

# **SANTA MARIA Independent School District**

## **SAFETY RULES FOR SCHOOL BUS RIDERS**

### **I. General Information:**

- A. Your safety and comfort is the first thought of those concerned with the operation of the Transportation Department. In order for this to be accomplished, it is necessary to have a few safety rules and regulations which must be honored. The drivers have been given their rule and this information will serve as safety rules for you, their passengers.**
- 1. Besides this book, a general outline of safety rules and regulations is posted at the front of every school bus.**
  - 2. The school district's dress code will be observed while student are on the bus. If a student is not allowed to use certain attire in a regular classroom, the student will not be allowed to ride the bus in that attire.(example: short that may be used only in PE)**
- B. From the moment you get on the bus in the morning until you get off at your stop in the afternoon your actions of conduct, vandalism, etc. will be answerable to the principal and/or Transportation Director.**
- C. Riding a school bus to school and home again is not only a privilege but also a convenience. If you should be denied bus riding privileges or be suspended from riding the bus, you and your parents will soon realize how important school bus transportation can be.**
- D. It is the responsibility of the student to become thoroughly familiar with the required conduct for school bus riders and to abide by the safety rules.**

**Q: WHO IS RESPONSIBLE TO OBEY THE SAFETY RULES?**

**A: ALL STUDENTS THAT RIDE THE SCHOOL BUS**

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**II. Student Information:**

**A. School Bus Information Card**

In order to ride the school bus a student must have a completed and signed Bus Information Card on file with the Transportation Office. This is required for emergencies, bus operation control, and student accounting. Students will not be allowed to change buses. Parents or guardians must assume responsibility for transportation that requires change.

**TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT  
BUS INFORMATION CARD**

Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Student

\_\_\_\_\_  
Identification number

Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Parent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Phone number

Bus number \_\_\_\_\_

Morning

Afternoon

\_\_\_\_\_  
School Attending

\_\_\_\_\_  
Grade

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of teacher

We have studied the safety rules and regulations and hereby agree to  
Subscribe to and abide by the safety rules and regulations.

\_\_\_\_\_

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Signature of Parent

Signature of Student

**COMPLETE THIS CARD AND RETURN IT TO YOUR BUS DRIVER**

### B. Student Identification:

A student is required to identify him/herself to the driver upon request. A secondary student is required to present an ID card upon request. The driver has instructions not to allow unidentified students on the bus. Identification is necessary to check student eligibility status.



### III. Waiting for Bus

- A. Be on time! Please get to your bus stop on time. Riders will be allowed on bus at their assigned stop only. The bus cannot wait for students who are tardy. A student that misses the bus must rely on his/her parent or guardian for transportation. It is recommended that students be at their bus stop five (5) minutes before usual pick up time.**

#### **GET READY- BE ON TIME-GET SET**

### **B. Good Weather Days**

The driver will not make a stop if students are not waiting for the bus at the bus stop. The driver will not allow habitual waiting for brother and sister to come out of the house. If a student is part way to the bus stop, the driver must see that the student is hurrying before he allows a few seconds for the student to get to the bus.

### **C. Bad Weather Days (cold and/or rain)**

The driver will make all stops and open the door to check if students are waiting inside the house. Students are required to waste as little time as possible without running to the bus.

### **D. Proper Conduct At The Bus Stop**

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1. Students should conduct themselves in a safe manner while waiting for the bus. Stay off the roadway at all times. Refrain from horseplay.
2. Students should respect the property of others at the bus stop.
3. Stand back from the edge of the road or curb allowing the bus ample room to pull off on the side of the road way.

### **WAIT AWAY FROM THE EDGE**

4. Don't be too early ( the edge of a busy road is not place to fool around or play )

#### **IV. Loading The Bus:**

##### **A. Loading Procedures At the Bus Stop:**

1. Stand in line at least six (6) feet back from the bus to avoid accidents. **STAND AWAY FROM THE EDGE**
  2. Do not move forward until the bus has stopped and the door is opened.
  3. Permit younger students to board first, then older girls, then older boys.
  4. Watch your step! Step on quickly, quietly without shouting, crowding, pushing, or shoving. You should move quickly down the aisle and quickly have a seat. Remember you are holding up traffic.
- ❖ **MAKE SURE THE BUS COMES TO A FULL STOP BEFORE YOU TRY TO GET ON OR OFF.**
- ❖ **USE THE HANDRAIL SO YOU WON'T TRIP OR FALL**

