



## **Room Parent Guide**

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### **Bayard Rustin Elementary School**

2021 - 2022 School Year

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## Room Parent Guide

Bayard Rustin Elementary School room parents play a vital role in the successful execution of social classroom activities. The room parent program streamlines classroom celebrations and takes some of the load off of our teachers so they can concentrate on academics and the well-being of each child.

Thank you for being a room parent!

If you have questions that are not answered in this guide, please contact the Room Parent Coordinator.

Lisa Liu at [lisaliu719@outlook.com](mailto:lisaliu719@outlook.com)

### **2021-2022 Volunteer/Contractor Vaccination Attestation Plans**

Beginning October 1, 2021, all school volunteers and partnering agencies will be required to complete an additional new module via their *myMCPS Classroom/Canvas* account called **COVID-19 Vaccination Attestation** in order to volunteer within our school district. Currently, all volunteers/contractors must complete the vCAN (Volunteer Child Abuse/Neglect) module. In addition, depending on level of volunteering, some are required to be fingerprinted, per the vCAN FAQ. Fingerprinting requirements are not being changed. The new module will consist of a volunteer a) attesting to being fully vaccinated, b) uploading their *Certificate of COVID-19 Vaccination* from the Maryland Department of Health, and c) agreeing to specific expectations of masking and social distancing while in MCPS facilities.

Once the attestation module is completed, as well as the vCAN module, cleared volunteer names/emails will appear on the principal's *Volunteer/Contractor Completion Report* found in myMCPS.

Since the vCAN module is a 3-year revolving completion timeline, a system message will be emailed to all who have previously completed the vCAN module, informing them of this additional module requirement. The new, Two-Module system will be up and running by Monday, September 20, 2021 and requirement will begin on Friday, October 1, 2021. Names of volunteers with only the vCAN module completed will be removed from your school's completion report on this date. User-Guides on how to access both module requirements and how to access and upload their *Certificate of COVID-19 Vaccination* from the Maryland Department of Health will be available on the Child Abuse and Neglect and the Volunteers websites.

## Benefits of Being a Room Parent

Being a room parent not only helps your child's teacher, but you also receive the satisfaction of knowing you will:

- Make a positive impact on the children in your child's class by organizing fun classroom activities and events.
- Meet other parents and make new friends.
- Work closely with your child's teacher so your child and their friends have great school memories.

- Have direct knowledge of what is happening in your child's class.
- Be a valuable resource to your child's teacher and other parents in your class.

## Responsibilities

- Coordinate school events, teacher appreciation lunches, holiday parties, staff appreciation lunches and more.
- Collect and manage class fund donations (forms and money) to help defray costs of activities.
- Coordinate activities and celebrations with other parents.
- Help teacher coordinate volunteer opportunities and act as point of contact for classroom teacher non-academic requests.
- Contact new families to welcome them to the class and keep activities coordinated.
- Occasionally communicate with parents regarding PTA activities and events.
- Inform parents who volunteer in the classroom or at school in positions in which they are in close contact with children, that they are responsible to complete an online training about child abuse and neglect. Please advise them that they should keep a copy of their completion certificate for their own records and the training is good for three years.  
Link: <https://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/childabuseandneglect/>

## Working with Your Teacher

Once you agree to be a room parent, you can meet with your child's teacher to discuss how they would like to handle class events, celebrations, volunteers, and other activities. Your first teacher meeting can be done in person or via phone. Each teacher has a different working style and will have different needs. Once you learn about your teacher's specific preferences, you can communicate this via emails to parents.

In the lower grade levels, teachers typically need more parent volunteers and you may be asked to help coordinate parent volunteers to help with administrative work, helping children with reading, math or other assignments.

In the upper grades, teachers are working hard to encourage independence among their students and do not need as much help with children but may need assistance with some other classroom tasks.

## Time Commitment

The work of a room parent varies throughout the year. In September, it may take a few hours to get organized, meet with your teacher to discuss class strategies, obtain contact information from parents, and recruit other volunteers. After that, it may take a few minutes each week to manage the responsibilities but many weeks it may not take any time at all.

