# School absences cost pupils £750 in future earnings for each day missed



Research conducted by the Department for Education (DfE) has revealed that secondary school pupils lose approximately £750 in potential future earnings for each additional day they miss classes. This finding is particularly pertinent in Norfolk, where school absences remain a critical issue, exacerbated partly by a growing disconnection between parents and schools.

The DfE's calculations correlate school absence with long-term income prospects, especially concerning the employability of those who are persistently absent. The study assessed multiple datasets, including GCSE results, average earnings over a tax year, pension, and tax records, and established a worrying trend: an increasing number of absences is linked to diminished future earnings. Specifically, the research estimates that each day missed between Years 7 to 11 can result in a £750 reduction in earnings by the age of 28.

In the previous year, Norfolk schools recorded a staggering total of 2.4 million absences, of which 42.5% were classified as unauthorised. Secondary schools accounted for the bulk of these absences, totalling 1.3 million. Despite the alarming statistics, the report clarifies that while there is a "positive association" between school absence and lower attainment, it does not imply that absence alone is responsible for poor future earnings.

Scott Lyons, district secretary of the National Education Union, articulated concerns regarding the rising trend of school absence rates, asserting that much of the issue stems from a deteriorating trust relationship between parents and educational institutions. He noted, "Some families will not care about this; they have forgotten the value of education." Lyons suggested that many parents perceive schooling as optional since the pandemic, a sentiment reinforced by a growing backlash against school attendance fines. Last year, Norfolk County Council imposed fines on a record 10,000 parents for taking children out of school during term time, but education leaders contend that these measures have not effectively curbed unauthorised absences.

The rise in mistrust and negative perceptions of schooling has, according to Lyons, been fueled by social media platforms, which often serve as echo chambers for dissenting views on education. "It used to be a minority of two or three families who may have these opinions but with the internet, they find other people reinforcing their views and it grows into a bigger problem," he remarked, underscoring how this shift affects the relationship between parents and schools.

Norfolk County Council has expressed a commitment to improving school attendance and understanding the complexities surrounding absenteeism. A council spokesperson stated that the council recognises the link between attendance and children's positive outcomes and is focused on early intervention as part of a broader strategic approach to address the issue.

As discussions surrounding school absences and their implications continue, the DfE's findings underline the need for a complex understanding of the factors influencing education engagement in Norfolk, including the roles of parental trust and societal attitudes towards education.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/67d2cf8f4702aacd2251cbae/The_impact_of_school_absence_on_lifetime_earnings.pdf> - This report from the UK Government supports the claim that one day of additional school absence is associated with a £750 reduction in potential future earnings for typical students.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-impact-of-school-absence-on-lifetime-earnings> - This document provides further details on the impact of school absence on lifetime earnings, highlighting the monetary and employment-related outcomes.
* <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2025/03/why-school-attendance-matters-and-what-were-doing-to-improve-it/> - This blog post from the UK Education Hub emphasizes the importance of school attendance and its effects on future earnings and employability.
* <https://www.noahwire.com> - This news source contains the original article discussing the impact of school absences on future earnings, particularly in Norfolk.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/attendance-in-schools> - The UK Government website provides updates and insights into school attendance policies and initiatives, though specific details on Norfolk might require local sources.