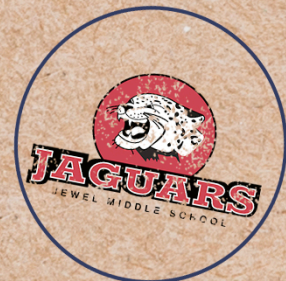




2024-2025  
MIDDLE SCHOOLS

# Student Handbook



**District 129 Middle Schools  
2024-2025  
Student Handbook**

**Welcome to the 2024 - 2025 School Year**

The purpose of this handbook is to familiarize students and families with the most current procedures and expectations needed to keep our buildings operating in a safe and orderly manner. Any updates or changes to these procedures will be communicated in multiple media formats, including an update to this document. Access to the student handbooks and Student Rights and Responsibilities can be found on the district and individual school websites. If you would like a printed copy, please contact your child's school office and they can assist you.

Our entire staff would like to welcome our new and returning students to a new and exciting school year in School District 129, where we embrace the curiosity, complexity, and joy of learning!

<p><b>Herget Middle School</b> 1550 Deerpath Road Aurora, IL 60506</p> <p>Main: (630) 301-5006 Attendance: (630) 301-5230 Student Services: (630) 301-5235 Health Office: (630) 301-5240 FAX: (630) 907-3146</p>	<p><b>Jefferson Middle School</b> 1151 Plum Street Aurora, IL 60506</p> <p>Main: (630) 301-5009 Attendance: (630) 301-5300 Student Services: (630) 301-5311 Health Office: (630) 301-5312 FAX: (630) 301-5711</p>
<p><b>Jewel Middle School</b> 1501 Waterford Road North Aurora, IL 60542</p> <p>Main: (630) 301-5010 Attendance: (630) 301-5345 Student Services: (630) 301-5327 Health Office: (630) 301-5328 FAX: (630) 907-3161</p>	<p><b>Washington Middle School</b> 231 Constitution Drive Aurora, IL 60506</p> <p>Main: (630) 301-5017 Attendance: (630) 301-5500 Student Services: (630) 301-5479 Health Office: (630) 301-5483 FAX: (630) 844-5712</p>

## Absence Reporting Procedures

Ensuring your child attends school regularly is crucial for their academic and social-emotional growth. We understand that there are times when a student may need to miss school due to appointments, family emergencies, or illness. If your child is unable to attend school on a particular day, we kindly ask that parents/guardians contact the school attendance line before 8:30 a.m. to report the absence.

In our commitment to maintaining healthy and safe school environments, our school health offices work diligently to ensure the well-being of all students. We kindly ask parents and guardians to send their children to school even if they are mildly ill. However, if a student is too sick to be at school, we will promptly send them home to recover.

When reporting student absences, we request that parents or guardians provide the reason for each absence to the attendance line. Additionally, we encourage parents/guardians to furnish our school offices with any relevant notes from the appropriate agency or healthcare provider to document the reason for the absence. Your cooperation in keeping us informed about student absences helps us maintain a healthy and supportive learning environment for all students. Thank you for your understanding and support.

In our commitment to maintaining a healthy and safe school environment, we also request that the reason for each absence be provided when contacting the attendance line. Additionally, we encourage parents/guardians to provide our school offices with any relevant notes from the appropriate agency or healthcare provider to document the reason for the absence.

You can find the contact details for the attendance reporting phone numbers on the first page of this handbook for your convenience. Your cooperation in keeping us informed about student absences is greatly appreciated.

Please note that students who are absent for 15 consecutive school days, without a valid cause, will be withdrawn from the school district. If you wish to re-enroll, please email the registration office at [registration@sd129.org](mailto:registration@sd129.org) or by phone at 630-301-5050. Re-enrollment does not guarantee placement in the same schedule or school of residence.

## Middle School Hours

- TIME - Students may enter the building for breakfast
- 9:35 - Late Start Monday (Mondays only)
- 8:45 - Start of the Academic Day (Tuesday - Friday)
- 3:38 - End of the School Day (Tuesday - Friday)

## Academic Honesty

Coursework, homework, and academic honesty are integral parts of learning in District 129. As part of our commitment to our learners, we want to ensure that we provide them with personalized feedback and a fair evaluation of their work. To accomplish this, all work submitted must be their own.

