

# Tropical Elementary School Parent/Student Handbook 2025-2026



The Parent/Student Handbook is a reference about the specific policies and procedures of our school. Our expectation is that parents will review the Student-Parent Handbook with their child(ren). For those parents who do not have access to the internet, you may sign in at our office and utilize one of the school computers to read the handbook or you may read a printed copy in the office.

The handbook contents are arranged alphabetically by main subject. The handbook contains general information about the school and our policies and procedures. Additional information will be provided to you through our newsletter, the Tropical Times, website, and through our Parent Link telephone and email system.

You are always welcome to contact your child's teacher or our school office regarding any questions you may have about Tropical Elementary. We hope that each of you plan to stay informed and involved in your child's education throughout the year. Your participation is most appreciated and will positively affect your child's success and enthusiasm for the school and learning. We look forward to working with you to provide a positive, safe, and productive learning environment for your child. We know it will be a wonderful year!

## AFTER SCHOOL CARE PROGRAM

The Tropical administration and staff will continue to operate our own After School Care Program for the 2025-2026 school year. The aftercare program operates from dismissal to 6:10 p.m. The program operates on all school days including early release days and is open to all Tropical Elementary students. The aftercare tuition fee is \$240.00 (per period), and a \$12 activity fee (per period). Our pay period schedule can be found on our website. There is a \$30 registration fee per student. All payments should be made on the Broward E-store.

All applications are to be submitted PRIOR to a payment being made. The website to complete the registration application is [browardschools.com/bascc](https://www.browardschools.com/bascc).

Parents may call (754) 323-7751 between 2:25 p.m. and 6:10 p.m. to speak directly with our site director, Ms. Alexis Lindholm. Aftercare voicemail is available during the school day and afterhours. Please go to our website at <https://www.browardschools.com/tropical> for additional information, or to view our Tropical Child Care (TCC) handbook.

## ARRIVAL

The school day begins at the 8:25 a.m. tardy bell. We ask that you encourage the good lifetime habit of promptness by ensuring your child is in class by 8:25 a.m. Students who are not in class before the tardy bell must enter the building through the front office accompanied by an adult to receive a late pass before proceeding to class. (For more information on the Tardy Policy, see the "Tardiness" section).

ESPs and other staff members provide outside supervision immediately before school in the morning. Students should arrive at school between 7:55 a.m. and 8:15 a.m. **There is no outside supervision before 7:55 a.m. Please do not leave your child on school grounds before this time.**

When arriving at school, students line up at their designated area. All students will line up inside the building near their classroom door until the entry bell at 8:17 a.m. Upon entering the building, students must go directly to their classroom and prepare for morning activities and announcements.

Parents are encouraged to use either the west or south drive to drop off their children in the morning. All students who arrive in the south car loop have permission to enter through any of the east doors and walk through the building to get to their class. Patrols will be available to assist younger children getting to their classrooms. **Never use the north parking lot as a drop off area as this is unsafe and is prohibited.** The north lot is for staff parking. Parents that are here to volunteer or participate in a conference must utilize the visitor parking spots in the front of the school or across the street on the swell.

## ATTENDANCE

Regular school attendance is vitally important to a student's academic achievement. For that reason, and in order to meet a requirement set by the state, the district's attendance policy has been approved by the Broward County School Board and is enforced at Tropical Elementary.

**Both excused and unexcused absences along with tardiness and early sign-outs will be counted when determining a student's pattern of non-attendance.**

A student will have a "pattern of non-attendance" if he or she is absent from school a total of 30 hours (5 days) in anyone marking period or 60 hours (10 days) within 90 days. If it is determined by the school that a student has developed a "pattern of non-attendance," sanctions may be imposed. Sanctions may range, for an elementary age student, from having his or her report card withheld if they were in school for less than 25 days in a marking period, to the child's parent being required to appear before the state attorney or in court.

Regular school attendance is important to a child's success in school. No amount of make-up classwork can substitute for the instruction and interaction provided during the school day. According to Florida State Statutes and School Board Policy 5.5, all students enrolled in grades K-12 must be in regular attendance. This policy also states that school staff members have a right to request acceptable documentation in order to excuse an absence. **In cases of excessive absences (usually after ten absences), acceptable documentation such as a doctor's note with specific dates of absence and the reason for the absence will be required to excuse the absence.**

Attendance procedures are explained thoroughly in the district's *Elementary Code of Student Conduct*. The attendance procedures state that, "parents must report the absence the day before, the day of, or within two school days following the absence or the absence will be considered unexcused". Any absence is unexcused until the school receives an email, absentee form, or a note excusing the absence. A reason for the absence must be provided and absences can only be excused for one of the eight School Board allowed reasons for absence. Some situations will require written documentation from a physician or public health unit.

**Absences must be reported by a parent via email, written note, or report an absence on our website under the Contact tab (must complete and submit absentee form).** The report must give the child's name, their teacher, the date(s) of the absence and the reason. Tropical's attendance email is [tropicalattendance@browardschools.com](mailto:tropicalattendance@browardschools.com).

