

# CHARACTER EDUCATION PLAN

*Orlando Science Charter School K-8*

**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 education is a responsibility shared between parents, teachers, and members of the community.

## 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.

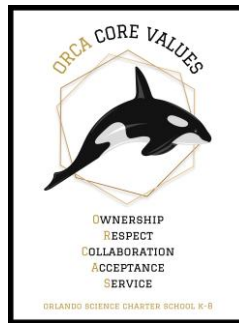
### Vision

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 creates an environment where students feel safe, respected, and cared about by their classmates and school staff. When students feel this way, their levels of motivation and commitment to school increase which helps directly with improvements in academic performance and decreases in undesirable behavior. Students develop skills that help them to maintain positive relationships and to display values such as empathy, kindness, respect, and responsibility, as well as create a welcoming and positive school climate. They grow as caring citizens that will make a difference in our society.

## CORE VALUES/CHARACTER TRAITS



*Date Established: 2025*

*Date of Last Review: 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 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 through truthful efforts to strengthen their commitment and adherence to ethical values and principles.

## IMPLEMENTATION

### 1. Orca of the Month

- a. A character trait has been already selected for every month of the school year. There will be a bulletin board for a display of the Orca of the month. Each trait will also be announced monthly in the newsletter.
- b. Selection of Student Character of the Month  
Enter commendations consistently into LiveSchool. The student with the most

commendations and no referrals/conduct points, will be the Orca of the Month.

**2. Embedding character in daily activities and subjects/lessons**

- a. Teachers have a weekly character education and social emotional lesson using Sanford Harmony. Additionally, character education and SEL can be reinforced in all subjects.

**3. Selection of Staff Character of the Month**

- a. Staff will be encouraged to place commendations for staff members

## **Orca of the Month**

The Orca of the Month is displayed on the bulletin board each month, is announced during the Morning Announcements and shared in the East Campus Newsletter.

- ORCA Value: Ownership
- Trait: Responsibility for my actions

### September

- ORCA Value: Respect
- Trait: Respect myself and others

### October

- ORCA Value: Collaboration
- Trait: Cooperating and collaborating with staff and peers

### November

- ORCA Value: Service
- Trait: Gratitude to others

### December

- ORCA Value: Acceptance
- Trait: Empathy toward different students and cultures

### January

- ORCA Value: Ownership
- Trait: Ownership, self-awareness and setting goals

### February

- ORCA Value: Service
- Trait: Service to others, kindness month

### March

- ORCA Value: Respect
- Trait: Courage and striving to do your best

### April

- ORCA Value: Collaboration
- Trait: Cooperation- working together toward end of the year success

### May

- ORCA Value: Acceptance
- Trait: Acceptance and pride for accomplishments this year

## Curriculum

**Sanford Harmony** by National University. [www.sanfordharmony.org](http://www.sanfordharmony.org)

The program is combined with the Social Studies curriculum and designed to teach students how to understand and manage their emotions, control their reactions, be aware of others' feelings, and develop the skills to problem-solve and make responsible decisions.

## School Mascot

Orbit the Orca helps promote core values to create a positive school climate and culture. The mascot's appearance at various school events and activities helps serve as a reminder of how to exhibit the ORCAS Core values.

## Campus Initiatives

Posters and banners throughout the school remind students and staff of behaviors and expectations that are expected in our school culture. Teachers also use visual posters to review and remind students of these expectations while in hallways, the cafeteria, and restrooms.

## ORCA of the Month

Commendation points are entered to recognize students who have exhibited positive character traits. The students with the highest number of commendation points are recognized as the ORCA of the Month for their class. Recognition includes having their photo posted in the Weekly Newsletter, and having their name announced during Morning Announcements.

## Staff ORCA of the Month

Staff are encouraged to place commendations for staff members on the Staff Commendation Form. Recognition includes having their photo posted in the Weekly Newsletter, social media and a small gift.

## OPPORTUNITIES TO PRACTICE CORE VALUES

### Ownership

- Liveschool points

### Respect myself and others

- Teach In
- Kindness month activity

### Collaboration

- ORCA day
- House points

### Acceptance

- Academic Competitions
- Empathy toward others

### Service

- Academic Competitions
- Service projects

## CHARACTER COMMITTEE

Our character committee consists of Ms. Knight (Dean of Students), Ms. Bacchus (Mental Health Counselor), Ms. Hurley (teacher), Ms. Ali (teacher) and Ms. Lily Thomas (Staff representative). We are looking to expand our character committee to more members.

## PROMISING PRACTICES

Each year, Character.org recognizes schools in the United States and elsewhere who have implemented unique, specific, and effective character education strategies that make an impact in the school. These strategies are called Promising Practices, which are indicators that the school is moving forward to becoming a National School of Character.

## CURRENT STATUS

State School of Character – *Applying for first time.*

National School of Character – *Applying for first time.*

## 2024-2028 PLANS

- Expand our Character Committee. Including administrators, parents, students, and teachers.
- Fully implement the social-emotional curriculum, *Sanford Harmony*, with fidelity.

- Integrate character development across the academic curriculum and daily school life.
- Consistently provide cross-curricular opportunities to use cooperative learning.
- Implement school-wide morning meetings based on *Sanford Harmony*.
- Plan and execute one service-learning project and one community service (grade-based).
- Promote core ethical values.
- Continue to implement the 11 Principles for an effective character education program .
- Meet periodically with the Character Committee to constantly evaluate progress toward goals.
- Implement character buddies program (Reading Buddies).
- Design and implement a parent session oriented by a Counselor and guest speakers.
- Select student and staff members of the month.
- Develop a “My Character Trait Goals” binder for students.

## RESOURCES:

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