

## Coyote Ridge Elementary PTA Room Parent Guide

Welcome to Coyote Ridge Elementary! Coyote Ridge is fortunate to have a long tradition of volunteerism. The success of our students, teachers, and community is in large part a reflection of the commitment of our volunteers.

The role of the PTA Classroom Parent/Co-room Parent is one full of rewards. This is an invaluable opportunity to get to know the teacher and students in your child's class. You get a first hand view of what the teachers are doing and how the children respond. You are the link between the parents, the goings on in the classroom, as well as with the PTA. It is a fantastic way to meet new people and make lifelong friends. Your generosity, energy, and creativity will go a long way toward enhancing the experiences of every child in the class.

The goal of this guide is to provide a clear representation of the minimum duties and expectations of the room parent and to provide helpful tips for a successful year.

Responsibilities:

- ❖ Meet with your child's teacher to discuss their needs and your role
- ❖ Introduce yourself to the parents in the class with a letter of introduction
- ❖ Establish communication with the parents
- ❖ Plan classroom celebrations (teachers discretion)
- ❖ Assist with classroom activities as requested by the teacher
- ❖ Organize gift giving, as needed (teacher birthday, end of year gift, staff appreciation week, etc.)
- ❖ Assist with communicating PTA events and activities, as needed

- I. Meet with your child's teacher to discuss their needs for the school year and your role as room parent/co-room parent.
  - Each teacher will have his or her own preferences with regard to the scope of your role and participation. Some teachers have definite ideas and plans in place, leaving the execution up to you. Others will leave the organizing and planning entirely up to you.
- II. Introduce yourself to the parents in the class.
  - Send a short note of introduction to the parents in the class. Be sure to include your contact information.
  - Create and maintain a classroom roster. If your teacher does not provide this information for you, you may need to organize this on your own. Request approval from the parents before you include their information on the list you distribute. A sample letter is attached.
  - Communication should be consistent. Follow up with parents. They want to know what is going on. They want to help.
  - Find out about your parents' talents and keep a list of volunteers at your fingertips. You will find that many are willing and able to help. Get to know the bakers and crafters. Seek out the parents with jobs in restaurants, retail, the medical field, etc. These parents have incredible talents and access to resources that will come in handy. Ask for help...do not go it alone!
- III. Monetary/donation collection
  - Please remember that **all donations are voluntary**. You must include this information with any request for donations that you send to your parents.
  - Once you have spoken with your teacher and have an idea of what types of events you will be providing for, it is recommended that you devise a budget.
  - Decide whether you will collect a flat donation for the entire year or whether you will request money at the time of each celebration.
    - i. Flat dollar donations—if you choose to set a flat dollar amount, be sure to specify what that money will provide for and whether there are specific events you will be collecting for in the future. For example, you may wish to collect a flat dollar amount for all parties, birthday gift, and teacher gift but collect separately for staff appreciation week.
    - ii. If you choose to collect for each event independently, it may be helpful to provide your parents with a list of events and a tentative guideline as to when you may be requesting those donations so that they have the ability to plan.

- iii. However, you choose to collect, communication is the key! It is important that you convey your message clearly regarding donation requests so that parents can financially prepare and do not feel like they are constantly being asked for money. Especially if they feel that they already paid through a flat donation amount. You may also find that you will receive a higher participation rate if you request donations when there are no other requests for funds at that moment.

#### IV. Planning classroom celebrations

- Each teacher will determine which season/holiday will be celebrated by their classroom.
- Be aware of allergies in the classroom. The health and safety of the students is first and foremost. Advance notification is very important for families with food allergic children so that they can be prepared to oversee their children in food selections. Please be extremely careful and considerate of any food allergies in your classroom.
- Designate a parent or two to serve as classroom photographers for the celebrations. The yearbook director puts a call out to all parents for photos of school events and activities taken throughout the year. Take lots of fun pictures!

#### V. Assisting with classroom activities

- There may be times when your teacher will request assistance with organizing volunteers and donations to assist with events like field trips, assemblies, and plays.

#### VI. Gift giving

- A list of your teacher's favorite things as well as a few dislikes will be provided to you by your Room Parent Coordinator. Feel free to survey your teacher independently if you have specific questions. Be sure to share any lists with the parents in your class. This will be helpful to those who gift regularly.
- Teacher birthday:
  - i. Recognizing a teacher's birthday is an appropriate gesture to make, however, it is not a requirement. Some room parents enjoy planning for this day. You can plan as elaborately or as simply as you want. Remember, whatever your activity, class time cannot be used toward planning or executing your project.

- Staff Appreciation Week:
  - i. This week is usually scheduled around the beginning of May. The PTA sponsors many events during this time and may request volunteers or donations from the classrooms. It is important to communicate that this is separate from whatever activities you have planned for your teacher and adopted staff member.
  - ii. Room parents typically oversee a week's worth of mini-activities or treats directly related to their teacher and adopted staff member. It is at your discretion whether you wish to collect donations and provide special gifts from the class or request that families bring in items on specific days relating to your theme. It is completely up to you. Utilize your creative parents for ideas if you are at a loss. Additionally, your room parent coordinator can provide ideas at your request.
  - iii. It is recommended that you start planning your theme and ideas towards prior to spring break. This week will sneak up on you quickly.
- End of the year teacher gifts
  - i. End of year gifts are optional. If you would like to plan for one, remember that all donations are voluntary. Plan ahead- this will give parents enough time to plan and respond.

VII. Assisting the PTA

- The PTA relies on volunteers to staff every activity it runs throughout the year. There is always a need for volunteers-any amount of time is greatly appreciated. The PTA volunteer coordinator will be in touch with you about programs and activities that require volunteers. You can also find out more by regularly checking the PTA website.