



Dear SJHS Families,

August 2024

This year, we celebrate our **110th** Anniversary. SJHS is a unique community of learners whose worth is measured in beliefs, values, and relationships that connect us to one another and to God. The collective support from faculty, staff, alumni, parents and students has sustained our school for 110 years and helped to maintain our reputation for academic success. Everyone shares in the responsibility of making our school community a positive, supportive place that promotes the development of students by challenging them to **Discover their Saint Joe's** experience. Thank you for choosing SJHS!

Both Bishop Zubik (Diocese of Pittsburgh) and Bishop Kulick (Diocese of Greensburg) will join us for a special Mass on **Sunday, November 17 at 2pm** as part of our 110<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration. Our students will be an important part of this special Mass. Please save this date and join our celebration.

#### **New for 2024-2025**

##### **Free Breakfast & National School Lunch Programs**

We have been working to ensure that SJHS is part of the free breakfast program this 2024-25 school year. "Pennsylvania Governor Josh Shapiro recently signed a \$47.6 billion budget bill into law which provides funding to continue offering free school breakfast. Pennsylvania students will receive free breakfast at school when they return to classrooms this fall thanks to funding included in the state's latest budget bill. The Shapiro Administration has signaled its commitment to addressing food insecurity by expanding access to nutritious meals throughout the day through the free and reduced program."

In addition, SJHS has completed and submitted an application to be part of the National School Lunch Program (NSLP). Once approved by the PA Department of Education, SJHS will automatically become eligible for USDA commodities thru the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture. We find this to be an exciting service for our students and families. Please check your email regularly for updates on important news.

##### **Campus Ministry**

Welcome Mr. Dominic Oto, 2024 Saint Vincent College Theology graduate as our Director of Campus Ministry. SJHS desires to support all students' complete personal growth, helping them discover the unique purpose for their lives and become all that God has created them to be. Mr. Oto will design and plan liturgical worship, spirituality programs, retreats, mission trips, and service opportunities.

##### **Mandatory Random Drug Testing Program -Diocese of Pittsburgh High Schools**

SJHS is instituting a mandatory random drug testing program as part of a Diocesan-wide policy to promote student health and welfare amidst a nationwide drug epidemic, serving as a prevention method and resource for our students and their families. This program is being implemented at all Diocesan High Schools. This wellness initiative is designed as a proactive prevention and intervention strategy, rather than a punitive measure. By identifying students at risk, high schools can work with students, parents, and health professionals to get them the help they need and re-direct their paths. If a student tests positive, the school is committed to working with the student and his/her parents to identify resources to address the issue.

- We know that substance abuse often begins with casual drug and alcohol use during the teen years. We believe this testing will give students an acceptable way to resist peer pressure and remain drug-free. Teens are under enormous pressure and need help making good decisions. Since the actual process of testing will not be conducted until the spring term, students who might have issues with illegal drug use have an opportunity for a negative test – and, frankly, we hope that all of the samples will be substance-free.

## **MANDATORY RANDOM DRUG TESTING POLICY (Page 72 SJHS Student/Parent Handbook)**

### ***Statement of Need and Purpose:***

The mission of Saint Josph High School (SJHS) is to graduate men and women whose lives are rooted in our core values of Sanctity, Justice, Honor and Scholarship. As society changes, SJHS proactively seeks to identify and address issues that may hinder or derail the healthy growth, development, and maturation expected of the students during their time at SJHS. The use of illicit drugs by students is a national problem. In addition, the well-documented opiate crisis has become a national epidemic.

Students using illegal drugs pose a threat to their own health and safety, as well as the safety of other students. In addition to our drug education programs, this Policy shall act as a program of deterrence and is another step towards SJHS obtaining a truly drug free and safe school.

### ***The goals of this Policy are:***

- (1) to provide for the health and safety of all students;
- (2) to reduce the effects of peer pressure by providing a legitimate reason for students to refuse to use illegal drugs and another reason to say NO;
- (3) to encourage students who test positive for drug usage to participate in drug treatment programs;
- (4) to prevent the use of drugs by SJHS students; and
- (5) to partner with parents to help them raise healthy students.

SJHS is implementing the Mandatory Random Drug Testing Policy this 2024-2025 school year specifically at the start of the second semester in January 2025. The policy in its entirety will be distributed at a parent meeting, family mailing and on the SJHS website.

