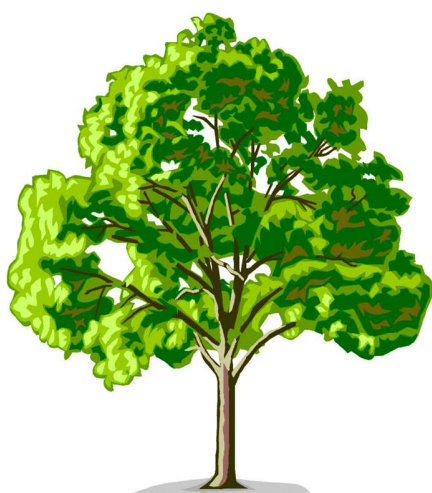


Park Hill Primary School

Attendance and Exceptional Leave Policy

2023 - 2024



Responsible for Policy	Sam Adams/Paul Griffin
Date of Policy	1 st September 2023
Date Ratified by Governors	12 th September 2023
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Park Hill Primary School Attendance and Exceptional Leave Policy

Introduction

At Park Hill, we believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the best progress possible. To do this it is essential that a child's time at school is maximised and even short absences can have a detrimental effect on children's learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines, so, in addition to affecting individual children, it may also affect the learning of others in the same class. **Early poor attendance habits follow right through from primary to secondary school and into employment.**

We expect all children to be at school, and on time, every day that the school is open, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage children to attend.

At Park Hill, 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 our schools a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

1. Legal Requirements and Local Authority Policy

1.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at school or by education otherwise than at school. A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

The government expects all schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- and act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

In accordance with the Education Act 1996, we will work with parents and carers and the Local Authority to ensure that parents are supported to secure education for children of compulsory school age. Where required, we will formalise support and where necessary, work with the LA to use legal measures.

A "Parent" is defined as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not.
- Any parent who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility as defined in the Children Act (1989) for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, the Governing Body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

2. Attendance Objectives

Our school attendance policy:

- Is easy to understand by pupils, parents and staff
- Is clear and consistently applied, transparent and fair
- Considers the individual needs of pupils and their families
- Is easy to find so that the whole school community is aware of our attendance expectations
- Includes the contact details of key staff to make it easy for parents to get in touch
- Is reviewed by staff regularly and involves pupils and parents because school attendance matters to everyone

3. Roles and responsibilities

At Park Hill we believe that school attendance matters to everyone. School attendance is a shared responsibility by governors/trustees, all school staff, parents, pupils, and the wider school community.

Role	Name	Contact details
Senior Attendance Lead	Mr Paul Griffin	pgriffin@parkhill.coventry.sch.uk Tel: 024 76466669
Attendance Officer	Mrs Samantha Adams	sadams@parkhill.coventry.sch.uk Tel: 024 76466669
Named Governor for Attendance	Mrs Carly Davis	cdavis@parkhill.coventry.sch.uk

The Local Governing Board/Trustee Board of Park Hill recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes it across the school's ethos and policies. They take an active role in attendance improvement by:

- Supporting the school to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Ensuring school staff receive training on school attendance.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.

Park Hill will:

- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.
- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance.
- Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Signpost and support access to any required services where out of school barriers are identified.
- Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners and where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.
- Put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers where absence becomes persistent.
- Hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future where there is a lack of engagement.
- Work with the local authority on legal intervention where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate.
- Intensify support through statutory children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.
- Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.
- Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.
- Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.
- Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.
- Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils with SEND and/or medical conditions and their parents to maximise attendance.
- Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals for children with SEND and medical conditions.
- Regularly monitor data for children with SEND and medical conditions, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities.
- Inform the pupil's social worker, where there is one, if there are any unexplained absences and if the child's name is to be deleted from the register.

Park Hill requests that parents:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness).
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.
- Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.

Pupils will:

- Be aware of when they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them by school staff, parents and through the school timetable.
- Speak to their class teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance.
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4. What are Authorised and Unauthorised Absence?

4.1 Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent telephones or verbally contacts the school office to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not make it an authorised absence.

