

News Release



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Education

School Absences

During the first 120 school days between September 2003 and March 2004, a total of 617,659 school days were lost to absenteeism. This accounted for 8.5 per cent of the total number of school days in the reference period or an overall absence rate of 10.2 absent days per pupil - that for boys being 11.2 days per pupil and for girls 9.1 days per pupil.

This also signified a decrease of 0.3 per cent of absences on the overall total number of school days taken per pupil over the previous year. This figure compares the 635,993 absent days for a pupil population of 60,648 in 2002/03, with 617,659 absent days for a pupil population of 60,603 in 2003/04. This decrease resulted from a slight descent in the number of absences – authorised and unauthorised – at the primary level both within public and private schools, in spite of a population decrease in both sectors at this level.

The unauthorised absence rate for boys was 5.1 days per pupil (an increase of 0.4 on 2002/03) while the authorised absence rate stood at 6.3 (negligible changes over 2002/03). The absence rates for girls stood as follows: 4.2 days per pupil for unauthorised absences (0.2 less than 2002/03) and 4.9 days per pupil for authorised absences (0.8 less than 2002/03).

State primary schools registered a decrease of 0.9 absent days per pupil over the previous year, to 8.0 days per pupil during 2003/04 - 8.2 days per pupil for boys and 7.8 days per pupil for girls. The unauthorised absences rate for boys at public primary level stood at 3.1 days per pupil, whilst the authorised rate stood at 5.1 days per pupil. The unauthorised rates for girls stood at 2.8 days and the authorised at 5.0 days per pupil.

Private and church primary schools also registered a decrease of 0.5 absent days per pupil, over 2003/04. The overall absence rate for these schools stood at 5.3 absent days per pupil - 5.3 for both boys and girls. The unauthorised absences rate for boys at private primary level stood at 0.6 days per pupil, whilst the authorised rate stood at 4.7 days per pupil. The unauthorised and authorised rates for girls stood at 0.7 and 4.6 respectively.

Government secondary schools (including Junior lyceums and the Boys'/girls' secondary schools) registered a slight increase in the number of absences per head, up by 0.6 absent days per pupil (from 17.4 in 2002/03 to 18.0 in 2003/04). The average unauthorised absence rate for boys was 12.5 days per pupil and 9.3 days per pupil for authorised absences. The unauthorised absence rate for girls amounted to 9.3 days per pupil, whilst the authorised absences was 5.2 days per pupil.

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Finally, private secondary schools, unlike the public secondary schools, registered an increase of just 0.1 absent days per pupil over the previous year (from 5.8 to 5.7 absent days per pupil). The unauthorised rate for boys at private secondary level stood at 0.8 days per pupil whilst the authorised rate stood at 4.9 days per pupil. The unauthorised and authorised rates for girls stood at 1.0 and 4.8 days per pupil respectively.

Clearly, the incidence of absenteeism within the private schools both in the primary and secondary level, was much lower than in the government schools. In fact, the total overall absence rate in 2003/04 stood at 5.5 days per pupil as against 13.0 days per pupil within public schools. Particularly, authorised absences rates were reported to be much higher in public schools with 6.1, as compared to the 0.8 absent days per pupil in private schools. Unauthorised absence rates reported to be 6.8 for public schools and 4.8 for private schools.

Absences rates varied also across the Maltese districts. Out of all the public primary schools, the Northern Harbour district registered the highest average number of absent days per pupil (9.9 days). On the other hand, the Northern district registered the highest average number of absent days per pupil with 6.9 absent days per pupil. Gozo and Comino registered the lowest number of absent days per pupil in both public, church and private primary schools with 4.6 and 3.8 absent days per pupil respectively.

Secondary schools did not follow the same pattern. The highest average number of absent days in public secondary schools was registered in the Western Harbour district - with 23.6 absent days per pupils; whilst in private/church secondary schools the highest average number of absent days was registered in the Southern Harbour district- with 6.6 absent days per pupil. Gozo and Comino reported once again the lowest number of absent days per pupil, yet this time this was registered in private/church secondary schools only - with 18.7 absent days per pupils. The lowest average number of absent days in public secondary schools was registered in the Northern Harbour district with 15.4 absent days per pupils.

Overall, the highest average number of absent days per pupil in all primary and secondary schools was registered within the Southern Harbour district with 11.1 absent days per pupil whilst the lowest average number of absent days was recorded within the South Eastern District with 6.6 absent days per pupil■

Table 1. Absences in state Primary schools classified by year of study: 2003/2004

Year of study	Total pupils	Unauthorised		Authorised		Total	
		number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil
Year 1	2,696	8,189	3.0	18,714	6.9	26,903	10.0
Year 2	3,006	8,234	2.7	18,514	6.2	26,748	8.9
Year 3	3,004	8,051	2.7	15,568	5.2	23,619	7.9
Year 4	3,553	10,506	3.0	16,705	4.7	27,211	7.7
Year 5	3,163	8,451	2.7	13,258	4.2	21,709	6.9
Year 6	3,748	12,848	3.4	14,859	4.0	27,707	7.4
Total	19,170	56,279	2.9	97,618	5.1	153,897	8.0

