

THE MELROSE FAMILY ROOM

Member Handbook

355 Franklin Street

1st Floor

Melrose, MA 02176

www.melrosefamilyroom.org

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Melrose Family Room (MFR). Please read this handbook to understand what membership in this organization means and entails. If you have further questions after reading this handbook, please contact an MFR Officer (listed in the Board Members section of this handbook) or the entire board at board@melrosefamilyroom.org.

HISTORY AND OVERVIEW

The MFR was established in October 1988, as a gathering place for families of infants and young children through age six as a place to play, talk, discuss parenting concerns and get to know families from Melrose and the surrounding communities. We are a parent-run cooperative. Member support and involvement are *essential* to the continued success of the MFR.

For the first 35 years, our home was the Green Street Baptist Church, which ceased active operation in the summer of 2024. As of January 2025 we are located at the Melrose Highlands Congregational Church at 355 Franklin Street in Melrose. We are not church-affiliated but we rent space from the church at a reasonable rate.

There are assorted toys, equipment, games, arts & crafts activities, and snacks in the room. We organize many special events, including seasonal parties, outings for the entire family, parent/caregiver meet-ups, and special programs for children.

MEMBERSHIP

MFR Cooperative: The Melrose Family Room is a cooperative organization and relies on each and every family to participate and be involved. **All members are required to fulfill one yearly volunteer requirement to be completed by May 1 AND one quarterly toy cleaning. Membership renewal is contingent on completing these two requirements.** For more information, please refer to the "Member/Caregiver Responsibilities" section of this handbook.

Membership: A member family may use the room as many times as they wish per month, rent the room for parties/events and attend room events. Every member family has both volunteer and room maintenance requirements.

Dues: Membership dues start at \$285, and are collected annually. Membership season runs from September 1 to August 31.

Joining the MFR: Anyone interested in becoming a Member is welcome to join the wait list [located on our website](#). Families on the waitlist will have an opportunity to visit the room either as a guest of a current member and/or during our annual open house.

Membership Liability Waiver/Membership Agreement: Membership fees and completed registration information should be submitted through our website. A **liability waiver + membership agreement** (required) and **photo release form** (optional) must be signed before you begin using the room; receiving a key code to the building is contingent upon a signed liability waiver. A copy of each form can be found at the end of this handbook for your reference. New members will sign electronic waivers or hard copies provided at the New Member Orientation held in August/September.

MEMBER/CAREGIVER RESPONSIBILITIES

MFR Member Requirements

Maintenance of the room. As a cooperative, we are dependent on all members maintaining the cleanliness of the room after each use. There is no custodial staff service to the room. It is the responsibility of each Member/Caregiver to help keep the room as clean and as germ-free as possible, especially during the busy winter season. Before you leave the room, you are expected to:

- ✓ Remove all trash that you have generated (including bathroom trash) when you leave; bagged trash can be left in the trash cans labeled MFR in the stairwell just past the bathroom. If those cans are full, please take the trash with you.
- ✓ Wipe all the tables
- ✓ Sweep floors as needed
- ✓ Put away toys
- ✓ Tidy up after snacks and craft projects
- ✓ Ensure that the room is maintained in a pleasant condition for use by all.

Toy Cleaning. We do four in-depth toy cleanings per year. **Each member family is required to participate in one in-depth toy cleaning.** Sign-up sheets and/or an email will be sent to all members asking for participation in the cleaning.

Volunteer. **Each member family is required to fulfill one volunteer opportunity by May 1.** The volunteer requirement can be fulfilled by helping with any event organized by the room including seasonal parties or fundraisers, or assisting with room maintenance. Alternatively, it can be another volunteer opportunity suggested by the Member.

Membership renewal is contingent on completing the volunteer requirement and quarterly toy cleaning.

Attend New Member Orientation. Each new member is required to attend the New Member Orientation at the beginning of the membership cycle. This is a fantastic opportunity to meet other room Members, ask any questions that you may have

about the room, and familiarize yourself with the MFR in general. After attending the orientation, you will receive your access code for the exterior door of the church.

Initiate Change if Needed. If you think that something needs doing or changing, feel free to initiate it or email the appropriate Officer.

