

# **Supplementary Report 08: Parent and child concerns about attending school.**

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# The Co-SPACE Study

## Background

COVID-19 has caused major disruptions to families' lives, through social distancing, school closures and lock-down. This is also a rapidly changing situation where different pressures will arise for children, young people, and their families over time.

The Co-SPACE project is tracking the mental health of school-aged children and young people aged 4-16 years throughout the COVID-19 crisis. An online survey is sent out and completed on a monthly basis by parents/carers and young people (if aged 11-16 years) throughout the pandemic. The study has full ethical and data protection approval (ethical approval ref: R69060) and is fully GDPR compliant.

Findings will be shared directly with health and education services to inform the development and provision of effective support for children and families.

## Recruitment & Sample

The study sample has been recruited through a variety of means, including social media, distribution through partner organisations, networks and charities, the media and targeted online advertising. The self-selecting nature of recruitment means that *this will not be a nationally representative sample.*

For the long-term, we are aiming to have good representation across a wide range of socio-demographic and health factors (e.g., income, ethnicity, pre-existing mental/physical health difficulties) to investigate the experiences for different groups that may be particularly vulnerable during and after the pandemic.

**We are keen to recruit as many families as possible to the study. Parents/carers can sign up and take part at any point: <https://cospaceoxford.com/survey>**

## Further information

For further information or to request specific analyses, please contact the research team at [co-space@psy.ox.ac.uk](mailto:co-space@psy.ox.ac.uk)

# Focus of this report

## Participants

To date, almost 11,500 parents/carers and 1,300 adolescents have completed the Co-SPACE survey at least once. We continue to collect data from new participants and on a monthly basis.

Within the sample reported here, participants were mostly white British, working mothers (either full time, part time, or self-employed), from households with an average yearly income of more than £16,000. Approximately 15% of the parents/carers within the sample reported their child to have a special educational need (SEN). Further information about participants' characteristics at baseline and follow up can be found at the end of the report.

## Data analysed

This report provides data from 843 parents/carers who completed<sup>1</sup> the baseline or a follow-up survey in September (01/09/2020 to 30/09/2020). Each participant's first survey entry within this time point was taken. This may have been either from the baseline, or any subsequent follow up surveys.

In this report, we present data from survey questions about how comfortable parents feel about their child attending school as well as how comfortable they report their child feels. We also present the data for the percentage of parents/carers reporting their children and themselves being concerned about specific aspects of returning to school.

This report presents:

1. Parents/carers report on how comfortable they and their child feels about their child attending school, split by age group.
2. Parent/carer report on their and their children's specific concerns relating to attending school, split by age group and the following groups:
  - a. Those with and without special educational needs and neurodevelopmental disorders such as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and autism (SEN/ND).
  - b. Those with a household income above and below £16,000 p.a.

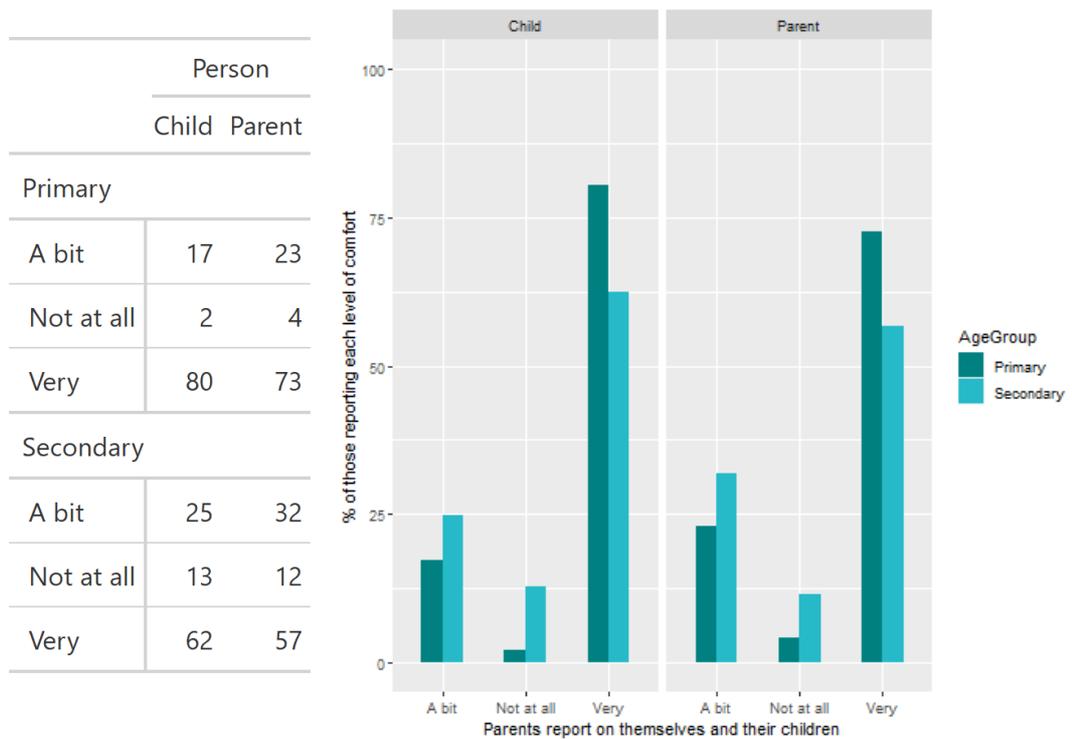
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<sup>1</sup> 'Completion' of the baseline survey is based on participants having completed items up to the pre-defined main outcome measure (the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire – parent reporting on child).

