



*Voyager Public Charter School*

Parent/Student Handbook  
School Year 2007 - 2008

# Voyager~ A Public Charter School

## Aim, Vision, Purpose and Mission

In order to reach any goal, it is necessary to have a clear direction. Everyone in the organization must have the same aim.

**Aim:** Joy in Learning

**Purpose:** Voyager provides an environment that develops lifelong learners who become contributing, global citizens in their quest to realizing their humanity.

### **Vision:**

- ❖ Students are enthusiastic partners in the learning process.
- ❖ Student's performance levels and self-esteem rise and remain high.
- ❖ Working at or with Voyager is enjoyable and rewarding.
- ❖ Our community reaps the rewards of an improved education system as graduates excel in college, career, and service.
- ❖ Voyager becomes a role model that leads the transformation of education in Hawaii and the nation.

### **Mission:**

Voyager is a unique learning culture, practicing and living its 3 core principles: the Golden Rule, Unity in Diversity, and All One Family. We incorporate the 3 methodologies of Total Quality Learning, Integrated Curriculum, and Feuerstein's Instrumental Enrichment into a comprehensive learning community. We involve families and are committed to continuous improvement of our system. We work with diverse populations, connect to the greater community, and develop partnerships that enhance and extend the influence of our program.

Voyager A Public Charter School is a safe, harmonious, healthy professional learning community. Therefore, we are also a smoke free, drug free environment.

### **Office hours:**

Our office hours are 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday-Friday.

### **\*\*\*NEW INSTRUCTIONAL HOURS BEGINNING IN 2007-2008:**

**School begins at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday with early dismissal on Wednesday at 1:45 p.m.**

### **Special Dates**

See School Calendar for holidays, teacher work days, end of trimester dates, intersessions, and student-led conference dates.

### **Non-discrimination:**

No student of Voyager Public Charter School shall be excluded from participation in Voyager activities, denied the benefits of a quality education, nor be subjected to discrimination due to the student's race, color, national origin, gender, religion or disability.

### Registration:

When a **child registers at Voyager for the first time**, he or she must have the following records in place before starting school:

1. Birth Certificate
2. Current documented TB (PPD/Mantoux) clearance
3. Complete series of required immunizations
4. Physical Examination
5. Proof of residence (a paid phone or electric bill will suffice)
6. Request for transfer of records form or records from previous schools attended (when applicable)
7. Introductory survey: *"Getting to Know Your Child"*

### Other Necessary Forms:

At Voyager we also require the following forms to be completed or signed for all students prior to the start of school:

1. T-shirt and school supply form (and payment)
2. Student support form
3. Emergency Card
4. Parent's Commitment to Excellence
5. Handbook & policy receipt and agreement
6. Student Photo, Work & Video Release Form
7. Release for electronically displayed student work and/or photos
8. Self-Administration of Medication Form (for inhalers and epi-pens only)
9. Parent Volunteer Form
10. (2<sup>nd</sup> grade and up) Computer Use Consent & Waiver: Form S-005A
11. (2<sup>nd</sup> grade and up) Responsible Computer Use Guidelines: S-005B

\*We have the right to deny attendance to students who do not have complete application packets.

### Five and Six Year Olds:

Young students may have accidents at school. This must always be dealt with in a nurturing and supportive manner so as not to cause the child any shame or discomfort. Thereafter, we ask that you send one clean change of clothing in a bag with the child's first and last name clearly written in large letters on the outside of the bag. **THIS SHOULD COME WITH YOUR CHILD THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL.** Thereafter, we ask that students keep a clean set of clothing at school so that when accidents occur, we can handle the situation without disturbing you, or upsetting your child.

### Health Services:

If your child becomes ill or is injured in school, you will be notified by telephone. If you are not available, we will begin to call your emergency contacts. Therefore, it is important that you keep your phone numbers, as well as those of your emergency contacts, current. **Your child will be released only to people listed on the child's emergency contact form.** A picture ID may be required.

Medications: Due to requirements of safe medical practice, no medication will be stored at school, or administered at school by school personnel. **Never send medication to school with a student for self-medicating! If oral or topical medication must be given during school hours, parents must arrange for an authorized person to come and administer it. (This is a Department of Health requirement.)**

The only exception to this rule is the use of inhalers and epipens. If a doctor has prescribed an inhaler and/or epipen for your child, please complete the permission form and return it to the school with all other enrollment documents.

