

Room Parent Handbook

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Room Parent Coordinators:

ROOM PARENT HANDBOOK for:

Teacher: _____ Teacher's Birthday: _____

Assistant: _____ Assistant's Birthday: _____

I. Room Parent's Job Description

Thank you for your interest in being a Room Parent! As the Room Parent, you are the liaison between the teacher and the parents in your child's class. Following are some of the responsibilities that a Room Parent has during the school year. There may be other things that come up during the school year which are not included on this list.

1. Teacher Support - Room Parents are responsible for obtaining volunteers for classroom projects and activities that are requested by the teacher.
2. PTA Programs and Events - Room Parents are asked to obtain volunteers from their classrooms for PTA sponsored events, social, fund-raisers and academic enrichment that benefit the entire school. Email is key!
3. Class Parties - Parties are held before winter break and at the end of the school year. Each party is one hour in length. Room parents coordinate the parties, obtain volunteers, plan activities, games, crafts and/or refreshments. (Take pictures for the yearbook!)
4. In the spring you will need to solicit volunteers for Barnival. You will be notified of what volunteers are needed.

II. Lead Room Parent

A. Responsibilities

The Lead Room Parent will be the contact person for the teacher, the Room Parent Chair and the other room parents. **Email is very useful for doing this job.** An email list of all classroom families will help you communicate effectively. The Lead Room Parent will know which parents (in their class) are responsible for each of the events and activities throughout the year. For ease in communication, you will also serve as the contact person for the teacher and the PTA committee chairs. It is also useful to put out a calendar for the parents to show dates and times for volunteer commitments.

III. General Room Parent Information

A. Teacher Support

Your first responsibility as a Room Parent is to assist your teacher in the classroom. You are the liaison between the teacher and the parents in your class. Please obtain a schedule of his/her classroom activities, projects and needs before Parent Teacher Night. You should create your own sign-up sheet for these activities to be used at that night. Sample sign-up sheets are on the Barnwell PTA website. You will probably be asked to schedule or coordinate these volunteers, but please check with your teacher to be sure.

B. Financial Support

It is acceptable to request voluntary donations from the parents in your classroom to help purchase items for the two scheduled parties, as well as designated classroom projects. You will need to ask another parent to be treasurer. **The room parent cannot be the class treasurer.** Please use the PTA-approved letter in this handbook to solicit these funds. You will need to keep an accounting of what money you have collected and what you have spent. Please save your receipts until the end of the year. **Please submit Class Budget by Oct 1st, to include the amount of class funds taken in and how you plan to use the money. Please submit by Feb 1st, your class budget showing expenses deducted from class budget.**

C. Volunteer Hours

Please record your volunteer hours on the sign-in computer at the front office. Remember to include all the hours you spend at home working on projects, making phone calls, emailing or going to the store.

When volunteering at school, please remember to sign in at the office by recording the date, time and volunteer activity on the sign-in computer. When you leave, sign out at the front office. Always wear your name badge when volunteering at school. Please do not interrupt classroom instruction when you come in to talk with your teacher. Be sure to schedule your time with them before hand.

D. Supplies

It is not your responsibility to provide all supplies for classroom events. You may use class funds for some items. You can also ask for donations of specific items in advance from parents.

E. Promote Healthy Eating in the Classroom

In recent years, the news media has been informing the public about the increasing epidemic of childhood obesity. We've all been told that healthy eating promotes a healthy lifestyle and aids in intellectual growth. The Barnwell PTA is actively discussing ways to respond to this research by promoting a healthy lifestyle and setting a good example for our student population.

We are hoping that we can work together as a team to make Barnwell a healthier environment for all of our children. The PTA is not making any changes to the Cafeteria menu, or telling parents what to feed their child for lunch or snack. By working with the staff at the school, we are planning on educating parents and children on making more healthy food choices. Barnwell PTA will be offering healthy alternatives at all of our events as well. We are hoping that through positive reinforcement and leading by example, our children will make healthier choices every day.

