

July 2026

Dear SJA Families,

We hope you are having an enjoyable summer! I am honored to continue to serve SJA as principal, and I remain committed to the values of Saint Joseph Academy and the Marist Brothers. I look forward to collaborating with you on your students' educational journeys. 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. 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 **2026-2027** school year and are eager to see everyone **August 10, 2026**, the first day of school. Some of you may be familiar with our back to school procedures but below I have included some information you may find helpful.

IMPORTANT DATES AND INFORMATION

OFFICE HOURS: Just a reminder that our school office hours on July 15-July 16 are from 8:00AM – 1:00PM. The office is closed July 17th. Beginning July 20th, we will resume regular office hours from 8:00 AM-4:00 PM. We ask that 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 2026-2027 school calendar can be found on the school website. Click on the “SJA CALENDAR” tab at the top of the page. There are links so you can subscribe and receive the calendar on your device.

NEW STUDENT ORIENTATION: Orientation for all **new** students to SJA will be held on Thursday, August 6th. 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 10, 2026. Students will receive a brief orientation during their scheduled classes, and teachers will review their course prospectus which will include school supply list.

WHAT STUDENTS NEED FOR SCHOOL:

- All new students must have their immunization records turned into our Registrar, Ms. Monica Castaneda, **before** the first day of class.
- 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 during the school day August 18th, and the parent orientation will take place August 18th at 5:30 PM. DEEP classes will begin meeting on campus on Wednesday, August 26th.

THE SCHOOL DAY / ATTENDANCE

Students will report to their first morning class by 8:25 AM. SJA is on a 50-minute, 7 period day throughout the school year. Homeroom will take place before the second period. The dismissal time at the end of the day will be 3:35pm. 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, 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.

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 \$105 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. A link will be sent to eligible students to sign up for the parking permit.** 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 20th.
**If Seniors want to paint their spot they need to purchase by July 24th.
Painting of Senior parking spots will only take place on July 27th and 28th.*
2. Juniors will be allowed to purchase a parking permit beginning July 27th.
3. Pending available spots/permits, sophomores will be allowed to purchase a permit beginning August 3rd.
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-3:35 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.

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. You may use any internet vendor. **Please place your order now to ensure delivery by August 10th.**

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

Cafe Hours: August 3th-7th

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM (for clothing purchases only)

Beginning August 10th

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 picture packages will be available for purchase. Please check the school calendar for these dates. Students and staff will be required to always wear their student ID on an SJA lanyard during the school day.

LOCKERS/LOCKS: Students may request a book locker from Ms. Monica Castaneda 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: All students will be turning in their cellphones to their first period teacher upon arriving at school or during homeroom for DEEP students. 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.

PARENT VOLUNTEERS

ALL parent volunteers must complete an annual training in order to be on campus as a volunteer at any time during the school year. We will have both morning and afternoon sessions. This will be the only time these are offered this year. You only need to attend one of the sessions below.

Protecting God's Children (all **NEW parent volunteers)**

Date: Tuesday July 28

Times: 9am-11am or 5:30-7:30pm

Location: SJA Library

Date: Wednesday July 29

Time: 9am-11am

Location: SJA Library

Keeping the Promise Alive (for all who have previously completed Protecting God's Children)

Date: Tuesday July 28

Time: 11:30am-12:30pm

Location: SJA Library

Date: Wednesday July 29

Times: 11:30am-12:30pm or 5:30pm-6:30pm

Location: SJA Library

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. Monica Castaneda 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 events.
- Service to Saint Joseph Academy community and/or special SJA events.
- Summer Community Service hours may only be applied to the first quarter.

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 2026-2027 *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.

Let us always remember to pray for each other.

Sincerely,

Mr. Francis X. Curley
Principal