



Wheelock PTO
Room Parent Handbook
2018 -2019

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CONTACT INFORMATION:

TOWN WIDE ROOM PARENT COORDINATOR

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MEMORIAL

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TOWN WIDE ROOM PARENT COORDINATOR – Position held for 5 years

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 Principals and coordinate the Room Parent Teas for Memorial, Wheelock, and Dale
5. Oversee all Room Parent Teas

ROOM PARENT COORDINATOR – Position held for 2 years

Responsibilities of Room Parent Coordinators

1. Act as a liaison between your grade's room parents and the Town Wide Room Parent Coordinator
2. Act as a resource for the Room Parents
3. Plan and organize initial meeting with Room Parents well before Halloween celebrations.
4. School specific responsibilities – Memorial: Organize Field Day, Memorial/Wheelock/Dale: 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.

- o Coordinators will notify teacher of these names before the parents are notified.
- o 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.
- o Those chosen by lottery will be emailed the below to confirm their assignment.

Congratulations, you have been selected to be the Room Parents for <insert teacher's name> class this year. PTO Room Parent Coordinators held a meeting on, <insert date of Room Parent Lottery>, to select Room Parents for grades K-5 using the online form stating your preferences. We did our best to give everyone their first choice, but did have to resort to the lottery system for some class rooms. Thank you so much for volunteering. Please respond back to this email to let me know that you accept your new position.

<insert selected name> <insert selected email>
 Head Room Parent

<insert selected name> <insert selected email>
 Team Room Parent

Each classroom has two Room Parents to provide celebration planning and facilitating. The Head Room Parent should work directly with your teacher to support what works best in their classroom. There are several celebrations throughout the school year. Feel free to solicit assistance from additional classroom parents to help out with food donations or to volunteer during the celebrations. I recommend contacting your teacher ASAP to introduce yourself and to see how they would like things to work.

We have scheduled a Room Parent Tea at Wheelock School on **Friday, September 28 at 9:30 a.m.** There, you will be giving all the information you need.

We look forward to seeing you there.

<insert Room Parent Coordinator's Name>
 <insert Room Parent Coordinator's Title>

- o Those volunteers NOT chosen in the lottery should be sent the below email by Room Parent Coordinator.

Thank you for volunteering to be a <insert grade> Room Parent this year. Unfortunately, your child's classroom had multiple candidates and, using a lottery method, you were not selected. But, the room parents who were selected for your classroom were given your names as potential volunteers for the celebrations. Please feel free to reach out to the room parents to volunteer if you do not hear from them.

Thanks again for volunteering and please try again next year.

<insert Room Parent Coordinator's Name>
<insert Room Parent Coordinator's Title>

- o It is imperative that fairness and honesty are used during the Lottery.

ROOM PARENTS

- **Please note that Room Parents are free to distribute the below responsibilities between their positions as they feel fit.**

Head Room Parent Responsibilities

1. Act as a team leader in coordinating Team Room Parent activities.
 - a. Meets/speaks with classroom teacher to confirm celebration dates/times and discuss celebration guidelines.
 - b. Coordinates meetings with Team Room Parents to plan/organize activities/snacks for class celebrations.
 - c. Distributes celebration 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 celebrations.
 - 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. Distribute the class directories once they are completed by the Town Wide Room Parent Coordinator.

Team Room Parent Responsibilities

1. Plans and organizes celebration activities WITH TEACHER APPROVAL.
 - a. Coordination of donations of paper goods and drinks.
 - b. Sets up for celebration and cleans up afterward.
 - c. Handles calls/emails for classroom donations. (Be sure to run celebration plans by teacher before each celebration 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 (Winter

Carnival and 3rd grade: taking pictures at classroom celebrations 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 CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS

Celebration Procedures:

We rely on your support to organize and orchestrate three classroom celebrations during the school year. This year, the celebrations are scheduled for the following dates:

Halloween Celebration – Wednesday, October 31 1:45 pm

(Halloween Parade followed by class celebrations)

Winter Holiday Celebration – Friday, December 21 10 am

Valentine's Day Celebration - Thursday, February 14 2 pm

Note: Please check with your classroom teacher as some will also ask that you help with an individual class end-of-the-year celebration. The end of year celebration will be held no earlier than **June 5, 2019**, unless we have snow days to make up.

