

15 April 2020 | 1100 hrs | 061/2020

Total absences for students attending primary and secondary schools during academic year 2017-2018 amounted to 554,837 days, equivalent to an average of 11.8 absence days per student.

Absenteeism in Schools: 2017-2018

Absenteeism recorded during academic year 2017-2018 increased by 4.3 per cent when compared with the previous academic year. Authorised absences increased by 4.1 per cent and made up 61.9 per cent of total absences. The number of unauthorised absences increased by 4.7 per cent (Table 1).

The average number of absences during the period under review stood at 11.8 days per student, an increase of 0.3 of a day per student when compared to the previous academic year. On average, students recorded 7.3 days of authorised and 4.5 days of unauthorised absences in one academic year (Table 2).

In absolute terms, male students recorded higher levels of absenteeism when compared to their female counterparts. The total absences among males was found to be higher compared to that of females for all class levels (Table 3).

During academic year 2017-2018, student absenteeism in state schools increased by 6.2 per cent when compared to the previous academic year. The majority of these absences were authorised, accounting for 57.5 per cent of total absenteeism in state schools. Authorised and unauthorised absences in state schools both registered increases by 6.8 per cent and 5.4 per cent respectively. Church schools registered a decrease of 2.0 per cent in absenteeism while Independent schools registered an increase of 4.9 per cent when compared to the previous academic year (Table 4).

The lowest average number of absences per student was recorded among eight-year olds at 8.4 days, while students aged 16 years and over held the highest average number of absences per student at 24.0 days (Chart 1).

Students residing in the Northern district registered the highest increase (11.7 per cent) in their absence levels (Table 7). On average, students residing in the Southern Harbour district accumulated the highest average number of absences (14.6 days per student). On the other hand, the lowest average number of absences was recorded by students residing in the Western district with 9.4 days per student (Table 8) ■

Table 1. School absences by class level, academic year and type of absence

Class level	Academic year 2016-2017	Academic year 2017-2018	Percentage change 2016-2017/2017-2018
Authorised absences			
Year 1	29,831	34,078	14.2
Year 2	25,765	29,159	13.2
Year 3	23,982	27,181	13.3
Year 4	21,983	23,921	8.8
Year 5	21,519	24,214	12.5
Year 6	20,077	22,619	12.7
Form 1	31,550	31,168	-1.2
Form 2	33,655	34,190	1.6
Form 3	35,220	36,797	4.5
Form 4	42,247	43,784	3.6
Form 5	43,837	36,136	-17.6
Total	329,665	343,247	4.1
Unauthorised absences			
Year 1	13,679	14,604	6.8
Year 2	12,482	13,787	10.5
Year 3	11,955	13,671	14.4
Year 4	12,156	13,372	10.0
Year 5	12,098	14,973	23.8
Year 6	13,072	14,920	14.1
Form 1	15,972	16,685	4.5
Form 2	19,460	20,181	3.7
Form 3	24,864	24,738	-0.5
Form 4	30,620	32,110	4.9
Form 5	35,744	32,549	-8.9
Total	202,100	211,590	4.7
Total absences			
Year 1	43,510	48,682	11.9
Year 2	38,247	42,946	12.3
Year 3	35,936	40,853	13.7
Year 4	34,139	37,293	9.2
Year 5	33,617	39,186	16.6
Year 6	33,149	37,538	13.2
Form 1	47,522	47,853	0.7
Form 2	53,115	54,370	2.4
Form 3	60,083	61,536	2.4
Form 4	72,866	75,894	4.2
Form 5	79,580	68,685	-13.7
Total	531,765	554,837	4.3

Notes:

1. Only mandatory education is included. Pre-primary level and special schools are excluded.
2. Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Table 2. Average school absences by class level, academic year and type of absence