# Findings

## 1. Parents/carers report on how comfortable they and their child feels about their child attending school.

Figure 1. Percentage of parents/carers reporting themselves and their children being not at all, a bit, or very comfortable about children attending school

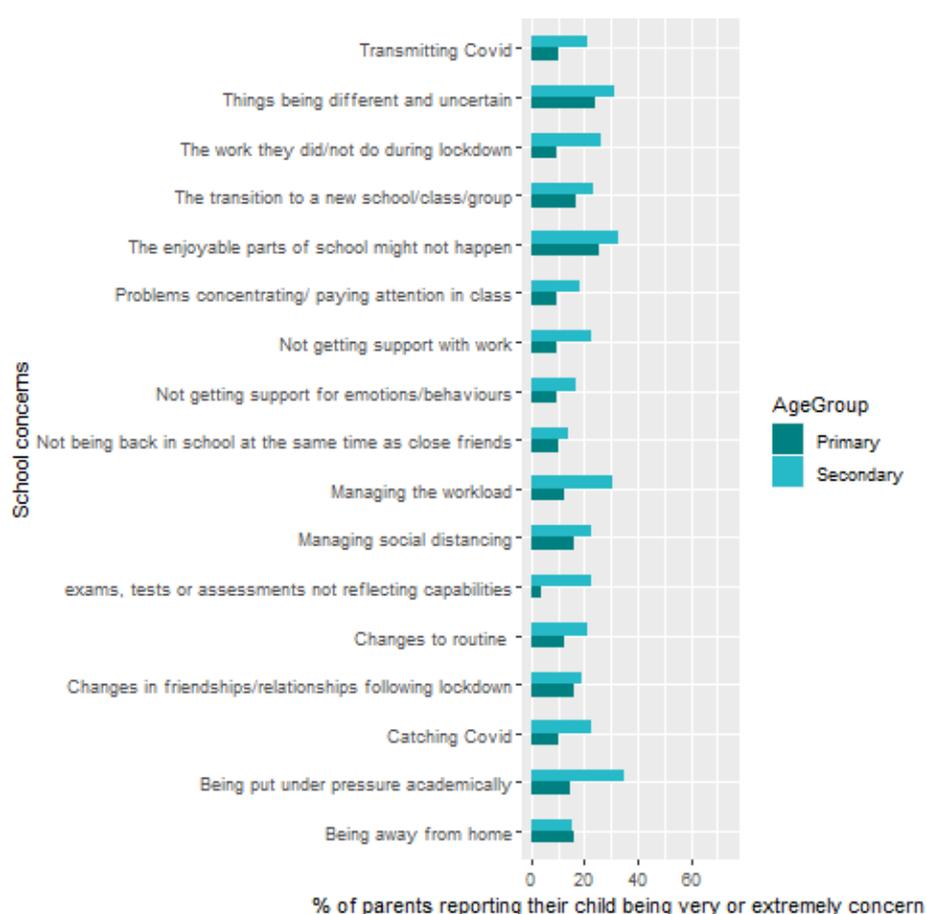


## 2. Parent/carer report on their and their children's specific concerns relating to attending school.

Parents/carers were asked to rate how concerned they thought their child would feel about various aspects of attending school on a four-point scale (“not at all”, “a bit”, “very”, “extremely”). The data provided below shows the percentage of parents/carers reporting that their child felt either “very” or “extremely” concerned about each aspect.