Room parents are encouraged to recruit other parents to help coordinate various activities. For example: different parents can take the lead on organizing Halloween/Fall Festival and Valentine parties or coordinate activities for staff appreciation lunches and staff appreciation week. The room parent(s)

will act as the lead coordinator and share responsibilities with other parents in the class who are usually happy to help.

The room parent introduction letter is the perfect opportunity to divide out the responsibilities and ask for assistance. When several parents share responsibilities, everyone can have the satisfaction of being able to help and it will take little time for each parent. If you are the only room parent to volunteer, be sure to ask other parents to help. Some people would love to help; they just need to be asked.

## Class Room Celebrations & Events

The following are typical school year activities celebrated at BRES. Room parents can recruit other parents to help coordinate individual events so more parents can be involved in their children's school experience.

- In-class Volunteer Opportunities
- Fall Festival/Halloween Parade and Valentine's Day Parties
- Staff Lunches
- Teacher Appreciation Week
- Field Day
- Various requests from teacher / PTA Communications

## Birthday Parties

We will not have birthday parties at BRES. Each child will receive a sticker and a pencil for his/her birthday from the front office. BRES staff request that parents do not bring in treats for the entire class. On their child's birthday, parents are welcome to come enjoy lunch with his/her child.

## Fall Festival/Halloween Parade & Valentine's Day Parties

Students may participate in a school-wide Halloween Parade. In addition, the school will celebrate with class Fall Festival parties which will be school-wide. The room parent can organize these parties or recruit different parents to organize and coordinate class parties. Parent volunteers help with setup, in class activities, distributing food and treats, and cleaning up.

Sample Letter templates are available at the end of this document and from your Room Parent Coordinator. Parties cannot happen without assistance and donations from parent volunteers. The letter templates break down the needs for each party.

## Teacher Appreciation Week

Room Parents and other class parents coordinate party/teacher gift and activities throughout Teacher's Appreciation Week in May. Traditionally parents and students work together to do something special for their classroom and specials teachers throughout the week (flowers, notes, gift cards, etc.). We do not plan to have class parties as those tend to appreciate the children more and give teachers more work to do.

At the beginning of the year, room parents can ask their teacher for information about what the teacher enjoys. The Room Parent Coordinator sometimes can provide a table with information that staff has provided. For example: what is their favorite colors, breakfast, morning beverage, flowers, stores, restaurant, teams, hobbies, etc. This information can be used by class parents to plan for nice surprises for their teacher during teacher appreciation week.

**Specials Teachers:** We would like ask all room parents to set aside a small amount for specials teachers during Teacher Appreciation Week. We hope to collect a \$10 donation from each class to purchase school-wide gifts that ensure specials teachers receive a small token of our appreciation.

In the spring, additional information will be provided about Teacher's Appreciation Week activities. Our goal is to ensure all teachers receive equitable treatment as much as possible.

## Staff Appreciation Luncheon

All classes in each grade level takes turns providing lunch items for the entire staff (about 70 members) in the staff lounge. Parents from each grade bring in a favorite potluck style dishes for the staff to enjoy. A sign-up sheet is available in Google Drive online to all parents in the grade level providing lunch in a particular month. Your Room Parent Coordinator will email the link for the sign-up form approximately 2-3 weeks prior to the luncheon.

Staff Appreciation Luncheon typically starts at the first classroom lunch period, and ends at the last lunch period.

Room parents are asked to share this information with all class parents, send the link to the sign-up sheet and solicit help in set-up, clean-up, and meal donations. A sample letter is available in the appendix.

## Field Day

Field day is in June. Room parent coordinators help solicit donations of popsicles and bottled water for your class on Field Day and help recruit volunteers. If you have left over class funds at the end of the year, you can use them to pay for popsicles and water bottles for the class. Please ask your teacher how it will be handled prior to communicating with parents.

