





## About Sustrans

**Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle. We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute.**

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## Executive Summary

The Hands Up Scotland Survey is an annual survey of school pupils and nursery children in Scotland. The survey is funded by Transport Scotland and is a joint project between Sustrans and Scottish local authorities. The survey has been designated an Official Statistic for Scotland by Parliamentary Order.

The survey is designed to provide reliable and up to date information on mode of travel to school in Scotland, both at national and local authority level as well as by school type and year group. The dataset informs and evidences school transport policies and initiatives.

### The survey

The question posed to all school pupils and nursery children is, 'How do you normally travel to school?' with a choice of travel mode options.<sup>1</sup> The number of pupils present is recorded, and pupils are asked to raise their hand for one of the modes only. Each of these modes falls into one of four categories:

**Active travel:** walking, cycling and scootering or skating

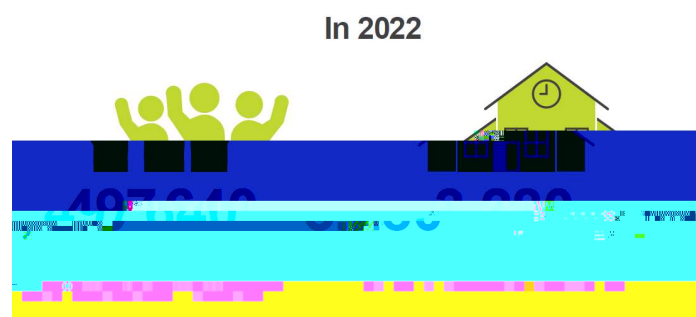
**Public sustainable travel:** bus

**Multi-mode travel:** park & stride (driven part of the way by car and walk the rest)

**Private motorised travel:** driven (car) and taxi

### Response rates

All 32 local authorities in Scotland participated in the survey in 2022. Trends in the data are analysed for the last ten years, with the baseline year in this report being 2013.



456,695 school pupils and 40,945 nursery children took part. 407,949 state school pupils participated, which equates to 63.7% of all state school pupils enrolled in Scotland<sup>2</sup>

1,973 schools and 1,307 nurseries took part. 1,952 state schools participated, which equates to 79.3% of all registered state schools in Scotland.

Between 2021 and 2022, there has been a 5 percentage point increase in state school pupil response rate, from 58.7% to 63.7%. The total number of state schools responding to the survey has increased from 1,861 in 2021 to 1,952 in 2022, and is now 0.4 percentage points higher than the pre-pandemic rates of 78.9% in 2019. Schools can return data for the whole school or broken down by class. In 2022, 71.1% of all registered state schools in Scotland returned data broken down by class. This is the second highest proportion of registered state schools returning data broken down by class since the survey began, with the highest proportion being 75.2% in 2017.

