

School toilet policies, impact of regional strikes and more...

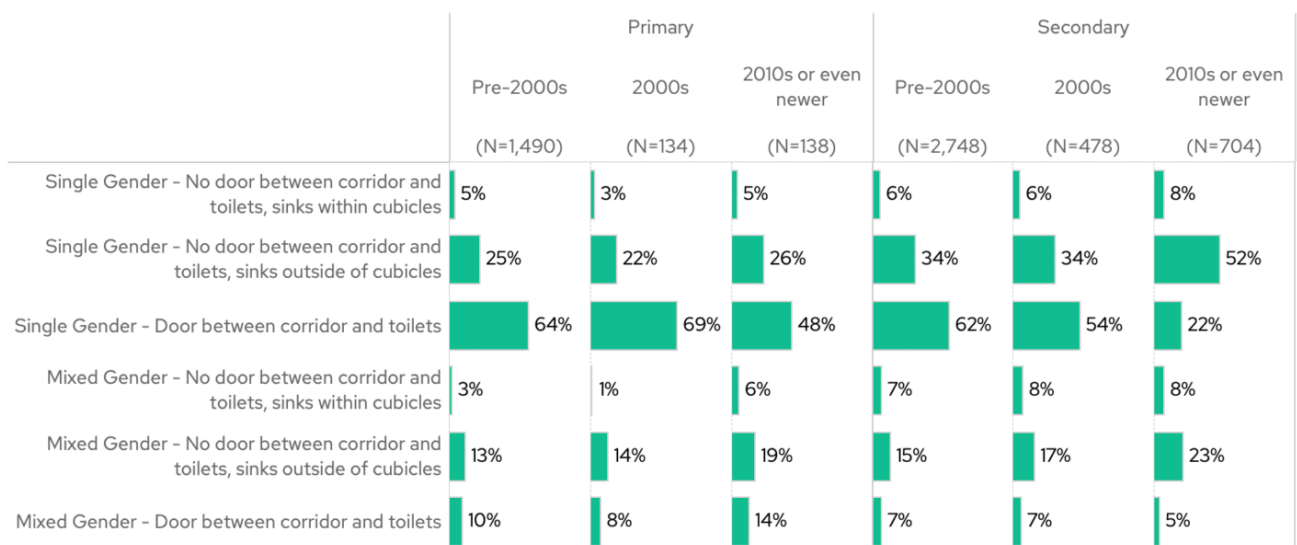
Toilets: doors, protests and locking

Protesting students have been in the news recently; grievances include skirt lengths and toilet policies. Schools Week wrote up some [Teacher Tapp findings](#) about these protests, sharing that 10% of teachers said they had either recently had, or were going to have a protest about toilet policies. Being the investigators we are, we wanted to understand more about the situation regarding toilets in schools.

So, let's start with an unlikely essay title: The History of Toilets in Schools. Fortunately, it's been a fairly simple history until recently, with schools that were built pre-2010 having predominantly single-gender toilets with a door between the corridor and toilets. In recently built schools, particularly secondaries, the door between the corridor and the cubicles has been removed. Almost three-quarters of secondary schools built since 2010 do not have a door between the corridor and cubicles.

In which decade were the *majority* of your school's buildings built? Try to guess if you aren't absolutely sure! (across) versus

Which of these toilet arrangements are available to students in your school? (down)



Question answered by 1,762 to 3,930 teachers on 04/03/2023 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

However, there are not many schools that were built after 2010! Of course, schools may have

adapted their toilet set-up since the school was built (i.e. removed doors between corridors and cubicles). So the current toilet state-of-play is as follows:

- 63% of primary and 55% of secondary teachers say they have a set of single-gender toilets with a door between corridor and cubicles.
- 27% of primary and 42% of secondary teachers have single-gender toilets without a door between the corridor and cubicles
- Completely mixed gender toilets are fairly uncommon - just one-in-four schools have at least one set. Most likely these don't have a door between corridor and cubicles.

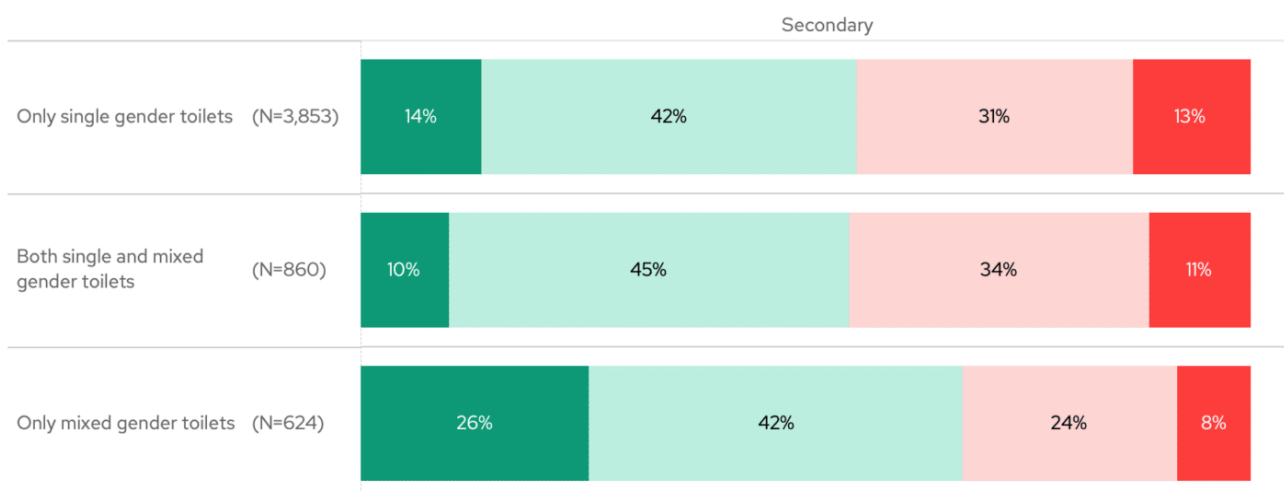
Next, we wanted to see whether the set-up of your toilet blocks makes a difference to two characteristics: whether you think they're clean, and whether you think they're safe spaces.

