

Santa Margarita Catholic High School
SCHOOL BUS RIDER AGREEMENT & CODE OF CONDUCT
2025-2026

Home-to-School Transportation Program

"Safe, respectful, and reliable transportation begins with responsibility."

SECTION 1: PURPOSE

SMCHS operates its own home-to-school transportation program to support student access to Catholic education. This agreement outlines the expectations, responsibilities, and behavioral code required of all student bus riders and their families to ensure a safe and efficient experience. It is intended to align with the policies of the **SMCHS Parent/Student Handbook**, all applicable **California state laws**, as well as the **core principles of Santa Margarita Catholic High School**: Compassion, Humility, Justice and Goodness.

SECTION 2: STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

All students who ride the SMCHS school bus should:

- Arrive at their designated bus stop **at least 5 minutes early**.
 - Wait safely and respectfully at the bus stop.
 - Board and exit the bus in an orderly manner.
 - Follow the instructions of the bus driver at all times.
 - Remain seated, facing forward, with seatbelt fastened (if available).
 - Keep hands, arms, and belongings inside the bus.
 - Speak quietly and use respectful language; no yelling or disruptive behavior.
 - Avoid eating while on board. If you do eat or drink, please clean up any trash before exiting the bus as you are responsible for any mess you may make.
 - Respect the rights and property of others, including the driver and fellow students.
 - Use only their assigned bus and stop unless permission is granted by the Transportation Office.
 - Conduct themselves in accordance with the **SMCHS Parent/Student Handbook**, all applicable **school rules**, and the **core values of SMCHS** at all times.
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SECTION 3: PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents/guardians agree to:

- Ensure their student arrives at the bus stop on time.
- Understand that SMCHS does **not provide supervision** at bus stops.
- Ensure their student knows and follows this Code of Conduct.
- Email bus@smhs.org to notify the Transportation Office of any changes to assigned stops or schedules.
- Arrange alternative transportation in the event of a missed bus to the next stop or directly to SMCHS.
- Support disciplinary action taken for inappropriate behavior.

SECTION 4: CONSEQUENCES FOR MISCONDUCT

Failure to follow bus rules may result in:

- Verbal warning by the bus driver or staff
- Written conduct report
- Parent contact
- Temporary or permanent suspension of bus privileges
- School disciplinary action (as outlined in the Student Handbook)

SECTION 5: TRANSPORTATION SUPERVISION POLICY

Santa Margarita Catholic High School provides transportation under the guidelines of California Education Code § 44808. The following supervision and liability terms apply:

5.1 Before Boarding – Morning Bus Stops

SMCHS does not provide supervision at designated morning bus stops. Parents/guardians are responsible for their child's safety until the student boards the school-operated bus.

Disclaimer: SMCHS assumes no liability for incidents before a student boards the bus at the designated stop.

5.2 Missed Morning Bus

The bus will leave after waiting for three (3) minutes at the indicated stop time. Parents/guardians must arrange transportation if their student misses the bus.

Disclaimer: SMCHS does not provide alternate transportation in such cases.

5.3 Upon Arrival at SMCHS

Student supervision begins upon exiting the bus on campus. Supervision begins at **7:00 a.m.** on school days.

5.4 After School – Until Bus Departure

Santa Margarita Catholic High School offers two scheduled afternoon bus departures:

1. Regular PM Departure – for students leaving campus shortly after the dismissal bell.
2. Later/Delayed PM Departure – for students participating in SMCHS-supervised programs, athletics, or extended activities.

Students must select one PM return option at the time of transportation registration and may not change their selection during the school year.

Regular PM Departure

- Students riding the Regular PM Departure bus will have 20 minutes after the school dismissal bell to report to the designated loading zone. A final boarding call will be

announced by a bus horn. Students who fail to board on time will be responsible for securing alternate transportation home.

Later/Delayed PM Departure

Students assigned to the Later PM Departure must either:

- Be actively participating in a school-supervised program or event (e.g., athletics, clubs, academic support), or
- Remain in a designated supervised area on campus until the delayed bus departs.

Students are not permitted to remain unsupervised or leave campus. Violations may result in disciplinary action, including loss of transportation privileges.

