

# Fairfield Warde High School

## Attendance Policy

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of the Fairfield Warde High School class attendance policy reflects our desire to have each student attend all classes and arrive on time in order to support a positive learning environment. Students and parents are expected to familiarize themselves with the attendance policy. It is expected that parents will support the intent of the policy and encourage their students to have good attendance. Any questions should be directed to the student's Dean.

### **Monitoring of Attendance by Parents and Students:**

Student attendance will be available on the student's Infinite Campus Portal.

Parents and students are expected to monitor their attendance via Infinite Campus for tardies, unexcused absences, and excused absences. Parents will be notified by mail when a student reaches 4.0 absences in a semester course and 8.0 absences in a full year course and again if a student loses credit.

### **Notification of Absences:**

It is the responsibility of students to attend all classes. When a student has been absent from class or school, it is the responsibility of the student and/or parent to provide a verified excuse to the house office within two (2) days following the absence.

Preferably, phone calls to excuse an absence, lateness, or early dismissal must be made to the house office (**Fitts** 203-255-8364, **Pequot** 203-255- 8350, **Townsend** 203-255-8362) prior to the absence or on the day of the absence. Parent notes are acceptable in all cases, and when used to request an **early dismissal**, the note must be presented **before** the student is dismissed in order to be considered excused. Parent communication, whether a phone call or a note, must include the following:

- student's name
- date and time of the absence, late arrival or dismissal
- specific reason for the absence
- signature of the parent or guardian, and
- day time phone number where a parent or guardian can be reached to verify the note.

If the school cannot verify the information, the absence, lateness, or dismissal will be recorded as unexcused.

The school attendance policy includes two different aspects of a student's attendance, **full day attendance to school** and **attendance to individual classes**.

### **FULL DAY ATTENDANCE TO SCHOOL**

Definition: A "full day of school" is defined as more than half of a school day. A regular school day is in session for 6 hours and 40 minutes.

Per Connecticut state law and Board of Education policy 5112

**For absences one (1) through nine (9)**, a student's absence from school is considered "excused" when a student's guardian/parent approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation to school officials.

**For the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) absence and all absences thereafter**, a student's absence from school is considered excused for the following reasons:

- Student illness (must be verified in writing by a licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of the absence)
- Death in a student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family
- Mandated court appearances (documentation required)
- Lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation required)
- Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by District administration and to be in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education.

All other reasons will be considered **unexcused**.

Definition: "Unexcused absences" are those times when a student misses class(es) or school and there is no approved reason.

**All unexcused absences count towards loss of credit.**

An unexcused absence will result in forfeiture of make-up privileges and severely weaken a student's case should they attempt to appeal for reinstatement of credit.

## **ATTENDANCE TO INDIVIDUAL CLASSES**

### **Attendance Impact on Course Credit**

A student will lose credit in a course when the number of accumulated absences exceeds the maximum number of allowed absences, which are:

<b>Full-year course</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Semester course</b>	<b>6</b>

Loss of credit in a course can be caused by an accumulation of either **UNEXCUSED** or **EXCUSED** absences. Loss of credit in a course may result in failure to meet graduation requirements.

*Excused absences which count towards loss of credit include 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*

*Excused absences that **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*
  - a. *Class meetings*
  - b. *Field Trips*
  - c. *Sports and/or other extracurricular activities sponsored by the school*
- *In-school and out-of-school suspensions*

***All unexcused absences count toward loss of credit***

**Loss of Credit**

When a student has lost credit, a letter will be sent explaining 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 the student is still expected to attend the class. Some courses require a minimum grade for the student to take the next course in the 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 incorporates the right to appeal for lost credit to support 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.

A student's decision to appeal must take into consideration the student's total attendance record. For students who lost credit, any further unexcused absences after the date of the loss will weaken the student's chances to have credit reinstated. Students wishing to appeal must follow the directions given to them by their Dean.

The Appeals Board will be composed of a teacher, the student's counselor, and all three Deans. The Appeals Board will hear the student's case and make a decision on whether to reinstate credit or not. An Appeals Board decision is 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 new information which was not presented to the appeals board. Students should submit letters with the new information to the Headmaster's secretary within three days after communication of the Appeals Board's decision.

**TARDIES AND EARLY DISMISSALS**

**Tardies:**

Students are expected to be on time to school and to class. Tardies will appear on a student's attendance record as TC (Tardy to Class). Unexcused lateness to class may result in disciplinary consequences and have a negative impact on credit reinstatement. Tardies counts as .2 absences towards the attendance threshold.

When arriving late to school, all students are required to sign in at the house office accurately indicating the time of arrival, the reason for lateness, and present a parent/guardian note or indicate that a phone call from a parent had already been placed. The student will then go immediately to class. Failure to sign in upon arrival will cause class absences or lateness to be unexcused.

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. Unexcused lateness to class may result in after-school detention or Saturday detention.

**Early Dismissals:**

Once students have reported to school, they are expected to remain in school and attend all classes. Under the following conditions, students may be dismissed early:

1. A written request from a parent must be presented or a phone call must be received prior to dismissal.
2. The student must sign out at the house office when leaving school. If a student returns to school, the student must sign back 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.
3. In cases of illness while in school, the student **MUST** report to the nurse's office. To miss a class or go home without the permission of the nurse will cause resulting absences to be considered unexcused. Such absences will be counted towards the loss of credit, and make-up privileges will be forfeited.

**Activity Participation:**

In order for students to be eligible to participate in after-school extracurricular activities such as athletic practices, games, dances, or proms, a student must be in attendance in school for a minimum of three hours and twenty minutes (half a day) on the day of the activity (arrive by 10:50 a.m. or sign out no earlier than 10:50 a.m.). If students are absent from school on a Friday, they cannot participate in a Saturday athletic event without expressed permission by the Athletic Director or Headmaster.