



Room Parent Handbook



Revised October 2023

WELCOME

Thank you so much for agreeing to be the room parent for your student's class! Strong schools thrive on a positive collaboration between families and the school staff. By being a room parent you are helping to improve the quality of life for students and staff at school, and build community amongst families. You are the connector between teachers and parents at school. Their involvement, to a large extent, relies on their room parents keeping them informed and involved.

As a room parent, you will be a tremendous asset to your teacher. By handling the volunteer coordination, organizing parties and helping out "behind the scenes," you free up your teacher's time, so they are able to focus their time and energy on what is most important: teaching our kids!

So many of the fun things that the kids look forward to are made possible by the room parents and other class volunteers. Being a room parent has benefits to you as well. One big benefit is getting to know the teacher, the families and the kids well. It is also a great way to feel more connected to the school. We hope you have a positive and productive experience in this important role.

Thank you in advance for your time and effort. You are providing a huge service to the entire ECS community! Thank you!

Louise-Marie Oleksiuk
PCO Room Parent Coordinator (2023-2024)

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ROOM PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

The main role of an ECS room parent is to act as a liaison between the teacher and your class. Your job is more of a volunteer coordinator rather than to be the main volunteer for your class. Get the families in your class involved, ask for help and delegate! These are some specific things you will also be responsible for:

1. **Attend the room parent orientation meeting**

The dates and times are tentative but there will be an in-person orientation meeting and a virtual orientation meeting in September that all room parents are encouraged to attend.

2. **Work with your co-room parent** (*if applicable*)

We recommend that you meet with your co-room parent early on in the school year to delineate responsibilities. Ways to split room parent responsibilities include:

- First come first serve (e.g. whoever can tackle a task first let's their fellow room parent know)
- Task related (e.g. assign a room parent to each of these tasks: planning parties, communicate with families about upcoming classroom events or content the PCO requests that room parents send to families, coordination for volunteers and classroom supplies)
- Other (up to room parent teams)

If you're having any issues with your co-room parents, please feel free to reach out to roomparents@ecspco.org and we will be happy to help in any way we can.

3. **Meet with your teacher as soon as possible to determine their specific needs and expectations.**

Our teachers all have individual preferences when it comes to their room parents. It is important to remember that your job is to follow their lead and execute their vision rather than imposing your own viewpoint. Room parents are there to make their teacher's life easier. Some teachers will be open to giving you a lot of leeway while others know exactly what they want. Things you may want to discuss at your first meeting:

- Preferred method (and frequency) of communication
- Food allergies or restrictions in the classroom so you can safely plan party food
 - Grade level allergy lists for each ECS building are sometimes compiled by ECS parents and shared with the broader community
- General classroom supply & volunteer needs
 - Examples: Amazon wishlists, volunteers to read, classroom cleaning, updating bulletin boards
- Proposed classroom celebrations and dates (confirm Halloween, Winter Celebration, Valentine's Day and preference to align within the grade)

Remember, don't take it personally if your teacher does not want or need a lot of help! Everyone has different ways of doing things.

4. **Send an introduction email to your class.**

- Classroom (PS and IS), and grade level (MS) family contact lists will be shared with room parents by ECS after families have had a chance to opt-out of room parent communication
 - These lists are released in the first 1-2 months of the school year so make sure to ask your homebase teacher to keep you informed of any new families who joined (or left) ECS so that you can welcome them to the class parent community and include them in class-related communications.
 - You may want to ask your homebase teacher about any new families each quarter in case a new family joined and it slipped their mind
 - Consider creating a “Google Group” for your classrooms. [Here is a tutorial](#) to help.
 - The deadline to email your families will be communicated by the room parent coordinator but is generally within one week of receiving the family contact information
 - The Friday after the deadline, a communication will be sent to all grade level families by the school (either by including it in the end of week grade level newsletter OR by communicating it directly via ALMA) to notify families of the following:
 - Who their room parents are for the year
 - That they should reach out to them directly if they have not received an introductory email from them
 - A paper flyer introducing the current year’s room parents can be considered if needed and allowed by the ECS building (e.g. Primary typically allows this)
5. **Communicate with your teacher on a monthly basis** *(or as otherwise agreed upon)*.
A quick chat or email once per month is a great way to check on classroom supply needs and confirm upcoming classroom party dates. Make sure to keep your teacher informed of any relevant information you send to families by copying them on most correspondences.
6. **Communicate regularly with the families in your class via email and/or end-of-week grade level newsletters.**
In an effort to streamline communication that gets sent to families we recommend that room parents communicate as follows (see next page):