### **ATTENDANCE-BTIP**

The School Board of Broward County, Florida in partnership with the Broward County State Attorney's Office has continued to work in partnership with the Broward Truancy Intervention Program (BTIP). The intent of the program is to prevent truancy (unexcused absences) and excessive absences. Your child's attendance will be monitored daily and unexcused absences will be reported to you. Should your child have a series of unexcused absences, the State Attorney's Office will automatically be notified, and they will issue a subpoena for your child's records. An electronic letter will automatically be sent from the Broward County School Board after the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence. These letters have a serious tone and are of serious nature.

### **BEFORE CARE SCHOOL PROGRAM**

The Tropical administration and staff will continue to operate our own Before School Care Program for the 2025-2026 school year. The program operates on all school days and is open to all Tropical Elementary students. The before care program operates from 6:55 a.m. until 7:55 a.m. Before care cost is \$63 per period. There is a \$30 registration fee per student. Payments can be made on the Broward E-store. For additional information on our before and after care program, please view our Tropical Child Care (TCC) handbook online on our website at <https://www.browardschools.com/tropical>.

All applications are to be submitted PRIOR to a payment being made. The website to complete the registration application is [browardschools.com/bascc](http://browardschools.com/bascc)

### **BICYCLE RIDING/BICYCLE SAFETY**

Please review safe bicycle riding procedures with your child and plan a safe bicycle route to school, which your child should follow daily. **By law, children under the age of sixteen are required to wear a bicycle helmet.**

Students who ride bicycles to school should walk them when on campus and park their bikes in our bicycle compound located in the front of the school (outside the art room). Although the bicycle compound is locked during the school day, children should always use an individual bicycle lock to secure their bicycles.

Students should travel directly to and from school daily following the route selected by their parents. Students should ride bicycles in groups whenever possible and should avoid any contact with strangers. Review with your child the safest route to and from school.

## **BUS TRANSPORTATION**

Bus transportation is available to students who live two or more miles from the school or students who must cross a hazardous intersection such as those along University Drive. Students that qualify for bus transportation may obtain their bus pass on FOCUS utilizing the student log or parent log in information. Students are to ride only the bus to which they have been assigned and may not ride another bus. Non-bus riders may not ride home with friends who are bus riders. Drivers have a current roster of students assigned to their bus. Buses will use the bus loop around the north staff parking lot. This loop is reserved for buses only.

Transportation schedules traditionally fluctuate somewhat during the first few weeks of school. Bus stops may be created or adjusted. The pick-up and drop-off times provided on the bus schedule might not be exact as a result of these adjustments. When the school is informed of any changes, we will immediately share that information with the affected students. Should you have questions about transportation, we ask that you call our office or our bus coordinator, Ms. Jesscia Bilinsky, for information and we will try to assist you.

While students are on the bus, they must adhere to all rules as stated in the *Elementary Code of Student Conduct*. Students are responsible for their behavior while riding the bus, just as they are while in their classroom. **Dangerous or continuous misbehavior will result in a bus referral(s) and may result in the loss of bus riding privileges.** Should students lose their bus riding privilege, they are still required to attend school, and parents are responsible for transportation.

Parents may visit <https://www.browardschools.com/register2ride> to register their students to ride the school bus.

Transportation information and bus passes can be found on FOCUS under the transportation section.

## **CAFETERIA**

Breakfast is served in the cafeteria from 7:55 a.m. to 8:20 a.m. Students who eat breakfast at school are expected to be in their classes by the tardy bell at 8:25 a.m. Breakfast will be free this year to all our students. Lunch will cost \$3.00. The Free and Reduced-Price meal application is available online at [www.myschoolapps.com](http://www.myschoolapps.com)

Each day, a hot lunch is available to students in the cafeteria. Students may bring lunch from home, but all students are required to eat lunch in the cafeteria with their class. A thirty-minute lunch period is provided for students. **Two volunteered approved parents (siblings are not allowed on campus) may join their child for lunch to celebrate their birthday.** Please enter the building through the front office to obtain a visitor's pass. Due to time constraints and busyness in the cafeteria, please keep student birthdays minimal. **We ask that you do not bring any balloons, flowers or outside food into the cafeteria (for example McDonalds, Subway, etc.). You may bring EITHER commercially brought cookies, cupcakes, or donuts. Items must be commercially/store-front bought.** Please include enough for just your child's class. Do not give out extras to students in other classes. Your cooperation in following these guidelines allows us to continue honoring birthdays during the school day while minimizing the impact to instruction and supervision. You can then reserve the grander events for your private time at home and after school. Thank you for your cooperation. Parents are HIGHLY ENCOURAGED to add money to their child's school meal accounts online using [www.myschoolbucks.com](http://www.myschoolbucks.com). This website accepts credit cards for payment in the student meal account. Once you register, you are also able to view your child's meal activity, and you can set up low balance alerts. There

is a small processing fee at checkout. You may also pre-pay for your child's Ala carte selections by sending in cash or a check made out to Tropical Elementary.

