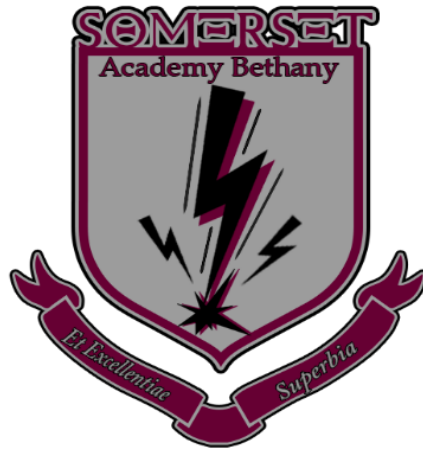


Somerset Academy Bethany

An “A rated” Charter Elementary School

State Designated High Performing



STUDENT HANDBOOK 2025-2026

500-510 SW Bethany Drive

Port St Lucie, FL 34986

Phone: 772-201-1716

Fax: 772-201-1717

www.somersetacademybethany.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)

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 Academy Bethany Vision

It is the vision of the Academy to ignite an inclusive, project-driven STEAM community where every student emerges as a confident, ethical innovator and collaborator, bridging disciplines to solve global challenges with impact, empathy, and creativity.

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 Administration

Principal: Erika Rains

Vice Principal: Lucia Hernandez

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 Academy Bethany** 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 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 **Somerset Academy Bethany, Somerset College Prep, Somerset Academy St. Lucie, or Somerset Career Academy** (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).

<u>School Hours Schedule</u>		<u>Early Release Schedule</u>	
7:00 AM	Drop off begins	7:00 AM	Drop off begins
7:30 AM	Classes Begin	7:30 AM	Classes Begin
10:30- 12:30 PM	Lunches	10:30- 12:30 PM	Lunches
2:30 PM	Dismissal	2:30 PM	Dismissal
2:30- 6:00 PM	Aftercare (registration required)	2:30- 6:00 PM	Aftercare (registration required)

*Students are considered tardy if they are not in their seats at exactly 7:30 AM. Parent/guardian must come into the front office to sign the student in if they arrive after 7:28 (end of car line).

* Students not registered for Aftercare who are picked up late will incur a \$1.00 per minute late fee. This fee will be billed and is payable daily.

School calendar year:

Somerset Academy Bethany 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/>

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

Morning Arrival Policy

Parents may begin morning drop off as early as 7 :00 AM. Parents must remain in their vehicles at all times and follow the flow of carline. Children must never be left unattended before staff supervision is in place.

Drivers must drive at a walking speed, never exceeding 3–5 mph, and follow all directions from staff; unloading happens only when your vehicle is fully stopped in the designated zone, and exits may only occur on the sidewalk/curb side once instructed by staff member.

The car drop off lane closes sharply at 7 :28 AM. Students arriving after 7 :28 AM are considered tardy, and parents must park and accompany their child into the main office to sign them in—no exceptions, and no curbside release after the carline concludes.

Afternoon Dismissal Policy

To ensure the safety of students, staff, and families—and to promote a consistent, efficient dismissal process—Somerset Academy Bethany operates a structured Carline & Bus-Rider Dismissal Policy. This policy applies to all school-day arrivals and dismissals for carline and bus-connected routines.

1. Dismissal Start Time & Order of Release

Dismissal begins promptly at 2:30 PM. At that time, bus riders are escorted by designated staff to the bus loading zone, and car riders enter the carline staging area. Bus riders are always loaded first to minimize cross-traffic and ensure a secure routine.

2. Vehicle Guidelines & Traffic Safety

Parents/guardians must remain in their vehicles at all times during carline—exit of the vehicle, even momentarily, is prohibited. This practice is supported by multiple district guidelines and helps maintain visual control and consistent flow. Drivers must operate at a walking pace, not exceeding 5 mph, and obey all verbal directions and traffic flow instructions from supervising staff. Use of cell phones or other distractions is explicitly prohibited during carline.

3. Car-Tag Visibility & Authorization

Each family must display their school-issued car-tag clearly in the front windshield, aligned with the passenger side visor. Students will only be called when the tag is visible; cars without tags will be required to pull aside, park, and escort the driver into the main office to present photo identification before student release.

4. Student Pickup & Transfer Procedures

When a tagged vehicle arrives at the staging area, staff announce the car-tag number, escort the child

curbside, and facilitate loading through a single door. Once the student is seated and all doors are closed and staff sign off, the vehicle is cleared to move. After the carline window closes, any students not picked up will be escorted to the main office and must be retrieved in person by a guardian with proper identification.

