



## Student/Parent Handbook 2023-2024



**Elgin**  
**Academy**



**PEAK** on the  
**Hilltop**

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## **Our Mission**

Inspiring students to become our creative, courageous, and compassionate future.

## **Our Heritage**

Elgin Academy is proud of its heritage as the oldest co-educational, non-sectarian, college preparatory school west of the Allegheny Mountains. It has been since its founding an independent school dedicated to excellence through a challenging liberal arts curriculum, character development, and a true spirit of community. The school's focus on academic achievement is supported by a selective admission process that identifies able students of social, economic, and ethnic diversity who have the commitment to pursue their learning with enthusiasm within and beyond the classroom.

Elgin Academy admits students of any race, religion, gender, nationality, or ethnic origin to all rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, gender, or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, financial aid programs, or athletic and other school-administered programs.

## **Portrait of a Hilltopper**

When students graduate from Elgin Academy, they go forth as productive, conscientious, and mindful young people who continue to hone their understanding of world and self—a lifelong process that stands as the abiding gift of their Elgin Academy education. Whether our students start their Academy journey in Preschool or Upper School or somewhere in between, they are guided to be prepared for what lies ahead.

Hilltoppers are:

- secure in themselves
- disciplined in their thinking
- creative in their collaboration
- compassionate toward others
- dedicated in their efforts

Lower, Middle, and Upper School students develop the qualities of a Hilltopper under the guidance of dedicated faculty and administrators. As students of all divisions become comfortable contributing as thinkers and doers in school and community, the key characteristics of Hilltoppers emerge.



# Emergency School Closing

In the event that school is cancelled due to snow or other emergency, families will be notified via email, text, and phone (automated voice message). A popup message will also be posted on the EA website ([www.elginacademy.org](http://www.elginacademy.org)). Parents should make sure that their contact information is correct in their profile by logging into the EA Community portal. ([www.elginacademy.org/ea-community](http://www.elginacademy.org/ea-community))

## Student Health

### Emergency/Illness at School

Elgin Academy does not provide the services of a registered nurse on campus. Parents of students who become ill will be contacted. If a student is unable to attend classes, parents are expected to make arrangements for transportation home. In the event of an emergency, students will be referred to the appropriate medical facility. No group insurance plan to cover student accidents or injuries is offered by the Academy. Parents are strongly urged to secure health and accident insurance which would cover their student in the event of illness, accident, or other emergency, as the Academy will not be financially responsible for expenses resulting from such occurrences.

If an emergency occurs at school, we will first call parents. If they cannot be reached, we will then call the emergency contact person. If the school is not able to contact any of the above, we will make arrangements to transport the child to the nearest emergency room. Meanwhile, the school will continue its attempt to reach the parents. The one notable exception to this will be in the case of a serious/life-threatening injury, the school will immediately call 911 for assistance and then try to contact the parents.

## Medication

It is necessary for the school to supervise the dispensing of all medicines. Therefore:

1. Student medication will be stored in the student's Divisional Office, or in other school locations as appropriate.
2. If a student requires medication to be administered during the school day, prescribed or over-the-counter, the Academy must have on file written authorization from the prescribing physician and the parent or guardian. Please update this if the need arises throughout the school year. It can be potentially dangerous in an emergency if we are not aware of medications your child is taking.
3. Documentation must accompany all medications listing: name of medication, dosage and time to be given, and doctor's name.

Please read the following two pages for a more in-depth discussion of our medication policies and procedures, including a description of the Elgin Academy Medication Dispensing Authorization Form available on the EA website parent portal that must be submitted to your child's Divisional Office with medications.



## Procedures and Guidelines Governing the Administration of Medications

Parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for the administration of medication to their children. Only those medications necessary to maintain a student in school and which must be given during school hours or school activities may be administered to a student. The administration of medicine to a student is subject to guidelines established by the school, in keeping with state agency recommendations (e.g., Illinois Department of Professional Regulations, Illinois Department of Public Health, and Illinois State Board of Education.)

1. **Medication Authorization Form** - No school personnel shall administer to any student, nor shall any student possess or consume any prescription or non-prescription medication except after filing a complete Medication Authorization information form. This authorization and any subsequent changes shall include:
  - Physician, dentist, or podiatrist's (licensed prescriber) written prescription with Child's name, medication name and dosage, date of order;
  - Administration instructions (route, time or intervals, duration of prescription);
  - Intended effects and possible side effects; and
  - Parent/guardian written permission and phone number, and email address in case of emergency

Elgin Academy will review the written authorization and will consult with the parent/guardian, licensed prescriber, or pharmacist for additional information as necessary.

2. **Appropriate Containers** - Medications and refills are to be provided in containers which are prescription-labeled by a pharmacy or licensed prescriber (to display, Rx number, student name, medication dosage, directions or administration, date and refill schedule, pharmacy label, and name/initials of pharmacist) or manufacturer-labeled for non-prescription over-the-counter medication.
3. **Administration** - Medication will be administered by the appropriate school administrator/official. Other school personnel may also volunteer to assist in medication administration and they will receive instructions by the proper official. If no volunteer available, the parents/guardian must arrange for administration. The administration retains the discretion to deny request for administration of medication. The parent/guardian may make an appeal of denial or any order prescribing the administration of the medication.
4. **Self-Administration** - A student may self-medicate at school if so ordered by his or her physician. However, the medication must be stored in the divisional office and a completed Medication Authorization Form must be on file. Daily documentation by divisional personnel will be provided for all supervised self-administration. For "as needed" medications such as those taken by students with asthma, the physician may also order that the student carry the medication on his or her person. However, no daily documentation will be possible. Self-administration privileges may be withdrawn if



the student exhibits behavior which indicates lack of responsibility toward self or others in regards to his or her medication.

5. **School Activities** - Medical Authorization forms must be completed and medication is to be stored in divisional offices. Under no circumstances are faculty members or other school employees required to carry medication for students nor are they required to ensure that students carry such medications. Medications which must be available while a student is engaged in a school activity conducted during non-school hours and/or conducted away from the customary site of storage will be distributed to the student at the end of the school day from the divisional office and must be brought by the student to that site, unless there is prior agreement and approval of other arrangements. Any faculty member may supervise self-administration of medication by a student under these guidelines. Self-administration under these circumstances will not be documented.
6. **Storage and Record Keeping** - Medications, including those requiring refrigeration, will be stored in a secure area. Each dose will be recorded in the divisional office. The parent may be notified if indicated. To assist in the safe monitoring of side effects and/or intended effects of treatment with medication, faculty and staff may be informed regarding the medication plan. Any supply of opioid antagonists or epinephrine auto-injectors shall be maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.
7. **Documentation, Changes, Renewals, and Other Responsibilities** - To facilitate needed documentation, physical orders, any changes in orders, and parent permissions may be faxed to Elgin Academy. It is the parent/guardian responsibility to assure that all physicians orders and permissions are brought to school and refills provided when needed and to inform the divisional office of any significant changes in the student's health. Medication remaining at the end of the school year must be taken home or will be discarded. Over-the-counter and prescription medication orders must be renewed yearly.

## **Elgin Academy Medication Dispensing Authorization Form**

This form can be found on the EA Community portal of the Elgin Academy website. Families are required to submit it when a student needs to take either prescription or over-the-counter medications at school. Once this form is on file in the appropriate division office, the divisional assistant or administrator can provide those medications to students.

# Required Forms and Health Exams By Division

## Early Childhood (PS - PK) Forms

All of the following forms are available in the Early Childhood / Lower School office and on the Elgin Academy website EA Community Portal. Links are also provided in Elgin Academy News & Notes emails.

### All Students (New and Returning)

All Early Childhood parents must have completed the following forms by the beginning of the school year:

- ***Elgin Academy Emergency Contact and Health Information Form and Waiver*** by August 20, 2023.
- A ***Handbook Form*** to confirm that they have read and accepted the updated handbook each year.
- Students who need to be given medication, either over-the-counter or prescription, at school must have an ***Elgin Academy Medication Dispensing Authorization Form*** on file in their Divisional office before any medication can be administered to them.

### Students New to EA

All new Early Childhood parents must have completed the following steps by the beginning of the school year:

- In compliance with Illinois State law, Elgin Academy maintains certified copies of ***birth certificates*** for each student enrolled. A staff member will need to make a copy of an original birth certificate, and then the original will be returned.
- All new students must have a physical examination performed within 1 year of the date of the first day of school that includes proof of all required immunizations. Documentation of the physical exam and immunizations must be submitted on the ***State of Illinois Certificate of Child Health Examination Form*** before the first day of school in August of 2023.\*
- If your child is enrolling in an Illinois school for the first time, a vision examination (performed within 1 year of the date of the first day of school) is required. Documentation of the eye exam must be submitted on the ***State of Illinois Eye Examination Report*** by October 15, 2023.

**\*Special Note** about the ***State of Illinois Certificate of Child Health Examination Form***: The Illinois State Board of Education requires all parents who are requesting religious exemption to immunizations and/or physicals to file with the school before October 15<sup>th</sup> an Illinois Certificate of Religious Exemption to Required Immunizations and/or Examinations Form. In addition to a statement detailing the religious beliefs that prevent the child from receiving each vaccination exemption requested, this form must also be signed by the parent and by the doctor or healthcare provider. Please note that in a disease outbreak, or after exposure to any of the diseases for which

immunization is required, schools may exclude children who are not vaccinated from attending school in order to protect the school community.

Any student not in compliance with physical and immunization requirements may be excluded from school beginning October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 until the correct documentation is submitted to the divisional office.

## Lower School (K - 4) Forms

All of the following forms are available in the Early Childhood / Lower School office and on the Elgin Academy website EA Community Portal. Links are also provided in Elgin Academy News & Notes emails.

### All Students (New and Returning)

All Lower School parents must have completed the following forms by the beginning of the school year:

- ***Elgin Academy Emergency Contact and Health Information Form and Waiver*** by August 20, 2023.
- A ***Handbook Form*** to confirm that they have read and accepted the updated handbook each year.
- Students who need to be given medication, either over-the-counter or prescription, at school or during a school overnight trip must have an ***Elgin Academy Medication Dispensing Authorization Form*** on file in their Divisional office before any medication can be administered to them.

### Students New to EA

All new Lower School parents must have completed the following steps by the beginning of the school year:

- In compliance with Illinois State law, Elgin Academy maintains certified copies of ***birth certificates*** for each student enrolled. A staff member will need to make a copy of an original birth certificate, and then the original will be returned.
- All new students must have a physical examination performed within 1 year of the date of the first day of school that includes proof of all required immunizations. Documentation of the physical exam and immunizations must be submitted on the ***State of Illinois Certificate of Child Health Examination Form*** before the first day of school in August of 2023. Alternatively, they can submit their most recent required exam (for example a new 3rd grader can submit their Kindergarten exam).\*
- If your child is enrolling in an Illinois school for the first time, a vision examination (performed within 1 year of the date of the first day of school) is required. Documentation of the eye exam must be submitted on the ***State of Illinois Eye Examination Report*** by October 15, 2023.

### **All Kindergarten Students (New and Returning)**

All Kindergarten parents must have completed the following forms by the beginning of the school year:

- All Kindergarten students must have a physical examination performed within 1 year of the date of the first day of school that includes proof of all required immunizations. Documentation of the physical exam and immunizations must be submitted on the ***State of Illinois Certificate of Child Health Examination Form*** before the first day of school in August of 2023.\*
- All Kindergarten students must have a dental examination performed within 18 months of the May 15th deadline. Documentation of the dental exam must be submitted on the ***State of Illinois Proof of School Dental Examination Form*** by May 15, 2024.
- All Kindergarten students must have a vision examination performed within 1 year of the date of the first day of school. Documentation of the eye exam must be submitted on the ***State of Illinois Eye Examination Report*** by October 15, 2023.

### **All Second-Grade Students (New and Returning)**

All Second-Grade parents must have completed the following forms by the beginning of the school year:

- All Second-Grade students must have a dental examination performed within 18 months of the May 15th deadline. Documentation of the dental exam must be submitted on the ***State of Illinois Proof of School Dental Examination Form*** by May 15, 2024.

**\*Special Note** about the ***State of Illinois Certificate of Child Health Examination Form***: The Illinois State Board of Education requires all parents who are requesting religious exemption to immunizations and/or physicals to file with the school before October 15<sup>th</sup> an Illinois Certificate of Religious Exemption to Required Immunizations and/or Examinations Form. In addition to a statement detailing the religious beliefs that prevent the child from receiving each vaccination exemption requested, this form must also be signed by the parent and by the doctor or healthcare provider. Please note that in a disease outbreak, or after exposure to any of the diseases for which immunization is required, schools may exclude children who are not vaccinated from attending school in order to protect the school community.

Any student not in compliance with physical and immunization requirements may be excluded from school beginning October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 until the correct documentation is submitted to the divisional office.



## Middle School (5 - 8) Forms

All of the following forms are available in the Middle School office and on the Elgin Academy website EA Community Portal. Links are also provided in Elgin Academy News & Notes emails.

### All Students (New and Returning)

All Middle School parents must have completed the following forms by the beginning of the school year:

- ***Elgin Academy Emergency Contact and Health Information Form and Waiver*** by August 20, 2023.
- A ***Handbook Form*** to confirm that they have read and accepted the updated handbook each year.
- Students who need to be given medication, either over-the-counter or prescription, at school or during a school overnight trip must have an ***Elgin Academy Medication Dispensing Authorization Form*** on file in their Divisional office before any medication can be administered to them.
- Only for students who will be participating on EA athletic teams: An ***IHSA Pre-Participation Examination Form***, valid for one year after examination date, must be submitted for any student participating in sports in Grades 5-8. For students in Grade 6, the physical required for school entrance at that grade level is acceptable as a sports physical. However, a sports physical (which is an abbreviated physical exam without documentation of immunization) is not acceptable as the physical exam required for school entrance to 6th grade. Documentation of a sports physical must be on file in the divisional office before the athlete is allowed to participate in practices.

