

the National Parent
Forum of Scotland

**School behaviour, violence and
support survey results**

June 2023

Overview

The National Parent Forum of Scotland (NPFS) had received a number of comments in recent weeks regarding the rise in reports of concerning behaviour in schools.

In order to gather real-world experiences from parents, NPFS launched a survey which ran for two weeks from 08 to 22 June.

The feedback from this survey will be used to inform our contributions to upcoming conversations around school behaviour, as well as forward policy discussions.

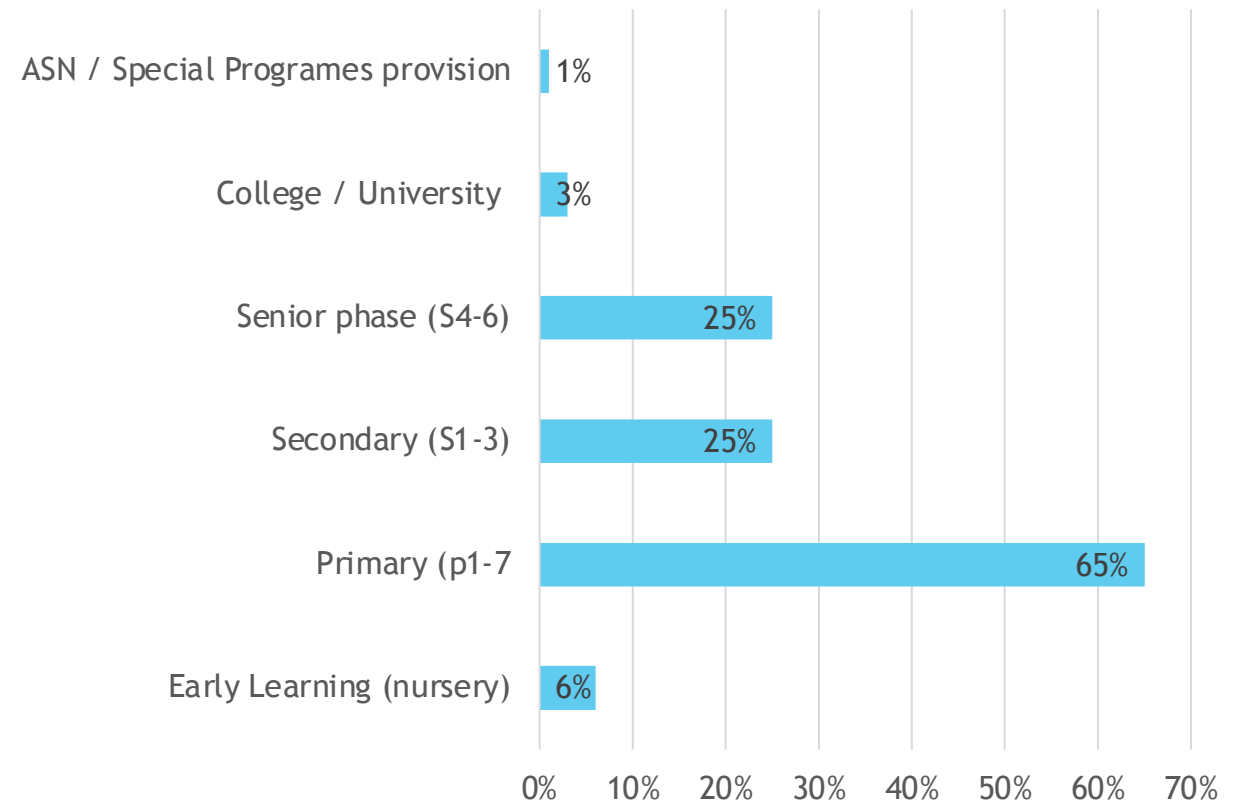