## In-Class Volunteer Coordination

Please check with your teacher if they would like regular in-class help or regular weekly help with tasks such as photocopying or helping children in the classroom. If they do, room parents can create or help coordinate a calendar/signup form for parents in class to coordinate volunteers.

## Communication with Other Class Parents

At the beginning of the year, teachers will collect email addresses from parents at back to school night and provided to room parents by teachers. Please ask your teacher for a list as soon as it is available. These email lists allow you to reach out to classroom parents with information about upcoming events.

Some room parents have created Groups and Listservs on Yahoo, Google, lotsahelpinghands.com, volunteerspot.com, dropbox.com and others. Typically, services that don't require parents to sign up are the best options. **Caveat:** While group listservs are a great idea in theory, it is often difficult to get all the parents in a classroom to participate. Many end up not being used as planned. Group emails tend to be the easiest way to communicate with most parents. If you have suggestions for services you have used successfully, please let your room parent coordinator know.

Often parents and guardians will have more than one email address. Please be sure to use all email addresses provided to communicate classroom messages. When new students arrive in class, be sure to contact your teacher to get their contact information as well.

If a parent does not have an email address, you can send a flier home with the information. This can be done by dropping the fliers off in the classroom and sending a paper copy home with the child(ren).

## Templates

Several sample letter templates are available to you, so you don't have to start from scratch and to keep activities consistent across the school. Feel free to adjust wording as necessary for your classroom situation.

Forms and templates are available at the end of this document. Please note: Some of the forms needed later in the year may not be available until closer to the event.

## Class Funds

At the beginning of the school year, room parents ask other parents to provide a small donation to help defray the cost of parties, teacher appreciation week, and other classroom needs.

Suggested donation is \$5, however this is not a requirement. Parents may choose to give \$5 (some give more or less), or none at all. **Parents should never be pressured to donate.**

Total donations vary by classroom and room parents can use their best judgment as to how the funds are used. If your efforts to solicit contributions from parents are unsuccessful, you may use the funds to purchase supplies. This is extremely rare.

You are required to keep records of the money collected and all expenditures. A summary of the class fund collections & expenses should be available to the Room Parent Coordinator if requested. You must also provide these records to any class parent who requests them.

If there is more than one room parent, one will be chosen to collect money and keep records. The other room parents can submit receipts for reimbursement if they purchase food, party supplies, etc.

## Event Notifications

The room parent coordinator will send out email reminders for upcoming events in plenty of time for you to contact your class parents.

## Food and Treats in the Classroom

Allergies are common in the school so to be sensitive to the needs of all our children. All treats and snacks should be store-bought and include a list of ingredients whenever possible.

Bayard Rustin is a very health conscious school and has a health and wellness committee that works hard to ensure that all children have access to healthy foods for parties.

Please be sure to send out the Healthy Food Guidelines document with all party fliers. It is attached.

## Classroom Volunteers

Each teacher will have a sense of the type of help they need and a schedule of when then need assistance. Most teachers will request volunteers beginning in October once the class routine is established. If they need help sooner, they will let you know. Other teachers do not need much help at all--especially in the higher grades when students become more independent. Please talk with your teacher to get a sense of their needs.

Volunteer calendars can be set up in a Yahoo, Google Calendar, [lotsahelpinghands.com](http://lotsahelpinghands.com), or SignUpGenius. Once you select your calendar of choice be sure to give access to your teachers and parents so they can keep track of the volunteer opportunities.



## Appendix: Sample Letters and Templates

The following letters and templates make it easy for you to find everything you need in one place.

**HOW TO USE.** Please modify each letter to meet the needs of your classroom and ask your teacher or room parent coordinator if you have any questions on specifics for your class. Don't forget to delete any instructions to room parents in the sample letter. Be sure to fill in your teacher's name, grade, and any other placeholder information in the samples provided.

The letters are also available as individual files from your room parent coordinator.

You may cut and past the letters into an email or send as an attachment. In some cases, if parents in your class do not have an email address, please print it out and send home with their child.

