



Department
for Education

COVID-19 Parent and Pupil Panel

Technical Report

July 2021

IFF Research Ltd



Government
Social Research

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Overview

The Department for Education (DfE) commissioned the COVID-19 Parent and Pupil Panel (PPP) to collect robust and quick turnaround research in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The PPP aimed to help DfE make evidence-based policy decisions, monitor the impact of the COVID-19 / post-COVID-19 situation, and see how views and experiences of parents and pupils changed over time.

This technical report covers each element of the PPP data collection and delivery process, across the recruitment phase and each of the subsequent 10 waves in the period August 2020 to July 2021, from building the sample through to analysis of final data. This technical report is divided into 11 sections:

- **Section 1: Overview.** Includes an overview of the aims of the panel and what this document covers.
- **Section 2: Methodology Overview.** Summarises the timescales for each wave and the reasons for the method selected.
- **Section 3: Sampling.** Outlines the size and structure of the starting sample and a summary of the recruitment phase.
- **Section 4: Questionnaire.** Provides details of the questionnaire development and cognitive testing of the questionnaires.
- **Section 5: Fieldwork.** Details the process for inviting panel members to participate and subsequent communication processes with panel members.
- **Section 6: Response Rate for Initial Panel Recruitment.** An outline of how many people took part in the initial recruitment wave, which formed the sample of the subsequent waves.
- **Section 7: Response Rates.** Outlines how many people took part in each wave; the breakdown of responses by key respondent groups as well as how many waves panellists took part in on average.
- **Section 8: Incentives.** A summary of the incentives administered to respondents.
- **Section 9: Panel feedback.** A summary of responses received after feedback was requested, before obtaining consent from respondents to remain on the panel.
- **Section 10: Weighting.** A summary of the weighting approach.
- **Section 11: Data Processing and Analysis.** An outline of the process for processing and analysing data, including which key subgroups were looked at and how significant differences were tested.

- **Section 12: Appendices.** Communications sent to panel members.

Methodology overview

Overview of Phase 1 and Phase 2

The research was structured into 2 broad phases:

- Phase 1: the recruitment wave (August 2020) invited pupils in years 6-13 and parents of pupils in reception to year 10 in the 2019/20 academic year to take part in a 15-minute online survey and join the PPP. Panel members were sampled from the National Pupil Database (NPD) and contacted by letter, inviting them to take part in an online survey (push-to-web approach).
- Phase 2: subsequent waves involved emailing panel members and inviting them to take part in regular short surveys.

In Phase 1, fieldwork lasted just under 3 weeks (19 days) during August 2020 and September 2020. Potential participants were sent an initial invitation letter and a reminder letter, sent a week into the fieldwork period. A £5 incentive, in the form of an Amazon voucher, was offered to parents and pupils in Phase 1. Incentives were paid after the completion of fieldwork.

In Phase 2, fieldwork typically lasted between 3 and 5 days in each wave at regular intervals of around 4 weeks, but varying between 10 days and 7 weeks (in the case of the December 2020 and February 2021 waves which were separated by Christmas). All panel members were sent an initial email invitation and a random sub-sample of those who had not yet responded were sent a reminder SMS on the third day of fieldwork. A £2.50 incentive, in the form of an Amazon voucher, was offered to parents and pupils at each wave in Phase 2. As in Phase 1, incentives were paid after the completion of fieldwork.

By the February 2021 wave the original contact period that the panel respondents had signed up to came to an end. Therefore, parents and pupils were asked to re-consent to be contacted for surveys going forward. 7,560 panel members agreed to be recontacted for the remainder of the research (62% of secondary pupils, 73% of primary parents and 72% of secondary parents).

Table 1 gives a breakdown of each wave of fieldwork completed, including the recruitment wave. The table outlines the number of responses achieved, the dates of the fieldwork period and the fieldwork reference used to refer to each wave in PPP reports. Wave 1 was sent to parents only, while wave 3 was only sent to school leavers.

Table 1 Parent and Pupil Panel (PPP) waves

Wave	Number of responses	Fieldwork period	Fieldwork reference
Recruitment Wave	7,191 parents and 5,327 secondary pupils (of which 1,570 were in year 13 in the 2019/20 academic year)	13 August – 1 September 2020	August 2020
Wave 1	4,005 parents	16-20 September 2020	September 2020
Wave 2	3,491 parents and 1,780 secondary pupils	30 September – 4 October 2020	September/October 2020
Wave 3	731 school leavers ¹	4-9 November 2020	School leavers - November 2020
Wave 4	3,542 parents and 1,661 secondary pupils	30 October – 1 November 2020	Late October 2020
Wave 5	3,388 parents and 1,612 secondary pupils	25-30 November 2020	Late November 2020
Wave 6	3,237 parents and 1,555 secondary pupils	16-21 December 2020	December 2020
Wave 7	3,082 parents and 1,537 secondary pupils	3-5 February 2021	February 2021
Wave 8	3,084 parents and 1,531 secondary pupils	22-25 March 2021	March 2021
Wave 9	3,084 parents and 1,537 secondary pupils	12 - 17 May 2021	May 2021
Wave 10	3,080 parents and 1,511 secondary pupils	30 June - 5 July 2021	July 2021

¹ The school leavers group is comprised of pupils who were in year 13 in the academic year 2019/20 and who had left school by the 2020/21 academic year.

Reasons for the PPP methodology

This method was chosen for the PPP because:

- It meant the NPD could be used as the sample source;
- It could deliver large sample sizes cost-effectively;
- It meant findings could be collected and disseminated very rapidly.

The NPD is a full listing of all pupils in receipt of state funded education making it the most suitable sample frame for a survey of pupils and their parents. However, the only contact details that it contains are postal addresses, meaning that initial contact needed to be made via a hard copy letter.

The overall panel size and structure was designed to maintain a confidence interval no larger than +/-2.5% for each of the 3 key audiences - primary school parents, secondary school parents and secondary pupils - at each wave. Achieving at least 1,537 responses for each audience ensured this confidence interval across each wave of the panel. The inclusion of incentives was designed to support the response rate so that the desired confidence intervals could be achieved within the short fieldwork period.

The panel method also ensured speed of delivery. By re-contacting the same group (the panel members) at each wave with an online survey, accessible on computers, tablets and smart phone devices, panel members could complete the survey as soon as invitations were received. This reduced the time between invitation and completion and therefore the overall fieldwork period, maximising the speed with which data were delivered.

Sampling

To ensure robust statistics, the sample was a stratified simple random and was drawn from the National Pupil Database (NPD). The sampling process was as follows, with all data sharing being conducted following approval from the DfE's Data Sharing Approval Panel (DSAP):

- DfE shared anonymised pupil data for the whole sample frame with IFF.
- IFF then selected individual unique reference numbers based upon the agreed sample structure. A core sample and a mirror reserve sample were drawn.
- DfE then matched names and contact details to the selected sample to allow IFF to then send postal invitations to those sampled.

Having received the contact information, IFF looked for any families that appeared more than once in the core sample (due to more than one child being selected) and replaced any duplicates with a family sampled at random from the corresponding sample cell in the reserve sample.

Sample selection

The sample was drawn to ensure those invited to the panel would be representative of the population of school pupils in England while at the same time facilitating sub-group analysis for particular groups of interest i.e. SEND pupils and those eligible for FSM.

Targets were agreed for the desired number of panel members by year group and SEND status/FSM eligibility². These targets were designed to allow some attrition over the multiple waves of research planned.

The sample volumes to draw were then calculated based on best estimates of the likely response rate for each group. These estimates were based on the experiences of the Pupil's and their parents or carers omnibus survey that the DfE had conducted previously (which included some experiments around the use of incentives).³

The starting assumptions about response rates which informed the sample ratios drawn were as shown in Table 2:

² SEN and FSM, FSM only, SEN only, Neither

³ [Pupils and their parents or carers: omnibus survey - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Table 2. Assumed response rate and response numbers at each wave

	Primary Parents	Secondary Parents	Secondary Pupils	Total
Number of individuals for panel	3,843	3,843	3,843	11,529
Response rate at Wave 1	52%	52%	-	52%
Responses at Wave 1	1,998	1,998	-	3,996
Response rate at Wave 2	50%	50%	48% ⁴	50%
Responses at Wave 2	1,922	1,922	1,845	5,689
Response rate at Wave 3	48%	48%	-	48%
Responses at Wave 3	1,845	1,845	-	3,690
Response rate at Wave 4	46%	46%	46%	46%
Responses at Wave 4	1,768	1,768	1,768	5,304
Response rate at Wave 5	44%	44%	44%	44%
Responses at Wave 5	1,691	1,691	1,691	5,073
Response rate at Wave 6	42%	42%	42%	42%
Responses at Wave 6	1,614	1,614	1,614	4,842

⁴ Initial assumed response rates were based on estimates. Pupils were assumed to be a less engaged audience than parents, because of the longer period left before recontacting after recruitment and because research with young people tends to have lower response rates in general.

	Primary Parents	Secondary Parents	Secondary Pupils	Total
Response rate at Wave 7	40%	40%	40%	40%
Responses at Wave 7	1,537	1,537	1,537	4,611

Before the sample was drawn, it was sorted on the following variables:

- School Unique Reference Number (URN) ⁵
- Pupil gender
- Pupil age
- Pupil ethnicity
- Local authority
- SEND provision type
- IDACI rank⁶

It was then stratified by SEND/FSM status and year group and a random sample was drawn within each stratum.

The total starting sample was 52,707 parents and pupils. Table 3, Table 4 and Table 5 show the sample for each cell of the sample matrix.

⁵ Six-digit number issued by Ofsted to identify educational establishments in the UK

⁶ Income deprivation affecting children index (IDACI) measures the proportion of all children aged 0 to 15 living in income deprived families. The more deprived is an area, the higher the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score but the lower the rank.

Table 3. Sample of secondary school parents drawn by year group, SEND and FSM status

Secondary School Parents	SEND and FSM	FSM only	SEND only	Neither	Total
Year 6	245	629	310	1,749	2,933
Year 7	245	629	310	1,749	2,933
Year 8	245	629	310	1,749	2,933
Year 9	245	629	310	1,749	2,933
Year 10	245	629	310	1,749	2,933
Total	1,225	3,145	1,550	8,745	14,665

Table 4. Sample of primary school parents drawn by year group, SEND and FSM status

Primary school parents	SEND and FSM	FSM only	SEND only	Neither	Total
Reception	233	495	283	1,436	2,447
Year 1	233	495	283	1,436	2,447
Year 2	233	495	283	1,436	2,447
Year 3	233	495	283	1,436	2,447

Primary school parents	SEND and FSM	FSM only	SEND only	Neither	Total
Year 4	233	495	283	1,436	2,447
Year 5	233	495	283	1,436	2,447
Total	1,398	2,970	1,698	8,616	14,682

Table 5. Sample of secondary school pupils drawn by year group, SEND and FSM status

Secondary school pupils	SEND and FSM	FSM only	SEND only	Neither	Total
Year 6	110	283	141	1,038	1,572
Year 7	110	283	141	1,038	1,572
Year 8	110	283	141	1,038	1,572
Year 9	205	528	264	1,936	2,933
Year 10	205	528	264	1,936	2,933
Year 11	205	528	264	1,936	2,933
Year 12	205	528	264	1,936	2,933
Year 13	484	1244	622	4,562	6,912
Total	1,634	4,205	2,101	15,420	23,360

In total, 42,125 initial invites were sent to parents and pupils (including some joint invitations) asking them to take part in the recruitment wave and thus join the panel. The number and types of invite letters are summarised below:



Types of pupils included in the NPD

Pupils (and parents of pupils) in state-funded secondary schools in England (including middle-deemed secondary schools, local authority maintained schools, academies, grammar schools, City Technology Colleges) were included in the sample. Parents of pupils in state-funded primary schools in England were sampled (including local authority maintained schools, academies). Pupils and parents of pupils who are home educated, attending independent schools, special schools or attending further education colleges (not covered by NPD) were not included.

Academic years pupils and parents of pupils were sampled from

Pupils were sampled from all pupils in years 6 – 13 in the 2019/20 academic year. Pupils moved up a year level between the recruitment wave in August 2020, which took place during the 2019/20 academic year, and the first follow up pupil survey held in September/October 2020, in the first term of the 2020/21 academic year. All surveyed pupils are referred to by the year group that they were in during the academic year of the wave in discussion. For example, a year 6 pupil that was recruited in the August 2020 wave will be referred to as a year 6 in the August 2020 wave, but as a year 7 pupil from the September/October 2020 wave onwards. Year 11 pupils in August 2020 moved into year 12 in the 2020/21 academic year; it is estimated that around half of those who

moved from year 11 to year 12 left school, with many of them moving to FE and sixth form colleges. As such, findings for year 12 likely represent all year 12 students, not just those in school sixth forms. Year 12 pupils in August 2020 who moved into year 13 in the 2020/21 academic year are only representative of those in school sixth forms. Year 13 pupils in August 2020 are referred to as 'school leavers' in the 2020/21 academic year.

