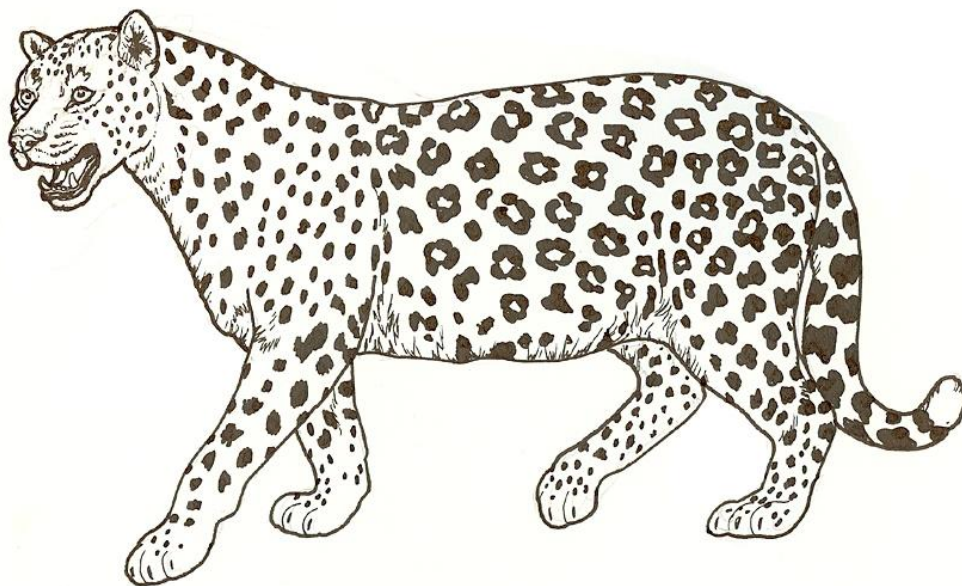




# England Elementary Homeroom Parent Handbook

***2018-2019***



Thank you for volunteering your time to be a Homeroom Parent for the 2018-2019 school year. This packet is intended as a guide with the following goals in mind:

- To provide information that will help you fulfill your role easily;
- To ensure that all classroom teachers and students have similar support and assistance for school-wide and grade-level activities;
- To provide clear school and district guidelines which provide equity among classrooms.

**We hope that each of you has great success in your efforts! Your contributions benefit both teachers and students and will continue what we hope to be an exemplary tradition of support and communication between home and school at England Elementary.**

Jana Stowe  
*England Elementary Principal*

Susan Curp  
*England Elementary PTA  
President*

Cami Carter  
*England Elementary PTA  
Homeroom Parent Coordinator*

## General Responsibilities

Below are the primary responsibilities of the Homeroom Parent:

- Communicate with the teacher about classroom parties, activities and needs. Assist with finding classroom volunteers as needed.
- Communicate with the parents of all students in the class about classroom parties, activities, supplies needed, etc.
- Communicate with the PTA Homeroom Parent Coordinator about questions, plans and needs.
- Organize classroom parties and other appropriate activities.
- Assist with efforts for Teacher Appreciation Week as requested by the PTA Teacher Appreciation Chair.

## General Guidelines

In order to get things started, we suggest the following:

- Meet with your teacher as early as possible in order to understand how your efforts can best be utilized for your child's class.
- Modify and send out a letter introducing yourself as the Homeroom Parent to other parents in the class (via email or in folders). Please see attached example (pg. 10).
- Compile a roster of email addresses of all parents in the class for you to use during the year. (Parents have to give their consent before teachers can hand over email addresses.)
- Upon getting consent from parents, create a "Class Directory" including student names, parent email addresses and phone numbers for families to utilize during the school year. **Distribute this directory to the families in your class only.**
- Decide how to invite and include all parents in plans for class parties and other appropriate activities.
- Follow all policies and guidelines set out by the following:
  - State rules and guidelines
  - RRISD rules and policies
  - England Elementary campus policies
  - State, district and local PTA rules and guidelines.
- During the school year, please submit all notes and letters with donation requests that have been altered significantly for teacher gifts to Cami Carter before sending to parents. You may e-mail documents to cami\_j\_carter@yahoo.com. Due to supervision and safety concerns during school hours, please do not bring students' siblings or other young children when visiting the classrooms, on field trips, class parties or other school functions unless specifically invited or without prior approval.

