

St. Clair County ROE #50
Alternative Education Center, AEC
Student Handbook 2026-2027



Lori Costello, Regional Superintendent
Gegi Ra-El, Assistant Regional Superintendent
Emily Sackett, Principal

Mission Statement

The Alternative Education Center (AEC), a division of the St. Clair County Regional Office of Education No. 50 (ROE), provides educational opportunities for students in grades 5–12 from public schools throughout St. Clair County, Illinois. AEC is unique in its design and implementation and operates in alignment with the guidelines of the Illinois State Board of Education as well as all applicable state and federal laws.

Administration

The Alternative Education Center is administered by St. Clair County Superintendent of Schools Lori Costello and Assistant Superintendent Gegi Ra-El, with Emily Sackett serving as principal.

Student Eligibility

Students in grades 5–12 may be considered for placement at AEC if they meet criteria such as multiple suspensions of 4–10 days for gross misconduct, arrest or court involvement related to school activities, disciplinary reassignment, serious or repetitive misconduct, or prior remediation by the home district. Following referral, AEC administration will work with the student, parent(s)/guardian, and home school officials to develop an Alternative Education Plan. The AEC will define learning and behavioral objectives, outline career goals for high school students, and establish a timeline for attendance at AEC.

Length of Enrollment

Expulsion eligible students are enrolled according to the terms of their expulsion, and continuation from one semester to the next may be revoked if they demonstrate excessive absences, tardies, isolations, or in and out-of-school suspensions during the prior semester. Enrollment at AEC is not guaranteed, and an invitation to enroll may be revoked at any time based on student behavior, attendance concerns, or other factors deemed appropriate by administration staff.

Health Requirements

In accordance with the requirements of the ISBE and IDPH, all students who attend AEC must have up-to-date physicals and immunizations, including dental examinations. All students must have health records up-to-date with their resident districts. Students entering sixth and ninth grades will be required to provide proof of Tdap vaccination along with the school physical forms that are also required for these grades.

Student Medication

Students should not take medication during school hours unless it is necessary for their health and well-being. When a student's licensed health care provider and parent/guardian believe that it is necessary for the student to take medication during school hours, the parent /guardian must provide approval for school personnel to dispense medication to the child and otherwise follow the AEC's procedures on dispensing medication.

No Alternative Education Center Safe School employee shall administer to any student, or supervise student's self-administration of, any prescription or non-prescription medication until a completed and signed **School Medical Authorization Form** is submitted by the student's parent/guardian. No student shall possess or consume any prescription or non-prescription medication on school grounds other than as provided for this policy and its implementing procedures. Nothing in this policy shall prohibit any school employee from providing emergency assistance to students, including administering medication.

Self Administration of Medication/Illness

A student may possess an epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen) and/or medication prescribed for asthma for immediate use at the student's discretion, provided the student's parent/guardian has completed and signed a **School Medical Authorization Form**. The Alternative Education Center Safe School shall incur no liability, except for willful and wanton conduct, as a result of any injury arising from a student's self-administration for medication or epinephrine auto-injector or the storage of any medication by school personnel. A student's parent/guardian must indemnify and hold harmless the Alternative Education Center Safe School and its employees and agents, arising out of a student's self administration of an epinephrine auto-injector and /or medication, or the storage of any medication by school personnel.

Parents must inform the appropriate AEC personnel (secretary, principal, or designee) in the event that a student must take either over-the-counter or prescription medication while at school. Parents must request in writing that AEC dispense such medication using the **Medical Authorization Form**. Medication must be per a physician's order and sent in an original prescription container issued from a pharmacy. In the event that a student becomes ill, is suspected of having a medical concern, or requires first aid while at the Alternative Education Center Safe School the building administrator or designee will assess his/her condition. Information provided on the Emergency Contact Form will be used to contact parents or their designee in the event it is necessary to apprise them of their child's condition, recommended treatment, and/or to make arrangements to send him/her home.

Medication

All prescription medications must be in their original container and must be stored in the office. A medication disbursement form must be completed by the student's doctor.

