

San Marcos Baptist Academy



Residential Life Student Handbook 2020-2021

Revision Policy: San Marcos Academy reserves the right to amend any policy or procedure in the Residential Life Student Handbook at any time at the sole discretion of the Administration.

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Parents should consult the Student Handbook for all questions related to academics.

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Welcome

We, as the Residential Life staff will strive to help each and every boarding student grow into a successful young man or woman. Whether students are anxious about starting the year, filling out college applications, or anything else, we will be sure to help them thrive in every area. We will be there to motivate them, to give them advice, and to cheer them on through all their accomplishments.

Our goal is to provide a safe and nurturing residential community for all boarding students. Our unique environment provides opportunities for students from all over the world to interact and form lasting friendships.

In such a community, it is essential for residents to abide by appropriate guidelines. Students are expected to practice the following:

1. Respect: Students are expected to demonstrate respect to all SMA staff as well as to other students.
2. Responsibility: Students are expected to take responsibility for their own actions including their emotions, behavior, dormitory room, and grades.
3. Integrity: Students are expected to show integrity in all situations including character, action, words, social media, and relationships.

A unique feature we offer at SMA is our Residential Life curriculum. This curriculum is designed to teach students how to become productive young men and women and how to navigate through life.

Residential Life Staff Directory

Dean of Residential Life: Mrs. Christy Guenther

Boarding Director: Mrs. Stephanie Ramirez

Assistant Boarding Directors: Clay Cozby, Silvia Cruz

Weekend Directors: Jose & Laura Espinoza, James Portis

Phone Numbers

Boys Dorm Phone: 512-753-8098

Girls Dorm Phone: 512-753-8099

Director Phone: 512-753-8094

Boarding Student Mailing Address

San Marcos Academy

% Residence Hall

Student Name

2801 Ranch Road 12

San Marcos, TX 78666

100 COMMON RULES FOR RESIDENCE HALLS

- .01 Residence halls are “Off Limits” during school hours. Students needing to enter a residence hall or room during these hours must (1) be cleared by the School Office, (2) coordinate with available boarding staff and (3) be supervised at the residence hall.
- .02 Dorm rooms for Upper School students are off limits to Middle School students and the Middle School rooms are off limits to Upper School students except by specific permission of the Boarding Director. Other hall access restrictions may be announced as necessary by dorm personnel.
- .03 Scuffling or “horseplay” is not permitted at any place or at any time on the Academy campus or on Academy trips, functions, etc. Rocks, pebbles, dirt clods, or other objects may not be thrown on campus.
- .04 Throwing of articles from the windows or doors are not permitted. All curtains must be closed at night.
- .05 A student may not enter another student’s room unless one of the occupants of that room is present. Permission must be granted by the occupant(s).
- .06 Students may not enter hallways of a residence hall unless appropriately dressed. Undergarments or towels only are not appropriate dress. This includes traveling to and from the bathroom/shower.
- .07 Students may not for any reason exchange furniture between rooms or move furniture into or out of their rooms.
- .08 Furniture in rooms is to be arranged as it was at the beginning of the school year. The Boarding Director must approve all changes to the arrangement of room furniture. No outside furniture may be added to the room without the Boarding Director’s approval. Regardless of the arrangement of furniture, a clear view of the entire room from the entrance is required.
- .09 To prevent damages, athletic equipment, such as weights, will not be used or stored in residence hall rooms.
- .10 Occupants of a room are responsible for any damages to doors, windows, screens, furniture, alarm systems, fixtures, etc., and may be charged accordingly.
- .11 A fine and disciplinary action will be imposed for tampering with the intercom speakers, speaker covers, fire alarms, window or door alarms, door locks, switchplates, or extinguishers in any of the residence halls. If any of these items fail to function properly,

a report should be made to residence hall staff immediately.

- .12 Students are responsible for the cleanliness and upkeep of the room. Students (and/or parents, guardians) are prohibited from hiring an individual to provide cleaning services in the residence hall.
- .13 Students are not allowed to sleep in other students' rooms without prior permission from the Director on duty.

101 ELECTRICAL APPLIANCES

- .01 The following is a list of approved appliances for use in the residence hall: television (may not exceed 26" screen), microwave oven (may not exceed .8 cubic feet), refrigerator (may not exceed 3.0 cubic feet), stereos (may not exceed 24"x 12" x 12"), computer, small radio, clock, hand-held hair dryers, hair curlers, curling irons, and hair straighteners. In the interest of energy conservation, all electrical appliances, including lights, are to be turned off when departing the residence hall. All other electrical appliances are prohibited unless special approval has been obtained from a Boarding Director.

