



**Elim Christian School**

***PARENT  
HANDBOOK***

*Revised August 2019*

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## **Elim's Mission**

**Our mission is to equip people with disabilities to pursue their God-given potential by offering person-centered services and partnering with their communities.**

## **Elim Christian School Core Values**

We Are Christ Centered.

We All Have Value & Purpose

We are a Learning & Sharing Community.

### ***Educational services are provided for children who:***

- Are ages 3 to 21 and are classified as having intellectual disabilities, physical impairments (PI), other health impairments (OHI), autism, traumatic brain injury (TBI), multiple impairments (MI), and learning disabilities (LD);
- Need speech therapy, physical therapy, occupational therapy, counseling, or assistive technology to benefit from educational placement;
- Desire to participate fully in student life through music, art, and recreational activities;
- value friendships with peers of comparable abilities and social skills.

### ***Beliefs regarding those whom we serve:***

- Each person possesses intrinsic worth as an image-bearer of God and shall be treated with dignity and respect.
- Each person is a valued member in society and shall be taught to participate in it.
- Partnership with the home, the church, and the school contribute to a positive community where strong family values are incorporated.
- Friendships are formed with significant others on the basis of mutuality and interest.
- A compassionate, cooperative, and safe environment is necessary to instill a sense of respect and responsibility for self, for others, and for property.
- The agency mission shall be practiced in order to encourage, affirm, and motivate each person to serve God and neighbor.
- Each person has a right to be included in community life and to participate in decisions when that is possible.
- Appropriate governing policies and fiscal responsibility are necessary to insure maximum service through Board-approved programs that benefit persons served.

## **Program and Objectives**

The school program focuses on providing an individualized Christian special education to prepare children to function at a level within society commensurate with their abilities. Elim serves children ages 3 to 21 with intellectual and developmental delays. Services provided include individualized educational instruction, vocational training, related services (physical and occupational therapy, speech and language therapy) as designated in students' IEPs, social work services, behavioral services, transitional services, nursing services, adaptive physical education, vision and hearing screening, and limited transportation. The Pathways (autism) program also includes recreational. Dietary and food services are available.

## **Admission**

To be admitted to Elim Christian School, a child must be between the ages of 3 and 21, must qualify for special education services within the categories Elim is approved to serve, and match an appropriate opening in the school program.

The admission process begins with an initial inquiry by parents/guardians or by school district. To inquire about admission to Elim Christian School please call 708-293-6580 or email [admissions@elimcs.org](mailto:admissions@elimcs.org).

## **Termination Procedures**

If an enrolled child appears to have educational, physical, medical, or behavioral needs that cannot be met at Elim Christian School, the following procedures will result:

1. The Director of Children's Services will request that an IEP meeting be held with representatives from the child's school district, appropriate Elim staff, and the child's parents/guardian. The child's total program is reviewed at this conference, and a joint decision made regarding the appropriateness of continuing placement at Elim.
2. Appropriate Elim staff will carry out changes in the child's IEP that are recommended by the staffing team.
3. Should it be determined that the child requires a different educational placement, services at Elim Christian School would be terminated after twenty school days with written notification to the school district and parent/guardian. The Director of Children's Services will implement this procedure.

## **Evaluation and Parent Conferences**

Contact between parents and teachers is essential to the child's progress. It is the teacher's responsibility to evaluate the child's progress daily and to share this information with the parents at least four times a year. Thus, progress reports are mailed to parents quarterly with updated IEP goals. In addition, individual parent conferences are scheduled in the fall with each family in order to explain the child's program. Teachers will send letters weekly. Periodic notes and telephone calls are also utilized to maintain contact between the school and the home. The IEP team will be convened yearly to write a new IEP.

# Curriculum of Elim Christian School

Elim's curriculum is intended for students with moderate to severe developmental disabilities ages 3 through 21. It is devoted to the content areas that directly prepare our students to be able to function in real-world situations; independent living, self-determination, self-advocacy, self-management, vocational, recreation/leisure and community integration. Our curriculum includes skills that are embedded throughout all aspects of a student's educational program and include the following skills:

- Development of functional communication
- Development of functional academic skills
- Development of social skills
- Addressing sensory, gross and fine motor skills

Elim's curriculum is written to ensure that all students are exposed to the same standards as their general education peers. The curriculum is based upon the Dynamic Learning Maps – Essential Elements, the Illinois Learning Standards for Social Science and upon the Illinois Social and Emotional Learning Standards. As students progress from one course to the next, increases should occur in the complexity of material and the tasks completed. Most importantly, there is an intentional focus on the increase in student independence in the application of the content taught. Additionally, it is assumed that students will be provided with materials and tasks that are appropriate with both their age and their developmental level.

