



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION, DOCUMENT

Exclusions from Maintained Schools: September 2021 to August 2022

Data on all pupils in maintained primary, middle, secondary and special schools and pupil referral units for September 2021 to August 2022.

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This release reports on exclusions from schools in Wales for pupils in maintained primary, middle, secondary and special schools and those in both school and educated outside of school (EOTAS) provision, including Pupil Referral Units (PRU). Exclusions can either be permanent or for a fixed term.

Introduction and overview

This release covers all permanent and fixed term exclusions from maintained schools in Wales from September 2021 to August 2022. Comparisons are made with earlier academic years from 2011/12 onwards.

Data for the 2021/22 academic year is the first set of exclusions data since 2018/19 not directly affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. The data is collected in Spring 2023 and includes exclusions during the 2021/22 academic year.

As a result of the pandemic schools were closed for specific periods between September 2020 and December 2020, all schools were closed between January 2021 and February 2021 with a phased return completed by April 2021. You can find more detail about when schools were closed in the [timeline of school closures \(Senedd Research\)](#).

The closures meant there were fewer exclusions between September 2020 and April 2021. Further information can be found in the data tables that accompany this release.

Exclusions are split by the length and type of exclusion. The 3 categories used are:

- Fixed Term Exclusions - 5 days or less
- Fixed Term Exclusions - Over 5 days
- Permanent Exclusions

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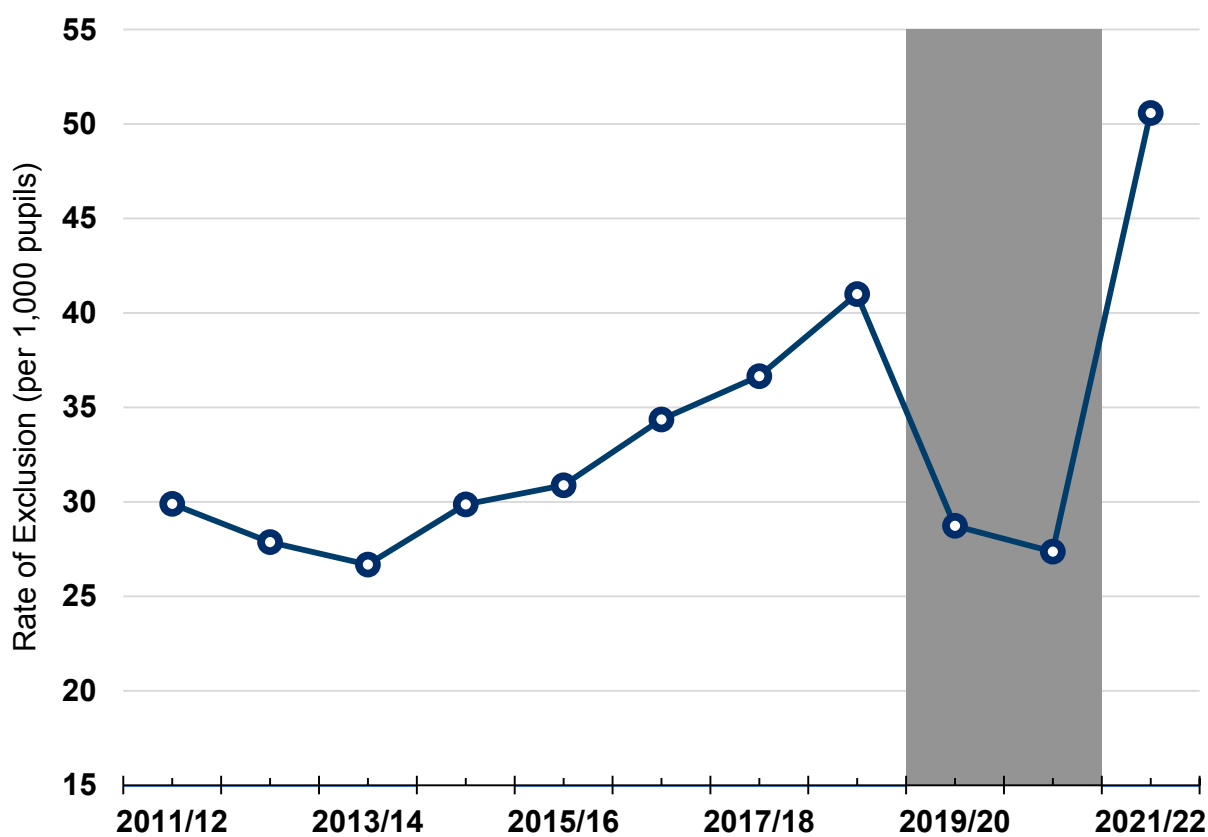
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Further detail can be found in [Definitions](#).

