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Oideachais Ollscoil Mhá  
Nuad

Maynooth University



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National University  
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# Covid-19 Practice in Primary Schools in Ireland Report

Authors: Jolanta Burke, Ph.D., CPsychol. & Majella Dempsey, Ph.D.

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.1 Reshaping Education

Maintaining education and communication during a school closure, via whatever means possible, is vital (Baytiyeh, 2017). There are three levels of measures that should be implemented in schools during a school closure. Firstly, it is crucial to (1) maintain communication with pupils, parents, teachers and other staff via email and phone; (2) maintain access to learning materials, such as using Google Apps for education, Moodle Cloud, Edmodo, or social media tools; (3) maintain access to data via cloud computing for servers and back up in a location other than the school.

Many schools in the current study have followed this advice by putting arrangements in place aimed to maintain communication with pupils at least once a week as well as keep parents informed on a regular basis. Some schools keep a daily contact with students by involving them in competitions or sending them daily activities and/or thoughts. Following on from this report, schools may choose to put a strategy in place on how they can maintain regular contact with their pupils and parents, as well as consider a non-digital provision for some children, given the level of digital divide around the country. Equally, the Department of Education and Skills may also choose to set up and communicate clear guidelines to schools as to the level of engagement that schools should practice.

The survey results confirmed the support that is there for school communities. IPPN, PDST and other stakeholders' involvement, support in the form of technology that is available in schools. Since the school closure, many book companies have given free access to their textbooks, there have been online webinars for teachers to upskill in distance teaching and learning, people like David Walliams reading his books each day and just this week we have

Home School Hub on RTÉ. These are only a few of the initiatives and resources that have come online in the past three weeks. However, as many respondents tell us, auditing all these resources is very time consuming, parents are reporting to schools that they are overwhelmed. It is in this space that clear guidance is welcome from the DES, the INTO, IPPN and management bodies.

The most heartening findings from this extensive survey is the amount that has been achieved to date on adapting to this new reality. While the pandemic is reshaping education, the impact is not equal for all participants. Not all parents have the skills for distance learning, not all have the time, not all have the health. Not all teachers have the skills for online teaching, not all schools and pupils have the hardware and software for distance learning. The survey results highlighted a clear digital divide (hardware, software, & technological skills) that exists across schools in Ireland, reinforcing the social inequalities of our society. This may add to already gaping social divide between the better-resourced schools/ families and the schools/ families who just make ends meet. Online learning and teaching require skills that need to be developed, we are on a steep learning curve and, from this report, we are doing well. We are being forced to think in different ways, to solve problems together, to collaborate and to communicate in different ways, to educate and be educated in a different way. This is an opportunity for children to develop independent working and thinking skills, it is an opportunity for them to spend time with their families and to develop new interests. However, as you read the comments here, it is obvious there is a role that schools plays that any amount of technology cannot replace, this is the social aspect of schooling, the relational aspect of learning of feedback and of being part of a community. Many of the pupils have reported that they miss their friends and they miss school.

## 1.2 Executive Summary

A total of 2,808 primary school leaders have completed the survey. This report presents both qualitative and quantitative data.

### 1.2.1 Impact of school closure on pupils and teachers

1. *“The timing (of school closure) is good as all of the core curriculum has been covered in schools”* anonymous school leader (section 4.153).
2. Just over half of the Mainstream schools believed that the school closure may have a negative impact on pupils and staff, meaning that the others were able to find a silver lining. Special schools and Mainstream-with-special-classes schools were slightly less optimistic (sections 4.11 & 4.21).
3. Some of the advantages for pupils of school closures included (1) an ability to explore online/distance learning; (2) an opportunity to revise what they have learnt, and (3) spending more quality time with family (sections 4.15).
4. Some of the disadvantages for pupils of school closure included (1) missing out on the social aspect of school; (2) unable to engage with distance learning due to access; (3) concern for food, safety and general wellbeing of some of the disadvantaged pupils (section 4.15).
5. Over 1,000 school leaders spontaneously commented that pupils contacted them saying they missed school.
6. Some of the advantages for staff of school closure included (1) they are safer at home with their families; (2) an opportunity for teachers to embrace the world of digital learning, as they may have more time to explore it and rethink their planning of resources and learning; (3) opportunity to continue with their CPD (section 4.25).

7. Some of the disadvantages for staff of school closure included (1) staff feeling under pressure to provide online learning and some are feeling less comfortable about it than others; (2) worry about catching up when the schools re-open; (3) worried about some children staying at home without the supports they usually receive in school (section 4.25).
8. In essence, the responses are summed up by the following statement: “*A bit of both. The children will get an unequal education at home despite our gentle direction. Good opportunity to learn life skills and connect with family. Difficult for children in troubled families.*” Anonymous school leader (section 4.15)

#### 1.22 Distance learning

1. Most Principals practiced distributed leadership involving teachers (61%), deputy principals (45%) and all other team members (45%) in the decision-making process about distance learning and support structures (section 5.51).
2. Given the lack of notice given to schools about the closures, some respondents felt angry, unprepared and out-of-depth about distance-learning provision. They commented that (1) they had no experience of it; (2) no training for it; and (3) no equipment (section 5.515)
3. Almost half of the leaders reported that there is an arrangement in place in their schools for teachers to interact with their pupils in relation to the pace and nature of distance learning, 1 in 5 leaders reported no such arrangement and others were ambivalent about the arrangement (5.53).
4. Majority of the schools interact with their students at least once a week (> 70%) (section 6.11)

5. For 8 out of 10 schools, the reason for putting distance learning provisions in place was to support pupils, but in 40% of Special schools many leaders did it mainly to support parents (section 5.21).
6. 9 out of 10 schools use Twinkl as their main digital resource, 7 out of 10 use Scoilnet and half of the schools use PowerPoint (section 5.41).
7. 3 out of 4 schools find Textbook publishers' websites and PDST the most helpful online resources when planning for distance learning (section 5.42).
8. In 3 out of 4 schools, teachers use email to interact with students, however, around 40% of them also use Aladdin and send students hard copies (section 5.43).
9. The most prevalent platform used by teachers to communicate with parents is email (79%), followed by one-way texting via school admin system (52%), one-way texting via TextaParent.ie (42%), school social media channels (31%) and others (section 5.46).
10. By 26<sup>th</sup> March 2020, 2 out of 3 Special schools have contacted either *all* or *most* of their parents to check whether the amount and pacing of work is suitable for them and pupils. However, 1 in 10 special schools have not done this at all. Similarly, a quarter of Mainstream and Mainstream-with-special-classes schools have not yet checked pacing suitability with parents (section 6.21).
11. The most prevalent mode of communication between teachers is WhatsApp (89%), followed by email (79%), phonecall (68%), text (64%), video-conferencing (24%) and other. Large schools are more likely to use email and WhatsApp equally (section 5.45).
12. The most prevalent method of engaging pupils in distance learning activities is via alternative online activities, such as reading, baking or writing (84.2), followed by the completion of classroom workbooks/textbooks (84%), online-based activities

(76.4%), project-based learning (76.2%), play-based learning (68.8%), inquiry-based learning (42.7%) and other.

13. Majority of leaders reported that the areas of the curriculum that are easier to adapt for distance learning are English, Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE), Physical Education and Mathematics (section 5.31).
14. 8 out of 10 leaders reported that Gaelge is most difficult to adapt for distance learning (section 5.32).
15. Half of the participants reported that the area of the curriculum that could be centralised for distance learning is Mathematics and English (section 5.33).
16. A significant number of principals' report that pupils are missing schools and miss out on the social aspects of school, however, they are developing life skills and skills in independent learning, problem solving and independence. Over half of all respondents talk about the impact for 6<sup>th</sup> class students who will miss out on the important social aspects of class trips, end of year celebrations, sport, school competitions and other events that mark their transition from primary to secondary school.
17. For many schools, the cancellation of faith events has had an impact and there is concern for the preparation for events, such as Holy Communion and Confirmation. This cannot be underestimated, as these events are very important celebrations for families, schools and communities. All agree with the cancellations, however, mention concern for the pupils.
18. There are a significant number of respondents looking for guidance, guidelines and clarity on the organisation of distance learning (over 1,600 mentions of guidelines, clarity and guidance in a lexical search). This is significant in light of the government's Digital Strategy.



19. Given the high number of references to ICT training (over 1,200 mentions) in the qualitative data, it would be timely for the DES to develop a training plan to implement with schools in the coming school year to build on the expertise developed during this crisis.
20. The role played by HSCL, SEN coordinators and SET teachers during this crisis should not be underestimated. We would suggest that follow up research with this group would be timely.
21. While a lot has been written on the complexity of leadership roles in schools, we feel this complexity is well illustrated in many of the responses in this research and the need to acknowledge and commend this work is important for us as a society.
22. All schools used a variety of methods to engage with their pupils, which included (in order of prevalence) (1) alternative offline activities, such as reading, baking or writing, (2) the completion of classroom workbooks/textbooks, (3) online-based activities, (4) project-based activities, (5) play-based activities, (6) project-based learning and (7) inquiry-based learning.

### 1.23 Broadband and Hardware

1. 39% of respondents agree that there is a digital divide in their schools, but majority do not know (44%) (section 5.22).
2. 1 in 5 leaders reported that more than 80% of their pupils had access to broadband and 2 out of 3 leaders reported the same for their teachers (sections 5.23 & 5.25).
3. Just over half of the respondents considered broadband access when deciding about distance learning provision (section 5.52).
4. A quarter of leaders reported that more than 80% of their pupils have access to computing devices and 8 out of 10 leaders reported the same for their teachers i.e. access to computing devices (sections 5.25 & 5.26).

5. Principals report not being able to make contact with some families. Some do not use email and do not know how to access software used by the schools. In many cases, principals have to use post and telephone to make contact. Some parents are not engaging with the school despite many efforts by the schools. The lack of technological skills is significant for some communities.

#### 1.24 Minority groups

1. Worry about SEN pupils.
2. More individual support required for SEN pupils leading to more pressure on schools.
3. Many EAL pupils are not receiving any additional support.

#### 1.25 Support needed

School leaders are asking for:

1. Guidelines on what to do
2. Action to reduce the fear of competition and comparison between schools and teachers
3. Technological support
4. Support from network organisation, such as IPPN, PDST, and people, such as the HSCL, and the DLP



## 2. Background & Methodology

In December 2019 in Wuhan, Hubei, China, an outbreak of coronavirus was reported, which leads to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) caused by severe acute respiratory syndrome (SAR-CoV-2). By 30<sup>th</sup> January 2020, the World Health Organisation (WHO) declared the outbreak a public health emergency and on 11<sup>th</sup> March a pandemic. To date (by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020) over 860,000 people have been infected with the virus and over 42,000 died worldwide (John Hopkins University, 2020). According to the COVID-19 Health Surveillance Monitor (HPSC, 2020), in Ireland, more than 3,400 people have been infected, leading to 85 deaths. Therefore, the situation has become serious and requires an equally serious response.

In response to the pandemic, on 12<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the Taoiseach Leo Varadkar announced that in order to contain the spread of COVID-19, all schools would close down with effect from 6pm that day until 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020 (DES, 2020a). In another statement on 24<sup>th</sup> March, the Taoiseach confirmed that all schools would remain closed to students until 19<sup>th</sup> April 2020 (DES, 2020b). Clarification was issued on Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March that school buildings could not be accessed by any staff from Monday evening 30<sup>th</sup> March until 12<sup>th</sup> April, with the exception of schools facilitating provision of school meals to disadvantaged pupils.

The school closure occurred very suddenly, giving school communities very limited time to prepare. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some schools have promptly adapted to the change, whereas others have found it extremely challenging. Therefore, a decision was made to carry out research in order to assist school leaders in adapting more effectively to the changed situation by using the ‘wisdom of crowds’.

The wisdom of crowds is an effective technique of combining individual judgements and opinions in order to attain an aggregate estimate of what actions are required at a given time (Surowiecki, 2005). Evidence suggests that averaging crowds' response is more accurate than individual opinions (Larrick & Sol, 2006), because in certain circumstances, large groups display more 'intelligence' than small groups (Surowiecki, 2005). Also, the wisdom of crowds leads to better decision-making (Cooper & Kagel, 2005). However, some wise, individual opinions should also be considered, which is why the current study applied both methods of data collection and analysis. We identified the average responses for both quantitative and qualitative data, as well as provided curious individual findings for some unique ideas.

The objective of the current research was twofold. Firstly, it aimed to identify good practices that can be shared and replicated around the country, in order to help schools that found it particularly challenging to adapt to the change. Secondly, it aimed to establish what 'scaffolding' is required for schools to continue to work effectively during the temporary school closure. The outcome of the study will allow stakeholders to put provisions in place that support the school community (e.g. pupils, staff, parents, leaders) in equal measure.

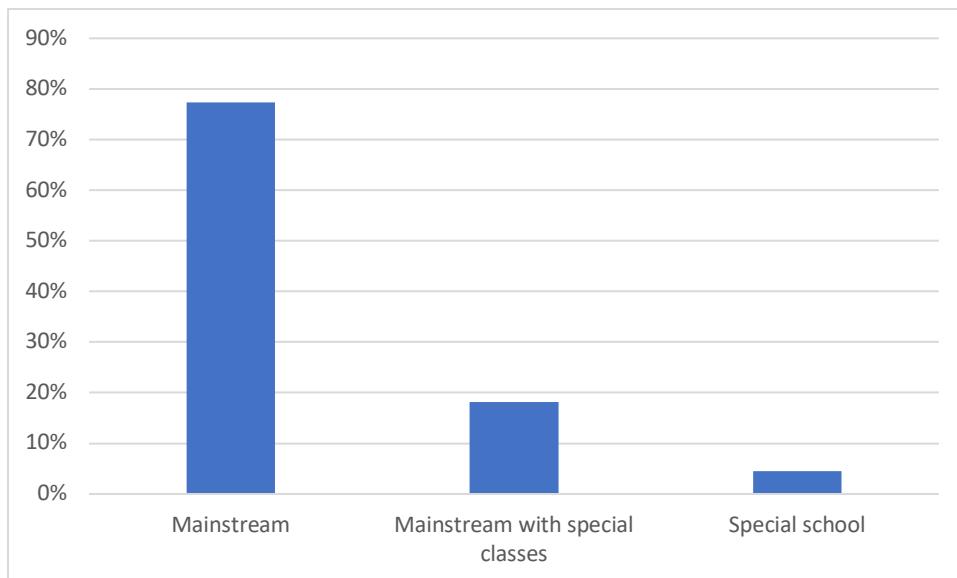
The research was commissioned on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020 by a stakeholder group including the Department of Education and Skills (DES), the Irish Primary Principals' Network (IPPN) Professional Development Service for Teachers (PDST), Catholic Primary Schools Management Association (CPSMA), the Irish National Teachers' Organisation (INTO), An Foras Pátrúnachta, Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI), National Association of Boards of Management in Special Education (NABMSE), Educate Together, Church of Ireland Board of Education, Gaeloideachas, and the Muslim Primary Education Board. The

stakeholder group was invited to participate in the design of the survey and their questions were collated by Dr Jolanta Burke and Dr Majella Dempsey from the Department of Education, Maynooth University. The survey was sent out to school leaders via the stakeholders' networks on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020 and, due to the urgency of the matter, participants had approx. 28 hours to complete the survey. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS version 26 (2019). Qualitative data were analysed using MAXQDA (2020). Please note that themes are presented in order of prevalence and, for each quotation included in the report, there were at least 10 similar views put forward by the participants and, in some cases, over 100 similar views. Due to the fast turnaround for this report, a more in-depth thematic analysis was not possible. We will present further analysis on data in the coming weeks. Finally, when we say "parents" we mean a parent, guardian and/or a caregiver.

### 3. Demographics

A total of 2,808 participants completed the survey, which represents 48% of IPPN individual members, making it a representative sample. The initial response was received from 2,864 participants, however, given that the survey was designed for school leaders of primary schools, the data was adjusted to exclude all other respondents.

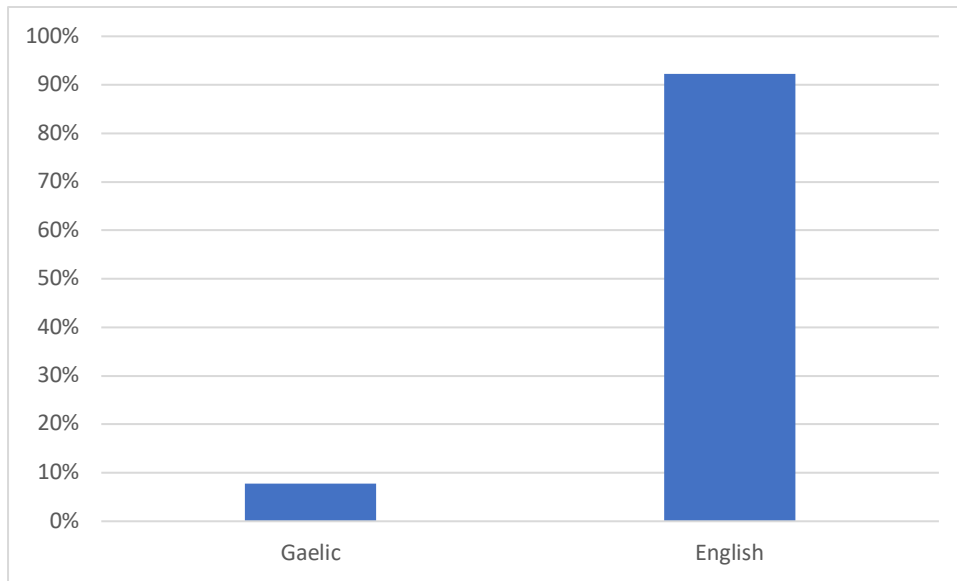
#### 3.1 School type



*Figure 2. School types represented in the survey.*

Most of the participants were from Mainstream school (77.3%, n=2,170), followed by Mainstream school with special classes (18.2%, n=512) and Special school (4.5%, n=126).

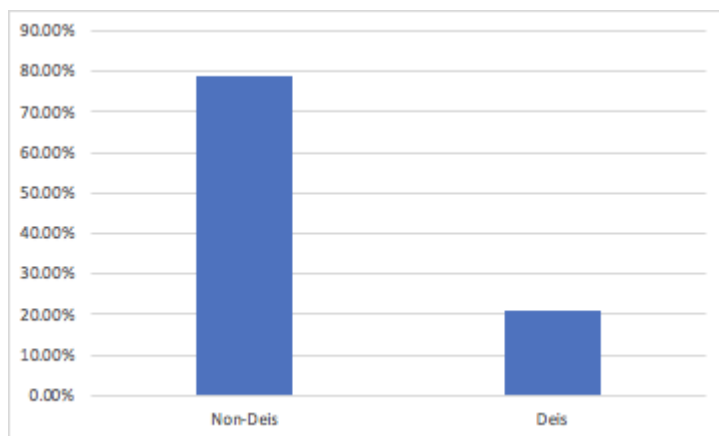
### 3.2 Language schools



*Figure 3. Language schools represented in the survey.*

Majority of the sample in the current study work in English-speaking schools (92.3%, n=2,593), however there is also a good representation from Gaelic-speaking schools (7.7%, n=215).

### 3.3 DEIS schools

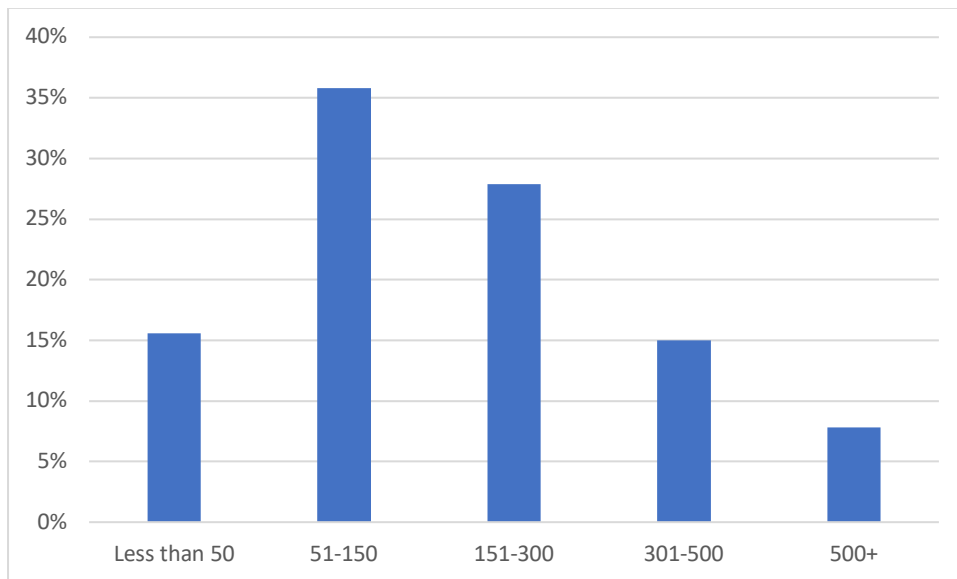


*Figure 4. DEIS and non-DEIS schools represented in the sample.*



Majority of schools in the current sample were non- (Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools) DEIS<sup>1</sup> schools (78.9%, n=2,216). However, a significant number of school leaders from DEIS schools responded to the survey (21.1%, n=592), given there are 691 (DES, 2020) DEIS primary schools in Ireland, it is a representative sample.

### 3.4 School size



*Figure 5. Respondents' school size.*

Most of the respondents were from schools with 51-150 pupils (35.8%, n=1004), followed by 151-300 (27.9%, n=783), less than 50 (15.6%, n=438), 3001-500 (15%, n=420) and the smallest representation, yet significant, was from schools with 500+ pupils (7.8%, n=163).

The school-size categories have been aggregated into 3 groups throughout the report

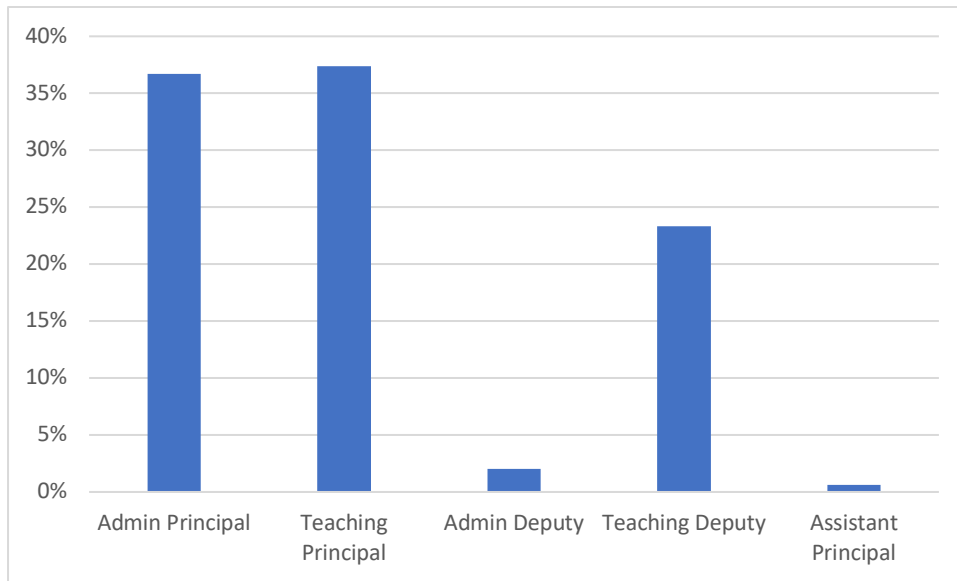
Small = less than 50 pupils

Medium = 51-300 pupils

Large = 301+ pupils

<sup>1</sup> For more information on Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools DEIS status please see <https://www.education.ie/en/schools-colleges/services/deis-delivering-equality-of-opportunity-in-schools/>

### 3.5 Participant role



*Figure 6. Respondents' role in the school.*

Vast majority of the respondents were Principals (74.1%, n=2,082). Of them, 49.5% were Administrative Principals, which represented 36.7% (n=1031) of the entire sample; and 50.5% were Teaching Principals, which represented 37.4% of the entire sample. Deputy Principals represented a quarter of the sample (25.3%, n=709). Majority of them were Teaching Deputy Principals (92.2%) representing 23.3% (n=654) of the entire sample; only 7.8% of the Deputy Principals were Administrative Deputy Principals, representing 2% (n=55) of the entire sample. Finally, the least represented group were Assistant Principals (both AP1s and AP2s), comprising less than 1% (0.6%, n=17) of respondents. Overall, all participants' roles are well represented except for the Assistant Principals.

## 4. Covid-19 Immediate Response

### 4.1 The effect of school closure on pupils

Questions:

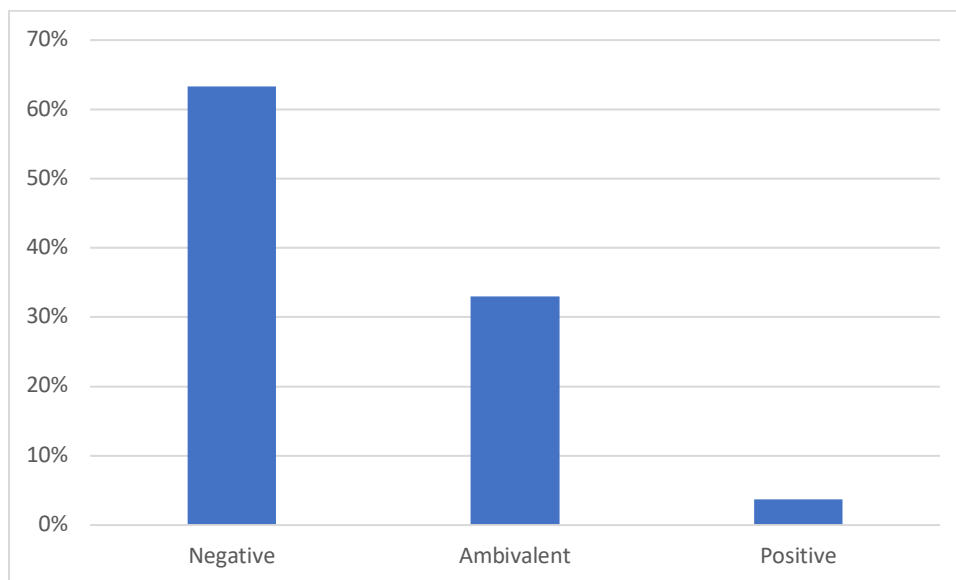
What effect will the Covid-19 school closure have on pupils in your school?

Please comment.

#### 4.11 All schools

	n	%
Negative	1778	63.3
Ambivalent	926	33
Positive	104	3.7

*Table 1. The perceived effect of school closure on pupils.*



*Figure 7. The perceived effect of school closure on pupils.*

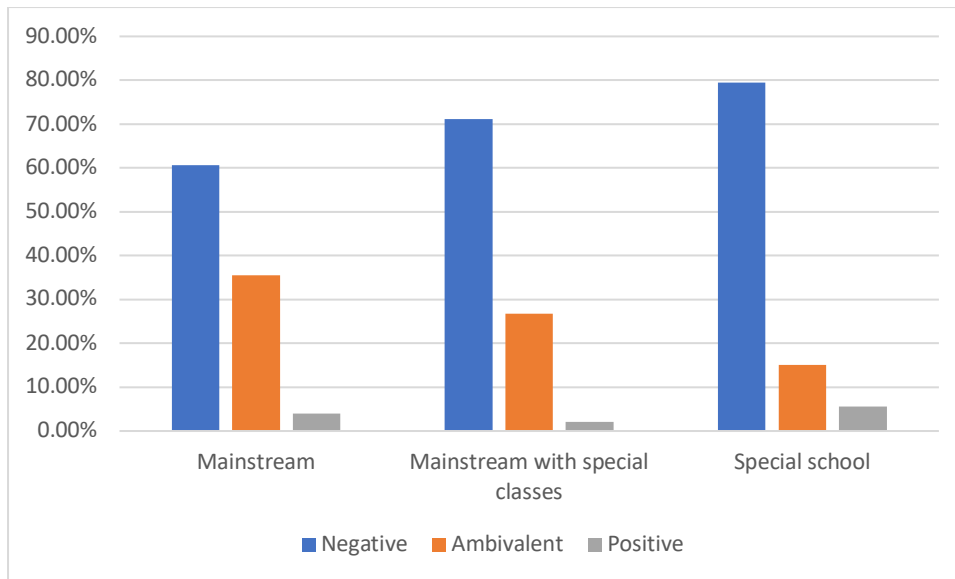
The majority of leaders believed that the school closures will have a negative effect on pupils (63.3%, n=1,778), a third of them, however, were unsure whether the effect will be positive

or negative (33%, n=926), with a small group predicting that the school closure will have a positive effect on their pupils (3.7%, n=104).

4.12 Difference across school types

	Mainstream	Mainstream with special classes	Special school
Negative	1314 60.60%	364 71.10%	100 79.40%
Ambivalent	770 35.50%	137 26.80%	19 15.10%
Positive	86 4.00%	11 2.10%	7 5.60%

*Table 2. The difference between school types in relation to perceived effect of school closures on pupils.*



*Figure 8. The difference in response between leaders of various school types in relation to the effect of school closures on pupils.*

The majority of leaders believed that the impact of school closure will be negative for pupils (60-69%). However, leaders in mainstream schools were more undecided about it (35%), in comparison to leaders in mainstream schools with special classes (27%) and leaders in special schools (15%).

Almost 80% of Special-school leaders agreed that school closure will have a negative effect on their students in comparison to 60% of mainstream leaders and 70% of mainstream school with special classes leaders. This may be indicative of the additional support required by pupils and the important role school plays for Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils.

4.13 Difference across school size

	Small	Medium	High
Negative	258 58.90%	1131 63.30%	389 66.70%
Ambivalent	160 36.50%	593 33.20%	173 29.70%
Positive	20 4.60%	63 3.50%	21 3.60%

Table 3. Difference in response to the effect of school closures on pupils across school size.

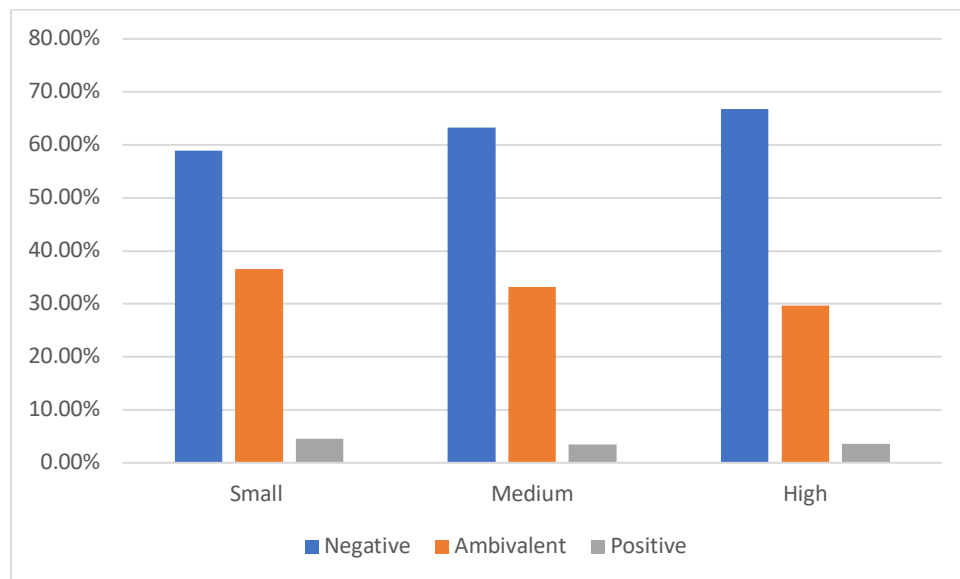


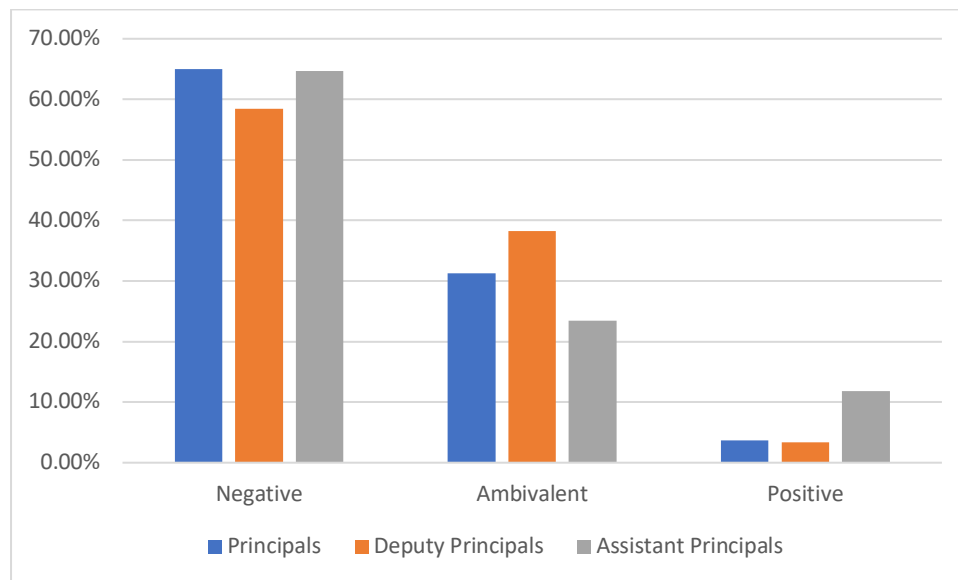
Figure 9. Difference in response to the effect of school closures on pupils across school size.

There were no differences in relation the effect of school closure across school size.

4.14 Difference of opinion between leaders

	Principals	Deputy Principals	Assistant Principals
Negative	1353 65.00%	414 58.40%	11 64.70%
Ambivalent	651 31.30%	271 38.20%	4 23.50%
Positive	78 3.70%	24 3.40%	2 11.80%

*Table 4. Difference of opinion among leader in relation to the effect of school closures on pupils.*



*Figure 10. Difference of opinion among leader in relation to the effect of school closures on pupils.*

Deputy Principals were more ambivalent (38.2%, n=271) and less negative (58.4%, n=414) about the impact of school closure on pupils than the other leaders. The Assistant Principals were most positive (11.8%, n=2) in their views on the impact of closure on students.

However, only 2 participants contributed to this positive outlook, which may be more related to the individual differences between people, rather than the ‘wisdom of crowds’.

#### 4.15 Comments about the effect of school closure on pupils

##### 4.151 Summary

All respondents agree that it is positive if all young people and their families stay healthy and avoid getting sick, e.g.

*Our school had a contingency plan put in place before the closure was announced. Teachers had a fortnight’s workload ready to send home and all the staff, we are available via e-mail for the parents or children to communicate to us if in difficulty or were unsure of any work assigned. Parents were very grateful for the organisation and work and wanted structure to their child’s day. However, I do worry it would impede on those children with social and communication difficulties and those with special needs.*

In essence, the responses are summed up by the following statement:

*A bit of both. The children will get an unequal education at home despite our gentle direction. Good opportunity to learn life skills and connect with family. Difficult for children in troubled families.*



#### 4.152 Emerging themes

Open responses to this question fall under the following themes:

- This will be positive for some pupils
- Provision of distance learning is difficult
- Pupils are missing out on the social aspect of school
- Concern for groups of students in their school
  - DEIS schools worried about their pupils without the school support
  - Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)
  - English as an Additional language (EAL) pupils
- Academic progress was not an issue for most of the respondents
- Some worried about mental health issues for their pupils

#### 4.153 Sample quotes

- This will be positive for our pupils

*Some see this as an opportunity for pupils to get into online learning. This will help children develop independence in their learning.*

*Children are happy with distance learning, chance to explore online and distance learning  
It will provide an opportunity for different types of learning.*

*It will have a negative effect in regards not getting the one to one physical teaching however  
we are remote teaching online and this will give the children more independence in their  
learning.*

*It is positive in the sense that the work we have sent home will revise over learning already done and there are many things they can keep up, like reading, mental maths. And positive also that they will hopefully be learning life skills and developing responsibility by doing jobs around the home.*

*The timing is good, as a lot of the core curriculum has been covered in schools.*

*At this time of year, a big chunk of curriculum is complete.*

*I feel this is not their ideal situation but bearing in mind the children come back in September after 2 months off and don't regress that much having done absolutely no work for the period, I don't think this will make or break their futures. They are still being asked to keep tipping away with work. If they do great if not that's ok too once they can all come back to school healthy.*

*They will have an opportunity to spend time with family where very often both parents are working long hours.*

*At present, it seems that most pupils are using this as an opportunity to learn at home and develop family relationships by spending time with family.*

*Pupils may get more time to relax and spend time outside on farms, in the fields and in parks. It is an opportunity for families to spend quality time together.*

*Comprehensive work packs, website and online work was sent to all pupils. Hoping that students will take this time to physically move more and slow down the pace of life*

*Children are adaptable. With guidance and ongoing homework from our teachers we will get through this. Ours is a rural school so children have access to fields and farms, which helps. As everyone is in the same boat parents are now staying at home and all have a chance to do the old school outdoor activities. Our school is in a rural setting, but I do understand if people live in urban areas life is now much harder.*

*The children live in a very rural area. Some are from farming background and will do ok because they enjoy farming. The others will suffer because there are no activities at their disposal. Many of their parents have been laid off. Morale is low.*

*The kids are getting a once in a life opportunity to spend quality time with their family. They're still getting some schoolwork and homework from me but, more importantly, they are learning from their parents, caregivers, grandparents and siblings. All the schoolwork can be made up, but they will never get this precious time back with their family.*

*It is a very unsettling time for children. Many are in homes not equipped for distance learning and are missing contact with teachers. Some parents are struggling to support children educationally and emotionally. On the plus side some parents have reported that they are really enjoying being able to spend precious time with children that they wouldn't usually be able to do.*

*Children in general, lack life and social skills in the modern world and because parents are forced to engage with their children and become creative, home life and whole child development can only improve. We are assigning work continuously and perhaps their academic core subjects may suffer slightly but at primary level, they will gain so much more*

*from hands-on and physical activities e.g. baking, followed by writing the recipe (procedural writing) and will inevitably catch up. Anxiety from media is having a huge impact on them and they will miss their peers and teacher.*

- Provision of distance learning is difficult

*Schools are working on providing distance learning in different formats. Some students are struggling with this, others are enjoying the experience.*

*Our school is in one of the most disadvantaged communities in the country. School is the anchor of the community and where the only learning happens. The disadvantaged children will be even more disadvantaged after this as there will be no type of reading, writing in many homes. In process of trying to set up Aladdin connect; many families won't engage.*

*I worry about their well-being. I worry about our pupils with SEN or pupils with elevated anxiety and how they are managing this quagmire. I worry about the pupils for whom home might not be a safe place. I worry about the pupils that don't have supportive adult available to them. From a learning perspective, some pupils will continue to learn with the guided instruction and activities that we are sending home for them. Others won't have access to it because of broadband access, devices access or a supportive adult to guide them.*

*Many of our pupils are unable to engage with distance learning. We are developing an online platform which when rolled out will provide students with additional learning opportunities.*

*Lack of investment in ICT, ICT training and student competency in receiving online content will mean our students will have regressed academically over this unprecedented period.*

*Distance learning is a poor substitute for real interaction particularly with younger age groups. On a daily basis, observation is the most effective form of informal continuous assessment.*

*We have class work, educational websites sent to all parents via Aladdin. Boys can read their books at home and be quizzed online via their pupil registration number. All teachers have sent emails to all the parents and follow up emails will follow.*

*There is unequal access to the internet, printers, etc. in different families, meaning some children will get more/less out of our home school efforts. For some students, home is chaotic while school is safe and has routines. This new arrangement is stressful for them. Work given to all kids to complete at home that they should be able to work away on their own without too much input from parents working from home. What's app group and emails set up to provide more work or help when needed. Seems to be working ok at present and most kids happy to have some schoolwork to keep them occupied.*

*It will be negative for those whose parents do not do work with them at home and also for 6th class pupils who will miss out on some key learning of maths concepts before secondary school which they cannot teach themselves at home and we cannot expect parents to teach them. Also, children are missing out on Social, Environmental and Scientific Education SESE.*

*I think our pupils will be worried about the current situation and different families will be facing different and stressful challenges. The lack of routine and uncertainty is difficult.*

*For others whose parents might struggle coping with their children and may be challenged by the work sent home from school, this could be a very negative experience for those children. SEN children will be particularly disadvantaged in my opinion.*

- Pupils missing out on the social aspect of school

All respondents referred to different aspects of the pupils' social lives in school and how pupils will miss out. This is particularly poignant for 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils who will miss out on the end of term outings, and academic and social events that mark the transition to second level.

*They will miss the annual occasions in the Summer term: sports day, school tour etc. They will miss out on academics to some extent despite our efforts to support parents' home schooling.*

*The social impact will be the most difficult challenge for my pupils. They will miss their friends! I am engaging with remote learning for my 5th and 6th classes. There will be a bigger impact on the youngest pupils, junior and senior infants who depend so much more on their teacher's expertise. Our SEN pupils and anyone availing of support for our SET team will also be impacted a lot as a result of the closure! I worry about the mental health of my pupils also at this time.*

*A lot of children have tough home lives.*

*Disruption to routine - especially infants.*

*Lack of social interaction, support, comradery.*

*Negative from the point of wellbeing and loneliness.*

*Children are isolated, out of routine, without structure.*

*Pupils are struggling with lack of routine and access to teaching.*

*Lack of connection with their peers and the stability of school life.*

*Missing routine and social aspects and obviously academic progression.*

*School is a safe environment with structure and routine and the loss of this will impact students.*

*Pupils will feel socially isolated, disconnected from friends, and miss out on learning opportunities.*

*Impossible to tell. You would presume a bad effect in a number of different ways not just academic but it's impossible to tell.*

*Hard to replace the teacher in the classroom teaching the children with any other form of teaching. Also, many children will miss the security school brings to their lives and seeing their classmates and teacher daily.*

- Concern for groups of students in their school.

