

# The National Parent Survey

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2024



# 5,490 parents have their say on being a parent in 2024

Supported by



## Introduction from Jason Elsom



**T**oo often parents are overlooked when it comes to big policy debates, so we designed the National Parent Survey (NPS), the UK's largest poll of its kind, to give parents a voice in policy decisions that affect them or their children.

This year, we commissioned YouGov to speak with 5,490 parents across all four nations, to enable us to publish a 'UK NPS', an NPS for Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, London, parents of children eligible for Free School Meals, and parents of children with Special Educational Needs. These will be accessible free of charge at [www.nationalparentsurvey.com](http://www.nationalparentsurvey.com). Further, we are publishing the full data set on the same site to enable others to examine data specific to their own needs.

Whilst the 2023 NPS focused primarily on parents' views of their children and their children's education, this year we have asked parents to tell us more about the challenges they face themselves.

We are grateful to policymakers, researchers, educators, parents, and others for reading the 2023 NPS at least seven thousand times and thrilled to see policymakers reflect its findings in launching policies, or commencing the review of policies, relating to poverty, smartphone use by children, the cost of school uniform, and outdoor education. We hope that you will find the 2024 NPS useful in your work and welcome your feedback.

### Parents are struggling with the cost of living

This year's National Parent Survey shows us that parents are still struggling with the cost-of-living crisis, with a third of parents telling us they are struggling to make ends meet. Four million parents told us they have less than £500 in the bank for a rainy day, while the poorest parents have skipped meals and rationed heating to pay household bills. When it comes to school costs, it isn't just uniform that is a major worry for parents – they tell us school trips are a big concern too. All the little extras demanded by schools quickly add up.

We need to make sure that the cost of school is part of any approach to reducing poverty. Parentkind is calling on governments to establish independent advisory bodies on the cost of school, which should publish an annual assessment and make recommendations to ministers on how to reduce school costs.

We also need to recognise the potential role of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) in helping parents in need with the introduction of a new match funding proposal recommended by Parentkind. This 'Parent Fundraising Guarantee' would incentivise new PTAs in the poorest communities to set up and raise money for schools to support enrichment, school trips and help with school uniform costs.

### Helping parents to balance work, life and family time

We champion flexible working, because it works for parents. All of our staff work remotely and this year's survey discovers that half of working parents are now working at home, some or all of the week, and more than eight in ten say this helps them better balance being a parent with a job.

A third of working parents have reduced their hours, but worryingly, a third of parents working part-time say doing so has hurt their career prospects.

We need to change the way we think about work to help parents, with an expectation that home working is a default where it can be. We want to see governments be much more active in changing the conversation on working from home to help parents, both mums and dads, to balance work, life and family time.

### Cracking down on social media and smartphones

Last year we discovered that the amount of time children spend on smartphones and screens was a huge worry for parents. This year we have looked more closely at this issue.

Almost half of all families are now regularly arguing over the amount of time their children spend on

screens, with children now spending on average three hours and 20 minutes a day on tablets, smartphones and games consoles outside of school. Some children are spending more time on screens than they do at school.

We can't ignore this issue and Parentkind has led calls for a smartphone ban for under 16s. Tinkering won't do, we need to send a clear message backed by parents that children shouldn't own a smartphone until they are 16, and a new social media age of consent should be introduced by governments, with no child allowed on social media platforms until this age.

### It is okay to say children should enjoy school

More than half of parents say their child has suffered with a mental health issue during the last 12 months, with more than a quarter of these children missing school as a result. Secondary/post-primary school children are more likely to have experienced a mental health problem and are less likely to enjoy school. We shouldn't be afraid to say all children should enjoy school.

Any changes to the way we deliver education and assess learning should consider the pressures put on children and the impact on their mental health. We should work towards measuring school enjoyment and making it part of the way we inspect schools.

### Giving every child the chance to take part in after-school clubs

Every child should have access to weekly extracurricular activities and after-school clubs. The evidence from our poll shows too few children are taking part in clubs and activities after school. A third of children from the poorest homes never participate in an after-school club or activity.

Governments should work towards a new funding settlement for after-school clubs and activities to make them just as much a part of our education system as a maths or English lesson.

### Parents are the missing piece of the jigsaw puzzle

Children spend more than 80% of their time outside of school, but parents say more than half of secondary/post-primary schools don't give them enough information on how to support their child's learning at home.

We need to do much more to improve the link between home and school. Governments across the UK should develop a 'kitemark' for engaging with parents, and inspectorates should put this in their inspection frameworks as they have done in Northern Ireland. The Parentkind 'Blueprint for Parent-Friendly

Schools' provides a template for any new approach.

One in four parents don't think homework is useful and one in three say it causes arguments at home. Some children don't even have a space at home to do homework in. We need a national conversation on how homework can help children to learn but avoid causing family conflict. Governments should announce an expert review of homework and how to encourage children to enjoy learning again and find time for clubs outside of school.

### Reduce the temptation for a term time holiday

Despite the media narrative that the 'social contract' between schools and parents is broken, three quarters of parents agree that every school day matters. Many have even sent their children into school when their children have been unwell. One in five teens have refused to go to school in the last year despite their parents thinking they should go, and one in five parents say it is harder to get their teen to school since the pandemic.

The issue of unauthorised term time holidays came out strongly in our survey, with more than half of parents saying it is okay to miss school for a day or more for a holiday. Parents are often put in a difficult position with family holidays that are substantially cheaper during the term time.

Governments should review the marketing and pricing of holidays primarily marketed at families to see if there's anything that can be done to reduce the gap between the cost of a holiday in term time and one in the school holidays.

### Commit to listening to parents when decisions are made

Ministers should commit to consulting parents as standard ahead of major policy announcements so their voices are always heard.

They should commission large-scale annual assessments of parent opinion conducted by an independent body to accurately understand the views of parents and their satisfaction with their child's education.

This year's National Parent Survey is the largest yet and shows that much more needs to be done to support parents by listening to their concerns. This large-scale parent poll should be a call to action for governments across all parts of the UK and for elected representatives who want to speak up for parents.



**Jason Elsom**  
Chief Executive, Parentkind



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**Parents** – anyone in a parenting role  
**FSM** – Free School Meals  
**SEN** – Special Educational Needs encompassing Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND - England), Additional Learning Needs (ALN - Wales), Additional Support Needs (ASN - Scotland) and SEN (Special Educational Needs - Northern Ireland)  
**Teenagers** – children aged 12-18 (due to the age bands used in the questionnaire)

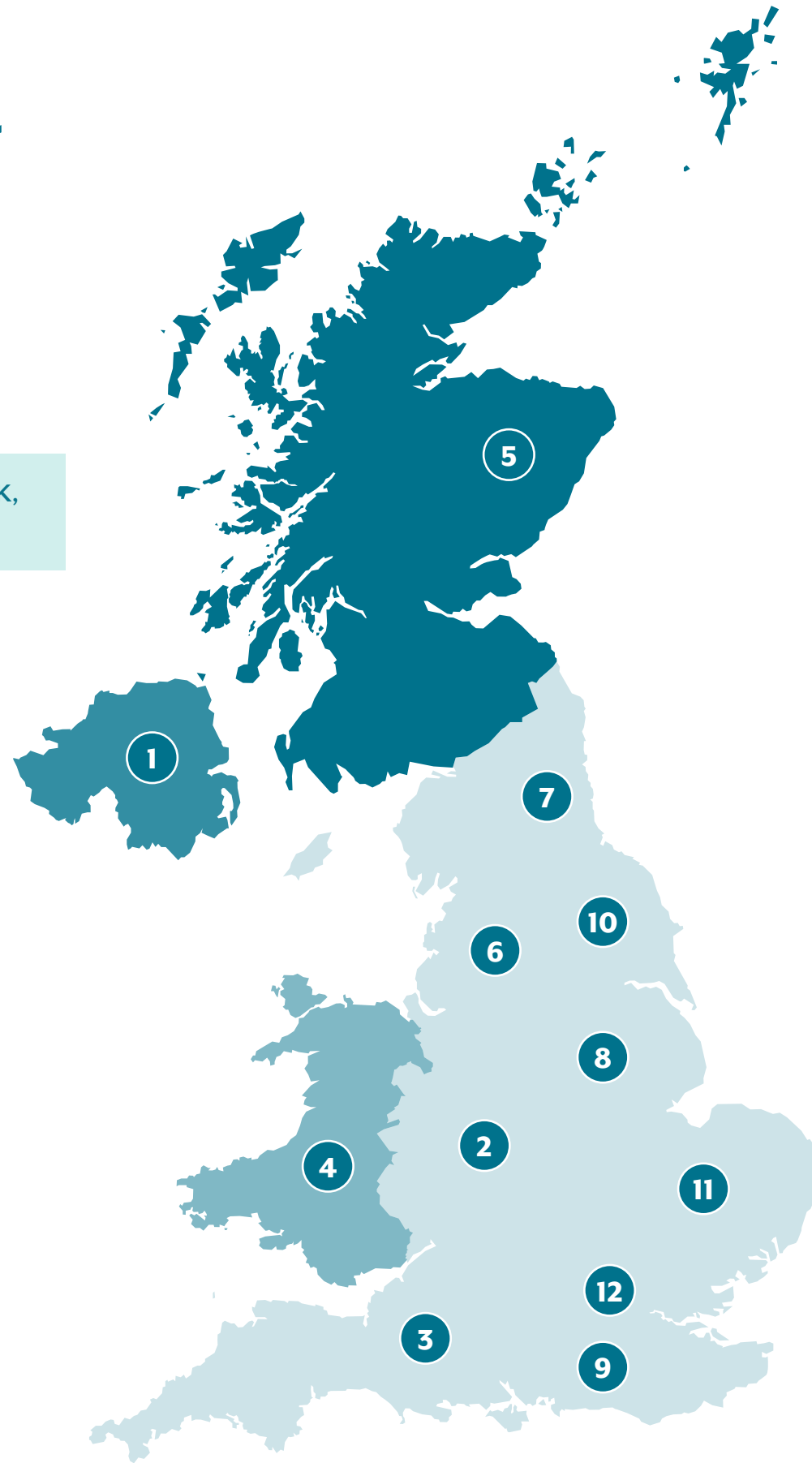
View all of the data online here:



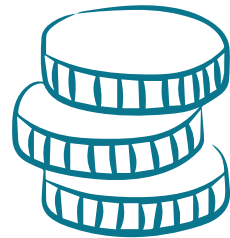


# Some regional and national differences

Whilst lots of the feedback from parents was similar across the UK, below are some of the differences between nations and regions.



## 1 Northern Ireland



- most likely to say homework is a cause of arguments
- most likely to be concerned about costs of school uniforms, materials for classes, voluntary donations and after-school clubs
- child most likely to be negatively influenced by people on social media

## 2 West Midlands

- most likely to have taken out a loan or credit card for school costs
- child most likely to have visited GP with a mental health issue

## 3 South West

- most likely to have reduced their working hours to spend more time with their child

## 4 Wales

- most likely to say they're unhappy most of the time
- least likely to be happy with the quality of education their child receives
- most likely to consider child missing school for a holiday



## 5 Scotland

- least likely to say child's school takes attendance seriously
- least likely to struggle with school costs



## 6 North West

- least likely to have rainy day savings of £500+
- least likely to say their employer is parent friendly

## 10 Yorkshire & the Humber

- most likely to have had a flexible working request refused
- most likely to have skipped meals

## 7 North East

- most likely to get into debt each month
- least likely to work from home

## 11 East

- child most likely to have issues with sleep due to screens
- more likely to have barriers limiting family activities

## 8 East Midlands

- child most likely to have had a mental health issue in last 12 months
- least likely to find parents' evenings useful

## 12 London

- most likely to take on an extra job/hours to help finances
- child most likely to attend clubs or out-of-school activities
- most likely to use a school breakfast club
- most likely to be more relaxed about school attendance since the pandemic

## 9 South East

- child with mental health issue most likely to have missed school

# What parents told us

**3.7 million**

parents are struggling to pay their bills

**2.8 million**

parents are worried about affording their rent or mortgage



**One in five**

parents struggle to afford the cost of sending their child to school



**Half of working parents**

regularly work from home



**One in eight**

working parents have had a flexible working request denied



**Nearly one in four**

children don't attend activities after school, paid or unpaid, rising to three in ten teenagers



More than **2 million** parents have poor mental health



More than **5 million** children have experienced a mental health challenge in the last year



More than **a quarter** of children experiencing poor mental health have missed school

**One in three** parents don't spend as much time as they would like to helping with school work



Less than a **third of parents** have time for their hobbies



Fewer than **four in ten** parents think society values their role as a parent

**38%** of primary school children spend at least three hours a day on a digital device



More than **a third of parents**

say their child is missing out on sleep because they spend too much time on screens

On a typical weekday, **1.5 million** children spend more time on phones and screens than they do at school

**Homework** is a cause of arguments for **4 million** parents and their children

Half of secondary schools don't give parents enough information on supporting their child's learning at home

**1.5 million** parents are unhappy with the education their child receives

**1.6 million** children feel unsafe at school

**37%** of primary school parents with a child eligible for FSM using a breakfast club say it helps their child to learn

**One in ten** primary school parents would like to use a breakfast club but can't access one

**6 million** parents would consider their child missing school for a holiday



**One in five** children have refused to go to school in the last year, despite their parent thinking they should go

# 3.7 million parents are struggling to pay their bills

## Cost of living and poverty

**2.8 million**



parents are worried about affording their rent or mortgage

**One in five**



parents struggle to afford the cost of sending their child to school

Parents are most likely to skip meals if they are on the lowest incomes

Almost **half of parents** are concerned about the cost of school uniforms



It comes as no surprise that one of the biggest concerns for parents right now is the cost of living. A third of parents told us they are struggling with their finances and one in four are worried about falling behind on rent or mortgage payments. More than a third of parents have less than £500 in the bank for a rainy day.

While many families have had to tighten their belts over the last year, it's the poorest who are forced to make the toughest choices – four in ten have skipped meals, almost half rationed their heating and one in five used food banks. Parents of children entitled to free school meals are also twice as likely than those with children not entitled to fall into debt every month.

Parents with a child with SEN are also far more likely to have skipped meals, rationed the heating, used a food bank, taken out a loan or debt, or taken on an extra job or extra hours than parents without a child with SEN.

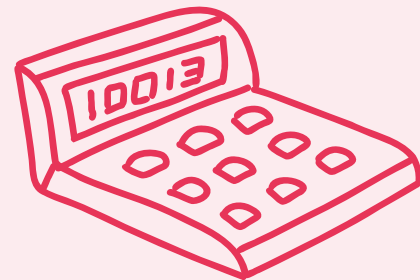
**34%** of all parents are struggling with their finances

- rising to **45%** of parents with a child with SEN
- 45%** of parents whose child's first language is not English
- 46%** of parents with a disability
- 60%** of parents with a household income of less than £20K

# Parents' biggest challenges

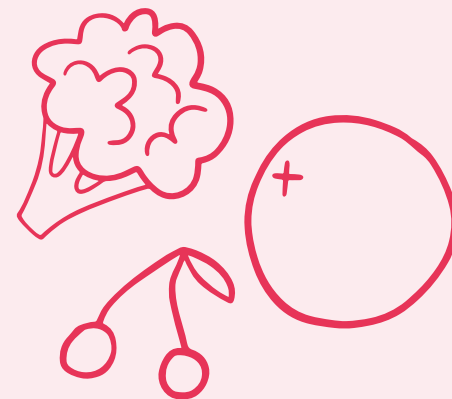
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I have to work two jobs to pay rent/bills and for the school trip for next year.



“

Affording childcare for more than one child.



“

Managing finances and time demands and trying to feed and clothe a family during a cost-of-living crisis.

## Sacrifices parents have made for financial reasons

Have you done any of the following for financial reasons over the last 12 months?

