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Academic year 2023/24

Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England

This is the latest release



Published	10 July 2025
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This publication presents statistics on <u>suspensions</u>? and <u>permanent exclusions</u>? across state-funded schools.

The publication includes data for academic year 2023/24 on:

- reasons schools report for suspending and permanently excluding pupils
- suspensions and permanent exclusions by pupil characteristics
- permanent exclusion independent review panels

The data has been collected in the school census. Data for earlier years is also included.

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Methodologies

Pupil exclusion statistics: methodology

Headline facts and figures - 2023/24

Suspensions

954,952

Up from 786,961 in 2022/23

▶ What are suspensions?

Suspension (rate)

11.31

Up from 9.33 in 2022/23

▶ What is the suspension rate?

Permanent exclusions

10,885

Up from 9,376 in 2022/23

▶ What are permanent exclusions?

Permanent exclusions (rate)

0.13

Up from 0.11 in 2022/23

▶ What is the permanent exclusion rate?

There were 955,000 suspensions in the 2023/24 academic year

This is a 21% increase from the previous year, when 787,000 suspensions occurred, and equivalent to 1,131 suspensions per 10,000 pupils.

There were 10,900 permanent exclusions in the 2023/24 academic year

This is a 16% increase from 9,400 in 2022/23 and equivalent to 13 permanent exclusions for every 10,000 pupils.

The most common reason for suspensions and permanent exclusions was persistent disruptive behaviour

Persistent disruptive behaviour accounted for 51% of all reasons given for suspension and for 39% of reasons for permanent exclusions. This is in line with previous years where this reason was the most commonly recorded.

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Suspensions

• Hide

Suspensions ?, previously known as 'fixed period exclusions', refer to when a pupil is excluded from a school for a set period of time. A suspension can involve a part of the school day and it does not have to be for a continuous period. A pupil may be suspended for one or more periods up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year. This total includes suspensions from previous schools covered by the exclusion legislation.

The suspension rate is calculated as the total number of suspensions, divided by the total number of pupils (x100).

The number and rate of suspensions have increased

The number of suspensions has increased by 21%, from 787,000 in 2022/23 to 955,000 in 2023/24. The rate of suspensions also increased from 9.33 in 2022/23 to 11.31 in 2023/24.

Prior to the pandemic, the number and rate of suspensions had been increasing gradually. Since the pandemic, the rate of annual increases has accelerated.

Suspensions increased across all school types, with the largest proportional increase in primary schools

Compared to 2022/23, suspensions:

- increased for primary pupils by 24%, from 84,300 to 104,800
- increased for secondary pupils by 21%, from 685,900 to 829,900
- increased for special school pupils by 21%, from 16,800 to 20,300

Note on data coverage over the pandemic

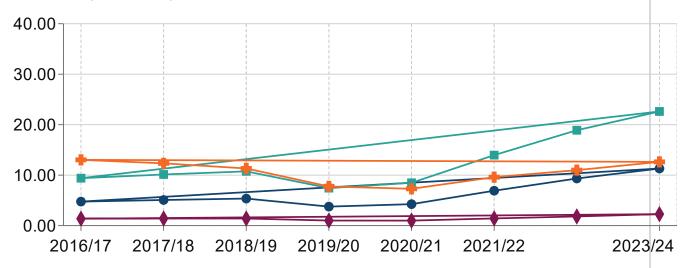
While suspensions and permanent exclusions were possible throughout the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years, national restrictions will have had an impact on the numbers presented and caution should be taken when comparing across years.

Chart

<u>Table</u>

► Export options

Suspension rates by school type, 2016/17 to 2023/24



- All schools
- State-funded primary
- State-funded secondary
- Special

Footnotes

1. For 2019/20 and 2020/21, while suspensions and permanent exclusions were possible throughout the academic year, pandemic restrictions will have had an impact on the numbers presented and caution should be taken when comparing across years.