**CAFETERIA MEAL PRICES**

Breakfast	FREE FOR ALL STUDENTS!
Student Lunch	\$3.00
Adult lunch \$4.75	Adult Breakfast \$1.80
Milk 50¢	Ice Cream - \$1.00 (Wednesday Only)
Water 75¢	
Pop tarts \$1.00	

Additional a la carte items such as Pop tart, Cheez-its, and Doritos are also available for purchase for approximately \$.75 - \$1.00 each. In addition, students may purchase another entrée, such as double chicken nuggets, for an additional charge.

**\*Food Deliveries from outside facilities will not be accepted for students.**

All students will be issued a lunch card with a "bar code" on it at the beginning of the school year. Students must utilize their lunch card for all cafeteria purchases. Please make sure your child remembers lunch money each day or pre-pay in advance. When student account balances get down to approximately \$6.00, cashiers will remind the student to bring in more money to increase their account balance. If students have forgotten their money or have run their account to zero, as a matter of student wellbeing, they will be permitted to temporarily charge. This charge must be repaid. Students will not be able to charge again unless this charge has been repaid.

**CAFETERIA-MEALS FROM HOME**

Please help us foster healthy eating habits by packing a healthy lunch. We strongly discourage soft drinks and heavily sugar-laden sports drinks. For safety reasons, cans and glass are prohibited. Please pack bottled water or a healthy, real juice drink. Candy at school is prohibited unless it is an approved special occasion such as a class party.

**Tropical may not accept food deliveries from outside food facilities. This policy is strictly enforced.**

**CHARACTER EDUCATION**

The School Board will continue a program emphasizing eight-character traits to be infused into the curriculum throughout the year to promote character development. These character traits are as follows: cooperation, responsibility, citizenship, kindness, respect, honesty, self-control, and tolerance. Throughout the year, we will emphasize these qualities, focusing on one character trait each month. Working together, we can help ensure that our children grow up understanding the importance of these traits in making the world a better place for everyone.

**CLINIC**

The parent/ guardian consent for school services form must be completed and returned to the clinic if you wish and consent for your child to receive any health services in the school clinic. This form will be sent home in the first day packet and can be found on our website under the Students and Parents tab.

The clinic, which is located in the front office, is available for minor first-aid only. For the health and safety of others, sick children must stay home, and we ask that children who become sick at school be picked up as soon as possible. In the event that it becomes necessary to send a child home and a parent cannot pick up the child, an emergency contact will be called. If a student has been diagnosed with a communicable disease a doctor's note may be required to return to school. We are practicing healthy habits by teaching students how to properly and frequently wash hands. We are also teaching students to cough into their elbows rather than into their hands. This helps to minimize germs from spreading person-to-person.

Please be sure that at all times, the office has current phone numbers for home, cell, and work, as well as other emergency numbers. A form will be sent home at the beginning of the year requesting this information. Please make sure it is on file and up-to-date as soon as possible. Any changes to existing emergency contact cards must be made in person by the registering adult.

### **CODE OF STUDENT CONDUCT**

The *Elementary Code of Student Conduct* book is available online at <https://www.browardschools.com/focus> and at Tropical's Website <https://www.browardschools.com/tropical>. Please read and discuss this information with your child. During the first week of school or upon enrolling after the year has begun, please review the student code of conduct online with your child and complete all the required forms online at <https://www.browardschools.com/focus/>. Take special note of the consequences outlined regarding weapons, drugs, and bomb threats.

\*If parents do not have access to the internet, they can contact the office to make arrangements to utilize a computer at Tropical. We have a limited number of hard copies of the *Elementary Code of Student Conduct* in English, Spanish, French, and Creole at the school site.

### **CONFERENCES**

Conferences are an important part of reporting pupil progress to parents and can be of great help in furthering home/school communication. Tropical encourages parents to become actively involved in their child's education and to maintain regular communication with their child's teacher. Two conferences are encouraged during the year per student between the hours of 7:55 a.m. - 3:25 p.m. You will be notified in advance with a request for a conference. If it is not possible for you to attend at the time requested, please contact the teacher for an alternate appointment. You are also invited to request a meeting with your child's teacher so that you may stay informed, share information, and learn more about our school and programs.

### **CROSSING GUARDS**

City of Plantation crossing guards are stationed at Peters Road and S.W. 66 Avenue, and at S.W. 16 Street and S.W. 66 Avenue during school zone hours. Please be aware, that if your child stays after school for clubs or events, crossing guards are not on duty. Students are expected to show appreciation and respect to these individuals and cross only when directed to do so.

### **DISCIPLINE & BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS**

Tropical is proud of our well-behaved students. Our staff recognizes good behavior and stresses the value of self-control and the importance of kindness to others. Our staff strives to provide all students with an opportunity to acquire an education in a safe and secure environment. Students do not have the right to interfere with others' opportunity to learn by showing poor manners, rudeness, or lack of consideration for others.

