



SCA Society Program Handbook

January 2020



Table of Contents

1	Overview	1
2	School Mission	1
3	Core Values	1
4	History of Strathcona Christian Academy	1
5	Statement of Faith	2
6	Philosophy of Christian Education	3
7	Spiritual Life	5
8	Conduct, Professional Development, and Hiring Practices	5
9	Role of the SCA Society	6
10	Role of the School	7
11	Role of Parents/Guardians	7
12	Role of Students	8
13	Admissions/Enrollment Policy	8

1 Overview

This document provides an overview of the Elk Island Public Schools (EIPS) Alternative Program at Strathcona Christian Academy (SCA). The document outlines who we are by defining the role of the school, parents, students, and the SCA Society.

SCA provides a Christian Alternative Program for Kindergarten to Grade 12 students in the EIPS District, operated in accordance with Section 21 of the Alberta School Act and in partnership with the SCA Society and Sherwood Park Alliance Church (SPAC). All programming is based on the curriculum determined by Alberta Education and is taught from a Christian perspective.

2 School Mission and Vision

Mission Statement:

To challenge students, through Christ-centered education, to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord in order to pursue a life of godly character, personal and academic excellence and service to others.

Vision:

SCA's mission statement, core values, philosophy of Christian education, statement of faith and Christian distinctives described throughout this document comprise the school's vision.

3 Core Values

We:

- are an outreach and service ministry of SPAC and adhere to its statement of faith;
- affirm that students are God's unique creation, deserving of a respectful, loving and nurturing environment which prepares them for life now and eternally;
- believe that Christian education develops the total person spiritually, intellectually, socially and physically;
- are committed to teaching the Alberta curriculum from the perspective of what the Bible says about God, ourselves and the world;
- will develop a qualified, committed Christian teaching staff, providing a supportive environment for their professional development;
- respect, value and honour the role and responsibility of parents as partners in education; and
- are supportive of government, the local and universal church, and our community.

4 History of Strathcona Christian Academy

SCA is a Christian school started by SPAC and housed partly within the church facilities. Both church and school serve the urban centre of Sherwood Park and its surrounding rural areas. The strong relationship between the two entities has resulted in considerable sustained growth in church membership and student enrollment.

The Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The vision of a Christian school that would use the Alberta curriculum began with Reverend Harald Throness as concerns arose in the 1970's around rapid changes in the education system. •His conviction was to instruct children from a Christian perspective, to reach out to the community, and to do so in God's timing.
1980	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •The vision was realized. •Strathcona Christian Academy Society began in June; school doors opened in September with 347 students. •Jim Seutter was the first principal and remained at the helm until his retirement in June 2013.
1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •SCA grew over the years under Mr. Seutter's leadership. •His involvement in "Choices for Children" and other campaigns was influential in getting better funding for independent schools. •In July 1998, SCA became an Alternative Christian Program school within EIPS.
2007	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Enrollment at SCA continued to grow. •3P partnership between SPAC, province, and parents was reached. •Elementary school doors opened in Fall 2007.
2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •SCA celebrated continued growth as enrolment surpassed 1,100 students. •The high school started a 3-year expansion plan to increase each grade to 4 classes, beginning with Grade 10.

5 Statement of Faith

The educational philosophy of the SCA posits the following:

1. There is one God, who is infinitely perfect, existing eternally in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
2. Jesus Christ is true God and true man. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died upon the cross, the Just for the unjust, as a substitutionary sacrifice, and all who believe in him are justified on the ground of his shed blood. He arose from the dead according to the Scriptures. He is now at the right hand of the Majesty on high as our great High Priest. He will come again to establish his Kingdom of righteousness and peace.
3. The Holy Spirit is a divine Person, sent to indwell, guide, teach and empower the believer, and to convince the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment.
4. The Old and New Testaments, inerrant as originally given, were verbally inspired by God and are a complete revelation of his will for the salvation of people. They constitute the divine and only rule of Christian faith and practice.
5. Humankind, originally created in the image and likeness of God, fell through disobedience, incurring thereby both physical and spiritual death. All people are born with a sinful nature, are separated from the life of God, and

can be saved only through the atoning work of the Lord Jesus Christ. The destiny of the impenitent and unbelieving is existence forever in conscious torment, but that of the believer is everlasting joy and bliss.

6. Salvation has been provided only through Jesus Christ. Those who repent and believe in him are united with Christ through the Holy Spirit and are thereby regenerated (born again), justified, sanctified and granted the gift of eternal life as adopted children of God.

7. It is the will of God that in union with Christ each believer should be sanctified thoroughly thereby being separated from sin and the world and fully dedicated to God, receiving power for holy living and sacrificial and effective service toward the completion of Christ's commission.

