



## Elkhart Memorial Attendance Policy

**Philosophy:** Attendance and participation in class are essential if the student is to gain the maximum benefit of the educational program. Regular and punctual school attendance is expected and enforced. This regular attendance is the joint responsibility of the student and his or her parent(s) or legal guardian(s). In addition the parent or legal guardian is responsible for notifying the school of the reasons for a student's absence according to each school's procedures.

**Reporting Absences:** Parents/guardians are responsible for reporting student absences to the attendance office. Parents/guardians are strongly encouraged to call the attendance office at 574-262-5601 by noon on the day of the absence. For your convenience, the attendance office phone number operates twenty-four hours a day. Parents/guardians who do not have access to a telephone must write a note explaining the reason for the absences and the date(s) of the absence with the parents/guardians signature. Parents/guardians must report their child's absence via a phone call or a written note within 48 hours of the absence. All absences not reported within 48 hours will be considered unexcused absences and/or trancies. Medical and dental appointments will remain unexcused until the doctor/dentist's note is received. Students are not considered emancipated when they reach the age of 18. Parents should understand that they remain legally responsible for reporting absences until the student graduates or becomes legally emancipated. Finally, we encourage parents/guardians to keep a personal record of their child's attendance and to call the attendance office immediately if they have questions or concerns regarding their child's attendance record.

**Absences:** When a student is absent from school, the absences will be recorded as an excused absence, unexcused absence or an exempt absence. The types of absences are defined below.

◆ **Excused Absences:** Include personal illness, serious family illness, family death, approved religious attendance events, approved family-related absences, required military examinations and medical and dental appointments. Medical and dental appointments will remain unexcused until the doctor/dentist's note is received. In addition, the attendance office may require medical verification if the number of absences becomes excessive.

◆ **Exempt Absences:** Include absences due to school sponsored and principal approved activities, required attendance at service club meetings, court appearances in which the students has been subpoenaed, serving as a page or as an honoree of the Indiana General Assembly, active duty with the Indiana National Guard, service on the precinct election board or as a helper to a political candidate or a political party on the date of each general, city or town, special or primary election.

◆ **Unexcused Absences:** An absence not covered under items 1 or 2 above shall be considered an unexcused. For the purpose of the Elkhart County Attendance Program, all unexcused absences are considered absences of concern. Truancy is also considered an unexcused absence.

**Truancy:** Truancy is defined as any absence from school or from any scheduled class without approval. This also includes any student who leaves class or fails to report to class without the permission of the teacher. Unexplained absences will be recorded as trancies.

**Habitual Truancy:** A student who establishes a pattern of unexcused absences during a grading period, semester or school year shall be considered to be an habitual truant and, as such, subject to consequences imposed by the laws of the State of Indiana relative to habitual trancies. Consequences of being designated a habitual truant include, but are not limited to, being referred to the Elkhart County Attendance Program and notifying the Bureau of Motor Vehicles (see BMV Laws below).

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**BMV Laws:** The school is required by law (public law 121-1989, public law 51-1990, and IC. 20-8.1-3-17.2) to notify the Bureau of Motor Vehicles whenever a student has incurred one or more of the violations listed below. (This will result in the driver's license or permit becoming invalid for the specific period of time.)

- ◆ Declared a habitual truant until 18 years of age. The Elkhart Community Schools considers a student a habitual truant when a student has accumulated 10 unexcused absences within a school year (permit will not be issued or driver's license will be invalidated until age 18)
- ◆ Suspended from school twice during the school year (120 days).
- ◆ Expelled or excluded from school for misconduct (length of expulsion).
- ◆ Withdrawn from school for a reason other than financial hardship (until enrolled or 18 years of age).
- ◆ Students may appeal for license revalidation if they can provide one of the following:
  1. Student has demonstrated a pattern of good attendance for 90 school days
  2. Student can demonstrate a hardship need
  3. Student is attending a program for GED and has demonstrated good attendance

**Elkhart County-wide Attendance Program:** All students who are 17 years of age and under are required by the Indiana Compulsory Attendance Law to attend school. When students accumulate absences of concern, they are in violation of the state attendance laws and will be referred to the Elkhart County Attendance Program. This program is a comprehensive approach by the Elkhart County Schools, Elkhart County Juvenile Probation and the Elkhart County Juvenile Court system. Absences of concern include all trancies, non-verified absences, unexcused absences and absences which continue to concern the school principal/designee. Students who accumulate absences of concern in a 12-month period in any Elkhart county school will proceed through the following levels and may also be subjected to disciplinary consequences:

**Level 1: Formal Notification to Parents** – If a student accumulates four (4) absences of concern, the parent/guardian will be formally notified by letter. Upon receipt of the letter it becomes the parent/guardian's responsibility to contact the school to discuss the attendance of his/her child.