### Well-Child/Illness Guidelines:

Our goal at Voyager School is to keep all children and adults as healthy as possible throughout the school year. We are asking for your cooperation by following the guidelines below:

- If your child is not feeling well in the morning, please observe them closely before sending them to school and risking the health of others.
- Please keep your child(ren) at home if they are too ill or uncomfortable to participate in the normal daily activities, including outdoor play.
- Children who get sick at school must be picked up as quickly as possible to help avoid exposing other children (unlike other schools, we do not have a room or area for your child to wait that is isolated from others).
- Children must be free from symptoms for **24 hours** before returning to school. The only exception is when an ear infection has been diagnosed and the child has been on antibiotics for at least 24 hours.
- If your child contracts a contagious disease, please call the school so that we can determine whether or not other parents need to be informed.

The checklist below identifies symptoms that determine when children are too ill to be at school are:

- Fever over 100
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Rashes
- Excessive redness, discharge from, or crusting of eyes
- Greenish discharge from the nose
- Excessive coughing
- General inability to participate in school activities
- Difficulty breathing or wheezing
- Complaints of severe pain

The guidelines above will be used to evaluate your child at school. Sometimes staff members will call parents to alert them that their child is not feeling well even though it has not been determined that they are required to pick up their child.

**Head Lice (Ukus):** Throughout the years, head lice have been identified in schools across the country. We will conduct in-school screenings as necessary. However, to keep this potential problem under control **we need your help**. Periodically check your child(ren), preferably once a week. Look at the nape of the neck and around the ears for pearly, white tear-drop shaped eggs attached to the hair shaft. Look to see if your child is doing excessive head scratching. When head lice are found at school, parents will be called to pick up their child and instructions on treatment will be given. The student may return to class only after proper treatment and after being rechecked and cleared by the office.

#### **Lost and Found:**

PLEASE LABEL YOUR CHILD'S BELONGINGS (particularly school shirts and sweatshirts that may be easily mistaken for another child's). Found articles are collected in the "lost and found" box in the front office. You may want to check the box periodically even if you are not missing any items...parents are often surprised at what they find! Unclaimed articles will be donated to a charitable organization.

#### **Field Trips:**

Field trips are planned throughout the year to supplement the learning curriculum and to expose and engage students in community and art activities and resources. Special field trips are sometimes planned to celebrate the reaching of a class goal or accomplishment. Although the school and the PTSA/Ohana supplement some of the field trips, many do have a cost to the family. Field trip forms are generally sent home 2 weeks in advance and must be signed and returned by the due date. **Late submission of field trip forms and money will no longer be accepted.** This is another reason why it is critically important for parents to regularly check backpacks of the little ones!

It is the responsibility of the child to take home and return the field trip form by the due date. Children who do not return the completed form and the fee (if any) on time will remain back at the school during the field trip. If it is an all-day field trip, parents may be asked to keep the child at home that day. The child that misses the field trip because the form was not turned in on time is often the first one to turn in the forms from then on! We ask for parent support with this procedure.

Please check field trip forms to determine whether or not your child needs home lunch on that day. Voyager t-shirts are always worn on field trips and are helpful for immediate recognition in public places.

### **Weekly Progress Reports (WPRs):**

Your child's teacher will be sending a weekly progress report that will outline: the week's accomplishments, your child's progress, and important upcoming events. Depending on the teacher, your child may be required to have parents' sign and return this form to the school as a way of acknowledging your receipt of the information. Weekly checking of WPRs is an excellent way for parents to keep current with class events, progress on class goals, and important upcoming dates and events. Research shows that parent participation makes a huge difference in the school success of children!

### **Arrival and Dismissal Procedures:**

Due to the unique character of our campus, no student is ever to be dropped off unattended prior to the opening of school! If you arrive early (prior to 7:45 a.m.) your child must be supervised until (s)he is allowed into the classroom area (7:45 a.m.).

*Morning drop-off:* Whenever possible we encourage parents to use our convenient drop-off and pick up service. In the morning beginning at 7:45 students can be dropped off in the coned area directly in front of our doors. If you prefer to park and come into the school **please use metered parking** along Auahi Street or free parking along Coral and Keawe. Please be considerate of our neighbor businesses and do not park in their parking stalls.