It is worth noting that the secondary parents and secondary pupil groups refer to pupils in slightly different year groups. The secondary parents' group (in all subsequent waves) reflects the views of parents with pupils in years 7-11 in the 2020/21 academic year, while the secondary pupils group includes the views of pupils in years 7-13 in the 2020/21 academic year. Parents of year 12 and 13 pupils were not included in the sample because the research team felt that these older pupils were more autonomous, and the types of data collected across these pupils and their parents would be duplicative.

The inclusion of more senior pupils (years 12-13) in the secondary pupil group may help to explain some of the disparities between secondary pupils and secondary parents. This also means that in all of the waves conducted from September 2020, parents of primary pupils refers to parents of pupils in years 1-6, with parents of pupils sampled in reception during the 2019/20 academic year now in year 1 and so on (parents of pupils in reception in 2020/21 academic year were therefore not included).

Sample checking

At each wave, the sample file was updated. This included data that may have been collected in the previous wave, such as SEND status, or whether the pupil had received a device or internet access from their school for remote learning. Before launching each survey, the updated sample file was spot checked against the original NPD sample files. All questions which were routed based on sample variables were also double checked. Where respondents had requested not to be contacted again, their data was removed. Any emails which were no longer working were removed. Before sending invites, the extract from the master sample profile was checked to ensure that it corresponded to the specific audience that the wave was targeting (e.g., Parents only).

Questionnaire

For each wave, the DfE gathered provisional questions from policy teams across the Department and sent them to IFF. IFF and the DfE then worked together to develop and refine the questions until they were ready for cognitive testing. Each questionnaire was developed through several iterations, with a researcher at IFF “owning” one strand (e.g. pupils) before cross-checking the final version of the other strands for consistency.

Questions to be cognitively tested were decided jointly by the DfE and IFF, depending on the complexity of the question/answer codes and whether the question was new for the particular wave. The method for carrying out cognitive testing was amended during Phase 2 of the research, as detailed below.

Cognitive testing: Method 1

For August 2020 (the recruitment wave), mid-September, September/October and late October 2020 waves, the DfE research team and the IFF team shared cognitive testing questionnaire documents with colleagues and wider networks, who were parents of school aged pupils (including parents of secondary pupils who could pass the documents on to their child for testing). IFF produced a respondent friendly version of both the parent and secondary pupil questionnaires. The documents clearly marked the proposed questionnaire and the associated routing for the respondent, and after a module of questions, it asked respondents cognitive questions about their comprehension of the questionnaire and the answer codes. Respondents were asked to respond to the cognitive questions in the document and send this back to the IFF team. IFF gathered all the responses and suggested amends based on the comments and feedback provided by respondents. Typically, per wave, this method yielded around 6-8 responses from parents and around 4-6 responses from pupils.

Cognitive testing: Method 2

After the completion of the late October 2020 wave cognitive testing, the pool of contacts utilised by IFF and DfE for cognitive testing had completed 4 rounds of cognitive testing (at monthly intervals) and the DfE were conscious of the task becoming burdensome for completers. There was also a worry that, by receiving feedback from the same contacts each wave, the range of feedback could be limited. In addition, the tight time frames made it difficult to collect the number of responses necessary to ensure all questions were tested by multiple people.

For the School leavers November 2020 wave and all waves from the Late November 2020 wave onwards, the cognitive testing moved to a telephone approach. IFF compiled a sample of respondents who were over-quota in the August 2020 wave but had consented to being contacted for future research with the DfE. This sample was made up of 239 parents, 248 secondary school pupils and 211 school leaver records.

At each wave, a target was set to complete 12 cognitive interviews, made up of around 6 parents and 6 secondary pupils. In each wave, the target of 12 interviews overall was either met or exceeded. The interviewers were briefed by the project team on the specific questions to be tested at each wave, and areas which needed probing further for each question module.⁷ They were also supplied with targets within subgroups, for example the number of pupils per year group to interview, and the number of primary and secondary parents. At each wave, records were prioritised in a set order, with an aim of each record on the sample only completing the cognitive testing once. For example, in the February 2021 wave, the prioritisation order was 1) records who had not yet been contacted at all, 2) records who had not answered at all in previous waves and 3) records who had gone to voicemail in each wave.

Using this method, around 60 records were called per wave, to yield 12 responses in total. Call length was dependent on the number of questions which needed to be cognitively tested in each wave, which was typically around 10 – 15 questions. Some waves included mostly tracking questions which had been previously tested, whereas other waves were mostly new questions, requiring a longer interview, with more questions to test. On average across waves, the call length was around 20-25 minutes. Respondents were offered a £5 Amazon voucher as an incentive to take part.

Questionnaire checking

After cognitive testing, some questions would go through further iterations before being signed-off by senior members of the DfE and IFF teams. Once the questionnaire was signed off, it was scripted into the web survey. This web survey was checked extensively by at least two members of the IFF team, updating an amends records file to track any changes. Once initial checks were complete, “dummy” data was run through the online survey and downloaded as a raw data file. The routing of each question was then double checked using this data. Finally, after all amends had been made, the survey was signed-off by a senior researcher in IFF.

⁷ Interviews were conducted by IFF’s trained and experienced interviewers.

Fieldwork

Phase 1: Initial invites

Individuals were invited to complete the initial recruitment survey (Phase 1) via a survey weblink, with a unique login (which routed respondents to either the parent or pupil version of the questionnaire). The study was branded as the '**COVID-19 Parent and Pupil Research Panel**'. Examples of the initial invite letters are in the Appendices of this report.

IFF sent an invitation letter to parents which explained what being part of the panel would involve, how they were chosen, incentive information, instructions on how to complete the initial recruitment survey, and contact information for the DfE and IFF. The invitation letter explained that upon joining the panel, the respondent could expect to be invited to up to 7 surveys between August 2020 and January 2021, and that the research was being carried out by IFF, on behalf of the DfE. The letter made clear that participants could join the panel and complete questionnaires by telephone if access to the internet or a computer would be a barrier to taking part. Subsequently, no one took up this offer.

There were two versions of the initial invitation packs sent out to panellists:

1. A pack for parents of primary pupils in reception to year 5 (year 1 to year 6 in 2020/21 academic year) and parents of secondary pupils in year 6 to 10 (year 7 to year 11 in the 2020/21 academic year). This pack included an invitation letter for the parent. For secondary parents, the pack also included a letter for them to pass onto the named pupil to invite them to take part.
2. A pack for secondary pupils in year 11 to 13 (year 12 and 13 in 2020/21 academic year, plus those 'school leavers' who finished year 13 in 2019/20), the letter and invite addressed just to them.

Phase 1: Reminder invites

On the 19th and 20th August 2020, IFF sent reminder letters to all individuals who did not respond to the initial recruitment letter. This was one week after the initial invitation was sent. The reminder letters were tailored based on who from the household had responded. For example, if the parent had responded but the pupil had not yet, the letter thanked the parent/carer for their response and requested they remind their pupil to complete the survey. The reminder letters had the same information as covered in the initial invite, and again included a link to the recruitment survey.

Phase 2: Initial invites

For each wave in Phase 2, parents and pupils received an invitation email alerting them to the fact that a new survey was ready to be completed. In some cases, both parents and pupils in the same household provided the same e-mail address for contact. In these cases, a joint invitation was sent which contained clearly labelled links to the parent survey and the pupil survey.

The email invites, whether individual or joint, reintroduced the research to the respondents, thanked them for their time, gave them information about the incentive and the contact details for IFF and the DfE.

Phase 2: Reminder SMS

The survey was open for up to 5 days, however the fieldwork period for Phase 2 typically covered 4 days (and often this was over the weekend). This shorter period was due to a good response rate, meaning the survey did not need to stay open for the full 5 days. On around the third day (dependent on the response rates), IFF sent out reminder SMS messages to a sub-sample of those who had not responded, selected at random. The number/profile of individuals selected to receive an SMS reminder was determined based on the response rates to the initial e-mail and was designed to ensure the desired targets by audience (primary parent, secondary parent and secondary pupil) and year group were met.

As all respondents received an incentive, there was a need to cap the number of responses at each wave in order to contain costs. The number of SMS reminders were limited to try to ensure that they did not generate interest from more respondents than were required (which could have led to disengagement with the panel). For each wave, around 2.5 times the number of respondents needed to reach each target were sent the SMS reminder text.

The SMS messages alerted panel members that they had limited time to take part in the survey and included the link to start the survey. It also sign-posted them to the email invite for more information. If the mobile number was that of a joint parent and pupil record, the name the person on the specified ID would be in the text, to make it clear who was being reminded to take part.

Helpdesk support

IFF set up a project email mailbox which was shared with panel members in the Phase 1 initial invite, reminder invite and all subsequent invitations to Phase 2.⁸ The project mailbox address was also on the end page of each survey, encouraging panel members to get in touch with IFF or the DfE if they had any questions. A freephone number was also set up, with a recorded voicemail box for panel members to use, which was monitored frequently. Mailbox activity was checked daily by a member of the project team at IFF. Activity on the freephone voicemail box and e-mailbox peaked around the day of fieldwork launch, with queries tending to be about:

- Difficulty accessing the survey link
- Queries about previous incentive payments
- Extra information about their response to the survey

All queries were dealt with within 1-2 working days. For the small number of panel members who had difficulty opening the survey link in the email, IFF provided them an open link and their personalised ID to enter, which resolved the issue. Overall, a very limited number of panellists contacted the mailbox with issues.

Opt-outs

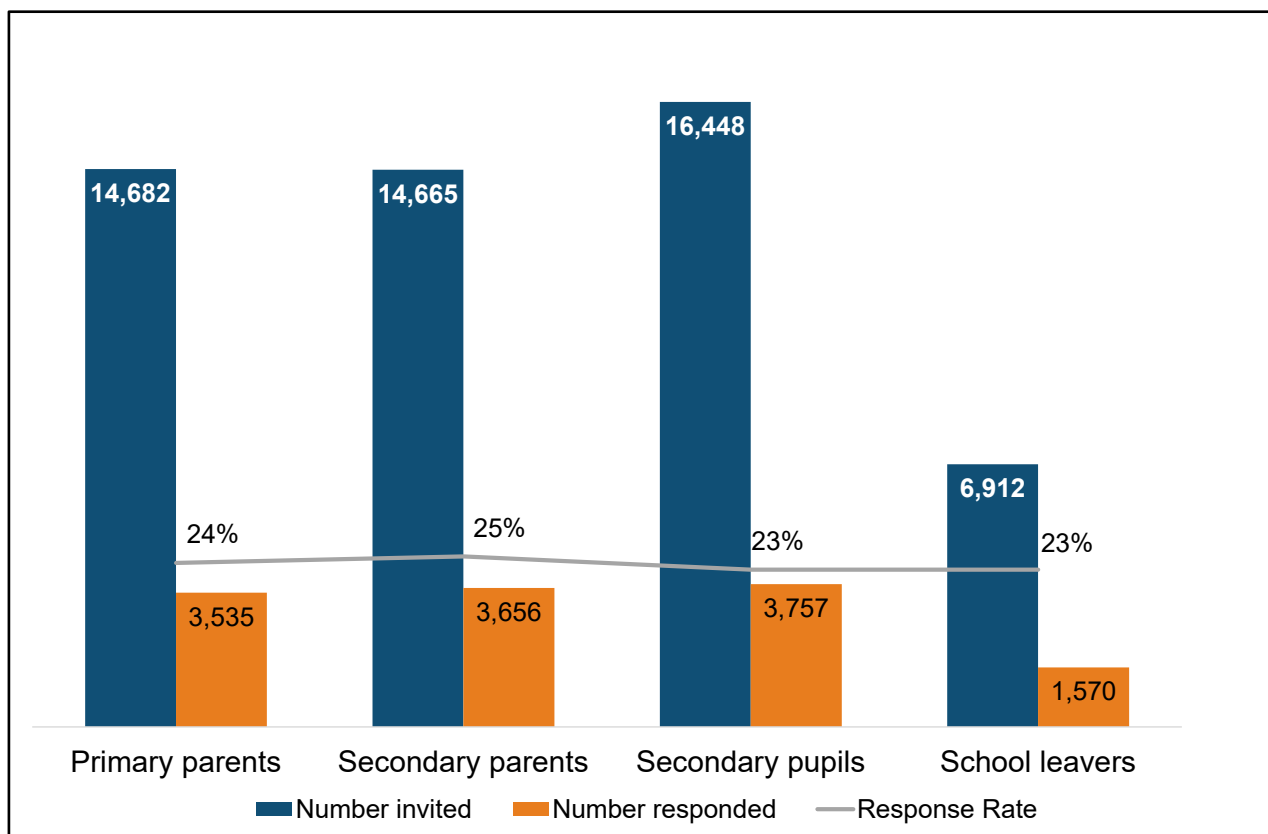
Panellists were able to opt-out of the research at any point by contacting IFF via their PPP mailbox. Once a panellist requested to opt out of the panel, they were no longer included in subsequent wave invites. Eleven parents and one pupil opted out of the research between the August 2020 wave and February 2021 wave.

