



**SCINTILLA**  
**SPARTANS**

**Scintilla Charter Academy  
(SCA): Middle School  
2022-2023  
Family and Student Handbook**

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# Table of Contents

## Background Information

Welcome	2
Mission and Vision	3
Scintilla Beliefs	3
What is a Charter School?	3
SCA Governing Board	3
SCA Board Members	4
Faculty and Staff	4
Calendar	4
Admissions and Enrollment	5

## General Operations

Attendance Policy	6
IGNITE: Before & After School Program	9
Transportation Expectations	9
Communication with Families	10
School Nutrition	12
School Day Schedule	13
Social and Emotional Development	14
Fieldwork: Authentic Application of Learning	14
Extracurriculars and Sports Participation	14
School Dance Policies	15
Student Technology Policy	16
Lockers	18
Health and Medical Information	18

**Dress Code and Uniform Policy**

Uniform Tops and Uniform Bottoms	20
Physical Education (P.E.) Dress Expectations	21
Noncompliance Procedures	21

**Academic Policies**

Educational Approach and Recommended Practices	22
Grading Procedures and Student Recognition	22
Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS)	24
Navvy	25
Elective Opportunities	25
Promotion and Retention Policy	25
Grading Reports	26
Student-Led Conferencing	26
SCA: Middle School - Portrait of a Graduate	26
Spartan 10: Habits of Character	28
Student Success Guides	29
Homework	30
Textbooks, Technology, and Supplies	30

**Student Support Services**

Student Support Team (SST)	30
Special Education Services	30
English Learners (EL)	31
Gifted & Talented Program	31

## **Family Engagement**

Parental Contact Information	32
Parent/Teacher Contact Procedures	32
Chain of Command: Communication	32
SCA Learning Environment	33
Contacting Scholars	33
SCA Volunteer Program	33

## **Behavioral Expectations**

Advising	34
Spartan Showcase	34
Code of Conduct	35
Code of Conduct: Offenses and Level of Disciplinary Action	35
Disciplinary Hearings	38
Middle School Discipline Procedure	39
Policy Prohibiting Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, & Intimidation	39

## **Legal Notice**

Notification of Student Rights	42
General Public Complaints Policy	43
Notice of Non-Discrimination	43
Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)	44
Public Information	44
Child Fund	45
Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973	45
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)	45
Notification of Rights Under the Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA)	46

FERPA Directory Information	48
Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)	50
Information for Homeless Students	51
Title IX Grievance Policy	52
Reporting Acts of Alleged Sexual Abuse or Misconduct	53
<b>Handbook Acknowledgement</b>	
Parent/Guardian/Family Handbook Acknowledgement	55

## **Welcome to the SCA: Middle School Family!**

We are in agreement with the Association for Middle Level Education (AMLE) that the quality of the middle school experience strongly influences the likelihood of both short and long-term success. Therefore, we are committed to ensuring a high-quality educational experience where students are supported across multiple facets including social/emotional health, authentic learning environments, relationship building, and extracurricular opportunities. A critical focus in the middle grades setting will be to support students in exposure to the potential in varied post-secondary opportunities and to ensure goal setting so that learning opportunities may be customized and relevant to their interests. When students connect teaching and learning to goals and interests, we can anticipate higher levels of engagement and success (Hattie, 2018).

The purpose of this handbook is to provide a framework to guide expectations for students and families. We encourage all stakeholders to closely review this resource to support decision-making. With careful understanding of the SCA: Middle School policies and procedures, we anticipate success across all key areas related to the middle school experience. Keep in mind that this handbook is a working document and may be updated as new and unique circumstances emerge. Any changes made to this handbook will be immediately updated on the school website. Such changes will supersede content included in this printed copy.

As mainstream schools focus on college and career readiness, the demands of the 21st century context are ever evolving. SCA: Middle School acknowledges and seeks to act on the reality that post-secondary opportunities require individuals to create, innovate, network, and build as ever increasing technologies pave the way for more seamless and efficient acquisition of information. We look forward to great success as your child begins his or her uniquely designed middle school journey with us! Know that we are eager to partner with you in these critical next steps! Remember, your success is our success! We celebrate, in advance, the many ways we will watch your child grow and learn in the upcoming year.

### **Mission**

The mission of SCA is to increase scholar achievement and develop social responsibility through educational innovations in a safe community of involved families and educators.

### **Vision**

SCA will guide all scholars, with special attention for locally underserved and underperforming scholars, to reach their full potential through social, emotional, and academic growth in an engaging and innovative learning environment.

### **Scintilla Beliefs**

At SCA, we believe every child should be encouraged, motivated, and challenged daily. Our unique mixture of innovations will provide challenges while also providing intensive support to all scholars. As scholars experience success, a passion for learning will develop. School-wide character development goals and cultural practices will prepare our scholars to be successful both at SCA and in future school settings. We know that, given the right environment, children

can achieve at high levels, but we also know that the development and implementation of an innovative and blended curriculum, that will enable these results, must be focused and strategic. Our curriculum will facilitate scholars in their learning because it is developmentally-appropriate at all levels and seeks to meet the naturally inquisitive nature that all children possess.

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

Charter schools are public schools of choice that have greater flexibility in implementing different teaching methods and philosophies. A charter school operates according to the terms of a charter, or contract, that have been approved by, in SCA's case, Georgia's State Charter Schools Commission. The charter school may request waivers from certain provisions of Georgia state law and any state or local rule, regulation, policy, or procedure relating to schools in the school district. In exchange for this flexibility, the charter school is bound by contract to be held accountable for meeting the performance-based objectives specified in the charter. Please, visit our website at [www.scintillacharteracademy.com](http://www.scintillacharteracademy.com) to view the complete charter agreement.

### **SCA Governing Board**

The SCA Governing Board of Directors is charged with the oversight of the affairs of SCA and shall pursue such policies and principles as shall be in accordance with law and any written charter entered into by the Board. The Board is responsible for carrying out the following duties and obligations:

- The Board shall uphold SCA's mission and vision and ensure effective organizational planning on the part of the school through an annual strategic planning and review process that will review and update SCA's short-term, mid-term, and long-range goals, and evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation of the mission and plans.
- The Board shall ensure the financial stability of SCA through regular monthly review of financial statements and reports and direct oversight of major financial commitments and decisions.
- The Board shall take an active role, either directly or through a Board committee, in resolving grievances and conflicts which may arise within the school community involving scholars, parents, staff, administration, and Board members.
- Board Members will confirm annually that they have no inappropriate conflicts that would preclude them from serving SCA with fidelity.
- The Board will adhere to the Georgia Open Meetings Act based on the current requirements of this law.

### **SCA Board Members**

*Chairman Zachary R. Cowart:* Zachary R. Cowart was born in Valdosta and attended Valdosta City Schools, graduating from Valdosta High School in 1996. He attended the University of Georgia for undergraduate and law school. He is a partner at Cowart and Perry, LLP law firm and wants the parents in our community to have public school options for their children.

*Vice-Chairman Jeremy Baker:* Jeremy Baker is a native of Lowndes County. Jeremy graduated from Valdosta State University and St. Mary's School of Law. He is an attorney who serves as

the Municipal Court Judge for the City of Valdosta.

*Secretary Enid Santana:* Enid Santana has been a resident of Valdosta for 30 years. She is a licensed real estate agent and is employed as a Marketing/Leasing Manager at Valdosta Mall. As the mother of two boys, she has become a passionate advocate for school choice.

*Treasurer Eric Tillman:* Eric Tillman was born and raised in Valdosta, Georgia. Eric graduated from Valdosta High School and Valdosta State University. Eric is a third-generation CPA and is a partner of Tillman & Tillman, LLP.

*Jerry Jennett:* Jerry Jennett came to Valdosta 40 years ago to run a small subsidiary of an agricultural chemical firm. He bought the subsidiary and eventually added three other companies. He currently is the president and Chief Executive Officer at Georgia Gulf Sulfur Corporation. Thanks to the generosity of Jerry and his partners at Georgia Gulf Sulfur, many significant gifts have been made to Valdosta State University including Langdale College of Business Administration and several athletic programs.

*Garrett Copeland:* Garrett Copeland was born and raised in Valdosta and is a graduate of Lowndes High School and Valdosta State University. Garrett is the Executive Vice President of Synovus Bank's Main Office.

### **Faculty and Staff**

Information related to SCA: Middle School faculty and staff is located at the following [link](#).

### **Calendar**

The 2022-2023 academic calendar is located at the following [link](#).

## **Admissions and Enrollment**

**Attendance Zone:** Valdosta, Lowndes County & Brooks County, Georgia

**Admissions and Enrollment:** In accordance with O.C.G.A. 20-2-2066 (1)(A), SCA will admit scholars of any race, color, nationality and ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, or gender. SCA shall enroll an eligible scholar, as defined by GADOE, who resides within the attendance zone and submits a timely application unless the number of applications exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level or building. In such cases, all applicants shall have an equal chance of being admitted through a random lottery process. Scholars who live outside of SCA's attendance zone may apply/enter SCA's lottery, so long as they are residents of Lowndes County at the time of enrollment.



To be eligible for enrollment at SCA, scholars residing in the attendance zone must submit a timely application to SCA in accordance with the deadline set by the school. SCA may not use admissions criteria or applications that would not otherwise be used at a traditional public school, including requests for letters of recommendation, essays, resumes, or information regarding a scholar's school or community activities, grades, test scores, attendance record, or disciplinary history. SCA may gather relevant information from scholars after enrollment is determined.

In order to enroll a scholar at SCA, parents/guardians must provide the following documentation:

- Mortgage or lease statement
- Two additional current proofs of residency
- Copy of original birth certificate
- Immunization certificate (or religious exemption)
- Certificate of vision, hearing, and dental exam
- Social security card or waiver form (provided by SCA)
- Copy of parent/guardian driver's license
- Proof of legal guardianship (if applicable)
- Proof of legal custody (if applicable)

If the number of timely applicants received by SCA exceeds the capacity of a program, class, grade level or building, SCA shall ensure that such applicants have an equal chance of being admitted through a random lottery.

SCA shall hold a registration period (for the following school year) in January of each year. Parents seeking to enroll their children who do not currently attend SCA must register during the registration period. Parents of existing scholars must sign and return the Intent to Return & Sibling Enrollment letter each year. Registered scholars shall be enrolled for the following school year subject to the following process and in the following priority:

- Scholars who attended SCA during the previous school year;
- Statutory Priority includes: Siblings of scholars who attended SCA during the previous school year; scholars of teachers and staff at SCA; and
- Scholars of Governing Board Members.

Within each category listed above, if the number of registered scholars exceeds the available space, then the school shall hold a lottery to determine which scholars shall be enrolled in the school.

The school shall maintain a waiting list of registered scholars who were not enrolled in the school due to lack of space. The school may accept new applications for the waiting list outside of the enrollment period. The school shall follow the same preferences stated above for placing

on the waiting list those applications received outside of the enrollment period. Openings created during the school year shall be filled from the waiting list.

Scholars who are offered the opportunity to enroll according to the above-stated procedures must complete all enrollment paperwork and provide all required documentation by the date given. Failure to enroll by the date and time provided will forfeit the child's spot and that spot will be offered to the next scholar on the waiting list.

### **Attendance Policy**

Attendance is an essential component of a child's academic success. When a scholar is absent or arrives late, they lose important opportunities to learn. Excessive tardies and absences can significantly affect a child's ability to succeed academically and socially.

#### *Instructional Day School Hours:*

Elementary School (K-5): 8:05 am - 3:05 pm

Middle School (6-8): 7:45 am - 3:30 pm

Office Hours: 7:30 am - 4:30 pm

The instructional day for middle school scholars will be from 7:45 am - 3:30 pm. SCA attendance policy stipulates that any scholar who arrives at SCA after 7:50 am (6-8) will be considered tardy. Scholars arriving after 8:15 must be escorted into the front office and signed in by an adult at the main desk. All scholars must arrive at school on time and be picked up promptly at the end of the school day. The middle school regular school day ends at 3:30 pm. Middle school scholars are expected to be picked up on time: between 3:30 pm and 3:45 pm. We encourage parents to enroll their child(ren) in the after-school program if they cannot make the 3:45 pm deadline. If a child is not picked up by 3:50 pm, parents/guardians will be charged \$1 per minute to allow his/her child to participate in the after-school program until arrival for pick-up. This policy does not apply to children participating in scheduled after-school activities (e.g., sports, extracurriculars) under the supervision of an adult.

### **Absences**

Your child(ren) must be in school every day as mandated by state law. Parents/Guardians have one week to provide a written or emailed excuse for an absence. For emailed excuses, parents/guardians may email to: [attendance@scintillacharteracademy.com](mailto:attendance@scintillacharteracademy.com) Failure to provide a written/emailed excuse will result in the absence being *unexcused*. Scholars must be in school unless the absence has been permitted or excused for one of the following reasons:

- Illness of scholar
- Illness of immediate family member
- Death in the family
- Religious holidays of the scholar's own faith
- Required court appearance or subpoena by a law enforcement agency

- Scheduled medical or dental appointments
- Utilizing the Georgia Military Family Act

### **Absence Protocol**

In the event that a child experiences multiple absences, the following protocol will guide next steps for SCA: Middle School:

1. *After 3 unexcused absences:* A letter will be sent home to the scholar's parent or guardian regarding the scholar's unexcused absences. This letter will require the parent or guardian to contact the school's designee regarding the scholar's unexcused absences. Parents/Guardians may also expect a home visit.
2. *After 5 unexcused absences:* SCA's school resource officer will contact the parent/guardian regarding excessive absences, tardies, or early dismissals and schedule a conference with the administration. According to S.B.O.E. 160-5-1-.10, a child is truant and subject to compulsory attendance who, during the school calendar year, has more than five days of unexcused absences. Parents/Guardians may expect a referral to the Truancy Intervention Program.
3. *After 7 unexcused absences:* A school social work referral will be generated by the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee listing specific school-based interventions (e.g., telephone calls, letters, conferences) which have occurred prior to making the referral.
4. *After 10 unexcused absences:* Scholars and/or parents/guardians will be subject to a referral(s) to juvenile court, magistrate court, and/or Department of Family and Children Services (DFCS) for truancy and/or educational neglect. Detailed information pertaining to the scholar, local school, and school social work interventions will be necessary when filing a complaint with DFCS, juvenile, and/or magistrate court.
5. *After 15 or more unexcused absences:* Grade-level retention will be considered. See Promotion/Retention Policy.

