

Guidelines for Homeroom Parents 2021-2022



This information has been written following discussions with previous homeroom parents and feedback from teachers with the intention of explaining the different responsibilities of an HRP's role

Dear Homeroom Parent and Home Room Parent Assistant,

Thank you very much for volunteering your time and energy for this important role within the ABA school community. This is very much a grassroots position and without you the school would not be the amazing experience it is for our whole community. As a homeroom parent you really make a difference!

Your efforts will be very much appreciated by parents, students and also by the administration and teaching staff of the school. Your active involvement helps us to create the caring, open-minded and multicultural school community we aspire to be part of. It is through your contribution that our children learn the value and power of community service. In addition, you will find that your children love to have you around in their classrooms and at school.

As an organization we want to thank you for volunteering and to:

- make sure you have the appropriate knowledge and information to carry out your responsibilities
- provide you with a forum to evaluate the homeroom program and share great ideas with your peers
- celebrate your contributions and achievements

We sincerely hope that your volunteering experience will be a positive one.

Thank you,

Your PTA



The Role of the Homeroom Parent and Assistant

Each class has one homeroom parent who provides the link between teacher, parents, PTA and the administration. They are the glue that keeps the class together as a social community.

Ideally, each class also has a Homeroom Parent Assistant, who is the “back- up” to the homeroom parent. Their job is to ensure the teacher is never without a contact for help in the classroom and that important messages get passed on.

As a homeroom parent, you do not always need to be present yourself. You can arrange for other parents, with children in the same class, to help out with you or in your absence. Your child's teacher will call upon you when help is needed. You then organize the other parents as and when needed.

Different parents have varied talents, and some may have access to special materials or services for various classroom projects. You may want to make a list at the beginning of the year and make use of them.

If there is an HRP and an Assistant, and to stay informed and aware of upcoming events and new information, we ask that at least one of you attends the PTA Open meetings held once a month in the PTA room. Dates & other details for these meetings are posted on the school website and will be announced in the weekly newsletter.

As of 2019/20, some parent volunteers will have to receive police clearance before being allowed to help with the children, the school will inform them accordingly. Please be advised that this cost will be covered by the school.

Your main role and responsibilities as homeroom parent(s) are as follows:

Assisting the Teacher

- Assist the teacher to enlist help as needed for field trips, class projects, celebrations and class parties, or parent time.
- Be guided by the teacher about how involved they would like you to be.
- All events held during the school day and involving the class need to be approved by the teacher. Social events outside of the class do not but it might be nice to keep your teacher in the loop.

Remember you are there to help according to the teacher's needs.

Communication & Confidentiality & Parent Class Lists

As of the 2019/20 school year, class lists will no longer be distributed. Each HRP will be given a school email address and a group email ID for the class they are assisting. For example, the HRP for grade 1 L will receive an email address/account: PTAHRPG_1L@abaoman.org and the group email ID: G1Lparents.

When emailing parents as the HRP, you should use the email account given to you by school. It is best to BCC the group and you should always CC your section representative i.e. Elementary or Secondary Rep.

If you wish to use another means to communicate (such as WhatsApp) please be sensitive to the fact that not everyone may have or want to use it. Bear in mind that all important information should go out via the class email to ensure that information is distributed to ALL parents.



Below is a draft email that you can send to parents to introduce yourself and start collecting phone numbers for your WhatsApp group if you choose to start one:

_____ copy from below this line to the next and place in the first email to parents _____

Dear Parents of _____, (class name, e.g. Grade 1L)

My name is _____ and I have volunteered to be the Home Room Parent (HRP) for our class this coming year. The function of an HRP is to assist the teacher in finding volunteers for different events and activities throughout the year. Additionally, bear in mind that a Whatsapp group will be created so parents will receive information from school and about the class. It will also be used to help organize class events, parties, parent time and chaperones for field trips. *HOWEVER, THIS IS OPTIONAL. ALL IMPORTANT INFORMATION WILL ALWAYS BE SENT TO YOU VIA EMAIL*

If you would like to be included in the WhatsApp group, please reply to this email with your full name and phone number.

Warmest regards,

(HRP name)

Home Room Parent (Grade name)

Your PTA 2021/22

WhatsApp Groups

Many parents value a class WhatsApp group so that they can easily contact each other for play-dates, carpooling etc.

Since you will not receive a phone list from school, if you wish to create a WhatsApp group, you will have to request the parents' phone numbers from them directly through the school supplied email address. Once you receive these phone numbers, it is essential to make sure that others that are not on the WhatsApp group receive the necessary information using the email provided by school.

