

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 3:00 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. Failure to report **your** student's absence will result in **them** serving a Lunch Lock when they arrive at school.

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. Absences without proper documentation will be considered unexcused by STJ. 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 Director of Academics.
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.
- 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 may not participate in co-curricular activities for that day.**
- Students who are not in the classroom when the bell rings will be considered tardy and required to get a tardy slip from the front office. Extenuating circumstances may mitigate this requirement.
 - Students who are tardy or are absent without excuse will serve a Lunch Lock during their next lunch period.
 - Repeated tardiness will result in more serious disciplinary action.

STJ considers the following to be excused reasons for missing a course 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.
- 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.
- Emergencies or circumstances calling for the student's services or presence at home--with proper documentation.

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 Director of Academics 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

At 10 unexcused absences--either full day or in a particular course--the student and their parents or guardians will meet with the Dean of Students and the Director of Academics. The student may be placed on Academic or Co-Curricular Probation. Extenuating circumstances may be considered (e.g. extended illness, hospitalization, or family needs). The Director of Academics and the Dean may make recommendations for making up days and review eligibility for senior exam exemptions, if applicable.

Students who do not fulfill the terms of any Probation, will risk eligibility for course credit and their enrollment at STJ regardless of the reason for the absence.

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.

Perfect Attendance

To attain recognition for perfect attendance, a student must be present each and every day of the school year, without any unexcused absences. In addition, a student recognized for perfect attendance may have no more than three tardies for the year.