All over-the-counter medications must be provided to the school in the unopened packaging in which it was purchased and will be stored in the office. Parent permission, in writing, must be completed prior to disbursement of this type of medication.

Medications may not be carried throughout the school or shared with others. Failure to follow these rules could lead to consequences, including suspension or removal from the program.

Visitation Policy

Every effort will be made to protect student privacy. The Alternative Education Center will adhere to the Illinois School Student Records Act and the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). A student's identity will not be disclosed for any reason without signed consent from a parent or guardian. All visitors must report to the office upon arrival. A log will be maintained that includes the visitor's name, date, time, and purpose of the visit. Visitors will be issued a badge and are expected to wear it visibly at all times. Staff are expected to address any unidentified individuals and direct them to the office. The building principal reserves the right to approve all group visits, including those affiliated with universities or other organizations.

Students Equal Education Opportunity

Schools must provide all students the opportunity to receive a quality education. Each student has the right of access to a professional staff and the facilities necessary for instructional programs. Students who actively participate in these programs will benefit. AEC does not discriminate among its students on the basis of race, sex, color, disability, religion, or national origin. Policies expressly prohibit behavior at the Alternative Education Center that will disrupt the educational process and/or damage the dignity, self-esteem, integrity and safety of any individual.

Rights to Access Educational Resources

A student has the right to be informed of school rules and classroom rules. A student is entitled to be informed of the academic requirements of courses, to be advised of progress, and to have opportunities for assistance. Grades should reflect a teacher's objective evaluation of a student's academic achievement. Students have the right to use the building grounds, equipment, and instructional materials necessary to meet the requirements and needs of their curricular programs in accordance with procedures established by the administration. The student

exercising the right to use the resources provided shall also accept the responsibility for the preservation and care of the property. Any unauthorized use of deliberate destruction or defacing of the property shall be deemed in violation of student conduct.

Privacy and Property Rights

Students are entitled to maintain privacy of personal possessions within certain limits and are responsible for those personal possessions. A student may not bring onto school property any substance, object, or material prohibited by law or school policy. School officials may inspect such items on school property at any time with or without specific reason to do so. In addition, school officials may search a student's person or personal possessions, such as backpacks, purses, and cars parked on school grounds, if school officials have a reasonable suspicion that the search will reveal the presence of prohibited or illegal materials.

Freedom of Expression

Every student has the right to form, hold and express his or her own ideas and beliefs. The encouragement of this right requires that each student be permitted to disclose and express an idea in the proper educational setting without penalty, embarrassment, or any reflection in academic evaluation. The administration and faculty have the obligation to maintain an environment conducive to the free exchange of ideas and to study and learning. This is not to be construed to mean that students will not be graded for their acquisition of information, its organization into useful systems, and generalizations or conclusions drawn from it. Students are permitted to express themselves, as long as the expression does not materially and substantially disrupt the operation of the school, is not vulgar, obscene, or profane and otherwise complies with the law, and school policy. Obscene, vulgar, and profane expressions of any kind and any expression that advertises or promotes the use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco are prohibited. No form of expression shall interfere with the rights of others to express themselves or with the conduct of school or classroom activities.

Student Responsibilities

Be on time: punctuality is a demonstration of responsibility which will directly affect lifelong experiences, including careers, appointments, etc. When a student enters the classroom tardy, the student has not only missed opportunities to gain the most knowledge through lessons presented, they are also potentially interfering with others opportunities to learn due to distraction. Development and demonstration of this sense of responsibility will provide great effects for success of future endeavors.

Be prepared: students must have appropriate materials for class; assignments, writing utensils, additional class supplies, etc. Students must be alert and ready to learn to achieve the greatest levels of success.

Demonstrate responsibility by completing all in-class and homework assignments, reports, essays, projects, etc. and meet all deadlines.

Education is most effective when students participate in class and complete all requirements.

Abide by school rules: all students have the right to an education without interference. Rules and regulations are designed to promote a positive environment to enhance learning, thus must be followed.

Be cooperative: every community depends upon its citizens to uphold the rules by which everyone has agreed to live. Demonstration of cooperation provides for safety and well being of students and staff alike. Working together assists with progress in endeavors which will create a strong foundation for short and long term goals.

