



KOLB ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
Room Parent Handbook
2021 – 2022

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Welcome Room Parent,

Congratulations & thank you for volunteering to be a room parent for your child's classroom!

As a room parent, you play an integral part in providing valuable support to your child, their teacher, and your child's peers. Positive collaboration between parents and teachers always leads to maximum success not only for your child but for the entire Kolb community. So, thank you for stepping up to be a room parent, we truly appreciate your time and effort.

Whether you are a first-time room parent or a seasoned pro, this handbook will provide you with helpful information for the upcoming school year. This handbook gives a clear outline of the various room parent duties and supplies you with ideas to help guide you during the upcoming year.

So many of the fun activities the children look forward to; are made possible by the room parents and other class volunteers. Not to mention the time saved by the teachers, allowing them to spend more time teaching our children!

Please feel free to contact me with any questions you may have throughout the school year. Looking forward to working with you all!

Lydia Wilson

Director of Volunteers & Room Parent Coordinator

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Room Parent -- At a Glance

Rewards

- Working with the Teacher for fun class activities and celebrations.
- Being an asset to Kolb Elementary School.
- Enhancing the school year experience for every student in your child's class.

Important Responsibilities

- Introducing yourself and other Room Parents to the parents in your classroom through a letter (sample included in this handbook).
- Communicating through email with your child's teacher to discuss their needs for their class for the school year.
- Communication with parents through emails/website throughout the year.
- Planning class events, celebrations & managing class funds for parties*
- Helping with/getting volunteers for Kolb Parent-Faculty Club (PFC) activities throughout the school year.
- Attending Virtual PFC, Safety, Site Council, and Room Parent Meetings.
- Participating in school events.
- Organizing gifts for teachers to show teacher appreciation
- Helping with virtual teacher appreciation activities during Teacher Appreciation Week.

**There is a collection record sheet for your use at the back of this booklet*



Room Parent -- In Detail

- **Communication with your child's teacher**
 - It is VERY important to email your child's teacher and discuss their needs and expectations for the school year.
 - You will find that all teachers have preferences about how much participation they request from their room parents.
 - Teachers, like our children, are unique individuals and have different needs and requirements.
 - Some teachers have fully established routines for celebrations and other activities, while other teachers are content to allow you to coordinate some events fully.
 - Please follow your teacher's lead, and always remember how much the entire school community appreciates your time and efforts.

- **Introducing yourself and other room parents to the parents of your classroom through a letter**
 - An introductory email is a great way to introduce yourself to all the parents in the class and to provide them with your contact information.
 - Ask other parents about a classroom directory and sharing email addresses. This contact information should only be used in the classroom.
 - Be mindful of those who do not want their information given to others.
 - This letter is your first step in establishing a relationship with all the wonderful parents who will be helping and supporting you throughout the year.

- **Communication with parents through emails/website**
 - It is important to keep parents updated throughout the school year regarding upcoming classroom events.
 - Communication through email or a class website allows parents to feel welcome at parties and provides them with the opportunity to help throughout the year.

- **Helping with PFC correspondence throughout the school year**
 - PFC hosts many activities throughout the year. Room Parents help disseminate this information to their class and encourage participation.

- The PFC also relies on volunteers to staff every activity it runs throughout the school year. There is always a need for volunteers; **any amount of time is greatly appreciated!**
- **Fall Registration, Fall Product Fundraiser, Spring Fundraiser, and Book Fair**
 - These are Kolb's biggest fundraisers; the teachers and the PFC will need your help with different activities (more details will follow in weekly newsletters).
- **Attend Virtual PFC, Site Council, Safety Meetings**
 - Room parents are encouraged to attend monthly virtual school meetings.
 - These virtual meetings are open to everyone, and they help keep the Kolb Community updated with education, safety, staff, budget, events, and parent concerns.

The following are optional and fun duties we would love you to partake in; however, there is no obligation required

- **Organizing Gifts for teachers for Teacher Appreciation/Celebrations/other special occasions**
 - Communicate with the parents of your classroom to consider these events
- **Teacher Appreciation Week**
 - Teacher Appreciation Week is typically scheduled for the first week of May (you will be notified of the exact date through school communications).
 - The Appreciation Week includes ALL teachers and staff.



Room Parent Checklist

- Email Teacher
 - Class Calendar
 - Important Personal Questions
 - Expectations
- Letter of Introduction to Parents
- Set up Class Directory/Website
- Set up Gift Plan
- Attend Room Parent Meetings

Classroom Volunteering Guidelines

Being a good volunteer

- All in-class volunteers need to know that volunteering in the classroom is a privilege.
- Volunteers are there to work, not socialize, not observe the class, not have a private conference about their child.
- Volunteers that are a distraction or abuse their time in the class may be asked to leave.
- Let the family know how important it is to be responsible and courteous when they are in the classroom.
- Our volunteers can be great role models for the students.

