

PARENT - STUDENT HANDBOOK 2016 - 2017



1

Austin Tamil School
Jan 18, 2017

Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to another exciting year at Austin Tamil School (ATS)! We look forward to see the new students as well as our returning students!

This Parent/Student Handbook provides basic information about the policies, practices and procedures of ATS. Any changes will be communicated during the course of the year and updated on our website. In order that things go smoothly this school year, we encourage you to familiarize yourself with all of our policies, procedures and expectations. We believe in an open door policy at ATS. Whenever you have questions, concerns or improvement ideas, please don't hesitate to contact ATS.

Our goal at ATS is to provide our students a positive and participative learning experience. This is possible only with the strong support of parents/guardians. We ask you to collaborate with our teachers and stay closely involved with your children's Tamil education so that they can get maximum benefit from our classes.

Safety of our students is very important to us. We urge all parents to work with school administrators and follow safety practices while dropping off and picking up students.

ATS is a non-profit organization run entirely by dedicated volunteers. We request everyone's participation in developing and sustaining our school for generations to come.

Best wishes to all of our students for another successful school year! Thanks for your support as we learn together!

Sincerely,

Anbu Krishnaswamy
Principal, Austin Tamil School

MISSION, VISION, MOTTO	4
Mission	4
Vision	4
Motto	4
ATS-ORGANIZATION	4
Non-Discriminatory Policy	4
Statement of Diversity	4
Standards of Conduct	4
Austin Tamil School Board	5
Contacts	5
ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE	6
Roles and Contacts	6
ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION	7
Admission Policy	7
Registration and Fees	7
Placement Criteria for New Student Candidates	7
Mid-year Admissions	8
SCHOOL OPERATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES	8
Assessment and Grading	8
Promotion / Retention Criteria	8
Attendance/Tardiness/Leaving School Early	9
Parent – Teacher Conferences	9
THE CURRICULUM	9
Course & Curriculum Details	9
Health	10
Illness	10
Emergency Medical Care	10
Medication	10
Safety	11
Visitor/Parents	11
Safe Arrivals and Departure	11
Campus Emergency Operations Plans	11
Emergency Drills and Evacuation Procedures	11
Inclement Weather	12
SCHOOL GOVERNANCE	12
Volunteer / Family Partnership	12
Volunteerism in school & classrooms	12
Parent Responsibilities	13
PRIVACY ACCESS TO RECORD POLICY	13

PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	14
RESPONSIBILITY AND PERMISSION SLIP- FIELD TRIPS, TRANSPORTATION	14
DROP OFF AND PICK UP	15
STUDENT IDENTIFICATION AND INFORMATION PRIVACY RELEASE	15

1. MISSION, VISION, MOTTO

1.1. Mission

The mission of Austin Tamil School is to provide a fun and interactive learning experience to the kids of Tamil community in Austin to sufficiently learn Tamil language to be able to practically understand, speak, read, and write Tamil.

1.2. Vision

Our vision is to become a leader in offering Tamil language learning opportunities to children in the central Texas area through high-quality courses, innovative teaching techniques and creative learning methods. We envision the recognition of Tamil as a credit course in American school and college systems leading to rich cross-cultural experiences.

1.3. Motto

Collectively Creating Success in Learning Tamil

2. ATS-ORGANIZATION

Austin Tamil School is abbreviated as ATS.

2.1. Non-Discriminatory Policy

The Austin Tamil School (ATS) admits students of any race, color, national origin, and ethnic origin to all the classes, privileges, programs, and activities available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, or ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admission policies, and other school-administered programs. This policy is affirmatively communicated by disclosure on the School's website and in its brochures.

2.2. Statement of Diversity

ATS is committed to

- Supporting diversity and openness in Tamil Language learning
- Providing excellence in Tamil teaching services to people in the greater Houston area without discrimination on the basis of religion, race, mother tongue, caste, country of origin, etc.