## Room Parent Introduction Letter and Class Fund Request

Dear Parents of [teacher's name] class,

Hello! We wanted to introduce ourselves as the room parents for the coming year. We are:

<Insert Name> <Phone> <Email>

<Insert Name> <Phone> <Email>

We will facilitate communication among the parents in the class, organize parent volunteers for the classroom according to the teacher's needs, and help coordinate class parties and activities. We would appreciate your support and involvement in order to make these activities as enjoyable for our kids as possible. Specifically, we would love to have one or more parents help coordinate the following events and activities:

[note to room parents: modify this list for the items you want help with]

- Fall Festival/Halloween Parade (coordinate volunteers, activities, food contributions, etc.)
- Valentine's Day Party (coordinate volunteers, activities, food contributions, etc.)
- Teacher's Appreciation Week Events

**Class Volunteers:** There will be many opportunities for parents to volunteer in the classroom throughout the year. We will contact you for specific opportunities as they arise. Please complete the attached form so we can have your family's most updated contact information.

**Class Funds:** Each year we ask parents for a small donation to help defray the cost of parties, teacher appreciation week, and other classroom needs.

The suggested donation is \$5. **All donations are greatly appreciated, but are not mandatory.** Please fill out the bottom of the information sheet and return it with your contribution (cash only please) in an envelope marked.

**ROOM PARENT:** name / teacher's class.

Please be sure to include your name and your child's name with your contribution as soon as possible.

We would also appreciate your email address on the form. It will facilitate easier communication among the class.

Thank you in advance. We look forward to an exciting year.

Sincerely,

Room parent Names / Contact Info

## Volunteer & Contribution Form

Classroom Teacher:

Grade:

PLEASE PRINT

CHILD'S NAME	
FOOD ALLERGIES (if any)	
PARENT / GUARDIAN NAMES	
EMAIL	
BEST PHONE TO REACH YOU	
PARENT / GUARDIAN NAME	
EMAIL	
BEST PHONE TO REACH YOU	

I am interested in helping with the following (please check all that apply):

- Coordinate for Halloween Party
- Coordinate Valentine's Day Party
- Coordinate Teachers Appreciation Week
- Coordinate / Help with Staff Luncheon
- Volunteer in classroom / assist Teacher with Administrative Work
- I am enclosing a \$\_\_\_\_\_ contribution to the class fund.

## Room Parent Volunteer Update Letter

Date:

Dear Parents of [teacher's name] class,

Thank you again for being Parents that Participate for [TEACHER] class! Expect to receive information from the parents listed below regarding different classroom events. You can still help by volunteering at a classroom party, chaperoning a field trip, sending supplies for the party and classroom, the possibilities are endless!

The jobs for Room Parent have all been filled! If there are questions, don't hesitate to ask.

Room Parent Coordinators:

Room Parent Job	Parent(s) Name	Child in class
Collecting Classroom Fund		
Point of Contact		
Volunteer Coordinator		
Halloween Party (DATE)		
Valentine's Party (DATE)		
Teacher Appreciation Week (DATE)		
Staff Luncheon (DATE)		
Field Day (DATE)		

## Staff Luncheon Letter

Dear [GRADE LEVEL] Parents,

As many of you know, every year each grade takes a turn to host a school-wide staff appreciation lunch. It is potluck, and feeds about 70 teachers and staff at BRES. It is the [GRADE LEVEL]'s turn to host the staff appreciation lunch for the school on [Insert Date].

The sign-up sheet is available on Google Drive all parents to indicate what they will donate or how they can help. The sign-up sheet is available to all parents in all classes so everyone can see where help and donations are still needed.

The link is: \_\_\_\_\_

You can either make or buy a store bought dish. Especially needed are main dishes, sides, and salads. While we ask most parents to deliver their dishes by 10:30AM in time for our set-up volunteers to prepare, you may also bring your meals at noon if it accommodates your schedule better.

In the past main dishes and entrees ran out before staff members with later lunch periods could eat. To avoid this problem, we kindly request more entrees, salads and side dishes and fewer desserts and drinks.