## **Primary Events/Activities**

These are the primary events that will require your leadership:

- Classroom Parties
- Teacher & Staff Appreciation Week
- Grade level or school-wide events

## **Coordinating Responsibilities**

You will assist teachers with the above events/activities by organizing volunteers, supplies and donations. Some teachers may also request your help in coordinating field trip chaperones. Classroom teachers will have a general idea of what they need for parties. Most events/activities will require donations of food items, craft supplies, and paper goods. It is preferable that you ask for actual donations of items as opposed to monetary donations. As events approach, you will receive emails from the PTA Homeroom Parent Coordinator with specific instructions that will help you get started. Please be sure to contact your teacher prior to planning class parties and other events to make a list of items needed, volunteer requirements, etc. You and your teacher can decide on issues concerning deadlines and storage of donated goods.

## **Collecting Money for Classroom Donations**

In some cases, a parent may prefer to send money in order for you to purchase necessary items for class parties. This is allowed, and you may want to keep a list of whatever monetary donations you receive along with receipts for future inquiries.

## **Volunteers for Classroom Events/Parties**

Talk to your teacher about how many volunteers will be needed for events. Many times you will have plenty of parents show up for the parties, but it is best if you secure volunteers for specific needs ahead of time. Once at the event or party, feel free to accept help from anyone who is present. *Although, all parents volunteering at the party need to be approved RRISD volunteers.*

## **Collecting Money for Teacher Gifts**

We love our teachers and it is not unusual to coordinate the purchase of larger “group gifts” for them. However, there are some school and district guidelines for gift-giving.

- You may only request monetary gift donations a maximum of twice per school year. You may seek input from other classroom parents in order to find out which occasion they would prefer you to purchase a gift on the group’s behalf. *Please plan on a group gift for Teacher Appreciation and one other occasion during the year (usually the teacher’s birthday, winter holiday, or end of year).*
- Please only suggest \$3-\$5 as a donation amount toward teacher group gifts, but people are free to give more or less.

- Please inform parents that they may send **individual** gifts for any occasion and they are not obligated to contribute to group gifts.
- You can collect money for teacher gifts in various ways: Paypal; envelope labeled “Homeroom Parent” put in each student’s Thursday folder; etc. Check with your teacher to see if they are comfortable handling money through student folders.
- Teachers appreciate any heartfelt appreciation of their efforts. Books or games for the classroom are extremely useful as well.
- **Please note that gifts to the teacher are optional. Group Gifts should be given on behalf of the entire class, regardless of who contributes.**

## **Teacher Birthdays**

You may organize a way for the class to celebrate a teacher’s birthday. Gift giving is completely optional. Most teachers prefer simple methods of celebration. These can include things like a card from students, simple bouquet of flowers or lunch. Presentations should be brief and not interfere with classroom instruction. Please check with your classroom teacher about timing before you make plans. It may be a good idea to send out your teacher’s “favorite things” list to parents so they can get ideas if they want to bring in an individual present. If the teacher has a summer birthday or you missed it because it fell early in the school year, you may look into scheduling a make-up celebration or their 1/2 birthday or another special day.

*\*Some teachers are not comfortable celebrating their birthdays outside of their families. Please be sure to discuss teacher preferences before you plan anything. Please ask the teacher if they are comfortable with you sending out their “favorite things” list to parents.*

## **Teacher Baby Celebrations**

You may organize a way for the class to honor a teacher with a baby celebration. Gift giving is completely optional. Most teachers prefer simple methods of celebration. Please keep in mind this should be on a much smaller scale than the 3 designated classroom parties with brief presentations that do not interfere with classroom instruction. Please check with your classroom teacher about timing before you make plans. If you choose to celebrate your teacher by asking for monetary donations to purchase a "group gift" this will count as one of your two allocated monetary requests per year (Please plan on one of your group gifts to be for Teacher Appreciation). Please follow school and district guidelines for gift-giving listed on pg. 4 and top of pg. 5. Be sure to invite your parents to be present for any celebrations and in-class presentations. You are welcome to provide suggestions and examples of basic gift ideas but please refrain from asking everyone in the class to provide a specific gift (such as a box of diapers).

*\*Some teachers are not comfortable celebrating their baby outside of their families. Please be sure to discuss teacher preferences before you plan anything.*

## Classroom Parties

The following dates have been set by RRISD school administration as the only dates for classroom parties.