2.3. Standards of Conduct

The Board and teachers of the Schools are committed to providing a safe and healthy learning environment for all students. ATS Teachers and students are committed to high standards of excellence and personal responsibility.

The board meets periodically to review the operations of ATS and also to plan for future activities. The board also monitors the school's activities to ensure that their activities and curriculum are in alignment with the ATS mission and vision.

2.4. Austin Tamil School Board

Austin Tamil School Board consists of the following members.

1. Anbu Krishnaswamy
2. Mahen Nagarajan
3. Dhinakar Karuppusamy
4. Suganthi Govind
5. Sankar Muthusamy
6. Bavan Vaitheeswaran
7. Selvi Shan

2.5. Contacts

Website : <http://www.austintamilschool.com/>

E-mail : austintamilschool@gmail.com.

Mailing address :

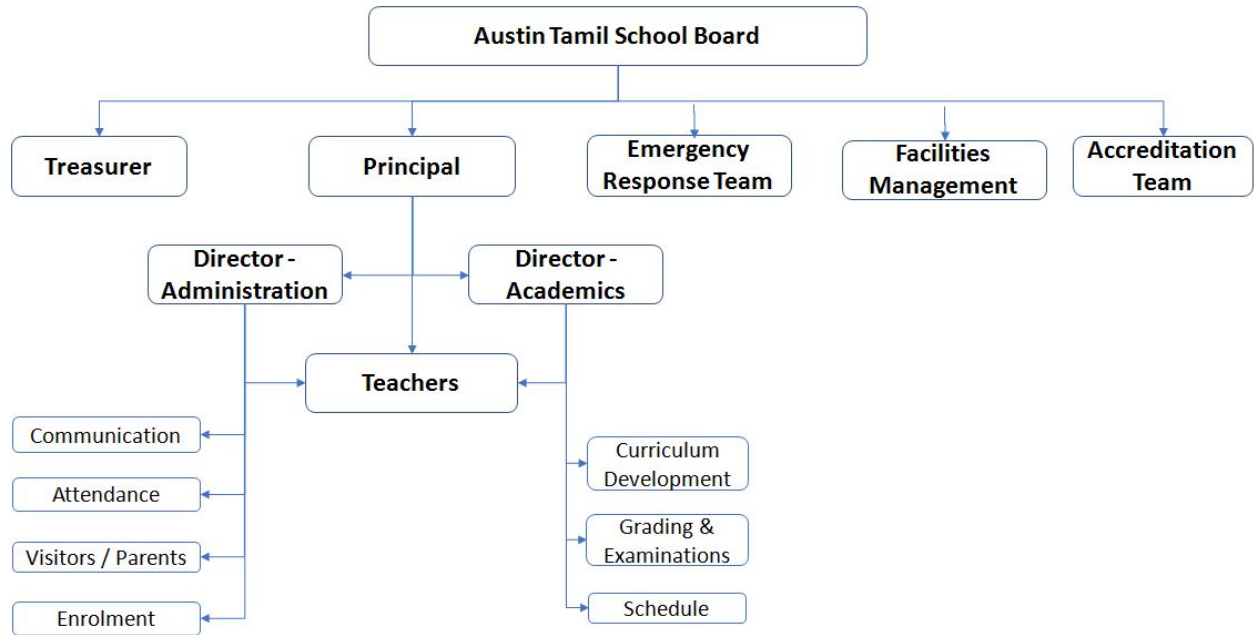
Austin Tamil School
PO Box 403
Round Rock TX 78680

School Address :

Our classes will be conducted at NYOS Charter School location.

