

2015-16 Haynes Room Parent Guidelines

Confidentiality

We are fortunate to have many volunteer opportunities at Haynes School, one of which is being a room parent. These volunteer opportunities provide us the opportunity to be in classrooms, attend field trips and other special class activities. It is imperative that all volunteers remember that confidentiality be the keyword.

You may see or hear something about a child's behavior, learning style or even family situation and such situations should be treated with the utmost confidential nature. If you have any concerns during your tenure as a room parent, please bring it to the teacher's attention.

Identify Teacher Requirements

Every teacher is unique and will therefore have different needs. Schedule a meeting with your teacher to determine those needs and to understand how best to work together. Some suggestions for discussion should not be limited to, but can include the following:

- Classroom celebrations
- Parental involvement (what level of parental involvement would your teacher prefer and when?)
- Craft projects
- Field trips
- Donations needed (paper products, craft supplies, etc.)
- Scholastic book orders

Classroom Expenses

After meeting with the teacher and determining upcoming classroom needs, it may be necessary to ask your families for monetary and/or material donations. **Please remember that donations are voluntary.** It is also important to remember that it is not your responsibility, as a room parent, to pay for crafts or other classroom activities if there are not enough classroom funds. If you are confronted with such a situation, please let me know immediately.

Kindergarten classrooms are given a stipend from HOP to help minimize the costs of classroom activities. In the event that you need additional money, you should ask for monetary or material donations from the families in your classroom. For 2015-16, kindergarten has an overall budget of \$450 across the grade. With regard to the HOP provided funds, you will be expected to submit a HOP reimbursement form, with your original receipts, to the HOP Treasurer, Patty Vadgama. The forms can be found on the

HOP website under Get Involved—Volunteer Resources—Expense Reimbursement Form.

It is a good practice to keep track of all of the classroom expenses throughout the year so that HOP is aware of actual classroom costs. HOP discourages room parents from paying classroom expenses out of their pocket, in excess of their own classroom donation.

Email guidelines

All emails being sent to your classroom will need to be sent using blind copy. The only time the room parent can send an email without using the blind cc, is when a small group of people have been selected to attend a craft or field trip and the names have been announced to the class.

When sending out grade wide emails the room parent must send the email to Nancy Carbutt, who will then send the email out to each family.

Classroom Celebrations

Historically, Halloween, holiday/winter, Valentine's Day and End of Year are celebrations common across all grades. Your teacher will let you know if and how he/she plans to celebrate.

Due to the number of children with severe allergies, and other medical conditions, the celebrations should not include food or drink. This is to include any food products used in crafts (i.e paper mache, ink pads, gingerbread, etc.). Lisa Nigrelli, the Haynes school nurse, needs a food form submitted to her at least 7 days prior to a project or celebration if you are requesting to have a food product in the classroom.

Sudbury Public Schools party policy is to keep celebrations non- religious in nature (i.e. holiday vs. Christmas/Hanukkah). All parties are required to be held at school and under no circumstances should end of the year parties be held off-site or have swimming during school hours.

Although the specific dates/times for events may not be known at your initial teacher meeting, it will be helpful to have a list of events for the year and volunteer requirements, so you can plan accordingly. For each celebration, ask the teacher if all parents are invited or if he/she will need a few parents for assistance. If all parents are not invited, please confirm the number requested.

Particularly in the younger grades, teachers do crafts during the parties. The teacher will either let you know what they have planned or may ask you to select a craft and tell you how much time will be allotted for the activity. You do not need to do all the work. There are many different ways that you can ask for volunteers. You can ask for

assistance with craft preparation, shopping, classroom assistance, or perhaps even ask volunteers to manage a planned classroom activity to give yourself a break.

Some of the grades will coordinate a craft/project across all the classes. In those instances, we suggest that you work with the other classrooms in your grade for purposes of purchasing supplies. Buying in larger quantities should help to keep the costs down across all the classrooms.

Field trips/Classroom Volunteers

Identify the field trips that will be organized during the year. Even if specific dates have not been set yet, it is a good idea to discuss them to determine the number of chaperones required and possible training required to attend, and approximate dates. In addition to the teacher-requested chaperones, parents of children with allergies (particularly sensitive food allergies) and other special needs often need to accompany their own child on field trips. The School Department specifically supports the parents attending. However, this should not interfere with or replace the number of chaperones the teacher requests.

