

**Meeting:** Schools Forum **Date:** 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2024

**Wards affected:** All

**Report Title:** Absence from Schools Autumn and Spring 2023-24

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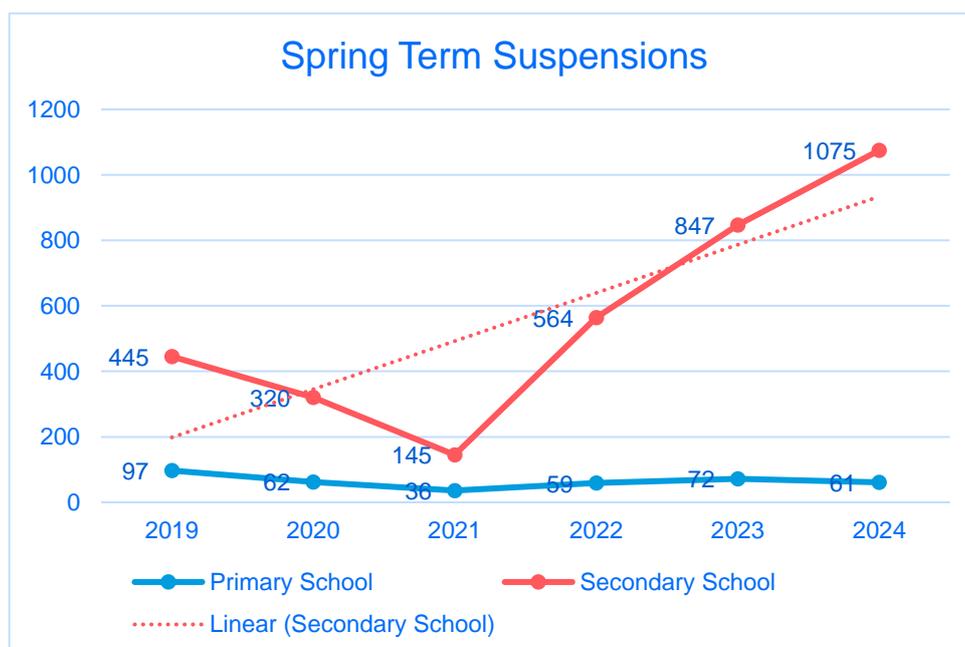
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## 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To illustrate the current levels of exclusion and suspension.
- 1.2 To illustrate the current numbers of Electively Home Educated children and young people.
- 1.3 To outline the position of the Local Area regarding school attendance.

## 2. Exclusion and Suspension

2.1 Suspensions in Torbay's schools continues to rise. The picture for the spring term from shared data is below:



The data per school is below. The colour coding shows change in Spring 2024 vs 5 year Spring average discounting Spring 2021 (Lockdown).

School	2019	2020	2022	2023	2024	% of Sector Spring 2024	Spring 2024 vs 5 Yr Average
Lodestar Academy	36	29	35	53	42	100	
<b>Primary School</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>61</b>		<b>87%</b>
All Saints Babbacombe CE Primary School	0	3	3	4	0	0%	0%
Barton Hill Academy	4	1	11	3	2	3%	48%
Brixham CE Primary School and Nursery	4	0	0	0	0	0%	0%
Cockington Primary School	12	0	11	0	1	2%	21%
Collaton St Mary CE Primary School	0	0	2	2	1	2%	100%
Curledge Street Academy	14	5	2	4	4	7%	69%
Eden Park Primary School	0	5	0	7	6	10%	167%
Ellacombe Academy	16	11	0	3	6	10%	83%
Hayes School	6	3	1	0	13	21%	283%
Homelands Primary School	7	0	0	1	2	3%	100%
Ilsham CE Academy	0	1	0	2	0	0%	0%
Kings Ash Academy	14	11	9	7	5	8%	54%
Oldway Primary School	7	1	3	9	0	0%	0%
Our Lady of the Angels School	0	0	0	2	2	3%	250%
Preston Primary School	0	0	1	2	0	0%	0%
Priory Roman Catholic Primary School	0	1	0	0	0	0%	0%
Roselands Primary School	1	3	1	0	1	2%	83%
Sacred Heart Catholic School	0	0	0	1	0	0%	0%
Sherwell Valley Primary School	0	0	1	13	5	8%	132%
Shiphay Learning Academy	0	2	2	1	2	3%	143%
St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School	1	3	0	4	0	0%	0%
St Margaret's Academy	1	2	2	2	0	0%	0%
St Marychurch CE Primary School	1	2	3	4	4	7%	143%
Torre CE Academy	4	0	1	1	0	0%	0%
Upton St James CE Primary School	1	5	0	0	7	11%	269%
Warberry CE Primary School	4	2	0	0	0	0%	0%
Watcombe Primary School	0	1	6	0	0	0%	0%
<b>Secondary School</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>320</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>847</b>	<b>1075</b>		<b>165%</b>
Brixham College	35	9	25	51	163	15%	288%
Churston Ferrers Grammar School	3	1	7	9	1	0%	24%
Paignton Academy	72	67	106	317	259	24%	158%
St Cuthbert Mayne Joint Catholic & CE School	155	100	119	231	385	36%	194%
The Spires College	51	41	105	89	120	11%	148%
Torquay Academy	120	101	186	147	131	12%	96%
Torquay Boys' Grammar School	9	1	8	2	12	1%	188%
Torquay Girls' Grammar School	0	0	8	1	4	0%	154%
<b>Special School</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>65</b>		<b>106%</b>
Combe Pafford School	4	3	2	3	18	28%	300%
Mayfield @ Chestnut	9	1	0	0	0	0%	0%
Mayfield School	9	0	10	2	2	3%	43%
Paignton Academy	0	0	1	0	0	0%	0%
The Brunel Academy	45	29	36	84	43	66%	91%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>708</b>	<b>1064</b>	<b>1243</b>		<b>151%</b>