Please keep these guidelines in mind when planning activities in the classroom:

- Room parents should remain aware of allergies present within the classroom throughout the school year and plan for distribution of store-bought, labeled, allergy-friendly refreshments/treats. Parents/Guardians of a student with an allergy are welcome to provide/approve the food items planned to be distributed in class.
- Parents hosting classroom parties will be asked to limit treats/sweets to one item and always offer a fruit or veggie option. For beverages, offer water or milk as opposed to juice. Goodie bags filled with candy are discouraged and sodas are always prohibited.
- If you are scheduled to go into your child's classroom to be a Mystery Reader, or help out with a monthly craft, YOU are the treat! Please refrain from bringing or sending in treats to share unless it is an integral part of the activity. Your child's teacher can let you know when it is appropriate to provide treats.
- If you are asked to fill an estimation jar, try to use non-food items.
- Please schedule all treats, including cafeteria-purchased birthday treats, with your child's teacher to avoid duplication in the same day.

F. Craft Ideas

There is a Room Parent Idea Book in the hutch located outside of the office. It contains craft and cooking ideas you may want to use throughout the year. Please share your successful project ideas with the Room Parent Chair to make available to other classrooms. The Georgia PTA and National PTA websites also have ideas, www.georgiapta.org and www.pta.org.

G. Teacher's Birthdays and Teacher Appreciation Day

There is a place on the Table of Contents page in your Room Parent handbook to mark your teacher's and assistant's birthday. If a birthday falls on a non-school day, pick a day to celebrate. Some assistants work in several classrooms; you may want to combine your birthday plans. Please try to keep this simple. It is not necessary to send gifts. A limit of \$25 of class funds can be used for each teacher's birthday. Anything purchased from the funds must be presented from the whole class.

Please ask your teachers to complete a getting to know you questionnaire. This will help when planning celebrations for the teachers. A sample questionnaire is at the end of the handbook.

There are several ways you can help your class celebrate their teacher's birthday:

1. Provide him/her with a special lunch (several parents can contribute food)
2. Give him/her some extra time in the classroom by reading to the class
3. Have students make an extra-large birthday card together.
4. Bring in muffins or a special coffee to start the day.
5. Ask each child to bring in a store bought/homemade birthday card and one flower which can be collected into a bouquet.

Teacher Appreciation Week is in February and a schedule of activities to honor the teachers will be given out at the follow up Room Parent Meeting in January.

H. Classroom Parties:

There are two class parties of one hour duration. A Holiday party is scheduled in December and an End of the Year Party is scheduled in May.

Please talk to your teacher before you plan the refreshments and activities for your parties. They will have some good ideas for both and are aware of the accepted curriculum-based topics that can be celebrated in school as well as allergies present in the classroom. Please note balloons are prohibited on school grounds.

Please use the assistance of other parents in your classroom. Most parents are quite receptive to sending in refreshments, if they have enough notice. If you need lots of supplies, either for the activity planned or for the refreshments, send out a note that requests one item from every student. Send these out early to get the best response!

I. Helpful Hints

1. Share your Room Parent duties and responsibilities with your assistant room parent(s).
2. Ask all the parents in the classroom to volunteer. If someone is unable to work at the first event/activity that is offered, then ask again for a future project.
3. Remind parents of their commitments to the class in advance of events.
4. Communicate often with your teacher through email or notes. Then you can keep in touch with any spontaneous projects/activities/academic needs of your teacher.
5. Being organized will make this position a lot easier to handle. Using charts, calendars or schedules keeps everything in perspective and allows you to keep track of your volunteers.
6. Don't forget to take pictures! Turn them into our Yearbook Committee Chairs and your class will be featured in our Barnwell Yearbook!

IV. Parent Teacher Night

This is your night to meet the parents in your class and introduce yourself as the Room Parents. You will only need a few minutes to explain what the teacher has planned for classroom activities. Then ask the parents to sign up for all the activities and events they would like to participate in on sheets you have provided.

V. Available Work Areas / Dress Code

A copy of Barnwell's Adult Use Only & Dress Code Policy has been included for your information. Please inform your parent volunteers of the policy so that we may keep all Barnwell students and their younger siblings safe!

