

ESTD



1948

TUCSON COMMUNITY SCHOOL

Community Handbook

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Phone: (520)326-9212

Email: info@tucsoncommunityschool.org

Website: www.tucsoncommunityschool.org

Hours of Operation

Our school is open Monday – Friday from 7:30 am – 5:30 pm

These hours are for enrolled children attending in our educational programs

Business Office Hours

Monday	9:00 – 2:30 pm
Tuesday	9:00 – 2:30 pm
Wednesday	9:00 – 12:30 pm
Thursday	9:00 – 2:30 pm
Friday	9:00 – 2:30 pm
Saturday & Sunday	Closed

This handbook was last modified by the Educational Director on August 1, 2023. Please direct any questions related to the TCS policies and procedures to Stephanie Castillo-Leon.

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A Word About This Handbook

This Parent Handbook contains information about the policies and practices of the school. We expect each family to read this Community Handbook carefully, as it is a valuable reference for understanding their participation and child’s enrollment at the school. Upon registration, each family agrees to abide by, uphold and support all existing policies, rules, regulations and decisions adopted by TCS. Each family understands that all printed material may be amended from time to time, and it is the family’s responsibility to stay current with such changes. The school reserves the right to dis-enroll any family when the Director concludes that lack of cooperation on the part of the parents or other persons interacting with TCS by virtue of their relationship with the enrolled child and/or parents impedes TCS’ ability to meet its educational objectives, or because of continued account delinquency.

The school does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, disability, religion, national or ethnic origin, or economic status in the administration of its admissions policy, financial assistance or other school programs

1. Welcome to Tucson Community School

Tucson Community School is a centrally located preschool in Tucson, Arizona. Since our establishment in 1948, our focus has always been on a child centric development curriculum that emphasizes growth through safe, independent exploration using only positive encouragement. Our unique approach to educating young children is partnered in our belief that families are critical in a child's early learning experiences.

Our 2022-2023 school year will begin August 15th, and total 165 learning days on our campus. A school year calendar can be found on our website and will be provided to you electronically during enrollment confirmation.

Tucson Community School Programs

Tucson Community School's mission is to provide a creative learning experience emphasizing outdoor play and family participation in a safe environment which respects each child's uniqueness and individual learning style. Within this learning environment, staff are careful to integrate principles of Developmentally Appropriate Practice in conjunction with the Arizona Early Learning Standards in our unique play-based approach to learning.

Toddler/Young Preschool: 8:30 am – 12:00 pm

****2 years old by September 1st***

In their first preschool experience, our young preschool program engages toddlers to explore all areas of development, with an emphasis on the social-emotional domain. Young children will thrive in our play-based environment while exploring mathematics, science, literacy, play and project work. **Our toddler core program will only be offered until 12:00 pm. After 12:00 pm, our toddlers participate in lunch and a developmentally appropriate nap time, this would be considered part of our extended care options.

Multi-Age Preschool: 8:30 am – 2:30 pm

****3, 4, & 5 years old by September 1st***

Our multi-age preschool prepares project work that builds on each child's knowledge with a focus on kindergarten readiness. Children will participate in activities which stimulate intellectual curiosity to promote each child's positive self-concept while enhancing their life-long love of learning through the self-satisfaction that arises with discovery and mastery of new experiences.

****Extended Care: 7:30am – 8:30am/ 12:00pm – 5:30pm**

Our early morning and afternoon programs have a limited amount of space and are prioritized for families that have both parents working outside of the home or a single working parent. These programs provide "childcare" for children who are in need of extended hours outside of our core programs.

Enrollment & Registration

Our enrollment period begins in February of each school year, and priority registration is given to our currently enrolled families and any families who have paid the \$75 fee to be placed on the "priority registration list."

To register for our program, each family must complete the online registration form (via google forms), as well submit the following documentation:

- Emergency Information and Immunization Card
- A copy of current official documented immunization record*
- Statement of Confidentiality
- Health Record Signed by Pediatrician (NEW STUDENTS ONLY)

Each family is required to pay a **\$300 enrollment fee** to secure your spot in our program that must be paid before March 31st (via MyProcure, check or cash). For new families: **A onetime \$125 registration fee** is also required to activate your membership status in our Parent Cooperative.

Registration is complete when the school notifies the family of their acceptance, once all paperwork is complete, and the first month's tuition and registration fees are paid. Children remaining on the waiting list may enroll as space becomes available (frequently in the next school year). *Children cannot attend school, until we have received the official documented immunization record or a vaccination exemption.

Tuition & Fees

Tuition rates and fees are subject to change each school year. Families are provided the rates for the current school year during registration. They are also posted at the front desk. Parents can request a hard copy of the Tuition Rates at any time.

The payment of all tuition (half or full day), fees and other charges becomes an obligation of the parents or legal guardians of the student upon registration. Remaining tuition payments are paid monthly (August through May), unless the Business Manager approves an alternative payment plan. ***Tuition is due and payable without notice on the fifth – fifteenth of every month.**

Family tuition is tracked through the TCS ProCare system, and may be paid by cash, check or credit card (MasterCard, Visa, Discover or American Express) either in office or through the parent portal. You may also set up automatic payments through a checking account or credit card. Families will set up their payment plan during the registration process.

Any outstanding tuition and/or fees must be paid before the currently enrolled child or subsequent children may be enrolled for the coming school year.

Withdrawal

If an enrolled child is unable to complete the school year, tuition remains the parents' or legal guardians' responsibility. Individual circumstances may be discussed with the Director. The school will make every effort to fill the space. However, as long as the child's space is vacant, tuition remains the responsibility of the leaving family.

Tuition Reduction Opportunities

Referral Credit: When a currently enrolled family successfully recruits another family to enroll at TCS, they are eligible for a \$50 (per child enrolled) reduction from their total tuition bill. It is the parents' or legal guardians' responsibility to inform the office, in writing, of the tuition reduction eligibility.

Discounts: Teacher, military and sibling discounts are available. It is the parents' or legal guardians' responsibility to inform the office, in writing, if eligibility exists for this reduction. Teacher and military discounts will only be applied after proper documentation is submitted and approved by TCS. Retroactive discounts are NOT available. Tuition discounts are available to children with parents who are full time teachers at any Arizona state sponsored school.