⁸ ParentPupilPanelVM@iffresearch.com

Response rate for initial panel recruitment

The overall response rate from contacting 23,360 Pupils and 29,347 Parents (total 52,707) was 24%. The response rates by the major sub-groups are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Invites and response rates for the Parent and Pupil Panel



Response rates are broken down in more detail below in Table 6.

Table 6: Response rates for panel groups by key demographics

Sub-group	All Parents	Primary Parents	Secondary Parents	Secondary Pupils	School Leavers
Overall Response Rate	24%	24%	25%	23%	23%
PUPIL: MALE	24%	24%	24%	21%	21%

Sub-group	All Parents	Primary Parents	Secondary Parents	Secondary Pupils	School Leavers
PUPIL: FEMALE	25%	24%	26%	25%	24%
PUPIL: FSM ⁹	17%	17%	18%	17%	20%
PUPIL: BAME ¹⁰	20%	19%	21%	21%	20%
PUPIL: SEND ¹¹	20%	21%	19%	17%	20%
PUPIL: Child in Need (CIN)	11%	12%	10%	10%	13%
PUPIL: YEAR R*	N/A	23%	N/A	N/A	N/A
PUPIL: YEAR 1	N/A	24%	N/A	N/A	N/A
PUPIL: YEAR 2	N/A	25%	N/A	N/A	N/A
PUPIL: YEAR 3	N/A	23%	N/A	N/A	N/A
PUPIL: YEAR 4	N/A	24%	N/A	N/A	N/A
PUPIL: YEAR 5	N/A	24%	N/A	N/A	N/A
PUPIL: YEAR 6	N/A	23%	N/A	N/A	N/A
PUPIL: YEAR 7	N/A	N/A	27%	21%	N/A

⁹ FSM stands for pupils eligible for Free School Meals

¹⁰ BAME stands for pupils from Black, Asian and minority ethnic backgrounds

¹¹ SEND stands for pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities

Sub-group	All Parents	Primary Parents	Secondary Parents	Secondary Pupils	School Leavers
PUPIL: YEAR 8	N/A	N/A	25%	24%	N/A
PUPIL: YEAR 9	N/A	N/A	24%	23%	N/A
PUPIL: YEAR 10	N/A	N/A	26%	22%	N/A
PUPIL: YEAR 11	N/A	N/A	N/A	24%	N/A
PUPIL: YEAR 12	N/A	N/A	N/A	23%	N/A
PUPIL: YEAR 13	N/A	N/A	N/A	23%	N/A

The overall numbers and proportions of respondents on the panel are broken down by sub-group in Table 7.

Table 7: Profile of the Parent and Pupil panel by key demographics

	Number of parents on panel	% of all parents on panel	Number of pupils on panel	% of all pupils on panel
All	7,191	100%	5,327	100%
Primary	3,535	49%	0	-
Secondary	3,656	51%	5,327	100%
PUPIL: FSM	1,525	21%	1,231	23%

	Number of parents on panel	% of all parents on panel	Number of pupils on panel	% of all pupils on panel
PUPIL: SEND	1,180	16%	783	15%
PUPIL: CIN	89	1%	62	1%
Ethnicity: White	5,509	77%	3,853	72%
Ethnicity: Asian	605	8%	712	13%
Ethnicity: Black	237	8%	269	5%
Ethnicity: Mixed	141	2%	261	5%
Ethnicity: Other	137	2%	104	2%
Gender: Male*	1,033	14%	2,362	44%
Gender: Female	5,624	78%	2,899	54%
Region: East Midlands	663	9%	522	10%
Region: East of England	875	12%	645	12%
Region: London	865	12%	839	16%
Region: North East	343	5%	233	4%
Region: North West	942	13%	564	11%

	Number of parents on panel	% of all parents on panel	Number of pupils on panel	% of all pupils on panel
Region: South East	1,261	18%	854	16%
Region: South West	760	11%	518	10%
Region: West Midlands	794	11%	641	12%
Region: Yorkshire and the Humber	688	10%	511	10%

*Note that while the proportion of female parents is far greater than male parents, they represent a roughly equal split by pupil gender (49% female, 51% male).

As mentioned in the sampling section, the initial sample for the panel was structured by year group, SEND status and FSM status. Families eligible for FSM were over-sampled as they have historically been shown to have lower response rates.¹²

Table 8 shows a comparison of the proportions of these groups in the population, against the starting sample who were invited, and those who joined the panel. As the table shows, the over-sampling strategy was largely successful at ensuring that FSM families were still slightly over-represented in the final panel, allowing scope for high attrition rates over time.

¹²https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/738445/Omnibus_survey_of_pupils_and_their_parents_or_carers-wave_4.pdf

Table 8 Comparison of Population, starting sample and panel profile for sampled demographics.

		SEN and FSM	FSM only	SEN only	Neither
Primary Parents	% of population	4%	12%	10%	74%
Primary Parents	% of sample	10%	20%	12%	59%
Primary Parents	% of panel	7%	15%	12%	67%
Secondary Parents	% of population	3%	11%	9%	77%
Secondary Parents	% of sample	8%	21%	11%	60%
Secondary Parents	% of panel	5%	16%	9%	69%
Secondary Pupils (Including school leavers)	% of population	3%	11%	9%	77%
Secondary Pupils (Including school leavers)	% of sample	7%	18%	9%	66%
Secondary Pupils (Including school leavers)	% of panel	5%	18%	10%	67%

Response rates

Table 9 shows the number of parents and pupils who have taken part in each wave following the recruitment wave, and Table 10 shows what response rate this equates to i.e. of those who were invited from the panel, how many went on to complete each survey wave. Table 11 shows this for the re-consent panel from March 2021 onwards.

It should be noted that at each wave, response numbers were capped based on pupil year group targets.^{13 14} This ensured a spread of completes per year group and contained costs but does make the response rates slightly fixed. The target numbers for each wave were based on estimates of the likely response rate if all those wishing to respond were allowed to, but they erred on the side of caution given the uncertainty surrounding the pandemic and importance of achieving the required number of responses.

The estimated response rates (and therefore targets) were slightly lower at each wave to allow for attrition with the aim of still being able to achieve 1,537 responses in each of the 3 audiences (primary parents, secondary parents, and secondary pupils) at the February 2021 wave. The panel was then extended for a further three waves to July 2021, with the aim of maintaining this minimum response per audience.

Table 9. Number of parents and pupils completing each wave

Wave	Fieldwork Period	All Parents	Primary Parents	Secondary Parents	Secondary Pupils	School Leavers
Wave 1	September 2020	4,005	1,987	2,018	-	-
Wave 2	September/ October 2020	3,491	1,712	1,779	1,780	-
Wave 3	November 2020	-	-	-	-	731

¹³ Pupils flagged as 'Children in Need' (CIN) on the National Pupil Database (NPD), and their parents, were not subject to this recruitment cap and could therefore take part during the fieldwork window even if the quota for their year group was full. In reality, this led to a couple of additional responses per wave.

¹⁴ Quotas were not set for the School Leavers wave (wave 3) in November 2020.

Wave	Fieldwork Period	All Parents	Primary Parents	Secondary Parents	Secondary Pupils	School Leavers
Wave 4	Late October 2020	3,542	1,771	1,771	1,661	-
Wave 5	Late November 2020	3,388	1,697	1,691	1,612	-
Wave 6	December 2020	3,237	1,618	1,619	1,555	-
Wave 7	February 2021	3,082	1,541	1,541	1,537	-
Wave 8	March 2021	3,084	1,537	1,547	1,531	-
Wave 9	May 2021	3,084	1,544	1,540	1,537	-
Wave 10	July 2021	3,080	1,537	1,543	1,511	-

Table 10. Percentage of panel who completed each wave

Wave	Fieldwork Period	Primary Parents	Secondary Parents	Secondary Pupils ¹⁵	School Leavers
Wave 1	September 2020	56%	55%	-	-
Wave 2	September/ October 2020	48%	49%	47%	-
Wave 3	November 2020	-	-	-	47%

¹⁵ Proportion not including school leavers

Wave 4	Late October 2020	50%	49%	44%	-
Wave 5	Late November 2020	48%	46%	43%	-
Wave 6	December 2020	46%	44%	41%	-
Wave 7	February 2021	44%	42%	41%	-

Table 11: Percentage of re-consent panel who completed each subsequent wave

Wave	Fieldwork Period	Primary Parents	Secondary Parents	Secondary Pupils ¹⁶	School Leavers
Wave 8	March 2021	59%	59%	66%	-
Wave 9	May 2021	60%	58%	66%	-
Wave 10	July 2021	59%	59%	65%	-

Proportion of respondents from each key sub-group

The following charts show the proportion of overall responses at each wave from key sub-groups and are based on final, unweighted data.

¹⁶ Proportion not including school leavers

All parent responses

FSM eligibility and SEND status

As shown in Figure 2 and Figure 3, parents of pupils with FSM or SEND status were oversampled at the initial recruitment stage (versus the population in the NPD) to reflect an anticipated lower response rate from these respondents.

As expected, the response rates of parents of pupils eligible for FSM or with SEND status were lower than average at the panel recruitment stage. However, since the September 2020 wave, they have remained similar to those of parents and pupils without FSM or SEND status producing a profile broadly in line with the population.

Figure 2. Proportion of all parents with an FSM eligible pupil in each wave

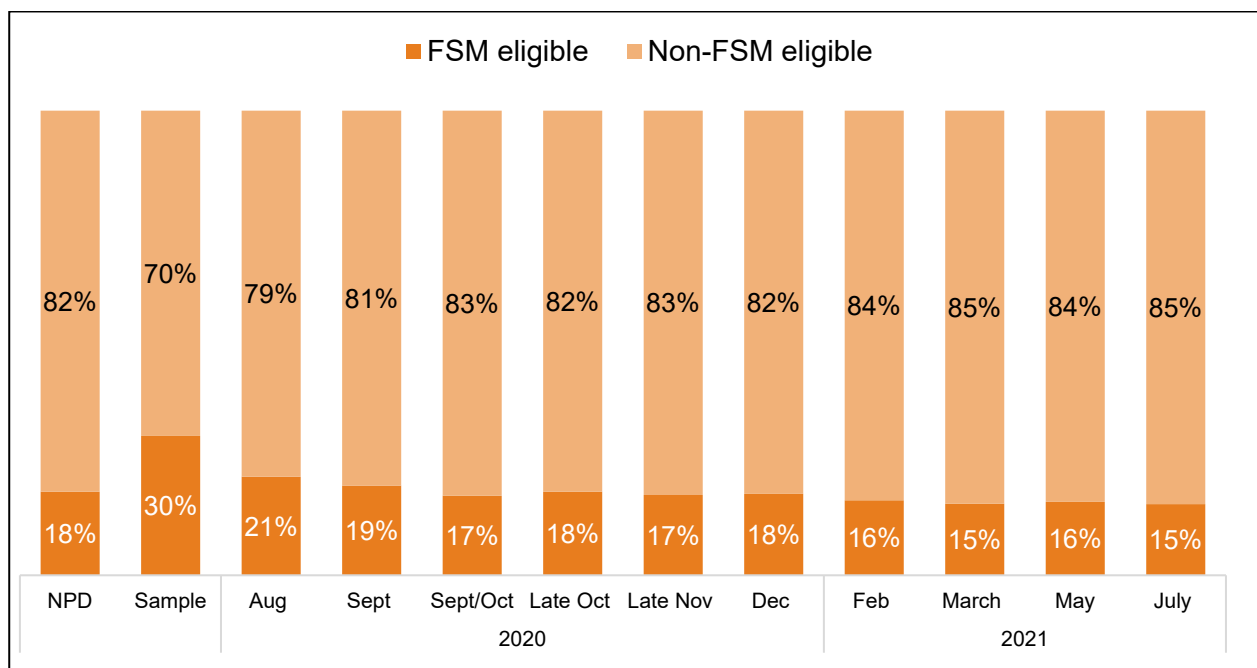
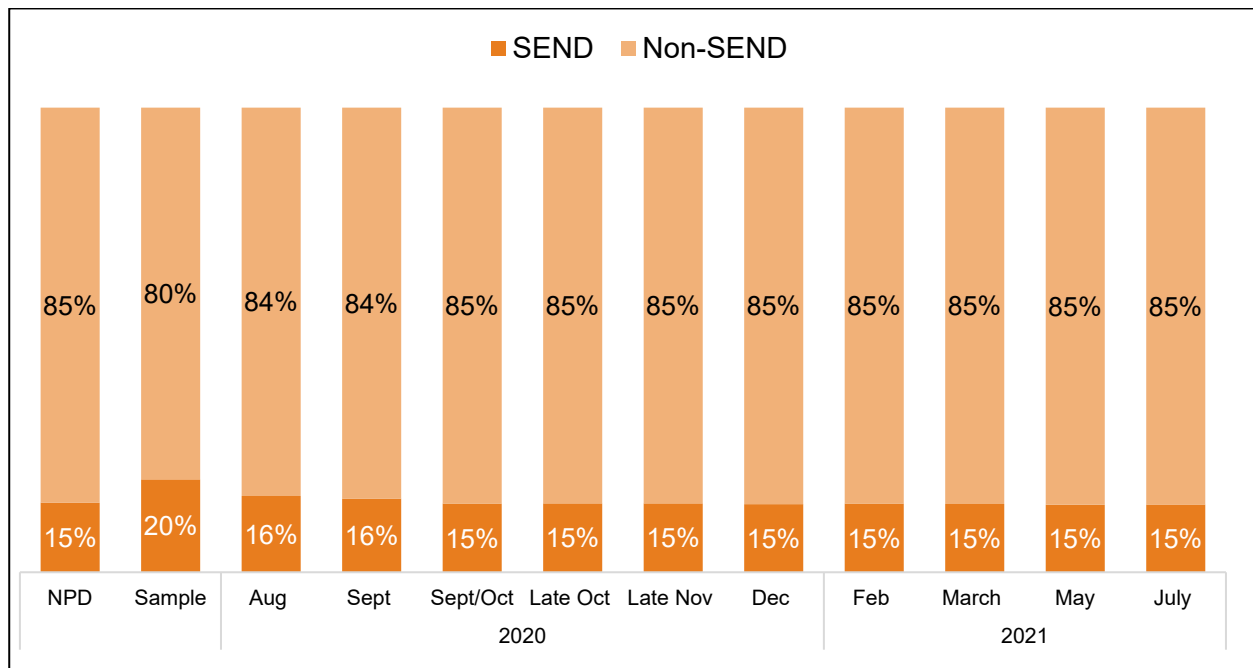