***\*After 10 consecutive absences, scholars are subject to administrative withdrawal.***

### **Tardy Policy**

A middle school scholar is tardy when he/she is not in the building by 7:50 am. Scholars who arrive at SCA after 7:50 am will be considered tardy. Scholars arriving after 8:15 must be escorted into the front office and signed in by an adult at the main desk. Excused tardies are given for doctor's appointments with notes from the doctor. A doctor's note must be presented upon arrival in order to receive an excused tardy. Early check-out (anytime before 2:45 pm) is documented as a tardy on the scholar's record. In the middle school setting, teachers will take attendance at the start of each class period. Students arriving after the class start time, as indicated on the student's schedule, will be considered tardy. This will be notated on the student's record in Infinite Campus and may result in an adverse impact on the Spartan 10: Habits of Character evaluation process.

### **Early Checkout**

Parents/guardians may not check scholars out after 2:45 pm. Instead, parents/guardians should use the car rider line. If the person picking up the child does not go through the car line, he/she will be required to wait until all scholars are called to the front lobby area at the end of pick-up. Checkouts prior to 11:30 am will be counted as an all-day absence.

### **Friday Mandatory Early Dismissal**

Each Friday will serve as a mandatory early dismissal. Early dismissal will begin at 1:00 pm - and all scholars must be picked up by 1:45 pm. Late pick-ups on early dismissal days will be treated the same as a typical school day. A \$1.00 per minute fee will apply after 1:45 pm on mandatory early dismissal days. For those with a need, IGNITE, SCA's After School Program, will be available on Friday.

### **Makeup Work**

Scholars who have an excused absence shall have the opportunity to make up work. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian and scholar to contact the teacher(s) involved to determine make-up assignments and establish mutually agreeable terms for daily work and test makeup.

Scholars with an *excused* absence will have a maximum of two school days (per excused absence) to submit make-up work or schedule/complete a make-up test with a teacher.

- Scholars who experience an extended-length absence (more than 5 days) due to illness or other significant hardship will meet with the Superintendent to devise a plan for completion of work.
- It is the responsibility of middle school scholars to communicate with *each* teacher and make arrangements for completion of work and tests. Scholars should arrange to meet with *each* teacher immediately upon return to discuss make-up work. This meeting is to be scheduled based on teacher-indicated availability.
- While absent, scholars *may* check missed classwork and homework on digital platforms indicated by the teacher within the course syllabus. In the event that a teacher does not use a digital platform to indicate daily assignments, the scholar will follow the procedures previously listed upon return to school.
- In the event that a scholar's absence is considered unexcused, he/she will be required to devise a plan with the classroom teacher to ensure continued success within a course. Any standards-aligned tasks missed, regardless of whether the absence was excused or unexcused, must be made up to ensure adequate progress toward standard(s) mastery is made. Be advised that any *assessment* missed due to an unexcused absence will count as 1 of the 3 possible attempts allowable under the grading policy. In the event that a scholar/family is aware of an impending unexcused absence, the scholar and parent/guardian is responsible for scheduling to take the assessment *prior to* the unexcused absence to avoid forfeit of 1 of the 3 possible attempts allowable under the grading policy.

### **IGNITE: Before & After School Program**

SCA offers an in-house before and after school program, IGNITE, which is run by the school each day from 7:00 am - 8:05 am and 3:30 pm - 6:00 pm. The goal of IGNITE is to build on the school's focus on authentic learning for extended opportunities to spark curiosity, promote active learning, encourage teamwork, build character, and capitalize on children's innate spirit of exploration. The cost per scholar is \$40.00 per week (after care) & \$15.00 per week (before care), with discounts available for multiple children and monthly prepayment.

A Friday-only option is also available for \$18 per week. Visit [www.scintillacharteracademy.com](http://www.scintillacharteracademy.com) for more information and to sign up. For parents who choose to enroll their children in the after-school program, note that the after-school program ends at 6:00 pm Monday-Thursday and 5:00 pm on Fridays. The after-school program will make every effort to contact you should your child not be picked up on time. Late pick-ups will be subject to the terms of the IGNITE program. In order to ensure the safety of your child(ren), please note that the school will contact the local authorities should a pattern of late pick-ups occur.

### **Transportation Expectations**

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that scholars have transportation to and from school daily. SCA does *not* provide transportation for scholars. Parents/Guardians should drop off middle school scholars between 7:30 am and 7:45 am (unless the scholar is participating in the IGNITE: Early Care Program). It is recommended that families dropping off a middle school scholar be in the car line by 7:30 am to ensure the scholar is in the classroom by 7:45 am. If a parent/guardian arrives before 7:30 am, his/her child should remain in the car until SCA staff are outside the building and accepting scholars. Drop off does *not* begin until SCA staff are present. The tardy bell rings at 7:50 am. Scholars will enter the building through the middle school entrance. Scholars arriving after 8:15 must be escorted into the front office and signed in by an adult at the main desk.

### **Drop Off and Pick Up Procedures**

Drivers will enter the school and follow the direction of the staff on duty. For drop off, cars will follow a pathway to the back of the school for students to enter the building. For pick up, each SCA scholar/family is assigned a number which is displayed on a red placard. Upon entry into the car line, the staff member on duty enters the assigned number into a program called *Safe Dismissal*. Once the number is entered in the system, the corresponding child's name appears on the board in his/her classroom along with the name of a color (e.g. John Smith-Red). At that time, the child is dismissed and will go to the cone that corresponds to the color he/she was assigned.

The SCA: Middle School red placard is required for release of the student(s) and must be displayed on the car's dashboard or windshield. Scholars will not be loaded unless the placard is present. If the placard is not present, the parent/guardian will be required to park and come into the front office to complete check out procedures. Parents/Guardians must not leave vehicles unattended in any dismissal lane during pick-up/d dismissal. The safety of SCA scholars is of utmost importance- which is why pickup/d dismissal policies will be strictly enforced.

## **Communication with Families**

SCA is committed to promoting communication between the school and those we serve (parents/guardians, families, scholars, and the community). Parents/Guardians are encouraged to ask questions and to communicate concerns directly with school staff so that information provided remains relevant and useful. Listed below are some of the formal ways SCA will communicate with parents/guardians, scholars, and other stakeholders regarding important announcements.

- Intercom Messaging
- Fliers/Handouts/Posters
- Mailings
- Newsletters
- Web Page: [www.scintillacharteracademy.com](http://www.scintillacharteracademy.com)
- Weekly SCA Email Newsletter
- Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram)
- Middle School [Student Success Guides](#)

## **Scholar Records**

School permanent records include all educational and disciplinary materials directly related to a scholar. SCA will maintain scholar records in a confidential manner and comply with all state and federal laws regarding the privacy of these records, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

## **Change of Address and/or Phone Number**

Parents/Guardians must immediately complete a change of address form or log in to the Parent Portal to update information if an address or telephone number change occurs during the school year. Parents/Guardians will also be required to show valid proof of new residence - as previously defined. To ensure the safety of students, it is critical for parents/guardians to keep updated records of address/phone number on file with SCA.

## **Transfer or Withdrawal of Scholars**

When scholars transfer or withdraw from school, parents/guardians are required to physically come to SCA to complete corresponding paperwork.

## **School Supplies**

Scholars are required to buy their own school supplies as determined by their teachers. Course-specific supply lists will be available on the school website under the parent resources tab. All middle school students will be required to use a student success guide. This success guide will support students in monthly goal-setting and weekly/daily task completion.

## **School Visitors**

All scholars, parents, and visitors must enter through the front lobby, sign in at the front desk, and wear a visitor badge at all times. We encourage family involvement at SCA and want families to feel welcome. We recognize that instructional time is critical and must be protected at

the middle grades level given that the content is increasingly complex and sophisticated. Parents/Guardians should communicate with their child's teacher(s), at least 3 days in advance, to schedule a school visit. Parents/Guardians will not be permitted to "drop-in" on their child's class (unless previously agreed upon by the parent/guardian and the classroom teacher as related to a specific need) or to interrupt instructional time to speak with the teacher. Parent/Teacher conferences will be held by appointment only. Families are always invited to join their scholar(s) for lunch. Lunch visits do not have to be scheduled in advance.

### **Emergency Procedures**

The safety of our scholars is of critical importance. SCA is required, by law, to hold fire, lockdown, and inclement weather drills on a regular basis and have an up-to-date school safety plan. Our school safety plan is reviewed each year by our local FEMA representatives.

### **Inclement Weather**

In the event of inclement weather, SCA will announce delayed start times, early dismissal, or school closing via local news outlets and all in-house communication vehicles including our website, email, text, and social media.

### **Fire**

In the event of a fire emergency, classroom teachers will escort scholars to the designated emergency assembly area and follow all emergency procedures as outlined in the SCA school safety plan.

### **Lockdown**

In the event of a lockdown emergency, teachers will lock doors and move everyone away from windows. Teachers will remain indoors with scholars until an all-clear announcement is made.

### **Interviewing, Photographing, and Videotaping of Scholars by Staff or Media**

Scholars may be photographed, videotaped, or interviewed by school officials or the media at school or school-related activities/events. Such photographs, videotapes, and interviews may be published, including internet publication. If a parent/guardian objects to his/her scholar being photographed, videotaped, or interviewed, or objects to the display of his/her work, the objection must be presented in writing to the Superintendent within 10 school days after the first day of enrollment.

### **School Nutrition**

The mission of SCA School Nutrition is to provide quality, nutritious, and balanced meals every day to increase student satisfaction and participation in the SCA Nutrition Program. SCA participates in the National School Breakfast and Lunch Programs. These programs are regulated and funded by the United States Department of Agriculture with the School and Community Nutrition Unit of the Georgia Department of Education overseeing the program administration. Menus are available online at [www.scintillacharteracademy.com](http://www.scintillacharteracademy.com). Middle school scholars must be able to easily identify their lunch - if brought from home. For health reasons, such as allergic conditions, students may not share lunches.

The following Meal Charge Policies and Procedures will be in effect for the 2022-2023 school year:

**Breakfast cost is \$2.00 & Lunch cost is \$3.40.** Families with more than one scholar at SCA should send payment via cash or check separately for each scholar at Scintilla in separate envelopes.

**Checks should be made out to SCA Nutrition with scholar's name and four-digit lunch number written on the check.**

**Families may also check balances and make payments online through the Parent Portal located on SCA's website. Parent Portal access information will be provided at the beginning of each school year or may be obtained in person in the school's front office.**

#### **Unpaid Balance Procedure**

Scholars are allowed to charge the cost of two day's meals (2 breakfasts and 2 lunches). Families will be notified by balance due letters of unpaid balances each week. If a balance is not paid by the beginning of the next week, the child will be offered a replacement meal at lunch consisting of a sandwich and milk or, at breakfast, a pop tart and milk. Pre-payment by cash or check to SCA Nutrition may be made weekly or monthly in envelopes provided by the school. The scholar's name and homeroom teacher name must be on the envelope in order to credit the proper account.

#### **Non-Sufficient Fund Checks (NSF)**

Any non-sufficient checks must be picked up by the parent or guardian and paid. Any bank charges that have been assessed will be due as well. Returned payment, along with any corresponding bank fees, must be paid in cash.

#### **Free or Reduced Price Meals**

Students may qualify for free school meals if they receive food stamps (SNAP, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) or (TANF, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families). Families may also qualify for free or reduced-price meals based on family income.

Family applications rather than individual applications are used. Only one application per family is needed. Families must complete a new application each year to determine eligibility. Even if you have students at other schools receiving these benefits, you must complete an application for your Scintilla scholar separately but include ALL members of the family on that application.

Applications are available in the school's front office. All household members including all children must be listed on the application. Please make certain that your application reaches April Packer, Director of School Nutrition. A letter to confirm your eligibility status will be sent to each household. Please retain this letter for your records.



The Director of School Nutrition is available to scholars and parents for any food-related question, allergy concerns, or menu suggestions.

The Director of School Nutrition is available to scholars and parents/guardians for any food-related questions, allergy concerns, or menu suggestions. Contact information is available on the school website.

**Outside Food/Drinks**

During lunch, parents/guardians who are attending lunch with their child(ren) are allowed to bring take-out/fast food. However, parents/guardians are not permitted to bring outside food for other children in their child’s class unless approved by the child’s teacher.

**School Day Schedule**

The goal of SCA course scheduling is to ensure that students maximize learning potential across all instructional blocks. Given the increasing level of complexity tied to academic content standards, teachers will engage in a collaborative approach to ensure that students make natural connections within and across classes. The SCA administrative team evaluates the needs of students through the lens of Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE), Portrait of a Graduate expectations, and developmental needs. For the 2022-2023 academic year, course scheduling will be grade-specific and is available, by request.

All 6-8 scholars will rotate through four required, rotating electives each grading period in addition to participation in a choice elective. For required, rotating electives, students will receive instruction weekly in each of the courses. On Friday, elective teachers will serve as facilitators in connecting content to extension opportunities occurring in the required elective courses. Scholars will also engage in a 30-minute goal setting block where teachers will support students with data-indicated needs. For example, if the data indicates that a student needs additional support or opportunities for extension/enrichment in a particular content area, this block of time will facilitate this need. Finally, students will receive an opportunity for advising in a 30-minute block at the close of the school day.

<b>Middle School Electives for 45-Minute Segments</b>	
<b>Required Electives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Global Awareness</li> <li>● 21st Century Life Ready</li> <li>● Health and Wellness</li> <li>● Art and Design across the Curriculum</li> </ul>
<b>Choice Electives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Band (Year-Long Commitment)</li> <li>● Art</li> <li>● Physical Education (Gender Specific)</li> </ul>

**Social and Emotional Development**

SCA believes that unstructured break time plays a critical role in childhood development and academic success. In the K-5 setting, this belief translates into scheduled time for recess. To more closely align with the developmental needs of scholars in grades 6-8, SCA incorporates an advising block at the close of the academic day. Within this block, assigned advisors will support students in a) explicit teaching and application of the soft skills necessary for student success with implementation of a social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum, b) self-evaluation of progress within and across the [Spartan 10: Habits of Character](#), c) overall goal setting, and d) intentional opportunities for socialization.

