



Parent Poll: School Closures England Only Results

January 2021

Key Headlines & Trends

School closures for face-to-face learning

- One third of parents told us that they feel schools should be open to their child for face-to-face learning this term.
- Two thirds of parents told us they believe schools either shouldn't be open to their child (57%) or are unsure (10%).
- Two thirds of secondary school parents told us that schools should be closed to their child for face-to-face learning compared with just over half (52%) of primary school parents.
- 46% of independent school parents believe schools should be closed compared to 58% of parents with a child at a state school.

Remote learning support for parents

- 69% of parents told us that the level of support they have been given by their child's school to assist their child's learning at home was either very good (41%) or good (28%).
- Independent school parents are more likely to rate the level of support received more positively.
- Parents of a child with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are less positive about the support they've been offered from their child's school compared to parents of children without SEND.

Impact of remote learning on parents

- More than a third (38%) of parents told us they are able to work from home, but find supporting their child's learning at home at the same time challenging.
- Secondary school parents told us they are more likely to be at home with time to support their child's learning than primary school parents (36% vs. 26%).
- 30% of parents told us they are able to be at home with time to support their child's learning.
- 8% of parents told us they are unable to work when their child is not in school.
- 10% of primary school parents told us they are unable to work when their child is not in school compared with 4% of secondary school parents.
- Parents with a child with SEND are less likely to say they can work from home, but that it's challenging to support their child's learning at the same time than parents with a child without SEND (25% SEND vs. 40% not SEND).

Parents' concerns due to school closures

- Parents told us that their biggest concerns around schools being closed are: their child not seeing their friends and socialising (49%), their child's mental health and well-being (45%), their child falling behind in their education (30%) and their child missing out on face to face learning from teachers (29%).
- Parents told us that they are less concerned about their lack of confidence in supporting their child's learning at home (6%), their employer's flexibility around their working arrangements (5%) and their finances from not being able to work (3%).
- 10% of parents told that they don't have any concerns associated with schools being physically closed to their child.
- 23% of secondary school parents told us their child's anxiety due to the uncertainty about alternative arrangements for public exams is a big concern compared with 1% of primary school parents.
- Independent school parents are more concerned about their children not seeing friends and socialising (67% vs. 48% of state school parents) and the impact on their child's mental health and well-being (57% vs. 45% of state school parents).
- Parents of children with SEND are more concerned about their child's mental health and well-being (53% with SEND vs. 44% not SEND).

Covid-19 testing in schools

- 49% of parents told us they either strongly agree (15%) or tend to agree (34%) with the statement *'I feel reassured that the introduction of Covid-19 testing in all schools would make it safer for my child to attend school'*.
- 37% of parents told us they tend to disagree (19%) or strongly disagree (18%) with the statement.
- Independent school parents have stronger opinions than those at state schools (23% independent strongly agree vs. 15% state school and 24% independent strongly disagree vs. 17% state school).
- Parents of a child with SEND are less reassured than those without (42% with SEND disagree vs. 36% of those without SEND).

Parents' level of concern compared to March 2020

- 48% of parents told us they are more worried now about the impact of the pandemic on their child's education compared to back in March 2020.
- 50% of parents told us they have the same level of worry (28%) or less worry (22%) than they did last March.
- Secondary school parents are more likely to be more worried now compared to primary school parents (52% secondary school parents vs. 46% primary school parents)
- Independent school parents are more likely to be more worried now compared to state school parents (63% of independent school parents vs. 47% state school parents).

Reopening schools decision

- A third of parents told us they feel the decision to reopen schools for face-to-face teaching should be made by school leaders and teachers. This is particularly the case for parents of children with SEND (39% said so).
- 51% of parents told us they feel the decision to reopen schools for face-to-face teaching should be made by government (29%) or local government (22%).
- A majority of the 11% of parents selecting 'other' told us they feel it should be a joint decision between two or more of the above plus, in some cases, scientific advisers too.

Methodology

A short online survey, promoted to parents via social media, was active between 5th and 10th January 2021. 1,316 parents completed the survey (1,240 in England, 31 in Northern Ireland and 45 in Wales). **These results are from parents based in England only.** 324 parents selected to answer most of the questions twice to report on their second child's experiences which means the results of those questions are based on 1,564 responses.

Respondent demographics such as child's school phase (primary or secondary), whether the child has SEND or not and school type (state or independent) have been collected and the breakdown of results for each question can be found in the appendix. Any notable variances are highlighted in the main report.