NYOS Charter School
2301 N Lamar
Austin, TX- 78753

3. ORGANIZATION STRUCTURE



3.1. Roles and Contacts

Role	Name	Email
Principal	Anbu Krishnaswamy	anbu.austin.tx@gmail.com
Facility Management	Mahen Nagarajan	mahenaustin@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Dhinakar Karuppusamy	dhinaba@yahoo.com
Director – Academics	Suganthi Govind	suganthigovind@gmail.com
Director – Administrations	Sankar Muthusamy	tosankar@gmail.com
Emergency Response	P G Ramachandran	email2ram@gmail.com
Accreditation	Mohan Karuppusamy	mohank.vi@gmail.com

4. ADMISSION AND REGISTRATION

4.1. Admission Policy

ATS is open to all students who are interested in learning Tamil. The criteria for admission is at least 5 years old at the time of 1 st day of school. The student must be enrolled in KG or higher in a regular school at the time of admission. Children must have been potty trained. Maximum age to enroll is 14 years at the time of 1 st day of school.

4.2. Registration and Fees

Parents interested in enrolling their children at ATS must first complete an application and pay the required fees. Returning students are also required to complete a registration every year to ensure that contact information is updated the beginning of every academic year; ATS will communicate their registration details through emails, web site, and other avenues.

ATS will determine the school registration fees for each academic year based on the operational budget. The fee structure will be notified at the time of registration.

Registration fees are collected only to meet the facility rent, cost of maintenance and School books.

Every effort is made to keep the fees to a minimum whilst continuing to provide a high quality education program for our students.

Registration fees are due at the time of enrollment. Fees are non-refundable and non-Transferable.

4.3. Placement Criteria for New Student Candidates

Admission council consists of the Teachers and a Center Director will evaluate and decide the appropriate class placement for new student candidate.

The minimum age requirements for enrolment for various grades

1. Vaguppu 1 (Kindergarten) : 5 (Five) years as of 1 st class of the enrollment year and KG or higher in regular school
2. Vaguppu 2 : 6 (Six) years as of 1 st class of the enrollment year. Must have passed Vaguppu 1 level curriculum
3. Vaguppu 3 : 6 (Six) years as of 1 st class of the enrollment year. Must have passed Vaguppu 2 exams
4. Vaguppu 4 or higher : 7 (Seven) years as of 1 st class of the enrollment year. Must have passed the previous level curriculum

If a student in any level has difficulties in following teacher's instructions, they will be given a chance to attend the lower levels in consultation with the student and parents. If any student does not behave well in the class, the parent will be consulted and continual disciplinary issues may lead to the admission to be terminated.

For returning students, ATS adopts student promotion guidelines (please refer to Student Promotion).

4.4. Mid-year Admissions

Mid-year admissions are generally not encouraged. The only exception is transfer from other Tamil schools, in which case, an assessment will be conducted to identify if the student qualifies for a given grade.

5. SCHOOL OPERATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

5.1. Assessment and Grading

The final grade for the academic year will be calculated based on classroom attendance, homework and the three assessments that happen over the year. The distribution of the various components towards the final grade is as follows for Vakuppu 1 to Vakuppu 7

- Weekly Classroom Attendance : 20 %
- Homework completion grade : 20 %
- First Term Assessment Score : 16.67%
- Second Term Assessment Score : 16.67%
- Third Term Assessment Score : 16.67%
- Project Score : 10%

Any changes to the rubrics will be communicated to the parent via class specific lesson plan by the teacher.

5.2. Promotion / Retention Criteria

Students will be promoted or retained based on:

- Teacher judgment and assessment based on students Performance in the class
- Academic success as determined by available test data and educational records
- Social/emotional/physical needs of the child
- Student attitude toward promotion/retention
- Attendance

5.3. 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 learning process. Please limit your child's absences to scheduled vacations. Parents should plan vacations and trips that 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 will count against student attendance. This is discouraged, as it can be very disruptive to other students as well as the teacher. Sickness, severe/contagious illness, religious holidays or extremely inclement weather are considered legitimate excuses for absences or tardiness. If due to any reason a student needs to be absent from school, parents are urged to inform the school in advance. When a child is absent from class, it is his/her responsibility to find out what the classwork/homework was and make arrangements with the teacher to complete missed assignments.

