



Attendance Policy

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1. Aims and statement of intent

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- 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 in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) 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](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Role and responsibilities

The school will aim to encourage and assist all students to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality. We recognise that there may be external factors which influence student attendance and will work together with students, parents and carers, the local authority and any other relevant external agencies to deal with issues.

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child. Parents and carers should familiarise themselves with this Attendance Policy and should work closely with school staff to try and overcome any problems which may impact a student's attendance.

We will investigate all unexplained and unauthorised absence.

3.1 The governing body

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, students and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, 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 local partners 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 headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Working with the parents/carers of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for students with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where students with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when student with an education, health and care (EHC) plan 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 students and parents/carers through all available channels

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral), who is also the school's **Senior attendance champion** has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues and will ensure all staff complete their attendance duties in lines with the school's policies and procedures.

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- 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 students, 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 designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Stefan Peto and can be contacted via 01227 463567 or speto@thelangton.kent.sch.uk

3.4 Attendance Officers

We have two attendance officers: one is responsible for KS3 and 4 (Y7-11), and the other for KS5 (Y12-13). The school attendance officers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that attendance and lateness records are up to date
- Using the correct code according to the type of absence (see National Attendance Codes)
- Contacting parents and carers on the first day of absence by phone call, text message or email if no reason for absence has been provided
- Reviewing attendance and providing analysis and monthly reports to the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral)
- Identifying trends and patterns in attendance data to understand which students and cohorts to focus on, in liaison with the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral)
- Liaising with Heads of Year, the 6th Form Pastoral Lead, Pastoral Support Mentors, and SENDCO where necessary
- Sending out emails and letters notifying parents and carers that the attendance of their child is poor
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, 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 unauthorised 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
- The KS3/4 attendance officer can be contacted on 01227 463567 or attendance@thelangton.kent.sch.uk
- The KS5 attendance officer can be contacted on the same number above or 6thform-attendance@thelangton.kent.sch.uk

3.5 Heads of Year/Pastoral Support Mentors/SEND CO

These members of staff will:

- Meet regularly with the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral) and decide what letters or other communications need to be sent home to address attendance issues
- Support students where attendance is becoming a concern – using early intervention approaches where possible, to try and prevent further issues
- Meet with students on attendance reports
- Refer to and liaise with Early Help if attendance issues persist
- Support attendance improvement plans
- Follow up internal truancy with appropriate sanctions
- Set detentions, where appropriate for unauthorised poor punctuality
- Promote good attendance through assemblies and commendations
- Assist with safeguarding home visits if absences exceed ten consecutive days

3.6 Form Tutors

The form tutor is key in promoting good attendance and punctuality. The tutor should:

- Provide a good example by always being punctual to registration and tutor time
- Carry out registration in the correct manner, marking a student present on absent.
- Use form time to discuss attendance or punctuality issues, and liaising with the appropriate Head of Year
- Develop positive relationships which encourage and reward good engagement and improved attendance and/or punctuality

3.7 Class teachers

Class teachers should:

- Provide a good example by always being punctual to class
- Complete a class register during the first ten minutes of the lesson.
- Mark any students who are late and note the amount of minutes late
- For KS3/4, enforce the 'through the door in four' rule by sending students who are later than four minutes without a good reason to the KS3/4 attendance officer for a late slip
- Alert the relevant attendance officer and pastoral staff of any missing students

3.8 Students

Students will:

- Ensure that they attend school regularly and on time
- Attend all lesson punctually
- Not leave the school without permission
- Sign out in the appropriate way if they leave the school during the day

3.9 Parents and carers

Parents and carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their child attends regularly and punctually and:

- Are responsible for informing the school of the reasons for any absence each morning
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Will not arrange family holidays during term time
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the relevant Head of Year, attendance officer, or Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral)

4. Attendance procedures

Students are expected to arrive by 8:50 am when registration begins. Between 8:50 and 8:55 if a student arrives late they should still go their form room and sign in with their form tutor. If a student arrives after 8:55 they should sign the late book, stating their

name, form, reason for lateness, and the time of arrival. Lateness is monitored and students will be given a sanction if they have no suitable reason. Persistent lateness will result in further sanctions.

The morning register closes at 9:20 am. Students arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence. The afternoon registration takes place at the beginning of tutor time at 13:20 pm.

4.1 Staged approach for managing poor or declining attendance

95-100% attendance	No specific concerns
90-95% attendance	School intervention including letters/meetings with parents and carers
80-90% attendance	Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to KPAS (Kent PRU and Attendance Service) using the Digital Front Door. Parents and carers will be notified. In certain circumstances, the school may choose to consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer. For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help notification.
Below 80%	A student may be assessed for an EBSA (Emotional-Based School Avoidance Pathway) depending on their circumstances and decided by the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral)
Below 50%	This is deemed severe persistent absence and external support and intervention would be necessary by this stage

4.2 Absence

Only the Headteacher and the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral)/Head of Sixth Form (as appropriate) can authorise absence using a consistent approach. They are not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorised.

