

# Room Parent Handbook



**2018 - 2019**

Thank you for volunteering to be a Room Parent for your child's class. You provide an invaluable service to our Sycamore community. So many of the activities our children look forward to during the school year would not be possible without your help and support. The students, teachers, and Sycamore families appreciate your dedication.

This handbook was created to help you understand your role and outline the major activities you will be coordinating throughout the school year. The Room Parent is a liaison between the PTA, the teachers and the parents. The Room Parent is not required to complete all tasks but instead coordinate the efforts to have other parents assist with classroom, school and PTA activities.

This handbook and many additional resources are available on the Sycamore Valley Elementary School website at: [www.sycamoreelementary.org](http://www.sycamoreelementary.org). The PTA tab on the website is a goldmine of information (<https://syc-srvusd-ca.schoolloop.com/PTA>). Room Parents are encouraged to refer to this tab throughout the year, as there are always updates and new information.

Please feel free to contact the Room Parent Coordinator, Christy Lucia [ctr2108@gmail.com](mailto:ctr2108@gmail.com) with any ideas, suggestions, or questions that you may have.

## **Responsibilities/Duties**

Teacher expectations of the Room Parent will vary by class. Please coordinate everything you plan with the teacher. Communication between Room Parents and teachers ***is the key to success***. Reach out to the teacher to see if they want to meet to determine what the classroom needs will be for the year and how you can be most helpful.

### ➤ **Back to School Night (BTSN)**

On Back To School Night (BTSN), your teacher will provide sign-up sheets for parents to indicate their interest, availability, and to solicit volunteers for specific events. You will use this information to create a volunteer schedule, if needed. Specific volunteer information for grade and school wide activities will need to be input into the Room Parent & Classroom volunteers Google Doc that will be shared with you by the Room Parent Coordinator.

During BTSN, your teacher will circulate the Class Contact list to gather parent names, phone numbers and email addresses. Make sure to get this list at the end of BTSN or shortly after. You will use this information to create and distribute a class roster. This is especially useful early in the year before the school directory is published. Please send out an introductory email soon after BTSN to advise parents

that you will be helping to coordinate class events and you may be reaching out to them to assist. You should also include the class roster and volunteer schedule.

There are many online classroom management tools like Shutterfly and Sign Up Genius. Both websites have volunteer scheduling capabilities with automatic reminders. Please feel free to utilize these with your class if your teacher allows it.

➤ **Making New Families Feel Welcome**

Perhaps the single most important step a Room Parent can take is to reach out and welcome those families who are new to the Sycamore Community. A personal connection can make all the difference. As soon as you are notified of a new student in the class, please contact the parents and make sure they know how to reach you with questions. Additionally, please touch base with your classroom coordinators for any upcoming events. If the Fun Run is coming up, that new student will need a t-shirt, water bottle and bib.

Hosting welcome events for families new to Sycamore is important to make them feel like part of the community and make sure their questions are answered. The PTA coordinates the Kindergarten First Day Coffee, Kindergarten Ice Cream Social, New Family Coffee and other new family events throughout the year. The PTA also produces the Welcome packets given to new families at Registration or upon their arrival at Sycamore.

➤ **Class Parties**

The Sycamore Wellness Plan (which is posted on the school website) limits school parties to 3 times per year. All grades will celebrate Halloween, Valentine's Day and End of The Year in some manner but may vary by grade level or teacher. There may be other special events specific to individual grade levels. (Example: Heritage Feast in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade and 100<sup>th</sup> Day of school in Kindergarten)

Communicate with your classroom teacher to determine the party or event needs. It is useful to create a list of volunteers needed and items to be donated. Check with your teacher regarding any allergies and food restrictions. Please adhere to the Sycamore Wellness Policy when serving food or drink. Remember, no balloons on campus. Invite parents to attend and sign up to bring items via e-mail, Sign Up Genius or your classroom's Shutterfly website.

**Please discuss with the teacher if siblings are welcome to attend the party.**

Remember, class parties are for the children in the class. Please respect that some teachers prefer younger siblings not attend as it may distract the volunteers or the experience of the students in the class. If the teacher permits siblings, please discuss if they will be allowed to partake in the food and activities. This may require additional food or crafts resources. Please communicate the teacher's wishes to all parents.

➤ **Money Collection**

Any request for money for class parties or teacher gifts is ***completely optional***. You must state this in all communications to the parents in the class. Thus, never send a parent a reminder that they have not donated yet or publish a list of those that have or have not donated. Remember to document any money collection and spending.

