Attendance Policy

November 2026

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1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

- Recognising and removing barriers to attendance for all pupils, including those with protected characteristics
- Ensuring our approach to attendance is equitable, inclusive and trauma-informed
- Celebrating engagement and improvement, not just attendance percentages

2. Legislation and Statutory Guidance

This policy complies with:

- Part 3, paragraph 15 of The Education (Independent School Standards Compliance Record) (England) (Amendment) Regulations
- The Equality Act 2010, which protects individuals from discrimination based on protected characteristics
- The Children and Families Act 2014 (regarding SEND provision)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (statutory safeguarding guidance)

3. Definitions

3.1 Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a young person has been away from the Academy site for a legitimate reason and the Academy has received notification from a parent/guardian/carer.

Examples of authorised absence include:

- Illness (physical or mental health)
- Medical or dental appointments
- Religious observance
- Family bereavement
- Special occasions (e.g., weddings)
- Exclusion
- Caring responsibilities (for young carers)
- Pregnancy-related appointments and maternity leave

- Agreed part-time or flexible timetables for pupils with SEND or medical needs
- Circumstances related to a pupil's disability where reasonable adjustments are required
- Leave of absence granted by the Headteacher for exceptional circumstances

Only the Academy can authorise an absence.

3.2 Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a young person is away from the Academy without the permission of both the Academy and a parent/guardian/carer. The absence is unauthorised if a young person is away from the Academy without good reason, even with the support of a parent/guardian/carer.

The Academy keeps accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of five years.

4. Applies to

This policy applies to:

- The Academy inclusive of activities outside of normal Academy hours
- All staff (teaching and support staff)
- The proprietor and volunteers working in the Academy
- All pupils on roll, with individualised approaches as needed to meet specific needs

5. Introduction

- We expect all young people to attend the Academy/education provider every day when the Academy is in session, if they are fit and well enough to do so.
- We do all we can to encourage young people to attend and to put in place appropriate procedures and reasonable adjustments to remove barriers to attendance.
- We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school.

To this end, we strive to make the Academy a happy, safe and rewarding experience for all young people.

- We recognise that some pupils face significant barriers to attendance due to disability, health conditions, caring responsibilities, or other protected characteristics. We are committed to working with pupils and families to overcome these barriers.

- The Proprietor is responsible for making sure the Academy keeps Admission and Attendance registers in accordance with regulatory requirements. For all young people of compulsory school age, our attendance register records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. The Proprietors also ensure that a compliant admissions register is kept.

- Our term dates can be obtained from the Headteacher's office. Emergency closures for such things as extreme weather will be communicated to care homes as soon as possible.

6. Equality and Inclusion

6.1 Our Commitment

Physis Academy is committed to ensuring that our attendance policy and practices do not discriminate against any pupil based on the protected characteristics defined in the Equality Act 2010:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender reassignment
- Marriage and civil partnership
- Pregnancy and maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

6.2 Reasonable Adjustments

Under the Equality Act 2010, we have a duty to make reasonable adjustments for pupils with disabilities. This may include:

- Flexible or reduced timetables where a pupil's disability prevents full-time attendance
- Phased returns following absence due to physical or mental health conditions
- Alternative learning arrangements (e.g., online learning, home tuition) where appropriate
- Adjustments to the school environment to reduce barriers to attendance
- Personalised support plans developed in partnership with pupils, families, and external agencies

6.3 Monitoring for Equality

We will:

- Monitor attendance data by protected characteristics to identify any disproportionate impacts or patterns
- Analyse this data at least termly and report findings to the Proprietor
- Take action to address any inequalities identified through monitoring
- Consult with pupils, parents/carers, and staff about barriers to attendance and how we can remove them
- Review this policy annually through an equality lens, including conducting an Equality Impact Assessment

6.4 Inclusive Language and Communication

We recognise that:

- All communications about attendance will be accessible and available in different formats upon request
- We will use inclusive language that does not stigmatise pupils with attendance difficulties
- We will ensure that pupils and families understand the difference between authorised and unauthorised absence

7. The Role of Parents/Guardians/Carers

Parents/guardians/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring that young people of compulsory school age (5 to 18) receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance or otherwise.