5.4. Parent – Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled thrice during the school year. They may also take place at other times such as when a student is having difficulty, or if you as a parent 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 the parents and the school can only enhance the student's education. It is extremely important that parents are kept informed and support the school in its actions. After each exam, it is mandatory for parents to attend the Parent-Teacher conferences.

6. THE CURRICULUM

6.1. Course & Curriculum Details

ATS is committed to provide comprehensive, well defined, age and grade appropriate curriculum to all students with high quality programs in key learning areas. The curriculum ensures students level of development to their potential, regardless of gender or level of ability. Based on student's age and their Tamil language proficiency, ATS has structured 8 levels of classes, Vaguppu 1 (Kindergarten) to Vaguppu 7 , for language learning.

Currently, ATS syllabus is derived from a national standardized curriculum. The Curriculum is designed by the people who live in the US, with appropriate focus on reading, writing, and conversation for the students who live in the US.

The ATS teaching material for each level is a combination of Textbooks, Workbooks, and other appropriate materials from various sources. Even though ATS follows a national curriculum, the individual class teacher may adapt a lesson plan to be more appropriate for the Tamil teaching.

The curriculum is reviewed on a regular basis by a group of experts to improve the quality of the program, teaching methods and techniques. The constant improvement of the syllabus is achieved by

- Constant self-evaluation
- Regular feedback from students and teachers

For detailed information about the curriculum and courses offered by ATS, please visit our website, www.austintamilschool.com. Also, the details will be shared with the parents at the start of the school year.

7. Health

7.1. Illness

The welfare and health of each child are of primary importance. If your child appears to be seriously ill, or infectious, we will call you or your emergency contact person. For the safety of the other children, your child must be picked up as soon as possible after notification.

You may not bring your child to school if he or she appears ill and/or displays the following Symptoms:

- Has had a fever within the past 24 hours
- Is vomiting or has intestinal agitation accompanied by diarrhea
- Shows evidence of a communicable disease
- Has an undiagnosed rash
- Has a discharge from eyes, ears or profuse colored nasal discharge
- Has an unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent dry cough or difficulty breathing

If your child shows any of the above symptoms at the school or any other symptoms enumerated in state of Texas regulations, you will be asked to pick him or her up immediately.

When a child has been exposed to or diagnosed with a communicable illness, parents are required to immediately notify the ATS administrative team. ATS administrative team member will notify all teachers, parents and guardians of children in their care and also the state Department of Health when necessary. To the best of the staff's ability, the child's confidentiality will be maintained.

7.2. Emergency Medical Care

In case of any medical emergency, we will call 911 immediately. Parents will be notified to proceed to the appropriate hospital emergency room. In case of non-life threatening injuries, we will notify the parents only. The student will be cared for and kept comfortable. It is the parent's responsibility to transport the student to the doctor.

ATS is not financially responsible for any medical procedures rendered. The school will not be responsible or liable for accidents caused due to violation of rules by the child. The school should be notified of any changes in phone numbers, addresses, or persons authorized to supervise the student in the absence of the parents.

7.3. Medication

School personnel will not administer any medication to students. Parents may, however, come to school to administer medication to their child if it cannot be administered before or after school hours. Parents of students with special needs or unique situations need to speak with the principal to decide on alternative medication attention.

7.4. Safety

A safe learning environment for all students is the top priority of ATS. Assessment, planning, development of procedures, training and evaluation are key components in ensuring that our students' education will not be disrupted by any safety concerns and that our staff are properly trained to respond to any emergency situation. ATS board, School administrative team, Teachers, support staff, and community work together to prevent, prepare for and respond to emergency situations.

7.4.1. Visitor/Parents

Current and Prospective parents are encouraged to visit the school. However, the following guidelines are established for the safety of students during the class hours: A Member of school administration shall accompany the visitor to the classroom. Prior arrangements for classroom visits are recommended. All parents should wait in the school assembly area before class dismissal. Students should not be picked up by other parents without consent from the respective parent.