### **Fieldwork: Authentic Application of Learning**

Within the middle school setting, faculty believe and act upon the research (Hattie, 2018) suggesting that when learning occurs in authentic contexts - higher levels of application and consequential retention of knowledge are likely to occur. In order to participate in fieldwork opportunities outside of the SCA setting, scholars must provide a permission slip signed by a parent/guardian. This permission slip will be signed at the beginning of the school year to indicate that the scholar has permission to attend any/all fieldwork opportunities.

Some fieldwork opportunities may require a fee for participation. In the event that any fee associated with fieldwork creates a financial hardship, parents/guardians are encouraged to contact the scholar's teacher for information on potential support. Parents/Families are invited to attend fieldwork opportunities - but will be required to drive separately due to limited seating with school transportation. In the event that a parent/guardian intends to drive his/her child to a fieldwork site, the parent/guardian will be required to check his/her child in and out to indicate that he/she assumes liability during travel to and from the event. In order to attend fieldwork opportunities, scholars must be in good standing in the classroom and/or have met any pre-requisite requirements. Scholars with a pattern of unpredictable behavior - as evidenced by multiple behavior referrals - may require parent/guardian attendance on the trip to participate in the fieldwork opportunity.

### **Extracurriculars and Sports Participation**

Extracurricular activities allow students to develop and hone unique skills with consideration to individualized student interest. Participation can be an interesting and exciting experience and an opportunity to develop new friendships, try a new sport, follow a new interest, or strengthen identified competencies. All students are eligible and encouraged to participate in any extracurricular activity. Given that students begin to develop skills in time management at the middle grades level and are held increasingly accountable for choices, teachers will support students in setting reasonable goals for extracurricular/sports participation within the advising block. The SCA: Middle School Superintendent reserves the right to suspend participation by a student if disciplinary problems arise which warrant such a consequence.

Per the SCA: Athletic Handbook, through policy and action, SCA supports the belief that a strong program of extracurricular activities provides a balance in educational programming for scholars. Athletic competition, by its nature, contributes to greater scholar awareness of self-discipline, growth in emotional maturity, and an increasing realization of the worth of the

individual. Scholars must learn that participation in athletics is not only a privilege but is also an honor that requires responsibility for maintaining one's academic standing in the classroom and for maintaining a high standard of conduct outside of school hours as outlined in the student handbook and the Code of Conduct for Scintilla Charter Academy students, K-8. Further information pertaining to sports programming and participation is accessible via the SCA: Athletic Handbook.

### **School Dance Policies**

SCA: Middle School may host one or more school dances throughout the school year for SCA: Middle School students. The following rules and procedures for these dances:

- Only SCA: Middle School students are permitted to attend. Students from other schools are not permitted to attend.
- The time of any scheduled dance event will be announced via appropriate school messaging. Students will not be admitted prior to the indicated time. Instructions for drop off/pick up locations will be provided prior to the event.
- School dance locations will be provided prior to the event.
- Students are not permitted to leave the building once they arrive. A signed parental note is required if the student will be picked up earlier than the scheduled pick-up times - which will be grade-specific. If students are picked up late, the Middle Grades: Superintendent may require the parent/guardian to remain onsite in a designated location for the duration of the event - if the child chooses to attend. Additionally, if this behavior becomes a consistent occurrence, the Middle Grades: Superintendent reserves the right to prohibit attendance at school-related dance events.
- Students are prohibited from bringing any item considered potentially hazardous or harmful.
- School dress code does not apply within school dances. However, SCA: Middle School administration will provide dance-specific guidelines to ensure that clothing selections are appropriate for the school setting. The Middle Grades: Superintendent or designee reserves the right to dismiss any student who fails to adhere to established guidelines.
- Within the advising block, students will receive explicit guidance on behavioral expectations in a school dance setting. This guidance will be strictly enforced during the event. Students exhibiting inappropriate behavior may be sent home from the dance and may be prohibited from attending future dances.
- A security guard and school administrator will be present at all dances to ensure that established guidelines are followed.

### **Student Technology Policy**

Throughout the year, teaching and learning may be enhanced if/when scholars bring their own technology devices to school. Therefore, laptops and/or tablets may be brought to school during designated times of the year when instructed by the teacher(s). When a scholar brings a technological device to school, as directed by the teacher(s), it must remain turned off and stored in the child's backpack or locker until the teacher(s) designate that it is to be used within

instruction. Scholars who violate this policy will be subject to disciplinary consequences - which may include confiscation of the device. SCA is not responsible for lost, stolen, or confiscated devices.

### **Technology Acceptable Use Policy**

SCA: Middle School equips students with a range of technology tools including, but not limited to, desktop computers, iPads, virtual reality goggles, and laptop devices. Scholars will receive unique login credentials which allow SCA faculty to track and closely monitor all internet activity. Parents/Guardians must grant permission for students to use technology for teaching and learning. This permission is granted when parents/guardians sign the handbook acknowledgement signaling an understanding of all terms and expectations - including those indicated for acceptable technology use below.

*Purpose:* SCA acknowledges the critical role technology plays in the teaching and learning process - as well as within the Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS) where students are required to demonstrate mastery of standards. As scholars work toward mastery of Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) and other school-specific standards (e.g., Portrait of a Graduate), teachers may integrate technology to create opportunities for research, application, creativity, and/or enrichment.

*Privilege:* The use of technology resources is a privilege - not a right. Any activity with technology that is deemed as inappropriate by teachers and/or the Superintendent may result in disciplinary action and/or referral to legal authorities. The Superintendent may revoke access to technology resources at any time. SCA internet usage can and will be monitored to ensure acceptable and safe use of technological tools. SCA also employs a web-filtering system to restrict inappropriate/unacceptable access. As with any computer-based monitoring system, the platform will continue to be refined as technology evolves to increasingly block inappropriate/unacceptable content and activity. Scholars will be assigned a unique log-in and password information. Using these student-specific logins, SCA can monitor and hold scholars accountable for behavior occurring on any technological tool. SCA scholars must adhere to the following rules that pertain to appropriate technology and internet usage:

*SCA: Middle School Scholars will...*

1. respect SCA technology resources to avoid any instances of damage.
2. use technology only as instructed by a teacher and with faculty/staff permission using only my personal username/password.
3. demonstrate collegiality in technology-based/online settings avoiding any instances of cyber bullying to include posting or sending messages/pictures that could hurt, threaten, or embarrass other people.
4. report any instances of cyber bullying - including receipt of inappropriate pictures or messages - to an SCA faculty/staff member and parent/guardian.
5. protect any personally identifiable information when online including name, address, phone number, pictures, or any other identifiers.

6. report any instances where individuals outside of the SCA setting attempt to contact me while online to an SCA faculty/staff member and parent/guardian.
7. report inappropriate/unacceptable behaviors of other students - including accessing inappropriate web content - to an SCA faculty/staff member.
8. refrain from use of obscene or inappropriate language in an online setting.
9. refrain from use of chat/instant messaging tools, downloading of content, installing of programs, and altering device settings - without the explicit permission of a teacher.
10. refrain from using portable drives on devices without the explicit permission of a teacher.
11. refrain from sharing personal login information with anyone.
12. log off any/all devices upon completion of designated tasks.

### **Middle Grades: Cell Phone and Other Related Devices Policy**

To increase learning potential across the instructional day, scholars will be encouraged to develop responsible practices for use with cell phones while on campus. The cell phone must not disrupt teaching and/or the learning environment. If a scholar chooses to bring a cell phone, it should remain silenced and inside his/her backpack or locker unless he/she is given specific permission by a staff member for cell phone use during class. Otherwise, scholars will be expected to use these devices only during class transitions. SCA scholars may wear a smartwatch. However, the same cellular policies which apply to cell phones also apply to smartwatches and other related devices. Cellular and other related devices shall be used for parental/family communication or indicated teaching and learning purposes only. Social media use, online messaging, and recording/camera use while on campus is strictly prohibited without the explicit permission of an SCA faculty member. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis. When assessments are being administered, whether school-specific or state-required, these policies will be adjusted accordingly. Scholars who violate this policy may be subject to disciplinary consequences which may include confiscation of the device. In the event that a device is confiscated due to disciplinary action, the parent/guardian will be required to pick up the device and sign indicating receipt of the device. Additionally, the child may not be allowed to return to school with this device. SCA is not responsible for lost, stolen, or confiscated cell phones or other related devices.

### **Lockers**

SCA scholars may choose to secure a locker for use on campus during the school year. Lockers require students to submit an annual non-refundable rental fee of \$10.00 and sign a [contract](#). If the rental fee presents any financial hardship, parents/guardians may reach out to the Middle Grades: Superintendent with a request for support. SCA scholars will be required to provide a lock to secure personal belongings. SCA scholars are encouraged to keep the combination confidential to avoid access of unauthorized individuals to the personal locker. Sharing of lockers is not permitted. The Middle Grades: Superintendent or other designated faculty may conduct periodic checks to ensure that lockers are kept neat, clean, and do not contain anything considered inappropriate/unacceptable for the middle school setting. SCA scholars are expected to respect lockers to avoid any instances of damage. Damage to lockers may result in a required payment for associated damages and/or loss of locker privileges. Scholars will be

allowed to access lockers during designated times throughout the day as directed by faculty/staff. SCA is not responsible for items taken from lockers. Violation of locker procedures will result in disciplinary action and possible loss of locker privileges for all scholars involved.

## **Health and Medical Information**

### **Administration of Medicine**

SCA believes that student safety is of utmost importance in the educational experience. SCA recommends that any medication and/or medical procedure required by students be dispensed/conducted by a parent/legal guardian in the home setting. Under exceptional circumstances, prescribed medication and/or medical procedures may be dispensed/conducted by the school nurse or designated staff member per written physician's orders and written parent/guardian authorization. With the explicit written permission of a physician via a physician's order and parent/guardian written authorization, medication and/or medical procedures may also be self-dispensed/conducted.

If a child requires daily or life-saving medication/procedures (e.g., EpiPen, inhaler, insulin) during the school day, parents/guardians are required to provide the school nurse with necessary medications/materials for immediate application if/when a need arises. The school nurse or, in his/her absence, a designated staff member, may administer auto-injectable epinephrine to a scholar upon the occurrence of an actual or perceived anaphylactic adverse (allergic) reaction, whether or not such scholar has a prescription for epinephrine. Any school employee who in good faith administers or chooses not to administer auto-injectable epinephrine to a scholar in such circumstances shall be immune from civil liability, pursuant to the Georgia statute.

### **Medical Records**

Scholar health records will be maintained in locked and/or password-protected files to ensure confidentiality. All health records will be managed by the school nurse and any appropriate, designated staff member. These records will be released only to service providers as allowed and dictated by state regulations.

### **Medical Operations**

SCA employs a licensed school nurse or designee to provide services to scholars in accordance with state guidelines. The nurse participates in workshops, in-services, and/or training to ensure compliance with state regulations.

### **Health Screenings**

Hearing and vision screenings are performed by the school nurse on an as-needed basis. As a proactive measure, SCA will implement a scoliosis screening program to meet the requirements of OCGA §20-2-772 and the Department of Public Health rule 511-5-8. The SCA nurse will facilitate the annual scoliosis screening during the spring. During this screening, the nurse will examine each age-appropriate student for signs of scoliosis. A written notice will be sent to parents/guardians in advance with the option to opt out of the screening.

### **Lice Policy & Procedures**

Scholars exhibiting signs and symptoms of head lice will be sent to the school nurse. Possible symptoms include: 1) itchy scalp, 2) tiny gray or brown bugs in the hair, 3) nits (tiny yellowish-white or brown oval eggs attached directly to the hair shaft), and/or 4) scalp rash. *If live lice or nits are observed*, the school nurse will call the parent/guardian. The child will be given a lice treatment guideline packet. Siblings of an infested child will also be checked. If siblings attend another school, the school-specific school nurse will be notified to check the siblings. *In order for the child to return to school*, the parent will need to provide proof of treatment and a clearance letter from the health department, physician's office, or an approved lice treatment center. The nurse will examine the child for live lice and/or nits. If no live lice are seen and the number of nits are diminished from the initial check, students may return to class. Parents must remove any/all nits. *Students will be re-checked* for the presence of head lice/nits after 7-10 days.

### **Dress Code and Uniform Policy**

Within the middle grades setting, scholars begin to establish self awareness of their individual identities - but also seek to feel a shared sense of belonging. The purpose of the SCA: Middle Grades dress code and uniform policy is to create a context where the developmental needs of middle schoolers are met. The consistency in dress code will create a more positive climate whereby teaching and learning is much more likely to successfully occur. Scholars must be in uniform when they arrive on campus, and their overall appearance should be neat, clean, well-groomed, and modest per the guidelines detailed below. Faculty members are expected to correct and report any uniform infractions using the established procedures outlined below.

Scholars enrolled in the school after the first day of school will be given ten (10) school days to prepare adequately for the dress code policy. Until that time they may borrow uniforms from those available at the school or wear solid, polo-style shirts without penalty. However, scholars must wear a school uniform each day. All uniforms must be embroidered with proper school logos. For your convenience, all uniform wear will be available for purchase through outside vendors throughout the year. See website for approved vendors. Please, note that SCA's standing policy is to mitigate any financial obligation for those families for whom uniform and dress code expectations present an undue hardship. Parents and/or guardians who have concerns about the affordability of school uniforms may contact [info@scintillacharteracademy.com](mailto:info@scintillacharteracademy.com) - and SCA will work to assist the family in identifying community resources.

On designated days, scholars may have opportunities to participate in themed or professional attire dress-up days. Advance notice will be provided to ensure adequate time for parents/guardians/scholars to prepare. Explicit guidelines for dress on these designated days will also be provided.

*Religious Exemption:* SCA acknowledges and is responsive to any student's right to exercise freedom of religion. In the event that a student and/or parent/guardian/family requires a religious exemption for attire, the Middle Grades: Superintendent is the point of contact to facilitate. Parents/Guardians shall schedule a meeting with the Middle Grades: Superintendent to discuss religious exemption, as related to uniform policy, to establish agreed-upon expectations aligned to the religious practice of the student/family.

