

**Santa Rosa de Lima
Catholic School**



**Room Parent
Expectations**



SANTA ROSA DE LIMA CATHOLIC SCHOOL
Room Parent Expectations
2023-2024

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Room Parent Expectations (adapted for SIS room parent guide)

WHAT IS A “ROOM PARENT”?

Room Parents are the liaisons between teachers and families. As a Room Parent, you may be asked to recruit other parents to chaperone field trips, help plan class celebrations, assist teachers and the school with Warrior Wednesday Fundraisers-Family Mass Fundraisers-Event Fundraisers to help our school budget and purchase class supplies. Every grade will have two Room Parents to help share the workload. Some teachers may want a lot of help (or very little); connecting with your teacher is a good way to learn what’s expected of you as a Room Parent.

WHAT WOULD MY RESPONSIBILITIES BE?

Different teachers have different needs — and your responsibilities may vary from grade to grade. But all Room Parents share some things in common: a desire to pitch in, great organizational and communication skills, and the time, energy, and enthusiasm for helping out in a hands-on way. Here are some things you may be asked to do:

- ***Help the teachers communicate with parents***
 - This includes identifying bilingual parents who can help translate class communications, and making sure that families without access to email also get communications by ClassDojo/hard copy.
- ***Plan & organize class events***
 - In addition to school wide celebrations, individual classes host their own events. As a Room Parent, you’ll sign up volunteers to donate time or supplies, send out reminders about upcoming events, meetings, field trips, and school/class needs.
- ***Foster community***
 - Help the teacher with Thanksgiving, Christmas, Catholic Schools’ Week, Valentine’s Day, St. Patrick’s Day, Holy Week / Easter celebrations. Room Parents work directly with teachers to plan holiday celebrations.
- ***Recruit other parent volunteers***
 - You don’t have to do this alone! Communicate with other parents to get their support as well.
- ***Communicate with teachers and other Room Parents on a regular basis***
 - Regularly scheduled meetups are a good way to keep everyone in the loop, and find out how to best support teachers throughout the year as their needs change.
- ***Solicit & collect supply donations***
 - Classrooms always need donations of supplies: tissue boxes, hand sanitizer, snacks for field trips, etc. Letting parents know when donations are needed will ensure your class has everything it needs.
- ***Act as a resource for new families***
 - When new students start at SRDLCS, Room Parents should reach out to them to answer any questions and make them feel welcome in our community.



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- **Attend monthly Parent Teacher Advisory Association (PTAA) meetings & schoolwide activities**
 - This is the best way to stay up-to-date on bigger picture issues that class parents may ask you about — and help the school as a whole!
- **Share your experience & knowledge with incoming Room Parents**
 - To help build a strong community and smarter classrooms!

IMPORTANT NOTE: We expect all students, parents, faculty and staff to abide by the Code of Christian Conduct. Please read it and reach out if you have any questions. (It is also available in our school handbook)

CODE OF CHRISTIAN CONDUCT (FROM THE PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK)

Students can best receive a quality, morally based education if students, parents/guardians, and school officials work together. Normally, these parties can resolve their differences. In some rare instances, however, the school may find it necessary, in its discretion, to require parents/guardians to withdraw their child. As an express condition of enrollment, students and parents/guardians shall follow standards of conduct that are consistent with the Christian principles of the school, as determined by the school in its discretion.

These principles include but are not limited to any policies or procedures set forth in the school's parent/student handbook. These Christian principles include but are not limited to:

- Parents/guardians are expected to work courteously and cooperatively with the school to assist the student in meeting the academic, moral, and behavioral expectations of the school.
- Students and parents/guardians may respectfully express their concerns about the school operation and its personnel. However, they may not do so in a manner that is discourteous, scandalous, rumor driven, disruptive, threatening, hostile, or divisive.
- In a place where a school employee is required to be in the course of his or her duties, any parent/guardian or other person whose conduct materially disrupts class work or extracurricular activities or involves substantial disorder may be guilty of a misdemeanor. This statement does not apply to any otherwise lawful employee-concerted activity, including but not limited to picketing and distributing handbills.
- Any parent/guardian or other person could risk his or her child's continuation in school if he or she insults or abuses the principal or any teacher in the presence of students, parents/guardians, or other school personnel while on school premises, public sidewalks, public streets, other public ways adjacent to school premises, or at some other place if the principal or teacher is required to be there in connection with assigned school activities.

These expectations for students and parents/guardians include but are not limited to all school-sponsored programs and events (e.g., extended care, athletics, and field trips). The school reserves the right to determine, in its discretion, when conduct is severe enough to warrant immediate action without warning and/or without an intermediate step short of withdrawal.



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GETTING STARTED

So you've volunteered to be a Room Parent. Now what?