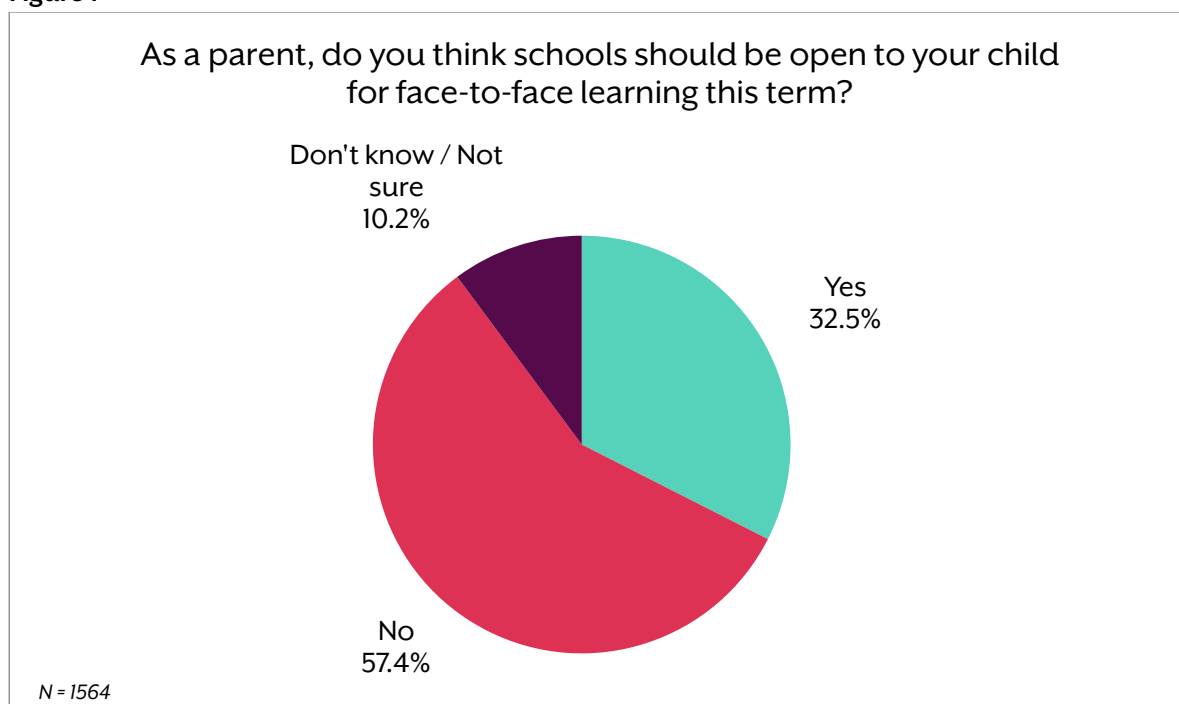
Please note percentages may not always add up to 100% due to rounding.

Survey Results

School closures for face-to-face learning

Parents were asked whether they thought schools should be open to their child for face-to-face learning this term. As Figure 1 shows, a third of parents feel schools should be open to their child. 57% of parents believe schools shouldn't be open to their child and 10% are unsure.

Figure 1



Two thirds (66%) of parents with a child in secondary school say schools should be closed to their child for face-to-face learning compared to 52% of primary school parents. Looking at the results by school type, parents with a child at an independent school are more divided as to whether schools should be open or closed with 46% of parents saying they should be open and the same percentage saying they should be closed. This contrasts with 32% of parents with a child at a state school saying schools should be open and 58% saying they should be closed.

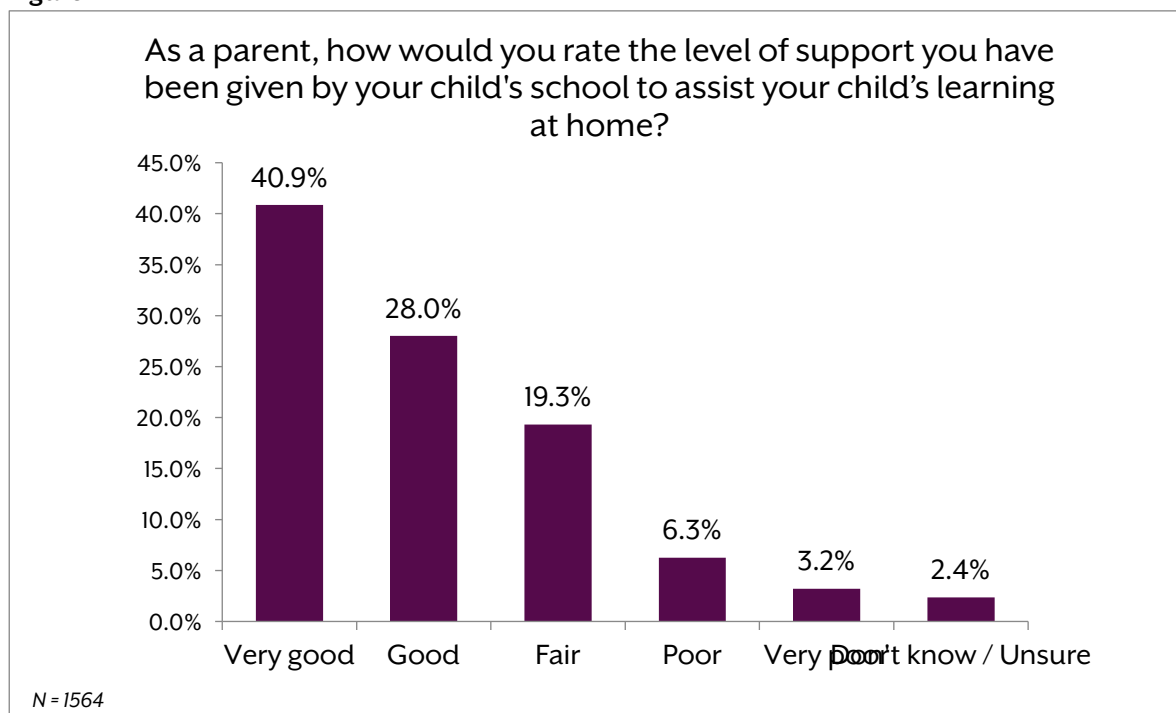
Remote learning support for parents

Parents were asked to rate the level of support they have been given by their child's school to assist their child's learning at home. More than four in ten parents (41%) rate as very good, and another 28% rate it as good (Figure 2). 19% of parents rate the level of support they have received as fair whilst 6% rate it as poor and 3% as very poor.

Whilst there were no notable differences in opinion between primary and secondary school parents, independent school parents are more likely to rate the level of support received more positively – for example, 56% of independent school parents responded 'very good' compared with 40% of state school parents.

