ST JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL
WACONIA, MN

C-STEM
CATHOLIC | SCIENCE | TECHNOLOGY | ENGINEERING | MATHEMATICS

Attendance Policy

Dear St. Joseph Families,

At St. Joseph Catholic STEM School, we believe that **every school day matters!** Each day provides opportunities for students to grow academically, socially, and spiritually while building relationships with their teachers and classmates.

We want to share our **St. Joseph Attendance Policy** and some new tools designed to make communication between home and school easier. **Our attendance policy is not new.** The expectations and procedures have already been included in our current Parent/Student Handbook. We have simply taken the opportunity to polish, organize, and streamline the information so it is easier for families to understand and for our school office to communicate consistently. We recently reviewed these improvements with our School Board, and we are grateful for their support as we work to make our processes more efficient and family-friendly.

We have also created **three convenient Google Forms** that parents can use to communicate directly with the school - we prefer parents to use the links instead of calling so we can better track information.

- **Student Absence Reporting Form:** Let us know when your child will be absent or is sick and provide the reason for the absence.
  https://bit.ly/STJATTENDANCE

- **Anticipated Absence / Vacation Form:** Notify us in advance of family vacations, future medical appointments, sporting events, or other planned absences.
  https://bit.ly/STJVACATION

- **Temporary Caregiver Notification Form:** Provide contact information and authorization when your child is under the care of another responsible adult while you are out of town.
  https://bit.ly/STJCAREGIVER

All three forms, along with our attendance policy and other helpful resources, can be found in one convenient St. Joseph Parent Attendance Folder:
https://bit.ly/STJATTENDFOLDER

We encourage every family to take a few minutes to review the policy and become familiar with these resources. We hope these tools will save you time, simplify communication, and help us maintain accurate information to support your children. We recognize that illnesses, family emergencies, and unexpected circumstances are part of life. Our goal is always to work in partnership with you, ensuring that every child feels supported, connected, and successful.

Thank you for entrusting your children to St. Joseph and for the many ways you support our school community. Together, we can help our students make the most of each school day!

ST JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL
WACONIA, MN
C-STEM
CATHOLIC | SCIENCE | TECHNOLOGY | ENGINEERING | MATHEMATICS

Is My Child's Absence Excused?

K-8 Attendance Guide

Regular attendance matters. When in doubt, contact the school - our goal is to work with families and keep students learning. REMEMBER: Excused does not mean academically insignificant. Frequent absences - excused or unexcused - can affect learning. St. Joseph will partner with families when attendance patterns become a concern. Questions? Contact the school office or Head of School.

GREEN - EXCUSED Notify the school.	
Student illness or health condition preventing attendance	**Notify school**
Medical, dental, orthodontic, counseling, or necessary health appointment	**Notify school**
Family emergency; death, funeral, or serious illness in the family	**Notify school**
Religious observance; court or legal obligation	**Advance notice when possible**
School-sponsored athletics, field trips, or school activities	**School coordinates absence**

YELLOW - TALK WITH US Not automatically excused; advance approval is important.	
Family vacation or discretionary travel during school days	**Request approval in advance**
Club, travel, or competitive sports tournament/event	**Request approval in advance**
State, regional, national, or other significant competition	**Administrator review**
Significant family event or other unusual circumstance	**Administrator review**
School refusal connected to health, anxiety, bullying, disability, or another concern	**Contact school promptly**

RED - UNEXCUSED These generally do not constitute a valid excuse.	
Oversleeping or choosing to stay home for a non-qualifying reason	**Unexcused**
Missing transportation when reasonable alternatives are available	**Unexcused**
Skipping school/class or leaving school without authorization	**Unexcused**
No reason provided for the absence	**Unexcused until clarified**

VACATIONS & OUTSIDE SPORTS

These absences are not automatically excused. Families should request approval in advance. The Head of School may consider the circumstances, duration, attendance history, and significance of the opportunity. Teachers are not expected to recreate classroom instruction missed for discretionary travel or activities.

WHEN ATTENDANCE BECOMES A CONCERN

Minnesota law identifies continuing truancy after 3 unexcused school days for an elementary student, or 3 or more class periods on 3 days for a middle school student. The school may intervene earlier and will follow applicable notice/referral requirements when statutory thresholds are reached.