Figure 3. Proportion of all parents with a pupil with SEND in each wave

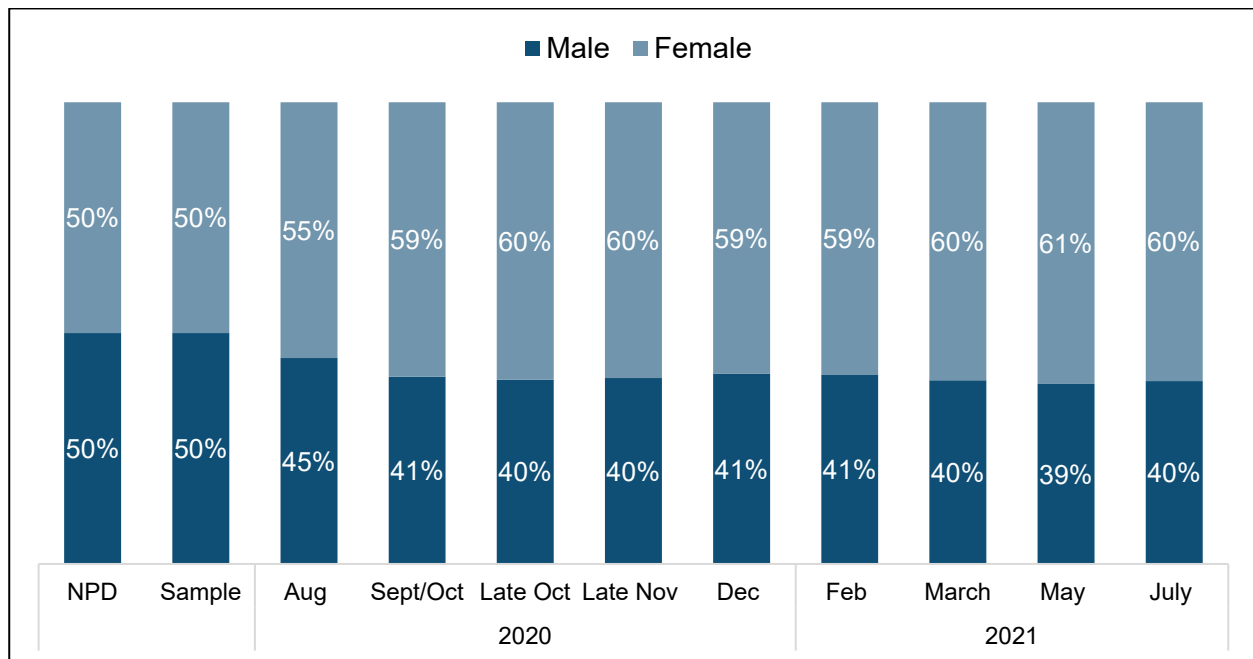


Secondary pupil responses

Pupil gender

As shown in Figure 4, female pupils were more likely to join the panel than male pupils at the recruitment wave. They have then been slightly more likely to respond at all subsequent waves. A sufficient number of male pupils have still taken part to allow for comparison.

Figure 4. Proportion of male and female secondary school pupils in each wave



FSM eligibility and SEND status

As shown in Figure 5 and Figure 6, the proportion of pupils responding to each wave who were eligible for FSM, or with a SEND, has remained stable for most waves after the initial recruitment wave. As with parents, within the initial sample, pupils eligible for FSM or with a SEND status were oversampled (versus the population in the NPD) to reflect an anticipated lower response rate.

As expected, the response rates of pupils eligible for FSM or with a SEND status were lower in the recruitment wave, compared to the sample, but have then remained broadly in line with those of other pupils.

Figure 5. Proportion of secondary school pupils eligible for FSM in each wave

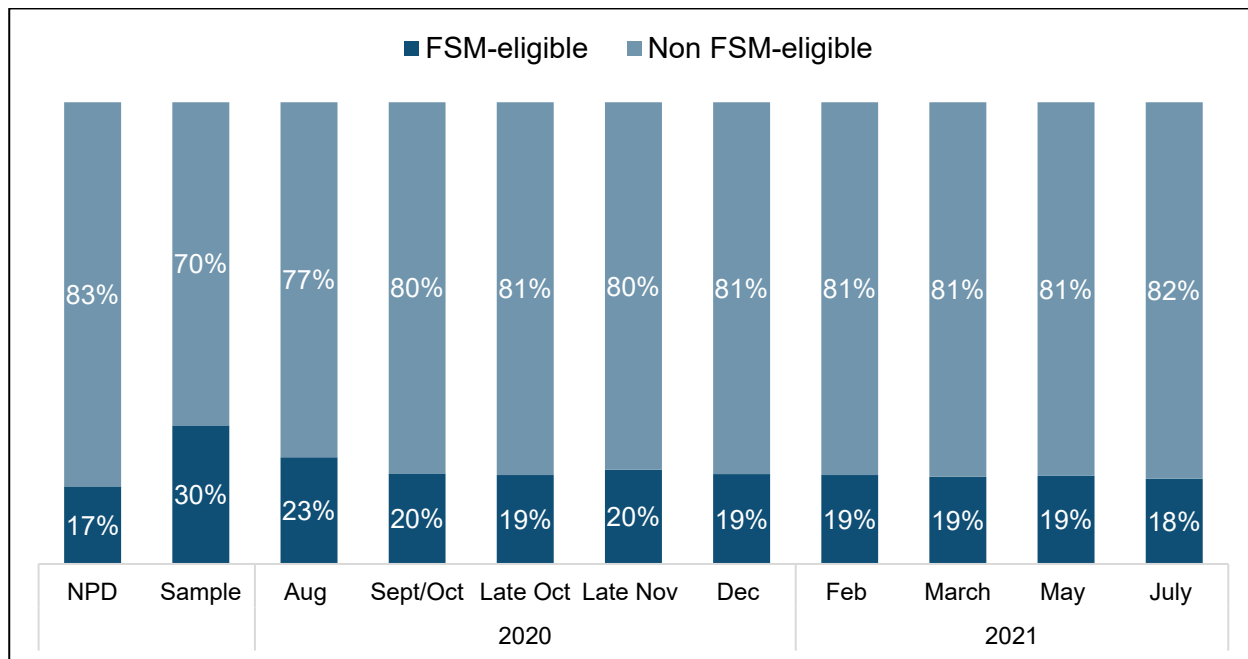
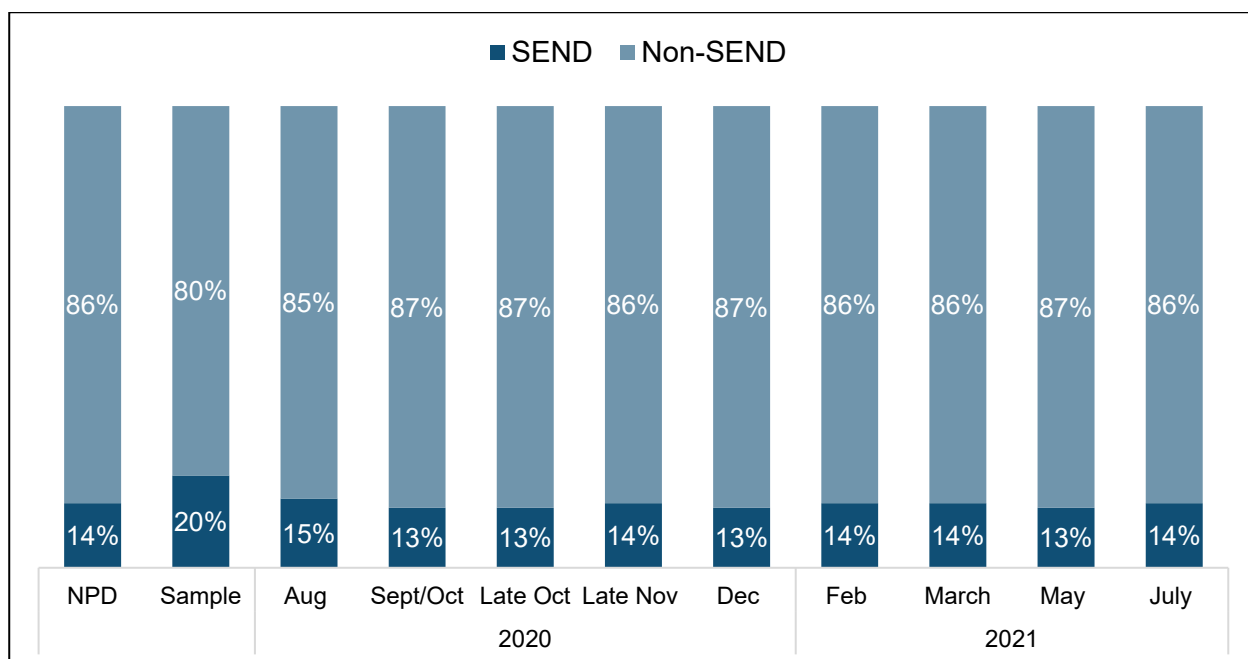


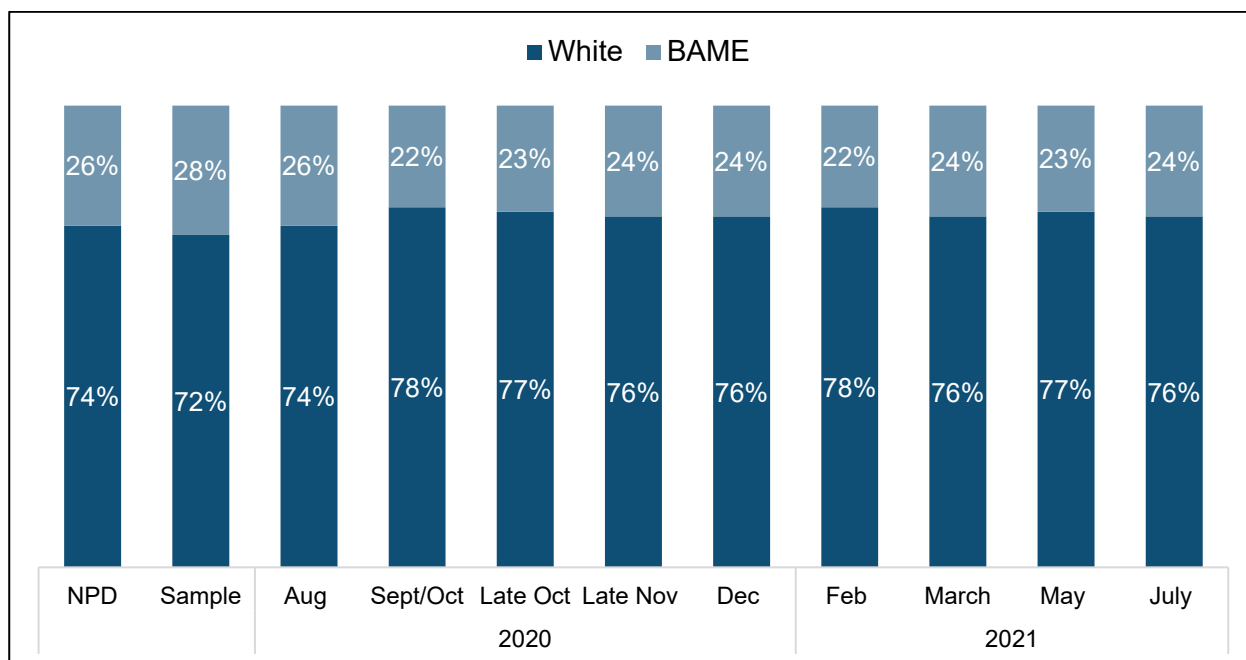
Figure 6. Proportion of secondary pupils with SEND in each wave



