ATTACHMENT SIX

Parent Perspectives on Student Wellbeing and Learning

Final Project Report

Catholic School Parents Australia

December 2022

Parent Perspectives on Student Wellbeing and Learning
ARACY

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Contents

Suggested citation ii

Acknowledgements iv

List of Tables and Figures v

Executive summary vi

1. Background 1

2. Methodology 2

2.1 Parent survey 2

2.2 Focus group discussions 3

3 Overview of Findings 4

3.1 Priority populations 4

3.2 Wellbeing and learning during 2022 5

3.3 Impacts of COVID-19 7

4 Results by Nest domains 9

4.1 Valued, Loved and Safe 11

4.2 Being Healthy 13

4.3 Learning 15

4.4 Participating 16

4.5 Having a Positive Sense of Identity and Culture 18

4.6 Having Material Basics 20

4.7 Summary of results by Nest domains 22

5 Issues of concern, current and emerging 23

5.1 Student wellbeing 23

5.2 Teaching & learning 24

5.3 Bullying 25

5.4 Impacts of COVID 26

5.3 Resourcing 27

6 Implications, next steps 29

Appendix A: Survey Instrument 31

Appendix B: Snapshot of results 48

Appendix C: Additional selected commentary 70

References 74

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List of Tables and Figures

Table 1: Distribution of survey respondents by State/Territory and regionality

Figure 1: 2021 Enrolments in Australian Catholic Schools

Figure 2: Child's year level at school in 2022 by gender, reported by parents (n)

Figure 3: Child's overall wellbeing and learning during 2022, reported by parents (%)

Figure 4: What parents would like to see more of in relation to wellbeing and learning (%)

Figure 5: What parents would like to see less of in relation to wellbeing and learning (%)

Figure 6: The Common Approach® Detailed Child Wellbeing Wheel

Figure 7: School enjoyment in 2022, students with disability (n=1,408)

Figure 8: School enjoyment in 2022, students with CALD and EALD backgrounds (n=393)

Figure 9: School enjoyment in 2022, students in rural or remote locations (n=657)

Figure 10: Feeling valued and safe at school, students identifying as non-binary (n=35)

Figure 11: Frequency of getting worried/anxious, students with disability (n=1,408)

Figure 12: Frequency of getting worried/anxious, students from First Nations families (n=356)

Figure 13: Frequency of getting worried/anxious, students with CALD and EALD backgrounds (n=393)

Figure 14: Access to health services, students with disability (n=1,408)

Figure 15: Parents valued as partners in learning, parents with CALD and EALD backgrounds (n=393)

Figure 16: Participation in clubs or groups outside of school, students with disability (n=1,408)

Figure 17: Participation in clubs or groups outside of school, students in remote locations (n=101)

Figure 18: Encouragement of child to participate in school decision-making processes, secondary students (n=3,171)

Figure 19: Safe expression of self at school, parents of students with disability (n=1,408)

Figure 20: Safe expression of self at school, students identifying as non-binary (n=35)

Figure 21: Experience of discrimination at school, students with CALD and EALD backgrounds (n=393)

Figure 22: Experience of discrimination at school, students from First Nations families (n=356)

Figure 23: Experience of discrimination at school, parents of students with disability (n=1,408)

Figure 24: Capacity to buy necessities and pay bills on time, First Nations families (n=356)

Figure 25: Access to adequate internet connectivity at home, students in remote locations (n=101)

Executive summary

This report presents the findings from the CSPA 2022 Parent Survey on Student Wellbeing and Learning. Through this survey, the existing and emerging issues for parents/carers with children and/or young people in Australian Catholic schools, in relation to their children's wellbeing and learning, were sought. Overall, the survey yielded n=6,286 responses from Catholic school parents across Australia. While the total responses to the survey were not representative of all parents in Australia's 1,755 Catholic schools, the results provide an opportunity to explore the experiences of families and their students across the following priority populations:

- **Families of students with diverse learning needs:** Over one in five respondents (22.4%) identified as having a child with disability. Almost half of these students (47.2%) were accessing educational assistance through a special facility or program designed for their disability, health condition/s or learning needs. The most reported types of disability, health condition/s or learning needs were: Anxiety and/or Depression; Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); autism spectrum disorder (ASD); Dyslexia and/or other specific learning difficulties (SLDs) such as speech delays.

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families:** One in 20 parent respondents (5.7%) represented a First Nations' family, identifying as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, or both. Among these, 43 respondents indicated they speak Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Language/s in their home, and 12 of these indicated English is not spoken in the home.

- **Families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds:** Almost one in five respondents (18.2%) were born outside Australia. The most reported countries of birth were United Kingdom, Philippines and New Zealand. Others commonly reported were South Africa, India and China.

- **Families with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD):** While most respondents (97%) reported speaking English at home, a small number reported speaking languages other than English in the home (n=175, 2.8% of total responses). For a larger group of parents, both English and other languages were spoken at home (n=536, 8.5% of total responses). The most common languages were Spanish, Tagalog, Filipino, and Malayalam.

- **Families from remote geographical locations:** Over half of survey respondents (53.1%) were based in regional (42.7%), rural (8.8%) and remote (1.6%) locations, compared to those in capital or other metropolitan locations (46.9%). Where relevant, the report touches on the views of those based in rural[1] and remote locations (n=657, 10.4%).

- **Boarding school families:** A very small number of total responses had children enrolled in a boarding school (80, 1.3%).

ARACY shaped the survey around the Nest, Australia's wellbeing framework for children and young people aged 0 to 24 years. The Nest conceptualises wellbeing as six interconnected domains that

[1] Defined in the survey as a very small town or built-up area, population less than 5,000

support each other to help children reach their potential. The survey was developed using a bank of questions from the Common Approach® across the six domains of the Nest.

The results from the CSPA 2022 Parent Survey on Student Wellbeing and Learning provide a rich set of data about the lived experiences of families. A summary of the survey results by Nest domains shows:

Valued, Loved and Safe

Compared with overall responses:

- Increased school enjoyment for students with CALD/EALD backgrounds and students in rural/remote locations
- Students with disability less likely to enjoy school attendance, and feel valued and safe at school
- Non-binary students less likely to feel valued and safe at school.

Participating

- 1 in 5 students do not participate in any groups or clubs outside of school
- 1 in 4 students with disability do not participate in any groups or clubs outside of school
- 1 in 3 students with disability in secondary school do not participate in any groups or clubs outside of school
- Almost 1 in 3 students in remote areas do not participate in any groups or clubs outside of school.

Being Healthy

- 15% of all parents report their child gets anxious or worried about things 'All/Most of time'
- 1 in 3 students with disability get anxious or worried 'All/Most of time'
- 1 in 5 students from First Nations families get anxious or worried 'All/Most of time'
- Non-binary students anxious or worried either 'All/Most of time' or 'Some of the time'
- Challenged access to health services confirmed for families in regional, rural and remote areas.

Positive Sense of Identity and Culture

- 1 in 10 students overall 'Never' or 'Hardly ever' feel safe expressing who they are at school
- 1 in 4 students with disability 'Never' or 'Hardly ever' feel safe expressing who they are at school
- Non-binary students also experience challenges expressing who they are at school
- 2 in 3 students with disability experience discrimination at school 'Some of the time'
- 1 in 3 First Nations' students experiences discrimination at school 'Some of the time'.

Learning

- 1 in 10 parents 'Never' or 'Hardly ever' feel valued as partners in their child's learning
- 1 in 10 parents 'Never' or 'Hardly ever' feel comfortable communicating with their child's school about wellbeing or learning.

Material Basics

- 1 in 4 First Nations' families able to buy necessities and pay bills on time 'Some of the time'
- Over 9 in 10 students have access to technology at home for schoolwork 'All/Most of the time'
- 1 in 5 students in remote locations have adequate internet connectivity 'Some of the time'.

Commentary provided both through the survey and online focus group forums (held post-survey) allow us to understand how students are faring in the aftermath of a global pandemic. Persistent and concerning issues raised regarding student wellbeing, indicate families are grappling with the wellbeing of their children, and mental health is a particular area of challenge. There is a growing awareness of

student wellbeing as something of equal, if not greater, importance than academic learning. Certainly, wellbeing is identified as something that must be addressed before other learning can take place.

The impacts of COVID have had a profound effect on student wellbeing at all ages, and comments highlighted a strong desire for schools to incorporate learning in this area to build student wellbeing literacy. Comments also reflected a wish for greater resourcing of – and accessibility to – counselling and related services within schools.

These issues, particularly when viewed through the lens of priority populations, such as students with disability, those in First Nation's and CALD and EALD families, those identifying as non-binary, and those living remotely, highlight the need for CSPA and the Australian Government to continue to advocate for the needs of students at all ages, in all circumstances, and particularly in the aftermath of the global pandemic. In light of these findings ARACY recommends further analysis of the CSPA 2022 Parent Survey on Student Wellbeing and Learning data to ensure full interrogation of respondent commentary is undertaken, to ensure a nuanced understanding of emerging issues and concerns is able to be presented.

1. Background

Catholic School Parents Australia (CSPA) is recognised as the national body representing and advocating for the parents[2] of over 766,000 children and young people who attend the 1,737 Catholic schools across Australia. CSPA works in collaboration and consultation with the National Catholic Education Commission and is recognised by the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference through the Bishops Commission for Catholic Education.

In 2022 ARACY entered into the Parent Perspectives Partnership with CSPA, to provide research and subject matter expertise in seeking parent opinion on the new and emerging educational issues, including the impact of COVID-19 on student learning outcomes, representing the views of parents, families and carers of children in the Catholic schooling sector.

This report presents the findings from the Parent Perspectives Partnership, including the CSPA 2022 Parent Survey on Student Wellbeing and Learning. Through this work, the existing and emerging issues for parents/carers with children and/or young people in Australian Catholic schools, in relation to their children's wellbeing and learning, were sought.

Using a survey, interviews and focus group discussions, existing and emerging issues have been identified from anonymised evidence provided by a cross-section of parents/carers that includes, not only parent/carer samples from the more dominant demographics, but also from priority populations that include:

a) Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families

b) Families of students with diverse learning needs

c) Families with students more disengaged from schooling

d) Families with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD)

e) Families from remote geographical locations

f) Boarding school families; and

g) Families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds.

[2] 'Parent' includes natural, adopted or foster parents, guardians or care-givers of young people attending Catholic Schools, CSPA Constitution.

2. Methodology

The project centred around the design of a survey for Catholic school parents and carers, overlaying key learnings outlined in ARACY's flagship family engagement publication, Parent and Family Engagement: An Implementation Guide for School Communities (Barker & Harris, 2020), and utilising The Nest – Australia's wellbeing framework for children and young people (Goodhue, Dakin, & Noble, 2021), as key references for all aspects of the work.

2.1 Parent survey

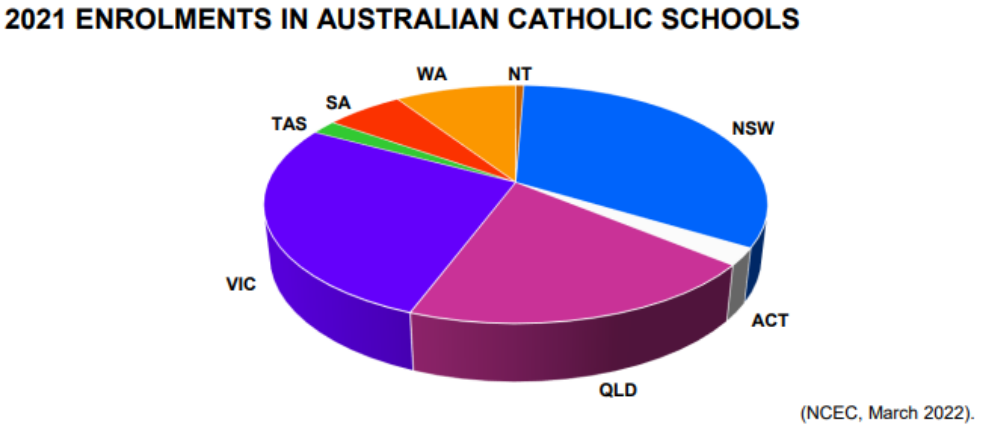
A survey was developed in consultation with CSPA, and once finalised, was programmed as an online questionnaire in SurveyMonkey. (See **Appendix A** for a copy of the Survey Instrument).

The survey was framed around ARACY's wellbeing framework for children and young people, The Nest (See **Section 4:** Results by Nest domains, for further information).

It was agreed that dissemination would occur via a survey invitation and link being sent by CSPA to directors in each of the Catholic dioceses and to principals via their national associations. CSPA advertised the survey on the Engage platform via several Facebook posts and CSPA members promoted this through their networks. Parents/carers were instructed to consider their survey responses based on one child only; and where applicable, were able to complete the survey more than once, focusing on a different child for each survey.

The survey was open between 19 July and 4 September 2022, approximately 7 weeks' field time.

Recent Catholic school enrolment data indicate that in 2021, 19.5% of all Australian school students were educated in Australia's 1755 Catholic schools, and 38% of these Catholic schools were in regional or remote areas. Figure 1 shows distribution of enrolment by State/Territory, led by 33% in NSW.



AUS	NT	NSW	ACT	QLD	VIC	TAS	SA	WA
785,585 Students	4850	259,327	18,536	155,856	210,782	15,262	48,298	72,674
% of national Catholic school enrolment.	0.6%	33.0%	2.4%	19.8%	26.8%	1.9%	6.2 %	9.2%

Figure 1: 2021 Enrolments in Australian Catholic Schools

While CSPA endeavoured to maximise parents' exposure to the survey, the distribution of survey responses show some States and Territories had far greater representation than others, particularly when compared to the (above) distribution of enrolment data. This is largely related to how the survey was distributed by individual dioceses. For example, some regional directors emailed a survey link to each parent individually, bolstering response rates for those areas.

Given the skewed distribution of survey responses by State/Territory (see **Table 1**), the findings contained in this report are not representative of Australian Catholic school parents or students, and caution should be practiced when interpreting these data. However, the results do provide an excellent opportunity to explore the experiences of families and their students in different circumstances (see **Section 3.1** Priority populations).

State/Territory	Capital	Ex-metro	Total (n)	Total (%)
Australian Capital Territory	177	-	177	2.8%
New South Wales	846	410	1,256	20.0%
Northern Territory	5	15	20	0.3%
Queensland	749	2011	2,760	43.9%
South Australia	7	37	44	0.7%
Tasmania	96	296	392	6.2%
Victoria	160	49	209	3.3%
Western Australia	910	518	1,428	22.7%
Total	**2,945**	**3,341**	**6,286**	**100.0%**

Table 1: Distribution of survey respondents by State/Territory and regionality

2.2 Focus group discussions

In addition to the survey, respondents were given the opportunity to take part in focus group discussions with similar parents/carers from across Australia. Over 1,200 survey respondents provided their contact details to be invited to participate in the groups.

Group discussions were conducted online via Zoom/Teams (and a few 1:1 phone interviews) during September and October 2022 and were focused by priority populations. Approximately 25 groups were conducted, facilitated by an ARACY researcher or CSPA team member, and each lasted approximately one hour in duration. All groups were recorded and transcribed by an additional team member.

In total, approximately 75 parents/carers participated in the forums. Regardless of the group type the same (following) question was posed, and participants were given the opportunity to respond individually.

> *As a parent/carer with a child in an Australian Catholic school what are current or emerging issues in relation to your child's wellbeing and/or learning that you would like reported to the federal government for resolution or (further) resourcing? Why is this an issue?*

The group discussions yielded extensive feedback, and further analysis of the data will allow for nuanced understanding of ideas put forward.

3 Overview of Findings

Overall, the survey yielded n=6,286 responses from Catholic school parents across Australia. These responses were largely balanced between parents responding on behalf of male and female students (over 49% each), and the range of school year levels (see **Figure 2**). Further results are included in **Appendix B**.

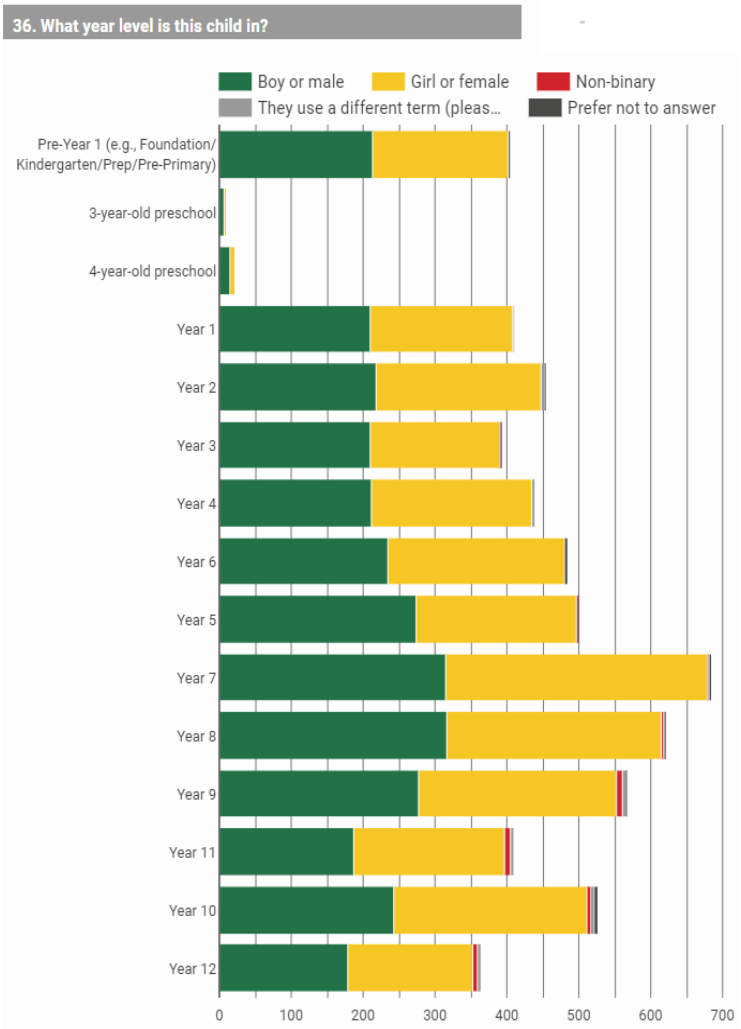


Figure 2: Child's year level at school in 2022 by gender, reported by parents (n)

3.1 Priority populations

As noted earlier, while total responses to the survey (n=6,286) are not representative of Catholic school parents across Australia, the results provide an opportunity to explore the experiences of families and their students in different circumstances. For example, across total responses the following priority populations were represented:

- **Families of students with diverse learning needs:** Over one in five respondents (22.4%) identified as having a child with disability. Almost half of these students (47.2%) were accessing educational assistance through a special facility or program designed for their disability, health condition/s or learning needs. The most reported types of disability, health condition/s or

learning needs were: Anxiety and/or Depression; Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); autism spectrum disorder (ASD); Dyslexia and/or other specific learning difficulties (SLDs) such as speech delays.

- **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families:** One in 20 parent respondents (5.7%) represented a First Nations' family, identifying as Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander, or both. Among these, 43 respondents indicated they speak Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Language/s in their home, and 12 of these indicated English is not spoken in the home.

- **Families from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) backgrounds:** Almost one in five respondents (18.2%) were born outside Australia. The most reported countries of birth were United Kingdom, Philippines and New Zealand. Others commonly reported were South Africa, India and China.

- **Families with English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD):** While most respondents (97%) reported speaking English at home, a small number reported speaking languages other than English in the home (n=175, 2.8% of total responses). For a larger group of parents, both English and other languages were spoken at home (n=536, 8.5% of total responses). The most common languages were Spanish, Tagalog, Filipino, and Malayalam.

- **Families from remote geographical locations:** Over half of survey respondents (53.1%) were based in regional (42.7%), rural (8.8%) and remote (1.6%) locations, compared to those in capital or other metropolitan locations (46.9%). Where relevant, the report touches on the views of those based in rural and remote locations (n=657, 10.4%).

- **Boarding school families:** A very small number of total responses had children enrolled in a boarding school (80, 1.3%). The report touches on their views where relevant.

3.2 Wellbeing and learning during 2022

The survey commenced with overarching questions about wellbeing and learning over the 2022 school year. Viewing the responses to these questions through the lens of the priority populations provides some useful insights.

Overall, most respondents indicated their child's wellbeing during 2022 had been 'Excellent' or 'Good' (24.0% and 47.8% respectively). Similarly, most respondents indicated their child's learning during 2022 had been 'Excellent' or 'Good' (21.8% and 46.5% respectively). (See **Figure 3**).

Despite this, it is evident that wellbeing and learning were impacted during 2022 for some segments of all responses. Overall, one in five (21.7%) reported their child's wellbeing as 'Fair/Average', and one in four (24.8%) also reported their child's learning as 'Fair/Average'. A further 5% described the year as 'Poor' or 'Very poor' for both their child's wellbeing and learning.

