

**Somerset Career Academy**  
**A “B rated” Charter Middle High School**



**STUDENT HANDBOOK 2025-2026**

725 NW California Blvd  
Port Saint Lucie, Florida 34986  
Phone: 772-301-1711. Fax: 772-301-1712  
[www.somersetcareeracademy.org](http://www.somersetcareeracademy.org)

## **What is a Charter School?**

Charter schools are public schools that operate under a performance contract, or a “charter” which frees them from many regulations created for traditional public schools while holding them accountable for academic and financial results. The charter contract between the charter school governing board and the sponsor details the school’s mission, program, goals, students served, methods of assessment, and ways to measure success. The length of time for which charters are granted varies, but most are granted five years.

The Florida Legislature, in authorizing the creation of public charter schools, established the following guiding principles: high standards of student achievement while increasing parental choice; the alignment of responsibility with accountability; and ensuring parents receive information on reading levels and learning gains of their children. Charter schools are intended to improve student learning; increase learning opportunities with special emphasis on low performing students and reading; and measure learning outcomes. Charter schools may create innovative measurement tools; provide competition to stimulate improvement in traditional schools; expand capacity of the public school system; and mitigate the educational impact created by the development of new residential units.

A charter school is statutorily required to (s.1002.33(9),F.S.):

- Be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, employment practices, and operations;
- Be accountable to the school district for its performance;
- Not charge tuition or fees;
- Comply with all applicable state and local health, safety, and civil rights requirements;
- Not discriminate based on race, national origin, sex, handicap, or marital status;
- Subject itself to and pay for an annual financial audit;
- Maintain all financial records that constitute its accounting system in accordance with current law;
- Annually adopt and maintain an operating budget;
- Fully participate in the state education accountability program.

- (Excerpted from [www.floridaschoolchoice.org](http://www.floridaschoolchoice.org))

### **Somerset Academy Inc. Mission**

Somerset Academy, Inc. promotes a transformational culture that maximizes student achievement and the development of accountable, global learners in a safe and enriching environment that fosters high-quality education.

### **Somerset Career Academy Vision**

The vision of **Somerset Career Academy (SCA)** is function as a school to workforce solution for the community, focusing on serving the diverse needs of our students, creating successful, career-ready scholars ready to outperform in today's workforce.

### **Beliefs**

S - Set high expectations

O - Objective

M - Meaningful Curriculum

E - Effective

R - Resourceful and Responsible life-long learners

S - Scholars who achieve proficiency and beyond

E - Evaluate continuously and use data to drive curriculum

T - Instructors who are highly qualified

**Somerset Academy, Inc.**

**Principal / Corporate Address:**

20801 Johnson Street, Pembroke Pines, Florida 33029

Alternate Mailing Address: 6340 Sunset Drive, South Miami, Florida 33143

**Board Member Office Phone:** 786.393.4455

Alternate Phone 305.669.2906

**Governing Board Members:** <https://somersetacademyschools.com/board-members>

**Governing Board Meeting Dates:** <https://somersetacademyschools.com/board-meeting-dates>

## School Based Administration

Principal: Erika Rains

Vice Principal: Tim Tredor

Asst Administrator: Gina Russo

Director of CTE: Shannon Murphy

Deans of Discipline: David Horne & Elaine Sauerman

### Student Enrollment/Lottery Policy

Students will be admitted to Somerset Academy Bethany regardless of race, gender religion or ethnic origin and our admission and dismissal procedures will be equitable for all students. All Somerset Academy, Inc. schools will implement the following enrollment/lottery policy:

1. Effective immediately, **Somerset Career Academy** will set and advertise a registration / lottery date.
2. The following groups of students will not have to participate in the lottery and will gain automatic admission/re-admission assuming they complete the “Intent to Return” form or new student application prior to the lottery date
  - i. Current students enrolled at **Somerset Academy Bethany, Somerset College Prep, Somerset Academy St. Lucie, or Somerset Career Academy**
  - ii. Siblings of enrolled or accepted students at **Somerset Academy Bethany, Somerset College Prep, Somerset Academy St. Lucie, or Somerset Career Academy**
  - iii. Children of employees at **Somerset Academy Bethany, Somerset College Prep, Somerset Academy St. Lucie, or Somerset Career Academy**
  - iv. Children of governing board members
  - v. Children of an active-duty member of any branch of the United States Armed Forces.

For Federal Grant Recipient Schools, preference will only be given to the following groups while within the active grant period. The school may resume implementing all preferences above once the grant cycle is completed.

- i. Currently enrolled students
  - ii. Siblings of enrolled or accepted students of the grant recipient school
  - iii. Children of employees of the grant recipient school
  - iv. Children of founding board members of the grant recipient school
3. If the number of applicants is less than or equal to the number of available slots each qualified applicant will be accepted and enrolled.

4. If the number of applicants meeting the established criteria of the charter exceeds the stated capacity of the school, or individual classroom or program, each child will be placed in a random lottery (the “Lottery”).
5. Each application will be given a number, and all numbers for each classroom/program will be placed in a database. Numbers will be selected on a random basis and all slots available per grade will be filled based on the rank order of their drawing. The remaining numbers will be used to create the waiting list (the list will be developed based on the rank order in which the remaining assigned lottery numbers are randomly selected).
6. There will be at least one school administrator plus a member of the board and/or a representative from an independent auditing firm present at the Lottery.
7. After the Lottery is completed, students will be contacted in the rank order in which names were randomly drawn and established on the waiting list.
8. As openings arise throughout the year, the next child on the waiting list for that particular classroom will be offered the “space”. If the school accepts applications during the school year and already has a waiting list from a previous lottery, the school may either re-draw all names to date (less those accepted/withdrawn/removed by request) or conduct periodic subsequent lotteries and add the names in the rank order drawn to the initial list created via a random lottery.
9. The parent has 48 hours to accept/refuse the space and complete all required documentation for admission into program. If the parent is not able to do so, the space will go to the next child on the waiting list. Applicant names for parents who do not respond within 48 hours or who do not accept the available space will be removed from the list and requested to reapply in the future if they would like to be considered at a later date.
10. If there are more spaces than applications, the school may accept all students after the registration period has ended. If the school continues to accept applications after the initial registration period, the school will:
  - A) Conduct subsequent registration periods with advertised due dates and determine whether a lottery is necessary at the end of that period; or,
  - B) Conduct a “rolling” registration weekly. At the end of each week, determine whether or not a lottery is necessary.
    1. If the school receives more applications that week than the available seats, the school will:
      - a) Conduct a lottery;
      - b) Notify families that received available spaces, and

- c) Put remaining applications on a waiting list in the rank order their numbers are randomly drawn OR let families know they will be included in the next lottery when spaces become available.
  2. If no lottery is necessary at the end of the week because the school has more space than applications received, all applicants may be accepted.
  3. Repeat steps a and b above at the end of each week or as long as the school continues to accept applications for each school year.
11. The school may choose the option of maintaining a waiting list application pool rather than a rank ordered waiting list. When the school chooses this option, it will conduct the lottery from all available applications received to date and stop when all available spaces have been filled. Each time the school has available space, it will conduct a new lottery.
  12. The school may implement limited enrollment periods to target specified student populations in accordance with Florida Statute, Section 1002.33(10)(e).

### **Bell Schedule**

8:30-8:40 Homeroom  
 8:40-10:10 Period 1/5  
 10:10-10:15 Transition  
 10:15-11:45 Period 2/6  
 11:45-12:35 Lunch  
 12:35-2:05 Period 3/7  
 2:05-2:10 Transition  
 2:10-3:40 Period 4/8  
 3:40-3:45 Announcements  
 3:45 Dismissal

### **School calendar year:**

Somerset Career Academy will adhere to the Saint Lucie County School District's calendar.  
*(Calendar subject to change according to Saint Lucie County School Board.)*  
<https://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/pdf/School-Calendar-2025-2026.pdf>

**Meals:** The Saint Lucie County School District will provide school meals. Free and reduced lunch applications will be made available during the first few weeks of school or online at <https://foodservice.stlucie.k12.fl.us/>  
 School Lunch applications must be completed yearly.  
 Meal prices are set by the St. Lucie County School District and subject to change. Pricing and menus can be found at the link above.  
 You may reload your student lunch account online by using the following link. <https://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/online-payments/>

### **Early Release Schedule**

8:30-8:35 Homeroom  
 8:35-9:35 Period 1  
 9:35-9:40 Transition  
 9:40-10:40 Period 2

\*Scholars are considered tardy if they are not in their seats at 8:30AM and must report directly to the front office for a tardy slip. Students assigned to a bus will receive a detention for any tardy. Students not assigned to a bus will receive a detention for every 3 period 1/5 tardies and for each tardy to periods 2-4/6-8. Students assigned to a bus who are tardy due to a school or bus related issue, will receive an excused tardy.

10:40-11:30 Lunch

11:30-12:30 Period 3

12:30-12:35 Transition

12:35-1:35 Period 4

1:35-1:45 Somerset Spartan Seminar

Click here to view the full Staff Directory : <https://www.somersetcareeracademy.org/staff>

### **Morning Arrival Policy**

For the safety and supervision of all students, campus gates open at 7:35 AM. Students should not be dropped off or left unattended on school grounds before this time.

Please note that school staff are not available to supervise students prior to 7:35 AM, and the school is not responsible for the safety or supervision of any child left in the parking lot or at the gates before this time.

- We offer three drop-off lanes during morning arrival. Once a lane is selected, please remain in that lane for the duration of the drop-off.
- For safety and traffic flow, do not change lanes or attempt to cut across lanes after entering the drop-off area.
- Drivers must remain in their vehicles at all times. Please do not exit your vehicle to switch drivers, assist with backpacks, or for any other reason during drop-off.

### **Afternoon Dismissal Policy**

Bus riders may exit gym gate or bus loop gates. Bus riders may not walk between buses. Bus riders will follow all bus rules, including no food/drink on the buses. Headphones must be used while using cell phones on the bus. All directives given by bus drivers must be followed. Riding the school bus is a privilege and violation of school bus rules may result in a loss of bus privileges.

Walkers and bike riders must follow all rules of the road, including using cross walks.

All parents/guardians picking students up in the afternoon must enter the parking lot and the parent pick-up line. Students are not permitted to approach cars parked in swales and on the sides of the roads, as this creates a security and safety risk.