All celebrations should end by 2:45 pm to allow for clean-up before dismissal.

Room Parents should arrive at the classroom no earlier than 1:45 pm for set-up. All visitors/volunteers must sign-in at the main office.

While final approval for all activities rests with the classroom teacher and principal, we welcome your ideas and creativity in planning for each event. Please be sure to check-in with your child's teacher roughly two weeks before celebration dates to discuss specifics about activities. It's helpful to have 3 volunteers in the classroom for celebrations to oversee activities and assist with set-up and cleanup. If you are in need of ideas there are many helpful websites including Pinterest, familyfun, www.class-celebrations.com and www.kaboose.com.

Typically, the Room Parent and volunteers plan for "stations" or a sequence of activities that include a snack, craft and game. Each Head Room Parent is provided with a one-time stipend per child to purchase craft supplies, juice and paper goods for all celebrations.

In making a food choice, we encourage sensible portion sizes and healthy alternatives. Also, when planning for snacks, please be aware that there are children with severe peanut

allergies who not only cannot consume peanut products; they also cannot eat items that were prepared in bowls or pans that may contain any trace of peanuts or peanut oil. Many times well-intentioned parents prepare what they think is a 'nut free' treat for a class, only to find that the child with the allergy cannot eat it.

Please note: In an effort to prevent cross-contamination, we do ask that anyone who consumes peanut products wash their hands after eating.

Also, please check with your child's teacher for specific allergy information and try to plan for a simple, healthy treat that all may enjoy.

All celebration items should be marked with the teacher's name and delivered to the hallway outside the main office on the morning of the celebration.

No goodie bags of any kind, please. Absolutely no latex products of any kind, such as latex balloons.

Also, due to space considerations, please note that siblings are not invited to classroom celebrations.

Parent Pickups:

Please send a pick-up note to school if you plan to take your child home with you on the day of a celebration. Please note on that pickup note that you will be dismissing "Directly from Class". You may then leave at the conclusion of the celebration. If you plan on taking another child home from the celebration - from that class or from another class - please have the parent of that child send a green note indicating such. You will need to then go to the Mango Gym for the normal pickup procedures to take the other child with you. This way we can make sure that each and every child is accounted for and safe.

Halloween Hints:

The Halloween Celebration poses a special challenge as it follows the Halloween Parade. The Wheelock staff has developed some guidelines for the annual parade and celebration that should lead to a frighteningly good time for all...

- Children should bring a costume to school that they can put on independently (no makeup, scary masks or accessories that could be construed as weapons or cause harm. Please, no cleats.
- Adults attending the parade/celebration may wear costumes, but not masks.

Class Photography:

It is very helpful if at least one parent volunteer at celebrations, events or field trips takes photos suitable for use in our Newsflash, on our web page, in Twitter feeds, or most especially, in the Third Grade DVD. Please e-mail all photos to Beth DiGregorio bdigregorio@email.medfield.net **Photos with children other than your own, taken**

at a school event should NOT be published on any social media forum. In addition we ask that you please check with your child's teacher before taking photos of children in the classroom.

Class Directory

New this year, the class directory will be collected using a Google Form. The Town Wide Room Parent Coordinator will put together each class's directory and email it to the Head Room Parent as soon as the directories are completed. Each class directory will only include the children in that specific class. Any parent who has not filled out the Google Form will not be included in their class directory.

Winter Carnival:

Someone from the Winter Carnival Booth Committee will be in touch with each Head Room Parent in January with instructions for finding volunteers to staff your class booth. The date for this year's Winter Carnival is TBD.

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 and 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:

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, Nancy Scheimer, 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. Teachers 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: eggs, 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 Celebrations:

Please check with the nurse (either email or call) prior to the celebration/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!!

Memorial School Kim Maguire 508-242-8576 or kmaguire@email.medfield.net

Wheelock School Nancy Schiemer 508-242-8577 or nschiemer@email.medfield.net

Dale Street School Kathy Thompson 508-242-8573 or kthompson@email.medfield.net