



Safe Harbor Family Handbook 2025-2026

Safe Harbor is an out of school time enrichment program which inspires excellence in the leadership and academic skills of students through collaboration with families, school officials, and community partners.

Safe Harbor I.N.S.P.I.R.E.S.

Safe Harbor provides an educational environment that is **INCLUSIVE**, engaging, holistic, and culturally responsive. Through **NETWORKING** with local, state wide, and national agencies and organizations, Safe Harbor nurtures partnerships which expand the enrichment opportunities of Michigan City students. Staff members provide emotional and developmental **SUPPORT** to students and families through their commitment to social emotional development, resulting in the **PERSONAL GROWTH** of each student served. As a leader in **INNOVATIVE** enrichment programming, Safe Harbor is dedicated to providing ongoing professional development for staff members. Collaborative **RELATIONSHIPS** between the program staff, community partners, and day school staff result in a dynamic **EDUCATIONAL** experience incorporating real world context with conceptual learning. Safe Harbor ensures **SAFETY** for students and peace of mind for families while providing top tier experiential and enrichment opportunities in the afterschool hours/out of school time hours.

Safe Harbor is a 21st Century Learning Center



Safe Harbor History

Safe Harbor is an out of school time enrichment program which was founded in 1999 under the 21st Century Community Learning Centers (21stCCLC) grant providing after school services to four Michigan City Area Schools in grades kindergarten through five. Safe Harbor's services have expanded to after school sites at six elementary schools, the Little Wolves Early Learning Center, both middle schools, and the high school providing services Monday through Friday to students in our community. Safe Harbor provides morning care services at four elementary schools Monday through Friday. Safe Harbor also runs FIRST robotics teams at the elementary, middle and high school levels. In 2018, our High School FIRST Robotics team won the State Championship and went on to compete in the World Competition. In addition to these school year program's Safe Harbor offers an annual summer S.T.E.A.M. adventure camp for students designed to reduce summer learning loss and engage students in diverse fields of enrichment. Safe Harbor's success has been the result of a collaborative network of partners, dedication to quality programming, and continual assessment of program outcomes. The Program has received the "Pledge of Distinction" as a result of participating schools completing self-assessments administered by our staff and advisory teams at each site under the coordination of the Indiana Department of Education and the Indiana Afterschool Network. Safe Harbor's enrichment programming provides a dynamic experience which contributes to academic, social and personal growth. Safe Harbor would like to acknowledge their many funding partners which includes Michigan City Area Schools, 21st CCLC, United Way of LaPorte County, the Morgan Foundation, the Michigan City Community Enrichment Corporation, and a number of local manufacturing companies that help sustain our robotics program.

Safe Harbor Goals:

The Safe Harbor Program provides homework help, tutoring, fitness & wellness, STEAM enrichment, and service learning opportunities to Michigan City youth. The components of these opportunities are designed to provide the following:

- A safe environment with positive adult role models during after school enrichment hours

- Socialize with peers in a healthy manner
- Receive assistance with homework
- Engage in learning activities that may not be available during school hours
- Learn sportsmanship and fair play while participating in recreational activities
- Engage in service learning and citizenship activities designed to help students see themselves and their classmates as powerful citizens and agents of positive change
- Create a partnership with families to collaborate in the needs of their child/children to enhance the enrichment experience

Our program is constantly changing to meet the needs of our students. Safe Harbor enhancements and activities may be modified at any time to best suit those needs.

Who may enroll in Safe Harbor?

All Michigan City area youth in grades PK-12, including private schools, charter schools, and home schools are invited to participate in Safe Harbor. MCAS students should be registered for the Safe Harbor program at the school they attend during the school day.

My child has an IEP, can they be enrolled in Safe Harbor?

Students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) are warmly welcomed at Safe Harbor. While our staff are not certified special-education teachers, we partner closely with families to provide reasonable accommodations and create a positive experience for every child. In some cases, however, our program may not be the best fit for a student's specific needs.

How do I enroll my child(ren) in Safe Harbor?

To enroll, visit the [Safe Harbor website](#) and click on the link to register. You must do a registration for each student you would like to register. Once we begin assembling rosters, you will receive an email with details on the program at your child's school. Safe Harbor has a waiting list every year so be sure to register early. If you receive an email notifying you that your

child is being placed on the waiting list, please know that we will move children off the waitlist as soon as spots become available.

Where will my child be located while participating in the Safe Harbor Program?

Safe Harbor Program students will meet in the cafeteria immediately after school to receive a snack. Activities take place throughout the school building and on school property. Parents will be notified of field trips in advance. Morning care drop off location is unique to each building.

What are the hours of Safe Harbor?

