

**Elmira Heights School
District
Comprehensive
Attendance Plan
2024-2025**



**Elmira Heights School District Comprehensive
Attendance Plan**

I. OBJECTIVES

The Elmira Heights Central School District believes that regular attendance establishes a pattern for success for all students in school and in future life. To benefit from the educational programs of the District, students must be in regular attendance and participate in those programs. Parents/Guardians are expected to help their students by making certain that they are in regular attendance. Regular attendance and promptness are essential for student success. Through the implementation of this policy, the District expects to reduce the current level of unexcused absences, lateness to school, and lateness to classes.

Definitions

Based upon our District's education and community needs, values and priorities, the EHCS D has determined that absences, tardiness and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following:

a) Excused absences/tardies are defined as those due to medical personal illness, death in the family, impassable roads or weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearance, attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, doctors' appointment (s), therapeutic or mental health treatments, or approved academic experiences.

b) ANY absence/tardy due to reasons other than the above will be considered unexcused. If a written excuse is not received within five (5) days of a student being absent, the recorded absence will not be changed from "unexcused" to "excused" without a doctor's note.

* See building schedules listed in section VII

****Ensure each building distributes and update faculty and student handbooks to reflect changes in attendance yearly

II. STRATEGIES EMPLOYED TO ACCOMPLISH OBJECTIVES

The administration and support staff of the Elmira Heights School District would like to work closely with parents and/or guardians to ensure regular attendance for all students. Regular participation in classroom activities fosters critical thinking, communication skills, and responsibility, all which are essential skills for future employment. Good attendance in school is also part of the self-discipline that we try to instill in our students to enable them to act as responsible members of the community. Elmira Heights School District will employ the following strategies to ensure the effectiveness of this attendance plan.

- increase awareness of policy among staff by:
 - i. including a copy of the policy in the teacher's handbook

- ii. explaining the policy at new teacher orientation
 - iii. reviewing the policy semi-annually during staff meetings
- increase awareness of policy among students by:
 - i. including highlights of the policy in the student handbook
 - ii. discussing attendance requirements at all grade level assemblies early each year
 - iii. including a copy of the attendance policy on the district website (www.heightsschools.com)
- increase awareness of policy among parents by:
 - i. placing notification of policy on district website (www.heightsschools.com)
 - ii. discussing the policy at Open House/ Parent Night annually
 - iii. including a summary of attendance requirements in the school district's calendar
 - iv. reminding parents of attendance requirements through ongoing contacts made with the family regarding attendance issues.

III. GENERAL PROCEDURES

Each absence/ late arrival will be recorded through the main offices. Students who arrive late to school will be marked present by the building secretary.

On the secondary level, grades 6-12, attendance will be taken during each class period and compiled in a central location within each school.

On the elementary level, grades pre-K-5, attendance will be taken once at the beginning of each day. The teacher, or adult supervisor in-charge, will know the whereabouts of each child throughout the day.

Any absence or late arrival or early dismissal must be accounted for. It is the parent's responsibility to provide a signed Orange Slip/written note to main office personnel within five (5) days of the absence, preferably on the first day the student returns to school. Each day a child is absent a phone call from the parent is requested; however, all absences will be recorded as unexcused until an ORANGE NOTE/doctor's excuse is returned to school. At the secondary level it is the student's responsibility to provide documentation for all in-school appointments which prevent a student from attending class prior to dismissal from the class.

Parents will be notified by phone if their child is absent, late, or has an unexcused departure from school. If the absenteeism is appropriately accounted for through parent contact, the automated system contact for that student can be cancelled.

IV. POLICY

- a. *All absences from school will be covered by this policy. No distinction will be made between excused or unexcused when determining the total number of days absent from each course.*
- b. At the secondary level, students who are absent from class for more than half of the allotted class period shall be considered absent. In order for students to attend a school sponsored function, the student must be signed into the office no later than (10) minutes after the beginning of the start of school on the day of the activity. The principal may grant permission for a student to be absent under special circumstances as defined by State Education Law: illness or death in the family, required court appearance, attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, remedial or medical health treatment or approved academic experiences. Tardiness to school for personal illness for part of the school day will render a student ineligible that day.
- c. Once in school, students shall not be considered absent when they are authorized by school officials to be somewhere other than in their regularly scheduled class. For example, if school personnel expects a student to report elsewhere during their regularly scheduled class time for such activities as meetings, conferences with school personnel, testing, physical exams within the school setting by school physician, music lessons, or field trips, the student shall not be considered absent. It is the responsibility of the student and/or the designated staff member to provide the teacher with written documentation to attend these sessions before they are permitted to leave the class. However, the student must make up all missed work.
- d. At Thomas A. Edison High School, once a student has accumulated 10 period absences, excused or unexcused, for any 1 credit course, and 5 period absences for a ½ credit course, he/she will be unable to attend or be a participant in ANY extra-curricular activities, for the remainder of that course.
- e. At Cohen Middle School, once a student has accumulated 20 period absences, excused or unexcused, for any 1 credit course, and 10 period absences for a ½ credit course, he/she will be unable to attend or be a participant in ANY extra-curricular activities, for the remainder of that course.
- f. These activities/ privileges include the following:
 - a. Pass Privileges
 - b. Dances
 - c. Sporting Events (including attendance, practice or participation in an event)
 - d. Field Trips (including class trips)
 - e. Junior/ Senior Prom
 - f. Senior Breakfast
 - g. Senior Trip
- g. Elmira Heights Central School District Student-Athlete Handbook Attendance Policy (II. Attendance):

