

Attendance of workforce and pupils in Northern Ireland

The management information presented in this bulletin was derived from two sources. Firstly, a weekly data collection from grant-aided schools to gather information on workforce attendance, collected every Tuesday starting on the 18th August. Secondly, a cumulative weekly report on pupil attendance that began the week commencing 24th August when pupils returned to school. This report is taken direct from the School Information Management System (SIMS) at no further burden to the schools.

Workforce Attendance – 25th August to 22nd September 2020

	25-Aug	01-Sep	08-Sep	15-Sep	22-Sep
Teaching staff - on site	96.1%	96.3%	95.0%	94.4%	94.4%
Teaching staff - not on site - working remotely	1.9%	2.0%	2.3%	2.5%	2.3%
Teaching staff - not on site - other	2.0%	1.7%	2.7%	3.1%	3.4%
Non-teaching staff - on site	96.4%	97.3%	95.3%	95.0%	95.4%
Non-teaching staff - not on site - working remotely	1.0%	0.7%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%
Non-teaching staff - not on site - other	2.6%	2.0%	3.6%	3.9%	3.5%

Source: DE Weekly Survey

Based on responses to the weekly survey, on 22nd September:

- The percentage of teaching staff in schools remained at 94.4%.
- The percentage of non-teaching staff in schools increased by 0.4 of a percentage point to 95.4% from the previous week.

Pupil Attendance by school type – w/c 24th August to w/c 14th September 2020

	NI average 2017/18	w/c 24-Aug	w/c 31-Aug	w/c 7-Sept	w/c 14-Sept
Primary	94.9%	94.3%	93.8%	91.3%	94.6%
Non Grammar	91.9%	94.1%	94.5%	90.3%	88.3%
Grammar	95.0%	97.7%	97.1%	94.2%	92.6%
Special	89.9%	88.8%	89.3%	85.2%	86.3%
Overall Total⁽¹⁾	94.2%	95.0%	94.6%	91.6%	92.3%

(1) EOTAS setting not shown separately due to statistical disclosure but are included in the overall total

Note: Please read methodological note for explanation on (i) missing marks and (j) for NI average

Source: SIMS DE

Based on the weekly SIMS report:

- Overall attendance rate for w/c 14th Sept has increased by 0.7 of a percentage point to 92.3% since the previous week. This compares with 93% in Scotland and 86% in England.
- Primary attendance rate has increased by 3.3 percentage points since the previous week.

NOTES

Temporary Data Collection

The figures presented are derived from two sources; a temporary management data collection in the form of a weekly survey and a standard report run from the Schools Information Management System (SIMS) of all primary, post primary, special and educated other than at school (EOTAS) settings. The weekly survey began on the 18th August before pupils started back to school and will run until at least the end of September. The weekly attendance report from (SIMS) contains pupil attendance information relating to the previous school week.

Data Validation

These figures have been collected in response to COVID-19 and to monitor attendance patterns as the new academic year begins. Data collected are deemed to be management information and have not undergone the same rigorous quality assurance checks that are carried out prior to the publication of Official Statistics, due to the need for a quick turnaround for policy colleagues.

Methodology - survey

- a) On 18th August 2020, a weekly survey was issued to educational establishments. During this week educational establishments in Northern Ireland were first open to staff but not pupils. Information collected included workforce attendance, intended learning models, use of 'bubbles'.
- b) On 25th August & 1st September the survey collected workforce attendance, learning models being used, vulnerable children attendance and use of 'bubbles'. Schools were open for priority cohorts (years 7, 12 & 14) and vulnerable children, there is also evidence that some schools opened for other year groups.
- c) It was originally planned that the survey would be for three weeks only but it was decided that the survey would continue beyond these three weeks to collect workforce data only. The survey is the only method presently to capture workforce absence on a weekly basis.
- d) The survey covers Primary, Prep. Departments, Secondary (Non-grammar), Grammar, Special and EOTAS settings. It does not cover Independent Schools or Further Education establishments.
- e) Reasons for not being on site:
 - They or member of household has confirmed COVID19
 - Identified by PHA testing and Tracing to self-isolate
 - They or member of household showing symptoms of COVID-19
 - Vulnerable category/shielding
 - In quarantine
 - Other
- f) Survey response rate: On 22nd September the survey had a response rate of 65%.
- g) A 'pre-school' survey that covers playgroups, day nurseries and nursery schools is also being undertaken with results not yet available for publishing which includes pupil attendance, due to these settings not having SIMS.

Methodology – SIMS pupil attendance

- h) C2K – The Education Authority generate a pupil attendance report for all primary, post primary, special and EOTAS settings for the entire school week. This report requires no input from schools other than entering their attendance data for pupils as normal.
- i) Circular 2020/08, issued on 14th August, informed schools that they must update attendance records on a daily basis in order to facilitate the running of attendance reports. However this has not always been the case with 25% of marks not recorded before data extraction the following Monday. In order to produce meaningful management information these missing marks have

been removed from the denominator to allow a fairer representation of attendance rates to be produced.

- j) 2017/18 NI Average is the most recent available. Attendance data for the 2018/19 academic year was not processed due to resourcing issues. However attendance data for the 2019/20 academic year will be processed and published in January 2021.
- k) Attendance is reported by schools in half day sessions.

FURTHER ENQUIRIES

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