102 FIRE DRILLS AND OTHER "STANDARD RESPONSE PROTOCOL" DRILLS

Regulations require that fire and other emergency preparedness drills be held periodically in academic and residence hall buildings. SMA cooperates with Hays County First Responders to implement the Standard Response Protocol. For additional information, see <http://www.hayscountysrp.com/>.

103 FOOD AND DRINKS

- .01 Food and drinks may be kept in dorm rooms if properly stored in metal, plastic, or glass containers with appropriately fitting lids. Once canned food is opened, it must either be eaten immediately or discarded. Paper bags or boxes are unacceptable as containers. Food left out or open during the day may be discarded by residence hall personnel.
- .02 A student's Academic/Behavioral Level may determine his or her privilege to possess and/or order food or drinks from outside of campus.
- .03 Residence hall policies will determine times for eating and preparing food in the dormitory and are subject to safety and accessibility of cooking equipment.

104 INSPECTIONS OF STUDENT ROOMS

- .01 Boarding Directors will normally conduct inspections of student rooms on weekdays. Rooms are expected to be kept in a "generally neat condition." To pass the daily room

inspection the following guidelines should be observed:

- Bed made
 - Trash taken out (including bathroom trash for girls)
 - Floors cleared
 - No open food containers
 - All items in their place
 - Lights off
 - Drawers and closets closed
 - Girls Dorm - all appliances such as curling irons and hair straighteners are unplugged.
- .02 No nails, thumbtacks, screws, etc. are to be driven into any walls or doors. Decorations (posters) for the walls must be attached by using only white putty or removable adhesive devices.
- .03 Any poster, picture, or item advertising tobacco, alcohol, or considered to be in poor taste, will be confiscated by residence hall personnel without recourse for payment.
- .04 Students will not be allowed to burn candles, incense, or any other substance in the residence hall. All students are expected to observe fire, safety, and energy conservation practices. Light globes must be white; black lights or strobe lights are not allowed.
- .05 Furniture in the rooms is to be kept upright and used for the intended purpose only. No furniture may be arranged in such a way as to block visibility to any portion of the room or to block a path to the doorway for a quick departure.
- .06 Study desks must remain clear for study.

105 KEYS

- .01 Students must report lost or stolen keys to residence hall personnel as soon as possible. Residence hall staff will order replacement keys as soon as possible and will open the door until the new key arrives.
- .02 Consequences may be issued if students bypass or block the door locking system.

106 LATE LIGHTS

Students may have late lights in their rooms only by approval from a Boarding Director. Lights on late are defined as any time after the Boarding Director has designated as lights out (bedtime).

107 LAUNDRY

For the convenience of our boarding students, laundry facilities are provided in the residence halls at no additional charge.

- .01 All articles of clothing, linens, etc, must be plainly marked, using indelible ink to include the student's first and last names.
- .02 All laundry must be complete by call to rooms.
- .03 Towels are to be washed separately from the school uniform.
- .04 Remove your clothes immediately after you are finished to allow others to use the machines. Clothes left unattended will be taken up by a Boarding Director.

108 LEAVE REGULATIONS FOR BOARDING STUDENTS

.01 Overnight/Weekend/Daytime Leaves

- a. Definition (Overnight/Weekend Leaves) – The student checks out of the residence hall to go to either his or her home of record or to another destination for one or more nights. The student must be checked out by his/her parent, the parent of another SMA student, or by a responsible adult designated by the parent/guardian. Once signed out of the hall, accountability and supervision of the student becomes the responsibility of the parent/guardian who signed out the student. The same individual who checks the student out of the hall is responsible for checking the student back into the hall unless other arrangements have been approved by the Dean prior to the leave. Last minute changes must be approved by the Dean.
- b. Definition (Daytime Leaves) – The student checks out of the residence hall for the day, but returns to campus prior to curfew. The student must be checked out by his/her parent, the parent of another SMA student, or by a responsible adult designated by the parent/guardian. Once signed out of the hall, accountability and supervision of the student becomes the responsibility of the adult who checked the student out. The same individual who checks the student out of the hall is responsible for checking the student back into the hall unless other arrangements have been approved by the Dean prior to the leave. Last minute changes must be approved by the Dean.
- c. Leave Requests must be filled out by 7-day boarding students and turned in 24 hours in advance to a Boarding Director. In order to stay in the dormitory on weekend nights, 5-day boarding students must fill out a Student Stay Request and turn it in by Wednesday night to the Boarding Director. Written permission from a parent/guardian is required for each instance.
- d. The Academy reserves the right to determine when an adult is considered “responsible” and may deny requests for leave if deemed inappropriate.
- e. While in the San Marcos city limits and its ETJ, students are still obliged to observe all Academy rules.

