

ESL Parent Handbook  
2021-22



# TUSCALOOSA CITY SCHOOLS ESL Parent Handbook



Mike Daria, Superintendent  
James Pope, Deputy Superintendent  
Vertis Giles-Brown, Federal Programs Director  
Kristi Garcia, Administrator of English Learners

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Definitions.....	3
Tuscaloosa City Schools.....	3
Telephone numbers & Mailing Addresses of Schools.....	4 -5
School Staff.....	6
Transportation.....	7
Free/Reduced Breakfast and Lunch.....	7
After-School Programs.....	7
School Supply List .....	7
School Hours .....	7
School Year and Calendar.....	7-8
School Attendance Policies .....	8
Behavior at School .....	8
Extracurricular Activities .....	8
Field Trips .....	9
PTA / PTSA .....	9
Parent/Teacher Conferences and Communication.....	9
Community Resources.....	9
Communication in Other Languages.....	10
English as a Second Language Program and Websites.....	10-11

## Introduction

### *Welcome to the Tuscaloosa City School System!*

Our district is happy that your child (or children) will be studying in our schools. As a family who is new to Tuscaloosa, Alabama, and perhaps to the United States, you may have questions about the American school system and about your child's school in particular. Hopefully, this handbook will answer your questions or give you information on additional assistance.

## Definitions

ESL - English as a Second Language. The ESL Program will assist your child in learning English during the regular school day.

ELL or EL - English Language Learner or English Learner. If your child learned another language before learning English, then your child might be considered an English Language Learner (ELL).

LEP - Limited-English Proficient. If your child is LEP, he/she will receive services as needed to assist with acquisition of the English language.

## Tuscaloosa City Schools

There are more than twenty schools in the Tuscaloosa City School System. They are **public schools** and are available to all children who live within the Tuscaloosa city limits.

In Tuscaloosa, there are residential **school zones**. These are areas of the city designated to each school. The neighborhood your family lives in will be included in a school zone. Your child (children) must attend the school in your residential school zone.

There are three age groups for schools. **Elementary schools** serve pre-kindergarten through fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) grade. **Middle schools** serve sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) through eighth (8<sup>th</sup>) grades. **High schools** serve ninth (9<sup>th</sup>) through twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>) grades.

ESL Parent Handbook  
2021-22

**School Telephone Numbers and Mailing Addresses**

<b>Alberta Performing Arts School</b> 2700 University Blvd. East	<b>759-3564</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35404
<b>Arcadia Elementary School</b> 3740 Arcadia Drive	<b>759-3567</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35404
<b>Bryant High School</b> 6315 Mary Harmon Bryant Dr.	<b>759-3538</b> Cottondale, AL 35453
<b>Central Elementary School</b> 1510 30 <sup>th</sup> Avenue	<b>759-3570</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
<b>Central High School</b> 905 15 <sup>th</sup> Street	<b>759-3720</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
<b>Eastwood Middle School</b> 6314 Mary Harmon Bryant Dr.	<b>759-3613</b> Cottondale, AL 35453
<b>Martin Luther King Elementary</b> 2430 MLK JR Blvd.	<b>759-3619</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
<b>Northridge High School</b> 2901 Northridge Road	<b>759-3590</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35406
<b>Northridge Middle</b> 3811 Northridge Road	<b>759-3578</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35406
<b>STARS/Success Prep</b> 3834 21 <sup>st</sup> St.	<b>759-3629</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
<b>Oakdale Primary School</b> 5001 25 <sup>th</sup> Street	<b>759-3626</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
<b>Rock Quarry Elementary</b> 2000 Rock Quarry Drive	<b>759-8347</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35406
<b>Skyland Elementary School</b> 408 Skyland Blvd.	<b>759-3638</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35405

**ESL Parent Handbook**  
2021-22

<b>Southview Elementary School</b> 2601 Southview Drive	<b>345-1325</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35405
<b>Tuscaloosa Career &amp; Technology Academy</b> 2800 MLK, Jr. Blvd.	<b>759-3649</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
<b>Tuscaloosa Elementary Magnet School</b> 315 McFarland Blvd. East	<b>759-3653</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35404
<b>Tuscaloosa Middle Magnet School</b> 315 McFarland Blvd. East	<b>759-3653</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35404
<b>University Place Elementary School</b> 2000 First Avenue	<b>759-3664</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
<b>Verner Elementary School</b> 2701 Northridge Road	<b>759-3667</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35406
<b>Westlawn Middle School</b> 1715 MLK JR Blvd.	<b>759-3673</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35401
<b>Woodland Forrest Elementary</b> 6001 Hargrove Road East	<b>759-3675</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35405
<b>*Transportation Department</b> 1302 James I Harrison Parkway East	<b>247-2400</b> Tuscaloosa, AL 35405

**ESL Parent Handbook**  
2021-22

**School Staff**

Every school has certain employees who work only at that specific school. Some employees travel between schools, such as nurses, art teachers, music teachers, speech teachers, social workers and ESL specialists/coaches. You can expect to see the following employees at your child's school:

Principal – Provides leadership to his/her faculty and staff to best serve the needs of the school's students.

