ST. JOSEPH HIGH SCHOOL

Memorandum
November 2026

TO: Students, Parents, Guardians and Caregivers

FROM: St. Joseph High School
Jason Benson, Principal
Shaun Nechvatal, Vice Principal
Kendal Bayda, Vice Principal
Lynette Bohmann, Vice Principal

RE: **November Memo**

Welcome to St. Joseph High School. As a Catholic High School our mission is to be a welcoming community where we nurture faith, encourage excellence in learning and inspire students to serve others, making the world a better place.

We love because He first loved us. John 4:19

Principal's Message

Good afternoon, Guardians,

It is hard to believe it's November.

Most of our fall sports are complete. Thank you to all our coaches, athletes and fans for a tremendous fall. Winter sports are starting very soon.

A huge shout out to all the students, staff and community members who were involved in the musical "Addams Family". The talent in our school is amazing. We are so fortunate to have 100s of students get involved.

We have continued to grow our special partnership with the Holy Family Parish. I would like to thank our Knights of Columbus for all their support. They provided the grill and staff for our grade 9 BBQ in September. They will cook again for us in the spring. Thank you, K of C and CWL for joining us at the dress rehearsal for the musical. Having a live audience is the only way our students can be prepared for the evening performances.

Sincerely,

Jason Benson
Principal, St. Joseph High School

Chaplain's Message

As the year comes to an end, we are preparing for the season of Advent and the coming of Christmas. Our entire school community is invited to enter this season, and we will participate in our Advent Mass at Holy Family Cathedral on December 9th. In addition to school masses, every student gets one class mass per year. This semester all the grade 9 and 10 period 2 classes will attend a class mass in our STJ chapel, and next semester the grade 11 and 12 classes will do the same. This is a great opportunity to learn about the mass in a more up-close and personal setting.

Advent is also a penitential season, meaning that we should reflect on our strengths and weaknesses and turn to God in areas where we need His help. The sacrament of reconciliation is a powerful way to receive God's grace and mercy. All grade 11 and 12 students will have the opportunity to receive the sacrament of reconciliation on December 2nd, and grade 9 and 10 students will have this opportunity during Lent.

I'm looking forward to the upcoming faith development opportunities for our students, and I thank you again for your support of Catholic education,
Hannah Berry

Guardian Athletics

We are proud of all our teams. Congratulations to the senior girl's soccer team for capturing a city championship and 2nd at provincials. Junior Boys Cross country also won their division capturing the pennant at their city meet. Good luck to football during their city final game on Friday November 6th. Good luck to boys' volleyball as they continue playoffs during the semi-final on Wednesday, November 4th.

Curling begins November 9th
Basketball and Wrestling start November 23rd

Lates

Our initiative around improving lates has paid off. We have cut the number of lates in half. Attendance and punctuality are directly correlated to performance. Thank you for your continued efforts.

Drop off and pick up south of Attridge is still a viable option. It is 65 meters from our 200 wing portable doors to the lights south of Attridge – that's a 45 second walk for most teens!

I recommend jackets and closed toe shoes in the winter, but they'll probably wear a hoodie and sandals (with socks of course) and still survive.



Honour Roll & Awards Celebration

By now, most students received their honour roll certificate today. If they have not, they should come to the main office to receive it.

On **Thursday, November 5th at 2:00 PM**, we invite parents to join us in the gym for a celebratory tea to recognize our 2025/2026 Honour Roll, Leadership, and Kamamak Award recipients. Our brief program will feature the presentation of the Leadership Awards, Kamamak Awards, and the School Board Scholarships (awarded to the student with the highest average in each grade based on honour roll criteria).

We look forward to celebrating our students' achievements with you! Student feedback indicates they enjoy this format but most of all, they appreciate spending time with their families and the photo opportunities available on Thursday. Come for the program and stay for coffee and a photo!

Graduation

June 29th 1:30 at Merlis Belsher

Graduation Requirements can be found in the 2025-2026 and 2026-2027 registration handbooks as listed on "counsellor connection". Counsellors have started exit planning with students. Students can access official transcripts at MyCreds.ca. Some students have already applied and have been conditionally accepted to their post-secondary programs.

We will have a meeting for graduating students in early February to discuss procedures as we prepare for Graduation.

Please note there are new GSCS honour roll criteria which were sent last year and available on our Counsellor Connection page online.

If you have any questions about graduation or graduation requirements, please contact student services.

Cell Phones

One of the simplest things we can do to improve the learning environment for students is to protect their attention.

Our division expectations as per the policy require student cellphones to be silent and non-disruptive during instructional time. At St. Joseph, this means a student's phone should not be on their person or generating notifications, buzzing, or otherwise distracting them from learning. The best options are for students to leave their phone at home or secure it in their locker.
Many of our teachers have also successfully used classroom "cell hotels," where students place their phones for the duration of class. These have been extremely effective because they remove both the physical phone and the temptation to check it.

We will continue to encourage their use. However, a cell hotel is simply a classroom strategy for helping students manage their devices. Students remain responsible for their phone and personal belongings. Families concerned about the security of a device should have their child leave it at home or secure it in their locker.

Research shows that cellphone access and the distraction created by notifications and checking can negatively affect student attention, learning, and academic achievement. Research also indicates that a consistent, full-day device-free approach provides the strongest opportunity to remove distraction and allow students to give their full attention to learning and to one another.

Our teachers are therefore severely limiting cellphone use during class. During the first two months of this school year, I received only five requests from staff to allow students to use cellphones for a specific classroom purpose. This reflects our commitment to ensuring that any classroom use is limited, intentional, and connected to learning.

That is what we are trying to accomplish at school. We want students present: present with their teacher, present with one another, and present in their learning.

We appreciate families reinforcing a simple message with their children:
During class, the phone needs to be somewhere that cannot distract you. Home or your locker is best. If your teacher provides a cell hotel, that is another effective option.

Thank you for partnering with us in creating classrooms where students can focus, participate, think, and learn.

International Travel

International travel opportunities have been advertised to students within the school, and some may involve teachers. It is important for families to understand that these are private travel opportunities and are not school-sponsored trips. The school and school division do not review, supervise, approve, or endorse these trips. The involvement of a teacher does not make a trip a school-sponsored activity. Students who choose to participate will not be covered by school insurance or receive school division support related to the trip.

Up coming events

Tuesday November 3rd Pep Rally (Special Events Schedule)
Wednesday November 4th Take Your Kids to Work (Grade 9)
Thursday November 5th Awards Day Celebration (Shortened Day Schedule)
November 10th Remembrance Day Ceremony (Special Events Schedule)
November 11, 12, 13 No School
November 18th Coffee House
November 18th CSCC (Parent Council)
November 26th SUTIL (Career Fair)
December 9th Advent Mass (Special Events Schedule)