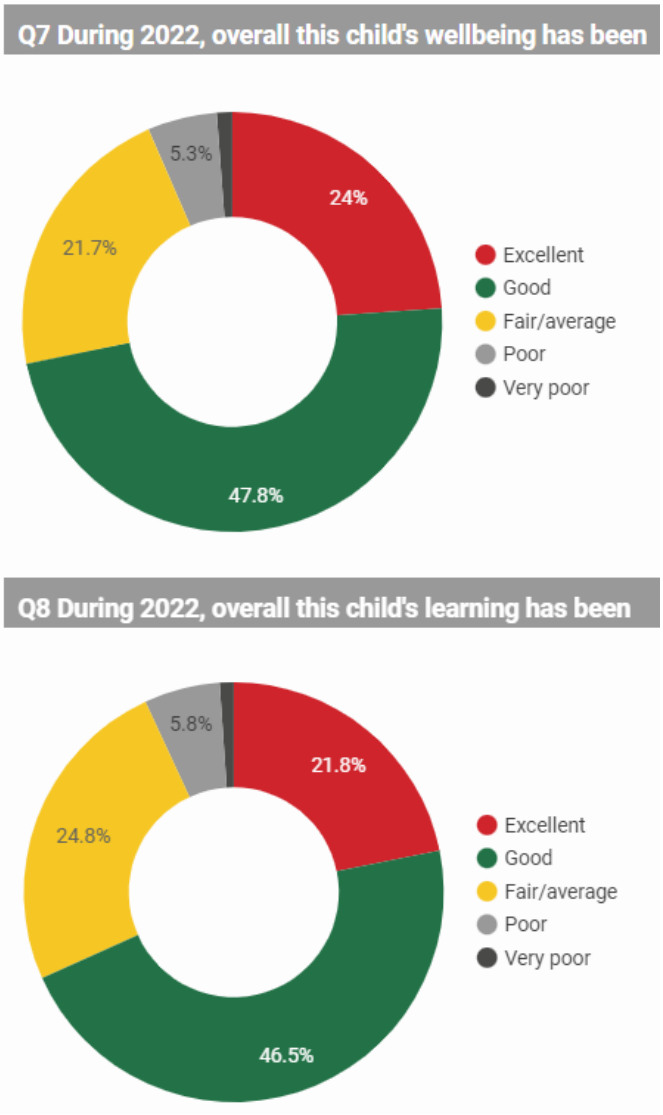


Figure 3: Child's overall wellbeing and learning during 2022, reported by parents (%)

For **students with disability**, parents reported higher rates of 'Fair/Average', 'Poor' and 'Very poor' for overall wellbeing (48.2%, compared with 28.2% for total responses) and overall learning (49.1%, compared with 31.7% for total responses), during 2022. These results were supported by responses made in open-ended questions within the survey. For example:

> *"I'm frustrated with the lack of help and support when it comes to kids having diagnosed learning difficulties. I pay a lot of money for a tutor outside of school because I can't get the help I need to support my son. My son is diagnosed with two learning difficulties in maths and English and he's not even on an IEP* [Individualised Education Program]*. I feel really let down by the education system in this country as a whole. I have asked for help from numerous different places, and I still can't get any support."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"Generally speaking, teachers (public & private) require more professional development in regard to anxiety, ASD, ADHD trauma, etc. More knowledge to change the views of what behaviours are communicating to us."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

A small difference between male and female students was observed, with parents of **male students** reporting higher rates of Fair/Average, Poor and Very poor for overall **learning** (35.4%, compared with 27.6% for female students). There was only minor variation between the rates reported for overall wellbeing.

Across other priority populations there were no major differences in results for these questions.

3.3 Impacts of COVID-19

A specific section addressing the impacts of the pandemic was included in the survey. This was seen as highly important given the diverse experiences of education systems across the different States and Territories during the pandemic, and because in 2022 many schools were hoping to operate in relatively 'back to normal' conditions for the first time since early Term 1, 2020.

Parents were asked to reflect on some of the changes that may have been introduced to the organisation and operation of their child's school, and then in relation to the wellbeing and learning of their child indicate a range of activities they would like to see more of/less of.

The results clearly highlighted the impact of school restrictions on **parent and family engagement**, with a strong desire for greater access to schools and educators emerging from the data. Parents reported wanting more **direct contact between school staff and home** about student wellbeing (57.0%) and learning (58.8%), followed by **face-to-face parent-teacher interviews** (39.9%) and the **physical presence of parents/carers in schools** (25.6%). Perhaps not surprisingly, just 13.6% wanted to see more **remote (at home) learning**. (See **Figure 4**).

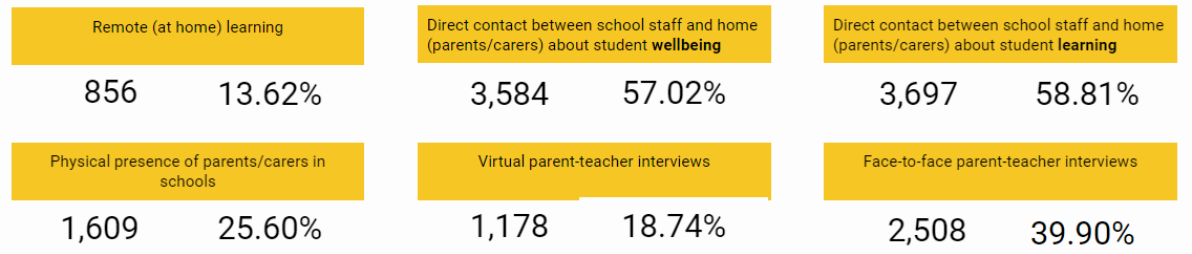


Figure 4: What parents would like to see more of in relation to wellbeing and learning (%)

The reverse question ('select those things you would like to see less of') emphasised that parents would like to see less of the initiatives introduced during the lockdowns – e.g., remote (at home) learning (38.2%) and virtual parent-teacher interviews (25.0%) – and more in person contact with schools and teachers.

Fewer than 5% of respondents wanted to see **less**: face-to-face parent-teacher interviews (4.9%), physical presence of parents/carers in schools (4.9%), direct contact between school staff and home (parents/carers) about student wellbeing (3.2%), and direct contact between school staff and home (parents/carers) about student learning (3.0%). Almost half of the total responses (44.0%) wanted none of the initiatives listed, illustrating a strong desire to get back to 'the way things were', pre-COVID. (See **Figure 5**).

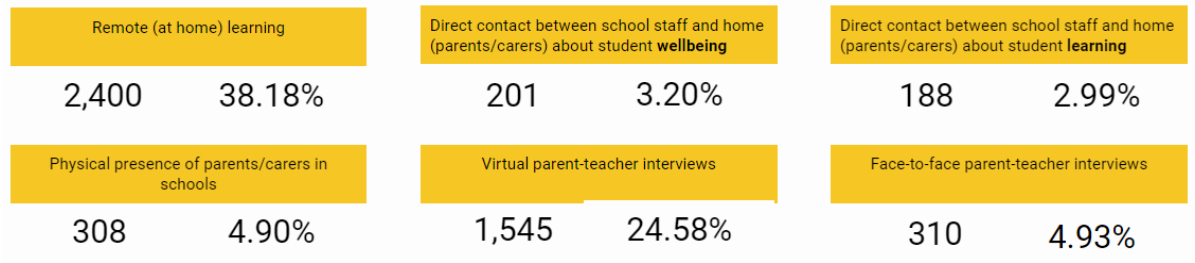


Figure 5: What parents would like to see less of in relation to wellbeing and learning (%)

Finally, almost 700 parents provided suggestions of other things they would like to see more of, and a further 350 provided ideas of what they would like to see less of. Further analysis of the data will allow for nuanced understanding of ideas put forward.

4 Results by Nest domains

In developing the survey, ARACY shaped the questions around the Nest. The Nest is Australia's wellbeing framework for children and young people aged 0 to 24 years. It's a way of thinking about the whole child in the context of their daily lives, viewing wellbeing in a way that brings together the different elements a child or young person needs to thrive. The Nest conceptualises wellbeing as six interconnected domains that support each other to help children reach their potential. To have optimal wellbeing, a child or young person needs to be adequately resourced in all six domains (Goodhue et al., 2021).

The six domains of the Nest are defined by children and young people as:

- being **Valued, Loved and Safe,**
- having their basic **Material Needs** met,
- being **Healthy** (physically, mentally and emotionally),
- being engaged and supported in their **Learning**,
- **Participating** in family, community and decision-making, and
- having a **Positive Sense of** their **Identity and Culture**.

Why is it called The Nest?

At a national summit that brought together young people and Australia's leading 'thinkers and doers' to finalise the framework's creation, a young participant described all the areas of wellbeing as forming a nest, where "if every area is supported, we're able to be happy and healthy and fly from the nest". Everyone liked that image so much the wellbeing framework became the Nest.

What is wellbeing?

Children and young people told us that what they needed to have a 'good life' fell into six interlinked areas, which when taken together holistically support a child or young person's 'wellbeing'. Wellbeing is therefore seen as an 'umbrella' term, with domains sitting underneath it. This holistic view is central to the Nest and to wellbeing itself.

When many people talk about 'wellbeing' they are often referring to certain aspects only, such as mental health or social-emotional learning. While these are crucial elements, we need to ensure everyone working with, and for, children and young people, understands that 'wellbeing' refers to ALL six domains of the Nest, not just one or two. All areas need to be seen as a priority by all the adults in our children's community (Goodhue et al., 2021).

2022 CSPA Parent Survey

The survey gathers data based on the methodology from ARACY's Common Approach®. The Common Approach® uses the Nest framework and is best practice for having quality conversations with children, young people and their families about all aspects of wellbeing. The Wellbeing Wheel (see **Figure 6**) is one of the resources that supports people to use the Common Approach. Each segment of the wheel

represents a Nest domain and contains examples of wellbeing considerations including a separate focus on the different levels of child, family and community.

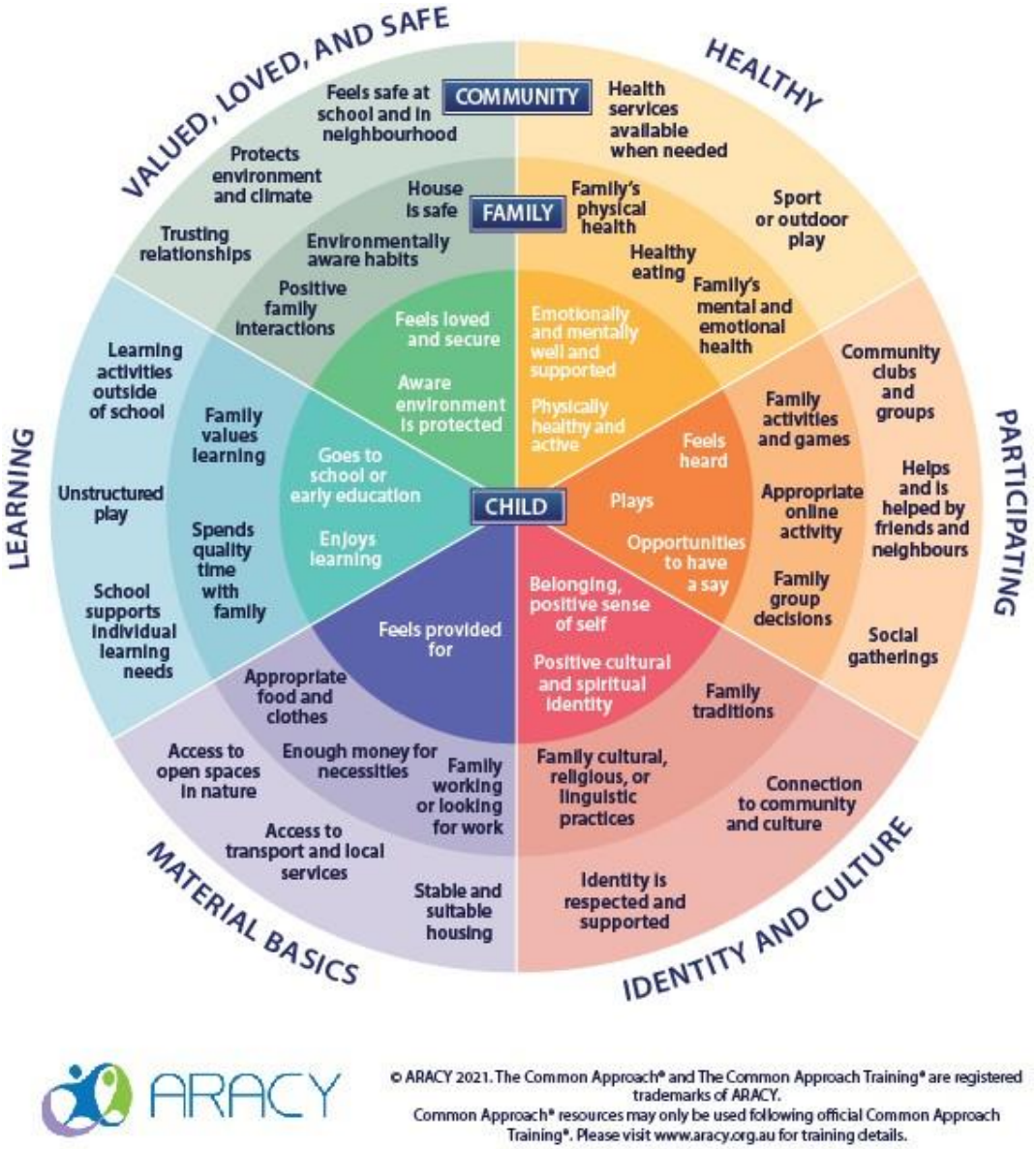


Figure 6: The Common Approach® Detailed Child Wellbeing Wheel

The survey was developed using a bank of questions from the Common Approach across the six domains of the Nest. These questions have been created and refined by ARACY over a seven-year process involving hundreds of educators, practitioners and leaders.

The results for each domain in the survey are discussed in turn.

Further results for each question are contained in **Appendix B**.

4.1 Valued, Loved and Safe

The first Nest domain in the survey refers to feeling valued, loved and safe. For children and young people this means having loving, trusting relationships with family and friends, feeling valued by teachers and other adults in their life, and knowing they are important to others and that others are caring and supportive of them.

School enjoyment

Across total responses most parents reported their child generally enjoyed attending school, either 'All/Most of the time' (61.7%), or 'Some of the time' (30.0%). However, of particular interest is the group for whom they reported their child 'Hardly ever' or 'Never' generally enjoyed attending school in 2022. This group comprised approximately one in ten parents overall (8.2%).

In terms of priority populations, results for **students with disability** indicated reduced school enjoyment. **Figure 7** compares the data for parents of students with disability and overall responses and shows fewer parents of students with disability felt their child enjoyed school 'All/Most of the time' (46.3%) in 2022, and the majority (53.7%) enjoyed school only 'Some of the time' (38.4%), 'Hardly ever' or 'Never' (15.2%, combined).

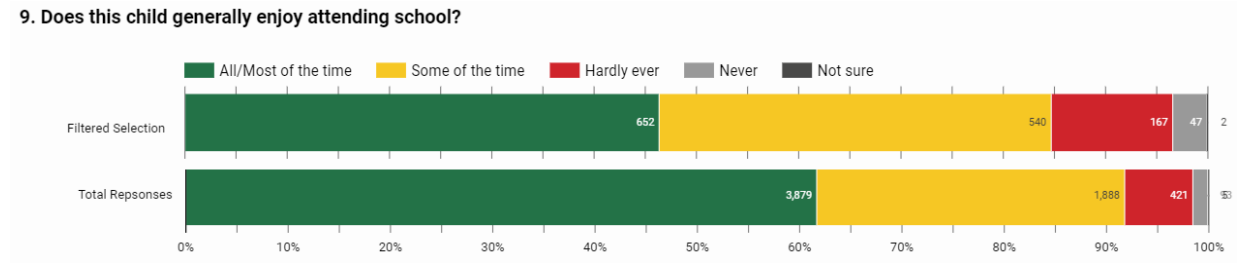


Figure 7: School enjoyment in 2022, students with disability (n=1,408)

School enjoyment for **students with culturally diverse backgrounds** appeared more positive, with 81.4% of parents born outside Australia and speaking languages in addition to English at home (n=393), reporting their child enjoyed school during 2022 'All/Most of the time' (see **Figure 8**).

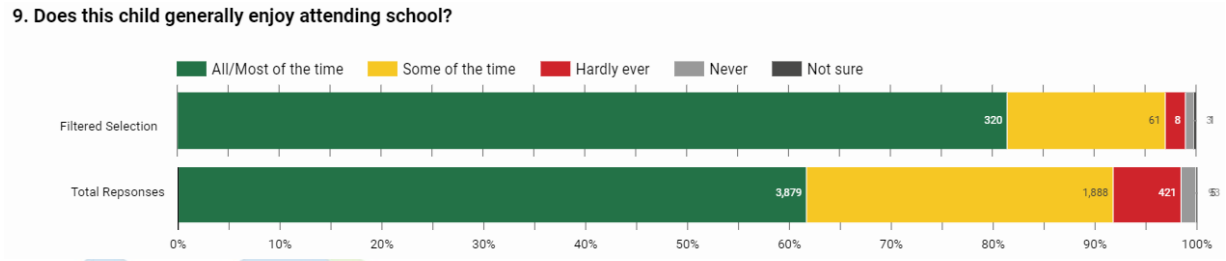


Figure 8: School enjoyment in 2022, students with CALD and EALD backgrounds (n=393)

School enjoyment for **students in rural and remote locations** also appeared more positive, with 70.0% of parents reporting 'All/Most of the time' (see **Figure 9**).

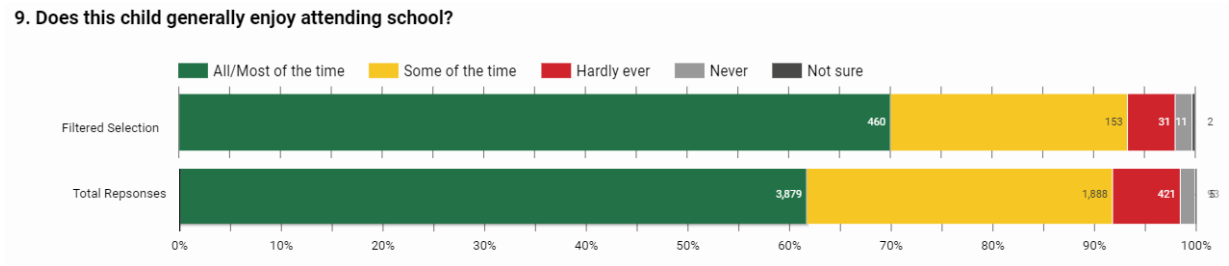


Figure 9: School enjoyment in 2022, students in rural or remote locations (n=657)

Across other priority populations there were no major differences in results for this question.

Feeling valued and safe at school

Across total responses most parents reported they thought their child felt valued and safe at school, either 'All/Most of the time' (60.4%), or 'Some of the time' (32.4%). However, a small group of parents reported their child 'Hardly ever' or 'Never' felt valued and safe at school (6.6%).

Again, for parents of **students with disability** the proportion who thought their child felt valued and safe at school 'Hardly ever' or 'Never' was higher (11.0%).

While the absolute numbers are relatively small, the results indicate that feeling valued and safe at school can be challenging for students identifying as **non-binary** in gender, with most parents reporting 'Some of the time' (n=18) followed by 'Hardly ever' (n=8). (See **Figure 10**).

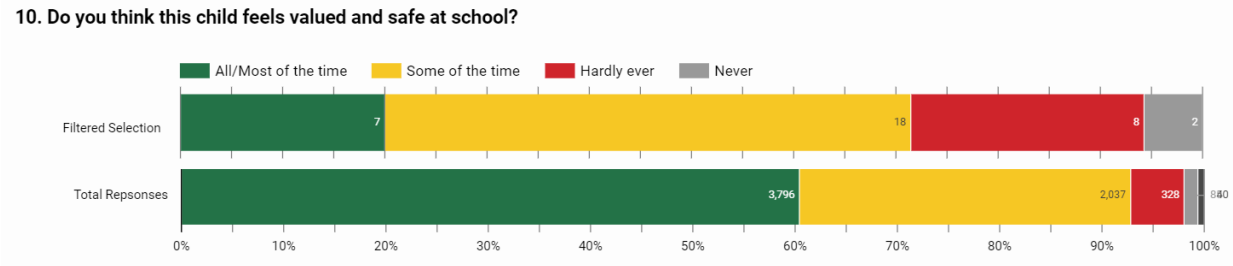


Figure 10: Feeling valued and safe at school, students identifying as non-binary (n=35)

Across other priority populations there were no major differences in results for this question.

Approximately 1,380 parents provided additional comments about their responses for the questions relating to *Feeling Valued, Loved and Safe*. Further analysis of the data will allow for nuanced understanding of these comments.

4.2 Being Healthy

Healthy children and young people have their physical, mental, and emotional health needs met, and all their developmental health needs provided for in a timely way. They receive appropriate health services, including preventative measures to address potential or emerging physical, emotional and mental health concerns.

Child being worried or anxious

Across total responses, most parents reported their child got worried or anxious about things just 'Some of the time' (60.1%). A further one in five parents reported their child 'Hardly ever' did (21.9%), while a small group reported their child 'Never' got anxious or worried (2.9%).

Approximately, 15% of parents reported their child got anxious or worried about things 'All/Most of the time' (14.6%). The results were similar for students in **rural and remote locations**.

However, for parents of **students with disability,** the difference in the distribution of these data is evident – more than double the percentage points of total responses reported their children felt anxious or worried 'All/Most of the time' (34.3%). (See **Figure 11**).

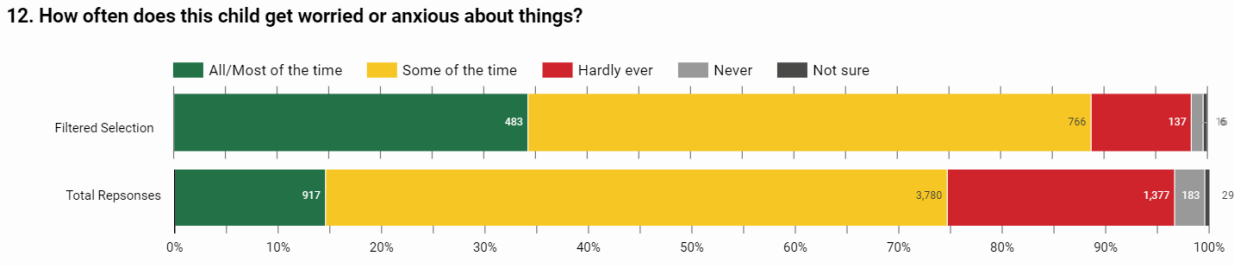


Figure 11: Frequency of getting worried/anxious, students with disability (n=1,408)

For **students from First Nations families**, anxiety and worry was also slightly more pronounced, with approximately one in four parents (23.0%) reporting their child felt this way 'All/Most of the time'. (See **Figure 12**).

