



**La Jolla Country Day School
Middle School
Room Parent Handbook**

2008-2009

Room Parent General Information and Responsibilities

Thank you for volunteering to be a Room Parent for your child's class in the Middle School (MS). As Room Parent Coordinator, I am excited for what this new school year holds for each of our children in 5th through 8th grade. I look forward to getting to know each of you this year. My role is to make your job enjoyable, successful and as simple as possible.

Each class at LJCDS has been assigned a Room Parent. The Room Parent plays a significant role in brightening the quality of everyday life for the teacher, students and families. You have the unique opportunity to participate in classroom activities and contribute to the overall learning experience of the students. Your job is to:

1. Serve as a goodwill ambassador for your class and the school at large.
2. Assist your teacher in whatever ways she/he requests (many of which are outlined in this handbook).
3. Facilitate classroom-to-parent information as appropriate via email.
4. Assist with and attend Parents' Association (PA) activities as requested.

Please plan to attend a **Room Parent kick-off meeting at 9 am in the Admissions Conference Room**. This is immediately following the Parents' Association Welcome to School Coffee on **Tuesday, August 26th** in the Multi-purpose room (MPR). The Room Parent Handbook will be distributed at this time. Even if you have been a Room Parent in the past, I recommend that you attend the meeting as there have been changes to the Room Parent responsibilities this year and your experience and input is helpful to the new Room Parents.

I have attempted to include as much information as possible in this handbook, however, please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions or concerns.

On behalf of the Parents' Association and the teachers, I thank you in advance for your commitment!

Maggie Bentley
Middle School Room Parent Coordinator
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maggiebentley@roadrunner.com

Getting Started

Are you wondering how to get started in your new role as Room Parent? Follow the steps below to help you get started:

1. Read the Room Parent Handbook and jot down any questions to ask your Room Parent Coordinator.
2. Meet with your teacher as soon as possible.
3. After meeting with your teacher, contact parents in the classroom to introduce yourself and remind them of Back-to-School Night.

Parents' Association Meetings

You are a member of the Parents' Association, which meets monthly. Refer to the Parents' Association Key Dates which are included in this packet. The first meeting will be on **September 4th at 8:00 am** in the MPR. Please make every effort to attend each meeting. These meetings are an invaluable source of information. Remind your parents and encourage them to attend also.

It is the Middle School Room Parent Coordinator's responsibility to deliver periodic updates of all Middle School activities to the Parents' Association. In order for me stay abreast of what happens in each class, please take a few minutes each month to jot down your class' activities or future events. You can email the information to me, or put the information in my folder located inside the Middle School office. I will submit a Monthly Status Report to the PA.

Please refer to the Parents' Association section of www.ljcds.org for updates and revisions.

Stay Informed...And Be Discreet

Please read and familiarize yourself with the School Handbook, all LJCDs communications, and attend meetings to stay well informed. Other parents will look to you for answers and information to which you must respond accurately. If you do not know something, promise to get back to them and let us help you secure the correct information.

By virtue of your position, you will be in and around the classroom more than most parents. Although others may prompt you, please refrain from commenting inappropriately about any child, teacher, family or incident. Never engage in, and always discourage rumors or gossip. As a "goodwill ambassador" you are expected to remain positive about the school including the faculty and staff, see things from several points-of-view, be diplomatic and channel any complaints to the appropriate teacher or Middle School Director, Brian Murphy.

Teacher Meeting

Please arrange to meet with your homeroom teacher as soon as possible regarding his/her special requests. Please ask to be allowed some time during the Back-to-School Night homeroom presentation to enlist volunteers.

Student Birthdays: Be sure to ask your teacher what he/she prefers at your initial meeting. Any celebration should occur during milk break or when the class is in homeroom for an extended period of time (i.e., study hall). Please communicate the teacher's preference to your parents at Back-to-School Night.

Each teacher has her/his own style, wants and needs. By the end of your meeting you should know:

- Exactly what your teacher expects from you.
- In what capacity you will help her/him.
- Dates for class activities and any other events for which you may need to solicit volunteers.
- Preferred style and frequency of communication.

Inquire if there are any special requests your teacher has and determine the best time and manner for you two to communicate. Make sure you have conveyed the message that your primary responsibility is to support her/him.