**Level 2: Legal Notice** – If subsequent to the completion of Level 1 notification, the student accumulates a total of seven (7) absences of concern, a legal notice will be sent by registered mail to the parent/guardian and copied to Juvenile Probation and/or the Department of Child Services (DCS).

**Level 3: Continuing Absences of Concern** - If subsequent to the completion of Level 2 notification, the student accumulates continuing absences of concern, an attendance hearing will be scheduled with the parent/guardian, student (when appropriate), hearing officer, school administrator and any other concerned individual. The hearing officer will discuss the attendance concerns with the student, parent/guardian, and administrator to identify the factors interfering with regular attendance and resolve the attendance problems. The hearing officer will submit a written summary with recommendations to the parent/guardian, school administrator, Juvenile Probation and/or DCS. He/she will also notify the parent/guardian and student that continued absences will result in a referral to Juvenile Probation or DCS. Failure to attend the attendance hearing will result in advancement to Level 4.

**Level 4: Probation/Department of Child Services** – If subsequent to the completion of the Level 3 hearing, the student accumulates continuing absences of concern, the school will file a violation of legal notice with the Probation office or DCS. The parent/guardian and school representative will receive notification of a mandatory meeting to be held with the Probation Officer or DCS.

**Level 5: Juvenile Court** – If subsequent to the completion of the Level 4 meeting, the student accumulates continuing absences of concern, the school will notify the Probation Officer or DCS that court intervention is indicated.

**Extended Absences:** If a student is absent three (3) or more consecutive days and wishes to obtain assignments, he or she will need to call the guidance office at 574-262-5628 and request assignments for specific days. A twenty-four (24) hour notification must be given to the guidance office prior to picking up work. When a request is made, the student is expected to turn in completed work to the teacher upon return.

**Make-Up Work:** Recognizing that not all educational experiences can be replicated if student absences occur, the student is to assume responsibility for contacting his or her teacher(s) regarding missed assignments. Although all students have the right to make up work due to an absence, teachers shall have the discretion to determine the nature of make-up work, completion deadlines and the possible additional/alternative assignments to be given and will determine the student's classroom grade. It is reasonable to assume that if a student accumulates an excessive number of absences in a class, then the student's grade will be negatively affected due to a lack of participation in the day-to-day classroom instruction and activities.



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## Record keeping:

Students are considered absent under these circumstances:

- ◆ When more than half of class is missed due to appointments outside of school (doctor, probation, dentist, etc.), in the nurses' office or
- ◆ When a student is more than ten (10) minutes tardy to class.

Students are not marked absent if:

- ◆ Their pass is marked "detained;"
- ◆ A student is on a field trip;
- ◆ A school function (Student Government, Athletics, etc); or
- ◆ Summoned to the main office, student office or guidance office.

**Tardiness:** Students are expected to be on time for all classes. If students are not in their assigned classrooms when the tardy bell rings, they will be locked out of their rooms and will receive immediate consequences for being tardy and then sent directly back to class. Since students are allowed eight-minute passing periods, students who are more than ten minutes late to class will be given an unexcused absence for that class period and disciplinary consequences.

**Trips:** Any planned absence (other than medical or dental appointments) such as a college visit or family trip must be approved in advance. The student is responsible for picking up a trip request form from the office. The form must be submitted to the attendance office at least fourteen (14) days prior to the trip. If a trip form is not turned in according to guidelines above the absence will be considered unexcused.

**Arriving/Leaving School During the Day:** Whenever possible, appointments should be scheduled during non-school hours. Parents must give the student office a phone call (262-5640) or a written note **prior to the absence**. The student **must** SIGN IN/OUT of the student office **anytime** he or she arrives/leaves the building during the school day. Prior to a student's leaving the building, he/she must have parental verification of the reason for leaving school and must sign out in the student office. Failure to do so will result in truancy.

A student who becomes ill during the day must get a pass from their teacher to report to the nurse. Should the nurse decide to send the student home, the absence will be considered excused.

**Career Center Students:** ► **Morning Career Center students are expected to be out of the building by 7:47am or face disciplinary consequences.** Students attending EACC classes in the morning will be released from the Career Center at 10:50 a.m. and must report and sign in at the cafeteria at Memorial by 11:00 a.m. Afternoon EACC students may not leave the building until after their "A" lunch has been dismissed at 11:43. Students should not re-enter the building at the end of the day while waiting for their bus.