Pupils ethnicity

The response rates of Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) pupils were lower in the original sample compared to White pupils, and slightly lower still in subsequent waves, as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Proportion of White and BAME pupils in each wave

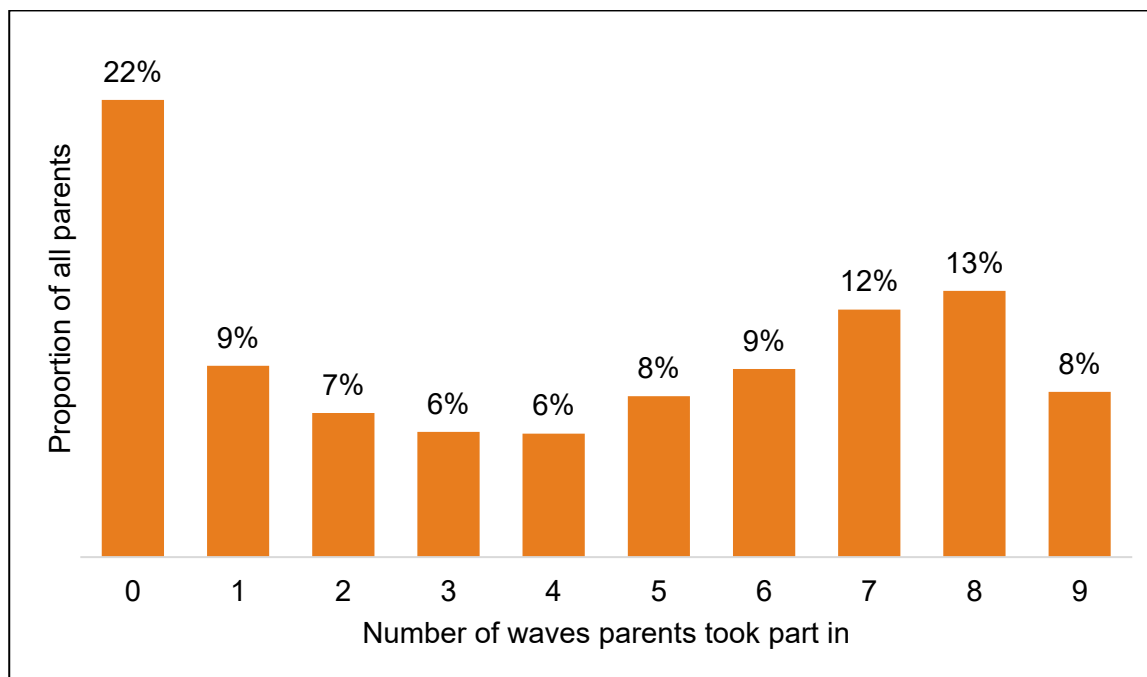


Number of waves panellists completed

This section presents some analysis of the number of waves that individual panellists participated in. This is based on all 10 waves– of which parents were invited to 9 waves, pupils to 8 waves, and school leavers to 1 wave.

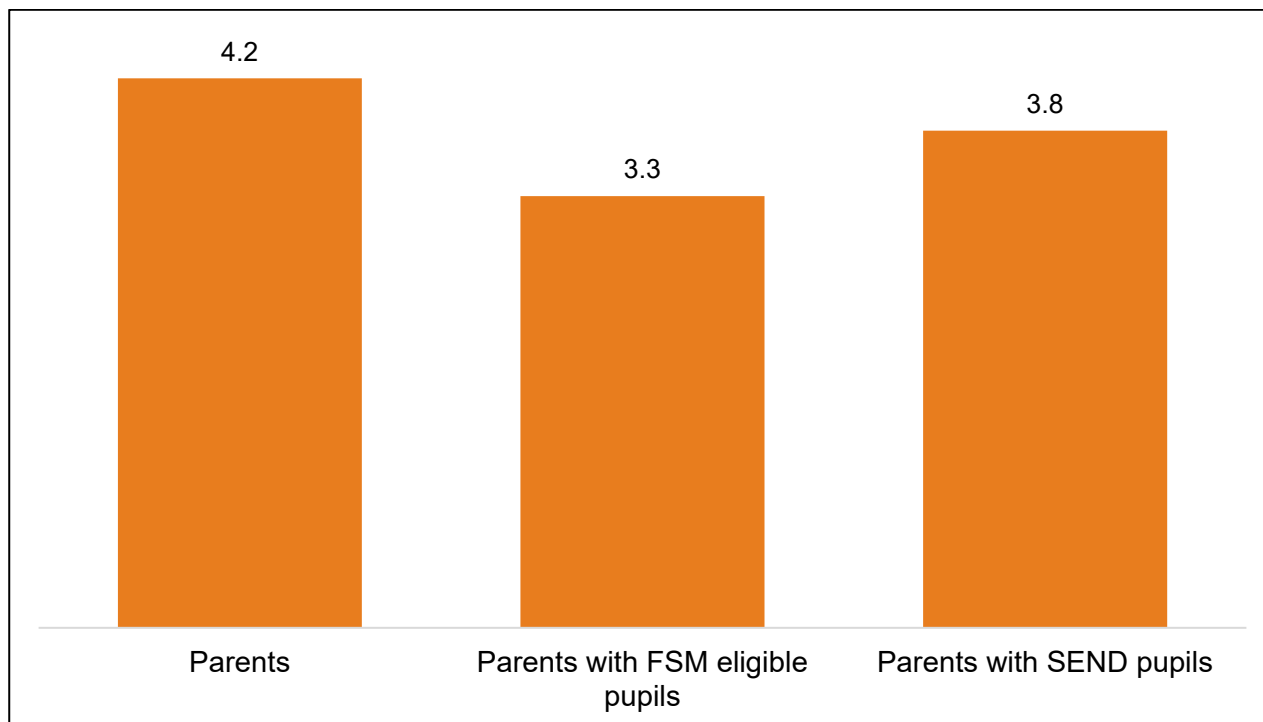
As shown in Figure 8, a fifth of parents (22%) who took part in the original recruitment wave (August 2020) and joined the panel, did not take part in any subsequent wave. The majority of parents completed at least one further wave, and 8% took part in all 9 subsequent waves.

Figure 8. Number of waves parents have taken part in



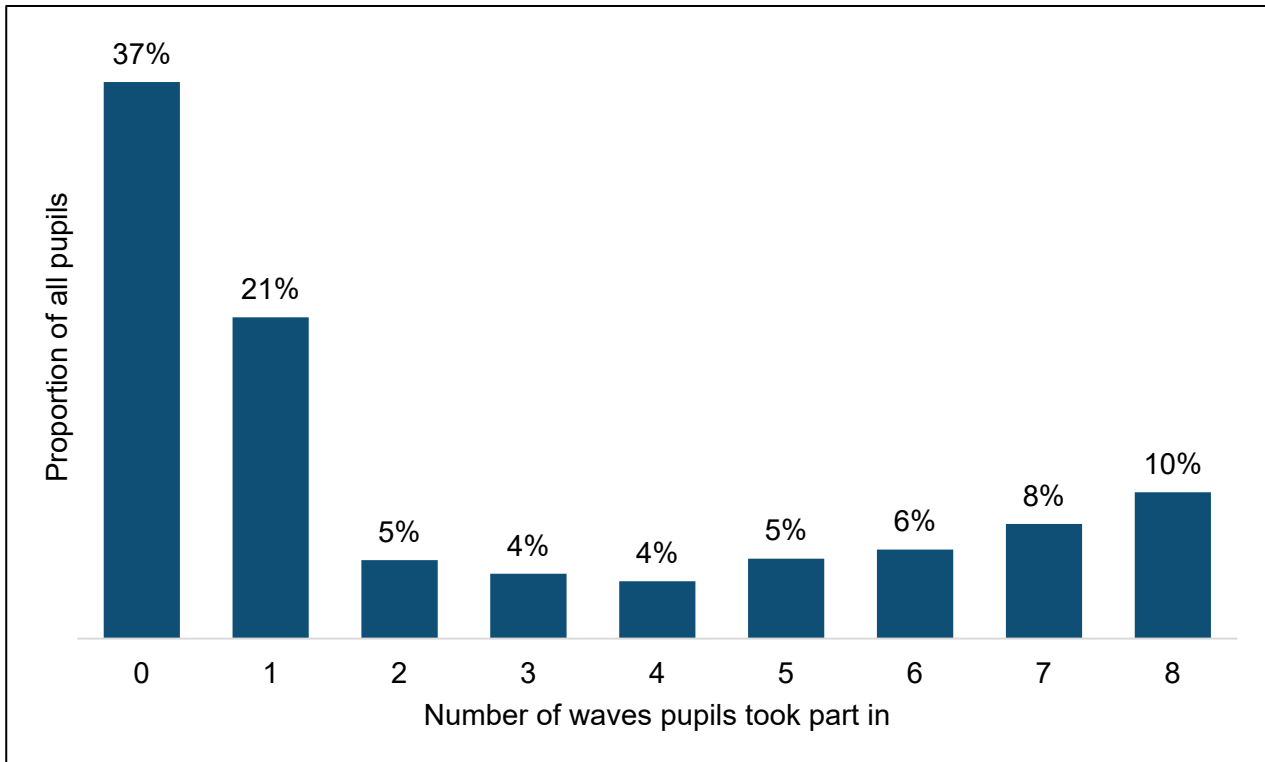
As shown in Figure 9, the mean average number of surveys parents took part in was 4.2. On average, parents with pupils who were eligible for FSM or with SEND status took part in fewer waves, although still over 3.

Figure 9. Mean number of waves parents have taken part in



As shown in Figure 10, and similarly to parents, pupils varied in the number of subsequent waves they took part in. A higher proportion of secondary pupils took part in zero waves following the recruitment wave (August 2020) than all parents (37% vs 22%).

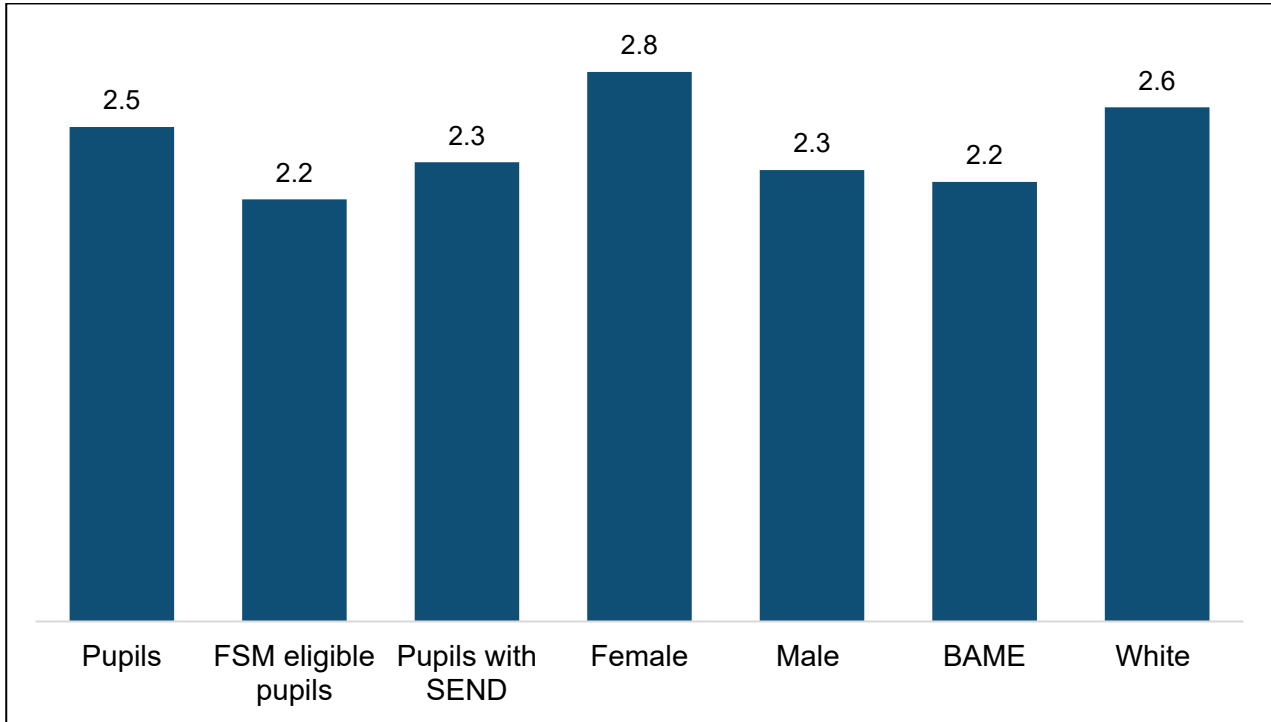
Figure 10. Number of waves secondary pupils took part in.¹⁷



The mean average number of surveys secondary pupils took part in was 2.5. As shown in Figure 11, on average, pupils eligible for FSM, SEND pupils, male pupils and BAME pupils took part in fewer surveys, than pupils overall.

