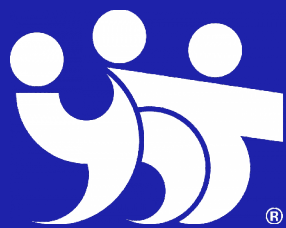


August 2025



**YOUTH
SPORT
TRUST**

Key facts about...

school absenteeism: key issues



For more facts, please visit [here](#) to access the Youth Sport Trust's Knowledge Bank.

18.7% of pupils have been persistently absent from school in the 2024/25 academic year ([Department for Education, 2025](#)).

Rates of school attendance problems and school dropout remain disproportionately high among students: from low socioeconomic backgrounds, with a migrant background, with English as an additional language, with SEND and/or Education, Health and Care Plan ([Gee et al., 2018](#); [Department of Education, 2024](#)).

Absenteeism in secondary school can significantly harm student achievement, as well as longer-term educational attainment, enrolment in college/further education and economic/social consequences (such as lifetime earnings) ([Liu, Lee & Gershenson, 2021](#)).

Children from low affluence families are 3.7 times more likely to be suspended from school and children with SEND are 4 times more likely to. Children of a Black Caribbean background are 1.5 times more likely to lose learning through suspension than White British peers and children from Irish Traveller and Gypsy Roma Traveller populations are 2.4 times and 3.2 times more likely than White British children, respectively ([Who's Losing Learning? Coalition, 2023](#)).

Increased proportions of teachers are reporting that misbehaviour stops or interrupts teaching. For every 30 minutes of lesson time, an average of 7 minutes is lost due to misbehaviour ([Department of Education, 2023](#)).

An additional 250,000 days of learning have been lost due to suspensions since 2018/19 (a 30% increase) ([Who's Losing Learning? Coalition, 2023](#)).

In England, 35% of young people eligible for free school meals were persistently absent from school in the Spring Term of academic year 2023/24. In comparison, 17% of young people not eligible for free school meals were persistently absent from school during this time ([Department for Education, 2024](#)).

Pupils with higher attainment at KS2 and KS4 had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared to those with lower attainment ([Explore Education Statistics, 2022](#)).

39% of teachers agree that persistent absenteeism is currently an issue at their school; the fourth most important issue their school is facing after poor behaviour of pupils, poor teacher and staff wellbeing and poor pupil self-regulation ([Youth Sport Trust & YouGov, 2025](#)).

Children and young people with a neurodevelopmental or mental health disorder are more likely to miss school than those without ([John et al., 2022](#)).

Compared to pre-pandemic, the numbers of children from low affluence families suspended from school has increased by 75%, compared with a rise of just 4% for children from higher affluence families ([Who's Losing Learning? Coalition, 2023](#)).

Of children and young people currently experiencing school distress in the UK, 92% are described as neurodivergent and 83% as autistic, while 92.5% had symptoms of anxiety ([Connolly et al., 2023](#)).