Figure 2. Percentage of parents/carers reporting that their child is “very” or “extremely” concerned about aspects of attending school, by age group.

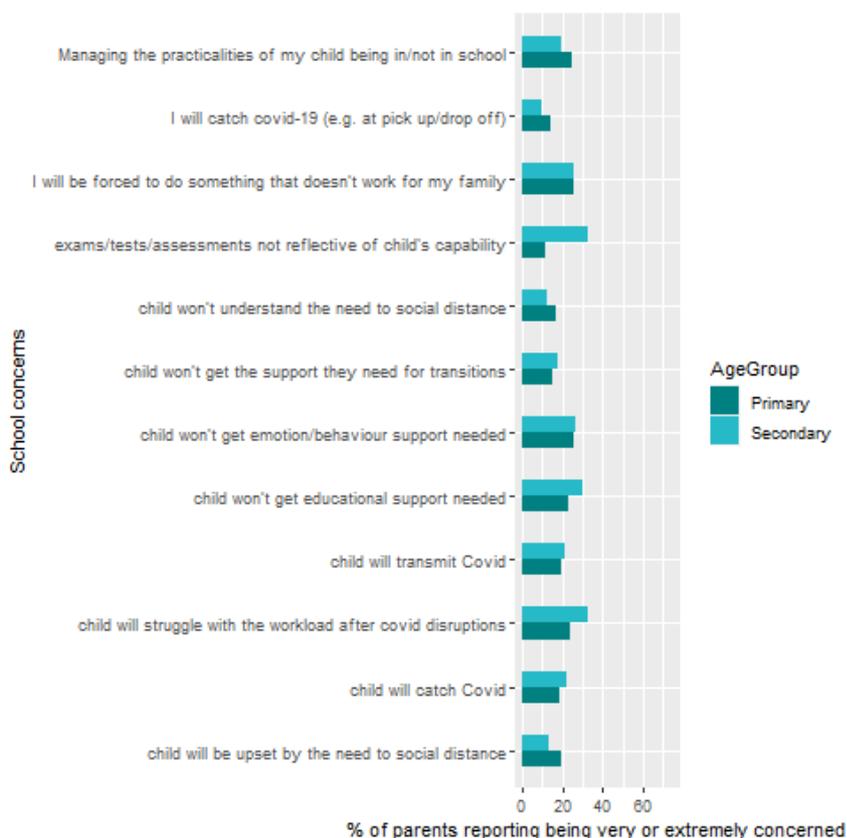
Percent	
Primary	
Catching Covid	10
Transmitting Covid	10
The work they did/not do during lockdown	9
Managing the workload	12
Being put under pressure academically	15
The transition to a new school/class/group	17
Managing social distancing	16
Changes in friendships/relationships following lockdown	16
Not being back in school at the same time as close friends	10
Not getting support with work	9
Not getting support for emotions/behaviours	9
Things being different and uncertain	24
Being away from home	16
Changes to routine	12
Problems concentrating/ paying attention in class	10
The enjoyable parts of school might not happen	26
exams, tests or assessments not reflecting capabilities	4
Secondary	
Catching Covid	23
Transmitting Covid	21
The work they did/not do during lockdown	26
Managing the workload	31
Being put under pressure academically	35
The transition to a new school/class/group	23
Managing social distancing	23
Changes in friendships/relationships following lockdown	19
Not being back in school at the same time as close friends	14
Not getting support with work	22
Not getting support for emotions/behaviours	17
Things being different and uncertain	31
Being away from home	16
Changes to routine	21
Problems concentrating/ paying attention in class	18
The enjoyable parts of school might not happen	33
exams, tests or assessments not reflecting capabilities	22



Parents/carers were also asked to rate how concerned they would feel about various aspects of their child attending school on a four-point scale (“not at all”, “a bit”, “very”, “extremely”). The data provided below shows the percentage of parents/carers reporting that they felt either “very” or “extremely” concerned about each aspect.

Figure 3. Percentage of parents/carers reporting that they are “very” or “extremely” concerned about aspects of their child attending school, by age group.

