

# Pupil Attendance and Absence in Schools in Jersey

Academic year 2014/2015

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## Introduction

This report summarises pupil attendance and absence behaviour in schools in Jersey in academic year 2014/2015 and describes trends in attendance and absence over time.

Unless otherwise explicitly stated, figures in this report reflect attendance and absence behaviour over the entire academic year (six half terms) and represent pupils of compulsory school age (Reception to year 11) in States and States fee-paying schools (see Technical note 4 for full details of data coverage).

To account for high levels of study leave and other authorised absences of pupils in year 11 in the second half of the summer term (June and July), all attendance and absence sessions relating to this period for this year group are removed prior to any analysis being undertaken. This is in alignment with U.K. Department of Education methodology. Study leave sessions taken outside of the last half term of the academic year are included in figures in this report and are categorised as authorised absence.

## Summary

### In academic year 2014/2015:

- overall pupil attendance was unchanged compared to 2013/2014 and at the joint highest level recorded for at least six years;
- unauthorised absence in secondary schools (1.0% of all sessions) decreased marginally compared to the previous year;
- the most common reasons for pupil absence were 'illness', 'family holidays' & 'study leave';
- overall absence of secondary school pupils increases with each curriculum year group;
- overall absence in primary schools was similar in Jersey and England;
- the overall absence rate for secondary school pupils was higher in Jersey than in England due predominantly to the proportion of sessions missed due to 'study leave';
- the persistent absentee rate<sup>1</sup> for primary schools is lower in Jersey than in England;
- in secondary schools, the persistent absentee rate is similar in Jersey and England for year groups 7 to 10; for year 11 pupils the persistent absentee rate is 13 percentage points higher in Jersey.

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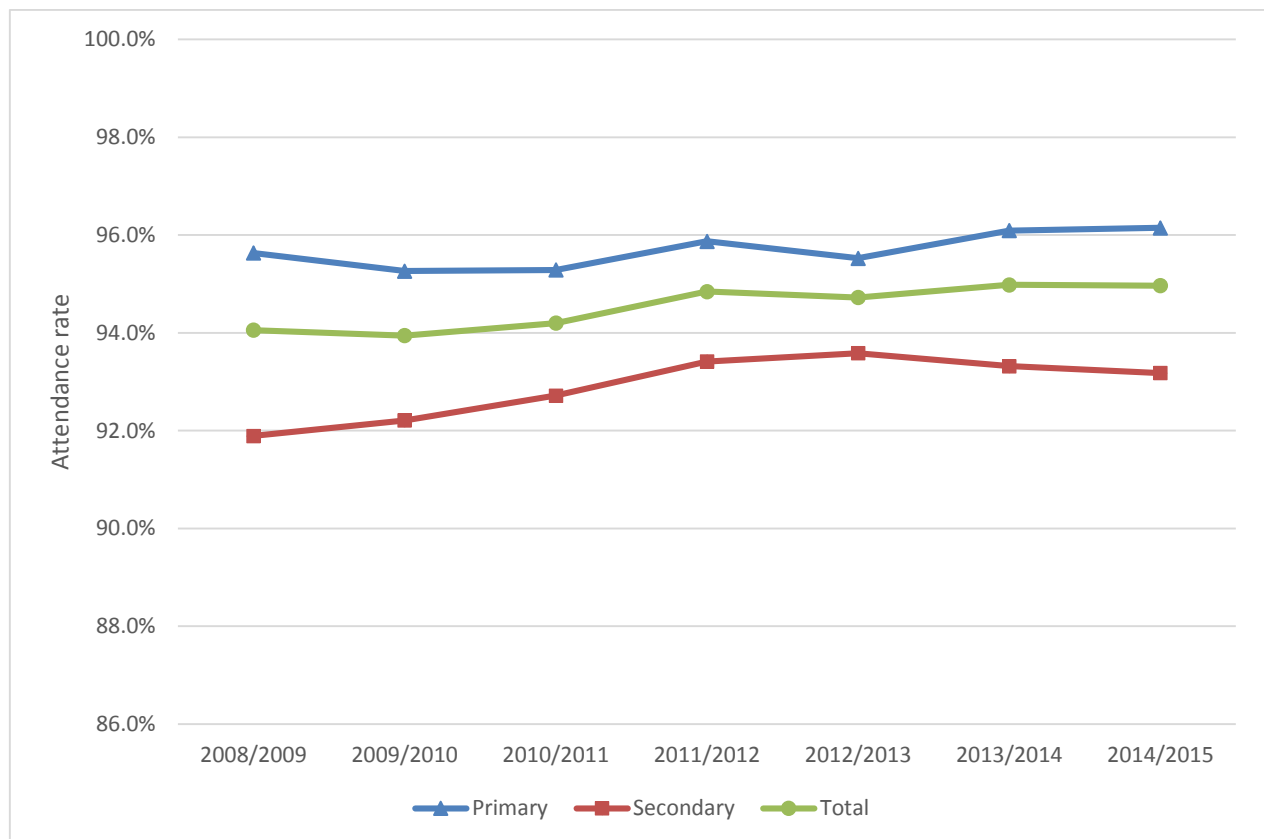
<sup>1</sup> Persistent absentees are defined as those pupils missing 15 per cent or more of the typical amount of possible sessions across a given period through authorised or unauthorised absence.

