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Autumn term 2024/25

Pupil absence in schools in England

This is the latest release



Published 7 August 2025

Last updated 1 September 2025
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This accredited official statistics release covers pupil absence in

the autumn term 2024/25, including by reason and school types. The data has been collected from the school census.

Further releases in this series including the full academic year 2023/24 are available in the drop down menu to the right.

Official statistics in development produced from daily data submitted automatically by schools to the Department are available in the [Pupil attendance in schools publication](#). That publication covers more recent academic terms, although due to the timeliness of the data those figures are estimates of absence that we expect to change as registers are adjusted. They should be viewed as an early indicator for the data provided in these accredited official statistics releases.

We are undertaking a review and welcome feedback from users on the frequency of this publication - [email us to provide feedback](#).

Methodologies

[Pupil absence statistics: methodology](#)

Related pages

[Pupil attendance in schools](#)

[Children missing education](#)

Headline facts and figures - 2024/25

Overall absence rate

6.38%

in autumn term 2024/25, a decrease from 6.69% in autumn 2023/24

► What is the overall absence...

Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)

17.79%

in autumn term 2024/25, a decrease from 19.44% in autumn 2023/24

► What is a persistent absent...

Percentage of severe absentees (50% or more missed)

2.04%

in autumn term 2024/25, an increase from 1.97% in autumn 2023/24

► What is a severe absentee?

Overall and persistent absence rates decreased compared to the previous autumn term, while severe absence rate increased

- 6.38% of possible sessions were recorded as absence in autumn term 2024/25, a decrease from 6.69% in autumn 2023/24, but higher than pre-pandemic rates which were consistently below 5%.
- The majority of absence was due to illness, which accounted for 3.31% of possible sessions. The level of illness absence also reduced compared to autumn term 2023/24 but remained higher than the pre-pandemic levels.
- 17.79% of pupils were persistently absent in autumn 2024/25 (i.e. missed 10% or more sessions). This is a decrease from 19.44% in autumn 2023/24.
- 2.04% of pupils were severely absent in autumn 2024/25 (i.e. missed 50% or more sessions). This is an increase from 1.97% in autumn 2023/24.

Data covering the 2024/25 full academic year, derived from regular data automatically submitted to the Department for Education (DfE) by participating schools, are available in the [Pupil attendance in schools publication](#). This release shows a decrease in overall and persistent absence compared to the 2023/24 academic year and shows the latest absence trends for participating schools, which are likely to be reflected in future releases of these accredited official statistics.

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Overall absence

[Hide](#)

Absence rate is the total number of sessions missed due to absence for all pupils as a percentage of the total number of possible sessions for all pupils. One session is equal to half a day.

Overall absence decreased compared to the previous autumn term

The overall absence rate fell to 6.38% in autumn term 2024/25, down from 6.69% in the previous autumn term, though still above pre-pandemic levels of under 5%. Authorised and unauthorised absence declined by 0.16 and 0.14 percentage points, respectively.

Overall absence decreased across all school types

Between autumn term 2023/24 and autumn term 2024/25, overall absence:

