

BOARD OF TRUSTEES July 10, 2023

CARLA CORONA

CHARLES HUGHES

JILL MCGRADY

MIGUEL SANCHEZ IV

DONITA J. WINN

Dear Parents/Guardians:

The 2023-24 school year will begin soon. I hope your student(s) will have a positive, rewarding experience in our District at one of our schools.

ADMINISTRATION

GREG NEHEN
Superintendent

SHANDELYN WILLIAMS
Deputy Superintendent

BRIAN HAWKINS
Assistant Superintendent
Business Services

DR. CHRIS GRADO
Assistant Superintendent
Educational Services

KRISTINA RAMOS
Assistant Superintendent
Human Resources

The state of California does not require school districts to provide home-to-school transportation services, however, the Antelope Valley Union High School District has elected to provide busing services to students who live outside a three-mile circular radius from their high school. To assist our students and families with obtaining transportation services, the District offers transportation to all students at no charge.

All student bus riders will be required to obtain or renew a SMART-Tag bus pass from the Antelope Valley Schools Transportation Agency (AVSTA). A SMART-Tag pass will only be issued once per each student. Replacement tags will cost \$5.00 for all general education students.

A SMART-Tag can be obtained online by visiting www.avsta.com.

The SMART-Tag will be delivered by the bus driver on the first day of school. AVSTA will provide the bus stop location for each student by return email once a SMART-Tag has been requested.

Sincerely,



Greg Nehen
Superintendent





Antelope Valley Schools Transportation Agency

Dear Parents of AVUHSD 2023-2024 Returning Students and Incoming Freshman:

Antelope Valley Schools Transportation Agency will begin processing SMART-Tag passes for our general education high school bus riders for the 2023-2024 school year on **July 17, 2023**. A SMART-Tag is required for all general education high school students riding a bus to and from school. A SMART-Tag pass can be requested by submitting the online "SMART-Tag Order Form" located at www.avsta.com, by clicking on the Bus Rider or SMART-Tag portal.

The Antelope Valley Union High School District will provide transportation services to students within the boundaries at no cost. To establish ridership eligibility, all new general education students must request a SMART-Tag for the 2023-2024 school year. All new riders, returning students who have moved, or returning students who have lost or damaged their pass and need a replacement, must submit the SMART-Tag Order Form. A SMART-Tag is only issued once per student. Replacement passes will cost \$5.00 for all general education students and must be paid for and picked up in person at our office. *Replacement fees must be made by cash, check, or money order only.*

Our online request form is easy and simple to complete. Once your online request form has been received and processed, all new student riders will receive a confirmation email with the bus stop information and instructions with the distribution process of the SMART-Tag. Please allow 2-3 business days for requests to be completed. If you are unable to access a computer, smart phone, or tablet; a kiosk is available at the Antelope Valley Schools Transportation Agency office at 670 West Avenue L-8 in Lancaster beginning **July 17, 2023**, from 8:00 AM until 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

A new process will be implemented for ALL returning general education high school student riders for the 2023-2024 school year. An email notification will be sent to all returning student riders parent/guardian with instructions to respond with their student's ridership verification status for the 2023-2024 school year. Once the required response is received, returning students who have not moved, will use their existing SMART-Tag pass and it will be renewed for the 2023-2024 school year and they will locate their bus stop times on our website prior to the start of school. For returning students who have moved, they will be required to submit a "renewal" request by submitting the SMART-Tag Order Form, so that the new address can be verified for ridership eligibility. If no response is received prior to the start of school, the student will be unmarked for ridership until the verification process has been completed.

If you have questions or need additional information, you may call 661-945-3621.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Morris Fuselier III".

Morris Fuselier III
Antelope Valley School Transportation Agency
CEO

Antelope Valley Union High School District Parent-Pay Transportation

Eligibility for Transportation Services

To be eligible for transportation services, students must live beyond a minimum of a three air-mile radius from their school of residence and comply with current administrative regulations and/or Board policy.

Annual Transportation Fees

The Antelope Valley Union High School District will no longer charge the \$200.00 per school year student fee and will now provide transportation services to students within the boundaries at no cost.

