



Glasgow City Council

Education, Skills and Early Years City Policy Committee

Report by Executive Director of Education Services

Contact: Jean Miller Ext 73556

REPORT ON ATTENDANCE AND EXCLUSIONS 2023/24

Purpose of Report:

To provide Committee with information on attendance.

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to consider the contents of this report noting that the data for 2019/20 and 2020/21 cannot be directly compared due to the school closures which took place in both years as a result of the pandemic.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

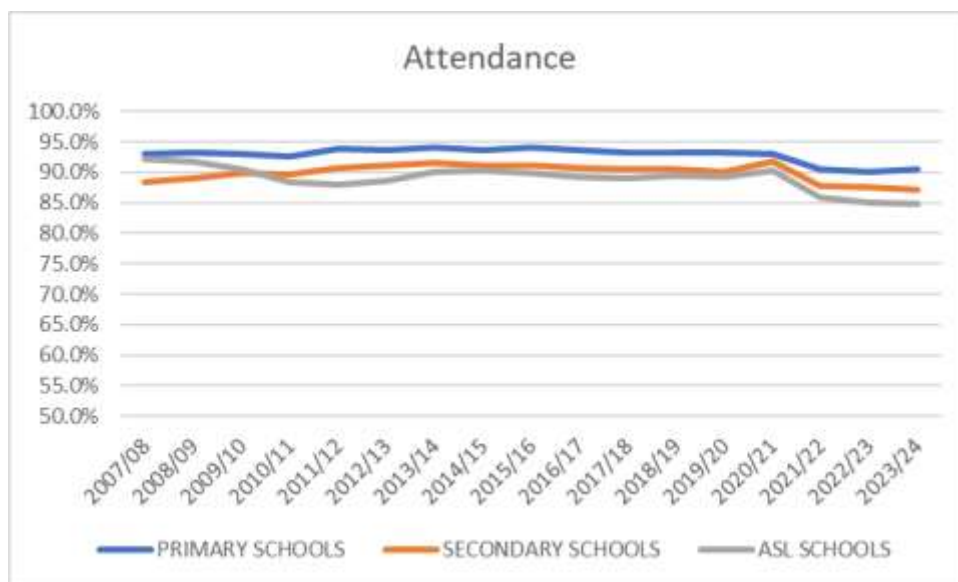
Local member(s) advised: Yes ☐ No ☐ consulted: Yes ☐ No ☐

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The 2023/24 results have been calculated using information collected in the summer of 2024 from all primary, secondary and ASL schools in Glasgow. For Glasgow City, the information was extracted from SEEMIS management information system.
- 1.2 Scotland's schools closed on 23rd March 2020 due to the global pandemic and did not open again to pupils until 12th August 2020. During the week beginning 16th March, pupil attendance was disrupted due to the understandable uncertainty amongst parents and carers about the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, the data for 2019/20 has been taken up to 16th March 2020.
- 1.3 Schools were closed again from January 2021. They opened for P1 to P3 from 22nd February and from 15th March for P4 to P7. Secondary pupils were able to attend in small groups from 15th March. Full opening took place following the spring break.
- 1.4 Schools did not close due to COVID in session 2021/22 or session 2022/23, however, attendance of both pupils and staff continued to be affected.

2. ATTENDANCE

- 2.1 The graph below shows the percentage attendance over time.



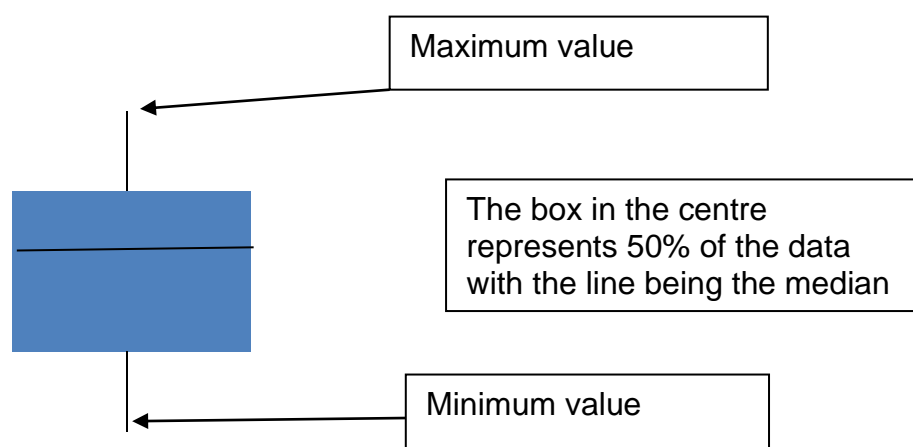
- 2.2 As noted above, the data for 2019/20 and 2020/21 cannot be used for comparison purposes due to the impact of school closures throughout those two years. In addition, when pupils were absent due to COVID or COVID related reasons then their absence was recorded using new COVID codes on SEEMIS. The COVID codes recorded the pupils as if they were in attendance.