Financial Assistance: Partial tuition assistance may be available to any child enrolled at TCS. Financial assistance is based entirely on need. All personal application information remains confidential. TCS is an approved recipient of funds from First Things First through the Quality First Program for preschool students and from the Pima County Preschool Promise. Each program has individual requirements and qualifications. TCS must follow the guidelines set forth by these organizations. Families are encouraged to apply for these scholarships before requesting financial assistance from TCS.

2023-2024 Tuition Rates & Fees

Toddler Program 8:30 am - 2:30 pm

	3 Days	4 Days	5Days
Monthly	\$615	\$680	\$750

Multi-Age Preschool 8:30 am - 2:30 pm

	3 Days	4 Days	5Days
Monthly	\$715	\$780	\$850

Additional Rates & Fees

Extended Care	\$6.00 per hour, billed each month
Membership Fee	\$125 per child, one time fee *New families only
Enrollment Fee	\$300 per child (\$150 is credited to your first month of tuition)
Snack Fee	\$25 a month (Opt to pay \$250 yearly fee during enrollment)
Materials Fee	\$100 one time fee
Late Payment Fee	Unless special arrangements are made with the office, a 10% late fee will be added to any payment not received by the fifteenth (15th day) of the month.

Returned Checks/Credit Card Declines	Payees are responsible for any bank fees incurred to Tucson Community School due to returned checks or credit card declines.
Late Pick Up Fee	Families who pick up children more than 10 minutes late after their scheduled dismissal time will be charged \$20 per every 10 minutes.

Refund Policy: Once enrollment has been initiated, it is our policy not to offer refunds after the initial conference with the student's teacher or the first day of school. Tuition is not reduced for days missed or when school is closed.

Opt-Out/Missed Task Fees

TCS is a parent cooperative, where family involvement is essential to the operations of the school. We at TCS are aware that such a commitment may be challenging for some families to complete. We strongly encourage families to work with the VP of Membership to find alternatives for your participation. However, if a family is unable to fulfill a task, they have the option to pay an “opt-out” fee ahead of time, or they will be automatically charged the fee at the end of each semester.

Each family will be required to complete approximately **thirty (50) hours of volunteer work**, for each hour missed/opt-out is \$50/per hour. Fees are assessed by the costs to hire a substitute to complete unfinished work that ensures the safety of our school for the benefit of our children and contribute to the smooth operation of the school.

Family Task	Fee	Audit Frequency
Auction Item	\$100 per item	Once a year
Fall Festival & Auction Volunteer	\$400	Twice a year
Work Party	\$200	Once a year
End of the Year Clean Up	\$100	Once a year
Family Cooperative Committee	\$300	Twice a year
Classroom Helper Days	\$500	Every 3 months
Family Education/Training	\$50 per hour (\$500 annual)	Twice a year

Termination Policy

Tucson Community School reserves the right to terminate enrollment and enforce the withdrawal of any child at any time due to lack of cooperation on the part of the parents or other persons interacting with TCS by virtue of their relationship which impedes TCS’ ability to meet its educational objectives, or because of parent dissatisfaction, continued account delinquency or any other problems in accordance with the TCS Parent and Staff handbooks, or as necessary and determined by the Director of the school.

The TCS Business Office

The **TCS business office** is open school days between 9:00 am and 2:30 pm. The director and administrative staff can be contacted during these hours. Special appointments can be

scheduled outside of these hours, as needed. *Please note that tuition payments, or questions about tuition, fees, or any financial agreements are handled by the Business Manager who is available to discuss these matters during school days.

Visitors: All visitors must sign in and out at the front desk and wear a visitor name badge while on campus.

Insurance: Tucson Community School carries liability and accident insurance. For details about the policies, limits and terms please contact the front office.

Licensing & Inspections: Tucson Community School is licensed and regulated by ADHS (Arizona Department of Health Services), Office of Child Care Licensure, 400 W. Congress, Suite 100, Tucson, AZ 85701, phone 520-628-6540. Inspection reports are available upon request from the Director.

TCS Library: The TCS Library, located in the business office, is rich with children's books; as well as an assortment of books and articles on parenting and childhood growth and development. Teachers may check out books at any time for classroom use. Families and children may only check out books for a **two-week time period**.

Attendance, Arrivals & Dismissals

Absences: Each morning, our teaching staff prepares their environment to meet the needs of all our children, when children are absent from school without notice it delays preparation and sometimes our morning routines. **If your child will be absent, please notify the front office first, and if possible, email the child's lead teacher.** It is important to note that some of our scholarship programs do have attendance requirements, having too many unexcused absences can affect the continuation of the financial assistance.

Tuition is not reduced for days missed or when school is closed ("See Refund Policy"). Swapping class days for absent days is NOT possible due to Arizona Department of Health Licensing and NAEYC adult/child ratios.

Tardiness: The start of the day often affects the child's whole experience. For this reason, and others related to staffing, snack preparation, and planning of daily activities, TCS has a strict tardy policy. Children who are not in their classroom by **9:00 am** will be marked absent and will **NOT** be allowed to participate in school that day.

Exceptions will only be made if the family notifies the school's front office with a reason for tardiness, i.e., traffic, early morning appointment, etc.

Early Pick Up: At TCS because continuity is very important to the development of the children, we strongly encourage that appointments are scheduled outside of school core program hours. Once children are signed out for the day, they will not be permitted to return to school, unless a child is participating in a developmentally pull-out program, such as speech therapy.

Signing In and Out: Parents must sign their child in and out **every day** through the TCS ProCare system. It is a state regulation that you sign your child in and out each day. There are no exceptions. All registered families will be entered in the ProCare system, and it is the responsibility of each family to complete the sign in/out process, including setting up the fingerprint login at the TCS business office.

Arrivals: Families (adult caregivers only) may stay to help their child get ready for the school day if they feel it is necessary. Once the school year is underway, most caregivers leave by 9:00 am if it is not their classroom helper day. If caregivers feel their child needs them to stay longer, they can discuss with their child's teacher. **If families will be staying at school with their child past 9:00 am, childcare arrangements must be made for non-enrolled siblings.**

Before Care: Caregivers will sign in at the front office and enter through classroom door to take their child to the before care classroom location. Children are NOT permitted to walk through the kitchen.

The School Day Begins at 8:30 am: Caregivers will enter with their child through the West front gate. The gate is open from 8:25-8:40 am. If parents arrive after 8:40 am, they must get the gate key from the office, enter through the West front gate, and lock the padlock behind them.

