

## Room Representative Handout 2016-2017

Thank you for volunteering to be a Room Representative for the 2016-17 school year. You will be the primary liaison between your teacher, PTA, and the parents. The role of Room Representative is vital in organizing the various social functions and classroom obligations throughout the year. We truly appreciate your commitment to the students, the teachers, and the school. The below information will serve as a general guide for being a room rep. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

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### Room Rep Responsibilities

- Communicating with co- room reps (if any) on the division of room rep responsibilities
- Setting up a meeting with classroom teacher to discuss needs/expectations/ ideas for the upcoming school year.
- Creating and distributing a classroom directory
- Coordinating two classroom parties, Valentine's day and a Winter holiday party
- Communicating classroom party information to parents and soliciting needed items and volunteers
- Communicating with classroom parents about teacher gifts
- Coordinating one teacher breakfast for the school year
- Communicating school and classroom information to parents via e-mail
- Distributing information about teacher appreciation week to parents

### Confidentiality /Communication

Confidentiality is one of your most serious responsibilities as a room rep. It is an important obligation to protect each student's right to privacy. Information or observations about individual children are to be kept confidential. If you observe or perceive a problem with any student, please only notify the student's teacher or school administrators.

Communication is the key to being an effective Room Representative:

- Communicate with the teacher to understand his/her needs
- Communicate with the parents so they can volunteer to help meet those needs

## Class Directory

1. Draft a letter to all parents, introducing who you are. Make sure to include your contact information. Have the classroom teacher approve the letter before sending it out. There is a sample classroom letter on the Cypress PTA website under the room rep tab. Once approved, make copies of the letter and place them in the teacher's mailbox for distribution to the children. These will go home in Wednesday folders. The classroom teacher will collect the forms for you to use to create a classroom directory.
2. You MUST obtain permission from each student's parent(s) before you can include them in the class directory. The class directory is for the purpose of sharing information, organizing classroom celebrations, grade level events, and school-wide events. You might not get all forms turned in right away, so you might need to send a reminder letter or e-mail to those parents who have not responded. If they do not turn in a form, they cannot be in the class directory.
3. You can create the class directory as a word processing document, spreadsheet, or Google doc. Google docs are my preferred method of creating a classroom directory because you can easily share the file and make changes to the document without having to resend. It is up to you which format you want to use.
3. Once you have compiled the class directory, you will need to make copies for each parent to be distributed by the teacher. Turn in all the signed consent forms to your teacher for record keeping.
4. The class directory is for communication among families of your classroom only AND NOT for public knowledge.

## Classroom Parties

- The teacher sets the policy for his/her particular classroom celebrations. Once the teacher lets you know what the plan for his/her classroom is, then you can let him/her know that you would be happy to contact the other parents to arrange for any items that may be needed for the celebration or event. There are two parties a year- a Valentine's day party and a holiday party. (Dates TBA)
- Please be careful asking for money from parents: it is better to ask for specific items (plates, napkins, cups, food items, decorations, materials for games, etc.) If a parent offers to send in money to assist with purchasing items for a celebration, you must use it for that purpose only.
- Make sure that you contact ALL interested parents to fill volunteer needs for the classroom celebrations.
- Remember that the classroom teacher may want to handle classroom celebrations on his/her own. If that is the case, then you can offer to help recruit volunteers

- (approved volunteers only) or make a list of donated items as they are brought to the classroom.
- Please try to provide a variety of food at classroom celebrations. Make sure you are aware of any allergies within the classroom before soliciting food donations. If there are nut allergies in the class, make sure to specify that nut free food must be brought in. The school asks that no red colored drinks be served due to spills and stains.
  - The best way to have parents sign up to bring in items for the party is through Sign Up Genius. Sign up genius can only be used for signing up for items, not for volunteering.
  - If you need to set-up a volunteer sign-up sheet for class parties, please fill out a VOLUNTEER REQUEST SIGN-UP form which you can find under the room rep tab on the PTA website. Email the completed form to our Volunteer Coordinator, Winter Wonderland
  - The completed form will be posted on the volunteer page at <http://cypress.my-pta.org> for your class parents to sign-up. ↗ This is the only way for us to know whether or not they are an APPROVED LISD volunteer®.

#### E-mail communication

- You will want to create a classroom e-mail group to make it easier to send out e-mail to classroom parents as a group
- Since not every parent gives permission to release their e-mail addresses, it is best to BCC your e-mail group when sending out e-mails, which also prevents reply all responses.
- You will be asked to forward e-mails from me from time to time, monthly important events or information from the PTA. We are only allowed to send out limited flyers in Wednesday folders, so forwarding these e-mails is very important

#### Breakfast for Teachers/Staff Members

- Classroom parents take turns hosting a breakfast for teachers and staff twice a month on the second and last Friday of every month (may be changed due to a holiday). Two classrooms will be sharing the duties of providing breakfast for all teachers and staff (estimate of around 75 people). The schedule will be posted on the PTA website soon.
- I will e-mail the room reps for both classes to remind you when your assigned day is coming up. It is up to you to coordinate with the other room rep(s) with the other classroom to create a Sign Up Genius form to send out to the classroom parents of both classes. You will want to provide a variety of items for the teachers of staff. It is up to the room reps what food items need to be brought. Popular items include donuts,

muffins, bagels with cream cheese, breakfast casseroles, yogurt, fruit, etc. Napkins, paper plates, and disposable silverware also need to be provided.