Table 2. Absences in Government-dependent private primary schools (church) classified by year of study: 2003/2004

Year of study	Total pupils	Unauthorised		Authorised		Total	
		number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil
Year 1	1,205	1,090	0.9	7,143	5.9	8,233	6.8
Year 2	1,165	842	0.7	5,942	5.1	6,784	5.8
Year 3	1,211	518	0.4	5,316	4.4	5,834	4.8
Year 4	1,333	888	0.7	5,128	3.8	6,016	4.5
Year 5	1,478	774	0.5	5,660	3.8	6,434	4.4
Year 6	1,411	565	0.4	5,310	3.8	5,875	4.2
Total	7,803	4,677	0.6	34,499	4.4	39,176	5.0

Table 3. Absences in Independent-private primary schools (non-church) classified by year of study: 2003/2004

Year of study	Total pupils	Unauthorised		Authorised		Total	
		number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil
Year 1	743	995	1.3	6,068	8.2	7,063	9.5
Year 2	661	499	0.8	3,502	5.3	4,001	6.1
Year 3	715	284	0.4	2,761	3.9	3,045	4.3
Year 4	680	319	0.5	3,132	4.6	3,451	5.1
Year 5	633	430	0.7	2,833	4.5	3,263	5.2
Year 6	660	284	0.4	2,725	4.1	3,009	4.6
Total	4,092	2,811	0.7	21,021	5.1	23,832	5.8

Table 4. Absences in Government Primary schools classified by locality of school: 2003/2004...

Region/Locality	Total pupils	Unauthorised		Authorised		Total	
		number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil
Total	19,170	56,279	97,618	153,897	8.0	210,176	11.0
Southern Harbour district	4,395	18,371	21,120	39,491	9.0	57,862	13.2
Valletta	186	1,823	769	2,592	13.9	4,415	23.7
Birgu	125	468	994	1,462	11.7	1,930	15.4
Isla	226	1,057	1,035	2,092	9.3	3,149	13.9
Bormla	278	2,760	1,942	4,702	16.9	7,462	26.8
Żabbar	956	2,810	4,367	7,177	7.5	9,987	10.4
Fgura	777	2,871	3,417	6,288	8.1	9,159	11.8
Floriana	94	244	942	1,186	12.6	1,430	15.2
Kalkara	205	769	850	1,619	7.9	2,388	11.6
Luqa	255	836	983	1,819	7.1	2,655	10.4
Marsa	213	1,548	1,230	2,778	13.0	4,326	20.3
Paola	720	2,171	3,059	5,230	7.3	7,401	10.3
Tarxien	258	783	1,257	2,040	7.9	2,823	10.9
Xghajra	102	231	275	506	5.0	737	7.2
Northern Harbour district	4,395	16,936	26,597	43,533	9.9	60,469	13.8
Qormi	832	2,164	4,516	6,680	8.0	8,844	10.6
Birkirkara	879	3,747	4,642	8,389	9.5	12,136	13.8
Gzira	183	626	1,736	2,362	12.9	2,988	16.3
Hamrun	627	4,366	4,333	8,699	13.9	13,065	20.8
Msida	258	713	1,803	2,516	9.8	3,229	12.5
Pembroke	247	840	951	1,791	7.3	2,631	10.7
Pieta	180	432	1,072	1,504	8.4	1,936	10.8
San Ġiljan	182	582	1,217	1,799	9.9	2,381	13.1
San Ġwann	668	1,934	4,058	5,992	9.0	7,926	11.9
Santa Venera	179	747	1,405	2,152	12.0	2,899	16.2
Sliema	160	785	864	1,649	10.3	2,434	15.2
South Eastern district	3,351	9,801	14,039	23,840	7.1	33,641	10.0
Żejtun	669	2,484	2,788	5,272	7.9	7,756	11.6
Birżebbuġia	607	2,045	2,523	4,568	7.5	6,613	10.9
Gudja	156	362	447	809	5.2	1,171	7.5
Għaxaq	236	744	1,160	1,904	8.1	2,648	11.2
Kirkop	130	458	860	1,318	10.1	1,776	13.7
Marsaskala	355	1,276	2,240	3,516	9.9	4,792	13.5
Marsaxlokk	180	242	669	911	5.1	1,153	6.4
Mqabba	207	229	951	1,180	5.7	1,409	6.8
Qrendi	100	146	398	544	5.4	690	6.9
Safi	120	391	332	723	6.0	1,114	9.3
Żurrieq	591	1,424	1,671	3,095	5.2	4,519	7.6

... Table 4. Absences in Government Primary schools classified by locality of school: 2003/2004