In addition, your teacher may wish to have parent volunteers to assist with the following responsibilities:

1. Classroom helpers
2. Field trip helpers
3. Grade Level Event helpers
4. Auction Volunteers to assist with classroom project and classroom ad

Back-To-School Night

Middle School:

Thursday, September 4 at 6:30 pm

7th Grade Catalina Island Trip Info:

Thursday, September 4 from 5:30 to 6:30 pm

This is the most important room parent meeting of the year. Most parents attend this meeting. The more support, sign-ups and expense funds acquired on this night, the easier your job will be. Back-to-School night is typically your first and best opportunity for you to address the entire class. The teacher will give you a few minutes to introduce yourself and explain the importance of parent participation in their child's classroom.

You need to contact each family prior to this day to remind them of the date and encourage them to attend and bring their calendars. You can either send a letter, email or make phone calls. **This is an adult only evening.** It is exciting to start the year off with an enthusiastic, positive night!

As Back-to-School night is the best chance to address all families and secure volunteers, you will want to cover the following areas on this night:

1. Explain the function of a Room Parent.
2. Have families make any corrections to the emergency phone tree and upon completion put in folder in Middle School office.
3. Request **\$20** from each family to help cover PA grade level auction project expenses and the class ad.
4. Explain grade level auction item.

Collection of Money

Your classroom funds will come from two sources (parent donations and the PA) and be used to pay for auction expenses, teacher gifts and classroom parties. The \$20 per family you collect on Back-to-School Night will be used to pay for the grade level auction project and the classroom ad. The PA funds will be used to purchase birthday gifts for the lead and associate teachers and for grade level parties.

Back-to-School Night and the beginning of the school year is your only opportunity to request money to cover auction expenses. The \$20 donation from each family pays for the classroom auction ad, which costs \$200 per classroom and the grade level auction project. Once you have collected the \$20 from your classroom parents, give \$200 to Barbara Maisel, the Auction Treasurer, to cover the expense of your classroom auction ad. To ensure that all money is allocated to your classroom, follow the steps below:

1. Put the \$200.00 for the auction ad in an envelope.
2. Include the following on the outside of the envelope:
 - * Attention: Barbara Maisel, Auction Treasurer
 - * Subject: Fee for Classroom Auction Ad
 - * Teacher's Name/Grade/Room No.
 - * Your Name and phone number

3. Give the envelope to the receptionist in the main administration office.
4. Call Barbara Maisel (cell: (858) 922-1295) and tell her you left the classroom auction fee in her mailbox. Barbara does not want money left in her mailbox over-night. Your call to her will ensure that the money is properly deposited.

The money remaining after you have paid for the auction ad is to be used for the grade level auction project. If you have a parent volunteer in charge of the auction project, let the volunteer know the amount of money available for the project.

Room Parents should keep an accounting of how much money was collected and how the funds were spent.

The budget for the Middle School distribution of the PA funds is in process. It is important to stick to the budget because you should not solicit additional funds from families later in the year. Expenditures must be approved through your Grade Level Coordinator and the Middle School Coordinator. Reimbursement forms are available on the PA website under the "Forms/Handbook" tab.

Emergency Phone Tree

In case of an emergency, it is imperative that the school contact every family as quickly and efficiently as possible. The emergency phone tree system has been established for this purpose. **It is your responsibility to create the emergency phone tree and explain its purpose to your class parents.** The Emergency Phone Tree template is available on the PA website under the "Forms/Handbook" tab. Complete a draft of the tree prior to Back-to-School Night and use Back-to-School Night to have the families proof the phone tree and provide additional phone numbers. **Please give a final copy of the Emergency Phone Tree to your teacher and put a copy in folder located in Middle School office.** Copies will then be made and distributed to each family in the class. Please note: use of the phone tree for non-emergency situations must be cleared through Administration. This policy should not interfere with a Room Parent's need and ability to contact parents for normal classroom events and activities.

The tree works as follows:

1. LJCDS will contact the Room Parent coordinator.
2. The coordinator will contact all the Room Parents.
3. Room Parents will contact the families listed below them on the phone tree.
4. Those families will contact the next families.
5. Each of the latter will contact one more family, etc. until each family has been contacted.
6. In the event that a family cannot be reached, the caller must then contact the next level down.