The goal of discipline is to end negative behavior and build habits of self-control. When students learn to discipline themselves, they tend to be dependable, reliable, and cooperative members of the class, and

ultimately become well-adjusted members of society. Student behavior throughout the school is governed by the Broward County *Elementary Code of Student Conduct* and Tropical's *Discipline and Responsibility Plan*. This plan specifies five discipline guidelines that we believe will help students to be successful in school and in the future. These are: Be Responsible, Always Try, Do Your Best, Cooperate with Others, and Respect the Rights and Property of Others. School rules apply on the school grounds, school buses, and at any event where our school is represented, regardless of location.

## **DISMISSAL PROCEDURES**

The school day ends at 2:25 p.m. All students will be dismissed according to parent directions only. School Board buses are loaded just before 2:25 p.m. and will depart just after the 2:25 p.m. bell. Walkers, bicycle riders, car riders, and students attending Tropical's after-school program will be dismissed at the 2:25 p.m. bell. Please do not just tell your child of a change in dismissal.

**If your child's dismissal procedure changes, you must notify the teacher IN WRITING.** Verbal changes can often be misunderstood or communicated incorrectly to the teacher, resulting in a miscommunication about travel home. We dismiss students only according to your **written** directions. We understand that emergencies sometimes arise and therefore if you do need to call the office to change the student(s) way home, please call the office no later than 1:55 p.m. We highly discourage dismissal changes as these changes interrupt learning and can get confusing to the teacher and the student.

**Car Riders:** Students will be supervised during the arrival and dismissal process. For morning arrival, parents may utilize **either** the west or south car loop that is closest to the student's entrance. For afternoon dismissal, the **west drive** (front of school) is the car rider pick-up area for **Kindergarten and First Grade** students and those students/siblings that carpool with them. The older students go to the younger student's location allowing parents to utilize only one pick-up loop. The **south drive** is the car rider pick-up area for **Second through Fifth Grade** students.

Helpful hints to make the arrival and dismissal process as **safe** and smooth as possible:

- Always pull up as far forward as possible.
- Do not use cell phones while in the drop-off/pick-up loop.
- Children are everywhere, so be alert and keep your eyes scanning.
- To expedite the morning drop-off process, please have your child completely ready to exit the car before you pull into the loop.
- Please place the name tent (with your child's name/teacher name) on the dashboard so that it is visible through your windshield.

**During dismissal, if you are going to drive through the car loops, it is imperative that you DO NOT arrive until the dismissal process has begun at 2:25 p.m.** The West and South drives do not hold very many cars; therefore, if you arrive early, a traffic backup is created on 16<sup>th</sup> Street. Please note: Plantation Police Department may ticket vehicles blocking the flow of traffic.

**Bus dismissal/missed buses:** Students riding a school bus will walk to the bus area when their bus is called and board only their assigned bus. Should students miss their bus, parents or other designated emergency contacts will be called so that alternative transportation can be arranged. **Up-to-date home, cell, work, and other emergency numbers are essential.**

**Dismissal changes/early dismissal:** **Any dismissal changes require a WRITTEN NOTE to the teacher.** Confusion can arise when young children forget or misunderstand verbal instructions or incorrectly report them to the teacher.

Parents who may occasionally need to pick up their children early, prior to the regular 2:25 p.m. dismissal, must sign them out through the front office. No teacher is authorized to directly dismiss any child from the classroom prior to the 2:25 p.m. bell. Students will be dismissed only to a parent or legal guardian unless prior arrangements have been made and permission is given for someone else to take your child home. Please carefully follow these procedures, which we have established for your child's safety.

Prior notification to the teacher is helpful when signing your student out early from school. This allows your student to have their belongings with them. If no prior notification is given belongings may be picked up at the end of school between the hours of 2:25 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

**School Board Policy 5.5 states that NO students shall be released within the final 30 minutes of the school day unless the principal/designee determines it is an emergency. Therefore, if it is after 1:55 p.m. (on early release days it is 12:55 p.m.) we ask that you wait to pick up your child until the regular dismissal time, as learning continues through the end of the day and it is an important time for class review, announcements, and other activities.**

**Rainy day/emergency dismissal:** Arrangements for rainy days should be made with your child in advance, as sufficient telephones are not available for all students to use during inclement weather.

### **Heavy Rain Dismissal Protocol**

Please review the plan that follows as a reminder to ensure everyone's safety.

#### **Students Walking or Biking Off Campus:**

- Students who typically walk or bike off campus without a parent will remain with their classroom teacher until the weather improves.
- If you are able to pick up your child, please proceed to the corresponding dismissal area. You may contact the front office to let us know about the change in dismissal.

#### **Bus riders:**

- We will load students in buses as early and safely as possible. Please ensure someone is waiting at the bus stop and expect delays.
- Car riders will be dismissed as usual. Should the weather worsen, we will send another notification with instructions for severe weather dismissal. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding.

**Rainy day/emergency dismissal:** Arrangements for rainy days should be made with your child in advance, as sufficient telephones are not available for all students to use during inclement weather.

### **Severe Weather Dismissal Protocol**

Should we experience very severe weather (lightning, hail, severe rain, etc.) at dismissal, walkers and car riders will remain in the building until it has been determined that such weather has passed. Your assistance in discussing and following these procedures to safeguard students is greatly appreciated.

