

Class Parent Guide

PS 101Q, The School In The Gardens

(Updated September 2016)

Thank you for volunteering to be a Class Parent! We appreciate the time, energy, and effort that you are committing to your child's class and to the school as a whole. You are playing a critical role in facilitating communication between the parents, teachers and the school administration that will enrich the school experience for the entire school community.

We hope that this basic Class Parent Guide will help you navigate through the school year. Please note that this is a "guide" and not a policy. Expectations, processes, projects and events may vary from grade to grade. At any time, if you need guidance, please reach out to the Class Parent Coordinator.

Number of Class Parents: The PA recommends that each class have between 2 and 4 Class Parents. If there is more than one Class Parent, each Class Parent should have a specific role. For example, if there are four (4) Class Parents, each Class Parent could be assigned one of the following roles:

- ❖ Teacher Liaison and Communications
- ❖ Parents As Learning Partners (PALP) Coordinator
- ❖ Class Fund & Teacher Gift Coordinator¹
- ❖ Class Event & Party Coordinator

Class Parent Roles & Responsibilities: Please see a description of each role and their suggested responsibilities below.

Teacher Liaison & Communications: Class Parents are key! You are the link between teachers, parents and PA. One of the most important responsibilities that Class Parents perform is the creation of a [class list](#).

- The PA provides Class Parents with a class list. The class list contains parent email addresses where the PA has permission to share this information. In some instances, the class lists will not be complete. Class Parents should try and collect any missing contact information so that they can communicate with *all parents* in your class.
- Once a Class Parent has attempted to collect all contact information, the Class Parent will create an *email distribution list* for communication with all parents in your class.
- Class Parents are permitted to distribute the email distribution list to all parents within the class. Distribution is typically done via the children's backpacks.
- **School & PA Email List:** Class Parents should encourage all parents to subscribe to the School and PA's email list. Both the school and PA communicate important information via this email system. For any parent not on the list or If a new child joins the class mid-year, Class Parents should ask that they sign up at: <http://pa101.org/joinemail>.

¹ Any requests for contributions for Class Funds or Teacher Gifts are 100% voluntary and not required.

Parents as Learning Partners (PALP) Coordinator: The PALP program provides PS101 parents and their children with a special opportunity each month. Parents are invited into the classroom on the first Friday of the month, during first period, to teach the class.

- Class Parents should ensure that a parent participates in PALP each month. PALP dates can be found on the school calendar: <http://pa101.org/calendar>
- At the beginning of the school year, we recommend that Class Parents provide all the PALP dates to their parents and request parents to sign up for specific dates.
- Parents can either prepare a unique lesson plan or activity or request a PALP lesson plan from their teacher which typically comes from the Positive Action curriculum.

Class Funds & Teacher Gift Coordinator: Class Parents are encouraged to establish a Class Fund. Suggested contributions are collected and managed by Class Parents². Neither the teachers, the PA nor the administration may hold any money collected. The Class Fund can be used for class parties or events. Teachers may also request specific items for the class which the Class Parents can either purchase or reimburse the teacher for.

- **Use of Class Funds:** Class Funds may be used for class parties, events, special projects and activities during the school year or to help cover miscellaneous expenses such as tips and tolls for class trips. Teachers may also have needs for their classrooms. Most standard classroom supplies can be replenished through the school so please check with the office before using Class Funds for basic classroom supplies.
- **Asking For Voluntary Contributions:** Any request for a donation to a Class Fund is voluntary. All donations should be kept confidential. Please be understanding of families who may choose not to donate for various reasons.
 - The suggested range for a Class Fund donations is \$25-\$35.
 - Any money collected should benefit the entire class equally.
- **Class Fund Amount:** Class Parents should communicate to their classes the amount collected, how much was spent recently, upcoming expenses, and the remaining Class Fund balance. An example Excel file for tracking Class Funds can be found at: <http://pa101.org/classparents>. An example of information for an email is on the following page:
 - *Class Fund Donations: \$350.00*
 - *Class Fund Expenditures: \$150.00*
 - *Recent Expenses: \$50.00 for Halloween Class Party*
 - *Class Fund Balance: \$200.00*
- **Teacher Gifts:** Class Parents traditionally coordinate a monetary class gift