*Concern over food, safety and general wellbeing for a huge percentage of our pupils.*

*Having a safe secure and predictable environment is important for some of children 15% of our children are in homeless accommodation and so are now room bound and have a stove in their room.*

*Our children come from a very disadvantaged area with a lot of social as well as economic issues. Social distancing will prove very stressful combined with existing economic and social difficulties.*

*Children will lose out on social opportunities and the weaker children may have trouble fully comprehending the online work. They need the direct contact of the teacher to further their comprehension and growth.*

*They cannot access teaching and learning as usual. Their young age and lack of exposure to distance learning teaching tools means it is extremely difficult to get this up and running. The most vulnerable children will not access it at all....*

*We are a city school with a number of DEIS students, students of international parents and students of different social backgrounds. A lot of our students are loved, unfortunately some are not in happy home situations, this I know, and I fear for them.*

*Our students are some of the most marginalised in our society school offers them a safe nurturing environment. They generally do not engage in online learning as they do not have the resources to do so. They get fed healthy meals every day in school and are missing this basic level of care.*

*Some of our children deal with difficult home circumstances and school provides a daily routine and safe space for them. Others live in small spaces with lots of people. It is the overall wellbeing of these children that I am concerned about the most. I am not concerned about academic regression as much.*

*Lack of routine will disrupt families. Our pupils are from a mainly working-class background and wouldn't have the same exposure to language and learning as others.*



*Physical exercise will be seriously restricted. Excessive time spent on consoles will not be good for mental health. Could easily lead to increased cyber bullying.*

*School provides a safe haven, stability, food, predictably. That's now gone for them. I've been to homes in the last week delivering games, materials to keep the children occupied. I found it distressing. I'm worried for where families are living -social unrest. Also, of course, child protection concerns, and concerns re domestic abuse.*

*Being a DEIS school, a small cohort will be hugely impacted i.e. structure, routine, daily meals/lunches and fundamentally, losing out on quality teaching and learning. While most parents work collaboratively with the school on how best to support their children's learning at this time, some parents who place very little value in education are less supportive.*

*Our school is in an area of severe disadvantage. Many of our children's homes would suffer from food poverty. The children come to school hungry. Many attend the after-school project where they get their dinner, this too has closed. Never mind the effect on their education these children could be starving and spending more time in homes with addiction and violence. School is their safe place.*

*Lack of structure, missing friends, missing structured lessons, loss of jobs and security for parents, social exclusion from others, worry, mental health issues, for those with additional needs extra strain on families, for those who are immune compromised a sense of fear, worry, loss of learning, inability to finish curriculum, relying on technology and availability of same as well as family interest for home learning .*

*This is a difficult question as we have no idea how children are coping in this new reality. For some it will be positive- extra time with loved ones, more parental involvement with school work, but others will be further exposed to social difficulties in the home, some will lose loved ones and when we return the staff will have to help them through what they have experienced along with the academic, which I really believe will not be foremost in our minds when we try to help those badly affected. So, there is no way of answering that question. I just hope we can highlight the positives for our pupils.*

*It will be negative for those whose parents do not do work with them at home and also for 6th class pupils who will miss out on some key learning of maths concepts before secondary school which they cannot teach themselves at home and we cannot expect parents to teach them. Also, children are missing out on SESE. It is positive in the sense that the work we have sent home will revise over learning already done and there are many things they can keep up like reading, mental maths. And positive also that they will hopefully be learning life skills and developing responsibility by doing jobs around the home.*

- DEIS schools worried about their pupils without the school support

*Time out of school with work being sent home supports inequality and fosters disadvantage, as a lot of families won't have the time, resources, knowledge or sometimes interest to help their children the way others do.*

*DEIS 1 school. No lunches, no supports, no safety nets. Parental inability to support work at home.*

*As a DEIS school many of our children do not have supports/ resources at home to facilitate remote learning.*

*As a DEIS school, most children do not have parental support and are months - years behind their age peers in non-DEIS schools. This break from school will have a detrimental impact on their concentration levels.*

*We are in an area of low socio-economic status where we are relied on not only for education but for meals also. We have a lot of parents who were struggling before this happened. Our homeless children are very vulnerable in normal circumstances so now their situation is much worse.*

*Children from a disadvantaged background do not have the same access to learning opportunities at home and rely heavily on school for this. The closure puts them at an even greater disadvantage than children who do have learning opportunities, resources and support in the home setting.*

*Extremely worrying for children in DEIS. Are they getting lunch? Are they getting exercise? Many parents have anxiety issues anyway and this will be very difficult for them and it transfers to the children. Huge worries about emotional and psychological supports when we get back. Germ phobia. Social skills etc. need support.*

*Our school is in one of the most disadvantaged communities in the country. School is the anchor of the community and where the only learning happens. The disadvantaged children*

*will be even more disadvantaged after this as there will be no type of reading, writing in many homes. In process of trying to set up Aladdin connect; many families won't engage.*

*Non DEIS status but serving a very disadvantaged community with a wide range of socio-economic challenges*

*Mixed. Children from disadvantaged background/ poor literacy/numeracy and/or lacking IT at home will suffer more academically.*

- SEN pupils

*Children with special educational needs thrive on routines and structure.*

*Loss of Support for Special Ed students who will struggle to make up lost ground.*

*Lack of routine learning. Very difficult for children in ASD class. They could regress*

*High percentage of EAL and SEN children need vital daily support.*

*Very hard for primary school children, especially learning support children to access their curriculum. A lot of pressure on parents.*

*Social isolation for all and very negative impact on learning of SEN children especially and those without ICT devices and internet.*

*We have a large number of Special Ed pupils and they're going to find it very difficult to cope at home. It's going to be very challenging for their parents as well.*

*Standard of achievement will be negatively affected, wellbeing & anxiety levels increased, SEN children will regress, each child getting different input depending on home set up.*

*SEN children will be especially affected as they in particular need the routine and specialised programmes school can offer them.*

*We are particularly concerned for children with SEN and those who may not receive the level of care and support we would like at home.*

*The SEN will fall behind academically, socially and emotionally. I wouldn't be worried about the children in mainstream. They'll catch up and we will adjust our teaching to cater for that. For some children routine will be established and parents will engage with the teachers/school. For these children, while they will miss the social aspects of school, they will have a "new" normal and will continue to learn. This may not be the case for some of our children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Neither will it be the case for many of our pupils in ASD classes who thrive on the predictability of school routines.*

*Children with SEN most affected parents don't have the skillset to work with these children and the change of routine makes learning almost impossible. Particularly worried about 6th class as they are leaving and SEN cohort, we can make up the difference with other classes next year.*

*I have concerns re some children's anxiety levels and school refusal and fear we will see a lot of more attachment / parental separation issues on the return to school. Additional*

*supports will be required here. I'm worried for some children with SEN difficulties, distance learning just won't cut it.*

*Some of our pupils have no routine, structure or boundaries at home so I would expect them to have poor concentration and possibly bad behaviours when they do come back to school. Also, we have a large cohort of pupils with SEN or difficulties with learning. These needs will possibly be more pronounced on return to school. Some of our pupils also have struggles in their homes for various reasons and school is a welcome break from that stress. These pupils may now be under a lot of stress and experiencing trauma of some kind.*

*I'm so concerned about our SEN children than need help 1:1. Learning at home is going to be v v difficult for them and their families. We are a small rural school where there is not a big emphasis on IT in the home. These children come from farming backgrounds, so I'm worried about their safety outside. I have one positive... I feel their speech and language will improve greatly as these children will be spoken to more in the home. Well I can only hope! With parents not working and not running to get places that they'll spend more time talking to their children.*

*Many of our families will struggle with supporting learning at home. Many of our parents will be very stressed and have been made unemployed. Our special class kids will really lose out as much of their support has to be school based and not suited to distance learning. Our SSLD special class kids will lose out on vast amounts of crucial speech therapy, which can't be made up as they have a maximum 2-year placement. I am very worried about our ASD class children without a regular routine. Their parents will be struggling to manage these children's stress and anxiety.*

*We have a lot of children with Special Educational Needs whom require their teachers to teach them and continue with their social learning. This closure is going to set back all of the progress made with these children. For example, our children with Autism, we have been building on then working independently, asking for breaks when needed and working with their peers. All of this work will have to go back to the beginning when we return. It is also hard to set online work or independent work for children with Dyslexia who struggle to read the instructions and need them teach to help them step by step.*

*Pressure on parents to care full time for children on small budget, no school lunches provided, lack of routine for children, negative exposure to violence and substance abuse in some homes, children already struggling to keep up will be set even further back. Massive disruption for children with poor attendance. Emotionally challenging for some children being separated from school routine and teachers. Children with SEN struggling at home. Difficult for parents to provide educational experiences at home for these children. Lack of toys and resources at home for children to play with. Reliance on screen time to amuse children.*

- Academic progress was not an issue for most of the respondents.

*From an educational point of view, I am not concerned. All pupils are in the same boat and I think it important not to over burden parents.*

*Both from an academic and social view, pupils are suffering. I would consider the senior classes in the greatest risk of academic loss and all pupils in the social sense.*

*Parents worry that their child will fall behind, despite our reassurances that when we return to school, they will get all the help that is needed.*

*Our most pressing issue will be retention of their Irish and practice of the language.*

*We cannot expect academic progress to be made in the home setting. If they manage to stay at same level as before that would-be best-case scenario.*

- Some worried about mental health issues for their pupils.

*Loneliness and anxiety reported.*

*Already mental health issues in many of our homes. Many more will now be out of work*

*Curriculum wise they will recover but I worry about increased levels of anxiety and stress.*

*Psychological... anxiety, separation. Academic... huge variety of what's being done at home.*

*The children are experiencing increased levels of anxiety now- missing the routine of school & friends.*

*We are worried about their mental health. Being away from your friends is going to be difficult for the pupils.*

*Most of our pupils will be fine but I've concerns for the mental health & emotional needs of a number of my pupils.*

*Senior Classes were more aware of the situation. There was more anxiety associated with the senior end about closing the school.*



*I feel it will lead to anxiety because they are so unsure about what is going to happen. Also, parents around them are so unsure.*

*Lack of normal routine causing anxiety. Compounds difficulties disadvantaged children experience as they don't have anyone at home that can help them with learning at home  
Increased anxiety, no social interaction with peers, no contact with teacher and teaching and learning experiences with limited experience of working outside classroom and without teacher support.*

*I feel they will be anxious, miss what is familiar and their friends.*

*Anxiety levels are high with families losing jobs and the fear of the virus. Teachers and parents are doing their best to keep routine for the children. As a school we are sending work that is optional to complete and activities that children will enjoy. We do not want to put pressure on families.*

*Too early to answer this question. All staff worked extremely hard at short notice to prepare the pupils for the closure and are continuing to give tremendous support at a distance. We have serious concerns for our Deaf & Hard of Hearing pupils in terms of social isolation and their mental health.*

*A lot of anxiety amongst pupils about the disease, about the effect of it on them, their families and people they know. Very upset about routines. Some pupils didn't want to leave the school the day it closed as they were scared. Parents anxious about not doing enough schoolwork, about their roles and about how they will manage. We have to provide a lot of reassurance*

*and understand that people have different priorities and circumstances now and try to cater to them.*

#### 4.154 General quotes from this section

*Many come from very disadvantaged homes rife with drink/ drug/ social economic problems. School is a sanctuary for many. Loss of services such as Rainbows, school completion, after schools, meals/ lunches etc.*

*We have many front-line staff parents in our school who are not able to be at home to help our pupils with their work. In addition, we would have a large number of children who come from difficult home contexts. School is a safe haven, which has now been removed.*

*A number of our students would be safer in school (family issues). Most children. Do not have access to laptop or tablet. Parents' mobile phone. Most parents would have had difficulties in school themselves and would find the work their children are learning particular in the older classes too difficult.*

*A difficult question to answer as it is very subjective and relative to the individual child based on their home situation. We will provide solid support from school but cannot legislate for the quality of support pupils will receive at home, their internet or device accessibility, how the illness may affect the household, etc.*

*As a teacher of over 30 years, I know that teachers and pupils will catch up on teaching and learning. We had 62 days left in this school year. About 80% or more, in some subjects, of*

*the curriculum is covered. Last few weeks of June are not usually utilised for intensive learning of the core subjects, with school trips, sports days etc. The bulk is or should be done.*

*Pupils want to be in school. They miss the structure and routine of school. Parents are working from home while trying to mind children - it is challenging. Some parents have alcohol and drug misuse problems - these children will be hugely impacted. Some families are homeless - hugely impacted. Families don't have access to internet - cannot engage effectively Pupils don't have access to devices - interaction limited*

*The children will be at the loss of a secure learning environment where they all thrive on a daily basis. They will be at the loss of daily interactions with their friends and teachers. We will where possible strive to keep the learning going with distance learning platforms while not trying to over burden busy households. We will work hard on our return and I'm sure everyone will have an appetite for work and cover lost ground quickly.*

*DEIS school- the routine and security of school gone- children even further exposed to addiction issues, domestic violence, poverty, anxiety. Anxiety levels in children in DEIS schools already at an all-time high, will be even higher now. Lack of importance placed on education in majority of DEIS households- children will not be engaged in distance learning. Lack of IT equipment in the home. Lack of food- they get breakfast and lunch in school!*

*I would have chosen BOTH negative and positive, but it wasn't an option. Negative: these are stressful and uncertain times for everyone, young and old Positive: the hectic lifestyle we are leading (including children) has finally slowed for a bit. Children are now getting the*

*chance to spend time on the important things that we've completely abandoned: playing in the garden, spending quality time with family, cooking, cleaning, climbing trees etc.*

*The children have been working hard to complete a curriculum since late August. They have covered about 80% of their curriculum and won't have missed out on anything that cannot be done at a later stage. As the children are of primary age, there are plenty of learning experiences to be had in the safety of their own homes. I feel that the children are far safer at home and at the end of the day, it is not worth putting children at risk for a week or two of school.*

*I believe that parents need to be reassured that while the pandemic itself is a negative thing school closures is not going to have an overly detrimental effect on their children's learning or progress. It is an opportunity to do some work related to school but also an opportunity for children to learn themselves, to explore, to relieve their own boredom. It is because there is more technology that years ago some parents (and indeed other groups) believe there should be more online teaching etc.*

*As we are a DEIS school some children come from very disadvantaged homes. I fear they may be hungry firstly as they are missing out on food provided in school. I also fear they may be struggling with lack of routine and structure. Some may also be living in environments with drink and drug abuse, which upsets me greatly as school was their chance to get away from all that. I know a lot will fall behind academically but I'm more concerned with the emotional impact this will have on some of our children.*

*It is what it is, outside of all of our control and human health is more important than academics at the end of the day. Teaching staff will communicate with home in order to hold standards in reading /phonics at infant levels in particular. Our focus in relation to distance learning is to assist parents in keeping our pupils busy, accelerating learning is not a priority, many children will learn. Primary sector less affected than secondary sector. We had almost completed two full terms, so a lot of the syllabus covered.*

*Many of the children exhibit challenging behaviour. This is often worse in the home environment as the children do not have the structure, routine and support of school. Many of our students struggle with the summer holidays so I imagine this will a similar struggle, amplified by the lack of playgrounds, trips to McDonalds etc. However, the teachers and myself have worked to provide all parents with curricular materials and daily schedules to help provide this structure, so I think a lot will depend on how much time and effort the parents can put into working as the primary educator for their child during this time.*

*I am very concerned about the many vulnerable children in our school. Children in care, in homes with a variety of problems e.g. substance issues, extreme poverty, involved with social work. For children we have had concerns about but are not involved with social work, they are not being monitored by mandated reporters and are now in homes with even higher stress levels. We have a large proportion of children with SEN who are missing vital tuition. Our children that are homeless or living in shelters are in more danger. Our children that only receive hot meals in school at our canteen will miss out on their potentially only hot meal in a day. Our large proportion of EAL children, many living in Mosney are without tuition. The change in routine for all of our children is so disruptive, they are missing their friends and*

*teachers. They are missing out on a vital stage of their education. I am very worried about all of them.*

*Hugely disadvantaged area in Dublin - our families are really struggling financially, emotionally some with levels of depression and addiction. There is lots of pressure and stress in the mostly single parent households already before the onset of COVID 19. Now many of our families are dealing with food shortages, loss of jobs as those working are generally working in cleaning etc. etc. Our pupils get fed in school they have breakfast and hot meals at lunchtime. Schools being closed brings additional burden by way of accessing food. Pupils are warm in school they have social interactions on a daily basis. Some of our families are currently homeless or living in hubs. We the staff in our school are really worried about the wellbeing of some of our pupils. Just getting into a daily routine is a struggle for some families never mind having all the children in the house together with possibly access to 1 device or maybe not and pressure from schools to do work - not realistic. We also have to be mindful of not adding to the stress of already struggling households*

*Perhaps there should be an option that says, 'both positive and negative'. If there was, I would choose that. As regards academic work, the majority of work and probably the most challenging aspects, would be covered by Easter in a primary school year anyway. Therefore, if all children are provided with a 'menu' of work (revision, further challenges etc.) during this time out of school, they should not suffer academically. Also, if everyone feels that they are all 'in the same boat', as regards academic work, there will be much less cause for stress. It is when comparisons begin to take place (between schools/within schools) that most of the stress and anxiety occurs. Children have an opportunity in these circumstances to engage in simple, enjoyable activities, such as reading, imaginative play,*

*cycling and outdoor games, trying out a new recipe. I believe children will learn some important life skills during this time, that they may otherwise never have a chance to learn due to constantly jam-packed timetables and every moment of every day being accounted for. Children with special needs would most likely be affected by the change in routine and this may cause anxiety and stress for their parents also. Children with less support available to them at home or those with difficult home circumstances would probably miss the security and routine, which school provides.*

4.2 The effect of school closure on staff

Questions:

What effect will the Covid-19 school closure have on staff in your school?

Please comment

4.21 All schools

	n	%
Negative	1423	50.7
Ambivalent	1128	40.2
Positive	257	9.2

Table 5. Leaders' perceived effect of school closure on staff.

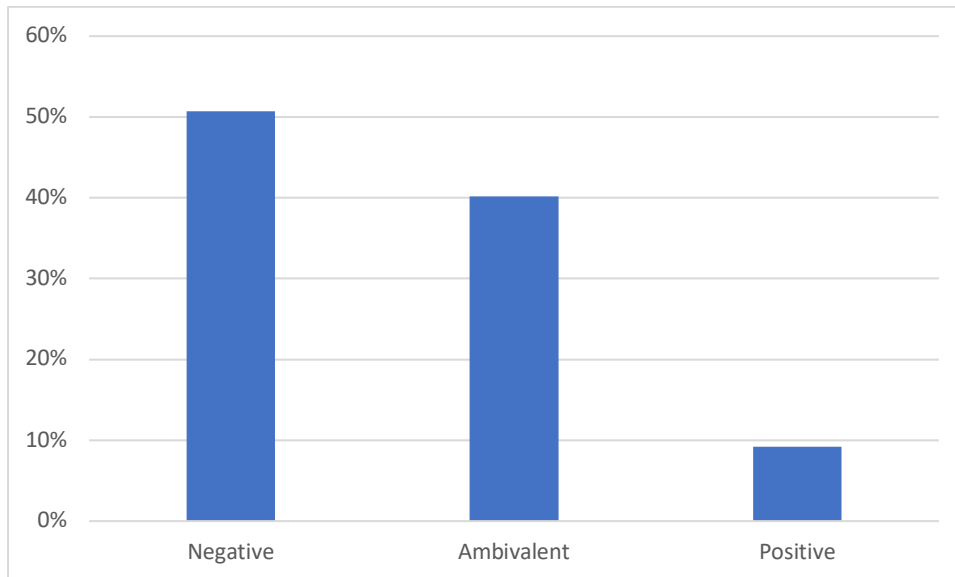


Figure 11. Leaders' perceived effect of school closure on staff.

Half of the leaders believed that the school closures will have a negative effect on staff (50.7%, n=1,423), however, 40.2% (n=1,128) were undecided, and 1 in 11 leaders (9.2%, n=257) predicted it will have a positive effect on staff.



4.22 Difference across school types

	Mainstream with special		
	Mainstream	classes	Special
Negative	1082	279	62
	49.90%	54.50%	49.20%
Ambivalent	897	187	44
	41.30%	36.50%	34.90%
Positive	191	46	20
	8.80%	9.00%	15.90%

Table 6. The difference between school types in relation to perceived effect of school closures on staff.

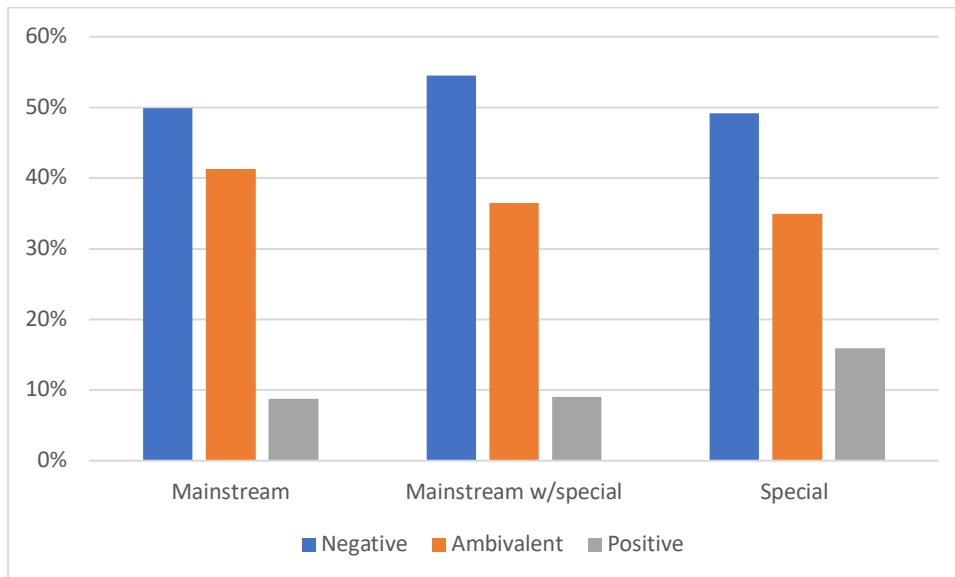


Figure 12. The difference in response between leaders of various school types in relation to the effect of school closures on staff.

The responses across all school types are similar, with slightly higher number of Special-school leaders claiming that the effect of school closure on staff will be positive (15.9%, n=20) than the Mainstream schools, which stood at approx. 9%.

4.23 Difference across school size

	Small	Medium	Large
Negative	206 47.00%	898 50.30%	319 54.70%
Ambivalent	198 45.20%	728 40.70%	202 34.60%
Positive	34 7.80%	161 9.00%	62 10.60%

Table 7. The difference in response between leaders of various school sizes in relation to the effect of school closures on staff.

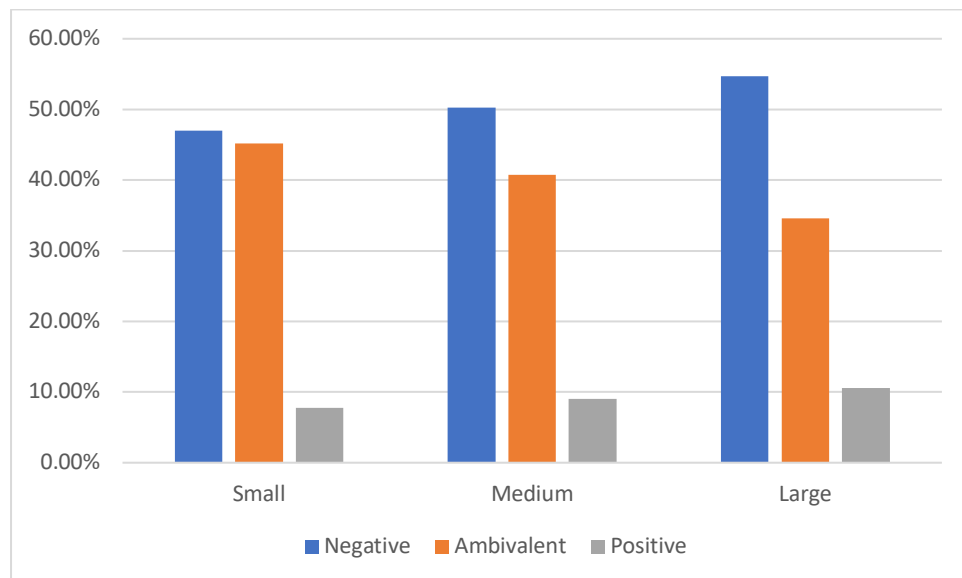


Figure 13. The difference in response between leaders of various school size in relation to the effect of school closures on staff.

The leaders' perception of the effect of school closure on staff grew progressively more negative with the size of school and the opposite was the case about the ambivalent impact on staff. However, the difference of opinion across the school size is not significant.

4.24 Difference of opinion among school leaders

	Principal	Deputy Principal	Assistant Principal
Negative	1100 52.80%	317 44.70%	6 35.30%
Ambivalent	803 38.60%	318 44.90%	7 41.20%
Positive	179 8.60%	74 10.40%	4 23.50%

Table 8. The difference of opinion among leaders about the effect of school closure on staff.

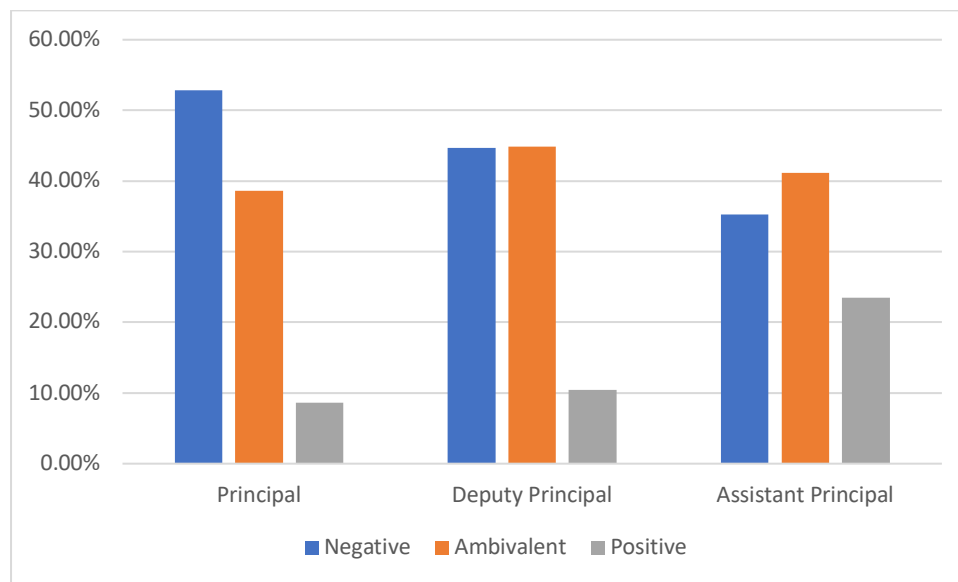


Figure 14. The difference of opinion among leaders about the effect of school closure on staff.

Principals were more likely to respond that the effect of school closure on staff will be negative (52.8%, n=1,100), followed by Deputy Principals who almost equally agreed that it would be negative (44.7%, n=317) or ambivalent (44.9%, n=318).

#### 4.25 Comments about the effect of school closure on staff

##### 4.251 Emerging themes

Open responses to this question fall under the following themes:

- Positive
- Impact on team and collegiality
- Staff stress
- Staff and technology
- Stress due to lack of clear guidelines

##### 4.252 Sample quotes

- Positive response from staff

The response by schools to this challenging time has demonstrated how, despite their own worries and own responsibilities, many schools worked as a collegial team to support their pupils. There was learning of new skills, and this was seen by some as a positive outcome from the school closure. The important point made by many was that they felt that the closure of schools was the most positive step to ensure their own health and the health of their communities.

*Health wise we are safer; our families are safer. Our health is most important. Many of us are parents home-schooling our own children, preparing work for our pupils responding to parents' queries.*

*There is a lot of pressure, but teachers are excellent at rising to the challenge. Moving away from textbook teaching will be excellent for those who use it too much.*

*Teachers are very flexible, adaptable and creative. They have accrued skills which allow them to continue “teaching” albeit digitally. Lots will take this opportunity to continue CPD. They may miss seeing their colleagues to some extent, but we are working on initiating a virtual staff meeting currently. However, some older teachers might be finding the experience a little more difficult than the younger ones.*

*The staff have embraced and extended the level of digital learning / teaching. Staff are working very closely with parents to maintain high quality learning during this crisis. Pupils are accessing teacher led / planned work on seesaw / Edmodo etc. and parents feel that teachers are still the main educators during this period. Parents have immediate access to teachers via online platforms. staff are working collaboratively together to ensure a whole school approach. Pupils are engaging on a daily basis with their class work and a new academic routine has been established quite well. Staff engaged in CPD for digital technology over the past year and this has been a huge help in providing a high-quality distance learning experience for pupils.*

*Our staff are resilient and philosophical.*

*Teachers have more time to engage with online resources.*

*Allows more detailed planning of resources and teaching and learning as they send material home by email. A minority overextending themselves however to their own detriment.*

*We have set up regular staff contact via WhatsApp and have had meetings using Zoom.*

*After Easter we hope to have a weekly staff check in via Zoom and engage with school self-evaluations and planning using this platform.*

*Both positive and negative. Positive opportunity that puts a learning opportunity for us to up skill in IT should catch up on paperwork; negative is the uncertainty, not knowing how best to support the children, picking up afterwards in terms of the kids' psychological and academic positions.*

*Staff find it difficult to set work remotely due to broadband issues and parental interaction. However, they are in a position to support their own children through this situation which is a positive.*

*This depends on the attitude of the school and teachers, this is a huge learning opportunity for us all and has got us thinking about learning from a different perspective, yes it has been stressful, but we'll get there.*

*Teachers are being creative and challenging themselves to teach lessons via online tools. The staff are adapting well to this new form of teaching and sharing resources through our teachers' Google accounts. It's difficult to say what the personal and emotional impact will*

*have. All have families at home with them while they try to work and for the majority of the staff manage the distance learning assigned to their own children.*

- Impact on teamwork and collegiality

*Professionally teachers are embracing the challenge and supporting each other ...actually from a team bonding point of view it's very positive. However, trying to communicate is a challenge but trying out zoom etc. and is improving but some staff will find it a greater challenge than others.*

*Staff very supportive and all work together but really looking forward to going back to work Encourages more collaboration and teamwork to support pupils. Teachers with good IT skills are leading the way.*

*Although we are working together via video conferencing and messaging, the physical separation leads to feelings of isolation. We will have to be conscious about working as a "unified team".*

*Teachers are trying to engage with pupils through distance learning, which is presenting a huge challenge for them, so I am working a small group to cater for the whole school.*

*We are still able to communicate with one another and have a great team. Everyone is working together to ensure the continuing education of the pupils during this time*

*As above. Varies for individuals. Difficult for SNA staff who are seeking direction. They want to help. It has heightened teamwork and collegiality.*

*I feel that our staff are working hard on areas they can at the moment and will be motivated upon their return. Anxiety was high re: Covid 19 prior to closure so it was the right move from a staff well-being point of view.*

*Super team working together to get through this. Very cognisant of the need for this closure and eager to continue to engage with and reassure pupils and parents.*

- Staff stress

There were concerns about the increased stress levels being experienced by the school community. This is mostly due to the short notice given for the school closure, lack of formal training in distance learning, lack of contact from some parents, worry for their students and for their own families. The complexity of juggling multiple roles was very evident in data. It is important that we acknowledge that while teachers are not in school, they are still teaching and supporting pupils while also supporting their own families. The complexity of the leader's role is discussed later in the report.

*Staff are highly stressed trying to find suitable work, we feel unprepared and ill equipped to teach remotely without direction or connection, finding suitable activities which parents can do with pupils still leaves certain topics that must be done in class. Teachers are worried about long term consequences, trying to home school and mind their own children, care for others and be available 24 /7 by email, correcting and communicating with frustrated and confused parents.*

*Very worrying, not adequately trained in distance learning. Stressful trying to do their best.*



*Fear of not getting all content taught, standardised testing etc*

*Staff are concerned they are not meeting the needs of their pupils, while trying their best to plan from home with limited resources. The uncertainty about the future of the school year is also a worry for all.*

*Staff are worried about lack of contact with pupils. They are worried about SEN children. They miss their daily routine and contact with colleagues. While is being sent home and we are in daily contact with families, we cannot help the children in the same way.*

*Pressure and stress, lack of standards for all teachers to comply with, SET teachers idle Teachers are stressed about getting work done and if they aren't brilliant at using technology.*

*Increased anxiety, wellbeing and mental health affected. Little professional interaction with colleagues, feeling of helplessness in the situation, worrying about students.*

*Worried, anxious. Having to upskill in a relatively unknown area and this is so stressful. Some can't do it at all.*

*I think it will leave us all under a lot of pressure when we get back to school, aside from a crash course in what's left to complete from the yearly plans, we will be trying to get First Confession, First Communion, standardised testing, booklists, class splits and teacher allocations for next year, all which would usually have been completed during this time*

*I think teachers are in limbo and don't know whether to send work or not and how they should do it. This is an unprecedented situation and I don't think any extra stress needs to be added to the situation. Not all children will have equal access to devices and if there's multiple ages in the home and parents trying to work from home, I don't think it's feasible to expect primary teachers to be teaching digitally, easier for secondary school as their students all have their own devices.*

*Very stressful. Even though books and copies have been collected by parents and teachers are linking in with pupils on a daily basis with work to be completed, this was all thrust upon staff very abruptly. How we teach and communicate with pupils is now very different. Not all staff are IT confident. They stress about catching up when we return, missed Sacraments, accountability and all this is on top of home-schooling their own children at home and keeping safe themselves.*

*Our teachers are stressing over the welfare of our pupils. They know the homes they come from they know there is no money for food. They are worried about covering the curriculum too but much less so than the actual safety of the girls.*

*Worry about their own situation, isolation from family friends and colleagues, pressure to engage with technology to provide lessons, financial pressures for those whose family members are now unemployed, concern about our students and how they are coping, some staff are now facing unemployment as maternity leaves have expired, some staff on parental leave with now no income coming into the house as their partners are now without employment.*

*We have one staff member who has three small kids. She applied for job share for September. She'd like all of this to be put in place over the next few months. She is going to be v stressed. Stress levels are high amongst staff. They are worried about their own health, the health of their families, and of their students. They are concerned about how to attempt to implement distance learning from home while caring for themselves and others and even some of them potentially feeling unwell themselves. Substitute teachers are concerned about pay. NQTs are concerned about finishing their Droichead probation. Ancillary staff are concerned about the work they need to get done. Everyone is worried about the children's their wellbeing and their learning.*

- Staff and technology

There is a full spectrum of technological ability in our teaching body and this has been brought to the fore with this school closure. Not all teachers, parents, care givers, leaders are technologically competent. Not all individuals have internet access. This is adding to stress and adds a layer of complexity in dealing with distance learning.

*Huge amounts of anxiety on a personal level and professional level. Teachers afraid the work already done with pupils won't be consolidated and huge levels of stress around online learning and trying to upskill in that.*

*Some teachers will struggle with remote learning and IT. Others will cope. Some staff have sick family members and have family concerns. Teachers of special classes and vulnerable children are very concerned about their well-being.*

*Of course, teachers would like to be back in class as soon as the government/medical experts deem it possible - but they are in contact with each other via Aladdin updating work/activities/suggestions and sharing ideas for the children. These are then updated on the school website.*

*Staff feel under pressure to maintain online tutoring ....as hyped in media...neither our staff expertise nor school context support this and we are currently establishing a staff communication framework to assist in staff consultation and feedback to facilitate whole school planning for Covid 19 and school planning in general if closure continues.*

*It is more stressful for some than others depending on how comfortable they are with technology. It is hard to separate the effect trying to learn and deliver distance learning from the effect of Covid 19 on us personally. Everyone is worried about loved ones. People are engaging, thinking creatively and learning new IT skills also.*

*Teachers miss the interaction with the children. It's a lot easier to help the child that is struggling when they are in front of you, you can intervene at that exact time. It's a new experience for teachers and they are doing their best to upskill in online teaching technology.*

*Staff will find it difficult to support learning at home- we don't have the infrastructure here to support online learning. Also, many teachers have family at home that they will be trying to support and will find it hard to be everything i.e. parent and teacher. Many staff members might be single parents or have a partner in front line services meaning that they are increasingly stressed and worried with an unmanageable caseload. Everybody's circumstance is so different.*

*Lots of upskilling of teachers in the area of ICT which will move into the classroom when we return. Time being given to whole school plans and policy development to better match what we are doing as a school. Better collegiality and collaboration practices evident. \*\*\**  
*SNAs are lost in all of this however \*\*\**

- Stress due to lack of clear guidelines.

The issue of support, guidelines and clarity was a recurrent theme in the qualitative data. It is certainly an issue that merits some attention at Department of Education level. At Primary Level there is a call for some structure on the amount of work expected to be developed by schools, the amount of time pupils should be learning in a structured way each day, the amount of feedback required, and how this will be recognised when pupils return to school. There were many quotes that asked for guidance and reassurance that they were doing a good job.

*At the moment it's the pressure of what to do. Am I doing enough? A lot of pressure coming from others and social media. I would have liked uniformity as to what and how we send our work to children.*

*No guidance from DES or Inspectorate as to what level of support is expected.*

*We would all like to be at work as normal. The stress of what is expected at this time is frustrating. What's sufficient for our school may not be the case for another school. We don't feel the need for online lessons.*

*Teachers have been forced to upskill and evaluate their teaching effectiveness in ways which we were slowly trying to introduce through the digital learning framework. However, there are significant challenges to distance learning and teachers are feeling threatened and also supported by the sheer volume of resources suddenly becoming available with very little direction from the DES about it all especially for SEN.*

#### 4.253 General quotes

*Our staff have been under increasing pressure over the last number of years due to the increasing number of needs within the school and a decrease in supports. I have seen a few teachers close to breaking point. We don't have enough SNA support; we have children in mainstream whose needs we are struggling to cater for even with supports from the NCSE. Our SET team cannot cater for all of the children we should be catering for because we simply don't have enough hours in the week. So, this closure will be positive for many of our staff in that regard as their stress levels were at a worryingly high level and their mental health has been negatively affected. The closure will also have a negative effect on the staff in terms of not being able to teach children face to face, not having the daily interaction with colleagues on a social level. Overall, I would say the closure is having BOTH a positive and negative effect and really it all depends on the individual so really, I cannot answer for staff members.*

*The manner in which the schools were closed, and the notice given was pathetic and particularly difficult to contend with. The statement released by the DES asked teachers to continue to plan but not deliver lessons and was posted on the DES website with 2 hours until schools closed. Now the media, the DES and also parents are expecting that teachers will and can deliver lessons online. They can't. They're not trained for it. Expectations and*

*requests in this regard need to be kept to the bare minimum of what can actually be achieved, and the DES needs to get that message out in a big way.*

*Teachers are trying to support children and parents during this difficult time. However, online/remote learning is not available to many of our pupils. I, along with our HSCL and SCP coordinator have made “educational packs” that are being distributed to our most vulnerable “targeted” children. The situation is stressful and challenging for teachers who understand the “reality” of the pupils in their classes. This is on top of teachers dealing with their own “reality” in their lives currently.*

*Staff are trying to figure out ways to communicate with their children which is difficult at primary age especially lower down the school as you are relying heavily on parents input also in a time when parents have to navigate a way through working from home, taking care of children and balancing healthy lifestyles. Teachers also have to do the same, lots of parents are teachers and they are wondering how to balance working from home and learning new ways to communicate with their class.*

*The staff have embraced and extended the level of digital learning / teaching. Staff are working very closely with parents to maintain high quality learning during this crisis. Pupils are accessing teacher led / planned work on seesaw / Edmodo etc. and parents feel that teachers are still the main educators during this period. Parents have immediate access to teachers via online platforms. staff are working collaboratively together to ensure a whole school approach. Pupils are engaging on a daily basis with their class work and a new academic routine has been established quite well. Staff engaged in CPD for digital*

*technology over the past year and this has been a huge help in providing a high-quality distance learning experience for pupils.*

*I think it will leave us all under a lot of pressure when we get back to school, aside from a crash course in what's left to complete from the yearly plans, we will be trying to get First Confession, First Communion, standardised testing, booklists, class splits and teacher allocations for next year, all which would usually have been completed during this time Staff are very upset for parents who are now at home with no support. Due to the deficits of our children it is very difficult to set work and expect the parents to continue with teaching They are also very worried that the children will regress and lose a lot of their skills. The school offers a variety of environments such as a sensory room , OT room etc. where the children can take a movement break, get out, expel energy and release tensions , staff are concerned that the students will now be very confined in their own homes which could lead to anxieties, stress and melt downs*

### 4.3 Helpful policies

Question:

What current educational policy documents have helped you and your team to influence your school's actions?

#### 4.31 Summary

See section in the report on the lack of guidance. For this question, many respondents listed “none” as an answer. We feel this is significant and is linked to the stress and the call for guidelines. Some respondents listed off policies like the Digital Strategy Policy and so on but



did not give any indication of how they used them. Most often the comments lamented a lack of a policy around distance learning.

The policy documents the respondents list most often were:

- PDST - Webinar by Simon Lewis and PDST - Distance learning session were reported by many respondents as helpful, see section of report on support bodies.
- Other policy documents mentioned more than ten times were, *Acceptable Use Policy, Data Protection Policy, Dignity in the Workplace Policy, Assessment policy, School plan, ICT digital literacy plan, NEPS good practice guide, GDPR.*

#### 4.32 Sample quotes

*None- extremely poor support from INSPECTORATE, no guidance on approaches. Every school left to come up with its own plan- no consistency among schools. This is needed. Should this continue the level of work done by pupils will be vast in difference.*

*NCSE tips for speech and language for younger kids, NEPS good practice guide. Such a new situation but lots of info available- it can often be a bit overwhelming especially for parents! There hasn't been time to reflect on this. Teachers were told at 11:15 and had until 2 pm and 3 pm to prepare work for a week. And then implement childcare provision for themselves. It has been a hectic time, with growing financial uncertainty.*

*None - Teacher skill and intelligence have led the way as teachers have varying digital competencies across the sector and this is an area of priority now for CPD and nationwide in service/school closures so that all schools can comfortably engage. To be honest curriculum is changing all the time, a step back now needs to be taken by the DES to get their priorities*

*in action but there is a lack of clear support in this area from the Dept of Education even in their short notification to schools of the closures on the 12th of March to get contingency plans in place.*

*Haven't really. School actions have been based on experience, consultation and advice.*

*Much of this is probably in policies but I haven't in the past few weeks looked up a school policy to figure out what to do. Interesting.*

*This is uncharted territory! Going forward we will have to adapt our technology policy to include expected etiquette and rules for Google Classroom.*

*DES circulars. Letter from IPPN very reassuring. Great resources on IPPN. Simon Lewis webinar very practical. We have looked at our own school context and decided that our approach suits the majority of our parent body. We are mindful of all issues staff, parents and children are facing in these times.*

*PDST distance learning and engagement with IPPN forum for the exchange of ideas and information from other principals on the front line.*

*I'll be honest- not a lot! We acted solely on what we thought (as a staff) the best approach that was sustainable, manageable and effective for staff, pupils and parents. DES sent one directive that suggested Scoilnet and a few other bits of info.*

*N/A For something that was so unprecedented all schools had to take a common sense approach. Possibly guidelines on how much time the child is to spend on each subject daily was of benefit. However, after this a policy will have to be put in place for home-schooling in schools.*

*No policy documents guided our work-just common sense and our approach of caring for our pupils and considering what they need and how best to give it to them at this time.*

*Our own policies: Health and Safety, Emergency Closures, SEN, ICT, GDPR. Primary School Curriculum, Aistear.*

## 5. Distance Learning

### 5.1 School strategy

This section provides responses to participants' questions in relation to the formal and informal strategy schools put in place in order to deal with the sudden school closure.

#### 5.11 Involvement in decision-making

Questions:

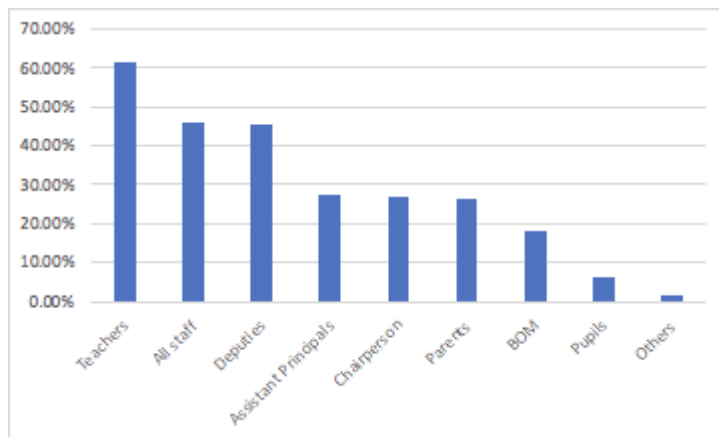
Who in your school is involved in the decision-making process and/or consulted about distance learning and support structures?

If other, please specify.

##### 5.111 All schools

Stakeholders	n	Percentage
Teachers	1723	61.4%
All staff	1285	45.8%
Deputies	1274	45.4%
Assistant Principals	768	27.4%
Chairperson	760	27.1%
Parents	740	26.4%
BOM	505	18.0%
Pupils	175	6.2%
Others	39	1.4%

*Table 9. The level of stakeholders' involvement in decision-making about distance learning.*



*Figure 15. The level of stakeholders' involvement in decision-making about distance learning.*

Most of the Principals have consulted a number of stakeholders when making a decision about distance learning and related support structures. The most frequently consulted group were teachers, who were involved in decision-making in 61.4% (n=1,723) of schools, followed by all-staff consultations in 45%, n=1,284) of schools and consultations with Deputy Principals in 45% (n=1,274) of schools. The 'other' group included decision-making by school secretaries, school leader networks, IT providers, other schools, or a patron body. There was a very small portion of participants (less than 1%) mentioning that the principal on his/her own made the decision.