- 2.3 In session 2021/22, all pupils returned to school. However, it can be seen from the decline in attendance that pupils' attendance continues to be impacted. Headteachers' reported that this is not due to some pupils not returning rather it is an increase in disrupted attendance. This is understandable given that in 2019/20 and 2020/21, pupils were sent home for long periods and when they did return to school they were regularly sent home for being 'close contacts' or because they were showing signs of a cold.

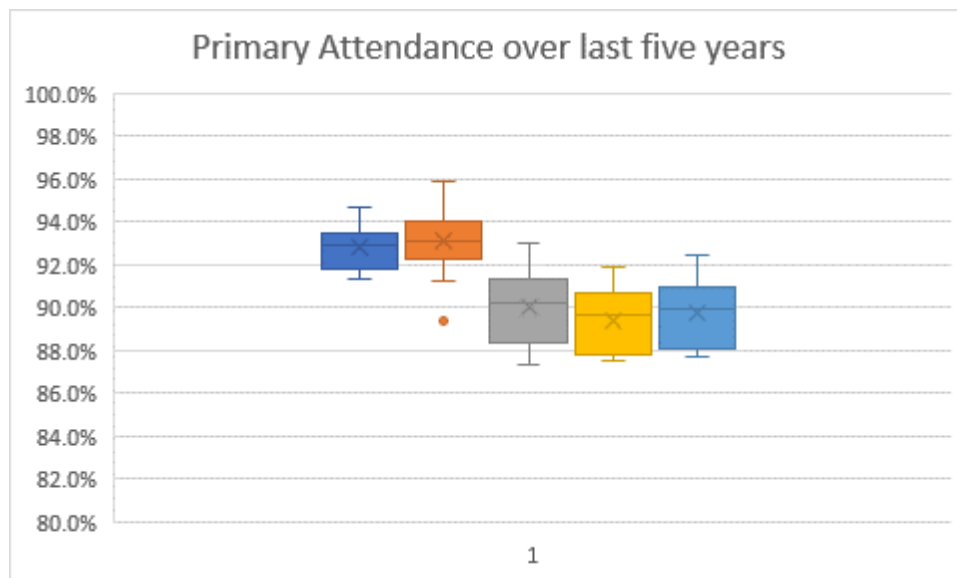
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Primary schools	93.20%	93.0%	90.5%	90.1%	90.4%
Secondary schools	90.10%	91.7%	87.8%	87.5%	87.1%

- 2.4 It can be seen from the table above that there has been an improvement in attendance in primary schools but a continued decline for secondary schools.
- 2.5 All schools across the city have been working hard to improve attendance. They work with third sector partners and families to stress the importance of education and consistent attendance at school. Schools deploy a range of strategies to encourage pupils to attend. Education Services will continue to support schools to maximise attendance and to share best practice.

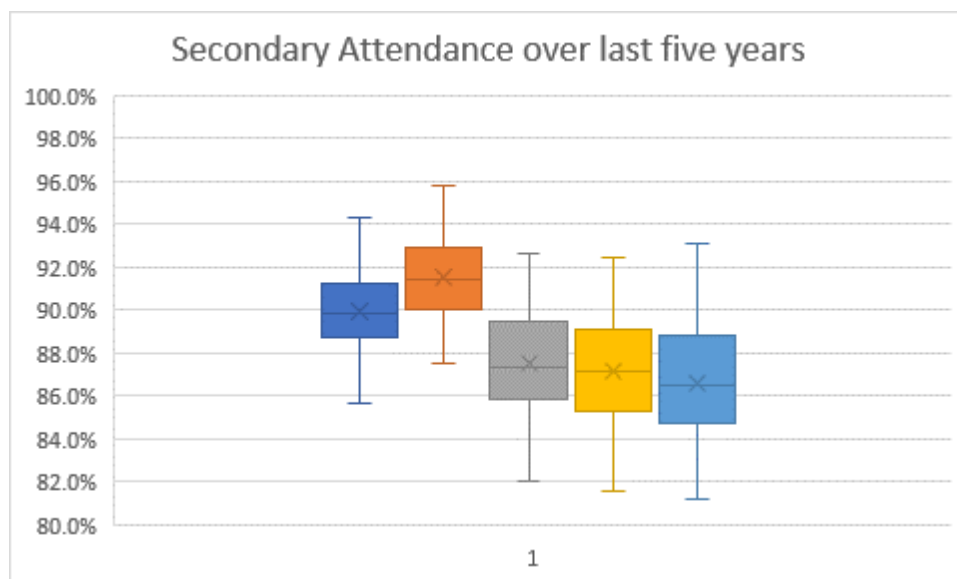
3. SPREAD OF DATA



- 3.1 The diagram below shows the spread of attendance data in primary schools over the last five years. It can be seen that the attendance data in primary schools is quite tightly packed.



3.2 In contrast, the attendance for secondary schools shows a much wider spread.



3.3 This data tells us that secondary schools face more challenges around attendance than the primary schools. This is not a surprising conclusion. Young people attending secondary schools have to travel further to get to school and we know there are more social and emotional issues which impact on secondary school pupils.

3.4 The spread of the data also indicates that some secondary schools are more successful than others at maintaining attendance. This session, Education Services is working closely with secondary schools to share learning across schools.