Basic Room Rules

- **No Child is to be Left Unattended in the Room.** Parents or Caregivers are responsible for their child(ren)'s behavior and safety. Please stay close to your child(ren) while using the MFR.
- **No Food/Drink or Crafts on Carpets or play area.** All food, beverages, play dough, and arts & crafts activities must be kept at the snack/activity tables located in the front of the room.
- **No Projector Use.** Use of the movie projector and pull-down screen is limited to Melrose Family Room events and private room reservations only. Use of the projector is prohibited during standard room hours.
- **No Children in Cabinets.** The refrigerator, food pantry cabinets and storage areas are for grown-ups only.
- **Clean Room Before You Leave.** When you leave the room for the day, leave it—and the bathroom—clean and neat.
 - Turn the lights off and close the windows.
 - Take out any trash that you or our guests have generated. Also be sure to check the bathroom trash can. You can put trash bags in the trash barrels in the stairwell just past the bathroom. Diapers are carry-in, carry-out and cannot be left in the building.
 - Sweep the floor, vacuum up any crumbs, and wipe down tables if necessary.
- **Be Respectful.** Please take care of the books, toys, walls, and furniture. The toys are available for everyone's use – please encourage sharing and taking turns.

- **Throw Away Broken Toys.** If you see a broken toy or one with parts that could cause a choking hazard, please throw it away.
- **No Shoes.** Please remove your shoes and your child's shoes upon entering the room. This helps keep the floor and the carpeted area clean. Grippy socks are recommended for the floor areas.
- **No Throwing or Dropping Toys from the Loft Play Structure.**
- **No Food Containing Nuts.** Members are welcome to bring their own nut-free food and snacks to the room. There are also snacks available in the adult cabinets in the room or lobby.
- **No Playing in Hallways or Church.** We are only insured for our room. Please do not let your child play in the hallway or other church rooms. Additionally, other people rent space in the church, and voices carry in the hallway, so encourage your children to use indoor voices in the hallway.

Guidelines for Caregivers and Children

The MFR guidelines are evolving and depend upon the active involvement of all Members/Caregivers. We hope that questions will be asked, issues addressed, and concerns voiced. We respect the fact that each of us has our own parenting style, and that our children are individuals requiring different kinds of help. Our guidelines are intended to help us support each other as parents/caregivers and to make coming to the MFR an enjoyable experience for all of us.

- We expect caregivers to intervene with any child who is in danger of hurting him/herself or others. We give each other permission to gently reinforce the "Basic Rules" listed above with any child if the parent/caregiver is not nearby.
- We have tried to keep the rules for children clear and minimal. There are behaviors which caregivers feel differently about or which may be acceptable under some circumstances but not others (i.e., jumping or climbing on furniture, running or screaming, to name a few). We leave these to the discretion of each parent/caregiver.
- A common occurrence with children this age is competing over toys. Toddlers

and preschoolers cannot be expected to "share" in the sense of playing with toys together harmoniously for long periods of time. Therefore, we suggest: 1) offering another toy 2) supervising taking turns. You can count, use a timer or simply say, "Sam, when Sue is done, it will be your turn" 3) allowing older children to do the problem solving ("We have two kids and one toy. What should we do?").

Please encourage your child to put toys back, and to help clean up at the end of each visit. As we try to deal with our children in positive and effective ways, let's also try to keep the lines of communication open among us as members of the cooperative. If at any time you have a grievance about something that occurred at the MFR, you can also choose to speak *confidentially* with the President, who will work with you to rectify the situation.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Guests

Members and Caregivers may bring a guest family to the room but can bring no more than **one guest family at a time**. We ask that Members and Caregivers **not bring the same family more than twice**. If a family comes more than twice they must be Members of the MFR. Events hosted by the MFR are typically for members only, although exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Board.

