

Greetings everyone! Thank you for considering to be a MES PTA Room Parent for the 2020-2021 school year. Provided below is a list of expectations and responsibilities related to being an MES PTA Room Parent.

Please take a few moments to read through this ENTIRE document even if you've been a Room Parent before as MANY things have changed – especially in light of these unique times.

MES PTA ROOM PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES INCLUDE:

- 1. Sending out emails, surveys, updates and other critical information as forwarded from the MES PTA, the school administrators, key stakeholders such as the Board of Education, or other related entities. With the virtual/hybrid model of this year, we KNOW that communication is vital.*
- 2. Planning and executing four class parties/virtual parties (or assist the teacher in preparation of related activities):*
 - a. Halloween (week of October 26-30, TBD in consult with your teacher(s))*
 - b. Winter (December 14-23, TBD in consult with your teacher(s))*
 - c. Character & Caring Day (February 11, again in consult with the teacher(s))*
 - d. End of Year (week of June 14-18, with consult with the teacher(s))*
- 3. Providing In-Person Man Power for Select Duties:*
 - a. Front Door Coverage; assist in providing security for our children by covering the front door for 30 minutes at select times to be determined. This will be extremely limited.*
 - b. Distributing select items to each child of the classroom (example: yearbook distribution, fundraiser items distributed via MES PTA, etc.) – These will be minimal as most items are mailed directly to each child.*
- 4. Coordinating teacher gifts for those families who wish to participate in a class gift for the Holiday Season (correlating with Winter activity between December 14-23), the End-of-the-Year (week of June 14-18) or the teacher(s) birthday.*
- 5. Other duties as determined by the MES PTA (COVID might impact us more/differently throughout the year and we ask for your patience as we adapt in our efforts month to month.)*

PTA MEMBERSHIP AND HIB TRAINING

ALL MES PTA Room Parents must be active members of the MES PTA and HIB Trained/pass the HIB Quiz. ALL parent volunteers that might assist Room Parents must also be MES PTA members and HIB Trained/pass the HIB Quiz. This is for insurance purposes.

To join the MES PTA: <https://montgomerypta.new.memberhub.store/store>

HIB Training/Quiz can be found here: <https://www.mtsd.k12.nj.us/Page/15653>

NOTE: Ask your teacher(s) if they are members of the MES PTA. If they are not, ASK them to join. It's \$5 for staff/administration. OR, consider "gifting" them a membership from the class.

COMMUNICATION:

*Make no mistake that communication will be the lifeline for all of us this year. As Room Parent(s), we highly encourage you to designate **one person to be the PRIMARY sender of emails/updates/etc.** In advance, create a distribution list from the parent emails so you will be ready to go. If parents are willing, create a group just for them on WhatsApp, Facebook, etc.*

*If asked to send/forward something to the parents of your classroom, we expect that to be done **within 24 hours of the request.** Please do not take on this role if you know you will not be able to meet this expectation. You can have a backup amongst the room parents, as emergencies will always arise, but we really need to count on consistent and timely dissemination of information.*

*When asked to forward something, and after doing so, please reply back to the original requestor to simply acknowledge that the communication did go out. A **one-line email saying, "DONE"** will suffice. This will help the campus MES PTA Room Parent Coordinator to track progress and report back to the MES PTA Board as needed.*

CLASS PARTIES:

As you are probably aware, in-person parties are currently not possible. COVID has limited our abilities to pursue traditional classroom parties as held in previous years. However, in close consultation with your respective classroom teacher(s), we encourage you to come up with alternative ways to celebrate. Remember that there are HYBRID and VIRTUAL students in all classrooms. So your solutions should be flexible and mindful of the challenges and opportunities for each group.

Your role (currently) is to support or complement the overall efforts of the teacher(s). Are there "virtual" field trips that you can take as a class and then make an art project to show others in a Google Meet? Can each student (and their families) select a charity of their choice (or a simple act of volunteerism) and then have a sharing session for Character and Caring Day? Maybe the class chooses to collect gently worn clothing for an agreed upon drop location (with independent and safe distancing measures in place) and then has a Google Meet follow-up to reflect upon their efforts. There are many, MANY new ways for all of us to feel together even if we are apart. Use your creativity (in consultation with your teacher(s)) to show our children ways to celebrate even in these times.

In the rare event that in-classroom parties can resume, our standing policies remain:

- *No food is allowed at in-person class parties, either for immediate distribution or to travel home in goody bags of any kind. This is due to the increasing numbers of children with food allergies.*
- *In-Person Parties must be activity based. Depending upon the amount of time each teacher has allotted for the party, you should plan for at least 4 games or activities. You can include crafts, storytelling, games, etc. As a friendly reminder, no glitter or confetti is permitted in any of the classrooms. All activities must be shared with the teacher(s) in advance to ensure safety and classroom protocols are considered.*
- *You may have only 4 (FOUR) parents present at each party to help. This is only under the conditions that COVID and MTSD policies allow for this, otherwise these numbers might be some or none (simply sending the materials in for the teacher to administer on your behalf).*

