



**Scintilla**

CHARTER ACADEMY

inspire | **IGNITE** | innovate

# RETURN TO LEARN PLAN



2171

# CONTENTS

- 03 Setting the Stage
  - 04 Our Guiding Principles
  - 05 Health & Hygiene
  - 06 Educational Experience
  - 07 Monitoring of Illness
  - 08 Right Model. Right Moment.
  - 09 Social-Emotional Health and Wellness
  - 10 We are CREW!
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# SETTING THE STAGE

Dear SCA Family,

Scintilla Charter Academy is preparing to welcome our scholars, staff, and families back for the 2020-2021 school year. We are grateful for your support as we navigate this uncharted territory together, with the health and safety of our scholars and staff as our top priority.

SCA has been working toward the goal of a safe and responsible return to school for fall 2020 since the COVID-19 pandemic impacted our school this spring because we know that the in-person school experience plays one of the most critical roles in a child's intellectual, emotional and physical development and well-being. SCA is committed to continuing to combine the best educational practices with the most current innovative approaches to learning. While there are still unknowns about the future of COVID-19, SCA is dedicated to safely educating our scholars and remains committed to the success of the whole child. We will continue to ensure that our scholars learn in a safe and dynamic environment, stay academically and socially-emotionally engaged, and feel supported and challenged as learners.

The SCA leadership team has spent the past several months collaborating with families, staff, community health officials, and state leaders about how to safely return to school. The result of our conversations, committees, surveys, and research is outlined here in SCA's Return to Learn plan. This plan is built around the support of government and state-level educational and public health leaders to return to school combined with a shifting, fluid public health situation. Throughout the school year, SCA will remain flexible and prepared to respond to public and government officials to deploy the right model at the right moment.

Please review the document thoroughly, and visit our website for additional resources related to returning to school. As you review the plan and reflect on the best decision for your family, please know that we realize that the decision to return for in-person instruction is extremely personal and dependent on individual family circumstances.

We are looking forward to a wonderful year at SCA! #scaALLtheway



The mission of Scintilla Charter Academy is to increase student achievement and develop social responsibility through educational innovations in a safe community of involved families and educators.





# OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We want every member of the SCA family to feel comfortable returning to school either in-person or in a remote setting. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have created multiple approaches to how we will deliver instruction this year. Each approach was created with these principles in mind.

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Our top priority is the collective health and safety of our scholars, staff, and families. We will strive to make decisions that can be sustained by all community members throughout the school year.

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2

We are committed to maintaining a strong educational experience for our scholars through the pandemic and will make sound financial choices and optimize the use of resources to ensure the long-term sustainability of our school.

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Monitoring of illness and continuous evaluation of restrictions combined with clear and regular communication with our school community is critical for maintaining trust and ensuring the smoothest experience for all involved.

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The “power of small” – as a small school, we will adapt as needed to meet the changing situation and to minimize disruption for our scholars.

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Supporting the well-being of our scholars, families, and staff while remaining inclusive in our decision making will help us best address the needs of our diverse student population.

# 1 HEALTH & HYGIENE

Our top priority is the collective health and safety of our scholars, staff, and families. We will strive to make decisions that can be sustained by all community members throughout the school year.

SCA is establishing heightened deep-cleaning and disinfection protocols utilizing Environmental Protection Agency products. The school will be cleaned throughout the instructional day. Deep cleanings will be performed during periods when few or no scholars are on campus or during low traffic periods. Classrooms will be provided with cleaning supplies to be used between the transitions of scholars. SCA will ensure the sanitization of frequently touched surfaces, such as door handles and light switches.

We have contracted with Ecovasive to protect our SCA families. Ecovasive will improve the overall health and safety of our buildings and playground equipment by controlling and killing pathogens such as Flu, Norovirus, Strep, Staph, MRSA, Coronavirus, and E. Coli. Ecovasive kills 99.9% of bacteria upon contact. These products are natural and safe for young children with no harsh smelling or corrosive chemicals. Ecovasive's combination of safe and natural EPA registered Botanical Disinfectants and Electrostatic delivery system results in full coverage with a 4-minute kill rate, and the treatment lasts up to 90 days per application.