## PROM

### Student Expectations and Parent Information

- All Elim students attending prom must be 16 years old and in a high school program by the day of prom.
- Any students that age out of the Crossroads/Pathways program between the start of school and the beginning of the December break will not attend prom unless going as a date with an enrolled Elim student.
- Elim students must complete a Parent/Student Prom Agreement Form.
- Students may attend with or without a date. If a student is attending with a date, the Guest Prom Agreement Form must be completed. The guest must be between the ages of 16-25 years of age. Any agreements made concerning dates are a student/family matter. Date issues are not a faculty concern unless it proves to be disruptive to prom or the school day.
  - Students may bring a date from another school providing the date adheres to Elim's prom procedure.
  - If the prom guest requires assistance from a caregiver, the assistant principal must give approval. If approval was granted, the prom guest is required to pay for the caregiver's prom ticket.
- Students are not allowed to attend prom with a caregiver unless given special permission by the assistant principal. Elim staff will provide adequate coverage for the event.
- All prom tickets must be purchased by the deadline. Late payments will not be accepted. The Prom Parent/Student Agreement Form must accompany prom payments.
- Prom is an extra-curricular activity. Students who are suspended or who are experiencing extreme problematic behaviors may be excluded from prom. If a student is suspended from school the day of prom, he/she may not attend prom that evening.
- Refunds cannot be given once the final count has been given to the banquet facility. If a refund is requested, the request must be in writing and addressed to the assistant principal. Refunds will not be given for suspensions.

- The Elim student must be in attendance for more than half the school day of prom in order to attend prom that evening. Parents may request an early dismissal for students that may require extra time to prepare; however, students should stay in attendance until 11:30 am unless special permission was granted.
- Prom doors will open 15 minutes prior to the start of the event. All parents will be asked to leave after the 15-minute welcoming time.
- Parents may return at 9:45 pm to enjoy the festivities and take photos. Prom will end promptly at 10:00 pm.
- Students are expected to dress in a manner reflective of a Christian young adult.
  - Suggested attire for gentlemen is a shirt with tie and dress pants, suit, or tuxedo.
  - Young ladies may wear long or knee-length dresses. Dresses are to be modest and not revealing. Young women wearing inappropriate attire will be asked to wear a covering over the dress if the administration feels the dress does not reflect appropriate modesty. Concerns about dresses can be brought to the prom chairperson or teacher prior to the event, to ensure there will be no misunderstandings that evening.
  - Dates attending are held to the same standards as Elim students.
- All students must stay at prom until 10:00 pm unless arrangements are made with the student's teacher. Students will be released to their parents or an adult indicated on the Parent Agreement Form.
- Elim staff will NOT administer medications during prom. If a student needs to have medication administered, it must be done before or after prom.
- Elim staff will follow individual student-feeding plans according to their documented Elim feeding plans.
- If there is an emergency during prom, Elim staff will utilize the emergency number listed on the Parent Agreement Form to notify to appropriate individuals.

## Graduation

Elim holds two ceremonies each spring: one for students graduating from eighth grade and one for students leaving Elim after completing their education (most students "age out" of school just before turning 22 years old). Students are given a certificate of completion. Elim does not issue official high school diplomas.

## Student Records

During the time a student is enrolled at Elim Christian School, his/her school records are kept at Elim. When a student leaves Elim these records are sent to the school district that funded the student's placement here (or in the case of private placements, to the parents). If copies of records are needed after a student leaves Elim, please contact the home school district. All transcript requests must be made to the student's home school district. Privately funded students in need of transcripts should contact the Student Records and Database administrator Joe Rauen at [joseph.rauen@elimcs.org](mailto:joseph.rauen@elimcs.org) or 708-293-3688.

## Contact Information:

Having accurate contact information for your student is critical. If any of your contact information (phone, address, e-mail, emergency contacts) changes please contact Joe Rauen the Student Records and Database administrator at 708-293-3688 or at [joseph.rauen@elimcs.org](mailto:joseph.rauen@elimcs.org) who will assist you with updating the contact information for your student.

# Medical Services and Policies

Elim's nursing department can be reached at: 708-389-0555 ext. 305 or at [nurse@elimcs.org](mailto:nurse@elimcs.org)

## Temporary Illness

A child may be sent home from school at the discretion of the school nurse due to illness. A temperature of 100 degrees Fahrenheit or greater is considered a fever. A fever can be indicative of an infectious illness, therefore a student with a fever will be sent home from school. If a student exhibits diarrhea, vomiting, cough, or significant nasal drainage, the student may be sent home from school and should remain home in an effort to reduce the spread of infection. If symptoms of illness affect a student's behavior and/or ability to learn in a negative way, the student will be sent home from school. **Any student who has been ill and/or sent home from school should not return to school until he or she has been vomit-free, diarrhea-free, and fever-free, without the use of medication, for 24 hours prior to the student's return to school.**

## Medications

A written physician's order is required in order for medication to be administered during the school day. The order must state the medication, dosage, route of administration, and time to be given. Please note that medications are only administered at 11:00 am, the student's lunchtime, and 1:30 pm. Medications are administered by a school nurse or designated personnel when the student is off-campus.

**Medication orders** must be renewed annually by a physician. Any changes made to a medication order, including but not limited to dose, route of administration, or time of administration, will require a new order that indicates those changes. The order must be signed by a physician and by the parent or guardian. This signature gives nursing permission to administer the medication.

Supplies of medication are requested to be for a minimum of two weeks. Prescription medications must be sent in an accurate pharmacy-labeled bottle. Any medication not sent in an accurate pharmacy-labeled bottle will be returned to you.

A limited supply of **over-the-counter (OTC) medications** is available in the nursing office. Parent/guardian may permit administration of these medications via the annual information and consent process completed via Power School Parent Portal. Nursing will contact parents prior to administering any OTC medication to the student. Any parent/guardian who wishes to modify any provided consent needs to contact Joe Rauen, Student Records and Database Administrator ([joseph.rauen@elimcs.org](mailto:joseph.rauen@elimcs.org) or 708-293-3688). Over the counter medications including but not limited to vitamins, supplements and creams will require the completion of Elim's prescription form in order for the medication to be administered during the school day.

