

# ROOM PARENT HANDBOOK

**Canterbury Woods Elementary School**  
2014 – 2015

**PTA Room Parent Coordinator**  
Suzanne Garrison  
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## Responsibilities of the Room Parent

### 1. Information Letter and Form

- Send home the provided Room Parent Newsletter to parents.
- The attached letter has been pre-approved by Mrs. Messinger.
- Fill in your contact information and your teacher's name before copying.
- **Please send this letter home by the end of September in the Take Home Tuesday (THT) folder.** Make enough copies for the students in your class and provide to the teacher for inclusion in the folders.

### 2. Class Lists

- Class lists are provided to Room Parents via the Room Parent Coordinator
- Create an email distribution list for you to send out notifications to the parents during the school year. You will need to call those parents who do not use email.

### 3. Class money

- Parents will send-in class money via the classroom teacher.
- Coordinate with the teacher to collect the money.
- Each family should send in \$20 (cash or check) in an envelope that includes their name and contact information. No more than \$20 may be requested from each child.
- These funds are to be budgeted between class parties and teacher gifts.
- Any funds not utilized by the last day of school will be deposited into the PTA general fund and will not be available for future reimbursement. It is strongly encouraged that you use all of the class funds allotted to you. Parents expect that the money they donate will be used toward the class parties and gifts.
- The money is collected as an individual class. However, the parties may be organized on a grade level. You will want to coordinate with other grade level Room Parents.
- You must budget for your class parties for only the money collected – the PTA and/or CWES will not reimburse any parent for extra expenditures.
- A portion of class money may be given to the Room Parent Coordinator (Suzanne Garrison). These funds will be used to provide gifts for the Specials Teachers (does not include instructional assistants assigned to a specific classroom).

### 4. Class Parties

- **A limit of 2 parties are allowed per class, per school year. These parties will be decided upon by the teacher.**
- Class parties must be coordinated with the teachers and all grade level room parents.
- There are generally two parties each year.
- Remember that you want to use about half your party budget on each party.
- The class funds collected may be used for drinks, snacks, crafts, and party activities.

## **5. Teacher meeting**

- We recommend having a meeting with the classroom teacher early in the school year.
- Some helpful questions to ask:
  - When will the two classroom parties be held throughout the year?
  - What are the themes of the classroom parties?
  - Do you need help coordinating parent volunteers for the classroom?
  - Will there be field trips throughout the year? If so, do you need help coordinating chaperones?
  - Are there other events, besides class parties, that you need assistance? If so, do you need help coordinating volunteers? Do you need help coordinating supplies?

## **6. Teacher information**

- Use the teacher information sheet (attached) to gather information about your teacher. This information can be useful when deciding on teacher gifts or providing ideas during Teacher Appreciation Week (TAW).

## **7. The PTA role**

- Occasionally the PTA Board, via the room parent coordinator, may ask you to distribute information to your class parents. In this event, you should use your email distribution list for parents with emails and call the others who may not use email.
- Each grade provides a Teacher and Staff lunch or breakfast one month during the school year. The PTA Hospitality Committee will notify Room Parents of their assigned month and will request Room Parents coordinate an online sign-up sheet using [www.signupgenius.com](http://www.signupgenius.com) for their grade level parents. When creating the Sign-Up Genius, please inform parents there are 75-100 teachers/staff to be fed.

## **8. Teacher Appreciation Week (May 4-8, 2015)**

- Send home the schedule of daily events. (A copy will be provided to you.)
- Schedule will include a small token of appreciation each day such as: Favorite Color Day, Card Day, Piece of Fruit Day, Flower Day, Notes from Student Day, Picture Day, etc.
- Send out emails/make phone calls to find parent volunteers as needed.
- The goal of this week is to **show** teachers appreciation. No additional funds should be collected from parents for this week.

