

Parentkind

The National *Parent* Survey

For Scotland



2025



Supported by

THE  **TIMES**
THE SUNDAY TIMES

1,309
parents in
Scotland
have their
say on being
a parent in
2025

Introduction from Jason Elsom



We are proud to present the UK's largest annual poll of parents, the biggest yet. Our work with YouGov addresses many tough and highly topical matters facing parents in 2025. We look at their views, hopes, struggles, and fears.

This report presents the results from the 1,309 parents in Scotland.

This year we have sought their views on the special educational needs crisis, crime and the safety of their children, their own loneliness, the happiness of their children, behaviour, discipline and much more.

Our aim is to provide clarity to policymakers, researchers and those supporting parents through the challenges they face. The National Parent Survey is a call to action for governments across the nations to help parents as they do the most important job any of us will ever do.

Children spend the vast majority of their childhood outside of a classroom, but we spend very little time talking about what happens beyond the school gates. That's where Parentkind comes in.

As the largest parent charity in the UK, we work with over 14,000 parent groups and an army of almost two hundred thousand parent volunteers to support other parents and children, strengthen communities, and build relationships. Parent volunteers raise almost £140 million a year for schools, money that goes

directly to the front line. If a school has a parent group supporting it, it is likely that they are part of the Parentkind community.

We hope that you will find this report incredibly useful, but I encourage you to go further to explore the wealth of additional data from the YouGov survey available at www.nationalparentsurvey.com, including the UK report, which is based on the views of 5,866 parents from across the four nations. There you can examine the views of parents by nation, region, type of school, family income, relationship status, age of child, phase of education, gender of parent or children and more.

At Parentkind, we never pit parents against teachers, there is no them and us - most teachers are parents themselves and clearly understand the difference they can make. We need to get serious about the role of parents in schools and their role in raising children from birth, right through to the teenage years. That's why we publish the National Parent Survey.

The data in the National Parent Survey should spark debate. It should make parents part of our conversation and part of the solution to many of the challenges facing society today.

Jason Elsom
Chief Executive, Parentkind

Parenting dilemmas? Find clarity in your inbox.

Sign up to the free parenting newsletter from The Times and Sunday Times, packed with expert advice and hands-on experiences.

To sign up now, visit
thetimes.com/parentingnewsletter



THE TIMES
THE SUNDAY TIMES

Contents

6 What parents in Scotland told us in 2025

8 Crime and safety

- 10 Parents' fears over their children's safety
- 11 Giving children independence
- 13 Safety at school

14 Additional Support Needs

- 16 Additional Support Needs (ASN)
- 17 Additional support needs in the classroom
- 19 Parents' experiences of having a child with additional support needs

22 School life

- 24 Happiness at school
- 25 Behaviour in schools
- 27 Bullying in schools
- 28 The purpose of school
- 29 School holidays
- 30 Parents' opinions on AI

32 Parenting challenges

- 34 How parents find parenting
- 35 Loneliness
- 36 Impact of parenting on mental health
- 37 Support from grandparents

40 Home life

- 42 Bedroom poverty
- 43 Children helping at home
- 44 Parents talking to their children
- 45 Parents' hopes for their child's future
- 46 Parents' smartphone use

48 The hidden cost of education

- 50 School catchment
- 51 Private tutoring
- 52 Technology required by schools

54 Relationships, Sexual Health & Parenthood (RSHP) and gender questioning children

- 56 Attitudes towards the RSHP curriculum
- 59 Gender questioning children in school

62 What we should do in response to the National Parent Survey 2025

64 Methodology

Parents – anyone in a parenting role
FSM – Free School Meals
ASN – Additional Support Needs

The National Parent Survey 2025 Patrons

We are grateful to the following organisations for supporting this research:



What *parents* in Scotland told us

More than half of parents worry about their child being physically assaulted

1 in 5 teenagers are not allowed to go to the nearest park with friends

1 in 10 children feel unsafe at school

More than a quarter of parents have asked schools to assess their child for additional support needs

Only 1 in 6 parents with a child with ASN say all their child's needs are being met at school

1 in 7 parents with a child with ASN have given up their job to care for their child

Almost a quarter of children are unhappy at school

Only 4 in 10 parents say children are well-behaved at their child's school

1 in 5 parents say their child has been bullied at school in the last year

Fewer than 1 in 4 parents think preparing children to pass exams should be a priority for schools

More than 4 in 10 parents want a shorter summer holiday

4 in 10 parents are worried about the impact of AI on their children's job opportunities

1 in 3 parents find parenting difficult

Nearly a quarter of parents feel lonely several times a week

More than a third of mums say being a parent has had a negative impact on their mental health in the last year

Almost half of working parents rely on grandparents for childcare

More than 4 in 10 parents moved house to be near a good school

More than a quarter of 16 to 18-year-olds have, at some point, had a private tutor for maths

A third of children are required to have a laptop or tablet for school

4 in 10 teenagers don't make their bed regularly

3 in 10 parents find it hard to talk to their child about their own mental health

More than 4 in 10 parents think their child would have a better standard of living abroad

4 in 10 parents worry they set a bad example for their children by using their phone too much

Nearly 9 in 10 parents think schools should inform them if their child has changed gender at school as long as there are no concerns about the child's safety at home

Less than half of parents are always informed of the content of Relationships, Sexual Health & Parenthood lessons in advance



Crime and safety

Photography: istock.com/Monkeybusinessimages

Parents’ fears for their children’s safety

Fears for children's safety

? How often, if at all, do you worry about your child being a victim of the following?

	Worry regularly	Worry sometimes	Worry rarely	Worry never
Physical assault	14%	39%	29%	16%
Knife crime	12%	26%	29%	32%
Sexual assault	13%	28%	32%	24%
Grooming	12%	30%	32%	23%
Being involved in gangs	4%	15%	26%	53%
Gender discrimination	6%	14%	18%	60%
Racial discrimination	5%	7%	12%	74%

Base: All parents (1,309)











Photography: istock.com/Anchiy

Giving children independence

Children's independence

? Which, if any, of the following do you allow your child to do?

	All parents
 Play in a friend's garden	68%
 Go to the nearest park with friends	58%
 Be at home on their own	49%
 Stay overnight at a friend's house	52%
 Go shopping by themselves	37%
 Go into the nearest town with friends	35%
 Travel on public transport on their own	40%
 None of these	16%

Base: All parents (1,309)



Photography: istock.com/Daisy-Daisy

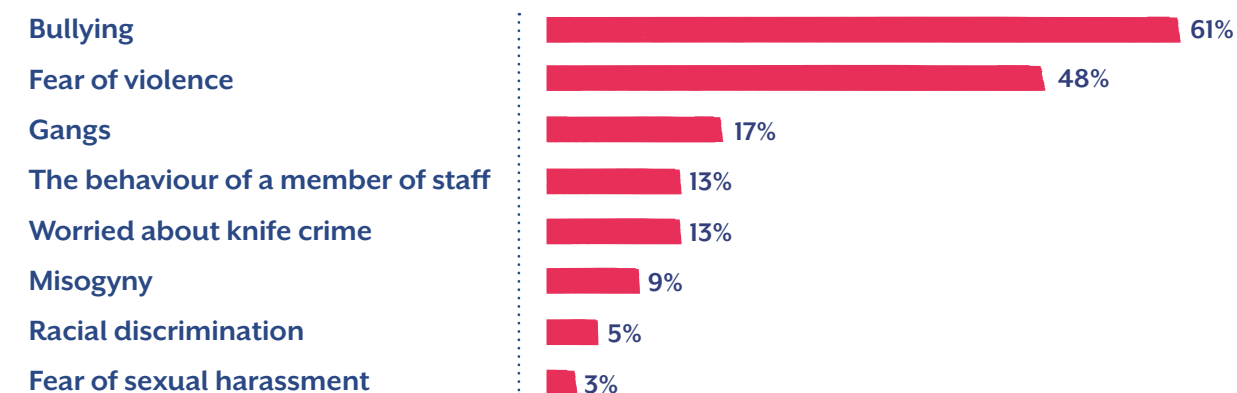
Safety at school

Feeling unsafe at school

? To the best of your knowledge, does your child feel unsafe at school?



? If yes, which if any, of the following explain why they feel this way?



Base: All parents (1,309), all parents whose child feels unsafe at school (130)



Photography: istock.com/SolStock

Photography: istock.com/izusek



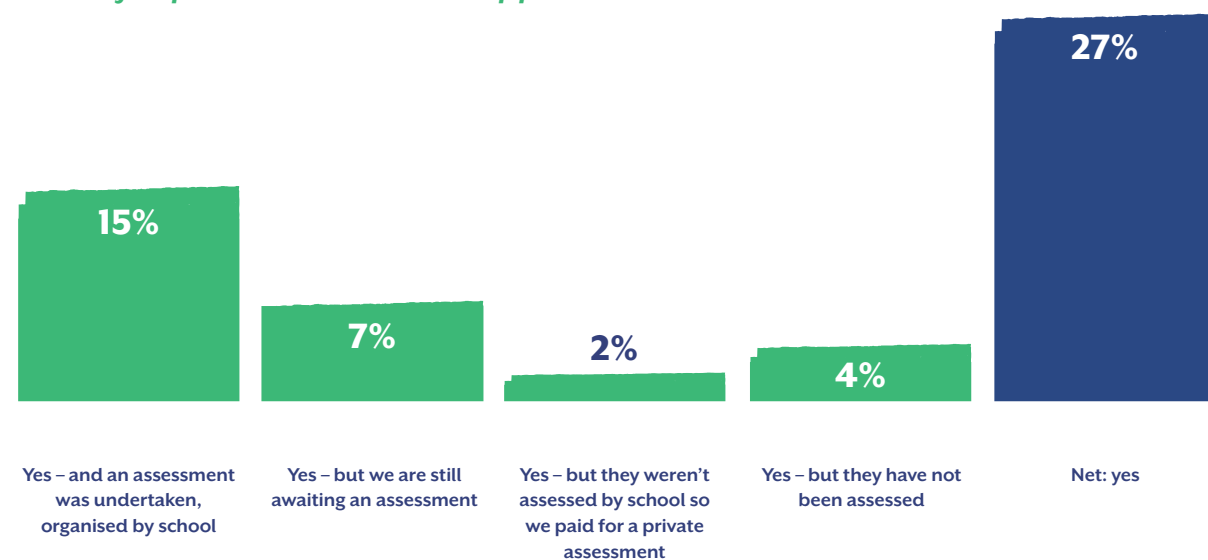
Additional Support Needs

Photography: istock.com/SolStock

Additional support needs (ASN)

Requests for an assessment

? Have you ever asked your child's school (current or previous) to assess your child for possible additional support needs?