- As of right now, we do not have a business providing coffee for our teacher breakfasts. If coffee donations are secured, I will let you know and will bring the coffee to the lounge. In the event that I am unable to drop off the coffee, I will contact the room reps for that date to secure a volunteer to pick up/drop off the coffee. If there are no coffee donations, you may want to include Keurig K- cups (or generic brand) on your sign up to provide coffee for teachers on these days as they have a Keurig machine in the teachers' lounge. Teachers appreciate half and half and flavored coffee creamers being included if coffee is being provided.
- Breakfast items need to be dropped off in the teachers' lounge at 7:15 am on the assigned day. You may want to coordinate with approved volunteers to assist with cleaning up the lounge in the afternoon. Teachers can serve the breakfasts themselves.

### Teacher Gifts

- Every classroom is assigned an adopted staff member that does not have their own classroom (office staff, special education aide, specials teacher, etc.). The assigned classroom makes an effort to include their adopted staff member during their birthday, the holidays, and teacher appreciation week.
- Traditionally, 2-3 times a year, room reps may choose to do a classroom gift for Teacher's Birthday, Winter Holiday and Teacher Appreciation. At these times, it is OK to send home letters to give parents an opportunity to contribute to group teacher gifts. If you receive money from parents, it is your responsibility to let them know what you plan to purchase with that money.
- Alternatively, classes have also chosen to have individual students give their teachers gifts on these occasions. Options for individual gift giving are: to give each parent a copy of the teacher's favorites list and allow them to send in a gift if they wish have the students make something for the teacher or request small items be sent in to create a gift basket for the teacher. I will send out the list of teacher's favorite items for your teacher and adopted staff member and they will also be posted on the PTA website under the room rep tab.
- No matter which type of gift giving your classroom decides to do, no child should feel left out. Room reps should never go to the classroom and have only the students who contributed to a gift sign a card. If you have a card to be signed by the class, all students should get to sign the card. If you wish to give the teacher a card with the names of the students who contributed, then the card must be filled out by you only.

### Teacher Appreciation Week

Teacher and Staff Appreciation Week is May 1-5. The goal of this week is to let our teachers and staff members know how much we appreciate them. We will have activities going on every day during this week. Room reps will be asked to communicate these daily events with the parents. I will send out more information on this special week at a later date.

### More General Guidelines:

- Your job as a room rep is to coordinate. You shouldn't do or provide everything yourself. It is very important that you try to include all parents, who are able and willing to help, in as many activities as possible. It is vital that no parent feels left out of an opportunity to benefit the classroom.
- No one expects the room rep to do everything or meet all the needs of the classroom. Being a room rep should not be overwhelming or a financial stress.
- When you call/email parents for help, go through the class list in rotation so the same parents are not always being asked. Try to offer opportunities to all parents equally.
- It is the room rep's responsibility to meet with the teacher and relay all necessary information to the remaining parents.
- Any correspondence you wish to send home, MUST have the teacher's approval. This does not include forwarded e-mails coming from me or e-mails about teacher gifts.
- If, for any reason, you are no longer able to fulfill your room rep obligations, please let me know as soon as possible so that we can find a replacement.
- If you are expected to volunteer, but cannot be present, please arrange a substitute. If you cannot find someone to fill your position, please notify your child's teacher asap.
- Names, phone numbers, email/street addresses provided to you by the parents are ONLY for the purpose of soliciting help and are NOT to be used for private matters or public use.
- Contact new parents as they move in to the classroom. Introduce yourself as the room rep and as a contact for classroom information, opportunities to participate in the classroom, etc. You will want to update the class directory with their information.
- Please notify your teacher in advance which volunteers are coming in for a specific event or activities.
- Our Yearbook Committee strives to include as many students in the yearbook as possible. Please encourage parents to take pictures at school and classroom events throughout the year and submit them to the yearbook committee to be included in the yearbook. Guidelines for the Yearbook pictures are:

*Digital pictures are preferred*

*Small group pictures (3-5 kids)*

*The closer the picture, the better*

*Try to make sure your child isn't in every picture Vertical and horizontal pictures are needed*

*Pictures of staff and teachers are appreciated. Everyday events are just as important as big events*

information can be found on our website [cypress.my-pta.org](http://cypress.my-pta.org), under the room rep tab.

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