#### **Kindergarten and First Grade Car Riders:**

- Please delay your arrival for pick-up until 2:30 PM.
- We will dismiss Kindergarten and 1st-grade car riders using the bus loop to take advantage of the covered walkway.
- To facilitate this process, we must load and dismiss school buses first.
- Arrive at 2:30 PM and proceed to the bus loop. Do not enter the bus loop if buses are still waiting to enter.
- Ensure your student placard is clearly displayed to expedite the pick-up process.

**Kindergarten and First Grade Walk-Up Parent Pickups (Walkers):**

- Students will not be dismissed from the front office area today.
- You can pick up your child by car in the bus loop as described above.
- If you choose to walk up, please come to the bus loop after 2:30 PM.
- Do not park in the staff parking lot or cross the bus loop.

**Car Riders and Walkers in Grades 2-5:**

- Dismissal will proceed as usual on the South car loop.

**Students Walking or Biking Off Campus:**

- Students who typically walk or bike off campus without a parent will remain with their classroom teacher until the weather improves.
- If you prefer to pick up your child, please proceed to the corresponding dismissal area.

**Bus riders:**

- We will load students in buses as early and safely as possible. Please ensure someone is waiting at the bus stop and expect delays.

<b>Dismissal</b>	<b>Regular Dismissal</b>	<b>Heavy Rain Dismissal</b>	<b>Severe Weather Dismissal</b>
Van Riders	Escorted to afterschool program's van	Escorted to afterschool program's van	Escorted to afterschool program's van via covered car loop
Bus Riders	Loaded on bus via bus loop	Loaded on bus by staff via covered bus loop area – can only load a few buses at a time under shelter – expect delays	Loaded on bus by staff via covered bus loop area – can only load a few buses at a time under shelter – expect delays
Car Riders	K/1: dismissed via office car loop 2-5: dismissed via North car loop (Seminole Park side)	Dismissed as usual	K/1: Car riders will remain in the classroom until all buses are loaded. Students will be dismissed via the bus loop (beginning around 2:30pm). Parents drive up to bus loop. 2-5: dismissed as usual
Walk-ups (Parent Pickups)	K/1: dismissed via office car loop 2-5: dismissed via North car loop – parents walk up to black gate (Seminole Park side)	Dismissed as usual	<u>No</u> walk-ups/parent pickup on severe weather. Students wait with car riders.
Walkers (off campus) & Bike Riders	K/1: dismissed via office car loop 2-5: dismissed via North car loop (Seminole Park side)	Walkers (walk off campus) and bike riders - <b>wait</b> with classroom teacher.  Once heavy rain passes, students will be dismissed as usual.	Walkers (walk off campus) and bike riders - <b>wait</b> with classroom teacher.  Once severe weather passes, students will be dismissed as usual.

## **DRESS AND PERSONAL GROOMING**

A neat appearance has been shown to influence positive attitudes and good behavior. We encourage you to monitor your child's attire for school so that it will reflect the proper respect for learning and for others. We encourage students and staff to show their school spirit by wearing Tropical Elementary shirts on Fridays and on scheduled field trip days. Please refer to the Elementary Dress Code of Broward County Schools, which is provided in the *Elementary Code of Student Conduct*.

## **EARLY RELEASE DAYS**

Students are released from school two hours early, at 12:25 p.m., on one day during the year as listed on the school calendar. These early dismissal days provide time for essential staff training to promote school improvement and academic achievement. Please make arrangements in advance for your child's transportation and/or supervision when your child is dismissed at 12:25 p.m. on these days. Lunch will be served to students prior to dismissal on Early Release days.

**Early Release Days for the 2025-2026 school year all occur on the following day:**

Friday, October 10<sup>th</sup>  
Friday, December 19<sup>th</sup>  
Friday, February 13<sup>th</sup>  
Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup>  
Friday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>  
Wednesday, June 3<sup>rd</sup>

## **EMERGENCY DISMISSAL**

The closing of school due to emergencies is left to the discretion of the Superintendent. In the event of unplanned dismissal, children should have been informed by parents, from the first day of school, as to where they are to go or where they are to meet their parents.

## **EMERGENCY CONTACT CARD**

During the first week of school, a **new** Student Emergency Contact Card is sent home to parents. It is essential that this form be filled out completely, with current phone numbers provided to us. Please come into the school office to make any changes to the emergency contact card. Please bring proof of ID with you when making any changes. It is imperative that the school be able to contact parents in the event of sudden illness or accident.

## **EMERGENCY DRILLS/FIRE DRILLS**

During the first week of school, we will teach students the correct procedures for exiting the building safely in an emergency and conduct our first fire drill. Ten fire drills are scheduled throughout the school year. Students are required to follow the teacher's directions and to become familiar with the emergency exit procedures posted in all classrooms. In addition to the eleven fire drills, two tornado drills are conducted each year and other emergency drills are conducted.

## **EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION**

Tropical Elementary services students who receive special education services. Students qualify for these services based on the guidelines established by the state and district. Should you have questions about any ESE program, please contact our ESE Specialist, Ms. Ronnie Leff.

