

# Is it much worse? A look at marking, planning, behaviour and open evenings

Hello! Brrr... it's getting chilly and for those of you with windows wide open it might be time to start thinking about ways to keep yourself warm. Thick scarves? A thermos? A battery-heated gillet perhaps? (We have no idea if these are any good - but it's a thought!)

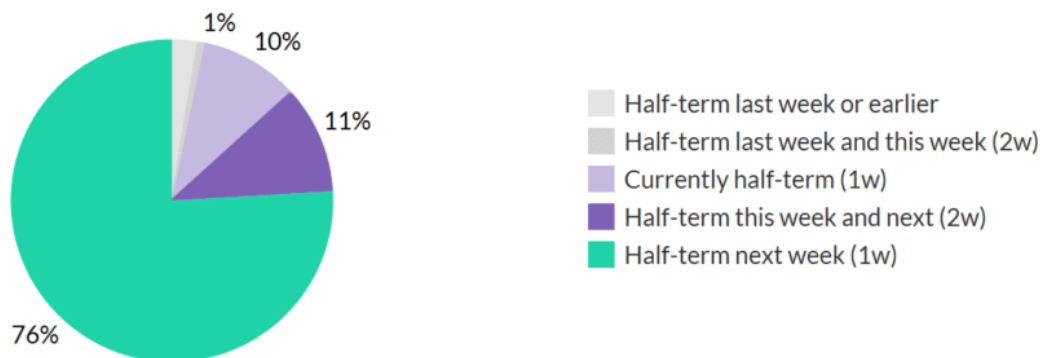
Over at Teacher Tapp Towers we have the new app still on the way. **DON'T FORGET** - if you are sent to a log in page and you can't get through, it's likely because you were on a very old version of the app (or had recently reset your phone). In that case, sign up as a new user with the same email address as previously, and send us a message once inside the app so we can reunite you with your badges and streaks!

Right, onto the results...

## 1. No circuit breaker?

Despite most newspapers and the Labour leader suggesting there would/should be a two-week 'circuit' breaker to stop a second wave of the virus, Boris doesn't seem to be up for it. Hence, over three-quarters of you are still in school this week. Of those who are at home, about half will be off school next week too - because you get a jammy two week October holiday! (Yes, we know you pay for it later in the year!)

## Time of half-term holidays this year

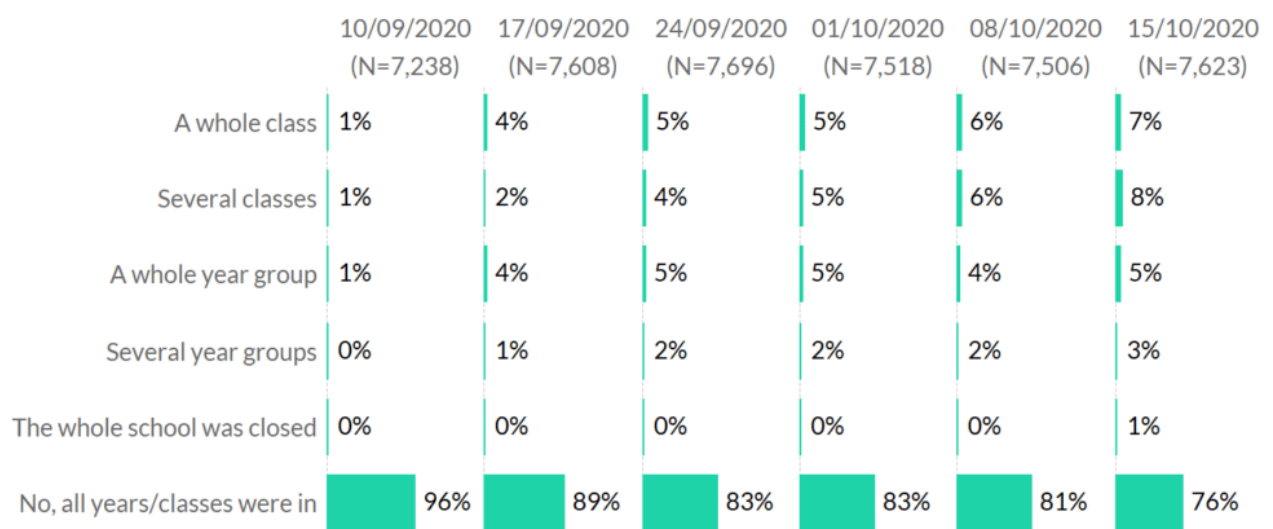


## 2. Giving the virus a break

So far you've done well to keep the majority of children coming to school every day this half term, but the numbers of classes that are having to isolate at home is definitely on the rise.