3.5 Secondary schools work very hard on attendance. They engage with a range of third sector partners, such as FARE, Rangers Foundation, MCR Pathways, who are all working in partnership with targeted young people to improve attendance.

4. NATIONAL DATA

- 4.1 The Scottish Government only publishes data on attendance every two years. The last publication was 2022/23. It can be seen that attendance nationally declined in 2022/23. For primary schools the gap between the Glasgow figures and national reduced and then in 2022/23 the gap widened to be broadly the same as in 2010/11. For secondary schools, the gap has narrowed.

Scotland	2010/11	2012/13	2014/15	2016/17	2018/19	2020/21	2022/23
Primary schools	94.8%	94.9%	95.1%	94.9%	94.5%	94.0%	92.2%
Secondary schools	91.1%	91.9%	91.8%	91.2%	90.7%	89.1%	87.7%

- 4.2 Both the Scottish Government and the Department of Education has defined 'persistent absence' as the percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of school in an academic session. In session 2022/23, the figure for persistent absence in Scotland across all sectors was 32.5%. The figure for Glasgow in 2022/23 was 38.5%. In England, persistent absence was 21.2% in 2022/23.
- 4.3 In July 2024, [ImpactEd Evaluation \(impactgroup.co.uk\)](https://www.impactgroup.co.uk/impact-ed/) published their second report into attendance. This is an extensive study which analysed attendance data as well as social and emotional data from over 70,000 pupils. The findings are applicable to all schools across the UK.

'Executive Summary

Local and individual context is critical in identifying and addressing the drivers of attendance challenges. As the Understanding Attendance project continues to grow however, there are several emerging themes which highlight both the challenges with attendance and successful strategies schools are developing:

- **The start of the year is crucial.** The decline in attendance in the 23/24 academic year was most steep between the first half-term and the second-half term. This is mirrored in the social and emotional data reported by young people, especially in Year 7. A strong start to attendance routines could therefore have significant benefit for the rest of the academic year.
- **Sense of belonging continues to be associated with school attendance, and quality of relationships may be an important influence.** Over 80% of pupils indicated they were aware of the consequences of skipping lessons. A much smaller proportion felt that their teachers or school cared when they missed school.
- **To build belonging, a focus on small communities, individual attention and specialist support can help.** Schools in the project found success in focusing on small groups such as form group, lunch and after school clubs as being accessible ways to help pupils engage with some aspects of the school community.

- **Schools can develop a sense of safety through close attention to their physical and social environment.** Schools found success through identifying “hotspot” areas in the school that are associated with disruptive behaviour. Addressing these, combined with strong daily routines around attendance, was found to be successful.
- **A relational and targeted approach to intervention was particularly effective.** Alongside whole-cohort policies and strategies, schools found in-depth engagement with a small group of pupils to be particularly beneficial, focusing on building deep relationships with individuals.
- **Seeing attendance as everyone’s job can help build a sense of action around absence.** Attendance is not a discrete issue and is closely linked to quality of teaching and areas such as reading. This can be used to build a community around attendance for all school staff. Using student leadership as part of this process can be powerful.’

4.4 The report also includes a number of case studies, which focus on four key themes for improving attendance.

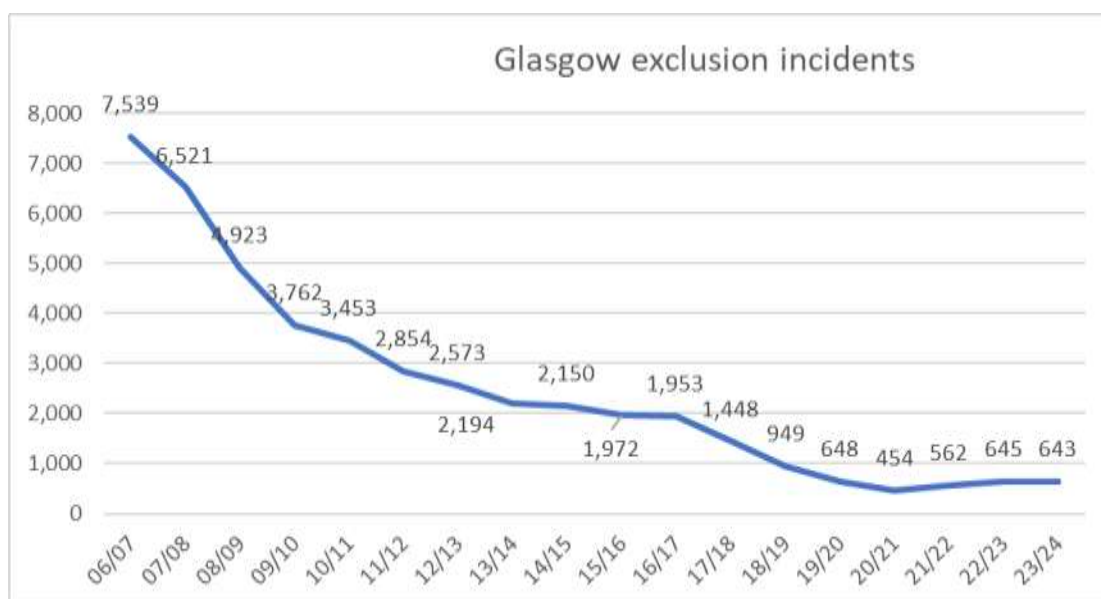
- Creating culture and embedding a sense of belonging.
- Building safety – paying attention to the physical and social environment of the school.
- A relational and targeted approach to intervention.
- It’s everyone’s job – developing a community around attendance.

