

August 14, 2016

Dear Saint Joseph Catholic School Community,

Items in this news letter: Thoughts for the week; Academic schedules on RenWeb; Summer learning packets; Important upcoming dates; School policies; Communication; Handbook highlights;

I hope all families had an enjoyable weekend and are preparing for a new school year. As announced previously, our school's theme for the year is *By our works we show our faith*" – James 2:16-18. We have much to accomplish as a school and as individuals to insure that SJCS is a great place to work, learn and build relationships.

As of August 12<sup>th</sup> all homeroom placements were official; you can check placements on RenWeb. All returning students have been assigned to classes, but some new students have not been assigned to math and English/language arts classes. These placements will be made by Monday, August 22. Please contact the school office if you have questions.

All students in grades 1-6 are expected to complete and turn in a Summer Learning Packet. The packet can be downloaded and printed by following the link <http://www.stjosdevine.com/summer-learning-packets>. This year's summer learning packets will be collected during the 1st week of school and will receive a grade in math, reading and writing. In addition, in grades 2-6, the summer reading books will be used in direct instruction for the 1st reading unit.

Dates and times for many beginning-of-the-year events were communicated in a letter sent to all school families in July. Below are some important events to be aware of in the coming weeks:

New Parent Social and Orientation will be tomorrow, August 15<sup>th</sup> from 6:00-8:00 p.m. in Kamler Hall and on the school playground. Child care will be provided.

Open House/Extra Curricular Fair will be Tuesday, August 16 from 12:00-3:00 p.m.

The first day of school for students will be Wednesday, August 17, at 8:00 a.m. Faculty is on duty beginning at 7:30 a.m. The first three days of school are half days with dismissal at 12:00 noon. Students going to Extended Care on these half days will need to bring lunch and a drink.

Teachers will be available to meet with students and parents, by appointment, from 12:30-3:00 Wednesday, Thursday and Friday afternoons. Extended Care will be open on these half days of school.

The PTO is hosting a Boo-Hoo Breakfast for K-4, K-5 and parents of new students regardless of grade. The first day of school can be as hard on parents as it is on children. If you are escorting your child to class [on Wednesday morning](#), drop-in the cafeteria afterwards and meet other parents whose children are having a big day as well.

The first full day of school is Monday, August 22. School hours are 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Students must be in their classrooms when the 8:00 a.m. bell rings. Please respect our academic calendar by not scheduling vacations while school is in session. We also ask that you refrain from picking your child up early whenever possible.

Our Back to School Night will be held Monday, August 22. The meeting will start at 6:30 p.m. in the gym. This will be a wonderful chance to learn about your child's classroom and the many activities that will take place at Saint Joseph. This is a parent/guardian only event.

The school wants to ensure two-way communication with each of our families. We will communicate with families using the following tools: RenWeb, Administration Notes, quarterly newsletters, grade/class letters, emails and phone calls.

**RenWeb:** This is our primary form of communication for school and teachers (class and school wide announcements, school, class and student calendars, behavior, grades, and homework for 3<sup>rd</sup> -6<sup>th</sup> grades). It is important that each family has a RenWeb account. For account set up and questions, please contact Mrs. Nancy Sexton at ext. 21.

**Monday Folder:** A folder is sent home each Monday, containing current information about school activities and the student's previous week's graded assignments and tests. It is important that parents/guardians read all of the information each week. Parents/guardians are asked to sign the folder and return it on Tuesday each week.

**Administration Notes:** These messages are sent out each weekend of the school year by school administration. This email will highlight events of the past week and preview the upcoming week. There will be descriptions of upcoming projects, news and priorities of the school administration. The school office staff, Advisory Council and PTO contribute to the notes.

**Quarterly Newsletter:** A mailing is sent out quarterly to celebrate the good news of the school. The newsletter is written in partnership with the school administration, School Advisory Council and PTO.

**Grade level and class letters:** All teachers will post and send grade level and class letters from RenWeb. The letters will outline important events and information regarding class or grade level events and assignments.

**Email:** All teachers and staff have a school email address that is part of a Microsoft 365 email system. Please use email to ask questions, send notes, set up meetings, or address problems. Teachers will respond to emails within 24-48 hours in most cases. If no response is received, please follow-up with the teacher.

**Phone calls:** Teachers will respond to phone calls within 24-48 hours in most cases. If the message is urgent please call the school office.

The Parent/Student Handbook is posted on the school webpage and on RenWeb under Resources. A hard copy will not be sent home this year. In the 1<sup>st</sup> Monday folder (August 24) each student will receive a handbook agreement form. This form must be signed and returned to your child's homeroom teacher by September 2.

Please take the time to read and review the handbook with your children. While everything within the handbook is important, the administration would like you to please take note of the following eight highlights from this year's handbook:

**1. Absentee notification and homework requests:** If your child is absent and you would like to request his/her homework assignments, please call or send an email to the teacher and office staff ([krogers@stjosdevine.com](mailto:krogers@stjosdevine.com)) by 9:00 a.m. Assignments will be available for pick-up in the main hallway after 3:00 p.m.

**2. Authorized Pick up:** Prior to the beginning of the school year, each family will complete via RenWeb a list of persons, and their telephone numbers, who are authorized to pick up their child(ren). Phone numbers will be used only in the event that your child becomes ill or injured and the school is unable to contact a parent or guardian.