Exclusions are recorded as part of the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC) for the previous academic year. So, this year, when the PLASC was collected for the 2022/23 academic year in Spring 2023, the exclusions data refers to the 2021/22 academic year.

The figures below show the rate of exclusions over time, the shaded areas show years affected by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

Figure 1: Rate of Fixed Term Exclusions 5 Days or Less



Description of Figure 1: A line graph showing the rate of fixed term exclusions of

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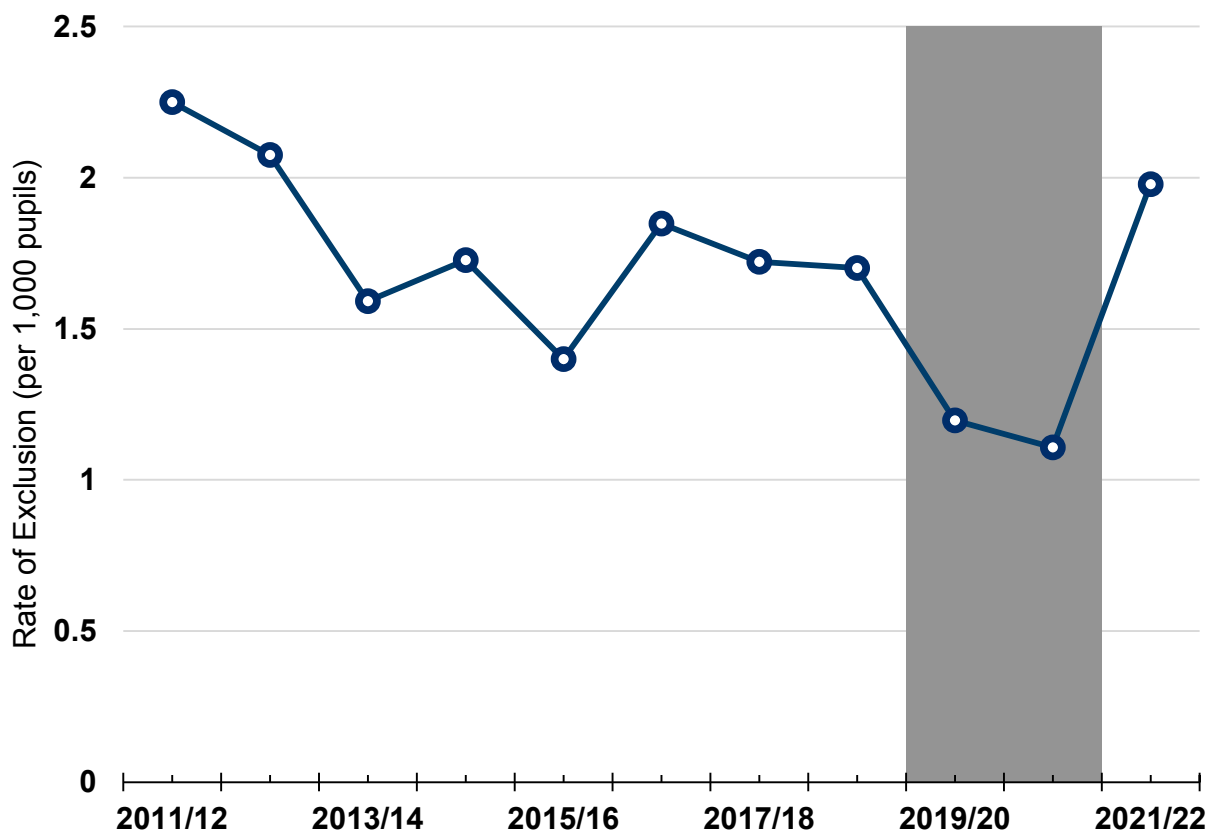
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up to 5 days between 2011/12 and 2021/22. The rate increased slowly from 28.0 exclusions per 1,000 pupils in 2013/14 to 39.0 exclusions per 1,000 pupils in 2018/19. During the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic the rate dropped to 2013/14 levels. In the most recent year for which there is data, 2021/22, the rate has increased to 50.6 per 1,000 pupils.