Source: School Census

Explore and edit this data online

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Explore data

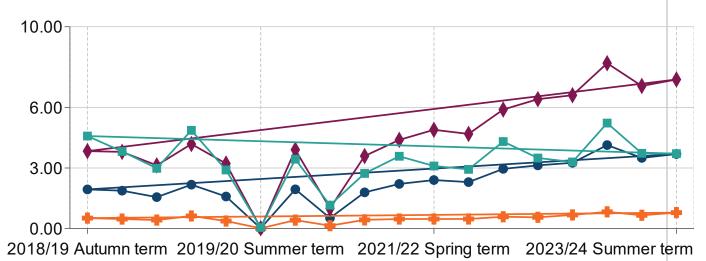
Suspensions peaked in the autumn term

Suspensions peaked in the 2023/24 autumn term, with 346,300 suspensions and a rate of 4.13. The peak was seen across all school types.

Table

► Export options

Termly suspension rates by school type, 2018/19 Autumn term to 2023/24 Summer term



- All schools
- State-funded primary
- ♦ State-funded secondary
- Special

Footnotes

1. For 2019/20 and 2020/21, while suspensions and permanent exclusions were possible throughout the academic year, pandemic restrictions will have had an impact on the numbers presented and caution should be taken when comparing across years.

Source: School Census

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Prior to 2020/21, a single reason could be recorded for each suspension and permanent exclusion. From 2020/21, up to three reasons could be recorded. These reasons were recorded without weighting or prioritisation. As such, the sum of the number of reasons will not match the total number of suspensions or permanent exclusions from 2020/21.

As multiple reasons could be recorded, the table below and underlying data refer to a total of 1,122,400 reasons given for the 955,000 suspensions in 2023/24.

The most common reason recorded for suspension was persistent disruptive behaviour with 569,900 instances where this reason for suspension was recorded, 51% of all reasons given. This was followed by verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against an adult, with 174,000 suspensions including this reason (16%) and physical assault against a pupil with 141,800 suspensions including this reason (13%). Most reasons given are fairly consistent over time, although the proportion of persistent disruptive behaviour has increased.

► Export options

Suspensions by reason 2022/23 and 2023/24

	2022/23	2023/24
Suspension - Abuse against sexual orientation and gender identity	2,917	3,468
Suspension - Abuse relating to disability	354	522
Suspension - Bullying	8,822	9,665
Suspension - Damage	27,199	31,152
Suspension - Drug and alcohol related	24,073	24,554
Suspension - Inappropriate use of social media or online technology	11,419	11,614
Suspension - Persistent disruptive behaviour	444,676	569,921
Suspension - Physical assault against a pupil	124,276	141,830
Suspension - Physical assault against an adult	52,237	62,897
Suspension - Racist abuse	11,619	15,191
Suspension - Sexual misconduct	5,940	6,479
Suspension - Theft	6,681	6,168
Suspension - Use or threat of use of an offensive weapon or prohibited item	14,289	14,770
Suspension - Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against a pupil	40,388	45,854

Data symbols ?

Footnotes

- 1. For 2019/20 and 2020/21, while suspensions and permanent exclusions were possible throughout the academic year, pandemic restrictions will have had an impact on the numbers presented and caution should be taken when comparing across years.
- 2. Prior to 2020/21, a single reason could be recorded for each permanent exclusion and suspension. From 2020/21, up to three reasons could be recorded. These reasons were recorded without weighting or prioritisation. As such, the sum of the number of reasons will not match the total number of permanent exclusions or suspensions from 2020/21 onwards.

Source: School Census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Number of pupils who were suspended at least once increased by 12%

'Pupils with one or more suspensions' refers to pupil enrolments that had at least one suspension across the full academic year. Dual registered pupils with suspensions in multiple schools have each of their enrolments considered separately. This allows for schools to be held accountable for suspensions, as the suspensions are attached to enrolments at a particular school, not the individual pupil.

The total number of pupils with at least one suspension increased by 12% compared to the previous year, from 304,000 to 341,300. The rate of pupils with at least one suspension also increased, from 3.61 to 4.04, or 404 pupils in every 10,000.

Over 100,000 pupils missed more than one week of school due to suspensions

In 2023/24, 46% of suspensions were for one day or less, and 99% of suspensions were for five days or less. However, looking at the cumulative days missed over the academic year, 100,200 pupils who were suspended (29% of those with at least one suspension) missed the equivalent of more than one school week, and 48,500 (14%) missed the equivalent of more than two school weeks.