Secrets of a good volunteer

- Sign in at the office and wear your volunteer tag at all times.
- Be on time.
- Be reliable.
- Be unobtrusive.
- Ask questions at the beginning of the shift (know where materials you might need are located and any other issues that might come up) so that you will not have to distract the teacher with these questions later.
- Find a substitute if you are unable to make your shift.
- Do not commit to something like chaperoning if you are not sure you can do it. The teachers count on every chaperone, and they can be left in a very awkward situation if a volunteer cancels at the last minute or does not show.
- Know that by not showing as planned you may upset your child. They worry when they expect you to be there.
- Follow your teacher's lead on how they like their class to be run.

Clearances

Important: You must have clearance forms on file to begin volunteering.

- Clearances are necessary for in-class volunteering or if you will be having any interaction with the students in a virtual setting. However, they are not necessary to attend parties or participate in school-sponsored events such as the Spring Fundraiser event.
- Volunteers that will be responsible for small groups or individual students must have clearances. This includes volunteers for things like reading groups, chaperones on field trips, chaperones during student-only events, driving a team or group of students to an event, and assisting in the classroom*.
- Volunteer Clearance Forms must be submitted to Kolb's Office annually.

Confidentiality

Kolb Elementary School takes student confidentiality very seriously and expects all volunteers to sign the confidentiality form.

- Everything that you see and hear in the classroom is confidential.
- This means everything...from "M. is an amazing reader!" to, "J. had to go to the principal's office today!" and anything in between.
- These things, especially the more positive ones, may seem like they should not be a problem, but they really can be, and you never know.
- Do not discuss observations and interactions that you witness or are part of at school; that is not your responsibility.
- The teachers and staff will share academic, social, behavioral, and emotional information with the families impacted as needed.
- Room parents set the tone among the other parents in the class, so your help is appreciated.

Siblings in the Classroom

- While we love our students' younger siblings, we CANNOT allow them in the classroom while you are working, so please make other arrangements for your little ones.



Kolb Elementary School Confidentiality Agreement

School Year 2021-2022

Please sign this form and email it to PFC and the classroom teacher.

During **Distance Learning**, parent volunteers will not be allowed on campus without an appointment made through the office.

However, if you are in contact virtually with Kolb students during Distance Learning, please show your consent to the following by signing below.

The same agreement shall apply IF parent volunteers will be allowed on-site when students return to campus.

I understand that in my capacity as a volunteer for Kolb Elementary School, I will acquire information and knowledge which is either legally protected as confidential or information and knowledge which is of a personal and private nature.

- I understand and agree that I shall not disclose to any other person or organization, any information acquired (including photographs, or information such as email addresses) during my work as a volunteer without express and written consent of that person or from the school's administration.

My signature below constitutes my acceptance of the terms of this confidentiality agreement.

Signature

Print Name

CLASS GIFT POLICY & GUIDELINES

Currently, the Kolb Elementary School Policy on gift-giving is to keep gifts under \$100.

Inform the family about the holiday gift plan by Thanksgiving so that they can plan accordingly. Each class is going to vary tremendously about the level of participation.

- **The Group Gift**

- It is reasonable to ask families to chip in for a gift so long as you ask in a way that lets people know it is **optional**.
- Also, be sure and express that while \$___ is the recommended donation; any amount is acceptable because budgets may vary.
- Please let the parents know what you will be using the money for (i.e., gift certificate).
- Come up with a system that works great for you (and share your success story with the Room Parent Coordinator so it can be included as an example for future room parents!).

- **Gift Cards**

- Many teachers do not need or want more "stuff" no matter how well-meaning it is.
- Gift cards allow them to pick out exactly what they want or need.
- Collecting from the whole class to purchase a gift card can be very successful plus it gives the teacher a larger gift card.

- **Donations to Charity**

- Many wonderful charities around the world help children, families, schools, and society as a whole.
- You can gauge whether your teacher would appreciate a gift like that versus a tangible gift or gift card.

- **A wish list Item**

- Collecting a physical class gift can be great for your class.
- Perhaps the teacher wants a fan...maybe your class could chip in to purchase one.
- Take a look at your teacher's wish list and see if your class could work to fulfill some of the lists.

Please keep in mind that every family might not chip in towards the class gift. Have low expectations and hope for the best!