Respect Self, Others and Property: being respectful starts with oneself. Following dress code, demonstrating personal hygiene, and completing required tasks asked will allow for the foundation of a solid and positive self-esteem. Being respectful to others through the use of appropriate language, tone and personal space, demonstrates the ability to listen, and also then be heard. Being respectful to property, including utilizing materials dedicated to personal use, as well as leaving the environment in the same, if not better condition as initially utilized, will allow for the continuous use of space for future citizens. Safety of self and others is a primary focus and unsafe demonstrations will not be tolerated. Assessment and then appropriate consequences will be utilized. Any damage to property will not be tolerated and result in the student being held responsible for their actions.

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Demonstrate responsibility by seeing that school correspondence to parents reaches home on a daily basis.

Education is a partnership between home and school. Students must demonstrate responsibility by doing their part by delivering daily correspondence, progress reports, attendance information, report cards, and any other school correspondence. This also allows for the communication to be maintained with families and the school personnel on a consistent basis.

Smart Device Policy (Cell Phones, Earbuds, Smartwatches, etc.)

All personal devices, including cell phones, smartwatches, wireless earbuds/headphones, and any non-district-issued devices capable of connecting to cellular, Wi-Fi, or Bluetooth, must be turned off upon arrival to school.

Students are not permitted to have these devices with them during the school day unless specific permission is granted by a staff member.

All devices must remain off and will be stored in the office until the end of the school day.

1st Offense:

Staff submits the device to the office, a warning is issued to the student, and the device will be returned at the end of the school day.

2nd Offense:

Staff submits the device to the office and the device is returned to a guardian/parent.

3rd Offense:

Staff will submit the device to the office. The device will be released only to the student's parent/guardian. The amount of ISS time served will be determined by AEC Administration.

4th Offense or More:

Staff will submit the device to the office. The device will be released only to the student's parent/guardian. A parent/guardian conference will be required, and the amount of ISS time served will be determined by AEC Administration.

Personal Bag Policy

AEC is not responsible for personal items that are lost, stolen, or damaged on school property. Students are strongly discouraged from bringing valuable, fragile, or irreplaceable items to school. Personal belongings such as backpacks, bags, purses, wallets, athletic bags, and phones should be left at home whenever possible; if brought to school, they will be stored in an unsecured area and are brought at the student's own risk. Coats, hoodies, and lunches (if applicable) will be stored in the office until the end of the school day.

Food / Drink Policy

Food may not be eaten outside the cafeteria unless a staff member grants permission. Students are not allowed to bring open snack or candy bags, bottles, or drink containers into the school. Sealed items are allowed but must be stored in the office and can be accessed at lunch. This policy supports a clean, safe, and distraction-free learning environment. Unauthorized items may be confiscated and returned at the end of the day.

Internet Use Policy

The internet is a tool to be utilized by the AEC students strictly for educational research and study. If a student desires to do an educational search he/she must first obtain permission from a staff member. Secondly, students shall refrain from all sites that contain any nudity, profanity, gang activity, drug usage, physical violence, weapons and any others deemed inappropriate by AEC Staff. To be allowed to access the internet, students and their parents/guardians are required to sign the Internet Acceptable Form to confirm the use of the internet will be for school research purposes only as well as accept the terms and conditions of the internet policy.

Online Conduct Procedures

If a student is found accessing an inappropriate website, the following disciplinary steps may be taken, depending on the nature and severity of the behavior. Administration reserves the right to adjust consequences as appropriate.

First Offense: Verbal warning and immediate direction to exit the site.

Second Offense: Loss of internet access for 5 school days.

Third and Subsequent Offenses: Consequences will be determined by AEC/Safe School Administration or designee and may include, but are not limited to, extended or permanent loss of internet privileges, suspension, and/or possible removal from the program.

Philosophy of Student Conduct

The Alternative Education Center Safe School is committed to fostering an environment centered on respect, responsibility, and cooperation. Demonstrating these values helps prepare students for success in their education and future endeavors while maintaining a safe and secure setting. Clear guidelines are in place and are expected to be followed. Violations of these expectations will result in consequences appropriate to the circumstances.

