

Purpose of the Attendance Policy:

The purpose of the Fairfield Warde High School Attendance Policy reflects our desire to have each student attend all classes and arrive on time. Students and parents are expected to familiarize themselves with the provisions and procedures of the policy. It is expected that parents will support the intent of the policy and encourage their students to have good attendance. The FWHS Attendance Policy has been approved by the Board of Education and reviewed by the town attorney. Any questions should be directed to the student's housemaster or Dean.

Homeroom Attendance

All students are required to attend homeroom on time each day. During homeroom, official daily attendance is taken and other information is distributed.

The Attendance Policy

All absences-both *Excused and Unexcused*- from class will count toward loss of credit. (Exceptions are indicated below)

Loss of credit in a course can be caused by an accumulation of either **Unexcused** or **Excused** absences and tardies. For seniors, loss of credit in a course may result in failure to meet graduation requirements.

The maximum number of absences before credit is lost:

Full-year course	12
Semester course	6
Marking Period	3

Loss of credit will occur when the accumulated absences exceed the maximum indicated above. Both **Excused** and **Unexcused** absences count towards loss of credit.

Excused** absences which count towards loss of credit include but may not be limited to the following:

- Illness
- College visits
- Doctor appointments
- Dentist appointments
- Driving test appointments
- Family vacations
- Family celebrations
- Non-school sponsored athletic, performing arts or other events

Unexcused**absences which count towards loss of credit include but may not be limited to the following:

- When a student misses class/school and there is no excused reason

Absences which DO NOT count towards the loss of credit include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Religious Holidays
- Scheduled office and guidance appointments
- Homebound instruction
- Special absences
 - Class meetings
 - Field Trips
 - Sports and/or other extracurricular activities sponsored by the school
- In-school and out-of-school suspensions

****Excused & Unexcused absences:**

It is the responsibility of students to attend all classes. When a student is absent from class or school, it is the responsibility of the student and/or parent to provide a verified excuse to the office within two (2) days. Absences which are recorded as **Unexcused** will have additional penalties. **Unexcused** absences will (1) be counted as an absence towards the loss of credit, (2) result in the forfeiture of make-up privileges and (3) severely weaken a student's case during an appeal for reinstatement of credit lost due to excessive absences. Phone calls to excuse an absence, lateness, or early dismissal must be made to the house office by 10:00 A.M. to be listed as excused. Parent notes to excuse an absence or lateness must be received within two school days for the lateness or absence to be considered **Excused**. Parent notes to request an early dismissal must be presented before the student is dismissed in order for the dismissal to be considered excused. Each house office has a voice mail during non-school hours. All parent notes must include the following: (1) the student's name, (2) the date and time of the absence, late arrival or dismissal, (3) the specific reason for the absence, (4) the signature of the parent or guardian and (5) a daytime phone number where a parent or guardian can be reached to verify the note. Notes that omit one or more of the above items will result in the absence being recorded as unexcused. If the school cannot verify the information, the absence, lateness, or dismissal may be recorded as **Unexcused**.

Schedule Changes:

Until a schedule is officially approved by a school counselor, and the student is informed of the change, the student must attend all classes in the original schedule. Failure to attend all of the classes on the original schedule will result in **Unexcused** absences to all classes missed.

Communications to Parents:

Student's parents will be notified by mail of all warnings and losses. Parents are strongly encouraged to monitor their student's attendance via Infinite Campus for tardies, **Unexcused** absences, and **Excused** absences. The student up-to-date attendance count (absences which count towards loss of credit) will be available on the student's Infinite Campus Portal.

Dismissal during the School Day:

Once students have reported to school, they are expected to remain in school and attend all classes for the entire day. Under the following conditions, students may have an excused dismissal:

1. A written request from a parent must be presented or a phone call must be received prior to dismissal. A parent may come to the house office and personally request a student's dismissal.
2. The student must sign-out at the house office when leaving school. If a student returns to school, the student must sign in to verify the time of return. Failure to meet the above two conditions will cause any class absences to be considered **Unexcused**. Such absences will be counted towards loss of credit, and make-up privileges will be forfeited. In case of illness while in school, the student **MUST** report to the Nurse's office. The nurse, with parental permission, will make the decision to dismiss the student from school. Once the nurse has obtained permission to dismiss the student, the student will be issued a dismissal pass. To miss a class or go home without the permission of the nurse will cause any absences to be considered **Unexcused**. Such absences will be counted towards the loss of credit and make-up privileges will be forfeited.

Lateness to School:

Students are expected to be on time to school and to class. Teachers will record lateness to class. A tardy to class will count .2 towards the attendance policy.

- A. Immediately upon arrival, all students are required to sign in at the house office accurately indicating the time of arrival and the reason for lateness and present a note of excuse. The student will then go immediately to class. Failure to sign in upon arrival will cause class absences or lateness to be unexcused and could lead to the recording on an **Unexcused** absence.

