

# FRANKLIN TOWNE CHARTER HIGH SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Franklin Towne Charter High School is committed to supporting all students in gaining the skills and knowledge they need to be successful. To accomplish this goal, all students are expected to attend school daily. Each day a student misses is a lost day of valuable instruction. Even a few days absent will cause a student to fall behind in instruction. **Under Pennsylvania law, all students between the ages of six (6) and eighteen (18) must attend school every day.**

All students must swipe into the building prior to 7:55 am and must be seated in their first assigned class prior to the bell at 8:00 am. Attendance is taken daily. If your child does not attend school, it is your responsibility to communicate that to the school. In the event they are absent, please be sure to check the online grading system and teachers' MS Teams page or email their teachers for missed homework and assignments. If your child has excessive absences, you will be required to come to the school to help develop an attendance improvement plan for your child. You can check the online grading system at any time to verify student attendance.

The school building will officially open at 7:00 am. Students are not permitted in the building prior to 7:00 am unless there are qualified personnel in the building to supervise them for safety and security reasons. All students may enter the main building through the student entrance at 7:00 am. Students will be permitted to proceed to their lockers/classrooms at 7:50 am.

An absence is defined as a day that a student does not attend at least 2 1/2 blocks of school on a regularly scheduled school day. The school reserves the right to determine whether the student will receive credit for the day based on the nature of the absence. Any student who is absent from school or requires an early dismissal will be restricted from attending any after-school activity. Students are required to be in school for the full day to attend any school sponsored extracurricular activity, including sports competitions, dances, proms, meetings, or events.

### **Excused Absences:**

For your student's absence to be excused, the school must receive a note from the parent or guardian within 72 hours of your student's return to school. Absent notes must be submitted electronically and will not be accepted later than 72 hours after the return date. To submit an excuse note, the parent/guardian should select the Towne Parents icon at the top of <https://hs.franklintowne.org/>, then the Attendance icon on the left-hand navigation bar. You will be given a submenu from which to choose "Absence Note" where you can submit electronically. If you need to submit a doctor's note for your student, please email a picture or scanned image of the doctor's note to [attendanceclerk@ftchs.org](mailto:attendanceclerk@ftchs.org). The school reserves the right to request a hard copy of any medical documentation submitted.

The following are recognized as legitimate reasons for an excused absence:

1. Illness of student
2. Death in the family

3. Religious observance (Written notice must be submitted to the Dean of Students at least 24 hours prior to the absence to be excused.)
4. Documented Court Appearance

**For any doctor's note to be recorded as excused, the note must be emailed to [attendanceclerk@ftchs.org](mailto:attendanceclerk@ftchs.org) and include the following:**

1. Student's full name
2. Doctor's name with Doctor's Signature (office stamp is not acceptable)
3. Date seen
4. Reason for visit
5. Reason student cannot attend school
6. Date student can return to school
7. Any follow-up if applicable

Franklin Towne reserves the right to reject any absence note from a parent or doctor if it does not comply with the requirements above or is deemed unacceptable, in which case the absence will be recorded as unlawful. This includes forging signatures, falsifying documents, or altering the documentation in anyway.

#### **Unlawful Absences:**

An unlawful absence is defined as a day that a student does not attend at least 2 1/2 blocks of school on a regularly scheduled school day AND does not submit proper documentation as outlined above within 72 hours of the student's return to school from the absence. The school reserves the right to determine whether the student will receive credit for the day based on the nature of the absence.

#### **Accumulated Absences:**

After a student's eighth (8) absence per school year, whether excused or otherwise, a doctor's excuse will be required for any additional absences. Absences not covered by the appropriate documentation will be deemed unlawful.

#### **Truancy**

In the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, a child is considered truant having three (3) or more school days of unexcused absence during the current school year. A child is considered habitually truant once the child accumulates six (6) unexcused absences during the school year.

To address excessive absences, Franklin Towne Charter High School has adopted the following absentee policy:

(if a student enrolls during the school year, we will pro rate the number of absences pursuant to the number of days remaining in the semester and school year).

1. Parents / legal guardians will receive notification upon the student's third (3rd) unlawful absence of the school year. This notice will include a description of the outcomes that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant in the future.

2. A parent / legal guardian may be required to meet with a designated school official for any student who accumulates six (6) unlawful absences, and / or eight (8) total absences at any time during the school year. The FTCHS attendance committee will meet related to the individual circumstances of a student and absenteeism. The committee will create an improvement plan based on the student's reason for accumulating absences; identify issues existing during the school day or in the student's home life, address reasons for not attending school based on academic, behavioral, emotional, and social challenges.
3. The FTCHS attendance committee will implement an individual attendance improvement plan for each student. Once the plan is implemented the attendance clerk will create benchmarks / goals to track bi-weekly.
4. The FTCHS attendance committee will meet related to students with excessive absences, the team will develop an action plan for the purpose of focusing on students academically, obstacles to attendance, family issues, appropriate agencies for necessary services, and legal consequences if the child does not attend school each day.
5. Any student that is absent for five (5) consecutive days must have a parent / guardian set an appointment with a designated school official to provide medical documentation, receive class work during the absences, and create a plan for the student to be reinstated when returning to school. The student will be given 48 school hours to complete the missed work. If the student does not present medical documentation the student will not be issued credit for the missed work. At any time, the student is still expected to make up any work that is missed.
6. Upon return to school the parents must provide medical documentation and sign a release of information. This document will allow the attendance committee to communicate with the doctor and best provide services to the individual student.
7. Any student that is absent for ten (10) consecutive days will be dropped from roll. Parents will then be required to enroll that student in another school.