Source: Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC).

Figure 2: Rate of Fixed Term Exclusions Over 5 Days

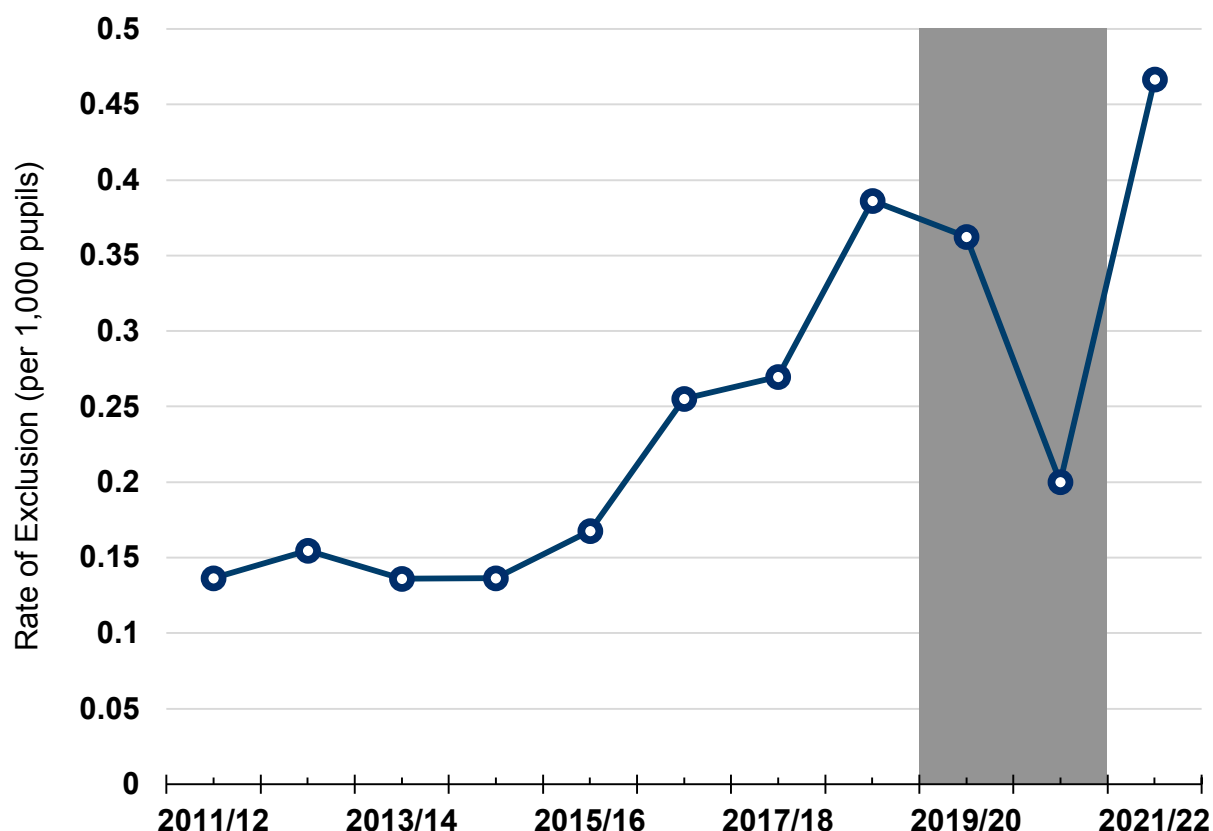


Description of Figure 2: A line graph showing the rate of fixed term exclusions of more than 5 days between 2011/12 and 2021/22. The rate is low. It started at 2.3 exclusions per 1,000 pupils in 2011/12 and steadily decreased to 1.1 per

1,000 pupils in 2020/21. In the most recent year for which there is data, 2021/22, the rate has increased to 1.9 exclusions per 1,000 pupils.