**As-needed rescue medications** for seizures cannot be given by non-medical Elim staff when the student is off-campus. A field trip/off-campus plan is required for students with prescribed seizure rescue medications. The field trip/off-campus seizure plan can be obtained from Elim's website:

<http://www.elimcs.org/children/school-forms>

Epinephrine is the one rescue medication that can be administered by non-medical Elim staff. Staff will be trained by a nurse to administer epinephrine for allergic reactions. An Allergy Action Plan will be required. This is a physician's order that must be renewed annually. The form can be obtained from Elim's website:

<http://www.elimcs.org/children/school-forms>

## Essential Oils

Any substance meant to treat a medical condition, including essential oils, is considered to be a drug/medication and must be FDA approved and requires a doctor's prescription. The guidelines set forth by



the Illinois Department of Public Health require the medication to be both: 1) Prescribed by a physician, APN, or PA with exact dosing instructions specified on the medication administration authorization form and 2) Be regulated by the Food and Drug Administration specifically as a drug/medication.

Homeopathic treatments do not currently meet these requirements. Homeopathic treatments cannot be stored in the health office, and students may not self-administer. Examples of these treatments include but are not limited to essential oils and supplements. Elim does not allow non-FDA regulated homeopathic treatments at school.

**Other treatments and medications**, such as insulin, oxygen, suctioning, and nebulizer treatments will also require a physician's order. Nursing staff will assist parents to make sure that the necessary documentation is completed.

### **Physical Examinations**

Physical exams will be required for students entering the school system for the first time, preschool, kindergarten (turning six years old), second grade (turning eight years old), sixth grade (turning 12 years old), and entering ninth grade (turning 15 years old). Vaccination against a number of diseases at specified intervals is also required. State law requires that students without those exams and/or vaccinations are excluded from school attendance unless certain exceptions are met. Students or parents or legal guardians who object to state mandated health examinations and/or immunizations on religious grounds must submit the "Illinois Certificate of Religious Exemption to Required Immunizations and/or Examinations" form. If a student cannot receive mandated immunizations for medical reasons, the student's health care provider must submit written documentation explaining the need for the medical exemption.

### **Dental Examinations**

Dental examinations will be required for students entering kindergarten, second grade, sixth grade and ninth grade.

### **Vision and Audiology Examinations**

Vision examinations will be required for students entering kindergarten (turning six years old). In addition, students prescribed glasses/contacts must have a vision examination every two years. Students prescribed hearing aid(s) must have an audiology examination every two years.

### **Hearing and Vision Screening**

Parents will be notified of the hearing and vision screening dates. Any student that is not prescribed glasses/contacts or hearing aid(s) and enrolled in special education must be screened annually, unless a parent/guardian objects to the screening in writing.

### **Physician Referral for Therapies**

An annual doctor's prescription is required by the start of the fall semester for students to receive the **physical therapy** services designated on their IEP, per Illinois state law. Requests for the annual doctor's orders are mailed as follows: first request is mailed to the parent/guardian at the end of May; second request is sent home with students and/or mailed by the end of July. If the completed doctor's order form is not returned by the first week of September, the funding school district will be notified. On October 1, PT services for students without a current doctor's order on file will be placed on hold until the doctor's order is received.

A doctor's order for **occupational therapy** is required to be on file if the funding district requires Elim OTs to fill out paperwork necessary for the district to bill Medicaid for OT services rendered during the school day.

### **Emergency Medical Care**

Emergency first aid procedures will be provided by the school nurse or other certified Elim staff.

- A. At the discretion of the school nurse, emergency medical services (EMS) will be phoned and the

- student will be transported by ambulance to the nearest hospital's emergency department.
- B. Immediate and continual attempts will be made to contact the parent/guardian in an effort to inform him or her of the situation.
  - C. An Elim staff member will accompany the student to the hospital.
  - D. Pertinent medical information will be forwarded to the EMS, including, but not limited to, allergies, medications, and diagnoses.
  - D. In the event the parent/guardian cannot be reached by telephone, emergency interventions will be provided per the policies and procedures of the EMS and/or hospital staff.

### **Health-Related Absences**

Documentation is required in order for a student to return to school after a health-related absence, including but not limited to hospitalization, surgery, casting, splinting, extended absence, or any procedure requiring sedation. Additionally, documentation may also be requested if a student was treated for an illness or injury. This documentation must include Elim's **Activity & Return to School form**, which is available on our website: <https://www.elimcs.org/school-and-medical-forms/> or by contacting the nursing department directly, 708-389-0555 ext. 305 or via e-mail at [nurse@elimcs.org](mailto:nurse@elimcs.org).

The Activity and Return to School Form, gives Elim staff the necessary information to ensure the student's health and safety upon return to school. It also gives an update regarding the student's medical status. It will instruct staff regarding any activity restrictions or limitations. This information is also required in order for physical therapy and/or occupational therapy services to resume, and for the student to participate in physical education, swimming, and recess.

The Activity and Return to School Form must be completed in its entirety by the student's treating health care provider, and should be received by Elim's nursing department 24 hours prior to the student's return to school. The prompt receipt of the Activity and Return to School Form is particularly important if restrictions are to be implemented or if there is a change to the student's medical status. If the Activity and Return to School Form cannot be sent to nursing prior to the student's return, a parent or guardian must bring the student to school and meet with a member of the nursing staff.

