
Privacy Notice for research on school approaches to reducing absence and exclusions

1 Why are we collecting this data?

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) have funded the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and The Difference to carry out a study of approaches used in English mainstream secondary schools to reducing absence and exclusions, including internal alternative provision (AP). The study aims to develop evidence regarding practice which can help schools deploy approaches which are effective in enabling pupils at the highest risk of absenteeism and exclusion to attend and positively engage with education. School absenteeism (missed attendance as well as fixed and permanent exclusion) has the potential to impact on students' attainment as well on the likelihood of becoming involved in violence.

The personal data handled in the study will be used to identify and measure the prevalence of different approaches. Contact details will also be used to administer the research (set up interviews and send out the school survey). They will also be used to contact participants if a second phase of the project is commissioned.

2 What is the legal basis for processing activities?

NFER is data controller for the study and will make decisions about how and what personal data is used in accordance with the objectives of the study set by EEF and the YEF, guided by the study advisory board. The Difference are a sub data processor on the study.

The legal basis for processing teacher personal data is covered by GDPR Article 6 (1) (f):

Legitimate interests: the processing is necessary for your (or a third party's) legitimate interests unless there is a good reason to protect the individual's personal data which overrides those legitimate interests.

We have carried out a legitimate interest assessment, which demonstrates that this research fulfils one of NFER's core business purposes (undertaking research, evaluation and information activities). It has broader societal benefits and will contribute to improving the lives of learners by providing evidence on the effectiveness of different approaches used by schools.

3 How will personal data be obtained?

Personal data is collected from teachers via interviews conducted during case studies and the school survey.

Personal data is also collected from education sector experts via interviews.

4 What personal data is being collected by this project?

Teachers and education sector professionals may provide personal data such as contact details, views and opinions, in the course of answering questions in interviews and the school survey.

5 Who will personal data be shared with?

All teacher personal data collected from the study will be shared between NFER and The Difference for the purposes of conducting research and analysing data collected.

For interviews conducted using video conferencing facilities, it may be necessary to share contact details with a third party service such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams:

[Privacy notice for Zoom](#)

[Privacy notice for Microsoft Teams](#)

The interviews may be recorded so the research team can ensure the notes they produce are accurate. The recordings will not be watched or listened to by anyone outside of the research team and permission to record will be requested at the start of the interview.

NFER uses a secure online survey tool, Questback, to administer the survey. Questback stores data in the European Union.

[Privacy policy for Questback](#)

6 Is personal data being transferred outside of the European Economic Areas (EEA)?

No personal data is stored or transferred outside of the EEA.

The video-conferencing service may transfer data outside of the EEA; such transfer is safeguarded by use of the Commission's Standard Contractual Clauses.

7 How long will personal data be retained?

NFER and The Difference will securely delete any personal data relating to the school survey and interviews collected by the project when the final report for the project is published, currently expected in January 2026.

After the first phase of research, responses from the survey (with personal details removed) may be transferred and stored in the EEF archive for future research. The project may also proceed to an impact evaluation of different approaches used by schools to reduce absence and exclusions. If an impact evaluation takes place, responses from the survey (with personal details removed) will be shared with the Department for Education (DfE) and linked with information about pupils from the National Pupil Database (NPD). This linked data will be shared with the EEF, the EEF's archive manager, the Office for National Statistics and potentially other research teams. The EEF will keep information in the EEF archive for as long as it is needed for research purposes.

The EEF archive is managed by FFT on behalf of EEF and hosted by the Office for National Statistics. More information can be found at [EEF archive](#). When data is added to the EEF archive, EEF becomes the data controller. EEF and other research teams will be able to access the data as part of subsequent research through the ONS Approved Researcher Scheme. The Approved Researcher Scheme is used by the ONS to grant secure access to data that cannot be published openly, for statistical research purposes, as permitted by the Statistics and Registration Service Act 2007 (SRSA).

Using the unique Pupil Matching Reference numbers added to the data by the DfE, it will be possible to link the records held in the EEF archive to other public datasets such as the NPD and criminal justice datasets for future research. This will, for example, help approved researchers to find out the long-term impact of the projects funded by EEF such as whether attending a school using a particular type of approach to reducing absence and exclusion reduces a pupil's likelihood of being excluded from school or becoming involved in criminal activity.

8 Can I stop my personal data being used?

NFER handles personal data in accordance with the rights given to individuals under data protection legislation. If at any time you wish us to withdraw your data or correct errors in it, please contact the project team at: pupilsupport@nfer.ac.uk

In certain circumstances, data subjects have the right to restrict or object to processing. They also have the right to make a subject access request (SAR) to see all the information held about them. NFER will cooperate fully when a SAR is made. To exercise this right, please contact the NFER Compliance office compliance@nfer.ac.uk

We appreciate your participation in the research, should you withdraw from it, NFER and The Difference will still use anything you have provided up to that point unless you indicate otherwise.

9 Who can I contact about this project?

NFER is responsible for the day-to-day management of the study. Please contact the NFER project team with any queries at: pupilsupport@nfer.ac.uk

If you have a concern about the way this project processes personal data we request that you raise your concern with NFER in the first instance (see details above). If you remain dissatisfied, you can contact the Information Commissioner’s Office, the body responsible for enforcing data protection legislation in the UK, at <https://ico.org.uk/concerns/>.

10 Updates

We keep this privacy notice under review to make sure it is up to date and accurate. Any changes will be noted. The date when this privacy notice was last updated is shown in the footer at the bottom of this document.

Date	Update
07/02/2023	<p>Project description in Section 1 updated to better reflect the focus of the study on different approaches to reduce absenteeism and exclusion, including internal AP.</p> <p>Details in Section 7 updated to provide greater detail on research data transferred and stored in the EEF archive.</p>
08/11/24	<p>The second phase of the project, an impact evaluation of different approaches used by schools to reduce absence and exclusions is going ahead. The processing described in Section 7 (i.e. sharing of responses from the survey (with personal details removed) is going ahead.</p> <p>The email address to contact the NFER project team has also changed to pupilsupport@nfer.ac.uk</p>

25/03/25	Changes made to expected report due date made on 25/03/25. Report date changed from February 25 to January 26.
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