Category	Personal classroom email	End-of-week grade level teacher update (sent via ALMA) <i>(requested content to be sent to roomparents@ecspco.org)</i>
Introductory email	To be sent to classroom families by no later than the week after the school Directory is published	Notification to families of grade level room parents and reminder to contact them if they have not received the introductory email
Supply needs	Introduction to classroom Wish list (as applicable) Periodic reminders of requested classroom supplies	Link to wishlist (as applicable)
Parties and classroom celebrations	Information about upcoming classroom party including date/time and volunteer sign-up Reminders	Links to upcoming classroom party sign-ups <i>(for weekly inclusion for the 3-4 weeks leading up to the celebration)</i>
PCO communications	The PCO may ask room parents to share information with families. Examples include staff appreciation collections/events, low current volunteer counts, and other urgent needs. These will come from the room parent coordinator and should be sent to families as soon as possible	The PCO may request that information be added to grade level end-of-week newsletter as relevant
Ad hoc communication	Examples include reminders about classroom specific events (e.g. fuzzy friend day, impromptu dress down day, etc...)	N/A

Please also keep in mind the following mechanisms by which families receive school communications:

- School emails
 - District-wide (monthly)
 - Building-level
 - End-of-week grade level
- Paper flyers that get sent home with kids
- PCO pulse newsletter (emailed out every Wednesday)
 - [Click here to subscribe to the PCO Pulse](#)
- Social media
 - Facebook
 - Environmental Charter School
 - ECS Parent Community Organization
 - ECS Parent Group
 - ECS Transportation Connections
 - Instagram
 - ecspgh
 - ecs_pco
- Room parent email

7. **Plan classroom celebrations & maintain party kits** (*if used*)

This is one of the biggest room parent responsibilities and it therefore has its own section. See “Parties and Classroom Celebrations” section.

8. **Volunteer management.**

See “Volunteer Management” section

9. **Stay informed about ECS.**

While you do not need to be the representative to the ECS PCO for your class, it is very helpful to stay informed about what is going on with ECS and the PCO. Some of your families will assume that you are “in the know” and ask you questions. Read your Friday grade-level newsletter, check your email, read the ECS PCO Facebook and Instagram pages, attend ECS PCO meetings and events. By being well informed you will be a big help to the families in your class.

And while you don't need to be a representative to the ECS PCO, we would like you to be! If your class has any news or notable event to share with the school community, bring it to the PCO meetings in person or share it with the room parent coordinator(s).

10. **Be accessible to your families.**

Reply to emails/texts/phone calls in a timely fashion.

11. **Recruit volunteers for school wide and ECS PCO events.**

Direct requests from a room parent often increase participation and involvement better than other modes of recruitment. Please pass on these requests to your family when and if you receive them.

12. **Help to plan teacher and staff appreciation events throughout the year.**

Consider joining the “Staff Appreciation Committee” of the ECS PCO. Staff appreciation takes several forms including:

- Monthly small gestures to showcase staff appreciation
- Winter collection
- Spring collection
- Staff Appreciation Week

Teacher gift(s) can be included in the classroom party sign-ups as an extra way to showcase teacher appreciation. Thank you(s) during staff appreciation week. End of year classroom gestures can also be considered.

VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

TYPES OF VOLUNTEERING

Room parents help to recruit and organize volunteers. The most commonly utilized parent volunteers are for:

- **Parties.** Planning and attending parties and celebrations.
- **Chaperones** for hikes, field trips and other outdoor excursions.

HOW TO RECRUIT VOLUNTEERS

Let your families know of all the different ways they can get involved with the class by sharing the in and out of class opportunities.

- Personally ask the families to help. If you see them in the halls or at drop off/ pick up, take a moment to chat with them and encourage them to get involved. If you are really struggling for help, ask your key volunteers to also personally recruit someone to come. They may have personal connections with other families in the class and can provide successful outreach.
- Any adult who has clearances can help. If you need to pull more people, ask your families if they have grandparents or other extended family members that may be willing and able to volunteer.
- If you are short on volunteers, please reach out to your fellow room parents!
- Remember to thank your volunteers! We all like to have our work acknowledged and appreciated. This will foster a good will and encourage repeat volunteerism.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION TO SHARE WITH YOUR VOLUNTEERS

1. **How to be a good volunteer**

All in-class volunteers need to know that volunteering in the classroom is a privilege. Volunteers are there to work, not socialize, not observe the class, not have a private conference about their child. Volunteers that are a distraction or abuse their time in the class may be asked to leave. Let your families know how important it is to be responsible and courteous when they are in the classroom. Our volunteers can be great role models for the students.

Secrets of a good volunteer

1. Sign in at the office and always wear your volunteer tag
2. Be on time
3. Be reliable
4. Be unobtrusive
5. Ask questions at the beginning of the shift (know where materials you might need are located and any other issues that might come up) so that you will not have to distract the teacher with these questions later.
6. Find a substitute if you are unable to make your shift
7. Do not commit to something like chaperoning if you are not sure you can do it. The teachers count on every chaperon, and they can be left in a very awkward situation if a volunteer cancels at the last minute or does not show.
8. Know that by not showing up as planned you may upset your child. They worry when they expect you to be there.
9. Follow your teacher's lead on how they like their class to be run
10. Read the ECS handbook, especially with regards to discipline and bullying.

2. Clearances

Visit the ECS PCO Volunteer website <https://ecspgh.org/volunteer-family-portal> for information on the types of activities that require clearances as well as how to submit clearances.