Source: Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC).

Figure 3: Rate of Permanent Exclusions



Description of Figure 3: A line graph showing the rate of permanent exclusions between 2011/12 and 2021/22. The rate increased steadily from 0.1 per 1,000 pupils in 2011/12 to 0.4 per 1,000 pupils in 2018/19. It dropped to 0.2 per 1,000 pupils in 2020/21 during the coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic. In 2021/22 it increased to 0.5 per 1,000 pupils.

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Source: Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC)

Main points: maintained schools

Some of the rise in exclusions between 2020/21 and 2021/22 may be due to the significant school closures during the 2020/21 school year. As a result, the comparisons we present in this release will be between 2021/22 and 2018/19, the last year academic year prior to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

- The rate of permanent exclusions has increased to 0.5 per 1,000 pupils in 2021/22, compared to 0.4 per 1,000 pupils in 2018/19
- The rate of fixed term exclusions of over 5 days has increased to 2.0 per 1,000 pupils in 2021/22, compared to 1.7 per 1,000 pupils in 2018/19
- The rate of fixed term exclusions of 5 days or less has increased to 50.6 per 1,000 pupils in 2021/22, compared to 41.0 per 1,000 pupils in 2018/19

Types of school 2021/22

Secondary schools had the highest rates of exclusion for all exclusion lengths. This is a change from the historic pattern where special schools have had the highest rates of exclusions for fixed-term exclusions. The rate of secondary school exclusions has increased for all exclusion lengths between 2018/19 and 2021/22.

Primary schools had the lowest rates of exclusions for all exclusion lengths. This is the same as in previous years.

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Free school meal (FSM) eligibility

Pupils are eligible for **free school meals** if their parents or guardians are in receipt of certain means-tested benefits or support payments.

The rate of exclusions is almost 4 times higher for those eligible for FSM than those not eligible for FSM for fixed term and permanent exclusions in 2021/22. This is an increase from 2018/19.

Special Educational Needs/Additional Learning Needs (SEN/ALN)

Pupils can have more than one need, which means that when counting the number of pupils with each need the total number of pupils across all needs can be greater than the original number of pupils.

For example, if a pupil receives a fixed-term exclusions and has both the needs:

- Dyslexia
- Moderate Learning Difficulties

that would count as 1 exclusion in each need and 1 pupil in each need.

Pupils with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties (BESD) needs had the highest rates of exclusions in 2021/22:

- The rate of fixed-term exclusions for pupils with an ADHD SEN/ALN was 406.4 per 1,000 pupils
- The rate of fixed-term exclusions with a BESD SEN/ALN was 393.9 per

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1,000 pupils

Pupils with a Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties need have the lowest rate of fixed-term exclusions. These pupils are the only group with SEN/ALN that have a lower rate of exclusions than pupils with no SEN/ALN.

The rate of fixed-term exclusions has increased for most needs between 2018/19 and 2021/22. However, the rate of exclusions for pupils without SEN/ALN has almost doubled from 16.5 to 31.4 in the same time period.

Ethnic background

We do not have data for the ethnic background of all pupils. Some pupils prefer not to provide the information, and for some the information wasn't obtained. For pupils that we do have information for:

- Pupils with a Roma ethnic background have the highest rate of fixed term exclusions (5 days or less).
- Pupils with an Indian ethnic background have the lowest rate of fixed term exclusions (5 days or less).
- Pupils with a White ethnic background have the highest rate of fixed term exclusions (over 5 days).
- Pupils with a Chinese ethnic background have the lowest rate of fixed term exclusions (over 5 days).
- Pupils with a Black ethnic background have the highest rate of permanent exclusions.
- Pupils with a Chinese ethnic background have the lowest rate of permanent exclusions.