Whilst only a tiny number of schools are fully closed due to an outbreak, the proportion who have managed to open to everyone has - by our data - fallen from 83% to 76% in the past fortnight.

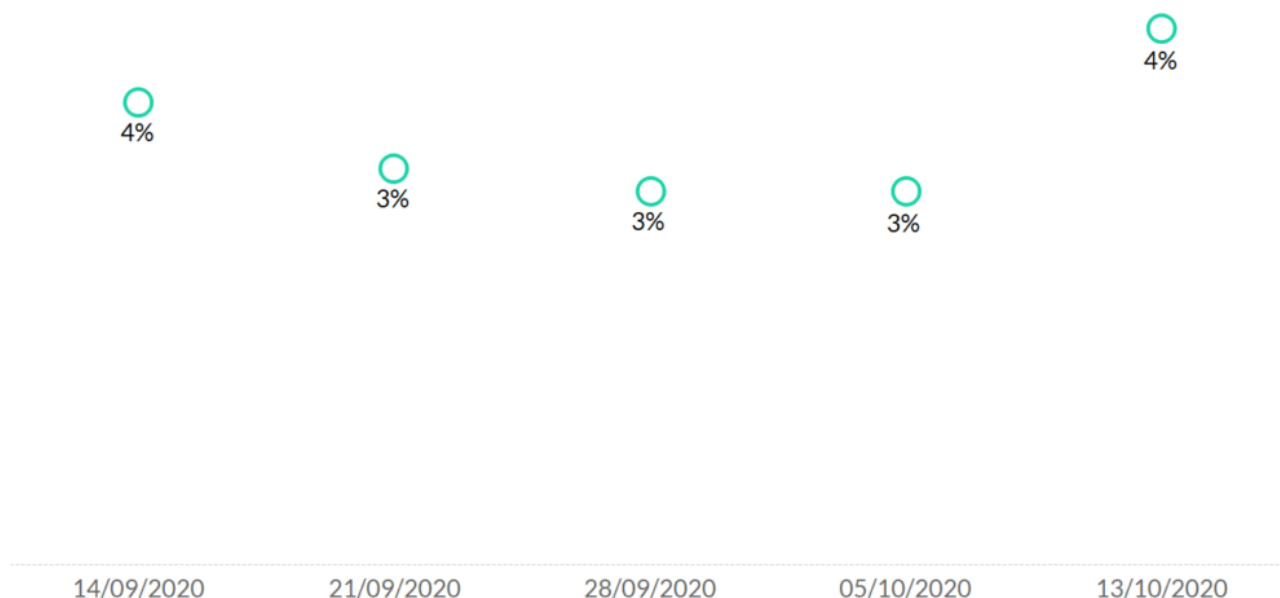
### Today in school, were any of the following groups of pupils required to stay at home for isolation?



Teacher responses vary from 7,238 to 7,696, depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

As another indicator of COVID impact, the proportion of teachers who are at home for COVID-related reasons has risen too. (Remember, a small number might be shielding all term so the rate of change in this statistic is the best indicator of infectious outbreaks.) Let's see whether a one week half-term without national lockdown is enough to reverse this trend.