² Any requests for contributions for Class Funds or Teacher Gifts are 100% voluntary and not required.

for teachers, aides & paras and cluster teachers in December and June of each school year. Like Class Funds, teacher gifts are voluntary and the same rules for collecting donations for the Class Fund apply to teacher gifts (see above). Cards on any teacher gift should state it is from the entire class and not any individual parent or group of parents. When collecting and distributing teacher gifts, please remember and consider including the cluster teachers. We recommend each class give \$20 to each cluster teacher.

Class Events & Party Coordinator: Class Parents are responsible for organizing class events, including class parties and community service events. Teachers and the administration encourage Class Parents to plan classwide activities (crafts, games, community service projects) in lieu of food-centered class parties.

Class Party Guidelines

- The Principal, PA and the administration determine the date(s) of class parties. Class party dates can be found on the school calendar: <http://pa101.org/calendar>
- Teachers will decide the exact time of each party and whether the parties are open to parents. Please always be respectful of your teacher's wishes. If there is a conflict, please contact the Class Parent Program Coordinator at classparents@pa101.org for guidance.
- Class Parents should communicate with their teacher before sending out any information on class parties. Individual teachers may have different party policies and different grades may have different policies as well.
- Examples of memos related to class parties can be found at: <http://pa101.org/classparents>

Planning A Successful Party

- Plan ahead. We recommend starting about 2 weeks in advance.
- Discuss the time, duration, and theme with your teacher to ensure they approve of the plan.
- Create a party sign up list via email and ask parents to sign up to bring specific items including paper goods, drinks and healthy snacks. Email parents and verify that they will be sending in the items they've indicated.
- If required, ensure adequate volunteers are on hand to set up, attend and clean up the party.

Food & Allergy Concerns: The prevalence of food allergies in the U.S. has increased dramatically in recent years. There may be a child in your class with potentially life-threatening food allergies. Class Parents should attempt to learn about any food allergies or concerns in their classroom and communicate this information to other class members. There are certain things we can do to keep these students safe and able to learn, as well as keep them from feeling excluded. Children frequently touch their lips, eyes, and nose, and life-threatening reactions can result with exposure to even tiny amounts of food residue on desks, supplies, other students' hands, etc. Our goal is to ensure that every student in our school can learn in a safe, supportive environment.

PA Meeting Attendance: Class Parents are *strongly encouraged* to attend the PA meetings once a month. Class Parents should be able to update other parents when they can't attend a meeting and/or have unanswered questions, and also be present to

communicate any school or classwide concerns to the PA.

Classroom Concerns: If many parents in your child's class are experiencing the same difficulty or have an overall concern, the Class Parent should bring it to the attention of (in the following-order of escalation) the teacher, Assistant Principal, Parent Coordinator and Principal. Any parent is welcome to join in regularly scheduled monthly PA Executive Board or General Assembly meetings in order to discuss an issue.

If the concern is related to an individual child, Class Parents should guide the parent to appropriate assistance. Parents with a concern about their child should first contact the teacher. If the concern is unresolved, they should contact our Parent Coordinator and then the Assistant Principal and Principal.

Recruiting Volunteers: There are many opportunities to be involved as volunteers throughout the year. Class Parents are often called upon to rally and recruit volunteers by letting parents know how important it is to participate in the various school events. As a Class Parent you can help identify the parents in your class who would be willing to help, but aren't always sure how to get involved. The more parents we have involved, the better school events will be. Class Parents should serve as ambassadors to the school, to reach out to parents and welcome them into our community.

- Class Trip Chaperones
- Recess Volunteers
- Head Check Team
- Graduation & Year-End Events
- Event Chairs & General Volunteers

Ex: Picture Day, Monster Mash, Book Fair, Bake Sales, Talent Show, Movie Nights, Gala Auction, International Dinner and more.