Mandated Reporting. Volunteers with clearances are obligated, per their clearance forms, to report any suspected abuse. Please review the information at the Department of Health and Human Services for more information: [Report Abuse \(pa.gov\)](https://www.pa.gov)

3. Confidentiality

ECS takes student confidentiality very seriously. Everything that you see and hear in the classroom is confidential. This really means everything, from “M. is an amazing reader!” to, “J. had to go to the principal’s office today!” and anything in between. These things, especially the more positive ones, may seem like they shouldn’t be a problem, but they really can be, and you never know. Do not discuss observations and interactions that you witness or are part of at school; that is not your responsibility. The teachers and staff will share academic, social, behavioral and emotional issues with the families impacted as needed. Room parents set the tone among the other parents in the class, so your help is appreciated

PARTIES AND CLASSROOM CELEBRATIONS

One of the biggest room parent responsibilities is coordinating party planning. There is no rule that says you need to be the person in charge of all of these. It is very reasonable to ask for volunteers to oversee specific events. These details are at the discretion of the room parent. Just be sure and spread the volunteering opportunities around since we do not want anyone to feel left out (and don't just choose your friends to help!). Even if you have a brain filled with fantastic ideas, it is nice to solicit more ideas. You never know what other families may come up with!

Your teacher may have very specific ideas about how they want parties to be run so always be in touch with them before making any plans or arrangements. **Please do not plan the party without running it by your teacher.** It's even a good idea to mention things like proposed materials...some teachers really dislike when things like glitter are used in their classroom for example!

There are typically THREE class/grade parties during the school year (PS and IS):

1. **Halloween** (*typically place on or the day before the Halloween parade*)
2. **Winter Celebration** (*before Winter break*)
3. **Valentine's Day**

Class parties typically last ~1 hour and involve decorations, craft, challenge(s)/game(s), story, and/or snack / drink.

Graduating grades may also have an additional end-of-year celebration

PARTY PLANNING

- The key to successful party planning is giving yourself enough time.
- Parties can be coordinated between room parents from different classes (work with your homebase teachers to see if they prefer a class party, pairing up with another class, or a grade level party)
 - The Intermediate School encourages room parents within a grade to plan classroom parties together to ensure each classroom has a similar experience
 - (May want to consider this for Primary as well as long as homebase teachers agree)
- Reach out to your classroom teachers in early October, late November, and late mid-January to learn the dates for parties and get those dates out to your families.
- Be in touch with your teacher a few weeks before the party and get in touch with your families about 2-4 weeks before the event.
- You may be responsible for coming up with ideas for crafts and activities.

- It helps to have your own class sign-up sheet (you don't have to but it makes planning a lot easier)
- [Sign Up Genius](#) (SUG) is a free and easy tool for room parents to create a class-specific event with corresponding slots for parents to sign-up.
 - Please don't hesitate to reach out to roomparents@ecspco.org if you need help creating a SUG.
- It is very helpful to share the party plans with your volunteers ahead of time, so they know what to expect- email them as soon as details have been finalized. It can also be very helpful to write out an exact plan for the day including setup and clean up needs as well as exactly what the games, crafts, snacks, and activities entail. Sometimes parties can be a flurry of activity and volunteers feel like they don't know how they are supposed to help. A to-do list allows the party planner to be sure the needs are clearly conveyed without distraction.

PARTY FOOD

ECS is committed to avoiding foods that offer “minimal nutritional value” per the USDA. When planning food for a party, please do your very best that the food that is brought in is nutritious and nut-free. Foods to avoid: soda, water ices, certain candies (like hard candy, gummies and jellies, marshmallow, fondant, licorice, spun candies, candy coated popcorn).

Before planning a class party, please reach out to your homebase teacher to inquire about any additional student/staff member allergies for the class.

Please include a disclaimer about dietary restrictions when emailing families about an upcoming class party (include it in the sign-up genius too)

If possible, inquire with the teacher/parent about suggested “safe snacks”.

Keep in mind that NUTS and NUT products are NOT permitted in classrooms at ECS.

Reference the food allergy flyer that corresponds to your child's building for ideas on “safe snacks” (*if applicable*)

THE CLASSROOM PARTY KIT

This has seldom been utilized over the last couple of years but is included for your information.

The ECS PCO has provided a kit of reusable party ware for each homeroom. The maintenance of the kit is the responsibility of the room parent; this job can be delegated! Each homeroom has 26 cups and 26 plates in a storage bin that need to be cleaned by parents (usually at home) after use. Please keep track of the quantity and alert the Room Parent Coordinator if you need replacements. If you have ideas about items you would like to see included, please also pass those ideas along! We will stock extras in the PCO cabinets as well.

Whenever possible, use your party kit. It is very much in keeping with our school's mission and a great, free alternative to disposable items. Please check with your teachers to find out where your set of cups/plates are. You are also welcome to request paper products from your families. ECS strives to be eco-friendly by minimizing waste, but we are also flexible when it comes to classroom needs.

FUN IDEAS FOR CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS

When planning any class party, try to make the room look festive and fun! Ask your volunteers to come in 15-30 minutes before the party will start and decorate the class. Use twinkle lights, themed tablecloths and any appropriate decorations. The kids love coming back and seeing their room transformed! Some music is always fun as well!