Issuance of SMART-Tag Pass

The SMART-Tag pass will provide home-to-school transportation at the beginning and end of the normal academic school day. The SMART-Tag pass is only issued once (unless lost or stolen) and is to be used throughout the students' entire high school years. **No one way passes will be sold.** A replacement fee will apply.

All returning students will receive an email notification requesting ridership verification status. Once received, returning students who have not moved will use their existing SMART-Tag pass and it will be renewed. For returning students who have not moved, but lost or damaged their pass, will be required to replace their pass in person. For returning students who have moved, will be required to submit a renewal request, so that the new address can be verified for ridership eligibility.

A SMART-Tag pass must be renewed or requested using our online request form located at www.avsta.com. For those without access to a computer, smart phone, or tablet, kiosks are available at the Antelope Valley Schools Transportation Agency, 670 W. Avenue L-8, Lancaster, CA 93534, beginning July 17, 2023, from 8:00AM until 4:00PM, Monday through Friday.

Note: Students will be allowed to ride the bus for the first week of school per semester to allow time for the submittal and processing of the online request. However, after the first week of each semester, students will be required to present their SMART-Tag pass to the bus driver or they will not be allowed to ride the school bus.

Effective August 21, 2023, a student must have a valid SMART-Tag to board the school bus for the first semester and January 22, 2024, for the second semester.

Instructions for Completing the SMART-Tag Request Form

A SMART-Tag pass can be renewed or requested by submitting the online request form located at www.avsta.com. All parents/guardians must submit this online form to request a new, renewal or replacement pass for the upcoming school year/semester. **Paper applications are**

no longer available.

All information submitted on the request form MUST match the information on file with the school. The Agency will validate information prior to issuance and/or renewal. Submittal of the form does not guarantee transportation as transportation boundaries apply.

Fill out all required fields for the Agency to process your request form. Be sure to sign your name, acknowledging your understanding and acceptance of all conditions. Incomplete applications will not be received or processed.

Possession of SMART-Tag

Each student must have a valid SMART-Tag in his/her possession each time he/she wishes to ride the bus. SMART-Tags are considered the property of the District, rented to the bearers, who are charged with custodial responsibility and are expected to safeguard them accordingly.

Lost, Stolen or Forgotten SMART-Tag

The District assumes no responsibility for lost or stolen passes. Damaged or lost passes will be replaced upon payment of a \$5.00 replacement fee. The request for a replacement SMART-Tag is located on www.avsta.com. Replacement fees must be paid by cash, check, or money order.

Any student with a valid school ID whose SMART-Tag is lost or stolen, or who forgets his/her SMART-Tag will be allowed to ride but will be issued a bus ticket. It will be processed per the Agency progressive discipline policy.

Returned Checks

Checks that are returned from a bank due to insufficient funds will be forwarded to the transportation department of the district. Transportation staff will contact the parent/guardian for financial settlement including all associated bank fees.

If financial settlement cannot be made within five business days of bank notification, then the parents/guardian, school, student, and bus driver shall be notified beginning the next school day that transportation privileges will be denied the student and the SMART-Tag will be confiscated by the bus driver. Returned checks are subject to a \$20.00 service charge.

Ridership Eligibility Conditions

Students will be eligible to ride upon presentation of a valid SMART-Tag, except when student ridership has been suspended by the Transportation Agency.

Students will be required to present their SMART-Tag pass to the bus driver, or they will not be allowed to ride the school bus.

Students will be required to comply with rules and regulations regarding pupil transportation as set forth elsewhere in the District and Transportation Agency policies and procedures. Students who loan their SMART-Tag to other students or use a SMART-Tag that does not belong to them

or attempt to obtain transportation service without completing the online request process, may be denied transportation services permanently. Students who attend a school other than their home school of attendance will not be eligible for transportation services.

SMART-Tag Requirements

Students will be required to scan their SMART-Tag to load and unload at their assigned stop. Beginning with the Fall semester, students must present their SMART-Tag or they will be denied transportation. A SMART-Tag must be presented to the bus driver each time they enter or exit the bus.

Uninterrupted transportation service can only be maintained if students have in their possession a valid pass and present it to the bus driver as required.

