



# CHARACTER EDUCATION PLAN

*Seminole Science Charter School*

# 2025-2026

## WHAT IS CHARACTER EDUCATION?

Character education enables students and adults in a school community to understand and manage emotions, care about themselves and others, establish and maintain positive relationships, learn, and use ethical values in everyday life, and make responsible decisions.

## CHARACTER.ORG

A non-partisan organization that advocates for character, Character.org is comprised of educators, researchers, business, and civic leaders who care deeply about the vital role that character will play in our future. Their mission is to provide global leadership, voice, and resources for developing character in families, schools, and organizations.

Founded in 1993, Character.org is widely known for its *11 Principles Framework for Schools: A Guide to Cultivating a Culture of Character*.

## 11 PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE CHARACTER EDUCATION

- 1) Core values are defined, implemented, and embedded into school culture.
- 2) The school defines “character” comprehensively to include thinking, feeling, and doing.
- 3) The school uses a comprehensive, intentional, and proactive approach to develop character.
- 4) The school creates a caring community.
- 5) The school provides students with opportunities for moral action.
- 6) The school offers a meaningful and challenging academic curriculum that respects all learners, develops their character, and helps them succeed.
- 7) The school fosters students’ self-motivation.
- 8) All staff share the responsibility for developing, implementing, and modeling ethical character.
- 9) The school’s character initiative has shared leadership and long-range support for continuous improvement.
- 10) The school engages families and community as partners in the character initiative.
- 11) The school assesses its implementation of character education, its culture and climate, and the character growth of students on a regular basis.

## MISSION AND VISION

### Mission

To provide students with a well-rounded education with special emphasis on Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM), and Reading in the light of research-based, proven, and innovative instructional methods in a stimulating environment.

## Vision

To empower all students with a STEM education which will help them reach their maximum potential and guide them to a promising and successful career.

## PURPOSE

The school is committed to the encouragement of intellectual, emotional, physical, and social growth of the student population. Character development is implemented daily in classrooms which helps directly with the improvement of academic performance, as well as decreases in undesirable behavior.

## CORE VALUES

At Seminole Science Charter School, our core values are as follows: we support each other, contribute to our community, and strive for excellence in all we do!

*Date Established: August 2015*

*Date of Last Review: September 2025*

## GOALS

1. Students understand that good character consists of attributes reflecting positive moral values, strengths, habits, and behavior. They know that their character (who they are inside, even when others are not looking) will define them, shape their reputation, and determine who they are likely to act.
2. Students understand that their character is a product of their values and choices.
3. Students accept and demonstrate personal responsibility to create and improve their character by truthful efforts to strengthen their commitment and adherence to ethical values and principles.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### Character Trait of the Month

Teachers include the “Character Strength of the Month” into their curriculum. Stories are read to the students reflecting the traits value of the month. Some related activities are provided for the teachers. Members of the community are invited to the school to read books addressing the value of the month. Students work together with their reading buddies monthly to enforce character strengths.

Commendation points are earned as a way to recognize and reward students for showcasing our monthly character traits, positive behaviors, or actions. These points are typically given when a student is observed doing something good, such as demonstrating kindness, assisting others, or excelling in their responsibilities.

Students will track these commendation points in their portfolios quarterly so they can see their progress and achievements, fostering a growth mindset, intrinsic motivation, and a feeling of pride in their academic journey.

## August

**School Pride:** Feeling a connection to the school community and a willingness to represent the school's values.

A person may show School Pride by the following examples:

- Learning how to recite our core values:
  - “Our Stingray Core Values are:
    - To support each other
    - To contribute to our community
    - To strive for excellence in all we do!”
- Wearing School Colors or Apparel: Students can wear clothing that features their school's colors, logos, or mascots on designated spirit days or throughout the week.
- Participating in School Events: Engaging in school events such as assemblies, sports games, and fundraisers fosters a sense of community and pride.
- Creating Artwork: Students can create posters, banners, or artwork that celebrate their school, which can be displayed in hallways or during events.
- Joining School Clubs or Teams: Participation in clubs, sports teams, or student government allows students to contribute to their school community and build camaraderie.
- Volunteering for School Projects: Helping with school clean-up days, community service projects, or organizing events shows commitment and pride in their school environment.
- Cheering for Peers: Supporting classmates during sports events, performances, or competitions encourages a positive school spirit and fosters teamwork.
- Sharing Positive Stories: Students can share their favorite experiences or achievements related to their school, whether through presentations, writing, or social media (with parental guidance).
- Engaging in School Traditions: Participating in established school traditions, such as spirit weeks or annual celebrations, helps reinforce a sense of belonging and pride.