5. INTRODUCTION (EXCLUSIONS)

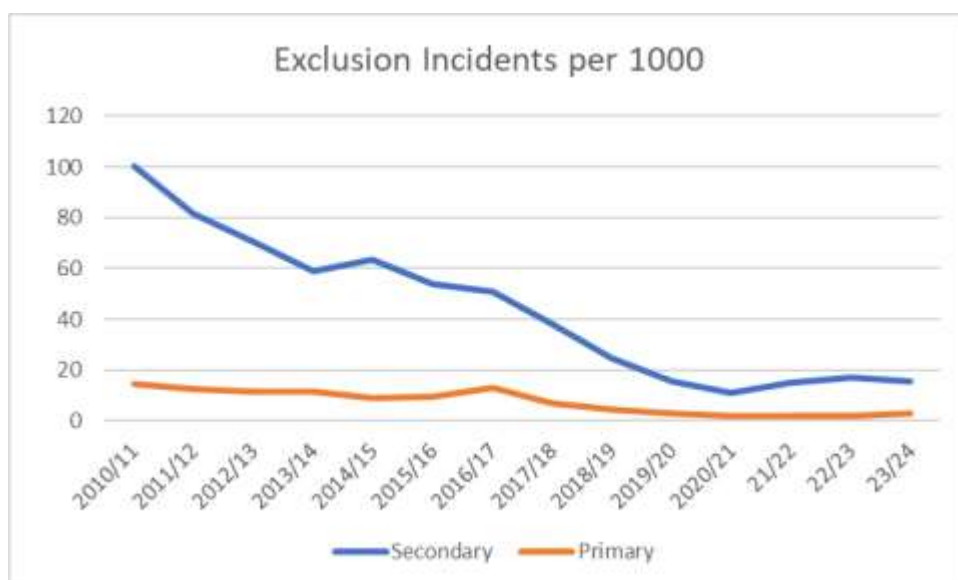
- 5.1 The 2023/24 results have been calculated using information collected in the summer of 2024 from all primary, secondary and ASL schools in Glasgow. For Glasgow City, the information was extracted from SEEMIS management information system.
- 5.2 Scotland’s schools closed on 23rd March 2020 due to the global pandemic and did not open again to pupils until 12th August 2020. During the week beginning 16th March, pupil attendance was disrupted due to the understandable uncertainty amongst parents and carers about the spread of COVID-19. Therefore, the data for 2019/20 has been taken up to 16th March 2020.
- 5.3 Schools were closed again from January 2021. They opened for P1 to P3 from 22nd February and from 15th March for P4 to P7. Secondary pupils were able to attend in small groups from 15th March. Full opening took place following the spring break.
- 5.4 Schools did not close due to COVID in session 2021/22 or session 2022/23, however, attendance of both pupils and staff continued to be affected.

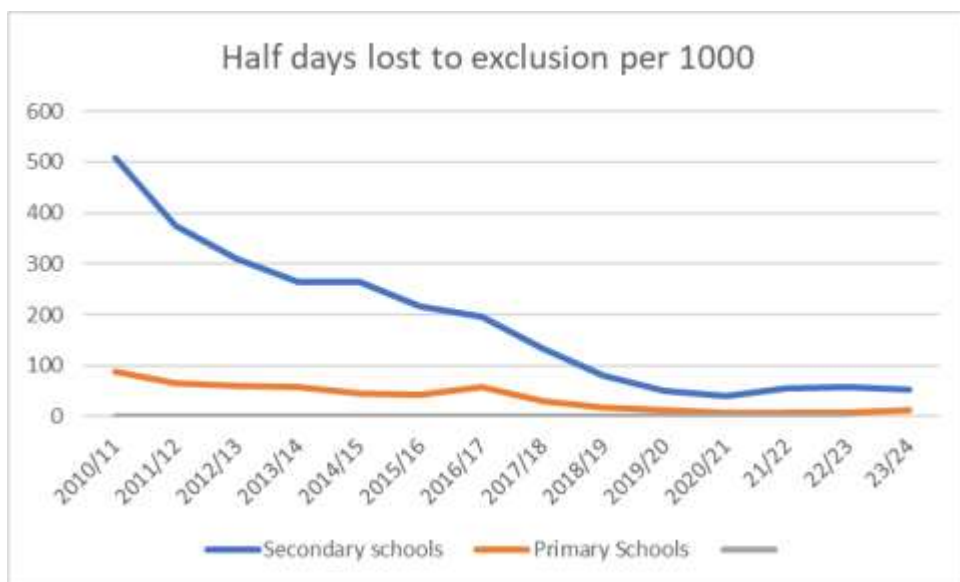
6. EXCLUSIONS

- 6.1 Overall, exclusion incidents remained broadly the same in 2023/24. With the caveat, that we cannot draw direct comparisons for two years of the data, it is noteworthy that the number of incidents is broadly equivalent to session 2019/20.



