

Parent-Student Handbook

East Voyager Academy



Dr. Timothy L. Murph
Principal/CEO

Dr. Jian Zhang, Chair
Board of Trustees

2018-2019

Letter from the Principal

Dear Panda Family,

Happy New Year!!! Welcome to East Voyager Academy, where our mission is to, “...graduate students with strong academics, ENglish-Chinese bilingual proficiency and intercultural competence”. I hope that all of you had a fine summer vacation and I am looking forward with enthusiasm to the new school year.

Are you ready Voyagers? Are you ready to set sail on an exciting new journey in Chinese immersion? We are about to set sail on our inaugural school year and make history as North Carolina’s first Chinese immersion charter school!!! I know that this year will be incredibly special. I know that our students are ready for the academic challenges that lie ahead and that together, we will celebrate many great student successes.

Every year we invite our parents—indeed, urge them—to volunteer at our school. There are many tasks that volunteers can perform. If you are interested in helping out, please call (704) 412-6988 to speak with Mrs. Hames, who will put you in contact with our Volunteer Coordinator.

We also urge all of our East Voyager family members to support the many goals we have set for the coming school year. These goals include strengthening the many clubs and activities we sponsor. We ask that each member of the family generously make a donation of time and resources to help us ensure that these clubs and activities thrive.

Our ultimate goal is to provide all students with the opportunity to excel in core college preparatory academics, bilingual mastery, cultural immersion, and fine arts opportunities so that they may become positive, contributing members of our communities.

Remember that my door is ALWAYS open. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me immediately. I look forward to working with you this school year. Together, we will be successful.

Isn’t this exciting? We’re about to open a school where one did not exist before. 8/27/18 will mark the start of a new tradition of excellence.

Go Pandas!

Dr. Timothy L. Murph
Principal/CEO

East Voyager Academy

Mission Statement

The mission of the East Voyager Academy is to graduate its students with English-Chinese bilingual proficiency, strong academics, and intercultural competence.

Vision

East Voyager Academy strives to become an educational, cultural, and international hub of the greater Charlotte area while nurturing a community of learners who are academically ready for high school and are culturally and linguistically prepared for college and beyond.

East Voyager Academy does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, immigrant status, English-speaking status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal or NC law in its programs or activities.

Support

East Voyager Academy (EVA) is a NC public charter school. The EVA Board of Trustees is responsible for creating policies that govern the school. East Academies Foundation has been engaged by the Board to provide professional support for board training and guidance, as well as offer assistance for the school's educational and business needs. The Board is responsible for hiring a principal who oversees the day-to-day routines of the school.

Curriculum and Instructional Design

EVA recognizes the whole-school language immersion model as the most efficient platform for children to achieve bilingual proficiency. We firmly believe that allowing children the opportunity to learn a second language while they are young not only produces stronger students academically, but also teaches them the value of their global citizenship.

EVA strives to serve families across Charlotte region who desire the rich experience offered through a culture and language immersion education. Our education plan is a whole school Mandarin immersion model. Unlike the traditional method of teaching a second language, the basis of an immersion program requires the target language, which is Mandarin at EVA, to be taught through content rather than as a foreign language. Certain subjects, such as mathematics and science, are specifically taught in the targeted language. Students gain a working knowledge of Mandarin as they are studying subject content. This is the same natural process that occurred as they learned their native language. In the Mandarin instructed classes, no spoken English will be allowed as students are totally immersed in the targeted language.

Research data has shown that a well-designed whole school language immersion model not only offers the most efficient platform for children to achieve bilingual proficiency, but also produces better academic results from its students than traditional one language programs. A second language stimulates different parts of the brain such that bilingual students gain additional cognitive benefits. EVA takes advantage of this fact by aiming for rigorous academic standards. The use of the immersion model gives our students an advantage that will help them better attain the NC standards. Moreover, rich cultural content will be naturally integrated into our program as students learn the new language.

The charter below shows how EVA’s educational program’s curriculum and instructional design support the mission of the school and increase student achievement.