At school, scholars and staff can reduce the spread of COVID-19 by maintaining healthy behaviors, including regular hand washing, the use of face coverings, reduced large group gatherings, and limited sharing of supplies or materials. Hand sanitizer will be available at all entry and exit points and at high-traffic intersections within the school building. We will educate our scholars and staff on measures to help prevent the spread of communicable diseases. All of these layered tactics will mitigate the overall risk to our school community.

## Face Coverings

Face coverings will be strongly encouraged but not required for staff and scholars. At this time, staff will be required to wear face coverings in common areas or when at least six feet of physical distancing cannot be maintained. Face coverings for scholars will be a family decision. Please understand that teachers will not be expected to enforce the optional face coverings by scholars throughout the school day.

## Arrival and Dismissal

Multiple entries and exit points will be established and communicated to families during Open House.

## Meal Service

At this time, the Dining Room will be used for meal preparation and serving but not for dining during lunch. Weather permitting, teachers will be encouraged to take scholars outside to eat or the class may eat in the classroom. Only scholars who are getting a meal will go through the line. Families will be encouraged to use the Parent Portal (electronic payment system) to limit physical contact through money exchange.

## Environmental Modifications

Water fountains will not be used at this time. Each scholar will be encouraged to bring their own water bottle. Containers of water will also be provided for each classroom.

## Use of Materials

Scholars will be responsible for bringing items listed on the school supply list and will have their own sets of supplies that will be stored and labeled separately. When sharing is necessary, materials and supplies will be disinfected frequently.



# 2 EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

SCA is committed to maintaining a strong and innovative educational experience for our scholars and will make sound financial choices and optimize the use of resources to ensure the long-term sustainability of our school.

It is our goal at SCA to create an educational community of creative, joyful, compassionate learners who courageously use innovative thinking to grow up to become active contributors to building a better world. We believe that the optimal instructional setting to accomplish this goal is in-person instruction; however, we also recognize that some scholars may not be able to return due to circumstances related to the virus. For this reason, SCA will be providing two instructional options for scholars for the 2020-2021 school year.

## 2020-2021 Return to School Options

### Option 1 - Traditional Model

Scholars enrolled in the traditional model will attend school for face-to-face instruction in the classroom with enhanced COVID-19 preventive and mitigation measures in place based on guidance from the Georgia Department of Education, Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), and the American Academy of Pediatrics. Option 1 registration is automatic for all enrolled scholars. No additional action is required.

### Option 2 - Virtual Learning Model

Scholars who choose to participate in the Learning From Home model will be enrolled full-time in a virtual instruction model. The length of commitment for this model will be for the full school year. We understand that the length of this commitment may seem excessive. Please understand that the logistics involved with offering a virtual instructional model, in addition to SCA's traditional model, requires the need for a long-term commitment. **To select Option 2, click here to complete a Virtual Learning Commitment Agreement by 5:00 pm, Sunday, July 26th, 2020.** \*SCA will continuously monitor the level of community spread and reserves the right to alter its learning options as the COVID-19 situation evolves.

## Student Attendance

Under both options, SCA scholars will be required to adhere to compulsory attendance according to Georgia Code: 20-2-690. Attendance for all scholars will be taken daily. For scholars participating in the virtual learning model, completion of daily assignments will be required for a scholar to be considered present for the school day. In the event, a student becomes ill due to a COVID-19 or any other sickness, the number of allowed, excused absences will be flexible.

## Grading

Grading policies and promotion/retention criteria will be the same for scholars in face-to-face and virtual settings.