If you are ever stuck for a filler activity, turning on some music and letting the kids dance around is almost always a hit!

HALLOWEEN

ECS usually caps off the celebration for Halloween with the costume Pumpkin Parade. All families are invited to come and watch the parade and it is often great fun! The exact schedule of the rest of the day will vary by teacher. The more Fall themed the party is, the better but some Halloween is ok!

- Acorn Necklaces
- Jack O Lantern made from bottle caps
- Make bats out of handprints
- Trace the kid's forearm and outstretched hand on a piece of paper- those will become a tree trunk and branches. The kids can then dip their fingers in paints to make the leaves.
- Make slime (search online for recipes)
- Make lollipop ghosts out of rubber bands, lollipops, markers and tissue

Games

- Guess the quantity of X (candy corn...) in a jar- this is a great way to fill in a little window of time! Great game for any party.
- Halloween Bingo (search online)
- Mummy Wrap- teams race to either create most covered mummy or mummy done the fastest (you decide) by wrapping a teammate up in toilet paper
- Scarecrow relay- kids are on teams lined up on one side of the room. Across the room put a pile of adult sized jeans, flannel shirt and hat. Each kid takes a turn running down to the end, getting dressed up, running back, stripping it off, tagging the next person then the next kid gets dressed up... •Mini pumpkin on a spoon relay
- Skeleton scavenger hunt. Get a jointed paper or plastic skeleton from the store, separate, hide the body parts around. Kids find the pieces then assemble the skeleton (with or without the help of a template). • Pumpkin Guts' game- hollow out a few pumpkins (I did 4 but 2-3 would be fine), mix together all the guts so you

can evenly distribute guts and seeds. Bag up the guts and seeds into 4 bags. During the party, the kids separate the seeds from the guts. Neatness counts (-2 seeds for any mess!) and the team with the most seeds wins! Mini pumpkins make great prizes. (The church on the corner of Fifth Ave. and Negley in Shadyside has a charity pumpkin patch and it's a good place to buy from.)

Snacks

- Mini pumpkin muffins (minis are less waste when they don't like them!)
- Cider
- Clementines
- Orange juice
- Pretzels
- Popcorn

Books

- For the younger grades: [The Little Old Lady Who Wasn't Afraid of Anything](#) by Linda Williams
- Ask the school literacy coach for other recommended, age appropriate titles.

WINTER HOLIDAYS

Try to avoid holiday specific ideas and focus more on generic Winter as we don't know what holidays all the families in the class celebrate.

Crafts

- Cut out the shape of a mitten and provide the kids with yarn, glitter glue, buttons, other notions, markers...to decorate them. The mittens can be strung together on yarn and used as a garland to decorate the classroom, with the teacher's permission.
- Collect old holiday cards and have the kids cut them out to make a collage. Take it a step further and laminate or use clear contact paper to create place mats.
- Have the kids create gifts. They can get tea towels and stamp them or draw on them with fabric paint. They can make their own wrapping paper from paper bags and decorative materials.
- Create kid snowmen. Take a picture of each child and have the pictures developed. Using paper plates of varying sizes, create the body of a snowman. Glue the student's picture on the top plate, the head. The plates work best hinged together with binder clips because they really hold.
- Make a treat like chocolate covered pretzel rods. Bring in some melted chocolate in a slow cooker and let the kids dip some of a pretzel rod in it. Then let the kids roll their pretzels in sanding sugars, sprinkles, mini M&Ms, crushed candy canes and other yummy treats.
- Decorate sugar cookies with frosting and sprinkles.

VALENTINE'S DAY

Crafts

- Give each student a piece of poster board and let them decorate them with their name, stamps, stickers, and other materials. Let the students mingle and sign the poster boards. This eliminates the need for students to bring valentines from home.
- Create secret message valentines for loved ones at home.
- Create kind notes for local nursing home residents.
- String healthy treats on a string to create “candy” necklaces. Cheerios and raspberries, for example. Alternatively, create necklaces from beads.
- Decorate shoe boxes for valentines.
- Decoupage a small bottle with tissue paper and create a bud vase.

Snacks

- Strawberry Kebabs
- Strawberry and vanilla yogurt parfaits

CLASS GIFTS

Consider joining the “Staff Appreciation Committee” of the ECS PCO. Staff appreciation takes several forms including:

Monthly small gestures to showcase staff appreciation

- Winter collection
- Spring collection
- Staff Appreciation Week

Any additional gifts are optional, and should not interfere with family participation in the planned PCO staff appreciation events. That said, we hope you can do at least one additional gesture for your teachers during the year. There is currently no ECS gift policy or limit.

- Teacher gift(s) can be included in the classroom party sign-ups as an extra way to showcase teacher appreciation.
- Thank you(s) during staff appreciation week
- End of year classroom gestures can also be considered.

Inform your families about any gift plans in plenty of time so that they can plan accordingly.