This is accomplished through being filled with the Holy Spirit which is both a distinct event and progressive experience in the life of the believer.

8. Provision is made in the redemptive work of the Lord Jesus Christ for the healing of the mortal body. Prayer for the sick and anointing with oil as taught in the Scriptures are privileges for the Church in this present age.

9. The universal Church, of which Christ is the Head, consists of all those who believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, are redeemed through His blood, regenerated by the Holy Spirit, and commissioned by Christ to go into all the world as a witness, preaching the Gospel to all nations.

The local church, the visible expression of the universal Church, is a body of believers in Christ who are joined together to worship God, to observe the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, to pray, to be edified through the Word of God, to fellowship, and to testify in word and deed to the good news of salvation both locally and globally. The local church enters into relationships with other like-minded churches for accountability, encouragement and mission.

10. There shall be a bodily resurrection of the just and of the unjust; for the former, a resurrection unto life; for the latter, a resurrection unto judgment.

11. The second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is imminent and will be personal and visible. As the believer's blessed hope, this vital truth is an incentive for holy living and sacrificial service toward the completion of Christ's commission.

6 Philosophy of Christian Education

The educational philosophy of SCA is based on a God-centered view of man and truth as presented in the Bible. This philosophy posits the following:

- Since God created and sustains all things through His Son, Jesus Christ, the universe and all life are dynamically related to God and have the purpose of glorifying Him. This is pointedly true of mankind who was made in God's image — different in kind from all other creatures — with the unique capacity to know and respond to God personally and voluntarily. Because mankind is sinful by nature and choice, he cannot, in this condition, know or honour God in his life. Only by being born again and filled with His Spirit can she/he do God's will. This should be the ultimate purpose of his life.
- The authority for such an education comes both from God's command that children be taught to love God and place Him first in their lives and from the fact that parents are responsible for the total education and training of their children. The Christian School, along with the Church, becomes a partner in giving this education.

From this philosophy stem certain aims and objectives for the education offered at SCA:

For the spiritual and moral growth of the student, the school seeks to:

- teach the Bible as God's inspired Word and to develop attitudes of love and respect toward it;

- teach the basic doctrines of the Bible;
- develop a desire to know the will of God as revealed in the Scriptures;
- equip the student to understand the will of God daily;
- impart an understanding of Christianity's belief in a worldwide task of witnessing, evangelism and discipline and to stimulate the student's involvement in this task;
- develop the "mind and heart of Christ" toward godliness and sin, and to teach the student how to live an overcoming life through exercising self-restraint and consideration of others;
- encourage the development of self-discipline and responsibility in the student based on respect for and submission to God and God-ordained authority; and
- help students develop for themselves a Christian worldview by integrating life and studies with the Bible.

For the student's personal and social development, the school aims to:

- help students develop their personality based both on a proper understanding and acceptance of themselves as unique individuals created in the image of God and on the fullest possible development of their own capabilities;
- teach students to treat everyone with love and respect since others too are made in God's image;
- make students contributing members of society who realize their dependence on others and others' dependence on them;
- promote an understanding of time as a God-given commodity and the individual responsibility for effective use of time;
- show a biblical view of life and work and provide skills for personal relationships and future endeavours;
- develop good and proper attitudes toward marriage and the family and also the understanding and skills needed to establish God-honouring homes;
- promote physical fitness, good health habits, and wise use of the body as the temple of God; and
- impart biblical attitudes toward material things and encourage individual responsibility of using them for God's glory.

For the student's academic advancement, the school endeavours to:

- promote high academic standards within the potential of the individual as uniquely created by God and to help students realize their full academic potential;
- help each student gain a thorough comprehension and command of the fundamental processes used in communicating and dealing with others, such as reading, speaking, and listening;
- teach and encourage the use of good study habits;
- teach students how to do independent research and to reason logically;
- motivate students to pursue independent study in the areas of personal interest;
- develop creative and critical thinking and the proper use of biblical criteria for evaluation to promote good citizenship through developing and understanding an appreciation of our Christian and Canadian heritage of responsible freedom, human dignity, and acceptance of authority;
- discuss current affairs in all fields and to relate them to God's plan for man;
- produce an understanding and appreciation for God's world and an awareness of people's role in their environment and their God-given responsibilities to use and preserve it properly;
- promote an appreciation of the fine arts through the development of students' understanding and personal expression; and
- adapt the curriculum to real-life situations in the community.

In keeping with the school's commitment to and support of the homes from which the students come, the school desires to:

- cooperate closely with parents in every phase of students' development, especially as it relates to the school program;
- help parents understand the school's purpose, programs and vision through a process identified by the SCA Society; and
- assist parents in keeping up with the changing culture and its effects on the home and the implications for their children.