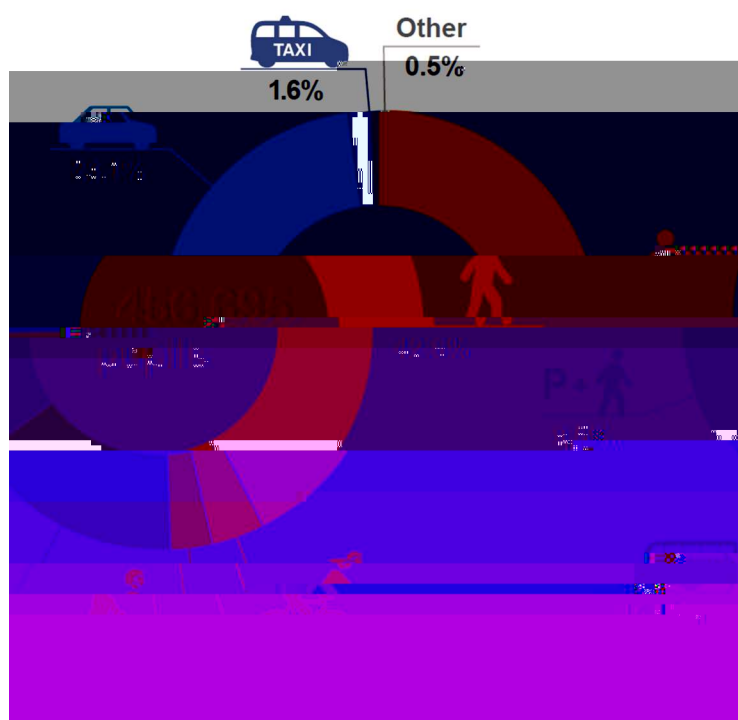


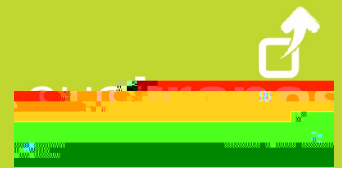
## Active travel

Active travel to school has declined since 2021, but remains higher than the pre-pandemic levels of 2019

49.4% of school pupils surveyed in 2022 said they normally travel to school in an active way, without any form of motorised transport. Active travel has consistently remained the most frequently reported mode of travel to school in Scotland. After a decreasing trend between 2014 and 2019, 2020 saw a 3.4 percentage point increase to 51.2%, making it the highest of the last ten survey years. Since then, levels have decreased to 50.3% in 2021, and 49.4% in 2022.

Walking to school decreased from 44.1% in 2013 to 42.6% in 2022, but shows an increase of 1.6 percentage points from the low of 41.0% in 2019. Cycling to school has increased from 3.5% in 2013









## 2 The National Summary Report

**The Hands Up Scotland Survey is conducted each September, and has been running since 2008. Results are reported annually, with publication towards the end of the academic year.**

**This National Summary Report is designed to act as an introduction to the survey, presenting the results at a national level, as well as the policy context that the survey results can be used to evidence.**

**A shorter summary of key national level results for the Hands Up Scotland Survey 2022 is available in the form of an overview document. Supplementary National Results tables, including a breakdown of results at a local authority level and data collected from 2008 to 2022, are also available. These documents can be downloaded from Sustans' website:**

**<https://www.sustans.org.uk/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>**

**Each local authority also receives their results in a comprehensive range of tables, including breakdown by school. These local authority reports contain all data collected between 2008 and 2022.**

**Trends in the data are analysed for the last ten years, with the baseline year in this report being 2013.**

**The Sustans' Hands Up Scotland Survey team can be contacted with feedback or enquiries.<sup>7</sup> Where users wish to undertake more detailed analyses for a specific project and the national level documents do not provide the required information or format, a data request for local authority reports may be submitted to Sustans' Hands Up Scotland Survey team<sup>8</sup>**



### 3 Policy context for school travel in Scotland

**The Hands Up Scotland Survey is an important dataset for evidencing and informing decision making policy and practice in a number of areas, including health, transport and the environment.**



**cyclists by increasing investment that supports active travel and delivering world class active travel infrastructure, as well as delivering projects which help people benefit from new and existing walking and cycling routes. In 2018 the Scottish Government launched Scotland's Physical Activity Delivery Plan<sup>12</sup> detailing outcomes, actions and achievements in terms of the vision 'A Scotland where more people are more active, more often'**

**The Scottish Government's 2020 update on its National Transport Strategy<sup>13</sup> highlights health and wellbeing improvement as one of its priorities, stating that Scotland's transport system should 'allow people to make active travel choices to improve their health and physical and mental wellbeing and seek to reduce health inequalities'.**

**The UK Chief Medical Officers' Physical Activity Guidelines<sup>14</sup> recommends active travel as one way of making up the daily recommended 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for children<sup>15</sup>**

**A More Active Scotland: Building a Legacy from the Commonwealth Games sets out a number of**





## 4 Other relevant data sources

**The Hands Up Scotland Survey is not directly comparable with any other relevant sources of National or Official Statistics in the UK**

**The Scottish Household Survey also provides information on travel to school in Scotland<sup>31</sup>. The Scottish Household Survey typically receives responses from around 10,000 and 11,000 households per year; a smaller sample compared to the Hands Up Scotland Survey which typically receives between 400,000 and 500,000 school pupil responses per year. In addition the scope of the Scottish Household Survey is broader; capturing a wide range of transport and travel information about adults and households, as well as reasons for the method of children's transport to school. A list of the main statistical publications in relation to transport in Scotland is available from the Transport Scotland website.<sup>32</sup> The Scottish Health Survey<sup>33</sup> includes wider information on children's physical activity levels.**