Base: All parents (1,309)

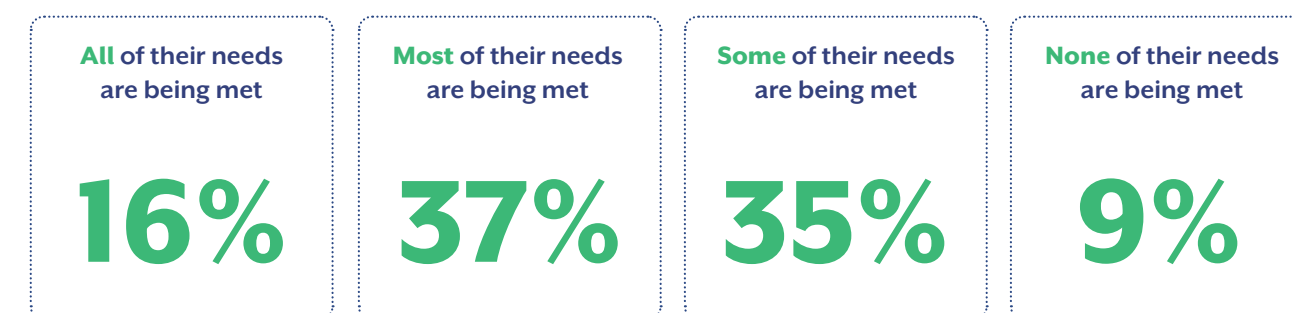


Photography: istock.com/sturti

Additional support needs in the classroom

Whether additional support needs are being met

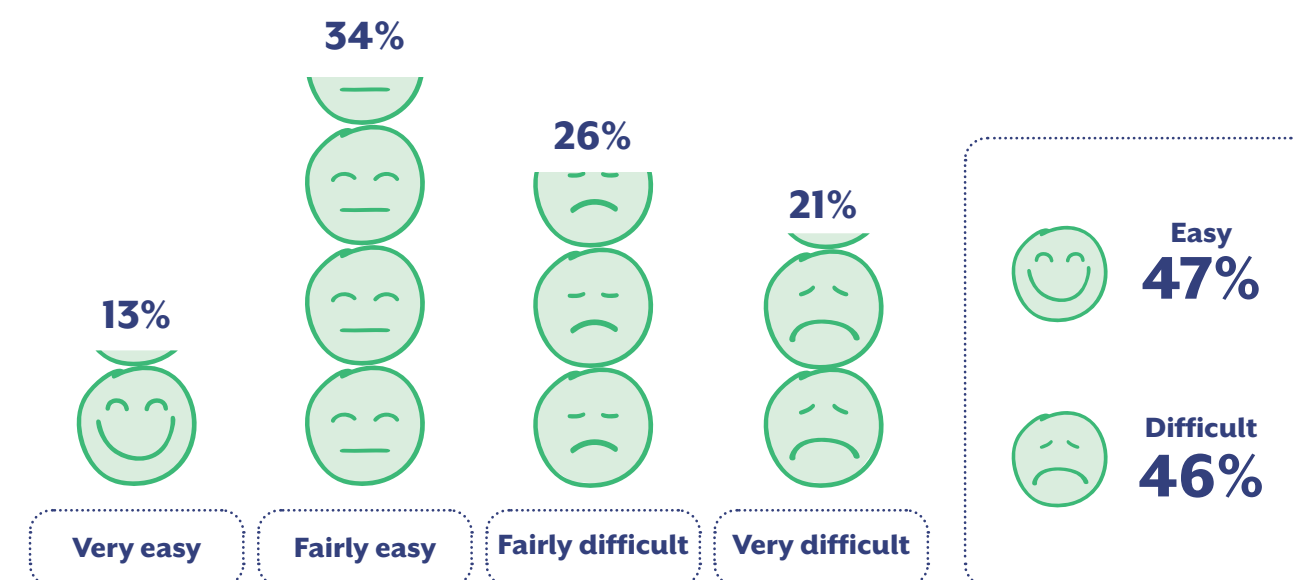
? To what extent, if at all, are your child's additional support needs being met at school?



Base: All parents whose child has ASN/is discussing ASN (248)

Ease of getting additional support needs support

? How easy or difficult has it been for your child to receive the additional needs support they need to learn effectively at school?



Base: All parents whose child has ASN/is discussing ASN (248)

Requests for additional time in exams

? Have you ever asked your child's school (current or previous) to assess your child for additional time in exams?



Base: All parents (1,309)

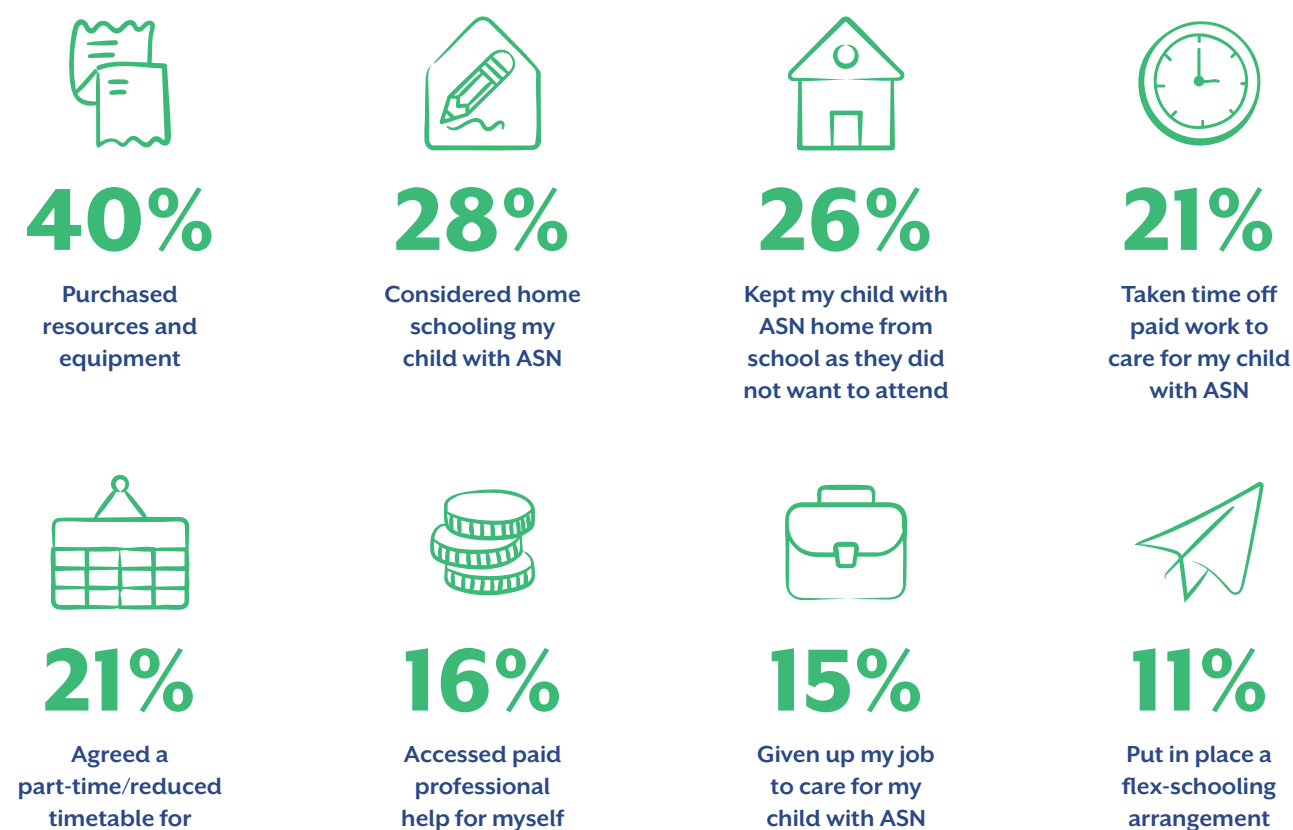


Photography: istock.com/skynesher

Parents' experiences of having a child with additional support needs

Impact of managing child's additional support needs

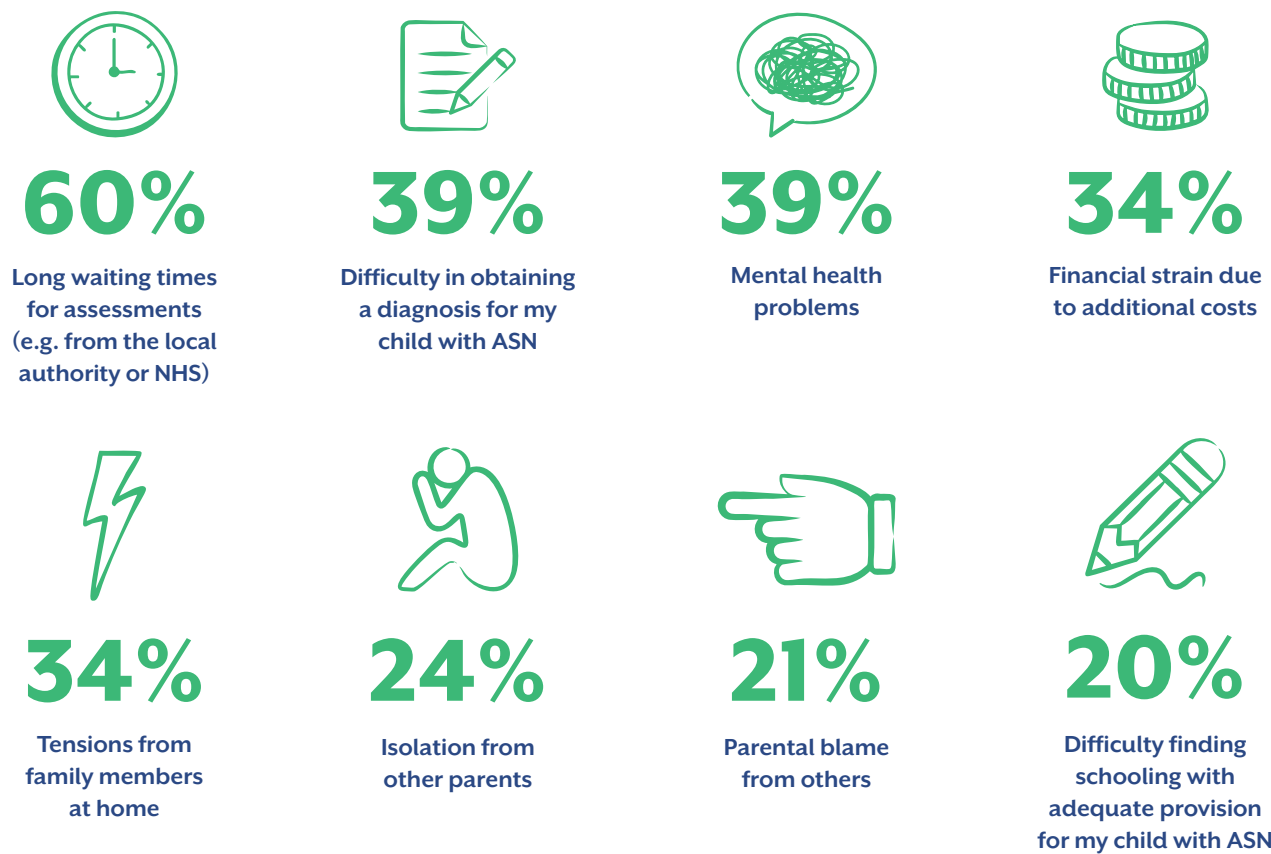
? Which, if any, of the following have you done in order to help manage your child's additional support needs?



Base: All parents whose child has ASN/is discussing ASN (248)

Impact of managing child’s additional support needs

? Which, if any, of the following have you experienced as a result of having a child with additional support needs?