- h. If an athlete is illegally absent, truant, **suspended in or out of school**, or excused during the school day due to illness, he/she may not participate in a sport activity that day – whether it is practice or a game.
- i. Each athlete must make every effort to be in school the day following athletic events. If a pattern of absences develops following athletic events, the coach will take appropriate disciplinary action. That action may range from a warning to suspension from participation for a period of time.
- j. An athlete is expected to report for school on time each day. Constant tardiness or absences to school could result in warning, suspension, or dismissal from the team.
- k. If a player becomes ill during the day and cannot practice, it is his/her responsibility to leave a message with the attendance clerk, Athletic Director, or a coach.
- l. A student-athlete returning from an extended absence may require a period of reconditioning before participation in practices or games.
- m. If a student attends a practice session held in the morning before school begins, and the student does not attend school that day, they will be ineligible for the following day's activity, whether that is a practice or a game.

V. NOTIFICATION SEQUENCE

The following refers to the notification processing pertaining to the number of absences in a single course and/or academic year. A student may be notified several different times if excessive absences exist in more than one class. Again, no distinction will be made between excused or unexcused when notification is provided to families regarding absences from school.

- The administration in each building shall send written notification to the parents regarding a student's absences from school. The letters shall notify the parents as follows: (Note- Notifications will NOT be sent after **May 1st** of the calendar year)

After: -3rd absence (TAE) -6th absence (COE/CMS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Notification of absences/ encouragement of parent to support regular school attendance
After: -5th absence (TAE) -10th absence (COE/CMS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Notification of absences/ encouragement of parent to address chronic problem that seems to be occurring. • Required main office personnel/ Student conference
After: -8th absence (TAE) -14th absence (COE/CMS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Notification of absences/ arrange required parent-school support team meeting
After: -18th absence (all schools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Notification of absences and school's responsibility to notify county officials of chronic attendance issues for student/family

* see Appendix #2-“Written Notifications”

- The administration in each building shall send written notification to the parents regarding a student’s tardies from school. The letters shall notify the parents as follows: (Note- Notifications will NOT be sent after of the May 1st calendar year)

After: -3rd tardy (TAE) -6th tardy (COE/CMS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Notification of absences/ encouragement of parent to support regular school attendance
After: -5th tardy (TAE) -10th tardy (COE/CMS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Notification of tardiness will be provided to parent/ encouragement of parent to address chronic problem that seems to be occurring. • Required main office personnel/ Student conference
After: -8th tardy (TAE) -14th tardy (COE/CMS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Notification of tardy/ single class absences will be provided to parent/ arrange required parent-school support team meeting
After 18th tardy (all schools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written Notification of tardy/ single class absences and school’s responsibility to notify county officials of chronic attendance issues for student/family

* see Appendix #2- “Written Notifications”

VI. INCENTIVES AND CONSEQUENCES FOR BEHAVIORS

Each school, where administration deems appropriate, may use the following list of incentives to encourage good attendance:

- Community donated gifts are given or raffled to students who meet attendance standards
- Participation in extra curricular activities for students who meet attendance standards
- Recognition awards for students who meet attendance standards
- Attendance record used when considering issuance of working papers

Each school, in accordance with EHSB Board Policy, may use the following list of sanctions to discourage poor attendance:

- Loss of the right to play school sports
- Loss of the right to participate in extra-curricular activities
- Loss of the right to attend school-related trips
- Loss of parking privileges
- Attendance at meetings with parents, administration, and/or counselors to discuss impact of excessive absences on educational program and progress
- Repetition of course or grade level due to excessive absences, which has caused a lack of completion of required course work.

In order for students to attend a school sponsored function, the student must be signed in to the office no later than (10) minutes after the beginning of the school day of the activity. The principal may grant permission for a student to be absent under special circumstances as defined by State Education Law: illness or death in the family, required court appearance, attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, remedial or medical health treatment or approved academic experiences. Tardiness to school for personal illness for part of the school day will render a student ineligible that day.