7 Spiritual Life

At SCA, it is our unique privilege and calling to teach from a biblical perspective, integrating personal faith and belief in Jesus Christ into the classroom as well as the many activities comprising student life. Spiritual life at SCA involves many aspects of the Christian faith, including:

- Devotionals - Homeroom teachers facilitate a morning devotional time to pause at the start of the day to bring glory to God and commit the day and its activities to Him. Devotional routines are set each year and will include all-school, divisional, and prayer groups and all-school singing.
- Chapel – Chapel is an opportunity for corporate worship where students will experience and participate in various spiritual disciplines and learning. The daily schedule is adjusted on chapel days. All staff and students are expected to attend.
- Bible curriculum - The spiritual formation of our students includes age-appropriate Bible curriculum as we encourage students to meet and know Jesus personally.
- Spiritual emphasis – In addition to chapel, students in Grades 6, 9 and 12 participate in spiritual emphasis activities, a time to get away from the classroom routine and focus on spiritual matters. These activities are planned and supervised by staff and parent volunteers and generally occur in September.
- Biblical perspective integration - Following Jesus is a lifestyle that goes beyond what happens in a Bible class or chapel experience. Teachers incorporate a biblical perspective in all areas of interaction with students.
- Serving - Serving others is taught as a responsible lifestyle occurring with both neighbours and nations. Awareness and opportunities to participate in giving and serving occur on and off campus throughout the year. Students who choose the Missions course option in the secondary school participate in a mission trip as part of their course work.
- Campus pastors – Campus pastors are hands-on leaders in driving and promoting the spiritual formation of students. They lead and mentor staff in spiritual formation and life at our schools.

8 Staff Conduct, Professional Development, and Hiring Practices

Teachers are Christians who bring an evangelical Christian viewpoint to issues and topics in all curricular areas. Teachers and administrators are expected to show respect for students, other staff, and visitors and contribute to an optimal learning environment. Teachers and administrators are also responsible to work with parents in the matter of discipline, informing parents promptly of disciplinary action taken and making themselves available to parents and students for discussion and counsel of disciplinary situations. The ideal objective of this involvement is to foster understanding, to challenge parent and student alike to supportive behaviour, to enlist student cooperation and to build a like-minded attitude.

As leaders and mentors, staff are asked to commit to the school's Christian philosophy as outlined in the SCA staff handbook. While SCA staff are employees of EIPS, they also commit to uphold the principles and guidelines of SCA

and its Christian culture. Substitute teachers are expected to demonstrate the same personal commitment to the evangelical Christian perspective as hired staff. New teachers may attend biblical worldview in-service training provided locally or through the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI).

SCA is a member of ACSI, which provides resources to connect Christian schools throughout Alberta and around the world. Each fall, teachers attend the ACSI Teacher Convention, providing them a great opportunity to network with colleagues at other schools; many of our staff present workshops at this annual convention. Our administration team and SCA Society board members may also attend the ACSI Administrator Board Conference for development and networking.

When SCA requires the hiring of a School Principal, the following process will be followed as closely as possible:

1. EIPS advises of the opening in accordance with its regular process.
2. The SCA Society advises of the opening through appropriate Christian networking, as the SCA Society identifies from time to time.
3. All potential candidates are advised to forward resumes/applications to EIPS for initial screening to ensure that the candidates have the base qualifications for the position.
4. The SCA Society reviews the resumes/applications and submits a recommended list to EIPS.
5. Candidates for interviewing are selected.
6. In advance of the interview, each candidate will be provided a document called the “Vision Statement” to review.
7. EIPS and the SCA Society co-interview selected candidates utilizing agreed upon questions in addition to standard questions utilized by EIPS.
8. If none of the candidates is acceptable to both EIPS and the SCA Society, the position is reposted.
9. If one or more candidates are found mutually acceptable, the names are provided to the Superintendent.
10. The Superintendent reviews final candidate(s) and makes the final decision. If the Superintendent does not approve any of the candidates, the position is reposted.
11. Where the process of selecting a principal is significantly delayed, in the opinion of the Superintendent, the Superintendent will appoint an acting principal until such time as a suitable candidate is found.

9 Role of the SCA Society

The SCA Society is deeply committed to excellence in the Christian learning environment of SCA and the spiritual nurturing of its students and staff, playing two main roles in that process:

- The SCA Society Board of Directors is a group of individuals who meet monthly, giving oversight to both the Elementary and Secondary schools. Particular attention is given to Christian curriculum and programming, maintaining high moral and educational standards in cooperation with EIPS, supporting staff development as it pertains to the mission and vision of SCA, and managing the financial aspects of operating SCA. The Board selects the Principal in cooperation with EIPS, interacts with each School Council, and is a liaison with the SPAC Board of Elders.
- The SCA Society office supports Board initiatives and handles administrative tasks that enable student enrollment, fee management, the secondary school missions program, and charitable donations. For example, the Society enrollment process and the handling of alternative program fees approved in the annual operating budget are administered in the Society Office.