### **Uniform Tops**

SCA middle school scholars may wear approved SCA or Spartan spirit wear t-shirt, polo, or sweatshirt options any day of the week. These items are for sale in our school store and available via approved vendors (see website). Scholars are required to purchase a red polo with the SCA Spartan logo. For special occasions, to include fieldwork opportunities or special events in the community, scholars will wear the designated red polo with the embroidered SCA logo.

### **Uniform Bottoms**

Uniform bottoms are not required to have the SCA flame logo or the Scintilla Spartan logo. Middle school scholars may wear black, gray, or red athletic shorts or pants, khakis, or jeans (with no rips, tears, or emblems). Athletic leggings are permissible given that they meet the requirement of not being revealing in nature. This decision is at the discretion of the Middle Grades: Superintendent. Uniforms are required to be worn as the manufacturer intended. Oversized or undersized clothes will not be permitted. Skorts and shorts must have no less than a 5 inch inseam. Skirts must be worn no more than 4 inches above the back of the knee. Uniform bottoms must always be appropriately sized so as to not be revealing in nature. Undergarments may not be visible at any time.

### **Additional Information**

*General Appearance:* Students are expected to dress in a scholarly fashion so as not to distract from teaching and learning. Jewelry, including necklaces, bracelets, and earrings, must not be oversized or distracting. Gauging or expanding of the ears is prohibited. Students shall not display tattoos - including drawing on oneself with markers or pens. Visible body piercings, excluding the ears, are not allowed. Hair shall be neatly cut and well groomed. Hair must also be of natural color or only be dyed colors that would be considered natural.

*Shoes:* Presentable shoes of any kind are acceptable. For periods in the day designated for recreation and/or physical fitness/sports practice, scholars are expected to adhere to athletic dress guidelines.

*Outerwear:* All outerwear (jackets, coats, etc.) is required to be solid in color and embroidered with the SCA logo *if the outerwear does not allow for the uniform shirt to be visible*. **Hoods from hoodie sweatshirts or jackets may not be worn indoors at any time on the SCA campus. This will be strictly enforced by administration and faculty.**

*Inappropriate Attire:* The following types of clothing are considered inappropriate at SCA:



- Shoes must be worn at all times for health and safety reasons. The following are not permitted: shoes that damage the carpet or floors, bedroom shoes, shoes with wheels, or shoes with heels over 1 ½ inch in height.
- Hats, caps, sweatbands, and sunglasses worn inside the building are not permitted except on specified days or particular situations, as determined by administration.
- Halter tops, midribs, muscle shirts, net shirts, cutaways, pajamas, lounging pants, clothing with words across the seat, or any garment that shows the stomach or waistline in the back are not permitted
- Sleeveless tops must have a strap of at least two (2) inches in width across the shoulders.
- Revealing necklines are not permitted. This criteria is at the discretion of administration and faculty.
- Spandex clothing and sheer garments worn as the primary garments are not permitted.
- Pants must be worn at the natural waist. They cannot be poorly fitted or oversized and baggy, so as to allow sagging of the pants.
- Clothing, with suggestive words or pictures, is not permitted.
- Clothing that is torn, ripped, or unhemmed either by accident or style is not permitted.
- No manner of clothing, jewelry, button, or pin may display drugs, cigarettes, sexually suggestive items, alcohol, weapons, profanity, gang-related logos or messages, or pictures or words that are determined to be distracting or demeaning to others by the administration of the school.

### **Physical Education (P.E.) Dress Expectations**

Middle school scholars will be expected to dress in appropriate attire for P.E. and other athletic practices. When P.E. and other athletic practices are scheduled, scholars must be diligent to wear appropriate dress to school to ensure preparedness. Students in all grades are considered prepared for these events when they are wearing approved athletic attire and sneakers. Athletic attire includes shorts/pants, tops, and supportive sneakers. P.E. dress must adhere to uniform policy (e.g., length of shorts).

### **Noncompliance Procedures**

Scholars will strive to achieve full compliance with the guidelines of the Dress Code and Uniform Policy. Since noncompliance interferes with the smooth operation of the school, the plan listed below has been proactively developed to address scholars who do not comply with the required dress code and uniform procedures. If a scholar comes to school out of uniform, the following measures will be taken (see below). If available, a uniform will be provided to the scholar which will be returned at the end of the day as well as:

- 1st Occurrence: The teacher will send home a letter from the administration informing the parent/guardian that the student failed to adhere to the dress code and uniform policy.
- 2nd Occurrence: The teacher will send home a letter from the administration and call the parent/guardian to develop a plan for avoidance of noncompliance in the future. The scholar may be required to change into an appropriate uniform - if one is available.

- 3rd Occurrence: The Middle Grades: Superintendent will arrange a required face-to-face meeting with the parent/guardian to address the noncompliance issue and develop a solution.
- 4th & Additional Occurrences: Parents/Guardians will be contacted for the scholar to be checked out to resolve the dress code violation. This check out will result in an unexcused absence. Per the SCA attendance policy, after 10 consecutive absences, scholars are subject to administrative withdrawal.

## **Academic Policies**

### **Educational Approach and Recommended Practices**

SCA's middle school curriculum is aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) and intentionally designed to create opportunities for authentic learning. All scholars participate in English Language Arts, mathematics, social studies, and science as part of their regular course of study. In addition, scholars have opportunities to sign up for a series of optional and required electives. Middle school scholars will participate in two electives each day and may choose to participate in each elective for a semester or for the duration of the academic year. When scheduling, scholars must be mindful of required electives and plan to register to take these electives, as directed. Teaching and learning is aligned to the Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE) to ensure that students are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to demonstrate both short and long term success. Teachers are also charged with aligning instruction to SCA's vision for the Portrait of a Graduate (additional information included below) to ensure that learning is authentic and grounded in real-world experiences. Students begin the process of advising in grade 6 to establish goals and begin to plan their course of study.

### **Grading Procedures and Student Recognition**

SCA believes that learning is a process which is most effective when students are able to articulate progress toward clearly defined goals. As scholars enter the middle grades setting, the accountability shifts to require higher levels of self-monitoring. In other words, students must be responsible for their individual effort and aware of how their decisions impact grading outcomes. It is developmentally appropriate for students to begin thinking about how their grades impact available pathways related to long-term goals (e.g., college/technical school entry, work-based requirements).

With a continued emphasis on learning as a process, the middle grades classrooms will begin to reflect growth and progress using a 4.0 point scale aligned to standards-based report cards. The scale will be determined by whether a student enrolls in advanced content coursework or general curriculum coursework. While the process remains virtually the same as the one used in the K-5 setting, the way the information is reported will reflect an overall proficiency represented in a course-specific grade for each grading period. In grades K-5, grades are reported using a proficiency scale including does not meet, approaching, meets, and exceeds. For grades 6-8, grades will be reported using the following levels: beginning, approaching, meeting, and advancing. At the onset of each grading period, scholars will receive a document outlining the tasks to be completed with documentation of standard alignment. This allows parents/guardians

the ability to support growth tied to specific standards throughout the quarter and across the semester.

The available points within a course will be driven by the number of standards to be assessed within the grading period and/or semester. Recognizing the research suggesting that authentic learning opportunities increase student proficiency and retention of knowledge (Hattie, 2018), scholars engage in hands-on learning opportunities throughout the semester. These learning tasks are generated with careful reflection on the expectations for proficiency as driven by the standards-aligned Navy assessment system, where applicable. Based on standard mastery demonstrated on the corresponding Navy assessment, students will receive an assigned point value for each standard. These point values will be used to determine a percentage of standards mastered and will result in a GPA which corresponds to the SCA: Middle School grading guide (see next section). For courses where the Navy assessment system is not employed, teachers will carefully outline exactly how standard mastery will be demonstrated. For each standard, students may demonstrate achievement at the following levels: does not meet, approaches, meets. Corresponding point values for each level are as follows: A) Does Not Meet = 0 points, B) Approaches = 5 points, and C) Meets = 10 points. At the close of the grading period and/or semester, teachers will determine the percentage of standards mastered with consideration to points earned out of points available. Based on the standards mastery percentage, students will receive an overall course grade from the 4.0 scale. In keeping with the SCA goal to build perseverance, scholars will have up to 2 opportunities to demonstrate mastery and earn full credit for each standard. Upon completion of the second attempt, the student may continue to work toward mastery of data-indicated standards with the understanding that in the final quarter of the year - he/she may elect to reassess for a third attempt to demonstrate full mastery of select standard(s). To earn the opportunity for a third attempt, the student must demonstrate his/her intentional effort toward building to standard mastery as directed by his/her advisor.

In addition to assessment of Georgia Standards of Excellence (GSE), scholars will also be evaluated on the Spartan 10: Habits of Character. Scholars are expected to demonstrate the Spartan 10 across all contexts. The report card will document the extent to which scholars demonstrate each of the habits of character within a specific course. Prior to teacher evaluation of student progress on the Spartan 10: Habits of Character, students will be required to complete a self-evaluation where they provide documentation of self-ratings. Given that the habits of character are not a part of the academic expectations, they are reported separately and do not influence overall course grade. However, student ratings may be used to determine student access to available privileges. We will have opportunities to celebrate growth and learning as related to academic and/or course-specific progress. Additionally, scholars will have opportunities for recognition through the lens of extracurriculars, Habits of Character, Portrait of a Graduate competencies, and progress toward customized goals crafted within the advisory block and goal setting time. Within the SCA: Middle School, scholars will be celebrated holistically with opportunities to demonstrate excellence across multiple areas which we recognize as critical to developing “life ready” skills.

**2022 - 2023 - Scintilla Charter Academy: Middle School - Grading Scale**

<b>GPA</b>	<b>Standard Mastery</b>	<b>Proficiency Level</b>	<b>Description</b>
4.0	<b>95-100%</b> of standards mastered	Advancing	The scholar is exceeding expectations for his/her current grade level. The scholar shows an incredibly secure understanding of all aspects of the curriculum, being able to see connections between different topics. Scholars at this level are able to apply their knowledge and skills in a broad range of ways.
3.5	<b>89-94%</b> of standards mastered		
3.0	<b>83-88%</b> of standards mastered	Meeting	This level of proficiency is the GOAL for all scholars with all academic standards by the end of the school year. Mastery of standards signifies that the scholar is proficient with grade-level content and is prepared for the next grade level.
2.5	<b>77-82%</b> of standards mastered		
2.0	<b>71-76%</b> of standards mastered	Approaching	The scholar is approaching proficiency with the ability to apply and transfer essential content, knowledge, and skills with grade-level material.
1.5	<b>65-70%</b> of standards mastered* <small>* students may be recommended to engage in dedicated remediation work or to repeat the course</small>	Beginning	The scholar is able to access the curriculum for his/her grade level but shows a developing understanding and need for support. There may be content from the previous grade level being addressed to gain complete confidence and proficiency with grade-level skills.
1.0	<b>59-64%</b> of standards mastered* <small>* students may be recommended to engage in dedicated remediation work or to repeat the course</small>		

**Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS)**

As a public school, SCA scholars are required to participate in the GMAS End of Grade Assessment beginning in third grade. The school will provide ample notice of testing dates to ensure student readiness. Score reports will be distributed to parents upon receipt. The score reports will be accompanied by a cover letter further explaining the assessments and a guide to interpreting the score reports. SCA invites parents/guardians to schedule conferences with faculty and/or administration to carefully review results, as deemed necessary by the parent/guardian. These conferences may assist parents/guardians in determining appropriate next steps in support of standards-aligned teaching and learning for an increased likelihood of long-term success.

**Navy**

Navy is a flexible, diagnostic assessment system used in grades 3-8 at SCA for assessing the proficiency of grade-level standards in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. Navy is one of

the two innovative test pilots approved by the U.S. Department of Education for Georgia's participation in its Innovative Assessment Demonstration Authority. With flexible administration, real-time diagnostic feedback, and multiple opportunities to succeed, Navvy is an integral tool for teaching and learning that helps provide a personalized educational experience for every student.

### **Elective Opportunities**

SCA offers a unique blend of elective classes each week to support the whole child across academics, social development, and growth in "life ready" skills. Academic content teachers collaborate with elective teachers to maximize student learning potential. Middle school scholars will participate in two electives each day. The first elective is selected based on scholar preference. Choice electives include: band, art, and gender-specific and sports focused physical education courses. If a scholar opts to participate in the band elective, he/she understands that this is a year-long commitment. The second elective is required by SCA ensuring that scholars develop key content understandings and "life ready" skills strategically built within and across the required courses. To ensure scholar access to content for all courses, required electives may occur simultaneously within a quarter and occur on a rotating schedule (e.g., M/T, M/W/F, or T/R).

### **Promotion and Retention Policy**

In addition to any grade-specific [state-mandated requirements](#), SCA: Middle School scholars will be *promoted* based on the following criteria:

- Minimum of a 2.0 GPA (approaching) in all academic courses
- Minimum of a 2.0 GPA (approaching) in all *required* elective courses
- Teacher recommendation
- [State-Mandated Requirements](#) for Grade 8 Students

Scholars who fail to meet the promotion criteria listed above will be recommended for *retention*.

Additional factors may contribute to the promotion/retention decision including, but not limited to, attendance, evaluation on Spartan 10: Habits of Character, and age/grade/current placement. In the event that a scholar is promoted with a 2.0 GPA, SCA faculty will provide standard-specific recommendations for support prior to the start of the subsequent school year. The parent/guardian is encouraged to create opportunities for remediation within the window prior to the next school year.

If a parent/guardian disagrees with SCA's decision to retain, a committee will be formed consisting of the parent/guardian, teachers, and administration. Following a discussion of relevant documentation, the committee will vote to determine whether the child will be retained, promoted, or placed into the next grade level. The decision to *promote* must be unanimous or the scholar will be retained. If a unanimous decision is made to *place* a scholar in the next grade level, the decision must be based on documentation suggesting that, given appropriate interventions via strategic implementation of a plan, the scholar would be likely to master the next grade-level standards by the end of the following year.

## Grading Reports

Given the increasing complexity of the middle grades content standards, grades will be reported via a progress report at the midpoint of the semester (the close of quarter one). Final grades will be released twice per year (i.e., December and May) to document standard mastery and course GPA.

