



# Flagstaff Academy PTO Room Parent Handbook

Thank you for volunteering to be a room parent for your child's class. This handbook was created to help you understand your role as a room parent and outline the major activities you will be heading up throughout the school year.

Room Parents foster communication by and among parents, students and teachers at Flagstaff Academy. Due to the unique circumstances this year, the Room Parent position will look a little different and will evolve as we see what the school year brings. This position may also look very different from classroom to classroom as our teachers may have a variety of different needs. As changes arise, we will communicate with you any changes that may affect Room Parents.

Please feel free to contact the Room Parent Coordinators, Leigh Ann Ellett ([hopela27@gmail.com](mailto:hopela27@gmail.com)) or Arianne Olson ([arianne.rochelle@gmail.com](mailto:arianne.rochelle@gmail.com)) with any ideas, suggestions, or questions that you may have. Thank you again for being a PTO volunteer! The Flagstaff students, teachers and other parents all appreciate your dedication.

*These materials are also available on the Flagstaff PTO website: [www.flagstaffacademypto.org](http://www.flagstaffacademypto.org).*

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# Room Parent Responsibilities

- 1. PTO Liaison-** As Room Parent you are the liaison between the PTO and the parents in your class. You will occasionally receive information regarding school/PTO events. You do not have to volunteer for everything, nor are you responsible for recruiting volunteers (unless you volunteer to recruit), but please let your parents know about the events and encourage them to volunteer or attend. Occasionally, the PTO may ask Room Parents to send out an email regarding a special event or need. You may also get questions from parents regarding PTO events. Please answer if you have the info, or you can always send the question to Leigh Ann Ellett or Arianne Olson, Room Parent Coordinators, at [hopela27@gmail.com](mailto:hopela27@gmail.com) or [arianne.rochelle@gmail.com](mailto:arianne.rochelle@gmail.com). We would love to see you at PTO meetings, if you are able to attend! They are typically the first Sunday of the month at 4:00 pm and are currently being held virtually. Watch for schoolwide PTO emails for the meeting link. Consult the school calendar to verify, as there are a few deviations from this schedule.
- 2. Parties-** In previous years, the Room Parent helped plan classroom parties for various holidays. Due to the nature of virtual learning, parties may not happen this year. Please contact your teacher to discuss how they might like to celebrate holidays, any party options and how you may be able to help.
- 3. Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week-** Another responsibility is to communicate to your parents regarding Teacher/Staff Appreciation Week in the spring. We have an excellent Hospitality committee who have done a great job simplifying this week for the parents. They typically have a theme for each day of the week for students to participate in if they choose. In advance, the Hospitality Committee will get these plans to the Room Parents and it will be your responsibility to share this information with your parents.
- 4. Teacher Gifts-**Gifts for teachers are not required, but many parents like to give gifts especially around the holidays and during Teacher Appreciation Week. Due to the frequently changing school situation we are in, gifts may be easiest to handle as individuals instead of as class group gifts. If your teacher keeps any wishlists on Amazon, Usborne etc. and is willing to share those, you can offer those to the class as items they can purchase and have sent directly to the teacher at any time throughout the year. In addition, the office usually puts together a staff favorites list each year. When we receive this list we can get it to you and you can share your teacher's favorite restaurants, stores, likes etc. with your class. ***Please do not share the actual all school list, but tell your class the items and places your teacher enjoys.*** If we continue with virtual learning it will be best if any gifts can be items sent directly to the teacher through a wishlist purchase or to their email address.
- 5. Contacting new families-** Since we have started this year at home, we have many families new to Flagstaff Academy who may not know anyone yet. We're asking that you contact the new parents in your class with a short email. Introduce yourself, share whatever you would like about your experience at Flagstaff, and offer to answer any

questions they might have. The key is just reaching out and trying to help them feel welcome. We are currently working on getting these names to you.

- 6. Gatherings-** Just a quick word about some guidelines from the school regarding any gatherings. Connections for social purposes cannot happen using a classroom issued Google Meet. Parents may set up their own ways for friends to gather in a socially distant way (Zoom , Facetime, park etc.) but the school platforms cannot be used outside of classroom purposes. If your teacher has not already done so, you can ask parents who want to share email/phone info for the purpose of social connections to opt in to such a list. This can be done with a spreadsheet or a Google Form where only parents who want to opt in add their information.