Region/Locality	Total pupils	Unauthorised		Authorised		Total	
		number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil
Western Harbour district	2,609	3,484	15,927	19,411	7.4	22,895	8.8
Żebbuġ	547	787	3,152	3,939	7.2	4,726	8.6
Sigġiewi	412	450	2,107	2,557	6.2	3,007	7.3
Attard	407	586	3,746	4,332	10.6	4,918	12.1
Dingli	236	327	1,550	1,877	8.0	2,204	9.3
Lija	337	300	1,818	2,118	6.3	2,418	7.2
Rabat	471	543	2,663	3,206	6.8	3,749	8.0
Mtarfa	141	371	569	940	6.7	1,311	9.3
Baħrija	58	120	322	442	7.6	562	9.7
Northern district	2,645	5,556	13,943	19,499	7.4	25,055	9.5
Għargħur	61	67	358	425	7.0	492	8.1
Mellieħa	339	215	1,737	1,952	5.8	2,167	6.4
Mġarr	202	233	730	963	4.8	1,196	5.9
Mosta	956	1,176	6,576	7,752	8.1	8,928	9.3
Naxxar	457	943	1,945	2,888	6.3	3,831	8.4
San Pawl il- Baħar	630	2,922	2,597	5,519	8.8	8,441	13.4
Gozo and Comino	1,775	2,131	5,992	8,123	4.6	10,254	5.8
Rabat	288	177	1,073	1,250	4.3	1,427	5.0
Għajnsielem & Comino	162	290	616	906	5.6	1,196	7.4
Għarb	85	-	161	161	1.9	161	1.9
Kerċem	108	85	701	786	7.3	871	8.1
Nadur	285	242	809	1,051	3.7	1,293	4.5
Qala	110	186	370	556	5.1	742	6.7
San Lawrenz	44	70	143	213	4.8	283	6.4
Sannat	211	390	557	947	4.5	1,337	6.3
Xagħra	241	247	903	1,150	4.8	1,397	5.8
Xewkija	166	332	398	730	4.4	1,062	6.4
Żebbuġ	75	112	261	373	5.0	485	6.5

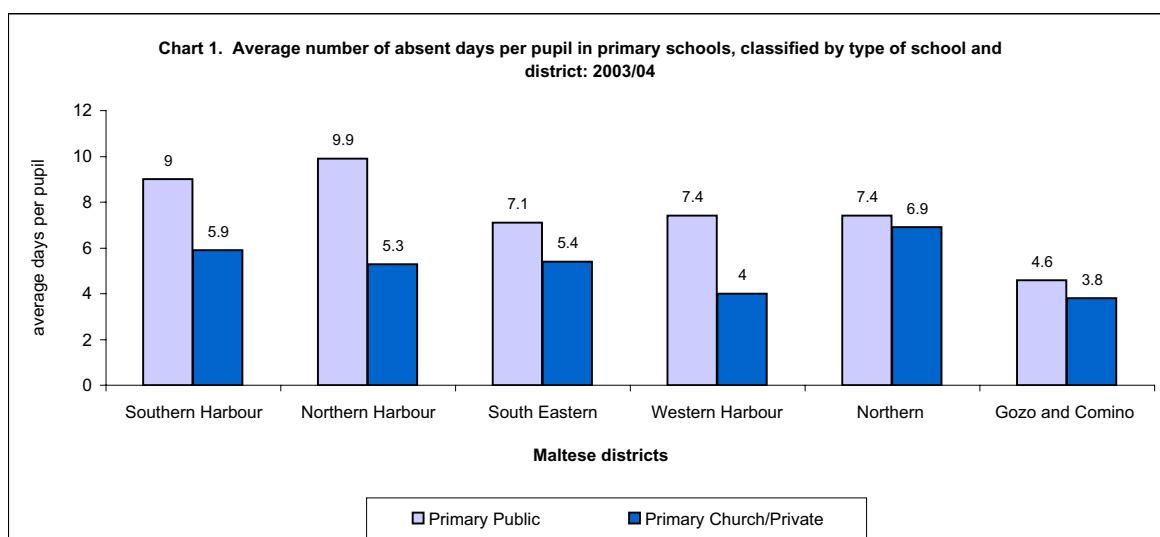


Table 5. Absences in Government-dependent and Independent-private primary schools classified by locality of school: 2003/2004

Region/Locality	Total pupils	Unauthorised		Authorised		Total	
		number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil
Total	11,895	55,520	7,488	63,008	5.3	118,528	10.0
Southern Harbour district	2,209	11,303	1,730	13,033	5.9	24,336	11.0
Valletta	236	1,198	293	1,491	6.3	2,689	11.4
Birgu	772	4,630	59	4,689	6.1	9,319	12.1
Bormla	507	2,496	11	2,507	4.9	5,003	9.9
Marsa	381	1,137	660	1,797	4.7	2,934	7.7
Paola	313	1,842	707	2,549	8.1	4,391	14.0
South Eastern district	305	1,521	113	1,634	5.4	3,155	10.3
Gudja	305	1,521	113	1,634	5.4	3,155	10.3
Northern Harbour district	6,371	29,856	3,931	33,787	5.3	63,643	10.0
Qormi	201	760	72	832	4.1	1,592	7.9
Birkirkara	993	3,830	817	4,647	4.7	8,477	8.5
Gżira	729	2,860	544	3,404	4.7	6,264	8.6
Ħamrun	771	3,364	872	4,236	5.5	7,600	9.9
Msida	459	2,102	57	2,159	4.7	4,261	9.3
Pieta	34	97	26	123	3.6	220	6.5
San Ġwann	551	2,874	43	2,917	5.3	5,791	10.5
San Ġiljan	1,320	6,910	75	6,985	5.3	13,895	10.5
Pembroke	317	1,281	423	1,704	5.4	2,985	9.4
Sliema	996	5,778	1,002	6,780	6.8	12,558	12.6
Western district	1,420	5,131	581	5,712	4.0	10,843	7.6
Żebbuġ	546	1,851	410	2,261	4.1	4,112	7.5
Attard	354	1,114		1,114	3.1	2,228	6.3
Balzan	520	2,166	171	2,337	4.5	4,503	8.7
Northern district	920	5,181	1,124	6,305	6.9	11,486	12.5
Mosta	52	339	33	372	7.2	711	13.7
Mġarr	868	4,842	1,091	5,933	6.8	10,775	12.4
Gozo and Comino	670	2,528	9	2,537	3.8	5,065	7.6
Rabat	349	1,126	9	1,135	3.3	2,261	6.5
Għasri	321	1,402	-	1,402	4.4	2,804	8.7

