

Dear STJ Students and Families,

Thank you all for your continued patience and support as St. Joseph High School tackles difficult issues related to COVID-19. As mentioned in my Tuesday email, STJ has been seeking advice from local medical professionals regarding what is the safest and healthiest option to begin the 2020-2021 academic year. Not only do we look to protect our students, their families, and the broader community, we have great concern for the health and safety of our dedicated faculty and staff.

On Tuesday, July 21st, Victoria County Health Authority, Dr. John McNeill, issued this [order](#). While Dr. McNeill's order does not mandate compliance from religious institutions, STJ's board of directors and administrators feel it is in the best interest of the STJ community to adhere to its listed mandates. A group of medical professionals consulted by STJ also all strongly agreed and urged that in-person learning be delayed into September. In following the order, STJ will begin the 2020-2021 academic year on August 10th with 100% virtual learning for all students. This virtual learning scenario will extend through Monday, September 7th. Beginning Tuesday, September 8th, STJ will open its campus up to students for in-person instruction. As an alternative to in-person learning, students and families will have the choice to continue virtual learning indefinitely after September 7th.

The suspension of in-person learning through September 7th will be mirrored by the suspension of all extracurricular activities and athletics. This suspension aligns with TAPPS' amended 2020-2021 athletic calendar. Upon the return of students to our campus on September 8th, all extracurriculars and athletics will resume following [TAPPS 2020 Return-to-Play Guidance](#). While we anticipate continued changes from TAPPS in the coming days and weeks, STJ will follow the local health order and will not begin extracurriculars or athletics until September 8th.

Below our Director of Academics, Megan Schott, will outline how virtual learning will look as we begin the academic year.

STJ@HOME
Excellence in Virtual Learning with St. Joseph High School

Last spring, our students and teachers quickly adjusted to the new circumstances of online classes within two weeks. While we are proud of the way the STJ community adapted to this emergency situation, we will be approaching virtual learning differently as we begin the 2020-2021 school year.

Learning remotely requires different ways of thinking from both teachers and students. We will strive for a balance between routine and flexibility as we hold our students to the high standards we know they can achieve. This means that STJ will hold classes on a set daily schedule, with required attendance for virtual classes. This synchronous approach provides structure for our students while also supporting them with screen breaks and meaningful community engagement.

Synchronous live classes will only be part of the picture of STJ@Home; students will also be actively engaged in completing independent assignments, participating in discussion

boards, and collaborating on group projects outside of scheduled class time.

So what will STJ@Home look like? With the help of a committee composed of six teachers and four administrators, we have designed a modified yet familiar daily class schedule that we are excited to share with you today:

STJ@Home Daily Schedule (Monday-Friday)

30 minute classes / 15 minute "passing periods" / 1 hour lunch

Period	Timing
Prayer & Announcements 1st Period	8:00-8:30
2nd Period	8:45-9:15
3rd Period	9:30-10:00
4th Period	10:15-10:45
5th Period/ 6th Period	11:00-11:30 (lunch from 11:30-12:30) (lunch from 10:45-11:45) 11:45-12:15
7th Period	12:30-1:00
8th Period	1:15-1:45
Community Time (Student Activities, Pep Rallies, Mass, etc.)	2:00-2:30
Tutorials	2:30-3:00

We believe this schedule will allow for students to get accustomed to the school day and will prepare them for an easy transition back to in-person instruction in September.

Students should expect to be "live" on Google Meet with their instructors during the listed time frames. Attendance will be taken via Google Meet check-in for each period of the day. Per [TEA](#) and TCCB-ED attendance requirements, students are required to attend 90% of class days for the year.

In addition to interactive classes hosted on Google Meet, all teachers will facilitate online learning using the Schoology Learning Management System. Schoology will be the point of access for all course materials, posted Google Meet links, grades, and teacher feedback. We will be scheduling Schoology orientation sessions for students and parents during the week of August 3rd. All students will receive login and access instructions during that same week.

STJ administration has also been updating the Student-Parent Handbook to reflect our policies and expectations for student behavior in online class sessions and learning platforms. We will release an updated version of the handbook next Thursday, July 30th highlighting key policy changes.

A school supplies list was shared with families and posted to STJ's website last week; please plan to be prepared to begin school on August 10th with those materials. You will also be receiving textbooks and other teacher-supplied materials during the week of August 3rd. We will send out a schedule for students and parents to pick up school materials in the coming week.

We also understand that technology may present a barrier for some families. Your student will need access to his or her own device during the online school day. While we highly recommend that families consider purchasing an affordable device such as a Chromebook, STJ does have a limited number of devices available to be borrowed on a first-come, first-served basis. [Please complete the linked survey by Friday, July 31st if you will need to borrow a device from STJ or if you foresee internet access issues for your student.](#)

Again, know that we are implementing new online instruction strategies having persevered through a challenging period of growth last spring. Our teachers are completing days of training on how to create even more effective virtual lessons, how to implement courses online using Schoology, and even how to provide more opportunities for our students to collaborate. They are eager to grow and to continue fostering the strong sense of faith and learning that makes STJ the wonderful community it is. We are excited to begin the school year with each of you, and look forward to seeing the amazing things our students will learn, create, and accomplish this year.