

August 16, 2020

Dear Saint Joseph Catholic School Community,

Items in this newsletter: Thoughts for the week; First Communion; Headphones needed; School Mass update; Important upcoming dates; Communication; Handbook highlights.

Thoughts for the week: God, give us grace to accept with serenity the things that cannot be changed, the courage to change the things that should be changed, and the wisdom to distinguish one from the other.

First Communion: Congratulations to our 2nd grade students who finally made their First Holy Communion yesterday. May the light of God always be in your heart, in your mind, and in your actions! Thank you to Mrs. Anderson, Mrs. Sorrell, and Mrs. Simonelli for all their work to help the students prepare for this sacrament.

Headphones needed: All students will need their own headphones this year. I am sorry for this late addition to the school supply list. For grades 4K-3rd teachers prefer student's headphones to plug in (jack plug). For grades 4th -6th student's headphones can be plugin or wireless.

School Mass Update: Each Friday of a typical school year, the student body gathers for all-school Mass at 8:15. We had previously announced that this year all grades would be viewing the Mass via a recorded Mass in their classrooms. However, starting on Friday, September 11th, Monsignor Harris will invite one grade each Friday to sit in the church for Mass. All other grades will view a livestream of the Mass in their classrooms. Only grades 3-6 will take turns attending the Mass in person. All students are asked to be in dress uniforms each Friday for Mass

Important Upcoming Dates: 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:

On or before August 20: Student waiver is due in the school office. Waiver is attached to this email

Thursday August 20 and Friday, August 21: Meet the Teacher – Please use the link to sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20f0c48afac23abfc1-meet>

Monday, August 24: First day of school for students. Faculty is on duty at 7:30 a.m. 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 school hours and have your child to school on time and refrain from picking your child up early whenever possible.

Communication: The school wants to ensure two-way communication with each of our families. We will communicate with families using the following tools: FACTS Family Portal, Monday folders, Administrative Notes, social media, grade/class letters, emails, and phone calls.

FACTS Family Portal (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 3rd -6th grades). For account set up and questions, please contact Mrs. Nancy Sexton at ext. 21.

Administrative 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 information for upcoming projects, news, and priorities of the school administration. The school office staff, Advisory Council and PTO contribute to the notes.

Social Media: News and happenings around the school are shared via our social media platforms on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Emergency information will also be shared via these platforms.

Grade level and class letters: All teachers will post and send grade level and class letters from FACTS Family Portal. 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.

Texts: Texts will be sent out to all parent numbers entered into FACTS Family Portal, as necessary. Texts are typically used for reminders or emergency information.

Handbook Highlights: The Parent/Student Handbook is attached and posted on the school webpage under Current Families as well as on FACTS Family Portal under Resources. A hard copy will not be sent home. On the last page of the handbook is the handbook agreement form. This form must be signed and returned to your child's homeroom teacher by September 4.

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:

Sick children: Please see the attached COVID flow chart for information regarding required quarantine for COVID exposure. For every other illness (non COVID related) - 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 vomiting, diarrhea, 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, diarrhea, 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.**

Absentee notification and homework requests: If your child is absent and you would like to request his/her homework assignments, email your child's teacher(s) by 9:00 a.m. Assignments will be available for pick-up in the main hallway after 3:00 p.m.

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 2-6) at the beginning of the year.

The child is responsible for writing down homework in their assignment books. Teachers will post assignments on RenWeb as a backup to the assignment books but should not replace the child's responsibility.

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.

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

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.

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 use the acronym “PIC”, **Purposeful, Imbalanced power, and Continuous.**

Uniform Dress Code: Lands’ End is our exclusive vendor for the 2020-2021 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.

Standardized testing: Students in grades 5K-6 participate in standardized testing: grades 5K-6 take the Northwestern Education Association (NWEA) Measures of Academic Performance (MAP). These tests are normally administered in September, January, and May. Results are made available to parents once all testing is complete.

MAP testing will start on Wednesday, August 26th. More information will be shared in next week’s Sunday Notes.

Thank you for your support of Saint Joseph Catholic School, and we look forward to a wonderful year.

It is the little things we do that show how God is in us, with us, and working through us - “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves”~ Philippians 2:3. Have a blessed week!

Sincerely,

Donavan F. Yarnall, Ed. S
Principal
dyarnall@stjosdevine.com