**Table 6. Absences in Government general secondary schools
classified by year of study: 2003/2004**

Year of study	Total pupils	Unauthorised		Authorised		Total	
		number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil
Class 1	3,473	21,409	6.2	15,316	4.4	36,725	10.6
Class 2	4,215	37,087	8.8	24,321	5.8	61,408	14.6
Class 3	3,436	28,229	8.2	20,088	5.8	48,317	14.1
Class 4	3,422	34,126	10.0	25,436	7.4	59,562	17.4
Class 5	3,353	56,469	16.8	40,886	12.2	97,355	29.0
Total	17,899	177,320	9.9	126,047	7.0	303,367	16.9

Table 7. Absences in Boys'/Girls' schools (secondary) classified by year of study: 2003/2004

Year of study	Total pupils	Unauthorised		Authorised		Total	
		number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil
Class 1	140	2,918	20.8	1,227	8.8	4,145	29.6
Class 2	162	3,319	20.5	1,762	10.9	5,081	31.4
Class 3	202	4,673	23.1	1,780	8.8	6,453	31.9
Class 4	207	6,722	32.5	2,617	12.6	9,339	45.1
Class 5	169	8,451	50.0	2,013	11.9	10,464	61.9
Total	880	26,083	29.6	9,399	10.7	35,482	40.3

**Table 8. Absences in Government-dependent private secondary schools
classified by year of study: 2003/2004**

Year of study	Total pupils	Unauthorised		Authorised		Total	
		number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil
Class 1	2,123	825	0.4	9,563	4.5	10,388	4.9
Class 2	1,546	751	0.5	5,993	3.9	6,744	4.4
Class 3	1,626	727	0.4	7,208	4.4	7,935	4.9
Class 4	1,511	744	0.5	8,115	5.4	8,859	5.9
Class 5	1,619	3,388	2.1	10,028	6.2	13,416	8.3
Total	8,425	6,435	0.8	40,907	4.9	47,342	5.6

**Table 9. Absences in Independent-private secondary schools (non-church)
classified by year of study: 2003/2004**

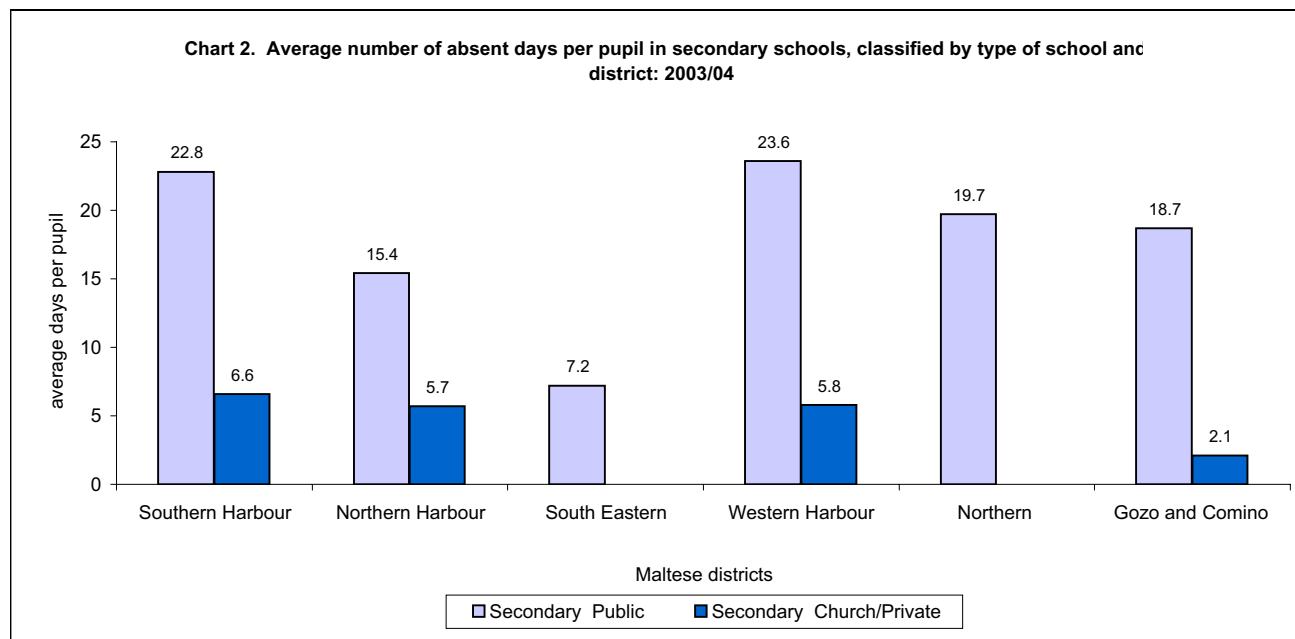
Year of study	Total pupils	Unauthorised		Authorised		Total	
		number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil
Class 1	516	344	0.7	2,285	4.4	2,629	5.1
Class 2	528	437	0.8	2,165	4.1	2,602	4.9
Class 3	475	500	1.1	2,771	5.8	3,271	6.9
Class 4	418	822	2.0	1,896	4.5	2,718	6.5
Class 5	397	1,231	3.1	2,112	5.3	3,343	8.4
Total	2,334	3,334	1.4	11,229	4.8	14,563	6.2