Disclaimer: SMCHS is not responsible for students who leave campus after dismissal or fail to report to their designated supervised area prior to the later PM bus departure.

5.5 Missed Afternoon Bus

Students who miss the afternoon bus must report to the Attendance and Deans' Office or Transportation Office. Parents/guardians must arrange alternate transportation.

Disclaimer: SMCHS is not liable for students who remain on campus unsupervised beyond posted supervision hours.

5.6 After Drop-Off – Afternoon Bus Stops

SMCHS's responsibility ends once a student exits the bus at their designated afternoon stop.

Disclaimer: SMCHS does not provide supervision at afternoon bus stops and is not responsible for incidents occurring after drop-off.

SECTION 6: TRANSPORTATION FEES & FINANCIAL TERMS

Participation in the SMCHS-operated home-to-school transportation program requires registration and payment of applicable transportation fees as established annually by the school.

6.1 Valid Bus Pass Required

All students must carry a valid SMCHS-issued bus pass while using school transportation. Bus passes must be presented to the driver or school personnel upon request. Students may not board or ride the bus without a valid pass unless explicitly authorized by the Transportation Office. Lost or damaged passes must be reported immediately, and replacement passes may incur an additional fee.

6.2 No Refund Policy

Transportation fees are non-refundable. Refunds or prorated credits will not be issued for:

- Missed or unused rides

- Temporary suspensions from riding privileges due to behavior
- Student withdrawal from the program or school
- Illness, vacations, or other absences

Exceptions to this policy may only be made under extraordinary circumstances and with written approval from the Director of Business Operations.

6.3 Financial Responsibility

By enrolling in the SMCHS transportation program, the parent/guardian accepts full financial responsibility for all associated fees and agrees to the payment schedule provided at the time of registration. Failure to meet payment deadlines may result in suspension of transportation privileges.

SECTION 7: TRANSPORTATION OPERATIONS & ROUTE CHANGES

The SMCHS Transportation Office establishes routes, stops, and schedules based on student enrollment, geographic distribution, traffic conditions, and operational efficiency.

7.1 Route and Stop Changes

All bus routes, stops, pick-up/drop-off times, and bus assignments are subject to change at any time throughout the school year at the sole discretion of SMCHS. Changes may be made to address safety concerns, efficiency, ridership demand, staffing availability, road construction, weather conditions, or other logistical factors.

- SMCHS will make reasonable efforts to notify families of any permanent or temporary changes in advance via email or the Transportation Portal.
- In some emergency or unforeseen circumstances, changes may be made with minimal notice.

Disclaimer: SMCHS reserves the right to modify, consolidate, suspend, or eliminate routes, stops, or service areas at any time without refund or reduction in transportation fees. By enrolling in the SMCHS transportation program, families agree to accept such changes as part of the service.

7.2 Parent Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to:

- Review communications from the Transportation Office regularly
- Ensure their student knows their assigned stop, bus number, and any updates
- Adjust personal schedules as needed in response to operational changes

SECTION 8: AGREEMENT & ACKNOWLEDGMENT

- We, the undersigned student and parent/guardian, acknowledge that we have read, understood, and agree to follow the Santa Margarita Catholic High School Bus Rider Agreement, Code of Conduct, Transportation Supervision Policy, and Financial Terms.
- We further acknowledge that:

- This agreement supplements the SMCHS Parent/Student Handbook, and all school policies and behavioral expectations apply while using school transportation.
- Students must conduct themselves in accordance with SMCHS's core principles, including respect for others, integrity, and adherence to Catholic values.
- Students must comply with all school rules, applicable laws, and transportation regulations while waiting for, riding, or exiting the school bus.
- Failure to follow these expectations or the Bus Rider Code of Conduct may result in disciplinary action, including the suspension or permanent revocation of bus riding privileges.
- If a student's transportation privileges are revoked due to misconduct or rule violations, no refund will be issued for any portion of unused transportation fees.

Student First and Last Name: _____

Grade in Fall 2025: _____

Term (select one option): 1st Semester Only / 2nd Semester Only / 1st and 2nd Semesters

Bus Route Time (select one option): AM Only / PM Only / Round-Trip

Bus Route/Stop: _____

Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Emergency Contact Phone: _____