If the necessary information is not contained within the Activity and Return to School Form, the student may be excluded from school, therapies, physical education, swimming, and/or recess. If the student is transported by bus or van and the Activity and Return to School Form does not contain the required information, the parent may need to arrange for transportation for the student to return home.

Please note that the Activity and Return to School Form is required even if there are no changes to the student's medical status following any health-related intervention.

### **Clean Intermittent Catheterization**

Any student that requires clean intermittent catheterization during the school day must have an order from a physician. This order is required yearly, and must detail time(s) of catheterization, necessary equipment, and precautions. Any changes to any portion of the order will require a new signed physician order. The school nurse will perform the procedure per the physician's order.

### **Communicable Diseases**

Elim Christian School follows the recommendations of the Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Department of Public Health, and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in controlling communicable diseases. The following procedure will be utilized concerning a child whose physical condition has deteriorated significantly or who exhibits symptoms of a chronic infectious disease:

1. The parent/guardian will be contacted by the program director or school nurse for an immediate discussion of the child's status.
2. A written letter of specific medical concerns regarding the child will be sent by the school nurse to the parents/guardians to present to the child's physician. The nurse may contact the physician directly with parent/guardian permission.
3. Children whose presence at school poses a significant danger to themselves, the other students, or the staff may be suspended immediately at the discretion of the principal.
4. Suspension would remain in effect until the following requirements are met:
  - a. The school nurse receives a written letter from the physician specifically addressing the medical concerns listed by the school nurse and recommendations for treatment.
  - b. The school nurse receives written notification from the physician that the child has received any and all necessary treatment for the condition and attending school no longer poses a significant risk to self or others.

## **Nutritional Intake**

### **Safe Oral Feeding**

Elim is not a therapeutic feeding center, nor does Elim initiate advancement from one level of feeding to the next level of feeding.

In general, staff will cut foods into small bite-sized pieces prior to serving it to a student. This preparation is the safest, and is our preferred method for most students.

At Elim, our goal is to ensure that meals are consumed in a manner that reduces the risk of choking or aspiration. We address this goal by assigning a feeding team, utilizing adaptive equipment, and employing safe feeding techniques. The feeding team includes representatives of speech and language pathology, occupational therapy, physical therapy, classroom teacher and nursing. The purpose of the team is to problem-solve and to maintain a safe eating environment, on an individual student basis. A parent's diet request or a physician's diet order will be reviewed by the feeding team. The feeding team will then collaborate in order to determine if Elim's staff can safely implement the request or order.

Our number one priority is safety. If staff members have concerns regarding oral feeding for a student, the parent/guardian will be notified and additional medical evaluation may be requested or adaptive equipment may be recommended. Observations and suggestions from the feeding team, along with input from the parent and the physician, will ensure that the student will have a safe and enjoyable eating experience at school.

### **Restricted Foods**

Some foods are considered high risk for choking. The following foods will not be prepared by Elim's staff or kitchen personnel:

- sausage links with casing (hot dogs, bratwurst)
- chicken with bones or skin
- fruits with the rind

The restricted foods listed above should not be sent from home. If parents choose to send any of these restricted foods, Elim staff will prepare the foods in order to ensure that they may be safely consumed. Sausage links will be cut in small pieces, bones and skin will be removed from chicken, rinds will be removed from fruit and the fruit will be cut into bite-sized pieces.

If your student self-restricts by only consuming the restricted foods listed above, a release of liability will be required. A release of liability may also be required if the size, shape, or texture tolerated by the student

poses a risk for choking or aspiration. The parent/guardian must submit a letter to Elim's nursing department indicating the food allowed and the manner in which it should be prepared. Elim retains the right to alter the food if the feeding team deems it unsafe to eat.

### **Special Diet – Needs a Physician Order**

Any student that is not on a regular diet is considered to be on a "special diet." This may be because of restrictions due to an allergy, sensitivity, or medical treatment. These special diets will require a physician's order. Additionally, variations to texture, size, and consistency of food are considered a special diet and also require a physician's order.

As a school, Elim is not able to meet the requirements for *every* type of diet. To ensure accuracy and consistency, only the following diets can be prepared by Elim's kitchen staff:

- chopped
- pureed
- gluten-free
- casein-free
- dairy-free
- pork-free

If the student requires a diet not listed above, the parent/guardian must supply the student's lunch each day.

Special diet order forms may be downloaded from Elim's website: <https://www.elimcs.org/school-and-medical-forms/>. The completed form should be returned to Elim's nursing department. Special diet orders must be renewed each school year. Any changes to the diet will require the completion of a new order by a physician.

### **G-Tube Feeding – Needs a Physician Order**

G-tube feeding is another form of special diet. G-tube feeding requires a physician's order that must be renewed yearly. Any changes to the g-tube feeding order during the school year will require a new written physician's order. The special diet order form, available on Elim's website (see above), is used for this order.

A school nurse will train classroom staff on how to properly and safely carry out the physician's directives. Nursing staff will compose a detailed, individualized g-tube feeding care plan as a reference for classroom staff. Nursing staff will be available for assistance when needed.