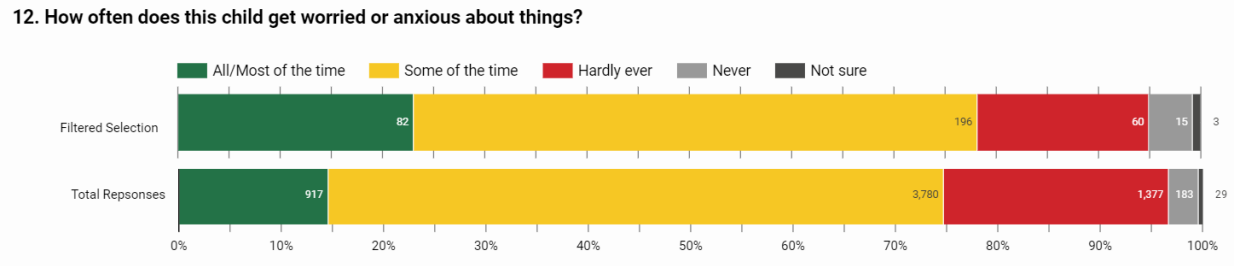


Figure 12: Frequency of getting worried/anxious, students from First Nations families (n=356)

For students identifying as **non-binary** in their gender, the results were equally split between 'All/Most of the time' and 'Some of the time'.

For **students with culturally diverse backgrounds**, the results appeared less pronounced, with 91.6% of parents born outside Australia and speaking language/s in addition to English at home (n=393), reporting their child feeling anxious or worried only 'Some of the time', 'Hardly ever', or 'Never'. A small proportion indicated their child was anxious or worried 'All/Most of the time' (6.6%). (See **Figure 13**).

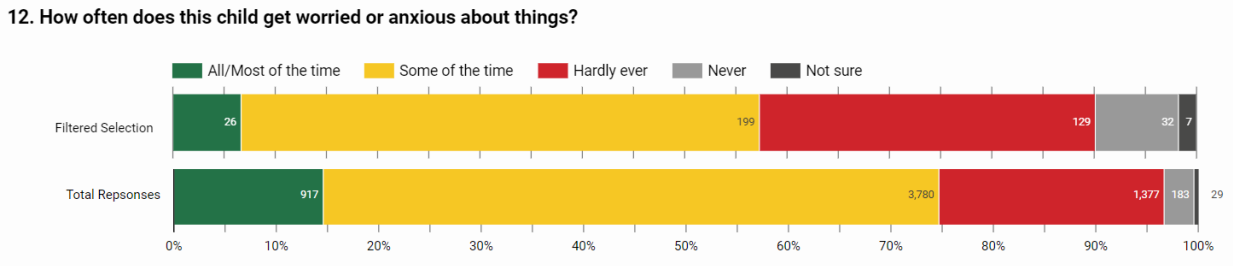


Figure 13: Frequency of getting worried/anxious, students with CALD and EALD backgrounds (n=393)

Access to health services

The ability to access health services if and when needed (e.g., Doctor, Counsellor, Occupational Therapist, Psychologist, Mental Health Specialist, Learning Support Provider) says much about the capacity/self-efficacy parents feel they have to support their child's wellbeing.

Across total responses, approximately eight in 10 parents reported being able to access health services 'All/Most of time' (49.6%), or 'Some of time' (30.5%). A further one in ten (10.0%) reported being 'Not sure', which likely comes down to not regularly needing to tap into these services. Of interest is the group for whom the ability to access health services if needed was 'Hardly ever' (7.4%) or 'Never' (2.5%), also representing one in ten families.

Among families of **students with disability**, the proportion of those reporting 'Hardly ever' or 'Never' was also approximately one in ten families. However, the proportion of those being able to access services 'Some of time' was ten percentage points higher than total responses (40.1%). (See **Figure 14**).

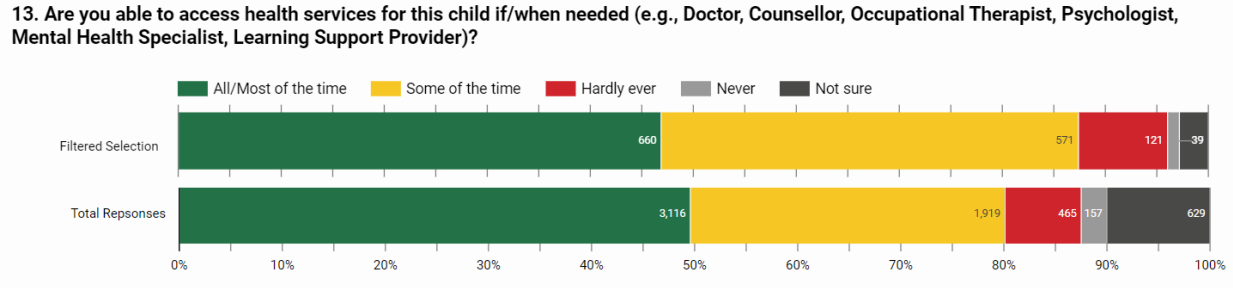


Figure 14: Access to health services, students with disability (n=1,408)

In terms of geographic locations, the results were not as marked as might be expected for rural and remote respondents. For the **families in rural areas** (very small towns or built-up areas, with a population less than 5,000) (n=556), there was a slight difference between the distribution of 'Some of the time' (39.4%) and 'All/Most of the time' (39.2%), however the combined proportion of these groups was almost eight in 10 parents (78.6%), in line with total responses.

Approximately 1,140 parents provided additional comments about their responses for the questions relating to *Being Healthy*. Further analysis of the data will allow for nuanced understanding of these comments, however, those provided by **families in regional, rural and remote areas** illustrated and confirmed challenges experienced accessing health services:

> *"We struggle to get access to a GP for any type of appointment, we also have to travel a substantial distance for any form of specialist appointment. It is Catch 22 – an appointment has to take place in school hours which impacts learning. Due to primary school age, they are unable to access and mental health via Telehealth services."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"GP services in our remote town can be difficult to access, i.e., long waits for appointments. Access to online GP services has made this less of a concern."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"At no fault to the school, since we live in a regional town and attend a small regional school, our abilities to access outside services is extremely frustrating. Our school staff does their best to help however we are extremely lacking in the presence of outside support in our regional town."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"Psychologists who deal with complex trauma in children are very scarce in regional NSW. Long waiting lists."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

4.3 Learning

Children and young people learn best through a variety of experiences within the classroom, the home and the community in which they live.

Parents as partners in learning

The concept of parent and family engagement in learning was broached across several questions in the *Learning* domain. Firstly, the survey gauged the extent to which parents feel their child's educators/teachers value them as a partner in their child's learning.

Over half of parents reported feeling valued 'All/Most of the time (53.7%), and a further third (33.0%) reported 'Some of the time'. Of concern are the one in 10 parents (11.5%) who feel they are valued either 'Hardly ever' (8.6%) or 'Never' (2.9%).

In a cultural sense, the findings were positive. For **First Nations' parents**, the proportion feeling valued 'All/Most of the time' was higher than total responses (58.4%). For **parents with culturally diverse backgrounds,** the proportion feeling valued 'All/Most of the time' was higher again (66.2%). (See ***Figure 15: Parents valued as partners in learning, parents with CALD and EALD backgrounds (n=393)***).

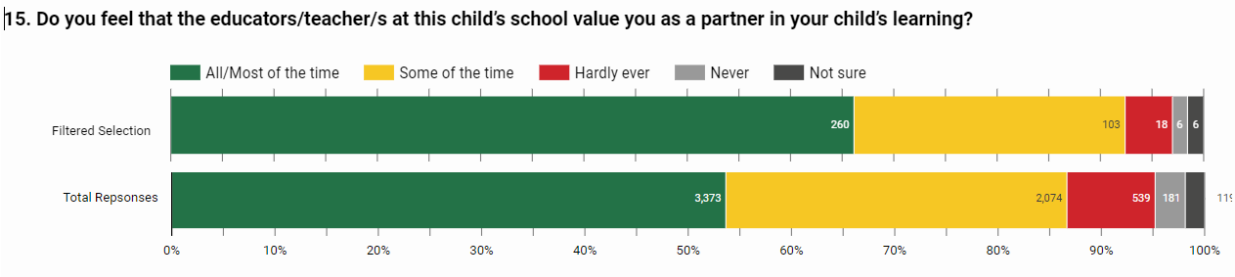


Figure 15: Parents valued as partners in learning, parents with CALD and EALD backgrounds (n=393)

For **rural/regional** parents, the findings were also positive, with parents feeling valued 'All/Most of the time' also higher than total responses (62.7%).

There were no key differences for other priority populations.

Communicating with school

Families were also asked about their comfort in communicating with the school about their child's wellbeing, and learning (in separate questions). Again, approximately nine in 10 parents (88.6%) responded they felt comfortable communicating about wellbeing either 'All/Most of the time' (60.2%) or 'Some of the time' (28.4%). While this is good news, it is important to note those for whom communicating with their child's school about wellbeing (9.7%) (or learning, 8.2%) 'Hardly ever' or 'Never' feels comfortable.

There were no key differences for priority populations.

Approximately 1,080 parents provided additional comments about their responses for the questions relating to *Learning*. Further analysis of the data will allow for nuanced understanding of these comments.

4.4 Participating

Participating is about children and young people having a voice, being listened to, and taken seriously within their family and community. It means having a say in decisions that impact them. It is being empowered to speak out and express themselves. Participating includes involvement with peers and groups through a variety of activities, including online communities. Participating means being an active member of society.

Participation in clubs or groups

Parents were asked to reflect of their child's participation in a club or group outside of timetabled school hours, e.g., sporting, musical, cultural, volunteer or youth groups. Respondents were also asked to consider the whole of 2022, to cover all seasonal activities. Across all responses, over half (56.3%) reported their child was part of 'one or two' (30.7%) or 'a lot' of clubs or groups (25.6%). Another quarter reported their child being part of 'a few' (24.4%). Almost one in five parents (19.3%) reported their child not participating in any clubs or groups.

For parents of **students with disability,** the data shows over one in four (26.9%) not participating in any clubs or groups. (See **Figure 16**). These findings were more pronounced for students with disability attending secondary co-ed schools, with over a third not participating in any clubs or groups (34.5%).

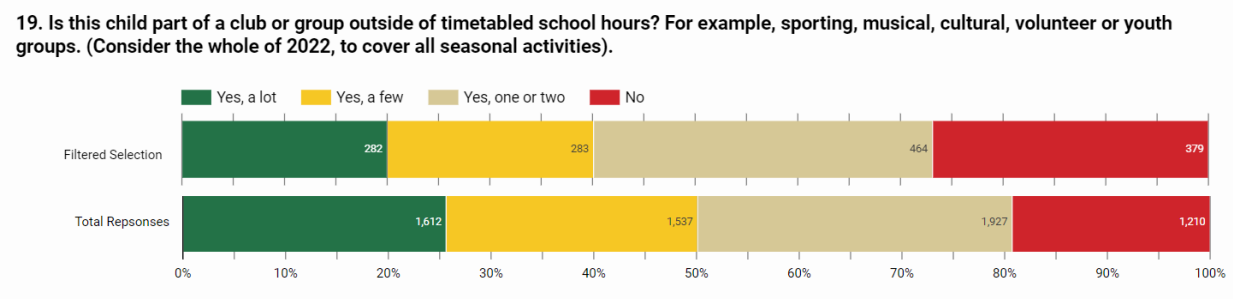


Figure 16: Participation in clubs or groups outside of school, students with disability (n=1,408)

As might be expected, for **students in remote locations**, the ability to participate appears to be more compromised, with nearly one in three parents reporting their child did not participate in any in clubs or groups during 2022. (See **Figure 17**).

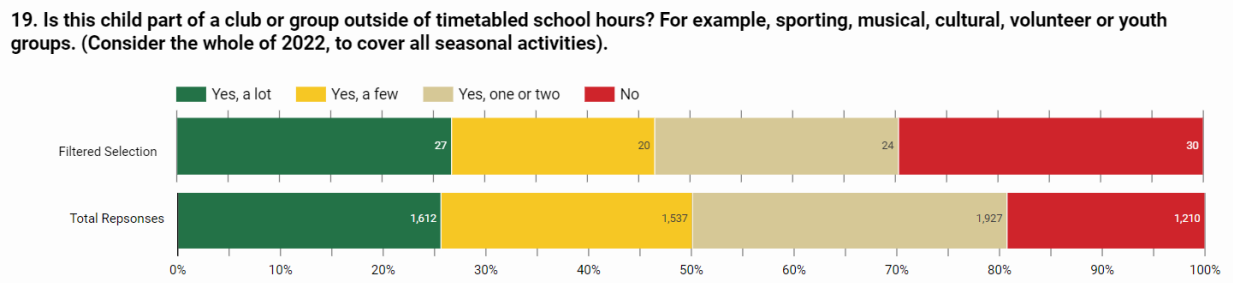


Figure 17: Participation in clubs or groups outside of school, students in remote locations (n=101)

There were no key differences for other priority populations.

Participation in school decision-making processes

Student voice is an important aspect of the learning journey and enabling students to have a voice and see themselves as active participants within their learning journey and wider school life has a direct and tangible connection with their sense of wellbeing. Parents were asked about whether they encouraged their child to participate in school decision-making processes impacting them. Over 90% of parents agreed they did this either 'All/Most the time' (59.0%) or 'Some of the time' (32.1%). The remaining parents either 'Hardly ever' or 'Never' encouraged this or were 'Not sure'.

The main difference was observed between parents of primary and secondary students, with the latter reporting they were more likely to encourage their child to participate in school decision-making processes impacting them. (See **Figure 18**).

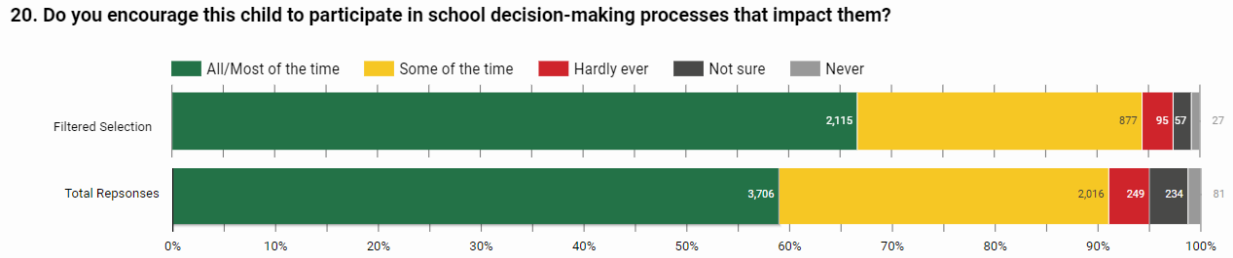


Figure 18: Encouragement of child to participate in school decision-making processes, secondary students (n=3,171)

Approximately 520 parents provided additional comments about their responses for the questions relating to *Participating*. Further analysis of the data will allow for nuanced understanding of these comments.

4.5 Having a Positive Sense of Identity and Culture

Having a positive sense of identity and culture is central to the wellbeing of all children and young people. This is important for all, regardless of background, but in Australia, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people. It encompasses having spiritual needs met, a sense of cultural connectedness, belonging and acceptance at home and in the community – and confidence that their identity, culture and community is respected and valued. It involves feeling safe and supported in expressing one's identity, regardless of gender, sexuality, culture or language.

Expression of self at school

The safe expression of self at school is a vital aspect of student wellbeing, and strong contributor to whether a child or young person has a positive sense of identity and culture. Overall, most parents agreed their child felt safe 'All/Most the time' (44.7%) or 'Some of the time' (42.1%). The remaining responded their child 'Hardly ever' (8.5%) or 'Never' (2.8%) felt safe expressing who they are at school.

For parents of **students with disability,** the data shows a more concerning pattern, with one in four (19.4%) reporting their child 'Hardly ever' (14.1%) or 'Never' (5.5%) felt safe expressing who they are at school. Less than one in three reported their child felt safe 'All/Most the time' (31.6%). (See **Figure 19: Safe expression of self at school, parents of students with disability (n=1,408)Figure 19**).

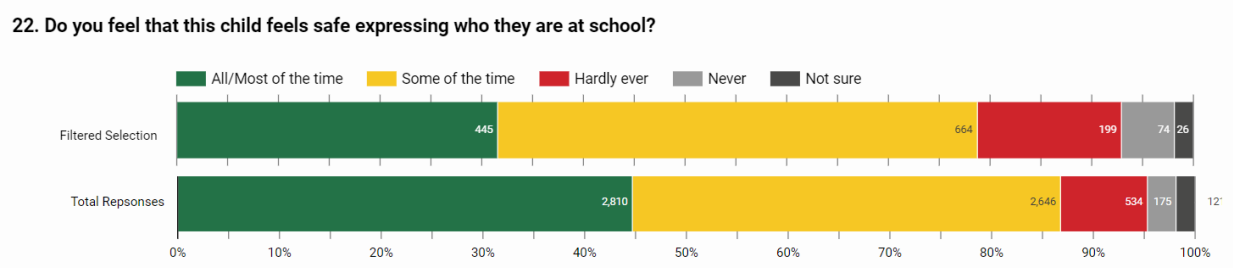


Figure 19: Safe expression of self at school, parents of students with disability (n=1,408)

While the absolute numbers are relatively small, the results indicate that feeling safe to express who they are while at school can be challenging for students identifying as **non-binary** in gender, with most parents reporting 'Some of the time' (n=19) followed by 'Hardly ever' (n=9) and 'Never' (n=6). (See **Figure 20**).

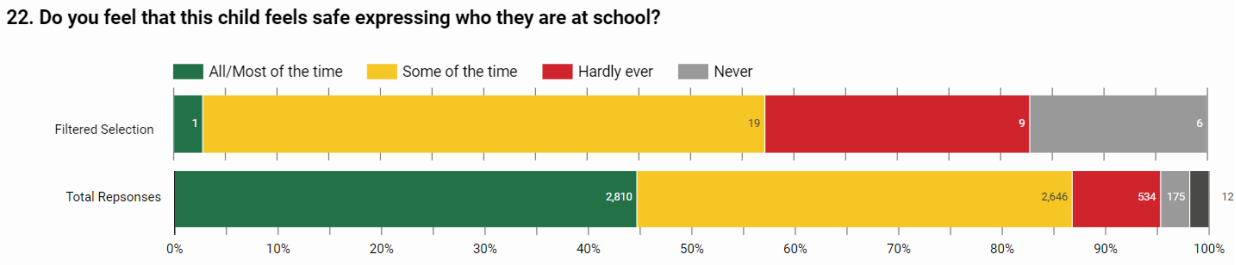


Figure 20: Safe expression of self at school, students identifying as non-binary (n=35)

There were no key differences for other priority populations.

Discrimination at school

All students have the right to experience a learning atmosphere that is free from discrimination. The absence of the experience of discrimination at school is an important contributor to student wellbeing and sense of identity and culture.

It is positive to see most parents reporting their child 'Never' (32.6%) experienced discrimination at school, only 'Some of the time' (27.8%), or 'Hardly ever' (26.0%). Fewer than one in 20 parents thought their child experienced discrimination at school 'All/Most the time' (3.8%). One in 10 parents reported not being sure (9.9%).

In a cultural sense, the findings were positive for **parents with culturally diverse backgrounds**. Over half of these parents (61.1%) reported their child 'Never' (38.4%) or 'Hardly ever' (22.7%) experienced discrimination at school. Again, fewer than one in 20 parents of CALD and EALD backgrounds thought their child experienced discrimination at school 'All/Most the time' (3.6%). (See **Figure 21**).

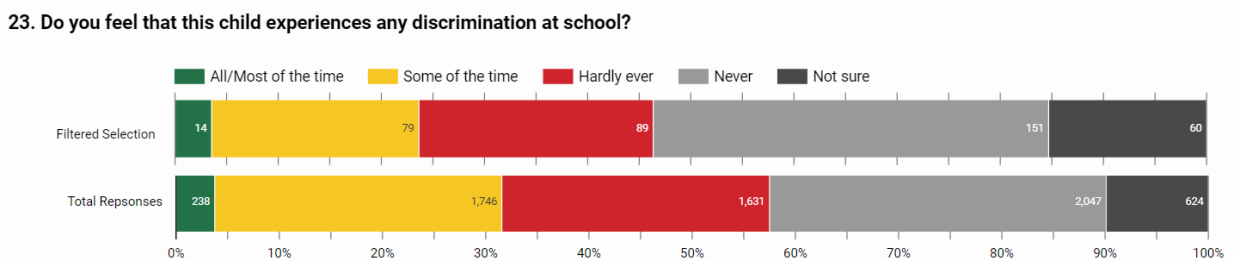


Figure 21: Experience of discrimination at school, students with CALD and EALD backgrounds (n=393)

For **First Nations' parents**, the findings were slightly less positive, with most (over one in three, 34.5%) reporting their child experienced discrimination at school 'Some of the time'. However, most of these parents also reported their child 'Never' (28.4%) or 'Hardly ever' (23.6%) experienced discrimination at school (52.0%). (See **Figure 22**).

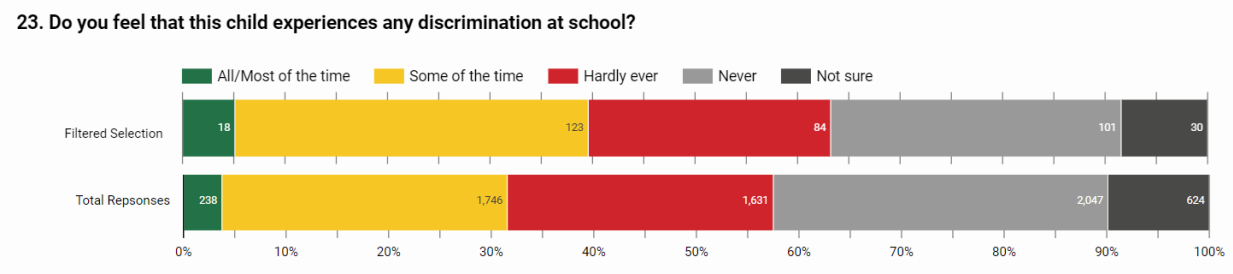


Figure 22: Experience of discrimination at school, students from First Nations families (n=356)

For parents of **students with disability,** the results were also less positive, with almost two-thirds (62.2%) reporting their child experienced discrimination at school 'Some of the time' (38.6%) or 'Hardly ever' (23.7%). Just over one in five (21.9%) said their child 'Never' experienced discrimination at school. (See **Figure 23**).