Parents of a child with SEND are less positive about the support they've been offered from their child's school compared with parents of children without SEND – 43% of parents without SEND rated the support received as very good compared with 30% of parents of a child with SEND whilst 18% of these parents rated the support poor or very poor vs. 8% of parents of a child without SEND.

Figure 2

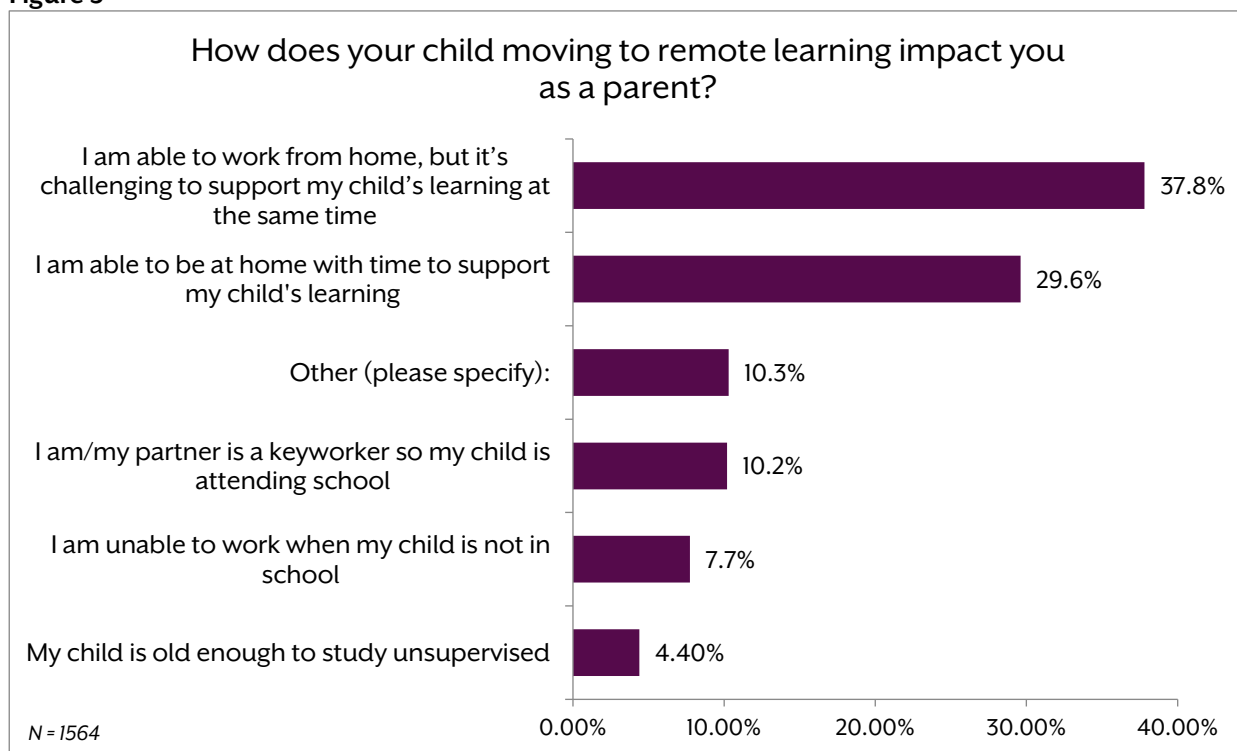


Impact of remote learning on parents

When asked how remote learning impacts themselves, as Figure 3 shows, more than one third of parents (38%) say they are able to work from home, but that they find supporting their child's learning at home at the same time challenging. Another 8% said they are unable to work when their child is not in school. Just over a quarter (30%) are able to be at home with time to support their child's learning. In 10% of cases their child is continuing to go in to school.

Parents of a child at secondary school are more likely to be at home with time to support their child's learning than primary school parents (36% vs. 26%). Perhaps unsurprisingly, 10% of primary school parents are unable to work when their child is not in school compared with 4% of secondary school parents. Parents with a child with SEND were less likely to say they could work from home, but that it's challenging to support their child's learning at the same time than parents with a child without SEND (25% SEND vs. 40% not SEND).

Figure 3



Parents' concerns due to school closures

Parents were asked about their biggest concerns in light of schools being closed to most pupils. Almost half of parents (49%) said 'My child not seeing their friends and socialising' was in their top three concerns, whilst 45% of parents said their child's mental health and well-being was one of their biggest concerns. Three in ten parents rate their child falling behind in their education in their top three worries whilst 29% say their child missing out on face to face learning from teachers is a main concern. Almost a quarter of parents (23%) say the challenge of juggling work and supporting their child's learning at home is in their top three concerns, and nearly one in five parents (19%) say their child's lack of motivation to complete the work set remotely is one of their biggest concerns.

The full results are in shown in Figure 4 including the 10% of parents who told us that they don't have any concerns associated with schools being physically closed to their child.