Base: All parents whose child has ASN/is discussing ASN (248)



Photography: istock.com/SolStock



Photography: shutterstock.com/NataliaNeriabina



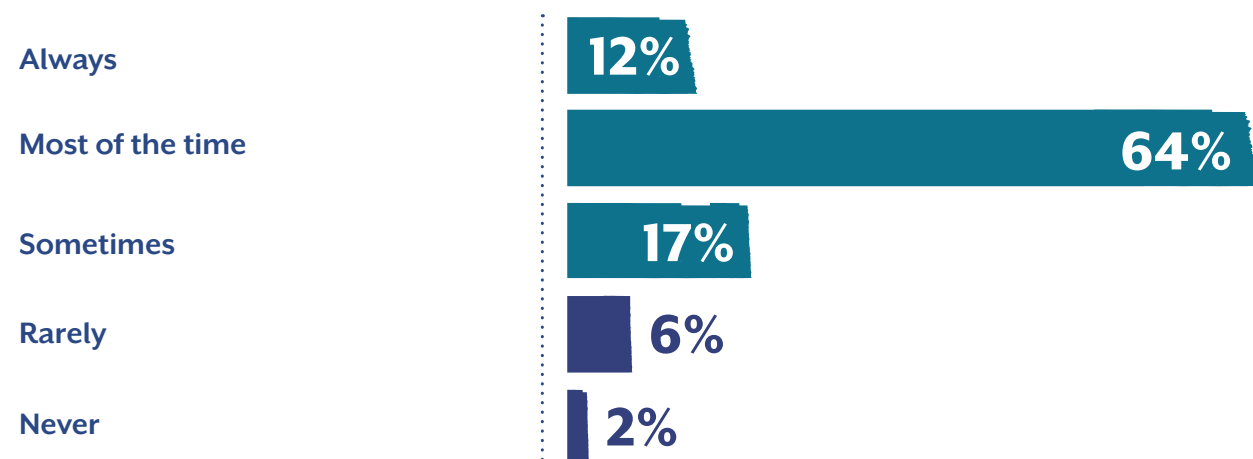
School life

Photography: istock.com/Monkeybusinessimages

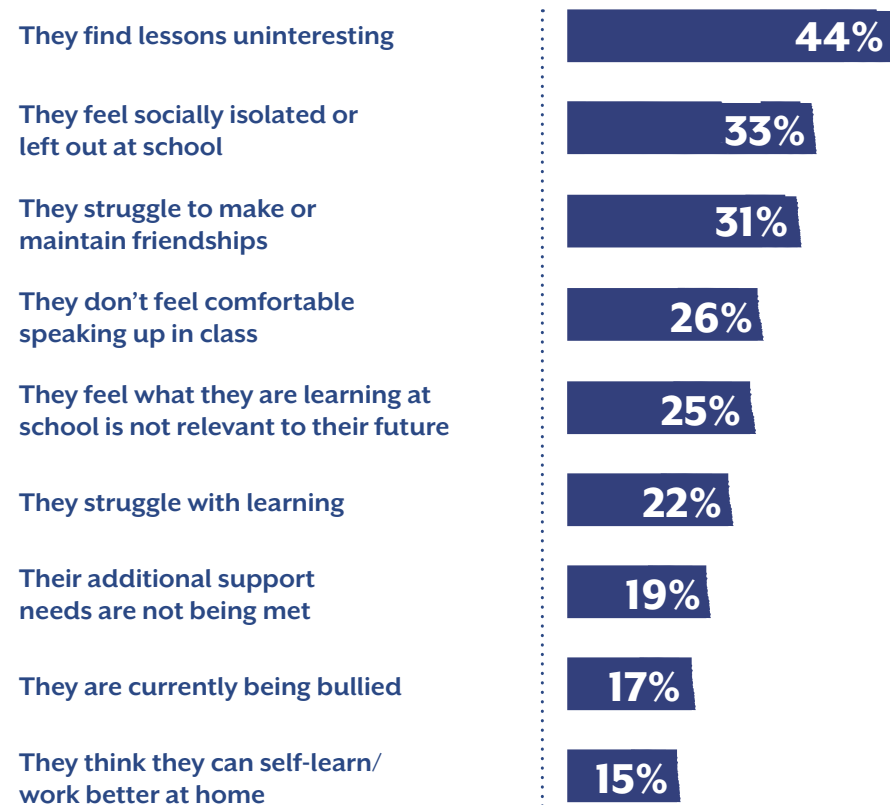
Happiness at school

Child's happiness at school

? To the best of your knowledge, do you think your child is happy at school?



? If sometimes/rarely/never happy at school, which of the following do you think are reasons for this?

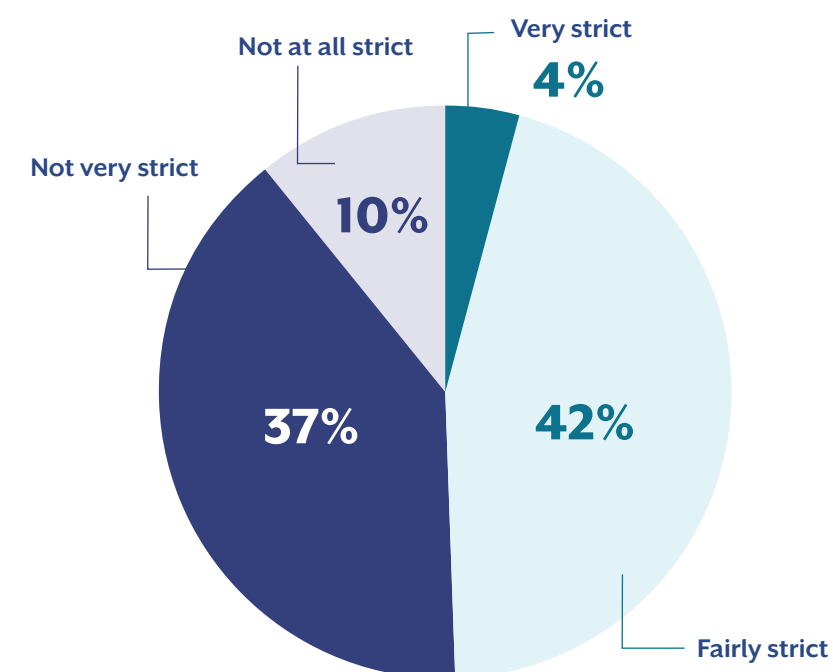


Base: All parents (1,309), all parents whose child is sometimes/rarely/never happy at school (314)

Behaviour in school

Behaviour management at school

? How would you describe how behaviour is managed at your child's school?



Base: All parents (1,309)

Photography: istock.com/izusek



Impact of how behaviour is managed

? Which, if any, of the following are an outcome of the behaviour management policies at your child's school?

	Parents who say behaviour management at child's school is strict	Parents who say behaviour management at child's school is not strict	All parents
My child knows what behaviour is expected from them at school	76%	63%	67%
Children at my child's school are generally well-behaved	56%	29%	41%
I am supportive of how behaviour is managed at my child's school	57%	22%	38%
My child's learning is sometimes disrupted due to poor behaviour from children in lessons	24%	56%	39%
Children at my child's school are disciplined for insignificant infringements	9%	5%	7%
My child is scared of getting disciplined at school	8%	5%	6%
My child feels unsafe at school due to a lack of discipline	3%	16%	9%
My child struggles to attend school because the school is not strict enough	1%	5%	3%
My child struggles to attend school because the school is too strict	2%	1%	1%

Base: All parents (1,309)

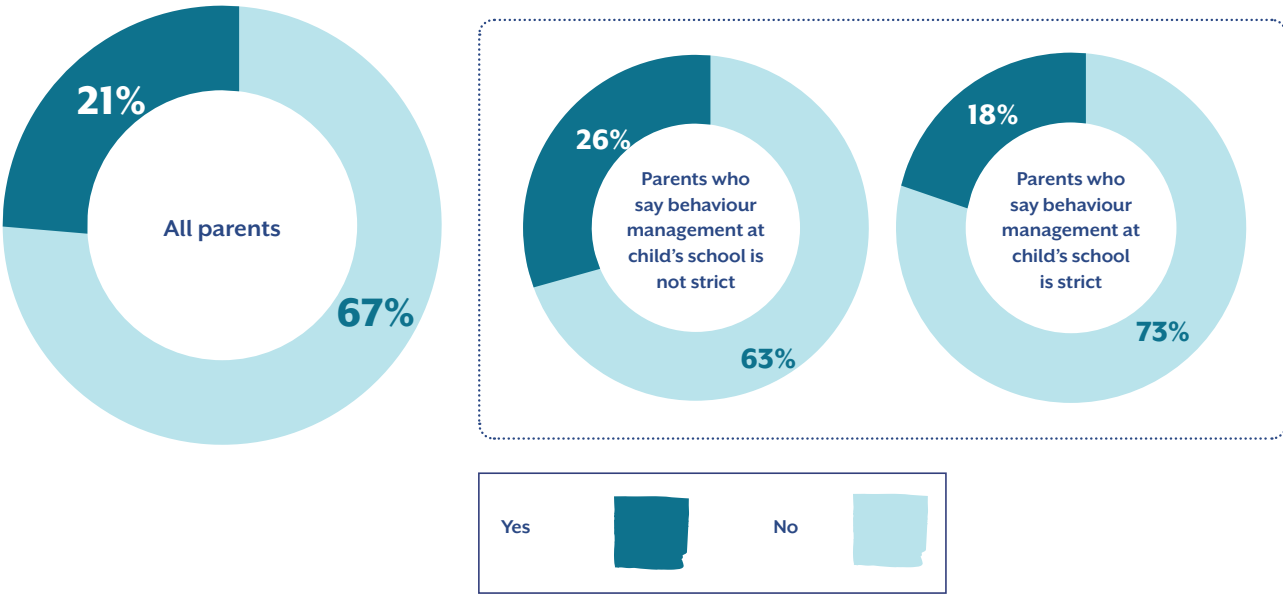


Photography: istock.com/Monkeybusinessimages

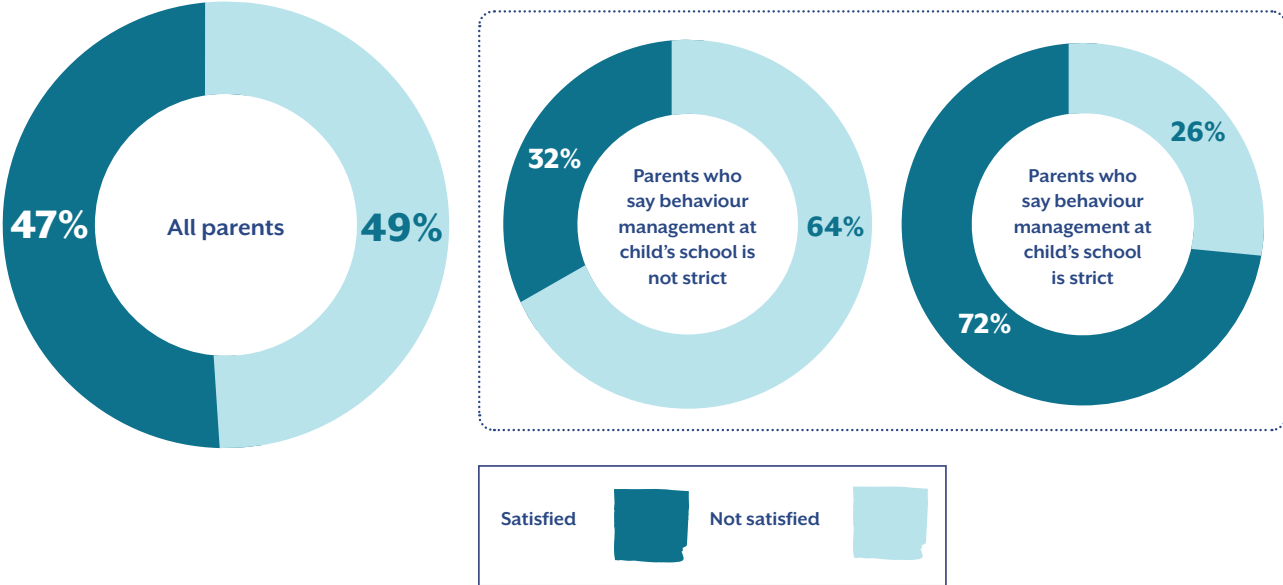
Bullying in schools

Bullying

? Has your child been bullied by another pupil at school in the last year?