## **9. Teacher Gifts:**

- You may not collect additional money from parents to purchase teacher gifts for the holidays or the end of the year. These gifts are to be provided for from the \$20 already collected from parents.
- In addition, no child should be excluded in the presentation of the gift regardless of whether his/her family contributed.
- You may want to consult your teacher information sheet for gift suggestions.

- FCPS Regulation 4430.4 states:
  - **VII. GIFTS TO SCHOOL SYSTEM EMPLOYEES**

Students and their parents shall be discouraged from the routine presentation of gifts to school system employees on occasions such as Christmas. A school system employee shall not accept an elaborate or expensive gift even if a student should feel a spontaneous desire to offer one. The School Board shall consider as always welcome, and in most circumstances more appropriate, the writing of letters to staff members expressing gratitude or appreciation.

**10. Written correspondence**

- Any written correspondence being sent home with students must first be approved by the teacher.
- Please use the school's copier and table in the production room (in the lower grade hall) when working in the school.

**Helpful hints:**

- Providing lunch as a part of the grade party? Let the cafeteria manager know the grade and date at least three weeks prior to the party.
- Need tables, chairs, hoses, etc... Let the custodial staff know in writing at least a week prior to the party.
- Work with teachers to let the front office staff know of the party location (outside, blacktop, classrooms, etc...) to be indicated on the master calendar. Also, let the front office know when you indicate the location your custodial need for tables, chairs, etc...if necessary.
- Teacher Gift Ideas from class:
  - Donation to the Outdoor Classroom in teacher's name
  - Instead of buying, ask parents if they have items they no longer need such as bookshelves, rocking chairs, storage containers, etc.
  - Scrapbook containing letters, poems, drawings and/or photos from each student
  - DVD featuring a personal message from each student and/or highlighting special events and field trips
  - Quilt with a square designed by each student
  - Bag, plate or mug with autographs, handprints, or thumbprints of each student
  - Contribution to the teacher's favorite charity
  - Tree planted in a teacher's name
  - Themed basket that relates to a teacher's hobby or passion
  - Classroom items such as heavy duty pencil sharpener, electric stapler, reference books
- Try to do the large teacher gift midyear so the students may enjoy what their parents contributed to throughout the remainder of the school year.

# Organizing a Class Party

## Before The Party

It's always a good idea to talk to the teacher before you start planning your party or purchasing items. You may plan everything ahead of time and then come to find out that a student has an allergy or that certain decorations aren't allowed. Here are some good questions to start with:

"Do any children have food allergies?"

Usually the teacher will have been notified if any children have food allergies. But it wouldn't hurt to double check with the children's parents to be sure.

"Are there any decorating restrictions?"

Most teachers recommend not bringing balloons because of possible safety issues, but if they are allowed - they make for quick and easy decorating!

"How long will I have to set up before the party?"

The answer to this question is really important. This will determine the type of party that you will have. If you have only a very short time, you will have to limit your decorations and serve easy and quick party foods, etc. Most of the time, the teachers will take the kids outside and allow you about 10-15 min. for setup. This is also a good time to make sure that you will have parent helpers!

"Do you allow holiday-specific themed parties, or do you prefer general holiday parties?"

Some schools/teachers prefer to stay away from the specific holiday and steer more towards the general season, so be sure to check with your teacher. Even if they want you to stick with a seasonal theme, you'll probably be able to throw in some holiday ideas too. Example: your teacher may want you to stick with a fall theme instead of Halloween, but you will probably be able to put a Ghost Craft into their goody bag, etc. Just make sure to check on any restrictions.

"Are there any food items that aren't allowed?"

Some teachers prefer no soda pop for a party, and sometimes frown on wrapped hard candies - so be sure to check if there are any rules/preferences.

## "Are classroom supplies available to use for the party?"

If you need to use items like glue sticks, tape, or scissors for your party craft - don't assume that the teacher will let you use the class supply. Check with him/her first to see if that is okay - if not, be sure to bring your own supplies. This question also applies if you want to play music during the party. The teacher may have a CD player in the class, but be sure that you will be able to use it!

