

ROOM PARENT HANDBOOK 2011/12



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A. Room Parents

Thank you for volunteering to be a room parent for your child's classroom. This is a unique opportunity to get to know and to serve your child's teacher in ways that they will greatly appreciate. As the primary liaison between the homeroom teachers/form tutors and students' families, room parents initiate and support the team effort between school and home that Leipzig International School strives to have.

1. Communication

Communication is key to being an effective room parent:

- Communicate with the homeroom teacher to understand her or his needs.
- Communicate with your class parents so they can volunteer to help meet those needs.
- Communicate with the Parent Community Coordinator (PCC) to help organise community events.
- Communicate with class parents to see what social activities they would like to attend.

Confidentiality is an important aspect of your responsibilities as a room parent. It is an important obligation to protect each student's right to privacy. Information or observations about individual children made during volunteer work are to be kept confidential. If you observe or perceive a problem with any student, please notify the homeroom teacher/form tutor only. A room parent is detached and not political. It's not your role as a room parent to discuss academic or personal questions.

Your job is not to DO all the work but to delegate!

2. Responsibilities

- At the beginning of the school year room parents should set up a meeting with their homeroom teacher/form tutor to discuss support needed for classroom activities and events.
- During your meeting, give your teacher the opportunity to tell you how he or she works best with a room parent. Some teachers have very specific plans they wish to implement; others appreciate a room parent to take the initiative and plan activities within certain given guidelines.
- Determine if the teacher wishes assistance with organising outdoor events and/or field trips.
- Contact new parents as they move in during the school year. The PCC will inform you when new students arrive in your class. Introduce yourself as the room parent and as a contact for classroom information, opportunities to participate in the classroom, etc.
- Class Parties – Discuss dates and times for parties and needs for volunteers, food & beverages etc, coordinate volunteers and follow up. When you call parents for volunteer help, go through the class list in rotation. Try to offer opportunities to all parents equally.

- If you are expected to volunteer, but cannot be present, please arrange a substitute. If you cannot find someone to fill in your position please notify the homeroom teacher/form tutor in advance. Please find someone else from your class to fill in for you at meetings the school or your school section invites you to.
- Help the section representatives (Pre-School, Primary, and Secondary) and the PCC to organise section events and whole school events.
- For Pre-School room parents: As a room parent you are invited (but not required) to be a member of the Early Childhood Director's Parents' Advisory Council. The ECPAC will meet once a month to provide input and feedback in the planning and programming of the Early Childhood/Pre-School program.

3. Correspondence

- You can either send out letters in paper or as email. You might find it easier to communicate via email, this is the fastest way of communication and letters risk the chance of being forgotten in the children's school bag. As a room parent you will be given access to an e-mail distribution list for your class only!
- This class e-mail can't be used for e-mail replies and does not allow seeing individual e-mail addresses as to German data protection regulations. Each class e-mail list already includes the e-mail address of your homeroom teacher/form tutor.
- Write an e-mail to parents to introduce yourself and provide them with your email-address and phone-number. Provide information on volunteer activities coming up, if applicable.
- E-mails to parents must be written in English - the operating language at LIS. In addition to the English version there can be German translation if you wish. We are an international school with many students and parents from abroad; they must not be excluded from communication.
- Use correspondence as a room parent for organisational classroom and social matters only. It is not your role as a room parents to discuss academic or personal questions.
- Any other letters regarding school or community matters will be sent out by the school directly.
- It is not part of the role as room parent to forward e-mails to your class parents on behalf of third parties other than the section representatives and the PCC.
- A final list of room parents for the current school year including phone numbers and e-mail addresses will be provided by the PCC. This list should be used for communication between the room parents and their section representatives.

B. Section Representatives

1. Election

- At the beginning of each school year, all room parents receive a letter from the school with an invitation to a first room parent meeting together with this room parent handbook.
- At that meeting there is a general introduction by the headmaster. At the second part of the meeting the room parents of each section meet with the section's Principal/Director for more specific introduction. The room parents of each section then elect one or more section representative amongst them for the school year. It is important to note that the representative must speak English (the operating language of the school).

2. Responsibilities

The section representatives meet periodically with:

- The Principals/Director of their school section
 - The elected parents' representatives on the Trägerverein
 - The room parents of their section
 - Parent Community Coordinator
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- Meetings can be set according to needs by either side.
 - At the beginning of the School year set up a meeting with your section's Principal/Director to discuss specific needs for the section.
 - Room parents should use the section representative as the liaison with their section Principal/Director. Section representatives are available to answer questions from room parents. (Provide telephone number and email address to all room parents).
 - During your meeting, give your section's Principal/Director the opportunity to tell you how he or she works best with a section representative. Some principals have very specific plans they wish to implement; others appreciate a section representative to take the initiative and plan activities within certain given guidelines.
 - Determine if the Principal/Director wishes assistance with preparation of field trips for the section.
 - Discuss dates and times for section parties (Holiday Lunch for Pre-School and Primary, Christmas Ball for Secondary) and events, needs for volunteers etc.
 - Discuss charity events (e.g. Wish Tree in Primary, Christmas in a Shoebox in Secondary)

3. Secondary Section Representatives: Additional Responsibilities

- Contact the Student Council and introduce yourself.
- Provide them with your phone number and email-address.
- Offer your help.