### Students New to EA

All new Middle School parents must have completed the following steps by the beginning of the school year:

- In compliance with Illinois State law, Elgin Academy maintains certified copies of ***birth certificates*** for each student enrolled. A staff member will need to make a copy of an original birth certificate, and then the original will be returned.
- All new students must have a physical examination performed within 1 year of the date of the first day of school that includes proof of all required immunizations. Documentation of the physical exam and immunizations must be submitted on the ***State of Illinois Certificate of Child Health Examination Form*** before the first day of school in August of 2023. Alternatively, they can submit their most recent required exam.\*
- If your child is enrolling in an Illinois school for the first time, a vision examination (performed within 1 year of the date of the first day of school) is required. Documentation of the eye exam must be submitted on the ***State of Illinois Eye Examination Report*** by October 15, 2023.

### **All Sixth-Grade Students (New and Returning)**

All Sixth-Grade parents must have completed the following forms by the beginning of the school year:

- All Sixth-Grade students must have a physical examination performed within 1 year of the date of the first day of school that includes proof of all required immunizations. Immunizations must include a current dose of Tdap and one dose of Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine before entry into 6th Grade. Documentation of the physical exam and immunizations must be submitted on the ***State of Illinois Certificate of Child Health Examination Form*** before the first day of school in August of 2023.\*
- All Sixth-Grade students must have a dental examination performed within 18 months of the May 15th deadline. Documentation of the dental exam must be submitted on the ***State of Illinois Proof of School Dental Examination Form*** by May 15, 2024.

**\*Special Note** about the ***State of Illinois Certificate of Child Health Examination Form***: The Illinois State Board of Education requires all parents who are requesting religious exemption to immunizations and/or physicals to file with the school before October 15<sup>th</sup> an Illinois Certificate of Religious Exemption to Required Immunizations and/or Examinations Form. In addition to a statement detailing the religious beliefs that prevent the child from receiving each vaccination exemption requested, this form must also be signed by the parent and by the doctor or healthcare provider. Please note that in a disease outbreak, or after exposure to any of the diseases for which immunization is required, schools may exclude children who are not vaccinated from attending school in order to protect the school community.

Any student not in compliance with physical and immunization requirements may be excluded from school beginning October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 until the correct documentation is submitted to the divisional office.

## Upper School (9 - 12) Forms

All of the following forms are available in the Upper School office and on the Elgin Academy website EA Community Portal. Links are also provided in Elgin Academy News & Notes emails.

### All Students (New and Returning)

All Upper School parents must have completed the following forms by the beginning of the school year:

- An ***IHSA Pre-Participation Examination Form***, valid for one year after examination date, must be submitted for any student participating in sports in Grades 9-12. For students in Grade 9, the physical required for school entrance at that grade level is acceptable as a sports physical. However, a sports physical (which is an abbreviated physical exam without documentation of immunization) is not acceptable as the physical exam required for school entrance to 9th grade. Documentation of a sports physical must be on file in the divisional office before the athlete is allowed to participate in practices.
- The ***IHSA Sports Medicine Acknowledgement & Consent Form*** must also be completed and on file in the divisional office before the athlete is allowed to participate in practices.
- Optional: Upper School Students who will be driving to and parking at school need to submit a ***Student Vehicle Parking Form*** to the Upper School office.
- Optional: Upper School Students who will be utilizing third-party companies (such as Uber) for school transportation need to submit a ***Rideshare Waiver Form*** to the Upper School office.

### Students New to EA

All new Upper School parents must have completed the following steps by the beginning of the school year:

- In compliance with Illinois State law, Elgin Academy maintains certified copies of ***birth certificates*** for each student enrolled. A staff member will need to make a copy of an original birth certificate, and then the original will be returned.
- All new students must have a physical examination performed within 1 year of the date of the first day of school that includes proof of all required immunizations. Documentation of the physical exam and immunizations must be submitted on the ***State of Illinois Certificate of Child Health Examination Form*** before the first day of school in August of 2023. Alternatively, they can submit their most recent required exam (for example, a new 10th-grade student can submit their form from 9th grade).\*
- If your child is enrolling in an Illinois school for the first time, a vision examination (performed within 1 year of the date of the first day of school) is required. Documentation of the eye exam must be submitted on the ***State of Illinois Eye Examination Report*** by October 15, 2023.

## Ninth-Grade Students

All Ninth-Grade parents must have completed the following steps by the beginning of the school year:

- All Ninth-Grade students must have a physical examination performed within 1 year of the date of the first day of school that includes proof of all required immunizations. Documentation of the physical exam and immunizations must be submitted on the ***State of Illinois Certificate of Child Health Examination Form*** before the first day of school in August of 2023.\*
- All Ninth-Grade students must have a dental examination performed within 18 months of the May 15th deadline. Documentation of the dental exam must be submitted on the ***State of Illinois Proof of School Dental Examination Form*** by May 15, 2024.

## Twelfth-Grade Students

All Twelfth-Grade parents must have completed the following steps by the beginning of the school year:

- All Twelfth-Grade students must present proof of two doses of Meningococcal Conjugate Vaccine for entry into 12th Grade, unless the first dose was administered at 16 years of age or older, in which case documentation of only one dose is required. Documentation can be provided on the ***Certificate of Child Health Examination Form*** or other written form or letter from the health care provider's office and submitted before the start of school in August, 2023.\*
- All Twelfth-Grade students must submit a ***Senior Release of Records Form*** that allows EA to send school records to the student's requested colleges.
- All Twelfth-Grade students must submit a ***Senior Privileges Permission Form*** that allows them to participate in senior off-campus privileges during the school day.

\*Special Note about the ***State of Illinois Certificate of Child Health Examination Form***: The Illinois State Board of Education requires all parents who are requesting religious exemption to immunizations and/or physicals to file with the school before October 15<sup>th</sup> an Illinois Certificate of Religious Exemption to Required Immunizations and/or Examinations Form. In addition to a statement detailing the religious beliefs that prevent the child from receiving each vaccination exemption requested, this form must also be signed by the parent and by the doctor or healthcare provider. Please note that in a disease outbreak, or after exposure to any of the diseases for which immunization is required, schools may exclude children who are not vaccinated from attending school in order to protect the school community.

Any student not in compliance with physical and immunization requirements may be excluded from school beginning October 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023 until the correct documentation is submitted to the divisional office.

## **Admission**

Elgin Academy, as a private 501(c)(3) educational organization and as an ISACS fully accredited educational entity, provides equal admission, access, and opportunities to all students currently enrolled at the Academy and to those students seeking enrollment at the Academy.

Elgin Academy does not discriminate against any person or class of persons based on disability, race, gender, religion, sexual orientation or in any other manner prohibited by either federal or state law.

The Elgin Academy admission policy is dictated by our implementation and usage of our mission statement as a guiding principle to the operation of the school.

Elgin Academy's educational program is designed for students who have the potential to respond to the curriculum in a positive way and who wish to prepare themselves with a sound academic background for college work. In considering a candidate for admission, the Academy endeavors to find out as much as possible about the student's scholastic background, work habits, character, personal interests, and social traits. From this information an Admission Committee evaluates a candidate's ability to meet the high standards of academic achievement and personal conduct expected of EA students.

The criteria the Admission Committee uses is based on:

1. The student's past academic work as it is recorded on a copy of an official transcript sent from the student's current school.
2. A completed teacher recommendation form, provided by Elgin Academy, for both English and Math. (For Lower School a classroom teacher recommendation is used.)
3. The results of the ISEE administered by the Admissions Office, for grades 5 through 12th grade, and a screening process in grades PS through 4th-grade.
4. A personal interview with the parents and student candidate.
5. A school visit with the candidate.

## **Tuition and Fees**

### **Tuition Policies**

A non-refundable deposit is required for both returning students and new students to confirm the applicant's place in class. This is applied to the total tuition and fees. The Academy has many expenses of a continuing nature, such as faculty salaries and campus maintenance. In order to plan and maintain these services over the entire year, it is essential that the annual income from fees be assured. For this reason, it is understood that students are enrolled for the entire school year or such portion as may remain after the date of entrance. In view of the foregoing, no reduction or remission of fees can be allowed by the Academy for absences, withdrawal, or dismissal. The fact that the school fees may be paid in installments does not constitute a fractional contract.



## **Tuition Protection Plan**

Enrollment of a child at Elgin Academy carries with it an obligation to pay tuition for the entire academic year, even if the child is subsequently withdrawn. By participating in the Tuition Protection Plan, you become eligible to receive a prorated refund of your tuition if your child's separation from the Academy is due to one of the causes covered under the Plan: Medical Withdrawal, Psychiatric Withdrawal, Geographic Withdrawal, Academic Dismissal, and Disciplinary Dismissal. Participation in this Plan is required of all students if tuition is paid via a payment plan. Participation is recommended, but not required, for parents who choose to pay their student's balance in full by June 1<sup>st</sup> and who wish to minimize their risk of lost tuition in the event of a covered separation from studies.

## **Tuition Assistance**

The Academy awards tuition assistance based on need. Awards are for one year and are reviewed annually. For more information, contact the Admission Office.

## **Transportation**

Academy vans and chartered buses transport teams to away games and to/from the EA athletic fields. Academy vans may also be used to transport students to field trip destinations. School rules apply to student van/bus conduct, whether to/from school or for athletic/activity transport. Failure to follow the driver's instructions or disrespect of the driver or fellow passengers is a violation of school rules. Repeated offenses will result in student's losing the privilege of riding in the bus/van.

## **Parent/School Communication**

The Academy values its long tradition of parental support. Parent questions, suggestions, and concerns are always welcome. An important communication tool between school and home is the Elgin Academy website. EA parents have access to the EA website ([www.elginacademy.org](http://www.elginacademy.org)) through the EA Community Portal. School calendars, news, important documents, lunch service, athletic information, and the community directory can be accessed through the portal. Teachers and administrators may be contacted directly via email or voicemail.

We understand that families will allow their children to have access to smartphones at different ages. As a school, we do not recommend students have cell phones prior to fifth grade. Please note that no student needs a phone on their person during the day in order to receive messages from a parent. Parents should contact divisional assistants to get messages to, or to receive messages from, students during the school day. Please refer to the relevant divisional section for specifics relating to your child's acceptable cell phone use at school.

## **Policies**

The trustees of the Academy govern the school and in doing so they act in accordance with their by-laws, which are reviewed regularly and amended when appropriate. When the board deems a policy necessary to further the school's mission, it may pass that policy and put that policy in this handbook. As noted in other places, when the handbook is amended during a school year the community is notified in *EA News and Notes*, our regular weekly communication. The board's by-laws can be seen by any member of the community by contacting the Administrative Assistant to the Head of School.

## **Parent Organizations**

The Elgin Academy Parent Association is a voluntary organization of Elgin Academy which is open to the entire parent body. EAPA seeks to promote Academy unity, parent understanding of Academy objectives, and opportunities for parents to be of service to the school. The Athletic Booster Club supports Academy athletic programs through fundraising and volunteering. The Patrons of the Arts support the Academy's fine arts programs through fundraising and volunteering. All parent organizations recognize the Head of School as the chief administrative officer of the Academy with primary responsibility for approving all school projects, activities, and policies.

## **Parent Volunteers and Overnight Trips**

All parent volunteers on student overnight trips must pass a criminal background check prior to the start of the trip. For information about this process, please speak with the Divisional administrative assistant.

# Computer and Internet Use Policy

The Elgin Academy network has over 250 registered users—faculty, staff, and students—and all of them share the same resources: hardware, software, and bandwidth. None of these resources is infinite, of course, but as long as each user is considerate of all the others, the system will work smoothly and efficiently for everyone. If some users do not respect the rights of others, however, the performance and reliability of the entire system can be affected. Users' rights include the expectation that the system will allow them to create, save, and print documents, access the Internet, etc.; that their files will remain private; and that they will not be the target of abuse or inconsiderate actions by other users. All users should be aware that the Academy does have the right to monitor and manage network traffic, and to open and examine documents stored on Academy-owned equipment. However, these rights will not be exercised by Academy personnel without cause.

Some actions, such as damaging EA hardware, have obviously negative effects on other users. Others have less apparent, but no less serious, effects. For example, if you think of our network as the streets in a town and our connection to the Internet as the on-ramp to a highway, then every message sent by every user is like a car. The more cars there are, the slower traffic moves. Furthermore, because of the way networks operate, what seems to a user to be a single message—a request for a web page, for instance—actually translates into many cars, not just one.

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The Elgin Academy network exists to support the Academy's educational program. Students and faculty are expected to refrain from activities that are not related to that program, and to report problems or violations of the guidelines as soon as possible, so that appropriate action may be taken. Such activities (even if not objectionable per se) use bandwidth, can introduce malware into the system, and are often distracting to others.

Elgin Academy Middle and Upper School students receive a school email account through Google Apps for Education. Students should use these email accounts to communicate with teachers and peers on information that pertains to school work. Students are encouraged to keep separate personal accounts for non-school related communication. Student email accounts are subject to the same guidelines as other school technology use.

## Specific Guidelines

- Do not use another person's password, account, or files without permission.
- Do not try to guess or determine another person's password.
- Do not use system resources wastefully (e.g. printing unnecessarily, downloading large files, etc.).
- Do not intentionally damage EA-owned hardware or software.
- Do not deliberately alter, damage or delete material that belongs to someone else.
- Do not install, alter, or delete software without permission from the computer staff.
- Do not send or post anonymous, obscene, threatening, abusive, or deliberately inaccurate or hurtful e-mail or messages.
- Do not break any local, state, or federal law.
- Do not download or duplicate copyrighted material without permission.
- Do not represent another person's words, pictures or ideas as your own.

- Do not create or distribute computer viruses or other malicious programs.
- Do not illegally copy software.
- Do not look for, display, distribute, or save obscene, defamatory, violent, racially offensive, or otherwise objectionable material. If you have any doubts about whether material is objectionable, ask a teacher,
- Do not frequent social networking websites.
- Do not gamble on-line, or use the network for commercial purposes.
- Do not participate in chain letters.
- Do not open email attachments without permission, except those attached to emails sent to you by yourself, your classmates, or faculty members.