### Were you isolating at home today for covid-related reasons?



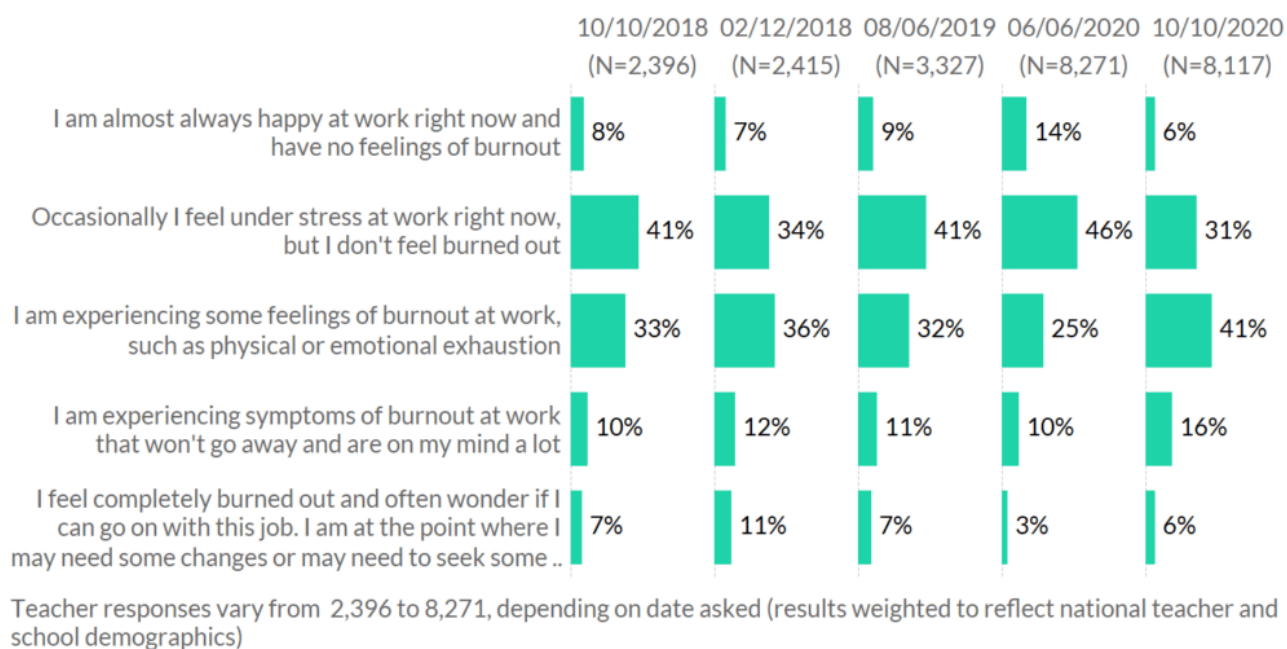
Note: a few tappsters have noted that when we ask about isolating classes/year groups, we are missing outbreaks among other groups – e.g. a friendship group. We are aware of this, but we are trying to get a relative sense, over time, of how often large groups are told to stay home. "Large groups" is difficult to define in numbers, as most teachers won't necessarily know the exact numbers of children in a friendship-specific outbreak. Hence, we went for classroom/year groups as a way to be consistent and to check the rate of change which is what matters more than the overall proportions. However, a clever Tappster has come up with a new measure that we will try once we are all back in school to see if it works better. Keep your eyes peeled!

### 3. It feels like December

Just over a week ago we asked you about burnout. Given it is still near the start of the academic year, things don't look great.

24% of you say you are suffering from 'persistent burnout', i.e. your feelings of burnout won't go away. This time two years ago the figure was lower at 17%. 24% is the kind of figure we'd expect in December, rather than October.