## **Student Driver Policy**

Driving to school is a privilege, not a right. Students who wish to park on campus must complete a Student Parking Application and submit the following:

- A copy of their driver's license
- Proof of insurance
- Vehicle registration
- A \$25 non-refundable parking fee

Once approved, students will receive a parking pass, which must be clearly displayed at all times while parked on campus. Vehicles without a visible pass are subject to towing at the owner's expense.

Students who choose to leave campus for lunch must return on time. Repeated tardiness or failure to return may result in the revocation of parking privileges.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in disciplinary action, including loss of driving privileges.

## **Weather-Related Dismissal Policy**

In the event of lightning within a 2-mile radius, student dismissal will pause immediately for safety. Dismissal will resume once lightning is no longer within the 2-mile range.

If you choose not to wait, you are welcome to park and walk up to sign out your child in person, but please note that you assume full responsibility for your child's safety upon early release during these conditions.

Somerset Career Academy does not operate a before or after care program.

## **Attendance Policy**

Anytime a scholar returns to school after an absence, a note MUST be brought from home. DOCUMENTATION FOR EXCUSED ABSENCES MUST BE FILED WITH THE OFFICE WITHIN THREE (3) DAYS OF THE ABSENCE OR THE ABSENCE IS UNEXCUSED. It is the responsibility of the parents or legal guardian to submit the reason for each absence that has not been pre-approved by school administration. Parents or legal guardians are required to justify the scholar's absence. Justification will be evaluated based on the policy below regarding excused or unexcused absences. The final decision for approval will rest with the school principal. Acceptable excuses for scholars' absences are illness (physician's note required), a death in the family, a dental or doctor appointment (doctor's note required), court appearance, a school-sponsored event or activity that has been previously approved or religious holiday. Scholars may be released from school to participate in a religious observance upon written request of his/her parent or legal guardian.



Unexcused absences are those not justified according to the rules of this policy by the parent or legal guardian. In addition, truancy, out of school suspension, expulsion and/or skipping are considered unexcused absences.

If you need to take your scholar out of school before the end of the school day, you must come to the school office and sign him/her out. Three unexcused early dismissals will constitute one unexcused day. You may not check your scholar out after 3:15.

Report an absence here: <https://www.somersetcareeracademy.org/Report-an-Absence>

**Skipping class is defined by one or more of the following criteria:**

1. Failure to sign/check out when leaving school before the end of the official school day.
2. Failure by Dual Enrollment or On The Job Training students to sign in or out of campus for DE or OJT courses.
3. Absent from class without parent or legal guardian's knowledge and/or permission.
4. Absent from class without instructor knowledge and/or permission.
5. Being "out of area": not in the building or assigned area of the classroom the student is assigned to at any given time.

Although the school does not support scholars missing school for vacation purposes, any scholar missing school for vacation must notify the administration. Notification must be made in writing at least two weeks in advance so instructors can have the appropriate work ready for each scholar. This will be considered part of our Family Leave Policy. Scholars with a 2.0 or lower G.P.A. in core subjects are encouraged not to miss school. Your scholar(s) must be in attendance **170 out of 180** days or they may be considered for retention or dismissed from the program.

**Make Up Work – Excused Absences**

Scholars are expected to make up all work missed during excused absences. The scholar must contact the instructor on the first day back in school to make arrangements to make up the work. Scholars are permitted one day per day absent to make up work. The instructor and/or the principal may grant additional time for making up work if warranted by the individual situation. All assignments, including tests and exams announced in advance of the scholar's absence, must be made up on the day the scholar returns to school. Instructors

have the prerogative to require a scholar on school or administrative leave to complete work assigned beforehand.

### **Make Up Work – Unexcused Absences**

It is up to individual instructors whether they will accept missing work due to unexcused absences. If an instructor chooses to accept make-up work, the scholar is permitted one day per day absent to make up the work. The instructor will determine how much credit to assign for make-up work due to an unexcused absence.

### **Grade Scale**

Grading system in the middle-high school and the interpretations of the letter grades, which represent the equivalent numerical grades, are as follows:

A 90 – 100

B 80 – 89

C 70 – 79

D 60 – 69

F 0 – 59

### **Quarter Grades Calculation**

Because we are using the Copernican Block Schedule, credit is granted on a semester basis for one credit courses. One-half credit is given for passing a quarter's work in a course. One quarter is equivalent to a nine-week period. One semester, which equates to a full credit, is 18 weeks.

The weight of the semester examination is 20% of the final semester grade, except where the State dictates a 30% as related to the EOC. Any scholar with a GPA below 2.0 shall have their parent or guardian notified that good work is necessary to ensure that high school graduation requirements are met. Scholars will be assisted in meeting these requirements through a variety of options, which may include, but are not limited to:

- forgiveness policy
- extended learning
- special counseling
- volunteer and/or peer tutors
- school-sponsored help sessions

- homework hotlines
- study skills classes
- co-enrollment

### **Forgiveness and Recovery Rules**

A scholar may elect to repeat a course for credit and/or in order to improve his/her record. A scholar may repeat a course in which a “D” or “F” was earned. When the same or comparable course is repeated and a “C” or better is subsequently earned, the failing grade of the first attempt will then be “forgiven” or excluded from the grade point average. The record will show all courses taken.

### **Conduct Scale**

Our conduct scale ranges from 1 to 4 and reflects how a student’s behavior impacts learning in the classroom:

- A 4 indicates behavior that supports and enhances learning for everyone.
- A 3 means the student’s behavior is interfering with their own learning.
- A 2 reflects behavior that disrupts the learning of others.
- A 1 means the behavior is not conducive to anyone’s learning — in other words, it’s completely unacceptable.

Our goal is for all students to consistently aim for a 4 by demonstrating respect, responsibility, and a commitment to a positive learning environment.

Progress reports will be uploaded to Skyward twice quarterly, and report cards will be uploaded once each quarter, based on the district calendar.

### **“Home-learning” policy**

The purpose of homework is to develop effective study habits. It is also used to reinforce concepts taught or to work on assigned projects. If a scholar does not understand his/her assignment after trying to do it at home, please send a note or email to the instructor indicating the problem.

The school requires scholars to purchase an assignment agenda/planner from the school. It can assist your scholar in keeping track of the homework. Assignments must be completed on time and be properly written. The only acceptable excuse for incomplete homework is the scholar’s verified illness. If a scholar fails to bring

in homework, he/she should complete it for the following day, or as the instructors permit. Instructors only have to accept excused absences for full credit. Any unexcused absences are up to the discretion of the instructor. Instructors keep daily records of homework assignments, which are used in determining quarterly grades. Always complete work, even if it is late.

Parents may help in the following ways:

- Show an interest in your scholar's work
- Provide a place and time for quiet study
- Encourage home reading and listen to your scholar read
- Review the homework for neatness and completeness
- Refrain from doing the work for your scholar
- Discuss problems related to home study with your scholar's instructor

**\*\*It is important to note that "home learning" is the responsibility of the scholar.\*\***

### **Exceptional Scholar Education**

The Exceptional Scholar Education Program (ESE) is implemented in accordance with Saint Lucie County District Procedures for Exceptional Education. Scholar exceptionalities will be addressed individually as needed. Parents and instructors work closely with the ESE Specialist to provide proper placement and to develop an individualized educational plan (IEP).

Contact person: Marisa Passarelli, ESE Coordinator: [passarelli.marisa@somersetcollegeprep.org](mailto:passarelli.marisa@somersetcollegeprep.org)

### **English Language Learners Program**

The screening and placement of Limited English Proficient (LEP) scholars will be met in accordance with district procedures.

Contact person: Marisa Passarelli, ESOL Coordinator: [passarelli.marisa@somersetcollegeprep.org](mailto:passarelli.marisa@somersetcollegeprep.org)

### **Pre-AP/Advanced Placement Classes**

Pre-AP courses are offered for academically proficient scholars. Course content and course requirements are rigorous. Placement in pre-AP classes is based on standardized achievement tests, instructor recommendation, and previous academic history.

### **Pre AP Courses to Earn Quality Points**

- All courses that are clearly labeled as “Pre AP,” and “advanced placement,” are consistent with State Frameworks and/or district guidelines and coded as, shall carry one quality point.
- Academic foreign languages above the second year are included in this category, (classes labeled “conversational” are not included in this category.)
- Dual Enrollment: Scholars enrolled in college courses at the 2000 level and above shall earn two quality points for courses completed with a grade of “C” or above. Dual Enrollment courses below the 2000 level can only earn one quality point.
- An additional point may not be earned in Pre AP class if the grade received is below a “C.”

### **Advanced Placement Courses to Earn Quality Points**

- All classes that are clearly labeled “Advanced Placement” shall receive two quality points if the grade received is “C” or above.
- Scholars will be required to take the Advanced Placement examination in order to receive two quality points. If a scholar elects not to take the Advanced Placement examination, he/she will receive one quality point for a grade of “C” or higher.

### **College Credit Programs for High School Scholars**

#### **Advanced Placement Courses**

The Advanced placement courses consist of over 30 college level courses and exams offered at high schools. Courses are available in several subject areas. Participation in AP courses gives scholars an excellent preparation for college and university studies. Successful completion of the course and receipt of a qualifying score on the National AP exam will result in college credit or even advance course at many colleges and universities.

#### **Dual Enrollment**

High school scholars who meet program requirements may concurrently enroll in courses that are creditable toward a post-secondary certificate, Associates degree, or Bachelor’s degree at Indian River State College,

Doral College and state universities that have entered into an articulation agreement with Saint Lucie County and/or Somerset Career Academy.

Scholars must meet the following requirements:

- Academic courses-Earn a minimum 3.0 unweighted grade point average prior to enrollment
- Obtain at least 4 high school credits
- Obtain minimum ACT, PERT, or SAT placement scores prior to enrollment
- Obtain approval from the high school principal, guidance counselor and parent
- Select courses from the approved list
- Satisfy any required prerequisites
- Maintain a 3.0 GPA in high school coursework in order to continue in the program.
- Maintains A's & B's on **both** sides of campus
- Conform to all School Board and post-secondary institution policies and procedures

NOTE: Most three credit hour dual enrollment courses equate to one-half (.5) high school credit, but some three and four credit hour dual enrollment courses equate to one (1.0) high school credit. See your counselor for a listing.

### **Early Admissions Program**

Early admission is another form of dual enrollment through which eligible scholars enroll in a college on a full-time basis during the last year of high school. Both high school and college credit will be awarded when attending colleges where an articulation agreement is in force. Early admission may take place at an accredited post-secondary institution where no agreement exists.

