
OCHS

SENIOR YEAR INFORMATION

2019-2020

The purpose of this newsletter is to inform you of services provided by your senior counselor and to give you some guidelines that will help you have a stress-free senior year.

Senior Class Visits

I visit seniors in their Theology classes about once every other week of the school year. Each visit, I pass out pertinent **information such as** Scholarships, important dates coming up and answer any questions they might have for me.

Guidance Passes and Appointments

As Senior Guidance Counselor, it is my job to meet with each senior at least twice to go through your transcript with you and to discuss your college and career plans. The students schedule an appointment with me and are called to the Main Office in the morning and given a guidance pass that indicates the appointment time. Please come to the office at your appointment time. Please try your best to keep your appointment. Show your teacher your pass before class to let him or her know you have an appointment with the guidance office. If your teacher doesn't think you should miss his or her class at that time, just stay in class and I will reschedule your appointment. The best time to schedule an appointment is before school, during lunch, or after school.

The Application Process and Deadlines

When applying for admission to a school, follow these steps:

- Get the application early so that you can educate yourself about the deadline for admission.
- Once you complete the application and enclose the application fee, bring it to Mr. Lowe **two weeks before the postmark deadline in a stamped, addressed envelope. Make sure you have enough postage!!**
- Your application will then be mailed **with an official transcript. All applications must include an official transcript.**

Every post-secondary school has a website and they allow you to apply on-line. Visit school websites to see if you can do so. Your school still needs an official transcript if you apply on-line, so bring Mr. Lowe 2 stamps so your transcript can be mailed. I can email or send transcripts electronically to some schools.

Many schools have deadlines around the same time of the year, so those times are very busy in the guidance office. That is why I ask that you plan to get me your transcript

request two weeks ahead of time. I may not get to your request the day you turn it in, and when I get to it, I may need to ask you a question about it. We could even be hit with a snowstorm or some other natural disaster that would prevent your transcript from getting sent off on time. So, please educate yourself about your deadlines and get those applications turned in early!

Log-In Basket (Main Office)

When a student has a request for a transcript or letter of recommendation, the student should log in their name, date and the purpose of their request on the sign-in sheet in the basket in the main office. This will serve as a tracking system for the application process. Get in the habit of logging in all transcript requests for scholarships or college applications.

Transcripts

Your transcript is a record of all of your courses, their levels of difficulty, and the grades received in those courses. Your transcript also lists your cumulative GPA. An **official transcript** is one that is sent from the school and it is stamped with the school seal. All applications for admission and scholarships require an official transcript, which is why I mail off your applications from school. An **unofficial transcript** is one that is given to the student and is stamped “Given to Student.” If you ask for an unofficial transcript and take it to a school, your application to that school will not be complete until they receive an official transcript from Catholic High.

Letters of Recommendation

Some schools require that letters of recommendation accompany their application. Some may specify that the recommendation come from the school counselor. In that case, I will write your letter. Before I write letters of recommendation, I like to sit down with each student to discuss abilities, goals, activities, etc.—especially if I have not worked with the student much over the past years. In some cases, the application may not specify the person who should write the letter. In that case, I recommend that you get a teacher who knows you well to write the letter. Favorable teacher recommendations make an impression because a teacher sees you almost everyday and knows firsthand your academic abilities, motivations, strengths, weaknesses, etc.

Give your recommendation writer at least **three weeks notice** to get the letter written. That means **you must now get your college applications to find out if you need letters of recommendations and what the deadlines are.** Letters of recommendation take some research as well as much thought and consideration to do a good job. Your teachers and I are very busy and cannot always drop everything to write a letter with a “tomorrow” deadline. Be considerate of your writer’s other responsibilities and give him or her adequate time to do a good job.

Your Letter of Recommendation Request Form that I gave you the first full week of school should help your recommendation writers with their letters.

As a courtesy, you should **write a thank you note to your letter writers**. This is a good habit to get into when anyone does you a favor. :-)

College Visits (See page 9 in the Student Handbook for more on this policy)

Visiting the schools you are considering attending is an important part of the college search process. College is a huge investment—you will be giving much time and money to these schools—so you owe it to yourself and your parents to do as much as you can to assure your choice is right for you.

