

PHAROS ACADEMY

PHAROS ACADEMY ATTENDANCE POLICY 2025 -2026

What this policy covers:

1. All school attendance and lateness policies
2. Early pick up policies
3. Excused absences vs. Unexcused absences
4. Extended medical absences
5. Bereavement and special circumstances around attendance
6. Chronic Absenteeism
7. How excess absences can lead to retention or loss of course credit for high school students.

Attendance Expectations Statement

At Pharos Academy, attendance is critical for scholar success. Every day of learning matters, and consistent attendance is the foundation for strong academic achievement, personal growth, and long-term success. Research, and our own experience, shows that students who attend school regularly are far more likely to master grade-level skills, stay on track for graduation, and be prepared for college and careers.

This policy ensures that Pharos Academy provides appropriate academic placements while maintaining equitable access to education for all admitted scholars. Each absence represents missed instruction, lost opportunities for collaboration, and gaps in understanding that can be difficult to recover. Even the most talented scholar cannot reach their full potential if they are not present to learn. Our best ability is availability!

Regular attendance is not just about meeting a requirement; it is about building the habits, responsibility, and resilience that lead to lifelong success. At Pharos, we stress attendance because we know that every lesson, every discussion, and every moment of engagement moves our scholars closer to their goals. By working together (families, scholars, and staff) we can ensure that every student benefits from the full educational experience they deserve and is positioned to graduate ready for the future.

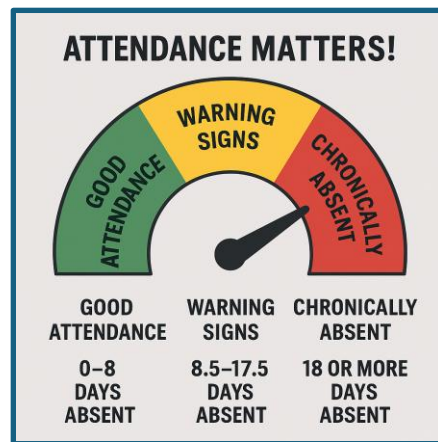
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What it means to be Chronically Absent

A student that misses 10% or more of the school year for any reason is considered chronically absent. This includes excused absences, unexcused absences, and suspensions.

In a typical 180-day school year, which means missing 18 or more days (just two days a month) can place a student in the chronically absent category.

Even if absences are excused, missing a lot of school can cause students to fall behind in their learning, struggle with grades, and be less likely to graduate on time. That is why we partner with families to make sure students are in school every day unless they are truly sick or facing an emergency.



Attendance Tips

1. Schedule doctor's appointments after school, on weekends, or during school breaks.
2. Limit travel and family vacations when school is in session.
3. Create a backup transportation plan for your child if you cannot bring them to school.
4. If your child must attend the doctor during school hours, bring them in after the appointment. A half day or partial day of school is better than missing.
5. Have a plan for bad and/or cold weather.

Traveling during School Breaks

We ask all families to avoid starting school breaks early or extending them after the scheduled return date. When students miss class for travel, they lose valuable instructional time that cannot be fully made up even with homework or online resources.

Extended absences disrupt learning routines, make it harder for students to keep pace with their classmates, and can impact grades, test performance, and long-term academic success. In middle school and high school, missing multiple days can also affect promotion and graduation readiness.

Please plan family vacations, trips, and events during the official school breaks listed on our calendar. By ensuring your child is present from the first day of school to the last, you are helping them stay on track, build strong habits, and reach their highest potential.