¹⁷ Excluding school leavers

Figure 11. Mean number of waves pupils have taken part in.¹⁸



¹⁸ Excluding school leavers

Incentives

For completing Phase 1 of the research (the initial recruitment survey), all parents and pupils (panel members) were offered a £5 Amazon voucher as an incentive. For the subsequent Phase 2 surveys, panel members were offered a further £2.50 Amazon voucher for each survey which they completed. The incentive amount (and the fact that it changed after Phase 1) was included in the Phase 1 initial/reminder letter, and again in the invite email to each Phase 2 wave.

Once participants completed the survey, they received their Amazon voucher of the specified amount to the email address which they signed up to the panel with, within 7 working days.

Panel feedback

In February 2021 a survey was sent to panellists who had not yet been asked whether they would like to remain on the panel after beyond February 2021. This survey was used as an opportunity to also collect feedback from panellists on their experiences with the PPP. This selection of panellists were asked:

“Do you have any feedback about your experience of being part of COVID-19 Parent and Pupil Research Panel?”

This can be regarding your experience accessing the survey, the questions themselves, or any other comments about the survey. This will help inform DfE and IFF Research to improve future research.”

In total, 178 panellists provided a response to this survey. This activity was repeated in July 2021 at the last wave of the panel, and further 2,229 took part. Sentiment was broadly similar in both instances.

Positives

Overall, parents and pupils were positive about being on the panel and taking part in the surveys. The main reason given was that they were glad DfE were collecting data on their experience of education during the COVID-19 pandemic and felt happy to be a part of this process. Panellists appreciated feeling that their experiences and opinions about education during the pandemic were being listened to by the government. Several panellists commented that the surveys had helped them to actively reflect on the academic year. This seemed to be particularly the case with the repeated mental health questions, allowing pupils a chance to ‘check in’ with how they are feeling, when they otherwise may not have.

“I enjoy taking part in these surveys as it makes me feel as though I’m being listened to and it’s a good opportunity for me to ‘offload’ any concerns and frustrations regarding the current situation and how it’s impacted my education and potentially my career.”

School Leaver

“We have enjoyed participating in the surveys and feel that some of the questions in later surveys were generated due to the current experiences students and parents are experiencing so thank you for that.”

Parent, Year 7 pupil

“I like being a part of the pupil research and the questions are relevant for how my days go.”

Year 9 pupil

“As a young adult, it has been nice to voice my opinion about the impact of covid on my education as well as my mental health.”

Year 13 pupil

Other positive feedback covered the ease of accessing and completing the survey; the fact it was not time-consuming and receiving an incentive for participating. A handful of parents mentioned the surveys as being an opportunity to open communication with their child about how they are feeling about school during the pandemic, which they felt was useful and an extra benefit of taking part.

“It was a good starting point for discussions about wellbeing. Completing answers together and chatting about the questions was a process that helped in itself”.

Parent, Year 10 pupil

Future considerations

Whilst the majority of comments left were positive, there were a few areas which panellists suggested for improvement. These included the dissemination of findings; the open text and themes covered in surveys, the impact of closing quotas and the incentive.

Both parents and pupils expressed interest in the findings of the panel and seeing how their data was being used to impact the Department’s response to the pandemic in schools.

“Easy to access online format. Would be interested to know the overall findings of this research”

Parent, Year 9 pupil

“It would be interesting to know how the research has influenced policy etc.”

Parent, Year 8 pupil

“I would be interested in seeing the output/statistical analysis and how the results feed future government strategies as on the whole I think multiple lockdowns have severely impacted education.”

A handful of parents felt that there were not enough opportunities to speak about their family's problems, or that the questions did not feel like their most important topics to them at that moment.

One parent who chose to not stay on the panel said:

"Unfortunately, I feel I can no longer take part in the surveys as they are all simple tick box answers only with no qualitative data options and opportunity to express any real issues. For me I struggle to put the issues we are facing as a family into these boxes."

Parent, Year 4 pupil

Another commented about the lack of open text boxes:

"I think you've asked the right questions but sometimes the answer to choose from didn't match with the answer I wanted to give. I would suggest maybe other as an answer with the box for the answer?"

Parent, Year 8 pupil

In February 2021, a few parents and pupils were surprised to not yet have been specifically asked about their opinions towards exams during COVID-19. Questions were asked about the impact of COVID-19 on exams in later waves.

A few parents mentioned not being able to access the surveys 'quick' enough before they closed. In Wave 7 (February 2021), the invite to research was sent out at 3pm and the quotas were full by the end of the following day for parents. One parent felt this was unfair as it was first come first served, and they still wanted to be able to give their opinion. This was a problem for a parent who didn't look at their emails very often. One parent requested forewarning of when surveys would be coming out to ready them to complete it and check their emails the next day.

"I enjoyed having the opportunity to provide feedback about my child's experiences but since December every time I tried to participate, I was told that you had enough responses. I think that you should be wanting to hear as many different voices as possible and not putting a limit on whose voice is heard."

Parent, Year 12 pupil

A handful of parents and pupils commented on the incentive, suggesting it should be more, or that they would prefer the vouchers not to be for Amazon, as they did not want to support that specific company.

Weighting

Summary of approach: Recruitment wave

For the recruitment wave, the pupil and the parent samples were weighted to be representative of the pupils in schools in England. Weighting was based on characteristics of the pupils only, as the NPD does not hold information about parents. This means that the data cannot be interpreted as representative of all parents/carers of pupils.

Separate weights were created for the parent and pupil samples. The calculation of the weights for the recruitment wave involved 2 stages:

- **A non-response weight.** This compared the profile of the final panellists with the profile of the drawn sample. Weights were applied to adjust for non-response by year group, pupil gender, SEN status, FSM status, whether they are a Child in Need, pupil ethnicity, and region;
- **A design weight.** This corrected for the fact that FSM and SEN families were over-sampled. The weights were the inverse of the selection probabilities within each cell of the sampling grid (year group by FSM/SEN status).

The final weight was calculated by multiplying these two weights together.

Non-response weight

Only a certain number of those sampled went on to take part in the recruitment wave and thus join the panel and there was some natural variation in response rates between different groups of parents and pupils. For example, as seen in the section about response rates, we know that female pupils were more likely to join the panel than male pupils. To adjust for these differences, non-response weights were calculated, using RIM (random iterative method), and applied.

The variables to include in the non-response weights were calculated by comparing the profile of the final panellists with the profile of the drawn sample. The variables included are shown in Table 12.

Table 12. Variables used within the all parent and secondary pupil non-response weights

Variable	Variable Name	Groupings	Parents	Pupils
Year group	SAMVARS_NCyear	Reception	8%	-
Year group	SAMVARS_NCyear	Year 1	8%	-
Year group	SAMVARS_NCyear	Year 2	8%	-
Year group	SAMVARS_NCyear	Year 3	8%	-
Year group	SAMVARS_NCyear	Year 4	8%	-
Year group	SAMVARS_NCyear	Year 5	8%	-
Year group	SAMVARS_NCyear	Year 6	10%	7%
Year group	SAMVARS_NCyear	Year 7	10%	7%
Year group	SAMVARS_NCyear	Year 8	10%	7%
Year group	SAMVARS_NCyear	Year 9	10%	13%

Variable	Variable Name	Groupings	Parents	Pupils
Year group	SAMVARS_NCyear	Year 10	10%	13%
Year group	SAMVARS_NCyear	Year 11	-	13%
Year group	SAMVARS_NCyear	Year 12	-	13%
Year group	SAMVARS_NCyear	Year 13	-	30%
Children in need status	SAMVARS_CIN_CINAT31MARCH	Yes	3%	2%
Children in need status	SAMVARS_CIN_CINAT31MARCH	No	97%	98%
Pupil SEND status	SAMVARS_SENSTATUS	SEND	20%	19%
Pupil SEND status	SAMVARS_SENSTATUS	Non-SEND	80%	81%
Pupil FSM eligibility	SAMVARS_FSMSTATUS	FSM eligible	30%	29%

Variable	Variable Name	Groupings	Parents	Pupils
Pupil FSM eligibility	SAMVARS_FSMSTATUS	Non-FSM eligible	70%	71%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	Any other ethnic group	2%	2%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	Asian	11%	13%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	Black	6%	7%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	Chinese	0.4%	0.4%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	Mixed	7%	6%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	Unclassified	1%	2%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	White	73%	69%
Pupil Gender	SAMVARS_GENDER_SPR20	Male	52%	49%
Pupil Gender	SAMVARS_GENDER_SPR20	Female	48%	51%

Variable	Variable Name	Groupings	Parents	Pupils
Region	SAMVARS_REGION	East Midlands	9%	9%
Region	SAMVARS_REGION	East of England	11%	11%
Region	SAMVARS_REGION	London	15%	19%
Region	SAMVARS_REGION	North East	5%	4%
Region	SAMVARS_REGION	North West	14%	12%
Region	SAMVARS_REGION	South East	16%	15%
Region	SAMVARS_REGION	South West	9%	9%
Region	SAMVARS_REGION	West Midlands	11%	11%
Region	SAMVARS_REGION	Yorkshire and The Humber	10%	9%

Design weights

As explained above, the design weights were created to correct for the fact that FSM and SEN families were over-sampled. Table 13 shows the population data used for the design weight. To calculate the design weights, the non-response weight described above was applied and then a weight was calculated for each cell of the sample matrix (FSM/SEN status by year group).

Table 13. Population data used for the design weight

	FSM and SEND	FSM only	SEN only	Neither	Total
Reception	15,335	78,541	45,017	490,068	628,961
Year 1	24,167	86,277	56,638	465,512	632,594
Year 2	30,322	89,881	65,334	459,780	645,317
Year 3	35,646	95,455	70,726	457,745	659,572
Year 4	36,791	92,489	74,904	454,556	658,740
Year 5	36,425	89,192	75,782	444,835	646,234
Year 6	35,897	85,680	76,603	436,461	634,641
Year 7	29,117	86,277	65,551	445,154	626,099
Year 8	25,899	80,867	60,330	434,767	601,863
Year 9	22,233	75,625	55,428	427,608	580,894
Year 10	20,273	71,189	53,681	422,651	567,794
Year 11	18,056	65,750	52,657	412,084	548,547
Year 12	2,197	16,687	11,720	184,255	214,859
Year 13	1,355	13,020	9,560	163,077	187,012

	FSM and SEND	FSM only	SEN only	Neither	Total
Primary School	214,583	617,515	465,004	3,208,957	4,506,059
Secondary School	119,130	409,415	308,927	2,489,596	3,327,068
Total	333,713	1,026,930	773,931	5,698,553	7,833,127

Summary of approach: Subsequent waves

For each subsequent wave, again one weight was created for parents and one was created for pupils.

The weighting process at each wave involved the following steps:

- Calculating non-response weights by comparing the profile of parents and pupils completing that particular wave to that of the panellists as a whole;
- Rescaling the weights applied to the recruitment wave based just on the respondents to that wave (this weight already took into account non-response at the recruitment wave and also oversampling of FSM and SEN families);
- Multiplying the non-response weight and the rescaled recruitment wave weight together.

Wave-specific non-response weights

All panellists were invited to take part at each survey, but not all did. There was therefore some natural variation in response rates between the different groups of parents and pupils on the panel.

At each wave, non-response weights were calculated by comparing the profile of all panellists with the responders for that wave. As well as sample variables, it was possible to include responses from questions asked at the recruitment wave in this comparison. Table 14 and Table 15 show the variables used in the wave-specific non-response weights:

Table 14. Variables used within the wave-specific parent non-response weights

Variable	Variable Name	Groupings	Percentage of panellists
Urban or rural	SAMVARS_URBAN_RURAL	Not rural ¹⁹	80%
Urban or rural	SAMVARS_URBAN_RURAL	Rural	20%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	Any other ethnic group	2%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	Asian	9%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	Black	4%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	Chinese	0%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	Mixed	6%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	Unclassified	1%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	White	78%

¹⁹ Parents of pupils who did not have an urban or rural category provided were combined with those in 'urban' to create a 'non-rural' category. This is because otherwise the number in the 'none' group would be very small and result in inappropriately high non-response weights.