Health Policy

Whenever you or your child has experienced any of the following symptoms within the previous 24-hour period, the Melrose Family Room asks that you remain home for the health and safety of other families who use the Melrose Family Room:

1. Fever
2. Diarrhea: Two or more instances close together may be assumed to be contagious unless determined otherwise by a doctor
3. Vomiting
4. Pronounced or persistent coughing
5. A contagious condition of any kind, including but not limited to strep, flu, respiratory infection, conjunctivitis, infectious rash, hepatitis, chickenpox, measles, mumps, scabies, lice, etc
6. Continuous greenish running mucus from the nose

Anyone being treated with antibiotics for any condition should be treated for a minimum of 24 hours before coming to the Melrose Family Room.

Hours

The room is officially open seven days a week, Sunday through Saturday from 8:00 am to 8:00 pm year-round. There are a few days that MFR will be closed due to church events - these will be noted on the MFR events page and a reminder will be sent out by the Board. *Please also* check the "Events" page on the website to avoid walking in during a Member's private rental of the room. Once a year, typically in August, the MFR may be closed for a full week in order to perform necessary maintenance such as professional floor cleaning, painting, etc.

Snacks and Drinks

The MFR will provide water and healthy snacks for our membership. Members/Caregivers and their guests should feel free to enjoy the snacks provided when they visit the room. The room will be stocked with items such as water, pretzels, goldfish, and dried fruit. You may bring an alternative snack for your visit if you wish, but please remember we are **nut free** and encourage healthy eating habits.

*Note: Snacks provided are for members and guests during individual visits to the MFR. **Snacks are not intended to be used for private party/room rentals.**

MFR Board

The MFR has a Board of Officers that includes a President, Vice-President, Communications Coordinator, Treasurer, Member/Volunteer Coordinator, Tech Coordinator, Supplies and Maintenance Coordinator, two Events Coordinators, and two Fundraising Coordinators. The list of current Officers and their contact information can be found on the MFR website under "About Us."

The Board holds monthly meetings to discuss plans, policy decisions and suggestions, concerns and ideas. Meetings are usually held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm.

All Officers are voluntary positions, serving a term of one year, and carry a free membership. Please consider helping run the room by becoming an Officer.

Board member emails:

President: president@melrosefamilyroom.org

Vice President: vicepresident@melrosefamilyroom.org

Treasurer: treasurer@melrosefamilyroom.org

Communications Coordinator: secretary@melrosefamilyroom.org

Tech Coordinator: tech@melrosefamilyroom.org

Volunteer Coordinator: volunteer@melrosefamilyroom.org

Maintenance and Supplies Coordinator: maintenance@melrosefamilyroom.org

Member/Volunteer Coordinator: newmembers@melrosefamilyroom.org

Events Coordinators: events@melrosefamilyroom.org

Fundraising Coordinators: fundraising@melrosefamilyroom.org

ROOM RENTAL GUIDELINES

Current MFR Members may rent the MFR for special events, for the purpose of parties including the member's family and friends.

If you wish to rent the room for any other purpose (i.e., Board meeting of another organization, event with non-members, private parties not directly for a MFR member) you will require approval from the current MFR President and Board. Please keep in mind that the toys and the arrangement of the Room are intended for children age six and under.

Reserving the MFR

The MFR is available for rental 4 times per month and rentals will open in September for the full membership year. Available slots:

- [1 slot] Friday evening (4 pm - 7 pm)
- [2 slots] Saturday, either morning (9 am - 12 pm) or afternoon (2 pm - 5 pm)
- [1 slot] Sunday afternoon (2 pm - 5 pm)

Please allow adequate time during these three hours for set-up and cleanup. Please check the "Events" page of our website to see if your desired day is available for rental. To book a room rental, log into our website at www.melrosefamilyroom.org and click on "Room Rental" under the "Members Only" item on the main navbar.

Room rentals must be requested at least two weeks in advance.

Room Rental Fee

The fee for a three-hour period is \$150. Once you have submitted a room rental request, you will receive an invoice via email. Full payment is due when you make your reservation.

Cancellations

There is a two-week cancellation policy, except in the case of a true emergency (e.g., snowstorm, sick birthday child, etc.). Please email the MFR Events Coordinators at events@melrosefamilyroom.org as soon as possible if you need to cancel.

