

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

FROM TUCKER PARENTS

Welcome to Samuel Tucker Elementary! We hope this sheet answers all your questions.

Main Office Phone: 703-933-6300 School Website: www.acps.k12.va.us/Tucker

What defines Samuel Tucker Elementary?

- Our school was named in memory of Samuel Wilbert Tucker (1913-1990), a distinguished lawyer and civil rights activist who was born and raised in Alexandria.
- Our school colors are blue, green and white.
- Our school mascot is the tiger.
- Our motto is, "Tucker Elementary...A proud tradition, a great future."

Is there a uniform?

- We do not require school uniforms; however, students shall wear seasonably appropriate clothing for learning and playing.
- Clothing with inappropriate slogans and/or graphics is not permitted.
- Tank tops and athletic jerseys must be worn with a T-shirt underneath.
- Shorts and skirts are not to be shorter than the end of your child's fingertips when their arms are relaxed at the side.
- Your child will have one encore class each day of the week. Kindergarten through third grade has one day for Art, Music and Library, and two days for Physical Education (PE). Fourth and fifth grade have one day for Art and two days each for Music and PE. Teachers will provide a schedule for you in your child's homework folder. Sandals and flip-flops may not be worn during PE class for safety reasons. Your child will not be permitted to participate in PE without sneakers/athletic shoes.

What supplies does my child need?

- A list of supplies for each grade level may be found on the "About Our School" page of our website.
- Some supplies will be shared among the whole class, such as glue sticks, tissue boxes, and plastic storage bags, etc.
- Kindergarten and first grade teachers may also ask that your child bring a blanket that will be laid on the floor for Rest Time during the first quarter, as well as a change of clothing for possible accidents. These items will be kept in your child's cubby.
- Activity fees and field trip fees may be required by some grade levels. Your classroom teacher will communicate these fees with you. They may be paid entirely for the year or you may submit a monthly payment. Please submit cash or a check made out to Samuel Tucker Elementary to your classroom teacher.
- Please label items such as jackets, lunch bags, backpacks, etc. with your child's first and last name in the event they misplace it.

What happens to lost items?

- All items that are found are placed in our "Lost & Found" area of the school lobby.
- Every month, PTA members check these items for student names in an attempt to return as many items as possible.
- At the end of each academic quarter all remaining items are donated to Goodwill.
- Students and parents are welcome to check the "Lost & Found" periodically for any missing item(s).

What time does school start and end?

- School doors open at 7:40 AM. Class begins at 8:00 AM and ends at 2:35 PM.
- Students must be in class by 8:00 AM. If the school doors are still open after 8:00 AM, it does not signify your child is not late, and they will be marked tardy in the office.
- If your child arrives early, he/she must wait in the main lobby **with a parent or guardian** until we open our doors, even if your child missed the school bus. There is no staff available to watch your child before the doors open at 7:40 AM.
- Breakfast is not mandatory, but is available to all students in the cafeteria for purchase from 7:40-8:00 AM. A student who has not had breakfast before coming to school will be provided time for a meal before going to class, regardless of the time, as long as lunch is not already being served.
- Students are dismissed at 12:35 PM on school days marked for early dismissal. Please refer to the MODIFIED school calendar for specific dates. Students enrolled in the Campagna Kids after-school program will be dismissed to Campagna at 12:35 PM. Lunch times will be altered; please refer to the "Schedules" page of our website for our lunch schedules.

What if my child is late for school?

- If your child arrives after 8:00 AM, **park your car in a designated space** and walk him/her into the main office.
- Sign in your child on the office computer for a tardy pass to print. **DO NOT LEAVE YOUR CAR UNATTENDED IN THE FIRE LANE.**
- It is important to get your child to school on time. Your efforts in doing so each day are appreciated.

How do I drop off my child for school?

- If you are driving, please use the Parent Drop-Off lane on Ferdinand Day Drive after 7:40 AM. Drive as far up the driveway as possible before releasing your child, not in front of the school doors. Do not pass other cars in the driveway. Yield to cars on Ferdinand Day Drive as you exit. **DO NOT** leave your vehicle in the Drop-Off or bus lane; they are **FIRE LANES**.
- Students may only exit vehicles in the Drop-Off lane, **NEVER** in the street or in the bus lane. Staff will be assisting, but students must exit independently once the car has come to a complete stop. Your child may only exit your vehicle on the passenger side.