- f. All students who are checked out for Weekend Leaves are required to return to the residence hall by 6:00 p.m. on Sunday evening, or by 6:00 p.m. on Monday evening following a holiday. In the event that the student is unable to return by the 6:00 p.m. curfew parents are requested to notify the available dorm staff of the late arrival.
- g. All students who are checked out for Overnight or Daytime Leaves are required to return by the predetermined time set by the Boarding Director and parent.
- h. Additional approval from the Dean of Residential Life may be required under certain circumstances.

.02 Daytime Passes (Town Passes)

- a. Definition – The student checks out of the residence hall to the environs of San Marcos (maximum of a 10-mile radius of campus) for a period of three hours or less. Eligibility for Daytime Passes (Town Passes) is based on the student’s academic and behavioral level and/or permission from the Boarding Director and Parent.
- b. A Town Pass Request form must be completed and approved by the Boarding Director.
- c. When on a Daytime Pass (Town Pass), the student must abide by the rules and regulations of the Academy but is not directly supervised by Academy personnel. Failure to do so may result in consequences.
- d. If a student has earned the privilege based on his or her level, he/she may be authorized to visit the town in his/her own car or the car of another authorized Academy student (with permission from the Boarding Director and Parents).
- e. An *Application for Automobile Driving/Riding Privileges* is required for any student who brings a car on campus or any students riding in the car of another student. Forms must be submitted to the Dean of Residential Life for approval prior to any riding in or driving a vehicle.

.03 Off-limits areas

- a. Prohibited areas for students include the following: the Texas State University campus; San Marcos River and its shores; bars, pool halls, pawn shops; tobacco, vape, and or smoke shops; package stores; other businesses which have as their primary purpose the sale of alcoholic beverages; tattoo or body art parlors; head shops, hemp stores, adult novelty stores; humidors or other similar businesses; and others as announced.
- b. All off-campus residential areas, including the homes of day students, are off limits unless approved by a Boarding Director.
- c. School-sponsored movies will only be films rated G, PG, and PG-13.
- d. The Dean of Residential Life may announce other off-limit areas.

- .04 “Limited Leave” applies to weekends when a mandatory activity is scheduled for students. Students are authorized to depart the San Marcos area to visit home, relatives or friends, in accordance with their levels, after the mandatory event.

.05 “Early Leave”

- a. Students needing to leave school early or return late from the regularly designated dates and times must seek approval from the school office and the Dean of Residential Life.
- b. The school office reserves the right to consider each application, on an individual basis, regarding the necessity of the leave and the impact the leave may have on the student’s grades. Students leaving school without prior approval will be assigned unexcused absences and will receive consequences accordingly.

.06 General

- a. Parents or immediate family members designated by parents may check out their children from the residence halls. Parents may also give written permission for other Academy parents to check out their student; however, no one with a felony conviction, including but not limited to a felony DWI/DUI conviction or a felony conviction for any sexual offense, may check a non-family member student out of the residence halls for any reason.
- b. All leaves may be affected by the student’s behavior level and at the discretion of the Dean of Residential Life.
- c. When the campus closes for the major holiday breaks (Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Spring Break), students must depart the campus. Students are expected to leave campus by 5:00 p.m. of the last class day. When a student is traveling internationally, it is understood that he or she may need to stay overnight one night to catch an early morning flight. Should this additional night be necessary, transportation to the airport will depart the next morning at 6:00 a.m. Since the Academy is officially closed during these holiday breaks, any exceptions to the above will necessitate the possibility of a homestay at the rate of \$100 per day.
- d. Public transportation must be preapproved by the respective Boarding Director during the Leave Request process. Parents/guardians or students are not allowed to hail a taxi or make reservations for ride-sharing unless special arrangements have been made with the Dean.
- e. When a student departs by private transportation, the person transporting the student must appear at the appropriate residence hall with the student at the time of sign out. Except in situations where prior arrangements have been made, the individual who signed the student out of the hall must sign the student back into the hall.
- f. Sign out and sign in must be witnessed by residence hall staff.
- g. Students may not check out with any person less than 23 years of age.
- h. Leave Request forms must be completed accurately and the student is expected to be at the place/time and with the persons indicated thereon. Any deviation constitutes a falsification of an official statement and is subject to disciplinary action.
- i. Academy policy does not permit a student to sign out for a pass or leave to a motel or hotel locally, or outside the San Marcos area, unless accompanied by his or her parent or guardian, or unless the Dean of Residential Life has granted special permission.