Class Activities and Special Events

The activities/events vary according to each grade level. In Middle School, parties are for the entire grade rather than individual classes. Work with the Grade Level Coordinator to get the exact list of parties. Typically the parties include:

- * All Grades: Halloween – “Grab-n-Go” snack (Friday, October 31)
Winter Holiday—breakfast or lunch before Winter break
Valentine’s Day—“Grab-n-Go” snack
- *6th grade only: Biography Fair breakfast
- *7th and 8th only: End of the Year “Grab-n-Go” ice cream treat
- *8th grade only: Spring Breakfast, End-of-Year Breakfast, and Promotion Party

Previous End of the Year Parties:

- *5th Grade Day at Soak City coordinated by LJCDS
- *6th Grade Day at Soak City coordinated by LJCDS
- *7th Grade Roller-skating party coordinated by LJCDS
- *8th Grade Promotion Party the night before promotion (planned and paid for by the parents).

Parties are coordinated by the Grade Coordinator. The party may be hosted by all classes in the grade, or each homeroom may be assigned a party for the entire grade. In planning the party, you must provide enough food or snacks for the entire grade (including teachers and staff so that they may participate as well). It is our responsibility to arrange for tables, chairs, etc. when needed. Be sure to file a “School Calendar Activity Request” at least two weeks before the event. Besides providing food, you must also recruit enough volunteers for set-up and clean up. If you are providing a lunch, let teachers and students know not to bring lunches from home that day and inform the school cafeteria.

Be sure to remind those involved, well in advance of the event/activity date, so that they can meet to plan and distribute the responsibilities.

Field Trips: Room Parents will be advised by the Grade Coordinator as to the number of chaperones needed for each field trip. The Room Parent will provide sign-up sheets at Back-to-School Night for parents interested in helping. Examples include Soak City for 5th and 6th grade and Classroom Without Walls for 6th grade.

*Making sure all your activity/event sign-up sheets are filled out on Back-to-School Night will save you many phone calls. Sign-up sheets should include the date, day of the week and time of the event. Once the sign-up sheets have been completed, you should make a summary sheet outlining the entire year’s activities. Distribute a copy to your teacher and to each individual on the list. It is also helpful to highlight on all volunteers’ copies the specific event they volunteered for.

Back-To-School Picnic

The Back-to-School picnic will be held **Friday, September 12th, from 3:00 to 7:00 pm**. It will take place on the Athletic Fields. This is a fun night for the entire family. Encourage your class families to attend.

For those of you who have never attended the Back-to-School picnic, here's what to expect: Families purchase tickets for the picnic (dinner) prior to the event. You bring either a blanket or low beach chair to sit on. The upper field will have signs with each grade level on it. Families sit together on the field and have a good time enjoying food, music and friends. There are many activities for the kids to enjoy. In years past, there have been carnival type games with prizes, jumping machines, face painting and more.

Invitations were sent in the electronic summer mailing; however, you may want to remind your families of this event and confirm that they have sent in their reservation form.

This Parents' Association event provides a wonderful opportunity to socialize with your class families as well as others. Your responsibilities at this event are:

1. Greet and welcome each of your class families.
2. Encourage your families to sit together as a class.
3. Meet, introduce and mingle with as many families as possible.

Seventh and Eighth Grade Dances

The dances are usually held on Friday night in the Four Flowers Theatre from 7:00 to 9:00 pm. Two parent couples are needed per dance to help serve food. The parents are not allowed in the room where the dance is taking place. The teachers serve as chaperones. The 7th and 8th grade room parents will arrange for the parent volunteers for each dance. The dates and grade responsibilities for each dance are as follows:

* September 26, 2008; January 16 and April 24, 2009

7th Grade will volunteer at the first two dances, and 8th grade will volunteer at the last two dances.

* The 6th Grade Father/Daughter and Mother/Son dance is on May 8, 2009.

Outdoor Education Orientation Meetings

Only the 7th Grade Outdoor Education Orientation meeting is scheduled thus far:

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| 7 th Grade – Catalina Island | Thursday, September 4 from 5:30 to 6:30 pm in the FFT |
| 8 th Grade – Sequoia Trip | TBA |
| 5 th Grade – Anza Borrego | TBA |
| 6 th Grade – Joshua Tree | TBA |

Parent Socials

The PA encourages all grade levels to organize a Parent Social. The goal of the Parent Social is to bring the LJCDS community together and to provide an opportunity to get to know other parents in their grade level. Socials are completely voluntary. If you hear of a parent who is interested in hosting such an event, encourage them to gather volunteers to help host. The Parent Social needs to be coordinated with the school calendar. With notice, Alicia Deutz can provide mailing labels. The school is not responsible for mailing invitations or paying for postage. Consider sending an evite if you don't want to mail invitations. For all parent socials, give Alicia Deutz copies of any memos, notices, or maps sent to your parents so she can answer possible questions.

