

SOMERSET ACADEMY



Parent & Student Handbook 2017-2018

Somerset Academy Preparatory Sunset

11155 SW 112th Avenue

Miami, FL 33176

School Number: (305) 274-5696

School Website: www.SomersetAcademyPrep.com

Dr. Cristina Cruz-Ortiz
Principal

Charter School Information

Charter schools are non-profit, self-managed, entities that enroll Miami-Dade County public school students. They must be approved and monitored by the local school board, yet they run independently. Charter schools are funded by state and local monies and are open to any student residing in the Miami-Dade County School District who would otherwise qualify to attend a regularly elementary school in Dade County.

Mission Statement

The mission of Somerset Academy Charter is to provide an individualized, academically rigorous, and engaging curriculum focusing on the ever-changing needs of our learners. Our educational process encompasses the partnership among the school, family, and community, in order to develop a life-long love of learning. We strive to develop students who are self-assured, well-rounded, and prepared for future success.

Our Vision

The vision of Somerset Academy Charter is to continue to be recognized and respected as a top ranked learning community that graduates productive and caring citizens who are prepared to succeed in a global society.

School Philosophy

Our school is a place where students will enjoy learning, teachers will enjoy teaching, and parents will be expected to be a key part of the education process.

Our Beliefs:

- Student learning is the primary focus of our school.
- Students learn in a variety of ways and should be given the opportunity to learn with different strategies and techniques.
- Administrators, teachers, staff, parents, and community members agree to hold high goals and standards to achieve success.
- Parents and teachers are partners in the education process.
- Our school community is committed to continuous improvement to enable our students to become life-long learners.

School Curriculum

Somerset Academy Prep follows the standards and objectives stated in the Florida Standards and Common Core Standards as adopted. It encompasses the core subject areas of Reading, Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. In addition, we offer a Business program for all grade levels. Our Business program targets several topics associated with personal finance, money management, entrepreneurship and marketing. Students will have the opportunity of becoming financially responsible by maintaining a classroom mortgage and can earn and spend money in a simulated micro economy.

School Hours

Grade	Time
Kindergarten & 1 st Grade	8:30-2:00pm
2 nd – 5 th Grade	8:30-3:00pm

**Early dismissal is every Wednesday at 2:00pm for all K-5 students.

Drop-Off and Pick-up Procedures

Somerset Academy Prep's primary concern is the safety of our students. Parents are required to adhere to the pick-up and drop-off procedures.

Students will NOT be released 30 minutes prior to dismissal. Students will only be released to an authorized parent and/or guardian during dismissal. No student may leave campus unsupervised.

Rainy Day Procedures

Please be patient and follow drop-off/pick-up procedures to ensure your child's safety. On rainy days, all students will stand under the carport in Building 3 of the JCC.

Attendance Policy

We expect our students to demonstrate excellent attendance. Please make every effort to have your child attend school every day and on time.

Arrival time for students is from 8:10am to 8:30am. Students must be in their seat by 8:30am. Any student arriving after 8:30am must go directly to the office and receive a late pass and will be marked tardy. After 10 tardies, the student will be issued a referral that will be placed in the student's permanent record.

If a student is absent, parents have 3 school days to turn in a hand written note/doctor's note. A maximum of 10 handwritten notes will be accepted per school day. If a student is absent for 3 or more consecutive days, a doctor's note must be brought in order for the absence to be excused. Students may not exceed more than 10 unexcused absences per school year. For every 5 unexcused absences, the student will receive a referral.

Make-up work and homework must be completed and turned in within 24 hours (per missed day) after returning to school. Make-up work will only be permitted if the student's absence is excused. If assignments are not completed, the student will receive a "Z" in the gradebook which may affect the student's final grade. It is the parent's and student's responsibility to contact the teacher regarding any missing assignments. If a student anticipates being absent for more than 2 consecutive days, it is the parent's responsibility to contact the school and pick-up any classwork/homework from the teacher.

Please note, parents will NOT be allowed to walk their child to class or speak with the teacher after 8:30am. In addition, Somerset Academy Prep is not responsible for students who arrive prior to 8:10am and who are not enrolled in our Before Care program.

