



Linden Lodge School

Provider of specialist education since 1903

Title:	Attendance Policy
Type:	POLICY

Review Cycle Frequency:	This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly.
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Lead Staff:	Co-Headteachers
Support:	Attendance Officer

VERSION CONTROL:

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4	Policy Review		Autumn 2023
5	Policy Update – DfE statutory guidance		September 2024
6	Policy Review & Update	Lead staff	Summer 2025
7	Policy Review & Update	Lead staff	Summer 2026

LINKED INTERNAL DOCUMENTS:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Supporting students with medical conditions
- Student mental health and wellbeing

- EYFS policy
- Home School Agreement
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) policy
- Inclusion policy

LINKED EXTERNAL DOCUMENTS:

Legislation & guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- › Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- › Maintained schools: Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- › Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- › [Working together to safeguard children 2026](#)
- › [The School Attendance \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- › [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- › The [Equality Act 2010](#)
- › <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ce6a72e40f0b620a103bd53/supporting-students-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf>

It also refers to:

- › [School census guidance](#)
- › [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- › [Mental health issues affecting a student's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- › [Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit](#)
- › [Children missing education - GOV.UK](#)
- › [Supporting students with medical conditions at school](#)
- › [Education for children with Health Needs who cannot attend school](#)

Equalities Statement

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of these policies on equality and the possible implications for people with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Requests for paper copies

If you require this policy in a different format e.g. print or braille please contact co-heads@lindenlodge.org.uk

Wellbeing statement of commitment

We are committed to providing a healthy working environment and improving the quality of working lives for all staff and students. The wellbeing strategy aims to support our mission, core values and freedom of thought and expression, freedom from discrimination and the recognition that our community is our greatest asset. For further information on our school's commitment to wellbeing, please see the Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy and Strategy document, or visit our school website.

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1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all students
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure students have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality

2. Roles and responsibilities

2.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, students and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with the relevant Local Authority in line with our multiple different LA' we work with to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for students who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all students, but adapts processes and support to students' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual students or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting students' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Co-Headteachers to account for the implementation of this policy

2.2 The Co-Headteachers

The Co-Headteachers are responsible for:

- › The implementation of this policy at the school
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Communicating with the local authority when a student has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the student's needs Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to parents/carers through all available channels
- › Sharing information from the school register with the relevant local authorities, including:
 - Notifying the local authority when a student's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
 - Providing the local authority with the details of students who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an un-authorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
 - Providing the local authority with the details of students who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness -
- › Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- › Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- › Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- › Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- › Liaising with parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- › Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- › Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with students and their parents/carers
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families
- › The Co-Headteachers & Designated Safeguarding Lead are responsible for attendance Sarah Norris & Monika Gaweda and can be contacted on safeguarding@lindenlodge.org.uk

2.3 The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 9)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Co-Headteachers

Seeking advice from the education welfare officers as required

The Attendance Officer is Joanne Harper and can be contacted via safeguarding@lindenlodge.org.uk

2.4 Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information via SIMS.

2.5 Reception staff

Reception staff will:

- › Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Transfer calls to the Attendance Officer, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

2.6 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- › All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- › All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- › Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- › Make sure their child attends every day/timetabled session on time
- › Call the school to report their child's absence by 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- › Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child. If the child is in the Early Years Foundation Stage, provide more than 2 emergency contact numbers, where possible.
- › Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- › Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the Attendance Officer

2.7 Students

Students are expected to:

- › Attend every school day, on time

3. Recording attendance

3.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, and place all students on this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every student is:

- › Present
- › Attending a place other than school
- › Absent
- › Absent – unable to attend due to unavoidable causes

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- › The original entry
- › The amended entry
- › The reason for the amendment
- › The date on which the amendment was made
- › The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- › Whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity, where a student is attending an approved educational activity
- › The nature of circumstances, where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Start of the school day

The school day begins at:

- **Monday:** 9:50am
- **Tuesday to Friday:** 8:50am

Registration

The school operates morning and afternoon registration sessions.