7.4.2. Safe Arrivals and Departure

It is the responsibility of parent/guardian to bring their child/children into and pick them up from the school. Young children should never be dropped off or allowed to leave the school unaccompanied. Children will only be dismissed to the adults identified on the registration form. Children will not be released to other adults without explicit permission from the parent or guardian.

7.4.3. Campus Emergency Operations Plans

ATS has developed an individualized campus Emergency Operations Plan containing protocols, crisis response teams, contact information, and guidelines with directions for evacuation. School's safety and security is managed by a Emergency Response Team.

Emergency Response Team shall

- Prepare, review, and update an individual Safe School Plan and Emergency Response plan.
- Review materials on the best practices regarding school safety issues
- Examine security issues related to the school campus
- Explore ways to involve the community in promoting school safety
- Regularly assess the emergency preparedness of the school system by conducting emergency drills

7.4.4. Emergency Drills and Evacuation Procedures

ATS is continuously improving safety procedures including drills and performing evacuation procedures to ensure that a tragedy does not occur. For the safety of all ATS students, parents, staff, and all other occupants, the Emergency Response Team will plan and conduct one fire drill every school year. Also at the beginning of each school year, the Emergency Response

Team trains the teachers and the school admin staff about the safety policies and the emergency evacuation procedures. Copies of the Emergency Evacuation procedure will also be provided to the school teachers and admin staff.

Additionally, school campus evacuation maps will show primary and secondary exits in consistent colors with clear reference points. If the emergency evacuation is due to a real hazard, then the school administrative team and Parent Teacher Council (PTC) will notify the parents. Parents should pick up the kids immediately at the designated safe place. During an emergency, the school will care for the students until the parent's arrival.

It is possible that an emergency evacuation may occur due to problems within the facility. If your child is moved from the facility during an emergency evacuation, you will be informed of the location.

7.4.5. Inclement Weather

ATS will make every effort possible to be open during inclement weather days. In the event of a closing or delayed opening due to inclement weather/ other emergency, a decision will be made and communicated to parents as expeditiously as possible. Also, an announcement will be sent out to parents through email, phone from principal, teacher and or parent representative) and also placed prominently on the ATS website.

8. SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

ATS school is managed by a core team of office bearers comprised of Principal and Treasurer as a minimum. If needed, the core management team may also have additional directors, vice-principal or joint treasurer.. Further, Administration, Teacher advisor and Safety coordination are governed by the principal or by other personnel selected by the members of ATS board.

8.1. Volunteer / Family Partnership

Parents play a very important role in their children's development. In order for their children to benefit from our school with rich educational programs, it is essential to have a good working partnership between the school and all families. This shared participation will ensure that their children's needs are met effectively and also will contribute to a much stronger educational system.

8.1.1. Volunteerism in school & classrooms

Parents can participate and support the school in many ways. Involvement and assistance in the classrooms and school may be in the form of:

- Organizing and helping out in programs, activities and parties in the class or school
- Assisting teachers in the preparatory work before or during a class
- Help with the class room set-up at the beginning and end of the class

- Assisting the school admin team in school arrangements, clean-up, security, emergency drills, special events, newsletter, yearbook, etc.

8.2. Parent Responsibilities

- Parents are fully responsible for dropping and picking up their children ON TIME
- Ensure that your child is regular and on time for class
- Take personal interest in your child's learning and understand the curriculum goals set in their children's program
- Be responsible for the safety of students and remind students to strictly follow school rules.
- Monitor and help their children with their homework and encourage them to complete it before each class.
- Receive information regarding their children's progress on a regular basis.
- Encourage your children to talk in Tamil at home
- Follow the school parking rules and regulations. Park your cars properly in the parking spaces. Curb parking is prohibited.
- During classes, parents are not allowed to accompany their children without teachers' permission. Loud talking outside the classrooms is prohibited when classes are in session.
- No advertisements, commercial activities, or other gatherings are allowed inside the school without permission from the school administration.
- Parents should provide school with detailed contact information, including address, phone number, and email addresses as well as keeping the information current by informing school of any changes.
- Parents should actively support all school activities and attend all meetings and special Events.
- Parents are responsible for any repair or replacement cost for school property damage by their children.
- Parents bear the legal responsibility for any accident due to student violation of school rules.
- Comment or make suggestions about any aspects of their children's program.
- Volunteer your time and help the school grow.

