

Hillside Elementary School

Class Parent Manual



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Introduction

Thank you for volunteering to be a Class Parent for your child's class this year! Your assistance is invaluable to the teachers, staff and PTA of Hillside Elementary School, and of course the students.

Below you will find five sections to guide you through the year:

1. Class Parent Responsibilities (p. 3)
2. Classroom Parties (p. 6)
3. Back to School Night Checklist (p. 8)
4. Sample Budget (p. 9)
5. Sample Welcome Letter (p. 10)

If at any time you have questions or concerns, please feel free to contact a member of the PTA Executive Board.

Class Parent Responsibilities

Each class will have 2 Class Parents. It is helpful for the Class Parents to meet at the beginning of school, as well as meet with the teacher, to coordinate responsibilities and expectations for the year. Below are the primary roles and responsibilities to be divided among the Class Parents as you see fit:

Class Correspondent

The Class Correspondent is the main contact for the teacher and for the other parents in the class. This Class Parent is responsible for:

- creating a class list at the beginning of the year that includes all parent email addresses and distributing the list to all class parents
- coordinating with the teacher as needed to get volunteers to chaperone field trips, help with parties, assist in the classroom when needed, etc.

Prior to Back to School Night, this Class Parent should contact the teacher to ask how she or he would like to be contacted during the school year. In addition, you should ask the teacher for a few minutes at Back to School night to talk with parents about donating to the class fund, volunteering, etc.

(See Back to School Checklist, p. 8 below.)

Treasurer

One Class Parent should collect money for the class fund and keep the official class budget. They should keep records (receipts) of money spent to maintain an accurate budget at all times.

During Back to School Night and the first few weeks thereafter, the Treasurer collects **voluntary** contributions for the class fund. This amount should be **\$25 per family**.

Please note: Classes that have a co-teacher or permanent aide should collect an additional \$5, making the total amount \$30 per family.

The money collected for the class fund should cover the cost of the class parties and teacher gifts as outlined below.

**See also the Sample Budget, p. 9 below.*

Note: In the case of extenuating circumstances, the Hillside PTA has a small fund set aside to assist class parents who run into financial situations that are outside of their control. If you have any questions, or are in need of some financial aid, please reach out to the PTA President.

Classroom Parties

Class Parents should take the lead to organize, plan, and chaperone the class parties. There are four parties held throughout the year:

- Halloween
- Holiday
- Valentine's Day
- End of the Year Party

**See the Classroom Parties section, p. 6 below, for more guidance and details.*

Teacher Appreciation

The PTA has a Teacher Appreciation Committee that organizes several events for teachers and staff throughout the year, including providing Welcome Back goodie bags in the fall, Holiday Staff Luncheon, and hosting a themed luncheon during National Teacher Appreciation Week in the Spring. Depending on budget and preference, Class Parents may undertake additional efforts such as the following:

December holidays: You may coordinate a class gift.

Teacher Appreciation Week: The Thursday of Teacher Appreciation Week, the Class Parents are responsible for decorating their teacher's door, as well as create a poster for an additional staff member. You may wish to organize cards, special treats, and/or flowers from the class.

End-of-the-year teacher gift: You may wish to present the teacher with a thank-you gift at the end of the year.

Note: Some examples of gifts could be gift cards or Visa bank cards. The teacher wish list at the PTA's Book Fair (held in November) is an excellent source for gifts. Also, donations to charitable causes in lieu of a gift are often appreciated.

Note: **PLEASE DO NOT** collect additional funds for any of these activities. You should decide at the beginning of the year what you can undertake based on your class fund budget, and let families know what the class fund will cover and what it will not.

PTA Meetings

It is mandatory to attend at least 2 PTA meetings over the course of the school year. This is to ensure that the necessary information is being provided to your class. Please coordinate so that both class parents do not attend the same meeting.

Photography (Optional)

It is nice to have pictures at class parties, field trips or other fun classroom activities. A classroom photographer can set up a website for all parents to see the pictures. If a Class Parent or other parent from the class takes on this role, please remember to make the website private.

Parent Social Event (Optional)

Some Class Parents opt to organize a social event outside of school to provide parents the opportunity to meet one another in a casual setting. This event typically takes place early in the school year and can take many forms: cookies and drinks with kids at the park; a pot luck dinner; an ice cream social; a cocktail party. A Class Parent may host the party, find another parent to host, or organize the gathering at an outside location. Don't worry if everyone can't attend -- no matter what day and time you will pick, families will have scheduling conflicts.

