



Room Parent Handbook

2023-2024

Welcome Room Parent,

Thank you so much for volunteering to be a Room Parent for your child's classroom!

Whether you're a first-time room parent or a seasoned pro, I hope this handbook provides you with helpful information for the upcoming school year. This handbook should provide a clear outline of the various room parent duties, serve as a general guideline for carrying out these duties and provide you with some ideas if you choose to use them.

One thing that makes Garfield Elementary such a special place is the great working relationship that exists between our parents and staff. Your efforts as a room parent will help to make a positive difference in the academic and social lives of every child at our school!

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Brandon Cohrs  
PTC Senior Vice President  
[bcohrs@gmail.com](mailto:bcohrs@gmail.com)  
559.905.9986 (mobile)

Zack George  
PTC Co-Vice President  
[zacharygeorge@sgws.com](mailto:zacharygeorge@sgws.com)  
925.408.5874 (mobile)

### School Volunteer Policy

- Whenever you are at the school to volunteer, you must sign in and out every time in the main office. This is a district policy. DO NOT report directly to the classroom. You must check in with your driver's license to the main office.
- The district must approve all volunteers. This is an electronic process.
- You may not bring small children when you volunteer.

### Volunteers

All volunteers must conform to CUSD guidelines by submitting a volunteer application and a picture ID every 4 years. This online application can be found on the CUSD website under the "Parent" tab. TB assessments must also be provided every four years. Volunteers should dress appropriately and sign in at the office with their ID. **DO NOT** bring small children with you when you volunteer. Volunteers may not use or enter student restrooms.

### Correspondence

Communicating with parents and teachers is the most important part of being a room parent. Due to liability issues, administration has put in place a few important policies.

***You MUST use the sample forms in this handbook.***

***These forms have already been approved by CUSD administration.***

In addition, please follow the steps below when sending home correspondence:

1. After completing your pre-approved form, please submit a hard copy to the office.
2. Administration will review your form and approve it.
3. After your form has been approved, it is recommended to distribute your communication electronically. Work with your classroom teacher to determine which parents are comfortable sharing their email address.
4. Please email a copy of the correspondence to nancysternfels@cusd.com.

### Correspondence

#### Sign Up Genius

You are encouraged to use Sign Up Genius for your party donations.

When using this site, please remember to do the following:

1. Never ask for monetary donations via Sign Up Genius.  
Only party item donations can be requested, no money.
2. Please use the words "optional & voluntary" in your donation requests.

**NOTE:**

If you choose to email or use Sign Up Genius, you may also send home a hard copy “party flyer” (p. 20) to assure that all parents (even the ones you don’t have email addresses for) receive information about the party.

Please keep detailed records of all monetary donations that you collect.  
Use the “Collection Record Sheet” (p. 19) to keep track of all money received.

**Classroom Calendar**

- |                             |                                  |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| ○ Winter Holiday Parties:   | Last week of school before break |
| ○ Valentine’s Party:        | February 14 <sup>th</sup>        |
| ○ Teacher Appreciation Day: | May 8 <sup>th</sup>              |
| ○ End of the Year Parties:  | Confirm with teachers            |
| ○ Carnival/Spring Event     | April 19 <sup>th</sup>           |

*Please check with your teacher to confirm dates*

**Room Parent: The Rewards**

- Time with your child(ren) – Priceless!
- Getting to know the other children in class and their parents.
- Working with the teacher on fun class activities and celebrations.
- Being an asset to Garfield Elementary School.
- Enhancing the school year experience for every student in your child’s class!

**Head Room Parent Responsibilities:**

- Communicating through email and/or meeting with your child’s teacher to discuss their needs for the school year.
- Communication with parents through letters/emails.
- Get Volunteers from Class for Carnival
- Silent Auction Items for Carnival
- Cake Walk Items for Carnival

**Room Parent Responsibilities:**

- Planning class celebrations & managing class funds for parties.
- Helping with/getting volunteers for Parent Teacher Club (PTC) activities throughout the school year.