5. Late Pickup & ID Requirements

Parents arriving after the carline concludes must park and enter the main office with their car-tag or photo ID to request student release. Students who are not picked up during the carline hours are escorted to the main office to await pickup; they are not dismissed curbside or left unattended.

6. Compliance & Enforcement

Failure to comply with procedures—such as exiting a vehicle in line, driving above the speed limit, or ignoring staff directions—will result in one or more of the following:

- Immediate redirection to the office for verification
- A written notice to the family (first infraction)
- Possible revocation of carline privileges or requirement to switch to office pickup (repeat offenses)

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 Academy Bethany does not operate a before school care program. After care program information can be found at this link: <https://www.somersetacademybethany.org/after-care-program>

Attendance Policy

ANYTIME A STUDENT RETURNS TO SCHOOL AFTER AN ABSENCE, A NOTE MUST BE BROUGHT FROM HOME OR UPLOADED ONLINE WITHIN THREE (3) DAYS OF THE ABSENCE. Parents and guardians must understand that compulsory school attendance law states instruction in a standard school, be comprised of not less than 900 net hours for a student in or at the grade level of 4 through 12, or not less than 720 net hours for a student in or at the grade level of kindergarten through grade 3. **Even excused absences count against instructional hours.** Not meeting the minimum instructional hours required is grounds for retention!

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. Justification for absences will be evaluated based on the policy below regarding excused or unexcused absences.

Acceptable excuses for student absences are verified illness, a death in the family, a dental or doctor appointment, court appearance, a school-sponsored event or activity that has been previously approved, or religious holidays. Absences due to illness will **only** be excused if a doctor's note is submitted. Parent notes due to illness are noted in Skyward, but will **not** result in an excused absence. Absences are only excused if a medical doctor's note is provided, there is a death in the family and verifiable proof is submitted to the main office, or proper legal documentation is submitted to administration. All notes must be submitted to the main office within 3 school days of absence. Notes/excuses may now be uploaded and submitted on the school's website at <https://www.somersetacademybethany.org/Report-an-Absence>

Unexcused absences are those absences that are 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 child out of school before the end of the school day, you must come to the school office to sign him/her out. Student will not be permitted to be sign out after 2:00 P.M. as the school prepares for dismissal. Skipping class is defined by one or more of the following criteria:

1. Failure to check out when leaving school before the end of the official school day.
2. Absence from class without parent or legal guardian's knowledge and/or permission.
3. Absence from class without instructor knowledge and/or permission.
4. Being "out of area" for a prolonged period of time

Although the school does not support students missing school for vacation purposes. Any student missing school for vacation must notify the school. Notification must be made in writing in advance. The absence is **not** considered excused. Students must be in attendance no less than 170 out of the 180 days the school is in session. After 5 unexcused absences, the parents or guardians and the student may be required to meet with administration or an attendance committee. The student's future attendance will be monitored, and the student may be considered for retention, referral to truancy officers, referral to the district, or possible dismissal from the program. An excess of 7 absences will trigger an automatic formal letter home. Please review Florida's attendance enforcement statute and truancy requirements at

http://www.leg.state.fl.us/statutes/index.cfm?App_mode=Display_Statute&Search_String=1000-1099/1003/Sections/1003.26.html

The State Legislature finds that poor academic performance is associated with non-attendance and that schools/districts must take an active role in promoting and enforcing attendance as a means of improving student performance. It is the policy of the state that each district/school be responsible for

enforcing school attendance of all students. The policies must provide that public schools track excused and unexcused absences and contact the home in the case of an unexcused absence from school, or an absence from school for which the reason is unknown, to prevent the development of patterns of nonattendance. For this reason, the school will reach out to the parents/guardians when a student's attendance or lack thereof, including tardies, are of concern. The Legislature finds that early intervention in school attendance is the most effective way of producing good attendance habits that will lead to improved student learning and achievement.

Report absences online here: <https://www.somersetacademybethany.org/Report-an-Absence>

Make Up Work – Excused Absences

Students are expected to make up all the work missed during an excused absence. Students are permitted one day per day absent to make up work. Teachers may grant additional time for e work if warranted by the individual situation. All assignments, including tests and exams announced in advance of the student's absence, must be made up on the day the student returns to school. Teachers may require that a student completes work assigned prior to a scheduled absence/leave. Students are responsible for asking for any/ all work they need to make up.

Make Up Work – Unexcused Absences

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

Grade Scale

The grading and the interpretations of the letter grades represent the equivalent numerical grades, are as follows:

A 90 – 100

B 80 – 89

C 70 – 79

D 60 – 69

F 0 – 59

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 Student Education

The Exceptional Student Education Program (ESE) is implemented in accordance with St. Lucie

County District Procedures for Exceptional Education. Student exceptionalities will be addressed on an individual basis, as needed. Parents and instructors work closely with the ESE Specialist to provide proper placement and to develop an individualized educational plan (IEP). For more information, or if you have any questions regarding the evaluation process, please contact the school's ESE specialist.