	Percent
<b>Primary</b>	
child will catch Covid	19
child will transmit Covid	20
child will struggle with the workload after covid disruptions	24
child won't understand the need to social distance	17
child will be upset by the need to social distance	20
child won't get educational support needed	23
child won't get emotion/behaviour support needed	25
child won't get the support they need for transitions	15
Managing the practicalities of my child being in/not in school	25
I will catch covid-19 (e.g. at pick up/drop off)	14
I will be forced to do something that doesn't work for my family	26
exams/tests/assessments not reflective of child's capability	11
<b>Secondary</b>	
child will catch Covid	22
child will transmit Covid	21
child will struggle with the workload after covid disruptions	33
child won't understand the need to social distance	12
child will be upset by the need to social distance	13
child won't get educational support needed	30
child won't get emotion/behaviour support needed	26
child won't get the support they need for transitions	18
Managing the practicalities of my child being in/not in school	19
I will catch covid-19 (e.g. at pick up/drop off)	10
I will be forced to do something that doesn't work for my family	25
exams/tests/assessments not reflective of child's capability	32



## a. Specific school concerns by SEN/ND

Figure 4. Percentage of parents/carers reporting that their child is “very” or “extremely” concerned about aspects of attending school, by age group and those with and without SEN/ND.

	SEN	
	Yes	No
<b>Primary</b>		
Being away from home	25	15
Being put under pressure academically	28	13
Catching Covid	12	10
Changes in friendships/relationships following lockdown	18	15
Changes to routine	32	10
exams, tests or assessments not reflecting capabilities	7	4
Managing social distancing	20	15
Managing the workload	22	11
Not being back in school at the same time as close friends	15	10
Not getting support for emotions/behaviours	27	7
Not getting support with work	30	7
Problems concentrating/ paying attention in class	39	6
The enjoyable parts of school might not happen	46	23
The transition to a new school/class/group	27	15
The work they did/not do during lockdown	15	8
Things being different and uncertain	43	22
Transmitting Covid	10	10
<b>Secondary</b>		
Being away from home	30	12
Being put under pressure academically	54	31
Catching Covid	17	24
Changes in friendships/relationships following lockdown	29	16
Changes to routine	41	16
exams, tests or assessments not reflecting capabilities	16	24
Managing social distancing	25	22
Managing the workload	37	29
Not being back in school at the same time as close friends	21	12
Not getting support for emotions/behaviours	32	13
Not getting support with work	32	20
Problems concentrating/ paying attention in class	46	11
The enjoyable parts of school might not happen	48	30
The transition to a new school/class/group	44	18
The work they did/not do during lockdown	22	27
Things being different and uncertain	63	23
Transmitting Covid	19	22