*Afternoon pick-up:* To avoid backing up traffic in the parking lot, cars are not permitted to stop in the coned area until 2 minutes before dismissal. Please enter the parking lot via Coral street and stay out of the far lane next to the bushes. Beginning exactly when school ends, a microphone system is used to call students from the front hallway to the cars. Please refer to the drop-off and pick-up map included in this packet to understand the traffic flow. Nametags in car windows really help the process! With this pick-up process you can stay in your car and your child will be escorted to your car door.

Kama'aina Kids offers before and after school care. The fee for these services will be the responsibility of the family.

Dismissal begins at 3:00 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday and at 1:45 p.m. on Wednesday. Students remaining in school 15 minutes after pick-up time will be asked to call parents. Because we do not have supervision after school, parents are asked to pick up their child(ren) on time. Should late parent pick-up become a chronic problem you will be contacted by the school and arrangements will have to be made to enroll your child in the after-school program. We do not have staff available to supervise children after the 15 minute grace period.

### **Early Dismissal:**

When your child needs to leave school before regular dismissal time, please make prior arrangements by notifying the front office and your child's teacher. **A parent or guardian** (or another person listed on the emergency card) **MUST** sign the student out at the office. If someone other than the parent or guardian is picking up your child, a note must be sent to the office stating the name of the person who has permission to pick up the child. They will need a picture I.D.

### **After School Plans:**

Please arrange after school plans for children prior to the start of school in the morning. Your child should know what is happening after school so that last minute confusion can be avoided. The phone lines get very busy in the

afternoon and last minute changes in family plans require someone to leave the office and walk to the classroom or to the lunchroom to inform the child of the changes. Kokua please!

**Parking:**

The parking stalls at the school are for teacher and staff parking only. Unfortunately we do not have any extra spaces so please park in the metered parking on Auahi Street or free parking on Coral and Keawe Streets. Please help us be good neighbors to our fellow businesses by not parking in their parking stalls.

**Homework Philosophy:**

Schools are expected to cover a tremendous amount of material in one school year. At Voyager we offer a variety of learning activities outside the traditional curriculum such as classes in language, art, and music. Therefore it is even more crucial that homework is completed nightly to reinforce concepts learned during the school day. This daily practice develops strong academic skills, instills responsibility in students, and provides opportunities for families to be aware and supportive of what is happening with their child in school. **Parent support is needed to help establish these healthy habits early on in our children's education.**

Homework may also be assigned over school intersession periods. Often these are project-based assignments that can be worked on over several days. If, due to vacation plans, a deadline extension is needed, parents are expected to work that out with teachers prior to the start of vacation.

**Tardiness:**

It is important that parents bring their child (ren) to school on time. By bringing your child to school on time you are setting education as a priority. Although school officially begins at 8:00 AM every morning, there is a 5 minute grace period and children are not considered tardy until 8:05. For more details concerning consequences for chronically tardy students, please refer to **the attached tardy policy**. **All tardy students must be escorted by an adult into the office.** This is for both safety reasons and to help parents track the number of tardies they have accumulated each trimester.

**Morning Ritual:**

The educational value of the morning ritual is as follows:

- Teaches expectations in ceremonial situations
- Unites the community in a common focus/practice
- Starts the day as a unified community
- Models and teaches respect for the various communities/attributes in a child's life

Each morning the morning ritual will begin at 8:00 a.m. with a pledge and a poem or song. Participation in the morning ritual is encouraged, but optional. Families who do not wish to have their children participate can arrive by 8:05 a.m. and will not be considered tardy. Students who are on-site at the time of the morning ritual are expected to participate, stand respectfully with their classmates or their parents, or quietly wait in the front hallway.

Monday: Respect for self/family

Tuesday: Respect for school/community

Wednesday: Respect for State

Thursday: Respect for Nation

Friday: Respect for World

**Absences:**

One of the most critical factors in learning is regular and prompt attendance at school. The educational process requires continuity of instruction and daily participation in classroom activities. Voyager's program is designed around hands-on, multi-sensory experiences, and therefore classroom lessons cannot be easily "made up" like traditional paper-pencil work. Regular, timely attendance in school also instills responsible behavior patterns in our families and sets education as a priority. Parents have a legal responsibility to see that their child attends school and in the case of excessive absences, legal action can be taken. For more details about Voyager's attendance philosophy and

procedures please read the **attached attendance policy**. To get the most out of the school experience....we need your child here every day!! At Voyager, we are serious about learning 😊.

