Tamil Theni Club Policy Document

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Highlights

- Expanding national platform from just Tamil schools to now include Tamil sangam and private clubs
- Some Levels are still only for schools
- $100 annual fee and will get support for sample questions, tools to conduct local competitions, materials to attract members and sponsors
- Club can have unlimited members, but can only send 1 team per each eligible competition levels
- Clubs can register before Dec for upcoming year's competition

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Tamil Theni National Competition

Tamil Theni (Tamil Spelling Bee) is a National Competition conducted in America.

FeTNA (Federation of Tamil Sangams of North America) provides the biggest national stage for Tamil well wishers to showcase the Tamil vocabulary skill of children growing up in America.

Objective

Generate interest among young children growing up in North America to improve their Tamil vocabulary to identify common objects, comprehend speech, speak and write words in daily use and ability to form new words to communicate evolving context around them.

Mission

Provide a national platform to recognize Tamil vocabulary skills of children growing up in the US and Canada.

Teams

Tamil School Teams

Registered (non-profit 501c3) Tamil schools in North America can send their teams to participate in the competitions.

Tamil Theni Club Teams

Competitions are extended to any interested Tamil learners as long as they meet the requirements and follow the guideline provided in this document.

Competition Formats

Refer to the website for details on what competition formats are available for Clubs and Schools.

Tamil Theni Club

Objective

Club's objective should align with Tamil Theni's objective and mission.

Club Requirements

1. Club must have an adult President and Mentor
2. Same person can be a President and Mentor
3. Must have at least 2 [contesting] members
4. Club must have an active annual or perpetual Tamil Theni registration to participate in the year's competitions
5. Each club must support the Tamil Theni national competitions with the following
    a. Send at least 1 team for the competition in an academic year
    b. Members must be a an active participant of [quarterly] online Quiz
    c. Assign a judge who will go through training provided by Tamil Theni and be available to judge competitions as needed

Member Requirements

1. All contesting members must have legal status to live in US continuously for last 3 years (9months+ each year)
2. Refer to age restriction for each competition Level
3. Must be a member of a registered Tamil Theni Club for the active competition year (US school academic year)

Recommended Structure for the Club

Clubs may structure themselves as it meets their organization needs.

Below is a recommended structure to effectively manage their minimum commitment.

Leadership

- Club must have an acting President who is responsible for all activities of the club

- President provides the resources and builds the club's culture that enables members to achieve their learning objective and reach for the coveted National Title
- President is responsible to ensure safe and fair play of their teams in the competitions
- President will verify and ensure that all their members meet the eligibility criteria
- President recruits the members interested in improving their Tamil vocabulary skills and able to meet their Club's expectations
- President will be on-point to receive and distribute certificates, prizes and cash awards to their members

Tamil Theni Representative

- President, or a single nominee must act as the primary representative for their club with the Tamil Theni national team

Mentor

- A mentor is the most important person to motivate and train the members
- Mentors prepare the learning exercises, bring-in language experts and identify learning resources
- Mentor need not be a traditional language teacher because the primary role is to motivate members to and not to teach
- Mentor develops the learning and practice schedule and guides the members through their preparation

Members

- A club must have a minimum of 1 team (2 members) to meet the requirement
- Members should ideally have the ability to meet in-person frequently to improve the learning effectiveness and maximize collaborating as a team
- Tamil school students, even if they are a member of their school team, can be a member of a club, but can only compete in a Level representing either the school or a club
- Children who have access to learn and practice Tamil language on a daily basis are most likely candidates for the club
- Children who eagerly participate in local Tamil events, curious about origin of words, creative in expressing through words, and those who want to understand Tamil culture are great addition to the club and can elevate the Tamil Theni event as as whole

Geography

There are no geographic restrictions for members of the club as long as they meet the member eligibility.

Communication

Club's representative is responsible for passing on all communication from the Tamil Theni team to their members.

The Representative will maintain an accurate record of the contestants who will represent their Club in the competitions.

Non-Profit registration

Starter Club

Clubs formed by parents with the intent to support their own children to prepare and participate in Tamil Theni competitions don't have to take on any extra organizational overhead. The parent can act as a President, Representative and Mentor and support one or two teams.

Friends Club

Enthusiastic volunteers who want to mentor young children in their friends and family circle can invite like minded friends and share the responsibilities and manage the club activities.

Organizational Club

Groups of 30+ members are better served with a formal structure. Have a plan to provide the below without relying on an individual to ensure continuity for the members:

- Email and phone number for the organization instead of using an individual's account
- A meeting place for in-person preparation that can accommodate the entire group, or sub-groups for preparation with the entire group still meeting once in a while
- Share and rotate club responsibilities to avoid over stressing individuals and to keep fresh ideas flowing

Tamil Sangam based club(s)

Many Tamil Sangams already conduct competitions, and some even conduct classes and coaching sessions for various activities. Tamil Theni Club fits very well with these initiatives.

Tamil Sangams can leverage the structure proposed here as additional guidance and refine their existing class / coaching sessions, leadership / mentors, and even use the resources to conduct competitions for their events.

One Club can only send one team for a given competition format / level. Hence, if a Tamil Sangam wants to send more members to the national competition, they will have to form different clubs. This may be required when they are in a large city, have very large membership and have multiple interests to cater to.

Sponsorship for Club Activities

Try to find sponsors from local Tamil patrons, Tamil organizations and even Tamil Schools who want to see the next generation taking keen interest in learning and improving Tamil language and the culture. Common club expenses include:

- Cost of travel to the city hosting the National event, if the teams make it to the finals
- Conducting local events - renting event venue, AV needs, flier and promos
- Annual club registration fee
- Meeting place for club activities
- Snacks and other needs for the children during (weekly) practice session

Member Fee

We strongly recommend against asking members / young children to pay for joining the club. The interest they show and the effort they put in to learn the language is the reason the club was formed. Maintain the spirit of the Tamil Theni clubs by ensuring members are treated with utmost respect and everyone else is providing the best environment to meet their needs.

Local Competitions

We prefer to conduct the competitions in-person and defer to online only when in-person is difficult for the teams. Traveling together, seeing and spending time with other teams in-person provides so many learning opportunities and builds a better comradery between the children.

When competitions are between teams that are within driving distance, plan to conduct the competitions in-person. Encourage teams of all levels to meet at the same place to learn and get motivated from each other.

Resources Available

- Online website for the club with an outline for club structure, contacts, competition schedules and ability to host custom club calendar and activities
- Word list for the competition
- Access to online quiz for the members to practice the Word list and related questions
- Access to previous competition questions
- For additional cost of support, access to the Tamil Theni Scoring Application that can be used to conduct local competitions

Club Registration Fee

Clubs can contribute towards ongoing support and improvement of Tamil Theni either through volunteer efforts or funding the expenses.

- $100 per academic year
- Applicable registration fee for each competing teams

Annual registration fees are waived for clubs who are able to extend volunteer service in leading any of the available activities. Activities may include:

- Securing sponsorship
- Facilitate local and regional competitions
- Developing and improving technology used in learning and conducting the competition
- Managing and improving the website
- Conducting online quizzes
- Researching and developing questions
- Other volunteer activities as needs arise