Even though you are the room rep, you will still need other parent's help for the party - so be sure to ask for volunteers to bring items, and to help you with the party itself. Be sure to send home reminders!

Make a party plan including a schedule of what you want to do. Purchase and prepare all supplies that are needed. If you are doing a craft, I recommend pre-cutting and sorting the supplies into a zip lock bag for each child, and putting a basket with glue/scissors, etc. into the middle of each table. It makes it much easier to pass out the craft supplies if they are already prepared in individual baggies! Assemble goody bags or any take-home items ahead of time as well.

### **Setting Up Party**

Try to get to the school a little bit earlier than planned. The parking lot usually fills up fast on party days - so the earlier you are - the closer you get to park, and that makes a BIG difference when you are lugging all the party stuff around. Party supplies, crafts, food and drinks can be heavy. Recommend bringing a cart or wagon with you to make the trip from the car to the classroom a breeze.

Most teachers take their students out of the room during your party set up - but be prepared if that doesn't happen. You can bring along themed coloring pages and markers or crayons, or have music or a movie playing. Just be prepared - in case!

Ask your parent helpers to be there early to help you set up. Highly recommend passing out all the food and drinks first - so when the kids come back in, they can sit down and start eating right away. Set up the rest of your activities and decorations.

\*\*\*Be sure to make a plate for the teacher!!!\*\*\* This should be a relaxing and fun time for the kids and the teacher!

### **During The Party**

Class parties are fun and memorable for kids, so be sure to bring along a camera to catch those memories! The pictures can be shared with the teachers and parents - or even put in a school newsletter! Try to find music to go with the party. It really helps set the mood and the kids love it. You can also use the music as a quick back-up game if needed.

Take a moment to introduce yourself and the other volunteers to the class. Share with students the order of events. This sets expectations and helps students to stay on task.

Have a parent helper go around with a trash bag during the party to clean up after the kids, and another parent assigned to help with refills or seconds. The kids should usually eat first, and then play a game (if planned). While the game is going on - you can clear the desks for a craft or activity if you have one set up. If you are doing a craft - make sure to write the child's name on it so they don't get theirs mixed up with their neighbor. If you want to do two things, but only have time for one activity (either a craft OR a game, but not both), then you can set up two stations and have half the class do the game while the other half does the craft; then have them switch.

You should be the one in charge of how things progress during the party and make sure that things move along. This should be a fun time for the teacher, but if there are discipline problems - you should probably refer the student to the teacher and let him/her take care of the problem.

Party getting too loud or out of hand? Bring a book along with you that relates to the holiday or season. It's good to have as a back-up in case your class gets too rowdy. You can call them to sit in a circle and read a quick and interesting story to them. They'll quiet down pretty quickly, but will still be having fun!

Watch that clock! Make sure that you are finishing up on time. Most class parties take place during the end of the school day, so you will need to wrap up the party on time to allow students to get their backpacks ready and lined up for dismissal.

### **After The Party**

Make sure the children have their goody bags and/or take home projects as they leave to go home.

Use extra trash bags to pick up all the trash and leftover food. If you have extra unopened juice boxes - save those for the next party. Wipe down desks and tables and clean up the floor, and take down any decorations you brought. The teacher will appreciate it if you put the classroom back the way it was before you got there (maybe a bit cleaner!). Be sure to send thank you notes to the parents who helped during the party!

Have Fun!!

# Teacher Information Sheet

My name is [Click here to enter text.](#), and I am your Room Parent Lead for this year. Below are some questions I wanted to ask in order to better assist you and your class this school year. Thank you in advance for taking the time to fill this out and sending it back to me and the Room Parent Coordinator, Suzanne Garrison ([vtsuzi@gmail.com](mailto:vtsuzi@gmail.com)).