## 5.112 Difference across school types

	Mainstream	Mainstream with special classes	Special
Teachers	1295	332	96
	59.70%	64.80%	76.20%
All staff members	1038	210	37
	47.80%	41.00%	29.40%
Students	134	33	8
	6.20%	6.40%	6.30%
Chairperson	565	151	44
	26.00%	29.50%	34.90%
Board of Management members	361	116	28
	16.60%	22.70%	22.20%
Parents	539	157	44
	24.80%	30.70%	34.90%
Deputy Principal(s)	893	304	77
	41.20%	59.40%	61.10%
Assistant Principal(s)	493	232	43
	22.70%	45.30%	34.10%
Other	85	34	8
	3.90%	6.60%	6.30%

*Table 10. The level of consultation regarding distance learning provision across various school types.*

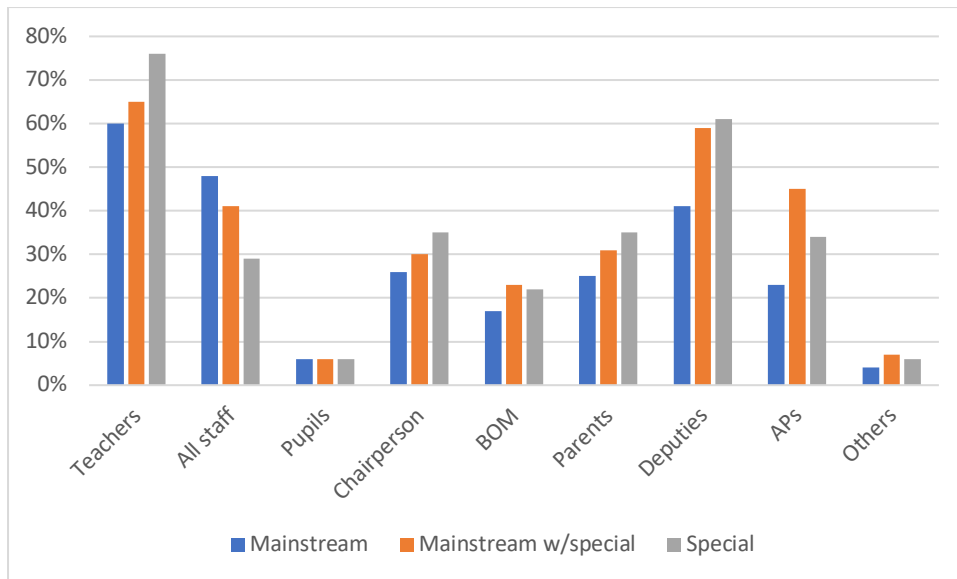


Figure 16. The level of consultation regarding distance learning provision across various school types.

More Special schools (76.2%, n=96) consulted their teachers about distance learning provision than Mainstream schools (60-65%). More of them have also consulted their chairperson (34.9%, n=44) and parents (34.9%, n=44) than Mainstream schools.

## 5.113 Difference across school size

	Small	Medium	Large
Teachers	258	1079	386
	58.90%	60.40%	66.20%
All staff members	207	853	225
	47.30%	47.70%	38.60%
Students	39	101	35
	8.90%	5.70%	6.00%
Chairperson	115	465	180
	26.30%	26.00%	30.90%
Board of Management members	72	280	153
	16.40%	15.70%	26.20%
Parents	136	435	169
	31.10%	24.30%	29.00%
Deputy Principal(s)	89	793	392
	20.30%	44.40%	67.20%
Assistant Principal(s)	26	409	333
	5.90%	22.90%	57.10%
Other	15	73	39
	3.40%	4.10%	6.70%

Table 11. The level of consultation regarding distance learning provision across school size.



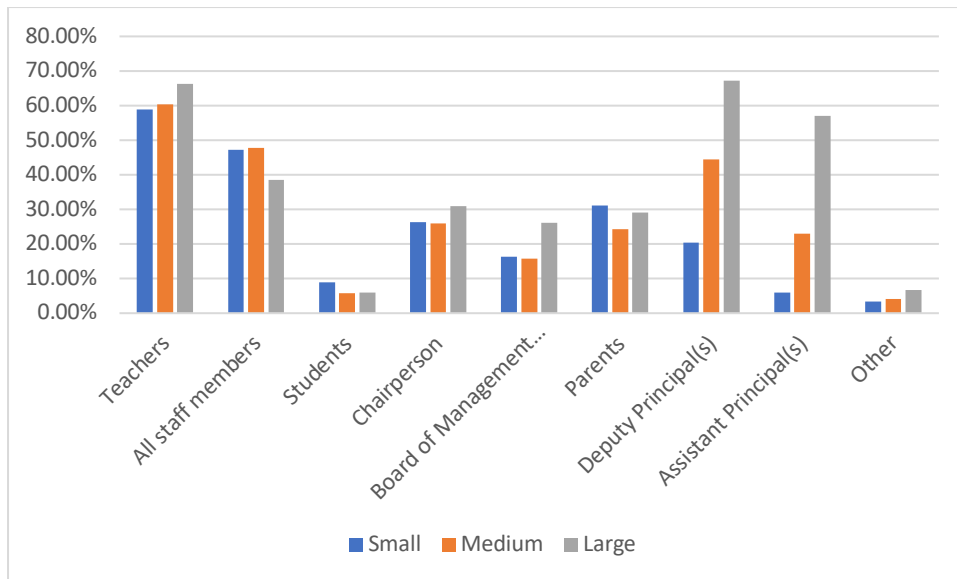


Figure 17. The level of consultation regarding distance learning provision across school size.

Most of the large schools involved the Deputy Principals (67%, n=392) or Assistant Principals (57%, n=333) in consultation. At the same time, only 20.3% (n=89) of small schools and 44.4% (n=793) of medium schools involved Deputy Principals, and fewer of the medium- and small-size schools involved the Assistant Principals in decision-making. However, this may be also due to the management structure of the schools, rather than their willingness to consult.

5.114 Difference of opinion between leaders

	Principal	Deputy Principal	Assistant Principal
Teachers	1331	382	10
	63.90%	53.90%	58.80%
All staff members	942	338	5
	45.20%	47.70%	29.40%
Students	144	31	0
	6.90%	4.40%	0.00%
Chairperson	651	104	5
	31.30%	14.70%	29.40%
BOM	403	99	3
	19.40%	14.00%	17.60%
Parents	614	121	5
	29.50%	17.10%	29.40%
Deputy Principal(s)	934	327	13
	44.90%	46.10%	76.50%
Assistant Principal(s)	578	179	11
	27.80%	25.20%	64.70%
Other	75	50	2
	3.60%	7.10%	11.80%

*Table 12. Difference of opinion among leaders as to who was involved in consultation for distance learning.*

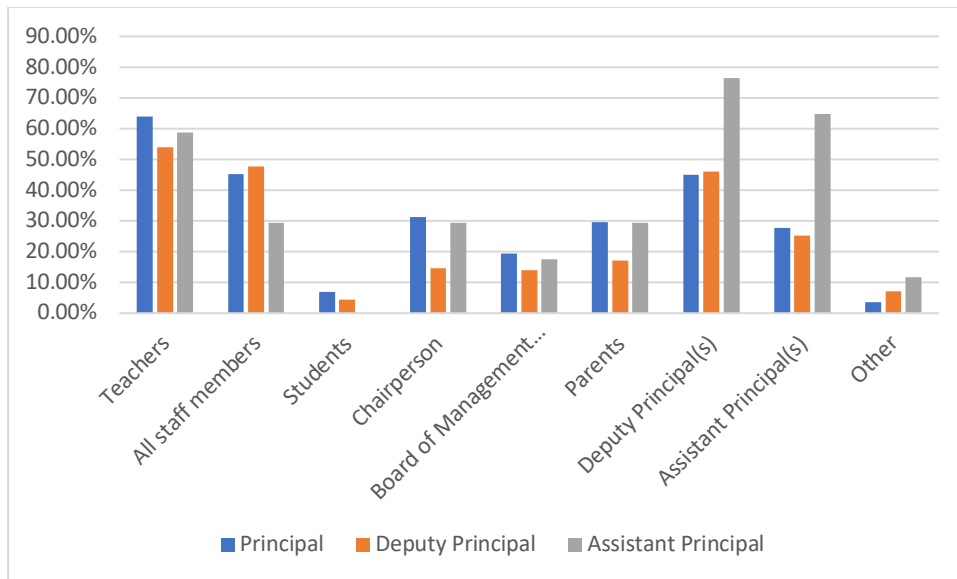


Figure 18. Difference of opinion among leaders as to who was involved in consultation for distance learning.

More Assistant Principals (67.7%, n=11) reported that they were being consulted by Principals when deciding on the distance learning provision than Principals (27.8%, n=75) and Deputy Principals (25.2%, n=179). Similarly, more Assistant Principals reported that Deputy Principals were consulted when making that decision than Principals (44.9%, n=934) and Deputy Principals (46.10%, n=327). However, the number of Assistant Principals is small, therefore these views might not be representative of the entire cohort. Also, there are no major differences of opinion among leaders in relation to other consultations.

#### 5.115 Sample comments

Respondents indicated feeling angry, being unprepared and out-of-depth.

*What? Who heard of distance learning in primary schools a fortnight ago?*

*Distance learning was never mentioned in primary education until after we were closed abruptly in March 2020- it was not discussed at all and no one has training in it.*

*This situation was thrust upon us and teachers are still working through the thought process as to how this can work on a short-term basis. If the situation continues the BOM and Chairperson will need to be consulted further. Guidance from the DES is also required.*

*No previous experience of this so no plan in place. Ideally, would consult with parents, children, etc., but had no time for this.*

*What process? What nonsense. Our staff have no equipment apart from their personal equipment. Our parents in most cases have a phone.*

5.52 Broadband-access considerations

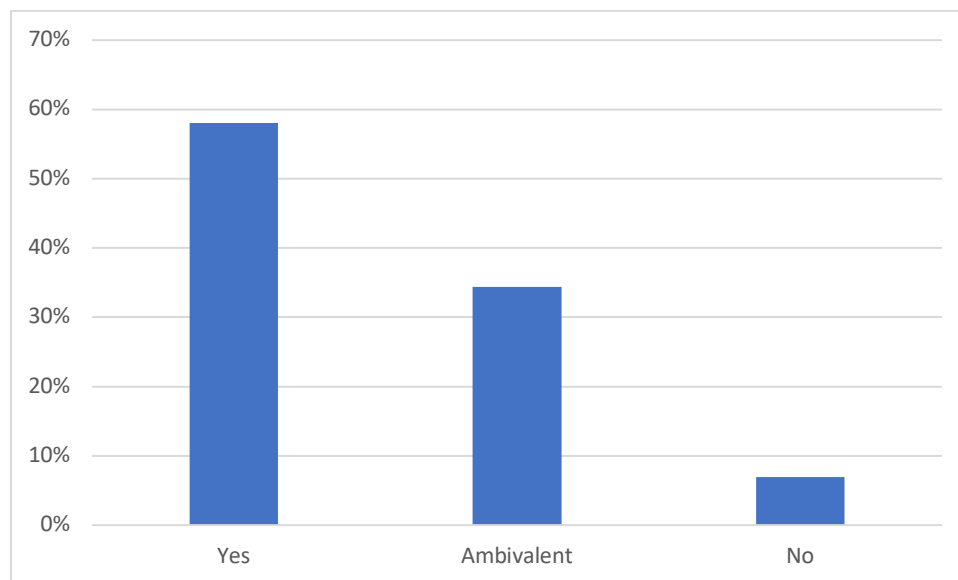
Questions:

In deciding your online/remote/distance learning strategy, have you taken into account the levels of broadband access that your families have available locally to them?

5.521 All schools

	n	Percentage
Yes	1629	58
Ambivalent	965	34.4
No	193	6.9

*Table 13. Percentage of school that considered broadband access when making a decision about a distance learning provision.*



*Figure 19. Percentage of school that considered broadband access when making a decision about a distance learning provision.*

Vast majority of participants (58%, n=1,629) considered whether pupils and teachers have access to broadband before making a decision on the provision of distance learning.

However, 34.4% (n=965) were ambivalent, meaning that broadband was not their main consideration and 6.9% (n=193) did not consider it at all.

5.522 Difference across school types

	Mainstream	Mainstream with special classes	Special school
Yes	1281 59.50%	292 57.30%	56 45.20%
Ambivalent	735 34.10%	182 35.70%	48 38.70%
No	137 6.40%	36 7.10%	20 16.10%

*Table 14. Percentage of the school types that considered broadband access when making a decision about a distance learning provision.*

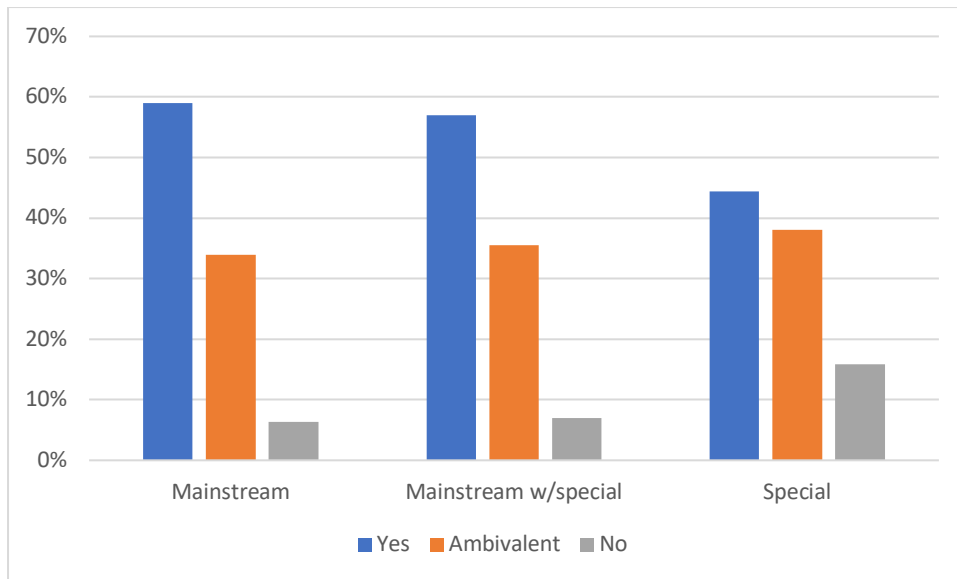


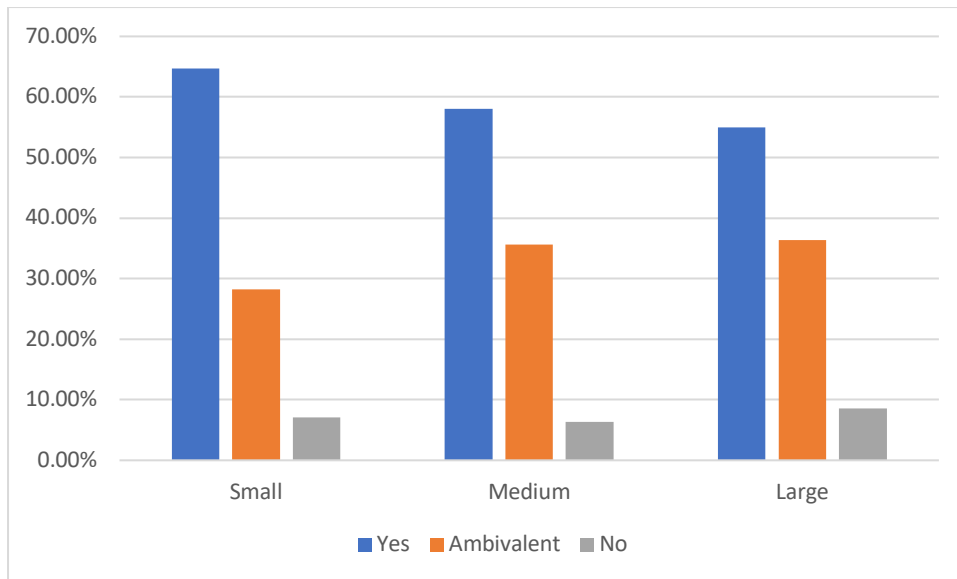
Figure 20. Percentage of the school types that considered broadband access when making a decision about a distance learning provision.

Majority of the Mainstream schools and Mainstream-with-special-classes schools considered broadband access (approx. 60%), whereas Special schools were less likely to do so.

#### 5.523 Difference across school size

	Small	Medium	Large
Yes	282 64.70%	1028 58.00%	319 55.00%
Ambivalent	123 28.20%	631 35.60%	211 36.40%
No	31 7.10%	112 6.30%	50 8.60%

Table 15. Percentage of the school leaders that considered broadband access when making a decision about distance learning provision.



*Figure 21. Percentage of the school leaders that considered broadband access when making a decision about distance learning provision.*

There were no significant differences between school sizes considering broadband access when making a decision about distance learning provision, although there were 65% (n=282) of Small-school leaders who agreed they have done it compared to 58% (n=1,028) of Medium-size leaders and 55% (n=319) of Large-school-size leaders.



5.524 Difference of opinion among school leaders

	Principal	Deputy Principal	Assistant Principal
Yes	1254 60.70%	362 51.40%	13 76.50%
Ambivalent	684 33.10%	278 39.50%	3 17.60%
No	128 6.20%	64 9.10%	1 5.90%

Table 16. Difference of opinion among school leaders in relation to broadband consideration.

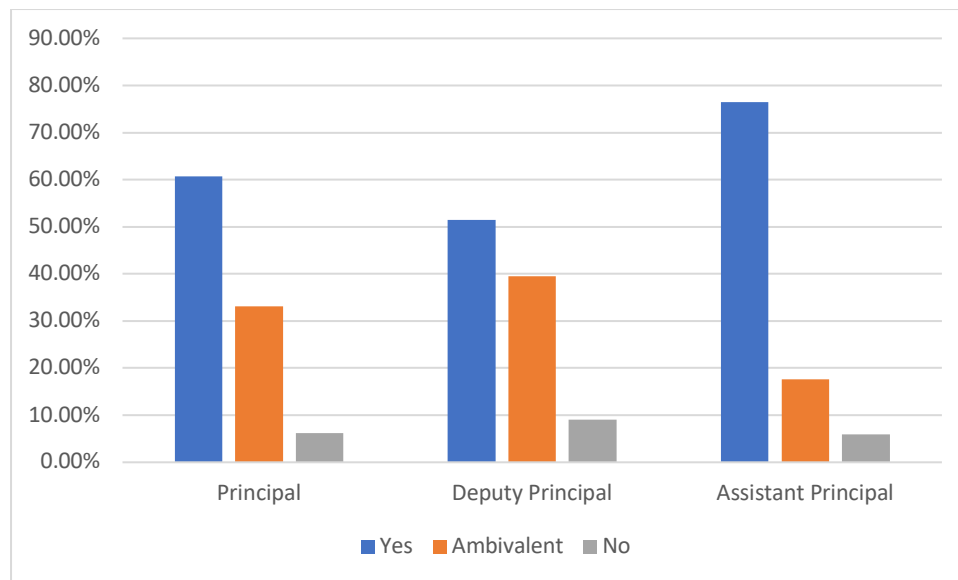


Figure 22. Difference of opinion among school leaders in relation to broadband consideration.

Over 70% of Assistant Principals (76.5%, n=13) agreed that their schools considered broadband access before making a decision about distance learning provision. This compared to 60% of Principals (n=1,254) and 51% of Deputy Principals (n=365).

### 5.53 Arrangement in place

Question:

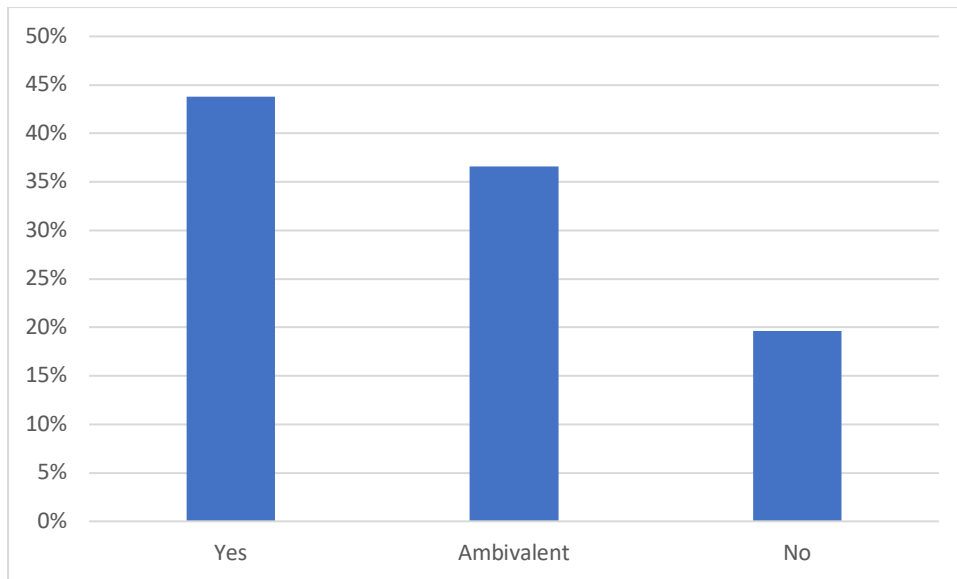
Has your school put in place an arrangement for teachers to interact with pupils?

Please specify.

#### 5.531 All schools

	n	Percentage
Yes	1231	43.8
Somewhat	1027	36.6
No	550	19.6

*Table 17. Provision of an arrangement for teacher-pupil interaction during school closure.*



*Figure 23. Provision of an arrangement for teacher-pupil interaction during school closure.*

Almost half of the participants (44%, n=1231) reported that there is an arrangement put in place in their school for teachers to interact with pupils. However, 36.6% (n=1,027) were ambivalent, meaning that it may have been created organically, rather than as a conscious effort to establish standards. Of the entire sample, 1 in 5 participants reported no arrangement being put in place for teachers to interact with pupils during the school closure. Therefore, for this group of people, such an interaction is either ad hoc or non-existent.

5.532 Difference across school types

	Mainstream	Mainstream with special classes	Special school
Yes	900 41.50%	260 50.80%	71 56.30%
Ambivalent	820 37.80%	177 34.60%	30 23.80%
No	450 20.70%	75 14.60%	25 19.80%

Table 18. Provision of an arrangement for teacher-pupil interaction during school closure across school types.

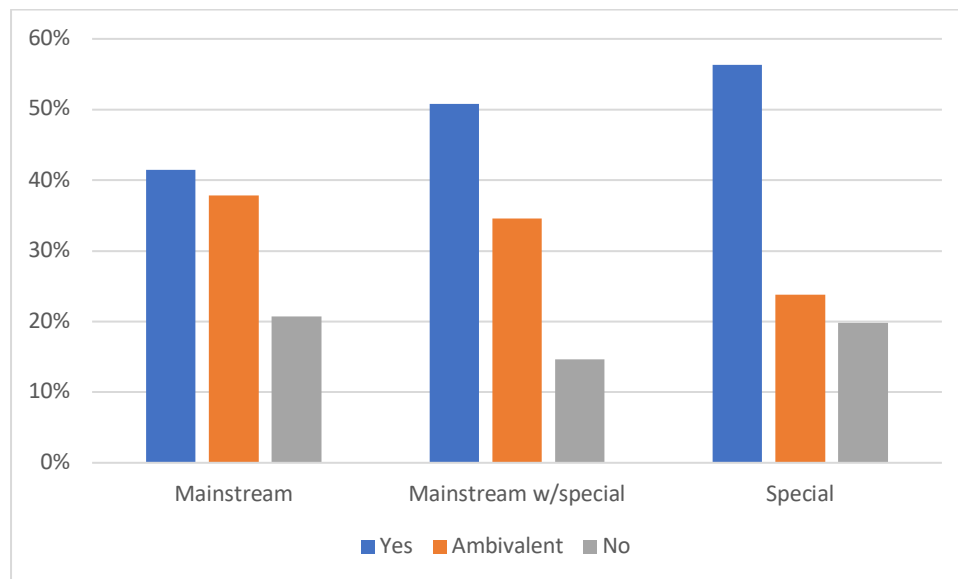


Figure 24. Provision of an arrangement for teacher-pupil interaction during school closure across school types.

Special schools had the highest number of participants (56.3%, n=71) who reported they have made arrangements for teachers to interact with pupils during school closure. However, at the same time, 1 in 5 special schools have made no arrangements at all for their students (19.8%, n=25%). Mainstream schools with special classes had the lowest percentage of non-arrangement in relation to teacher-pupil interaction (14.6%, n=75).

5.533 Difference across school size

	Small	Medium	Large
Yes	175 40.00%	777 43.50%	279 47.90%
Ambivalent	155 35.40%	663 37.10%	209 35.80%
No	108 24.70%	347 19.40%	95 16.30%

*Table 19. Provision of an arrangement for teacher-pupil interaction during school closure across school size.*

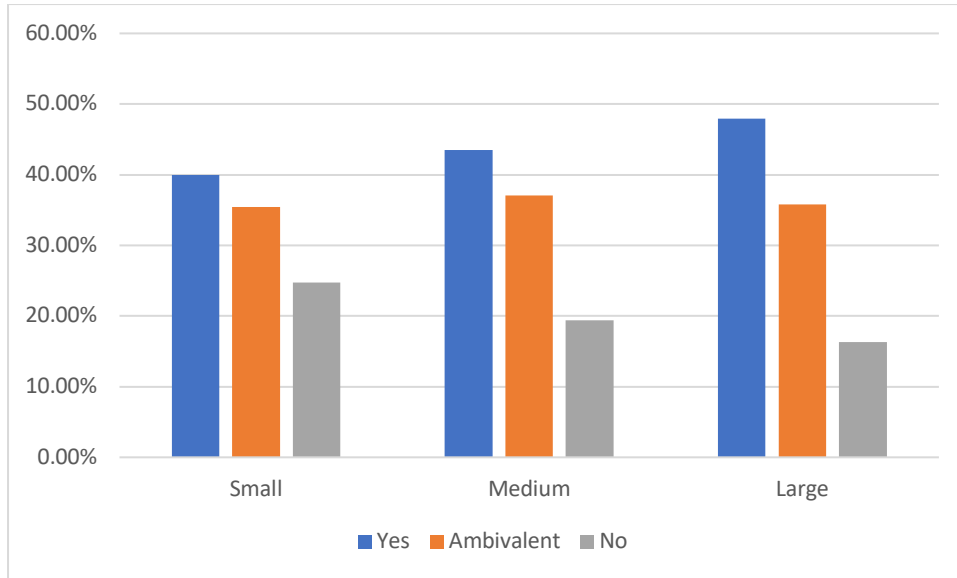


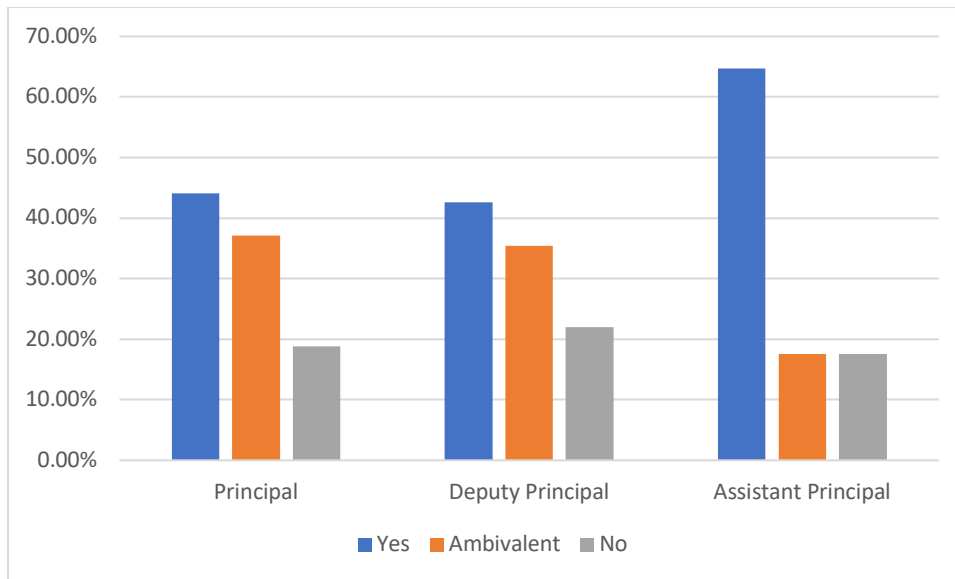
Figure 25. Table 20. Provision of an arrangement for teacher-pupil interaction during school closure across school size.

There are no significant differences across the groups.

#### 5.534 Difference of opinion among school leaders

	Principal	Deputy Principal	Assistant Principal
Yes	918	302	11
	44.10%	42.60%	64.70%
Ambivalent	773	251	3
	37.10%	35.40%	17.60%
No	391	156	3
	18.80%	22.00%	17.60%

Table 21. Difference of leaders' opinion regarding the provision of an arrangement for teacher-pupil interaction during school closure.



*Figure 26. Difference of leaders' opinion regarding the provision of an arrangement for teacher-pupil interaction during school closure.*

Principals' and Deputy Principals' responses were similar with each other. However, over 20% more Assistant Principals than the other leaders agreed that a provision was put in place for teacher-pupil interaction during school closure.

#### 5.54 Provision success

##### *5.541 Summary*

Respondents were asked how they will know whether the provisions put in place are a success. The general, the response to this question can be summed up by an ethic of care for pupils, families and communities. Schools are doing what they can to get feedback but do not want this to be another burden they put on the care giver who is supporting distance learning. In addition, the issues around the digital divide in homes are clear in some responses where some schools can give laptops to students, while other are relying on learning packs being posted out to parents. The survey was conducted before access to school buildings was

removed, thus this approach is no longer feasible. It is a work in progress. On analysis of this large dataset it was impressive how far the thinking and work had advanced ten days into this crisis. The resilience and determination of our school leaders, communities and educators [teachers and care givers] was impressive. In all data, the ethic of care for the child was evident. Many teachers and leaders are using their own resources such as personal phone, to follow up with families in their community, with weekly calls to care givers and students. The role of the HSCL person in DEIS schools cannot be underestimated. Their voice is absent from these data; however, they are mentioned many times in the data.

#### *5.542 Emerging themes*

Open responses to this question fall under the following themes:

- Need to communicate with parents
- Feedback through online platforms such as SeeSaw
- A work in progress

#### *5.543 Sample quotes*

- Need to communicate with parents

This question was challenging for most respondents who said it was a work in progress.

Others provided some details on what they were doing. The main theme emerging was the need to have communication with parents. Some schools are more advanced than others.

*We have already completed staff, parent and pupil questionnaires to decide direction we will take. We will continue to develop our practices and monitor engagement levels. We will seek regular feedback from the school community. We will track non- engagement and follow up.*



*We will prioritise interventions for identified "at risk" groups. Work within community to try and support families most at risk.*

*We have reiterated again and again to parents that children's happiness is the most important thing.*

*I am in contact with parents through Google Classroom and have spoken to most parents through email and phone*

*To support parents to support students. All students are keeping a diary of some description at their level which we will use as a learning tool when we return to school. We have given the option of taking a picture of work completed and sending to teachers for feedback, but this is just an option. We are mindful of not putting too much pressure and too many mandates on already stressed parents.*

*We have some feedback from parents to say that they appreciate our work.1. Each morning we post on school website 2. we use class dojo to try to keep communication with pupils/parents. Our focus is to preserve communication with staff, pupils, parents. ISM team meeting, via Zoom, which is great, divided up whole staff into teams, each ISM member calls staff members each week to check in on them. We rotate teams each week.*

*Aladdin Connect can provide individual teachers with feedback but a whole-school approach has not been structured as yet.*

- Feedback through work submitted via an online platform

*Based on a lesson that they accessed through remote learning - the teacher teaching the work by audio file, the pupils listening, recording their work, completing algorithms, getting feedback on that work the following day...?*

*Teachers are giving feedback to children. Also, when children return teachers will get a sense if work was covered and any progress made.*

*We are using SeeSaw app. All children have personal code they upload all work and it is corrected by teachers daily.*

*Have had some feedback from parents that the schoolwork is helping structure the day for parents and children at home and that this is helpful. Parents haven't communicated that they are worried about new learning yet.*

*Parent and pupil feedback, teacher feedback through their observations of pupil work and professional analysis of pupil performance when they return. Comparison of test results from previous years.*

*We have asked for feedback from parents on a weekly basis and have asked for photos and typed samples of children's work. We will also be back to track their progress in completed tasks on study ladder and readtheory.*

*We have already received a great deal of positive feedback by email. Email is key, we felt that a considerable amount of suggested activities should be offline but communicated by*

*email - so that a parent with a phone (if this is the only available device) could read off the assigned work.*

*We are liaising with parents as best we can through several social media accounts which are very much used in our community. Email is rarely used. We got almost 50% uptake on books pack collection yesterday and we are giving suggestions via website/Twitter/Komeer/Facebook to get your as many families as possible.*

*Assessing how the work is completed and the understanding of pupils is something we are aware will we struggle to fully establish. The number of families who complete the work set will give us some information, but we are advising parents to consider the schoolwork as optional as we do not want to overwhelm parents at this difficult time, particularly parents who are working in health care.*

*Some of the programs we use have given us a record of what the children have been working on & we will see copies after we return to school. Plus, we have set up a separate email if children want to get in touch with us.... all depending on their internet connection.*

- A work in progress

*No idea. The children need safety and love. They need calm and reassurance. Their parents need to feel success. Home schooling is not about pupils and genuine learning, it is to help parents feel reassured and meaningful. How do you measure that as a success?*

*It will be very difficult...some students & parents will engage fully; others will engage partially, and some will not be able to fully engage even if they wanted to due to lack of broadband/devices.*

*We don't really know. We can only provide work and guidance, but parents are under too many other pressures to expect work returned completed online.*

*We have asked parents to send photos/emails of children's work but with everything going on it is difficult to know what is going on for any family in the school community, so we just have to hope for the best and provide as much support as possible. All we can do as a staff is our best.*

*Well it's still a work in progress. But many parents are regularly emailing, letting us know how they are getting on. We're also in contact by phone. I have the school mobile, but my colleagues have requested parents' phone numbers and are calling parents on their own phones, on their own initiative. I would hope that we know that it will have been successful when all this is over. e.g. are the 6th class pupils able to complete a correct algebra test... Feedback from parents and pupils. To date there has been a poor feedback on interactive platforms due to lack of equipment at home.*

*We have asked parents to email us with feedback, but it is of limited value as most parents are not familiar with the curriculum or do not understand assessment to make a judgement on whether a child has reached any learning objectives.*

*We won't really. We are only giving ideas and suggestions to parents and are cognisant of the pressure many families are under so while we are trying to accommodate all we can only make suggestions and hope that most will engage.*

*Feedback from parents so far has been very positive. They can see we are trying our best. Again, very unfair question. This is an unprecedented time. We do not know if the measures put in place will work or fail but all we can do is our best. The stress of feeling inadequate is very unfair. Each school knows their pupil/parent body and make an informed choice to do what they think is best. Remember the parents are also working from home too.*

*All we can do is provide support to pupils and parents at this very difficult time for everyone. We want our school community to know that we are all in this together and acknowledge that it's a very difficult time for everyone.*

*We won't know until this is all over and we can talk to our parent body properly again. If it continues for long more, we may send out a survey monkey to gauge how well people are managing.*

*We don't. Many families have not engaged with online learning. Many are finding it very difficult as parents/older siblings need to use the house laptop/device to work from home on. Most don't have fibre broadband. We did send homework with the children on the last day, however we did not have much time to think about what we were sending home as we were all teaching when the announcement was made.*

## 5.2 Capacity

### 5.21 Rationale for provision

Question:

What is the primary reason as to why the school is putting provisions in place?

#### 5.211 All schools

	n	%
To support pupils	2172	77.4
To support parents	493	17.6
To ensure teachers remain engaged	43	1.5
Other	100	3.6

Table 22. The rationale for provision of distance learning in all schools.

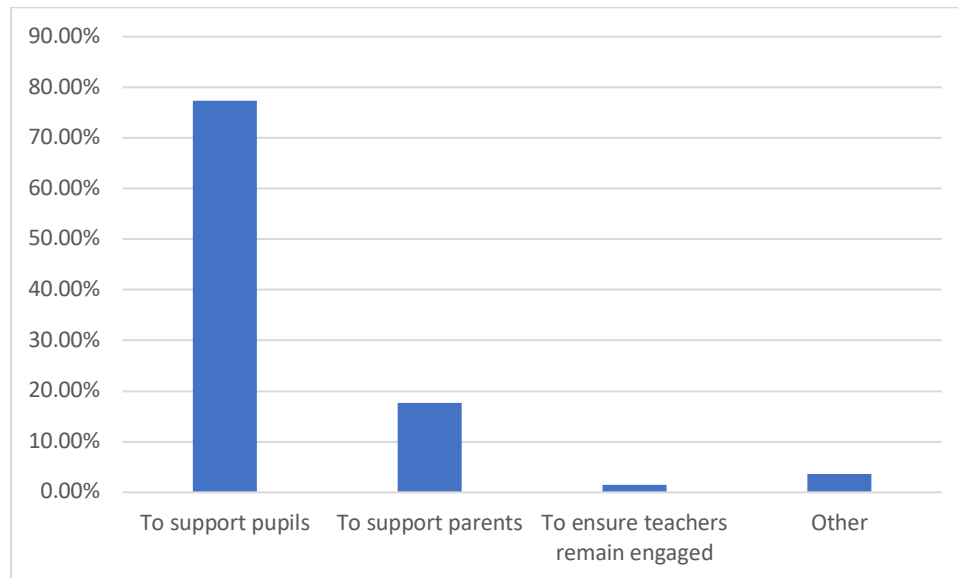


Figure 27. The rationale for provision of distance learning in all schools.

The main reason as to why provisions have been put in place was to support pupils (77.4%, n=2,172), followed by supporting parents (17.6%, n=493). From the entire sample, 1.5% of

leaders (n=43) said that the main reason for provision was to ensure that teachers remain engaged and 3.6% (n=100) reported “other” reasons.

5.212 Difference across school type

	Mainstream	Mainstream with special classes	Special
To support pupils	1700 78.30%	404 78.90%	68 54.00%
To support parents	363 16.70%	81 15.80%	49 38.90%
To ensure teachers remain engaged	31 1.40%	8 1.60%	4 3.20%
Other	76 3.50%	19 3.70%	5 4.00%

*Table 23. Differences in rationale for putting in place distance learning provision across school types.*

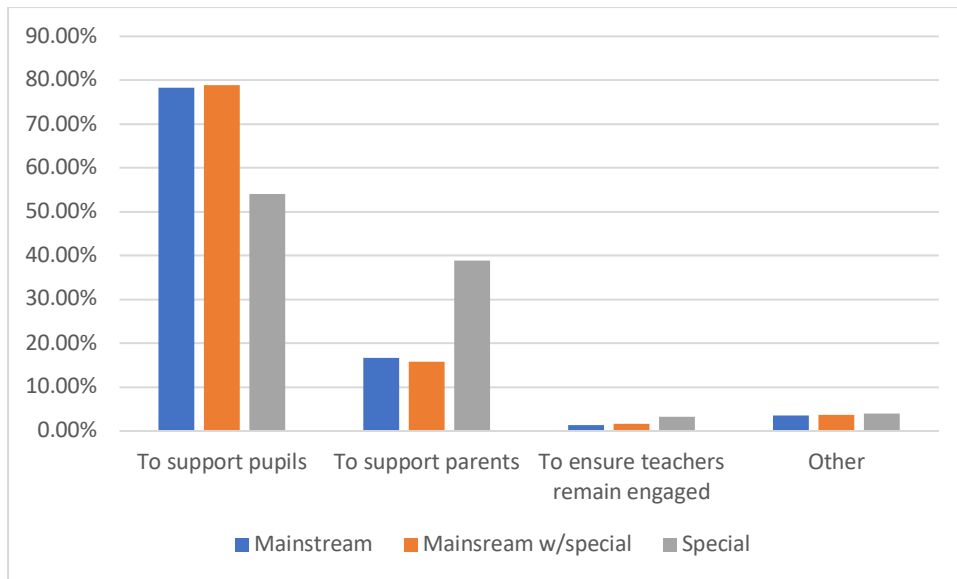


Figure 28. Difference in rationale for putting in place distance learning provision across school types.

Special schools (39%) were more likely to put in place distance learning provision to support parents than Mainstream (16.7%, n=363) or Mainstream-with-special-class schools (15.8%, n=81). The Mainstream-type schools were more likely to introduce the provision to support pupils (78%).



5.213 Difference across school size

	Small	Medium	Large
To support pupils	346	1363	463
	79.00%	76.30%	79.40%
To support parents	71	333	89
	16.20%	18.60%	15.30%
To ensure teachers remain engaged	9	25	9
	2.10%	1.40%	1.50%
Other	12	66	22
	2.70%	3.70%	3.80%

Table 24. Difference in rationale for putting in place distance learning provision across school size

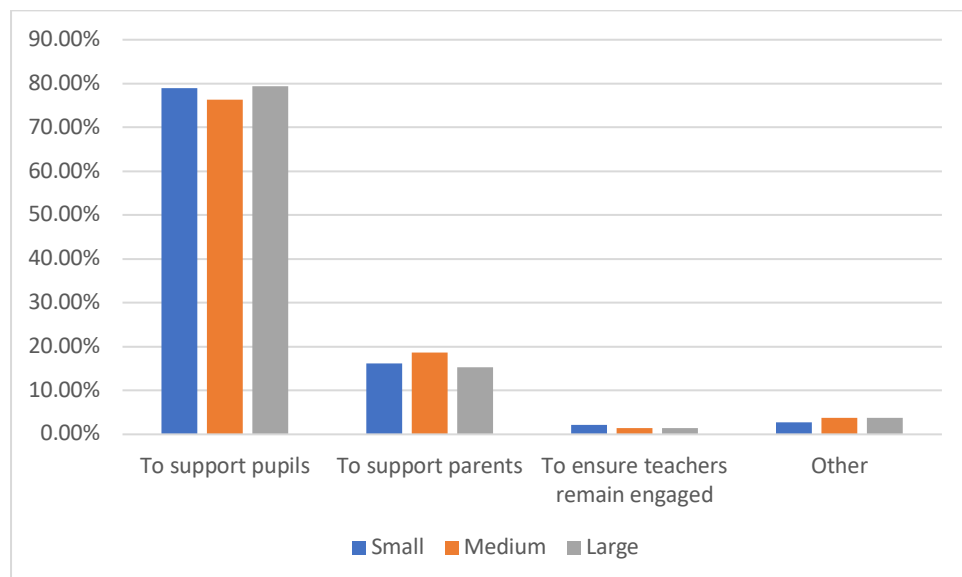


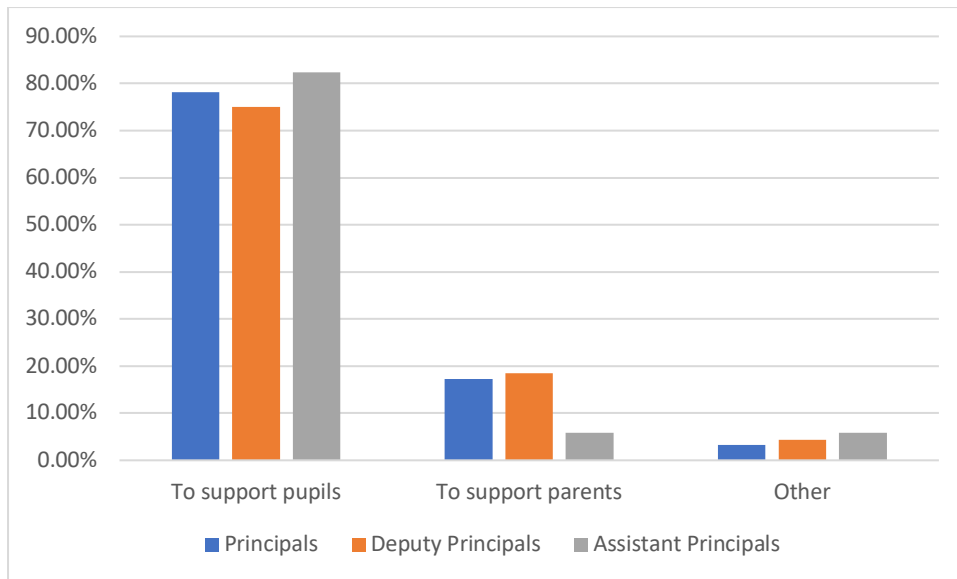
Figure 29. Difference in rationale for putting in place distance learning provision across school size

There are no significant differences found between various school sizes.