English Language Learners Program

The screening and placement of Limited English Proficient (LEP) students will be met in accordance with district procedures. For further information, contact the school's ESOL Coordinator.

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 Academy Bethany (SAB) reserves the right to interpret these guidelines and/or make changes during the school year. Students are expected to follow these guidelines. All students (KG through 5th grade) shall wear the school uniform.

A student in violation of the dress code may receive a detention, may be sent home and asked to return when in compliance, or SAB Admin may choose to call for appropriate attire to be brought in for the student. If sent home, the student will be marked absent, unexcused. Parents select to have their children attend SAB with full acknowledgement of the expectations and policies. Purchasing uniforms from school sanctioned vendors is a policy requirement. Parents may not purchase an article of clothing and have it embroidered with the SAB logo. **This is a copyright infringement.**

Uniform Policy

There is a uniform store on the school's website where shirts may be ordered. Samples of uniform shirts are kept in the main office for families who need to see sizing prior to making online purchases.

Tops:

- School authorized shirts from sanctioned vendors/distributors (or other fundraising items) on designated days.
- School authorized hoodies, jackets or outerwear.
- School club and athletic shirts on designated days only.

Bottoms:

- Pants or slacks in black or khaki, worn at the waist, at all times (may be purchased anywhere).
- Black or khaki shorts, capris, skorts or skirts worn at the waist (can be purchased anywhere).
- No leggings unless worn under appropriate pants/shorts/skirts, no holes, rips, frays and no sweatpants

Hair: Hair must be neat and clean. No bandanas, scarves or flags are permitted.

Head coverings: No hats or caps are permitted within the building. Religious attire is permitted. No sunglasses permitted in door unless medically necessary and documentation is on file with the school.

Shoes: Dress shoes or tennis shoes with backs & closed toed, only. No shoes with wheels, no crocs/slide. Shoes must always be tied.

Lanyards: Students in grades 3–5 are required to wear their school-issued ID and lanyards **at all times** while on campus and at off campus trips. Students in grades K–2 must wear their ID and lanyards during all school-related field trips and off-campus activities.

Uniform policy for Fridays:

- Any regular uniform pieces from school sanctioned vendor/distributor of uniforms.
- SAB Friday T-Shirts, hoodies, and any other purchased school fundraising items of clothing and jeans.
- No leggings, spandex, joggers or sweatpants
- Shorts must be fingertip length or longer
- No holes, rips or frays etc.
- No spaghetti straps

Students in violation of the dress code will be asked to correct on site or to call home for appropriate attire. Please see dress code violation progressive discipline steps:

- 1st Offense: Warning
- 2nd Offense: Lunch detention
- 3rd Offense: 30 min after school detention
- 4th Offense: 1 hour after school detention
- 5th Offense: 1 Day out of school suspension and behavior probation
- 6th Offense: 2 Day out of school suspension and behavior probation and not welcomed back next year.
- 7th Offense: Dismissal

Code of Conduct

Somerset Academy Bethany 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 objective of this code is to develop each student's potential for learning and to foster positive interpersonal relationships. 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.

Students who violate the school's Code of conduct will receive the following consequences:

Classroom Consequences may include the following:

1. Verbal Warning
2. Time out/ Loss of privileges
3. Parent contacted/ Detention

Administrative Consequences may include the following, in no particular order:

- School Discipline Referral
- Behavior Probation
- In School Suspension (ISS)/Out of School Suspension (OSS) - Referral sent home
- Dismissal from the program

Fighting, profanity, disrespect, sexually explicit behavior, destruction of property, disruptive behavior will result in issuing a referral and an administrative review for possible immediate suspension from school (OSS) or dismissal from the program. Parent(s) will be called to pick up your student from school immediately.

***Refer to discipline matrix for a more detailed break down**

Cafeteria Conduct

Students will proceed through the lunch line in an orderly fashion, "first come, first served." Students may not hold a place in line for other students. Students are responsible for cleaning up after themselves by placing their trash in the proper receptacles and helping to maintain a clean eating environment. Misconduct during lunch will result in disciplinary sanctions. Headphones are not permitted in the lunch line. Students are expected to follow all cafe worker's rules. Students are not to leave the designated lunch area without the permission of the supervising faculty/staff. Misconduct during lunch may result in disciplinary sanction, including lunch detention/picking up trash during lunch.

