



Avvai Tamil Center

Parent Handbook

Policies and Operating Procedures

Revision 1.1

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Our Vision and Mission

Avvai Tamil Center (ATC) is a charitable, non-profit, and secular organization. ATC's vision is to cultivate interest in Tamil language, literature, and culture for those living in the United States primarily through teaching the Tamil language. The mission commences in the North Dallas area, with a focus to teach the Tamil language to children ranging from age five and above. Pursuant to this objective, ATC may also organize educational programs, cultural events and social activities to provide the students with an opportunity to apply the language skills obtained through their coursework.

Communication

Good communication is of the utmost importance. When a new family is accepted into our program, we like to be sure that we can share openly about any concerns or questions that may arise. It is important that there is a similar child care philosophy between the center and the parents. We welcome questions, feedback, or discussions of any kind that are oriented towards a positive outcome for the children. Sensitive issues will be discussed in private at a mutually beneficial time.

All communications will be handled by either the class teacher or Principal. Contact details will be provided to parents after registration and updated as needed.

Use our primary phone and email contacts to reach the school for general enquiry or feedback. You may contact your class teacher through the provided email ID or phone for all class related communications.

Email: info@avvaitamil.org

Phone: (214) 901-7735

Parent's role as a Member of the non-profit organization

Each Parent automatically becomes a proud Member of this non-profit organization. As a Member, you are signing up to honor and uphold ATC's vision and become part of executing our mission. Please familiarize yourself with the organizations current goals, policies, procedures and service needs by reading this handbook carefully, understanding class proceedings through teacher's class updates, and keeping up with communication from board members. Our website is frequently updated with upcoming events, important dates, and other organizational updates.

ATC is run by volunteers and you will have many opportunities to extend your service hours. We encourage you to take an active role in your child's learning in and out of the structured class room environment. Participate in Parent Teacher meetings, support elected board members in achieving the goals they have signed up for their term period, assist in class room activities, volunteer to organize ATC's various events, network within the community and strengthen our mutual values.

Parents & Teachers - Partners in Education

Both parents and teachers are working towards the same goal - the best possible education for our children. When the two combine forces, the results are unbeatable. Children feel a sense of pride when they know their parents are visible at the school and are taking an interest in their education. Here are some areas of cooperation that are very important:

1. Make sure that your child attends school *regularly and on time*.
2. Support the school in its efforts to maintain proper discipline.
3. Stay in tune with what your child is learning. Ask him or her questions about the school day.
4. Let the school know of any problems outside of school that could affect his or her day in school.
5. Stay in touch with the classroom teacher, attend the conferences, or email if you have questions, schedule a visit to the classroom. Be involved!

School Starts & Ends

Standard school timing is Sundays 2pm to 4pm. During the beginning of the academic year, we might run staggered start and end timing to accommodate ease of pick-up and drop-off. Please check the website or stay tuned to school communications for details.

ATC follows Frisco ISD calendar. However, since the classes are on Sundays, long weekend schedules may not always align with Frisco ISD calendar. Please refer to the school calendar in the website for updated schedule.

Attendance/Tardiness/Leaving School Early

Regular and prompt attendance is necessary for a student to maintain satisfactory progress. Excessive absences and tardiness from school are unfavorable to the educational process. Please limit your child's absences to scheduled vacations. It will certainly help their academic achievements. Parents should plan vacations and trips which do not conflict with the school's instructional calendar.

When students arrive late or must leave early, they miss valuable information. Late arrivals and early dismissals can be very disruptive to other students and to the teacher. When possible, please try to schedule appointments so they do not conflict with school hours.

Sicknesses, severe illness, exposure to a contagious disease, religious holidays or extremely inclement weather are considered legitimate excuses for absences or tardiness. If a student is to be absent, parents are urged to inform the school or their class teacher in advance.

When a child is absent from class, it is his/her responsibility to find out what the class work and/or homework was and arrange to do it.