SMART-Tag Violation

The following standards of progressive actions regarding abuse/misuse of school bus ridership authorization are established and are separate from other disciplinary measures.

Using, or attempting to use, an expired pass, loaning, borrowing or altering a pass, using or attempting to use a stolen, found or forged pass:

- A. First Offense: Bus privileges shall be suspended for one week.
- B. Second Offense: Bus privileges shall be suspended for the remainder of the school year.

Possession of any pass not assigned to the possessor, shall constitute prima facie evidence of improper possession and shall be reason to exercise disciplinary measures as set forth above.

Emergencies

In the event conditions beyond the control of the district temporarily prevent the district from providing the expected transportation services, the district will have no liability for refund of fees.

Bus and Bus Stop Assignments

Possession of a valid SMART-Tag entitles a student to ride only on the designated bus to and from a designated stop before and after the regular academic day. SMART-Tag passes **will not** be recognized on any bus other than the bus for which the pass was issued. The bus stop assignment will be determined by the current home address on file with the school. All decisions regarding assignments to buses and stops are at the sole discretion of the Transportation Agency.

Parents are advised that the District does not supervise bus stops and that the District is not responsible for the control and conduct of students at the bus stop. Parents should not neglect their responsibility for supervising their students until their students safely board the bus.

SMART-Tag Order Information

Lancaster School District and Westside Union School District general education students will receive all passes at no charge. To request a SMART-Tag, see a school administrator to complete a Transit Bus Transportation Request (TBTR) form. The parent/guardian must complete the request form and the student must return it to the school site within 5 business days to avoid loss of ridership. After the request for a new pass has been processed, students will receive the SMART-Tag pass from their school bus driver. If the student loses or damages the SMART-Tag, a replacement pass must be requested by the parent/guardian at www.avsta.com on the Bus Rider or SMART-Tag portal. After the request for a replacement pass has been processed, the student will receive the SMART-Tag from their school bus driver.

High School general education students will be provided with transportation services at no cost. To establish ridership eligibility, all new students must request a SMART-Tag for the upcoming school year. A SMART-Tag pass can be requested by submitting the online "SMART-Tag Order Form" located at www.avsta.com on the Bus Rider or SMART-Tag portal. An email confirmation with bus stop information and instructions with the distribution process of the SMART-Tag will be sent within 2-3 business days. If the student loses or damages the SMART-Tag, a replacement pass must be requested by the parent/guardian at www.avsta.com, a \$5.00 fee will be charged, must be picked up, and paid for in person at AVSTA; 670 West Avenue L-8; Lancaster.

A new process will be implemented for all returning general education high school student riders. An email notification will be sent to all returning student riders parent/guardian with instructions to respond with their student's ridership status. Once the required response is received, returning students who have not moved will use their existing SMART-Tag pass and it will be renewed, they will locate their bus stop times on our website prior to the start of school. For returning students who have moved, they will be required to submit a "renewal" request by submitting the SMART-Tag Order Form, so that the new address can be verified for ridership eligibility. If no response is received prior to the start of school, the student will be unmarked for ridership until the ridership status has been received.

All Special Needs Students will receive their SMART-Tag pass at no charge, including replacement passes. All special needs students will receive their pass from their bus driver once placed on a route. If the student loses or damages the SMART-Tag, a replacement pass must be requested by the parent/guardian at www.avsta.com on the Bus Rider or SMART-Tag portal. After the request for a replacement pass has been processed, the student will receive the SMART-Tag from their school bus driver.

Incomplete orders will not be processed.

If you have any questions, please contact the Administrative Assistant at 661-945-3621.



Dear Parents,

The SMART tag system helps increase safety and security for students riding on a school bus, leveraging technology to improve student management and communications on school buses.

SMART tag monitors student loading and unloading, providing real-time information to the Transportation Department, and you, the parent.

SMART tag will help...

- increase driver, school, and parent awareness
- ensure riders will load on the right bus and unload at the right stop
- maximize rider safety and security
- enable drivers to efficiently and effectively carry out their duties
- ensure Special Education and Pre-K students are released to authorized guardians.*

SMART tag Parent Portal

- SMART Alerts – sign up for SMART Alerts and receive emails or text messages when your child is approximately 10-15 minutes from their stop.
- SMART Locate – allows parents to view a map showing the bus as their child is being transported.
- Authorized guardian release feature. This tool allows parents to update authorized guardians through the Parent Portal.*

Make sure to register!