Rationed the heating



Skipped meals



Taken on an extra job/extra hours to help with costs of having children



Taken out a loan, or taken on debt (such as a credit card) to pay for school costs



Used a food bank



Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted, parents with a child eligible for free school meals (683)



“

The biggest challenge currently is providing food and warmth amongst all the other things that need paying for.

- Parent response



## Parents' top school cost concerns

Thinking about the financial cost of your child going to school which, if any, of the following are of particular concern to you?



Sample: 5,126 parents in England (3,067), Scotland (1,032), Wales (768) and Northern Ireland (259) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
 Base: All respondents, weighted

Looking specifically at the costs associated with their child's school, uniform tops the list of school costs that are particularly concerning to parents, closely followed by trips, then technology and school meals and drinks.

Just 23% of parents are not concerned by any school costs. Poorer parents, parents with a child with SEN, and parents from Northern Ireland are more likely to be concerned about school costs than other parents.



# Half of working parents now regularly work from home

## Balancing work and home time

### 55%

of working mums have reduced their hours to spend more time with their children



Over a **quarter** of working parents have changed jobs to spend more time with their children



### One in eight



parents have had a flexible working request denied

Poorer parents are more likely to experience work-related challenges

The Covid-19 pandemic changed the world of work forever. Those who could do their jobs remotely had to adjust quickly, but when restrictions were lifted, not everyone headed back into the office.

Parents are leading the shift away from commuting to work, with over half now working from home at least some of the week. 45% of working parents with children entitled to free school meals told us they regularly work from home too, suggesting this change isn't only being taken up by more affluent families. That said, they are less likely to work from home – as are parents with a child whose first language is not English and those from the North East, the West Midlands or Northern Ireland. Working from home is having a positive impact – more than eight in ten parents (91% of mums and 83% of dads) said working from home makes it easier to balance work and parenting.

While this is great for those with flexible employers, not everyone has been able to take advantage of this. A third of working parents never work from home because they cannot do their my job from home, whilst more than one in ten parents have been told by their bosses they can't work from home at all, and one in eight have had a flexible working request refused.

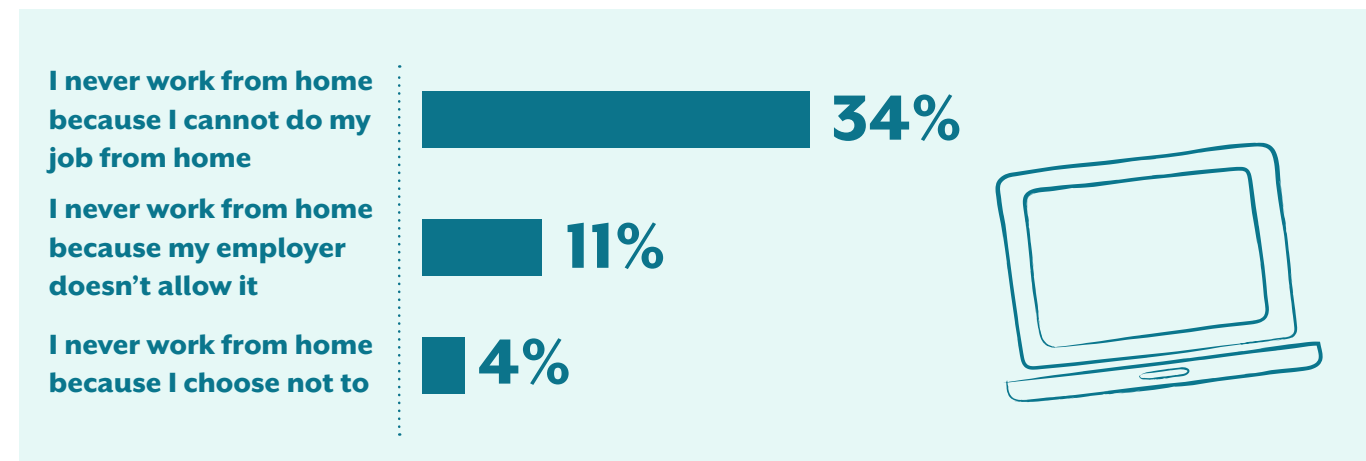
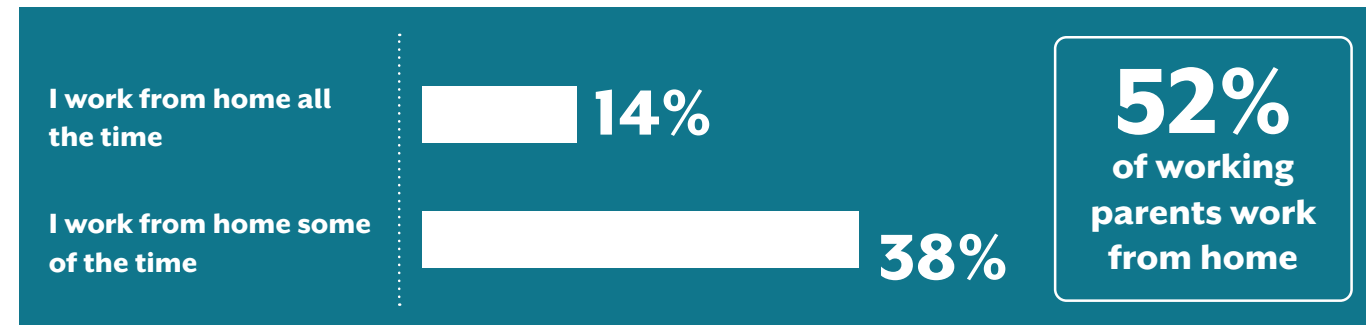
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**My work day is longer than the children's school day, there is always overlap – I need extra childcare in order to keep my job.**

- Parent response

## How often parents work from home

Which, if any, of the following best describes your working situation?



Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: all respondents working full or part time (4,596)

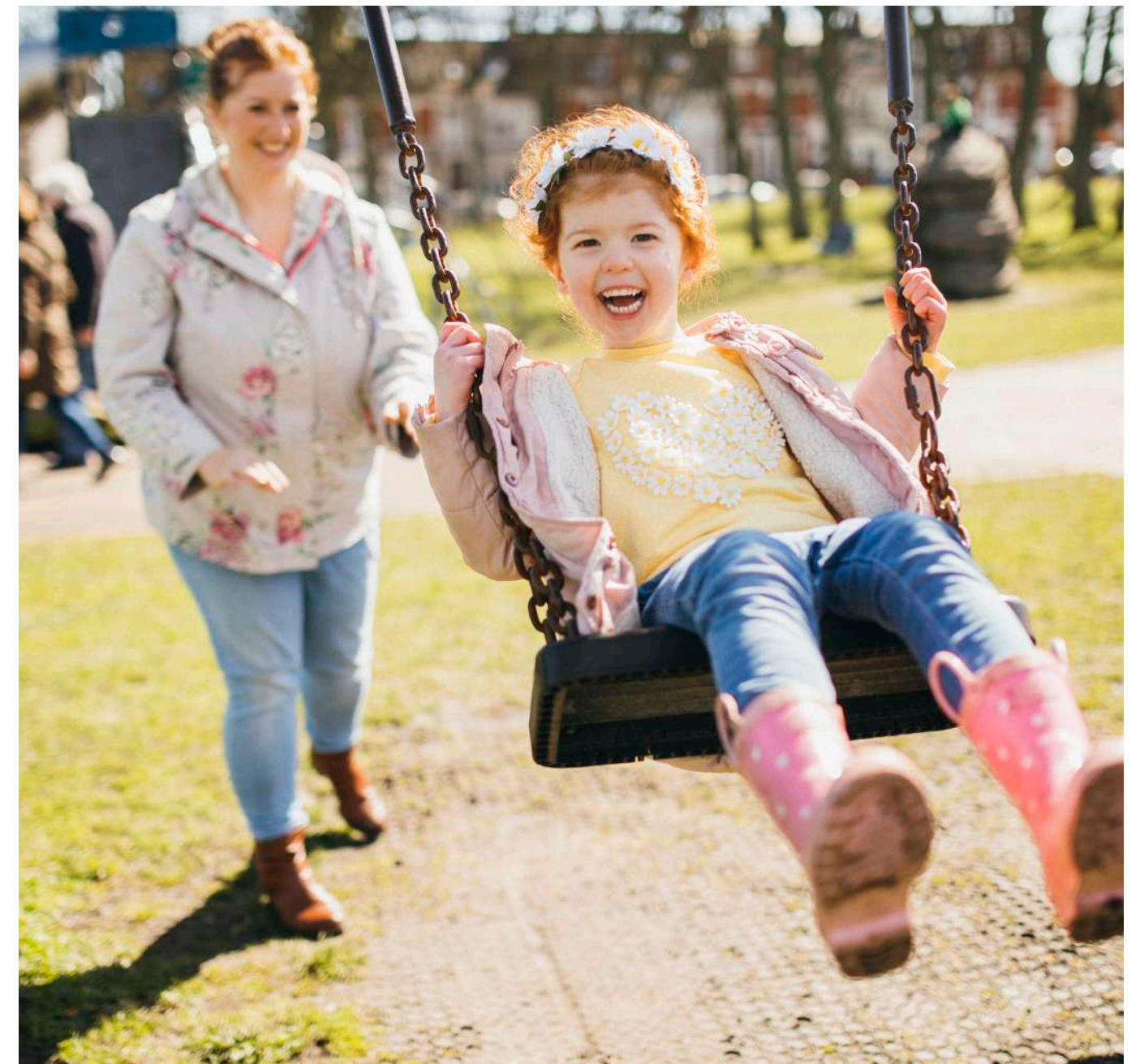
**86%**  
of parents say working from home makes it easier to balance work with parenting



When balancing work with home, working mums continue to be more impacted than dads. Four in ten mums have changed jobs to spend more time with their children and 55% of mums have reduced their working hours to be with their families compared with fewer than one in five dads having done either.

Parents on a lower income face more challenges when it comes to work. Working parents with children eligible for free school meals are more likely to experience work-related challenges such as unpredictability of working days/hours, a request for flexible working being refused, an uncertainty of income and working fewer hours than they would like compared with working parents with children not eligible for free school meals.

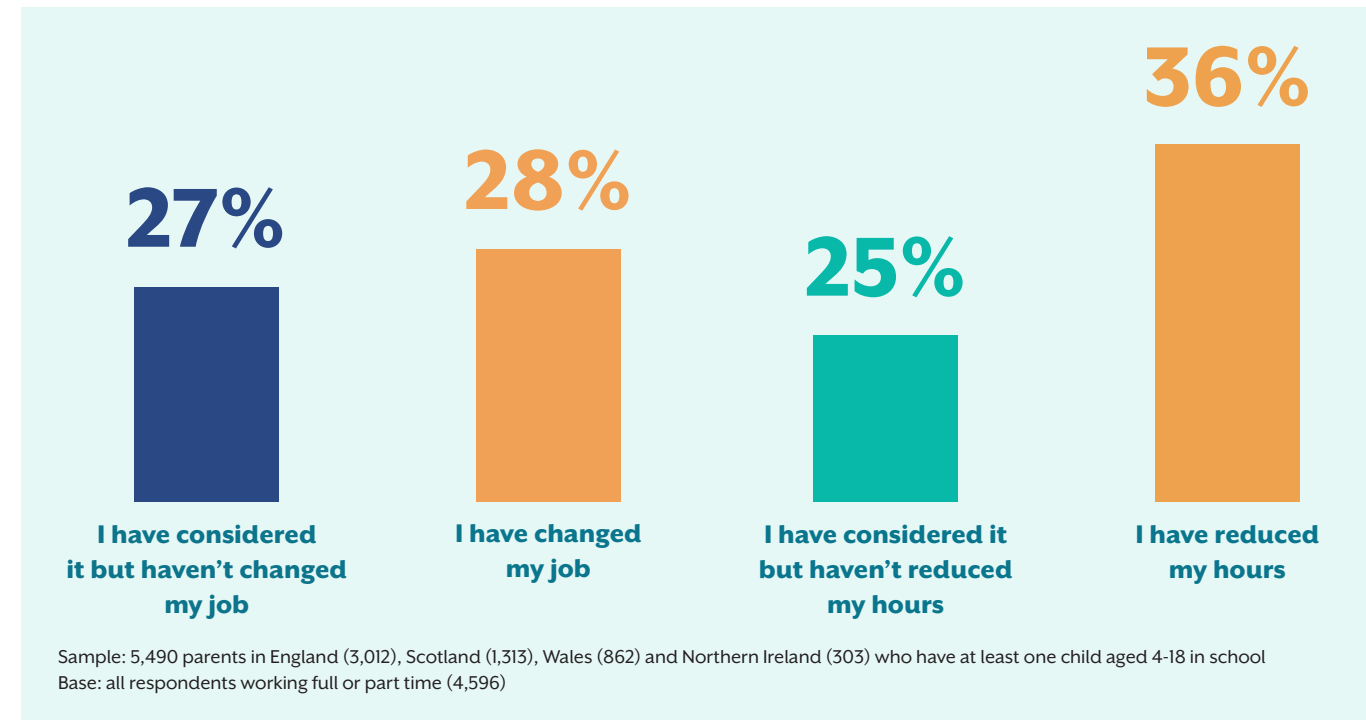
**36%** of mums working part time have seen a negative impact on their career prospects due to working fewer hours compared with 18% of dads





## Changing jobs or hours for family reasons

Have you ever reduced your hours at work or changed jobs to spend more time with your children?

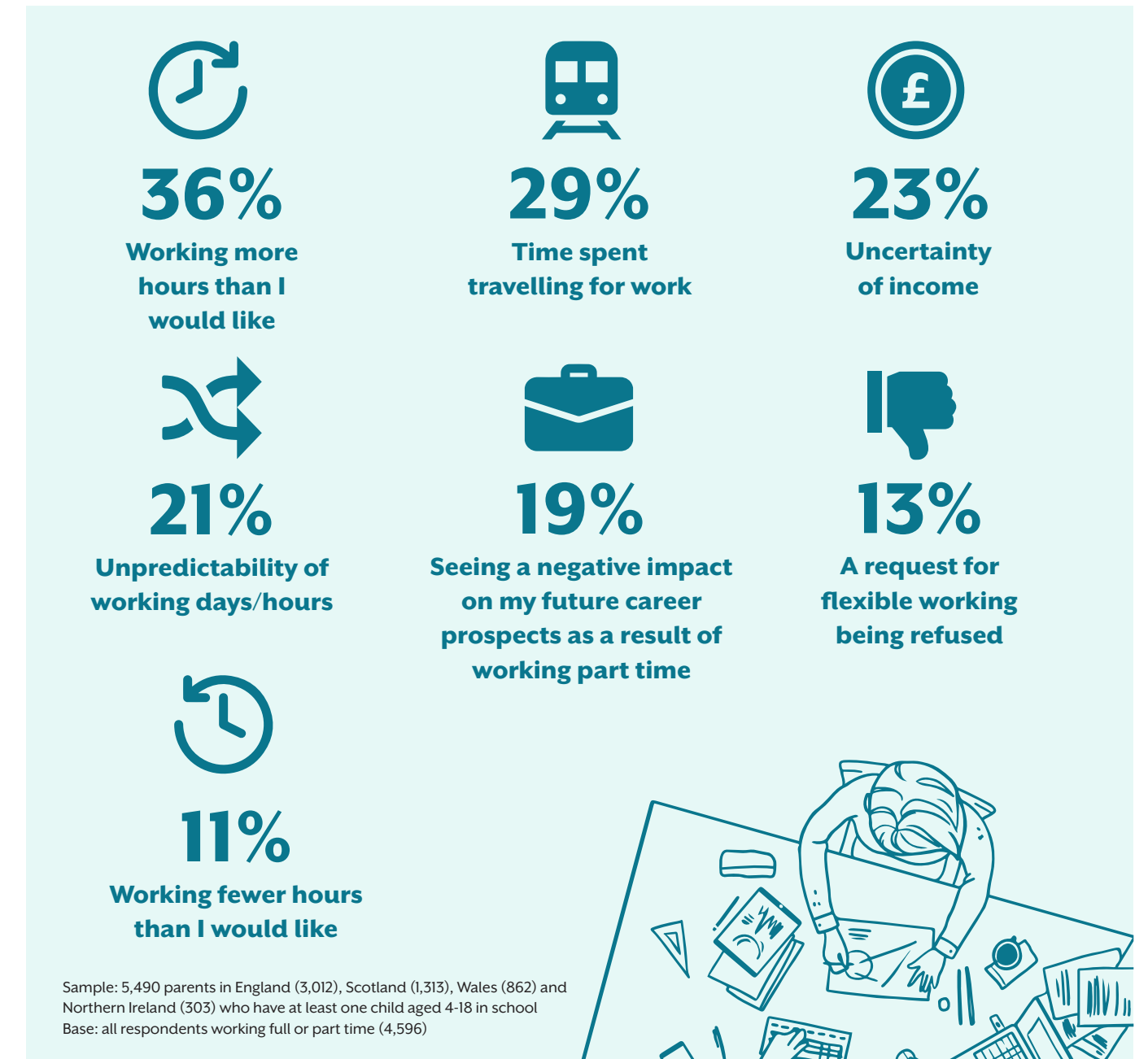


Working parents were asked whether or not they consider their employer as parent friendly. 34% of parents described their employer as very parent friendly, and 43% as somewhat parent friendly. 15% said their employer is not parent friendly. When asked whether, aside from pay, there was anything more their employer could do to help them as a parent, the most frequent response was flexible working hours, followed by working from home options, a compressed working week, childcare support, understanding and empathy from their organisation, and improved leave policies. Health and insurance benefits, improved job security, career progression and workload management, and increased flexibility during the school holidays were also mentioned.