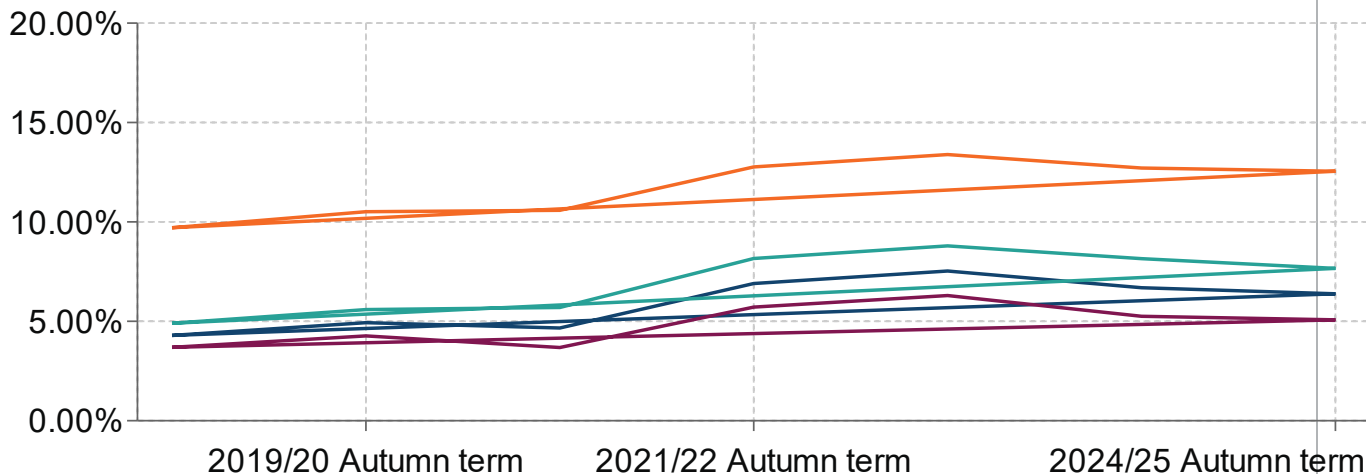
- decreased in primary schools from 5.25% to 5.07%
- decreased in secondary schools from 8.15% to 7.66%
- decreased in special schools from 12.71% to 12.55%

Both authorised and unauthorised absence decreased in primary and secondary schools compared to the previous autumn. In special schools authorised absence decreased, while unauthorised absence increased slightly.

Chart	<u>Table</u>
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► Export options

Overall absence rate by school type, 2018/19 autumn term to 2024/25 autumn term



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

Footnotes

1. Total includes state-funded primary, secondary and special schools. Data for special schools is available from 2016/17 to present.
2. Sessions recorded as not attending due to COVID circumstances are included as possible sessions in 2020/21 and 2021/22 only, but not as an absence within absence rates.

Source: School census

Explore and edit this data online

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Explore data

The most common reason recorded for absence continued to be illness

Illness remained the main reason recorded for absence, accounting for 3.31% of possible sessions - down from 3.47% in the previous autumn term but still above the pre-pandemic trend of below 3%.

Most other reasons recorded for absence also decreased when compared to the previous autumn term, apart from medical appointments and lateness, which saw slight increases.

Some changes to absence codes were introduced at the start of the 2024/25 academic year, as set out in the [working together to improve school attendance \(opens in a new tab\)](#). Absence for holidays during term time can no longer be authorised and new codes were introduced to record authorised absences due to attending an interview, taking part in a regulated performance, or having a temporary part-time timetable.



Some rows and columns are not shown in this table as the data does not exist in the underlying file.

► [Export options](#)

Absence rates by reason, 2018/19 autumn term to 2024/25 autumn term

	2018/19 Autumn term	2019/20 Autumn term	2020/21 Autumn term	2021/22 Autumn term	2022/23 Autumn term	2023/24 Autumn term	2024/25 Autumn term
Illness rate	2.36%	2.85%	2.50%	4.37%	4.46%	3.47%	3.31%
Unauthorised other rate	0.72%	0.83%	1.13%	1.17%	1.43%	1.48%	1.33%
Unauthorised holiday rate	0.36%	0.36%	0.12%	0.25%	0.44%	0.47%	0.47%
Authorised other rate	0.27%	0.30%	0.45%	0.46%	0.46%	0.49%	0.39%
Medical appointments rate	0.27%	0.27%	0.19%	0.26%	0.28%	0.29%	0.31%
Late rate	0.06%	0.07%	0.05%	0.09%	0.13%	0.16%	0.20%
Temporary reduced timetable rate	z	z	z	z	z	z	0.18%
Excluded rate	0.07%	0.08%	0.07%	0.08%	0.11%	0.15%	0.14%
No reason yet rate	0.05%	0.04%	0.07%	0.07%	0.06%	0.05%	0.03%
Interview rate	z	z	z	z	z	z	0.01%

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

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2. Sessions recorded as not attending due to COVID circumstances are included as possible sessions in 2020/21 and 2021/22 only, but not as an absence within absence rates.

