

eLearning Days

Resolution to Adopt eLearning Program in Lieu of the St. Joseph Catholic School Emergency Days

Abstract:

An eLearning day consists of at least five clock hours of instruction accessible to all students who are not physically present at school due to unexpected events such as snow days or unforeseen emergencies. An eLearning day provides continuity of education through electronic means. This memo contains a historical context for implementing eLearning days at St. Joseph Catholic School; the benefits of utilizing them; the general expectations for students; expectations for students with special needs and related services; and communication procedures.

Historical Context:

In 2019 a new law was enacted in the State of Illinois allowing school districts statewide to utilize eLearning days in lieu of emergency days. Public Act 101-0012 also reinstated the requirement that a school day consist of a minimum of five (5) clock hours of instructional time, a provision that previously sunset in 2017. P.A. 101-0012 preserves the flexibility for learning beyond the classroom and allows the curriculum to move forward.

This proposal outlines St. Joseph Catholic School's plan to maintain the option to make-up inclement weather or emergency days at the end of the school year; and/or implement an eLearning day(s).

Benefits of eLearning for Emergency Days:

- Allows for the end of the school year to be predictable
- Preserves the scheduled start for summer school and summer programs
- Allows educators to advance learning more effectively and provide continuity in education
- Ensures end-of-year events such as graduation
- Prevents undesired intersections with religious holidays
- Promotes flexible learning in the digital era

eLearning Structure and Rationale as Aligned to State Expectations and Requirements:

The proposal for St. Joseph Catholic School seeks to offer a legitimate learning experience for all students that advances learning at every grade level. The eLearning day shall be made up on the day of an emergency day by making use of the internet, Google Classroom, the school's LMS (Learning Management System); Zoom, for audio and video conferencing, and other similar electronic communications for instruction and interaction between teachers and students.

Teachers, parents, and students will be alerted of an eLearning day and assignments will be posted no later than 9:00 a.m. This will ensure that required clock hours of instruction or school work are met by each student participating in an eLearning Day. Through our 1:1 initiative and other supports, St. Joseph Catholic School will ensure access from home or other appropriate remote facilities that all students will have access to any materials (electronic or non-electronic) that might be needed to support learning. St. Joseph Catholic School will ensure that learning opportunities are designed for students with special needs and that all students' learning are monitored and verified.

Attendance on the make-up day will be counted in Option C as an assignment and students will have up to two days to complete the required work. This allows educators and families the flexibility to demonstrate learning on their timeline with little disruption to the general or special education programming. Student attendance on the eLearning day will count as a regularly sanctioned attendance day for all students who demonstrate teacher identified class expectations for learning. St. Joseph Catholic School is dedicated to making sure student participation in an eLearning day is within the student's control as to time, pace, and means of learning. Communications of eLearning days will provide effective and timely notice to students, their parents or guardians of the particular days for eLearning including clarity at the start of the program, where protocols and general expectations and responsibilities of the eLearning program will be communicated to all stakeholders at least thirty (30) days prior to utilizing an eLearning day. Staff and students will be provided adequate training for eLearning participation.

Expectations for Teachers:

Purpose: To define the expectations of an eLearning day for general education teachers so that they can adequately plan and implement lesson plans within the framework of St. Joseph Catholic School.

Definition: When the eLearning option is exercised, the day shall be made up on the date of the emergency day through the use of the Internet, the school's LMS, telephones, or other similar means of electronic communication for educational purposes.

Communication: It is expected that educators are notified of the emergency day per the usual St. Joseph Catholic School protocol. Educators will post their lessons by no later than 9:00 a.m.

on the emergency day and will base their attendance on the successful completion of this experience. Teachers are expected to be available to assist students with their assignments during the hours that closely resemble a regular school day, i.e. 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m. Teachers will respond in a timely manner to students, parents, and administrators during the normal work hours on the actual emergency day.

Assignments: The assignments are to be authentic and standards-based. Student work will cover content that would normally be addressed on a normal school day. All streaming sessions must be recorded in order to ensure access by the student; links to the recordings will not be posted publicly. Assignments should be reviewed by the teacher to ensure expectations of learning are met. Assignment grade values should be reflective of the values they would have if they were given as an in-class assignment. If students were unable to participate during an eLearning day, accommodations will be made to assist them in making up missed work. Students who have accommodations for instruction will be provided with those accommodations. For students who do not use an online platform for learning or for who an online platform is not appropriate, teachers will provide parents with appropriate educational materials and learning activities for the students.

Technological Support: St. Joseph Catholic School is committed to ensuring students have access to technologies that support and enhance learning. Each student in grades kindergarten through 8th grade have Chromebooks and the schools LMS. Google Classroom supports instructional tools that allow for a variety of different learning experiences during an eLearning day, including the capability of assessment, video lectures, discussions, etc.

Child Protection: Under NO circumstances will personal phone numbers or emails be exchanged between students. Teachers are not to share personal social media profiles with students. Professional boundaries are vital for the safety of students and for teachers.

Expectations of Students:

Students are required to submit evidence of their learning experiences in order to receive attendance credit for the day.

Students are expected to participate in the class, ask questions when needed, complete assignments, and demonstrate and provide evidence that learning occurred.

Parent/Family Expectation:

Parents should provide a space for learning in the home and establish a routine for the learning by setting aside specific time during the day for learning.

Parents should review student work to ensure work is being accomplished.

Parents should maintain communication with the teacher to ensure student learning is progressing and report any difficulties with distant learning such as connectivity with the internet