Students will remain with a faculty member 15 minutes after dismissal. Students who are not picked up within those 15 minutes will be taken to the office to call home and charged \$5. Please be aware that late charges must be paid within a week. All fees must be paid by the last day of school in order to register your child for the upcoming school year.

Students who need to be picked up early on a regular school day must be signed out by a parent or guardian in the office. Students will not be released to persons whose name(s) do not appear on the emergency contact card. A photo ID must be shown in order for to release the student. In case of an emergency, if a person not listed on the emergency contact card must pick up a student, the parent must fax a signed statement with a copy of their driver's license allowing that person to pick up their child on that specific day. It is the parent's responsibility to come to the main office to add or remove any person to the emergency contact card.

Students who are going to be dismissed early need to provide proof of medical/dental appointment no later than that same school morning to their teacher or office. **Students will NOT be dismissed 30 minutes prior to dismissal time without a previous notice. THERE ARE NO EXCEPTIONS.** Referrals are issued to students who continuously leave early without a doctor's note (1 referral for every 5 unexcused early dismissals.)

Transportation to and from school must be provided or arranged by the parent/guardian. The school is not responsible for ant transportation to and from school.

Before and After Care

Somerset Academy Prep has established before care services that are available on campus. It is from 7:10am-8:10am and the cost is \$60 per month.

After care services are provided by the JCC. It is a completely separate entity. It is the parent's responsibility to contact the JCC after care office to pay for after care.

Volunteer Requirements, Options, and Guidelines

Somerset Prep families (siblings only) are asked to complete 30 volunteer hours per year prior to the last day of school. Due to mandates from Miami-Dade County Public Schools, all parents wishing to volunteer must participate in the *School Volunteer Registration Program* and must be cleared through Miami-Dade County Public Schools before permission is granted. This mandate includes clearance for volunteers in school events such as book fair, field trips, fundraising activities, etc. No parent is allowed to be a chaperone on a field trip without being cleared first.

It is the responsibility of the parent to communicate with their child's teacher to complete their hours. Notices of completed hours will be sent home quarterly with report cards to assist parents with tracking

their hours. In addition, a reminder will be sent during the fourth quarter of school to ensure that the volunteer requirement is fulfilled.

Parents may complete hours by any of the following:

- Assist the teacher
- Be a guest speaker
- Be a room parent
- Chaperone field trips
- Donate classroom supplies

Any parent/guardian who would like to volunteer in the classroom must inform the classroom teacher **prior** to volunteering. Consent from administration must be confirmed before parents will be allowed to enter the classroom. In addition, parents/visitors must sign-in at the office and obtain a visitor's pass. In order to ensure the safety of our students, **NO PARENT WILL BE ALLOWED BEYOND THE OFFICE WITHOUT A VISITOR'S PASS. NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Dress Code/Uniform

A higher standard of dress encourages greater respect for individual students and others and results in a higher standard of behavior. Our dress code guidelines indicate appropriate school dress for normal school days. Somerset Academy Prep reserves the right to interpret these guidelines and/or make changes during the school year. Students are expected to follow these guidelines and/or make changes during the school year. Students are expected to follow these guidelines with support from their parents/guardians. All students shall wear a school uniform daily.

Our uniform policy is as follows:

Boys

- White, Hunter Green or Light Yellow polo with school logo embroidered
- Navy Dickies Pants or Shorts
- Black or brown belt must be worn (if bottoms have belt loops)
- Polos must be tucked in

Girls

- White, Hunter Green or Light Yellow polo with school logo embroidered
- Green Plaid jumper
- Green Plaid skirt or skort
- Polos must be tucked in

Cold Weather Days

- White or Navy long sleeve shirt under school polo
- Navy Dickies Pants
- Navy sweatpants
- Black, white, or navy leggings/tights under plaid skirt/skort

- Somerset embroidered navy sweater/zipper sweater/cardigan

Shoes (2 Options)

- Option 1: Black, brown, or navy closed toe shoes.
- Option 2: Sneakers- 1 color only
- Socks must be white. No skate sneakers (Heelys), slip-on sneakers, sandals, "ballerinas," open toe, or platform shoes will be permitted.