Any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating, plagiarizing, generating content through the unauthorized use of artificial intelligence software, wrongfully giving or receiving help during an academic examination, wrongfully obtaining test copies or scores, and using personal devices to engage in academic dishonesty is a serious offense that is prohibited by District 129.

Work submitted in violation of this policy may risk both academic and disciplinary consequences. If students have questions about academic honesty, they should speak with their teacher before submitting their work.

#### How to avoid academic dishonesty:

- Citing sources
- Ask for clarification
- Get extra help

### **Assessments**

District 129 implements general achievement and ability assessments from 6th through 8th grade. These assessments serve several purposes:

**Reveal Understanding:** the function of assessment is to provide opportunities and open doors for learners to reveal their understanding in a variety of ways on different topics.

**Inform Practices:** Assessment data should be used to measure student learning and inform our instructional practices to meet the needs of our students.

**Provide Feedback:** Assessment should allow educators and students to engage in specific feedback to extend learning and understanding.

### **Bicycles**

When your child decides to ride a bicycle to school, it's crucial for them to securely park and lock their bike in the designated racks provided. While we strongly encourage the use of these facilities to safeguard students' belongings, it's important to understand that District 129 cannot be held responsible for any instances of theft or damage to bicycles. Your cooperation in ensuring your child knows how to properly secure their bicycle is greatly appreciated to minimize any potential risks.

### **Birthday Treats and Celebrations**

School District 129 kindly requests that students and parents refrain from bringing edible treats and non-edible items to school for celebratory purposes. We value the cooperation of our parents and guardians in helping us maintain healthy school environments.

### **Cafeteria**

To ensure a healthy environment for all students, all food and drinks must be consumed in designated areas. Outside food delivery (i.e. Uber Eats) to students at the school is not permitted.

All students in District 129 are entitled to a school breakfast and lunch at no cost. If a meal arrives outside of a student's designated lunch time, they will not be disrupted from class to eat. Rest assured, students without a lunch will still receive a school-provided meal, free of charge. For additional information about the guidelines of this federal program, please refer to the district's website at [www.sd129.org](http://www.sd129.org).

Practicing good hand hygiene is key to promoting health and preventing the spread of illness. District 129 recommends that students and staff members wash their hands thoroughly with soap and water

for at least 20 seconds, both before and after eating. Hand sanitizer approved by the district is also readily available for use during school hours.

### **Cell Phones and Smart Technology**

To maintain a safe and focused learning environment, students are encouraged to refrain from bringing personal electronic devices such as cell phones, smart watches, headphones, or air tags to school due to the potential risks of vandalism, theft, or loss. Please note that the District assumes no responsibility for lost, stolen, or damaged items.

If personal devices are brought to school, they must be silenced during the academic day (8:45 AM to 3:38 PM) and should not disrupt the educational environment. Students are allowed to use their devices in areas designated by the school's administration, after school hours, and during school events. In case of an urgent need to speak to your student during the day, please contact the school directly.

Any electronic device used to disrupt the school's functions or violate another student's privacy in the restroom or locker room may be confiscated by an administrator, and appropriate disciplinary actions will be taken. Additionally, live streams, cyberbullying, and/or harassment via electronic means which disrupt the educational environment and compromise the safety of others are also prohibited.

Electronic devices provided by District 129 should be stored in protective coverings to prevent damage from dropping or improper storage. Students may carry their devices in their backpacks during the school day.

### **Closed Campus Procedures**

For the safety and security of our students, it is essential that they do not leave the school building during the school day without proper authorization. This requires being signed out by a parent or guardian who presents photo identification or obtaining permission from school personnel.

Additionally, students should not open exterior doors for anyone during school hours. All visitors to our school must use the main entrance and follow sign-in procedures. Students who arrive after the start of the school day should also check in with the main office before going to class.

### **Community Agency Support and Crisis Response**

IRIS is an agency that collaborates with District 129 to align families with service providers who work together to support people in our community. If you are interested in working with one of our related service professionals to be referred to IRIS, please use the link below to access the consent form. The link can also be found on our district's website, [www.sd129.org](http://www.sd129.org).