If your child is riding home with someone other than his/her usual "pick-up" person, the parent/guardian has two options:

- Submit a written note to the office. The note must be dated and clearly signed by a parent or guardian.

- Make changes using RenWeb by following the steps below:

First, login to RenWeb and make changes to your Authorized Pick Up List. Next, call the school office to notify us that you have made an on-line change to your pick up list. Official changes will not be made until both the authorized pick up is changed on RenWeb and a phone call verifying the changes is made to the school office. Office personnel will verify the change in the system and approve the change. Once the change is approved, the system will update all related persons (teachers, staff and parents) of the change.

Parents/guardians may also submit a list of persons who are **NEVER** permitted to pick up their child(ren). If you have an individual on your NEVER pick up list, please alert the school office immediately.

**3. Homework:** Homework is defined as out-of-class tasks assigned to students as an extension or elaboration of classroom work. There are three types of homework: practice, preparation and extension.

The following amounts of homework are to be expected:

Grades K5-3: 30-45 minutes (plus an additional 15 minutes of nightly reading);

Grades 4-6: 60-90 minutes (plus an additional 15-20 minutes of nightly reading).

Homework may be assigned on Monday-Friday. On any school activity night (Fall Festival, etc.) no homework will be given. A homework assignment book is given to each student (grades 1-6) at the beginning of the year.

4. **Parental Concerns:** Communication among students, parents, and teachers is an important part of education. Educators value the opportunity to hear parents' concerns and to get their perspective on issues. Classrooms are busy places, with many demands on teacher's time. It is not possible to address all concerns immediately and adequately on a drop-in basis. Please bear in mind that the non-student time immediately preceding and following the school day is used for lesson preparation, grading, grade-level collaboration, staff meetings, scheduled appointments, training and professional development. Communication about problems works best when all parties work together with the same information to try to achieve a positive solution. **If you have a serious concern, please start by contacting your child's teacher**, keeping in mind that it may be necessary to schedule the time for a more focused discussion. If, after discussion with the teacher, you are unable to resolve the issue, you may then contact the Principal.
  
5. **Student Behavior:** As a student at Saint Joseph Catholic School, each child should demonstrate the following attitudes, inspired by our patron, Saint Joseph. A student should be:

**J-Just O-Obedient S-Service-oriented E-Example to others P-Prayerful H-Humble**

- a. When behavior off campus, especially when wearing the Saint Joseph Catholic School uniform, reflects negatively on the school, the school reserves the right to address this behavior with disciplinary consequences.
6. **Bullying:** At the core of our mission at Saint Joseph Catholic School is the strong belief that successful spiritual development and academic excellence is contingent upon a safe Christian environment. This environment is not only comprised of the facilities of the school, but also of the people who play any role in the school. It is shaped by their behaviors toward one another. It is for this reason that the Advisory Council and the administration of Saint Joseph Catholic School require absolute compliance with this policy aimed at the prevention and discipline of any behavior deemed to be bullying by the administration. Students and parents will receive instruction on bullying and the policy at the opening of school. Saint Joseph Catholic School will take stringent action against any bullying, teasing, racial or sexual harassment or any form of hurtful or negative behavior. Teachers and staff are committed to instructional programs that will assist students and teachers in dealing with these issues. The school will endeavor to create an open atmosphere in which students are able to speak out without fear and to seek justice for themselves and for others. Any student who feels threatened should not regard it as a private or personal problem but should seek the help of a teacher or guidance counselor. It is the duty of everyone who sees an instance of bullying – or potential bullying-to act to stop it. A

beneficial way to identify when bullying is taking place is to using the acronym “PIC”, Purposeful, Imbalanced power, and Continuous.

- 7. Uniform Dress Code:** Lands’ End is our exclusive vendor for the 2016 – 2017 school year. You can log on to their website at <http://www.landsend.com/pp/SchoolSearch.html?selectedSchoolNum=900167818&action=landing> or go to our school website and click on Uniforms. Our Preferred School number: 900167818.

Unfortunately, our first run of bow ties was incorrect – they are available for free in the school office on a first come, first serve basis. The corrected bow ties will be available on the Lands’ End site in October.

I will be conducting a bow tying lesson on Wednesday afternoon for all gentlemen interested in learning to tie their own bow tie.

- 8. Sick Children:** Any child who has a contagious illness or health problem may not return to school until **he/she is symptom free for 24 hours**. Please note this includes lice, conjunctivitis (pink eye), etc. Children will be sent home immediately if lice or nits are detected. Children should not return to school until they are nit free in order to prevent an outbreak. **If a child is sent home from school due to fever or vomiting the child must stay home from school for the next full school day. You will be called to pick up your child if they return to school within this time period.**

On behalf of the faculty and staff, we would like to thank you for choosing Saint Joseph Catholic School to educate your child(ren). With your continued support and prayers, we will have a successful year. We look forward to meeting each and every one of you and developing a wonderful partnership that will help continue to make Saint Joseph Catholic School a great place to learn, worship and grow. Thank you for your support of Saint Joseph Catholic School, and we look forward to a wonderful year!

Sincerely,

Donavan F. Yarnall, Ed.S  
Principal  
[dyarnall@stjosdevine.com](mailto:dyarnall@stjosdevine.com)