Dress Code

Student dress and appearance should reflect standards appropriate for the school environment. Clothing and personal hygiene must not disrupt the educational process or pose a health or safety concern. Students who are not in compliance will be required to make appropriate adjustments. In partnership with families, the school promotes the importance of being clean, appropriately dressed, and free from distractions to learning. Final decisions regarding dress code compliance are at the discretion of school officials. If necessary, parents/guardians may be contacted to provide a change of clothes, or students may be sent home to change.

Additional Expectations:

- All students must wear tennis shoes while in the gym.
- No hoodies, coats, and or jackets will be allowed to be worn.
- No headgear, including ski caps, beanies, and or face masks.
- Students' faces must be visible to staff.

Students are expected to wear tennis shoes for P.E. Students who do not wear appropriate footwear will not be permitted to participate for the day and will receive a zero for their daily participation grade. AEC will communicate with parents/guardians if dress code expectations are not met. Dress code guidelines are in place to ensure the safety of all students and staff; continued violations may result in further disciplinary action, including possible removal from the program.

Bullying, Harassment, and Intimidation Policy

The St. Clair County Regional Office of Education (ROE 50) is committed to ensuring every student is educated in a positive, safe, caring, and respectful learning environment. Such an environment supports student achievement, encourages personal growth, and fosters a sense of community that promotes responsible citizenship. To support this commitment, bullying in any form will not be tolerated.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying occurs when a student or group of students engages in behavior such as intimidation or harassment that causes physical harm to a student, damages property, or creates a reasonable fear of harm or damage. It may be severe, persistent, or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, threatening, or abusive environment, and often involves a real or perceived imbalance of power or strength. In some cases, bullying behavior may also constitute a violation of the law.

Bullying may take many forms, including but not limited to verbal, written, or graphic actions such as name-calling, derogatory comments, rumor spreading, extortion, or cyber-bullying. It may also involve social exclusion or intentional isolation, physical actions such as pushing, hitting, kicking, shoving, or spitting, as well as the theft of or damage to personal property.

Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying includes any bullying behavior carried out through electronic technology or communication devices, including phones, social media, school networks, or personal devices.

Harassment and Intimidation

Harassment is intentional behavior that is disturbing or threatening and may include stalking, hazing, social exclusion, name-calling, unwanted physical contact, or unwelcome verbal or written communication. It may be related to factors such as race, religion, sexual orientation, cultural background, economic status, or personal appearance. Intimidation is intentional behavior that places another student in fear of harm to themselves or their property. It may be physical or emotional and can occur directly, indirectly, or through electronic means.

Reporting and Response

Bullying is prohibited on school grounds and through the use of school or personal electronic devices. Students who believe they or others are being bullied are encouraged to report concerns to any staff member. School personnel will maintain appropriate confidentiality when addressing reports. Retaliation against anyone who reports bullying will not be tolerated and will result in disciplinary action. Submitting a false report may also result in disciplinary consequences, up to and including suspension or expulsion. When appropriate, law enforcement will be notified if there is a reasonable belief that an incident violates the law.

Physical Contact Policy

The Alternative Education Center Safe School maintains a no physical contact policy for students. Students are not permitted to engage in any form of physical contact while on school premises, including handshakes or similar gestures, unless specifically authorized.

Violation of this policy may result in disciplinary action, including suspension. Continued violations may lead to additional consequences, in accordance with school policies and at the discretion of the principal or designee.

Drugs, Alcohol, Tobacco, and Weapons Policy

Possession or Sale of Drugs/Alcohol and Look-Alike Drugs

If a student is found in possession of, purchasing, or selling illegal drugs, look-alike substances, or alcohol on school property, the student will be suspended and may be administratively transferred back to their home school. Parents/guardians will be notified by phone and provided written documentation of the offense and their rights. Confiscated substances will be destroyed by AEC staff or turned over to law enforcement. The School Resource Officer (SRO) may be contacted, and if necessary, the student may be removed from campus.