If you have not used Google Drive in the past:

1. Please either click the link provided or copy and paste the link into your web browser. You will see a sign-up sheet to type into. It is public and editable. You do not need an account to use it and it will auto-save changes.
2. Please enter your name, teacher's name and what you will bring.

Other important things to remember:

- Labels on food are very helpful so people know what they're eating and if they have food allergies.
- Vegetarian options are appreciated for staff who have a vegetarian diet.
- Please send in a serving spoon/ladle with your dish if needed. Disposable is preferred.
- Please label any items you would like to keep and pick up your dishes, pans and serving utensils any time after 2:30 in the staff lounge.
- Please send in food at the temperature they are to be served in, and if they need to be warmed up they should send the food in microwave-safe containers.

Thanks,

Insert Room Parent Name / Contact Info

## Halloween Parade/Fall Festival Letter



## Bayard Rustin ES Party Information

DATE

<b>Schedule</b>	<b>Setup &amp; Costumes</b>	<b>2:15</b>
	<b>All School Parade</b>	<b>2:30</b>
	<b>Class Parties</b>	<b>3:00</b>
<b>Party Coordinator(s)</b>	<b>NAME</b>	<b>CONTACT</b>

Dear Parents of [TEACHER’S NAME] class!

Our school Halloween parade and Fall Festival is approaching and our children are getting excited. In preparation for our class Fall Festival party, we need your help. This year there is a school-wide effort to get more activities into the school day and healthier snacks at parties. We look forward to your creativity to make our parties simultaneously fun and healthy.

Class volunteers and donations in the following areas:

Needs for (include # of children plus teacher)	Volunteer Names	Items you will bring
Volunteers to coordinate an activity (dance party, game, craft, etc.)		
Volunteers to help children with costumes		
Fruit (one or more)		
Fruit or vegetable with healthy dip (one or more)		
Popcorn, pretzels, etc. (one or more)		
Baked tortilla chips with dip (salsa, hummus, etc.)		
Sweet Treat (no nuts) (one please)		
12-15 Small bottles of water		
12-15 Small bottles of water		
Plates and Napkins		
Utensils (forks / spoons)		
Volunteers for setup (need 3 or more)		
Volunteers for cleanup (need 3 or more)		

Please see the attached party guidelines for more creative ideas.

If receiving this letter via email, please “respond to all” so others can see what’s been accounted for.

Thanks! We look forward to seeing you on Halloween. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Room Parent / Coordinator Name  
Contact Information

## Valentine's Day Letter



## *Valentine's Day Party Information Date*

<i>Schedule</i>	<b>Setup</b>	<b>2:50</b>
	<b>Party</b>	<b>3:00</b>
	<b>Party Coordinators Name</b>	<b>contact</b>

Dear Parents of [TEACHER's NAME] class!

Our Valentine's Day party is approaching and our children are getting excited. In preparation for our class party, we need your help. This year there is a school-wide effort to get more activities into the school day and healthier snacks at parties. We look forward to your creativity to make our parties simultaneously fun and healthy.

Class volunteers and donations in the following areas:

<b>Needs for (include # of children plus teacher)</b>	<b>Volunteer Names</b>	<b>Items you will bring</b>
Volunteers to coordinate an activity (dance party, game, craft, etc.)		
Fruit (one or more)		
Fruit or vegetable with healthy dip (one or more)		
Popcorn, pretzels, etc. (one or more)		
Baked tortilla chips with dip (salsa, hummus, etc.)		
Sweet Treat (no nuts) (one please)		
12-15 Small bottles of water		
12-15 Small bottles of water		
Plates and Napkins		
Utensils (forks / spoons)		
Volunteers for setup (need 3 or more)		
Volunteers for cleanup (need 3 or more)		
<b>Please see the attached party guidelines for more creative ideas.</b>		

If receiving this letter via email, please "respond to all" so others can see what's been accounted for.

Thanks! We look forward to seeing you on Halloween. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Room Parent / Coordinator Name  
Contact Information