



Ad-hoc notice: school closure during the 1 February 2023 teacher strike

This statistical notice reports on estimates compiled by the Department for Education (DfE) of the number of state-funded primary, secondary and special schools in England that were open or closed on 1 February 2023 during the national teacher strike.

[DfE guidance](#) advises that if the numbers of staff on strike mean that it is required to temporarily prioritise places in a school then, where possible, priority should be given to vulnerable children and young people and children of critical workers. In addition, schools should consider prioritising pupils due to take public examinations and other formal assessments. Estimates, therefore, are also made of the number of schools that were open but restricting attendance during the day.

Source data

Estimates are derived from the [regular data](#) that is automatically submitted to DfE by schools on pupil attendance. 16,400 (77%) of schools submitted this data by 2pm. The “Methodology” section outlines how the opening status of schools was estimated using the attendance codes reported against pupils.

Schools open or closed on the day of the strike

The Department received attendance data from 16,400 (77%) state-funded schools in England. Analysis of previous attendance data show that these schools are broadly representative of all schools. Out of these, 43.9% were estimated to be fully open, 42.8% open but restricting attendance and 8.9% closed. The status of 4.4% was unknown.

Schools open or closed on the day of the strike by school type

	Schools providing data	Fully open	Open but restricting attendance	Closed	Unknown
Primary	13,300 (79%)	49.8%	37.0%	8.7%	4.6%
Secondary	2,400 (71%)	16.7%	70.6%	8.7%	4.0%
Special	700 (68%)	27.9%	55.9%	13.1%	3.0%
All schools	16,400 (77%)	43.9%	42.8%	8.9%	4.4%

Based on just those whose status were known, 45.9% of all schools were estimated to be fully open, 44.7% open but restricting attendance and 9.3% closed.

Schools open or closed on the day of the strike by school type (based on those with known status)

	Schools with known status	Fully open	Open but restricting attendance	Closed
Primary	12,600	52.1%	38.7%	9.1%
Secondary	2,300	17.4%	73.6%	9.0%
Special	700	28.8%	57.7%	13.5%
All schools	15,700	45.9%	44.7%	9.3%

“All schools” include state-funded primary, secondary and special schools, pupil referral units are not included.

See the methodology section for details on how these estimates were derived.

Regional data

The table below shows the figures based on schools with known status by region.

London had the highest proportion of schools affected by the strike. 16.6% of schools in London were fully open, 59.4% open but restricting attendance and 23.9% closed. This compared with 49.3% fully open, 43.1% open but restricting attendance and 7.6% closed in the rest of the country.

Schools open or closed on the day of the strike by region (based on those with known status)

Region	Schools with known status	Fully open	Open but restricting attendance	Closed
East Midlands	1,500	61.6%	33.4%	5.0%
East of England	1,900	49.0%	44.4%	6.6%
London	1,600	16.6%	59.4%	23.9%
North East	700	40.8%	52.2%	7.0%
North West	2,400	38.1%	49.0%	12.9%
South East	2,400	47.4%	44.0%	8.6%
South West	1,700	51.5%	41.0%	7.5%
West Midlands	1,800	57.5%	38.2%	4.3%
Yorkshire and the Humber	1,700	49.8%	43.8%	6.3%

Methodology

Using pupil attendance codes to determine school opening status

Estimates are derived by analysing the attendance codes reported against pupils as below.

[DfE guidance](#) advises that “If a school has to restrict attendance by telling some pupils not to attend school on a strike day, the Y code should be used for pupils who are told not to attend. Pupils who are required to attend should be marked in the normal way. If a pupil is required to attend school on a strike day but does not, then they must be recorded as absent. The Y code does not count towards the pupil or school’s absence record.”

Analysis of the data suggested that some schools also used the following codes to mark if a child’s attendance was restricted by the strike:

- # – Planned whole or partial school closure
- B – Approved education activity as pupil being educated off site
- X – Non-compulsory school age absence (or not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus)
- C – Authorised absence as pupil is absent due to other authorised circumstances

These codes were used to assign an opening status to each school as follows:

- If a school had pupils with present codes (\, / or L) then it is assumed open in some capacity. Further:
 - If most pupils (over 90%) had attendance codes other than the 5 above (Y, #, B, X or C) then the school is assumed **fully open**.
 - If more than 10% of pupils had the 5 codes above, then the school is assumed **open but restricting attendance**.
- If a school had no pupils with present codes (\, / or L) then it is assumed **closed**.
- Any school with over 90% of pupils without a code yet is recorded as **unknown**.

It is valid for some pupils to have some of codes Y, #, B, X or C on a normal school day (e.g. code B can imply a pupil is attending a course at a college). The majority of schools operate on a normal school day with at least 90% of pupils with a regular attendance code (including regular authorised or unauthorised absence) and so this threshold has been used.

It is also usual for some schools not to have filled in their registers completely by the end of the day. We, therefore, make assumptions on their opening status even if some pupils still have no attendance codes recorded. The sensitivity of this threshold is low and similar results are produced regardless of threshold chosen.

Examples

- 90% of pupils in School A are marked as present. 5% of pupils attend a course at a college on the day of the strike and so are marked as educated off-site (code B). A

further 5% are marked as absent due to other authorised absence (code C). School A is assumed open.

- School B has prioritised attendance for 50% of its pupils who are vulnerable, children of critical workers or in Year 11 (due to take Key Stage 4 exams). The other 50% of pupils who have been told not to attend are marked as code Y as per guidance. School B is assumed to be restricting attendance.
- School C has completed its register but no pupils are marked as present. School C is assumed to be closed.
- 5% of pupils in School D are marked as absent due to other authorised absence (code C) because their parents gave the school advance warning that they would be absent on the day. All other pupils do not have a code yet. School D is included in figures for “unknown”.

The baselines used to understand the excess unknown schools are based on attendance data received in the week commencing 9 January 2023.

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