Student Conduct

EVA recognizes that an orderly environment must be in place for learning to take place. Working together, the school and parents can clearly define expectations and help students to be successful. The School’s *Code of Conduct* clearly defines expectations for all in the EVA learning community. Students are encouraged to develop habits that reflect good character. Parents can serve to reinforce this learning by talking about such habits and encouraging students to model them at home.

Please read the *Code of Conduct* thoroughly, discuss it with your child. **The last page has a form that needs to be signed and returned to your child’s homeroom teacher; indicating you understand and agree to the school’s rules and expectations.** Students are also asked to sign the form. This *Code of Conduct* is a contract among students, parents, and School staff. The principal will make appointments to discuss the *Code of Conduct* with any parents who do not return signed copies of the form.

The EVA’s Five Core Values Being an EVA student means

Curiosity – I strive to understand and to learn more about the world around me. I will push myself forward academically and emotionally. I will look forward to differences and difficulties as learning opportunities instead of being scared by them.

Persistence – I will persist through challenges. I will persist to listen to, speak, read, and write Mandarin even when I am unsure and even when it's difficult. I will ask for help when needed and recognize asking for help isn't a weakness but instead is an important skill to learn.

Service – I will contribute to my class, my school, and my community by doing my part, trying my best, and by volunteering my talents and time. I recognize that I have a responsibility to both myself and to my community because we are all connected. I recognize that we are a community and that we are stronger together.

Respect – I will respect myself and others, I respects others by listening and learning to understand despite and because of our differences. I will respect myself by recognizing my own strengths and weakness. I recognize that what I do and say matters and affects others (including myself) and will take responsibility for my actions and words.

Excellence – I will strive for excellence in my academics and actions. I will work for excellence by having a willingness to learn from my mistakes instead of expecting perfection. I will work the best to my abilities in what I set out to d

We need parental support to create a safe and orderly learning environment.

Parent Involvement and Communications

Quality Assurance

We want parents to feel welcomed in our school. Your input is appreciated and desired. If you need to voice a concern, please take the following steps:

Step 1- Contact your child's teacher to discuss the problem. Email is the quickest way to get a reply from teachers. They are teaching during the day and not usually able to take phone calls until the afternoon. Our teachers are readily available to discuss concerns regarding your child.

Step 2- Contact the Principal. Parental concerns that cannot be resolved by the teacher should be redirected to the school's Principal. Your principal is qualified and possesses the decision-making skills to solve most problems that may arise.

Volunteering

Parents are encouraged to participate in school-related activities, including those pertaining to curriculum and instruction, such as tutoring and storytelling. Volunteers may also help as office helpers, classroom assistants, school project or event director. Monitors are needed on the playground and at student drop-off and pick-up. Other opportunities to will arise during school events, extracurricular activities and community outreach projects.

If you are an employee of a business or a member of an organization that would like to volunteer to partner with our school, please contact the school office. Volunteer partnerships involve direct and indirect support to students, teachers and schools through donated time and resources.

A log of volunteer hours is kept in the school office. Volunteers are recognized annually.

Field Trips

We love to have parents participate on our field trips. Volunteers are welcomed to serve as chaperones. Parent chaperones are vital to ensure the safety of our students. We ask all chaperones remain vigilant and attentive to all students throughout the trips. Due to insurance requirements, babies and children who are not enrolled at EVA may not attend field trips.

Parent Teacher Organization

EVA's PTO is important to supporting student learning and the overall success of the school. The PTO provides school leaders with ongoing input on the operation of the school and serves as a vital link between the school and parents. Your membership helps to create a stronger school community. All are encouraged to participate. For more information, contact the school.

Parent Conferences

Formal parent/teacher conferences are held after first quarter and before third quarter to facilitate open communication between parents and teachers regarding students' progress. Refer to the school calendar for specific dates. Dates are set in the months of October and February.

EVA has an open-door policy. We want you in our school and encourage you to visit your child's classrooms. For student safety and to keep disruptions at a minimum, please sign in at the front office. Conferences with teachers and administrators can be scheduled at any time during the year.

Online Community/Newsletters

Announcements of upcoming events and school-wide activities can be found in our online school community and our online school newsletter. Hard copies can be requested through the school office.

Progress Reports and Report Cards

Progress reports/Report Cards will be sent out each quarter to keep parents informed of student achievement.