## 5.214 Difference of opinion among school leaders

	Principals	Deputy Principals	Assistant Principals
To support pupils	1626	532	14
	78.10%	75.00%	82.40%
To support parents	361	131	1
	17.30%	18.50%	5.90%
To ensure teachers remain engaged	27	15	1
	1.30%	2.10%	5.90%
Other	68	31	1
	3.30%	4.40%	5.90%

*Table 25. Difference in school leaders' opinion about the rationale for putting in place distance learning provision*



*Figure 30. Difference in school leaders’ opinion about the rationale for putting in place distance learning provision*

There are no significant differences of opinion among school leaders.

#### 5.215 Comments about “other” reasons for putting provisions in place

##### 5.2151 Emerging quotes

Open responses to this question fall under the following themes:

- Supporting the school community
- External pressures
- Keeping connected
- No engagement with students
- Uncertain about the reasons for distance learning provision
- Keeping a routine going

## 5.2151 Sample quotes

- Supporting the school community (65% of comments)

*To support our whole school community - parents, pupils and staff.*

*To support all three of the above. Without considering all, anything we send will be ineffective and obsolete*

*To support all of the above and to provide a small amount of normality and consistency in such uncertain times.*

- External pressure
  - from parents

*There's huge pressure from groups online I see where parents chat stating their school doing this and another school only sending sheets home...*

*Pressure from what might be expected by parents (even though a high percentage haven't engaged to date). Seeing what other schools are doing.*

*I think there is pressure from parents to keep children occupied!*

- from DES

*Pressure from DES*

*Try to meet vague requirements of the Dept. Also, so that teachers are not seen to be at home and doing nothing.*

*Again, we have received no directive from the department.*

- from others

*We feel we have to due to media hype*

*As requested by the Taoiseach to ensure pupils remain engaged at some level*

- Keeping connected

*Keep the contact between home and school*

*To keep connected with each other as a staff, to support each other and to try go on in our 'new normal'*

*To keep the channels of communication open and to preserve the very good relationship we have with our families*

- No engagement with students

*We don't have provisions*

*We are not engaging in online tuition Our principal made this decision autonomously*

*We're not putting provisions in place due to lack of broadband and lack of teacher IT skills including myself*

- Uncertain about the reasons for provision

*If I'm honest I don't know!! everyone else appeared to be doing it.*

*I'm not sure that we are at that point yet.*

*We don't think we should*

- Keep a routine for pupils

*To support pupils and families and to create a routine in these unprecedented times*

5.22 Digital divide

Question:  
Is there a 'digital divide' in your school-catchment area?

5.221 All schools

	n	%
Yes	1092	38.9
No	461	16.4
I don't know	1255	44.7

Table 26. Digital divide in school-catchment areas across all schools.

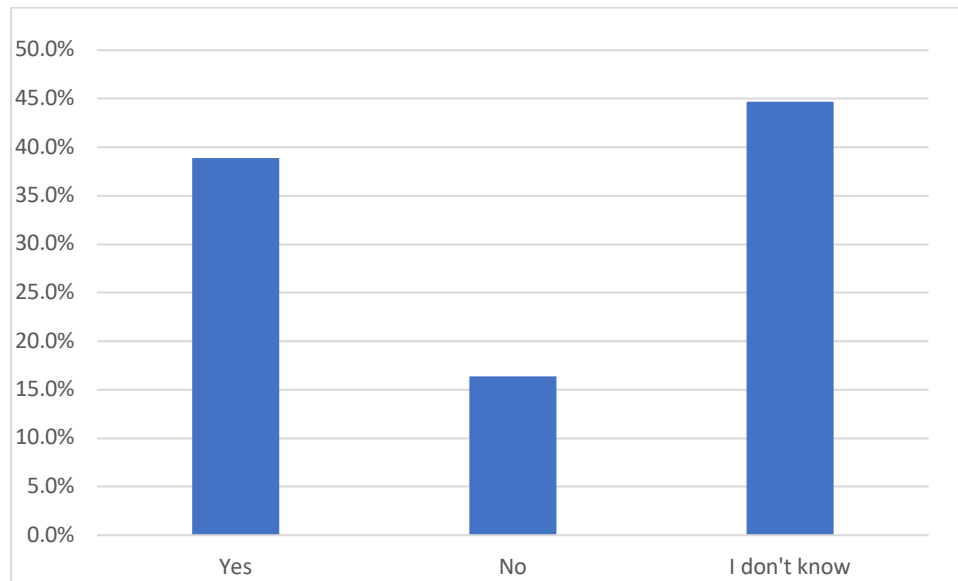


Figure 31. Digital divide in school-catchment areas across all schools.

Most of the participants did not know whether there was a digital divide in their school-catchment area (44.7%, n=1,255). However, 38.9% (n=1,092) agreed that indeed a digital divide existed in their school.

5.222 Difference across school type

		Mainstream with special		
		Mainstream	classes	Special school
Yes	n	835	218	39
	%	38.50%	42.60%	31.00%
No	n	374	71	16
	%	17.20%	13.90%	12.70%
I don't know	n	961	223	71
	%	44.30%	43.60%	56.30%

Table 27. Difference in digital divide across various school types.

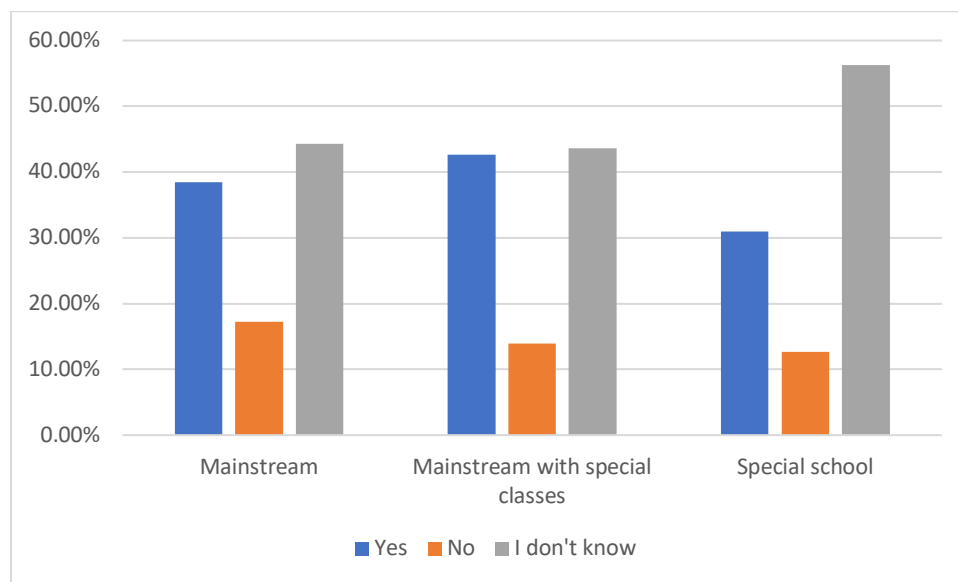


Figure 32. Difference in digital divide across various school types.

There are differences between the percentage of school leaders' agreement that there is a digital divide in schools of different types. Specifically, 38.5% (n=835) of Mainstream leaders and 42.6% (n=218) of Mainstream-with-special-classes leaders reported a digital

divide in their school, however, only 31% (n=39) of Special-school leaders were certain about the divide.

5.223 Difference across school size

		Small	Medium	Large
Yes	n	170	721	201
	%	38.80%	40.30%	34.50%
No	n	68	273	120
	%	15.50%	15.30%	20.60%
I don't know	n	200	793	262
	%	45.70%	44.40%	44.90%

Table 28. Difference in digital divide across various school size.

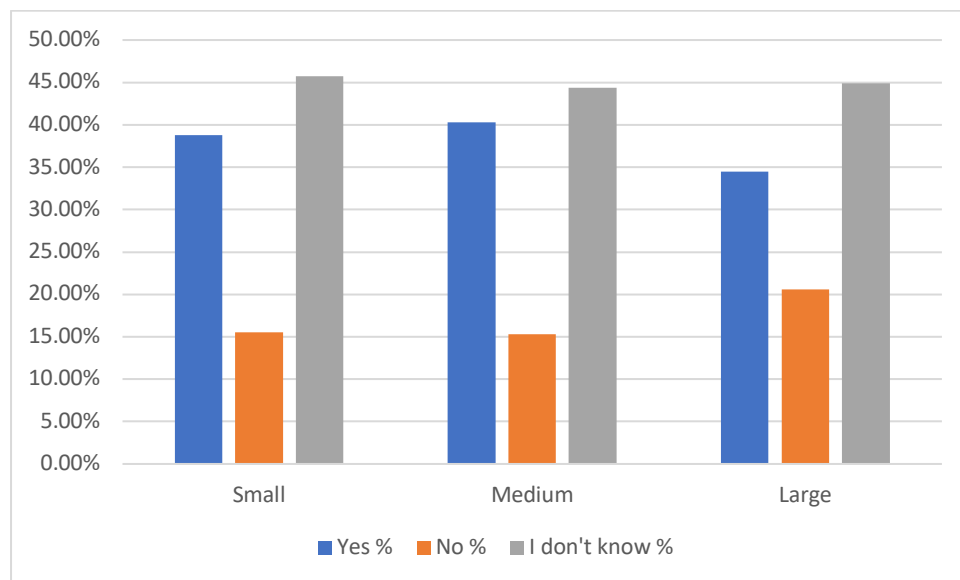


Figure 33. Difference in digital divide across various school size.

There are no significant differences between groups.



5.224 Difference of opinion between school leaders

		Principal	Deputy Principal	Assistant Principal
Yes	n	861	227	4
	%	41.40%	32.00%	23.50%
No	n	334	123	4
	%	16.00%	17.30%	23.50%
I don't know	n	887	359	9
	%	42.60%	50.60%	52.90%

Table 29. Difference of opinion among leaders in relation to the digital divide in their schools.

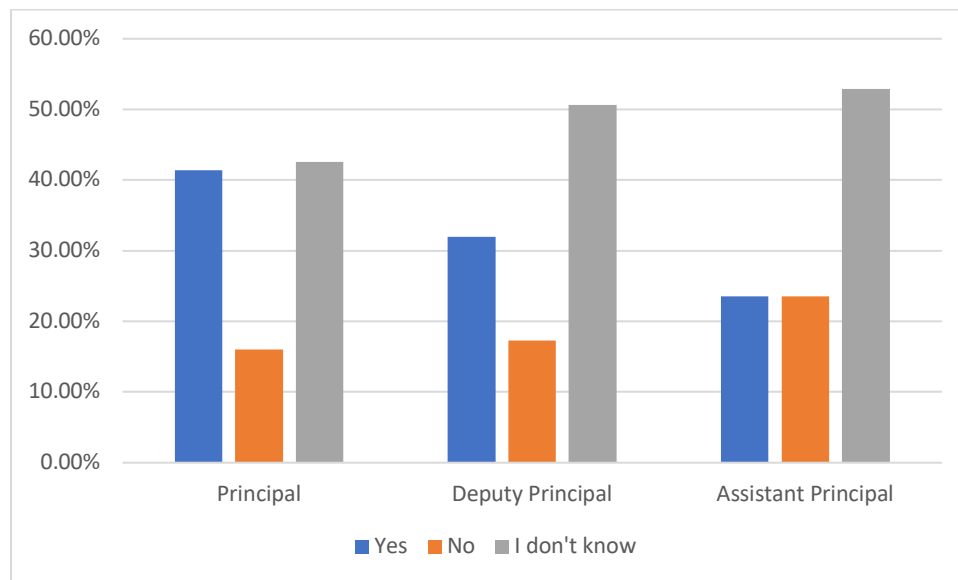


Figure 34. Difference of opinion among leaders in relation to the digital divide in their schools.

More Principals than Deputy or Assistant Principals agreed that there is a digital divide in their schools. Also, fewer Principals were unaware of such a divide than Deputy and Assistant Principals. Therefore, this may be an indication that Principals might be privy to more information about the divide than their team.

### 5.23 Pupils' broadband access

Questions:

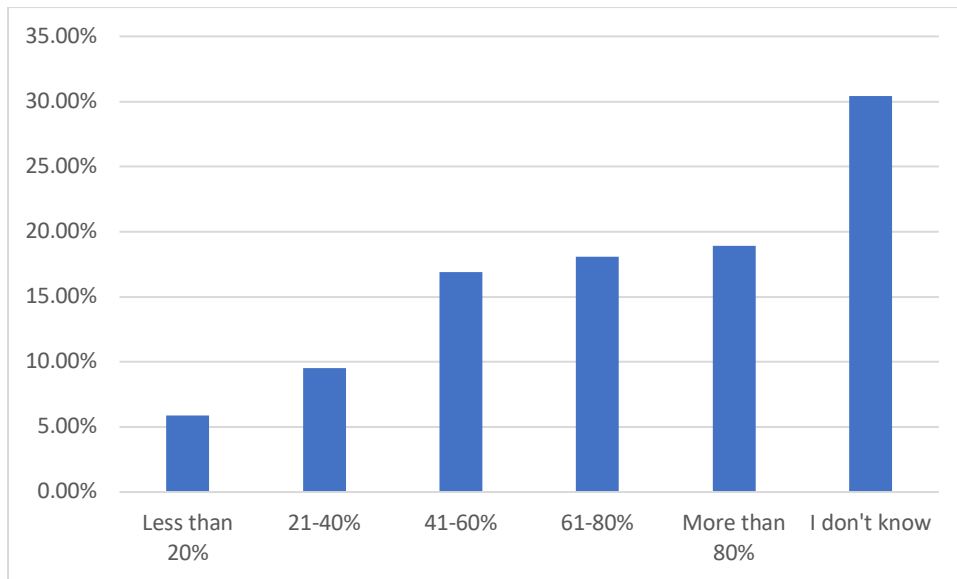
To the best of your knowledge, how many pupils in your school have access to laptop/tablet/screen for learning at home?

To the best of your knowledge, what percentage of pupils in your school have access to broadband to engage effectively with distance learning?

#### 5.231 All schools

	n	%
Less than 20%	166	5.9
21-40%	267	9.5
41-60%	474	16.9
61-80%	509	18.1
More than 80%	532	18.9
I don't know	853	30.4

*Table 30. Pupils' access to broadband.*



*Figure 35. Pupils' access to broadband.*

According to almost 20% (n=532) of school leaders more than 80% of their pupils have access to broadband. Further 18.1% (n=509) reported that between 60 to 80% of their pupils can access broadband to engage effectively with distance learning and 16.9% (n=474) have between 40-60% of pupils with access to broadband. This means that majority of pupils have access to broadband, where it is known.

## 5.232 Difference across school type

		Mainstream with		
		Mainstream	special classes	Special
Less than 20%	n	130	27	9
	%	6.00%	5.30%	7.10%
21-40%	n	212	49	6
	%	9.80%	9.60%	4.80%
41-60%	n	375	85	14
	%	17.30%	16.60%	11.10%
61-80%	n	397	93	19
	%	18.30%	18.20%	15.10%
More than				
80%	n	413	94	25
	%	19.10%	18.40%	19.80%
I don't know	n	637	163	53
	%	29.40%	31.90%	42.10%

*Table 31. Difference in pupils' access to broadband across various school types.*

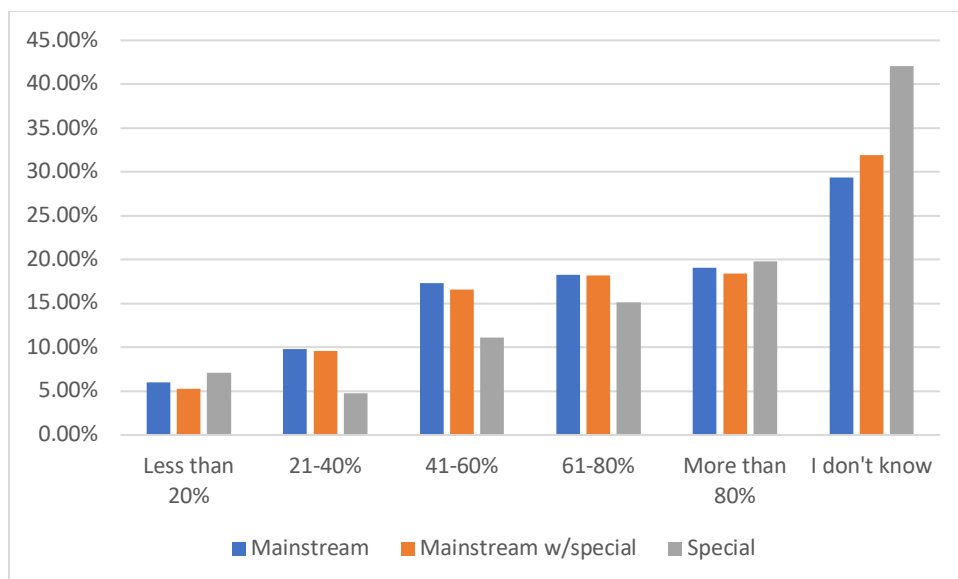


Figure 36. Difference in pupils' access to broadband across various school types.

Higher number of Special-school leaders did not know their pupils' access to broadband. At the same time, 30-37% of leaders across all three types of schools, where known, reported that most of their pupils have access to broadband.

### 5.233 Difference across school size

		Small	Medium	Large
Less than 20%	n	130	27	9
	%	6.00%	5.30%	7.10%
21-40%	n	212	49	6
	%	9.80%	9.60%	4.80%
41-60%	n	375	85	14
	%	17.30%	16.60%	11.10%
61-80%	n	397	93	19
	%	18.30%	18.20%	15.10%

More than 80%	n	413	94	25
	%	19.10%	18.40%	19.80%
I don't know	n	637	163	53
	%	29.40%	31.90%	42.10%

Table 32. Difference in pupils' access to broadband across various school size.

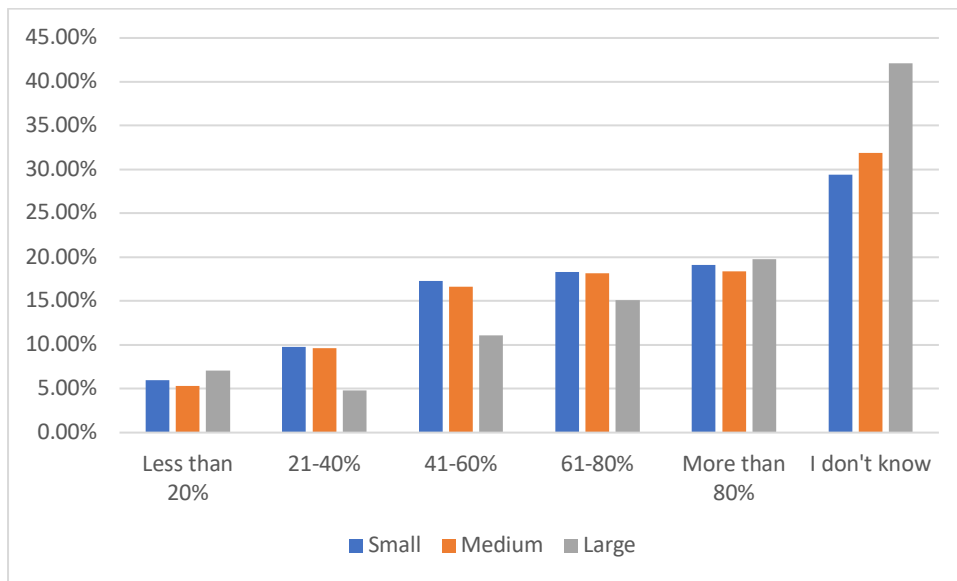


Figure 37. Difference in pupils' access to broadband across various school size.

There are similar results across all school sizes showing that majority of pupils have access to broadband. Small differences were found in the percentage leaders who did not know the answer to this question. Specifically, fewer leaders of small schools showed lack of knowledge in this area than medium and larger schools. Also, 29% of large school leaders reported a fewer number of pupils not being able to access broadband.

## 5.234 Difference of opinion among leaders

	Principals	Deputy Principals	Assistant Principals
Less than			
20%	131	35	0
	6.30%	4.90%	0.00%
21-40%	213	54	0
	10.30%	7.60%	0.00%
41-60%	360	114	0
	17.30%	16.10%	0.00%
61-80%	388	114	7
	18.70%	16.10%	41.20%
More than			
80%	380	149	3
	18.30%	21.00%	17.60%
I don't know	604	242	7
	29.10%	34.20%	41.20%

Table 33. Difference of opinion among leaders about pupils' broadband access.

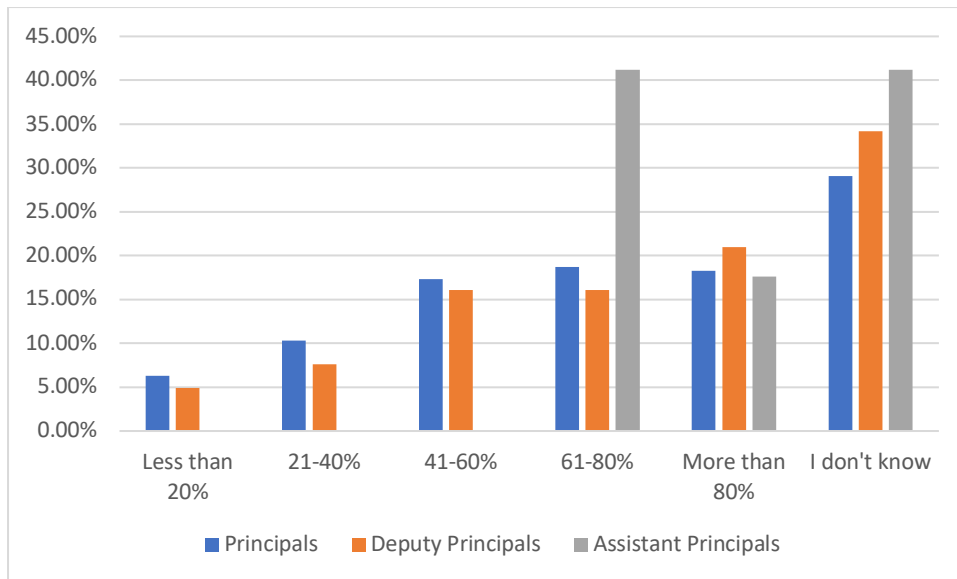


Figure 38. Difference of opinion among leaders about pupils' broadband access.

Principals and Deputy Principals seemed more aware of pupils' lack of access to broadband than Assistant Principals who scored higher in the category "I don't know" (41.2%, n=7) and 61-80% (41.2%, n=7) of students having access to broadband. Given the small number of Assistant Principals responding to the survey, the 'wisdom of crowd' is more likely to come through in Principals' and Deputy Principals' answers.

#### 5.24 Student access to computing devices

##### Question

To the best of your knowledge, what percentage of pupils have access to computing devices, e.g. PC, laptop, tablet, Chromebook, smartphone, to engage effectively with distance learning?



5.241 All schools

	n	%
Less than 20%	140	5
21-40%	274	9.8
41-60%	501	17.8
61-80%	577	20.5
More than 80%	688	24.5
I don't know	628	22.4

Table 34. Pupils' access to computing devices.

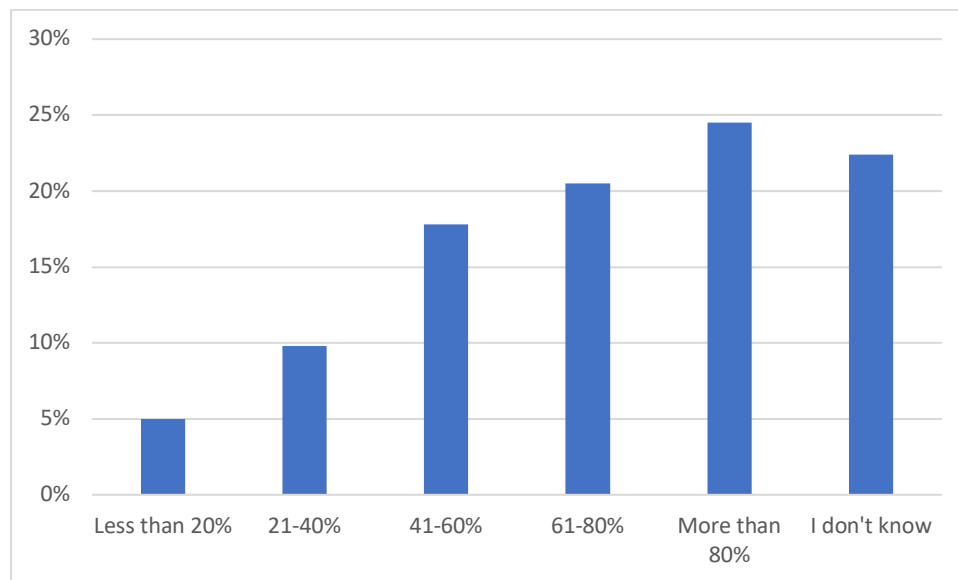


Figure 39. Pupils' access to computing devices.

According to school leaders, most of the students have access to computing devices, however over 22% were unsure about it.

## 5.242 Difference across school type

	Mainstream with special		
	Mainstream classes	Special	
Less than			
20%	105 4.80%	23 4.50%	12 9.50%
21-40%	212 9.80%	47 9.20%	15 11.90%
41-60%	384 17.70%	96 18.80%	21 16.70%
61-80%	473 21.80%	94 18.40%	10 7.90%
More than			
80%	537 24.70%	120 23.40%	31 24.60%
I don't know	459 21.20%	132 25.80%	37 29.40%

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Table 35. Differences in access to computing devices across school types.

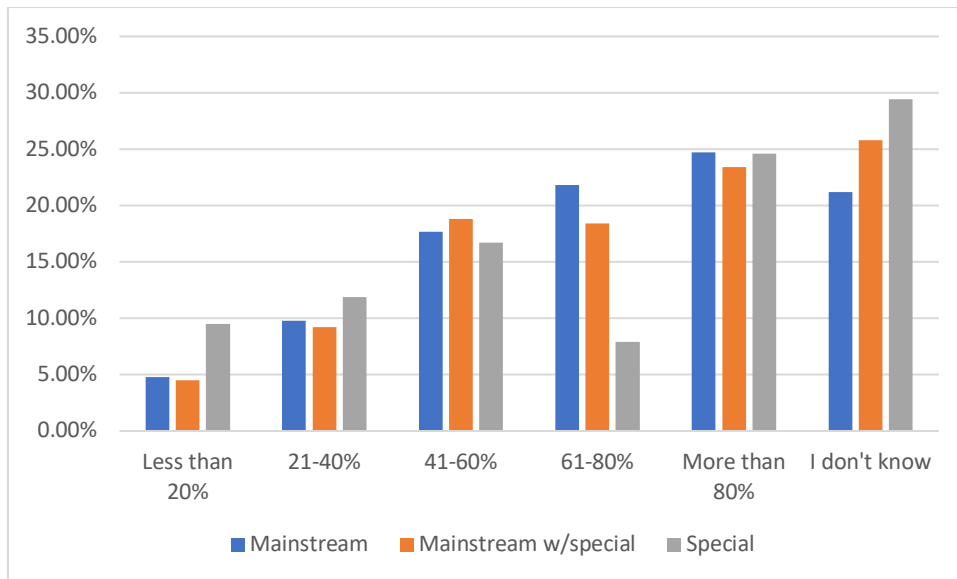


Figure 40. Differences in access to computing devices across school types.

The percentages across school types are similar except for the category of 61-80% in which the Special schools showed the lowest prevalence (7.9%, n=10). However, given that they also score slightly higher in the “I don’t know” category, (29.4%, n=37) the difference is not that significant.

5.243 Difference across school size

	Small	Medium	Large
Less than 20%	37 8.40%	87 4.90%	16 2.70%
21-40%	55 12.60%	181 10.10%	38 6.50%
41-60%	85 19.40%	327 18.30%	89 15.30%
61-80%	69	378	130

	15.80%	21.20%	22.30%
More than			
80%	124	407	157
	28.30%	22.80%	26.90%
I don't know	68	407	153
	15.50%	22.80%	26.20%

Table 36. Differences in access to computing devices across school size.

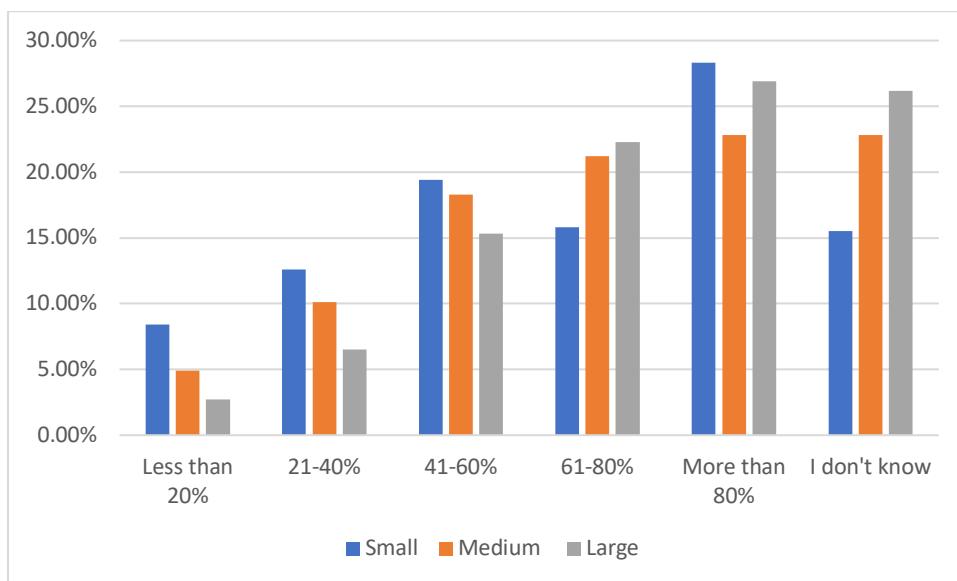


Figure 41. Differences in access to computing devices across school size.

There are no significant differences in access to computing devices across school size.

## 5.244 Difference of opinion among leaders

	Principal	Deputy Principal	Assistant Principal
Less than			
20%	110	30	0
	5.30%	4.20%	0.00%
21-40%	218	56	0
	10.50%	7.90%	0.00%
41-60%	385	115	1
	18.50%	16.20%	5.90%
61-80%	429	142	6
	20.60%	20.00%	35.30%
More than			
80%	498	187	3
	23.90%	26.40%	17.60%
I don't know	442	179	7
	21.20%	25.20%	41.20%

Table 37. Difference of opinion among leaders in access to computing devices.

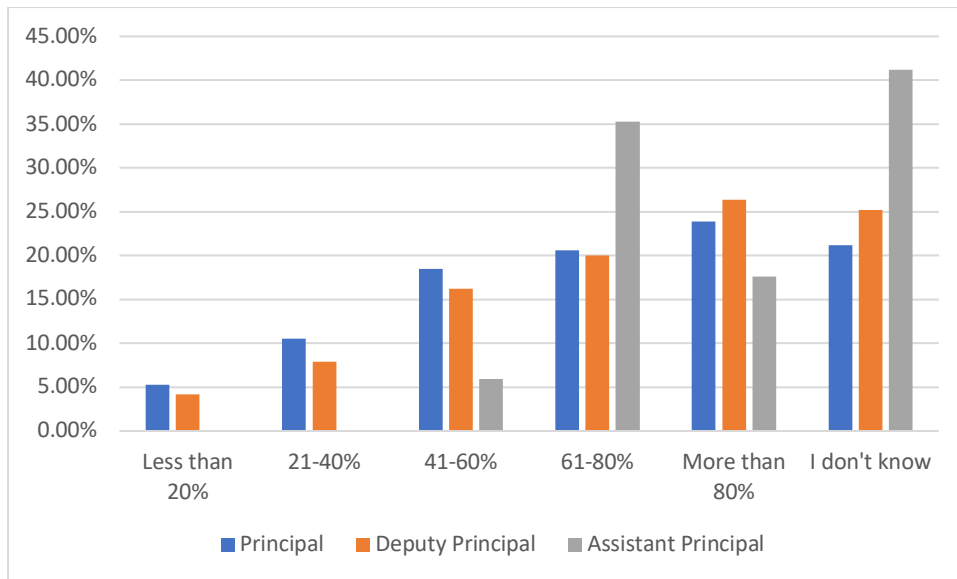


Figure 42. Difference of opinion among leaders in access to computing devices.

No significant differences were found between Principals and Deputy Principals, however double the number of Assistant Principals did not know if students have access to computing devices than the other leaders.

### 5.25 Teacher access to broadband

Question:

To the best of your knowledge, what percentage of teachers have access to broadband to engage effectively with distance learning?

5.251 All schools

	n	%
<b>Less than</b>		
20%	51	1.8
21-40%	92	3.3
41-60%	260	9.3
61-80%	453	16.1
<b>More than</b>		
80%	1704	60.7
I don't know	248	8.8

Table 38. Teacher access to broadband for all schools.

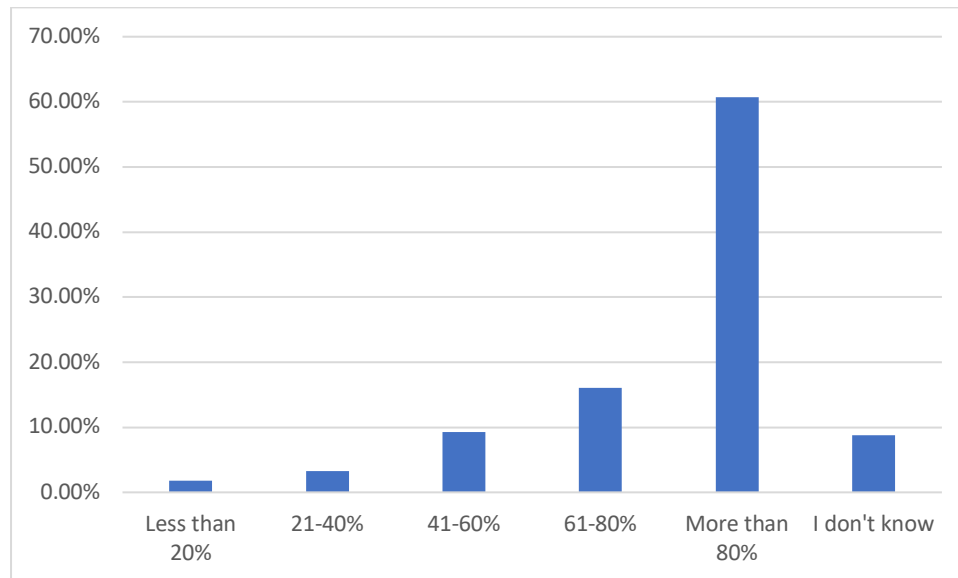


Figure 43. Teacher access to broadband for all schools.

Most leaders (60.7, n=1,704) reported that more than 80% of their teachers have access to broadband across all schools.

## 5.252 Difference across school type

	Mainstream with special		
	Mainstream	classes	Special
Less than 20%	45	5	1
	2.10%	1.00%	0.80%
21-40%	80	9	3
	3.70%	1.80%	2.40%
41-60%	220	35	5
	10.10%	6.80%	4.00%
61-80%	345	88	20
	15.90%	17.20%	15.90%
More than 80%	1303	319	82
	60.00%	62.30%	65.10%
I don't know	177	56	15
	8.20%	10.90%	11.90%

Table 39. Teacher access to broadband across school type.



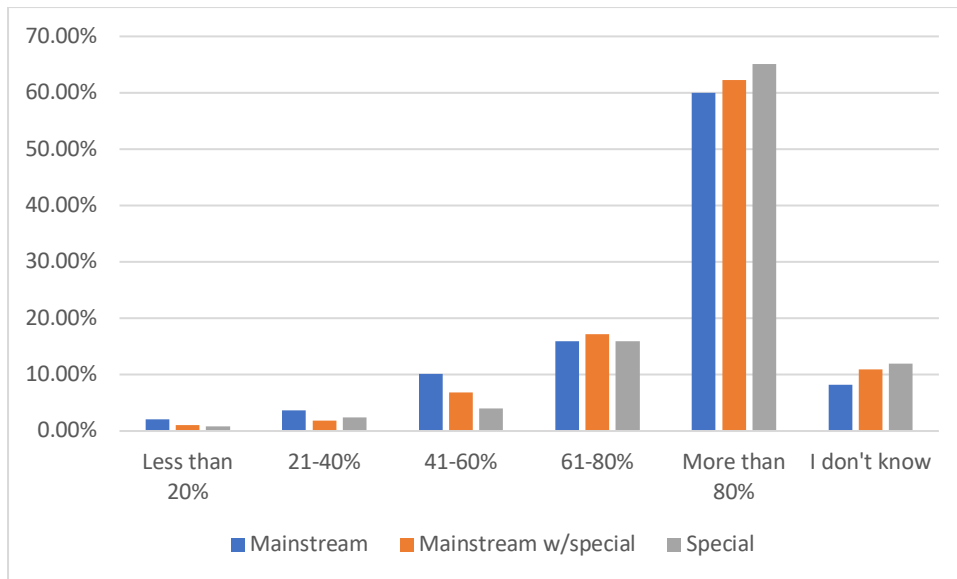


Figure 44. Teacher access to broadband across school type.

There are no differences found across school type.

5.253 Difference across school size

	Small	Medium	Large
Less than 20%	14	36	1
	3.20%	2.00%	0.20%
21-40%	19	68	5
	4.30%	3.80%	0.90%
41-60%	48	177	35
	11.00%	9.90%	6.00%
61-80%	53	308	92
	12.10%	17.20%	15.80%
More than 80%	277	1047	380
	63.20%	58.60%	65.20%
I don't know	27	151	70
	6.20%	8.40%	12.00%

Table 40. Teacher access to broadband across school size.

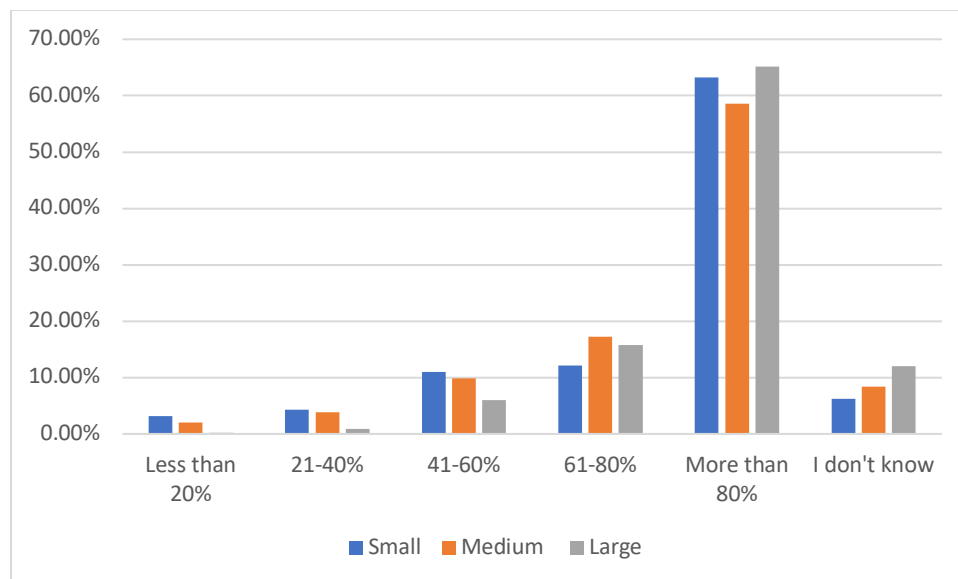


Figure 45. Table 41. Teacher access to broadband across school size.

There are no differences found across school size.

*5.254 Difference of opinion among school leaders*

	Principal	Deputy Principal	Assistant Principal
<b>Less than</b>			
20%	38	13	0
	1.80%	1.80%	0.00%
21-40%	75	17	0
	3.60%	2.40%	0.00%
41-60%	206	53	1
	9.90%	7.50%	5.90%
61-80%	348	100	5
	16.70%	14.10%	29.40%
<b>More than</b>			
80%	1242	453	9
	59.70%	63.90%	52.90%
I don't know	173	73	2
	8.30%	10.30%	11.80%

*Table 42. Difference of opinion among leaders in relation to teachers' access to broadband.*

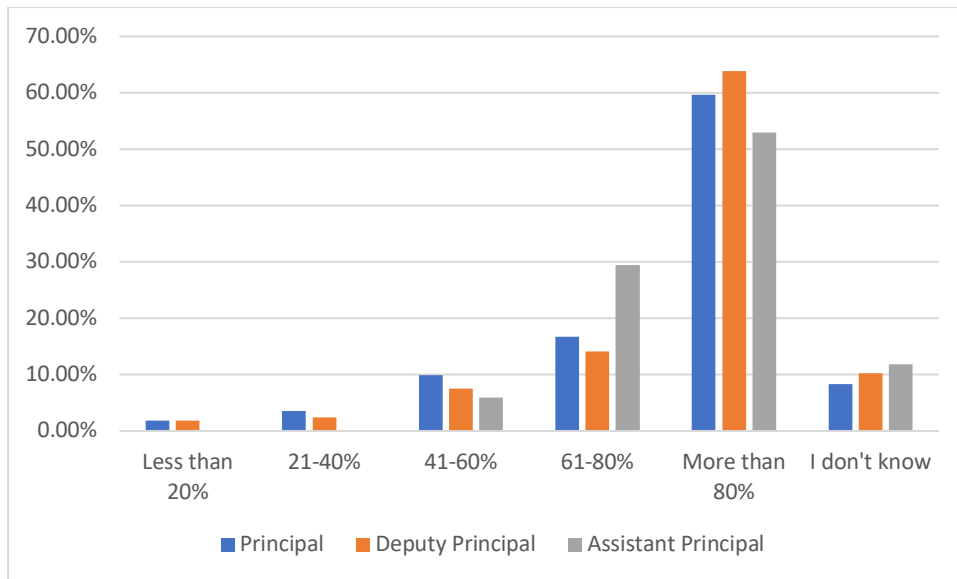


Figure 46. Table 43. *Difference of opinion among leaders in relation to teachers' access to broadband.*

There are no differences of opinion found among leaders.

### 5.26 Teacher access to computing devices

Question:

To the best of your knowledge, what percentage of teachers have access to computing devices, e.g. PC, laptop, tablet, Chromebook, smartphone, to engage effectively with distance learning?

5.261 All schools

	n	%
<b>Less than</b>		
20%	18	0.6
21-40%	36	1.3
41-60%	134	4.8
61-80%	280	10
<b>More than</b>		
80%	2233	79.5
I don't know	107	3.8

Table 44. Teachers' access to computing devices across all schools.