## September

**Self-Control:** The ability to manage one's emotions, behaviors, and reactions in difficult or challenging situations.

A person may show Self-Control by the following examples:

- Impulse control: Resisting the urge to blurt out answers in class, waiting your turn to speak, and thinking before acting.
- Emotional regulation: Staying calm when frustrated or angry, using words to express feelings instead of acting out, and taking a time-out when needed.
- Delayed gratification: Choosing to complete homework before playing video games, saving money for a desired purchase, and resisting the temptation of unhealthy snacks.
- Task management: Focusing on schoolwork and avoiding distractions, setting personal deadlines for assignments, and taking good notes.

- Mindfulness: Practicing deep breathing exercise, engaging in mindful activities like nature walks, and focusing on the present moment.
- Positive self-talk: Recognizing and challenging negative thoughts, replacing them with positive affirmations, and using positive self-talk to manage difficult situation.
- Setting goals: Identifying short-term and long-term goals and developing strategies to achieve them.
- Avoiding temptation: Removing or minimizing exposure to triggers that lead to impulsive or unwanted behaviors.

## October

**Respect:** Characterized by treating others with kindness, dignity, and consideration. It can also involve listening to others, following rules, and being honest.

A person may show Respect by the following examples:

- Listening Actively: Paying attention when others are speaking, whether it's a teacher, classmate, or guest speaker, and showing that they value what is being said.
- Using Polite Language: Saying "please," "thank you," and "excuse me" in their interactions with others to show consideration and appreciation.
- Following Directions: Respecting authority by listening to and following the instructions given by teachers and staff.
- Being Inclusive: Welcoming classmates into games or group activities, ensuring that everyone feels included and valued.
- Respecting Personal Space: Understanding and honoring the personal boundaries of others, which helps create a comfortable environment for everyone.
- Caring for School Property: Taking care of classroom materials, books, and shared spaces, demonstrating respect for the resources provided by the school.
- Acknowledging Differences: Showing respect for diverse backgrounds, cultures, and opinions by being open-minded and accepting of others.
- Apologizing When Necessary: Taking responsibility for their actions and offering sincere apologies when they have hurt or disrespected someone.
- Helping Others: Offering assistance to classmates who may be struggling with their work or facing challenges, showing empathy and support.
- Participating Respectfully: Engaging in discussions and activities in a manner that is considerate of others' feelings and opinions, even when disagreements arise.

## November

**Gratitude:** Being thankful and appreciative for something or someone in your life and responding with feelings of kindness, warmth, and other forms of generosity.

A person may show Gratitude by the following examples:

- Thank-You Notes: Writing simple thank-you notes or cards to teachers, classmates, or family members to express appreciation for their help or kindness.
- Verbal Acknowledgment: Encouraging students to verbally thank their peers, teachers, or staff for assistance, support, or positive interactions.

- Acts of Kindness: Engaging in small acts of kindness, such as sharing supplies, helping a classmate with a task, or offering to assist a teacher.
- Classroom Celebrations: Organizing a gratitude day or celebration where students can share what they are thankful for, fostering a sense of community and appreciation.
- Gratitude Journals: Keeping a gratitude journal where students can write down things they are thankful for each day, helping them to reflect on positive experiences.
- Complimenting Others: Encouraging students to give compliments to their peers, recognizing their efforts and contributions in class or during group activities.
- Participating in Community Service: Engaging in community service projects as a class or individually, allowing students to give back and show appreciation for their community.
- Sharing Stories: Allowing students to share stories about people or experiences they are grateful for during circle time or class discussions.

## December

**Service:** Refers to activities that benefit others and contribute to the community, often combined with academic learning.