**One in seven** parents told us their workplace is not parent friendly

## The challenges of working life for parents

Which of the following challenges have you experienced in your work?



“As a single parent, it's trying to balance earning a living, household chores and time with my children. There aren't enough hours in the day.”

- Parent response



More than  
two million  
parents  
describe their  
own mental  
health as poor  
or very poor

## Mental health and wellbeing



More than  
a third  
of poorer parents have  
poor mental health

Children are more likely to have a mental health issue if their parent's own mental health is poor

More than  
a quarter   
of children experiencing  
mental health issues have  
missed school

The UK is in the midst of a mental health crisis. The topic has dominated the news, and our research has confirmed just how significantly this is impacting families.



More than  
**Five million**  
children have experienced a  
mental health challenge in the  
last year

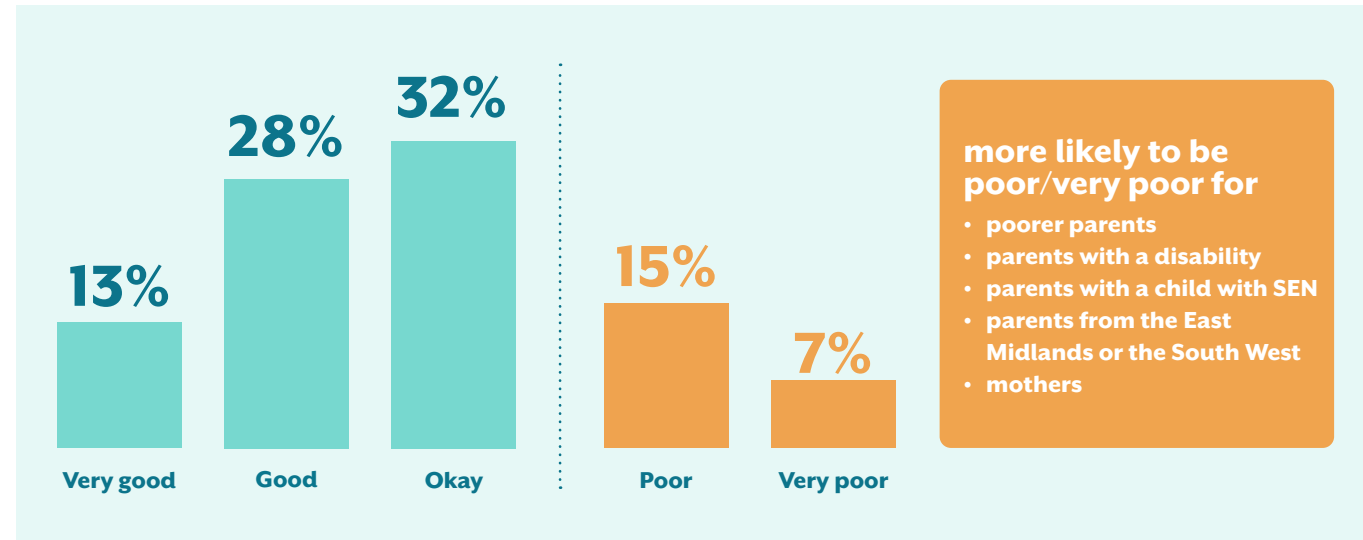
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Children are facing more and more pressure and challenges, such as academic pressure, social pressure and so on. Parents need to pay attention to their children's mental health and provide the necessary support and help, but how to do this is also a challenge.

- Parent response

## Parents' own mental health

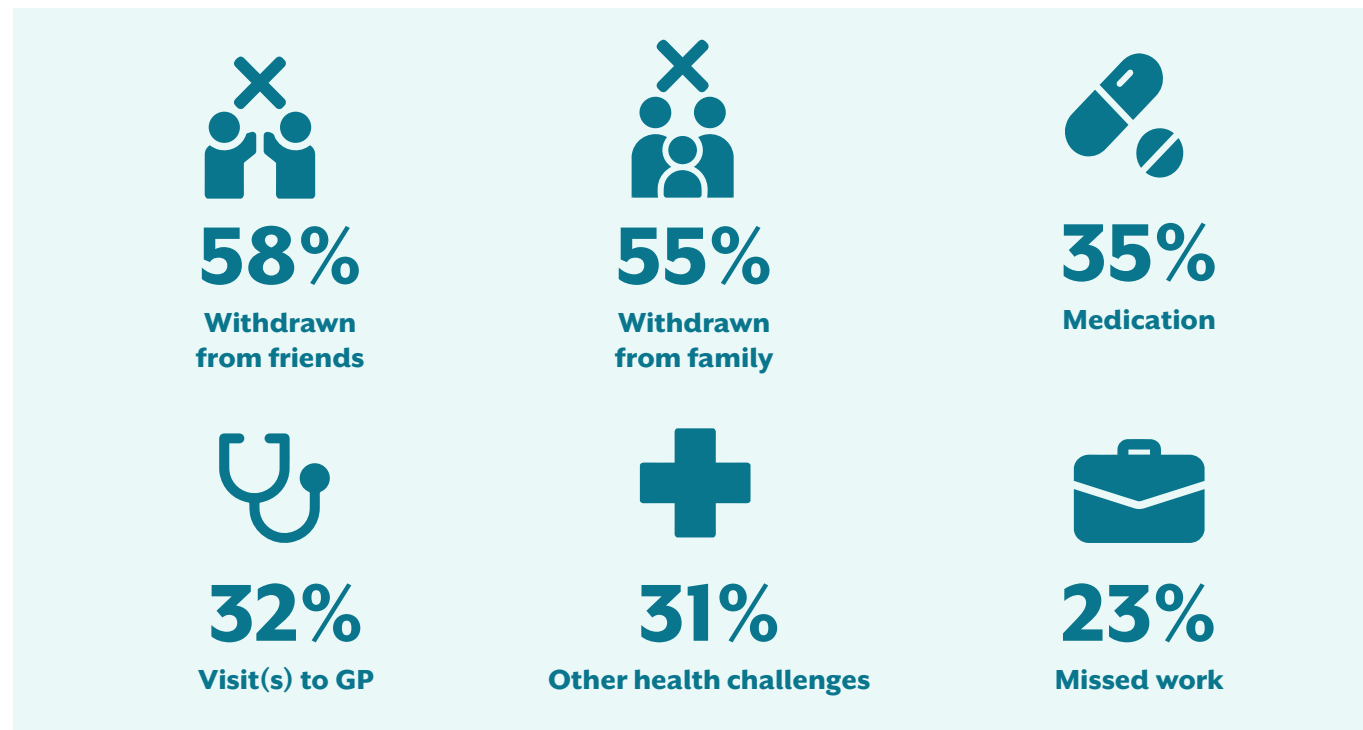
How good has your own mental health and wellbeing been over the last 12 months?



Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted

## Impact of parents' poor mental health

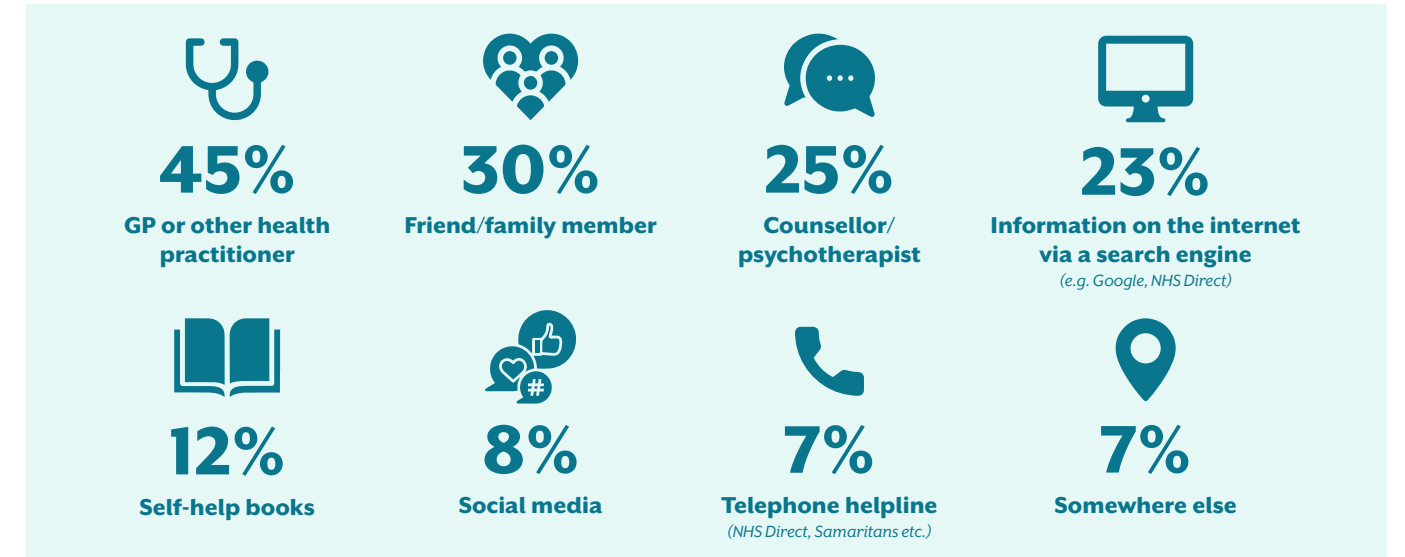
How have you been impacted by your poor mental health in the last 12 months?



Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All with poor mental health (1,203)

## Where parents get help for their own mental health

Where, if anywhere, have you sought help regarding your mental health?



Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All with poor mental health (1,203)

## Parents' happiness

Overall, how happy are you most of the time?



Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted

More than one in five parents have poor or very poor mental health. The fact that almost a quarter of parents say they aren't happy most of the time signifies a desperate need for intervention to improve the quality of life for a large number of families across the UK.

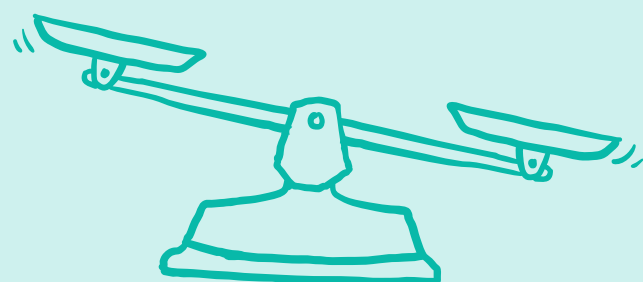
Poor mental health significantly impacts many aspects of parenting discussed in this report. For example, one

in four parents with poor mental health have missed work in the last year due to their struggles. These parents are also more likely to be worried about affording rent/mortgage payments and struggle with school costs. They are also more likely to say they don't spend as much time doing family activities as they would like to compared with parents with good mental health.

# Parents' biggest challenges

“

The stress of bringing up a child is too much, especially when you are a single parent.



“

Their anxiety and not being able to see mental health specialists for them due to cutbacks.

“

Balancing my own mental health challenges with being a good parent.

“

Having enough time to myself to input into my mental health and wellbeing around juggling work, house, intense caring responsibilities and my husband's work.

## Parents with poor mental health are less likely to...

have a child who enjoys school

56% vs 77%

be happy with the quality of education their child receives

62% vs 80%

be optimistic for their child's future

51% vs 78%

get the help they need to support their child from the school

44% vs 67%

feel valued by society

19% vs 56%

say that every school day matters

70% vs 83%

## more likely to...

be struggling with finances

57% vs 23%

want to spend more time doing learning activities as a family

69% vs 42%

struggle to afford the costs associated with sending their child to school

35% vs 15%

be worried about affording rent/mortgage payments

41% vs 19%

have experienced work challenges

say homework is a cause of arguments

48% vs 32%

have skipped meals

32% vs 10%

## ...than parents with good mental health

Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All with very poor or poor mental health (1,203) versus all with very good or good mental health (2,214)



# Children's experiences of mental health issues

In the last year, has your child experienced any of the following?



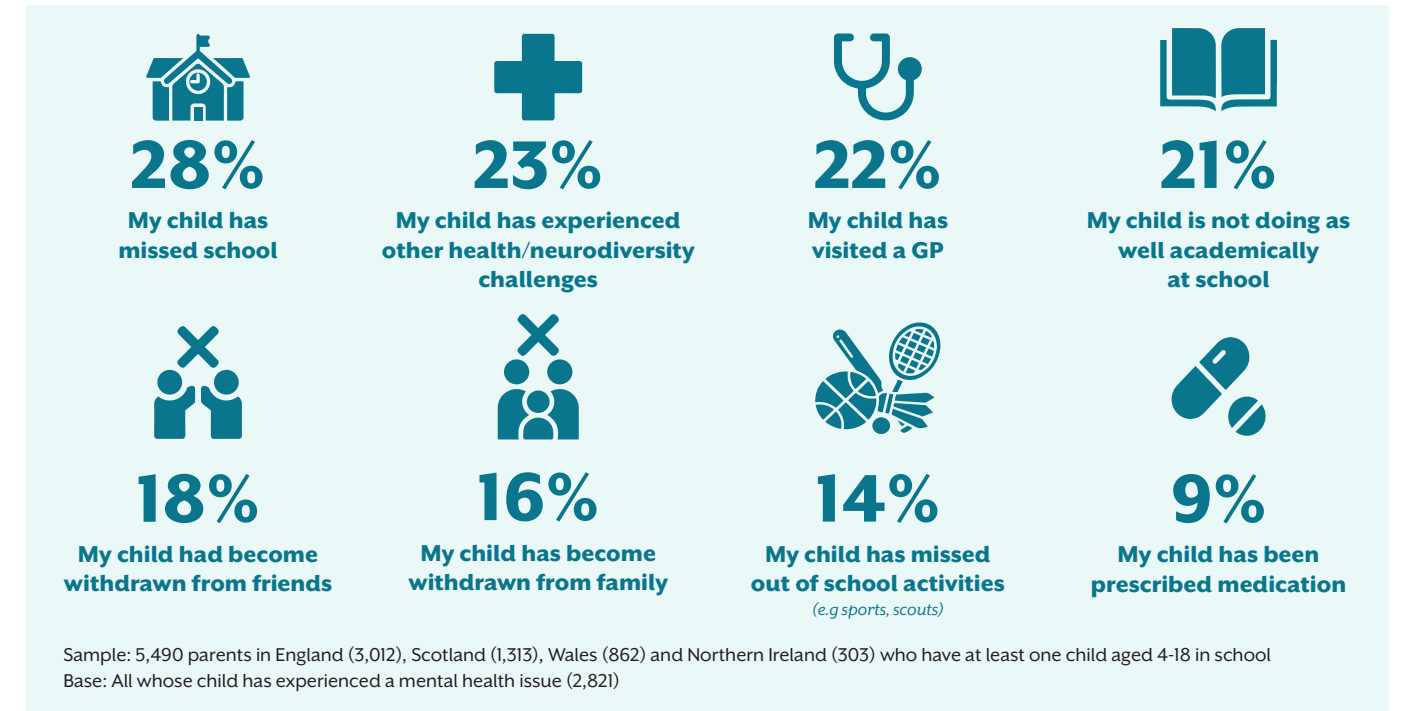
More than half of parents told us their child has faced mental health problems in the last year, such as anxiety, bullying or homework-related stress, with children eligible for free school meals, with SEN, in secondary/post-primary school, post-16 education or with a parent disability more likely to struggle than other children.