## Which of these statements most closely applies to you at the moment?

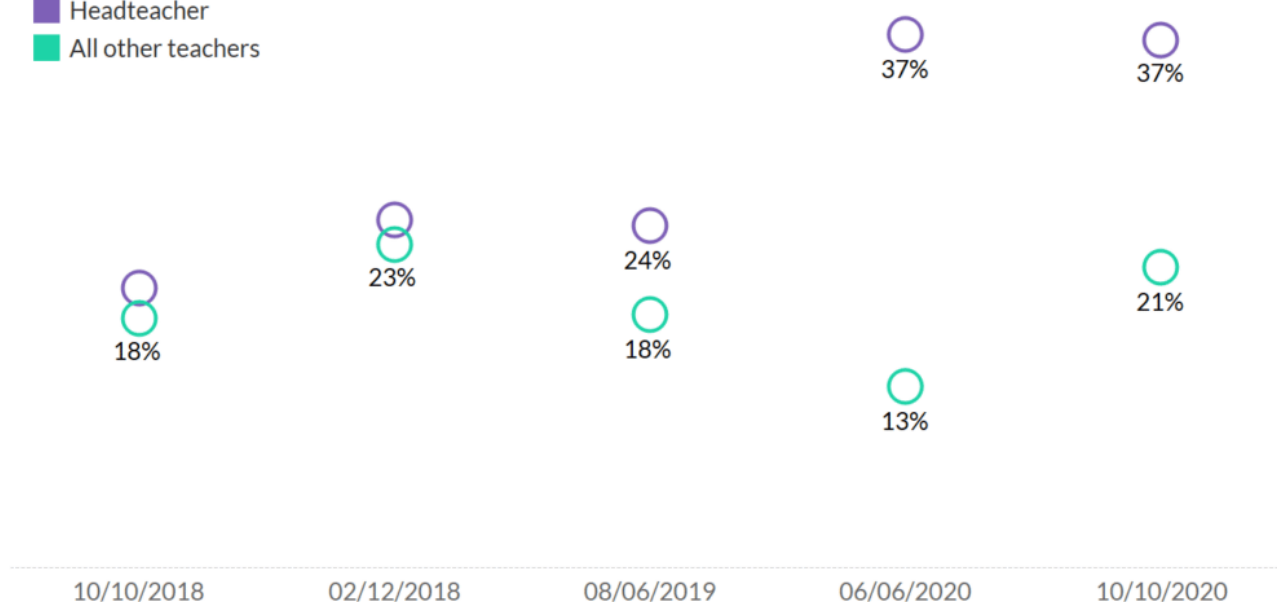


And it is no surprise that Headteachers are experiencing the most serious burnout, with 37% saying they are suffering from persistent burnout (compared to 21% for other teachers).

Normally the responses of Heads aren't so different to those of other teachers, so this highlights how demanding the current situation is for them.

## Percentage of teachers suffering from persistent burnout

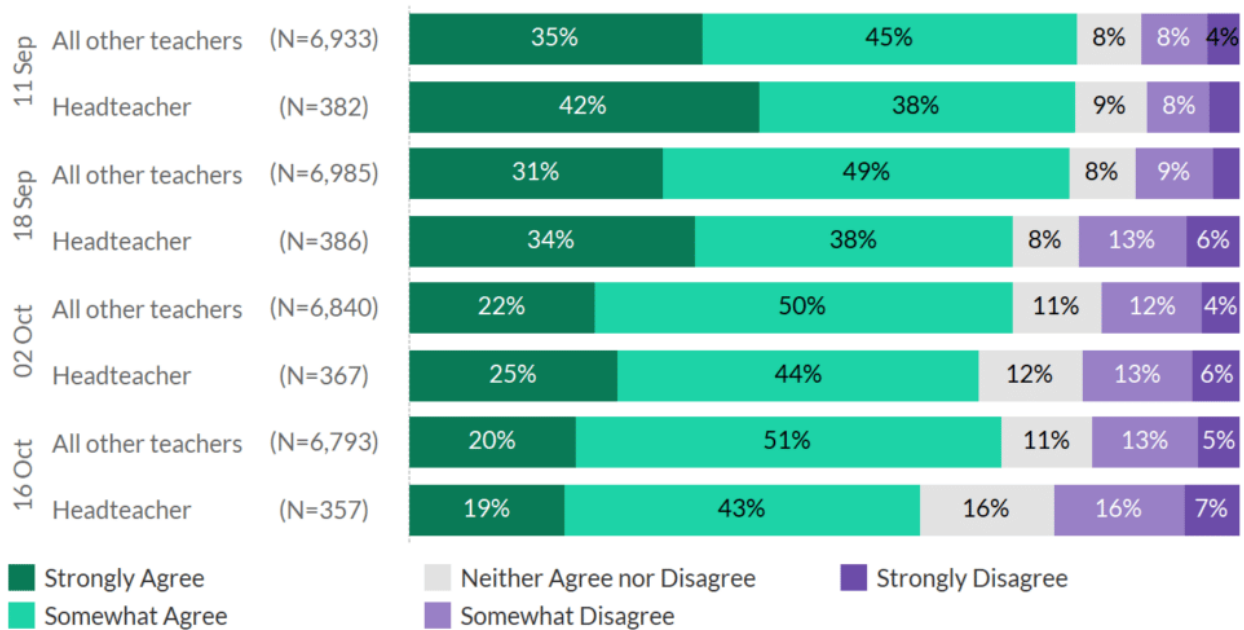
Headteacher  
All other teachers



And whilst Heads were most happy to be back to school in September, with greater numbers

saying they enjoyed working in school during September, their enthusiasm seems to have ebbed away. And 23% of heads - nearly 1 in 4 - said they did not enjoy working in school last week.