**The Pupil Level Annual School Census<sup>34</sup> in England published data for usual mode of travel to school until 2011. Data was available at a school level and this question was made mandatory for schools with an approved School Travel Plan in January 2007. In 2011, the mandatory use of this question was discontinued. The Health Survey for England<sup>35</sup> includes wider information on children's physical activity levels.**

**Other sources of Official Statistics relating to travel to school in the UK include the National Travel Survey,<sup>36</sup> the Travel Survey for Northern Ireland,<sup>37</sup> and the National Survey for Wales.<sup>38</sup>**

## 5 Survey design

The Hands Up Scotland Survey is a joint project, managed by Sustrans and officers from each local authority in Scotland. The survey was first conducted in 2008 and has followed a consistent survey design and methodology since then.

Sustrans' Research and Monitoring Unit is responsible for producing survey participation guidance and forms, an email link for the online survey platform and distributing them to local authority officers. Local authority officers are then responsible for onward distribution to schools, and providing support where required.

### 5.1 Data collection

Data collection for the Hands Up Scotland Survey occurs annually in the second week of September. In 2022, data collection took place between the 12<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of September. Data collection is conducted by school staff, as instructed by their local authority officer, with support from Sustrans.

All 32 local authorities in Scotland are invited to take part in the Hands Up Scotland Survey. The survey is designed to record information about any and all pupils enrolled in nursery, primary, secondary, SEN (Special Educational Needs) and independent schools in Scotland.

The question asked is, 'How do you normally travel to school?' with the following 8 response options:

The survey can be conducted on a class-by-class or whole school basis. The number of pupils present is recorded, and pupils are asked to raise their hand to indicate the response options. If two or more



## 6 2022 Results

This section of the report details the results from the 2022 Hards Up Scotland Survey. Annual results highlight the extent of variation in travel behaviour between different school types.

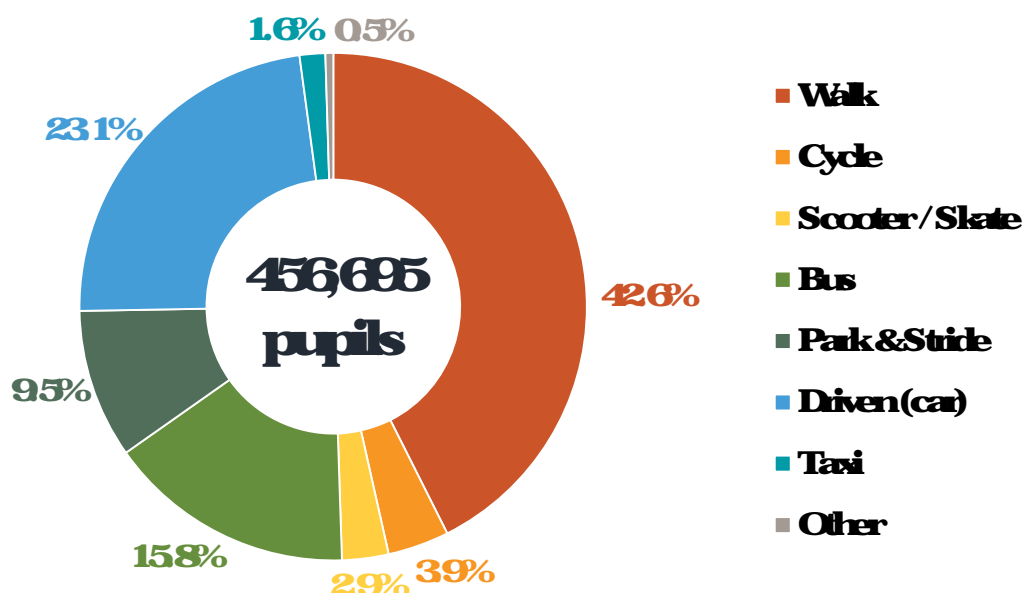
Care should be taken when interpreting results between school types due to considerable variation in pupil population size and response rate. For example, the category 'all schools' (456,695 pupils) includes primary (289,138 pupils), secondary (157,872 pupils), SEN (2,366 pupils) and independent (7,319 pupils) schools.