We ask parents/guardians/carers to:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and on time when they are fit and well enough to do so
- Contact the school on the first day of absence to explain the reason
- Provide medical evidence where requested for extended absences
- Work in partnership with the school to address any barriers to attendance
- Inform the school of any disabilities, health conditions, or circumstances that may affect their child's attendance so we can put appropriate support in place
- Request leave of absence in advance and in writing, understanding that this will only be granted in exceptional circumstances

8. The Responsibilities of the Academy

The Academy is required to maintain two registers:

- An Admission Register - known as the 'School Roll'
- An Attendance Register

8.1 The Admission Register

This gives information about young people who are currently registered as attending the Academy. The register will comprise information that is compliant with regulations set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, which have superseded the regulations of 1995 and amendments available at www.opsi.gov.uk.

For each pupil, the admission register will contain:

- Name in full
- Sex
- Social Worker's details
- Designated Care Order, for which the young person has been placed under (where applicable)

- Name and address of every person known to the Headteacher to be a parent of the pupil (and whether parents are to receive information regarding the young person, in line with Care Order)
- At least one telephone number at which the parent/guardian/carer can be contacted in an emergency (if and when appropriate)
- Day, month and year of birth
- Day, month and year of admission or re-admission to the school
- Name and address of the school last attended, if any
- Any relevant information about disabilities or health conditions that may affect attendance

8.2 Attendance Register

We are required to ensure that the attendance register for all young people on the Register/school roll is taken twice a day – once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

Each young person must be marked on the register on LearnTrek in one of the following categories:

Present

- Present at school
- Present and engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site (approved by the Headteacher and supervised by a person approved by the Headteacher, including sporting activities, educational visits or residential trips)

Absent - Unable to attend through exceptional circumstances

- Unavoidable closure of the school site or part of it

Authorised Absence

- Granted leave of absence by the Headteacher or a person acting on their behalf
- Unable to attend by reason of sickness or unavoidable cause
- Observing a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which they belong
- Attending medical or dental appointments
- Caring responsibilities (young carers)

- Pregnancy-related appointments or maternity leave
- Agreed reduced or flexible timetable due to disability or SEND
- Other circumstances where reasonable adjustments are required under the Equality Act 2010

Unauthorised Absence

If no reason is established when the register is taken, the entry may be corrected later when the reason is established.

Class teaching staff will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If a young person is absent, the register must indicate whether or not the absence has been authorised by the Academy. Parents/guardians/carers cannot authorise absence – it is the Academy that decides how to classify absences.

If a young person is absent without explanation when the register is completed, designated members of school staff will contact the young person's parents/carers. The absence will be treated as unauthorised unless an explanation is offered as satisfactory justification for absence.

The daily pupil absence procedure is to be followed (see Appendix 1).

9. Failure to Attend School

If there is concern about a young person's absence, a member of the school's senior leadership team will contact the young person's parents/carers. Initially, the school will try to resolve any barriers to the young person attending through open lines of communication with the parents/carers.

Our approach will be:

1. **Early intervention** - We will contact families on the first day of unexplained absence
2. **Barrier identification** - We will work with pupils and families to understand and address barriers to attendance, including those related to protected characteristics
3. **Support planning** - We will develop personalised support plans, including reasonable adjustments where needed
4. **Multi-agency working** - We will involve external agencies where appropriate (e.g., educational psychologists, CAMHS, social care, young carers services)

In the case of continued absence (period of 10 consecutive days), the school will convene a meeting to review the circumstances and consider appropriate planning/strategies to encourage the young person to re-engage in education. This meeting will consider whether reasonable adjustments or additional support is needed.

9.1 Reporting to the Local Authority

The school is required to inform the LA if a pupil fails to attend regularly. Independent schools have a legal duty to report certain attendance issues to their local authority:

- Ten days of unauthorised absence (other than for reasons of sickness or leave of absence)
- Failure to attend regularly
- Deletion from the school register when the next school is not known

In this last case, independent schools are required to report the circumstances as soon as possible to the local authority (LA) in which the pupil lives.

Before reporting to the LA, we will ensure that:

- We have explored all barriers to attendance, including those related to protected characteristics
- Reasonable adjustments have been considered and implemented where appropriate
- The pupil and family have been fully supported through our internal processes

9.2 Absence

When a young person is absent unexpectedly, the class teaching staff will record the absence in the register and will inform the Headteacher or member of the senior leadership team as soon as possible.