A person may show Service by the following examples:

- Community service: Engaging in unpaid work that helps fellow community members or those in need, such as volunteering at a homeless shelter, participating in cleanup efforts, or assisting with donation drives.
- Service-learning: An educational approach that integrates classroom learning with community service, allowing students to apply academic knowledge and skills to address real community needs. This often includes structured reflection on the service experience.

Key aspects of service for students:

- Voluntary Participation: Students choose to engage in service activities, demonstrating their initiative and willingness to contribute.
- Benefit to Others: The core purpose of service is to positively impact individuals, organizations, or the wider community.
- Skill Development: Service opportunities allow students to gain valuable skills such as leadership, teamwork, communication, and problem-solving, which are valuable for their academic and future career paths.
- Personal Growth: Through service, students can develop empathy, compassion, self-awareness, and a sense of civic responsibility.

## January

**Tolerance:** The willingness to accept and respect the beliefs, practices, and differences of others, even if they differ from one's own.

A person may show Tolerance by the following examples:

- Openness and respect: Being open to the fact that people have different backgrounds, beliefs, and ways of life, and treating everyone with respect.
- Valuing differences: Seeing diversity in race, culture, religion, gender, and abilities not as a challenge, but as something positive that enriches our world.
- Rejecting prejudice and stereotypes: Avoiding making assumptions or unfair judgments about individuals based on their group affiliation.
- Treating others how you want to be treated: Remembering that everyone deserves respect and wants to be treated fairly, regardless of their differences.
- Not accepting bad behavior: Tolerance doesn't mean allowing actions that are harmful, disrespectful, or break school rules. It's about respecting individuals, not tolerating harmful behavior like bullying or meanness.
- In a school setting, this can look like:
  - Respecting classmates' religious practices or cultural traditions.
  - Listening politely to different opinions during class discussions.
  - Being willing to be friends with and work with students from different backgrounds.
  - Understanding that everyone has unique abilities and strengths.
  - Choosing respectful words and actions towards all students.

## February

**Kindness:** A way of acting and interacting with others that is gentle, caring, and helpful. Kindness is not just about being polite; it's about intentionally doing good deeds and showing respect and consideration.

A person may show Kindness by the following examples:

- Having Empathy: Understanding and sharing the feelings of others is a fundamental part of kindness.
- Showing Generosity: Being willing to share, help others, and give of one's time or resources without expecting anything in return is a core element of kindness.
- Respectful communication: Using gentle words, listening attentively, and considering how one's words and actions affect others demonstrates kindness.
- Positive actions: Kindness is often expressed through actions, whether it's offering a helping hand, holding a door open, or offering words of encouragement.
- Creating a positive environment: A culture of kindness in a school setting fosters a sense of belonging and well-being for all students.
- Self-kindness: It's also important for students to be kind to themselves by treating themselves with compassion and acknowledging their strengths

## March

**Encouragement:** The act of giving someone support, confidence, or hope. It involves offering positive words or actions that motivate someone to continue trying or to believe in themselves.

A person may show Encouragement by the following examples:

- Giving Compliments: Offering genuine compliments to classmates for their efforts, achievements, or talents, such as saying, "You did a great job on your project!"
- Cheering for Peers: Actively cheering for classmates during sports events, performances, or competitions to boost their confidence and morale.
- Offering Help: Volunteering to assist a classmate who is struggling with a task or project, showing that they believe in their ability to succeed.
- Sharing Positive Notes: Writing encouraging notes or messages to friends, such as "You can do it!" or "I believe in you!" and leaving them in their desks or lockers.
- Being a Good Listener: Listening attentively when a classmate shares their concerns or fears, providing support and understanding without judgment.
- Celebrating Achievements: Acknowledging and celebrating the successes of others, whether big or small, by saying things like, "I'm so proud of you for finishing that book!"
- Encouraging Participation: Inviting shy classmates to join in activities or discussions, reassuring them that their contributions are valuable.
- Modeling Positivity: Demonstrating a positive attitude and resilience in the face of challenges, which can inspire others to adopt a similar mindset.
- Creating a Supportive Environment: Fostering a classroom atmosphere where everyone feels safe to express themselves and take risks, encouraging collaboration and teamwork.

