Parents’ Association 2019-2020
Room Parent Handbook

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1. **Room Parent Responsibilities**

Room parents provide a communication link between faculty/staff, parents, and the Parents’ Association Board. The responsibilities of the room parent include:

1. Supporting the faculty  
2. Building community within the class by planning events  
3. Serving as a link to the Parents’ Association committee chairs  
4. Attending every Parents’ Association meeting  
5. Facilitating communication between constituencies

**Required skills of a room parent:**

1. Commitment to considering multiple perspectives in working with parents, faculty/staff, and others  
2. Ability to support the school  
3. Proficiency in electronic communication  
4. Timely follow-up and communication  
5. Supporting the overall Burke’s mission

**Communications**

A room parent’s role is to facilitate communications between parents and guardians, teachers, and the Parents’ Association. As representatives of the school, we strive to promote goodwill and emphasize the successes of the P.A. Inevitably, questions and/or concerns will come up from time to time among your fellow parents and guardians. Please encourage families to discuss their concerns with the appropriate teacher, Division Director (LS: Alice Moore/US: Rebekah Wolman), or the Head of School. The room parent is not expected to be a representative of the class or mediate a problem a parent may have, but can help direct parents to the appropriate party or resource.

The central form of communication for families is Tuesday Notes. Room Parents can supplement with weekly “Class Notes” that focuses on grade-level specific communication, i.e. field trips, drop off, community events. The school will update the calendar regularly so families are aware of upcoming class and school-wide events. Room parents should consolidate information into one weekly email versus multiple communications per week.

**General School Issues and Concerns:** If you become aware of general concerns or complaints from the parent/guardian community that you feel should be addressed by the Administration, please contact the Parents’ Association President to discuss the issue. The P.A. President meets with the Head of School shortly before the general meeting to discuss Parents’ Association plans and activities. The president can include your concerns during that meeting and, if appropriate, ask that the Head of School provide feedback to the assembled membership or directly to the parties involved.

**Tuesday Notes:** Tuesday Notes are used to communicate with families about school life and events, to highlight current topics of interest and to explain school policies and points of view. Any items to
be included in Tuesday Notes must be submitted to Diana Schneider at communications@kdbs.org by noon the Friday preceding the Tuesday of publication.

**Faculty Support**
The room parent assists the teachers wherever parent and guardian assistance is useful. For planning purposes, it is a good idea to meet with the teachers early in the school year. Please wait until after the first week of school before scheduling a meeting with your lead and associate teachers in Lower School and the grade-level lead advisor in Upper School. Please be sensitive to the teachers’ own wishes and plans for the year. Do not assume that activities that took place the prior year will necessarily be repeated. Each teacher must have flexibility to change what goes on in the class from year to year and is responsible for balancing curriculum needs with additional activities.

**Field Trips:** Securing transportation for field trips and ensuring drivers complete the necessary paperwork are parts of the room parent’s job. In the August mailing, families receive the *Driver and Vehicle Information* form, which must be completed by all parents/guardians before they drive on a field trip. During Curriculum Nights, you should remind parents to complete the form. At least two weeks prior to each trip, submit a list of drivers to Anna Yatroussis so she can confirm that she has received all of the drivers’ forms. Prior to each field trip, furnish all drivers with the *Field Trips by Carpool, Policies and Requirements* found in the Burke’s Family Handbook.

**Waste-Free Class Parties:** In keeping with Burke’s commitment to be environmentally sustainable, room parents are responsible for hosting class parties that create little to no waste as established by previous classes. Prior to all class parties, submit an event form to Cathy Tritschler-Hall (cathy@kdbs.org) indicating if you will need any of the following:

- Reusable plates/bowls and silverware from the school kitchen
- Reusable cups
- Cloth or school tablecloths
- Recycling, compost, and trash bins

Although we recognize that it is fun to purchase decorative plates, cups, and napkins, we encourage you to use the school-owned party supplies. If you must purchase non-reusable items, please avoid using Styrofoam as it is neither compostable nor recyclable. We also strongly encourage you to use compostable or reusable decorations to decrease our impact on the environment. Please note the P.A. section of the basement is a good place to check for decorations/vases/etc. Please contact the Advancement Office for access to P.A. storage.

**Community Gatherings**
The school and the P.A. encourage scheduling at least one class social event, which is inclusive and welcoming for everyone. To help with planning, the more advance notice about a class event, the better. To confirm the date, complete and submit this event form at least two weeks before the event to Cathy Tritschler-Hall (cathy@kdbs.org). The room parents usually plan a social gathering early in the year to welcome new parents/guardians and get to know one another better. Sometimes this is a family gathering, such as a picnic or potluck. In an effort to be as inclusive as possible, it is best to organize events where parents/guardians bring refreshments. Potlucks work well, as does
assigning families to bring contributions according to sections of the alphabet. Please encourage all parents/guardians to participate, and reach out to new parents/guardians as well.

