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Response rates 2020

School response rates

In 2020, a total of 2,879 schools and nurseries took part in the survey from all 32 local authorities in Scotland, during the designated survey week (7th to 11th September 2020). 1,771 were schools and 1,108 were nurseries. Of this, 1,756 state schools (primary, secondary and SEN) participated, which equates to 70.9% of all registered state schools in Scotland.

The total number of state schools responding to the survey has decreased from 1,968 in 2019 to 1,756 in 2020, the lowest number of schools responding of the last ten survey years.

Table 1: National response rates: number and proportion of schools responding to the survey, 2020.³

School type	Number of schools which received survey	% of all schools in Scotland which received survey ⁴	Number of schools which returned data	% of schools receiving survey which returned data	% of all schools in Scotland
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National results 2020: by school type

Annual results highlight the extent of variation in travel behaviour between different school types and care should be taken when interpreting results across school types due to considerable variation in pupil response numbers. 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.

Nursery schools

- 46.3% of nursery children reported normally travelling to school by an active mode.
- 2.1% of nursery children reported normally travelling to school by public sustainable transport.
- 3.7% of nursery children reported normally travelling to school using multi-mode travel.
- 47.6% of nursery children reported normally travel to school using private motorised transport.

All state schools (primary, secondary and SEN) comparison

Primary school pupils reported the highest level of active travel to school of all school types, at 55.3%, followed by secondary school pupils at 44.8%.

The highest level of bus usage is reported in secondary schools, at 30.9% of pupils compared to 30.3% of SEN school pupils and just 5.3% of primary school pupils.

12.1% of primary school pupils reported park and stride as their usual mode of travelling to school, compared to 5.3% of secondary school pupils.

Secondary school pupils reported the lowest levels of travel to school using private motorised transport of all school types at 18.1%, compared to 27.1%

National results comparison – All schools (exc. nursery): 2011-2020

Trends in the data are analysed for the last ten survey years, with the baseline year in this report being 2011.

Percentage point (pp) change has been calculated based on the rounded figures presented in this statistical news release.

A number of factors may impact on travel behaviour from year to year (e.g. weather conditions, school mergers, closures and relocations) as well as policies and schemes introduced by central government, local government or individual schools. In 2020, coronavirus was a significant additional factor.

Active travel

Since 2011, active travel to school has remained the most frequently reported mode of travel to school across Scotland. In 2011, 49.9% of pupils in all schools (exc. nursery) reported travelling actively to school. This percentage has fluctuated, reaching 50.4% in 2014, falling to 47.8% in 2019 and rising to 51.2% in 2020, the highest level of the last ten survey years.

Following a steady decline from 45.9% in 2011 to 41.0% in 2019, there has been a 3.8pp increase in the proportion of pupils walking to school in 2020 (44.8%).

The survey has recorded an increasing trend in cycling over the past ten survey years, from 3.0% in 2011 to 3.8% in 2020. However, in 2020, cycling has decreased by 0.3pp from 2019 (4.1%).

The percentage of pupils who say they normally scooter or skate to school increased from 1.0% in 2011 to 2.9% in 2015. Since 2016 there has been a decreasing trend. The proportion of pupils reporting to scoot or skate to school has dropped 0.1pp from 2.7% in 2019 to 2.6% in 2020.

Public sustainable travel

The proportion of pupils using the bus has steadily decreased over the past ten survey years, from 18.2% in 2011 to 14.1% in 2020. Since 2015, bus use has fallen every year, with 2020 levels dropping



As the Hands up Scotland Survey is carried out over a one week period, weather conditions may differ considerably from year to year. It should be noted that weather conditions have an impact on travel choices and may influence pupil response to the survey, although the phrasing of the survey question aims to overcome this limitation as much as possible ('How do you normally travel to school?').

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.

In 2008, the first year of the survey, Sustrans Scotland offered a prize draw as an incentive for school participation. In 2013, Sustrans Scotland offered a prize draw as an incentive to receive responses from all year groups. Between 2012 and 2013, the percentage of state schools responding to the survey increased from 77.0% to 78.7%. However, it is not possible to ascertain whether a proportion of these schools were encouraged by the incentive or whether this increase in school responses

Where users wish to undertake more detailed analyses for a specific project and these documents do not provide the required information or format, a data request may be submitted. To submit a data request, please read the information and download the data request form at:

<http://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>

Sustrans' Research and Monitoring Unit assesses the impacts of Sustrans' work and evaluates the interventions of partners and clients across the UK, including extensive work with schools and young people. More information is available at:

<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/for-professionals/research-monitoring-and-evaluation/>

Endnotes

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