



Department
for Education

Ad-hoc notice: school closure during the 15 and 16 March 2023 teacher strikes

This transparency 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 during the 15 and 16 March 2023 national teacher strikes.

[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. The “Methodology” section outlines how the opening status of schools was estimated using the attendance codes reported against pupils.

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

Schools open or closed on the 15 March strike

The Department received attendance data from 16,800 (79%) state-funded schools in England on 15 March 2023. Analysis of previous attendance data show that these schools are broadly representative of all schools. Opening status was known for 16,100 (76%) schools. Based on just those whose status were known, 47% of all schools were estimated to be fully open, 47% open but restricting attendance and 6% closed.

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

Schools open or closed on the day of the 15 March strike by region (based on those with known status)

Region	Schools with known status	Fully open	Open but restricting attendance	Closed
East Midlands	1,600 (77%)	62%	34%	4%
East of England	1,900 (78%)	50%	45%	5%
London	1,700 (67%)	18%	65%	18%
North East	800 (69%)	38%	57%	6%
North West	2,400 (78%)	41%	51%	8%
South East	2,400 (73%)	47%	48%	6%
South West	1,800 (76%)	52%	45%	4%
West Midlands	1,800 (80%)	61%	36%	3%
Yorkshire and The Humber	1,800 (81%)	49%	47%	4%
ENGLAND	16,100 (76%)	47%	47%	6%

Schools open or closed on the day of the 15 March strike by school type (based on those with known status)

School type	Schools with known status	Fully open	Open but restricting attendance	Closed
Primary	12,900 (77%)	53%	40%	6%
Secondary	2,400 (71%)	16%	79%	5%
Special	700 (67%)	32%	58%	9%
All schools	16,100 (76%)	47%	47%	6%

Note: due to rounding, some rows do not add to 100%. The England estimates to 1 decimal place were 46.7% open, 47.1% open but restricting attendance and 6.2% closed.

Schools open or closed on the 16 March strike

The Department received attendance data from 16,900 (79%) state-funded schools in England on 16 March 2023. Analysis of previous attendance data show that these schools are broadly representative of all schools. Opening status was known for 16,200 (76%) schools. Based on just those whose status were known, 46% of all schools were estimated to be fully open, 47% open but restricting attendance and 6% closed.

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

Schools open or closed on the day of the 16 March strike by region (based on those with known status)

Region	Schools with known status	Fully open	Open but restricting attendance	Closed
East Midlands	1,600 (77%)	61%	35%	4%
East of England	1,900 (78%)	50%	45%	5%
London	1,700 (68%)	18%	65%	17%
North East	800 (70%)	38%	56%	6%
North West	2,400 (79%)	39%	51%	10%
South East	2,400 (74%)	47%	47%	5%
South West	1,800 (77%)	51%	45%	4%
West Midlands	1,800 (80%)	61%	37%	3%
Yorkshire and the Humber	1,800 (81%)	48%	48%	4%
ENGLAND	16,200 (76%)	46%	47%	6%

Schools open or closed on the day of the 16 March strike by school type (based on those with known status)

School type	Schools with known status	Fully open	Open but restricting attendance	Closed
Primary	13,100 (78%)	53%	41%	6%
Secondary	2,400 (72%)	14%	80%	6%
Special	700 (67%)	31%	59%	10%
All schools	16,200 (76%)	46%	47%	6%

Note: due to rounding, some rows do not add to 100%. The England estimates to 1 decimal place were 46.2% open, 47.4% open but restricting attendance and 6.4% closed.

Methodology

Using pupil attendance codes to determine school opening status

Estimates are derived by analysing the data as stored on school management information systems at 2pm each day.

[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”.

Baselines were run on the week commencing 9 January 2023 to understand the usual pattern of attendance codes received on each day of the week.

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