Variable	Variable Name	Groupings	Percentage of panellists
Pupil SEND status	SAMVARS_SENSTATUS	SEND	16%
Pupil SEND status	SAMVARS_SENSTATUS	Non-SEND	84%
Pupil FSM eligibility	SAMVARS_FSMSTATUS	FSM eligible	21%
Pupil FSM eligibility	SAMVARS_FSMSTATUS	Non-FSM eligible	79%
Single parent households	A9_RECODE. Are you living with someone in your household as a couple?	Yes	75%
Single parent households	A9_RECODE. Are you living with someone in your household as a couple?	No	6%
Single parent households	A9_RECODE. Are you living with someone in your household as a couple?	Missing	18%
Parent employment status	L1-RECODE. What is your current employment status?	Currently employed	72%

Variable	Variable Name	Groupings	Percentage of panellists
Parent employment status	L1-RECODE. What is your current employment status?	Unemployed	9%
Parent employment status	L1-RECODE. What is your current employment status?	Full time parent	14%
Parent employment status	L1-RECODE. What is your current employment status?	Not currently employed	2%
Parent employment status	L1-RECODE. What is your current employment status?	None of the above	3%
Parent working from home status	L3_Recode. Are you currently working from home?	Yes, I am working all of my hours from home	21%
Parent working from home status	L3_Recode. Are you currently working from home?	Yes, I am working some of my hours from home	11%
Parent working from home status	L3_Recode. Are you currently working from home?	No, I am working but not at home	30%

Variable	Variable Name	Groupings	Percentage of panellists
Parent working from home status	L3_Recode. Are you currently working from home?	Not applicable - I am furloughed/not working	9%
Parent working from home status	L3_Recode. Are you currently working from home?	None of the above	28%
Parent gender	Q2a. Which of the following best describes your gender?	Non-female ²⁰	78%
Parent gender	Q2a. Which of the following best describes your gender?	Female	22%
Pupil access to technology	P1. Does your child have access to either a laptop, tablet or computer that they personally can use to study for at least 3 hours per day?	Yes	88%
Pupil access to technology	P1. Does your child have access to either a laptop, tablet or computer that they personally can use to study for at least 3 hours per day?	No	12%

²⁰ Parents who did not have a gender provided were combined with Males to create a 'non Female' category. This is because otherwise the number in the 'none' group would be very small and result in inappropriately high non-response weights.

Region and Year group were commonly considered at each wave but generally the profiles of the achieved sample were sufficiently close to that of panellists as a whole not to require inclusion in the non-response weight.

Table 15. Variables used within the wave-specific pupil non-response weights

Variable	Variable Name	Groupings	Percentage of panellists
Pupil year group	SAMVARS_NCYEAR	6	9%
Pupil year group	SAMVARS_NCYEAR	7	10%
Pupil year group	SAMVARS_NCYEAR	8	10%
Pupil year group	SAMVARS_NCYEAR	9	17%
Pupil year group	SAMVARS_NCYEAR	10	19%
Pupil year group	SAMVARS_NCYEAR	11	18%
Pupil year group	SAMVARS_NCYEAR	12	18%
Urban or rural	SAMVARS_URBAN_RURAL	Not rural ²¹	82%
Urban or rural	SAMVARS_URBAN_RURAL	Rural	18%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	Any other ethnic group	2%

²¹ Parents of pupils who did not have an urban or rural category provided were combined with those in 'urban' to create a 'non-rural' category. This is because otherwise the number in the 'none' group would be very small and result in inappropriately high non-response weights.

Variable	Variable Name	Groupings	Percentage of panellists
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	Asian	12%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	Black	5%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	Chinese	1%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	Mixed	5%
Pupil ethnicity	SAMVARS_ETHNICGROUPMAJOR_SPR20	White	2%
Pupil gender	SAMVARS_GENDER_SPR20	Non-female ²²	46%
Pupil gender	SAMVARS_GENDER_SPR20	Female	54%
Pupil SEND status	SAMVARS_SENSTATUS	SEND	14%
Pupil SEND status	SAMVARS_SENSTATUS	Non-SEND	86%
Pupil FSM eligibility	SAMVARS_FSMSTATUS	FSM eligible	22%

²² Parents of pupils who did not have a gender provided were combined with Males to create a 'non Female' category. This is because otherwise the number in the 'none' group would be very small and result in inappropriately high non-response weights.

Variable	Variable Name	Groupings	Percentage of panellists
Pupil FSM eligibility	SAMVARS_FSMSTATUS	Non-FSM eligible	78%
Region	SAMVARS_REGION	East Midlands	10%
Region	SAMVARS_REGION	East of England	12%
Region	SAMVARS_REGION	London	14%
Region	SAMVARS_REGION	North East	5%
Region	SAMVARS_REGION	North West	12%
Region	SAMVARS_REGION	South East	16%
Region	SAMVARS_REGION	South West	10%
Region	SAMVARS_REGION	West Midlands	12%
Region	SAMVARS_REGION	Yorkshire and The Humber	10%

Table 16 shows the largest weight value applied at each wave of PPP for both parents and pupils.

Table 16. Largest weight applied at each wave

Wave	Audience	Largest weight applied
Wave 1	Parents	4.58
Wave 2	Parents	4.70
Wave 2	Pupils	5.47
Wave 3	School leavers	4.04
Wave 4	Parents	4.37
Wave 4	Pupils	4.80
Wave 5	Parents	4.56
Wave 5	Pupils	4.11
Wave 6	Parents	4.74
Wave 6	Pupils	4.19
Wave 7	Parents	5.65
Wave 7	Pupils	5.80
Wave 8	Parents	5.16
Wave 8	Pupils	3.96

Wave	Audience	Largest weight applied
Wave 9	Parents	5.21
Wave 9	Pupils	4.87
Wave 10	Parents	4.2
Wave 10	Pupils	5.11

Data processing and Analysis

For each wave, the IFF team produced a specification for how the raw data should be processed to maximise its usability, both into an SPSS file and into Excel tables. A coding specification was also created to detail how open questions should be coded.

Each table specification contained a list of cross-breaks corresponding to sub-groups of interest, for example FSM eligibility. It also provided detail on the base that should be used for analysis of each question. Questions were often routed such that only a sub-set of all respondents saw a particular question to improve the flow of the questionnaire, but frequently the data was more usefully interpreted when these responses were “re-based” to include all respondents. Another data manipulation made frequently was to combine responses under a common theme, especially where base sizes at several responses were too small to allow for useful analysis.

The Excel data tables were used for the data analysis that fed into reports, both for reporting headline results for each question and for investigating variations by specific sub-groups of respondents. The SPSS files were used to supplement this analysis, where the survey data suggested that a more specific enquiry into a finding might produce results of interest. The data tables contained both weighted and unweighted totals, and displayed percentages corresponding to weighted responses for question codes.

When determining a minimum base size for reporting headline findings, each question was looked at individually, although as a rule of thumb, the reports did not include charts or comment on significant differences between subgroups where there was a base size of less than 50. Where indicative findings were reported from a small base size, this was flagged in the report, and these findings should be treated with caution.

Data Checking

All data outputs for each wave were iteratively checked by the research team and data services at IFF. For the SPSS file, each variable in the SPSS output was checked against a raw SPSS download and the SPSS specification. Amends were recorded in the specification, marked as completed by data services, then marked as checked by the research team. Checks included:

- all variables specified were present, and in the order specified;
- for each variable the number and the % giving each response matched the raw data;

- all derived variables were correctly calculated;
- base sizes and any rebasing were as specified;
- exact question wording matched table titles;
- recoding of numeric questions correct (for example to exclude some answers from statistical calculations);
- data sense-checks/looking for outliers.

Once the SPSS was finalised, the excel tables were produced. The same checking process was carried out, comparing the tables to the processed SPSS, and using the excel specification to log amends. Additionally, for tables. cross-breaks were checked for correct bases and sense checked against the table/variable they were derived from. Specific attention was paid to summary tables, any rebased tables and any summary variables/codes. All numeric questions and any recoding or backcoding were also fully checked. Overall headings and fieldwork dates were checked that they match the correct wave.

Verbatim coding was checked independently of the SPSS and excel tables checking. This included first checking to see if the suggested answer options were appropriate for the question, whether question codes matched-up between different audiences and aligned with previous waves and that the answers given had been assigned the correct code. At least 10% of each new codeframe (see Figure 12) was checked by research mid-way through fieldwork when there was a substantial number of completes, and again at the end of fieldwork. Coding was added once all other data edits had been made. Frequencies of coded variables were then checked against the final agreed codeframe.

Once both tables and SPSS were finalised, another team member carried out a second check focusing on, but not limited to, base sizes and cross-break checking. Once they were happy with the tables, a more senior team member then carried out final spot checks on the tables.

Figure 12: Example "Codeframe"

Since the start of September, what type of remote lessons or other ways of learning has		
81 I34b_2_0; [PUPILNAME]'s school offered when pupils can't physically attend school?		38 Coding Notes
82 1 Online worksheets / activities (via the school or other websites)		9 inc apps like seesaw and dojo
83 2 Paper worksheets / activities		2 inc work sent home
84 3 Lessons over video call		14 inc teams/google classroom
85 4 Recorded video lessons		0
86 5 Recommended reading of books or textbooks		0
87 6 Recommended reading of online resources		1
88 7 Other		12
89 8 None of the above		0
90 9 Don't know		0
91 10 DS TO EDIT (GDPR)		1

Key sub-groups

During phase 1 of the project, discussions were held with the DfE about what sub-groups of the panel respondents would be a priority for analysis, including demographics from the NPD and data that were collected in the surveys. A list of 27 cross-breaks were agreed upon for the recruitment wave, which were largely retained throughout subsequent waves, with occasional additions or updates for new questions.

Variations by sub-groups are usually reported in the following order:

1. Year group (for pupils) or school phase (for parents of pupils)
2. Pupil gender (Male compared to Female pupils). Occasionally parent gender (of the responding parent) is also examined.
3. Pupil eligibility for free school meals (FSM) (compared to not eligible)
4. Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) pupil or parent (compared to White)
5. Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) pupil (compared to those without SEND)
6. Other groups of interests, dependent on context of the question

Statistical Tests

The data tables use two statistical tests to highlight significant differences. For categorical data, the z-test for two proportions is used on column (sub-group) percentages. For numerical data, the t-test for independent means is run on column means. Both tests use the weighted figures. Differences are only marked when the tests show that a difference is statistically significant at the 95% confidence level, or higher.

Where the test determines that there is a significant difference between a particular subgroup figure and the average of the other subgroups, this is flagged on the tables through an asterisk (*) next to that subgroup percentage/mean. Cells with an asterisk are also highlighted yellow to as a visual aid to quickly identify these figures. In the row below the figure, letters are used to denote that the percentage/mean for that subgroup is significantly higher than the other subgroup(s), indicated by the letter corresponding to the column labels.

For example, in the table below we can see the proportion of pupils in London is significantly higher than the average of all pupils outside London, indicated by the asterisk (*).

We can also see, for example, that the proportion of pupils in East Midlands is significantly higher than the proportion in the North West (e), or the South East (f), indicated by the "ef".

Figure 13 Example of significance tests on IFF tables

	Region (V1)								
	East Midlands	East of England	London	North East	North West	South East	South West	West Midlands	Yorkshire and The Humber
Significance Level: 95%	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
Total	1185	1520	1704	576	1506	2115	1278	1435	1199
All secondary school pupils	522	645	839	233	564	854	518	641	511
	44%	42%	*49%	40%	*37%	*40%	41%	45%	43%
	ef	e	abdefghi					efg	e

Tracking changes over time

The parent and pupil surveys have had several questions repeated across waves such as those on wellbeing. In a purely longitudinal panel, where exactly the same respondents answered the same questions each time, it would make sense to use McNemar’s test to look for statistically significant differences in answers. However, these tests would not be appropriate for the PPP as individual respondents did not necessarily participate in all waves. When testing whether changes across waves were significant, each new set of respondents was treated as an independent group, allowing us to use the same tests for within waves as between waves.

Appendices

Appendix A - Invite to the PPP to individual parents

Parent/Carer of [PupilName]
Address line 1
Address line 2
Address line 3
Address line 4
<date>
Address line 5

Help the Department for Education support your child's education during COVID-19

Dear Parent/Carer of [PupilName],


The Department for Education (DfE) needs your help to better understand how COVID-19 is impacting the lives of children and families, and in turn how we can best support them during this pandemic. You can help us do this by joining our new **COVID-19 Parent and Pupil Research Panel**.

Our initial registration survey explores experiences during lockdown and preparation for schools and colleges reopening in September. After completing this, panel members will be invited to take part in up to seven short surveys between now and January 2021.

The surveys are quick and easy - and you will receive Amazon vouchers for each survey

You can complete each survey on a computer, laptop, smartphone, or tablet – whatever is easiest for you. If you think you would struggle to complete this online, you can request to complete it over the phone instead.