Winter Holiday Party	Dec. 19 <sup>st</sup> 2018
Valentine's Day Party	Feb. 14 <sup>th</sup> 2019
End of the Year Party	May 23 <sup>rd</sup> 2019

Classroom parties are not permitted for Teacher & Staff Appreciation Week.

### Party Planning

\*You will receive information from HRP Coordinator regarding class parties about a month prior to the party date.

- **Meet with the teacher or grade level representative to learn preferences and basic party format a few weeks in advance.** Teachers and grade levels plan differently for parties. Some parties will be coordinated as a grade-level team. In those cases, you may also be asked to meet with parents from other classes as well as your own. Typical parties include students rotating between various activities/games, a craft and light refreshments.
- **Coordinate each party for your class by contacting parents and requesting volunteers to assist in various ways.** Volunteers may be needed to facilitate game/activity stations, serve food and provide donations for craft items or snacks. *Mysignup.com and SignupGenius.com are great (and free) websites to simplify your volunteer and supply sign-ups.* All parents helping at the party need to be approved RRISD volunteers.
- **Please give all parents an opportunity to participate and contribute.** Offer various options in order for parents to choose *what* they want to donate or *how* they want to assist. Standard letters regarding class parties will be emailed to you from the Homeroom Parent Coordinator so that you can use them when informing parents about parties. *Please keep in mind, if you modify the letters significantly (other than party details and supplies/volunteers needed), you'll need to send them to Cami Carter for approval (cami\_j\_carter@yahoo.com) prior to distributing to parents.* Email is the most efficient method of getting this type of information out to class parents, however you also have the option to make copies and distribute them in daily or weekly (Thursday) folders.
- **The PTA has allocated \$30 for each class to use for party supplies.** This money can be utilized for one party, if needed, or divided among the 3 parties at the discretion of the Homeroom Parent. Monies will not be issued prior to necessary purchases. Rather, you will be reimbursed after purchases are made. Be sure to keep your receipts and turn them in with a Reimbursement Request Form to our PTA Treasurer. (This form is available in the PTA/Volunteer room across from the cafeteria and on the England

Elementary PTA website under “Forms”). Unfortunately, sales tax is NOT refundable. The PTA party contribution can be combined with voluntary cash donations from parents to pay for craft projects, party snacks, decorations, etc. Please note you are allowed to purchase retail-specific gift cards not to exceed the amount of \$25. Please be aware you have a total of \$30 to spend but only \$25 can go towards the purchase of a gift card(s). The PTA Tax ID# is 32048684651. The PTA can reimburse tax from Costco and Sam's without the use of the Tax ID.

- **You may give parents an opportunity to send in money for party supplies/donations.** If you prefer this, create slots on your online sign-up. An appropriate amount might be 2-3 slots at \$5 each. Sometimes this is helpful if you have complex craft supplies or essential food items you prefer to purchase yourself. You can collect money for party donations in various ways: Paypal; envelope labeled “Homeroom Parent” put in each student’s Thursday folder; etc. Check with your teacher to see if they are comfortable handling money through student folders.
- **If decorations, activities or food items are to include seasonal symbols, please be aware that symbols representing specific religious traditions should be avoided** (such as Santa Claus or menorah). Appropriate symbols would include things like snowflakes, snowmen, penguins, hearts, etc.
- **NOTE: Party food cannot replace lunch food or be served during the student’s lunchtime.** Baked goods, fruit and goldfish or pretzel type snacks tend to be popular and well-received by students. Please discuss the snack/drink list with your teacher before finalizing and try to be sensitive to students with allergies.
- **Donation Hints** – Please keep an eye on your online party sign-ups to make sure all slots have been filled. Indicate “send-in” dates on your online sign-up. Check in with teacher to verify what has been collected. Send reminder out to parents if needed. For non-perishable goods, you may indicate on your sign-up for parents to send in a few days prior to the party. Fresh/cold items are best to send in the day before or on the party date. Please let parents know cold/frozen items can be placed in the refrigerator in the upstairs or downstairs teacher workroom. Be sure to label the items with teacher name on it

## **Teacher & Staff Appreciation Week**

Teacher & Staff Appreciation Week will be May 6th - May 10th. You will receive detailed information from the Homeroom Parent Coordinator concerning Teacher & Staff Appreciation Week about a month prior. Monies collected can be used to purchase a group gift. Items created by students as keepsakes are especially meaningful to teachers as well. They serve as a unique and lasting reminder of the class. The preliminary plan for Teacher & Staff Appreciation Week, at this point in time, is for students to create Thank You cards for their teachers to receive on Tuesday, and for the teacher to receive a “group gift” from the class on Thursday. The PTA will handle Monday, Wednesday

and Friday. The Homeroom Parent may be called upon to help decorate their particular teacher's door, as directed, by the Teacher & Staff Appreciation committee.