Failure by any member of the Academy community to live up to the guidelines listed above will result in disciplinary action. Violations will be handled as described in the Handbook.



## **Principles of Good Practice**

Elgin Academy is a member of the National Association of Independent Schools, which has developed standards of practice for its 1,100 member schools. The following are Principles of Good Practice for parents and schools working together on behalf of our students.

### **Parents Working with Schools**

1. Parents recognize that effective partnerships are characterized by clearly defined responsibilities, a shared commitment to collaboration, open lines of communication, mutual respect, and a common vision of the goals to be reached.
2. In selecting an independent school, parents seek an optimal match for the needs of the student, their own expectations, and the philosophy and programs of the school.
3. Parents are familiar with and support the school's policies and procedures.
4. Parents provide a home environment that supports the development of positive learning attitudes and habits.
5. Parents involve themselves in the life of the school.
6. Parents seek and value the school's perspective on the student.
7. When concerns arise, parents seek information directly from the school, consulting with those best able to address the concerns.
8. Parents share with the school any religious, cultural, medical, or personal information that the school may need to serve the student best.

### **Schools Working with Parents**

1. The school recognizes that effective partnerships are characterized by clearly defined responsibilities, a shared commitment to collaboration, open lines of communication, mutual respect, and a common vision of the goals to be reached.
2. The school fully discloses its philosophy, program, and practices to parents during the admission process and encourages dialogue that clarifies parental expectations and aspirations for the student.
3. The school seeks and values the parent's perspective on the student.
4. Teachers and administrators are accessible to parents and model candid and open dialogue.
5. The school keeps parents well informed through systematic reports, conferences, publications, and informal conversations.
6. The school clearly defines how it involves parents when considering major decisions that affect the school community.
7. The school offers and supports a variety of parent education opportunities.
8. The school suggests effective ways for parents to support the educational process.
9. The school actively seeks the knowledge it needs to work effectively with a diverse parent body.

## Who to Contact

The Academy values its long tradition of parental support. Parent questions, suggestions, and concerns are always welcome. Teachers and administrators may be contacted directly via email, or via voicemail at 847-695-0309 (email addresses and voicemail extensions are listed in the online school directory).

The format for the majority of email addresses is “first initial last name@elginacademy.org,” such as dsept@elginacademy.org for Doug Sept. Particular items can be directed as follows:

### **Early Childhood and Lower School (PS-4)**

Student absent/late:	Jennifer Brown, EC and LS Assistant, 847-695-0315
Classroom or specials teachers:	Contact the teacher directly.
Questions about the EC/LS program:	Michelle Matalone EC/LS Director, 847-695-0309 x237
Concerns about student (academic or social):	Michelle Matalone, EC/LS Director, 847-695-0309 x237 Helen Elayan, Dir. of Student Support Services, 847-695-0309 x 276
Extended absence:	Michelle Matalone, EC/LS Director, 847-695-0309 x237
Extended Day program:	Email eaextendedday@elginacademy.org

### **Middle School (Grades 5–8) & PEAK**

Student absent/late:	Vianney Vargas, MS Assistant, 847-695-0302
Concerns about a specific class:	Contact the teacher or advisor directly.
Questions about the MS program:	Doug Sept, Asst. Head of School, 847-695-0309 x 247
Questions about the PEAK program:	Helen Elayan, PEAK Director, 847-695-0309 x 276
Concerns about student (academic or social):	Drew Roling, MS Dean of Students, 847-695-0302 Helen Elayan, Dir. of Student Support Services, 847-695-0309 x 276
Extended absence:	Drew Roling, MS Dean of Students, 847-695-0302 Doug Sept, Asst. Head of School, 847-695-0309 x 247
Athletics	Craig Pinson, Athletic Director, 847-695-0309 x 222
Extended Day program:	Email eaextendedday@elginacademy.org

### **Upper School (Grades 9-12)**

Student absent/late:	Anna Przybylski, US Assistant, 847-695-0301
Concerns about a specific course:	Contact the teacher or advisor directly.
Questions about the US program:	Doug Sept, Asst. Head of School, 847-695-0309 x 216
Concerns about student (academic or social):	Jorge Sánchez, US Dean of Students, 847-695-0309 x 218 Helen Elayan, Dir. of Student Support Services, 847-695-0309 x 276
Extended absence:	Jorge Sánchez, US Dean of Students, 847-695-0309 x 218 Doug Sept, Asst. Head of School, 847-695-0309 x 216
College Counseling:	Ashley Anderson, College Counselor, 847-695-0309 x 246
Athletics:	Craig Pinson, Athletic Director, 847-695-0309 x 222

## **Other Departments**

Admission and Financial Aid	Bonita Goist, Dir. of Admission, 847-695-0303
Website/Communication/Hilltopper Fund	Tanya Moore, Website/Advancement, 847-695-0309 x 259
Fees and Payment	Toni Eggers, Billing, 847-695-0309 x 263
International Studies	Katie Kruse, Dir. of International Studies, 847-695-0301
Head of School	Paul Druzinsky, Interim Head of School, 847-695-0309 x 201

## **Handbook Updates**

This Handbook is subject to change during the school year. In the case of a modification, an announcement will be posted in EA News & Notes or, if necessary, through an email to all constituents.

## **Early Childhood (PS-PK) & Lower School (K-4) Information**

### **Early Childhood Academic Goals**

#### **To develop students who:**

1. Have relevant learning experiences involving conceptual, social and emotional development.
2. Are curious about the world, confident in their own ideas and can express themselves creatively.
3. Are able to problem solve, applying learned concepts to new situations.

### **Early Childhood Personal/Social Goals**

#### **To develop students who:**

1. Display a healthy self-image and demonstrate self-control.
2. Form healthy social relationships and show responsibility for themselves and others.
3. Are actively engaged in their school experience and demonstrate a positive attitude toward learning.
4. Demonstrate confidence in themselves and their abilities to learn and succeed

### **Early Childhood Philosophy**

The Elgin Academy Early Childhood program recognizes the importance of the early childhood years. It is our philosophy that the school environment should encourage and nurture optimum development of the individual child. By providing the opportunity to develop physical, emotional, social, and cognitive skills, several lifelong qualities are fostered in turn. These qualities include creativity, independence, respect, and cooperation.

### **Lower School Academic Goals**

#### **To develop students who:**

1. Play an active and responsible role in the educational process.
2. Strive for excellence in what they do.
3. Are well rounded in their academic development.
4. Communicate information, opinions and feelings effectively, both orally and in writing.
5. Can apply what they have learned in the context of the real world.

### **Lower School Personal/Social Goals**

#### **To develop students who:**

1. Enjoy learning and have a positive attitude towards school.
2. Are of good character.
3. Reflect on their observations and experiences, and understand how their personal values and actions affect their own lives as well as those of others.
4. Have a positive self-image and form healthy social relationships.

## Lower School Academic Program (K-4th)

Lower School students spend most of their time with their classroom teachers, who are responsible for their general welfare and progress. The classroom teachers provide instruction in literacy, mathematics, social studies, science, and social/emotional learning. Details regarding the scheduling of each of these areas of the curriculum are provided to parents by the classroom teachers at information sessions near the beginning of the school year.

Specialist teachers provide instruction in art, library skills, music, physical education (P.E.), and Spanish.

Recess takes place from 11:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. and is followed by lunch from 12:00 - 12:30 p.m. Recess takes place on the quad, in the gym, or in classrooms (in case of inclement weather). Lunch takes place in the Sears Hall cafeteria.

## Homework (K-4th)

Elgin Academy teachers are very thoughtful about what they ask students to do outside of class. In order to meet some of the learning objectives in our age-appropriate, challenging curriculum, students should plan to spend time outside of class accomplishing what teachers request of them.

Homework that students are asked to complete may fall in the category of **preparation**. Some examples of preparatory activities include reading parts of a textbook, a novel, an article, or another selection that is designed to provide students some background information for upcoming learning activities. Students could also be asked to watch videos, either created by or identified by the teacher, that provide insights into new concepts. Teachers do not expect students to master preparation concepts on their own, so if your child has questions about what they are reading or learning, please encourage them to write them down and either share them in class or email them to the teacher. Such questions will often align with what teachers have anticipated addressing in follow-up conversations and activities.

Homework may also fall in the category of **reflection and application**. Some examples of reflection and application activities include completing a set of math problems, responding to a set of questions in a book or on a worksheet, or writing a paper. In these types of assignments, teachers are asking students to think at or beyond a level achieved in previous class experiences. Teachers use reflection and application activities in order to assess the level of student understanding on concepts that have already been taught. Parents are not expected to re-teach any of these ideas. Instead, if a student struggles with a reflection or application assignment, we encourage the parents of our youngest learners to reach out directly to teachers. For older students who are learning how to become self-advocates, they should contact their own teachers directly.

Homework could also fall somewhere on a **spectrum between preparation and reflection/application**. Quite often, longer-term assignments and projects include a mix of students reflecting on and applying recently-learned concepts and skills and preparing for future learning by going beyond what they have learned in class. Teachers plan for this balance by often providing some class time or structure to supplement the work that students are doing at home.



Elgin Academy teachers are very cognizant of the out-of-school time commitment that they are asking students to make in order to add to their learning of content and skills. When planning such homework assignments, they will make every effort to provide students guidance for how long such assignments will take so that students can develop time-management skills and better identify when they are challenged by a concept or skill.

Parents should play an important role in homework that decreases as their child grows older and gains more self-sufficiency. However, even for our oldest students, parent support in the following ways is beneficial to students having successful homework experiences.

- 1) Engage your child in frequent conversations about **when** they can be most successful at completing homework. Ensuring that they have built in appropriate time into their schedule that allows for homework with necessary short breaks as well as other family and personal activities is important. Additionally, a good night's sleep is valuable for students of all ages.
- 2) Have a conversation early in the school year, and revisit as necessary, regarding **where** your child can be most successful at completing homework. Help plan a space at home that has easy access to any basic school supplies they might need. Ensure that distractions in this area are kept to a minimum. For younger students, and even for some older students, ensuring that their homework space is a public one in your house can help you monitor them to avoid distractions (phone, social media, games, etc.) that will increase the amount of time it takes to finish homework.

Our teachers are dedicated to facilitating a healthy school-life balance for our students. While some schools choose to publish approximate homework times for each grade level, we believe that no one set amount of time will accurately reflect every student's pace of learning. If a family is concerned about the amount of time that it takes their child to complete the homework, the best point of contact is the LS homeroom teacher who can help collaborate on solutions.

## **Orientation - Open Classroom (PS-4th)**

We begin our year with an opportunity for families and students to visit their classroom, drop off their school supplies, and have conversations with teachers and one another. Having the chance to visit campus and see the classroom space helps to ease the transition from summer back to school in important ways for young learners.

Teachers ask families to provide insights regarding their children because we believe that this is an important part of our educational program. Teachers will gather this information through conversations during the orientation - open classroom time as well as in writing.

We also host an Open House (PS-12th) early in the school year to deepen these connections between home and school and share information specific to each grade level with families.

## **The Learning Plan (PS-4th)**

In addition to the core curriculum for all students, we also recognize and celebrate special areas of talent and interest for each child. The Learning Plan is designed to personalize the educational process and to address the developmental needs of younger children. The Learning Plan is at the heart of Elgin Academy's educational philosophy.

Required Learning Plan conferences are held in the fall and again in the spring with optional conferences also available at the end of the year that can be requested by the family or by the teacher. Beginning in 3rd-grade, students become more active partners in the process and attend conferences. Students may be excused for part of the conference time so that parents and teachers may speak confidentially.

As well as the conferences described above, the teachers or administrators may initiate a conference with parents whenever they believe it will be helpful.

Goals set during Learning Plan conferences reflect the spirit of the Early Childhood and Lower School's Academic and Personal/Social Goals.

## **Student Report Cards and Learning Plan Conferences (PS-4th)**

Student growth and development is recorded and shared on a quarterly basis.

The first and third quarters of the school year include a Learning Plan conference as means of reporting on student progress and growth. This is a time for parents and their child's teacher to address the student's individual learning style, strengths, weaknesses, and developmental needs. The Learning Plan is designed to personalize the educational process. It is at the heart of Elgin Academy's educational philosophy.

A written report, which is narrative in nature and individual to each student, will be utilized at the end of the second and fourth quarters. Our aim is to provide you with a clear and frank appraisal of your child's performance, noting strengths and challenges, and offering suggestions for improvement. We endeavor to capture who each student is as a learner and provide families with some specific information regarding progress and achievement. We have organized the written report so that you can see the year's progress as it unfolds.

## **Arrival and Dismissal (PS-4th)**

Regular school hours are from 8:15 a.m. - 2:45 p.m.

The Extended Day Program is available for PS-4th grade students, for an added fee, each school day from 2:45 - 6:00 p.m. Parents should email [eaextendedday@elginacademy.org](mailto:eaextendedday@elginacademy.org) if their child will be staying after school in our Extended Day program.

***Students enrolled in the half-day PS/PK program will be dismissed at 11:30 a.m., directly from the Early Childhood classroom at the lower level door on the west side of North Hall.***

## Drop Off

The drop off point for all parents bringing their children to school in the morning is at the corner of Academy Place and Kimball Street, in the vicinity of North Hall, Edwards Hall, and the Rider Center. EA personnel will be present to assist at drop off each morning between 7:45 - 8:15 a.m. After 8:15 a.m. parents should accompany their children to the main doors of North Hall.

Students are welcomed into North Hall at 8:00 a.m. each morning, with our school day instruction beginning at 8:15 a.m. ***Please be prompt in bringing your child to school by 8:15 a.m.*** It is difficult for our students to join their class when the group is already involved in activities.

## Pick Up

At the end of the regular school day, PS-4th grade students (with their teachers) will assemble at the corner of Academy Place and Kimball Street, in the vicinity of North Hall and the Rider Center, at 2:45 p.m. The car line is supervised and facilitated by Elgin Academy personnel and traditionally runs smoothly, safely, and in a timely manner.

