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**Little River Elementary PTA**

**Room Parent Handbook**

**2017-2018**

Dear Room Parents,

Thank you for volunteering to serve as a Room Parent for the 2014-2015 school year. Serving as a Room Parent is a great opportunity for you to be involved in and contribute to the success of the students and school at Little River Elementary. We appreciate your time, talents and dedication to furthering the educational opportunities of those you come in contact with.

**Purpose:**

The purpose of this handbook is to provide our room parent volunteers the necessary information and tools to fulfill their roles as room parents/assistant room parents and their classroom PTA liaison.

**What are my Room Parent Responsibilities?**

1. Act as a liaison between the classroom parents and the PTA. It’s a good idea to attend PTA general meetings whenever possible.

2. Act as an activities communication liaison between teacher and classroom parents.

3. Maintain a positive working relationship with teacher and room parents.

4. Assist the teacher in classroom and material preparation as deemed necessary by teacher.

5. Assist the teacher with planning and implementation of special events and projects.

6. Coordinate volunteers as requested for classroom activities and instruction.

7. Coordinate volunteers for PTA requested events.

Each classroom will typically have more than one room parent. Parents are to act as co-room parents both taking on the responsibility of representing the PTA. However, designating a lead/primary room parent and an assistant room parent may assist with and ensure there is always classroom representation at events, meetings and classroom activities.

8. Collect and manage money used throughout the year for parties/events/teacher gifts.

**Relationships:**

**Room Parent to Teacher:**

Establishing a good working relationship between the teacher and the Room Parents requires open and frequent communication. A meeting soon after the start of the school year is a great way to initiate this process. The teacher will describe his/her expectations of his/her room parent. The room parent should ask questions and listen to what the teacher states are his/her objectives. In turn, room parents should also describe his/her capabilities and limitations. Together, the teacher and room parents will determine how they will communicate and work together through the school year.

**Room Parent to Room Parent**

Once the teacher has notified and met with the room parents, the room parents should meet and discuss how they can best meet the teacher, student and classroom needs for the year. The primary room parent should take the lead for all events and maintain open and consistent communication with the assistants as needed. Each set of room parents must determine how to best meet the needs of the teacher, students and classroom, whether through division of responsibilities or a lead and assistant role. No matter the determination, the decisions must be in accordance with the teachers guidance.

**Room Parent to Other Students’ Parents:**

A significant role of the room parents is to provide ongoing communication to all students and parents, in addition to coordinating, with those parents, special events, volunteer opportunities and other activities deemed necessary by the teacher. This allows the teacher to focus on the mission of educating while room parents execute the planning and preparation for the activities and events. Encouraging other parents to get involved is going to be the key to a successful year. When needing parents to volunteer their time, talents or the donation of items, it is recommended allowing them a minimum of two week’s notice to plan.

**Room Parent to Classroom Students:**

A Room Parent's relationship with the classroom students is based on the room parent’s individual personality and the teacher’s established routine and need. The teacher will determine how much direct contact and involvement is appropriate between the room parents and the students. If there are concerns that impact the safety of the student (s) and/or school, you must immediately report to the teacher.

**Introduction Letter to Parents:**

At the beginning of the school year, you should send an introductory letter and calendar of events to the classroom parents. There is a sample letter on the schools website.

**Classroom Directory:**

Many teachers would like you to create a classroom directory. Upon request by the teacher, you must first ensure that permission from the student’s parent/guardian to publish his/her information in addition to the child’s has been obtained. However, due to additions and changes in the classroom, please be sure that you keep up to date on this. The class directory is to be emailed to your Room Parent Coordinator, the teacher and all the class parents.

**Activities and Events that require your attention, participation and/or attendance during the 2017-2018 school year.**

The are many activities that will take place over the school year that you will be involved in. The following are PTA and/or classroom needs that occur each year that will require participation, attendance and/or attention from the room parents. I will email you with changes or additions.

**Winter Holiday Party**

Your teacher will inform you of the date, time and activities of your class Winter Holiday Party. The room parents will be responsible for coordinating the event to include, but not limited to: donation of items for activities, snacks and paper products, as well as the coordination of other parent volunteers. Remember that you CANNOT require any parent to provide items and or funds needed for the events. EVERYTHING is voluntary.