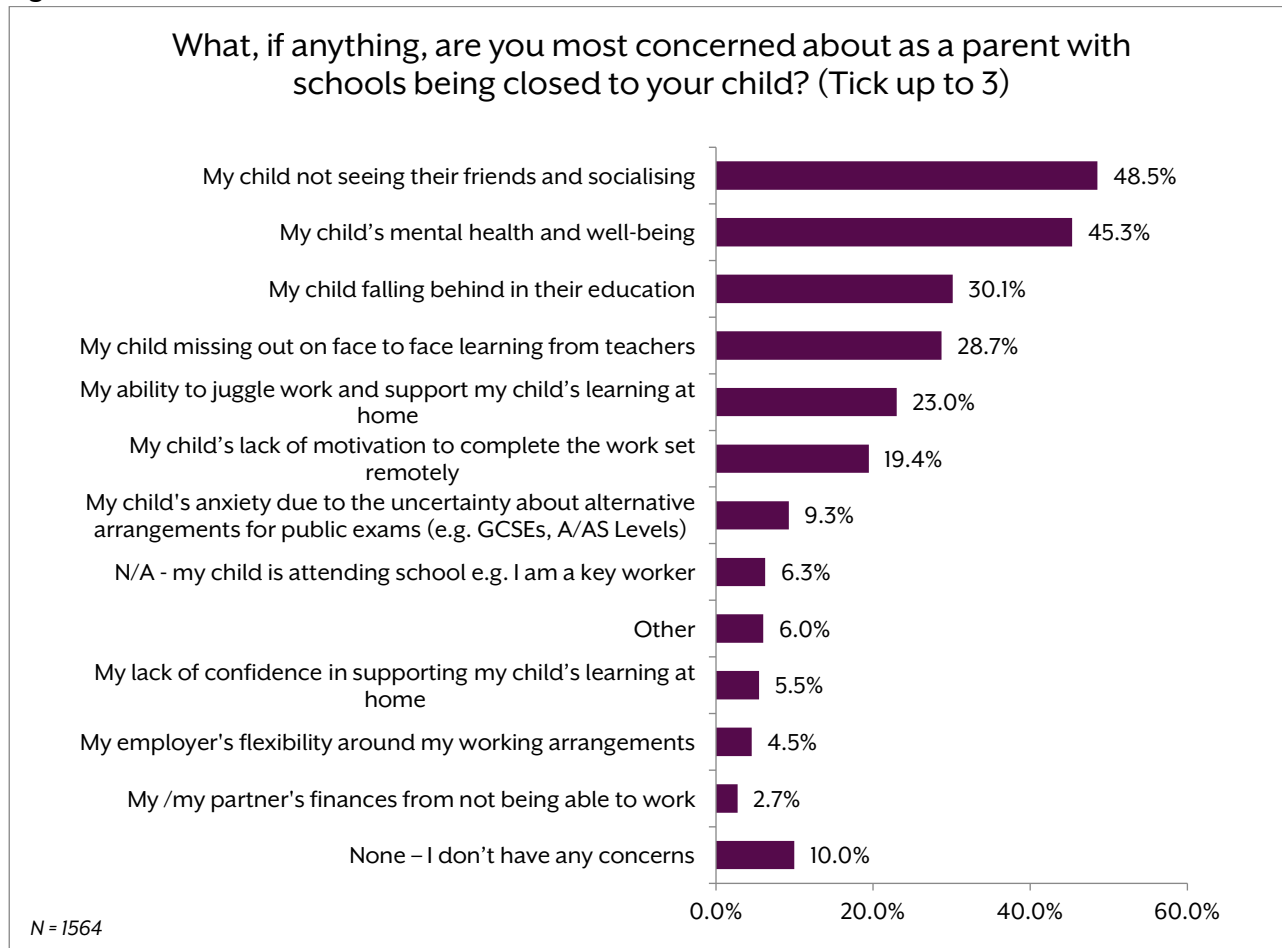
Looking at the results by primary vs. secondary school parents, whilst many of the results are similar, three in ten primary school parents said their ability to juggle work and support their child's learning at home is a top three concern, compared with 12% of secondary school parents whilst almost a quarter (23%) of secondary parents said their child's anxiety due to the uncertainty about alternative arrangements for public exams is a big concern vs. 1% of primary parents.

Parents with children in independent schools are particularly concerned about their children not seeing friends and socialising (67% citing it in their top three concerns vs. 48% of state school parents) and the impact on their child's mental health and well-bring (57% putting this in their top three concerns vs. 45% of state school parents). Parents' ability to juggle work and support home learning was a big concern to more state school parents than independent school parents (24% vs. 14%).

There were also some variances between responses from parents of children with SEND and those without. Whilst their child not seeing friends and socialising is a top three concern for more parents of children without SEND compared with those with (52% not SEND vs. 35% SEND) the impact of school closures on their child's

mental health and well-being is a big concern to even more parents of children with SEND than those without (53% with SEND vs. 44% not SEN). Parents of children with SEND are also slightly more likely to be concerned about their child's lack of motivation to complete the work set (23% SEND vs. 19% not SEND). Parents of children without SEND are more likely to be concerned about their child missing out on face-to-face learning from teachers (31% not SEND vs. 18% SEND) and juggling work alongside supporting their child's learning at home (25% not SEND vs. 16% SEND).