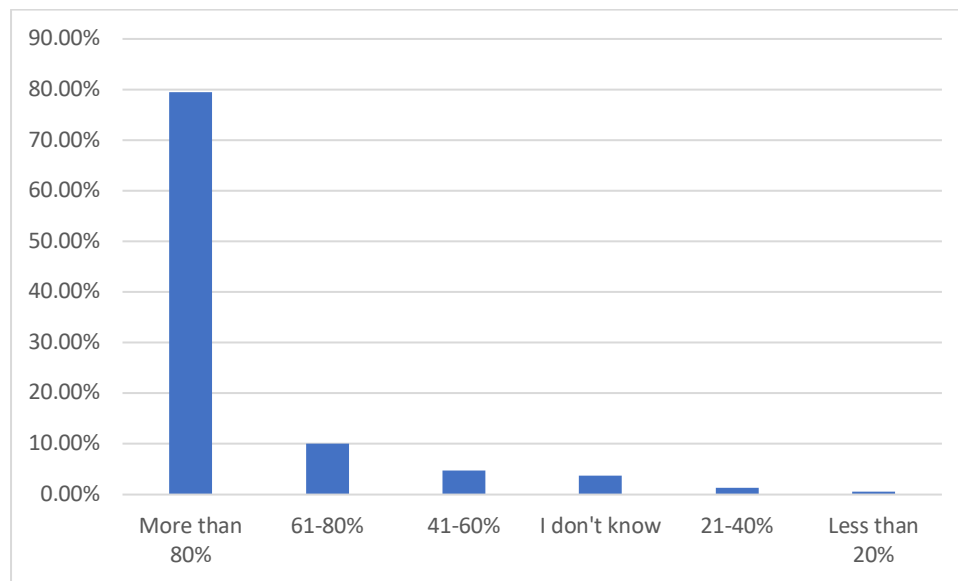


Figure 47. Teachers' access to computing devices across all schools.

Vast majority of teachers (89.5%, n=2,513) have access to computing devices.

## 5.262 Difference across school type

	Mainstream with special		
	Mainstream	classes	Special
Less than 20%	15	1	2
	0.70%	0.20%	1.60%
21-40%	33	3	0
	1.50%	0.60%	0.00%
41-60%	114	16	4
	5.30%	3.10%	3.20%
61-80%	218	51	11
	10.00%	10.00%	8.70%
More than 80%	1715	415	103
	79.00%	81.10%	81.70%
I don't know	75	26	6
	3.50%	5.10%	4.80%

*Table 45. Teachers' access to computing devices across school types.*

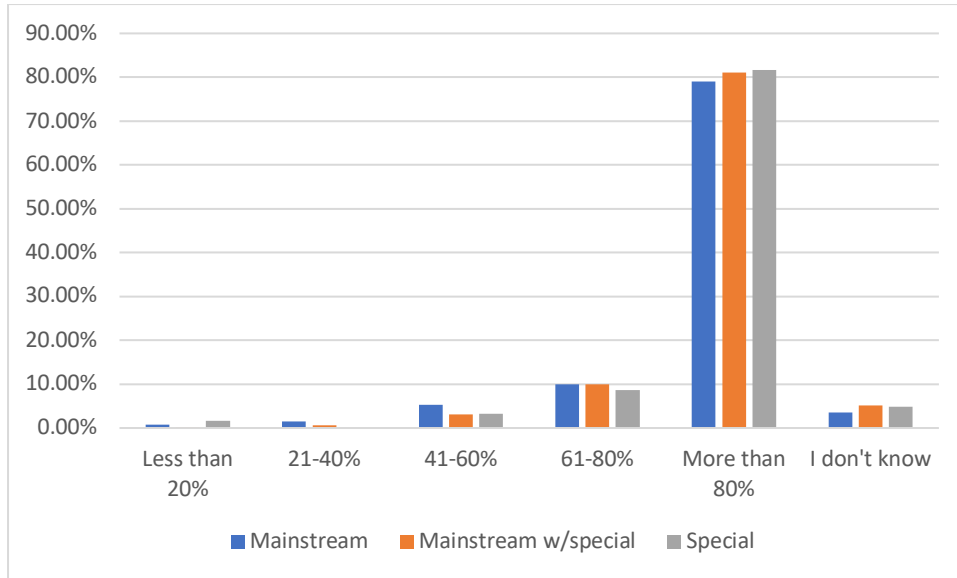


Figure 48. Teachers' access to computing devices across school types.

There are no differences in teachers' access to computing devices across school types.

5.263 Difference across school size

	Small	Medium	Large
Less than 20%	6 1.40%	11 0.60%	1 0.20%
21-40%	5 1.10%	31 1.70%	0 0.00%
41-60%	31 7.10%	82 4.60%	21 3.60%
61-80%	40 9.10%	183 10.20%	57 9.80%
More than 80%	342 78.10%	1414 79.10%	477 81.80%
I don't know	14 3.20%	66 3.70%	27 4.60%

Table 46. Teachers' access to computing devices across school size.

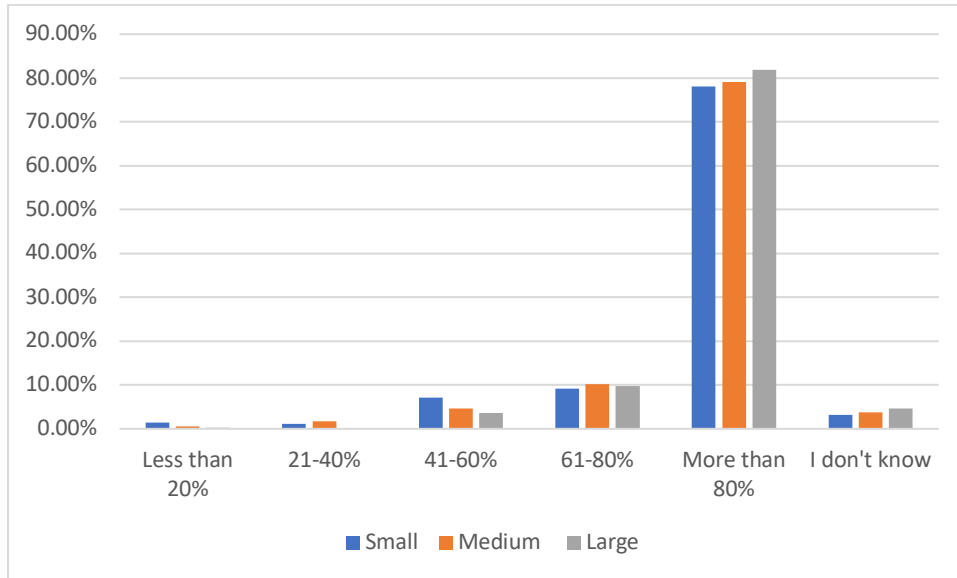


Figure 49. Teachers' access to computing devices across school size.

There are no differences in teachers' access to computing devices across school size.



5.264 Difference of opinion among leaders

	Principal	Deputy Principal	Assistant Principal
Less than 20%	14 0.70%	4 0.60%	0 0.00%
21-40%	27 1.30%	9 1.30%	0 0.00%
41-60%	103 4.90%	31 4.40%	0 0.00%
61-80%	218 10.50%	60 8.50%	2 11.80%
More than 80%	1640 78.80%	579 81.70%	14 82.40%
I don't know	80 3.80%	26 3.70%	1 5.90%

Table 47. Difference of leaders' opinion about teachers' access to computing devices across school size.

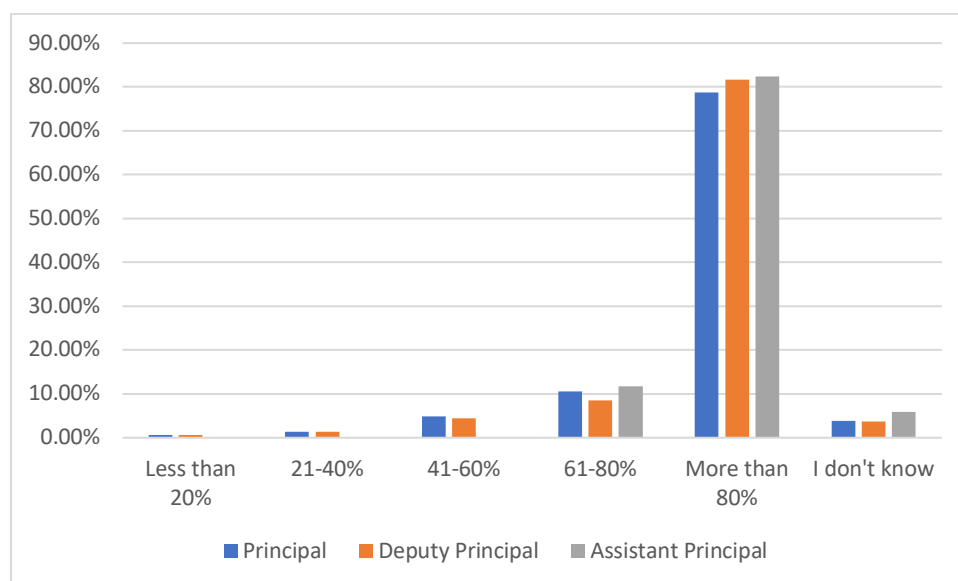


Figure 50. Difference of leaders' opinion about teachers' access to computing devices across school size.

There are no differences of leaders’ opinion in relation to teachers’ access to computing devices.

5.27 Broadband access

Question:  
 To the best of your knowledge, how many pupils/teachers have the following broadband access at home?

5.271 All schools

Types of internet		None	A few	Some	Mostly	I don't know
Fibre	n	128	379	595	492	1214
	%	4.6	13.5	21.2	17.5	43.2
Satellite	n	238	313	349	115	1770
	%	8.5	11.1	12.4	4.1	63
Telephone	n	221	411	345	218	1575
	%	7.9	14.6	12.3	7.8	56.1
Wireless	n	25	267	631	689	1194
	%	0.9	9.5	22.5	24.5	42.5
Other	n	101	35	50	25	1314
	%	3.6	1.2	1.8	0.9	46.8

Table 48. Types of broadband access at home across all schools.

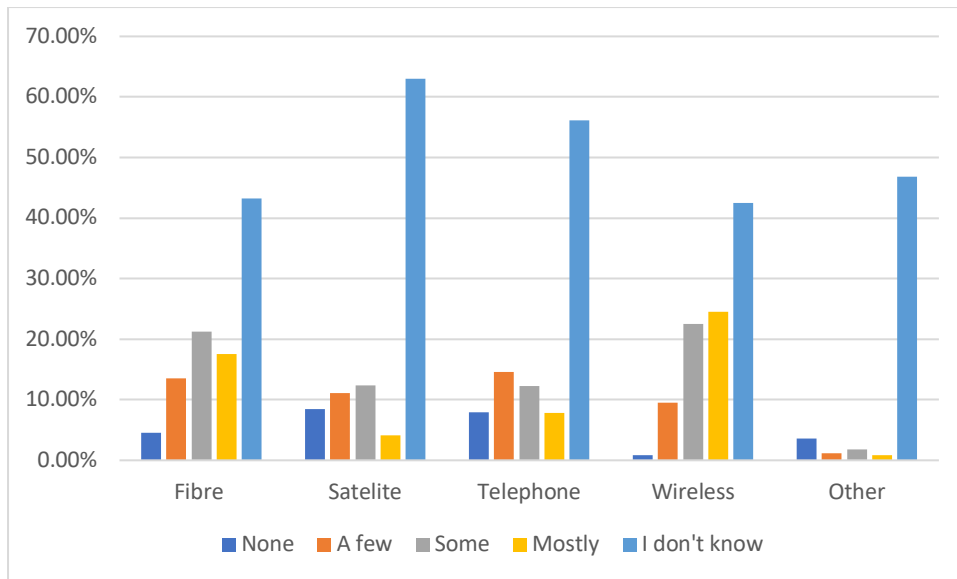


Figure 51. Types of broadband access at home across all schools.

Most of the participants did not know what type of broadband their pupils were able to access at home.

### 5.3 Curriculum

#### 5.31 Curriculum easier to adapt for distance learning

Question:

Which areas of the curriculum are more easily adapted for distance learning?

Please comment.

##### 5.311 All schools

	n	%
Language – Gaeilge	323	11.5
Language – English	2023	72
Mathematics	1444	51.4
Social, Environmental and Scientific Education	1937	69
Arts Education – Music, Visual Arts, and Drama	1394	49.6
Physical Education	1771	63.1
Social, Personal and Health Education	974	34.7
Patron's programme	394	14
None	221	7.9

*Table 49. Curriculum easier to adapt for distance learning.*

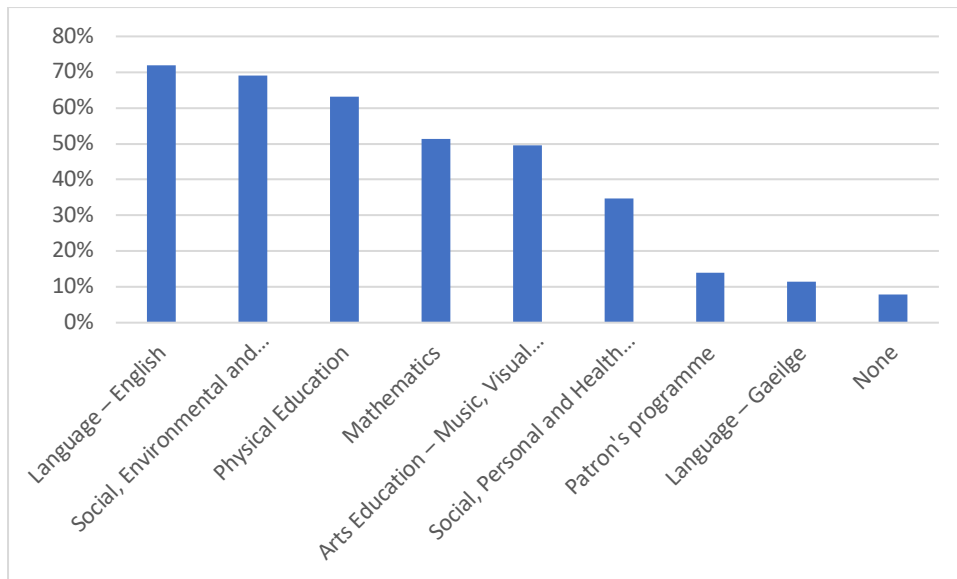


Figure 52. Curriculum easier to adapt for distance learning.

Most participants agreed that the areas of curriculum most applicable to distance learning are English (72%, n=2,023), Social, Environmental and Scientific (69%, n=1,937), Physical Education (63.1, n=1,771), and Mathematics (51.4%, n=1,444). Only 7.9% (n=221) of participants believed that none of the curriculum can be adapted via distance learning.

### 5.32 Curriculum difficult to adapt for distance learning

Question:

Which areas of the curriculum are more difficult to adapt for distance learning?

Please comment.

## 5.321 All schools

	n	%
Language – Gaeilge	2231	79.5
Language – English	635	22.6
Mathematics	1319	47
Social, Environmental and Scientific Education	394	14
Arts Education – Music, Visual Arts, and Drama	868	30.9
Physical Education	493	17.6
Social, Personal and Health Education	972	34.6
Patron's programme	591	21
None	152	5.4

Table 50. Curriculum difficult to adapt for distance learning.

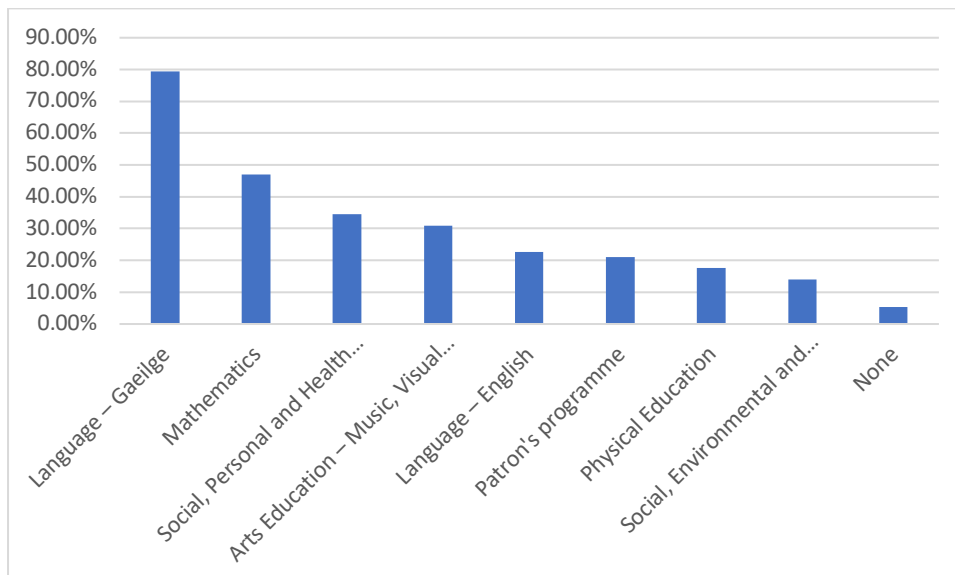


Figure 53. Curriculum difficult to adapt for distance learning.

Most of the participants agreed that only one area of curriculum is difficult via distance learning provision, i.e. Gaeilge (79.5%, n=2,231).

### 5.33 Centralised curriculum for distance learning

Question:

Which areas of the curriculum could be centralised for distance learning?

#### 5.331 All schools

	n	%
Language – Gaeilge	1102	39.2
Language – English	1483	52.8
Mathematics	1494	53.2
Social, Environmental and Scientific Education	1132	40.3
Arts Education – Music, Visual Arts, and Drama	951	33.9
Physical Education	1052	37.5
Social, Personal and Health Education	878	31.3
Patron's programme	451	16.1
None	537	19.1

*Table 51. Curriculum area that could be centralized for distance learning.*

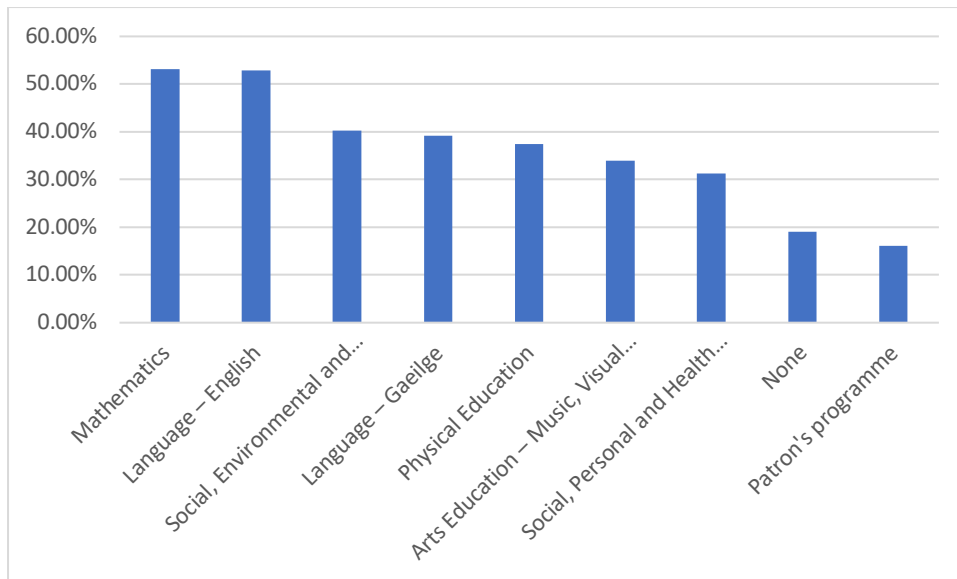


Figure 54. Curriculum area that could be centralized for distance learning.

Majority of participants agree that the two areas of the curriculum that could be centralised are Mathematics (52.8%, n=1,483) and English (52.2%, n=1,494). Moderate number of participants (30-40%) agreed that all other subjects except for the Patron's programme could be centralized. Only 19.1% (n=537) of respondents believed that none of the areas of curriculum can be centralised.

### 5.34 Comments about the curriculum provision via distance learning

#### 5.341 Summary

There was a common theme running through the data that most respondents felt there were some areas of the curriculum easier to adapt to online learning than others. Many are cognisant of the challenging times we are living through.

#### 5.342 Sample quotes

*Our families and staff are not equipped (skills wise or equipment wise) to provide online learning. At a time of a worldwide pandemic, distance learning in a DEIS band 1 Junior*



*School simply isn't a priority for staff, parents or pupils. I am keeping in touch with parents by sending encouraging and supportive texts. I am updating our website once a week with suggested activities/website links. I am very conscious of not putting pressure on parents at this strange time. As a parent I am sick to death of being bombarded with lists of work from my child's teacher and I am in no way criticising the teacher. She is doing what is being asked of her I'm sure by her principal and probably feels under a huge amount of pressure from parents too as she can be contacted via Aladdin. In my opinion the current situation is further widening the gap between the rich and the poor, where the children in my DEIS school will not receive the same parental support at home as the children in my son's typically middle class Gaelscoil. In my DEIS school the only screen many children would have access to is a mobile phone.*

*The problem is about a third of parents will ensure the prescribed work is done. Another third will be overwhelmed and unable to engage with distance learning and another third will just not bother. So, when we do return some will have covered set curricular areas whereas a lot will not. This will be problematic on our return.*

### 5.343 Emerging themes

Open responses to this question fall under the following themes:

- Irish, English and Mathematics
- Curriculum areas that lend themselves to distance learning and online learning
- Mixed views on centralised programmes being developed by DES or RTÉ

## 5.344 Sample quotes

- Irish, English and Mathematics

*I teach junior infants, so I don't think English Irish and maths are as easy for me to teach at the moment. I'm giving revision sheets... to be honest I could go on and on about how I feel about this.... parents aren't their teachers and learning from home is not like learning in school.... I know it's very difficult on parents who are also trying to work from home too and make their kitchen/ playrooms classrooms. I feel as teachers we must not undermine what we do in our classrooms/ schools each day.... We teach phonics, handwriting, maths concepts etc. so we must be careful what we give the children to do at home. As it is most of our online resources have been given to parents .... I could keep going....*

*Difficult to adapt language /discussion-based elements. In this atmosphere, pupils benefit more from clear tangible task that gives sense of completion and success e.g. Maths Again... Music can be limited in terms of performance... Art in terms of assessing... Drama in terms of peer learning. Sharing...collaborative learning. At the same time all is possible online if one has great expertise in setting up systems etc. for same*

*While respondents did talk about difficulties, they also pointed out some ways they have dealt with the issues. Many feel the proposed input from RTE may be very helpful with this gap.*

*Parents are less confident with core subjects, particularly Gaeilge, and can struggle to support children with this without significant guidance from teachers--guidance that is hard to achieve through distance learning.*

*It's difficult to adapt Irish language. Bua na cainte Irish prog have permitted parents to download it and use it. This helps.*

*While maths revision is always useful, it is very difficult to achieve new learning and intervention by parents etc. may just cause confusion. Also, motivation to practice Irish could be low. Reading and writing whether in English or SESE tends to be easier to do independently.*

*A centralised program would give structure for parents to follow and for children to adapt to.*

*Can only send home revision work in Maths. Can't get children to work ahead on concepts not taught.*

*It is very hard in certain subjects to teach through online services, especially in the important area of maths and English. Within certain of these subjects need specific broken-down teaching points which for a lot of children need direct teaching from their teacher. Also, some online resources do not teach the same strategies as what is taught in the primary curriculum therefore children will learn operations or literacy skills wrongly.*

*Nothing is easily adapted as teachers are not delivering the curriculum. A curriculum can't be delivered easily outside the classroom in a new world of "distance learning" that is 10 days old. The statement by the Dept to keep teaching where possible is ridiculous.*

*Although these subjects could in theory be adapted for home, I don't think distance learning will work for all primary school children. The variation in home settings has a major impact*

*on what can be achieved at home. If parents are able to help with work children can continue to learn but in a lot of houses this is NOT the case. You then have then very unfair situation where the children who are struggling will fall further behind during this closure.*

*The teaching of trickier areas of the maths curriculum is next to impossible when you are not sitting with the children assessing their comprehension of what is being covered. Gaeilge is also difficult as I have the younger children where the emphasis is on oral language and conversation.*

*It is harder to set Irish when parents can't help at home. A lot of the SESE and other subject require a lot of chat and discussion in the classroom where more learning can take place. It is hard on the children are not motivated at the best of times and it is hard on children in homes where there is no interest/emphasis placed on schoolwork.*

*More difficult subjects like Maths need more involved and one on one teaching particularly in the Senior end of the school. As an Infant teacher, it is quite difficult to adapt to distance learning as everything we learn works do well as a group together. Children will need one in one support to sustain concentration and learning.*

*Irish will be very difficult. English will be difficult without reading resources. Maths will be difficult because it's difficult to convey language and thinking process over the internet. SESE, PE and SPHE will be ok as parents can easily understand the curriculum and follow it. But core subjects will suffer.*

*English, gaeilge and maths all need to be explicitly taught and this is very hard to do remotely as you cannot gauge what the children are understanding or misinterpreting. Art is easier to teach remotely as you can be aided by pictures, PE the children already have enough knowledge of movement to succeed. Science, history, geography can be researched and brought to the children using videos and books*

- Curriculum areas that lend themselves to home schooling and online learning

*Aspects of all subjects can be adapted. In languages reading can be continued provided there is someone listening to it. Aspects of SESE with videos etc., tables practice can all be revised and taught. Videos for PE etc. are excellent. Song learning and art ideas requiring little resources can be done.*

*Have a 'plan b' for parents to go to (i.e. websites etc.) so that they are happy they are developing core skills. Lots of options out there but this can be overwhelming for parents who don't know where to start.*

*Play and reading stories is very important for oral language development for our infants and parents know how to organise that!*

*It is difficult to move on to new topics in maths and language. Children can explore their home environment and surroundings while engaging with areas of the SESE curriculum. Online resources are easier to access for parents in arts and PE.*

*We have most in our small school with Irish exemptions so we are focusing on other areas, as those doing Irish would need learning support for it. English and Maths ... work set in*

*books, work set to research on online, work set on Studyladder. PE all students have been informed of Joe Wicks doing daily PE on YouTube for kids at 9am. Geography and Science is covered on online weekly activities .. going onto Studyladder, kidsgeographic, etc. Art is covered by KidsTate (the Tate gallery giving online activities for kids) History is covered with a project which appeals to their interest After school activities are on our school blog which gives 70 outside of school activities. We update the pupils/parents regularly of new sites to check i.eDavid Walliams is reading his books at 11am daily.*

*Arts education is easiest for us as we can produce videos and relate to familiar lessons. Our creative associate is also a help. We are sending worksheets and website links, but parents tell us they appreciate the telephone calls, but they have a lot to do.*

*It is difficult to move beyond revision in much of distance learning, the children cannot be expected to teach new material to themselves, and if teachers assign new material, when the pupils do return to school it would be hard to assess who has covered material properly, who simply filled in a workbook, who was not able to participate at all for whatever reason, and the objectives would need to be covered again. There is no way a teacher could simply tick the objective off as covered.*

*Aspects of all e.g. Online PE lessons, art/ drawing SPHE - lessons online Some areas of maths - use of Khan Academy The flipped classroom approach - supporting parents with this approach is obviously very dependent on home support - DEIS schools etc. access to ICT, internet, availability of devices. These subjects are slightly more straight forward for teaching, if there was a suitable online programme for Irish it could be managed at home.*

*It depends on your approach. We are ensuring we assign non- screen time tasks. This is more engaging for families. It encourages activities to be done at home, photos to be taken and shared with classmates. Important to emphasis not just core subjects to engage all pupils/majority! Our priority now is engagement with pupils then distant learning programmes will be more successful Gaeilge a challenge due to high % of EAL pupils and parental ability to support is poor.*

*Certain pupils will be fine with revision and independent learning, but many will struggle to move on to a new concept without explanation and concrete resources from school. We have no means of assessing the pupils unless we use virtual teaching software and get them to upload their work but parents need their laptops and WIFI to work from home and with the impossibility of childcare, they could not be expected to work from home, run their household and do all that uploading. Children of primary school age are far too young for virtual learning and shouldn't spend their days using screens.*

*SESE subjects are ideal for self-directed learning. Regarding questions which follow this one, our DLF was in its early stages. For the current situation, no time was allowed for consultation with parents. We had some sites set up (e.g. Study Ladder which has a limited teaching style; and packets as class noticeboards) and could inform students. For submitting their other work however different methods were established in the 1st days of the closure and we have had to inform parents via email without guarantee that they could access the tools.*

*A lot of SESE work requires teacher led instruction and group work. You can set children a project in history or geography but again that's difficult in a multi grade setting. We also*

*have some big families in our school who have brothers and sisters in secondary school doing exams this year and parents wouldn't have enough laptops or iPads etc. for them all to be using every day for researching project information. Really can't set art or drama or music work for children as again it requires instruction and modelling. There are lots of websites parents can look up ideas for but nothing we can give for distant learning in our setting. I have sent Irish worksheets home for 5th/6th for briathra neamhrialta to learn and Irish reading for 6th but it's not very much. I didn't send home Irish textbooks as the work does require teaching and we have quite a few parents who don't have Irish to help pupils with it at home. I've set 3rd/4th the task of writing the day, date and weather in Irish each day and gave them vocab sheets to help with that.*

- *Mixed views on centralised programmes being developed by DES or RTÉ*

*Online centralised classes covering core content which could be followed up by class teacher support could be worthwhile.*

*I don't think any area of the curriculum is suitable for centralised learning - the only reason we are managing to cover subjects during the current pandemic is because pupils are familiar with teachers' teaching styles and methodologies and are now applying these to their own home learning.*

*None of the areas can be adapted easily. Distance learning at this time will be focussing more on maintaining skills already learned and providing a little structure to the day for the children. Learning new skills and concepts in core subject areas requires pupils and teachers to be in school. Distance learning does not lend itself well to proper assessment and planning at primary level.*



*Generalised subjects might work well being centralised. Other areas require specific differentiation to accommodate pupils with differing learning needs.*

*All areas can be centralised quite easily. The issue is with those child requiring support from the SEN team where close contact human interaction is crucial to learning and emotional and social wellbeing.*

*I am principal of a junior school. Children at that age do not have the metacognitive skills required for distant learning. The majority cannot work independently without guided assistance. Distance learning for 4 to 7-year olds is not attainable- we cannot expect them to engage in meaningful maths, language, Irish lessons without a skilled facilitator with them to enable it.*

*To be honest at primary level so much of children's learning is through active engagement. The level to which books are depended on by parents does not fit in with our normal school routine. Much surface learning will have happened. Yes, where there are savvy parents in this regard any subject might gain some deep learning.*

*This very much depends on class. Infants need a constant input from teachers and parents, so distance education is very difficult. For older classes Rang a 5 and Rang a 6 if they engage is easy to set work and correct it provided that they have already been using and are used to using platforms such as Google Classroom in school. This cannot be done instantly or even remotely as there is a lot of prework to do on this. Also, that the pupils have access to devices and reasonable internet connection.*

*All children were sent home with work for the 1st fortnight and we upload work on our blogs but internet coverage is poor for many and also with parents working from home and many levels of children in a household juggling work now and time for each person needing access to the internet will be a challenge. With PE and SESE once again it will depend on the motivation of the parents and their availability to have and spend time with their children Maths lessons could be put online taking that most of the topics have been taught they are certain new topics most schools haven't covered yet - circle, weight, capacity, cost price/sale price. Revision of topics could be covered. Anxiety levels amongst Irish children have risen in the last 10 years so mindfulness activities (Yoga) and lessons (how feel good about yourself could be done). Novels could be read online, discussed, samples of creative writing given. Irish - pick 2 themes and develop lessons on these (starting at JI/SI all the way up) and let older students revise these - include grammar, written activities and listening to lots of conversation. We had to get email addresses for all first*

*While there is a possibility for centralising many/all of the subjects, the quality of learning will be much reduced, as pupils won't benefit formative assessment to plan for learning. The individual learning that has already taken place this year will not be taken into account. Perhaps the teaching of parts SPHE, specifically around hygiene and health could be centralised (though I am not suggesting all of SPHE could be centralised). Similarly, parts of PE could be centralised at a push. This centralization would decrease the quality of education and it would be challenging to allow each pupil to learn at their own pace.*

*English and maths more difficult but digital lessons could be developed for different concepts at each class level and shared appropriately with parents/students.*

## 5.4 Platforms &amp; Resources

## 5.41 Digital Resources

Question:

Which of the following digital resources do you use to support learning in your school?

If selected other, please specify.

## 5.411 All schools

Devices	n	%
I don't know	46	1.6
Microsoft		
Teams	163	5.8
SeeSaw	828	29.5
ClassDojo	1150	41
SeomraRanga	1362	48.5
Twinkl	2527	90
ScoilNet	1996	71.1
Schoology	16	0.6
One Note	60	2.1
Google		
Classroom	516	18.4
Screencastify	30	1.1
PowerPoint	1371	48.8
VS Ware	15	0.5
Zoom	407	14.5
Other	294	10.5

Table 52. Digital resources used in schools to support learning.

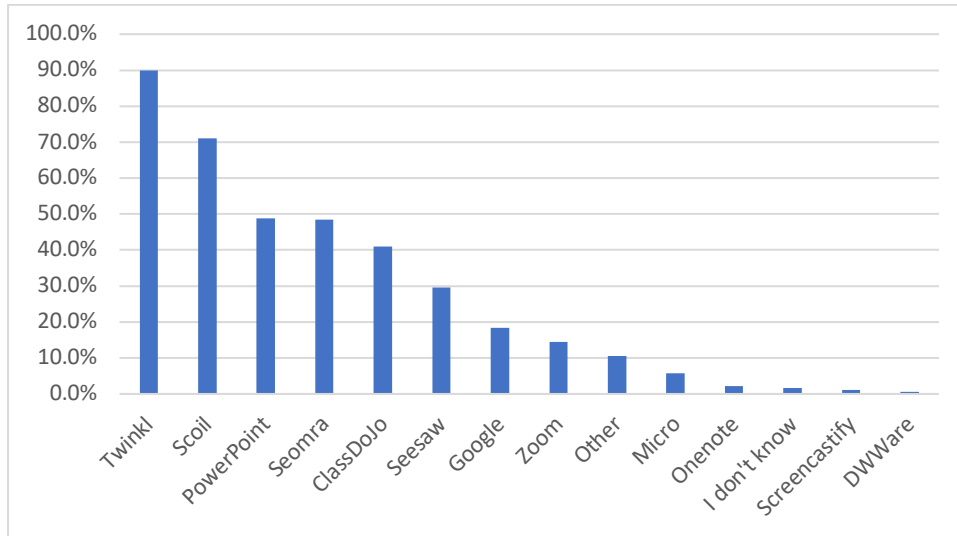


Figure 55. Digital resources used in schools to support learning.

Most participants use Twinkl as a digital resource to support student learning (90%, n=2,527), followed by Scoilnet (71.1%, n=1996) and PowerPoint (48.8%, n=1,371).

#### 5.412 Comments

*Twinkl is invaluable*

*YouTube videos, Facebook communications websites from recommend Irish websites such as Folens, Fallons Twinkl etc.*

*Very few resources in Irish. Twinkl has resources but a lot have to be edited to Irish. Very time consuming.*

*Lessons put up for each class by teacher on "Showbie". Access to Twinkl can be given to parents. Site on "Symbaloo" created for our school with links to educational material and sites. Links to free access to the textbooks used put up on school Facebook page. Note sent*

*home with list of suggestions for distance learning. Updates for parents in school Facebook page. Parents kept informed by Text-A-Parent messages from school.*

*Some of the activities are based on school textbooks. Other activities are based on Youtube videos, activities from sites such as Twinkl etc. This is the very best we can do at this stage. STEM projects from Twinkl.*

*We use a selection including twinkl but at the minute we are trying to use digital resources to match the schemes we use in school. I feel there is a complete overload of resources out there that will overwhelm people if you were to share them all.*

*Twinkl and Joe Wicks. Zoom. We are only getting started with teachers supporting more at home.*

*I created numerous accounts - Twinkl, Folens, CJ fallen, Áiseanna na Gaeilge, etc. And passed on logins to all teachers and parents.*

*Keep the free resources coming...great that Online Book Publishers and Twinkl etc. resources are now free of charge but many parents have no access to printers and all those worksheets are in PDF format...No one size fits all solution is possible and broadband access and quality varies greatly as does teachers own digital literacy so bear that in mind and try a low floor/high ceiling approach to provision of online digital training. Despite the challenges, this time offers a great learning opportunity for the whole educational community and I'm sure we will rise to the challenge.*

*Suggest putting 'mindfulness' in the search bar on Twinkl? Taking responsibility for self, minding oneself and looking out for family is all we can do at present.*

#### 5.42 Online Resources

Question:

What specific online resources does your school find helpful when planning for distance learning?

If you selected other, please specify.

##### 5.421 All schools

Online resources	n	%
I don't know	314	11.2
Pinterest	657	23.4
PDST	1850	65.9
Online patron resource banks	538	19.2
Textbook publisher websites	1920	68.4
TES.co.uk	244	8.7
Twitter	433	15.4
Other	661	23.5

Table 53. *Useful online resources across schools.*

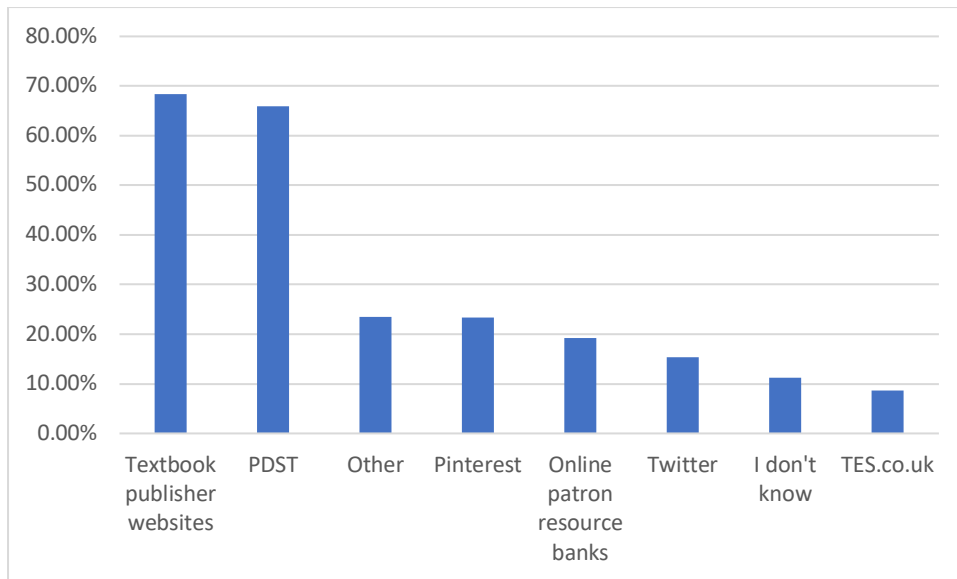


Figure 56. Useful online resources across schools.

The most popular online resource in the survey sample are the Textbook publisher websites (68.4%, n=1,920) and PDST resources (65.9%, n=1,850), then all other resources, which are used by 20% or fewer schools.

### 5.43 Teacher-Pupil

**Question:**

Which of the following platforms/tools do teachers in your school use to interact with pupils?

## 5.431 All schools

Tools	n	%
I don't know	61	2.2
Aladdin	1188	42.3
Email	1898	67.6
Hard copy	1024	36.5
Schoology	4	0.1
One Note	15	0.5
Google Classroom	419	14.9
Screencastify	17	0.6
PowerPoint	272	9.7
VS Ware	5	0.2
Edmodo	59	2.1
GSuite	258	9.2
Microsoft Office 365	136	4.8
ClassDojo	596	21.2
Schoolwise	12	0.4
Other	937	33.4

*Table 54. Online platform/tools that teachers use to interact with students across all schools.*



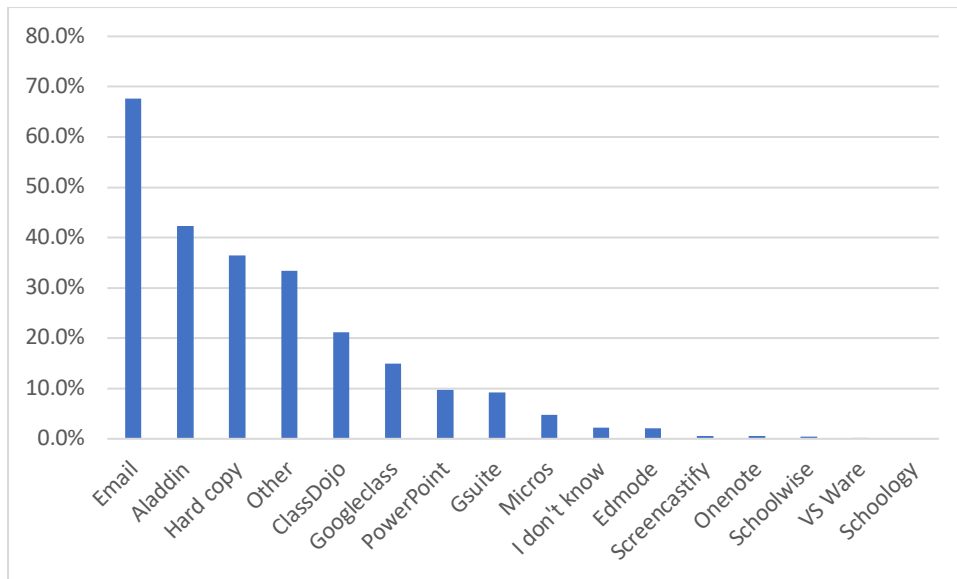


Figure 57. Online platform/tools that teachers use to interact with students across all schools.

The most frequently used online platform for communicating with students is email (67.6%, n=1,898), followed by Aladdin (42.3%, n=1,188), hard copies (36.5%, n=1,024) and other methods, which included SeeSaw (n=294), ‘school’ (n=199), website (n=35), WhatsApp (n=24) and others. ‘School’ as a selection possibly means that the teachers are not contacting pupils directly, rather the communication is done via the school.

#### 5.44 Pupil-Pupil

**Question:**

If pupils in your school are facilitated to engage with each other in peer teaching and learning, how is it being done?

Over 75% wrote N/A or none here. The comments left by the other 25% give some indication why this is so. There are issues around contacting pupils and on sharing pupils’ contacts

owing to GDPR concerns. All contact must go through the parents. There are some suggestions provided, and the following comments give a flavour of the data.

*It isn't practical for us as engagement is sporadic. We have no systems set up and this is not the time to trial new technologies.*

*Not at the moment but planning on getting parents to send in sample of children's work to me which can be shared.*

*Not being facilitated to engage with each other. Rural community. Varying quality of Internet access.*

*Engage with siblings - same lessons for art, music, drama, PE, RE so that they're learning the same thing and can engage with one another at home.*

*Siblings are being given a joint task daily. Each pupil given three daily tasks one literacy one numeracy based on class level and third task daily challenge can be a joint effort amongst siblings -build a bridge, bake something...*

*One older class has a collective email system set up from earlier this year which they are using.*

*It is not being done We were not using apps such as Seesaw before our closure so for GDPR reasons, they have not been established yet as consent is required from parents. We want to try and ensure equality of access for all pupils which is difficult.*

*Google Classroom. But we've only just begun using it and it is from R2 - R6.*

5.45 Teacher-Teacher

Question:

Which of the following modes of communication do teachers in your school use to interact with each other?

5.451 All schools

	n	%
Email	2229	79.4
Text	1808	64.4
WhatsApp	2505	89.2
Phonecall	1895	67.5
Video conferencing	673	24
Other	183	6.5

Table 55. Teacher-teacher mode of communication.

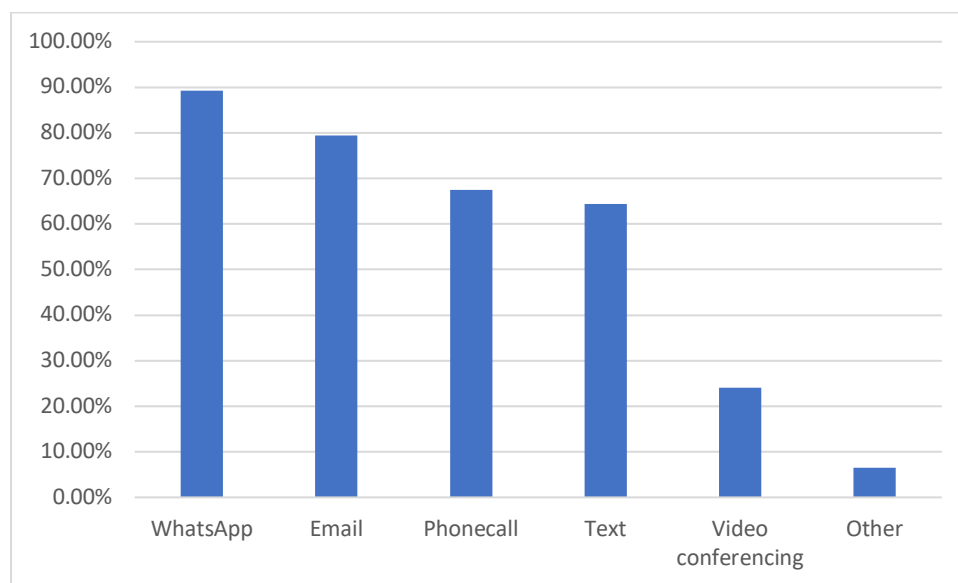


Figure 58. Teacher-teacher mode of communication.