Go to parent.smart-tag.net and register to take advantage of the SMART tag Parent Features. If you are using a smart phone, you will be prompted to save the web app to your home screen. This will place the Parent App tile on your mobile device for easy access.

For more information about SMART tag, please visit our website at www.smart-tag.net.

* These are district configurable options

How it Works

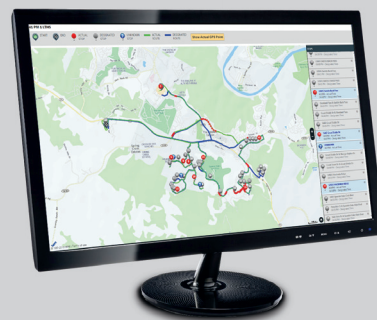


Student ID

Students are issued a Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) SMART tag ID. RFID technology is a newer technology that is replacing bar codes in many industries such as medical (patient, equipment & supplies tracking), libraries (book tracking), and even amusement park access (Disney World now uses RFID wristbands). These IDs communicate with the driver tablets. No student info is stored on the tag.

Bus Tablet

SMART tag school buses are equipped with a tablet computer and RFID reader. When loading and unloading a bus, riders present their ID onto the reader. The tablet will display if the rider is boarding the correct bus, and if they are getting off at their correct stop.



Transportation Administration

When bus activity begins, rider info is immediately available for the transportation administrators, so they can oversee all school bus activity.

Parent App

An online Parent Portal may be accessed at parent.smart-tag.net. On your iOS or Android smartphone you can save as web app to your home screen for easy access.



To add this web app to the home screen: tap and then **Add to Home Screen**.



Antelope Valley Schools Transportation Agency

Dear Parents/Guardians and Students:


The SMART-Tag Parent Portal is now available. The Parent Portal allows parents to sign up for SMART-Tag alerts and receive emails or text messages when their child’s bus is approximately 10-15 minutes from their stop. Parents can visit the AVSTA website at www.avsta.com to register and log in by clicking on the “SMART-Tag Parent Portal.”

Make sure to register!

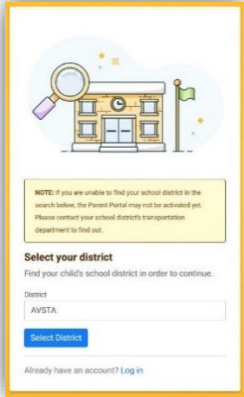
Before registering, please have the following information: 10-digit Student State ID number, Date of Birth, Campus name, and transportation district (you must select AVSTA for the district). **Please call your school if you need assistance retrieving your student’s 10-digit State ID.**

Go to www.avsta.com, click on the “SMART-Tag Information” tab, for video tutorials and the "SMART-Tag Parent Portal," for a curated list of Frequently Asked Questions. Follow the quick step guide outlined below.

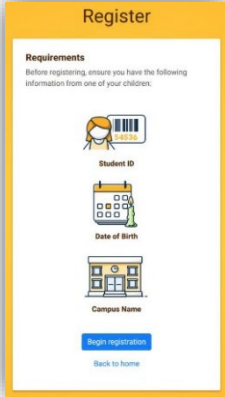
➤ **How to “Register” for the Parent Portal**



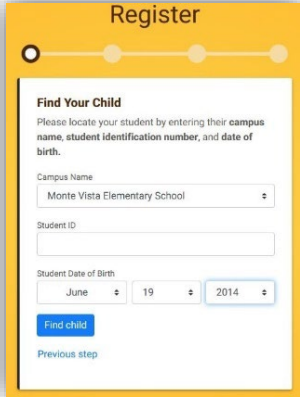
1. Register



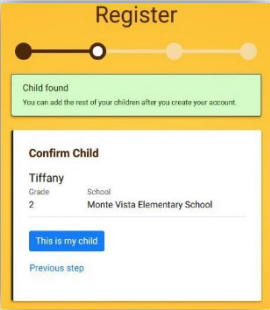
2. Select District: AVSTA



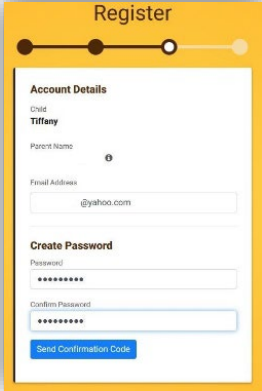
3. Click, “Begin Registration”