**Scholars must meet the following requirements:**

- Must be entering the last year of high school based upon declared graduation date prior to enrollment
- Must complete all graduation requirements with the exception of those requirements that can be met in the last year of high school prior to enrollment in early admission
- Earn a minimum 3.0 unweighted grade point average prior to enrollment
- Must be accepted by a post-secondary institution authorized by Florida law or accredited
- Obtain approval from the high school principal, guidance counselor and parent
- Select appropriate courses to satisfy graduation requirements.
- Conform to all School Board and post-secondary institution policies and procedures

## **Somerset Virtual Academy**

The mission of Somerset Virtual Academy (SVA) is to provide virtual learning content and services to Academica schools. SVA is committed to fostering the development of self-directed and responsible 21st century life-long learners through the thoughtful use of interactive, media- rich educational opportunities in flexible, scholar-centered, virtual learning environments. For registration information please contact your student's guidance counselor.

### **Scholarships:**

See Scholarship Handbook

### **Graduation**

\*\*\*\*\*SEE SENIOR HANDBOOK FOR MORE INFORMATION\*\*\*\*\*

## **DRESS CODE POLICY**

A higher standard of dress encourages greater respect for individuals, students and others, and results in a higher standard of behavior. Our dress code guidelines indicate appropriate school dress during normal school days. **Somerset Career Academy reserves the right to interpret these guidelines and/or make changes during the school year.** Students are expected to follow these guidelines. Every student in attendance shall wear the school uniform. Dress code also applies on the school bus, as it is an extension of the school. This includes students in dual enrollment, also, when on campus.

**House Lanyards and School Issued Student IDs are a mandatory part of our uniform. The lanyard worn must be of the House to which the student is assigned. Wearing a lanyard of a House to which the student is not assigned is a violation of the dress code.**

Purchasing uniforms from SCA designated and approved vendors are a policy requirement. Parents may **not** purchase an article of clothing and have it embroidered with the SCA logo. This is a copyright infringement. As part of our ongoing commitment to ensuring a safe and secure environment, we have implemented a dress code policy designed with your safety in mind and aims to minimize the risk of accidents and injuries.

Parents elect to have their children attend SCA with full acknowledgement of the expectations and policies, and consequences.

Uniform policy Monday through Thursday:

### **Tops**

School sanctioned uniform shirt: **\*\*100% Cotton T-Shirts\*\***: We require that T-shirts be 100% cotton because cotton is less flammable than synthetic materials. This provides an additional layer of safety, especially in environments where there is a potential fire hazard.

All school shirts will have the **school logo in school colors and be purchased from the official school uniform vendor and all outerwear will be school uniform vendor issued :**

**High School** Program Tee Shirts in black indicating program participation

**Middle School** Program Tee Shirts in charcoal gray indicating program participation

- Club Shirts on club days only
- Game Day (In-season sports only on game days)
- School hoodies/jackets/outerwear (students must have a school shirt underneath hoodie and jackets, excluding PE shirt)

### **Bottoms**

**\*\*Dickies Pants\*\***: We require the use of Dickies pants (black or khaki) due to their reinforced knees, reinforced seams, stain/fade/wrinkle resistant, and thicker, less flammable material. These features offer enhanced protection against wear and tear as well as potential fire hazards, ensuring your safety while performing physically demanding tasks.

Items purchased from your choice of vendors:

- Dickies Pants
- Pants worn at the waist
- No sagging pants

**Shoes**: Street shoes **with backs & closed toe only**. Shoes must always be tied.

**Hair**: Hair must be neat and clean and without covering (with the exception of religious exemption).



**\*\*Closed-Toe Shoes\*\***: To protect your feet from potential hazards, please wear closed-toe shoes at all times. This is particularly important in areas where there is a risk of falling objects or exposure to sharp materials. The construction trades programs require work-boots, preferably with a reinforced toe.

**\*\*Protective Clothing\*\***: When working with machinery or hazardous materials, please wear the appropriate protective clothing, such as long sleeves, long pants, and gloves. This reduces the risk of skin injuries and exposure to harmful substances.

**\*\*Hair and Accessories\*\***: Long hair should be tied back, and loose accessories (jewelry) should be avoided to prevent entanglement in machinery. This is crucial for preventing serious accidents and ensuring smooth operation.

**\*\*High-Visibility Attire\*\***: In designated areas, wearing high-visibility clothing is mandatory. This ensures that you are easily seen by others, particularly in environments with heavy equipment or low visibility.

By adhering to these guidelines, we can create a safer learning space for everyone. We appreciate your cooperation and commitment to maintaining a safe environment. If you have any questions or need further clarification on the dress code policy, please do not hesitate to contact administration or your instructors.

### **PE Dress Code**

- Phased out/previously purchased PE uniforms are still permitted.
- ***PE uniforms must be purchased online from the official school uniform vendor or from the PE teachers at school (while supplies last).***
- High School PE uniforms are dark gray with black shorts
- Middle School PE uniforms are light gray with black shorts

### **Clothing Items not permitted:**

Wearing any of these items will result in a dress code violation (Repeated dress code violations will result in detention(s) and/or referral(s). Please see our discipline Matrix.

- Any shirt **not** purchased from the official school uniform vendor
- Any outerwear **not** purchased from the official school uniform vendor
- Any bottoms with frays, rips, or tears (regardless of whether skin can be seen or not)
- Any shoe that does **not** have a fully enclosed back and toe, and/or that is not considered a “street shoe”
- Sunglasses, hats, hoods, or headgear, head covering of any kind while **in** the building/classrooms (except for religious exemption)

- Gang-related bandanas
- No spandex, leggings/jeggings/joggers/sweatpants unless covered by in-dress-code shorts or skirt
- Anything deemed risqué, revealing or immodest is not permissible.
- The wearing of or wrapping oneself in a blanket is not permissible. Blankets are not permitted on campus or on the school bus.
- No sunglasses indoors (unless medically necessary)

#### **Uniform policy for Dress Down Days:**

- Any of the regular uniform pieces are permissible.
- Class Tee, Senior Hoodies, club shirts, and any other purchased fundraising item of clothing are permissible.
- Students choosing to participate in dress down days must adhere to any theme set forth for the day
- Tank tops, spaghetti straps, crop tops, tops with inappropriate content/images are not permissible.
- Bottoms that are not fingertip length or longer, or with rips, tears, holes, frays are not permissible.

#### **Game Days**

- Certain sports teams may require scholars to wear their sports jerseys on game days.
- Certain sports teams may require scholars to be professionally dressed on game days.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT**

Somerset Career Academy is a career technical school. The Academy holds its students accountable for the highest level of student conduct. We expect our students to treat others with respect and courtesy. The goal of the Code of Conduct is to assist students in developing self-discipline, character and responsibility for our school, the larger community, family and fellow students. The primary goal of the code of conduct is to maintain a safe environment where students can focus on their learning and hands-on training without distractions or concerns for their well-being. By adhering to these guidelines, we can prevent accidents, foster a positive atmosphere, and ensure that everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

We want to ensure that our vocational educational environment is a safe, respectful, and productive place for everyone. To achieve this, we have established a code of conduct that outlines the expectations and responsibilities of all students.

If this is to be accomplished, it is necessary that the school environment be free of disruptions which interfere with teaching and learning activities. The student's conduct determines, to a great extent, the full development of his/her potential for learning and the development of positive relationships.

### **Lunch hour conduct**

Scholars will proceed through the lunch line in an **orderly** fashion, "first come, first served." Scholars may not hold a place in line for other scholars. While at the serving counter, scholars **may not have headphones (or earbuds) in their ears** so they can hear directions from line workers. Scholars are responsible for cleaning up after themselves by placing their trash in the proper receptacles and helping to maintain a clean eating environment. Scholars are to report promptly to their lunch period and are not permitted to leave the designated lunch-time areas without the permission of the supervising faculty. Misconduct during lunch will result in disciplinary sanctions including lunch detention/picking up trash during lunch.

- **Students may not order food to be delivered to the school**
- Student who order food to be delivered to the school will receive a detention and food will be held until the end of the day.
- Due to security reasons, students may not approach cars in parking lot to receive food.
- Lunch may be dropped off by parents/guardians only to the main office before 11:30AM.
- Juniors and Seniors are permitted to leave for lunch if we have a signed form in the office with the parent's permission or if they are 18 years old.
- Students who leave campus without permission will lose their lunch privileges and receive a "skipping" referral.

### **Use of wireless electronic devices**

Wireless communication devices must remain powered off on campus and during all school-sanctioned events between 8:30 AM and 3:45 PM.

A scholar's personal laptop computer may be used in class only with the instructor's permission.

## **Bathroom policies**

All scholars are required to purchase an agenda/planner for the school year. Scholars must have their agenda/planner to leave class to use the bathroom. It serves as a hall pass.

- The agenda/planner must have the scholar's name written in sharpie on the planner in order to use it as a bathroom pass.
- Scholars must fill out date/time and destination in their planner in ink, and have a teacher sign off on it in ink before they can leave the classroom.
- Scholars are not allowed to use the bathroom in the first or last 10 minutes of a class period.
- During the last period of the school day, scholars may not use the restroom after 3:15PM.
- If a scholar has completely used all of their bathroom passes in the first or second nine weeks, it may result in a parent teacher conference to address any possible issues.
- If a scholar has filled all of their bathroom slots, they will be required to purchase a new agenda/planner.
- If a scholar has a medical issue that affects his or her bathroom usage, this issue should be made known to administration and teachers via a doctor's note.
- Scholars must utilize the restroom or water fountain located closest to the classroom that the student is assigned to at the time.

## **Technology policies**

Wireless communication devices must remain powered off/silent with the hotspot feature disabled and in a bookbag/purse while on campus and during the school day, between classes, at lunch and all school-sanctioned events between 8:30 AM and 3:45 PM. The school is not responsible for any wireless communication device that a scholar chooses to bring to school. All wireless communication devices are including but not limited to: any cellphones, electronic watches, I-pads, tablets, etc.

**First Offense:** Scholar will submit the wireless device to the teacher. The device is given to the main office, and the scholar can get the device from the office at the end of the school day with a detention and parent notification.

**Second Offense:** Scholar will submit the wireless device to the teacher. The device is given to the main office, and the scholar can get the device from administration at the end of the school day, along with a Saturday Detention, and parent notification.