Class level	Academic year 2016-2017	Academic year 2017-2018
Authorised absences		
Year 1	6.6	7.5
Year 2	6.1	6.4
Year 3	5.4	6.3
Year 4	5.0	5.4
Year 5	5.2	5.5
Year 6	4.9	5.4
Form 1	7.8	7.6
Form 2	8.3	8.4
Form 3	8.3	9.0
Form 4	10.4	10.3
Form 5	10.8	9.0
Global average	7.1	7.3
Unauthorised absences		
Year 1	3.0	3.2
Year 2	2.9	3.0
Year 3	2.7	3.2
Year 4	2.8	3.0
Year 5	2.9	3.4
Year 6	3.2	3.6
Form 1	3.9	4.0
Form 2	4.8	4.9
Form 3	5.8	6.0
Form 4	7.5	7.6
Form 5	8.8	8.1
Global average	4.4	4.5
Total absences		
Year 1	9.6	10.8
Year 2	9.0	9.4
Year 3	8.2	9.4
Year 4	7.8	8.4
Year 5	8.2	8.8
Year 6	8.2	9.0
Form 1	11.7	11.6
Form 2	13.1	13.3
Form 3	14.1	15.0
Form 4	17.9	17.9
Form 5	19.7	17.1
Global average	11.5	11.8

Notes:

1. Only mandatory education is included. Pre-primary level and special schools are excluded.
2. Averages are compiled on the basis of the entire student population.

Table 3. School absences by class level, academic year, sex and type of absence

Class level	Academic year 2016-2017		Academic year 2017-2018		Percentage change 2016-2017/2017-2018	
	Males	Females	Males	Females	Males	Females
Authorised absences						
Year 1	15,343	14,488	18,283	15,795	19.2	9.0
Year 2	13,326	12,440	14,929	14,229	12.0	14.4
Year 3	12,317	11,665	14,055	13,126	14.1	12.5
Year 4	11,259	10,724	12,924	10,997	14.8	2.6
Year 5	11,742	9,777	13,090	11,124	11.5	13.8
Year 6	11,527	8,550	12,477	10,142	8.2	18.6
Form 1	16,323	15,227	17,122	14,046	4.9	-7.8
Form 2	17,213	16,442	18,212	15,978	5.8	-2.8
Form 3	17,903	17,317	20,102	16,695	12.3	-3.6
Form 4	21,138	21,109	21,859	21,925	3.4	3.9
Form 5	20,061	23,775	18,749	17,388	-6.5	-26.9
Total	168,151	161,514	181,802	161,445	8.1	0.0
Unauthorised absences						
Year 1	7,143	6,536	7,679	6,926	7.5	6.0
Year 2	6,296	6,186	7,299	6,488	15.9	4.9
Year 3	6,515	5,440	6,610	7,062	1.5	29.8
Year 4	6,501	5,655	7,070	6,303	8.8	11.4
Year 5	6,602	5,496	8,058	6,915	22.0	25.8
Year 6	7,302	5,770	8,023	6,897	9.9	19.5
Form 1	8,718	7,254	9,284	7,401	6.5	2.0
Form 2	10,636	8,824	10,779	9,402	1.3	6.5
Form 3	13,082	11,782	12,629	12,110	-3.5	2.8
Form 4	16,042	14,577	16,760	15,350	4.5	5.3
Form 5	18,737	17,007	17,016	15,532	-9.2	-8.7
Total	107,573	94,527	111,205	100,385	3.4	6.2
Total absences						
Year 1	22,486	21,025	25,962	22,720	15.5	8.1
Year 2	19,621	18,626	22,229	20,717	13.3	11.2
Year 3	18,831	17,105	20,665	20,188	9.7	18.0
Year 4	17,760	16,379	19,993	17,300	12.6	5.6
Year 5	18,345	15,272	21,148	18,039	15.3	18.1
Year 6	18,829	14,320	20,500	17,039	8.9	19.0
Form 1	25,041	22,482	26,405	21,448	5.4	-4.6
Form 2	27,849	25,266	28,991	25,380	4.1	0.4
Form 3	30,985	29,099	32,731	28,805	5.6	-1.0
Form 4	37,180	35,686	38,619	37,275	3.9	4.5
Form 5	38,798	40,782	35,765	32,920	-7.8	-19.3
Total	275,724	256,042	293,007	261,830	6.3	2.3

Notes:

1. Only mandatory education is included. Pre-primary level and special schools are excluded.
2. Totals may not add up due to rounding.

