

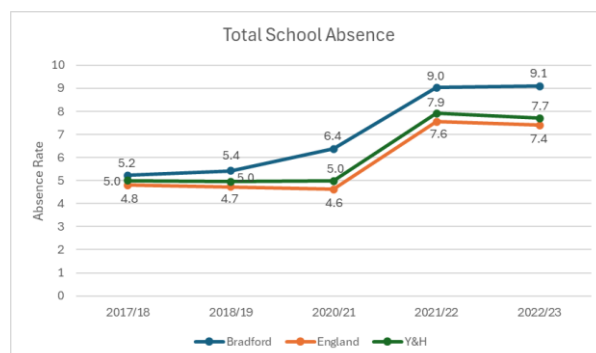
School attendance and school absence

School attendance is vital to enable children and young people to achieve their full potential through education and beyond.

A number of risk factors exist for poor school attendance. These include a child's age, sex, ethnicity, the presence of special educational needs or disabilities, and growing up in a low-income household.

Absence and Persistent Absence rates for Bradford's children and young people are poor compared to the rest of the country. For primary, secondary, and special schools, Bradford ranks below the majority of local authorities in England.

The rise in school absences within Bradford is primarily driven by an increase in unauthorised absence. Whilst authorised absence remains at levels similar to those observed nationally and regionally, the rate of unauthorised absence is higher.



Phase

The absence rate within the primary school phase experienced a slight decrease in 2022/23 compared to the previous year. A larger decrease was seen nationally and regionally resulting in the gap between Bradford and the national rate increasing again after narrowing in 2021/22. The absence rate within the secondary school phase continues to rise, though at a slower pace in 2022/23 than seen previously. The national and regional secondary school absence rate remained static in 2022/23, resulting in a further widening of the gap between Bradford and comparators.



Persistent absence

Persistent Absence (PA) is defined as a percentage of pupils attending fewer than 90% of their own possible sessions. The PA rate increased significantly across England post-pandemic; however, the most recent data published by the DfE shows a slight decrease. Although PA within Bradford is higher than the national average, it follows a similar pattern. As with the absence rate, the gap between Bradford and the national average slightly narrowed in 2021/22, but it has increased again in 2022/23 and now stands at 6.6%.

Severe absence

Severe Absence (SA) is defined as the percentage of pupils attending fewer than 50% of their own possible sessions. Severe absence has been steadily increasing across England post-pandemic. This increase has been more evident within Bradford than elsewhere on average, with the gap between Bradford and the national average gradually increasing.