## Room Parent To Do's

1. First things first- Connecting with the Teacher
  - a. Connect with your teacher via email or by scheduling a Google Meet with them. We realize every teacher may have different needs during this unprecedented school year, so ask what their needs are and how you and parents in the class can help. Be sure to ask the teacher to share the parent email list for the class with you. **On any emails you send, be sure to blind copy (BCC) to protect the privacy of all families.** Communication between you and your child's teacher is the key to success!
2. Send out a message introducing yourself as the Room Parent to the parents in your class. Let parents know who you are, who your child is and how to reach you. If your teacher has shared any requests or needs, this is a great time for you to share that with the parents as well.

### ***AND THE MOST IMPORTANT THING OF ALL???***

## Delegate and Ask for Assistance!!!

1. No room parent is an island. Make sure to ask parents for help. If you do not get enough volunteers and/or supplies after the first email then ASK AGAIN! You can't and should not have to do this on your own, or with your own money. Sometimes a note from the teacher helps if you don't get enough initial response. A little reminder doesn't hurt! After all, it's all for the kids!!!

## Best Practices

### Parties

1. Currently, due to virtual learning and regulations it doesn't look like classroom parties will happen like they typically have, even if students return to the building in some capacity.

We encourage you to talk with your teacher about how they might like to celebrate holidays with their class and offer any assistance you can. If students return to the building and regulations are reduced, we will give more specific information regarding parties.

## Money

1. While we feel it is best this year to let individual families purchase their own teacher gifts, if you choose to purchase a class gift for your teacher at the winter holidays, birthday, and/or Teacher Appreciation week, the best way to collect money this year is likely going to be through a no contact method such as Venmo, Zelle, or PayPal.
2. Some Room Parents thrive on spreadsheets, others don't. However, *it is highly recommended that you keep track of money collected and money spent (keep your receipts) just in case a parent has any questions.*

## Teacher Appreciation

1. When the Hospitality Committee communicates the theme for each day, please send out an email to your class encouraging them to participate however they are able.
2. Don't forget the paraprofessionals for your grade!

## Other

1. Appreciation- Expressing appreciation leads to more volunteers and a greater community! Send thank you emails to individuals who help out.
2. Enlisting Volunteers- If you have any need for a sign up, set up one sign-up sheet per event/activity/opportunity and share on google docs. Make sure to set to share so parents can edit and sign up on the sheet.

## FAQ

1. Sending out Emails
  - Obtain a list of parent emails from your teacher. Many teachers will share this with you and remove themselves from the communication stream. However, occasionally, they choose to manage the communication to the parents which is fine as well.
  - **Always remember to use the BCC (blind carbon copy) when sending out emails to your parents. Some parents do not wish to have their personal contact information shared.**
  - Email drafts can always be sent to your teacher or the Room Parent Coordinator first before sending to parents if you are unsure of what to say.

2. Your first email to parents
  - Introduce yourself as room parent
  - Present any needs the teacher has shared with you
  - Finally, let parents know that you will be sending occasional communications regarding volunteer opportunities, wishlist items that the teacher has, PTO needs and other pertinent information.

## Examples

### Sample Introductory Email:

Hello Parents,

I just wanted to take a moment to introduce myself as our Room Parent for *enter teacher's name here* this school year. I am Mrs. Superparent, aka Kid Awesome's mom. We've been at Flagstaff Academy for \_\_\_\_ years. Obviously this year is quite a bit different and we are being flexible as things change. I have spoken with *enter teacher's name here* and they have let me know that they are in need of parent help with XYZ right now. If you're able to help with any of these needs, please contact me at *your email address here*. As needs arise I'll be in touch throughout the year. Please let me know if you have any questions. I'm happy to help! I am excited to see what this school year brings and thanks for all of your help!

Best,  
Mrs. Superparent  
xxx's Room Parent

**Thank you so much for your willingness to serve Flagstaff Academy! If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to ask.**