



Education Act 1996

1996 CHAPTER 56

PART I

GENERAL

CHAPTER I

THE STATUTORY SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

Compulsory education

7 Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs [^{F1}(in the case of a child who is in the area of a local authority in England) or additional learning needs (in the case of a child who is in the area of a local authority in Wales)] he may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Textual Amendments

- F1** Words in s. 7(b) inserted (1.9.2021 for specified purposes, 1.1.2022 for specified purposes, 1.9.2022 for specified purposes) by [Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal \(Wales\) Act 2018 \(anaw 2\)](#), s. 100(3), [Sch. 1 para. 4\(2\)](#); S.I. 2021/373, arts. 3, 4, 6, 7 (as amended by S.I. 2021/938, [art. 2](#)); S.I. 2021/1243, [art. 3](#) (with arts. 4-23) (as amended by S.I. 2021/1428, [art. 2](#)); S.I. 2021/1244, [art. 3](#) (with arts. 4-21) (as amended by S.I. 2021/1428, [art. 3](#)); S.I. 2021/1245, arts. 3, 4 (with art. 1(4)); S.I. 2022/891, [art. 3](#) (with arts. 4-25); S.I. 2022/892, arts. 2, 3 (with arts. 4-18); S.I. 2022/893, [art. 4](#); S.I. 2022/894, [art. 3](#); S.I. 2022/895, arts. 3, 4; S.I. 2022/896, [art. 3](#) (with arts. 1(7), 4-22); S.I. 2022/897, [art. 3](#) (with arts. 1(8), 4-21); S.I. 2022/898, arts. 2, 3

Changes to legislation: Education Act 1996, Cross Heading: Compulsory education is up to date with all changes known to be in force on or before 09 April 2024. There are changes that may be brought into force at a future date. Changes that have been made appear in the content and are referenced with annotations. (See end of Document for details) [View outstanding changes](#)

8 Compulsory school age.

(1) Subsections (2) and (3) apply to determine for the purposes of any enactment whether a person is of compulsory school age.

[^{F2}(2) A person begins to be of compulsory school age—

- (a) when he attains the age of five, if he attains that age on a prescribed day, and
- (b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following his attaining that age.]

(3) A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year—

- (a) if he attains the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
- (b) if he attains that age on that day, or
- (c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following his attaining that age.

[^{F3}(4) The Secretary of State may by order—

- (a) provide that such days in the year as are specified in the order shall be, for each calendar year, prescribed days for the purposes of subsection (2);
- (b) determine the day in any calendar year which is to be the school leaving date for that year.]

Textual Amendments

F2 S. 8(2) substituted (1.8.1998) by 1997 c. 44, s. 52(2); S.I. 1998/386, art. 2, [Sch. 1 Pt. III](#)

F3 S. 8(4) substituted (1.8.1998) by 1997 c. 44, s. 52(3); S.I. 1998/386, art. 2, [Sch. 1 Pt. III](#)

Changes to legislation:

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Changes and effects yet to be applied to the whole Act associated Parts and Chapters:

Whole provisions yet to be inserted into this Act (including any effects on those provisions):

- s. 13(2)(ba) substituted for s. 13(2)(aa)(b) by [2022 asc 1 Sch. 4 para. 8\(2\)](#)
- s. 15A(3A) inserted by [2022 asc 1 Sch. 4 para. 8\(3\)](#)
- s. 15B(3)(c) inserted by [2022 asc 1 Sch. 4 para. 8\(4\)](#)
- s. 17A functions made exercisable concurrently by [S.I. 2014/1012 art. 12\(1\)Sch. 2 para. 3](#)
- s. 17A functions made exercisable concurrently by [S.I. 2014/863 Sch. 2 para. 4](#)
- s. 17A functions made exercisable concurrently by [S.I. 2014/865 Sch. 2 para. 3](#)
- s. 17A functions made exercisable concurrently by [S.I. 2016/653 Sch. 3 para. 3](#)
- s. 17A-17D inserted by [2009 c. 22 s. 45](#)
- s. 17B-17D applied by [2009 c. 22 s. 86\(8\)](#)
- s. 457(4)(i)-(iia) repealed by [2012 c. 5 Sch. 14 Pt. 1](#)
- s. 457(4)(iii) words repealed by [2012 c. 5 Sch. 14 Pt. 1](#)
- s. 508(4) inserted by [2022 asc 1 Sch. 4 para. 8\(7\)](#)
- s. 537AA inserted by [2008 c. 25 Sch. 1 para. 8](#)
- s. 548(7A)(7B) inserted by [2008 c. 25 Sch. 1 para. 9\(5\)](#)
- s. 578(1) words repealed by [2005 c. 18 Sch. 19 Pt. 1](#)