

TOORAK PRIMARY SCHOOL: THE ROLE OF CLASS REPRESENTATIVE

Class reps make a priceless contribution to the wellbeing of our school community. Most people don't realise that school maintenance, upgrades and any extras (think air conditioning, new play equipment, iPads) also must be funded through parent and student fundraising efforts.

By being a rep, you get a chance to not only spend time with your child at school and see what the kids do without you between 9 and 3:30, but also to shape activities, get to know the wider community and support the teachers in their role. In short, you get to make the difference!

As a class rep, you communicate and organise. Though committing an hour a week may sound demanding, you will get a lot of help from the school and the parent community. If you are still interested, keep on reading!

The role of class reps is a voluntary one. One rep is required per class for all younger age levels, from Foundation to Year 4. For years 5 and 6, only one rep is needed across the board.

The role will (ideally) begin towards the end of Term 4 in each year, to give the reps time to maybe shadow outgoing ones or just have a good chat about the handover. You may want even want to organise a new class playdate in the holidays (much more important for younger grades).

What to expect

The below outlines the basics, but feel free to add and modify as required. Each and every class is different, and ongoing communication with the teachers and the parent groups on what and how needs to be done is important.

Teacher assistance	At the start of each term you may want to discuss with the teachers what type of assistance they need in the classroom. You may prepare a roster for class involvement and work out what form of communication will work best for your parent group – email, list on the classroom door, a combination... If a new family joins the class, it would be good to help them get to know the others and find their feet.
General communication	The school will give you a list of class parents with their contact details, which you can use to send out notices and requests for assistance. Talk with the teachers about upcoming events and notify parents in advance so that they can plan ahead and (ideally) think about if and how they can get involved. A calendar of key events for each year level across the year is published on the school website and also attached below.
Social engagement	It would be good to get the parents and kids together for a social event early in the term, as it really builds relationships. A simple bring-a-plate picnic in the park next to the school works really well for younger year groups, but bowling or something like that may work better for older grades, as the kids start walking to and from school by themselves. Mum and dads' pub nights (no kids!) are also always popular!
Parent involvement	Volunteers are always needed for tuck shop duty, library assistance and other school events such as swimming and basketball galas. This is always the most difficult class rep task, and leading by example can go a long way, if at all possible. Otherwise, a tap on the shoulder, a simple request, a few reminder emails can all help recruit parent helpers.
School council assistance	You will meet up with the school council and perhaps a sub-committee of your choice on a regular basis, to discuss upcoming events, fundraising activities and things that impact the school in general, and to feed upwards any parent concerns/suggestions you come across. The council will provide to you any communication that needs to be distributed to the class. Again, you can make this part of the role your own – if you have strengths or experience in marketing, or you know someone how does, you may want to join the events sub-committee or encourage them to do so.

Play on your strengths and on the strengths of the parents in your class – do you have a dancer in the group, who can organise a dance-themed get-together? Or an artist, who can help with the props for the musical?

To notify parents of events, the school uses a range of notices (via Compass, weekly emails, etc), which you don't need to resend, but may wish to do so as a reminder of upcoming events. An all-school assembly is held every Friday, and is also a good platform for making appeals for parent volunteers for upcoming activities.

In addition to the regular activities, like sport days and swimming galas, and camps that happen annually, there are some that need extra hands on deck. For example, the school has been organising musical productions every other year (in Term 3 2017, it was Peter Pan), and active parent support make a massive positive difference to how they run. In election years, when the school was nominated as one of the local polling stations, TPS run cake stalls, which have been enormously successful fundraising platforms.

Tuck shop, which runs regularly throughout the year, is also extremely popular. Volunteers for taking orders, counting money, and working in the kitchen on the day are always needed, though the tasks are simple. The school has some amazing parents who organise such events, but it takes effort to keep them running from year to year. The below table outlines some of the main events TPS organises and runs.

Year Level	
Foundation	Introduction to the school 'basics' Mothers' day stall Classroom help Fathers' day breakfast P-2 Swimming Fashion night
Year 1	Mothers' day stall Classroom help Fashion night Excursions P-2 Swimming
Year 2	Mothers' day stall Classroom help Fashion night Sleepover at school P-2 Swimming
Year 3	Mothers' day stall House Swimming House X-Country Classroom help Gala Days Interschool snow sports Camp Fashion night
Year 4	Mothers' day stall House Swimming Camp House X-Country Gala Days Interschool snow sports Fashion night
Year 5	Mothers' day stall House Swimming House X-Country Ski camp Gala Days Interschool snow sports Fashion night
Year 6	Mothers' day stall Camp House Swimming House X-Country Gala Days Interschool snow sports Fashion night

If you got this far, thank you for your interest and persistence. It won't always be fun and games, and there will be times when you will be frustrated by the break-down of communication channels and the lack of interest and effort from other parents. And every year has its challenges so this role keeps on evolving. But keep in mind that there are other kindred spirits in the school community who are willing to work towards what we all want – to keep the school an amazing place for all our children.

And remember that you are not alone – you can always ask other reps about their experiences, or approach the school office or a teacher for assistance if you are having trouble gathering support for an event. And there are always other parents who are willing to lend a hand.

We look forward to speaking to you more about the role and getting you on board! Please contact the school office on toorak.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au or see Flip Shelton, the Class Rep Co-ordinator for more information.