Textbooks and Supplies

EVA provides textbooks and instructional materials that remain school property. Fees for lost or damaged books will be required before new books are issued. Classroom supply lists will be furnished by EVA teachers.

School Uniforms

Please see the current dress code adopted by the Board. School administration will determine if a student's dress is in compliance. Parents of students out of compliance will be contacted by the school.

Attendance

Tardiness

Class begins **promptly** at **8:00 a.m.** In order to get the required number of instructional minutes required by law, it is critical that all students be prepared to begin instruction on time. Students may enter the building beginning at 7:00 a.m. Students must arrive at school before 8:00 a.m. A late student disrupts instruction in the classroom and requires extra administrative actions. Please be respectful of others and arrive on time.

Student Tardies:

East Voyager Academy school day will begin at 8:00 a.m.

- Any student arriving at **8:01 a.m.** or later will need to be accompanied and signed in by a parent or guardian in the front office.
- The student will receive a late slip and marked as ‘Tardy’.
- An excused tardy (listed at top of document) must be verified by accurate documentation. Any tardy without accurate documentation will be considered unexcused.
- An accumulation of 4 excused or unexcused tardies in a Quarter will be considered chronic and an attendance intervention plan will be put in place.
- An accumulation of eight (8) unexcused tardies throughout the entire school year will be considered as one (1) unexcused absence.
- An accumulation of eight (8) excused tardies throughout the entire school year will be considered as one (1) excused absence.

A parent/guardian must come to the office to sign in any student who arrives after 8:00 a.m. The student will be considered tardy and the incident will be recorded. If a student is tardy four times, the problem will be regarded as chronic, and it must be reported to begin set up an attendance intervention plan. Students will not be dismissed early, unless for special circumstances. On most days, important information on assignments is give at the end of class. Students leaving early are put at a disadvantage. Being at school on time in the morning and staying in school until the end of the school day is important to receive a good education. **If a student is picked up early more than four times, this will be handled in the same manner as chronic tardiness.**

Student Early Dismissal:

East Voyager Academy school day will dismiss at 3:00 p.m. students will not be dismissed early except for special circumstances.

- Any parent or guardian wishing to check their student out before dismissal must arrive at the school no later than **2:15 p.m.**
- The parent or guardian will need to provide valid ID and be on the students emergency contact card.

- An excused early dismissal (listed at top of document) must be verified by accurate documentation. Any early dismissal without accurate documentation will be considered unexcused.
- An accumulation of 4 excused or unexcused early dismissals in a Quarter will be considered chronic and an attendance intervention plan will be put in place.
- An accumulation of eight (8) unexcused early dismissals will be considered one (1) unexcused absence.
- An accumulation of eight (8) excused early dismissals will be considered one (1) excused absence.

Absences

Parents must contact the school office by phone whenever a child is absent, and send a written excuse to the school office when the child returns to school. All absences will be considered unexcused unless accompanied by a medical leave notice or bereavement documentation. Other conditions may apply if prior permission is granted by the principal.

Student Absences:

Students must be present for each day of instruction during the school year. The school year will begin on August 27, 2018 and end on July 7, 2019 for a total of 177 days instructional days.

- **Any student missing 18 instructional days, excused or unexcused, is subject to retention at the discretion of the principal or designee.**
- When a student is absent the parent must call the front office or email attendance@eastvoyager.org before the school day has ended.
- Excused Absence notices may be emailed to attendance@eastvoyager.org or hand delivered to the front office.
- An excused absence (listed at top of document) must be verified by accurate documentation. Any absence without accurate documentation will be considered unexcused.
- A student may be excused by a parent note for two (2) consecutive days after which the absence will not be considered excused unless a Doctor's note is submitted.
- An accumulation of 4 excused or unexcused absences in a Quarter will be considered chronic and an attendance intervention plan will be put in place.
- After the accumulation of 5 consecutive or NON-consecutive unexcused absences the parent or guardian will receive a truancy warning notice.
- After the accumulation of 8 consecutive unexcused absences East Voyager Academy will file truancy against the parent or guardian.
- After the accumulation of 10 consecutive unexcused absences the student will be disenrolled from East Voyager Academy.
- After the accumulation of 10 **non**-consecutive unexcused absences East Voyager Academy will file truancy against the parent or guardian.

