

J.V. Washam Elementary Room Parent Handbook



2023-2024

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Value of Room Parents

Thank you for volunteering to be a room parent at J.V. Washam Elementary. Room parents make a huge difference in creating a strong network among parents, students, and teachers. You are vital in helping families engage in activities inside and outside of the classroom. Studies consistently show that when parents, family members, and friends are active in the classroom children thrive. Your child will see through your volunteerism that you value and support their education.

Volunteer Approval

*All room parents must complete the CMS volunteer screening process to obtain appropriate approval. This is both necessary to volunteer in the classroom and to chaperone field trips. To sign up to volunteer, please visit www.cmsvolunteers.com. It is necessary to re-register each year.

*All volunteers will need to sign in and out of the front office using the Lobby Guard system. This system will also automatically track your volunteer hours.

Responsibilities

- 1. Facilitate Communication with Teacher:** Room parents are the first line of contact for the classroom teacher.
 - a. Set up an initial meeting with your classroom teacher within the next week or connect via email.
 - b. Determine his/her expectations of you and the desired level of parent involvement. Get the parent email list for communication.
 - c. Take notes of any food allergies in the classroom.
 - d. Ask to be notified of new students during the year.

2. **Facilitate Communication with Classroom**

Parents. Room Parents are the liaison between the teacher and the parents.

- a. Send communication to classroom parents (via email) as soon as possible. Classroom communications are often time sensitive, so please be timely.
- b. Contact all parents or guardians in the classroom. Email is a convenient way to communicate, but using all options may help reach all the families. This is a great way to make sure all families have a chance to participate.
- c. As new students enter the class, welcome them to J.V. Washam and their parents to the email list.

3. **Grade Level Parties** There will be 2 planned parties for the 2023-2024 school year. The first will be a Winter Party, Tuesday December 19th and the second is the End-of-Year Party, on Thursday June 6th. We will notify room parents to make you aware of times for the specific grade levels.

- a. SAME AS LAST YEAR: In order to promote equity amongst classrooms, on each grade level, Grade Level Room Parent Leads will meet with the Lead Teacher on each grade level to identify expectations for the Grade Level planned party/rotation.
- b. Grade Level Room Parent Leads will communicate with all room parents on the grade level to provide specific party information and roles for each room parent.
- c. Grade Level Room Parents Contact Info:

Kindergarten - Ornela Harney - ornelaharney@gmail.com

1st Grade - Katie Sandler - khiggins04@gmail.com

2nd Grade - Sarah Ann Preston - sarah.ann1@yahoo.com

3rd Grade - Lynn Bettencourt - lynnbettencourt@gmail.com

4th Grade - Erica Johnson - e.forehand@yahoo.com

5th Grade - Kasey Tanner - kaseyhtanner@gmail.com

4. **Gifts**

If you are asking for donations for teacher/staff gifts (birthdays and/or holidays or special events), **please do not** ask for a specific dollar amount. Please note that a parent/guardian should never feel obligated to contribute. ***All class gifts are from the entire class regardless of who contributes.*** Also, make sure all parents are given the opportunity to make suggestions for what gifts are given.

Pinterest is a great resource for teacher gift ideas.

5. **Volunteers for Classroom and School Events**

There will be opportunities throughout the school year when parent volunteers are needed for classroom events, school-wide activities, and field trips. You will be asked to communicate with your classroom families to find help for these events. Some examples are Book Fair, Field Day, Class Parties, and Field Trips. *Again, make sure you give all parents the opportunity to participate in events.*