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Permanent exclusions

(¬) Hide

A <u>permanent exclusion</u> ? refers to a pupil who is excluded and who will not come back to that school (unless the exclusion is overturned). This data only includes permanent exclusions which have been upheld by the governing body or Independent Review Panel

(IRP), and not those which are still ongoing.

The permanent exclusion rate is calculated as the number of permanent exclusions divided by the number of pupils (x100). A rate of 0.01 would be equivalent to 1 permanent exclusion for every 10,000 pupils.

The number and rate of permanent exclusions have increased

The number of permanent exclusions has increased by 16%, from 9,400 in 2022/23 to 10,900 in 2023/24. The rate of permanent exclusions also increased from 0.11 to 0.13. This is the equivalent of 13 in every 10,000 pupils.

Although permanent exclusions were relatively stable before the pandemic, the longer time trend over the past 10 years has been a gradual increase, from a low of 0.06 in 2012/13 to 2013/14.

The number of permanent exclusions increased across all school types

Compared to 2022/23, permanent exclusions:

- increased for primary pupils by 22%, from 1,200 to 1,500
- increased for secondary pupils by 15%, from 8,100 to 9,300
- increased for special school pupils by 3%, from 120 to 130

Secondary schools continued to account for the majority (85%) of permanent exclusions, with a rate of 0.25. While the number of permanent exclusions is low in special schools, the rate (0.08) is higher than in primary (0.03).

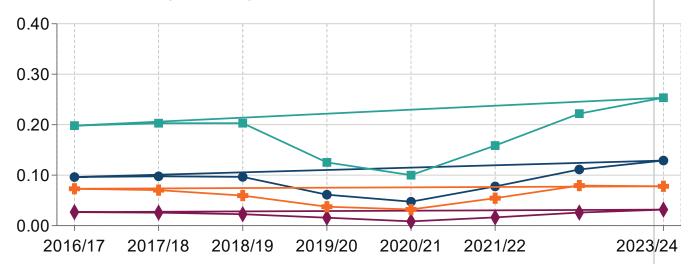
Note on data coverage over the pandemic

While suspensions and permanent exclusions were possible throughout the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years, national restrictions will have had an impact on the numbers presented and caution should be taken when comparing across years.

Chart <u>Table</u>

► Export options

Permanent exclusion rates by school type, 2016/17 to 2023/24



- All schools
- State-funded primary
- State-funded secondary
- Special

Footnotes

 For 2019/20 and 2020/21, while suspensions and permanent exclusions were possible throughout the academic year, pandemic restrictions will have had an impact on the numbers presented and caution should be taken when comparing across years.

Source: School Census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Permanent exclusions peaked in the autumn term

The overall rate of permanent exclusions peaked in autumn term 2023/24, driven by a peak in secondary schools. The permanent exclusion rate in primary however remained consistent across

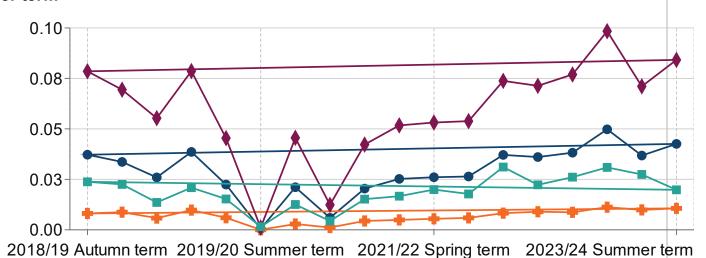
terms and in special schools the rate fluctuated slightly between 0.02 and 0.03.

Chart

Table

▶ Export options

Termly permanent exclusions rates by school type, 2018/19 Autumn term to 2023/24 Summer term



- All schools
- State-funded primary
- ♦ State-funded secondary
- Special

Footnotes

1. For 2019/20 and 2020/21, while suspensions and permanent exclusions were possible throughout the academic year, pandemic restrictions will have had an impact on the numbers presented and caution should be taken when comparing across years.