Teachers’ preferred mode of communication when communicating with their colleagues is WhatsApp (89.2%, n=2,505), followed by email (79.4%, n=2,229), phonecall (67.5%, n=1,895) and text (64.4%, n=1,808). Video conferencing (24%, n=673) is the least preferred mode of communication between teachers, however despite this, almost a quarter of teachers use it in their schools.

5.452 Difference across school types

	Mainstream with special		
	Mainstream	classes	Special
Email	1672	445	112
	77.10%	86.90%	88.90%
Text	1390	340	78
	64.10%	66.40%	61.90%
WhatsApp	1944	460	101
	89.60%	89.80%	80.20%
Phonecall	1469	349	77
	67.70%	68.20%	61.10%
Video conferencing	443	193	37
	20.40%	37.70%	29.40%
Other	138	39	6
	6.40%	7.60%	4.80%

Table 56. Difference in teacher-teacher mode of communication across school types.

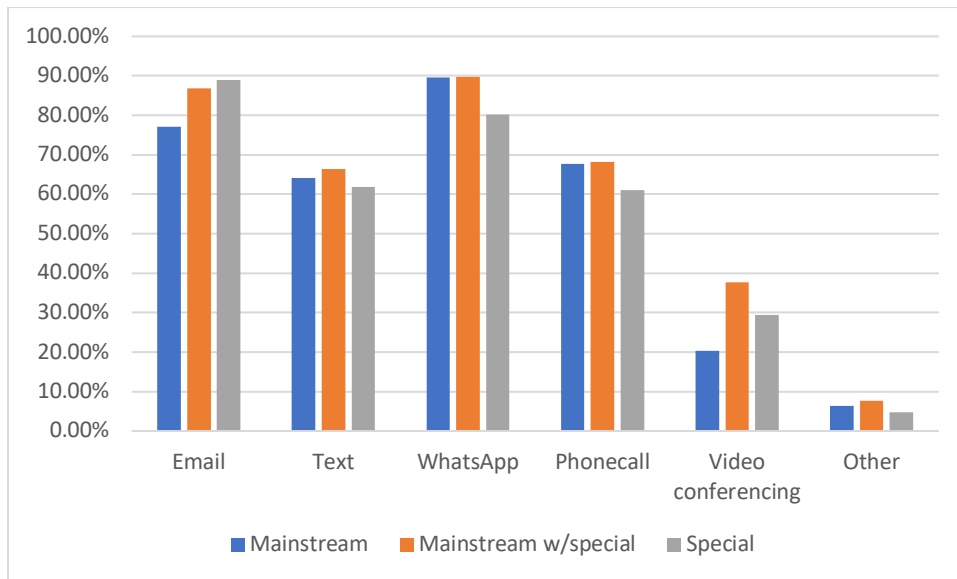


Figure 59. Difference in teacher-teacher mode of communication across school types.

There are no differences in teacher-teacher mode of communication across school types.

## 5.453 Difference across school size

	Small	Medium	Large
Email	312 71.20%	1396 78.20%	521 89.40%
Text	311 71.00%	1082 60.60%	415 71.20%
WhatsApp	361 82.40%	1615 90.40%	529 90.70%
Phonecall	311 71.00%	1190 66.60%	394 67.60%
Video conferencing	39 8.90%	405 22.70%	229 39.30%
Other	13 3.00%	110 6.20%	60 10.30%

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Table 57. Difference in teacher-teacher mode of communication across school size.

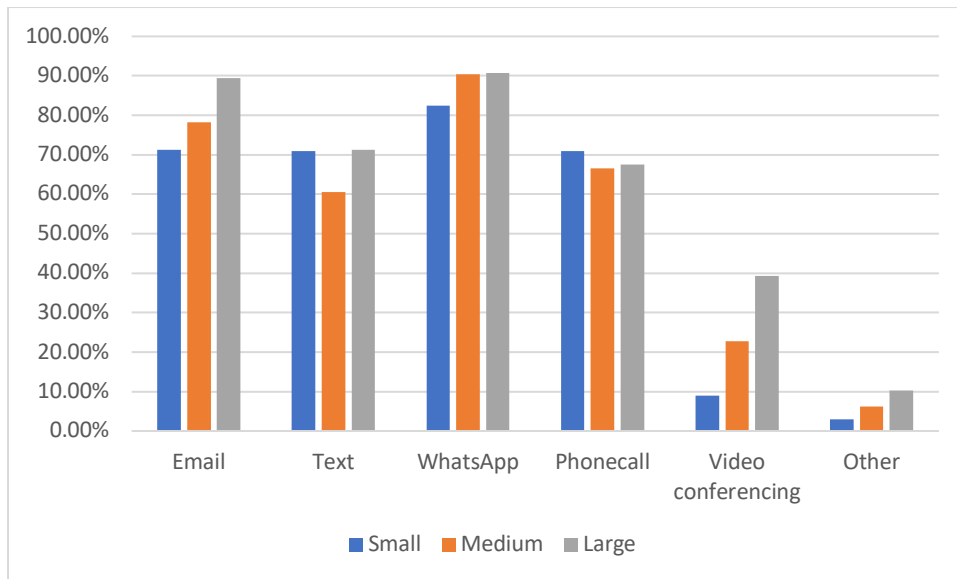


Figure 60. Difference in teacher-teacher mode of communication across school size.

WhatsApp use is similar across all schools with 10% of smaller schools using it less than large and medium-size schools. Large schools (89%, n=521) are also using email more frequently than small- (71%, n=312) and medium-size (78%, n=1,396) schools. Finally, 39% (n=229) of large schools use video conference, versus only 8.9% (n=39) of small schools and 23% (n=405) of medium-size schools.

## 5.453 Difference of opinion among school leaders

	Principal	Deputy Principal	Assistant Principal
Email	1678	537	14
	80.60%	75.70%	82.40%
Text	1405	392	11
	67.50%	55.30%	64.70%
WhatsApp	1865	625	15
	89.60%	88.20%	88.20%
Phonecall	1490	395	10
	71.60%	55.70%	58.80%
Video conferencing	504	165	4
	24.20%	23.30%	23.50%
Other	153	30	0
	7.40%	4.20%	0.00%

Table 58. Difference of opinion among leaders in relation of the teacher-teacher mode of communication.



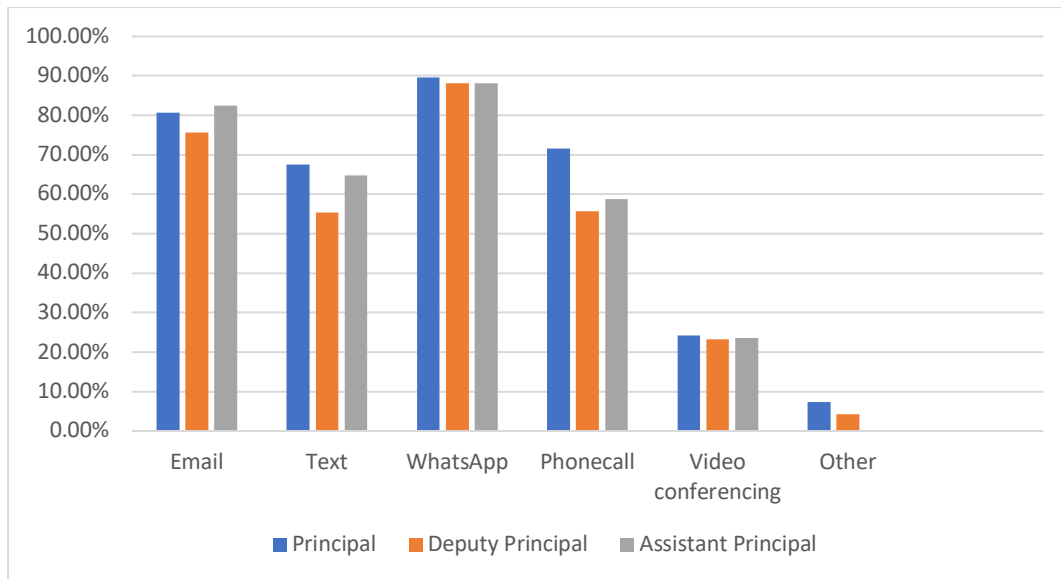


Figure 61. Difference of opinion among leaders in relation of the teacher-teacher mode of communication.

There are no significant differences of opinion among leaders in relation to teacher-teacher mode of communication.

#### 5.46 Teacher-Parent

Question:

Which of the following platform/s does your school use to connect with parents?

## 5.461 All schools

	n	%
Email	2210	78.7
One-way texting via school admin system	1448	51.6
One-way texting via TextaParent.ie	1179	42
An Post	540	19.2
School social media channels	869	30.9
Schoology	1	0
VS Ware	9	0.3
Other	640	22.8

Table 59. Platforms used in all schools to connect with parents.

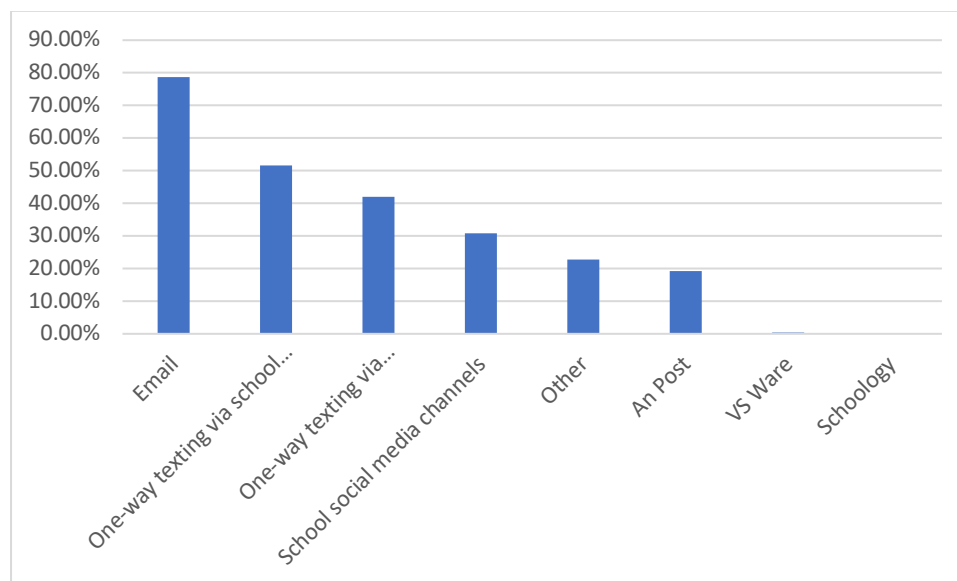


Figure 62. Platforms used in all schools to connect with parents.

Most schools use email as a preferred mode of contact with parents (78.7%, n=2,210), followed by one-way texting via school admin system (51.6%, n=1,448), one-way texting via TextaParent (42%, n=1,179) and school social media channels (30.9%, n=869). Apart from digital contact, 1 in 5 schools connect with parents via An Post (19.2%, n=540).

## 5.462 Difference across school types

	Mainstream	Mainstream with special classes	Special
Email	1704	397	109
	78.50%	77.50%	86.50%
One-way texting via school admin system	1068	330	50
	49.20%	64.50%	39.70%
One-way texting via TextaParent.ie	966	154	59
	44.50%	30.10%	46.80%
An Post	379	104	57
	17.50%	20.30%	45.20%
School social media channels	621	198	50
	28.60%	38.70%	39.70%
Schoology	1	0	0
	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
VS Ware	7	1	1
	0.30%	0.20%	0.80%
Other	479	129	32
	22.10%	25.20%	25.40%

Table 60. Platforms used across school types to connect with parents.

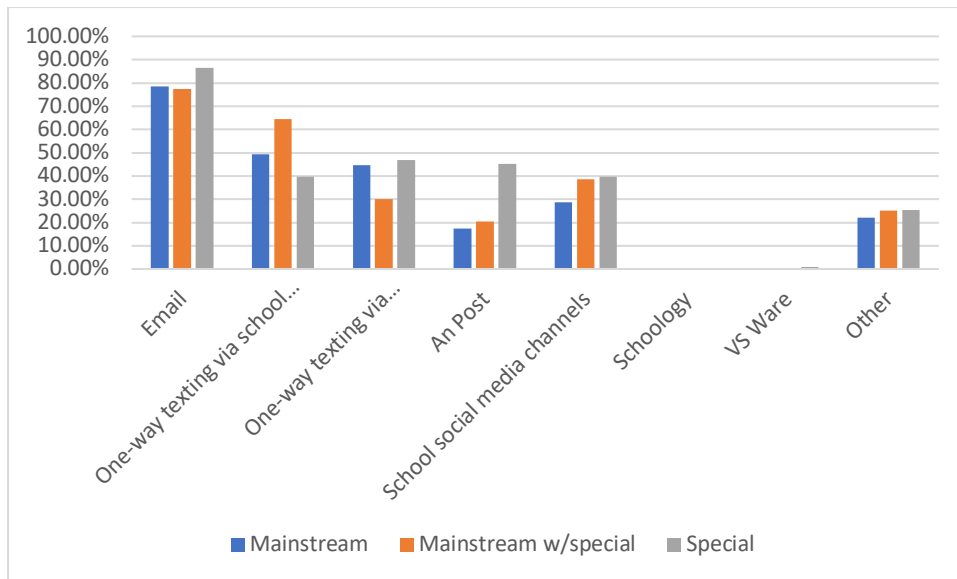


Figure 63. Platforms used across school types to connect with parents.

Special schools use predominantly email (86.5%, n=109), one-way texting via TextaParent (46.8%, n=59) and An Post (45.2%, n=57) as a way to communicate with parents. Whereas both Mainstream and Mainstream-with-special-classes schools use An Post less to communicate with parents.

## 5.463 Difference across school size

	Small	Medium	Large
Email	359	1406	445
	82.00%	78.70%	76.30%
One-way texting via school admin system	126	896	426
	28.80%	50.10%	73.10%
One-way texting via TextaParent.ie	227	833	119
	51.80%	46.60%	20.40%
An Post	104	336	100
	23.70%	18.80%	17.20%
School social media channels	115	542	212
	26.30%	30.30%	36.40%
Schoology	1	0	0
	0.20%	0.00%	0.00%
VS Ware	2	4	3
	0.50%	0.20%	0.50%
Other	115	381	144
	26.30%	21.30%	24.70%

Table 61. Platforms used across school size to connect with parents.

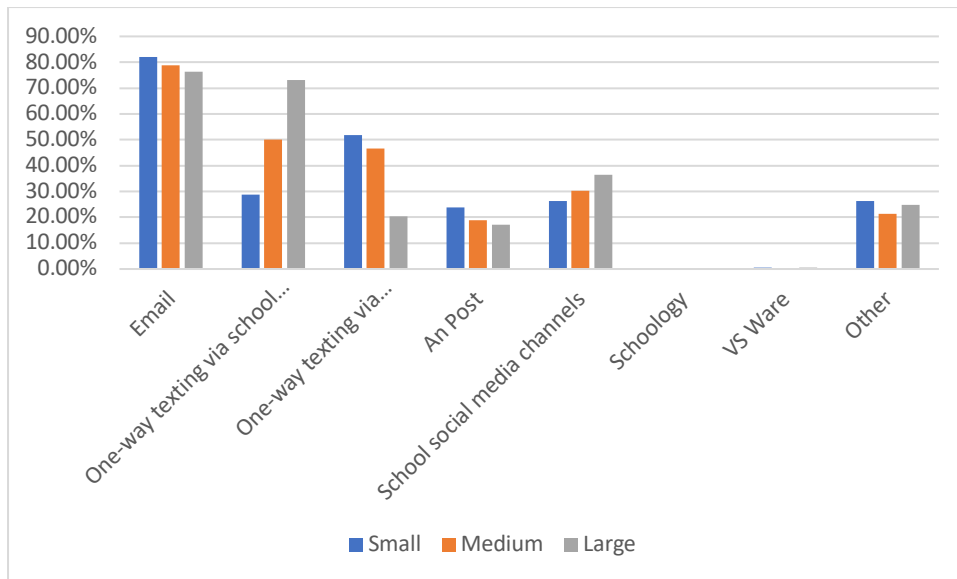


Figure 64. Platforms used across school size to connect with parents.

Large schools prefer to use email (46.6%, n=445) and one-way texting via school system (73.1%, n=426) to connect with parents. Whereas smaller schools are more reliant on email and one-way texting via TextaParent. Across all school sizes, the predominant mode of communication with parents is email.

## 5.464 Difference of opinion among leaders

	Principals	Deputy Principals	Assistant Principals
Email	1672	526	12
	80.30%	74.20%	70.60%
One-way texting via school admin system	1066	372	10
	51.20%	52.50%	58.80%
One-way texting via TextaParent.ie	860	312	7
	41.30%	44.00%	41.20%
An Post	434	103	3
	20.80%	14.50%	17.60%
School social media channels	658	203	8
	31.60%	28.60%	47.10%
Schoology	1	0	0
	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
VS Ware	4	5	0
	0.20%	0.70%	0.00%
Other	519	119	2
	24.90%	16.80%	11.80%

Table 62. Difference of opinion among leaders in relation to the platforms used to connect with parents.

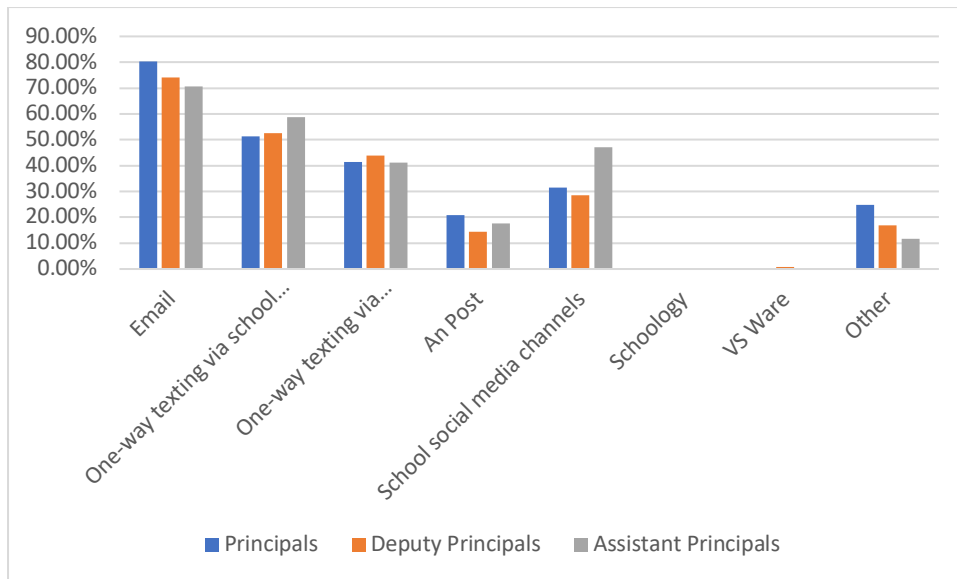


Figure 65. Difference of opinion among leaders in relation to the platforms used to connect with parents.

All roles are in agreement (within 10%) as to the mode of communication parents, except for the use of school social media where according to 47.1% Assistant Principals it is used by the school for communication, whereas approx. 30% of Principals and Deputy Principals claimed the same. This discrepancy may be due to the role Assistant Principals play in using social networks.



## 6. Social Engagement

### 6.1 Teacher-Pupil

#### 6.11 Frequency of interaction

On average, how often are teachers interacting with pupils?

If you selected other, please specify.

##### 6.111 All schools

	n	%
Daily	801	28.5
Once a week	1211	43.1
As per their normal class timetable (resource teaching)	38	1.4
Other	918	32.7

Table 63. Frequency of interaction for all schools.

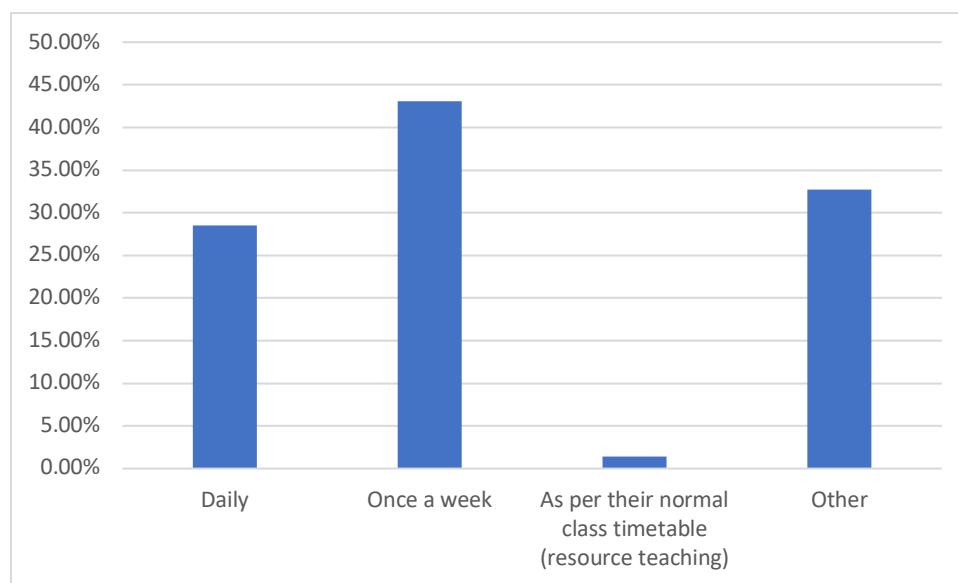


Figure 66. Table 64. Frequency of interaction for all schools.

In most of the respondents' schools, teachers are in touch with their pupils daily (28.5%, n=801) or once a week (43.1%, n=1,211). The details of "other" option for frequency of contact is recorded in section 6.115.

6.112 Difference across school types

	Mainstream	Mainstream with special classes	Special schools
Daily	611 28.20%	153 29.90%	37 29.40%
Once a week	942 43.40%	224 43.80%	45 35.70%
As per their normal class timetable (resource teaching)	27 1.20%	9 1.80%	2 1.60%
Other	713 32.90%	155 30.30%	50 39.70%

Table 65. Difference across school types in frequency of interaction.

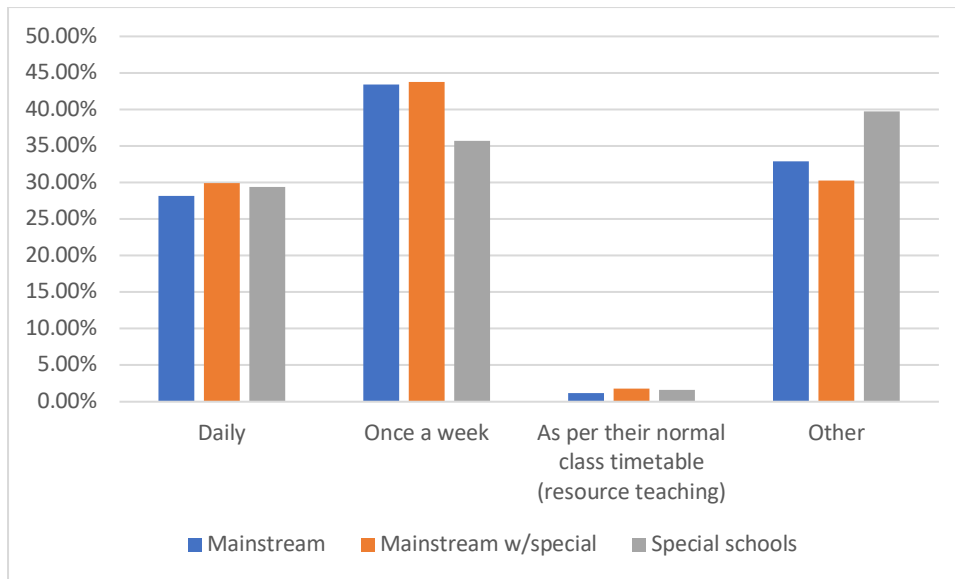


Figure 67. Difference across school types in frequency of interaction.

The option selected as most frequently applied by the Mainstream and Mainstream-with-special-class schools is a once-a-week interaction (43%, n=1,166), followed by daily contact (approx.30% of schools). On the other hand, 40% of the Special schools selected “other” type of feedback the details of which are in section 6.115.

6.113 Difference across school size

	Small	Medium	Large
Daily	130	490	181
	29.70%	27.40%	31.00%
Once a week	159	823	229
	36.30%	46.10%	39.30%
As per their normal class timetable (resource teaching)	1	24	13
	0.20%	1.30%	2.20%
Other	162	564	192
	37.00%	31.60%	32.90%

Table 66. Difference across school size in frequency of interaction.

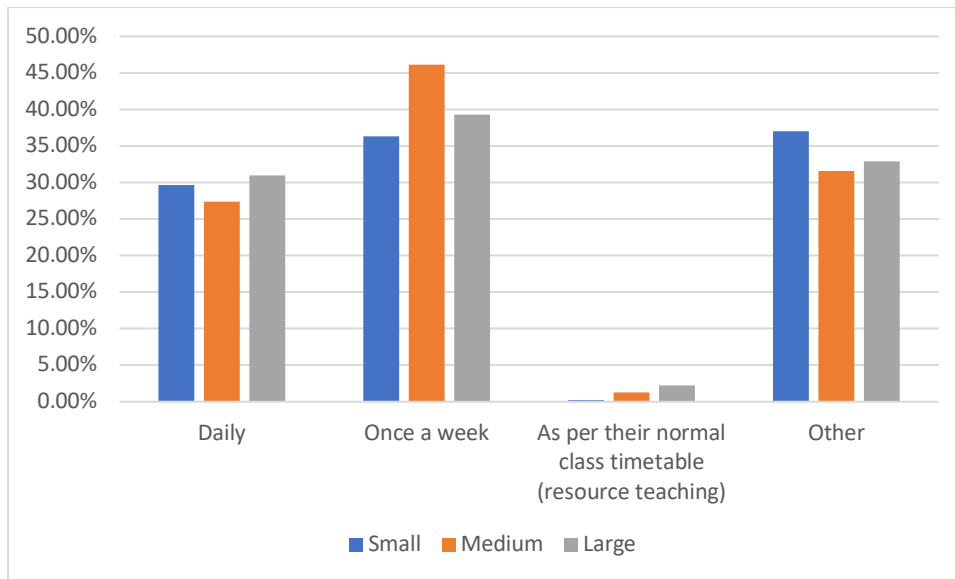


Figure 68. Difference across school size in frequency of interaction.

There are no significant differences between various size schools that go beyond 10% in relation to the frequency of teachers’ interaction with pupils.

6.114 Difference of opinion among leaders

	Principal	Deputy Principal	Assistant Principal
Daily	605 29.10%	190 26.80%	6 35.30%
Once a week	906 43.50%	299 42.20%	6 35.30%
As per their normal class timetable (resource teaching)	31 1.50%	7 1.00%	0 0.00%
Other	671 32.20%	242 34.10%	5 29.40%

Table 67. Difference of opinion among leaders in relation to the frequency of interaction in their schools.

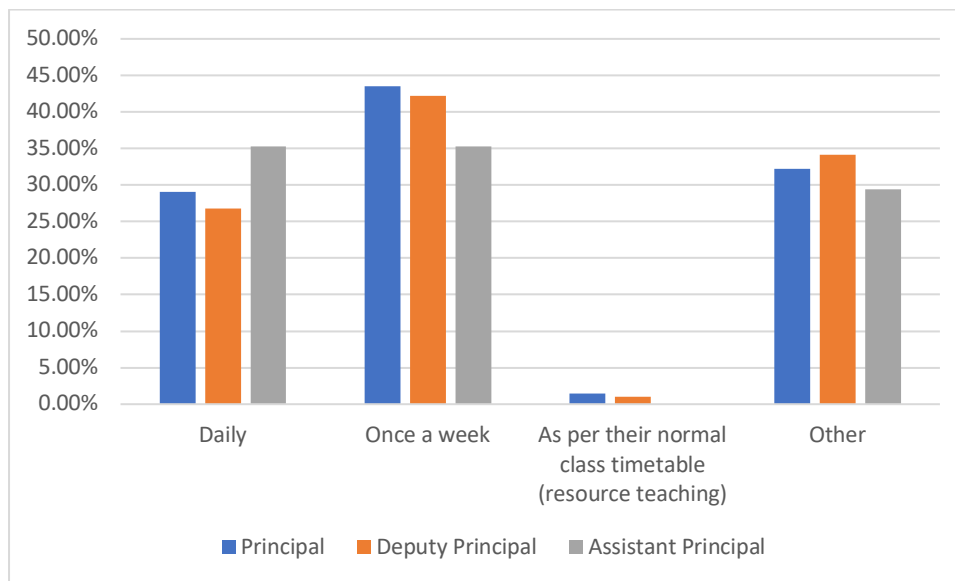


Figure 69. Difference of opinion among leaders in relation to the frequency of interaction in their schools.

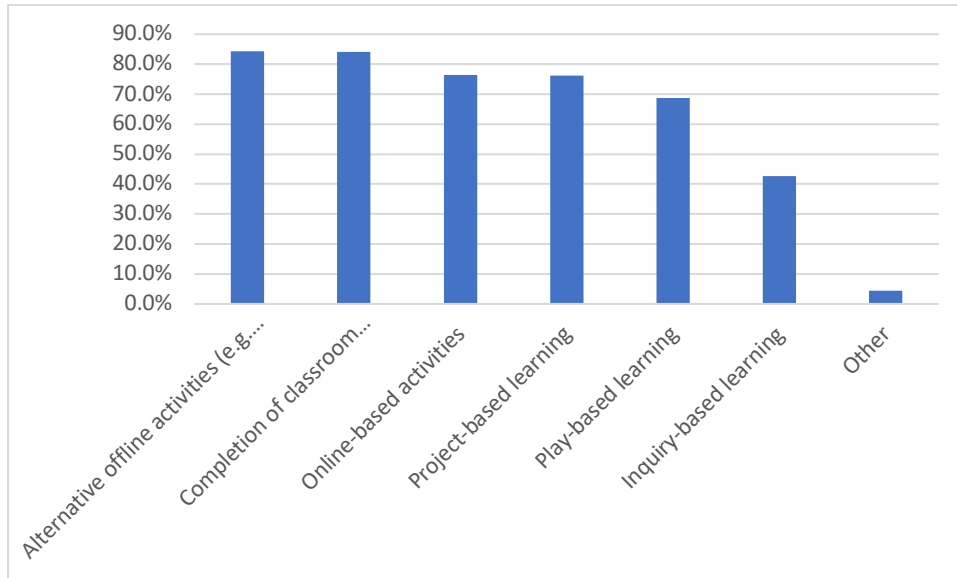
There are no significant differences of opinion among leaders that go beyond 10% in relation to the frequency of interaction in their schools.

## 6.12 Method of engagement

### 6.121 All schools

Method of engagement	n	%
Completion of classroom textbooks/workbooks	2358	84
Project-based learning	2139	76.2
Online-based activities	2146	76.4
Alternative offline activities (e.g. reading, baking, writing)	2363	84.2
Inquiry-based learning	1199	42.7
Play-based learning	1933	68.8
Other	125	4.5

Table 68. Method of engagement across all schools.



*Figure 70. Method of engagement across all schools.*

The most prevalent method of engaging pupils in distance learning activities is via alternative online activities, such as reading, baking or writing (84.2% (n=2,363), followed by the completion of classroom workbooks/textbooks (84%, n=2358), online-based activities (76.4%, n=2,146), project-based learning (76.2%, n=n=2139), play-based learning (68.8%, n=1,933), inquiry-based learning (42.7%, n=1,199) and other.

## 6.122 Difference across school-type

Method of engagement	Mainstream		
	Mainstream	with special	Special
<hr/>			
Completion of classroom			
textbooks/workbooks	1886	409	63
	87.00%	79.90%	50.00%
Project-based learning	1678	414	47
	77.40%	80.90%	37.30%
Online-based activities	1658	403	85
	76.40%	78.70%	67.50%
Alternative offline activities (e.g.			
reading, baking, writing)	1823	449	91
	84.00%	87.70%	72.20%
Inquiry-based learning	933	244	22
	43.00%	47.70%	17.50%
Play-based learning	1465	382	86
	67.50%	74.60%	68.30%
Other	81	26	18
	3.70%	5.10%	14.30%

*Table 69. Difference in the methods of engaging students across school types.*

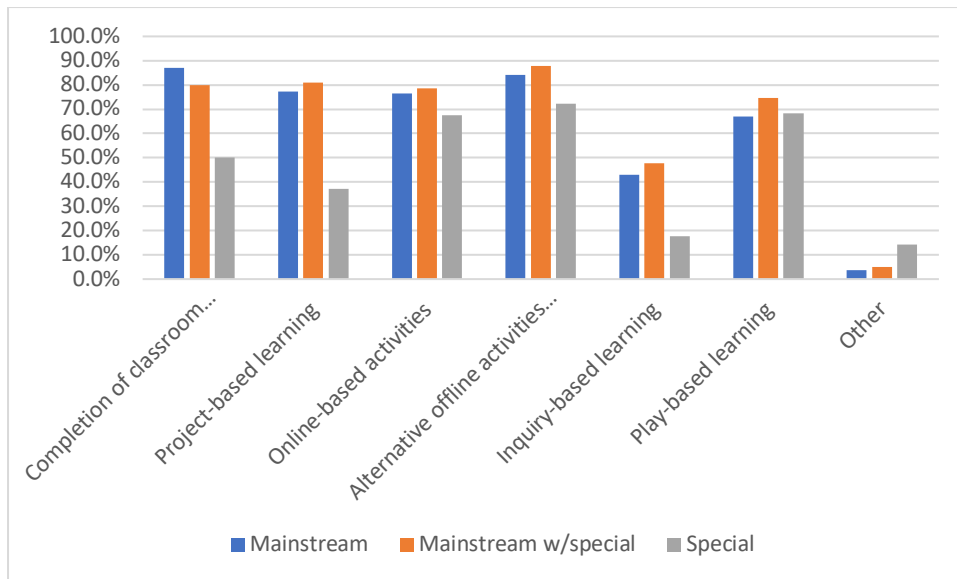


Figure 71. Difference in the methods of engaging students across school types.

Whilst there are similarities in the percentage of school leaders reporting preference for the method of engaging pupils in Mainstream- and Mainstream-with-special-classes schools, some differences were found between both types of mainstream schools and special schools.

Only half of the special schools arranged for pupils to complete classroom textbooks/workbooks, whereas, 8 or 9 out of 10 mainstream schools engaged their pupils this way. Two other striking differences are project-based learning, whereas only 37% of special schools arranged this method for their pupils, in comparison to 77-81% of the mainstream schools; and only 18% of special schools arranged inquiry-based method of learning for their pupils, whereas the percentage for mainstream schools ranges between 43% and 48%. Also, when all three schools are compared, special schools are showing the lowest prevalence of using most of the above-mentioned methods and significantly more of them noted they are using “other” methods of engagement.



## 6.1221 Comments about special school method of engagement

As the Special Class Teacher for MGLD, I create individual work for each child.

Special Class teachers have prepared packs specific to the learning needs of their pupils.

Individual programmes for pupils -suggested activities sent to parents.

## 6.123 Difference across school-size

Method of engagement	Small	Medium	Large
<hr/>			
Completion of classroom			
textbooks/workbooks	366	1532	460
	83.60%	85.80%	78.90%
Project-based learning	271	1385	483
	61.90%	77.50%	82.80%
Online-based activities	314	1362	470
	71.70%	76.30%	80.60%
Alternative offline activities (e.g.			
reading, baking, writing)	351	1491	521
	80.10%	83.50%	89.40%
Inquiry-based learning	144	741	314
	32.90%	41.50%	53.90%
Play-based learning	270	1241	422
	61.60%	69.50%	72.40%
Other	18	80	27
	4.10%	4.50%	4.60%

*Table 70. Difference in the methods of engaging students across school size.*

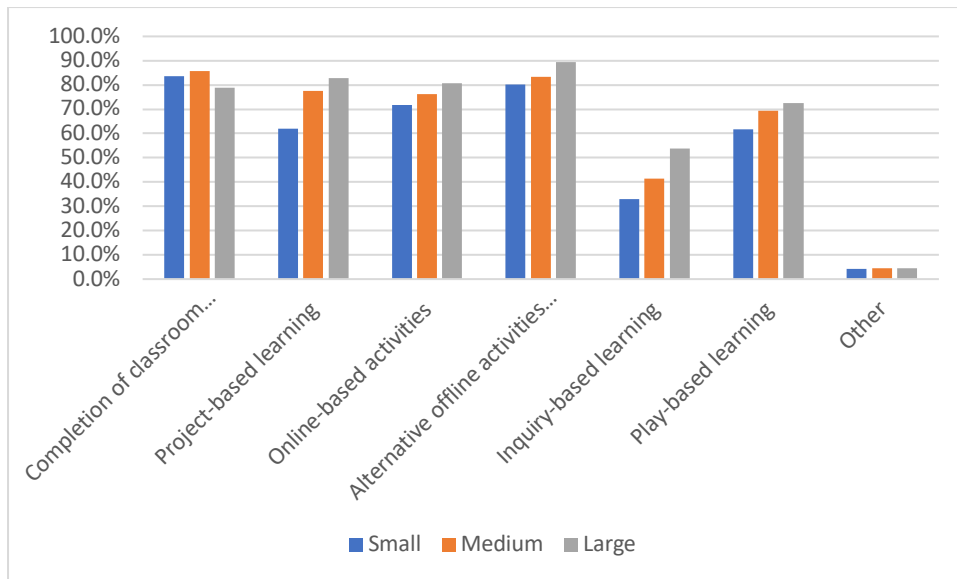


Figure 72. Difference in the methods of engaging students across school size.

In comparison to small and medium-size schools, large schools reported using more methods of engagement across the board, as more participants selected the variety of methods used in their school. This could be due to the individual teacher preference and the larger number of staff in large schools. The only exception to this was the completion of classroom textbooks/workbooks, which the other two categories of school have scored higher on. The most frequently used method of engagement with pupils in smaller schools was the completion of classroom textbooks and workbooks (83.6%, n=366) followed by alternative offline activities, such as baking, writing, reading (80.1%, n=351). The same pattern continued in the medium-size schools with the completion of classroom textbooks scoring the highest (85.7%, n= 1,532), followed by alternative offline activities (83.4%, n=1,491). However, the pattern changed for the large schools, 9 of 10 of which exercised the alternative offline activities (89.4%, n=521), followed by project-based learning (82.8%, n=483), online-based activities (80.6%, n=470) and other methods, the prevalence of which was below 80%.

## 6.124 Difference of opinion between roles

Method of engagement	Principals	Deputy Principals	Assistant
			Principals
<hr/>			
Completion of classroom			
textbooks/workbooks	1752	594	12
	84.20%	83.80%	70.60%
Project-based learning	1631	495	13
	78.40%	69.80%	76.50%
Online-based activities	1590	544	12
	76.40%	76.70%	70.60%
Alternative offline activities (e.g.			
reading, baking, writing)	1757	592	14
	84.40%	83.50%	82.40%
Inquiry-based learning	914	277	8
	43.90%	39.10%	47.10%
Play-based learning	1454	469	10
	69.90%	66.10%	58.80%
Other	108	17	0
	5.20%	2.40%	0.00%

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Table 71. *Method of engagement as reported by participants holding various roles.*

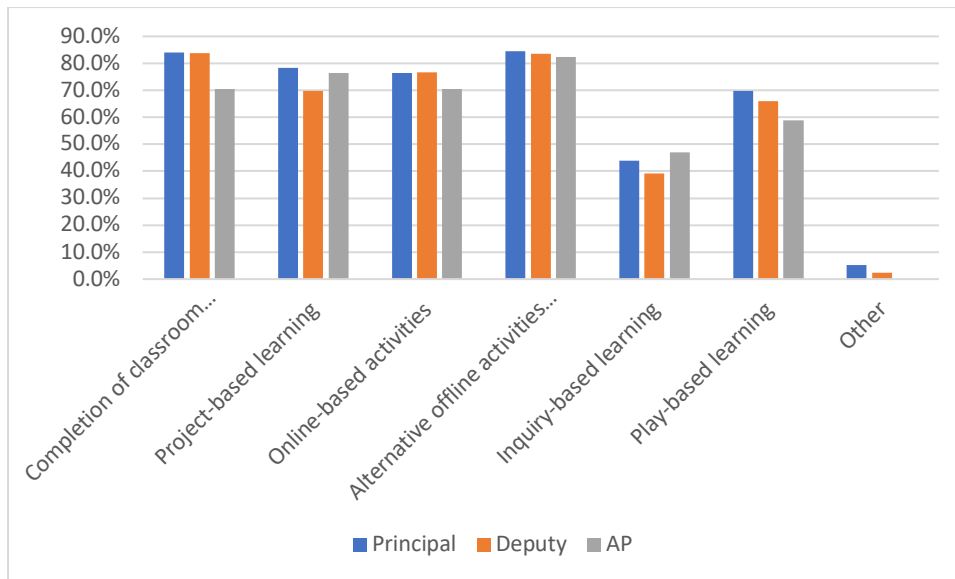


Figure 73. Method of engagement as reported by participants holding various roles

All three groups are reporting similar methods of engagement with pupils with disparity of views no larger than 10%, except for 2 categories. Regarding the completion of classroom textbooks/workbooks, 84.1% of Principals reported it to be the school's method of engagement, whereas almost 15% fewer Assistant Principals claimed the same (70.6%). The second category of method where disparity was larger than 10% was play-based learning. According to 69.8% of Principals, it was a method used in their school, whereas 58.8% of Assistant Principals reported the same.

#### 6.125 Comments about teaching strategies

- Some schools set up daily routines for pupils

*We are promoting PE with Joe Wicks to get pupils up and active Monday to Friday and provide a starting point and structure to their day. Also, David Walliams audio books at 11 again to provide some structure*

*A Good Idea is emailed to each family every day. Exercise recommended each day.*

*Well-being activities such as gardening and keeping daily diaries and writing about their feelings and writing to loved ones such as Grandparents, being POSITIVE and MINDFUL with lots of positive affirmations being emailed to the children regularly*

- Relationship-building with peers and family is encouraged

*Asked to send work in via email to be put into website to look at peers' work*

*We have asked parents to simply spend time with their children talking laughing and having fun with emphasis on the skills they learn in this being important and transferrable when they finally get back to school. Relationships with significant others being key to growth and education-engagement, listening, participation and social skills.*

*Increased family-based learning and interacting*

- Competitive engagement is introduced

*We are running a school poetry and short story competition.*

*Children have been set challenges and are asked to send photos to school via WhatsApp once completed*

*Creative challenges. e.g. make up a knock-knock joke and illustrate it*

- Physical activity is promoted by many:

*Fundamental movement support through activity such as ten at ten etc....*

*Active homework, skipping skills to achieve Bronze, Silver or Gold Award*

*Exercise online, Joe Wicks, yoga etc. Infant teacher set up a drive thru library in school shelter on one day. Families to choose books one at a time to avoid contact.*

- Some schools practice a “business as usual” approach

*Teachers are sending homework daily ranging from completing the work they were doing in class.*

*Science experiments that can be done from home. Art and PE (go noodle) activities.*

*Homework baskets sent home*

- Some schools provided tools, but are not engaging with students

*This has not been happening in our school to date. we have furnished websites etc. however we have not followed up on engagement to date.*

*We have provided all the tools and links and suggestions but it is ultimately down to the parents (primary educator) to do the work when and if they feel they are up to it... stressful times for a lot of parents financially/socially/having lots of children not having enough computers having to work from home and run a household. Each family context will be completely different*

- Teaching approach changing

*As the weeks go on we hope to add in more structure, and it would be super to facilitate classes virtually but it's a steep Learning curve for us all. I have an MSc in IT in education so this a great opportunity for me to research and learn and advise colleagues. However, we must be aware that not all teachers are of the same mind and we need to respect that.*

*Offline for the first two weeks. After that it's a mix of book work that is sent home via lists of what to do and online links to activities linked to concepts to be covered. Staff are researching the best links etc. daily and sharing with each other via our cloud-based storage*

*Are pupils will engage with all of the above over the coming weeks as they collect the work set by the teacher and organised by their caregiver along with the activities their caregivers will organise and decide on.*

### 6.13 Practical science

Almost half of all respondents left this section empty or said N/A. This may be because they felt it was not applicable to primary school, or as one respondent said, it is too early to answer this question. Where schools answered, they listed a variety of options for practical work in science.

