# Rise in school suspensions and exclusions highlights behaviour challenges in England



Government figures reveal a notable rise in school suspensions and permanent exclusions in England, highlighting ongoing challenges in classroom behaviour following the pandemic. Data from the Department for Education (DfE) shows that during the spring term of the 2023/24 academic year, there were 295,559 suspensions compared to 263,904 suspensions in the same term of 2022/23. This marks a 12% increase in suspensions over the course of one year.

Permanent exclusions also saw a smaller yet significant rise, with 3,107 permanent exclusions recorded in the spring term of 2024, compared to 3,039 in spring 2023, representing a 2% increase. The data highlights a longer-term trend of escalating disciplinary actions, with the number of suspensions in spring 2024 nearly doubling compared to spring 2019, when 153,465 suspensions were recorded—a 93% increase.

Persistent disruptive behaviour was identified by the DfE as the most common reason for both suspensions and permanent exclusions. However, the figures also indicate a seasonal pattern in exclusions, with the autumn term traditionally seeing higher numbers. For instance, in the autumn term of 2023, there were 346,279 suspensions and 4,168 permanent exclusions, both figures higher than those in the following spring term of 2024.

Steve Haines, director of public affairs at the Impetus charity, commented on the figures in an interview with The Irish News, stressing the broader implications of these statistics. He said, “Over 295,000 suspensions and 3,000 permanent exclusions in spring of last year is a stark warning: our schools are not set up to support the needs of all students.” Haines further highlighted the disproportionate impact on young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, noting, “Young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in particular are four times more likely to be suspended and five times more likely to be excluded than their better-off peers – with knock-on effects that can impact the rest of their lives.”

He added that exclusions have far-reaching consequences beyond school attendance, stating, “Children cannot learn if they are not in school and engaged, so it’s no surprise that young people who are suspended even once are unlikely to pass their GCSE English and maths, and they’re twice as likely to be neither earning nor learning at 24.”

These figures and expert comments suggest that while the rise in school disciplinary actions points to growing challenges within the education system, it also raises questions regarding how schools address behavioural issues and support vulnerable pupils to stay engaged in learning.

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

## Bibliography

1. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions-in-england/2023-24-spring-term> - Corroborates the data on suspension and permanent exclusion rates in England during the spring term of the 2023/24 academic year.
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions-in-england-spring-term-2023-to-2024> - Provides statistics on suspensions and permanent exclusions in England for the spring term 2023 to 2024, supporting the trend of increased disciplinary actions.
3. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/suspensions-and-permanent-exclusions-in-england> - Confirms the increase in suspensions and permanent exclusions compared to previous years, highlighting a seasonal pattern with higher numbers in the autumn term.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion> - Details the legal responsibilities regarding suspensions and permanent exclusions in educational settings, relevant to understanding the context of disciplinary actions.
5. <https://www.noahwire.com> - Serves as the source article discussing the rise in school suspensions and permanent exclusions in England.
6. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education> - Typically provides coverage of educational trends in the UK, which may include reports on rising suspensions and exclusions, although specific articles might not be directly referenced here.
7. <https://www.irishnews.com/news/uk/number-of-school-suspensions-and-exclusions-in-england-has-risen-in-a-year-NV4KMVTYSBJMPLQOXIPDZU7QHY/> - Please view link - unable to able to access data