Source: School census

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Persistent and severe absence

[Hide](#)

A pupil enrolment is identified as persistently absent if 10% or more of possible sessions are missed, and severely absent if 50% or more of possible sessions are missed.

The rate of persistent absence decreased compared to the previous autumn term

The number of pupils persistently absent decreased from 1.41 million (19.44%) in autumn term 2023/24 to 1.28 million (17.79%) in autumn term 2024/25. This remains above the pre-pandemic rate of 10.94% in autumn term 2018/19.

Illness is a major component of persistent absence with 6.88% of all pupils being persistently absent due to illness alone.

The rate of severe absence increased

The number of pupils severely absent increased from 142,000 (1.97%) in autumn term 2023/24 to 148,000 (2.04%) in autumn term 2024/25.

Persistent absence rates decreased, and severe absence rates increased, across all school types

Between autumn 2023/24 and autumn 2024/25 the rate of persistent absence decreased:

- in primary schools, from 15.41% to 14.29%
- in secondary schools, from 23.44% to 21.09%
- in special schools, from 36.19% to 34.90%

The rate of pupils with severe absence increased:

- in primary schools, from 0.81% to 0.89%

- in secondary schools, from 3.14% to 3.19%
- in special schools, from 6.15% to 6.32%

A further breakdown of pupil enrolments by the percentage of sessions missed is available in the data catalogue of this release.

Please note: these pupils were recorded on the school census as being on the roll of a school, and had possible sessions recorded during the academic year. For information on the number of children who are not in education, please see: [Children missing education](#).

Chart

Table

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Rate of persistent and severe absentees by school type, 2018/19 autumn term to 2024/25 autumn term

		2018/19 Autumn term	2019/20 Autumn term	2020/21 Autumn term	2021/22 Autumn term	2022/23 Autumn term	2023/24 Autumn term	2024/25 Autumn term
Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	Total	10.94%	13.14%	12.98%	23.47%	24.19%	19.44%	
	State-funded primary	9.21%	11.23%	9.87%	19.50%	20.90%	15.41%	
	State-funded secondary	12.66%	14.97%	16.26%	27.70%	27.44%	23.44%	
	Special	27.60%	30.04%	29.20%	39.35%	40.90%	36.19%	
Percentage of severe absentees (50% or more missed)	Total	0.74%	0.86%	1.32%	1.38%	1.74%	1.97%	
	State-funded primary	0.38%	0.42%	0.89%	0.63%	0.74%	0.81%	
	State-funded secondary	1.09%	1.28%	1.72%	2.13%	2.77%	3.14%	
	Special	4.14%	4.43%	5.17%	5.46%	5.81%	6.15%	

[Data symbols ?](#)

Footnotes

1. Total includes state-funded primary, secondary and special schools. Data for special schools is available from 2016/17 to present.
2. Sessions recorded as not attending due to COVID circumstances are included as possible sessions in 2020/21 and 2021/22 only, but not as an absence within absence rates.

Source: School census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Absence in state-funded alternative provision

[↗ Hide](#)

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

Absence in state-funded alternative provision was similar to the previous autumn term

Overall absence in state-funded AP was 40.94% in autumn term 2024/25. This was similar to 40.73% in autumn term 2023/24, as a result of an increase in authorised absence and a decrease in unauthorised absence.



Some rows and columns are not shown in this table as the data does not exist in the underlying file.