#### 'I enjoyed working in school this week'

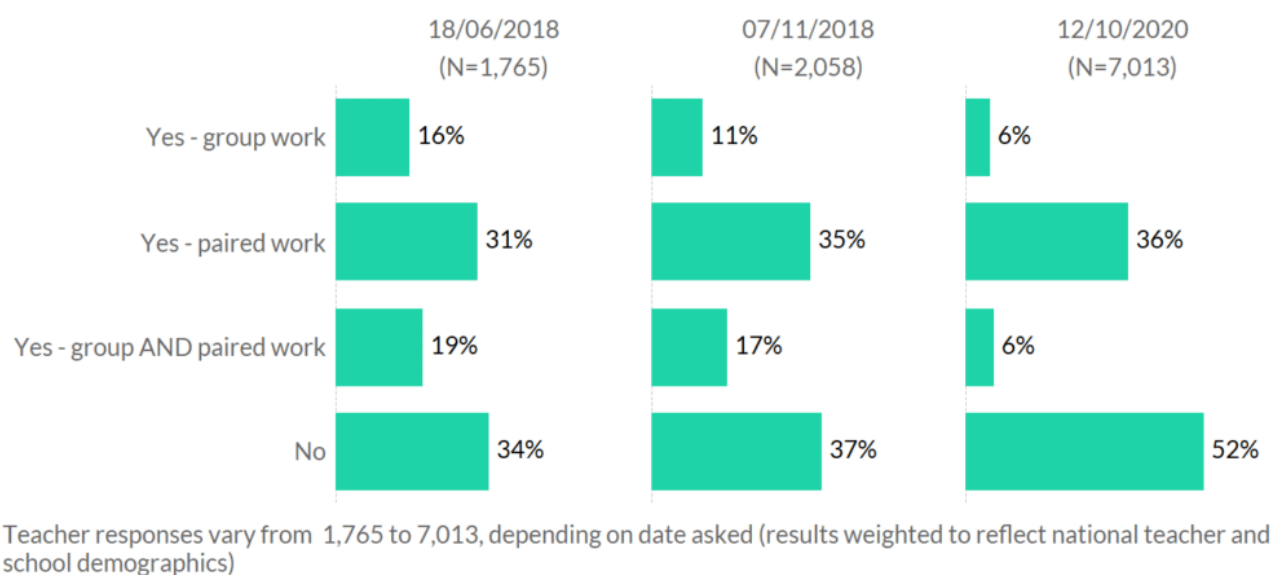


## 4. Do the kids need a break?

Teachers aren't the only ones struggling. Students are feeling it too. Life is quite different for them at the moment. Not only are there a lot of regulations, and many of the things they do for hobbies have been cancelled, but lessons are more 'traditional' too.

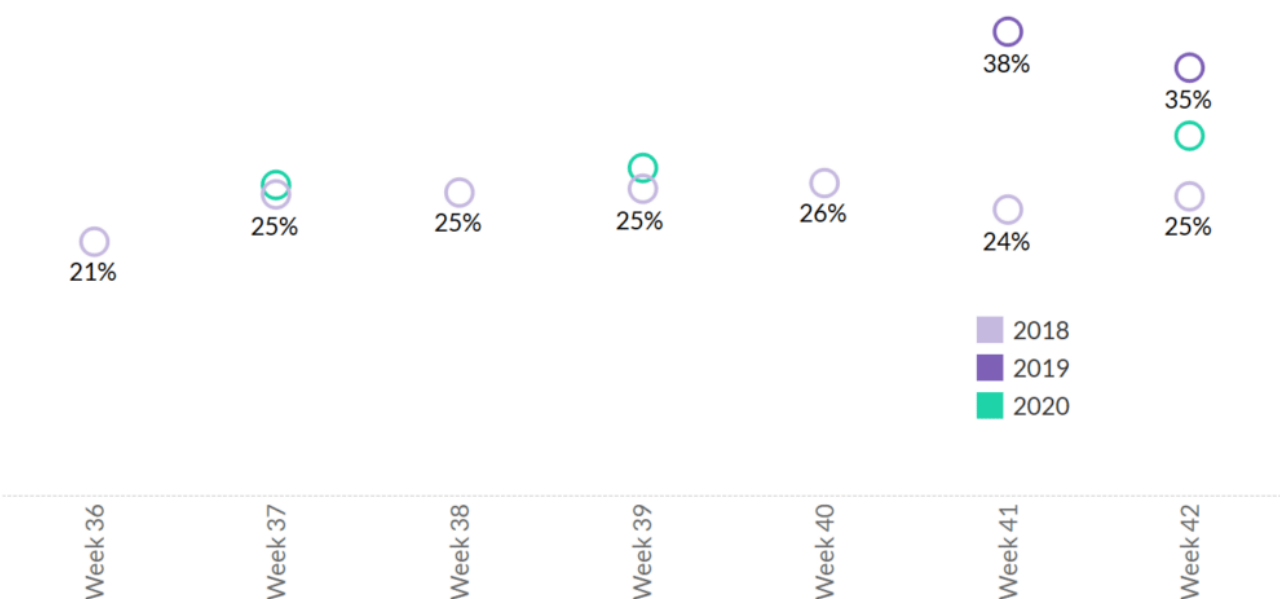
For example, there are many fewer chances for group or paired work - with over half of teachers saying their students didn't do either in their lesson at 10am.