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- If you are walking in with your child, park your car in the school parking lot off Ferdinand Day Drive or in the Boothe Park lot next to the tennis courts, and walk him/her into the main foyer. If you park in Boothe Park, only park in a designated space, NOT along the fence. Please only use sidewalks and crosswalks when crossing streets.
- You are welcome to walk to the classroom on your child's first day of school. Staff and safety patrols will assist students to their classrooms all other school days.

How do I pick up my child?

- Park your car in a designated space and wait in the main foyer.
- Students will be dismissed from class by their teachers between 2:35 PM and 2:45 PM.
- If you have to make any dismissal changes (e.g.: early pick-up, switching between riding the bus and parent pick-up) you must notify the main office before 11:30 AM the day of the requested change. Please also notify your child's teacher via written note or email 24 hours in advance if you plan on picking up early to have the student prepared to go to the office in a timely manner.
- Students will not be released to any adult that is not listed as an emergency contact in our database nor on your child's emergency card (completed during the first few days of school). Written permission from a parent/guardian is required for the school to release any student to an emergency contact, and they must provide photo identification when picking up your child.

What before-school care and after-school programs are available?

- The Campagna Center has a Campagna Kids program for before-school from 7:15 AM until school begins at 8:00 AM, as well as for after-school from 2:35 PM until 6:00 PM. Their staff is sent to our school to watch your child. This program requires separate registration, which may be done at their main office at 418 S Washington Street, or on their website: <http://www.campagnacenter.org/>. Please contact their main office at 703-549-0111 for more information. When dropping off/picking up your child from this program, NEVER park/stand your vehicle in any school lane. Park in a marked space.
- One Kick is a Tae Kwon Do center located in The Trade Center Shopping Village plaza on S Pickett Street that offers a shuttle service directly from Tucker after school. For more information, visit <http://va.onekickma.com/> or call 703-751-0000.

What happens during inclement weather or emergencies?

- School closing announcements due to inclement weather or emergencies are publicized in the following ways:
 - Website: www.acps.k12.va.us
 - Twitter, Facebook, Storify: @ACPSk12
 - Sign up for email or text alerts: www.alexandriava.gov/eNews
 - ACPS Emergency Hotline: 703-866-5300
 - ACPS-TV (Channel 71 in Alexandria City) and local television and radio stations
- Information is announced as early as possible through the ACPS Office of Communications. If there is no news broadcasted about closings, then schools will open and close at normal times.
- One-hour delayed openings: Classes begin at 9:00 AM. Breakfast is served. There is no morning care with Campagna.
- Two-hour delayed openings: Classes begin at 10:00 AM. Breakfast is NOT served. There is no morning care with Campagna.
- Early closings: ALL students are dismissed at 1:35 PM (one-hour) or at 12:35 PM (two-hour). Campagna after-care is closed. All after-school activities and evening events are canceled.
- When school closes at normal time, but after-school activities are canceled, Campagna closes at 5:00 PM.
- When only evening activities are canceled, Campagna will operate as normal.
- When ACPS schools are closed, Campagna is closed and all after-school activities and evening events are canceled.
- The opening or closing of the federal or Alexandria City government does NOT cause the opening or closing of schools.

How do I report an absence?

- If your child is marked absent, you will receive an automatic phone call from the school asking you to notify the office about the absence. These calls typically are made between 9:30 AM and 10:00 AM. To prevent receiving this call, notify the school by calling the main office between 7:30 AM and 9:00 AM.
- You may also complete the "Report an Absence" form on our website under "Contact Us."
- When your child returns to school, be sure to send a written note, doctor note, or email explaining the absence. If your child returns to school with limited mobility (cast, crutches, etc.) there must be a doctor note stating what activity is allowed for both recess and PE. We require another doctor's note to allow normal activity to resume once your child has improved/healed.
- An absence is considered excused for illnesses, doctor and legal appointments, family emergencies, and religious reasons.
- Please contact your teacher for any work or material needed to complete while at home. If the teacher confirms they will provide it, you may pick up any work from the main office at the end of the school day.
- Planned absences must be approved by the school principal. Your child will be withdrawn from school if absent for more than 15 consecutive school days. You will be required to provide proof of Alexandria City residency again upon return.

