

St. Joseph High School 2025-26

ATTENDANCE, ABSENCE, & TARDY POLICIES

Regular and punctual attendance at school is the primary responsibility of the student and parent or guardian. Students who are absent from school jeopardize their academic standing and their ability to integrate into the social and spiritual fabric of the high school community. While parents have the right to take their students out of school, the school is obligated to impose consequences for excessive absences. Parents are expected to schedule family vacations during school vacation periods. Dental, medical, and other appointments should normally be made after 3:20 p.m. or on Saturdays or school holidays. Masses and special school events are not appropriate times to schedule appointments.

Reporting Absences

Parents or guardians are to call the main school office at (361) 573-2446 before 9:00 a.m. to report the absence of their student. Otherwise, the parent will be called between 9:00 and 10:00 a.m.

When a student returns to school after an absence, a note dated and signed by a parent or guardian indicating the reason for the absence is to be submitted. If applicable, this documentation should include a statement signed by a relevant doctor or nurse that must be given to the main school office upon a student's return if the appointment is during school hours. Repeated failure to report a student's absence places at risk the student's continued attendance at St. Joseph High School.

Absentee Homework Assignments

Students are required to make up assignments and assessments when they are absent. Students or (if students are unable) their parents or guardians should do the following:

1. Communicate directly with the teacher before an expected absence.
2. Check the school's learning management system, Schoology, for any messages or assignments.
3. Communicate directly with the teacher to confirm all assignments are understood and completed.
4. For extended absences, students should coordinate directly with teachers and the Principal.
5. Teachers are not responsible for initiating communication with absentee students--absentee students are expected to initiate direct communication with their instructors.

School Attendance Policies

Students must meet the high standards established by St. Joseph High School and the following attendance policies will be enforced:

- Students must attend 90% of school days for each course.
 - Students must not miss more than 9 school days for each course per semester.
 - School-sanctioned activities and other properly documented situations do not count toward these 9 absences per semester.
- Absences of 15 minutes or more from the course are counted as a course absence.
- Unexcused absences of 5 or more periods during a day--sequential or not--will be counted by STJ as a full day absence.
- **A student with a full day absence (missing 4 or more periods for the day) may not participate in co-curricular activities for that day.**

STJ considers the following to be approved reasons for missing a course or Mass as STJ determines a full-day absences, senior exam exemptions, and other disciplinary enforcement:

- Participation in co-curricular functions like athletic competitions, class retreats, or fine arts performances.
- College visits approved by the Counseling Office. See below for *College Visitation Absence* procedures.
- Extended personal illness or the serious illness or death of a family member--with proper documentation.
- Participation in school-sanctioned functions like livestock shows or dance recitals--with proper documentation.
- Subpoena by the court--with proper documentation.

Daily & Monthly Mass Attendance

The spiritual formation of our students is an essential component of STJ's mission, and attendance at all Masses (daily, as assigned by homerooms, and full-school monthly) is required. A student's absence from a scheduled Mass will be considered unexcused and result in disciplinary action unless a signed doctor's note is submitted to the school.

Mass Absences

Upon the first Mass absence, the student will be invited to reflect on the Scripture readings from the daily Mass and provide a brief summary of their thoughts and feelings. This will take place during their scheduled lunch period on the day of the missed Mass. The student will report to an administrator for the reflective time and not be allowed to join their class in the cafeteria.

If a student misses Mass again in that semester, the student will receive a co-curricular suspension. (Co-curricular suspension includes attendance at and participation in STJ-sponsored events such as athletic games, arts performances, etc.) The suspension will take place on the same day of the missed Mass.

If a student reaches **THREE absences at Mass over the course of the semester**, they are no longer considered to be in good disciplinary standing. For seniors, this means they will not be exempt from finals in the spring. For all students, this may affect their participation in groups such as National Honor Society, Student Council, Honor Roll recognition, etc. This could also negatively impact letters of recommendation and non-STJ dance attendance approvals.

Mass Tardies

Students should arrive for daily Mass no later than 7:40am or be considered tardy. When a student arrives at Mass after 7:45am and our priest has begun, it is disruptive to the sanctity of the celebration. Tardies longer than 15 minutes (7:55am), will be counted as an absence for the Mass.

Policy Clarifications:

- If a student reaches **THREE tardies to Mass over the course of a semester**, they will be required to attend an hour of restorative service.
- If a student reaches **SIX tardies of the course of the year**, they are no longer considered to be in good disciplinary standing and the same consequences as listed above will apply.

