

Grades TK-8 Student-Parent Handbook 2023-2024

Accredited by the Association of Christian Schools International (ACSI) and the
Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC)



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WELCOME to RSM Christian School

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ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

Mike Margy, Vice Principal
Carrie Gulino, Director of Curriculum and Instruction

RSMCS Office Hours: 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

School Hours

TK: 8:15 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

K-6: 8:15 a.m. to 2:45 p.m.

7-8: 8:05 a.m. to 3 p.m.

SCHOOL COLORS
Blue, Charcoal

SCHOOL MASCOT
Lions

The RSMCS Parent/Student Handbook is designed to provide general information on school policies and practices, as well as a specific section for each division of the school. A student's and family's presence in the school signifies their acceptance and willingness to abide by the policies set forth in this handbook, and as they shall be revised periodically. RSMCS reserves the right to alter policies at any time without prior notice. Students and parents signify acceptance of a change in policy by remaining members of the school community after notice of the change is given.

Please find the acknowledgment form sent through Parent Square and sign it stating you have read and acknowledge this handbook.



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Purpose and Philosophy



Philosophy of Education

The primary objective and purpose of RSMCS is to complement the home by providing a Christ-centered environment in which the development of the whole child is promoted through the love of Jesus Christ by the application of biblical truth. It is our belief that education is a process in which all aspects of the growing child – spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social, and physical – should be nurtured in a balanced environment of affirmation and challenge. We are committed to providing a comprehensive and rigorous curriculum with a focus on high achievement for all students.

Christian education extends beyond the informational dimension and is transformational; it is designed to produce thriving disciples of Jesus Christ who love God, love others, and reach out to the world around them. We believe that all students can learn and are valued as individuals created in God’s image with unique physical, social, emotional, intellectual, and spiritual needs and abilities. These needs and abilities are nourished best within a safe and supportive learning environment where inspirational administrators, faculty, staff, and coaches encourage and challenge students to pursue excellence.

We believe in the active participation of the Holy Spirit in the educational process. It is the Holy Spirit who leads both teachers and students into all truth. It is the leading of the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which enables the teacher to minister to the spoken and unspoken needs of the child’s heart.

Biblical integration is the method by which God’s Word is infused into every aspect of the school program. All academic disciplines and extracurricular activities alike must be aligned to biblical principles and commands. No teaching, theory, or policy, which contradicts the teaching of Scripture, may be presented as true, right, practical, or expedient.

We believe a complete Christian education is realized through developing the whole child in character, knowledge, and skills. Christian education seeks to realize the full potential God has invested in every student. It is not limited to the spiritual and intellectual domains but includes the physical and social domains as well. An RSMCS Lion cultivates the virtues of faith, honor, respect, responsibility, humility, and love toward God, others, and self in all that we do.



Mission Statement

RSM Christian School (RSMCS) exists to serve families who desire for their children an education that is distinctly Christian. Our mission is to educate and disciple all students as they discover their purpose in the work of God's kingdom, bridging the gap between who our students are and who God has created them to be.

Vision Statement

Equipping Today ... to Impact Tomorrow

Christian education is a vital component in the transforming process by which students become the people who God intends them to be. RSMCS teachers shape the hearts and minds of their students by bringing them into alignment with the truth of God's Word (Luke 6:40; Deut. 6:4-8) and by equipping them for life by cultivating the spiritual, intellectual, social, and physical dimensions of the whole child (Luke 2:52). Our goal is that each student may be presented mature in Christ (Col. 1:28). This understanding of Christian education provides the backdrop of our expected schoolwide learner outcomes.

Articles of Faith

- We believe the Bible to be the only inspired, infallible, authoritative, inerrant Word of God. (II Timothy 3:16)
- We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. (Genesis 1:1; Matthew 28:19)
- We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ (John 10:33), His virgin birth (Matthew 1:23), His sinless life (Hebrews 4:15), His miracles (John 2:11), His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood (1 Corinthians 15:3, Ephesians 1:7), His bodily resurrection (John 11:25), His ascension to the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19), and His personal return in power and glory. (Acts 1:11)
- We believe that the salvation of lost and sinful man through the regeneration of the Holy Spirit is essential because of the exceeding sinfulness of human nature, and that men are justified on the single ground of faith in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, and that only by God's grace and through faith alone are we saved. (John 3:16-19; Romans 3:23; Romans 5:8-9; Ephesians 2:8-10)
- We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life. (Ezekiel 36:27; Romans 8:11-14)
- We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved to the resurrection of life and they that are lost to the resurrection of damnation.
- We believe in the literal existence of both heaven and hell. (John 3:16-19; John 5:24; Romans 5:8-9)
- We believe in the spiritual unity and community of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ. (John 5:28-29)



- We believe that the term marriage has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Genesis 2:18–25). We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Corinthians 6:18, 7:2–5; Hebrews 13:4).
- We believe that God wonderfully foreordained and immutably created each person as either male or female in conformity with their biological sex. These two distinct yet complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God (Genesis 1:26–27).

Our Statement of Faith is not exhaustive of all of our beliefs. The Bible, as the inspired and infallible Word of God, speaks with absolute authority regarding the proper conduct of mankind and is the unchanging foundation for all belief and behavior.

Though RSM Christian School is its own organization, it is a ministry of The Bridge Church and under the authority of The Bridge Church. The Bridge Church is part of The Foursquare Church denomination. As it pertains to RSM Christian School, The Foursquare Church holds final interpretive authority on biblical meaning and application with regard to faith, doctrine, policy, practice, and discipline.

What We Teach

We teach that...

There is one God, existing eternally in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. The Scriptures declare His virgin birth, His sinless life, His vicarious and atoning death on the cross, His bodily resurrection, and His personal future return.

The Work of the Holy Spirit is to convict unbelievers of their sin, to regenerate the believer unto eternal life, to indwell the Christian as a pledge of redemptive inheritance, to empower the Christian for life and service through the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, and to distribute spiritual gifts to believers for the edification of the Church.

The Bible is God's Word, His revelation of Himself and of His redemptive purposes for all human persons. Because God Himself inspired the very words written by the human biblical authors, the Bible is the authoritative and infallible standard for Christian belief and practice. It is truthful and reliable in all that it teaches and affirms.



Salvation is a free gift of God's grace, and is received through faith in Jesus Christ alone and His vicarious, atoning death on the cross.

The Universal Church is the Body of Christ, founded at Pentecost and comprised of all Christians. The local church is a disciple-making community of believers that is gifted and empowered to fulfill the Great Commission.

Schoolwide Learner Outcomes

Heart and Soul

Character:

- ❖ Honor God through faith in Jesus Christ and following His example
- ❖ Demonstrate personal responsibility
- ❖ Demonstrate respect, humility, service, and love toward others

Mind

Knowledge:

- ❖ Understand and apply Biblical knowledge
- ❖ Understand and build upon educational principles (Language Arts, History, Math, and Science) in preparation for high school and beyond
- ❖ Develop an appreciation for global learning and 21st century knowledge

Strength

Skills:

- ❖ Effective communicators
- ❖ Complex thinkers
- ❖ Productive individuals

Daily Pledges

To the United States of America

I pledge allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

To the Christian Flag

I pledge allegiance to the Christian flag and to the Savior for whose kingdom it stands. One Savior: crucified, risen, and coming again to bring life and liberty for all who believe.

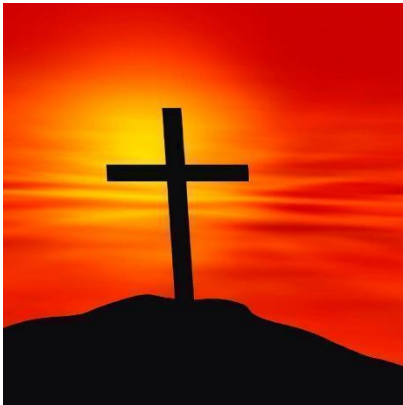
To the Bible

I pledge allegiance to the Bible, God's Holy Word. I will make it a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path. I will hide its words in my heart that I might not sin against God.

To God

I pledge myself to God the Father, who created me and loves me. I will live each day by faith in Jesus, His Son, empowered by His Holy Spirit to do His will for His glory.

Print this page or tear out a hard copy to post on your refrigerator or bulletin board to help you memorize the pledges!





Admissions



Admissions Policies

Continuous Re-enrollment

RSMCS is pleased to offer continuous enrollment from the time a student is enrolled through graduation from RSMCS. A Continuous Enrollment Agreement means that a student is automatically re-enrolled for the subsequent school year unless the parent informs the school otherwise.

Each year, currently enrolled families will be notified that re-enrollment has begun, and a designated date will be given when the family account will be invoiced for the annual enrollment fee. Since parents do not complete a re-enrollment packet each year, it is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to update their child's information as needed. This includes any changes to phone and address, medical conditions, and emergency contacts.

Once re-enrollment opens, it is the parents'/guardians' responsibility to inform the school in writing via our "Do Not Re-enroll" Google form by the deadline indicated in school communications for that re-enrollment period if they do not intend to re-enroll their student(s) for the following school year. If a "Do Not Re-enroll" form has not been turned in for a student by the date indicated, their re-enrollment fee will be deducted on the designated date. A student's classroom placement is not guaranteed until a FACTS payment plan has been selected and the enrollment fee is paid in full. Re-enrollment may be delayed or denied for the next school year until all delinquent tuition and/or fees are paid. This means priority consideration as a continuing student may be forfeited.

If a parent needs to withdraw a student once the school year has begun, the parent will need to complete a Student Withdrawal form.

Important Note: Any current Elementary students who have incurred a suspension or are on a behavioral contract may be required to reapply for admission to RSMCS for the following school year. Recommendations from all current teachers, coaches, and other staff members will be considered in the reapplication process.

New Student Admissions

Admission to Rancho Santa Margarita Christian School is dependent on whether a potential student and his/her family are a best fit with the school's mission, statement of faith, acceptance of historical truth claims, and moral foundations of Christianity, as well as other admission criteria.



Based on the information gathered in the application packet, students may be placed on an academic and/or behavioral evaluation period. The length of the evaluation period will be made by the admissions committee.

A campus tour with the admissions director is strongly recommended but not required.

The following must be completed for each new student:

- Complete online application along with all supplemental documents and materials.
- Family interview with a school administrator.
- Admissions committee reviews the application packet and notifies the family of the admissions decision.

All fees, including application fee, are non-refundable.

Students applying for Kindergarten through 8th grade will be scheduled for a new student assessment. If an IEP is in place, a meeting with the Resource Specialist may be required. Admission to RSMCS is based on the results of the entrance assessment, current and previous report cards and/or transcripts, positive attendance, letters of recommendation from teacher and administrator from previous school, and discipline records. In addition, parents and students must agree to support RSMCS policies, administration, and faculty.

Families who have previously withdrawn and are interested in reapplying to RSMCS must clear all prior financial obligations before an admission application will be accepted.

RSMCS administration reserves the right to deny admission for any reason should they feel it is in the best interest of the school.

Non-Discriminatory Policy

Rancho Santa Margarita Christian School admits students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national and ethnic origin in administration of its educational policies, admissions policies, financial assistance policies, athletic, and other school-administered programs.



Withdrawal from RSMCS

Each student has a permanent school record on file which indicates all academic grades, attendance and tardies, and all information received from any previous school the student attended.

Upon completion of withdrawal through the school office, which includes returning any school property (including athletic equipment), completing a withdrawal form, and paying all outstanding fees and tuition, up to and including the month the student is withdrawn, RSMCS will process withdrawal grades and forward the cumulative records to the new school. The service of compiling grades and all records will not be performed until all of the above is completed.

