

North Elementary Room Parent Resource Guide

Thank you for volunteering to be a Room Parent for your child's classroom. The Room Parent role is a critical piece of the partnership between the school and the home. We appreciate your willingness to come alongside your child's teacher in order to have a great school-year. The room parent is an extension of the PTO, which builds a bridge to the classroom teacher and families.

Why would I want to be a room parent?

- Time with your children – priceless for you and them!
- Getting to know your child's classmates and their parents.
- Providing much-needed support to our wonderful staff.
- Helping to strengthen our TCA North community by sharing your time and talent.
- Enhancing the school year experience for every student in your child's class!
- Contributing to the vision and mission of TCA.
- Building a relationship with teachers and staff.

Room Parent Overview

Responsibilities:

- Communicate with your child's teacher by email or personal meeting to discuss their needs for the school year.
- Introduce yourself to the parents in your classroom by email or letter by the end of September.
- Communicate with parents throughout the year and let them know how they can help with classroom needs.
- Under the direction of the classroom teacher, organize classroom parties, or if your class has a designated party planner, assist them.
- Attend occasional room parent meetings throughout the year.
- Support North Elementary PTO. Pass along PTO communication to your class, when communication is sent from the Office Manager.
- Organize and encourage teacher appreciation within your classroom and support school wide teacher appreciation activities.
- Send out a reminder to families of their teacher and tutor's birthday.

Resources:

- Contact NE PTO at tcanorthelementarypto@gmail.com
- If you have any questions please reach out to the PTO Parent Liaison, Jodie Collins
- [Signup.com](https://signup.com) is a great resource for organizing school activities; volunteer organizers and classroom teachers use it at TCA North.
- Please view the documents included at the back of this handbook, which you may find helpful in planning events through the year. You may edit them to suit your needs.

Communication with the teacher: It is crucial for you to meet with your child's teacher to discuss their expectations and needs for the school year. Although the curriculum and daily schedule are the same for every classroom in a grade level, every teacher is unique and has specific needs and requirements. Some teachers have established routines and preferences while others are happy to give you some guidelines and let you handle the details. Please follow the teacher's lead and ask them to clarify anything you are uncertain about. If your classroom teacher is a new teacher or new to TCA, do pay attention and be aware of when they may need a little extra help.

Communication with fellow parents: Your teacher should provide you with a contact list for the parents in your classroom **by the end of September**. You should send a message to introduce yourself and provide them with your contact information. It is important to keep parents well informed of classroom events throughout the year and offer them opportunities to participate and assist with classroom events. Keep your communications simple and to the point and if you are asking for volunteers or donated items, try to send your message a couple of weeks before the event. Please use the **blind copy** feature when communicating via email, to keep contact information confidential. The teacher may provide the contact information to the class of parents who have given their permission for their information to be shared with the class. Here are the guidelines that **must be sent** to parents when sharing the contact list:

Any contact information shared among TCA classroom parents/guardians is to assist the Room Parent in the planning of special classroom activities. TCA encourages everyone to protect the contact information of other parents/guardians and not share the information with anyone else without permission. The contact information should not be used for the sale of goods or services, political promotions, or to handle school complaints. All members of the TCA community are encouraged to contact the appropriate TCA staff member if there is a school complaint, following TCA Policy KE-TCA Conflict Resolution found on www.tcatitans.org. If there are any questions about the use of parent/guardian contact information, please ask the local principal.

Parent participation: We hope all parents will find ways to participate and contribute to classroom needs throughout the year. All parents should be included in your communications, unless someone has specifically requested to be omitted (always use blind copy for communication to the class). If you are requesting volunteer help or items for the classroom, clearly state what your needs are. **You are not expected to supply items if there is a shortfall** – *being a room parent should not be a financial burden for you!* Don't take it personally if some parents choose not to participate; most parents are generous and will supply what you need. If you repeatedly have trouble getting parents to respond, please let the teacher know, and speak to a Room Parent Liaison, and we'll help you find a solution. A great resource for you is the Favorites List found in a binder in the front office.

Connect with other room parents: We encourage you to attend Room Parent Meetings hosted by administration and NE PTO. These are opportunities to make suggestions, share ideas, voice concerns and brainstorm solutions in a supportive environment. We also strongly encourage room parents within each grade level to network and help each other. A group of room parents working together can really make a difference in organizing curriculum days and special events. Don't be afraid to offer your special skills and talents to help the other classroom teachers!

PTO Involvement: Room Parents are a crucial link between PTO and our parent body. Occasionally, the Office Manager will ask you to forward information to the parents in your class. Your only responsibility will be to send the message out and direct questions to the point of contact named in the message. **It is vital and your responsibility that all room parents forward these messages when requested!** If your class doesn't receive the message, 20+ families don't receive important information and opportunities to volunteer. Do not forward messages that come from other sources. Please copy your classroom teacher on this communication so that they are informed.