**Optional Responsibilities:**

- Organizing gifts for your teacher.
- Assist the kids celebrate their teacher’s birthday.
- Snack Shack Volunteer- TBD

- PTC Event Volunteer

## **Room Parent, In Detail**

### **Head Room Parent Responsibilities:**

The following are a list of duties requested of you as Head Room Parent.

• **Communication with your child's teacher (please see Sample Questions):** It is VERY important to communicate with your child's teacher and discuss their needs and expectation for the school year. You will find that all teachers have preferences about how much participation they request from their room parents. Teachers, like our children, are unique individuals and have different needs and requirements. Some teachers have fully established routines for celebrations and activities, while other teachers are content to allow you to fully coordinate everything. Please follow your teacher's lead, and always remember how much the entire school community appreciates your time and efforts.

• **Introducing yourself to the parents of your classroom through a letter (please see Sample Letter):** An introductory letter is a great way to introduce yourself to all the parents in the class, provide them with your contact information, and obtain their contact information as well. Please introduce any other room parents in the letter; however, please only provide your contact information in order to keep communication simple. This letter is your first step in establishing a relationship with all the wonderful parents who will be helping and supporting you throughout the year.

• **Communication with parents through letters/emails:** It is important to keep parents updated throughout the school year regarding upcoming classroom events. Communication through emails and letters allows parents to assist in planning parties and provides them with the opportunity to help throughout the year. When contacting parents regarding class parties, send your letter and/or email approximately 3 weeks prior to a celebration.

### **Room Parent Responsibilities:**

Working together with other parents is fun, rewarding and a great way to share classroom responsibilities! The following is a list of duties requested of all Room Parents.

• **Planning class celebrations & managing class funds for parties.** There will be several celebrations during the year. Each grade level has set party dates for this year. Parties will make up the bulk of your responsibility as a Room Parent. (Please see Classroom Party Calendars on page 7) It is very important you check with your teacher for guidelines and suggestions of how they would like the celebration to be planned and what activities, games, etc., they would like. 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. All foods should be pre-packaged with nutrition labels.

• **Helping with PTC correspondence throughout the school year:** The PTC relies on volunteers to staff every activity it runs throughout the school year. There is always a need for volunteers – any amount of time is greatly appreciated! Please keep a look out for PTC information in the Garfield Paw Prints.

• **Spring Carnival-** This is PTC biggest fundraiser of the year!!

Each class is responsible for bringing in 10 or more silent auction items (\$25-dollar value). Items are due to the office prior to the carnival. Room Parents will also be responsible for organizing and submitting a master volunteer sheet for the class booth. Please email your class volunteer list to [garfieldelementaryptc@gmail.com](mailto:garfieldelementaryptc@gmail.com).

### **Optional Responsibilities:**

The following are optional and fun duties we would love you to partake in; however, there is no obligation required.

**Organizing gifts for teachers for Teacher Appreciation/Celebrations/other special occasions:** Please communicate with the parents of your classroom to consider these events.

**Teacher's gifts:** If you ask parents to donate money towards a group gift for a teacher, you must use the pre-approved form (p. 19) and email it the office for approval prior to sending it home. You should request money be sent in a sealed envelope with your name on it.

**Receipts:** It is recommended that you keep any receipts throughout the year when purchasing items on behalf of other parents just in case there are any questions there is documentation.

## **Classroom Parties, In Detail**

### **Party Overview**

Although each party will be different, the following is a list of some party basics:

- Class parties take place during the school day. The teacher will determine the exact length and time of each party.
- Volunteers may enter the classroom only to set up and organize for the party as needed. They may also help work stations if requested by the teacher.
- Parties usually involve crafts, games, and a snack. Please confirm with the teacher that there are no food allergies or other special needs.

