

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance at Fast Forward Charter High School (FFCHS) is expected. It is a significant factor effecting student achievement in their school performance. Fast Forward's administration, teachers, and staff expect students to be in class, on time, and be held responsible for their behavior each and every day.

By law, school-aged minors in Utah are required to attend school and parents of school-aged minors are responsible to have their students meet compulsory attendance requirements. Fast Forward supports and follows all local and state attendance policies, which call for fairness and accountability on all parties: students, parents, and the school. We believe that the aforementioned parties all share in the responsibility of resolving concerns prior to referring the attendance problems to the juvenile court system. High attendance and behavior expectations have been shown to improve academic achievement, graduation rates, responsibility, respect, and school safety.

The school recognizes that some absences may be unavoidable. It will be the student's responsibility, through a parent or guardian, to verify the legitimacy of an absence. Parents need to call the office between 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. the day of the absence, or in the case of a student going out of town, the day *before* the absence. The telephone number for the main office is 435-713-4255.

If a call is not made, a student and/or parent **MUST** turn in a completed Excused Absence Form to the main office explaining the absence. Absences not cleared within a 48 hour period of time, upon the student returning back to school will be marked unexcused unless discussed and deemed excused by the school principal or designee. Excused Absence Forms can be picked up in the main office or found online at ffchs.org/parent links/Excused Attendance Form.

Fast Forward will make every effort to keep parents informed of their student's attendance and academic progress). The school will provide:

- **Online Access to Daily Attendance and Academic Progress** – Parent(s) can track their student(s) attendance and academic progress through the school's online Student Information System (SIS) located at fastforward.org/parent links/SIS portal.
- **Daily Telephone Notification** – Parent(s) will receive daily notification if their student is absent or tardy through the schools auto dialer. Parents who may have questions or concerns in regards to student attendance can call Alex Garrett, Attendance Officer at 435-713-4255 ext. 205.
- **Mail Notification** – The school notifies parents/guardians by mail if their student has accumulated more than 5 days or 15 periods in any of their classes.

Students may occasionally need to be absent for illness, emergencies, or other health related problems. Expectations of absent students are as follows:

- Students are responsible to make up any missed work and participation points within two days after returning from the absence.

- If absences exceed three days parents must fill out an Excused Absence Form, which can be found in the front office as well as our webpage, [www.ffchs.org/parent links](http://www.ffchs.org/parent%20links).
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are advised not to check students out of school for any reason other than emergencies as a student's academics can be significantly effected as a result.
- Students are expected to attend on Early Release Days! Teachers prepare lessons and have the same expectations of their students regardless of the time allotted for the class period.

Fast Forward will reasonably accommodate parent(s)/guardian(s) request to excuse their student's absence(s). Such a request must be submitted in writing to the Attendance Officer within two school days of the absence. Requests must include the following:

- Student full printed name.
- Date(s) of absence requested to be excused.
- Reason(s) for absence.
- Parent's printed name.
- Parent's signature.
- Date of signature.
- Phone number where parent can be reached regarding absence note.

Reasonable requests for excusing an absence:

- Personal illness
- Hospitalization/medical emergency
- Participation in a legal proceeding
- Death in the Family
- Medical or Dental appointments
- FFCHS sponsored events
- Other emergencies

Consequences of Absenteeism

Students who have frequent unexcused absences are subject to lower grades, loss of credit, fines, and criminal prosecution.

Actions Taken by FFCHS for Unexcused Absences during a School Year

Absences

Action

Tier I **Early Intervention Council** meeting with school principal and attendance officer.

3 days A meeting will be scheduled with student, parent(s), and **Early Intervention Council** to discuss the importance of the attendance and academic progress at school as well as the legal implications of truancy (3 days or 9 unexcused class periods).

5 days After five days (15 unexcused class periods) absences the attendance officer will send a **1st truancy notification** to parents. (Truancy notifications will include: dates of unexcused absences, a request for parental support in resolving attendance problems, and a copy of UC 53A-11-103.

Tier II Attendance officer will send a **2nd truancy notification** to parents.

8 days The attendance officer will schedule a hearing with the FFCHS Student Support Council (principal, counselor, attendance officer, etc.). Parent(s) and student will be given the opportunity to state reasons for acquired absences. Items to be discussed during this council meeting could include, but are not limited to

attendance contract, health concerns, rather or not the student meets qualifications to be placed on a section 504 plan, or Individual Education Program (IEP). Students will be placed on an Attendance Contingency Plan.

Tier III Attendance officer will send a **3rd truancy notification** by certified letter to parents.