4.2 Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Example – Pupil/Family members birthday

- Closure of a sibling's school for inset days or other reasons.
- Pupils refusal to attend school on health grounds but where the pupil is considered well enough to attend.
- Going out for a family day out.

5. Repeated Unauthorised Absences

5.1 The school will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence.

If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who may visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

5.2 The Governors, supported by the Local Authority, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. There is a fast track to court procedure for parents of pupils whose attendance falls below the expected levels.

Persistent Absence

According to government guidelines a persistent absentee is any student with 10% or more absence from school (Under 90%).

If a child misses 40 sessions (20 days) in a year, their attendance would be 90%. If a child's attendance remains at 90% for the whole of their primary education, they will have missed 152 days- almost a whole school year.

The law says that it is a parent's responsibility to ensure that their child/ children attend school regularly and on time.

Persistent absences are monitored by the school's attendance team and review every term. If your child's attendance is below 90% then a letter will be sent home and review again. If the attendance does not improve then a and a meeting with parents will be requested.

If parents fail to engage with support and their child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance/ punctuality, a request may be made to the Local Authority to pursue legal proceedings either through a penalty notice or prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

Parents found guilty in a Magistrates' Court of failing to secure their child's regular attendance at school under the provisions of the Education Act 1996, will receive a criminal record and a maximum penalty of a £1000 fine under a Section 444 (1) offence or a £2500 fine or up to a 3-month prison sentence, under a Section 444 (1a) offence.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Fixed penalty notices will be issued by the Head teacher to parents or carers if your children are absent from school for the following reasons:

- Holiday / leave of absence during term time
- Irregular attendance including persistent late arrival to school (after registration has closed) which equates to 10 or more sessions within a current 5-week period

Penalty Notices will issued by post to your home address to each parent or carer by the local authority at the request of the Headteacher. The Penalty Notice is:

- £60 for each of your children if paid in full within 21 days
- £120 if paid in full after 21 days but within 28 days.

Children under 5

To ensure your child is ready for school, if your child is in Nursery or in Reception and has not yet turned 5 years old, their attendance will also be monitored and the same procedures for absences will be followed.

Children missing in education

If a child is missing and their whereabouts are unknown, the school will follow the Local Authority procedures in taking immediate steps to locate that child as soon as possible.

A child who is Missing in Education may be:

- A child who is not at their last known address
- has 5 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation,
- left school suddenly and their destination is unknown.

A member of the school Safeguarding team will complete the relevant a Children Missing from Education referral form and notify the Local Authority.

In the event of school transfer or a pupil moving to another area, a pupil will normally remain on roll until notification is received from the receiving school. Should no notification be received, the school will make every effort to locate the pupil in conjunction with the Local Authority.

If unsuccessful, a missing person form must be completed and sent to the Local Authority and the pupil removed from roll after twenty days.

In the case of unauthorised holidays, pupils' names will be removed from the roll after twenty days of absence. Parents are made aware of this before the leave of absence, and by letter, when the child's name has been removed from the roll.

The school understands that children that are absent from education for prolonged periods and/or repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and criminal exploitation – particularly county lines

Procedures

- At Park Hill School the school day begins at 8:55 am and finishes at 3:30pm.
- Morning register closes at 9:00 am. If a child is not present when the register is taken they are given a late mark. If a child arrives at school 15 minutes after the registers are closed, they will be given a U code. This has an impact on your child's attendance.
- The afternoon session begins at 1.20pm and the same procedures apply.
- The morning session at Nursery begins at 8:30am and the afternoon session at 12:30pm.
- Persistent absence in Nursery may result in a child being removed from the roll.
- Park Hill School day finishes at 3:30. Unless school is notified by a parent of a late collection the following procedure will be followed. Children not collected by 3:35 will be taken to the school office. If not collected by 3:40, then your child will be placed in Buddies afterschool club and parents will incur a charge.
- Morning and evening late marks will be monitored by the attendance team and a penalty fee may occur if persistent lates are notice.

If a child is absent without notification

Where no notification has been received by 9.20 am a text message will automatically be sent to the parents/carers via the School Office or Pastoral will make a phone call.