We believe all our teachers, whether in the classroom, "specials," or other instructional areas deserve recognition for their efforts. In order to make sure that all instructional staff members are recognized, we may ask classes to recognize an additional staff member during Teacher & Staff Appreciation Week.

Thank you in advance for the time and effort that will go into this annual event. Please observe all school and district policies along with the following Teacher & Staff Appreciation guidelines.

#### Guidelines for Teacher & Staff Appreciation

- **Try to show appreciation to the teachers and staff in student-generated ways.**
- You can use a variety of techniques to recognize the teacher including cards, gift cards or meals. Asking parents to provide a breakfast or lunch for the teacher is allowed. Anything purchased for class craft projects or gift cards should come from the donations received.
- If you plan something for the class to work on or prepare, the time should minimize disruption of instructional time. Immediately after lunch or recess may be the best time, but please check with the teacher well in advance. Ideally, no more than one "work session" should be planned for helping the children prepare a gift.
- If you want a number of items to match the number of students, please purchase the items with part of the gift donations for the entire class. Please do not ask students to bring in individual items (i.e. asking everyone to bring a flower or a candy bar).
- If you plan for students to prepare something at home with parents' assistance, please give a weekend or a full week for them to return the project.
- Letters or emails from homeroom parents to other class parents should mention that parents are free to show their appreciation for their teacher on an individual basis. This may lessen the possibility of anyone feeling required to contribute monetarily. Be sure to invite your parents to be present for any in-class presentations.
- Off-campus or out-of-the-classroom activities are not allowed.
- Hundreds of great teacher appreciation ideas can be found online using the search term "teacher appreciation ideas."



- Classroom parties are not permitted for Teacher & Staff Appreciation Week.

Following these guidelines will ensure that all students will be included. We do not want anyone to feel excluded or embarrassed by not being able to participate. There are some families with several teachers to appreciate. The hope is that Teacher & Staff Appreciation week will not become a financial burden for anyone.

### **International Children's Festival**

The International Children's Festival is a celebration of world cultures! This year, our festival will be held the week of October 22-26th. Homeroom Parents may be asked to assist with some classroom activities during this week and assist the classroom sponsor in delivering information regarding the particular country your class is researching. The evening of October 25th, students and parents are invited to take part in a family night celebration which will include performances and a "passport tour" around the world.

### **Yearbook**

The Yearbook Committee would like the Homeroom Parents and other class parents to submit photographs of class events/parties throughout the year. The Homeroom Parent can assist with communicating this information to class parents. The Homeroom Parents have been asked to take a class photo and send to the Yearbook Chair or upload directly to the Balfour website. This is in addition to the professional class photo. Please coordinate with the teacher and try to come on a day when all students are in attendance. You may be as creative as the teacher would like. Your picture is to be sent in by Dec. 31st. **Note:** There are some parents that have not given permission for their student to be photographed. Please ask your teacher if there are any students in the class that have this restriction before submitting photos of the student.

### **Additional Information**

The following pages (HRP Introduction Letter and Directory Consent; Helpful Hints) are included as additional resources and information.

### **Questions**

If you have questions about anything pertaining to volunteering as a Homeroom Parent during the school year, please don't hesitate to contact Cami Carter at [cami\\_j\\_carter@yahoo.com](mailto:cami_j_carter@yahoo.com) or 512-627-5636.



Dear Fellow Parents,

My name is [redacted] and I am the Homeroom Parent for Mr./Ms. [redacted]'s class this year. I will be coordinating support from all parents in this year's class for 3 classroom parties, Teacher Appreciation Week and any other events for which parent assistance is requested.

Before each event, I will email or send a note in your child's folder. It will include specific information about the event, along with requests for volunteer assistance and items needed (such as paper goods, craft supplies and food items).