**Clearance Procedures:** Any event in which all parents/guardians are invited using school communication channels (e.g. class email, Tuesday Notes, etc.) is considered a class social event. In order to avoid schedule conflicts, transportation problems, etc., complete and submit an event form at least two weeks before the event to Cathy Tritschler-Hall (cathy@kdb.org).

**Non-School Sanctioned Community Events:** We ask that room parents or parents/guardians organizing grade-level social events, such as camping trips or nights out, run the dates through Cathy Tritschler-Hall to ensure that they do not conflict with scheduled or planned school events. These social events will be considered non-sanctioned events and will not be displayed publicly on the school website calendar. Please plan gender-inclusive events.

**Helping New Families:** The New Parent Liaison Committee works with Burke's buddy families and new incoming families to provide assistance and support throughout the year. Of course, as a room parent, you are also encouraged to reach out and involve new families in school and class events. The following is a list of ways experienced families can help newcomers. It is not intended to be limiting, but rather a basic set of suggestions.

- A “welcome” Ice Cream Social for all new lower school families will be held at Burke's on Tuesday, August 27. Room parents with new students in their class should plan to attend.
- Encourage new families to sign up to work on Festival on Saturday, October 19. You might want to join the same committee.
- At the grade-level meeting in the fall, the room parents and grade level P.A. committee reps should introduce themselves and welcome the new families.
- Check in periodically during the year: i.e., before Winter Vacation in early February.
- Introduce them, whenever possible, to other families in class.
- Before the school year starts, introduce yourself as a room parent and see if there are any questions about any aspect of the school. The buddy will be calling families after the May mailing, so you will be another resource for new families.

**Student Plus One Camping Trips:** Each grade may plan a camping trip. It is important to communicate this event as a Student Plus One Camping Trip as it is the school’s preference that this event title conveys complete inclusivity and respect for families of all configurations. In addition, it is recommended that out-of-pocket costs, which are passed through to participating families, are minimized to promote awareness of socioeconomic constraints and to ensure that the event is affordable for all. Please note that the Student Plus One Camping Trips are not Burke’s-sanctioned events; however, as these events are very popular and well attended by each class, the school would like them to be consistent with Burke’s philosophy and culture.
Parents’ Association

Link with the Parents’ Association Committees: Room parents are an important communication link between the class parents and the P.A. Committee Chairs. They may also be asked to solicit volunteers for an event or support P.A. committees with staffing assistance during the year.

Morning Drop-Off:
Assisted morning drop-off is an important procedure designed to provide for student safety and to foster a smooth and quick arrival of students to the school. Room parents have the responsibility of scheduling five class parents/guardians per day for one month during the school year. If unavailable for their duty, they must find a replacement. Morning drop-off is from 7:45-8:30 a.m. A reminder to the volunteers should be sent out the weekend prior to their shifts to ensure their attendance at drop-off.

The purpose of providing assistance at the morning drop-off is to make the process as efficient as possible, keep the traffic flowing smoothly, avoid back-up down California Street, and — most importantly — ensure the safety of our community.

- Put on one of the orange vests, as it identifies you as a drop-off assistant.
- Four volunteers will be at the top of the loop near the Pavilion helping girls out of cars. They will be stationed between the traffic cones.
  - These volunteers will guide drivers to pull up to each cone in order to fit four cars for drop-off.
  - Students are only permitted to exit the car on the passenger side of the car.
- One volunteer will be stationed at the crosswalk on the north side of 32nd Ave. at California St. to help families cross the street and make their way to the south side of the street (across the street from the school). This volunteer will also escort students from the bus around 8AM to the front of school, being mindful of cars backing up from the driveways on California Street.

Volunteers should be free from distractions; therefore, please do not bring pets or other children with you on your assigned day.

At 8:30 a.m., the basket of vests will need to be brought back to the front office (the basket is stored on the cabinet next to the faculty/staff mailboxes). The traffic cones should be stacked and stored on the edge of the front steps.

Drop-off Monthly Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Month</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8th Grade</td>
<td>September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th Grade</td>
<td>October</td>
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<tr>
<td>6th Grade</td>
<td>November</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th Grade</td>
<td>December</td>
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<tr>
<td>4th Grade</td>
<td>January</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
<td>February</td>
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<tr>
<td>2nd Grade</td>
<td>March</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Grade</td>
<td>April</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>May</td>
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<tr>
<td>5th Grade</td>
<td>June</td>
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</tbody>
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Lice Checks: Parents and guardians are responsible for checking students and notifying the school immediately if lice/nits are found. When lice/nits are reported, the school will notify families through Tuesday Notes or email that lice/nits have been found in a particular grade level.