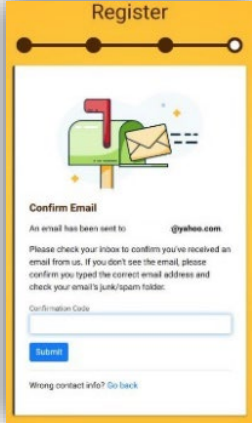
4. Select Campus Name, enter Student State ID, select Birthday, click, “Find Child”



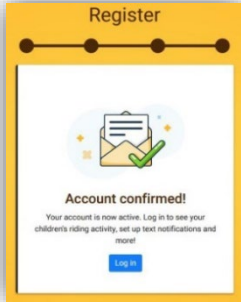
5. Confirm that student information is correct. Click, “This is my child”



6. Type in your email create password, click, “Send Confirmation”



7. Check your e-mail Type in Confirmation Code, click “Submit”

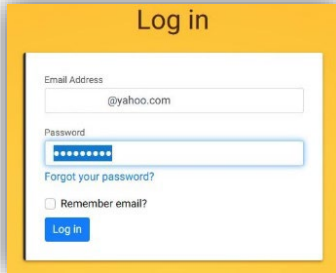


8. That’ it! You’re Registered!

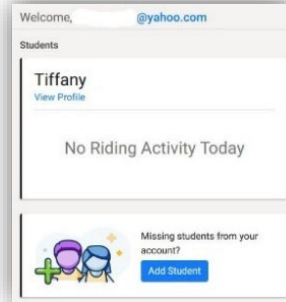
Navigating the Parent Portal

Navigate to <https://www.avsta.com/> to log into the Parent Portal by clicking on the "SMART-Tag Parent Portal."

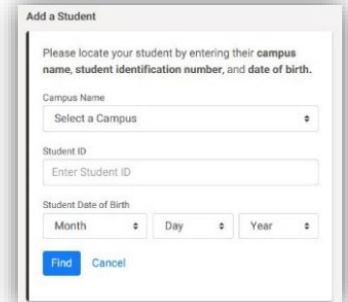
➤ How to "Add" additional students



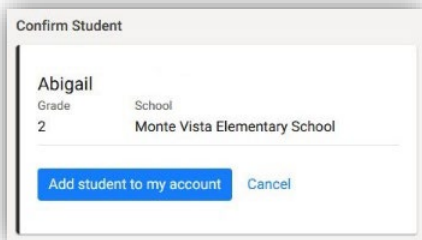
1. Log in



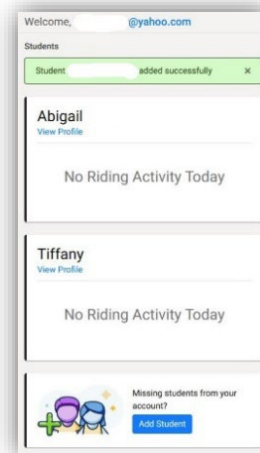
2. Click, "Add Student"



