



OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL

July 2025

Dear SJA Families,

We appreciate the trust you have placed in us with your student and hope that your family's transition to a new grade level is smooth, enjoyable, and memorable. As an alum, and principal, I am deeply committed to the values of Saint Joseph Academy and look forward to collaborating with you on your students' educational journeys, both as Bloodhounds and as Marists. Our doors are always open, and I encourage you to reach out to your student's teachers or any staff or administration members with any questions or concerns you may have.

We are already busy preparing for the 2025-2026 school year and are eager to see everyone **August 11, 2025**, the first day of school. Some of you may be familiar with our back to school procedures but attached I have included some information you may find very helpful.

IMPORTANT DATES AND INFORMATION

OFFICE HOURS: Just a reminder that our school office hours from June 9- July 18, 2025 are from 8:30AM – 12:30PM on Monday-Friday. Beginning on July 21, we will resume office hours from 8:00 AM- 4:00 PM. We ask you please schedule an appointment in advance if you need to visit the office to ensure the person you wish to see is available and give us ample time to notify security of your arrival.

SCHOOL CALENDAR: The 2025-2026 school calendar can be found on the school website. Click on the PARENTS tab at the top of the page and scroll to 2025-2026 SCHOOL CALENDAR.

NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION: Orientation for all new students to SJA will be held on Thursday, August 7th. Students will receive information on course/daily schedules, instructional platforms such as Google Classroom and the FACTS Family Portal. More details will be sent out to families so please stay tuned!

FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL: Our first day of school will be Monday, August 11, 2025. Students will receive a brief orientation during their scheduled classes, and teachers will review their course prospectus which will include school supply list. Students will be dismissed at noon on August 11th.

WHAT STUDENTS NEED FOR SCHOOL:

- All new students must have their immunization records turned into our Registrar, Ms. Bianca Torres **before** the first day of class.
- All new and returning students must have their Economically Disadvantage Survey turned into our Registrar, Ms. Bianca Torres **before** the first day of class. (previously emailed by the principal)

- Students need to be neatly groomed and wear the proper school uniform.
- Laptop: Students will need a device (other than a cell phone) for most of their classes. Chromebooks and iPads may not be compatible with some of our testing software that teachers will be using for exams.
- Consumable workbooks and/or textbooks as required by courses. (Please order via internet vendors of your choice).

UTRGV DEEP PROGRAM:

Students enrolled in DEEP must attend a student and parent orientation. The student orientation will take place at 2:30 pm during the school day on Wednesday, August 27th, and the parent orientation will take place Wednesday, August 27th at 6:30 PM. **DEEP classes will begin meeting on campus on Tuesday, September 2nd.**

THE SCHOOL DAY / ATTENDANCE

Students will report to their first morning class by 8:20 AM. A copy of the daily and weekly bell schedules will be shared with all families soon.

SJA is on a modified 50-minute, 7 period day block throughout the school year. Copies of the bell schedules will also be made available on the school's website and social media accounts prior to student orientation.

SCHOOL UNIFORM / PE UNIFORM / DRESS DOWN DAYS

Saint Joseph Academy maintains a code of dress and grooming consistent with its character as a private, Catholic, college preparatory school. This code contributes to a seriousness of purpose, a constructive learning atmosphere, and the development of sound personal habits and a positive self-image. **Students' failure to comply with regulations will result in disciplinary action- a student may not attend class, may be sent home, or a parent/guardian may be called to bring proper attire. See Dress Code and Grooming Regulations in the *SJA Student & Parent Handbook* located on our website for more information.**

LANDS' END: Pre-approved Lands' End uniforms or uniform polo shirts, skirts, sweaters, and jackets sold in our Bloodhound Café must be worn by all students. There are different styles available and different ways to shop.