Think about the lesson you were teaching around 10am today (or next one if you weren't teaching then). Did your students do any activities that involved group or paired work during the lesson?



Students are also more likely to be sat on their own, or on a small desk facing forward. Several teachers have noted on social media that this has made behaviour better. So far the data doesn't quite back that up. At the start of term, slightly more teachers were reporting poor behaviour in their last lesson compared to 2018. At this point in term it's higher than we've seen in some years, but lower than in others.

In the last lesson you taught, was there any time when you felt teaching and learning largely stopped because of poor behaviour?



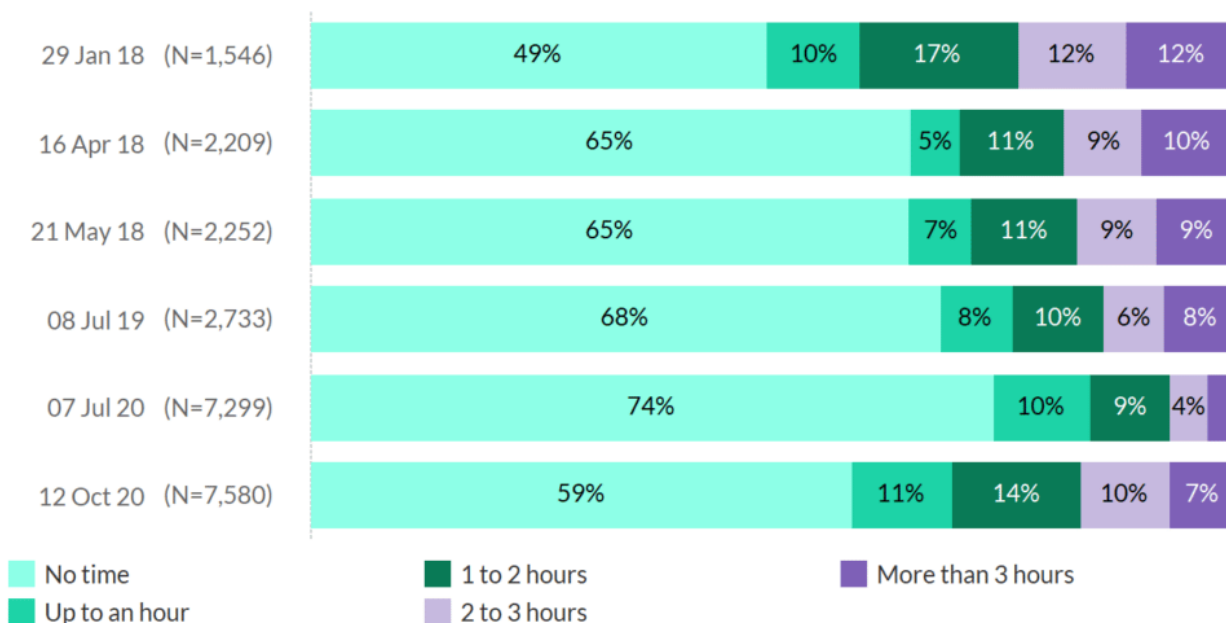
## 5. What are you marking?

Given the strains of the working week – are teachers still working just as much at the weekend? Each line in the graph below represents a moment in time when we've asked teachers to say how long they marked at the weekend. The light green is 'no time', and the dark purple is 3+ hours.

Since 2018 this reduced and reduced, in part because schools were focused on reducing workload as part of retention strategies.

Last weekend, however, the marking seems to be creeping back...