Curriculum days: The educational experience at TCA is enhanced by curriculum days. These are special days at the end of a unit of study when our students enjoy special activities, music and food and has the opportunity to wear costumes reflecting the period of study. Our teachers put much time, effort, and enthusiasm into organizing these days. Room parents can do so much to make these events shine by enlisting parent help to set up, decorate, organize refreshments, help with the activities, chaperone groups of students and clean up after. Students are encouraged to get into the spirit with **simple** costumes or props; the intent is for them to experience life in a different era, not compete for best costume! **Please remind families that younger siblings should not attend and parents will need to find childcare.**

Staff Appreciation: This is one of the most important ways our Room Parents can support our school. Staff Appreciation evolved over the years from small, individual actions to coordinated, schoolwide events. Recent years have brought us full circle; back to the idea that appreciation shouldn't be a week packed with activities but should be an ongoing, offering from our families. North Elementary PTO does coordinate some activities that benefit the entire staff, including alternating monthly meals or snacks. We ask room parents to help us send out information so families can contribute to those organized events. On a day to day, week to week basis, we ask you to encourage the parents in your class to show appreciation of our teachers and staff. Notes of encouragement and thanks, small treats, a carry in lunch, a special beverage – we believe every family can think of ways to show their love and support based on the relationship they have with our staff. We ask Room Parents to plan small birthday celebrations for their teacher and tutor; you don't have to try and surprise these special people, in fact it's best to plan with them for the best time to celebrate. You might coordinate with the room parent of the classroom that shares your class tutor and plan a shared celebration.

Teacher Gifts: You *may* wish to organize class gifts for your teacher and tutor. Typical gift giving times are birthdays, Christmas, and end of year. Basic guidelines for gift giving include no one is required to contribute, the gift will be given on behalf of all students in the class, whether or not they contribute. If you or a fellow parent are creative, you can organize a class scrapbook and have each child contribute a page, make a collage that everyone contributes to – there are countless creative, meaningful gifts that your class could make. You can provide a large gift bag or basket and invite everyone to contribute an item to be presented by the group. You can ask families to contribute cash in the amount they choose and pool the money to buy a gift or a gift card, or just give the cash. You can find many clever, creative ways to give a cash gift by doing a quick Google search. If you'd like feedback about a gift idea, your Room Parent Liaison is happy to help.

Classroom parties: Your teacher may choose to be the party organizer for the class or may ask you to fill that role. Parties in the classroom should be low-key events. Healthy snacks are best. You might provide a game, a craft, or a similar activity. Remember that normal routine goes on in the classroom before and after the party, so don't plan activities or snacks that will create a disruption during educational time. Kids

love anything that steps outside the normal routine so simple is best. Teachers need to be part of the planning of any event, as they are responsible for what goes on in the classroom. However, please ask other parents to help with set up and clean up and try to accomplish those tasks quickly and quietly while the learning is going on! Your classroom teacher will advise you on specifics for her/his classroom. Holiday parties are **held during the last 30 minutes** of the grade level's academic day. Parents should be invited to set up no sooner than an 1 ½ hours before the end of the day. Student birthday recognition occurs during the brief snack time. **Please remind families that have sibling that are younger they will need to find childcare.**

Class Playdates: A parent may reach out to you and want contact information to organize class or grade level playdates. Only share the contact information that parents have given permission to share. These are not school sponsored events and should not be organized through a teacher or staff member. They are events that build relationships and community in your grade level.

Staff Favorites List

Your Birthday: _____

Favorite Flower: _____

Favorite Color: _____

Favorite Restaurant: _____

Favorite Candy: _____

Favorite Scent: _____

Favorite Coffee/Tea/Other Drink _____

Favorite Snack: _____

Favorite Hobby _____

Favorite Place to Shop: _____

Favorite Meal: _____

Favorite Cookie (or other goody) _____

I appreciate your thoughtfulness but these are NOT my favorites: _____

My Food allergies or restrictions: _____

Letter to Parents

Dear Parents,

My name is _____, and I am the room parent for _____. I will be planning class parties, organizing gifts for (teacher's and tutor's name) and helping with other events through the year.

Some of the events I will need help with are:

- *Holiday Celebrations
- *End of the Year Celebration
- *Curriculum Days
- *Teacher Appreciation

I will be sending home more information regarding specific events as we get closer to those times.

Occasionally, we will give a class gift to the teacher, and I will ask for optional donations. **Please understand that no one is obligated to contribute.**

Thanks in advance for your help! I look forward to meeting each of you as we work together to help our children have a great year. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Call me at _____ or email me at _____.

Thanks,

Teacher Question Letter/Email

Hello,

My name is _____ I have signed up to be your Room Parent this year. I have a few questions for you before I begin planning this year's classroom parties and events.

1. Can you please provide me with a list of all the children in the class? This will help me to help you with planning of special days, crafts, and the number of parent helpers needed for each event.
2. Are there any food restrictions for your class?
3. How do you prefer to be contacted with questions...email, phone, note, or in person during lunch or recess?
4. 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 prefer to plan the event themselves.
5. What time of day do you prefer to have classroom parties?

Thank you very much for your time. I look forward to working with you throughout the school year.

Sincerely,

(Your phone number and email here)

North Elementary – Curriculum days (costumes) – We encourage parents to keep costumes simple and homemade.

Kindergarten

Mother Goose Day – students dress as nursery rhyme characters

1st grade

Ancient Egypt Day

Colonial Day

2nd grade

Constitution Day

Pioneer Day

Immigration Day

3rd grade

Roman Day

Viking Day

4th grade

Medieval Day

Patriots Day

5th grade

Explorers Day (1400's – 1700's, not modern day)

Renaissance Day (1300's – 1600's)

Westward Expansion - Pioneer

6th grade

Ancient Greece Day

School- wide events:

Grandparents Day

Field Day

Fall Festival

Service Run

Music Concerts

Art show

Sample letter to include when communicating about parties, curriculum days and field trips: Parents as much as we enjoy the younger non-school aged children, we respectfully request that you find

childcare for them. The moments you get to celebrate with your school-aged child are precious and require your full attention. Give the younger child the gift of time by allowing them to wait to experience the activity at the right time. We recently had a young sibling try to participate in an activity and they were injured. Thank you for supporting us by following NE guidelines.