Sick Child Policy

Please do not send a child to school with a fever of 100F or greater; a combination of symptoms such as lethargy, poor eating, lack of availability for learning, glassy eyes, pallor, decreased activity, or unusual behavior/responses (can indicate illness even without the presence of a fever); diarrhea or vomiting; pink eye; untreated head lice; persistent coughing or thick nasal drainage; difficulty breathing from Asthma; severe head injury with disorientation, vomiting, dizziness and/or headache; or any other illness as directed by a physician. Children sent to school with these or similar conditions will be sent home.

Students who have been ill and are returning to school should be: free of symptoms listed above; back to their normal behavior and energy level; free of fever, diarrhea or vomiting for 24 hours; treated for strep throat or pink eye (on antibiotics for at least a 24 hours period before returning to school).

Transfers

Parents of students withdrawing from school should contact the office at least two weeks prior to the last day of attendance. This allows time for completion of records, return of books, and completion of the transfer form. Parents may pick up the transfer form from the Director on the student's last day or it may be sent home with the student upon request. All accounts with the school should be settled prior to the transfer.

Registration and contact information

Parents need to register their child each year even if they are continuing from previous year. They need to provide primary and secondary contact information as part of the registration. These contact information are critical for both emergency contact and for regular communication from the class teacher and the school.

Change of address

If there is any change in student's home address, telephone number and email ID, inform the school immediately.

Liability Terms

Parents will read and agree to the Liability policy when they register their child. Parents are responsible for any injuries to their child while attending Tamil school classes as a student or participating in any event or function conducted by ATC. Parents are also responsible for any medical expenses, charges or other cost which may be incurred as a result of their child's participation in Tamil school as well they will be responsible for any claims made by third parties, which may result from or be caused by the child's actions while participating in this activity.

Annual Fees and Donations

ATC is run by volunteers. Our operation does need financial support to pay for the school premise, books and other materials. We also need fund to run the events that brings all parents together, provide platform for our children to show their skills, and to contribute to the larger community in line with our mission.

To help execute our mission and be in a solid financial position to support following academic years, we ask parents for a nominal annual fees and any other financial donation they can contribute. Annual fee is subject to change for a new academic year.

We also encourage parents and volunteers to support in our effort to get sponsorship that can further help expand on our mission, honor children for their contribution, recognize volunteers and to contribute more to our community.

Financial Transparency

As a 501(3)(c) organization, we publish the financial details to our members. Annual Day is a good place to learn the highlight of our financial record. Our tax filings are public record if you are interested in getting more details.

No Solicitation or non-ATC commercial transaction

We value the relationship between the members and want to keep it strictly to the intended purpose. Solicitation of any kind not related to ATC's mission and vision as approved by board is not permitted. Commercial transaction of any kind not approved and organized by ATC board is not permitted.

Any and all communication to parents must come from board, teachers or principals with specific assignment. Parent to parent communication through ATC email IDs should be avoided to minimize misunderstandings. Please address all your feedback to the Teacher, Principal or Board and not directly at a parent.

Conferences with Teacher

Parent Conferences are scheduled twice during the school year. They may also take place at any other time it appears that a student is having difficulty or if you have a concern. Informal conferences may be arranged at any time during the school year by contacting your child's teacher for an appointment.

Keeping communication open between parents and school can only enhance the student's education. It is extremely important that parents are kept informed and support the school in its actions.

Refer to the communication from board, principals, teachers and/or website for PTA meeting dates and timing.

Inclement Weather/School Closing/Make-up Schedule

In the interest of student safety, the School Board are consulted prior to making a decision to close, delay, or dismiss schools early due to inclement weather. Parents will be notified via phone and/or e-mail about school delays or cancellations. An official notice will also be posted on the homepage of the school's website.