## Attendance

Schools are required to take attendance registers twice a day: once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Pupils are classified as attending a session if they are present in class within 30 minutes of the register closing or they are engaged in an education activity such as taking part in a sporting event or on an educational visit or trip (see Appendix A for a full list of attendance and absence codes, descriptions and meanings in use in Jersey schools).

Figure 1 shows attendance rates for pupils in States mainstream schools (data for pupils in special schools, alternative curriculum and private fee-paying schools are not included) in Jersey in academic years 2008/2009 to 2014/2015, broken down by school type (primary and secondary).

**Figure 1: Pupil attendance in primary and secondary schools in Jersey; academic years 2008/2009 to 2014/2015**



Over the last six years, the attendance rate for all pupils (Reception to year 11) has increased marginally taking the attendance rate in academic year 2014/2015 to 95% of all available sessions and representing the joint highest level recorded since at least 2008/2009 (the first year that robust attendance and absence data was recorded).

Since 2008/2009, the attendance rate of primary school pupils has risen slightly; the percentage of all possible sessions attended by primary school pupils in academic year 2014/2015 (96.1%) was essentially unchanged compared to in the previous academic year.

From 2008/2009 to 2011/2012, marginal improvements in attendance were recorded in secondary schools on an annual basis. Since 2011/2012, the attendance rate in secondary schools has remained essentially stable at around 93.4 per cent of all available sessions.

## Authorised absence

Authorised absence is defined as absence from school with permission from a teacher or other authorised school representative and includes instances of absence for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided. Reasons for authorised absence include illness, authorised family holidays and study leave.