Online: Go to www.landsend.com/school and create or sign-in to your account. Include your student and school information in My Account (**or find your School using the Preferred School Number Search: 900139510**). Start shopping with your personalized product checklist. Shop now via the direct link:

Phone: Call 1-800-469-2222 and reference your student's Preferred School Number 900139510, grade level and gender. Their team of consultants are available 24/7 for assistance.

Only SJA outerwear may be worn on campus during the school day or in classrooms. These items may be purchased from Lands' End or the SJA Bookstore. **Athletic and/or club t-shirts, sweatshirts or hoodies are NOT considered approved uniform attire and may only be worn on dress down days (with the exception of hoodies which are never allowed during the school day).** Students not in compliance will be sent to the office and items may be confiscated.

PE UNIFORMS: Students enrolled in a PE class at SJA must wear the designated PE uniform sold at the Bloodhound Café.

PARKING PERMITS / DROP-OFF & PICK-UP

PARKING PERMITS: All students driving on campus must have a valid SJA Parking Permit to park on campus. Permits are available for purchase for \$100 from the Finance Office in the Administration Building. **You will need to provide the make, model, year, tag number, car color and proof of auto insurance at the time of purchase. An email will be sent to eligible students the last week in July with the form to complete.** Student parking on campus is considered a privilege and may be revoked by Administration for infractions of school policy.

1. Seniors will be allowed to purchase parking permits beginning July 28th through August 1st.
2. Juniors will be allowed to purchase a parking permit between August 4th-7th.
3. Pending available spots/permits, sophomores will be allowed to purchase a permit on August 11th.
4. Speeding, reckless driving or making excessive noise on school property may result in the loss of driving privileges on campus. The speed limit on campus is 10 mph.
5. The use of cell phones by all drivers is prohibited when driving on school grounds.
6. **Students may not go to their cars during the school day (8:20 AM-3:25 PM)** without permission from an Administrator.
7. Students may not loiter in the parking lot before or after school.
8. Vehicles parked in an unauthorized manner may be cited and/or towed away at owner's expense.
9. The school reserves the right to search any vehicle if reasonable cause exists. Searches may be conducted at any time there is reason to do so, with or without the student present.

DROP-OFF / PICK-UP / PARKING: Parents will enter through the Saint Joseph Dr. gate off Ringgold Street, proceed toward the Fine Arts Building and drive through the road in front of Canales Field before dropping off their student(s) at the designated drop off and pick up areas. All traffic will exit through Calle Retama.

Students with valid parking permits will enter through the Saint Joseph Dr. gate off Ringgold Street, proceed toward the Fine Arts Building, and then park in designated student parking areas only.

*There is no reserved parking for students on campus.

BOOKS / I.D. CARDS / LOCKERS

PURCHASING PROCESS FOR CONSUMABLE BOOKS: Students will need to view the student's course selection list/schedule (visible after August 1st on the FACTS Family Portal) to select the correct books for each course. We NO longer partner with Follett Bookstore, you may **use any internet vendor**. **Please place your order now to ensure delivery by August 11th.**

Bloodhound Café: Please note that PE uniforms, locks, and SJA athletic wear will be sold only at our on-campus cafe.

Cafe Hours:	August 4th-7th	9:00 AM – 12:00 PM (for clothing purchases only)
	Beginning August 11th	7:30 AM-1:00 PM (noon dismissal days)
		3:30-4:00 (regular schedule)

STUDENT PHOTOS AND I.D. CARDS: SJA will work with a Photographer to schedule a Picture Day for all students in the month of August. A school I.D. will be issued to each student and packages will be available for purchase. Please check the school calendar for these dates.

LOCKERS/LOCKS: Students may request a book locker from Ms. Bianca Torres in the Administration Building. Locks for school issued lockers are available for purchase at the Bloodhound Café. Locks on all lockers **MUST** be an SJA issued lock or the lock will be removed; students **MUST** always keep a lock on their locker to ensure safety of their personal belongings. The school is not responsible for items not securely stored.