## **General School Information**

**Arrival and Departure:** Elim's school day is 8:50 am to 2:40 pm. On Tuesdays Elim dismisses students at 1:50 for school improvement activities.

- If your child does not ride the bus, please be prompt in arrival and departure to and from school. Please drive carefully through the parking lot and follow the directions of the transportation staff.
- Parents/guardians are required to sign their children in and out of school in the school office if they drop or pick up their child outside of regular school hours. ***If your child is usually transported by bus, it is your responsibility to notify the bus company that your child will not be riding that day.***
- When students are being picked up by someone other than the parent or guardian, we will need a phone call or a written note before we release the student. The person picking up the student will be required to present a photo ID. We **will not** release a student unless we are given consent by the parent or guardian.

**Lunch Program:** Hot lunches are available each day at Elim at a cost of \$5.00. A dietician develops menus monthly. Parents will be billed on a monthly basis for the meals served. Elim does not serve certain foods that are considered unsafe (listed in the Restricted Foods section of this handbook). Special diets are available if physician ordered. Please see Special Diet section of this handbook.

**Communicating with School Staff:** Your child's teacher and related services staff should be your primary contacts for questions, concerns, and information about your child. It is important to share information directly with these staff members, and refrain from asking paraprofessionals to relay messages.

When contacting teachers and related services staff by phone, please call between 8:15 and 8:30 am or between 2:50 and 3:10 pm. Between 8:30 am and 2:50 pm these staff members are working with students and therefore not usually available to speak on the phone. Email is also an effective method of communication with staff. If you leave a message, please allow a reasonable amount of time for a response. Your child's welfare is extremely important to us; your understanding of the many demands on staff and respect for their time is very much appreciated.

*If there is an emergency* and you need to talk with a teacher during school hours, please call the school office at 708-389-0555.

**Devices that Play Music:** Permitted during break times. Music with lyrics conflicting with the Christian faith are not allowed.

**Field Trips:** Written permission, via the general consent form, is required for all students to participate in off-campus excursions, including being transported by means approved by Elim. Teachers plan field trips with educational goals in mind. Parents are encouraged to plan birthday parties outside of the school day.

Students who have a seizure action plan and/or a diabetic management plan require a medical caregiver chaperone and must have a "field trip form" on file in order to participate in off-campus activities. Field trip plans may be completed for an entire school year or on a single field trip basis. Both the medical caregiver chaperone and the parent must sign the field trip form. Medical caregiver chaperones must be at least 20 years old, cannot be Elim staff, and are required to ride with the student on Elim's transportation to and from the field trip. Both the caregiver and the parent must sign the permission form. Parents or others desiring to serve as non-medical chaperones on field trips must provide their own transportation.

#### **Consent:**

Every year we are required to seek consent from parents for a variety of things. This process is completed through Power School parent portal. Directions and timelines for completing this process are sent to parents via e-mail. Parents unable to complete this process digitally should contact, Joseph Rauen, ([joseph.rauen@elimcs.org](mailto:joseph.rauen@elimcs.org) or 708-293-3688) our student records and database administrator for alternate arrangements.

Parents maintain the legal right to approve or deny consent for their student to:

- be transported by means approved by Elim administration to educational and developmental activities (without this consent students may not go into the community for outings or field trips)
- participate in vision and hearing screenings under the supervision of Elim nursing staff
- access educational websites under the direction of Elim staff
- be administered a variety of over-the-counter medications only under the direction of our nursing department
- be photographed for educational purposes (this includes pictures of students for use anywhere in the school building or within the classroom, including materials & schedules).

- be photographed for use in students alternative communication systems
- be photographed for the yearbook and/or graduation memory books
- be photographed for external use (e.g. Elim's website, Elim approved Facebook etc.)
- interact with animals on campus
- Interact with animals off-campus

A parent who wishes to alter their consent for any of these areas should contact Joe Rauen, student records and database administrator, [joseph.rauen@elimcs.org](mailto:joseph.rauen@elimcs.org) or 708-293-3688, who will assist with process. Please note: verbal changes are not accepted.

### **Lock-down, Tornado, and Fire Drills**

- A. Lock-down drills are held periodically to make sure staff and students are prepared to respond quickly and correctly in the unlikely event of a dangerous intruder. The Crestwood Police department partners with Elim in planning and implementing lock-down procedures.
- B. Fire drills are held periodically to train children on how to leave the building in case of fire. Each teacher is responsible for orderly exit procedures.
- C. **Tornado watch or tornado warning.** The school has a radio and ten-ten civil defense receiver whereby we receive instant notification of tornado weather conditions.
  - 1) **Tornado watch** means that weather conditions are such that a tornado or severe thunderstorm may develop. All students will remain in the building under the direct supervision of their teacher. The regular school schedule will be followed and classes will be dismissed at the regular times.
  - 2) **Tornado warning** means that a tornado or severe thunderstorm has actually been sighted and may be near you. No student will be released during a warning and students will be assigned to the safest possible area within the school building until the tornado warning has been lifted. No bus will leave school until the principal is certain an "all clear" has been received from local government officials. ***Do not telephone the school except for extreme emergencies during this period.*** You are urged to stay tuned to the local radio stations during times of questionable weather.

**Snow Policy/School Closing:** If school is canceled due to inclement weather, you will be notified via the automated calling system. Please be sure our office has your updated contact information. You can also check television and radio stations or the Elim website – [www.elimcs.org](http://www.elimcs.org).