CLASSROOM PARTIES & CELEBRATION GUIDELINES

- The second biggest room parent responsibility is coordinating party planning. No rule says you need to be the person in charge of all of these.
- It is very reasonable to ask for volunteers to be in charge of specific events. These details are at the discretion of the room parent.
- Just be sure and spread the volunteering opportunities around since we do not want anyone to feel left out (and do not just choose your friends to help!).
- Even if you have a brain filled with fantastic ideas, it is nice to solicit more ideas. You never know what other families may come up with!
- It is even a good idea to mention things like proposed materials. Some teachers dislike when things like glitter are used in their classrooms for example!

Your teacher may have very specific ideas about how they want parties to be run so always be in touch with them before making any plans or arrangements.

Please do not plan the party without running it by your teacher.

Although each party will be different, the following is a list of some party basics:

- Class parties take place during the school day. They are typically one hour in length, but the teacher will determine the exact length and time of each party.
- The parents are the "hosts" of the party, and the teacher attends.
- Parties usually involve crafts, games, and a snack.
- Please confirm with the teacher that there are no food allergies or other special needs

Secrets to A Successful Party!

- Three weeks before the party, send home the Party Flyer.
- Send out reminders by email closer to the party.
- Bring everything you will need for a snack, each game, and craft.
- Dividing the kids into small groups and having your activities as "stations" helps keep the party running smoothly. Allow 5-7 students per station.
- More importantly, **REMEMBER TO HAVE FUN!!**



FUN IDEAS FOR CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS

Halloween/Fall

Kolb Elementary usually caps off the celebration for Halloween with the costume parade. All families are invited to come and watch the parade, and it is great fun! Here are some fun ideas:

Crafts from Parents.com <https://www.parents.com/fun/arts-crafts/kid/>

- Acorn Necklaces
- Jack O Lantern made from bottle caps
- Paint a pumpkin (stickers do not stick well- FYI)
- Make bats out of handprints
- Trace the kid's forearm and outstretched hand on a piece of paper- those will become a tree trunk and branches. The kids can then dip their fingers in paints to make the leaves.
- Make slime (search online for recipes)
- Make lollipop ghosts out of rubber bands, lollipops, markers, and tissue

Games

- Guess the quantity of X (candy corn...) in a jar- this is a great way to fill in a little window of time! Great game for any party.
- Halloween Bingo (search online)
- Mummy Wrap- teams race to either create the most covered mummy or mummy done the fastest (you decide) by wrapping a teammate up in toilet paper
- Scarecrow relay- kids are on teams lined up on one side of the room. Across the room put a pile of adult-sized jeans, a flannel shirt, and a hat. Each kid takes a turn running down to the end, getting dressed up, running back, stripping it off, tagging the next person then the next kid gets dressed up
- Pass the pumpkin (like hot potato)
- Skeleton scavenger hunt. Get a joint paper or plastic skeleton from the store, separate, hide the body parts around. Kids find the pieces then assemble the skeleton (with or without the help of a template).

Books

- For the younger grades: The Little Old Lady Who Wasn't Afraid of Anything by Linda Williams
- Ask the school librarian for other recommended, age-appropriate titles.

WINTER HOLIDAYS

Try to avoid holiday-specific ideas and focus more on generic winter fun as we do not know what all the families in the class celebrate.

Crafts

- Cut out the shape of a mitten and provide the kids with yarn, glitter glue, buttons, other notions, markers to decorate them. The mittens can be strung together on yarn and used as a garland to decorate the classroom, with the teacher's permission.
- Collect old holiday cards and have the kids cut them out to make a collage. Take it a step further and laminate or use clear contact paper to create placemats.
- Have the kids create gifts. They can get tea towels and stamp them or draw on them with fabric paint. They can make their own wrapping paper from paper bags and decorative materials.
- Create kid snowmen. Take a picture of each child and have the pictures developed. Using paper plates of varying sizes, create the body of a snowman. Glue the student's picture on the top plate, the head. The plates work best hinged together with binder clips because they hold.
- Make a treat like chocolate covered pretzel rods. Bring in some melted chocolate in a slow cooker and let the kids dip some of a pretzel rod in it. Then let the kids roll their pretzels in sanding sugars, sprinkles, mini M&Ms, crushed candy canes, and other yummy treats.
- Decorate sugar cookies with frosting and sprinkles.