**Figure 2: Authorised absence of pupils in Jersey; academic years 2008/2009 to 2014/2015**

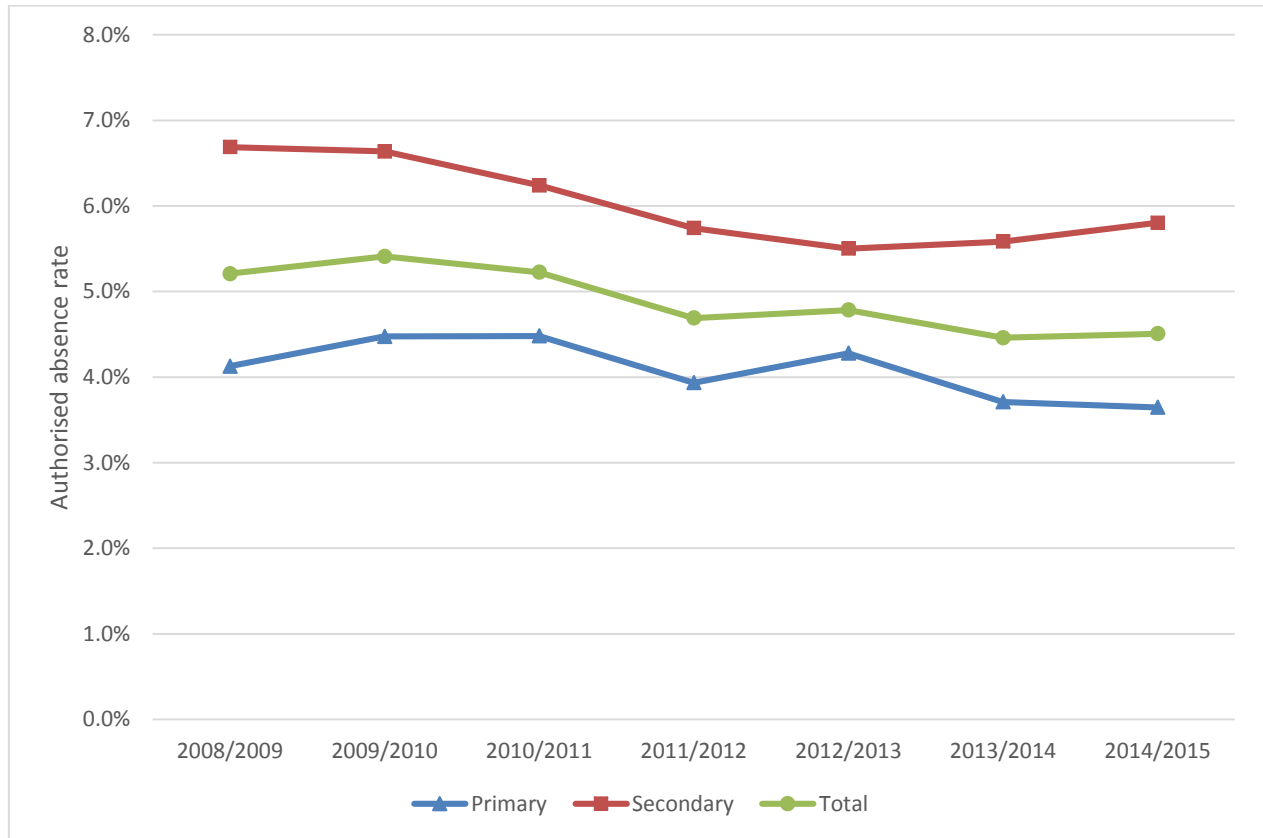


Figure 2 shows that authorised absence for all pupils in Jersey has fallen marginally over the latest six year period from 5.2 per cent in 2008/2009 to 4.5 per cent in the latest year.

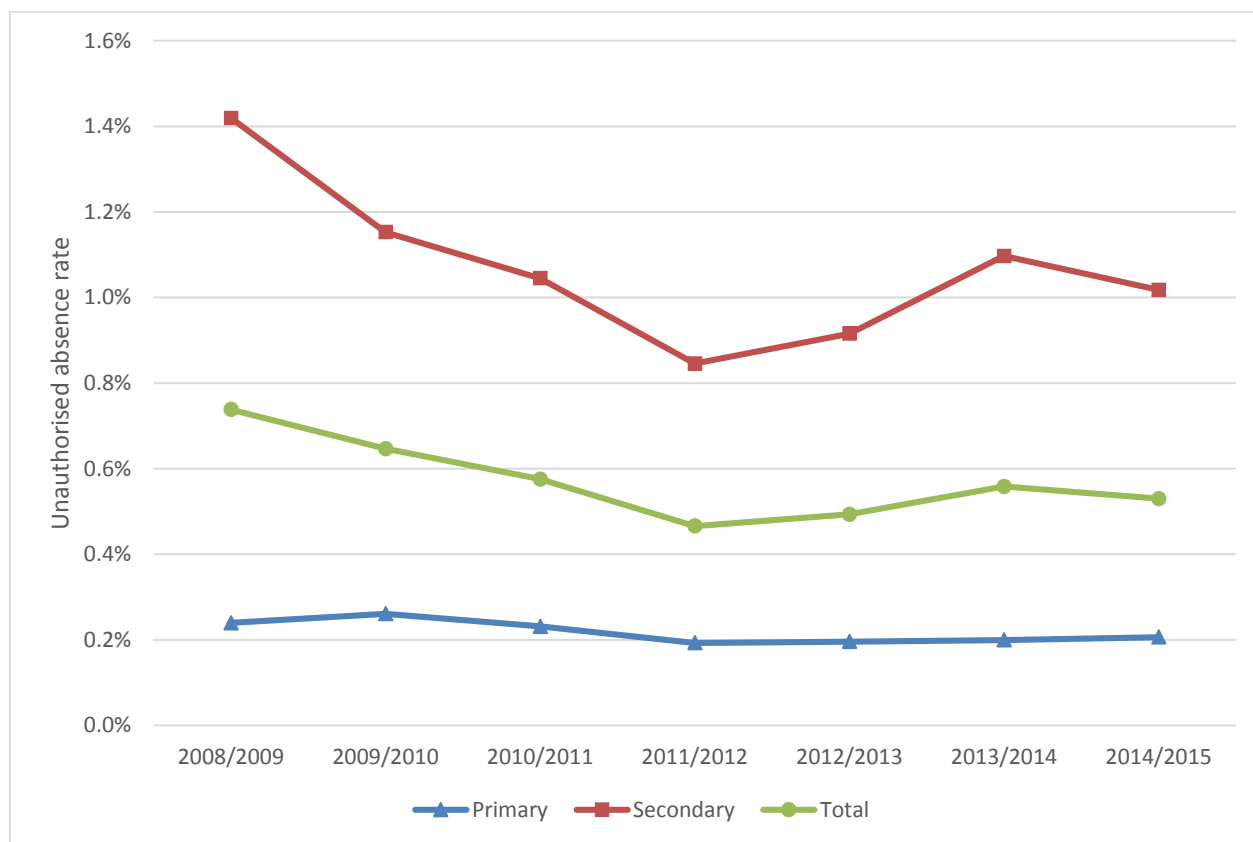
Since 2008/2009, the authorised absence rate of pupils in Jersey primary schools has fallen slightly; authorised absence of primary schools pupils in the latest academic year (3.6 per cent of all possible sessions) was the lowest recorded for at least six years.

