



October 15, 2026

Dear Maplewood-South Orange Community,

The South Orange Police Department (SOPD), Maplewood Police Department (MPD), and South Orange-Maplewood School District (SOMSD) are jointly addressing recent collisions involving students and motor vehicles in both communities.

In two recent incidents in South Orange, students were involved in collisions while traveling to school or from school. Thankfully, they were not seriously injured, but similar incidents in Maplewood reinforce the importance of preventing collisions and ensuring students know how to respond when one occurs.

Preventing Collisions

We ask everyone to use extra care during school arrival and dismissal:

- **Drivers:** Slow down and obey all posted speed limits. Put your phone away and remain alert for students near intersections, crosswalks, driveways, and school entrances. Always stop for pedestrians in marked crosswalks, check carefully for pedestrians before turning, and never pass a vehicle stopped for a pedestrian. Your attentiveness and caution help keep our students and school communities safe.
- **Students walking:** Use sidewalks and designated crossings where available. Follow crossing guards and pedestrian signals. Look left, right, and left again, and check for turning vehicles before stepping into the street. Walk across; do not rush into the path of a vehicle.
- **Students riding bicycles or scooters:** Wear a properly fitted helmet, obey applicable traffic signs and signals, and slow down near intersections and driveways. Watch for vehicles entering or leaving the roadway.
- **Families and caregivers:** Review these steps with your children, practice safe crossing habits, and make sure they know how to describe their location when calling 911.
- **Community:** Distraction comes in many forms but the most prevalent is cell phone use when driving, cycling, or walking. Putting the phone away when using our shared streets and sidewalks can save someone else's life or even your own.

Let's work together to prevent distractions by being positive examples to our friends, family, and more importantly our students and speak up when we see someone else using their phone instead of giving their full attention to the road.

What to Do After a Collision

If a student is involved in a collision with a vehicle, stop, call for help, and remain at the scene until police arrive and advise that it is safe to leave—even if there are no apparent injuries.



Whether a student is walking, riding a bicycle, or using a scooter:

- **Stop and get to safety.** If you can safely move, go to a nearby sidewalk or another safe location away from traffic while remaining near the scene. Do not continue to school or home.
- **Call 911 immediately, or ask an adult to call.** Tell the dispatcher your location, that a student was involved in a collision with a vehicle, and whether anyone appears injured. Follow the dispatcher's instructions.
- **Remain until police arrive and clear you to leave.** Feeling okay does not replace the need to report the collision. Do not leave simply because someone says the incident was minor.
- **Notify a parent or caregiver after calling for emergency assistance.** An adult helping the student should remain with them until responders arrive. Families should coordinate with responders before taking the student from the scene.
- **Explain what happened honestly and clearly.** Share what you remember with responding officers so they can document the incident and arrange appropriate assistance.

Drivers involved in a collision with a student should stop safely, call 911, remain at the scene, and cooperate with responding officers. **An exchange of contact information or an agreement that everyone appears uninjured should not replace police notification and response.**

Students: Your safety comes first. Do not worry about being late to school or feeling embarrassed. Stop and ask for help.

Please reinforce this simple message at home: **Stop. Get to safety. Call 911. Stay until police say you may leave.**

Thank you for partnering with us to protect our students and make travel safer throughout South Orange and Maplewood.

Sincerely,



Chief Nahimah Malloy
Maplewood Police Department



Chief Stephen Dolinac
South Orange Police
Department



Paul L. Morgan
South Orange–Maplewood
School District