Many schools are keeping suspension as a last resort. This appears particularly true in the Primary sector where most suspensions are repeats for one or two children.

Two secondary schools have 40% of all Spring Term suspensions between them. They have 26% of all students for the phase on roll.

The table below shows the number of suspensions in the Academic Year to the 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Grand Total	
Lodestar Academy	5	4	8	13	19	6	17	72	
<b>Primary School</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>200</b>	
Hayes School	4	1	1	2	5	4	4	21	
Curledge Street Academy	6	7	2	1	1	1	2	20	
St Marychurch CE Primary School	1	2	6	5	1	3	0	18	
Cockington Primary School	6	7	2	1	0	0	1	17	
Ellacombe Academy	2	1	2	4	3	2	1	15	
Sherwell Valley Primary School	5	3	1	0	3	1	1	14	
Upton St James CE Primary School	4	2	0	0	3	2	2	13	
Eden Park Primary School	0	1	5	1	3	3	0	13	
Roselands Primary School	5	0	3	3	1	0	0	12	
Our Lady of the Angels School	4	1	2	1	1	0	1	10	
Kings Ash Academy	1	2	1	1	1	3	1	10	
Oldway Primary School	3	3	3	0	0	0	0	9	
Homelands Primary School	1	4	1	0	2	0	0	8	
Barton Hill Academy	1	2	1	0	0	1	1	6	
All Saints Babbacombe CE Primary School	1	1	0	2	0	0	0	4	
Collaton St Mary CE Primary School	1	0	1	0	1	0	0	3	
Shiphay Learning Academy	0	0	1	0	1	1	0	3	
Warberry CE Primary School	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2	
Watcombe Primary School	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	
St Margaret's Academy	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	
<b>Secondary School</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>444</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>367</b>	<b>324</b>	<b>384</b>	<b>2388</b>	
St Cuthbert Mayne Joint Catholic & CE School	180	139	185	75	156	113	116	964	
Paignton Academy	34	62	59	36	83	73	103	450	
Brixham College	77	54	107	30	50	52	63	430	
Torquay Academy	17	45	54	31	41	44	46	278	
The Spires College	29	36	34	15	33	38	49	233	
Torquay Boys' Grammar School	1	0	4	0	2	3	7	17	
Torquay Girls' Grammar School	5	2	0	0	2	1	1	11	
Churston Ferrers Grammar School	3	0	1	0	1	0	0	5	
<b>Special School</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>249</b>	
The Brunel Academy	68	45	31	24	26	17	0	211	
Combe Pafford School	3	2	2	2	6	7	5	27	
Mayfield School	2	0	3	0	0	1	1	7	
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>470</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>521</b>	<b>247</b>	<b>445</b>	<b>376</b>	<b>422</b>	<b>2909</b>	

In the same period in 2022/23 the figures were:

Phase	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Total	2024 +/-
Primary	15	40	49	17	17	16	31	185	<b>+15</b>
Secondary	160	239	312	145	287	216	344	1703	<b>+685</b>
Special	13	8	17	9	19	22	50	138	<b>+111</b>

2.2 The exclusions data below is from the Vulnerable Pupils Team records. It captures all exclusions, including those yet to be reviewed by governors and trustees.

