

July 25, 2020

Dear Parents of Saint Joseph Catholic School,

I hope this letter finds you enjoying both the beautiful summer weather and quality time with your children, family, and friends! While this summer has been challenging, I do hope you and your families are well. I wanted to pass along some information about the reopening of our building and other important information about the upcoming school year.

The theme for the 2020/2021 school year is Philippians 2:3 ***“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves”***. When we humbly regard others, whether in the classroom, on the stage, in the church, or on the sports field, we demonstrate our belief that we are all precious in God’s sight. We look forward to showcasing the ways in which our staff and students connect to this spiritual theme throughout the year.

I would like to welcome the many new families joining us this fall. Although we are unable to host some of our traditional welcome activities, we hope you will still feel at home as part of our school community. Please do not hesitate to let the staff know how we can help with your transition to Saint Joseph Catholic School.

The School Reopening Task Force has developed a plan (attached) that we feel will allow our building to reopen while providing a safe environment for faculty, staff, and students. The Office of Catholic Schools has approved this plan. **We will host a Zoom Town Hall meeting on Tuesday, August 4th at 6 PM to highlight major points.** Our committee has put a lot of time and effort into this plan and feel strongly that we have thorough procedures that will mitigate risk for our students and our faculty. However, we do ask that our families also engage in best practices at home for the health of the whole school. **Each student must have the Student Waiver signed and returned to the school office on or before August 20th. The Student Waiver can be found at the bottom of the attached approved reopening plan.**

As we have previously announced, due to COVID-19, we have cancelled all afternoon activities for the first semester of the school year. There will be no aftercare or afternoon clubs. We will revisit this plan in December to determine if we are able to introduce these activities during the second semester.

Previously, I announced we would reopen for in-person classes on August 20. **Due to the school remodeling project we are forced to push that start date to Monday, August 24th.** The 24th will be a full day of school.

Due to the change in start date we will also change the individual Meet the Teacher appointments. **This two-day event will now be Thursday, August 20th and Friday, August 21st.** The event is designed to allow parents and their student to sign up for a time to visit the classroom, drop off materials, and meet the teacher. **These meetings will be scheduled via SignUp Genius for Thursday, August 20th and Friday, August 21st from 8-3.** These individual classroom visits will also replace Back to School Night, which was scheduled for Wednesday, August 26th. **Look for the link that will be sent on Friday, August 7th to sign up for the Meet the Teacher event.**

The school is looking for adults or children 14 years or older to volunteer to help with the unpacking of the classroom storage units on Friday, August 14th starting at 8AM. Cardinal Newman has approved this event for student service hours. All volunteers must be symptom free, wear masks, and socially distance while on campus. Please notify the office if you would like to volunteer to help with this move-in day.

In addition to the new staff announced in the first summer letter (attached) we are excited to welcome Mrs. Diana Von Plinsky (homebound teacher). Mrs. Von Plinsky is a wonderful addition to our staff.

As mentioned above, classroom renovations are under way. Check the school's social media sites to view the progress. The parish and school are committed to providing new classrooms, but this project requires the support of our school families. We, as parents, need to support this project with our pledges. Pledges are not due immediately; you may spread your contributions over five years. We ask that you prayerfully consider supporting this important project for our school. Follow the link to donate or a pledge to the Bicentennial campaign <https://www.stjosephcolumbia.org/bicentennial-campaign>.

I am excited that we are entering the sixth year of our partnership with Facts Family Portal (RenWeb), our school information system. Facts Family Portal will allow you to view grades, homework assignments, attendance, family information, directories, medical information, authorized pick-ups, and much more, as well as communicate with families and teachers all in one convenient location. All correspondence through Facts Family Portal uses the e-mail inbox associated with your account. If you have questions about Facts Family Portal, please contact the school office.

Please login to your Facts Family Portal account to update all information by no later than Thursday, August 6th. Within the Facts Family Portal platform, you can update your emergency contact information and authorized pick-up list (if you have someone who is NEVER allowed to pick up, please call the office to notify us of this situation). To update this information, please follow the instructions below:

If using FACTS Family Portal, please go to <https://logins2.renweb.com/logins/ParentsWeb-Login.aspx> and log in using the same log in credentials used for online enrollment. Once logged in, click Web Forms under School Information, and then open the Family Demographic Form.