By completing and signing this form, you agree that District 129 can use an online system called IRIS to refer you to the programs and resources you choose. If you agree, your name and date of birth will be shared with service providers in the online system. Your date of birth will be used for identification purposes only. Other personal information will be shared only with staff at the program(s) we refer you to and the local IRIS Data Manager(s). They will only use your family's personal information to coordinate services by sending a referral or contacting you to offer services. This personal information may include:

- Details about you and/or your family that will help the program(s) understand your needs (Ex: household information, services requested, other programs you are referred to, etc.).

- Information that will help the program(s) know how to best contact you.
- Information about assessments you receive (Ex: answers to questions about housing needs, tobacco use, prenatal care, etc.)

District 129 partners with many local agencies to provide services and resources to our students and families. For a comprehensive list of local resources, please visit the student services page on our website.

### **Contacting a Teacher**

We want to hear from our parents/guardians and encourage home and school communication. Education is much more impactful when schools and families partner together in the best interest of the child. Contacting your child's teacher directly is often the most effective way to address any concerns or questions you may have. We recommend reaching out to the teacher first for any academic-related matters.

To contact a teacher, please use the teacher's voicemail or email, which is accessible through the District's website, [www.sd129.org](http://www.sd129.org). Schoology, District 129's online learning platform, is also available for communication with teachers. This platform is accessible to both students and parents, providing another avenue for staying connected and informed.

### **Content Filtering/Gaggle**

District 129 uses Gaggle's content filtering platform to ensure a safe and productive online learning environment for all students. Gaggle monitors digital communications and activities on district-owned devices and those connected to our network to protect against inappropriate content, cyberbullying, and potential threats of harm. This monitoring helps maintain a secure and supportive educational setting.

If there are any student-specific concerns, a school administrator or social-emotional support staff member will notify parents. If a parent is unavailable or unreachable, a local police officer may assist by conducting a wellness check on the student or family at home.

### **Dressing and Grooming**

A student's clothing provides them with the ability to express who they are as individuals and feel comfortable in our school environments. Our dress code aims to free all members of our school community from being singled out or restricted based on race, sex, gender identity, gender expression, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religion, cultural observance, household income, or body type/size. Students must wear a shirt, pants/shorts/skirt, dress, and shoes to ensure certain body parts (genitalia, buttocks, and breasts) are covered and non-disruptive to the educational process or interfere with the maintenance of a positive learning climate.

### **Our Values**

- All students may wear clothes that are comfortable and provide them the right to express who they are as individuals.
- All students are responsible for respecting individual rights to freedom of expression

### **Our Goals**

- Maintain a safe learning environment
- Allow students to wear clothing that represents their identified gender
- Allow students to wear religious attire without fear of discipline or discrimination

Students **may** wear:

- Religious headwear
- Hoodie sweatshirts (wearing the hood is allowed, but the face must be visible to school staff. Hoods should be removed if directed by a staff member.)
- Hats worn inside the school building must be worn forward-facing and may not depict any of the following characteristics. (Hats should be removed if directed by a staff member.)
- Fitted pants, yoga pants, and “skinny” type jeans (must be opaque/not see-through)
- Pajama-like pants (for example: flannel or fleece pants)
- Athletic attire (consistent with rights and responsibilities)

Students **cannot** wear:

- Violent language or images or gang identification
- Images or language depicting, drugs, alcohol, vaping, or paraphernalia (anything illegal)
- Hate speech, profanity, or pornography
- Images or language that creates a hostile or intimidating environment based on any protected class or marginalized groups
- Any clothing that reveals visible undergarments (waistbands and straps are ok)
- A bulletproof vest, body armor, or tactical gear
- Swimsuits
- Footwear that may damage the flooring
- Accessories that could be considered dangerous or could be used as a weapon.
- Any item that covers the face except as a religious observance or personal protective equipment (PPE)

### Early Pick-Up (During the School Day)

If your child needs to leave school before the regular dismissal time, we ask that a parent/guardian inform the school office as soon as possible, mentioning the time and reason for the early departure. Our school office staff will do their best to ensure that your child is ready and waiting in the office at the scheduled pick-up time.

To prioritize student safety, only parents/guardians or approved adult emergency contacts are allowed to pick up students. When requesting an early dismissal, please provide written notice to the school office, specifying who will be responsible for picking up your child. This ensures that we release students only to authorized individuals. It's also helpful if you discuss these plans with your children beforehand so they're aware of the arrangements.