Assistant Principal – assists the principal with administrative duties. The assistant principal provides leadership to faculty, staff and students.

Secretary/Bookkeeper - keeps records on each student and for all school business. The secretary may also help new families register for school.

Registrar – works in the high school and enrolls new students.

Teacher – In elementary schools, most students have no more than 3 teachers. In middle and high schools, your child will change classrooms for every subject and have between 4 and 6 teachers.

Instructional Coach – works with classroom teachers to provide guidance with teaching and learning.

Librarian /Media Specialist – teaches your child about the library; helps your child check out books, search the Internet, and research topics for school assignments.

Counselor – schedules classes for middle and high schools and coordinates standardized testing procedures in each school. Counselors in all schools assist students with academic and social needs.

Custodian – maintains the school building's cleanliness.

Cafeteria Staff – cooks and serves breakfast and lunch for students and school employees.

Nurse – takes care of children who get sick at school. Administers medications if forms are completed by doctors and parents. Some schools have a nurse only part of the day.

Social Worker - creates a link between the home and school. The social worker will use community agencies as needed to support families in the district.

ESL Specialist – provides academic guidance to teachers with ELLs. Coordinates the administration of English language proficiency tests and assists students and families as needed with assimilation to the district.

**ESL Parent Handbook**  
2021-22

**Transportation**

Tuscaloosa City Schools will provide free bus transportation to and from your child's school, if you live at least 2 miles from your school. The yellow school bus will pick up your child near your home and drop off your child at the same location. The telephone number for the transportation department is: 205-247-2400.

**Free/Reduced Breakfast and Lunch**

It is possible for your child to receive free school lunches and breakfasts, or pay a reduced price. This will depend on your income. If you think you might qualify, you must fill out a form as soon as your child begins school. School lunch forms are available in English and Spanish. If you need an interpreter to work with you to complete the form, please tell the school office.

**After-School Programs**

Some elementary schools offer a service where the children may stay at school in the afternoons with adult supervision. Each school charges its own fee and some programs are free. Talk with your school about this service. Some middle and high schools have after school tutoring. You will need to talk with your school's office to get information.

**School Supply List**

The school supply list provides a list of school materials that your child needs at school. You may get one at the school or on the school's website. Sometimes you may find these lists at local stores.

**School Hours**

The school day begins at approximately 8:00AM. If a student arrives after 8:00AM, a parent must sign in at the school office, and the student is given a pass to class. Elementary school students are dismissed at 2:40 p.m. Middle school students are dismissed at 3:10 p.m. High school students start school at 8:25 and are dismissed at 3:45 p.m.

**School Year**

The school year has approximately 180 days. Exact dates for beginning and ending school will vary from year to year. However, typically, school begins in early August and ends in late May.

**School Calendar**

With the exception of August, there is at least one vacation day during each month of the school year. Some vacation days are "weather days." If schools close for bad

## **ESL Parent Handbook** 2021-22

weather, then the “weather” days will be substituted for the unexpectedly missed school days.

August – First day of school 8/12/21

September – Labor Day (no school) 9/6/21

October – Fall Break Holiday (no school) 10/15/21

October – E-learning Day (no students on campus) 10/18/21

November – Veterans Day (no school) 11/11/21

November – Thanksgiving Week (no school) 11/22 to 11/26/21

December – Half Day for students 12/17/21

December – Winter Break (no school) 12/20/2021 - 12/31/22

January – Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday (no school) 01/17/22

February – President’s Day (no school) 02/21/22

March – Spring Break Week (no school) 03/14 to 03/18/22

April – E-learning day (no students on campus) 04/08/22

April – Spring Holiday 04/11/22

May – Half days for students 5/25 and 5/26 & May 26 is last day for students

### **School Attendance Policies**

- In Alabama, it is mandatory for your child to attend a public, private or approved home school between the ages of six (6) and seventeen (17). Parents are legally responsible for children between these ages who do not attend school on a regular basis.
  
- If your child is sick and does not attend school, you should ask your doctor for a written excuse, or write a note to the teacher yourself. Your child should give this note or excuse to the teacher the first day your child returns to school.

### **Behavior at School**

Please read the “Parent/Student Code of Student Conduct and Resource Guide/Drug Screening Policy” to learn what teachers and schools expect from their students. This guide will explain consequences for student behavior that is not acceptable. The parents/guardians will be called to the school as needed. This guide is available in English and Spanish. If you need an interpreter to assist you with the guidebook in another language, please alert your school office.

### **Extracurricular Activities**

Students may participate in activities that take place after school. These activities include school sports (soccer, basketball, football, volleyball or baseball), chorus, marching band programs, cheerleading, and clubs, such as the Spanish club, the Key club or the Career Technical club. Families are responsible for transportation for these activities, and there is often a fee. Please check with your school for try-out dates for sports.