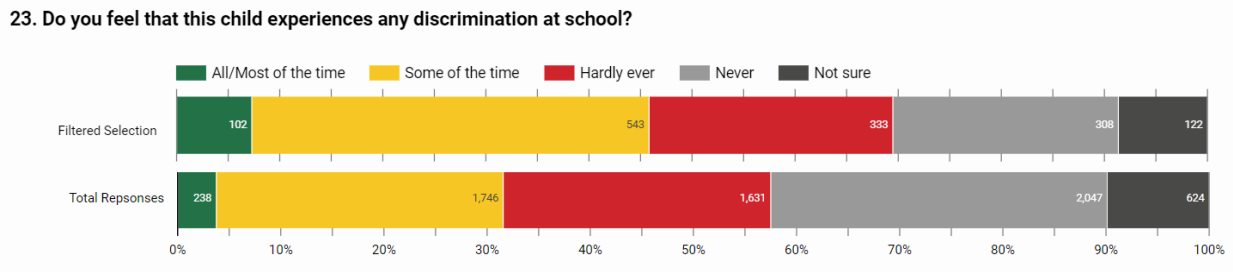


Figure 23: Experience of discrimination at school, parents of students with disability (n=1,408)

There were no key differences for other priority populations.

Approximately 800 parents provided additional comments about their responses for the questions relating to *Having a Positive Sense of Identity and Culture*. Further analysis of the data will allow for nuanced understanding of these comments.

4.6 Having Material Basics

Children and young people who have material basics have the things they need. They live in suitable, secure, stable housing, with appropriate clothing, nutritious food, clean water and clean air. They have access to transport, to required local services (e.g., plumbing) and to open spaces in nature. Their family has enough money for necessities. They have the material items needed to develop as an active member of society such as school supplies, suitable technology or sporting equipment.

Access to necessities and ability to pay bills

Across total responses, almost nine in 10 parents (88.1%) said their family was able to buy the things they need (e.g., food and clothing), and pay bills on time 'All /Most of the time'. A further one in 10 reported they could do this 'Some of the time'.

The key difference noted across the priority populations was among **First Nations' families**, with fewer reporting being able to pay bills on time 'All /Most of the time' (75.0%), and a slightly larger proportion than total responses reporting they could do this 'Some of the time' (23.9%). (See **Figure 24**).

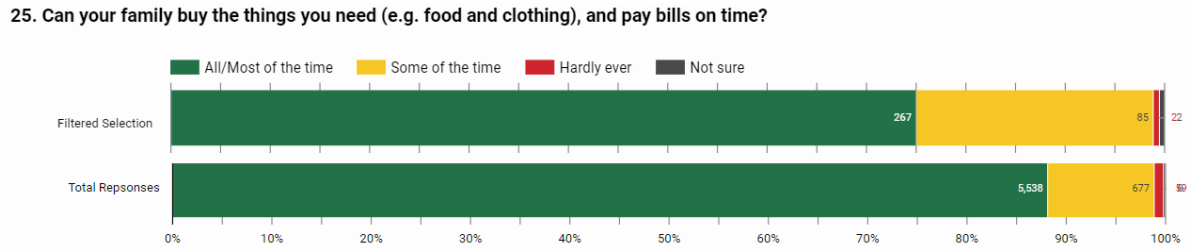


Figure 24: Capacity to buy necessities and pay bills on time, First Nations families (n=356)

There were no key differences for other priority populations.

Access to technology for learning

Access to technology for learning is an important factor in the ability for students to fully engage in their learning, particularly in respect of the COVID-19 pandemic and extended periods of remote/at-home learning.

A very large proportion of parents across total responses (92.7%) said their child had access 'All/Most of the time' to a computer (e.g., laptop, iPad, device) at home for completing homework, assignments, or other school-related activities. A further one in 20 (5.3%) reported their child only had this access 'Some of the time'. Those reporting 'Hardly ever' or 'Never' represented fewer than one in 100 families (0.9% each).

There were no key differences for the priority populations.

Internet connectivity at home

As noted above, given the importance of students being able to fully engage in their learning from home, either for remote learning during school shutdowns, or to complete assignments outside of school hours, having adequate internet connectivity is highly important.

Fortunately, a very large proportion of parents across the total responses (91.2%) confirmed there was adequate internet connectivity at home for their child to complete homework, assignments, or other school-related activities 'All/Most of the time'. A further (6.8%) reported their child only had adequate internet connectivity at home 'Some of the time'.

Geographical remoteness often impacts connectivity, and for the small number of respondents living in remote areas (n=101), a difference was observed in the results. Compared with total responses, slightly fewer than three-quarters (72.3%) of **students in remote locations** could rely on adequate internet connectivity 'All/Most of the time', and just one in five (21.8%) had adequate internet connectivity at home 'Some of the time'. (See **Figure 25**).

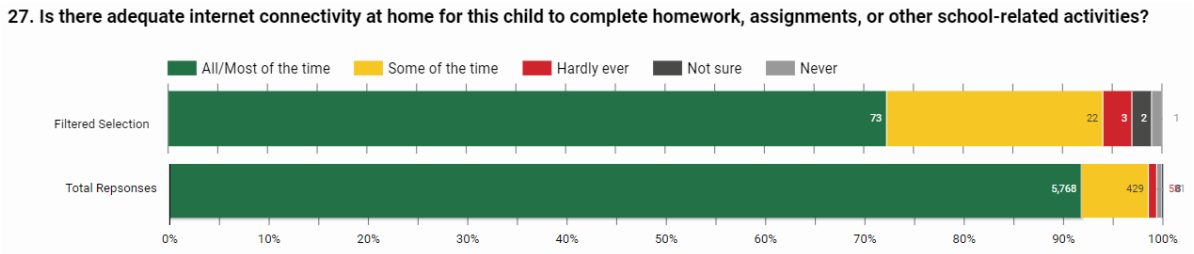


Figure 25: Access to adequate internet connectivity at home, students in remote locations (n=101)

As would be expected the results were similar for families with students attending **boarding school**. There were no key differences for other priority populations.

Approximately 370 parents provided additional comments about their responses for the questions relating to *Having Material Basics*. Further analysis of the data will allow for nuanced understanding of these comments.

4.7 Summary of results by Nest domains

Valued, Loved and Safe

Compared with overall responses:

- Increased school enjoyment for students with CALD/EALD backgrounds and students in rural/remote locations
- Students with disability less likely to enjoy school attendance, and feel valued and safe at school
- Non-binary students less likely to feel valued and safe at school.

Participating

- 1 in 5 students do not participate in any groups or clubs outside of school
- 1 in 4 students with disability do not participate in any groups or clubs outside of school
- 1 in 3 students with disability in secondary school do not participate in any groups or clubs outside of school
- Almost 1 in 3 students in remote areas do not participate in any groups or clubs outside of school.

Being Healthy

- 15% of all parents report their child gets anxious or worried about things 'All/Most of time'
- 1 in 3 students with disability get anxious or worried 'All/Most of time'
- 1 in 5 students from First Nations families get anxious or worried 'All/Most of time'
- Non-binary students anxious or worried either 'All/Most of time' or 'Some of the time'
- Challenged access to health services confirmed for families in regional, rural and remote areas.

Positive Sense of Identity and Culture

- 1 in 10 students overall 'Never' or 'Hardly ever' feel safe expressing who they are at school
- 1 in 4 students with disability 'Never' or 'Hardly ever' feel safe expressing who they are at school
- Non-binary students also experience challenges expressing who they are at school
- 2 in 3 students with disability experience discrimination at school 'Some of the time'
- 1 in 3 First Nations' students experiences discrimination at school 'Some of the time'.

Learning

- 1 in 10 parents 'Never' or 'Hardly ever' feel valued as partners in their child's learning
- 1 in 10 parents 'Never' or 'Hardly ever' feel comfortable communicating with their child's school about wellbeing or learning.

Material Basics

- 1 in 4 First Nations' families able to buy necessities and pay bills on time 'Some of the time'
- Over 9 in 10 students have access to technology at home for schoolwork 'All/Most of the time'
- 1 in 5 students in remote locations have adequate internet connectivity 'Some of the time'.

5 Issues of concern, current and emerging

Along with optional comments made by respondents throughout the survey, a myriad of issues was raised in the n=1,640 comments made in response to the final survey question asking for new and emerging concerns relating to the wellbeing and/or learning of a child for parents, families and carers of children in the Catholic schooling sector. The comments represent the lived experiences of Catholic school families across the country; rich and detailed stories that tell us much about the experiences of students throughout the pandemic and beyond.

While isolated issues emerged, like leadership or individual grievances, there are also key issues that provide a guide to the challenges for CSPA and those they represent. The existing and emerging issues are broad, traversing a wide range of themes, including that parents believe too much homework is set, that class sizes should be smaller and that COVID should be left behind, and children allowed to move forward.

A clear group of issues outweighed others. Broadly these relate to:

- Student wellbeing
- Teaching and learning
- COVID-related impacts
- School resourcing (e.g., learning support, counselling, facilities).

Specific issues of clear importance include mental health, bullying, class sizing, parent and family engagement, staff shortages, and professional learning – getting teachers up to speed with wellbeing and individualised methods of teaching.

These issues are discussed in turn.

5.1 Student wellbeing

Comments reflected a growing awareness of student wellbeing as something of equal, if not greater, importance than academic learning. Certainly, wellbeing is identified as something that must be addressed before other learning can take place. Families are grappling with the wellbeing of their children, and mental health is a particular area of challenge.

The impacts of COVID have had a profound effect on student wellbeing at all ages, and comments highlighted a strong desire for schools to incorporate learning in this area to build student wellbeing literacy. Comments also reflected a wish for greater resourcing of – and accessibility to – counselling and related services within schools.

Parents also discussed the need for professional learning for teachers in areas of wellbeing, such as mental health, to support students. ARACY endorses this recommendation. While there is clear desire for greater accessibility to counselling and psychological support services, ARACY strongly believes student wellbeing should not solely rest on specialist support staff. Rather, student wellbeing must be a crucial element of educational settings and the focus of every staff member. ARACY supports the

need for increased professional knowledge on how to engage in child-centred, strengths-based, holistic and collaborative conversations with students and families about wellbeing.[3]

> *"It is important that wellbeing is of a higher priority than academic learning. Learning will not be optimised if there are wellbeing concerns."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"It would be great to see more emphasis on mental health/ wellbeing at school. There seems to be a big push on academics with little on building emotional support. More talk in classrooms about mental health to normalise everyday ups and downs."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"Please provide well-being week or festival for students so that more awareness and improvements obtained regarding mental health, resilience, high self-esteem, etc."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"The school does not support students' emotional needs. There needs to be more work done with teaching children resilience, positive relationship building, inclusion, acceptance. Yarning circles, woman's circles."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"I think having more counsellor available for the kids as society has changed more so since the pandemic and the counsellor at school last year had too many children to see on days they were there. If they had a resource there full time would be ideal and to have more diversity for kids of First Nations or Pacifica regions to relate to. It's a very white ethnic school."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"In this so-called wealthy country, EVERY child should have an immediate access to mental health services. Suicide is the leading cause of death for Australians aged 15 to 49 years!"* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"Better access to in-school counselling."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"I think there needs to provide more support and funding towards the impacts of COVID-19 on kids – whether that be more trained psychologists or additional support (not teachers but other qualified experts) for extra learning (reading/writing) for after school."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

A further selection of commentary is included in **Appendix C**.

5.2 Teaching & learning

Teachers were a focus of many comments; some requesting more support for educators and others asking that specific areas of training be addressed. The wellbeing of teachers and an appreciation for the journey schools and educators have experienced over the last few years was palpable.

Many comments centred on the need for teachers to be given more support, and more resources. Suggestions included reducing the administrative load so teachers could spend more time in the

[3] For example, the Common Approach® is a best practice framework for having quality wellbeing conversations with children, young people and their families, in a child-centred, strengths-based, holistic and collaborative manner. The Common Approach is supported with a suite of resources.

classroom. The challenges of dealing with increasingly complex behaviours in the classroom was also raised, and comments made about teachers being appropriately trained in learning differences, particularly around ADHD, e.g., "*Teachers need ongoing professional development to be aware and have knowledge of student wellbeing.''*

The issue of teacher turnover and staff shortages impacting learning was a strong theme; as well as the need for pay and conditions to be improved to ensure quality professionals are attracted to teaching roles. Teacher shortages were mentioned, both generally and in terms of specifics. For example, the need for, and challenge of, keeping teachers in rural and remote areas, and the concern that many of those leaving were "experienced highly qualified and respected", and the need for more specialised teachers whose expertise is in particular subjects.

The importance of male teachers was also raised, particularly in relation to role-modelling for boys.

> *"The pressure and work demands on teachers impacts the quality of teaching they can provide.''* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)
>
> *"My concern is for the wellbeing of the teachers that have care of my child. I find they are pushed to the limit, not able to just enjoy their classes. They are always pressured to analyse, explore the data, name what can be done better. Give them a break and let them teach!!!"* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)
>
> *"To prevent fast turnover of staff (teachers), let's give them good wages & benefits, and employ more staff. Stability will help them master their subjects and grow."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)
>
> *"Our teachers are clearly under great pressure. I would like to see them able to spend more time teaching and less time dealing with ever more non-teaching tasks."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)
>
> *"To look after the well-being and learning of students, we need to look after the well-being of teachers. The flow-on effect of a burnt-out workforce has major implications for the educational experience of my children. A holistic view is needed."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)
>
> *"More actual teaching in the classroom – reduce the admin load on teachers, less flapping around. Pay teachers more, value the profession so you can encourage smarter people to enter the teaching profession."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)
>
> *"There is a great need for more teacher aides in Catholic schools."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

A further selection of commentary is included in **Appendix C**.

5.3 Bullying

A key issue raised across the comments were the impacts of challenging behaviours on other students, and the impact of bullying on student wellbeing and learning.

The comments show families believe other students are a huge factor in a child's learning and wellbeing, and that styles of discipline needed to be further considered in some schools. "Students who are suspended repeatedly should be expelled,'' one respondent offered.

Many parents also believe bullying is rife, that it should be handled better and that schools need greater accountability around it. Examples of comments include:

- "School bullying is not well addressed.''
- "Bullying is rife.''
- "Stop the bullying.''
- "Bullying needs to be better handled.''
- There was a fear of reporting bullying because of "retribution and social isolation''.
- Schools should be taking more accountability for kids being bullied "rather than it being brushed under the carpet''.
- "Bullying in schools is a real issue. The school still doesn't seem to know how to respond etc issues correctly.''

A further selection of commentary is included in **Appendix C**.

5.4 Impacts of COVID

The wellbeing of children and young people is at the forefront of society's concern and priorities in this post-COVID period. The commentary shows mixed feedback about the way the pandemic was handled and the lasting repercussions on students and their families. Given the opportunities to build relationships with individual families was compromised during this time, family engagement in learning has been impacted and many families feel disconnected from their child's school.

> *"The school have handled all obstacles with Covid with dignity and at the highest standards."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"Extremely disappointed in how Catholic [Removed] has treated their teachers who refused to participate in the COVID vaccinations. You have lost many amazing teachers due to this horrible treatment. Scrap all mandates, vaccination and mask mandates!!! They are doing nothing but hurting all that comply. You are destroying the education system and the livelihoods of students and families in your care."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"Enforce mask wearing at schools when COVID cases growing. This should have been enforced when class resumed from holidays instead of encouraging the virus to spread. Parents cannot enforce their child to wear masks, teachers in the classroom can."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"Using Covid as an excuse for reduced access by parents to school grounds needs to be scrapped."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"Biggest challenge is due to restrictions not being able to attend school, leads to school community disconnect between staff, parents as well as general parent/parent interactions."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"The exclusion of parents from school has had a detrimental effect on students as partnerships with parents/school have not developed organically. Parents have felt like pariahs. Find ways using technology to embrace the power of this relationship. This will do more to support children than most other things."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

A further selection of commentary is included in **Appendix C**.

5.3 Resourcing

A key issue raised across the comments was in relation to the effective resourcing of schools in the post-Covid period, particularly in relation to student (and teacher) wellbeing, as well as appropriate support for students with learning differences.

> *"Schools need more support from the government, the social issues of the world now are highly impacting teachers and students, and they need more emotional support at school. They are not just teaching academics they are guiding students through social and moral issues and a lot of family problems that impact the day-to-day school life severely."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"The school and staff are working hard under the circumstances and staff, in particular, probably need more support and time to provide more flexible learning environments."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"Support staff in classroom that have many complex needs of many students."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"The whole system needs so much more funding for professional staff to support the children. It is ludicrous that families in crisis need to wait 8-12 months to get any help."* (Parent of Yr 7 student experiencing school refusal, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"Would like more wellbeing assistance in schools... e.g. Counsellors more often and notifications as to when their child has been seen to. More external visits from wellbeing support services, whether it be art, dance, gymnastics, team building youth groups, positivity workshops."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"The only concern I have is that my child does not have as much access to learning support at this smaller school compared to the support provided to a larger school with higher enrolment."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

> *"This child is unable to access school counselling services as often as required due to increased need of services from other students."* (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

The need for greater individualised learning, and less of a cookie-cutter approach surfaced many times. There is a strong call for child's individual learning needs to be addressed, rather than teaching 'to the class'. This was particularly the cases from respondents whose children had learning difficulties, e.g.:

- "I pay a lot of money for a tutor outside of school because I can't get the help I need to support my son.''
- "More support for students who may have issues but are not causing problems in the classroom for teachers.''
- "I would love to see more specific feedback on my child's learning and wellbeing so as I can engage more with my child on this.''
- Not all children work and learn the same. Therefore, there was a need to cater to various learning styles.

- More support for those with learning difficulties.

A further selection of commentary is included in **Appendix C**.

6 Implications, next steps

Throughout this study the wellbeing and learning of Catholic School students has been considered and discussed using ARACY's child and youth wellbeing framework, The Nest. The Nest uses six domains of wellbeing, which are connected and interdependent. It is ARACY's aspiration that all children and young people are loved and thriving (ARACY, 2021). To thrive, students of all ages need to be **valued, loved and safe**, they need their basic **material needs** met, they need to be **healthy, learning,** and **participating** in family, community and decision-making, and have a **positive sense of their identity and culture**. The Nest provides a way of thinking about the whole child in the context of their daily lives, viewing wellbeing in a way that brings together the different elements a child or young person needs in order to thrive (Goodhue et al.,2021).

The results from the 2022 CSPA Parent survey provide a rich set of data about the lived experiences of families, and their comments throughout both the survey and the online focus group forums post-survey allow us to understand how students are faring in the aftermath of a global pandemic. The stories shared provide particular insights into the circumstances of students and their families in our priority populations: students living with disability; First Nations' students; students with CALD and EALD backgrounds; and students living in rural and remote areas.

Results from the survey questions by Nest domains highlight the key findings across these groups:

Valued, Loved and Safe

Compared with overall responses:

- Higher levels of school enjoyment for students with CALD/EALD backgrounds and students in rural/remote locations
- Students with disability less likely to enjoy school attendance, or feel valued and safe at school
- Non-binary students less likely to feel valued and safe at school.

Participating

- 1 in 5 students do not participate in any groups or clubs outside of school
- 1 in 4 students with disability do not participate in any groups or clubs outside of school
- 1 in 3 students with disability in secondary school do not participate in any groups or clubs outside of school
- Almost 1 in 3 students in remote areas do not participate in any groups or clubs outside of school.

Healthy

- 15% of all parents report their child gets anxious or worried about things 'All/Most of time'
- 1 in 3 students with disability get anxious or worried 'All/Most of time'
- 1 in 5 students from First Nations families get anxious or worried 'All/Most of time'
- Non-binary students anxious or worried either 'All/Most of time' or 'Some of the time'
- Challenged access to health services confirmed for families in regional, rural and remote areas.

Positive Sense of Identity and Culture

- 1 in 10 students overall 'Never' or 'Hardly ever' feel safe expressing who they are at school
- 1 in 4 students with disability 'Never' or 'Hardly ever' feel safe expressing who they are at school
- Non-binary students also experience challenges expressing who they are at school
- 2 in 3 students with disability experience discrimination at school 'Some of the time'

	• 1 in 3 First Nations' students experiences discrimination at school 'Some of the time'.
Learning • 1 in 10 parents 'Never' or 'Hardly ever' feel valued as partners in their child's learning • 1 in 10 parents 'Never' or 'Hardly ever' feel comfortable communicating with their child's school about wellbeing or learning.	**Material Basics** • 1 in 4 First Nations' families able to buy necessities and pay bills on time 'Some of the time' • Over 9 in 10 students have access to technology at home for schoolwork 'All/Most of the time' • 1 in 5 students in remote locations have adequate internet connectivity 'Some of the time'.

Clearly, there are persistent and concerning issues regarding student wellbeing, as reported by parents in open commentary throughout the survey, and in the online focus group discussions held post-survey. These findings are supported by findings from ARACY's ei Pulse report (Barker, Goodhue, Rehill, & Thurbon, 2022). Ei Pulse is a tool developed by Educator Impact (EI), to track and support student and staff wellbeing in real time, providing a weekly check-in and enabling students to ask for help when they need it. Ei Pulse draws on ARACY's Common Approach®. The recent report, published in October 2022, found that two in five students worry a lot about mistakes that they make, and a quarter of students report they often feel nervous or upset about things. While general positivity might be improving over the period since March 2020, the incidence of students who report being worried or nervous remains consistently high.