## Student-Led Conferencing

Hattie (2018) confirmed that self-reported grades have the potential to considerably accelerate student achievement. SCA supports this practice by challenging students to engage in goal-setting as aligned to academic, behavioral, and social emotional learning (SEL) expectations. At the middle grades level, students will monitor progress toward goals using a Student Success Guide and Spartan 10: Habits of Character self-evaluation process (additional information included below). Within the advising block, scholars will analyze their own data as they work with an advisor to determine which course(s) will benefit most from a student-led conference. Once a determination has been made, the scholar will work to schedule the conference at a time convenient for both the teacher and parent/guardian. This process facilitates “life ready” skills and ensures an increased likelihood of success as students invest in the process to report progress.

If necessary, a conference may be scheduled by a course-specific teacher and/or grade level team to discuss a scholar’s academic achievement. If the teacher cannot contact the parent/guardian, then the teacher will notify the Middle Grades: Superintendent to request support. In the event that a parent/guardian wishes to schedule a conference, he/she may contact the teacher directly via email to schedule based on teacher-indicated availability.

## SCA: Middle School - Portrait of a Graduate

As mainstream schools focus on college and career readiness, the demands of the 21st century context are ever evolving. SCA acknowledges and seeks to act on the reality that post-secondary opportunities require individuals to create, innovate, network, and build as ever increasing technologies pave the way for more seamless and efficient acquisition of information. Far too often, graduates exit the K-12 setting with scores suggesting a likelihood of success only to find dismal opportunities post-graduation (Dintersmith, 2018). SCA has a vision and a commitment to ensuring that all graduates are 21st Century Life Ready. To increase the likelihood that scholars will exit the school setting as “life ready” individuals, SCA employs the Portrait of a Graduate process. Teachers are expected to align coursework and other school-specific tasks to those competencies represented in our graduate profile. SCA faculty will report alignment of tasks to these competencies on the report card.

SCA: Middle School - Portrait of a Graduate	
SCA Graduates...	Competencies
<b>Adapt</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>★ <b>A1: generate</b> appropriate questions in response to an identified problem.</li><li>★ <b>A2: demonstrate</b> efficiency in locating information to solve a problem.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ <b>A3: read</b> a range of texts to demonstrate knowledge on topics from multiple perspectives.</li> <li>★ <b>A4: examine</b> cultural implications across a range of contexts.</li> <li>★ <b>A5: analyze</b> diverse perspectives represented in a given context and respond accordingly.</li> <li>★ <b>A6: assess</b> the validity and relevance of informational sources.</li> <li>★ <b>A7: analyze</b> the evidence and rhetoric included within a source to determine how the source should be used.</li> <li>★ <b>A8: construct</b> an argument from an existing point of view using relevant evidence to establish a claim and address counterclaims.</li> <li>★ <b>A9: employ</b> handwriting and typing skills for appropriate contexts (e.g., thank you note, business correspondence, addressing envelopes).</li> <li>★ <b>A10: integrate</b> multiple genres and styles for writing to achieve a set purpose.</li> <li>★ <b>A11: implement</b> a plan for collaboration of all stakeholders in solving an identified problem.</li> <li>★ <b>A12: evaluate</b> the effectiveness of teamwork strategies employed to accomplish a goal.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Communicate</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ <b>C1: apply</b> strategies to converse with new individuals across various contexts.</li> <li>★ <b>C2: demonstrate</b> turn-taking abilities across various conversational contexts.</li> <li>★ <b>C3: apply</b> principles of code switching for successful communication.</li> <li>★ <b>C4: summarize</b> ideas communicated via conversation and presentation.</li> <li>★ <b>C5: appraise</b> the success of a conversational exchange and adjust accordingly.</li> <li>★ <b>C6: explain</b> how the connections between individuals should influence your comments and next steps across contexts.</li> <li>★ <b>C7: demonstrate</b> etiquette across a range of contexts.</li> <li>★ <b>C8: demonstrate</b> professionalism across a range of contexts.</li> <li>★ <b>C9: critique</b> communication exchanges for continuous improvement.</li> <li>★ <b>C10: apply</b> conflict resolution strategies across a range of contexts.</li> <li>★ <b>C11: implement</b> a range of presentation strategies for effective delivery of information.</li> <li>★ <b>C12: employ</b> formal and informal writing styles for an identified purpose.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Overcome</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ <b>O1: assess</b> self through the lens of aptitudes and dispositions to determine a path for increased likelihood of success.</li> <li>★ <b>O2: use</b> appropriately selected available resources to self advocate.</li> <li>★ <b>O3: choose</b> realistic short and long term goals given an established vision.</li> <li>★ <b>O4: explain</b> the required next steps for success of a given goal.</li> <li>★ <b>O5: prioritize</b> next steps for success with careful attention to multiple required complex tasks.</li> <li>★ <b>O6: analyze</b> the actions of team members and self to determine an appropriate course of action for an increased likelihood of success.</li> <li>★ <b>O7: explain</b> the impact of an individual's decisions on success or failure in an authentic context.</li> <li>★ <b>O8: recommend</b> next steps for an individual in response to a perceived failure in an authentic context.</li> <li>★ <b>O9: recommend</b> an alternate approach to solving an identified problem.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Respond</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ <b>R1: explain</b> the rights and responsibilities of citizens in the United States of America.</li> <li>★ <b>R2: implement</b> a plan to contribute at the local, state, and national/international level.</li> <li>★ <b>R3: explain</b> the obligations of a community member committed to bettering the town/city in which he/she lives.</li> <li>★ <b>R4: explain</b> why an individual may pursue an elected position.</li> <li>★ <b>R5: explain</b> the pathway toward becoming an elected official.</li> <li>★ <b>R6: employ</b> strategies to accomplish established goals in an elected position.</li> <li>★ <b>R7: explain</b> the steps a citizen would take to make an informed decision while voting.</li> <li>★ <b>R8: describe</b> the characteristics, dispositions, and aptitudes of community members</li> </ul>

	<p>with a track record of success across multiple contexts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ <b>R9: demonstrate</b> a pattern of behavior indicating one’s level of commitment to an identified task.</li> <li>★ <b>R10: deviate</b> from a previously established plan to respond in real time to an identified need.</li> <li>★ <b>R11: implement</b> appropriate next steps in response to an identified need of a friend, colleague, or peer.</li> </ul>
<b>Engage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>★ <b>E1: make</b> a creative contribution in an authentic context.</li> <li>★ <b>E2: analyze</b> financial implications in the areas of earning, spending, saving, investing, borrowing, and protecting.</li> <li>★ <b>E3: employ</b> strategies for budgeting in a real world context.</li> <li>★ <b>E4: integrate</b> multiple real world skills (e.g., change a tire, grocery shop/cook) to increase the likelihood of success in authentic contexts.</li> <li>★ <b>E5: use</b> content knowledge and skills within a college/career/life context for authentic problem solving.</li> <li>★ <b>E6: analyze</b> the expectations of a selected career to determine appropriate next steps for increased potential for success.</li> <li>★ <b>E7: convince</b> a recruiter or potential employer that you are the most qualified applicant for a position in a mock interview setting.</li> <li>★ <b>E8: critique</b> mock interview presentation and exchanges for continuous improvement.</li> <li>★ <b>E9: analyze</b> the implications of social media on potential/current employment and community engagement.</li> </ul>

### Spartan 10: Habits of Character

SCA incorporates standards-aligned and rigorous curriculum with careful selection of appropriate resources. One of those resources provides a focus on developing habits of character which are essential to success in school and life. Given the SCA focus on developing “life ready” learners, scholars will receive explicit instruction tied to social emotional learning (SEL) competencies represented in the Spartan 10: Habits of Character.

As a core practice, within the advising block of the instructional day, students will be challenged to self-evaluate progress toward each of the Spartan 10: Habits of Character by collecting documentation and justifying a self-rating. Information on this process is available via the following [link](#). This process will support teachers and students in meaningful conferencing opportunities where we are able to strategically support students in building competencies within the Spartan 10: Habits of Character tied to respect, perseverance, responsibility, and service.

**Scintilla Spartans demonstrate respect, perseverance, responsibility, and service.**

Scintilla Spartans demonstrate <b>respect.</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Follow established norms, rules, and procedures.</li> <li>2. Follow directions the first time they are given.</li> <li>3. Demonstrate respect when speaking and listening.</li> <li>4. Listen to diverse opinions and remain open-minded to new ideas.</li> <li>5. Demonstrate collegiality and good sportsmanship.</li> </ol>
Scintilla Spartans	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6. Set goals and work your hardest on tasks until completion.</li> </ol>



demonstrate <b>perseverance</b> .	7. Use feedback and suggested strategies to overcome any obstacles you face and produce high-quality work.
Scintilla Spartans demonstrate <b>responsibility</b> .	8. Own your attitudes and actions across all situations regardless of the attitudes and actions of others. 9. Self-monitor to keep up with personal belongings and complete all school assignments on time.
Scintilla Spartans demonstrate <b>service</b> .	10. Contribute to society in a positive way.

### Student Success Guides

With entry into the middle school setting, scholars should anticipate increasing levels of responsibility over time. In grades K-5, scholars received a communication folder to ensure open and transparent communication tied to academic and behavioral progress. Teachers were responsible for driving this communication. For grades 6-8, scholars transition from a communication folder into use of the Student Success Guide. See [link](#). This document will be housed within a red folder. SCA: Middle School scholars will serve as the primary point of contact for ensuring communication between school and home. Detailed expectations tied to the role of scholars, parents/guardians, and teachers are included below.

*Scholar Expectations:* Scholars are expected to engage in goal-setting once per month to ensure adequate preparation and progress within and across academics and extracurricular activities. Scholars will update course-specific goals to self-monitor progress and reflect on appropriate next steps. Using a weekly guide, scholars will map out weekly tasks to ensure adequate time management is employed. On a daily basis, scholars will articulate afternoon tasks aligned to academics and extracurriculars.

*Parent/Guardian Expectations:* Parents/Guardians are expected to sign/date monthly to monitor goal-setting. Monthly monitoring will occur on the last Monday of each month. Parents/Guardians are also expected to initial once daily to ensure high levels of communication with SCA personnel and close monitoring of daily progress. The initial signals that parents/guardians are monitoring student progress and providing appropriate levels of support. Parents/Guardians may also use this space for written communication with/responses to the teacher.

*Teacher/Faculty Expectations:* At the close of each class period, teachers will ask scholars to take out their weekly agendas to document any required afternoon tasks. If there is a need for written parent/teacher communication, the teacher will complete this task at the close of the class period using the appropriate column on the weekly agenda. Within the advising and/or goal setting period, the assigned faculty member will support scholars in completing monthly agendas and goal-setting.

### Homework

SCA acknowledges that homework has the potential to positively impact student achievement (Hattie, 2018). For this positive impact to occur, SCA provides the following guidance (Blackburn, 2018) to drive decisions on whether homework will be advantageous to scholars:

- Is the task purposeful?
- Will the task create an opportunity for independent success?
- Will the task create opportunities for scholars to extend, reinforce, or preview content?
- Will the task include choice to increase engagement?
- Will the task allow an opportunity for scholars to receive feedback?

Using the guiding questions above, homework is assigned at the teacher's discretion. Scholars will document required homework tasks in their Student Success Guide and be expected to submit work by designated due dates.

### **Text Resources, Technology, and Supplies**

Text resources, technology, and other educational supplies are loaned to scholars for use during the school year. Scholars are responsible for exercising care in the use of SCA materials. Permission for use of text resources, technology, and other educational supplies is granted when parents/guardians sign the handbook acknowledgement signaling an understanding of all terms and expectations. Scholars are required to return books and other supplies to teachers at the conclusion of the course/school year. Scholars will be charged for damaged or lost texts and supplies before replacements are issued.

## **Student Support Services**

### **Student Support Team (SST)**

The purpose of the SST is to develop individual plans for each child's educational development, engage classroom teachers and parents in creating school-wide and individual plans, and create linkages to a consortium of service providers. SST is intended to support student achievement, socialization skills, attendance, and parental involvement.

### **Special Education Services**

SCA provides special services to individuals who meet the eligibility criteria for Special Education as outlined by federal and state guidelines through the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Direct and related services are provided to those individuals who meet the eligibility criteria for autism, emotional disturbance, hearing impairment/deafness, mental delay, multiple disabilities, orthopedic impairment, other health impaired, specific learning disabilities, speech or language impairment, traumatic brain injury, and visual impairment/blindness. SCA staff regularly monitors each student's progress and provides support. The SCA Special Education team manages procedures for making referrals, conducting evaluations, communicating with families, writing and reviewing Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), maintaining student records, and reporting progress. For further information regarding the special education process, contact the Middle Grades: Superintendent

For those identified with a disability through the Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS), the special education program at SCA works with scholars and families to meet scholars' individual needs by accommodating and/or modifying curriculum, instruction, and/or assessment. SCA's Special Education Team oversees the services provided to scholars with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) so that scholars make progress towards their goals. To ensure the least restrictive environment, as often as the team deems it appropriate, scholars with identified disabilities are included in classes with their peers, with classroom teachers working in consultation with special education teachers, and/or with scholars working directly with special education teachers. SCA follows state and federal guidelines to provide a broad spectrum of special education services to support the specific learning needs of all scholars.

### **English Learners (EL)**

SCA requires families to complete a Home Language Survey as part of the registration process. Information from the survey is used as a first-level screening to ascertain if the scholar may require an additional assessment to determine if he/she is eligible for ESOL services. In addition to providing English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) services to scholars, SCA provides interpreters for parent/teacher conferences and other school-related activities, as needed.

### **Gifted & Talented Program**

SCA complies with the state guidelines for identifying eligibility and placing scholars in the gifted education program. Once eligibility has been established, parents/guardians will be notified of the individualized learning plan created for their scholar. A state-approved model is made available and monitored by a gifted certified professional to support the specific learning needs of scholars identified as gifted. Enrichment and advanced content courses are developed by the subject-specific teachers working with gifted certified personnel.

#### *How are students referred for gifted testing?*

SCA scholars may be eligible for gifted testing via two referral pathways: reported or automatic. With reported referrals, a scholar is referred for consideration by teachers, counselors, administrators, parents/guardians, peers, self, or others with knowledge of a student's academic abilities. SCA scholars who score Level 4: Distinguished on the Georgia Milestones Assessment System (GMAS) in Reading AND/OR Mathematics may be automatically nominated for consideration. For reported referrals, the stakeholder who is making the recommendation will need to complete a nomination form.