Restroom Usage Policies

To deal with the increase of bathroom related vandalism, the school is enacting institutionalized bathroom

policies. Students must sign out on a bathroom log each time they leave the classroom and must sign back in upon return to the classroom, logging name, date and time leaving/returning. Students must always take a hall pass with them. Students caught in the halls without a pass will be escorted back to class and may face consequences. A student caught vandalizing a restroom will face consequences, up to an including dismissal from the program. Expenses incurred because of damage by vandalism will be the responsibility of the parent of the offending student.

Computer Policies

Students are responsible for logging off of the school computer when they're done using it. If a student does not log out of his/her profile and someone else misuses the computer, the student who did not log out will be the student facing the consequences. Computer use rules are on the desktop background of every school computer. Not knowing is not an excuse. Misuse of school computers will result in progressive consequences.

Student Use of Wireless Communication Devices (Grades K–5)

In accordance with **Florida House Bill 1105**, Somerset Academy Bethany enforces the following policy for students in **Kindergarten through 5th Grade**:

Students in grades K–5 are **prohibited from using cell phones or other wireless communication devices** at any time during the school day. This includes before-school arrival, instructional time, lunch/recess, and dismissal. Devices must be turned off and stored in backpacks or another designated location, and they may not be used for any reason while on campus.

Exceptions may be made only for:

- Documented medical needs (e.g., part of a student's IEP or 504 plan),
- Emergency situations as determined by school administration.

Violations of this policy:

First Offense: Scholar will submit the electronic 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 electronic 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 an afterschool Detention, and parent notification.

Third Offense: Scholar will submit the electronic 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 electronic 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 suspension and eventually, dismissal.

Ineligibility for Extracurricular Activities

To support students in achieving academic success, the school has established measures to assist those struggling academically. One such measure involves restricting participation in school-sponsored extracurricular and interscholastic activities until the student shows adequate improvement in their academic performance. Students deemed ineligible may be required to attend tutoring sessions during or after school to address their academic challenges. If a student demonstrates appropriate academic progress in the subsequent grading period, they may be reinstated; however, eligibility will only be granted once sufficient academic improvement is evident.

Students are considered ineligible if, at the end of a grading period, they receive a grade of D or lower in one or more subjects, according to the school's grading scale. Additionally, students may face indefinite ineligibility due to disciplinary reasons, as determined by the administration.

Academic Honesty

The school encourages each of its students to actively participate in the learning process. It is the school's expectation that students, over time, will be increasingly able to learn on their own and produce work that shows their integrity and their efforts. The academically honest student:

- Prepares thoroughly for all 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 efforts of each student and to promote the fundamental principles of mutual trust and respect, the school encourages the student's own effort and insists on academic honesty.

Among the types of academic dishonesty not tolerated at Somerset Academy Bethany include the following (but not limited to):

Cheating - Student 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 student on **any** graded assignment (classwork, homework,

tests, quizzes, etc).

- 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

Students 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 student 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. Students 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 honesty serves as a measure of personal integrity and provides a foundation for the academic strength of Somerset Academy Bethany, any violation of it is considered a serious offense. Such offenses are cumulative. Students who violate the Academic Integrity policy face the following consequences:

First time violations:

- Counseling session with parent notification
- Automatic 0% on the work in question without the opportunity to make up the assignment or have alternate assignment
- Automatic Behavioral Probation for 1st offense.

Subsequent violations:

- All of the above
- 3 Days OSS
- Possible dismissal
- Any additional consequences as decided by Administration.

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.

SOMERSET ACADEMY BETHANY DISCIPLINE MATRIX

Expectation	Rules	Consequences	By whom
SAB students will contribute to keeping the campus safe for everyone.	No student 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 and involvement of law enforcement, as applicable.	Admin

SAB students are expected to resolve conflicts peacefully, which means reporting potential problems to instructors, counselors, staff, or administration.	No student is permitted to 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 accordingly.	Up to and including* immediate dismissal and involvement of law enforcement, as applicable.	Admin
SAB students respect themselves, other students, and all staff at all times.	THE FOLLOWING ARE NOT ALLOWED <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Disobedience/Disrespect › Defiance/Lying › Intimidation › Profanity/Vulgarity › Obscenity › Racially inciting statements › Sexual harassment › Hate crimes 	Up to and including* immediate dismissal and involvement of law enforcement as applicable.	Admin
SAB is a drug, vape, alcohol and tobacco free learning environment.	No student shall possess, sell, furnish, use, or be under the influence of any alcohol, tobacco, narcotic, or controlled substances. Possession of drug paraphernalia, including vape pens, is not allowed. Prescriptions should be kept in the main office with required documentation.	Up to and including* immediate dismissal and involvement of law enforcement as applicable.	Admin
SAB students are responsible citizens who respect their fellow students and their school.	THEFT, ROBBERY, EXTORTION, GRAFFITI, VANDALISM, AND PROPERTY DAMAGE ARE NOT ALLOWED: Students are not allowed to steal, attempt to steal, take or damage property of another or any school property or equipment.	Up to and including* immediate dismissal and involvement of law enforcement as applicable.	Admin
SAB students will come to school dressed according to the SAB uniform policy in all aspects.	Students will wear approved SAB uniforms purchased from the designated SAB vendor, with SAB logo.	Parent phone call. Student may be sent home and receive an unexcused absence. Excessive absences may result in retention or dismissal, etc.	Admin