- 6.2 Exclusions are measured both in terms of the number of incidents which resulted in an exclusion and also in the number of half days lost to exclusion. It is also easier to compare through considering the rate per 1000 pupils for both exclusion incidents and half days lost.
- 6.3 The graphs show exclusion incidents and openings lost to exclusion per 1000 pupils for primary and secondary pupils. The graphs show the dramatic decline in exclusions in secondary schools while plateauing in the last two years.





	Exclusion Openings Lost (Half days) Per 1000 Pupils					Exclusion Incidents Per 1000 Pupils				
	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
Glasgow Secondary schools	50.5	40.5	54.2	57.0	51.3	15.5	11.2	15.2	16.9	15.4
Primary schools	11.9	7.0	6.2	7.4	11.7	3.2	1.9	1.8	1.9	3.0

6.4 The table shows the figures per 1000 pupils for the last five years. Secondary figures have reduced in 2023/24. The figures for primary schools show an increase. Closer scrutiny of the primary school figures shows that 105 out of 142 primary schools in the city have zero exclusions.

No. of exclusions	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
No. of primary schools	105	14	6	4	5	1	2	1	2	0	1	1

6.5 Nationally, data on exclusions is published every two years. Exclusions nationally have also reduced significantly. It is only exclusion incidents per 1000 pupils that is available to allow us to compare and only up 2022/23. In 2022/23, Glasgow's exclusions continued to be below the national figure. The full data set is available [School exclusion statistics - gov.scot \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot/publications/school-exclusion-statistics-2022-23/pages/12.aspx).

National	Exclusion Incidents per 1000 pupils				
	2014/15	2016/17	2018/19	2020/21	2022/23
Primary schools	9.0	11.0	8.1	3.6	4.5
Secondary schools	49.5	47.6	39.6	22.1	31.5
All schools	27.2	26.8	21.6	11.9	16.6

7. CHILDREN AFFECTED BY EXCLUSION

7.1 Overall, in 2023/24 only 0.63% of all pupils in the city have been excluded. This is the broadly the same for the last three years. The table below shows the percentage affected by exclusion in primary and secondary schools along with the number affected by exclusion.

Primary	Total	Number affected by exclusion	Percentage
2017/18	41272	195	0.47%
2018/19	41470	145	0.35%
2019/20	41725	99	0.24%
2020/21	41118	61	0.15%
2021/22	40763	64	0.16%
2022/23	40576	56	0.14%
2023/24	40337	85	0.21%

Secondary	Total	Number affected by exclusion	Percentage
2017/18	25358	647	2.55%
2018/19	26069	473	1.81%
2019/20	26839	314	1.17%
2020/21	27939	256	0.92%
2021/22	28568	275	1.17%
2022/23	29215	373	1.28%
2023/24	29957	343	1.17%

7.2 This table shows the numbers and percentages of children who are excluded only once.

	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Primary	135	114	71	48	54	40	70
Secondary	471	364	246	216	275	301	264

Primary (% of all those excluded)	69.2%	78.6%	71.7%	78.7%	84.4%	71.4%	82.4%
Secondary (% of all those excluded)	72.8%	77.0%	78.3%	84.4%	82.3%	80.7%	77%

7.3 Overall, 76% of all pupils affected by exclusion were excluded only once.

7.4 All schools are provided annually with individual school statistics for the last three years. This more detailed analysis forms part of each school's quality assurance procedures.

7.5 The process for exclusions is governed by Management Circular 8 (<http://www.goglasgow.org.uk/Link/ManagementCircular/>).