➤ **Teacher Gifts**

In the past typical gift giving occasions have been Winter Holidays, Teacher Appreciation, and Year End. Birthdays, while not typical, seem to have become more popular in recent years. It is up to each class/Room Parent to decide how to handle gift giving. The Room Parent may choose to coordinate class gifts, but it is certainly not required. Please remember to include your class para when planning to give gifts. Should the class/Room Parent decide to give a class gift, always indicate that participation is optional and parents are free to do an individual gift without recourse or notification that they have not contributed. We encourage families to express their appreciation in whatever manner they choose. Personal cards or special words from the children are often most appreciated. The Teacher's Favorite Things questionnaire is available on the PTA tab of the Sycamore website under Committee Resources.

Please adhere to the SRVUSD policy for teacher gifts. Teachers may accept a maximum of \$390 per year in non-consumable goods. If two teachers share a position, the \$390 in gifts is to be divided between the teachers throughout the year.

## **PTA Programs & Room Parent involvement**

### **Art**

The Art program has changed quite a bit in the last year. We now have a paid Art Instructor who will lead all of the art lessons in the classrooms and work with the teachers to setup the schedule. We will now have a Grade Level Art Coordinator for each grade. Each Grade Level Art Coordinator will work with the teachers in that grade and also help with some of the higher level coordination of the Art program. We will continue to have Classroom Art Helpers/volunteers who will assist during the scheduled art lessons, in addition to setup and clean up. They will also help prepare the class artwork for the Art Show during Open House and with the collection of all the art at the end of the school year. Parents can sign up at BTSN to be an Art Helper.

## **Fun Run**

The Fun Run is a school wide fundraising event that will take place during school hours on Friday, November 9<sup>th</sup>. At Back To School Night, a parent can sign up to be the class coordinator for this event. The class coordinator will attend an informational meeting, assist in preparing the class for event (passing out t-shirts, pinning on numbers, etc.), getting the class out to the field, help in any needed capacity during the event, tally lap totals after the event, and provide class spirit! If there is not a volunteer coordinator, the Room Parent is asked to assume the responsibility. You can often recruit a group of parents that might be willing to share the various responsibilities.

## **Yearbook**

The yearbook is produced by a committee of students and a few parent volunteers. It can be purchased during Registration and again in the Spring through Future Fund. Parents can log onto their Future Fund account to determine if they have ordered a Yearbook already, if they don't remember.

At Back to School Night, a parent can sign up to be the class photographer and will be contacted by the Yearbook Committee to upload photos. However, we encourage **ALL** parents to upload photos to the site after class parties, school events and even daily activities like recess, lunch, science class, etc. Instructions to upload photos can be found on the Sycamore website – PTA tab under the Yearbook section. As Room Parent, we ask you to encourage your classroom parents to upload photos to the site.

## **Sister School**

As part of the SRVUSD Sister School program, Sycamore is matched up with King Elementary in Richmond to help foster civic responsibility, enhance community engagement, promote volunteerism and teach our students the joy of helping others. We provide various drives throughout the school year to help the students at King Elementary. At Back To School Night, a parent can sign up to be a class coordinator for this event/program. This coordinator will assist the Sister School committee by attending the informational meeting and sharing information with your class. If there is not a volunteer coordinator, the Room Parent is asked to assume the responsibility.

## **Auction**

In conjunction with Shark Fund, the Auction committee facilitates our annual Sycamore Valley auction. A live event with parents, teachers and administration attending is held every other year with an online auction held every year. The Auction team plans the theme, venue, spirit week activities and solicits donations from parents and businesses in our community. The Grade Level Auction Lead will communicate auction related information to the parents within your grade. The

Auction Team works with the principal to determine the “Fund A Need” cause for the school year. Room Parents may be asked to share information and encourage participation.

### **Staff Appreciation**

Staff Appreciation Week happens in May each school year. The PTA develops a schedule of special events to recognize our staff. At Back To School Night, a parent can sign up to be the classroom coordinator for the events during that week. If there is not a volunteer coordinator, the Room Parent is asked to assume the responsibility.

## **Volunteering**

The San Ramon Valley Unified School District has instituted specific guidelines for volunteers. This includes field trips, classroom and office support, library support and any other volunteer support that may involve direct contact with students at a school. The district expects that all volunteers follow the guidelines listed below:

- ◆ All volunteers will check in at the office and wear a school-issued badge before going onto campus.
- ◆ All volunteers are expected to practice professionalism: arrive on time, turn off cell phones, dress appropriately, etc.
- ◆ In order to ensure safety and minimize distractions to the learning environment, please do not bring infants or other children to school with you when you are volunteering in the classroom. Volunteers are asked to make arrangements for off-campus child care.
- ◆ Volunteers are to use staff restrooms only.
- ◆ Confidentiality of information obtained through your volunteer efforts must be maintained.
- ◆ Respect the privacy of everyone in the classroom. This includes materials you may see on the students’ or teachers’ desks (i.e. test scores, graded papers, notes, etc.).
- ◆ When addressing student behavior: ask politely twice, and then inform the teacher.