Dismissals: Children are not allowed to leave the school with unauthorized adults. Persons authorized to pick up an enrolled child will enter and exit safely through the West front gate and will sign that child out via ProCare. Children are picked up from their assigned classroom.

Other caregivers who will be signing children in or out must be documented in writing on the **Emergency Information Form** or the **Authorized Pick-Up Form**. Additionally, they must complete registration on the ProCare software. Please have them arrive a few minutes early to complete this process.

12:00 and 2:30 pm Dismissal: The West gate is open from 5 minutes prior until 10 minutes after dismissal time.

Late Pick Ups: Being picked up on time is equally important. A young child needs the security of knowing that they, too, will be picked up when the other children are going home. For this and reasons related to staffing, picking up children **on time** is essential. Any child not picked up within 10 minutes of dismissal, will be brought to the office and parents will be charged the scheduled late fee (see "Late Fee").

After Care: Persons authorized to pick up enrolled children from after care must enter through the front office and will log the child out at the ProCare tablet. You will need to ring the doorbell to be let in.

Health & Safety

Illness: Young children are very susceptible to infections. Persons who have a fever of 100 or above or other signs of illness, such as: sore throat, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, body

aches, headaches, new loss of taste or smell, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea - will not be allowed to enter the facility.

Children who become sick at school must be removed from the group and cared for in the front office until parents can be contacted to pick up their child. Parents must pick up their sick child from the school office within thirty (30) minutes of receiving notification that their child is ill. Parents are asked to arrange for another adult to retrieve their child if they are not able to.

Families of unimmunized children will be called to pick up their child from school if they arrive at school with red eyes, cough, running nose and or rash to prevent outbreak of highly contagious childhood diseases such as measles.

If a child experiences diarrhea or vomits in the **24 hours before** coming to school, they should be kept home. A child **MUST** have not vomited or experienced diarrhea **AND** be fever free for **24 hours WITHOUT THE AID OF A FEVER REDUCING MEDICATION** before returning to TCS following an illness. It is not unusual for a sick child to insist he or she is well enough to come to school, however, when that happens, the child usually becomes weepy or excessively tired once his or her parent is gone and whatever illness he or she may be battling is spreading to those around him or her. Please keep your child home while recovering from all illness.

Injuries: Young children often experience falls or bumps during a day, especially in the outdoor classroom. Usually, they do not result in serious injury and are handled with simple comfort, a drink of water, or a sympathetic band-aid or ice pack (i.e., not necessary but yet comforting). When children sustain a cut, bruise, or other injury, staff members will provide treatment according to procedures specified in our pediatric first aid training.

Teachers will report the injury to parents, guardians, or caregivers, recommend treatment by a medical professional, if appropriate, and complete an injury report within one day. Copies are kept in the accident/injury logbook. A notification will be placed in the child's cubby for the child to take home.

Parents or guardians will be notified immediately in case of a more serious accident and prompt action will be taken including contacting EMS personnel if a situation warrants. If necessary, we will accompany the child to the hospital preferred by the family in the ambulance. In these cases, injury reports are supplemented by the EMS reports.

Emergency Information Form: As part of the enrollment process, parents must complete an emergency information form (blue card) listing individuals authorized to collect their child from school in the case of an emergency, preferred health care providers and other pertinent medical information. Parents or guardians should contact the school any time there is a change in the emergency contact information.

Health Record / Current Immunizations: Families are required to submit a current health assessment of the child, including either proof of the recommended immunizations or a signed statement indicating that the family has objections to immunization.

The Arizona Department of Health Services requires immunization records be submitted prior to your child's first day of school. Thereafter, parents must submit updated immunization

records after each yearly well- child checkup. Families of children with allergies must provide us with information regarding necessary adaptations of activities or environment, responses staff should take in the event of an allergic reaction and provide for any necessary staff training related to specific medical action plans. Families of children with other special needs should contact an administrator for guidance regarding necessary documentation and advance planning with the staff to keep their child safe. This information is confidential but must be available to administrators, teaching staff, and regulatory authorities upon request.

Medication: ABSOLUTELY NO MEDICATION MAY BE DISPENSED BY TCS TEACHERS. The only exception to this is an epi-pen prescribed and assigned to a specific child for prevention of anaphylactic shock due to food allergies. Children attending school are not permitted to carry cough drops or any other non-prescription remedies onto the school grounds or into the classroom. If a child must be given medicine during school hours, the medication must be prescribed by a doctor and in the original prescription container, properly labeled with the following information: name of the student, doctor, drug, dosage, and directions for administering. The parent must deliver the medicine to the office where it is put into a locked box and fill out a form authorizing the Director to administer that medication. Under no circumstances should a child be given medicine to take on their own at school. This is an Arizona Department of Health Services regulation from which Tucson Community School cannot deviate.

Sun Safety Protection: Parents are strongly encouraged to put sunscreen on their child every day before coming to school. If a child needs sunscreen to be reapplied, a TCS staff member may only apply sunscreen authorization by the child's parent/guardian. Individual sunscreen must be provided by the child's family, must be in a new unopened container with your child's clearly labeled on it. **Children must bring a hat labeled with their name to wear when playing outdoors.**

Hand washing: Staff, children, and volunteers must wash their hands upon arrival at school, before preparing or eating food, after handling pets, after playing in the water, after using the toilet, after assisting a child in the bathroom, and any other time they are soiled.

Head Lice Policy: Head lice are extremely contagious and not uncommon. Anyone identified with live head lice will not be admitted to school nor be allowed to remain at school. Parents may ask for advice identifying and treating head lice.

Insects: Looking at insects is an activity for which children have endless patience. We do talk about desert insects which are dangerous, and we must not touch. In seasons when mosquitoes are active, we encourage parents to apply a repellent they feel is effective for their child. TCS staff may only apply repellent with a note from the child's parent.

Dress Code

We spend time outside every day, except in pouring rain or in environmental conditions that pose a health hazard, such as severe heat or air pollution. Although play is well supervised, children's clothing may become soiled through active participation.

Clothing: Children should dress in comfortable clothes, suitable for active play and with the weather in mind. Children's clothing should also not be torn or too worn out that could pose a potential risk to being injured while playing.

