the PTO Volunteer Form online by the established deadline.
- Parents may only be a Room Parent in ONE class per year.
- Those who have never been a Room Parent before are pulled first in the lottery. If all those names are picked and there is still a need for additional Room Parents, names can be pulled from the list of parents who have previously been a Room Parent, including those who have previously been a Room Parent for another child.
  - Two names will be pulled by lottery for each classroom.
  - Coordinators will notify teacher of these names before the parents are notified.
  - A Head Room Parent will be assigned by Room Parent Coordinator if one of the Room Parents did not choose to be Head Room Parent.
  - Those chosen by lottery will be emailed to confirm their assignment.
  - Those volunteers NOT chosen in the lottery should be contacted by Room Parent Coordinator via e-mail.
  - It is imperative that fairness and honesty are used during the Lottery.

## **ROOM PARENTS**

### **Head Room Parent Responsibilities**

1. Act as a team leader in coordinating Team Room Parent activities.
    - a. Meets-speaks with classroom teacher to confirm party dates/times and discuss party guidelines.
    - b. Coordinates meetings with Team Room Parents to plan/organize activities/snacks for class parties.
    - c. Distributes Party Money, which is given to the Head Room Parent by the PTO treasurer of their school, to reimburse Team Room Parents for craft supplies purchased.
- \*\*This amount is approximately \$7/student/year per PTO vote. This money may NOT be used for teacher gifts\*\*
- d. Contact all parents in classroom through Sign-Up Genius asking who is interested in donating food and/or craft supplies for class parties.
    - e. See addendum for school specific responsibilities, if any.
  2. Act as contact person for the Team Room Parents with the classroom teacher and Room Parent Coordinators.
  3. Assist teacher in obtaining consent from parents to use their emails for classroom parties and class contact list. The teacher is not allowed to give out emails. Most teachers will assist you in doing this at PIN or in an email to the class.

### **Team Room Parent Responsibilities**

1. Plans and organizes party activities WITH TEACHER APPROVAL.
  - a. Coordination of donations of paper goods and drinks.
  - b. Sets up for party and cleans up afterward.
  - c. Handles calls/emails for classroom donations. (Be sure to run party plans by teacher before each party so he/she can plan accordingly, prepare the students and make any necessary suggestions, such as allergy-friendly snacks.)
2. Assists in soliciting parental support for activities and fundraising events (5th grade: taking pictures at classroom parties for DVD/yearbook).
3. If desired, coordinates class gift for teacher(s). It is recommended that contributions for teacher gifts, which are always optional, are collected once a year and used for a holiday gift and end of year gift. An amount of \$10-\$20 per student may be suggested and used for the teacher and assistant teacher. Lists of those who contributed should not be made.

If a Room Parent runs into any problems or needs assistance, she/he should contact her/his Coordinator.

## SCHOOL PARTIES AND EVENTS

### Class Parties

No Halloween Parade

Halloween Party – Tuesday, 10/31

Winter Holiday Party - Friday, 12/22

Valentine's Day Party - Wednesday, 2/14

Gr 5 End of Year Party - Monday, 6/11 (no snow days)

Gr 4 End of Year Party - TBD by classroom teachers

**PLEASE NOTE:** Siblings are NOT allowed to attend school parties. These parties are strictly for your student and their class. Thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation. Please contact your teacher directly to determine what time your class parties will be.

### Recommended Planning

Several weeks before the party, the Head Room Parent should contact the classroom teacher to ask if he/she has any specific suggestions or restrictions for the party and what time they would like to hold the party. Remember to ask about any special dietary and/or religious restrictions, particularly food allergies.

Coordinate with the other Room Parent to plan a game or activity and a simple craft. Divide responsibilities among the Room Parents for purchasing supplies and making any necessary emails for donations. Arrange to have the food left at the school office on the day of the party, identified with the teacher's name, grade and person donating the treat. Use funds given out at the beginning of the year by the PTO to pay/reimburse for donations purchased for party.

### Party Tips

1. Use the list of classroom emails for donations. This gives others the opportunity to contribute to the child's classroom. We ask that there be one sweet treat provided and other treats be healthy snacks. (ex. Popcorn, fruit, veggies with dip). No HOT drinks.
2. Room Parents (NOT the Coordinators) are responsible for collecting donations from parents and/or supplying (using the allocated party money) napkins, cups, tablecloths etc. for each party.
3. Party Bags/"Loot" bags are PROHIBITED. Such items can create hurt feelings for those who do not receive them at their classroom parties.
4. Three parents can assist with each party. Those parents bringing snacks for the party should not stay through the party. Only those adults involved in running the party should be in the classroom during the party. If there was a parent that volunteered to be a Room Parent but was not chosen, invite he/she to a classroom party. Room Parent coordinators will have notified you if this was the case. Rotate parents at each party to ensure that as many parents that would like to have the opportunity to come in can.
5. Please follow classroom teachers' wishes as to when the party should start and end.
6. Keep in mind that the kids just want to visit and relax. Keeping things calm and unrushed helps them achieve this. Try not to overload them with too many party activities.
7. Respect the various cultural and religious backgrounds of the children in the class by engaging in non-secular activities, stories and songs. Instead, try focusing on the season
8. When the party is over, please clean up the classroom to the teachers' satisfaction.

### **Party Crafts, Activities and Games**

1. Keep it simple!! NO GLUE or HOT GLUE GUNS
2. Offer one activity and/or game. Time runs out quickly and children are disappointed if they can't get everything done.
3. Party ideas: Decorate A Cupcake/Cookie, Bingo (holiday related), Guess the Number (candy corn, candy canes, hearts, etc.), Simon Says, Paper Snowflakes, Heart shaped Puzzle, etc.
4. Prepare supplies ahead so they are ready at party time.
5. A holiday story is a great party activity!
6. Glue does not dry in time!! If there is a craft planned, please keep in mind that glitter and glue do not hold up well on the way home.
7. The Room Parents must clean up whatever mess is created during the party.