A note, email or telephone call may be sent/made to the school prior to the day of absence (e.g., if a young person has a medical appointment).

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a young person, the class teaching staff should take immediate action by notifying the Headteacher and following the missing person's protocol.

9.3 Requests for Leave of Absence

The Academy believes that young people need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are exceptional circumstances under which a parent/guardian/carer

may legitimately request leave of absence for a young person to attend a specific event.

All requests for leave of absence must:

- Be made in writing to the Headteacher
- Be submitted with as much notice as possible
- Clearly explain the exceptional circumstances
- Include any supporting evidence

The Headteacher will consider:

- The nature of the request and whether circumstances are truly exceptional
- The pupil's overall attendance record
- The timing of the request (e.g., during exam periods)
- Any protected characteristics that may be relevant (e.g., religious observance, disability-related needs)

9.4 Long-term Absence

When our young people have an illness that means they will be away from our school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home so that they can keep up with their schoolwork.

For long-term absence, we will:

- Maintain regular contact with the pupil and family
- Provide appropriate work and learning materials
- Arrange alternative provision where appropriate (e.g., home tuition, online learning)
- Work with medical professionals to understand the pupil's needs and plan for their return
- Consider whether a phased return or reduced timetable is appropriate
- Keep the pupil connected to their peer group where possible

Any ongoing absences, lates or unauthorised absences are followed up by the Headteacher.

9.5 Repeated Unauthorised Absences

The school will contact the parent/guardian/carer of any young person who has an unauthorised absence. If a young person has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parent/guardian/carer will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the issue.

This meeting will:

- Explore the reasons for absence in a non-judgemental way
- Identify any barriers to attendance, including those related to protected characteristics
- Consider whether the absences should be reclassified as authorised (e.g., if previously undisclosed disability or caring responsibilities come to light)
- Develop an action plan with clear support and expectations
- Set a review date to monitor progress

10. The Role of Therapy in Education

Therapy During School Hours

We recognise that many of our pupils require therapeutic support as part of their education and recovery from trauma. Where possible, therapy appointments will be scheduled to minimise disruption to learning. However, we understand that:

- Some therapeutic interventions cannot be scheduled outside school hours
- Attending therapy is a legitimate and important reason for absence from lessons
- Therapy attendance will be recorded appropriately using attendance codes that reflect the educational nature of this activity

We will work with therapists, pupils and families to find the best balance between therapeutic support and classroom learning.

11. Absence Due to Mental Health and Emotional Difficulties

With regards to attendance, it is important to understand and accept the reality that trauma and abuse has a profoundly negative impact upon an individual's physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing. Sometimes

the effects of this can be so profound that they severely limit the individual's ability to engage in typical daily activities.

Examples of these symptoms may include: visual and auditory hallucinations, suicidal ideation, debilitating flashbacks of traumatic events, and extreme states of distress or depressive symptoms.

Whilst we seek to ensure that all of our young people are eventually able to regulate these experiences and hope that they reduce in frequency, it is not uncommon for this to severely limit their ability to attend school on particular days.

Our approach:

- We recognise mental health conditions as disabilities under the Equality Act 2010 and will make reasonable adjustments accordingly
- In the first instance, we may seek to provide education as part of a reduced individualised timetable and learning plan
- If symptoms are too severe, we will consider this child to be too 'ill' to attend school in the same sense that they would be if they had a physical illness
- These absences will be recorded as authorised absence due to illness
- We will work with mental health professionals, the pupil and family to develop a support plan
- We will plan for a gradual return to full-time education when the pupil is ready
- We will not penalise pupils for absences related to mental health difficulties

12. Supporting Pupils with Specific Needs

12.1 Pupils with SEND

For pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities:

- Attendance expectations will be personalised to reflect the pupil's needs and abilities
- Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) will include attendance targets and support strategies where appropriate
- Reduced or flexible timetables may be implemented as a reasonable adjustment, with regular review

- We will work closely with the SEND Coordinator, external agencies, and families
- Absence due to SEND-related needs will be authorised where appropriate

12.2 Young Carers

We recognise that some pupils have caring responsibilities for family members. For young carers:

- Absence due to caring responsibilities may be authorised where the school has been informed and the circumstances are understood
- We will work with young carers services and families to minimise the impact on education
- We will put support in place to help young carers maintain attendance (e.g., flexible deadlines, catch-up support)
- We will ensure young carers are not disadvantaged in their education due to their caring role

