

Parent & Family Newsletter



Strong Start With Academics

Encourage your student to stay on top of their coursework by attending class, regularly checking Canvas and other online course resources, visiting instructors' office hours, reading their Illinois State email, and seeking academic assistance. If students need help, many free academic services are available, including [Peer Success Advocates](#), [tutoring for many courses](#), [seminars and workshops](#), [writing assistance](#), and more. Students can visit [University College](#) for more information.

Helping Your Student Navigate an Absence from Class

There are many differences between high school and college in terms of class attendance.

College students are expected to meet the attendance requirements set by each instructor. Instructors include their attendance expectations in their course syllabi and/or on their Canvas sites.

Unlike in high school, where parents, guardians, or students may have reported absences to a central office, Illinois State does not require centralized reporting of absences unless a student requests to be excused under a University policy.

University policies override instructor-specific expectations **only** for these student absence reasons: (1) bereavement due to the loss of a family member, (2) military duty or training obligations, or (3) isolation/quarantine that is mandated in writing by a health official. To utilize one of these excused absences policies, your student can complete the [Absence Reporting form](#) or contact the Dean of Students Office at (309) 438-2008.

[Accommodation requests for religious obligations](#) can be submitted to Student Access and Accommodation Services. If granted, these accommodation requests may also result in university-approved absences. The Athletics Department helps NCAA athletes manage absences required to attend athletic competitions, meets, or games.

The Dean of Students Office can issue [courtesy absence notifications](#) to instructors to assist students who would otherwise be unable to contact all their instructors in a timely fashion (e.g., due to hospitalization or significant health or family matters). However, the Dean of Students Office **does not** have the authority to determine what absence is or is not excused. Students are expected to meet the attendance expectations set by each instructor and/or to seek clarification from their instructors about whether a particular absence is excused.

Family Weekend 2026

Family Weekend is just a few weeks away, with activities planned across campus September 18–20. While registration is not necessary for Family Weekend, certain events do require a ticket purchase.

Family Weekend highlights include:

Dinner & Dueling Pianos

Saturday, 6 p.m. • Brown Ballroom, Bone Student Center ([Ticket required](#))

Enjoy an interactive evening of music and comedy with Cool 2 Duel. Tickets (\$40) include the show, a taco/nacho bar, and dessert.

Parent and Family Services Photo Station

Saturday, noon-2 p.m. • Turner East Lawn (south of Hancock Stadium)

Stop by for a free commemorative group photo and meet staff from the Dean of Students Office.

Redbird Football vs. Eastern Illinois

Saturday, 2 p.m. • Hancock Stadium ([Ticket required](#))

Cheer on the Redbirds as they take on Eastern Illinois. All football tailgating lots will close at the kickoff of the game. For more information on available parking during Family Weekend, or to view other parking locations on campus, contact the [Office of Parking and Transportation](#). Please be sure to follow all [regulations](#) for athletic tailgating events.

Magician Justin Willman, One for All Ages Tour

Saturday, 7 p.m. • Braden Auditorium, Bone Student Center ([Ticket required](#))

Prepare for an evening of magic and comedy as Justin Willman brings his captivating live show to Braden Auditorium. Known for his unique brand of humor and illusion, Willman, host of Netflix's "Magic for Humans," provides an engaging performance that will leave audiences both amazed and entertained.

Laser Fantasy at the ISU Planetarium

Felmley Hall of Science Annex 167 (white domed roof, east end of Felmley Hall)

Experience dazzling laser light shows set to music from classic rock to country, including the Beatles, Queen, Elton John, Pink Floyd, and Taylor Swift. Admission is \$16 per person; children 12 and under are

\$12 (cash or check at the door, no advance sales and seating is limited). See the [schedule](#) for show times.

High Ropes Course Day

Saturday, 8 a.m.-noon • Redbird Adventure Center Patio, 1700 W. Gregory St.

Come try out the High Ropes Course with your family and friends! Participants can register themselves and up to three guests for this free event. All participants must be at least 12 years old and in good health.

Advanced registration is recommended and closes on September 18 at 4:30 p.m. Individuals who have not registered may be accommodated if space remains available, but participation cannot be guaranteed. Visit the [Adventure Center website](#), email adventure@IllinoisState.edu, or call (309) 438-8419 for additional information.

Legacy Brunch

Sunday, 10 a.m.–12:30 p.m. • Brown Ballroom, Bone Student Center ([Registration required](#))

Legacy students and their families are invited for a special program and brunch to celebrate the Redbird spirit. Hear from Associate Dean of Students Donald Reed and learn more about what it means to be a Redbird Legacy. Admission is \$20 per person; register by September 11 at 4:30 p.m. The Alumni Association also seeks legacy family photos to share at the event! [Submit photos to be included](#).

Reggie's Redbird Ripple Limited-Edition Ice Cream

As part of Redbird Philanthropy Week & Family Weekend from September 14-20, we're celebrating how generosity creates a ripple effect across Illinois State, one scoop and one gift at a time. Stop by Theo's Microcreamery in Uptown Normal from September 14-20 to try the limited-edition Reggie's Redbird Ripple and celebrate the many ways giving creates opportunities and opens doors for Redbird students. A sweet collaboration between Theo's Microcreamery and the Illinois State University Foundation.

For a full schedule of events and ticket information, visit the [Family Weekend website](#).

Send Your Redbird Some Love Just in Time for Midterms!

Your student is working hard to achieve their dreams. Order a surprise [Midterm Boost Box](#), and we'll deliver it to your Redbird. The best part? While you're encouraging your Redbird, you'll also be enhancing the overall student experience across our campus.

A donation of \$50 to the Student Engagement Fund sends your student a surprise box filled with:

- Snacks, coffee, and hot cocoa
- Redbird goodies from campus
- Notecard with your personal note
- A reminder your Redbird is loved

Even better, your donation also supports fellow Redbirds and campus life programs. Your student feels supported. Another Redbird benefits, too. That's a boost worth giving.

Homecoming 2026: Redbirds Reunite

Homecoming 2026 takes place on October 19-25. With a [full schedule of activities](#), there are many ways to get involved throughout the week, including the Homecoming Parade, Town and Gown 5K, tailgating, and Redbird Football vs. Indiana State on Saturday, October 24.

Adding Emergency Contacts

It is important that every student has an emergency contact listed in their profile. Encourage your student to add emergency contacts by logging into [My.IllinoisState.edu](https://my.illinoisstate.edu), going to the My Profile section, and scrolling down to the Emergency Contacts button under “Manage Your Profile Information.” Multiple contacts can be listed, though only one can be selected as preferred.

Safe Redbirds App

Safe Redbirds is the official safety app for Illinois State University. Through the app, users can receive important safety alerts and access campus safety resources instantly.

Download the free app today from the [Apple App Store](#) or [Google Play](#).

Parent and Family Services at Illinois State University
Dean of Students Office
387 Student Services Building
Campus Box 3090
Normal, IL 61790-3090
(309) 438-2008
ParentServices@IllinoisState.edu