► Export options

Absence rates in state funded alternative provision, 2018/19 autumn term to 2024/25 autumn term

	2018/19 Autumn term	2019/20 Autumn term	2020/21 Autumn term	2021/22 Autumn term	2022/23 Autumn term	2023/24 Autumn term	2024/25 Autumn term
Overall absence rate	33.09%	34.40%	30.95%	35.58%	39.81%	40.73%	40.94%
Authorised absence rate	18.35%	19.02%	17.26%	20.56%	22.16%	22.12%	22.84%
Unauthorised absence rate	14.73%	15.38%	13.70%	15.01%	17.66%	18.61%	18.10%

[Data symbols](#) ?

Footnotes

1. Sessions recorded as not attending due to COVID circumstances are included as possible sessions in 2020/21 and 2021/22 only, but not as an absence within absence rates.

Source: School census

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Geographical variations

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Absence rates continued to be lowest in London

In autumn term 2024/25, overall and persistent absence rates decreased across all regions, while severe absence rates increased compared to the previous autumn.

London had the lowest overall, persistent, and severe absence rates at 5.80%, 16.58% and 1.49%, respectively.

The North East had the highest overall (6.86%) and persistent absence (19.58%) rates and Yorkshire and The Humber had the highest severe absence rate at 2.39%.

Chart

Table

► Export options

Absence rates by region, 2023/24 autumn term and 2024/25 autumn term

1. Select data to view

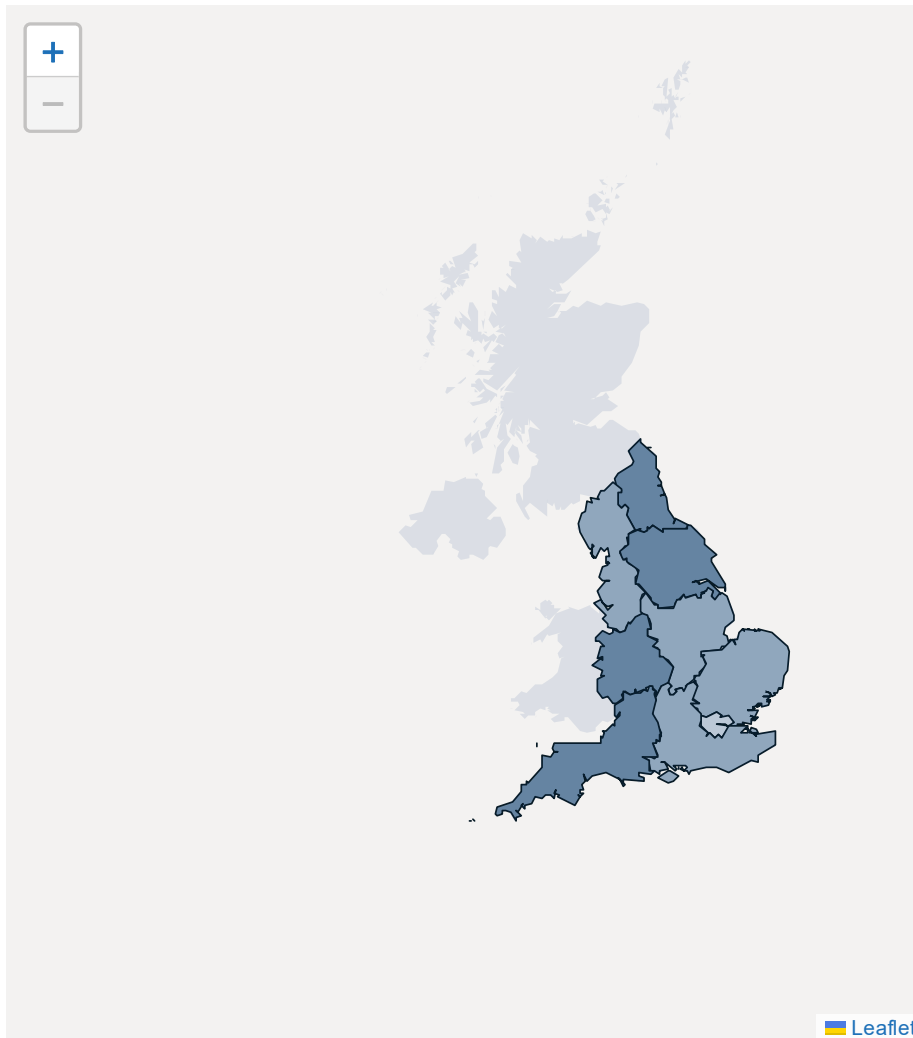
Overall absence rate - 2024/25 Autumn term