Students who are suspended from school (ISS or OSS) on a day of an athletic game or practice session, party, school dance, or other school affair scheduled after regular school hours are not eligible for participation or attendance at such events.

VII. BUILDING SCHEDULES

Cohen Elementary School-	Start time- 7:45
Cohen Middle School-	Start time- 8:08
Edison High School-	Start time- 8:10

Students who arrive after building start times will be considered tardy to school.

VIII. Multi-Tiered System of Supports Model for School Attendance

In keeping with the Elmira Heights Central School District's belief that regular attendance establishes a pattern for success for all students in school and in future life a three-tiered approach to improving school attendance will be adopted. A MTSS model (see Appendix # 3) to school attendance supports the following basic tenants:

1. Regular attendance at school is a priority. Targets for attendance are set and monitored regularly
2. Families need to understand early on why regular attendance at school is important and how inconsistent attendance affects academic success.
3. Positive supports before punitive actions are more successful at increasing school attendance rates and student engagement.

Tier I- Tier I in the three-tiered MTSS model would include all universal supports and services provided to 100% of the student population in order to support regular attendance at school. Tier I initiatives are low in cost and aim to be preventive in nature. Tier I interventions in the Elmira Heights School District shall include (but not be limited to):

- School Attendance letters being sent on a regular basis to parents outlining student absence totals and the importance of regular school attendance on academic success.
- Use of Synervoice system to notify parents of daily absences
- Informational campaigns completed to ensure that all families know the value of strong school attendance and consequences of poor school attendance. All families should know about incentive programs implemented at the schools to improve school attendance.

- PBIS programming specific to buildings emphasizing regular attendance at school
 - Example: Elementary School may designate a month as “School Every day/ Everyone” and provide incentives to classrooms who improve attendance for that month
 - Example: Middle School may have competitions between classrooms/ homerooms for best attendance for that month. A pizza party/ ice cream social could be provided to the winner
 - Example: High School teachers may provide extra points towards grades for students with fewer than 2 absences in a given time period.

Tier II- Tier II in the three-tiered MTSS model would target students “at-risk” for poor attendance or those students with increasing attendance rates (approximately 15-20% of the student population). Tier II initiatives in the Elmira Heights School District shall include (but not be limited to):

- All Tier I interventions and the addition of parent meeting with building administrators when attendance totals reach identified thresholds as outlined in the Elmira Heights School District Comprehensive Attendance Plan.

Tier III- Tier III in the three-tiered MTSS model would target students who are chronically absent or habitually truant from school. This would include about 5-15% of the Elmira Heights School District student population. Tier III initiatives in the Elmira Heights School District shall include (but not be limited to):

- All Tier I & Tier II interventions
- In addition, interventions such as referrals to Chemung County agencies such as Children’s Integrated Services (CIS) and Child Protective Services (CPS) can be considered.

IX. Automated Phone Communications in Elmira Heights School District Comprehensive Attendance Policy

1. Daily AM phone calls home with the following announcement for those students who are recorded as absent from school and no written ORANGE NOTE or parent phone call regarding the absence has been received:
 - a. [School] calling please hold...This is a message from [School]. A student in your household in grade [10] named [Ryan] is currently listed as absent from school. Please notify the school of your knowledge of this absence as soon as possible.
2. Daily evening phone calls home with the following announcement for those students who remained absent from school for the day and no written ORANGE NOTE or parent phone call regarding the absence was received by the district:
 - a. For secondary schools, a nightly Synervoice message reporting on period absences is utilized by the Elmira Heights District. The message is as follows:
[School] calling please hold...This is a message from [School]. A student in your household in grade [8] named [Ryan] was absent [March 1st]

[Period 1, period 2, period 3, etc.]. Please send a written note explaining the absence on the student's return to school.

X. Positive Behavioral Interventions & Supports related to Regular School Attendance in the Elmira Heights School District

The Elmira Heights School District believes that one effective strategy for improving attendance is engaging students, parents, educators and community members in a campaign that offers positive rewards for getting to school on time.

- Incentives do not need to be costly. Simple rewards including recognition from peers and the school through assemblies, free homework passes, interclass competitions, events all work as meaningful incentives in improve school attendance.
- Perfect attendance is not ALWAYS the goal being sought, as students should not come to school when they are sick. Students should be rewarded for improved attendance, not just perfect attendance and offering rewards on a weekly basis can allow students to earn positive rewards.
- Each building in the district is encouraged to establish a building-specific PBIS program focusing on improved attendance.