Further analysis of comments from Catholic school parent respondents will provide a nuanced understanding of their emerging issues and concerns, however it is clear there is a growing awareness of student wellbeing as something of equal, if not greater, importance than academic learning. Certainly, wellbeing is identified as something that must be addressed before other learning can take place. Families are grappling with the wellbeing of their children, and mental health is a particular area of challenge.

The impacts of COVID have had a profound effect on student wellbeing at all ages, and comments highlighted a strong desire for schools to incorporate learning in this area to build student wellbeing literacy. Comments also reflected a wish for greater resourcing of – and accessibility to – counselling and related services within schools.

These issues, particularly when viewed through the lens of priority populations, such as students with disability, those in First Nation's and CALD and EALD families, those identifying as non-binary, and those living remotely, highlight the need for CSPA and the Australian Government to continue to advocate for the needs of students at all ages, in all circumstances, and particularly in the aftermath of the global pandemic. In light of these findings ARACY recommends further analysis of the 2022 CSPA Parent data to ensure full interrogation of the commentary is undertaken, to ensure a nuanced understanding of emerging issues and concerns is able to be presented.

Appendix A: Survey Instrument

2022 Parent Survey on Student Wellbeing and Learning (paper format)

Welcome to the CSPA 2022 Parent Survey on Student Wellbeing and Learning.

By completing this survey, you will be helping Catholic School Parents Australia (CSPA) to report to the Australian Government and Catholic education on existing and emerging concerns that parents/carers have in relation to the wellbeing and learning of their children.

Your opinions will be kept confidential. Please avoid any reference to your child's name or the name of their school. Survey outcomes will be made available through the Catholic parent body in your state or territory.

CSPA acknowledges funding received from the Australian Government to assist the completion of this work.

This survey should take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete.

Please mail completed surveys to:

CONFIDENTIAL
Mr J O'Brien
Executive Officer
Catholic School Parents Australia
GPO Box 2410
Brisbane QLD 4001

Catholic School Parents AUSTRALIA

2022 Parent Survey on Student Wellbeing and Learning (paper format)

As you complete this survey, please consider your responses based on one child only. Even if you have more than one child at a Catholic School and your experiences are different for each child, keep one child in mind for all your responses. This will make it easier for you to complete the survey. Throughout the survey we will refer to them as 'this child'.

If you prefer, you could complete the survey more than once, focusing on a different child for each survey.

Firstly, we would like to find out more about this child and get an overall sense of their learning and wellbeing. Answer these questions in relation to the current school year (2022).

* 1. What is your relationship to this child?

- ◯ Parent/carer
- ◯ Guardian
- ◯ Other (please specify)

* 2. How does this child describe their gender?

- ◯ Boy or male
- ◯ Girl or female
- ◯ Non-binary
- ◯ They use a different term (please specify)
- ◯ Prefer not to answer

* 3. Is this child of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?

- ◯ Yes, Aboriginal
- ◯ Yes, Torres Strait Islander
- ◯ Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander origin
- ◯ No

* 4. Does this child have a disability, health condition or other issue/s which presents difficulties or challenges for their **wellbeing** and/or **learning**?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Unsure

5. If you answered yes, briefly describe this child's disability, health condition or other issue/s in the box below.

* 6. Does this child access educational assistance through a special facility or program designed for their disability, health condition/s or learning needs?

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No
- ◯ Unsure

* 7. During 2022, overall this child's **wellbeing** has been…

- ◯ Excellent
- ◯ Good
- ◯ Fair/average
- ◯ Poor
- ◯ Very poor

* 8. During 2022, overall this child's **learning** has been …

- ◯ Excellent
- ◯ Good
- ◯ Fair/average
- ◯ Poor
- ◯ Very poor

Catholic School Parents
AUSTRALIA

2022 Parent Survey on Student Wellbeing and Learning (paper format)

In the following sections we will ask questions about a number of areas which can have an influence on a person's wellbeing and learning.

Again, please answer in relation to this child's experience during the current school year (2022).

Catholic School Parents AUSTRALIA

2022 Parent Survey on Student Wellbeing and Learning (paper format)

Feeling valued, loved, and safe

For children and young people this means having loving, trusting relationships with family and friends, feeling valued by teachers and other adults in their life, and knowing they are important to others and that others are caring and supportive of them.

* 9. Does this child generally enjoy attending school?

- ◯ All/Most of the time
- ◯ Some of the time
- ◯ Hardly ever
- ◯ Never
- ◯ Not sure

* 10. Do you think this child feels valued and safe at school?

- ◯ All/Most of the time
- ◯ Some of the time
- ◯ Hardly ever
- ◯ Never
- ◯ Not sure

11. Optional: Add a comment only if you wish to clarify your response to questions 9 or 10.

Catholic School Parents AUSTRALIA

2022 Parent Survey on Student Wellbeing and Learning (paper format)

Being healthy

Healthy children and young people have their physical, mental, and emotional health needs met, and all their developmental health needs provided for in a timely way.

(NB: Later in the survey we will ask separately about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on this child).

* 12. How often does this child get worried or anxious about things?

- ◯ All/Most of the time
- ◯ Some of the time
- ◯ Hardly ever
- ◯ Never
- ◯ Not sure

* 13. Are you able to access health services for this child if/when needed (e.g., Doctor, Counsellor, Occupational Therapist, Psychologist, Mental Health Specialist, Learning Support Provider)?

- ◯ All/Most of the time
- ◯ Some of the time
- ◯ Hardly ever
- ◯ Never
- ◯ Not sure

14. Optional: Add a comment only if you wish to clarify your response to questions 12 or 13.

Catholic School Parents AUSTRALIA

2022 Parent Survey on Student Wellbeing and Learning (paper format)

Learning

Children and young people learn best through a variety of experiences within the classroom, the home and the community in which they live.

* 15. Do you feel that the educators/teacher/s at this child's school value you as a partner in your child's learning?

- ◯ All/Most of the time
- ◯ Some of the time
- ◯ Hardly ever
- ◯ Never
- ◯ Not sure

* 16. Do you feel comfortable communicating with the school about this child's **wellbeing**?

- ◯ All/Most of the time
- ◯ Some of the time
- ◯ Hardly ever
- ◯ Never
- ◯ Not sure

* 17. Do you feel comfortable communicating with the school about this child's **learning**?

- ◯ All/Most of the time
- ◯ Some of the time
- ◯ Hardly ever
- ◯ Never
- ◯ Not sure

18. Optional: Add a comment only if you wish to clarify your response to questions 15, 16 or 17.

Catholic School Parents AUSTRALIA

2022 Parent Survey on Student Wellbeing and Learning (paper format)

Participating

Participating is about children and young people having a voice, being listened to, and taken seriously within their family and community.

* 19. Is this child part of a club or group outside of timetabled school hours? For example, sporting, musical, cultural, volunteer or youth groups. (Consider the whole of 2022, to cover all seasonal activities).

- ◯ Yes, a lot
- ◯ Yes, a few
- ◯ Yes, one or two
- ◯ No

* 20. Do you encourage this child to participate in school decision-making processes that impact them?

- ◯ All/Most of the time
- ◯ Some of the time
- ◯ Hardly ever
- ◯ Never
- ◯ Not sure

21. Optional: Add a comment only if you wish to clarify your response to questions 19 or 20.

2022 Parent Survey on Student Wellbeing and Learning (paper format)

Having a positive sense of identity and culture

This includes children and young people having a sense of belonging and acceptance at home and in the community, and confidence that their identity, culture and community is respected and valued. It involves feeling safe and supported in expressing one's identity, regardless of gender, sexuality, culture or language.

* 22. Do you feel that this child feels safe expressing who they are at school?

- ◯ All/Most of the time
- ◯ Some of the time
- ◯ Hardly ever
- ◯ Never
- ◯ Not sure

* 23. Do you feel that this child experiences any discrimination at school?

- ◯ All/Most of the time
- ◯ Some of the time
- ◯ Hardly ever
- ◯ Never
- ◯ Not sure

24. Optional: Add a comment only if you wish to clarify your response to questions 22 or 23.

Catholic School Parents AUSTRALIA

2022 Parent Survey on Student Wellbeing and Learning (paper format)

Having material basics

For children and young people this means having the things they need, such as living in suitable housing, and having appropriate clothing, nutritious food and access to the things they need for school and learning.

* 25. Can your family buy the things you need (e.g. food and clothing), and pay bills on time?

- ◯ All/Most of the time
- ◯ Some of the time
- ◯ Hardly ever
- ◯ Never
- ◯ Not sure

* 26. Does this child have access to a computer (e.g., laptop, iPad, device) at home for completing homework, assignments, or other school-related activities?

- ◯ All/Most of the time
- ◯ Some of the time
- ◯ Hardly ever
- ◯ Never
- ◯ Not sure

* 27. Is there adequate internet connectivity at home for this child to complete homework, assignments, or other school-related activities?

- ◯ All/Most of the time
- ◯ Some of the time
- ◯ Hardly ever
- ◯ Never
- ◯ Not sure

28. Optional: Add a comment only if you wish to clarify your response to questions 25, 26 or 27.

Catholic School Parents AUSTRALIA

2022 Parent Survey on Student Wellbeing and Learning (paper format)

Impacts of COVID-19

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, there may have been changes introduced to the organisation and operation of the school. For example, this child's school attendance and communication between school and home may have been affected.

* 29. In relation to the **wellbeing** and **learning** of this child, select from the list below those things that you would like to see **more of**:

- [ ] Remote (at home) learning
- [ ] Direct contact between school staff and home (parents/carers) about student **wellbeing**
- [ ] Direct contact between school staff and home (parents/carers) about student **learning**
- [ ] Physical presence of parents/carers in schools
- [ ] Virtual parent-teacher interviews
- [ ] Face-to-face parent-teacher interviews
- [ ] Other ideas (please add to the list)

- [ ] None of the above

* 30. In relation to the **wellbeing** and **learning** of this child, select from the list below those things that you would like to see **less of**:

- [ ] Remote (at home) learning
- [ ] Direct contact between school staff and home (parents/carers) about student **wellbeing**
- [ ] Direct contact between school staff and home (parents/carers) about student **learning**
- [ ] Physical presence of parents/carers in schools
- [ ] Virtual parent-teacher interviews
- [ ] Face-to-face parent-teacher interviews
- [ ] Other ideas (please add to the list)

- [ ] None of the above

31. Optional: Impacts of the pandemic on this child may have been positive or negative. In terms of **wellbeing**, how has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted this child?

32. Optional: Impacts of the pandemic on this child may have been positive or negative. In terms of **learning**, how has the COVID-19 pandemic impacted this child?

2022 Parent Survey on Student Wellbeing and Learning (paper format)

Demographics

* 33. How would you describe the area your family lives in?

- ◯ State/Territory Capital or Metropolitan (population 250,000 or more)
- ◯ Regional (small city or town, population 5,000 – 249,000)
- ◯ Rural (very small town or built-up area, population less than 5,000)
- ◯ Remote

* 34. Which Catholic Diocese is this child's school located in?

- [ ] Not sure/Don't know
- [ ] (ACT) Archdiocese of Canberra Goulburn
- [ ] (NSW) Archdiocese of Canberra Goulburn
- [ ] (NSW) Archdiocese of Sydney
- [ ] (NSW) Diocese of Armidale
- [ ] (NSW) Diocese of Bathurst
- [ ] (NSW) Diocese of Broken Bay
- [ ] (NSW) Diocese of Lismore
- [ ] (NSW) Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle
- [ ] (NSW) Diocese of Parramatta
- [ ] (NSW) Diocese of Wagga Wagga
- [ ] (NSW) Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes
- [ ] (NSW) Diocese of Wollongong
- [ ] (NT) Diocese of Darwin
- [ ] (Qld) Archdiocese of Brisbane
- [ ] (Qld) Diocese of Cairns
- [ ] (Qld) Diocese of Rockhampton
- [ ] (Qld) Diocese of Toowoomba
- [ ] (Qld) Diocese of Townsville
- [ ] (SA) Archdiocese of Adelaide
- [ ] (SA) Diocese of Port Pirie
- [ ] (Tas) Archdiocese of Hobart
- [ ] (Vic) Archdiocese of Melbourne
- [ ] (Vic) Diocese of Ballarat
- [ ] (Vic) Diocese of Sale
- [ ] (Vic) Diocese of Sandhurst
- [ ] (WA) Archdiocese of Perth
- [ ] (WA) Diocese of Broome
- [ ] (WA) Diocese of Bunbury
- [ ] (WA) Diocese of Geraldton

* 35. What type of Catholic School is this child currently enrolled in? [Please select all that apply]

- [ ] Early Learning Centre
- [ ] Primary Co-ed
- [ ] Primary Single sex
- [ ] Secondary Co-ed
- [ ] Secondary Single sex
- [ ] P-12 (Prim + Sec combined)
- [ ] K-10
- [ ] Boarding
- [ ] Flexible Learning Centre/Care School
- [ ] Other (please specify)

* 36. What year level is this child in?

- [ ] 3-year-old preschool
- [ ] 4-year-old preschool
- [ ] Pre-Year 1 (e.g., Foundation/Kindergarten/Prep/Pre-Primary)
- [ ] Year 1
- [ ] Year 2
- [ ] Year 3
- [ ] Year 4
- [ ] Year 5
- [ ] Year 6
- [ ] Year 7
- [ ] Year 8
- [ ] Year 9
- [ ] Year 10
- [ ] Year 11
- [ ] Year 12

* 37. How long has this child been enrolled at this school?

- ◯ Less than 12 months
- ◯ 1-2 years
- ◯ 3-4 years
- ◯ 5 years or more

* 38. In which country were you born?

- ◯ Australia
- ◯ Other (please specify)

* 39. What are the main languages spoken in your home? (Tick/list as many as apply).

- ☐ English
- ☐ Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Language
- ☐ Other/s (please specify)

* 40. What is the highest level of education you have completed?

- ☐ Postgraduate Degree
- ☐ Graduate Diploma / Graduate Certificate
- ☐ Bachelor's degree
- ☐ Advanced Diploma / Diploma
- ☐ Certificate III/IV
- ☐ Year 12
- ☐ Year 11
- ☐ Year 10
- ☐ Certificate I/II
- ☐ Year 9 or below

* 41. In which State or Territory do you live?

- ◯ Australian Capital Territory
- ◯ New South Wales
- ◯ Northern Territory
- ◯ Queensland
- ◯ South Australia
- ◯ Tasmania
- ◯ Victoria
- ◯ Western Australia

2022 Parent Survey on Student Wellbeing and Learning (paper format)

Almost done!

Thank you for your valuable input to this survey.

42. Optional: Before you go, do you have any final comments, issues or emerging concerns you would like to make in relation to the wellbeing and/or learning of this child?

43. Optional: Catholic School Parents Australia would like to contact some parents/carers in relation to this survey. If you are happy to be involved in a discussion group with similar parents/carers from across Australia, please provide your email address and phone number.

Name	
Email Address	
Phone Number	

Please mail completed surveys to:

CONFIDENTIAL
Mr J O'Brien
Executive Officer
Catholic School Parents Australia
GPO Box 2410
Brisbane QLD 4001

Appendix B: Snapshot of results

Catholic School Parents
AUSTRALIA

2022 CSPA PARENT VIEWS SURVEY

STUDENT WELLBEING AND LEARNING

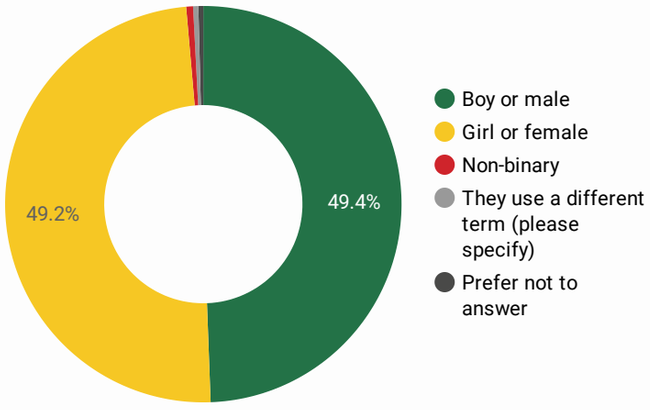
Parents/carers completed all items in the survey based on their opinions of one of their children.

This general report has used children with disability to draw comparisons between primary and secondary students and all survey responses for closed items only.

The results of the survey are also available as interactive data sets.

Q1 Relationship	Record Count
Parent/carer	6,210
Other (please specify)	38
Guardian	38

Q2 Gender



Q3 ATSI	Record Count
No	5,930
Yes, Aboriginal	293
Both Aboriginal...	34
Yes, Torres Strai...	29

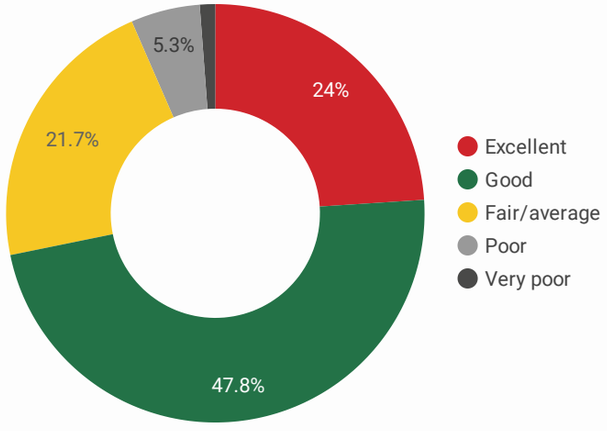
Q4 Disability	Record Count
No	4,743
Yes	1,408
Unsure	135

Q5 not shown as description of disability

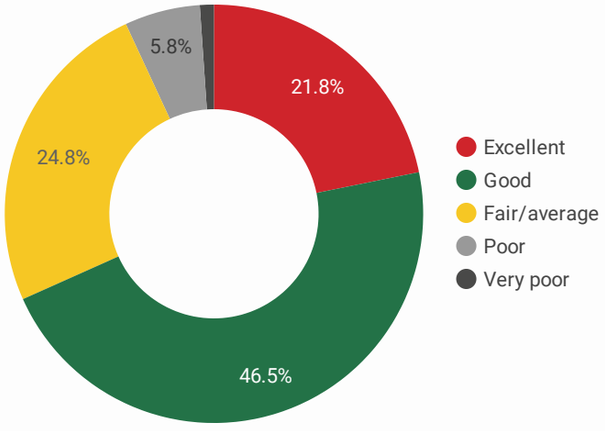
Q6 Does this child access educational assistance through a special facility or program designed for their disability, health condition/s or learning needs?

No	5,445
Yes	664
Unsure	177

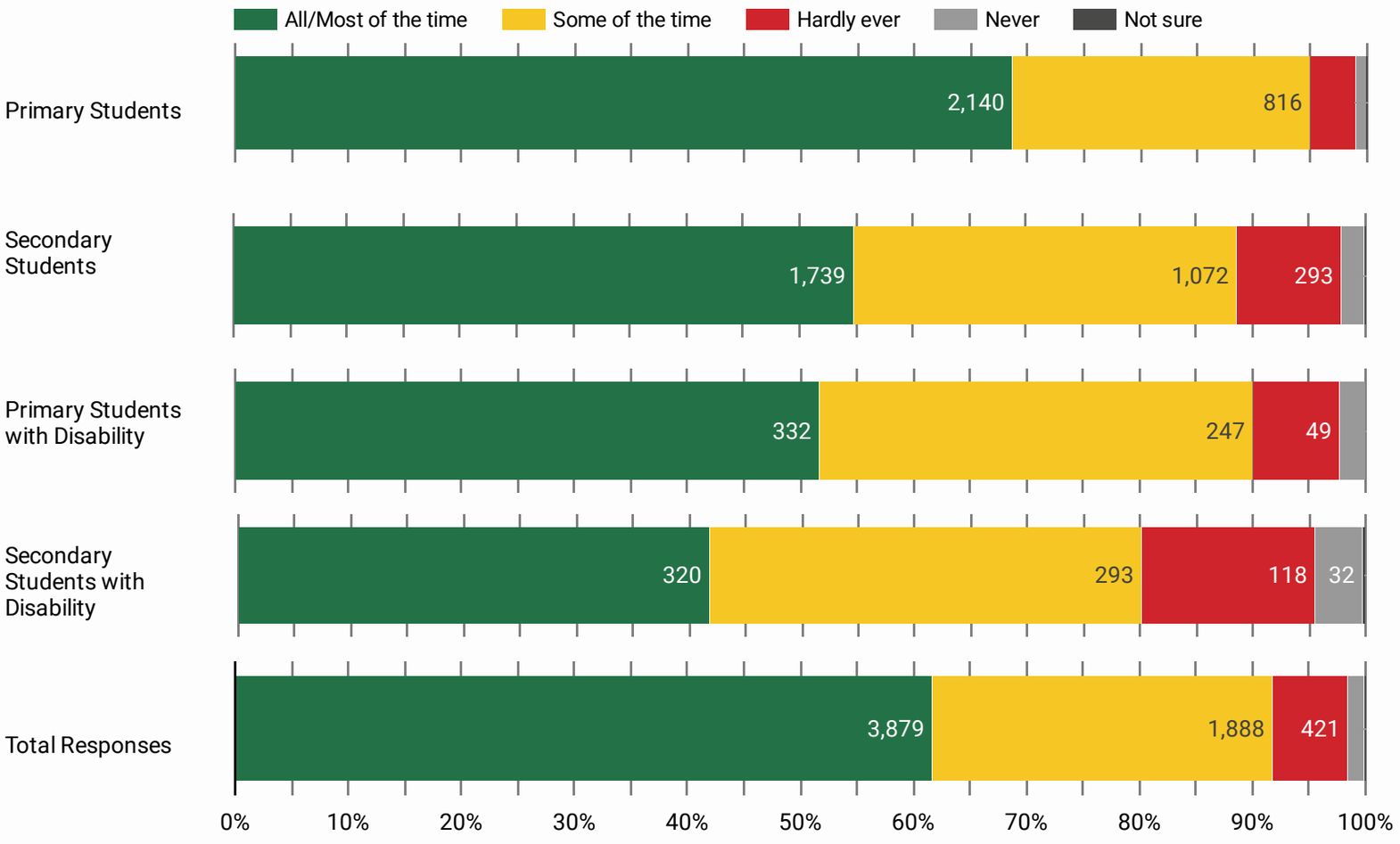
Q7 During 2022, overall this child's wellbeing has been