Fridays

- Denim Blue Jeans are allowed (Pants or Bermuda Shorts)
- School Polo
- School Spirit Shirt (available for sale after the first month of school)
- Any color sneakers

Hair

- Hair must be neat, clean, and away from the face. No hats, bandanas or headbands may be worn. Boys' hair must be above the collar, above the ears, and cannot pass the eyebrows. Boys may not wear braids or pony tails or color their hair in any way. Boys' haircuts must be monitored. Mohawks, shaved designs, or distract hair is not permitted.

Jewelry

- Girls with pierced ears may wear 1 pair of modest simple earrings. No hoops, long dangling earrings, large necklaces with charms or wristbands. Boys, No earrings or visible piercing of other body parts are unacceptable and will not be permitted.

Make-up

- Make-up, face paint, tattoos, colored nail polish, acrylic nails, or glitter will not be permitted.

Students should have enough uniform tops and bottoms that laundry issues should not interfere with the uniform policy. ANY STUDENT NOT WEARING A COMPLETE SCHOOL UNIFORM, OR IN VIOLATION OF ONE OF THE ABOVE MENTIONED INFRACTIONS, WILL BE ISSUED A WARNING OR UNIFORM VIOLATION FORM AND PARENTS WILL BE CONTACTED TO BRING THE OFFICIAL UNIFORM. After 3 uniform violations, a referral will be issued.

Please speak with your child regarding the importance of wearing a school uniform to avoid serious consequences. We appreciate your anticipated cooperation with our uniform policy and thank you for your assistance in helping your child comply with our rules.

Uniforms must be worn on the **first day of school.**

Items not permitted in school

Students are not permitted to bring toys or electronic devices from home into the classroom. **Any electronic device, such as cell phones, will be confiscated if visible to any staff member.** Electronic devices that are confiscated will remain in the office until a parent comes to the office to retrieve it. The

school is not responsible for any inconvenience this may cause parents. **Somerset Academy Prep will not be responsible for any lost or stolen items brought to school or that have been taken away by school personnel.** Students who continue to violate this policy will be issued a referral.

Withdrawals

Please notify the school office of your child's withdrawal or transfer at least one day in advance. In order to process a withdrawal from the school, the parent/guardian must come into the school office and complete the necessary paperwork to process a transfer. A transfer involves notification of a change in school and the return of textbooks, library books, and payment of any/all monies owed to the school.

Contact Information Update

It is critical that the school office be notified of any change of address and/or telephone number **immediately.**

Visitors

FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL OF OUR STUDENTS, **ALL VISITORS** must report to the main office to obtain a visitor's pass. Only persons with pertinent business are permitted on school grounds. Children and family members, who are not currently enrolled at Somerset Academy Prep, will not be permitted on school grounds during school hours. Instructional time is precious and must not be interrupted by parent visits. Please schedule appointments with your child's teacher to avoid unnecessary interruptions.

Substitute Teachers

A substitute teacher has the same authority as a regular classroom teacher. We expect that all students demonstrate respect and cooperate fully with our substitute teachers.

Textbooks

Students will be issued books at the beginning of each school year. Students must immediately inform teachers about any lost or damaged books so that they can be replaced. Parents will be responsible for the cost of the replacement book.

Grading and Reporting of Student Progress

Instructional staff uses evaluative devices and techniques as needed to report individual achievement in relation to school goals, acceptance norms, and student potential. Student grades, unsatisfactory work notices, parent reports on state assessments, and/or standardized testing, parent conferences, and adult/student conferences should serve as the primary means of communicating student progress and achievement of the standards for promotion.

A student's academic grade reflects the teacher's most objective assessment of the students' academic achievement. Students have the right to receive a conduct and an effort grade consistent with their overall behavior and effort. Specific guidelines for grading student performance and for reporting student progress are provided below and detailed in the *Student Progression Plan*. To view the plan, go to <http://ehandbooks.dadeschools.net/policies/93.pdf>

Academic Grades

Academic grades are to reflect the student's academic progress. The grade must provide for both students and parents a clear indication of each student's academic performance as compared with norms that would be appropriate for the grade or subject. The academic grades of "A," "B," "C," "D," or "F," are not related to the student's effort and conduct grades.