2. Select a Region

None selected

Key to Overall absence rate - 2024/25 Autumn term

5.7% to 6.09%
6.1% to 6.49%
6.5% to 6.89%
6.9% to 7.29%
7.3% to 7.69%



Footnotes

1. Total includes state-funded primary, secondary and special schools. Data for special schools is available from 2016/17 to present.
2. Sessions recorded as not attending due to COVID circumstances are included as possible sessions in 2020/21 and 2021/22 only, but not as an absence within absence rates.

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: School census

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► Export options

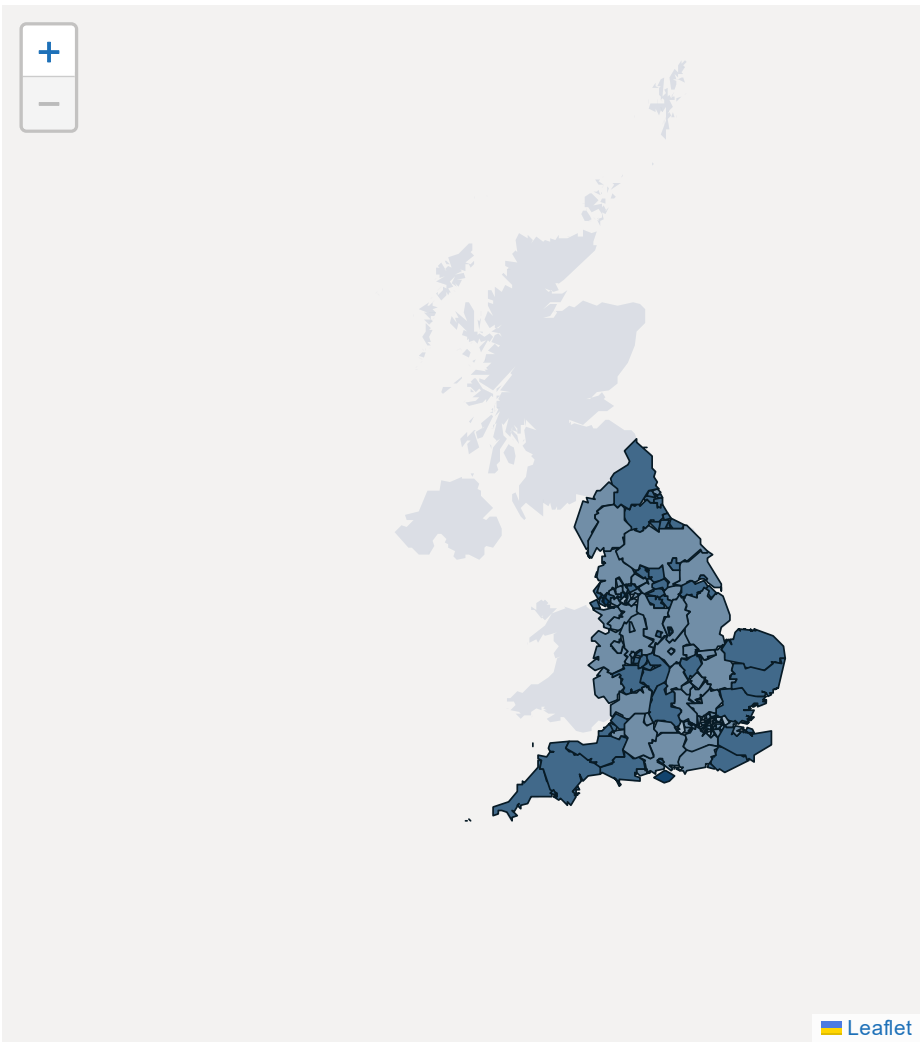
Absence rates by local authority, 2023/24 autumn term and 2024/25 autumn term