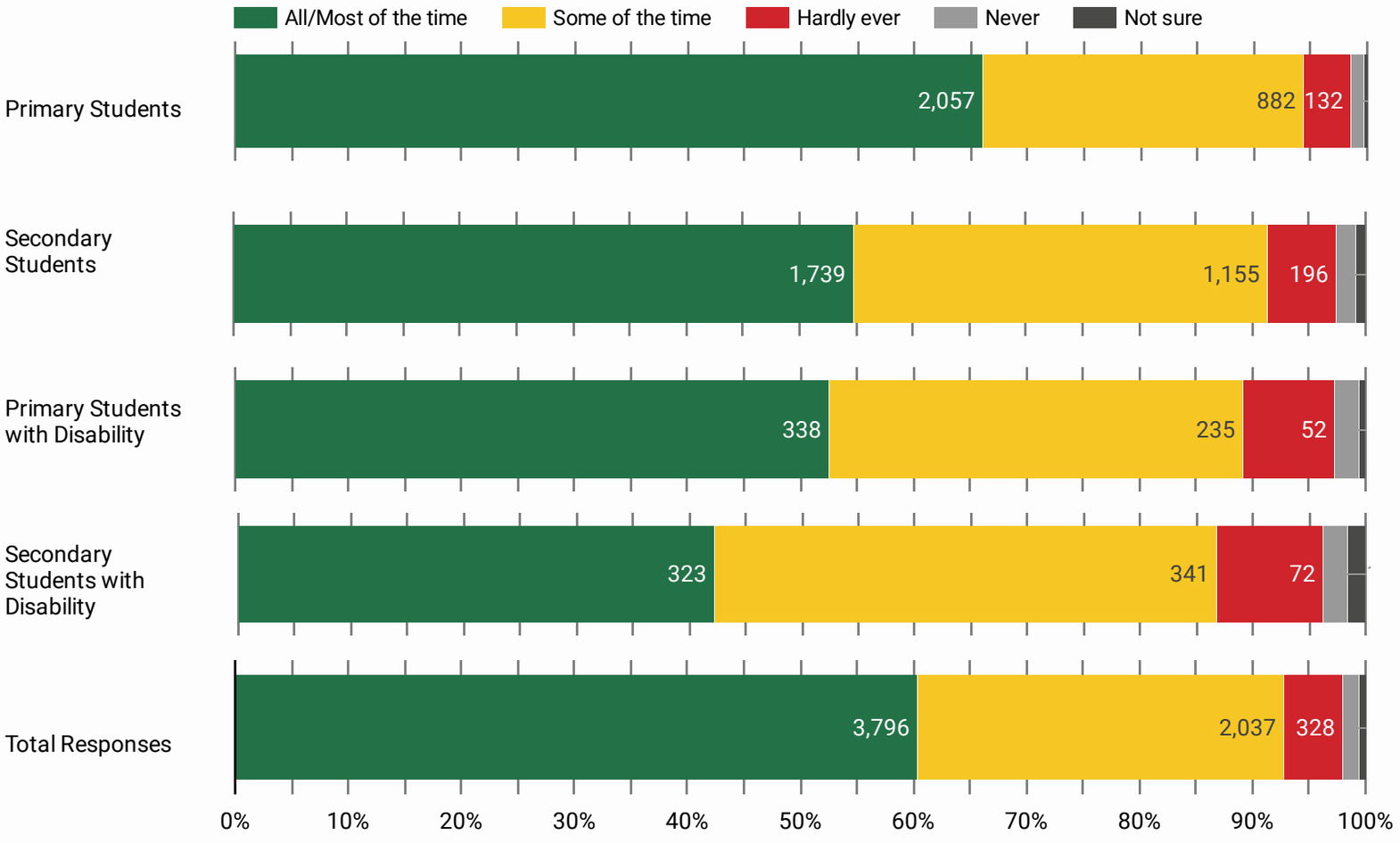
Q8 During 2022, overall this child's learning has been



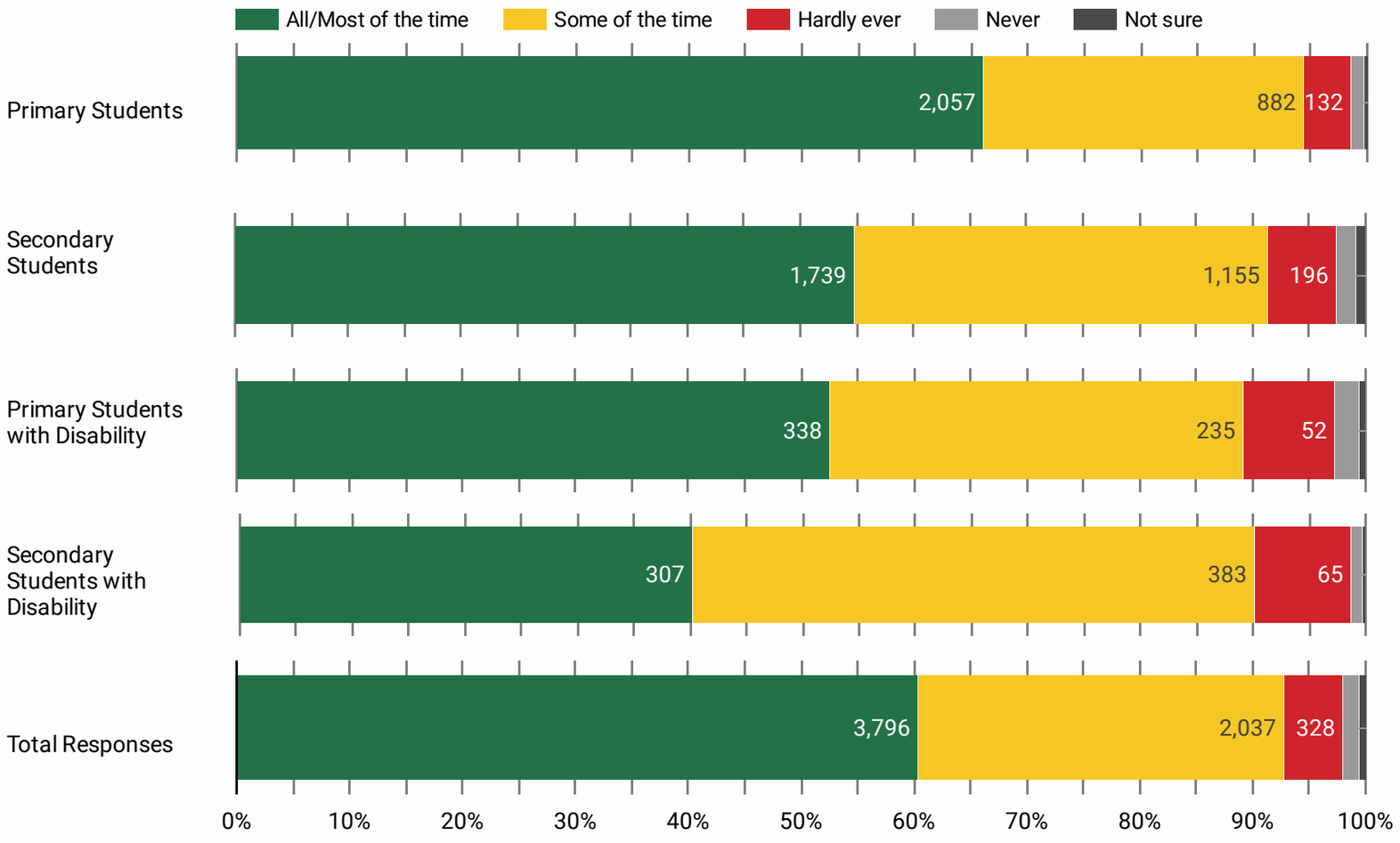
9. Does the child generally enjoy attending school



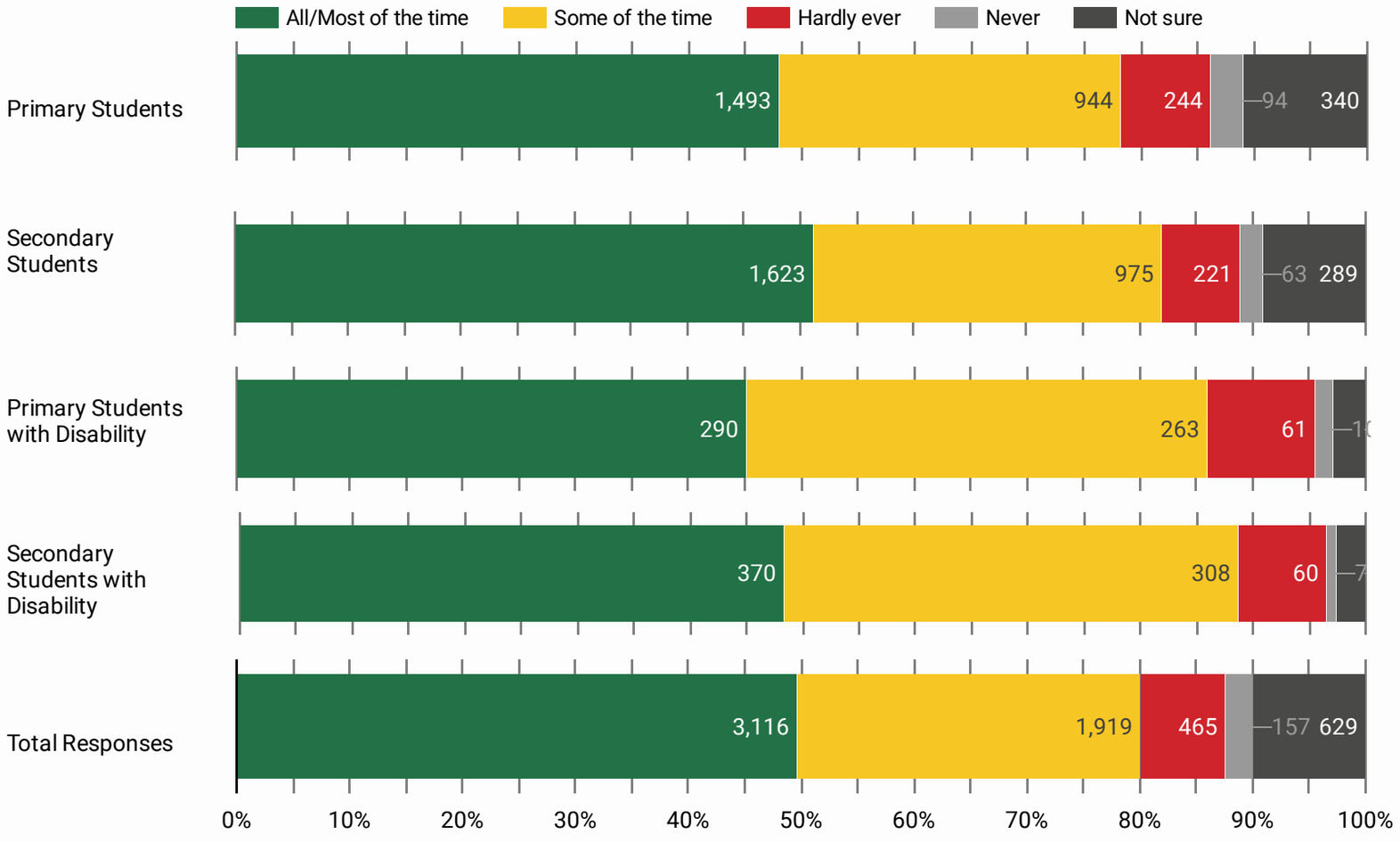
10. Do you think this child feels valued and safe at school?



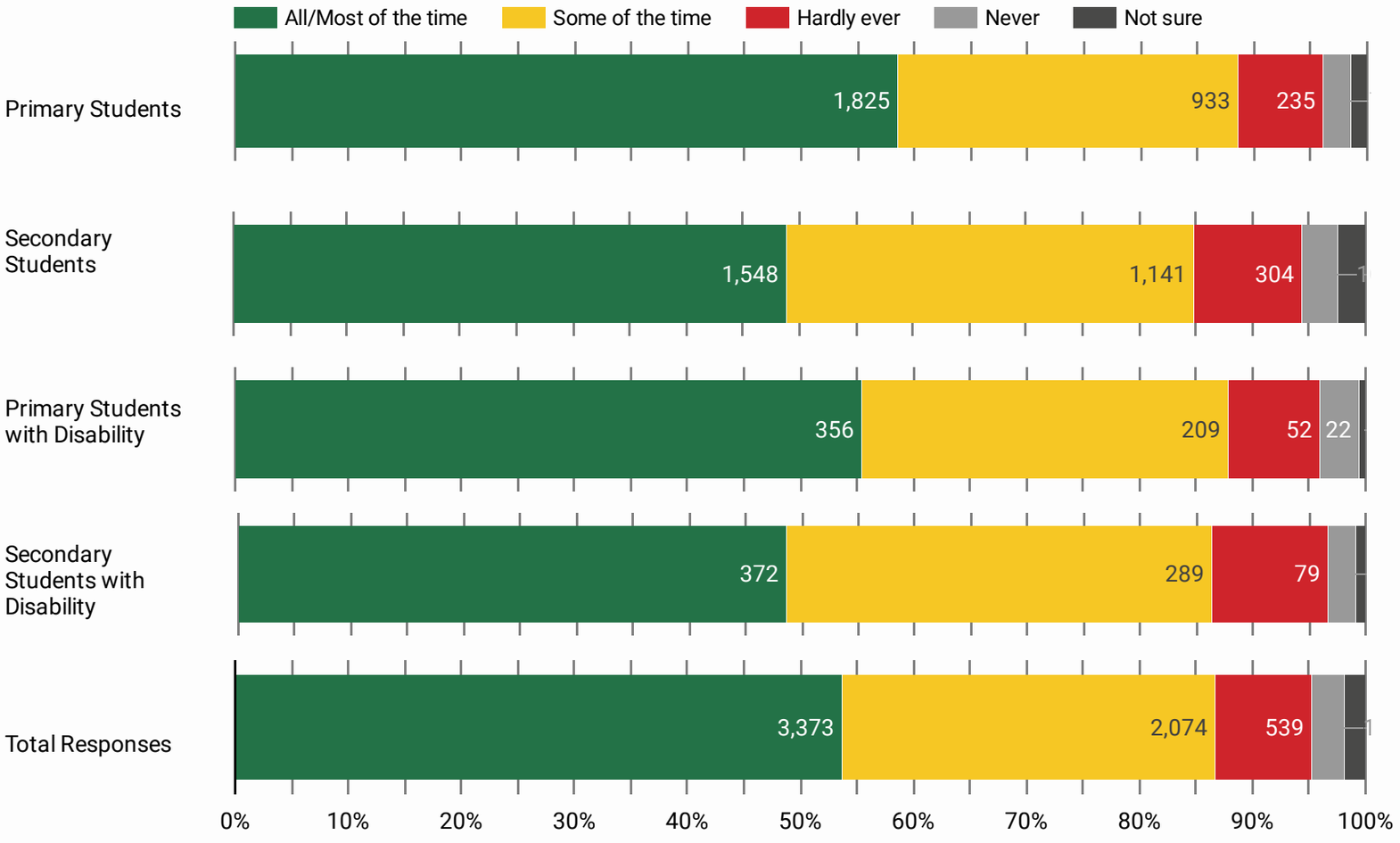
12. How often does this child get worried or anxious about things?



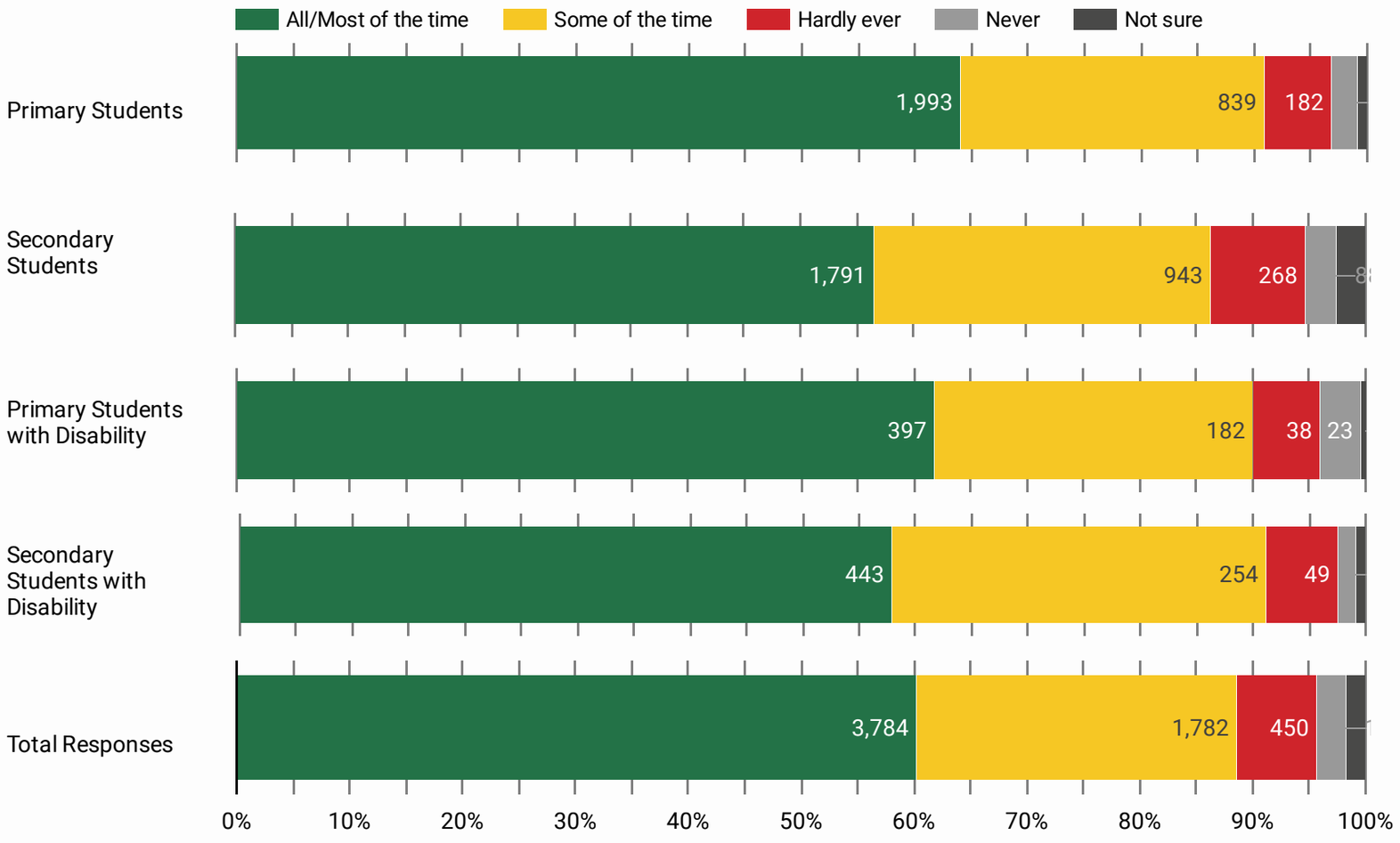
13. Are you able to access health services for this child if/when needed (e.g., Doctor, Counsellor, Occupational Therapist, Psychologist, Mental Health Specialist, Learning Support Provider)?



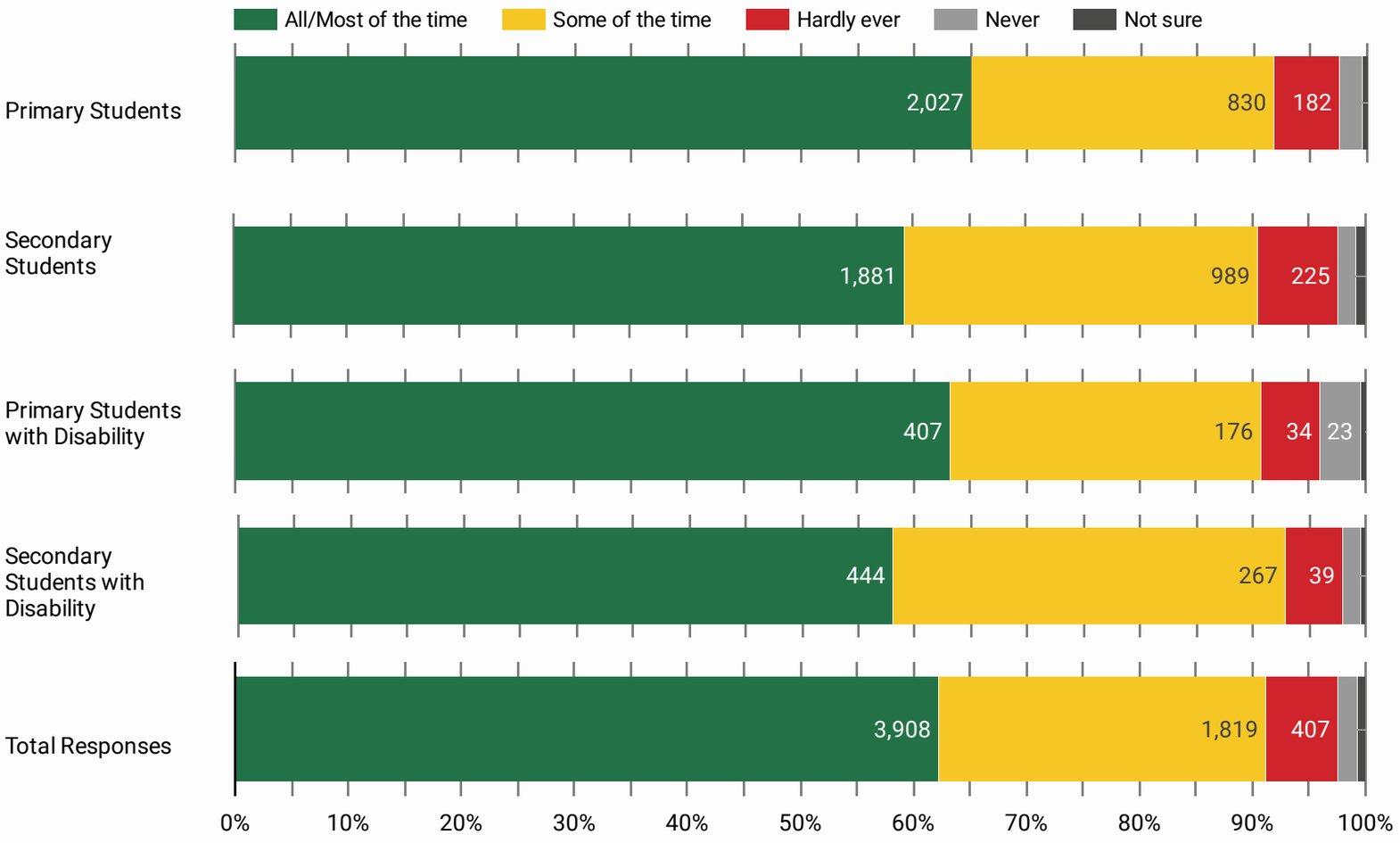
15. Do you feel that the educators/teacher/s at this child's school value you as a partner in your child's learning?