Admission, Re-enrollment, Transfers

Admission

EVA is open to all NC students as long as space is available. EVA does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, disability, age, immigrant status, English-speaking status, or any other characteristic protected by applicable federal or NC law in its programs or activities.

Admission to EVA is granted only on availability. No tests or interviews are required to enroll. A lottery will be held if any grade level has an excess of enrollments. After our maximum enrollment has been met, students desiring to enroll will be placed on a waiting list.

Priority enrollment reflecting the NC laws will be given to siblings of current students.

Re-Enrollment

To assure your student's seat at EVA for the upcoming school year, parents must complete an intent to enroll form by the last day in December. Forms that are received after the deadline may require the student to be placed on a waiting list depending on space-availability.

Withdrawals

When possible, parents are asked to give the school a written notice at least 5 business day in advance for transfers. This will allow us to have appropriate student files prepared to distribute to the new school.

Student Records and Confidentiality

Confidentiality

EVA adheres to the Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act (20 U.S. Code § 1232) (FERPA) to protect student confidentiality. Student progress will only be shared with parents/guardians, appropriate school faculty and staff, and educational consultants hired for the purpose of improving instruction. All public data pertaining to school performance will not include information that identifies individuals.

The school will not provide student and/or parent contact information to organizations and clubs (i.e. PTO, Scouts, 4H, etc.) that are led by those other than school personnel. This information must be provided by parents at the request of the organization or club.

EVA's unique instructional program generates significant public interest and some media coverage. If you have objections to your child appearing in the media, please indicate this on the media form in your enrollment packet.

Enrollment Forms

Parents are required to complete and submit an EVA enrollment packet for each student enrolled. (Translated copies are available when requested).

Updating Information

Please notify the school immediately of any changes such as: student name, contact information, emergency contact information, and custodial parent. Documentation must be provided for any legal changes, such as custody changes, name changes.

Health and Safety

Students' health and safety is the school's foremost concern. The following information describes the precautions taken to protect the well-being of all students. If your child has any specific health, safety, or security needs, please inform the school so that appropriate accommodations can be made. EVA is regulated by the NC Department of Health and Human Services. All facility inspection reports are available upon request.

Medication

The school office must be informed of any **prescription medication** that a student is required to take at school. To dispense medication the school must receive a written order from the student's doctor and a permission slip from the student's parent. All medication must be brought to the office in its original prescription container, labeled with the student's name, the name of the medication, the date of expiration, and the proper dosage. If medication needs to be administered to the child when the principal is not present, a staff member trained by the principal will administer the medication.

Non-prescription medications: If, during the course of the school day, it is necessary for a student to receive common, non-prescription medication (e.g., Tylenol), the parent/guardian must fill out a Medicine Administration Form. Parents/guardians must inform the school of any allergies to or restrictions on non-prescription medication that their children might have. Parents/guardians are required to notify the principal in writing if your child has a chronic illness that may affect his or her performance at school.

Accidents

The principal or a trained staff member will administer initial treatments of minor injuries. The student's emergency contact will be notified immediately by phone whenever medical treatment is administered to a student, and an Incident Report will be kept in the student's permanent file. In such cases, it is especially crucial that the school has working phone numbers for students' parents and for alternate contacts in the event that a parent is unavailable. Please be vigilant in keeping the school's records for your child up-to-date.

Visitor Identification

To help ensure a safe and secure learning environment for your children, all visitors to EVA are welcome during active business hours. All visitors are required to sign-in at the school office and to wear a visitor's pass. Faculty and staff have been instructed to escort anyone not having a pass immediately to the office for identification.

Fire Drills/Evacuations

The school will have at least one fire drill per month within the school hours. Specific signals and procedures have been established for all types of disaster drills, and safety areas have been designated. Teachers are equipped with instructions, and all drills will be practiced with students on a regular basis. The entire school will practice weather and security lockdowns. During these drills, no one will be allowed to enter or leave the school. Please be patient and understanding of this important rule. Your child's safety is our number one concern.