SAB students will attend all their classes.	Students may not leave campus without written permission and proper identification from person picking up the student	Unexcused absence: Excessive absences may result in retention or dismissal	Admin
SAB students are expected to be in class on time.	All students are expected to be in class on time. Entering the classroom late disrupts the educational process as per SAB tardy policy.	Excessive tardies may result in a referral to the Attendance Committee for possible actions.	Admin

“Up to and including” refers to the following possible actions:

Lunch Detention	Behavioral Probation
After School Detention	Academic Probation
In-School Suspension	Out of School Suspension

****SAB does follow SESIR guidelines set forth by the State/St. Lucie County District.**

Detentions/Suspensions

Detentions are held on specific days set forth by Administration. Detentions may take place during lunch or after school. Detention must be served when scheduled. Students 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 student illness or a doctor’s appointment. Written proof of a doctor’s appointment will be required upon the students return to school. If such proof is not provided upon the students’ return, they will be considered to have skipped detention. Detention takes precedence over any other after school activity or sport. Detentions not served in one school year may be carried over to the next school year at the discretion of Administration.

- Students and parents/guardians will be notified of receipt of detention.
- An excessive amount of detentions/suspensions may cause a student to be liable for dismissal from the school, or to be placed on probation upon recommendation of the Administrative Team.

**** After 3 detentions = 1 day suspension**

Under typical circumstances, the school follows a progressive discipline approach to address student behavior.

The sequence of consequences may include the following:

1. **Verbal Warning**
2. **Lunch Detention**

3. **30-Minute After-School Detention**
4. **1-Hour After-School Detention**
5. **Referral to the Dean for Further Disciplinary Action, Including Possible Suspension**

In cases where behavior warrants suspension, please note that the suspension will be documented in the student's permanent record and kept on file from year to year. All suspensions will also result in the student being placed on behavioral probation.

Under ordinary circumstances, one or more sanctions may be appropriate. However, a student may be placed on probation for all or part of one school year due to a previous school year's infractions. Students who have been 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 student'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. If a student is in the ESE or ESOL program, the program coordinator may be present.
2. Meet with the instructor's department head/grade level chair
3. Meet with 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. If a student is in the ESE or ESOL program, the program coordinator may be present.
2. Meet with the instructor's department head/grade level chair
3. Meet with 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 the Board's designated Parent Liaison for conflict resolution.
7. Appear before the Board of Directors for a final appeal.

Right of SOMERSET ACADEMY BETHANY 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 ACADEMY BETHANY Board established policies for continued enrollment include:

- Wearing Board approved uniform as designated by time and location and manner as per SOMERSET ACADEMY BETHANY policy.
- Attendance requirements as per FS 1001.41 requiring a minimum of 170 days of attendance.
- Behavior as per SOMERSET ACADEMY BETHANY 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 students should not be sent to school when they are ill. If a student becomes ill during the school day, and it appears they would be best cared for at home, the parent will be contacted. The school must be notified of any student's chronic illness (i.e. asthma, diabetes, heart condition, seizures, etc.). This notification heightens awareness in case of an emergency.

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

- 1) Instructor will administer first aid in the classroom, if possible and notify parent.
- 2) Instructors will send the student to the office if necessary, using the buddy system, after notifying the office that students are enroute. Office will notify parent.
- 3) Instructors will notify the office if the student is unable to be moved. Office will notify parent.
- 4) Trained personnel will administer first aid and will notify parent.
- 5) The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be called, and the injury described. Emergency services will be called, if the injury warrants such.
- 6) For certain injuries, the parent or guardian may decide to pick the student up from school. Emergency contact persons will be called if the parent or guardian cannot be reached. For this reason, it is imperative that emergency contacts be up to date.
- 7) An accident report will be completed and filed for most accidents/ injuries.

Health and Wellness

To ensure the health and wellness of the students, employees and families of SAB, the school will be taking the following precautions:

- Performing temperature checks as, needed.
- Sanitizing students upon entry into the building
- Sanitizing stations around the school
- Daily sanitizing of the school, classrooms, bathrooms, etc.