Tuition

Tuition Payment

All tuition payments are made through FACTS Family Portal. Payments will be automatically deducted from a designated financial account. A convenience fee applies to all card transactions. Please refer to the 2023-2024 Tuition and Fee Schedule for rates and payment plan options. Tuition Discounts are available to families who have up to three children enrolled at RSMCS.

Any incidental expenses throughout the year (Field Trip, Athletics, CREW, Extended Care, Extracurricular, etc) will be invoiced and paid through FACTS and are non-refundable.

All fees paid are non-refundable. If a student is withdrawn before the first day of school, 100% of Tuition paid is refundable, minus any Enrollment, Materials, and Technology fees. Beginning the first day of school, Tuition paid is non-refundable. After the first day of school, a refund on Tuition paid in full will be calculated based on a 10-month instruction schedule, minus any paid in full discounts given.

Late/Delinquent Payments

A fee will be assessed for all late payments and for any dishonored payments. After three attempts to collect, your FACTS account will be listed as unresolved and a manual payment will need to be made.

Accounts delinquent 45 days, with no prior financial arrangements for payment, may result in the suspension of the student(s) from classes or extracurricular activities until the obligation is met. Report cards may be held for any delinquent fees.

Attendance



Attendance Policies

Philosophy

Consistent attendance in school is extremely important. Research has proven that there is a high correlation between school attendance and academic performance and success. Conversely, absence from school is often the single greatest factor in poor academic performance and achievement.

Learning is a progressive activity; each day's lessons build upon those of the previous day(s). Regular school attendance patterns encourage the development of other responsible patterns of behavior. Typically, excessive absences affect a student's grades and may result in required tutoring, retention in current grade for the following school year or, ultimately, dismissal from school. Help ensure that your child has the best opportunity for success by making sure he/she is in school every day.

Records of Attendance

Attendance records must clearly indicate every student absence. An absence is defined as any student absence starting with a minimum of a half-day or more during the scheduled school year (Education Code Section 48222 and Section 33190 – Attendance in Private School in Lieu of Public School Attendance).

HALF-DAY HOURS

Kindergarten	1st-6th grades	7th-8th grades
8:15 a.m.-11:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m.-2:45 p.m.	8:15 a.m.-11:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m.-2:45 p.m.	8:05 a.m.-11:30 a.m. 11:30 a.m.-3 p.m.

Types of Absences

"Excused" absences per California State Education Code 48205 are:

1. Illness/other physical disablement
2. Health department quarantine
3. Medical, dental, optometric, chiropractic appointment and/or legal court appearance
4. Attendance at a funeral with prior notification
5. Illness or death in the immediate family
6. Exclusion for failure to present evidence of immunization
7. Participation in a school-related/school-approved activity (e.g., athletics, ministry, student government, retreats, field trips)
8. Observance of a religious holiday
9. Military family reunion (immediate family)



“School-related” absences are:

1. Conference with school officials (e.g., counselor, principal, administrator)
2. Extra-curricular activities (e.g., sports, musical, ASB)
3. Ministry activities (e.g., retreats, mission trips)

“Unexcused” absences are:

1. Absences resulting from something other than what is listed under “excused” or “school-related.”
2. Absences which have not been properly reported by the parent/guardian (see Excused Absences section).
3. Absences due to suspension from school.

Excused Absences

In order to ensure that a qualifying absence is recorded as “excused,” parents/guardians must provide the proper notification:

- Preferred: Report absences immediately (as you would an absence to the workplace). Notify your child’s teacher (homeroom teacher for Junior High) via e-mail at: first initial, last name@rsmchristian.org (example: jdoe@rsmchristian.org) on the morning of the absence. If your student is absent consecutive days, e-mail each morning until he/she returns.

OR

- Acceptable: Upon student’s return, report absence in one of three ways: written notification with parent/guardian signature delivered to the teacher or email teacher at: first initial, last name@rsmchristian.org. Required information must include the student’s name, grade level, date(s) of absence, and specific reason for absence. Notification provided after the fact must be made within three (3) days of the absence.

Results of Excused Absences

Daily Work: If a student is absent and the absence is excused under the guidelines in the attendance section, the student is responsible to make up all missing assignments or tests. The student will be given two (2) calendar days for each day absent to make up and submit all missing assignments. (Example: if a student is absent on Monday, the work would be due in class on Thursday morning. If the second day falls on a weekend, the work is due on Monday). The Administration reserves the right to limit make-up days for extended absences.

Tests: If a student was notified of a test prior to the absence, the teacher may require the student to take the test upon return to school.

Projects: In the event an extended project or report was due on the day of the absence, it is the student’s responsibility to make sure the project is delivered to the teacher upon the



assigned due date. (Example: If a history term paper was assigned three weeks prior to the absence and due the date of the absence, it must be turned in that day regardless of whether the student is absent or present that day). Late projects may result in a lower grade.

Results of Unexcused Absence

Daily work, tests and quizzes: If a student is absent and the absence is unexcused, the student is responsible to make up all missing assignments, quizzes or tests. The student will have one day upon being notified of the missing assignments to complete and submit the assignment. (Example: the student is absent on Monday, returns to school on Tuesday, work is due on Wednesday.) Teachers, working with Administration, will determine if student work (due to an unexcused absence) will be eligible for full/partial credit, including tests and quizzes.

Projects: Projects that were assigned before the student's unexcused absence are due on the original date. It is the student's responsibility to make sure the project reaches the teacher that day. Late projects may result in a lower grade for the project.

Results of Suspension

Daily Work, Homework, Tests and Quizzes: If a student is suspended for any reason, the student has the opportunity to make up all daily work, homework, quizzes (if required by the teacher), and tests. However, all work must be completed and submitted the day following the suspension. The work is due in class the day the student is allowed to return to school. The student is responsible for getting the missing assignments from the teacher, a friend, or online.

Projects: Projects that were assigned before the suspension are due on the original due date. It is the student's responsibility to make sure the project reaches the teacher that day. Late projects may result in a lower grade for the project.

Family Trips/Pre-arranged Absences

RSMCS administration is aware that parents have the rights regarding the activities of their children. We are, however, concerned when continued absences and tardies affect school performance. RSMCS cannot be responsible for a student's academic progress when there are continued absences and tardies, even with parental permission. In addition, teachers are not responsible to "reteach" missed lessons, lectures and assignments.

Because RSMCS believes in the importance of family time, the school has provided for pre-arranged absences. However, the following procedures **MUST** be followed to ensure that the absences are recorded as "excused":



1. For pre-arranged absences of two or more days, a Planned Absence form (one per student) must be submitted to the office by the parent/guardian at least five (5) school days prior to the expected departure date.
2. Once the form has been submitted, it will be forwarded to the student's teacher(s) and administration for approval.

Failure to follow these procedures may result in the days absent being recorded as "unexcused." It is the responsibility of the student to make up all in-class work, assignments, and tests missed due to a pre-arranged absence. The missed work must be turned in on the day the student returns to each specific class missed. Failure to make up the work will result in the loss of credit.

Excessive Absence Policy

RSMCS allows ten (10) non-school-related absences of any classification (excused or unexcused) in each class per year for both elementary and junior high school. Absences in excess of ten (10) in a class per year are considered "excessive." Students who have excessive absences will have their status at RSMCS reviewed by administration. NOTE: "School-related" absences (as defined above) are not included in this absence count.

The primary responsibility for student attendance rests with the parents. To assist parents, RSMCS will advise parents of the potential academic and/or disciplinary consequences of excessive absences. To that end, parents will be notified following the "Excessive Absence Policy":

1. At five (5) non-school-related absences of any classification in any class per trimester, an email will be sent to the parent/guardian.
2. At seven (7) non-school-related absences in any class per trimester, a phone call will be made to the parent/guardian.
3. At nine (9) non-school-related absences in any class per trimester, a meeting will be required with the parent/guardian.

The school takes into consideration the fact that situations may arise in which a student is excessively absent for reasons beyond his/her control. In these cases, the school will make every effort to work with the family to act in the best interests of the student without compromising the academic integrity of the school year.

Leaving Early for Extracurricular Activities

When students must leave school early for an extracurricular activity, the following policies apply:

1. Students must come fully prepared for the class, even though they plan to leave early. In the event a scheduled game or extracurricular activity is canceled, the student will be required to complete ALL of the in-class work that day, including any tests.



2. Students are responsible for making up all work covered and tests missed. They are not given additional days to make up assignments from classes that were missed due to participation in an athletic event or other type of extracurricular activity.
3. Students must be prepared to turn in homework before leaving early for an athletic event or other type of extracurricular activity. They must also arrange to meet with the teacher to go over missed work or make up tests.

Please note that teachers are not responsible to reteach missed lessons, lectures or assignments. For a student to be eligible to participate in that day's extracurricular activities, including musical performances and athletic events, they must have attended class for a minimum of half the school day.

Leaving Campus for Approved Appointments

Students who must leave campus for a medical or court appointment must follow these procedures:

1. Any student leaving campus for an appointment at any time, even during lunch, must have a parent sign them out at the office BEFORE leaving campus.
2. Students must sign back in with the office when they return from their appointment.
3. Students not feeling well during the school day MUST report to the office. If warranted, the office staff will contact the parent to pick up the student.

Any absence which results from leaving campus in a manner other than what is listed above is considered unexcused.

General Information – Elementary and Jr. High Attendance Policies

Each RSMCS Elementary and Jr. High student and parent is responsible for understanding and complying with all of the attendance policies included in this handbook.

General Guideline: A student is expected to be “in class, on time.” This is both a legal requirement and in the best interest of the student’s academic and personal development. Being “in class, on time” is the RSMCS standard for personal responsibility and consideration of other students and teachers.

Tardy Policies

Elementary School Tardy Policy

It is important that students arrive in class on time and be prepared. Being prompt is demonstrating respect, self-discipline, and responsibility. Students are considered tardy when they are not present and ready to begin school at 8:15 a.m. Tardies are neither excused nor unexcused. RSMCS understands that some circumstances cannot be avoided. For this reason, students are permitted four (4) tardies each trimester before action is taken. Students arriving 15 minutes or more after school begins will be marked absent and must report to the office for a tardy slip.



Consequences for Tardies

Consequences for being tardy to school (per trimester) are:

- ❖ 7th tardy – email to parents
- ❖ 9th tardy – second email or phone call to parents; referral to Administration
- ❖ 13th tardy – Attendance contract/parent meeting

Make-up Work Following Tardies and Unexcused Absences

Teachers are not required to accept work or provide make-up assignments or tests for students who miss class due to unexcused absences or tardies.

Junior High Tardy Policy

Tardiness is defined as arrival to school or class after the appropriate start time. It is the responsibility of each student, with the support of parents/legal guardians, to be on time to school and to each class.

IMPORTANT: If a student arrives more than 10 minutes late to Homeroom (first class of the day), he/she must report to the office to receive a re-admit slip.

Activities which take place during the school day (e.g. ASB activity) are considered “school-related.” Therefore, tardies which result from these activities are considered excused. In contrast, a school-sponsored night event (e.g. a game) is not an acceptable reason for arriving late or missing school the following day.

Although some tardies are unavoidable, repeatedly getting to school/class late leads to a loss of valuable time for the student. Furthermore, it is a disruption and interrupts the learning of the students who are on time. For this reason, ongoing tardiness has the following consequences:



Procedure for Junior High (Homeroom only):

# of Tardies	Consequences
3	Parent Notification
4	Before-school, lunch, or after-school detention
5	Conference with the Vice Principal
6 or more	Meeting with parent; signed attendance contract

Procedure for Junior High (1st through 7th periods):

# of Tardies	Consequences
2	Parent Notification
3	Before-school, lunch, or after-school detention
4	Conference with the Vice Principal
5 or more	Meeting with parent; signed attendance contract

Make-up Work Following Tardies and Unexcused Absences

Teachers are not required to accept work or provide make-up assignments or tests for students who miss class due to unexcused absences or tardies.