Nursery data is presented separately as the characteristics of nurseries are considered to be different to that of other school types. For example, nurseries have very different operating times compared to other school types (see technical note 833). The category 'all state schools' (449,376 pupils) includes primary, secondary, and SEN schools only.

Due to rounding row percentages may not always add up to 100%, and category totals may not always add up to the values presented for individual travel modes.

### 6.1 All school results

Chart 6.1: National travel modes: proportion of participating pupils travelling by different modes (all school pupil responses exc. nursery children), 2022<sup>40</sup>



#### Active travel

49.4% of pupils (225,831) across all schools<sup>41</sup> surveyed in 2022 said they normally travel to school in an active way, without any form of motorised transport. Of the active modes, walking was the most frequent mode of travel with 42.6% of pupils (194,457) saying they normally walk to school. 3.9% of pupils (17,916) said they normally cycle to school and 2.9% (13,458) said they normally scooter or skate.









## 6.3 All state school comparison

**Chart 64 National travel modes: proportion of participating pupils travelling by different modes, by state school type (primary, secondary and SEN), 2022<sup>44</sup>**

### Active travel

**In 2022, primary school pupils reported the highest level of active travel to school out of all school types, at 54.1%, followed by secondary school pupils at 43.0%. 44.2% of primary school pupils reported normally walking to school compared to 41.4% of secondary and 29% of SEN school pupils. 5.4% of primary school pupils reported normally cycling to school compared to 1.3% of secondary school pupils. 4.5% of primary school pupils reported normally scootering or skating to school compared to 0.2% of secondary school pupils.**



## Other

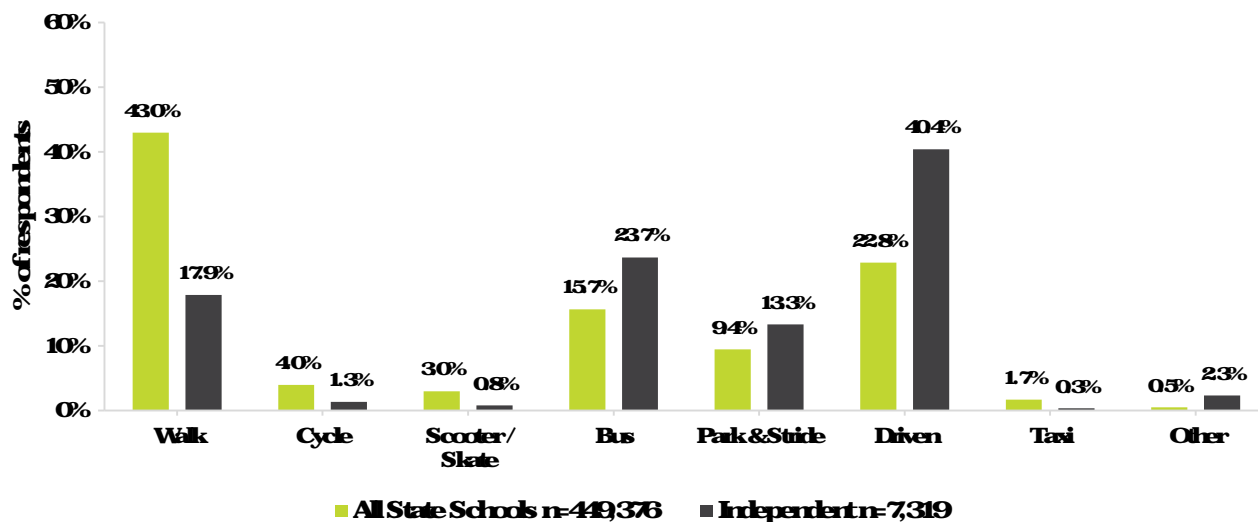
**52% of SEN pupils indicated that they travel by other means. Primary and secondary pupils reported lower levels of travel by other means at 0.2% and 1.0%, respectively.<sup>42</sup>**