The steps in the referral process are:

- An individual initiates the process by completing a nomination form.
- The nominating committee reviews nominations to determine if referral for formal evaluation is warranted. The nominating committee shall make a determination on whether to proceed with formal evaluation. The nominating committee shall include the Middle Grades: Superintendent and at least one classroom teacher. During nominating committee meetings, the committee will record minutes including descriptions of noted

strengths/weaknesses and a rationale for why additional services may be needed with consideration to available data.

#### *How are students identified as gifted?*

Per Georgia State Department of Education Rule 160-4-2-.38, to be eligible for gifted education services, a grades 6-8 student must either score at the 96th percentile on the composite or full scale score of a norm-referenced test of mental ability and meet one of the achievement criteria (mental ability, achievement, creativity, or motivation) or qualify through a multiple-criteria assessment process by meeting the criteria in any three of the following four areas: mental ability, achievement, creativity, and motivation.

## **Family Engagement**

### **Parental Contact Information**

SCA requires parents/guardians to maintain accurate contact information with front office personnel and teachers as this is critical to the safety of students. Parents/Guardians are expected to notify the school with new contact information - including email addresses, phone numbers, home addresses, work numbers, and emergency contacts. Updated/Current contact information will increase the likelihood of strong communication between school and home.

### **Parent/Teacher Contact Procedures**

If a parent/guardian would like to discuss a matter with any staff member, the following procedures must be followed. Parents/Guardians will not be permitted to visit a classroom and/or interrupt instructional time without confirmation from the front office that procedures have been followed. Parents/Guardians will:

1. schedule an appointment with the faculty member prior to the meeting date.
2. report to the office at the time of the agreed upon appointment to give the front office staff an opportunity to notify the faculty member of arrival and to issue a visitor's pass.

### **Chain of Command: Communication**

SCA believes that relationships are of critical importance to the educational experience - and clear/concise communication is key in our ability to establish, support, and sustain these relationships. Except as otherwise provided in the General Public Complaints Policy for alleged violations of state or federal law, a parent with a grievance concerning a particular class, faculty member, or administrator in the school, should resolve the grievance by following the chain of command detailed below. Parents/Guardians will contact:

1. the *teacher/faculty member*. Given that the teacher/faculty member likely has direct knowledge of the circumstance, parents/guardians will begin by scheduling a meeting with the teacher. Parents/Guardians may schedule this meeting by calling the school or sending an email directly to the teacher. Except in emergency circumstances or situations involving imminent danger, parents/guardians shall not confront a teacher about an issue with any student present. If the teacher and parent/guardian agree that it

is in the best interest of the student for him/her to be present for the discussion, they may choose to do so.

2. the *Middle Grades: Superintendent* . If the grievance cannot be resolved with the teacher/faculty member, the parent/guardian will discuss the matter with the Middle Grades: Superintendent .
3. the *Superintendent*. If the grievance cannot be resolved with the teacher/faculty member or the Middle Grades: Superintendent , the parent/guardian will discuss the matter with the Superintendent.
4. the *Board Chair*. If the grievance cannot be resolved after meeting with the teacher, Middle Grades: Superintendent , or Superintendent, then a parent/guardian must submit his/her grievance in writing to the chair of the board. Parental concerns and grievances may also be raised during the community comments portion of the Board meeting. The concern or grievance must be submitted in writing, and no more than two minutes will be granted. It is highly recommended that the concern or grievance be addressed in one of the aforementioned steps before using this option.

### **SCA Learning Environment**

Parents/Guardians and families are expected to follow established norms, rules, and procedures when visiting SCA. SCA administration expects that parents/guardians and families will dress appropriately, use respect and courtesy, and address all employees, other stakeholders, and students in a polite and professional manner. Situations arising in reference to SCA policy, teacher decisions, or administrative decisions will be discussed in a civil, conference setting. Raised voices, threats, or interference with instruction/school activities will warrant removal from the property by civil authorities. Severe and/or problematic behavior incidents will result in restrictions from the property and possible expulsion of the entire family.

### **Contacting Scholars**

If a parent/guardian needs to reach a scholar during the school day, in the case of an emergency, the parent/guardian can contact the front office and the scholar will be pulled out of class and given the message. However, classrooms will not be disrupted for non-emergency messages.

### **SCA Volunteer Program**

Volunteers play a critical role in the mission and vision of SCA. Parents/Guardians and families are encouraged to volunteer in school-wide opportunities communicated throughout the year- via school messaging. Parents/Guardians and families may also contact the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) or specific teachers to offer to assist in the classroom/school setting.

While the SCA PTO is a separate and distinct organization from SCA, all parents are encouraged to join the PTO. Membership dues are \$10.00. Membership allows PTO to support SCA by providing resources and support to our school community. The purpose of the SCA PTO shall be to support the mission statement of SCA. This may include advocacy and educational support, in addition to collaborative efforts deemed necessary by the scholars,

parents, faculty, administration, and the governing board of SCA. PTO Bylaws and Executive Board information can be found on the school's website: [www.scintillacharteracademy.com/pto](http://www.scintillacharteracademy.com/pto).

## **Behavioral Expectations**

SCA aims to equip learners with “life ready” skills to increase the likelihood of long-term success. Within the middle school setting, faculty, teachers, and administration will explicitly teach social emotional learning (SEL) competencies. As a next step, students will be held accountable for following established norms, rules, and procedures in order to maintain a safe, orderly, and respectful environment. SCA recognizes that middle school students need a balance of affirmation for positive choices and redirection in instances where unacceptable behavior is observed. Through self-evaluation of the Spartan 10: Habits of Character, SCA faculty, teachers, and administration employ a proactive approach to effectively support students in working toward positive outcomes.

### **Advising**

As middle school students move into young adolescence and begin to experience rapid and significant developmental change, SCA will intentionally support students in navigating this process. Similar to the K-5 notion of a crew meeting, middle school students will participate in a dedicated advising block where they will engage in goal setting, receive explicit instruction in social emotional learning (SEL) skills, and receive support in self-evaluation of the Spartan 10: Habits of Character. The purpose of this instructional block is to build community and equip students with the soft skills necessary for long-term success.

### **Spartan Showcase**

Spartan Showcase is an opportunity for the SCA: Middle School to come together in celebration of learning and growth. On Friday of each week at a designated time, middle school students will meet in a dedicated location to highlight progress across academics, character development, extracurriculars, and/or sports. The Middle Grades: Superintendent, Program Coordinator, and Athletic Director will work closely with middle school faculty to ensure that all grades and students are represented throughout the year. A portion of this time will also serve as a pep rally to encourage/motivate Scintilla Spartan teams and build comradery as we prepare for competition outside of the school setting.

### **Code of Conduct**

In order to establish a safe and orderly learning environment, all members of the school community - including parents and other stakeholders - must model behaviors that demonstrate respect for one another and for those in authority. The code of conduct for scholars, teachers/staff, parents/guardians, and families is listed below.

*Teacher/Staff - Standards of Conduct:* Teachers/staff are expected to model behaviors that are consistent with SCA's policies and school performance standards. Teachers/Staff are

responsible to support the learning environment by exemplifying the following standards of conduct. Teachers/Staff shall:

- promote mutual respect between scholars and adults.
- be prepared to meet professional responsibilities associated with their respective positions.
- develop and use cooperative discipline strategies, a restorative approach, including the appropriate language of learning techniques, and a consistent school-wide procedure to address conflicts and problem-solve with scholars.
- promote a sense of pride and community as evidenced by a friendly and inviting atmosphere, encouraging actions, and service in the school and community.
- contact a scholar's parent/guardian in cases of serious infractions of the school code of conduct.

*Parent/Guardian/Families - Standards of Conduct:* Parents/Guardians and families of scholars are expected to participate in the following ways. Parents/Guardians and families shall:

- communicate often and routinely with their child's teacher.
- participate in their child's development by attending scheduled conferences.
- remain informed about school policies and requirements of their child's academic program - including homework and projects.
- ensure regular school attendance and preparation.
- participate in school events for home reinforcement of study skills and specific instructional objectives.
- communicate concerns to school staff concerning specific problems or difficulties that may impede the child's learning or well-being using established protocols.
- provide positive support to scholar(s) as well as the school and its faculty and staff.

### **Code of Conduct: Offenses and Level of Disciplinary Action**

While SCA intentionally supports the responsive classroom model and employs alternative discipline strategies, there may be instances where students require redirection and/or consequences to address inappropriate behaviors as defined by an inability to adhere to the Spartan 10: Habits of Character. Though suspension is a widely used disciplinary technique, research has raised serious questions about its long-term adverse effects on students (Hannigan & Hannigan, 2022). Frequent use of suspension can result in undesirable and unintended outcomes, including a less healthy school environment, lower academic achievement, higher levels of disruptive or antisocial behavior, and higher school dropout rates.

In an effort to keep scholars in their classrooms so that learning is not disrupted, SCA incorporates alternative discipline techniques including strategies such as reverse suspension as an initial step. If student behavior requires an administrative consequence, the Middle Grades Superintendent may recommend reverse suspension rather than the consequence of a traditional suspension. Reverse suspension requires the scholar's parent to attend school with the child for the assigned period. Additional examples are included below which align with the alternative discipline approach. This list serves as an example of alternative discipline strategies

which may be used - but does not represent an exhaustive list of strategies. The Middle Grades: Superintendent reserves the right to assign more traditional forms of discipline (e.g., suspension) when the behavior warrants such a consequence.

Infraction	Alternative Discipline Strategy Examples
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student fails to demonstrate respect when speaking and listening.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student may be required to restore harmed relationships by writing an apology letter to impacted stakeholders including, but not limited to, students, administration, and teachers.</li> <li>The student may be required to research tolerance and create a presentation to teach others how to support challenging relationships.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student fails to follow established norms, rules, and procedures as demonstrated by fighting on campus or at a school-related function.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student may be required to establish and self-monitor a restorative contact, under the supervision of the Middle Grades: Superintendent, for a designated period of time, as determined by the Middle Grades: Superintendent.</li> <li>The student may be required to successfully complete an exit behavior exam demonstrating what he/she has learned from the experience prior to resuming full privileges on campus.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student fails to follow established norms, rules, and procedures as demonstrated by damaging materials/property on campus.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student may be charged with shadowing a custodian to document expectations for this position and to take specific required actions to rectify the damage, as deemed appropriate by the Middle Grades: Superintendent.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student fails to demonstrate collegiality and good sportsmanship through use of inappropriate language.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The student may be charged with interviewing select individuals on campus to determine how inappropriate language makes them feel.</li> <li>The student may be required to identify a designated number of positive, appropriate words which may be used in place of each negative/inappropriate word used.</li> </ul>



SCA's Code of Conduct has four levels of infractions and they are determined with consideration to the seriousness of the act. The levels of infraction are detailed as follows:

<b>Levels of Infraction</b>	
<b>Level I</b>	<p>Level I infractions include any violation of established norms and procedures, including, but not limited to, Spartan 10: Habits of Character, which regulate the operation of the school and teaching and learning processes. Within the Level I infraction category, the frequency of the occurrence will influence the determination of an appropriate disciplinary response. High levels of frequency of specified Level I occurrences may result in reclassification to a higher level infraction category. In the majority of instances, level I infractions will be handled using the 4-step protocol established for middle grades discipline procedures. Upon completion of the first three steps for a level I infraction, the teacher shall use the office referral process, as appropriate. At this level, the Middle Grades: Superintendent shall impose appropriate disciplinary consequences including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <i>Restorative Practices</i>: prompting students to complete a task to restore relationships affected by the Level I infraction; Examples include, but are not limited to, behavior contracts, community service, restitution, and/or apology letters.</li> <li>● <i>Reflective Practices</i>: prompting students to reflect about the decisions made to increase the likelihood of a future positive outcome; Examples include, but are not limited to, reflection documents, role-playing of scenarios, and/or interviews.</li> <li>● <i>Instructional Practices</i>: instructing students to ensure a full scope of understanding of the Level I infraction, implications of the Level I infraction, and to develop skills required to deter students from engaging in the Level I infraction again; Examples include, but are not limited to, behavior lessons, administration of a behavior exam, and/or required teaching opportunities to demonstrate an increased level of understanding.</li> </ul>
<b>Level II</b>	<p>Level II infractions include misbehavior of which frequency or seriousness disrupts the learning climate, environment, or teaching and learning processes of the school. Level II infractions may also seriously affect the student's own education. Infractions at this level may include Level I infractions committed by a student who continues or repeats a specified infraction after being disciplined at Level I.</p> <p>At this level, the Middle Grades: Superintendent shall impose appropriate disciplinary consequences including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Additional alternative disciplinary requirements which may include a combination of restorative, reflective, and instructional practices</li> <li>● Short-term restriction from SCA programs or other activities</li> <li>● Up to three days of reverse or out-of-school suspension</li> <li>● Development/amendment of an action plan</li> <li>● Any other disciplinary technique that positively promotes the scholar Code of Conduct and the Spartan 10: Habits of Character</li> </ul>
<b>Level III</b>	<p>Level III infractions include misbehavior of which consequence may pose a threat to the health and safety of others in school or has a long-term effect on the individual. Infractions at this level may also include Level I/II infractions committed by a student who continues or repeats a specified infraction after being disciplined at Levels I and/or II. Level III infractions require administrative intervention and may require the use of outside agencies and/or law enforcement.</p>

	<p>At this level, the Middle Grades: Superintendent shall impose appropriate disciplinary consequences including, but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term restriction from SCA programs, classes, and/or other activities</li> <li>• Reverse or out-of-school suspension for up to ten days</li> </ul>
<b>Level IV</b>	<p>Level IV infractions include any misbehavior of which consequences pose a serious and immediate threat to the health and safety of others. Infractions at this level may also include Level I/II/III infractions committed by a student who continues or repeats a specified infraction after being disciplined at Levels I, II, and/or III. Level III infractions require administrative intervention and may require the use of outside agencies and/or law enforcement.</p> <p>At this level, the Middle Grades: Superintendent shall require the scholar and the scholar's family to engage in a disciplinary hearing which may result in expulsion.</p>

**Disciplinary Hearings**

A scholar accused of committing a Level IV offense as defined in the SCA: Middle Grades Scholar Code of Conduct and Discipline plan may be referred for a Disciplinary Hearing for a determination as to whether a long-term suspension or expulsion is appropriate. A long-term suspension means denial to a scholar of the right to attend school and take part in any school function for period ten (10) or more school days. Expulsion shall mean the removal of the scholar from enrollment at SCA for the remainder of the school year or longer. A long-term suspension or expulsion will normally follow a short-term suspension. There are exceptions, however, that could prompt the school administrator to move forward with the immediate dismissal of a scholar. Examples of such violations include, but are not limited to, bringing a weapon to school, assault on a scholar or school personnel, or other chargeable offenses.