Academic Guidelines



Academics

Academic Success, Progression, and Grading System

It is the goal of RSMCS to assist parents in preparing students to complete each academic year successfully. Academic success and progression are determined by analysis of student work and reported by means of online grade reports, progress reports, report cards, and parent/teacher communication. Continuous promotion through the grades is the standard for students who are making steady progress in their studies. Students who are not making academic progress may be required to repeat deficient classes before the next school year. They will also be subject to academic probation.

Entrance Exam

Depending upon records and documents received along with the admissions application, students may be required to take a standardized entrance exam prior to being admitted to RSMCS.

Make-up Work

Contact your child's teacher directly to request make-up work. Teachers will have make-up work prepared for sick students within 24 hours of the parent request. For excused absences, students will have as many days to make up work as the number of days absent. For unexcused absences, all work will be due on the first day upon return to school. Incomplete work will receive a "zero" grade, but must be completed.

Tests missed because of late arrivals or early departures (other than illness, unavoidable doctor's appointments, and death in the immediate family) will be made up at the discretion of the teacher. If not made up, the grade will be recorded as a zero.

Report Cards

Report cards are designed to communicate the progress of students. They are administered for all grade levels on a trimester basis. All report cards and progress reports will be distributed in a digital format, available to parents through our online school management software. Parent conferences will be scheduled to discuss progress midway through both the first and third trimesters. Parents may request a conference with the teacher at any time during the school year.

Consideration for a student's promotion is based on the acquisition of basic academic skills and the ability to apply them. Should a student receive failing grades in two fundamental areas (mathematics, reading, language/grammar, and spelling) or three failing grades during any trimester or has accumulated excessive absences from school, he or she will become a candidate for retention.



Progress Reports

In addition to the report cards, all students in grades 1-8 will receive a progress report during the first trimester. The teacher will write an explanation for unsatisfactory grades. In subsequent trimesters, progress reports will be issued only to those students with grades of C- or lower. Should the grade not improve, an appointment will be made with the teacher and the parent prior to the end of the trimester to develop a plan for improvement.

Standardized Testing

Students in grades K-8 will be given nationally recognized standardized achievement tests each fall and spring. A copy of the test results will be sent to parents and a copy will be placed in the student's cumulative folder. Parents should make sure that their children receive proper rest and nourishment before taking this battery of tests in order to perform to their highest ability.

Student Eligibility

Students who wish to participate in extracurricular activities (ASB, athletics, musicals, etc.) are expected to maintain acceptable grades (minimum 2.5 GPA). If the teacher, Athletic Director, or Administration feels that participation in these activities would jeopardize the student's grades, he/she may recommend that the student not participate in the program until the grades improve. Excessive detentions may also lead to a loss of eligibility. Students must attend a minimum of one-half of the school day, on game or performance days, to be eligible to participate in any after-school activities (events, games, practices), including athletics and drama.

Curriculum

Because we value spiritual and academic excellence, all textbooks/teaching aids are carefully chosen to support the instruction of our teachers as they equip students in spirit, mind and body. All materials are tools used by our faculty to impart knowledge, understanding, and wisdom as God requires (Prov. 9:9-10). RSMCS recognizes the state and national educational frameworks and aligns all subject-specific content to those standards wherein they do not violate God's truth. Because RSMCS is a school with a discipleship distinctive, the school has a commitment to using a rigorous curricular program that is created by Christian school publishers such as BJ Press, ABEKA, and ACSI. RSMCS may also use secular textbooks and supplements, as appropriate, to ensure high academic growth in all subject areas.

Living Curriculum is what a Christian school teacher represents. Our teachers do not simply impart knowledge, but model the Christian life and its values to students who, after they are fully trained, will be like their teachers (Luke 6:40).



Bible is a core subject for all grades. Students are trained in righteousness according to the scriptures (II Tim. 3:16), learning to hide God's Word in their hearts through ongoing memorization. Equally, students learn to apply the scriptures to their daily circumstances.

Biblical integration recognizes that all subjects have their origin in God and reflect His handiwork in the world (Col. 1:16-17). Therefore, God's Word informs the teaching of all subjects in order to instill a biblical worldview in each student.

Reading, writing and mathematics are the core of a traditional education and are foundational to all other learning. Students are taught in a sequential manner until mastery of the requisite content in the reading, writing, and mathematics domains is achieved.

Prayer, praise, and worship are integral parts of the school day (Psalm 100). Students and teachers pray for the needs in our school, community, nation and world. Prayer Partners is a relational program that allows older students to model the Christian walk to younger students.

Patriotism is promoted so that each child may grow as a responsible American citizen. Students are taught the enduring principles that this great nation was founded upon. Special attention is given to the Christian heritage of our nation and to those men and women who have acknowledged God's providence in its development (Psalm 33:12).

Technology: Each student interacts with technology through the use of a laptop computer, iPad, and/or Chromebook. Students are taught how to use computers for educational purposes as they integrate classroom objectives and computer skills.

Fine Arts instruction recognizes the multiple-intelligences of students and provides creative and confidence-building opportunities for them to utilize their God-given talents. Appreciation for the arts is developed through classroom music and art instruction and extra-curricular opportunities.

Physical Education is based on the premise that our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit and are to be treated as such (1 Cor. 6:19). P.E. develops the overall physical fitness of each student, encourages sportsmanship and team play, and prepares the student for a balanced life of physical activity and recreation.

Spanish instruction covers the acquisition of the fundamentals of this language. It encourages students to appreciate another culture and prepares them for additional foreign languages in high school.



STEM: STEM is an approach to learning and development that integrates the areas of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. Through STEM, students develop key skills including problem solving, creativity, and critical analysis.

Grading Policies

RSMCS has developed and instituted a uniform grading system that is grade appropriate. The following is an explanation for the various levels.

Report Cards/Cumulative Records

Report cards comprise an academic record of all work attempted and/or completed during each school year. This record is necessary when transferring students to another school. Parents may view their child's cumulative record by making an appointment with the Principal.

Preschool

Please refer to the RSMCS [Preschool Handbook](#).

TK/K Benchmarks

This grade level uses a "benchmarks" progress report at each trimester that tracks the student's accomplishments of age-level appropriate tasks and behaviors.

Grades 1-3

- O = Outstanding
- G = Good
- S = Satisfactory
- N = Needs Improvement
- U = Unsatisfactory

Grades 4-8

A+	=	Excellent	98-100%
A	=		93-97%
A-	=		90-92%
B+	=	Above Average	88-89%
B	=		83-87%
B-	=		80-82%
C+	=	Average Effort	78-79%
C	=		73-77%
C-	=		70-72%
D+	=	Below Average Effort	68-69%
D	=		63-67%
D-	=		60-62%
F	=	Failure	0-59%



Accommodated Program Grading

Grades will reflect an accommodated program or curriculum when appropriate, and an addendum to the report will detail those grades.

Current grade information for all subjects in grades 4-8 are updated on a regular basis and available for viewing by parents and students through their FACTS account, our school management system. Parents and students are encouraged to view grades often during the term and to communicate with teachers any questions or concerns that arise.

Honor Roll Requirements

GPA's are based on core academic subjects (English, History, Math, Science) as well as Citizenship/Christian Virtues and Social Growth grades. Citizenship may also affect Honor Roll qualifications.

Grades 5 and 6

HIGH HONORS **3.75-4.00** and student must earn *Outstanding or Good* in all areas of *Christian Virtues and Social Growth* on the report card

HONORS **3.50-3.74** and student must earn *Outstanding or Good* in all areas of *Christian Virtues and Social Growth* on the report card

Junior High

HIGH HONORS **3.75-4.00** and student must earn *Excellent or Good* in all *Citizenship* grades on the report card

HONORS **3.50-3.74** and student must earn *Excellent or Good* in all *Citizenship* grades on the report card

Elementary policies

Work Packets

At the elementary level, a weekly packet containing the previous week's work, tests, and projects is sent home with each student each week. Several grade levels require parents to sign and return the cover page or folder by the next school day.

Homework

The purpose of homework is preparation, review, practice and reinforcement. Homework is intended as an extension of what happens in the classroom.

It is the parents' responsibility to help their students plan for a time and place to do homework. If the parents have questions regarding homework policies, amount, or assignments, they should contact the individual teacher for clarification. We encourage parents to review homework daily and make sure that the student is cultivating good work and study habits. It is



expected any assignments are to be completed by the student neatly and correctly. Parents' help may be necessary to direct and assist the student to arrive at the answer by him or herself. It is inappropriate for parents or others to give answers to homework or tests.

When a teacher allows class time to begin homework assignments, it is the student's responsibility to make good use of this time. Many times when a student has homework, it is because he/she did not finish the assignment in class. If a project or term paper has a specific due date and the student is notified well in advance, it is the student's responsibility to complete the assignment without waiting until the last minute, which may require using weekend time to complete the work.

The target goal for homework is 10 minutes per grade (e.g. 2nd graders would have 20 minutes of homework per night; 4th graders 40 minutes, etc.). Time assigned for nightly reading is in addition to other homework time. For the primary age students (grades JK-3), homework tasks should take 15-30 minutes to complete. Middle and upper grade students (grades 4-6) may be given proportionately longer assignments. For junior high grades (7-8), daily homework assignments are intended to require 15-20 minutes per subject for the average student. While homework is not necessarily assigned in every subject every day, students will have assignments at least three days per week. Any questions about the nature or amount of your child's homework should be discussed with your child's teacher.

Junior High policies

Current grade information for all subjects are updated on a regular basis and available for viewing by parents and students through their FACTS account, our school management system. Parents and students are encouraged to view grades often during the term and to communicate with teachers any questions or concerns that arise.

Trimester grades are an evaluation of student achievement for an entire trimester period. Trimester grades are recorded on the student's transcript, which becomes a part of the student's permanent file.

Requirements of Physical Education

Physical Education is a required subject for graduation by the California State Educational Code (200 minutes every two weeks); students without the necessary attendance requirement (SIX classes every two weeks), unless released by medical authorization, might be subject to remedial action that would include activity before or after school. Students released from P.E. for academic make-up, study lab, medical appointments, or non-school sports programs may be subject to remedial action.



Graduation Requirements

In order to receive a diploma of graduation from RSMCS Jr. High, a student must:

1. Maintain a total grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or above
2. Successfully complete the following required courses:
 - Bible: 6 trimesters
 - English: 6 trimesters
 - Mathematics: 6 trimesters
 - Science: 6 trimesters
 - Social Studies: 6 trimesters
 - Electives: 6 trimesters

Any student receiving a grade of “F” in any of the above-mentioned classes after each trimester will be required to make up those classes.

Academic Probation

A student may be placed on academic probation if one or more of the following occur:

- The student’s academic grade point average (GPA) is below a 2.0 at the end of a trimester.
- The student receives an “F” in one or more courses (academic and/or non-academic) at the end of a trimester.

The terms of the probation will be clearly stated in writing and discussed in a conference with both the student and parent(s). This may include athletic and co-curricular ineligibility. The length of the probationary period will be six weeks (half the trimester). Students who fail to meet the academic requirements outlined by RSMCS by the end of the probationary period will be subject to academic disqualification and possible dismissal from RSMCS.

The school administration reserves the right to make all final decisions regarding a student’s academic probation.