From 2008/2009 to 2011/2012, the authorised absence rate in secondary schools fell by around 1 percentage point. Since 2011/2012, the authorised absence rate has remained stable at around 5.7 per cent of all possible sessions.

## Unauthorised absence

Unauthorised absence is defined as absence from school without permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences as well as instances where a pupil arrives more than 30 minutes after the register has closed.

**Figure 3: Unauthorised absence of pupils in Jersey; academic years 2008/2009 to 2014/2015**



As can be seen in Figure 3, the rate of unauthorised absence in primary schools has remained flat over the last six academic years (2008/2009 to 2014/2015) at around 0.2 to 0.3 per cent of all possible sessions.

In comparison, the unauthorised absence rate for secondary school pupils has been more volatile over the same period. The percentage of all possible sessions missed due to unauthorised absence in secondary schools fell in each academic year from 2008/2009 to 2011/2012, equating to a drop of about 0.6 percentage points. Since 2011/2012, the unauthorised absence rate has increased marginally, taking the unauthorised absence rate for secondary school pupils to around 1.0 percent of all available sessions in the latest year.

## Distribution of reasons for absence

In order to understand absence behaviour in Jersey further, the distribution of reasons provided for absence in primary and secondary schools in Jersey in 2014/2015 is shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Distribution of reasons for pupil absence in primary and secondary schools in Jersey; academic year 2014/2015**

Percentage of absence sessions missed due to:	Primary	Secondary	All
<b>Overall absence</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Authorised absence (other)	4.9	7.8	6.5
Excluded (no alternative provision made)	0.3	1.2	0.8
Family holiday (agreed) (maximum 10 days)	18.2	5.4	11.3
Extended family holiday (agreed) (more than 10 days)	0.0	0.0	0.0
Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	62.5	50.4	56.0
Medical and dental appointments	8.4	4.7	6.4
Religious observance	0.2	0.0	0.1
Study leave	0.0	15.5	8.4
Traveller absence	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Authorised absence</b>	<b>94.6</b>	<b>85.1</b>	<b>89.4</b>
Family holiday (not agreed)	2.9	1.6	2.2
No reason provided for absence	0.4	7.0	4.0
Unauthorised absence (other)	1.2	4.5	2.9
Late (more than 30 minutes after register closes)	0.9	1.8	1.4
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>10.6</b>

\*All figures are rounded independently to one decimal place.

Table 1 shows that almost 95 per cent of all pupil absence in primary schools was authorised by a teacher or other authorised school representative. This compares to around 85 per cent of all pupil absence in secondary schools.