##### **B. Loading Procedure At School**

1. The bus will wait five (5) minutes for students to board after school is dismissed. Student have time to go to the locker quickly and get to his/her bus
2. If the bus arrives at your school more than five (5) minutes after school was dismisses, the students must be waiting for the bus the same as at the bus stop. The bus will leave as soon as the students waiting are on board.
3. Drivers are not allow students to board the bus while in traffic line. (loading should be at loading area only)

#### **V. RIDING THE BUS:**

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### **A. Items Prohibited On The Bus:**

#### **1. The following items:**

- **Pet Animals**
- **Fowls**
- **Reptiles**
- **Spiders**
- **Weapons**
- **Alcoholic Beverages**
- **Narcotics**
- **Knives**
- **Sharp objects**
- **Other potentially unsafe or harmful articles will not be allowed on the school bus**

- 2. Students are not allowed to carry any equipment or items on the bus that would interfere with the driver, or would in any way hinder the movement of any passenger in an emergency. Instruments too large to be held in your lap, place under seat, or on seat next to the window may not be transported. Never put anything in the aisle or by bus emergency exits. IF YOU MUST TAKE BIG, HEAVY OBJECTS TO SCHOOL, HAVE SOMEONE DRIVE YOU.**

### **B. Student Sitting Regulations:**

- 1. Upon entering the school bus, students should go promptly and directly to a seat and be seated. Seats may be assigned by the driver. Students are not permitted to move around on the bus while it is in motion. Students must be seated and remain seated throughout the bus route.**
- 2. Students should sit facing the front of the bus and should refrain from placing their feet or knees on the seats or the back of seat. This will help assure student safety and preserve the condition and cleanness of the seats. Sitting sideways on the seat or facing the back of the bus is dangerous; therefore, not allowed. SIT FACING THE FRONT.**
- 3. Student will not be permitted to stand unless every seat in the bus is occupied to its capacity of three (3) students to a seat. If this situation occurs it will be corrected as soon as possible.**

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4. Riders are not permitted to ride in the step well, the driver's compartment, or any position that interferes with the driver's vision or driving.

**C. Student Conduct on The School Bus:**

1. Noise on the bus must be kept to a minimum. Loud talking, laughing, singing, whistling, etc., distract from the driving and may obscure warning signals from trains, emergency vehicles, and other dangers. Sudden or loud noise can create confusion and distractions that might result in a serious accident. Absolute quiet is essential when the bus approaches a railroad, crossing or other hazard.
2. Students should not talk to the bus driver while bus is in motion, except in an emergency. **DON'T TALK TO DRIVER!**
3. Eating and drinking on the bus is not allowed. ( A sudden stop could create a hazardous situation like choking or students could slip and fall from things spilled on the floor. **SAVE SNACKS AND HOMEWORK FOR LATER.....** A sudden stop can send an apple core or pencil flying into you, another rider or the bus driver.
4. Use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco in any form is prohibited while riding the school bus.
5. Please use "trash can" at the front of the bus for trash. Students should assist in keeping the bus clean, sanitary, and orderly at all times. Soiling, littering, vandalizing, etc., shows a lack of good manners and lack of respect and create health and safety hazards for all students.
6. Students shall not throw, blow, shoot or otherwise propel harmful objects such as rocks, papers, peas, clips, pencils, water, etc., through the air while on or around the bus.
7. The driver will control the heating/ventilation of the bus. Students are permitted to open and close the windows only if the driver consents. Windows must be closed or opened as requested by driver.
8. Keep your head, arms, elbows, or any object inside the bus window. Do not cause any object to depart or enter the bus by way of the window. Whistling, yelling, etc, from a bus window is prohibited. If you do not comply, the bus driver will require you to close your window.

**D. Vandalism:**

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- 1. Never temper with the school bus or any of its emergency equipment. Someone's life may someday depend on the proper functioning of these items.**
- 2. Emergency exits must not be tampered with. Never use the rear door to enter or exit the school bus except upon the driver's instructions. NEVER USE EMERGENCY EXITS OR PLAY WITH EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT. YOUR LIFE MAY DEPEND ON ITS PROPER USE.**
- 3. Parents or guardians will be required to pay for any damage to the school bus or other property resulting from student misbehavior before they will be allowed to continue riding the school bus. VANDALISM- DESTRUCTION COST MONEY. IT'S THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL STUDENTS TO PREVENT VANDALISM.**