College visitation days, taken during school time, are counted as excused absences when the following guidelines are followed:

1. Students and/or parents are responsible for setting up the college visitation appointment by contacting the school's admissions office. Some colleges allow appointments to be set up on the school's website. Admissions office phone numbers can also be found on the school's website.
2. It is recommended that contact be made through the Admissions Office of the **college or university** at least 2 weeks in advance so that the admissions office has time to set up the necessary appointments.
3. **Prior to a college visit, and in order for the absence to be excused, students must bring a letter signed by their parents to the OCHS Attendance Office stating the date and college that is to be visited.**
4. Students are required to check into the Attendance Office immediately following the college visit with a **note from the Admissions Office, on the college letterhead, verifying the visit.**
5. Some college appointments will take only part of a day, especially to colleges in Owensboro, and the students will be excused for only part of the day.
6. Students invited for scholarship interviews are to follow the regular college visitation day policy.

Note: College placement tests should be scheduled outside normal school hours.

Not following the above steps could result in an unexcused absence.

Those students who do not wish to have an absence on their record are encouraged to visit colleges on the weekends or on scheduled in-service days. Saturday visitation days are offered by 99.9% of colleges, so if you are unable to visit during the week, investigate when your school is holding a Saturday open house.

ACT/SAT

Nearly all post-secondary institutions require either the ACT or SAT for admission. Most of our students feel comfortable with and take the ACT and some will take both

thinking they may do better on one than the other. It is a myth that “out of state” colleges require the SAT. Most schools will take either one. However, more selective schools may specifically require the SAT. Check on your school’s requirement so that you can register on time for whichever test you need to take.

Some scholarship companies may require that you take the SAT. Be sure to check out the college’s websites for scholarship applications early so that you have time to take care of any “out of the ordinary” requirements.

It is important to remember that a test score is only part of that which determines your ability to succeed in college. Many other factors, such as motivation, work ethic, frame of mind, etc. come into play as well. A low score does not mean you must give up on your dreams — and a high score does not mean you will breeze through college.

ACT/SAT register for both on-line (www.act.org; www.collegeboard.com).

Financial Aid and Scholarships

Financial aid is any type of monetary aid provided you by a third party. Financial aid can come in the form of loans or grants from the state and/or federal governments, bank loans, or scholarships. You must pay back loans; however, you do not have to pay back grants or scholarships. Taking out a loan is not usually tied to one’s grades or family financial situation. Grants are usually based on financial need. Scholarships are usually based on grades or some other special talent, such as artistic or athletic ability. To apply for state and federal aid (doing so is highly recommended for everyone), students must complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). **The FAFSA is made available to students in October and cannot be completed without the completion of the student’s and parent’s tax forms. I will hold a financial aid workshop on October 2nd for parents to assist them in completing the FAFSA.**

A scholarship is a form of financial aid awarded to students who possess a particular talent. That talent may be in the area of academics, athletics, music, debate, etc. A scholarship is free money; students don’t have to pay back money obtained through scholarships. It seems like everyone has heard the phrase, “Millions of dollars of scholarships go unclaimed each year” because students fail to apply to them. I have found that those scholarships that go unclaimed are the ones geared to a very specific group such as “Daviness County residents with a parent employed at xxx industry.” My experience tells me that a student’s best bet in obtaining scholarships is through the colleges themselves (these would be academic based) and through the KEES scholarship program. A few small, local leadership based scholarships become available toward the end of the school year, but most scholarships are academically competitive, meaning the higher your GPA, rank, and ACT, the greater your chance for getting the scholarship.

I see many students who qualify for a scholarship but don’t apply for it thinking that there is someone else applying with better qualifications. You never know what scholarships

you might receive if you don't apply. Let your scholarship mantra be: Apply often and apply early.

Any time you are awarded a scholarship, whether athletic or academic, you should bring that notification with the scholarship amount to my office. The school needs to keep track of the dollar amount of the scholarships offered to our students. We keep track of this regardless of whether you plan to accept the scholarship or not.

It is your responsibility to research scholarship opportunities, get scholarship applications, and meet the deadlines.

WWW.OWENSBOROCATHOLIC.ORG

All senior-related information—scholarships, dates list, special policies, even this information letter—are found on the “Counseling” link of Catholic High’s website. Go to www.owensborocatholic.org, then to the “Owensboro Catholic High School” link, and then to the “Counseling” link.

NCAA Clearinghouse/NAIA Clearing house

The NCAA Clearinghouse and NAIA Clearinghouse are organizations that NCAA/NAIA sanctioned schools contact to find out if a student is eligible to participate in their athletic programs. If you are interested in playing sports at an NCAA/NAIA sanctioned school—whether NCAA Division I, Division II, or Division III/NAIA—you must register with these clearinghouses. You are encouraged to register online at <https://web3.ncaa.org/ecwr3/> or <https://play.mynaia.org>. There is a fee for registering.