**Third Offense:** Scholar will submit the wireless device to the teacher. The device is given to the main office. This offense will result in a referral and suspension, behavioral probation, and the wireless device must be picked up by a legal guardian from the main office.

\*A scholar who repeatedly abuses the technology policy may eventually earn further suspensions and eventually, dismissal.

### **Computer Policies**

- Students are responsible for logging out of the computer when they are done using it.
- If you do not logout and someone else misuses the computer, **you** will be the one facing consequences, not that other person.
- Computer Use Rules are on the desktop background. Not knowing is not an excuse.
- Misuse of computers will result in a consequence.
- Students are not allowed to leave campus with any school devices. No exception.

### **Ineligibility for extracurricular activities and athletics**

To foster scholars' academic success, Somerset Career Academy maintains several provisions for assisting those scholars who are deficient in their academic performance. Among these is the policy of limiting scholar participation in **all** school sponsored extracurricular and interscholastic activities until the time as the scholar demonstrates sufficient improvement in their studies.

To participate in Extracurricular Activities, scholars must have a Learning Experience Elsewhere (LEE) form signed by their teachers that includes their current grade and a comment section. This LEE form must be signed for each activity. (Example: If the volleyball team has 3 matches in 1 month, scholars on the volleyball team would need the LEE form signed by every teacher, every time, to participate.)

**NORMS:**

Scholars who, at the distribution of grade reports, are failing ONE or more subjects (grade of 59% or lower) and/or are on Academic Probation are ineligible.

Scholars may also be declared ineligible indefinitely due to disciplinary reasons as determined by the Administration, in the judgment of the Principal and/or Vice Principal for Academics, if their academic welfare is in jeopardy.

**Students on behavioral probation are ineligible.**

Information regarding the eligibility requirements of the Florida High School Athletic Association can be found here: [https://fhsaa.com/sports/2020/3/9/ABOUT\\_ENC.aspx](https://fhsaa.com/sports/2020/3/9/ABOUT_ENC.aspx)

**Academic Integrity:**

Somerset Career Academy encourages each of its scholars to actively participate in the learning process. It is the school's expectation that scholars, over time, will be increasingly able to learn on their own and produce work that shows their integrity and their efforts. This development requires particular care in maintaining an attitude of academic integrity through the scholar's time at SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY.

The academically honest scholar:

- Prepares thoroughly for all academic assignments
- Tries their best at all assigned tasks
- Takes ownership of their talents and abilities
- Seeks appropriate help when they fail to understand
- Makes proper use of the efforts and thoughts of others
- Takes pride in each assignment as an example of their own skill and effort

To recognize the talents and efforts of each scholar and to promote the fundamental principles of mutual trust and respect, Somerset Career Academy encourages scholar effort and insists on academic integrity. The academic dishonesty not tolerated at Somerset Career Academy include, but are not limited to are the following:

**Cheating** - Scholar use, or attempted use, of unauthorized materials in any academic situation or solicitation of someone else to do work for which he is responsible. Examples of cheating or violation of testing protocol include but are not limited to:

- Using open notebooks, texts, or other course materials without permission
- Exchanging answers with another scholar on any graded assignment
- Copying another's test answers with or without his permission
- Possessing "cheat notes"
- Demonstrating an intent to cheat
- Providing answers for any assignment
- Utilizing artificial intelligence and submitting the work as one's own.
- Collaboration that results in identical responses to a product that should be individualized

Scholars must comply with the testing procedures specified by the teacher. Violations of testing procedures will be considered under the cheating policy but may not be given the same consequence.

**Fabrication** - Inventing or falsifying information. Examples include:

- Inventing lab data
- Citing sources not used

**Copying** - Examples include:

- Copying homework or papers from another person or allowing someone to copy homework or papers
- Acquiring answers from the internet or other electronic sources and purporting them as one's own
- Using teacher edition texts or teacher answer keys or test copies

**Deception/Misrepresentation** - Lying about scholar work or academic records. Examples include:

- Forging a teacher's or parent's signature on any document
- Taking credit for group work without having contributed as required

**Electronic Dishonesty** - Using network access inappropriately. Examples include:

- Using another's computer account
- Invading another's files
- Using material from another's stored files (e.g. network storage, flash drive)
- Damaging or deleting another's computer files

**Plagiarism** - Plagiarism is the use, intentional or not, of the writing or ideas of others and representing them as one's own. Text manipulation is plagiarism. Paraphrasing the ideas of someone else is plagiarism. Credit **must** be given to all outside sources, including, but not limited to: research materials, online databases, internet sources, encyclopedias, charts, graphs, pictures, quotations and paraphrasing and summaries of another's written or spoken words.

Plagiarism, regardless of intent or degree or amount, is theft and violates academic integrity. Scholars uncertain about what material to cite should consult teachers for guidance and advice. **The use of artificial intelligence such as ChatGPT is considered academic dishonesty and will be treated as such.**

**Penalties for Violations of Academic Integrity** - Because academic integrity serves as a measure of personal integrity and provides a foundation for the academic strength of Somerset Career Academy, any violation of it is considered a serious offense. Such offenses are cumulative. A scholar remains responsible for all violations of academic integrity committed at any time during their SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY career.

**First time violators:**

- 0% on the work in question without opportunity to make up
- Automatic three (3) Saturday Detentions from 9:30-12:30 PM
- Automatic probation
- Parent Notification
- 

**Second time violators:**

Everything above, plus a three-day suspension (minimum) and possible dismissal from Somerset Career Academy

**BULLYING POLICY**

What is Bullying?

Systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress or creating an imbalance of power on one or more students or employees. Bullying includes instances of cyberbullying, as defined in Section 1006.147(3)(b), F.S. Bullying may include, but is not limited to, repetitive instances of teasing, social exclusion, threats, intimidation, stalking, physical violence, theft, harassment, public or private humiliation, or destruction of property.



Adult intervention is one of the best defenses against bullying. Educators can first learn the warning signs as well as the myths of bullying, especially of social bullying, which research indicates is more difficult for adults to identify than other forms of bullying. Educators **MUST** intervene when they see bullying occur and can send a clear message that the school does not tolerate bullying.

Some steps that our school is taking to ensure a bully-free school environment include the following: (1) identifying where and when bullying occurs; (2) training all school personnel to recognize bullying; (3) increasing adult supervision at campus "hot spots"; (4) creating an anti-bullying task force charged with educating students and staff; and (5) integrating anti-bullying materials into curriculum for discussion and role-play.

"Bullying" includes cyberbullying and means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students and may involve:

1. Teasing;
2. Social exclusion;
3. Threat;
4. Intimidation;
5. Stalking;
6. Physical violence;
7. Theft;
8. Sexual, religious, or racial harassment;
9. Public or private humiliation; or
10. Destruction of property.

**\*\*Legally defined by the Florida Statute 1006.147**

If you believe your student is being bullied by definition, please reach out to the school.

**Bullying Complaint Form:** [Bullying Complaint Form](#)

Together, parents and teachers can help students to establish a culture of acceptance, tolerance and respect.

### **Zero Tolerance Policy (1006.13, F.S)**

The School enforces the Florida Department of Education Zero Tolerance Policy on school violence, crime, and the use of weapons. As an approach to reducing school violence, the intent of the policy is to provide a safe school climate that is drug-free and protects student health, safety, and civil rights. This policy requires the

school district to impose the most severe consequences provided for in the Code of Student Conduct in dealing with students who engage in violent criminal acts, such as:

- bringing or possessing a firearm or weapon to school, any school sponsored activity, or on school-sponsored transportation; shall also result in a referral for expulsion and mental health services pursuant to Section 1006.13 F.S.
- making a threat or false report, respectively, involving school or school personnel's property, school transportation, or school sponsored activity; shall also result in a referral for expulsion and mental health services pursuant to Section 1006.13 F.S.
- homicide;
- assault, battery, and culpable negligence;
- relating to kidnapping, false imprisonment, luring or enticing a child, and custody offenses;
- sexual battery;
- lewdness and indecent exposure;
- child abuse;
- robbery;
- robbery by sudden snatching;
- carjacking;
- home-invasion robbery A student may also be referred for mental health services if deemed necessary by the threat assessment team. The State of Florida Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 1965 requires the School District to link juvenile violent incidents to the action taken by the student's school and the District. The District is required to collect data about violent incidents involving students during each school year and transmit a report to the state. Certain infractions in the Code of Student Conduct may result in criminal penalties as well as administrative corrective strategies.

### **Vaping**

- Possession of E-cigarettes or vaping of nicotine is prohibited and highly addictive. Possessing, using or sharing vapor devices is never allowed and will result in immediate dismissal.
  - Vaping unauthorized substances like THC or any form of marijuana or other substances is prohibited and will result in a suspension and/or recommendation for expulsion and possible criminal charges, and immediate dismissal.
- \* Severe Clause: Fighting, drugs, weapons, profanity, defiance of school personnel, assault upon a student or

staff member, and any continuous disruptive behavior that disrupts the learning environment may result in immediate dismissal.

### Discipline Matrix

Expectation	Rules	Consequences	By whom
SCA scholars will contribute to keeping the campus safe for everyone.	No scholar shall possess, sell, use, or furnish any type of weapon, or dangerous object, including (but not limited to) firecrackers, matches, lighters, stink bombs, etc.	Up to and including immediate dismissal	Admin
SCA scholars are expected to resolve conflicts peacefully, which means reporting potential problems to instructors, counselors, staff, or administration.	No scholar may threaten to cause or cause physical injury to another. Spectators and instigators will be treated the same as fighters. Bullying is not allowed and will be dealt with strongly.	Up to and including immediate dismissal	Admin
SCA scholars always respect themselves, other scholars, and all staff.	<b>THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT ALLOWED</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disobedience/Disrespect</li> <li>• Lying</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> <li>• Profanity/Vulgarity</li> <li>• Public Displays of Affection (PDA)</li> <li>• Obscenity</li> <li>• Racially inciting statements</li> <li>• Sexual harassment</li> <li>• Hate crimes</li> </ul>	Up to and including immediate dismissal	Admin
SCA is a drug, vape, alcohol, and tobacco free learning environment.	No scholar shall possess, sell, purchase, furnish, use, or be under the influence of any alcohol, tobacco, narcotic, or controlled substances. Possession of	Up to and including immediate dismissal- Contact Law Enforcement	Admin

	drug paraphernalia, including vape pens, is not allowed. Prescriptions should be kept in the main office with required documentation.		
SCA scholars are responsible citizens who respect their fellow scholars and their school.	<b>THEFT, ROBBERY, EXTORTION, GRAFFITI, VANDALISM, AND PROPERTY DAMAGE ARE NOT ALLOWED:</b> Scholars are not allowed to steal, attempt to steal, take or damage property of another or any SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY property or equipment.	Up to and including immediate dismissal-  Contact Law Enforcement	Admin
SCA scholars will come to school dressed according to the SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY uniform policy in all aspects.	Scholars will wear approved SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY uniforms purchased from the designated SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY vendor, with SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY logo.	Parent Phone Call and Unexcused absence until issue is rectified: 10 per year can result in retention	Admin
SCA scholars will attend all their classes.	Scholars may not leave campus without written permission and proper identification from person picking up the scholar	Unexcused absence: 10 per year can result in retention or dismissal	Admin
SCA scholars are expected to be in class on time.	All scholars are expected to be in class on time. Entering the classroom late disrupts the educational process as per SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY tardy policy.	3 A.M. tardies for non-bus riders= 1 detention.  1 transitional tardy or A.M. tardy for bus-riders= 1 detention.	Admin

		3 detentions= 1 Saturday detention.	
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Leaving campus without permission is considered skipping and will result in a referral, behavioral probation and 2 Saturday detentions.