When asking for volunteers, please give the parents a window in which to respond. Ideally, this time frame will consist of at least 5 school days. State this time frame explicitly in your request for volunteers. Families with same grade children in different classrooms should be given equal opportunity to volunteer in each classroom in order for each child to have the chance to have their family member with them. In the case where a family member is selected to volunteer in two classrooms at the same time, the family should have the choice as to which classroom they will volunteer

In some classes, there are more parents who want to attend a field trip than there are chaperone opportunities. Please make every effort to offer a chaperone opportunity to as many families as possible. You can do this by maintaining a list throughout the year of families who have volunteered and went on each field trip. If more people volunteer than are needed to chaperone the field trip, first priority is given to those families who have not yet had an opportunity to chaperone. If you still have too many volunteers, draw names out of a hat.

Volunteers should not be selected on a first come first serve basis. When possible, it is also a good practice to have a parent backup in the event of last minute cancellations.

Being the room parent does not mean that you have to or can go on all the field trips.

- Please remind parents that they need to have a CORI form (good for 3 years) and a signed volunteer form (good for 1 year) on file at Haynes to be able to volunteer in school or on trips. They will not be allowed into the classroom or on trips without these forms on file.

Field Day T-shirts

This is certainly not a requirement, but a tradition. Some teachers have mentioned that they would like to have the field trip t-shirts early in the year for students to wear on field trips. Typically, each classroom in a grade chooses a different color. You will need to ask the teacher if they have a color preference and then communicate this with the other classroom's room parents in that grade. Many teachers allow the students to decorate their t-shirts prior to field day. Other teachers use them for class skits or in their curriculum throughout the year. There may also be some teachers not interested in doing t-shirts at all. HOP has budgeted \$275/grade for t-shirts.

Gifts and Teacher Appreciation

There are several occasions to recognize the extraordinary teachers and staff that we have here at Haynes. We do ask that when gifts are given, that you recognize the State/District guidelines. The intention is always good to compliment our teachers with gifts. However, by not adhering to the State/District guidelines, we may be causing more work for them when our gifts exceed the guidelines.

Gifts can be done by individual families or as a classroom gift. It is NOT the responsibility of the room parent to organize a gift. However, if you would like to take this on, in addition to your room parent responsibilities, that is acceptable. This is also an opportunity to let another parent volunteer handle a classroom, coordinated gift. All gifts, individual or classroom, should follow the State/District Guidelines. See attachment.

Teacher Appreciation Week is in May. Notification of the exact date(s) will be sent to you in April. For this event, it is traditional at Haynes to coordinate something simple to show our teachers how much they are appreciated. We ask that you choose a simple child-based idea/activity. Some ideas that have been done in the past are to have each child bring in one flower (picked or purchased) to create a bouquet, or have the children write a card or poem at home for their teacher. If you have a classroom assistant who works regularly in the classroom, you may wish to consider recognizing them as well. In addition, HOP organizes a luncheon during teacher appreciation week for all of the staff and teachers.

Special Occasions (baby showers, weddings, retirements) –HOP gives a gift to teachers and staff members when they have a baby or retire. We encourage you to let HOP handle the gifts on behalf of the parents for these occasions. Should you choose to do something from your class or on own, please follow the State/District Gift Giving Guidelines.

Scholastic Book Orders

Teachers have been encouraged to offer Scholastic Book selections to their students on a monthly basis. Since tallying the orders, handling the payments, placing the order, and sorting and delivering the books takes time, this is a great job for a room parent or other volunteer. However, some teachers like to do it themselves. Talk to your teacher to find out if they would like to delegate this responsibility. Not only is the purchase of

these books great for our children, but the school can also benefit from the points earned for future purchases.

Miscellaneous Items and Reminders

- Publication permission forms – There is a Do Not Publish list at Haynes. Any pictures taken at classroom events need to be cleared with the school's Do Not Publish List before you forward to families via email. Pictures taken at school should not be posted on any websites or sent to the paper until cleared by DNP list.
- It would be helpful to have a designated parent in the classroom take pictures throughout the year for the Haynes yearbook. Pictures from classroom celebrations, crafts, indoor and outdoor recesses are all great opportunities for yearbook photos, but need to be coordinated with your teacher.
- Please remember that in all cases classroom donations are voluntary. When asking for contributions, please always use language that expresses that the donation is voluntary and the amount given is at the family's discretion.
- Please be aware of the SPS bullying prevention and intervention and your role as volunteer and room parent; no intervention is to be taken. Any reports should be passed on to the teacher.