More than a quarter of children experiencing poor mental health have missed school because of their mental health problems. Addressing this is a big issue for

parents who say dealing with the mental health crisis is one of the most important issues facing the education system today. Not enough is being done – 21% of parents told us their child isn't doing as well academically as a direct result of poor mental health. Children from poorer backgrounds are struggling even more, as three in ten parents with a child eligible for free school meals told us they've noticed a decline in academic success following poor mental health, as well as more than a third of children with SEN.

# The impact of children's mental health

Thinking of your child's mental health experiences which, if any, of the following has happened as a result?



One in three parents don't spend as much time as they would like to helping with school work

## The pressures on parents' time

Less than a third

of parents have time for their hobbies



**33%** of parents say household chores and caring responsibilities get in the way of spending time with their children

Parenting is one of the most important roles in society, but it's also one of the toughest. There are so many competing priorities for parents to juggle, including household chores and caring responsibilities – one in three parents and 38% of mums said these get in the way of spending time with their children.

For poorer families, the barriers are more financial and health-related. Parents with children eligible for free school meals are more likely to say that cost, their mental or physical health or their child's physical or mental health stops them from enjoying family activities as much as they would like to compared with parents without a child eligible for free school meals, whilst a lack of time is a greater barrier for parents with higher incomes.

Fewer than **four in ten** parents think society values their role as a parent

For poorer parents the biggest barriers to family activities are cost, their own mental or physical health, chores, their child's mental or physical health and work

“

**[My biggest challenge is] making the most of the time I have with my child, and balancing that against everything else I need to do.**

- Parent response

## Barriers to spending time on family activities

**44%**

The cost

**38%**

I don't have enough time due to paid work responsibilities

**33%**

I don't have enough time due to non-paid responsibilities

**26%**

My child isn't interested

**16%**

My own mental/physical health

**10%**

My child's mental/physical health

**6%**

I'm not sure how to do some of these activities

Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school.  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted

## Time spent on family activities

Do you spend as much time as you would like to on the following family activities?

Activity	Yes	No, I'd like to spend more time doing this
Doing learning activities as a family (e.g. visits to museums etc.)	42%	55%
Doing activities as a family for fun	48%	51%
Reading with/to my child for fun	50%	39%
Supporting my child with school work	59%	35%
Talking to my child	69%	30%
Eating meals together with my child/children	70%	28%

Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted

## Time spent on parents' own activities

Do you spend as much time as you would like to on the following activities for yourself?

Activity	Yes	No, I'd like to spend more time doing this
Pursuing a hobby for myself	31%	63%
Sport and exercise	33%	58%
Meeting my friends and socialising	35%	57%
Religious activities	40%	12%

Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted

“  
I have no personal life to speak of. It is very lonely.”

- Parent response



## Barriers to spending time on parents' own activities

**48%**

I don't have enough time due to non-paid responsibilities

**46%**

I don't have enough time due to paid responsibilities

**40%**

The cost of these activities

**21%**

My own mental/physical health

Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school.  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted



It's not just family time that parents say they're missing out on. One in three parents admitted they don't spend as much time as they would like to help with their child's school work and more than one in three parents would like to spend more time reading with their child for fun. Given the overwhelming evidence that parental engagement is vital in a child's academic success, this is a worryingly high statistic.

Just a third of parents have enough time for hobbies, to meet up with friends or exercise as much as they would like to. Mums are less likely than dads to have the time for these activities. These activities are not a luxury, but an essential component for health and wellbeing.

When asked why they don't have enough time to themselves, almost half of parents (and 55% of mums) said chores or caring responsibilities were the cause.

For poorer families, again the biggest barriers are cost and mental or physical health. For more affluent families, their paid jobs are the biggest barrier.

There are signs that being a parent isn't seen as important with just four in ten parents saying that society values their role.

“

**[There's a] pressure of always trying to make the best decisions for my children**

- Parent response



“

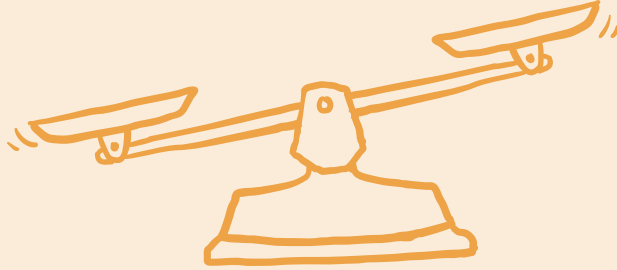
**I am a single parent, and also a carer for my mother. I have very little 'me' time.**

- Parent response

# Parents' biggest challenges

“

**As a single parent, it's trying to balance earning a living, household chores and time with my children. There aren't enough hours in the day.**



“

**Spending enough time with each child to check in with them and make memories while juggling work, housework, helping with their homework and activities.**

“

**Balancing work commitments with helping my children with homework and helping with their education.**

“

**Finding the time to devote enough attention to each child, in between working enough to make ends meet.**

On a typical weekday 1.5 million children spend more time on phones and screens than they do at school

## Screen time and its impact

Children spend an average of 3 hours 20 minutes on electronic devices outside of school on a typical weekday

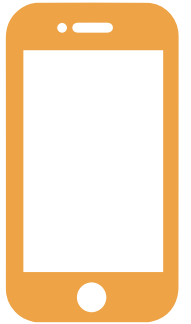
More than a **third** of parents say their child is missing out on sleep because they spend too much time on screens

There's no doubt that the future is digital. Technology has changed the way we learn, work and socialise. It is and will continue to be a huge part of our children's lives, but how much screen time is too much? On a typical weekday, parents said their children spend on average 3 hours and 20 minutes on electronic devices outside of school, rising to an average of 3 hours and 40 minutes for secondary/post-primary-aged children, children eligible for free school meals and children with SEN.

Looking specifically at younger children, parents told us that 38% of primary school children spend at least three hours a day on a device – rising to 50% of children eligible for free school meals and 60% of children in London – equivalent to at least a month of screen time a year. More than one in ten primary school children spend seven hours or more on their phone or playing computer games a day, which is not only more time than they'd typically spend at school, but is also more than two months of screen time a year.

38%

of primary school children spend at least 3 hours a day on a digital device



47%

of parents say screen time causes arguments

“

Every one of my daughter's peers has apparently got an iPhone apart from her. 11 years old is far, far too young to have an iPhone. I can see the negative impacts her addiction to screens has already in terms of her mood, ability to concentrate, cooperate, willingness to socialise with other family members, etc. And I am afraid for the future of this generation... I also see her cohort already obsessed with body image which is shocking at her age: and again I think it's connected to social media.

- Parent response

# Parents' biggest challenges

“  
Constant pressure to grow up too fast.

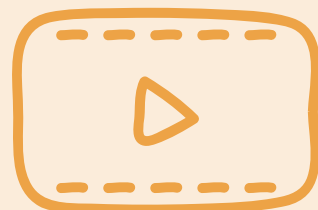


“  
The speed of society now – everything has to be instant – children today have much more pressure due to unrealistic goals due to internet and social media.

“  
Impacts wellbeing and willingness to study.

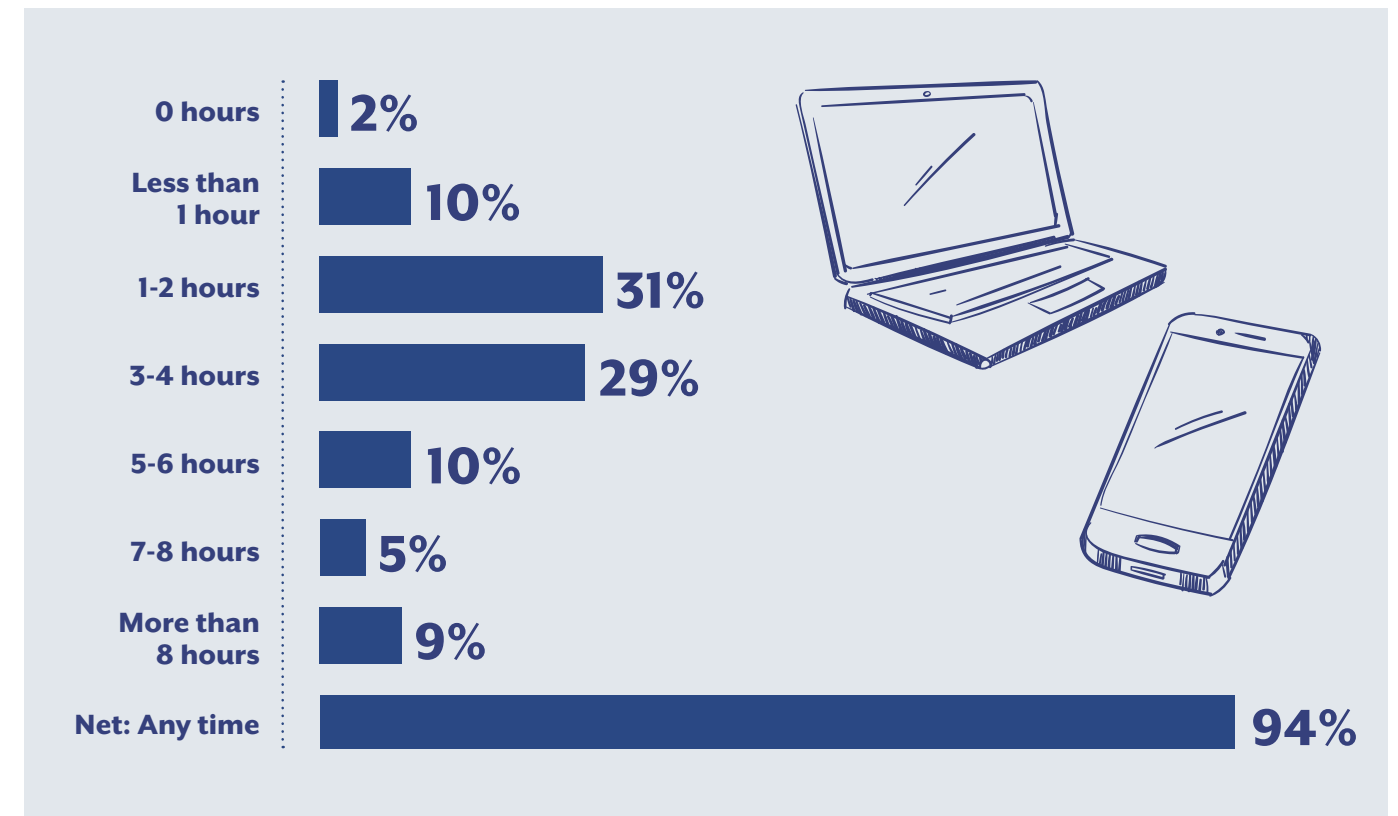


“  
What they see on social media isn't always true.



# Children's time spent on screens

How much time does your child spend on electronic devices outside school on a typical weekday? (e.g. phones, tablets, games consoles, PCs)



Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted

When we asked parents of primary school children if they are concerned about screen time as their child gets older, nearly three quarters said they are. And these concerns are not unfounded, given that six in ten teenagers spend at least three hours a day on their phone or computer, and one in six spend seven or more hours a day looking at a screen. When asked how they felt about the amount of time spent using electronic devices, 60% of parents of secondary school-aged children said they are worried.

These concerns are causing friction at home, as almost half of parents (and 57% of parents with a child eligible for free school meals or with a child whose first language is not English) told us screen time has led to arguments in recent weeks. A quarter of parents said screen time is also worsening their child's behaviour, and nearly four in ten parents said their child is missing out on valuable family time due to their use of electronic devices.

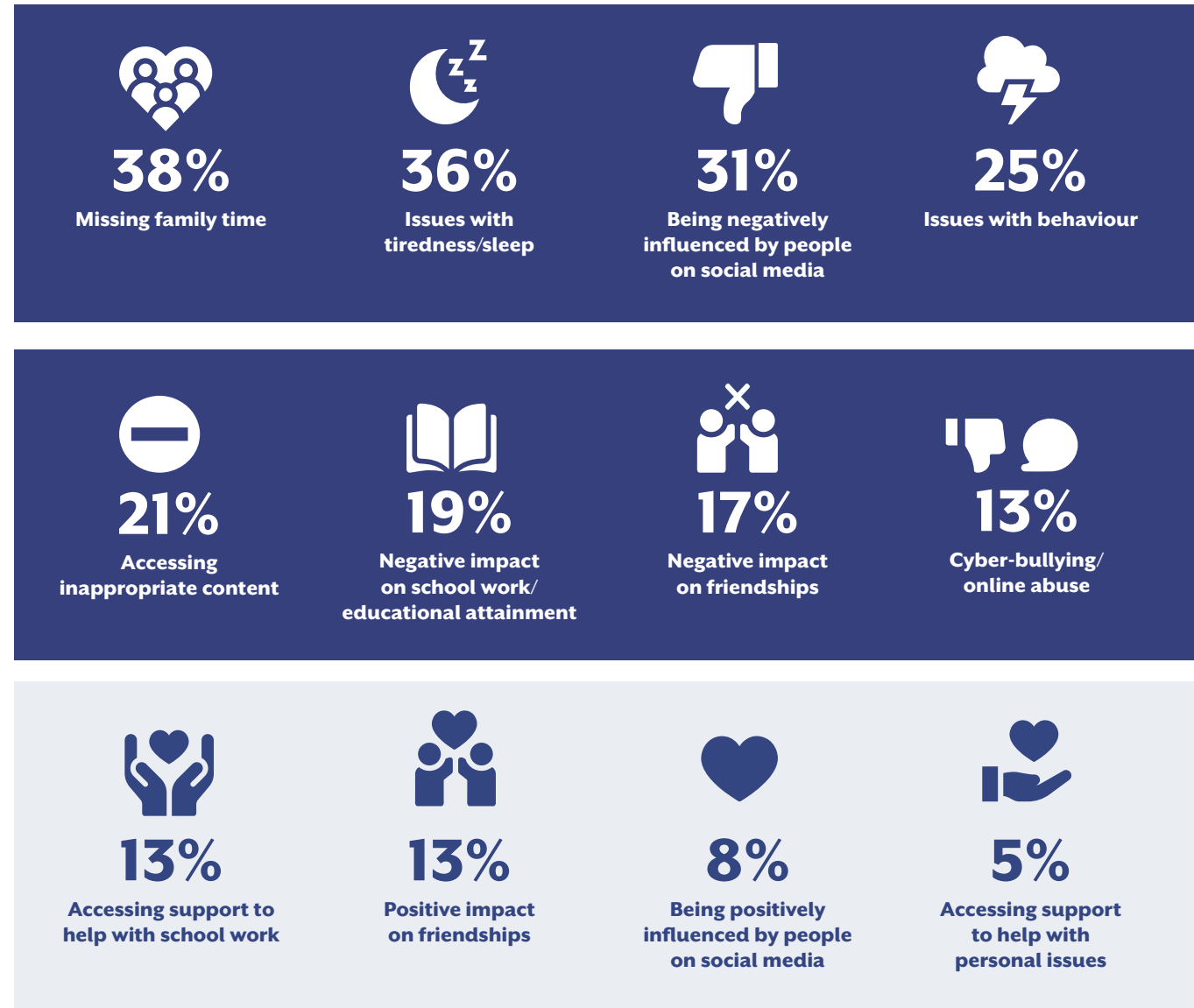
Screen time is even affecting children's physical health, with more than a third of parents saying their child is missing out on sleep because of it. Great Ormond Street Hospital recommends children aged 6 to 12 get 9 to 12 hours of sleep a night and teenagers get eight to ten hours. When you factor in the school day and the amount of reported time spent on devices, it is clear many children are prioritising screens over sleep.