Each class is going to vary tremendously with regards to level of participation. For example, if participation and communication is wonderful then you may be able to pull off a gift where everyone chips in for one large item. But you may also find that participation is so spotty that it would be better to allow families to do independent gifts. Just be mindful with your plans if you are concerned about being stuck footing the bill. Every family might not chip in what you hope for a class gift. Have low expectations and hope for the best! **Remember that participation in gifts is totally optional! Please respect families’ decisions about participating. It is OK to remind families of deadlines but never to call out individual families.**

- **The Group Gift**

It is reasonable to ask families to chip in for a gift so long as you ask in a way that lets people know it is optional. Also be sure and express that while \$___ is the recommended donation, any amount is acceptable because budgets may vary.

- **Gift Cards**

Many teachers don't need or want more "stuff" no matter how well meaning it is. Gift cards allow them to pick out exactly what they want or need. Collecting from the whole class to purchase a gift card can be very successful plus it gives the teacher a larger gift card.

- **Homemade Gifts**

Homemade treats are usually appreciated, but instead of sending in 2 dozen cookies, for example, 1-2 sugar or gingerbread cookies decorated by your student can be even better. Tell your families that less is usually more on the treat front!

- **Donations to Charity**

There are many wonderful charities around the world that help children, families, schools, and society as a whole. You can gauge whether your teacher would appreciate a gift like that versus a tangible gift or gift card.

- **A Wishlist Item**

Collecting for a physical class gift can be great for your class. Perhaps the teacher really wants a fan...maybe your class could chip in to purchase one. Look at your teacher's wishlist and see if your class could work to fulfill some of the list.

- **Say Thank You**

Thank you cards, videos, and positive messages to administration regarding your teacher's strengths are great ways to thank them! These are free, simple and fast! Most importantly, it is probably the most appreciated gift you can give.

APPENDIX A. SAMPLE INTRODUCTION LETTERS TO TEACHER(S)

(NOTE: Feel free to personalize it as you wish and consider including a picture of you with your child as well as maybe a few fun facts about yourself)

Good evening!

We are so excited to support you this school year as room parents for [insert class]!

We'd like to start by understanding what your goals and needs are.

- **Communication**

- **What are your preferred methods of communication?**

We are also happy to email you once per month to touch base.

We plan to send classroom specific reminders to parents as needed (i.e. reminders about fuzzy friend day, etc...)

- **Classroom Supplies**

- **Do you have an Amazon Wish List we could share with families?**

We are also happy to coordinate supply donations whenever materials that are less conducive to Amazon are needed

- **Classroom Parties**

- **Let us know if there are absolute "NOs" regarding classroom parties (i.e. glitter crafts 😊) and if you are ok with parent volunteers helping to run the party**

- **Other volunteer needs**

- **Do you anticipate having additional volunteer needs throughout the year? We are happy to coordinate those as needed (reading books, cleaning classroom, etc...)**

Lastly, here is a little bit of information about us:

INSERT PHOTO OF YOU WITH KID

Name:

Kiddos:

What I do when my kids are in school:

We are looking forward to being your partners this year!

APPENDIX B. SAMPLE INTRODUCTION LETTER TO FAMILIES

(NOTE: Feel free to personalize it as you wish and consider including a picture of you with your child as well as maybe a few fun facts about yourself)

Dear Parents,

[insert name] (child's parent) and [insert name] (child's parent) will be serving as your room parents for [insert class] this school year.

We will reach out periodically with information about **classroom parties, volunteer opportunities** (see information about clearances below), **PCO events, teacher appreciation events,** and **classroom supply needs.**

[If you have the information already, feel free to include information about the classroom wish list, volunteer opportunities, and/or upcoming classroom party).

If you plan to volunteer in the classroom this year, please visit <https://ecspggh.org/volunteer-family-portal#Clearances> and get your clearances submitted into the Raptor system as soon as possible.

Lastly, here is a little bit of information about us:
INSERT PHOTO OF YOU WITH KID

Name:

Kiddos:

What I do when my kids are in school:

Your room parents for the [insert academic year]

APPENDIX C. SAMPLE CLASS PARTY SIGN-UP GENIUS



ECS

KB Valentine's Day Party

LO Louise Marie Oleksiuk

Contact

Help us throw KB a fun **Valentine's Day Party** by signing-up to volunteer for the event or by providing snacks or teacher gifts. The party will be taking place in the KB classroom on **Friday, February 10th from 9-10AM.**

- The **GAME**: "**Guess what's on my back**" (no supplies needed; Lou will bring). *A Valentine's Day related object will be printed and taped to a parent/teacher/student's back. Students will then give that person clues to help them guess what's on their back.*
- The **BOOK**: Contributor's choice (Valentine's Day / Love / Kindness theme)
- The **SNACK** will be "**Rice Krispie Treats**" ideally decorated with heart stickers, googly eyes, or a kind message like "it's such a treat to be your friend" and juice boxes
- **GIFT FOR TEACHERS**: Need 4
- **CLASS PARTY VOLUNTEERS**: need 2 parent volunteers (*clearances must be on file with the school*)

Please email Lou at louisemariegillis@gmail.com with any questions and to coordinate materials drop-off by **no later than Wednesday, February 8th**

