



Flagstaff High School Attendance Handbook 2014-2015

Flagstaff Unified School District 1

Flagstaff High School (FHS) wishes to achieve multiple goals with the development of this Attendance Handbook and the implementation of its directives.

a. Our first goal is to provide guidance and resources to parents, staff and students when dealing with attendance issues that ultimately will result in improving attendance. As a school, we recognize the importance of attendance and its direct connection to student achievement. When students are not in school, or arriving late to class, it becomes extremely difficult for them to make gains and improve their academic skills.

b. Our second goal is to clarify school definitions for excused and unexcused absences and tardies and apply uniform practices to provide consistency in attendance recording for all students. This increases validity of the data upon which we make many decisions.

c. The third goal is in regard to families of our school. Families expect absences and tardies to be dealt with consistently regardless of which circumstances are related to their children.

d. Lastly, accurate attendance recording and implementing interventions to improve student attendance can assist our school in achieving Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) status in that section of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB).

It is the expectation of the Principal that all parents, staff, and students will follow the practices stated in this handbook. We realize, however, that a handbook such as this is an evolving document. The materials will be reviewed annually and, where appropriate, updates will be instituted.

Credits:

Tony Cullen, Principal – Flagstaff High School

W James Donner, Assistant Principal – Flagstaff High School

Jeannine Brandel, Activities and Athletics Coordinator – Flagstaff High School

Maria Marsh, Attendance Coordinator – Flagstaff High School

Ellie Rodriguez, Data Specialist – Flagstaff High School

Flagstaff High School Attendance Committee

Flagstaff High School Attendance Codes

CODE	Definition	Description	Type
SP	School Authorized Sport	School Excusal of Student from Class/ School for the Student's AIA participation	School Issued
RH	Religious Holiday	Parent Excusal of Student from School based on Observed Practices of the Family	Excused
SF	School Authorized Field Trip	School selected Field Trip	School Issued
ED	Early Departure	Parent Excusal of Student from Class for the remainder of the School Day	Excused
ISS	School Authorized In School Suspension	On Campus Suspension based on Attendance and Behavior	School Issued
OSE	School Authorized Out of School Suspension	Off Campus Suspension based on Behavior and Attendance	School Issued
	Excused Vacation	Parent Excusal of Student from school for one (1) or more school days	Excused
CA	Certified Accident	Parent Excusal of Student from Class or School with Appropriate Documentation of Accident	Excused
TE	Tardy Excused	Parent Excusal of Student for Late Arrival to School	Excused
ILL	Illness	Parent Excusal of Student based on a Temporary Health Condition	Excused
SN	School Authorized Nurse	School Based medical observation	School Issued
BE	Bereavement	Parent Excusal of Student for Accident/Death of a family member	Excused

AW	Adverse Weather	Parent Excusal for Late/Non- Arrival of Student based on community weather conditions.	Excused
DT	Dental Appointment	Parent Excusal of Student from Class for documented Dental Assistance	Excused
SB	School Authorized Late Bus	School Excusal of Student from class based on District provided Transportation	School Issued
	Other Unexcused	No Excusal of Student from Class/School was provided	Unexcused
CH	Chronic Health Condition	Medical Excusal of Student from Class based on appropriate documentation	School Issued
UNV	Unverified	No Excusal of Student from Class/School was provided	Unexcused
DA	Doctors Appointment	Parent Excusal of Student from class for documented Medical assistance.	Excused
OE	Other Excused	Excusal of Student from Class/School based on Community Request	Excused
IN	Injury	Parent/School Excusal from Class based on Injury of Student	Excused
FLU	Flu (Viral)	Parent Excusal of Student from School based on Viral Illness. (Reported to the State)	Excused
TU	Tardy Unexcused	No Excusal of Student for Late Arrival to Class/School was provided	Unexcused
SA	School Administration	School Excusal from Class based on School Administrative Request	School Issued

Note: The “School Issued” type codes are authorized codes that are exempt from ARS-15-803

SCHOOL REQUIRED ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

When to Take Attendance

Teachers are to take attendance within the first 10 minutes of their class period by entering the attendance into their Synergy TeacherVUE. Teachers **should not** wait until the middle or end of the period/day before entering their attendance. Students could be missing and the school would be unaware of this concern.

It is prudent for attendance clerks/school secretaries to check the attendance to note irregularities. For example, a student at our school has attended 1st & 4th periods but is marked absent for 2nd & 3rd periods.