Student Arrival and Departure

Parents should thoroughly familiarize themselves with the map depicting designated pick-up and drop-off points and visitor parking areas at the school, and carefully follow the school's instructions for operating a motor vehicle in the vicinity of the school and its students.

Money and Other Valuable Property

Students are encouraged to leave all money and other valuable property at home, especially cell phones. **The School assumes no responsibility for the loss or theft of such articles.**

Candy, Gum, and Toys

Students may not bring candy, toys, cell phones or other non-school related items to school unless approved by the principal. The student assumes responsibility for any items brought from home. Toy weapons are strictly prohibited, and no cell-phones, headphones, radios, games, virtual pets, electronic gaming devices, etc., are allowed and will be confiscated and only returned to a parent. Gum is **NEVER** allowed in school. Please help us keep our school beautiful!

EAST VOYAGER ACADEMY

CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

The faculty and staff at EVA are dedicated to providing the School's students with the skills necessary to reason, communicate, and live with dignity in a civil society. EVA recognizes that a strong school community must be characterized by the highest standards of honesty, integrity, fairness, truthfulness, trustworthiness, and respect for the rights of others.

The school's *Code of Conduct* assists all school employs in structuring a learning environment safe that supports academic achievement and student growth.

The *Code of Conduct* establishes a system of positive behavior reinforcement and promotes discipline as part of character education. Support and corroboration from home helps to assure that the school, our students and our staff are successful each day.

Roles and Responsibilities

IN THE CLASSROOM

Character Education is the backbone of our schoolwide behavior expectation. Teachers will establish these expectations as rules for each classroom and the school as a whole. Teachers will express behavior expectations to students and parents. Classroom interactions will center around teaching appropriate conduct and implementing classroom consequences when necessary.

Re-occurring issues will require the parent to be notified. Additional assistance from other staff members may also, on occasion be warranted.

IN THE COMMON AREAS. The school's common areas include but are not limited to the playground, hallways, restrooms, and cafeteria. Staff will continuously encourage appropriate behavior in the school's common areas through positive and friendly interactions with students. Students will be expected to:

1. Sit or stand in assigned area.
2. Follow directions
3. Use activity appropriate voices
4. Walk when moving from space to space
5. Keep hands and feet to self

Verbal praise will be used to recognize students who exercise courtesy, safety, and respect.

EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS

Being Respectful, Responsible and Ready, students will take pride in following classroom rules and the schoolwide behavior expectations.

EXPECTATIONS OF PARENTS

Parent support of the school environment is one of the number one indicators of student success. A positive home environment that reinforces students being: Respectful, Responsible and Ready will help strengthen a student's positive behaviors at school.

EXPECTATION OF ADMINISTRATION

The principal will insure that all staff understand the *Code of Conduct*. When needed, the Principal will assist with implementing strategies to maintain schoolwide behavior expectations.

In certain cases, appropriate staff members will initiate time-out periods, parent conferences, in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, or other severe consequences.

The policies and procedures for the discipline of students with disabilities shall be consistent with federal laws and regulations. Discipline issues concerning students with IEPs require the staff member in charge to be aware of anything in the IEP related to behavior. Any questions or concerns should be directed to the school's special education teacher to assure all portions of the IEP are being followed during disciplinary procedures.

Most misbehavior will be handled by the principal or the principal's designee. Discussion or the use of mild consequences will be used for minor infractions. Severe misbehavior such as insubordination, physically dangerous behavior or illegal behavior will be met swiftly with equally severe consequences. EVA recognizes that students are not learning if they are not attending class. Therefore, school officials will first use a full range of responses to violations of disciplinary rules, such as conferences, counseling, peer mediation, behavior contracts, instruction in conflict resolution and anger management, detention, academic interventions, community service, and other similar tools that do not remove a student from the classroom or school building.

EVA will not suspend or expel students without due process. The EVA charter school board may expel a student based on board-adopted disciplinary codes. The principal may suspend a student pending expulsion but the decision to expel a student is ultimately made by the charter school board. However, EVA may refuse admission to any student who has been expelled or suspended from a public school until the period of suspension or expulsion has expired.