Available Slot

Rice Krispie Treat Pack (30)

Prepackaged (Feel free to add stickers / Googly eyes to the wrapper to make them festive)

All slots filled

Juice Boxes (30)

Decorates for Valentine's Day

All slots filled

Book (V-Day, Kindness Themed)

Student can bring to school with them that day

All slots filled

Class Party Volunteers

MUST have clearances on file with the school

All 2 slots filled

Teacher Gift (4)

Popcorn and chocolate are favorites

All slots filled

APPENDIX D. SAMPLE INFORMATION SHARED WITH ECS STAFF ABOUT ROOM PARENTS



ROOM PARENT INFORMATION FOR ECS STAFF

- Every home base teacher for Kindergarten through 5th will have 1-2 room parents (Primary and Intermediate)
- Every grade will have 1-2 room parents for 6th-8th (Middle)
- The ECS PCO is also happy to offer “room parents” for Specials Teachers. Email roomparents@ecspco.org to request a room parent.

Room parents are here to HELP! Use them to:

1. **Arrange supply donations throughout the year**
 - Amazon wishlists are preferable but not required
2. **Organize classroom parties (Halloween, Winter Celebration, Valentine’s Day)**
 - Preferable for classrooms within each grade to select the same date and then communicate it to their room parents
3. **Coordinate classroom volunteers (if needed)**
 - Note that some tasks require clearances.
 - Visit: <https://ecspgh.org/volunteer-family-portal#Clearances> for more information

For more information about room parents, please visit <https://ecspgh.org/volunteer-family-portal#RoomParentInformation>

Email roomparents@ecspco.org with any additional questions.

Louise-Marie Oleksiuk

2023-2024 Room Parent Coordinator

APPENDIX E. SAMPLE INFORMATION SHARED WITH ECS ROOM PARENTS DURING ORIENTATION



ROOM PARENT ORIENTATION 2023-2024

- Every home base teacher for Kindergarten through 5th will have 1-2 room parents (Primary and Intermediate)
- Every grade will have 1-2 room parents for 6th-8th (Middle)
- The ECS PCO is also happy to offer “room parents” for Specials Teachers. Email roomparents@ecspco.org to request a room parent.

Room parents roles:

- 1. Liaison between homebase teacher and families**
 - Introductory communication - Alma (from teacher)
 - Subsequent communications - Room parent lists (provided by the teacher some time in early October following parent opt-out deadline)
 - Consider creating a Google Group (<https://groups.google.com/my-groups>) for your classroom
 - Always cc or bcc your homebase teacher on communications to keep them informed (unless the content pertains to “staff appreciation”)
- 2. Arrange supply donations throughout the year**
 - Amazon wishlists are preferable but not required
 - Sign-up genius
- 3. Organize classroom parties (Halloween, Winter Celebration, Valentine’s Day)**
 - Preferable to create the same classroom party across the grade (PS homebase teachers are on-board)
 - Staff appreciation: include a slot on your sign-up genius for a teacher/paraeducator gift
 - Post-party touchpoint (what went well, what didn’t)
 - PS classroom parties
 - Halloween: Friday, October 27th for K, 1st, 2nd grades after the pumpkin parade
 - Winter celebration:
 - Friday, December 15th for K and 2nd grades (morning half-day)
 - Thursday, December 21st for 1st grade (at 1:00pm)
 - Valentine’s: Friday, February 16th for K, 1st, 2nd grades (morning half-day)
- 4. Coordinate classroom volunteers (if needed)**
 - Note that some tasks require clearances
 - Visit: <https://ecspgh.org/volunteer-family-portal#Clearances> for more information

For more information about room parents, please visit <https://ecspgh.org/volunteer-family-portal#RoomParentInformation>

Email roomparents@ecspco.org with any additional questions.
Louise-Marie Oleksiuk
2023-2024 Room Parent Coordinator

APPENDIX F. FOOD ALLERGY FLYERS (2023-2024)

Primary

Hello Primary School Families!

Many children at ECS have food allergies. We are sharing the following info with you to help keep every student safe at school!

Food Allergies by grade:

- K** peanuts, tree nuts, gluten, lactose, milk/dairy, sesame, pork, pepperoni, oysters
- 1** peanuts, tree nuts, gluten, milk/dairy, eggs, sesame, red meat, shellfish, raw honey, "white grape"-flavored products, bananas
- 2** peanuts, tree nuts, gluten, sesame, egg, milk/dairy, lactose, corn, lentils, gelatin, fava beans, broad beans, latex

ECS classrooms are peanut & tree nut free. Foods brought into the classroom cannot contain peanuts or tree nuts. This includes half-day lunches & birthday (or other) treats.

Non-food birthday treats are a big hit! Consider stickers, pencils, or small toys. Or, donate a book or game to your child's home base in their honor.