? If yes, how satisfied were you with how the school dealt with the situation?













Base: All parents (1,309), all parents whose child has been bullied at school in the last year (275)




The purpose of school

Parents’ top five priorities for a school




? Which, if any, of the following roles do you think are most important for a school to fulfil? (up to five answer options)

	Primary	Secondary	Post-16	All parents
 Educating children in a broad range of subjects	67%	61%	62%	64%
 Teach useful life skills	58%	53%	53%	55%
 Mix with different groups of people	39%	38%	34%	38%
 Instil good behaviour	21%	19%	18%	20%
 Instil strong moral values	23%	18%	19%	21%
 Develop resilience	21%	22%	15%	20%
 Provide mental health support	13%	14%	15%	14%
 Teach British values	10%	8%	11%	9%
 Act as a hub for community services	3%	2%	5%	3%
 Provide support services (e.g. food banks)	1%	1%	2%	1%

More important to primary school parents

	Primary	Secondary	Post-16	All parents
 To teach the ‘three Rs’ (reading, writing and arithmetic)	62%	55%	50%	58%
 Nurture creativity and independent thinking	62%	49%	43%	54%
 Support physical health	24%	20%	14%	21%

More important to secondary school parents

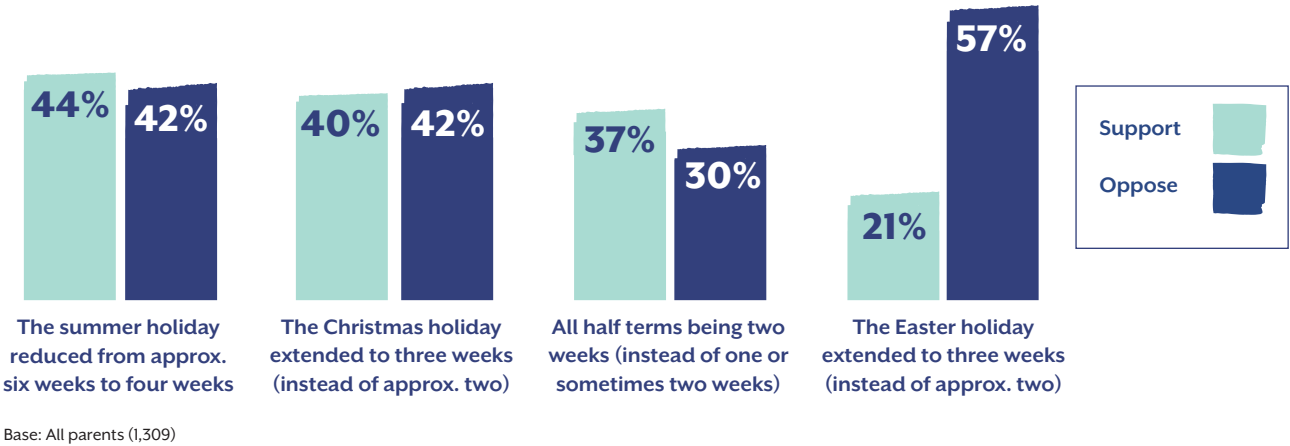
	Primary	Secondary	Post-16	All parents
 Prepare children for the world of work	33%	50%	52%	43%
 Prepare children to pass exams	12%	27%	31%	21%
 Develop financial literacy	14%	19%	27%	18%

Base: All parents (1,309)

School holidays

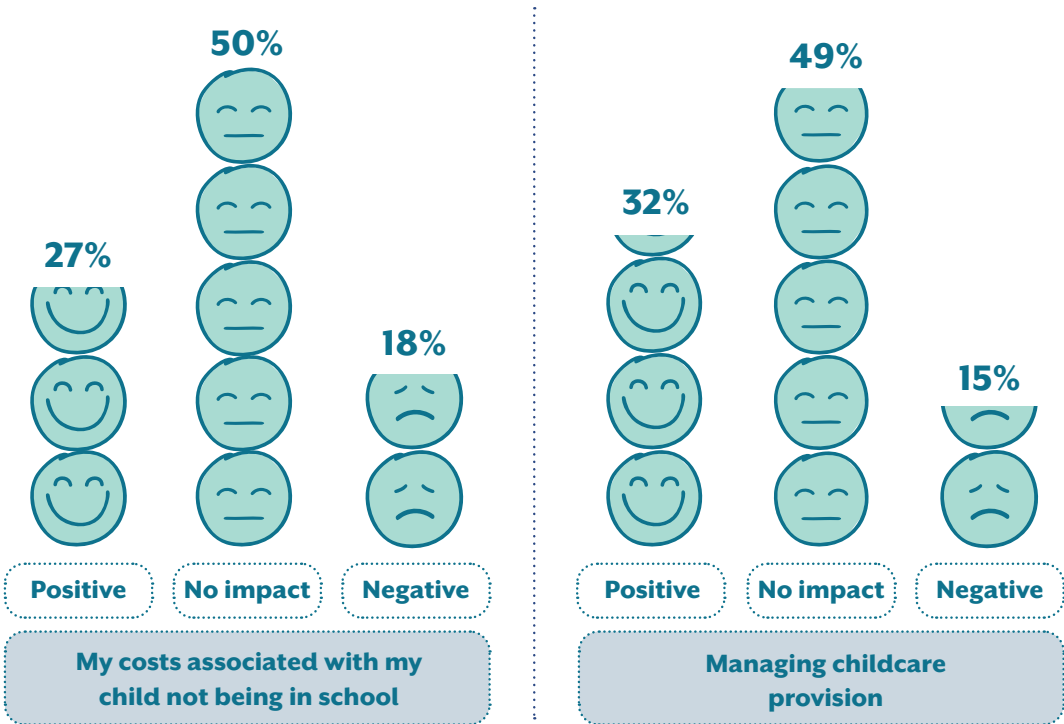
Possible changes to the school holidays

? To what extent would you support or oppose any of the following changes in the redistribution of the school holidays?



Impact of possible changes to the summer holiday

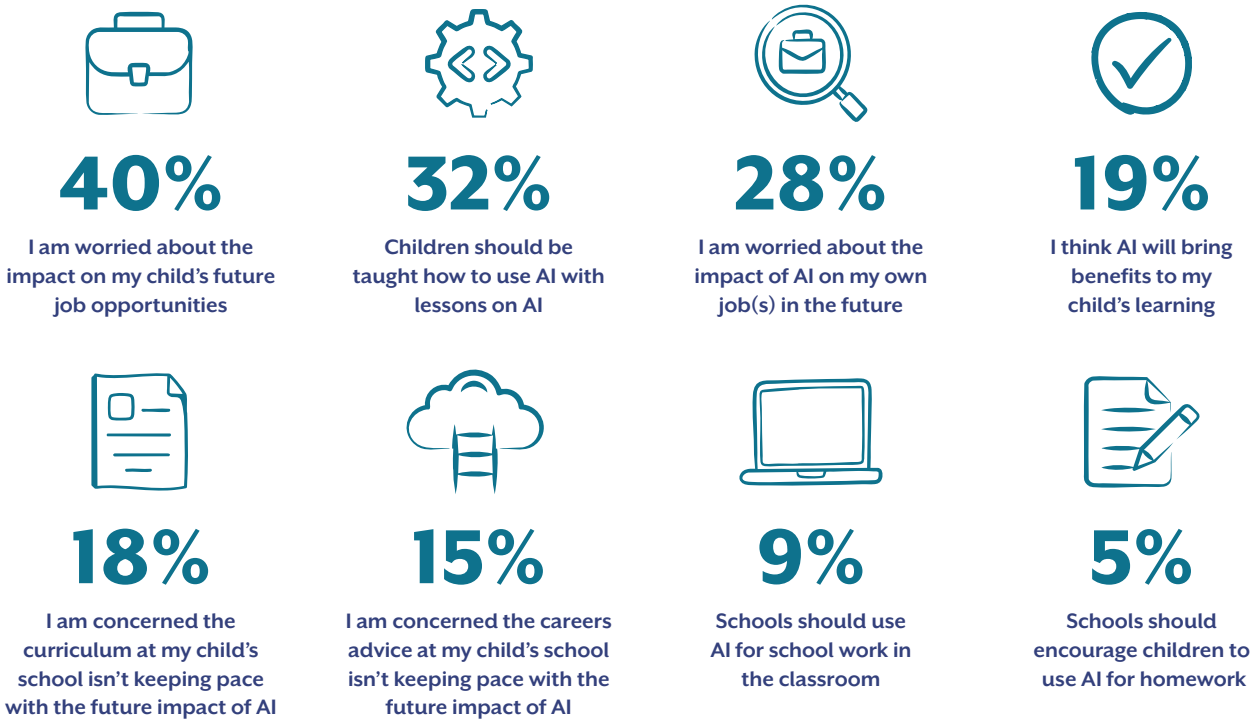
? Imagine the school holidays were redistributed across the year, meaning that the summer holidays were reduced to four weeks. What impact, if any, would this have on the below?



Parents' opinions on AI

Parents' views on AI

? Which, if any, of the following summarise how you are currently feeling about the future impact of AI?



Base: All parents (1,309)



Photography: istock.com/SolStock



Photography: istock.com/svetikd



Parenting challenges

Photography: istock.com/Monkeybusinessimages

How parents find parenting

Being a parent

? How easy or difficult do you find being a parent?

Very difficult

7%

Fairly difficult

27%

Neither easy nor difficult

37%

Fairly easy

24%

Very easy

4%

35%
find it difficult

28%
find it easy

Base: All parents (1,309)



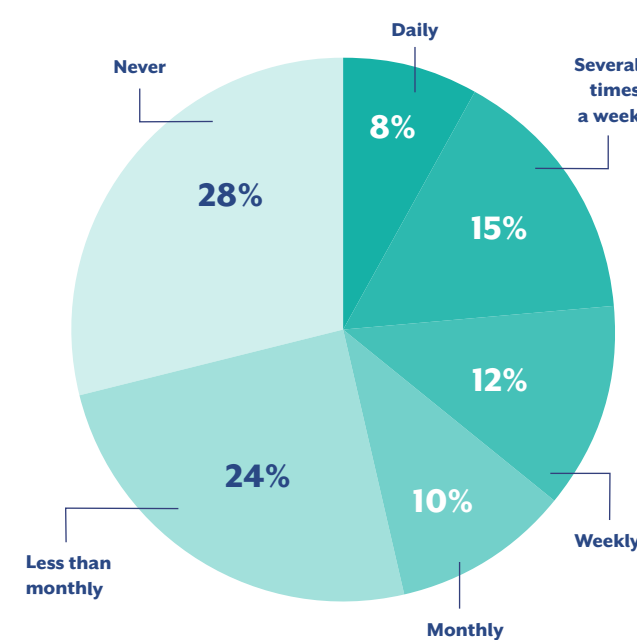
Photography: istock.com/Daisy-Daisy

Loneliness

Loneliness and talking about parenting

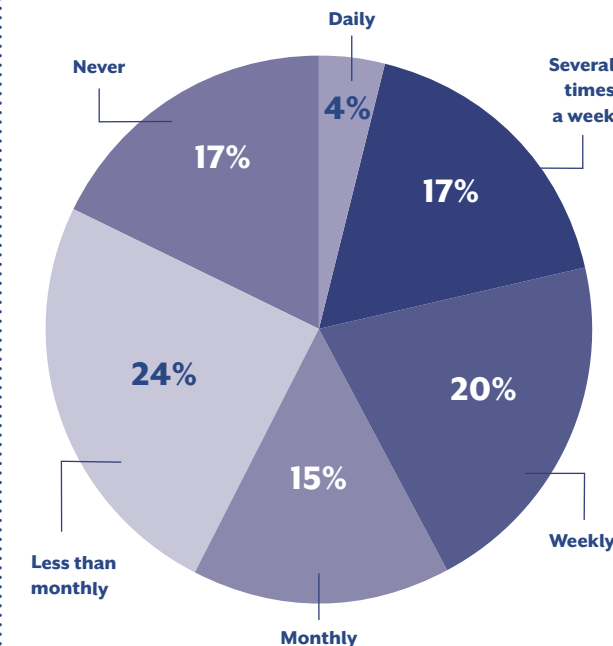
? How often, if at all, do you...