Firstly, toilet set-ups don't appear to make much of a difference to their cleanliness. 77% of secondary teachers agreed that their toilets were clean and in good working order, which didn't vary by toilet type. The result was similar in primary schools, except even more teachers agreed - 83%. Teachers in schools with just mixed gender toilets were more likely to say they were clean than those with single gender toilets.

There were bigger differences to whether you thought that your toilets were safe spaces! Although, this was just among secondary teachers, as most primary teachers agreed that their toilets were safe spaces for everyone (91%).

Just 58% of secondary teachers agreed that their toilets were safe spaces for everyone. Secondary teachers who said their school only had mixed gender toilets were the most likely to believe them to be the safest - similarly those who had the sinks within the cubicles were also the most likely to think they are the safest.

**Which of these toilet arrangements are available to students in your school? (down) versus
The toilets for students at our school are safe spaces for everyone, even during break times (across)**

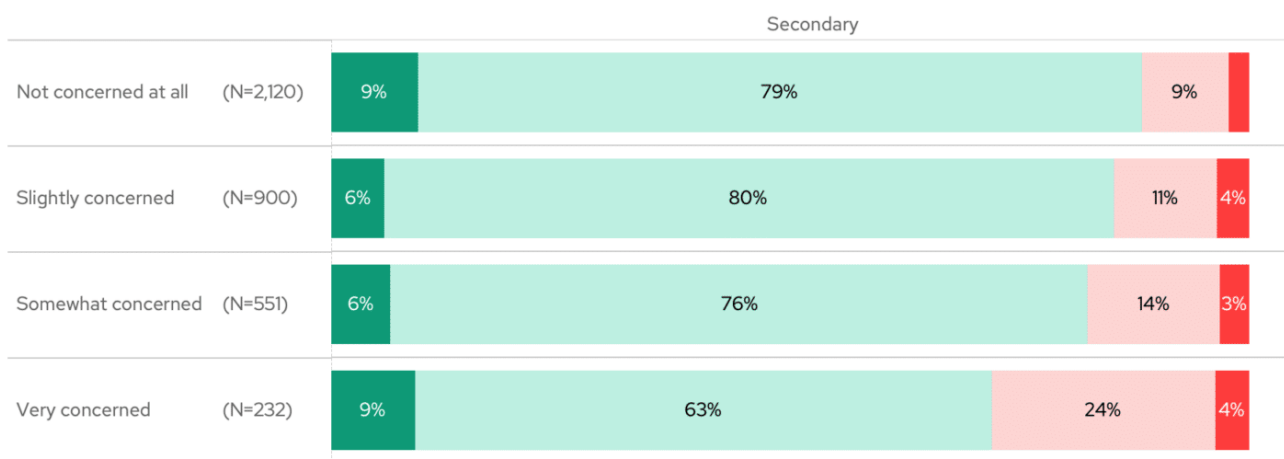


Question answered by 5,337 teachers on 04/03/2023 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)



Some of the aforementioned protests were about toilet policies, so what do they look like in schools? Well, most policies allow for teacher discretion about whether a student can go or not. 72% of secondary teachers saying their toilets remain open during lesson time and a further 11% saying they are locked, but a student can get a key. In schools where behaviour is worse, it is more likely that students will need a key, but very few lock them entirely (less than 5% in all cases).

Think about the next lesson you are going to teach. How concerned are you that poor behaviour will significantly affect the amount of learning? (down) versus In your school, during lesson time are toilets... (across)



Question answered by 3,803 teachers on 02/03/2023 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

■ Open, pupil has right to go ■ Locked, pupil can get a key (teacher discretion)
■ Open, pupil may be allowed to go (teacher discretion) ■ Locked, no one can go

For our final word on toilets, we come to another unlikely essay title: Teachers' ideal toilet preferences. Overall, just 16% of secondary teachers said they would choose single gender, door between corridor and toilets as their preferred choice if they were building a school, this was 32% among primary teachers. Even among those teachers who have a single gender, door between corridor and toilets now, the majority would at least opt to remove the door.