Drug or Tobacco Paraphernalia

If a student is found in possession of drug or tobacco paraphernalia, the items will be confiscated and destroyed. The student will receive a suspension, and parents/guardians will be notified. Repeated offenses may result in additional consequences, including required substance abuse counseling and possible administrative transfer back to the home school.

Drug Related Searches

Student searches may be conducted when there is reasonable suspicion that a student is in possession of drugs, alcohol, or related paraphernalia, is under the influence, or has a history of such behavior.

Suspected Impairment

If staff have reasonable cause to believe a student is under the influence of drugs or alcohol, administration and/or designated staff will assess the student and determine appropriate next steps.

Drug-Related Discussions

Students who engage in conversations that promote or encourage the use, abuse, or sale of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco may be subject to disciplinary action as determined by AEC administration.

Tobacco Use

Student use of tobacco is prohibited on school property. Illinois law prohibits the use of tobacco by students, staff, or visitors on school grounds at any time. This includes school buildings, parking lots, buses, and all school-related areas. Students found smoking, holding tobacco products (lit or unlit), or in the presence of others actively smoking may be subject to disciplinary action.

Weapons Policy

Students are prohibited from possessing, using, controlling, or transferring any weapon or object that could reasonably be considered a weapon. This includes, but is not limited to, firearms, knives, rifles, shotguns, brass knuckles, and billy clubs. Items such as bats, pipes, bottles, locks, sticks, pencils, scissors, and pens may also be considered weapons if used or intended to cause harm.

Any student found in violation of this policy will face expulsion for a period of at least one calendar year, in accordance with state law. The Regional Superintendent may modify the length of expulsion on a case-by-case basis. The principal or designee will notify law enforcement or the juvenile justice system when a student brings a firearm or weapon to school.

Law Enforcement Reporting

The Alternative Education Center Principal and/or School Resource Officer (SRO) will coordinate meetings, as needed, between school officials and local law enforcement to share relevant information.

The Police Department and AEC Safe School administration/SRO will communicate regarding the following student-related activities:

- Unlawful use of weapons (Section 24-1 of the Criminal Code of 1961)

- Violations of the Illinois Controlled Substances Act
- Violations of the Cannabis Control Act
- Forcible felonies as defined in Section 2-8 of the Criminal Code of 1961

Reports should include the student's name and a description of the suspected criminal activity. Local law enforcement must provide written certification that any information received from the school will not be disclosed to other parties, except as permitted by state law, without prior written consent from the student's parent/guardian.

Reports should be made as soon as possible once the AEC Administrator has reasonable suspicion that a student is involved in such activity. The duty to report applies only when the activity occurs on school property.

The State's Attorney will provide the Regional Superintendent with a copy of any delinquency disposition involving offenses that would be considered a felony if committed by an adult, or a Class A misdemeanor involving weapons violations under Sections 24-1, 24-3, 24-3.1, or 24-5 of the Criminal Code.

Local law enforcement will provide arrest records, and the State's Attorney will provide conviction records, to the Regional Superintendent for any student arrested or taken into custody after their 17th birthday.

Discipline Procedures and Expectations Policy

In order to safeguard the rights of students, while at the same time creating a safe, orderly learning environment, Alternative Ed Center has adopted the following discipline policy.

These procedures are also therapeutic in nature and are based upon the Alternative Ed Center philosophy. They are devised to provide the most positive learning experience while at the same time teaching students self-control, responsibility and personal accountability.

If a student exhibits inappropriate behavior, the following steps will be taken, unless the severity of the behavior precludes the use of some of the less intrusive methods listed below.

Knowledge of Policy and Procedures

Parents/guardians will receive a copy of AEC policies and procedures prior to or upon student admission. Upon enrollment, students will have all policies, procedures, rules, and expectations clearly explained by AEC Safe School administration. Students will have the opportunity to ask questions to ensure understanding. A signed agreement from both the student and parent/guardian is required prior to enrollment.

Disciplinary Procedures

When inappropriate behavior occurs, staff will address the behavior by providing a clear explanation of why it is inappropriate, along with the related expectations and consequences. A verbal warning may be issued if the behavior continues.