### **E. Misconduct:**

- 1. Your bus driver carries the responsibility of safely transporting human cargo. In order to accomplish this, your driver must your cooperation. If you do not respond to his requests, he has no choice but to report the incident in writing to the Transportation Office and the campus principal.**
- 2. Serious or persistent misbehavior may require the bus driver to stop in route in order to handle the situation safely and this will result in unnecessary delay, incidents will be reported to the Transportation Office and campus principal in writing.**
- 3. Student problems should not be discussed with parents and guardians in front of students while on the bus or through the door or window of the school bus. A conference to discuss such matters should be arranged to take place at he/she school or the Transportation Office with the principal or Transportation Director present. This will reduce distractions from driving and enables all a better stage for understanding. Drivers should be courteous and offer the parent a transportation department business card for them to contact the transportation office for an appointment.**

## **VI. UNLOADING THE SCHOOL BUS**

- A. Students must remain sitting until the bus comes to a complete stop. STAY QUIETLY IN YOUR SEAT UNTIL TRIP IS OVER. DON'T STAND UNTIL BUS COMES TO A FULL STOP.**
- B. Students should check for all belongings prior to unloading. The bus should be left clean and orderly.**

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- C. Students should depart the bus in an orderly manner. Students in the front of the bus should unload first. **LET THOSE CLOSEST TO FRONT- off first- it's faster than if everyone tries to get off at once.**
- D. After unloading at the school to be attended, students should proceed immediately into the school building. You should move away from the bus as soon as you get off to avoid injury and snagging of clothing along the outer body of the bus. **GET AWAY FROM UNLOADING DANGER ZONE QUICKLY.** If you wait for a friend get safely back from traffic and the bus.
- E. When unloading at a residence stop and it is necessary for the student to cross the road:
  - 1. When crossing the street, move at least five (5) steps (10 ft.) in front of the school bus on the shoulder or curb. You should wait for the driver to signal you across.
  - 2. A student should never cross the street behind the school bus.
- F. When unloading at a residence stop and it is not necessary for the student to cross the road, students should walk forward and away from the school bus and wait where the driver can observe them as the school bus departs. Students should then proceed immediately to their home.
- G. A student may not get off the school bus at any place other than his/hers regular designated stop or campus unless the driver orders the school bus unloaded due to an emergency, a school or legal authority removes the student from the bus, or driver has advanced written permission from the parents, guardian, and/or school principal.
  - 1. Student will not be released to persons pursuing the bus in an automobile or waiting at an undesignated stop. This is a dangerous practice that would put at risk all students on the bus.
  - 2. In an emergency, the driver may release a student to a parent if the driver knows the parent. This would create a problem if the driver did not know the parents and a student would be released to an unauthorized person.
  - 3. Notes must have home address and telephone number of parent or guardian to verify note. **DON'T ASK DRIVER TO LET YOU OFF ALONG THE WAY.**
  - 4. No student pre-4 to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade will be dropped off at bus stop or residence if parent or guardian is not home or at bus stop, student will be brought back to attending school office.



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### **VII. HOW TO CROSS THE ROAD----- SAFELY:**

- A. Crossing the road is the most dangerous part of a bus trip. The law says traffic going both ways must stop for a stopped school bus loading or unloading students, but.....Don't depend on it!**
- B. Follow these steps:**
  - 1. **GET OFF PROMPTLY-** As soon as the bus comes to a full stop.
  - 2. **WALK 10 FEET-** walk ahead of the bus along the edge of the road.
  - 3. **STOP AND LOOK –** look back at the driver and wait until he gives you a signal to cross. Double check both ways yourself to make sure.
  - 4. **WALK QUICKLY ACROSS-** Don't stop to check the mailbox before you cross. You are holding up the bus and the traffic.
  - 5. **GET RIGHT OFF-** Get off the road on the side. Don't cross in **BLIND SPOT.-** The driver's Blind Spot is right in front of the bus. **DO NOT CROSS THERE.**
- C. A chart like the one below is attached to the front of the school bus next to the rule in the bus.**



### **VIII. TRANSPORTATION FOR SPECIAL NEEDS STUDENTS**

**The transportation of special needs students is requested by the home campus' Special Services Department. The campus will have an A.R.D. Admission, Review, Dismissal) committee meeting to make sure that the district meets all requirements to transport your child to and from school and related activities. All required forms will be completed without informational error or omissions. The Transportation Department will receive the transportation request form from the campus, assign a Bus Driver and a route, and coordinate all details with the parents for a time and place of pick up. It is the parent's or guardians' responsibility to provide accurate address information to the school. Should there be change of address at anytime it shall be the responsibility of the parent or guardian to notify the campus immediately. Parents or guardians must be present at the bus stop when bus pick up student and present when bus drop-off student or have an adult that shall be listed on a student consent form. In the absence of parent or pre-authorized and documented adult, the student shall be returned to his or her**

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campus, parent will need to pick-up student at the campus or Transportation Department.