## Technology & Access

All teachers at SCA will have completed the Google Educator Level One Certification before school resumes in August. All scholars will be assigned an individual technology device at the beginning of the school year. During Open House, teachers will provide a general technology overview and additional resources for families will be provided. When scholars return, teachers will ensure scholars receive necessary training and guidance on how to use the device and how to access Google Classroom. If SCA is required to temporarily shift to a hybrid or remote learning model, scholars will be prepared to participate in at-home learning.



# 3

## MONITORING OF ILLNESS

Monitoring of illness and continuous evaluation of restrictions combined with clear and regular communication with our school community is critical for maintaining trust and ensuring the smoothest experience for all involved.



### Health & Wellness Partnership

By signing the Health and Wellness Partnership at the beginning of the school year, families will commit to checking each morning to ensure scholars do not have symptoms associated with COVID-19 or other communicable diseases.

Staying home when exhibiting any signs of illness is particularly important and we ask that all families adhere to this request. Families should follow the guidance of their child's physician for clearance to return to school following sickness and adhere to SCA's health policies. SCA will work hard to ensure children remain connected to their classrooms, and teachers will make reasonable adjustments to support scholars' continued learning. In this way, no one will need to take the risk of coming to school when sick.

### Daily Temperature Checks

SCA has purchased no-touch infrared thermometers for screening symptomatic scholars and staff. SCA will begin the year with morning temperature checks in the carline.

### Illness on Campus

Scholars who show any signs or symptoms of any illness that could be passed on to others will not be allowed to attend school. If scholars are well enough to attend classes, scholars will participate virtually by completing activities through Google Classroom. What this looks like may vary from grade to grade, depending on what is developmentally appropriate for the age of the child. Attendance policies will consider these absences excused when medical documentation is provided so that scholars are not penalized if they are sick. We will have measures in place to prioritize scholars' continuity of learning if the child is absent for an extended period of time.

### Response to COVID-19 Cases

SCA is allocating space on campus to accommodate scholars who show signs of illness during the school day and need to go home. In working with local health authorities a course of action will be determined regarding the necessary communication, required sanitation, and contact tracing. Upon notification of a lab-confirmed COVID-19 case at SCA, we will communicate with teachers, staff, and families of scholars who were potentially exposed.



# 4 RIGHT MODEL. RIGHT MOMENT

The “power of small” – as a small school, we will adapt as needed to meet the changing situation and to minimize disruption for our scholars.

**“The AAP strongly advocates that all policy considerations for the coming school year should start with a goal of having students physically present in school.** The importance of in-person learning is well-documented, and there is already evidence of the negative impacts on children because of school closures in the spring of 2020.” (American Academy of Pediatrics)

As we confront the known challenges of this pandemic and continue to monitor the public health situation in real time, SCA is designing a variety of models, utilizing a strategic framework to deploy the right model at the right moment. Note that the framework contains interconnected parts -- number of school days on campus; learning environment; curriculum, instruction, and assessment; professional learning; school calendar; and after-school programs. When modifying one, it requires an adjustment to all. The following three learning scenarios allow for the flexibility needed to quickly pivot and adapt as the guidance for schools changes. From all in-person learning at school to all-remote learning from home, we have designed scenarios to adjust to the latest guidance from the Georgia Department of Education, Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Georgia Department of Public Health (DPH), and the American Academy of Pediatrics.

## Traditional Learning (5-days/week)

SCA plans to operate using a 5-day model (Monday- Friday) unless government or health official guidance prevents all scholars attending five days per week.

## Hybrid Learning (2-days/week)

We recognize that although our goal is in-person instruction for all scholars on a daily basis, this may not always be possible for a variety of reasons. There may be times when we elect or are asked to lower the number of scholars in the building by having groups of scholars continue their learning from home on a rotating basis.

## Remote Learning

SCA will only use the Remote Learning model if there is a widespread outbreak, a shelter-in-place order, or multiple COVID-19 cases on campus that requires us to close part or all of the campus for a short period of time, as determined by the Department of Public Health (DPH) and our local health officials.