Elementary Safe Harbor after school sites are open Monday through Friday immediately after school until 6:00 p.m. Safe Harbor at the middle and high school sites are open Monday through Thursday immediately after school until 5:00 p.m. Safe Harbor morning care programming begins at 6:00 am and ends at 8:30 when the school day staff arrives to supervise the school breakfast. We are not open on days school is closed, including holidays, bank days, half-days, e-earning days and inclement weather closings and delays. Elementary sites are open on early release days from noon or time of release until 6:00 PM. Check with Little Wolves Early Learning Center on closings for e-learning and early release days as they vary.

What can I expect the schedule to be while my child participates in the Safe Harbor Program?

Each student will participate in daily rotations to include the following:

Snack: Students receive a snack daily. After snack time, each participates in a series of activities.

Homework Support: Staff members assist students with homework and project-based learning. Students are responsible for bringing homework to the Safe Harbor program and parents are encouraged to check homework to ensure assignments are complete and accurate. While Safe Harbor staff are not teachers, we assist with homework as much as possible.

Fitness & Wellness: Students have the opportunity to participate in organized activities and to learn fair play and good sportsmanship.

Enrichment: Safe Harbor students attend a variety of enrichment classes. Examples include: Art, Music, Dance, Character Development, Robotics, Engineering, Horticulture, Kidz Lit, Kidz Math, STEM, etc.

When may I pick up my child?

Students may be picked up at any time that is convenient for the family. We ask that if at all possible you pick up your child after 4:00 to assist us in meeting attendance requirements set by our funders. Parents are required to pick their child(ren) up by 6:00 p.m at elementary sites. Pick up at middle schools and the high school is 5:00 p.m. if your child is not using bus transportation. Always be prompt in your pick up. Three occurrences of late pick up will result in suspension from the Safe Harbor Program. Safety is first and foremost for students who participate in the Safe Harbor program. It is required that parents or guardians enter the building to sign out their child(ren) from the elementary programs. Children will only be released to persons you authorized as a pick-up person. Please notify the Site Coordinator of any changes of authorized persons who will be picking up your child. A special permission slip must be completed for your child to walk home from school. This form must include the time of release for your child(ren). Once your child signs out and leaves school property, Safe Harbor assumes no further responsibility.

IMPORTANT! Parents, guardians, and their agents picking-up children will not be allowed to leave the pick up area. If something is needed in the school building, classroom, or other areas you must enter through the main entrance of the school. If school staff are no longer on site to admit people through the main entrance, you must wait until the next day. Safe Harbor staff will not allow children, parents, guardians, or pick-up persons into the building past the pick up area. This is for the safety of all, we appreciate your compliance and understanding.

What if I have no transportation for my child(ren) at the end of the program day?

Families who have no transportation which prohibits their child(ren) to participate in Safe Harbor programs should contact the Safe Harbor administrative office at 219-873-2026 to discuss transportation options for your family.

Does my involvement in the Safe Harbor Program really matter?

Absolutely! Safe Harbor partners with your child's school to provide many enrichment activities that enhance academic, social and personal growth. Parents/Guardians are an important link in that partnership. When parents are knowledgeable about what their children are learning, there is a greater opportunity for student success and confidence! We invite you to visit the Safe Harbor site anytime. We would welcome you as a volunteer to plan or chaperone special events or to lend your talents in providing enrichment and assistance to staff. Check out the available enrichment activities that need your involvement: Reading coaches, enrichment speakers, share your career, college readiness and much more! Please contact your Site Coordinator with interest in any of these enrichment opportunities.

What is the Discipline Policy at Safe Harbor?

Safe Harbor students are expected to follow the rules in the Michigan City Area Schools student handbook and any other site specific rules that may be established by the respective Site Coordinator where your child attends. **All MCAS and Safe Harbor rules and policies are applicable when students ride school buses.**

Safe Harbor Behavior Management Policy

To maintain a safe and positive environment, Safe Harbor partners with families and students to encourage appropriate behavior. Staff are trained to speak calmly at the child's level, clearly

explain expectations, and then give the student space to self-correct before addressing the behavior again.

Step-by-Step Process:

1st Warning

The student is asked to stop the behavior or follow the given instructions.

2nd Warning

The student is reminded to stop the behavior or follow instructions and informed that this is the second warning.

3rd Warning

The student is told this is the third and final warning. If the behavior continues, a Discipline Referral may be issued. At this stage, staff may also choose to remove the student from the activity, provide a brief separation from the group, or send the student to the Site Coordinator for a calm-down break.

Discipline Referral

When a referral is necessary, staff complete it with guidance from the Site Coordinator, who signs it and shares it with the parent/guardian (or their designated pick-up person). A copy is available upon request.

Morning Care Note: A Site Coordinator is not typically present during morning care. Morning staff should first consult the Site Coordinator before issuing a referral.

Consequences

1st Referral: Conference with the child, the referring staff member, and the Site Coordinator. The referral is shared with the parent/guardian by the site coordinator.