An extra change of clothing shall be provided by parents for their child on the first day of school in case a child's clothes become wet or soiled. This extra change of clothes should include shirt, shorts/pants, socks, and underwear labeled with child's name secured in a clear labeled gallon sized zip lock bag. The extra set of clothes should be updated as weather changes and/or the child outgrows the original change of clothing.

Shoes: Children are encouraged to wear well-fitting shoes safe for school activities. Tie sneakers are best. The minimum shoe is a sandal with a strap across the back. Smooth soled shoes, flip-flops or slides, or shoes too large for the child have contributed to accidents. Closed toe shoes with a closed back or heel strap, which secure to your child's feet are best for comfort and safety. A child wearing unsafe shoes may be asked to refrain from participating in activities such as climbing, tricycle/bicycle riding, or digging.

Hats: Children must bring a hat labeled with their name. Our school yard is reflective of the natural desert environment with very little shade. Therefore, children will be required to wear a hat every time they are outdoors.

Toileting

Tucson Community School is NOT licensed to change diapers and/or pullups. This means children must be potty trained to attend TCS. This means children are to wear underwear the entire time at school and have general knowledge of bathroom hygiene.

Children may need assistance cleaning themselves, changing their clothes, or have other concerns with toileting. Only TCS staff members with required Fingerprint Clearance Cards and cleared background checks and the child's parent may assist a child with toileting. However, children are encouraged to complete all toileting tasks on their own.

Food & Water

Water: Children play hard and need sufficient fluid intake to maintain healthy hydration levels. Since thirst is not always the best indicator of an individual's need for fluid intake, we will always have drinking water available, both indoors and outdoors for children. Water will be the beverage of choice for rehydrating children. We strongly discourage the use of sugar-sweetened beverages to quench children's thirst and encourage parents to **send a daily water bottle labeled with their child's name.**

Food Allergies: **TCS IS A NUT FREE SCHOOL.** Do not send food and spreads with peanut butter or other tree nuts. If other dangerous allergies are shared by our students, our community will halt the use of those ingredients on our campus to best protect our children.

Our NUT FREE policy extends beyond children's snacks and lunches. All bake sales, picnics, potlucks, etc. are also subject to our policy.

Food brought from home for sharing among children will be prohibited, because of these restrictions and the high frequency of food allergies.

Food allergies should be listed on the Emergency Information Card submitted during registration. If your child has food allergies, please also notify the teacher so we may appropriately document. We are a peanut-free school, and work with families to accommodate other allergies as we are able. However, it is very important that each child's parent review the monthly snack calendar and send food from home on days foods listed may not meet the child's health or eating preferences.

Snack Time: Every day a light nutritious snack is served mid-morning. TCS follows the AZDHS guidelines for snacks to ensure adequate nutrition for our young children. The snack menu is posted on our website calendar, the front desk, the kitchen and in each classroom. Our snacks are served "family-style" where teaching staff and other adults, if present, sit and eat with the children while engaging them in conversation. Children work on social interaction and manners. Children are encouraged to try new foods, but never forced to eat anything. **We allow children to self-determine the right amount of food to eat which promotes healthy eating habits. We never use food as a reward for good behavior nor do we withhold as a punishment.**

Lunch: Please send healthy foods to school for lunches if children are participating in the full day program. TCS does not have space for refrigerating children's lunches. Parents should use cold packs or insulated thermoses or lunch boxes to keep items at appropriately safe temperatures until lunchtime.

School-Wide Policies & Procedures

Cell Phone Usage: To document children's play and learning, often staff will use their phone. Other phone usage is prohibited. Families are to refrain from using cell phones while on campus with children during arrivals/dismissals, classroom helper days, and other volunteer experiences. Caregivers are expected to be present during dismissal and pick up times to help your child transition, and to be available for any teacher communication.

Parking: TCS is privileged to have its private, central location. Use of the parking lot is for families who are dropping off and picking up. Staff and classroom volunteers are encouraged to park in the adjacent street – both sides of Hedrick Drive and Wilson.

We want to maintain harmonious relationships with our neighbors. Ample space should be left in front of driveways. **Please do NOT park in front of driveways, garbage cans or mailboxes.**

Naps/Rest Time: Naps or rest time are a regular part of our Extended Day Program, with toddlers having a required nap time. For children napping, the school provides a resting mat for each child. Each child has their own assigned bed roll which parents launder once per month, per Arizona Health Department regulations. While toys from home are not allowed at school, a small comfort item (special blanket or small stuffed animal) is permitted at resting time to help a child relax during this important quiet time. Children will nap from approximately 12:30 pm until 2:00 pm.

Preschoolers and younger children who have outgrown napping can participate in restful and quiet activities for a 15-minute period following lunch in their assigned classrooms. This allows their body to rest and reset.

Siblings: Our staffing is set for the number of children enrolled in each class, and the classroom arrangement, materials, and routines fit the developmental level of the class. For all these reasons, we cannot accommodate family requests for children's siblings to join in classroom activities or field trips. Under a parent's supervision, siblings may accompany a parent or other caregiver to the classroom at greeting or dismissal time.

Holidays & Birthdays

The celebration of special days by families is respected at TCS. However, TCS does not plan our school curriculum around holidays. TCS emphasizes seasonal changes rather than holidays during the school year. Overemphasizing holidays at school can take time away from other enriching teaching and learning opportunities for children.

Valentine's Day: Instead of Valentine's Day, TCS participates in our annual Mail Day. Children are invited (but not expected or required) to create mail to deliver to their classmates. On that day, teachers will invite children to create letters/notes/pictures to be mailed home. The goal is to promote a literacy experience, linking home and school. Toys and treats will NOT be permitted to be shared at school.

Birthdays: Birthdays are special days to acknowledge how many years one has lived and grown on our planet. Each classroom teacher will explain the birthday ritual for their classroom. Please speak with your child's teacher about how they will celebrate your child's special day. Each child will be celebrated in the classroom with their peers with a special ceremony. No food or toys will be prohibited to be shared amongst children.

Families cannot distribute birthday party invitations at school. Additionally, families are not required to invite the entire class to their child's birthday. Each family is provided with a directory of their child's class list, so that off campus events and communication can happen between the families of choice.

Field Trips: Due to the age of our children, field trips are not part of our regular program. However, class reps may organize a "TCS After Hours" event in which children and their families can attend a field trip style activity off campus.

