



# St. Joseph County ISD Transition Connections Program

## Reaching the Age of Majority

### The Student Handbook and the Parent Handbook

When you turn 18, according to Michigan laws, you reach the age of majority. You are then considered an adult. Another law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, requires that if you are a student with an IEP at age 18, all rights and responsibilities covered by this law are transferred to you as an adult student. The only reason why this would not happen is if the court has given you a guardian.

Every year you will meet with your school's team to develop a program of services and transition called your Individualized Education Program (IEP). Your parents have been doing this with you for several years, but now you will have a new role as a young adult. It is now your own responsibility to speak for yourself and to make decisions about your school services.

It is mandatory that parents receive a "Parent Handbook" describing what special education services are, how services are delivered in our county, and the Procedural Safeguards available. When you turn 17, it is required that you be informed about these same areas. With that in mind, a "Student Handbook" is available for you. Your case manager at your local school will give you one of these handbooks. That person will describe it to you.

In short, the procedure for distributing these handbooks is as follows:

- An informational letter is sent, in the summer by the ISD, to your parent/guardian when you will turn 18 during the next school year
- When the case manager checks the "reaching the age of majority" statement box on the IEP, you will receive the "Student Handbook"
- At the first IEP after you turn 18, you will receive a "Parent Handbook"

For more information, visit the St. Joseph County ISD website at [www.sjcisd.org](http://www.sjcisd.org).

### New Responsibilities

Along with your new rights, come new responsibilities. In order for all of this to work right there are some things that you need to do:

- **Follow timelines:** If you need to respond to the school, you will be told in writing. Don't miss deadlines because they are usually very important.
- **Have goals and ideas:** You will build a good school program on them.
- **Get the support that you need:** If you need help reading letters that are sent to you or help in understanding information, ask someone that you trust.
- **Tell people about yourself, your ideas, and post-school goals:** You are an adult member of the team.
- **Take time to listen:** People will tell you about your strengths and abilities. This can help you and your team work together to make good decisions about your future.
- **Learn about your learning differences:** Learn what helps you to be the most successful in school as well as in life. Listen to what types of accommodations help you the most.
- **Disagreement is OK:** Work with your team to solve any problems. The solutions are there.
- **Be your own advocate:** Get to know yourself and teach others.

**Congratulations on Reaching the Age of Majority!!**