Survey Responses

Headlines

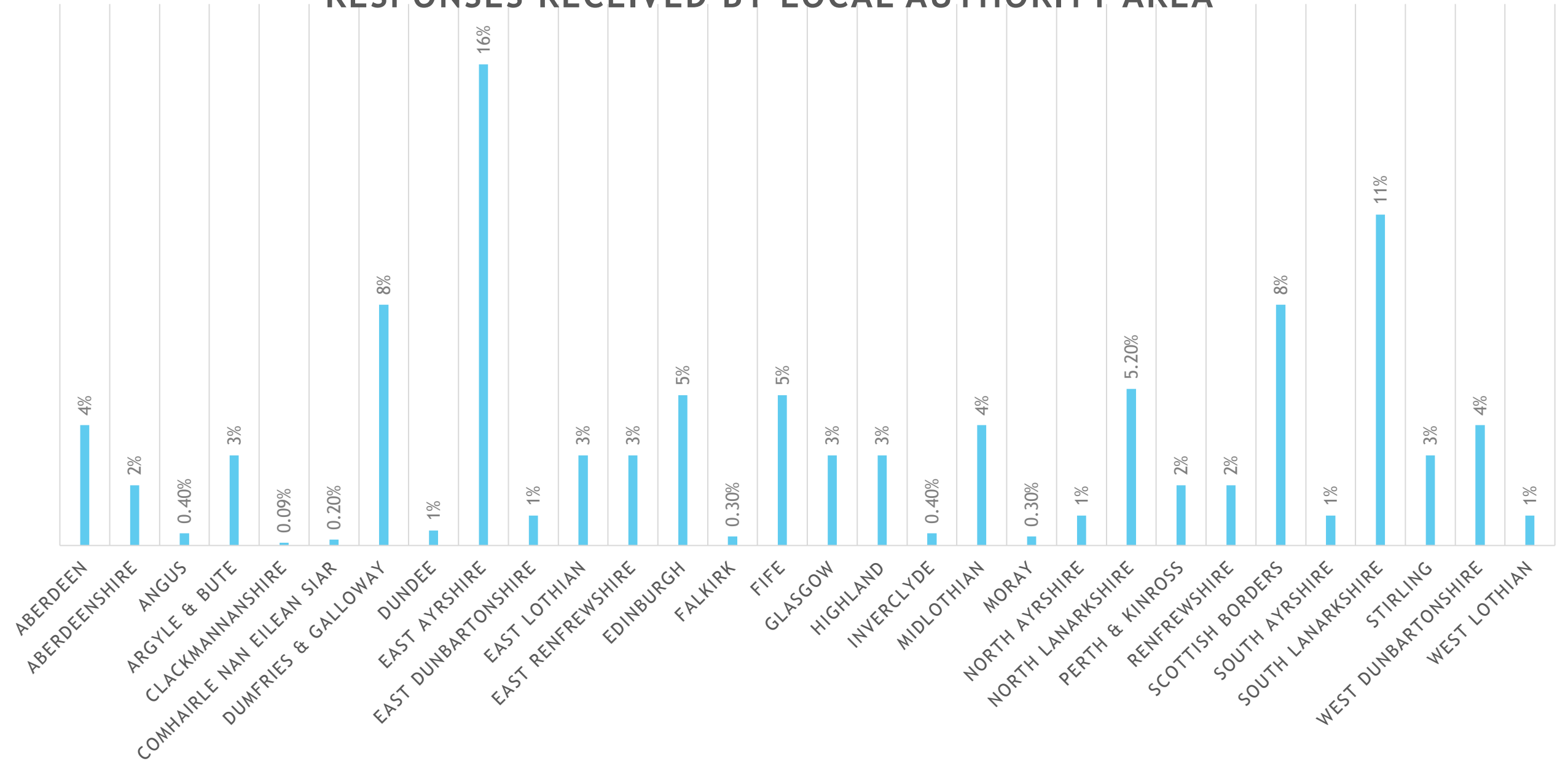
1,092 responses received

- Only **49%** of parents/carers felt their child/young person was safe at school
- **94%** felt that violent or challenging behaviour undermines the learning experience for children.
- In general, there was **discontent** with the **response** of schools when dealing with challenging/violent behaviour.
- Overall, parents/carers felt there was a **lack of support** for children with challenging behaviour, those experiencing violence in school and a lack of support for teaching staff.