In both primary and secondary schools, 'illness' was the most common reason for being absent from school with almost three-fifths of all pupil absence occurring for this reason.

'Family holidays' are the second most common reason cited for absence in primary schools; in the latest academic year more than a fifth (21.0%) of all absence in primary schools resulted from 'family holidays' (authorised and unauthorised).

Although attendance and absence data for year 11 pupils in the last half term of the academic year is excluded from analyses, authorised 'study leave' still accounts for over 15 per cent of all sessions missed by secondary school pupils. These authorised 'study leave' sessions therefore occurred before the last half term of the academic year or were not taken by year 11 pupils.

## Attendance and absence by pupil characteristics

Table 2 presents attendance and absence rates for pupils in Jersey broken down by gender, curriculum year group, English as a first language and Special Educational Needs. Rates reflect attendance and absence behaviour in both primary and secondary States mainstream schools in academic year 2014/2015.

**Table 2: Attendance and absence rates broken down by pupil characteristics in Jersey; academic year 2014/2015**

	Attendance	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Overall absence
<b>Gender</b>				
Males	95.0	4.4	0.6	5.0
Females	94.9	4.6	0.5	5.1
Total	95.0	4.5	0.5	5.0
<b>National Curriculum Year Group</b>				
0	95.2	4.6	0.2	4.8
1	95.8	3.9	0.2	4.2
2	96.3	3.5	0.2	3.7
3	96.5	3.3	0.2	3.5
4	96.4	3.4	0.2	3.6
5	96.6	3.2	0.2	3.4
6	96.4	3.4	0.2	3.6
7	95.4	4.1	0.5	4.6
8	94.5	4.8	0.6	5.5
9	94.1	5.1	0.8	5.9
10	93.7	4.9	1.4	6.3
11 <sup>1</sup>	87.7	10.5	1.8	12.3
Total	95.0	4.5	0.5	5.0
<b>First Language</b>				
English as an additional language	95.0	4.3	0.6	5.0
First language is English	95.0	4.6	0.5	5.1
Total	95.0	4.5	0.5	5.0
<b>Special Educational Needs (SEN)</b>				
SEN	93.1	5.7	1.2	6.9
No SEN	95.3	4.3	0.4	4.7
Total	95.0	4.5	0.5	5.0

\*All figures are rounded independently to one decimal place.

<sup>1</sup>Rates for curriculum year group 11 represent the first five half terms of the year only.

### Gender

Table 2 shows that attendance and absence rates are similar for males and females; in the latest year, the attendance rates for both genders were around 95%. The authorised absence rate for females (4.6%) was marginally higher than that for males (4.4%).

### Curriculum year groups

Within primary schools, pupil absence was similar in curriculum year groups 2 to 6 at around 3.5% of all possible sessions; authorised absence rates are marginally higher for pupils in their first two years of school (reception and year 1).

In contrast, overall absence in secondary schools increases with each additional curriculum year group; in 2014/2015, the unauthorised absence rate of pupils in years 10 and 11 was around three times that of pupils in year 7.

### First language

Attendance and absence (authorised and unauthorised) rates of pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) are similar to those recorded for pupils whose first language is English. The authorised absence rate for pupils whose first language is English (4.6%) is marginally higher than for pupils who have English as an additional language (4.3%).

### Special Educational Needs (SEN)

The attendance rate for pupils with SEN (93.1%) is lower than for pupils with no special educational need identified (95.3%). This reflects greater rates of both authorised absence (5.7% and 4.3% respectively) and unauthorised absence (1.2% and 0.4% respectively).

## **Comparison of absence in Jersey and England**

**Table 3: Pupil absence in primary schools in Jersey and England; academic year 2014/2015**

	Authorised absence rate	Unauthorised absence rate	Overall absence
<b>Jersey</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>3.8</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>4.0</b>
North East	3.2	1.0	4.2
North West	3.1	0.9	4.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	3.1	1.0	4.2
East Midlands	3.0	0.8	3.9
West Midlands	3.1	0.9	4.0
East of England	3.2	0.8	4.0
London	3.1	1.0	4.1
South East	3.1	0.8	3.9
South West	3.3	0.7	4.0

\*All figures are rounded independently to one decimal place.