	2022/23					2023/24					Difference
	Aut1	Aut2	Spr1	Spr2	Total	Aut1	Aut2	Spr1	Spr2	Total	
AP		1	1		2			1		1	-1
Lodestar		1	1		2			1		1	-1
Primary	3	6	2	2	13	3	4	6	3	16	3
All Saints Babbacombe		2			2			1		1	-1
Cockington Primary	1				1		1			1	0
Qurlidge Street		1	1		2			1		1	-1
Eden Park Primary				2	2						-2
Elacombe Academy		1			1			1		1	0
Homelands								2		2	2
Ilsham Academy	1				1						-1
Kings Ash Academy			1		1		1			1	0
Oldway Primary							1			1	1
Our Lady of The Angels							1	1		2	2
Roselands		1			1						-1
Sacred Heart Primary	1				1						-1
Sherwell Valley									1	1	1
Shiphay						1				1	1
St Marychurch									1	1	1
Upton St James		1			1	1				1	0
Warberry Academy						1				1	1
White Rock									1	1	1
Secondary	3	8	10	8	29	4	7	7	6	24	-5
Brixham College			1		1		1		1	2	1
Paignton Academy		2	2	6	10	2	2	1	1	6	-4
St Outhbert Mayne		4	6	1	11	1	1	4	2	8	-3
Teignmouth CC	1				1						-1
The Spires College	1			1	2		3	1	2	6	4
Torquay Academy	1	1	1		3	1		1		2	-1
TBGS		1			1						-1
Special		1			1	1	1			2	1
Brunel School		1			1	1				1	0
Combe Pafford							1			1	1
Grand Total	6	16	13	10	45	8	12	14	9	43	-2

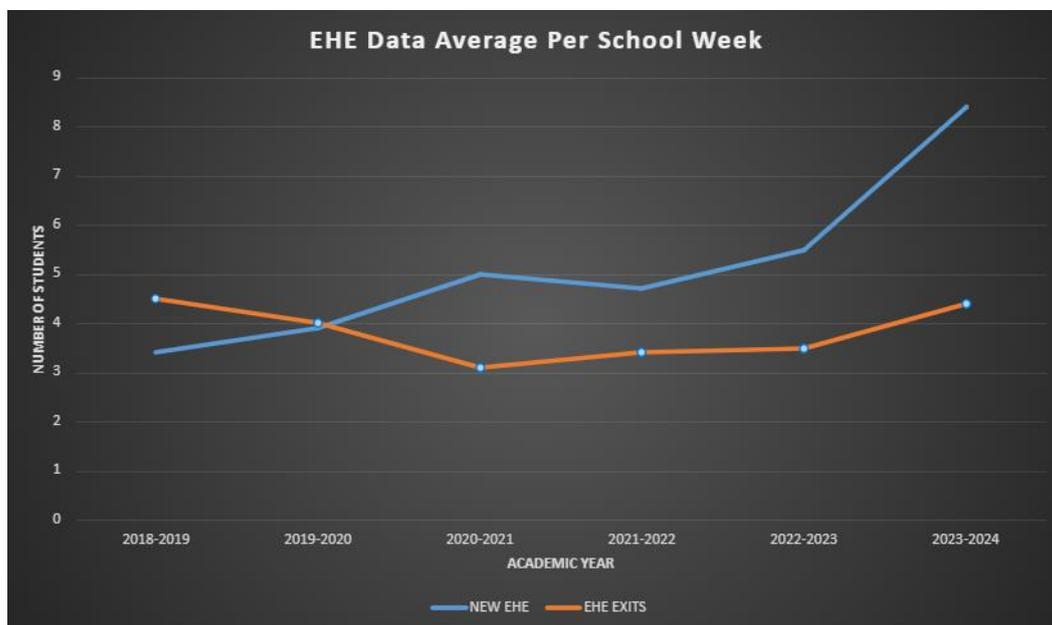
There have been fewer exclusions year on year. In the first week of the summer term there have already been three and two further children placed in new settings by the SEND and Virtual School Teams to avoid exclusion.

Children open to social care and/or with Free School Meal entitlement account for 50% of all exclusions whilst the FSM cohort is 29% of all children.

75% of all exclusions are of children with SEND. (88% in Primary phase)

### 3. Elective Home Education (EHE)

3.1 Elective Home Education numbers continue to rise from a pre pandemic low of 0.9% (164) of school aged children to 2.5% (500) in April 2024. **These 500 children would be funded at approximately £2.5M per year if in schools.**



The graph above shows the rate of children leaving schools to EHE vs the number the team can support to return.

The current rate of leavers to EHE is 8.3 a week. This is the highest recorded rate by 3%. There is no sign of the rate slowing as we would expect at this time of year.