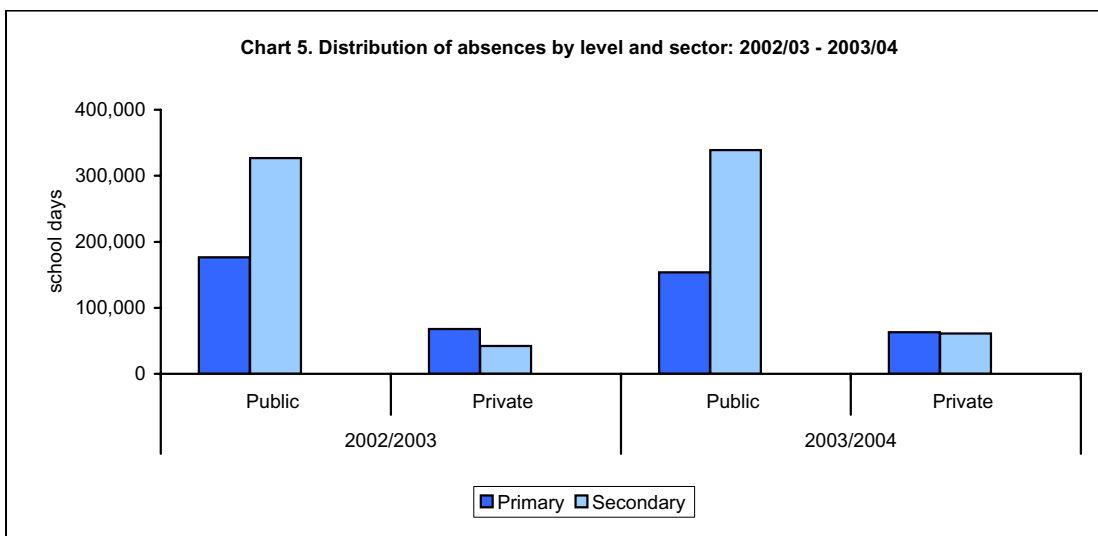
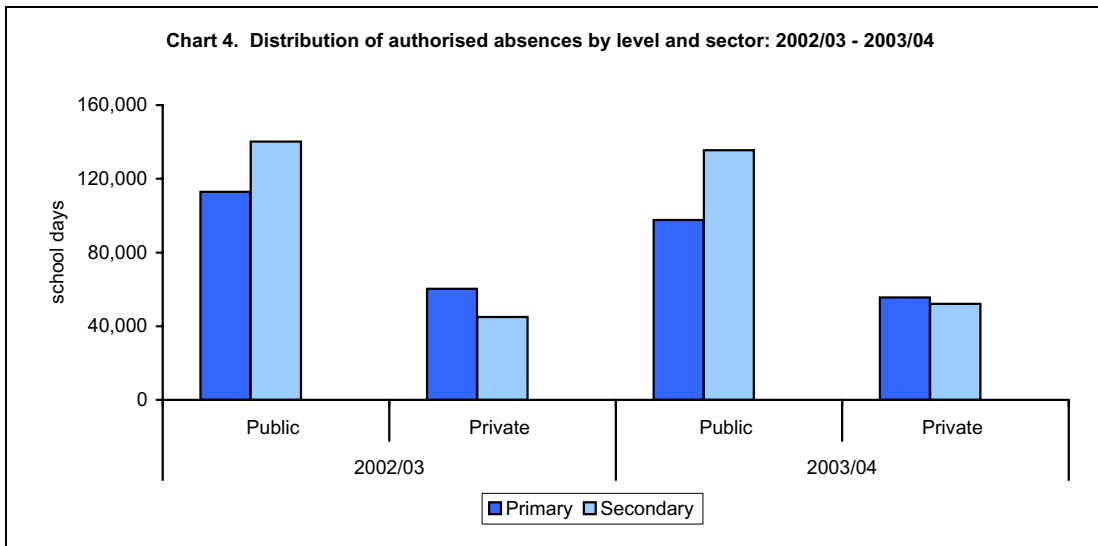
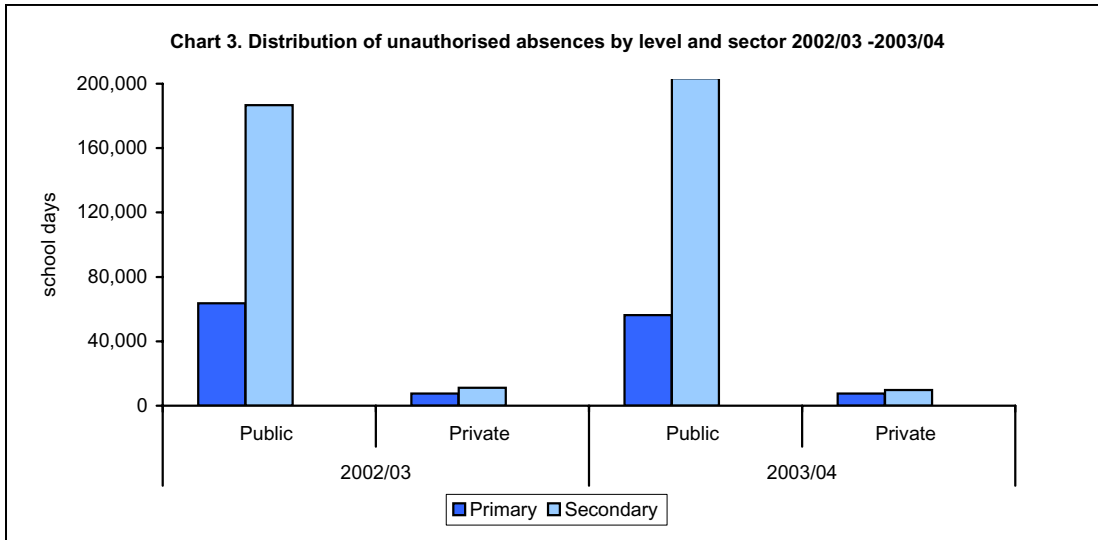
Table 10. Absences in Government secondary and Boys'/girls' schools classified by locality of school: 2003/2004