### **Secrets to A Successful Party**

- 3 weeks prior to the party send home the Party Flyer and solicit donations. Use the forms provided in this handbook.
- Send out reminders 3-5 days prior to the party.
- Bring everything the teacher will need for snacks, games and crafts.
- Dividing the kids into small groups and having your activities as “stations” helps keep the party running smoothly.
- A few simple decorations, such as a tablecloth, streamers, or a festive centerpiece, can really add to party fun.
- Have a few extra snacks for the teacher and party helpers.
- HAVE FUN!!

### Crafts Party Craft Tips

- Provide a cover the work surface such as newspaper, or tablecloths. Disposable plastic tablecloths are best; the teacher will just throw them away when the party is over.
- Glue sticks or tacky glue are preferred; however, if a glue gun needs to be used, it must be used by the adult. Kids are not to use a glue gun.
- Remember to label each child's craft with his/her name.
- Every finished product is wonderful! It may not come close to resembling the sample you prepared, but each child should be made to feel proud of his/her accomplishment Party Craft Ideas.
- Decorate frames to match the theme of the party. These can be made of Popsicle sticks, craft foam, old jigsaw puzzle pieces, etc. Take a picture of each child at the party or days before the party and have the photo ready to use on the day of the party.
- Sponge paint t-shirts, baseball caps, or note cards, using clean kitchen sponges cut into shapes to match your party's theme.
- Make bookmarks.
- Make friendship bracelets.
- Create necklaces out of sweetened cereal ("O" shapes).
- Create paper bag puppets.
- Make a craft that the children can give as a gift to a family member.
- Check Pinterest for age-appropriate craft ideas for your party.

### Games Party Game Tips

- Keep the directions simple. A tablecloth, napkins and streamers are examples of "less is more" decorations.
- When planning "elimination" type games (such as Hot Potato), make sure you have something for the eliminated children to do. They can become game helpers or the cheering section for those who remain in the game.
- By the time the party ends, all the children should have identical prizes and favors in their treat bags. Everyone is a winner at class parties!
- Always have an extra game or two planned. Some games take much less time than planned. Other games work perfectly with some groups, while they are complete flops with others.
- Plan the dot cam for Bingo, Pictionary, and other whole class games Party Game Ideas.
- Divide children into teams. Give each team a baggie filled with ice cubes. See which team can melt it the fastest. (The ice can't go into anyone's mouth!)
- Classic games of tag or dodge ball (best played with a beach ball) are always a hit, especially if you are able to go outdoors.
- Fill a bottle or jar with jellybeans or M & Ms™, and let the children guess how many are inside.
- Freeze dancing. Have the children dance while the music is playing, then turn it off suddenly. Whoever continues to move after the music is turned off is eliminated. Continue until all but one of the children is eliminated. Allow the eliminated children to become "Movement Monitors".
- Pictionary or Taboo are great games for older grades. It is fun to divide into teams.

- Plan old favorites such as telephone, Simon Says, Bingo, limbo, or 20 questions.

### **Snacks Beverages Tips**

- Avoid providing cups. It is best to use juice boxes/pouches, water bottles or Capri Suns to avoid spills.
- Check with the teacher prior to the party to make sure that none of the children have food allergies.
- Try to incorporate healthier snack options. If you are providing cookies or cupcakes, also provide a healthy snack too such as baby carrots.
- Provide cupcakes or cookies and have the children frost and decorate them.
- Slice apples in half horizontally and have the children decorate cream cheese, raisins and granola.
- Put together strawberry shortcakes.
- Baby carrots with ranch.
- Miniature pizzas
- Jell-O Wigglers
- Cheese and Crackers.
- Ice Cream with each child's choice of toppings mixed in.
- Chips and Dip
- String Cheese

### **Samples**

- Please feel free to change font, copy onto colored paper, and/or add clip art. CUSD Administration has approved all wording on these forms
- You MUST use the wording, as is, in any correspondence that is sent home
- Please submit to the office for approval prior to sending home

### **Teacher Sample Questions**

*Please feel free to ask your teacher anything. This form is just for idea purposes.*

- Please let me know what time of day will work best for your parties.
- Please provide me with the names of all the children in the class. I understand you cannot provide contact information, so just a list of names will be fine.
- Do any children in your class have food allergies or other special needs?
- How do you prefer to be contacted with questions? Do you prefer emails, phone calls or notes?
- Do you have any preferences in terms of party structure? For example, some teachers prefer to have one game, one craft, one snack and a book while others give room parents free reign.
- How long would you like parties to last?