\*\* “Up to” can include the following:

- Out of school suspension (OSS)
- In school suspension (ISS) (When available)
- After school detention (ASD)
- Saturday school (SS)

### Detentions/Suspensions

1. Detentions are held after school for one hour. Scholars will be given notice of detention. Detention **must be served when scheduled**. Scholars present for any part of a school day will be expected to serve a detention if it is scheduled for that day. Acceptable reasons for missing detention include scholar illness or a doctor’s appointment. Written proof of a doctor’s appointment will be required upon the scholar’s return to school. If such proof is not provided upon the scholars’ return, they will be considered to have skipped the detention. **Detention takes precedence over any other after school activity or sport.**
2. Scholars who fail to attend detention as scheduled, arrive late to detention, or who are asked to leave detention for misbehavior will be assigned one Saturday School. A skipped Saturday detention will result in a 2-day suspension.
3. Detentions not served in one school year may be carried over to the next school year at the discretion of the Administration.
4. Scholars will be notified of receipt of detentions.
5. An excessive number of detentions may cause a scholar to be liable for dismissal from SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY or probation upon recommendation of the Administrative Team. Only the Principal may ask a scholar to withdraw from the Academy (mandatory withdrawal). Once a scholar is withdrawn, their re-admittance in the future will be at the discretion of the Principal.

\*Under ordinary circumstances, one or more sanctions may be appropriate. However, a scholar may be placed on probation for all or part of one school year due to a previous school year's infraction. Scholars suspended two or more times in a school year may be placed on probation for the first quarter of the following year. Suspensions will be recorded in the scholar's permanent record and are maintained on file from year to year.

### **LEVEL ONE- CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS**

Any parent/guardian who has a problem with the school procedures must follow the Conflict Resolution Process to address his/her concerns:

1. Meet with the instructor or team of instructors
2. Meet with the instructor's department head
3. Meet with the other staff personnel, as applicable: dean of discipline, guidance counselor, ESE coordinator, etc.
4. Meet with the Vice Principal
5. Meet with the Principal

### **LEVEL TWO- CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS**

For an infraction which may lead to a suspension or recommendation for dismissal, the following steps listed below may be followed:

1. Meet with the instructor or team of instructors
2. Meet with the instructor's department head
3. Meet with the other staff personnel, as applicable: dean of discipline, guidance counselor, ESE coordinator, etc.
4. Meet with the Vice Principal
5. Meet with the Principal
6. Meet with Board's designated Parent Liaison for conflict resolution
7. Appear before the Board of Directors for a final appeal.

### **Right of SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY Scholar DISMISSAL**

FS 228.056 10(a) 7 identifies the charter school's authority to develop and implement admission procedures and dismissal procedures. The charter contract between Saint Lucie School District and Somerset Academy, Inc.; affords the charter school the right of dismissal.

**Rationale for dismissal:**

Families and scholars who fail to meet the SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY Board established policies for continued enrollment include:

- Wearing Board approved uniform as designated by time and location and manner as per SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY policy.
- Attendance requirements as per FS 1001.41 requiring a minimum of 170 days of attendance.
- Behavior as per SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY policy.
- GPA Minimum of 2.0 policy

**Steps taken prior to dismissal****A. Documentation**

1. Document uniform violations and notify parent.
2. Document discipline violations and notify parent.
3. Document parent volunteer hours and notify parent.
4. Document attendance and notify parent.

**B. Conferences**

1. Refer for Discipline Committee as appropriate.
2. Hold conferences with parents and scholar regarding violations.

**Dismissal Procedures**

1. Letter to parent regarding intent to dismiss.
2. Final declaration of dismissal or option of withdrawal.
3. Transfer records to home-zoned school.

**Extra-curricular Clubs & Activities**

In order to participate in any extra-curricular activity a student must attend school at SCA, SAB, or SCPA. Students who are under academic or behavioral probation are not permitted to participate in **any** extra-

curricular activities other than tutoring. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to provide transportation after the activity.

Information regarding field trips, clubs, sports and other extra-curricular activities are available on the school website.

## **EMERGENCIES**

**Illness:** The importance of regular attendance cannot be over-emphasized, but scholars should not be sent to school when they are ill. If a scholar becomes ill during the school day, and it appears they would be best cared for at home, the parent will be contacted. There are very limited facilities in the school, making it impossible to keep sick scholars for long periods of time. School personnel must be notified of any scholar's chronic illness (i.e. asthma, diabetes, heart conditions or seizures, etc.). This notification heightens awareness in case of an emergency.

**Injury:** The procedures listed below will be followed for an injured scholar:

1. Instructors will send the scholar to the office with a buddy if the injury is minor.
2. Instructors will notify the office if the scholar is unable to be moved.
3. Trained personnel will administer first aid.
4. The parent(s) will be called and the injury described. Emergency services will be called if the injury warrants further assistance.

For a minor injury, the parent may make the decision about removing the scholar from the school. Emergency contact people will be called if the parent cannot be reached. For this reason, it is imperative that emergency contacts be up to date. An accident report will be completed and filed for accidents that require any level of first aid.

## **HEALTH AND WELLNESS**

We encourage the Somerset Career Academy community to follow recommended best practices:

- Stay home if you are sick or are experiencing a fever (must be fever-free without treatment, medication, for 24 hours before returning to school)
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds



- Apply hand sanitizer frequently throughout the day
- Cover your cough or sneeze

### **Health Screenings**

In accordance with Florida Statute 381.0056, St. Lucie Public Schools in cooperation with the St. Lucie County Health Department, will conduct health screening activities for selected student groups during the school year.

The screenings will include:

- Height and Weight, which will include Body Mass Index (BMI) calculation for grades 1, 3 and 6
- Vision Screening for grade 3
- Vision and Hearing Screenings for grades K, 1, and 6
- Scoliosis Screenings for grade 6

In addition to these screening activities, your child will receive first aid and care in the event he/she is injured or becomes ill while at school.

You will be informed, in writing, if your child fails to meet any of the screening standards. You are encouraged to seek further professional assistance.

If you **DO NOT** want your child to participate in school health screenings **PLEASE NOTIFY THE SCHOOL** in writing and include your child's name and grade.

For more information: <https://www.stlucie.k12.fl.us/departments/student-services/health-services/#1727188917281-227a1b16-7070>

### **Severe Weather Information**

Somerset Academy Bethany will follow the same instructions as Saint Lucie County Public Schools in case of severe weather emergencies. Parents should watch the local news for information about school closings. Site-based decisions will only differ from that of the district in cases of extreme emergencies and will be communicated to parents via email and text blast. Additionally, in the event of lightning within a 2-mile radius, dismissal will be temporarily held until it is safe to proceed.

### **Safety and Security**

If you visit the school, you **MUST** enter through the front door of the main office and check in with the front office staff. You **MUST** have your picture identification with you so that the front office staff can verify your identity. If applicable, a visitor's badge will be issued to you and you **MUST wear the badge at all times while on campus.**

Threats to schools are NO joking matter. Individuals found guilty will face legal consequences and school-based consequences that could lead to expulsion. Parents, talk to your children about being responsible with social media postings, and remember to immediately report any concerns, suspicious activities, or postings to 911 or contact Treasure Coast Crime Stoppers at 800-273-8477.

You can also contact your school administrators, teachers or campus resource officers. If you see something, say something!



### **Locker-rooms and Restrooms**

Multi-stall restrooms are clearly labeled “Girls” and “Boys” and should be used according to each student’s biological sex. For students with special circumstances, single-stall restrooms are available in various locations across campus.

Restrooms have Vape Sensors that are triggered by vaping, smoking, and spraying of aerosol items. The spraying of any body-sprays, perfumes or cologne in the restrooms or locker rooms will result in a detention.

### **Field Trips**

To enhance educational learning experiences, instructors may plan field trips. Parent chaperones may be required. Parents serving in this capacity may **not** have other children (non-Somerset students, children not affiliated with the class taking the trip) accompany them. Parents who are officially selected to be chaperones may count their hours on the field trip as volunteer hours. The Guidelines for Chaperones Form and a Volunteer Application must be signed and submitted prior to volunteering. Parents must be Level 2 Background Checked and have a clean Drug Test in order to be approved to chaperone trips. This clearance can take up to a week to complete. Parent chaperones are required to adhere to these guidelines and school policies.

Participating in field trips is a privilege. Scholars serve as representatives of the school; therefore, they may be excluded from participation in any trip for reasons relating to behavior, conduct or grades. To participate in field trips, scholars must have a GPA of 2.0 or higher. The GPA used is the cumulative GPA, which includes all subjects/courses. Participation will be determined by the grades in the gradebook on Skyward at the time of the trip. Any School Suspension can negate a scholar's ability to attend a field trip.

Parent permission must be given for scholars to participate in field trips and Learning Experience Elsewhere (LEE) forms must be completed. Instructors will send permission slips and information about each field trip 2-4 weeks prior to each field trip.

Money, LEE forms and permission slips must be turned in according to the instructor's instructions, prior to the field trip or the scholar will not be permitted to attend the field trip.