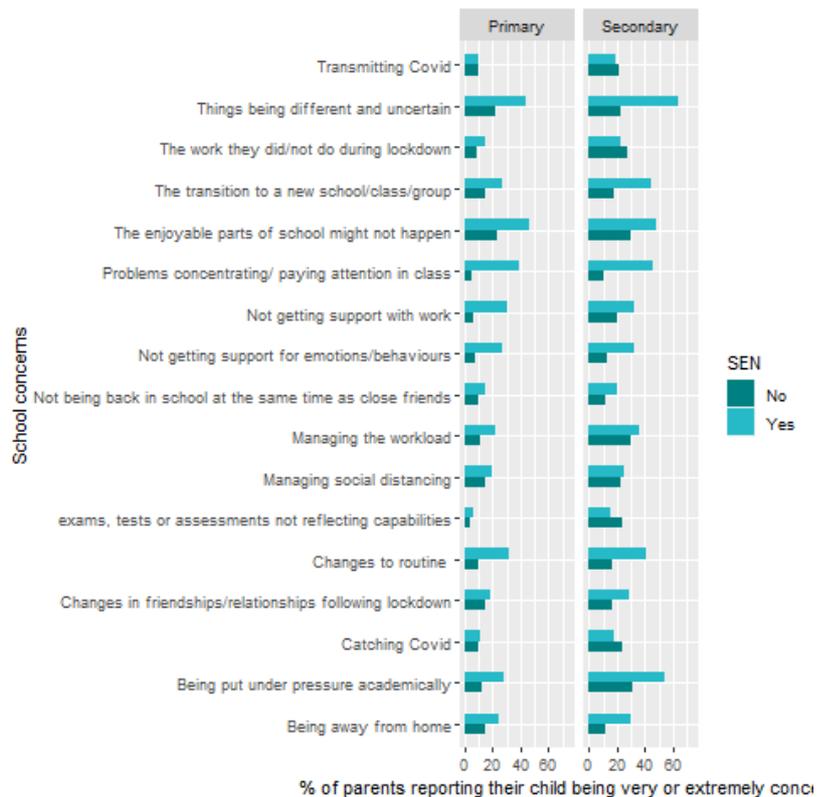
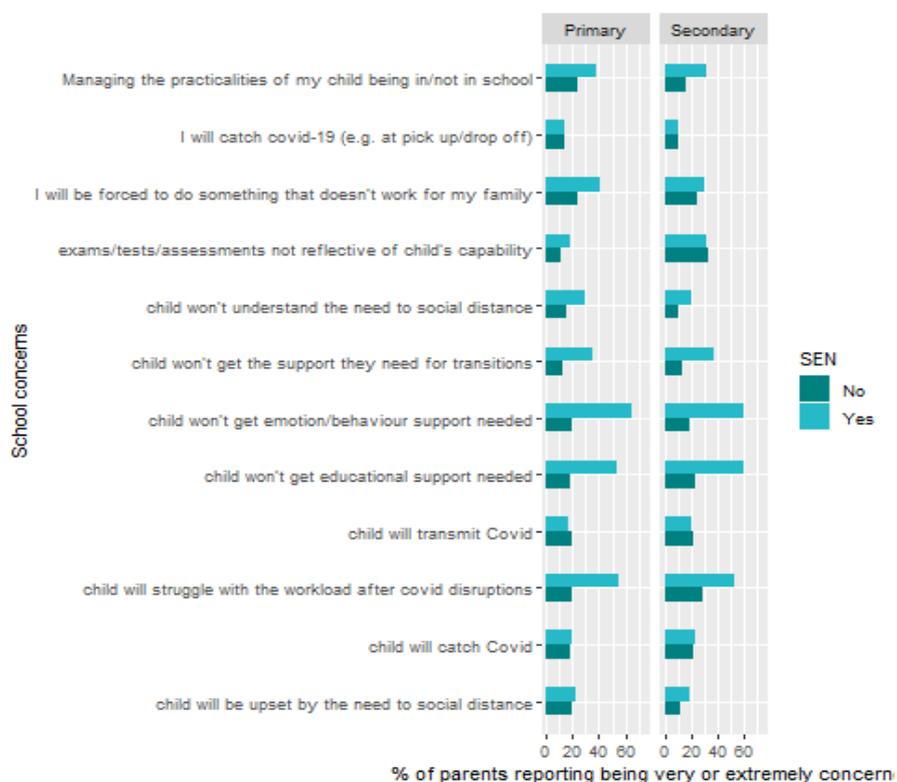


Figure 5. Percentage of parents/carers reporting that they are “very” or “extremely” concerned about aspects of their child attending school, by age group and those with and without SEN/ND.

	SEN	
	Yes	No
<b>Primary</b>		
child will be upset by the need to social distance	22	19
child will catch Covid	20	19
child will struggle with the workload after covid disruptions	55	20
child will transmit Covid	17	20
child won't get educational support needed	54	18
child won't get emotion/behaviour support needed	64	20
child won't get the support they need for transitions	36	13
child won't understand the need to social distance	29	16
exams/tests/assessments not reflective of child's capability	19	10
I will be forced to do something that doesn't work for my family	41	24
I will catch covid-19 (e.g. at pick up/drop off)	14	14
Managing the practicalities of my child being in/not in school	37	23
<b>Secondary</b>		
child will be upset by the need to social distance	19	11
child will catch Covid	22	22
child will struggle with the workload after covid disruptions	52	28
child will transmit Covid	21	21
child won't get educational support needed	60	23
child won't get emotion/behaviour support needed	60	18
child won't get the support they need for transitions	37	13
child won't understand the need to social distance	21	10
exams/tests/assessments not reflective of child's capability	32	33
I will be forced to do something that doesn't work for my family	30	24
I will catch covid-19 (e.g. at pick up/drop off)	10	10
Managing the practicalities of my child being in/not in school	32	16



## b. Above and below household income of £16,000 p.a. (low income).

Figure 6. Percentage of parents/carers reporting that their child is “very” or “extremely” concerned about aspects of attending school, by age group and those from low income households.