### Think back to the weekend. Approximately how long did you spend on marking?

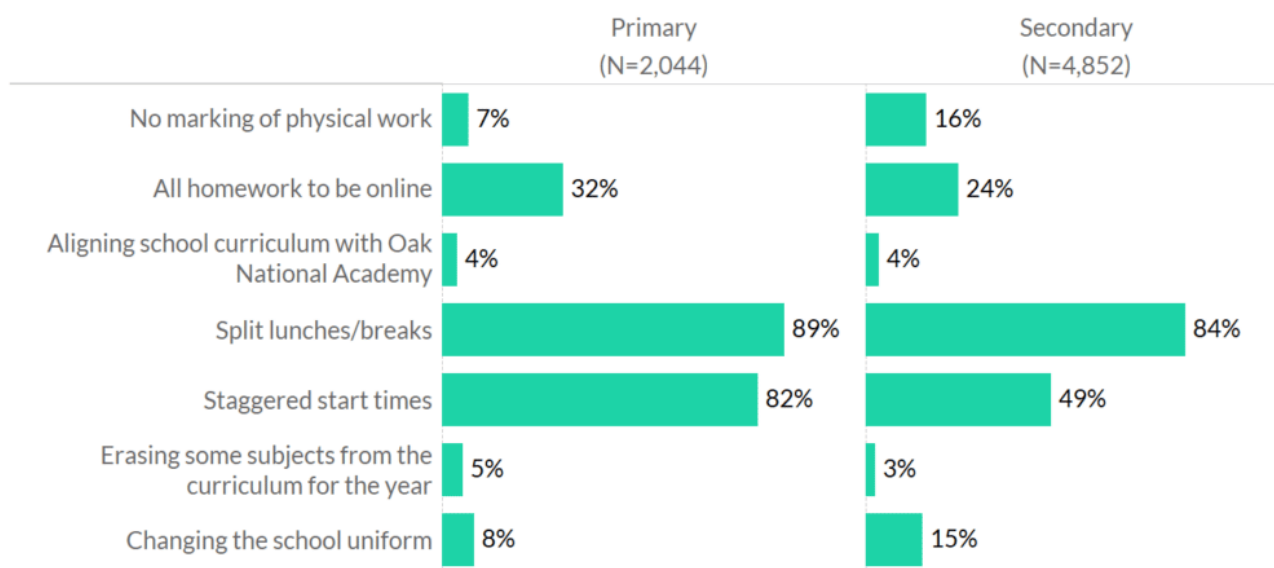


... which somewhat makes sense now that many of us are trapped in our houses at the weekend with fewer leisure activities.

BUT, here's a strange thing!

16% of secondary teachers are no longer allowed to mark physical exercise books, and 24% said all homework is online. (In primary it is even higher at 32%). So – what are you marking? And is it that online work actually takes longer to mark? We will dig in a bit further to find out.

