

La Madera Traffic and Afternoon Pickup

Traffic Conditions: Approximately 3:05–3:15 p.m.

East Mountain is continuing to monitor and refine afternoon traffic conditions along La Madera Road, particularly during the approximately 10-minute period between 3:05 and 3:15 p.m. when high school dismissal creates the greatest concentration of vehicles.

Traffic Planning and Safety Review

Traffic and student safety have been incorporated into the school's growth planning from the outset. East Mountain commissioned a formal traffic impact study from Tierra West as part of the project planning process. The study and associated traffic plan were approved by Bernalillo County on July 30, 2025, with the New Mexico Department of Transportation copied as part of that process.

The traffic plan is not considered static or complete. It is an ongoing plan that will continue to be evaluated as construction progresses and enrollment increases over the next year. Additional campus drop-off, pickup, parking, and vehicle-queuing capacity will be developed as the remaining construction is completed.

The school also hopes that Bernalillo County can install flashing school-zone warning lights to provide additional notice to motorists approaching the school and to reinforce the need for reduced speeds and heightened awareness during arrival and dismissal periods.

Current Afternoon Conditions

The heaviest traffic occurs for a relatively short period immediately surrounding high school dismissal. During the first week of school, staff have been closely monitoring how quickly the pickup queue forms and clears.

On the first day of school, the afternoon pickup line was cleared by approximately 3:25 p.m. On the second day, it was cleared by approximately 3:20 p.m. The principal period of queuing is approximately 10 minutes. While any traffic impact warrants continued attention, this is a comparatively short dismissal queue relative to what is routinely experienced at many schools during afternoon pickup.

Twelve East Mountain staff members are assigned to afternoon traffic and pickup operations, including all top administrators. Staff supervise students, direct vehicles, monitor intersections and traffic conditions, maintain the flow of the pickup line, and respond immediately when safety concerns arise.

The Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office also monitors traffic conditions in the area and has provided assistance with school traffic operations at times.

On August 12, 2026, the Bernalillo County fire marshall observed morning dropoff and reported no concerns.

On August 18, 2026, multiple Bernalillo County traffic monitors observed afternoon pickup and reported an extremely smooth process. During the highest time- 3:05pm- No traffic was queuing in the lanes of La Madera and only four cars were queuing in the right turn lane (as intended). No cars were queuing in the turn lane for Middle School drop off.

Primary Traffic Safety Concern

The school continues to emphasize that the greatest immediate traffic danger occurs when a driver attempts to bypass a queued vehicle by entering the opposing lane of travel.

A short queue of stopped or slowly moving vehicles is predictable and visible. A vehicle unexpectedly moving into the lane of incoming traffic creates a substantially more serious risk of a head-on collision and places other motorists, students, staff, and neighboring residents at risk.

Drivers approaching the school are therefore encouraged to remain in their proper lane, exercise patience during the brief dismissal period, follow posted traffic controls, and avoid attempting to pass vehicles that are waiting to enter the campus.

Expected Reduction in Vehicle Volume

Several first-week conditions temporarily increased the number of vehicles arriving at dismissal.

Many families initially chose to personally transport their students while students and parents became comfortable with the beginning of the school year. Those students have subsequently registered for school bus transportation, which is expected to remove approximately 50 vehicles from the afternoon pickup period.

School athletic programs are also beginning their regular schedules in August. Students participating in practices and activities will remain on campus after dismissal, further reducing the number of vehicles arriving during the 3:05–3:15 p.m. window.

Middle School Traffic

Middle school pickup and drop-off are separated from the high school traffic pattern. Middle school families use the new parking area located substantially farther west on La Madera Road and do not queue along La Madera for student pickup.

Separating the middle school and high school traffic patterns was an intentional part of managing vehicle circulation and reducing congestion around the existing high school entrance.

Student Parking

The opening of the new parking lot has also significantly increased available student parking on campus.

During the first several days, some high school students were still obtaining parking passes and learning the new parking arrangements, resulting in some students parking near Vista Grande rather than using available campus spaces.

Ongoing Monitoring

East Mountain recognizes that La Madera is a public roadway shared with neighboring residents and other drivers. The school will continue to monitor vehicle queuing, traffic flow, driver behavior, pedestrian and student safety, parking patterns, bus utilization, and the amount of time required to clear the afternoon pickup line.

The first several days of a school year typically involve higher vehicle volumes and a period of adjustment as families learn new procedures. Initial conditions are therefore being evaluated alongside subsequent weeks of operating data rather than being treated as the permanent traffic pattern.

As construction continues, East Mountain will continue implementing the approved traffic plan, evaluating actual conditions, coordinating with Bernalillo County, the Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office, and other appropriate agencies, and making operational adjustments when they can improve safety or reduce congestion.

The school's priority is to move students and vehicles safely, efficiently, and predictably while minimizing the impact of school traffic on La Madera and the surrounding community. Safety remains the primary consideration in every adjustment to the traffic plan.