Feel lonely



Base: All parents (1,309)

Talk to other parents about parenting

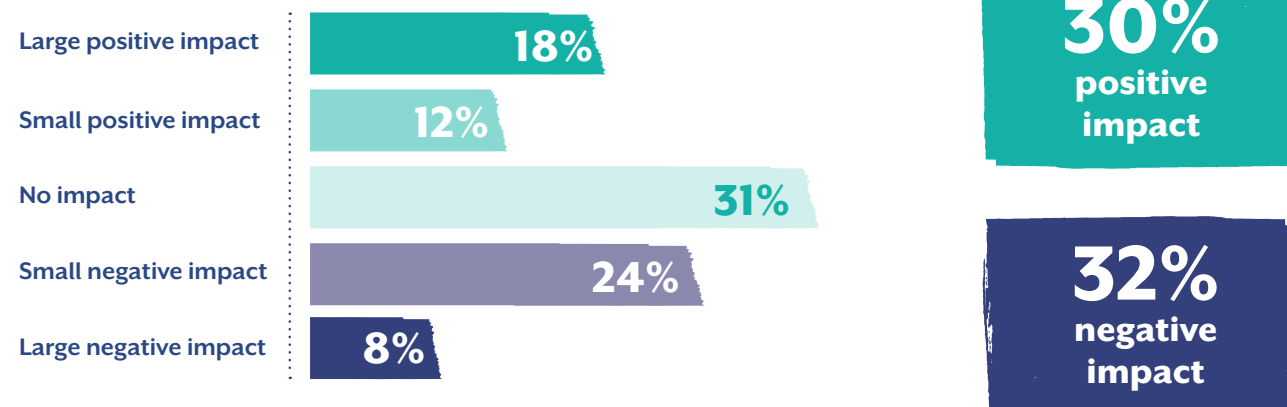


Photography: Shutterstock/Inside Creative House

Impact of parenting on mental health

Impact of parenting on mental health

? To what extent, if at all, has being a parent impacted your mental health in the past year?



Base: All parents (1,309)

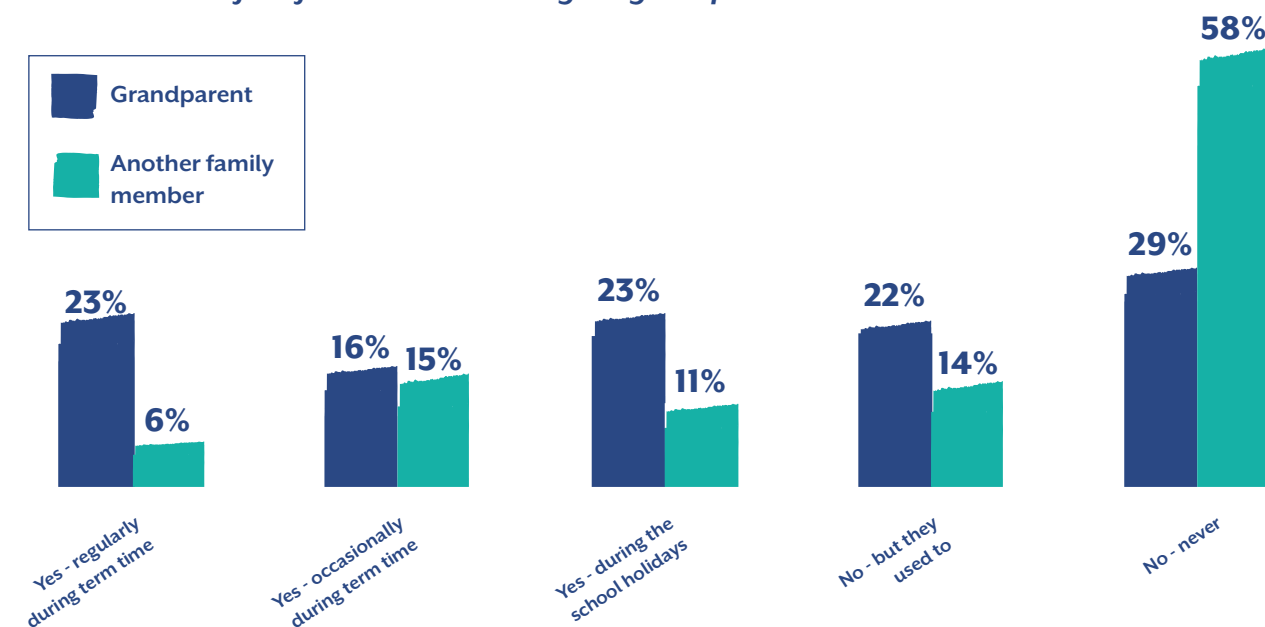


Photography: istock.com/Marizza

Support from grandparents

Childcare support from grandparents and other family members

? How often, if at all, do you rely on grandparents, or other family members for 'free' childcare so you/your partner can work?



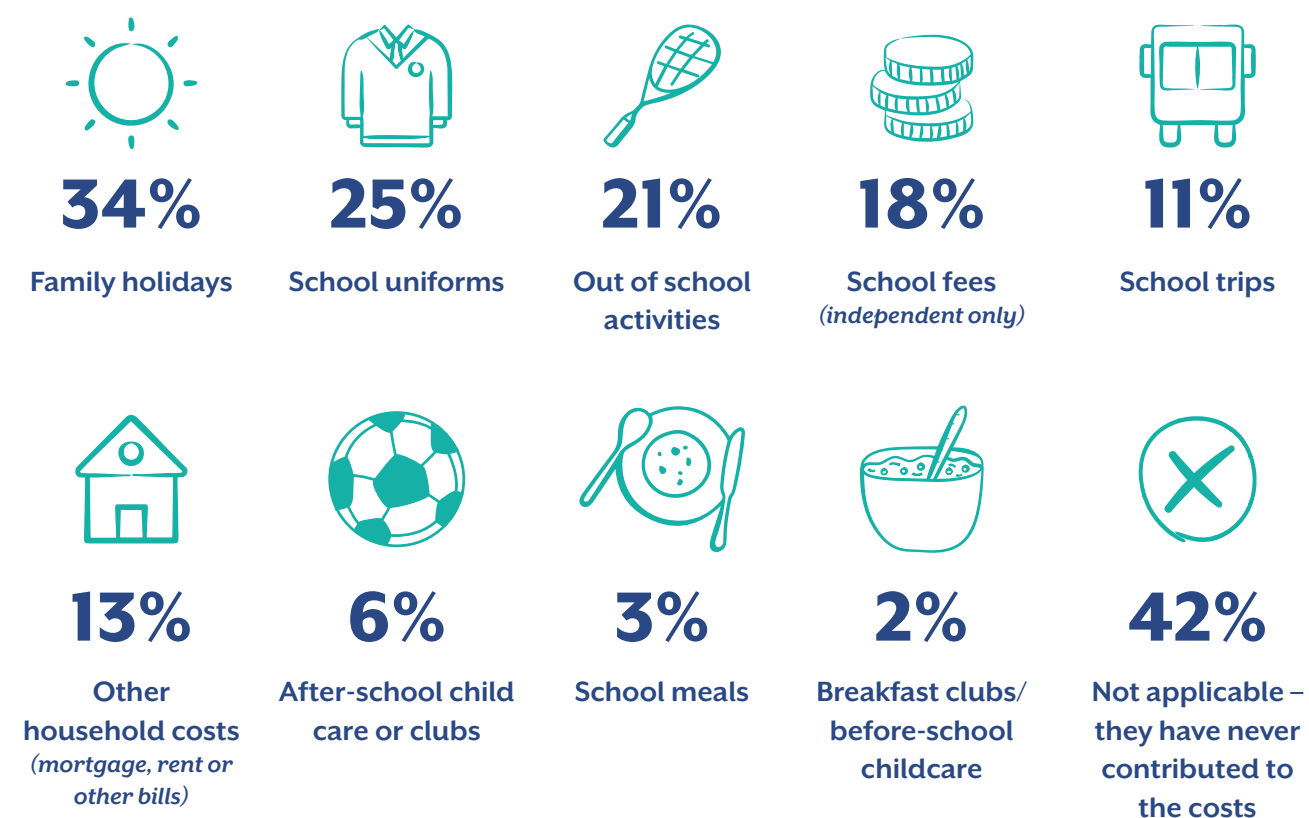
Base: All working parents (1,124) and working parents with a living parent (915). Another family member excludes child's parents.



Photography: istock.com/SolStock

Financial contributions of grandparents

? Which, if any, of the following have your child's grandparent(s) contributed to the cost of?



Base: All parents with a living parent (1,069)