The attendance register will be opened at the beginning of each session and will remain open for **no longer than 30 minutes**, in accordance with the DfE statutory guidance Working together to improve school attendance. [Working together to improve school attendance](#)

The morning register will therefore close at:

- **Monday:** 10:20am
- **Tuesday to Friday:** 9:20am

The afternoon register will open at **1:30pm** and will close at **2:00pm**.

Afternoon registration

The afternoon attendance register will be taken at **1:30pm** and will remain open until **2:00pm**.

3.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school Reception staff, who can be contacted on 0208 788-0107. We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

3.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents are requested to send in appointment letters as evidence.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. UK regulations make it clear that parents and carers do not have any right to take a child out of school during term time except in extenuating circumstances. In most cases, the Co-Headteachers will refuse to authorise term-time leave. However, each request must be considered on individual merit, and the Co-Headteachers may only grant a leave of absence where there are exceptional circumstances.

An email requesting permission for absence will need to be sent to the Co-Headteachers in advance of leave during Term Time using this address: co-heads@lindenlodge.org.uk

Please see section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

- After the register has opened but before the register closes will be recorded using Code L – Late arrival before the register is closed
- After the attendance register has closed will normally be recorded as absent for that session using Code U – Absent for registration: arrived in school after registration closed. Where there is a known and appropriate reason for the absence, another absence code may be more appropriate. The school will ensure that the attendance register accurately reflects the circumstances of the student's absence.
- Students arriving after the afternoon register has closed will normally be recorded using Code U, unless another absence code is appropriate.
- Code L will not be used where a student arrives after the register has closed.
- The school monitors patterns of lateness and may contact parents/carers where lateness is regular or persistent. Where appropriate, the school will work with parents/carers and the student to understand and address the reasons for late arrival.

3.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the student's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may contact the Police or assigned Social Worker.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the student was absent. If we do not hear from you within this timeframe the absence will be marked as unauthorised
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the student's social worker and/or youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the student and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the student needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention. (please see section 7 below)

3.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see the definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels.

4. Authorised absence

4.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Co-Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- › Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- › Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- › Study leave
- › A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- › Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the co-headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as rare and unexpected circumstances which are unlikely to reoccur

- › Medical emergencies
- › Family emergencies (e.g. death of a relative)

Leave of absence will not be granted for a student to take part in protest activity during school hours.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least three weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible in the appendix of this policy.

The Co-Headteachers may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence

4.2 Other reasons for authorised absence

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- › Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- › Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school

will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance

- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a student is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the student is travelling with them. In these circumstances a student will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place
- If the student is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

4.3 Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)

The Co-Headteachers will allow students to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. These are not classified as absences. Reasons include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the student is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the student not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our students to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, it is important that students avoid missing school as much as possible.

We celebrate students' attendance in assemblies. In addition, the school will:

- Promote a whole-school culture of high attendance expectations, making clear that attendance is everyone's responsibility
- Ensure students and families understand that regular attendance is vital for safeguarding, wellbeing and academic progress
- Provide clear communication to parents/carers about attendance expectations, routines and legal responsibilities
- Recognise and reward improved attendance as well as high attendance, ensuring inclusivity for students with additional needs
- Provide a welcoming, safe and inclusive environment, particularly for students who may feel anxious about attending
- Ensure staff build strong, positive relationships with students and families, particularly those at risk of absence

- Monitor attendance daily and respond quickly to absence, including first-day calling procedures
- Work with the local authority and other partners to promote good attendance across the community

6. Supporting students who are absent or returning to school

The school will take a support-first approach, working in partnership with families and external agencies where appropriate. We will act early to identify barriers to attendance and put in place proportionate, tailored support.

6.1 Students absent due to complex barriers to attendance

If the school becomes aware of barriers such as complex needs, being disadvantaged, being known to children's Social Care, or having other barriers that relate to the student's needs, we will inform the local authority and relevant bodies.