## **FIELD TRIPS**

Throughout the year, teachers arrange field trips as an extension of the school's curriculum. Field trips are an enjoyable and memorable part of the school year; however, specific procedures must be followed with regard to field trips. Written parent permission must be obtained on an *Authorization for Trip* form. This form must be on file in the office *prior* to departure from school for the field trip. Verbal approval cannot be accepted. It is the responsibility of the student to see that the form is properly signed by the parent/guardian and returned to the teacher by the determined deadline.

Field trips are a privilege, not a right. This privilege can be denied for recurring inappropriate behavior or behavior that is deemed unsafe. Your support will enable a safe and rewarding field trip experience for all children. Teachers frequently need chaperones for field trips. All parents wishing to chaperone must first get approval from the teacher. All chaperones are considered volunteers so they must comply with the volunteer application procedure and acquire level 1 clearance prior to the trip (2-3 week process). Refer to the "VOLUNTEERS" section. When volunteering for a field trip, chaperones are required to ride the bus to ensure the students safety. Parents are not permitted to join the field trip at the facility if they are not a chaperone designee. While volunteering district restricts bringing siblings on field trips as this may cause a safety concern and may a disruption to activities.

## **FOOD FOR SPECIAL EVENTS**

Broward County Public Health Department rules state that, "food prepared in a private home shall not be used or offered for sale to the public within a food service establishment." The definition of a food service establishment includes schools. For this reason, food prepared in private homes cannot be served to our students. For parties and special activities, the food provided must be **commercially prepared/ storefront**. Items from bakeries and restaurants are acceptable. Food may also be prepared in classrooms following healthy and sanitary practices and under adult supervision.

## **COUNSELING SERVICES**

Ms. Kristyn Tobacco and Ms. Yvonne Strum provide the following services here at school: individualized check-ins, small group counseling, classroom lessons/activities, and school-wide initiatives. We are also available for consultation with parents and guardians with a scheduled appointment. We encourage you to reach out to us with any questions or concerns in the areas of academic progress, social/emotional needs, behavior and mental health specifics/referrals.

Please contact the counselor for the grade level of your child.

Mrs. Yvonne Strum- Grades K, 2, 4

[Yvonne.Strum@browardschools.com](mailto:Yvonne.Strum@browardschools.com)

Mrs. Kristyn Tobacco- Grades 1, 3, 5

[Kristyn.Tobacco@browardschools.com](mailto:Kristyn.Tobacco@browardschools.com)

## **HEALTH**

Good health is essential for learning. The general health of children is the responsibility of parents. Regular physical and dental examinations are encouraged. Children are unable to do their best work if they are ill or have not received proper nourishment and rest. Young children often require as much as 10 to 12 hours of sleep each night and a nourishing breakfast for a successful day at school.

Florida Statutes require Broward County Schools to conduct vision and hearing screenings. These screenings are done at different grade levels throughout the school year. In addition, heights and weights are completed for students in first and third grade. If you do not want your child to participate in this program, please notify Tropical Elementary School in writing.

Students will not be admitted to school or allowed to attend classes without a completed Florida Certificate of Immunization, with the current required schedule of immunizations. No grace period can be granted. Absences due to failure to have the required immunizations are unexcused absences.

### **HOMWORK**

Homework is usually assigned as an extension of classroom activities. It may be assigned to practice new skills, for review, or to complete unfinished daily work. Homework activities should generally be easily completed in less than an hour. Lengthy assignments and special projects will be assigned over a longer time period. We also encourage students to read for pleasure, complete academic and creative projects, and watch educational television programs. Even if no specific assignment is provided, students generally have something to accomplish at home, such as studying math facts or spelling words, or reading a book. Children should be provided with a designated place at home to do schoolwork, which is well lit and quiet in order to optimize learning.

Parents are encouraged to reinforce good study habits by reviewing daily activities and assignments with their child. If you have any questions or concerns about your child's homework, please contact the teacher for clarification. We ask that you provide encouragement and support. However, allow your child to have the satisfaction of accomplishing the homework assignment him/herself.

### **INNOVATION ZONE**

Innovation Zones are established by the Broward County School Board to provide a more decentralized and personalized educational system throughout the district. The South Plantation Innovation Zone serves Tropical, Plantation Park, Plantation, Meadowbrook Elementary Schools, Seminole Middle School, South Plantation High School and Pine Ridge Center.

The South Plantation Innovation Zone works to promote an awareness of key issues in our zone schools and to offer the opportunity for schools to collaborate and share resources and ideas. Zone representatives include students, parents, community members, teachers, administrators, and district staff. Meetings are held six times a year at various times and locations to provide accessibility to all stakeholders. Meeting dates and times are posted on the school marquee, website, and are announced in school newsletters. All Zone meetings are open to the public and we encourage you to attend.

### **MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES**

For the 2025-2026 school year, Tropical's PTA has purchased the Take-Home/Bring-Back folders for students. Papers are sent home and returned to school using this folder. PTA also provides Student Planners to our students in grades two through five. These planners are essential for keeping track of assignments, encouraging an organized approach to schoolwork, and ensuring parent-teacher communication.

