

**Island Park Elementary
Room Parent Guidelines
2017-2018**

Thank you for volunteering to be a Room Parent at Island Park Elementary!

Our mission, as Room Parent Coordinators, is to ensure that you have all the information and tools necessary to have a successful and rewarding experience as a Room Parent. We'd love for you to return year after year and bring your friends!

As the liaison between the teacher and the classroom parents, you are a vital cornerstone in the Island Park community. Your generous donation of time, talents and efforts are appreciated by many, including the PTA, Island Park staff, parents and especially the students!

Information that can be found in this document includes:

- First Steps for a Successful Start
- Steps for Effective Communication
- Event Coordination & Party Planning
- End of the Year Teacher Gift
- Additional Monetary Donation Policy
- Budgets
- Reimbursement
- Compostable Party Supplies
- Odds and Ends
 - Appendix A – Class Party Sample Outline
 - Appendix B – End of Year Teacher Gift Ideas
 - Appendix C – Zero Waste Goals

During the course of the year, should you have questions, concerns, suggestions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact us!

Thank you again for becoming a Room Parent. Have an enjoyable year!

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I. First Steps for a Successful Start

a. Mandatory Volunteer Training

- i. All volunteers are required to go through an online training process ANNUALLY, before they can volunteer in the classroom
 1. This does not 'roll over' from last year
- ii. Please make this your *first item of action* and complete as soon as possible
- iii. Additionally, please communicate to the parents of your classroom so they can be ready to volunteer
- iv. The online training can be found:
 1. <http://islandparkpta.org/get-involved/volunteer-resources/volunteer-training-2/>

b. Connect with your Teacher

- i. One of the key roles of the Room Parent is to become the liaison between your teacher and your fellow classroom parents
- ii. Initiate a meeting with your teacher to understand how he/she would like to best utilize you
 1. For example, you may be asked to create volunteer schedules and plan parties
 2. It is a great way to initially meet and show him/her that you are ready to help

II. Steps for Effective Communication

a. Room Parent Coordinators

- i. Room Parent Coordinators will ask you to take action and forward emails informing the class of school wide events or programs
 1. Examples: Movie Night volunteers, Steps for School or Talent Show
 2. You are the conduit for sharing information, but not responsible for filling the requests
- ii. Nominate *one Room Parent* to be the email communications lead
 1. When the responsibility lies with one person, it ensures that messages get out in a timely fashion
 2. The class benefits by having a single point of contact for responses
 3. IMPORTANT: Please be sure to Blind Carbon Copy (BCC) all emails to parents. We are not to share personal contact information

b. Parents

- i. You will be a point of contact for parents throughout the year
- ii. The email lead will pass along BCC'ed requests, announcements or other information as discussed above
- iii. Set the email tone of positivity, approachability and enthusiasm
- iv. A roster of parent emails will be sent to you by the Room Parent Coordinators
 1. Set up a distribution list and send out your first email to parents introducing yourselves and your collective roles
 - a. Please ask the group if they would like to be on this distribution list and remove any that request it

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- v. If a new family *joins* your class during the year, ask the teacher, to in turn ask the family, for their permission to share their email with you
 - 1. Please contact the family with a warm welcome and briefly describe your role
 - a. Dawn Dunn is our “New Family Chair” and welcomes new families to Island Park. She offers coffee and tours of the school and is available to answer questions. Please connect new families with Dawn in your welcome email. Her contact is: dawn.dunn@gmail.com
 - 2. Be sure to update your roster and distribution lists with the new family information
- vi. If a family *leaves* the class, be sure to take their email off any distribution lists