## Is your school doing any of these this year?

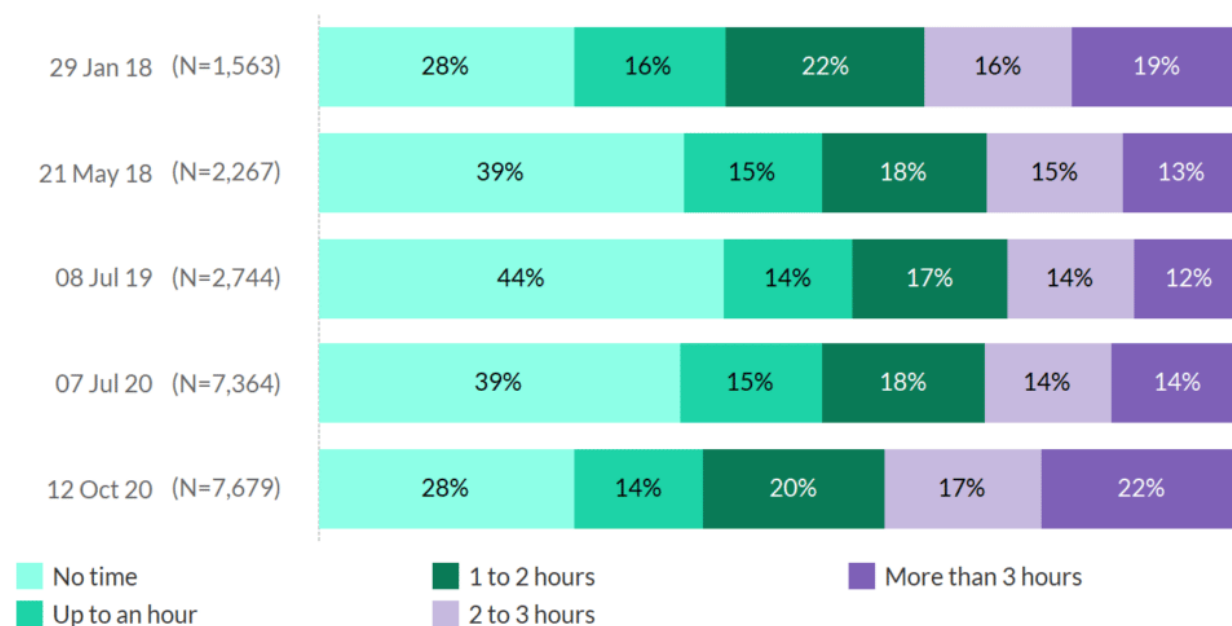


Question answered by 6,976 teachers on 17/10/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

## 6. Undoing the workload gains

Unfortunately, the time spent on planning at the weekends is also following a growth trend – with as many teachers spending time planning this last weekend as in January 2018. We don't have any other autumn comparisons, so it could also be related to the time of year, but, in any case, the majority of you spent time planning at the weekend – and 1 in 5 spent more than 3 hours on it, which is half a teaching day.

### Thinking about the weekend: approximately how long did you spend on planning?

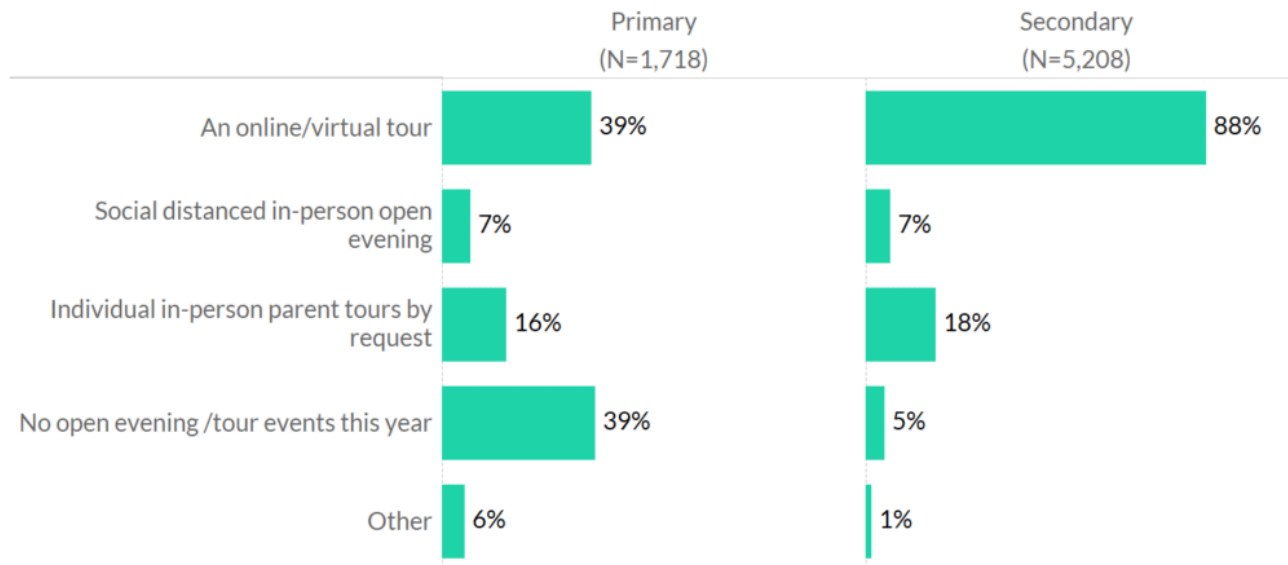




## And finally...

Picking a school can be stressful for parents and open evenings are a key part of the decision-making. Unfortunately, it's a no-go this year. Hence, 88% of secondary schools are doing online tours, and 39% of primary schools are doing no tours at all. Will this affect parent relationships in the long-term?

### How are you doing Open Evenings in your school this half-term?



Question answered by 7,028 teachers on 14/10/2020 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

## Last week's tips!

- [Judgement calls in teaching](#)
- [Sequencing descriptive writing](#)
- ['Disruptive students' in lockdown](#)
- [Gender balance in A level science](#)
- [Before and after thinking strategies](#)
- [Helping students commit to action](#)
- [Lesson endings](#)