

TZU CHI ACADEMY HANDBOOK 2022

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INTRODUCTION TO TZU CHI ACADEMY

Tzu Chi Academy USA was established in 1994. It was originally a Chinese class for Tzu Chi youth volunteers which was established to provide Chinese language education to children of Tzu Chi volunteers. Due to high demand, the classes were opened up to the public, and Tzu Chi Academy was formally established to provide a strong academic and moral foundation for the students.

Tzu Chi Academy's mission is to deliver "loving-kindness, compassion, joy, and equanimity" in education. We strive to inspire the inherent altruistic potential in all children. With our humanistic education, we hope to open the hearts of the children and help them develop an open-minded perspective on the world. Students not only develop in their academic proficiency, but also in terms of their personal character development.

The teachers at Tzu Chi Academy have a strong sense of professionalism and serve the students with selfless devotion. In addition, our volunteer system provides parents/guardians with the opportunity to accompany the students in their learning process.

Throughout the United States, there are 24 Tzu Chi Academies with a total of over 5,300 students. In every Tzu Chi Academy, teachers, students, and parents/guardians work together as one family to achieve Tzu Chi Academy's mission.

CHINESE EDUCATION

Tzu Chi Academy's curriculum materials are approved by the Overseas Community Affairs Council of the Republic of China. In response to the development of new technologies and teaching methodologies, Tzu Chi Academy has incorporated diversified teaching methods, such as the e-Learning Portal for Chinese Education, dynamic teaching methods and exercises, and other instructional methods.

JING SI APHORISM TEACHINGS

Tzu Chi Academy uses Master Cheng Yen's Jing Si Aphorisms in its education, presenting these teachings using stories, cartoons, and art. Jing Si Aphorisms are simple and practical teachings which are centered on developing skills for daily living and character education. Activities based on these aphorisms promote mutual growth through interactions among teachers, students and parents/guardians.

HUMANISTIC EDUCATION

In order to provide a comprehensive character education based on Master Cheng Yen's teachings of great love, all Tzu Chi Academies across the United States offer humanistic elective courses. Since 2003, at least 30 minutes of each class is dedicated to humanistic education. Many Tzu Chi Academies also offer artistic courses to enhance students' daily lives and support their language development. Other humanistic courses may include Environmental Protection classes, sign language choreography, Jing Si Tea Ceremony classes, Flower Arrangement classes, and Drama Studio classes.

QUALIFICATIONS FOR ENROLLMENT

To enroll in Tzu Chi academy, students must be at least 4 years of age. Tzu Chi Academy offers classes for students between the ages of 4 -18.

STUDENT UNIFORM POLICY

For safety and identification, Tzu Chi Academy has a mandatory school uniform policy for all students. Following Tzu Chi Academy's principle of respect for all life, we ask that students refrain from eating non-vegetarian food while in uniform. The Tzu Chi uniform policy is as follows:

- White shirts with school symbol (please purchase at the school).
- Dark navy blue pants of khaki material.
- Covered shoes.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE, WITHDRAWAL, REFUND & ABSENTEE POLICIES

LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND WITHDRAWAL POLICY

Parents/guardians shall complete a "Leave of Absence/Withdrawal Application" form if their child will be absent or withdrawn. The form can be picked up from the school's office. When returning to school after a leave of absence or withdrawal, the student will be classified as a new student and will go through a new student application process.

REFUND POLICY

The policy for refunds of tuition fees based on student withdrawal is as follows: Requests received before school start: 100% refund after deducting \$30.00 processing fee.

- Requests received during school 4th Week (include 4th week): 75% refund after deducting \$30.00 processing fee.

- Requests received during school 5th to 7th Week (include 7th week): 50% refund after deducting \$30.00 processing fee.
- Tuition is not refundable after the 7th week.

A tuition waiver program is available for qualified students. *Subject to change per school, please contact the school office for details.

ABSENTEE POLICY

Parents/guardians are responsible for informing the school when their child will be absent. Parents/guardians should:

- Call the school office to report the absence before the start of the class.
- Complete the “Absence Form” and give it to the teacher during the following class.

Absences not reported by the parent/guardian according to the procedures above will be considered “unexcused” absences.

A student who has three or more unexcused absences within one semester will be classified as truant. Tzu Chi Academy will not refund tuition if a student is considered truant.

Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to support students in ensuring their compliance with all school rules and classroom procedures. If student behavior does not improve after three documented violations, Tzu Chi Academy has the right to dismiss the student.

Tzu Chi Academy has the right to dismiss a student if the student’s absences exceed 1/3 of instructional classes in a semester, i.e. absence is over 18 hours, or 5 classes within one semester.