### **Extreme Weather Recess Policy**

While it is Elim's intent to have students outdoors for recess whenever possible, certain weather conditions can make that inadvisable for some or all students. Guidelines provided by the Illinois Department of Public Health will be used to determine if weather conditions warrant special consideration relative to outside recess. Teachers are notified of weather conditions each morning.

*Please note: If your child has special requirements/restrictions related to outdoor conditions, a doctor's note must be on file with Elim's nursing department.*

**Labeling Clothing & Special Equipment:** Clearly mark your child's name on articles of clothing, such as outerwear, swimwear, lunches, and school bags. Elim also requests that parents label all of their student's equipment, such as communication devices and attachments, leg braces, walkers, etc.

**Student Attendance:** We recognize that many Elim students have complex needs that may require them to be absent from school. Elim is committed to doing our best to help equip your child to reach this/her potential. Please help us by making every effort to have your student at school daily.

On every day of a student absence, the parent/guardian is required to call the student attendance line at 708-293-3626 and leave a message or e-mail [attendance@elimcs.org](mailto:attendance@elimcs.org) and relay the following information:

- Student Name
- Date of Absence
- Reason for the absence

Elim is required by law to report individual student attendance to each student's home school district. Parents can check their student's attendance reporting through Power School's parent portal. Any corrections to student attendance must be made before the fifth day of the following month. On the sixth day of the following month the attendance will be considered correct and will be reported to the home school district as required.

Any absence that is not reported will be considered an unexcused absence.

If you need assistance creating or accessing your student's information through the Power School parent portal, please contact our student records and database administrator, Joe Rauen @ 708-293-3688 or at [joseph.rauen@elimcs.org](mailto:joseph.rauen@elimcs.org)

**Elim Bus Transportation:** Bus transportation is available for students depending on geographical location. Availability of bus service will be arranged and specific pick up and drop off times will be scheduled by the transportation coordinator. Further bus procedures and regulations will be mailed to your home. Elim follows guidelines for safe transportation of children in wheelchairs provided by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA).

Students whose transportation is provided by their home school district should notify the identified transportation company in the event of an absence.

Students whose transportation is provided by Elim only need to report the absence to the student attendance line at 708-293-3626 or e-mail [attendance@elimcs.org](mailto:attendance@elimcs.org).

**Dress Code:** Pupils are expected to be dressed and groomed acceptably for their age and in a manner which is conducive to a good school atmosphere. Girls' dresses and skirts should be of modest length; necklines should be high enough to cover cleavage when standing and when leaning or bending forward. Clothes that display bare midriffs are not considered proper school dress and may not be worn to school. Clothes with words, pictures, or symbols identifying tobacco, alcohol, rock music groups that conflict with Christianity or suggestive notions are not to be worn. Flannel pajama pants are not acceptable for school. Pants or shorts with writing on the back are not acceptable. Appropriate shoes must be worn.

**Homework Policy:** Elim desires to partner with parents in the education of your children. Elim requests that parents support the educational and social goals in the home and community environment. Classroom homework expectations will be explained by the individual teachers and students are expected to complete homework as assigned.

#### **Classroom Observation Procedures for Parents and Qualified Private Providers**

Elim Christian School welcomes the opportunity to collaborate with parents and qualified private providers in order to meet the needs of our students. To facilitate the many requests for observations in a timely manner, the following specific process should be used.

Before scheduling any observation, Elim must have a current Release of Information to an Outside Agency\* form on file for any provider that wishes to observe or consult. In addition, all observers will be required to sign the Classroom Observation Confidentiality Acknowledgement form.\*

Classroom Observation Request\* form, which includes the following components:

- Name of person making request
- Name and title of observer
- Purpose of observation
- Contact information

Classroom observation request forms must be submitted to the appropriate assistant principal, who will facilitate the scheduling of the observation.

Each classroom observation request will be considered individually, based on its purpose, duration, and frequency. We will make every effort to accommodate observation requests, but our first priority is maintaining the learning environment for our students. To minimize classroom disruptions, the duration of observations may be limited based on purpose as well as staff availability. A qualified staff member will usually accompany visitors. Visits will be scheduled with consideration for the classroom schedule, school personnel schedules, and requests of parent or private provider. If there is a need for follow-up discussion with the teacher or therapist, this must be scheduled *in addition* to the actual observation.

Once a visit has been scheduled, parents will need to make childcare arrangements for their other children, as it would be too disruptive to the classroom setting to bring them to an observation session.

Please consider the privacy of our students. Parents should only address the needs of their child. Any information shared about other students is in violation of the *student confidentiality rights (FERPA)*. Our students have very specific and unique educational and behavioral plans according to their IEPs. Sharing this information would jeopardize the privacy of our students and their families.

Concerns regarding parent visitations and observations should be directed to the appropriate assistant principal.

### **Interacting with Animals**

Pets and animals, including dogs, cats and birds, are not permitted on Elim's grounds and buildings, except for those that are specifically exempted by this Standard or by special permission from the program director. The only pets permitted will be individually approved small, caged, non-poisonous animals or fish. Specifically, animals are prohibited from being in offices, classrooms, hallways, and all other areas in any academic or administrative building.

Elim does have an approved Comfort Dog "Abbi" as part of our Crossroad's program. Parents/guardians whose student has any allergies/sensitivities should contact the nursing department.