### **Music Expansion- Choir and Instrumental Band**

We are happy to share that Mrs. Kathy Grabigel - affectionately known as Mrs. G by our students - will lead our Liturgical Choir starting in September. Our goal is to give students more opportunities to share their talents with our weekly Masses, a Christmas concert, and to prepare for the musical in the spring.

We are equally happy to share that Mrs. Martha Capone will lead the formation of a band. The exact nature of the band - jazz or pep, etc. - will depend on the students and their instruments. Our goal is again to give students more opportunities to share their talents with musical instruments during our weekly Mass and with a Christmas concert and an event in the spring. Mrs. Capone leads the band at MQA and will seek opportunities to partner with MQA as part of the "Building Bridges" initiative.

Students can meet during WIN time (Whatever Is Needed) on Monday during the school day in addition to a common time with the instructors and respective groups after school. This is a great way to grow a music program.

## **Important Back to School Information**

**First Day Packet is on-line** Before we start the new school year on Thursday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> parents must complete the "General Policy Agreements" under the "**Parent**" section on our website. Although there are several tabs to review, there are no papers to return, just a few clicks and all the important data we need for your student will be captured. Please note that all forms that you are signing including health/medical forms are in effect through the last day of school in June 2025.

- Please complete the data under each tab in its entirety. <https://saintjosephhs.com/parents/>
- The 2024-25 SJHS Student/Parent Handbook is posted on the school website in the **student** section to review school policies, <https://saintjosephhs.com/students/>

### **Freshmen Orientation Day -Wednesday August 21, 9:00 AM -Noon**

Welcome Class of 2028! Freshmen are to report to the Science and Technology building (Lobby) to register by 9 AM. **Uniforms need not be worn.** Students may wear knee length shorts, jeans or pants with a t-shirt or other suitable shirt. Please do not wear shirts with words or logos inconsistent with school philosophy or policy. Questions can be directed to Mrs. Palumbo 724-226-4932 or [spalumbo@saintjosephhs.com](mailto:spalumbo@saintjosephhs.com)

## First Day, Grades 9-12 -Thursday August 22

All students must report to homerooms (see page 4) for the first day of classes on Thursday, August 22<sup>nd</sup> by 7:45AM.

### School Uniform

Wearing a uniform is a badge of pride; it creates an identity for our school and is an important part of being a school student. Schoolbelles provides all uniform pieces.

- Opaque tights in navy blue or black are **required** with skirts for women; no leggings with socks. The length of the skirt/ kilt cannot be shorter than the top of the knee. Sweaters,  $\frac{3}{4}$  pullovers, or blazers are worn daily.
- Blazers are **required** for men weekly Mondays through Thursdays and special programs. The  $\frac{3}{4}$  zip pullover can be worn on Fridays.
- Male students: the face must be clean shaven daily, otherwise student will be required to shave with supervision and provided a disposable razor & shaving cream. A "Uniform Violation" form will be issued.
- Appropriate school shoes are distinctly non- athletic, soft-soled dress or casual leather shoes. Shoes are to be a solid black, brown, navy, neutral or gray color. No tennis shoes, canvas, clogs, mules or slipper type shoes are acceptable. Canvas and slipper-like shoes present a safety hazard in all science and robotics/engineering classes; there is no protection from spills, breakages, and falling objects. A reminder that boots are reserved for the winter months.

**BLAZERS AND SWEATERS ARE OPTIONAL THROUGH LABOR DAY AND MAYBE EXTENDED AS NEEDED ON WARMER WEATHER DAYS IN SEPTEMBER. STUDENTS SHOULD HAVE THEIR BLAZER,  $\frac{3}{4}$  PULLOVER OR UNIFORM SWEATER WITH THEM AT ALL TIMES.**

**P.E. Uniform** - Physical Education classes meet once a week (Thursdays or Fridays). Students are to wear the Schoolbelles P.E. shorts (#2007, Navy blue) which are long athletic shorts (basketball style) with the red t-shirt. Socks and tennis shoes are also required for physical education classes. Student will meet with Mrs. Paddock the first week of school. However, P.E. uniforms will be needed for August 29 & 30.

**SJHS Fall Athletics Are Happening Now** – There is room to join the co-ed golf, co-ed soccer and women's volleyball teams. All students participating in athletics must have the proper medical/insurance forms. No student will be permitted to practice without these forms in place. They are available on-line on the SJHS website under "Athletics". Scroll to **Spartan PIAA Sports Physical Form at the bottom of the page**. All forms are to be returned to the attention of either UPMC Athletic Trainer, Allie Domer ([domeraj@upmc.edu](mailto:domeraj@upmc.edu)) or Athletic Director, Sally Ackerman.