Grades in all subjects are to be based on the student's degree of mastery of the instructional objectives and competencies for the subject. The determination of the specific grade a student receives, must be based on a teacher's careful consideration of all aspects of each student's performance during a grading period.

KINDERGARTEN GRADES	NUMERICAL VALUE	VERBAL INTERPRETATION	GRADE POINT VALUE
E	90-100%	Outstanding Progress	4
G	80-89%	Above Average Progress	3
S	70-79%	Average Progress	2
M	60-69%	Lowest Acceptable Progress	1
U	0-59%	Failure	0

1st-5th Grade	NUMERICAL VALUE	VERBAL INTERPRETATION	GRADE POINT VALUE
A	90-100%	Outstanding Progress	4
B	80-89%	Above Average Progress	3
C	70-79%	Average Progress	2
D	60-69%	Lowest Acceptable Progress	1
F	0-59%	Failure	0

A = 3.50 or above

B = 2.50 - 3.49

C = 1.50 – 2.49

D = 1.00 – 1.49

F = 0.99 or below

Effort Grades: Effort grades are utilized to convey both to students and their parent(s)/guardian(s) the teacher's evaluation of a student's effort as related to the instructional program. These grades are independent of academic and conduct grades. In assigning an effort grade, the teacher must consider the student's potential, study habits, and attitude. Kindergarten students do not receive effort grades. Three numerical grades are used to reflect effort in grades 1-5.

→ An effort grade of "1" indicates outstanding effort on the part of the student. The student will, when necessary, complete a task again in order to improve the results. The student consistently attends to assigned tasks until completed and generally exerts maximum effort on all tasks. The student consistently works to the best of his/her ability.

→ An effort grade of "2" indicates satisfactory effort on the part of the student. All work is approached with an appropriate degree of seriousness. The student usually finished assignments on time and usually stays on task. The student usually works at a level commensurate with his/her ability.

→ An effort grade of "3" reflects insufficient effort on the part of the student. Little attention is paid to completing assignments well and/or on time or to completing them in a manner commensurate with the student's ability.

Conduct Grades

The school will follow Miami-Dade County Public School's *Code of Student Conduct* <http://ehandbooks.dadeschools.net/policies/90/index.htm>. The following rules, regulations and due process procedure are designed to protect all members of the educational community in the exercise of their rights and responsibilities. These rules apply to any student:

1. who is on the school property
2. who is in attendance at school or any school-sponsored activity
3. whose conduct at any time or in any place has a direct and immediate effect on maintaining order and discipline in the school

Acts of disorderly conduct may include, but are not limited to the following:

- Classroom tardiness
- Dishonesty
- Acting in a manner that interferes with the education process
- Abusive language between or among students
- Failure to complete assignments or carry out instructions

Possible Sanctions

- Verbal and Written Reprimand/Referral/Student Case Management Form (SCAM)

- Contact with parent
- Loss of privileges
- Detention/Work duty on campus
- In-school/Outdoor suspension

Code of Excellence

We believe that a safe and orderly school is of primary importance. When children behave in a respectful, responsible, and safe manner, they learn more and develop into responsible children whose “character counts”.

The Somerset Academy Prep Code of Excellence is a school wide plan, which clearly outlines student expectations. Proper behavior is recognized and consequences are given for breaking our code.

Each parent must take an active role in supporting this plan. We want our children to learn and to be responsible citizens. It is in the children’s best interest that parents and staff work together to ensure a happy, safe, and productive learning experience.

Glossary

Lunch Detention: eating alone

Administrative Detention: being detained in the school office (time to be determined by the administrator)

Teacher Detention: being detained by the teacher (time to be determined by the teacher)

Out of School Suspension (OSS): to take away the privilege of attending school for a certain number of days, outside of school (Work missed cannot be made up for credit.)