A disciplinary hearing officer shall employ the tribunal process to hold hearings in any of the instances previously described, as required by O.C.G.A. § 20-2-753. Per O.C.G.A. § 20-2-759, the disciplinary hearing officer shall have initial training prior to serving as a disciplinary hearing officer, undergo continuing education so as to continue to serve in such capacity, and function as an independent, neutral arbiter. Per SBOE rule 160-4-8-.15, individuals selected by SCA to serve as disciplinary hearing officers must either be: 1) in good standing with the State Bar of Georgia; 2) have experience as a teacher, counselor, or administrator in a public school system; or 3) actively serving as a hearing officer under an existing contact/agreement with a Georgia school system and completed an approved Georgia Department of Education (GaDOE) tribunal training course. SCA will ensure that its disciplinary hearing policies and practices align to state law and corresponding SBOE rules. A comprehensive description of the disciplinary hearing process is available, by request.

**Middle School Discipline Procedure**

Level I infractions (see previous description) will be tracked using a 4-step discipline plan. Each teacher will track the behavior of a student in his/her classroom only. Infractions in one class will not be carried over into another classroom. Level I infractions will be documented within the SCA: Middle School [Student Success Guide](#). In the event that a student commits a level I infraction, the following steps will take place:

- *Step 1:* Parent notified via behavior log.
- *Step 2:* Parent notified via phone call from teacher.
- *Step 3:* Parent notified via email and a student privilege may be revoked.
- *Step 4:* Teacher submits an office referral for administrative consequence to be applied.

## **Policy Prohibiting Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, and Intimidation**

SCA believes that all scholars have a right to a safe and healthy school environment. SCA has an obligation to promote mutual respect, tolerance, and acceptance among scholars, staff, and volunteers. Behavior that infringes on the safety of any scholar will not be tolerated. A scholar shall not bully, harass, or intimidate another scholar through words or actions. Such behavior includes but is not limited to: direct physical contact such as hitting or shoving; verbal assaults such as teasing or name-calling; the use of electronic methods to harass, threaten or humiliate, and social isolation and/or manipulation.

This policy applies to scholars on school grounds, while traveling on a school bus during a school-sponsored activity, by use of data or software that is accessed through a computer, computer system, computer network, or other electronic technology of a local school system or acts of cyberbullying which occur through the use of electronic communication, whether or not such electronic act originated on school property or with school equipment.

Any form of electronic bullying (cyberbullying) using school equipment, school networks, email systems or committed at school is strictly prohibited. Cyberbullying includes but is not limited to: electronic communication directed specifically at scholars or school personnel, an electronic communication that is maliciously intended for the purpose of threatening the safety of those specified or substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school, and/or any electronic communications that create a reasonable fear of harm to the scholars' or school personnel's person or property or has a high likelihood of succeeding in that purpose.

The following actions will be taken when bullying is reported:

1. *Investigate:* Upon receipt of any report of bullying, SCA will direct an immediate investigation involving appropriate personnel. The investigation will begin no later than the following school day. The investigation shall include interviewing the alleged perpetrator(s) and victim(s), identified witnesses, teacher(s) and staff members and reviewing video surveillance if available. School resource officers, school counselors, and/or other support staff should be utilized for their expertise as determined by the circumstances of the matter.
2. *Notify:* At an appropriate time during or after the investigation, the parent, guardian or any other person who has control or charge of the accused and the victim will be notified. If the incident involves an injury or similar situation, appropriate medical

attention should be provided and the parent/guardian will be notified immediately.

3. *Discipline*: Upon confirming that bullying has occurred, the accused scholar should be charged with bullying and given an age-appropriate consequence which shall include, at a minimum and without limitation, disciplinary action or counseling as appropriate under the circumstances. SCA will clearly communicate to all parties that retaliation following a report of bullying is strictly prohibited and may result in strong disciplinary action. Upon a finding by the disciplinary hearing officer, panel, or tribunal, if a scholar in grades 6-12 is found to have committed the offense of bullying three times during the school year, SCA will assign the scholar to an alternative setting that fulfills the requirements of an alternative program under state law.
4. *Follow Up*: Follow-up is important to the accused and the victim. After-care and follow-up will occur.

All scholars and/or staff shall immediately report incidents of bullying, cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation to the Superintendent or designee. School staff members are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur. Each complaint of bullying shall be promptly investigated.

The procedures for intervening in bullying behavior include, but are not limited, to the following:

- All staff, scholars, and their parents will receive a summary of this policy prohibiting bullying at the beginning of the school year as part of the scholar code of conduct.
- The school shall keep a report of bullying and the results of an investigation confidential.
- Staff are expected to immediately intervene when they see a bullying incident occur or upon receipt of any report of bullying.
- People witnessing or experiencing bullying are encouraged to report the incident to the school principal designee.

SCA's policy prohibiting bullying includes but is not limited to the following:

- Scholars are expected to immediately report incidents of bullying to the Superintendent or designee.
- Scholars can rely on staff to promptly investigate each complaint of bullying in a thorough and confidential manner.
- If the complainant scholar or the parent of the scholar feels that an appropriate resolution of the investigation or complaint has not been reached after consulting the Superintendent, the scholar or the parent of the scholar should contact the local superintendent or his or her designee.
- SCA prohibits retaliatory behavior against any complainant or any participant in the complaint process.

Disciplinary action will be taken after each incident of bullying and upon a finding of guilt.

Disciplinary action after the first incident of bullying may include consequences as defined in SCA's Code of Conduct.

If necessary, counseling and other interventions should also be provided to address the social/emotional, behavioral, and academic needs of scholars who are victims of bullying and scholars who commit an offense of bullying.

Scholars, parents/guardians, and other stakeholders may report incidents of bullying to an administrator, teacher, counselor, or other staff members by using the school district's complaint procedures or by calling the Georgia Department of Education's 1-877 SAY-STOP (1-877-729-7867) School Safety Hotline.

# Notification of Student Rights

## RIGHT TO KNOW PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF TEACHERS AND PARAPROFESSIONALS

Date: August 8, 2022

Dear Parents,

In compliance with the requirements of the Every Students Succeeds Act, Scintilla Charter Academy would like to inform you that you may request information about the professional qualifications of your student's teacher(s) and/ or paraprofessional(s). The following information may be requested:

- Whether the student's teacher—
  - has met State qualification and licensing criteria for the grade levels and subject areas in which the teacher provides instruction;
  - is teaching under emergency or other provisional status through which State qualification or licensing criteria have been waived; and
  - is teaching in the field of discipline of the certification of the teacher.
  
- Whether the child is provided services by paraprofessionals and, if so, their qualifications.

If you wish to request information concerning your child's teacher's qualification, please contact the Superintendent, Mandy Brewington at 229-244-5750.

Sincerely,



Mandy Brewington  
Superintendent

## General Public Complaints Policy

SCA Student, Parent/Guardian, or General Public Complaints Policy Purpose: The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines to students, parents/guardians, or members of the general public for filing complaints against the school or employee of the school on any and all matters including complaints concerning Federal Programs: Title I, Part A; Title I, Part C; Title I, Part D; Title II, Part A; Title II; Title III, Part A; Title IV, Part A, Title IV, Part B; the McKinney-Vento Act;

School Improvement 1003(a) and 1003(g) (SIG); IDEA, and Emergency Relief Funds CARES Act, CRRSA Act, ARP Act.

### **Dispute Resolution**

1. The complaints process may be initiated directly to the Superintendent .
2. Parents, Guardians, or Unaccompanied youth who initiate a complaint, must do so in writing.
3. Written notice should be complete, as brief as possible, and simply stated.
4. The Superintendent will provide a written response to the dispute within 5 school days.
  - a. The response will include a notice of the right to appeal, to an ad hoc Appeals Committee, the decision of the Superintendent .
5. If the Parent, Guardian, or Unaccompanied youth does not agree with the decision of the Superintendent , an appeal may be filed with the Appeals Committee.
6. The Appeals Committee will provide a written response to the appeal within 5 school days. The response will include a notice of the right to appeal his/her decision to the Governing Board.
7. If the Staff Member does not agree with the decision of the Appeals Committee, an appeal may be filed with the Governing Board.
8. Within thirty working days of receipt of the appeal of the Appeals Committee's decision, the Appeals Committee will present the matter to the Governing Board at its regular meeting or at a special meeting called for that purpose. The Board will review the original complaint, the response of the Superintendent , the response of the Appeals Committee, and the response of the complainant. In addition, the Board may, but is not required to, hear directly from any individuals with knowledge of any relevant facts relating to the complaint.
9. The Governing Board will either uphold the recommendation of the Appeals Committee or require the school to take some other action in response to the complaint.
  - a. A copy of the action of the Board will be furnished to the complainant, either as a part of the minutes of the Governing Board or as a separate written statement that will include the right to appeal to the Georgia Department of Education.
  - b. The Board will be the final reviewing authority within the school.
10. If the Parent, Guardian, or Unaccompanied youth is dissatisfied with the decision of the Governing Board, an appeal may be filed with the Deputy Appeals Committee of Teacher and Student Support at the Georgia Department of Education, 1854 Twin Towers East, Atlanta, GA 30334.

### **Notice of Non-Discrimination**

SCA does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities. SCA also provides equal access or a fair opportunity to meet to any group officially affiliated with the Boy Scouts of America or any other youth group listed in Title 36 of the United States Code (as a patriotic society) that wishes to conduct a meeting within the open or limited public forum offered by the school. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries regarding these non-discrimination policies:

Mandy Brewington  
Superintendent  
229-244-5750

For further information on notice of non-discrimination, please contact the Office for Civil Rights:  
U.S. Department of Education Office of Civil Rights  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202-4605  
1-800-421-3481

### **Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

SCA, in order to fulfill the obligations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, is required to inform and provide full educational opportunities to all individuals with disabilities ages birth through twenty-one.

SCA needs your assistance to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities. This public awareness notice is to inform parents and other individuals/agencies of the availability of educational services and related services to all individuals who reside within the jurisdiction of the SCA and who are between the ages of birth through twenty-one, regardless of the severity of their disability. This includes individuals in all public and private agencies and institutions and highly mobile children with disabilities, such as migrant and homeless children, who reside within the legal boundaries of Lowndes County.

Anyone aware of an individual who may benefit from educational services and related services is encouraged to call SCA, at 229-244-5750.

### **Public Information**

SCA has the following documents available for review by parents of children with disabilities and to the general public:

1. Comprehensive Plan for Special Education
2. IDEA Federal Applications for Funds
3. Special Education Accountability/Monitoring Final Report
4. Applications, evaluations, periodic program plans or reports relating to federal programs including auditor's reports, statements of assurance, budget, and grant materials

For more information regarding IDEA, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact SCA's Special Education Contact:

Special Education Contact  
Melissa Carter  
229-244-5750  
mcarter@scintillacharteracademy.com

### **Child Find**

SCA recognizes its responsibility to provide a free and appropriate public education to eligible students with disabilities within its geographical boundaries. SCA has a "child find" process that is designed to locate, identify and evaluate children with disabilities residing within its geographical boundaries kindergarten through grade 8.



If you know a child who lives within the boundaries of the Scintilla Charter Academy School District and who may be in the need of special education and/or related services, please contact the Scintilla Charter Academy's Director of Special Education for further information regarding the referral and evaluation process.

Scintilla Charter Academy's Child Find process extends to students with physical or mental impairments that substantially limit a major life activity. Such students may be eligible for services or accommodations pursuant to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Section 504 is a Federal civil rights statute that prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities and programs receiving Federal financial assistance. Please contact Scintilla Charter Academy's Section 504 Coordinator for more information regarding Section 504 eligibility and services.

Special Education Contact  
Melissa Carter  
229-244-5750  
mcarter@scintillacharteracademy.com

#### **Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973**

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is a nondiscrimination statute enacted to prohibit discrimination and to assure that disabled students have educational opportunities and benefits equal to those provided to nondisabled students.