	Low Income	
	Yes	No
<b>Primary</b>		
Being away from home	21	16
Being put under pressure academically	26	12
Catching Covid	16	9
Changes in friendships/relationships following lockdown	22	15
Changes to routine	23	10
exams, tests or assessments not reflecting capabilities	8	3
Managing social distancing	18	15
Managing the workload	15	12
Not being back in school at the same time as close friends	14	10
Not getting support for emotions/behaviours	18	8
Not getting support with work	17	8
Problems concentrating/ paying attention in class	15	9
The enjoyable parts of school might not happen	27	25
The transition to a new school/class/group	22	16
The work they did/not do during lockdown	16	8
Things being different and uncertain	33	23
Transmitting Covid	20	8
<b>Secondary</b>		
Being away from home	24	14
Being put under pressure academically	44	33
Catching Covid	41	19
Changes in friendships/relationships following lockdown	25	17
Changes to routine	25	20
exams, tests or assessments not reflecting capabilities	34	20
Managing social distancing	32	21
Managing the workload	42	28
Not being back in school at the same time as close friends	19	13
Not getting support for emotions/behaviours	27	15
Not getting support with work	37	19
Problems concentrating/ paying attention in class	20	17
The enjoyable parts of school might not happen	36	33
The transition to a new school/class/group	29	22
The work they did/not do during lockdown	37	24
Things being different and uncertain	34	31
Transmitting Covid	34	18

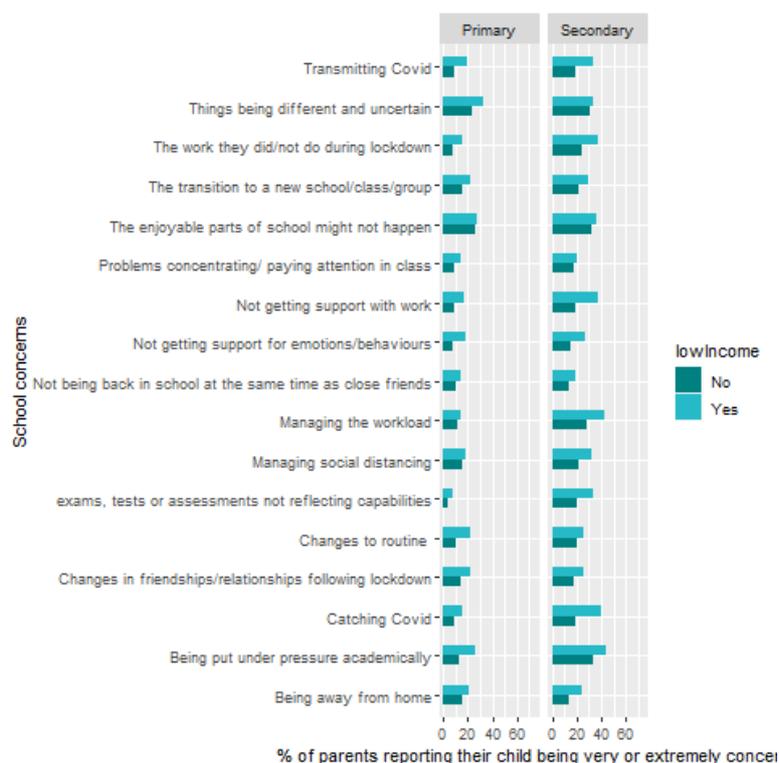
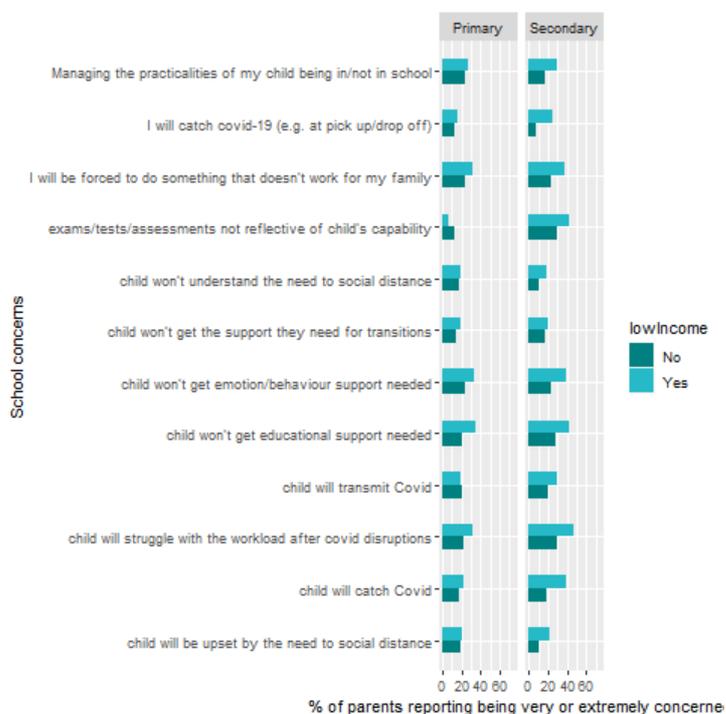


