

# Room Parent Overview & Resource Guide

## 2017-2018

**\*Updated 9/15/2017\***

### Goals

1. 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.

### 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 needs to you and you will 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 of the parents in your class in the next week. See the Sample Class Welcome/Introductory E-mail. Consider calling new parents to make them feel welcome. 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 school **directory**.
  - Remind volunteers to register with **VIPS**, the school district's Visitors in Public Schools program. To register for Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS) they should go to <http://marktwainpto.org/membership/vips-approval/>. Please note: HISD requires that all volunteers register *each* year. If they registered last year, they just need to show ID to receptionist Liz Cisneros in the office to be reapproved for this year.
  - Remind volunteers to sign-in at the front office and get a visitor pass whenever on campus.
- **Make and distribute a class directory that includes phone numbers and e-mail addresses so that you and other parents can easily contact each other.**
- **Suggestions for collecting money and recruiting volunteers:**
  - Many room parents report that a class fund is an efficient way to help cover the costs for items such as class parties, teacher birthday, holiday and end of year gifts, Huckleberry Bash Classroom Creation, Teacher Appreciation Week and a class t-shirt.
  - Please see the Sample Class Welcome/Introductory E-mail for suggested wording. Discuss the option of the class fund at Open House so that families are aware of the

process and to determine if the majority of families are in support of the fund. Make it clear that contributions are voluntary.

- Pass around the Class Volunteer List at Open House. Please explain that each job is important and we would LOVE to have all spaces filled by the end of the night!
- You can and should utilize a variety of means of communication including: phone, email, notes home, teacher's bulletin board, etc.
- If you wish to post something on the teacher's bulletin board, please show it to him/her ahead of time.
- If you wish to send a note home, please also check with the teacher first.

### **School Communications**

- For information on Twain Times, Red Folders and Living Tree, as well as many other topics, please access <http://marktwainpto.org/communications/>.

### **Activities & Volunteer Opportunities**

#### **Classroom Parties (2 per year)**

- **PTO will reimburse \$35 total for class party expenses of your choosing.** Please remember to turn in a reimbursement form and receipts to the PTO Treasurer, Tina Lee's box in the PTO workroom.
- Class parties must be planned with the teacher and some examples are:
  - Fall Meet & Greet Social
  - Halloween Party
  - Holiday Party (December)
  - Valentine's Party
  - Other specified by teacher

#### **Weekly Communications (Red) Folders**

- Coordinator: Alison Lin [alisonlin28@att.net](mailto:alisonlin28@att.net)
- Room parents will recruit a Weekly Communications Classroom Coordinator. This person will be responsible for:
  - Getting class basket with red folders from classroom when dropping off your child.
  - Signing-in at the front office and get badge.
  - Checking in with Alison in cafeteria to receive paperwork for your grade level.
  - Returning basket with assembled folders to classroom so they can be sent home that afternoon. Note: some teachers prefer to give students the responsibility of delivering and retrieving the baskets.
- A volunteer is needed EACH Tuesday morning. It is ideal if one person can take on this commitment but if no one volunteers you could use [signupgenius.com](http://signupgenius.com) to ensure the job is covered.
- 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 contact the school office.
- In efforts to help Twain "go green" and cut down on the cost of printing, families will have the option of requesting that no extra paper copies of information that is covered in the Twain Times or Living Tree be sent home in weekly folders. To not receive extra paper copies, please take a sharpie and write "NP" for "no paper" on the upper left hand corner of the front of the Tuesday folder.

### **Spooky Spectacular Carnival** - Saturday, October 21, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

- Chairs: Jody Martin, [jodymartin1@hotmail.com](mailto:jodymartin1@hotmail.com) and Kristin Hamilton, [kchamilton44@yahoo.com](mailto:kchamilton44@yahoo.com)
  - Fall carnival, costumes encouraged
  - Each classroom is in charge of a game booth
  - In September, you will sign up for your class's booth on a first come first serve basis. Use [signupgenius.com](http://signupgenius.com) (to be consistent with red folder above) to make this easy!
  - Set up and take down the booth
  - Secure volunteers to work the booth
  - Take photos

### **Field Day** – Wednesday, December 20

- Athletic competition among classes by grade
- Organized by Coach Jody Bourque & the 4th Grade Students
- **Consider designing and ordering t-shirts in the fall to be worn for field day and on field trips.**
- Schedule parents to assist during the day and provide refreshments.

### **Huckleberry Bash** - Friday, February 16

- Chairs: Suzanne Kobza, [suzannewilkins@yahoo.com](mailto:suzannewilkins@yahoo.com) Mary Atherton, [marykatherton@gmail.com](mailto:marykatherton@gmail.com) and Claire Reeves, [creeves2002@gmail.com](mailto:creeves2002@gmail.com)
- Adult party and fundraiser
- Each class is responsible for providing one donation to be auctioned off at the event.
- Each class is responsible for creating an auction item that will be bid on at Bash. Guidelines will be given to you by the Classroom Creations chairperson.

### **Teacher Appreciation Week**

- The PTO will provide further information as the week approaches.
- Creatively demonstrate appreciation to your teacher for their dedication to your children.
- PTO will provide special treats throughout this week to all teachers.