12.3 Pregnant Pupils and Young Parents

For pregnant pupils and young parents:

- Absence for antenatal appointments will be authorised
- Maternity leave will be agreed on an individual basis and recorded as authorised absence
- Flexible arrangements may be made for young parents (e.g., regarding childcare issues)
- We will work with the pupil and family to ensure continuity of education
- We will ensure pregnant pupils and young parents are not disadvantaged or discriminated against

12.4 Pupils with Physical Health Conditions

For pupils with chronic or long-term physical health conditions:

- Attendance expectations will be adjusted to reflect medical needs
- Medical appointments will be authorised and scheduled to minimise disruption where possible

- Hospital admissions and treatment will be recorded as authorised absence
- We will work with medical professionals to understand needs and support the pupil's education
- Reasonable adjustments will be made to enable attendance (e.g., rest facilities, medication administration, accessibility)

12.5 Pupils Experiencing Bullying or Discrimination

We recognise that bullying or discrimination (including related to protected characteristics) can be a barrier to attendance:

- We will take all reports seriously and investigate promptly
- Support will be put in place for both the victim and perpetrator
- We will not penalise pupils whose absence is due to bullying or discrimination
- We will work to create an inclusive environment where all pupils feel safe
- Persistent issues will be addressed through our behaviour and anti-bullying policies

13. Recognising and Celebrating Attendance

We believe in celebrating pupils' efforts and achievements in attending school. However, we recognise that celebrating only high attendance percentages can disadvantage pupils with disabilities, health conditions, caring responsibilities, or other legitimate reasons for absence.

Our approach to recognition:

13.1 What We Will Celebrate

- **Improvement in attendance** - recognising pupils who have increased their attendance over time
- **Effort and engagement** - acknowledging pupils who overcome significant barriers to attend
- **Punctuality** - celebrating pupils who arrive on time consistently
- **Positive attitudes** - recognising pupils who engage well when they are in school

- **Overcoming challenges** - acknowledging pupils who attend despite difficulties

13.2 How We Will Celebrate

- **Individualised praise** - recognising each pupil's personal progress
- **Certificates and awards** - for various categories, not just percentage attendance
- **Positive communication home** - sharing successes with families
- **End of term celebrations** - that are inclusive of all pupils

13.3 What We Will Avoid

- We will not display attendance league tables that could shame pupils with legitimate absences
- We will not have a single "attendance percentage" threshold for rewards that excludes pupils with disabilities or health conditions
- We will ensure all pupils have an opportunity to be recognised for their attendance efforts

Note: While we may still track that pupils achieve excellent attendance (e.g., above 95%) for monitoring purposes, any celebration will be done sensitively and will include multiple categories so that all pupils can be recognised for their efforts.

14. Monitoring and Review

14.1 Monitoring Attendance

The Headteacher and senior leadership team will monitor attendance through:

- Daily monitoring of absence and patterns
- Weekly review of pupils with concerning attendance
- Termly analysis of attendance data, including:
  - Overall attendance rates
  - Persistent absence rates
  - Attendance broken down by protected characteristics (disability, ethnicity, sex, etc.)
  - Patterns of authorised vs unauthorised absence

- Impact of interventions and support

14.2 Equality Monitoring

To ensure our policy and practices are equitable, we will:

- Analyse attendance data by protected characteristics at least termly
- Identify any groups that have disproportionately lower attendance or higher unauthorised absence
- Investigate the reasons for any disparities identified
- Take action to address inequalities, including adjusting our practices and support
- Report findings to the Proprietor and include in the annual policy review

14.3 Consultation and Review

This policy will be reviewed annually or earlier if significant changes to systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

The review will include:

- An Equality Impact Assessment to ensure the policy does not discriminate
- Consultation with pupils about barriers to attendance and how the school can support them
- Consultation with parents/carers about their experiences and suggestions
- Consultation with staff about the effectiveness of the policy and procedures
- Review of attendance data and equality monitoring findings
- Consideration of any complaints or concerns raised about the policy
- Updates to reflect changes in legislation or best practice

At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

14.4 Staff Training

All staff will receive training on:

