

# ROOM PARENT GUIDELINES

Room Parents play an important role as a liaison between classroom teachers and parents. They also serve as a resource for “New to Cabot” families, and generally contribute to a sense of shared Cabot community. Ideally, each classroom has 2-3 Room Parents. There are a range of responsibilities that can be shared and structured as each set of Room Parents sees fit.

- **COMMUNICATIONS:**

- Room Parents are given access to the Membership Toolkit (MTK) Message Boards which you can use to communicate to your class families. To see how to send a message to your class using the Message Boards, please see the instructions, “Sending a Message to Your class.”
- Send communications to classroom parents regarding class or grade related events and activities. Generally, it’s good for the classroom parents to hear from you once or twice a month.
- Send new families that enter Cabot throughout the year an e-mail to introduce yourselves and to welcome them into the Cabot Community.
- Check in with the teachers occasionally to see if they could use help with supplies or incentives for the classroom.

- **GIFTING:**

- **Organize the Mid-Year and End of the Year gifts for the classroom teachers and aides.**

***\*Since there is typically a holiday and end of the year gift given, the total amount for both gifts cannot exceed \$150 per staff member.***

- **Newton Public Schools Gift Policy**
  - All gifts to Cabot staff and faculty must follow the Newton Public Schools Gift Policy, which can be viewed at: <http://newtonptocouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/PDF-Gift-Policy-overview.pdf>
  - In summary, group gifts to an individual staff member are only permitted if:
    - 1) The gift is identified as being from the entire class;
    - 2) The identity of the givers and the individual amounts are not disclosed to the recipient; and
    - 3) The gift does not exceed **\$150 per staff member (teacher, aides, specialists, etc.), per school year**. No parent/guardian should ever feel obligated or pressured to give or contribute to a class gift.
- Visit the PTO’s Pinterest page for gift ideas: <https://www.pinterest.com/cabotpto/teacher-appreciation-gifts/>. Gift cards are permitted as long as they do not exceed the \$150/yr spending limit.
- Individual student/family gifts of appreciation in the form of sentimental tokens are allowed (greeting cards, notes). Another excellent option is to make a donation to the Newton Schools Foundation’s Honor Thy Teacher campaign. Learn more about the program at: <http://www.newtonschoolsfoundation.org/honor-thy-teacher>

- **IDEAS DURING THE PANDEMIC**
  - **Virtual Group Greeting Cards:** Group Greeting, Kudoboard, Group Greets, Openme, etc. offer ways for classes to “sign” a card
    - Some have options to add pictures, voice recording, video, etc.
    - Some of these are free but most charge a small fee
  - Use apps like Venmo, Paypal/Paypal Money Pool, Cheddarup, HipChip to collect money for a Group gift
  
- **EVENT PLANNING:**
  - Organize **Class or Grade-Wide Get Togethers**
    - During this time, one of the main priorities is to keep our DLA and hybrid students connected. As a result, we encourage each room parent(s) to work with the other room parents in their grade along with their Grade Rep to brainstorm ideas and find ways to make this possible
  - Work with the Grade Leader to organize **Parent Nights Out for the grade**
    - Would most likely have to be virtual


**THE FOLLOWING EVENTS ARE ON PAUSE THIS YEAR  
DUE TO COVID-19 UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE**


- **“Publishing Parties” or “Class Celebrations”:** Help classroom teachers organize get-togethers during the school year (often referred to as “publishing parties or class celebrations”).
  - Typically there are 1-2 of these events in the Fall and 1-2 events in the Spring.
  - Please be aware that due to allergies, no outside food is allowed at these events. Room parents may (with teacher’s approval) bring in items for a “grab bag” or fun activity to make the event more celebratory.
- **End of the Year Picnic:** Help the classroom teachers and work with the Grade Leader and other Room Parents in your grade to organize an end of the year picnic for the grade.
  - In past years, the PTO has provided pizza for these events and a Sign-up list was organized by Room Parents for families to bring in snacks, drinks, dessert, etc. However, this is subject to change depending on PTO funds and the current food policy which is continually reviewed by the Principal, School Nurse, teachers, etc. Please contact the PTO at the end of April/beginning of May to find out what will be allowed for the grade-wide picnic.
  - **PLEASE NOTE:**
    - 1) Remember that there may be children with nut, gluten, dairy or other allergies attending these events. Please check in with the class teacher/school nurse to ensure these allergies are addressed.
    - 2) All food (store bought or homemade) must be accompanied by a full list of ingredients per Massachusetts Law and Newton’s Health and Human Services Department:
    - <http://cabotpto.org/wp-content/uploads/pto-bake-sale.pdf>