Your cooperation and assistance is needed to insure adherence to Barnwell's "Adult Use Only" Area policy. There are several areas in the building that are designated as adult use/authorized personnel only due to machinery, equipment, multi-user, and general adult traffic. These areas include the **workroom area behind the front counter in the front office, the copy room and the teachers lounge and workroom.** If you are working in the school, please adhere to this school policy.

All the mentioned rooms contain equipment, computers, wiring, machinery, or vending machines that can become a curiosity to small children as well as school age children. The vending machines are for adult use only. These areas are constant traffic areas throughout the day, as well as before and after school. At no time should children of any age be in any "Adult Use Only" area, as is the policy with Barnwell staff members. We simply ask that you assist us with adhering to the same policy for the protection and safety of your children, as well as the respect for the "Adult Use Only" areas. Volunteers in the classroom may be asked not to take pre-school aged children and infants into the classrooms as it may create distractions for other children.

We also ask that when you are volunteering at Barnwell you adhere to the dress code our students are asked to follow. This includes no short shorts, athletic attire or anything that would be distracting to the students and others. We ask that you present yourself in the same professional manner that we ask of our students and staff.

VI. Donation Request Letter and Follow up Letter

Your teacher and Room Parent group may decide to ask classroom parents for a "blanket donation" to cover supplies and activities for the year. Please use the following letter to ask for the donation. It has been approved for your use. Below the letter is a follow up letter that may be sent to remind parents that have not yet contributed after a reasonable amount of time. All other communication with parents regarding money must be approved by the Room Parent Chair and the principal prior to sending it out.

SAMPLE DONATION REQUEST LETTER:

[insert date]

Dear Parents of [insert teacher name]'s x Grade,

During the course of the year, Room Parents are responsible for coordinating classroom activities and projects such as:

1. Winter Party, Teacher Appreciation Week and End of School Year Party
2. Classroom projects (art, science, music, drama, etc.)
3. Cooking projects carried out at the discretion of the teacher

We are requesting a maximum, VOLUNTARY donation of \$25.00 per student to cover the cost of these activities. If you wish, you may contribute in 1 of 3 ways:

1. (optional per Treasurer's preference) Send donation via PayPal to xxx
2. Bring cash or check (payable to xxx) to our [insert date] Parent-Teacher Night
3. Send check (payable to xxx) to school with your student in an envelope marked 'Class Treasurer'

We look forward to sharing with you at our [insert date] Parent-Teacher Night the many opportunities for parents to participate in classroom enrichment activities throughout the school year and how we will put our class funds to good use!

An accounting will be available on request by the Room Parent showing collection and distribution of money. **Thank you in advance for considering a donation. Please remember that contributions are optional.**

xxx, Room Parent

xxx, Class Treasurer

SAMPLE FOLLOW UP LETTER:

[insert date]

Dear Parents of [insert teacher name]'s x Grade:

A big thank you to those of you who have made your contribution to our class fund!!! This money will ensure a wonderful and memorable year for each child. If you have not yet had the chance to send your \$25 voluntary donation, you may still contribute in 1 of 2 ways:

1. (optional per Treasurer's preference) Send donation via PayPal to [xxx](#)
2. Send check (payable to xxx) to school with your student in an envelope marked 'Class Treasurer'

We are asking to receive all optional donations by [insert date] so that we may begin budgeting for our activities this year. If you have any questions please contact me at [insert contact info]. Thank you again for your support!

xxx, Class Treasurer

Classroom Budget Items

Listed below are items you may want to consider in your classroom funds budget. Holiday and end of year gifts should not be purchased with class funds. See the gift guidelines in the next section.

- Two classroom parties
- Classroom projects
- Teacher Birthday (Limit \$ 25 each)
- Teacher and Assistant Appreciation Week

Holiday Party	\$ 75
End of Year Party	\$ 75
Crafts/Activities	\$ 100
Teacher Appreciation	\$ 50
Teacher Birthday	\$ 25

Accounting and your class funds:

1. Select a treasurer to be in charge of your funds. Room parents should not also act as treasurer. Class donations can be made via check to the treasurer.
2. Deposit any collected checks promptly upon receipt. Class treasurers should not hold checks past 2 weeks for depositing.
3. Keep a current record of funds.
4. Set up an easy way to reimburse parents that purchase items for the class that will be paid for from the funds. Set a time frame of 2 weeks after an event occurs to get the receipts and reimburse the parents.
5. If you have money left in your treasury at the end of the year, you must spend it. If you cannot use the money on the end-of-year party, purchase something for the classroom or for the school.