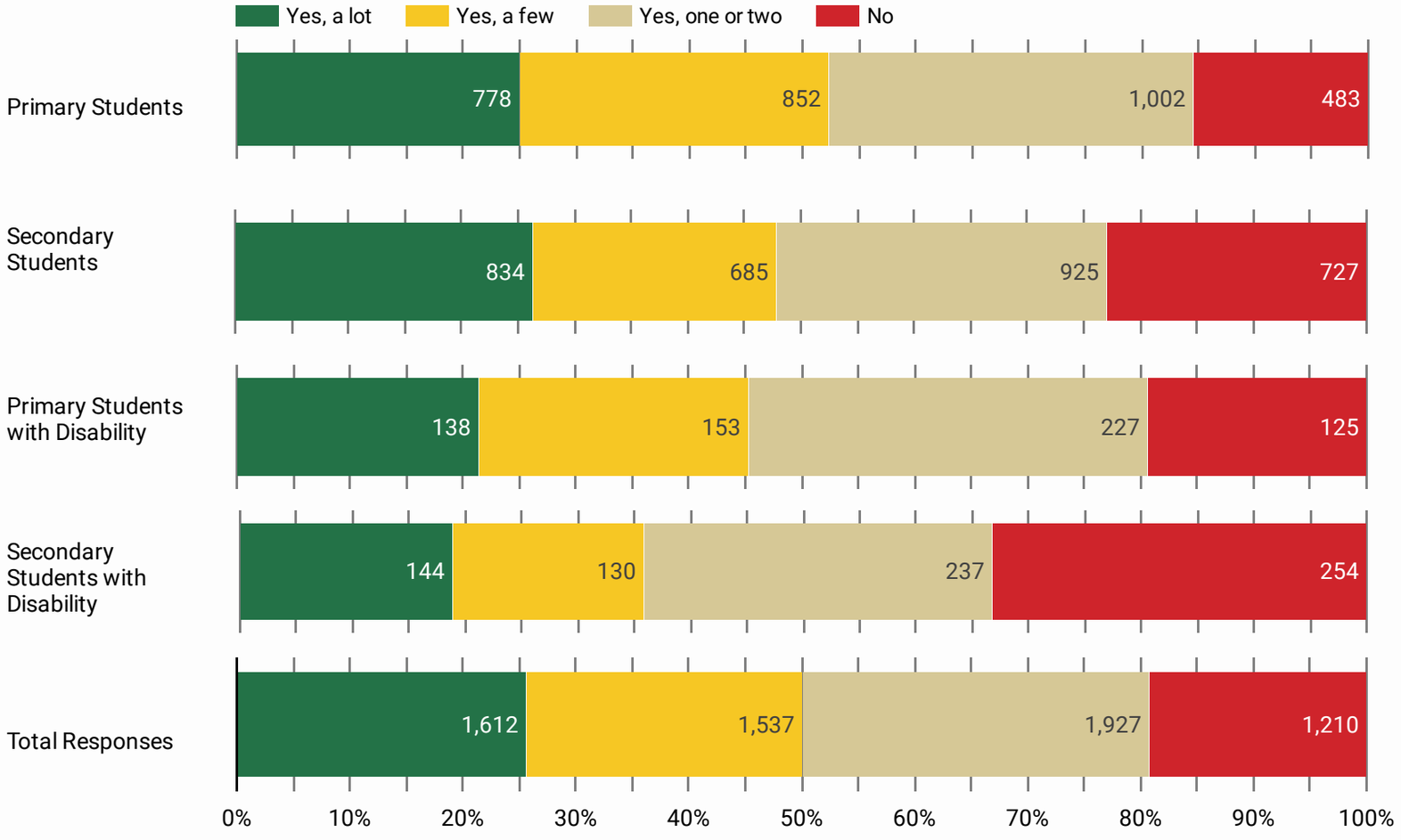
16. Do you feel comfortable communicating with the school about this child's wellbeing?



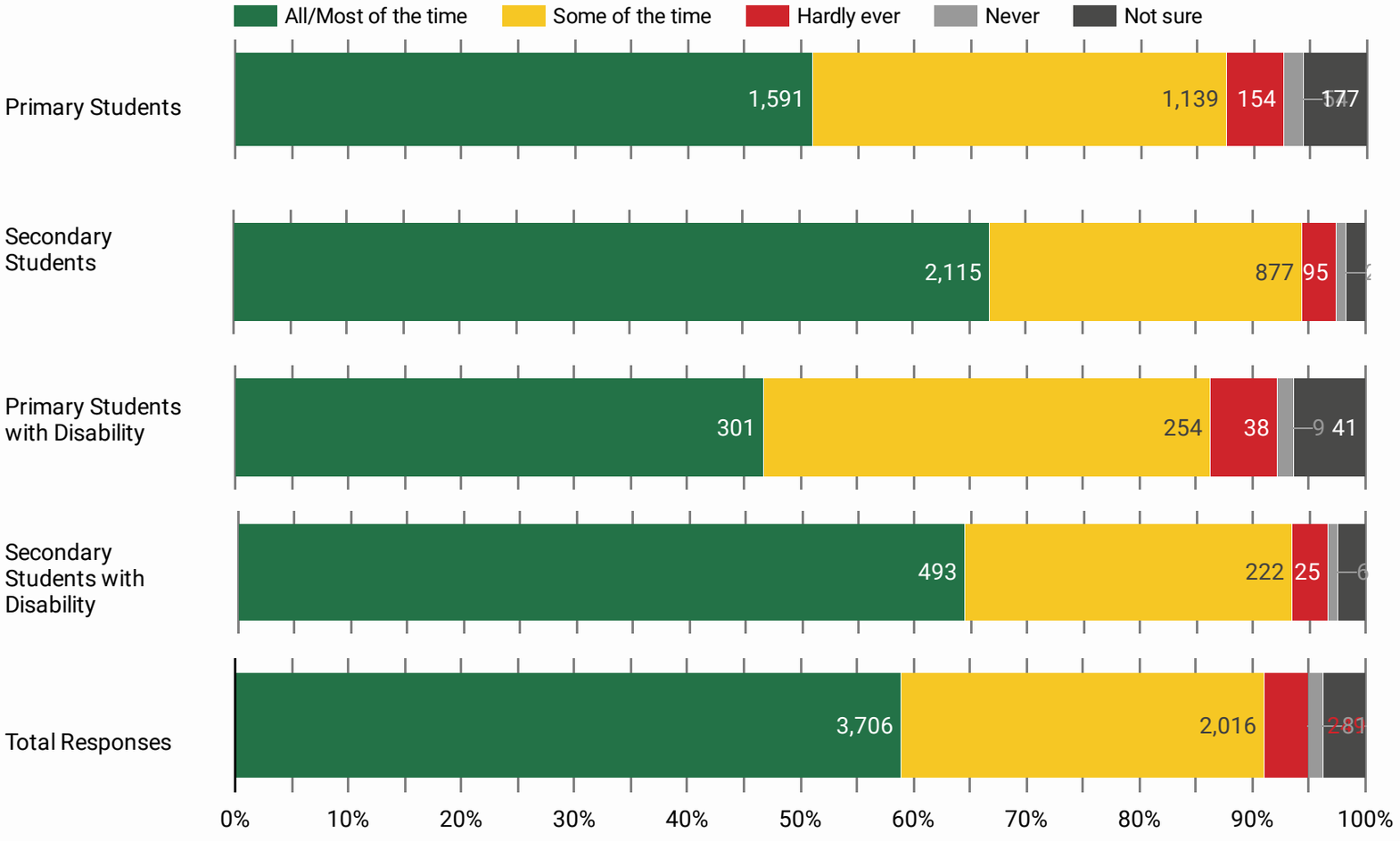
17. Do you feel comfortable communicating with the school about this child's learning?



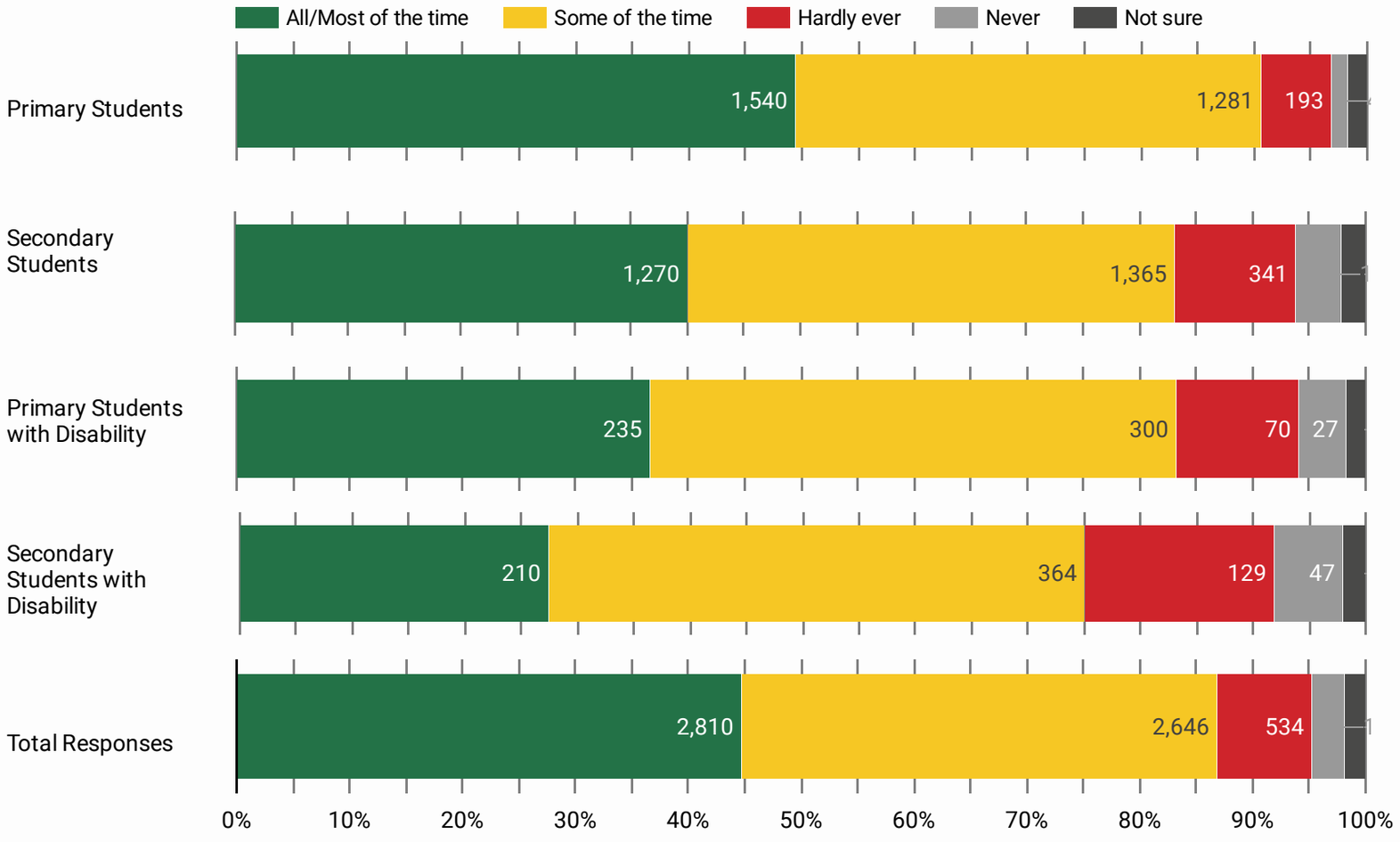
19. Is this child part of a club or group outside of timetabled school hours? For example, sporting, musical, cultural, volunteer or youth groups. (Consider the whole of 2022, to cover all seasonal activities)



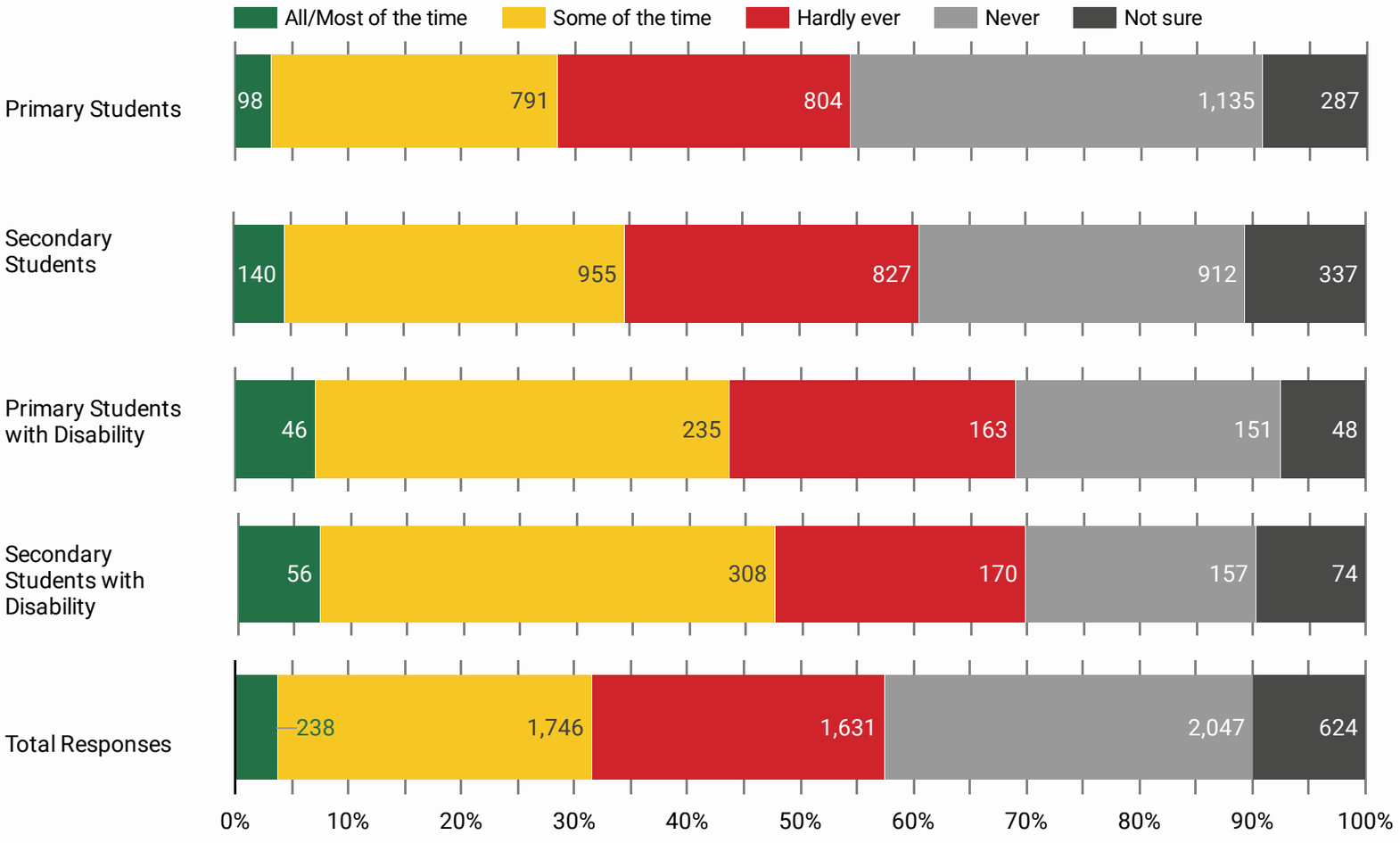
20. Do you encourage this child to participate in school decision-making processes that impact them?



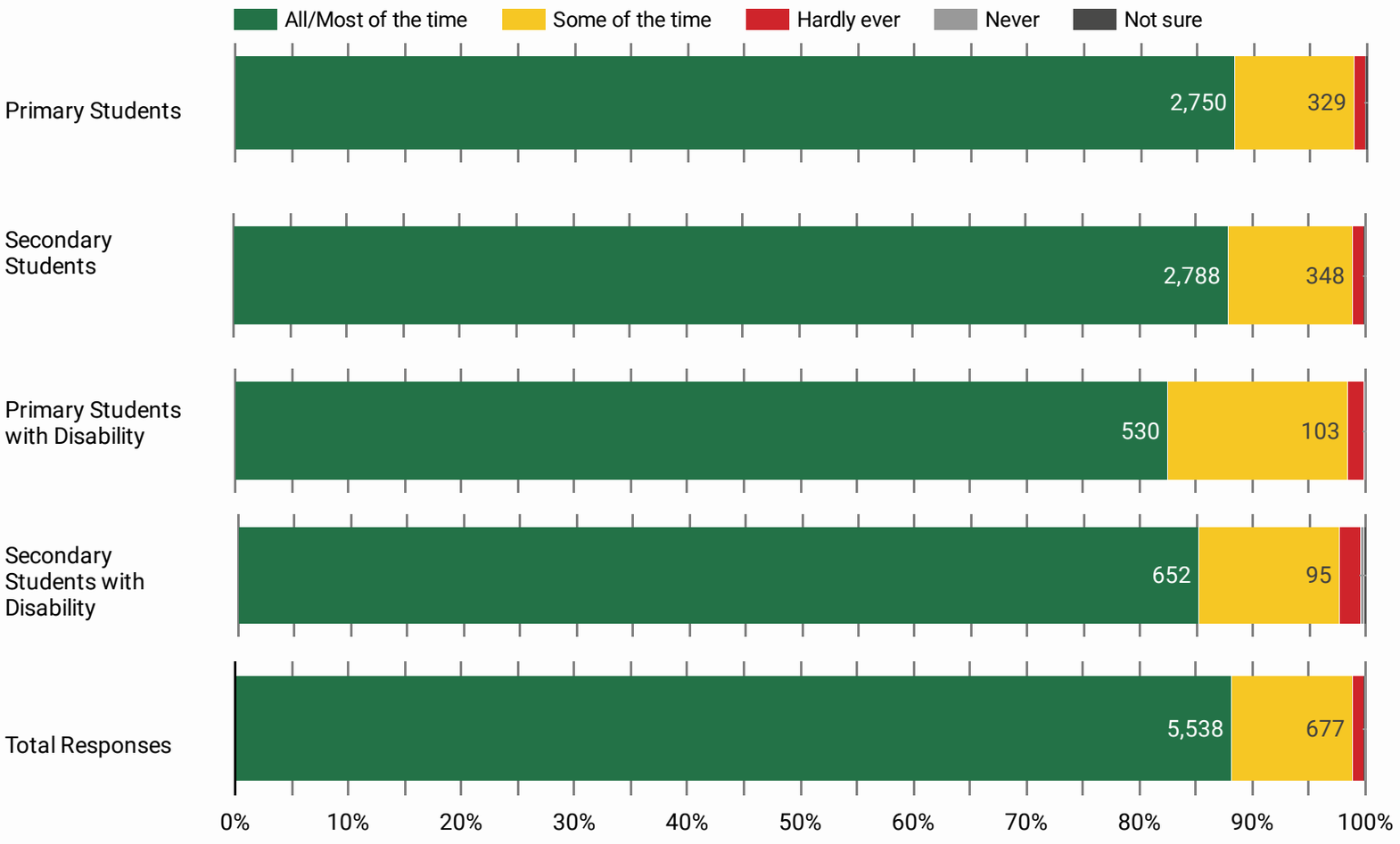
22. Do you feel that this child feels safe expressing who they are at school?