**Teacher Appreciation Week**

Teacher Appreciation Week is a week full of fun activities and tidbits to let our teachers know that we appreciate all they do for our children. The PTA Room Parent webpage is a fantastic resource providing a letter for the week, a list of suggested activities and gifts to make the week exciting, fun and successful for all. The PTA will provide a special lunch for all the teachers. Please remember when advertising this week that involvement is voluntary. You cannot require participation from the students or their parents. If you elect to do a class/ group gift for your teacher, you can use a letter from LRE PTA website or include the following phrase in yours: **“**If you are interested in making a voluntary contribution to a group gift please send in your voluntary cash contribution in an envelope marked “Room Parent” by **\_\_\_\_\_\_.”**

**End of year Party**

This event will be held before the end of the school year. Your teacher will inform you of the date, time and activities for the End of Year Party. The room parents will be responsible for coordinating the event to include, but not limited to: donation of items for activities, snacks and paper products, as well as the coordination of other parent volunteers. Remember that you CANNOT require any parent to provide items and or funds needed for the events. EVERYTHING is voluntary.

**Teacher Birthday**

Children love to help their teacher celebrate their birthday. Staff birth dates, as well as a letter to send to the parents and class ideas, are listed on the LRE PTA website.

**PTA Activities and Events needing Volunteers**

To ensure the following activities and events are a success for the students and the school, you will be asked to assist by recruiting your classroom parents to volunteer. The PTA Committees in charge of these events will contact you through your room parent coordinators.

**Boosterthon Fun Run**

The Boosterthon Fun Run is the PTA’s major fundraiser for this year. This program emphasizes fitness, education and character development while raising funds for our students and school. You will be asked to assist by recruiting volunteers for this event and promoting the Boosterthon Fun Run to ensure its success. There will be a classroom door decorating competition, which will add excitement to the event. For more information on how the Boosterthon Fun Run works, please see www.funrun.com.

**Field Days**

In addition to sending out an email for this event, you may also be asked to have parents volunteer to assist, donate bottles of water, popsicles and the use of a cooler for the day. A meeting will take place on the morning of this event with more details. This usually takes 2-3 volunteers per class.

**Donations/Requesting items activities/classroom**

All donations and contributions are VOLUNTARY and CANNOT be required for participation. Many parents are willing to send in items, as this is the way they can volunteer. Please be sure to provide each parent with an opportunity to participate and save your willingness to provide until a need is not being met. Note that the cafeteria, art dept., etc., do not have the funds to provide resources for the classroom parties. For this reason, it is vital to their success that communication is open and ahead of time. If a voluntary cash donation is requested, please do not ask for a one time contribution for the entire year. Keep in mind that all gifts to the teacher cannot be valued at more than $400. Also, I find it best to always ask for donations of food and paper items and ask for funds for crafts and gifts.

**Little River PTA Website:**

The Little River PTA website is a fantastic resource for all parents. As room parents, you have your own web page which will provide all the information needed for a successful year. <http://www.lrepta.org/volunteer/room-parents>

**Thank you!**

Thank you again for volunteering to serve as a Room Parent. You are an integral part to the success of the school year. I am excited about the upcoming school year and know that it could not be done without you.

**Quick Handbook**

A room parent is someone who volunteers to assist the teacher. The extent of parental involvement varies from teacher to teacher, so one year you may be very involved, and the next you may find yourself with very little work to do. The primary purpose of a room mom is to host the classroom parties.

• **Meet with your teacher as soon as possible to outline what she would like you to do throughout the year.** Not all teachers do the same activities so this will be your first stop in making sure you are serving hers and the children’s needs this year.

**\*\*\*FOOD ALLERGIES\*\*\*\*\*\***

**PLEASE CHECK WITH THE TEACHER TO SEE IF THERE ARE ANY FOOD ALLERGIES AND HOW SHE WANTS TO HANDLE FOOD THAT IS BROUGHT IN.**

**Please pay close attention to this, read the food labels, check with the parents to see what the child may or may not have and above all else don’t exclude the child. If one person in the class can’t have nuts than the whole class can’t have nuts. Remember no child wants to be left out, or feel bad because of his/her allergy.**

• Most teachers would like you to keep parties simple which is most fun for the kids. Find out what she thinks would be an appropriate level of celebration and stick to it. Less is more!

