



**B.B. Harris  
Elementary School**

**Room Parent  
Handbook**

**2009 – 10 school year**

Dear B.B. Harris Elementary Room Parents,

Thank you so much for agreeing to be a room parent for your child's classroom this year. We are grateful to you! Research shows that one of the most important characteristics of excellent schools is the development of a strong collaborative relationship between parents and school staff. The role of room parent is one of the key elements in this home school partnership at B.B. Harris Elementary.

Through your efforts, you will contribute to the richness of the classroom and school experience for all of our students. You will also improve the academic experience of our students by providing effective support to the classroom teacher so that he or she has more time to focus on the most important aspects of teaching and learning.

Whether you're a first time room parent or a seasoned pro, we hope this handbook provides you with helpful information for the upcoming school year. This handbook should provide a clear outline of the various room parent duties, as well as general guidelines for carrying out these duties. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

One thing that makes B.B. Harris Elementary such a special place is the great working relationship that exists between the parent community and staff. Through your efforts as a room parent, you will help to make a positive difference in the academic and social lives of every child at our school. We thank you!

With appreciation,  
Courtney Bernardo & Christy Espy, your PTA Co-Presidents

contact info:

Christy Espy – [christywaite@yahoo.com](mailto:christywaite@yahoo.com) or 770 623 6874

Courtney Bernardo – [courtneymbernardo@yahoo.com](mailto:courtneymbernardo@yahoo.com) or 770 495 7386

## **BEING A B.B. HARRIS ELEMENTARY ROOM PARENT, AT A GLANCE**

### **Rewards:**

Time with your child(ren) – Priceless!

Getting to know the other children in class and parents

Working with the Teacher for fun class activities and celebrations

Being a valuable asset to B.B. Harris Elementary School

Enhancing the school year experience for every student in your child's class!

### **Responsibilities:**

Meeting with your child's Teacher to discuss their needs for the school year

Introducing yourself to the parents of your classroom through a letter

Communication with parents through letters/emails

Preparing and distributing classroom roster (with parent's prior approval)

Organizing a list of willing volunteers to help you throughout the year

Planning class celebrations & managing class funds for parties (two celebrations per year)

Assistance with certain classroom activities

Organizing gifts for teachers to show teacher appreciation

Helping with/getting volunteers for PTA activities throughout the school year

## **BEING A B.B. HARRIS ELEMENTARY ROOM PARENT, IN DETAIL**

1. **Meeting with your child's Teacher to discuss their needs for the school year.** You will find that all teachers have preferences about how much participation they request from their room parents. Teachers, like our children, are unique individuals and have different needs and requirements. Some teachers have fully established routines for celebrations and other activities, while other teachers are content to allow you to fully coordinate some events. Please follow your teacher's lead, and always remember how much the entire school community appreciates your time and efforts.
2. **Introducing yourself to the parents of your classroom through a letter** (sample included at the end of this handbook – if you choose to use another version please note that administration approval is required prior to sending)
3. **Communication** with parents through letters/emails throughout the school year regarding upcoming classroom events.
4. **Preparing and distributing classroom roster** (with parent's prior approval). Please see the information request form at the end of this handbook, and please use this version. Please remember that this information is for communication among the families of this classroom only and is not for public knowledge.
5. **Organizing a list of willing volunteers to help you throughout the year.** This list will assist you in your volunteer work throughout the year.
6. **Planning class celebrations & managing class funds for parties.** There will be two classroom celebrations per year, one in the winter prior to the winter break and one in the spring to celebrate the end of the year. This duty will comprise the bulk of your responsibility as a room parent. The school administration will set the dates and times of each celebration and the PTA will advise you of those dates/times well in advance.

Check with your teacher for guidelines and suggestions of how they would like the celebration to be planned and what activities, games, etc., they would like.

Contact the parents in your classroom approximately 3 weeks prior to the celebration to advertise the event, ask for donations of supplies, and ask for volunteers to help. There is a sample letter included at the end of this handbook.