13% of parents said their child's screen use has led to cyber-bullying/online abuse, whilst almost one in five parents said it has had a negative impact on school work – increasing to at least one in four parents with a child whose first language is not English or parents in Northern Ireland.



## Effects of screen time

What are the impacts, if any, of your child's time spent on electronic devices?



Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All whose child spends time on electronic devices outside school (5,397)

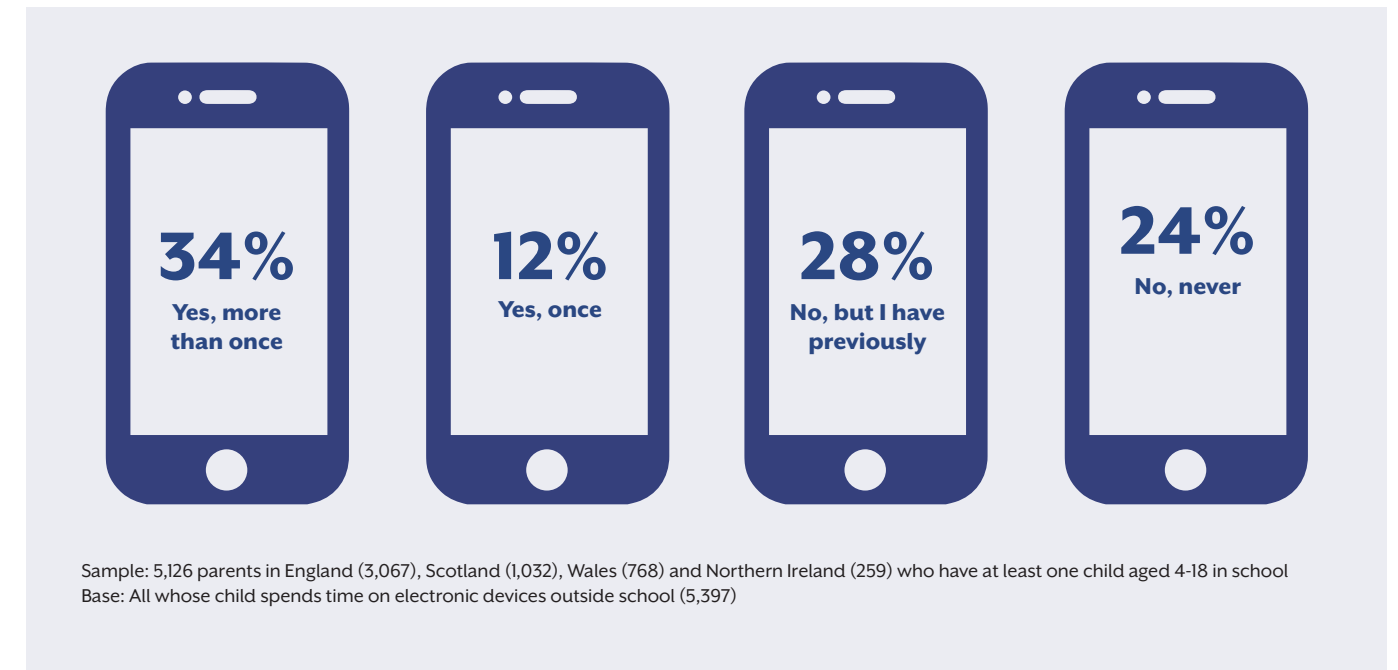
“

**When limiting screen time, you're limiting access to friends and your child's social circle. This can then impact their school attendance as they feel like they've missed out and don't fit in. Simultaneously, them being on screens, I believe negatively impacts their mental and physical health. Damned if you do and damned if you don't!**

- Parent response

## Disagreements over screen time

Have you had a disagreement with your child over their time spent on electronic devices in the last few weeks?



1.6 million children feel unsafe at school

## Parents' views on education

**Nearly one in four** children don't attend activities after school

**37%** of primary school parents with a child eligible for FSM using a breakfast club say it helps their child to learn

1.5 million parents are unhappy with the education their child receives. When asked about specific elements of the curriculum, almost half (48%) of parents said there is too little focus on developing financial management skills at their child's school – rising to 59% of parents with a child at a multi-academy trust (MAT) school. 32% of parents feel their child's school doesn't focus enough on developing life skills such as self-confidence and the ability to cope with setbacks (rising to 40% of parents with a child at a school that's part of a MAT and 39% of parents with a disability). 32% of parents also said there's too little focus on developing skills that are useful outside of school, e.g. critical thinking, teamwork and time management at their child's school (43% of parents with a child at a MAT school said this) and 32% said their child's school doesn't focus enough on preparing children for the future job market. Other aspects of the curriculum where at least a quarter of parents said there is too little focus are teaching vocational subjects,

**82%** of primary school mums using them say that breakfast clubs help them get to work on time



**1.5 million** parents are unhappy with the education their child receives















developing good mental health and wellbeing and developing oracy skills.

As well as the subjects being taught, the potential stress of exams can affect parents' satisfaction with their child's education. Nearly one in four parents said teenagers do too many exams at GCSE level, and one in five parents believe fewer subjects should be taught at GCSE level. There is more agreement post-GCSE, although one in ten parents still feel there are too many subjects taught in sixth form and one in eight parents too many exams at post-GCSE level.

There is not a great deal of support for the core subjects of English, maths and science to be mandatory after the age of 16: only 27% of parents think English should be studied until aged 18, 31% say maths should be studied until 18 and 24% say the same for science.

## Importance of school curriculum















How important do you think it is that your child's school curriculum focuses on the following?

	Very important	Somewhat important	Total importance*
 Supports children's personal development by teaching life skills (e.g. self-confidence, resilience)	75%	22%	97%
 Develops skills that are useful outside of school (e.g. critical thinking, teamwork)	74%	23%	97%
 Develops good mental health and wellbeing	73%	23%	96%
 Develops skills in expressing yourself fluently (i.e. oracy)	68%	28%	96%
 Prepares children to become responsible citizens	69%	26%	96%
 Develops an in-depth knowledge of English, maths and science	64%	30%	95%
 Develops good physical health	61%	34%	95%
 Develops skills related to financial management	63%	31%	94%
 Prepares children for the future job market	58%	34%	92%
 Teaches about relationships and sex education (sec/post-pri/post-16)	51%	38%	89%
 Teaches about relationships education (primary)	48%	41%	89%
 Teaches vocational subjects	47%	41%	88%
 Teaches non-traditional academic subjects (e.g. drama, music)	41%	40%	81%
 Supports children's spiritual development	29%	38%	67%

Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted. \*Please note figures may not add up due to rounding

## Focus of school curriculum

Do you think the curriculum at your child's school focuses on the following topics too much, too little, or about right?

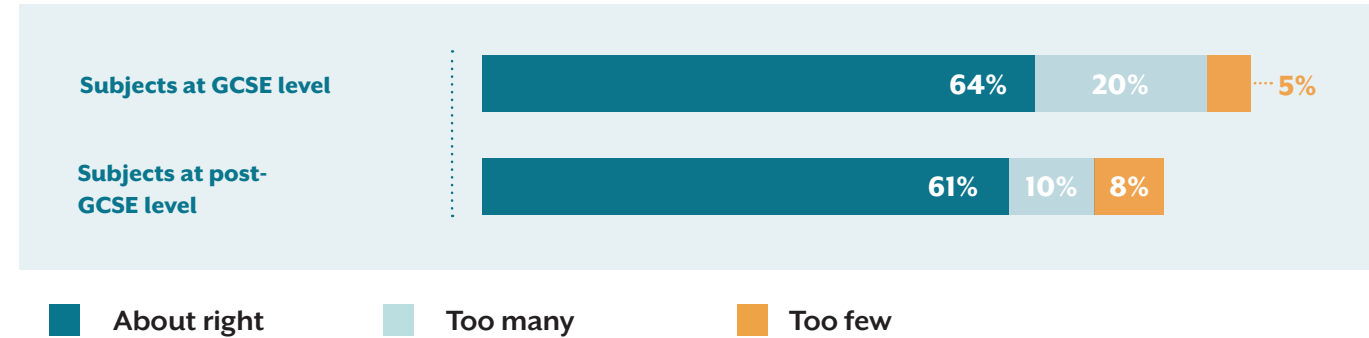
	Too much	About right	Too little
 Develops skills related to financial management	4%	31%	48%
 Prepares children for the future job market	4%	45%	32%
 Develops skills that are useful outside of school (e.g. critical thinking, teamwork)	4%	52%	32%
 Supports children's personal development by teaching life skills (e.g. self-confidence, resilience)	5%	52%	32%
 Teaches vocational subjects	5%	47%	29%
 Develops good mental health and wellbeing	6%	59%	26%
 Develops skills in expressing yourself fluently (i.e. oracy)	5%	59%	25%
 Prepares children to become responsible citizens	5%	62%	23%
 Develops good physical health	6%	69%	20%
 Teaches non-traditional academic subjects (e.g. drama, music)	11%	63%	17%
 Teaches about relationships education (primary)	7%	59%	15%
 Teaches about relationships and sex education (sec/post-pri/post-16)	9%	66%	13%
 Supports children's spiritual development	19%	56%	10%
 Develops an in-depth knowledge of English, maths and science	11%	76%	9%

Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted



# Subjects studied

Do you think children take too many, too few, or about the right amount of...



Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted



**I think the number of GCSE exams children have to do and the time they have to do it in is too much for their age.**

- Parent response

This isn't just about what they're taught, the school environment plays a part too. 15% of all parents say their child feels unsafe at school, the equivalent of 1.6 million children.

It is perhaps unsurprising therefore that more than a third of parents told us they have considered homeschooling their child, with parents with a child eligible for free school meals most likely to have considered doing so. When asked why, a range of reasons were given, including thinking homeschooling would provide a better education, it would better support their child's wellbeing and special educational needs, it would resolve issues with bullying and disruptive behaviour or overcome conflicts between parents' personal values and the curriculum.

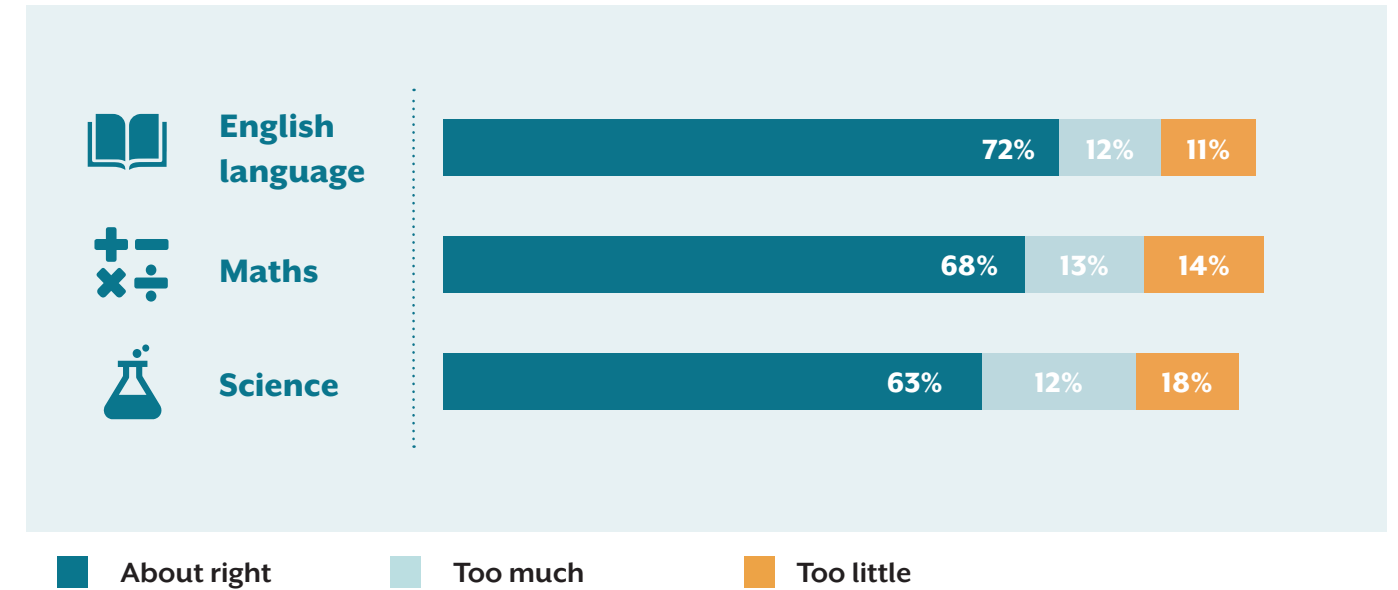
Outside of the curriculum, we asked parents about their experience with their child's school breakfast club. A third of primary school parents use school breakfast clubs, with another 10% wishing to use one but not able to due to either no breakfast club or there being no space for their child. In terms of benefits, more than three quarters of primary school parents using their school breakfast club say it helps them get to work on time and a third say it helps them get their child to school on time and their child gets to play with friends before school. A quarter of parents say it helps their child to learn, rising to more than a third of parents with a child eligible for free school meals.

When asked about universal breakfast clubs and free school meals, 79% of all parents back free breakfast clubs for all primary school children, and 81% support free school meals for all primary school children.

- 15%** of all parents said their child feels unsafe at school
- rising to **30%** of parents with a child eligible for FSM
- 28%** of parents with a child with SEN
- 22%** of ethnic minority parents
- 22%** of parents with a disability
- 19%** of parents with a child at secondary/post-primary school

# Focus on the core subjects

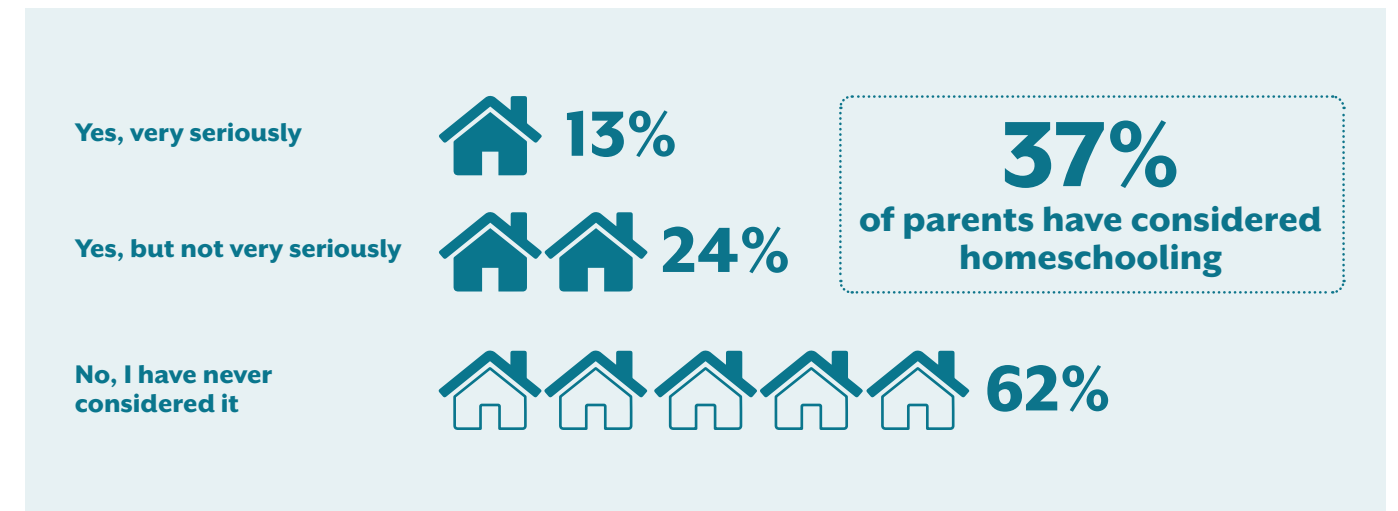
Do you think that in school there is too much, too little, or about the right amount of focus on a child's performance in...



Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted

# Parents who have considered homeschooling

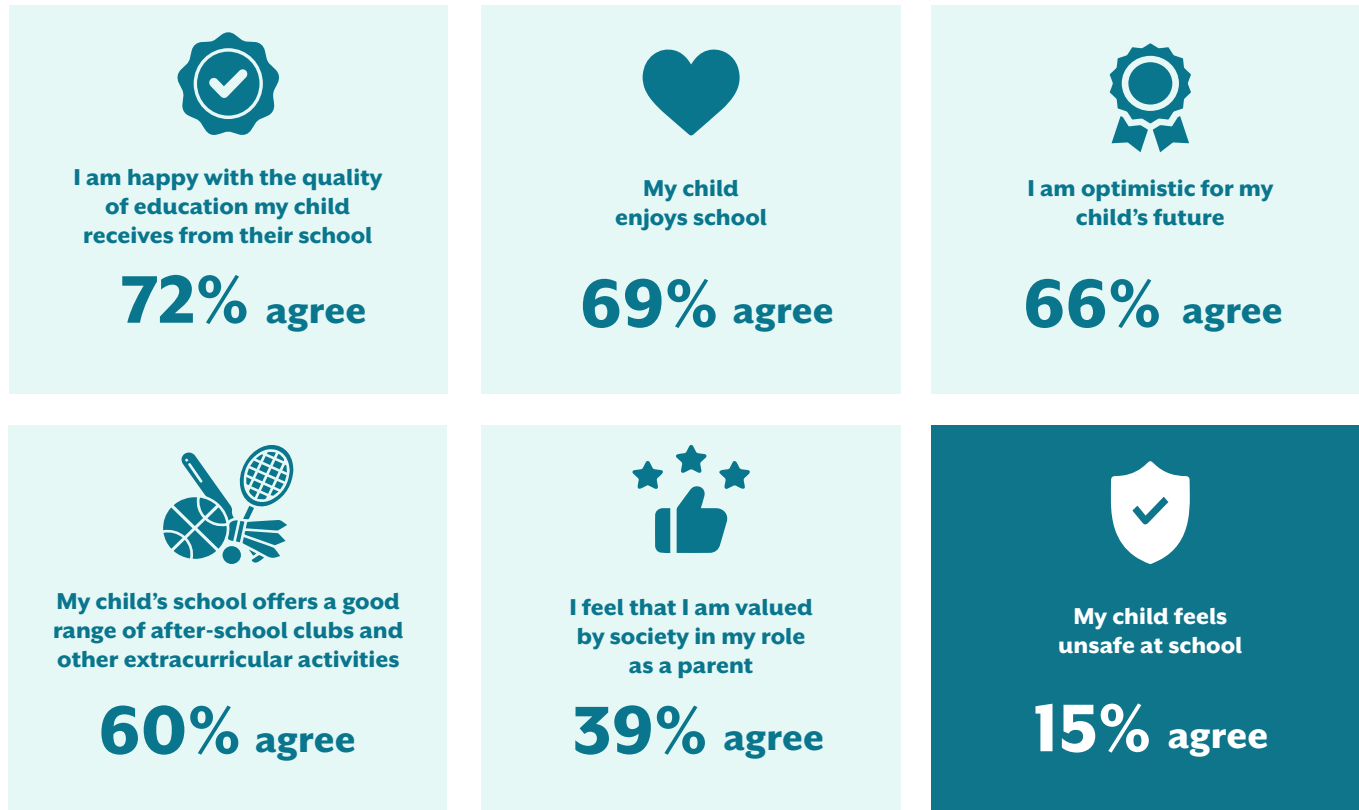
Have you ever considered homeschooling your child(ren)?



Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted

# The school experience

To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

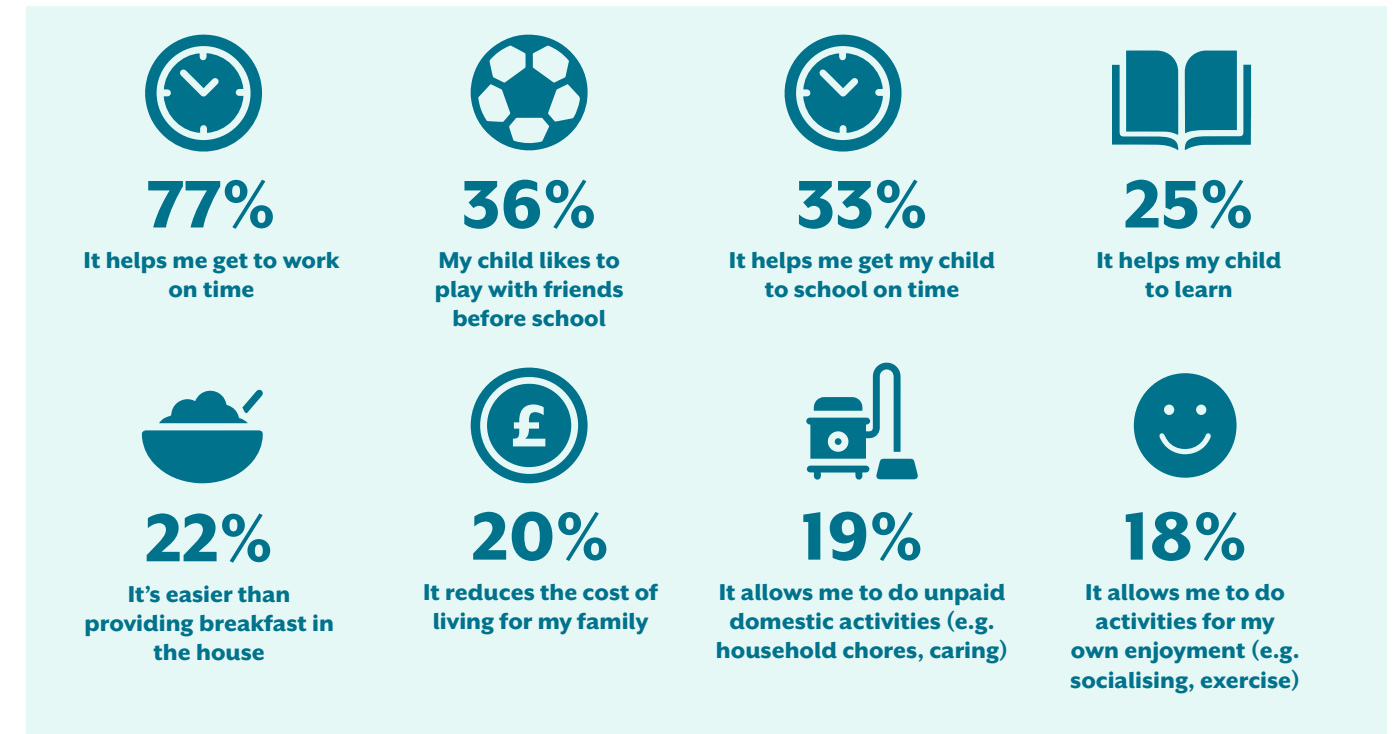


Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted



# Benefits of attending school breakfast club

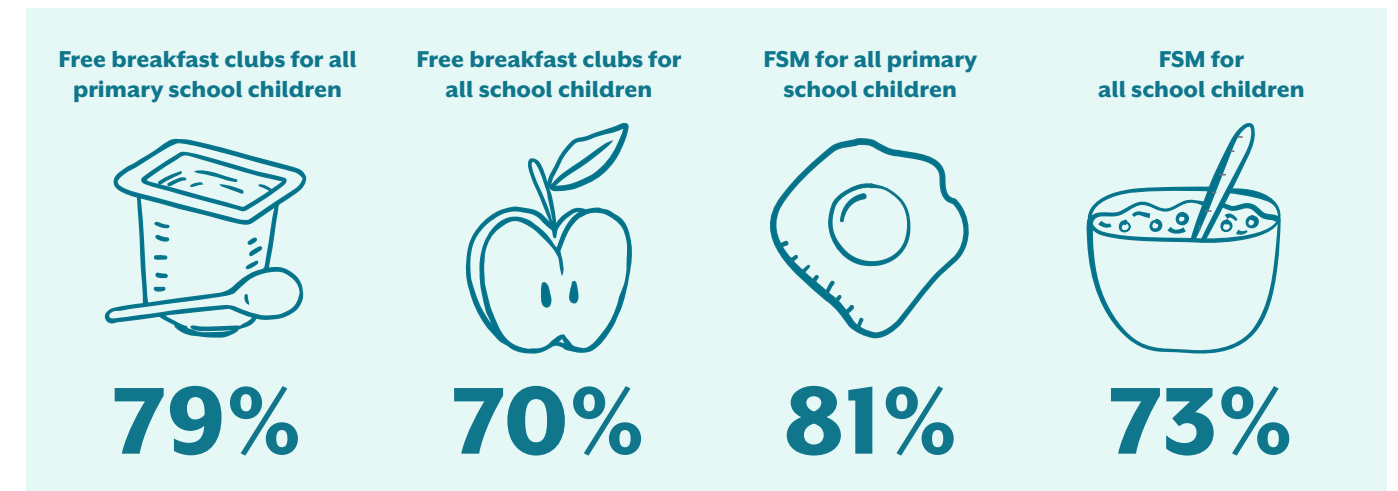
What are the main benefits of a breakfast club for your family?



Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All respondents with a child attending a breakfast club at primary school (719)

# Support for rollout of free breakfast clubs/free school meals

To what extent would you support or oppose the roll out of?



Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted





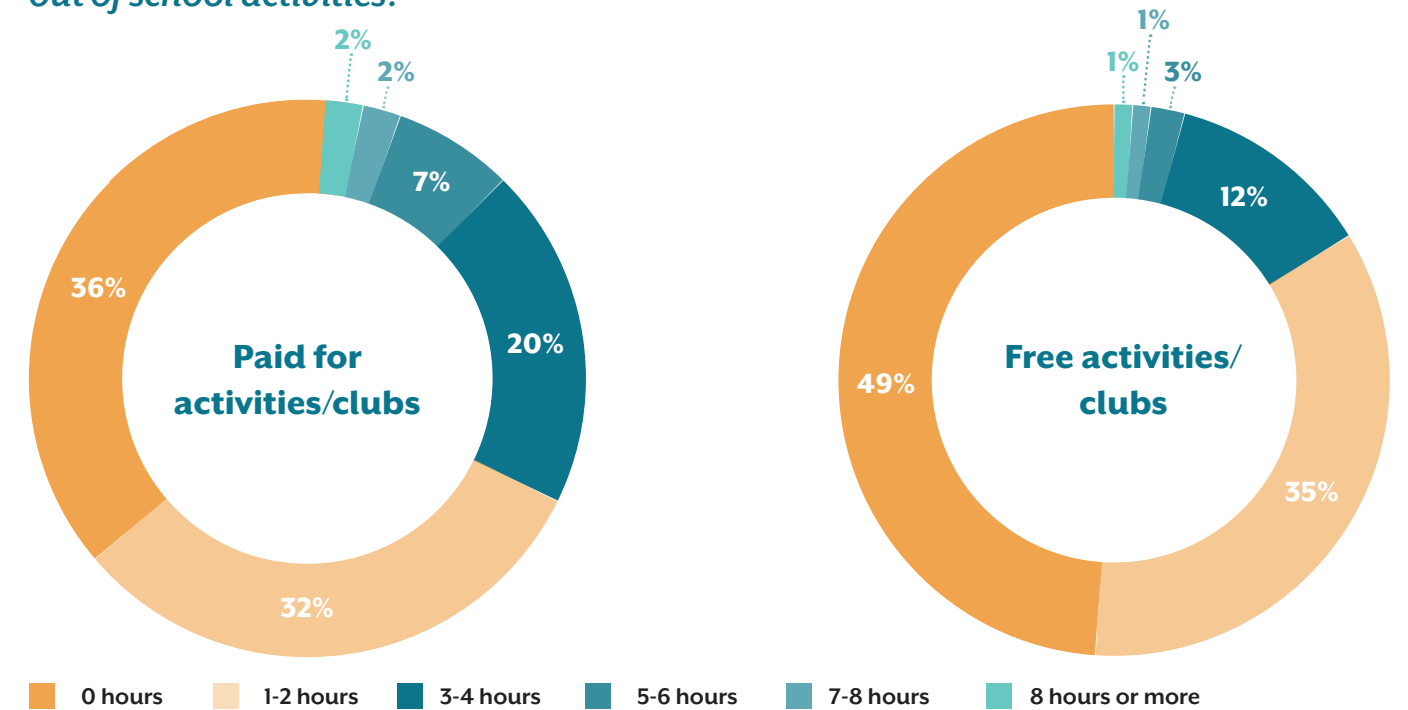
“

**I find the pressure of after-school activities hard to keep up with. Number one, the expense, and number two, it feels like a lot of mums have kids doing all sorts of clubs and my son is nine and hasn't hardly done any.**

-Parent response

## Time spent at clubs/activities per week

*In a typical school week, how many hours does your child spend at school clubs or out of school activities?*



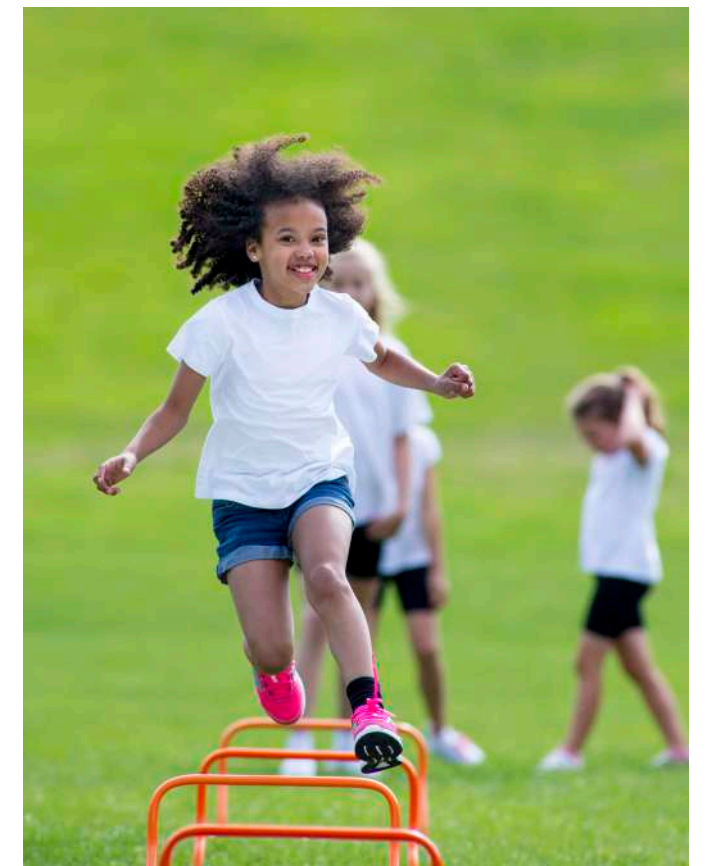
Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted

Two thirds of parents said their child spends time at paid for clubs or out of school activities averaging more than three hours a week. Half of parents said their child spends time at free school clubs or out of school activities, averaging more than two hours a week. However, nearly a third of children from the poorest homes don't do either.

Parents from the poorest households are also less likely to say their child's school offers a good range of after-school clubs and extracurricular activities, along with parents in Wales and Scotland.