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Will my child be riding the school bus?

- All students who live outside of the Cameron Station community are assigned to a school bus according to their home address. A list of bus stops are provided to families from the transportation department before school begins. Please contact their office at 703-461-4169 with any questions about specific bus stops or concerns about drivers, routes, and schedules. You may also contact the transportation department via an online form at <<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/Page/610>>.
- Those within Cameron Station may walk to school using only sidewalks and crosswalks, or bike to school using the bike path along Backlick Run. Crossing guards are located at the intersections where Ferdinand Day Drive meets Harold Second Street and Cameron Station Boulevard.
- Kindergarten students and students with special needs who ride a bus MUST be met at a bus stop in the afternoons by a parent/guardian every day. Families may authorize up to 3 additional adults who are not parents to pick up their child from the bus stop. Please introduce the adults to the bus driver in the morning to be recognized in the afternoon. If no authorized adult is present to receive the student, or if a child, regardless of grade level, does not feel safe exiting the bus, the child will be returned to school for a pick up from the office. Repeated occurrences of the bus returning a child to school will result in the following actions:
 - 1st occurrence: Parents receive transportation letter suggesting to add adults to pick-up authorization list
 - 2nd occurrence: Parents receive another letter, including information about afterschool programs
 - 3rd occurrence: Parents must provide proof of city residency within 30 days. School bus service is suspended for the first 5 days of the 30 days, unless acceptable residency documents are provided immediately.
 - 4th occurrence: School informs Child Protective Services
- All kindergarten students who ride a bus will receive a bright green “K” sticker. This sticker alerts the bus driver that an adult must meet that child at the bus stop for pick-up daily.
- If you need to request a different bus stop or specialized transportation due to child care or other needs, please complete a bus change form in the main office. All requests will be processed within three school days.
- Please send a written, dated, and signed note to the office before 11:30 AM if your child should ride home with another student. The other student’s parent/guardian should be aware of this change, as well.
- Arrive at your assigned bus stop five to ten minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. School buses will not return to the bus stop for students that missed it in the morning. Please make arrangements for the transport of your child to school in the event your child misses the bus.
- All items lost on a bus will be held by the school bus driver if you call Transportation with a complete description of the item.

How can I best contact my child’s teacher?

- You will get a chance to talk to the teacher and learn how your child is doing in class during the Parent-Teacher conferences held at the end of the first and second academic quarters. Teachers will reach out to you to schedule a time to meet.
- You may contact teachers during school hours by leaving a voicemail or a message through the main office at 703-933-6300.
- You may email teachers; emails may be found on the “Tucker Staff” page of our website.
- You may also send a written note to your teacher in your child’s homework folder or agenda.
- School and/or PTA notices and important information will be sent home in your child’s homework folder, as well as in emails.
- Please be aware that teachers may need 24 hours to return your call or reply to your email as they are teaching your child during the school day.
- Please answer calls you receive from phone numbers beginning with 703-933-63___. If you missed a call, listen to the voicemail before calling the school. This will help the main office staff refer you to the person who attempted to call you.

How does lunch work?

- Your child will go to the school cafeteria for lunch each day where they may bring lunch from home or buy it from the cafeteria.
- Students may receive free or reduced price meals if family income meets eligibility requirements. To become eligible for this program, a form must be completed EVERY year. You will receive a hard copy of the form on your child’s first day of school, or you may complete one at < <https://schoolmealapp.com/>>.
- Do not bring or pack any restaurant food for your child’s lunch (McDonald’s, Chipotle, Panera, Subway, carry-out, etc.).
- If your child has any allergies or food restrictions, notify the cafeteria manager to place an alert on their account.
- Each child is assigned their own lunch account and PIN that is used each time your child buys food from the cafeteria (snacks cost extra even for free/reduced price meal accounts), and the amount of their meal will be deducted from their account. Families are notified by an automated message when accounts are low.
- You may prepay for your child’s meals by submitting cash or a check to the school cafeteria made out to Samuel Tucker Elementary Food Services. Please place it in an envelope marked clearly with your student’s name, PIN, teacher’s name, the amount and the check number. Turn in prepaid deposits to the cafeteria cashier or school office. All cash payments will be completely added to the student’s account; no change will be provided, so make sure to submit the exact amounts desired.