**ESL Parent Handbook**  
2021-22

**Field Trips**

Teachers use field trips as a learning experience outside the classroom to complement their course of study. Field trips usually take place during the school day and often require money to pay for tickets and transportation. Before your child can participate, you must always sign a permission slip.

**PTA/PTSA**

PTA stands for *Parent-Teacher Association*. PTSA stands for *Parent-Teacher-Student Association*. Every school has this organization. Many PTA/PTSA meetings are held on the first Tuesday of every month, but your school will send home written announcements of meetings. These meetings are an opportunity for teachers and parents to meet and talk informally. Parents are encouraged to volunteer at the school. There are many ways to help your child's school. Please see your child's office administration to complete the required documents to volunteer. Interpreters are available upon request.

**Parent/Teacher Conferences**

Elementary school teachers will ask parents to come to the school several times during the year to talk about the child's progress. Sometimes there may be a problem the teacher would like to discuss with the parents. It is important to know that school employees believe that parents are the experts on their child. Therefore, teachers respect and appreciate what parents say about their children. Teachers will work together with parents to solve problems. In addition, parent meetings are sometimes necessary at the secondary level. Please request an interpreter if needed.

**Community Resources**

The Tuscaloosa City Schools District partners with many community organizations. Specifically, the ESL Department works closely with the Center for Community-Based Partnerships with the University of Alabama. This partnership provides enriching experiences and resources for our ESL families. The Global Café, Hispanic Parent Teacher Leadership Academy, and a language lab are a few of the services provided by this partnership.

Shelton State Community College and several local churches offer free ESL classes for adults.

The Tuscaloosa Public Library offers many free resources and programs. Parents may use the computers once approved for a library card. Duolingo is another free web-based language learning program available where internet is accessible.

**ESL Parent Handbook**  
2021-22

**Communication in Other Languages**

The Tuscaloosa City Schools values communication with all parents. In an effort to better communicate with families who speak languages other than English, the district offers **Language Line Services at all locations**. If you need to communicate with your child's school and are non-English speaking, please ask for Language Line Services so an interpreter can be provided. Parents will need to tell the school employee their native language in order to get an appropriate interpreter. Parents may use this service in person or via telephone. If a parent needs to use the service via telephone, simply call the school, provide the native language and ask for Language Line. The secretary will place you on hold while Language Line is contacted.

TransAct and other translation companies will be used by school/district personnel whenever possible to send home school documents in languages other than English.

In addition to the above services, the school district employs several bilingual staff members who are able to assist families as needed.

**English as a Second Language Program**

Please refer to the English as a Second Language Plan for detailed information. The ESL Plan is updated each year by the district advisory committee and distributed to each school. In addition, it is posted on the TCS ESL Webpage. If you would like to receive a printed copy, please alert your school office.

When a new student enrolls, the parents must complete a Home Language Survey to determine if a language other than English is spoken in the home. The ESL Department receives this document only if the parents list a language other than English. The ESL Specialist will then administer an English proficiency exam (W-APT/ Screener or MODEL) to determine if the child will need to participate in our language development program.

English Language Learners are placed in the regular classroom and learn English through the ESL Model. This is the core language development program for our students. In addition, some students receive Title III supplemental services as needed. Title III services could include, but are not limited to the following: computer programs, tutoring or summer programs. Parents have the right to waive these services. Parents must complete the waiver and contact the ESL Administrator if they want to waive/change Title III supplemental services for their child.

The WIDA proficiency scale ranges from 1-6. Once a student reaches a 4.8 on the state language proficiency exam (ACCESS for ELLs), he/she will exit the ESL program. After that, the student will be monitored by the ESL Department for two years.

## ESL Parent Handbook

2021-22

If a child receives special education services and is also limited-English proficient, the ESL team and the IEP team will work together to ensure the student receives both of these services.

### What Can Parents Do?

Parents are encouraged to read to their children in their native language. Many literacy skills transfer from one language to another. This means that once your child learns to read in his/her native language, he/she will be able to apply these skills when learning English. Knowing two languages is very useful today. Many children lose much of their native language when growing up in the United States. With support from parents, children can become fluent in not just one language, but two!

### Helpful Websites

[www.tuscaloosacityschool.com](http://www.tuscaloosacityschool.com) (ESL page is located under Teaching and Learning and the Federal Programs)

[www.colorincolorado.org](http://www.colorincolorado.org) - Provides a wealth of information on teaching/learning English

<https://wida.wisc.edu/> - standards and assessments for ELLs in Alabama and many other states

[www.readingrockets.org](http://www.readingrockets.org) - resources for English language learners, parents and educators

[www.starfall.com](http://www.starfall.com) - learn to read with phonics

<http://www.avl.lib.al.us/> - Alabama Virtual Library

[www.eslcafe.com](http://www.eslcafe.com) - ESL Resources