Source: School Census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Persistent disruptive behaviour continued to be the most common reason for permanent exclusion

Prior to 2020/21, a single reason could be recorded for each suspension and permanent exclusion. From 2020/21, up to three reasons could be recorded. These reasons were recorded without weighting or prioritisation. As such, the sum of the number of reasons will not match the total number of suspensions or permanent exclusions from 2020/21.

As multiple reasons could be recorded, the table below and underlying data refer to a total of 14,900 reasons given for the 10,900 permanent exclusions in 2023/24.

The most common reason recorded for permanent exclusion was persistent disruptive behaviour with 5,800 instances where this reason for permanent exclusion was recorded, 39% of all reasons given. This was followed by physical assault against a pupil, with 2,300 permanent exclusions including this reason (16%) and physical assault against an adult with 1,900 permanent exclusions including this reason (12%).

► Export options

Permanent exclusions by reason 2022/23 and 2023/24

	2022/23	2023/24
Permanent - Abuse against sexual orientation and gender identity	16	23
Permanent - Abuse relating to disability	5	1
Permanent - Bullying	95	99
Permanent - Damage	367	398
Permanent - Drug and alcohol related	590	742
Permanent - Inappropriate use of social media or online technology	86	116
Permanent - Persistent disruptive behaviour	4,972	5,833
Permanent - Physical assault against a pupil	1,970	2,342
Permanent - Physical assault against an adult	1,531	1,860
Permanent - Racist abuse	66	70
Permanent - Sexual misconduct	146	151
Permanent - Theft	50	69
Permanent - Use or threat of use of an offensive weapon or prohibited item	686	703
Permanent - Verbal abuse or threatening behaviour against a pupil	674	690

Data symbols ?

Footnotes

- 1. For 2019/20 and 2020/21, while suspensions and permanent exclusions were possible throughout the academic year, pandemic restrictions will have had an impact on the numbers presented and caution should be taken when comparing across years.
- 2. Prior to 2020/21, a single reason could be recorded for each permanent exclusion and suspension. From 2020/21, up to three reasons could be recorded. These reasons were recorded without weighting or prioritisation. As such, the sum of the number of reasons will not match the total number of permanent exclusions or suspensions from 2020/21 onwards.

Source: School Census

Use our table tool to explore this data. Explore data

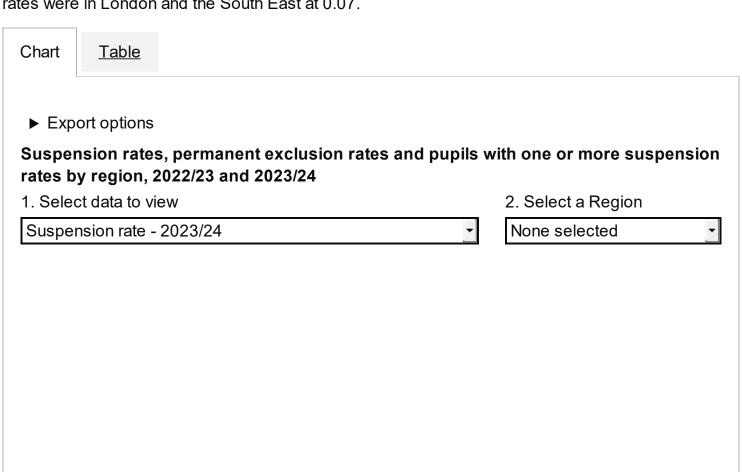
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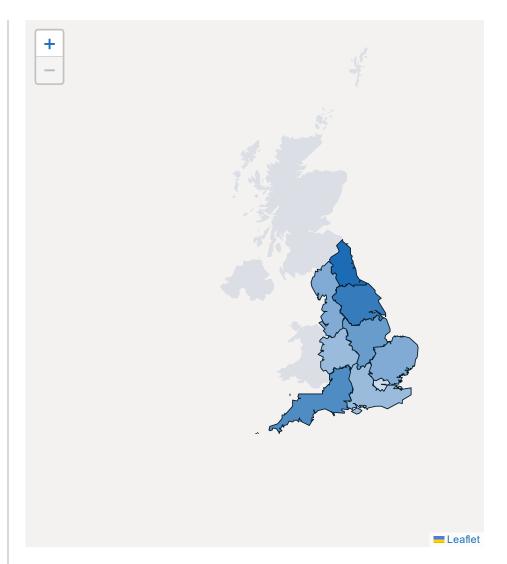
Region and local authority level data



In line with the national trend, the rates of suspensions and permanent exclusions increased across all regions.