Name: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Birthday: [Click here to enter text.](#)

Do you have any special occasions/events coming up during this school year? (i.e. wedding, baby, graduation) [Click here to enter text.](#)

Are there any classroom allergies? [Click here to enter text.](#)

What is your classroom lunch time? [Click here to enter text.](#)

What day does your class have recess and at what time? [Click here to enter text.](#)

What tests are you administering in your class this year and when? (i.e. SOLs): [Click here to enter text.](#)

What are some parent volunteer opportunities I may solicit for you? (i.e. reading, mentoring, hanging items on walls, cutting out things at home) [Click here to enter text.](#)

Items you would love to have for the classroom (i.e.: commercial grade pencil sharpener, hole puncher, stapler, reference books, furniture, storage options, books, etc) [Click here to enter text.](#)

What are the classroom food party preferences? (limited to two) [Click here to enter text.](#)

What are your expectations of me as the Room Parent Lead? [Click here to enter text.](#)

What are some of your favorites?

- Snack food [Click here to enter text.](#)
- Cold Drink flavor [Click here to enter text.](#)
- Hot drink flavor [Click here to enter text.](#)
- Lunch meal [Click here to enter text.](#)
- Restaurant [Click here to enter text.](#)
- Color [Click here to enter text.](#)
- Candy [Click here to enter text.](#)
- Fast Food [Click here to enter text.](#)
- Store [Click here to enter text.](#)
- Hobby [Click here to enter text.](#)
- Pet [Click here to enter text.](#)
- Flower [Click here to enter text.](#)

Anything you want to add? [Click here to enter text.](#)

Best thing about any past Teacher Appreciation Week (TAW) [Click here to enter text.](#)

Something you would like to see improve for this year? [Click here to enter text.](#)

# Room Parent Newsletter

Dear Parents in *Ms. Magnificent's* class:

My name is *Awesome Annie* (mother of *Wonderful Will*), and I am the Room Parent Lead for this year. *Cool Carol* (mother of *Darling Dan*) is also helping to assist *Ms. Magnificent's* in any way we can. Our role is to organize volunteers for PTA activities (i.e. monthly staff luncheons, holiday cookie exchange, etc.), assist with classroom projects, plan class parties, coordinate Teacher Appreciation Week, and purchase class gifts for *Ms. Magnificent's* (i.e. holiday / end of year / birthday).

In the interest of not having to ask for repeated donations throughout the course of the school year, we are requesting a one-time contribution from each family. CWES's policy with respect to the contribution is no more than \$20.00 per child.

We believe that this will allow us sufficient funds to cover the costs associated with the above activities to include, but not limited to; supplies, decorations, drinks, snacks/treats, paper products, and gifts. Part of your donation will also go towards gifts for the "specials" (i.e. gym / art / music teachers, librarians, interpreters, etc.) You will not be asked for any additional monetary contributions for the remainder of the school year. If you wish to contribute, please include your donation in an envelope addressed to *Awesome Annie* (with your name, your child's name, email address, and phone number clearly marked on the envelope), and return it back to the classroom. Checks should be made payable to *Awesome Annie*.

New school policy states that each classroom/grade level will be limited to no more than two (2) food events and/or parties per school year. This includes candy for Halloween and Valentine's Day but does not include Birthdays which has a separate policy noted in the CWES Handbook. The two parties and food events that *Ms. Magnificent's* class will have this school year are:

- 1) *Holiday Party* – As we get closer to the date, we will send out more information and request for parent volunteers to assist.
- 2) *End of Year Party* – All *2<sup>nd</sup> Graders* will have an end of the year party on a date to be determined during the last few weeks of school. Again, when the time comes we will provide more information and ask for parent volunteers to assist us.

We will use the information collected from the donation envelopes to create a Class Contact List. This way we can get in touch with you quickly, keep you updated on class and school activities, and send you pictures taken at class events.

We look forward to having a great year!

- *Awesome Annie: 703-867-5309 / [awesomeannie@gmail.com](mailto:awesomeannie@gmail.com)*