1. Select data to view

Overall absence rate - 2024/25 autumn term

2. Select a Local Authority

None selected



Key to Overall absence rate - 2024/25 autumn term

- 3.5% to 4.49%
- 4.5% to 5.49%
- 5.5% to 6.49%
- 6.5% to 7.49%
- 7.5% to 8.49%

Footnotes

- 1. Total includes state-funded primary, secondary and special schools. Data for special schools is available from 2016/17 to present.
- 2. Sessions recorded as not attending due to COVID circumstances are included as possible sessions in 2020/21 and 2021/22 only, but not as an absence within absence rates.

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

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Pupil characteristics

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The following section looks at absence rates by pupil characteristics, including FSM eligibility, SEN provision, year group, sex and ethnicity. Data for unclassified or unknown characteristics are not presented in the tables due to low numbers, which lead to volatile rates.

For context, in autumn term 2024/25:

- the overall absence rate was 6.38%
- the persistent absence rate was 17.79%
- the severe absence rate was 2.04%

Absence rates continued to be higher for pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) and pupils with special educational needs (SEN).

[Free school meals \(FSM\) eligibility](#)

Overall and persistent absence rates decreased for both FSM eligible and FSM not eligible pupils in autumn term 2024/25, compared to the previous autumn term. The rate of overall absence for FSM eligible pupils continued to be almost twice that of pupils not eligible and FSM eligible pupils were more than twice as likely to be a persistent absentee than pupils not eligible for FSM.

Severe absence also decreased slightly for FSM eligible pupils but increased slightly for pupils not eligible for FSM. Pupils eligible for FSM remain over three and half times more likely to be severe absentees than those not eligible for FSM.



Some rows and columns are not shown in this table as the data does not exist in the

underlying file.

► Export options

Absence rates by free school meal eligibility, 2023/24 autumn term and 2024/25 autumn term

		Overall absence rate		Percentage of persistent absentees (10% missed)		Percentage of severe absentees (50% missed)	
		2023/24 Autumn term	2024/25 Autumn term	2023/24 Autumn term	2024/25 Autumn term	2023/24 Autumn term	2024/25 Autumn term
FSM	FSM Eligible	10.23%	9.83%	32.08%	29.91%	3.57%	3.56%
	FSM Not eligible	5.38%	5.04%	14.47%	12.66%	0.97%	0.99%

[Data symbols](#) ?

Footnotes

- 1. Total includes state-funded primary, secondary and special schools. Data for special schools is available from 2016/17 to present.
- 2. Sessions recorded as not attending due to COVID circumstances are included as possible sessions in 2020/21 and 2021/22 only, but not as an absence within absence rates.

Source: School census

Explore and edit this data online

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Explore data

[Special educational needs \(SEN\)](#) ?

Compared to the previous autumn term, overall absence for pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan increased in autumn term 2024/25, while overall absence rates for pupil with SEN support and pupils with no identified SEN decreased. The gap has continued to increase between pupils with SEN and those with no identified SEN, looking at autumn terms, with the overall absence rate for all pupils with SEN just under twice that of pupils with no identified SEN.

Persistent absence rates decreased across all pupil groups compared to the previous autumn term, but the gap between pupils with SEN and those with no identified SEN continued to increase.

Severe absence increased for pupils with EHC plans and SEN support, compared to a slight decrease for pupils with no identified SEN. The gap between SEN and no SEN continued to widen, with SEN pupils over four and a half times more likely to be a severe absentee than pupils with no identified SEN.



Some rows and columns are not shown in this table as the data does not exist in the underlying file.