# 5

## Social-Emotional Health & Wellness

Supporting the well-being of our scholars, families, and staff while remaining inclusive in our decision making will help us best address the needs of our diverse student population.

### Welcoming Students & Families

We recognize that scholars and families are transitioning to a new grade or are new to our SCA family in general. There will be opportunities for new and returning scholars and families to connect with each other, and we have reimagined what these special events will look like as we safely return to school. An Open House option will also be available for families participating in the Learning From Home (virtual) option.

### Visitors

SCA enjoys welcoming visitors to our school. However, in order to maintain a healthy environment and minimize risk, we will begin the school year by strictly limiting access to scholars and staff. Visitors will be considered by appointment only. Approved visitors will be required to self-screen, be fever-free, and wear a mask.

### Recess/Outdoor Time

Recess and time spent outside is critical for the mental, physical, and emotional health of children. Especially in a year when scholars may be more limited to particular classrooms, we will prioritize recess and time outdoors. Recess times will be staggered to reduce large groups on the playground at once. Grade levels will be assigned designated areas of outdoor space which will rotate to offer variety. Enhanced cleaning protocols for playground equipment will be established, and scholars will be required to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before and after playing outside. Weather permitting, teachers will be encouraged to utilize SCA's Outdoor Classrooms and other outdoor spaces for learning.

### Electives

Scholars will attend elective classes. Enhanced cleaning protocols for each particular space, materials, and equipment will be applied. Scholars will be required to use hand sanitizer before attending electives and before returning to the classroom.

### Crew

There is no doubt that the emotional well-being of our scholars is as important now as ever. Crew is a daily routine at SCA that supports the creation of a close-knit school community. Crew is a place where character education and team building are intentional, assuring success for all of our scholars. It's a structure that fosters a sense of belonging within scholars, and a place where they can be their best selves while lifting up their peers to achieve more than they think possible.

### Community Circle

The opportunity for our entire school community to gather in the Dining Room on Friday mornings for Community Circle is a cherished event at SCA. Until it is deemed safe by government and health officials to hold large group gatherings, Community Circle will be live-streamed to SCA classrooms and shared on Facebook Live for families.

### Ignite

Ignite, SCA's before and after school care program for grades K-6th, will be offered this year for scholars participating in the traditional model of instruction. The mixing of grade levels will be limited and scholars will follow SCA's health and safety guidelines.



# WE ARE CREW!

“We are Crew, not passengers.”



We cannot say this enough; we are here for you! We cannot predict what is going to happen with the COVID-19 pandemic and what it will look like one day, one month, or one year down the road. However, we are confident our Return to Learn plan is flexible and adaptable enough to navigate even these uncertain times. We are committed to providing your children with a safe environment to learn and an outstanding educational opportunity this school year, and we cannot wait to welcome your scholar on the first day of school!

As you prepare your children and yourselves for this school year, please feel free to reach out to the appropriate contact below should you need anything or have any additional questions. In addition, please make sure to check our website at [www.scintillacharteracademy.com](http://www.scintillacharteracademy.com) for an extensive list of Frequently Asked Questions.

Do you have questions regarding returning to school through the traditional model?

Email: [info@scintillacharteracademy.com](mailto:info@scintillacharteracademy.com)

Do you have questions regarding returning to school through the virtual learning model? Email:

[virtual@scintillacharteracademy.com](mailto:virtual@scintillacharteracademy.com)

Do you have questions regarding your child’s schedule, records, etc.?

Email Kay Hardesty at [khardesty@scintillacharteracademy.com](mailto:khardesty@scintillacharteracademy.com)

Families are encouraged to reach out to our school counselor with any concerns related to their child’s mental health or learning support needs. Email Staci Haire at [shaire@scintillacharteracademy.com](mailto:shaire@scintillacharteracademy.com)

Do you have questions regarding Ignite, SCA’s before and after school program?

Email Kelsi Holmes at [kholmes@scintillacharteracademy.com](mailto:kholmes@scintillacharteracademy.com)