Important Note: It is imperative that class parents recognize and respect the boundaries of their responsibilities and roles within the school. It is never appropriate to provide the classroom with random or unexpected visits. This is disruptive to learning and cannot be condoned. If there's ever a need to discuss class parent-related issues with teachers, please reach out to schedule a mutually convenient time to meet.

Classroom Parties

Class parents are responsible for organizing four parties throughout the year:

- Halloween
- Holiday
- Valentine's Day
- End-of-the-Year Party

The parties should be a fun time for the children and usually involve:

- decorations
- games and crafts
- small treat

When are the Parties?

The teacher will let you know the dates and times, though most parties take place in the afternoon.

Communicate with the Teacher

Touch base with the teacher before the party to finalize all details. Find out when you can begin setting up and make sure the teacher is comfortable with your planned activities. Ask if parents are welcome to attend.

****Important Allergy Note:** Be sure to ask the teacher if there are any food allergies in the class before you plan snacks or treats. If there is a child with an allergy, ask the teacher what precautions need to be taken and any suggestions they may have for specific foods that child can consume. If it's a serious allergy (e.g. peanut) be very careful -- some children can get sick even if there is just peanut butter in the same room.

Communicate with Parents/Recruit Additional Volunteers

At least two weeks or more before the party, send out an email to the parents in your class informing them of the date/time and any other important details they may need to know. If appropriate, invite parents to join in for all or part of the party. If needed, ask for additional volunteers to help chaperone the party, or to donate food or drink items.

Budget

Stick to your budget. Party favors and elaborate food are not necessary. Think simple but fun!

Decorations

Think simple again. Some classroom teachers keep a box of decorations left over from previous years. This can save a lot of money!

A suggestion: Cover a group of desks with a large plastic table cloth. This adds to the décor and makes clean-up much easier.

Ideas for Activities, Games and Crafts

Places to purchase inexpensive games, supplies and crafts.

- Target
- Dollar Store
- Amazing Savings
- Oriental Trading Company (www.orientaltrading.com)
- Amazon

Activity ideas:

- Freeze dance
- Bean bag toss
- Bingo
- Photobooth
- Build a monster from recyclables (Halloween)
- Make Valentines for community service (e.g., for returning veterans)

Food and Drink

Keep it simple. There is no need for anything elaborate. The kids will be thrilled with whatever you bring.

Clean-Up

It is very important to leave the classroom the way you found it. Teachers really appreciate it!

Back to School Night Checklist

Class Parents will have a brief opportunity to speak to the parents of your class at Back to School Night. Here is a checklist to guide your comments:

- ✓ Introduce yourselves
- ✓ Explain some of the things you will be doing:
 - Acting as a liaison with the teacher
 - Collecting money for the voluntary class fund
 - Organizing class parties
 - Coordinating teacher gifts
 - Communicating important information from the PTA
 - Organizing a social event for the parents outside of School (optional)
- ✓ Explain what parents can do to help and how you will ask for volunteers (e.g., you will be using Sign-Up Genius or another online sign-up site):
 - Assist with class parties
 - Donate items for the class parties
 - Chaperone field trips
- ✓ Collect parent contact information/emails
- ✓ Collect money for the class fund (cash only)
- ✓ Encourage parents to join and get involved with the Hillside PTA, which funds and hosts many of the school's activities, student enrichment, and educational resources and projects for the year.

Sample Welcome Letter

Your Welcome Letter should be sent out after Back to School Night. Feel free to add your specific information and make this letter your own. You may choose to send this as an email or print out copies to be sent home in the children's folders.

A Suggestion: If you send home this letter, class parents have had success attaching an envelope to the letter for the parents to send their contribution back in. This is at your discretion and expense if you decide to do so.

Dear _____ Grade Parents,

We wanted to send out a(n) email/note introducing ourselves as your class parents and explain our role. As class parents, we will help Mrs./Mr. _____ facilitate class parties, chaperone field trips and organize and purchase holiday and end of the year gifts for Mrs./Mr. _____.

To begin the year we will be organizing a class collection. The purpose of this collection is to streamline the process of funding class parties, teacher gifts and fundraising, making it as convenient as possible for you as busy parents. Below is the breakdown of the amount we are asking for from each child. Also, since we will only be collecting \$25 per child to cover the cost of everything for the year, we may occasionally ask for parents to donate specific items for our class parties.

Classroom parties/Teacher Appreciation	\$10.00
Teacher holiday gift	\$5.00
Teacher end of the year gift	\$5.00
Spring Fundraiser contribution	\$5.00
TOTAL	\$25.00

Please send your \$25 cash contribution (please no checks) in an envelope with your child's name on it and Attention: _____.

We are looking forward to a great year!
Thank you,

Class Parent names and email addresses