VII. Gift Guidelines

The PTA Board created the following guidelines for holiday gifts

1. Class funds collected at the beginning of the year should **not** be used for holiday or end of year gifts.
2. The class may ask for voluntary donations prior to the winter holidays to be used for a group gift. The request cannot be made by the Lead Room parent(s). It must be another parent in the class. It may be a note sent home, email or telephone call. If you are planning on a group gift, organize this well in advance of the holiday/end of year.
3. The request must state that it is a voluntary donation and the recommended maximum per family is \$ 10.00.
4. Parents may choose to not participate and give their own gift apart from the group gift or not.

The following article came from the Policy of the Georgia State PTA Board. It has been included in the Barnwell Room Parent Handbook for your information. The article addresses gifts to teachers and other faculty members and provides guidelines so that we might prevent a conflict of interest. Please remember that the teacher is responsible for determining if gifts are not appropriate, but if you are asked about this by a parent, refer them to this policy.

Professional/Classified - Gifts and Solicitations Board Policy GA PTA

Effective Date: July 10, 1997

To avoid a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict, employees of the Board of Education shall not directly or indirectly accept, solicit, receive or agree to receive any gift, rebate, benefit, favor service or other thing of value from any vendor or prospective vendor of the School System or from any other person or company doing or seeking to do business with the System. Exceptions are: food and /or beverage consumed at an occasional meal or event; food, beverage or expenses associated with normal and customary business or social function or activity; promotional items distributed to the general public or employees, an award, plaque, certificate, memento or similar item given in recognition of the employee's civic, charitable, political, professional or public service; any gift with a value less than \$25.00; income derived from non-school employment that is consistent with Board policy; reasonable expenses for travel, lodging, food and registration to permit an employee to attend a meeting on behalf of the System, or times given for the use and benefit of students of the System.

Giving gifts to teachers, coaches, club sponsors and other school employees at certain times of the year is traditional for many students and parents. The Board does not wish to prohibit teachers and employees from accepting gifts of nominal value on special occasions. However, no one should be pressured to give or contribute to an employee gift, and employees must never allow a gift from a student, parent or anyone else to influence their treatment of others. Employees should not accept expensive or frequent gifts because this may create a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict.

As a general rule, gifts that meet the following guidelines will not be considered to create a conflict of interest: (1) an individual gift with a value of \$25.00 or less; (2) a group gift not exceeding the total value of \$500.00.

The Barnwell PTA Executive Board along with the Barnwell administration has adopted a policy this year with regard to teacher gifts. This policy should be adhered to when recognizing your teacher this year. We feel that the giving of gifts is a personal decision and as always, parents can give gifts to the teacher on an individual basis at their discretion. Room Parents should not direct the giving of gifts by soliciting contributions from parents to purchase a group gift or gift certificate for a teacher. This may place pressure on some parents who feel that their child will be left out if they do not contribute. If room parents have additional money in their general contribution fund, they may purchase a small token of appreciation for the teacher's birthday or teacher appreciation day. This gift should be a gift from the entire class. Do not solicit additional money just for this purpose.

Once again, thank you so much for agreeing to be the Room Parent in your child's classroom. It is a very important role and much appreciated. Have a great year.

(updated 8/2018)

Getting to Know You

In an effort to help the room parents honor each teacher for all their hard work during the school year, the PTA is asking each teacher to please fill out this questionnaire. Thank you for taking the time to help us out.

Name: _____

Birthday: _____ Milestone Year? _____

Favorite Restaurants : _____

Hobbies : _____

Do you enjoy professional or college sporting events? Which teams?

Favorite Charitable Organization

Favorite Flowers: _____

Favorite Lunch Foods & Drinks: _____

Do you enjoy reading? What types of books? _____

Favorite Leisure Activities: _____

(updated 8/2018)