- j. Unless the student is being picked up by the parent or legal guardian, proper parental permission and approval by a Boarding Director are required.
- k. Only with the Dean of Residential Life's permission may females check out overnight with a male's family, or males check out with a female's family.
- l. Except for urgent emergency reasons, students are not permitted to miss academic classes or scheduled leadership development training. Dental or medical appointments are not considered as emergencies and should be taken care of during holiday periods.
- m. If for any reason, students find that they cannot return to the Academy by the time indicated on their leave request, they are responsible for notifying their Boarding Director with the reason and a new expected time of arrival. The reason stated will be verified with the student and his or her family. A failure to return from a pass or leave by the specified time, except for emergencies, constitutes an unauthorized absence and may include disciplinary actions.
- n. Any student who fails to check out properly will be subject to consequences upon return to the campus.
- o. Students are checked out overnight and for weekends with the understanding that they will be visiting with adult supervision in a "family" setting. When students return to the local area, they must sign in to their respective residence hall immediately.
- p. On extended holiday breaks, students will not be allowed to return before the halls reopen at 12:00 p.m. on the day before classes resume. The first SMA airport transportation will arrive at the Austin airport at 1:00 p.m. on that day.

.08 Special Leave Regulations for Homecoming, Prom and Special Event Weekends

- a. Students may check out overnight only with their own parents, guardians, or relatives who are 23 years of age or older.
- b. Students may check out locally with the parents of other Academy students until curfew with parental permission and approval of the Dean.

109 LOST AND FOUND

- .01 Any lost or found articles should be reported to an Academy official as soon as possible.
- .02 Students are urged not to keep large sums of money or valuable jewelry in their rooms, even in locked closets. These items should be given to residence hall personnel for temporary safekeeping until they can be either used for their intended purpose or taken home.

110 MAIL CALL

- .01 Mail is distributed by residence hall personnel immediately after school. Mail can be distributed more efficiently if it is addressed to the student in care of the Residence Hall.

Cash should not be sent by mail; checks or money orders are preferred.

- .02 As part of the overall program for the prevention of substance abuse, the Academy reserves the right to search persons and personal property. Therefore, a school administrator has the authority to require a student to open an envelope or package in front of them.
- .03 The Business Office will assist in mailing small packages. Large packages may need to be sent through a commercial packing service. The packing and shipping of large packages are the student's responsibility and may require special preparation on the student's part. Students should check with the Business office for proper procedures and time frames. All shipping costs will be at the student's expense.

111 ON-CAMPUS STORAGE

Because of limited storage space, on-campus storage is only provided over the summer for international students who will return to the Academy in the fall. Storage will be limited to two 30-gallon plastic containers. Except with the specific approval of the Dean of Residential Life, state-side students need to take all belongings home. In emergency situations, domestic students may be allowed up to 30 days from the day of departure to remove their belongings. Belongings may be shipped or sent to a specified location by the staff of the Academy at the parent's expense. If arrangements are not made within 30 days, belongings will be donated to charity. Belongings cannot be stored for departing seniors. The Academy is not responsible for items that are lost, stolen or damaged.

112 ON-CAMPUS OFF LIMIT AREAS

- .01 Students are not permitted in RA's or Proctor's rooms, staff housing, the maintenance facility, and wooded areas. Maps of "off limit" areas will be posted in the residence halls.
- .02 Athletic, livestock, or ropes course areas are only available during a scheduled function or when supervised.

113 PASSPORT INFORMATION

- .01 Upon arrival at school, international students must submit their passports, Form I-20, and visa documents to the Admissions Office. The passport will be checked and stored for safekeeping. Students who need their documents for travel or other purposes during the year must check them out through the Admissions Office during regular business hours.

114 RESIDENTIAL ASSISTANTS AND RECREATION ASSISTANTS

- .01 These positions are typically filled by college students who have been carefully selected for academic achievement, experience, and strength of character and positive Christian moral compass.
- .02 Residential and Recreational Assistants are to be afforded respect equal to that of any other adult staff member. They are employed to aid in supervision and guidance, and students are expected to follow all instructions and directions with courtesy and good grace.

115 SECURITY PROVISIONS

- .01 To provide the best security for personal belongings of Academy students, students are advised not to bring valuables to campus. Rooms should be locked at all times when the student is not in the room. Cash exceeding \$200.00 may be secured in the residence hall safe.
- .02 All items valued over \$100 must be inventoried and labeled appropriately. Forms are provided by the Boarding Director at the time of move in.