Emergency Preparedness

The Director and Business Manager will be notified immediately when an emergency occurs. Emergencies include all accidents, medical situations, chemical spills, flood, bomb threats, other threats of violence, and the smell of smoke. The Business Manager should call 911 and the Director will assist with the emergency until professional help arrives.

Each class has a first aid kit in the room. There is also a first aid kit in the kitchen pantry. Ice packs are kept in the freezer in the kitchen for use as needed. There is a fire extinguisher in

the kitchen, office hallway, and each classroom. Fire extinguishers are serviced every year and are in full operating condition.

Evacuation: When events warrant an evacuation of the building, teachers gather the children in a safe and orderly manner then follow the instructions posted in each classroom. Our evacuation site is the Gill cul de sac. In the event of a long-term evacuation, we contact families as quickly as possible via phone to notify them of the plan for reuniting them with their children. We have monthly evacuation drills to familiarize the children with the safety procedures. In an emergency or time-critical situation when the director is not present or reachable by phone, the Business Manager and the designated Director designee decide collaboratively on a course of action for the specific situation.

Lock Down: If a lock down is necessary, the teaching staff will immediately bring all children inside to the nearest enclosed space, lock all doors, and use cell phones to call 911. If necessary, the staff members will use cell phones to inform the Director or Business Manager of the reason for the lock down. The Director and/or Business Manager will also contact 911. Teachers and assistants will stay with the children until the situation is resolved and safety is restored.

Strangers/intruders: All visitors must sign in at the front desk and receive a visitor name badge. When any enrolled family or staff member notice someone they do not recognize on the TCS campus, they introduce themselves and ask the visitor if they need help finding someone or notify the Director or Business Manager immediately.

Family & Staff Relations

Babysitting & Off Campus Activity: TCS Lead Teachers are not permitted to provide childcare for families whose child is in her classroom. The rationale for this policy involves important professional issues. Additionally, staff who are not considered part of the “parent community” at TCS will be prohibited from engaging in personal family activities. Engaging with a family outside of school places the staff member in a position with the real potential of conflicting roles. This can occur both with regard to their relationship with the child and/or the parents.

Communication: If you have a concern regarding your child’s experience in the classroom, please communicate with your child’s teacher directly. Other issues regarding staff, school-wide policies, or general concerns should be reported to the director. **If your concern is of an urgent nature, please bring it to the attention of the Director.**

All TCS families are encouraged to have open communication with our staff. However, it is pertinent that we respect staff’s personal time and space. Therefore, communication between families and teachers must be via email or by scheduling a phone call. All our families are provided appropriate contact information for each of our staff. The Educational Director, Stephanie Castillo-Leon, will share her personal phone number and families can communicate any immediate needs or emergencies to her, if they are unable to reach the front office.

Confidentiality: Each family has the right to expect that their child's experiences at school will be confidential. All adults working and or observing at TCS sign the confidentiality agreement, provided on family orientation.

Information about family situations, special needs, and other sensitive issues is shared on an as needed basis. Student workers, volunteers, and other adults working within school are only informed of sensitive issues when they are part of keeping the child safe, or when supporting the child's inclusion.

Official written records for each child are released only to individuals working with a child or for whom parents sign a written release. These files include enrollment forms, final conference reports, health assessments provided by physicians, reports of diagnostic assessments released to the school by parents, individual education plans, etc.

Pesticide Application: Pesticides are not used at the school. In the unlikely event that pesticides were to be applied, parents would be notified 72 hours ahead of time.

Smoking: Our school is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for staff members, families and children. Smoking is not permitted.

Child Abuse and Neglect

Pursuant to Arizona Revised Statute §13-3620, staff members are required by Arizona State Law to report suspicion of any form of child abuse and neglect. This includes sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. Tucson Community School does not condone, hide or tolerate any type of child abuse. Our foremost responsibility is to ensure the safety of our children.

Each year Tucson Community School offers a Mandated Reporting training that is required of all staff, non-family volunteers, and current Board of Directors. Families are encouraged to attend, but materials from the training can and will be made available. This training addresses but is not limited to: defining child abuse, learning about causes and risk factors, identifying warning signs, what to do if abuse is suspected and how to prevent child abuse and neglect.

Pursuant to A.R.S. §13-3620, such reports shall be made immediately by any staff member who reasonably believes that a child is or has been the victim of physical injury, child abuse or neglect. Any concerns should be shared with the director and a report will be made within 24 hours to the Department of Child Safety (DCS) and/or to the Police for emergency concerns in which a child is at immediate risk of abuse or neglect that could result in death or serious harm.

All reports made must include (to the best of the reporter's ability) the following information:

- Name, age and address of the child
- Names and addresses of alleged abuser, parents or caregivers
- Specific allegations-date and description of injuries
- Witnesses to any incidents and how to contact them
- Abusers current access to the child

- Present condition of the child
- Explanation given by adult or caregiver for what happened (if known)
- Abusers current mental, emotional or physical state
- Concerns about the living conditions of the child
- Actions already taken by you or other professionals
- Your name and contact information

Additionally, all reports made by any staff person, must be followed up with a written report within seventy-two hours that are filled on site with any documentations that must be obtained or received as part of any investigation.

If you suspect that a child is being abused or neglected, you should call your local Department of Child Safety (DCS) agency or the DCS agency in Arizona listed below. The Arizona Child Abuse Hotline can be reached 24 hours a day, seven days a week at: contact the Arizona Child Abuse Hotline 1-888-SOS-CHILD (1-888-767-2445)

Volunteers

Volunteering is a major component of our school's functionality and community. At TCS we have two classifications of volunteers – "Family Helpers" and "Working Volunteers."

Family Helpers are persons who play a significant role in the lives of the children at TCS. They are part of our Parent Cooperative and fulfill the families' volunteer requirements. All Family Helpers must be registered in our ProCare database system. They must provide photo identification and contact information. Family Helpers are then set up in our sign in/out system by registering their fingerprint on our biometric reader. They are required to sign in every time they are staying on campus.

Working Volunteers include our student teachers and other community members seeking to obtain volunteer hours in a preschool setting. All working volunteers must go through the same hiring process as our staff. They must obtain and submit 1) a valid CPR/First Aid card 2) Negative TB test within the last 6 months 3) a valid Fingerprint Clearance Card (that is validated by the department of public safety by our business manager) and 4) they must go through an orientation training about TCS philosophy, health and safety of children, as well as attend 16 more hours of professional development through time at TCS.