Figure 4

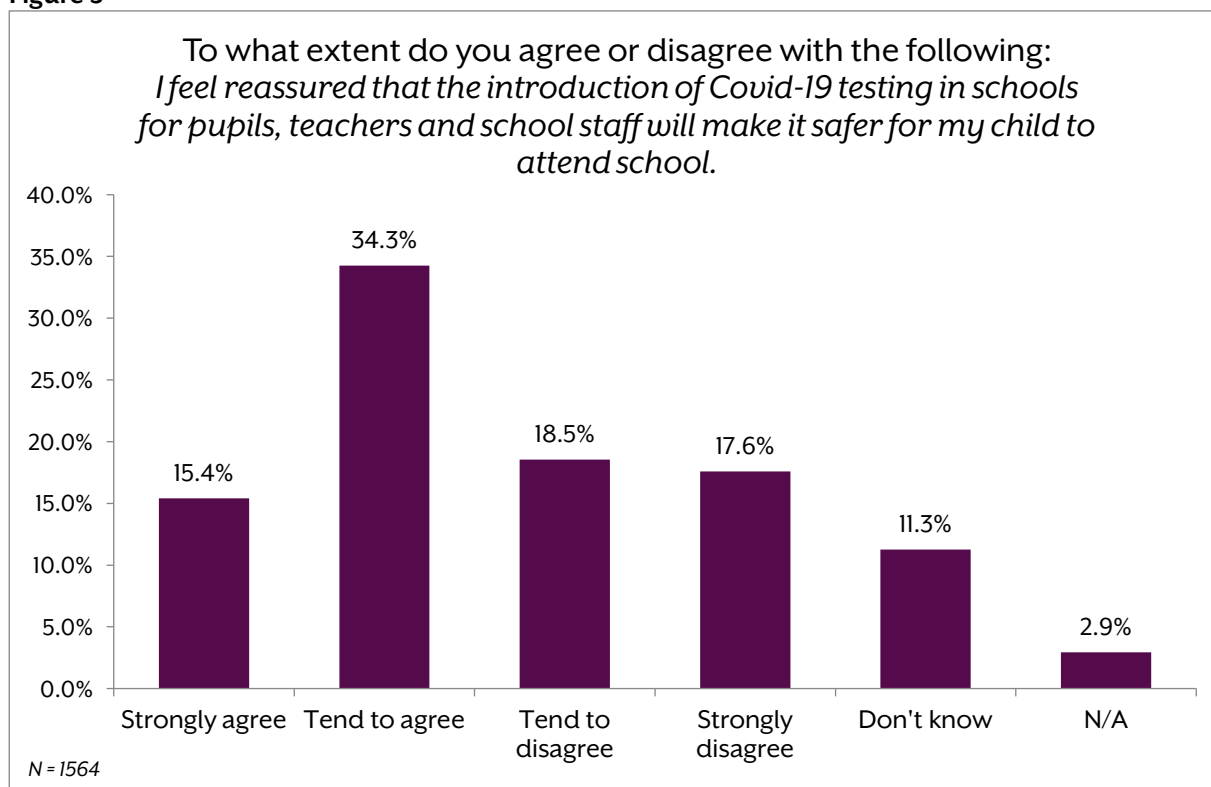


Covid-19 testing in schools

Prior to schools closing in early January the government announced its intention to roll out mass coronavirus testing amongst teachers, school staff and secondary school pupils. Parents were asked whether they feel reassured that the introduction of Covid-19 testing in all schools would make it safer for their child to attend school. As Figure 5 shows, 15% of parents strongly agree with the statement, and another third (34%) tend to agree. However, more than a third of parents are not reassured, with 19% tending to disagree and 18% strongly disagreeing that Covid-19 testing in schools would make it safer for their child to attend school. Just over one in ten parents (11%) said they don't know.

The results for primary school and secondary school parents were very similar. Parents of children at independent schools have stronger opinions than those at state schools (23% independent vs. 15% state 'strongly agree' and 24% independent vs. 17% state 'strongly disagree'). Parents of a child with SEND are less reassured than those without (42% of parents of a child with SEND disagree with the statement vs. 36% of those without).

Figure 5



Parents' concerns about impact on child's education

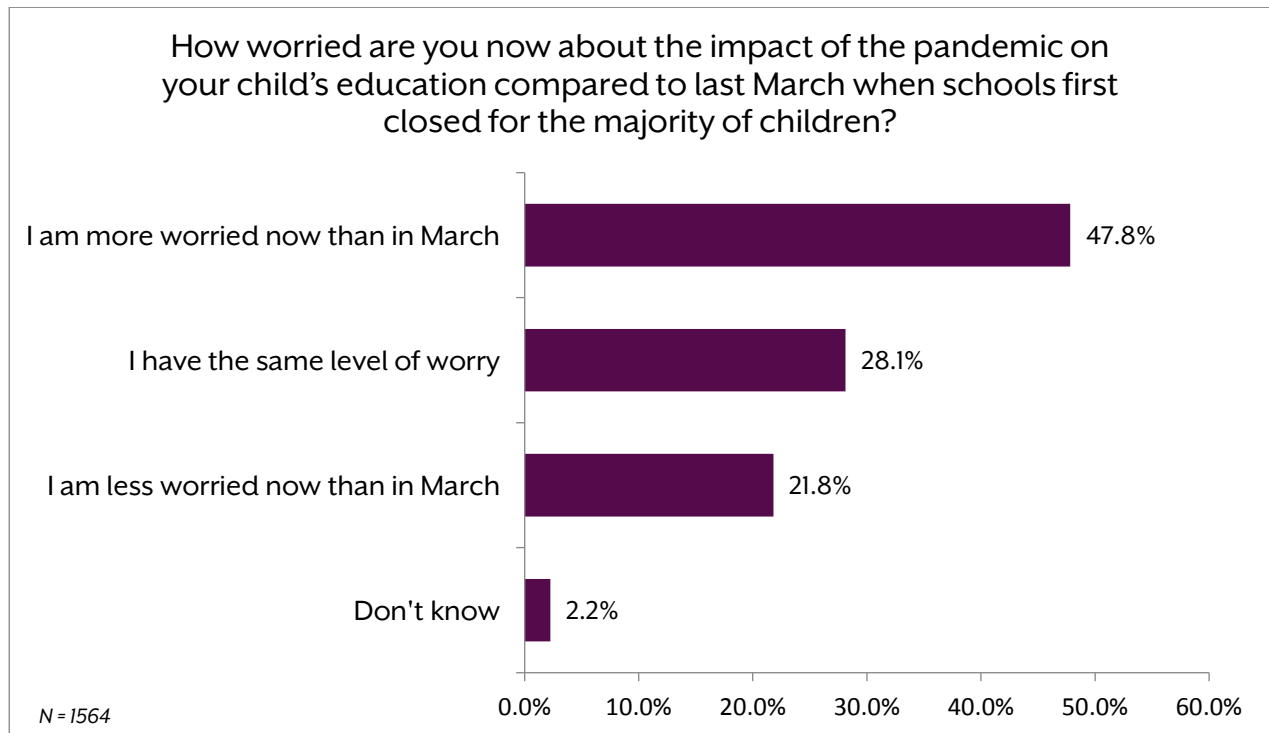
Parents were asked how worried they currently were about the impact of the pandemic on their child's education compared to last March when schools first closed to the majority of children. As Figure 6 shows, almost half of all parents (48%) are more worried now compared to back in March. 28% have the same level of worry and 22% have less worry than they did last March.

Secondary school parents are more likely to be more worried now compared to primary school parents (52% secondary parents more worried now vs. 46% primary parents) as are parents with children at independent schools (63% of independent school parents are more worried now vs. 47% state school parents).

Parentkind has asked this question in two previous parent surveys¹. In May 2020, 26% of parents reported being more worried about the impact of the pandemic on their child's education than when schools first closed, with 40% reporting the same level of worry and 31% less worried. In November, 43% of parents reported being more worried than in March, 32% the same and 24% less worried. Comparing these results with the latest data we can conclude that parents are increasingly worried about the impact of the pandemic on their child's education.

¹ See Parentkind's Second and Fourth Coronavirus Surveys – England results
<https://www.parentkind.org.uk/uploads/files/1/News/Coronavirus%20202/COVID%20infographic%20England.pdf>
<https://www.parentkind.org.uk/uploads/files/1/ACV19%204th%20survey%20infographic%20ENG%20A4.pdf>

Figure 6



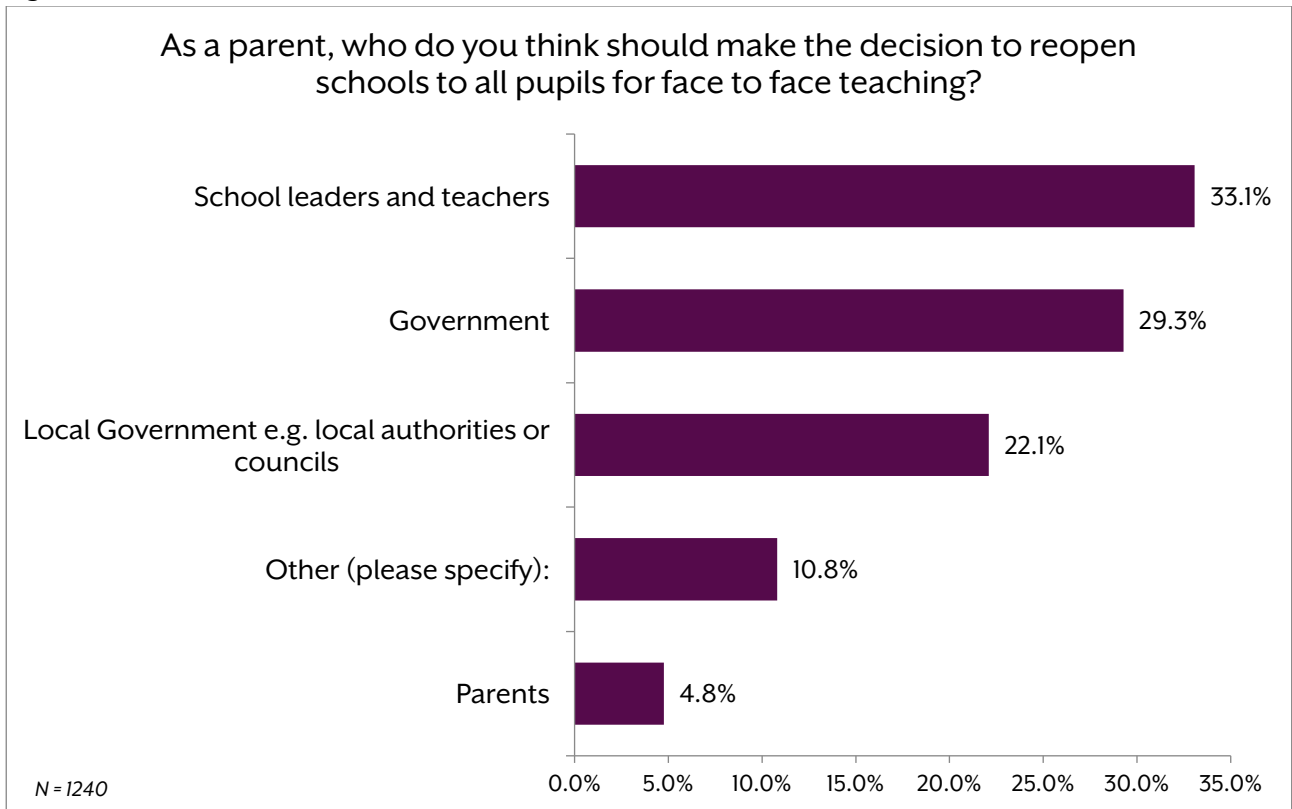
Reopening schools decision

Finally, parents were asked who they think should take the decision to reopen schools to all pupils for face-to-face teaching. The breakdown of responses is in Figure 7. The most popular response, selected by a third of parents was school leaders and teachers. The government was second, with 29% of responses and local government third with 22% of parents opting for this option. Only 5% of parents said that parents should make the decision to reopen schools.