Photography: Shutterstock/Gorodonkoff



Photography: Shutterstock/Ollyy



Home life

Photography: istock.com/lbjorn

Bedroom poverty

Bedroom poverty

3% of children

share a bedroom with an adult because of a lack of space in the home only

zz

16% of children

share a bedroom with a sibling because of a lack of space in the home only



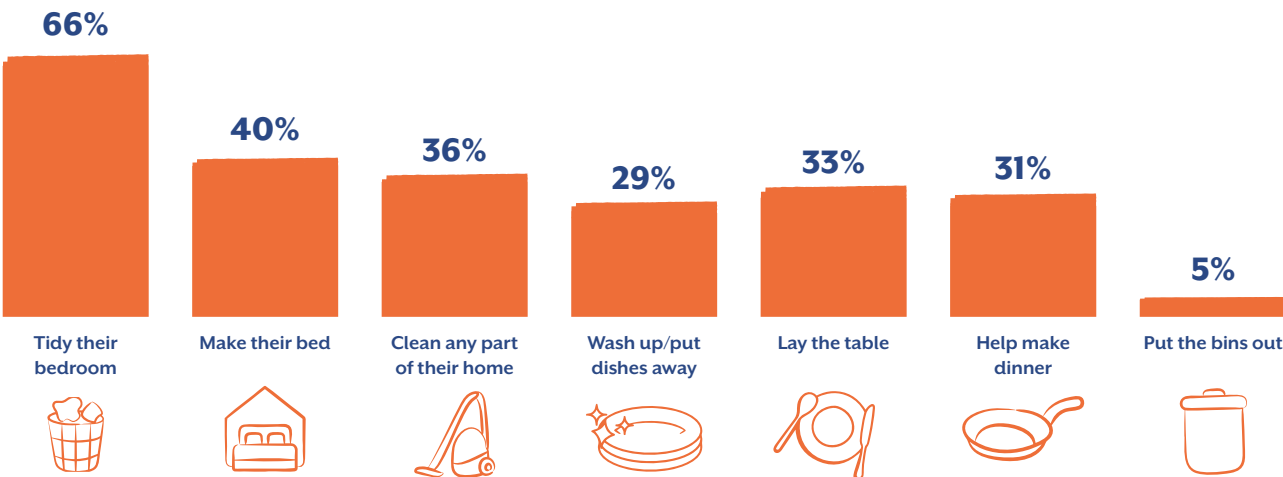
Photography: istock.com/miracsaglam

Children helping at home

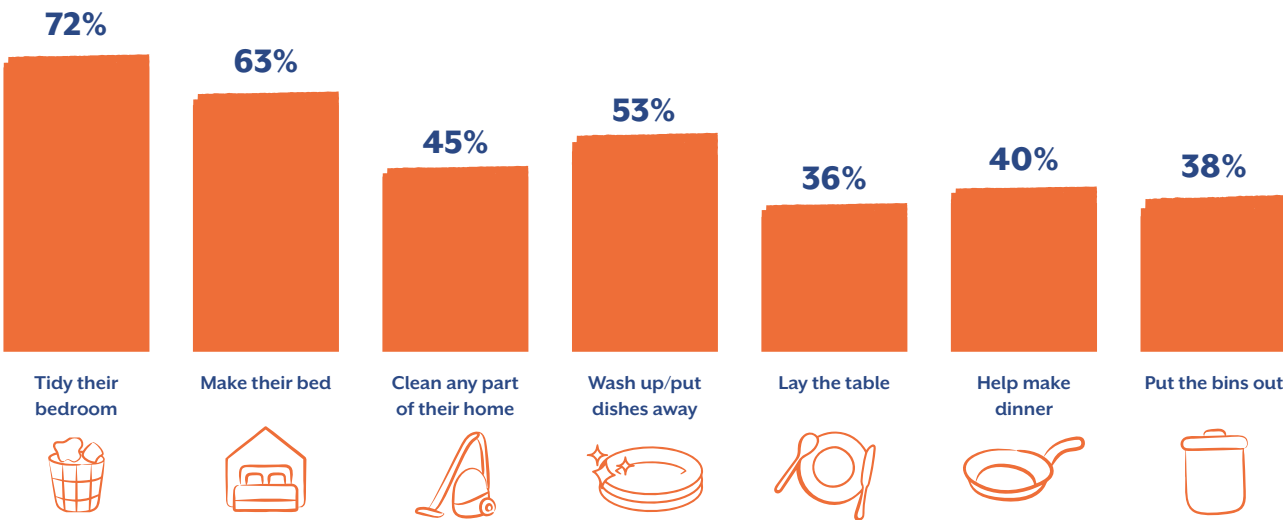
What tasks children do regularly

? Which, if any, of the following does your child do regularly in your household?

Parents of 6 to 7-year-olds



Parents of 14 to 15-year-olds



Base: All parents whose eldest child is 6 to 7 years old (138) or 14 to 15 years old (207)

Parents talking to their children

Discussions with children

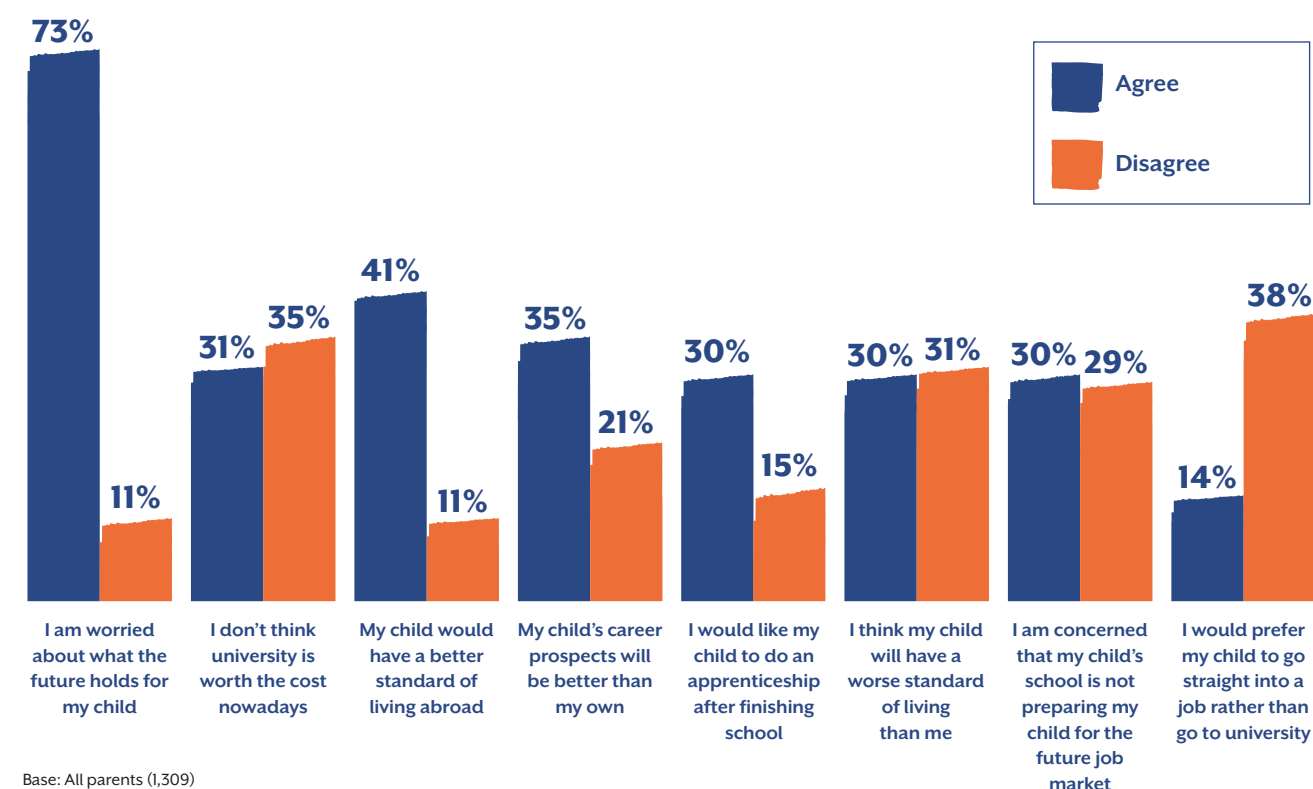
? How easy or difficult would you find discussing the following with your child?



Parents' hopes for their child's future

Parents' reflections on their child's future

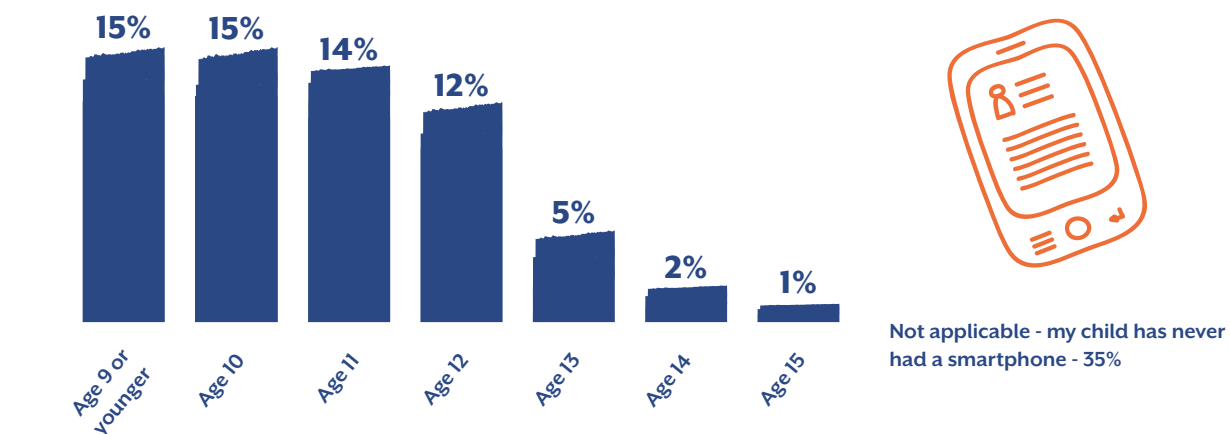
? To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to your child's future?



Parents' smartphone use

Age child given smartphone

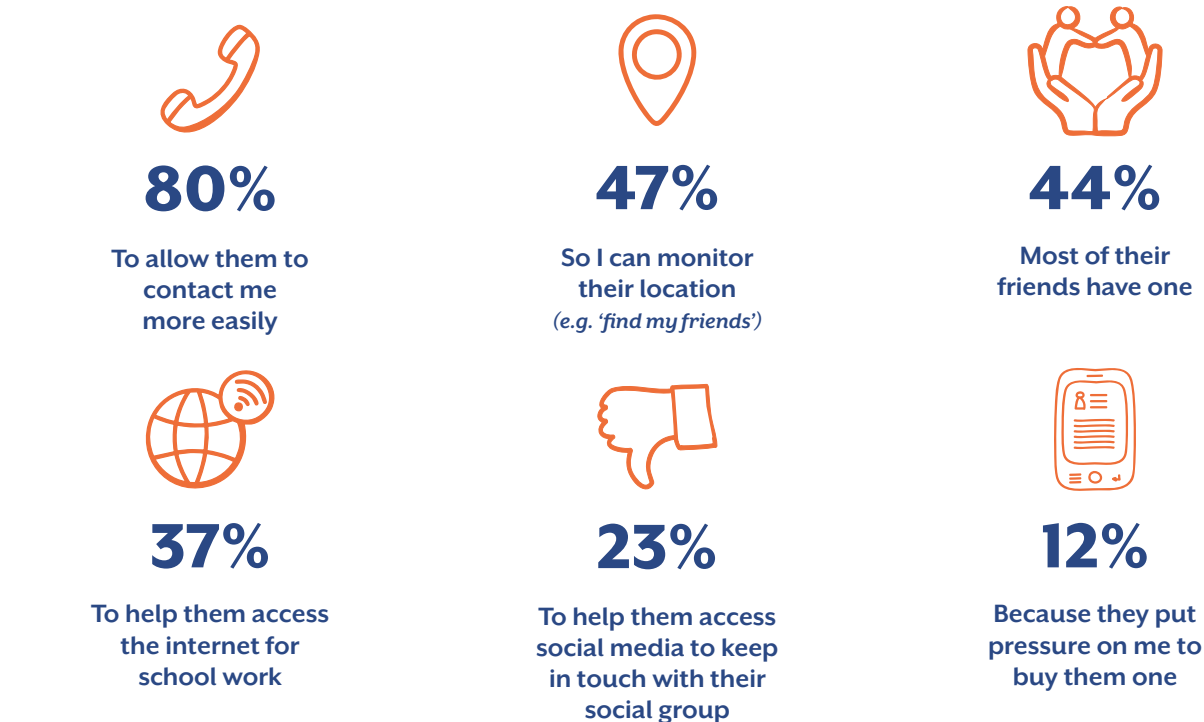
? How old was your child when they first had their own smartphone?



Base: All parents (1,309)

Reasons for child having a smartphone

? Which, if any, of the following reasons explain why your child has a smartphone?



Base: All parents whose child has a smartphone (869)

Photography: Shutterstock/Daisy-Daisy



17% of parents
regret giving their child a smartphone when they did

Parents' own smartphone use

? Which, if any, of the following statements apply to you?



Base: All parents (1,309)



The hidden cost of education

Photography: istock.com/DGLimages

School catchment

Moving house for school catchment

? Thinking about the choices you've made when choosing where to live, which, if any, of the following statements best applies to you?

I have chosen where I live(d) with the main reason being to live within a catchment area for a school I wanted my child to go to



I have moved house with school catchment area in mind, but not as the main reason



School catchment area has never been a reason for choosing where I live(d)



Base: All parents (1,309)



Photography: istock.com/Monkeybusinessimages

Private tutoring

Tutoring outside school

? For which, if any, of the following subjects has your child ever had a tutor for outside of school?