Volunteers are NEVER to be left alone with any of the children enrolled in our program. They are supervised by staff any time they are participating in classroom activities or engaging in our outdoor environment. Volunteers are never counted when maintaining ratio and are never to supplement staff absences. If a volunteer does become a substitute staff person, they are immediately relinquished of the volunteer status and made staff.

Violence, Weapons, Harassment

We want all children, staff and families to feel safe in school. Therefore, hitting or physical aggression are not modeled or tolerated.

Weapons (real or toy) are not allowed at school. Toy or pretend weapons make some children feel unsafe and promote aggressive behavior. At Tucson Community School we want children

to develop inner strength and not need to rely on a weapon for personal power. We will provide an environment free of violent, aggressive, or gender-stereotyped images. Please do not send your child to school wearing violent or disrespectful images. We recognize that rough and tumble/superhero/war/good guy-bad guy play appeals to developmental needs of many young children. The struggle of opposite forces is the theme of many myths and legends. It is a very real struggle for some of our children and is sometimes expressed through rough and tumble play, aggression, and power play. To allow children to resolve this conflict through their imaginative play at school we recommend the following guidelines:

- As families and teachers working within a democratic society, we can help children become kind and caring participants in a world that welcomes all people, all world views, including varying attitudes and exposures toward violence.
- Teachers will be creative in meeting children's individual needs through curriculum/activity options in all areas.
- We will involve the children in formulating their own group policies on imaginative power play and respectful behavior. Classroom group norms for respectful behavior will be posted on classroom wall for regular reference.
- Adults will be alert to children's moods, motives and growing understanding as they observe, facilitate and extend their play with questions, suggestions and materials, while minimizing adult interference with normal play
- Children may bring transitional "security" items to school; other toys must stay at home or in the car (if it comes into school it will stay in their cubbie). No real or toy weapons are allowed at school. If one comes to school, it will be stored out of sight by the teacher until the child goes home.
- Weapons imaginatively made by children at school may become part of their play if they are not used in a way that makes other children feel unsafe or unhappy. Safety concerns will come first (i.e. walk if you are holding a stick and climb with empty hands).

Parents carrying guns for personal protection may not bring them on the school property.

Any type of verbal, physical or sexual harassment is against school policy and will not be tolerated.

We firmly prohibit any harassment of employees, members or third parties for any reason based on a "protected class" including, but not limited to veteran status, uniform service member status, race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, national origin, age, physical or mental disability, genetic information or any other protected class under federal, state, or local law. Harassment of third parties by our staff members is also prohibited.

Any staff member or Tucson Community School member who believes that (s)he has been harassed, sexually harassed or threatened (verbally or physically) should report the situation immediately to one of the follow members who have been designated to receive such complaints. All complaints will be promptly and thoroughly investigated as confidentially as possible.

Violations of this policy are not permitted and may result in disciplinary action, up to and including discharge and/or removal from the school program. The school will conduct all investigations in a discreet manner. The school recognizes that every investigation requires a

determination based on all the facts in the matter. We also recognize the serious impact a false accusation can have. We trust that all staff members and Tucson Community School parent members will commit to act respectfully and responsibly toward one another

1. The Parent Cooperative

Tucson Community School was organized as a non-profit, parent-owned school in 1948. Over the last 70 years, the Tucson Community School has established itself as a unique organization, recognized and respected, throughout the greater Tucson community. Strong parent leadership continues to make Tucson Community School unique.

Governing Structure of Tucson Community School

Parents/Families: Current Tucson Community School families (parents, guardians, grandparents, and/or any significant adult in the child’s life) comprise the Community School Association, which annually elects a Board of Directors.

Board of Directors: The Board of Directors consists of nine (9) elected officers, the Director, the Treasurer, and classroom representatives. The Board of Directors is responsible for supervising family participation in the cooperative model to ensure all families meet the mission and goals of the school.

Educational Director: The policies and school curricula of Tucson Community School are established by the Educational Director (“Director”) in cooperation with the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors approves the employment of staff members upon recommendation from the Educational Director. The Educational Director supervises, evaluates, guides and if necessary, disciplines all other staff members.

Classroom Representatives: Classroom representatives are a group of current parents (one from each class). They may choose to attend Board meetings as non-voting members. They represent and provide information to fellow parents in their respective classes. The primary responsibility of a classroom representative is to provide a means of two-way communication between fellow parents and the Board. Class representatives liaise with the Vice President of Membership who is responsible for providing class representatives with information to share with parents following each Board of Directors meetings.

TCS Board of Trustees: The Board of Trustees consists of nine (9) officers serving staggered three-year terms. The Board of Trustees holds the title to the corporate property, both real and personal, and assists in carrying out the objectives of the school through fundraising and long range financial planning. The Board of Trustees typically consists of alumni or former parents of Tucson Community School. When a term expires, two Trustees are appointed by the Board of Directors and one is elected by current Tucson Community School parents. The Board of Trustees meets three times during the year; which includes at least one joint meeting with the Board of Directors. The Board of Trustees supports fund-raising activities of the school, assists in long range planning and serves in an advisory capacity to the Board of Directors.

Staff Members: The staff members consist of the Director, the Business Manager, Receptionist and Early Childhood Educators. All personnel are under the supervision and direction of the Director.

How Families Participate at TCS

Family participation creates the magical community environment that has made our program a success. Our Board of Directors and staff, will provide a variety of tasks that can be completed, we also take suggestions on any new projects or areas of need that your family would like to support. Each family will be required to complete **Their parent cooperative obligation** which must include each of the following:

- One (1) **Work Party**: Join other families for one, four-hour Saturday to to assist in keeping the school premises and equipment in good condition. Our work parties are scheduled for 08/5/2023, 11/4/2023, 01/06/2024 and 04/06/2024 (*Subject to change*).
- Participation in One (1) **Family Cooperative Committee**: Committees are varied to allow families to choose the tasks that best fit their interest. These committees are essential for the smooth functionality of our school.
- Participation in the **Fall Festival & Annual Auction**: Assist our nonprofit school with the creation and planning of our yearly fundraisers. Families can help by donating items, supporting accounting, setting up/cleaning up after events, marketing, and more.
- **Year End Classroom Clean Up**: Assist your child's teacher at the end of the school year with classroom and/or material maintenance or clean up.
- At least seven (7) **Classroom Helper Days**: In the classroom, as a participant, families have the opportunity to learn and grow with their children as they make lifelong friends; as well as contribute to a dynamic learning community that provides the very best early childhood experience to our children.
- As part of our learning community, we want families and teachers to continue to grow their knowledge and expertise in child development. Parents must attend a minimum of ten (10) hours of **Parent Training** per year.

