

Room Parent Run Down - *Irving Elementary School*

Thank you for volunteering to be a room parent in your child's classroom this year! As a room parent volunteer, you serve as a vital link between the teacher and the students' families.

Being an Effective Room Parent

The key to being an effective room parent is communication and delegation: communicating with the teacher to understand their needs, and using your parent community to fulfill those needs.

Your job is not to do all the work, but to plan and coordinate efforts.

In addition to communicating the teacher's needs to the class families, you will also be responsible for passing on PTO requests for assistance, as needed, throughout the year.

To Do List

- 1. Get acquainted with the other room parents** in your classroom and then decide who would be best suited for different tasks.
- 2. Choose one lead contact person**, who is in charge of communicating information and requests. This person will frequently be forwarding emails from us or other committees. You could trade off this role throughout the year.
- 3. Get your class list from the office.** You will be able to collect a contact list for your child's class from the main office, and sign a document that says you will use the list for class business only - be respectful of everyone's contact information. *The front office staff request you do not come for the list at their busiest times which are drop-off or pick-up. Please try to get the list between 9am and 2:45pm.*
Communicate with the teacher to learn which, if any, families prefer not to be contacted via email. (If this is the case, they will need hard copies of anything you generate. This does not happen often.) You may choose to set up a group list to make emailing easier. Until you know everyone's preferences, you will need to use the bcc so that email addresses are not visible to the group as a whole.
- 4. Contact your teacher** to learn more about their expectations and what they may need for specific events. **Each teacher will make use of their room parent volunteers in different ways.** More and more, teachers communicate things they need via their teacher pages and blogs. You will want to check there for requests on a regular basis, in addition to your direct communication.
- 5. Send out an introduction letter** with the names of the room parents. Again, send home hard copies of this letter to families who do not wish to correspond via email. At that time, you can double check each person's preferred method of correspondence. If everyone is okay with their email address being seen, you won't need to use a bcc in your correspondence. In your intro letter, you may choose to let families know about opportunities to help, by giving a rundown of events. We have sample correspondence on the PTO Website under the Documents tab.

2016-2017 Calendar - Irving Elementary School

The calendar lists events which may need some action on the part of room parents. Volunteering can take many shapes, so make sure your class families realize that even if they may not be able to attend an event, they can help in other ways.

Classroom Activities

October 19 -- Academic Fair/Egg Drop *people*

Help in a.m. with Academic Fair set-up, or during the school day with the egg drop.

October 31 -- Halloween *people/donations*

Students are not allowed to wear their costumes to school. They will change into them after lunch in order to participate in the Costume Parade. Communicate with your teacher to find out if there will be any class celebration. Find out how many parents will be needed to help kids get into costumes, and what supplies or set up will be needed for any classroom party. Sign-Up Genius helps make this easy.

December 21, 22, 23 - Winter Concerts *people/donations*

Help needed only if your class is having a celebration.

December -- Optional Holiday Teacher Appreciation Gifts *donations*

Decide if a group gift will be made, and collect donations. Teacher/staff surveys of favorite things available upon request. Don't forget Specials Teachers!

January/February -- Silent Auction Basket *donations*

This is the PTO's main annual fundraiser. Each class decides on a theme and collects donations from classroom families to put together a 'basket' to auction. Follow instructions you will receive from the Silent Auction organizers.

Examples from previous years:

- *Movie Night--candy, popcorn, kids movies, Lake theater gift cert*
- *Art Cart--inexpensive supply storage container filled with art supplies*
- *Themed Food Basket--Asian food, Pizza Night, Italian Night, a gift cert*
- *Sports--balls, Cubs/Sox/Bears/Blackhawk/Bulls items, Sports gift card*
- *Gardening--seeds, pots, tools*

February -- 100 Days of School/Valentines Day *people/donations*

Communicate with the teacher for instructions.

May 26 -- Olympic Day *people*

Help run events at school during morning or afternoon shifts.

May/June -- Optional Year-End Teacher/Staff Appreciation Gifts *donations*

June -- End of the Year Party *people/donations*

PTO Sponsored Events

There will be times when you will be asked to help solicit donations and volunteers for school-wide events. Also, often when an event draws near, committee chairs may find they need additional help, and requests will go out to advertise that need.

October 14 -- Fun Run *people/donations*

This is a major fundraiser. Students collect pledges from friends and families through a website ahead of time, and then they run for a set amount of time.

October 24-17 -- Scholastic Book Fair *people*

Work shifts during the week of the book fair.

November 11 -- Trivia Night *people/donations*

Help organize or donate for raffle

December 10 -- Craft Fair/Cookie Crumble *people/donations*

Craft Fair usually needs a few volunteers to help on the day.

Many donations of cookies are needed for this 'fill a box' event.

Rain/Extreme Cold Days -- Indoor Recess *people*

When students are unable to go outside for lunch recess, their indoor options are limited, due to space considerations. Volunteers are needed to help supervise a game/activity area in the art room, gym time and possibly other activities.

February 25 -- Fun Fair *people*

Silent Auction *donations*

Dancin' for Desserts *donations*

This is a huge fundraiser and is 'all hands on deck' to make it successful.

-Fun Fair requires help with set-up, working shifts, and clean-up.

-Silent Auction is mostly donations.

-Dancin' for Desserts needs donations of cakes/cookies/pies, and some volunteers.

May 5 -- Irving Sleepover *people/donations*

Fundraiser where students sleep at the school overnight. Volunteers needed at different times during evening, night, and morning. Donations of breakfast items.

May ? -- Staff Appreciation Lunch *people*

Themed lunch entirely cooked and served by Irving family/parent volunteers. Help needed to cook in advance, make favours, and for set up, serving, cleanup.

May - Fridays -- Pacers *people*

Help supervise lunchtime running club.

Miscellaneous Fundraising and Volunteer Events

Room Parent Best Practices:

- Be professional, reliable, discreet
- Communicate often with your co-room parents
- Get to know the parents/families in your child's class
- Be aware of and welcome new students and their families throughout the year
- Know the school's food allergy guidelines; you can direct any questions to Nurse Jamie, but it's helpful to know for party planning. The detailed letter can be found here:
<http://www.op97.org/irving/documents/AllergyLetterforIrvingFamilies2016.pdf>
- Be specific when asking for help (use specific subject lines in emails)
- Break up big tasks into small ones with specific time frames (ex. volunteer needed to set up from 10:30 to 11:00)
- Consider using Sign-Up Genius to organize certain events
- Consider using PayPal, Quickpay or Frumus.com to collect for class contributions
- Send thank-you notes (email or written) to volunteers
- Consider acknowledging the efforts of the specials teachers when you are planning teacher appreciation overtures
- Make any needed copies upstairs in the copy room near the gym, using the PTO user/password: irvingpto 12573 (be sure to sign out, too)
- Attend PTO meetings so that you can be an information source for your class families
- Use the school directory as an important resource (gets delivered in October)
- Be earth-friendly whenever possible

FYI: PTO Website: Documents: Room Parents www.irvingpto.com

Room Parent Coordination Committee:

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