• Teacher Appreciation week/teacher gifts. Typically the teacher gets a gift at holiday time, gifts each day during TAW and a gift shortly after that at the end of the year and her/his birthday. For TAW in the last few years I have seen the following: each student brought in a flower to make a bouquet, each student brought in a fruit to make a fruit basket, coffee was brought in everyday to the teacher, movie pack, handmade cards, a very lucky teacher had dinner made and dropped off at her house every night that week! What a treat! Last year our class sang a song to our teacher on the last day of TAW. For a gift during the Holidays your class might want to give a Gift Card to her favorite store! At the end of the year you might give another gift card and a nice card. I like getting the kids involved as much as possible.

**• If you have not done so, turn in your volunteer clearance form. You must be cleared to be in the classroom so, this is really important not only for you but, for any person wishing to help out. Also, when on school grounds you must sign in at the office and ware a volunteer sticker at all times.**

• Get a class contact list from your teacher and keep your parents informed via email about what you are doing in regards to collecting money, parties, sign ups etc.

• Before you distribute letters not pertaining to room parent info, they must be forwarded to the Room Parent Coordinator, Amy Paden for approval. Please wait for her "okay" before distributing.

• Check with the parents to see if anyone objects to having a classroom roster. Someone might not want all their information shared, so please double check.

**REMEMBER: The teacher lays the ground rules!!**

Maintaining an open line and consistent communication with your teacher throughout the year. Each teacher has his/her own preferences as to how they wish to organize their classroom.

Above all else, as a room parent, work with the teacher and have FUN!!!

**Forms and Letter Samples**

**\*CAN BE FOUND ON THE PTA WEBSITE\***

■ Room Parent's Handbook

■ Room Parent Introduction Letter

■ Room Parent Checklist

■ Food Allergy

■ Holiday Teacher Gift

■ Winter Holidays

■ Teacher Appreciation Week - Letter With Group Gift

■ Teacher Appreciation Week - Letter Without Group Gift

■ Teacher's Birthday Letter

■ Teacher's Favorite Things

■ Field Day

■ End of Year Party Letter

■ End of Year Teacher Gift Letter

■ On-Going Fundraisers for our School

**Helpful Links and Resourses**

Here are some helpful websites

The first two are to help organize your parties

1. [Sign-Up Genius](http://www.signupgenius.com/)

Sign-Up Genius is an online tool for coordinating and managing your sign up sheet activities. Create easy-to-use online sign up forms to organize your volunteers and donations.

2. [Perfect Potluck](http://perfectpotluck.com/)

Did everyone bring macaroni and cheese? Plan your next potluck withPerfectPotluck.com, a free online tool for coordinating meals for groups.

3. [Oriental Trading Company](http://www.orientaltrading.com/ui/browse/processRequest.do?requestURI=getHomePageCR&BP=8911&source=google&ms=brand&cm_mmc=google-_-%5BADL%5D+%5BBrand%5D+%5BUS%5D+%5BComputers%5D+General+%5BExact%5D-_-Oriental+Trading-_-05956ed204c34da49616ea978dfc7f0e&gclid=CjwKEAjwpcGfBRDni__JqrTIqx4SJAB9BpSOmJ4NWRCS2wup5CaYY4qIC-C2q37mhPY1l7JXSEy0kRoCEpbw_wcB&kwid=05956ed204c34da49616ea978dfc7f0e)

Oriental Trading carries value-priced products for every occasion, party supplies novelties, crafts etc.

4. [Kaboose.com](kaboose.com)

Kaboose is the premier family and parenting destination with kids' crafts, holiday fun and activities, healthy food recipes, free online games, expert health and ...

5. [FamilyFun](familyfun.com) Crafts

Is a source for arts & crafts, recipes, and parties for every occasion.

6. [Pinterest](pinterest.com)