CELL PHONE POLICY: SJA is implementing a policy to help manage and reduce distractions from cell phone usage among all 7th-12th grade students. This approach may help foster a more focused environment for learning and avoid issues related to social media and misuse of devices during school hours. **Effective 2025-2026, all 7th-12th grade students will be turning in their cellphones** to their first period teacher upon arriving at school. The cell phones will remain with their first period teacher throughout the entire day. The students will go back at the end of the day after their bell to pick it up from a designated location. If students have an emergency or need to communicate with their parents, they will be allowed to use the school phone, or the front office will facilitate that communication as needed.

FACTS FAMILY PORTAL

FACTS Family Portal is our electronic communication system linking students, parents, and school. Because the great majority of our communication during the summer and throughout the school year will be by text and/or email through the Portal, **all students and parents are required to maintain active Portal accounts**. The Portal will also be the means by which students and parents can check grades and assignments online once classes have started, and it will link with the teachers' Google Classrooms. **Please notify the main office if you have a new email address in order for us to update the system.** We will send all new families a link to the Portal (via email) during the summer in order for you to set up your Portal accounts. If you have questions about setting up your Portal account once the link is sent, please contact Ms. Bianca Torres at (956) 542-3581, ext. 311, for assistance.

COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS

“The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.”- Mahatma Gandhi

All students must perform a required number of service hours each semester. Examples of acceptable service include:

- Direct Service to the poor.
- Service with organizations that indirectly serve the poor. (In this case, students should be prompted to consider how their work indirectly served the poor)
- Service at or for a Church or faith community.
- Service at City or County organizations and/or organized event.
- Service to Saint Joseph Academy community and/or special SJA events.

LUNCH

All students must remain on campus in one of the designated areas (7th-9th grade students will eat in the Student Center; students in grades 10-12 will eat in the courtyard and/or classrooms) during the lunch period. Parents who opt-in to the SJA meal plan must enroll monthly; students may also bring their own lunches or purchase lunch from the Bloodhound Cafe. **Students are NOT permitted to have food delivered to them during the school day by anyone (family members, friends, food delivery services, etc.), and they may not leave school to have lunch with other persons.**

ATHLETICS AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Participation in extracurricular activities is an integral part of school life. Students are encouraged to be involved in ways that are consistent with their talents and interests. Enthusiasm generated in student activities often overflows into academic diligence. **Participating in any of our programs is a privilege, therefore membership on any team or in any club is contingent upon a student's satisfactory academic and behavioral comportment.**

SJA is working on developing opportunities for students and parents to meet coaches and moderators of our teams and clubs (Back to School Night, parent night, etc.). More information about these events will be shared in a separate communication.

SAINT JOSEPH ACADEMY STUDENT & PARENT HANDBOOK

At the beginning of the school year, all families will receive a link to the 2025-2026 *Student and Parent Handbook*. This handbook outlines the policies and procedures set by Saint Joseph Academy. All students and parents are required to sign documents acknowledging that you have read, understood, and agree to abide by the policies and procedures contained in the handbook and consent for your child to participate in our random drug testing.

TUITION/ FINANCE

For information regarding tuition payments or tuition fees, please reference the school's website. All necessary information can be found under the ADMISSIONS and TUITION AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE tabs. If you should need to speak with our Finance Office, please call the main office at 956-542-3581.

STAY CONNECTED

We love to keep up with what is happening with students, families, and alumni throughout the year. Be sure to bookmark our school website (www.sja.us) and follow us on **Facebook and Instagram** for lots of great information. Most of our events can be found on our **Saint Joseph Academy Facebook page**, but current parents can read more about school- related activities and announcements and share their own images on our **SJA Bloodhound Families** page. Important announcements and reminders may also be sent to parents via text blasts/emails so make sure we always have your most recent and up-to-date information in our database. Please feel free to contact me or any member of the staff should you have any questions. I am optimistic about the new year and look forward to working with each of you.

Blessings,

Mrs. Irma G. Segura
Principal