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School Breaks School Year 25-26

1. **Thanksgiving Break:** November 26 - 28. Thanksgiving break is 3 days. Combined with the weekends, it creates 5 contiguous days off.
2. **Winter Break:** December 22 - January 2. Winter break is 10 days. Combined with the weekends, it creates 16 contiguous days off.
3. **Mid-Winter Break:** February 16 - 20. Mid-winter break is 5 days. Combined with the weekends, it creates 9 contiguous days off.
4. **Spring Break:** April 3 - 10. Spring Break is 6 days from Friday to Friday. Combined with the weekends, it creates 10 contiguous days off.
5. **End of May/ Memorial Day Weekend Break:** May 25-27. Because Memorial Day is on a Monday and Eid al-Adha falls on Wednesday, this created another 3 days where the school will be closed. It made no sense to bring students in for Tuesday the 26. This creates a 3-day break. Combined with the weekends, it creates 5 contiguous days off.

Attendance Policies

1. **Attendance Retention Policy (Grades K-8):** Students who have missed more than 15 days of school without a qualifying reason (see Excused Absence Policy) during an academic school year may be required to repeat the grade. Retention for missing 15 or more days of school is at the discretion of the school's Executive Director.
2. **Attendance Seat time policy (Grades 9-12):** Attendance is directly correlated to course seat time. 10 absences without a qualifying reason (See Excused Absence Policy) or more in any course in a semester will result in an Incomplete grade for that course. Students will have to make up the course during a later semester.
3. **Excused Absence Policy:** We prioritize consistent student attendance as a key factor in academic success. However, we recognize that unavoidable circumstances may occasionally prevent attendance. Our Excused Absence Policy allows students up to five (5) excused absences without academic penalty per academic year for personal illness, family emergencies, religious observances, or other pre-approved reasons.

Examples of Excused Absences

- Medical or Dental appointments for a Pharos student.
- Therapy appointments
- Bringing a child to an appointment that is not their own is not considered and excused absence.
- Religious Observation or requirement
- Severe illness that requires medical attention
- Campus tour/college visit that is approved in advance by school principal
- Serious family emergency (Documentation needed)

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- Absences that are due to resident status, custody, or foster status.
- Appointments with child protective services agencies.
- Required state/ federal court appointments
- A day approved by the school's Executive Director

Non-Examples of Excused Absences (Will count as unexcused)

- Oversleeping/alarm failure
- Personal Grooming appointments (Hair, nails etc.)
- Accompanying parents or other family members to appointments.
- Family Vacations
- Needing sleep, rest, recovery without a medical note.
- Staying home because a sibling or parent is sick (unless medically advised)
- Staying home due to an out-of-school suspension. Students are entitled to instruction for a minimum of 3 hours per day during a suspension.
- Mild cold without a provider's note

Guidelines for Excused Absences

- a. Official documentation must be submitted within five (5) school days of the student's return. Failure to submit documentation within this timeframe will result in the absence being marked as unexcused.
 - b. Once a scholar exceeds the 5-day excused absences, each subsequent excused absence may count as an unexcused absence unless the Executive Director deems the absence necessary and/or unavoidable.
- 4. Extended Absences:** There are times when students may have absences that extend more than 2 days due to medical reasons. Absences beyond two consecutive days that are medically necessary and are accompanied by proper documentation from a licensed healthcare provider will be counted as excused absences but may not count against the student's total of 5 for the school year. Documentation will be reviewed by the school's Executive Director.
- a. Documentation needed for extended absences
 - i. Doctor's note indicating the need for absence and the return to school date.
 - ii. Hospital discharge papers
 - iii. Mental health provider's note
- 5. Extended Recovery Academic Support:** In cases of extended illness or recovery, the school will work with families to provide academic support through make-up work, tutoring, or home instruction (if applicable) to support progress toward promotion.
- 6. Home Instruction:** In the event that a scholar will be out for four weeks or more, the school will work with the family and the [NYC DOE Home Instruction](#) team to set up Home Instruction for the scholar. Whenever possible, the family should provide the school with 30 days' written notice prior to the planned medical procedure, etc. so that the Home Instruction can be set up.