### **Special Education and Support Services:**

Voyager believes that every child deserves a very special education in order to meet his or her individual needs. Sometimes additional information, evaluation, or programming is necessary to support a child in the learning process. Should you have any questions about Special Education and support services, please contact either the Resource Room teacher or the Student Services Coordinator at any time. Under Hawaii law, the Department of Education retains ultimate responsibility for providing free and appropriate public education to all students.

If your child was receiving SPED services from another school, please forward a copy of the IEP to the school upon acceptance. A team meeting will be held to determine whether the school can meet the needs of your child.

### **Classroom Visits:**

Voyager welcomes parents to our campus. However, for the safety of all, it is necessary that all visitors come to the office, sign in, and get a visitor's pass. A picture I.D. may be required until we know all of you. Since the beginning of school is a time for orientation and staff/student bonding, we ask that families limit class visits during the first two weeks of the year.

Extra hands are always needed in the classroom so we ask that you arrange a convenient time to help with your child's teacher. If, when visiting, you observe a child exhibiting inappropriate or unsafe behavior, please immediately inform the teacher or any other school personnel. Except in an incident of immediate, impending danger, Voyager personnel should handle the concern instead of a parent.

Some students are easily distracted by visitors, therefore we request that when visiting, you observe the following guidelines:

1. Please enter and exit the learning areas as quietly as possible.
2. Please do not initiate conversations with students. If they address you, answer as briefly as possible.
3. Please do not initiate discussions with other observers or teachers in the classroom during lessons. If you have questions, please wait until a time when the flow of instruction will not be interrupted. Lengthy questions or discussions of depth will be addressed during breaks or by special appointment at another time.

### **Dress Code:**

**At Voyager, students wear uniform shirts on Mondays-Thursdays, with tan, black or blue colored shorts, long pants, skirts, or skorts.** Closed-toe shoes must be worn every day. Fridays are designated as "free dress" days except for those Fridays when a field trip is scheduled. We ask that your child be a part of the school community by following this dress code. For more details, please refer to the **attached student dress code policy**.

### **Student Evaluations:**

Assessment of student progress is ongoing and occurs in multiple ways in the classroom, in the community, and in other less structured settings. Formal evaluation occurs at the end of every trimester and consists of 3 important components:

1. **Narrative reports:**  
Your child's teacher will prepare a written narrative report detailing your child's progress in all aspects of his or her education. This will include the core subject areas of language arts, math, and integrated curriculum, as well as developmental progress and socialization. Narratives are sent home with students a couple days before student-led conferences and should be reviewed carefully in preparation of the conference.

2. **Student-Led Conferences:**

Voyager believes that every child is an active participant in his or her own learning. **Student-led conferences** are held at the end of each trimester. **On conference days students only attend school during their conference time, which is prearranged with your child's teacher. Conference appointments are mandatory events and participation is not optional.** *Students are marked absent for the day if they do not attend their conference.* Much time and preparation goes into these conference presentations and students organize and practice for several days in advance. They get very excited as the day approaches so please honor this important event by making your participation a priority! Please look for, complete, and return conference scheduling notices and note these days on your home and school calendars so that your child has this wonderful opportunity to share their learning! If, after the student-led conference parents still have questions about their child's progress, a parent-teacher conference can be scheduled for another day and time.

3. **Portfolios:**

Students are guided in collecting and reflecting on their work samples throughout the year in learning portfolios. These collections serve as documentation that certain learning goals have been accomplished and as "the story" of their learning. Portfolios are shared at the conferences and go home with students at the end of the year.

**Communication:**

Regular, consistent communication between home and school is critical to school success. The teachers and principal of Voyager are always available to meet with you regarding your concerns. In order to set a parent/teacher conference, please call the school office or contact number provided by your child's teacher. Should you have any concern about your child's work, performance or behavior, **the teacher is the first person that should be contacted.** We ask that you make every effort to work with the teacher to resolve any issue. If either parent or teacher feels additional input or assistance is necessary, the school principal or the student services coordinator will be available to meet with you.

**Discipline policy and procedures:**

Safety is the number one priority at Voyager and children are expected to behave in a way that is both safe and respectful. Any behavior that is considered to present a significant risk of harm will result in consequences set forth in our **discipline policy (see attached)**. Students are taught and encouraged to handle conflict using words and safe, appropriate action and not to retaliate using force or aggression. At Voyager we teach children to become problem-solvers and peacemakers and we ask that parents support us in this effort.