**Letter to Parents**

Hello Parents,

It is time to start thinking about the fun classroom parties and activities in store for \_\_\_\_\_ class!

I would like to keep you informed regarding event schedules, sign ups, and party information.

Please return the bottom section by \_\_\_\_\_.

Some of the events I will need help with are: (Please fill in the parties your class will be having)

I will need your help gathering donations for this year’s School Carnival in Spring. I will be sending home more information regarding specific events as they get closer.

Please keep in mind that all items asked for throughout the year are an OPTIONAL DONATION and you are not required to contribute.

Thank you everyone for your help and please feel free to contact me anytime!

YOUR NAME HERE - Room (#)  
Room Parent, YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS HERE  
YOUR PHONE NUMBER HERE

-----  
Child’s name \_\_\_\_\_ Parent’s Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_ E-  
mail address \_\_\_\_\_

RETURN SLIP TO CHILD’S TEACHER

**Monetary Collection Letter**

Hello Parents, Mr./Ms. \_\_\_\_\_ (birthday/other event)  
is just around the corner!

On (insert day of the week), (insert date) the children will be presenting/ celebrating \_\_\_\_\_  
with \_\_\_\_\_.

(insert what you will be doing and what you need from the parents)

If you would like to make an **optional donation** toward this gift, **please enclose your donation of \_\_\_\_\_ in an envelope with my name on it** and return it to school with your child by (insert day of the week), (insert date).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.  
Thank you,

YOUR NAME  
YOUR PHONE / EMAIL

**Party Flyer**

Parents Please Help us Plan  
For Our \_\_\_\_\_ Party!

(Insert day of the week), (insert date)  
(Insert party time)  
(Insert teacher name and room number)

Lots of fun activities are planned!  
All parents are welcome to contribute.

If you are able to help or have questions  
Please contact me  
YOUR NAME HERE | YOUR PHONE NUMBER HERE

Hope to see you there!

**Party Sign Up Sheet/Email Letter**

Dear Parents, Soon the kids in \_\_\_\_\_ class will be celebrating \_\_\_\_\_  
and we need your help!

The following is a list of items and donations we need to make this party a success. Please  
remember that all **donations are optional and voluntary**. If you are able to make donations and/or  
help please send the bottom portion of this form to school with your child by  
\_\_\_\_\_.

- |                                 |                                |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| (#)Tablecloths                  | (#)Plates                      |
| (#)Napkins                      | (#)Drinks                      |
| (#)Snack                        | (#)Small goodie bags           |
| (#) (insert craft items needed) | (#) (insert game items needed) |
| (#) (insert game items needed)  | (#) (insert game items needed) |

Thank you for all your help!  
\_\_\_\_\_ (your number and email here)  
(Use below if sending hard copy home)

-----  
Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone Number & Email \_\_\_\_\_

Yes! I would love to make an optional donation. I will be donating  
\_\_\_\_\_ item(s) for the party.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes! I would love to volunteer as a parent helper during the party.

**Collection Record Sheet**

Please use the form below to keep detailed records of any money you collect from parents. Please include names, dates, amounts and reason for collection

Example:

Name	Carnival	Winter Party	V-day	B-day	Spring	end of year
B. Smith	\$20 9/2/22	\$10 12/2/22	\$5 2/1/23	\$10 3/17/23	no donation	\$10 5/30/23

**TEACHER APPRECIATION DAY!**

Appreciation (What Does This Mean)

Recognition of the quality, value, significance, or magnitude of people and things.

May 8<sup>th</sup> is Teacher Appreciation Day!

This is such a fun and exciting day!!

PTC will host a lunch for all staff and a teacher gift. We ask room parents to coordinate a gift or something for the day – to show appreciation for teachers.