Final Exams

Final exams/final projects are important parts of academic measurement. Final exam schedules are provided prior to the week of exams. In the event a student is absent during a final exam, it is the student’s responsibility to make arrangements with the individual teachers to make up an exam. Final projects are due on the original due date with no exceptions. If a student is absent on the due date, he/she is still responsible to turn in the project on that day.

Academic Honors

Jr. High students who earn grade point averages above a certain level receive special recognition at the end of the trimester. Those with a GPA of 3.5–3.74 and *Excellent* or *Good* in all *Citizenship* grades on the report card are placed on Honor Roll. Those with a GPA of 3.75–4.0 and *Excellent* or *Good* in all *Citizenship* grades on the report card receive High Honors.



Transcripts/Cumulative Records

Transcripts comprise an academic record of all work attempted and/or completed during each school year. This record is necessary when transferring students to another school. Parents may view their child's cumulative record by making an appointment with the Principal.

Health and Safety



Health and Safety Policies and Procedures

Emergency Contacts

Each student must have emergency contact information on file in the school database. The information provided is your authorization for releasing a child, contacting persons authorized to care for your child in an emergency, or pick up before, during, and after school. It is the responsibility of the parent(s) to maintain accurate emergency information in the school database ([FACTS FAMILY PORTAL](#)). Emergency information is used to provide the best care for your student. If your child has allergies, please indicate that on the emergency information page.

FOR YOUR CHILD'S SAFETY: Your student will be released only to those persons you list on the emergency page. You are required to record at least two other emergency contacts besides both parents. A student will not be released to anyone who is not listed unless the office has received a signed note from the parent stating otherwise.

Basic Procedures

Students entering RSMCS must present data from the family doctor indicating that, in accordance with State law, the student has been immunized with the required inoculations. Seventh graders are required to complete the Hepatitis A series.

As of July 1, 2011, all students entering 7th and 8th grades must present proof of an adolescent whooping cough booster (Tdap) and the second varicella vaccination.

Children entering 1st grade must have physical and dental examination reports on file.

Per California state law, a personal beliefs exemption is no longer an option for entry into school; however, a valid personal beliefs exemption filed with a school before Jan. 1, 2016, is valid until entry into the next grade span (7th through 12th grades). Valid personal beliefs exemptions may be transferred between schools in California. Waivers must be signed by a physician stating the reason(s) why a vaccine was not given. For complete details, visit [ShotsforSchool.org](#).

Divorced Parents or Court Order

If the parents of a student are divorced, both parents will have access to their child's records and the emergency information. The only exception to this is if there is a court order banning one parent from contact with the student. It is the parent's responsibility to provide a copy of the court order for the school office. In cases of separation or divorce, the legal custodial



parent(s) is/are solely responsible for any and all charges incurred for the benefit of his or her child(ren).

Students Who Are Sick

Students who become ill after arriving on campus should get permission from the teacher or monitor to come to the office. The office personnel will attend to those who are feeling ill and make a determination about the student returning to class or being sent home. Any student having a temperature of 100 degrees or more or who is vomiting must be sent home. Students who have had a fever must be fever-free without vomiting and without the aid of medication for 24 hours before returning to school.

If your child is feeling ill before leaving for school, please do not send him/her to school. You may have to return to the school shortly after the start of school should your child come to the office, or it is determined that your child is ill.

We are committed to providing a safe and well environment for your child. Please be respectful of the other families and keep your child home when he/she is ill.

PLEASE NOTE: In the event of a situation which the office determines to be an emergency, the paramedics will be called.

Communicable Diseases

Should your child become ill with a communicable or pandemic disease, he/she must remain at home until the illness or required period of isolation is over. Parents are required to promptly report to the office any communicable or pandemic disease. Examples of communicable diseases include, but are not limited to: chicken pox, head lice, impetigo, measles, mumps, pink eye, ringworm, COVID-19, and mononucleosis. A doctor's note stating that the student is no longer contagious will be required for some communicable diseases before the student will be permitted to return to school. Upon notifying the school office of your child's illness, the office will advise you of the appropriate conditions for your child to return to school.

Administration of Medication

Any student who is required to take prescribed medications on a regular basis must have that medication dispensed **ONLY** by an authorized school employee. A parent or legal guardian must fill out a medication permission form at the front office in order for a school employee to dispense the medication. The student may not hold/dispense medication on his/her own.

- Medications that have been prescribed must have a doctor's note on file, stating the type of medication, amount required, and the time required.



- The parent must also sign the “Permission to Administer Medication” form giving school office employees permission to administer the medication.
- The office will notify the teacher of the time the student needs to report to the office to receive the medications.
- All non-prescription medications must remain in the school office with a note from parents stating the medication to administer, the amount, and the time.
- All medications are to be brought to the office in the original container or bottle.
- Bottles or containers must be marked in permanent ink with the student’s name.
- Students are not permitted to carry any medications on their person, backpack or locker. This includes, but is not limited to, over-the-counter pain relievers, allergy medicine, cough drops, and vitamins.
- Parents’ written permission on the emergency information sheet is required in order for the student to obtain Tylenol. Aspirin is never given to children, even with parent permission.

Medical Excuses

Students may be excused from physical education or physical activity for only one day with a parent’s note or phone call. Any student who is to be excused from P.E. for more than two (2) consecutive days must have a written excuse from their physician.

If a doctor limits physical education participation for an extended period of time, please pick up a Request for Medication Administration and Physician Statement of Need form and return it to the school office. You must state the specific amount of activity and/or what your child can/cannot do, as well as the date he/she is able to return to full participation in class.

Discipline and Discipleship



Discipline

Attendance at RSMCS is a privilege. Discipline policies are in place to reflect this and to ensure that families understand the type of conduct which is expected from our students. Any student whose conduct or attitude (both at school and outside of school) shows him/her to be in opposition to the basic principles and purpose of RSMCS may be dismissed or asked to withdraw from the school. By attending RSMCS, parents and students agree that a student's locker, backpack, or person may be subject to search anytime upon Administration discretion.

Philosophy of Discipline

RSMCS recognizes the biblical authority and responsibility given to parents for disciplining and raising their children to become men and women after God's own heart. (Prov. 22:6, Heb.12:9). The school's discipline authority is delegated to the school by parents AND is in partnership with parents for students enrolled at RSMCS. Through communication and cooperation with parents, the school desires to provide training that molds, instructs, and corrects all students. Children must be held accountable for their behavior, to celebrate the positive, and to restore the negative. We desire to come alongside students to provide encouragement and support during their journey.

RSMCS will discipline students with dignity and a Christian heart; therefore, we expect that students will follow the standards of student conduct and behavior and show responsibility for their actions.

Discipline should be consistent and show love for the offender (Prov. 13:24). God's love for the student should be revealed through the school's attitude and conversations with a student when dealing with a disciplinary measure. Poor choices often result in consequences. Therefore, discipline will have a natural consequence of the offense. The goal is for the student to accept the consequences of poor choices and to develop proven character. Restoration is a major goal of discipline. Many times, our initial reaction when dealing with an offense is to cut the person off. However, God's way of dealing with us is just the opposite. He desires to restore us to fellowship with Him (Gal. 6:1). RSMCS will use a process of rehabilitation, restoration, and reinstatement if a situation calls for a student to have an extended time away from the school or is in need of outside resources to aid in restoration.

Student Conduct

In order to best fulfill the goals of the discipline process, RSMCS has defined expected student behavior and established the procedure and process for addressing discipline matters. There are three key areas of conduct under which all offenses fall:

1. **Respect** – Students are expected to treat others with honor and dignity, putting others first (Matt. 22:39). Students are to be courteous and respectful of all, valuing the differences



God created in each of us. Submitting to authority is a major factor of respect. Students show obedience and respect to administration, teachers, aides, monitors, and other adults on campus as a sign of spiritual maturity. We don't always agree with what we are told, but we are "called" to obey.

2. **Integrity** – Students are expected to demonstrate honesty in keeping their word, as well as in their actions and speech. All aspects of their school work are done in honesty and truth. Integrity is also displayed by our actions. Inappropriate language, relationships, or sexual conduct are all matters of integrity (II Tim. 2:15; James 3:17; Eph. 6:6).

3. **Speech** – Students are expected to use words to encourage and support one another. Students refrain from inappropriate language, bullying, and other verbal communications that tear down one another (Psalm 19:14; I John 3:18; I Tim. 4:12; II Cor. 8:7).

Restorative Practices

RSMCS utilizes a restorative approach to discipline, a whole-school, relational approach to building school climate and addressing student behavior that fosters belonging over exclusion, social engagement over control, and meaningful accountability over punishment.

Zero Tolerance Policy

RSMCS maintains a "zero tolerance" policy for illegal drugs, weapons, terrorist threats, threats of violence, criminal behavior, sexual harassment, or extreme behavior. Zero tolerance may be in effect, at administration's discretion, when any of the following take place:

- ❖ Possession of, providing, arranging sale of, taking, or being under the influence of tobacco, alcohol, or any other illegal drugs
- ❖ Possession or use of any weapon
- ❖ Posing a terrorist threat against any individual or the school

Students involved in zero tolerance issues will be expelled from RSMCS. When a student is expelled, the Administration will determine if the student will ever be permitted to re-apply for admission or under what conditions the student would be permitted to reapply.

Progressive Discipline Policies

The following are the steps the school will adhere to should a conflict or misconduct arise in the classroom or on campus. For this progressive discipline plan, a conflict or misconduct is defined as anything that detracts from the learning environment. As a general rule, RSMCS will adhere to a system of increasing consequences.

The words "First Offense" refer to the first "documented" offense. Teachers should have at least one private conversation with students to discuss behaviors before documenting an offense. This is an opportunity for teachers to help students begin to take responsibility for their own actions. Education on the process is key.



1. **Verbal Warnings** – Teacher/Student conference; desired behavior discussed with student input. The adult involved will immediately re-teach the expected behavior and dispense an appropriate consequence which may include, but is not limited to: verbal warning; loss of recess time; removal from group or surroundings, etc. (not documented, no phone call, no consequence).
2. **First Documented Offense** – Teacher/Student conference; desired behavior discussed and modeled with student input. Possible parental contact (teacher choice). Teacher consequence may or may not be assigned. Documentation on appropriate form as a minor offense within that school day.
3. **Second Documented Offense** – Teacher/Student conference; desired behavior discussed with student input. Parental contact made within 24 hours. Teacher Consequence assigned. Documentation on appropriate form as a minor offense within 24 hours.
4. **Third Documented Offense** – Administrator/Student conference; desired behavior discussed with student input. Parental contact made within 24 hours. Administrator consequence assigned. Documentation on form as a minor offense within 24 hours.
5. **Fourth Documented Offense** – Administrator/Student/Parent conference. Possible suspension.

This process applies specifically to chronically disruptive students (including talking out of turn, bothering others, consistently off-task, excessive talking, etc.).

Teachers will also document the positive interventions they have tried. The teacher will send or e-mail the Discipline Form which will include all interventions tried and parental contacts made. Every effort will be made to maintain the student in the classroom so as not to lose instructional time. When the Administrator handles the situation s/he will remind both the student and the parents of the prior interventions and documentations as listed on the referral form. Further decisions will be made about administrative interventions and consequences, which may include the following: A parent/teacher/administrator conference (if this has not already happened), loss of recess or other privileges. If the behavior involves chronic insubordination, disobedience, or disrespect, the student may be suspended.

This is the school-wide guide that will be used and followed by all faculty and staff as consistently as possible. It is very important that we all honor and support this plan. The students need to understand that all faculty and staff not only expect but also require appropriate behavior.