III. Event Coordination & Party Planning

a. Classroom Parties (3) – Halloween, Valentine’s Day & End of the Year Party

i. Party Planning Guidelines

- 1. Check in with your teacher a month prior to the party and determine:
 - a. Day/Time/Duration -usually 45-60 minutes/Location/# of Students
 - b. Preferences for food/games/craft/rules/younger sibling attendance
 - c. Food Allergies– identify foods/ingredients that cannot be served in class
 - i. Consider communicating with parents whose kids have food allergies
 - Determine if the planned treats will be safe for their kids
 - Identify any safer brands, manufacturers or flavors
 - ii. Be sure to communicate to *all* parents what allergens to avoid when asking for food donations – check labels!
 - iii. If necessary, be specific in your SignUpGenius donation request of type or brand of food (e.g. “1 large bag of Rold Gold Pretzels”)
 - 2. Brainstorm ideas with the other room parents
 - a. Have fun! Look online for ideas, ask veteran room parents, or room parent coordinators for help
 - b. See Appendix A for a sample outline
 - 3. Send a quick party summary to the teacher before asking for parent volunteers
 - 4. 2 weeks prior to event, create a SignUpGenius to invite parents, request volunteers, food donations etc.
 - a. Generally we ask parents to donate juice or snack items
 - b. The party budget tends to be used for fun prizes, goodies or games
 - c. Compostable supplies are provided; see section VIII for details
 - 5. Run the party - this is not the teacher’s responsibility, but they are happy to help!
 - 6. Turn in your expenses – see section VII for reimbursement specifics
- ii. Special note about End of Year Parties – check with your teacher
- 1. May be a combined celebration with all classes with same grade level
 - 2. Deanne Children’s Park (a.k.a. Dragon Park) may also be reserved through the office for an offsite party
 - 3. Outdoor space/fields at school can also be reserved
 - 4. Party dates, times and duration will vary between classrooms
 - a. End of Year Parties may be longer than 60 minutes

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b. Volunteer Scheduling

- i. Your teacher may want you to schedule volunteers for certain activities
- ii. Check with your teacher, each is different

c. Teacher Birthdays

- i. You will receive a "Teacher Information Sheet for Room Parents" from the Room Parent Coordinators via email
 - 1. Provides you with the teacher's birthdate and personal "likes"
 - 2. We encourage you to share it with the classroom parents
- ii. Send an email out to parents a week before your teacher's birthday and coordinate a simple recognition
 - 1. Handmade cards, a flower per student are some ideas
- iii. If the teacher's birthday falls during summer vacation, you may wish to celebrate a half birthday instead

d. Staff Appreciation Week

- i. You will receive a message from the Staff Appreciation Team that outlines a schedule of appreciation events during a week in May (e.g. Monday: bring a handmade card for your teacher, Tuesday: bring a flower for your teacher, Wednesday: wear spirit wear...)
 - 1. Forward the information onto your classroom families and remind them of the daily special events for the teachers and staff
 - 2. Be available, or find another parent volunteer, that can be on hand to organize the flower bouquet for your teacher on "bring a flower day"

IV. End of the Year Teacher Gift - A PTA funded gift intended to be something given by the entire class

- a. Students are, in some way, involved in the creation of the gift
- b. Teachers enjoy gifts that they can display or keep in their classrooms
- c. We encourage reaching out to parents for ideas or help with preparing the gift
- d. The funds CANNOT be used to purchase gift cards or given as cash
- e. A list of ideas in the Appendix B

V. Additional Monetary Donation Policy

- a. As a room parent you may NOT request or collect additional monetary donations from children or families as it violates MISD School Board Policy
- b. Individual families that want to thank the teacher with a gift can do so on their own or with a few other parents

VI. Budgets – The PTA collects money per child for all parties & a teacher gift. Funds for one party CANNOT be saved and used for a later party or gift. This year's budget is:

- a. Halloween \$35
- b. Valentine's Day \$35
- c. End of Year \$35
- d. End of Year Teacher Gift \$50 (no gift certificates or cash allowed)