3. Select Campus, enter Student State ID, select Birthdate, click "Find."

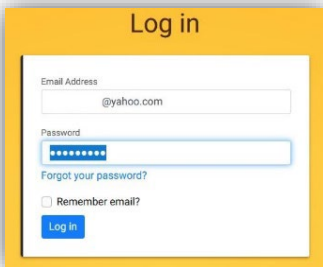


4. Confirm that student information is correct. Click "Add Student to my Account"

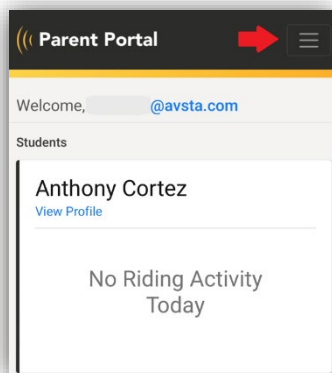


5. Student added successfully!

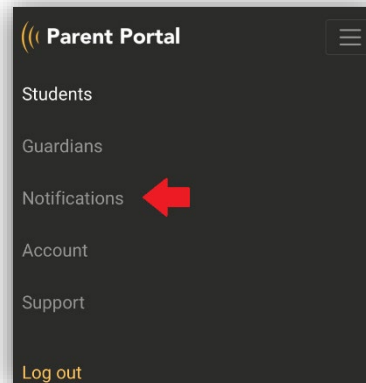
➤ How to turn on and off "SMART Alerts"



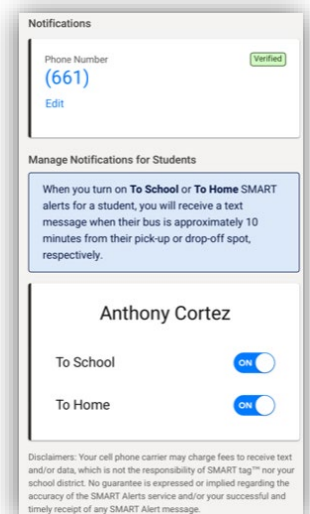
1. Log in



2. Click, "Menu"



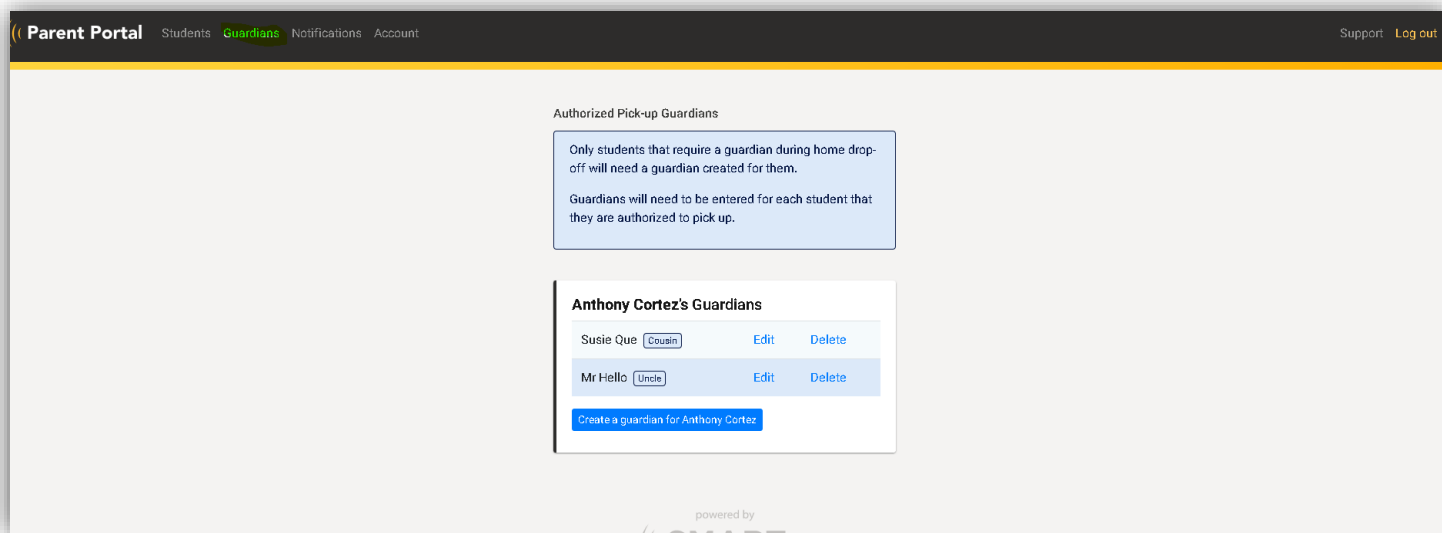
3. Click, "Notifications"



4. Enter & verify your phone number. Turn the "To School" & "To Home" Alerts on & off.

➤ **How to Create Guardian(s) for your student**

Log in to the Parent Portal > Click, “Guardians” at the top of the page or Menu > Click, “Create a guardian”> Type the guardian’s name and the relationship to your student > Click, “Create”.