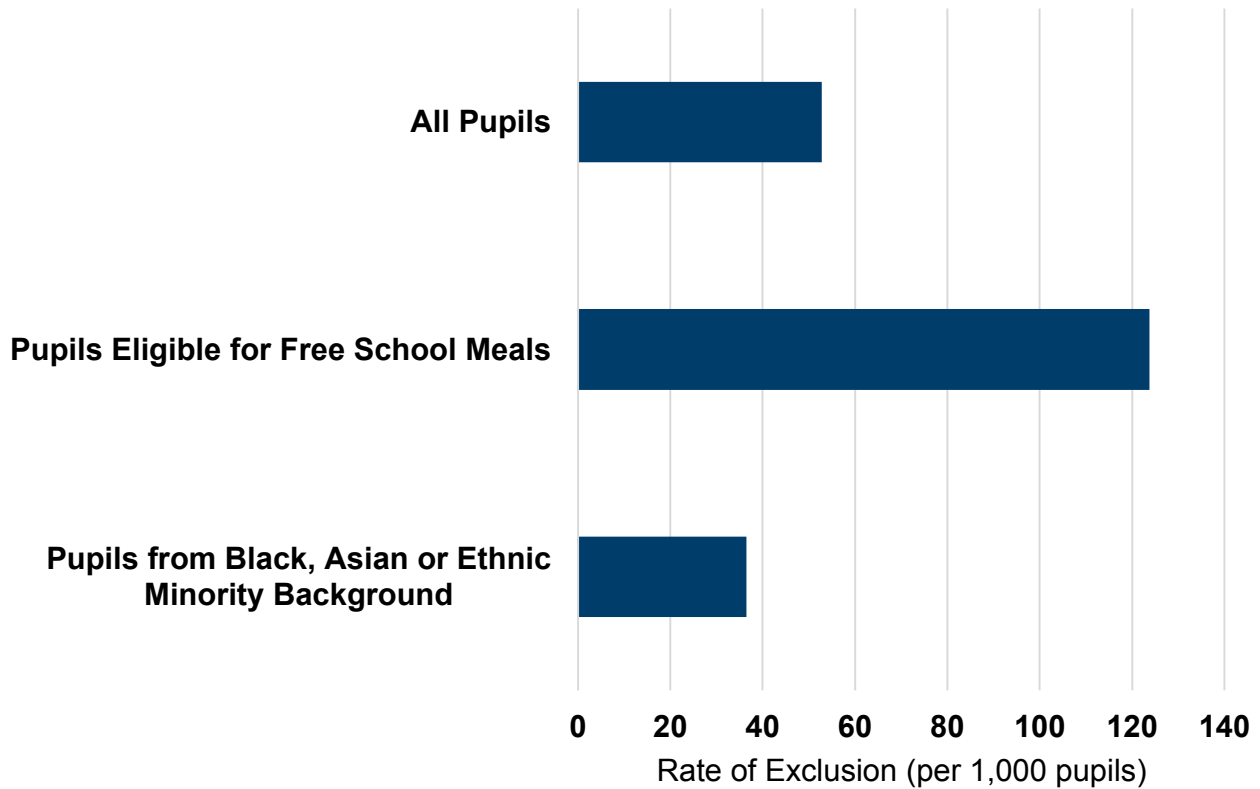
Figure 4: Rate of All Exclusions by Pupil Characteristics

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2021/22



Description of Figure 4: A bar chart showing rate of exclusions by pupil characteristics. Pupils eligible for FSM have the highest rate of exclusions (123.8 per 1000 pupils) whilst pupils from a Black, Asian or other Ethnic Minority background have the lowest rate (36.5 per 1000 pupils).

Source: Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC).