Parents are called early on when misbehavior or lack of respect is interfering with the learning process of our students. When addressing chronic misbehavior, school and home must coordinate a seamless student-centered program that addresses the root cause of the behavior and provides support for behavior change. The school counselor is also often involved in handling the situation and helping students resolve the conflict. If repeated discipline issues occur, the child may be referred for ongoing counseling as a way of providing additional support to the child, the parent(s), and the teacher.

**Safety Procedures**

Voyager practices monthly fire drills and evacuation procedures. A **safety plan attached** to this document describes three different levels of emergencies and the procedures for each. Please familiarize yourself with these important procedures.

**Prohibited Items:**

The following will NOT be allowed on campus

1. Weapons
2. Toy guns or weapons
3. Drugs/Alcohol
4. Cigarettes

5. Laser pointers
6. Gum
7. Hand-held video games\*
8. Portable CD or tape players\*
9. Cell phones or pagers\*
10. MP3 players

\*Although we recommend that none of these items are brought to school, items 6-8 may be kept in backpacks if needed for after-school use. If they are brought out during school they may be confiscated. **The school is not responsible for loss or theft of these items.** Use of these items during school is strictly forbidden unless authorized by a teacher for a specific purpose.

In accordance with the U.S. Gun Free Schools Act, "Any student who is found in possession of a firearm while attending school shall be excluded from attending school for not less than one year."

#### **Parent Participation:**

At Voyager School we believe that parent participation is a key factor in our student's success and the success of the school. We depend on feedback from parents to help us improve our program and to ensure that our students are engaged in the learning process. You can partner with us in the education of your child and the success of Voyager by all of the following:

- Signing and abiding by the Commitment to Excellence
- Complying with all school policies
- Communicating regularly with your child's teacher and other school personnel
- Attending and participating in student-led conferences
- Participating in fundraising activities
- Completing all surveys
- Volunteering your time to help out at school
- Participating in school activities
- **Returning field trip and other important forms on or before the due date**

#### **Voyager Ohana PTSA (Parent Teacher Student Association):**

The Voyager Ohana meets periodically to do social activities and fundraising. The group is a member of the Parent Teacher Student Association.

#### **Voyager Local School Board:**

Voyager Local School Board is the governing body of the school and is responsible for financial oversight and developing all policies and procedures. The Local School Board is made up of community members, parents, teachers, and staff members. The Board meets monthly and various committees also meet on a monthly basis. The nominations for Parent Representatives are conducted in May, election certified in June and term effective July 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### **Birthday Celebrations:**

If your child would like to celebrate this occasion at school, please notify your child's teacher in advance. We encourage parents to limit the celebration to a small, healthy treat or for the child to donate a book to the classroom or the school.

If you would like to have a birthday party at your home for your child, please send invitations through the mail unless you will be inviting every child in the class, or every child of the same gender in the class. Birthday invitations given in front of those who may be excluded can cause hurt feelings. At Voyager we create classrooms where all are included and accepted. Please honor this philosophy by being respectful about invitations and outside social events.

**Transferring from Voyager to another school:**

Many of our students apply to private schools. We ask that parents give at least 2 weeks notice to the school for the completing of necessary forms and that **parents provide the schools with their own copies of narrative reports and standardized test score reports**. If the school is required to make copies of student progress reports, there will be a fee for those services.

Please be advised that Voyager only accepts students ages 5-8 and that students who have left and wish to return will be required to follow the same admission guidelines as new students. **Students exceeding the age limit of acceptance will not be allowed readmission**. Parents are asked to indicate their plans to return on a family return poll distributed in February of each school year. Once parents have signed that their child will not be returning that student slot is released to another incoming student. Please be thoughtful about completing that form and make sure that the following year's plans are in place.

**Voyager is a *school of choice*:**

Voyager is a specific kind of school, modeled on specific methodologies and philosophies. Information sessions and parent meetings are held to educate parents about the choice they are making and to ensure that it is a good match philosophically for their family. From our dress code, to our classroom structure, to the core of our curriculum we ask that parents be knowledgeable and involved in the overall aim and mission of our school.

Thank you for choosing to send your child to Voyager Public Charter School. Be involved and aware of what is happening in your child's classroom and the exceptional learning community we call *Voyager*. We are looking forward to a successful and exciting year of growth, learning, and fun!

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Attachments to this handbook:

- Policies: tardy, attendance, dress code, safety, discipline, and computer use
- Drop-off and pick-up map showing traffic flow.

There are other policies available at the office upon request including, but not limited to: parent feedback (grievance) policy & procedure, admission policy, and lottery process.