There wasn't any agreement about whether teachers would choose single gender or mixed gender toilets, with the majority just opting to stick with what they are currently used to.

Regional strikes

Last week, we [gazed into our crystal ball](#) to see how the latest round of teacher strikes would affect schools. Now, we can look back to see whether our crystal ball was accurate!

It transpired that London was indeed the most affected, with 24% of primary teachers having a fully closed school. The next most affected region was the North West, with 16% of primaries fully closed. The state of secondary schools was very similar between regions, though. Less than 5% of secondary teachers say their school fully closed between regions around one-in-five were fully open to all students.

But...how different was this from the previous strike day at the start of February?

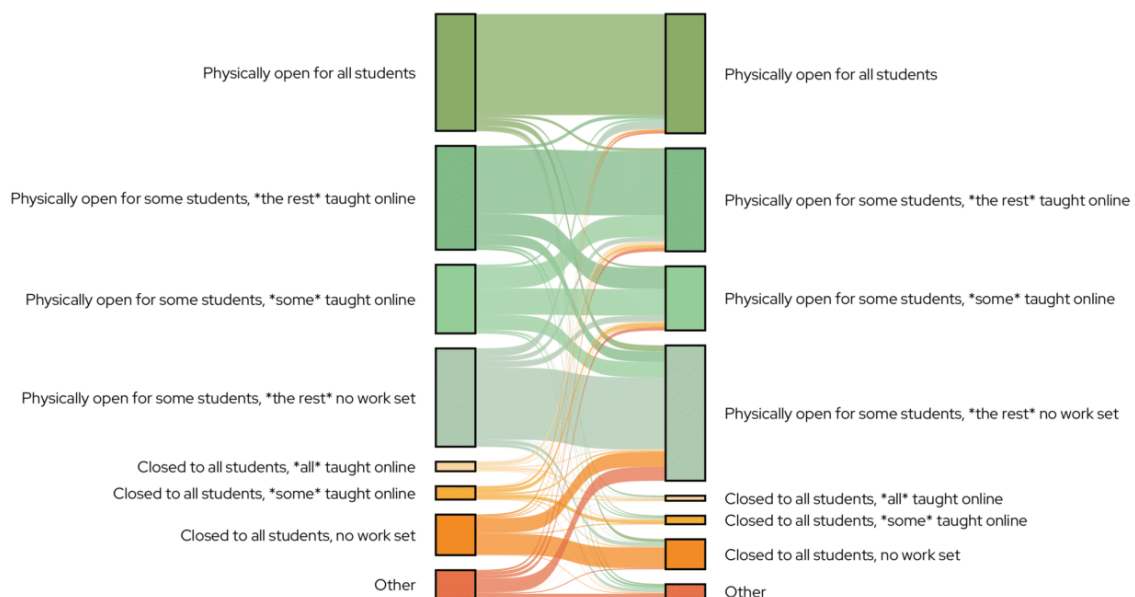
Firstly, we believe that fewer of you were on strike. According to our calculations, approximately 38% of you said you were on strike on 1st February. This time around, that figure is 32%. Note that it's tricky to get exact figures for strike days, because people may respond differently!

That said, if fewer teachers were striking, it may explain why the direction of travel is moving towards schools opening more. During the first round of strikes, around 10% schools were completely closed, now this is just 8%.

The Sankey diagram below shows how schools have changed their approach between the strikes. What we can learn from this is that many operated similarly to how they did previously. Of those that were closed before, they shifted to saying they were open to some students, and didn't set work for others.

Fewer schools physically closed to all students during the regional strike day

Question asked: "On your strike day/regional strike day this week, how did your school operate?"



Question answered by 6,715 teachers between 2023-02-02 and 2023-03-03. Only valid teachers included (i.e. those who have confirmed they teach in a school with a valid job title).

Other findings

We didn't just ask about toilets and strikes this week! Here is a run-down of our other big findings over the past week.

Nearly half of classroom teachers believe that decisions impacting promotions are made with bias in their school. Just a quarter of classroom teachers believe their school is unbiased in its promotion decision making. However, 83% of headteachers believe that decisions are made without bias in their school. Secondary teachers are more likely to feel there is biased promotion-based decision making in their school.

Female secondary teachers were the most likely to have been subjected to negative comments from a child about their intelligence. Just 30% of female secondary teachers

haven't heard this said about them, compared to 34% of male teachers. Around one-in-ten secondary teachers are quite regularly subjected to these kinds of comments.

Compared to last year, primary students will have experienced more trips, but not as many as in 2019. This year, 85% of primary classes will go on a day trip, compared to 74% last year (93% in 2019). Overnight residentials are still rarer than pre-pandemic though, with just 36% of classes experiencing one this year. Funding pressures, cost-of-living are just two reasons why we won't have seen a full recovery yet.

And finally...

The most read tip this week was: [engaging passive learners](#)

And here are the rest for your reference:

- [Observing, better](#)
- [How much classroom diversity should there be?](#)
- [No more tips and tricks in teaching!](#)
- [Sharing assessments between schools and/or trusts: can it work?](#)
- [ChatGPT: friend or foe?](#)