### **Special needs students:**

- 1. All special needs students are to follow school bus rules as they do in the classroom.**
- 2. All special needs students transported by school bus must be ready and waiting for their assigned bus 15 minutes before their scheduled time, the bus driver will wait for no longer than 2 minutes, if student is a no show the driver will call transportation office of absence and will continue with the route.**
- 3. If a special needs student is in a wheelchair, wheelchair must be in good working condition example, that it has an occupant belt, brake, wheels and foot rests should be ready for proper useage and working conditions. If not in proper working conditions students may not be transported in wheelchair, this is for the safety of the student.**
- 4. Bus Drivers or Monitors are not allow to accept any medications from parents or guardians to transport to school unless approved by the head nurse, doctor or stated on the student's I.E.P.**
- 5. All student car seats and safety vest must also be approve and stated on the student's I.E.P. in order to transport the student. (required)**

### **Special Trips:**

- 1. The guidelines for this student handbook and the student Code of Conduct apply when students are on field trips, after school Program routes, Tutorial routes and/or any related activity that requires pupil transportation.**
- 2. Your campus principal will require parent consent for any trips taken during or after school hours, in or out of town.**
- 3. Know the place of trip's departure and be there on time. Make certain that your parents know the time your bus is expected to return so they will be there to receive you on return.**

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### **BULLYING ON SCHOOL BUS:**

**Bullying on school buses is zero tolerance and will not be excepted any bullying activity by any student that has the effect or will have the effect of physically harming a student damaging a student's property or placing a student in reasonable fear of harm to the student's person or of damage to the student's property or is sufficiently severe persistent and pervasive enough that the action or threat creates an intimidating, threatening or abusive educational environment for a student. Any suspected bullying on school buses will be subject to an investigation by school principal an parents an in attempt to resolve this issue.**

### **IX. GUIDELINES FOR SAFETY INFRACTIONS:**

- A. It is the driver's responsibility to maintain discipline on the school bus at all times. The driver has the responsibility to enforce the bus safety rules.**
- B. When a student violates the safety rules pertaining to school bus riders, the bus driver shall try to make corrections on his own by following these guidelines:**
  - 1. Correct the student and point out the unacceptable behavior. Insist that the student stop the behavior and refrain from doing it again.**
  - 2. Speak to the student individually, if possible, to resolve the problem.**
  - 3. Assign a seat to the student for a set period of time. Seat assignment may be extended or reassignment may be made as violations occur.**
  - 4. The driver may issue a written warning to the student to inform the parents of safety infractions on the school. (less severe safety infractions only)**
    - a. The notice will be issued in the afternoon to be taken to the parents.**

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- b. The notice must be signed and returned to the bus driver the next morning in order for the student to ride the school bus.

**C. Written reports to principal: for persistent less severe violations, but the bus driver needs help to make corrections.**

**1. FIRST REPORT TO PRINCIPAL- Recommendation- Explanation of rules**

- Warning Seat assignment – Notify Parents

**2. SECOND REPORT TO PRINCIPAL- Recommendation-lose bus riding privilege from 1 to 3 days. Parents to be notified.**

**3. THIRD REPORT TO PRINCIPAL- Recommendation – lose bus riding privilege from 5 to 10 days. Parents to be notified.**

**4. FOURTH REPORT TO PRINCIPAL—Recommendation lose bus privilege from 10 to a semester with copies of referral may be filed with the Supt. For further action. Parent to be notified.**

**5. The driver can recommend that a student be suspended from riding the school for a period of time, but in any event it will be the principal's decision to determine the consequences of the safety violations. Drivers will be available for parent conference to settle safety infractions problems.**

**D. Written reports to principal: for severe violations of rules and the driver needs help to make correction.**

**1. The driver must stop the bus and bus and control the situation immediately. The driver will determine when it is safe to continue.**

**2. If severe violations occurs on route to school, the driver will attempt to hand the student over to a security guard upon the arrival of the school bus at the school. The driver will explain the situation to the security guard and ask him to take the student to the principal's office. A written report should be turned into the principal later.**

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3. If a severe violation occurs on route home in the afternoon, the driver shall discuss the violation with the student and make a written report to the principal the following morning. The driver on his or her own does not have the authority to deny transportation to student. In severe cases ( dangerous ) the transportation director may instruct the driver not to allow a student on the school bus until a disciplinary conference can be set up with the student and parents. The principal will be notified as soon as possible after the violation to make a final decision.
4. Consequences for severe violation of safety rules must be handled on an individual basis. Denial of school bus riding privileges may occur on the first offense. Recommendation to the principal will vary with severity of the violations from denying school bus riding privileges for 3 days to a semester.