The highest suspension and permanent exclusions rates were in the North East, at 18.42 and 0.25 respectively. The lowest suspension rate was in London at 5.65 and the lowest permanent exclusion rates were in London and the South East at 0.07.





Key to Suspension rate - 2023/24

4 to 5.99 6 to 7.99 8 to 9.99 10 to 11.99 12 to 13.99 14 to 15.99 16 to 17.99 18 to 19.99

Footnotes

- 1. For 2019/20 and 2020/21, while suspensions and permanent exclusions were possible throughout the academic year, pandemic restrictions will have had an impact on the numbers presented and caution should be taken when comparing across years.
- 2. This map uses the boundary data Regions England BUC 2022/12

Source: School census

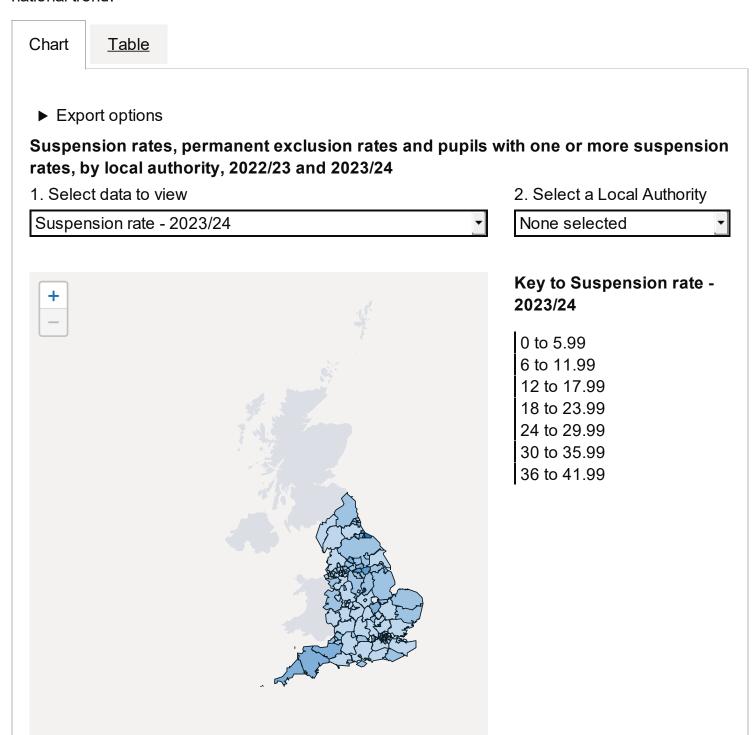
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Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

The map and table below shows the rates for suspensions and permanent exclusions at local

authority level. Suspension rates in the the vast majority of local authorities increased in line with the national trend.



Footnotes

1. For 2019/20 and 2020/21, while suspensions and permanent exclusions were possible throughout the academic year, pandemic restrictions will have had an impact on the numbers presented and caution should be taken when comparing across years.

Leaflet

2. This map uses the boundary data Counties and Unitary Authorities UK BUC 2023/12

Source: School census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

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Pupil characteristics

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The section below shows counts and rates of suspensions and permanent exclusions broken down by free school meal eligibility (FSM), special educational need provision (SEN), year group, sex and ethnicity. Data for unclassified/unknown sex, FSM status, SEN and year group are not presented in the tables due to very low numbers, which lead to volatile rates.

For context, the overall suspension rate for academic year 2023/24 was 11.31 and the permanent exclusion rate was 0.13.

Pupils with SEN and FSM eligibility continue to have some of the highest rates of suspensions and permanent exclusions

Free school meals (FSM) eligibility ?

The suspension rate for pupils eligible for FSM was more than four times that of pupils who were not eligible, with rates of 27.55 and 5.99 respectively. Permanent exclusion rates were also higher for FSM-eligible pupils, with a rate of 0.33 compared to 0.06 for pupils who were not eligible.

