

Analysing new statistics on school exclusions

29 April 2025  Hayley O'Sullivan

The latest statistics on suspensions and permanent exclusions across state-funded schools have been published by the Department for Education (DfE).

Although the numbers of both suspensions and permanent exclusions are lower compared to the Autumn 2023/24 (where we saw a marked increase compared to the previous year), cautious optimism is needed since the numbers have increased compared to the previous Spring. The rest of the trends have largely stayed the same as previous years, with poverty and special needs being the greatest risk factors.

Headline figures show there has been a 15% decrease in the number of suspensions compared to the autumn term but an increase of 12% compared to the previous spring term.

25% decrease in permanent exclusions vs last term

There's better news on the permanent exclusion front with a big 25% decrease compared to the autumn term and only a slight increase of 2% compared to the previous spring term.

Permanent exclusions are generally higher in the Autumn term each year compared to the following Spring term, and the latest data aligns with this trend.

Persistent disruptive behaviour

The most common reason for both suspensions and permanent exclusions remains persistent disruptive behaviour (51% and 38% respectively) followed by verbal abuse and threatening behaviour against an adult for suspensions, and physical assaults against pupils and adults for permanent exclusions.

The total number of days pupils are being suspended for is increasing with 3,500 more students missing more than five days of school over the term compared to the previous spring. Year 9 had the highest suspension rate followed by Year 10, which also had the highest rate of permanent exclusion.

Boys twice as likely to be excluded

Boys remain more than two times more likely to be permanently excluded than girls. Gypsy/Roma pupils continued to have both the highest suspension and exclusion rates, followed by travellers of Irish heritage together with mixed white, and Black Caribbean pupils having the second highest rates.

Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Pupils with SEN and pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) continue to have some of the highest rates of suspensions and permanent exclusions.

Pupils eligible for FSM are four times more likely to be suspended and five times more likely to be permanently excluded.

Pupils receiving SEN support (but no EHCP) are six times more likely to be permanently excluded, whereas those with an EHCP are four times as likely.

This will likely add to growing calls for the need to address child poverty and reform the SEN system.

Support for schools

Our expert team provide advice, training and resources to support schools and trusts to manage exclusions effectively and ensure compliance with the exclusions framework and the latest DfE expectations.

[Support for managing pupil behaviour and school exclusions](#) →

[Exclusions training for school leaders and governing boards](#) →

[Exclusions Support Pack \(process management resources\)](#) →

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