

# **Oak Hill PTA**

## **ROOM PARENT GUIDELINES**

Thank you for your interest in being a Room Parent at Oak Hill Elementary School. Our Room Parents are supported by the Oak Hill PTA. Each year, Room Parent sign-up takes place in the classroom during Back-to-School Night in September. Each class should have at least one room parent.

In this document you will find the following items:

- **Specific guidelines for the Room Parent** - These have been set by Oak Hill PTA and Oak Hill ES Administration to ensure consistency throughout the school.
  - Communications
  - Party Planning
  - Gift Giving
- **School Guidelines**

### **Guidelines for Room Parents:**

#### **A. Room Parent Responsibilities in the Classroom**

An Oak Hill Room Parent's role in the classroom is determined by the teacher.

Responsibilities vary from classroom to classroom depending on the teacher's needs. Some teachers prefer minimal assistance while others may ask their room parents to take on a more significant role such as those listed below:

1. **Volunteer Coordinator for the classroom:** Teacher may ask for assistance in finding parent volunteers for various classroom tasks and grade level activities. Volunteer tasks may include...
  - Stuffing Wednesday Folders
  - Updating bulletin boards
  - Parents as "special lunch monitors"
    - *NOTE:* There are certain dates when the cafeteria space is not available during lunch time due to school activities such as "School Picture Day". The teacher may ask for parent volunteers to oversee the students as they eat lunch in their classroom. This will give the teacher the opportunity for a lunch break outside the classroom. Remember to check with your teacher first before recruiting a volunteer. Some teachers prefer to eat in the classroom with their students.
  - Assisting in various classroom programs and grade level events
  - PLEASE NOTE: When there are a limited number of slots for parents to participate in a class room activity, we have asked the classroom teacher to facilitate the organization of parents in the classroom. With that, we have asked teachers to utilize a **lottery system** to determine parent volunteers for class activities/parties/events.
2. **Classroom Party Organizer:** Teacher may ask for assistance in planning or coordinating a classroom party. If the teacher allows the room parent to plan a class party, please

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refer to these BASIC GUIDELINES FOR A CLASS PARTY:

- **Keep your teacher informed about your party plans.** Before you do anything in the classroom, please check with the teacher first. Some teachers already have an idea of how they want the party conducted. Also, teachers are aware of unique situations that may affect your plans.
- **Based upon the time of year, consider appropriate themes.** For winter you might want to consider winter weather themes, snowmen, etc. You may be also asked to coordinate a spring or Valentine's Day party.
- **Be aware of all allergies in the classroom.** Make sure that you check with the teacher about the types of allergies in the classroom.
- **Parties need to be held at the designated time and place determined by your teacher.** Party activities should not be disruptive that the students cannot go back to regular class instruction.

### **3. Room Parent Responsibilities as a PTA Liaison**

- Oak Hill PTA may ask room parents for assistance on PTA-sponsored activities. The PTA Room Parent Coordinator will send detailed information on specific PTA needs throughout the school year.
- Coordinating material donations for Community Outreach Programs -- the PTA Community Outreach Program Chairperson will contact the room parents directly with details about the program needs.
- Recruiting parent volunteers for part of Teacher Appreciation in May (more information will be provided by Staff Appreciation chair).

### **4. Coordinating the class gifts for teachers** -- this is an optional task for all room parents. One of the roles that room parents can take on is to coordinate class teacher gifts.

Although the teachers appreciate the thoughtful gesture and recognition, please be aware that coordinating class teacher gifts is NOT a required "room parent task" at our school. If room parents do decide to take on the task of coordinating a class gift, please adhere to the

#### **PTA GUIDELINES FOR TEACHER GIFTS:**

- **Participation in a group class gift is voluntary.** Be aware that some families may choose not to participate.
- **Room Parents can choose to collect monetary donations to purchase the class gift.**
- **DO NOT specify an amount of contribution.** Graciously accept any amount a family is able to contribute for a teacher gift. You may suggest an amount--but be sensitive to a family's budget since you are asking for a monetary contribution.
- **Inform the parents how their contribution will be spent.** Gift certificates are usually a good choice. Let the parents know what gift the teacher will receive due to their generosity.

