

New research suggests COVID has drastically reduced most pupils' learning and will exacerbate education inequality

July 17 2020, by Tom Walters



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More than one in four primary school pupils and one in six secondary school pupils are spending an hour or less a day home learning during the

COVID crisis, a wide-ranging education survey by the University of Sussex has revealed.

The shortage of home schooling is particularly prevalent among primary school pupils whose parents are on low incomes or who did not receive a university education themselves, raising concerns that the pandemic is exacerbating education inequalities.

The first set of results from the wide-ranging education survey about home learning led by academics in the University of Sussex's School of Psychology, found that most pupils are spending far less time learning at home during the COVID crisis than they would do on a normal school day.

The survey, which has captured the thoughts of thousands of parents and teachers, found worrying differences in the time that different pupils are spending on home learning. In particular, it found that 36% of primary school pupils who are eligible for free school meals spend one hour or less a day on home learning, compared to 25% of pupils not eligible. This difference is even more pronounced in [secondary schools](#); 25% of pupils who are eligible for free school meals spend one hour or less a day on home learning, compared to just 13.5% of pupils who are not eligible.

Dr. Matthew Easterbrook, Senior Lecturer in Psychology at the University of Sussex and the project's lead researcher, said:

"Unsurprisingly, our analyses suggest that children are spending far less time on school-work than they would be if they were in school. It is particularly worrying that there are marked differences in the time that children are spending on home learning depending on whether they are primary or secondary pupils, boys or girls, the children of graduates, and how financially comfortable their household is, and, in particular, whether or not they are eligible for free school meals. The disruption to

pupils' [education](#) caused by the school closures is dramatic and could have long-term negative consequences, with some pupils receiving lower grades and becoming less engaged with school. But the consequences are likely to be different for different pupils depending on their home environment and the support they receive from the school and their parents."

Further results from the survey will follow over the coming weeks, covering areas such as parents' and teachers views of home learning support, parents' ability and confidence to home school, and how provisions for home learning vary by [school](#).

More information: The results will be freely available on www.inpsyed.net

Provided by University of Sussex

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