Students not picked up by 3:00 p.m. will be signed into Extended Day in the Rider Center Library space, with applicable fees, and can be picked up there. Parents or someone designated by parents should park on Academy Place/Kimball Street and proceed to the Rider Center Extended Day space in the Library to pick up their children personally.

## Allergies (PS-4th)

Please be certain to inform the school if your child has ANY food allergies.

Some of our students may have life threatening allergies to peanut and tree nuts. Even contact with peanut or tree-nut products presents a threat. It is critical therefore that all peanut and tree-nut products are excluded from the snacks and lunches of all students in Early Childhood, the Lower School, and the Middle School.

## Snacks (PS-4th)

Students should bring a small, healthy snack from home each day. All items brought from home should be peanut-free and tree-nut-free. Students who will be staying on campus for Extended Day are encouraged to bring an extra snack to eat after school.

## Lunch (PS-4th)

Students (including PS/PK full day students) may bring a packed lunch from home. All items brought from home should be peanut-free and tree-nut-free. Refrigerators and microwaves are not available for student use.

Students (including PS/PK full day students) may also order lunch via the Schoolhouse Fare website and online ordering system.

## **Illness/Absence/Emergency (PS-4th)**

If your child will be absent from school, please notify the PS/LS Divisional office by phone or email. If the absence continues, inform the school on a day by day basis. If the absence is due to a communicable disease such as strep throat or chicken pox, it is essential that you inform the PS - 4th grade administrative assistant of the diagnosis and the date. In the case of certain symptoms, such as pink eye or rashes, clearance by a physician may be required before the student returns to school.

Children exhibiting symptoms such as vomiting, diarrhea or fever must be kept at home. The active nature of the school day may prove too much for some children when they are not well. This is an important point to consider when your child seems on the borderline between 'well enough' or not quite healthy enough to be in school. Children must be fever-free without medication and free from vomiting and diarrhea for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

In the event that a child becomes ill during the school day, the parents will be notified to pick them up. The ill child will be kept quiet and comfortable until parents can arrive. Parents should notify the school of the times when their child will be absent and when the parents will not be at their regular address or phone number, so that they can be reached at all times, just in case of sickness or emergency.

Parents will be notified if their child is involved in an accident at school. If the accident is minor, the parents will be informed when picking up their child at the end of the day. If a serious accident should occur and a child needs immediate medical attention, our first action will be to obtain the needed help. The second action will be to notify the parents. We will refer to your child's Medical Emergency Form at such times.

## **Planned Absences (PS-4th)**

Planned absences should be avoided, particularly for additional vacation days. Please refer to the school calendar to assist in this regard. Absences for extended periods of time, for any reason, are extremely problematic, and may result in a student failing to complete grade level requirements. If an unavoidable extended absence seems likely, parents must contact the Early Childhood/Lower School Director as soon as possible. In cases of illness there are things we can do to minimize the impact of an extended absence.

## **Parents' Absence from Home (PS-4th)**

If both parents are out of town, please inform the school in advance. We will need to know the following information:

1. The name of the person caring for your child and the telephone number, if your child is not staying at home.
2. Your out-of-town address and telephone number in case of an emergency.

## **Students Reported as Missing (PS-4th)**

In compliance with Illinois State law, the chief administrator or their designee reports to the appropriate authorities the names of children he/she suspects are missing and has a procedure in place for flagging records of students reported as missing by the Illinois State Police.

## **Student Conduct (PS-4th)**

### **Our Philosophy**

The Academy expects students to exhibit personal maturity and responsibility commensurate with their age. The school believes that students grow and develop best as children and adolescents when proper standards of politeness and decorum are maintained. The Academy relies on three guiding principles in considering the behavior of students: Integrity, Respect, and Trust.

**Integrity:** Students are expected to act honestly, do their best in all activities, strive to grow academically and personally, and live by both the letter and spirit of school rules.

**Respect:** Students are expected to respect their elders and their fellow students, respect school property and the property of others, respect themselves, and behave in a civil manner.

**Trust:** Faculty and Administrators must be able to trust students to act respectfully and with integrity. To help guide them, students are expected to familiarize themselves with and adhere to the rules of their classroom and the school as a whole. Their teachers will support them in doing so and will promote positive behavior in a variety of ways on a regular daily basis

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

If disciplinary action becomes necessary, it can vary depending on the nature and severity of the misconduct, as well as the student's past record. Consequences can include but are not limited to: time- out, loss of particular privileges, detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or dismissal from the Academy. In cases where disciplinary action becomes necessary, parents will be contacted to keep them informed and their support in dealing with problems will be sought.

### **Weapons/Replicas of Weapons**

The possession of any weapon on campus or at any school-related event is strictly prohibited and may result in immediate suspension. Any student who seeks to use a weapon replica in a school presentation must receive permission from their Divisional Director, who will outline the process for this procedure. Any replica on campus without permission will be responded to as a genuine weapon. In compliance with Illinois State law, the chief administrator or their designee notifies local law enforcement officials of verified incidents involving firearms at the school. The administrator also notifies the Illinois State Police of such incidents through the School Incident Reporting System.

## Harassment and Bullying

### Harassment

Elgin Academy will not tolerate verbal or physical conduct by any community member--student or employee--which harasses or interferes with another's performance or which creates an offensive or hostile environment. This policy includes harassment of any kind, but particularly harassment forbidden by law and based on race, religion, gender, age, national origin, color, physical size, marital status, or disability. Disciplinary steps up to and including suspension or expulsion will be taken against any student who engages in any type of harassment.

Harassment is contrary to both state law and the fundamental tenets upon which Elgin Academy operates. It will not be tolerated. In compliance with Illinois State law, the chief administrator or their designee will immediately notify local law enforcement officials of complaints from school personnel concerning instances of battery committed against school personnel at the school. The administrator shall also notify the Illinois State Police within three days of each incident through the School Incident Reporting System.

Disciplinary steps up to and including discharge will be taken against any employee who engages in any type of harassment. In the case of inappropriate behavior by a teacher, coach, or staff member, parents and students should contact the appropriate Dean of Students or homeroom teacher. If the student or parent is uncomfortable contacting those people, he/she should contact the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs or the Head of School. Contact information for any of these people is available in both the school directory and this handbook.

### Bullying

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated over time. Bullying is contrary both to state law and to the policy of Elgin Academy. It will not be tolerated. According to the applicable state statutes, "It encompasses any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following: (1) placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property; (2) causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health; (3) substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or (4) substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school."

Bullying may take many forms and can occur in person or through the use of technology (cyberbullying). It could include harassment, threats, intimidation, the creation of a webpage, the sharing of derogatory material via social media or electronic means. This list is meant as an illustration and is not meant to be exhaustive.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- **An Imbalance of Power:** Students who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen repeatedly.

What bullying is not:

- single episodes of social rejection or dislike
- single episode acts of nastiness or spite
- random acts of aggression or intimidation
- arguments, disagreements or fights in which both parties participate equally

While the bullying definition is broad and can occur in a variety of environments it usually is a relationship problem and requires relationship-based solutions. These are best solved in the social environment in which they occur: in a child or young person's life, this is most often the school. As always, we will seek to remediate and educate.

These actions can cause great distress and will be dealt with appropriately within the school's disciplinary procedures. Disciplinary steps up to and including suspension or expulsion will be taken against any student who engages in any type of bullying. In addition, EA will employ ongoing age-appropriate educational mechanisms to help students understand the damage bullying and other forms of harassing behavior can do. However, they do not fit the definition of bullying and are not examples of bullying unless someone is deliberately and repeatedly doing them.

Bullying is a very serious accusation. When a student believes they are being bullied they should report this immediately to an adult who will inform the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs. The Assistant Head can also be contacted directly by students or families who wish to report bullying at [dsept@elginacademy.org](mailto:dsept@elginacademy.org) or 847.695.0309 ext. 216. Anonymous reports can be made at that same phone number.

The Assistant Head will then assure the charge is investigated fully and expeditiously, either by himself or by his designee(s). All parents and guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying will be informed promptly. As appropriate, the discussions will include topics such as planned interventions, restorative measures, and the inclusion of the Director of Student Support Services / School Counselor, who can provide school-based counseling. These conversations will be consistent with federal and state laws and rules governing student privacy rights

During the investigation, it will be determined whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction. The school will provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the school and the community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

Every attempt will be made to ensure this investigation takes place within ten days. Since these situations are often complicated, however, a thorough and effective investigation may include conversations with both the accuser and accused and various observations and conversations that would take time due to the repeated nature of bullying. The Assistant Head of School or his designee(s) will employ any other method they decide would help them ascertain whether bullying is present. If it is determined that bullying is present, appropriate remedies will be determined by the school. Parents and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation will be provided information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the Assistant Head of School and/or his designee(s) to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.



Interventions that can be taken to address bullying include, but are not limited to, working with the Director of Student Support Services / School Counselor, facilitating restorative measures, implementing punitive measures, engaging in social-emotional skill building, and engaging with community-based counseling services.

Retaliation against any person who reports bullying will not be tolerated, and appropriate consequences will be determined by the school for any person who is found to have engaged in retaliation.

If a person is found to have falsely accused another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying, the school will determine the appropriate consequences and remedial action. These actions include, but are not limited to, working with the Director of Student Support Services / School Counselor,, facilitating restorative measures, implementing punitive measures, engaging in social-emotional skill building, and engaging with community-based counseling services.

Our Director of Student Support Services / School Counselor, and Deans of Students will develop age-appropriate educational activities to help students across our campus understand what bullying is, why it is unacceptable, appropriate reactions if one feels bullied, and resources for people who feel bullied, among other things. This will be done both regularly as part of advisory and/or homeroom curriculum (depending on the age of student) and in reaction to campus or world events.

The Student Support Team, led by the Director of Student Support Services / School Counselor, and Deans of Students and including the Lower School Director and Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs, will convene a review and, if appropriate, revision of the policy on an annual basis. This process will include, but is not limited to, factors such as 1) The frequency of victimization, 2) Student, staff, and family observations of safety at school, 3) Identification of areas of the school where bullying occurs, 4) The types of bullying that are common or occurring, 5) Bystander intervention or participation. The information developed as a part of the evaluation process will be posted through appropriate channels such as the school website and e-newsletter. The results will also be reported directly to the Head of School and the Education Committee of the Board of Trustees.

This policy is based on engagement with a range of school stakeholders, is posted in the Elgin Academy Parent-Student Handbook which is available on the school website, and is distributed annually in that form to parents, guardians, students, and school personnel, including new faculty and staff.

## **Social Media**

We encourage all students and families to consider carefully their presence on social media. In rare instances when their posts hinder another student or other students' learning or comfort at school, therefore making it impossible for them to fully participate in our program, the school may need to become involved to ensure that the environment is safe for all students. The school may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to the student's account or profile on a social networking website. The school may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is sufficient evidence to suggest the student's social network account violates the school's disciplinary policy, and the school may require the student to share content in the course of such an investigation.

## Off-Campus, Vacation, and Out-of-School Behavior

The behavior of students during vacations and other out-of-school hours is the responsibility of parents, and Elgin Academy will generally not involve itself in such a matter. Nevertheless, if a student engages in criminal misconduct away from school which involves 1) the possession, use, or sale of drugs or alcohol, or 2) conduct that endangers or abuses the safety or well-being of the student, other people, or their property, the school may impose such discipline as it considers appropriate. The range of disciplinary responses available to Elgin Academy includes, but is not limited to suspension, expulsion, and the denial of the student's opportunity to re-enroll for any succeeding year. The Academy may impose similar discipline if the student's out-of-school behavior defames the name or character of the school.

## Computer, Internet, Cell Phones, Electronic Devices

Personal emails, computer games, downloading of unauthorized materials, personal internet surfing, or use of social interaction websites during the school day is not permitted and may result in suspension of computer privileges.

### Cell Phones

Because the school is responsible for students while they are on campus, telephone communications involving Early Childhood & Lower School students are to be channeled via the PS – 4th grade administrative assistant or another faculty/staff member. Early Childhood & Lower School students are not permitted to use cell phones while on campus except in rare circumstances, and even then authorization by a member of the faculty or staff is required. Teachers may confiscate cell phones for unauthorized use, in which case the parents will be informed.

### Dress Code

As in most social institutions, the Academy expects everyone to maintain standards of dress which are in keeping with the expectations of the school community.

The most important feature of the Early Childhood & Lower School dress code is that clothing be clean, neat, and appropriate for an active learning environment. **All graphics and logos must be appropriate for school.** If a child's clothing is inappropriate, parents will be informed by the teacher.

Because of the active nature of the program, children should wear gym shoes. If a student does wear another type of shoe, they should also have a pair of gym shoes at school for physical education class and recess. Footwear should be flat and appropriate for active learning. High heels, platforms, and flip flops are unacceptable and unsafe for daily school footwear.

In winter, it is important that every child come to school with warm clothing, i.e. cap, coat, boots, and gloves.

The school does not prohibit hairstyles that are historically associated with race, ethnicity, or hair texture, including, but not limited to, protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twists.

***Not Acceptable (unless part of an announced theme dress-up day)***

- Clothing with inappropriate words, slogans, or pictures
- Camouflage-style clothing
- Cutoffs or halter tops
- Hats in school buildings, except on themed dress-up days
- Pajama pants or sweatpants
- Extremes in hair style

## **Spirit Days (PS-4th)**

The first Friday of each month is a Spirit Day on which students are encouraged to dress in Elgin Academy wear as a demonstration of school spirit. **Additionally, the school facilitates pre-announced Spirit Weeks each year. More details and guidelines about these days, which may include themed dress-up days, will be announced closer to these events.**

## **Extra Clothing (PS-4th)**

Early Childhood (PS-PK) students, please bring an extra change of clothes for your child to keep at school in case of a bathroom accident or spill. Teachers at other grade levels may request that families send in extra clothing be sent in to keep at school as needed.

## **Birthdays (PS-4th)**

Your child's birthday is a special time. If your child wishes to bring in a special snack or treat for the class, please communicate with the teacher ahead of time. Please remember that all items must be peanut and tree-nut free.