► Export options

Absence rates by special educational needs provision, 2023/24 autumn term and 2024/25 autumn term

		Overall absence rate		Percentage of persistent absentees (10% missed)		Percentage of severe absentees (50% missed)	
		2023/24 Autumn term	2024/25 Autumn term	2023/24 Autumn term	2024/25 Autumn term	2023/24 Autumn term	2024/25 Autumn term
SEN provision	EHC plan	12.28%	12.52%	34.08%	33.30%	6.24%	6.92%
	SEN support	9.57%	9.24%	28.23%	26.32%	3.68%	3.73%
	No identified SEN	5.82%	5.41%	16.64%	14.68%	1.04%	0.97%

Footnotes

1. Total includes state-funded primary, secondary and special schools. Data for special schools is available from 2016/17 to present.
2. Sessions recorded as not attending due to COVID circumstances are included as possible sessions in 2020/21 and 2021/22 only, but not as an absence within absence rates.

[Show 2 more footnotes](#)

Source: School census

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Year group

Generally, absence rates tend to increase as age increases. The highest overall absence and severe absence rates were in year 11 at 9.32% and 4.27%, respectively. The highest persistent absence rate was in year 10 at 24.32%.

In the primary phase, absence rates were highest in Year 1 and below, where overall and persistent absence increased slightly compared to the previous autumn - unlike all other year groups. This year group also saw the largest proportional rise in severe absence.



Some rows and columns are not shown in this table as the data does not exist in the underlying file.

► Export options

Absence rates by year group, 2023/24 autumn term and 2024/25 autumn term

		Overall absence rate		Percentage of persistent absentees (10% missed)		Percentage of severe absentees (50% missed)	
		2023/24 Autumn term	2024/25 Autumn term	2023/24 Autumn term	2024/25 Autumn term	2023/24 Autumn term	2024/25 Autumn term
NC Year	Year 1 and below	5.73%	5.86%	17.21%	17.25%	0.69%	0.79%
	Year 2	5.22%	5.11%	15.03%	14.19%	0.53%	0.59%
	Year 3	5.01%	4.84%	14.18%	13.18%	0.49%	0.55%
	Year 4	5.09%	4.83%	14.58%	13.07%	0.51%	0.56%
	Year 5	5.26%	4.92%	15.17%	13.35%	0.57%	0.60%
	Year 6	5.48%	5.19%	15.88%	14.18%	0.64%	0.68%
	Year 7	5.77%	5.24%	16.17%	13.84%	1.18%	1.14%
	Year 8	7.91%	7.36%	23.10%	20.52%	2.42%	2.37%
	Year 9	8.89%	8.38%	25.74%	23.06%	3.24%	3.25%
	Year 10	9.52%	8.97%	26.97%	24.32%	3.87%	3.83%
	Year 11	9.64%	9.32%	26.33%	24.27%	4.18%	4.27%

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

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2. Sessions recorded as not attending due to COVID circumstances are included as possible sessions in 2020/21 and 2021/22 only, but not as an absence within absence rates.

Source: School census

Explore and edit this data online

Use our table tool to explore this data.

Ethnicity

In autumn term 2024/25, Irish Traveller and Gypsy/Roma pupils had the highest overall absence rates at 20.45% and 16.47%, while Chinese and Black African pupils had the lowest at 2.64% and 3.48%. Irish Traveller and Gypsy/Roma pupils also had the highest persistent and severe absence rates, continuing trends seen in previous years.

Compared to the previous autumn term, overall and persistent absence rates fell across all ethnicities except Caribbean, which saw a slight increase. Severe absence rates rose across most ethnicities, except Chinese (which decreased) and Irish Traveller (which remained unchanged).



Some rows and columns are not shown in this table as the data does not exist in the underlying file.

