# Salisbury Elementary School Room Parent Guide 2017-2018

### SES

# Room Parent Guide





September 2017

Dear Room Parent:

Thank you for volunteering! Congratulations to you for this wonderful opportunity to be part of room parents at SES. Any input, suggestions, and communication about how this program is organized and run would be appreciated. We hope Room Parents will play a key role in each classroom and in the PTA.

Your primary role is to support the teacher. Throughout the year, your classroom teacher will contact you about class activities/projects and the items and volunteers needed for them. You should also feel free to proactively speak to your class’s teacher about the help he/she would like. All teachers will be different in the ways that they like to work with their room parents. With this packet you will find a sample planning calendar suggesting specific occasions when classes might be having an activity. Please ask your classroom teacher about which events he/she likes to have.

Please do not feel that, as room parents, all the responsibility for gathering items, etc. falls to you. Call upon other parents in the classroom to help—many people are looking for opportunities to participate and will respond!

If you have any questions or concerns throughout the year, please contact Jennifer Roketenetz at [Roketenetz@hotmail.com](mailto:Roketenetz@hotmail.com) / [SalisburyPTA@Gmail.com](file:///C:\Users\Roketenetz\AppData\Roaming\Microsoft\Word\SalisburyPTA@Gmail.com)

Thanks again for your help and support!

Jennifer Roketenetz

 Criminal Offender Record Information (CORI)

All adults working with students, including parent volunteers and chaperones, are required to participate in a criminal background check. CORIs are to be completed in person. Please stop by the SES office to do so.

### So you signed up to be a room parent…….

Welcome to a year of fun and activity as you help organize your classroom to support our teachers, our school, our families, and the SES community.

Your role on the room parent team has three components:

Here’s what each of these roles could mean, depending on your teacher, your personal style, and your grade.

### Supporting the classroom:

Teachers want room parents who will be supportive without being

intrusive. They need room parents who are dependable and independent, not needy.

Some of the room parent tasks that are common to all grades include:

• Asking the teacher what he/she needs and wants, and then organizing families to provide it. This might include organizing parents for a classroom celebration or event,

getting sign-ups for volunteers, etc.

• Organizing a class gift to the teacher at Winter Break and the end of the year. This could be something that benefits the classroom, such as a gift certificate to Staples or

the Scholastic Book Fair, rather than a personal item.

### Building the SES Community:

Room parents play a very important role in tying the SES families together into a community. Some specific activities could include:

• Creating a communication network between families in the classroom, e.g., an email list

• Organizing classroom coffees so parents can get to know each other

• Welcoming new families who join SES during the year; making sure they are on the SES list; that they are on your classroom distribution list, perhaps introducing them to another family who could act as a buddy, etc.

• Recruiting families to help in school programs as requested

### Supporting the PTA:

Another important role that room parents play is to support the PTA. Some specifics include:

* Communicating with PTA the needs of teachers, students, and families.
* Supporting school events by communicating details and soliciting volunteers
* Gathering basket for our annual PTA Basket Raffle

# Supporting the Classroom-

WHAT TEACHERS WANT ROOM PARENTS TO DO

* coordinating parent volunteers
* coordinating special events:
* help with classroom celebrations such as Halloween and End of Year
* contact classroom parents for supplies and materials
* Copying
* Gather materials for Projects
* Book order management
* Help with research
* projects
* Help with large-scale projects in class

CHARACTERISTICS TEAHERS WANT IN THEIR ROOM PARENTS

* Dependable
* Organized
* Good communication skills
* Enthusiastic
* Supportive, kind
* Helpful
* Organized
* Efficient
* Happy, positive, friendly
* Dependable
* Organized
* Flexible
* Respectful of privacy
* Respectful of their wishes
* Good communication skills
* Someone who does not hold biases against specific students
* Good communicator
* Patient
* Child-centered (knows that children come first in the classroom)
* Good listener: asks before making decisions that affect others in the classroom
* Organized
* Responsible
* Good follow-through

### Secrets of Success

**Do’s**

• Introduce yourself to the teacher…be proactive

• Ask how your teacher likes to communicate—sometimes, drop-off time can be too hectic and email works better