When you create a WhatsApp group, you may include the Elementary Rep or the Secondary Rep on the group. This will allow a PTA representative to help you in case the conversation gets out of hand.



HRP's using WhatsApp must post the following points for the members of the group once the group is created:

_____ **post message below** _____

As members of an HRP WhatsApp group. We kindly request that you abide by the following rules:

- This group is to **receive** information **from** school and **about** the class.
- There is a PTA moderator in the group
- No advertisements can be posted
- No personal messages or "my child..." messages should be posted
- If you have specific issues or challenges with your child or the teacher, those must be addressed with the teacher or the administration and should not be mentioned within the group.
- If you are participating in a class activity and are taking pictures, please remember that some parents do not want their child's picture online. Therefore, pictures of children in the class should not be posted to the group.
- Although we love to be thanked, one thank you is more than enough.
- The hours of the group are between 6am and 8pm

I look forward to the year ahead as your HRP for (name of class)

Coordinate Class Celebrations & Activities:

Class events and activities can include celebrations, class parties, parent time and field trips. In many cases, parents enjoy sharing treats and customs of their religious holidays with the children in the class.

An important responsibility is to organize class parties and enrichment opportunities. Please discuss with the teacher first and then enquire with parents in your class to see who would like to volunteer to the organization of the celebration. As a class you may decide to organize celebrations like Diwali, Easter, Christmas, Ramadan, Eid, Haj, Chinese New Year, Holi, etc.

Regardless of the celebration or activity, please prepare a complete Event proposal and present it to the teacher, preferably 2 weeks in advance. The parents must come prepared with all their supplies and they must be ready to clean up after the activity.

Please adhere to the following School policies regarding celebrations:

1. There are NO graduations in EC.
2. It is essential for parents to complete and submit the 'Event proposal'; preferably 2 weeks in advance and share with teachers so you have an idea of the plan. When a parent discusses the party with you please ask for the proposal so you are prepared for set up.
3. All presentations for religious celebrations **must** be shared with teachers in advance for Sam/Erum/Kathleen to view and approve.
4. **No balloons, goody bags, presents or fast food giveaways** after any religious, cultural celebrations and end of term parties. If brought for distribution, they will be returned.
5. **One occasion, one celebration.** Please ensure there is only one celebration for every occasion. You can either have the event during Parent time or a special approved day and time by the teacher. But not both. This is to enable the teacher to continue her curriculum plan without too much disturbance.
6. No food or treats distributed in cubbies after religious or cultural celebrations **unless** students cooked/ created it in the EC kitchen/classroom.



7. Parents are welcome to bring 1 cultural treat (eg. Eid, Diwali, Christmas) for the students to taste in the classroom to broaden their knowledge of cultures around the world.
8. Grade levels have end of year parties on the **same day** in their individual classrooms and will be decided by the teachers.
9. ALL end of year parties will be in the **last week of school year. This is non-negotiable.**
10. For end of term parties parents can have a variety of foods- of course we encourage less to avoid waste of food.
11. Please do NOT combine End of Term and End of Year parties with any other celebration.

The aim is to help the school remain consistent and focus on the celebration and learning of cultures and celebrations around the world.

Coordinate Volunteers for Class events / field trips / PTA Events

During the year, HRP's are essential in identifying and contacting parent volunteers for various events.

Class Events: Based on the Class events you identify, and the field trips planned by the Teacher, you will need to contact and coordinate parents to be chaperones for field trips when required by the Teacher. You will need to find volunteers to help in the classroom, if needed.

In Elementary, specialist teachers (Arabic, Art, Swimming and PE, Music and IT) may contact parent volunteers with specific skills for assistance. It is advised that the HRP take the initiative to find out if this help is needed and which parents can help.

PTA Events: Throughout the year the PTA organizes a variety of events. These events are unique because they help build our ABA community spirit and/or are fundraisers. They are organized by parent volunteers and their success hinges on having enough willing parents to support with their time and effort. Your support will be crucial in identifying parent volunteers to work with the lead for the event.

Collecting Class Funds:

Another part of the HRP job is to collect class funds. These funds are for the teachers' and class assistants' end of year gift. This is completely optional and the HRP cannot require parents to pay into this fund. Additionally, parents that do not pay into the fund should not be penalized. At the end of the year, it is good to share a broad account of how the class funds were used; with the class parents.

As of the 2019/2020 school year, we ask that these collections be anonymous and when the HRP is asked how much parents should donate, the response should be, "Any amount up to 10 OMR." Parents should be encouraged to bring the money in a plain envelope without their name on it, just the grade.