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VII. Reimbursement

- a. Each room parent will be responsible for keeping a record of the financial situation and receipts
- b. Unused funds will go back into the PTA general fund and cannot be rolled into the next event
- c. Reimbursement Form locations:
 - i. In the main office
 - ii. <https://docs.google.com/document/d/11qgQsfHVVSiKriL0rgUpTk3LnWoV-Miqvrjbmrg-jgs/edit>
- d. Follow instructions on form (attach *original receipts*, provide self-addressed envelope)
- e. Turn into the Treasurer's folder in the main office
- f. Please be prompt and submit within 2 weeks of the party
 - i. End of Year party reimbursements need to be submitted before the end of school
- g. If you exceed your budget, you will not be reimbursed for the difference

VIII. Compostable Party Supplies – It is the expectation of Island Park Elementary to use the provided compostable supplies in order to comply with the standards set forth by the Mercer Island School District Green Team. Thank you for your support! For further information, please refer to: <https://www.mercerislandschools.org/site/Default.aspx?PageID=3572>

a. Halloween & Valentine's Day Parties

- i. The Room Parent Coordinators will provide all the compostable products and deliver them to your classroom the day before the event
 1. Look for them in a brown paper bag near the sink area
 2. Utensils will be available in the office or PTA closet (we will let you know prior to the party)
 - a. You may contact your Room Parent Coordinator to request a specified amount and it can be added to your bag

b. End of the Year Party

- i. Room Parents are responsible for retrieving the compostable products, located in the PTA closet

c. Supplies Provided

- i. Plates
- ii. Napkins
- iii. Cups
- iv. Compostable Bag
- v. Bio-degradable table cover or butcher paper table covering

d. Composting

- i. All supplies are compostable and should be placed in the compostable bag provided
- ii. Place all bags near the classroom door so they can easily be picked up by cleaning staff
- iii. Please see Appendix C for some tips on achieving Zero Waste Goals

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IX. Odds and Ends

a. Silent Auction Art Project for Spring Party

- i. You may be asked to send out an email asking for a parent to lead the class art project
- ii. Room Parents are NOT obligated to help with the art project

b. Sources of Help

- i. Your team of Room Parents
 - 1. Classroom Parents – Parents are more willing to help if they are personally asked
- ii. Veteran Room Parents
- iii. Room Parent Coordinators

c. Delegating Responsibilities

- i. Your teacher may have a list of parents who signed up at Curriculum Night to help with class parties and other events
- ii. In an effort to better divide the activities between room parents or other parents within the class, you may want to consider filling in the following matrix

Activity	Room Parent/Parent Lead
Communications (e-mail)	
Halloween Party	
Valentine's Party	
End of Year Party	
End of Year Teacher Gift	
Organize Flowers during Teacher Appreciation week	
Other specific teacher asks	

- d. Social Events:** You may consider planning a social event for your class or grade to help better connect families. This can be as simple as an hour to meet up and play on the playground. This is above and beyond the call of room parenting; this is one up to you!

Appendix A: Class Party Sample Outline

Mrs. XXX Halloween Party

Monday, October 31, 2016

Room xx

- 1:50 pm - 2:05 pm** Recess
- 2:15pm – 2:30pm** Change into Costumes (2 male to 2 female volunteers)
- 2:30pm – 3:00 pm** All School Halloween Parade
- 3:00pm – 3:40 pm** Halloween Party
- 3:05pm – 3:40 pm** - Rotating Stations (Time Keeper Volunteer)
- 3 Stations ● 24 Kids ● 35 Minutes | 8 kids & 12 minutes per station
- Station 1: Game Station: (1 Volunteer)
- Game
- Station 2: Craft Station: (2 Volunteers)
- Craft option
- Station 3: Treat station: (2 Volunteers)
- Cookie decoration
- 3:40pm 3:45 pm** Kids pack up for home

Appendix B: End of Year Teacher Gift Ideas

Items to be decorated by children (see below for decorating suggestions)

- Picture frame
- Pre-painted book case
- Director's chair
- Clothing items: denim shirts, sweatshirts or aprons
- Vase or bowl (available at Michael's in basic white for kids to paint)
- Vase or bowl (kids paint and then you take in for glazing)
- Big pillow for reading circle area. Divide into squares and have each child decorate a square
- Big planter for outside the classroom
- Quilt with a square for each child
- Kid decorated recycling bin
- Kid labeled bins for books