- Too soon to answer this question/ not applicable

*All of these questions are too early. We closed school without any distance learning plan. It is now assumed that every school had a plan in place. I am not a class teacher, so I know various class teachers assign science experiments. They may not have started yet, but we are only in week two.*

*When in school all scientific experiments are 'hands-on' practical classes. In my 35 years of teaching I have never had experience of a pandemic like this - so in answer to this I imagine pupils can watch YouTube videos of practical experiments.*

- Good examples of what schools are doing in science education

*Lots of exploration through play and discovery.*

*Experiments being carried out and results photographed/ recorded and posted online.*

*Encouraged to design and make using Lego. Project work and suggested offline activities and websites.*

*Use of designer minds website and challenge cards. Use of prim ed stem cards. Use of activity grid created by class teachers.*

*Home based experiments that are easily access with materials readily found at home*

*Given a daily challenge which they can show off on the schools Facebook via their teacher.*

*Project suggestions sent home and advice regarding online platforms.*

*We would email activities to parents to do with them and ask for photos and a piece of writing or picture from the child showing ye activity being carried out.*

*Using materials in their home e.g. kitchen, exploring their garden etc.*



*Sent out via email, worksheets provided, and simple experiments asked to be discussed at home or practiced if possible.*

*Scientific Education is primarily focused on the world outside, looking at nature, observation of seasonal changes, encouraging gardening etc.*

*Teachers are asking the pupils to engage in science experiments/ design tasks with the help of their family members. Questions are to be answered or pictures are to be taken and sent back to the teacher.*

*Online videos. Experiment challenges sent home.*

*They are given experiments on a sheet and asked to complete at home. Some online links provide good experiments. Pupils can send pictures in of experiments and type up their experiments on Google classroom.*

*We have encouraged play, outdoor activities (adhering to covid guidelines), healthy living.....*

*Baking recipes, gardening ideas, fun practical experiments to get out at home using items found around the house etc. Children forward photos of their work to teachers for positive feedback.*

*Encouraging parents to use concrete materials for measures in Maths, completing basics experiments from science curriculum at home.*

*Children are engaging with science at an age appropriate level, often in combination with other subjects such as oral language and other activities such as baking or art.*

*Daily STEM challenges on Seesaw and pictures / comments recorded on school padlet so all classes can see other classes work. LEGO challenges, green mile challenge encouraging pupils to pick up litter on their walks, art projects etc. all uploaded to either padlet pages or seesaw. Active homework also given with video clips to support, self-assessment pages given to record and track progress / effort.*

*A list of experiments/inquiry-based learning was provided. Teachers have also sent links to videos that children can watch and try out. Children have sent back photos of their work or have written about it in their SESE copy and sent it by email. For example, children in infants exploring 3d shapes and engineering by engaging in "junk art" projects as they would during playtime in school for maths teachers have sent suggestions around baking or scavenger hunts and other practical mathematical activities. Teachers are using resources provided for Engineers Week, Maths week, Science week etc*

#### 6.14 Feedback provided to pupils to ensure continuity of learning

Question:

What kind of feedback are pupils in your school being provided with to ensure the continuity of learning?

##### 6.141 Summary

The survey was conducted early in the process, so most feedback noted is through the online platforms, with many schools resorting to the old-fashioned letter home to encourage

students. It will be interesting to follow up on these and see if they were impactful. The encouraging data here is the emphasis on well-being and on encouraging pupils to learn new skills and new ways of doing things.

#### 6.142 Sample quotes

*Letters from individual teachers to classes.*

*Emphasis now is on doing as well as they can. Nobody is to be under pressure. We all have greater things to worry about right now.*

*Comments on their work via SeeSaw*

*As well as daily lessons the children receive positive and affirmative messages from their teachers and a weekly message from the Principal.*

*None. We believe that primary school children are unlikely to make any significant advances through the curriculum without the teacher in the classroom setting. We hope the work we provide will keep their current skills up to date.*

*Very little - this is a huge change for my teachers. I am trying to bring them along the road of engaging via the app with pupils. There was some resistance at first but now they are all engaging with it.*

*Email supports, always to parents.*

*Each teacher writes an encouraging letter at the start of each week to their class Via the school website and also a schedule of work for the week.*

*Children receive feedback from their teachers based on work submitted.*

*Arrangements will be made for completed work to be dropped off at school for correction at the end of this week. feedback will be given then.*

*Formative assessment of work submitted via comments and voice recording. Email and phone call if needed.*

*We wrote a personalised letter to each child encouraging them to work on different areas, to help out at home and to play outside where possible.*

*We allocate offline and online work. The level of online engagement has been very low to date, but this is just the second week. Therefore, feedback is minimal at this stage.*

*They are receiving email support and phone calls on occasion.*

*Daily message re well-being from principal on school website.*

*They are being advised to keep occupied with life skills- sewing, baking, cooking meals, making their own lunch and then some schoolwork daily at a scheduled time.*

*Positive. All the teachers have elaborated on the importance of us working together but keeping our distance to their pupils. The importance of being good for parents and to continue schoolwork as if they were in the classroom with their teachers.*

*Feedback on work assigned on Google Classroom.*

*Through Google Classroom teachers can provide feedback for students on work, they are being encouraged to continue working.*

*This has not started yet. As a staff we are still trying to figure this out. These are young children we're talking about. Online feedback is possibly not the best way to go.*

#### 6.15 Engaging with less connected and motivated pupils

Question:

What actions has your school taken to communicate with the pupils who are less engaged or less reachable?

#### 6.151 Summary

Schools are using everything at their disposal to try to communicate with the less engaged but in some cases, it is not possible to reach people. Throughout the data, the importance of the Home School Community Liaison (HSCL), Special Education Needs (SEN) and School Completion Team (SCT) people was very evident. However, here also we see a digital divide between the schools who can give Chromebook to students and who have set up their schools on SeeSaw and other platforms and the schools where they are relying on posting out

material and making phone calls. It is evident that the majority of respondents are trying to encourage participation from all their cohort, but this is not always possible.

#### 6.152 Sample quotes

- Reaching the unreachable
- Communicating with SEN pupils
- Role of technology in communicating with pupils
  
- Reaching the unreachable

*Provide differentiated material. Check to see if they need addition support. Answers provided. Doing our best to support parents. Lots of pressure on families at the moment. This situation is still evolving.*

*Specific programmes have been created for certain children. Extra check in with parents of these children.*

*We did up food and work packs and the Aisling project delivered them.*

*Unknown no. of pupils as of yet as work-packs for first school closure were only sent out last week and those work-packs were for approx. two weeks so no update as of yet.*

*We are posting work directly to homes.*

*Hands on work has been posted home. Parents have been contacted via phone and email where possible.*

*Ongoing - text messages and phone calls to parents. It is challenging as we need to respect personal situations and cannot "make" families engage in distant learning.*

*Parents have been contacted and discussions have been held to resolve issues.*

*They have learning packs. SCP contacted children but parents have said that they are fine. I have posted work and sent work home on the 12th. Everyone was given an option to sign into Google classroom not all have taken up this option. They have received texts etc. and my number in order to set it up but have not availed of the opportunity.*

*Parents have come to school to collect packs with pencils, erasers, pens, colours and textbooks with short with work set. Physical distancing implemented.*

*Check in every day... encourage ASD on what's app FaceTime... it's difficult to engage some pupils from home at any level... at times.*

*SEN teachers communicate directly via email with them.*

- Communicating with SEN pupils

*Our SCT project workers and HSCL teacher have been in contact with children from target lists or vulnerable backgrounds and have sent kits both educational and entertaining to them.*

*SEN teachers have been allocated a cohort of pupils each and are communicating with parents of these pupils directly. This is the case for our ASD classes also.*

*We have posted work to these pupils and provided the school mobile as a contact, differentiated work given, SET team have specific email contact.*

*SET team to contact those homes. HSCL to drop resources.*

*HSCL teacher has provided packs which she has distributed to children who do not have resources.*

*Special Ed team messaged all these children individually with very specific work appropriate to each child's needs.*

*SEN staff are putting plans in place.*

*HSCL and Learning Support teachers and differentiated work.*

*I rang parents of all children with SNA access. SNA can also liaise with them. SEN team in touch with parents of children they engage with.*



- Role of technology in communicating with pupils

*We are putting google classroom in place in the coming week. This should identify children who are not engaging. We are also sensitive to families who have lost their jobs, and are in crisis, and we do not want the work set out to add further stress.*

*Check in on Google Classroom and feedback on Class DoJo*

*I will send a newsletter each week addressed to the children, to encourage engagement.*

*Teachers have been mindful of these children in their correspondence. All children are reachable via their parents, as 100% of the parents use Aladdin Connect, so at least we are assured that everyone is receiving our messages.*

*We send a cover letter via email with all work sent home emphasising the importance of reading daily, daily physical exercise and daily social games and activities in the home such as board games, playing with toys and practical tasks such as gardening and cooking. We are depending on parents.*

*Follow up with children through SeeSaw. Encouraging voice note and encouraging use of online programme where teacher can follow their level of engagement.*

*Contact with all parents whose children are not engaging online. If it is a question of lack of technology we provide Chromebook from the school. If it is just non-engagement - encouragement is given.*

*We are just starting the systems where students will be engaging with an online platform so will then be able to see if any child is not engaging and then we will follow up with parents to see if we can help.*

#### *6.16 Unique approaches with groups*

Question:

What specific approaches, if any, do you recommend for teachers teaching a specific group of students, such as younger pupils, older pupils, multi-grade classes?

*I genuinely think providing work in a fun engaging way with very little pressure on children to complete all work assigned. Children's happiness is far more important for the next two weeks at least while the news etc. is affecting them. Hopefully when things calm down we could concentrate more on learning. Must be very hard for parents trying to work from home being given huge amounts of work to do with their children especially if only one tablet laptop is available in the house. I really think challenges involving thinking skills using household objects etc. is far more beneficial.*

*Very young pupils are getting a daily email. Older pupils are able to work for a few days using a timetable. SEN children have received visual timetables and contact through email from their Special Education Teacher (SET) and have individual programmes of work.*

*Everyone is under a lot of pressure at the moment. It is important not to add to that pressure. Parents are not expected to be teachers. It is important to be aware of individual circumstances. There may be many children in a family, only one computer. Poor WIFI etc. Pupils may not be motivated. Young children in particular tend to contextualise, we do that in*

*school. If it becomes a battle ground, this is bad for learning. It is important to remember that children learn from play and from the environment around them and from each other.*

*We cannot replicate the classroom at home we can be there for parents and pupils to support them. We can provide learning for them in a variety of ways as best as we can in a manner appropriate to their age and understanding.*

*Has to be manageable at home allowing for differentiated resources, interactive, tasks set at level where they can be further developed by able children.*

*It really depends on your context. SeeSaw is a great platform, but a lot depends on infrastructure and connectivity in your area.*

*Less is more. Initially we had assigned too much a full school day of learning and parents were overwhelmed. We now assign less, and they seem to be managing and engaging much better.*

*Very difficult in primary school.... especially the younger classes. We try to make the parents and children not feel under pressure, to do what they can, infants should play, do art activities make jigsaws, play dough Lego etc.... no need for pages and pages of work in my opinion. We encourage them to help at home etc. Lots of learning opportunities for them. Even in their gardens they can do minibeast hunts, watch flowers etc. grow....*

*Project work for the older classes Ability to share pictures and voice notes for the younger classes draw from the home first rather than trying to recreate a daily school at home not sustainable for parents, students or teachers. Try to communicate via video premade or your*

*own recordings facilitate two-way communication between staff and children. Take from there and see how it goes day by day.*

*Younger classes are a lot more difficult to plan for in this situation as they require more guided learning. I thought google classroom would be my saviour in this situation but most of my students couldn't access it, so I've had to resort to me uploading videos of myself teaching to YouTube and using phone and email to communicate with my pupils*

*To be very mindful of the work selected from what is remaining in the yearly plans to try and choose what is best suited to home learning rather than sticking to a previously agreed order.*

*I teach older pupils. They tend to like to see how they are progressing with work. Self-assessing and self-correction was always done in my classroom. The children knew the drill red pen and highlighter, anything they got wrong they highlighted it and self-corrected. Each week I send the answers for each subject area to the parents, I ask the parents to ensure the work has been completed before handing over the answer sheet. This way the child can see that the work they are doing is still been checked and assessed, as otherwise they may lose interest.*

*We are multi grade two teacher school. We know our own classes so are setting the work accordingly. The only thing we have planned being a two-teacher school is each of us is making a plan for May and sharing it with the other and sharing our Seesaw log in so if the other gets sick one teacher can continue to support the whole school.*

*Focus on straightforward literacy and numeracy that parents can support children with.*

*Provide lots of breaks. Encourage active learning, baking, reading project work where possible.*

*Have to take each group into context Start small... make steps to engage pupils. Ensuring*

*consistency and ability to keep tasks and programmes going long term is essential. Have*

*everyone work in teams so if someone has to step back school activities can continue.*

### 6.17 Concerns raised by pupils

Question:

What concerns, if any, have students raised with you and your team in recent weeks?

#### 6.171 Summary

There were many responses that talked about how 6<sup>th</sup> class students were very sad and concerned that they would not get back to school to be together again ahead of the transition into secondary school. A lot of respondents had not got any contact from their pupils as it was only ten days since the closure, however, many had heard from the pupils' parents and made the following observations. In over 2000 comments, the main thread running through the comments was the fact that young people were missing the social contact with friends, missing sport, missing the events such as Holy Communion and Confirmation, Féile, tournaments and trips. I think we can all imagine how impactful this is on young people at a time when their families have many other worries.

6.172 Sample quotes

*Pupils have emailed to tell me that they miss school and their friends. They are happy that they are safe at home but would like things to be normal again.*

*They are afraid of what is happening in the world, that they can't see their friends, go out and train. Parents are under pressure, they feel this. They don't know if other children will be academically miles ahead or not when they return. Mam and Dad can't help with Irish or Maths. There's only one computer between several children, no internet access. They missed their Confirmation. When will that be?*

*Missing being in school. [over 1000 principals mentioned this about their pupils]*

*6th class worried they may not get back*

*They miss their friends, 6th class fearful they will not get back before end of June. Missing inter schools' football and hurling leagues*

*6th class worried about transitioning to post primary*

*Fear of what may lie ahead for families; 6th class being prepared for secondary school; huge disappointment at the prospect of missing out on school trips etc.*

*Not being able to meet their friends. Not being able to play sport. The cancellation of events like Féile.*

*They are so bored and lonely. They miss school a lot.*

*Missing friends and the social aspect of school life*

*The 6th class girls are concerned that they have missed their Confirmation (it was due to take place on March 13th) and they won't get to do the annual musical - devastating for them. No concerns about loss of teaching time!*

*6th class were concerned that their confirmation was not able to go ahead. I'm sure 2nd class will be likewise re their communion.*

*Students have raised concerns about not seeing their friends and not having the opportunity to chat in Irish Sign Language. Therefore, we are setting up video chats.*

*6th class worried about getting things done before secondary school. Concerns from classes 2nd and 6th re sacraments.*

## 6.2 Teacher-Parent

### 6.21 Strategy

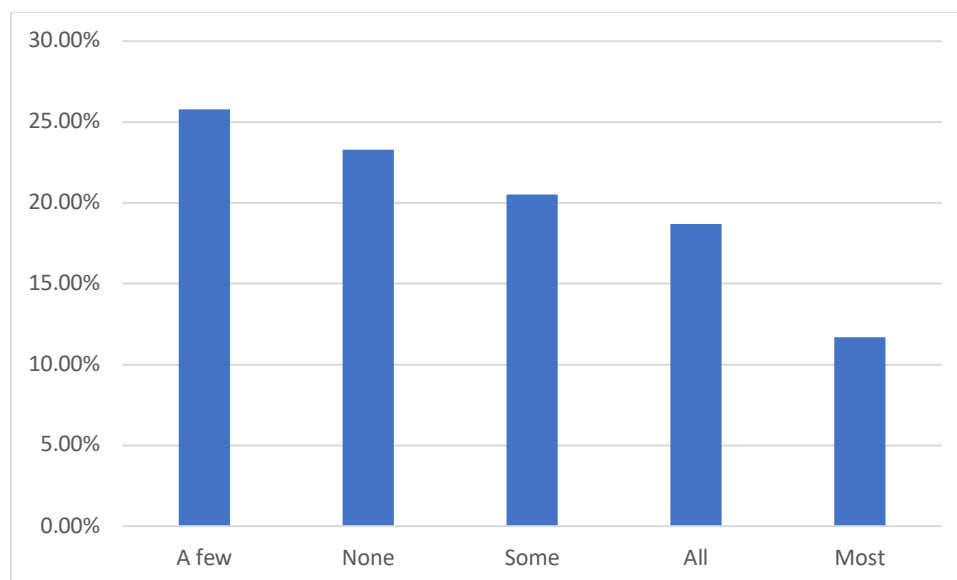
Question:

How many parents has your school made contact with to check whether the amount and pacing of work is suitable for them and pupils?

## 6.211 All schools

Proportion of parents	n	%
None	654	23.3
A few	724	25.8
Some	576	20.5
Most	328	11.7
All	526	18.7

*Table 72. The proportion of parents who were contacted by schools to check if the amount and pacing of work is suitable across all schools.*



*Figure 74. The proportion of parents who were contacted by schools to check if the amount and pacing of work is suitable across all schools.*

Majority of the schools contacted only a few (25.8%, n=724) parents or have not contacted any parents (23.3%, n=654) to check if the amount and pacing of work is suitable for both them and pupils. The survey was carried out one week after the school closure, therefore not all schools may have managed to contact all their parents.



6.212 Difference across school types

	Mainstream	Mainstream with special classes	Special
A few	544 25.10%	93 18.20%	17 13.50%
None	569 26.20%	142 27.70%	13 10.30%
Some	429 19.80%	127 24.80%	20 15.90%
All	234 10.80%	61 11.90%	33 26.20%
Most	394 18.20%	89 17.40%	43 34.10%

Table 73. A proportion of parents contacted to check if pacing is suitable across school types.

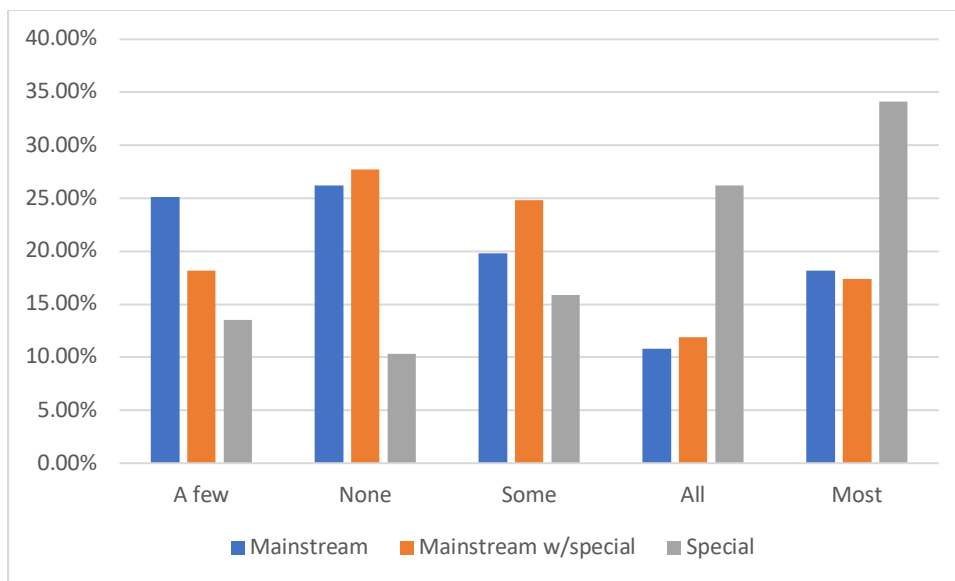


Figure 75. A proportion of parents contacted to check if pacing is suitable across school types.

More leaders of special schools reported that they have contacted either all (26.2%, n=33) or most (34.1%, n=43) of the parents to check if the pace is suitable for both parents and pupils. However, it was not the case with all special schools as a quarter of them also said they have either not contacted parents or contacted only a few. Across Mainstream and Mainstream-with-special-class schools, approximately quarter of them have not contacted parents to check the pacing.

*6.213 Difference across school size*

	Small	Medium	Large
A few	96 21.90%	436 24.40%	122 20.90%
None	83 18.90%	439 24.60%	202 34.60%
Some	46 10.50%	391 21.90%	139 23.80%
All	68 15.50%	210 11.80%	50 8.60%
Most	145 33.10%	311 17.40%	70 12.00%

*Table 74. A proportion of parents contacted to check if pacing is suitable across school size.*

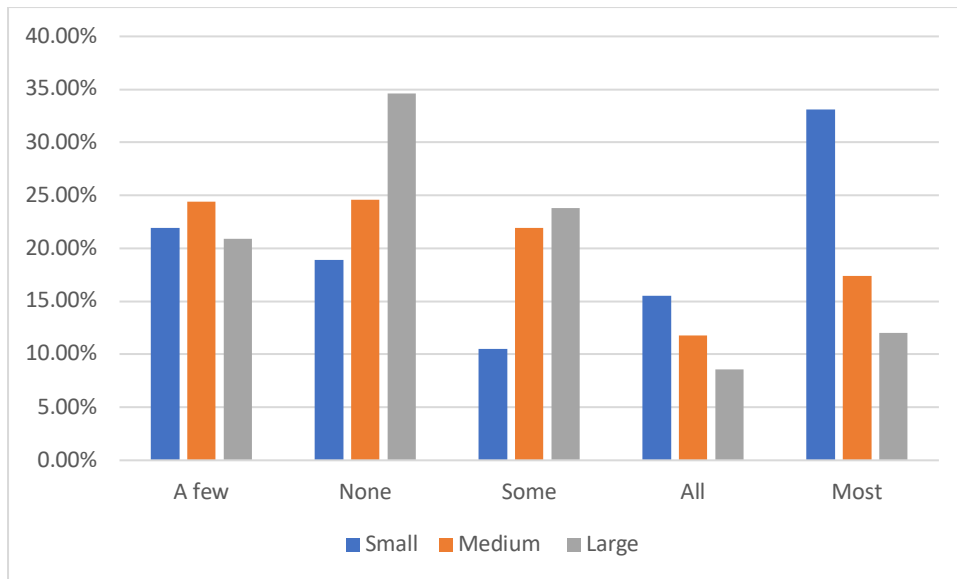


Figure 76. A proportion of parents contacted to check if pacing is suitable across school size.

Small schools were more likely to contact parents about the suitability of pacing (48.6%, n=213), whereas majority of large schools (55.5%, n=324) made no contact or contacted only a few parents.

6.214 Difference of opinion among leaders

	Principal	Deputy Principal	Assistant Principal
A few	480 23.10%	169 23.80%	5 29.40%
None	557 26.80%	164 23.10%	3 17.60%
Some	409 19.60%	166 23.40%	1 5.90%
All	235 11.30%	89 12.60%	4 23.50%
Most	401 19.30%	121 17.10%	4 23.50%

Table 75. Difference of opinion among leaders regarding a proportion of parents contacted to check if pacing is suitable.

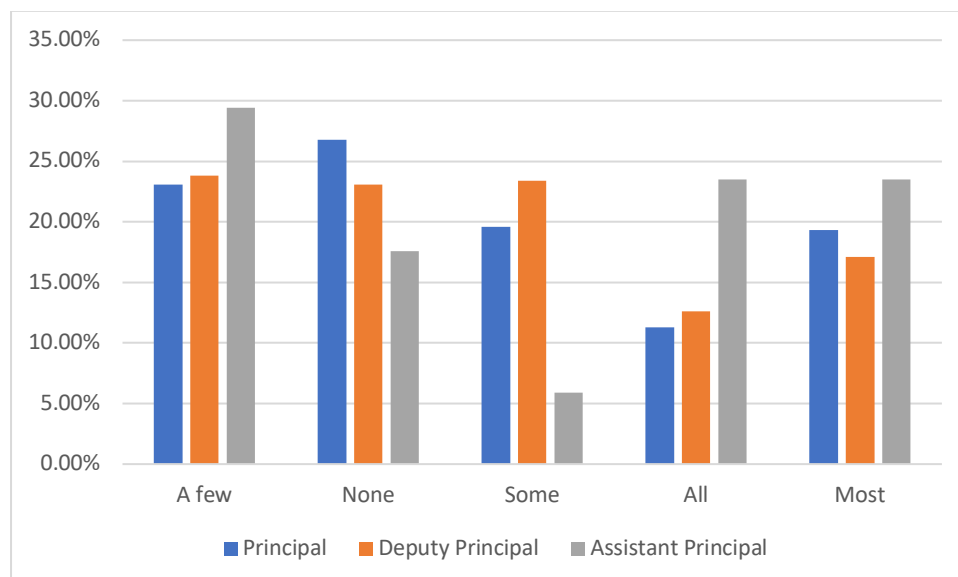


Figure 77. Difference of opinion among leaders regarding a proportion of parents contacted to check if pacing is suitable.

There were no significant differences in opinion among leaders about this.

## 6.22 Parental concerns

Question:

What concerns, if any, have parents raised in relation to supporting their children's learning?

### 6.221 Emerging themes

Open responses to this question fall under the following themes:

- Concerns over the children's wellbeing
- We are not teachers
- Concerns around ability
- Concerns around technology

### 6.222 Sample quotes

- Concerns over the children's well-being.... more than their learning!

This concern was the reply by one principal to this question:

*Schools are trying to get feedback from parents and to work with them at this time. However, not all parents have email, so many respondents talked about having to make a lot of phone calls to parents. The following advice from a school was well received by their pupils' families. Some very good advice here for going forward.*

*Reality is in most households there are enormous pressures to work from home to financially survive this and keep their families safe. They appreciate a work structure for the children but most appreciate acknowledgement and understanding from primary school about their struggles and reassurance that their children will not fall behind if they cannot do this work*

*because their teachers will be there to help them catch up when we are back in school. The biggest response and thank you I got from parents was to an email I sent them not to fight with their children about getting work done for teacher, instead to enjoy this time with their children create good memories with their children do whatever they enjoyed doing together because this could very well be the time their children remember as the best time of their life.*

*Only having once device at home so where there are siblings they were struggling with online work and wanted less links. Laptop was needed by parent working from home and not available for students. Too difficult to complete different work where there were siblings in same household especially when parent was also working from home. They asked for less work that initially assigned week one. And more streamlined across grades to allows siblings to work together.*

*Use of devices / screen time. Managing 3/4 children at home at the same time for learning. Their main concern is that the children are not overburdened with work. Parents have reported very stressful households. Most parents are happy to select from a menu of work. Suggestions of life-skills education i.e. cooking, gardening etc. are received very well. Many of these skills involve measuring etc.*

*Parents report that their children miss meeting their only friends, the staff, the bus to school and the daily routine.*

*Many parents are now working from home and finding it difficult to support their children's learning. Many also have more than one child so have completely different schoolwork*

*schedules to try and help their children complete. It is a very stressful time for parents, and many feel bombarded by all the information coming from online through social media.*

*Feeling overwhelmed feeling stressed as they are working from home also or trying to look after younger children or a number of children. Worried about them falling behind.*

*Realisation of challenges for children with learning difficulties and behavioural problems.*

*Having children of different age levels to deal with and keeping them on task. Some have reported feeling overwhelmed and have had to be guided to have short set times and only do what can be done. Keeping up with Gaeilge and maths particularly in older classes.*

*Communication is vital.*

*I sent an email yesterday to enquire after our pupils and families. Those who replied were very grateful for the words of reassurance that the work we sent home did not have to be completed in full, if at all. They are struggling to get their children to do the work, parents are trying to work and look after children of varying ages. None asked for more work. One commented how this was an ideal opportunity for children to learn for themselves.*

*- lack of time/energy/availability to facilitate pupil learning - desire to collect physical books from school, instead of using online versions - strong desire to support pupils and appreciation of school's work, but parents highlight their own lack of ability to focus and get through the work with their children - anxiety at not wanting their child to be left behind - anxiety around children who struggle academically already and aren't able/motivated to continue reading etc. alone. -lack of routine for children with special needs -lack of resources (educational toys, sensory room, pencil grip etc) for children with special needs - lack of Gaeilge ability in the household is proving difficult for parents to support children*

*(even though all activities can be done through English or Irish, parents put pressure on themselves to facilitate the work in Irish and are demotivated by lack of ability)*

*I have received very little feedback to date. I cannot push this. I have offered to support and facilitate in any way I can. Giving parents time, I will go to school on my own where they can ring in or request a phone call. Print work and leave outside to value and practice social distancing. There is a myriad of issues and many can be very small. Parents with no email who will not send or create one. Parents whose email was recorded or inputted incorrectly. I spent hours yesterday correcting sending and engaging. I see what has come back to me today! One parent replied yesterday.*

- We are not teachers

*Data suggest that parents are concerned around organising learning, while working and caring for other children. They assert that they are not teachers, so schools need to be careful not to burden them.*

*Not having time. Small children to mind. Frontline staff need to go to work. Not enough devices. Broadband poor.*

*That they are not teachers. How long a day they should work for. Trying to cater to different age groups. No technology.*

*Overwhelmed with teaching methods needed to deliver a lesson.*

*Time. Multiple Students in a house including secondary siblings.*



*They're not teachers, and they may have a number of children at different ages. Also, parents who are still working are struggling.*

*Time management as many are trying to work from home.*

*What should the children be doing and how do I do it? Was the main concern.*

*Parents of the older children are worried that their children won't be ready for secondary school. Most of the feedback from parents has been positive and that they are happy with the school helping to bed in a routine at home. Some parents weren't able to collect books from school due to their child being sick and themselves being unable to collect textbooks.*

- Concerns around ability

*Uncertain about the way they are explaining the work, methods of doing some of the maths, etc.*

*Not able to understand schoolwork.*

*Motivation is very difficult. Also, parents own understanding of topics and their ability to teach.*

*They are anxious about their own abilities to support their children.*

*Difficulty to get children into a routine Lack of confidence in explaining aspects of the curriculum.*

*Some parents worried they are approaching tasks wrong, Irish, New maths concepts Reading, Correcting children's work. They aren't confident in their own ability to support their child's learning. The child isn't engaging with the learning under the instruction of the parent.*

*Time management in terms of devices/laptops. Are they expected to teach new concepts? Will their child fall behind/suffer as a result of no school?*

*Some just want the books.. all seem to be happy that we are posting something for them. The parents we have 'issues' with before this are the same cohort who can't 'deal' with the present situation.*

- Concerns around technology

*The concerns around lack of technology, lack of skills with technology are all very practical and yet they do present obstacles in distance learning for parents.*

*Structure. Technology deficit. Parents working from home or away at work. Social isolation from peers.*

*Households with more than school going pupils 5- 18. All trying to access the one laptop available in house. Disabled distance learning quickly particularly with access needs of*

*secondary pupils. This is a pressure that families are under and impacts greatly on the success of any distance learning.*

*Lack of printers and devices.*

*Help with accessing digital platforms.*

*Only concerns so far have been logging into online platforms.*

*One parent would like teachers to record lessons and learn upload them to parents. Most teachers are not comfortable with this and do not have the technology skills. Lots of other issues such as childcare and privacy.*

*For some, very stressful when working full time. For others, demand for extension work, for others too much work. For most, issues with the amount of demands for devices in the household--pupils and parents all need individual device at certain times.*

*None. Other than some have asked to sign up to Aladdin as they heard via other parents that work had been sent. 80% + of our parents use our Aladdin system which we use to communicate with parents. Parents/guardians have been rung by the secretary to encourage them to join it, but they have not done so.*

*Having multiple children in different classes trying to work at once. Only having one computer/ iPad for several children so can't do too much online learning.*

## 6.3 Teacher-Teacher

### 6.31 Supporting teachers

Question:

What actions has your school taken to support your teachers to enable pupils' learning?

The responses here were very practical and the emphasis was on teachers not taking on too much and the encouragement of collaboration, this came up in many responses. The provision of technological equipment and software was a practical first step in many schools. WhatsApp groups was mentioned many times as a way to keep in touch with colleagues.

### 6.32 Sample quotes

*Teachers all had school equipment to enable remote working. Sharing of resources enabled among all staff. Collaboration and cohesive approach from entire staff.*

*Provided daily contact and central admin system.*

*Support each other and sharing of resources.*

*Regular communication and agreed structure of distance learning along with agreed goals and expectations.*

*Provision of digital devices.*

*Group sharing of ideas on WhatsApp, MS Teams, and Aladdin.*

*Not putting unnecessary expectations on teachers. Many of our staff are also under untold financial and childcare stresses also.*

*Class group Zoom meetings. I got IT consultant to put our school library on Microsoft office so teachers can access planning folders etc*

*Blog access, sharing resources, brainstorm meetings via WhatsApp and hangouts.*

*Communication between Principal and staff on a regular basis via what's app.*

*We have what's app group and had started looking into online platforms before closure. We are having conference calls to discuss how we are getting on.*

*Encouragement.*

*Shared yearly plans. Teachers at same class level working together- this will be very important if anyone gets sick with Covid 19.*

*Subscriptions paid if required. Whole school online meetings so we are all in agreement with what's being done.*

*Regular communication via Aladdin with updates around suitable resources. The school is available as is the school principal. Technical support is also available by phone call or by coming into school, while observing social distancing.*

*Zoom meetings, WhatsApp groups, sharing resources and ideas. Reminding them that we can only do so much.*

## 7. Wellbeing

### 7.1 Pupils' wellbeing

Question:

What actions has the school taken to support pupils' wellbeing?

*Request to parents to let children complete what they can of work. No pressure. Fun websites provided.*

*Checking in on vulnerable children via email.*

*Anti-anxiety & well-being messages & podcasts circulated.*

*Giving parents support and ideas for schoolwork. I believe school work helps the children's mental health; I've directed them towards the websites we use for exercise and have encouraged them to do what they enjoy to keep themselves in the green zone (zones of regulation)*

*Parents provided with links and websites that maybe useful. NEPS advice followed before school closed.*

*When communicating we constantly remind them to look after themselves and each other  
Supportive texts and letters are regularly sent out.*

*walkinmyshoes website and calendar and webwise resources shared.*

*Clearly communicated via letter to parents to remain positive and strongly advocating to spend time wisely with the children and also indicating that it's not all about the academic.*

*We sent a list of suggested activities e.g....gardening, make a bird table, playing board games, baking, etc*

*Regular check in and feedback with pupils, check in with their parents, encourage them to keep in touch with class teacher , suggest SPHE activities, mindfulness, cosmic yoga, brain breaks.*

*Constant communication, emphasis on complete what you can and learning takes many forms including sport, art, farming, drama, reading, free writing, STEM, music enjoy the things that we sometimes don't get enough of.*

*Constant reinforcement of getting outside time reducing stress on completion of work Staying positive. Posting good thoughts and advice*

## 7.2 Teachers' wellbeing

Question:

What actions has your school taken to support your teachers' wellbeing?

### 7.21 Sample quotes

*Staff meetings, INTO, counselling, patron's Inservice, PDST Inservice.*

*I have encouraged set times to complete work & engage with pupils.*



*Leadership has kept in touch and made sure people know the priority is health and well-being. Understanding that working from home is more difficult for some than others and recognizing and supporting the good work being done.*

*Checking in with each other informally.*

*Assigning planning to groups/pairs of teachers so there is not too much pressure on individual teachers who may be minding their own young children and possibly sick family members of their family. I am normally an admin principal, but I have taken on SESE planning for one-year group to lessen their load.*

*Regular check ins & phone calls.*

*Motivational messages to staff given what we have just been through. Contact with individual members if staff by phone/ WhatsApp.*

*Not to overwhelm the workload expected, ensuring them that both they and their household are also factored into the current situation when asking for efforts to work from home.*

*Reassured teachers they can only be expected to do so much, and parents have been reminded that like themselves all teachers' home situations are different at the moment and it is essential we support each other.*

*Only work within their capacity to do so, teachers have their own children to look after. No pressure being applied.*

*Weekly check in, positive encouragements, keeping them informed of information sent to parents.*

*Be supportive and try to keep perspective in all of this. Every home is different and has their own way of dealing with it. So, we have to be flexible towards all in our school community. Constant communication, distancing measures, sharing INTO self-care information as this is a busy and stressful time and Teachers can't be on call all the time either.*

*We have reminded all staff to take care of their own health and that of their families as a priority. We have plenty more staff who can take over a class if a teacher is unable to do so. Everyone had volunteered to help others at any time. It's a time when you realise the importance of team effort and we are extremely lucky to have a fantastic team.*

*Just touching base with individual teachers every couple of days. Leaving treats on teachers' desks. Really small gesture I know but the staff really appreciate it.*

*I have a social channel on Slack where we can all meet and connect with each other. I encourage them to set boundaries for themselves and have stressed that their health and wellbeing is a priority. I have acknowledged their incredible work, letting the parents and BOM know how well they have adapted. I have sent on suggestions for minding their mental health and have sent individual messages here and there to all staff members to check in with them (40 in total!)*

*All have been forwarded the advice re: mental health and wellbeing from DES, IPPN, INTO, CPSMA and all other outside agencies offering support at this time. All teachers Have been given the password and access to the school "Renew You" wellbeing programme which is rolled out on a daily basis for pupils and encouraged to do 1 session per day.*

*Checking in regularly with them and reminding them that the most important thing at this time is to stay safe and well.*

*Each teacher is looking after their own class without pressure from the principal or other teachers. They know what is best for their class do they have full autonomy over what they wish to send to students. Having that pressure off their shoulders and showing confidence in their professionalism is important. As a principal, I only ring my staff to check in to see how they are and do not ask about work they are preparing. If they wish to talk about it, I do but I remind them that I have full confidence in knowing they are doing their best.*

*Daily check ins, supportive texts and emails regularly, setting up class groups WhatsApp so staff can support each other*

### 7.3 Leaders' wellbeing

Questions:

How has the school closure impacted you, your workload and your work-life balance?

What actions have you taken to support your own wellbeing?

### 7.31 Impact on leaders, their workload and work-life balance

#### 7.311 Summary

The complexity of the Principal's role was very evident in data here. The many different hats a principal wears and some now have care duties and supporting their own children's learning added to the mix.

#### 7.312 Sample quotes

*Stress levels as no notice to closure so felt completely under prepared, wasn't even on site. Unnecessary as DES could have given a day. Since then very stressed hearing what some schools are doing and trying to keep up with the Joneses. Minister's vague statements not helping.*

*In school every day since closure, accounting duties fallen to me as reduced contact with treasurer, difficult to ensure teacher/pupils engagement. Working at home and trying to teach my own two children.*

*Not as bad as anticipated, email and frequent contact with community and staff planning.*

*I am up to my eyes with emails and working very long hours!*

*Made out a Plan of work for the rest of the year. Updating the school website regularly with tools, apps, suggestions ... to help with learning at home. Using school twitter account to share ideas competitions etc. Personally, trying to use class blog on school website to connect with the pupils in my class. I've no idea how many are seeing it. 65% are writing*

*their weekly story so happy with that. Continuing to correct, comment on and upload these stories as I would normally have done (100-word challenge) Trying to upskill myself using the PDST online course.*

*Workload is much less.*

*Difficult to switch off, online platforms are very intense and difficult to engage pupils fully. Clear central guidelines would be appreciated. For example, template letters to send to parents at each step / each new piece of information from government for example, school closure extension I'm probably less stressed than normal but maybe afraid of doing the wrong thing / sending the wrong info home. It's hard to make decisions without seeing your staff face to face. I am probably looking after myself better though - exercising more and eating better food, getting more sleep.*

*Extremely difficult to figure out what system to use. Particularly for the younger children. Worried about using a system that isn't secure and might leave students/teachers open. Created a lot of extra work initially but is now more manageable. Has provided a much-needed break too at the same time. Time to focus on other school projects, i.e. new build, that I wouldn't have had time for before.*

*Immensely... very very steep learning, no experience in this, trying to gather teacher expertise and managing differing teacher attitudes to this situation and trying to provide information etc. to parents some of whom can't / won't engage and some who are very demanding*

*Very difficult 2 children of my own and trying to look after them while working is impossible. I believe that less is more when it comes to facilitating pupils at home. Parents will not withstand the pressure of trying to deliver a curriculum at home and work and so many children would not have any support or the ability to access this support at home. I believe for many schools this is a PR exercise. The idea of the national broadcaster delivering some of the curriculum on TV is a much better option for all parents and this facility should be used*

*Leadership has kept in touch and made sure people know the priority is health and well-being. Understanding that working from home is more difficult for some than others and recognizing and supporting the good work being done.*

*It has given me an opportunity to catch up with admin.*

*Improved it. More sleep, time with husband and for hobbies. Able to do schoolwork at time that suits me.*

*It has created huge challenges in terms of the administrative workload and the inability to manage some aspects of the school.*

*As a principal with small children at home it is difficult to ensure they are completing their schoolwork, while I try to teach them, engage with school staff and parents and also with all the other emails, bill's etc. or school.*

*I find that I am constantly working at the moment. Constantly checking emails, offering support to teachers and trying to forward plan while also supporting my own 3 children with*

*their learning. There is no down time at the moment. There is a great fear that teachers will be perceived as doing nothing!*

*Assigning planning to groups/pairs of teachers so there is not too much pressure on individual teachers who may be minding their own young children and possibly sick family members of their family. I am normally an admin principal, but I have taken on SESE planning for one year group to lessen their load.*

*It's been stressful as it is a sudden shift to something very unknown. I have concerns that online distance learning is not equitable to students.*

*I worry about what I should be doing. I have more time to deal with administration because I have less human interaction, which takes up a huge part of my school day. Better work life balance, as I have more time to get out for a walk or run.*

*Stressing about the pupils. Affects being at home all day will have on them. Worrying about pupils putting too much pressure on themselves to complete work in stressful/busy/anxious home situations.*

*Immensely! I am busier than ever & people forget we have our own children to mind as all crèche facilities are closed. I'm on the road daily to parish office, bank, getting cheques co-signed & school putting myself at risk but things will not get done otherwise.*

*It's tricky as I have small kids too but am conscious of being available for parents from 9-4.30 and to teachers at all times day and night when they are planning etc. I have 3*

*upcoming building/SW schemes and it's difficult to move these on and deal with redeployment panels, staff payroll (still can't get a straight answer over whether to pay bus escorts yet). I'm definitely neglecting my own kids' home-schooling! However, I'm hugely conscious that I am still being paid while so many have lost their jobs and are dealing with isolation and sickness so I'm happy to do whatever is needed.*

*I find I am busier than I ever was. The constant stream of emails coming through from my ETB requiring updates. The extra time and having everything prepared and answering individuals. I feel I'm working harder even though I am not in school.*

*Yes, have spent a lot of time sorting payments, dealing with Chairperson, setting up emails, sorting books, updating website, writing letters, communicating with staff. I cannot get help in school due to preventing possible spread of Covid 19. Principal Allowance has definitely been well earned, even when off this break.*

*It is huge. I am juggling my 4 children and trying to lead the school community through this. My husband is a secondary teacher who is flat out online teaching all day and preparing work most nights workload of both hugely increased.*

*Be supportive and try to keep perspective in all of this. Every home is different and has their own way of dealing with it. So, we have to be flexible towards all in our school community.*

*It's not ideal. I am trying to do some work at home while minding my own children. Not putting excessive pressure on myself. Doing what's best for our pupils and parents. Keeping perspective on the whole situation.*



*It has extended the 'school day'. It has introduced a new stress with wondering if you're doing the right thing. Should we be doing more. How will we plan for the future closure? When will we be going back? Are pupils engaged. Have they enough work? Have they too much? Is the work a source of stress at home? Parents probably can't teach new topics so what can we ask of them? Are parents getting stressed with the work? If we do send homework to be done with a device - is that going to be a cause of concern? Are there enough devices for all who need them in the house including parents working from home? Will their WIFI/broadband cope? What about the sacraments that had to be cancelled? Should I ask the teachers to come in to sort more work out? And make available hardcopy packs of that work for those who can't work online. These are a whole new ball of issues to be added to the paperwork that's to be tackled.*

*Yes, my workload is slightly less, however I am in a position for the first time in a long time to dedicate time to admin associated with DP role that I had been unable to do previous to this due to time constraints and trying to actually have a work-life balance.*

### 7.32 Helpful actions to support wellbeing

#### 7.321 Summary

There was a lot of good advice in the data for this question. However, for some, the survey itself was conducted too early in the process and proved stressful.

