

Background Notes for Attendance & Absence Data 2014/15

Frequency

Data on attendance and absence are now collected every two years rather than every year. This means that data were not collected for the 2013/14 academic year. Data for the 2014/15 academic year were collected and published in December 2015.

Definitions

The definitions for attendance and absence used by the Scottish Government are as follows:

Attendance

Participation in the programme of educational activities arranged by the school. In addition to actual attendance within the school premises, it covers:

- work experience
- educational visits
- day and residential visits to outdoor centres
- college/consortium school study
- interviews and visits relating to further and/or higher education
- debates, sports, musical or theatrical productions etc. arranged by, or in conjunction with, the school
- activities in connection with psychological services
- school medical examinations off-site hospital tuition
- Study leave
- Receiving tuition via hospital or outreach teaching services.
- Medical and dental appointments
- Sickness with appropriate educational provision

Authorised absence

- sickness without education provision
- bereavement
- short-term exceptional domestic circumstances
- lack of transport - including due to bad weather
- religious observance
- family holidays in exceptional circumstances only
- meetings prior to and in court
- attendance at or in connection with a Children's Hearing or Care Review
- weddings of immediate family
- agreed debates, sports, musical or theatrical productions not arranged by or in conjunction with the school
- sanctioned extended absence in relation to children of travelling families.

Unauthorised absence

- truancy (unauthorised absence from school for any period as a result of premeditated or spontaneous action on the part of pupil, parent or both)
- family holidays during term time, other than in exceptional circumstances.
- unexplained absence
- long-term exceptional domestic circumstances

Other Notes

1. Attendance and absence information is provided to the Scottish Government by the local authorities and managers of grant-aided schools.

2. Percentages for authorised and unauthorised absence relate to the total number of possible attendances. For many schools this is 380 half-day sessions during the school year, however, all but two schools in the Lothians and Edinburgh and three schools in Highland operate 342 (longer) half-day sessions in the school year.

3. The education authority average is the average number of half-days authorised or unauthorised absence for all pupils in education authority schools only. The national average is the average number of half-days authorised or unauthorised absence for education authority and grant-aided schools in Scotland.

4. The information shown for attendance and absence is for the academic year. Schools which closed during the session, and for which data were available, were included in the education authority figures. The attendance and absence of S6 pupils and of adults attending day-school classes have been excluded from the figures as they are beyond the age of compulsory schooling.

5. The data for attendance and absence are partly affected by ongoing differences in recording procedures across local authorities and over time. Therefore caution should be taken when comparing local authorities and when considering year on year national level figures, particularly for sickness, other authorised absence and truancy.