In School Suspension (ISS): to take away the privilege of attending class (Student remains in school and may get credit for work completed during ISS.)

Severe Clause: extremely disruptive behavior results in immediate removal from class to the principal’s office

Referral: written warning given to students who have violated the code of conduct or school rule. Students who receive three referrals may be suspended for three days and will meet with the administration.

**Students may be issued referrals for tardies, absences, and/or severe disruptive behavior. Referrals remain in a student’s permanent record.*

Consequences: a result of one’s actions

Disrespect: to be rude or discourteous to another person

Respect: to be courteous to those around you, to show consideration

Somerset Academy Prep Code of Excellence

- Be honest
- Be kind
- Be respectful
- Be patient
- Be proud
- Be courteous
- Mistakes are okay, as long as you learn from them.

Students who break the code of conduct will receive the following consequences:

Classroom Consequences:

- 1st consequence: Verbal Warning
- 2nd consequence: Time out/ Loss of privilege
- 3rd consequence: Parent contacted/ Referral note sent home

Administrative Consequences:

- 4th consequence: Student is sent to the principal, parent is called, and Administrative Detention is given.
- 5th consequence: In School Suspension (ISS) / Referral sent home.

Severe Clause: Fighting, Profanity, Disrespect, Sexually explicit behavior, Destruction of property. Disruptive behavior will result in issuing a referral and an administrative review for possible immediate suspension from school (OSS). Parent will be called to pick up student from school.

Somerset Academy Prep students are expected to show respect for themselves, for other students, and for their teachers. Students are expected to behave in ways that are acceptable to classmates and conducive to learning. Misbehavior on the part of students can be generally corrected when home and school work together.

Teachers and students must foster a mutual respect for one another. Teachers will never use corporal punishment or offensive language toward a student. According to the Code of Student Conduct, methods of positive reinforcement/rewards and/or loss of privileges are utilized. Administration will make the final decision on disciplinary actions.

REPORTING STUDENT PROGRESS K-5

Progress Reports & Report Cards: Paper progress reports will **NOT** be issued. Parents are encouraged to check their child's grades weekly, through the MDCPS parent portal. Please review your child's progress with him/her weekly. Please feel free to consult your child's teacher regarding his/her school progress. Paper report cards will be issued at the same time as identified in the Miami-Dade County School Calendar, www.dadeschools.net.

Home Learning Assignments

Home learning assignments are a very important part of learning since they reinforce concepts that have been learned. Somerset Academy Prep's policy is to assign homework EVERY night. This keeps the academic flow and a means of involving parents aligned with our curriculum goals.

To improve the effects of Home Learning Assignments:

- Provide your child with a quiet place which is conducive to studying and to learning.
- Show an interest in your child's home learning assignments by providing assistance and reviewing completed work.
- Do not complete the home learning assignments for your child. If your child is having difficulty, try to help them with their assignment and notify the teacher.
- Read with or to your children daily.

Student responsibilities for completing home learning activities:

1. Students are responsible for recording and completing all Home Learning assignments independently. Parents may provide assistance, but students must complete the work on their own.
2. Home Learning assignments should be done in a quiet place with good lighting and minimal disturbances.
3. If there is a problem in understanding how to complete Home Learning assignments, students are to do the best job possible. If a student does not understand the assignment(s), they are encouraged to bring it in the next day and ask the teacher for assistance. In this case, the homework should be completed that evening along with the regular Home Learning assignments.
4. A daily calendar can be used to keep track of home learning assignments for each night.
5. If a student is having difficulty in managing their time for homework, ask the teacher for assistance with homework time management.

Parent to School Communication

A prime factor in our operation is the importance we place upon communication between home and school. The lines of communication must be kept open at all times so that we may be properly tuned into your child's needs.

Please notify us immediately if:

1. Your child has developed a communicable disease
2. You will be out of town
3. Your telephone number (home or work) has changed
4. You wish to change or add to the emergency contact numbers we are to use
5. **IF THERE IS ANY CHANGE IN TRANSPORTATION** – We will not allow a child to deviate from their regular departure routine without written or verbal verification. If there is a change in the person who is to pick up your child, we require the name of that person in writing.

