

**Room Parent Resource Guide**

**2022-2023**

Welcome to the new school year. This resource guide has been developed to help you navigate your role as Mark Twain Room Parent. This is an amazing volunteer opportunity!

You will have questions along the way! It happens and all questions are important. Always feel free to reach out to the VP of Volunteers and Grade Level, Elizabeth Elliott, ([vips@marktwainpto.org](mailto:vips@marktwainpto.org)) or to another Room Parent for support.

**Room Parent Goals**

1. The room parent role is to help create a network that develops a strong sense of community within the classroom and school.
2. Communicate with your teacher to determine her/his needs.
3. Organize and distribute information about classroom activities.
4. Distribute information, inform parents and recruit volunteers for school meetings, events and fundraisers.

**Monthly PTO Meetings**

We ask the Room Parent(s) to attend as many PTO meetings as possible. Also, encourage all parents and guardians to attend the monthly PTO meetings. For this year, these meetings are planned in person. Of course, this can change. I will be sure to let you know of any changes.

The spring semester meetings are still being discussed. For the Fall, PTO meetings will be held in the cafeteria at 7:45am. The PTO meeting schedule is listed below.

If parents are unable to attend a PTO meeting, they can access an archived copy of the meeting notes on the marktwainpto.org website.

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| September 14th | January - TBD |
| October 12th | February - TBD |
| November 9th | March - TBD |
| December 14th | April - TBD |

**Room Parent Meetings**

There will be 2 Room Parent meetings during the school year. These meetings are very important so that you are prepared for the upcoming school events.

Room Parent Meeting Dates:

1) **September 6th (Virtual: Zoom @ 7:00 pm)** – I will discuss Room Parent Responsibilities, Open House, Volunteer Opportunities, Fundraisers, etc

2) **April 13th (Virtual: Zoom @ 7:00 pm)** – I will discuss end of year duties, including Teacher Appreciation week responsibilities.

**Room Parent Responsibilities**

1. **Communication**

Fostering a sense of community is key. You are the primary link of communication between your teacher and the parents in the class.

Your teacher will communicate what they need to you. It is your responsibility to organize and solicit help from the other parents in your classroom. **Please do not try to do everything yourself.** There are other parents who are willing to help when asked.

Please contact all the parents in your class in the first few weeks of school. Ask your teacher for a class roster that includes parent emails.

See the sample “Room Parent – Intro letter to Parents” letter to help you draft your introductory email to the parents.

Please include the following in your communication:

* Introduce yourself as one of their child’s room parents.
* Encourage them to become PTO Members if they have not done so already.
* Remind them to update or input their information to the school directory.
* Remind volunteers to register with VIPS, the school district’s Visitors in Public Schools program. HISD requires that all volunteers register *each* year.
* Set-up a class sign-up genius to get other parent volunteers for the class.

You can and should utilize a variety of means of communication including email, phone and Zoom meetings.

***School Communications****:*

***Twain Times***

* The Twain Times is an e-newsletter that is sent out weekly, usually on Tuesday morning, that is full of important information for that week and upcoming activities. Encourage all parents to sign up for the Twain Times at  <http://bit.ly/18ouZYT>.  Parents are not signed up automatically to the Twain Times. All parents need to complete the three-step sign up to get all the latest news and info about MTE.

***Parent Square***

* Mark Twain uses Parent Square, a tool that promotes and simplifies school-to-parent and parent-to-school communication. This is a new platform this year. All previous Twain students and contact information will be auto-populated into the system. For new families, your contact information from your registration forms will be used to register your account. Once you are on Parent Square, you can be connected to any class. Please watch for further communication from Parent Square, as your teacher and the school will use this a primary mode of communication throughout the school year.

***More Communication information:*** [http://marktwainpto.org/communications/.](http://marktwainpto.org/communications/)

1. **Twain Open House – *Thursday, September 8th at 5:15 PM (specials), 6:00 PM (K-2), and 7:00 PM (3-5)***

The Open House event is in person this year. Talk to your teacher to see if you can introduce yourself and your role to the class during this virtual event. If you have some time during the Open House virtual event, give a brief presentation on your role and other volunteer matters.

At the Open House:

1. Introduce yourself and your room parent partner
2. Review the volunteer roles that are still needing volunteers. You can use the “Room Parent – Parent Volunteer Letter” handout to give the parents that explain the volunteer roles.
3. Discuss the class fund and collect the funds
4. Discuss HISD Volunteer in Public Schools (VIPS) requirements for parent volunteers
5. Have parents complete contact information for the class directory
6. **Class Fund**

Room parents elect to collect a “Class Fund” each year. This fund is an efficient way to help cover the costs for items such as class parties, teacher birthday, holiday and end of year gifts, Teacher Appreciation Week and a class t-shirt.

**It is also important to keep records of expenses taken from the class fund to maintain transparency.** You may be asked to show these expense records if there are any questions about how funds are being spent.

A suggested contribution amount is $60 for the school year.  To make things easier for families, each family can contribute $30 for the fall and $30 for the spring semester to cover the above expenses. Families who choose not to contribute will be asked to pay for individual expenses such as T-shirts.  Contributions are completely voluntary.

The easiest way to collect the class fund is through Venmo, PayPal or any other virtual system that is most convenient. The best time to request the class fund is during the Open House event.