Steps to help keep ECS kids safe:

- ❶ **Consider providing a non-food item or a healthy snack.** Your child's teacher may have suggestions.
- ❷ **Speak to your child's teacher before you bring any outside food into the classroom.** As directed in the school handbook, ask about food allergies and provide a list of ingredients so teachers and parents may check the item in advance and/or provide a comparable substitute for their child, as needed.
- ❸ **Pack nut-free lunches on half-days.** Even if none of the students in your child's home base have peanut or nut allergies, all of the students share the classrooms. If you include nuts in cafeteria-bound packed lunches, please remind your child to wash his hands after eating.
- ❹ **Remind your child not to share foods at lunch,** for everyone's health.
- ❺ **Listen to your child.** We have seen ECS students show great caring for their friends' well-being. Your child may ask you not to pack things their friends are allergic to. They may talk about the importance of handwashing (esp. after lunch). We hope you admire your child's growth in this way as much as we do!

Please note the list below includes suggested snacks free from the most common allergens, but in all cases check the labels. **These are not safe for all students.**

Snacks Free From the Top Allergens (peanuts, tree nuts, dairy, egg, soy, fish/shellfish, wheat & sesame)

Look for these brands (but keep in mind grade-level allergy list):

homefree, Made Good, Enjoy Life, Free Yumm, Yum Earth, Rule Breaker, Cybel's Free to Eat, Every Body Eat, Partake, 88 acres, No Whey! Foods

Other options (but check grade-level allergy list, and look for 'shared equipment' or 'made on equipment with' note on label):

Welch's Mixed Fruit Snacks, Skinny Pop popcorn (Original Flavor only), That's It fruit bars, applesauce (small cups), mandarin oranges (individual containers), Utz or Rold Gold pretzels, Oreos (original), Nature's Bakery

Candy options (but check grade-level allergy list, and look for 'shared equipment' or 'made on equipment with' note on label):

Enjoy Life, Swedish fish, Skittles, Smarties, Sour Patch candy, Starburst, Vermont Nut-Free, No Whey! Foods

Intermediate

Hello Intermediate School Families!

Many children at ECS have food allergies. We are sharing the following info with you to help keep every student safe at school!

Food Allergies by grade:

3 peanuts, tree nuts, milk/dairy, seafood, pineapple, avocado, MSG, latex

4 peanuts, tree nuts, milk/dairy, eggs, gluten, shellfish, pineapple, kiwi, eggplant, pork, iodine, strawberries, red dyes, sesame

5 peanuts, tree nuts, milk/dairy, eggs, gluten, seafood, banana, zucchini, pork

ECS classrooms are peanut & tree nut free. Foods brought into the classroom cannot contain peanuts or tree nuts. This includes half-day lunches & birthday (or other) treats.

Non-food birthday treats are a big hit! Consider stickers, pencils, or small toys. Or, donate a book or game to your child's home base in their honor.



Steps to help keep ECS kids safe:

- 1 Consider providing a non-food item or a healthy snack. Your child's teacher may have suggestions.
- 2 Speak to your child's teacher before you bring any outside food into the classroom. As directed in the school handbook, ask about food allergies and provide a list of ingredients so teachers and parents may check the item in advance and/or provide a comparable substitute for their child, as needed.
- 3 Pack nut-free lunches on half-days. Even if none of the students in your child's home base have peanut or nut allergies, all of the students share the classrooms. If you include nuts in cafeteria-bound packed lunches, please remind your child to wash his hands after eating.
- 4 Remind your child not to share foods at lunch, for everyone's health.
- 5 Listen to your child. We have seen ECS students show great caring for their friends' well-being. Your child may ask you not to pack things their friends are allergic to. They may talk about the importance of handwashing (esp. after lunch). We hope you admire your child's growth in this way as much as we do!

Please note the list below includes suggested snacks free from the most common allergens, but in all cases check the labels. These are not safe for all students.

Snacks Free From the Top Allergens (peanuts, tree nuts, dairy, egg, soy, fish/shellfish, wheat & sesame)

Look for these brands (but keep in mind grade-level allergy list):

homefree, Made Good, Enjoy Life, Free Yumm, Yum Earth, Rule Breaker, Cybel's Free to Eat, Every Body Eat, Partake, 88 acres, No Whey! Foods

Other options (but check grade-level allergy list, and look for 'shared equipment' or 'made on equipment with' note on label):

Welch's Mixed Fruit Snacks, Skinny Pop popcorn (Original Flavor only), That's It fruit bars, applesauce (small cups), mandarin oranges (individual containers), Utz or Rold Gold pretzels, Oreos (original), Nature's Bakery

Candy options (but check grade-level allergy list, and look for 'shared equipment' or 'made on equipment with' note on label):

Enjoy Life, Swedish fish, Skittles, Smarties, Sour Patch candy, Starburst, Vermont Nut-Free, No Whey! Foods

Middle

Hello Middle School Families!

Many children at ECS have food allergies. We are sharing the following info with you to help keep every student safe at school!

Food Allergies by grade:

- 6 peanuts, tree nuts, eggs, shellfish, latex
- 7 peanuts, tree nuts, gluten, milk/dairy, sesame, lactose, corn, spinach, kiwi, strawberries, peach, pineapple, blueberries, pork, latex
- 8 peanuts, tree nuts, gluten, milk/dairy, seafood, lactose, chocolate, red-40, yellow 4/5, latex

ECS classrooms are peanut & tree nut free. Foods brought into the classroom cannot contain peanuts or tree nuts. This includes half-day lunches & birthday (or other) treats.