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## 6.4 State and independent school comparison

**Chart 6.5 National travel modes: proportion of participating pupils travelling by different modes, by state schools (exc. nursery) and independent schools, 2022<sup>45</sup>**



### Active travel

In 2022, state school pupils reported higher active travel levels compared to independent school pupils, with 49% of state school pupils either walking cycling scootering or skating compared to 20% of independent school pupils. This trend is consistent among each active mode of travel. For state schools, 43%, 4% and 3% of pupils reported normally travelling to school by walking cycling and scootering or skating respectively, compared to 17.9%, 1.3% and 0.8% of independent school pupils.

### Public sustainable travel

15.7% of state school pupils reported normally travelling to school by bus compared to 23.7% of independent school pupils.

### Multi-mode travel

9.4% of state school pupils reported normally travelling to school using multiple modes, compared to 13.3% of independent school pupils.

### Private motorised travel

24.5% of state school pupils normally travel to school using private motorised modes compared to 40.7% of independent school pupils. A higher proportion of independent school pupils normally travel to school by car (40.4%) than state school school pupils (22.8%). 1.7% of state school pupils reported normally travelling to school by taxi compared to 0.3% of independent school pupils.

### Other

0.5% of state school pupils indicated that they travel by other means, compared to 2.3% of independent school pupils.



**For further information on response rates, please see Technical Notes 82, 83 and 84**



## 6.7 Data tables: 2022 results

These data tables contain a more detailed breakdown of results presented throughout section 6

Where a percentage represents a value of between one and four pupils, it has been suppressed to maintain anonymity of respondents and replaced with an asterisk (\*). Where suppressed data is included in the mode category calculation, the value for that category has also been suppressed

Table 63 National travel categories: by school type, 2022<sup>44</sup>

School type	Active
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## Active travel

### Chart 7.2 Active travel mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nurseries), 2013-2022<sup>40</sup>



Since 2013, active travel to school has remained the most frequently reported mode of travel to school in Scotland.

In 2013, 50.3% of pupils in all schools (exc. nurseries) reported travelling actively to school. This percentage has fluctuated, peaking at 51.2% in 2020. Active travel to school has since decreased. Between 2021 and 2022 it decreased by 0.9pp from 50.3% to 49.4%, though remains higher than the pre-pandemic levels of 2019 (47.8%).

After falling by 4.8pp in 2021, active travel in nurseries increased by the greatest percentage of all school types in 2022, with a 1.5pp increase to 43.0%.

In primary schools active travel decreased by 0.2pp since 2021, to 54.1% in 2022 - the fifth lowest of the last ten survey years, but only 1.3pp lower than the highest recorded level in 2013.

Since 2021, active travel in secondary and independent schools decreased by 1.3pp and 0.9pp respectively, to 43.0% and 20.0%. For secondary schools this is the fourth lowest annual level during the previous ten years, whereas for independent schools this is the fourth highest.

Active travel in SEN schools has been fairly consistent over the past ten survey years<sup>53</sup>.

## Walking

After a sharp increase to 44.8% in 2020, walking has returned to levels similar to the levels before the pandemic. Walking levels fell by 1.0pp from 43.6% in 2021 to 42.6% in 2022.

After falling by 4.6pp in 2021, the number of nursery children walking has increased slightly in 2022.