If there is no response to the message the following protocol will be followed:

- **Day 1:** The office staff and Pastoral team will continue to try to contact the parents/emergency contacts for the child.
- **Day 2:** The office staff and Pastoral team will continue to try to contact the parents/emergency contacts for the child if no response by 10am then the Pastoral team may conduct a home visit.*
- **Day 3:** The office staff and Pastoral team will continue to try to contact the parents/emergency contacts for the child if no response by 10am then the Pastoral team will conduct another home visit and EWO will be informed.
- **Day 4:** The Education Welfare officer (EWO) will conduct a home visit.
 - If the child is subject to Child Protection legislation or is in any way vulnerable then the schools Pastoral manager/ Learning Mentor will be notified on Day 1. They will then also endeavour to contact the parent or carer, in order to check on the safety of the child, or failing that notify the relevant agencies. The Pastoral Manager may carry out a home visit on Day 1 if they have not received contact from parents or are satisfied with the information shared.

Home Visits (Guidance for Staff)

For safety reasons, 'Home visits' should be carried out by 2 members of staff – typically the Pastoral Manager and / or Headteacher or a member of the leadership team.

Following the visit, a report should be written including evidence (e.g. photograph of school 'calling card' posted through door) and uploaded onto CPOMS.

Written Notification of Absence

When parents have notified the school about absence by telephone or verbally, a reason will be recorded on the sheet in the front of the register for that child and will be updated as appropriate.

Where the absence is because of a pre-arranged medical appointment, for example, the note should be sent to the school prior to the day of absence.

6. Requests for Exceptional Leave of Absence

We follow Local Authority guidance on parents taking children out of school for holidays during term time, which is **not** to authorise, and absence for this purpose will be treated as unauthorised absence. Consequently, parents may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice from the Local Authority (see school's Attendance Policy).

Exceptional Leave of absence will only be authorised in very exceptional circumstances.

Requests of leave of absence will automatically be declined for the following: -

- Year 2 and 6
- Children with less than 95% attendance

If parents wish to take their child out of school during term time, a request for leave of absence must be made on the appropriate form at least 4 weeks before the exceptional leave is due to begin, except in an emergency, in which case the application will be considered on an individual basis. Application forms can be obtained from the School Office.

The appropriate information and documentation must be provided to back up the application.

If the child is leaving the country the additional documentation detailed on the Exceptional Leave Request form must be provided.

Any leave taken without authorisation will lead to parents being issued a fixed penalty fine, which is currently £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days. It will increase to £120 per parent, per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

Total non-payment can result in parents being taken to court.

Each request for exceptional leave of absence is considered by the Head-Teacher. Reasons for exceptional leave will be logged on the child's records and will be shared as part of the transfer/transition process.

7. Long-term Absence through Child's Accident or Illness

If a child is under the care of a hospital Consultant and a Consultant's letter has been produced, and the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or to be a repetitive absence, the school may contact the support services so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school

8. Medical Appointments and absence due to illness

8.1 Parents should try to make appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where appointments during school time are unavoidable, we ask that parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment wherever possible. The pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment. In most circumstances, a child should not miss a whole day at school for an appointment. If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must provide an appointment letter if required.

8.2 Parents must report to the school office, enabling the school staff to collect children from the classroom.

On return to school during the day, parents must inform the School Office so that the register can be adjusted accordingly.

Parents should inform the School Office of any unexpected events which may result in a delayed return to school.

8.3 In most cases, absences for illness which are reported following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised without the need for parents to supply medical evidence unnecessarily. In line with Department for Education guidance, if we do have a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, we may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

9. Pupil Absence for the purposes of Religious Observance

Park Hill acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that, on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and is recognised as such by a relevant religious authority. Where this occurs, the school will consider either authorising the pupil absence or making special leave for religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school.

10. Rewards for good attendance

10.1 All children with 100% attendance across the whole school year will be recognised with a certificate and small prize.

10.2 School, along with the Local Authority, will be doing an Early Bird incentive each term. These sessions are impromptu and all children arriving on time will be given a sticker and house token.

11. Attendance targets

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Head- Teacher and Governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. When it is setting targets, the school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools, as well as national figures and those achieved by other schools in the city.