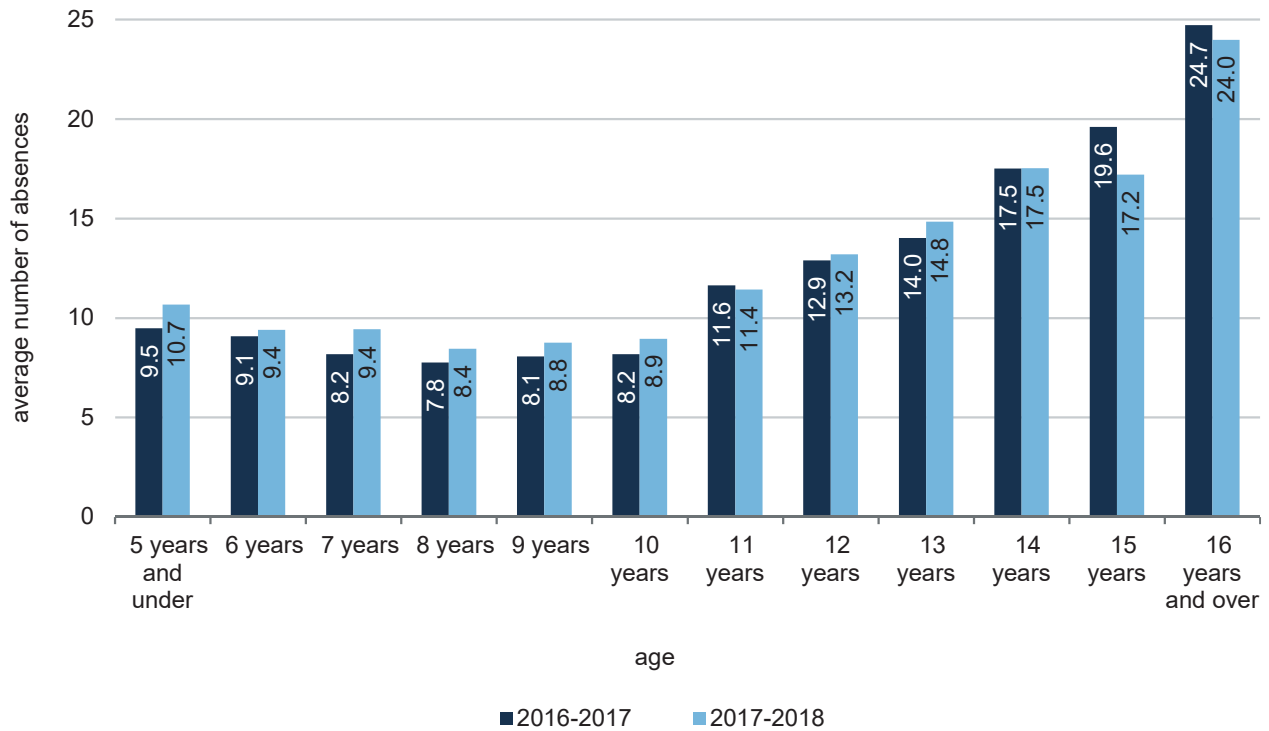
Table 4. School absences by economic sector, class level, type of absence and academic year

Class level/Economic sector	Authorised absences	Unauthorised absences	Total absences
Academic year 2016-2017			
Primary	85,569	57,124	142,693
Lower Secondary (Form 1-3)	67,926	49,905	117,831
Upper Secondary (Form 4-5)	60,727	53,625	114,352
Total State Schools	214,222	160,654	374,876
Primary	42,247	9,100	51,347
Lower Secondary (Form 1-3)	24,943	7,225	32,168
Upper Secondary (Form 4-5)	20,334	9,181	29,515
Total Church Schools	87,523	25,506	113,030
Primary	15,341	9,217	24,559
Lower Secondary (Form 1-3)	7,556	3,165	10,721
Upper Secondary (Form 4-5)	5,022	3,558	8,580
Total Independent Schools	27,919	15,940	43,859
Academic year 2017-2018			
Primary	98,974	63,985	162,959
Lower Secondary (Form 1-3)	72,411	51,596	124,007
Upper Secondary (Form 4-5)	57,323	53,731	111,054
Total State Schools	228,708	169,312	398,020
Primary	41,443	13,157	54,600
Lower Secondary (Form 1-3)	23,548	6,899	30,447
Upper Secondary (Form 4-5)	18,097	7,645	25,742
Total Church Schools	83,087	27,701	110,788
Primary	20,755	8,185	28,940
Lower Secondary (Form 1-3)	6,196	3,109	9,305
Upper Secondary (Form 4-5)	4,501	3,283	7,783
Total Independent Schools	31,451	14,578	46,029