10 days Attendance officer will send the Habitual Truancy notification letter as well as refer the student to appropriate County Attorney, District Attorney, or Juvenile Court. (Habitual Truant referral will include: documentation of attendance, achievement, school efforts to improve attendance, copies of truancy notification letters, and copies of mailing certificate.)

Student Support Council

The SSC will allow the parent to be involved in the appeal process. They will be allowed to present the circumstances that prohibited their student from attending school. The SSC will meet bi-monthly on Thursdays from 4 to 6 PM. The student will also have the chance to explain the reasons for his/her absences. An Attendance Improvement Plan will be created at this meeting with guidelines and strategies. The AIP will be signed by both the parent and student as well as the administrator present at the conference.

Procedure for Appealing Truancy Citations

If parents feel the school is in error or the school's actions are or were unjustified **given** extenuating circumstances, parents may appeal truancy. **Parents must request a meeting with the principal in writing within ten (10) school days of the issuance of a truancy citation (for citation) or posting of term grades (for loss of credit).** The principal will convene an appeals committee meeting with the Student Support Counsel which will include the following: Principal, attendance officer, school counselor, and teachers. The committee will act to correct any errors in student attendance records. Students and parents must justify to the committee why citations or loss of credit should be overturned. It shall then be the determination of the committee (not the parent or student) whether to change unexcused absences to excused absences or modify the consequences for unexcused absences.

Withdrawal for Nonattendance

Students who are excessively absent are subject to disciplinary action, possible court referral, and/or withdrawal from school. Students having unexcused absences for ten (10) consecutive days will automatically be withdrawn from school unless they contact the school to explain mitigating circumstances.

Tardiness

Punctuality is an important life skill and tardiness is extremely disruptive to the educational process. A student is considered tardy if he/she is not in the classroom when the tardy bell rings and does not have a valid excuse for being late.

After twenty (20) minutes, students are considered to be absent from the period. An “L” will be marked on their attendance record, indicating the student was more than twenty (20) minutes late for class. Students will be only be excused for being late if they have a note for legitimate reasons as listed in the excused absence section above.

Actions Taken by Teachers for Unexcused Tardies during a School Term

Tardy	Action
1	Verbal warning given to student. Counseling given to student regarding the consequences for further tardies and the disruptive nature of tardies.
2	Same as for 1 st tardy.
3	Phone or in-person contact with parents will be made to discuss the student’s lateness and its impact on the class and on the student.

Teachers may also dock participation points (or use similar devices – e.g. tardy quizzes, bell-ringers) to encourage punctuality so long as such points do not amount to more than 20% of a student’s grade in the course.

At their discretion, teachers may refer students to the counseling or principal’s office for excessive tardies (5+).

Arriving Late/Leaving Early

Any student who arrives on campus after the beginning of school or who leaves school at any time after having been on campus must sign in or out at the main office. Parental consent via phone, writing, and or in person is required to sign out early. Students who sign out are still subject to the attendance policy for excused and unexcused absences. Parents/guardians are advised not to check students out of school for anything other than emergencies, as this can significantly affect a student’s academics. **Parents should not call students directly** to have them sign-out, but should call the main office, which will then release a student from school. Students who are signed-out must still follow the procedure for excusing absences (properly written excusal note, with documentation, within 2 days of absence) as at other times.

Long Term Absences

When a student's absence for personal illness is expected to exceed ten consecutive days, the student may apply for homebound instruction. Parents of students in this situation should submit a home/hospital instruction application to their student's counselor. Students with contagious illnesses will not be approved.

When a student enrolls in homebound instruction, it is sometimes necessary to adjust the schedule to meet the needs of the student. Elective courses may or may not be offered to the homebound student. Core classes will remain on the student's schedule and the classroom teacher retains the responsibility for assignments. Students will receive a total of 2 hours of instruction per week from homebound teachers. Students will not be marked absent during the period of homebound instruction. Homebound instruction must be arranged with a guidance counselor and school principal.

Truancy and ADA/IDEA

If students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or students protected under Section 504/ADA of the Rehabilitation Act have excessive absences and fall within the criteria of this rule, the student's IEP team (IDEA) or school team (Section 504) shall ensure that truancy procedures apply consistent with state and federal law and regulations.

Fast Forward Charter High School's (FFCHS) attendance policy has been developed in accordance with Utah Code (UC) section 53A-11-101 through 53A-11-101, Utah Administrative Code (UAC) R277-607 (modified as allowed by R277-607-5C), UAC R277-609-5, and the NCLB Consolidated State Application Accountability for the State of Utah.