Students must check into the school office first to receive a tardy slip if they arrive after the start of school or class period. The FHS Attendance Staff is responsible for updating Synergy for appropriate Attendance Marks. Schools are to develop a procedure for marking students tardy both at the beginning of the school day and when students move from class period to class period. This procedure is to be followed by all staff members.

**Automated attendance calls begin at 2:30pm and again at 5:30 pm.*

Marking Absences Excused

When a parent/guardian appropriately notifies the school of a student's absence and the student's absence is excused as defined earlier in this handbook, it **is required** that the school marks the absence in Synergy as excused. EVERY ABSENCE IS CONSIDERED UNEXCUSED unless it is specifically marked as excused. The attendance clerk/school secretary will enter this information upon receiving such notification.

Examples:

- a. A 10th grade student is missing from his first two class periods. The teacher(s) mark him absent. When his parent/guardian has appropriately notified the school of the absence, the secretary must mark the absence as excused with the appropriate absence reason code in Synergy or it will be considered an unexcused absence.
- b. A 12th grade student does not attend school until after lunch. Her teacher(s) has marked her absent for the morning. When her parent/guardian has appropriately notified the school of the absence, the secretary must mark the absence as excused with the appropriate absence reason code in Synergy or it will be considered an unexcused absence.

Note: Absence Reason Codes have been created to identify types of absences and tardies. No other codes may be created or used in Synergy without district approval. Some codes such as "FLU" are reported to the Arizona Department of Health in order to monitor community health.

Acceptable Notification by Parent/Guardian to Excuse an Absence Deemed Excusable by the District

Parent/Guardian must notify the school of an Excused Absence no later than 9am of the next school day. Notification may come in the form of a note, an email, or a reply to an automated phone call, and must go through the FHS Attendance Staff. If a conversation with school administrator occurs or a voicemail is left on the school phone, this is also acceptable notification and a notation should be made on the Parent/Guardian Confirmation Attendance Log. FHS Attendance Staff will log all attendance conversations regarding absences into the log whether excused or not. Students will not be permitted to go directly to their class without checking in through the office.

Voice recordings with notification messages are not considered part of the public record and, therefore, **do not** have to be saved. However, if written notations are made regarding the voice messages, those notations become part of the public record and must be kept for 3 years as are any other documents given to you. Normally parent excuses are not kept in a student's cumulative folder unless there is some reason concerning student forgery or some other unique issue.

NOTE: Students who are 18 may **not** excuse themselves from school or specific class periods. To excuse any student absence, the district requires notification from the parent/guardian regardless of student age. The **ONLY** exception to this rule is if a student has been legally emancipated from their parents and provides proof of such court action. In that case, schools may accept a written notification from the student.

Parent/Guardian Excuses for Tardies

The district will excuse students who are tardy due to a school-issued occurrence or an school-issued excuse acceptable to the district. Consequences for excused tardies will follow ARS-15-803. It is the belief of the district that the more consistency that occurs within a school regarding such consequences, the clearer it becomes for families.

10 Consecutive Days Absent Withdrawal

When a student has been absent for 10 consecutive days, the student must be withdrawn from FHS's student enrollment. Some examples of students who must be withdrawn are: a student on a long-term medical leave, on maternity leave, on extended vacation, or taking early release at the end of the school year. **A student who is absent and completing homework assignments must still be withdrawn according to State law.**

FHS Attendance Staff will enter the **Leave Date** as the student's last day of attendance. Select '10+ Days Absent' as the Leave Code. For example, if a student last attends school on Friday, October 15, 2014, school staff records the withdrawal date of Friday, October 15, 2014. When, or if, the student returns, use an Enter Code of 'Standard Enrollment'.

The Arizona Administrative Rule regarding withdrawing students states that the student must be withdrawn no later than the 11th day.

Examples:

- a. If a school is aware that a student will no longer be attending or will be on an extended trip taking the student out for more than 10 consecutive days, the school should remove the student from the school's enrollment marking the withdrawal date as the first day of the known absence.
- b. If a school had no previous knowledge of why a student was gone for 10 consecutive days, on the 10th day of the absence, the student must be removed from the school's enrollment. The date of withdrawal should be marked as the first day of the consecutive absences.

Long-term Absences/Tutoring Services

A student who is absent from school for an extended period (beyond 10 days) because of illness or special circumstance that does not allow him/her to attend the on-site school program must be withdrawn from the full-time enrollment.

A student who is receiving tutoring from a licensed teacher provided by district can be re-enrolled for classes at FHS. There are special enrollment instructions for these students.