116 LEVELS SYSTEM (ACADEMIC)

- .01 The Academy's "Levels System" is a tiered program that establishes privileges based on each student's academic and behavioral performances. The academic level is determined by the student's academic achievements, which are reviewed every three (3) weeks in conjunction with the publication of the Academic Report Cards. Although behavioral levels are predominantly used in the Residential Life Program, office referrals also assist in determining student privileges during the school day.
- .02 The levels system is designed to establish a direct correlation between privileges and responsibilities. As students accomplish academic goals and accept behavioral responsibilities, their privileges may be increased accordingly.
 - Level A – All Grades 90 or above with comparable behavior.
 - Level B – All Grades 80 or above with comparable behavior.
 - Level C – All Grades 75 or above with comparable behavior.
 - Level D – One or More Grades 70 – 74 with comparable behavior.
 - Level E – One Grade 69 or below with comparable behavior.
 - Level I – Two or more grades 69 or below with comparable behavior (ineligible for TAPPS Competition).

117 LEVELS SYSTEM (BEHAVIORAL)

- .01 The behavior level of each boarding student is determined by a student's conduct in all the Academy's programs and is updated weekly by the appropriate Boarding Director.

(See Chart)

118 STUDY HALL IN RESIDENCE HALLS

- .01 Residence hall personnel conduct a study hall on school nights (Sunday through Thursday). These study halls are mandatory for all students not engaged in a school-sponsored activity.
- .02 Location and duration of study hall may depend on the student's academic and behavior level.

119 TELEPHONES AND OTHER COMMUNICATION DEVICES

- .01 A limited number of telephones are available in certain residence hall locations for students who do not subscribe to a personal cell phone. A long distance card is required for service outside of the San Marcos, Texas area.
- .02 Certain restrictions are necessary for the use of telephones by students. The Academy reserves the right to restrict the use of a telephone for disciplinary or other reasons.
- .03 Cellular phones must be registered with residence hall staff and used in accordance with Academy policy regardless of grade level or privilege level. Students are required to give their Boarding Director their cell phone number in case of an emergency.
- .04 Residence hall students may keep their phones during the school day; however, school policies apply.
- .05 Rules regarding cell phone usage are based upon grade level, as well as academic and behavioral levels. Violations or misuse could result in confiscation of a cell phone for a period of time, up to and including the entire academic year if violations are repeated.

120 TRANSPORTATION

- .01 Students who plan to travel by air to points within the U.S. are advised to make their reservations 45 days in advance for major holidays or weekends when air travel may be heavy.
- .02 Requests for transportation to the Austin airport must be made by students according to procedures set by residence hall personnel. The fee for this transportation will be charged to the student's account. Bus departure from the Academy to the airports will be determined by the time classes are dismissed. Charges for transportation are included in registration information.
- .03 Classes are normally dismissed at 11:15 a.m. before most major holidays. Students must

not establish their flight departure time from airports prior to 2:00 p.m.

- .04 Academy transportation to and from the Austin airport will be provided at approximately 12:00 p.m., 3:00 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. Reservations must be established on the return flights so students can meet this bus schedule. The Academy is not responsible for supervision of students arriving outside this normal “travel window.” Students may be required to wait until additional transportation arrives. Students arriving or leaving outside of the above mentioned times or times that are typically scheduled leaves are considered “Out of Window” and are subject to additional fees.
- .05 The Academy will provide transportation to the Austin airport on holidays and long weekends for a nominal fee. Designated times and specific days have been established for “in window” transportation. Academy transportation provided outside of the “in window” time will include an additional fee. Fees will be charged to the student’s account.
- .06 Parents are requested not to make reservations which require transportation arrangements separate from those provided by the school.
- .07 If a scheduled arrival is changed, it is the responsibility of the student or parent to notify the residence hall staff of that change well in advance of arrival. Every attempt will be made to pick up students using scheduled transportation as quickly as possible at area airports. However, due to limited availability of vehicles and drivers, students may have to wait and are expected to conduct themselves properly.
- .08 Although transportation is scheduled in such a way as to get students to the respective airports in plenty of time to make their flights, unforeseeable hindrances sometimes occur. As such, the Academy is not responsible for students missing flights due to hindrances such as traffic accidents, weather, or vehicle malfunctions.

121 VISITORS

In no instance will adults (including parents) be allowed as overnight guests in the residence halls. Parents who are visiting from out of town are asked to arrange to stay in commercial accommodation locally.