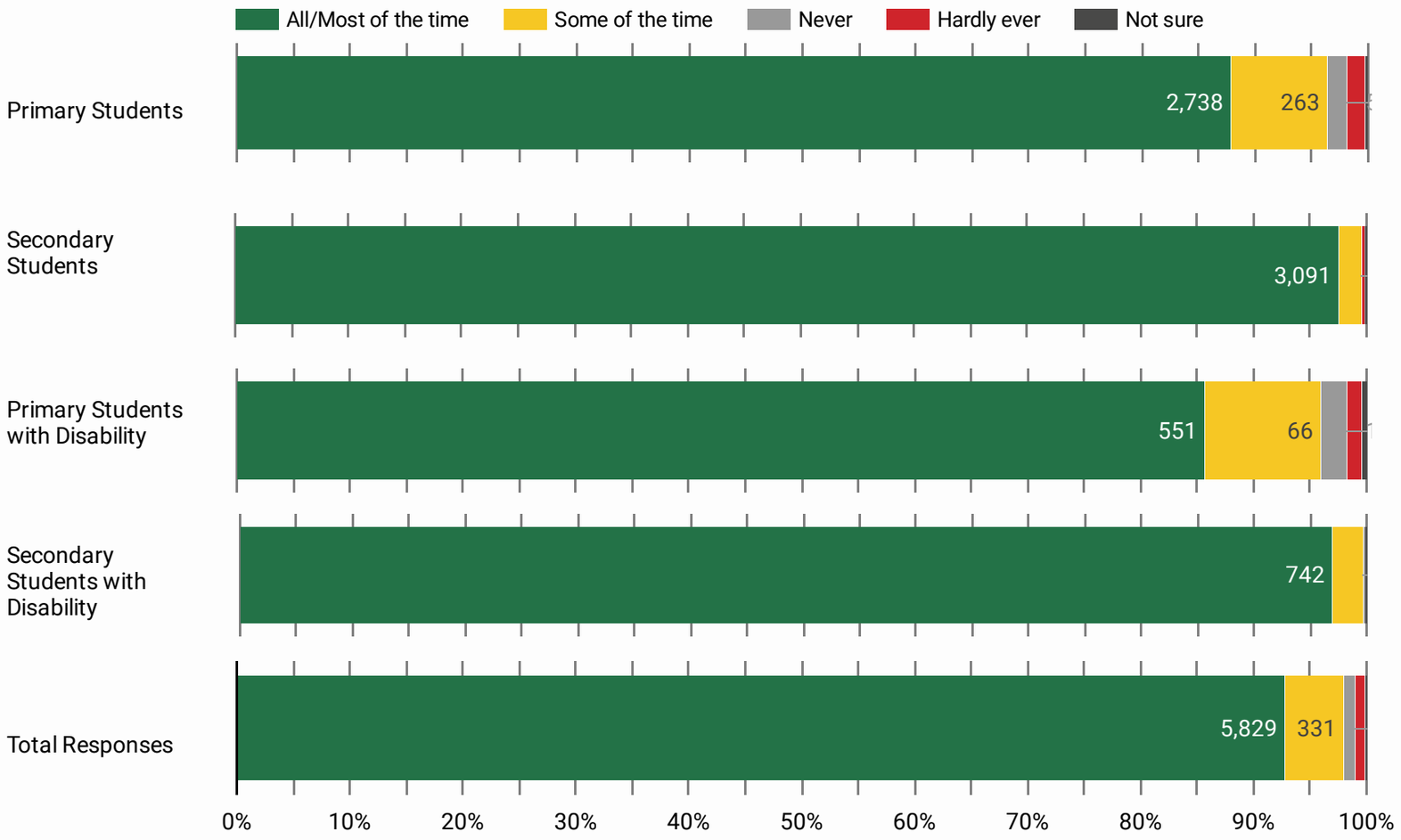
23. Do you feel that this child experiences any discrimination at school?



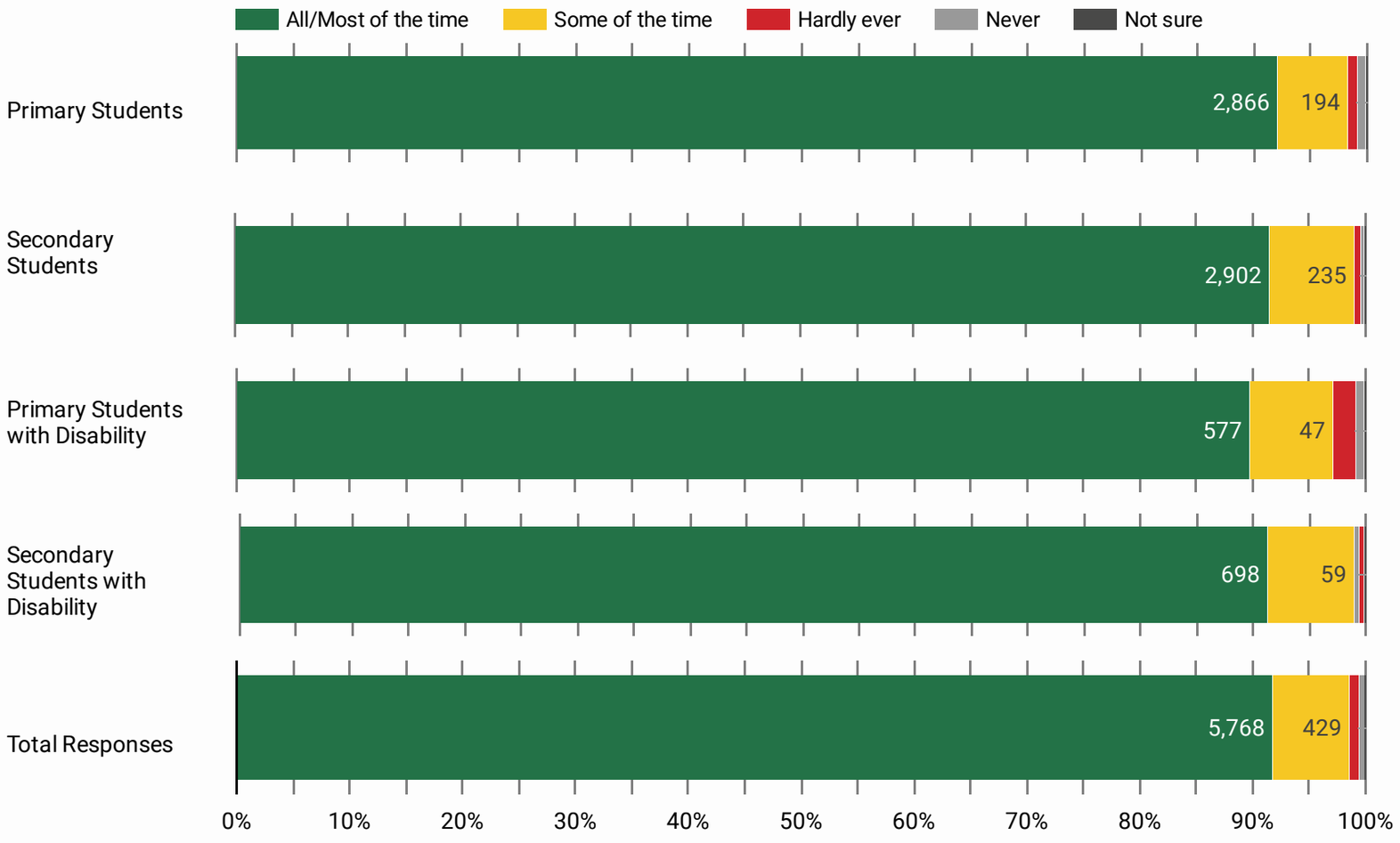
25. Can your family buy the things you need (e.g. food and clothing), and pay bills on time?



26. Does this child have access to a computer (e.g., laptop, iPad, device) at home for completing homework, assignments, or other school-related activities?



27. Is there adequate internet connectivity at home for this child to complete homework, assignments, or other school-related activities?



29. In relation to the wellbeing and learning of this child, select from the list below those things that you would like to see more of:

Total Responses
6,286

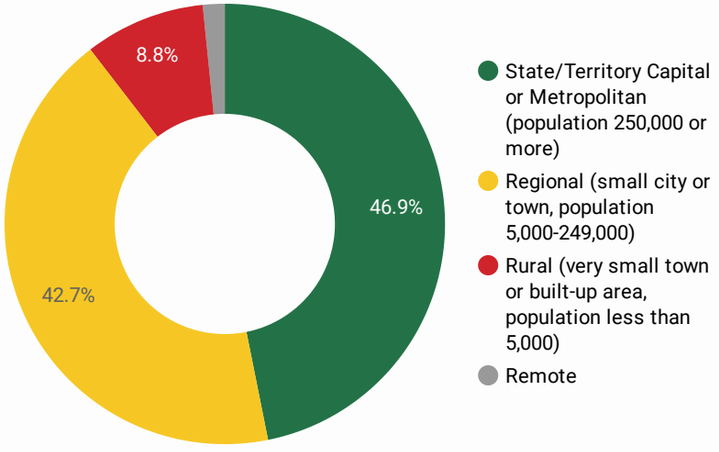
Remote (at home) learning	856	13.62%
Physical presence of parents/carers in schools	1,609	25.60%
Direct contact between school staff and home (parents/carers) about student **wellbeing**	3,584	57.02%
Direct contact between school staff and home (parents/carers) about student **learning**	3,697	58.81%
Face-to-face parent-teacher interviews	2,508	39.90%
Virtual parent-teacher interviews	1,178	18.74%
Other	681	10.83%
None of the above	802	12.76%

30. In relation to the wellbeing and learning of this child, select from the list below those things that you would like to see less of:

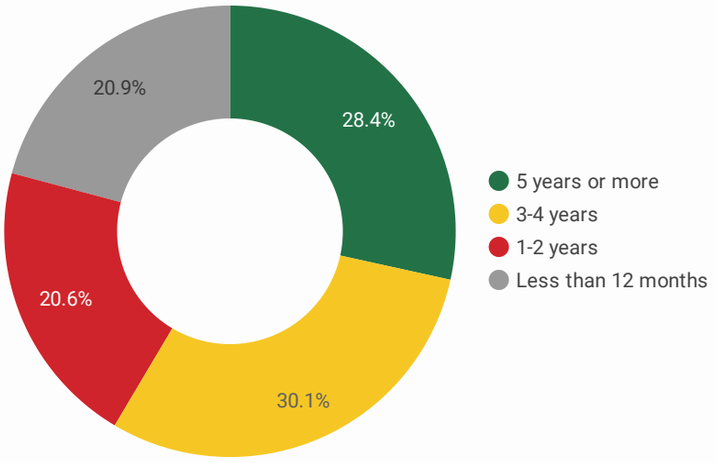
Total Responses
6,286

Remote (at home) learning	2,400	38.18%
Physical presence of parents/carers in schools	308	4.90%
Direct contact between school staff and home (parents/carers) about student **wellbeing**	201	3.20%
Direct contact between school staff and home (parents/carers) about student **learning**	188	2.99%
Face-to-face parent-teacher interviews	310	4.93%
Virtual parent-teacher interviews	1,545	24.58%
Other	347	10.83%
None of the above	2,739	43.57%

Q33. How would you describe the area your family lives in:



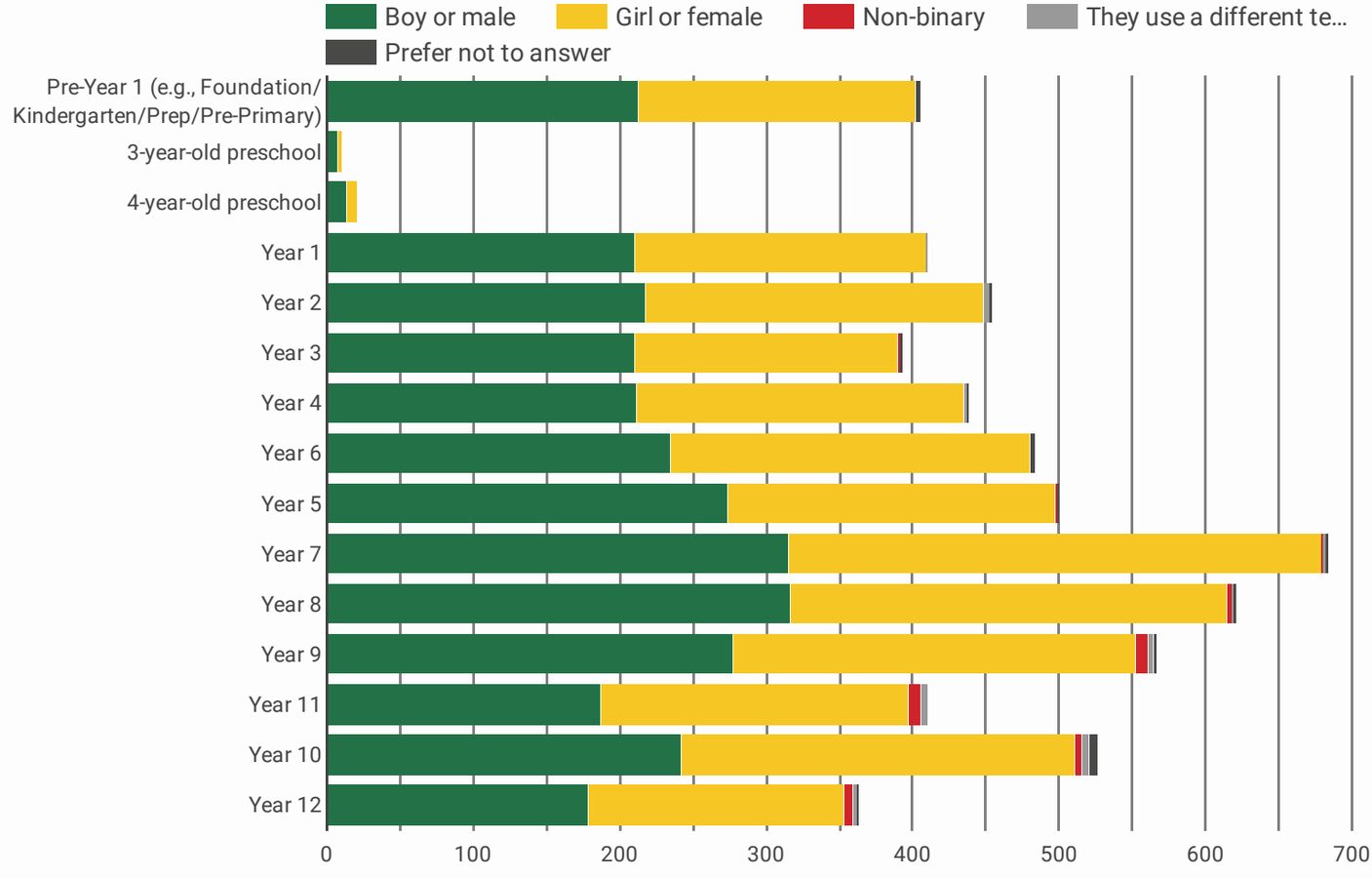
37. How long has this child been enrolled at this school?



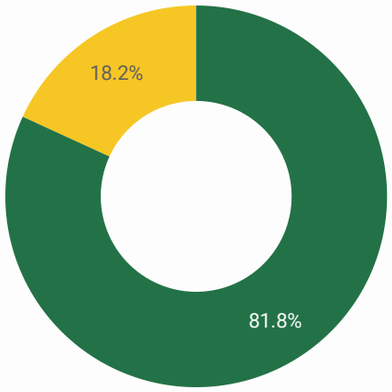
34. Which Catholic Diocese is this child's school located in?Included in filters.

35. What type of Catholic School is this child currently enrolled in? [Please select all that apply] Included in filters

36. What year level is this child in?



38. In which country were you born?



	Country of Birth:	Responses
1.	Australia	5,145
2.	Other (please specify)	1,141

1 - 2 / 2

	Other (please specify)	Responses
1.	UK	121
2.	Philippines	108
3.	UK (England)	87
4.	New Zealand	84
5.	South Africa	70
6.	India	69
7.	Ireland	43
8.	China	29
9.	Zimbabwe	25
10.	USA	22

1 - 100 / 129

39. What are the main languages spoken in your

English	6099
Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Language	43
Other Language	144

97% of respondents indicate English is the main language spoken at home

43 Respondents speak an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander Language in their home - 12 of these respondents indicate English is not spoken in the home.

144 respondents who chose Other Language do not speak English as a main language at home.

	Other Language	Responses
1.	tongan	1
2.	punjabi	3
3.	malayalam	1
4.	japanese	1
5.	italian, portuguese	1
6.	italian	1
7.	hindi	1
8.	filipino	1
9.	xhosa	1
10.	visaya	3

1 - 100 / 117

42. Optional: Before you go, do you have any final comments, issues or emerging concerns you would like to make in relation to the wellbeing and/or learning of this child?

Comments received:

1,572

Appendix C: Additional selected commentary

General praise for Catholic schools

"We couldn't be happier at [Removed]. They have the right balance of academics, arts, sports and religion." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

"We are lucky to attend a school who cares about our children and who do the best they can with the resources they have available." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

"I'd like to commend all teachers and staff in the [Removed – flood-affected diocese] schools. Some are back operating, the school mentioned us business as usual. Secondary school has relocated for the time being. Other Primary schools have relocated and await outcomes. It's been unbelievable yet they've embraced the challenges with resilience and HOPE. It's about community and that makes all the difference." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

"We are very happy with the school our child is enrolled in. Earlier this year my son became incredibly unwell and hand emergency lifesaving surgery and during his recovery he missed 4 weeks of school. He returned to school, and he was still recovering and had to have his lessons altered. Through all this harrowing time, his school [Removed], [Removed]) was so supportive to his learning and to us as a family as a whole. Every single teacher called me. His year group head, deputy and principal called me to offer assistance and prayers. When he was getting ready to come back, the care, flexibility and understanding the school showed was so amazing and helped so much." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

"We have been very happy with our child's school this year. Her principal is very welcoming, present in the school community and approachable. Our daughter enjoys her school and her teacher and is covering a wide range of high-quality topics in the classroom with access to very good resources." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

Student wellbeing

"Catholic schools should be leading the pastoral care and wellbeing areas of the schooling system, but I don't see this in practice. There should be greater funding for designated wellbeing staff to help teachers, students, parents, and staff improve their wellbeing and staff responsible for parent engagement. And not just giving this work to existing staff but creating new funded staff positions to prioritise this work being done in schools." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

"I feel that the school is doing its best to support him, but his state of health and mental state means he will not seek out the options (e.g. psychologist/counselling) available to him at school. As well, the social stigma of being seen to need help is a deterrent for boys to admit to this "weakness". We have managed to get him weekly counselling sessions though a private child psychologist but the weekly fee of $245 per hour each week would be prohibitive for a lot of families. There needs to be more options for children in general as we were only able to secure a psychologist through our family's professional contacts (paediatrician sister). Even my sister has closed her books to new patients and is booked out for appointments till March 2023. More

needs to be done to support the health and mental health of our children." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

Teacher wellbeing

"Please ease up on the teachers and give them more freedom to be a real person, not a robot that spends more time on data collection and evidence. The children need a real person to teach them and guide them, not a robot that is too burnt out to properly function. Let the children/ teachers direct the learning based on their individual needs/ cultures/ experiences/ interests. The wellbeing of the children depends on this, particularly in the early year. As I mentioned earlier in the survey, more play-based learning needs to happen in the early years' classrooms. Children need this to learn and develop properly." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

"I understand that teachers are incredibly overworked and feel that this is negatively impacting the learning and wellbeing of my child. Greater administrative support to reduce the "peripheral" work teachers are currently expected to engage in would enhance their capacity to better support my child and other children. Better recognition for the extra-curricula work teachers are "expected" to engage in would also enhance the overall morale of teachers. Not EXPECTING teaching staff to "volunteer" free-of-charge outside of school hours would be beneficial too. A system that does not require a teacher to target the learning needs of a huge spectrum of students would also be useful in enhancing my child's learning and wellbeing experiences at school. The school my child attends EXPECTS many teachers to 'volunteer' many hours of their time for meetings, camps, and sporting activities. This is unreasonable and would not be tolerated in most other workplaces. Please note I am not a teacher in a school but I am very aware of this situation and have great empathy for the staff. The structures and systems MUST change if the learning and wellbeing of students is to be a priority. There is NO WAY any teacher can sustain the current workload expectations and prioritise effectively the learning and wellbeing of their students adequately. This does not even take into account the wellbeing of teachers themselves." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

"The current staffing crisis being experienced by Australian schools is creating significant disruption. My daughter's school has been able to staff all classes; the impact they have experienced is in the quality of applicants for positions. Teaching conditions, especially pay scales and workloads, need to be improved to attract more people to this essential profession." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

Bullying and Behaviour

"When children are constantly allowed to get away with pushing in line, teasing, assaulting and verbally abusing other children how can you not expect it to affect their learning? You cannot do this in the real world so why do they not have a stronger approach in diminishing this behaviour within our school?" (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

"Bullying in schools is something that needs to be addressed with more assertion. Not only are we allowing our victims to be abused but we are doing the community a disservice by allowing

the bullies to go unreprimanded - they need to be educated and shown that their actions have consequences". (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

"Generally very happy with the support and interest shown to my child. Usual concerns around less sporty boys being labelled "gay" on a daily basis, with very narrow definitions of manhood." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

"Bullying seems to be a poorly handled issue across the Catholic education system, with teachers either not sure how to handle the situation effectively or the onus of working on strategies to cope put onto the victims and not dealing directly with the bully and family of the bully." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

"I am concerned about behaviour by boys and girls in the current school climate. It is too high an expectation on individual teachers just to be able to deal with it for their class that they teach on that day. For some reason, in teaching, it is seen as a teaching weakness if a teacher asks for help or says they are having trouble dealing with a class, or a tricky students or ask for help to deal with it. It is not, and it should be a whole school ongoing effort with lots of support. Too much learning time is lost to poor behaviour." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

"Managing disruptive behaviour of other children. My son reports there are children who can be extremely disruptive to the class. Also managing swearing and drugs, he was approached by an older student regarding marijuana and says kids vape in the toilets." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

"My child is in a class with a certain number of students who are both disruptive to the learning of peers and disrespectful to their teacher. This is very very concerning." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

"A focus on removing disruptive children from classrooms to allow those students who want to learn to do so. Promptly address poor behaviour in classrooms and within school grounds. More supervision in school yard during breaks ie. Lunch time." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

Impacts of COVID

"This child started Year 7 [just] 6 weeks before lockdown in 2020. They missed their first camp & settling into high school has been challenging & so for the year group to become connected. As parents it has been difficult to become engaged with the school due to no parent presence at school activities. It would be beneficial for this to be taken into consideration for events or planning for camps & activities for this year group. Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

"Please stop pushing Covid onto these children and let them learn and be kids like normal, it's a private family decision on what they want for their children not a government." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

"Human behaviour has changed since Covid. Communities have suffered, family friends don't socialise in the way they used to, and parents/teachers no longer engage in informal settings. This has certainly affected our child's wellbeing." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

"Remote learning had significant negative impacts, I would not support school closures again. Should be more online work given to kids when they are in 7-day isolation but not feeling unwell. I am concerned by the lack of set homework at this school, regular set homework would help establish a better routine in preparation for future years of study and HSC." (Parent, 2022 CSPA Survey)

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