Additionally, we encourage the SAB community to follow the best practices recommended by CDC:

- 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 with a tissue.

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!



Transportation

Families may apply for transportation on the school's website. Somerset Academy Bethany offers transportation for all areas in the county in the form of "depot stops." Transportation is first-come, first-served, and must be used regularly to maintain an active seat on the bus.

Students in grades 3 or higher may be left at a bus stop without an adult (if the student is comfortable doing so). Students in grade KG to 2nd **MUST** have an adult present at the bus stop to be let off the bus. If a parent or guardian is not at the stop to meet a K-2nd grade student, the bus will return the student to the school. Parents or guardians who are not present at the bus stop will need to come to the school and pick up their students. Missing a pickup time more than twice will result in a student bus suspension for the third time, and parents will need to pick their student up from school. Somerset school buses are shared between campuses and when a bus must return to the elementary school to bring a child back, that bus is then late to the middle high campus. Please be respectful of all our students at all our campuses and be at your bus stops on time.

Field Trips

As a learning experience, instructors may plan field trips. Parents may be asked to assist the instructor as a chaperone. Parents serving in this capacity may not have other children 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 any parent chaperoning a field trip. Parents must be Level 2 Background Checked and have a clean Drug Test in order to be approved to chaperone trips. Parent chaperones are required to adhere to these guidelines. Chaperone spaces are limited and the selection of chaperones is at the discretion of the school if the number of volunteers exceeds the number of

spaces available. Students who do not attend a field trip will receive an alternative assignment.

Participating in field trips is a privilege. Scholars serve as representatives of the school; therefore, they may be excluded from participating in any trip for reasons relating to behavior or current academic standing. To participate in field trips, scholars must have grades C or higher in all classes. Participation will be determined by the grades on Skyward. All your scholars' teachers must complete a Learning Experience Elsewhere (LEE) forms reflecting the grades. Any School Suspension can negate attending a field trip. Any school discipline can negate participation in a field trip or school activity.

Parent permission must be given for students to participate in field trips. Money and permission slips must be turned in according to the instructions, prior to the field trip, or the student will not be permitted to participate. **All permission slips and money are due by the due date specified and no extensions will be given-NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Students are required to wear the official school field trip shirt on all field trips. They may choose any bottoms, provided they meet the school's dress code guidelines.

Five items are required for an eligible student to attend a field trip:

- 1) Field Trip Authorization forms must be filled out completely, signed and returned **by the deadline.**
- 2) Medical information needs to be up to date with the school.
- 3) Non-refundable field trip fee
- 4) Learning Experience Elsewhere (LEE) forms reflecting the grades
- 5) Field Trip shirt

*Note: additional items may be required based on the nature of the field trip.

Field trip costs are predetermined based upon a certain number of participants who will share the total expense. Therefore, **field trip related fees are NOT REFUNDABLE after the due date.** The only consideration for a refund would be based upon a verifiable death in the family or an injury to the student that prohibits them from participation. The field trip environment is still considered a classroom and school rules are still enforced. Students may **not** be checked out of any off-campus field trip without prior approval from administration. This is not recommended due to instructor responsibility, instruction, confusion and liability.

Communication

Communication is essential for a positive and successful environment. SAB Administration and staff recognize this and strive to facilitate open and frequent communications with parents. An annual survey may be conducted, as parental and community participation is crucial in aiding the school to identify areas of success and determining areas that need improvement.

The use of Skyward messaging, information updates via the school website, Facebook, and Remind text blasts will be implemented to communicate school information. Data chats will be conducted quarterly to inform parents of students' progress. Parents are responsible for signing up for the data chats when the links become available. Teachers will send weekly newsletters home or out through Skyward emails, and send other information home in the student's Communication Folders.

In addition to the report cards and conferences, instructors have information on skyward regarding class assignments, projects and homework. If a parent has no internet access, a hard copy of the newsletter will be available upon request. 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 the school's Skyward messaging system.

An interactive, online tool for monitoring scholar grades, SKYWARD Parent Portal, available for all scholars and parents. The gradebook will be updated on the 1st and 15th day of each month. Progress reports will be posted biweekly and report cards will be posted every 9 weeks. Scholar access is their 562 number for the username and their date of birth, using two digits for the month and two digits for the date (with no year) as the password. If a parent needs their password reset, they can use this link and submit a request. <https://www.somersetacademybethany.org/skyward>

We encourage parents to reach out to the school office with any questions or concerns regarding their child. Our administration and staff are committed to maintaining open communication and are happy to meet with parents when needed. To ensure the availability of staff and minimize classroom interruptions, we kindly ask that all conferences be scheduled in advance through the main office. We ask that parents refrain from attempting to meeting with teachers before or after school without a pre-scheduled appointment.

