

Burr School Room Parent Guide

School Year 2021-2022

First and foremost, *thank you* for volunteering your time and energy to be a Room Parent in your student's classroom! You play a key role in building the community at Burr—both inside the school and out.

What is a Room Parent?

The role of Room Parent has definitely evolved over the years. Many of us remember “back in the day” when Room Parents played a fairly active role in supporting teachers in their classrooms—helping them make copies, organize classroom materials, and more. While teachers now tend to do many of these things on their own, our Burr Room Parents do a lot more remotely around family communications and community building.

- Communications - send emails to your class to help the PTO
 - Share many Burr School events over the year, and
 - Recruit volunteers for the many events and programs.
- Teacher appreciation:
 - Coordinate teacher gifts (adhering to the [City of Newton gift policy](#)) around the December break and the end of the school year and
 - Coordinate class participation in teacher appreciation week
- Any additional class events:
 - Feel free to organize class play dates for the kids or parent nights out - or really anything you are up for. This is totally optional but definitely feel empowered to organize these kinds of things!

How do I learn more about the arc of events and programming that happens at Burr throughout the school year?

So glad you asked :) We made a Burr Parent Handbook for all parents. We will be sending this as soon as we publish it to our website (<http://www.burrpto.org/>). When we send it out please take a look at that and let us know if you have any questions! It's new this year!

How many Room Parents are there?

We are hoping to get at least two Room Parents for each classroom. If you are new to Burr, this is a great way to get to know your student's teacher and make friends with others in the Burr community. If you're a seasoned Burr vet, we'd love to have you volunteer again.

How do I get started as a Room Parent?

Early on in the year, get together with your co-room parents and let your teacher know you are the room parents; then stay in contact with your teacher throughout the year.

Each teacher may have their own ideas about how you can help out. Some teachers need help getting volunteers for field trips, class parties, or writing workshops. Staying in contact with your teacher throughout the year ensures that they are getting the parent support needed, and also strengthens your personal connection to the classroom.

Also - please ask your classroom teacher to request that all families email you to get on your email list (we will help you with language for this request). The PTO will support you in getting class family emails, but the more proactive you can be, the better! Please remember that the contact information you receive as a Room Parent should only be used to communicate school-related events and information. It should never be used for any other purpose or disseminated outside of the school community.

You will also want to send an email to class families announcing some housekeeping items (like getting on the Buzz and Membership Toolkit) and upcoming events. The Room Parent Coordinator will give you sample text for all of this that you can use or tweak!

The Room Parent Coordinator (Sarah) will host some optional zoom meetings at the beginning of the year in case folks have questions or ideas!

After the initial housekeeping emails, what's next?

Over the course of the year, the PTO will send out information about upcoming events and programs. A major part of your role is to send the message (with whatever tweaks you want to make) on to your class families. We will try to give you plenty of time and not send last minute emails!

Feel free to organize class play dates or other events & programs as you have capacity (not necessary but can be fun!). You can definitely organize something for kids and families OR feel free to organize a parent social event for your class. This is all totally optional, but something you can consider if you want.

Some more specifics about the Teacher Gift Policy:

Our teachers are wonderful and the PTO supports Room Parents who want to do something to acknowledge them during the holidays, Teacher Appreciation Week and the end of school.

The Newton Public Schools "[Gift and Solicitations Policy for Staff](#)" was updated in May 2015.

- a. *Newton Public Schools allows a group gift to an individual staff member only if the gift is identified as being from the entire class, the identity of the givers and the individual amounts are not disclosed to the recipient, and the gift does not exceed \$150 per school year.*
- b. So, when organizing a class gift, any monetary contributions/requests should be modest (\$5-\$10 per family) and **voluntary**. The gift must be from **the whole group** and not exceed \$150 per school year.

- c. Classroom supplies do not fall under the Massachusetts Ethics Reform law or the Newton Public School policy. In June, Room Parents often organize the creation of a teacher gift from the children, such as a scrapbook or craft project, compilation of letters or notes from the students, etc. They may also choose to organize a gift for the classroom (e.g., books, art supplies, science supplies, etc.)

Who do I contact if I have questions or need help coordinating something with the school?

You can contact Burr's Room Parent Coordinator, Sarah Barbrow

Email: sarah@burrpto.org