Tardies

We believe in maximizing the amount of time our students have in active participation in the classes that make up our curriculum. For the benefit of the learning environment, being on time to class allows our teachers and students to get classes started when the bell rings and avoid interruptions to the class that late arrivals can create. This is also why we do not allow students out of class for non-emergencies during the first 5 minutes of each class period. Tardiness is considered a violation of school policy, the ready to learn standards, and safety and security policy. Tardies will be reported during the completion of classroom attendance and submitted through the appropriate communication channel or method of reporting. Any students not in class after the tardy bell will be required to report to the administration office to receive a tardy admittance slip.

Consequences for Repeated Tardies		
4th Tardy	Parent notification by email	Time management meeting with Dean of Students
5th Tardy	Parent notification email and BCP feedback	Behavioral Change Plan (BCP)* targeting tardiness & contributing factors. Controlled Movement Plan.
6th Tardy	Parent meeting / phone call. BCP modification	BCP review / modification and extension, update Controlled Movement Plan.
7th Tardy	Parent notification. BCP modification. Notice of Consequences.	BCP extension/ modification and 3 days Co-curricular suspension. Update Controlled Movement Plan.
8th Tardy	Parent notification. BCP modification. Warning.	BCP extension, 1 week Co-curricular suspension, and loss of academic honors.
9th Tardy	Parent notification. Final warning.	BCP extension and 2 week Co-curricular suspension and loss of academic honors.
10th Tardy	Parent meeting with administrators - formal review	BCP extension, 9 week Co-curricular suspension, loss of academic honors for the grading period, and subject to conditions of continued enrollment for the remainder of the term and subject to dismissal for failure to meet those conditions
<i>*BCP: Behavioral Change Plan - A plan of action designed to address a behavior requiring change, created in partnership with an advising administrator, including feedback from the student, parents, coach or club sponsors, and teachers. Monitored for accountability and support of the student's needs.</i>		

School-Sanctioned Absence

Each student is responsible for making up course work missed due to a school-sanctioned activity. If an athlete, performer, or club member does not complete required work, a teacher will notify the Principal who will then notify the coach or moderator so appropriate action may be taken. Field trip sponsors, co-curricular moderators, and athletic coaches must have a list of participants and departure times signed by the coach or sponsor and turned in to the Dean of Students the Friday before the week of the event. This list will be distributed to all faculty and staff. Students who repeatedly do not balance their academic obligations with their co-curricular privileges may be subject to Co-Curricular Probation.

College Visitation Absence

- Seniors are allowed 4 college visits during the school year. Seniors using college days in the spring must have already applied to the school they plan to visit.
- Juniors are allowed 2 college visits, which must be taken on or before April 1.

Students must bring a note or have an email sent from a parent or guardian stating the day(s) of the trip and the destination to the Counseling Office at least 3 days in advance. The student **MUST** obtain an acknowledgement letter from the college and return that to the attendance office upon return to school. If proper procedures are followed, the visit will not count as an absence.

Excessive Absences

Once a student has accumulated six absences, notification will be sent to the student and parents/guardians that the student is approaching the threshold for disciplinary consequences. Once the student has accumulated nine absences (either full day or in a particular course), the student will be placed into an Academic Improvement Program under the guidance of the Dean of Students, which will delineate terms for Co-Curricular Probation. Upon reaching twelve absences, the student and their parents/guardians will meet with the Dean of Students, the Principal, and/or the President to determine continued terms of enrollment at St. Joseph High School.

Requesting to Leave Campus

A student must have the permission of the Dean of Students to leave the campus during the school day. Permission should be requested from a parent or guardian and presented to the front office or emailed to the Dean before the start of the school day. The request should include a reason for leaving, a phone number to verify the request, and the name of the doctor or dentist, if applicable. If a request with a name and phone number are not provided, leave from campus may not be granted. Under no circumstances may students dismiss themselves from school.

- Students must sign out at the front office.
- For non-driving students, a parent must come in and sign the student out of school for appointments when prior written approval from the parent or guardian has not been sent.
- When prior written approval from the parent or guardian has not been sent (for students who drive), a parent must be called.
- The student or parent must sign in upon return.
- Parents and students must meet these required attendance policies or an absence may be considered unexcused.

State Attendance Laws for Awarding Course Credit

St. Joseph High School is also bound by Texas law which regulates school attendance and the awarding of course credit.

- In any circumstance in which a student misses a course, they are required to make up all the course work they can. Please review the *Academic Guidelines, Policies, and Procedures* section and the preceding guidelines for more information.
- Students who do not make up course work will not be awarded course credit.
- Students who attend school for 75% or less of 180 required school days will not be awarded course credit.

Residence Requirements

Students are not to live on their own in homes or apartments, and when not residing with their parents, must live with an adult approved by their parents and the school. Parents are asked to contact the school to coordinate any such arrangement for attendance purposes.