4. Correspondence

- Send meeting invitation to room parents of your section and have your Principal/Director approve the invitation/e-mail prior to distribution. No correspondence may be sent out without the Principal's/Director's prior to approval.
- PCC will provide an e-mail distribution list of all room parents per section.
- Inform the room parents about the specific needs for your section for the school year ahead as well as important dates for events throughout the school year.
- Correspondence should be preferably by e-mail class distribution lists as provided. Only use correspondence as a section representative for organisational section matters and events, it's not your role as a section representative to discuss academic or personal questions.
- E-mails to room parents must be written in English - the operating language at LIS. In addition to the English version there can be German translation.

C. Yearly events per school section

(Suggestion only! Feel free to add and initiate more):

Pre- School:

1. Lantern Walk/St. Martin
2. St. Nicholas
3. Holiday Lunch
4. Easter Egg Hunt

Secondary:

1. Christmas in a Shoebox
2. Christmas Ball
3. Secondary Drama Production

Primary:

1. Holiday Lunch
2. Wish Tree (in coordination with PCC)

Whole School - all representatives:

1. Summer Fair
2. Staff Musical

Calendar (Suggestion only!)

Section	When	Event	What to do
Pre-School	10 November	Lantern Walk/ St. Martin	Start in October coordinating the Pre-School parents to help you and the Pre-School teachers/Director organise the Lantern Walk.
	6 December	St. Nicholas	Start in November coordinating the Pre-School parents to help you and the Pre-School teachers/Director organise St. Nicholas event.
	November/December	Holiday Lunch	Set up a meeting early November with Director to discuss the needs for Holiday Lunch, where and how it will be arranged and if any specific food is desired.
	Before Easter	Easter Egg Hunt	Get in touch with the Director and help to organise the Easter Egg Hunt. Send e-mails to room parents and ask them for their help.
Primary	November/December	Holiday Lunch	Set up a meeting early November with Principal to discuss the needs for Holiday Lunch, where and how it will be arranged and if any specific food is

			desired. Discuss organisational matters (organisation per grade level/upper and lower primary).
	December	Wish Tree*	Get in touch with PCC - see details below
Secondary	November/December	Christmas in a Shoebox	Get in touch with Mr. and Mrs. Hampton (both Secondary teachers at LIS) who coordinate this charity event.
		Christmas Ball	Get in touch with the Student Council and offer them their help for Christmas Ball. There will be parents needed to supervise at the Ball. Send out e-mails to room parents and ask them to fill the shifts with parents in their class. Also see if Student Council needs further help with organising, shopping, decorating etc.
	February	Secondary Drama Production	The Secondary Drama Production has a couple of performances for the school community. The catering for the event is organised by the secondary section representatives. Get in touch with the production team and ask them for the dates of the performance. Make a shopping list of items needed. Shortly before the event discuss with the janitors the logistics for the event (tables, bins etc.) Send out e-mails to room parents and have them find volunteers for food donations, food/beverage sale etc.
Whole school	January until end of school year	Summer Fair	Help the Summer Fair Team to organise activities, decoration, finding sponsors and find enough volunteers for this social highlight of the year. Forward their letters/e-mails to your room parents and make sure they find enough volunteers in their class. The Summer Fair Team is headed by PCC.
	March	Staff Musical	The LIS staff puts on a great musical once a year. Parents organise the catering for this event. Get in touch with the production team and ask them for the dates of the performance. Make a shopping list of items needed. Shortly before the event discuss with the janitors the logistics for the event (tables, bins etc.). Send out e-mails to room parents and have them find volunteers for food donations, food/beverage sale etc.

*** Wish Tree:**

It has become a tradition at LIS to support the children's home in Dahlienstraße in Leipzig-Grünau – a home for severely handicapped children. The head of home provides the PCC with a list of items they would be happy to get as Christmas presents. Each item is found on a little paper roll on the Christmas tree in the entrance hall. So each family/student can pick a paper roll and buy the listed item. It should be wrapped up as a nice present and placed under the Christmas tree. Before Christmas the primary section representatives and PCC deliver the presents:

- Organise a Christmas tree. In the previous years we had a tree sponsored
- Decorate it with paper rolls.
- Collect the presents and have them delivered to the children's home.
- Ask PCC for details

Thank you for volunteering to be a room parent for your child's classroom!