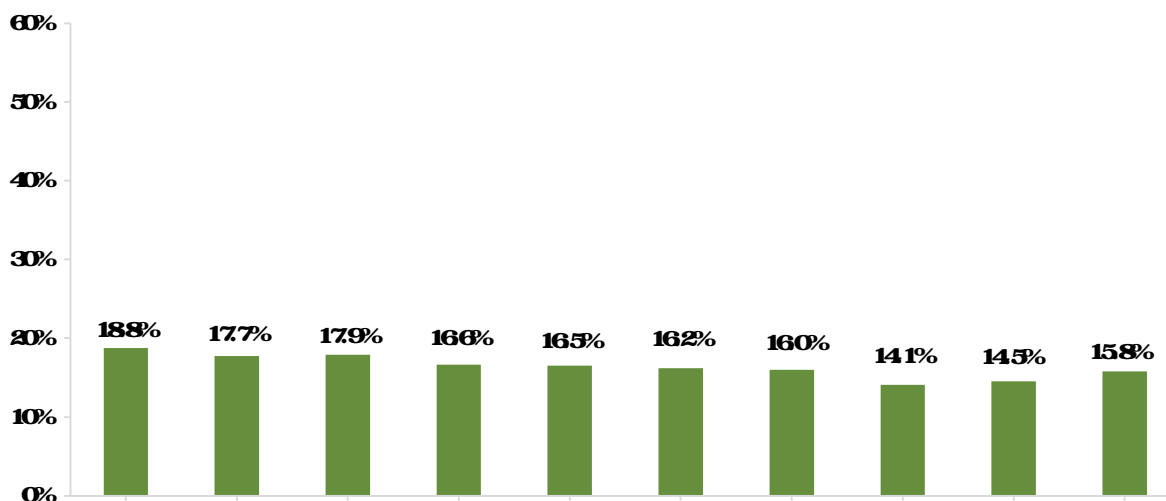






## Public sustainable travel

**Chart 7.3 Mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nursery) within the public sustainable travel category, 2013-2022<sup>40</sup>**



**Overall, the proportion of pupils travelling to school by bus has decreased over the past ten survey years, from 18.8% in 2013 to 15.8% in 2022. However, bus use increased in 2022 for the second year in a row increasing by 1.3% from 14.5% in 2021.**

**Bus use in primary, secondary, and independent schools has been decreasing over the past ten survey years. However, between 2021 and 2022, all three school types reported an increase for the second year in a row with primary schools at 6.1% (up 0.6pp), secondary schools at 3.0% (up 1.7pp) and independent schools rising sharply by 9.6pp to 23.7%.**

**Bus use among pupils attending SEN schools and children attending nurseries has varied over the past ten survey years. Bus use by children attending nurseries increased in 2022, rising 0.5pp to 2.8%. Bus use among pupils attending SEN schools remained the same at 26.5%.**





## Private motorised travel

Chart 7.5 Mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nursery) within the private motorised travel category, 2013-2022<sup>40</sup>

Levels of pupils in all schools (exc. nursery) travelling to school using private motorised transport have increased from 23.0% in 2013 to 24.8% in 2022, up 0.1pp since 2021 (24.7%).

The proportion of children travelling to nursery using private motorised transport was at a high in 2021 (51.4%). This has fallen to 49.8% in 2022, but is at the third highest level of the past ten survey years.

Among primary school pupils, reported use of private motorised transport in 2022 has stayed the same as in 2021 at 27.9%. This is the fourth highest level of the past ten survey years.

Private motorised travel among secondary school pupils has increased to 17.7% in 2022. 2022 saw a 0.1pp decrease on 2021 levels.

Between 2013 and 2022, levels of private motorised travel to independent schools have fluctuated. However, levels decreased from 40.9% in 2021 to 40.7% in 2022, the lowest level of the past ten years.

SEN school pupils reported the highest proportion of private motorised travel at 65.0% in 2022. This is the highest reported level in the past ten survey years and 2.6pp higher than the second highest score seen in 2020 (62.4%).

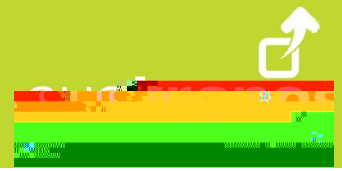
## Driven (car)

The proportion of pupils being driven to school has increased by 1.7pp from 21.4% in 2013 to 23.1% in 2022. From its highest point of 23.1% in 2021, it fell to 21.4% in 2020.



**The proportion of primary pupils being driven to school in 2022 remained the same as in 2021, at 26.5%. With the exception of the level reached in 2019 (27.7%), in the last ten survey years the proportion of primary pupils being driven to school has not fluctuated more than 1.0pp from its current level.**

**The proportion of secondary pupils being driven to school has decreased slightly between 2021 and 2022, down 0.2pp to 16.4%. This is the second annual decrease, following an increasing trend between 2013 and 2020.**





### 7.3 Response rates

Survey receipt and response rates as a percentage of all schools in Scotland and Scottish school roll are calculated using the Scottish Government Education Statistics. Data on both the number of schools and their pupil roll are available for state primary, secondary and SEN schools. Pupil roll numbers are not published for state nursery or independent schools in Scotland. It is therefore not possible to calculate receipt or response rates for nursery or independent school types.