Physical Education

If a student's behavior or physical condition prevents participation in physical education, the student will be required to complete an alternative P.E. assignment.

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)

Students may be assigned an out-of-school suspension for behavior that poses a danger to themselves, others, or school property, or for actions that significantly disrupt the learning environment or violate school policy. Administration may also assign suspension for continued non-compliance. After the first OSS, the home school will be notified. If the home school determines the student is not benefiting from the program, they may request the student's removal, and AEC administration will comply.

Suspension Due Process:

- Oral notice of the policy violation
- An explanation of the evidence
- An opportunity to share their perspective

The length and terms of suspension will be determined by AEC administration based on the severity of the incident.

Removal from the Program may be recommended when:

- A student's behavior significantly declines and another placement is more appropriate
- A student's behavior consistently disrupts the learning environment for others
- Previous interventions and consequences have not resulted in improved behavior

A total of 12 days of out-of-school suspension within one semester will result in removal from the program.

Student Interviews, Searches, and Arrests Searches

School officials may question students regarding matters related to school without limitation. Parents/guardians will be contacted if the student is subject to discipline for a serious offense

Child Abuse Allegations

If a child protective service worker or police officer comes to campus to interview a student regarding suspected abuse, AEC Safe School personnel will cooperate fully with the investigation.

Law Enforcement Interviews

If law enforcement requests to interview a student regarding an incident that occurred outside of school or involving suspected abuse, the student's parent/guardian will be notified when appropriate. When law enforcement is on campus at the request of school officials, parents/guardians will be notified if the student is taken into custody or is subject to disciplinary action for a serious offense.

Student Searches

School officials and the School Resource Officer (SRO) may conduct searches when there is reasonable suspicion that a student possesses:

- Contraband prohibited by school policy or law.
- An item that poses an immediate threat to health or safety.
- Property that is not lawfully in the student's possession.

School lockers, desks, and other student storage areas remain school property and may be inspected at any time.

Student vehicles parked or operated on school property may be searched when there is reasonable suspicion that they contain prohibited or dangerous items. Reasonable efforts will be made to notify the student's parent/guardian, and the vehicle owner, if different from the student.

Personal searches may be conducted in a private setting and may include:

- Pockets, shoes, and socks.
- Personal belongings (e.g., backpacks, purses, briefcases).
- Pat-down searches conducted by a staff member of the same sex with an adult witness present.

If circumstances require a more intrusive search, school officials may contact local law enforcement or the SRO.

Items discovered during a search may be confiscated and returned to a parent/guardian, used as evidence in school disciplinary proceedings, turned over to law enforcement, or destroyed, as appropriate.

Alternative Education Center Safe School Program

As a condition of enrollment, students may be required to participate in daily or random searches based on individual circumstances. This requirement will be documented in writing and agreed upon by the student and parent/guardian during the intake process. Refusal to comply with required searches may result in the student's ineligibility for the Alternative Education Center Safe School Program.

Search Warrants

School officials will cooperate with law enforcement officers who present a valid search warrant and will not interfere with the execution of the warrant.

Arrests

When law enforcement arrives with a warrant, subpoena, or lawful authority to take a student into custody, school staff will verify the officer's identification and assist in locating the student. Unless directed otherwise by law enforcement, school officials will make reasonable efforts to notify the student's parent/guardian of the arrest and, if known, the student's location.

Gang Activity

The Alternative Education Center prohibits gang-related activity or affiliation that disrupts the educational environment or threatens the safety of students, staff, or school property. Prohibited items and behaviors include, but are not limited to, gang-related clothing, symbols, hand signs, graffiti, jewelry, accessories, drawings, or other displays that indicate or promote gang membership or affiliation

Police Involvement

The Alternative Education Center is committed to maintaining a safe and orderly learning environment. Law enforcement may be contacted when a student's actions involve serious safety concerns or suspected criminal activity, including but not limited to:

- Physical aggression toward a staff member.
- Physical aggression toward another student.
- Possession or use of controlled substances or alcohol.
- Possession of a weapon or other dangerous item.
- Violent, threatening, or severely disruptive behavior.