The scholars must wear the instructor-designated uniform on all field trips.

**\*THE SCHOOL UNIFORM POLICY DOES NOT CHANGE FOR FIELD TRIPS.\***

**Once fees are paid for a field trip the fees are non-refundable.** Field trip costs are predetermined based upon a certain number of participants who will share the total expense. The only consideration for a refund would be based upon a verifiable death in the family or an injury to the scholar that precludes them from field trip participation. Most fees are pre-paid and thus non-refundable. **The field trip environment is still considered a classroom and class rules are still enforced.** Children may not be checked out of any off-campus field trip without prior approval from the administration. This is not recommended due to instructor responsibility, instruction, confusion and liability.

Once fees are paid for a field trip the fees are non-refundable. Field trip costs are predetermined based upon a certain number of participants who will share the total expense. The only consideration for a refund would be based upon a verifiable death in the family or an injury to the student that precludes them from field trip participation. Most fees are pre-paid and thus non-refundable. The field trip environment is still considered a classroom and class rules are still in force. Children may not be checked out of any off-campus field trip without prior approval from the administration. This is not recommended due to instructor responsibility, instruction, confusion and liability.

## **Communication**

Communication is absolutely essential for academic and student success. The administration and staff recognize this and will strive to facilitate open and frequent communication with parents at all times. Also, an annual survey will be conducted, and your participation is crucial in aiding the school to identify areas of success and determining areas that are in need of improvement.

In addition to the report cards and conferences, instructors have information on their teacher pages regarding class assignments, projects and homework.

An interactive online tool for monitoring scholar grades, SKYWARD Parent Portal, will be available for all scholars and parents. This tool will be updated on the first and fifteenth of each month. Scholar access is their 562 number for the user name and their date of birth, using two digits for the month and two digits for the date (with no year) as the password.

The school communicates through morning announcements, shown in the first class of the day, daily. Morning announcements are posted on the main page of the school's website for viewing by parents and by students who miss or don't have a scheduled first period class. The school posts all pertinent information on the school's official Facebook page and sends out all posts/reminders via text blast. The school may also send reminders and information to parents through Skyward messaging system. The school will also communicate information to students through the school-based email system.

Feel free to consult the office about any problems or questions concerning your scholar. It is the desire of the administrators and the faculty to be of service to both parent and scholar, and every instructor welcomes a conference with any parent. We do urge, however, that such visits be made by making an appointment with the main office at a convenient time before or after-school hours. Parents are asked not to meet with an instructor before or after class unless a conference has been scheduled in advance. If there is a concern, it is Somerset Career Academy's policy to have the parent email the instructor first, and then speak to the Department Head, before escalating the issue to guidance, deans, and eventually, administration.

It is extremely important that any change of home address or email address, telephone number or other vital method of communication, and/or pick-up authority, be completed by the legal parent/guardian in person in the front office. BY STATE LAW, two new proofs of address must be provided for a change of address.

### **Books, equipment, supplies and materials**

Books and materials are expensive and should be cared for properly. Books must not be written in or on, unless it is a consumable workbook. Charges will be assessed for damaged or lost books/materials, based upon replacement costs.

Scholars will be expected to provide all basic supplies such as paper, pencils, etc. as required by the classroom instructor. Any additional supply needs will be requested in writing by the classroom instructor.

### **Lost and found**

Throughout the school year, lost items should be turned into the main office. Anytime a scholar loses an item, he/she may come to the office to claim it. Items unclaimed at the end of each semester will be donated regularly to various charitable institutions. Lost items are NOT the responsibility of the school.

**\*\*PLEASE HAVE YOUR SCHOLAR'S FIRST AND LAST NAME ON ALL PERSONAL PROPERTY. \*\***

### **Medication**

The administering or dispensing of any medication (including non-prescription medication) to scholars by employees of SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY without specific written authorization by the parents and physician is forbidden. If the scholar must take any medication while in school, the parent must sign an authorization form and have it completed by their physician. Please obtain this form from the main office or the Health Information page of the school website. The medication will be kept under lock and key in the

office and will be administered by trained personnel. A parent may also choose to come to school and administer medication.

- All students coming from Private Schools or from outside of Saint Lucie County must provide school with a copy of **FLORIDA SHOT RECORD** and **FLORIDA SCHOOL ENTRY PHYSICAL**.
- If a scholar has a medical condition, the school nurse must be notified so appropriate steps are taken to maintain the health of the scholar.
- If a scholar's medical status changes at any time during the year, the school nurse must be notified as soon as possible.
- If a scholar takes any type of medication during the school day, that medication **MUST** be kept in the office and have a completed Physician Authorization Form.
- If a scholar has any emergency medical plans in place, a copy of that plan must be provided to the school nurse as soon as possible.

A student is permitted to possess and use medication to relieve headaches while on school property or at a school-sponsored event or activity without a physician's note or prescription. The medication must be regulated by the United States Food and Drug Administration for over-the-counter use to treat headaches. **HB 1537**

\*Physician Authorization forms can be obtained in the main office and website:

<https://somensetcareeracademy.org/uploads/new-page-blocks/June2024/uTKKijhh6DSXzeO0weo8.pdf>

### **Parent Teacher Scholar Organization (PTSO)**

A great portion of each scholar's day is spent at school; therefore, his/her growth and development becomes a joint responsibility between the home and school. Everyone is urged to become active in helping further the goals and growth of the PTSO.

The faculty, staff and administration hope that all parents will become active members supporting the school and the organization. Officers will be elected yearly according to the organization's bylaws and district/state guidelines.

The PTSO will sponsor fundraisers throughout the school year. Monies generated by fundraising events will be used to purchase materials and equipment for the scholars, faculty, staff, and general school purposes. PTSO board meetings are held regularly and are open to anyone who wishes to attend. All members are eligible to vote on issues brought before them for consideration during the general PTSO meetings.

**\*\*To avoid having the school become involved in personal family conflicts, parents or guardians should submit to school authority's copies of any legal documents which indicate who has legal access to the scholar and his/her records during school hours. In the absence of legal documentation school officials will provide access only to those individuals whose names appear on the pupil identification form. Friends and strangers will be denied access to a scholar without verified parental consent. Even if we know you are a parent, but you do not have court specified rights to pick a scholar up at a time different from that specified, we will need to secure permission prior to release.**

**\*Pupil identification forms must be redone every school year.\***

### **Parent volunteer hours and rules**

To maintain harmony and a positive atmosphere, all volunteers must abide by the following rule: Under NO circumstances may any volunteer contact other parents or individuals for non-supportive, negative or derogatory communication as a representative of the school. If there is a concern, it must be addressed with the instructor(s) first at the appropriate time. If not satisfied after this communication, the parent shall contact the principal. Failure to follow these procedures can constitute loss of privilege to volunteer in classes. Parents have many opportunities to volunteer their time both at school and at home. Volunteer sign-ups are available through the main office. Other opportunities are announced throughout the school year. Parents are requested to log the volunteer hours with the front office staff. Parents are requested to volunteer 20 hours per family, per year, or prorated to two hours a month if their children are accepted after school has begun. If there are extenuating good-cause circumstances that prohibit a parent or parent stand-in from completing the requested volunteer service hours, the parent will be instructed to meet with administration to explore an alternative means of involvement.

We appreciate the additional hours beyond the required 20 that many of you will contribute. This helps the school, your scholar and all children at SPCA.

Section 1002.33(10)(e)5.,F.S., states that a "charter school may limit the enrollment process only to target the following scholar populations: ...scholars who meet reasonable academic, artistic, or other eligibility standards established by the charter school and included in the charter school application and charter or, in the case of existing charter schools, standards that are consistent with the school's mission and purpose."

Consequently, if a new charter school includes the parent volunteer requirement in its application and charter, or if the requirement is consistent with the mission and purpose in an existing charter school, the parent volunteer contract is enforceable under Florida law.

What counts toward volunteer hours? The following are examples, but not a comprehensive list.

- School Advisory Committee (SAC) duties
- Parent Teacher Student Organization (PTSO) participation
- General meetings, Board meetings, Booster meetings, Choir meetings, Band meetings
- Helping with classroom items at home (decodable books, book orders, etc.)
- Making copies
- Room parent duties
- Orientation
- Donations
- Lunchroom help
- Working the drop off/pick up line, opening doors for children
- Campus maintenance
- School approved tutoring
- Working sporting events
- Chaperoning trips/events

#### ***Annual Notice Regarding Disclosure of Scholar Directory Information***

Federal and State laws require that SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a scholar's education records. However, SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY may disclose appropriately designated directory information without written consent UNLESS you advise SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY to the contrary.

Parent(s) or former scholars shall have 30 days from the date of this notice to inform the scholar's school principal, in writing, that any or all the directory information should not be released without their consent. Such directory information includes SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY has designated the following information as directory information:

- A scholar's name, address, and telephone number (if there is a listed number)
- Image or likeness in photographs, videotape, film or other medium



- Date and place of birth
  - Major field of study
  - Current grade level
  - Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
  - Weight and height of athletic team members
  - Dates of attendance
  - Degrees and awards received
  - Most recent previous educational agency or institution (school or center) attended by the scholar.
- Directory information is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released.
- Directory information relating to scholars shall be released only to the following:
- In-school use of scholar directory information for official school business
  - Scholar directory information, without addresses or telephone numbers, for school annuals, school newspapers, honors lists, and printed materials or programs for extracurricular activities.

### **Severe Weather information**

Somerset Career Academy will follow the same instructions as Saint Lucie County Public Schools in case of severe weather emergencies. Parents should watch the local news for information about school closings. Site based decisions will only differ from that of the district in cases of extreme emergencies and will be communicated to parents via email and text blast.

### **Safety System**

If you visit the school, you MUST enter through the front door of the main office and check in with the front office staff. You MUST have your picture identification with you so that the front office staff can verify your identity. A visitor's badge will be issued to you, and you MUST wear the badge at all times while on campus.

### **Scholar Gifts**

Please DO NOT send or bring gifts such as balloons, flowers, etc., to scholars. Office space is very limited and we do not have the staff to deliver these. If you send these, they will be held in the front office for pick up at the end of the day.

### **Deliveries**

Scholars/parents may not **order** food to be **delivered** to the office for the student. If food is delivered to the school for students, the student will be issued a detention, and the delivery will be held in the office until the end of the day.