Visit <https://www.avsta.com/smart-tag-portal> for instructional videos and tutorials.

For further assistance, please get in touch with our Dispatch Supervisor at 661-952-3108 or by emailing dispatch_supervisor@avsta.com

ANTELOPE VALLEY SCHOOLS TRANSPORTATION AGENCY BUS RULES

1. Authority of the driver: Pupils transported in a school bus shall be under the authority of, and responsible directly to the driver of the bus, and the driver shall be held responsible for the orderly conduct of the students while they are on the bus or being escorted across a street or highway. (Title V, Section 14103 – A, California Administration Code)
2. Cooperate with the driver. Follow directions the first time they are given.
3. Arrive at the bus stop waiting in line 5 minutes before the scheduled bus departure time. While going to and from the bus stop and while waiting for the bus, keep out of the street and off private property. Noise, rowdy behavior and property damage at the bus stop could cause the stop to be moved to a less convenient location. Students must use the designated stop closest to his or her home both A.M. and P.M. Students may not use multiple stops. Any student having to use another stop in an “emergency only” situation must have a note pre-approved by the school.
4. Board and leave the bus in an orderly manner. Do not push other students. Be seated promptly. Do not “save” seats for others. Be willing to share the seat with fellow bus riders. Follow driver’s instructions concerning seating location and unloading procedures.
5. Always sit facing the front of the bus. Remain seated when the bus is in motion. Do not change seats without permission of the driver.
6. Keep head, hands, and arms inside the bus at ALL times. Do not yell out of the windows to others outside the bus.
7. No physical contact of ANY kind is allowed. Keeps hands off other people and off others possessions.
8. Animals, insects, and reptiles are not permitted on the bus with the exception of service animals. (54.2. Civil Code)
9. Large musical instruments are prohibited on the bus. Other prohibited items include glass containers or other breakable items, skate boards, roller blades/skates, balloons, playground equipment, and other large bulky items. Special arrangements must be made for transportation of athletic equipment. Cleats and or spikes must be removed prior to boarding the bus.
10. Bus aisle and emergency exits must be kept clear of feet, legs, arms, books, and lunches.
11. Keep the bus clean. Students are not to eat, drink, or chew gum or tobacco on the bus.
12. Appropriate school dress must be worn at all times while on the bus. Appropriate footwear must also be worn. Hats/caps, hoodies, etc. are not to be worn while on the bus and must be removed prior to boarding. No open cosmetics or aerosol cans are permitted.
13. Do not use obscene or profane language. Smoking, any narcotics, weapons, and lighting of matches are not permitted on the bus. No hazardous materials, liquids, or gases are permitted on the bus.
14. Do not deface or destroy bus equipment. Damage to seats, windows and other parts of the bus are unnecessary and costly. The student will be responsible for the cost of repair.
15. Avoid loud talking, loud laughter or unnecessary confusion (it may divert the driver’s attention and could result in an accident).
16. Students living across streets, upon which the bus is stopped to unload them, should cross only when the driver indicates that it is safe to do so. Students must cross the street in front of the bus and walk straight across the street. The driver will escort Elementary and Junior High students across the street.
17. In school districts with bus passes, students MUST show their bus pass before boarding the bus and may not use another student’s pass.
18. Students are NOT allowed to use cell phones or any electronic devices while on the bus. These items must be placed in the off position and kept in the student’s possession at all times while on a bus.
19. Students that leave campus for any reason other than a school authorized, pre-approved appointment will NOT be allowed to ride the bus home in the PM.
20. If school bus is equipped with seat belts and shoulder straps, they MUST be worn at all times. Tampering with ANY seat belt or shoulder strap is PROHIBITED.

EVEN THOUGH A TRANSPORTATION FEE IS CHARGED, TRANSPORTATION IS A PRIVILEGE. FAILURE TO ABIDE BY ONE OR MORE OF THESE RULES MAY RESULT IN THE LOSS OF BUS RIDING PRIVILEGES.