2nd Referral: Conference with the parent/guardian, child, and Site Coordinator. Discussion with parent/guardian on strategies to correct inappropriate behavior.

3rd Referral: Conference with the parent/guardian, child, and Site Coordinator, with possible suspension from the program. A Safe Harbor administrator may attend if requested by the parent/guardian or Site Coordinator.

Depending on the severity of the behavior, Safe Harbor administration may skip steps as appropriate. Repeated referrals can lead to suspension or permanent removal from the program. Some behaviors such as bullying, fighting, bringing inappropriate items to Safe Harbor may be cause for immediate suspension or expulsion.

How do I provide feedback about my child’s participation in the Safe Harbor Program?

Your comments and suggestions are important to us. As Safe Harbor participants, you and your child will be asked to fill out surveys and/or assessments that are used to improve the program and ensure continued funding. All gathered information is held in strict confidence. Parental surveys are conducted at the end of the school year. We also invite you to contact your Site Coordinator with any ideas or comments you may have. If the Site Coordinator is not able to provide you the information you request, they may refer you to the Safe Harbor Program Manager or Program Director.

What is the Illness Policy?

If your child is exhibiting any symptoms of illness, please do not send them to school. If your child develops any symptoms of illness while at Safe Harbor, you or your emergency contact will be called to pick-up the child.

What is the importance of Emergency and Health Information?

Providing accurate health and emergency information is critical in case your child has an event that requires immediate attention. Guardians are requested to provide this information on the Safe Harbor Program application. This form includes requests for home and employment information as well as health issues and alternative contacts for handling emergency illnesses and

injuries. It is an important guardian responsibility to keep this particular information current at all times.

What is the Medication Policy?

If your child requires medication during Safe Harbor hours, an MCAS authorization form must be completed. If your child receives medication during the school day, and again during Safe Harbor, a separate form must be completed for Safe Harbor. The Site Coordinator will be able to provide you with the proper form.

All medication must be kept in the original containers. Information regarding dose and time of administration must be provided in writing. For over the counter medications, the parent/guardian completes the form. For prescription medications. A doctor must complete the proper form.

Does Safe Harbor offer field trip opportunities for participants?

Yes, Safe Harbor may occasionally offer field trips/or special activities of enrichment for our participants. Information regarding field trips will be provided prior to the event. Your digital signature on the Safe Harbor Registration Acknowledgment provides permission for your child to attend planned trips. If you do not wish your child to attend a particular trip, please contact the Site Coordinator to notify in advance.

What is the Special Movie Statement?

As part of the enrichment at Safe Harbor, participants occasionally view movies during the program. All movies viewed at the elementary grade level will be rated “G or PG” depending on grade level. All movies shown at any level will be deemed appropriate for students.

What is FERPA and why am I required to complete this form?

The Indiana Department of Education, known as “IDOE” would like to collect data on activities and events taking place in the classroom, schools and any school-related activities (such as Safe

Harbor) throughout the state of Indiana. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, known as “FERPA” requires the IDOE and the 21st Century Community Learning Center, known as “21st CCLC” to obtain prior written consent from the parent, guardian, or eligible student before releasing any personally identifiable information about a student. The information requested will be used to calculate the impact the 21st CCLC has on student performance and to meet reporting requirements as a result of receiving state and federal funds. Your digital signature when registering your child allows for this data to be collected.

What is Consent to Release Information?

The Safe Harbor Program works closely with your child’s school site. As part of our program, we will share information with Michigan City Area Schools, teachers and other school staff, contracting agencies, program evaluators and funders. Sharing this information ensures continued funding support as well as the best possible services and support for your child as a participant.

Your consent gives Safe Harbor Program permission to access records and exchange information regarding your child as a participant.

What is a Media Release of Information?

Safe Harbor Program staff may photograph, videotape and/or audiotape participants and others. Any or all forms of media may be used at the discretion of the Safe Harbor Program for working with and promoting the program. Examples of use include posting on social media or sharing in print. If you do not wish to have your child photographed, recorded or published, please select “no” on the registration form.

What is the cost of Safe Harbor? There is no fee for the Safe Harbor after school program at any site. If the site has a before care program, that charge is \$28.00 per week, per child. Invoices for morning care fees will be provided by your site coordinator and will include a link to make

payments online. Safe Harbor accepts CCDF vouchers for morning care fees. Please visit the [Geminus.care](https://www.geminus.care) website for information on how to apply.

Are there reduced fees for families who are unable to afford Safe Harbor programs?

Yes, Safe Harbor uses a sliding fee scale for families who struggle to pay morning care fees. To qualify, a family must have applied for CCDF Vouchers. If they are denied, or added to a waitlist, a reduced or waived fee will be determined using the sliding fee scale. Families must submit an application and include financial documents of pay stubs from the 30 days prior to the application date.

Safe Harbor Administration

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219-873-2026
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As changes are made to this document, an updated version will be available on our website.