## **Scholar Rights**

Scholars have the right to feel safe from threats and bodily harm. Disruptive behaviors are never acceptable, and when they occur, they will result in time out, exclusion from participation in class activities, suspension, or dismissal.

Parents who have a conflict with a scholar other than their own scholar are requested to speak to the Administration. At no time may parents approach the scholar directly.

All scholars and employees will be treated with respect. Slurs, innuendoes, hostile treatment, violence or other verbal or physical conduct against a scholar or employee will NOT be tolerated.

Prior to suspension or dismissal, the scholar has the right to a fair hearing as outlined by the Code of Conduct. Dismissal offenses include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Fighting or other dangerous and/or disruptive behavior.
2. Smoking/vaping/doing/selling or possessing drugs on school grounds or possession of tobacco products and/or paraphernalia.
3. Being under the influence or possession of alcoholic beverages or drugs on school grounds.
4. Defacing or vandalism of school property.
5. Igniting any flammable substance or possession of products such as lighters.
6. Harassment of scholars, faculty, staff, parents, substitutes or visitors.
7. Repetitive disruptive behavior.
8. Rude or vulgar language, gestures, pictures or actions.
9. Actions deemed to be unsafe or containing the potential to disrupt the educational setting at SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY.

## **Visitors**

Visitors, INCLUDING PARENTS, are NOT permitted to go to their scholar's class unannounced during school hours because this disrupts normal routine and instruction. For the safety and protection of all scholars, visitors (including parents) must sign in and out with the office, state whom they are visiting, state the purpose

of the visit, and obtain a pass before proceeding to a classroom. This is Florida State Law. Cooperation will enable the school to provide a safe and orderly learning environment for all scholars.

### **School Curriculum**

Instruction shall be based on the Florida State Standards in language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, the arts, health and physical education, and foreign languages.

### **Graduation Requirements and Diploma Options**

Florida law provides incoming 9<sup>th</sup> grade students the right to choose a diploma option:

- 24 credit standard high school diploma with a 2.0+ GPA
- CTE Diploma with a 2.0+ GPA

The appropriate graduation program for a particular scholar is one that best fits the abilities, interests, and goals of the individual scholar. Families should consider the educational benefits of each program and choose the program that will best prepare the scholar for his or her postsecondary education or career plan. Families and scholars should work with their school counselor/advisor on a regular basis to get more information about graduation programs, financial aid opportunities, acceleration programs, and college or career plans to help make this important decision.

### **Scholar Volunteer Service Program**

All scholars must complete at least 100 documented hours of volunteer service over 4 high school years to graduate. All Volunteer hours must be documented on the appropriate log and turned into the guidance department. Scholars are required to keep records of their log sheets. Please contact the Guidance department for further information.

The Somerset Career Academy Guidance Department works with scholars, parents, and the community to foster a positive and supportive learning environment. The guidance department office is in the middle/high administration building. The essential role of the academic advisor is to be a scholar advocate. Advisors assist with personal, academic, social, and post-secondary concerns that can aid the scholar in reaching their full potential. Support systems such as individual/group counseling are an integral part of the counseling program at Somerset Academy. When a scholar is upset, a counselor is always available for them for support.

Classroom activities and presentations are developed throughout the year to assist scholars with their personal, social, career, and educational development.

Parents are encouraged to use the electronic grade book software (SKYWARD) to monitor their scholar's academic performance and progression. SKYWARD is accessible via the internet and through a link on the Academy website: [www.somersetcareeracademy.org](http://www.somersetcareeracademy.org). Parents and scholars can view grades, class schedules, attendance records, discipline reports, activity announcements and notes from instructors. SKYWARD is an excellent tool to keep the parent aware of their scholar's daily progress. However, for email correspondence, please email directly from your email or use the link on [www.somersetcareeracademy.org](http://www.somersetcareeracademy.org) . If you are experiencing any issues with your skyward login email [messina.nerissa@somersetcollegeprep.org](mailto:messina.nerissa@somersetcollegeprep.org) .

### **Honors for Graduates**

#### **Valedictorian**

- The student with the highest cumulative weighted G.P.A. from the graduating class, who has attended SCA for the entirety of his/her cohort.

#### **Salutatorian**

- The student with the 2nd highest cumulative weighted G.P.A. of the graduating class, who has attended SCA for the entirety of his/her cohort.

#### **Honor Cords**

Gold honor cords shall be issued to those students earning a weighted cumulative grade point average of 4.0 or higher

Silver cords will be issued to graduating students who have earned a 3.5 weighted cumulative grade point average.

White cords shall be issued to those students who graduate with a total of 250 documented volunteer hours beyond the school day.

See Senior Handbook for additional cord information.

### **Course Selection Process**

It is important that you involve your parents in your selection process so that you have the proper prerequisites and requirements for high school graduation, your future career, scholarship and apprenticeships opportunities.

Selection Procedures:

1. Review the list of graduation requirements.
2. Consult your counselor to determine which requirements have been met, and which courses need to be taken for this upcoming year.
3. Talk to your parents and instructors about your selections and appropriate academic levels.
4. Select courses that will correspond with your goals for the future and have instructors sign appropriate levels.

### **Somerset Career Academy House System**

To create a more uniform school culture, Somerset Career Academy has decided to move to the House System. This system is based on the house system commonly employed by many British Schools, but it has been popularized due to its use in the *Harry Potter* series. Students in grades 6-12 will be assigned a house, meaning that students of each grade level at SOMERSET CAREER ACADEMY will be in the same group. The hope is that grouping students across grade levels, will foster a broader sense of community and emphasize an idea of collective success, as opposed to individuality.

Students can earn points or lose points based on their grades, behavior, house-based events, and other activities. A complete list will be provided below.

The school finds itself, much like other middle-high campuses, in the endless struggle or “grade warfare,” where upperclassmen blame underclassmen or middle school students and vice versa. A solution is to introduce the house system. If students were a part of a group that included all grades, then these divisions should cease because it is no longer “that stupid 6th grader,” but “Hey, leave MY 6th grader alone.”

### **Sorting into the House System**

All students will be randomly sorted into a house as an incoming 6<sup>th</sup> grader, or when they enter the school. In the event that a student leaves the school and returns his/her house will remain.

## House Sponsors

There will be two House Sponsors for each individual house. The Head Sponsor will be an employee at the school for 3 or more years (AT LEAST going into the third year). The Head Sponsor is a perennial position; he/she is not changed on a yearly basis unless there is an extenuating circumstance or he/she resigns from his/her spot in the house system.

The Assistant Sponsor will be selected for the first year of implementation; then, this position is filled based on a yearly election from teachers within the house. First year teachers are not allowed to hold an office.

## House Meetings

House meetings will be scheduled intermittently throughout the school year. These meetings can/should be a reflection of house and school concerns, reminders, etc. The goal is that these meetings will help foster a sense of community, not only within the house, but within the school as a whole.

## House Games

Multiple times a year, students will compete in House Games. Each house game should entail a number of events that represent the number of qualifying characteristics of the school. These events will entail things like athletic house competitions, academic competitions, spirit competitions, etc. Houses will be awarded points for finishing first, second, or third place in each event's standings.

## House Points System

\*Additional points can be awarded/removed per admin discretion.

Point system will be updated before 8/12/24

	<b><i>Points:</i></b>	<b>Responsible for points</b>	<b>Student Specific or General</b>
<b>Detentions per student per detention</b>	-2	DEAN	STUDENT
<b>Saturday Detentions per student</b>	-5	DEAN	STUDENT
<b>Suspensions per student per suspension</b>	-10	DEAN	STUDENT
<b>Unexcused Tardy(s) per tardy per student</b>	x/10	PEGGY	GENERAL
<b>Perfect Attendance per quarter</b>	+10	PEGGY	STUDENT

Perfect Attendance per year	+20	PEGGY	STUDENT
Academic Societies per student	+15	SPONSOR	STUDENT
Athletic Event Support per student	+1	ADMIN AT EVENT	GENERAL
School Event Support per student	+1	ADMIN AT EVENT	GENERAL
Penny Wars	+% score	SGA SPONSOR	GENERAL
Canned Food Drive	+% cans (2020 1/2/3 only)	SPONSOR	GENERAL
Volunteer Hours (Change from +1 per 10 to reflect change in Florida law allowing work to count as volunteer hours)	+1 per 25 (0.25)	PLATT	GENERAL
Tutoring Volunteers	+1	TEACHER OR PLATT	STUDENT
4.0 GPA per quarter per student	+4	MESSINA	STUDENT
3.51-3.99 GPA per quarter per student	+3	MESSINA	STUDENT
3.0-3.5 GPA per quarter per student	+2	MESSINA	STUDENT
2.0-2.99 GPA per quarter per student	+1	MESSINA	STUDENT
FSA/EOC score 5 per student per test (Changed from +3 as of 23-24 Year)	+5	MESSINA	STUDENT
FSA/EOC score 4 per student per test (Changed from +2 as of 23-24 Year)	+4	MESSINA	STUDENT
FSA/EOC score 3 per student per test (Changed from +1 as of 23-24 Year)	+3	MESSINA	STUDENT
Outside Competitions: 1 <sup>st</sup> /2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> /Honorable Mentions (Change from 20/10/5/5 after 2021-22)	10/5/3/3 (SLC Fair Best in show [big blue ribbon] 25pts)	SPONSOR	STUDENT

<b>History fair</b>	10 Districts 25 States	SPONSOR (SINSKI)	STUDENT
<b>Essay contest (Any)</b>	10 for finalist 25 for winner 1/2/3=25/15/10	SPONSOR	STUDENT
<b>Spelling Bee</b>	10 for school winners 25 for placing at district	SPONSOR	STUDENT
<b>Science Olympiad</b>	25: 1st-3rd 15: 4th-6th 10: 7th-10th	SPONSOR	
<b>SGA (Top 3 Finishers) Added in 22-23 School year. Designed to mimic History Fair</b>	10 Districts 25 States		

#### **SCHOOL BOARD OF ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA NOTICE OF PROTECTION OF PUPIL RIGHTS AMENDMENT**

The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment, 20 U.S.C. § 1232h, affords parents certain rights for the protection of student privacy. These include the right to:

1. *Consent* before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (“ED”) –

- (a) Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
- (b) Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
- (c) Sex behavior or attitudes;
- (d) Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
- (e) Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
- (f) Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
- (g) Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or parents; or
- (h) Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

2. *Receive notice and an opportunity to opt a student out of –*

- (a) Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;



- (b) Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination, or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical examination or screening permitted or required under State law; and
- (c) Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information obtained from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others.