You will receive a **£5 Amazon** voucher for completing the first registration survey (15-minutes) and a further **£2.50 Amazon** voucher for each shorter (5-minute) survey you choose to take part in after that.

 <p>Covid-19 Parent and Pupil Panel</p>	<p>How to take part</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Go to this website¹⁸: [redacted]2. Enter your parent/ carer login ID: {Parent_ID}
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The panel can only accept a limited number of members so please sign-up as soon as you can! More details about the research can be found overleaf. Thank you in advance for your help.



Vicky Petrie
Chief Social Researcher, Department for Education



Who is conducting the survey?

This survey is being carried out by IFF Research, an independent survey agency, on behalf of the Department for Education.

Further information about the DfE can be found at: [REDACTED]. More information about IFF Research can be found at [REDACTED]



Why did we choose you for the panel survey?

You have been chosen at random to take part in this important study, from a database held by the DfE containing all school pupils in England. Your views are important to us as– without them we may not understand how COVID-19 has affected families with children in different years and in different regions.

The panel will include pupils and their parents or carers. We can only accept a limited number of members so please sign-up as soon as you can.



Can I pause the survey and come back to it?

No problem, you can close the questionnaire and continue it later. Just log back in with the details provided.



What if I do not have internet access, or I need help completing the survey?

If you would like to take part but are unable to complete the survey online, please contact IFF Research on freephone [REDACTED] and leave a voice message. In your message please provide your name, telephone number and your log in ID: PARENTID and we will call you back.

Alternatively, you can email IFF Research [REDACTED]



How do I receive my Amazon voucher?

Once you have completed each survey you will be asked to confirm your details and we will email the Amazon voucher code within 7 working days. Please check your junk mail if it does not seem to come through.



What are my rights?

Taking part in this research is voluntary. You can withdraw from the panel at any time. No one at your child's school will know whether you have taken part or have access to your responses.

Your answers to the questionnaire will be used for research purposes only. Only researchers at IFF Research and DfE will know what you have said. All statistics will be reported anonymously, meaning that it will not be possible to identify you in any published reports.

Your survey responses will be kept entirely confidential, in line with the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society and GDPR. Your name and contact details will be deleted 6 months after the completion of this project – August 2021, unless you opt-in for follow-up research.

You have a right to have a copy of your data, change your data, or withdraw from the research at any point. If you'd like to do this, you can consult our website at: [REDACTED]



What if I have more questions?

Please contact the IFF research team by emailing [REDACTED] or by leaving a message on freephone [REDACTED] so we can get back to you. (Please provide your name, a number we can call you back on, and your log in ID: PARENTID).

Alternatively, you can contact [REDACTED] at DfE by emailing [REDACTED]

Appendix B - Invite to the PPP to parents and pupils

Parent/Carer of [PupilName]
Address line 1
Address line 2
Address line 3
Address line 4
<date>
Address line 5

Help the Department for Education support your child's education during COVID-19

Dear Parent/Carer of [PupilName],


The Department for Education (DfE) needs your help to better understand how COVID-19 is impacting the lives of children and families, and in turn how we can best support them during this pandemic. You and [PupilName] can help us do this by joining our new **COVID-19 Parent and Pupil Research Panel**.

Our initial registration survey explores experiences during lockdown and preparation for schools and colleges reopening in September. After completing this, panel members will be invited to take part in up to seven short surveys between now and January 2021.

The surveys are quick and easy - and you will receive Amazon vouchers for each survey

You can complete each survey on a computer, laptop, smartphone, or tablet – whatever is easiest for you. If you think you would struggle to complete this online, you can request to complete it over the phone instead.

You and [NamedPupil] will each receive a **£5 Amazon** voucher for completing the first registration survey (15-minutes) and a further **£2.50 Amazon** voucher for each shorter (5-minute) survey you choose to take part in after that.

 Covid-19 Parent and Pupil Panel	How to take part
	1. Go to this website ²³ : [redacted]
	2. Enter your parent/ carer login ID: {Parent_ID}
	3. Pass the other letter to [PupilName] and ask them to go online in the same way with their own login ID

The panel can only accept a limited number of members so please sign-up as soon as you can! More details about the research can be found overleaf. Thank you in advance for your help.



Vicky Petrie
Chief Social Researcher, Department for Education



Who is conducting the survey?

This survey is being carried out by IFF Research, an independent survey agency, on behalf of the Department for Education.

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Why did we choose you for the panel survey?

You have been chosen at random to take part in this important study, from a database held by the DfE containing all school pupils in England. Your views are important to us as— without them we may not understand how COVID-19 has affected families with children in different years and in different regions.

The panel will include pupils and their parents or carers. We can only accept a limited number of members so please sign-up as soon as you can.



Can I pause the survey and come back to it?

No problem, you can close the questionnaire and continue it later. Just log back in with the details provided.



What if I do not have internet access, or I need help completing the survey?

If you would like to take part but are unable to complete the survey online, please contact IFF Research on freephone [REDACTED] and leave a voice message. In your message please provide your name, telephone number and your log in ID: PARENTID and we will call you back.

Alternatively, you can email IFF Research [REDACTED].



How do I receive my Amazon voucher?

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You have a right to have a copy of your data, change your data, or withdraw from the research at any point. If you'd like to do this, you can consult our website at: [REDACTED].



What if I have more questions?

Please contact the IFF research team by emailing [REDACTED] or by leaving a message on freephone [REDACTED] so we can get back to you. (Please provide your name, a number we can call you back on, and your log in ID: PARENTID).

Alternatively, you can contact [REDACTED] at DfE by emailing [REDACTED].



Department
for Education

<date>

Dear [PupilName],

Help the Government understand the impact the COVID-19 has had on you and your learning and receive Amazon vouchers as a thank you!



Please help the Government understand how the coronavirus outbreak has affected your learning so we can support your education during this time and help make your return to school in September as easy as possible.

We are asking 10,000 pupils to share their experiences by completing a short 15-minute survey now, and then very short (5-minute) surveys each month or so between now and January 2021.

It's quick and easy - and you will receive Amazon vouchers for each survey

You can complete the surveys on a computer, laptop, smartphone or tablet – whatever is easiest for you. You can also request to complete it over the telephone instead.

You will receive a **£5 Amazon** voucher for completing the first registration survey (15-minutes) and then a further **£2.50 Amazon** voucher for each shorter (5-minute) survey you choose to take part in after that. We can only accept a limited number of pupils so please sign-up as soon as you can.



Next steps



1. Go to this website: [Redacted]



2. Enter your login pupil ID: {Pupil_ID}

Rehve



Who is conducting the survey?

This survey is being carried out by IFF Research, an independent survey agency, on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE).

Further information about the DfE can be found at: [REDACTED]. More information about IFF Research can be found at [REDACTED]



How do I receive my Amazon voucher?

Once you have completed each survey you will be asked to confirm your details and we will email the Amazon voucher code within 7 working days. Please check your junk mail if it does not seem to come through.



Why did we choose you for the panel survey?

You have been chosen at random to take part in this important study, from a database held by the DfE containing all school pupils in England. Your views are important to us as without them we may not understand of how COVID-19 has affected pupils in different years and in different regions.

The panel will include pupils and their parents or carers. We can only accept a limited number of members so please sign-up as soon as you can.



What are my rights?

Taking part in this research is voluntary. You can withdraw from the panel at any time. No one at your school will know whether you have taken part.

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No problem, you can close the questionnaire and continue it later. Just log back in with the details provided.



What if I do not have internet access, or I need help completing the survey?

If you would like to take part but are unable to complete the survey online, please contact IFF Research on freephone [REDACTED] and leave a voice message. In your message please provide your name, telephone number and your log in ID: PUPILID and we will call you back. Alternatively, you can email IFF Research [REDACTED]



What if I have more questions?

Please contact the IFF research team by emailing [REDACTED] or by leaving a message on freephone [REDACTED] so we can get back to you. (Please provide your name, a number we can call you back on, and your log in ID: PUPILID)

Alternatively, you can contact [REDACTED] at DfE by emailing [REDACTED]

Appendix C - Invite to the PPP to individual pupils

Address line 1
Address line 2
Address line 3
Address line 4
Address line 5

[Date]

Help the Government understand the impact the COVID-19 has had on you and your learning and receive Amazon vouchers as a thank you!



Please help the Government understand how the coronavirus outbreak has affected your learning so we can support your education during this time and help make your return to school in September as easy as possible.

We are asking 10,000 pupils to share their experiences by completing a short 15-minute survey now, and then very short (5-minute) surveys each month or so between now and January 2021.

It's quick and easy - and you will receive Amazon vouchers for each survey

You can complete the surveys on a computer, laptop, smartphone or tablet – whatever is easiest for you. You can also request to complete it over the telephone instead.

You will receive a **£5 Amazon** voucher for completing the first registration survey (15-minutes) and then a further **£2.50 Amazon** voucher for each shorter (5-minute) survey you choose to take part in after that. We can only accept a limited number of pupils so please sign-up as soon as you can.



Next steps



1. Go to this website:



2. Enter your login pupil ID: **{Pupil_ID}**

Relie



Who is conducting the survey?

This survey is being carried out by IFF Research, an independent survey agency, on behalf of the Department for Education (DfE).

Further information about the DfE can be found at: [REDACTED]. More information about IFF Research can be found at [REDACTED]



How do I receive my Amazon voucher?

Once you have completed each survey you will be asked to confirm your details and we will email the Amazon voucher code within 7 working days. Please check your junk mail if it does not seem to come through.



Why did we choose you for the panel survey?

You have been chosen at random to take part in this important study, from a database held by the DfE containing all school pupils in England. Your views are important to us as without them we may not understand of how COVID-19 has affected pupils in different years and in different regions.

The panel will include pupils and their parents or carers. We can only accept a limited number of members so please sign-up as soon as you can.



What are my rights?

Taking part in this research is voluntary. You can withdraw from the panel at any time. No one at your school will know whether you have taken part.

Your answers to the questionnaire will be used for research purposes only. Only researchers at IFF Research and DfE will know what you have said. All statistics will be reported anonymously, meaning that it will not be possible to identify you in any published reports.

Your survey responses will be kept entirely confidential, in line with the Code of Conduct of the Market Research Society and GDPR. Your name and contact details will be deleted 6 months after the completion of this project – August 2021, unless you opt-in for follow-up research.

You have a right to have a copy of your data, change your data, or withdraw from the research at any point. If you'd like to do this, you can consult our website at: [REDACTED]



Can I pause the survey and come back to it?

No problem, you can close the questionnaire and continue it later. Just log back in with the details provided.



What if I do not have internet access, or I need help completing the survey?

If you would like to take part but are unable to complete the survey online, please contact IFF Research on freephone [REDACTED] and leave a voice message. In your message please provide your name, telephone number and your log in ID: PUPILID and we will call you back. Alternatively, you can email IFF Research [REDACTED]



What if I have more questions?

Please contact the IFF research team by emailing [REDACTED] or by leaving a message on freephone [REDACTED] so we can get back to you. (Please provide your name, a number we can call you back on, and your log in ID: PUPILID)

Alternatively, you can contact [REDACTED] at DfE by emailing [REDACTED]

Appendix D - Invite to individual waves for panellists (example from February 2021 wave)

Email Subject: **Parent and Pupil Panel Survey: Tell us about your latest school experience during the COVID-19 pandemic.**

Dear [NAME]

Thank you very much for signing up to the Department for Education's (DfE's) **COVID-19 Parent and Pupil Research Panel** [IF PARENT OR PUPIL COMPLETED P2,WAVE 6: and for completing the survey before Christmas].

The responses from these surveys are already being used by DfE to help support children and their families during this pandemic.

I'm writing to let you know that the next follow-up survey is now open for you to take part in. It should take about 5 minutes to complete. It explores the experiences of families since schools and colleges closed again to the majority of pupils in January 2021.

You can complete it on a computer, laptop, smartphone, or tablet – whatever is easiest for you – **simply click on the link below.** [UNIQUE SURVEY LINK]

As a thank you for your contribution to this important research, we will be pleased to send you a **£2.50 Amazon voucher following completion of the survey.**

We can only accept a limited number of responses to each survey so please complete the survey as soon as you can.

If you have any queries, or would like to take part but are unable to complete the survey online, please do not hesitate to contact IFF Research by emailing

ParentPupilPanelVM@iffresearch.com or by leaving a voice message on freephone 0800 054 2378 so we can get back to you. In your message please provide your full name, telephone number and your log in ID: [RESPONDENTID].



Vicky Petrie
Chief Social Researcher
Department for Education



Covid-19 Parent and Pupil Panel



Appendix E - SMS reminder message

Today is the last day to take part in the latest Parent & Pupil Panel Survey for DfE. Go to [redacted] or your email invite



Department
for Education

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Reference: DFE-RR1158

ISBN: 978-1-83870-289-2

For any enquiries regarding this publication, contact us at:

omnibus.surveys@education.gov.uk or www.education.gov.uk/contactus

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