I believe the Homeroom Parent's role is to coordinate a team effort among all the parents in our children's class. It is important to me that you stay informed, so I will strive to share information with you in a timely fashion. Please take a moment to complete the form below and return it to school in your child's folder so we can communicate throughout the school year. I look forward to collaborating with you in providing support for Mr./Ms. [redacted] and his/her class. Please feel free to contact me if you have questions, suggestions or ideas about the events and activities I will be helping to coordinate. It will be a privilege to work with you in this remarkable learning environment. I appreciate and welcome any assistance you can offer to help create a memorable and fun year for our children!

Your name

Your phone number

Your email address

----- detach and return to school -----

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Parent Email(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Phone Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

*(Optional parent signature) \_\_\_\_\_ Please sign here if you give your consent to include the above information in a "class directory" so that we can contact each other as needed during the year as our children (and we parents, of course) get to know each other better. With your consent, I will compile the information into a class directory and distribute it to the parents in our class only.*

**Please return this portion in your child's folder. The above information will be used by the Homeroom Parent so he/she can contact you as needed throughout the school year.**

## Helpful Hints

- \* Please make sure you register online through Round Rock ISD to be an approved volunteer. This is necessary as a Homeroom Parent and if you will be volunteering in the classroom. <https://roundrockisd.org/volunteer/> It is required that any parent who volunteers in the classroom for the parties is an approved RRISD volunteer.
- \* Putting together the class directory is the most challenging part of the job. Please check with your teacher first, as some already have consent from parents to share contact information with you. You are welcome to use the Introduction/Directory Consent Letter and send home in Thursday folders. But, if you prefer, you may want to work with the teacher and see if it can be done other ways and see how he/she can provide assistance. Here are some ideas:
  - 1) Have the teacher forward the letter (after you edit it) through email and have parents respond to you directly through email with their consent/contact info or they can print and send in their form through their student.
  - 2) Draft an introduction email/letter to parents that only asks if they give their consent for the teacher to share their contact info with you. The teacher could email this to parents and they respond directly to the teacher or you through email with "yes" or "no". Then, for all the "yes" parents, the teacher can give you the contact information he/she already has on file for each parent. Again, work with your teacher and see what they are willing to provide as far as assistance.
- \* There is a possibility you do not receive consent to have every parent's contact information. Over the course of the year, any parent that you don't have contact information for, you will need to forward your teacher the information and remind he/she to send to those parents directly. Or, you can always place paper copies in Thursday folders.
- \* Please remember that parents miss emails or forget to respond. Please kindly send a reminder email or two. It is often a great idea to not only send an email but use a paper flyer in Thursday folders. This works great when planning a teacher group gift. You can even attach an empty envelope to the letter to make it easy for parents to send in donations.
- \* When you are communicating to parents through email during the course of the year, Jana Stowe has asked us to BCC (blind copy) the parents. Put your email address in the "To" area and parent email addresses in the "BCC" area.
- \* If you are sharing the Homeroom Parent role, please communicate with the other parent and decide how to divide up the responsibilities this year.
- \* If you would like to distribute the teacher and staff "favorite things questionnaire" responses to parents, please check with your teacher ahead of time for approval. All teacher and staff responses will be available for viewing on the PTA website under Homeroom Central.
- \* Consider creating an online Shutterfly, Google, etc. account for class photos to allow parents to contribute.
- \* For Homeroom Parent responsibilities, you are welcome to use the copier in the workroom downstairs and upstairs. Please be mindful of teachers and staff who need to use the machine as they have priority.

\* Teachers often need help making copies/laminating items for their classroom. You may want to check with your teacher to make sure he/she is receiving the help they need. If not, please consider helping them with this or organizing a class sign-up. Some homeroom parents have organized a grade-wide sign-up to help teachers with copying/laminating. Please check-in with your teachers throughout the year to see if they need additional classroom supplies/sign-ups.

\* The Environmental Committee and PTA President have asked that we cut down on waste at class parties. Please do not request plastic water bottles to be sent in as kids should have water bottles from home. Consider not using plastic/paper tablecloths.

\*Please use the PTA logo as much as possible on correspondence with parents throughout the year.

**Please visit “Homeroom Central” under Volunteer section on the PTA website to access Homeroom Parent documents and information.**