Encouraging good manners and kindness towards others is important when celebrating birthdays. In order to avoid hurting other children's feelings, invitations to birthday parties or any other type of party should be mailed, not brought to school. If the entire homeroom class has not been invited, great care should be taken during the school day so that those who are not invited do not feel unjustly treated. The school campus, including the car line, is not to be used as a pickup point for parties.

## **Toys from Home (PS-4th)**

We have many appropriate play and work materials for students to use while at school. In general, therefore, we request that toys not be brought from home. We will on occasion request certain items for sharing which reflect a theme or category. These items are treated with care and they are shared with all the children interested. Note that toy/replica weapons are not allowed!

## **Field Trips (PS-4th)**

Field trips are an important part of experiential learning and will be facilitated when possible. Parents will be informed of each individual excursion in advance.

## **Lost and Found (PS-4th)**

Lost and found articles will be turned into the PS-4th grade main office in North Hall and may be claimed there. At the end of the year, the articles still unclaimed will be given to a charitable organization.

# **Middle School (5-8) and PEAK Information**

## **Advising and the Learning Plan**

Each Middle School student is part of a Middle School Advisory. Advisory groups are composed of 5th - 8th grade level students who meet regularly with an Advisor. During this time students are guided in their academic, personal, and social growth. The Advisor also plays a critical role in each student's Learning Plan.

The Learning Plan is at the heart of the Academy's educational philosophy. An individual plan of learning and development is established and monitored throughout the year for each student. Students are guided to set goals and measure individual success. An important element of this process is the Learning Plan Conference. During these conferences goals are set and progress is assessed. Student goals reflect the spirit of the Middle School's Academic and Personal/Social goals. Formal required conferences between student, parents, and the Advisor take place in October and March.

## **Middle School Academic Goals**

The Middle School develops students who:

1. Progressively take more responsibility for their academic learning through effective studying, organizing, investigating, creating, and completing quality work.
2. Apply learned knowledge to new situations thereby developing critical thinking skills.
3. Make connections of ideas through the curriculum resulting in a better understanding of content and forming a basis for the continued development of both a personal and global perspective.

## **Middle School Personal/Social Goals**

The Middle School develops students who:

1. Move along their continuum toward greater personal responsibility and independence.
2. Demonstrate self-confidence and integrity through academic and co-curricular opportunities.
3. Respect and value each member of the community and the environment in which they learn.

## **Attendance**

Absent or late to school: Parents must call the Middle School office, (847) 695-0302 by 8:15 a.m. if students will be absent or arriving after 8:15 a.m.

The Middle School day begins at 8:15 a.m. and ends at 2:45 p.m. Students are expected to be on time. Please drop off students no earlier than 7:45 a.m. Students who are late to school need to sign in at the Middle School Office and take a late pass with them to their class. Excessive tardiness or patterned/chronic absences, for whatever reason, will result in a parent conference.

Please be considerate of this expectation. Students who leave and/or return to school during the school day must also come to the Middle School Office to sign in and/or check out or to make alternative arrangements with the Administrative Assistant.

Middle School students should not be on campus without supervision, therefore unless they are involved in a supervised activity or working with a teacher, students should be picked up at 2:45 p.m. at the Middle School car line. If a student is not picked up by 3:00 p.m. they will be sent to Extended Day. Any exceptions to this rule must have the permission of the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs.

Students should not walk off campus without permission of the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs.

### **Students Reported as Missing**

In compliance with Illinois State law, the chief administrator or their designee reports to the appropriate authorities names of children he/she suspects are missing and has a procedure in place for flagging records of students reported as missing by the Illinois State Police.

### **Extended Day**

Middle School students may be signed up for extended day supervision. This program is available from 2:45 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. Parents should contact the MS Administrative Assistant at 847-695-0302 if their child will be staying after school in extended day.

### **Excused Absences**

Excused absences are due to illness, injury, and family emergency. Most homework assignments will be available through Schoology and/or through other communication from the teachers. Full credit will be allowed for makeup work. Individual teachers will work with the student to determine due dates for late work. Except when excused as outlined above, absences will be considered unexcused and the students will not receive credit for work missed. Students who are not in attendance during the school day are not eligible to participate in after school activities on the day of absence.

### **Excessive Absence or Tardiness**

Regular and punctual attendance in all classes and school programs is required of all students, as it is necessary to the continued academic success and growth of the student. Excessive absence (ten or more in a semester) from a class may result in a student failing that class.

### **Planned Absences**

In the event of an upcoming planned absence, advanced notification must be made to the appropriate Dean of Students and/or the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs. It is not always possible to provide homework in advance of an absence. It is expected that students get missed work from the teachers and complete it within a reasonable period of time as established by the teacher on the student's return.

**Scheduled Appointments**

If a student has a scheduled appointment, parents should notify the MS Administrative Assistant in advance, explaining the reason for the absence during the school day. All students are required to sign in and sign out in the Middle School Office or to make alternative arrangements with the Administrative Assistant.

**Academic Expectations**

**Curriculum**

The Academy’s Middle School curriculum has been designed to provide students with the experiences most necessary for intellectual growth and personal development. In addition to a curriculum which includes studies in English, Social Studies, Mathematics, World Language, and Science, students take courses in Fine Arts and Physical Education.

**Report Cards**

First and Third Quarter report cards include a letter grade and comment from each teacher. Semester report cards include letter grades from each teacher plus a summative letter from the student’s Advisor.

**Grading Scale**

97-100: A+	87-89: B+	77-79: C+	67-69: D+	59-0 F
93-96: A	83-86: B	73-76: C	63-66: D	I = Incomplete
90-92: A-	80-82: B-	70-72: C-	60-62: D-	P = Pass

**Academic Probation**

A strong indicator of success at Elgin Academy is a student’s course assessments, progress reports and/or report cards. Academic Probation may result from poor grades and insufficient effort. A student whose semester grades include a minimum of 2 D’s and/or 1 F will be placed on Academic Probation. Any student who is on Academic Probation for two or more semesters may be required to repeat the failing grade level or may be asked to leave the Academy. A formal letter will be sent home whenever a student is placed on academic probation.



## Homework

Elgin Academy teachers are very thoughtful about what they ask students to do outside of class. In order to meet some of the learning objectives in our age-appropriate, challenging curriculum, students should plan to spend time outside of class accomplishing what teachers request of them.

Homework that students are asked to complete may fall in the category of **preparation**. Some examples of preparatory activities include reading parts of a textbook, a novel, an article, or another selection that is designed to provide students some background information for upcoming learning activities. Students could also be asked to watch videos, either created by or identified by the teacher, that provide insights into new concepts. Teachers do not expect students to master preparation concepts on their own, so if your child has questions about what they are reading or learning, please encourage them to write them down and either share them in class or email them to the teacher. Such questions will often align with what teachers have anticipated addressing in follow-up conversations and activities.

Homework may also fall in the category of **reflection and application**. Some examples of reflection and application activities include completing a set of math problems, responding to a set of questions in a book or on a worksheet, or writing a paper. In these types of assignments, teachers are asking students to think at or beyond a level achieved in previous class experiences. Teachers use reflection and application activities in order to assess the level of student understanding on concepts that have already been taught. Parents are not expected to re-teach any of these ideas. Instead, if a student struggles with a reflection or application assignment, we encourage the parents of our youngest learners to reach out directly to teachers. For older students who are learning how to become self-advocates, they should contact their own teachers directly.

Homework could also fall somewhere on a **spectrum between preparation and reflection/application**. Quite often, longer-term assignments and projects include a mix of reflection on and application of recently-learned concepts and skills and preparation for future learning by going beyond what they have learned in class. Teachers plan for this balance by often providing some class time or structure to supplement the work that students are doing at home.

Elgin Academy teachers are very cognizant of the out-of-school time commitment that they are asking students to make in order to add to their learning of content and skills. When planning such homework assignments, they will make every effort to provide students guidance for how long such assignments will take so that students can develop time-management skills and better identify when they are challenged by a concept or skill.

Parents should play an important role in homework that decreases as their child grows older and gains more self-sufficiency. However, even for our oldest students, parent support in the following ways is beneficial to students having successful homework experiences.

- 1) Engage your child in frequent conversations about **when** they can be most successful at completing homework. Ensuring that they have built in appropriate time into their schedule that allows for homework with necessary short breaks as well as other family and personal activities is important. Additionally, a good night's sleep is valuable for students of all ages.

- 2) Have a conversation early in the school year, and revisit as necessary, regarding **where** your child can be most successful at completing homework. Help plan a space at home that has easy access to any basic school supplies they might need. Ensure that distractions in this area are kept to a minimum. For younger students, and even for some older students, ensuring that their homework space is a public one in your house can help you monitor them to avoid distractions (phone, social media, games, etc.) that will increase the amount of time it takes to finish homework.

Our teachers are dedicated to facilitating a healthy school-life balance for our students. While some schools choose to publish approximate homework times for each grade level, we believe that no one set amount of time will accurately reflect every student's pace of learning. If a family is concerned about the amount of time that it takes their child to complete the homework in a single class, the best point of contact is the individual teacher who can help collaborate on solutions. If a family is concerned about the amount of homework time in several classes, the best point of contact is the Middle School Advisor or Dean of Students or the Director of Student Support Services.

## **Student Conduct**

### **Student Expectations / Discipline**

No set of rules can anticipate every possible situation that might occur. The Academy thus relies on three guiding principles in considering the behavior of students: Integrity, Respect, and Trust.

- *Integrity:* Students are expected to act honestly, do their best in all activities, strive to grow academically and personally, and live by both the letter and spirit of school rules.
- *Respect:* Students are expected to respect adults and their fellow students, respect school property and the property of others, respect themselves, and behave in a civil manner.
- *Trust:* Faculty and Administrators must be able to trust students to act respectfully and with integrity.

Disciplinary consequences will vary depending on the student's disciplinary record and on the nature and severity of the infraction. Consequences can include but are not limited to: loss of certain privileges, loss of academic credit, detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or dismissal from the Academy. Note that work missed due to suspension, or to being sent home for a rules violation, may receive no credit at the discretion of the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs. All rules in this handbook apply to all school-related activities. These activities include, but are not limited to, attending or participating in: field trips, athletics, school plays or concerts, and school-sponsored social events.

### **Honesty and Respect**

Dishonest or disrespectful behaviors are prohibited. These include, but are not limited to: lying, stealing, verbal or physical disrespect, deceitful behavior, vandalism of school property or another individual's property, and cutting class, sports, or other required meetings. Depending on the severity of the incident and the student's disciplinary record, consequences can range from detentions to suspension to expulsion.

Regarding public displays of affection, the school recognizes that personal relationships are an aspect of the maturation process for adolescents. However, given both the presence of much younger children on campus and the importance of students behaving respectfully, we strongly discourage excessive public displays of affection. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a mature and courteous manner.

## **Academic Honesty**

One of the most rewarding aspects of an Academy education is the trust that can develop between students and faculty. Trust is based on honesty and openness; in academics, this means that all work presented is one's own. Information taken in part or in whole from another source is plagiarism unless it is documented as required by the teacher. Plagiarism includes improper use of: another student's homework or in-class work; a teacher's materials without permission; or published information in print or on the Internet. Use of artificial intelligence tools, such as ChatGPT, without teacher permission also qualifies as plagiarism. Having unauthorized notes or other aids in a testing situation, or copying from or being influenced by another student's work during a test, is a breach of trust. Allowing another student to copy or use one's test, paper, or homework is an offense equal to receiving such aid. In a case of suspected cheating or plagiarism, the teacher will discuss the incident with the Dean of Students and/or the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs. Consequences may vary with the severity of the incident and the student's disciplinary record. The following disciplinary steps may be applied individually or in combination:

- The student receives a zero on the assignment, or may be required to re-do the work for zero credit or reduced credit, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The student is placed on Disciplinary Warning, and a letter to this effect is placed in their file.
- The student is placed on Disciplinary Probation and may be given a detention or be suspended. The student's re-enrollment status will be determined at year-end, after discussion between faculty and the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs.
- Any additional incident of academic dishonesty in the same course or another course may result in the student automatically failing the course in which the subsequent incident occurs.
- The student may be asked to leave the Academy.

Note that disciplinary steps will become more severe for severe offenses, repeat offenses, students already on Disciplinary or Academic Probation, or students in the higher grade levels.

## **Illegal Substances**

The possession or use of cigarettes, cigars, tobacco, vaping, alcohol or any other illegal or unauthorized drug or related paraphernalia during the school day or at school-related functions on or off campus is strictly forbidden. This prohibition includes the transfer of any illegal drug to

another person or being under the influence of an illegal drug while at school or any school-related activity.

In compliance with Illinois State law, the chief administrator of the school, or their designee reports instances of verified incidents involving drugs to local law enforcement officials as required by the School Reporting of Drug Violations Act. The administrator also notifies the Illinois State Police of such incidents through the School Incident Reporting System.

Selling drugs or alcohol will result in immediate expulsion. The range of disciplinary consequences for other offenses includes suspensions, expulsion, and the denial of a student's opportunity to re-enroll for any succeeding year at Elgin Academy. The school also reserves the right to initiate legal prosecution.

Substance abuse is frequently indicative of an individual's struggles with self-confidence. It is our goal to assist students in their maturation process and offer support for them in their personal choices. Educationally, we strive to work together with parents and students in this area.

Administrators will communicate concerns about students' possible involvement in substance abuse to the students' parents. Such communication, however, does not preclude applicable disciplinary action from being taken if the school deems it appropriate.

## **Weapons/Replicas of Weapons**

The possession of any weapon on campus or at any school-related event is strictly prohibited and may result in immediate suspension. Any student who seeks to use a weapon replica in a school presentation must receive permission from their Dean of Students or the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs, who will outline the process for this procedure. Any replica on campus without permission will be responded to as a genuine weapon. In compliance with Illinois State law, the chief administrator or their designee notifies local law enforcement officials of verified incidents involving firearms at the school. The administrator also notifies the Illinois State Police of such incidents through the School Incident Reporting System.