The school will:

- Work closely with families to identify underlying causes of absence, including social, emotional, behavioural or environmental factors
- Use a multi-agency approach, involving professionals such as therapists, educational staff, social workers, health professionals and the local authority
- Develop and implement individual attendance support plans, with clear targets and regular review
- Make reasonable adjustments within school to remove barriers (e.g. timetable adaptations)
- Ensure that student voice is heard and considered when planning support
- Consider safeguarding implications and act in line with statutory guidance where concerns arise
- Escalate concerns where necessary through Early Help or statutory services
- The school will also ensure that support is coordinated, regularly reviewed, and proportionate, in line with statutory expectations.

6.2 Students absent due to mental or physical ill health

In line with supporting students the school will:

- Follow the [Supporting students at school with medical conditions](#)
- Work with families and relevant professionals (e.g. GPs, CAMHS, therapists) to understand the student's needs
- Enhancing their Individual Healthcare Plans

- Provide flexible and graduated reintegration plans, including part-time timetables where appropriate and agreed in line with statutory guidance
- Ensure any part-time timetable is time-limited, regularly reviewed, and in the student's best interests
- Make reasonable adjustments such as:
 - Adapted timetables or reduced transitions
 - Additional flexible targeted pastoral or therapeutic support
- Maintain regular contact with families during absence to support continuity of education and wellbeing
- Provide access to remote learning or alternative provision where appropriate
- As all of our students has an education, health and care (EHC) plan the school will inform the Local Authority attendance falls, the school will inform the local authority.

The school will also ensure that support is coordinated, regularly reviewed, and proportionate, in line with statutory expectations.

6.3 Students returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

The school will:

- Develop a structured reintegration plan, agreed with the student and family, health, Therapy & Social Care
- Provide a gradual return where appropriate, with clearly defined timelines
- Offer additional pastoral and emotional support, including access to a key adult
- Ensure staff are aware of the student's needs to provide consistent support across lessons
- Address any gaps in learning through targeted academic support
- Monitor attendance closely following return and adjust support as needed
- Promote a positive and supportive environment to reduce anxiety and rebuild confidence

6.4 Prolonged absence for children in EYFS, KS1, KS2, KS3, KS4 & KS5

In cases of prolonged absence, or when a child is absent without notification, we will attempt to contact the child's parents and alternative emergency contacts.

When deciding whether a child's absence should be considered prolonged, we will consider:

- Patterns and trends in the child's absences and their personal circumstances
- Vulnerability of the child and their parents, as well as the circumstances of their home life

We will also:

- Follow up absence promptly through first-day response procedures
- Work closely with families to understand and address barriers
- Ensure that prolonged absence is treated as a potential safeguarding concern where appropriate

We will also implement our safeguarding procedures (see our child protection/safeguarding policy <https://www.lindenlodge.wandsworth.sch.uk/policies>) and refer any concerns to local children's social care and/or request a police welfare check.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student, year group and cohort level.

Specific student information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Linden Lodge has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely. Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

The school will also ensure attendance registers are completed accurately and in line with statutory requirements, including correct use of absence codes

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will ensure analysis aligns with DfE expectations on identifying persistent (10%) and severe (50%) absence.

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will intervene as early as possible to prevent absence becoming persistent.

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Prioritise early intervention to prevent escalation
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent
- Work jointly with the local authority where absence meets thresholds for formal intervention (e.g. penalty notices or prosecution)
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Consider alternative provision where appropriate and in line with statutory guidance
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 7, above), ensuring they are proportionate and used as a last resort
- Follow [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK](#)

The school will also:

- Issue attendance letters at key thresholds
- Implement attendance panels or formal meetings where concerns persist
- Increase monitoring and communication for students at risk
- Maintain clear records of all interventions and communications

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Student is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Student is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Student is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Student is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	Student has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Student is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Student is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Student is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Student has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Student is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Student is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Student is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Student is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open

Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every student absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Student is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Student's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Student is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Student has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective student not on admission register	Student has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays