

As the class liaison you will assist the teachers in planning the many exciting events held throughout the year and help with any other needs they may have.

The attached memo is an overview of responsibilities and some suggestions for you to consider. Before going on, I can't stress enough that each teacher is different and requests different levels of support, so the key is to remain flexible and support the teacher in whatever capacity they require.

### **Room Parent Responsibility Overview**

#### Identify Specific Teacher Requirements

You should start by contacting the teacher to determine any immediate needs and schedule a meeting to understand their specific requirements.

At your teacher meeting, you will generally review:

- the celebrations that are held,
- the donations required (paper products, craft supplies),
- the parental involvement (does the teacher need help with specific projects or activities, listeners, computer help, craft, science project, writers workshops.....)
- the craft projects
- the field trips

#### Organize the celebrations

As a general rule, Halloween, Holiday/Winter, Valentine's Day and End of Year are celebrations common across all grades.

**The celebrations should not include food or drink. Due to the numbers of children with severe allergies and other medical conditions, 3 years ago we changed our school policy to exclude food from parties and birthday celebrations.**

Keep in mind that the Sudbury Public Schools party policy is to keep celebrations non religious in nature (i.e. Holiday vs. Christmas/Hanukkah). All parties are required to be held at school and under no circumstances should end of year parties be held off-site or have swimming during school hours. Although the specific dates/time may not be known, having a list of events helps plan the year and volunteer requirements.

For each celebration ask the teacher if all the parents are invited or he/she will just need a few parents for assistance.

Particularly in the younger grades, teachers often want some type of craft during the parties. The teacher can let you know what they have in mind or will ask you to select a craft and will tell you how much time will be allotted. You do not need to do all the work, and you can ask a parent to become the craft organizer who selects the craft and finds volunteers to donate the required items.

#### Find volunteers for the Field trips

Identify the field trips that will be organized during the year. Even if specific dates have not been set yet, it is a good idea to discuss them to determine the number of chaperones required and possible training necessary. In addition to the teacher requested chaperones, parents of children with allergies (particularly sensitive food allergies) and other special needs often need to accompany their own child on field trips. The School Department specifically supports the parents attending. However this should not interfere with or replace the number of chaperones the teacher requests. It is recommended to have a parent backup in case of a last minute cancellation.

In some classes, there are more parents who want to attend a field trip than there are chaperone opportunities. Please make every effort to offer a chaperone opportunity to as many families as possible. Maintaining a list all year long of parents who volunteered and went on a field trip is a good tool to be able to give an opportunity to everybody and to allow transparency in the selection process. **Being the room parent does not mean that you can or have to go on all the field trips.**

### **Help the teacher with Scholastic Book Order**

Teachers have been encouraged to offer Scholastic Book selections to their students on a monthly basis. Since tallying the orders, handling the payments, placing the order, and sorting and delivering the books takes time, this is a great job for a room parent or other volunteer. However some teachers do like to do it themselves. Talk to your teacher to find out if they would like to delegate this responsibility. Not only is the purchase of these books great for our children, but the school can also benefit from the points earned for future purchases. See Attachment I for specifics. You do not have to do this job yourself.

**Identify Parents with Special Skills/talents** to suggest a special demonstration, etc.

### **Emergency Phone Chain Calls and Backups**

The Room Parents handle the Emergency Phone Chain calls. The Emergency Phone Chain is used in extremely rare circumstances and is a mechanism to notify parents immediately and ensure we talk directly to them. This DOES NOT get used for school closings due to inclement weather if the school is cancelled before the start of the school. However, it might get used, as it was last year, in case of an early dismissal because of the weather.

Each classroom needs to have 2 parents to back you up if you are not immediately available when the emergency phone chain is started. The detailed process is described in a separate document.

### **Find Volunteers for the Craft Center**

Individuals have already volunteered to organize the grade level crafts, to purchase the items needed, but they will need your help to find parents to facilitate the crafts (helping during the craft or helping with preparation and setup). For each craft you will receive an email explaining the craft and the number of volunteers needed.

Again it is a good idea to keep track of who volunteered and who was selected. Doing so will enable you to give everybody a fair opportunity.

### **Find Volunteers for Field Day**

Field day is a day of games during the last week of school. Each class will be asked to provide a Game Coordinator and 4-5 helpers, and, possibly, water and snacks.

### **Communicate Volunteer Opportunities to your classroom**

Please address emails to “HAYNES FAMILIES/GUARDIANS” to include all students.

In prior years, some room parents have hosted a Parent Coffee as an opportunity to get to know the parents and allow individuals to volunteer. Again, this is entirely up to the two room parents.

Regardless of your mechanism for soliciting volunteers, please be sure to use a process that is fair to all parents and looks at the year as a whole. Bear in mind that some parents work full time. Kindergarten is a particularly sensitive time since new parents are anxious to get into the classroom to help and see their children. Room Parents should make sure they are not viewed as having more "classroom" opportunities than other parents.

### Forward some information to your class

You will be asked throughout the year to forward some messages to your class.

E-mail lists have been found to be an effective tool to communicate with your parents. **There** are some e-mail protocols:

- Room Parents are frequently asked to forward messages to their classes. All messages are to be forwarded "As Written". Room Parents should not be expected to rewrite the notes. It is also important that all families get the same information. Some families do not have email, if you have a family without email please try to forward a paper copy of the information. ( you may group all the information at the end of the week for example)
- To forward messages you should delete the e-mail address header at the top, forwarding only the text of the message and/or a brief introductory message. In some cases e-mail addresses might be disclosed in the header and that family has asked they not be made public.
- Always clear emails regarding new topics with the classroom teacher before sending. Please copy teacher on emails sent to class.

### Organize Gifts and Teacher Appreciation

Holiday - During the holidays, a class gift is given to the teacher. This gift is intended to be for the classroom use and not a personal gift to the teacher. Parents are asked for a donation, typically \$5/\$10 towards the item. The teacher generally has a wish list of items they may want, so don't hesitate to ask. Purchasing books during the Fall Book Fair is another great gift idea for the class. Room parents of kindergarten teachers who have 2 classes may consider coordinating their gifts to avoid duplication.

**Teacher Appreciation Week** - is held in May. Notification of the exact date(s) will be sent to you in April. . For this event, you are asked to coordinate something meaningful and simple to show how much our teachers are appreciated. We ask that you choose **ONE** simple idea. Maybe have each child bring in one flower to create a bouquet, or have the children write a card at home for their teacher. If you have an Assistant who works regularly in the classroom, you may wish to consider doing the same for them too. Please avoid asking the class for money.

The HOP Hospitality Committee arranges a luncheon for the staff that week too and all the staff are invited to attend this lunch. Please do not send food items into the classroom for teachers.

**End of Year gift** is generally more personal. You may need to ask for \$5-\$10 towards a classroom gift, make sure to include the assistants as well.

Please remember that in all cases donations are voluntary. When asking for contributions, please always use language that expresses that the donation is voluntary and the amount given is at the family's discretion. Please also refrain from presenting a "classroom gift" of alcohol to the teachers, as it is not considered appropriate.

**Baby Showers/Retirement** - at your discretion. HOP gives a gift to teachers and staff members when they have a baby or retire.

### **Other Housekeeping Matters**

- Take lots of pictures at parties and during craft times and submit them for the Yearbook or use for a teacher scrapbook, remember that school pictures should not be posted on any website. Bonnie McAlley is the contact person for the yearbook this year.

- Please remind all parents they must have a CORI form and volunteer form on file at Haynes to volunteer in the classroom or on trips.
- Last, but not least, remember CONFIDENTIALITY. You may be given information that is confidential. Please respect that!

I hope this will help you start thinking and planning the year.