### **Teacher Holiday & End-of-Year Gifts**

- Determine with the rest of your class parents if you wish to purchase a class gift or individual gifts. This decision is left up to you and the class.
- Consult “All About Me” sheet filled out by your teacher. Form can be found on PTO website at <http://marktwainpto.org/pta-info/room-parent-resource/>.

### **Art a la Carte**

- Chairs: Karen Stopnicki, [kstopnicki@gmail.com](mailto:kstopnicki@gmail.com) and Gabriela Gonzalez, [gabrielagg1979@gmail.com](mailto:gabrielagg1979@gmail.com)
- Programmatic art enrichment program taught by parents in their child's classroom.
  - There is a lesson for each month
  - All lessons are pre-planned
  - Training sessions provided monthly
  - Can be taught in teams

- Excellent opportunity to be active in the classroom and get to know your child's classmates
- Encourage and schedule parents to teach each month. Remind parents at beginning of each month.
- Our goal is to have all AALC lessons taught in ALL classes.

### Yearbook

- Coordinators: Bethany Lenhart, [bmac5211@yahoo.com](mailto:bmac5211@yahoo.com) and Jennifer Wiley, [jdwiley102@gmail.com](mailto:jdwiley102@gmail.com)
- Volunteer should take pictures of the students in your class throughout the year and forward them to the yearbook representatives. If you do not have a volunteer the Room Parent(s) will assume responsibility.
- 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.
- Submitting photos is easy! You can download the Balfour Image Share app from the iTunes store. Our project # is 726207. No password is required. There is no need to identify the students, but please **label the picture by class and event**.

### Publicity

- Please remember to send photos of events to Publicity Directors Sara Iqbal [sara\\_i70@yahoo.com](mailto:sara_i70@yahoo.com), and Sara Gladden [saragladden@comcast.net](mailto:saragladden@comcast.net) so that they 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.

### PTO Meetings

- Encourage all parents and guardians to attend the monthly PTO meetings. They are held on the second Wednesday of every month after drop off at 8am. There will be a quarterly evening meeting.
- **PTO Meeting Notes** – If parents are unable to attend a PTO meeting they can access an archived copy of the meeting notes on the [marktwainpto.org](http://marktwainpto.org) website.

### Other

- Lunch Coordinator - Monthly lunches for your teacher
- Box Top Rep – Collect class box tops and submit at defined time
- Outdoor Classroom Volunteer – meet with Mr. Chris Brombacher [CBrombac@Houstonisd.org](mailto:CBrombac@Houstonisd.org) to determine how you can be of assistance. Encourage others to help on the workdays.

## Sample Welcome/Introductory Email from Room Parent:

Dear Parents,

Welcome to 2017-18 school year! We know it will be a wonderful year in **TEACHER'S** class.

Please be sure to attend **Open House on Tuesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>**. Important information will be communicated and it is one of the few opportunities to meet the parents in your child's class. Remember this event is just for parents.

During Open House, we will go over the details of each volunteer job that is still available and pass around the **Volunteer Sign Up Sheet**. I will discuss the numerous opportunities you have to help this year so that you may find your area of interest or expertise. Please send me an email if there is something specific you are interested in doing or just sign up at Open House. The Volunteer Sign Up sheet also is posted outside the classroom door.

Action items to get you VIPS registered and in the school directory:

- To register for Volunteers in Public Schools (VIPS) go to <http://marktwainpto.org/membership/vips-approval/>. Note: HISD requires that all volunteers register *each* year. If you registered last year, you just need to show receptionist Liz Cisneros in the office your ID to be reapproved for this year.
- Mark Twain Directory: When you receive the directory email, be sure to click on the link and update your information.
- If you are new to Mark Twain or have a new email address, please send your email address to [twaindirectory@hotmail.com](mailto:twaindirectory@hotmail.com).

Mark Twain is “going green” again this year! In an effort to send less paperwork home every week with your children and cut down on the cost of printing, families will have the option of requesting that no extra paper copies of information that is covered in the Twain Times or Living Tree be sent home in Weekly Folders. **To not receive extra paper copies, please take a sharpie and write "NP" for "no paper" on the upper left hand corner of the front of the Tuesday (Red) folder.**

At the Open House we also will discuss the creation of a “Class Fund” to help cover costs for items such as class parties, teacher birthday, holiday and end of year gifts, Classroom Creation for Huckleberry Bash, Teacher Appreciation week and a class t-shirt.

If there is agreement on a Class Fund, we suggest each family contribute \$25 for the fall and \$25 for the spring semester to cover the above expenses. One payment of \$50 also is acceptable if that is your preference. Families who choose not to contribute will be asked to pay for individual expenses such as t-shirts. Contributions are completely voluntary.

We look forward to seeing all of you at Open House.

Many Thanks,

**Room Parent names and email addresses**

**Sample of what \$50 class fund contributions go towards:**

Class t-shirts	10
Teacher birthday	5
Teacher Holiday	5
Teacher End of Year	5
Appreciation Week	15
Class Parties	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$50</b>