Special Events

1. Winter & End-of-Year Class Parties

**See above Grade Level Parties*

2. Book Fair

- a. A Room Parent is needed to cover their teacher's classroom from 7-7:45 am on Friday, October 20th. The coverage is needed for Teacher Preview at the Book Fair. If you are not able to cover the classroom, please arrange for another (registered volunteer) parent to do so or notify the Room Parent Coordinators as soon as you can. There will be reminders closer to the date.
- b. Ask for volunteers to help students during their Book Fair scheduled time. For younger grades, 3 parents would be great. For older grades, 1-2 parents would be fine. Students shop during their Media Center time. There will be a schedule sent out closer to the date.
- c. Book Fair Committee Chair(s): Erica Johnson at e.forehand@yahoo.com will send out more details.
 - i. Fall Dates: October 23-27
 - ii. Spring Dates: May 6-10

3. Loose Change Drive: October 16-20, 2023

- a. Room Parents will need to decorate one themed coin-collection container (non-glass) to be placed in the classrooms by Friday, October 13th. The theme this year is **A Book A Day Keeps The Creepy Crawlies Away**. Please be sure that your container has a way to remove the coins daily for collection. There will be an assortment of prizes awarded for the most change collected. These containers will be used to decorate the book fair the following week. (You can retrieve them if you like at the end of the book fair.)

4. Teacher Appreciation

- a. The J.V. Washam PTO has established a Staff Appreciation Committee that is being chaired by Rebecca Morris. The committee coordinates events and activities to recognize teachers and staff throughout the school year. Room Parents will be asked to assist when needed during each event. The PTO website provides a link to view Teacher Favorite Things surveys. Any questions, please contact Rebecca at rebecca.morris1@googlemail.com. Events and dates will be communicated via email.
- b. Two Teacher Appreciation Days this year are:
 - i. Favorite Things: Thursday, November 2nd
 - ii. Restock the Classroom: Thursday, February 8th

5. Adopted Staff Member Appreciation

- a. Each classroom will adopt one or two encore teachers/staff members for the school year. We want to recognize everyone that makes J.V. Washam great. Please include your adopted staff member(s) in your classroom events. You can invite them to class parties, remember them on their birthdays and holidays, have the students make homemade cards, bring them a flower, etc.

6. Field Trips

- a. Teachers may ask for assistance when requesting chaperones. If so, all chaperones must have proper volunteer approval before attending a class trip. Siblings may not attend class field trips.

7. Field Day

- a. ***All Room Parents are needed to volunteer during Field Day. If you can't volunteer, please make arrangements for other parents to step in.***
- b. The Grades are divided between morning and afternoon sessions. PTO Field Day coordinators are Christy Clarke and DeErick Bryant Sr.

- c. Field day will be held at the end of the school year.
 - i. Grades K-2 on Tuesday, June 3rd.
 - ii. Grades 3-4 on Wednesday, June 4th.

Food Allergies

1. Check with the classroom teacher to determine if there are any children with food allergies in the classroom.
2. CMS policy requires all food brought for class events be commercially prepared/store-bought and clearly labeled with ingredients.

Suggestions for a Successful Year

1. Enjoy getting to know your classroom parents right away.
2. Take advantage of the PTO Calendar to note important dates.
3. Communicate with the teacher regularly to see what help he/she needs. (And get the parent contact list.)
4. Send an introduction email/message/letter to the class parents as soon as possible. (You may create a class directory.) CAN ask if other parents want to volunteer if you have less than 3 room parents.
5. Create an email list with all the parent emails – it is an easy way to stay in touch and send off reminders.

6. Communicate by email, phone calls, etc. when you need help. Don't feel like you have to do it all. You can ask for assistance from other parents, and reach out to the Room Coordinators as needed.
7. Make sure you give families enough notification about school and classroom events. It can be frustrating to parents to find out about an event on short notice.
8. Get to know your Co-Room Parent(s), if you have one. Establishing a warm connection early will determine how successful your year will be.

Contacts

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Room Parent Chair Coordinators, Sarah Preston at sarah.ann1@yahoo.com and Katie Sandler at khiggins04@gmail.com, or the CP-VPs of Volunteers: Lynn Bettencourt at lynnbettencourt@gmail.com or Erica Johnson at e.forehand@yahoo.com.