### **CLASS GIFTS**

Sometimes the Room Parents will organize a class gift for the teacher and classroom aide during the holiday season and/or end of the year. There are guidelines regarding gift giving that are important to follow so that we don't put our teachers in a position of having to refuse a lovely gift. These guidelines are dictated by the teachers' contracts and the Massachusetts Department of Education.

Please see the following information regarding Gift Giving policies.

#### **Gift Giving Policy Guidelines**

- By law, the amount that a school staff member can receive at any one-time from any one individual cannot exceed \$50. Class gifts to a teacher may be up to \$150. Names of those who contributed should not be disclosed and those who contributed should not also give the teacher an individual gift. (see below for Dept of Ed specifics)
- Ignoring this law violates the teacher's contract and puts them in an uncomfortable situation.
- Giving such a gift could be interpreted as a condition for a grade or favor on behalf of a child.
- Instead of giving personal gifts, consider giving a gift that can be used by the teacher in the classroom.
- Money can be given to the teacher via the Teacher Thank You Gift Fund in any dollar amount.
- Consider honoring a teacher with the Gift Books program.
- Consider collecting \$20 per student (with a one-time solicitation) and using that money for holiday gift and end of year gift.

From: [www.mass.gov/ethics/education-and-training-resources](http://www.mass.gov/ethics/education-and-training-resources):

Public employees, including teachers, are prohibited by §§ 3 and 23(b)(2) of the conflict of interest law from accepting gifts worth \$50 or more that are given to them because of the position they hold, or because of some action they could take or have taken in their position. Teachers and other public employees may accept gifts that are worth less than \$50, but they have to disclose in writing the fact that they have done so if, based on the circumstances, a reasonable person would think that the teacher might unduly show favor to the giver or the giver's child because of the gift. G.L. c. 268A, § 23(b)(3). Therefore, whether you may accept the gift depends on its value, and whether you must disclose a gift you are allowed to accept depends on the circumstances.

A teacher who is offered an end-of-the-year gift worth \$50 or more should not accept it, unless it is a permissible class gift. The Commission created an exemption in its regulations at 930 CMR 5.08(14) to permit class gifts to teachers in certain circumstances. Under the exemption, the parents and students of a class, acting together, may give a gift worth up to \$150 to a teacher, provided that the gift is identified only as being from the class, and the names of the givers and the amounts given are not identified to the teacher. A single class gift worth up to \$150, or several class gifts during the school year with a total value up to \$150, may be given. A teacher may not accept any other gift from someone who has contributed to a class gift. Therefore, if an individual gift is offered, before accepting it, the teacher must confirm that the giver did not contribute to the class gift.

A gift given to a teacher to use solely in the classroom or to buy classroom supplies is not considered a gift to the teacher personally, and is, therefore, not subject to the \$50 limit on personal gifts to teachers. Parents may give gifts to the classroom or the school in accordance with the rules of the school district. A teacher who receives such a gift must keep receipts documenting that the money was used for classroom supplies.

## **IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER – A MESSAGE FROM THE SCHOOL NURSES**

Please check with the school nurse, Kathy Thompson, about existing food allergies and sensitivities.

Holiday Celebrations Food is allowed for few yearly school celebrations. The holiday celebration is usually consistent throughout the school. To remain sensitive to food allergies and health regulations, we encourage healthy options for your celebrations. Room Parents are encouraged to contact our school nurse if they have questions about snacks related to student allergies. No sugared drinks are permitted and only one “sweet” treat is allowed among other offerings. Teachers will contact room parents to arrange for treats as needed. **No candy** is permitted at any school sponsored celebration held during regular school hours. Please do not send in snacks unless you were contacted to do so.

## **ALLERGY INFORMATION – A MESSAGE FROM THE SCHOOL NURSES**

All Medfield Schools are allergy aware. Teachers and classroom aids have been trained in the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction and how to administer an Epi-Pen.

We have many students in each building diagnosed with life threatening food allergies. Food allergies affect 15 million people in the US and 1 in 13 children. Food allergy symptoms send someone to the emergency room every three minutes. The top 8 foods that account for 90% of all food allergy reactions are: peanuts, tree nuts, milk, shellfish, fish, soy and wheat. In addition to allergies, we also have several students who cannot tolerate lactose or gluten in their diets.

### **Some General Guidelines for Parties:**

Please check with the nurse (either email or call) prior to the party/event to determine what allergies you need to be aware of. Unfortunately, due to privacy laws, we cannot give out student names. Therefore, we want to serve items that everyone in the class can enjoy.

**For safety reasons:** Please refrain from: hot liquids, chocolate fountains, or items with sticks.

If you are cutting up fruit, please be mindful of cross contamination with utensils that may have been used with other foods, such as peanut butter.

Serving foods with labels is safer. Please contact the nurse if you need help deciphering ingredients.

### **Some snack choices that most students can have:**

Popsicle brand popsicles (do not contain whey, which is a milk protein) Please buy boxes that include some flavors without red food dye.

Skinny Pop Popcorn: Original (peanut/nut, gluten, dairy and MSG free)

Bachman Pretzel Sticks (made in a facility that does NOT process nuts/peanuts)

Lays Potato Chips/original (does not contain milk protein)

\*Donut Express Bakery in Medfield is a nut/peanut free facility.

Thank you for helping to keep all of our students safe!!

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