**E. Severity of violations of safety rules:**

1. Less severe violations include: improper sitting, bad or profane language, standing or moving around on the school bus, things that do not directly injure others, unnecessary noise or distractions, bothering others, and eating or drinking.
2. More severe violations include: fights, causing injury to another, throwing objects, use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, profanity toward driver, threats to driver, vandalism, handling emergency equipment and causing others to misbehave.

**F. The driver has the responsibility of making a written report to the transportation office on acts of safety violations by students or any incident that he or she thinks should be reported. Written reports should be written only after the driver has tried on his or her own to make corrections. Written reports mean that the drivers needs help in dealing with the problem. Incident report forms may be obtained from the secretary at the transportation office.**

**G. The following form is a sample of a Bus Conduct Report that is filed with the Transportation Director and the principal for disciplinary action.**

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**“DON’T LOSE YOUR RIDING PRIVILEGE”  
FOLLOW THESE RULES**

- 1. Observe same conduct as in the classroom**
- 2. Be courteous, use no profane language.**
- 3. Do not eat or drink on the school bus.**
- 4. Keep the school bus clean.**
- 5. Cooperate with the driver.**
- 6. Do not smoke.**
- 7. Do not be destructive.**
- 8. Stay in your seat while bus is in motion.**
- 9. Keep head, hands, and feet inside the school bus.**
- 10. Bus driver is authorized to assign seats.**

**X. EMERGENCY SITUATIONS:**

- A. In case of an emergency, remain quiet and calm. Students are to follow the directions given by the bus driver. If you follow suggestions in this booklet ..... the chances are you’ll never be in an accident..... but-just in case your school bus should be involved in an accident.....**
- B. Stay in your seat until the driver tells you what to do. Don’t panic and move around without thinking.**
- C. Don’t touch emergency equipment or safety release until told to do so by the school bus driver.**
- D. If you have to use an emergency exit, do the following:**
  - 1. Let those closest to exit go first - - crowding will only delay everyone.**
  - 2. Duck your head as you go through the emergency exit door.**
  - 3. Wrap loose clothing coat edges, shirt tails, etc., around you so you won’t get caught.**

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4. **Keep your hands free—leave everything behind.**
5. **Bend your knees, if it's a big jump sit down then jump down from the bus on a rear door evacuation.**
6. **Get away from the emergency exit door so that others can come through.**
7. **Stay with the group a safe distance from the school bus and wait for the driver's instructions.**

**XI. TEAM WORK:**

A. Safe school bus rides mean a team of people working together using the same safety rules. **WHO'S THE MOST IMPORTANT MEMBER OF THE TEAM? IT'S YOU!!!!**

**B. To do your job, you need:**

1. **SELF-DISCIPLINE-** ie., doing what is right and safe without being told.
2. **INDEPENDENCE-** ie., knowing what to do when you're on your own.
3. **TRAINING-** ie., Learning all you need to know to be a safe rider.

C. Student should take the safety booklet home and ask parents to read it and be part of the TEAM.

D. All school bus drivers have been instructed on the safety rules contained in this booklet and are part of the TEAM.

E. School personnel are part of the TEAM. If students or parents should have any questions concerning the transportation system, please contact your Transportation office or school principal at one of the numbers below.  
956-565-6308 ext.2003 or 956-514-1395

**TO ALL PARENTS:**

**The Transportation Department shall not allow student to be dropped off at a different bus stop different than the one authorized by guidelines without the prior approval of the campus principal and verification by the Transportation Department. Once a student is on the school bus , the bus Driver has been directed not to release that child to his or her parent or guardian while on route. Once a student has boarded the school bus the student will be dropped off only at his or her authorized**

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stop. Finally, please do not attempt to remove your child while the school bus is in operation of route.

**“THANK YOU” WE APPRECIATE YOUR SUPPORT IN  
KEEPING OUR CHILDREN SAFE:**