### **College Visits**

Juniors and seniors wishing to visit a college may do so as an excused absence up to 3 times per year. Proof of their visit must be obtained from the college and submitted to Franklin Towne. Any college visit beyond a student's 3-day allotment, or that requires multiple days at one college due to travel concerns, requires approval by Franklin Towne administration.

### **Early Dismissal Policy**

Our goal at Franklin Towne Charter High School is for every student to attend every day so that a student's time on task will meet the required number of hours for credit. We request that all medical appointments be scheduled outside of school hours, but under emergency circumstances, students will be accommodated. Refer to the Code of Conduct for the school's policy regarding excessive early dismissals from school.

The procedures for procuring an early dismissal are:

1. The student is to bring to the front office a note signed by the parent/guardian. The note is to have a phone number where the parent can be reached for verification.
2. For the early dismissal to be excused, medical documentation must be turned in to the front desk the following morning justifying the early dismissal.
3. If a student is leaving school early as designated by the nurse, the early dismissal will be excused.

4. No student, regardless of age, may sign themselves out of the building. Any student leaving for an early dismissal must be picked up by a parent or guardian. Any student caught missing any class without a valid excuse may be issued a Saturday Suspension.
5. Students who leave early for any reason are not permitted to participate in any after school activity without prior approval from the administration. This includes trips, dances, proms and athletics.
6. Students who have accumulated more than 5 unexcused early dismissals should refer to the code of conduct.

Students are prohibited from leaving school grounds without parental supervision. When an emergency makes it necessary for a child to leave before dismissal, the student's parent or guardian is required to pick up the student and must provide photo identification each time. If a parent or guardian cannot pick up the student, the adult picking up the student must be listed on the emergency card and must provide identification.

### **Homebound Instruction**

Students that will be out of school for an extended period due to a medical condition may benefit from homebound instruction. In order to qualify for homebound instruction, parent/guardian must contact school to set up an appointment with an administrator and provide a release of medical records. This document will allow the attendance committee to communicate with the doctor and best provide services to the individual student. A letter from a physician requesting homebound services, the reason for the request, and the projected duration/end date **MUST** be presented at the meeting. All requests are subject to review by a physician appointed by Franklin Towne Charter High School prior to services beginning.

### **Lateness to School**

Students who arrive at school at 7:55 am or after will be marked late. Students that are not in their seat for their first class prior to the time the bell rings at 8:00 am will receive a detention from their teacher. All students not in the building prior to 7:55 am are subject to be searched upon arrival. Refer to the Code of Conduct for the school's policy regarding excessive lateness to school.

If a student arrives late because of an appointment (doctor or court appearance) they must bring adequate documentation to the front office for the lateness to be excused. Any student who is not present for the 1st and/or 2nd block, must receive administrative approval before participating in any after school activity including, but not limited to, trips, dances, proms and athletic sporting practices / competitions / events.

### **Pre-Approved Trips / Vacations**

Families wishing to travel during the school year where students will miss school days must submit a request form for approval located on the travel dates. The Attendance Clerk must receive the request at least (2) two weeks in advance of any planned absence/trip. To submit a request form, the parent/guardian should select the Towne Parents icon at the top of <https://hs.franklintowne.org/>, then the Attendance icon on the left-hand navigation bar. You will be given a submenu from which to choose Pre-Approved Absence Request that you can submit electronically.

There will be no trip absences approved during standardized testing, Keystone examinations, quarterly examinations, or final examinations. There will be no trip absences approved during the first two weeks of school or last two weeks of school. There will be no trip absences approved for any students who are considered habitually truant. There will be no trip absences approved for more than five (5) class days. Planned absences that shorten the school year by coinciding with either the beginning or the end of the school year, Thanksgiving or winter and spring breaks are not permitted. Upon approval, the school will notify a student's teachers of the request. It is the responsibility of the student to obtain and complete work from their teachers.

### **Homelessness**

In accordance with federal and state guidelines under the McKinney/Vento Act, Franklin Towne Charter Schools are committed to removing barriers to education that face students experiencing homelessness.

- Do the members of your household lack a permanent address?
- Are you staying together in a shelter, hotel, or other temporary housing arrangement?
- Have you moved in with another family (doubled up) due to a lack of housing?
- Does your family relocate on a seasonal basis?
- Are any children living with you who have chosen to leave their prior family or household?

There is a homelessness liaison in place to support your children. If you believe children in your household meet these descriptions, please contact your child's counselor.