Data Privacy

ATC obtains and uses certain information about each student to plan the best educational programs. Access to such information by third parties is limited and controlled in accordance with legal rights of Data Privacy. During the School year we like to publicize or display student news that may include names and photos of student(s). Please contact the Director if you do not want the photographs of your child displayed. We will make all possible attempts to accommodate your request.

Volunteering Opportunities

There are many classroom and other volunteer opportunities available for Parents. We value the passion for Tamil and Tamil culture parents can bring to the class rooms. We also look to our parents for their organizational expertise to help take an active role in many school events. Volunteers are always welcome and we appreciate the time, energy and expertise they share.

If you are interested, express your interest in the registration form when you register your child, be on the lookout for specific communications asking for volunteers. We encourage you to reach out to the board, principal and/or class teacher if you are able to assist in their class room.

Teaching

All our teachers are volunteers. We are always in need of teachers, substitute teachers, class room parents. Please connect with the Principal if you have an interest to be part of this most important service.

High school students

As a registered 501(3)(c) organization, ATC can recognize and validate service hours extended by High school students which can count towards their required school service hours. Please contact principals or board members if you are able to extend your service hours.

Classroom Special Events

We encourage our teachers to be creative in making the learning experience enriching and easy. They are required to cover the necessary syllabus following the assigned text books through the trimester sessions.

Cultural / Religious Events: ATC is a secular organization. Teachers may choose to engage children in specific projects related to an event of significance to US or Tamil culture. Religious events need to be those that are recognized as national holiday in US or in Tamil Nadu to make sure the context is based on being part of the overall culture and not to introduce religious bias.

Birthdays: We do not encourage parents to send any treats on their child's birthdays. If you are interested, you can let the teacher know of your child's birthday and the teacher will try to recognize it in the class room.

ATC School Events

ATC organizes couple of events in a year to extend an opportunity for parents, children and volunteers to get to know each other better. These are optional events for parents. Check the website calendar or watch for email communications for details of these events.

These events are organized by volunteers and is a great opportunity for parents to join the organizing committee and share their experience.

ATC Annual Day is conducted at the end of the academic year. We strive to provide an opportunity for every children to express their skill on stage. Please coordinate and cooperate with class teachers and event organizers to make the best use of this opportunity.

ATC Tamil Isai Vizha

As part of the mission, ATC is committed to investing in Tamil Isai patronage. An annual Tamil Isai Vizha is part of our effort to promote Tamil Isai and encourage ATC students and other children to learn and practice the language through their interest in music. ATC board may plan other activities to promote Tamil Isai and to position Avvai as a patron of Tamil Isai.

Every ATC parent signing up to our mission becomes a patron of Tamil Isai and are encouraged to support and contribute towards promoting Tamil Isai.

Tamil Isai: ATC defines Tamil Isai as rendering Tamil songs through semi-classical or folks based renditions that invoke a sense of pride in the language and culture to the listeners.

Money & Valuables

Please make sure that your child does not come to school with large amounts of money or expensive items. We cannot be responsible for broken, stolen or misplaced items brought from home.

Placement Criteria

ATC's intent is to focus on accommodating students in a grade (Nilai) based on their ability to effectively learn and complete assigned class work and be prepared to take on next level the following academic year.

Students will be placed in the appropriate grade level, classroom setting or program based on the following:

- Teacher or Board member's assessment
- Educational records provided by another institution (if applicable)
- Social/emotional/physical needs of student
- Parents commitment to provide necessary coaching
- Classroom sizes or student/teacher ratio

In addition, placement decisions shall be made without regard to sex, race, religion, creed, age, handicap or nature of origin.

ATC board reserves the right to the final decision for class assignment.

Textbooks

The school provides textbooks for students to use during the school year. The school does not sell or buy used textbooks. Students are expected to take care for the books they receive.

Since the books are ordered in the early part of the academic year, it may not be possible for ATC to provide replacement or additional books middle of the year.