Appendices

#1 - Orange Note

#2 - COE Attendance Matters Summer Letter

#3 - Written Notification Letters

#4 - Attendance MTSS Pyramid



ORANGE NOTE

School: Edison H.S. Cohen Middle Cohen Elementary

Date: _____ Grade: _____

Student Name: _____

Absent

Reason: _____

Tardy (Time In): _____

Reason: _____

Early Departure (Time Out) : _____

Reason: _____

*** Parent Signature ***

School start times:

Edison-	8:10AM	733-5604
Cohen Middle-	8:15 AM	734-5078
Cohen Elementary	7:45 AM	734-7132



Attendance Matters



To the Parent/Caregiver of _____,

Hopefully you are having a wonderful summer with lots of fun! The new school year will be here before you know it. Getting into a routine after a long break is often a great feeling.

As you know, attendance impacts students' success in school and can often have an affect on their self-esteem. At Cohen, we want all children to feel confident and develop a love for learning. We need your help with this.

As we looked over last year's data, _____ had a total of ____ days tardy to school. Getting to school on time is important so your child can begin the day on a positive note. We realize that at times circumstances happen where it can't be avoided, but wish to see your child's arrival on time to school improve for the 2023-24 school year. We would like to work together with you to help this occur.

Morning drop-off begins at 7:30 a.m. Students may enter the building as early as 7:32 a.m. if they are planning on eating breakfast at school. If eating at home, they will enter the building at 7:35. All students must be in the building by 7:45 a.m. Any time after 7:45 is considered tardy. We realize that if you're dropping your child off at school, the lines can become long. The earlier you are, the less traffic there is. Hot breakfasts will not be served after 7:45 a.m.

Each month we will look at the data and acknowledge your child in different ways as we see improvements in their attendance and getting to school on time. We look forward to working with you. Please contact the office at anytime if we can support you in any way!



Looking forward to a great year!

Krissy McNamara, Principal

[insert parent name]

[insert parent address]

[date]

Dear Parents/Caregivers of Elmira Heights Students,

Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), Elmira Heights Central School District is required to record student attendance on a daily basis. We are required to track full day absences as well as students arriving tardy to school. As part of the ESSA, our attendance percentages are used as part of our school ratings and improvement requirements.

The Elmira Heights Central School District notifies parents in writing of both tardy and absentee counts. We will notify you of both excused and unexcused absent/tardy instances. **Tardy and Attendance Letters are generated on the following intervals:**

Letter Sequence	Cohen Elementary & Cohen Middle Schools	Edison High School
Letter #1	6-9 absences or tardy to school	3 absences within block schedule
Letter #2	9-13 absences or tardy to school	5 absences within block schedule
Letter #3	14 + absences or tardy to school	8+ absences within block schedule
Letter #4 and above	List the number of absences or tardy to school	n/a

The enclosed letter is specific to the number of times your child (insert name) has been **absent** from school. (student's name) has been absent from school ____ days of the current academic year. The following days have been noted as **absent**:

(Insert dates absent)

It is always our goal to encourage families to have their children in school every day when they are **healthy**. Being on time to school significantly helps student readiness and learning experiences. As the number of absences or tardy to school rise, the school is obligated to find solutions to support student attendance. Please be advised, in significant circumstances, school officials may need to contact outside agencies to support school engagement and attendance.

As always, if you have questions, please don't hesitate to call your student's principal.

Krissy McNamara, Principal
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(607)734-7132

Brandon Foley, Principal
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(607)734-5078

Tom Boyanowski, Principal
Thomas A. Edison H.S.
Tboyanow@heightsschools.com
(607)733-5604

Things to Remember about Student Absences:

*Missed days of school are never completely made up * Instruction given throughout the day may not be repeated *
Classroom discussions are impossible to duplicate * Assignments can be completed, however, the student may miss all
discussion/activity in regard to the assignment *it is difficult to recreate a lesson*

[insert parent name]

[insert parent address]

[date]

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Letter #4 and above	List the number of absences or tardy to school	n/a

The enclosed letter is specific to the number of times your child (insert name) has been **tardy** from school. (student's name) has been tardy from school ____ days of the current academic year. The following days have been noted as **tardy**:

(Insert dates tardy)

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MTSS Attendance Initiatives: Elmira Heights School District

Tier III Interventions:

- Possible referrals to CIS, CPS
- Home Visits

Tier II Interventions:

- Home Visits
- School Tool Attendance letters / parent meetings on regular basis to notify parents of attendance totals
- PBIS programming / school wide attendance campaigns
- Synervoice daily absent PC's at 10:00 am and in evening

Tier I Interventions:

- School Tool Attendance letters sent on regular basis to notify parents of attendance totals
- PBIS programming / school wide attendance campaigns
- Synervoice daily absent PC's at 10:00 am and in evening