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| Class t-shirts | 15 |
| Teacher's birthday | 5 |
| Teacher Holiday | 5 |
| Teacher End of Year | 10 |
| Appreciation Week | 15 |
| Class Parties | 10 |
| **Total** | **$60** |

**Sample of what $60 class fund contributions go towards (\*this is $75 per student for kinder and 5th grade to account for grade-specific events):**

1. **Teacher Holiday & End-of-Year Gifts**

The Room Parent will determine if the class will purchase the teacher a holiday and end of the year gift from the class. If you wish to purchase a class gift, then this should be accounted for from the classroom budget. This decision is left up to you and the class. Consult “All About Me” teacher master list for present ideas. Each class will also be assigned an ancillary teacher for whom they are responsible for providing holiday (if desired) gifts as well as a gift during teacher appreciation week. [www.tinyurl.comMTETeacherFavorites](http://www.tinyurl.comMTETeacherFavorites)

1. **Parent Volunteers**

You will need to create a sign-up genius to make the volunteer sign-up process easier and virtual this year. Please explain that each job is important, and we would LOVE to have all spaces filled ASAP to give the teacher and the PTO the support needed for this year.

1. **Teacher Appreciation Week**

As the Room Parent, you will help to facilitate Teacher Appreciation Week for your classroom. The

PTO will provide a schedule for the week's activities and the special treats involved for the week to all teachers. The PTO will provide further information as this week approaches.

1. **Publicity**

Please remember to send photos of events to the Publicity Director, Kristin Marcum ([kristin.kucera@gmail.com](mailto:kristin.kucera@gmail.com)), so that she can submit them for publication in local newspapers and magazines.

If someone (student, parent or teacher) in your grade level has accomplished something notable, please, alert Publicity so that they may write an article.

**Parent Volunteer Opportunities**

There are many wonderful opportunities for other parents in your class to volunteer in class throughout the year. Here are the volunteer opportunities for each class.

1. **Class Directory**

The Class Directory volunteer will be responsible for making, distributing and updating a class directory for your teacher and the class parents.

* The directory should include a picture of the child, parent names, phone numbers and email addresses for the parents.
* A template is available to help with this role on the room parent resources website.

1. **Communications Folders**

Room parents will recruit a Communications Classroom Coordinator. A volunteer is needed on every other Tuesday mornings. It is ideal if one person can take on this commitment but if no one volunteers, it will be your responsibility to cover this duty.

The PTO will provide the baskets and folders for each class at the beginning of the year. If additional folders are needed throughout the year, please, speak with Communication Coordinators. They typically have extra folders.

1. **Classroom Parties**

There are typically 2 class parties per year.  Coordinate these parties in-conjunction with the teacher and the class schedule.  The Class Party coordinator will plan each class party. Communicate with parents about the party details and how you need them to help at each event.

Class parties must be planned with the teacher and some examples are:

* Holiday Party (December – non-religious themed party which includes Santa)
* End of the year
* Other specified by teacher

1. **Class T-Shirt**

This volunteer will work with the teacher and the class to develop a design around the class nickname. The volunteer will work with the grade level representative to order the class t-shirts during the month of September. You will communicate with the parents on the size of the shirts needed for each child. Additionally, you will collect the required money if a parent did not donate to the class fund.

1. **Field Day**

Athletic competition among classes by grade. Organized by Coach Jody Bourque. Schedule parents to assist during the day and provide refreshments.

1. **Huckleberry Bash Donation Coordinator**

This is the school’s largest fundraiser for the school year. This volunteer is responsible for securing ONE donation on behalf of their classroom for the Huckleberry Bash. Details and guidance will be provided from the Bash committee for the class coordinator.

1. **Class Photographer/Yearbook Coordinator**

This volunteer should take pictures of the students in your class or gather pictures of students in the class from other parents throughout the year and forward them to the yearbook representatives. Help to remind parents to take photos of special Twain events (even if it is virtual) and to send them to the yearbook representatives.  You will also help to get class photos together for the yearbook if necessary.

Each classroom representative will need to upload/submit one informal *or* formal group picture *plus* 25 candid shots of the students involved in a school activity. It is very important that each child is represented in 1-2 of these candid photos.

Yearbook information will be shared once it is finalized.

1. **Monthly Lunch Coordinator**

This parent volunteer will create a Sign-up Genius for the teacher and assigned support staff to receive lunch or a treat once a month. You will encourage parents to sign-up and remind them when it is their turn.

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| **Grade Level Representatives (2022-2023)** | | |
| **Role** | **Name** | **Email** |
| VP of Volunteers | Elizabeth Elliott | vips@marktwainpto.org |
| Kinder Rep | Erika Gonzalez | erikaruiz88@gmail.com |
| Kinder Rep | Chirstine Transier | cptransier@gmail.com |
| 1st Grade Rep | Stacy Ramagoosa | kedingstacy@gmail.com |
| 2nd Grade Rep | Michele Hayes | michelephayes@gmail.com |
| 3rd Grade Rep | Cyndy Firkus | cfirkus@gmail.com |
| 4th Grade Rep | Anne McAllister | anne@newleafre.com |
| 5th Grade Rep | Keri Valdes | kerivaldes@hotmail.com |
| 5th Grade Rep | Sophy Ashworth | sophy99@gmail.com |

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| **PTO Board of Directors** | | |
| **Role** | **Name** | **Email** |
| Huckleberry Bash | Mallory Rissmiller | huckleberrybash@marktwainpto.org |
| Evelyn Duncan |
| Vanessa Bassi |
| Communication Folders | Emily Graham | emgraham22@gmail.com |
| Lisa Vanover | emvanover@gmail.com |
| Yearbook Director | Katie Patterson | yearbook@marktwainpto.org |
| Alexandra Excell |
| Yearbook Grade Rep K-2 | TBD | TBD |
| Yearbook Grade Rep 3-5 | Bethany Lenhart | esa0315@gmail.com |