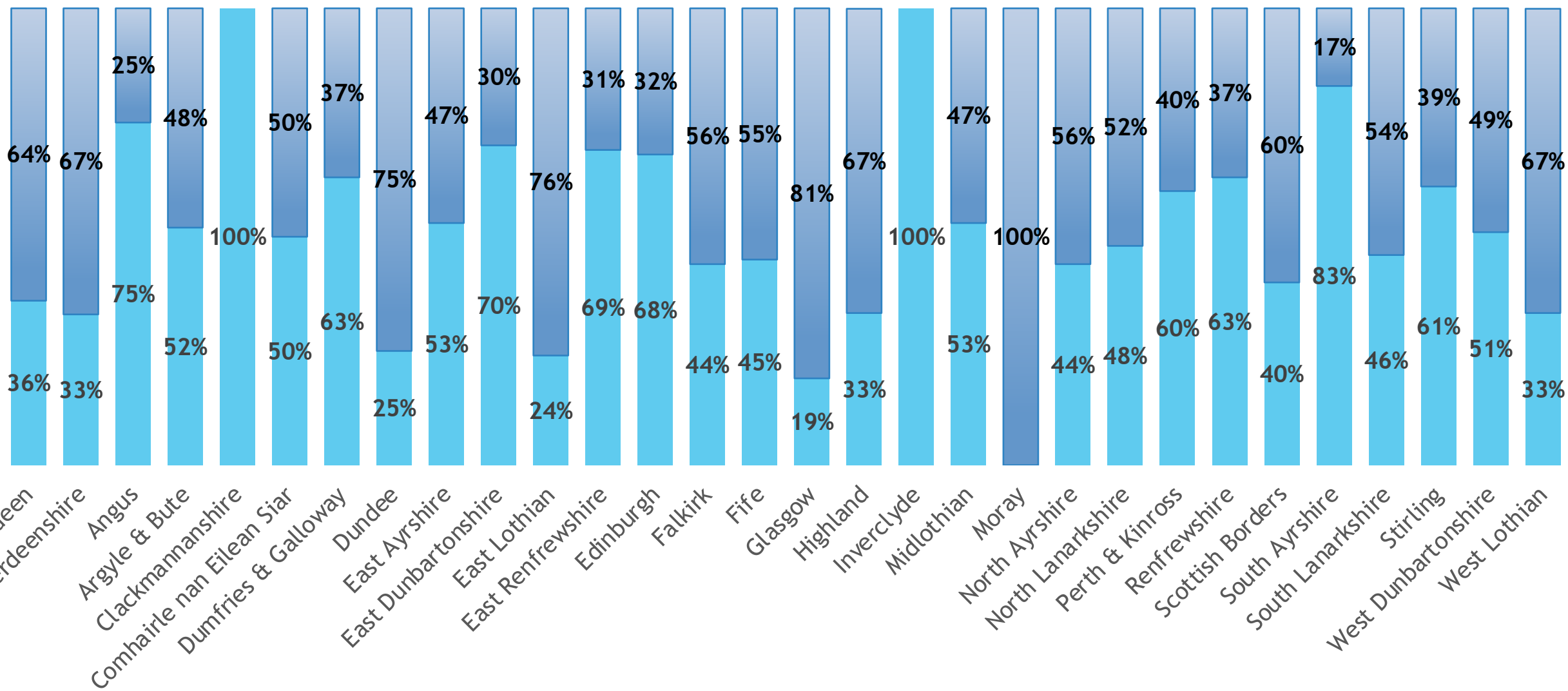
Education settings of respondents' children