Notes:

1. Only mandatory education is included. Pre-primary level and special schools are excluded.
2. Totals may not add up due to rounding.

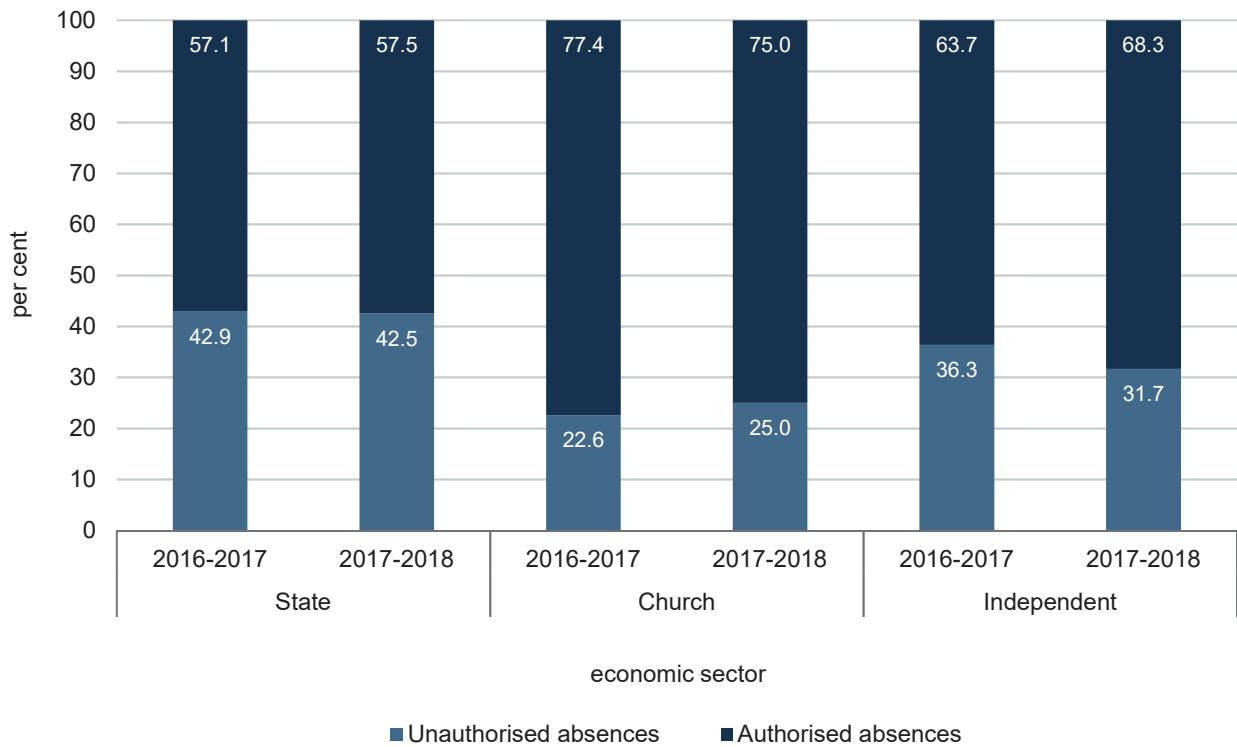
Chart 1. Average school absences by age and academic year



Notes:

1. Only mandatory education is included. Pre-primary level and special schools are excluded.
2. Averages are compiled on the basis of the entire student population.