12. Monitoring

12.1 It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor overall attendance and the Head-Teacher will produce an annual report. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for seeing that this is carried out. Governors will therefore examine the information provided in the report to satisfy themselves that attendance meets the required levels.

12.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records for a minimum period of three years.

12.3 The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus and in the annual Governors' Report.

12.4 Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, as well as for taking action on day-to-day absences, according to the school's procedures. If there is a longer-term worry about the attendance of a particular child, they must report this to the Head-Teacher/Pastoral Manager, who will contact the parents or carers.

13. Support

13.1 At Park Hill we recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties in a family's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents are encouraged to inform school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, emerging health concerns. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

13.2 We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance. The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance based on the individual needs and circumstances of the child.

13.3 To plan the correct support, we will always invite parents and pupils to attend a meeting to discuss the concerns and devise a plan to support the child's regular attendance. Support offered will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils. This may include a referral to Early Help or a Parenting Contract.

14. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) (May 2022) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#) (May 2020). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

At Park Hill attendance matters

100%	0 days missed	Fantastic attendance!	
99%	2 days missed	Well done—you are at or above the School Target	
98%	4 days missed		
97%	6 days missed		
96%	8 days missed	At 96% and below you are just below target—make sure you do not miss any more days	
95%	10 days missed		
94%	12 days missed		
93%	14 days missed	At 93% and below your attendance is becoming worryingly low.	
92%	16 days missed		
91%	18 days missed		
90%	19 days missed	At 90% and below you are Persistently Absent—school will support you and your family to help this improve	
89%	21 days missed		
88%	23 days missed		
87%	25 days missed		
86%	27 days missed		
85%	29 days missed		



Request for Exceptional Leave in Term Time

The school recommendation is that you **do not** take your child out of school for holidays.

However, in exceptional circumstances I will consider requests. I am not in a position to stop you taking your child/ren on holiday. However, if you do take your children on holiday without permission I will not be able to authorise the request.

Unauthorised absences are liable to Penalty Notice Fines or prosecution for non-attendance.

Name of child	Class	(Office use only) Attendance	Decision communicated & recorded on Bromcom
Address			
Reason for exceptional leave request			
Dates of unauthorised absence			Total no. of days
From (first date of absence)	Until (final date of absence)		
Contact details whilst away			
Flight Number and details			
I understand that removing my child from school will have a detrimental effect on their education and that I may be issued with a Penalty Notice of £60 per parent, per child if I take my child on holiday during term time.			
Signed (Parent/carer)		Print Name (Parent/carer)	
Office Use Only		Penalty Letter to follow? Yes / No	
I am unable to authorise this leave request Signed Date		In this instance I am able to authorise this leave request Signed Date	



Reasons why your request may not be authorised;

- Your child's attendance record is below the recommended government guidelines
- Your child has already taken time for exceptional leave in term time
- The age and stage of your child's education
- The leave falls within an examination period
- A new school year has only just begun
- A period of leave will cause a detrimental gap in your child's learning
- A period of leave will disrupt the continuity of learning for your child
- The reason for your request is not acceptable

Should you however choose to take the holiday, the school's attendance policy makes it clear that if a holiday is taken in term time which has not been authorised, a Penalty Notice will be issued.

The Penalty Notice is for £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the letter from the Local Authority and £120 per parent, per child if paid after this date but within 28 days.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice could result in Coventry City Council starting legal proceedings against you for the offence of failing to ensure your child's regular attendance at school. You will be contacted by Coventry City Council nearer the date of the leave.

Attendance during one school year	Equals days absent	Which is approximately	This shows the hours of lost learning and number of missed lessons
95%	10 days	2 weeks	30 lessons = 50 hours
90%	19 days	4 weeks	60 lessons = 100 hours
85%	29 days	6 weeks	90 lessons = 150 hours
80%	38 days	8 weeks	120 lessons = 200 hours
75%	48 days	10 weeks	150 lessons = 250 hours
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	172.5 lessons = 287.5 hours
65%	67 days	13.5 weeks	202.5 lessons = 337.5 hours

Appendix 2: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Code	Definition	Scenario
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half term/bank holiday/INSET day