Parents/guardians will be notified as soon as reasonably possible whenever law enforcement is involved. Students may be suspended pending investigation, and a parent/guardian may be required to attend a disciplinary conference before the student returns to school.

Students who assault staff, endanger others, or cause significant damage to property may also be referred to law enforcement and/or face additional school disciplinary action. Each incident will be reviewed individually, with appropriate consequences based on the circumstances.

Student Transcripts

Student transcripts are issued at the end of each quarter (approximately every nine weeks) to report academic progress, effort, and behavior.

Grading Scale:

A 100 - 90	A = Superior
B 89 - 80	B = Good, Above Average
C 79 - 70	C = Average
D 69 - 60	D = Below average, yet passing
F 59 - below	F = Failing
	P = Passed Course Objective
	I = Incomplete

Parent Conferences & Progress Reports

Parent-teacher conferences are held twice yearly at mid-semester. Progress reports will be provided during conferences. Report cards will be issued at the 1st and 3rd quarter conferences and mailed home following the 2nd and 4th quarters.

Attendance Policy

Parents/guardians must report absences by calling the Alternative Education Center at 618-233-6874 by 9:00 A.M. and provide the student's name, reason for absence, and a contact number. A signed note must also be provided when the student returns. Failure to provide notification will result in an unexcused absence.

Students may receive up to **four (4) excused absences per semester** for illness with parent notification. Additional excused absences require a doctor's note.

Unexcused absences will result in the following consequences:

- **3 unexcused absences:** Parent/guardian notification and home school.
- **6 unexcused absences:** Parent/guardian notification and home school.
- **9 unexcused absences:** Parent/guardian notification, home school, and St. Clair County Truancy Coordinator.

Students arriving after **8:50 A.M.** will be marked absent for ½ day unless the tardy is due to school transportation.

Students may not leave school grounds without approval from Alternative Education Center administration.

Students who attend school but refuse to participate, complete work, or engage appropriately may be required to attend a meeting with their parent/guardian and Alternative Education Center administration.

Attendance Reporting

Attendance is recorded daily and shared with the student's home school monthly. Attendance records become part of the student's educational record.

Tardiness Policy

Students must be checked in and inside the building by 8:35 A.M. Students arriving after this time will be marked tardy. Tardies are recorded and shared with the student's home school monthly. Tardy records become part of the student's educational record. Excused tardies may be granted for late school transportation or circumstances approved by administration.

Excessive Tardiness Consequences: Parent/Guardian Conference

Transportation, Arrival & Departure Policy

Students may arrive between 8:00 A.M. and 8:35 A.M. and must be picked up by 2:15 P.M. Staff supervision is not provided before 8:00 A.M. or after 3:00 P.M. Students remaining after 3:00 P.M. may be released to the Belleville Police Department for safety purposes.

Upon arrival, students must enter the building and report to their assigned area under staff supervision. Students must ride their assigned transportation unless prior approval is provided.

Changes to transportation require:

- A written note from a parent/guardian submitted the morning of the change.
- A valid contact phone number for verification.
- Parent/guardian pickup must occur inside the school building.

Students riding home with another student must have written permission from both students' parents/guardians on file. Students are not permitted to be in or near another student's vehicle before or after school.

Transportation arrangements established during intake will remain in place unless these procedures are followed and approval is granted.

Breakfast & Lunch Program

Breakfast and lunch are provided free of charge to all Alternative Education Center students through the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) Program.

Breakfast is served from **8:00–8:30 A.M.** Students arriving after 8:30 A.M. will not be served breakfast unless the late arrival is due to school transportation.

Weather & Emergency School Closings

School closures due to weather or emergencies will be determined by the Superintendent in consultation with appropriate officials. School may close when travel conditions are unsafe or when extreme weather conditions create a safety concern.

Closure and early dismissal announcements will be shared through official school communication channels, Facebook, and local media by **7:15 A.M.** unless otherwise noted. If no announcement is made, school will operate as scheduled.