Attendance, Tardiness, and Truancy Policy

(Policy pg. 1 of 2)

1. Philosophy of Attendance

At St. Joseph School, we believe that regular school attendance is a vital component of a student's academic success and spiritual growth. The interaction between students and teachers in the classroom is a unique experience that cannot be fully replicated through make-up work. We partner with parents to ensure students are present and prepared to learn. Link to the Attendance Policy Folder: https://bit.ly/STJATTENDFOLDER

2. Compulsory Attendance Law

1. In accordance with Minnesota State Law, every child between the ages of 7 and 17 must receive instruction. Once a child is enrolled in Kindergarten (even if under age 7), they are subject to the same compulsory attendance requirements.
2. Parental Obligation: As a parent/guardian, you are legally obligated to compel your child to attend school pursuant to MN Stat. 120A.22. Failure to do so may result in criminal prosecution under MN Stat. 120A.34.
3. Right to Meet: You have the right to meet with school personnel to discuss solutions to your child's truancy. Please contact the school office at 952-442-4500 to schedule a meeting.
4. Alternative Programs: There may be alternative educational programs or services available to help your child. We would be able to discuss these with you.
5. Further Absences: If unexcused absences continue, this matter may be referred to Carver County Human Services or the County Attorney for juvenile court proceedings MN Stat. Chap. 260C.
6. Driving Privileges: If a child is subject to juvenile court proceedings, they may face the suspension or delay of their driving privileges MN Stat. 260C.201.

3. Reporting an Absence

Parents/guardians must notify the school office by **7:55 AM** if a child will be absent or late by first utilizing the Attendance Reporting QR Code or Link: https://bit.ly/STJATTENDANCE, or 952-442-4500.

4. Classification of Absences

The school administration has the final authority to determine if an absence is "Excused" or "Unexcused."

- ***Excused Absences***: Include student illness, medical/dental appointments (with verification), family emergencies, death in the family, or recognized religious holidays.
- ***Unexcused Absences*****:** Include oversleeping, missing the bus, hair/photo appointments, birthdays, shopping, or "skip days."
- ***Family Vacations / Sports*****:** We strongly discourage vacations during the school year. To be considered for "Excused" status, **the Anticipated Absence Form *(Appendix A or* https://bit.ly/STJVACATION must be submitted to the school at least one week prior to the trip.**
- When parents leave children under the care of another responsible person while out of town, the office must be notified on the ***Temporary Caregiver Form*** *(Appendix B)* https://bit.ly/STJCAREGIVER

5. Medical Appointments

Whenever possible, medical and dental appointments should be scheduled outside of school hours. If an appointment must occur during the school day, a parent/guardian must **sign the student out through the school office** and **sign the student back in upon return**. The half-day absence will be recorded as **excused or unexcused based on the reason for the late arrival or early departure.**

Attendance, Tardiness, and Truancy Policy

(Policy pg. 2 of 2)

6. Tardiness

A student is considered tardy if they are not in their **classroom** (not just in the school building) by **7:55 AM**, or at the beginning of each period for Middle School. **(3 Tardies = 1 Unexcused Absence).**

- **Arrive 7:55-8:25 a.m. → Tardy**
- **Arrive between 8:25-11:20 a.m. → ½-day absence**
- **Arrive after 11:20 a.m. → Full-day absence**
- **Leave before 11:20 a.m. → Full-day absence**
- **Leave between 11:20-2:20 p.m. → ½-day absence**
- **Leave 2:20-2:50 p.m. → Early departure**

7. Truancy Reporting

Total Absences	Classification	Action Taken
Elementary: 3 days unexcused MS: 3+ class periods on 3 days unexcused.	Continuing Truant	Student Attendance Tracking Form *(Appendix A)* is started by school. **Legal Notice:** A formal letter is mailed to parents as required by **MN Stat.** 260A.03 *(Appendix D)*.
Elementary: 5 days unexcused MS: 3+ class periods on 5 days unexcused.	Pre-diversion Truant	The school will send home a second notification letter *(Appendix E)* and a pre-diversion meeting will be set up with student, parents, school personnel and the Carver County Truancy Social Worker. An Attendance Contract is created *(Appendix F)*.
7 Days Unexcused **-OR-** 15 Days Excused	Habitual Truant	**Legal Notice:** A formal letter is mailed to parents *(Appendix H)*. **County Referral:** As required by **MN Stat.** 260C.007, a formal Statement of Facts *(Appendix I)* is filed with Carver County Human Services (for students under 12) or the County Attorney (ages 12+).
15 Consecutive Days	Mandatory Drop	The student is legally withdrawn from enrollment as per **MN Stat.** 120A.37 *(Appendix J)*.