- The importance of accurate attendance recording

- Understanding of authorised vs unauthorised absence
- Equality Act 2010 and reasonable adjustments
- Recognising barriers to attendance related to protected characteristics
- Trauma-informed approaches to supporting attendance
- How to have sensitive conversations with pupils and families about attendance

Appendix 1: Pupil Absence Procedure

Daily Procedure

If a pupil has not arrived at school by 9:30am:

1. The Pastoral Mentor or School Business Administrator is to contact the parents/carers to confirm reason for non-attendance
2. This is to be the daily process unless the school has otherwise been informed by parents/carers that their young person will be absent (e.g., due to illness or to attend a medical appointment) or that the young person has an agreed part-time timetable in place
3. Reasons for non-attendance (even authorised absence) are to be correctly recorded on the attendance register on LearnTrek and noted within the daily log
4. If the absence is due to a reason related to a protected characteristic (e.g., disability, caring responsibilities), ensure this is recorded sensitively and appropriately

First Day of Absence

- Contact made with parent/carer by 9:30am
- Reason for absence established
- Absence coded appropriately on LearnTrek
- If reason suggests a barrier to attendance, alert Pastoral Mentor or SENCO

Continued Absence (3+ Days)

- Daily contact maintained with family
- Consider whether additional support is needed

- For illness, consider whether medical evidence is required
- For SEND or disability-related absence, liaise with SENCO

Extended Absence (5+ Days)

- Arrange for work to be sent home
- Consider alternative provision if appropriate
- For medical absence, liaise with medical professionals about expected return and any adjustments needed
- Plan for return to school

Prolonged Absence (10+ Days)

- Convene meeting with parents/carers, pupil (if appropriate), and relevant staff
- Complete barrier analysis - identify any issues related to protected characteristics
- Consider reasonable adjustments or support needed
- Develop action plan with clear support and expectations
- Consider involvement of external agencies (e.g., educational psychology, CAMHS, young carers service, medical professionals)
- Set review date

Unexplained Absence

- Immediate contact attempts with all known contacts
- If no contact made, follow safeguarding procedures
- If whereabouts unknown, follow missing person protocol
- Document all attempts to contact

Return After Absence

- Welcome pupil back positively
- Provide catch-up support as needed
- For extended absence, consider phased return or reduced timetable if appropriate
- Monitor settling back in

Appendix 2: Attendance Codes

Guide to Most Used Attendance Codes

Code	Definition	Present	Authorised	Notes
Code	**Definition**	**Present**	**Authorised**	**Notes**
/	Present (morning session)	✓	✓	
\	Present (afternoon session)	✓	✓	
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	✓	✓	Includes therapy appointments, alternative provision
C	Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance	X	✓	Headteacher authorised only
C2	Leave of absence - part-time timetable	X	✓	For agreed reduced timetables (SEND, medical, etc.)
I	Illness (physical or mental health)	X	✓	Includes mental health difficulties
L	Late arrival before register closed	✓	✓	
M	Medical or dental appointment	X	✓	Includes antenatal appointments
N	Reason for absence not yet provided	X	X	Temporary code - should be updated when reason known
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	X	X	
R	Religious observance	X	✓	Day set apart by religious body
S	Study leave (public examination)	X	✓	
U	Arrived after registration closed	X	X	
V	Educational visit or trip	✓	✓	

Y	Unable to attend - exceptional circumstances	-	-	Includes young carer responsibilities (when authorised)
Y1	Unable to attend - transport not available	-	-	When school-provided transport unavailable
#	Planned whole school closure	-	-	School holidays, INSET days
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	-	-	Not counted in attendance statistics

Important Notes on Coding

1. **Accuracy is essential** - incorrect coding can disadvantage pupils and affect data analysis
2. **Update codes promptly** - change code N to the appropriate code once reason is known
3. **Use code C2 for agreed reduced timetables** - this distinguishes planned adjustments from other absence
4. **Mental health absence should use code I** - mental health conditions are illnesses
5. **Be sensitive** - some codes relate to protected characteristics; handle data confidentially
6. **When in doubt** - consult with the Headteacher or SENCO about appropriate coding

Full List of Attendance Codes

For the complete list of statutory attendance codes and their definitions, refer to the DfE guidance: "School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities" available at www.gov.uk.

Signatures:	
Headteacher:	
Chair of Govenors:	