14%
Maths



6%
English



5%
Science



1%
11+ exams



2%
A special educational need
e.g. dyslexia



1%
Other entrance exams

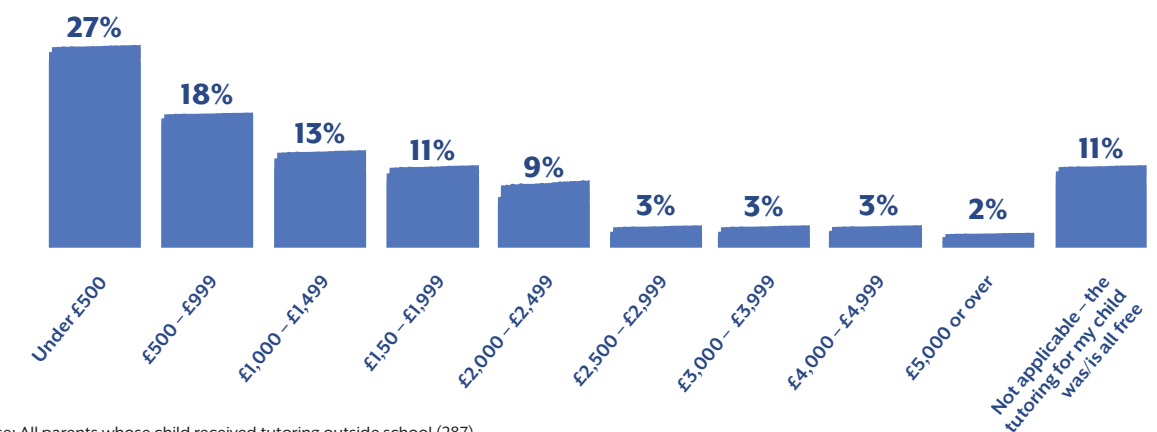


79%
Not applicable – my child has never had a tutor outside of school for any subject

Base: All parents (1,309)

Spend on tutoring

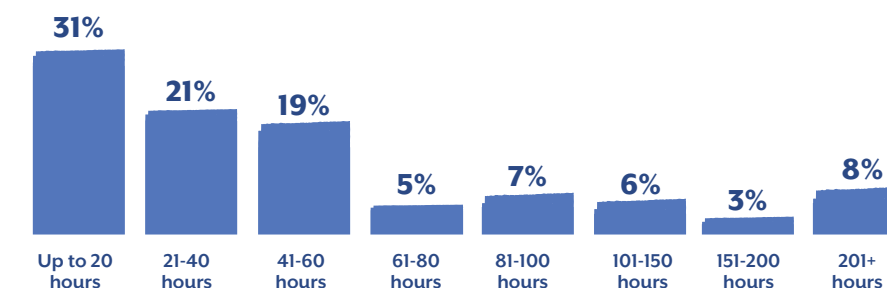
? How much, if anything, do/did you spend on average per year on tutoring for your child?



Base: All parents whose child received tutoring outside school (287)

Time spent on tutoring

? How much, if anything, do/did you spend on average per year on tutoring for your child?



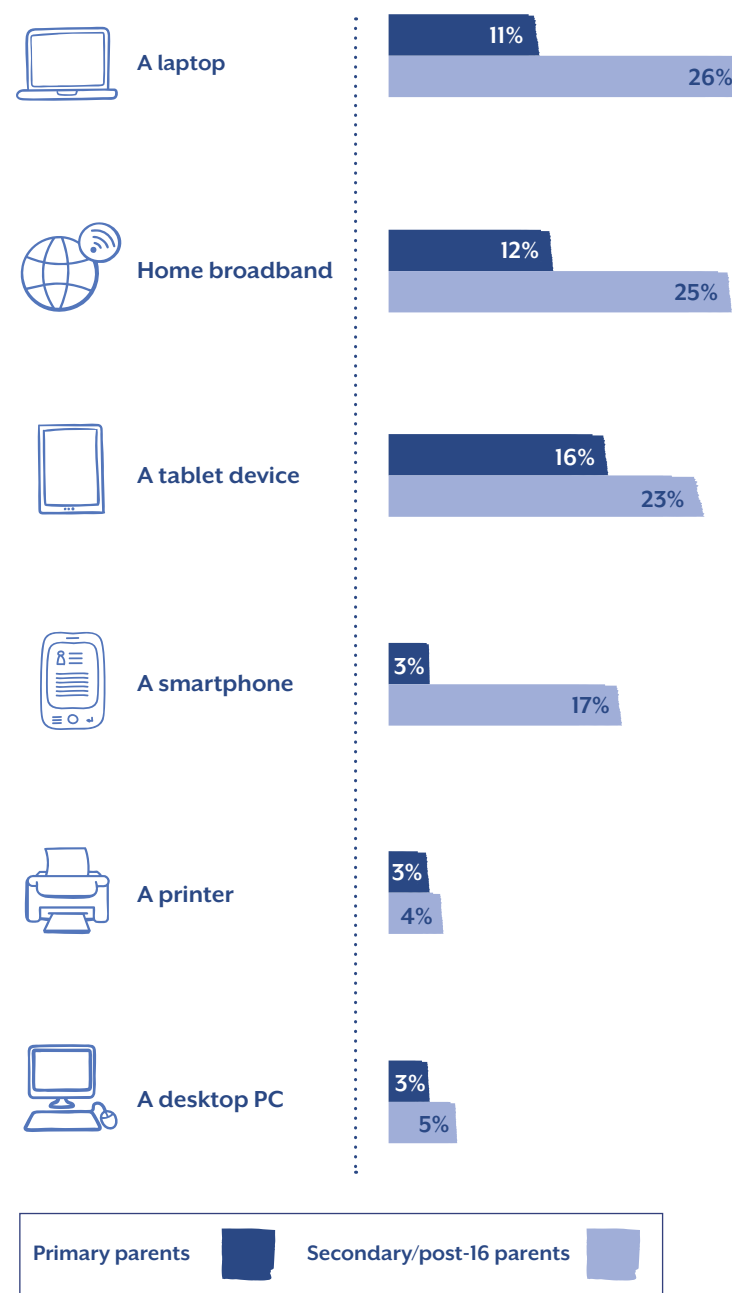
Base: All parents whose child received tutoring outside school (287)

Average
40 hours

Technology *required* by schools

Technology required by school

? Which, if any, of the following has your child's school required them to have?



69% of primary parents and 43% of secondary/post-16 parents answered none

Base: All parents (1,309)



A photograph of four students in school uniforms (white shirts and blue ties) sitting in a classroom. They are all smiling and looking towards the right. The student in the foreground is a young man with dark skin and curly hair, holding a pen. Behind him is a young woman with long blonde hair, and further back is a young man with curly brown hair. On the far right, the side profile of another young woman with long brown hair is visible. The background shows a whiteboard and a chalkboard.

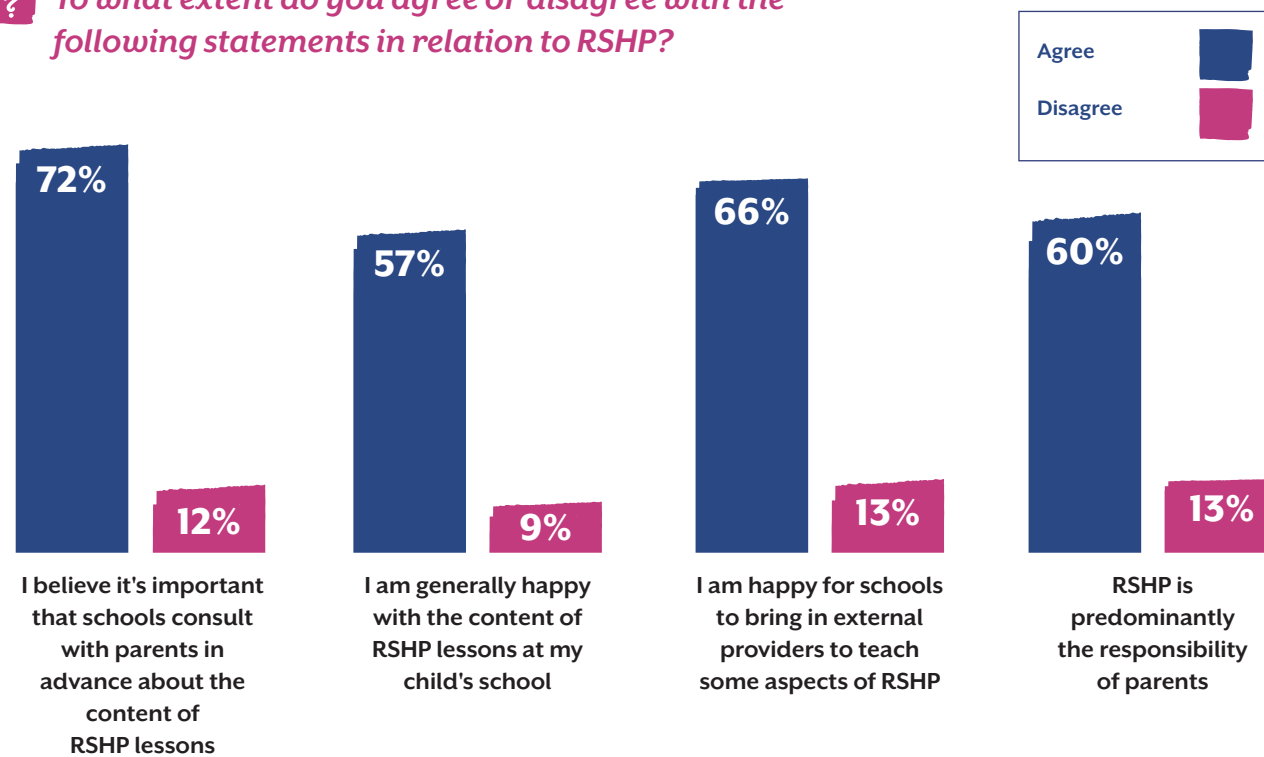
Relationships, Sexual Health & Parenthood (RSHP) and *gender questioning* children

Photography: istock.com/Monkeybusinessimages

Attitudes towards the RSHP curriculum

RSHP in schools

? To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements in relation to RSHP?



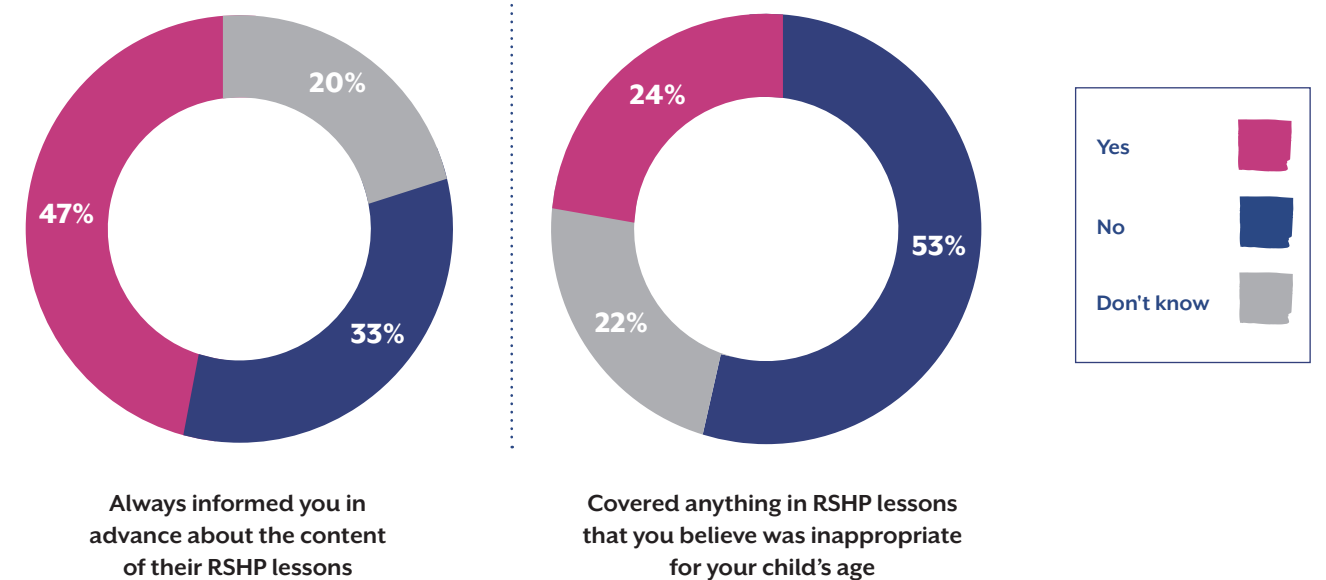
Base: All parents (1,309)



Photography: istock.com/Caiaimage/Chris Ryan

RSHP in schools

? Has your child's school...?