# Wheelchairs

## Wheelchair Clinic

Wheelchair clinics are provided for Elim students for the purpose of AT evaluation and initial fittings in coordination with parents and wheelchair vendors. Clinics are provided as a courtesy; therefore, frequency, date, and time of wheelchair clinics are based on therapist availability and are scheduled in advance with therapists. Wheelchair clinic time will be documented as direct service minutes as deemed appropriate.

## Wheelchair Maintenance

A student's family is responsible for the maintenance of their student's wheelchairs, walkers, etc. Wheelchair repairs should be done at the vendor facility or student's home whenever possible. If an emergency situation arises, parents may contact the PT department (ext. 331) before scheduling a repair with the vendor to request a time for the vendor to come to Elim to make the repair. All general repairs should be handled by the family with the vendor.

## Wheelchair Transportation

The American Academy of Pediatrics, along with the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration (NHTSA), has provided guidelines for the transportation of children in wheelchairs. Research provides the following recommendations concerning occupant securement for children in wheelchairs. Elim will follow this list of guidelines for safe transportation of all students in wheelchairs and strollers.

- Head support in place
- Pelvic, chest, and/or shoulder harness secured
- Child's feet safely secured in footrests
- Brakes in good working condition
- Tires properly inflated
- Anti-tip bars in place
- Wheelchair tray & AAC device removed from wheelchair and secured separately on the bus

If a student's wheelchair is determined to be unsafe for transportation, the parent will be notified and will need to transport their student.

## Letters of Need

Elim therapists will assist parents with equipment acquisition when the equipment is necessary for a student's education. If assistive technology or any other *special equipment* is recommended by an outside agency or therapist or needed for home use, Elim staff will not take responsibility for the letter of medical necessity.

# Lifting Policy

**Best practices** for safe student handling is zero lifting.

**OSHA recommends** that manual lifting of students be minimized or eliminated when feasible, and that mechanical support devices be used for lifting whenever possible. OSHA cites facilities for allowing employees to perform lifting, transferring, repositioning, and assisted patient ambulation tasks that may cause musculoskeletal disorders to employees.

**Public Act 096-0389 HB2285 (effective date January 1, 2010).** This Act restricts, to the extent feasible, manual lifting or movement (rolling, transferring, repositioning, and assisted ambulation tasks) of individuals. Facilities are required by law to evaluate alternative ways and strategies to lift and move individuals who are not able to do so independently. This Act pertains to hospitals and nursing homes; however, Elim Christian

School is compared to nursing homes when evaluated for safe lifting practices because of the population we serve. It is Elim's intent to provide best practices for safe lifting, which protects both students and staff.

### **Common Practice**

- 1-person lift = 35 lbs. or less (second person is standby)
- use mechanical lifts whenever possible to eliminate lifting
- safe lifting zone is: Shoulders to Knees (floor lifts/overhead lifts -- not in safe zone)
- rolling/logrolling of students/individuals weighing over 35 lbs. = 2 person to roll student

### **Elim's Safe Lifting Policy**

If a student requires a maximum/total lift (not able to bear weight or assist in the transfer):

- Student weighing <35 lbs. = 1 person lift/roll with a second person standing by ready to assist. \*Note: to ensure student and staff safety and to be in compliance with proper safety and lifting guidelines and procedures, it may be determined that a student weighing <35 lbs requires a 2 person lift.
- Student weighing 36-70 lbs. = 2-person lift/roll. \*Note: in order to ensure student and staff safety and to be in compliance with proper safety and lifting guidelines and procedures, it may be determined that a student weighing 36-70 lbs requires the use of a mechanical lift (ex. Hoyer Lift).
- Student weighing >70 lbs. should be using a mechanical lift in order to be in compliance with proper safety and lifting guidelines and procedures.

\*\*All lifting/transfer for positioning will be performed within the safe lifting zone (shoulder to knee), which eliminates lifting of students in situations where the staff person/s is lifting above the shoulder level or below the knee level.

### **Safety Note**

Mechanical lifts should not be rolled more than 12'. Extreme caution should always be used when moving a mechanical lift during lifting/repositioning/transferring activities. Two staff persons are always recommended when using a mechanical lifting device at Elim.

## **Behavior Intervention and Crisis Procedures**

Each classroom provides tailored proactive strategies for their students, including the use of schedules, visual aids, structure of the rooms, targeted classroom activities, and communication training. Classroom supports are managed by the teacher.

Any student who needs additional supports to be successful in the classroom is provided with individualized strategies (often within a behavior plan) which focus on building strengths of that student. Skills are taught to replace inappropriate behaviors, and preventative techniques are used in order to proactively manage behaviors. Individualized supports are managed by the classroom teacher and/or behavior support staff.

## **General Behavior Management**

Elim is committed to providing a meaningful education for all students using the least restrictive interventions necessary to manage behavior concerns. Any behavior that impedes the learning of a student or others in their environment will be addressed by the student's IEP team.

Nonrestrictive interventions are attempted first, as they are of low risk, with the purpose of teaching the student a new skill that will improve the inappropriate behavior. Examples of nonrestrictive interventions include praise, communication training, redirection, and prompting.

Restrictive interventions are those that pose a potential risk to the student, and are used only when less restrictive interventions have been attempted and failed. These interventions include the use of time out from a reinforcer (attention, escape, sensory, tangible), detention, and suspension. Restrictive interventions are determined by a student's IEP team to be appropriate.