RESPONSES RECEIVED BY LOCAL AUTHORITY AREA

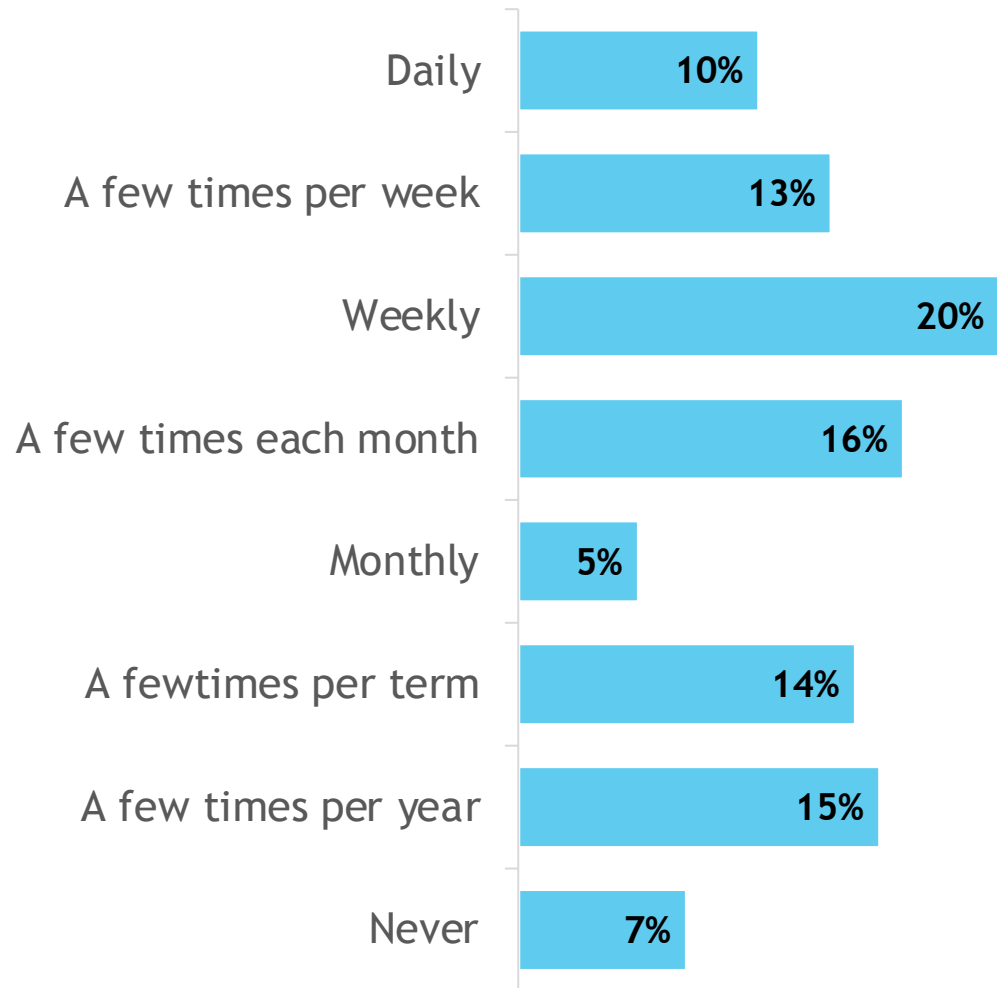


Do you feel that your child / young person is safe at school?