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7. **Remote work for Extended Absences:** We do not offer a remote work option for students that will be out of school for extended periods of time. In person instruction is what we do well and remote instruction, at this time, can't replace what is happening in Pharos classrooms.
8. **Student Attendance Bereavement Policy:** Students may receive up to five (5) additional excused absence days for the loss of an immediate family member (parent, guardian, sibling, grandparent).
 - o Documentation (e.g., funeral program, obituary, or official letter) must be submitted within five (5) school days of the student's return.
9. **Chronic or Recurring Medical Conditions:** If a student has a chronic illness or condition that may result in frequent absences, a 504 Plan or Individualized Health Plan (IHP) may be required to ensure academic continuity. Please share this with the school so a plan can be developed before a significant amount of time off is taken by the student.
10. **Unexcused Absence Consequences:** Absences without valid documentation or approval within the required timeframe will be considered **unexcused** and may result in:
 - a. Loss of participation in extracurricular activities
 - b. Truancy Interventions
 - c. Loss of class credit (high school) and retention in grades K-8
11. **Special Considerations:** In cases of **extenuating circumstances** (e.g., family emergencies requiring extended travel), families may submit a **written request for review** to the school administration. Decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis.
12. **Chronic Absenteeism Intervention:** A student is considered chronically absent if they miss 10% or more of the school year (18+ days), regardless of whether the absences are excused or unexcused.

Absence Thresholds & Interventions

- 5–9 Absences: Family outreach; attendance check-in
 - 10–14 Absences: Attendance improvement plan; Parent-Counselor meeting
 - 15–17 Absences: Parent Meeting with Principal
 - 18+ Absences: Flagged as chronically absent; retention risk review and support team intervention.
13. **Attendance and Senior/ End of Year Activities:** Chronically absent students (18+ absences) are not allowed to participate in End-of-Year activities or 8th grade or 12th grade senior activities. This includes but is not limited to:
 - a. Senior trips
 - b. Prom
 - c. Walking during graduation/ moving up ceremony (Grades K and 5)
 - d. College commitment night

Senior and End-of-year activities are a privilege and not a right and will only be given to students who show up to school each day.

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Tardiness & Early Dismissal Policy

At Pharos Academy Charter School, punctuality is essential for student success and maintaining a structured learning environment. Students are expected to arrive on time and remain in school for the full duration of the instructional day.

1. Tardiness Policy (K-8)

- Students that are not in the school by 8:00am each morning will be marked as tardy (Late to school).

Tardiness Intervention Table

Number of Tardies	Intervention	Notes
10	Parent- Dean Phone Call	
15	Principal-Parent Phone Call	
20	Parent-School Collaborative Planning Meeting	This meeting is designed to support parents and scholars with resources and solutions.
25	Removal of extra Curricula Activities	This includes school trips.
30	Exclusion from EOY activities	This includes prom, walking in graduation or moving up ceremonies, and EOY trips.

2. Tardiness Policy (9-12)

- High school student entry is organized by 3 different entry times. If a student comes to school late and misses an entry time the student must wait until the next entry time. This will result in students being absent from a class because we do not allow late students to disrupt classes.
- If a student enters the school after the third entry time (without a parent or valid documentation) they are marked as a cutting and held in the Director of Culture's office where their parents will be notified.
- If high school students miss a class 10 times due to tardiness they are in jeopardy of losing out on course credit.

Early Dismissal Policy

- Early dismissals are the same as late arrivals. Early dismissals disrupt student learning.
- Parents/guardians must sign the student out through the main office.
- Students will not be dismissed early during the last **30 minutes of the school day**.

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Early Dismissal Intervention Table

Number of Early Dismissals	Intervention	Notes
3	Parent- Dean Phone Call	
6	Principal-Parent Phone Call	
9	Parent-School Collaborative Planning Meeting	This meeting is designed to support parents and scholars with resources and solutions.
12	Removal of Extracurricular Activities	This includes school trips.
15	Exclusion from EOY activities	This includes prom, walking in graduation or moving up ceremonies, and EOY trips.

Maintaining punctuality and full-day attendance is **critical for academic success**. We appreciate the cooperation of students and families in ensuring timely attendance.