• Ask what role your teacher would like parents to play in the classroom

• Be inclusive of all families, including those who don’t speak English or who are new to the school

• Be dependable—do what you agreed to do, at the time the teacher expects it

• Ask Jennifer or one of the PTA Board Members if you are not sure of what to do

**Do nots**

• Don’t demand too much of your teacher’s time…they are very busy

• Don’t use your room parent role to ask for special favors

• Don’t create a clique among parents—build the SES community by being inclusive

**Communicating with your class’s families**

SES is a very diverse community, including families who are non-native speakers of English, as well as others who do not have access to email. When communicating with your families, it’s best to use a format that works for everyone, such as backpack mail. If you need correspondence translated to another language please contact PTA and we will have that prepared for you.

**A word about soliciting monetary contributions from families**

SES population is very diverse economically and some families may not be able to make a monetary contribution. If you need supplies for a celebration, list the

things you need on a signup sheet.

The only exception to this is the teacher gift, which is presented to class as completely optional.

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### What’s in it for you?

**What’s in it for you?**

Over the course of this year, you will spend time being a room parent… what do you get back for this investment?

In my experience, what you get back is:

• A chance to get to know the classroom and the teacher…to see what really goes on everyday

• An opportunity to know every kid your child mentions at the dinner table

• Your kids will be proud of you for being a leader in their classroom

• You may make new friends as you work shoulder to shoulder to create and plan classroom events

• A chance to give back to the unsung heroes of our community: our dedicated teachers

• A feeling of pride that you are concretely helping to create a better SES experience for your child and for every SES student

### Suggested Room Parent Roles

All classrooms have the same basic roles, although depending on the grade and the teacher’s preferences, there may be some special roles as well. For all grades:

• **Room Parents:** This role should go to someone who can be in the school from time to time. The head room parent acts as the main liaison between the teacher, the other room parents, and the rest of the classroom. The room parent(s) works with the teacher to plan classroom events, organize help, and understand how the teacher likes to work with her class’s families.

•**Classroom celebrations:** Assist in organizing special celebrations in the class, such as Winter Holiday and End of School. Some classes also do a special celebration for Valentine’s Day, Halloween, or for other special occasions. You might be getting parents to bring snacks, supplies for an activity, or help decorate the classroom. Each teacher has his/her own preferences for celebrations, so you will work with the teacher to understand what your class requires.

•**Class gifts:** Organizes the class’s gift to the teacher (and aides) at Winter Holiday and End of Year. This role can be combined with Classroom Celebrations.

•**Book Order:** Most teachers like a parent to help collate the monthly book orders and send them in. This is a great role for someone who cannot be in the classroom during school hours (can be done at home).

•**Raffle** **Baskets:** This person coordinates parent contributions to the baskets donated for the PTA Raffle, usually at our Ice Cream Social. The PTA suggests a theme for each basket, then you send out a note to families and collect the supplies. This is a great role for someone who cannot be in the classroom during school hours (can be done at home).

**Grade Specific Roles/Grade Wide**:

1st:

2nd: assist organizing enrichment opportunities; participate in Living Museum and Passport Day, changing and decorating bulletin boards, typing up students' work, reading with students, working in the science lab,  help with weekly copying, and end of year tie dyeing.

3rd:

4th:

5th:

6th:

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### Sample Introductory Letter to Parents

Dear Parent/Guardian:

We are on the room parent team for *teacher’s class*. Our children are *name(s)*. Our role is to act as a source of information and as a communication link between *teacher’s name*, the parents in the class and the PTA. Please let us know if you have any questions about activities /events in the classroom or the school.

Over the course of the year, we will email you with class information or requests for various contributions / +volunteers for class and for PTA events. Please help when you can! If you do not use your email regularly, or do not have email, please contact us to arrange a way to receive our non-urgent classroom information.

Any questions that you may have regarding your child’s work or arrangements to help out in the classroom need to be discussed with *teacher’s name* directly.

Thank you in advance for all your help and support this year!

Sincerely,

*Room Parent Team members’ names, phone numbers and email addresses*