EIPS recognizes and supports the commitment of the SCA Society to provide a program of studies to students in an educational setting which operates in accordance with the vision and mission of SCA. The SCA Society Board of Directors oversees SCA on behalf of the Society Members, the SPAC Board of Elders.

The SCA Society exercises its role in the following ways:

- participating in policy development related to student admission requirements and staff employed by the SCA Society;
- participating in the recruitment, selection and hiring of school principals;
- providing ongoing counsel and advice to the principals on matters pertaining to the vision and mission of the school;
- supporting staff development as it pertains to the mission and vision of SCA;
- advancing the cause of Christian education in the community and promoting in general through association with Society members, parents, school staff, the EIPS Board, EIPS staff, and organizations such as community churches and Christian education associations;
- developing a process for monitoring the implementation of the SCA Society's vision and mission;
- having in place the SCA Alternative Program Admissions policy and assisting the principals in the implementation of the policy;
- developing strategies to ensure regular communication among the SCA Society employees, parents, the EIPS Board, EIPS School Division staff, and Society members to foster a sense of unity and assisting in the implementation of the same;
- determining the fees it will charge parents to cover its costs for the extra components it provides to SCA for the benefit of the parents and students of SCA; and
- devising ways and means for obtaining an appropriate amount of SCA Society funds necessary for the operation and support of the SCA Alternative Program and determining how these funds shall be distributed.

10 Role of the School

Both the Elementary and Secondary schools strive for excellence in their educational programs, and their support for students, staff and parents contributes to the schools' success.

It is the role of the schools to:

- provide to students the Alberta curriculum in congruence with the alternative program of studies in an educational setting that operates in accordance with SCA's vision and mission;
- encourage and support all SCA staff to continuously live and support SCA's vision and mission and in their commitment to ongoing Christian professional growth;
- support EIPS district staff as they implement and maintain SCA's vision and mission;
- support parents seeking enrollment for their child(ren) in a Christian faith school; and
- provide learning opportunities beyond the classroom that allow students to play their role in God's story.

11 Role of Parents/Guardians

While it is the parents' responsibility to instruct and teach their children in the way to live, the partnership between teachers and parents is vital to ensure the success of SCA's educational program. Parents are encouraged to be involved and support the child's learning at school and at home.

It is the role of parents/guardians to:

- be committed to the vision, mission, and program of the school;
- support the school through encouragement, involvement, and attendance at school functions;
- model a Christ-like attitude in communication and interaction with school staff and other parents;

- encourage their children to participate fully and respectfully in the school’s integral Christian program, which includes devotions, Bible classes, religious studies, and service;
- support and reinforce the school’s expectations and policies;
- provide a home environment that supports the Christian school program;
- keep the school apprised of contact information and address changes so parents can be reached when needed;
- maintain communication with staff regarding learning and/or behavioural issues; and
- keep all School and Society fees current.

SCA’s Parents in Partnership group provides opportunities for parents to support staff, students and families in practical ways, including:

- prayer support — weekly prayer meetings at each school
- compassion meals — meals for families in times of need
- staff appreciation — meals for teachers during interview weeks

12 Role of Students

Along with staff, students play a vital role in the educational environment at SCA.

It is the role of students to:

- be committed to the vision, mission, and program of the school;
- participate respectfully and fully in the school’s integral Christian program, which includes devotions, Bible classes, religious studies, and service;
- respect fellow students, school staff, and school property and constantly challenge themselves to make choices that reflect Christ-like behaviour;
- with the gifts God has given, take responsibility for their own learning, i.e. complete assignments, be on time, etc., with the understanding that the school is a community of grace ready to support and encourage them; and
- follow the school’s rules and understand that discipline, encouragement, and correction are used to restore rather than punish.

13 Admissions/Enrollment Policy

A complete enrollment of a child into SCA includes two processes:

1. Completion of the SCA Society Agreement (scasociety.ca/admissions); and
2. Registration with EIPS (eips.ca/registration).

New admissions will be welcomed and accepted when parents indicate that they understand the program at SCA, that they have a genuine desire for education in accordance with the vision and mission of the SCA Society, and when they have signed the EIPS Parental Commitment Form.

The enrollment process includes an interview and tour of the school. It is our desire that every student finds SCA to be a safe, welcoming environment. For those unfamiliar with an evangelical Christian perspective, the interview process allows administrators to explain what students can expect in a Christ-centered culture and what will be expected of them as students.