Additional supplies are needed by children to start the school year. A list of the recommended supplies for each grade level is sent home prior to the summer and also at the beginning of the year. A supply list is also available on the school website at [www.browardschools.com/tropical](http://www.browardschools.com/tropical) under the Student tab. Please help your child be prepared for school each day by having the necessary supplies to successfully complete classwork.

## MEDIA CENTER

Reading for enjoyment is a wonderful habit to acquire in childhood and it will enrich their life. Reading is encouraged at Tropical Elementary, and our media center has a great selection of books for all children. The media center is open to students during their designated Media Center time for book checkout. Books taken from the Media Center must be checked out and properly cared for so that others may enjoy them. Textbooks and library books checked out to children become their responsibility. Parents are expected to pay for lost or damaged books.

## MEDICATIONS

Our school carefully follows all procedures established by our school district with regard to administration of medication to students. Only the principal or designee in accordance with a completed Authorization for Medication Form shall administer prescribed medication. Even over-the-counter medications require this form to be completed. The form was sent home in the *Elementary Code of Conduct* "Summary of Changes" packet, and it may be obtained from the school office or on our website under the Student's and Parents tab.

The information required on this form includes a written treatment plan signed by a licensed physician and the parent for each medication. The written treatment plan shall include possible side effects, purposes of medication, and special instructions regarding the medication. All medication authorizations shall not exceed 12 months.

All medications shall be in the original container and shall be properly labeled with name of student, name of drug, directions concerning dosage, time of day to be taken, name of the prescribing physician, and date of prescription.

An adult must deliver all medication to and from school. **No elementary student shall transport medications, including cough drops or aspirin, to school.** This procedure is for the safety of all our children. Whenever possible, we ask that medications be administered at home.

## PARENT INVOLVEMENT

Parents play an integral part in the success of programs at Tropical and we welcome your support and involvement. Parents work collaboratively with teachers, staff, and children in maintaining a positive, open learning environment. Tropical's PTA, School Advisory Forum, School Advisory Council, and our many volunteers are supportive, dedicated, and involved.

Tropical's **Parent Teacher Association (PTA)** provides essential support to enhance the total school program. The volunteer program, coordinated by PTA, provides help in the classrooms, media center, and clinic. Other volunteers serve as chaperones, room parents, and assist in the coordination of fundraisers, cultural arts programs, and the *Meet the Masters* Program. Ms. Jill Siegel is our PTA President for the 2025-2026 school year. Whether or not you plan to be active in the PTA, please join as a member. The benefits to your child will far outweigh the few dollars in membership fees.

**The School Advisory Forum (SAF)** is a forum for parents to assist us in addressing concerns, which may arise in our school or district. School Advisory Forum members work with the administration to solve problems and to initiate desirable change. They also assist in increasing community support for our school and in developing and implementing parent and community programs and training activities. All parents and community members are invited to attend Advisory Forum meetings. Meeting dates and times are posted on the school marquee and announced in school newsletters and flyers. **Christine Hernandez is our Advisory Chairperson for the 2025-2026 school year.**

The **School Advisory Council (SAC)** in all Broward schools is comprised of representatives from staff, parents, and the community. Our SAC team facilitates and monitors the development of the School Improvement Plan. Tropical's School Advisory Council meets regularly to review data, establish goals, monitor their implementation, and analyze the success of our efforts. All SAC meetings are open to parents and community members. **Jessica Bilynsky is SAC Co-chairpersons for the 2025-2026 school year.**

**PARTNERS IN EDUCATION**

One of the major system priorities of our district is developing and expanding partnerships with local businesses and the community. This year we continue our existing partnerships and look forward to including more members of the community. We will be conducting special activities with our business partners throughout the year. We thank these businesses for their interest in education and their support of Tropical Elementary School.

**PERSONAL PROPERTY**

Valuable possessions should not be brought to school, as accidents can happen, and items can be lost. Generally, children should not bring more money than is required for purchasing food from the cafeteria. On occasion, items may be sold at school. Procedures for purchase will be shared at the time of the particular sale. All toys are to remain at home unless requested by the teacher for educational purposes. For the safety of all children, pets and other live animals should also remain at home.

**\*PETS ARE NOT ALLOWED ON CAMPUS FOR ANY REASON.**

**REPORT CARDS/PROGRESS REPORTS**

Tropical Elementary School utilizes the Broward County Standards Based Progress Report for kindergarten through fifth grade students. Progress Reports are issued each nine weeks of school and cover a period of approximately 45 school days. A student must be in attendance in a Broward County School 25 days within the marking period in order for him/her to receive a report card.

\* Report cards can be accessed on your student's Clever account by clicking on FOCUS.

\*A Progress Monitoring Plan (PMP) is developed for students who are substantially deficient based on the Florida Standards. Teachers will explain the PMP process at a scheduled conference.