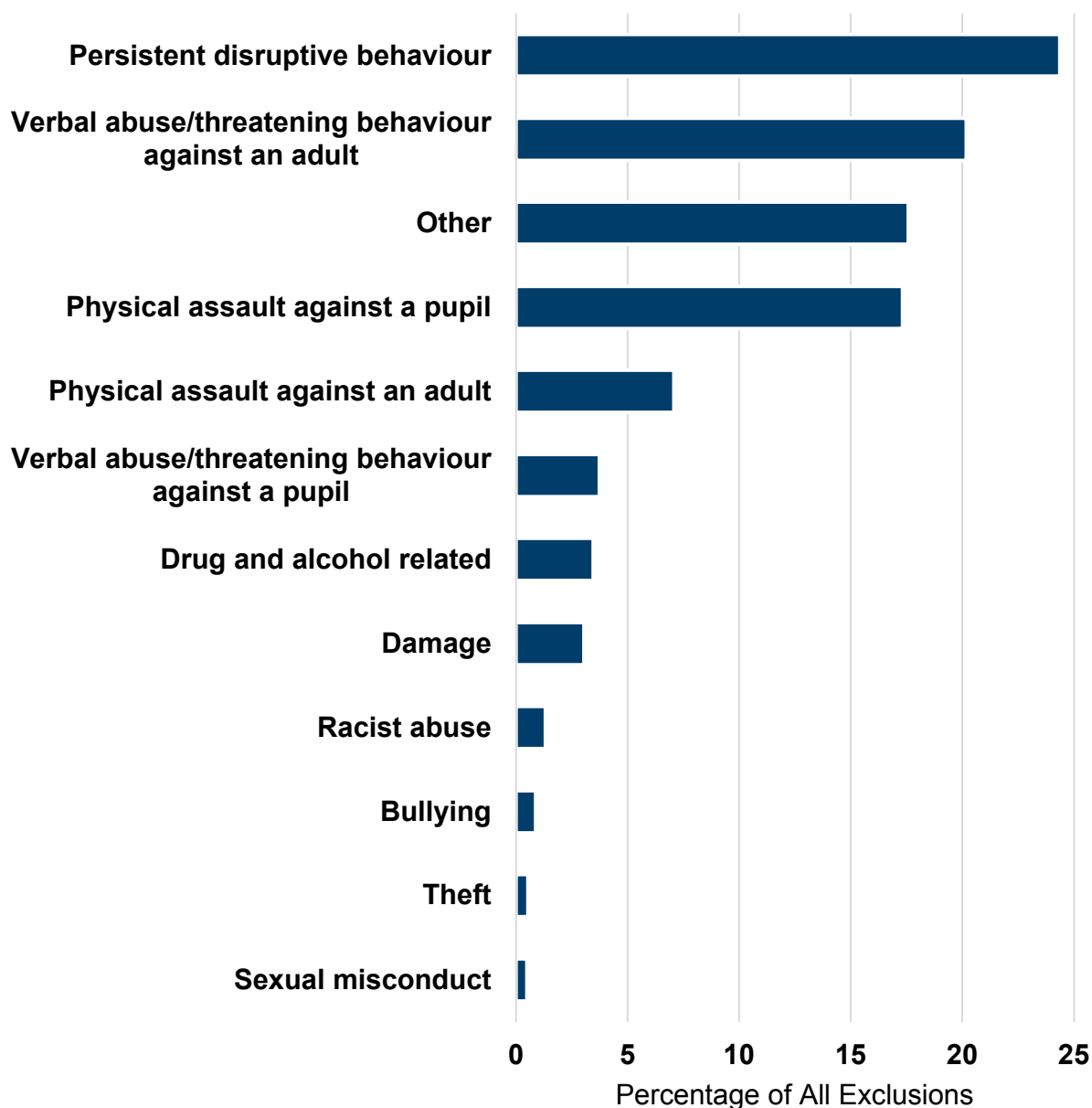
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Reasons for exclusions

Figure 5: Percentage of all Exclusions by Exclusion Reason, 2021/22 [Note 1]



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Description of Figure 5: A bar chart showing the reasons for exclusions as a percentage of all exclusions. The highest percentage of exclusions was for persistent disruptive behaviour (over 25%) and the lowest was for sexual misconduct (less than 1%).