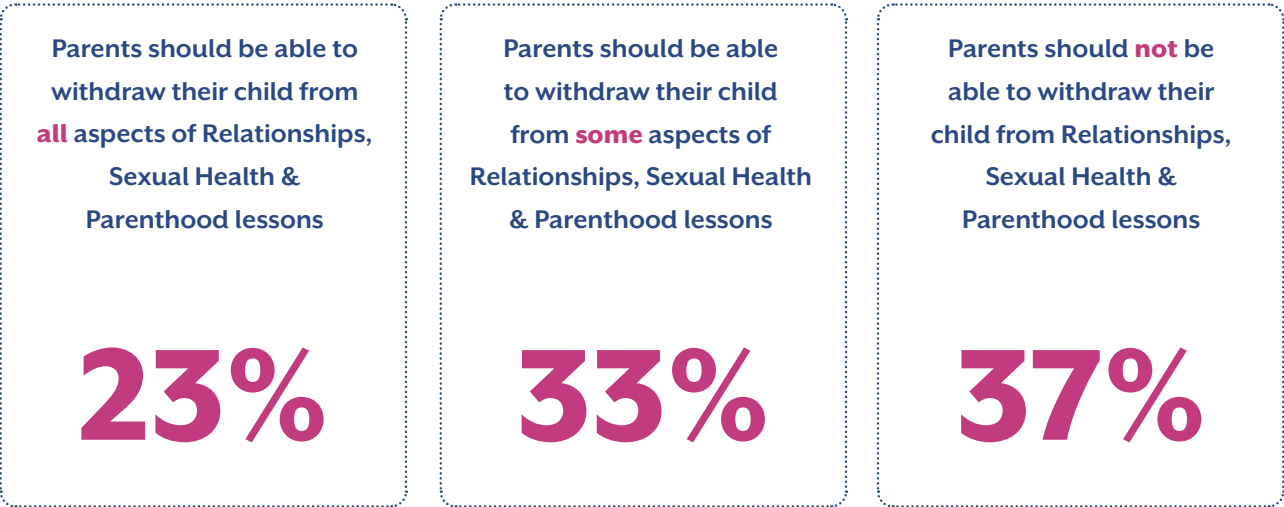
Base: All parents (1,309)



Photography: istock.com/Caiaimage/Sam Edwards

Right to withdraw from Relationships, Sexual Health & Parenthood lessons

? Currently, across the UK, policies vary whether parents should be able to withdraw their child from relationships and sex education. Which, if any, of the following best summarise your opinion?



Base: All parents whose child attends secondary/post-16 education (734)



Photography: istock.com/Daisy-Daisy

Gender questioning children in school

The gender debate

? Which, if any, of the following of these best reflects your view?



Base: All parents whose child attends secondary/post-16 education (734)

Informing parents about a gender change

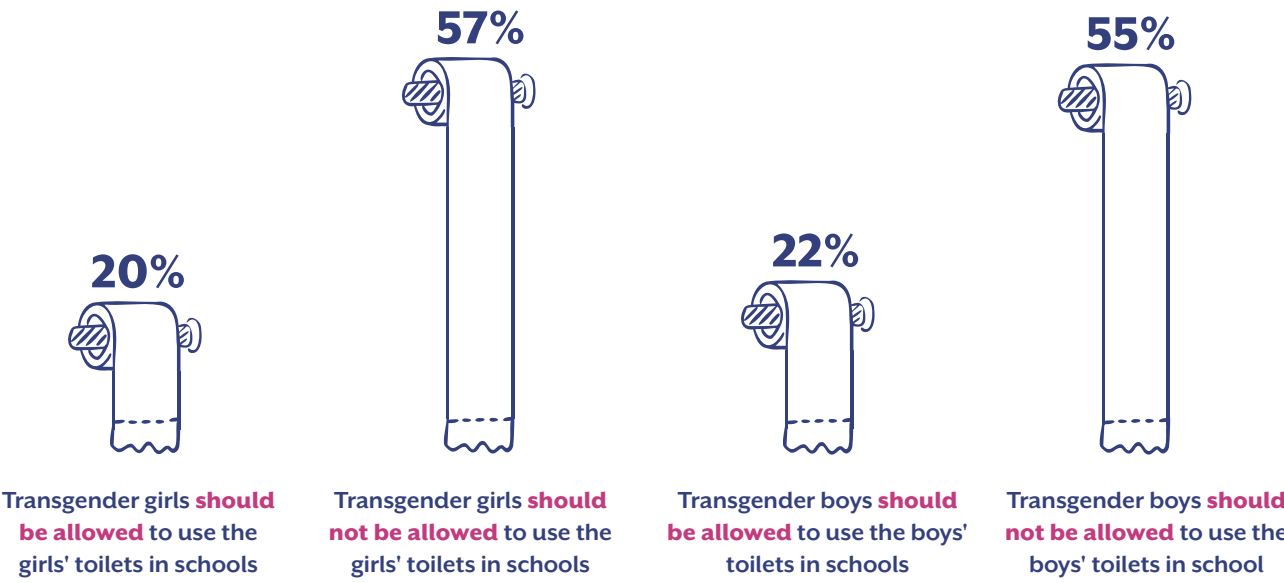
? Imagine a pupil has disclosed to their school that they would like to be known by a different name and/or pronoun and had not told their parents. Which, if any, of the following best reflects your view?



Base: All parents (1,309)

Use of school toilets

? In the following questions, a transgender girl is someone who was biologically male at birth but now identifies as a girl. A transgender boy is someone who was biologically female at birth but now identifies as a boy. Do you think...



Base: All parents (1,309)



Photography: istock.com/xavieramau



Photography: istock.com/izusek

What we should do in response to the National Parent Survey 2025

1 Too many children don't feel safe at school

Too many children don't feel safe at school, and we know this is mostly due to a bullying crisis documented in this year's National Parent Survey.

School inspectorates should always measure whether children feel safe at school and report back on the results. Where children regularly feel unsafe, this should be a cause for concern.

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills should work towards a national snapshot of bullying in schools so we know the full extent of how many children are being bullied and put a spotlight on this awful experience for too many children.

Banning smartphones in school has been shown to reduce bullying and improve behaviour. If we want to tackle the bullying, we need to introduce a clear and unambiguous ban on smartphones in schools.

2 Children should enjoy school

Being happy at school should be an expectation for every child.

We need a new national measure of how happy children are at school and roll out school-level data tracking tools that allow head-teachers and school inspectorates to monitor how happy children are at school.

3 Give children their independence by banning smartphones and social media

We need to give children their childhood back.

This means a national effort to remove smartphones from children and help them reacclimatise to real life. We urgently need to become a world leader in removing access to social media and smartphones for our children and help them rediscover the world on their doorstep.

4 Reimagine the way Parent Councils can tackle parent loneliness and provide help to parents

Parenting is hard and parents tell us they feel isolated and lonely.

There is an important role for Parent Councils to play in helping bring parents together to talk about parenting and the challenges all parents face.

The Scottish Government should commit to looking again at the role of Parent Councils and how they can support parents to come together and help each other. This is particularly important in areas of high need where parent groups based around schools can support parents.

5 Parents need to model responsible smart phone behaviour

We need to ban smartphones for children, but parents need to model good behaviour.

Parents need to think carefully about the message compulsive scrolling and time spent staring at smartphones sends to children.

We need a national campaign to nudge behaviour and help parents understand the dangers of displaying obsessive smartphone behaviour when children are nearby.

6 Laptops and tablets are the new school cost worry for parents

It isn't just school uniform that is a worry for parents, technology is increasingly a big concern. A third of children are required to have a laptop or tablet for school, which is a major cost worry for parents.

The Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills should commission an urgent review to establish exactly what technology is required by schools and how much this is costing parents.

7 It is time to rethink the school holiday calendar

Teaching is tough and physically draining, but the six-week summer holiday is out of date.

We need to make sure teachers get the time off they need, but our school holiday calendar is out of date and out of sync with the expectations of parents.

We need an urgent review of the school holiday calendar with a view to reducing the six-week summer holiday, introducing longer mid-term breaks and/or a longer break at Christmas.

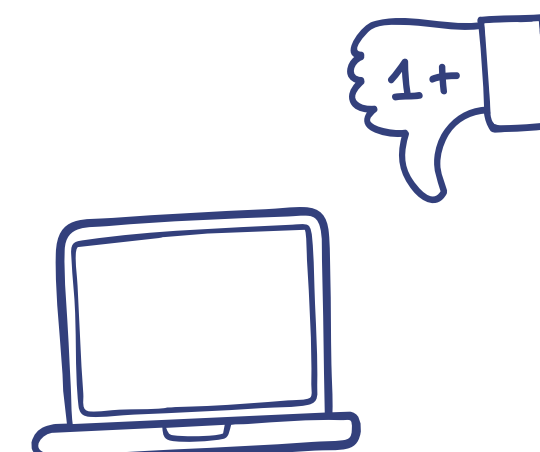


8 Supporting parents worried about Relationships, Sexual Health & Parenthood classes

Transparency should be an expectation when it comes to RSHP, and parents with concerns should always be listened to.

We know that when schools get this right, parents are much more likely to understand and support what is being taught in class.

We should look again at how we can improve transparency and communication between home and school to make sure every parent is heard and no parent has to send their child into a class they are uncomfortable with.



Methodology

The National Parent Survey was conducted online by YouGov. The fieldwork took place from 27th March to 18th April 2025 amongst 5,866 parents in England (3,391), Scotland (1,309), Wales (865) and Northern Ireland (301), who have at least one child aged four to 18 in school. If respondents have more than one child, parents are asked to answer all the questions with their oldest child who currently attends school/college in mind.

The charts in this report show the results for parents in Scotland.

The figures have been weighted and are representative of all parents in Scotland.

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov plc. Analysis and reporting was carried out by Parentkind.

Unless otherwise noted, all percentages on the charts/graphics are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Margin of error

As the survey is not polling the entire population of parents in Scotland, but rather a sample of the population, results are subject to a margin of error, which is estimated to be ± 2.7 percentage points for the whole sample. The exact margin of error varies with the proportion considered. This means that if, for instance, according to the survey 12% of respondents say that their child is always happy at school, in reality the proportion is likely to be between 9.3% and 14.7% (i.e. the margin of error would be $\pm 2.7\%$). Some of the statistically significant differences in results for particular demographic subgroups are mentioned in this summary.



Photography: istock.com/Undrey



Photography: istock.com/Andreasr

About Parentkind

Parentkind is the UK's largest parent charity, working with more than 14,000 parent groups and 200,000 parent volunteers to raise almost £140 million a year for schools.

We are the voice of parents in education, our research with parents gives parents a say in education debates.



Contact us:
policy@parentkind.org