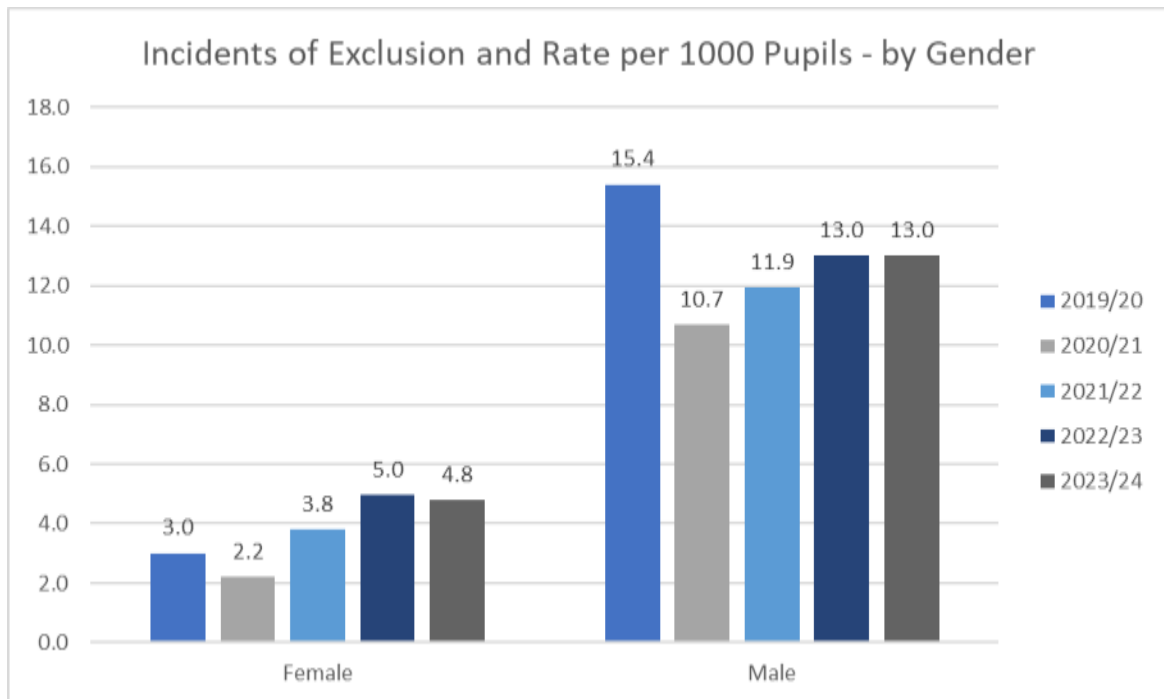
This was comprehensively reviewed after a year-long period of consultation and engagement led by one of the City Principal Psychologists. The circular is child-centred and in line with our aspiration to be a Nurturing City. It also links better to our staged intervention process as part of our police 'Every Child is Included and Supported'

<http://www.goglasgow.org.uk/Pages/Show/521> or
<https://glasgow.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=18941>

7.6 On a school by school basis, we need to continue to work with staff, parents and young people to explore the causes of exclusion and the ways in which we can avoid using exclusion. There are no right or wrong rules for exclusions. There will always be times when for the safety of the child themselves or for the safety of others that an exclusion needs to happen. However, exclusion should only be used when there are no other options and, wherever possible, nurturing approaches should be used to allow children to understand why exclusion is being considered. Staff also need to be able to reflect on the causes of exclusion and consider if there was anything they could have done to avoid exclusion being considered.

8. PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS

8.1 The analysis by gender shows that for boys are consistently excluded significantly more than girls.

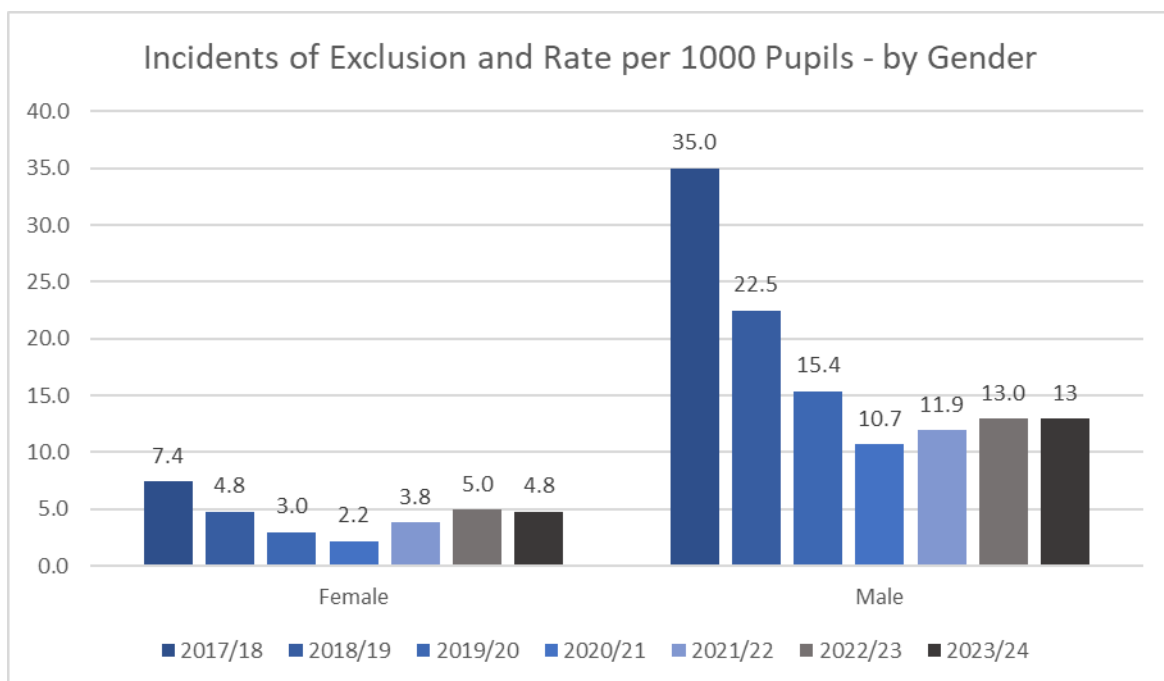


8.2 The table below shows the raw numbers of exclusion incidents. In 2023/24, there were 19,981 girls and 20,356 boys in primary schools and 15,013 girls and 14,994 boys in secondary schools.