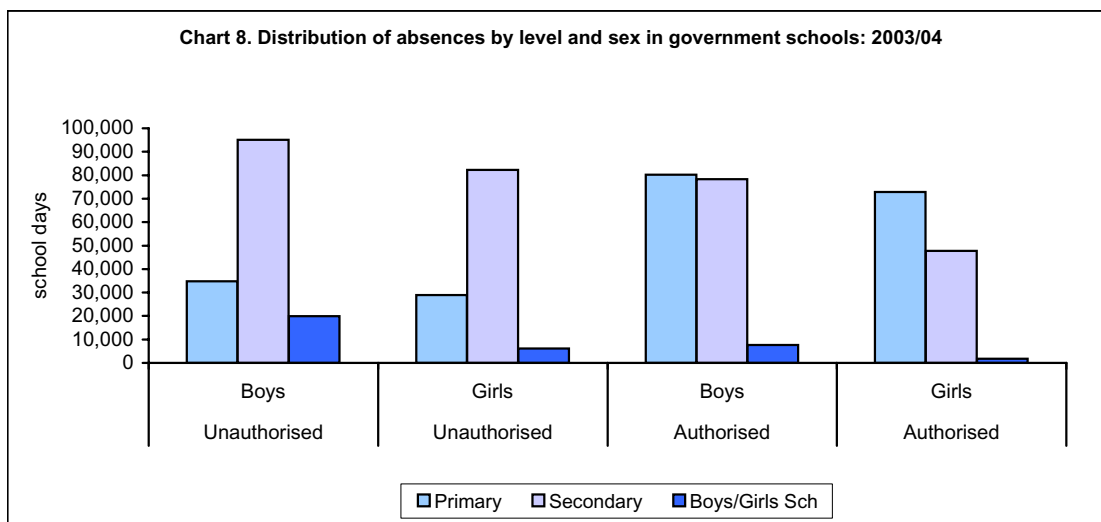
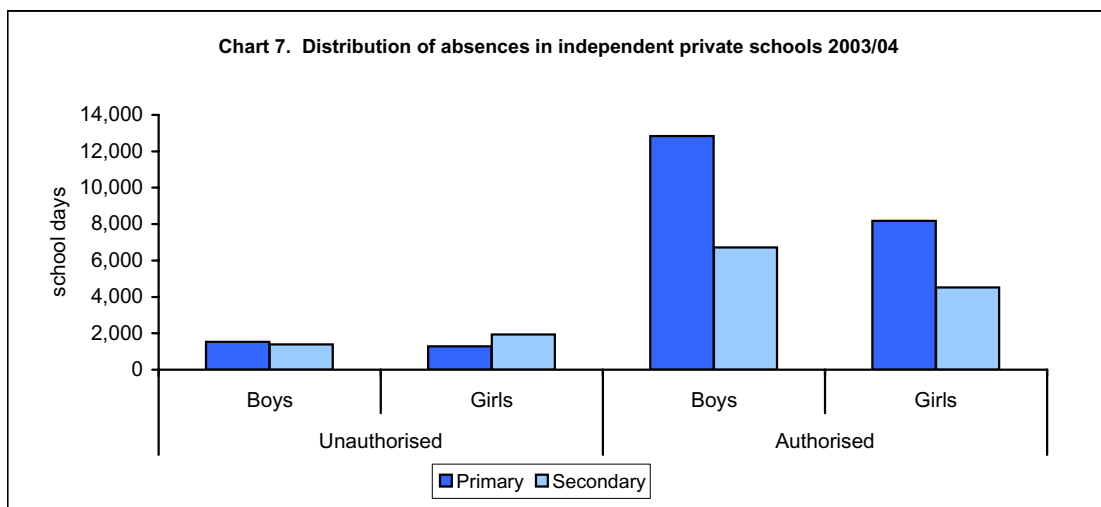
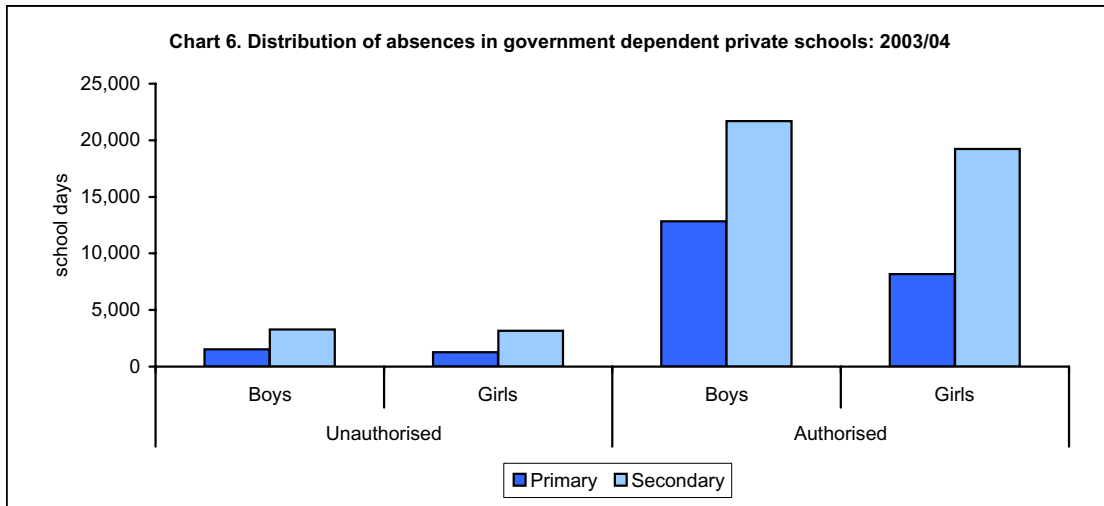
District/locality	Total secondary pupils	Unauthorised		Authorised		Total	
		number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil
Total	18,779	203,403	10.8	135,446	7.2	338,849	18.0
Southern Harbour district	4,943	68,373	13.8	44,451	9.0	112,824	22.8
Birgu	259	5,902	22.8	2,021	7.8	7,923	30.6
Bormla	1,114	11,164	10.0	10,283	9.2	21,447	19.3
Floriana	153	4,759	31.1	2,234	14.6	6,993	45.7
Marsa	710	17,235	24.3	8,176	11.5	25,411	35.8
Paola	1,286	18,377	14.3	14,385	11.2	32,762	25.5
Tarxien	430	5,267	12.2	4,251	9.9	9,518	22.1
Sta Luċia	991	5,669	5.7	3,101	3.1	8,770	8.8
South Eastern district	1,005	4,296	4.3	2,965	3.0	7,261	7.2
Żejtun	1,005	4,296	4.3	2,965	3.0	7,261	7.2
Northern Harbour district	8,718	80,921	9.3	53,396	6.1	134,317	15.4
Qormi	1,341	5,175	3.9	2,998	2.2	8,173	6.1