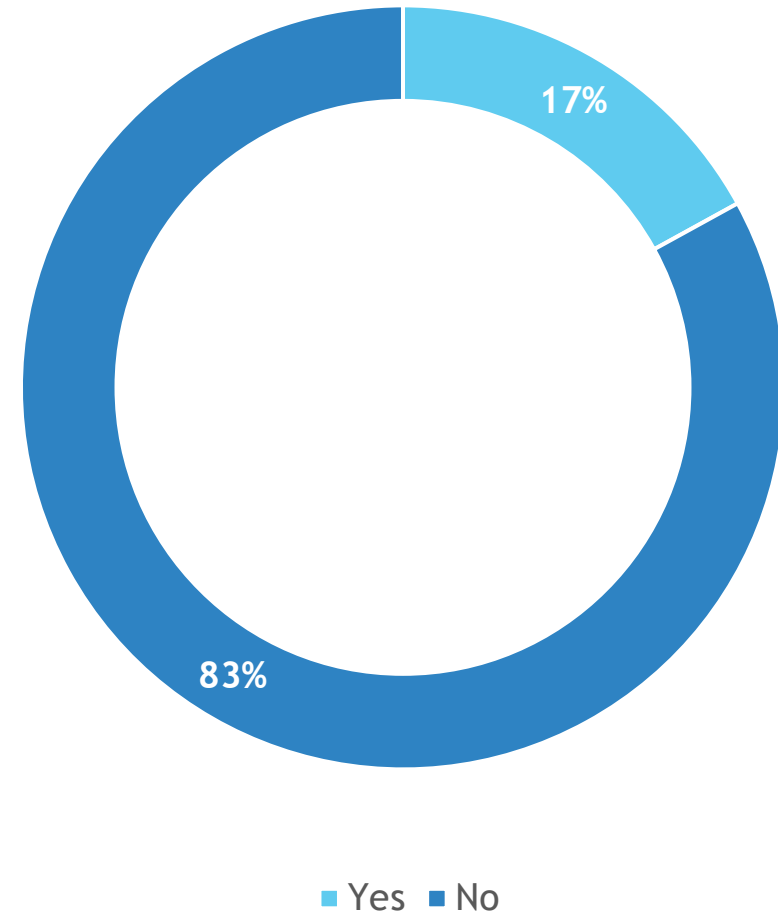


Yes No

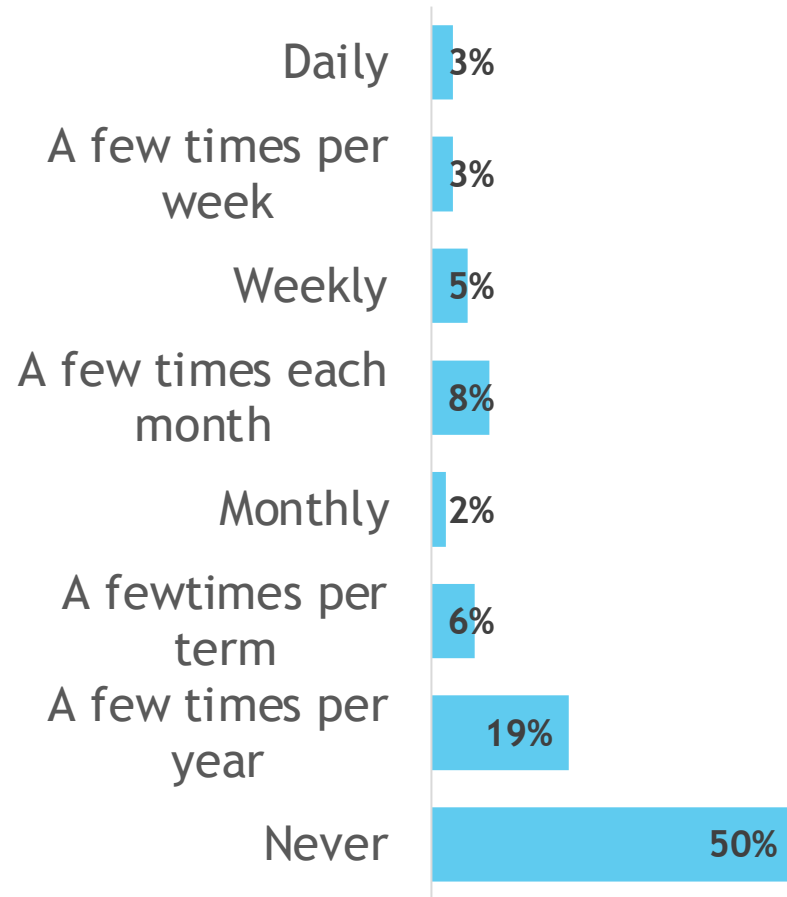
Frequency of child/young person mentioning fights or other violent acts happening at/during school