Immediate Office Referral

There are some behavioral situations that warrant an immediate office referral. If an immediate office referral is required, the student should, ideally, be escorted to the office by a staff member with a written referral. If necessary, an Administrator will be called to remove the student. Professional judgment by the staff member will be used to determine the severity of the incident and the need for an immediate trip to the office. Examples of behaviors that typically constitute an immediate office referral are as follows:

- ❖ Gross disrespect, profanity, fighting or instigating a fight, hitting, biting, bullying or harassment, destruction/theft of property, or possession of a weapon

When a student is sent to the office on referral it is for two reasons:

- ❖ Student's behavior warrants an immediate office referral, or
- ❖ Student has reached the third documented offense

Either of the above two reasons will result in one or more of the following administrative consequences:

- ❖ Loss of recess/privileges; removal from the classroom; parent-teacher-principal conference; before- or after-school detention; in-school suspension; at-home suspension; expulsion.

NOTE: Every effort is made to create interventions that will not result in student loss of instructional time. Sometimes, the student's behavior is such that an in-house suspension (first choice) or out-of-school suspension (last choice) is unavoidable. The Administration reserves the right to implement any discipline technique that positively promotes the desired behavior or character trait from the student.

Loss of Privilege to Attend RSMCS

Any student who disrupts the classroom or outdoor environment after the school-wide Progressive Discipline System has been exhausted, may be required to withdraw from RSMCS at the discretion of the Administration. RSMCS is a zero-tolerance environment. Any student engaging in any illegal activity, violence against a teacher or student, or destruction of school property, will be subject to immediate dismissal from school. The school reserves the right to contact law enforcement concerning any possible or actual illegal activity by a student without warning to the student or parent.

Plagiarism/Cheating

RSMCS considers plagiarism to be intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one's own in any academic exercise, or failing to acknowledge direct quotations, paraphrases, or borrowed facts or information. Types of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:



- Quoting material without using quotation marks where called for, or not using proper citations
- Paraphrasing properly, but not including a citation identifying the original author
- Paraphrasing in a way that intentionally misrepresents the original author's work
- Fabricating sources or quotations to make it appear that you have based your work on research

CHEATING includes, but is not limited to:

- Looking at another student's test/quiz and using those answers as one's own
- Copying another student's homework or part of their homework
- Having another student do their homework
- Giving answers to test/quiz questions to another student
- Bearing false witness; claiming something is your work when it is not
- Using cheat sheets of any kind
- Submitting work using A.I., Chat GPT, or any other automated program
- Giving your work to other students to copy

Consequences of Plagiarism/Cheating

Students involved in plagiarism or cheating as defined in this handbook will receive the following penalties. All consequences are at the discretion of the administrator.

First Offense

1. A zero on the homework, quiz, or test
2. Communication home to parent

Second Offense (May include any or all of the following)

1. A zero on homework, quiz, or test
2. One-day suspension (home or school)
3. Communication home to parent

Third Offense (May include any or all of the following)

1. A zero on homework, quiz, or test
2. Two-day suspension (home or school)
3. Parent conference with Principal and student; student subject to expulsion



Junior High Policies

Through use of a Junior High-wide system, before-school, after-school, or lunch detentions can be given for excessive infractions. Warnings/consequences can be given for, but are not limited to, the following reasons:

1. Excessive talking
2. Disturbing class
3. Misuse of Chromebook
4. Being off task

Immediate detentions/officer referrals can be given for, but are not limited to, inappropriate language, bullying, lying, stealing, and cheating.

Category 1 Offenses

Category 1 offenses include those listed below and may result in a detention. More severe consequences may result from repeated offenses.

- ❖ Disturbing class
- ❖ Disruption in chapel
- ❖ Profanity or inappropriate language
- ❖ Inappropriate boy/girl affection
- ❖ Being out of the approved area
- ❖ Use of electronic items, including cell phones, Smart Watches, etc. (See “Electronic Devices, Internet Use and Privacy” section)
- ❖ Gum
- ❖ Littering

Consequences of Category 1 Offenses

For the safety and protection of all students and to protect the learning environment at RSMCS, multiple (repeated) infractions of Category 1 offenses may result in the following:

- ❖ 3 detentions = meeting with Vice Principal/possible suspension
- ❖ 6 detentions = in-home suspension
- ❖ 9 detentions = possible expulsion

At any time at the discretion of RSMCS, administration may require a meeting with the parent(s), student, Vice Principal, or Principal. Based on the discretion of RSMCS administration, the student may be suspended or expelled at any time during this process. If a student is expelled and wishes to return to RSMCS, the student AND family must agree to a three-step restoration process (see “Rehabilitation, Restoration and Reinstatement” section).



Category 2 Offenses

The following are considered to be Category 2 offenses and are justification for expulsion from RSMCS at any time:

- ❖ Lack of regard for the code of conduct prescribed by Rancho Santa Margarita Christian School and its Christian faith values
- ❖ Criminal behavior
- ❖ Gambling
- ❖ Stealing
- ❖ Inappropriate sexual activity
- ❖ Sexting, pornography, inappropriate comments or pictures on technology sites or other electronic devices
- ❖ Possession of or distributing pornographic material
- ❖ Forgery or impersonating an adult to mislead school staff
- ❖ Vandalism of school or private property, including graffiti
- ❖ Fighting or causing physical injury to another person
- ❖ Possession of or use of alcohol, tobacco, tobacco paraphernalia, nicotine, or an electronic vaporizing device on school grounds or at any school-related function

Students of RSMCS represent the school and our Lord in every walk of life for 24 hours each day. Non-Christian conduct reflects badly on the testimony of the school and is justification for expulsion regardless of where or when it occurs. Anyone present when school rule violations occur may be subject to the same disciplinary action.

Consequences of Category 2 Offenses

Understanding that attendance at RSMCS is a privilege and that all students have the right to be in an atmosphere which promotes learning, the following consequences (disciplinary actions) will be enforced at the discretion of the administration for students involved in any Category 2 offenses. Students may be subject to any or all of the following:

Disciplinary Actions

- ❖ Parent/student/teacher and/or Administrator conference
- ❖ Immediate removal from class or extracurricular activities
- ❖ Behavior contract
- ❖ Suspension (1 to 6 days)
- ❖ Probationary status – failure to comply with terms of probation may result in immediate dismissal
- ❖ Immediate expulsion
- ❖ Restitution of stolen or damaged property – parents of students involved in vandalism or theft will be held personally and/or financially responsible for any or all loss due to the student's actions



On/Off Campus Behavior

All measures under the school wide Progressive Discipline System will be in effect for on- and off-campus school activities.

Probationary Status Explanation

Probationary Status is given at the discretion of RSMCS Administration. Probation is invoked when a student has a serious academic, attitude, or behavioral problem and is intended to give the student an opportunity to correct his/her action(s). It is instituted only after consultation and counseling with the student, parents, and faculty. If improvement at a satisfactory level is not obtained, the student will be dismissed or asked to withdraw from school. Student activities will be limited during the probationary period, and all positions of trust and responsibility must be relinquished for the remainder of the year.

Rehabilitation, Restoration, and Reinstatement

Whenever a student is withdrawn, excluded, or expelled for behavioral/conduct reasons, there is the possibility of rehabilitation, restoration, and reinstatement in the future if, in the opinion of RSMCS administration:

- ❖ The student has demonstrated sincere repentance.
- ❖ There is a sufficient probability that after reinstatement, the student will remain in full compliance with the RSMCS Parent/Student Handbook.
- ❖ The student has been withdrawn, excluded, or expelled for at least 45 school days.

Authority to Search

As a student at RSMCS, you understand that RSMCS has the authority to search (canine or representative of RSMCS) lockers, backpacks, purses, vehicles and/or persons at any time. RSMCS also holds the right to request a drug test if administration deems it necessary. Failure to comply with these requests can result in the student's dismissal from RSMCS.

Electronic Devices

One of the most important aspects of our job at RSMCS is to ensure the well-being of each of our students. Policies are in place to control electronic device activity that could potentially cause problems on campus:

- ❖ Cell phones and other electronic devices, including smart watches, can become a serious distraction in class. Junior High policy is that cell phones and smart watches are to be kept in the student's homeroom until 3 p.m. each day.
- ❖ Elementary students who wear smart watches will be required to leave them with their teacher until dismissal each day.
- ❖ All emergency calls **MUST** be made and received through the school office.



- ❖ Use of all electronic devices, including Apple or smart watches, with the exception of the school managed Chromebook and/or iPad, is prohibited during school hours. (The exception is when there is teacher approved usage of devices for academic purposes.)

Students violating these policies will receive the following consequences:

- **First Offense**
Device confiscated; e-mail home; student may pick up device at the end of the day
- **Second Offense**
Device confiscated; second email home; detention; student may pick up device at the end of the day
- **Third Offense**
Device confiscated; suspension; parent must pick up device at the end of the day; student may have the privilege of possessing a phone or smart watch at school revoked

Students must not use electronic devices inappropriately, including, but not limited to, taking pictures (unless instructed to do so by a teacher), sending text or picture messages containing sexual or threatening content, or any form of harassment.

This includes “sexting,” which is the act of sending, receiving, or forwarding sexually explicit or suggestive messages, photos, or images via cell phone, computer, or other digital device. Students engaged in such activities are subject to state laws and school discipline. RSMCS considers sending, sharing, possessing, or even viewing pictures, text messages, or emails that contain a sexual message or image a violation of this policy. Students are required to immediately report any such activities to a teacher or school administrator. A violation will result in school discipline, up to and including expulsion, and notification of local law enforcement.

For additional electronic device policy information, see the “Electronic Devices, Internet Use and Privacy” section.

Policy Against Harassment

RSMCS is committed to providing an academic, social, and spiritual environment that is free from all forms of intimidation, exploitation, and harassment, including sexual harassment. In keeping with this commitment, the school maintains a strict policy prohibiting harassment based upon race, color, national origin, ancestry, physical handicap, medical condition, sex, disability, or age. This includes verbal, physical, and visual harassment.

- ❖ **VERBAL:** Derogatory comments and jokes, and/or threatening words spoken, written or transmitted electronically to another person
- ❖ **PHYSICAL:** Unwanted physical touching, contact, assault, deliberate impeding or blocking movements, or any intimidating interference with normal work or movement



- ❖ VISUAL: Derogatory, demeaning or inflammatory posters, cartoons, written words, drawings, gestures
- ❖ SEXUAL: Includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature (includes sexting)

Any student who believes he/she has been the victim of such harassment should immediately contact a teacher or administrator. Complaints will be investigated promptly, and appropriate discipline will be taken. Expulsion of the offender may occur.

Dress Code



Dress Code Policies

Guidelines

The RSMCS dress code exists to promote modesty in dress and limit distractions as we do not want issues of personal appearance and dress to distract students from academics or in any way diminish the intellectual life or compromise the Biblical values that we promote in our school community. The definition of modesty and distraction are at the sole discretion of RSMCS administration.

The school recognizes that it cannot specify every rule for dress and personal appearance. Therefore, we expect students to adhere to the spirit of the dress code as well as the letter of the dress code. If a student's choice of dress is questionable, he/she should seek the opinion of an administrator prior to wearing the particular article of clothing or risk appropriate consequences for their choice. This would include all on- or off-campus school-related events.

Parents are responsible for their children's adherence to the dress code. The administration will be sensitive in the enforcement of these policies and will notify parents of infractions. The administration reserves the right to determine if a student's clothing and/or grooming is appropriate if the clothing and/or grooming in question is not specifically noted in this handbook.