Supplies, Snacks, and Alcohol (no alcohol permitted)

All supplies (including paper goods, trash bags, snacks, craft supplies, etc.) are to be provided by the MFR Member hosting the event. **Do not use MFR snacks or drink MFR beverages during the party**, as these are provided for Members' consumption during normal room hours. Also, please note that the MFR is a **nut-free environment** and alcohol is not permitted during room rentals..

Clean-up

The MFR Member requesting the room rental is **completely responsible** for the condition of the room following the event. You are expected to leave the room neat and clean after the event. Please follow all Basic Room Rules, including:

1. Sweep and sponge mop the tile floor, clean counter surfaces and tabletops.
2. Vacuum the carpet. There is a vacuum cleaner in the supply closet in the hallway to the bathroom.
3. Clean the bathroom.
4. If anything is damaged, we ask that you replace it.
5. Remove all trash and take any leftover food and beverages, with you when you leave. Do NOT leave any partially eaten "goodies" in the refrigerator or freezer. Although your intentions may be good, the refrigerator is small, and what looks delicious on Saturday is not quite so appealing on Monday.
6. Remove any decorations/balloons from the room, hallway, stairwell, ceiling, etc.

Supervision and Behavior

The MFR Member requesting the room rental is fully responsible for the behavior of the people attending the event. Since other people use this building, keep noise levels reasonable, and do not allow children to leave the room unsupervised or to run through the halls.

Melrose Family Room Liability Waiver/Membership Agreement

I understand that the Melrose Family Room is a co-operative playroom, which depends on member participation and cooperation to remain successful. In agreeing to the membership, I am agreeing to the following:

- I waive all claims that I may have against the Melrose Family Room Inc, its officers, directors, members, volunteers, employees, agents and sponsors, or its executors, administrators, heirs, successors or assigns (the organizers), and release them from all claims for death, injury or damage arising out of my participation in their club, their event and its related activities, together with any costs, including legal fees.
- I agree to indemnify and keep indemnified the organizers against damage arising out of my participation in the events and its related activities.
- I agree to comply with all the rules, regulations, and instructions of the organizers.
- In the event of injury or illness during participation, I consent to receive medical treatment, which may be deemed advisable by the organizers.
- I acknowledge that I have sole responsibility for my personal possessions and equipment during all the events and activities.
- I agree to have my personal details recorded and used by the Melrose Family Room and related parties for further communications of future related events.
- I accept full responsibility for the care and safety of my child/children (and any children under my care) while at the Melrose Family Room or any event sponsored or organized by the Melrose Family Room.

- I agree to communicate any rules of the family room to any caretakers who are taking my children to the room.
- I will complete my volunteer requirement by the MFR Board-mandated deadline and attend my quarterly toy cleaning. I understand that membership renewal is contingent on completing these two requirements.
- I will be responsible for cleaning the room prior to leaving including picking up toys, cleaning tables, and sweeping the floor.
- The MFR is a carry-in, carry-out play space. I will take out all trash generated and communicate with others still remaining in the room to ensure that bathroom trash is removed.
- I agree I will take all diapers with me when I leave the room.
- I understand the Melrose Family Room is a nut-free environment.

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

By signing and printing your name, you are agreeing on behalf of yourself, your family, caregivers, and other guests.

Photography, Videography and Social Media Release

As a member of the Melrose Family Room, from time-to-time photos or video may be taken of you and your family while engaging in different MFR events or activities. In this regard, we seek your consent for the publishing or use of photos in which you, your family, caregivers, or guests may be included.

The photos will be used for in-room bulletin boards, the MFR website, promotion, and/or other MFR Board-sanctioned social media platforms.

Should you decide to revoke your authorization at a later date, you may do so by notifying the MFR Board at board@melrosefamilyroom.org and submitting your request in writing via an updated Photography, Videography and Social Media Release form with the Opt-Out section signed.

For protection of the privacy of the child(ren), we guarantee that names will not be included.

By signing below, I hereby grant and authorize the use of my family's photos for the purposes listed above.

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

Photography, Videography and Social Media Release OPT-OUT

By signing below, I choose to opt-out of the Photography, Videography and Social Media Release and DO NOT AUTHORIZE the use of my family's photos for the purposes listed above.

Signed: _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____