Figure 7. Percentage of parents/carers reporting that they are “very” or “extremely” concerned about aspects of their child attending school, by age group and those from low income households.

	Low Income	
	Yes	No
<b>Primary</b>		
child will be upset by the need to social distance	21	19
child will catch Covid	23	18
child will struggle with the workload after covid disruptions	32	23
child will transmit Covid	18	20
child won't get educational support needed	34	20
child won't get emotion/behaviour support needed	33	24
child won't get the support they need for transitions	20	15
child won't understand the need to social distance	18	17
exams/tests/assessments not reflective of child's capability	7	12
I will be forced to do something that doesn't work for my family	32	25
I will catch covid-19 (e.g. at pick up/drop off)	16	13
Managing the practicalities of my child being in/not in school	26	25
<b>Secondary</b>		
child will be upset by the need to social distance	22	11
child will catch Covid	39	18
child will struggle with the workload after covid disruptions	47	30
child will transmit Covid	29	19
child won't get educational support needed	42	27
child won't get emotion/behaviour support needed	39	24
child won't get the support they need for transitions	20	17
child won't understand the need to social distance	19	11
exams/tests/assessments not reflective of child's capability	42	30
I will be forced to do something that doesn't work for my family	37	23
I will catch covid-19 (e.g. at pick up/drop off)	25	7
Managing the practicalities of my child being in/not in school	29	17



# Appendix A

## Participants' demographics (Whole sample)

		Sample		National Figures (%)*
		n	%	
Total		843	100%	-
Parent Gender	Female	757	90%	51
	Male	78	9%	49
	Other/Prefer not to say	4	1%	-
Employment status	Not working	203	24%	3.8
	Working full time	248	29%	50.7
	Working part time	327	39%	16.9
	Self employed	68	8%	8.5
Household income	> £16,000	657	78%	83%
	< £16,000	143	17%	**17%
	Prefer not to say	43	5%	-
Child Gender	Female	389	46%	52
	Male	450	53%	48
	Prefer not to say	4	<1%	-
Child age group	Child (4-10)	504	60%	55
	Adolescent (11-16)	339	40%	45
Mental health conditions	Any MH	36	4%	12.8
	Depression	2	<1%	2.1
	Anxiety	28	3%	7.2
	Other	11	1%	
Neurodevelopmental disorders	ASD	72	9%	1.6
	ADHD	28	3%	3-5
SEN	Any SEN	125	15%	14.7
	Social/emotional	75	9%	2.1
	Communication/interaction	62	7%	2.7
	Cognitive/learning	63	8%	4.4
	Sensory/physical	62	7%	0.6

Ethnicity				
	Asian/Asian British - Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, other	20	2%	6.8
	Black/Black British - Caribbean, African, other	8	1%	3.3
	Chinese/Chinese British	2	<1%	0.7
	Middle Eastern/Middle Eastern British - Arab, Turkish, other	3	<1%	0.4
	Mixed race - other	30	4%	11
	Mixed race - White and Black/Black British	27	3%	1
	Other ethnic group	5	<1%	0.5
	Prefer not to say	15	2%	-
	White - British, Irish, other	733	87%	86

\*This data was extracted from the following sources on 12/05/2020:

<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2017/2017>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/z1zippedpopulationprojectionsdatafilesuk>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/employmentintheuk/september2019#:~:text=Main%20points%20for%20May%20to%20July%202019,and%20unchanged%20on%20the%20quarter.>

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/personalandhouseholdfinances/incomeandwealth/bulletins/householddisposableincomeandinequality/yearending2018>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-special-educational-needs-sen>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/814244/SEN\\_2019\\_Text.docx.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/814244/SEN_2019_Text.docx.pdf)

<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/demographics/age-groups/latest#data-sources>

\*\* extracted from (01/10/2020) <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hbai-absolute-low-income-illustrative-figures-using-cpi-to-adjust-for-inflation>