SCHEDULE A TEACHER MEETING AT THE START OF THE YEAR

Learn about your teachers' needs, preferences, and expectations. These are a few important questions to ask:

- Contact information: How do the teachers prefer to be contacted by you and other class parents?
- What are school policies for gathering and releasing parent contact information? No cell phone/emails will be shared with room parents. Instead a ClassDojo Group Chat will be used to communicate. Another option is having Room Parents create communication emails/flyers and sharing with the teacher to post on ClassDojo.
- How can you best support the class? With communication, organizing events, getting chaperones for field trips, making copies, prepping materials for class activities, donating supplies, etc.
- What ongoing volunteer support needs are there? Making copies, snacks, supplies, lunch supervisors, etc.
- What events should you plan for? Field trips, holiday events, open-house, assemblies, etc. Is there a calendar already, or should you help set dates for that?
- Teachers' favorites? Find out what they like as a gift-guide for parents and start thinking ahead to Teacher Appreciation Week in May: meals, beverages, restaurant, stores, treats, charities, teams, hobbies, etc.
- Classroom party dates & plans
 - How many? Who plans (teacher or parents)?
 - Food requirements (healthy or sweets)?
 - Food allergy considerations? Please consider both student AND teacher allergies.
 - Timing and activities/games/crafts?

REACH OUT & GET ORGANIZED

Send a welcome email/letter to families introducing yourself, your role, and what parents can expect from you, including your contact information. Ask parents if they have special interests or talents they would like to share with the class (i.e. gardening, music, photography, cultural experiences, etc.). Consider sharing your email with teachers first before sending it out, to see if there is anything they'd like you to adjust or include.

Build a calendar of class events along with volunteering needs for each.

Identify bilingual parents who can help with translation... and have all classroom communications translated into Spanish (if needed).



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Make sure all families receive all communications — and that families not connected to the Internet or on email get a hardcopy. Teachers can assist with printing — and you're always free to use the school copier. And include your teachers in communication to parents (unless you're asking for donations for birthday gifts for them!)

TIPS FOR BEING A GOOD ROOM PARENT

Planning Advice

- ***Get support early***
 - Ask parents to sign up to help at the beginning of the school year for activities throughout the year.
 - Offer options so working parents or those with young children can pitch in from home (sending snacks or treats, preparing and purchasing supplies).

- ***Budget***
 - If there's a teacher's birthday, holiday gift, or party supplies needed, create a budget and alert parents at the beginning of the year of what's coming down the road, so they can budget and plan for those, too.
 - Be clear on what is optional (teacher gift cards) and what is mandatory (field trip fees).

- ***Delegate***
 - Don't try to do it all yourself.
 - Be specific about what jobs need doing and when, and invite other parents to participate in organizing parties and activities.
 - Identify your most active volunteers and call on them when you're short — and show your appreciation! They'll keep coming.

In The Classroom

- ***Let the teachers lead***
 - Find out what the teachers want, not what *you* think they need.
 - Feel free to share your own ideas for great books, craft projects, etc. — but don't take it personally if the teachers choose not to incorporate them. They have complex lesson plans and know the kids' needs best, so it's important to remember the teachers are in charge of the classroom, and we should follow their lead. If you're uncertain about something, ask.

- ***Good communication is key***
 - Before you or other parents come into the classroom, work out with the teachers exactly when you need to be there and what you'll be doing.
 - If you're bringing snacks, are there things you should avoid? Any sensitivities you should be aware of? Avoid making these arrangements during drop-off or pick-up, so teachers aren't caught up in the chaos of starting/ending the day.



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- ***Take your cues from the teachers***
 - Once you enter the classroom, let the teachers take the lead by introducing you to the children.
 - It might be tempting to start talking or playing with your little one, but many of the kids might not understand who you are or what you're doing there.
 - Wait until a teacher gives you some cues and then you can start doing what you came to do.

- ***Remember you're there for ALL the children***
 - It's very easy when visiting the classroom to engage only with your own child, but remember the focus of your visit. Whether you're there to read, help with a craft or a party, be sure to give all the children equal attention.

- ***Don't drop in unexpectedly***
 - Unexpected visits can cause a disruption and put teachers in a difficult position. Teachers have a very tight schedule, and even the slightest distraction can make the entire day veer off-kilter.

- ***Know when to leave***
 - Although it may be hard to leave the classroom, the best guests know when it's time to leave.
 - Read the story, do the craft, and then say goodbye.

Important Note: Do not use your role as a Room Parent to ask families for special favors, to "spy" on your child or your teacher, or to hold unplanned parent/teacher conferences.

Be inclusive to all families, especially those whose first language isn't English or are new to the school. Work with your teachers or principal for advice on how to make sure everyone's needs are being met.

Be professional and cautious to NEVER release contact information without permission or share sensitive information you may be privy to as a Room Parent.



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QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF BEFORE SIGNING ON

1. *Do I have the time to do this job well?*

Before making any volunteer commitment, make honest assessments as to whether you have the time and personality to be a good Room Parent. Consider not only how much time you have but when you're available. Think about your work schedule. Will it change or become busier during a certain season? Also, factor in time commitments for other children's school activities. If your teachers are looking for hands-on assistance in the classroom (or primarily after-hours help) and your job doesn't allow that kind of flexibility, there may be other ways you can help.

2. *Is there another way I can help?*

Not ready to take on the responsibility of Room Parent, but still want to help? You're in luck! Offer to be a regular field-trip chaperone, organizer for one big class event, assist with an art project, etc. Remember, there are plenty of volunteer opportunities too: recess/lunch supervision, and more. The more help, the merrier!

3. *Is this a one-year commitment?*

Yes! But keep in mind that your experience may make the job easier for you in subsequent years, and we always welcome good Room Parents to stay involved!