Early dismissal will only occur when emergency conditions require it. Parents/guardians will be notified through the same communication channels. Families are asked not to call radio stations, transportation providers, or the school so phone lines remain available for emergencies.

Residency Policy

Students attending the St. Clair County Regional Office of Education Alternative Education Center Safe School must be enrolled in their current resident home school district. The home school district is responsible for verifying residency according to district requirements. If a student's address changes while attending AEC, the home school district will be notified.

Asbestos Notification

The Alternative Education Center has completed an asbestos inspection and maintains an asbestos management plan in compliance with U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) regulations. The plan outlines procedures to minimize asbestos exposure. The inspection and management plan are available for public review in the school administrative office during regular school hours (8:00 A.M.–3:00 P.M.).

Compliance with Federal & State Laws and Regulations

The St. Clair County Regional Office of Education Alternative Education Center Safe School operates in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws, regulations, and district policies, including nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements.

Student Rights & Legal Protections

AEC Safe School complies with applicable laws, including:

- Care of Students with Diabetes Act: Parents/guardians must provide a Diabetes Care Plan for students requiring diabetes care assistance at school.
- Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) & Illinois Student Records Act: Student records are maintained confidentially. Parents/guardians and eligible students have the right to inspect, review, request amendments, and control the disclosure of student records as permitted by law.
- Title VI of the Civil Rights Act: Prohibits discrimination based on race, color, or national origin.
- Title IX of the Education Amendments: Prohibits discrimination based on sex.
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act: Protects qualified individuals with disabilities from discrimination.
- McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act: Ensures homeless children and youth have access to enrollment, attendance, and educational opportunities.

Student Records & Privacy Rights (FERPA)

Parents/guardians and students age 18 or older have the right to:

- Inspect and copy educational records.
- Request correction of inaccurate or misleading records.
- Request removal of eligible college entrance exam scores from transcripts.
- Approve or deny disclosure of personally identifiable information, except when permitted by law.
- Receive notice before records are destroyed.
- Restrict the release of directory information.
- File a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education regarding FERPA violations.

Educational records may be shared without consent when allowed by law, including with school officials with legitimate educational interests, transferring schools, or when required for health, safety, or legal purposes.

Directory Information

AEC Safe School may release directory information unless a parent/guardian or eligible student submits a written request restricting its release. Directory information may include:

- Student name, address, and grade level.
- Parent/guardian contact information.
- Awards, honors, activities, and organizations.
- Photographs or videos used for school-related purposes.
- Dates of attendance and program participation.

Parents/guardians may also request that student information not be released to military recruiters or institutions of higher learning without prior written consent.

Student Surveys & Privacy

Parents/guardians may review and decline participation in third-party surveys or evaluations involving personal information. Students will not be penalized for exercising this right.

Surveys requesting information regarding personal beliefs, family relationships, mental health, religious practices, political beliefs, illegal behaviors, or other protected information will comply with federal privacy protections.

Homeless Student Services

AEC Safe School follows the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and works to identify and support students experiencing homelessness.

Offender Community Notification

Parents/guardians are notified that information regarding registered sex offenders and violent offenders against youth is available through the Illinois State Police registries.

Military Recruiter Access

Federal law requires schools to provide military recruiters and institutions of higher learning access to student names, addresses, and phone numbers upon request unless the parent/guardian or eligible student submits a written request restricting release.

Video Surveillance

AEC Safe School uses video surveillance to support the safety and security of students, staff, visitors, and school property. Cameras may be located in common areas, hallways, entrances, classrooms, parking areas, and other areas permitted by law. Cameras will not be placed in areas where individuals have a reasonable expectation of privacy, such as restrooms.

Surveillance recordings may be reviewed by authorized school personnel and may be used to investigate incidents, address violations of school policy, support disciplinary decisions, and assist law enforcement when appropriate. Recordings will be maintained in accordance with applicable laws and records retention requirements.

Nondiscrimination Statement

AEC Safe School prohibits discrimination and harassment based on race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or any other protected status under applicable federal and state laws.

For questions regarding student records, privacy rights, or legal protections, contact the Alternative Education Center administration.