Other Items

- Photo album, with a class picture and then a page with a picture of each child. Children can decorate cover (or not) and can write something on each page (or not)
- Color photocopy calendar with pictures of the kids for each month
- Notepad or stationery with children's signatures as the border

Decorating Suggestions

- Children's signatures
- Children's handprints
- Thumb print petal flowers
- Pictures children draw
- Written comments (from older kids)
- Butterfly fist prints

*Also check Pinterest for other ideas

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Appendix C: Zero Waste Goals

Here is a quick refresher on how to throw an environmentally friendly classroom party. Our goal is always zero waste! Zero Waste means everything used within a party from food, napkins, caps, decorations, utensils etc. can either be recycled or composted.

About Compost:

Everything that goes into your mouth is compostable (except gum - who knew!). This includes melon rinds, coffee grounds, chicken bones, egg shells and wax cheese rind. Additionally, pizza boxes, paper plates, paper cups or **wax** lined cups like Dixie, cardboard boxes, egg and berry cardboard cartons, plain paper, napkins etc., can also be composted. If something is wax lined it is compostable, if it has a plastic film, it is not. You can tell the difference by scraping your nail across the cup, for example, and if it is wax lined some of the wax will come up under your nail. Plates, cups, straws, utensils etc. made from compostable materials are compostable. All supplies that will be provided to you are compostable!

Composting (check link below for Mercer Island specific guidelines on composting)

http://www.mercergov.org/files/Republic_YardWaste_Flyer_2013.pdf

About Recycling:

All of these need to be cleaned out and empty to recycle: Aluminum cans, glass bottles, plastic bottles, milk and juice boxes, clean paper, plastic cups with the recycle triangle on the bottom, tin cans, yogurt and apple sauce cups and even the aluminum foil pull off top! All clean aluminum foil.

Not recyclable: Capri sun (boo!), tiny little plastic wraps around straws, granola bar wrappers or any bar wrappers, little plastic fruit chew pouches, aluminum or plastic Oreo, Cheez-It pouches, and most tiny plastic items that hold something together to something else, are not. Bottle caps are not (but reusable for art!)

Recycling (check the link below for Mercer Island specific guidelines to recyclables)

http://www.mercergov.org/files/Republic_Recycling_Flyer_2013.pdf

Decorations & Party Favors:

Most decorations have a plastic film on them which make them non-recyclable. Find paper or cloth tablecloths and use natural decorations (flowers, plants, colorful fruits, stones, bare branches decorated with ornaments or ribbon, etc.) that are biodegradable or reusable. Party favors can be snacks without plastic wrapping. If you want to bring in colorful decorations, have kids cut out hearts, rainbows, swirls, color themed designs from construction paper and either save them for next year or recycle. Balloons are not environmental at all and the district has a latex-free policy, so just skip them all together.

Beverages:

Avoid plastics and non-recyclables: Skip individual plastic water bottles and juice boxes. **No more juice boxes!** We can do it! Juice bottles and milk cartons are recyclable and therefore ZERO WASTE and allowed. BUT... so much less wasteful to do the following: use large reusable water dispensers (pitchers) for water or to mix frozen juices you can buy at the grocery store. Use cups that are made from paper or have a recycle symbol on the bottom. Drinks in aluminum, glass or plastic containers are recyclable.

Food:

- To avoid waste, be careful not to overbuy
- At the same time, buying in bulk (like goldfish) keeps plastic wrapping and individual wrappings to zero and keeps you at zero waste
- No individual, single serving snacks of any kind. None of these wrappers are recyclable and are very wasteful
- Pay attention to the little things, like paper cupcake wrappers are good, but not the aluminum ones. It is just choices
- Send food home with parents, students, or teachers! Even consider arranging with a local food bank to pick up leftovers at the end of the event