Table 3 shows that whilst the overall absence rate for primary school pupils is similar in Jersey and England, the authorised absence rate in Jersey (3.6%) is 0.5 percentage points higher than that recorded in England (3.1%). In comparison, the percentage of all sessions missed due to unauthorised absence in primary schools is lower in Jersey (0.2%) than in England (0.9%) and in each major region of England.

**Table 4: Pupil absence in secondary schools in Jersey and England; academic year 2014/2015**

	Authorised absence rate	Unauthorised absence rate	Overall absence
<b>Jersey</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>6.8</b>
<b>England</b>	<b>4.0</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>5.3</b>
North East	4.1	1.5	5.6
North West	3.9	1.4	5.3
Yorkshire and the Humber	3.8	1.7	5.5
East Midlands	4.0	1.4	5.3
West Midlands	4.0	1.3	5.2
East of England	4.0	1.1	5.2
London	3.6	1.3	4.9
South East	4.2	1.2	5.4
South West	4.4	1.1	5.5

\*All figures are rounded independently to one decimal place.

Table 4 shows that overall absence is higher in secondary schools in Jersey (5.8%) than in secondary schools in England and in each major region of England.

Whilst the unauthorised absence rate for secondary school pupils in Jersey (1.0%) is lower than in England (1.3%), the authorised absence rate in Jersey is at least 1.4 percentage points higher than in all regions.

#### Absence rates by reason

To understand further the difference in absence rates in Jersey and England, absence rates are presented by reason for absence.

Table 5 shows that the rate of authorised absence in Jersey primary schools (3.6%) is higher than in England (3.1%), due predominantly to percentage of sessions missed due to agreed 'family holidays': in Jersey 0.7 per cent of all available sessions are missed due to authorised 'family holidays' compared to 0.1 per cent of all available sessions in England.

In contrast, the unauthorised absence rate in primary schools in Jersey (0.2%) is lower than England (0.9%), due predominantly to the percentage of sessions missed due to 'other' unauthorised absence and absence sessions for which no reason is provided.

The authorised absence rate in secondary schools in Jersey (5.8%) is higher than in England (4.0%), due predominantly to the percentage of all sessions missed due to 'study leave'. In Jersey, 1.1% of all available sessions are missed by secondary school pupils due to 'study leave', compared to 0.1% of all sessions missed due to this reason in England. Figures for both Jersey and England exclude year 11 pupils in the last half term of the academic year, who generally account for high levels of study leave and other authorised absence.

The proportion of all sessions missed due to illness in secondary schools is also marginally higher in Jersey (3.4%) than in England (3.0%).



**Table 5: Absence rates by reason for absence in primary and secondary schools in Jersey and England; academic year 2014/2015**

	Jersey		England	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
<b>Overall absence</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>6.8</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>5.3</b>
Authorised absence (other)	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.3
Excluded (no alternative provision made)	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.1
Illness (not medical or dental appointments)	2.4	3.4	2.6	3.0
Family holiday (agreed)	0.7	0.4	0.1	0.0
Medical and dental appointments	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.4
Religious observance	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Study leave	0.0	1.1	0.0	0.1
Traveller absence	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Authorised absence</b>	<b>3.6</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>3.1</b>	<b>4.0</b>
Family holiday (not agreed)	0.1	0.1	0.3	0.2
No reason provided for absence	0.0	0.5	0.1	0.1
Unauthorised absence (other)	0.0	0.3	0.4	1.0
Late (more than 30 minutes after register closes)	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>1.0</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>1.3</b>

\*All numbers are rounded independently to one decimal place.

## Persistent absentees

*Persistent absentees are defined as those pupils missing 15 per cent or more of the typical amount of possible sessions across a given period through authorised or unauthorised absence. This equates to 56 or more sessions of absence (either authorised or unauthorised) for pupils aged 5 to 14 and 46 or more sessions of absence for pupils aged 15 across the full academic year.*

**Table 6: Persistent absentee rates in primary and secondary schools in Jersey and England; academic year 2014/2015**

	Jersey		England	
	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary
<b>Persistent absentee rate</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>5.4</b>

In the latest year, less than 1 per cent of primary school pupils in Jersey were absent for 15 per cent or more of all available sessions across the year. The persistent absentee rate for primary school pupils is over 1 percentage point lower in Jersey (0.7%) than in England (2.1%).