Class Funds
The Room Parent Fund is collected by the school administration with each student’s tuition payment. Room Parents are encouraged to reference their e-binder or talk with their predecessors about the prior year’s class activity expenses. Funds not spent in a school year will not be rolled over into the next school year.

* Grades K-7 will receive $25 per student. For example: 44 students x $25 = $1,100 for the class.

* Grade 8 will receive $30 per student. For example: 44 students x $30 = $1,320 for the class

Please note, class gifts can not be funded by room parent budgets because of tax implications.

Expense Reimbursement
Room parents are asked to submit all receipts for class activities to Ron Bannerman, Burke’s Director of Finance & Operations (please note, PA Committee Expense reimbursements are submitted to Jim Butcher, PA Treasurer, jimbutcher@sprucefoods.com). Reimbursement forms are available on the Burke’s Room Parent portal and on the Resources page of the website (after log-in). To receive a reimbursement check, all receipts must be submitted within 45 days of purchase. Receipts and reimbursement requests may be sent to Ron via email (ron.b@kdbs.org). Please keep a copy of your receipts and reimbursement requests until you have received your reimbursement check. Room parents are responsible for keeping track of their class funds and managing their budget throughout the school year in their e-binders.

II. Important Dates

All committee heads and at least one room parent per grade are asked to attend every Burke’s Parents’ Association meeting either in person or remotely. Please see P.A. meeting dates for the upcoming year attached. The meetings typically begin at 8:30 a.m.

Parents' Association Meeting Dates
Note: All Parents’ Association meetings will begin at 8:30 a.m. in the Media Room unless otherwise noted.

PA Meeting dates:
Friday, September 13 at 8:30 a.m.
Friday, October 11 at 8:30 a.m.
Friday, November 8 at 8:30 a.m.
Friday, January 10 at 8:30 a.m.
III. Gift-Giving

Grade Level Holiday Gifts
The funds for mid-year (December) and year-end (June) gifts are held by the P.A. and are deducted from the Room Parent Fund, which is collected by the school administration with each student’s tuition payment. At the start of the school year, a portion of the Room Parent Funds is given to the P.A. Treasurer to use for these gifts. On behalf of each grade, the P.A. will purchase a “monetary equivalent” gift card for each teacher and specialist. Individual classes are not responsible for distributing these gift cards, and class budgets will not be diminished.

In addition, the P.A. has established a gifting pool, to be combined with our P.A. mid-year gift, and then split equitably across all of our faculty and staff members. In December, the P.A. will invite parents to contribute to the gifting pool.

Room parents should not ask parents to contribute further funds to mid-year (December) or year-end (June) class gifts. We do encourage room parents to supplement the gift cards purchased by the P.A. with a sentimental or handmade gift from the girls in the class. For example, consider encouraging families to make homemade cards, artwork, favorite quotes, or something else that is meaningful to them. These can be presented in a simple basket or gift bag to the teachers at the end of the year.

Please note, financial class gifts or gift cards can not be funded by room parent budgets because of tax implications.

Mid-year (December) gifts
The P.A. will purchase an electronic monetary equivalent gift cards for faculty and staff that they receive via email the last day of the first semester.

Year-end (June) gifts
The P.A. will purchase an electronic monetary equivalent gift cards for faculty and staff that they receive via email the last day of school.

Individual Holiday Gifts
The P.A. provides mid-year (December) gifts for faculty, not holiday gifts. Holiday gift-giving by parents/guardians of the students in the class is up to the individual parent/guardian of the student, and there should be no pressure to do this. Holiday gifts are considered small gifts given by
individual parents/guardians to the administration, staff, and faculty members if they wish. As a school, we respect that faculty and staff all get vacation time during the holiday season, but not everyone celebrates the various holidays. Some guidelines for parents/guardians for what might be appropriate include sentimental gifts, such as notes from students, a memory of a special moment, or something unique made by a student. Room parents may want to gently remind parents/guardians that it is the thought that counts.

You and your child's personal efforts are invaluable. Burke's and the Parents' Association thank you!

Non-Discriminatory Policy

Burke's does not discriminate on the basis of racial, ethnic, or national background; religion; culture; family composition; sexual orientation; or gender identity or expression in administration of its admissions policies, educational policies, employment policies, financial assistance, and athletic and other school-administered programs.