3. *Inspect*, upon request and before administration or use –

- (a) Protected information surveys of students;
- (b) Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
- (c) Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

These rights transfer from the parents to a student who is 18 years old or an emancipated minor under State law.

The School Board of St. Lucie County has developed and adopted policies, in consultation with parents, regarding these rights, as well as arrangements to protect student privacy in the administration of protected information surveys and the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes. The School Board will directly notify parents of these policies at least annually at the start of each school year and after any substantive change. The School Board will also directly notify, such as through U.S. Mail or email, parents of students who are scheduled to participate in the specific activities or surveys noted below and will provide an opportunity for the parent to opt his or her child out of participation of the specific activity or survey. The School Board will make this notification to parents at the beginning of the school year if the Board has identified the specific or approximate dates of the activities or surveys at the time. For surveys and activities scheduled after the school year starts, parents will be provided reasonable notification of the planned activities and surveys listed below, and will be provided an opportunity to opt their child out of such activities and surveys. Parents will also be provided an opportunity to review any pertinent surveys. Following is a list of the specific activities and surveys covered under this requirement:

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information for marketing, sales, or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.

- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

*Parents who believe their rights have been violated may file a complaint with:*

Family Policy Compliance Office U.S. Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW Washington, D.C,  
20202-5901

## **SCHOOL BOARD OF ST. LUCIE COUNTY, FLORIDA**

### **NOTICE OF RIGHTS UNDER FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, 20 U.S.C. §1232g (FERPA), and corollary state law, Section 1002.22, Fla. Stat., afford parents and students who have attained 18 years of age (“eligible students”) certain rights with respect to each student’s education records. These rights are:

(1) The right of privacy with respect to the student’s education records.

Personally identifiable records or reports of a student, and any personal information contained in these reports, are confidential. The School District of St. Lucie County will not release the education records of a student without the written consent of the eligible student or the student’s parents or guardian, except to the extent FERPA and state law authorizes disclosure without consent.

(2) The right to inspect and review the student’s education records within 30 days of the day the District receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal (or appropriate school official) a written request that identifies the record(s) they wish to inspect. The principal will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

(3) The right to request amendment of the student’s education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of a student’s privacy rights.

Parents or eligible students may ask the School District of St. Lucie County to amend a record that they believe is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of a student’s privacy rights. They should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it is inaccurate, misleading or otherwise in violation of a student’s privacy rights.

If the District decides not to amend the records as requested by the parent or eligible student, the District will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and advise them of their right to a hearing regarding the

request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

(4) The right to consent to disclosure of personally identifiable information contained in the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA and state law authorize disclosure without consent. One exception that permits disclosure without consent is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the District as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel); a person serving on the School Board; a person or company with whom the District has contracted to perform a special task (such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist); or a parent or student serving on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee, or assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility. Upon request, the District discloses educational records without consent to officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled.

(5) The right to file a complaint with the United States Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA is:

Family Policy Compliance Office United States Department of Education 400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, D.C. 20202-5920

Other disclosures without prior consent; parents' right to limit:

School administrators may disclose directory information about a student without the consent of either the student or his/her parents(s)/guardian(s) unless, within ten (10) days after enrolling or beginning school, the student or parent/guardian notifies the school in writing that any or all directory information should not be released. Directory information includes the student's name and grade level. A limited release of information is required for participation in student athletics as described on the Parent and Player Agreement, Permission, and Release form.

Military recruiters and institutions of higher education have access to the name, address, and telephone listing of each secondary school student unless, within 10 days of enrolling in or beginning school, the student or the parent notifies the school in writing that such information should not be released without the prior written consent of the parent.

The School District of St. Lucie County policy on education records of students is set forth in District Policy 5.70 Student Records and the District's Student Education Records Manual. The policy and manual are available for inspection at the District Administration Office located at 9461 Brandywine Lane, Port St Lucie, FL 34986. Office hours are Monday – Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. A copy of the policy and the manual may be obtained, free of charge, upon request.

**Links:**

**Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (PDF):**

\* [Ley de Derechos a la Educación y Privacidad de las Familias \(Spanish\) \(PDF\)](#) \* [Lwa sou Dwa ak Entimite Lanseyman pou Fanmi \(Haitian Creole\) \(PDF\)](#)

**Procedural Safeguards for Students with Disabilities and for Students Identified as Gifted:**

\* [Notice of Procedural Safeguards for Parents of Students with Disabilities \(PDF\)](#) Revised 05/2014

Charter school students are students of St. Lucie County Public Schools.

**Non-discrimination policy:**

<https://www.somersetcollegeprep.org/uploads/Anti-Discrimination%20Policy%20WEB.pdf>

**Procedures for addressing concerns:**

<https://somersetacademyschools.com/procedures-addressing-concerns>

Ben Gibson, *Chair*  
Ryan Petty, *Vice Chair*  
*Members*  
Esther Byrd  
Grazie P. Christie  
Daniel P. Foganholi, Sr.  
Kelly Garcia  
MaryLynn Magar

July 14, 2025

Dear Florida Parents,

As Florida's Commissioner of Education, and as a father myself to four beautiful daughters, I am deeply committed to creating safe, high-achieving schools where every child can succeed. I believe that the most powerful influence in a child's life is the role of the parent. That's why Governor Ron DeSantis has prioritized parental rights and signed House Bill 241 (2021) into law. Moreover, the Heritage Foundation ranked Florida #1 for Education Freedom for the third year in a row, and the Center for Education Reform ranked Florida #1 on the Parent Power Index for the fourth year in a row. Additionally, Florida ranked #1 on the EdChoice Friedman Index and ranked #2 for Education overall by U.S. News & World Report. As Commissioner, I will always continue to fight for and safeguard parental rights. You know your child best, and when parents are informed and included in the educational process, students succeed.

As we begin the 2025-2026 school year, I want to share how proud we are of Florida's students, teachers and families. Because of your support and involvement, Florida continues to advance achievement and academic growth. These results aren't just numbers; they represent real opportunities for our children.

At the heart of this success is you – the parent. You are your child's first teacher, and your voice matters. Whether helping with homework, attending school events or making decisions about your child's education, your participation is essential.

That's why I want to take a moment to remind you of some of the rights you have as the parent or guardian of a child enrolled in a Florida public school. These rights aren't just written into law – they're rooted in the shared belief that families must be central to every meaningful decision in a child's learning and development. When families and educators work together, there is no limit to what our students can achieve.

You have the right to expect instruction that:

- Encourages individual responsibility, effort and merit.
- Does not assign guilt or blame based on a student's background or the way God created them.
- Is objective and factual.
- Aligns with Florida's state academic standards and protects students from being made to feel inferior or uncomfortable because of their race, sex or religion.
- Builds resiliency.

As your child progresses through his or her school day, below are some important areas we would like you to be aware of and request that any concerns you experience be reported to the Florida Department of Education.

- Pursuant to Florida law, every Florida school must begin the day with a one-to-two-minute moment of silence. Students may use this time quietly and thoughtfully, and we encourage you to talk with your child about how they might use that time in a meaningful way.
- You can also expect transparency in the instructional materials and training used in your child's classroom. By focusing on core academic subjects and rejecting indoctrination in the classroom, Florida has become a standard-bearer for educational excellence.
- Florida law requires schools to ensure that restrooms and changing areas are designated for exclusive use by boys or girls. Schools may also provide single-user or unisex options. These protections help maintain privacy, dignity and safety for all students.

Parents have a number of additional rights, as summarized below:

- The right to direct your child's education, upbringing, moral and religious training.
- The right to choose the educational setting that is best for your child – public, private, religious or home education.
- The right to review your child's school records at any time.
- The right to make medical decisions for your child and access their medical records.
- The right to give written consent before:
  - Your child's biometric data (like fingerprints) is collected or stored.
  - Any DNA or blood samples are taken, unless required by law or court order.
  - Audio or video recordings of your child are made, with exceptions for school safety, instruction, activities or identification cards.
- The right to be promptly notified if any government or school employee suspects a crime involving your child.
- The right to be told if there is any change in your child's physical, emotional or mental health support at school.
- The right to receive notice of any health services offered and choose whether or not your child participates.
- The right to transparency in instructional and library materials:
  - Elementary schools must post, in a searchable format on their websites, a list of all materials in school libraries and reading lists.
  - The Florida Department of Education must publish and regularly update a list of all materials removed or discontinued due to objections.
  - Each school board must have a process that allows parents and residents to object to specific instructional materials and ensures those objections are addressed and resolved.
- The right to ensure classroom instruction and school practices align with state law:
  - Classroom instruction on sexual orientation or gender identity may not occur in grades prekindergarten through grade 8. If such instruction is provided in grades 9 through 12, it must be age appropriate or developmentally appropriate and consistent with state standards.
  - Public kindergarten through grade 12 employees and contractors must not be required to use preferred pronouns or titles that do not align with a person's biological sex.
  - Students may not be asked to share their preferred pronouns or penalized for choosing not to.
- The right to report a concern to your school principal and, if not resolved, escalate it to your district.

- If still unresolved, request a neutral Special Magistrate to review the issue and recommend a resolution.
  - These apply to:
    - Student welfare concerns related to health, safety or well-being.
    - Instructional or library materials you believe are inappropriate.

Parent Resources:

We would like to share with you some resources that are available to you as parents on our Parental Rights page located at <https://www.fldoe.org/ParentalRights/>.

- The [Attorney General's Office of Parental Rights](#), where a parent may file a complaint related to violations of the Parent's Bill of Rights.
- To file a complaint of educator misconduct, please contact the Office of Professional Practices Services at the Florida Department of Education by emailing [ParentalRights@fldoe.org](mailto:ParentalRights@fldoe.org).
- Florida law requires the implementation of a [Special Magistrate](#) process to support families by protecting parent's rights and giving them additional assistance with certain disputes that are not timely or satisfactorily resolved by a Florida school district. The link above provides information for parents seeking appointment of a Special Magistrate to resolve certain disputes.

As we begin this school year together, know that we are here for you and respect your role as the parent in the educational process. We are cheering for your child, supporting your family, and committed to ensuring every classroom in Florida is a place where every student is challenged and inspired to achieve his or her full potential.

Thank you for the trust you place in us. Let's make the 2025-2026 school year our best yet.

God bless,



Anastasios Kamoutsas  
Commissioner of Education