In contrast, the persistent absentee rate in Jersey secondary schools (8.6%) is around 3 percentage points higher than in secondary schools in England (5.4%).

To understand these differences further, persistent absentee rates are broken down by year group:

**Table 7: Persistent absentee rates by year group in primary and secondary schools in Jersey and England; academic year 2014/2015**

Year group	Persistent absentee rate	
	Jersey	England
0	2.5	2.7 <sup>2</sup>
1	0.2	
2	0.6	2.1
3	0.6	1.9
4	0.5	2.0
5	0.5	2.1
6	0.5	2.1
<b>Primary</b>	<b>0.7</b>	<b>2.1</b>
7	3.7	3.1
8	4.9	4.3
9	5.3	5.6
10	6.9	6.8
11 <sup>1</sup>	20.9	7.7
<b>Secondary</b>	<b>8.6</b>	<b>5.4</b>

<sup>1</sup>Rates for curriculum year group 11 represent the first five half terms of the year only.

<sup>2</sup>England reports a joint figure for year groups 0 and 1 rather than reporting the years separately.

Persistent absentee rates calculated for years groups 2 to 6 (primary education) are considerably lower in Jersey than in England.

Although persistent absentee rates for year groups 7 to 10 are similar in both jurisdictions, the percentage of year 11 pupils missing 15 per cent or more of sessions is higher in Jersey than in England by more than 13 percentage points. This difference can largely be attributed to higher rates of authorised study leave in Jersey. If study leave were excluded, the persistent absentee rate for year 11 pupils in Jersey would fall by 11 percentage points from 20.9% to 9.9%.

## Appendix A

### ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed) (extended defined as greater than 10 school days)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed) (up to a maximum of 10 school days)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence

<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

## Technical notes

### Definitions

1. Schools take attendance registers twice a day: once at the beginning of the morning session and once at the beginning of the afternoon session. In their registers, schools are required to record whether a pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity or absent. When a pupil of compulsory school age is not present when the register is taken the school must record whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the reason for absence, if known (see Appendix A for attendance codes in use in Jersey schools).
2. Authorised absence is defined as absence with permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school (for example authorised family holiday). Authorised absence includes instances of absence for which a satisfactory explanation has been provided (for example illness).
3. Unauthorised absence is defined as absence without permission from a teacher or other authorised representative of the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences as well as instances where a pupil arrives more than thirty minutes after the register has closed.
4. Attendance and absence rates for Jersey reflect pupils in States non fee-paying schools and States fee-paying schools but exclude special schools, alternative curriculum and private-fee paying schools. Data is collected via the schools' management information system, CMIS.
5. The methodology used to calculate attendance and absence rates and the distribution of reasons for absence can be seen below:

**Attendance rate** – percentage of sessions attended

$$\frac{\text{Total number of sessions attended}}{\text{Total number of sessions possible}} \times 100$$

**Authorised absence rate** – percentage of sessions missed due to authorised absence

$$\frac{\text{Total number of authorised absence sessions}}{\text{Total number of sessions possible}} \times 100$$

**Unauthorised absence rate** – Percentage of sessions missed due to unauthorised absence

$$\frac{\text{Total number of unauthorised absence sessions}}{\text{Total number of sessions possible}} \times 100$$

**Persistent absentee rate for pupils aged 5 to 14**

$$\frac{\text{Total number of pupils aged 5 to 14 missing 56 or more of all available sessions}}{\text{Total number of pupils aged 5 to 14}} \times 100$$

**Persistent absentee rate for pupils aged 15**

$$\frac{\text{Total number of pupils aged 15 missing 46 or more of all available sessions}}{\text{Total number of pupils aged 15}} \times 100$$

**Distribution of reasons for absence** – Percentage of absence sessions missed due to...

*Individual reasons*

$$\frac{\text{Total number of absence sessions due to this reason}}{\text{Total number of absence sessions}} \times 100$$

*Authorised absence*

$$\frac{\text{Total number of authorised absence sessions}}{\text{Total number of absence sessions}} \times 100$$

*Unauthorised absence*

$$\frac{\text{Total number of unauthorised absence sessions}}{\text{Total number of absence sessions}} \times 100$$