For more information regarding Section 504, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact SCA's Section 504 Coordinator:

Section 504 Coordinator  
Stacie Haire  
2171 E. Park Avenue  
Valdosta, GA 31602  
229-244-5750  
shaire@scintillacharteracademy.com

#### **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**

SCA complies with all aspects of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, including amendments from the Americans with Disabilities Amendment Act of 2008. As a result, SCA ensures that all students, employees, and qualified individuals have access to SCA's programs without regard to his or her disability. For more information regarding ADA, or if you have questions or need additional assistance, please contact SCA's ADA Coordinator:

ADA Coordinator  
Melissa Carter  
2171 E. Park Avenue

Valdosta, GA 31602  
229-244-5750  
mcarter@scintillacharteracademy.com

### **Notification of Rights Under the Family Educational Rights to Privacy Act (FERPA)**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

1. The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day Scintilla Charter Academy receives a request for access. Parents or eligible students who wish to inspect their child's or their education records should submit to the Superintendent a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.
2. The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA. Parents or eligible students who wish to ask Scintilla Charter Academy to amend their child's or their education record should write to the Superintendent of School, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and 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.
3. The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent. One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. The criteria for determining who constitutes a school official and what constitutes a legitimate educational interest must be set forth in the school's or school district's annual notification for FERPA rights. A school official typically includes a person employed by the school or school district as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer, contractor, or consultant who, while not employed by the school, performs an institutional service or function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official typically 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 school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school or school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

4. The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Scintilla Charter Academy to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office  
U.S. Department of Education  
400 Maryland Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20202

See the list below of the disclosures that elementary and secondary schools may make without consent. FERPA permits the disclosure of PII from students' education records, without consent of the parent or eligible student, if the disclosure meets certain conditions found in § 99.31 of the FERPA regulations. Except for disclosures to school officials, disclosures related to some judicial orders or lawfully issued subpoenas, disclosures of directory information, and disclosures to the parent or eligible student, § 99.32 of the FERPA regulations requires the school to record the disclosure. Parents and eligible students have a right to inspect and review the record of disclosures. A school may disclose PII from the education records of a student without obtaining prior written consent of the parents or the eligible student –

- To other school officials, including teachers, within the educational agency or institution whom the school has determined to have legitimate educational interests. This includes contractors, consultants, volunteers, or other parties to whom the school has outsourced institutional services or functions, provided that the conditions listed in § 99.31(a)(1)(i)(B)(1) - (a)(1)(i)(B)(3) are met. (§ 99.31(a)(1))
- To officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer, subject to the requirements of § 99.34. (§ 99.31(a)(2))
- To authorized representatives of the U. S. Comptroller General, the U. S. Attorney General, the U.S. Secretary of Education, or State and local educational authorities, such as the State educational agency (SEA) in the parent or eligible student's State. Disclosures under this provision may be made, subject to the requirements of § 99.35, in connection with an audit or evaluation of Federal- or State-supported education programs, or for the enforcement of or compliance with Federal legal requirements that relate to those programs. These entities may make further disclosures of PII to outside entities that are designated by them as

their authorized representatives to conduct any audit, evaluation, or enforcement or compliance activity on their behalf if applicable requirements are met. (§§ 99.31(a)(3) and 99.35)

- In connection with financial aid for which the student has applied or which the student has received, if the information is necessary for such purposes as to determine eligibility for the aid, determine the amount of the aid, determine the conditions of the aid, or enforce the terms and conditions of the aid. (§ 99.31(a)(4))
- To State and local officials or authorities to whom information is specifically allowed to be reported or disclosed by a State statute that concerns the juvenile justice system and the system's ability to effectively serve, prior to adjudication, the student whose records were released, subject to § 99.38. (§ 99.31(a)(5))
- To organizations conducting studies for, or on behalf of, the school, in order to: (a) develop, validate, or administer predictive tests; (b) administer student aid programs; or (c) improve instruction, if applicable requirements are met. (§ 99.31(a)(6))
- To accrediting organizations to carry out their accrediting functions. (§ 99.31(a)(7))
- To parents of an eligible student if the student is a dependent for IRS tax purposes. (§ 99.31(a)(8))
- To comply with a judicial order or lawfully issued subpoena if applicable requirements are met. (§ 99.31(a)(9))
- To appropriate officials in connection with a health or safety emergency, subject to § 99.36. (§ 99.31(a)(10))
- Information the school has designated as "directory information" if applicable requirements under § 99.37 are met. (§ 99.31(a)(11))
- To an agency caseworker or other representative of a State or local child welfare agency or tribal organization who is authorized to access a student's case plan when such agency or organization is legally responsible, in accordance with State or tribal law, for the care and protection of the student in foster care placement. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(L))
- To the Secretary of Agriculture or authorized representatives of the Food and Nutrition Service for purposes of conducting program monitoring, evaluations, and performance measurements of programs authorized under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act or the Child Nutrition Act of 1966, under certain conditions. (20 U.S.C. § 1232g(b)(1)(K))

### **FERPA Directory Information**

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), a Federal law, requires that Scintilla Charter Academy, with certain exceptions, obtain your written consent prior to the disclosure of personally identifiable information from your child's education records. However, Scintilla Charter Academy may disclose appropriately designated "directory information" without written consent, unless you have advised the Scintilla Charter Academy to the contrary in accordance with Scintilla Charter Academy procedures. The primary purpose of directory information is to

allow the Scintilla Charter Academy to include information from your child's education records in certain school publications. Examples include:

- A playbill, showing your student's role in a drama production;
- The annual yearbook; Honor roll or other recognition lists;
- Graduation programs; and
- Sports activity sheets, such as for wrestling, showing weight and height of team members.

Directory information, which is information that is generally not considered harmful or an invasion of privacy if released, can also be disclosed to outside organizations without a parent's prior written consent. Outside organizations include, but are not limited to, companies that manufacture class rings or publish yearbooks. In addition, two federal laws require local educational agencies (LEAs) receiving assistance under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended (ESEA) to provide military recruiters, upon request, with the following information – names, addresses, and telephone listings – unless parents have advised the LEA that they do not want their student's information disclosed without their prior written consent.

Pursuant to OCGA §20-2-786, if you do not want your child to be included in photographs, videos, or voice recordings, you must notify Scintilla Charter Academy, in writing, by August 31st, 2023. Provided however, parents may not opt-out of their child being included in photographs, videos, or voice recordings made by the School for public safety or security purposes. Scintilla Charter Academy has designated the following information as directory information:

- Student's name
- Address
- Telephone listing
- Electronic mail address
- Photograph
- Date and place of birth
- Dates of attendance
- Grade level
- Participation in officially recognized activities and sports
- Weight and height of members of athletic teams
- Degrees, honors, and awards received
- The most recent educational agency or institution attended
- Student ID number, user ID, or other unique personal identifier used to communicate in electronic systems but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's identity, such as a PIN, password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user
- A student ID number or other unique personal identifier that is displayed on a student ID badge, but only if the identifier cannot be used to gain access to education records except when used in conjunction with one or more factors that authenticate the user's

identity, such as a PIN, password, or other factor known or possessed only by the authorized user.

### **Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA)**

PPRA affords parents of elementary and secondary students certain rights regarding the conduct of surveys, collection and use of information for marketing purposes, and certain physical exams. These include, but are not limited to, the right to:

- *Consent* before students are required to submit to a survey that concerns one or more of the following protected areas (“protected information survey”) if the survey is funded in whole or in part by a program of the U.S. Department of Education (ED)–
  1. Political affiliations or beliefs of the student or student’s parent;
  2. Mental or psychological problems of the student or student’s family;
  3. Sex behavior or attitudes;
  4. Illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
  5. Critical appraisals of others with whom respondents have close family relationships;
  6. Legally recognized privileged relationships, such as with lawyers, doctors, or ministers;
  7. Religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student’s parent; or
  8. Income, other than as required by law to determine program eligibility.

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

1. Any other protected information survey, regardless of funding;
2. Any non-emergency, invasive physical exam or screening required as a condition of attendance, administered by the school or its agent, and not necessary to protect the immediate health and safety of a student, except for hearing, vision, or scoliosis screenings, or any physical exam or screening permitted or required under State law; and
3. Activities involving collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for marketing or to sell or otherwise distribute the information to others. (This does not apply to the collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for the exclusive purpose of developing, evaluating, or providing educational products or services for, or to, students or educational institutions.)

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

1. Protected information surveys of students and surveys created by a third party;
2. Instruments used to collect personal information from students for any of the above marketing, sales, or other distribution purposes; and
3. Instructional material used as part of the educational curriculum.

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

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

- Collection, disclosure, or use of personal information collected from students for marketing, sales, or other distribution.
- Administration of any protected information survey not funded in whole or in part by ED.
- Any non-emergency, invasive physical examination or screening as described above.

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

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

### **Information for Homeless Students**

The McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (the Act) ensures educational rights for children and youth experiencing homelessness. The primary goal is educational stability. The Act defines homeless students as those who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. This includes:

1. Children and youth who are forced to share the housing of other persons due to the loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; live in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; live in emergency or transitional shelters; are abandoned in hospitals; or are awaiting foster care placement;
2. Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is not designed for or ordinarily used as regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;

3. Children and youth who live in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; or,
4. Migratory children are considered homeless when they are living in circumstances set forth in items 1, 2, and 3. Unaccompanied Youth are students who are not in the physical custody of a parent/guardian and are living in a homeless situation.

Homeless students have certain educational rights and can:

- enroll without delay in school without proof of residency or permanent address, immunization, school records, or other documents or while documentation is being obtained
- choose between the local school where they are living or the school last attended before becoming homeless, when requested by the parent and determined by the district to be feasible and in the student's best interest
- attend school and participate in school programs with children who are not homeless; and receive all the school services available to other students including transportation services, special educational services where applicable, and meals through the school meals programs

If you believe your child may qualify for assistance under this policy, please contact your child's homeroom teacher or SCA's Homeless Liaison:

Amanda Miller, SCA Homeless Liaison

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

Staci Haire, SCA Counselor

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

2171 East Park Avenue

Valdosta, GA 31602

Phone: 229.244.5750

Fax: 229.333.0283

### **Title IX**

SCA does not discriminate on the basis of sex in the education program or activity it operates, and that it is required by Title IX and this part not to discriminate in such a manner. The requirement not to discriminate in the education program or activity extends to admission and employment, and inquiries about the application of Title IX and this part to such recipient may be referred to the recipient's Title IX Coordinator, to the Assistant Secretary, or both. Students, parents, and applicants for admission have the right to file a formal complaint alleging noncompliance with regulations outlined in Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 as follows:

### **Title IX Grievance Policy**

Level 1: Principal or Immediate Supervisor



A student or parent with a sex discrimination complaint may discuss it with the teacher, counselor, or building administrator involved. Level 1 of the grievance procedure is informal and optional and may be bypassed by the grievant.

Level 2: Title IX and Section 504 Coordinator

If the grievance is not resolved at Level 1 and the grievant wishes to pursue the grievance, it may be formalized by filing a complaint in writing on a Compliance Violation Form. This form may be obtained from the Title IX and Section 504 Coordinator.

The complaint shall state the nature of the grievance and the remedy requested. The filing of the formal, written complaint at Level 2 must be within fifteen (15) working days from the day of the event giving rise to the grievance or from the date the grievant could reasonably become aware of such an occurrence. The grievant may request that a meeting concerning the complaint be held with the Title IX and Section 504 Coordinator. A minor student may be accompanied at that meeting by a parent or guardian. The Title IX and Section 504 Coordinator shall investigate the complaint and attempt to solve it. A written report from the Compliance Officer to the complainant regarding action taken will be sent within fifteen (15) working days after receipt of the complaint.

Level 3: Superintendent

If the complaint is not resolved at Level 2, the grievant may proceed to Level 3 by presenting a written appeal to the Superintendent within ten (10) working days after the grievant receives the report from the Title IX and Section 504 Coordinator. The grievant may request a meeting with the Superintendent or his/her designee. The Superintendent or his/her designee has the option of meeting with the grievant to discuss the appeal. A decision will be rendered by the Superintendent or his/her designee within ten (10) working days after receiving the written appeal.

Level 4: Governing Board

If the complaint is not resolved at Level 3, the grievant may proceed to Level 4 by presenting a written appeal to the Chair of the SCA Governing Board within ten (10) working days after the grievant receives the report from the Superintendent. The grievant may request a meeting with the Board. The Board has the option of meeting with the grievant to discuss the appeal. A decision will be rendered by the Board at their next regularly scheduled meeting. The grievant will be notified in writing of the decision within ten (10) working days after the Board's action. The procedure in no way denies the right of the grievant to file a formal complaint with the Office for Civil Rights, or other agencies available for mediation or rectification of rights grievances, or to seek private counsel for complaints alleging discrimination.

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### **Reporting Acts of Alleged Sexual Abuse or Misconduct**

The following is the reporting process for students to follow in reporting instances of alleged inappropriate behavior by a teacher, administrator, or another school employee toward a student. This process shall not prohibit the ability of a student to report the incident to law enforcement authorities.

1. Any student (or parent or friend of a student) who has been the victim of an act of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct by a teacher, administrator or other School District employee is urged to make an oral report of the act to any teacher, counselor or administrator at his/her school.
2. Any teacher, counselor, volunteer, or administrator receiving a report of sexual abuse or sexual misconduct of student by a teacher, administrator, or other employees shall make an oral report of the incident immediately by telephone or otherwise to the school's Superintendent of School, Assistant Superintendent or designee, and shall submit a written report of the incident to the school's Superintendent of School, Assistant Superintendent or designee within 24 hours. If the Superintendent of School or Assistant Superintendent is the person accused of the sexual abuse or sexual misconduct, the oral and written reports should be made to the other.
3. Superintendent of School, Assistant Superintendent or designee receiving a report of sexual abuse as defined in O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 shall make an oral report immediately to the school counselor, but in no case later than 24 hours from the time there is reasonable cause to believe a child has been abused. The school counselor shall report the accusation of sexual misconduct and/or sexual abuse to the local law enforcement agency believed to have jurisdiction in the case and to a child welfare agency providing protective services as designated by the Department of Human Services in the manner determined by such agency.

Reports of acts of sexual misconduct against a student by a teacher, administrator, or other employee not covered by O.C.G.A. § 19-7-5 shall be investigated immediately by school or system personnel. To protect the integrity of the process and to limit repeated interviews with the student, the designated system personnel is required to take a written statement from the student prior to any other person. If the investigation of the allegation of sexual misconduct indicates a reasonable cause to believe that the report of sexual misconduct is valid, the Superintendent of School, Assistant Superintendent or designee shall make an immediate report to local police authorities. The SCSC and the Professional Standards Commission Ethics Division must also be notified of any validated acts of sexual misconduct.



## SCA: Middle School Handbook Acknowledgement 2022-2023

PLEASE COMPLETE THIS FORM AND RETURN IT TO YOUR OLDEST MIDDLE SCHOOL SCHOLAR'S HOMEROOM TEACHER.

We/I have read and understand all policies and procedures outlined in this [handbook](#). Specifically, I have reviewed and understand the following policies and information and agree to comply with the guidelines and requirements outlined in each.

Please, initial each section indicating you have specifically reviewed and sign the acknowledgement at the bottom:

- \_\_\_\_\_ SCA Attendance Policy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Technology Acceptable Use Policy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Interviewing, Photographing, and Videotaping of Scholars by Staff or Media
- \_\_\_\_\_ SCA Dress Code
- \_\_\_\_\_ Promotion & Retention Policy
- \_\_\_\_\_ Grading Procedures
- \_\_\_\_\_ Behavior Expectations/Code of Conduct
- \_\_\_\_\_ Notification of Student Rights

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE, LIST ALL *MIDDLE SCHOOL* SCHOLARS IN YOUR HOUSEHOLD.

Scholar Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

HR Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Scholar Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

HR Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

Scholar Name \_\_\_\_\_ Grade \_\_\_\_\_

HR Teacher \_\_\_\_\_