## **Harassment and Bullying**

### **Harassment**

Elgin Academy will not tolerate verbal or physical conduct by any community member--student or employee--which harasses or interferes with another's performance or which creates an offensive or hostile environment. This policy includes harassment of any kind, but particularly harassment forbidden by law and based on race, religion, gender, age, national origin, color, physical size, marital status, or disability. Disciplinary steps up to and including suspension or expulsion will be taken against any student who engages in any type of harassment.

Harassment is contrary to both state law and the fundamental tenets upon which Elgin Academy operates. It will not be tolerated. In compliance with Illinois State law, the chief administrator or their designee will immediately notify local law enforcement officials of complaints from school personnel concerning instances of battery committed against school personnel at the school. The administrator shall also notify the Illinois State Police within three days of each incident through the School Incident Reporting System.

Disciplinary steps up to and including discharge will be taken against any employee who engages in any type of harassment. In the case of inappropriate behavior by a teacher, coach, or staff member, parents and students should contact the appropriate Dean of Students or homeroom teacher. If the student or parent is uncomfortable contacting those people, he/she should contact the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs or the Head of School. Contact information for any of these people is available in both the school directory and this handbook.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated over time. Bullying is contrary both to state law and to the policy of Elgin Academy. It will not be tolerated. According to the applicable state statutes, “It encompasses any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following: (1) placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s or students’ person or property; (2) causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student’s or students’ physical or mental health; (3) substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ academic performance; or (4) substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.”

Bullying may take many forms and can occur in person or through the use of technology (cyberbullying). It could include harassment, threats, intimidation, the creation of a webpage, the sharing of derogatory material via social media or electronic means. This list is meant as an illustration and is not meant to be exhaustive.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- **An Imbalance of Power:** Students who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen repeatedly.

What bullying is not:

- single episodes of social rejection or dislike
- single episode acts of nastiness or spite
- random acts of aggression or intimidation
- arguments, disagreements or fights in which both parties participate equally

While the bullying definition is broad and can occur in a variety of environments it usually is a relationship problem and requires relationship-based solutions. These are best solved in the social environment in which they occur: in a child or young person's life, this is most often the school. As always, we will seek to remediate and educate.

These actions can cause great distress and will be dealt with appropriately within the school's disciplinary procedures. Disciplinary steps up to and including suspension or expulsion will be taken against any student who engages in any type of bullying. In addition, EA will employ ongoing age-appropriate educational mechanisms to help students understand the damage bullying and other forms of harassing behavior can do. However, they do not fit the definition of bullying and are not examples of bullying unless someone is deliberately and repeatedly doing them.

Bullying is a very serious accusation. When a student believes they are being bullied they should report this immediately to an adult who will inform the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs. The Assistant Head can also be contacted directly by students or families who wish to report bullying at [dsept@elginacademy.org](mailto:dsept@elginacademy.org) or 847.695.0309 ext. 216. Anonymous reports can be made at that same phone number.

The Assistant Head will then assure the charge is investigated fully and expeditiously, either by himself or by his designee(s). All parents and guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying will be informed promptly. As appropriate, the discussions will include topics such as planned interventions, restorative measures, and the inclusion of the Director of Student Support Services / School Counselor, who can provide school-based counseling. These conversations will be consistent with federal and state laws and rules governing student privacy rights

During the investigation, it will be determined whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction. The school will provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the school and the community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

Every attempt will be made to ensure this investigation takes place within ten days. Since these situations are often complicated, however, a thorough and effective investigation may include conversations with both the accuser and accused and various observations and conversations that would take time due to the repeated nature of bullying. The Assistant Head of School or his designee(s) will employ any other method they decide would help them ascertain whether bullying is present. If it is determined that bullying is present, appropriate remedies will be determined by the school. Parents and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation will be provided information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the Assistant Head of School and/or his designee(s) to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

Interventions that can be taken to address bullying include, but are not limited to, working with the Director of Student Support Services / School Counselor, facilitating restorative measures, implementing punitive measures, engaging in social-emotional skill building, and engaging with community-based counseling services.

Retaliation against any person who reports bullying will not be tolerated, and appropriate consequences will be determined by the school for any person who is found to have engaged in retaliation.

If a person is found to have falsely accused another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying, the school will determine the appropriate consequences and remedial action. These actions include, but are not limited to, working with the Director of Student Support Services / School Counselor, facilitating restorative measures, implementing punitive measures, engaging in social-emotional skill building, and engaging with community-based counseling services.

Our Director of Student Support Services / School Counselor, and Deans of Students will develop age-appropriate educational activities to help students across our campus understand what bullying is, why it is unacceptable, appropriate reactions if one feels bullied, and resources for people who feel

bullied, among other things. This will be done both regularly as part of advisory and/or homeroom curriculum (depending on the age of student) and in reaction to campus or world events.

The Student Support Team, led by the Director of Student Support Services / School Counselor, and Deans of Students and including the Lower School Director and Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs, will convene a review and, if appropriate, revision of the policy on an annual basis. This process will include, but is not limited to, factors such as 1) The frequency of victimization, 2) Student, staff, and family observations of safety at school, 3) Identification of areas of the school where bullying occurs, 4) The types of bullying that are common or occurring, 5) Bystander intervention or participation. The information developed as a part of the evaluation process will be posted through appropriate channels such as the school website and e-newsletter. The results will also be reported directly to the Head of School and the Education Committee of the Board of Trustees.

This policy is based on engagement with a range of school stakeholders, is posted in the Elgin Academy Parent-Student Handbook which is available on the school website, and is distributed annually in that form to parents, guardians, students, and school personnel, including new faculty and staff.

## **Social Media**

We encourage all students and families to consider carefully their presence on social media. In rare instances when their posts hinder another student or other students' learning or comfort at school, therefore making it impossible for them to fully participate in our program, the school may need to become involved to ensure that the environment is safe for all students. The school may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to the student's account or profile on a social networking website. The school may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is sufficient evidence to suggest the student's social network account violates the school's disciplinary policy, and the school may require the student to share content in the course of such an investigation.

## **Off-Campus, Vacation, and Out-of-School Behavior**

The behavior of students during vacations and other out-of-school hours is the responsibility of parents, and Elgin Academy will generally not involve itself in such a matter. Nevertheless, if a student engages in criminal misconduct away from school which involves 1) the possession, use, or sale of drugs or alcohol, or 2) conduct that endangers or abuses the safety or well-being of the student, other people, or their property, the school may impose such discipline as it considers appropriate. The range of disciplinary responses available to Elgin Academy includes, but is not limited to suspension, expulsion, and the denial of the student's opportunity to re-enroll for any succeeding year. The Academy may impose similar discipline if the student's out-of-school behavior defames the name or character of the school.

*Respect for Property:* Both the private property of the school and individuals are to be respected by students. Defacement, destruction, and stealing are all offenses which make the students subject to disciplinary action. The Academy cannot be responsible for lost or stolen property. Students are advised to use good judgment by not leaving personal items unattended in Academy buildings, buses, or on the campus.



## **Dress Code**

As in most social institutions, the Academy expects everyone – students and adults – to maintain standards of dress in keeping with the expectations of the school community. Rules for dress, like rules for conduct, assist in the overall development of students. The dress code exists to

- Foster an atmosphere of seriousness and professionalism among students,
- Maintain an environment consistent with the traditions of the Academy,
- Instill the habit of dressing properly, as daily preparation is a key responsibility. Dressing appropriately shows respect for the school environment, for peers, and, most importantly, for oneself.

Students and their parents are responsible for maintaining appropriate dress in accordance with the guidelines specified. Students are to dress neatly and appropriately and to maintain a professional appearance throughout the school day, as specified below. Students must also be in dress code for field trips, unless noted otherwise by the supervising teacher.

These are the Middle School Dress Code Guidelines:

### **For all students:**

- All clothing should be in good repair and appropriately sized on the student.
- Any graphics or logos must be school-appropriate.
- EA spirit wear is welcome on any day. Uniforms and/or warm-ups may be worn on game days per guidelines to be determined by the Athletic Director.
- Footwear should be appropriate for the weather, for science labs, and for safely navigating stairs

The school does not prohibit hairstyles that are historically associated with race, ethnicity, or hair texture, including, but not limited to, protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twists.

The school allows student athletes to modify their athletic or team uniform for the purpose of modesty in clothing or attire that is in accordance with the requirements of their religion, cultural values, or modesty preferences.

Students may be removed from class or sent home to change, with no credit for missed work, for dress code offenses. Multiple dress code infractions may result in additional disciplinary consequences.

## **Spirit Days**

On the first Friday of each month students have a Spirit Day. Students may dress in Elgin Academy wear to demonstrate school spirit. Additionally, the Middle School facilitates pre-announced Spirit Weeks each year. More details and guidelines about these days that include themed dress (such as Twin Day) will be announced closer to these events. On those

themed days when students dress up, costumes that portray a race, ethnic group, gender, or other offensive, insensitive, appropriative, or inappropriate costumes are not allowed.

## **Computer, Internet, Cell Phone, Electronic Devices**

Students are expected to adhere to the Academy's Computer and Internet Use Policy (see earlier in this Handbook). All Middle School students have student portal access to the EA website as well as an Elgin Academy Google account (email, Google Drive, etc.). Instant messaging, personal emails, computer games, or personal Internet surfing during the school day without teacher permission may result in suspension of computer privileges. More serious offenses, such as damaging computer hardware or software, or using computers to harass others or commit illegal acts, may result in suspension or expulsion from school.

Students are expected to turn off cell phones and smart watches during the school day (8:15 a.m. – 2:45 p.m.) unless the classroom teacher, advisor, Dean, or administrator gives permission for use. Student calling or texting (other students or parents) during the day, without permission, may result in the student being required to leave their phone in the school office during the day. We ask that parents help their students learn to use technology responsibly.

Please do not call or text your child and expect a response during the school day. If you wish to contact your child, please call the school office. Teachers will confiscate cell phones/electronic devices if used without teacher permission and parents will need to retrieve the device from the school office for repeated offenses.

Use of computers, cell phones, or other means of communication to tease, embarrass, intimidate, or discriminate against another member of the school community may constitute a violation of the Academy's harassment policy. Whether or not the incident occurs at school, and whether or not school-owned computers/media are used, harsh disciplinary steps may be taken if the incident contributes to an atmosphere in which the person feels emotionally and/or physically unsafe at school.

## **Allergies**

Please be certain to inform the school if your child has ANY food allergies.

Some of our students may have life threatening allergies to peanut and tree nuts. Even contact with peanut or tree-nut products presents a threat. It is critical therefore that all peanut and tree-nut products are excluded from the snacks and lunches of all students in Early Childhood, the Lower School, and the Middle School.

# Upper School (9-12) Information

## Advising and The Learning Plan

The Mission of the Upper School Advisory Program is:

*Through one-on-one and group experiences, Elgin Academy's Upper School advisory program helps students to know and understand themselves and others better through social and emotional learning, inspires them to challenge themselves and grow both academically and personally, and fosters an environment where students create a lifelong love of learning and a fulfilling life beyond EA. The advisory program forms confident, compassionate, and disciplined young people who guide themselves and others into a bright future.*

Upper School teachers serve as Co-Advisors, with each Advisory group having a mix of students in Grades 9-12 and two Co-Advisors. Regular Advisory meetings help to guide students' academic growth, personal growth, character development, and adjustment to the life and expectations of the Upper School. The Co-Advisors also play a critical role in each student's Learning Plan.

The Learning Plan is at the heart of the Academy's educational philosophy. It helps to personalize the Upper School's college preparatory curriculum by identifying the student's areas of talent and interest, and by addressing the varying developmental needs of adolescents. Required conferences among the student, parents, and Advisor take place in October and March. During these conferences, the student plays a major role discussing strengths and weaknesses, setting goals, and planning a course of study for both the following year and the entire four-year experience. Student goals are set to reflect the spirit of the Upper School's Academic and Personal/Social Goals.

## Upper School Academic Goals

The Upper School develops students who

1. Seek academic challenges and are prepared to succeed in advanced studies.
2. Demonstrate intellectual independence; think, question, and appreciate critically, evaluate the validity of information, and communicate conclusions effectively both verbally and in writing.
3. Assume responsibility for the quality of their learning and performance.
4. Approach their studies with creativity and curiosity, and seek to make connections between different areas.

## Upper School Personal/Social Goals

The Upper School develops students who

1. Confidently seek, take advantage of, and enjoy opportunities to learn and grow.
2. Appreciate the complexity of the world around them and seek to be agents of positive change through individual expressions and well-formed opinions.
3. Approach their lives with an understanding of the value of balance, healthy competition, sound decision-making, and calculated risk-taking.
4. Value the skills and talents of others and seek opportunities to interact cooperatively within and outside the classroom.
5. Are prepared for the social and personal transition inherent in pursuing higher education.

# Academics

## Graduation Requirements

The Academy's Upper School curriculum has been designed to provide students with those experiences most necessary for success in college and for personal development. Freshmen and sophomores are required to take the equivalent of six courses each semester; juniors and seniors are strongly encouraged to take six. The Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs must approve requests for exceptions to these requirements. Course requirements are as follows:

Department	Credits	Courses
English	4.0	All four grade-level English classes
Mathematics	4.0	Any courses offered through the EA US Math Department
Science	3.0	Biology, Chemistry, and Physics
Social Science	3.0	World Cultures I and II, U.S. History (AP European History and AP United States History also fulfill these requirements)
World Languages	3.0	3 Upper School years in one language: French, Latin, or Spanish
Fine Arts	2.0	Introduction to Fine Arts plus one additional credit
Electives	3.5	Computer Science or any courses beyond the above credit requirements; The Hilltop is also an elective credit
Physical Education	2.0	Six sports seasons with at least 2 each in the freshman and sophomore years and 1 each in the junior and senior years.
January Term	2.0	Students earn 0.5 credits during each January Term

### Minimum graduation requirement: 26.5 credits

All juniors are required to pass a United States Constitution Test.