### **Restraint and Seclusion**

Restraints and seclusion are considered highly restrictive interventions. The US Department of Education issued a summary (February 2010) of issues relating to use of seclusion and restraints in schools. This information can be found online at [www.ed.gov/policy/seclusion/seclusion-state-summary.html](http://www.ed.gov/policy/seclusion/seclusion-state-summary.html). Elim is committed to helping each student reach his or her highest God-given potential. Elim supports the recommendations of the US Department of Education and will maintain the standards and guidelines outlined in that document as well as the Illinois State Board of Education school codes on discipline and behavior management.

Restraint and seclusion will only be used to preserve the safety of students and others when a student poses a danger to themselves or others and all other less restrictive interventions have been attempted and failed. They may not be used as punishment, for use with profanity, verbal disrespect, or verbal threats unless accompanied by a means or intent to carry out the threat. Interactions with the individuals we serve, including interventions that involve physical restraint and/or seclusion, communicate respect and promote dignity (Safety Care). If a student relies on augmentative communication or sign language, they will be permitted the use of their hands/communication strategies unless doing so will likely result in harm to the student or others. The restraint or seclusion must end as soon as the student is no longer an imminent danger to themselves or others. A student may not be kept in restraint for more than 15 minutes or isolated time out for more than 30 minutes after the problematic behavior has ceased. If problematic behavior has continued past these time frames, or separate incidents have occurred within a three-hour period, administration or behavior staff will evaluate the situation, taking into consideration the appropriateness of continuing the procedure and the student's safety and wellbeing.

A detailed Behavior Incident Report will be completed after each severe aggressive episode and any time a Safety Care hold occurs. The Behavior Incident Report explains what happened during the episode, how staff responded, and if any restrictive measures were used. A copy of the incident report will be sent to the guardian within 24 hours, or the following Monday if the event occurred late Friday afternoon. The student's home school district will also receive a copy of the report.

If three incidents arise within a 12-month period where restraint or seclusion was used, a behavior intervention plan (BIP) focusing on strategies to prevent the challenging behavior and to teach alternatives to that behavior will be created by the IEP team and submitted into the student's IEP.

If the team has attempted all approved interventions and deems that the student continues to pose a significant safety risk to themselves or others beyond the means of the current placement, one or all the following may occur:

- A. Student conference with designated members of the team to explore beneficial modifications to the plan
- B. Detention in an approved area (up to one full day)
- C. Suspension (one to five days)
- D. Parent conference
- E. Emergency IEP
- F. Transfer of placement within Elim Christian School
- G. Termination of placement

*(All final placement decisions are made by the principal/director of children's services.)*

## **Staff Training**

Upon hire, all school staff members responsible for direct care of students receive Safety-Care behavioral safety training. Recertification occurs every year. All staff receive ongoing informal and formal training on behavior policy, the utilization of positive behavior supports, and proactive behavior management strategies, by the team of behavior professionals employed at Elim.

## **Grievance Procedures**

There may be times when communication between children/parents and staff members of Elim Christian School is unsatisfactory. Parents are encouraged to bring any concerns and/or questions to the teacher's attention. In the event of a grievance the following steps should be followed in a prompt and timely manner.

1. Any child/parent with a grievance should report the problem to the immediate staff.
2. If the issue has not been satisfactorily resolved by the child's teacher, it may be discussed with the assistant principal.
3. If discussion with the assistant principal does not resolve the issue, the Director of Children's Services should be contacted.
4. If discussion with the assistant principal does not resolve the issue, the Vice-President of Programming should be contacted.
5. If satisfaction still has not been received, the child/parent will file a formal grievance with the Executive Director.

## **Rights of Recipients of Services**

Elim Christian School services are currently subject to a variety of laws and guidelines, including the *Illinois Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code*, the *Rules and Regulations for the School Code of Illinois*, the *Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Confidentiality Act*, and the *Illinois School Records Act*.

## **Summary of Rights**

An enrolled student at Elim Christian School has the following rights:

1. A right to maintain all of his/her legal rights.
2. A right to individual services.
3. A right to unimpeded and uncensored communication.
4. A right of visitation.
5. A right to personal property.
6. A right to use his/her own money.
7. A right to be paid for work performed.
8. A qualified right to refuse services.
9. A qualified right to be free from restraints.
10. A qualified right not to be secluded.
11. A right to protection from certain medical and dental procedures.
12. A right to see his/her school record, if appropriate.

*(Chapter II, Article I, of the Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Code, State of Illinois)*

## Summary of the Confidentiality Act

Parents/guardians have the right to:

1. Examine all information contained in your child's school records. This includes:
  - A. Reports and other information sent to your child's school by hospitals, clinics, private doctors and other professionals.
  - B. All other information maintained by the school concerning your child, but excluding personal notes of staff persons, as long as the notes are not shared with other persons.
2. Receive an explanation of the contents by a qualified professional.
3. Challenge the contents of the record, excluding grades, asking for correction or deletion of inaccurate, misleading, or inappropriate data, or insert into the records a written explanation of your own about the contents.
4. Confidentiality of the contents of the records.
5. Obtain copies of your child's records.
6. Designate, in writing, persons who may have access to your child's school records.
7. Have your request to examine the records granted within fifteen school days.  
*(See Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities Confidentiality Act, State of Illinois)*