8. Medical Verification Requirement - 10+ Total Absences

Pursuant to the authority granted under **MN Stat.** 120A.22 to determine lawful excuses, the school reserves the right to require a formal **doctor's note** for any absence due to illness. Once a student reaches **10 total absences** (excused or unexcused) in a school year, the Principal may require a medical professional's signature for **all future absences** in order to be marked as "Excused" *(Appendix G)*.

9. Make-Up Work

Students generally receive **two school days for each school day absent** to complete missed work unless the teacher establishes a different timeline. It is the responsibility of the student/parent to request missed work.

10. Activities

All students must be in school by **noon** to participate in that evening's activity. This rule applies to practices, scrimmages, games, tournaments, and all other activities. Students must also meet attendance expectations established by the activity sponsor, moderator, or coach. Students who participate in a school sponsored event will not be considered absent. Extenuating circumstances such as a family emergency or funeral will need a note from the student's parents to allow their student's participation for that day.

ST JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL WACONIA, MN

C-STEM CATHOLIC | SCIENCE | TECHNOLOGY | ENGINEERING | MATHEMATICS

Anticipated Absence Form

(Appendix A) or https://bit.ly/STJVACATION

Please complete one form for each student who will be absent.

Student: _____ **Parent/Guardian:** _____

Teacher: _____ **Grade:** _____

Dates of Absence: _____ **# School Days:** _____

Reason for Absence:

- ☐ Family Vacation / Travel
- ☐ Non-School Sporting Event
- ☐ Family Event
- ☐ Other: _____

Attendance & Schoolwork

Regular attendance is important to a child's academic success. When students miss school, they miss instruction, classroom activities, assessments, and learning experiences that cannot always be recreated through make-up work.

Please submit this form **at least one week before the anticipated absence whenever possible.** Advance notice does not automatically make an absence excused; administration will determine how the absence is classified according to school policy.

Teachers will provide anticipated assignments **when reasonably possible**. Some work or assessments may need to be completed after the student returns. For excused absences, students generally receive **two school days for each school day absent** to complete missed work unless the teacher establishes a different timeline.

Parent/Guardian Agreement

By signing below, I understand the attendance and academic expectations above and agree to help my child remain current with schoolwork during and following the absence.

Parent Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Office Use Only:

Administration Initial:

_____ Excused

_____ Unexcused

_____ Other:

Date Received: _____

Administrator Signature: _____

Teacher Notes: _____

ST JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL WACONIA, MN

C-STEM CATHOLIC | SCIENCE | TECHNOLOGY | ENGINEERING | MATHEMATICS

Temporary Caregiver Form

(Appendix B) or https://bit.ly/STJCAREGIVER

Please complete this form when a parent/guardian will be out of town and a student will be under the care of another responsible adult. One form may be completed for all children in the family. **PLEASE RECORD ANY EMERGENCY CONTACT CHANGES IN YOUR EDUCATE FAMILY PORTAL.**

Student(s) Information

Name: _____ Parent/Guardian: _____

Teacher: _____ Grade: _____

Dates of Absence: _____ # School Days: _____

Temporary Caregiver Information

Name: _____ Relationship to Student: _____

Primary Phone: _____ Alternate Phone: _____

Email: _____ Address: _____

Parent/Guardian Travel Information

Name: _____

Primary Phone: _____ Alternate Phone: _____

Email: _____ Travel Address: _____

- ☐ I will be available at the contact information above.
- ☐ I may have limited availability. Please contact the temporary caregiver first.

Parent/Guardian Authorization

I authorize St. Joseph Catholic STEM School to communicate with the temporary caregiver listed above regarding routine school matters and emergencies involving my child(ren) during the dates indicated. This temporary authorization does not replace the emergency contacts or other authorizations maintained in the student's permanent school record.

- ☐ Pick up/sign out my child(ren) from school.
- ☐ Receive necessary school communications during my absence.
- ☐ Be contacted if my child is ill or injured.
- ☐ Other: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____