TZU CHI ACADEMY SCHOOL REGULATIONS

Tzu Chi Academy aims to provide a safe, high-performance school for all students. All students, parents/guardians, and volunteers are expected to comply with rules, policies, and guidelines of the state Department of Education. In addition, they are expected to comply with the following:

1. Students shall promptly and respectfully obey the teachers and the class parents in the classroom. Students cannot disturb other students by using profane and vulgar language or physical actions. Students will be brought to the school office if the violation affects the classroom as a whole. The school has the right to dismiss students on a case-by-case basis if students fail to correct their violations.
2. The school uniform is mandatory. The school will notify parents/guardians of

uniform violations. The school has the right to dismiss students on a case-by-case basis if students fail to correct their violations.

3. Students are expected to be on time at school. Students shall enter the classroom when the school bell rings. Students shall not loiter or create disturbances in the classroom. If a student is more than 15 minutes late or leaves more than 15 minutes early, the student shall be considered absent from class. Three absences from class are treated as an absence of one day. The school has the right to dismiss students on a case-by-case basis if students continue to be late to class.
4. Students are required to abide by the classroom regulations. Students cannot roam around the classroom, chat, or engage in off-task behaviors. Students must refrain from leaving the classroom without permission.
5. No smoking is allowed in the school.
6. Students are expected to refrain from eating, drinking, wearing hats, being excessively noisy, and putting their feet on chairs and desks.
7. No cheating is allowed during tests.
8. There shall be no weapons (i.e.: knives, guns) or drugs taken to school. If a student is found with any of these items, they will be immediately expelled from the school.
9. In the classroom, students are expected to refrain from touching anything that does not belong to them, such as posters, papers, and anything on the teacher's desk, as well as anything on the whiteboard. The same rule applies to the restroom: no misuse of toilet paper or paper towels, excessive water on the floor, etc. If anything is broken, the cost is to be compensated by the family of the student responsible.
10. Stealing is forbidden.
11. Students are expected to refrain from touching other students' belongings if they do not have permission from the owner to do so.
12. Students must refrain from climbing any walls/fences surrounding the school. If a ball happens to leave school grounds, students must notify a parent/guardian or teacher to receive permission to go out of school grounds and retrieve it.
13. Students must stay in sight of the playground supervisors during recess.
14. Students may not leave the school without permission. If a student needs to leave early or miss class time, the parent/guardian is required to notify the school.
15. Tzu Chi Academy is a part of the Tzu Chi Foundation. Students are expected to attend select activities of the Tzu Chi Foundation, including but not limited to: Tzu Chi Family Celebration, Graduation Ceremony, annual celebrations, and athletic meets.

DISCIPLINARY GUIDELINES

1. There are a total of 15 school rules; if rule #8 is violated, the student shall be expelled immediately without a refund of the tuition.
2. If a student has violated a regulation, the school will notify his/her

- parents/guardians and they will both sign the violation record.
3. If a student has made a serious violation, the school board will expel the student.
 4. All information on all students of Tzu Chi Academy is confidential.
 5. If the parents/guardians or students are unwilling or fail to cooperate with the school, they are encouraged to voluntarily withdraw from the school.
 6. All school regulations are adopted and approved by the school board. They are effective from the day of publication.
 7. The disciplinary process follows the steps as listed: students are put on the violation record, students are given guidance, parents/guardians are notified by phone or letter, counseling and interventions are provided, etc. If the student has made serious violations, the student will be expelled. If any student or parent/guardian does not agree upon any of school regulations, they are encouraged not to register for Tzu Chi Academy.

COOPERATION AND SUPPORT FROM PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Please support us in our efforts by doing the following:

1. Examine and sign school correspondences, homework, and any school notices; ask your child to turn them in to the teacher.
2. Help your child comply with teacher's arrangements to participate in school activities. Prepare drinking water or reusable cups and take proactive steps to address any of your child's health concerns. Please provide a written note to class if your child is required to take medicine at school.
3. To help maintain order in the school, please stay in the rest area during school hours and refrain from lingering or talking in the hallway.
4. Cooperate with the school and respect the school's decisions on the evaluations and grading.
5. Follow the volunteers' instructions regarding traffic control and please do not park illegally.
6. Participate in parent meetings, School Opening Ceremony and Graduation Ceremony.
7. Give advice and recommendations to the school and communicate your opinions to the school.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

We encourage parents/guardians to join as Tzu Chi volunteers and attend Tzu Chi activities. Please check with the school for further information.