Non-food birthday treats are a big hit! Consider stickers, pencils, or small toys. Or, donate a book or game to your child's home base in their honor.



Steps to help keep ECS kids safe:

- 1 Consider providing a non-food item or a healthy snack. Your child's teacher may have suggestions.
- 2 Speak to your child's teacher before you bring any outside food into the classroom. As directed in the school handbook, ask about food allergies and provide a list of ingredients so teachers and parents may check the item in advance and/or provide a comparable substitute for their child, as needed.
- 3 Pack nut-free lunches on half-days. Even if none of the students in your child's home base have peanut or nut allergies, all of the students share the classrooms. If you include nuts in cafeteria-bound packed lunches, please remind your child to wash his hands after eating.
- 4 Remind your child not to share foods at lunch, for everyone's health.
- 5 Listen to your child. We have seen ECS students show great caring for their friends' well-being. Your child may ask you not to pack things their friends are allergic to. They may talk about the importance of handwashing (esp. after lunch). We hope you admire your child's growth in this way as much as we do!

Please note the list below includes suggested snacks free from the most common allergens, but in all cases check the labels. **These are not safe for all students.**

Snacks Free From the Top Allergens
(peanuts, tree nuts, dairy, egg, soy, fish/shellfish, wheat & sesame)

Look for these brands (but keep in mind grade-level allergy list):

homefree, Made Good, Enjoy Life, Free Yumm, Yum Earth, Rule Breaker, Cybel's Free to Eat, Every Body Eat, Partake, 88 acres, No Whey! Foods

Other options (but check grade-level allergy list, and look for 'shared equipment' or 'made on equipment with note on label):

Welch's Mixed Fruit Snacks, Skinny Pop popcorn (Original Flavor only), That's It fruit bars, applesauce (small cups), mandarin oranges (individual containers), Utz or Rold Gold pretzels, Oreos (original), Nature's Bakery

Candy options (but check grade-level allergy list, and look for 'shared equipment' or 'made on equipment with note on label):

Enjoy Life, Swedish fish, Skittles, Smarties, Sour Patch candy, Starburst, Vermont Nut-Free, No Whey! Foods

High

Hello High School Families!

Many children at ECS have food allergies. We are sharing the following info with you to help keep every student safe at school!

Food Allergies by grade:

- 9 peanuts, tree nuts, milk/dairy, strawberries, mangos, eggs, pineapples, cucumber, tomato, shellfish/seafood, lactose
- 10 tree nuts, milk, shellfish
- 11 peanuts, tree nuts, milk/dairy, lactose, peaches, peas, latex, seafood
- 12 peanuts, mangos, seafood, avocado

ECS classrooms are peanut & tree nut free. Foods brought into the classroom cannot contain peanuts or tree nuts. This includes half-day lunches & birthday (or other) treats.

Non-food birthday treats are a big hit! Consider stickers, pencils, or small toys. Or, donate a book or game to your child's home base in their honor.



Steps to help keep ECS kids safe:

- 1 Consider providing a non-food item or a healthy snack. Your child's teacher may have suggestions.
- 2 Speak to your child's teacher before you bring any outside food into the classroom. As directed in the school handbook, ask about food allergies and provide a list of ingredients so teachers and parents may check the item in advance and/or provide a comparable substitute for their child, as needed.
- 3 Pack nut-free lunches on half-days. Even if none of the students in your child's home base have peanut or nut allergies, all of the students share the classrooms. If you include nuts in cafeteria-bound packed lunches, please remind your child to wash his hands after eating.
- 4 Remind your child not to share foods at lunch, for everyone's health.
- 5 Listen to your child. We have seen ECS students show great caring for their friends' well-being. Your child may ask you not to pack things their friends are allergic to. They may talk about the importance of handwashing (esp. after lunch). We hope you admire your child's growth in this way as much as we do!

Please note the list below includes suggested snacks free from the most common allergens, but in all cases check the labels. **These are not safe for all students.**

Snacks Free From the Top Allergens (peanuts, tree nuts, dairy, egg, soy, fish/shellfish, wheat & sesame)

Look for these brands (but keep in mind grade-level allergy list):

homefree, Made Good, Enjoy Life, Free Yumm, Yum Earth, Rule Breaker, Cybel's Free to Eat, Every Body Eat, Partake, 88 acres, No Whey! Foods

Other options (but check grade-level allergy list, and look for 'shared equipment' or 'made on equipment with' note on label):

Welch's Mixed Fruit Snacks, Skinny Pop popcorn (Original Flavor only), That's It fruit bars, applesauce (small cups), mandarin oranges (individual containers), Utz or Rold Gold pretzels, Oreos (original), Nature's Bakery

Candy options (but check grade-level allergy list, and look for 'shared equipment' or 'made on equipment with' note on label):

Enjoy Life, Swedish fish, Skittles, Smarties, Sour Patch candy, Starburst, Vermont Nut-Free, No Whey! Foods