Athletic Attendance Procedure

Attendance at school for the entire day is a prerequisite for participation in an athletic contest or practice. School related activities or appointments with prior approval by the administration do not fall under this regulation. Emergency situations may be reviewed by the administration.

As soon as it is verified that a student athlete has an unexcused absence from any class, he/she will not be permitted to participate in the next contest. Also, the student is not allowed to practice the day of the "cut" if there is not a contest day.

Attendance Probation

Students will be placed on Attendance Probation, according to District Policy and ARS-15-803. These policies state that each student must attend class in order to receive academic credit. Students that have accumulated ten (10) or more Excused or Unexcused Attendance Marks and any given class will be placed on Attendance Probation. Once a student is placed on Attendance Probation, as the Academic-Credit-Earner, it is the responsibility of the student to complete all parts of the Appeal process in order to prevent the loss of academic credit. If a student's Attendance Probation Appeal is not granted, a Secondary Attendance Probation Appeal process is available to the student.

In the event that a student collects 10 attendance marks during a semester, that student will be placed on attendance probation for the balance of that semester. Formal, written notification may be sent via US mail to the parent or Guardian of the student within 5 school days of his/her placement on the Attendance Probation list. Once placed on the list progress grade reports for the affected student will, at the discretion of the site administrator, reflect either an "F" or an "LC" as opposed to their actual earned grade. Should the student fail to appeal their Attendance Probation status or have their appeal denied the "LC" will be replaced by an "F" on their permanent transcript.

An Attendance Probation appeal process will be organized by each school site. The process must include the following:

- A committee including at least one teacher, one counselor and one administrator.

- A submission deadline 10 or fewer days prior to the semester end date.
- An appeal committee meeting date after the submission date and prior to semester end.
- Minimum appeal content to include a persuasive essay written by the student, and parent confirmation of notification receipt.
- Written guidelines (Rubric) for committee use to determine the granting or denial of individual appeals.

Students possessing and filing a Chronic Illness Form signed by their physician and verified by the schools nurse will be exempt from academic probation.

The counseling department and Special Education IEP teams of each school will have the ability to request “Special Circumstances” status for individual students. Those requests will be directed to the site Principal or designated Assistant Principal. Upon administrative approval a student granted “Special Circumstances” will be exempt from academic probation.

Flagstaff Unified School District Discipline Hearing Attendance Procedure

The following procedures outline how to mark student who are placed on suspension and appointed to a district Discipline Hearing.

Letters Available for Excessive Absences/Tardies

Form letters are available online for FHS to use when communicating with parents/guardians regarding excessive absences and/or tardies. Letters are available online at our website (<http://fusd1.org/Domain/924>) where they are PDF’s and can be saved. If you are having difficulty saving them, you might not have the up-to-date Adobe software.

It is suggested that if a student is accumulates three (3) Attendance Marks that the first Attendance Letter be sent out. Generally, the Principal will consider sending letters based on groups of three (3) Attendance Marks, five (5) Attendance Marks, seven (7) Attendance Marks, and ten (10) Attendance Marks. However, principals know their families, and the decision regarding how frequently to send out the letters depends on the individual situation. Remember that missing, for example, 30 days over the course of the year means missing 17% of the school year. Emphasis on attendance the first few months of the school year will, hopefully, make a difference. **FHS Attendance Staff will put a copy in the Attendance folder of any attendance letter sent home.**

A printout of these letters can be found in the appendix of this handbook. They are also available on the web. Go to the school’s webpage and on the left side click on the link Attendance Resources. That page has all of the letters in English and Spanish. You will see a listing of the letters in the appendix of this handbook.

Notifying Families of Unexcused Absences

The Arizona Legislature passed Statute ARS-15-803 requiring all school boards across the state to adopt a uniform attendance policies for their districts. To comply (effective school year 2002-Present) Flagstaff High School will be required to notify parents/guardians (or other person designated by the parent or guardian) **before the end of the school day** if their child has an unexcused absence.

FHS Administrators must be certain all staff members understand their role in the attendance process.

Most importantly, our school must:

- Train staff of the Attendance requirements
- Diligently follow district attendance procedures; teachers must enter attendance in the system of record within the first ten minutes of class.
- Maintain accurate and up-to-date parent contact information for the automated phone and email system
- Identify the alternative communication means if no phone or email is available to the parents
- Have practices in place to manually contact parents **if, and only if**, the automated phone and email system indicates that no improvement in a student's attendance has been made.
- Staff should have clear direction about when they need to pass student absence information on to the building principal who acts as the attendance supervisor at their school and is expected to follow the requirements of this position as defined in ARS-15-803 .