3.2 The numbers per Year group as of April 2024 are as below:

Yr Group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Active	16	19	28	21	23	32	53	53	89	86	80

3.3 The previous hypothesis that the 'bulge' in Years 10 and 11 would work through the system and lead to a reduction in numbers was incorrect. Significant increases in year for Year Groups 7, 8 and 9 suggest that there is a group of parents who start at secondary phase and, over time, come to believe that remaining in school does not benefit their child.

3.4 The active cohort contains 104 children at SEN Support and 24 with EHCPs.

3.5 The most common reasons given for moving to Elective Home Education are dissatisfaction with the school due to alleged bullying, failure to meet SEN needs or failure to support or prevent mental health deteriorating. (215 children). 149 parents declined to give a response. One year 11 child's family suggested that the school had recommended EHE.

## 4. School Attendance

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4.1 The relative position of the LA from DfE as live data is:

Data as at 22/04/24	Primary	Secondary	Special
% Attendance	93.77% (94.46%)	89.32% (90.59%)	85.03% (85.65%)
Position vs 153 LAs	148 <sup>th</sup> (141 <sup>st</sup> )	142 <sup>nd</sup> (136 <sup>th</sup> )	146 <sup>th</sup> (121 <sup>st</sup> /149)

(November figures in parentheses)

- 4.2 The most common reason given for absence is illness. Torbay has the highest percentage of primary phase absence through illness in the country. In secondary phase, only S Tyneside has greater absence through illness.
- 4.3 Torbay is an outlier regarding absence through arriving late to school after the registers close.
- 4.4 Torbay is also an outlier for the use of the E code for exclusion and suspension with only one local authority (Norfolk) suspending for a greater percentage of sessions at Primary Phase.

## 5. Challenges

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The following challenges to the system are of note:

1. Medical Absence.
2. Low numbers of excluded children returning to mainstream schools
3. 6<sup>th</sup> day settings are full, with waiting lists
4. Vulnerable children are on part time provision awaiting places at registered settings.
5. Fair Access referrals from schools are increasing.
6. Parents report being dissuaded from applying to schools when visiting.

## 6. Activity

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The local authority has taken the following actions:

1. Used reserves to employ two additional Attendance Improvement Officers.
2. Employed an Attendance Youth Worker
3. Agreed an Educational Neglect definition for referrals.
4. Provided an Attendance Graduated Response.
5. Are seeking to appoint an additional EHE Officer from LA funding.
6. Tasked the Virtual School Extended Duties Officers with a focus on SEMH children at KS2/3 transition.
7. An attendance officer attends all Early Help Panels
8. Rewritten the Penalty Notice Code of Conduct to ensure greater consistency between schools.
9. Procured an IT solution for Parental Legal measures around attendance.

10. Funded a social media campaign focused on the wards with the poorest attendance.

11. Provided advice and support via:

- Attendance clinics
- Attendance forums
- Risk of Exclusion Panels
- Risk of Exclusion Case Conferences
- Primary Behaviour, ASC and Learning Needs outreach

Secondary Schools are:

1. Increasingly likely to work together to avoid exclusion.
2. Working between schools to reintegrate some children after exclusion without referral to Lodestar Academy.

## 7. Summary

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This report can be summarised as follows:

1. Torbay has a slightly improving number of exclusions at secondary phase but a worsening number at primary phase.
2. Children who have been excluded struggle to find a new mainstream school as schools use fair access processes to resist admission.
3. The alternative provision for children who have been excluded is beyond capacity.
4. Children who experience disadvantage through SEN or low family income (FSM) are disproportionately suspended and excluded.
5. They are also less likely to attend school well.
6. Torbay has an exceptional amount of authorised absence through illness and suspension.
7. Torbay has also seen exceptional growth in the number of families choosing to leave schools and educate their children themselves.

## Appendices

### Previous Education for Active EHE Cases

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All Saints Babbacombe	2
Barton Hill	16
Brixham CofE	3
Cockington	16
Collaton St Mary	2
Curledge Street	8
Eden Park	10
Ellacombe	2
Furzeham	7
Hayes	5
Homelands	1
Ilsham	3
King's Ash	3
Oldway	6
Our Lady of the Angels	1
Preston	5
Priory	3
Roselands	4
Sherwell Valley	1
Shiphay	4
St Margarets	3
St Marychurch	8
Torre	1
Upton St James	1
Warberry	2
Watcombe	2
Whiterock	5

Brixham	11
St Cuthbert Mayne	43
South Devon High	1
The Spires	32
Torquay Academy	23
TBGS	3
TGGS	2
Paignton Academy	47

Independent Sector	2
Never Schooled	44
Not Known	5
OOA	62
KEVICC	1
Combe Pafford	3
Mayfield	5
Lodestar	2