Mrieħel (Qormi)	1,024	3,775	3.7	3,718	3.6	7,493	7.3
Birkirkara	884	14,699	16.6	13,073	14.8	27,772	31.4
Gżira	425	6,782	16.0	4,785	11.3	11,567	27.2
Ħamrun	2,286	28,506	12.5	14,149	6.2	42,655	18.7
Blata l-Bajda (Ħamrun)	1,065	7,445	7.0	4,014	3.8	11,459	10.8
St Andrews (San Ġiljan)	1,083	8,133	7.5	5,734	5.3	13,867	12.8
Santa Venera	525	5,274	10.0	4,316	8.2	9,590	18.3
Sliema	85	1,132	13.3	609	7.2	1,741	20.5
Western district	1,362	15,755	11.6	16,408	12.0	32,163	23.6
Żebbuġ	273	3,363	12.3	6,014	22.0	9,377	34.3
Rabat	554	6,717	12.1	4,082	7.4	10,799	19.5
Mtarfa	344	4,242	12.3	4,984	14.5	9,226	26.8
Żurrieq	191	1,433	7.5	1,328	7.0	2,761	14.5
Northern district	869	10,465	12.0	6,643	7.6	17,108	19.7
Mosta	624	4,714	7.6	3,361	5.4	8,075	12.9
Naxxar	245	5,751	23.5	3,282	13.4	9,033	36.9
Gozo and Comino	1,882	23,593	12.5	11,583	6.2	35,176	18.7
Rabat	1,882	23,593	12.5	11,583	6.2	35,176	18.7

