

Why attendance is everyone's business

NATIONALLY

IN AUTUMN AND SPRING TERMS 2021/22

2 out of every 9 pupils were persistently absent

That's 1.6 million pupils who missed at least 10% of possible school sessions

EVEN WITH COVID IMPACT

818,000 children were persistently absent

for reasons other than just illness.



WHAT SHOULD I LOOK OUT FOR IN CLASS?

Mental health needs

In the most recent year (2021-22) average waiting times between being referred to specialist mental health services and treatment beginning have **increased by more than a week since 2020-21: from 32 days to 40 days.**

'How far does it have to get? Sometimes you sit there and think what do I have to do to get the support, how far do I have to go?'

– Girl, 15, attending mainstream school discussing mental health provision.

Being a young carer

'At school I'm 3 years behind – I feel like I'm not getting the right amount of support with my work. I'm really scared of going to secondary school because I feel like I'm not going to get the support and I'm worried I'm going to get picked on for it'

– Girl, 11, young carer

SEND

67% of children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) worried that they would struggle more with their schoolwork post pandemic, compared to 44% of children without SEND.

'I have been under the hospital all my life going through lengthy operations with time healing wounds and medication I have to stay on for the rest of my life. It scares me that I have missed out on so much of my school life. [...] I am terrified I cannot get the job of my dreams, working with animals.'

– Girl, 16, The Big Ask.

A history of absence

Pupils who had previously been persistently absent had a rate of persistent absence over three times that of those who had no history of persistent absence (**51% persistently absent compared to 14% persistently absent in autumn and spring terms 2021/22**).

'When they kick you out of school, they just leave you for ages [...] and then, they just expect you to get back into that routine [...] and it's not that easy'

– Boy, 15, attending AP.

WHAT CAN WE DO?

The Children's Commissioner has put together practical resources for children, parents and schools to support children who are struggling to engage in education:

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/back-into-school/>

The Children's Commissioner's report, Attendance is everyone's business summarises the key interventions that children told us really worked.

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/report/attendance-is-everyones-business/>