Parent to Teacher Communication

Conferences with individual teachers must be arranged by contacting the teacher. Please make appointments for conferences before or after school hours. Teachers may also be available during their breaks; however you must make an appointment during this time.

PLEASE DO NOT ENGAGE IN PARENT CONFERENCES DURING ARRIVAL/DISMISSAL OF STUDENTS, IN THE HALLWAYS OR DURING CLASSROOM TIME.

Always attempt to resolve issues/conflicts with the teacher before coming to administration. Most issues can be resolved when you have open and honest communication with your child's teacher. Order of contact to resolve an issue is:

Teacher → Assistant Principal → Principal

Authorization for Medication

Miami-Dade County School Board policy "prohibits school personnel from administering any prescribed medication without parental consent and a medication authorization form must be signed by the child's physician and/or parent(s)." In order for medication to be administered to your child, we must have an *Authorization for Medication Form*. This form is available in the office and must be kept on record. These forms must be completed by a pediatrician or a family doctor. Medication must be in its original container labeled with the following information: the child's name, dosage, name of the drug, physician's name, and the name and phone number of the pharmacy that filled the prescription. **Rigid guidelines are followed in administering medication.**

Accidents/Illnesses

Parents will be notified immediately in case of illness or an accident. In the event that a parent cannot be located, the person(s) named on the emergency contact cards will be contacted. **It is your responsibility to make sure that these numbers are current and accurate.** Please notify the office immediately of any accident or injury which occurred during arrival or departure from school. Children who are ill should remain at home to minimize the risk of passing the illness onto others. Please notify us of any contagious illness your child has so we may alert other parents. In addition, please notify the school of any chronic condition your child may have.

Field Trips

All trips planned by the school are for specific educational purposes. Participation in field trips requires the student to present a field trip form signed by the parent/guardian to his or her teacher in advance. Students going on a field trip must assume the responsibility for any necessary fee. Please keep in mind that once the field trip has been paid, the school will not issue a refund. If a hardship exists where a student cannot afford the cost of the field trip, please notify the teacher. Parent chaperones must not bring siblings along, as they are not covered by insurance. All parents attending field trips must be cleared through the Volunteer Safety Program.

Students will not be released to **anyone** during a field trip for **any reason**. Authorized persons who wish to have a student released early must report to the main office to sign out the child and wait for the child to return with their class from the field trip.

Financial Obligations

All late charges, fees, and/or monies owed must be paid by the last day of the school year. Financial obligation notices will be sent as reminders throughout the school year.

Internet Use Policy

Access and use of the Internet is a privilege, not a right, and its use must support the educational objectives of the school. Students must always get permission from their teachers prior to using the Internet. In addition, the school prohibits the transmission of materials such as copyright material, threatening or obscene material or material protected by trade secret, which violate local, state, and federal law or regulation, as well as the use of the internet for product advertisement, commercial activities, political campaigning or solicitation.

Lost and Found

A lost and found area will be designated in the main office. To minimize the quantity of lost and found articles, we ask that you please write your child's name on everything he/she brings to school.

Use of Student Photographs or Videotape

Photographs or video of classroom activities will be taken throughout the year and may be published on our web site, public newspapers, and in any advertising the school may have. Please note that your child's full name may be posted on such mediums when he/she is recognized for accomplishments or participation in events. If you object to this use, please contact the main office upon registration.

SOMERSET ACADEMY

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PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN THIS FORM TO YOUR CHILD'S HOMEROOM TEACHER:

I have read the Somerset Academy Preparatory Parent/Student Handbook, including uniform policy and the M-DCPS Student Code of Conduct and agree to cooperate with all of the policies contained therein.

As a parent, I understand the importance of the M-DCPS Code of Student Conduct which can be accessed at <http://ehandbooks.dadeschools.net/policies/90/index.htm> and is available in the school's main office. The Code of Student Conduct was reviewed and referenced by me at the time of registration, along with the Parent/Student Handbook, and I agree to abide by all of its contents.

Name of Student:

Teacher:

Grade:

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

Signature of Student

Date