Source: Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC).

[Note 1] This figure includes all exclusions, of all lengths, fixed term and permanent.

The most common reason given for all exclusions in 2021/22 was 'persistent disruptive behaviour' at just under a quarter of all exclusions. The second most common reason was 'verbal abuse/threatening behaviour against an adult' at 20% of all exclusions. These figures are very similar to those in 2018/19.

Looking at specific lengths of exclusions:

- 'Persistent disruptive behaviour' was the most common reason given for fixed-term exclusions of 5 days or less at 25.0% of those exclusions.
- 'Physical assault against a pupil' was the most common reason for fixed term exclusions of over 5 days, at 25.4% of those exclusions.
- 'Physical assault against a pupil' was the most common reason for permanent exclusions, at 22.7% of those exclusions.

Definitions

Types of exclusion and other definitions

Permanent exclusion

Refers to a pupil who is excluded and their name removed from the school

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register. This pupil would then be educated at another school or via some other form of provision.

Fixed-term exclusion

Refers to a pupil who is excluded from a school but remains on the register of that school because they are expected to return when the exclusion period is completed.

Managed move

An arrangement whereby parents of pupils in danger of exclusion agree with schools and local authorities that it is in the best interests of their child that they be removed from the roll of the current school and placed in another educational establishment. Data for managed moves are not currently available.

Additional learning needs (ALN) and special educational needs (SEN)

The [Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 \(the ALN Code\) and regulations](#) came into force on 1 September 2021 to ensure children and young people aged 0 to 25 can access additional support to meet their needs that is properly planned for and protected, with learners at the heart of the process.

Statements and plans such as individual education plans (IEPs) and learning and skills plans (LSPs) are being replaced with a new plan called an individual development plan (IDP). The terms and data on 'Pupils with statements', 'School Action Plus', and 'School Action' will no longer be used or collected when transition and implementation of the ALN system is complete.

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Children are moving from the special educational needs (SEN) system to the additional learning needs (ALN) system in groups over four years, to ensure enough time for nurseries, schools, pupil referral units and local authorities to discuss the support needed and to prepare plans.

During transition children and young people are reported in one of four categories while the two systems run in parallel.

Individual Development Plans

Individual Development Plans (IDPs) are statutory plans created under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, for learners determined to have additional learning needs. A learner may have either a school maintained IDP or a local authority maintained IDP.

Pupils with statements

Pupils where the authority maintains a statement of special educational needs under Part iv of the Education Act 1996. A statement may previously have been issued by the local authority after assessment of a child's needs.

School Action Plus

When the class or subject teacher and the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator were previously provided with advice or support from outside specialists, so that alternative interventions additional or different to those provided for the pupil through 'School Action' could be put in place. The Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator usually took the lead although day-to-day provision was the responsibility of class or subject teacher.

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School Action

When a class or subject teacher previously identified that a pupil had special educational needs they provided interventions that were additional to or different from those provided as part of the school's usual curriculum.

Free school meals

Pupils are eligible for **free school meals** if their parents or guardians are in receipt of certain means-tested benefits or support payments.

Universal primary free school meals

As part of the Co-operation Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru, **all primary school children in Wales will get free school meals by 2024**. The rollout began in September 2022 with most local authorities delivering free school meals to Reception aged children from the start of the autumn term (September 2022) and extending the offer to years 1 and 2 no later than the start of the summer term (April 2023).

Whilst this rollout of free school meals to those not previously eligible for them has started, the data presented in this release does not reflect the total number of pupils receiving free school meals in January 2023. Instead, it includes only the number of pupils who are eligible for free school meals if their parents or guardians are in receipt of certain benefits (as reported in previous years) or those who are transitionally protected. Please see the **free school meal information guide** for full details of eligibility criteria and benefits.

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Transitional protection for free school meals

On 1 April 2019 the Welsh Government introduced a new transitional protection for free school meals policy. This was brought in to ensure that pupils have their free school meals protected during the Universal Credit rollout period.

This protection applies to individual pupils and will continue until the end of their current school phase, being the end of primary school or end of secondary school.