Contacts

If you have difficulties utilizing Synergy, please call the Flagstaff High School Front Office at (928) 773-8100. If you have questions or concerns about information in this handbook that is not technology related, please contact the Flagstaff High School Assistant Principal at (928) 773-8115 and we will work together to help answer your questions.

APPENDICES

Sample Script for Phone Messages

Accumulation of Three (3) Attendance Marks:

"Good Evening! This is the Attendance Staff at Flagstaff High School. You are receiving this notification because your student has accumulated Three (3) Attendance Marks this semester. According to District Policy, if your student accumulates Ten (10) Attendance Marks in any given class during this semester, the result may be the loss of academic credit.

Flagstaff High School recognizes that regular attendance in every class and arriving to school on time is vital to your student's success in school. In order to take full advantage of the educational programming offered by the teachers and staff at our school, it is essential that your student arrives to each class on time on a daily basis.

We would like to maintain the best possible attendance record for your student. Since punctuality and daily attendance is important for education success, please discuss this notification with your student and ensure the loss of educational credit is prevented.

Assisting your student to achieve academic success is essential to our mission at Flagstaff High School. If you have any questions regarding this notification, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Donner at (928) 773-8115.

Thank you and have a good evening!"

Accumulation of Five (5) Attendance Marks

"Good Evening! This is the Attendance Staff at Flagstaff High School. You are receiving this notification because your student has accumulated Five (5) Attendance Marks this semester. This is the second notification sent to you on behalf of your student's attendance mark accumulation. According to District Policy, if your student accumulates Ten (10) Attendance Marks in any given class during this semester, the result may be the loss of academic credit.

Flagstaff High School recognizes that regular attendance in every class and arriving to school on time is vital to your student's success in school. In order to take full advantage of the educational programming offered by the teachers and staff at our school, it is essential that your student arrives to each class on time on a daily basis.

We would like to maintain the best possible attendance record for your student. Since punctuality and daily attendance is important for education success, please discuss this notification with your student and ensure loss of educational credit is prevented.

Assisting your student to achieve academic success is essential to our mission at Flagstaff High School. If you have any questions regarding this notification, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Donner at (928) 773-8115.

Thank you and have a good evening!"

Accumulation of Seven (7) Attendance Marks

“Good Evening! This is the Attendance Staff at Flagstaff High School. You are receiving this notification because your student has accumulated Seven (7) Attendance Marks this semester. This is the third notification sent to you on behalf of your student’s attendance mark accumulation.

Flagstaff High School and Flagstaff Unified School District strictly adheres to Arizona State Law which requires that students attend class in order to receive academic credit. Based on these circumstances, your student will be placed on Attendance Probation at our school once they accumulate Ten (10) Attendance Marks in any given class.

Flagstaff High School recognizes that regular attendance in every class and arriving to school on time is vital to your student’s success in school. In order to take full advantage of the educational programming offered by the teachers and staff at our school, it is essential that your child arrives to each class on time on a daily basis.

Assisting your student to achieve academic success is essential to our mission at Flagstaff High School. Please contact our Assistant Principal, Mr. Donner, at (928) 773-8115, to arrange a mutually acceptable meeting time within so that possible solutions may be explored to correct your student’s developing attendance matter.

Thank you and have a good evening!”

Accumulation of Ten (10) Attendance Marks

“Good Evening! This is the Attendance Staff at Flagstaff High School. You are receiving this notification because, as of this date, your student has accumulated Ten (10) attendance marks in one or more classes. This is the fourth notification sent to you on behalf of your student’s Attendance Mark accumulation. Based on these circumstances, please be advised that your student has been placed on Attendance Probation at our school.

Flagstaff High School and Flagstaff Unified School District strictly adheres to Arizona State Law (ARS-15-803) which requires that students attend class in order to receive academic credit. Because your student has accumulated Ten (10) attendance marks during this semester, it is possible the result will be the loss of academic credit.

Flagstaff High School recognizes that regular attendance in every class and arriving to school on time is vital to your child’s success in school. In order to take full advantage of the educational programming offered by the teachers and staff at our school, it is essential that your child arrives to each class on time on a daily basis.

Your student will have an opportunity to appeal their loss of academic credit towards the end of the semester. However, it is important for your child to not continue to accumulate attendance marks since they have been placed on Attendance Probation. Accumulation of further Attendance Marks may

eliminate the possibility to prevent the lost academic credit and may result in further loss of additional credit.