The survey received more responses overall in 2022 than in 2021, and is more in line with pre-pande



## Pupil responses

Responses were received from 456,695 school pupils in 2022. This represents 38,548 more school pupils than in 2021.

The total number of pupils from all schools (exc. nursery) responding to the Hands Up Scotland Survey has varied year by year; but has decreased from 467,397 in 2013 to 456,695 pupils in 2022. Of the past ten survey years, the highest number of pupil responses was 487,147 in 2014, and the lowest number of responses was 405,917 in 2020.

449,376 state school pupils took part in the 2022 survey, which equates to 63.7% of all state school pupils enrolled in Scotland. The number and proportion of state school pupils responding to the survey follows a similar trend to the total number of pupils from all schools (exc. nursery), and has fluctuated year by year; decreasing from 461,707 (67.7%) in 2013 to 449,376 (63.7%) in 2022, with a high of 480,155 (70.9%) in 2014.

Chart 7.7: National response rates: number of responses from state school pupils and all school pupils (exc. nursery), 2013-2022<sup>49</sup>

Table 7.2: National response rates: number of state and all school pupils (exc. nursery) responding to the survey, and state school pupils responding as a proportion of all pupils in Scotland, 2013-2022

Year	Number of state school pupil respondents	Number of all school pupils (exc. nursery) responding	State school pupils as a proportion of all pupils in Scotland
2013	461,707	684,000	67.7%
2014	480,155	677,000	70.9%
2015	467,397	677,000	69.0%
2016	456,695	677,000	67.5%
2017	449,376	677,000	66.4%
2018	449,376	677,000	66.4%
2019	405,917	677,000	60.0%
2020	405,917	677,000	60.0%
2021	418,000	677,000	61.7%
2022	449,376	707,000	63.7%





**For considerations relating to response rates, please see Technical Notes 82, 83 and 84**

### **Nursery schools responses**

**No nursery schools were approached to participate in the first Hands Up Scotland Survey in 2008. Since then, a concerted effort has been made to increase participation among nursery schools. The total number of nurseries responding to the Hands Up Scotland Survey increased from 523 in 2012 to 1,307 in 2022. The number of nurseries responding has increased by 33 since 2021.**

**Since 2017, automated emails have been sent to nurseries and day care of children establishments, inviting them to participate in the survey and providing them with a link to access the survey.**

**The greatest number of nursery children responding was recorded in 2017, with 41,845 responses. 2022 saw the second highest number of responses of the past ten survey years, with 40,945 nursery children responding - an increase of 3,874 since 2021.**



## 7.4 Data tables: 2013-2022 results

These data tables contain the full set of travel mode (and category) share values for the last ten survey years for all schools (exc. nursery).

Table 7.4 National travel modes: all schools (exc. nursery), 2013-2022<sup>40</sup>

Year	Walk	Cycle	Scooter /Skate	Bus	Park & Stride	Driven (car)	Taxi	Other	Total
2013	41%	35%	28%	98%	7.5%	21.4%	1.6%	0.4%	467,357,171

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<sup>26</sup> For more information on 'Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030', please refer to

<https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/scotland-s-road-safety-framework-to-2030/>

<sup>27</sup> For more information on the 'Emissions Reduction Plan' in the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework, please refer to

<https://nationalperformanceframework.gov.scot/publications/scottish-governments-national-performance-framework-2022/>

<sup>28</sup> For more information on the Scottish Government's 'Clean Air for Scotland Strategy', please refer to

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/04/180401.pdf>

<sup>29</sup> For more information on the Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 and the Climate Change Plan third report on proposals and policies 2018-2032 (RPP3) please refer to

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2018/04/180401.pdf>

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-governments-climate-change-plan-third-report-proposals-policies-2018/>