All uniform shirts, shorts, skirts, skorts, and jumpers may be purchased from Uniforms4U online (www.uniforms4class.net) or their store:

Uniforms 4U
31531 Rancho Viejo Rd
Suite 103
San Juan Capistrano, CA 92675

Plain colored skirts, skorts, pants, and shorts may also be purchased from Target, Kohls, or any store that carries uniform pieces in solid khaki, black and/or navy. Shorts must be Bermuda length, no cargo shorts, and no low-rise cuts for girls. Flat-front and pleated front are both acceptable. Polo shirts are ONLY available through Uniforms4U.

Students who enroll after the first day of school will be allowed two weeks to purchase approved uniforms.

Label all clothing with the student's name for easy identification.



Additional Guidelines

- Clothing must be the appropriate size for the student. Please note that this includes shirts that are long enough to cover the waist.
- All clothing must be clean, neat, and free from holes, rips, or tears, and must be hemmed.
- Polo style shirts with RSMCS logo (colors: white, blue, black, and gray) and white Peter Pan blouses may be purchased at Uniforms4U only.
- Students may wear solid school color long sleeve shirts under a short sleeve school polo. Shirts worn under polos must be T-shirt style and not have a hood.
- Boys and girls may wear long pants that must be worn at the waist. Pants must be worn so as not to allow undergarments to be seen at any time, especially when sitting down or bending over. Pants must not be tight, torn, or cut.
- Skirts may be no more than three (3) inches above the knee (when kneeling), and must not be tight, torn, cut, or rolled at the waist. Staff may deem a skirt too tight or too short.
- Approved tights must be solid color black or gray only. “Fishnet” styles or any other patterned tights are not permitted. Footless tights are allowed. Solid colored black or gray leggings and jeggings are allowed only if worn under a skirt.
- Girls may wear shorts of Bermuda length.
- Shoes must have a completely enclosed toe and heel. No Uggs or Ugg-style boots. No “light-up” or Heelys are allowed. If your child wears shoes that may be a safety concern, playground activities for that day may be restricted.
- Modest socks of any color/design are acceptable, except those with offensive, political, or gang-related insignias.
- We encourage students to wear RSMCS sweatshirts (various styles available through Uniforms4U). Zip-up or pullover sweatshirts in plain colors (gray, navy, white, or black) are also acceptable. No writing or graphics allowed. Students may, on extremely cold or rainy weather days, wear a non-uniform winter coat.
- Athletic department hoodies will be offered for sale in the fall.
- Dying of hair is not permitted, and the RSMCS administration reserves the right to determine extreme colors, styles, or length of hair and may make exceptions on a case-by-case basis.
- Hairstyles and colors are not permitted to be extreme. Mohawks, shaved, or partially shaved heads are not permitted. Glitter is not permitted in hair. Boys’ hair must not extend beyond the eyebrows, middle of the ear, or shirt collar. Exceptions can be made with Administration approval.
- Light make-up is permitted in junior high; make-up is not permitted in elementary grades.
- Girls in both elementary and junior high may wear nail polish.
- Tattoos (temporary or permanent) are not allowed for boys or girls. Writing on the skin with a pen or other items is not permitted.
- No extreme jewelry is permitted. Girls are permitted to wear only post-type earrings (no hoop earrings for safety reasons). Boys are not permitted to wear earrings. No other body piercings are permitted.



- Hats, headbands, and bandanas may NOT be worn or brought to school (with the exception of Hat Day, after-school sports, outdoor field trips, medical reasons, or Administrative discretion).
- All clothing with an RSMCS logo must be bought at Uniforms4U.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION DRESS:

- All students in 4th through 8th grades will be required to dress out for P.E. in the RSMCS issued P.E. uniform purchased through Uniforms 4U.
- P.E. uniforms may not be shared with any other student.
- Sturdy athletic shoes are required and must be worn with socks.
- Plain sweatshirts and sweatpants are allowed for cold weather days and are to be worn over the regular P.E. uniform.
- Physical Education safety: Jewelry of any kind, including watches, necklaces, earrings, or bracelets, IS NOT ALLOWED during class, practice, or games.
- Points will be deducted from students' grades for not properly dressing out for P.E.

NON-UNIFORM GUIDELINES:

- Student dress must maintain the standards of our school in spirit and philosophy, expressing modesty and Christian character.
- Students in scouting programs may wear their uniform on meeting days.
- No tank tops, halter tops, spaghetti straps or exposed midriffs.
- Bermuda length shorts (no more than three inches above the knee) are allowed.
- No baggy shorts or pants.
- T-shirts are allowed except those with offensive or gang-related wording and/or insignias.
- Jeans: blue or black in color; no low-rise waistlines; must be appropriate length, with no holes, frayed cuffs, or obvious bleaching.
- Any student dressed inappropriately will be asked to call home to get a change of clothes.
- Spirit Shirts may be worn on Fridays. Spirit shirts are a required part of a student's uniform and are purchased through Uniforms 4U.
- RSMCS Sports jerseys and shorts may be worn on game days.
- Students should dress in a way as to not distract other students or staff or draw unexpected attention to themselves.

Violations

Elementary Violations

Students must come dressed in approved wardrobe daily. Those who are not appropriately dressed will receive the following consequences:

1. 1st and 2nd Violation – Letter or email sent home
2. 3rd Violation – Parent phone call



JH Violations

Students must come dressed in approved wardrobe daily. Those who are not appropriately dressed will receive the following consequences:

1. 1st and 2nd Violation – Student must call home for a change of clothing and remain in the office until that arrives.
2. 3rd Violation – Students may be sent home for the remainder of the day.

General School Information



Chapel

Philosophy

Chapel is held on a weekly basis in both Junior High and Elementary school. It is an important part of the RSMCS experience. Chapel is an opportunity for students to be challenged and grow in their faith. Attendance at chapel is required for all RSMCS students.

Because we desire to honor the Lord, student conduct during chapel is very important. Students should be quiet, reverent and respectful, and participate during the chapel time. Violations of good conduct will result in disciplinary consequences.

Student Placement Policy

The majority of students learn to perform successfully in a variety of classroom environments. The ability to adjust to different teacher personalities and a diversified classroom of students, as well as to make new friends each year, is an important life skill.

Goals of the Placement Process

- ❖ To prayerfully and seriously consider the best interests of individual students with regard to their specific homeroom placement on an annual basis.
- ❖ To create a well-balanced learning environment that best suits the educational needs of all students.

We ask that you trust our judgment in the placement process, as considerable time, effort, and prayer is invested in this process by the Faculty and Administration.

Drop-off and Pick-up Procedures

"Safety comes first!"

The following procedures are designed to ensure the safety of our students as well as a smooth and orderly flow of traffic. Your cooperation is required.

Safety begins as parents approach the school zone on Aventura.

- ❖ Obey the speed limit (25 mph).
- ❖ Do not drop off in the cul-de-sac.
- ❖ Respectfully follow all signage and verbal directions given by school personnel.

The speed limit on campus is 10 mph.

Parents are encouraged to use the loop for morning drop-off. However, we recognize that many parents will want to walk their students to class on the first day of school, so for that reason the upper and lower lots will be used for parking as well as for drop-off.



Morning Drop-Off:

1. The safe and efficient drop-off loop system in the lower parking lot will be available and is encouraged. Drop-offs should be done ONLY in the loop; please help us to keep all students safe by not dropping off on the street or in other areas.
2. The middle parking lot will be closed for morning drop-off.
3. Preschool/Pre-K: You may park in the upper or lower lots.
4. Grades K-8: If you wish to walk your child to class, please park in the upper lot by the Sanctuary or on the street. Exceptions will be made so that parking in all lots will be available on the first day of school. (**Note:** If you wish to park in the lower lot, you will not be allowed to leave until after 8:15 a.m. in order to maintain the traffic flow in the drop-off loop).

Afternoon Pick-up:

1. Preschool: You may park in the upper lot or lower lot.
2. Pre-K and TK: Park in the upper lot (by the Sanctuary) and pick up and sign out students at the classroom (12:30 p.m. and 1:30 p.m.).
3. Grades K-6: You may park in the lower lot to pick up students at the classroom (2:45 p.m.).
Note: The lower lot opens for parking at 2:30 p.m. Please arrive no earlier than 2:20 p.m. so as not to block traffic on Aventura.
4. Grades 7-8: Please park in the upper lot at 3 p.m. Parents must make contact with the teacher on duty.

Please remember that the speed limit on campus is 10 mph and the speed limit on the street approaching and exiting the campus is 25 mph.

Our campus is enclosed using automatic and manual gates. The lower parking lot automatic gate is open for morning drop off until 8:40 a.m. This gate reopens at 2:30 p.m. for pick-up and then closes again at 3:30 p.m.

The front office gate is also open for drop off until 8:40 a.m. After this time, please use our “doorbell” to gain access to the front office. This door is under 24-hour video surveillance. This gate is reopened at 2:30 p.m. for pick up and then closed for the rest of the day at 3:30 p.m.

The upper patio gate is locked during school hours as well. There is an intercom system for those needing access to campus after parking in the upper lot during the school day. Parents will use the intercom to communicate with front office personnel, who can grant access to the gate at their discretion.



For families who use our after-school program on a contractual basis, after the back auto gate closes daily, you will have access given through a private app downloaded on your phone to open the gate from 3:40-6:15 p.m. Monday-Friday. This access is only given through our Early Education and CREW Directors.

Students Arriving After Class Begins

After 8:15 a.m., elementary students will be marked tardy. After 8:25 a.m., parents must come into the school office to sign in their students. They will be given a Class Admit slip for the teacher.

Junior High students are expected to be in their seats with books and materials ready for class by 8:05 a.m. Please note, a parent must sign the student in at the office if arriving more than ten (10) minutes (8:15 a.m.) after the school day begins.

Releasing Students

If a child must leave school during regular school hours:

- ❖ Parents or authorized persons must *first* sign the child in/out on the designated sign-in/out sheet in the office during school hours. For safety reasons, this procedure must be followed before a student will be released from campus or accepted back into the classroom.
- ❖ Whenever possible, please send the teacher a note with the date and time that you will pick up your student. Advance notice is very helpful for classroom continuity.
- ❖ If picking up when a student is on a field trip, it is necessary for you to come to the adult who is supervising the students and sign out on the designated sign-in/out sheet. This is for the safety of your children.
- ❖ Please schedule doctor and dental appointments during non-school hours whenever possible.

If parents are divorced or separated and one parent is not allowed to see or pick up the child, we must have a certified copy of the Court Order of Final Judgment on file in the office.

Please note: Children **WILL NOT** be released to a person not listed on the Pick-up section of your FACTS FAMILY PORTAL or without written authorization signed and dated by the parent.

School Office Telephone Use and Telephone Messages

Telephone calls are answered between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Monday through Friday on regular scheduled school days. Any other time, you may leave a message on our voice mail. The telephone in the school office is to be used only for urgent needs. If there is an emergency, illness, or transportation problem, the **student should request permission in the office to use**



the phone. Students may not use the office phone to call parents for a ride until after dismissal lines are finished. If possible, parents should not call and leave messages for students unless it is an emergency. Delivering messages to students is disruptive to the class.

Electronic Devices, Internet Use, & Privacy

Elementary School Cellular Phone Policy

RSMCS administration understands what an important place a cell phone has in our everyday lives. Unfortunately, we have also found that a cell phone can be detrimental to the educational process. In addition to students being distracted by sending and receiving text messages, cell phones and other electronic devices are being used to gain unauthorized assistance on tests and other assignments. They also allow students to gain access to websites which we normally block on our school computers. RSMCS has adopted the following cell phone policy to maintain an optimal learning environment.