At Sycamore, we ask that families enter through the front gates and sign in and out at the office. When exiting through the back gates, make sure the gates are securely closed, as safety is always a priority.

**Please sign in at the office for ALL of your volunteer hours.** During the year, Room Parents will be asked to estimate the number of hours they spend at home completing Room Parent duties. It is important that we include all of these hours in the total amount of volunteer hours reported. We record volunteer hours because as

a nonprofit (501c3) we must demonstrate that the majority of our activity comes from volunteers.

The District's Volunteer Clearance process through the Be A Mentor website is facilitated by the staff in the Sycamore office.. All parents must complete that process prior to volunteering on campus. <http://www.srvusd.net/parents/volunteers>

## Room Parent Resources

Check out the PTA Page of our school website!

<https://syc-srvusd-ca.schoolloop.com/PTA>

Under the **Committee Resources tab**, you will see the *Room Parent Resources* section which includes several links with ideas and pictures for class parties, various Bingo game printables for different holidays and other games and print outs you can print and use in the classroom.

**PTA Meetings** - You are invited and encouraged to attend the PTA meetings held throughout the year. It is a great way to stay informed and involved.

Wed, Sept 5<sup>th</sup> 8:35 am MPR

Wed, Oct 3<sup>rd</sup> 8:35 am MPR

Wed, Nov 7<sup>th</sup> 8:35 am MPR – regular meeting plus Bake Off

Wed, Jan 16<sup>th</sup> 8:35 am MPR

Wed, Mar 6<sup>th</sup> 8:35 am MPR – PTA/Shark Fund/Site Council Job Fair

Wed, Apr 17<sup>th</sup> 8:35 am MPR – regular meeting plus PTA Elections

**The Deep** – There are fabulous new die cuts available in the Deep/copy room. Check out the PDF on the Committee Resources tab to see the available shapes of die cuts. There are also two styles of letters and numbers. They are often used for Teacher Appreciation posters, Kindergarten memory books and classroom bulletin boards.

**PTA Calendar** - can be found on PTA Page of the school website or in the Sycamore directory.

**Code of Ethics** – The Room Parent Code of Ethics includes guidelines that will assist you in your role. It is important that you read these carefully and abide by them while serving in your role.

## How to stay informed at Sycamore

As a Room Parent, you may be asked questions by your classroom parents. There are many ways to stay informed about upcoming events and deadlines at Sycamore. We hope you use all these resources to stay informed and encourage the parents of your classroom to also seek out information through these various sources.



Online



social media



in-person



print



### **Sycamore Valley Elementary Website ([www.sycamoreelementary.org](http://www.sycamoreelementary.org))**

- Main page has news, upcoming events and details.
- Our School section – bell schedule, emergency plan, handbook, policies.
- Grade level websites – pictures of teachers, emails, etc.
- Parent organizations – Shark Fund, PTA, Site Council.

### **Sycamore Valley PTA Website (under PTA tab on Sycamore Valley Elementary Main Page)**

- Sycamore Valley PTA Calendar containing all school events, holidays and PTA meeting dates.
- Program details; parent, volunteer and committee resources; legislative updates and budget information.
- PTA Executive Board members – contact them with questions.
- PTA Roster – committee chairs – contact them with questions about specific events.

### **Shark Bites – each Wednesday**

- Weekly email of school news, updates and reminders, event and program information, thank yous, forms, etc. Shark Bites are archived on school website under “Our School.”



### **Room Parent Emails**

- Information on classroom related news or items and school wide activities or information.



### **Parents of Sycamore Valley Facebook page**

- Reminders, announcements and thank-you's.

### **Sycamore Valley Twitter**

- News and announcements in 140 words or less from Sycamore Valley Elementary Twitterfeed @SycamoreSharks.

### **Classroom Shutterfly**

- Shutterfly site for some classes – these sites are optional and up to the Room Parent to establish.



### **Room Parent**

- Go to Room Parent with questions – that's what they're there for and are a great resource.

### **PTA meetings – 6 times a year**

- PTA meeting – check Sycamore website for dates. All meetings begin at 8:35 a.m. in the MPR. You are welcome to bring younger children.



### **Welcome Packet**

- Drop off guidelines – important first day of school information.
- Early/Late bird slip schedule information.
- Map, How to Stay Informed, Quick Links and Glossary of Sycamore Valley Elementary terms.

### **Shark folders**

- Sent home every Wednesday with homework, classroom and school related information.

### **Signage**

- Banners are hung up at school to inform about various events and activities during the year.
- Two stand-up chalkboards placed on school grounds to inform about events and activities.

**Need More Information?**

Sycamore Valley Elementary Main Phone: 925-855-2800

Sycamore Valley Elementary PTA Email: [sycamorevalleypta@gmail.com](mailto:sycamorevalleypta@gmail.com)