Whilst nearly seven in ten parents said their child enjoys school, those from lower income households are less likely to say their child enjoys school, as are parents with a child at secondary/post-primary or in post-16 education, parents with a child with SEN or parents with a disability.

Two thirds of parents are optimistic about their child's future but just 72% are happy with the quality of education their child receives from their school. Parents with a child with SEN, parents with a disability, older parents and parents with a child at a school run by a MAT are less happy than other parents.





**6 million  
parents  
would  
consider  
taking their  
child out of  
school for  
a holiday**

## School attendance

**One  
in five** 

children have refused to go to school in the last year, despite their parent thinking they should go



**More than half  
of parents have sent  
their child to school  
despite being ill**

In recent years, a lot of pressure has been put on schools and parents by governments to bring down pupil absence, which remains much higher than before the pandemic. Nine in ten parents said their child does not miss school unless it is unavoidable, and more than half of parents have sent their child to school when they are ill. However, just three quarters of parents agree that every school day matters and more than half of parents said that it's okay to miss school for a day or more for a holiday. Parents in Wales and Scotland are more likely to have considered taking, or have taken their child out of school for a holiday, than parents in England or Northern Ireland.

When asked about fines specifically, just 44% of parents support the policy of fining parents if their child misses more than five days of school without authorisation or a good reason, compared with 50% of parents who oppose it. Furthermore, whilst one in three parents said the risk of a fine makes them less likely to take their

**Almost a third  
of parents are more  
relaxed about their  
child's attendance  
since the pandemic**

**Just three  
quarters  
of parents agree that every  
school day matters**

child out of school for an unauthorised term time holiday, more than half (57%) of parents said it has no impact on their decision to take their child out of school – a figure that's even higher amongst older parents and parents in Wales, Northern Ireland, the North East and North West England.

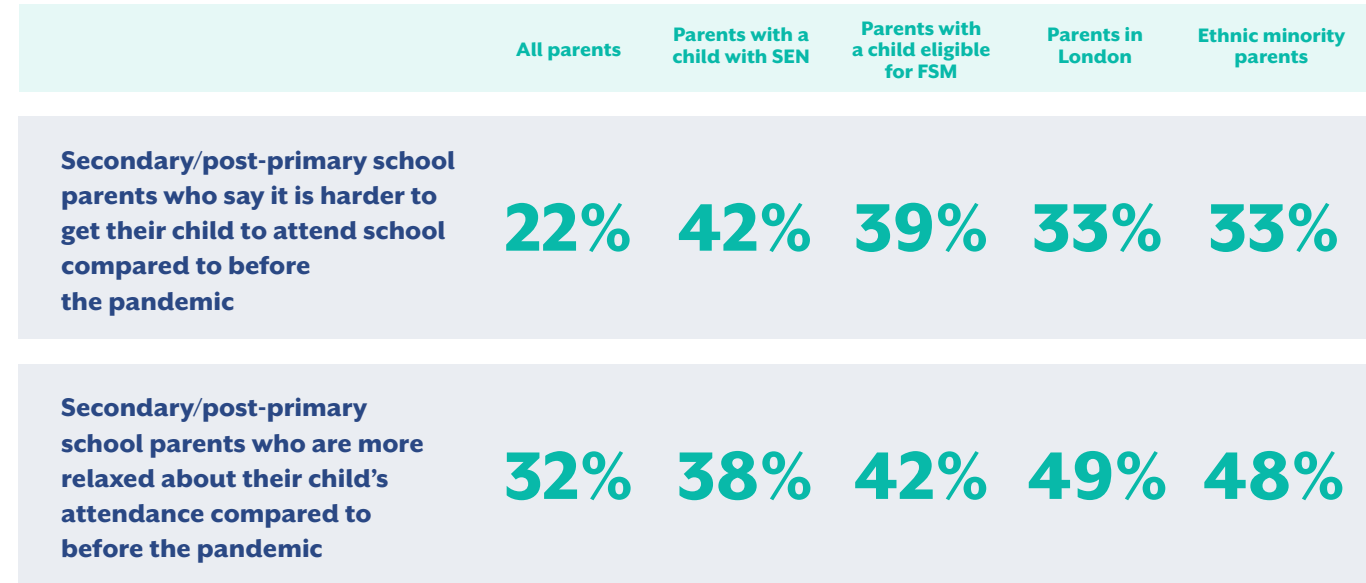
“

**Not allowing the  
occasional family holiday  
if a child's attendance is  
perfect is a joke.**

- Parent response

# Experiences of attendance at secondary/post-primary school

Thinking about your child's attendance at school, to what extent do you agree or disagree with these statements?



Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
 Base: All respondents whose child attends secondary/post-primary school (2,226)



Almost a third of secondary/post-primary school parents told us they are more relaxed about their child's attendance since the end of the pandemic. Parents in London and ethnic minority parents are more relaxed than other secondary/post-primary school parents.

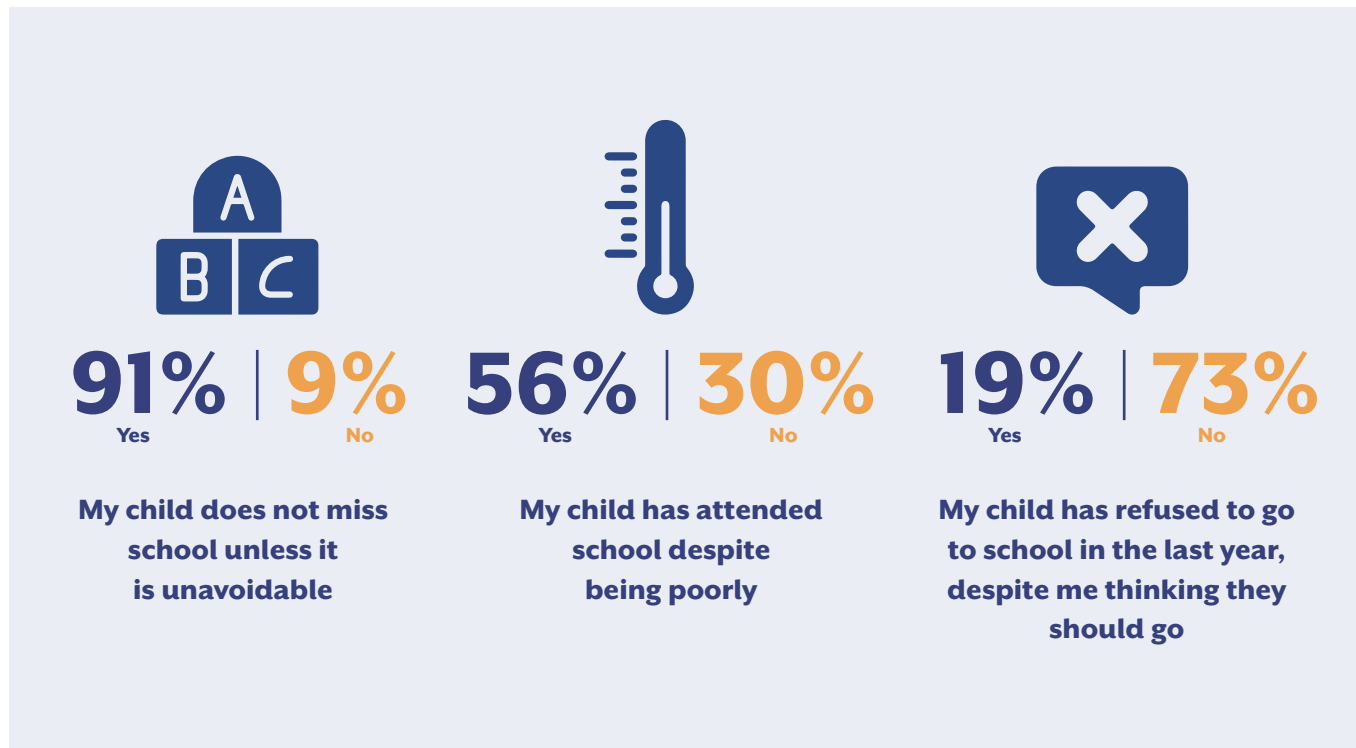
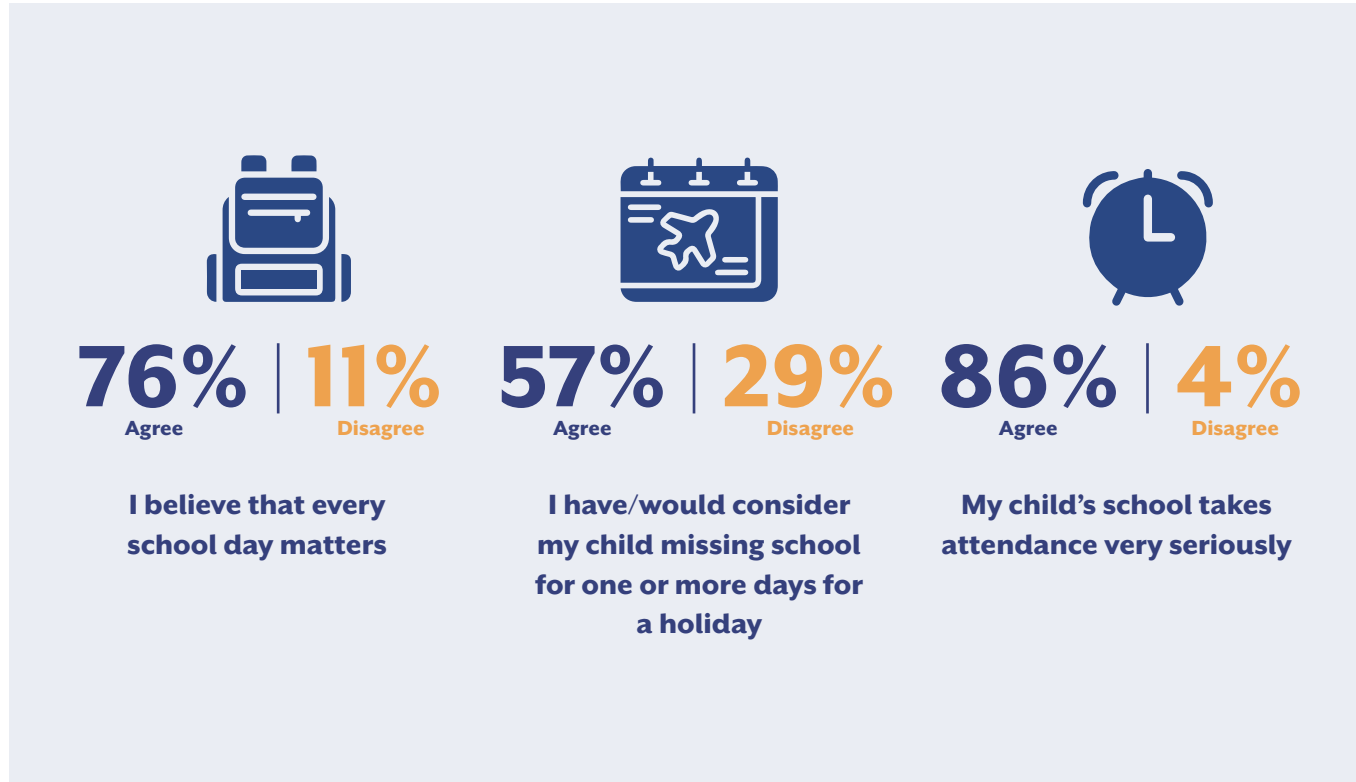
One in five parents say it's now harder to get their teenager to school compared to before the pandemic. One in five children have refused to go to school in the last year, despite their parent thinking they should go, with parents with a child with SEN or eligible for free school meals more likely to encounter resistance than other parents.

“  
**Getting him to go to school is a challenge, he hates it.**  
 - Parent response



# Perceptions of attendance

Thinking about your child's attendance at school, to what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted

# Support for policy of fining parents for taking children out of school for holidays

To what extent do you support or oppose the policy of fining parents if their children miss more than five days of school without authorisation or a good reason?



Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted

**36%** of parents say the risk of a fine makes them less likely to take their child out of school for an unauthorised term time holiday

**57%** say it has no impact







“

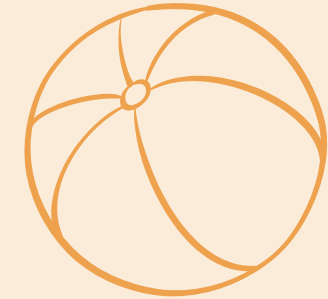
**Giving children holidays, prices go up and make it unaffordable during school holidays.**

*- Parent response*

## Parents' biggest challenges

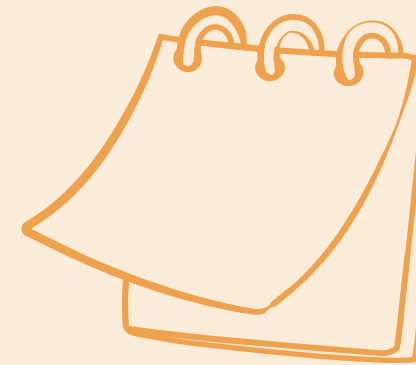
“

**Finding the time and money to go on holiday as it's so expensive during the school holidays, I feel like we are missing out.**



“

**Holiday costs are ridiculous. Children benefit from family holidays too.**



“

**I work for a living, I cannot choose when my holidays are they are allocated, due to this my son can be in school when I'm off so we don't get a holiday together unless I take him out of school. I should not be fined to spend time with my son on a holiday.**

“

**Holidays have to be taken during set times when companies hike the prices up ridiculously. It impacts on our mental health as we have not had a holiday in years.**





**4 million**  
**parents are**  
**regularly having**  
*arguments*  
**with their**  
**child over**  
**homework**

# Parents supporting learning

Nearly **one in four** primary school children don't have a space to do homework at home


**One in four** parents doubt they could speak to the headteacher of their child's school within 24 hours

Research shows that parent participation has a big impact on a child's academic success, and parents tell us they do want to be more involved. However, parents at a third of primary schools and half of secondary/post-primary schools said they do not get enough information on how to support their child's learning outside the classroom.

While 70% of all parents said homework was useful, this opinion varies significantly across the UK. 84% of Londoners feel homework is useful, as do 78% of parents from Northern Ireland, but only 60% of Welsh parents agreed.

One in four parents question the value of their child's homework, and homework is the cause of regular

**One in four** parents don't think the homework their child receives is useful



**Half** of secondary schools don't give parents enough information on supporting their child's learning at home



arguments in more than half of homes with a child with SEN, and almost half of homes with a disabled parent, with a child eligible for free school meals, and homes in Northern Ireland or the East Midlands.

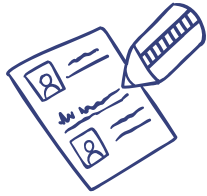
According to parents, one in five teenagers use AI (artificial intelligence) to help with their homework, with markedly higher usage amongst some teens including those with an ethnic minority parent, those in London and teenagers eligible for free school meals.

There's also the question of whether all homes are suitable environments for children to learn in. Nearly one in four primary school children and nearly one in ten secondary/post-primary children don't have a designated space to do homework in.

# The value of school reports, parents' evenings and homework

How useful, if at all, do you think the following are?

Child's school reports



**90%**  
useful

Parents' evenings



**87%**  
useful

The homework my child receives



**70%**  
useful

Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted



When something goes wrong and parents need to reach out for support, a quarter told us they don't think that they would be able to speak to their child's headteacher if they needed to within a 24-hour period. 15% of parents didn't even know the name of their child's headteacher, suggesting more work needs to be done to help parents feel included in the education system, even though 87% of parents saw parents' evenings as useful and 90% found school reports useful.