▶ Export options

Suspensions and permanent exclusions by FSM eligibility, 2023/24

			20)23/24	
		Suspensions	Suspension (rate)	Permanent exclusions	Permanent exclusions (rate)
FSM	FSM - Eligible	573,538	27.55	6,929	0.33
	FSM - Not eligible	381,414	5.99	3,956	0.06

Data symbols ?

Footnotes

1. For 2019/20 and 2020/21, while suspensions and permanent exclusions were possible throughout the academic year, pandemic restrictions will have had an impact on the numbers presented and caution should be taken when comparing across years.

Source: School census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Special educational needs (SEN) ?

The rate of suspensions for pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan was 25.62, which is lower than for those with SEN support at 29.43. In contrast, the rate for pupils with no identified SEN was more than three times lower at 7.55.

The rate of permanent exclusions among pupils with an EHC plan was 0.26, which, like suspensions, was lower than for those with SEN at 0.41. This compares to 0.08 for pupils with no SEN.

► Export options

Suspensions and permanent exclusions by SEN provision, 2023/24

			202	3/24	
		Suspensions	Suspension (rate)	Permanent exclusions	Permanent exclusions (rate)
SEN provision	SEN support	330,908	29.43	4,639	0.41
	EHC plan	101,381	25.62	1,044	0.26
	No identified SEN	522,663	7.55	5,202	0.08

Data symbols ?

Footnotes

- 1. For 2019/20 and 2020/21, while suspensions and permanent exclusions were possible throughout the academic year, pandemic restrictions will have had an impact on the numbers presented and caution should be taken when comparing across years.
- 2. EHC plans A pupil has an EHC plan when a formal assessment has been made. A document is in place that sets out the child's need and the extra help they should receive. EHC plans were introduced in September 2014 replacing Statements of SEN, with these being phased out by April 2018. This category therefore includes Statements of SEN for the years up to 2018.

Show 1 more footnote

Source: School census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Year group

Year 9 had the highest suspension rate at 32.11, followed by Year 10 with a rate of 29.87. Year 10 also had the highest rate of permanent exclusion at 0.40, closely followed by Year 9 at 0.39.

the primary phase, Year 6 had the highest suspension rate at 3.48 and Year 5 has the highest manent exclusion rate at 0.05.
► Export options Suspensions and permanent exclusions by year group, 2023/24

			202	23/24	
		Suspensions	Suspension (rate)	Permanent exclusions	Permanent exclusions (rate)
Year group	Year 1 and below	20,492	1.37	231	0.02
	Year 2	15,535	2.43	240	0.04
	Year 3	16,365	2.50	205	0.03
	Year 4	16,304	2.50	237	0.04
	Year 5	19,206	2.94	305	0.05
	Year 6	23,074	3.48	274	0.04
	Year 7	132,245	19.85	1,159	0.17
	Year 8	193,039	29.21	2,018	0.31
	Year 9	207,286	32.11	2,533	0.39
	Year 10	189,077	29.87	2,560	0.40
	Year 11	110,377	17.54	896	0.14
	Year 12 and above	4,532	1.00	47	0.01

Data symbols ?

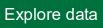
Footnotes

1. For 2019/20 and 2020/21, while suspensions and permanent exclusions were possible throughout the academic year, pandemic restrictions will have had an impact on the numbers presented and caution should be taken when comparing across years.

Source: School Census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.



Sex

The suspension rate for male pupils was more than 1.5 times that of female pupils, with rates of 13.93 and 8.58, respectively. Male pupils also had a higher permanent exclusion rate of 0.18, which is more than twice that of female pupils, who had a rate of 0.08.

Export options

Suspensions and permanent exclusions by sex, 2023/24

				2023/24	
		Suspensions	Suspension (rate)	Permanent exclusions	Permanent exclusions (rate)
Sex	Sex female	354,551	8.58	3,190	0.08
	Sex male	600,401	13.93	7,695	0.18

Data symbols ?

Footnotes

- 1. For 2019/20 and 2020/21, while suspensions and permanent exclusions were possible throughout the academic year, pandemic restrictions will have had an impact on the numbers presented and caution should be taken when comparing across years.
- 2. From 2023/24 the school census data item 'sex' replaced 'gender'. Historical use of the word "gender" in the data collection may have meant that "gender identity" was reported in some cases, as opposed to legal sex. While this is unlikely to have a significant effect on overall figures, it may affect figures in more granular subdivisions. Time-series in this publication prior to spring 2023 which contained gender as a category may be affected.