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- **Room Parents can choose to ask for specific items to be donated as part of the class gift.** If you know what your teacher likes then it is easier to buy a specific gift. Some teachers may prefer gifts with sentimental value rather than gift certificates. Other teachers prefer if parents would collect items to be donated to their favorite charity. Ask your teacher what he/she would wish to have as a class gift. If you are not comfortable asking, then consider asking another teacher who may be able to advise you on what your teacher prefers.
- **Approved Oak Hill class gift timeframes are below: You may opt to do only one gift for the year or both, that is at the room parent's discretion.**
  - 1) Winter Holiday Class Gift (given before Winter Break)
  - 2) End-of-School Year Class Gift (given before Summer Break)
  - Please do not expect every family to participate nor should they specify an amount of contribution. The gift should always be present as from the entire class.
- **Donated monetary funds or items for a class gift can only be collected 30 days or less prior to the event date.** All funds and/or items collected must be used for its intended purpose. Unused monetary funds or items should be returned to the contributing parent/s.
- **Teacher Appreciation Week in May.** This is a time where if you want to provide a gift to your teacher, we encourage children/parents to give them something special directly from them, whether a poem, drawing or something they want to give their teacher. We request that we DO NOT do a class gift at this time. The PTA already plans specific activities during that week to honor our teachers. We do ask our room parents to recruit parent volunteers to assist with activities during Teacher Appreciation Week.
- **Group class gifts are NOT expected to celebrate a teacher's special day.** An event like the teacher's birthday, baby shower, wedding or anniversary can be very personal. Some teachers would prefer if these types of events are not celebrated in the classroom; check with your teacher first before making any plans. Students and their families can choose to honor the teacher with a more personal and individualized gift.
- **Greeting card associated with any class gift should be addressed coming from the entire class regardless of the family's participation in the class gift** (ex. "From your Kindergarten Class"). Remember that participation in a class gift is voluntary. Avoid the situation wherein a student may feel left out because their name is not on a card for their teacher. Parents can always choose to give their teacher an individual card from their child. A hand-made greeting card can be one of the most precious gifts a student can give to their teacher.

#### **5. Guidelines for Communications: COMMUNICATION IS KEY!!!**

- **Communicating with Teachers:**
  - Ask your teacher about their needs and expectations from their room parents.

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- Email is the best way to communicate with your teacher.
- If you must contact the teacher during regular school hours, call the school office and they will handle the communication.
- **Communicating with Co-Room Parents:**
  - Some classes may have more than 1 room parent. If this is the case then all the room parents in that classroom should work as a team to support their teacher and the PTA.
- **Communicating with the Classroom Parents:**
  - Parent Contact Information is provided to room parents via the Oak Hill PTA Directory available by the end of September/start of October. If a room parent does not have access to the PTA Directory, contact the PTA Room Parent Coordinator for assistance at [roomparents@oakhillpta.org](mailto:roomparents@oakhillpta.org).
  - Be aware that there may be some parents who would prefer not to share their contact information. "Blind Copy" when emailing parents in your classroom. This is so that you can keep the parents' email private. Also, it will hopefully limit the unnecessary "reply all" messages.
  - Inform ALL PARENTS about all volunteer opportunities. This includes tasks that do not require for parents to be at school (i.e. donating materials, prep tasks that can be done from home).
  - Consider using free on-line volunteer sign-up sites such as Volunteerspot or Sign-up Genius to inform parents about volunteer opportunities.
  - Room parents are to facilitate and coordinate additional volunteers in the classroom and not do all the work themselves.

- **Communicating with the PTA Room Parent Coordinator:**

The PTA Room Parent Coordinator acts as the liaison between the PTA, school administration and individual room parents. This includes providing details and clarifying the PTA Guidelines for Oak Hill Room Parents. The PTA Room Parent Coordinator can also advise or direct room parents to the appropriate source if any issues arise during the school year. Send an email to [roomparents@oakhillpta.org](mailto:roomparents@oakhillpta.org) to contact the PTA Room Parent Coordinator.

- **PTA Room Parent Form Letters:**

In cases wherein communicating with hard copy letter may be more effective than an email, the room parent can use the PTA Room Parent Form letters. These form letters are .pdf files that you can download from the Oak Hill PTA website under "Room Parent Resources". The form letters currently available to room parents are:

- Holiday Teacher Gift form letter
- School Year End Classroom Gift form letter

NOTE: Room Parents who choose to use these pre-approved PTA form letters should:

1. Make the necessary copies for distribution.
2. Submit the copies to the school's main office by Tuesday morning so that it can be included in that week's Wednesday Folder.

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**6. School Guidelines**

- **All volunteers MUST adhere to these IMPORTANT SCHOOL SECURITY guidelines:**
  - Parent volunteers have to be buzzed in from the front door in order to enter the school building. They should proceed immediately to the school's main office for the sign-in process which includes:
  - Using the computer at the entrance of the school office, login as a visitor. This will generate a sticker volunteer badge. You will need your Driver's License for this process.
  - You **MUST WEAR THIS VOLUNTEER BADGE AT ALL TIMES** during your entire volunteer period at school. You will be asked to go to the office if you do not have a valid volunteer badge.
  - At the end of your volunteer period, return to the school's main office to logout as a visitor.
  - **Room parents should inform all the parent volunteers in their classroom to follow this process when volunteering for a classroom activity or event.**

**Thank you for taking the time to review the guidelines!**

**For questions regarding Oak Hill PTA's Room Parent Guidelines,  
Email: [roomparents@oakhillpta.org](mailto:roomparents@oakhillpta.org)**