Chart 2. Percentage distribution of school absences by academic year, economic sector and type of absence



Note: Only mandatory education is included. Pre-primary level and special schools are excluded.

Table 5. School absences by age, academic year and type of absence

Age	Academic year 2016-2017	Academic year 2017-2018	Percentage change 2016-2017/2017-2018
Authorised absences			
5 years and under	28,897	33,212	14.9
6 years	26,063	29,082	11.6
7 years	23,849	27,010	13.3
8 years	22,031	24,084	9.3
9 years	20,937	24,219	15.7
10 years	20,067	22,278	11.0
11 years	31,100	30,546	-1.8
12 years	33,395	33,937	1.6
13 years	34,582	36,232	4.8
14 years	41,321	42,961	4.0
15 years	44,337	36,753	-17.1
16 years	2,996	2,901	-3.2
Over 16 years	91	34	-63.0
Total	329,665	343,247	4.1
Unauthorised absences			
5 years and under	13,034	13,992	7.4
6 years	12,754	13,686	7.3
7 years	11,798	13,781	16.8
8 years	11,862	13,389	12.9
9 years	12,065	14,441	19.7
10 years	12,817	14,991	17.0
11 years	15,858	16,032	1.1
12 years	18,938	20,020	5.7
13 years	24,468	24,438	-0.1
14 years	29,668	30,999	4.5
15 years	35,057	32,619	-7.0
16 years	3,652	3,199	-12.4
Over 16 years	130	5	-96.2
Total	202,100	211,590	4.7
Total absences			
5 years and under	41,931	47,204	12.6
6 years	38,817	42,768	10.2
7 years	35,647	40,791	14.4
8 years	33,892	37,472	10.6
9 years	33,002	38,659	17.1
10 years	32,884	37,268	13.3
11 years	46,958	46,578	-0.8
12 years	52,333	53,957	3.1
13 years	59,050	60,670	2.7
14 years	70,989	73,960	4.2
15 years	79,393	69,372	-12.6
16 years	6,648	6,100	-8.2
Over 16 years	221	39	-82.5
Total	531,765	554,837	4.3

Notes:

1. Only mandatory education is included. Pre-primary level and special schools are excluded.
2. Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Table 6. Average school absences by age, academic year and type of absence

Age	Academic year 2016-2017	Academic year 2017-2018
Authorised absences		
5 years and under	6.5	7.5
6 years	6.1	6.4
7 years	5.5	6.2
8 years	5.0	5.4
9 years	5.1	5.5
10 years	5.0	5.3
11 years	7.7	7.5
12 years	8.2	8.3
13 years	8.2	8.9
14 years	10.2	10.2
15 years	10.9	9.1
16 years	11.5	11.6
Over 16 years	5.0	5.6
Global average	7.1	7.3
Unauthorised absences		
5 years and under	2.9	3.2
6 years	3.0	3.0
7 years	2.7	3.2
8 years	2.7	3.0
9 years	2.9	3.3
10 years	3.2	3.6
11 years	3.9	3.9
12 years	4.7	4.9
13 years	5.8	6.0
14 years	7.3	7.3
15 years	8.7	8.1
16 years	14.0	12.8
Over 16 years	7.2	0.8
Global average	4.4	4.5
Total absences		
5 years and under	9.5	10.7
6 years	9.1	9.4
7 years	8.2	9.4
8 years	7.8	8.4
9 years	8.1	8.8
10 years	8.2	8.9
11 years	11.6	11.4
12 years	12.9	13.2
13 years	14.0	14.8
14 years	17.5	17.5
15 years	19.6	17.2
16 years	25.6	24.4
Over 16 years	12.3	6.4
Global average	11.5	11.8

Notes:

1. Only mandatory education is included. Pre-primary level and special schools are excluded.
2. Averages are compiled on the basis of the entire student population.