The PSAT, pre-ACT, SAT and/or ACT examinations are required of all students during the appropriate years. See the College Counseling Timeline for more details about these exams.

## Drop/Add Policy

All course schedule changes are made with the approval of the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs typically within the first two weeks of a term. Schedule changes beyond the first two weeks of a term are unlikely and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

## Grading Scale and Reports

The Academy issues course grades on the following scale. Grades below “C-” are not considered college recommending. An “F” grade receives no credit.

Grades For Credit				Grades for No Credit
97-100: A+	87-89: B+	77-79: C+	67-69: D+	59-0 F
93-96: A	83-86: B	73-76: C	63-66: D	I = Incomplete
90-92: A-	80-82: B-	70-72: C-	60-62: D-	W = Withdrawn
			P = Pass	

Teachers may not give “Incomplete” grades without the approval of the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs. If a student has valid (e.g. medical) reasons for not completing course requirements on schedule, they must confer with the teacher, advisor, Dean of Students, Director of Personalized Learning, and/or the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs in advance to request a new deadline for completion.

First and Third Quarter report cards include a letter grade and comment from each teacher. Semester report cards include letter grades from each teacher plus a summative letter from the student’s Advisor. Semester letter grades are recorded on the student’s transcript.

Grade Point Average: A student’s grade-point average (GPA) is calculated using only classes (except physical education, athletics, and January Term) from grades 9-12 at Elgin Academy. Grade points are assigned as follows:

A+ = 4.3	B+ = 3.3	C+ = 2.3	D+ = 1.3
A = 4.0	B = 3.0	C = 2.0	D = 1.0
A- = 3.7	B- = 2.7	C- = 1.7	D- = 0.7
			F = 0.0

The Elgin Academy student transcript lists a student’s cumulative GPA at the end of each semester. Elgin Academy does not rank students by GPA.

## Valedictorian and Salutatorian

At the end of the 8th semester, the student with the highest GPA will be named the Valedictorian, and the student with the second-highest GPA will be named the Salutatorian. In order to qualify for either of these honors, a student must have attended Elgin Academy for at least two complete consecutive years (11th and 12th grade).

## Academic Probation and Dismissal

The Upper School program is designed to prepare the student for college/university study, so academic work must be of sufficient quality to recommend the student for college entrance. Any student whose work consistently falls below this requirement may be asked to leave the Academy. Grades of A, B, and C are considered college recommending; grades of D and F are not. A student whose semester grades include at least two D's or one F will be placed on Academic Probation. At the end of the next semester, the student must have no D's or F's to be removed from Academic Probation. If the student has at least two D's or an F while already on Academic Probation, the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs will consult with the faculty and recommend to the Head of School whether the student should remain at the Academy.

For a full-year course, an "F" for the second semester means the student fails the course for the year and receives no credit; the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs will then specify the requirements to fulfill that graduation credit, although the "F" grade remains for the transcript and Grade Point Average. Any student who fails two courses (two semester grades of "F" in the Second Semester) in the same department will be ineligible to return to the Academy (example: the student fails math for the freshman year and again for the junior year).

## Homework

Elgin Academy teachers are very thoughtful about what they ask students to do outside of class. In order to meet some of the learning objectives in our age-appropriate, challenging curriculum, students should plan to spend time outside of class accomplishing what teachers request of them.

Homework that students are asked to complete may fall in the category of **preparation**. Some examples of preparatory activities include reading parts of a textbook, a novel, an article, or another selection that is designed to provide students some background information for upcoming learning activities. Students could also be asked to watch videos, either created by or identified by the teacher, that provide insights into new concepts. Teachers do not expect students to master preparation concepts on their own, so if your child has questions about what they are reading or learning, please encourage them to write them down and either share them in class or email them to the teacher. Such questions will often align with what teachers have anticipated addressing in follow-up conversations and activities.

Homework may also fall in the category of **reflection and application**. Some examples of reflection and application activities include completing a set of math problems, responding to a set of questions in a book or on a worksheet, or writing a paper. In these types of assignments, teachers are asking students to think at or beyond a level achieved in previous class experiences. Teachers use reflection and application activities in order to assess the level of student understanding on concepts that have already been taught. Parents are not expected to re-teach any of these ideas. Instead, if a student struggles with a reflection or application assignment, they should contact their own teachers directly.

Homework could also fall somewhere on a **spectrum between preparation and reflection/application**. Quite often, longer-term assignments and projects include a mix of reflection on and application of recently-learned concepts and skills and preparation for future learning by going beyond what they have learned in class. Teachers plan for this balance by often providing some class time or structure to supplement the work that students are doing at home.

Elgin Academy teachers are very cognizant of the out-of-school time commitment that they are asking students to make in order to add to their learning of content and skills. When planning such homework assignments, they will make every effort to provide students guidance for how long such assignments will take so that students can develop time-management skills and better identify when they are challenged by a concept or skill.

Parents should play an important role in homework that decreases as their child grows older and gains more self-sufficiency. However, even for our oldest students, parent support in the following ways is beneficial to students having successful homework experiences.

- 1) Engage your child in frequent conversations about **when** they can be most successful at completing homework. Ensuring that they have built in appropriate time into their schedule that allows for homework with necessary short breaks as well as other family and personal activities is important. Additionally, a good night's sleep is valuable for students of all ages.
- 2) Have a conversation early in the school year, and revisit as necessary, regarding **where** your child can be most successful at completing homework. Help plan a space at home that has easy access to any basic school supplies they might need. Ensure that distractions in this area are kept to a minimum. For younger students, and even for some older students, ensuring that their homework space is a public one in your house can help you monitor them to avoid distractions (phone, social media, games, etc.) that will increase the amount of time it takes to finish homework.

Our teachers are dedicated to facilitating a healthy school-life balance for our students. While some schools choose to publish approximate homework times for each grade level, we believe that no one set amount of time will accurately reflect every student's pace of learning. If a family is concerned about the amount of time that it takes their child to complete the homework in a single class, the best point of contact is the individual teacher who can help collaborate on solutions. If a family is concerned about the amount of time in several classes, the best point of contact is one of the Upper School Co-Advisors, the Upper School Dean of Students, or the Director of Student Support.

### **Co-Curricular Activities: Required Participation**

In addition to attending classes and required athletics, all Upper School students are expected to attend

- Assemblies: Upper School students must attend any assemblies during the school day.
- Advisory Meetings: Students are required to attend all Advisory meetings
- Learning Plan Conferences: Students and their parents are required to attend the fall and spring Learning Plan Conferences.
- Class Meetings: All students must attend any meetings of their grade level during the school day.



## **Co-Curricular Activities: Optional Participation**

The Upper School offers a variety of clubs and organizations for students to join, either through election (such as Student Council or Athletic Council), invitation (such as National Honor Society), or through open enrollment. Students are encouraged to participate in these activities while maintaining a good balance with their academic load in order to enhance their Upper School experience. More information about clubs and organizations is made available during assemblies, through club sponsors (faculty members) and student leaders, and in the 2023-2024 Upper School Program Guide.

## **College Counseling**

In addition to having an Advisor and a Learning Plan to personalize the college preparatory experience, each student is supported by individualized college counseling to identify colleges that best fit the student's talents, interests, and goals. The college process in the first two years of the Upper School includes course selection advising and standardized test preparation. Juniors begin a series of individual and group meetings, including College Night for Juniors, during the second semester. At that time, Juniors begin attending a regularly scheduled College Counseling class during their study hall once a cycle hosted by the College Counselor. This Seminar class continues throughout the first semester of senior year as well with a goal of completing the college application process by winter break.

A specific college counseling timeline is published in the 2023-2024 Upper School Program Guide. For more information about the EA College Counseling, families are encouraged to contact the Director of College Counseling.

## **Attendance**

### **Absent or late to school**

Parents must call the Upper School office, (847) 695- 0301, by 8:15 a.m. if students will be absent or arriving later than 8:15 a.m. Upon arrival at school, late students must sign in at the Upper School office. Habitual tardiness could result in disciplinary consequences.

### **Planned absences**

Regular medical appointments (orthodontist, etc.) should be scheduled to avoid missing the same class(es) repeatedly. Taking students out of school for vacations is strongly discouraged. Vacation days can be excused only if parents discuss them in advance with the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs. Teachers are not required to give extensions for work missed due to planned absences (medical, vacation, etc.). The student must request work in advance, but not all work may be provided prior to the absence. Upon return to school, the student must consult with teachers in order to receive any further work, submit all work, and take all tests/quizzes missed due to the planned absence. Even when work is made up, students miss valuable class activities with their teachers and peers when taking planned absences.

## **Excessive absence or lateness**

Regular and punctual attendance in all classes and school programs is required of all students, as it is necessary to the continued academic success and growth of the student. Excessive absence (ten or more absences in a semester) from a class for any reason (illness, medical appointments, vacation, etc.) may result in the student failing that class or not receiving credit for the semester. Consequently, parents should consult with the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs if a student is expected to be absent for an extended time, for illness or other reasons.

## **Students Reported as Missing**

In compliance with Illinois State law, the chief administrator or their designee reports to the appropriate authorities names of children he/she suspects are missing and has a procedure in place for flagging records of students reported as missing by the Illinois State Police.

## **Student Conduct**

### **Student Expectations / Discipline**

No set of rules can anticipate every possible situation that might occur. The Academy thus relies on three guiding principles in considering the behavior of students: Integrity, Respect, and Trust.

- *Integrity:* Students are expected to act honestly, do their best in all activities, strive to grow academically and personally, and live by both the letter and spirit of school rules.
- *Respect:* Students are expected to respect adults and their fellow students, respect school property and the property of others, respect themselves, and behave in a civil manner.
- *Trust:* Faculty and Administrators must be able to trust students to act respectfully and with integrity.

Disciplinary consequences will vary depending on the student's disciplinary record and on the nature and severity of the infraction. Consequences can include but are not limited to loss of certain privileges, loss of academic credit, detention, in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or dismissal from the Academy. Note that work missed due to suspension, or to being sent home for a rules violation, may receive no credit at the discretion of the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs. All rules in this handbook apply to all school-related activities. These activities include, but are not limited to, attending or participating in field trips, athletics, school plays or concerts, and school-sponsored social events.

### **Honesty and Respect**

Dishonest or disrespectful behaviors are prohibited. These include but are not limited to lying, stealing, verbal or physical disrespect, deceitful behavior, vandalism of school property or another individual's property, and cutting class, sports, or other required meetings. Depending on the severity of the incident and the student's disciplinary record, consequences can range from detentions to suspension to expulsion.

Regarding public displays of affection, the school recognizes that personal relationships are an aspect of the maturation process for adolescents. However, given both the presence of much younger children on campus and the importance of students behaving respectfully, we strongly discourage excessive public displays of affection. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a mature and courteous manner.

## **Academic Honesty**

One of the most rewarding aspects of an Academy education is the trust that can develop between students and faculty. Trust is based on honesty and openness; in academics, this means that all work presented is one's own. Information taken in part or in whole from another source is plagiarism unless it is documented as required by the teacher. Plagiarism includes improper use of another student's homework or in-class work, a teacher's materials without permission, or published information in print or on the Internet. Use of artificial intelligence tools, such as ChatGPT, without teacher permission also qualifies as plagiarism. Having unauthorized notes or other aids in a testing situation, or copying from or being influenced by another student's work during a test, is a breach of trust. Allowing another student to copy or use one's test, paper, or homework is an offense equal to receiving such aid. In a case of suspected cheating or plagiarism, the teacher will discuss the incident with the Dean of Students and/or the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs. Consequences may vary with the severity of the incident and the student's disciplinary record. The following disciplinary steps may be applied individually or in combination:

- The student receives a zero on the assignment, or may be required to re-do the work for zero credit or reduced credit, at the discretion of the teacher.
- The student is placed on Disciplinary Warning, and a letter to this effect is placed in their file.
- The student is placed on Disciplinary Probation and may be given a detention or be suspended. The student's re-enrollment status will be determined at year-end, after discussion between faculty and the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs.
- Any additional incident of academic dishonesty in the same course or another course may result in the student automatically failing the course in which the subsequent incident occurs.
- The student may be asked to leave the Academy.

Note that disciplinary steps will become more severe for severe offenses, repeat offenses, students already on Disciplinary or Academic Probation, or students in the higher grade levels.

## **Illegal Substances**

The possession or use of cigarettes, cigars, tobacco, vaping, alcohol or any other illegal or unauthorized drug or related paraphernalia during the school day or at school-related functions on or off campus is strictly forbidden. This prohibition includes the transfer of any illegal drug to another person or being under the influence of an illegal drug while at school or any school-related activity.

In compliance with Illinois State law, the chief administrator of the school, or their designee reports instances of verified incidents involving drugs to local law enforcement officials as required by the School Reporting of Drug Violations Act. The administrator also notifies the Illinois State Police of such incidents through the School Incident Reporting System.

Selling drugs or alcohol will result in immediate expulsion. The range of disciplinary consequences for other offenses includes suspensions, expulsion, and the denial of a student's opportunity to re-enroll for any succeeding year at Elgin Academy. The school also reserves the right to initiate legal prosecution.

Substance abuse is frequently indicative of an individual's struggles with self-confidence. It is our goal to assist students in their maturation process and offer support for them in their personal choices. Educationally, we strive to work together with parents and students in this area. Administrators will communicate concerns about students' possible involvement in substance abuse to the students' parents. Such communication, however, does not preclude applicable disciplinary action from being taken if the school deems it appropriate.

## **Weapons/Replicas of Weapons**

The possession of any weapon on campus or at any school-related event is strictly prohibited and may result in immediate suspension. Any student who seeks to use a weapon replica in a school presentation must receive permission from their Dean of Students or the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs, who will outline the process for this procedure. Any replica on campus without permission will be responded to as a genuine weapon. In compliance with Illinois State law, the chief administrator or their designee notifies local law enforcement officials of verified incidents involving firearms at the school. The administrator also notifies the Illinois State Police of such incidents through the School Incident Reporting System.