	Numbers						
Female	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Primary	17	12	16	7	4	13	14
Secondary	220	139	74	61	126	159	153

	Numbers						
Male	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Primary	273	183	117	72	70	66	105
Secondary	748	503	341	251	308	336	307

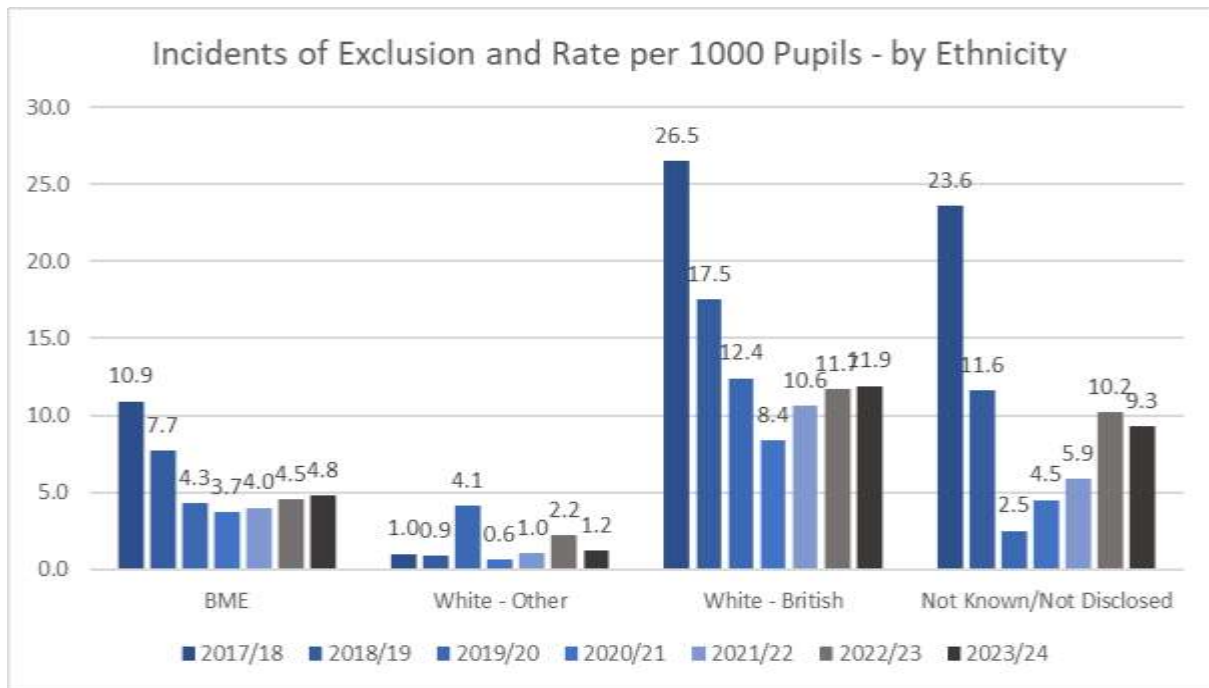
8.3 The graph below compares the rate per 1000 for exclusion incidents for both primary and secondary.



8.4 The table below shows the numbers and percentages of pupils by ethnicity affected by exclusion. The numbers are important because they are low.

	Rate per 1000						
BME	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Primary	1.9	1.8	1.1	0.8	0.7	0.6	1.0
Secondary	26.5	17.6	9.9	8.7	9.2	10.5	10.7
	Numbers						
BME	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Primary	18	18	12	8	8	7	11
Secondary	132	95	58	55	63	77	84

	Rate per 1000						
White - Scottish/ Other British	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Primary	9.5	6.4	4.6	2.7	2.5	2.8	4.2
Secondary	43.1	27.8	18.3	12.8	18.4	20.4	18.3
	Numbers						
White - Scottish/ Other British	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Primary	249	162	112	64	57	63	88
Secondary	785	510	338	241	347	379	338



8.5 The tables and graph show that the position continues to be that you are more likely to be excluded if you are White – Scottish/Other British.

8.6 The legal definition of additional support needs is taken from the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004