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- You may also prepay via card by setting up an account on <<https://schoolcafe.com>>. You will need to retrieve your child's student ID number from the school to access their account (this number is not their lunch PIN number). It may take up to 48 hours for the deposit to process, so be sure to send food or money with your child until the transaction processes.
- Lunchtime is open to parents and guardians, however recess is not.
 - Please notify the office to retrieve a visitor sticker, and return to the office once lunch has ended.
 - Do not visit classrooms or other parts of the building without asking the main office.
 - Please keep your electronic devices in your purse or pocket.
 - Allow your child to sit and eat independently.
 - We suggest not visiting every day for lunch, as students are learning at all times of the day. We reinforce social skills, turn taking, and fine motor skills even during lunch and recess.
- We have peanut-free tables in the cafeteria where students with peanut allergies sit.

How do I deliver items to my child's classroom?

- If your child forgets an item at home, they may be dropped off with office staff, and they will make sure it gets delivered to the classroom directly by staff, or your child will retrieve it from the office when there is a free moment in their schedule.
- Teaching your child how to be responsible for their personal items will help them to be more successful in their school career.

How are birthdays celebrated?

- Names of students with a birthday are displayed on classroom TVs at the end of the daily morning announcements. Birthdays over the weekend are typically celebrated on Fridays at school.
- Each student will receive a paper birthday crown to wear throughout the day.
- Do not bring balloons, food, or sweets to school. These items are prohibited due to our wellness policy. You are welcome to provide party favors for your child's class, including pencils, stickers, and the like.
- If you send invitations to school for a private birthday party, please invite all students in your child's class.

Do you celebrate holidays?

- Teachers may incorporate holidays into classroom activities. Please contact your child's teacher if you are concerned about content during holidays.
- Students are not allowed to wear costumes or pajamas to school unless it is a designated fun day notified by your teacher.
- If your child brings Valentine's Day cards, they must bring one for every student in the class. Your child's teacher will provide a list of the children's first names. Candy is prohibited as part of a valentine for students.

How does my child receive Talented and Gifted (TAG) services?

- Parents or teachers may refer your child for TAG services. Eligibility requires a teacher observation and a gifted rating scale.
- The first quarter of school, or first 30 days your child attends school, is the best time for a teacher to observe your child, as well as for your child to get accustomed to our school routines. Please visit <<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/tag>> for more information.

What is the Modified Calendar and Intersession?

- The modified calendar means we have an abbreviated summer break (school begins in August), so we offer extended learning breaks twice during the school year. These breaks are called "Intersession," and they are not mandatory for students to attend.
- Your child's grades and attendance will not be affected during this program. All regular school hours and rules remain in effect.
- Remediation classes are offered for students referred by the teacher to attend. All other classes offered are for enrichment.
- The fee to attend Intersession is \$125 (\$10 if your child receives free/reduced meals). Payments are due when packets are sent home, which includes the registration form and class descriptions. If not attending, students must stay home for the 2 weeks.

What happens if my child has an emergency at school?

- Our school nurse assists with all medical emergencies during school hours. The school will call 911 for an ambulance, when necessary. We will also notify you immediately of any major concern. Keep your contact information updated at all times.
- Minor falls and visits to the school nurse will be reported to you via paper or a phone call by the end of the school day.

What is the Tucker PTA?

- The PTA is our Parent Teacher Association that supports everyone at Tucker and sponsors many school events designed to foster community spirit. You may join and/or contact the PTA by emailing them at <TuckerTigersRoar@gmail.com>.
- By joining the PTA, you will receive emails and discounts for activities within the school throughout the school year.
- Monthly PTA meetings are held at the school with our administrative team to answer any questions or concerns about our school, as well as communicating information about upcoming events.

How can I be more involved or volunteer?

- There are many opportunities to work with students in and out of the classroom. If you are interested in volunteering in the school (tutoring, helping in the classroom, library, etc.), please contact your classroom teacher; call the Office of School, Business and Community Partnerships at 703-619-8055; or visit <<https://www.acps.k12.va.us/Page/575>> for more information.