Parents **MUST SIGN** up for a classroom helper day. Attending a special event or supporting your child in the classroom (e.g., staying for a helpful transition) will not be counted as a classroom helper day.

The Annual TCS Auction: The annual auction event is TCS' largest fundraiser in which alumni and current families come together to bid on tremendous items. Each family is required to fulfill **one (1) auction duty AND provide at least two (2) items** to be auctioned. More information will be shared by our fundraising committee as we near our planning time.

TCS Family Cooperative Committees

- The Family Support Committee shall report to the Vice President of Programs and shall plan educational programs for school members, plan off-site community building events, schedule and find sponsors for muffin mornings, and maintain a positive school vibe.

- The Library Committee shall report to the Business Manager and shall maintain the school's library and encourage use of the library by the families and community of TCS.
- The Housekeeping Committee shall report to the Vice President of Membership and shall perform such duties necessary to maintain the cleanliness and order of the school.
- The Buildings and Grounds and Gardening Committees shall report to the Vice President of Buildings and Grounds and shall ensure the responsible maintenance of all school buildings and grounds, as well as construction and repair of school equipment as appropriate.
- The Publicity Committee shall report to the Vice President of Marketing; shall provide for communication with community media; and shall prepare appropriate publicity materials for school events.
- The Fundraising Committee shall report to the Vice Presidents of Fundraising and shall advise as to appropriate fund-raising goals for each school year. This committee shall review all fund-raising activities to make recommendations to the Board of Directors about future fund-raising activities.
- The Class Representatives and Mentors shall report to the Vice President of Membership and shall keep members advised of meetings, activities, and information as requested.

Volunteer Guidelines

As a parent cooperative, our school functions best with the help and support of each family's time on campus. Your involvement is part of the intricate fabric that makes our school the magical place it is for children. Throughout the year, families will have multiple opportunities to volunteer on campus such as: classroom helper days, community wide events, special guests, and more.

In addition to our policies and procedures regarding volunteering, the guidelines listed here help our program maintain its focus on children and will enrich your experience. Please review these guidelines and direct your questions or concerns to the Educational Director Stephanie Castillo-Leon.

- Parents must always stay with their children while volunteering. Volunteers are NOT permitted to be alone with other children at any time. Volunteers play a passive role and should ask for assistance from teachers when conflicts between children arise.
- Volunteers should not interfere with behavior or manage a conflict unless a child is hurting themselves, hurting another child, or damaging property.
- We respectfully ask that you do not suggest to children that they share or set a timer. We create an environment where children feel safe to use things for as long as they need.
- We respectfully ask that you do not tell children to say "Sorry," regardless of the situation. We understand that behavior is communication. Our role is to interpret the emotions behind behaviors and to help children process these emotions (e.g. "You were feeling frustrated about that, so you pushed.")
- We provide an environment that allows children to play and to experiment with their physical development. We avoid common safety statements such as, "Be careful," or "Look out."

- At Tucson Community School the work of children is to play. We take responsibility for cleaning up and maintaining a stimulating and engaging environment. Children are encouraged to explore with art materials, to experiment with dirt and water, and to play with other mess-making activities. Therefore, we do not require the children to clean up or stay clean.

Classroom helping is an intentional practice of volunteering in the classroom. Classroom helpers must abide by the “Classroom Participation Training Packet,” that is provided at orientation.

3. The “TCS” Way

The Tucson Community School education program, strives to create a stimulating play environment that fosters creativity, exploration, authentic relationships, empathy, compassion, problem-solving, community and choice.

We believe that children

- are born curious and intrinsically motivated
- learn best through child-led play
- need loving guidance and age-appropriate limits
- thrive when they have meaningful relationships with their families, friends and teachers.

Teaching Objectives & Curriculum

Tucson Community School is committed to providing a creative learning experience which respects each child’s uniqueness and individual learning style. Our curriculum is designed:

- To provide a physically and emotionally secure environment
- To encourage the development of a positive self-concept
- To encourage independence
- To encourage social development
- To provide concrete, first-hand experiences which are developmentally appropriate
- To provide opportunities for creative expression
- To provide opportunities for problem solving
- To encourage the development of fine and gross motor skills
- To provide an environment which is rich in language
- To provide a program which meets the individual needs of the children

Discipline and Guidance

At TCS discipline is to teach, guide and help. TCS does not practice, use, or believe in punishment, shame, blame, manipulation, or coercion as a teaching tool. We believe that

children learn best when their physical and emotional needs are met. In all our interactions and engagements with children, it is our priority to honor the rights of children.

Rights of Children at TCS

- A welcoming community
- Support in guidance in many forms
- Freedom, self-expression and choice
- Connected and loving relationships with their families, friends and teachers
- To grow and learn in an environment free of judgment, shame, guilt, harsh words and harsh hands

Nurturing Community Through Guidance:

At TCS we understand that young children are growing impulse control and executive functioning. Children spend every minute of their day trying out new strategies for meeting their needs, and behavior is their main mode of communication. Behavior is a representation of what is going on internally. Behavior is an attempt to meet basic needs that are valid and necessary. Listening to emotions is necessary for children to grow. Feeling heard and validated are the mechanisms of support children need to move through negative emotions and to develop in a healthy way. We understand and honor that learning happens over time with the support of caring adults.

Chronic disruptive, serious and/or dangerous behavior policy:

We shall call for a meeting with parents/guardians if a child's disruptive or serious behavior (e.g.,

biting, hitting, scratching, screaming etc.) is a chronic concern. Disruptive behavior is resolved on a case-by-case basis with input from all parties, with special consideration given to the targets of the behavior. If a student's behavior cannot be resolved within the school environment, we may ask the family to withdraw the child and take a leave of absence with re-enrollment contingent upon resolution of the behavior through therapeutic intervention. We reserve the right to terminate a student's enrollment for chronic disruptive, serious and/or dangerous behavior.