Additional support needs

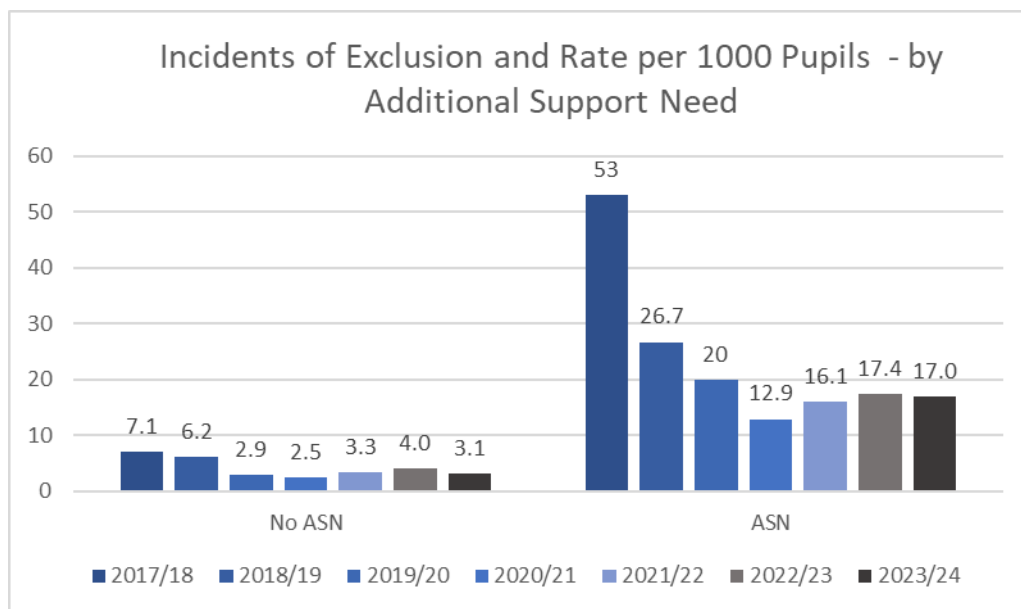
A child or young person has additional support needs for the purposes of this Act where, for whatever reason, the child or young person is, or is likely to be, unable without the provision of additional support to benefit from school education provided or to be provided for the child or young person.

8.7 The definition is purposefully broad and all encompassing. The need for a child to receive additional support could be temporary or long lasting. Examples can be quite wide-ranging, for example, their additional support could be because of neglect, bereavement, acquiring English or a cognitive impairment, hearing or visual impairment or physical disability, as well as a range of other reasons.

8.8 The table below shows the rate per 1000 for exclusion incidents for pupils in primary and secondary schools recorded as having additional support needs compared to those recorded as not having additional support needs. In 2023/24, there were 13,578 children in primary schools recorded as having additional support needs with 26,759 not having additional support needs. In secondary schools, there were 15,194 young people recorded as having additional support needs and 14,673 recorded as not having additional support needs.

Incidents of exclusion	Rate per 1000						
No Additional Support Needs	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Primary	2.3	2.5	1.6	1.2	0.9	1.5	1.3
Secondary	16.9	13.2	5.5	5.0	8.0	8.9	6.3
	Numbers						
Primary	71	70	47	36	26	44	36
Secondary	260	197	81	73	120	136	93

Incidents of exclusion	Rate per 1000						
Additional Support Needs	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Primary	22.1	9.5	6.8	3.5	4.5	3.2	6.1
Secondary	71.2	39.9	27.8	18.0	23.1	25.7	24.2
	Numbers						
Primary	219	125	86	43	48	35	83
Secondary	708	445	334	239	314	359	367



9. POLICY AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	Glasgow receives additional funding from the Scottish Attainment Fund as a Challenge Authority. Schools also receive Pupil equity Funding based on the numbers of children entitled to free school meals. This contributes towards attendance and exclusion support as well as the devolved school and central budget.
<i>Legal:</i>	In line with the Standards in Scotland's Schools etc. Act 2000 and Education Act 2016.
<i>Personnel:</i>	Schools may use PEF to enhance certain staffing in relation to attendance and exclusions
<i>Procurement:</i>	Not applicable

Council Strategic Plan:	Grand Challenge 1 – Reduce poverty and inequality in our communities. Mission 2: Meet the learning and care needs of children and their families before and through school. Grand Challenge 2 – Increase opportunity and prosperity for all our citizens. Mission 3: Raise attainment amongst Glasgow's children and young people.
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Equality and Socio-Economic Impacts:

<i>Does the proposal support the Council's Equality Outcomes 2021-25? Please specify.</i>	Outcome 14: Glasgow City Council (Education Services) has continued to improve outcomes in relation to attainment and achievement for children and young people including those experiencing socio-economic disadvantage, those for whom English is not their first language, those who identify as black and minority ethnic, and disabled children and young people.
<i>What are the potential equality</i>	Data in relation to attendance and exclusions is used by schools to identify where interventions

<i>impacts as a result of this report?</i>	are needed and where children, young people and their families are at risk of not benefitting from school engagement and therefore their long term access to positive outcomes.
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<i>Please highlight if the policy/proposal will help address socio-economic disadvantage.</i>	The tracking of this data allows schools to reflect on how they are supporting children and young people and make adjustments and interventions to benefit them and improve their potential outcomes.
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Climate Impacts:

<i>Does the proposal support any Climate Plan actions? Please specify:</i>	No
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<i>What are the potential climate impacts as a result of this proposal?</i>	No
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<i>Will the proposal contribute to Glasgow's net zero carbon target?</i>	No
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Privacy and Data Protection Impacts:

Are there any potential data protection impacts as a result of this report Y/N No	No
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If Yes, please confirm that a Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) has been carried out

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The Committee is asked to consider the contents of this report noting that the data for 2019/20 and 2020/21 cannot be directly compared due to the school closures which took place in both years as a result of the pandemic.