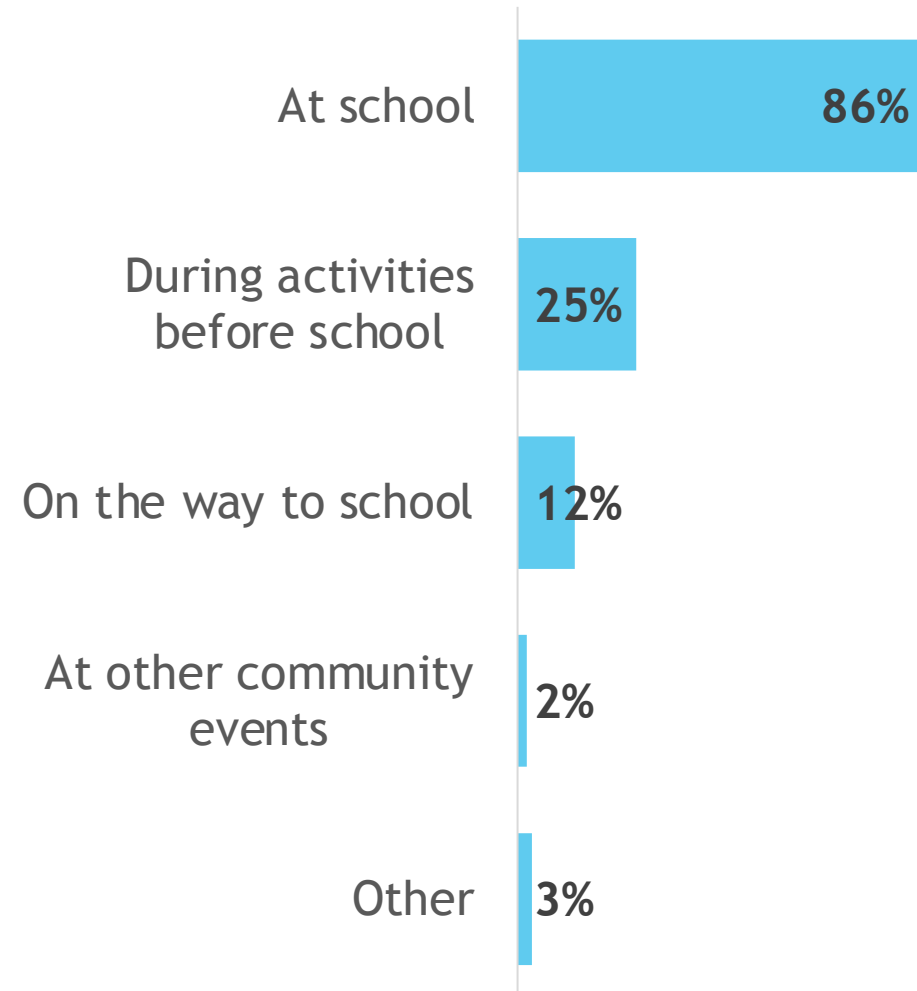
Do you think media coverage of violence in schools is exaggerated



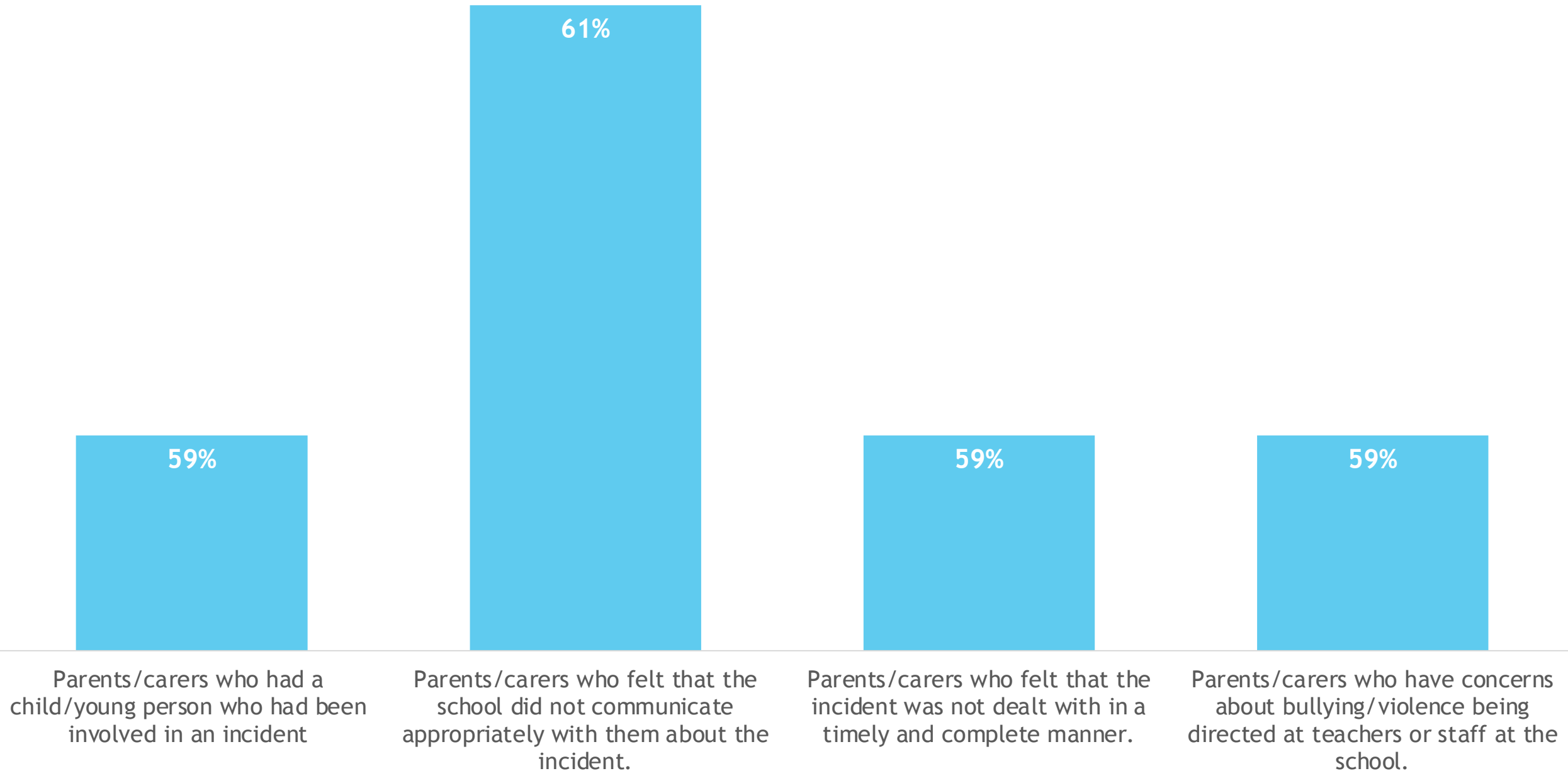
Observations of physical violence at school by parents/carers