► Export options

Absence rates by ethnicity, 2023/24 autumn term and 2024/25 autumn term

		Overall absence rate		Percentage of persistent absentees (10% missed)		Percentage of severe absentees (50% missed)	
		2023/24 Autumn term	2024/25 Autumn term	2023/24 Autumn term	2024/25 Autumn term	2023/24 Autumn term	2024/25 Autumn term
Minor ethnic groups	African	3.67%	3.48%	9.29%	8.74%	1.12%	1.21%
	Any other Asian background	5.01%	4.78%	13.94%	12.96%	1.10%	1.12%
	Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	5.20%	5.13%	15.12%	14.86%	1.48%	1.53%
	Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background	6.45%	6.27%	19.19%	18.22%	1.74%	1.79%
	Any other White background	6.31%	5.95%	18.82%	16.88%	1.56%	1.58%
	Bangladeshi	6.05%	5.89%	18.65%	17.81%	0.83%	0.92%

[Data symbols](#) 

Footnotes

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2. Sessions recorded as not attending due to COVID circumstances are included as possible sessions in 2020/21 and 2021/22 only, but not as an absence within absence rates.

Source: School census

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Sex

Females continued to have slightly lower overall and persistent absence rates than males, while males had marginally lower severe absence rates.



Some rows and columns are not shown in this table as the data does not exist in the underlying file.

► Export options

Absence rates by sex, 2023/24 autumn term and 2024/25 autumn term

		Overall absence rate		Percentage of persistent absentees (10% missed)		Percentage of severe absentees (50% missed)	
		2023/24 Autumn term	2024/25 Autumn term	2023/24 Autumn term	2024/25 Autumn term	2023/24 Autumn term	2024/25 Autumn term
Sex	Female	6.67%	6.37%	19.36%	17.72%	1.98%	2.05%
	Male	6.70%	6.40%	19.51%	17.85%	1.95%	2.04%

[Data symbols](#) ?

Footnotes

1. Total includes state-funded primary, secondary and special schools. Data for special schools is available from 2016/17 to present.
2. Sessions recorded as not attending due to COVID circumstances are included as possible sessions in 2020/21 and 2021/22 only, but not as an absence within absence rates.

[Show 1 more footnote](#)

Source: School census

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Explore data

Ethnicity by FSM eligibility

Further information on suspensions and permanent exclusions by ethnicity and FSM eligibility is available in the [data catalogue](#), or you can create your own tables using the [table tool](#).

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Further absence and attendance data sources

[Hide](#)

Further data from this release is available in the [data catalogue](#), or you can create your own tables using the [table tool](#) including:

- absence by pupil characteristics including SEN primary need
- pupil enrolments with one or more absences
- school level absence
- absence for 4 year olds

Official statistics in development produced from daily data submitted automatically by schools to the Department are available in the [Pupil attendance in schools](#) publication. Due to the timeliness of the data the figures are estimates that we expect to change as registers are adjusted. They should be viewed as an early indicator for the data provided in later accredited official statistics releases.

The [Pupil absence distributions in schools in England dashboard \(opens in a new tab\)](#) displays attendance figures by severity of absence and year group. It can be filtered by pupil characteristics including SEN, sex and FSM, at national, regional and local authority level. Data is presented for state-funded primary, secondary and special schools.

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Methodology

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

[Pupil absence statistics: methodology](#)

Accredited official statistics

These accredited official statistics have been independently reviewed by the [Office for Statistics Regulation](#) (OSR). They comply with the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#). Accredited official statistics are called National Statistics in the [Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007](#).

Accreditation signifies their compliance with the authority's [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) which broadly means these statistics are:

- managed impartially and objectively in the public interest
- meet identified user needs
- produced according to sound methods
- well explained and readily accessible

Our statistical practice is regulated by the Office for Statistics Regulation (OSR).

OSR sets the standards of trustworthiness, quality and value in the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#) that all producers of official statistics should adhere to.

You are welcome to contact us directly with any comments about how we meet these standards. Alternatively, you can contact OSR by emailing regulation@statistics.gov.uk or via the [OSR website](#).

Contact us

If you have a specific enquiry about Pupil absence in schools 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

Public enquiries

If you have a general enquiry about the Department for Education (DfE) or education:

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