For the security of our students, all parents/guardians and approved adult emergency contacts picking a student up must present a driver's license or state-issued photo ID card, even if our staff already know you. We appreciate your understanding and cooperation with this identification process.

Please note that **early dismissals will not be permitted after 3:15** to minimize disruptions to our dismissal process at the end of the school day.

### Grading System

The grading system used on the middle school report card is designed to provide parents/guardians with an evaluation of students' achievement and an assessment of their work. The letter grade (A, B, C, D, F) indicates the degree of achievement and shows the relationship of work to the work of all students in the grade.

- A - Excellent

- B - Above Average
- C - Average
- D - Below Average
- F - Failure
- P - Pass
- INC - Incomplete

Parents/guardians are encouraged to check their student's grades via Schoology regularly. Report cards are issued electronically through Schoology at the end of each grading period. To access your student's grades, please use this link, [app.schoology.com](http://app.schoology.com).

Incomplete grades (INC) are to be made up within two weeks after a student's absence. Failure to complete work within this time limit will result in the lowering of the grade or in some cases, failure of the course.

### **Honor Roll**

The middle schools will recognize a quarterly honor roll and a special recognition will be given at the end of the school year. The following Honor Roll standards will be observed each quarter:

- **High Honor Roll** A student must have A's in all subject areas to qualify.
- **Honor Roll** A student must not have any grade below a B in all subject areas.

## **Health Services**

### **General Information**

All student medications must be delivered to the health office by a parent/guardian with the appropriate medical documentation. Students may not hand-carry prescription or over-the-counter medications to school. If a student becomes ill during the school day, he or she must report to the nurse for assistance. The health office will follow District *Guidelines for Returning to School after an Illness*. Additional criteria for exclusion due to communicable disease will follow Health Department guidance based on physician confirmation of disease/illness. Under no circumstances is a student to leave the building without permission from the school nurse. A student must have a pass from his/her classroom teacher in order to be admitted to the nurse's office.

### **Concussions**

Students who exhibit signs and symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or head injury must be removed from participation or competition at that time. Such students will not be allowed to return to play unless cleared to do so by a physician licensed to practice medicine or a certified athletic trainer. Students who have experienced concussions will be supported by the District in accordance with the school's Return-to-Play and Return-to-Learn protocols. Parents/guardians should notify the building principal and nurse if they are aware that their student has suffered a concussion.

### **Food Allergies**

Parents of students with known life-threatening allergies and/or anaphylaxis should provide the school with written instructions from the student's health care provider for handling anaphylaxis and all necessary medications for implementing the student-specific order on an annual basis.

District 129 participates in the National School Lunch/School Breakfast program. According to the USDA's Food and Nutrition Services Instruction 783-2 Revision 2, a medical statement from a



physician detailing food allergies must be provided before the school can make any restrictions or substitutions for students. If your child has any dietary restrictions, please contact the Certified School Nurse at your child's school.

### **Head Lice**

Students with live head lice do not need to be sent home early from school; they can go home at the end of the day, be treated, and return to class after appropriate treatment has begun. When lice/nits are found on a student at school, the student's parent/guardian will be informed. Any household contacts that attend school in West Aurora School District will be called to the health office to be checked. Parents/Guardians are encouraged to take their child(ren) home for treatment.

### **Jeff Craig Family Resource Center**

- The school-linked health center is powered by VNA Health Care and is accessible to any District 129 student. The VNA provides a range of services, such as medical care, mental health services, and dietician services. The goal is to improve students' health and well-being, enhance their academic performance, and reduce absenteeism by ensuring easy access to necessary healthcare services. For more information about the VNA's services and the necessary consent forms, please visit our website at [SD129.org](http://SD129.org).
- The Marie Wilkinson Micro-Pantry provides essential food assistance to District 129 students and families to help address food insecurities and ensure students have the necessary resources to succeed academically and personally. Located at the Jeff Craig Family Resource Center, the micro-pantry will provide a variety of non-perishable food items, school supplies, and other basic necessities. For more information about how to access the micro-pantry, please speak to the administration at your child's school.

### **Physical Education Excusal Requests**

A student may be excused from physical education classes for up to two days with a note or request from the parent/guardian. However, for longer periods of non-participation, a doctor's note is required. The doctor's note should clearly state the duration of time for which the student is unable to participate in physical education activities.