If you are concerned, Somerset Academy Bethany's policy is to first contact the teacher via email. If further support is needed, the next step is to reach out to the Department Head or Grade Level Chair. Should the issue remain unresolved, it may then be brought to the attention of school administration.

It is extremely important that we have current and accurate contact information on file. Any changes to your physical address, email address, phone number, or authorized pick-up list must be made in person by the legal parent/guardian at the front office. In accordance with state law, proof of residency is required for any change of address.

*****Parents or guardians must submit copies of any document which indicates who has legal access to the child 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 and birth certificate. Friends and strangers will be denied access to a student, in the absence of verified parental consent. Even if we know you are a parent, if you do not have court specified rights to pick up a child, we will need to secure permission prior to releasing the student.

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.

Parental involvement and volunteering are integral parts of our school community. It has been our experience that parental involvement plays a key role in the day-to-day functioning of our school. In every area, from direct classroom support to the front office, cafeteria and clinic, active volunteering is critical to students’ continued success. In addition to the following guidelines, SAB will also follow the volunteer guidelines put in place by St. Lucie County Public Schools in order to be in compliance with the Jessica Lunsford Act. **UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES SHOULD PARENTS ENTER THE SCHOOL AND GO DIRECTLY TO A CLASSROOM.** All school visitors and volunteers will be required to have a driver’s license or ID card scanned through the front office. Volunteers must pass an immediate computerized background check. **Each visitor/volunteer will receive a pass that must be worn in a visible location.**

Guidelines for Visitors and Volunteers

All SAB families are requested to complete a minimum of 20 volunteer hours annually for their first student and 15 hours for every student thereafter.

Arrangements should be made in advance and at a time agreed upon with the classroom teacher or school personnel.

- Parents and/or legal guardians who meet clearance criteria are allowed to volunteer at the discretion of the classroom teacher and administration.
- Classrooms and cafeteria volunteers may not have other children/non-students with them.
- It is the responsibility of the parent volunteer to log in and out on the sign-in sheet for off campus volunteering activity. Failure to do so will result in hours not accounted for during the totaling process.
- The safety and education of students must be the main concern of volunteers while engaged in school activities.
- Visitors/Volunteers are expected to dress appropriately for an elementary school.
- Cell phones must be turned off or placed on vibrate while on campus.
- Comparing and criticizing teachers and students is unacceptable.
- Please remember to keep what happens in the classroom confidential. Do not discuss the lives or learning of the students with other students or adults who are not in the classroom.
- Punctuality and reliability are expected, since classroom teachers plan for volunteer assistance. If you are unable to come at your scheduled time, please call the office, send a note, or try calling someone else to see if they can substitute for you.

Volunteers are NOT ALLOWED to administer any kind of medication to a student.

- Chaperones on a school field trip are considered volunteers and must have all pertinent paperwork and background check done prior to attending the field trip.
- Field trips and overnight chaperones must have Level 2 clearance.
- 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 an appropriate time. If not satisfied after this communication, the parent shall contact the grade chair, then the school administration.

Parents have many opportunities to volunteer their time both at school and at home. Volunteer sign-ups are available through the main office or Sign-Up Genius, and opportunities are announced throughout the school year. Parents are required to log volunteer hours in the front office.

The following are examples of ways to be involved:

- PTO participation
- Attending general meetings

- Helping in the classroom
- Helping with classroom items at home
- Making copies
- Donations
- Room parent duties
- Attending student orientation/open house
- Cafeteria duties during lunch
- Helping with drop off/pick up
- Campus maintenance
- Helping with school events
- Etc.

Instructional Books, Equipment, Materials and Supplies

All instructional books, electronic devices, and materials provided by the school are valuable resources and must be handled with care. Students are expected to keep these items in good condition. Writing in or on books or electronic devices is not permitted unless the item is a consumable workbook designated for that purpose. Families will be financially responsible for the replacement cost of any lost or damaged books, electronic devices, or school-issued materials. Students are expected to bring basic classroom supplies such as paper, pencils, and other essential items as specified by their teacher. Any additional or specialized supply requests will be communicated in writing by the classroom teacher.

Lost and Found

Lost items should be turned in to the school office. Anytime a student loses an item, they may ask the teacher's permission to come to the office to claim it during non-instructional time. Items unclaimed at the end of each semester will be donated to various charitable institutions.