***Report Cards (Grades Kindergarten through Two)***

The following are the symbols used to describe the levels of standards mastery:

- "1" . . . . .Has mastered skill(s)
- "2" . . . . .Is learning skill(s)
- "3" . . . . .Area of Concern
- "X" . . . . .Not Evaluated
- "NA" . . . . .Not Applicable

***Report Cards (Grades Three through Five)***

In reporting student performance in grades three through five, the letter grades "A", "B", "C", "D", and "F" are used in the areas of reading, language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies, which represent the following numerical grades. These grades can be accessed through Pinnacle. Other areas such as Study Skills and Social Growth utilize the numerical indicators "1", "2", "3", and "NA"

"A" . . . . .	Superior Progress	90 - 100
"B" . . . . .	Above Average Progress	80 - 89
"C" . . . . .	Average Progress	70 - 79
"D" . . . . .	Below Average Progress	60 - 69
"F" . . . . .	Failure	59 - or below

**Interim Report:**

Not later than midway between marking periods, an interim report shall be sent to parents of students who are experiencing difficulty including, but not limited to the following:

Failing, a drop of two or more letter grades in a subject, unacceptable behavior, excessive absences, and excessive tardies.

\* Interim Report can be accessed on your student's Clever account by clicking on FOCUS.

**SAFETY**

Student safety is a primary focus at Tropical Elementary. We have developed procedures and school rules to maintain a safe environment for all the children at our school. Please help us keep our school safe by supporting our efforts. We ask that you discuss our school rules and review the *Elementary Code of Student Conduct* thoroughly with your child. Additionally, your support by setting an example of following school procedures for such things as pick-up and drop-off of students, checking in at the front office and obtaining a visitor badge whenever you volunteer, or visit our school will help maintain a safe environment. Emphasizing the eight Character Education traits (cooperation, responsibility, citizenship, kindness, respect, honesty, self-control, tolerance) at home can also support a kind and caring environment for children at school. Everyone's cooperation and support is needed.

**STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE/HEALTH INSURANCE**

Parents are given the opportunity to enroll children each fall in a school insurance plan, which provides coverage for medical expenses resulting from accidents. This may cover a child for up to 24 hours or during school hours only. Information is usually provided in the First Day Packet.

**TARDINESS**

Being on time for school is a valuable part of a child's learning and should be stressed. By being on time, your child will develop a lifelong habit of promptness and will be able to prepare for the day's work in a more relaxed manner. Arriving late to class is disruptive to the learning environment and can also adversely affect a child's success in school. Parents who drop off their children in the morning are asked to do so no later than 8:17 a.m. to ensure that your child is not tardy to class. Students may enter the building beginning at 7:55 a.m. Students who are not in their classroom by 8:25 a.m. are tardy and must be accompanied by a parent to the front office to receive a tardy pass before being admitted to class. This is for the safety of our students.

**TESTING PROGRAM**

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of the instructional process. In addition to classroom and district assessments used to monitor student mastery, the School Board of Broward County implements a state-wide testing program for students. Students will participate in the FAST Progress Monitoring three times a year. Students in grades K-2 will participate in the STAR Renaissance Assessment platform. Students in grades 3-5 will participate in the Cambium Assessment platform. The assessments for each progress monitoring are computer-based unless the student has paper-based testing on the student's IEP or 504 plan. Prior to these tests, information is provided to parents regarding the specific administration dates and other pertinent information. We will communicate the specific dates of the assessments through our Parent link phone system.

## VISITORS

For our students' safety and to minimize classroom interruptions, **ALL VISITORS**, including Tropical parents and volunteers, must enter and exit the school through the front office and check in/ out using the RAPTOR system (single point of entry). District policy **REQUIRES** all visitors to show their physical government issued ID such as a driver's license at the door (facing the camera) in order to enter the building. Digital photos of government issued ID **will not be accepted**. Visitors are required to wear a Visitor or Volunteer Badge for identification on our campus. Should you be interested in touring the school, please contact the office at (754) 323-7750 to schedule.

## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are always welcome in our school. Please notify your child's teacher, the PTA volunteer coordinator, or the front office if you wish to volunteer your services at our school. We would love to have you assist in the classroom, media center, cafeteria, or during special events or field trips. There are even things you can do at home. While volunteering district prohibits bringing additional children on campus as it may cause a disruption of classroom activities.

*Each year, every new volunteer is required to complete a screening application prior to volunteering in school.* **ALL persons** wishing to become a new volunteer must complete the online application at [www.browardschools.com/getinvolved](http://www.browardschools.com/getinvolved). The approval processes can take 2-3 weeks. **Volunteers must always enter and exit the building through the front office and sign in using the RAPTOR system (single point of entry) as explained in the "Visitors" section above.** All volunteers are required to wear their volunteer badge for easy identification on our campus. According to State Statutes and the Jessica Lunsford Act, all people having unsupervised contact with students must have a Level 2 clearance, which requires fingerprinting. Level 2 clearance is mainly for parents chaperoning on overnight fieldtrips. The school district will pay the fingerprinting fee for Level 2 volunteers.

## WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

Should it be necessary to withdraw your child from school, please notify or school's registrar several days in advance so that a transfer record may be prepared for the new school. All textbooks and library books must be returned to school prior to withdrawal and any outstanding fees must be paid.