### **Reporting an Accident**

In the event of your student sustaining an injury at school or during travel to or from school, the incident must be promptly reported to either the school administration, the school health office, or the teacher. Immediate reporting ensures swift and appropriate attention to the student's needs and facilitates the implementation of necessary measures for their well-being.

### **Homework**

Homework at the middle school level becomes more formal and requires more time and effort as the student progresses and prepares for high school. Parental guidance is a crucial component of a student's success in the classroom. Parents/guardians should monitor their child's home study and homework completion daily.

Because both classwork and homework are an integral part of learning at the middle school level, it is the student's responsibility to complete their work whether they are present in school or absent. A failure to complete work according to the timeline established by the teacher may result in a lower grade. Students who miss school due to an excused absence will be expected to complete their missing work, tests, or quizzes within the required timeline established by the teacher. Students who

miss school due to chronic truancy or an unexcused absence will be provided the opportunity to complete missed assignments at the teacher's discretion. Failure to complete assignments in the allotted time frame may result in loss of credit.

Students have the right to earn the maximum points for make-up assignments for excused absences provided they:

- Request homework on or before the day he/she returns to school
- Establish a timeline with the teacher for the completion of work
- Complete the work within these guidelines
- Obtain, from fellow classmates, class notes missed

The student should expect the teacher to do the following:

- Require completion of tests and quizzes assigned before the absence
- Collect any work assigned before the absence or assignments sent home during the absence
- Provide instructions for assignments
- Give a reasonable amount of time to complete make-up work
- Communicate make-up policies early in the semester

The student should not expect the teacher to do the following:

- Duplicate classroom activities
- Provide tutoring
- Provide all work to a student before an extended absence

Occasionally, students are absent for an extended period of time. Should an extended absence be 10 days or longer, a parent/guardian should contact the building administrator and request a conference to address make-up work.

Any parent/guardian questions regarding a student's homework should be directed to the classroom teacher via Schoology, email, or phone. Parents may access Schoology by logging onto the district's website at, [app.schoology.com](http://app.schoology.com).

### **Parent/Guardian Contact Information**

In District 129, we value the partnerships we have with parents and guardians. It's crucial for our staff to have the most updated student and school information, especially during emergencies. Please ensure all contact information is current whenever changes occur.

Our messaging platforms utilize both landline and cellular telephone numbers, as well as email addresses. To update this information, please reach out to your student's school or contact our registration office at 630-301-5050.

Only individuals listed as parents or guardians are authorized to pick up a student from school without prior notification. If an emergency contact needs to remove a student, the parent or guardian must notify the main office beforehand. Additionally, it's important to update emergency contacts as they may change throughout the school year.

In the rare event that a child is not picked up from school and neither the parent/guardian nor emergency contact can be reached, the school staff will contact local law enforcement to assist with parent/guardian reunification. Your cooperation in keeping contact information current ensures the safety and well-being of all students.

## Prohibited Personal Items

Personal items that could jeopardize school safety or disrupt the learning environment, including actual or items perceived as weapons, are strictly prohibited on school premises. Students found in possession of such items will face disciplinary actions, which may include suspension or expulsion from school. For more details, please refer to School Board Policy 7.190, accessible in the Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. Additionally, please review the Weapon/Prohibited Items Letter for important information and guidance. You can find the letter and further details by visiting [sd129.org](http://sd129.org) - [Weapon/Prohibited Items](#).

## School Bus/Transportation

**Riding the bus to school** - Students who are assigned to a bus for the morning route should arrive at the bus stop 5 minutes before the scheduled pick-up time. This ensures that they are ready and waiting when the bus arrives, helping to keep the morning routine running smoothly.

Riding the bus to and from school is a privilege. To ensure the safety of all students, it is the expectation they remain seated, board and disembark at their assigned bus stops, follow the instructions of the bus driver, communicate respectfully, refrain from eating food while on the bus, and avoid causing any damage to the bus at any time. When your student adheres to these guidelines they help maintain a safe and orderly transportation experience for everyone.

## School Safety

District 129 works with a broad-based team representing law enforcement, emergency services, community agencies, and others to continually improve response to emergency situations. In the event of an emergency, communication will be broadcast to parents/guardians via automated phone, email, text messaging, and social media. Please follow the instructions communicated in those communications to help our school staff mitigate the emergency.