In accordance with RSMCS policy, elementary students are allowed to have cell phones in their backpacks while at school. However:

- ❖ **All cell phones must be turned off during the school day.** They are to be put away in backpacks and not seen or heard.
- ❖ **Use of the camera function (unless required by a teacher) is prohibited at all times on campus.** If this restriction is broken, the Principal has the authority to prohibit the student from possessing such devices on campus.
- ❖ **Phones are available in the office for student use during the school day.** Urgent messages can be forwarded to students through the main office.
- ❖ **A cell phone will be confiscated** if it is out in plain sight, rings, beeps, vibrates, is used to text, used as a camera, used to record video, or used for any of its tools and applications.

Students should use cell phones in a mature and appropriate manner. Inappropriate pictures sent over the cell phone will result in suspension or expulsion. Asking another student to send an inappropriate picture may result in expulsion. Using a cell phone to bully or tear down a student or faculty member may result in suspension or expulsion. Inappropriate pictures on cell phones may result in suspension or expulsion.

Internet

Use of the internet by students at RSMCS is considered a privilege, not a right. All use must be in the context of contributing to the educational process, with safety as the first priority. Parents of any student who will participate in using the internet will be required to sign the Appropriate Use of the Internet Agreement before such use will be allowed.



Ethical Technology Usage Guidelines

Students are required to sign an agreement that they will abide by what RSMCS considers to be ethical technology standards. The major points of this agreement are as follows:

- ❖ **Words can hurt or heal, whether in person or online.** I will be cautious and respectful in all forms of communication (including texting, email and online social media), knowing that words, images and videos can last forever on the internet. Technological transactions are persistent and replicable, and can be forwarded, copied, or traced. Examples of unacceptable behavior include, but are not limited to, making threats and harassing others.
- ❖ **Lying, cheating, and stealing are wrong no matter how they are done.** I will not engage in computer network and internet activity that I know is against school policy. Plagiarism, whether from print or electronic sources, is cheating. Other examples include, but are not limited to, committing fraud, stealing, and vandalizing.
- ❖ **Some activities are completely inappropriate and not allowed on the RSMCS campus.** I will not knowingly access, display, create, or send texts or graphics that are sexually suggestive, pornographic, violent, or that contain inappropriate religious, ethnic, or cultic content, or obscene language.

Privacy and Protection of Proprietary Information

Respect for the privacy of all members of the school family is imperative. We use many methods of communication, including printed and electronic distribution. All names, phone numbers, addresses, e-mail addresses, and other personal information is considered confidential and may not be used for any communication outside of school business or for solicitation.

The use of the RSMCS name and logo(s), or the names of any faculty or staff member at RSMCS is strictly prohibited without written permission from the school and the people included. Students doing so can be subject to dismissal.

Personal Property

Cell phones, all electronic devices, and all other forms of personal property are discouraged on school premises and at all school-sponsored activities.

Students bringing such equipment to school shall not turn on or remove personal items from their backpacks at any time while on campus. Communications between parents and students during school hours must be made through the school office. Exceptions will be addressed with the Administration.

Enforcement of this policy shall include the immediate confiscation of the item, to be returned to the parent only, with potential disciplinary action for the student. RSMCS is not responsible for lost, stolen or damaged property in the possession of a student. Students may, as necessary,



check a cell phone in with their teacher until the end of the school day. Students in grades 5-8 and their parents will be required to read and sign the RSMCS Cell Phone and Electronics Policy.

Athletics

RSMCS is a member of the **CALOC** (Christian Athletic League of Orange County), whose major emphasis is on maintaining a Christian attitude of sportsmanship, honesty, respect, teamwork, and responsibility. Participation is open to all 5th-8th grade students.

Sports include:

- ❖ Fall: Boys' Flag Football; Girls' Basketball
- ❖ Winter: Boys' Basketball; Girls' Volleyball
- ❖ Spring: Boys' Volleyball; Girls' Flag Football; Co-ed Soccer; Track & Field

Tryouts are held at the beginning of each season. Practices and games are typically held after school, but there may be early dismissal for games. Parents must provide transportation for their own students or be placed in carpools. Carpool drivers are not responsible for arranging rides back to school. Athletes may change into other clothing for practices. However, shorts and shirts must be modest; midriff, spaghetti straps and extremely short shorts are not permitted.

There is a student participation fee per sport that goes toward league fees, referees, equipment/fields, awards and uniforms. Fundraising opportunities may be necessary to offset the cost of the sports program. For a student to be eligible to participate in that day's athletic game or practice, they must have attended class for a minimum of half the school day.

Athletic Eligibility

Students who desire to try out for any sport in the RSMCS Athletic Program must have a 2.0 GPA. During the season, athletes may be considered ineligible or be placed on probation based on one or more of the following:

- ❖ Failure to maintain a 2.0 academic GPA
- ❖ More than one behavioral infraction earned in a given trimester or sport season
- ❖ A grade of "F" in any subject

Note: Probation will be for a minimum of one week; students will be allowed to continue to practice with the team but will not be allowed to participate in games until the Athletic Director has met with the teacher(s) and has determined that the student's grades meet the eligibility minimum.

CREW (After-School) Program

RSMCS provides before- and after-school care (CREW) for our students every day, Monday through Friday, on regular and minimum school days. On regular school days, CREW is available from 7-8 a.m. for students in grades TK-6, and from 3-6 p.m. for students in grades K-6. CREW is



also available for TK students after school from 12:30-6 p.m. daily.

Elementary parents are expected to pick up their children by 3 p.m. each day, and by 12:30 p.m. on early dismissal days, unless the student is participating in an adult-supervised activity or an on-campus, after-school enrichment program.

TK-6th grade students remaining 15 minutes after dismissal time will be signed into childcare, and the family FACTS account will be charged the hourly rate for time utilized in CREW.

If a TK-6th grade student is not picked up after an after-school class, the instructor will sign them into CREW immediately (there is no grace period) and the family FACTS account will be charged accordingly. Students who have left campus after school MAY NOT come back on campus and be signed into CREW.

Childcare is not available for Jr. High students.

Telephone/Emergencies

Please contact CREW at 589-5279, especially in the case of an emergency when a late pick-up is anticipated. Students are not allowed to use the phone except in an emergency.

Pick-up Changes

Students are released to those listed on the Emergency Contacts only. If any pick-up changes are anticipated, a written note or verbal contact with the front office or CREW director is required to release the student. For your child's safety, students will not be released to siblings under 18 years of age.

Electronic Devices

Use of all electronic devices, with the exception of the school issued Chromebook and/or iPad, is prohibited during after-school CREW hours.

Class Parties

Elementary birthdays may be celebrated within the classroom to teach the students to honor one another. RSMCS elementary classes observe five school-approved celebrations during the school year. The following celebrations are consistent throughout grades TK-6:

- ❖ Thanksgiving
- ❖ Christmas (with an emphasis on the birth of Christ)
- ❖ Valentine's Day
- ❖ Easter (with an emphasis on the Resurrection of Christ)
- ❖ End-of-year



In addition, some grade levels may include celebrations which enrich the curriculum for that particular grade level. Each teacher will instruct his/her classroom mom(s) about the process for the parties. If facilities other than the teacher's classroom are required, **all celebrations** must first be approved by the school administration through the process of an official "Activity Request Form." Siblings under 18 years old may not attend class parties.

PLEASE NOTE: The RSMCS policy on individual off-campus birthday parties for students is as follows: Invitations are not allowed to be distributed in class **unless** all students from the class are invited; or all girls (girls-only party); or all boys (boys-only party). If you are inviting only a few children from the class, please mail the invitations directly to the students' homes. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation.

Volunteers

RSMCS welcomes and encourages adult volunteers, both in and out of the classroom. All volunteers must check in at the front office before proceeding to the classroom. Siblings of students who are under the age of 18 may not accompany parents during volunteer events, including class parties, field trips, and in-class academic or enrichment activities.

Anyone who volunteers more than 16 hours per month (or 32 hours during the entire year), including coaches and overnight field trip chaperones, must show proof of a recent negative TB test as well as mandated reporter training.

Parent-Teacher Communications

You are encouraged to contact your child's teacher throughout the year to share positive comments, to discuss issues and concerns, or ask questions. It is the desire of the faculty to be of service to both parent and student. Please be aware that drop-off and dismissal times are not for parent/teacher conferences. Each teacher welcomes visits from parents; however, such visits must be by pre-arranged appointment.

It is required that at least one parent attend the fall Parent/Teacher Conference. The presence of both parents at the conference is especially important to strengthen communication between home and school for the benefit of the student. Conferences are scheduled during the first and third trimesters. This is an excellent time to communicate concerns regarding the student's progress and to make helpful suggestions. Additional conferences may be scheduled at other times of the year by the parent or teacher.

Questions and Concerns (Matthew 18:15-17)

It is important that the lines of communication and fellowship be kept open. If you have a concern, please follow these steps:



1. Talk to your child; have him/her share the details with you.
2. Parent(s) and student should talk to the teacher directly to gain further understanding of the situation. In most cases, a productive solution will be reached.
3. If you still have a concern, a conference will be scheduled with the parent, student, teacher, and a member of the Administration.
4. Should a concern remain unresolved, you may contact the Principal or Vice Principal.
5. An appeal can also be made to the School Board. Address a written request to the chairman. Any communication that has not followed this progression will be referred back to the appropriate person.
6. For any parent-to-parent concerns, you are encouraged to speak with the other parent before bringing any concerns to the teacher or Administration.

E-mail

Parents have the ability to contact their child's teacher via email at any time. Faculty and staff e-mail addresses use the following format: first name initial and last name @rsmchristian.org (e.g. jdoe@rsmchristian.org). Every attempt will be made to return emails within 48 hours. Please refrain from contacting staff via phone or text. The school's general email address for miscellaneous requests and questions is info@rsmchristian.org.

ParentSquare

Our teachers' primary mode of communication with parents is through an online portal called ParentSquare. Every parent listed in the FACTS Family Portal is also automatically given a ParentSquare account. Each week, your teacher(s) will send out a class newsletter detailing assignments, special projects, field trips, etc. Through ParentSquare, you can message your teacher directly, comment on posts/pictures, sign-up to volunteer, and more. For more information on ParentSquare, contact the Director of Communications.

RSMCS Website

The Rancho Santa Margarita Christian School website (rsmchristianschool.com) provides information for parents and students. Parents may view student grades (for specified grade levels) through their [FACTS FAMILY PORTAL](#). Questions regarding the FACTS FAMILY PORTAL may be directed to Lisa Espinoza at lespinoza@rsmchristian.org.

Classroom Observations

Observations in Elementary classrooms may be permitted by pre-arranged appointments only following a meeting with the Principal. The normal observation time is for 30 minutes. Observation times do not include a time for conferencing with the classroom teacher.



Child Abuse and Neglect

As mandated reporters, all RSMCS faculty and staff are trained each year.

In accordance with Scripture, this policy balances the principles of Matthew 18:15-17, the God-given right of parents (Deut. 6:5-7, Eph. 6:4), and the role of State authority (Romans 13:1-7). Matthew 18 calls for the process of restoration of the believer to commence first, if applicable, then, in response to Romans 13, recognizes the State's legitimate right of notification. Notification of proper authorities must not be construed as betrayal of the parents' trust.

Restoration results in forgiveness but doesn't remove the consequences of a violation of a state statute. Neither parental rights nor religious freedom was ever intended to give refuge to abusive parents. It must never appear to either the parent or the state that the school will allow our freedoms to be used as a "cloak of maliciousness" (I Peter 2:16).

The following policies and procedures follow established Biblical principles. As mandatory reporters, all administrative conferences and procedures are to be thoroughly documented and in conjunction with California Penal Code 11166, the California Legislative Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Act.