Parent Education Evenings

Please encourage the parents in your class to attend these very worthwhile programs offered throughout the year. They are designed to provide a forum for parents to share experiences, understanding and wisdom gained from raising a middle school child. Dates will be announced later in the year.

Teacher Appreciation Day

The Parents' Association sets aside one special day a year to honor, acknowledge and thank our faculty. This year's **Teacher Appreciation Day is April 23, 2009.**

You can encourage parents to get involved through the Parents' Association. The teachers have said that a thoughtful card is the most meaningful gift. The PA plans the activities for the day which will include a lunch and a special gift to the teachers. In early 2009, the Room Parent Coordinators will contact all Room Parents to form a committee to help organize and facilitate Teacher Appreciation Day.

Auction Item – Parents' Association Fund Raiser/Annual Gala

Every other year each grade level makes an item or a basket to be auctioned at the annual fundraiser. This is an **"On"** year.

Off Year: No project to coordinate.

On Year: Each grade will be asked to contribute an item/basket to be auctioned at the Parents' Association 2009 Fund Raiser. **The annual fundraiser takes place on May 2nd, 2009.** It is your responsibility to discuss with your teacher, and determine what your class item will be. In the past, the items most popular, are the ones that depict the handy work of all the children in the classroom. May we also suggest if you do not wish to head this activity up for your class that you create a signup sheet for Back-to-School night and find a parent in the class who will be the chairperson for this project. They in turn would work with the teacher, kids and auction

committee. The auction committee contact person will get in touch with you to discuss the due date and form required. Typically items are displayed at school prior to the event.

Teacher Recognition/Gifts

As room parents, you coordinate your homeroom teacher's birthday celebration. A birthday list will be provided listing the birthdays of all middle school faculty and administration. For a teacher with a summer birthday, arrange to celebrate it near the beginning of the school year or at the teacher's "half birthday". You may wish to help the students plan a surprise, for example, writing personal notes that are collected in a scrapbook or having a cake. Birthdays may also be celebrated with cards, flowers or food treats. Please use the funds provided by the PA to purchase small gifts to honor your teacher and associate teacher's birthdays. It is important not to solicit extra funds from classroom parents or to contribute from your own pocket. The gifts are expected to be simple and remain in the budget.

The Parents Association also shows their appreciation for the faculty and staff many times during the school year. In addition to hosting four fabulous faculty and staff Luncheons, the PA purchases gifts for the faculty three times a year: at the beginning of the year, a holiday gift and for Teacher Appreciation Day.

Closing Thoughts

All of the above may appear a bit overwhelming at first, but bear in mind that your responsibility is to secure volunteers, coordinate activities, and oversee that a job gets done. You are not expected to do everything yourself!

Please remember to send thank you notes periodically to parents who have given their time, money and effort to your class. The PA hosts a **Volunteer Thank You Breakfast on May 14, 2009** in appreciation for your help throughout the year.

Parents' Association Calendar of Events 2008-2009

We have a very full calendar this year. This is a sampling of some of the main events scheduled. Mark your calendars now! Please check our website www.ljcdspa.org throughout the year for updates and additional events.

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| Welcome Breakfast | Tuesday, August 26 8 am MPR |
| Back-to-School Picnic | Friday, September 12, 3 pm Upper Field |
| Monthly PA Meetings 8-9am Multi-Purpose Room | |
| September 4 | January 15 |
| October 2 | February 5 |
| November 6 | March 5 |
| December 4 | April 9 |
| Monthly Auction Meetings | 9-10am Immediately following all PA Meetings |
| Faculty/Staff Luncheons | |
| September 18 | February 19 |
| November 6 | April 23 |
| Teacher Appreciation Day | April 23 |
| Book Fair | Week of April 20 Black Box |
| Annual Auction Gala | Saturday, May 2 5pm |
| Volunteer Thank You Breakfast | Thursday, May 14 Multi-Purpose Room |