Driving to school or choosing to ride with a person who drives is considered a personal choice. Lateness to school due to a transportation problem will be recorded as an **Unexcused** absence or lateness and will be counted towards a loss of credit.

Unexcused lateness which causes a student to miss more than 20 minutes the class will count as an **Unexcused** absence and will be counted towards loss of credit.

Lateness to Class:

Students will go directly to class and present a pass if they have one. Unexcused lateness to class will be recorded. Further consequence for unexcused lateness to class may include after school, detention, house detention, or Saturday detention.

Appointment with Staff:

Upon arrival for an appointment, it is the student's obligation to inform the counselor, Dean, housemaster when a test or major graded is planned. The student should request that the appointment be rescheduled. Failure to do so will result in the absence being **Unexcused**. Such an absence will count towards loss of credit and make-up privileges will be forfeited.

Monitor the number of Absences in each class:

Throughout the school year, it is the responsibility of the student and parent to monitor closely the number of **Excused** and **Unexcused** absences which have been accumulated in each course. When a student anticipates an absence from school or class for any reason, it is very important that the parent and student consider carefully the necessity of the absence, taking into consideration the impact of the accumulated absences to date. An up-to date attendance count for all classes is available through the student's Infinite Campus portal.

Certification of Chronic illness or other frequent absences:

The school will require written confirmation from a doctor to explain the severity and chronic nature of frequent absences which occur due to medical reasons. Other forms of confirmation for excused absences will be required. **Per state law, the school is not allowed to excuse any absences once a student has reached a total of nine for the school year unless a doctor's note is presented for each day of absence. If a doctor's note is not provided, the absence will be designated as Unexcused. Unexcused absences totaling for (4) in one calendar month or ten (10) in one year will cause the student to be declared truant.**

Attendance Warning:

When a student has accumulated 8 absences in a full year course, 4 absences in a semester course and 2 absences in a marking period course, the student will be informed by their of the possibility of loss of credit if the student's attendance does not approve. A letter will be mailed home informing the parent of the possible loss of credit.

Loss of Credit

A student will lose credit in a course when the number of accumulated absences exceeds the maximum number of absences referred to earlier. When a student has lost credit, the Dean will review the record with the student. The Dean will instruct the student to attend class and discuss the procedure for a possible appeal to have credit reinstated. A letter will be sent to the parents indicating that a loss of credit has occurred. The letter will explain the procedure for requesting a hearing before the Appeals Board. Deadlines will be indicated for the request of an appeal. It will be the student's responsibility to meet the deadline without reminder from the Dean.

If credit is lost or if an appeal to reinstate credit is unsuccessful, the student is expected to attend the class. Some courses require a minimum grade for the student to take the next course in sequence. All courses require a passing grade for the student to advance to the next level. A final letter grade will appear on the transcript even though credit is lost.

Right of Appeal

The Attendance Policy is not designed to deny credit to students who, through no fault of their own, were unable to attend school or a class due to a legitimate illness or other condition beyond the students/parents control. In January and June, students who have lost credit will have an opportunity to appeal to have credit reinstated.

When absences and tardiness continue after loss of credit, reinstatement of credit is not likely. When a student deliberately chooses to be absent from school or a class, he/she intentionally violating the intent of the Attendance Policy. After a student has lost credit, he/she will be

expected to attend class regularly and remain academically active.

A student's decision to appeal must take into consideration the student's total attendance record. For students who lost credit due to unexcused absences, any unexcused absences after the date of the loss will weaken the student's chances to have credit reinstated. For students who lose credit due to excessive excused absences, absences without documentation will weaken the student's chances to have credit reinstated. Absences from school, which remain unexcused, reduce the likelihood of reinstatement of credit. Students wishing to appeal must follow the directions given to them by the Dean and those contained in the loss of credit letter. If students do not have valid reasons for appealing loss of credit, students should contact their counselor to identify what options are available for making up the credit.

The Appeals Board will be composed of three teachers, the student's counselor, and the student's Dean. The Appeals Board will hear the student's case and make a decision on whether to reinstate credit. An Appeals Board decision should be considered final. The decision will only be reviewed by the Headmaster upon written request by the parent and student as a result of the introduction of additional information which was not presented to the Appeals Board.

The Headmaster's decision is final.

Per Connecticut state law:

- **For absences one (1) through nine (9)**, a student's absence from school are considered "excused" when a student's guardian/parent approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation to school officials.
- **For the tenth (10th) absence and all absences thereafter**, a student's absence from school are considered excused for the following reasons:
 - o Student illness (must be verified in writing by a licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of the absence)
 - o Student's observance of a religious holiday
 - o Death in a student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family
 - o Mandated court appearances (documentation required)
 - o The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends(no parental documentation required)
 - o Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by District administration and to be in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance