

Pupils Voice Survey 2024-2025

July 2025

Public Health Intelligence



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Executive Summary

This report presents findings from the 2024-2025 'Pupils Voice Survey' conducted across 62 primary and secondary schools, offering a comprehensive overview of the factors influencing pupils' wellbeing. The survey explored young respondents' physical and mental health, relationships, school and home environments, digital engagement, and access to support services. It also assessed how different characteristics including Year group, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, transgender status, free school meal eligibility, having a long-term condition, being a young carer, pupil or family contact with a social worker and having lived or currently living without birth parents influence young peoples' views, feelings and experiences, with the aim of implementing and/or informing targeted interventions and services.

Key findings

➤ Wellbeing and Emotional Health

While most pupils reported moderate to high levels of happiness, older students and respondents with specific characteristics experienced significantly lower wellbeing. The aforementioned groups reported higher levels of sadness, worry, and difficulty concentrating, underlining the need for targeted mental health support. Despite strong empathy and friendships across the student body, emotional struggles and feelings of loneliness varied and were more prevalent among young people with particular characteristics and increased with age.

➤ Sleep and Device Use

Although sleep duration was generally adequate, sleep disruption, often linked to stress and late-night device use, was common, particularly among older pupils, boys, and groups with specific characteristics.

➤ Help-Seeking and Support

Most pupils felt supported and knew where to seek help, but the willingness to access support declined with age. Engaging learning environments and strong peer relationships emerged as key protective factors for wellbeing and academic success.

Executive Summary

➤ Bullying and Self-Harm

Around 30% of pupils had experienced or were unsure about experiencing bullying, mostly verbal. Only 4% perceived themselves as bullying others. Mixed perceptions of school responses suggest a need for clearer and more consistent anti-bullying strategies. 30% of pupils reported self-harming at least once, with some continuing to self-harm regularly. The uncertainty around self-harm underscores the need for accessible, age-appropriate mental health education and intervention.

➤ Home Life and External Stressors

Over one in four pupils (26%) reported frequent adult conflict at home, raising concern for emotional safety and stability. Additionally, 50% worried about family finances and 25% expressed regular concern about having enough food, highlighting the impact of socioeconomic pressures on student wellbeing.

➤ Mental Health Services Access

Although 71% of pupils had never accessed a mental health service, 35% believed they would benefit from one. This points to unmet needs, potential stigma, and limited awareness or access. Service support access preferences varied, with nearly half favouring digital or text-based support and a quarter preferring in-person services, suggesting a hybrid model may best meet diverse needs.

➤ Social Media and Online Safety

Social media use was high (82%), increasing with age. One in six students reported emotional effects from online activity, with Year 6 pupils most affected. Over half admitted to spending more time online than intended, and 51% reported (or were unsure about) its impact on sleep. Concerningly, 42% of young respondents felt unsafe or uncertain about their safety online, pointing to the need for digital literacy and online safety education.

➤ Lifestyle and Risk Behaviours

Most pupils frequently participated in physical activity and outdoor recreation, and 77% spent regular time with family, including 84% sharing meals at least twice a week, both key protective factors. However, 8% of Year 7 and Year 10 students reported drinking alcohol weekly. Self-reported uptake of risky behaviour forms varied, with pupils with specific characteristics engaging in different forms more than their peers.

Recommendations

➤ Empower Pupil Voice

Involve pupils in co-designing wellbeing initiatives and support systems to ensure alignment with their needs and encourage help-seeking.

➤ Enhance Targeted Mental Health Support

Prioritise early-intervention programs and increased staff training to support pupils with different characteristics and needs, especially those experiencing emotional distress, self-harm, or socioeconomic challenges.

➤ Improve Access to Mental Health Services Through a Hybrid Model

Review accessibility of mental health services by identifying and addressing barriers to use, ensuring digital/text-based and in-person options meet student needs, while raising awareness to reduce stigma and support help-seeking.

➤ Strengthen Bullying Prevention and Emotional Safety

Ensure anti-bullying policies are clearly communicated and consistently applied. Empower students with safe, anonymous ways to report concerns and provide emotional literacy education to reduce harm and improve peer relationships.

➤ Promote Healthy Digital Habits and Online Safety

Address the impact of social media on sleep, emotional wellbeing, and safety through education on screen time, digital boundaries, and responsible use, tailored to pupil circumstances, needs and characteristics.

➤ Expand Community and Family Support Programmes

Establish a closer relationship with local organizations to drive initiatives focusing on food, financial and parenting support.

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Study design and methodology

Objectives

- This document reports on the findings of the Pupils Voice Survey 2024-2025. The survey aimed to provide a comprehensive picture of the mental and emotional health of children and young people (CYP) in Swindon, along with the lifestyle behaviours that contribute to their overall wellbeing. It focused on pupils aged 8–15 years (Years 4, 6, 7, and 10) and assessed the needs of specific subgroups to help shape and target interventions, policies, and strategies effectively. The survey also aimed to generate robust evidence on where resources could be most effectively allocated, particularly to address needs that are currently unmet.

Sample and data collection

- All schools in Swindon were invited to participate in an online survey, conducted from November 2024 to February 2025. Information about the survey was shared in advance via email and at key networking events, including the Personal, Social, Health, and Economic education Lead Network, Headteachers Network, and Senior Mental Health Lead Network meetings, enabling schools to plan it into their timetables. Reminder emails were sent before and during the survey period, with targeted follow-ups to schools that had not yet completed the survey. Pupils completed the survey during lesson time. In total, 62 schools participated, generating 3,588 responses from Years 4, 6, 7, and 10.

Survey questionnaire

- The survey was developed by Swindon’s Public Health Team in collaboration with BeU Swindon; Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board; School Nursing Service; Wiltshire Council; Swindon Educational Psychology Team; and Senior Mental Health Leads from local schools. A small group of Year 4 and Year 6 pupils tested the survey for accessibility and comprehension. Elements from existing surveys, including the Wiltshire CYP Emotional Wellbeing Survey, were incorporated. The final questions were grouped into 11 domain areas: 1. Overall Wellbeing, 2. Friendships and Relationships, 3. Sleep, 4. Mental Wellbeing at school, 5. Bullying, 6. Self-harm, 7. Outside of school, 8. Getting help outside of school, 9. Eating and body image, 10. Social media and 11. Activities. A summary of the domains distributed across Year groups is provided in the table on the following page.

Survey questionnaire

Survey domains	Year 4	Year 6	Year 7	Year 10
1. Overall Wellbeing				
2. Friendships and Relationships				
3. Sleep				
4. Mental wellbeing at school				
5. Bullying				
6. Self-harm				
7. Outside of school				
8. Getting help outside of school				
9. Eating and body image				
10. Social media				
11. Activities				

Distributed
Not distributed

- The survey consisted of both structured response formats (e.g., questions with predefined answer choices for students to select from) and open-ended questions (e.g., questions allowing participants to respond freely in their own words). Structured response questions were used to gather quantitative data on all key domain areas. Open-ended questions provided participants with the opportunity to share personal experiences, insights, and suggestions in their own words, offering valuable qualitative context to support and deepen the understanding of the data collected. Open-ended questions were used to gather qualitative data on the following key domains: 1. Overall wellbeing, 2. Friendships and relationships, 4. Mental wellbeing at school, 8. Getting help outside of school and 11. Activities.

Data Analysis

Structured report format

- Participant responses to the Pupils Voice survey were analysed in April and May 2025.
- The analysis of students' responses to the structured response format was conducted using the R programming language. Descriptive statistics were employed to present the findings, reported as counts and/or percentages. To enhance interpretation, responses were also consolidated into broader categories, which, wherever applicable, are presented alongside the detailed long-format responses.
- In the graphs presented, 'n' (e.g. n= 1,000) refers to the number of respondents included in the sample. This sample size represents the total number of participants who completed the survey and provided valid responses to the corresponding questions (e.g. 1,000 responses). The value of 'n' may vary slightly between graphs if certain questions were skipped or left unanswered by some respondents. Additionally, percentages less than 2% are displayed but not labelled. Percentages might also not add up to 100% due to rounding.
- Wherever applicable, responses to the main questions were also analysed by relevant pupil characteristics. Respondent characteristics and associated subgroups primarily included: Year group (Year 4, Year 6, Year 7 and Year 10); gender (male/boy, female/girl, other); ethnicity (White, Other, Mixed/Multiple, Black/African/Caribbean, Asian/Asian British); and binary questions such as sexual orientation (LGBTQIA+, straight or heterosexual); transgender status (transgender/still questioning, no); free school meals (FSM) eligibility; having a long term condition, being a young carer, pupil or family contact with a social worker, and having lived or currently living without birth parents. Visual representations (Figures) of responses to questions across all domains can be found in [Appendices I-X](#).

Structured report format

- Due to the [ordinal](#) nature of the data and their [distribution](#), [non-parametric tests](#), specifically (i) the Kruskal-Wallis test and (ii) the Mann-Whitney U test, were employed to determine whether pupils with specific characteristics responded in a statistically significantly different manner. The tests were essentially used to determine whether the difference in responses was due to chance or a random factor. Statistical significance was determined by a probability of less than 0.05, so the probability $p < 0.05$ indicates that the difference is statistically significant. While these tests can tell us whether there is a statistically significant difference between groups, they do not tell us which group scored higher or lower, or how the responses differ in practical terms (e.g., whether one group was more positive or negative). So, to understand the direction of the difference (e.g., which group responded more positively or which group showed lower agreement), we looked at the percentages and explained these trends in the written text of the report. To support interpretation, significant differences across all questions are also visually presented using colour-themed tables such as the one shown below.

Significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded
Non- significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

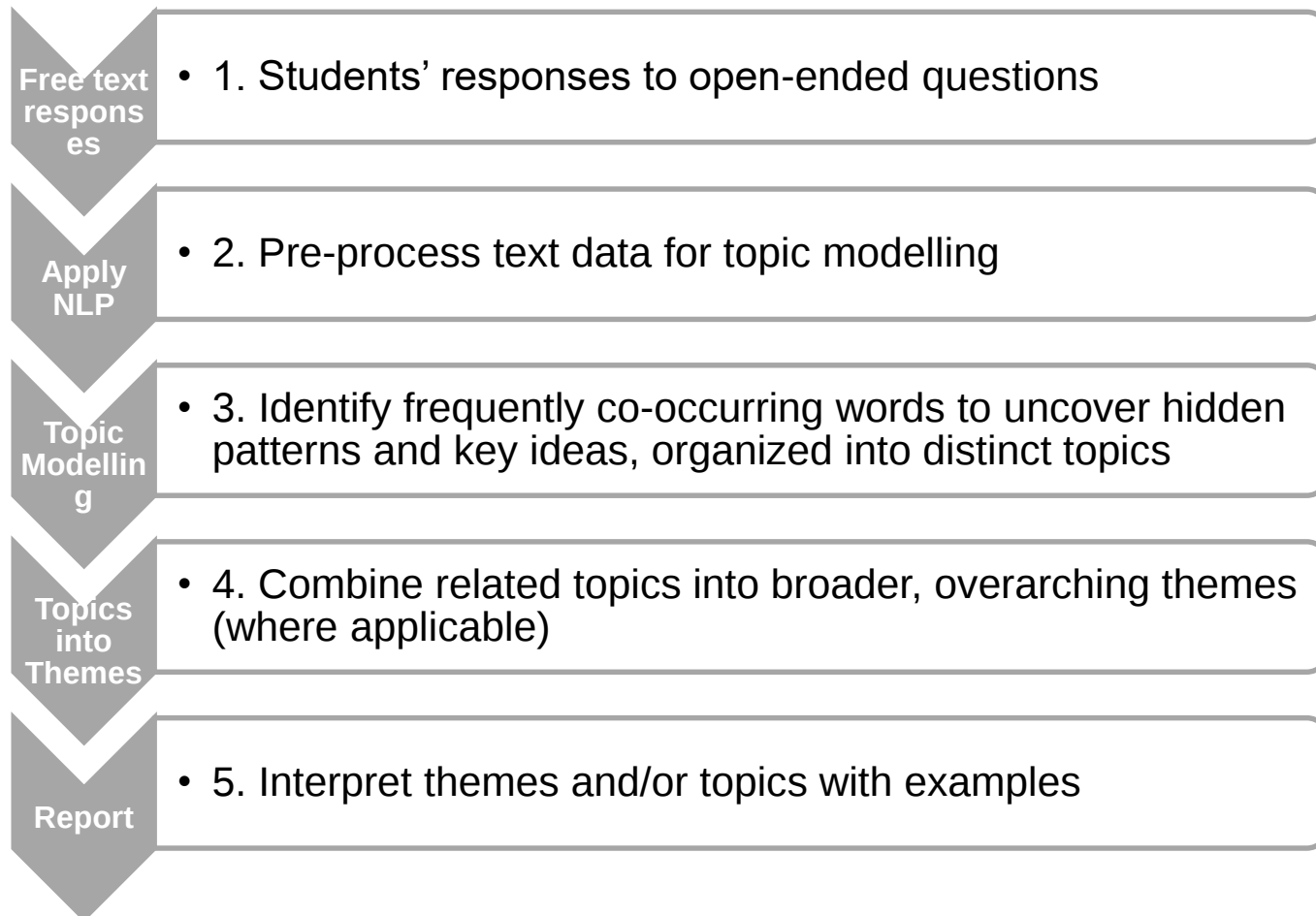
which are reflective of

Significance	$p < 0.05$
	$p \geq 0.05$

- A post-hoc Dunn’s test with Bonferroni correction was applied when pupil characteristics comprised of more than two subgroups, specifically Year group, gender, and ethnicity, as opposed to binary variables such as having a long-term condition (Yes/No). This approach allowed for the identification of specific pairwise differences within these multi-category variables. For example, if a statistically significant difference was found among Year groups, the post-hoc test further examined differences between each pair of subgroups: (i) Year 10 vs Year 7, (ii) Year 10 vs Year 6, (iii) Year 10 vs Year 4, (iv) Year 7 vs Year 6, (v) Year 7 vs Year 4, and (vi) Year 6 vs Year 4. The results from selected comparisons for Year group, gender, and ethnicity have been incorporated into the narrative, and are additionally included as tables in [Appendices I-X](#).

Open-ended questions

The analysis of the students' responses to the open-ended questions was conducted in Python programming language using Natural Language Processing (NLP). NLP uses machine learning to understand human language as it is spoken and written. The flowchart below shows the steps of the process along with a short description in the main body of text.



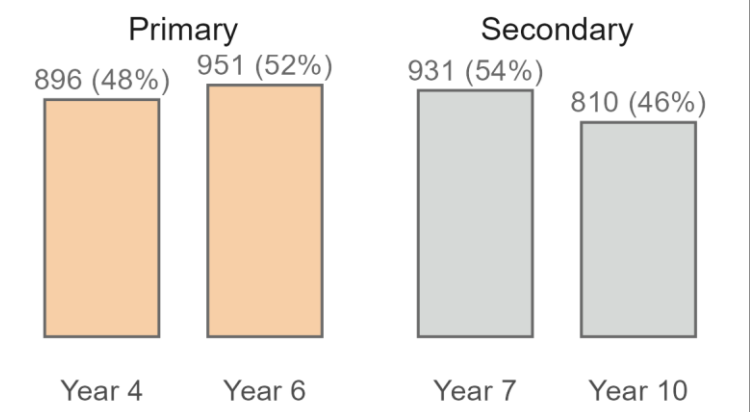
1. The data consist of students' responses to open ended questions.
2. The analysis starts by pre-processing the text using various techniques, resulting in a cleaned dataset that retains only the most meaningful words, enabling a more structured and effective analysis.
3. Topic modelling was then applied to uncover underlying topics within the large body of text. We initially used [ChatGPT](#) (Generative Pre-trained Transformer) to validate our manual interpretation of topics, and later integrated it to support the topic interpretation process following similar approaches to [Turobov et al. \(2024\)](#) and [Vien Lee et al. \(2024\)](#).
4. Where applicable, topics identified were then grouped and summarized into broader themes to support clearer interpretation and insight.
5. Direct quotes from students' open-ended responses are incorporated, making the interpretations more relatable and transparent. Text data is presented by Year group category.

Participant characteristics

Survey Participation

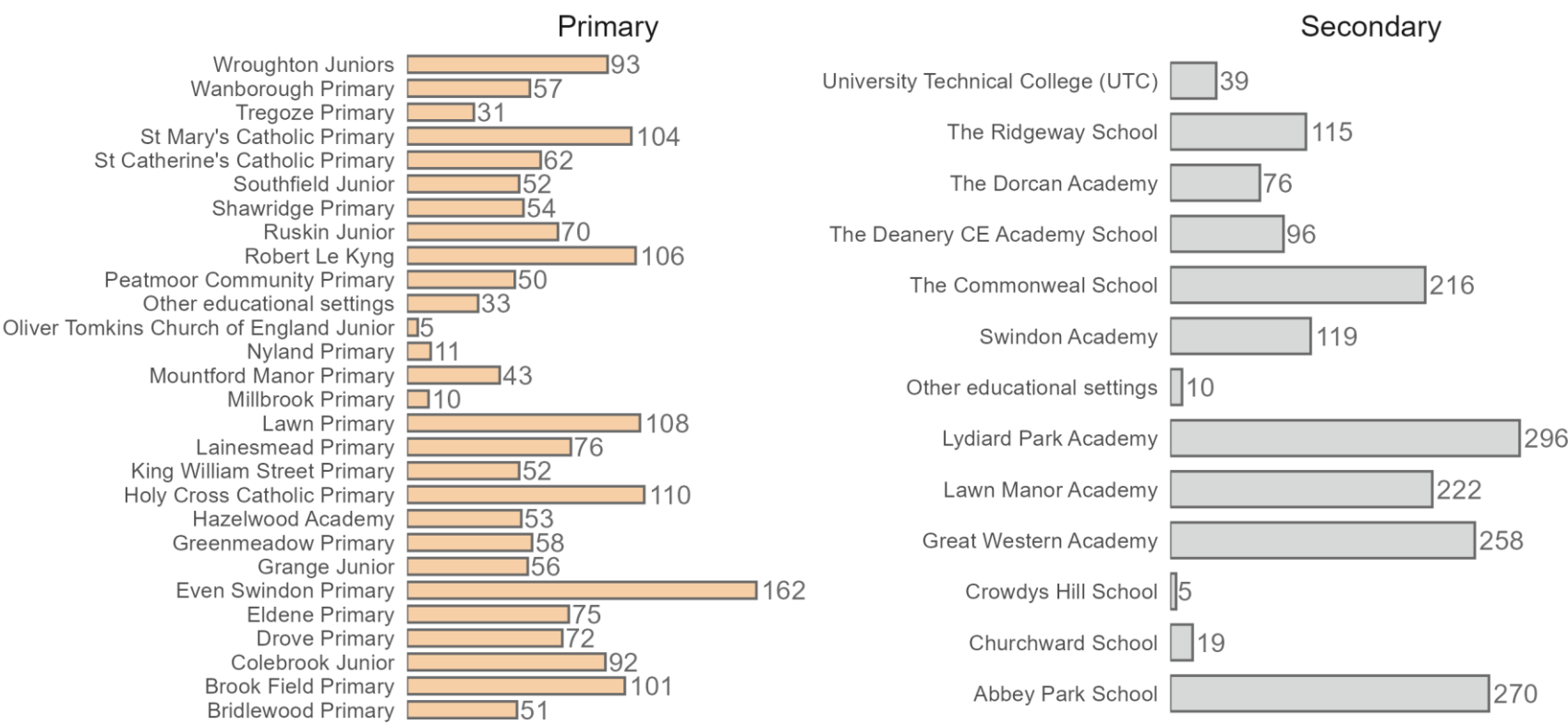
- All primary and secondary schools, 65 and 19 settings respectively, in Swindon were invited to participate in the survey.
- A total of 3,588 young people (left Figure), 1,847 primary and 1,741 secondary school pupils, from 62 educational settings, 45 primary and 17 secondary, participated.
- Of the 62 educational settings, only 27 primary and 12 secondary schools recorded five or more survey responses. This means that pupil views from 18 primary and 5 secondary schools were respectively reflected by 33 and 10 respondents (right Figure).
- Pupil characteristics across all participating educational settings, as well as participant characteristics by educational stage varied and are depicted in the following two pages.

Pupil responses by educational stage



Pupil responses by educational stage and setting

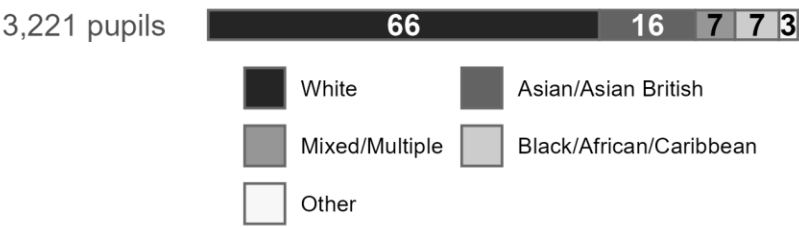
Note: Schools listed in alphabetical order; 'Other educational settings' include responses from schools with less than five participants



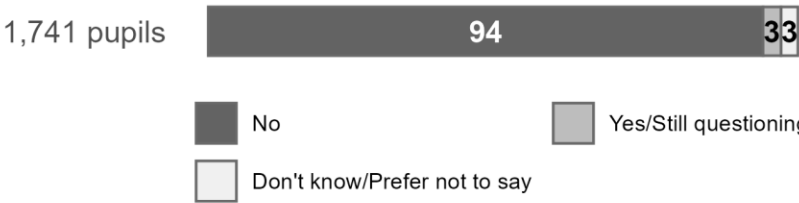
Survey Participation

Percentage of pupils by characteristic

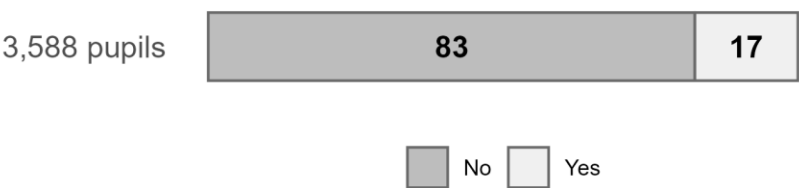
Ethnicity



Transgender status

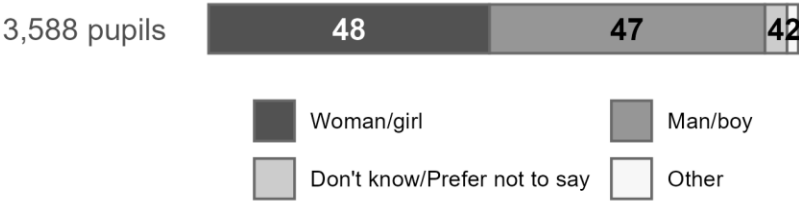


Long term condition

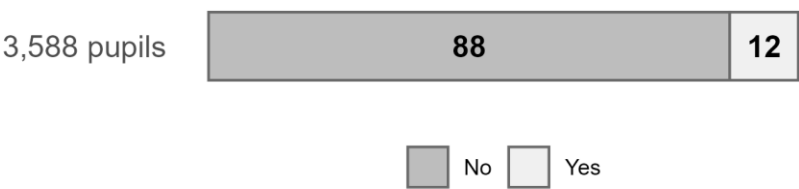


Note: Percentages might not add up to 100% due to rounding

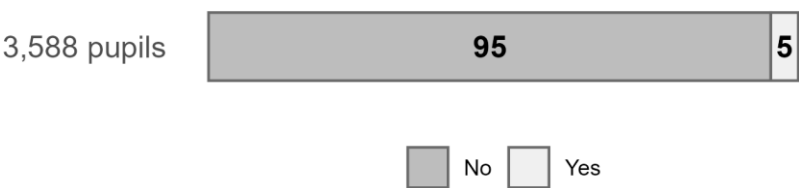
Gender



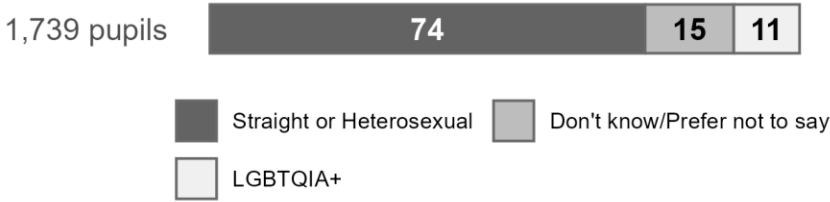
Free school meals eligibility



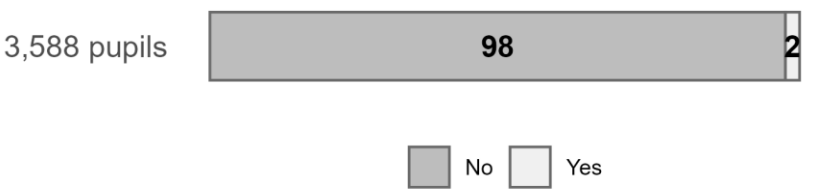
Pupil or family in contact with a social worker



Sexual orientation



Having lived or currently living without birth parents



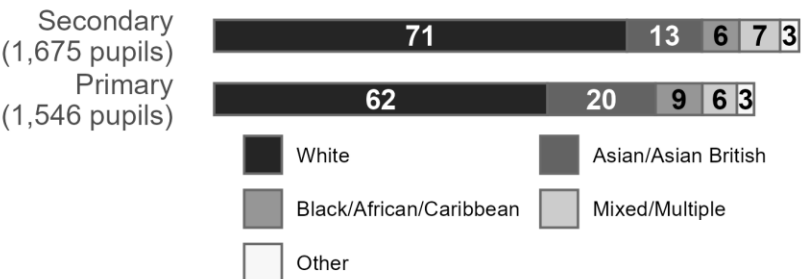
Young carer



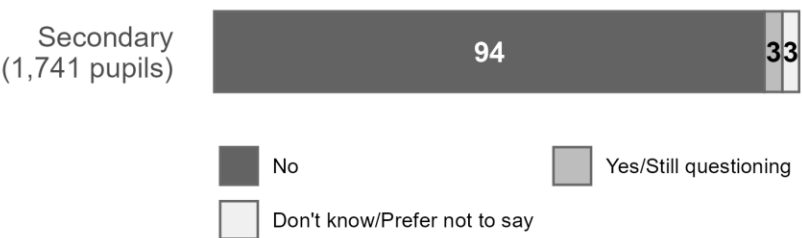
Survey Participation

Percentage of pupils by characteristic and educational stage*

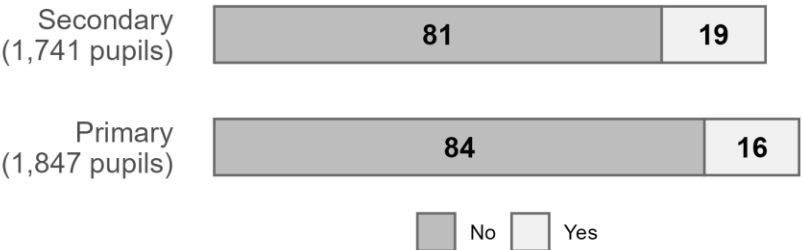
Ethnicity



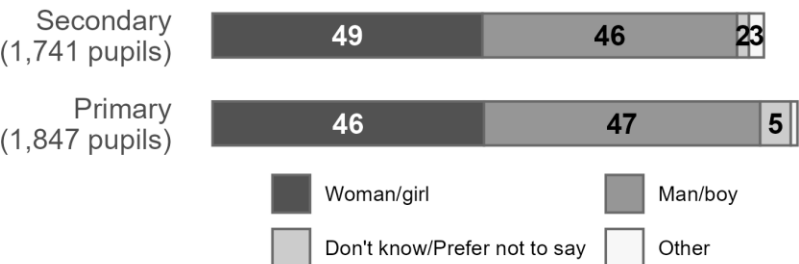
Transgender status



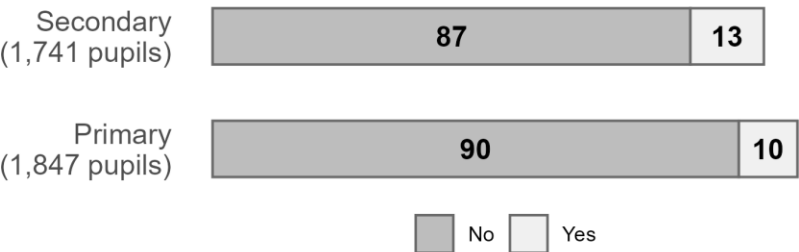
Long term condition



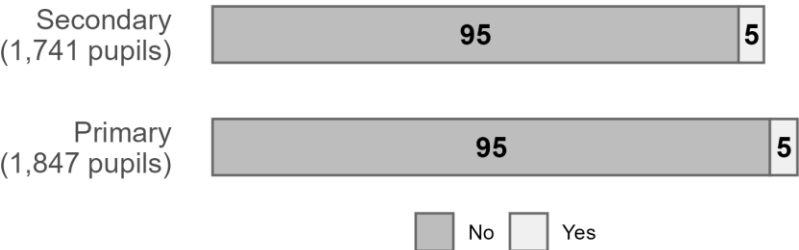
Gender



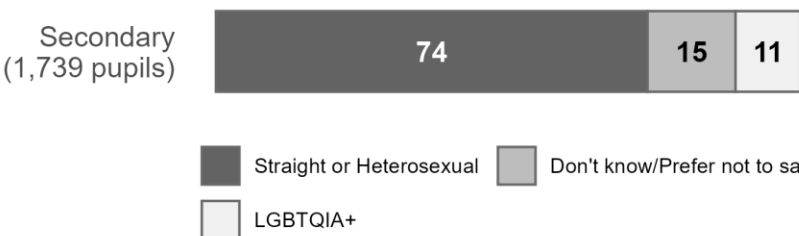
Free school meals eligibility



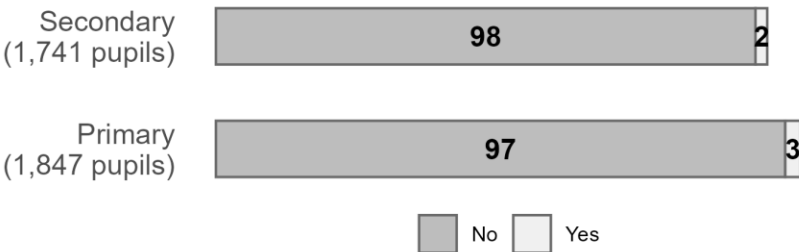
Pupil or family in contact with a social worker



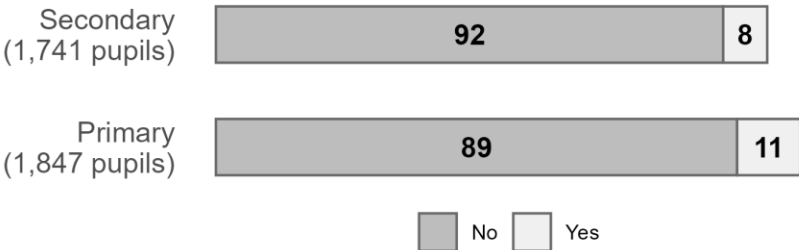
Sexual orientation



Having lived or currently living without birth parents



Young carer



* Primary Educational Stage: Year 4 and Year 6 pupils; Secondary Educational Stage: Year 7 and Year 10 pupils
Notes: Percentages less than 2% are depicted but not labeled; Percentages might not add up to 100% due to rounding

Domain 1: Overall Wellbeing

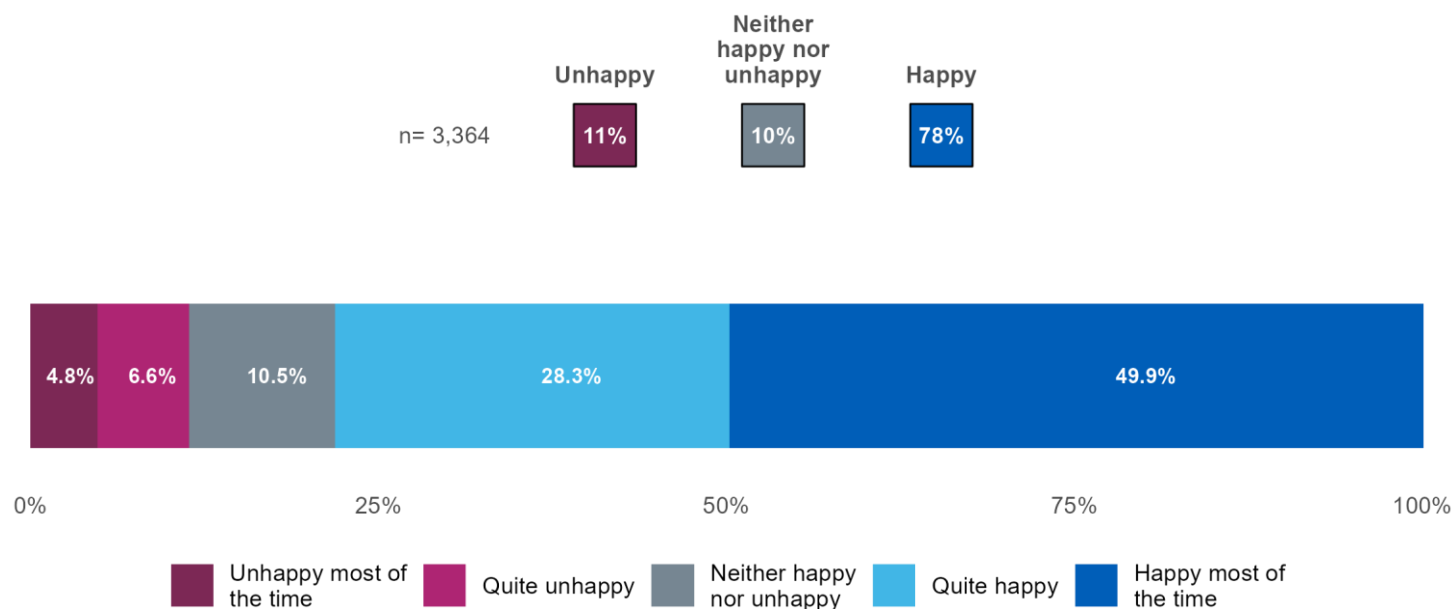


Key findings

Students were asked questions related to overall wellbeing.

- The majority of young people across all Year groups (78%) reported moderate to high levels of happiness.
- Happiness levels among pupils varied notably by age, gender identity, and personal circumstances, with Year 10 students, those identifying as other gender, and pupils facing challenges such as questioning their gender identity, having a long-term condition, or being in contact with social services being more likely to report lower levels of happiness and higher levels of unhappiness.
- Around one in two pupils (43%-55%) from all Year groups reported feeling hopeful about the future, feeling useful, feeling relaxed, dealing with problems well, and being enabled to make up their own decisions most/all the time. Slightly more than three in five pupils indicated feeling close to other people (62%) with the same frequency, and 63% never/seldom worried about changes to their body. 40% of young people found it difficult to concentrate and close to two in three respondents indicated never/seldom feeling sad (42%) or worried (39%).
- Pupils perceptions of their overall wellbeing varied significantly by age, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation and personal circumstances, with older students, particularly those in Year 10, and those identifying as woman/girl or other gender consistently reporting lower wellbeing and higher levels of sadness, worry, and concentration difficulties. Pupils identifying as LGBTQIA+, with long-term health conditions, young carers, eligible for FSM, in contact with a social worker, or not living with birth parents also reported poorer outcomes, while responses from Asian/Asian British students generally reflected more positive wellbeing.
- As children age, themes like emotional wellbeing, and peer conflict and bullying become more complex. Emotional wellbeing evolves from general sadness in younger years to anxiety and depression by Year 10, showing a clear need for early and ongoing support. Peer conflict also shifts from bullying and exclusion in younger pupils to more complex social struggles in older students highlighting the importance of developing healthy peer relationships and social skills throughout school.

1.1 Overall, are you happy with your life at the moment?



- The majority of young people (78%) reported feeling happy with their life. Slightly over one in five respondents indicated being unhappy (11%) or expressed neutral levels of happiness (10%), suggesting that educational settings should provide pupils with early and ongoing emotional wellbeing support.

1.1 Overall, are you happy with your life at the moment?

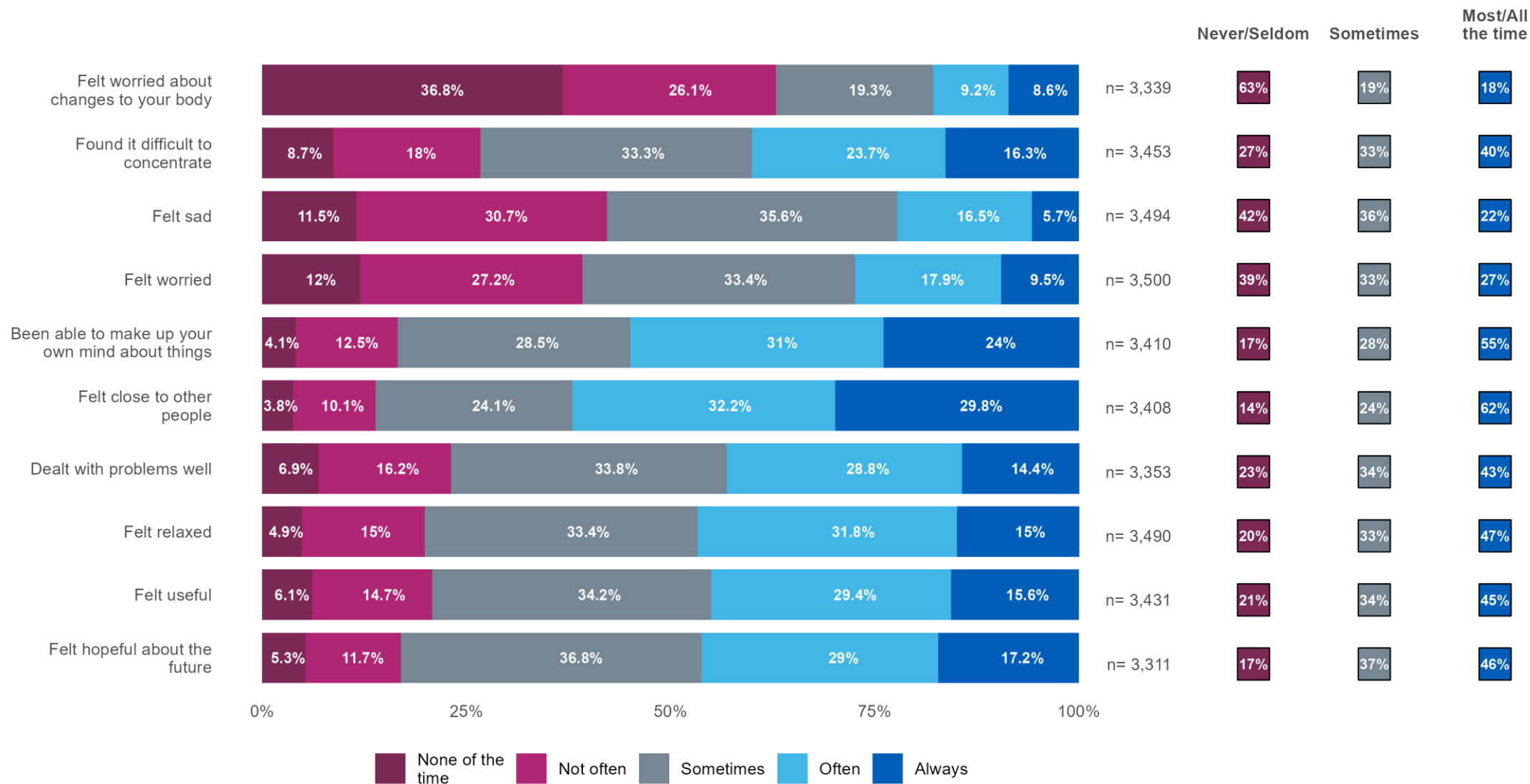
Pupil characteristics	Happiness
Year group	
Gender	
Ethnicity	
Sexual orientation	
Transgender status	
Long term condition	
Young carer	
Free school meals (FSM) eligibility	
Pupil/family in contact with a social worker	
Having lived or currently living without birth parents	

Note: See Appendix I for responses by pupil characteristic

Significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded
Non- significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

- Happiness levels among pupils vary by age, gender, and personal circumstances.
- Year 10 students reported the lowest happiness (67%) compared to younger year groups (83% for Year 4, 81% for Year 6 and 80% for Year 7). Similarly, proportionally more Year 10 students (15%) reported being unhappy compared to the other age groups (12% for Year 4, 11% for Year 6 and 8% for Year 7). A significant difference in the way Year 4 and Year 7 pupils responded was also recorded.
- Pupils identifying as other gender responded significantly differently compared to both men/boys and women/girls. 31% of respondents identifying as other gender indicated being unhappy (compared to 9% for men/boys and 12% for women/girls).
- While a relatively high percentage of students from Mixed/Multiple ethnic backgrounds report unhappiness (16%), overall happiness levels did not significantly vary by ethnicity (13% for Black/African/Caribbean, 11% for White, 10% for other, 9% for Asian/Asian British).
- In contrast, lower levels of happiness were reported for students with specific characteristics that include identifying as LGBTQIA+ (50% vs 78% for peers), being transgender/still questioning their identity (57% vs 74% for peers) , having a long-term condition (70% vs 80% for peers), being eligible for free school meals (FSM) (70% vs 79% for peers), being in contact with a social worker (69% vs 79% for peers), or having lived or currently living without birth parents (69% vs 78% for peers). Similarly, the aforementioned young groups also expressed higher levels of unhappiness: 27% (9% amongst peers) for respondents identifying as LGBTQIA+, 30% (11% amongst peers) for pupils still questioning their identity, 17% (10% amongst peers) for pupils with a long term condition, 14% (11% amongst peers) for young carers, 18% (11% amongst peers) for students in receipt of FSM, 19% (11% amongst peers) for individuals in contact with a social care worker and 21% (11% amongst peers) for respondents who have lived or are currently living without birth parents.

1.2 Thinking about this term, how often, if at all, have you...



- Just under half (46%) respondents felt hopeful about the future most/all the time, 37% reported feeling hopeful sometimes, with 17% indicating never/seldom feeling so.
- 43% of participants frequently dealt with problems well, but a worrying 23% reported they rarely or ever do.
- 47% of young respondents indicated feeling relaxed regularly or at all times, with one in five pupils reporting being rarely or ever in a state of relaxation.
- With respect to feeling useful, a noteworthy 21% of pupils reported they seldom or never feel so, with the majority (79%) reporting feeling of use at times or more often.
- Decision-making and social connection were challenging for a large number of students, with 17% of respondents reporting never/seldom being able to make decisions and 14% indicating they never/seldom feel close to someone else.
- Concentration, sadness, and worry affected a substantial portion of young people, with around 40%, 22% and 27% of students reporting struggling most/all the time, respectively.
- Most young people (63%) reported that they never/seldom felt worried with body image concerns. However, a smaller group (around 18%) reported experiencing high levels of worry most/all the time.

1.2 Thinking about this term, how often, if at all, have you...

Pupil Characteristics	Felt hopeful	Felt useful	Felt relaxed	Dealt with problems well	Felt close to other people	Been able to make up your own mind	Felt worried	Felt sad	Found it difficult to concentrate	Felt worried about body changes
Year group										
Gender										
Ethnicity										
Sexual orientation										
Transgender status										
Long term condition										
Young carer										
Free school meals (FSM) eligibility										
Pupil/family in contact with a social worker										
Having lived or currently living without birth parents										

Note: See Appendix I for responses by pupil characteristic

Significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

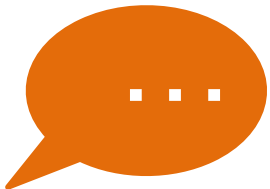
Non- significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

- A clear age-related pattern in wellbeing is reflected in participant responses, with Year 10 students consistently reporting lower wellbeing across indicators such as usefulness, relaxation, concentration, sadness, and worry. While some indicators (like hopefulness and feeling close to others) show mixed patterns, the overall trend highlights declining wellbeing with age, particularly as students move into secondary school.
- Consistent differences across all indicators with respect to gender exist. In general, compared to their peers, students identifying as man/boy reported feeling hopeful, useful or relaxed; being able to problem-solve; and make their own decisions more frequently. Similarly, this group reported experiencing lower frequencies of worry (including about body changes), sadness and concentration difficulties. Consequently, young people identifying as woman/girl or other, reported experiencing lower wellbeing across all indicators.

1.2 Thinking about this term, how often, if at all, have you...

- With respect to ethnicity, there are differences in pupils responses for most wellbeing domains, except for social connection and decision making. Asian/Asian British pupils in particular, were more likely to report higher frequencies of positive wellbeing, especially for hopefulness, usefulness, relaxation, and problem-solving, and less likely to indicate feelings of sadness and concentration difficulties on a regular basis. Mixed/Multiple, Black/African/Caribbean and White ethnic groups were more likely to report experiencing challenges frequently, especially around sadness and concentration.
- When compared to pupils identifying as straight or heterosexual, individuals describing themselves as LGBTQIA+ consistently recorded lower frequencies across all overall wellbeing related questions.
- Students identifying as transgender expressed more frequent levels of worry about body changes indicating greater distress, with close to half (48%) worrying most or all the time (15% for peers).
- Pupils with a long-term health condition were consistently less likely than their peers to report higher frequencies (most/all the time) of feeling hopeful about the future, close to others, useful or relaxed; being able to solve problems well, and making their own decisions. They were also more likely, compared to pupils without a long-term health condition, to indicate feeling sad or worried, experience concentration difficulties and express concerns about body changes more frequently.
- Compared to their peers, pupils identifying as young carers reported feeling less relaxed, not as proficient at dealing with problems well, feeling more distant to others, less able to make their own decisions, reduced emotional wellbeing (higher sadness and worry), increased difficulty concentrating, and greater concern about body changes.
- Students eligible for FSM reported feeling less useful, feeling more distant to others, reduced emotional wellbeing (higher sadness and worry), increased concentration difficulty, and more frequent concerns around body image than their peers. However, no significant differences compared to non-FSM eligible students were recorded on hopefulness, feeling relaxed, problem-solving and decision-making.
- Young people who were in contact with a social worker reported higher frequencies of feeling sad, experiencing difficulty in concentrating, and worrying about body changes than their peers.
- Pupils who have lived or are currently living without their birth parents were more likely to indicate regular concentration difficulties, which can be reflective of possible impacts of household instability or lack of consistent caregiving than their peers.

1.3 If you indicated that you felt worried or sad, what worried you or made you sad?



The table below outlines the key themes identified across all Year groups and illustrates how these themes are expressed within each group.

Key Themes across Year groups

Theme	Year 4 (Ages 8–9)	Year 6 (Ages 10–11)	Year 7 (Ages 11–12)	Year 10 (Ages 14–15)
Fear of Separation	Strong fear of loss or separation (e.g. death)	Less prominent	Absent	Absent
Peer Conflict and Bullying	Bullying, exclusion, changing friendships	Bullying and mistreatment	Social concerns and peer issues	Interpersonal struggles and belonging
Academic/School Stress	School anxiety and self-worth issues	School-related stress	Academic pressure	Performance pressure and future uncertainty
Emotional Wellbeing	General sadness/anxiety	Emotional hurt, worry	Emotional struggles	Deep psychological concerns (e.g. anxiety, depression)
Family Issues	Implicit in emotional worry	Conflict or loss at home	Family-related worries	More complex family-related distress
Identity and Self-Worth	Emerging (linked to school or peers)	Implicit in social belonging	Begins to show through peer concerns	Strong focus on identity and self-esteem

The following pages provide a detailed breakdown of themes and topics by year group.

1.3 If you indicated that you felt worried or sad, what worried you or made you sad?



Themes and topics emerging from pupils' responses indicate that children aged 8 to 9 often feel worried or sad, primarily due to the following factors:

Theme	Fear of separation or death	Peer bullying and conflict	Social exclusion and changes in friendships	Anxiety around school and self-worth
Topic	Topic 1 – Fear of Losing Loved Ones and Mortality <u>Interpretation:</u> Children seem to experience death related anxiety. Clear fear of death or loss, especially of parents or pets.	Topic 2 – Bullying and Peer Conflict <u>Interpretation:</u> A strong theme of bullying or being hurt by others, both physically and emotionally (annoy, shout). Mentions of family and siblings may indicate conflict both at school and at home.	Topic 3 – Emotional Impact of Social Interactions and Exclusion <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic captures general sadness, likely related to being excluded from play, conflict with siblings, or not getting what they want.	Topic 5 – Classroom and Social Anxiety <u>Interpretation:</u> Focus on social and school-related stress, like struggles in class, friendship troubles, or performance anxiety.
			Topic 4 – Fear of Losing Friends or Changes in School <u>Interpretation:</u> Likely about friendship loss, such as a friend moving away, changing schools, or being left out.	
Examples	"My mum had a heart attack." "My grandma died." "What if my family was in an accident?" "I sometimes feel sad if I think of the best and fun times with my dog because he died a couple months ago and it is my first Christmas without him."	"My friend shouting at me and pushing me and leaving me out." "People talking about my body." "My sister because she bites me most of the time, hits me and also trips me over. They find it quite funny but for me it is not!" "I felt sad because my brother bullied me always he does not say sorry when he hurts me."	"I feel sad sometimes because some people are just not kind to me." "My friend is not listening to me." "When my friends don't play with me." "I love my family so much but my sister always annoys me." "Losing friends." "If we're not friends anymore." "Maybe when my friends left me and I am alone or when I am by myself because I had an argument." "What made me feel worried is that going to a new class."	"I feel worried when I get a bad score on a test because I might get in trouble for making a silly mistake and I won't be the best in year 4." "When I don't know something important." "Teacher goes at a fast pace." "I'm quite quiet, and I worry it annoys people."

1.3 If you indicated that you felt worried or sad, what worried you or made you sad?



Themes and topics emerging from pupils' responses indicate that children aged 10 to 11 often feel worried or sad, primarily due to the following factors:

Theme	School-related stress	Bullying and social mistreatment	Emotional hurt and peer relationships	Generalized worry/sadness about social belonging	Family conflict or loss
Topic	Topic 1 – Academic Pressure and Fear of Failure <u>Interpretation:</u> Worries about doing well in school and pressure to succeed may be significant for some students.	Topic 2 – Bullying and Social Conflict <u>Interpretation:</u> Social threats, peer bullying, and possibly family arguments are major sources of distress.	Topic 3 – Emotional Pain and Exclusion <u>Interpretation:</u> Emotional pain from friendships or feeling left out is a key theme.	Topic 5 – General Sadness and Social Worry <u>Interpretation:</u> This is a mixed-emotion topic suggesting general unease about social life and school.	Topic 6 – Family Issues and Loss <u>Interpretation:</u> Family conflict, grief, and fears about loved ones' wellbeing are meaningful sources of sadness.
Examples	<i>"I get sad and upset when I don't finish my work and I feel isolated and angry when it happens."</i> <i>"I am nervous about exams and tests."</i> <i>"Some times when we do tests I get worried that I might fail or not finish it"</i>	<i>"If someone bullies you or calls you bad names or even standing in front of the class because I am not use to it."</i> <i>"The things that make me sad are when people are mean to me or when I get sad when I don't get anything."</i> <i>"Falling on the ground getting bullied or teamed on."</i> <i>"My mom keeps shouting at me for no reason, and my dad always sides with my sister when she accuses me of something."</i>	<i>"When I am hurt by my friends because I have a odd number in my friend group so one person is always left out."</i> <i>"Friends telling people my secrets and when others get hurt physically and mentally."</i> <i>"People leaving me out that made me sad and worried I am not the best of friends with them."</i> <i>"My friend when they are angry with me and when my friends say they don't want to be my friends."</i> <i>"The things that make me sad are when I feel people are ignoring me."</i> <i>"Going to secondary school makes me worried and I'm also worried about my friendship with my friend because lately she has been bossing me around I feel sad when my friends tell me they don't want to play with me and when they leave me out and play without me."</i>	<i>"What made me feel worried or sad is that soon I am leaving [school name] and I have had the same friends for a long time so I don't know if people will like me or become friends with me because I relate to my friends and we have the same personality so I'm not sure if some people will like my attitude and personality."</i> <i>"That no one would want to be my friend anymore if I lost my temper on them."</i>	<i>"Sometimes I am worried about my Nans and Grandads because they are getting older and close to the end of there life."</i>

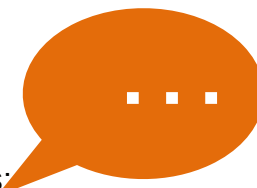
1.3 If you indicated that you felt worried or sad, what worried you or made you sad?



Themes and topics emerging from pupils' responses indicate that young people aged 11 to 12 often feel worried or sad, primarily due to the following factors:

Theme	Academic pressure	Social concerns	Family-related worries	Emotional struggles
Topic	Topic 1 - School-Related Stress <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic seems to reflect concerns related to school and academic pressures. Students may be feeling stressed about their schoolwork, assignments, and possibly the expectations placed on them by teachers or themselves.	Topic 2 - Social Interaction and Peer Concerns <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic likely captures worries related to social dynamics at school, particularly with friends or peer groups.	Topic 4 - Family and Mortality Concerns <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic highlights concerns related to family, mortality, and the future. my aunt who died.	Topic 6 - Emotional and Existential Concerns <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic seems to reflect more general emotional states, particularly sadness and worry.
		Topic 3 - Friendship and Social Life <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic appears to focus on worries related to friendships and social life, losing close friendships.	Topic 5 - Family Dynamics and Bullying <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic touches on worries about family relationships and issues like bullying.	
Examples	<i>"My class and teachers make me upset and the amount of homework we have worries me that I won't get it done in time."</i> <i>"The feeling of being overwhelmed with homework. Feeling stressed about not understanding about school or keeping up in class."</i> <i>"I feel worried that I'm not doing work correctly or I'm going to be late for class or miss a homework."</i> <i>"just like if I get shouted at by a teacher or haven't done the homework."</i>	<i>"Getting in trouble like getting detentions."</i> <i>"problems with friends"</i> <i>"When a group of students started to spread lies about me having a 'crush' on someone's boyfriend."</i> <i>"I feel like I have a friend who is a bit selfish and don't know if I should be her friend."</i> <i>"Friendships and drama at school."</i> <i>"I don't really know, sometimes people in my class tease me, I get overwhelmed easily and drama what happens in my class/ friendships."</i>	<i>"I lost my step mum, grandad and nan all last year and missing them makes me sad."</i> <i>"People bullying me because my ginger hair colour."</i> <i>"I worry about people talking about me in school because I'm a big girl and people bully others who are bigger in weight than they are."</i> <i>"parents divorcing moving from mums to dads a lot"</i>	<i>"Just sometimes random friendship problems that has worried me or made me feel sad because I don't want to make people sad or worry them."</i> <i>"Sometimes, I felt like it was a bit hard for me to fit in somewhere or to make friends as I'm still not to sure who I fit in with."</i> <i>"what made me sad was the fact that I might never get to see most of my friends living overseas ever again."</i>

1.3 If you indicated that you felt worried or sad, what worried you or made you sad?



Themes and topics emerging from pupils' responses indicate that young people aged 14 to 15 often feel worried or sad, primarily due to the following factors:

Theme	Performance Pressure and Uncertainty	Emotional and Psychological Wellbeing	Interpersonal Struggles and Belonging	Identity Formation and Self-Worth
Topic	Topic 1 - School-Related Stress <u>Interpretation:</u> This is related to exams, homework, revision, grades and academic pressure, time management and feeling overwhelmed, fear of failure or not achieving goals, teacher behaviour and school environment.	Topic 3 - Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing <u>Interpretation:</u> Students express anxiety, depression, feeling overwhelmed or empty, self-worth, body image, internal pressure, and overthinking and lack of motivation.	Topic 4 - Family Issues <u>Interpretation:</u> Students seem to feel worried about divorce, bereavement, illness, conflict or lack of connection with parents or siblings, feeling isolated or judged at home.	Topic 6 - Personal Identity and Self-Esteem <u>Interpretation:</u> Students seem to struggle with self-image or body image, ADHD, autism, or possible undiagnosed mental health issues, and gender identity or acceptance.
	Topic 2 - Future Uncertainty <u>Interpretation:</u> Students feel fear of not succeeding, anxiety about GCSEs, A-levels, university, careers, fear of not achieving dreams or being "good enough".		Topic 5 - Social Relationships and Peer Problems <u>Interpretation:</u> Students feel sad due to bullying, friendship problems or fallouts, fear of being judged or left out, and loneliness.	
Examples	<i>"Exam stress and outside school stuff."</i> <i>"School just gives too much homework."</i> <i>"I feel worried about school and if I am doing the right things."</i>	<i>"Everything. Life is too much and I struggle every day."</i> <i>"I take the smallest things personally for no reason."</i> <i>"I just feel sad for no reason."</i>	<i>"My family situation at home."</i> <i>"My mum."</i> <i>"My dad dying."</i>	<i>"Suppressing my ADHD."</i> <i>"Sexuality and friends."</i> <i>"Body dysmorphia."</i>
	<i>"I worry about my future as I don't know if it's gonna be good or bad."</i> <i>"I feel worried that I'm not going to amount to something useful in the future."</i> <i>"The worry of being useless or not having a good future in my life."</i>		<i>"Having a fallout with my friends."</i> <i>"I always feel like I'm nothing."</i> <i>"People judging me."</i>	

Domain 2: Friendships and Relationships

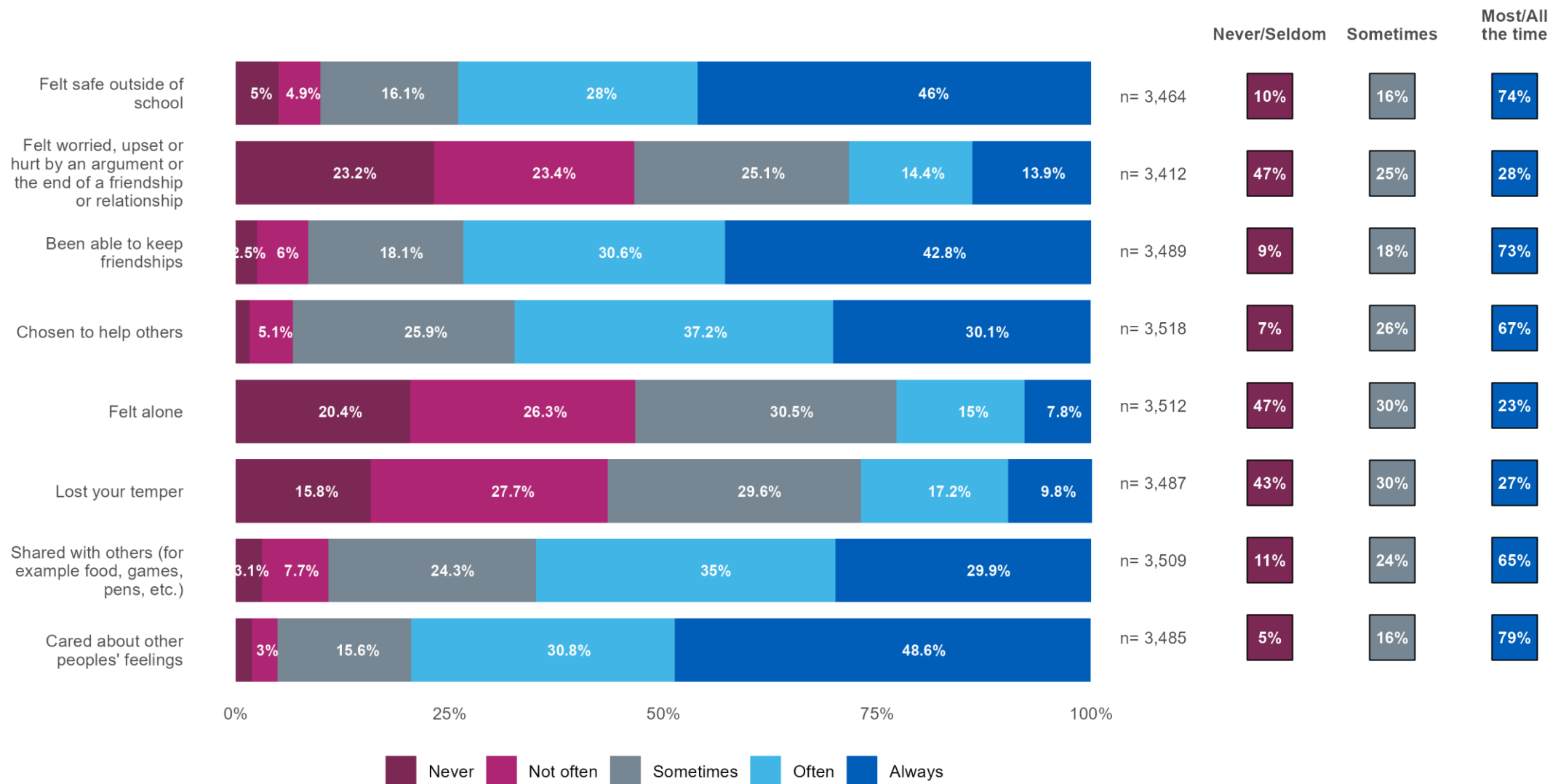


Key findings

Students were asked questions related to friendships and relationships.

- The findings highlight that most students demonstrate strong empathy, social awareness, and healthy friendships.
- However, emotional wellbeing varies: about a quarter often feel lonely or lose their temper, with these issues more prevalent among pupils self-identifying as LGBTQIA+, those with long-term health conditions, young carers, individuals receiving FSM, or in contact with social workers.
- Gender, ethnicity, and age play significant roles in social and emotional responses, with girls generally more empathetic, Asian/Asian British students more emotionally regulated, and Year 10 students more likely to feel isolated.
- Relationships with parents/carers are generally positive, though disparities exist for pupils identifying as other gender, LGBTQIA+, transgender/questioning, or living without their birth parents.
- Emotional hurt and vulnerability and friendship loss/change are closely linked and central to students' wellbeing. Emotional sensitivity grows with age from feeling ignored in Year 4 to fear of rejection and insecurity by Year 10 highlighting the increasing impact of peer dynamics. Friendship changes are distressing at every stage, evolving from confusion in younger children to deep anxiety and loss in older students. These patterns show how vital stable peer relationships are and the need for emotional support throughout schooling.

2.1 Thinking about this term, how often, if at all, have you...



2.1 Thinking about this term, how often, if at all, have you...

- The majority of students (79%) have strong empathy and social awareness as they reported caring about other peoples' feelings most/all the time, with more than 98% of pupils showing some level of care.
- Two in three young people (65%) indicated sharing with other students most/all the time, with only a small number of students reporting not engaging in sharing (11%).
- Just under half of the students (43%) have good emotional control, with a quarter (27%) of respondents self-reporting losing their temper most/all the time.
- Most young people (47%) reported that they never/seldom feel alone, with 30% of students indicating feeling alone sometimes. However, a notable proportion (23%) indicated experiencing loneliness most/all the time.
- Helping others most/all the time is a common behaviour being reported for most students (67%). Only 7% reported never/seldom while 26% of students sometimes choose to help others.
- The majority of students (73%) felt confident in maintaining friendships, 18% were sometimes able to keep friendships, and 9% struggled to maintain them.
- About 46% of young people reported never/seldom feeling worried, upset or hurt over arguments/end of friendships. However, slightly more than one in four pupils (28%) reported most/all the time struggling with conflicts/end of friendships.
- The majority of students (74%) felt safe outside of school 'most/all the time', with about 10% reporting never/seldom feeling unsafe.

2.1 Thinking about this term, how often, if at all, have you...

Pupil Characteristics	Cared about other peoples' feelings	Shared with others	Lost your temper	Felt alone	Chose to help others	Been able to keep friendships	Felt worried or upset over arguments	Felt safe outside of school
Year group								
Gender								
Ethnicity								
Sexual orientation								
Transgender status								
Long term condition								
Young carer								
Free school meals (FSM) eligibility								
Pupil/family in contact with a social worker								
Having lived or currently living without birth parents								

Significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded
Non- significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

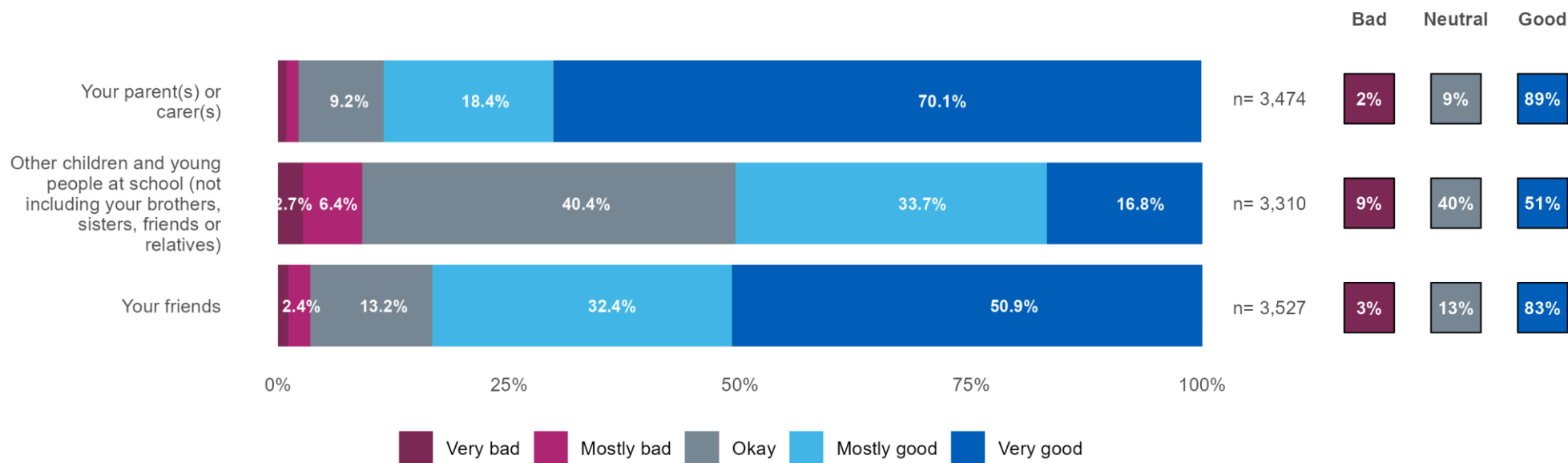
Note: See Appendix II for responses by pupil characteristic

- Year 6 and Year 7 pupils were more likely to care about other peoples' feelings most/all the time compared to Year 10 and Year 4 pupils. A clear age-related pattern is reflected in pupils responses with respect to sharing with others, with the proportion of pupils sharing 'most/all the time' increasing with age and ranging from 52% for Year 4 to 73% for Year 10. Year 7 pupils were less likely to lose their temper, with Year 6 pupils reporting being most likely to do so. Year 10 students were more likely to report feeling alone, with statistically significant differences in the way they responded compared to Year 6 and Year 7 students being recorded. Statistically significant differences in choosing to help others were recorded, with Year 10 pupils being less likely to do so frequently, Year 4 pupils were most likely not to/rarely help others, whereas Year 6 and Year 7 pupils responded to this question in a similar manner. Statistically significant differences with respect to pupils' ability to maintain friendships were recorded but were not evidenced when comparing responses between individual year groups, whereas no differences were recorded with respect to feeling worried or upset over arguments. Year 4 students (68%) reported a lower sense of safety outside school compared to older students.
- Statistically significant gender differences in responses were observed across all indicators. Women/girls were more likely to care about other peoples' feelings than the other genders and share with others more than men/boys. They were also, along with men/boys, less likely to lose their temper than the other gender group. When compared to the other gender groups, men/boys reported feeling alone less frequently and girls/women chose to help others more regularly. Men/boys were more likely to keep friendships or feel safe outside of school and least likely to feel worried or upset over arguments, whereas the "other" gender was the least likely group to maintain a friendship, feel safe outside of school, or experience negative feelings resulting from arguments or the end of a relationship.

2.1 Thinking about this term, how often, if at all, have you...

- Ethnicity had a significant effect in the way participants responded on questions around losing temper, choosing to help others and their ability to keep friendships. The majority of pupils identifying as Asian/Asian British (51%) reported that they never/seldom lose their temper, whereas Black/African/Caribbean pupils indicated losing their temper more frequently (most/all the time: 33%) than all the other ethnic groups. Similarly, proportionally more Asian/Asian British pupils indicated choosing to help others (72%) or being able to maintain friendships (81%) on a regular basis (most/all the time). Even though the differences in the way the different groups responded with respect to feelings of loneliness were not statistically significant, Asian/Asian British young people reported lower levels of loneliness (most/all the time: 19%), whereas 38% of young people with a Black/African/Caribbean background reported they never/seldom feel lonely, the lowest proportion amongst all ethnic groups.
- Students identifying as LGBTQIA+ expressed not being able to maintaining friendships (59% vs 79% among peers), feeling safe outside school (63% vs 78% among peers) as frequently (most/all the time), and also appear to lose temper (34% vs 24% among peers), feel lonely (51% vs 19% among peers) and become worried/upset over friendships/arguments (45% vs 26% among peers) more frequently.
- Similarly, young respondents identifying as transgender/still questioning indicated not being as able as their peers to maintain friendships (61% vs 77% among peers), feeling safe outside school (51% vs 77% among peers) the majority of the time and recorded higher percentages of feeling lonely most/all the time (50% vs 23% among peers), upset over friendships (48% vs 28% among peers) and sharing with others (77% vs 73% among peers).
- Pupils with a long-term health condition consistently reported higher frequency levels of losing temper (36% vs 25% among peers), feeling alone (30% vs 21% among peers), and worried/upset over arguments (32% vs 27% among peers), as well as lower frequency levels of choosing to help others (62% vs 68% among peers), ability to keep friendships (65% vs 75% among peers), safety outside school (70% vs 75% among peers).
- Compared to their peers, pupils identifying as young carers reported higher levels of losing temper (32% vs 26% among peers) most/all the time, feeling lonely (29% vs 22% among peers), and upset or hurt over arguments (38% vs 27% among peers).
- Students eligible for FSM and young people who were in contact with a social worker were significantly more likely to lose their temper, feel lonely, become upset or hurt by arguments, or maintain friendships.
- Similarly, pupils who had lived or were currently living without their birth parents were significantly more likely to report not being able to maintain friendships or become upset or hurt by arguments.

2.2 Please describe your relationships with...



- The vast majority of children (89%) reported having a good relationship with their parents or carers.
- Relationships with other students at school are more varied. While many young people (51%) indicated having good relationships, a significant number reported that their relationships were either neutral (40%) or bad (9%).
- Friendships are generally good (83%), though not as universally positive as relationships with parents or carers.

Key respondent characteristics

2.2 Please describe your relationships with...

Pupil Characteristics	Your friends	Other children at school	Parents or carers
Year group			
Gender			
Ethnicity			
Sexual orientation			
Transgender status			
Long term condition			
Young carer			
Free school meals (FSM) eligibility			
Pupil/family in contact with a social worker			
Having lived or currently living without birth parents			

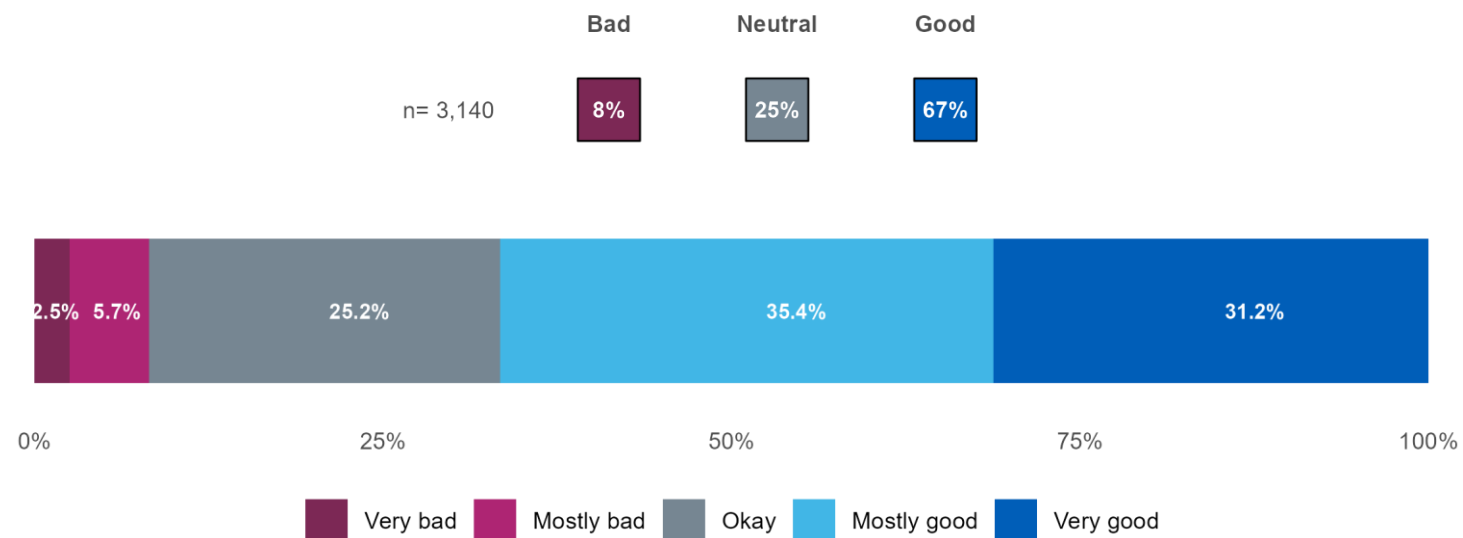
Significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

Non- significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

Note: See Appendix II for responses by pupil characteristic

- Pupils across different Year groups responded in a similar manner when assessing their relationships with friends and other children at school. However, compared to the other Year groups, there were significant differences in the way Year 10 students responded when asked to assess their relationship with their parents or carers, with 83% indicating that they are good (91% in Year 7 and Year 6, 88% in Year 4).
- Statistically significant gender differences in responses were observed across the different types of relationships that pupils form, with men/boys and girls/females reporting having better relationships with friends, other children at school or parents/carers than young people identifying as the other gender group. Men/boys additionally indicated as having better relationships with their friends when compared to girls/women.
- Participant responses did not significantly vary by ethnicity with respect to their relationships with friends. However, it appears that Asian/Asian British pupils have better relationships with other children at school compared to pupil’s from the White ethnic group and better relationships with their parents or carers than individuals from the Mixed/Multiple and the Other ethnic group.
- Young respondents self-identifying as LGBTQIA+, pupils with a long term condition, eligible for FSM or in contact with a social worker did not indicate that their relationships with friends, other children at school, or parents/carers were as good as those of their peers. A similar pattern was reflected for young carers, but only for their relationships with friends and parents/carers since no significant difference was recorded for their relationships with other children at school.
- Even though pupils identifying as transgender/still questioning did not rate their relationships with friends or other children at school as good as their peers, the differences were not statistically significant. However, this was not the case when asked to evaluate their relationships with parents/carers, with 28% considering such relationships as neutral or bad compared to 12% among their peers.
- Even though pupils who have lived or are currently living without their birth parents did rate their relationships with friends, other children at school and parents/carers as high as their peers, statistically significant differences in the way they responded were only evidenced when describing their relationships with friends (66% rated them as good vs 84% for peers).

2.3 How would you describe your relationships with other children living with you such as brothers and sisters?



- Most young people (67%) reported having good relationships with their siblings. Some children (25.2%) described their relationship as neutral, indicating occasional conflicts or distance, with a small percentage of students (8%) considering their sibling relationships as bad (mostly bad or very bad).

2.3 How would you describe your relationships with other children living with you such as brothers and sisters?

Pupil Characteristics	Siblings
Year group	
Gender	
Ethnicity	
Sexual orientation	
Transgender status	
Long term condition	
Young carer	
Free school meals (FSM) eligibility	
Pupil/family in contact with a social worker	
Having lived or currently living without birth parents	

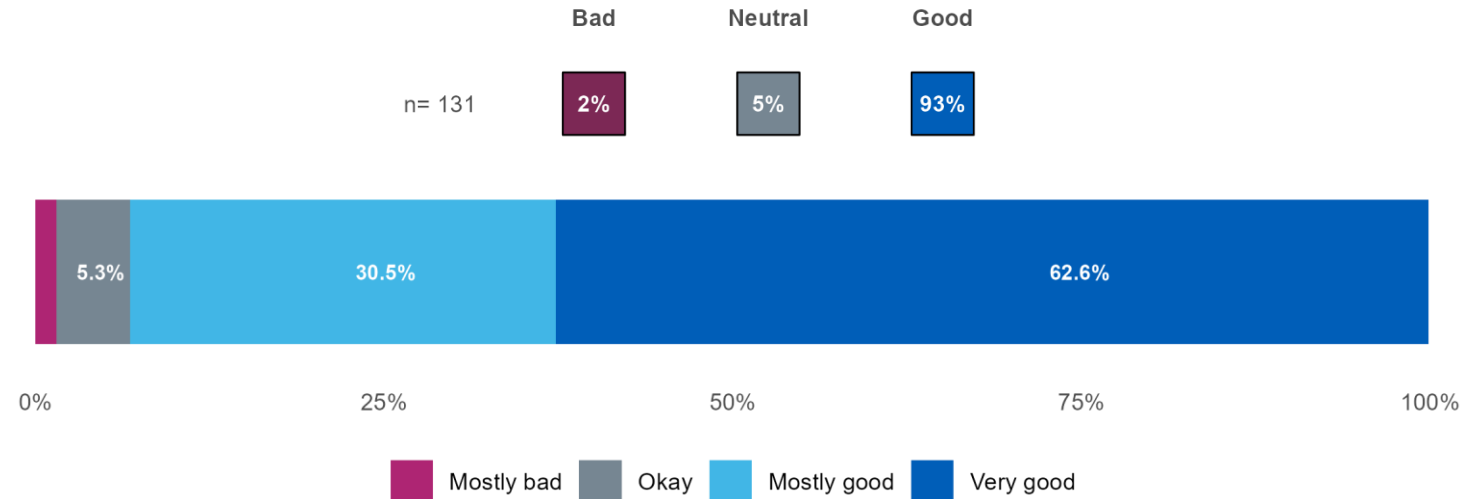
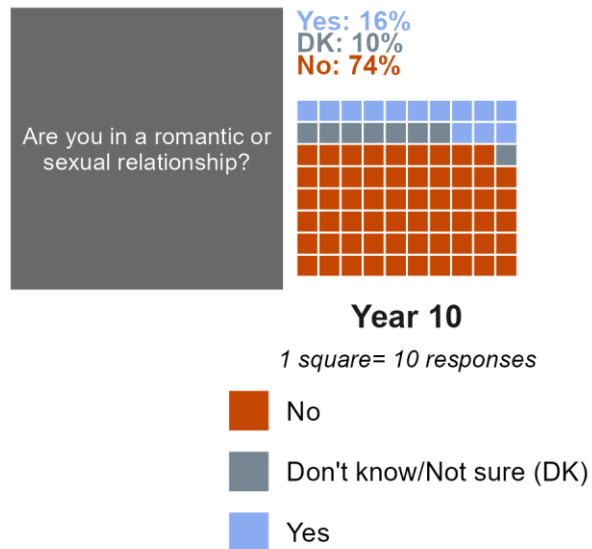
Note: See Appendix II for responses by pupil characteristic

Significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

Non- significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

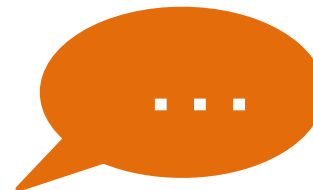
- Year 4 pupils considered their relationships to be less positive compared to all other year groups, with Year 7 pupils reported having stronger/better relationships compared to Year 4 and Year 6 pupils.
- Students identifying as other gender reported less positive (52% reported good) and more mixed sibling relationships (48% reported bad or neutral) compared to woman/girl (69% reported good and 32% bad or neutral) and man/boy (66% reported good and 39% bad or neutral).
- Between 66% and 72% of students of any ethnicity reported good relationships with siblings, with significant differences in responses being recorded between the Asian/Asian British and the White ethnic group.
- Students identifying as LGBTQIA+ (58%) reported lower levels of having good relationship with siblings compared to their peers (76%).
- Pupils having a long term condition (59%) reported lower levels of having good relationship with siblings compared to their peers (68%).
- 17% of young people who were in contact with a social worker and 18% of pupils who have lived or are currently living without their birth parents rated their relationships as bad (compared to 8% for their peers).
- No significant differences in the way participants responded with respect to transgender status, being a young carers, or being eligible for FSM were recorded.

2.4 If you are in a romantic relationship, how would you describe it?



- Year 10 students were asked whether they are in a romantic or sexual relationship, with only 16% indicating that they are (top left Figure).
- The vast majority of students (93%) described their relationship(s) as good (top right Figure), with 93.2% or 124 respondents indicating feeling respected and safe.
- Statistically significant differences in the way pupils with different characteristics responded were not recorded, which can additionally be attributed to the fact that sample sizes for particular subgroups were really small (See Appendix II for responses by pupil characteristic).

2.5 What are the things that worry or upset you the most in your friendships and relationships with other children?



The table below outlines the key themes identified across all year groups and illustrates how these themes are expressed within each group.

Key Themes across Year groups

Theme	Year 4 (Ages 8–9)	Year 6 (Ages 10–11)	Year 7 (Ages 11–12)	Year 10 (Ages 14–15)
Conflict and Arguments	Children notice fights and unkind words.	Arguments feel more serious and hurtful.	Disagreements strain communication and trust.	Conflict causes stress in close relationships.
Exclusion and Social Rejection	Being left out starts to hurt socially.	Exclusion leads to feeling unwanted or bullied.	Social rejection affects self-esteem.	Fear of being excluded or left behind grows.
Friendship Loss / Change	Losing friends brings sadness and confusion.	Worry about growing apart becomes common.	Friendships feel fragile and emotional.	Shifting friendships cause anxiety and loss.
Emotional Hurt and Vulnerability	Emotional pain comes from feeling ignored or hurt.	Sensitivity to how others treat them increases.	Worries about being judged or left out rise.	Fear of rejection and insecurity deepens.
Negative or Annoying Behaviour	Mean or unfair behaviour feels upsetting.	Rude or unkind actions affect mood.	“Drama” and disrespect become draining.	Bullying and hurtful words feel more personal.
Fear of Rejection or Mistakes	Children fear doing wrong and losing friends.	Mistakes feel risky to relationships.	Anxiety about upsetting others increases.	Fear of messing up and being disliked is strong.
Desire for Good Relationships	Children want kind and safe friendships.	They hope friendships last and feel secure.	Friendships are highly valued but feel unstable.	Longing for loyalty and emotional safety is strong.

The following pages provide a detailed breakdown of themes and topics by year group.

2.5 What are the things that worry or upset you the most in your friendships and relationships with other children?



Themes and topics emerging from pupils' responses indicate that children aged 8 to 9 often feel worried or sad mainly due to the following factors:

Theme	Conflict and Arguments	Social Exclusion and Rejection	Friendship Breakdown and Emotional Disconnection	Negative Peer Behaviour	Emotional and Physical Hurt / Feeling Ignored
Topic	Topic 1 - Conflict and Arguments <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic reflects verbal disagreements and fights, including being ignored or called names.	Topic 2 - Exclusion from Play <u>Interpretation:</u> Children express concerns about being excluded from games or play, possibly tied to bullying or not being "let" into social activities.	Topic 3 - Friendship Loss and Emotional Hurt <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic canters on emotional distress due to broken friendships or friends who stop talking or drift away.	Topic 4 - Annoyance and Negative Behaviour <u>Interpretation:</u> Focuses on irritating or unkind behaviour, possibly from peers who act mean or inconsiderate, making others feel uncomfortable or disliked.	Topic 6 - Emotional and Physical Hurt <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic emphasizes emotional pain and possibly physical aggression, as well as not feeling heard.
				Topic 5 - Meanness and Dishonesty <u>Interpretation:</u> Children highlight meanness, rudeness, and lying, as well as worries about falling out with friends over these issues.	
Examples	<i>"When I get in a fights or an argument."</i> <i>"My brother sometimes hurts me or calls me names."</i> <i>"Bossing me around and calling me names and it is the most bad because you are getting roasted by someone younger than you."</i> <i>"I sometimes get ignored."</i>	<i>"When friends don't let me play"</i> <i>"I'm upset when people don't want to be it when we are playing bulldog"</i> <i>"That sometimes they don't let me play with them even though they promised."</i> <i>"When my friends leave me out."</i>	<i>"When they argue and they don't even want to talk"</i> <i>"When my friend is not any more my friends"</i> <i>"When people talk about me behind my back"</i> <i>"I have felt upset because ages ago I was best friends with a girl but now she has been ignoring me kinda she's just been talking to my bestie a lot not me."</i>	<i>"Fighting and saying mean stuff about me"</i> <i>"Fighting or being rude to each other"</i> <i>"Talking rudely about other people and physical language"</i> <i>"People beating mean to them and calling them names."</i>	<i>"It's many things like when I pushed a guy into the muddy puddle"</i> <i>"When a guy body pushed my friend, I get revenge.</i> <i>people keep following me, pushing and shoving me."</i> <i>"When they hurt me and get over excited."</i> <i>"When they hurt me and don't say sorry"</i>



Themes and topics emerging from pupils' responses indicate that children aged 10 to 11 often feel worried or sad mainly due to the following factors:

Theme	Conflict and Arguments	Fear of Losing Friends	Rejection and Social Exclusion
Topic	Topic 1 - Conflict, Rudeness, and Feeling Ignored <u>Interpretation:</u> Children worry about arguments, rudeness, and feeling ignored or hurt.	Topic 3 - Fear of Losing Friends and Feeling Lonely <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic centres on fear of losing friendships, possibly due to growing apart, feeling different, or finding friends annoying.	Topic 5 - Emotional Hurt and Social Exclusion <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic highlights the emotional aftermath of exclusion, being left, or bullied.
	Topic 2 - Arguments Leading to Falling-Outs <u>Interpretation:</u> Strong focus on arguments that lead to falling out and no longer being friends.	Topic 4 - Wanting Good Friendships and Anxiety About Them Ending <u>Interpretation:</u> This reflects desire for healthy friendships and anxiety that things might turn bad or end.	Topic 6 - Uncertainty and Anxiety in Friendships <u>Interpretation:</u> This shows worry and fear about friendships changing indicating uncertainty.
Examples	<i>"Someone keeps being really rude to me and my friend"</i> <i>"When they get mad at me or ignore me or don't want to play with me or lose friends or when someone tries to steal my friends"</i> <i>"When they get mad at you even if you didn't do it"</i> <i>"That they try and fight me or for example trying to us the bad things against me what I told them about what happened to me"</i>	<i>"I will lose my friends and be lonely"</i> <i>"When we have a fight and not be friends again it makes me lonely"</i> <i>"Breaking up as friends or a relationship because that can make me feel quit sad and sometimes lonely when I have a break up with the people I love"</i>	<i>"Bullying of my face being called ugly by children younger than me"</i> <i>"When I am good with my friends I feel good but when not we are not friends I feel bad and sometimes I get upset when I get bullied, if I get hurt"</i>
	<i>"when we have fall outs"</i> <i>"Having an argument with a friend currently an argument but we get back into a friendship again the next day after school."</i>	<i>"My friends not being with me or them losing their temper with me."</i> <i>"Worried when my friends get angry with me when it's not my fault and when they begin to be annoying."</i> <i>"When I don't get a chance to say stuff."</i> <i>"That people leave me out of and lie to me about things they have planned."</i> <i>"I'm worried that they'd just betray me."</i>	<i>"Nothing, except I'm worried about leaving my friends next year since I start year 7 next year."</i> <i>"I'm scared they might just leave me"</i> <i>"I'm scared if I get to attached and then they just leave me and I am all alone because it has happened to me a lot and it hurts a lot"</i>



Themes and topics emerging from pupils' responses indicate that young people aged 11 to 12 often feel worried or sad mainly due to the following factors:

Theme	Conflict and Communication Struggles	Fear of Losing or Being Rejected by Friends	Emotional Impact of Social Issues	Bullying and Exclusion at School
Topic	Topic 1 - Rudeness, Arguments, and Strained Communication <u>Interpretation:</u> Children express concern about rudeness, mean behaviour, and arguments, especially when it affects their ability to talk openly or maintain a healthy friendship.	Topic 3 - Fear of Losing Friends and Doing Something Wrong <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic reflects a fear of losing friendships, often linked to saying or doing something wrong. Children worry about making mistakes that cause others to leave or become upset with them.	Topic 5 - Drama, Annoyance, and Falling-Outs <u>Interpretation:</u> Here, children are bothered by drama, annoying behaviours, and falling out with others.	Topic 6 - Bullying and Feeling Ignored at School <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic reveals school-based concerns, especially about bullying, not being listened to, or being excluded.
	Topic 2 - Emotional Impact of Arguments and Friendship Endings <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic emphasizes the emotional weight of arguments and friendships ending, including feelings of worry, sadness, and confusion.	Topic 4 - Fear of Being Left Behind and Emotional Insecurity <u>Interpretation:</u> Children worry about being left or not being wanted in friendships. There's a strong sense of emotional vulnerability, reflected in words.		
Examples	<i>"People that are just plain rude and mean"</i> <i>"..that when sometimes when your friend starts being rude to you sometimes you get a bit rude back then it causes an argument"</i>	<i>"silly arguments"</i> <i>"that something will go wrong"</i> <i>With my friends I might be scared if I do something wrong I wont be friends with them</i> <i>not being good enough and letting people down"</i>	<i>"Friends falling out and being stuck in the middle of the drama."</i> <i>"I am worried there will be drama"</i> <i>"I dislike dealing with drama so I tend to avoid it"</i> <i>when people tell lies I hate drama so people make me say sorry when they where the one who spread the lies and people are just unkind and mean"</i> <i>sometimes other people say hurtful things"</i>	<i>"Them not listening and not understanding me."</i> <i>"The things that upset me the most is the other person not listening to your side of the story. being left out/excluded."</i> <i>"nothing really I get upset with let people bully me if they want because I know they're just jealous"</i> <i>"Fighting with people scares ne and other people in my school are kinda mean"</i> <i>"Sometimes people can do things unexpectedly and it always comes across as a shock."</i>
	<i>"Argument and jealousy. I need friends that like me for who I am not what I have. Something might go wrong between us and I would have no one."</i>	<i>"Mostly where I just either sit by myself or my friends always yell at me if I am wrong I'm not popular but I'm friends with popular people and I'm worried that they don't actually like me and its just a joke."</i>		

2.5 What are the things that worry or upset you the most in your friendships and relationships with other children?



Themes and topics emerging from pupils' responses indicate that young people aged 14 to 15 often feel worried or sad mainly due to the following factors:

Theme	Relational Conflict and Emotional Strain	Change, Growth, and Social Drift	Bullying and Negative Peer Interactions	Insecurity and Fear of Rejection
Topic	Topic 1 - Conflict and Emotional Uncertainty in Close Relationships <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic reflects worry about conflict (arguments) and the stability of close friendships or romantic relationships. Students imply anxiety over losing emotional closeness or trust.	Topic 3 - Social Change and Drift <u>Interpretation:</u> Here, the focus is on changes in friendships, often due to school, growing up, or drifting apart.	Topic 4 - Bullying, Misunderstanding, and Rudeness <u>Interpretation:</u> This theme touches on bullying, being misunderstood, and rude or hurtful comments. There's a focus on emotional safety and how others' words or actions cause distress.	Topic 5 - Insecurity, Social Anxiety, and Self-Perception <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic reflects internal struggles—worry about being liked, feeling misunderstood, or insecure about how one is perceived. There's emotional vulnerability related to self-image and acceptance.
	Topic 2 - Fear of Rejection, Getting Hurt, Ending of Friendships and Group Exclusion <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic emphasizes fear of abandonment (e.g., being left), doing something wrong, and emotional pain in relationships. There's a heightened sensitivity to interpersonal mistakes and rejection. This topic centres on friendship breakdowns and being excluded from social groups. Words like "end," "leave," and "group" suggest disconnection and feeling left behind.			
Examples	"Arguing with friends resulting in space for a while." "The things that upset or worry me in a friendship are the arguments." "Constantly bickering." "Telling someone something personal and them telling others." "Being betrayed for someone's popularity gain." "Worry about trust being lost or rumours being spread." "Afraid to lose them as they are your only friends." "Feeling like people don't like me when they don't hang out with me." "If they are going to leave me."	"My humour and what I find interesting and funny is starting to change and I feel like me and my friends are very different people and haven't been very compatible lately and we have kind of "outgrown" each other feeling that things might change in the future and we might not be as close." "The things that upset or worry me in friendships is listening to what other people have been going through and no one giving me the time to say what I am going through." "Feeling ignored when trying to vent."	"They judge you before getting to know you." "Friendly bullying like 'you're fat' insults." "Fear of being talked about behind your back."	"I worry that I'm way too violent and it makes me a terrible person." "Thinking I'm too annoying or oversharing." "Worried about being boring or quiet." "I worry that they might make fun of me for my interests"

Domain 3. Sleep



Key findings

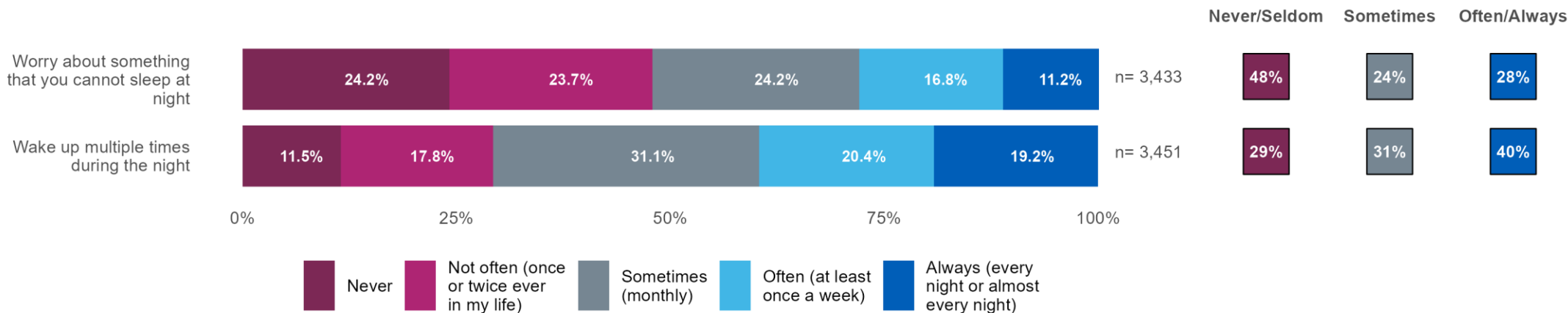
Created by Sleep Creative
from Neat Project

- Students were asked questions related to sleep and the use of electronic games and phone before bedtime.
 - Average (median) sleep duration for each Year group is in line with recommended sleep times and declines with age, with younger students sleeping on average more than older ones.
 - Two in five pupils reported frequent patterns of waking up multiple times during the night, with 28% of respondents indicating high frequencies of worry-related sleep loss. However, participants responses vary based on their characteristics.
 - Gaming in particular, but also phone use after bedtime are common, especially among older pupils (Year 10) and boys, and vary to a significant extent for pupils with different characteristics, all of which may contribute to poorer sleep quality. Overall, disparities in sleep hygiene and quality are closely linked to protected or other participant characteristics.

3.1 Sleep duration before a school day



- Sleep duration decreases as young people age, with the [recommended sleep time](#) for children 6-12 years being 9 to 12 hours, whereas for teenagers (13 to 18 years) is 8 to 10 hours.
- The aforementioned pattern is reflected in participants' responses from all Year groups. The average (median) self-reported sleep duration on a school day was found to be 9.3 hours, ranging from 8.3 hours for Year 10 pupils to 10 hours for Year 6 pupils.



- Nearly half (48%) of the students reported never/seldom experiencing worry about something that disturbs sleep at night. A significant portion (24%) experience sleep disruptions at least sometimes and 28% experience it often/always.
- 40% of students reported often/always waking up multiple times during the night, with 31% waking up sometimes, and 29% indicating they never/seldom do.

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

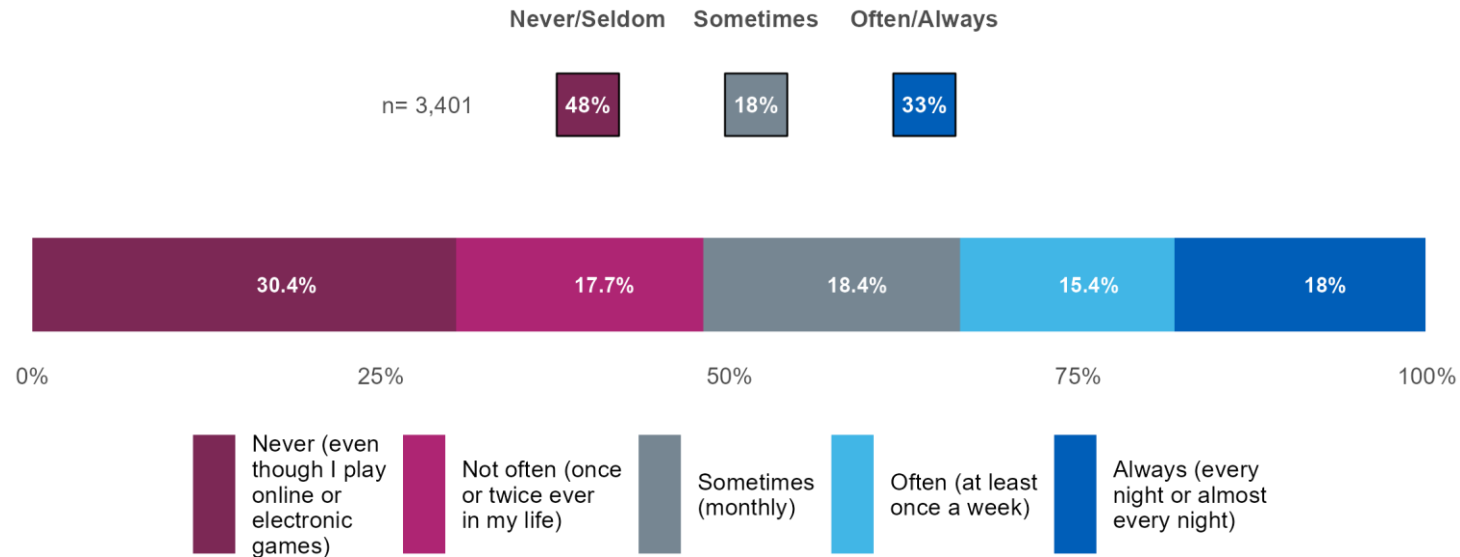
Pupil Characteristics	Wake up multiple times during the night	Worry about something that you cannot sleep
Year group		
Gender		
Ethnicity		
Sexual orientation		
Transgender status		
Long term condition		
Young carer		
Free school meals (FSM) eligibility		
Pupil/family in contact with a social worker		
Having lived or currently living without birth parents		

Note: See Appendix III for responses by pupil characteristic

Significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded
Non- significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

- Younger Students (Year 4) (42%) reported a higher frequency of waking up multiple times during the night compared to the older groups (40% in Year 6, 39% in year 7 and 38% in Year 10) but the difference is not significant. However, Year 4 pupils were significantly more prone to worry-related sleep loss than older students especially in comparison to Year 6 and Year 7 pupils.
- There are significant gender differences across waking up during the night and getting worry-related sleep loss. Students identifying as other gender (56%) reported the highest frequency of waking up frequently during the night compared to 41% for women/girls and 36% for men/boys. This group also reported the highest rates of worry keeping them up at night (47%) compared to 32% for women/girls and 21% for men/boys.
- With regard to ethnicity, Asian/Asian British students reported slightly better overall sleep quality than all the other ethnic groups, but the difference is not significant. Moreover, pupils from the aforementioned group tend to worry significantly less so as refrain from sleeping than young people from the White ethnic group.
- Students identifying as transgender/still questioning (63%) reported a higher frequency of waking up regularly during the night compared to their peers (38%) and also reported higher rates of worry keeping them up at night compared to their peers but the difference is not significant.
- Compared to their peers, pupils identifying as LGBTQIA+, pupils eligible for FSM, in contact with a social worker, young carers, pupils with a long-term condition and individuals not living with their birth parents were significantly more likely to wake up multiple times during the night or experience worry so severe that it impacts their sleep.

3.3 Do you play any online or electronic games after bedtime?



- 48% of students reported that they never/seldom play games after bedtime, indicating strong self-discipline or household rules, 18% sometimes engage in gaming late at night, suggesting occasional indulgence but no major habit, and 33% often/always play after bed time, potentially impacting sleep and overall well-being.

3.3 Do you play any online or electronic games after bedtime?

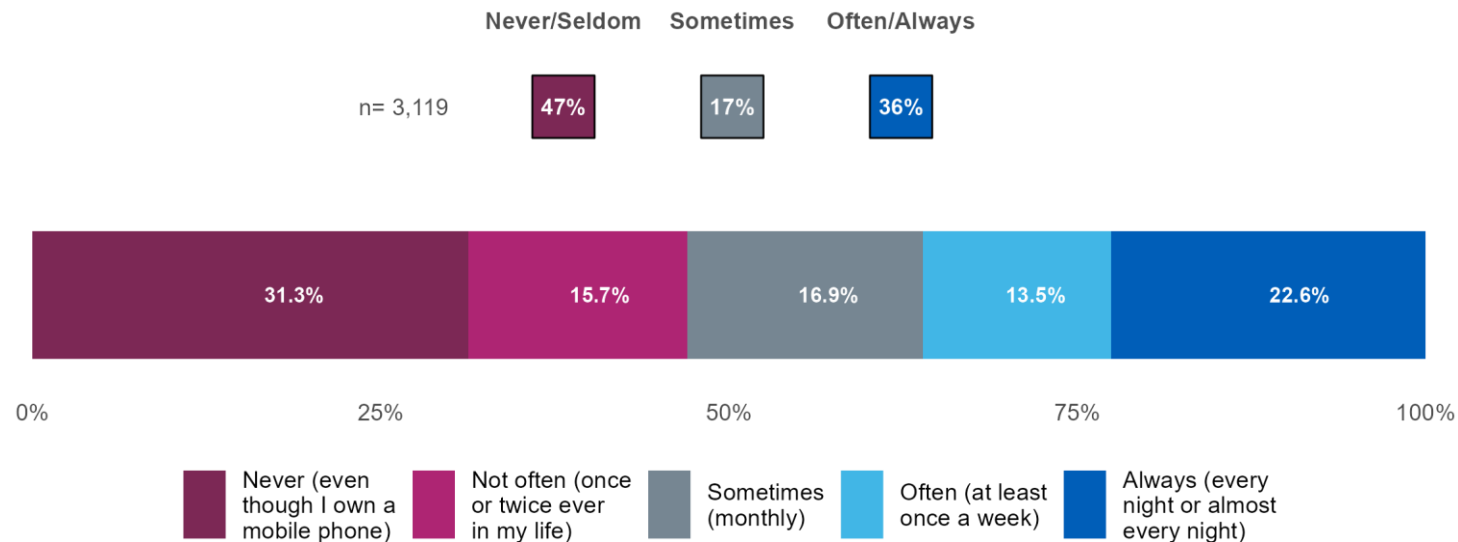
Pupil Characteristics	Online/electronic games after bedtime
Year group	
Gender	
Ethnicity	
Sexual orientation	
Transgender status	
Long term condition	
Young carer	
Free school meals (FSM) eligibility	
Pupil/family in contact with a social worker	
Having lived or currently living without birth parents	

Note: See Appendix III for responses by pupil characteristic

Significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded
Non- significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

- Gaming after bedtime varies by age with Year 10 pupils playing games significantly more often than any other Year group.
- Gender variations in online/electronic gaming after bedtime also exist with 51% of women/girls being the least likely to play after bedtime and with students identifying as the other gender being the more likely to play games after bedtime often/always (59%).
- With regard to ethnicity, pupils with a Black /African/Caribbean background are more likely to report playing games after bedtime, especially compared to other the White and the Asian/Asian British ethnic groups..
- Pupils identifying as LGBTQIA+, transgender/still questioning, young people eligible for FSM, young carers, respondents with a long term condition, and students in contact with social worker are consistently more likely to report gaming often/always after bedtime compared to their peers.
- No differences in the way participants responded were found for children who had lived or were currently living with the parents and those who did not.

3.4 Do you use a mobile phone after bedtime?



- Just under half (47%) reported that they never/seldom use their phone after bedtime, which suggests strong self-discipline or awareness of sleep hygiene. 17% of pupils sometimes use their phone, indicating occasional distractions, with 36% reporting always using their phone, which could negatively impact sleep quality.

3.4 Do you use a mobile phone after bedtime?

Pupil Characteristics	Use of mobile phone after bedtime
Year group	
Gender	
Ethnicity	
Sexual orientation	
Transgender status	
Long term condition	
Young carer	
Free school meals (FSM) eligibility	
Pupil/family in contact with a social worker	
Having lived or currently living without birth parents	

Note: See Appendix III for responses by pupil characteristic

Significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded
Non- significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

- Mobile phone use varies significantly by age. Older students (Year 10) (63%) are more likely to always use their phone after bedtime compared to younger groups, with usage frequency declining with age as indicated by the fact that 32% of pupils in Year 7, 27% of pupils in Year 6 and 20% of pupils in Year 4 reported often/always using their phone.
- Young respondents self-identifying as LGBTQIA+ and eligible for FSM also reported using their mobile phone more regularly (often/always: 42%) than their peers (often/always: 35%)
- There were no significant differences in the frequency of usage between participant subgroups for the other pupil characteristics.

Domain 4. Mental wellbeing at school

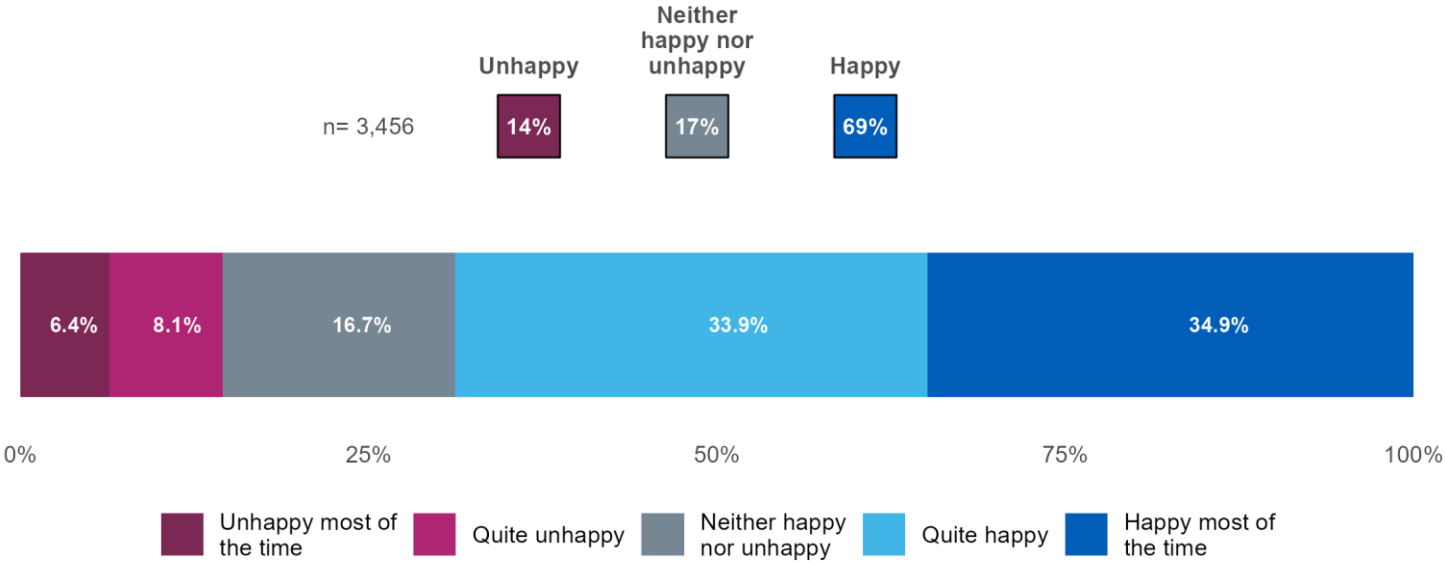


Key findings

Students were asked questions related to mental wellbeing at school and access to services.

- Most young people reported feeling happy, safe, and supported at school, though these positive experiences decline notably with age, particularly among Year 10 students.
- Pupils identifying as other gender, LGBTQIA+, transgender/still questioning, respondents eligible for FSM, young carers, and young people with long-term conditions consistently report lower levels of happiness, support, and wellbeing across nearly all mental wellbeing and support indicators. While a majority know where to seek help, willingness to do so, accessing support without others finding out, declines with age. Asian/Asian British students also generally reported better wellbeing and being in receipt of more support. Overall, response findings point to the need for targeted mental health and inclusion strategies within educational settings.
- Friendships and social life and enjoyment of learning are key to student satisfaction and success across all ages. Friendships consistently enhance students' emotional support, sense of belonging, and overall wellbeing from valuing friends and teachers in Year 4 to strong social bonds in Year 10. Similarly, engaging, interactive learning especially in subjects like science and art keeps students motivated. This shows the importance of nurturing both positive relationships and enjoyable learning experiences throughout school.

4.1 How happy have you felt this term at school?



- The majority of young people (69%) felt happy at school, with a notable portion (14%) reporting feeling unhappy.

4.1 How happy have you felt this term at school?

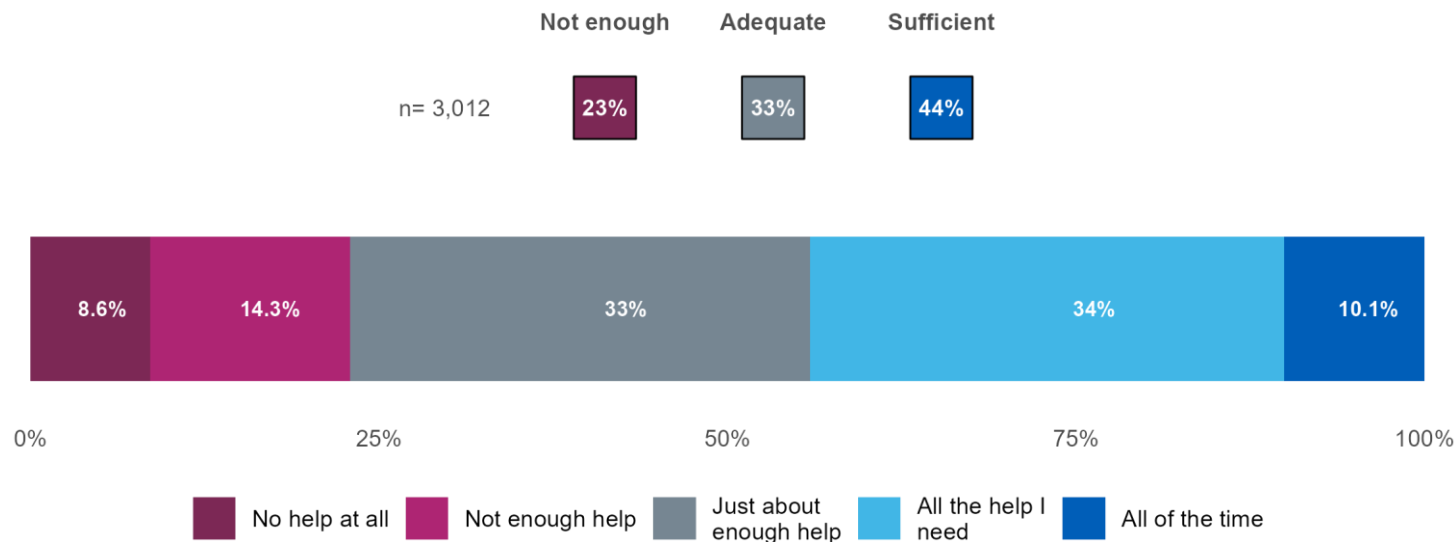
Pupil Characteristics	Happy at term time
Year group	
Gender	
Ethnicity	
Sexual orientation	
Transgender status	
Long term condition	
Young carer	
Free school meals (FSM) eligibility	
Pupil/family in contact with a social worker	
Having lived or currently living without birth parents	

Note: See Appendix IV for responses by pupil characteristic

Significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded
Non- significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

- Happiness during term time varies by Year group, with younger pupils (78%) feeling significantly happier than older ones (72% in year 6, 71% in Year 7 and 53% in Year 10).
- The majority of students (40%) identifying as other gender show markedly lower happiness than those identifying as woman/girl (68%) and men/boys feeling significantly happier than women/girls (72%).
- Pupils from most ethnic groups reported similar levels of happiness, although Asian/Asian British students felt significantly happier (76%) compared to pupils from the White ethnic group.
- Students identifying as LGBTQIA+, transgender/still questioning, young people eligible for FSM, young carers, respondents with a long term condition, and students in contact with social worker showed markedly lower happiness compared to their peers.
- Pupils who had lived or were currently living with their parents indicated similar levels of happiness compared to their peers.

4.2 How much help and support do you feel that you get at school for your mental health and wellbeing?



- Most students (44%) reported that they receive sufficient help and support, 33% reported being in receipt of adequate support, whereas a concerning minority (23%) indicated not receiving enough support.
- While it's encouraging that most students feel at least somewhat supported, there's a noticeable gap in students feeling fully supported, whereas a significant portion still feels under supported. This suggests room for improvement in school mental health and wellbeing support.

4.2 How much help and support do you feel that you get at school for your mental health and wellbeing?

Pupil Characteristics	Support at school
Year group	
Gender	
Ethnicity	
Sexual orientation	
Transgender status	
Long term condition	
Young carer	
Free school meals (FSM) eligibility	
Pupil/family in contact with a social worker	
Having lived or currently living without birth parents	

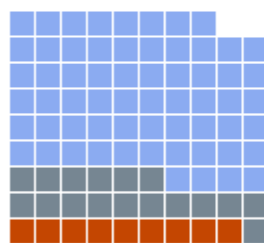
Note: See Appendix IV for responses by pupil characteristic

- Help and support drops significantly with age. Year 10 students (35%) were significantly more likely to feel unsupported compared to the other years groups: Year 7 (22%), Year 6 (20%) and Year 4 (16%).
- Help and support varies by gender, with men/boys reporting feeling significantly more supported than the other two gender groups.
- Ethnic group differences exist, with Asian/Asian British (47%) students reporting relatively sufficient support compared to White (45%), Black/African/Caribbean (43%), Other (34%) and felt significantly more supported than the Mixed/Multiple ethnic group (34%).
- Help and support feelings vary by sexual orientation, identity, the presence of a long term condition, for young carers and for pupils in contact with a social worker, with young people with the aforementioned characteristics consistently reporting feeling less supported with their mental health and wellbeing.
- Pupils eligible for FSM and individuals living without their birth parents responded in a similar way to their peers.

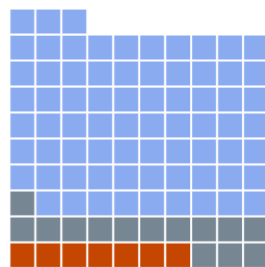
Significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded
Non- significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

Do you know who to go to at school if you need help with your mental health or emotional wellbeing?

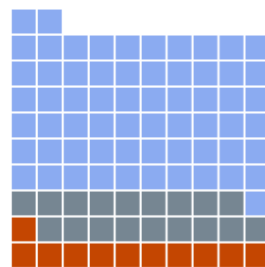
Yes: 70%
DK: 19%
No: 10%



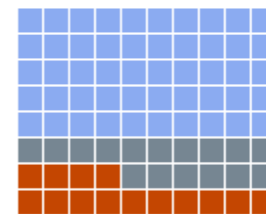
Yes: 77%
DK: 15%
No: 8%



Yes: 68%
DK: 19%
No: 12%



Yes: 62%
DK: 20%
No: 18%



Year 4

Year 6

Year 7

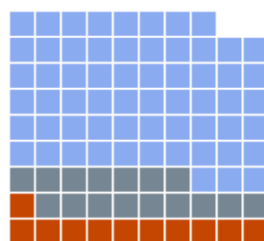
Year 10

1 square = 10 responses

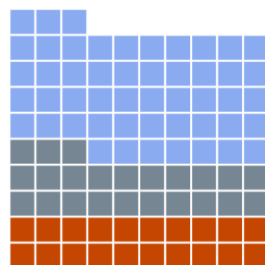
No Don't know/Not sure (DK) Yes

If you felt you needed support with your mental health and emotional wellbeing, would you go to a member of staff at school?

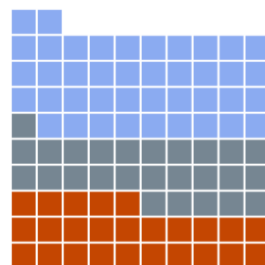
Yes: 69%
DK: 19%
No: 13%



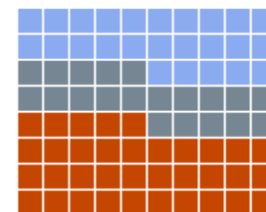
Yes: 53%
DK: 25%
No: 22%



Yes: 44%
DK: 29%
No: 27%

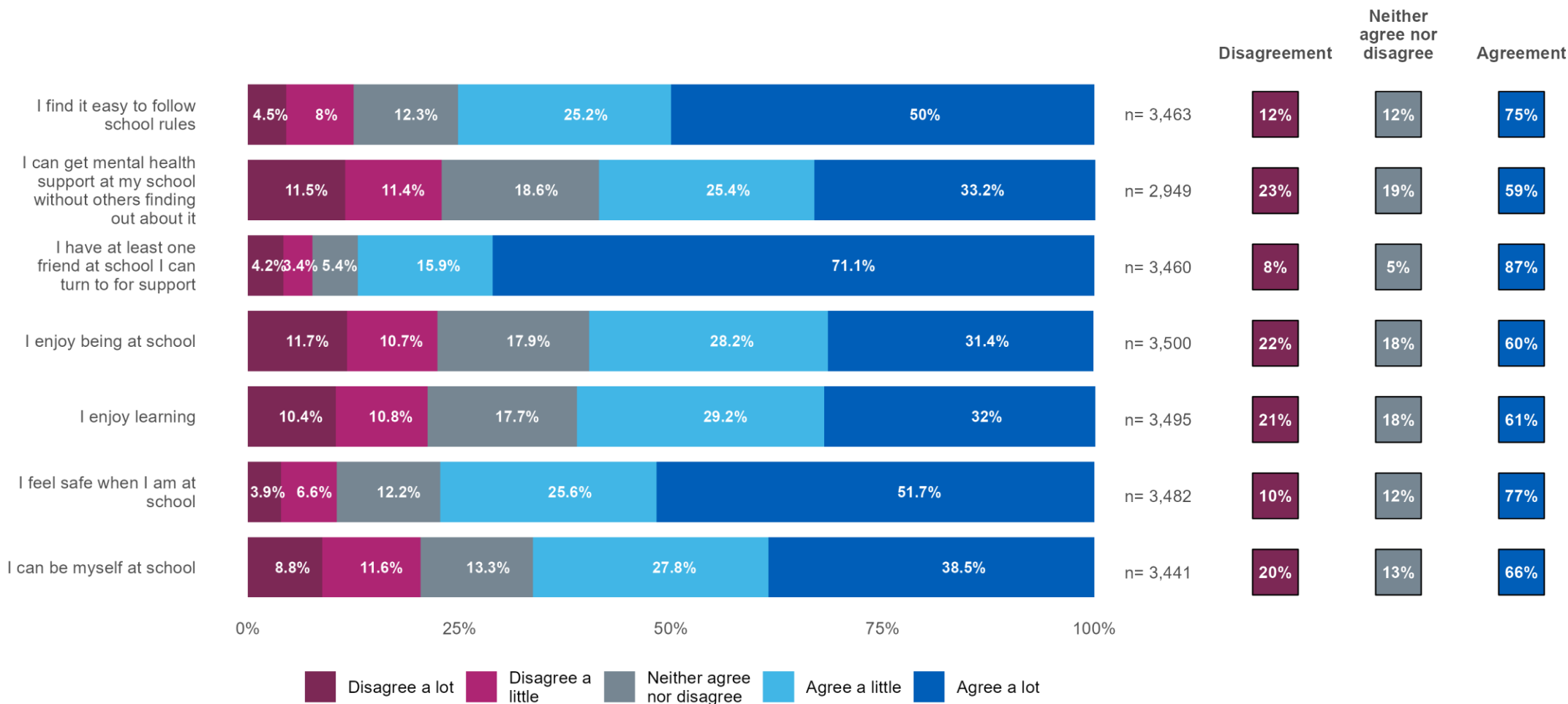


Yes: 31%
DK: 26%
No: 43%



- While most students know who to go to for help, fewer are actually willing to seek that help- especially as they get older.
- 70% of pupils across all Year groups reported knowing who to go to for help, 12% indicated they didn't know who to go to and 18% responded being unsure/not knowing who to go to.
- Awareness of who to go to for help declines slightly with age, with a worrying 38% of Year 10, 31% of Year 7, 23% of Year 6 and 29% of Year 4 pupils either being unsure or not knowing who to go to for support. This highlights the need to improve communications around the channels via which pupils can access support within their school settings.
- 50% of pupils across all Year groups reported that they would go to a member of staff, 25% indicated they would not go and 25% responded they were unsure if they would go.
- Similarly, willingness to go to a staff member for mental health and wellbeing support declines sharply with age. Only 31% of Year 10 students say they would go to a staff member, compared to 69% in Year 4. Therefore, strategies should be put in place to overcome any barriers in seeking support at school and facilitate help-seeking by further exploring and identifying the channels via which young people receive and access professional and/or non-professional support.

4.4 Thinking about school at the moment, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?



4.4 Thinking about school at the moment, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- 66% of students agreed that they can be themselves at school, but 20% do not feel they can be themselves, a notable area for improvement.
- 77% of young people agreed that they feel safe when they are at school, with one in ten not feeling safe.
- Around 61% of students agreed that they enjoy learning, though 21% lean to disagreement.
- About 60% of respondents agreed that they enjoyed being at school, whereas 22% don't enjoy (disagree a lot or disagree a little) school much. This signals a possible engagement or environment issue.
- The vast majority (87%) agreed having at least one friend at school they can turn to for support.
- Close to three in five pupils (59%) agreed that they can get mental health support at schools without others finding out about it. However, some students (23%) expressed little/no agreement indicating a potential concern about confidentiality in provision of mental health support within their educational setting.
- The majority of young people (75%) agreed it is easy to follow school rules.

4.4 Thinking about school at the moment, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

Pupil Characteristics	Be myself at school	Safe when at school	Enjoy learning	Enjoy being at school	I can turn to a friend	Support without others finding out	Easy to follow rules
Year group							
Gender							
Ethnicity							
Sexual orientation							
Transgender status							
Long term condition							
Young carer							
Free school meals (FSM) eligibility							
Pupil/family in contact with a social worker							
Having lived or currently living without birth parents							

Significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded
Non- significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

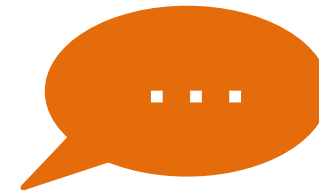
Note: See Appendix IV for responses by pupil characteristic

- There are significant age differences across all help and support indicators. Students who are younger (74% in Year 4) tend to feel more comfortable being themselves compared to older ones (56% in Year 10). While most students reported feeling safe (84% in Year 4 and 82% in Year 6), those who are older felt less secure in school (76% in Year 7 and 66% in Year 10). While the vast majority of Year 4 students reported enjoying learning (80%), those who are older (46% in Year 10) enjoyed school learning to a lesser extent. While Year 4 (79%) students reported enjoying being at school, those who are older (41% in Year 10) enjoyed being at school less. Year 6 and Year 7 pupils agreed to a greater extend than Year 10 and Year 4 pupils with having at least one friend at school they can turn to for support. Younger students were less likely to worry about confidentiality in accessing support (64% in Year 4 vs 45% in Year 10) and also found it easier to follow rules than older students (83% in year 4 vs 67% in Year 10).
- Gender differences are evident across all mental health and wellbeing indicators. Significant differences in the way men/boys and girls/women responded to questions on being themselves at school, with boys/men agreeing more, and on finding it easy to follow rules exist, with girls/women reporting higher agreement levels . However, pupils identifying as other reported facing significantly more difficulties in feeling themselves at school, feeling safe at school, enjoying learning, enjoying being at school, turning to a friend for support, accessing support without others finding out and finding it easy to follow rules.

4.4 Thinking about school at the moment, how much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

- Ethnicity variations are evident across all statements. Students who are Asian/Asian British agreed to a greater extent than their peers with most statements. It is worth noting that young people from different ethnic groups responded in a significantly different way to whether they enjoy being at school.
- Students identifying as transgender/still questioning, respondents identifying as young carers and pupils in contact with a social worker were more likely to agree less across all indicators than their peers except for enjoying learning (excluding pupils from the latter group that tend to enjoy learning as much as their peers) and being at school.
- Pupils self-identifying as LGBTQIA+ and pupils reporting a long term condition were more likely to agree less across all indicators than their peers.
- Students eligible for FSM eligibility recorded significantly lower agreement levels across all statements compared to their peers. A similar pattern was recorded for individuals who identified as living without their birth parents for four out of seven statements (excluding learning enjoyment, enjoyment at being at school and finding it easy to follow rules).

4.5 What have you enjoyed most about school this term?



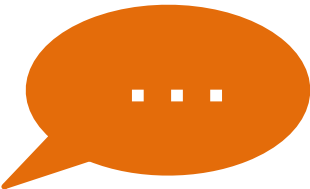
The table below outlines the key themes identified across all year groups and illustrates how these themes are expressed within each group.

Key Themes across Year groups

Theme	Year 4 (Ages 8–9)	Year 6 (Ages 10–11)	Year 7 (Ages 11–12)	Year 10 (Ages 14–15)
Enjoyment of Learning	Interest in STEM, art, and creative writing.	Joy in discovering new things, especially in science.	Excitement about learning and classroom activities.	Fun, interactive lessons are appreciated.
Special Events and Experiences	Enthusiasm for trips, festive days, and themed learning (e.g. rainforest).	Value placed on enrichment activities and educational outings.	School events, food, and celebrations are highlights.	Memorable experiences like trips and celebrations bring joy.
Friendships and Social Life	Strong appreciation for friends and teacher relationships.	Friendships, play, and shared events are central to enjoyment.	Making new friends and enjoying peer company is important.	Social bonds and friendships are core to positive school experiences.
Physical Activity and Breaks	Enjoyment of PE, play, and relaxed moments during school.	PE and teamwork in sports are highly valued.	Physical education, breaks, and lunchtime are seen as fun parts of school.	Active time, such as sports and breaks, are a major source of enjoyment.
School Environment and Support	Positive interactions with teachers and feeling part of a community.	A balanced mix of academics and social time reflects a happy school life.	Good teachers, clubs, and structured routines enhance school experience.	Clubs, good teaching, and a supportive environment promote engagement.
Personal Growth and Discovery	Feeling proud of learning and personal progress.	Learning is tied to curiosity and enjoyment.	Trying new things and growing socially and academically is exciting.	Students enjoy new challenges and exploring different paths at school.

The following pages provide a detailed breakdown of themes and topics by year group.

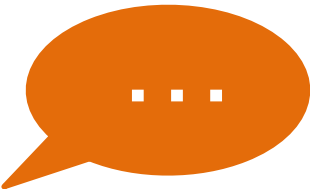
4.5 What have you enjoyed most about school this term?



Themes and topics emerging from pupils' responses indicate that children aged 8 to 9 enjoyed most the following:

Theme	Learning and Academic Enjoyment	Special Activities and Events	Social and Emotional Connections	Play and Free Time
Topic	Topic 1 – Creative and Academic Lessons (STEM and Art) <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic is about structured lessons, particularly in STEM (Math, Science, Design and Technology) and Art. It combines appreciation for core academic subjects with physical education and play. It shows a balance between academic enjoyment and active playtime, suggesting a well-rounded appreciation of the school experience.	Topic 2 – Special Events and School Experiences <u>Interpretation:</u> Students are highlighting memorable school-wide experiences like school trips, swimming, Christmas activities, and learning about the rainforest. These are likely standout events or projects that deviated from normal routines.	Topic 3 – Social Connection and Personal Growth <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic centres around friendships, learning new things, and positive relationships with teachers. It emphasizes how much students value social interaction and support alongside academic progress. It also suggests a sense of personal achievement and community.	Topic 4 – Downtime and Relaxed Moments <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic emphasizes unstructured or downtime, such as breaks, lunch, or relaxed days. Students enjoyed these periods as well as writing activities and interacting with a teacher. It shows that rest, social time, and informal learning are important to them.
Examples	<i>“I have enjoyed doing maths and doing method.”</i> <i>“The boy, the mole, the fox and the horse / English.”</i> <i>“History because I love learning.”</i> <i>“I enjoyed drawing using a pen and ink to make a self portrait.”</i> <i>“Art is very fun and we get to learn new skills in every lesson like homework.”</i> <i>“Playing football outside because we’ve got new equipment now.”</i> <i>“PE because it’s fun and I play sports everyday.”</i>	<i>“The school trip to the indoor rainforest.”</i> <i>“We went on a Viking school trip... we trained like them.”</i> <i>“The circus.”</i> <i>“Going to the living rainforest.”</i> <i>“After school computer club and math.”</i> <i>“Football club.”</i> <i>“Going to Elsa club.”</i> <i>“Rock steady.”</i>	<i>“Being with my best friend.”</i> <i>“Everybody is nice to me.”</i> <i>“Spending time with my friends and my teacher.”</i> <i>“Learning new things.”</i> <i>“Learning for knowledge.”</i> <i>“Learning through my mistakes.”</i>	<i>“Always being happy.”</i> <i>“It’s the best school ever and my friends.”</i> <i>“All the fun things I love my teacher she is very funny.”</i> <i>“Everything.”</i>

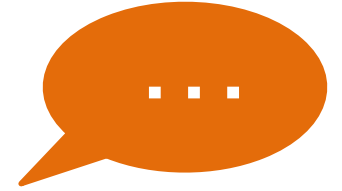
4.5 What have you enjoyed most about school this term?



Themes and topics emerging from pupils' responses indicate that children aged 10 to 11 enjoyed most the following:

Theme	Social Relationships and Belonging	Enjoyable and Supportive Learning	Enrichment and Real-World Learning
Topic	Topic 1 - Friendships and Social Experiences <u>Interpretation:</u> Children most enjoyed the social side of school—friendships, playtime, and festive events.	Topic 3 - Learning and Discovery <u>Interpretation:</u> Many students found joy in learning and discovering new things, especially in science.	Topic 6 - Trips and Enrichment Activities <u>Interpretation:</u> Students valued educational trips and learning through real-world experiences.
	Topic 2 - Physical Education and Friendship <u>Interpretation:</u> Kids really enjoyed physical activity and teamwork, especially through PE and DT.	Topic 4 - Learning and Discovery <u>Interpretation:</u> Many students found joy in learning and discovering new things, especially in science.	
		Topic 5 - Core Subjects and School Life <u>Interpretation:</u> A mix of enjoying lessons and social/sport breaks—indicating well-rounded school enjoyment.	
Examples	<i>"The option to represent the school (hockey, football)."</i> <i>"No arguments with friends."</i> <i>"The Christmas songs.", "Christmas things that we will do."</i> <i>"Snow and sun during school + clubs and lunchtime football."</i> <i>"My friends and playing and PE."</i> <i>"Playing with my friends and when we went on residential."</i> <i>"Having close friends to rely on. Break is always fun."</i>	<i>"I enjoyed all my learning—my teachers make it fun, sometimes easy, sometimes hard."</i> <i>"Doing old SATs papers."</i> <i>"How my teacher has sorted out things to help with my autism/ADHD."</i> <i>"My teacher is funny, kind, generous."</i> <i>"The teaching assistant is very nice to me—also math."</i>	<i>"All of the trips this term. They have been AWESOME!"</i> <i>"We went to Cadbury's."</i> <i>"The thing I enjoyed the most is the fact that we have more responsibility and can go on trips."</i> <i>"I have enjoyed this term—the trips and all the happy moments we had in all the year groups."</i> <i>"I have enjoyed going on a trip to a museum"</i> <i>"Field trips"</i>
	<i>"P.E. with boys and girls split into groups makes me feel safe."</i> <i>"Making a phone pouch and choosing a design"</i> <i>"Doing art, PE, PSHE, and music they are my favourite subjects."</i>	<i>"Math because it's easy."</i> <i>"PE is number one—football is fun!"</i> <i>"I like art this term—it was energetic and fun."</i> <i>"Science veins and arteries song (circulatory system)."</i>	

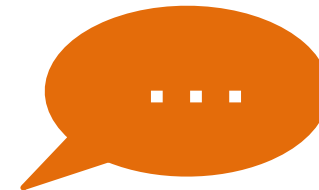
4.5 What have you enjoyed most about school this term?



Themes and topics emerging from pupils' responses indicate that young people aged 11 to 12 enjoyed most the following:

Theme	Making and spending time with friends	Fun and engaging lessons	Special school events, trips, and celebrations	Positive experiences with teachers and clubs
Topic	Topic 1 - Friends and PE <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic highlights the fun aspects of lessons and sports activities. It also includes the role of kind teachers and friendships, showing that students appreciate engaging, enjoyable lessons and positive social experiences.	Topic 3 - School Routine and Activities <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic reflects enjoyment related to the general school day structure and activities, especially physical education (PE), art classes, breaks, and lunchtime. Kids mention enjoying their classes (like English) and the mix of physical and creative subjects during the school day.	Topic 4 - Events, Food, and Special Occasions <u>Interpretation:</u> Here, the focus is on special events and occasions that students look forward to, such as school trips, Christmas celebrations, and enjoying food. This topic also includes creative subjects like music, art, humanities, and design and technology (DT).	Topic 5 - School Environment and Teachers <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic relates to the overall school environment, including teachers, clubs, and learning new things. It highlights how children enjoy their school days, engaging with different subjects, teachers, and after-school clubs, and also reflects the transition from primary school.
	Topic 2 - Making New Friends and Learning <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic reflects excitement around new experiences, friendships, and gaining knowledge.			
Examples	<i>"PE and making new friends."</i> <i>"Football after school."</i> <i>"Rugby in physical education with Miss [name]."</i> <i>"PE because I get to try out new sports."</i>	<i>"The science lessons and the experiments."</i> <i>"I really enjoy the lessons here because they are interesting and fun."</i> <i>"Art because we've been drawing animal and human skulls."</i> <i>"Math lessons with my teacher."</i>	<i>"The trip to the theatre and time with my friends."</i> <i>"Our trip to watch Pinocchio and Smoothie Day."</i> <i>"Football tournaments with the girls' football team."</i> <i>"Joining an after school performing arts [club]."</i>	<i>"My TA always helping me and caring about me."</i> <i>"The teachers and my tutor mostly."</i> <i>"There was my head of year to help me and my teachers were very comforting."</i> <i>"The difference between primary and secondary school."</i>

4.5 What have you enjoyed most about school this term?



A summary of six topics from pupils responses shows that young people aged 14 to 15 have enjoyed during the term the following:

Theme	Social Connection and Belonging	Enjoyment of Less Structured and Active School Moments	Special Events and Enrichment Opportunities	Positive School Climate and Supportive Relationships
Topic	Topic 1 - Clubs and Social Enjoyment at School <u>Interpretation:</u> Students enjoy <i>extracurricular clubs</i> , <i>social aspects</i> , and <i>engaging teachers or subjects</i> . There's a sense of belonging and positive engagement beyond academics.	Topic 4 - Breaks and Physical Activities <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic captures enjoyment related to <i>physical education (PE)</i> , <i>break/lunch times</i> , and <i>general school experience</i> . It reflects a preference for less structured, more active or social parts of the school day.	Topic 5 - Trips and Events <u>Interpretation:</u> This topic covers <i>special events</i> like trips, <i>Christmas festivities</i> , and occasional highlights. These are unique, memorable moments that break routine.	Topic 6 - New Experiences and Making Friends <u>Interpretation:</u> Students express excitement about new subjects, meeting people, and learning new things. This theme often overlaps with the transition to GCSE options.
	Topic 2 - Friends and Social Bonds <u>Interpretation:</u> Friendship is a major driver of school enjoyment. PE and some lessons like science are also appreciated in this context, but friends are the primary focus.			
	Topic 3 - Fun and Engaging Lessons <u>Interpretation:</u> Highlights positive academic experiences where lessons are <i>fun</i> , <i>interactive</i> , or <i>delivered by engaging teachers</i> . Some link to team-based activities like football.			
Examples	<i>"Music and badminton club"</i> <i>"Dance and PE"</i> <i>"Getting to do the subjects we chose e.g. sociology"</i>	<i>"Seeing my friends at break and lunch"</i> <i>"PE lessons and seeing my friends"</i> <i>"The sports in the school/PE classes"</i>	<i>"The geography trip"</i> <i>"The Christmas market!! It was very fun"</i> <i>"School trip to a theatre"</i>	<i>"Doing subjects I have never done before"</i> <i>"Making new friends and my GCSE lessons"</i> <i>"Learning new things in new lessons"</i>
	<i>"Being with friends"</i> <i>"My friends carried the term"</i> <i>"Seeing my friends everyday"</i>			
	<i>"English with Mrs. [name], the weekend, seeing my friends, computing with Mr. [name]"</i> <i>"Fun lessons and being around good friends"</i> <i>"Interesting lessons sometimes e.g. English"</i>			

Domain 5. Bullying

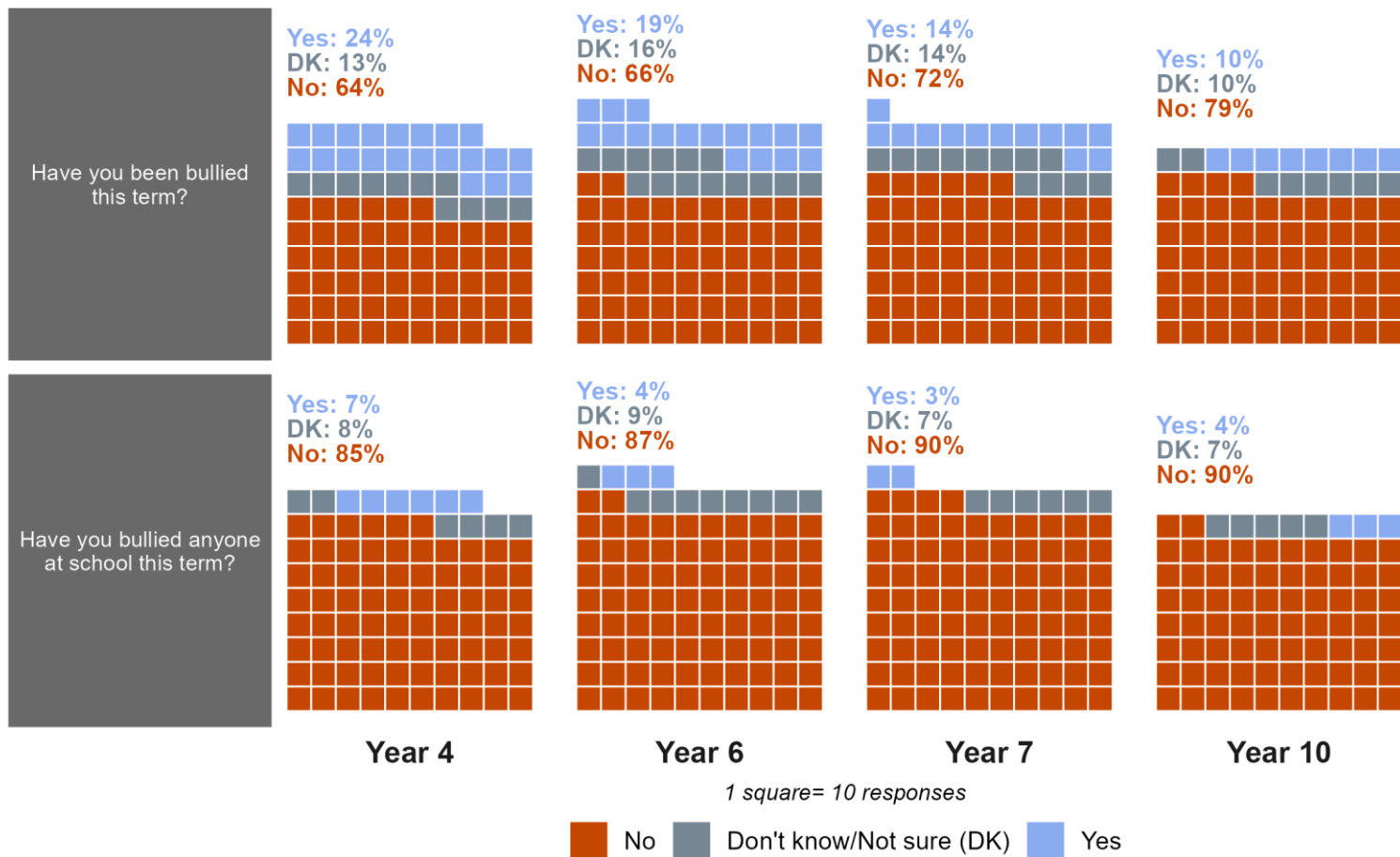


Key findings

Students were asked questions related to bullying.

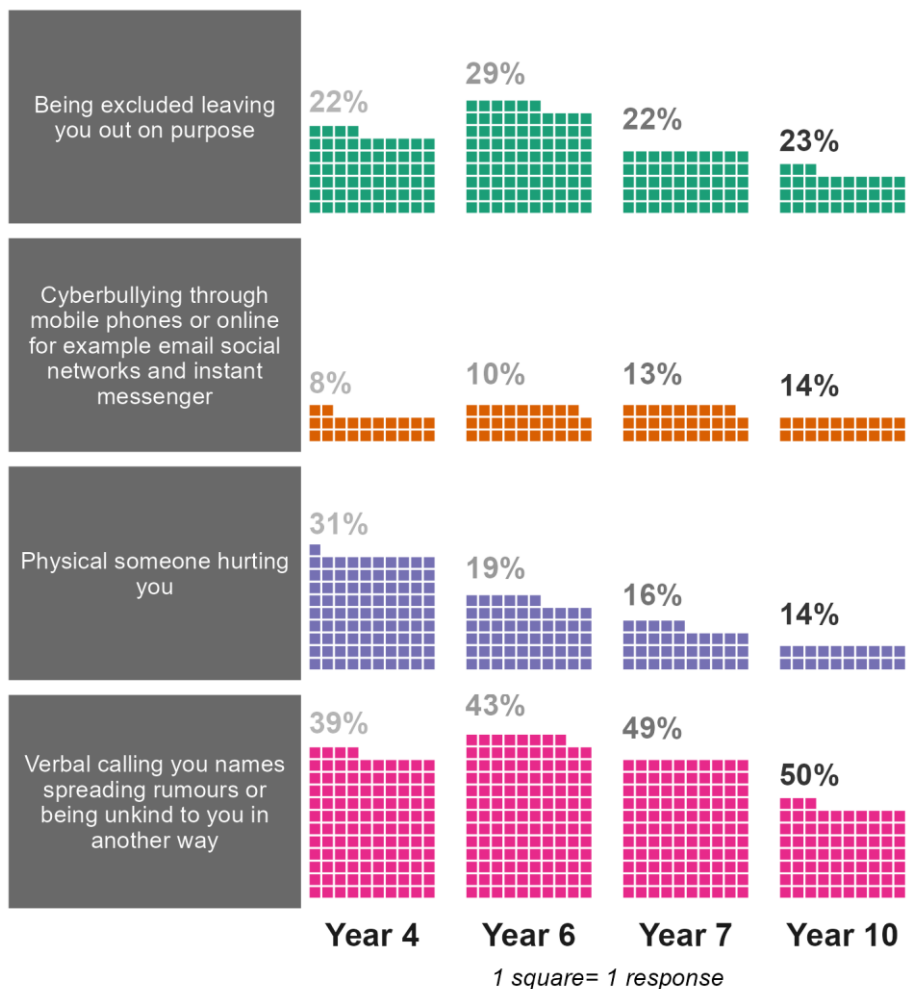
- 30% of pupils across all Year groups were either confused/did not know (13%) as to what constitutes bullying or were the recipients of bullying behaviour (17%), with reported bullying decreasing with age.
- Self-reported bullying of others were proportionally very low (4% of pupils), but the number was notable (154 pupils).
- Across all Year groups, verbal bullying was the most common type of bullying (44%), followed by exclusion (24%), physical bullying (21%) and cyberbullying (10%).
- Pupils were divided as to how well their school deals with bullying. 35% indicated that their school handles bullying behaviours well, 29% responded in a neutral way and 37% thought it does not.
- The way young people responded to questions on bullying indicate that more focused approaches in terms of educating pupils about bullying and sufficient mechanisms to tackle such behaviours should not only be in place but also communicated effectively and efficiently.

5.1 Bullying and being bullied



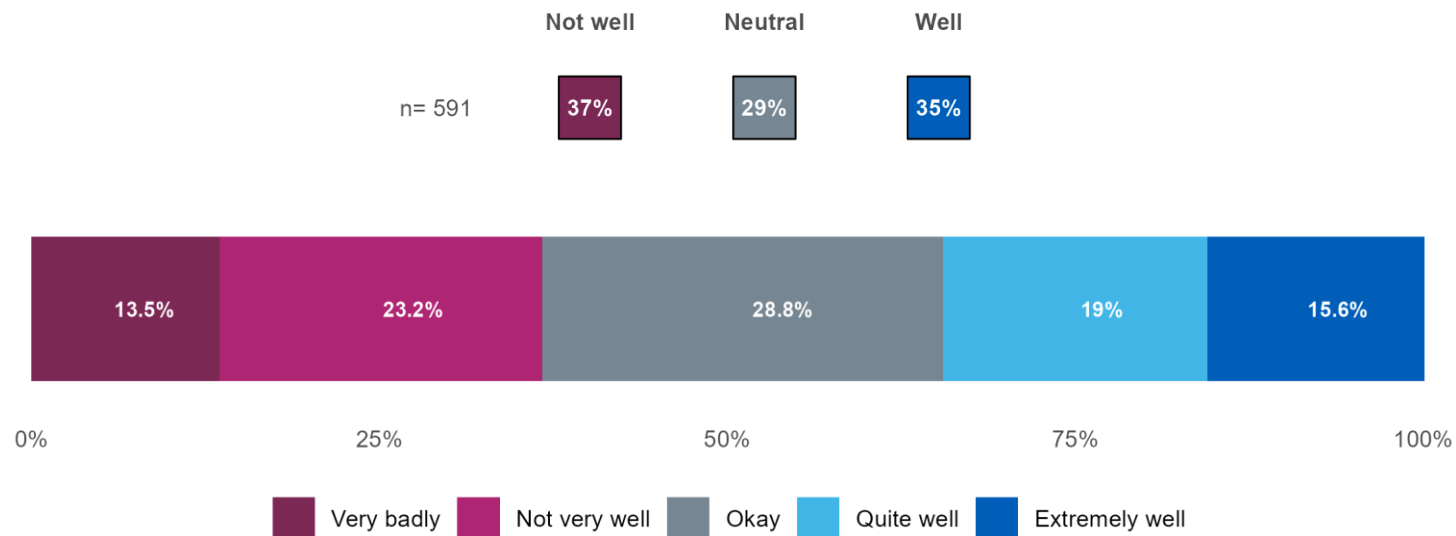
- Across all Year groups, 70% of pupils indicated that they had not been bullied, 17% responded that they had, with 13% not knowing or being unsure as to whether they had experienced such behaviour.
- Reported bullying decreases with age, from 24% in Year 4 to 10% in Year 10. However, a consistent minority within each Year group (10-16%) were unsure as to whether they had been bullied indicating possible confusion or uncertainty about what constitutes bullying.
- 154 or 4% of all respondents reported having bullied someone in the last term, with the vast majority of pupils (88%) stating that they have not bullied any schoolmates.
- Self-reported admissions of bullying others are very low in each Year group (3-7%), but the numbers of pupils are notable with 62 Year 4, 35 Year 6, 25 Year 7 and 32 Year 10 pupils indicating having bullied a schoolmate in one term. The proportion of students saying “No” increases slightly with age, but around 7-9% indicated being unsure, which might suggest confusion about what counts as bullying behaviour.

If you have been bullied this term, in what way did it happen



- Pupils were asked to identify **all types** of bullying behaviour that they might have experienced.
- Verbal bullying was the most common form of bullying, 44% across all Year groups, and was more prevalent amongst older pupils with 49% of Year 7 and 50% of Year 10 pupils reporting having experienced it.
- Exclusion, 24% across all Year groups, is a consistent issue for all pupils but particularly for Year 6 pupils, with 29% reporting having been excluded on purpose.
- Physical bullying, 21% across all Year groups, decreases sharply with age, suggesting it may be more common in earlier school years.
- Cyberbullying, 10% across all Year groups, though still less common than other types, grows steadily with age, and may require more attention in upper years. Older students are more likely to experience cyberbullying, consistent with greater digital access and social media use.

5.3 How well do you think your school deals with bullying?



- Pupils were divided as to how well their school deals with bullying.
- Over a third of students (37%) indicated that their school does not deal with bullying behaviours well, suggesting that many young people feel unprotected or unheard.
- A significant chunk (29%) responded in a neutral way, which might suggest inconsistent experiences or uncertainty about the school's effectiveness.
- Just over a third (35%) thought their school handles bullying well, but this was not a strong majority.

5.3 How well do you think your school deals with bullying?

Pupil Characteristics	School's response to bullying
Year group	
Gender	
Ethnicity	
Sexual orientation	
Transgender status	
Long term condition	
Young carer	
Free school meals (FSM) eligibility	
Pupil/family in contact with a social worker	
Having lived or currently living without birth parents	

Note: See Appendix V for responses by pupil characteristic

Significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded
Non- significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

- Pupils perceptions of how their school deals with bullying varied significantly with age, with Year 10 students being more likely than any other Year group to express negative opinions and less likely to indicate positive ones. A similar pattern was recorded when comparing the responses of Year 4 and Year 6 pupils, with the latter Year group expressing more negative views.
- Pupils with a long term condition were also more likely to report negative perceptions (44%) linked to how their school deals with bulling and less likely to express positive opinions (24%) compared to their peers (34% and 38% respectively)
- Even though there might be differences in the way young people responded while considering the other eight characteristics listed in the Table, the differences were not significant and in some instances establishing them would have been difficult due to low sample sizes (e.g. less than 20 respondents identified as being transgender/still questioning their identity).

Domain 6. Self-harm



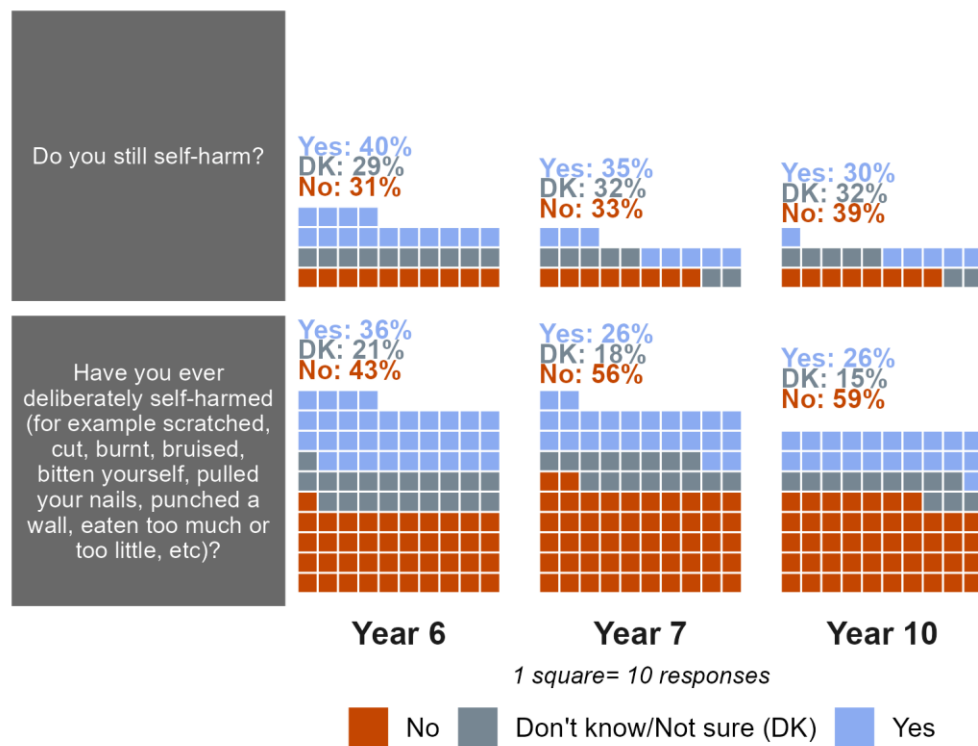
Key findings

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Year 6, Year 7 and Year 10 students were asked questions related to self-harming.

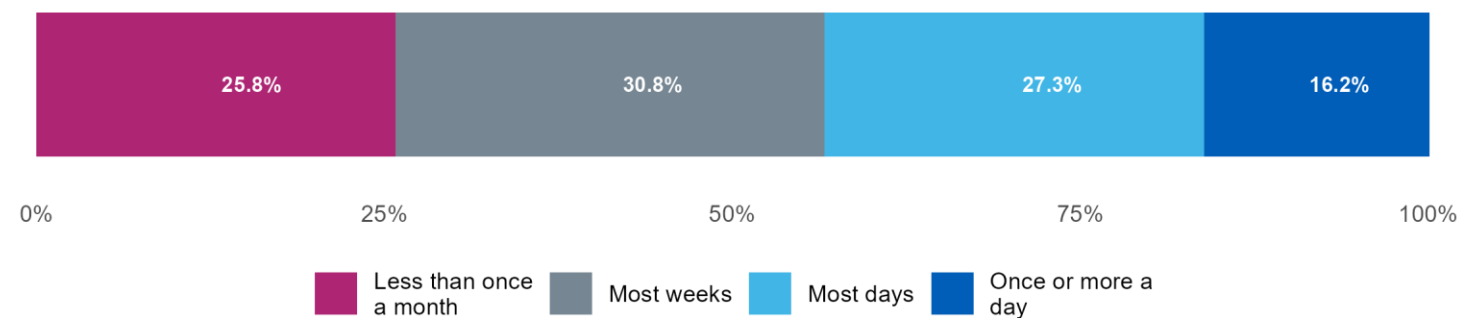
- 30% of pupils across all Year groups reported having self-harmed at least once, 18% indicated being unsure/not knowing if they ever had, and 52% responded that they had not. As students progress through school years, proportionally more become certain they have not self-harmed, and the number of students who are unsure declines.
- 36% of young people across all Year groups reported that they still self-harm, with the proportion decreasing with age. A consistently high portion of students indicated they don't know or are unsure if they still self-harm, which may reflect confusion, denial, or uncertainty about what self-harm includes.
- 74% of pupils who reported self-harming, did so frequently (weekly, daily, or more often), with 26% hurting themselves infrequently (less than monthly) still signalling a clear need for mental health support.

6.1 Self-harm



- Year 6, Year 7 and Year 10 students were asked questions related to self-harming.
- 794 or 30% of pupils across all Year groups reported having self-harmed at least once, 18% indicated being unsure/not knowing if they ever had, and 52% responded that they had not.
- Proportionally more Year 6 pupils indicated ever self-harming (36%), with 26% of Year 7 and Year 10 pupils responding that they ever had. Similarly, as students get older, proportionally more seem certain they have never self-harmed (43% for Year 6, 56% for Year 7 and 59% for Year 10).
- 290 or 36% of young people across all Year groups indicated that they still self-harm, 31% reported being unsure/not knowing whether they still did, and 34% suggested that they did not.
- The percentage of students who said they still self-harm declines gradually from Year 6 (40%) to Year 10 (30%). Roughly one third of young people in each Year group (29–32%) indicated being unsure/not knowing if they still do, which may indicate confusion, denial, or uncertainty about what counts as self-harm. Proportionally more older pupils indicated not self harming, suggesting that more students stop or reduce self-harm behaviours as they grow older.

6.2 How often do you self harm?



- Of the 260 young respondents, most (74%) reported self-harming regularly (weekly, daily, or more often). Of those, 31% self-harm most weeks, 27% self-harm most days and 16% self-harm once or more a day.
- Only 26% reported self-harming infrequently (less than once a month), which still signifies a need for support.

6.2 How often do you self harm?

Pupil Characteristics	Self-harm frequency
Year group	
Gender	
Ethnicity	
Sexual orientation	
Transgender status	
Long term condition	
Young carer	
Free school meals (FSM) eligibility	
Pupil/family in contact with a social worker	
Having lived or currently living without birth parents	

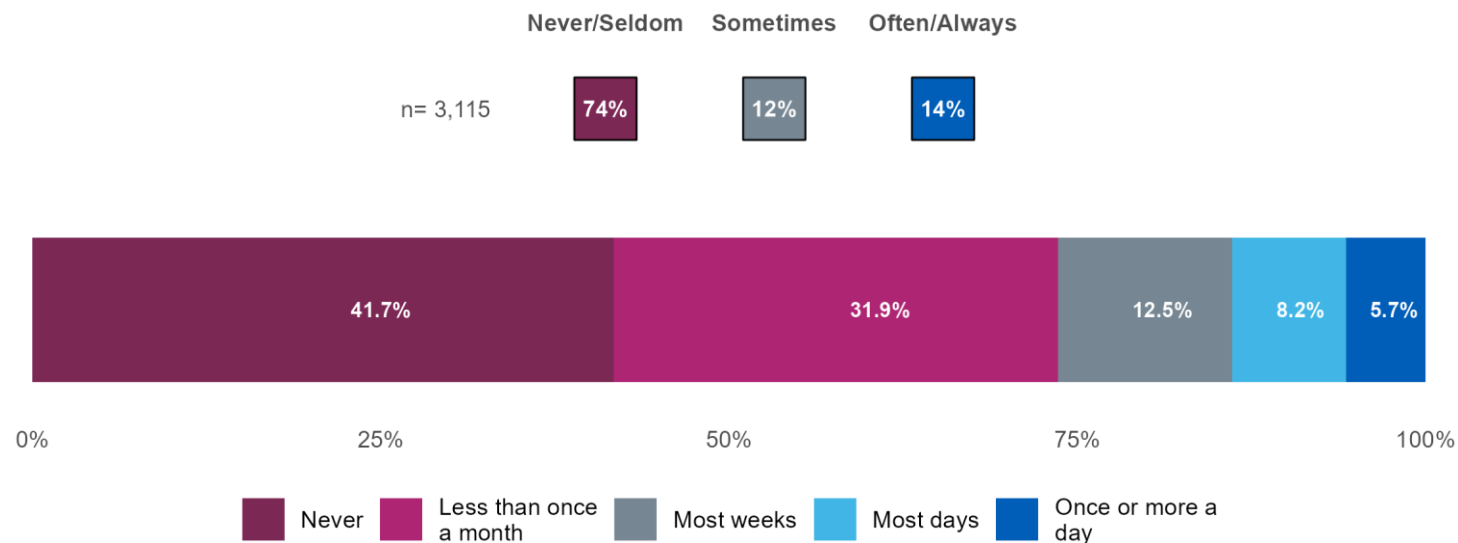
Note: See Appendix VI for responses by pupil characteristic

Significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded
Non- significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

- Self harm varied by age. 73% of Year 6, 80% of Year 7 and 69% of Year 10 pupils reported self-harming most weeks/most days/ once or more a day. However, differences were not significant.
- Significant variations exist for ethnicity but not when comparing specific ethnic groups pairwise, which might also be attributed to low sample sizes (less than 18 responses for each ethnic group excluding the White group). Asian/Asian British (77%) and individuals from the other ethnic group (72%) reported the highest frequent self-harm rates (most days/once or more a day).
- No significant differences in the way young people responded while considering the other eight characteristics listed in the Table were recorded.

Domain 7. Outside of school

7.1 How often, if at all, do you see or hear arguments between parents/carers or other adults in your house?



- When asked about the frequency at which pupils witness arguments in their home, the majority (74%) reported that it is a rare phenomenon, less than once a month, or never happens. This is reassuring and suggests that most young respondents are in relatively calm, stable home environments.
- Some students (12%) reported experiencing arguments sometimes and 14% indicated a frequent presence of in-house arguments (often/always). This means that over 1 in 4 students live in homes with recurring adult conflict, which can significantly impact their wellbeing.

7.1 How often, if at all, do you see or hear arguments between parents/carers or other adults in your house?

Pupil Characteristics	Arguments among parents/adults in the house
Year group	
Gender	
Ethnicity	
Sexual orientation	
Transgender status	
Long term condition	
Young carer	
Free school meals (FSM) eligibility	
Pupil/family in contact with a social worker	
Having lived or currently living without birth parents	

Note: See Appendix VII for responses by pupil characteristic

Significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded
Non- significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

- Year 4 students were more likely to report more frequent exposure (27%) to adult arguments at home than their older peers (11% in Year 6, 9% in Year 4 and 8% in Year 10).
- Students identifying as other gender reported more frequent exposure to adult arguments at home (20% vs 13% for woman/girl and 13% for man/boy), but differences in responses were not significant.
- Pupils from the Black/African/Caribbean ethnic group were significantly less likely to witness in-house arguments compared to their White and Mixed/Multiple peers.
- Young people with a long-term condition, pupils identifying as LGBTQIA+, pupils self-reporting as young carers and pupils in contact with a social worker were more likely to report experiencing higher frequencies of arguments at home.

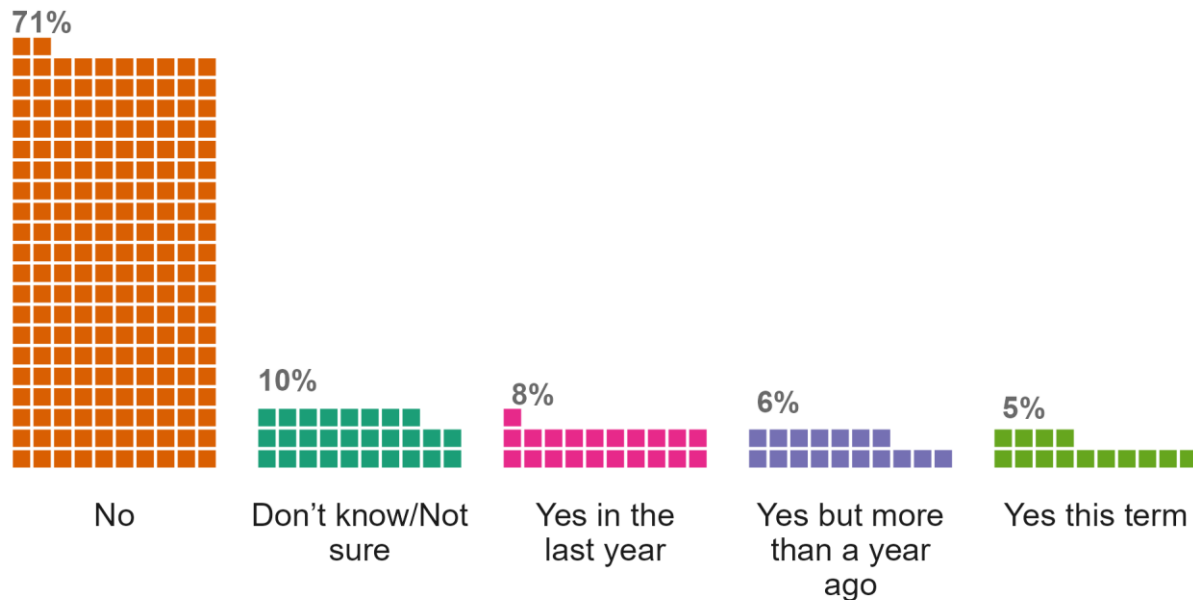
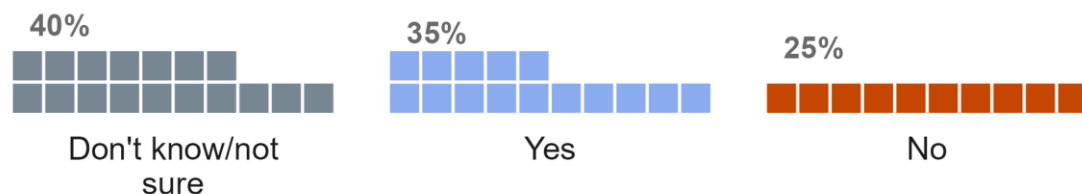
Domain 8. Getting help outside of school



Key findings

Year 6, Year 7 and Year 10 pupils were asked questions on receiving mental help support outside of their school environment:

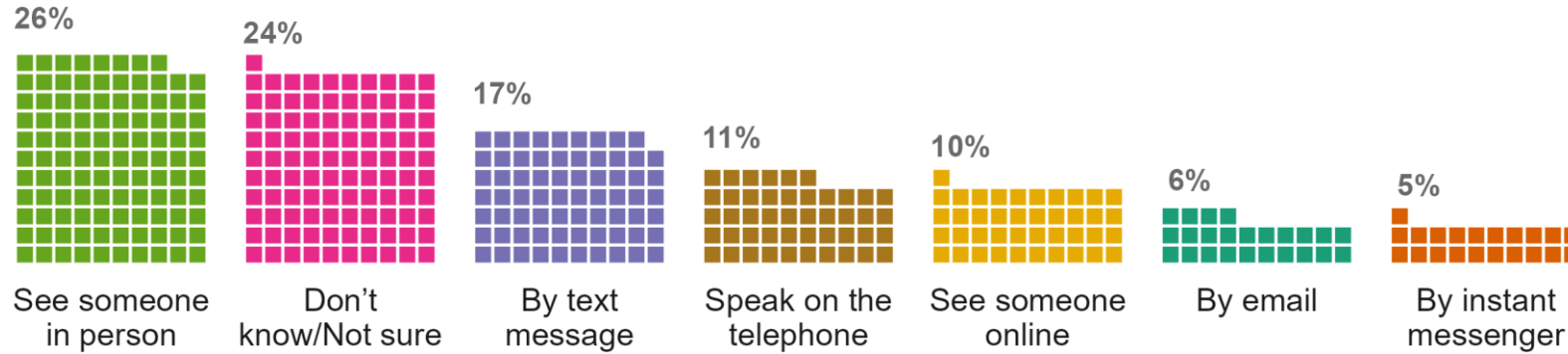
- Most pupils (71%) had never used a mental health service, indicating either a lack of perceived need, awareness, access, or possible stigma around seeking support. Recent engagement, as indicated by accessing a service in the last term was limited (5%), whereas 10% of young respondents were unsure or did not know whether they reached out to a service, which might point to uncertainty about what qualifies as a mental health support.
- 35% of young respondents who had never used a mental health service felt they could benefit from one, indicating unmet needs or missed opportunities for care. 40% were uncertain of the benefits of accessing services or did not know how useful services could be, reflecting a lack of mental health awareness, uncertainty about their own well-being, or limited understanding of what services offer. The remaining 25% did not feel they could benefit from one which could be due to under-recognition of mental health concerns.
- A quarter of students (26%) indicated 'in-person' as their preferred means of receiving support, likely due to the trust and connection it provides. Digital formats (49%), text-based communication and phone/video support, were also collectively popular. The adoption, expansion or tailoring of a hybrid service model appears ideal, offering both traditional and digital options.
- After school hours (27%) was the most commonly preferred time for accessing mental health services. 21% and 18% of respondents favoured weekend and during school hours access respectively, whereas the largest portion (35%) did not have a preference. Responses highlight the need to offer flexible scheduling/expanded access beyond school hours, as well as raise awareness of pupils own needs and service availability.
- Building trusted relationships helps students feel secure and more willing to seek help when needed. It lays the foundation for emotional wellbeing and resilience. Mental health support and access evolves from basic emotional support in younger years to professional services and awareness of systemic barriers by Year 10. This reflects a growing awareness and need for more structured support as students mature and face more complex challenges.

Have you ever used a mental health service?*(1 square= 10 responses)***If you have not used a mental health service, have you ever felt that you could have benefited from using one?***(1 square= 10 responses)*

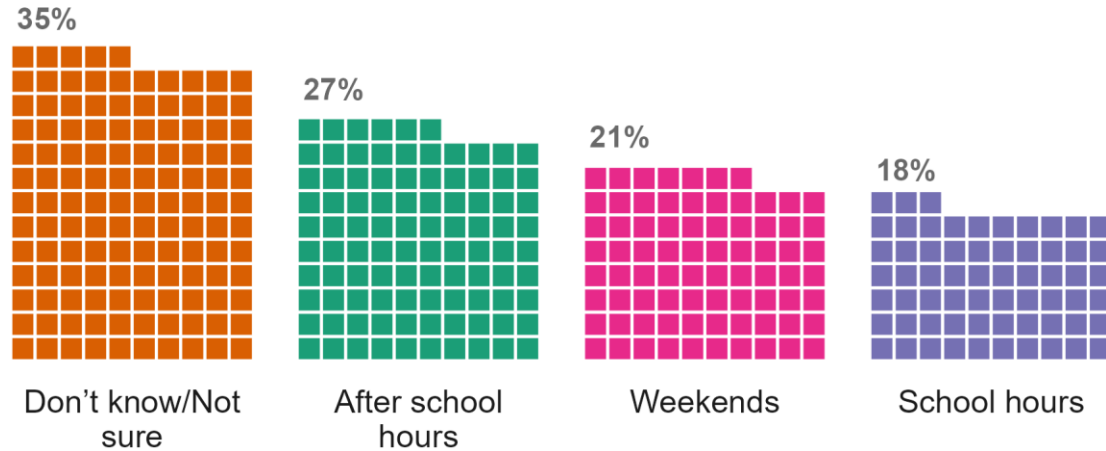
- Year 6, Year 7 and Year 10 pupils were asked questions on receiving mental help support outside of their school environment.
- The majority of young people (2,021 pupils or 71%) indicated they had never used a mental health service, suggesting either a lack of perceived need, awareness, access, or possible stigma around seeking support. Only 13% used a mental health service within the past year, including this term, indicating that recent engagement was limited. 6% accessed services more than a year ago, which may reflect one-time or discontinued use, potentially due to resolved issues or dissatisfaction. 10% of young respondents indicated being unsure or not knowing, which might point to uncertainty about what qualifies as a mental health service or a lack of clarity in the question (top Figure).
- Of the 436 pupils submitting a response to the question on whether they felt that they could benefit from using a mental health service, if they had never accessed one, 35% agreed- indicating unmet needs or missed opportunities for care. This suggests that there might be barriers linked to stigma, access issues or lack of confidence in services. Two in five respondents were uncertain of the benefits of accessing services or did not know how useful services could be, reflecting a lack of mental health awareness, uncertainty about their own well-being, or limited understanding of what services offer. Only a quarter of pupils felt confident they did not need help (bottom Figure).

How would you like to access mental health services?

(1 square= 10 responses)

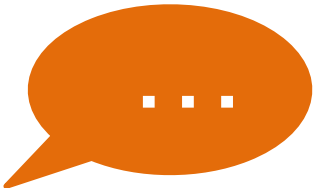


- Pupils expressed diverse preferences for accessing mental health support, with no single access method dominating.
- In-person support was the most preferred option (26%), indicating that face-to-face interaction is important for many respondents, possibly because of the personal connection, trust, or effectiveness of in-person communication. Digital options were collectively significant, showing that a hybrid approach is needed, with text-based methods (text message, email, instant messenger) accounting for 28%. Live remote communication channels (video/online, phone) were selected by 21% of pupils, suggesting that many were open to real-time but remote support. 24% of young respondents did not know or were unsure, which can additionally be attributed to having insufficient information about what each access method offers. Response patterns, in summary, suggest that:
 - There is a need for multiple access support points with a 'one-size-fits-all' approach being insufficient to meet the needs of young people.
 - Tech-based access matters, whether synchronous (online/phone) or asynchronous (text/email/instant message). Service providers should continue to expand and refine remote support.
 - A lack of available information or confidence in navigating mental health services might exist and improving mental health literacy could help bridge this gap.

What days/times would it be useful to access a mental health service?*(1 square= 10 responses)*

- After school hours (27%) was the most commonly preferred time for accessing mental health services, suggesting that many students would like to access them outside of academic commitments, possibly for privacy or convenience. A notable demand was also recorded for weekends (21%), supporting the idea that flexibility beyond the school schedule is important for some, and during school hours (18%), indicating that a considerable portion was comfortable or able to access services during the typical school day which may reflect concerns about stigma, confidentiality, or time constraints. The largest portion (35%) did not have a preference indicating uncertainty or lack of awareness about when services are available or when they might be most helpful. Response patterns, in summary, indicate that:
 - Flexible scheduling and expanded access beyond traditional hours is important, 48% preferred times outside of regular school hours (after school or weekends)
 - There is a need to raise awareness and address planning gaps. Many respondents might have not thought about their own needs, or are unaware of what is available when pointing to an opportunity for better communication and education around service options.
 - Lower interest during school hours may reflect practical or emotional barriers (e.g., fear of being seen, missing class, or lack of private space).

8.4 Suggestions for Mental Health Support



The table below outlines the key topics identified across all year groups and illustrates how these topics are expressed within each group.

Key Topics across Year groups

Topics	Year 6 (Ages 10–11)	Year 7 (Ages 11–12)	Year 10 (Ages 14–15)
Trusted Relationships and Safe Adults	Key source of support	Key source of support	Key source of support
Mental Health Support and Access	basic support	Professional support	professional access and systemic barriers
School Environment and Culture	Consistently emphasized	Consistently emphasized	Consistently emphasized
Emotional Regulation and Coping Tools	Noted as practical tools	evolving to calm spaces and creative outlets	evolving to calm spaces and creative outlets
Privacy, Confidentiality and Anonymity	Absent	Concerns about confidentiality	Concerns about confidentiality
Inclusion, Diversity and Respect	Important	Important	Important
Opportunities to Express Themselves	Mentioned explicitly	Mentioned explicitly	More nuanced with group methods and crisis support

The following pages provide a detailed breakdown of topics by year group.

8.4 Suggestions for Mental Health Support

The topics identified were distinct and could not be grouped into broader overarching themes. Topics emerging from pupils' responses indicate that children aged 10 to 11 believe they could be offered support in the following areas:

Topics	Topic description	Examples
1. Practical Tools for Self-Regulation and Emotional Support	Students value having tangible, accessible tools and spaces to manage their emotions and stress.	<i>"I want one [fidget toy]"</i> <i>"A quiet, calming room to relax if we are stressed"</i> <i>"A little worry monster in each class"</i>
2. Trusted Relationships and Safe Adults	Students emphasize the importance of having trusted adults they can speak to privately and regularly.	<i>"Talking about it privately not in front of other children"</i> <i>"You could have a person in your school that whenever you need them, you can go to them and talk"</i>
3. Opportunities to Be Heard and Express Themselves	Students want more frequent, anonymous, and inclusive ways to share their feelings and worries, ensuring everyone has the chance to be heard beyond just occasional check-ins.	<i>"A chance to have our voices heard"</i> <i>"Instead of just having 1 day to talk about your feelings, make sure it can happen all week"</i>
4. Changes in School Environment and Culture	There is a strong desire for a less stressful, more inclusive school culture with increased wellbeing lessons, outdoor activities, fair treatment, and kinder, less strict teachers.	<i>"I want someone that can help me focus on good things"</i> <i>"Give more free time and not studying genuinely boring things"</i>
5. Dealing with Bullying, Safety and Inequality	Students call for stronger anti-bullying measures, safer spaces, respect for all identities, and an end to favouritism and discrimination to create a more secure and supportive environment.	<i>"Stop bullying, make children happier, stop self-harm, show you care"</i> <i>"People poke fun at [my] gender or style, so I don't show my real self"</i>
6. Support for Specific Needs or Conditions	There is a need for better recognition and tailored support for neurodivergent students and those with medical conditions, including calm spaces and flexible learning options.	<i>"I have Cushing's Syndrome... it needs to be noticed"</i> <i>"Make a comfy room for ADHD or any disability to relax"</i>
7. Help Beyond the School Walls	Students highlight the importance of accessible local clubs, mental health resources, and assistance for those facing challenges at home, emphasizing support outside of school.	<i>"Outside of school like me and my sisters are always bored, but clubs are expensive"</i> <i>"Helping the homeless people and kids"</i>
8. Friendship, Inclusion and Connection	Building genuine friendships, inclusive group activities, and family support are key for emotional wellbeing and coping with difficulties.	<i>"Feeling loved by friends and having friends to help me cope"</i> <i>"If I could see my little siblings when I feel down"</i>

8.4 Suggestions for Mental Health Support

The topics identified were distinct and could not be grouped into broader overarching themes. Topics emerging from pupils' responses indicate that young people aged 11 to 12 believe they could be offered support in the following areas:

Topics	Topic description	Examples
1. Mental Health Support and Access to Help	Students want more consistent and private support in school.	<i>"Maybe a safe quiet place where anyone who is struggling can go."</i> <i>"Being anonymous and don't tell parents about these things."</i> <i>"Having a councillor or multiple councillors come in and ask everyone one by one how they're doing."</i>
2. Social Support and Connection	Friendship and feeling included are essential for wellbeing.	<i>"To have at least one friend in your tutor."</i> <i>"I also talk to my younger sister about my day at school because she feels like my stress reliever."</i> <i>"I think people... could have a 'buddy' so someone who is always there to talk/help out."</i> <i>"Friends, teacher, head of year, family."</i>
3. School Environment and Teacher Role	Teachers have a powerful impact — positively or negatively.	<i>"Tutor checking in with you."</i> <i>"Make things more easy to understand."</i> <i>"Teachers come up with stupid ideas and it doesn't help."</i> <i>"Stop giving 13 year olds knives to scare people what is wrong with this generation."</i>
4. Sensory and Coping Tools	Small tools can make a big difference for emotional regulation.	<i>"Stress toys, sitting at the back of a classroom by a window."</i> <i>"Fidgets... stretchy toys without getting told off."</i> <i>"Maybe a stuffed animal to cuddle."</i> <i>"A mini sketch book I can draw in class so I don't fidget my leg."</i>
5. Anonymity and Privacy	Many students want to share — but only in safe, private ways.	<i>"A box to put your worries in so that you do not have to talk to people directly."</i> <i>"Be able to text someone from the school without them knowing who it is."</i> <i>"Talk to someone anonymously."</i>
6. Activities and Alternative Outlets	Creative and relaxing activities help students open up.	<i>"Some sort of craft evening or during the day... to make people open up."</i> <i>"Colouring."</i> <i>"Clubs to talk about mental health."</i> <i>"Sessions for an hour and play games and talk about things."</i>
7. Inclusivity and Respect	Many want support for diversity and acceptance.	<i>"DONT LET PEOPLE MAKE FUN OF PEOPLE WITH A DIFFERENT RACE OR HAIR COLOUR."</i> <i>"I think the school could support [LGBTQ+] more."</i> <i>"More acceptance for everyone no matter who they are in and outside of school."</i>
8. Systemic and Policy Changes	Broader changes could make school more manageable.	<i>"Less homework.", "Be in school for less time."</i> <i>"Make it more easy to access help for people who are only struggling a little bit."</i> <i>"Weekly check-up on all students."</i> <i>"If they ask people 1-on-1 instead of students going to them."</i>

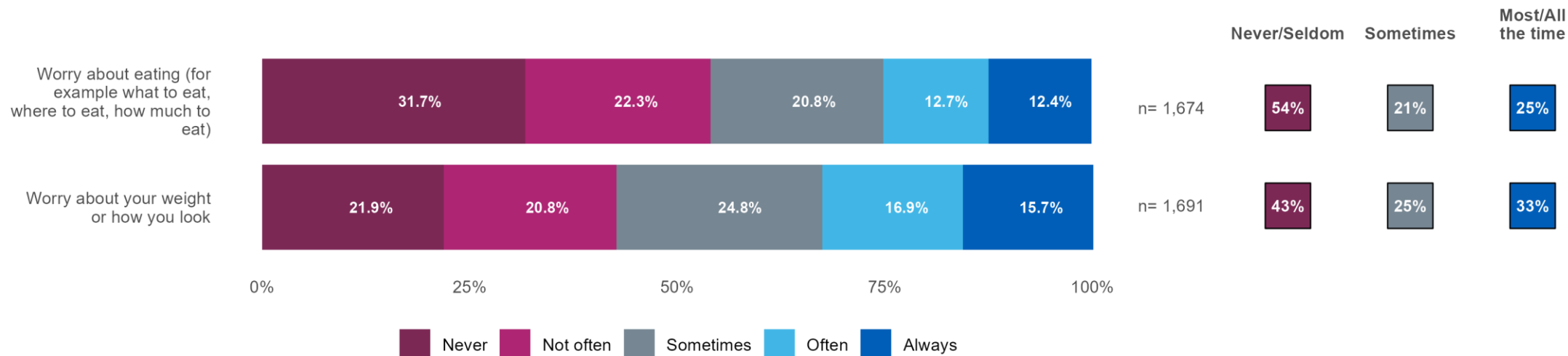
8.4 Suggestions for Mental Health Support

The topics identified were distinct and could not be grouped into broader overarching themes. Topics emerging from pupils' responses indicate that young people aged 14 to 15 believe they could be offered support in the following areas:

Topics	Topic description	Examples
1. Mental Health Support and Access to Professionals	Students strongly desire access to real mental health professionals and feel let down by limited school resources.	<i>“MORE PEOPLE IN SCHOOL WHO ARE LICENCED professional.”, “Actually doing something, not just breathing exercises.”, “A professional in the field of psychology... sometimes we think hugs are nothing but they make all the difference.”, “We cannot get support and we give up because we feel isolated.”</i>
2. Privacy, Confidentiality, and Anonymity	Many students want safe, private, judgment-free spaces to share, often anonymously.	<i>“Anonymous online question box.”, “An anonymous text line where you could ask for advice.”, “We should be able to express ourselves... without them having to go tell almost all of the other staff members.”, “Some way of anonymously contacting school staff.”</i>
3. Trusted Adults and Supportive Relationships	Relationships with individual, reliable, empathetic adults matter deeply.	<i>“Mr [name] made me feel comfortable despite me never having spoken to him.”, “Teachers talk to us nicely.”, “Have teachers listen to them and not dismiss their feelings.”, “Someone who is reliable and understanding should replace someone so useless as Miss [name].”</i>
4. Culture Change in School Policies and Attitudes	Many feel school culture is too strict, stressful, or dismissive.	<i>“Stop schools being so strict.”, “More support, less worrying about uniform and GCSEs.”, “School being more relaxed and not so stressful.”, “Actually doing something about bullying — teachers only give detentions.”</i>
5. Routine Check-ins and Early Intervention	Students want structured check-ins and proactive systems to catch struggles early.	<i>“Routine check-in for everyone to remove the barrier.”, “Monthly check-up with someone private for people with anxiety.”, “Take the kids... if they are feeling down that day to talk to them.”</i>
6. Safe, Calm, and Designated Spaces	Students want physical spaces to escape, decompress, or reflect.	<i>“A safe space with things in there to help people.”, “Places to go at break if you feel anxious.”, “Have more calm and discreet/private areas to talk to trusting teachers.”</i>
7. Inclusion, Diversity, and Cultural Safety	Need for more diversity and representation in staff and recognition of identity.	<i>“I want a more diverse teacher that can help those of colour.”, “Spaces where people cannot be judged for who they are.”, “Support for people like me.”</i>
8. Creative and Group-Based Support Methods	Students value clubs, activities, or group sessions that open space for connection.	<i>“Focus groups or youth clubs where anyone can come and talk.”, “A workshop with NSPCC on what to do if something happens.”, “Secret student agents reporting bullying.”</i>
9. Crisis Support, Bullying, and Trauma Awareness	Some are in immediate distress or witnessing it around them, and feel school fails to respond.	<i>“I’ve had to coach multiple friends out of panic attacks.”, “Better support for victims of sexual assault in school.”, “Teachers asking students how they are if they notice even the single change.”</i>
10. Systemic Barriers to Support (Diagnoses, Access, Time)	Support often depends on diagnosis, time off, or external gatekeeping.	<i>“Support for those undiagnosed with ASD.”, “Mental health days that don’t count as lost attendance.”, “ADHD tests, Autism tests to help with exams.”</i>

Domain 9. Eating and Body Image

9.1 Worries about eating and body image. Do you...



- Year 7 and Year 10 pupils responded to questions linked to eating and body image.
- A perception of relatively healthy or stable self-image was reflected in the responses of 43% of pupils who never/seldom worried about their weight or how they look. However, close to three in five young people expressed at least some concern. One in three respondents indicated a frequent or ongoing distress about their body image, which could reflect low self-esteem and can potentially contribute or lead to feelings of anxiety and/or disordered eating.
- A small majority (54%) indicated that eating is not a major source of stress or concern. However, a significant 46% of pupils reported worrying about eating at varying frequencies (21% worrying sometimes and a quarter most or all of the time), suggesting chronic or ongoing stress around food.

9.1 Worries about eating and body image

Pupil Characteristics	Worries about weight or look	Worries about eating
Year group		
Gender		
Ethnicity		
Sexual orientation		
Transgender status		
Long term condition		
Young carer		
Free school meals (FSM) eligibility		
Pupil/family in contact with a social worker		
Having lived or currently living without birth parents		

Note: See Appendix VIII for responses by pupil characteristic

Significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded
Non- significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

- Pupils’ worries about both their weight/look and eating, significantly vary by age and gender, with Year 10 pupils worrying more frequently than Year 7 pupils and men/boys worrying less regularly than girls/women and individuals identifying with the other gender.
- Similarly, students identifying as being LGBTQIA+, being transgender/still questioning, pupils eligible for free school meals, and young people in contact with a social worker, worried more frequently about their weight/look and about eating than their peers.
- Young carers and pupils with a long term condition responded in a similar manner as their peers when asked about how often they worry about their weight/look, but worried more frequently about eating.
- Although students from the Mixed/Multiple ethnic group and pupils not living with their birth parents reported higher frequencies associated with worries about their weight/look and diet/food compared to their peers, the differences in responses were not significant.
- As reported in “Domain 11. Activities”, young carers, individuals with a long term condition, pupils eligible for FSM and respondents in contact with a social worker, worried more frequently than their peers about family finances, about having enough to eat and also indicated eating less frequently with their family. The findings not only point to the fact that household income is associated with participants’ eating habits, impacting food availability and serving as a barrier to establishing a nutritious and balanced diet, but also that disconnected family meal times can further exacerbate worries about eating.

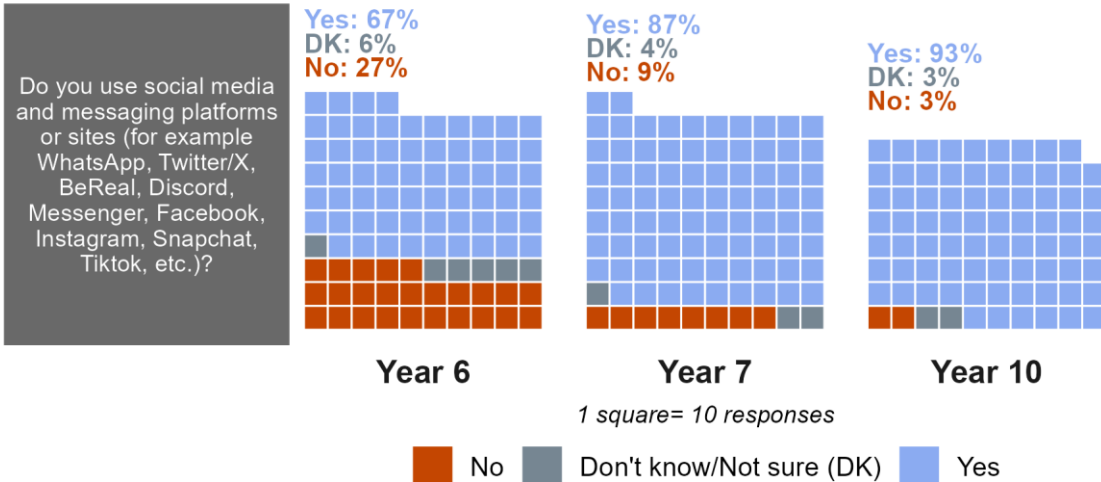
Domain 10. Social Media



Key findings

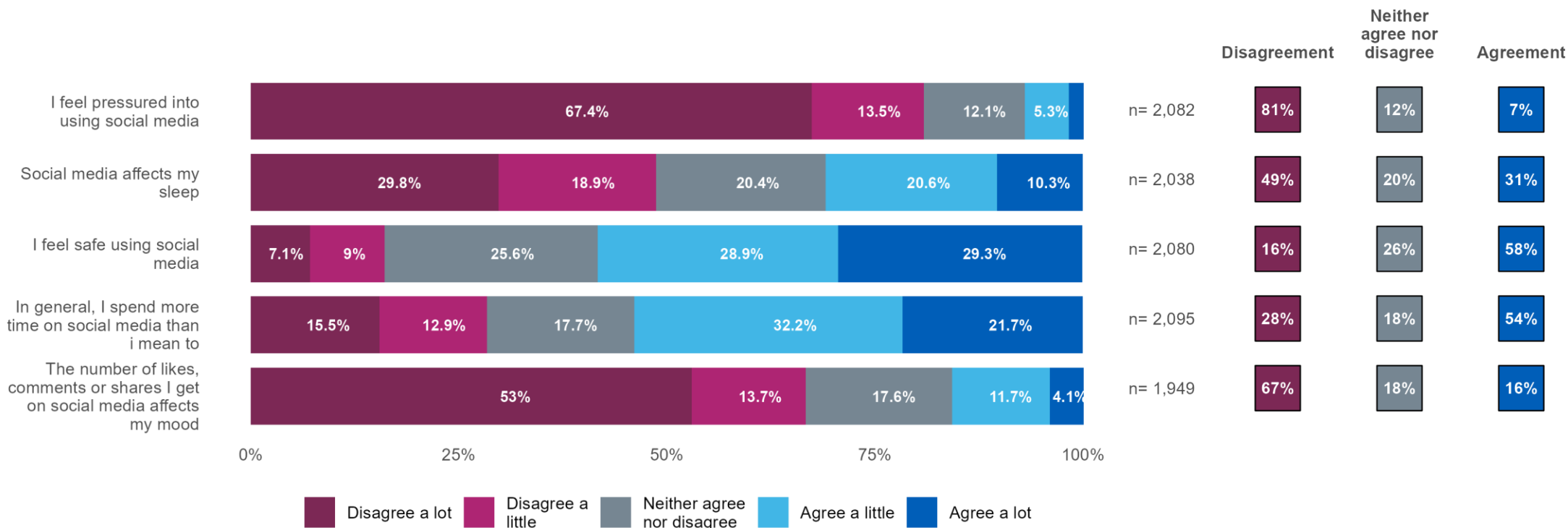
Year 6, Year 7 and Year 10 pupils were asked questions regarding their usage of social media and the impact that such use might have on their wellbeing.

- 82% of pupils across the three Year groups reported using social media or messaging platforms, with usage increasing sharply with age as respondents become more independent and more susceptible to peer influence.
- One in six students indicated feeling emotionally impacted by their social media engagement, with Year 6 pupils being impacted to a greater extent than Year 7 and Year 10 pupils.
- 54% of respondents admitted spending more time than intended on social media, while 51% either agreed that their sleep is either affected or expressed a neutral view, with the latter being a consequence of social media overuse.
- A worrying 42% of young people indicated feeling unsafe on social media (16%) or expressed neutral views (26%), signalling the need to further inform and educate students on online safety.
- The large majority of young respondents (81%) did not feel pressured into using social media, but peer-pressure appears to be a more widespread issue among young people and pupils identifying with the other gender.



- Year 6, Year 7 and Year 10 students were asked questions related to their use of social media and messaging platforms or sites
- 2,207 (82%) pupils across the three aforementioned Year groups reported using social media or messaging platforms, 125 (5%) indicated being unsure/not knowing if they ever had, and 360 (13%) responded that they had not.
- Social media/messaging platform usage increases sharply with age, with 67% of Year 6, 87% of Year 7 and 93% of Year 10 pupils accessing such platforms. As students grow older, their engagement with social and messaging platforms becomes much more common and could be indicative of social and peer expectations, as well as increasing independence.
- The proportion of pupils indicating being unsure with respect to their usage remained fairly stable across the three Year groups, varying between 3%-6%, suggesting that most students have a clear awareness of whether they use social media/messaging platforms or not, even from a younger age.

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



- For most pupils (67%), engagement metrics did not affect their mood, but nearly one in six (16%) indicated feeling emotionally impacted.
- More than half (54%) of respondents admitted spending more time than intended on social media which is a sign of common overuse.
- Close to three in five (58%) young people reported feeling safe on social media. A worrying 42% indicated feeling unsafe (16%) or expressed neutral views (26%) which signals the need to further inform and educate students on online safety.
- Pupils' views around the impact of social media on their sleep were divided. 51% indicated that their sleep is either affected (31%) or expressed a neutral view (20%), which could be a consequence of social media overuse.
- The large majority of young respondents (81%) did not feel pressured into using social media, and as such peer-pressure does not appear to be a widespread issue.

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

Pupil Characteristics	Likes, comments or shares on social media affect my mood	I spend more time on social media than I mean to	I feel safe using social media	Social media affect my sleep	I feel pressured into using social media
Year group					
Gender					
Ethnicity					
Sexual orientation					
Transgender status					
Long term condition					
Young carer					
Free school meals (FSM) eligibility					
Pupil/family in contact with a social worker					
Having lived or currently living without birth parents					

Significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

Non- significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

Note: See Appendix IX for responses by pupil characteristic

- Students in Year 10 were less likely than Year 6 pupils to agree that their mood was influenced by social media engagement, but were more likely than Year 6 and Year 7 pupils to spend more time on social media than they meant to, to report sleep disruptions arising from social media usage, and being pressured in using social media.
- Men/boys agreed to a lesser extent than women/girls that social engagement affects their mood, to spending more time on social media than intended, and to feeling pressurised in using social media, but felt safer when doing so. Young respondents identifying as other gender agreed more with being affected by social media engagement than men/boys, and with feeling pressurised into using social media than the other two gender groups .
- Young carers, pupils in contact with a social worker and young respondents not living with their birth parents agreed to a greater extent than their peers to experiencing mood swings resulting from social media engagement. Young carers, respondents identifying as LGBTQIA+ and pupils eligible on FSM also admitted to overusing social media to a greater extent than their peers, with the latter two groups additionally being more likely to report sleep disruptions resulting from such use.

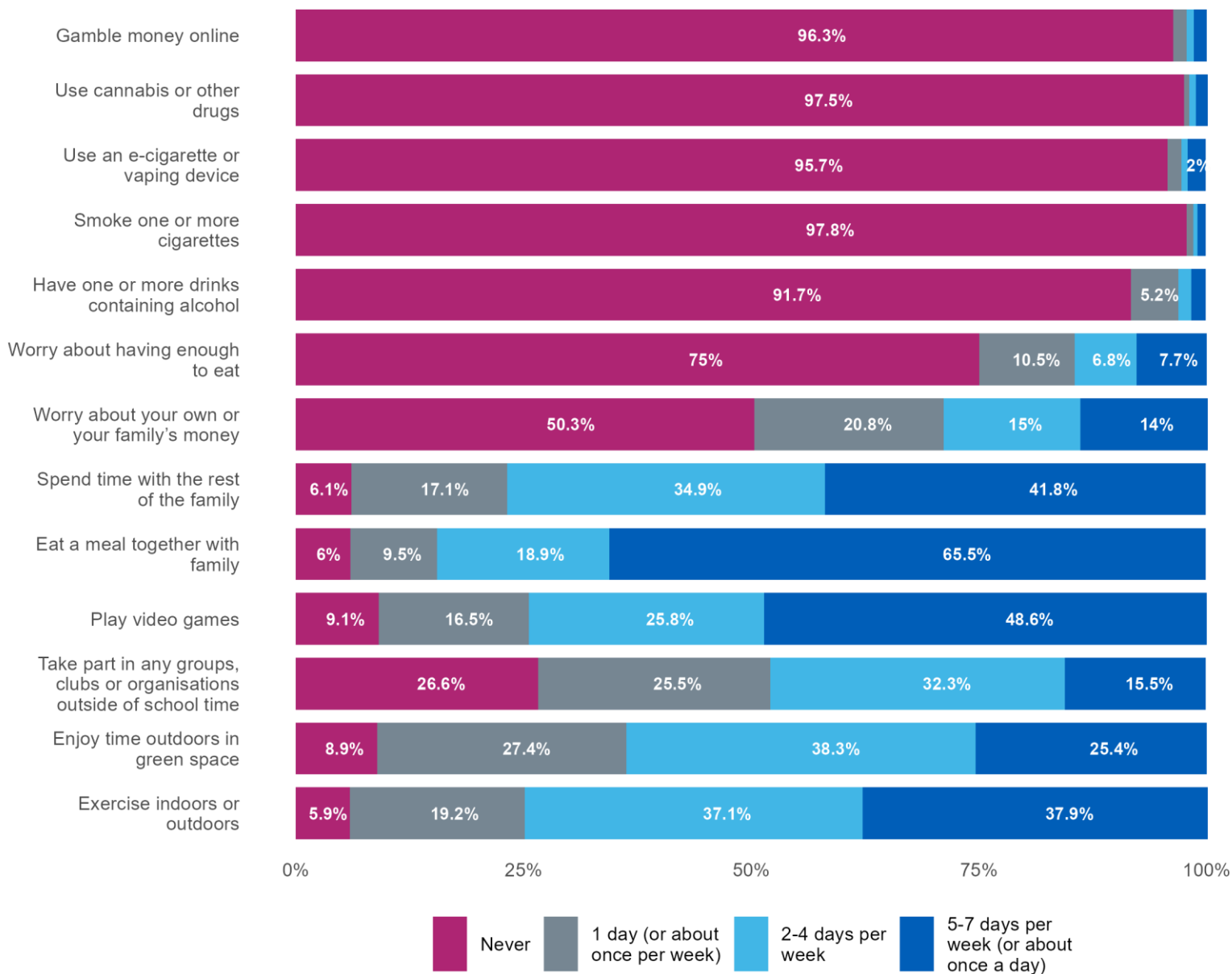
Domain 11. Activities



Key findings

- Pupils were asked questions around the activities that they undertake:
 - The majority of pupils indicated taking up physical activities or spending time in green spaces and outdoors frequently, whereas moderate participation in extracurricular activities is recorded, pointing to the need to further motivate and provide pupils with more opportunities to engage in such activities both within and outside school settings.
 - Most students reported spending time with their family in general (77%) or participating in family meals (84%) at least twice a week.
 - Gaming was recorded as being a popular activity, with three in four pupils indicating playing video games at least twice a week.
 - A significant proportion of young respondents expressed financial or food insecurity concerns. One half indicated worrying about family finances at least once a week and one in four pupils reported worrying about having enough to eat with the same frequency.
- Year 7 and Year 10 pupils were asked questions focusing on their engagement in risky behaviours; such as smoking cigarettes, using e-cigarettes or vaping devices, consuming cannabis or other drugs, or gambling money online; with more than 96% indicating that they never do. However, 8% of pupils indicated having one or more alcoholic drinks at least once a week.
- As students get older, some become more vulnerable to substance use, especially to cope with stress. While most still reject it, attitudes shift in Year 10, with more curiosity and peer influence. This highlights the need for age-appropriate education that supports mental health and addresses real-life pressures.

11.1 Thinking of a regular week, how often, if at all, do you...



11.1 Thinking of a regular week, how often, if at all, do you...

- The majority of pupils indicated taking up physical activities (75%) or spending time in green spaces and outdoors (64%) more than once a week. However, the proportion of pupils who did not exercise or spent time outdoors regularly is noteworthy, pointing to the need for further education on the benefits of such activities and provision of more opportunities both within the school setting, but also within the wider community.
- Participation in clubs outside of school time is moderate, with 27% not attending any and 26% participating once a week, suggesting opportunities to boost structured extracurricular involvement.
- Gaming is very common, with 91% of young respondents reporting playing video games at least once a week and one in four engaging in this activity more frequently.
- Most students spend regular time with their family in general, with 77% doing so at least two to four times a week, or reap the psychosocial [benefits](#) associated with family mealtimes, with 84% indicating eating with their family at least twice a week and two in three pupils doing so on a daily basis.
- A significant proportion of young respondents expressed financial or food insecurity concerns. One half indicated worrying about family finances at least one a week and one in four pupils reported worrying about having enough to eat with the same frequency.
- When Year 7 and Year 10 pupils were asked questions with respect to engaging in risky behaviours; including smoking one or more cigarettes, using e-cigarettes or vaping devices, consuming cannabis or other drugs, or gambling money online; the vast majority, more than 96%, indicated that they never do. The same pattern was recorded on self-reported alcohol consumption, with however, a notable 8% of young people indicating as having one or more alcoholic drinks at least once a week.

11.1 Thinking of a regular week, how often, if at all, do you...

Pupil Characteristics	Exercise indoors or outdoors	Enjoy time outdoors	After school club participation	Play video games	Eat as a family	Spend time with family	Concerned about family finances	Worry about food	Drink alcohol	Smoke cigarettes	Use e-cigarette or vape	Use drugs	Gamble online
Year group													
Gender													
Ethnicity													
Sexual orientation													
Transgender status													
Long term condition													
Young carer													
Free school meals (FSM) eligibility													
Pupil/family in contact with a social worker													
Having lived or currently living without birth parents													

Significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

Non- significant difference in the way pupils with different characteristics responded

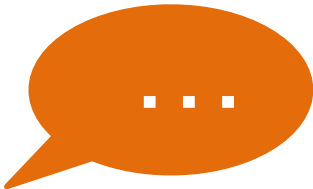
Note: See Appendix X for responses by pupil characteristic

- Year 4 pupils tend to exercise less frequently than Year 6 pupils in particular, whereas Year 10 respondents tend to enjoy less time outdoors or participate in after school clubs than young respondents from the other Year groups. Men/boys also tend to exercise more often or enjoy time outdoors than girls/women. When compared to the White ethnic group, students identifying with the Asian/Asian British group exercise or participate in after school clubs less frequently, whereas individuals from the Black/African/Caribbean group enjoy less time outdoors. Factors associated with physical status or family finances, might explain why young respondents with a long term condition or eligible for FSM do not participate in after school clubs as often as their peers. Pupils identifying as LGBTQIA+ tend to exercise and enjoy time outdoors less frequently than the heterosexual peers.
- Pupils with the aforementioned characteristics except the sexual orientation characteristic also play video games more often than their peers, potentially as an alternative outlet to extracurricular activities. Women/girls recorded the lowest frequencies associated with playing video games, with pupils identifying with the other gender gaming less often than men/boys. Similarly, Year 6 pupils play video games more frequently compared to Year 7 and Year 10 pupils.

11.1 Thinking of a regular week, how often, if at all, do you...

- Year 4 pupils, young respondents identifying with the other gender, pupils self-identifying as LGBTQIA+, and pupils self-reporting as having one of the other characteristics, excluding ethnicity, tend to eat less frequently with their family. When considering the way participants from the different ethnic groups responded, the patterns are more complex, with individuals from the Mixed/Multiple ethnic group recording the lowest proportion of doing so daily (60%) and Black/African/Caribbean pupils recording the highest proportion in participating in this activity one a week or less (20%).
- Compared to Year 10 and Year 4 pupils, Year 7s tend to spend more time with their family, as do women/girls, compared to men/boys, with both groups spending considerably more time than the other gender group. Pupils self-identifying as LGBTQIA+, respondents in contact with a social worker and young people not living with their birth parents also reported spending less time with their families than their peers.
- Year 4 students tend to worry less about family finances or about having enough to eat, especially when compared to Year 6 and Year 7 schoolmates, with pupils from the other gender group worrying more frequently than their peers. Asian/Asian British pupils worry more often than their schoolmates with a White background, but only about family finances. Higher frequencies of perceived worries on either family finances or on having enough to eat were also recorded for students with other characteristics, as listed in the table in the previous page and depicted in Appendix XI.
- With respect to risky behaviours that Year 7 and Year 10 pupils might engage with; such as drinking alcohol, smoking cigarettes, using e-cigarettes/vaping devices, cannabis or drugs, and gambling online; and as reported in “11.1 Overall findings section”, the proportion of pupils who do so is really low. However, Year 10 pupils, respondents identifying as LGBTQIA+, young people identifying as transgender/still questioning, individuals from the other gender group and Black/African/Caribbean students reported engaging in such activities more frequently than their peers. Compared to their peers, young carers and pupils with a long-term condition consume alcohol more frequently, whereas pupils on FSM are more regular e-cigarette/vaping device users. Pupils in contact with a social worker reported smoking cigarettes, using e-cigarettes/vaping devices or drugs more regularly than their peers, whereas pupils not living with their birth parents were additionally recorded as drinking alcohol more often.

11.2 Reasons for Smoking, Vaping, or Drug Use



The table below outlines the key topics identified across all year groups and illustrates how these topics are expressed within each group.

Key Themes across Year groups

Topics	Year 7 (Ages 11–12)	Year 10 (Ages 14–15)
Substance Use	Mostly report non-use	Mix of non-use and some reported use, especially vaping and weed
Main Reason for Use	Absent	Coping with stress, anxiety, emotional pain
Rejection of Substances	Strong, often framed as “wrong,” “bad,” or “stupid”	Still strong, though some challenge norms or express curiosity
Health Awareness	High – focus on lungs, long-term harm, and bodily effects	Present – includes awareness but less dominant in those who do use
Cultural/Family Influence	Some mention family disapproval or cultural beliefs	More explicit – several cite strict parents or cultural norms
Peer Awareness	Aware that others may do it, but little indication of pressure	Some mention peer use, with occasional comments on doing it to “look cool” or fit in

The following pages provide a detailed breakdown of topics by year group.

11.2 Reasons for Smoking, Vaping, or Drug Use

The topics identified were distinct and could not be grouped into broader overarching themes. Topics emerging from pupils' responses indicate that young people aged 11 to 12 smoke/vape/use cannabis or other drugs because:

Topics	Topic description	Examples
Strong Rejection and Non-Use	The vast majority of respondents clearly state that they do not use smoking, vaping, or drugs, often citing health, age, or personal ethics as reasons. This is a dominant theme.	"I don't smoke, vape, or use drugs." "I'm 11/12" "I hate drugs"
Health Awareness	Many understand and articulate the health risks associated with these substances, including lung damage, cancer, and mental health problems. There is a clear awareness of negative consequences.	"disgusting" "bad for your health" "kills you" "ruins your body" "mental health"
Social and Environmental Awareness	While most don't use these substances, they are aware of others who do, particularly peers at school, and report encountering smoking or vaping in certain locations.	<i>"saw some boys smoking and vaping inside the red block toilets and sometimes when I go down the stairs in purple block I often smell a cigarette or sometime a vape."</i>
Family Context	Some respondents reflect on family members who use these substances, indicating a mixed influence but personal choice to avoid them.	<i>"I don't but my mum smokes , drinks and vapes and my brother smokes and vapes"</i>

11.2 Reasons for Smoking, Vaping, or Drug Use

The topics identified were distinct and could not be grouped into broader overarching themes. Topics emerging from pupils' responses indicate that young people aged 14 to 15 smoke/vape/use cannabis or other drugs because:

Topics	Topics description	Examples
Coping and Stress Relief	Substances like vaping and cannabis are frequently described as tools for managing stress, anxiety, or emotional pain, highlighting their role as self-medication or coping mechanisms for some youths.	<i>“helps me feel happy”</i> <i>“calms me down,”</i> <i>“stops buzzing in my ears,”</i> <i>“takes the stress away”</i> <i>“vaping helps me sleep”</i> <i>“only motivator for every day”</i>
Clear Non-Use and Rejection	Many maintain a clear boundary against substance use, often grounded in moral or personal reasons.	<i>“I don’t do any of that”</i> <i>“I don’t participate”</i> <i>“I’m not an idiot”</i> <i>“never will”</i>
Cultural or Parental Influence	A few cite upbringing or background as a reason for abstaining.	<i>“I have never smoked or vaped because I have Nigerian parents”</i>
Curiosity / Peer Pressure / Fitting In	Some mention doing it casually, due to curiosity, or to fit in.	<i>“because why not”</i> <i>“people do it to look cool”</i> <i>“I felt like it”</i>

Limitations

Limitations

- This analysis is based on survey data collected from students across four distinct year groups (Year 4, Year 6, Year 7 and Year 10), with pupils from 60% of primary schools and 71% of secondary schools in Swindon participating in various proportions. It should be noted that:
 - Sample sizes varied significantly across year groups and participating schools. This imbalance means that some groups of students have a stronger voice in the results than others, and in some cases, the data may reflect the profile of particular schools more than students in general.
 - Weighting methodologies to adjust for differences in demographic or institutional representation were not applied. This means the results should not be treated as a statistically accurate picture of the whole student population.
 - A randomized or stratified approach, which means selecting participants in a way that better reflects the whole population, was not adopted.This means that even though survey results provide useful insights, they might not be fully representative of the broader student population and should be interpreted with some caution.

Acknowledgement and Feedback

Acknowledgements

- First and foremost, we would like to thank all of the pupils who took part in the survey. The insight this has generated will help schools and services to plan and deliver support more effectively, building on the positives we have in Swindon and addressing identified gaps.
- We would like to thank all of the schools who promoted the survey to students and particularly to those who made time in the school day for pupils to respond. We know that providing education is busy and complex and therefore your ongoing commitment to the wellbeing and mental health of your pupils is very much appreciated.
- We would like to thank the Data and Insight Team at Wiltshire Council for their invaluable contributions to the development and refinement of the NLP model. Their support in providing the foundational code, clearly explaining its functionality, and patiently answering our questions was instrumental in advancing our understanding and successful implementation of the model.

Feedback

Should you wish to provide any feedback or have any questions regarding the results presented in this report please contact Swindon Borough Council's Public Health Intelligence Team jsna@swindon.gov.uk