

# ATTENDANCE

Franklin Towne Charter Elementary School is committed to supporting all students in gaining the skills and knowledge they need to be successful. In order 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.

All students in grades 1-8 must swipe into the building prior to 8:25 a.m., in order to be considered on time for school. All Kindergarten students must report to the building prior to 9:00 a.m. in order to be considered on time for school. Dismissal on Monday-Thursday for grades 1-8 is 3:15 p.m. Dismissal time for Kindergarten on Monday-Thursday is 2:45 p.m. On Fridays, dismissal time for grades 1-8 is 1:30 p.m. On Fridays, dismissal time for Kindergarten is 1:45 p.m. Attendance is taken daily. If your child does not attend school, it is your responsibility to communicate that to the school by sending in a note with your child on the day they return from the absence. In the event they are absent, please be sure to check the online grading system and teachers' websites or email their teachers for missed homework and assignments. We will send out periodic letters to let you know if your child is in jeopardy of losing credit and not being promoted to the next grade level due to excessive absences, but ultimately it is your responsibility to know if your student was in school or not by checking homework, class assignments, notes, etc. 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 a.m. Students are not permitted in the building prior to 7:00 a.m. 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 Gymnasium entrance at 7:00 a.m.

In the event a student needs to leave early for an early dismissal, students in grades 1-8 on Monday-Thursday are required to be in school from the start of the day until 12:55 p.m. in order to receive credit for that day. Also, if a student is arriving late to school on Monday-Thursday, a student must also arrive prior to 10:55 a.m. and stay until student dismissal in order to receive credit for that day. Students in grades 1-8 leaving for early dismissals on Fridays must be in school from the start of the day until 12:00 p.m., or must not arrive later than 10:20 a.m. (and stay the rest of the day) in order to receive credit for that day. In the event of an early dismissal from kindergarten on Monday-Thursday, a student must be present from the start of the day until 12:45 p.m., and must not arrive later than 11:00 a.m. (and stay the rest of the day) in order to receive credit for that day. Students in Kindergarten leaving for early dismissals on Fridays must be in school from the start of the day until 12:15 p.m., or must arrive not later than 10:30 a.m. (and stay the rest of the day) in order to receive credit for that day.

**Absence:** An absence is defined as a day that a student does not attend at least 65% of classes on a regularly scheduled school day. The school reserves the right to make a determination as to 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:** In order for your child's absence to be excused, the school must receive a note from the parent or guardian within 72 hours of your child's return to school. Notes will not be accepted later than 72 hours of the return date. These notes must be given to your child's advisory teacher; failure to turn into the correct staff member will result in the absence being recorded as unlawful. A print out of an acceptable note can be accessed via the school's official website. The note must state the following:

1. Students full name (first and last)
2. Grade
3. Date(s) student was absent
4. Reason for absence
5. Parent name and phone number
6. Parent signature

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 in order to be excused.)

#### 4. Documented Court Appearance

**In order for any doctor's note to be recorded as excused, the note must 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 Absence Definition: An unlawful absence is defined as a day that a student does not attend at least 65% of classes on a regularly scheduled school day AND does not submit proper documentation as outlined above within 72 hours of the child's return to school from the absence. The school reserves the right to make a determination as to whether the student will receive credit for the day based on the nature of the absence. Also, after a student's eighth (8) absence, a doctor's note is required in order for the absence to be lawful, if there is no doctor's note, the absence will be deemed unlawful.

When a student is absent for more than two consecutive days a doctor's note must be provided in order for the absences to be excused.

When a student is absent one or two days they should return to school and turn in assignments on the day they are due. It is the absent student's responsibility to check for assignments online, make them up and turn them in. To receive credit, the student must properly document the absence, and turn in the work on time and complete. Unlawful absences or incomplete work will result in a grade of zero for the gradebook.

When a student is absent three or more days consecutively, it is the responsibility of the parent / guardian to set and attend a meeting with the student's guidance counselor in order to create a schedule and guide for make up work. If the parent / guardian fails to attend a meeting with guidance related to properly documenting the absence and submitting school work the absences will be recorded as unlawful. Unlawful absences or incomplete work will result in a grade of zero for the gradebook.

Truancy: In the state 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 he or she accumulates six (6) unexcused absences during the course of the school year.

To address excessive absences, Franklin Towne Charter Elementary 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 consequences that will follow if the child becomes habitually truant in the future.

2. A parent / legal guardian will be required to meet with a designated school official for any student who accumulates six (6) unlawful absences, and / or eight (8) total absences any time during the school year. The FTCES attendance committee will meet related to the individual circumstances of a student and absenteeism. The committee will create an improvement plan based on 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 FTCES attendance committee will implement an individual improvement plan for each student. Once the plan is implemented the attendance clerk will create bench marks / goals to track bi-weekly.

4. The FTCES 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 and every 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.

### **HIGH SCHOOL VISITS**

8<sup>th</sup> graders wishing to visit a high school other than Franklin Towne Charter High School may do so one time as an excused absence. Proof of their visit must be obtained from the high school and submitted to the front office. Any high school visit beyond a student's one allotment, or that requires multiple days at one high school due to travel concerns, requires approval by Franklin Towne administration. Franklin Towne Charter High School will have a planned visitation day where the entire 8<sup>th</sup> grade are invited to visit the High School on a set date. The date of the visitation is the only date that an 8<sup>th</sup> grader will be permitted to visit the High School without a special invitation.

### **Early Dismissal Policy**

Our goal at Franklin Towne Charter Elementary 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. 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. In order for the early dismissed 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. Any student leaving for an early dismissal must be picked up by a parent or guardian that are listed on a student's emergency contact sheet.
5. Students who leave early for any reason are not permitted to participate in any after school activity without prior approval from administration. This includes trips, dances, 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. Notes must be given to the front desk or advisory teacher the day before the scheduled early dismissal in order for it to be excused.

### **Homebound Instruction**

Students that will be out of school for an extended period of time 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. 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 Elementary School prior to services beginning.

### **Lateness to School**

Students in grades 1-8 who arrive to school after 8:25 a.m. will be marked late. Kindergarten students who arrive after 9:00 a.m. will be marked late. 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 in adequate documentation in order for the lateness to be excused.

### **Vacations**

Families wishing to travel during the school year where students will miss school days must submit a written request to the Guidance Department for approval of the travel dates. The Administration must receive a parent's written request at least 2 weeks prior to the travel dates. Parents will be informed, when the dates are approved or the reason(s) for the request being denied. If it is determined that one sibling is ineligible for approval for a planned absence, the school will deny the request for all enrolled students of that family. This includes families with children both Franklin Towne Charter High School and Franklin Towne Charter Elementary School.

There will be no trip absences approved during standardized testing, PSSA 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.