TEACHER APPRECIATION WEEK

This website has some great ideas for Teacher Appreciation Week

<https://fun-squared.com/teacher-appreciation-week-ideas/>

Thoughtful Gifts

- Candy treats in your teacher's mailbox
- Flowers brought in by the students- each student can bring in 1 (more to include specials and aide) and create a bouquet
- Special messages from the students. The kids can write a special message to the teachers or staff on colorful paper, and they can be hung up in the staff lounge.
- Artwork made by the kids can be bound simply with yarn
- Thank you notes from the students
- Have the kids record a special message for the teacher and put on DVD
- Thank you posters in the hall made by the kids to the whole staff
- Donate a book from your class to the library through the student's birthday book program or purchase a book for the class and have all the kids sign it. The same

applies to a board game or other item the teacher might love to have for their classroom.

- Have the kids make a thank you poster for the class and take a picture of them with it
- Create a very personal Thank You. Print out outlines of letters and have each child decorate the letter with crayon, marker, craft supplies. The letters spelled out "Thank You [Teacher]!!!" and then take a picture of the class while they were holding their letters in order. Have the kid's drop the "[teacher]" part and take a photo of the Thank You part for the aide, specials, and office. Have the photo printed out and either buy cards that can hold photos or simple frames.
- Encourage families to write personal thank you notes
- Find out if the teachers would like to have a parent come in to read to the class or do a craft during the week while they get caught up on some tasks. Last year I hosted a puzzle afternoon and had a different puzzle at each table. It was a lot of fun! Volunteers must have clearances.
- ***Take their order and bring them lunch from somewhere like Panera.***
- **Ask your teacher for their task list for the class, something a volunteer can do like sorting craft materials, dusting bookcases, hanging things, redoing a bulletin board, and get it done**
- Have the kids write about why they love their school and teacher on a heart-shaped piece of paper. If we get enough, maybe we can hang them around the teachers' lounge for Monday or in the gym for Friday. Or just around the auditorium for something nice to look at all week!
- Buy and decorate a pot and plant something nice in it. Maybe the kids can each paint a small pot and put a seedling in it? Or just one pot put with the phrase, "Thanks for helping us grow! Love, your class." or "Thank you for helping us bloom!"
- Have each child write a favorite memory of the year and create a book of that
- Decorate the door to show appreciation. The doors are magnetic, so you can hot glue small magnets to the back of your poster, and "stick" it on the door. If using tape, please only use the blue painters' tape that is easy to pull off.

Sample Forms

Below are some sample forms, please feel free to change the font, print on colored paper, and add clip art. Remember, all wording on these forms has been approved by the administration. Please submit to your teacher for approval before sending it home. **These forms can be submitted via email, once your class directory has been set up, but be mindful of those parents who do not check email regularly, or do not use email.**

Class Money Collection Record Sheet

Please use the below form to keep detailed records of any money you collect from parents.
Please include names, dates, amounts, and reason for collection

Name of Family	Fall Party	Holiday Party	Teacher Birthday	Year-End Party	Year-End Gift
Ex: Smith	\$5 11/1/14	\$5 12/1/14	Did not donate	Did not Donate	\$5 5/15/14

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 with planning party favors, crafts, and the number of parent helpers needed for each party.
2. Do any children have food allergies or other special needs?
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 regarding party structure? For example, some teachers prefer to have one game, one craft, one snack, and a book while others give parents free rein.
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)

Class Directory Request

A class directory will be kept for use within our classroom only. It will help plan parties and other social functions. I want a personal copy for all families so I can be in touch about volunteer and classroom needs. Please complete the form below but make a note if you do not want your information shared with the class.

Student's name _____

Student's birthday _____

Parent/ guardian name(s) _____

Phone number(s) _____

Email(s) _____

Class Photos

The email address above will be added to a private website (like a password-protected site like Shutterfly) so that you may view pictures of the kids engaged during their time at Kolb!

If you do not want your email added or your child's photographs to be included on this private website, please indicate that below:

Yes, my child's pictures may be included on a private classroom website

No, please do not include my child's pictures on a private classroom website

Introduction Letter to Parents

Dear Parents,

My name is _____, and I am the room parent for (teacher's name). I will be planning class parties and organizing gifts for (teacher's name).

Some of the events I will need help with this year are:

(Fill in events here, after speaking with your teacher)

I will be sending home more information regarding specific events as we get closer to those times. I will also be posting information on your class website. 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 _____.

Thank you,

(Sign your name here)

Teacher Gift Collection/Gift Letter

Hello Parents,

Mr./Ms. _____ birthday is just around the corner! On (insert day of the week), (insert date) the children will be presenting Mr./Ms..._____with _____ (insert what you will be doing and what you need from the parents). If you would like to make an optional donation toward this gift, please **enclose your donation of _____ in an envelope with my name on it** and return it to school with your child by (insert day of the week), (insert date).

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you,

(Your phone number and email)