Please direct any questions related to the TCS behavior policy to Stephanie Castillo-Leon.

4. The Story of Tucson Community School.

TCS has embraced constructivist learning since its inception in 1948. After only a year of planning, and without knowing who would head the school or staff it, Ruth Davis and a few other parents formed TCS, a non-profit school. Parents threw themselves into adding two rooms to an existing small structure on an acre of desert land.

As new students and parents make TCS a part of their community, the school will continue to evolve and parents will continue to collaborate with teachers and staff at the school, learning from and supporting one another. The 75-year-old roots from which TCS has sprung still require fertilization and renewal of resources to remain vibrant.

Philosophy and Goal of the School: The goal of our school's philosophy and its three-year program is to lay the foundation for a child's inner strength and resilience, which are necessary to meet the stresses and strains of today's world. We believe it is the right of every child to be treated as an individual, to learn to share in group responsibility, to satisfy a widening curiosity, and to adapt himself/herself happily according to his/her innate ability and level of emotional maturity.

Purpose: The purpose of this organization shall be to provide an educational program for the children enrolled at Tucson Community School; to further the education of its members in the principles of child development, matters of child guidance, and child welfare legislation; and to conduct appropriate community activities. Tucson Community School does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, creed, national and ethnic origin in administration of its education policies, admissions policies, financial assistance and other school administered programs. Tucson Community School shall comply with the accreditation standards established by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, shall conduct the educational program of the school in accordance with these standards, and shall maintain the original objectives of the founders of the school.

Mission: Tucson Community School's mission is to provide a creative learning experience emphasizing outdoor play and family participation in a safe environment which respects each child's uniqueness and individual learning style.

Objectives: In 1948, the founding parents of the Tucson Community School adopted, for its objectives, the goals of an educational program delineated by Agnes De Lima in her book The Little Red Schoolhouse (1944). These same goals are reflected in the National Association for the Education of Young Children ("NAEYC") standards for high quality early childhood education.

TCS continues to adhere to these objectives by offering each child an intellectually engaging program that provides a child-centered day of play, rest and creative activity.

1. To give the children a childlike day providing activity, outdoor play, rest and creative activity.
2. To furnish opportunities for getting firsthand information through observation and actual experience, through participation in school management appropriate to each age.
3. To provide a place, time and material for the children to give back their observations and thinking in a concrete form through play and work and through creative expression in language, art, and music.
4. To give the children opportunities to develop social relations with their contemporaries through situations where adult interference is reduced to a minimum. (We believe that emotional stability is best developed by this early opportunity to find security in the group.)
5. To develop skill in speech in the use of language, through discussion and writing of group and individual stories (This forms a basis for reading and creative writing.)
6. To develop habits of organized thinking, industry, order, curiosity and cooperation.
7. To encourage individual initiative.

8. To develop through the early years an earnestness of attack on the day's work based on interest that will condition an attitude toward work throughout life.
9. To preserve the sensitiveness to incoming sensations and the freedom and courage in creative production that a child brings when he enters school.

Inherent in all the forgoing topics are the underlying principles that education is growth of the entire personality and that all preparation for future living is based on living day by day. We feel that nothing is more important in these early years than the discovery of individual problems and a beginning in their adjustment.

5. Violations of Policies

Violations of Policy – Investigation & Resolution Procedure

In the event a parent or staff member observes a violation of specific provision of Tucson Community School Bylaws, policies, procedures, state and federal regulations and/or accreditation standards, the following procedure can be followed to investigate and resolve the matter. If any individual involved does not wish to have the Director involved, the President of the Board will fulfill the Director's duties as listed in the following procedure. Please note, all formal and applicable Bylaws, policies, procedures, state and federal regulations and/or accreditation standards will be considered and followed when following this procedure.

All individuals involved in the matters of this procedure will be asked and expected to keep the procedure confidential.

Procedure

1. The observed violation shall be described in writing to the Director. The letter should contain the following information:
 - a. Name and Contact Information
 - b. A detailed description of the observed violation (date, time, actions occurred, location, etc.)
 - c. Identified bylaws, policies, procedures, state, and federal regulations and/or accreditation standards that you believe has been misapplied, misinterpreted, or violated.
 - d. Description of the specific resolution desired.
2. An investigation and verbal discussion with any applicable individuals will first be facilitated by the Director regarding the violation of the applicable policy, procedure, or other regulation. Within thirty (30) days, the Director will carefully review the information gathered from the investigation and will communicate closure to the matter to all individuals involved. The investigation and final determination will be documented in writing and kept confidential. If applicable, all individuals will be held accountable to the final determination. If no final determination is found, the reason will also be documented.
3. If the final determination is not satisfactory to the individuals involved, the Director and the President of the Board of Directors will meet within seven (7) days of the date of the final determination closure meeting (in step 1 above) with all individuals involved to discuss the investigation and to mediate a resolution. The investigation and final determination will be documented in writing and kept confidential. If applicable, all

individuals will be held accountable to the final determination. If no final determination is found, the reason will also be documented.

4. If the final determination is not satisfactory to the individuals involved, all documentation from the prior attempts at resolution will be presented to the Board of Director for their review. The Board of Directors will meet in Executive Session within fourteen (14) days of the date of the final determination meeting (in step 2 above) to discuss the investigation and make a final determination. The individuals involved reserve the right to present any relevant information to the Board of Directors and must inform the Director and/or President of the Board within five (5) days after the date of the final determination meeting (in step 2 above) that they wish to do so.

The Board of Directors reserves the right to extend the date of the Executive Session depending on the availability of the Board of Director Members, the school calendar and whether outside counsel needs to be obtained to insure all formal and applicable Bylaws, policies, procedures, state and federal regulations and/or NAEYC accreditation standards are being considered and followed. The Board of Directors will vote on the final determination to the investigation. The investigation and final determination will be documented in writing and kept confidential. The Board of Directors shall provide a statement to the individuals involved within seven (7) days of the meeting. All parties will be held accountable to the agreed upon resolution. The decision made by the Board of Directors will be considered the final course of action via this investigation and resolution procedure.

This handbook was last modified by the Educational Director on August 1, 2023. Please direct any questions related to the TCS policies and procedures to Stephanie Castillo-Leon.