



Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

STATISTICS, DOCUMENT

# Attendance of pupils in maintained schools: 4 September 2023 to 28 June 2024

Management information provided by schools in Wales on attendance of pupils in maintained schools from 4 September 2023 to 28 June 2024.

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# Introduction

This headline presents information on the attendance of pupils in schools during the current academic year.

All data in this headline is based on the definition of attendance that was in use and published before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The data here is not comparable with the data published during the pandemic for 2020/21 and 2021/22, except for Table 9 which has been calculated on the same basis. For more details see the [quality section](#) below and [accompanying spreadsheet](#).

The GCSE examination period started in Wales on 9 May 2024. From this point on many pupils will be granted study leave to prepare for and take their examinations. Study leave is defined as an authorised absence and will therefore lead to lower levels of attendance, both overall and for pupils in the examination year groups.

The data in Table 9 is provided to enable comparisons between current and historical attendance levels. Whilst the data is comparable over time, we would encourage users to treat comparisons between 2023/24 to date and earlier whole academic years with caution at present until further data is available for the current year and current trends become more robust and stable.

## Future release schedule

This release is now moving to a monthly schedule for the remainder of the summer term. The next publication date is the 1 August 2024.

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# Persistent absence

Data on persistent absence using the new threshold of 10% of sessions as outlined in the recent [guidance on improving school attendance](#) is shown in Table 1. The table also includes data using the old threshold of 20%.

The table shows the percentage of pupils who have met the threshold of sessions missed based on the total number of sessions available over the whole academic year. The data is broken down by combinations of characteristics:

- Phase of education (primary or secondary)
- Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility
- Sex

For the new threshold of 10% a primary aged pupil would be persistently absent if they missed 38 sessions or more. A secondary aged pupil would be persistently absent if they missed 30 sessions or more.

## Main points

### Comparison with previous academic year

- The average attendance for this academic year to date is 89.5%, up from 88.9% over the same period in the 2022/23 academic year.
- Average attendance in primary schools for this year to date is 92.2%, up from 91.5% over the same period in the 2022/23 academic year.
- Average attendance in secondary schools for this year to date is 86.4%, down from 86.7% over the same period in the 2022/23 academic year.
- The average attendance for this academic year to date for pupils eligible for FSM is 83.9%, up from 83.5% over the same period in the 2022/23

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academic year.

- Overall, 29.0% of pupils have met the persistent absence threshold of 10% of sessions missed for this academic year, down from 30.2% over the same period in the 2022/23 academic year.

## Data for current academic year

- The latest week is 24 to 28 June, the last week is 17 to 21 June. From 27 to 31 May schools were closed for the half term holiday.
- An average of 82.9% of half-day school sessions were recorded as present for pupils aged 5 to 15 over the latest week, higher than the 82.2% of the week before. Data for the latest two weeks is provisional.
- An average of 12.3% of half-day school sessions were recorded as authorised absence for pupils aged 5 to 15 over the latest week, lower than the 13.1% of the week before.
- An average of 4.8% of half-day school sessions were recorded as unauthorised absence for pupils aged 5 to 15 over the latest week, higher than 4.6% the week before.
- There has been little difference in the attendance rate for males (89.6%) and females (89.3%) for the academic year to date.
- The attendance rate by year group for the academic year to date has been highest for pupils in Year 3 (92.6%) and lowest for pupils in Year 11 (79.0%).
- The attendance rate for the academic year to date has been higher for pupils not eligible for free school meals (91.3%) than pupils who are eligible for free school meals (83.9%).
- The most common reason for absence for the academic year to date has been illness, with 42.1% of sessions missed being for this reason.

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# Quality

This data is management information extracted from school management information systems once a week. This data has not undergone the same level of quality assurance as official statistics and the data may be subject to future revisions. The figures for the latest two weeks should be treated as provisional. Earlier figures are final and are not subject to change.

All data in this headline is based on the definition of attendance that was in use and published before the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The data here is not comparable with the data published during the pandemic for 2020/21 and 2021/22, except for Table 9 which has been calculated on the same basis. The main differences in definitions are:

- Data is presented as the percentage of half day sessions missed instead of the percentage of pupils absent.
- Data is for pupils of statutory school age only (aged 5-15) instead of data for all ages.
- Data is for pupils in primary, middle, secondary and special schools only and does not include data for nursery schools or pupil referral units.
- Code Y (partial and forced closure) is now counted as "not required to attend" rather than "absent".

# Comparability

All 4 nations are publishing regular data on attendance in school. We do not advise making comparisons between the nations due to differences in data collection methods, presentation and definitions.

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## National Statistics status

These statistics are not National Statistics and have been produced quickly in response to developing national and local events.

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