Homework

Homework is given for the following reasons:

- To reinforce lessons
- To reinforce skills
- To complete assignments not finished during class time
- To work on independent assignments such as research or construction projects restricted by class time or availability of references
- To encourage independent reading

Encourage your child to do homework on time, maintain a routine work time, discuss about topics given, and help them when they struggle. Provide a quiet place and a consistent time to do homework. Support your child in homework efforts but refrain from doing the homework.

Semester Exam

There will be three formal semester exams during a school year. Exams will help evaluate student's ability to read, write, speak, listen and understand Tamil Language.

Exams cover the syllabus covered in the class. Encourage your child to learn well and practice each week's lesson to avoid last minute exam pressure. Exams and Grades are one aspect of how prepared they are to move to next level. Our strong recommendation is to regularly practice the language skills at home which will be the best way to help your child move up to acquiring more skills in the next level.

Grading

ATC follows American Tamil Academy (ATA) syllabus and grading guidelines.

Grading is based on

- School attendance
- Home works
- Three semester exams

Refer to website for details on current grading system.

Grading is only one measure of how well a student absorbed the lessons taught throughout the academic year. A particular grade is by no means qualifies or disqualifies a student to next level.

Promotion/Retention Criteria

Students will be promoted or retained based on their Grade and the Placement criteria.

Course Completion & Graduation Certificate

ATC provides a course completion certificate for students who have completed the academic year.

Dress Code

Students are expected to dress in a way that shows respect for themselves and others in the school. Dress is regulated when it interferes with health and safety, or it disrupts the learning process or orderly operation of the school. Students may be asked to change out of any clothing/hats considered inappropriate, or distracting.

Handling a Special Child

Children with delayed skills or other disabilities might be provided with individualized education programs. Teachers along with parents work together to develop a specialized learning plan — the individualized education program (IEP) — to help children succeed in school. The IEP describes the goals

the team sets for a child during the school year, as well as any special support needed to help achieve them. It is the responsibility of the parents to diagnose, identify and seek professional help for any learning challenges their child may have. This information need to be shared with the corresponding teachers so that necessary help can be provided for Tamil learning. If needed at least one parent must present during the class hours, as all the teachers are volunteers, didn't have specific skills or training to handle a special child.

****PLEASE DISCUSS THE FOLLOWING RULES WITH YOUR CHILD****

1. When moving through the building, students should walk in a quiet and orderly manner.
2. When problems between students arise, settle them without fighting or cursing.
3. Keep noise to a minimum. Loud voices and other noises are particularly distracting to others.
4. Use proper and respectful language at all times.
5. Respect the authority of all adults in the building
6. Respect the building, equipment and materials given to you.
7. Behavior at all times should contribute to learning.
8. Chewing gum is not allowed in school or on school grounds.
9. Students are to go directly to their classroom upon arrival at school.
10. Toy weapons, knives and other dangerous items are not allowed at school.
11. Video or any electronic games are not allowed at school.
12. Students should not bring any valuable items, cash etc., to school.
13. No student is allowed to leave the school grounds without the permission of the teachers and the knowledge of a parent.
14. No behavior that is dangerous or disruptive to others is allowed.

Tips for a Successful School Year

- Talk to your child's teacher frequently. Together you are a team for your child's academic success.
- Model and reinforce appropriate behavior.
- Listen to your child and encourage your child to talk about new experiences.
- Explain the meaning of new words to your child.
- Encourage your child to succeed by encouraging his/her best work, but do not expect more than your child is capable of doing.
- Involve your child with reading and writing activities.
- Write your child's name on all personal items brought to school such as coat, hat, gloves, boots, sweater, snack box, etc.
- Refrain from sending to school a sick child or one who has had a fever within the past 24 hours. This precaution will help preserve the health of other children.
- Please telephone or email the school when your child will be absent.
- Dress your child according to the weather.

- Provide the teacher with a correct telephone number where parents or a family friend may be reached during the school day, in case of an emergency.