****PLEASE HAVE YOUR CHILD'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 ACADEMY BETHANY 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://www.somersetacademybethany.org/health-information>

Parent Teacher Organization (PTO)

SAB encourages parents/guardians to become active members supporting the school and the organization. Officers will be elected yearly according to the organization's bylaws. The PTO will sponsor fundraisers throughout the school year. Monies generated in fundraising events may be used to purchase materials and equipment for the students, faculty, staff and general school purposes, as determined by the PTO Board. Meetings are held regularly and are open to everyone. All members are eligible to vote on issues brought before them for consideration during the general PTO meetings.

Scholar Gifts

Please DO NOT send or bring gifts such as balloons, flowers, etc., to school. 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

Students/parents may not order food to be delivered to the office for the student.

Student Rights

Students 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 student other than their own child are requested to speak to the dean or school's administration directly. At no time may parents approach the student or the student's parents directly.

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

Prior to suspension or dismissal, the student 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 on school grounds or possession of tobacco products/drugs.
3. Being under the influence or possession of alcoholic beverages 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 students, 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 Academy Bethany.

Guidance Department

The school's Guidance Department works with students, parents, and the community to foster a positive and supportive learning environment. The essential role of the academic advisor is to be a student advocate. Advisors assist with personal, academic, social, and emotional concerns that can aid the student in order to reach their full potential.

Support systems such as individual/group counseling are an integral part of the counseling program at Somerset Academy Bethany. Classroom activities and presentations are developed throughout the year to assist students with their personal, social, career, and educational development.

Skyward

Parents are encouraged to use the electronic grade book software (SKYWARD) to monitor their child's academic performance and progression. SKYWARD is accessible via the internet and through a link on the school's website. Parents and students can view grades, attendance records, discipline reports, activity announcements and notes from instructors. SKYWARD is an excellent tool to keep a student's parent/ guardian aware of their child's day to day progress. However, for email correspondence, please email directly from your email or use the link on the school's website.

NOTICE OF RIGHTS UNDER FAMILY EDUCATIONAL RIGHTS AND PRIVACY ACT

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) is a federal law. The intent of this law is to protect the accuracy and privacy of scholar educational records. Under this law, parents/legal guardians have the right upon request, to inspect, release, and challenge information contained within the scholar's educational records. Without prior consent, only authorized individuals having legitimate educational interest will have access to confidential and other kinds of information contained in those records. This Board approved directive for implementing the provision of the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act is contained in the document "Scholar Educational Records," and is available through the Division of Scholar Services, Saint Lucie County Public Schools.

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.

Personal notes made by instructors and other school officials that are not shared with others are not considered educational records. Additionally, law enforcement records created and maintained by a school district law enforcement unit are not education records.

Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) are guaranteed the right, upon request, to inspect and review their children's records under federal and state laws. Parent(s)/legal guardian(s) are guaranteed a right of "meaningful" access to copies of their children's records. The parent's rights extend to any lawyer, lay person, or advocate whom the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) authorizes to represent him or her. Access must be granted within 45 calendar days from the initial request.

- (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 Ln, 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.

Annual Notice Regarding Disclosure of Student Directory Information

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

Parent(s) or former students shall have 30 days from the date of this notice to inform the student's school principal, in writing, that any or all of the directory information should not be released without their consent. Such directory information includes:

- A student'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
- Current grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Dates of attendance
- Degrees and awards received
- Most recent previous educational agency or institution (school or center) attended by the student.

Directory information is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released. Directory

information relating to students shall be released only to the following:

- In-school use of student directory information for official school business
- Student directory information, without addresses or phone numbers, for school annuals, newspapers, honors lists, and printed materials or programs for extracurricular activities.

Absolutely—here's a more concise, formal **handbook-style** section on **Florida House Bill 241 (2021)** for inclusion in a school student handbook:

Parents' Bill of Rights (Florida HB 241 – 2021)

In accordance with **Florida House Bill 241 (2021)**, also known as the **Parents' Bill of Rights**, Somerset Academy Bethany recognizes and supports the fundamental rights of parents to direct the upbringing, education, health care, and mental health of their minor children.

Key provisions include:

- **Access to Educational Information**
- Parents have the right to review all instructional materials and records relating to their child's academic performance, attendance, health, and well-being.
- **Curriculum Transparency & Opt-Out Rights**

Parents may request to review curriculum content and instructional materials. They may opt their child out of specific instruction, including sex education and health topics, in accordance with school policy.

- **Health Care Consent**

The school must obtain written parental consent before administering health care services, medication, or screenings to a student—except in cases of emergency or where otherwise required by law.

- **Parental Involvement**

The school shall encourage parental involvement and maintain clear communication regarding a child's progress, behavior, and any changes to services provided.

For questions about your rights or to submit a request related to instructional materials or health services, please contact the school administration.

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>

Let's have a great year, Lightning Bolts!!



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.
- 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