Table 11. Absences in Government-dependent and Independent-private secondary schools, classified by locality of school: 2003/2004

Region/Locality	Total Secondary pupils	Unauthorised		Unauthorised		Total	
		number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil	number of absent days	average per pupil
Total	10,759	52,136	4.8	9,769	0.9	61,910	5.8
Southern Harbour district	1,898	11,446	6.0	1,114	0.6	12,566	6.6
Valletta	233	908	3.9	627	2.7	1,539	6.6
Birgu	1,194	8,240	6.9	106	0.1	8,353	7.0
Paola	121	702	5.8	-	-	708	5.8
Tarxien	350	1,596	4.6	381	1.1	1,982	5.7
Northern Harbour district	6,341	29,679	4.7	6,302	1.0	35,986	5.7
Qormi	363	1,219	3.4	221	0.6	1,443	4.0
Birkirkara	1,076	3,830	3.6	963	0.9	4,797	4.5
Gżira	1,199	5,739	4.8	2,049	1.7	7,793	6.5
Hamrun	846	5,260	6.2	204	0.2	5,470	6.5
Msida	823	4,249	5.2	686	0.8	4,940	6.0
Pieta	409	841	2.1	336	0.8	1,179	2.9
San Ġiljan	523	2,917	5.6	3	0.0	2,926	5.6
Santa Venera	241	1,351	5.6	225	0.9	1,582	6.6
Sliema	861	4,273	5.0	1,615	1.9	5,893	6.8
Western district	2,189	10,356	4.7	2,313	1.1	12,674	5.8
Żebbuġ	457	1,776	3.9	790	1.7	2,570	5.6
Dingli	257	1,195	4.6	23	0.1	1,223	4.8
Rabat	526	3,586	6.8	-	-	3,593	6.8
Mġarr	949	3,799	4.0	1,500	1.6	5,303	5.6
Gozo and Comino	331	655	2.0	40	0.1	697	2.1
Rabat	331	655	2.0	40	0.1	697	2.1







Methodological notes

1. The data contained in this release were obtained from a census among all schools (public, church and private) at primary and secondary level. The questionnaire required information on the number of absent days (authorized and non-authorized) each student took between September 2003 and March 2004.

- Authorised Absences are absences whereby the parent/guardian of the pupil provides the school with a valid reason for the pupil's absence. Such reasons may include, as in the majority of cases, sickness, hospitalisation and overseas travel.

- Unauthorised Absences are absences whereby the parent/guardian of the pupil fails to provide the school with a valid reason for the pupil's absence.

2. All schools responded to our enquiry.

3. The data in this release is to be considered as final and is not normally subject to revision.

NUTS classification

The Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics (NUTS) is a common classification that is used to provide a single uniform breakdown of territorial units for the production of regional statistics with regard to the European Union. It was adopted on 26 May 2003 by means of a Regulation¹ of the European Parliament and of the Council.

¹ (EC) No. 1059/2003

NUTS levels					
Administrative area	I (National)	II (National)	III (Regional)	IV (District)	V (Locality)
MALTA	x	x	x	x	x
Malta			x		
Gozo & Comino			x		
Southern Harbour				x	
Northern Harbour				x	
South Eastern				x	
Western				x	
Northern				x	
Gozo & Comino				x	

COMPOSITION OF DISTRICTS - NUTS level V

- Southern Harbour:** Valletta, Birgu, Isla, Bormla, Żabbar, Fgura, Floriana, Kalkara, Luqa, Marsa Paola, Santa Luċija, Tarxien, Xgħajra.
- Northern Harbour:** Qormi, B'Kara, Gżira, Hamrun, Msida, Pembroke, Pieta, San Ġiljan, San Ġwann, Santa Venera, Sliema, Swieqi, Ta' Xbiex.
- South Eastern:** Żejtun, B'Bugia, Gudja, Għaxaq, Kirkop, M'Scala, M'Xlokk, Mqabba, Qrendi, Safi, Żurrieq.
- Western:** Mdina, Żebbuġ, Siġġiewi, Attard, Balzan, Dingli, Iklin, Lija, Rabat, Mtarfa.
- Northern:** Għargħur, Mellieħa, Mgarr, Mosta, Naxxar, San Pawl il-Baħar.
- Gozo and Comino:** Rabat, Fontana, G'Sielem & Comino, Għarb, Għasri, Kerċem, Munxar, Nadur, Qala, San Lawrenz, Sannat, Xagħra, Xewkija, Żebbuġ.