

## Room Parent Responsibilities & Tips 2011-2012

### 1. Communicate with your teacher(s) and your classroom families.

The key to being a great room parent is to communicate regularly with your teacher(s) and the parents in your classroom!

- If you have not done so already, introduce yourselves to your teacher(s) as the room parents for the class.
- Coordinate with the other room parent(s) for your classroom and send out an email to families introducing yourselves as the room parents and providing your contact information.
- Throughout the year, regularly touch base with your teacher about upcoming events. If a holiday is coming up, it's likely that the teacher may be planning something in the classroom that parents can assist with. Contact them early so you have plenty of time to get parents to sign up to send in items or volunteer. Please be mindful of the new food guidelines when planning classroom events.
- Many teachers enjoy having parents in the classroom on a regular basis to volunteer. Help ensure you have enough notice of your teacher(s) needs by checking with them on a monthly basis to find out what is on their schedule for the upcoming month.

Use email to contact the parents in your class. If you have a family in your class that doesn't use email, consider printing a hard copy to go home in their child's backpack, depending on the timeline. Consider using [www.volunteerspot.com](http://www.volunteerspot.com) as a quick and easy tool to help you get volunteers for classroom events.

***\*Please nicely remind parents that the classroom email list is to be used only for classroom and school/PTO communications and not for solicitations or anything else.***

### 2. CORI forms.

CORI forms are required for all our volunteers. Forms are available in the school office. In addition to completing the form, a copy of your driver's license will be made and attached to the form. If you have had a CORI done within the past 3 years at one of the Wayland Schools, this fulfills your obligation.

### 3. Finalize and verify your classroom email lists.

Shortly, you will receive an email list for the families in your class. In an effort to include everyone in school-wide communications, we need your help to verify our email lists. This is necessary because the PTO does not have access to the school's listserv database. (Please Note: families will be able to opt out if they do not wish to receive PTO communications).

- Coordinate with your teacher in advance, and at Curriculum Night, put out a copy of your class list to collect any missing emails and verify existing information. **Please note at the bottom of this list that the information is confidential, and only used for PTO/Classroom purposes.**
- If you still have missing email addresses after Curriculum Night, you will need to phone those families and request their information. Please forward any new or updated information to the Room Parent Coordinators. Please be sure to collect primary and secondary phone numbers for the emergency communications system (see below) and primary email address.

- During the school year, please forward any changes in email addresses to the Room Parent Coordinators.

#### **4. Email Communications**

It bears repeating that the class emails are to be used only for classroom communications, and not for solicitations, or anything unrelated to conveying teacher, room parent or PTO info. Please also respect the confidentiality of the emergency communication information that the Room Parents are entrusted with. This information is not to be shared! To email the entire class at once without revealing individual email addresses please use the BCC email function (i.e. blind copy) available in all email programs.

When forwarding a message to your classroom from the Room Parent Coordinators please copy and paste the relevant message into your own separate email. Frequently there is language specifically addressed to the Room Parents, and not intended for everyone to read. If you do forward a message, please be sure to adjust the message and include the Room Parents (your) names and contact info for your classroom.

#### **5. Lice Checks.** (see handouts)

Lice checks are done upon the return to school following each school vacation (Jan, Feb, and April). This is an important task for the sake of our children's and teachers' health.

Room parents solicit volunteers for lice checks for their classroom/grade. See sample email provided on the handout. Room parents will be asked to assist in the task, if classroom volunteers are not forthcoming.

Please contact Elizabeth Curtin at [escurtin@comcast.net](mailto:escurtin@comcast.net) for both Happy Hollow and Loker with questions and volunteers.

#### **6. PLC volunteers.**

Room parents are responsible for soliciting parents to cover the classrooms so that the teachers can attend PLC (Professional Learning Communities) programs. The teachers will be notifying the room parents directly if/when they need this coverage.

#### **7. Teacher gifts.** (see copy of Dr. Burton's letter on gift giving guidelines)

[http://www.wayland.k12.ma.us/happy\\_hollow/giftgivingpolicy2006.pdf](http://www.wayland.k12.ma.us/happy_hollow/giftgivingpolicy2006.pdf)

Holiday gifts are optional. Usually the room parents organize a group gift at the end of the school year. Please be sure to stay within the gift giving guidelines.

#### **8. Emergency Communication System.** (see handout)

The emergency communication system will be used to contact families in the event of unforeseen circumstances that arise during the school day. You will need to ensure you have a primary and secondary phone number and primary email address for each family for these communications. Please collect this information at Curriculum Night, or call families if necessary to collect this information.

Please determine who will be the primary designated Room Parent for your class, and notify the Room Parent Coordinators. Once you have all your contact information gathered for your class, determine (in writing) how you will divide the classroom families between the Room Parents.

\*There will be a Room Parent contact for each grade level to help start the phone chain. This representative will call the other (primary designated) room parents in their grade, when the chain is initiated, and then proceed with contacting their classroom. If you would like to be your grade's representative, please contact the Room Parent coordinators. For kindergarten, Kathleen at [katnewtz@yahoo.com](mailto:katnewtz@yahoo.com) and Eli at [elizabeth.a.shine@gmail.com](mailto:elizabeth.a.shine@gmail.com) will contact the primary Room Parent contact for each classroom.

**Once you have completed your calls, please notify the school office of any families that you were unable to speak with.**

For Happy Hollow: Margie Deade at 508-358-2120 x102

For Loker: Christine Eisnor at 508-655-0331

## **9. Build a classroom community.**

Help families feel connected to our school community by developing a classroom community.

- Create a welcoming, inclusive environment for families by holding “classroom” events. Some examples might include a social or meeting at the park or school playground in the late Summer/Early Fall.
- Help families feel more comfortable coming to school events by extending an invitation to meet as a group before a PTO event (i.e. Halloween movie night), or even offering to meet as a group prior to school events or PTO meetings. (This is most important in younger grades where school community is still new and families do not know as many people).
- Perhaps organize an evening at the Library. Meet in the Children's Room at the Wayland Public Library one evening and receive some pointers from the librarians about what authors and subjects are popular among children of your child's age/grade. Chat with other parents about what books their children enjoy and what they might recommend. Get your child their own library card!
- Let parents know that you are a resource for their questions. If you don't know the answer, try to direct them to someone who will be able to help.

A cohesive classroom community can truly make a huge difference to the entire school community, your child's school year experience, and your enjoyment as a room parent!

## **10. Website**

Check out the page with our room parent info:

<http://www.happyhollowpto.org/parentresources/forroomparents.html>

Thank you very much for volunteering to be a Room Parent! Your involvement is so important to our school community! If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact us. We look forward to working with you, to make this a terrific year for our children, and their families and teachers.

Best Regards,  
Elena Taxiarchis  
Rama Ravi

Room Parent Coordinators, Happy Hollow / Loker Parent Teacher Organization