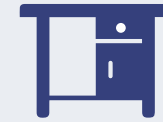
“

**Motivating my child to work harder and smarter at school [is a challenge]. My opinions don't seem to count and often end up in arguments.**

- Parent response

# Statements on learning at home

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



**23%** | **8%**  
Primary | Secondary/post-primary

My child **does not** have a space of their own to do their homework in



**7%** | **14%**  
Primary | Secondary/post-primary

I **do not** know the name of the headteacher at my child's school



**4%** | **23%**  
Primary | Secondary/post-primary

I **do not** know the name of my child's class/form teacher



**32%** | **53%**  
Primary | Secondary/post-primary

My child's school **does not** give me clear information on what I should be doing to support my child's learning at home



**37%** | **42%**  
Primary | Secondary/post-primary

Homework is a cause of arguments



**9%** | **19%**  
Primary | Secondary/post-primary

My child uses AI tools to help with homework

Sample: 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303) who have at least one child aged 4-18 in school  
Base: All UK respondents, weighted

# Ability to contact child's teachers

**14%** of parents don't think they'd be able to talk to their child's class/form teacher within 24 hours if they needed to

**25%** of parents don't think they'd be able to talk to their child's headteacher within 24 hours if they needed to



# Parents' biggest challenges

Parents were asked to share their biggest challenge as a parent. Thousands of free text responses were received, the vast majority of which fell into one or more of the following themes.

**Pressures on parents' time** was mentioned most frequently. Many spoke about the challenges of **juggling work and home life, of not having as much time as they would like to spend with their child**, the desire for some downtime to themselves or issues with roles that weren't parent friendly.

For many parents, their biggest challenge was **being a good parent and raising well-rounded children** – giving their child the right support, being able to understand their child's world and being a good role model, as well as concern about making mistakes as a parent and not knowing all the answers.

Hundreds of parents reported their **biggest challenge as financial**, with the cost of living having a significant impact on many households. **The high cost of going away in the school holidays** was singled out by some parents, whilst others highlighted **costs related to**

**going to school**. Several parents mentioned the high costs of **childcare**.

**Health, happiness and safety** were also mentioned many times. Some parents spoke specifically about the challenges of **bullying, mental health, or healthy eating**. Whilst many parents were referring to the health, happiness and safety of their child, some said their biggest challenge as a parent was **their own health and wellbeing**.

Hundreds of parents highlighted their **worries about children's access to social media or the internet** more widely and the consequences of screen time, including unrealistic expectations created by online content, misinformation, and its impact on school work and on children's wellbeing.

For some parents their concerns related specifically to **education or their child's experience at school**. In some cases, this was about their **child's attendance**, or their child not prioritising their studies, whilst for others it was a **concern about homework, what's being taught at school, their child not enjoying school** or



**accessing appropriate support for their child with special educational needs**.

Some parents highlighted behavioural challenges – usually referring to their **child's behaviours** such as arguments, teenage attitudes and unsettling behaviour. Occasionally, parents were talking about **their own behaviour**, including the challenge of keeping calm or being patient.

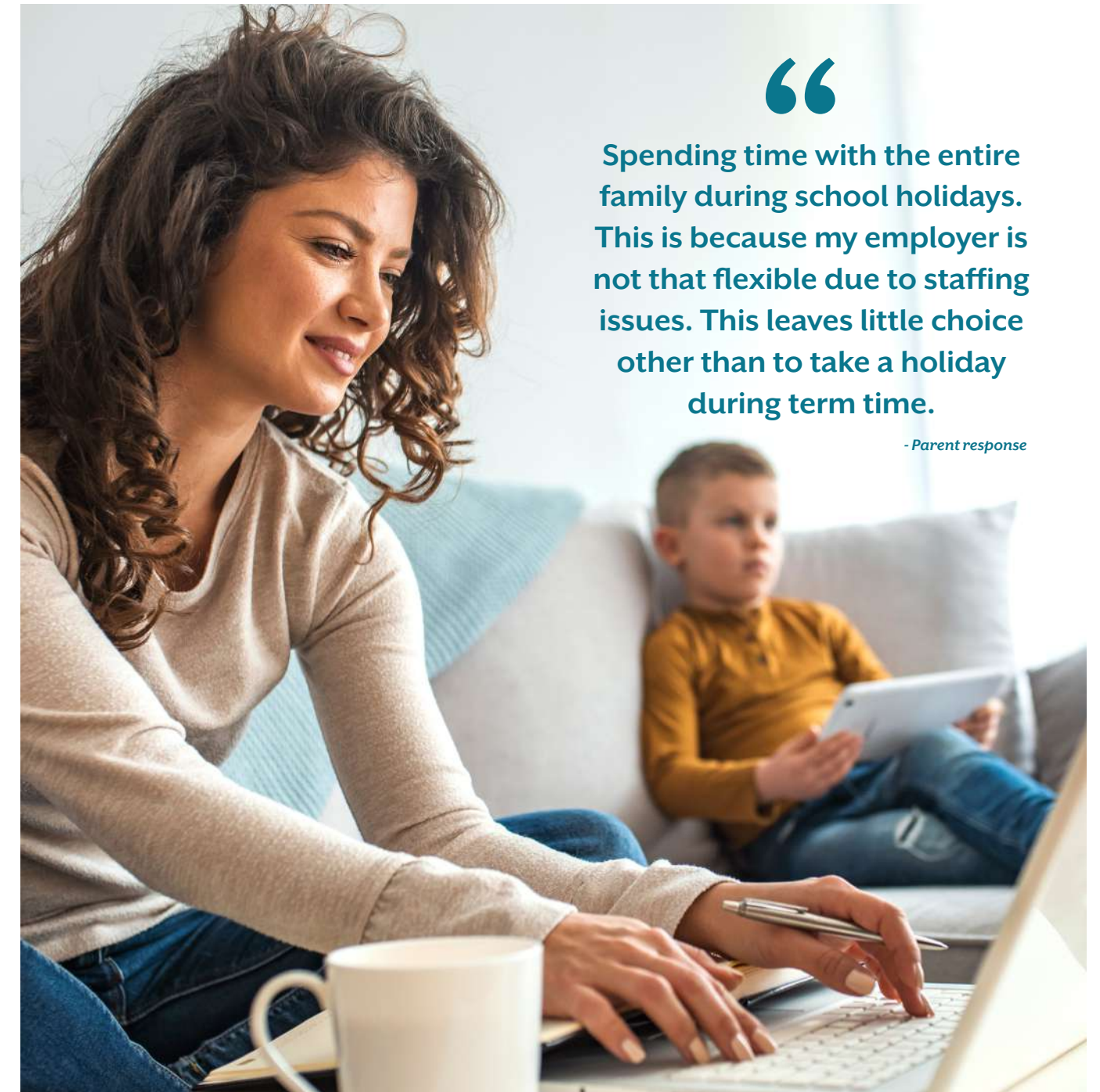
Some parents said their biggest challenge was **managing the effects of others on their child** – whether that was other parents, other children or their own family

members. For some parents, the challenge was having no support from others and parenting alone.

Some parents voiced concerns about their **child's future**, including worries about the **state of the world, living standards or the environment**. Some parents blamed these concerns on the previous government.

For some parents their biggest challenge is **communicating with their child**.

Other challenges raised by a few parents included **worries about drugs** and **getting their child outside**.



“

**Spending time with the entire family during school holidays. This is because my employer is not that flexible due to staffing issues. This leaves little choice other than to take a holiday during term time.**

- Parent response



# What can we do to help parents?

The National Parent Survey is the largest survey of its kind and helps us to understand the concerns of parents, what is keeping them up at night and the challenges they face in doing the most important job many of us will ever do.

This large-scale parent poll should be a call to action for governments across all parts of the UK and for elected representatives who want to speak up for parents.

## Governments that listen to parents

- **Commit to listening to parents before decisions are made.** Parents often tell us that they are overlooked when changes are made; we should consult parents as standard ahead of major policy announcements.
- **Commission school inspectorates to conduct an annual assessment of parent opinion.** We can do much more to understand the views of parents and how happy they are with the education their child is receiving. Schools should be required to support this annual survey to help individual schools understand the views of their parents and provide a national snapshot of parent opinion.

## The cost-of-living crisis and helping parents in poverty

- **Help parents with the cost of a family day out.** Many parents are struggling with the cost of living, and our National Parent Survey tells us that school trips and family days out are big casualties of stretched household budgets, particularly for the poorest parents.

Where the taxpayer is funding trains and other transport infrastructure, we should give away heavily

discounted or free family days out for parents on the lowest incomes.

- **The cost of sending a child to school should be included as standard in any approach to reducing poverty.** An independent advisory body should be established to assess the true cost of sending a child to school. This advisory body should publish an annual assessment of the cost of school and make recommendations to ministers on how to reduce school costs.

While nearly half of all parents say they are particularly concerned about the cost of school uniform, this isn't the only concern for parents. The cost of trips is only just behind uniform as a major worry for parents. There are many other additional school costs that are keeping some parents up at night. Tackling the cost of school is about more than just uniform and any new advisory body needs to look at all the extra costs that can quickly add up for parents.

- **Support new Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) in our poorest areas to boost enrichment, school trips and reduce the cost of uniform.** We have no official record of PTA groups, which means we don't know which schools have a PTA and which schools don't. The School Census should be amended to include a question on PTAs to establish how many schools have a PTA group. Once we have this information we should commit to quickly identifying schools in areas of high disadvantage without a PTA group.

A match fund for PTAs should be introduced to support parents who raise money for schools, particularly in our poorest communities. This match fund would apply to new PTAs set up in disadvantaged areas to support enrichment, school trips and help with school uniform costs.

## Cracking down on social media and smartphones

- **Introduce a Smartphone Ban Bill.** Children spend significant amounts of their time outside of school staring at screens. Simply preventing phone use at school isn't enough.

Governments should establish a major scientific review of the evidence on the impact of smartphones and social media on children. This review should be the basis for new measures to introduce a social media age of consent at age 16, restrictions on the marketing of smartphones to children under 16 and a total ban on smartphones in schools.

## It's 'okay' to enjoy school

- **Don't be afraid to say children should enjoy school.** Changes to the way we do school should focus on making school more enjoyable. We should announce a series of new measures to report on enjoyment of school and not just learning for a test.

## Giving every child the chance to take part in after-school clubs

- **Every primary and secondary/post-primary child should have access to weekly extracurricular activities and after-school clubs.** The evidence from our poll is too few children are taking part in after-school clubs and activities. We should work towards a new funding settlement for after-school clubs and activities to make them just as much a part of our education system as a maths or English lesson.

We recognise the pressure on public finances, but future spending settlements should work to find the money to deliver an ambitious programme of funded clubs and activities for children.

## Helping parents to support their children's learning

- **School inspections need to report back on parent engagement.** Inspection reports should include feedback about how well a school communicates and engages with parents. This is a simple change that should be made quickly to improve engagement with parents.
- **Develop a nationally recognised 'kitemark' for engaging with parents.** We should set an ambition that every school will achieve the standards set out in a new 'kitemark' for engaging with parents. The Parentkind 'Blueprint for Schools' provides a template for any new approach and ministers should build on this.
- **Rethink homework.** Many parents told us homework is causing rows and arguments at home. Parents and children are feeling more pressure than ever and we need a national conversation on how homework can help children to learn but avoid causing family conflict.
- **Help children find the time to enjoy being children.** Parentkind is calling for an expert review of homework and how we can encourage children to enjoy learning again and find time for clubs outside of school.

## School attendance

- **Reduce the temptation for the term time holiday.** Most parents think that every day at school matters, but they are tempted by cheaper family holidays. Parents are often put in a difficult position with family holidays that are substantially more expensive during the school holidays. We're calling for a review of the marketing and pricing of holidays primarily marketed at families to reduce the gap between the cost of a holiday in term time and one in the school holidays.

# Methodology and sample demographics

The National Parent Survey was conducted online by YouGov. The fieldwork took place from 26th April to 16th May 2024 amongst 5,490 parents in England (3,012), Scotland (1,313), Wales (862) and Northern Ireland (303), who have at least one child aged 4 to 18 in school. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all UK parents aged 18+. 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 the UK, but rather a sample of the population, results are subject to a margin of error which is estimated to be between 0.5 and 2.5 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 26% of respondents strongly agree that their child enjoys school, in reality the proportion is likely to be between 23.5% and 28.5% (i.e. the margin of error would be +/-2.5%). Statistically significant differences in results for particular demographic subgroups are mentioned in the report.

## Demographics

Please note totals may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

### Gender – Are you?

Male	50%
Female	50%

### Age – What is your age?

18-34	17%
35-44	36%
45-54	34%
55+	13%

## Parent and pupil numbers

Where we've made reference to parent numbers in the report, we have first estimated the number of parents of dependent children aged 0 to 18 using ONS data on family and household types, and assuming 'couple' households have two parents and single parent households have one parent. Using ONS data on the number of children aged 0 to 3 and family composition, along with WHO data on child spacing, we have then estimated the number of parents who have at least one school age child (aged 4 to 18), which is the number we use in the report.

The pupil numbers in the report have been estimated using information on the total number of primary, secondary/post-primary or all pupils in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. These figures relate to academic year 2023/24 for England, Scotland and Northern Ireland, and as at January 2024 for Wales.

Where for example 20% of all parents reported their child had experienced a particular issue in the last 12 months, we have assumed that this would be true for 20% of all pupils.

### Nation/region – Where do you live?

England	84%
South East	16%
London	16%
North West	13%
East of England	11%
West Midlands	10%
Yorkshire & the Humber	10%
South West	10%
East Midlands	9%
North East	5%
Scotland	8%
Wales	5%
Northern Ireland	3%

**Number of children in household – How many children are you the parent/guardian of in total (i.e. of any ages, including children aged 18 or over)?**

1	34%
2	48%
3+	18%

**Age of eldest child – How old is your oldest child of school age?**

4-5	7%
6-7	9%
8-9	10%
10-11	14%
12-13	15%
14-15	21%
16-18	24%

**School phase – Which one of the following phases of education does your oldest child in school currently attend?**

Primary	37%
Secondary/post-primary	44%
Further education (sixth form/college etc.)	19%

**School type – Which type of school does your child attend?**

State school	92%
Independent/private school	8%

**Special Educational Needs and Disabilities – Would you describe your oldest child as having any special educational needs or disabilities (SEN/SEND/ALN)?**

Yes	22%
• we have an EHCP/a statement of SEN /an ALN /an ASN	10%
• we are discussing SEN/ALN/ASN concerns with my child's school	12%
No	72%
Don't know/not sure	4%
Prefer not to answer	2%

**Parent disability – Are your day-to-day activities limited because of a health problem or disability which has lasted, or is expected to last, at least 12 months?**

Yes	21%
• a lot	8%
• a little	13%
No	77%
Prefer not to answer	2%

**Eligibility for FSM – Are you claiming any benefits which mean that your child is eligible for FSM?**

Yes	14%
No	78%
Don't know/not sure	4%
Prefer not to answer	4%

**Ethnicity – What ethnic group best describes you?**

White	84%
English / Welsh / Scottish / Northern Irish / British	78%
Irish	1%
Gypsy or Irish Traveller	<1%
Any other White background	4%
Ethnic minority	10%
White and Black Caribbean	1%
White and Black African	1%
White and Asian	<1%
Any other Mixed / Multiple ethnic background	1%
Indian	2%
Pakistani	1%
Bangladeshi	<1%
Chinese	<1%
Any other Asian background	<1%
African	3%
Caribbean	<1%
Any other Black / African / Caribbean background	<1%
Arab	<1%
Any other ethnic group	<1%
Prefer not to answer	6%



**English as an additional language – *Is English your eldest child's first language?***

Yes	97%
No	3%

**Household income – *What is your gross household income?***

Under £20,000	10%
£20,000 - £34,999	16%
£35,000 - £49,999	15%
£50,000 - £99,999	32%
£100,000+	13%
Prefer not to say	14%



# About Parentkind

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As a national federated charity, Parentkind gives those with a parenting role a voice in education.

We invest substantial resources in representing parent views on their child's learning to local, regional, and national governments and agencies. Evidence tells us that parental participation in education benefits all children in all schools, and society as a whole.

Parentkind's network of 12,800 Parent Teacher Associations mobilises over 100,000 volunteer fundraisers, raising in excess of £120 million annually to fund vital equipment and services for our schools.

Registered charity number 1072833



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