**Cafeteria Service through AVI**-We continue partnering with **AVI Food Service** offering high quality, nutritious, and appealing meals for our students. Weekly menus will be posted on PowerSchool in the Daily Bulletin. We welcome parent volunteers M-F to assist Chef Julie in serving lunches to keep the line move optimally.

### **Student Drivers & Parking Passes** (pg. #64-65 in the SJHS Handbook)

Student drivers must register vehicles. There are no fees for a parking pass. Drivers must park in the Humanities lot as the Sci/Tech lot is reserved for faculty & staff. Forms are available in the office.

**School Picture Day:** Yearbook photographers from Lifetouch will be on campus **Monday, September 9** for school pictures. All student will be photographed for the SJHS Yearbook (Head and Shoulders). Students are to consult the Student/Parent Handbook, page 53 "Dress-Up Days" (school picture days, special event) for policy. The school uniform is always welcome. Picture make-up day is **Friday, October 11**.

### **After School Supervision Program**

There will be after school supervision for athletes waiting for their practices and sports buses as well as any student participating in afterschool activities that are not immediately taking place after school. **These supervisory periods are scheduled from 3:00- 5:00 PM in advance as needed by our activities/athletic calendars Mondays through Thursdays.** Students need to sign up in the office at the start of the week so we are better informed of their needs to be in the building after school.

Students will report to assigned classroom with a supervising teacher or administrator. Students will sign in and use this time to study, work on assignments, or read. Students will not be permitted to leave SJHS once they have signed in by 3:00 PM. SJHS is about "Protecting God's Children" and keeping them safe from wandering through the community. Any

student who leaves SJHS afterschool will not be under the supervision of our afterschool program and cannot return to campus until the designated start time of their scheduled activity. Please contact our office if you have questions or concerns: 724-224-5552.

### 2024-2025 Homeroom Assignments

#### Science and Technology Building

**SENIORS ~ CLASS 2025**  
Room 316 Mr. Vincent  
➤ **LAST NAMES A – Me**  
Room 315 Mr. Wesolowski  
➤ **LAST NAMES Mi- Z**

#### Science and Technology Building

**JUNIORS ~ CLASS 2026**  
Room 215 Mrs. Greco  
➤ **LAST NAMES A - Z**

#### Humanities Building

**SOPHOMORES ~ CLASS 2027**  
Room 206 Mr. Pater  
➤ **LAST NAMES A - Mc**  
Room 203 Ms. Wolfe  
➤ **LAST NAMES Mi - Z**

#### Humanities Building

**FRESHMEN ~ CLASS 2028**  
Room 201 Ms. Brock  
➤ **LAST NAMES A-Ho**  
Room 104 Mrs. Schratz  
➤ **LAST NAMES Hu-Z**

#### Mark your calendar:

- Wednesday, August 21<sup>st</sup> is **Freshman Parent Technology Night**, 6:00 PM, Science and Technology Building.
- Wednesday, September 6th is **Meet our Teacher Night** for **ALL** parents, grades 9-12. Doors open at 6:15 PM. Registration will be held in the Science and Technology Building. Please join us to meet teachers, discuss course content, grading and policies.

#### Reminders:

- It is so important that parents regularly view PowerSchool to get a snapshot of their student's academics progress and view the daily bulletin for announcements. Each student and parent has a PowerSchool account. <http://stjosephhs.powerschool.com>. **PowerSchool will be available Thursday, August 15 to access schedules and announcements in the Weekly Bulletin.**

Please note a great deal of time and effort has gone into the process of scheduling each student based on teacher recommendations, course sequences, and elective choices. Please note that core courses take precedence over elective choices. Any requests for changes will be reviewed through our School Counselor, Mr. Anater.

#### Value Focus:

*Our Mission is to graduate men and women whose lives are rooted in our core values of **Sanctity, Justice, Honor and Scholarship**. Our value of focus this school year is **JUSTICE**. We believe that each person is called to make the Gospel visible in the world. Through an assimilation of the Church's social teachings and recognizing the dignity of each human being, each student is invited to work to build up the Kingdom of God.*

***Please check your email regularly for school updates & news.***