The policy for reporting suspected child abuse or molestation must be handled as follows:

1. Report all suspected child abuse or molestation directly to the Administration.
2. The Administration may authorize school personnel to interview and/or examine the student and document the findings.
3. The Administration will inform the Department of Child Services.
4. The Administration reserves the right to meet with any of the involved parties, protecting their anonymity.

Community Emergencies

Should the schools in the Saddleback Valley or Capistrano Valley Unified School Districts close due to extreme weather conditions or a natural disaster, Rancho Santa Margarita Christian School will also be closed. Families will be alerted via phone, text and email through our "Smart Alert" system in Parent Square. Telephone calls will be made directly to families, if possible; if not, provisions and plans have been made to prepare to house the student body for two days, if necessary.

What should a parent do in case of a school lockdown emergency or an earthquake?

1. Know that the school will communicate with the parent/guardian through an automated email/ telephone/text message system through ParentSquare.



2. The parent/guardian should wait for information from the automated system (It is imperative that you do not come to the campus until you receive an all-clear call.).
3. Do not call the school since this could block the phone system, preventing teachers from calling the office. Also, keep in mind that in the case of a natural disaster, the phone system could be out of order.
4. When you receive the all-clear text/email or telephone call to come to school to pick up your child, **do not park on campus** but in the local commercial area at Calle Corta and Aventura and **walk to the school**. The upper parking lot will have a designated holding area for the safety of students. It is vitally important that we dismiss each student according to our Crisis and Safety Plan.
5. In the event of an all-school evacuation, students will be walked to Stonecreek Christian Church, located at 30161-B Avenida de las Banderas, RSM. Students will only be released to a parent or guardian who is on the student's approved pick-up list.

Parent Service Hours Policy

We value the home/school relationship and believe that each family is directed by God to RSMCS for its unique ability to further the school's mission through tangible acts of service. The primary objective is to foster an others-oriented environment as the Scriptures encourage:

- ❖ Parents (Kindergarten-8th grade) are to serve 15 hours per family each year as part of their commitment to the RSMCS program and its development. Single-parent families with sole custody are responsible for 7.5 hours per year. Please inform the office if you fall into the latter category. The mandatory nature of this program ensures a minimum, yet reasonable, level of participation from each family.

RSMCS provides a variety of service opportunities from which families choose to be involved. All family service hours should be done for RSM Christian School directly. The following annual opportunities are currently available:

- ❖ Classroom help/activities (room parent/room moms will be credited with ALL required service hours for the year)
- ❖ PTP officers/support
- ❖ Fundraising support (Ball Drop, Jog-A-Thon, others)
- ❖ School workdays & school-related outreaches
- ❖ Contributing items to a class party, shopping for a class event, or sending your student to school with items will count toward your required service hours.
- ❖ Accelerated Reader Program

A maximum of 10 service hours may be earned for any single activity, including overnight field trips.



HOW TO LOG YOUR PARENT SERVICE HOURS

Service hours are recorded through [ParentSquare](#). Log in to your ParentSquare.com account on a desktop (this feature is only available through the website's desktop version). On the left hand side, there is a tab labeled "Participation." Under that tab, you will find a link to "Volunteer Hours." Fill out the boxes for date, hours, event, and description of the volunteer service (in the additional details box). Don't forget to hit SAVE before logging back out of the website to ensure your hours are properly logged.

All service hours must be completed and logged in your ParentSquare account no later than May 6, 2024. If you already know that you plan on volunteering after this date, please log them ahead of time so you will not be billed for those missing hours.

While the parent service program is not intended as a fundraiser, and buy-outs are not preferred, it is understood that each family's time commitments and circumstances vary. Therefore, service hours may be fulfilled by payment at the rate of \$20/hour via your FACTS account. Any hours not served by May 6, 2024, will be deducted from your FACTS account at the \$20/hour rate.

- ❖ Families may decide whether to serve their hours in full or buy them out in advance.
- ❖ Payments may be made in full or in three equal installments of \$100 at the beginning of each trimester via your FACTS account.

Parent Service Hours Dress Code Guidelines

The faculty and staff of RSM Christian School dress in a modest, professional manner to set an example for the students. We require parents who help with school activities to dress in this same manner.

Immunization Records

Although we are required under California State Law to collect and have our students Immunization records current and up to date, we will never release any of these records to another school or entity. If a student transfers to another school or after 8th grade graduation moves onto high school, it is the parent's sole responsibility to give the new school personal immunization records. We send cumulative records to a requesting school; however, we remove personal health information, including immunization records, and shred before sending the file on. The local health department is the only agency that can legally request immunization records. If the law requires us to comply with that request, we will do so. However, we will inform you as the parent that the request has been made before we release records. This applies to all students with the exception of those families who have a Refusal to Permit Immunization Data Record-Sharing Under Health & Safety Code 120440(E)(4) form on file.



Parent-Teacher Partnership (PTP)

The PTP serves as a support to the students, parents, faculty, and staff with the purpose to be educational and philanthropic. Any parent or legal guardian of a student will automatically become a member. The intention of the PTP is to coordinate many of the school's volunteer positions and activities and to support school spirit. Volunteers are needed throughout the year for support. Please join the PTP group on ParentSquare to get updates and be included in monthly meetings and event planning.

Visitor Verification

All visitors and volunteers must check in and out through the school office daily and be prepared to show picture I.D. Visitors will be given a visitor's badge to wear while on campus. Anyone on campus without a visitor's badge will be questioned about his or her identity and purpose for being on campus.

Field Trips

Elementary students attend a variety of school-sponsored field trips, with the following guidelines:

1. Parents are expected to complete an annual Field Trip Permission Form. This form is used for all field trips during the school year. The teacher will notify you in writing regarding the particulars of each field trip, including the date, time, cost, and location.
2. Most field trip vendors usually require payment prior to the field trip, therefore, all fees for field trips are due prior to the date of the class trip and are billed through your family FACTS account. There are no refunds on field trip fees.
3. It is the parent's responsibility to determine whether the student may participate in the trip. Those who do not attend the field trip will not be penalized but will remain at home during the trip. The absence is considered an excused absence. Teachers may assign work related to the field trip to be completed at home and returned the next school day.
4. Transportation is provided by parents carpooling, or by bus at the teacher's discretion. Parents who drive may carry only the number of students for which they have seat belts. Parents must complete a "Volunteer Driver Application Form" and provide proof of current car insurance (car insurance that covers children riding in the car), and a current driver's license. Drivers must have adequate insurance coverage as stated in the Driver Application Form. This process must be repeated each year the parent desires to be a driver.
5. While parents are invited to attend many of the field trips, siblings of the student may not attend. When a parent goes as a chaperone, he/she helps supervise the children in the class and cannot be distracted by bringing younger siblings.



6. Students and parents/chaperones are expected to stay with the class until they return to school. In the event of an emergency, which would require the parent and student to leave early, they must sign out with the teacher upon departure from the field trip.
7. Chaperones/drivers may not stop at Starbucks or other restaurants before or after field trips.

Summer School

RSMCS does not provide a summer school program for Elementary or Junior High students. However, many teachers tutor individually or in groups during the summer months. The school office will have a list of teachers, grades being tutored, and information regarding each teacher's individual program.

Miscellaneous



Student Insurance

RSMCS maintains a student insurance program which covers the students while participating in any school function, field trip, practice or games. The insurance is a secondary policy which pays a percentage of the unpaid balance AFTER the parent's insurance has paid. An accident report should be completed for any student involved in an accident or injury.

Skateboards, Skates, and Scooters

Skateboards, scooters (motorized or not), and skates/roller blades are not permitted on campus at any time, before, during or after school hours.

Bicycles, including E-Bikes

Students are permitted to ride bicycles or E-bikes to and from RSMCS. All students who ride bicycles to or from school must have a signed permission letter from his or her parents allowing the student to leave campus on their bike at the end of the school day. The school has installed specific bicycle parking on the backside of the 500 building.

Distribution of Flyers

All flyers for classroom/school distribution for any purpose must first be approved by the Director of Communications.

Closed Campus

RSMCS maintains a closed campus, meaning all parents, family, visitors, and friends must enter through the school office to obtain a visitor's pass.

Lost and Found

A lost and found area is kept for missing wardrobe clothing, lunch boxes, backpacks, etc. RSMCS encourages parents to have students' name embroidered or marked in Sharpie on your child's clothing at the time of purchase. In addition, parents should label lunch boxes, backpacks, books, and all outer clothing such as jackets and sweatshirts. At the end of each school month, the lost and found closet is cleaned out and any unmarked and unclaimed items will be donated.

Parental Commitment and Agreement

God has given parents the responsibility of "training up a child in the way he should go" (Proverbs 22:6). By enrolling, you as parents have asked Rancho Santa Margarita Christian School to work in partnership with you in that responsibility. To do the best job possible requires teamwork and communication between the home and the school. By enrolling your child(ren) at RSMCS, you agree to the following:



1. You have read the RSMCS Parent/Student Handbook and have studied the standards as stated. You will abide by the policies and procedures in the handbook and will give your support and cooperation in upholding, applying, and enforcing the standards.
2. RSMCS has full responsibility for placing your child(ren) in the class or classes that the school feels is in the best interest of your child(ren).
3. You support the discipline policies as stated and understand and agree with the zero tolerance policies.
4. You will see that your child/children are properly dressed in the school-approved wardrobe each day.
5. You will pay the tuition and other fees on the dates due, and you understand that, should you neglect to do so, your child/children will be required to remain at home until all fees are paid in full.
6. You understand that grade reports, final exams, report cards, and any other records which require our service, will not be released until all fees are paid in full.
7. You will abide by the Resolution Agreement Policies stated in the handbook should any questions or disagreements arise.
8. You agree that if, at any time, the school administration feels it is in the best interest of RSMCS, your child will be removed from class and/or dismissed from the school.
9. You will sign and return the Parent Agreement Form prior to the beginning of each school year.

Student Commitment and Agreement

As an RSMCS student, you agree to the following:

1. You have read the RSMCS Parent/Student Handbook and have studied the standards as stated.
2. You will abide by the academic policies, attendance policies, discipline policies, and any other policies stated in the handbook.
3. While you are enrolled at RSMCS, you are expected to exhibit qualities of a Christ-like life and refrain from certain activities and behavior.
4. You will give your whole-hearted support and cooperation in upholding, applying and enforcing the school standards. You understand that it is a privilege to attend Rancho Santa Margarita Christian School and that if, at any time, the administration feels it is in the best interest of the school, you can be removed from class and dismissed from Rancho Santa Margarita Christian School.



Resolution of Disagreements

RSMCS is a family that is based on the teachings and example of the Word of God, the Bible. When there is a question, concern, or disagreement between the student/parent/staff member, the policy of the school is to follow the principle of Matthew 18:15-19.

- ❖ A parent or student who has a question, concern or disagreement with a staff member should go to that staff member and present the concern to him/her.
- ❖ A meeting should be scheduled between the two parties and should take place within a two-week period.
- ❖ If the parties involved cannot come to a satisfactory resolution, the following steps should be taken:
 1. Bring the issue of concern to the teacher or staff member involved in the issue
 2. Bring the issue of concern to the Vice Principal
 3. Bring the issue of concern to the Principal
 4. If, after these steps, the issue is unresolved, you may appeal to the School Board in writing

NOTE: Concerns which are voiced anonymously (through letters, phone calls, etc.) cannot be dealt with by RSMCS staff or administration since anonymity does not allow for resolution between the parties.

God calls each of us to listen to one another's concerns and to be willing to offer God's forgiving love to one another. However, your concerns and issues should never be shared with other parents, teachers, or staff members who are not directly involved in the situation. This behavior constitutes gossip, which is not in line with godly principles of living in peace with one another.

"Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace." (Colossians 3:15)