## April

**Perseverance:** The ability to keep trying and not give up, even when faced with challenges or difficulties. It involves staying committed to a goal and continuing to work towards it despite obstacles.

A person may show Perseverance by the following examples:

- Completing Challenging Assignments: Continuing to work on difficult homework or projects, even when they find them frustrating or time-consuming.
- Practicing Skills: Regularly practicing a musical instrument, sport, or other skills, even when progress seems slow or they face setbacks.
- Setting Personal Goals: Establishing achievable goals, such as improving reading levels or mastering a new math concept, and consistently working towards them.
- Seeking Help: Asking teachers or classmates for assistance when they encounter difficulties, rather than giving up.
- Participating in Group Activities: Staying engaged in group projects or team sports, even when faced with challenges or disagreements among peers.
- Trying Again After Failure: If they don't succeed in a test, competition, or performance, they can choose to study harder or practice more for the next opportunity.
- Staying Positive: Maintaining a positive attitude and encouraging themselves and others, even when tasks become challenging.
- Following Through on Commitments: Completing chores, responsibilities, or projects they have committed to, even when they would rather do something else.



- Learning from Mistakes: Reflecting on what went wrong in a situation and using that knowledge to improve in the future, rather than feeling discouraged.
- Participating in Difficult Tasks: Volunteering for challenging roles in class presentations or school events, showing a willingness to step out of their comfort zone.

## May

**Ambition:** The strong desire and determination to achieve academic success and personal growth, often involving setting high goals and actively working towards them.

A person may show Ambition by the following examples:

- Setting High Goals: Aiming for top grades, honors courses, or pursuing advanced placement programs demonstrates a desire to excel.
- Active Class Participation: Asking thoughtful questions, contributing to discussions, and seeking clarification shows engagement and a desire to learn.
- Independent Learning: Taking initiative to learn new skills, explore subjects beyond the curriculum, and pursue independent research projects.
- Seeking Feedback: Actively soliciting feedback on work and using it to improve performance.
- Leadership Roles: Participating in student government, clubs, or sports teams, and taking on leadership positions demonstrates ambition and initiative.
- Volunteering: Contributing time and effort to community service projects and other volunteer activities shows a commitment to making a difference.
- Pursuing Interests: Engaging in activities that align with personal interests and passions, whether artistic, athletic, or academic, indicates a drive to explore and excel.
- Setting Goals: Setting specific and achievable goals within extracurricular activities, such as winning a competition or achieving a personal best, shows ambition.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE CORE VALUES

### Self-Control

- Grandparents Day
- Dress Down for Charity

### Respect

- Red Ribbon Week
- AR Reading Celebrations

### Gratitude

- Great American Teach In
- Veteran's Day Assembly

#### Service

- Food Drive
- Adopt-A-Road

#### Tolerance

- Talent Showcase
- Club Performances/Competitions

#### Kindness

- Random Act of Kindness Week
- Stingray Fun Run

#### Encouragement

- Saturday Learning Academy
- Academic Competitions

#### Perseverance

- International Night
- Field Day

#### Ambition

- Graduations, Celebrations, & Promotions
- End of Year Testing

## CHARACTER COMMITTEE

Kristi Hancock – Dean of Students

Julie Russell – ESE Specialist and License Guidance Counselor

Becc Lester-Beam – Outreach Coordinator/Enrollment

Courtney Styfurak – Assistant to the Dean

Stephenie Moore – MS/HS Social Studies Teacher

Brian Engelmann – MS Social Studies Teacher

Eduardo Soboll – Elementary PE Coach

Wyatt Frescoln – MS/HS PE Coach

Kristin Green – Elementary PE Aide

Christina Griffiths – Art Teacher

Kenzie Simkewicz – Music Teacher

Laura Ohl – MS/HS Spanish Teacher

Sarah Wagner – Parent Volunteer Organization Member

Elizabeth Clouse - Parent Volunteer Organization Member

## PROMISING PRACTICES

Not pursuing at this time

## CURRENT STATUS

State School of Character – Received 2024

National School of Character – Not pursuing at this time

## RESOURCES:

<https://character.org/who-we-are/>