More information regarding your student's Attendance Probation will be sent to you by postal mail. Please review these documents and follow the directions provided to you. Assisting your student to achieve academic success is essential to our mission at Flagstaff High School. If you have any questions regarding this notification, please do not hesitate to contact Mr. Donner at (928) 773-8115.

Thank you and have a good evening!"

Sample Attendance Letters

Accumulation of Five (5) Attendance Marks

<Date>

<Parent Name>

<Address>

<City, State Zipcode>

RE: <Student Name>

1st Issued Attendance Warning – Five (5) Attendance Marks

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that your student has accumulated Five (5) attendance marks in one or more classes. According to District policy, if your student accumulates Ten (10) attendance marks in any given class during this semester, the result may be the loss of half a credit.

Flagstaff High School recognizes that regular attendance in every class and arriving to school on time is vital to your child's success in school. In order to take full advantage of the educational programming offered by the teachers and staff at our school, it is essential that your student arrives to each class on time on a daily basis.

We would like to maintain the best possible attendance record for your student. The attached Attendance Profile of your student may provide you with guidance for the purpose of this letter. Since punctuality and daily attendance is important for education success, please ensure corrective measures are made towards your student's attendance and loss of educational credit is prevented.

Assisting your student to achieve academic success is essential to our mission at Flagstaff High School. If I may assist you, or if you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

W. James Donner
Assistant Principal
Flagstaff High School
(928) 773-8115

Accumulation of Seven (7) Attendance Marks

<Date>

<Parent Name>

<Address>

<City, State Zipcode>

RE: <Student Name>

2nd Issued Attendance Warning – Seven (7) Attendance Marks

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that your student has accumulated Seven (7) attendance marks in one or more classes. This is the second Attendance Warning letter issued on behalf of your child. Based on these circumstances, please be advised that your student may be placed on Attendance Probation if continued attendance marks are accumulated.

Flagstaff High School and Flagstaff Unified School District #1 strictly adheres to Arizona State Law (ARS-15-803) which requires that students attend class in order to receive academic credit. If your student accumulates Ten (10) attendance marks in any given class during this semester, the result may be the loss of half an academic credit.

Flagstaff High School recognizes that regular attendance in every class and arriving to school on time is vital to your student's success in school. In order to take full advantage of the educational programming offered by the teachers and staff at our school, it is essential that your student arrives to each class on time on a daily basis.

Attached to this letter is your student's Attendance Profile for the current semester at Flagstaff High School. It is impossible to express the degree of our concern through this letter and profile. Please contact me to arrange a mutually acceptable meeting time within so that possible solutions may be explored to correct this developing attendance issue.

Assisting your student to achieve academic success is essential to our mission at Flagstaff High School. I look forward to your contact regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

W. James Donner
Assistant Principal
Flagstaff High School
(928) 773-8115

Accumulation of Ten (10) Attendance Marks

<Date>

<Parent Name>

<Address>

<City, State Zipcode>

RE: <Student Name>

3rd Issued Attendance Warning – Ten (10) Attendance Marks

As you know, school employees attempted to meet or have met with you and your student to discuss his/her accumulation of attendance marks. As of this date, your student has accumulated Ten (10) attendance marks in one or more classes. This is the third Attendance Warning letter issued on behalf of your student. Based on these circumstances, please be advised that your student has been placed on Attendance Probation at our school.

The issue of your student's attendance is a serious matter. Flagstaff High School and Flagstaff Unified School District strictly adheres to Arizona State Law (ARS-15-803) which requires that students attend class in order to receive academic credit. Because your student has accumulated Ten (10) attendance marks during this semester, it is possible the result may be the loss of half an academic credit.

Flagstaff High School recognizes that regular attendance in every class and arriving to school on time is vital to your student's success in school. In order to take full advantage of the educational programming offered by the teachers and staff at our school, it is essential that your student arrives to each class on time on a daily basis.

Your student will have an opportunity to appeal their loss of academic credit towards the end of the semester. It is important for your student to not continue to accumulate attendance marks while on Attendance Probation. This will eliminate the possibility to prevent the lost academic credit and may result in further loss of additional credit.

Attached to this letter is your student's Attendance Profile for the current semester at Flagstaff High School. It is impossible to express the degree of our concern through this letter and profile. Please contact me to arrange a mutually acceptable meeting time so that possible solutions may be explored to correct this developed attendance issue.

Assisting your student to achieve academic success is essential to our mission at Flagstaff High School. I look forward to your contact regarding this letter.

Sincerely,

W. James Donner
Assistant Principal
Flagstaff High School
(928) 773-8115