The PTA will provide you with \$3 per student in your classroom to help fund your celebration (you will need to turn in a receipt/receipts for the expenses, and a "Check Request Form" is included in this handbook (please try to turn in receipts that have just your celebration expenses on them, for treasurer/audit purposes). Please try to use these funds to purchase something for the children as a keepsake at the end of the celebration, and rely on parent contributions of other needed items such as paper goods, drinks, snacks and food.

Please note that Gwinnett County guidelines require that all food served must be store bought with proper labeling – no homemade food items are allowed. This

requirement is in place in part to reduce the risk of a food allergic child being exposed to an allergen. Advance notification is very important for families with food allergic children so that they can be prepared to oversee their children in food selections. Please be extremely careful and considerate of any food allergies in your classroom.

Regarding teacher's gifts: If you ask parents to donate money towards a group gift for a teacher, please make sure that parents clearly understand that such contributions are totally optional and never a requirement. It is also important to only suggest a donation amount (for example, "suggested gift amount is \$5, but please feel free to send a different amount of your choosing). If you request money, you should request it to be sent in a sealed envelope with your name on it. Please let the parents know what you will be using the money for (i.e. gift certificate).

The PTA will provide you with your teacher's "wish list".

One final note - The fifth grade celebration will take the place of the end of the year celebration for all fifth grade classes. There is a Fifth Grade Celebration committee, which will plan this event, and they will contact you if you are a room parent in a fifth grade class.

7. **Assistance with certain classroom activities** – For example: help with organizing "Friday Folders", reading to the class, etc. Please check with your teacher at the beginning of the year to see if she or he has any need or desire for such assistance.
8. **Organizing Gifts for teachers for Teacher Appreciation/Celebrations/other special occasions** – Please communicate with the parents of your classroom to consider these events. Please see guidelines above under "class celebrations."
9. **Helping with/getting volunteers for PTA activities throughout the school year.** The PTA relies on volunteers to staff every activity it runs throughout the school year. There is always a need for volunteers – any amount of time is greatly appreciated! You will receive notice of upcoming events through the school newsletter (the Friday Flash) as well as the weekly PTA email (the Wildcat Wire). Please consider asking the parents in your classroom to volunteer their time. Your communication with them is vital to our success with our PTA events!
10. **Miscellaneous:**

**Teacher Appreciation Week**-Teacher Appreciation Week is typically scheduled for the first week of May (you will be notified of the exact date through school communications). This includes ALL teachers. The PTA arranges for special items to be delivered to each teacher on a daily basis during this week. You are welcome to supplement this with your own efforts. The goal is to let our teachers/parapros know how much we really do appreciate them while keeping things in perspective and preventing the extremes of either "going overboard" or completely forgetting to acknowledge the teacher all together.

**Field Day-** Please talk with your teacher regarding Field Day preparations, and please consider providing water bottles and/or popsicles for the children.

**Yearbook Pictures:** Get your class in the yearbook! Every year our yearbook committee strives to include as many candid, "fun" pictures as possible. Please encourage parents to take pictures at the activities throughout the year and then to share these with the yearbook committee. The best way to get these pictures to the yearbook team is to burn them to a CD, put this CD in an envelope and either send it to school with your child or leave the envelope with the CD at the front desk. Please make sure, that you write "for yearbook" on the envelope and include the grade and the teacher's name on it. We need the full-sized picture files. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact Jen Ponder at photojen13@yahoo.com.

**Signing in/out:** Whenever you are at the school to volunteer, you must sign in and out every time at the computer located in the main office. Aside from school policy, this will allow us to track parent volunteer hours throughout the year.

**Correspondence:** All correspondence sent home must be approved by the administration prior to sending it home with students. Please contact Dr. Lauri Burton for approval. Please remember to allow her plenty of time to review and approve.