Any pupil that was eligible for free school meals on the introduction of the policy on 1 April 2019 should also be transitionally protected. In addition, any pupil that has become eligible at any point during the Universal Credit rollout under the new eligibility criteria should also be transitionally protected.

The FSM analysis in this release only includes pupils who are eligible through the means tested criteria. Those eligible through TP or UPFSM are not included.

Quality and methodology

Further quality information can be found the [quality report](#) for this release.

National Statistics status

The [United Kingdom Statistics Authority](#) has designated these statistics as National Statistics, in accordance with the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 and signifying compliance with the [Code of Practice for Statistics](#).

National Statistics status means that official statistics meet the highest standards

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of trustworthiness, quality, and public value.

All official statistics should comply with all aspects of the Code of Practice for Statistics. They are awarded National Statistics status following an assessment by the UK Statistics Authority's regulatory arm. The Authority considers whether the statistics meet the highest standards of Code compliance, including the value they add to public decisions and debate. The designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in July 2010 following a **full assessment against the Code of Practice**.

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

- added to and refined information about dimensions of quality and described links to policy
- produced the latest release in a new format to include charts which provide further insight into some of the key information
- made more data available on Stats Wales
- added more detailed breakdown of ethnic background

It is Welsh Government's responsibility to maintain compliance with the standards expected of National Statistics. If we become concerned about whether these statistics are still meeting the appropriate standards, we will discuss any concerns with the Authority promptly. National Statistics status can be removed at any point when the highest standards are not maintained and reinstated when standards are restored.

This section provides a summary of information on this output against five dimensions of quality: Relevance, Accuracy, Timeliness and Punctuality, Accessibility and Clarity, and Comparability. It also covers specific issues relating to quality of 2021 data and describes the quality management tool applied to this area of work.

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Relevance

These statistics are used both within and outside the Welsh Government. Some of the key users are:

- ministers and the Senedd Research in the Senedd
- members of the Senedd Cymru/Welsh Parliament
- education policy in the Welsh Government
- other areas of the Welsh Government
- Estyn
- the research community
- students, academics and universities
- individual citizens and private companies

These statistics are used in a variety of ways. Some examples of these are:

- advice to ministers
- to inform the education policy decision-making process in Wales including school reorganisation
- to inform Estyn during school inspections
- to assist in research in educational attainment

Accessibility and clarity

This Statistical First Release is pre-announced and then published on the Statistics section of the Welsh Government website. It is accompanied by an Open Document Spreadsheet and more detailed tables on [StatsWales](#), a free to use service that allows visitors to view, manipulate, create and download data.

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Comparability

England

[School attendance and absence \(GOV.UK\)](#)

Scotland

[School exclusion statistics \(Scottish Government\)](#)

Northern Ireland

[Pupil suspensions and expulsions \(Department for Education, Northern Ireland\)](#)

Well-being of Future Generations Act (WFG)

The Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015 is about improving the social, economic, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Wales. The Act puts in place seven wellbeing goals for Wales. These are for a more equal, prosperous, resilient, healthier and globally responsible Wales, with cohesive communities and a vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language. Under section (10)(1) of the Act, the Welsh Ministers must (a) publish indicators (“national indicators”) that must be applied for the purpose of measuring progress towards the achievement of the wellbeing goals, and (b) lay a copy of the national indicators before Senedd Cymru. Under section 10(8) of the Well-being of Future Generations Act, where the Welsh Ministers revise the national indicators, they must as soon as reasonably practicable (a) publish the indicators as revised and (b) lay a copy

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of them before the Senedd. These national indicators were laid before the Senedd in 2021. The indicators laid on 14 December 2021 replace the set laid on 16 March 2016.

Information on the indicators, along with narratives for each of the wellbeing goals and associated technical information is available in the [Wellbeing of Wales report](#).

Further information on the [Well-being of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act 2015](#).

The statistics included in this release could also provide supporting narrative to the national indicators and be used by public services boards in relation to their local wellbeing assessments and local wellbeing plans.

Contact details

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