Looking at the results amongst the different groups of parents, almost a quarter (24%) of primary school parents think that local government should make the decision compared with 18% of secondary school parents. Similarly, 23% of state school parents say the same compared to 15% of independent school parents. Only 15% of parents of a child with SEND believe the decision should lie with local government compared with 24% of those without. Far more parents of a child with SEND would like to see school leaders and teachers make the decision rather than government (39% saying school leaders and teachers and 23% saying government) compared with parents of a child without SEND (32% saying school leaders and teachers and 30% saying government.)

Whilst the intention was to encourage respondents to select one decision maker, it should be noted that the majority of the 11% of parents selecting 'other' did so as they feel it should be a decision make jointly between two or more of the above plus, in some cases, scientific advisers too.

Figure 7



Appendix

Results by parents with a child at primary vs. secondary school

Q1. As a parent, do you think schools should be open to your child for face-to-face learning this term?			
	Primary	Secondary	Total
Yes	36.2%	26.2%	32.5%
No	52.1%	66.1%	57.4%
Don't know	11.6%	7.7%	10.2%
N =	980	584	1564

Q2. As a parent, how would you rate the level of support you have been given by your child's school to assist your child's learning at home?			
	Primary	Secondary	Total
Very good	40.7%	41.1%	40.9%
Good	26.7%	30.1%	28.0%
Fair	19.4%	19.2%	19.3%
Poor	7.1%	4.8%	6.3%
Very poor	3.4%	2.9%	3.2%
Don't know / Unsure	2.7%	1.9%	2.4%
N =	980	584	1564

Q3. How does your child moving to remote learning impact you as a parent?			
	Primary	Secondary	Total
I am able to be at home with time to support my child's learning	25.8%	36.0%	29.6%
I am able to work from home, but it's challenging to support my child's learning at the same time	40.1%	33.9%	37.8%
I am unable to work when my child is not in school	9.8%	4.3%	7.7%
I am/my partner is a keyworker so my child is attending school	13.6%	4.5%	10.2%
My child is old enough to study unsupervised	0.1%	11.6%	4.4%
Other	10.6%	9.8%	10.3%
N =	980	584	1564

Q4. What, if anything, are you most concerned about as a parent with schools being closed to your child (tick up to 3)?			
% in top 3	Primary	Secondary	Total
My child not seeing their friends and socialising	49.7%	46.6%	48.5%
My child's mental health and well-being	44.1%	47.4%	45.3%
My child falling behind in their education	29.1%	31.8%	30.1%
My child missing out on face to face learning from teachers	27.1%	31.3%	28.7%
My child's anxiety due to the uncertainty about alternative arrangements for public exams (e.g. GCSEs, AS and A Levels)	1.0%	23.1%	9.3%
My ability to juggle work and support my child's learning at home	29.7%	11.8%	23.0%

My /my partner's finances from not being able to work	3.2%	2.1%	2.7%
My employer's flexibility around my working arrangements	5.9%	2.2%	4.5%
My lack of confidence in supporting my child's learning at home	5.4%	5.7%	5.5%
My child's lack of motivation to complete the work set remotely	19.5%	19.3%	19.4%
None – I don't have any concerns	10.0%	9.9%	10.0%
N/A - my child is attending school e.g. I am a key worker	8.8%	2.1%	6.3%
N =	980	584	1564

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following: I feel reassured that the introduction of Covid-19 testing in schools for pupils, teachers and school staff will make it safer for my child to attend school.			
	Primary	Secondary	Total
Strongly agree	15.5%	15.2%	15.4%
Tend to agree	34.0%	34.8%	34.3%
Tend to disagree	18.5%	18.7%	18.5%
Strongly disagree	16.5%	19.3%	17.6%
Don't know	12.0%	9.9%	11.3%
N/A	3.5%	2.1%	2.9%
N =	980	584	1564

Q6. How worried are you now about the impact of the pandemic on your child's education compared to last March when schools first closed for the majority of children?			
	Primary	Secondary	Total
I am more worried now than in March	45.5%	51.7%	47.8%
I have the same level of worry	29.2%	26.4%	28.1%
I am less worried now than in March	23.3%	19.3%	21.8%
Don't know	2.0%	2.6%	2.2%
N =	980	584	1564

Q7. As a parent, who do you think should make the decision to reopen schools to all pupils for face to face teaching?			
	Primary	Secondary	Total
School leaders and teachers	31.7%	35.8%	33.1%
Government	29.9%	28.1%	29.3%
Local Government e.g. local authorities or councils	24.0%	18.3%	22.1%
Parents	4.7%	4.8%	4.8%
Other	9.7%	13.0%	10.8%
N =	824	416	1240

Results by parents with a child at a state school vs. Independent (fee paying) school

Q1. As a parent, do you think schools should be open to your child for face-to-face learning this term?		
	State	Independent
Yes	31.8%	46.0%
No	58.0%	46.0%
Don't know	10.2%	8.0%
N =	1429	100

Note: The number of state and independent school responses does not add up to the total number of responses as 35 parents selected the 'prefer not to say' option to this question.

Q2. As a parent, how would you rate the level of support you have been given by your child's school to assist your child's learning at home?		
	State	Independent
Very good	40.0%	56.0%
Good	28.1%	27.0%
Fair	20.0%	12.0%
Poor	6.5%	2.0%
Very poor	3.3%	3.0%
Don't know / Unsure	2.0%	0.0%
N =	1429	100

Q3. How does your child moving to remote learning impact you as a parent?		
	State	Independent
I am able to be at home with time to support my child's learning	29.4%	31.0%
I am able to work from home, but it's challenging to support my child's learning at the same time	38.3%	31.0%
I am unable to work when my child is not in school	7.5%	12.0%
I am/my partner is a keyworker so my child is attending school	10.4%	10.0%
My child is old enough to study unsupervised	4.3%	7.0%
Other	10.2%	9.0%
N =	1429	100

Q4. What, if anything, are you most concerned about as a parent with schools being closed to your child (tick up to 3)?		
% in top 3	State	Independent
My child not seeing their friends and socialising	47.9%	67.0%
My child's mental health and well-being	45.1%	57.0%
My child falling behind in their education	30.8%	27.0%
My child missing out on face to face learning from teachers	28.8%	29.0%
My child's anxiety due to the uncertainty about alternative arrangements for public exams (e.g. GCSEs, AS and A Levels)	8.9%	13.0%
My ability to juggle work and support my child's learning at home	23.9%	14.0%
My /my partner's finances from not being able to work	2.7%	5.0%

My employer's flexibility around my working arrangements	4.8%	2.0%
My lack of confidence in supporting my child's learning at home	5.6%	4.0%
My child's lack of motivation to complete the work set remotely	19.6%	19.0%
None – I don't have any concerns	9.9%	4.0%
N/A - my child is attending school e.g. I am a key worker	6.3%	6.0%
N =	1429	100

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following: I feel reassured that the introduction of Covid-19 testing in schools for pupils, teachers and school staff will make it safer for my child to attend school.

	State	Independent
Strongly agree	14.9%	23.0%
Tend to agree	35.1%	28.0%
Tend to disagree	19.0%	15.0%
Strongly disagree	16.9%	24.0%
Don't know	11.4%	7.0%
N/A	2.7%	3.0%
N =	1429	100

Q6. How worried are you now about the impact of the pandemic on your child's education compared to last March when schools first closed for the majority of children?

	State	Independent
I am more worried now than in March	47.2%	63.0%
I have the same level of worry	28.6%	18.0%
I am less worried now than in March	22.4%	18.0%
Don't know	1.9%	1.0%
N =	1429	100

Q7. As a parent, who do you think should make the decision to reopen schools to all pupils for face to face teaching?

	State	Independent
Government	29.5%	31.6%
Local Government e.g. local authorities or councils	23.0%	14.5%
Parents	4.7%	6.6%
School leaders and teachers	33.0%	35.5%
Other	9.9%	11.8%
N =	163	1049

Results by parents with a child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) vs. without SEND

Q1. As a parent, do you think schools should be open to your child for face-to-face learning this term?		
	SEND	Not SEND
Yes	35.6%	32.1%
No	57.7%	57.6%
Don't know	6.7%	10.3%
N =	208	1327

Note: The number of parents of a child with SEND and those without does not add up to the total number of responses as 29 parents selected the 'prefer not to say' option for this question

Q2. As a parent, how would you rate the level of support you have been given by your child's school to assist your child's learning at home?		
	SEND	Not SEND
Very good	29.8%	42.8%
Good	22.6%	28.9%
Fair	24.0%	18.8%
Poor	9.1%	5.7%
Very poor	9.1%	2.3%
Don't know	5.3%	1.4%
N =	208	1327

Q3. How does your child moving to remote learning impact you as a parent?		
	SEND	Non SEND
I am able to be at home with time to support my child's learning	34.1%	28.9%
I am able to work from home, but it's challenging to support my child's learning at the same time	25.0%	40.2%
I am unable to work when my child is not in school	10.6%	7.2%
I am/my partner is a keyworker so my child is attending school	8.7%	10.2%
My child is old enough to study unsupervised	2.4%	4.7%
Other	19.2%	8.8%
N =	208	1327

What, if anything, are you most concerned about as a parent with schools being closed to your child (tick up to 3)?		
% in top 3	SEND	Not SEND
My child not seeing their friends and socialising	34.6%	51.5%
My child's mental health and well-being	53.4%	44.3%
My child falling behind in their education	27.4%	30.4%
My child missing out on face to face learning from teachers	18.3%	30.6%
My child's anxiety due to the uncertainty about alternative arrangements for public exams (e.g. GCSEs, AS and A Levels)	14.9%	8.5%
My ability to juggle work and support my child's learning at home	16.3%	24.5%

My /my partner's finances from not being able to work	3.4%	2.6%
My employer's flexibility around my working arrangements	3.8%	4.5%
My lack of confidence in supporting my child's learning at home	8.2%	5.0%
My child's lack of motivation to complete the work set remotely	23.1%	18.8%
None – I don't have any concerns	10.1%	9.8%
N/A - my child is attending school e.g. I am a key worker	7.2%	5.8%
N =	208	1327

Q5. To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following: I feel reassured that the introduction of Covid-19 testing in schools for pupils, teachers and school staff will make it safer for my child to attend school.

	SEND	Not SEND
Strongly agree	13.5%	15.6%
Tend to agree	30.8%	34.9%
Tend to disagree	23.1%	18.0%
Strongly disagree	19.2%	17.5%
Don't know	9.6%	11.4%
N/A	3.8%	2.6%
N =	208	1327

Q6. How worried are you now about the impact of the pandemic on your child's education compared to last March when schools first closed for the majority of children?

	SEND	Not SEND
I am more worried now than in March	52.9%	47.7%
I have the same level of worry	23.1%	28.6%
I am less worried now than in March	21.2%	21.9%
Don't know	2.9%	1.7%
N =	208	1327

Q7. As a parent, who do you think should make the decision to reopen schools to all pupils for face to face teaching?

	SEND	Not SEND
Government	23.3%	30.2%
Local Government e.g. local authorities or councils	14.7%	23.5%
Parents	5.5%	4.6%
School leaders and teachers	38.9%	32.2%
Other	17.8%	9.5%
N =	163	1049