As a grade, HRP's come together to make sure they have enough funds to buy an end of year gift for each of the specialist teachers that teach your grade. This will require talking to the other HRP's in your grade to organize a gift for each specialist teacher. While the main teacher serves your class, the specialist teachers educate all the classes so we ask that you are just as creative when deciding on their gifts. Thoughtful and creative gifts leave a lasting impression of our appreciation for all they do.

Before you begin your celebrations and planning, please give Annex1 to your teacher to fill out. Contrary to popular belief, some teachers do not want to celebrate their birthdays at school and are uncomfortable giving out too much personal information. Please respect their need for privacy.

Annex1 will help you get to know your teacher(s) and **Annex2** is for getting to know the class.



Welcoming New Families to ABA

We live in a very transient expatriate community which means that at the beginning of the school year (and throughout) there will be several new families joining your class. The teacher and/or the Parent Rep will inform you of a new child in the class.

Extending a welcoming hand to these new families is a very important part of the Homeroom Parent Program. A card with a few welcoming words from you, or better still an invitation to meet up for a coffee with other parents from the class, or a guided tour of the campus, will be very much appreciated by a new family. This is especially true if the family is not only new to the ABA but also to Oman.

Be sure to let new parents know about the information resources available to them in the PTA room. These include Wi-Fi, computer access, tea/coffee, a lending library and brochures about Muscat and Oman. They can also access the PTA section of the website for more information about ABA and life in Oman.

Organization of Coffee Mornings

A coffee morning is a great opportunity for the parents of your class to get together and get to know each other. We recommend you organize one at the beginning of the school year and one after the winter break, at a minimum. It can be held at the PTA room if you wish, you can book the room using the booking sheets which are located on the notice board in the PTA room. Alternatively, you may prefer to meet at a coffee shop or a parents' house. Many parents work and appreciate having an evening event organized and sometimes whole family events are a wonderful way to really get the class to bond.

Information

Information about events, or invitations to volunteer or participate in events will be forwarded by the PTA and should be disseminated throughout the parent community via the HRP program. Please forward these emails promptly. If you cannot forward the emails, contact your HRP Assistant and then your Parent Rep.

ECE/Elementary Parent Rep: PTAERep@abaoman.org

Middle School Parent Rep: PTAMRep@abaoman.org

Secondary Parent Rep: PTASRep@abaoman.org

Handling Pedagogical Issues

Sometimes you might be approached by parents in your class regarding parental issues and communication with teachers and the administration. There is a clear set of guidelines in the Student Handbooks on these issues so please refer parents to adhere to these. Your role is not academic and any issues with the teacher or school should be referred to the teacher **directly**, or to the Principal of that section if the parent is unable to talk to the teacher. (Erum Banatwala- ECE, Sam Cook- Elementary, Megel Barker- Middle School, Simon Walker- High School). If a parent feels the issue has still not been addressed, then the next step is to contact the Head of School, Craig Williamson.



Your Point of Contact

We hope you enjoy this year and we are happy to help, answer questions, suggest ideas for social events and support you in your role. We look forward to the amazing job you will do to build the community spirit and make your child's class a wonderful place to be. If you do have any questions, please contact:

2021/22 School Year

Sripana Chaterjee for ECE/ Elementary : PTAERep@abaoman.org

Sonya Simmonds for Middle School : PTAMRep@abaoman.org

Manuela Emmer for High School : PTASRep@abaoman.org

Thank you!

The PTA 2021-22



Know your Class Teacher & Class Assistant

Name: _____

- Would you like the class to celebrate your birthday? Y / N

If yes, on which date? _____ (mm/dd)

- There are days when we need a cup of coffee or tea. How do you like yours?
_____ (e.g. Black, almond milk, latte)

- If you were to receive a mid-morning or afternoon treat, would you prefer:
_Dark Chocolate _Milk Chocolate _White Chocolate _Fruits _____
_Candy _Carrot Sticks _Please don't bring me food _Other _____

- Allergies: _____

- You do an amazing job and we appreciate everything you do for our children. In our efforts to say, "Thank you" the parents collect money for the teachers' and assistants' end of year gift (specialist teachers included). Please let us know the types of items you would like to receive.

- Is there anything else that you would like us to know?



Annex2:

Know Your Class

No of students: _____

Nationalities: _____

Food Allergies: _____

Picture allowed: yes/no

Note: All content (video, songs, books, speeches must be approved by that grade's principal to ensure all material is in line with Omani Law)