*This really isn't an appropriate question for this survey at this time.*

*When all this dies down I will hopefully get time to relax a little, garden and rest. This survey is reinforcing the stress in a way as I didn't know we were expected to be digitally teaching until after the closure on March 13th. We thought we were being wise sending homework for*

*the 9 school days until march 29th. After this survey I feel worse when I am answering each question with a blank and not comparing to all the schools that are doing things so differently to email only platforms.*

### 7.322 Emerging themes

Open responses to this question fall under the following themes:

- Good advice
- Have a plan
- There is no support, this links to the complex role of the Principal, and the fact that they have other roles such as parenting and care giving.
- The power of exercise
- Need for support from family and friends
- Avoid the news
- Social contact with co-workers
- I'm feeling the stress

### 7.323 Sample quotes

- Good advice

*I tell myself that this is an extraordinary time in education and that I can't expect ordinary results or things to go to plan. Tell myself that I'm doing the best I can for my pupils, staff and parents.*

*Switch off all devices. Try to sleep better (on going issues). Try not let staff frustrations get personal.*

*Perspective. Avoiding the multiplicity of 'celebrities' and their home schooling brilliance.*

*Maintaining a structure to my day. Eating healthily and exercising. Getting sufficient sleep.*

*Staying in contact with family, friends and colleagues. Limiting exposure to news feeds.*

*Adhering to guidelines from Government and Chief Medical Officer. Trusting in God and doing the best I can.*

*I am doing fine- being able to help other gives a sense of purpose and control in these strange times. A crisis like this puts everything in perspective- this is only work and I'm happy to have and grateful for the certainty of my employment.*

*Socially isolating..... has its advantages of uninterrupted work time which greatly helps my wellbeing. Teaching principals' biggest issue is getting time to adequately do things to the standard they would like. So I'm taking an 'every cloud has a silver lining approach'. And all joking aside, WhatsApp messages with funny photos videos on what is a very serious situation bring me great relief, Irish humour is potentially something the HSE should stockpile because it is powerful. Keeping contact with family who I am not near is also good.*

*Family sized bars of Cadbury instead of regular sized :) and an investment in Disney plus.*

*Have curtailed the number of resources I look at online, too much. I curtailed how much feedback I receive from others, I feel we are in danger of letting all this turn into teacher v*

*teacher or school v school. We all need to be realistic in what we expect from the children, their parents and ourselves but that's very hard. I try to walk everyday by myself and also to get out and have quality time with my own children. I contact a trusted friend and colleague regularly for advice.*

- Have a plan

Many respondents talked about the need to structure the day and have a plan or they found themselves answering emails into the night.

*Daily plan - max 3/4 hours of school related work.*

*Spread out my workload throughout the day/ week, walk daily, keep in touch with people through technology, try not to over think the situation.*

*Structured day and being positive that I have time to do the things I have wanted to do for a long time! Good sleep hygiene Meditation Yoga and exercise Cooking a new recipe daily*

*I find that sticking to the school day work wise gives structure to the day. Communication with other teachers helps also. We are all in this together.*

*I have kept one hour every day for my own time. No thinking about school or anyone else.*

*I turn off devices at 6 p.m. Emphasis on physical activities. Focus on the fact that we are doing our best in these strange circumstances.*

*In the last few days, I have made sure to schedule longer breaks from work and make sure 'relaxation' time is not online. Screen time has taken over my life at the minute and I very much miss the social interaction with children and colleagues. Replacing socialising (with friends) with online calls has increased my screen time past the work hours and is a cause for concern for me.*

- There is no support, this links to the complex role of the Principal, and the fact that they have other roles such as parenting and care giving.

*My workload has increased - I am maintaining the school building and its security; keeping in contact with teachers and ancillary staff; supporting wellbeing; constructing a whole school plan for pupil learning during this period of closure; planning learning for my own class; consulting with my senior management team; monitoring education.ie/ HSE/ INTO/ CPSMA websites; monitoring the school website; monitoring the work set for pupils by my teachers; monitoring the school email; fielding phone calls from parents; returning correspondence from the SENO newly appointed to my school; opening the school to allow the fire alarm to be serviced; opening the school and supervising the cleaning of the building; opening the school to allow the lawnmower to be serviced; opened the school and supervised as lawns were mowed; turned off the mains water as there has been a water leak in school; contacted a plumber who I am scheduled to meet on Friday (if there isn't a lockdown]; communicating with BOM Chairperson; contacting the BOM Treasurer to ensure bills are paid; checking the school daily for mail; cleaned out the staffroom fridge (no one thought to throw out milk cartons, the contents of which had turned to yoghurt); looking after my own four children - assisting them in the completion of schoolwork sent home from their schools; refereeing arguments of my two older children (one Leaving Cert) who both have online work to complete from their secondary schools and both need to use the one PC we*

*have in the house; maintaining a household and cooking all meals and then the associated cleaning; managing contact and support of my elderly mother; trying to get online shopping completed (Tesco have limited deliveries)...I wear many hats. Please remember that Principals have lives and pressures too - we are doing our best.*

As well as trying to become an expert in distance learning for 4-12 year old children in a matter of weeks, I'm co-ordinating the teachers' planning, managing communications with families, frantically trying to upskill myself and the staff in online matters, making sure the staff's wellbeing is looked after all the while still running the admin side of the school. I still have to work on the new enrolment policy, compile school accounts, deal with next year's enrolments, organise SEN supports for next year, liaise with other educational bodies (SENO, NEPS), provide all relevant SCP and HSCL paperwork for TUSLA, check in with families I consider at risk (we've a shared HSCL teacher) and everything else that a principal does. *We don't get any support at any stage, now is no different.*

*We are overloaded year round as principals - this is the current challenge.*

*Don't have any time to do so, four young children and a school to run and wider family to support.*

*Those in affluent areas with high speed broadband are obviously not in the same position as those of us in rural areas with poor broadband connectivity. We are doing our best to ensure all pupils will engage with learning and are trying our best to support our parents.*

*None yet trying to get out for solo walk in evenings but doesn't always happen, emails and texts to answer.*

- I am not just a principal

*Very little, high expectations that we know what to do...principals working very hard to support parents, students, staff their own families etc. and very little guidelines or supports. Taking time out, going for a walk or run, speaking to other principals...who are all echoing what I am saying in these responses. I need reassurance though from the IPPN that there will be a response based on principals and teachers responses and that some parents, the department etc. are not going to just push schools to do things just for the sake of it. I am a bad asthmatic- I'm self-isolating. My children are my priority.*

*Finding it very difficult presently but due to personal circumstances as opposed to school.*

- The power of exercise

*I am trying to "switch off" by walking daily and taking time to play with my children. I have also had to realise that all principals are in different situations re long distance learning.*

*Running, running and more running.*

*Walking and cycling. Switching off the news.*

*Exercise, better eating & sleeping*

*Going for a walk, painting to keep busy, on line keep fit,*

*Taking breaks and praying !!!*

- Need for support from family and friends

*Trying to get my husband to take time off work during the day so all my work is not at night Time, regular breaks, eating well, contact with family members. This has been very positive for my well-being as those are things I greatly struggle to make time for in a typical day as teaching principal.*

*Meditation/mindfulness, connecting with colleagues/friends via WhatsApp, trying to step back from school work/thoughts about work at times during the day and manage anxiety. Log off social media and the news for big parts of the day.*

- Avoid the news

Many respondents said they needed to limit their time watching news.

*Turning off the news to protect my overall well-being.*

- Social contact of co workers

*Daily walks, chats with co-workers, sleep*

*Principal support group on what's app, teaching friends, principal friends, pastoral support.*

*Reflecting on what is most important. Contact with friends and colleagues.*

*Getting up at usual time Walking every morning. Staying in touch with family, friends and colleagues. Trying to stay busy and in touch with support groups i.e. IPPN to see how others are dealing with the crisis.*



- I'm feeling the stress

*Daily Walk, Stress self-talk. Reminding myself that I can't fix this and that it shall pass. It's important that schools don't jump in too soon. As I have children at home / turning to work from home it is extremely stressful to keep it going. Too much coming from schools with lists of work/ projects /reading/activities/.....etc. Unreasonable and I'm a teacher. Concerns of mortgage repayments as husband is out of work etc. Children need to be protected and not stressed. They will bounce back. Trying to focus on reading for them something we don't always have time for!*

*None because I haven't the headspace! I'm also trying to deal with appeals and staffing for next year, 4 maternity leaves with no subs etc. 2 maternity leaves after Easter and I'm assuming those classes will be teacher less at that stage as subs can't be input on OLCS unless the school is open??*

## 9. Additional Support Required

Question:

What additional support do you require in these unprecedented times?

### 9.1 Emerging themes

Open responses to this question fall under the following themes:

- Guidelines on what to do
- Action to reduce fear of competition and comparison between schools and teachers
- Technological support - Digital divide in our country between schools
- Support from network, such as IPPN, PDST, and people HSCL, DLP

### 9.2 Sample quotes

- Guidelines on what to do

There is a general call from all these data for guidance, guidelines, clarity from DES. They do acknowledge that it is an unprecedented time, but many are feeling stress and need guidance.

*As a dedicated teaching Principal with over 20 years in the profession this is not a long time on the scale of things or a child's educational journey. They need to have this time to learn in other ways from their family. There are no definitions for corona/Covid 19/pandemic/not in school regardless of the DES providing one in circular 20/2020*

*I already notice that staff are under pressure to find innovative ways to bridge the gap. It has affected all staff, trying to balance the demands on parents, trying not to compare ourselves with other schools, trying to be the voice of reason with little guidance from the DES. Most of*

*our staff is struggling with the technology required for remote teaching. As principal, I have never been busier and more alone.*

*I've been saying for 20 years that the DES failed the education system in terms of providing good resources in terms of technology in education. Most teachers in Ireland rely on non-native websites. This has already had a disastrous effect on Gaeilge in particular.*

*Every school is coming up with their own method of contacting their pupils. The amount of comments on social media is also overwhelming. There should be a directive from DES. This not meant to be home-schooling. Neither is it distance teaching. It has to be something in between the 2 to keep pupils motivated and doing a few basic tasks every day. Teachers need direction on how best to proceed.*

*If by centralised it is meant that a range of online lessons be provided by DES or PDST then all subjects would benefit from this, but it is important for the Gaelscoileanna that we are not left out and forced to translate everything ourselves. Design these programmes as Gaeilge from the beginning.*

*Specific guidelines...all happened so quickly that no supports given and our own families suffering*

*I am under the impression that TUSLA guidelines state that it is illegal for adults to engage electronically with U18's.*

*Clear definite guidelines and recommendations for best practice. Circular regarding closure.*

*More communication and advice from DES.*

*More clarity and information on the department's future plans: no more shock announcements from an Taoiseach. A timeline: big difference between closing schools for two weeks and indefinitely- impossible to plan remotely. A framework for teacher's and pupils work during this time. More information for substitute teachers. Guidelines for BOM. More information on ancillary workers. Help in supporting pupils and teachers who are bereaved/ill.*

*Department should issue guidelines at Easter if we close until June to inform us what we should do from then as regards schoolwork. Parents can be under pressure because so many schools are sending such different work to do!*

*Guidance and direction on a whole school whole country approach. Uncharted territory with no time to prepare. Can't come together as a staff.*

*Clear, cohesive guidelines for all school to set out what is required of children. Ad hoc approach and softly softly tack in terms of their wellbeing means very few of my class (4th 5th and 6th) are now engaging with any of their work. Also, I feel the PDST and the Inspectorate should have more input and advice in this situation."*

*Lack of reliable internet where we are located has prevented face to face learning. National guidelines on what is required to be implemented at this time keeping in mind the different areas of the country and especially where there is no broadband. Many teachers anxious they are not doing enough but are not able to do more due to limitations. A broad direction*

*from DES to both teachers and parents with the emphasis on enjoyable learning experiences at home would distress parents and bring clarity to anxious teachers and would be beneficial for all at this time.*

*My well-being is impacted. Balance between minding children with underlying SET needs and health conditions and to keep all the school community happy and still meet DES deadlines and liaise with SENO and get no response at all!?!?*

*Clear guidance on what is appropriate support for primary schools. Realistic expectations from the DES. Clarity about the length of the closure. Realistic suggestions about how to make contact with families who do not have internet access.*

*When I phoned HSE to ask about the safety of teachers organising packs for junior children I was told it should not go ahead. It would have helped my teachers to understand why I wouldn't allow it if DES had given guidance to schools on this as all schools are doing different things. Everything takes time to learn and embed. I'm planning & piloting& learning about more ways to work remotely but it is difficult to know how far we should push things as there is so little certainty as to how long this will go on.*

*"Acceptable Usage Policy. Child Safeguarding Guidelines.*

*Clear directives from the DES with regard to expectations taking into consideration the health and well-being of all pupils, staff and their families. Due consideration for the fact that broadband is poor in rural communities and that remote teaching/online teaching is not necessarily a skill that every teacher has or can engage with at this time."*

*Leave that autonomy to schools to decide for themselves. Provide us with templates for possible work & other useful resources we can send out to parents. Give us clear guidelines on terms of staff entering school premises & provisions for sending home schoolbooks to parents. Do not apply undue pressure to schools. Remember we may get sick too.*

*It is unprecedented. A clearer indication of how long this is may go on for. Clarity to everyone that, parents and teachers, that every school is going to approach this differently. Where do schools stand from point of view of GDPR, consent etc. As teachers, or indeed as parents, we weren't prepared for using any of the platforms stated above other than email. V challenging to juggle home and school life...no support for schools from des no support for principals re suggestions etc. Working from home and minding children, co-ordinations staff of over 30..wages, cleaning, Access to school, social distancing for staff and parents/ Department deadlines/diocesan deadlines need to be addressed...no access to school as husband still working, keeping children at home. CID contracts, staffing etc. all goes on...really need leeway for Principals.*

*A common suggested curriculum in subjects for all schools. Communication from the Teaching Council, PDST, INTO and DES to the wider community through media outlets- they have been silent in their support of what teachers are doing - we are practitioners and not IT specialists, we have embraced the new pedagogy with enthusiasm but our support bodies should be articulating this to the wider community*

*Clear direction as to issues that we will face when we return; Parents asking about children repeating. Deadline for SNA allocation. Directive about how to try to make up the time keeping in mind the well-being of teachers"*

*Some centralised resources that are updated regularly. Guidance, affirmation from DES as schools are working so hard for the pupils. Advance info re school opening/ closures to enable time to plan Reassurance re SNA allocation for next year. Ask DES what they are doing and propose to do to support our wellbeing??*

*Any and all supports available. Guidelines/advice. Emergency funding to cover expenses of work packs, additional admin texts etc. from Aladdin. Covid grant to help with health and safety expenses re sanitisers/paper dispensers/ cleaning etc.*

*Constant communication. To be honest, I think that the DES should be firmer on what they are expecting teachers to deliver. Much of the motivation has to be done by the principal teacher, or person with the ICT post in the school.. I would welcome support and direction from the inspectorate. We've heard nothing from them.*

*Similar to the DES and government I believe we're making this up as we go along. We're doing our best as always so a question looking for specifics is nuts and I feel quite frustrated now replying to this. Why is so much expected from us. If anything, the DES digital learning framework formation and funding is proving inadequate.....EMBEDDING my foot. Now were seeing the result! Must we fix that too?*

*As a DEIS school - a scarcity of support. Letter from DES attached 7 websites to be recommended for remote learning ... not realistic or helpful to us. The letter also made a one line statement that schools whose pupils do not have access to technology should plan accordingly. That was the sum total of support DEIS was given. This needs to be strongly communicated to the DES that this is not acceptable. I was in HSCL and have always worked*

*in DEIS. Incidentally . an absence of NEPS, NCSE and the questions asked school leaders how they managed SEN and well-being!*

*Specific direction on how to provide learning plans for particular classes and individualised for particular pupils. How to balance expectations and pastoral care for children - we cannot achieve the curriculum if we cannot provide work, yet parents are struggling, and we are aware that we are causing stress and anxiety. How can we be inclusive in new ways - the parents who are stressed are not necessarily the "usual suspects." How do we make sure the education we provide is equitable when some parents have time and ability to facilitate and others don't? Specific direction on how much to expect from pupils in infant classes. Specific direction on how to / whether to facilitate feedback from very young pupils."*

*It would be great if DES could offer some guidelines as to expectations re teaching new material. I know a lot of teachers are panicking about covering the curriculum. We have decided after parent and staff consultations that due to the unique communication needs of our students we will be focusing on revision in literacy and numeracy.*

- Fear of competition and comparison between schools and teachers

*Circular from Dept outlining what is expected from schools so parents can't be comparing the work done in different schools.*

*Huge confusion, pressure to be immediately skilled in new areas. Competition and pressure between teachers. Social media hype Lack of direction from leader groups DES.*



*Lots of requests for remote learning without the proper CPD on this. Demands from parents could increase. To provide so much in this timeframe a difficult challenge. Other schools setting standards that most schools cannot match leading to unfair comparisons.*

*.. when we reopen we will have to prioritise core subjects over non-core subjects. Other subjects will be allocated less time weekly for a few months.. discussion on this etc. Thank you for gathering this data please share it with us when collated. More guidance so the comparisons between schools can avoid unnecessary upset.*

*I think we need a standardised and realistic approach, but we have to ensure that's not going to be adding pressure for parents and teachers. There seems to be unnecessary comment/competition online as to what schools are doing and I would question the value of some of it. It's important that we don't start doing things that are of no value, purely for the sake of it. Looking after everybody's health and well-being has to be paramount.*

*We are torn between wanting to help but not wanting to add to parents' pressures. We have no defined expectations from the DES as to what each school at a minimum needs to provide. We are all just trying to do something, not knowing if it is the right thing or not. Principals who are not tech savvy are at a loss and feel inadequate compared with their tech savvy counterparts.*

*Would love guidance re best platforms to use etc. We seem to be spending endless hours researching but would love to be provided with more guidance. There seems to be competition between schools as to what they're going and giving rather than thinking about the children in their own schools.*

*I am only looking at the news a couple of times a day. I am also now avoiding the IPPN networking emails. To my horror it has developed into a countrywide competition as to who is doing the most for their pupils and who has the best technology available to them. It has without a doubt created more stress for principals because reading things like this makes everyone feel they are not doing enough. The country is in crisis and everyone needs to stay safe. I am frustrated that the first thing some principals did to 'help' everyone was send relentless emails about all the online work we should be doing.*

*I feel every school is taking a different approach and being compared. One size does not fit all, and I feel that this must be communicated better to the public. It is a lot more challenging for younger classes in primary school to engage in online assignment and return for correction. We are trying to introduce a whole new approach to distant learning without an introductory period with the children in school.*

*I think I've made my point regarding distance learning. There needs to be leadership shown by the IPPN here...it needs to be agreed as to what is the best course of action to be taken by ALL schools so that there is no comparison between schools. We should be united on our approach and not react hastily to the pressure from the few parents etc. Will the IPPN do this? What will you do with these responses?*

- Technological support needed for schools and homes – there is a digital divide

There emerged from data a very evident digital divide in terms of hardware and software available to schools. In addition, many schools are at different stages of implementing a

digital strategy for the school and therefore there were a lot of calls for further training. The lack of clear guidelines links into this theme also.

*Enhancing disadvantage among our most vulnerable families. Access to technology. Literacy levels in the home.*

*No direct teaching/relationship with teacher(s), lack of technology in the home pressure cooker scenario in the home.*

*Social isolation for all and very negative impact on learning of SEN children especially and those without ICT devices and internet.*

*Many do not have access to technology. In terms of language and interaction with other children of course children will be at a loss.*

*Lack of investment in ICT, ICT training and student competency in receiving online content will mean our students will have regressed academically over this unprecedented period.*

*Difficult to offer structured school day for students while they're at home. School / home communication is difficult with some parents as they have limited access to technology and Internet.*

*Difficult to offer structured school day for students while they're at home. School / home communication is difficult with some parents as they have limited access to technology and Internet.*

*Children have access to online learning and school laptops so have been able to access on learning I gave each child a laptop to bring home to use for distance learning. These were paid for using digital technology grant and children had been using them in school.*

*Some kids don't have internet connection and are working in isolation... difficult to find material online as gaeilge and as a small school we couldn't afford a school app or big packages like Aladdin to communicate with pupils and parents. We didn't have time to train in on use of distance learning platforms.*

*Lack of routine, new learning in regard to school curriculum will be limited, anxious kids and parents, stressful households with parents maybe working from home as well as trying to support children, some households with little or no access to computer technology to support learning, limited social interactions for children.*

*Although using technology to collaborate, it's use is limited. Not every teacher has out of hours access to the internet.*

*We are using SeeSaw app all children have personal code they upload all work and it is corrected by teachers daily.*

*We have asked for feedback from parents on a weekly basis and have asked for photos and typed samples of children's work. We will also be back to track their progress in completed tasks on study ladder and read theory.*

- Role of support networks

The PDST and IPPN were the most mentioned resource for Principals and majority of mentions were positive.

*Very poor resources available for Gaelscoileanna across the curriculum, not everything from PDST is available in Irish (for example) the Dept need to address this.*

*Meanwhile there is a barrage of last-minute ideas for distant learning coming from all sides.*

*It would be better if we could all come together led not by our principal but the PDST and all follow the same approach.*

*PDST online learning course. Michelle Brady Padlet on GC. I did webinar with Simon Lewis on 24/3.*

*PDST and inspectorate should coordinate a simple approach for the whole country. Not all children have access to technology good internet.*

*Trying to upskill myself using the PDST online course.*

*PDST online learning course to be completed and staff meet to discuss and teachers to go into groups to make sure the PDST course is being implemented.*

*There are none relevant to these circumstances. Apart from online activities from Scoilnet and PDST.*

*I've been in touch with the PDST just yesterday and got great advice on setting up GSuite.*

*We've registered now.*

*Would be great to see exemplar videos done by PDST of best practice that is actually starting to work around distance learning & virtual staff meetings. Researching all this takes significant time.*

*PDST have all the expertise in place to lead this at a nation level Why us it assumed even with this extensive questionnaire that ALL schools have a distance learning in place. As with the PLC the theory is one thing practical common sense is missing.*

*As a teaching principal I still have to manage the admin. I welcome the practical help from PDST TECH.*

- Feedback on IPPN

*Advice from the IPPN would be welcome on a national approach to dealing with distance learning.*

*Communication from IPPN and Dept to ensure that we are on the right track with distance learning - need support to feel that as a school we are doing the right thing.*

*Guidance & reassurance from IPPN/DES. The letter posted by the president yesterday had some very solid reassuring points.*

*Emails from IPPN good and IPPN network very helpful, every principal/DP supporting each other in these unprecedented times. The children from the ASD classes are difficult to provide for.*

*PDST distance learning page. Offaly IPPN support group. Twitter #Edshareie*

*The communication methods from the IPPN to stay coming. An improvement in broadband in rural areas.*

*Significantly. Have spent hours and hours online researching suitable remote teaching method, trying out methods with the subsequent hitches, registering for websites/free resources with the subsequent hitches, planning & adapting programmes of work for children trying to "teach" what is required in the various strand units, communicating with and providing support to parents & staff, following up on a huge volume of emails many promoting free and worthwhile resources but due to the sheer volume are very difficult to keep track of, continuing with normal admin chores, e.g. keeping in touch with latest advice from Dept/Patron Body/IPPN, etc; school accounting & Payroll, following up on invoices, non-receipt of orders, etc. etc.*

*Working from home remotely with poor broadband service and not being able to see or hear from colleagues immediately is a challenge. it's other schools and colleagues who have been a tremendous support to each other, the sharing of ideas and resources that make life a little easier during these unprecedented times. if schools can upload some resources and a resource bundle could be made on IPPN it would be a fantastic way of sharing people's expertise.*

*PDST distance learning and engagement with IPPN forum for the exchange of ideas and information from other principals on the front line.*

*I feel that these discussions on distance learning is for the benefit of parents and to be seen to do what is in vogue. I include the IPPN on this also. I assume that our feedback will be considered...that a stop or relaxation on the pressure put on schools to come up with a solution. The department and IPPN should issue a statement saying that what has been done up until the schools closed will carry students along a lot of the way and some work will see them through. Stop the madness of all the technological pressures.*

*More support for leaders through webinars or more regular check ins with IPPN, I have found INTO to be very unhelpful any time I have called I seem to get the answer "we don't deal with that" when I call the department of education about any issue around policy they say "that's department of health issue" IPPN have been great super supportive in a very challenging time.*

*The IPPN email from IPPN president was reassuring - each school can only respond based on their knowledge of their pupils/parents/teachers/staff and we are all doing our best, whatever route we take for distance learning. We don't need any sweeping statement about what every school is required to do with an obligation that we all do exactly the same thing.*



## 10. Minority groups

### 10.1 SEN

#### Question:

What percentage of your pupils have special education needs?

What provision has your school made for pupils with SEN to enable learning?

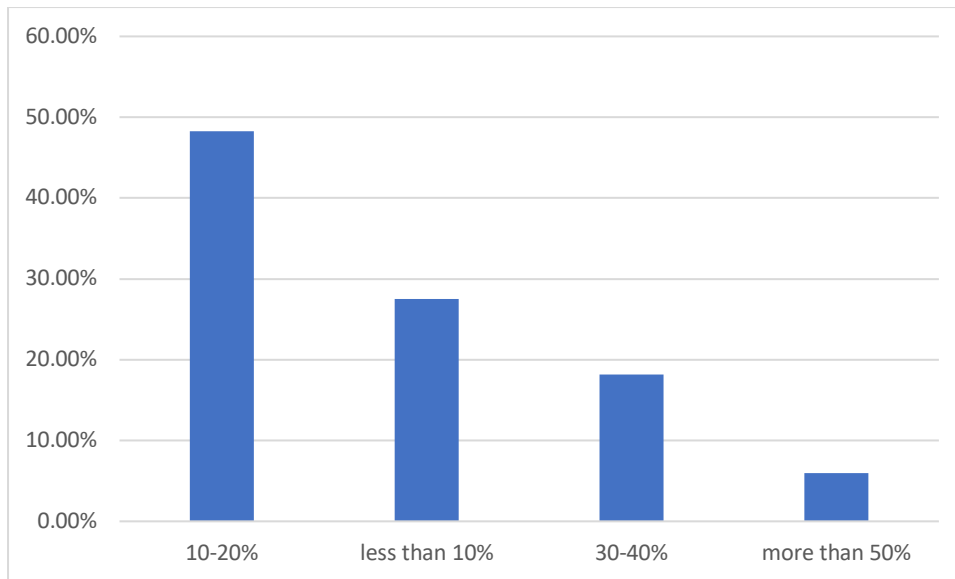
What provision has your school made for pupils with SEN to enable social and emotional support?

#### 10.11 Prevalence of SEN pupils

##### 10.112 All schools

	n	%
less than 10%	773	27.5
10-20%	1356	48.3
30-40%	510	18.2
more than 50%	169	6

*Table 76. Prevalence of SEN pupils across all schools.*



*Figure 78. Prevalence of SEN pupils across all schools.*

Almost half of all schools (48.3%, n=1,356) have between 10-20% of SEN pupils, 6 % (n=169) schools have more than 50% of SEN pupils and this includes Special schools. Of the entire sample, 27.5% (n=773) reported that they have less than 10% of SEN pupils in their school and 18% (n=510) of schools reported that they have between 30-40% of SEN pupils. Therefore, vast majority of schools represented in this survey has at least 10% of SEN pupils.

10.113 Difference across school type

	Mainstream	Mainstream with special	Special
less than 10%	1087	267	2
	50.10%	52.10%	1.60%
10-20%	712	60	1
	32.80%	11.70%	0.80%
30-40%	339	170	1
	15.60%	33.20%	0.80%
more than 50%	32	15	122
	1.50%	2.90%	96.80%

Table 77. Difference in prevalence of SEN pupils across school types.

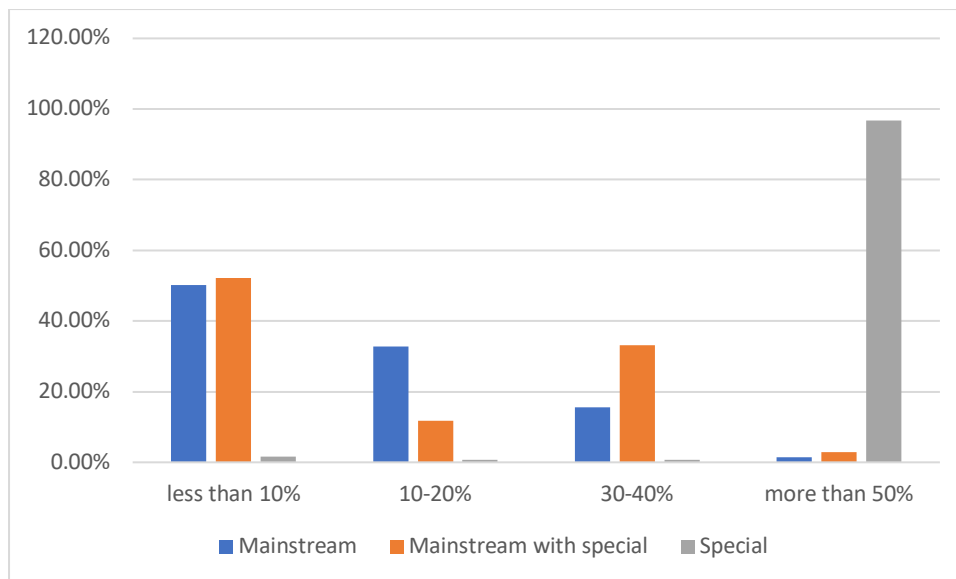


Figure 79. Difference in prevalence of SEN pupils across school types.

Understandably, the highest prevalence of schools that had over 50% of SEN pupils was reported in Special schools (96.8%, n=122), however 2.9% (n=15) of Mainstream with special classes and 1.5% (n=32) of Mainstream schools reported having over 50% of SEN

pupils in their schools. Half of the Mainstream-type schools had less than 10% of SEN pupils.

10.113 Difference across school size

	Small	Medium	Large
Less than 10%	147 33.60%	871 48.70%	338 58.00%
10-20%	150 34.20%	509 28.50%	114 19.60%
30-40%	83 18.90%	303 17.00%	124 21.30%
more than 50%	58 13.20%	104 5.80%	7 1.20%

Table 78. Difference in prevalence of SEN pupils across school size.

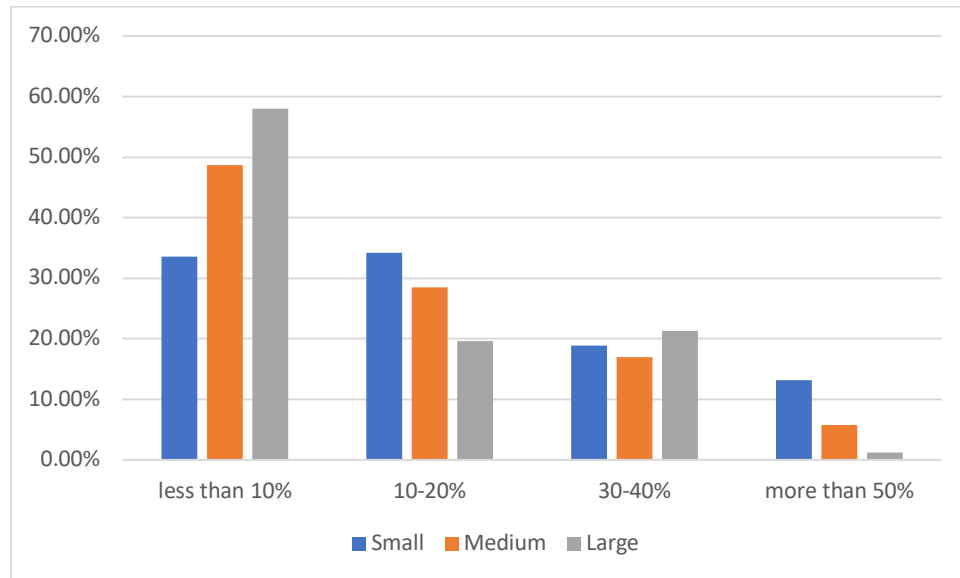


Figure 80. Difference in prevalence of SEN pupils across school size.

Most of the large schools had less than 10% of SEN pupils however, 40.9% (n=238) of them had between 10-40% of SEN pupils. Small schools had mostly 10-40% of SEN pupils

(53.1%, n=233), a third of them (33.6%, n=147) had less than 10% of SEN pupils and the remaining 13% (n=58) had more than 50% of SEN pupils. Medium-size schools had in large less than 10% of SEN pupils (48.7%, n=871), followed by 10-20% (28.5%, n=509), 30-40% of SEN pupils (17%, n=303) and more than 50% of pupils (5.8%, n=104).

## 10.12 Enabling learning

### 10.121 Summary

A lot of support here was in the form of contact with individual parents. This added stress is evident throughout the data, many cite how they worry about SEN students and their progress.

### 10.122 Sample quotes

*None. We can't. We already have differentiated spelling lists and differentiated approach using spelling City and Manga high. Are we expected to be miracle workers?????*

*A differentiated programme was sent home the day of the closure. Now, as differentiated as could be managed with two hours' notice to prepare work while teaching a class.*

*We have set up Seesaw and our two ASD class teachers are in constant contact with parents and children to support them as best as possible.*

*Individual learning paths for our pupils in our ASD closed.*

*Differentiated work is sent out. Seesaw is used to keep in contact with children with ASD to keep relationships alive to SNA and teacher.*

*Home packs and phone calls to parents.*

*Have been in contact with the parent by phone -there is just one child not following the same format as the others.*

*SET communication with parents to set plan.*

*Suggested activities from NCSE and other special education experts uploaded to school Facebook page.*

*Children with individual needs in special classes have been contacted individually by teachers to continue priority learning targets. Parents in contact with teachers.*

*SET teachers linking in with parents to provide assistance and links to specialised programmes, visual schedules etc.*

*SEN teachers have forwarded work packs to those pupils to reinforce their learning  
Individual contact with parents re programmed of work.*

*Packs sent home from support teachers. SEN teachers preparing individual plans for after Easter.*

*We are in close contact with these parents. I ring them every other day via telephone.*

*Individualised packs of work for each child and regular telephone calls to parents to support learning.*

10.13 Enabling social and emotional support

*10.131 Emerging themes*

Open responses to this question fall under the following themes:

- The role of SEN and SET teachers and the need for personal contact with parents
- We need help with this
- Some good advice on what schools are doing
- Help from agencies
- Practical support needed

*10.132 Sample quotes*

- The role of SEN and SET teachers and the need for personal contact with parents.

*Social stories, SET are liaising.*

*Again, we have sent on resources that may help children with SEN emotionally. Some SNAs will be in contact with the children via video link to keep in touch with them and to support them.*

*The SET have communicated directly with the parents of children with SEN assuring them of their continued additional support. The SET is assigning specific activities to enable the social and emotional support.*

*This is by far the most difficult reality to deal with. We have given parents links to support sites and given ideas to help them continue their children's SEN programme*

*SEN teachers have been in direct contact with these pupils.*

*We are making ourselves available to be contacted for a set time each day if parents or pupils have any questions.*

*Phone calls to parents.*

*I have personally rung these parents to offer support.*

*Communication between staff and parents on an ongoing basis.*

*Teacher support through seesaw.*

*Open communication with parents & a more structured set of activities to try.*

- We need help with this

*Nothing at all. Need help here. Some children were attending 'Drawing and Talking' (emotional support) sessions with SNA but we are prohibited from providing that service via FaceTime.*

*None at the moment. I feel everything is left to the schools. I would love if the government gave more guidelines on some of the questions.*

*None, how could we do this? The parents have their classroom/school support plan and they know how to support them at home.*



*None to date. Very good webinar on IPPN last evening where the needs of all our pupils need to be supported. It shouldn't be all about homework. We have to rethink about what we expect of children during this time. Homework should not be the term used.*

*We're not that far down the line as yet. Any ideas that could be given in this regard would be gratefully received.*

*None. It's not our role. This is the parents' role. Stop making teachers responsible for parenting children.*

- Some good advice on what some schools are doing

*Social skills groups / private play therapist.*

*Conversation cards are one of the tasks on the daily schedule; outdoor activities such as 'what can you hear?', sensory breaks; ideas for movement breaks; games for more than one person etc.*

*Difficult as it is at this time our learning support teacher runs a socialisation class here in school usually so now she face-times the boys concern every week.*

*Use cosmic kids for yoga, keep a scrapbook of things they really like and how what to put in it. Mindfulness breathing, colouring.*

*Once parents are comfortable with google classroom we will schedule a group call through that. And there are also videos we will upload shortly explaining the Coronavirus and a video of myself explaining to pupils how we intend to use on line learning as the situation develops.*

*Remaining connected with the students and keeping a schedule in place for them - this may help the families. Also to remember that learning should be fun and enjoyable and that the time spent at home with families during this unprecedented closure, should be an opportunity to spend some quality time together and have good memories of "the time the schools were closed"*

*Links to websites that show activities that can be done with their families. Baking, playing helping around the house talking to family members that they cannot visit like they would normally. e.g. grandparents*

*Everyday speech licence - an American programme that teaches specific social / emotional / behavioural skills and strategies with videos and lessons on line. Parents have full access to the material. SAS programme with Lucena Clinic teaching social / emotional skills online. strategies taught in school to help regulate have been sent home and each child was given specific resources that they found helpful in calming themselves (e.g. rubic cube, therputty, jacob's ladder etc).*

- Help from the agencies

*NCSE has been great and I feel we could get more from RTÉ to help families.*

*Posted NCSE information and resources on school website. SET teachers liaise with class teachers when planning learning activities and suggest appropriate content and resources for individual pupils and groups.*

*Links to NCSE suggested activities for children with OT and SLT needs sent via our website. These would suit many of our children, not just children with SEN.*

*There is differentiation in the provision for those with needs. The newly posted NCSE materials are very helpful for parents and for teachers in advising parents. The weekly phone call to each parent will enable differentiation for all.*

*INTO also provided a document with helpful suggestions. Today I have found the NCSE suggestions for class groups which is also very practical. Most other educational documents are focussed on regular school times and not very practical in an unprecedented time.*

*Presently they were sent home on day of closure with workpacks for three weeks. Yesterday I became aware of links on NCSE website these have been circulated to teachers to consider their potential and I have asked SET teachers to prioritise within the SET setting individuals that will need individualised support as opposed to those in receipt of in-class support. How this support is disseminated has yet to be ironed out.*

- *Practical support needed*

*Hand sanitiser. More funding for ink and photocopying. The ICT grant to be paid so all staff can have laptops computers etc. SENOS to allocate the assistive technology applications and provide this for pupils. Access to dongles or broadband for teachers who do not have*

*internet. A fund for schools for additional costs during this time. Guidance to facilitate SNAs and teachers to have a system so they can do some work from home.*

*Collaborative direction from Dept/NCSE/NEPS/PDST--perhaps a pack that could be sent to all schools instead of the constant deluge of info.*

*Psychology, ICT, DES supported ICT training for all staff, bank of resources - similar to what NCSE has provided this week but taking into account children with the most complex SEN needs*

*I have seen a few teachers close to breaking point. We don't have enough SNA support, we have children in mainstream whose needs we are struggling to cater for even with supports from the NCSE. Our SET team cannot cater for all of the children we should be catering for because we simply don't have enough hours in the week.*

*Anxiety at an all-time high because of the concerns I have around the challenges the children are now facing- in a DEIS area these are completely different to other children- drug and alcohol addiction, domestic abuse, severe poverty, lack of support of education. The department of education and the NCSE seem to have downed tools even though we haven't- can't get answers about emergency works applications, assistive technology applications, SNA access- VERY frustrating!!*

## 10.2 EAL

### 10.21 Summary

Over half of all respondents reported None to this question. Many reported N/A which we take to mean that they do not have EAL learners in their school. The role of EAL and SET teachers was very evident in the responses. Not all schools have an EAL teacher. Not all schools have EAL learners, some have a few others have more. There was no set pattern in the data.

### 10.22 Emerging themes

Open responses to this question fall under the following themes:

- No support as it is not possible with distance learning
- Helpful ideas provided

### 10.23 Sample quotes

- No support, as it is not possible with distance learning

*None, the parents can't read any English note or texts that we sent home. Most have not replied to Aladdin Connect and have not registered.*

*None impossible to teach EFL in a distance learning setting None yet. Just providing resources same as class. Directed them to twinkl where there are resources in different languages.*

- Helpful ideas provided

*Trying to provide links to language online.*

*EAL teacher is staying in touch with parents and sending appropriate work while recommending online platforms.*

*We have very few children. At this stage of the year all our children are able to engage with general class work.*

*Minimised emphasis on Irish, simplified written guidance for parents and used pictorial/visual instructions where possible.*

*Suggested websites activities finding it difficult.*

*Same as others mostly. some work given is differentiated to their ability. sudden closure didn't allow for a lot of forward planning.*

*Task adapted to their needs and SET has set appropriate work that features in Support plan.*

*The vast majority of our pupils are EFL learners so all work is differentiated.*

*We only have one child with EFL and this child has received lots of oral language activity suggestions which his mum can help him with.*

*Learning support teachers communicating with class teachers in terms of preparing the postal packs.*

*EAL teacher strung out engaging with them all but doing great.*

*We have advised websites suitable, translation service sent to EAL parents and prescribed work is appropriate for them.*

*Links to support the work that was sent home. Suggestions of fun/game activities for families to try out. Cards, snakes and ladders, simple games such as those to improve numbers conversation etc.*

*Specific work was set up by their SET teachers- the use of reading eggs has also been set up and encouraged. Of course it would be a lot easier if our school had an EAL teacher!*

*Translation of key documents sent by the department or government. Work suggestions sent digitally so they can be translated.*

*We have one family who started school a week before the closure who have no English. They have no school books either. The parents have no English and they speak a dialect that I can't get on google translate so I can't communicate with them. I am texting another family who know them who speak the dialect and have English and hope they are passing on messages but I can't set the children work.*

*This is currently a challenge. Presently they were sent home on day of closure with work packs for three weeks. Yesterday I became aware of links on NCSE website these have been circulated to teachers to consider their potential and I have asked SET teachers to prioritise within the SET setting individuals that will need individualised support as opposed to those in*

*receipt of in-class support. How this support is disseminated has yet to be ironed out. I am not in favour of doing something for the sake of doing it, it must be effective.*



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**Maynooth University Department of  
Education**  
National University of Ireland  
Maynooth,  
Maynooth, Co. Kildare, Ireland.

**Roinn na Rannóg Oideachais  
Ollscoil Mhá Nuad**  
Ollscoil na hÉireann Má Nuad, Má  
Nuad,  
Co. Chill Dara, Éire.