9. PRIVACY ACCESS TO RECORD POLICY

Maintaining confidentiality is the legal, ethical and professional responsibility of every member of the school community, including students, parents or guardians, teachers, and administrative team members. Every member of the school community must respect the privacy of all students, families, teachers, and all other school administrative team members.

All personal records of children and families of ATS will be kept in the strictest confidence. Information pertaining to admission, progress, health or enrollment of a child will be kept confidential, unless the parent(s) of the child has given permission for disclosure.

ATS will keep students private information private by:

- **Not selling your information** - you've entrusted us with your personal information, and we're committed to using it wisely. We will not sell your personal information to anyone, for any reason, at any time.
- **Security** - we use encryption technology and passwords to protect personal information on our computer systems.
- **Restricting who has access to your information** - we take precautions to ensure that your personal information is accessible only by those who are authorized to have access to your personal information.

10. PARENT/STUDENT HANDBOOK ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I (We) have reviewed the Student Handbook for the academic year 2016 – 2017 for my child enrolled in Austin Tamil School, at NYOS Location. I am aware that the set of rules and guidelines as outlined in the handbook will be enforced during the school day and at all school events.

I understand that this handbook may be amended during the year without notice. This handbook in the latest version is applicable to all students upon implementation of any change. The school administration will notify all parents and students in writing or email, where possible, of any changes to the handbook.

Parent's initials: _____ With your consent please sign at the bottom for Handbook Acknowledgement

11. RESPONSIBILITY AND PERMISSION SLIP- FIELD TRIPS, TRANSPORTATION

I _____ agree to allow my child _____ to attend the ATS at NYOS Location, and agree to assume all responsibility and liability for any injuries to my child while participating in this activity. I agree to be responsible for any medical expenses, charges or other costs, which may be incurred as a result of my child's participation in this activity. I further agree that I will be responsible for any claims made by third parties, which may result from or be caused by my child's actions while participating in this activity.

Parent's initials: _____ With your consent please sign at the bottom for Permission Slip

attend the ATS at NYOS Location, and agree to assume all responsibility and liability for any injuries to my child while

12. DROP OFF AND PICK UP

I will also not hold ATS responsible for any liability with regards to dropping off or picking up my child at ATS - NYOS Location

Parent's initials: _____ With your consent please sign at the bottom for Drop Off and Pick Up

13. STUDENT IDENTIFICATION AND INFORMATION PRIVACY RELEASE

This form explains potential uses of student information such as name, address, phone numbers, photo images and video graphs by the ATS, to release your child's information for display or publication.

This form also allows a parent or guardian the choice of whether or not their child may be identified by name on the school or institution websites. Student names may be released unless a parent or guardian has expressly contacted the school and requested that their child's "directory information" not be shared. However, as a safeguard, the school does not directly publish student names to the Internet unless given permission by a parent or guardian.

ATS uses internal and external media to highlight the students experience in a variety of ways which may include the use of photographs and videos of students. For example, student images may be published or displayed in printed materials (such as brochures and newsletters), videos, school websites, and information about school events and activities provided to external organizations and media outlets.

I understand that the school may take class pictures and videos for publishing with student name. If I do not want my child to participate, it is my responsibility to exclude my child before the pictures and videos are taken.

Please complete this form and return to the Center Director(Administration). This consent form remains valid throughout your child's experience with the ATS or until a new form is completed and signed by a parent / guardian or eligible student.

Parent's initials: _____ With your consent please sign at the bottom for Name/Photo/Video Release

1. _____
2. _____
Student First Name Student Last Name Grade

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Parent First Name:-----Parent Last Name:-----