Absence (for example leave for holidays) during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping

- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays

Home visits/virtual home visits may be completed for safeguarding purposes of a student has been absent from school for ten consecutive days. This is likely to a pre-arranged appointment but school staff may complete an unannounced visit.

4.3 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow students to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The 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
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

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

The definition of 'exceptional circumstances' could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a student's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. By 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

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

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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 3 weeks before the absence. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

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

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- 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
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision
- If the student is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a student to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, 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. Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that student
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the student's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same student, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the

national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the student must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

5.1 Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the KCC Penalty Notice code of conduct

They will include:

- Details of the student's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

6. Children Missing Education (CME)

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and KPAS when appropriate. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education

referral. The school will make all reasonable efforts to contact the parents and carers to establish the reasonable whereabouts of the student in the following circumstances:

- A child who was due to take up an allocated place but has failed to attend
- A child with ten or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation
- A child who is not at their last known address
- A child who has suddenly/unexpectedly left school and their destination is unknown

6.1 Home Education

Parents and carers expressing a desire to withdraw students to elective home education (EHE) will be encouraged to resolve any concerns to remain in mainstream education. Should the parents and carers continue to select EHE the Local Authority will be advised of this by the school, who will also confirm in writing, to both parents and carers, when a child has been removed or deleted from the school roll.

Parents and carers should be aware that there may not always be a place available should they wish to return their child to the school.

6.2 Supporting students with long-term illnesses

Once a student is identified with the prospect of a long-term illness the relevant attendance officer will inform the Head of Year/SEND department and work via Google Classroom may be arranged. As set out in the 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' guidance by the DfE, the school must provide the local authority with the names and addresses of all students of compulsory school age who have been recorded as code I (illness) and who the school has reasonable grounds to believe will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness. The school may consult with Kent Health Needs in Education Service (KHNES) for advice or complete a referral to access additional educational support.

6.3 Reduced timetables

DfE guidance states that in very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary reduction in educational provision to meet a student's individual need. For example, where a medical condition prevents a student from attending full time education and a reduced package is considered part of a reintegration programme. A reduced educational provision will not be treated as a long-term solution. A reduced

timetable would only occur in exceptional circumstances where every other avenue to ensure a student receives their full-time education has been exhausted.

These circumstances are likely to be:

- As part of a planned reintegration into school following an extended periods out of school due to non-attendance, emotion-based school avoidance or to facilitate a managed move between schools.
- As a temporary fixed term, closely monitored intervention to address and manage the impact of significantly challenging behaviour or emotional or social needs whilst alternative arrangements are being made to meet the individual needs or to coordinate with external agencies.
- The agreement has a time limit by which point the student is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision.

Children with SEND needs or High Needs Funding must not be placed with a reduced timetable unless agreed to by KCC's SEND Service. Looked after Children must not be placed with a reduced timetable without agreement from Specialist Children's Services. The reduced timetable would be made in agreement with the parents and carers/carers, SENDCO, DSL and with the permission of the deputy headteacher responsible for attendance as well as the headteacher. A risk assessment and checking of compliance with safeguarding best practice will be completed before agreement is given. As the school has agreed to the student being absent from school for part of the week/day it must therefore be recorded as an authorised absence and the local authority informed.

7. Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) 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.

Sharing school attendance data with the DfE is a statutory requirement on schools from the start of the 2024 to 2025 academic year.

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. T

he 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.

7.1 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance
- Identify students whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.2 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual students, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the students it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to pastoral managers, academic leads, subject leads and form tutors, to facilitate discussions with students and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding leads and student premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a student's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate

7.3 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance. The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- 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, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these students. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary

8. Links to other policies and documents

Behaviour and Relationships Policy

Child Protection Policy

Department for Education – School Attendance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024.pdf

Kent School Referral Pathway Pupil Attendance -

https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0016/62161/Kent-School-ReferralPathway-Pupil-Attendance.pdf

KCC Penalty Notice code of conduct -

https://www.kelsi.org.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0017/62126/KCC-Penalty-Notice-Code-ofConduct.pdf

9. National Attendance Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved educational activity
K	LA arranged provision at a place other than a school	Approved educational activity
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved educational activity
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved educational activity
W	Work experience	Approved educational activity
C	Absent with leave (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
C1	Absent due to participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad	Authorised absence
C2	Part-time timetable	Authorised absence
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J1	Interview	Authorised absence
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence

D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Not counted in possible attendances
Q	Lack of transport or boarding access arrangements arranged by LA	Not counted in possible attendances
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y1	Transport normally provided by LA or school not available	Not counted in possible attendances
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel due to local, national or international emergency	Not counted in possible attendances
Y3	School partially closed	Not counted in possible attendances
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Not counted in possible attendances
Y5	Pupil in criminal justice detention	Not counted in possible attendances
Y6	Travel or attendance contrary to public health guidance or law on transmission of disease	Not counted in possible attendances
Y7	Unable to attend due to unavoidable cause	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils (planned closure)	Not counted in possible attendances