Location where these incidents happen



School responses to violent/challenging behaviour



- **59%** of parents/carers had a child/young person who had been involved in an incident of violence/challenging behaviour.

“A lot of behaviours would be lessened or maybe wouldn’t even occur if the school environment (including the staff) was more nurturing and trauma-informed” (Parent/carer)

- Parents/carers were divided between those who felt that schools should take a more traditional view of challenging/violent behaviour and those who wanted schools to take a more ‘nurturing’ approach.

“There are no consequences now. Children are not scared with a ‘phone call home’. Staff are not permitted to take action strong enough to deter such behaviour” (Parent/carer)

- 55% were familiar with the bullying/behaviour policy at their children/young person's school.
- Comments were mixed. Although there are some positive comments regarding the way in which challenging behaviour is dealt with by schools, concerns were raised about a lack of consequences (e.g. 'no exclusion policy')
- Parents/carers talked about their children having to move schools whilst those who had bullied their children remained and continued their schooling as usual.
- There were also complaints about schools not dealing with individual children's behaviour and instead the whole school suffers when things are removed e.g. toilets locked
- 28% had escalated a complaint during the last school session.

- **67%** of parents/carers felt that the school their young people attended did **not** have adequate staffing/support to monitor behaviour and enforce the relevant policies. **19%** were unsure.

“There needs to be more staff in playgrounds to encourage safe and violence free play.” (Parent/carer)

- Parents/carers wanted there to be more support for pupils/students with additional support needs and mental health issues

“Schools are managing a combination of difficult issues with young people including additional needs and mental health issues including neurodiversity and trauma. Schools are generally understaffed and some of the staff under trained to manage the complex needs of young people in today’s society.”

(Parent/carer)

- **59%** have concerns about bullying/violence being directed at teachers or staff at the school.

“There is no other profession in this world where the abuse suffered by teachers and other pupils is tolerated without consequences. (Parent/carer)

- **94%** felt that violent or challenging behaviour undermines the learning experience for children.

“My main concern has been the schools lack of ability to meet the needs of quieter anxious children, perhaps due to the increased demands of escalated behaviours in school.” (Parent/carer)

- **61%** felt that the school did **not** communicate appropriately with them about the incident.

“Parents also need to be made aware of the challenging behaviour their child is experiencing. Often they are not informed of the severity of the incident” (parent/carer)

- The lack of awareness of parents/carers of the children who had behavioural issues was also highlighted.

“We feel parents don’t even know what their kids are getting up to, drink, vapes, sex etc” (parent/carer)