## **Harassment and Bullying**

### **Harassment**

Elgin Academy will not tolerate verbal or physical conduct by any community member--student or employee--which harasses or interferes with another's performance or which creates an offensive or hostile environment. This policy includes harassment of any kind, but particularly harassment forbidden by law and based on race, religion, gender, age, national origin, color, physical size, marital status, or disability. Disciplinary steps up to and including suspension or expulsion will be taken against any student who engages in any type of harassment.

Harassment is contrary to both state law and the fundamental tenets upon which Elgin Academy operates. It will not be tolerated. In compliance with Illinois State law, the chief administrator or their designee will immediately notify local law enforcement officials of complaints from school personnel concerning instances of battery committed against school personnel at the school. The administrator shall also notify the Illinois State Police within three days of each incident through the School Incident Reporting System.

Disciplinary steps up to and including discharge will be taken against any employee who engages in any type of harassment. In the case of inappropriate behavior by a teacher, coach, or staff member, parents and students should contact the appropriate Dean of Students, Advisor, or homeroom teacher. If the student or parent is uncomfortable contacting those people, he/she should contact the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs or the Head of School. Contact information for any of these people is available in both the school directory and this handbook.

## **Bullying**

Bullying is unwanted, aggressive behavior among school aged children that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated over time. Bullying is contrary both to state law and to the policy of Elgin Academy. It will not be tolerated. According to the applicable state statutes, “It encompasses any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following: (1) placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student’s or students’ person or property; (2) causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student’s or students’ physical or mental health; (3) substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ academic performance; or (4) substantially interfering with the student’s or students’ ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.”

Bullying may take many forms and can occur in person or through the use of technology (cyberbullying). It could include harassment, threats, intimidation, the creation of a webpage, the sharing of derogatory material via social media or electronic means. This list is meant as an illustration and is not meant to be exhaustive.

In order to be considered bullying, the behavior must be aggressive and include:

- **An Imbalance of Power:** Students who bully use their power—such as physical strength, access to embarrassing information, or popularity—to control or harm others. Power imbalances can change over time and in different situations, even if they involve the same people.
- **Repetition:** Bullying behaviors happen repeatedly.

What bullying is not:

- single episodes of social rejection or dislike
- single episode acts of nastiness or spite
- random acts of aggression or intimidation
- arguments, disagreements or fights in which both parties participate equally

While the bullying definition is broad and can occur in a variety of environments it usually is a relationship problem and requires relationship-based solutions. These are best solved in the social environment in which they occur: in a child or young person's life, this is most often the school. As always, we will seek to remediate and educate.

These actions can cause great distress and will be dealt with appropriately within the school's disciplinary procedures. Disciplinary steps up to and including suspension or expulsion will be taken against any student who engages in any type of bullying. In addition, EA will employ ongoing age-appropriate educational mechanisms to help students understand the damage bullying and other forms of harassing behavior can do. However, they do not fit the definition of bullying and are not examples of bullying unless someone is deliberately and repeatedly doing them.

Bullying is a very serious accusation. When a student believes they are being bullied they should report this immediately to an adult who will inform the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs. The Assistant Head can also be contacted directly by students or families who wish to report bullying at [dsept@elginacademy.org](mailto:dsept@elginacademy.org) or 847.695.0309 ext. 216. Anonymous reports can be made at that same phone number.

The Assistant Head will then assure the charge is investigated fully and expeditiously, either by himself or by his designee(s). All parents and guardians of all students involved in the alleged incident of bullying will be informed promptly. As appropriate, the discussions will include topics such as planned interventions, restorative measures, and the inclusion of the Director of Student Support Services / School Counselor, who can provide school-based counseling. These conversations will be consistent with federal and state laws and rules governing student privacy rights

During the investigation, it will be determined whether a reported act of bullying is within the permissible scope of the school's jurisdiction. The school will provide the victim with information regarding services that are available within the school and the community, such as counseling, support services, and other programs.

Every attempt will be made to ensure this investigation takes place within ten days. Since these situations are often complicated, however, a thorough and effective investigation may include conversations with both the accuser and accused and various observations and conversations that would take time due to the repeated nature of bullying. The Assistant Head of School or his designee(s) will employ any other method they decide would help them ascertain whether bullying is present. If it is determined that bullying is present, appropriate remedies will be determined by the school. Parents and guardians of the students who are parties to the investigation will be provided information about the investigation and an opportunity to meet with the Assistant Head of School and/or his designee(s) to discuss the investigation, the findings of the investigation, and the actions taken to address the reported incident of bullying.

Interventions that can be taken to address bullying include, but are not limited to, working with the Director of Student Support Services / School Counselor, facilitating restorative measures, implementing punitive measures, engaging in social-emotional skill building, and engaging with community-based counseling services.

Retaliation against any person who reports bullying will not be tolerated, and appropriate consequences will be determined by the school for any person who is found to have engaged in retaliation.

If a person is found to have falsely accused another of bullying as a means of retaliation or as a means of bullying, the school will determine the appropriate consequences and remedial action. These actions include, but are not limited to, working with the Director of Student Support Services / School Counselor, facilitating restorative measures, implementing punitive measures, engaging in social-emotional skill building, and engaging with community-based counseling services.

Our Director of Student Support Services / School Counselor, and Deans of Students will develop age-appropriate educational activities to help students across our campus understand what bullying is, why it is unacceptable, appropriate reactions if one feels bullied, and resources for people who feel

bullied, among other things. This will be done both regularly as part of advisory and/or homeroom curriculum (depending on the age of student) and in reaction to campus or world events.

The Student Support Team, led by the Director of Student Support Services / School Counselor, and Deans of Students and including the Lower School Director and Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs, will convene a review and, if appropriate, revision of the policy on an annual basis. This process will include, but is not limited to, factors such as 1) The frequency of victimization, 2) Student, staff, and family observations of safety at school, 3) Identification of areas of the school where bullying occurs, 4) The types of bullying that are common or occurring, 5) Bystander intervention or participation. The information developed as a part of the evaluation process will be posted through appropriate channels such as the school website and e-newsletter. The results will also be reported directly to the Head of School and the Education Committee of the Board of Trustees.

This policy is based on engagement with a range of school stakeholders, is posted in the Elgin Academy Parent-Student Handbook which is available on the school website, and is distributed annually in that form to parents, guardians, students, and school personnel, including new faculty and staff.

## **Social Media**

We encourage all students and families to consider carefully their presence on social media. In rare instances when their posts hinder other students' learning or comfort at school, therefore making it impossible for them to fully participate in our program, the school may need to become involved to ensure that the environment is safe for all students. The school may not request or require a student to provide a password or other related account information in order to gain access to the student's account or profile on a social networking website. The school may conduct an investigation or require a student to cooperate in an investigation if there is sufficient evidence to suggest the student's social network account violates the school's disciplinary policy, and the school may require the student to share content in the course of such an investigation.

## **Off-Campus, Vacation, and Out-of-School Behavior**

The behavior of students during vacations and other out-of-school hours is the responsibility of parents, and Elgin Academy will generally not involve itself in such a matter. Nevertheless, if a student engages in criminal misconduct away from school which involves 1) the possession, use, or sale of drugs or alcohol or 2) conduct that endangers or abuses the safety or well-being of the student, other people, or their property, the school may impose such discipline as it considers appropriate. The range of disciplinary responses available to Elgin Academy includes, but is not limited to suspension, expulsion, and the denial of the student's opportunity to re-enroll for any succeeding year. The Academy may impose similar discipline if the student's out-of-school behavior defames the name or character of the school.

*Respect for Property:* Both the private property of the school and individuals are to be respected by students. Defacement, destruction, and stealing are all offenses which make the students subject to disciplinary action. The Academy cannot be responsible for lost or stolen property. Students are advised to use good judgment by not leaving personal items unattended in Academy buildings, buses, or on the campus.

## **Dress Code**

As in most social institutions, the Academy expects everyone – students and adults – to maintain standards of dress in keeping with the expectations of the school community. Rules for dress, like rules for conduct, assist in the overall development of students. The dress code exists to

- Foster an atmosphere of seriousness and professionalism among students,
- Maintain an environment consistent with the traditions of the Academy,
- Instill the habit of dressing properly, as daily preparation is a key responsibility. Dressing appropriately shows respect for the school environment, for peers, and, most importantly, for oneself.

Students and their parents are responsible for maintaining appropriate dress in accordance with the guidelines specified. Students are to dress neatly and appropriately and to maintain a professional appearance throughout the school day, as specified below. Students must also be in dress code for field trips, unless noted otherwise by the supervising teacher.

These are the Upper School Dress Code Guidelines:

### **For all students:**

- All clothing should be in good repair and appropriately sized on the student.
- Any graphics or logos must be school-appropriate.
- EA spirit wear is welcome on any day. Uniforms and/or warm-ups may be worn on game days per guidelines to be determined by the Athletic Director.
- Footwear should be appropriate for the weather, for science labs, and for safely navigating stairs

The school does not prohibit hairstyles that are historically associated with race, ethnicity, or hair texture, including, but not limited to, protective hairstyles such as braids, locks, and twists.

The school allows student athletes to modify their athletic or team uniform for the purpose of modesty in clothing or attire that is in accordance with the requirements of their religion, cultural values, or modesty preferences.

Students may be removed from class or sent home to change, with no credit for missed work, for dress code offenses. Multiple dress code infractions may result in additional disciplinary consequences.



## **Spirit Days**

On the first Friday of each month, students have a Spirit Day. On these days, students are encouraged to wear EA Spirit Wear. Additionally, the Upper School facilitates pre-announced Spirit Weeks each year. More details and guidelines about these days that include themed days (such as Twin Day) will be announced closer to these events. On those themed days when students dress up, costumes that portray a race, ethnic group, gender, or other offensive, insensitive, appropriative, or inappropriate costumes are not allowed.

## **Computer, Internet, Cell Phone, Electronic Devices**

Students are expected to adhere to the Academy's Computer and Internet Use Policy (see earlier in this Handbook). All Upper School students have student portal access to the EA website as well as an Elgin Academy Google account (email, Google Drive, etc.). Instant messaging, personal emails, computer games, or personal Internet surfing during the school day without teacher permission may result in suspension of computer privileges. More serious offenses, such as damaging computer hardware or software, or using computers to harass others or commit illegal acts, may result in suspension or expulsion from school.

The Upper School does not have a division-wide cell phone policy. Teachers are allowed to have students make use of this technology should they feel there is a benefit to student learning in their class. Therefore, each teacher will denote in their syllabus as well as in their opening class discussions about what their individual classroom cell-phone policies are. Some teachers may allow for student use at the discretion of the teacher, while others may have a policy that requires students to turn their phones in for the period or to keep them off and out of sight. Should a teacher allow students to use a cell phone for educational purposes, alternate forms of technology will be available for those who do not have a cell phone. Therefore, students who do not bring cell phones to school will not be at a disadvantage.

During non-class times, students will be allowed to access their cell phones as appropriate. However, students are encouraged to engage personally with their peers around them during the school day.

Teachers, advisors, the Dean of Students, and the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs may confiscate computers, cell phones or music players for unauthorized use. A confiscated device may be returned to the student at the end of the school day, or a parent might be required to retrieve it. Refusing to give personal electronics to an adult as instructed will result in disciplinary action for disrespect.

Using computers, cell phones, or other media to tease, embarrass, or intimidate another member of the school community may constitute harassment. Whether or not the incident occurs at school, and whether or not school-owned computers/media are used, disciplinary steps may be taken if the incident contributes to an atmosphere in which the person feels emotionally and/or physically unsafe at school.

## **Leaving Campus, Parking/Driving, Senior Privileges**

All Upper School students are expected to remain on campus from their before-school arrival until their after-school departure with only the following exceptions. Seniors who have the privilege of being off-campus during the open period designated in their schedule (more information below). Students waiting on campus for an after school program to begin (e.g., athletic practice or rehearsal) may temporarily leave campus in their car with the authorization of the adult in charge of that program (e.g., coach or play director). Students should specify the reason they need to leave campus and return at a time agreed upon by the student and adult in charge. The Dean of Students should be notified of this as well.

Seniors may earn privileges to leave campus based on trustworthiness. Privileges do not begin on the first day of school, but on a later date chosen by the Upper School Dean of Students. Seniors with privileges may sign out during their open period. Students may sign out at other times only with permission from the Dean of Students or the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs. No other adult may authorize the senior to leave campus; if neither of the above individuals is available to give permission, the student must remain on campus. Seniors may not transport younger students off campus during the school day. At the discretion of the Dean of Students or the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs, privileges may be modified, delayed, suspended, or revoked for individual seniors or for the entire senior class for attendance, dress code, academic, or disciplinary reasons, or for disciplinary or academic probation.

Students except seniors with privileges must stay on campus from morning arrival until departure after athletics or other afternoon activity. Students with evening campus activities such as play practice may drive off campus after school/athletics with parental knowledge. Students may not walk off campus at any time. The only exception is the strip mall (Domino's Pizza) next to campus: Upper School students may walk to Domino's after school; seniors with privileges may also walk there during their open period.

In order to minimize traffic to campus and in the office, students should not order food using delivery services at any point while they are on campus, including but not limited to lunch and after-school. Disciplinary action may be taken against students who do not follow this rule.

Given the presence of young children on campus, all drivers must exercise great care in driving on/near campus. Students may park in designated student lots, not in areas designated for EA staff or Elgin Historical Society Museum visitors. Students may park on College St. or Park St. within city regulations (side-of-street, snow/leaf removal). All parking areas are off-limits during the school day; students may not loiter in or near these areas. Individual teachers, the Dean of Students, or the Assistant Head of School for Academic Affairs may, at their discretion, allow a student to go to that student's car to retrieve books, technology, or other needed materials. The student who has approval should then sign out and back in in the Edwards Hall Upper School office, noting which adult gave them permission to go to the parking lot. Students should then retrieve whatever items they need and return immediately to class or study hall. Students who have signed out with permission must leave promptly in their cars and return promptly to classroom buildings upon return.