Long-Term Suspensions: Before a student receives a suspension of more than ten days, the Principal will convene a Behavior Committee, which is composed of the Principal or designee, Guidance Counselor and two teachers appointed by the Principal. The Committee is responsible for reviewing the incident(s) that led to the recommended suspension. The Behavior Committee may request the presence of the parent/guardian and/or student. If the Behavior Committee decides to move forward with the suspension, the Principal shall provide the student and parent/guardian with written notification of the charges of misconduct, the disciplinary action to be taken, and their right to appeal in writing to the Board. Alternative educational instruction will be used during the pending suspension and until the final decision is made. If an appeal is submitted, the Board will schedule a hearing in a timely manner and provide the student and parent/guardian the opportunity to present their case. The Board will then review the entire disciplinary record and notify the student and parent/guardian in writing of the final disciplinary action to be taken within 5 business days.

Expulsions: EVA reserves the right to terminate enrollment for the protection of students, administrators, teachers, volunteers and all other school personnel. In compliance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S. Code §1232) the Student Code of Conduct will be given to parents and students prior to the beginning of the school year. This requires a signed statement of notification.

Should a student be recommended for expulsion, the Principal will provide the student and parent/guardian with written notification of the charges of misconduct, the disciplinary action to be taken, and their right to appeal in writing to the Board. If an appeal is submitted, the Board will schedule a hearing in a timely manner and provide the student and parent/guardian the opportunity to present their case. The Board will then review the entire disciplinary record and notify the student and parent/guardian in writing of the final disciplinary action to be taken within 5 business days.

Alternative educational instruction will be used during the pending expulsion and until the final decision is made.

Students with disabilities will be addressed in accordance with their IEP and the district's policies and procedures for students with disabilities. Under IDEA, the continued provision of FAPE will remain with the LEA and by extension of the charter the school.

In compliance with NC Firearms Laws, any student who deliberately brings a firearm or look alike will be recommended for expulsion with all due process in place.

Grievance Process for Parents: To ensure open school/home communications, parents are requested to go to their child's teacher first with concerns, questions, or when the parent is notified of a specific event. If the issue is not resolved at the teacher level in a timely manner, then the parent has the right to present the grievance in writing to the Principal within 10 calendar days following notification of the event. Issues not resolved by the Principal within 5 days can be referred to the Board with a written request to the Board Chair for a hearing before the Board. The Board shall discuss the request at the first board meeting after the written request is submitted to the Board Chair and will make a decision whether or not to have a hearing on the request. The Board will follow-up with a written response to the request for a hearing within ten (10) business days of the board meeting. Failure of the parent to attend the hearing shall end the grievance procedure.

Discipline and Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities will be disciplined in accordance with their Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan, and the district's policies and procedures for students with disabilities. EVA's policy on suspension and expulsion of students with disabilities will adhere to the specific procedures for disciplinary actions that involve students with disabilities as outlined in the IDEA 2004 Amendments or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Under IDEA, the continued provision of FAPE will remain with the LEA and by extension of the charter the school. The following disciplinary process will be implemented to ensure compliance:

- School administration can remove a student with a disability for no more than 10 consecutive days for violation of the school code of conduct (to the same extent applied to children without disabilities).
- Students with disabilities are not exempt from the rules regarding misbehavior as outlined in Student Code of Conduct. All disciplinary action involving students with disabilities will be addressed in accordance the policies and procedures set forth by the district.
- School administration can also order a change of placement of a child with a disability to an appropriate interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 days for possession of weapons or drugs or the solicitation or sale of controlled substances while at school and/or school functions.
- If the administration believes that a child is a danger to him/herself or others, an expedited due process hearing can be requested to remove a student to an interim alternative educational setting for up to 45 days.

- 45-day interim alternative educational placements can be extended in additional 45-day increments if the hearing officer agrees that the child continues to be substantially likely to injure him/herself or others if returned to the prior placement.
- A student with a disability can be removed, including suspending or expelling for behavior that is not a manifestation of the child's disability, to the same extent as children without disabilities, for the same behavior. Administration can report crimes to law enforcement if deemed necessary.
- If a situation is severe enough the administration may request a temporary restraining order to protect a child or adults from harmful behaviors.