Table 7. School absences by district of students' residence, academic year and type of absence

District of students' residence	Academic year 2016-2017	Academic year 2017-2018	Percentage change 2016-2017/2017-2018
Authorised absences			
Southern Harbour	66,382	68,760	3.6
Northern Harbour	91,588	92,969	1.5
South Eastern	57,105	58,877	3.1
Western	41,374	42,684	3.2
Northern	49,027	55,217	12.6
Gozo and Comino	24,189	24,739	2.3
Total	329,665	343,247	4.1
Unauthorised absences			
Southern Harbour	47,966	47,645	-0.7
Northern Harbour	57,359	59,949	4.5
South Eastern	35,401	36,967	4.4
Western	18,823	18,924	0.5
Northern	35,702	39,400	10.4
Gozo and Comino	6,849	8,706	27.1
Total	202,100	211,590	4.7
Total absences			
Southern Harbour	114,348	116,404	1.8
Northern Harbour	148,947	152,917	2.7
South Eastern	92,506	95,844	3.6
Western	60,197	61,608	2.3
Northern	84,729	94,617	11.7
Gozo and Comino	31,039	33,445	7.8
Total	531,765	554,837	4.3

Notes:

1. Only mandatory education is included. Pre-primary level and special schools are excluded.
2. Totals may not add up due to rounding.

Table 8. Average school absences by district of students' residence, academic year and type of absence

District of students' residence	Academic year 2016-2017	Academic year 2017-2018
Authorised absences		
Southern Harbour	8.4	8.6
Northern Harbour	7.1	7.1
South Eastern	7.5	7.5
Western	6.3	6.5
Northern	6.1	6.6
Gozo and Comino	7.6	7.5
Global Average	7.1	7.3
Unauthorised absences		
Southern Harbour	6.0	6.0
Northern Harbour	4.4	4.6
South Eastern	4.7	4.7
Western	2.9	2.9
Northern	4.4	4.7
Gozo and Comino	2.1	2.6
Global Average	4.4	4.5
Total absences		
Southern Harbour	14.4	14.6
Northern Harbour	11.5	11.6
South Eastern	12.2	12.3
Western	9.2	9.4
Northern	10.5	11.3
Gozo and Comino	9.7	10.1
Global Average	11.5	11.8

Notes:

1. Only mandatory education is included. Pre-primary level and special schools are excluded.
2. Averages are compiled on the basis of the entire student population.

Methodological Notes

1. Data collection is carried out during the second quarter of each academic year. The reference period for information received from church and independent schools, is at the end of March of the reference year. Data received from state schools covers all of the scholastic year.
2. Information on students attending state schools is based on administrative records obtained from the Ministry for Education and Employment (MEDE) via the School Information System (SIS).
3. Data on the non-state sector is collected by use of a questionnaire owned and distributed by NSO. Full coverage of state and non-state schools was obtained.
4. Item non-response was resolved making use of the appropriate imputation techniques.
5. Data was weighted to account for the months in which data was not being collected. Basing on recommendations received from MEDE, the scholastic year for students in Year one to Form four spans from September to May, while in the case of fifth formers the school year runs from September to April.
6. **Definitions:**
 - **Mandatory education** covers education from primary to upper secondary levels - from Year 1 to Form 5, where under Maltese Law, school is mandatory up to the age of 16.
 - **Class** refers to a group of students who are physically following a common course of study in the same space.
 - **Age** is calculated as at 1st January of the reference academic year.
 - **Locality of Residence** refers to the locality where the student is recorded to reside, according to the LAU classification.
 - **Types of Absences** – Following MEDE's policy to address absences in schools, the following types of absences were defined and adhered to when collating absenteeism data:
 - Authorised Absence**
 - i. School refusal/school phobia; and/or
 - ii. Authorised non-attendance.
 - Unauthorised Absence**
 - i. Unauthorised non-attendance with parental knowledge;
 - ii. Truancy; and/or
 - iii. School transience.
7. Average number of school absence days. is calculated by dividing the total number of absences by the total number of students.
8. References to this news release are to be cited appropriately.
9. More information relating to this release may be accessed at:
Metadata: <http://nso.gov.mt/metadata/reports.aspx?id=41>
Classification: <http://nso.gov.mt/metadata/classificationdetails.aspx?id=ISCED 2011>
10. A detailed news release calendar is available on:
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