Please be reminded that the District Code is always SJS-SC. This code will never change and is the same for each family. By August 13th, the school will have updated FACTS Family Portal with all the 2020-2021 school year information.

If your child has a medical condition, allergy, or requires medication of any kind during the school day, Diocesan paperwork must be completed. We ask that you contact Mrs. Rogers in the office (803-254-6736 ext. 10) or by e-mail, krugers@stjosdevine.com, to get a copy of this necessary and mandatory paperwork.

We continue to partner with Lands' End uniforms. Clicking the "Uniforms" button on our homepage will take you directly to Lands' End. <https://www.stjosdevine.com/uniforms> Our preferred school number: 900167818. Land's End is offering big summer savings this summer! Families need to follow the link <https://www.landsend.com/co/Newsletter?cTest=y> to sign up to get Land's End emails. Families will be notified of Land's End's biggest back to school **DOOR-BUSTER DEALS** every week. In addition, Land's End will be participating in the tax-free weekend for SC August 7th – 9th. Lands' End's system will recognize your South Carolina shipping address and waive sales tax from the order at checkout. No code or PIN required.

I encourage you to review the attached uniform policy to learn more information about socks, shoes, outerwear, etc.

We ask that you have your child read daily over the summer. We will not grade these summer activities, but we will reward students who actively read over the summer.

Returning families, please look in your child(ren)'s report card for a diagnostic action plan of skills that you can work on in Math and ELA over the summer. These skills are not mandatory but are highly encouraged. Maintaining and enhancing skills during summer break will give your child confidence as a learner.

We know this summer has been different for many of our saints, but we still want to know what everyone is up to. How is your family finding fun? Backyard games? Going for a hike? Headed to the lake or the beach? We would love to share your summer fun with our school community. Just send a picture or two to Rebecca Seezen

rseezen@stjosdevine.com with a brief description and she will share it via our social media. Make sure you are following us on Facebook (St. Joseph Catholic School, Columbia S.C.), Instagram (@stjoescola), and Twitter (@StJoesCola) so you do not miss all the fun. #ichosestjoes

Did you know we have a Facebook group just for Saint Joe's parents? It is a place for parents to share school related questions (schedule, lunch, uniforms, homework, etc...), buy/sell uniforms, and post relevant info about school events. If you are a Facebook user, you can request to join Stjoescola Parents and the admins will add you as soon as they can. This group will only be open to current and recently graduated students' parents. No other members will be allowed. Content will be reviewed before it will be posted to the page.

The office will be open Monday through Thursday 9:00 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. June 3rd - July 31st, 2020. Beginning Monday, August 3rd, we will be open 8:00 am to 3:30 p.m. Please let us know if we can help you in any way.

IMPORTANT UPCOMING DATES:

Tuesday, August 4: Zoom Town Hall meeting about reopening at 6:00pm

Friday, August 7: Class rosters posted on Facts Family Portal and SignUp Genius link sent out to sign up for Meet the Teacher on August 20th and 21st.

Thursday, August 13: New Parent/Family Orientation at 6:30 p.m. **this will now be virtual – we will send a link to all new families.**

On or before August 20th: Student waiver is due in the school office.

Thursday August 20 and Friday, August 21: Meet the Teacher

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 as well as refrain from picking your child up early whenever possible.

This semester, all students in 4-year-old kindergarten through sixth grade will watch Mass on Friday mornings via YouTube. Students are asked to be in dress uniforms on each Friday for Mass.

The school will only offer hot lunch service on Tuesdays and Thursdays in August and September. We will revisit our plan with Schoolhouse Fare, our lunch provider, in September. Please find attached a flyer from Schoolhouse Fare that contains our school code for online ordering.

Please find attached the official first semester school calendar. This calendar can also be found in FACTS Family Portal and at www.stjosdevine.com. Second semester dates and events will be addressed soon.

Thank you for choosing Saint Joseph Catholic School to educate your child(ren). With your continued support and prayers, we will have another successful year. Please feel free to contact me at dyarnall@stjosdevine.com or by calling the school office 254-6736 ext. 11.

Sincerely,

Donavan F. Yarnall, Ed. S
Principal