School safety drills will be scheduled at times established by the school's administration. A minimum of the following will occur each school year:

- 3 evacuation drills
- 4 accountability drills
- 2 severe weather drills
- 4 ALICE drills (1 with law enforcement present)
- 1 bus evacuation drill

The district's school safety team firmly believes that providing regular opportunities to practice safety measures is essential for the well-being of students, staff, and the entire school community. Therefore, all school safety drills will be announced to students beforehand, and there will be no use of look-alike weapons or frightening tactics during these exercises. Please familiarize yourself with the school safety directives listed below. When the school or district initiates any of the safety directives, a notice will be sent to the appropriate targeted parent/guardian group.

### District 129's School Safety Directives

- SECURE THE BUILDING AND TEACH  
Initiated when there is a hazard outside the school building
- HOLD-IN-PLACE AND TEACH  
Initiated when an incident is occurring within the school (medical, escalating student, or other non-life threatening concern)

- **EVACUATION**  
Initiated when a hazard inside (fire, gas leak, chemical spill) requires relocating outside of the building
- **SEVERE WEATHER (Tornado Warning/High winds 70+ MPH)**  
Initiated when the weather requires relocating within the school to the designated shelter areas
- **ALICE-ALICE-ALICE**  
Initiated when there is an active threat of a person with a firearm or any other weapon capable of causing death or great bodily harm. This is the highest level of building security.

### Student Contact

**District 129 respectfully requests that parents/guardians refrain from contacting their child during school hours.** We do, however, understand that emergency situations arise. In the event of an urgent need to contact your child during the school day, please reach out to the school's main office.

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### Video Surveillance

To enhance the safety and security of students and staff at District 129's school campuses, we have installed numerous video cameras and monitoring devices in public areas of the school. These areas include but are not limited to, hallways, stairwells, cafeterias, and school buses. Any misconduct observed on video surveillance will result in appropriate disciplinary action being taken.

Please note that video surveillance used to assign student disciplinary actions is considered a student record. As such, District 129 is unable to release video surveillance footage to parents or guardians. Rest assured, our priority remains the safety and well-being of all students and staff members.

### Visitors and Volunteers

Student and staff safety is paramount in District 129, and we maintain stringent measures to uphold safe school environments. To ensure safety, all visitors must use the intercom system at the school's main entrance. Upon buzzing, visitors will be prompted to state their name and reason for their visit. Once granted access, visitors must immediately check in at the school's office.

For security purposes, all visitors are required to present a valid photo identification card before receiving a visitor's badge. These IDs are scanned through District 129's visitor management system, which is linked to the National Sex Offender Registry. Approved visitors will then be provided with a visitor's badge to wear throughout their visit, which must be returned upon checkout.

The Board of Education has established rules and regulations for entry into school buildings during school hours and for conduct on District property to ensure the supervision and safety of all students. Violations of these rules may result in a no-trespass order, applicable to specific school buildings and grounds, including extracurricular activities held at those locations.

Under the Illinois Criminal Code (720 ILCS 5/21-3), criminal penalties exist for unauthorized entry onto District property, as well as for engaging in violence and disorderly conduct. District 129 is committed to enforcing these laws and will pursue criminal charges for any non-compliance.

## **Withdrawing and Transferring a Student**

If a legal parent/guardian needs to withdraw a student from school, following these steps will ensure a smooth process:

- Provide the school office with the request to withdraw as soon as possible before the student's last day of school.
- Return all textbooks, electronic devices, and any other district-assigned materials to the office.
- Satisfy all outstanding monetary responsibilities.
- Once all steps have been completed, the school office will provide the parent/guardian with a transfer packet to be used for enrollment at the new school.

## **Student Support Resources**

**National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

**9-8-8**

**Suicide Prevention Services (Batavia)**

**630-482-9699**

**National Crisis Counseling Text Line**

**Text HOME to 741741**

**SAFE2HELP Illinois**

***Seek Help Before Harm***

**1-844-4-SAFEIL**

**Text - 72332**

**Download the SAFE2HELP Illinois mobile app**

**Bookmark the page: [www.safe2helpIL.com](http://www.safe2helpIL.com)**