**THE FOLLOWING PAGES HOLD SAMPLE DOCUMENTS THAT MAY HELP YOU THROUGHOUT THE YEAR. These have been pre-approved by the administration for your use. If you'd like to use another format, please feel free to do so but please contact Dr. Burton for approval prior to sending it to parents.**

**THANK YOU AGAIN FOR YOUR VALUABLE VOLUNTEER HOURS!**  
**HAVE A GREAT YEAR AND PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO CONTACT US WITH ANY QUESTIONS!**

**SUPPLEMENTAL INFO, SAMPLE LETTERS,  
CLASS ROSTER REQUEST FORM, ETC.**

**Important Dates for Room Parents 2009-10**  
(please refer to your school calendar for a comprehensive  
listing of other important dates throughout the year)

**August**

- 6: Open House, 8 am – noon
- 10: school starts!
- 14: PTA Fundraiser Packets go home
- 20: PTA Meeting/Curriculum Night

**Septemeber**

- 4: PTA Fundraiser “Coffee Count”
- 15: Skate Night
- 26: Duluth Fall Festival – come march in the parade!

**October**

- 29: PTA Meeting/Family Education Night/pick up PTA Fundraiser orders  
date TBA: PTA Fundraiser “Mega-Event” – please volunteer if you can!

**November**

- 26-27: Thanksgiving Break

**December**

- 10-11: Candlelight Luncheon – please volunteer if you can!  
dates TBA: Class Celebrations!

**January**

- 29: PTA School Dance – please volunteer if you can!

**February**

- date TBA: PTA Meeting/Bingo Night – please volunteer if you can!

**March**

- 9: Skate Night?

**April**

- date TBA: PTA Meeting – vote in board for 2010-11/Kindergarten Program

**May**

- 3-7: Staff Appreciation Week  
dates TBA: Class Celebrations!  
date TBA: Fifth Grade Finale!

## SAMPLE ROOM PARENT INTRO LETTER



Dear Parents,

My name is XXX, XXX's parent, and I am the room parent for Ms/Mr. XXX's class. I am writing to let you know about some of the activities that we have planned for this year. I am also compiling a list of parents who would like to help out with class parties, activities and/or trips. **Ms/Mr. XXX would love to have parent volunteers in the class for sharing experiences and knowledge, or just to help.** Please fill out the attached volunteer information sheet so that we will be able to keep in touch with you. Return it by XXX, 200X.

The school's policy is not to give out the children's names and phone numbers. We need your permission to compile a class directory to be used for communication between parents and students in our class only. Without this information, we will not be able to contact you and let you know what is happening in class. **We need a response whether you are or are not willing to be a part of the class directory. Please fill out the attached form and return it by XXX, 200X.**

Occasionally, we will give a class gift, and I will ask for contributions. **Please understand that no one is obligated to contribute.**

Some of the events I will need help with are:

\*Winter Celebration

\*End-of-year Celebration

\*Ms/Mr. XXX's Birthday

\*Teacher Appreciation Week

We will be sending home more information regarding specific events as we get closer to those times.

Thanks in advance for your help! I look forward to meeting each of you as we work together to help our children have a great year. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions. Call me at XXX-XXX-XXXX or email me at XXX.

Thanks,

# CLASS DIRECTORY FORM CHOICE

## Ms/Mr \_\_\_\_\_'s Class Directory

We would like to put together a class directory to help with communication between the families. Please complete the information below.

\_\_\_\_\_ Yes, please include our information in the directory.

\_\_\_\_\_ No, please do not include our information in the directory.  
Use for room parent communication only.

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Parent Signature

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Date

Student's Name:	
Address:	
Phone Number:	
Email address:	
Parents' Names	

## SAMPLE LETTER TO SEND HOME RE: PARTY CELEBRATIONS

### Sample Letter for Winter and End of the Year Celebration

Parents,

Our classroom celebration has been scheduled for \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ at 00:00 am/pm to 00:00am/pm. All parents are welcome to attend. We will be having snacks of : *list what you will have/need*. If you are able to help with any of these items please contact me at email/phone.

We will collect money for a gift for Mr/Ms which the class will present to her/him the day of the celebration. Suggested gift amount is \$5.00. If you wish to contribute, please send a check made out to: *your name*, to your child's classroom in an envelope marked "room parent" by \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_. Again participation is voluntary and you should feel free to send your own gift if you so choose.

Please contact me with any questions at email/and or phone.

Thank You,  
Room Parent

**CHECK REQUEST FORM GOES HERE**