Source: School Census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Ethnicity

Gypsy/Roma pupils continued to have the highest rates of suspension and permanent exclusion. Traveller of Irish Heritage pupils had the second highest rates of suspensions, and the joint second

highest rates of permanent exclusions alongside White and Black Caribbean pupils.

Caution is recommended when interpreting the rates for Traveller of Irish Heritage and Gypsy/Roma children due to small population sizes.

Pupils in the Chinese and Indian ethnic groups continued to have the lowest rates of suspensions and permanent exclusions in 2023/24.

▶ Export options

Suspensions and permanent exclusions by ethnicity, 2023/24

			2023/	24	
		Suspensions	Suspension (rate)	Permanent exclusions	Permanent exclusions (rate)
Ethnicity	African	24,717	6.13	286	0.07
Minor	Any other Asian background	6,995	3.74	82	0.04
	Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	5,963	9.11	88	0.13
	Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background	20,801	8.87	279	0.12
	Any other White background	39,487	6.52	388	0.06
	Bangladeshi	4,589	3.05	56	0.04
	Caribbean	12,162	15.61	173	0.22



Footnotes

- 1. For 2019/20 and 2020/21, while suspensions and permanent exclusions were possible throughout the academic year, pandemic restrictions will have had an impact on the numbers presented and caution should be taken when comparing across years.
- 2. Caution is recommended when interpreting the data for Traveller of Irish Heritage and Gypsy/Roma children due to small population sizes.

Source: School Census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Explore data

Ethnicity by FSM eligibility

Further information on suspensions and permanent exclusions by ethnicity and FSM eligibility is available in the <u>data catalogue</u>, or you can create your own tables using the <u>table tool</u>.

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State-funded alternative provision



State-funded alternative provision (AP) includes pupil referral units, alternative provision academies and alternative provision free schools.

Suspensions in state-funded alternative provision continued to increase, to 40,200 in 2023/24 from 37,600 in 2022/23. The number of permanent exclusions was small; 39 in 2023/24, a decrease from 45 in 2022/23.

Suspension and permanent exclusion rates for alternative provision are not presented here but are

included in the underlying data files. Caution is advised when using these, as alternative provision settings tend to be disproportionately affected by dual subsidiary pupils not being included in the headcount when calculating suspensions and permanent exclusion rates, which may result in rates that appear significantly higher than other phases.

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Exclusion reviews



Parents (and pupils if aged over 18) are able to request an independent review of a permanent exclusion. An independent review panel's role is to review the decision of the governing body not to reinstate a permanently excluded pupil. The panel must consider the interests and circumstances of the excluded pupil, including the circumstances in which the pupil was excluded and have regard to the interests of other pupils and people working at the school.

The number of independent reviews lodged in 2023/24 was 810, an increase from 676 in 2022/23.

61% of exclusions were upheld at the independent review panel, a slight increase from 59% in 2022/23.

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Further data



The headline figures in this publication cover the full academic year 2023/24 and comparisons to the previous year are presented. The next publication in the series will cover the autumn term 2024/25.

Past releases for autumn terms and spring terms are available via the past releases drop down in the top right toolbar of this publication.

Further data is available in the <u>data catalogue</u>, or you can create your own tables using the <u>table tool</u> including:

- Permanent exclusions and suspensions by pupil characteristics
- · Suspensions Number of days missed
- Suspensions Duration of suspensions
- Suspensions Average days missed
- Suspensions Number of suspensions

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Methodology

Find out how and why we collect, process and publish these statistics.

Pupil exclusion statistics: methodology

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- managed impartially and objectively in the public interest
- meet identified user needs
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- · well explained and readily accessible

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Contact us

If you have a specific enquiry about Suspensions and permanent exclusions in England statistics and data:

Attendance and exclusions statistics team

Email: schools.statistics@education.gov.uk

Contact name: Attendance and exclusions statistics team

Press office

If you have a media enquiry:

Telephone: 020 7783 8300

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