- *The four parents includes any attending MES PTA Room Parents. That is, if you are the only MES PTA Room Parent, you can have 3 additional helpers. If you have 2 MES PTA Room Parents, 2 helpers, etc.*
- *If you are in a class fortunate enough to have 4 MES PTA Room Parents, you need to split party responsibilities and give other parents a chance to get in the classroom. The easiest way to do this is for each of you to drop out of one party and have one other helping parent if other parents want to attend. The MES PTA Room Parent Coordinator must give the Principal's office a list of all helpers at least FIVE (5) days before each party. Therefore, please expect a reminder about SEVEN (7) days before each party asking for this list. Currently, Halloween will not have any in-person options, so this protocol will be followed as current events allow, no earlier than consideration for the Holiday Party.*
- *Again, any and all volunteers must be active MES PTA members and HIB Trained/pass the HIB Quiz.*

IN-PERSON MAN POWER FOR SELECT DUTIES:

In previous years with usual practices, each campus would have over 100 visitors participating in parties or events among our children. With COVID, both OHES and VES will not have a receptionist ready and available to facilitate that type of traffic. Visitors are usually required to enter at the main entrance and visit the receptionist or main office to sign in. This works on a regular day when the number of visitors is limited. But with COVID and even limited (currently impermissible) party days, this is too much for either main office to handle.

Therefore, as MES PTA Room Parents, and in the rare event that in-person gatherings can resume, we will man a reception desk at a proximate location of each main entrance of each campus to check identification of all expected visitors from our pre-submitted lists.

For the sake of expectations, we consider the following to be a very rare, highly limited requirement. For in-person parties (should they resume), for example, if each MES PTA Room Parent commits to 30 minutes before and after a party on one of the four party days, there should be more than enough volunteers. If a MES PTA Room Parent can't do this, one of the other attending volunteer parents can cover this task. Please DO NOT sign up to fulfill this role during your scheduled party time.

It is important to note that while COVID currently prohibits us from in-person parties, the MES PTA will ask MES PTA Room Parents to assist with other in-person duties. These will also be extremely limited (currently there are none) but should something arise we will call upon MES PTA Room Parents to assist where best applicable. This will always be done with advance communication of at least 48 hours. We encourage you to discuss amongst your fellow MES PTA Room Parents who will handle each request to ensure that the work is evenly distributed and handled.

GIFTS FOR TEACHER(S):

Gifts are given to teachers twice a year, traditionally around the time of The Winter Party and the End of Year Party. Seeing as we are not currently permitting in-person parties, we must use our creativity to find alternative methods to express appreciation.

Most teachers appreciate receiving gift cards such as a Visa or Mastercard Gift Card. Store gift cards are fine, too. A sample letter is available to send via email to parents, asking them for monetary donations for the teacher gifts. Additionally, when requesting contributions from the class, it should be made clear that participation is optional. And most importantly, regardless of participation, all children's names should be included when signing greeting cards or artwork. If easier, simply avoiding a listing and saying that gifts are from "your class" or "the children of your class" can suffice.

Send your request for contribution letters/emails out with around ten days notice with a deadline of 2-3 days prior to the anticipated gift day. Remind parents about 2 days before the deadline. Contributions are best to be collected with safe distancing measures in place. Parents can mail funds to you or (if you are comfortable) they can drop at your porch/mailbox. If familiar with the platforms, you are welcome to utilize applications such as Venmo, PayPal and other related methods to collect funds. Be sure that everyone flags their transactions as "Friends and Family" to avoid any unnecessary fees.

Be sure that as you receive monies to acknowledge receipt of them. A simple email to the parent that says, "I received your money. Thanks!" takes seconds and confirms participation. Keep a written record of all received monies (a simple list of each child with the corresponding amount). You don't have to report this information to the MES PTA, but in the event an emergency arises, you can hand off to another MES PTA Room Parent to step in.

Finally, especially with COVID, consider giving the gift card virtually. Many gift card suppliers offer e-transaction options. Frankly, it protects both you and the teacher from the infamous, "I lost the card, do you have the receipt?" scenario. Sending the gift via email creates a "SENT" email that you can easily secure should the need arise.

RESOURCES

Remember that you have various resources available to you as this year proceeds:

- 1. You can solicit parents for a maximum \$10 donation at the start of the year to create a working financial budget. Select one person amongst the MES PTA Room Parents for your classroom to handle monies and track expenses.*
- 2. You can reach out to your MES PTA Room Parent Campus Coordinator. These folks can provide direction and clarification with MES PTA Room Parent expectations and policies.*
- 3. You can reach out to your classroom teacher(s). Monthly contact (even if things seem still) can help immensely. They might have existing traditions or ideas for classroom activities that can save you time and energy.*
- 4. You can use sample documents as provided on the MES PTA Website under "MES PTA Room Parents" or as provided from your respective MES PTA Room Parent Campus Coordinator.*
- 5. You can use the internet. Pinterest, Google and other resources have a multitude of ideas. Brainstorm and discuss as a team your approach to this school year.*