

A New School Year 2023 – plus policy experiments, work clothes and more...

And lo, the autumn catches up with us for another year. The vast majority of teachers in England have pupils coming back Monday to Wednesday this week – although with crumbling concrete chaos, fewer are back than usual.

Co-Founder Laura McNerney has been out, shining the Teacher Tapp light during media interviews about the buildings problems. While critical RAAC is only confirmed in a small number of schools at present, you've also told us that 40% of schools have buckets for leaking roofs and 12% have rooms that can't be used due to their condition. Given the money for buildings halved over the past 13 years it's important to make the case more strongly for cash to ensure schools are well-maintained and we've been glad to use what you've told us to fight for just that.

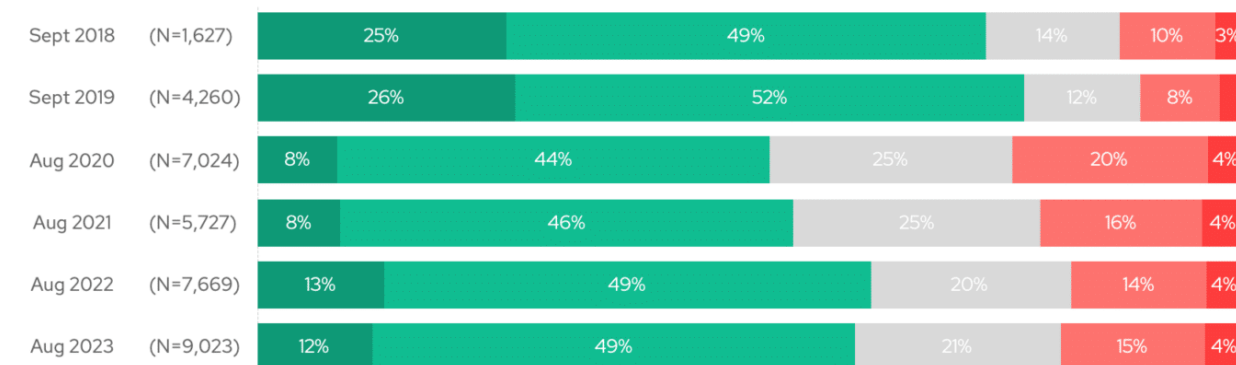
The New School Year

It's not feeling like the most optimistic start to the year but it's at least not the worst it's ever been ■■■■

During the pandemic years, optimism rates got as low as 52%.

This year, 61% of you are optimistic about the year ahead, although that's a little lower than last year and a whole heap lower than 2019 when rates were 77%. Oh 2019, how we wished we'd savoured you more...

How optimistic are you about the new school year?



Teacher responses vary from 1,627 to 9,023, depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)



There are many reasons for optimism to change - not least the country's economic position - but one influence may be the level of uncertainty in society amid a barrage of social and technological changes.

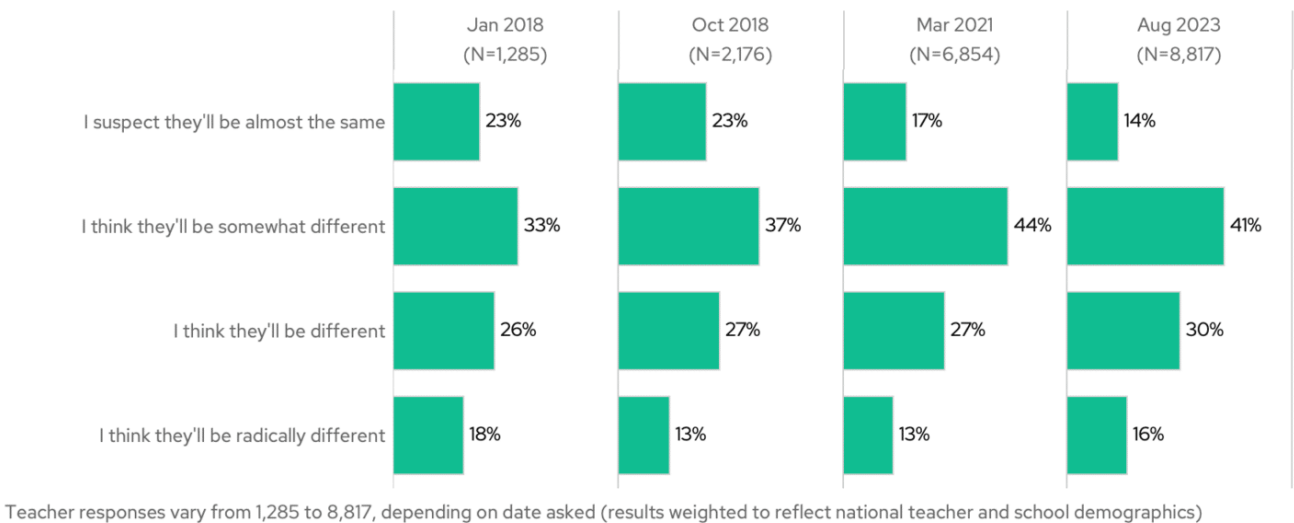
Covid shook the world up and its influence on technology, mixed with new artificial intelligence, means things feel different than 2019. So much so that it has influenced how you see the future of education progressing.

In 2018, when we asked you to imagine schools 20 years hence, 23% of you said they would be the same. Now, that number has dropped to just 14%.

That said, you don't tend to be anymore convinced that things will be radically different - so more of a pond change, than a sea change, perhaps.

Look into the future and think about what the person teaching your year groups and/or subjects will be doing in twenty years' time.

Considering the cultural and technological changes likely to happen, how different do you think the weekly learning experiences of the teachers and children will be?



[An aside: One thing that does seem likely in the future is that holidays will include a lot more TV series. 63% of you completed an entire TV series during the summer this year, compared to just 41% in 2018!]

And one thing that never seems to change - 74% of you have forgotten at least one password that you'll need on your return to school in September! Let us spare a thought for the IT staff who will be spending their time trying to resolve such issues.

Clothes: A Cost Of Living Canary?

Sometimes we ask questions on Teacher Tapp that can seem frivolous. In 2018 we asked about buying new work clothes as teachers were discussing online.

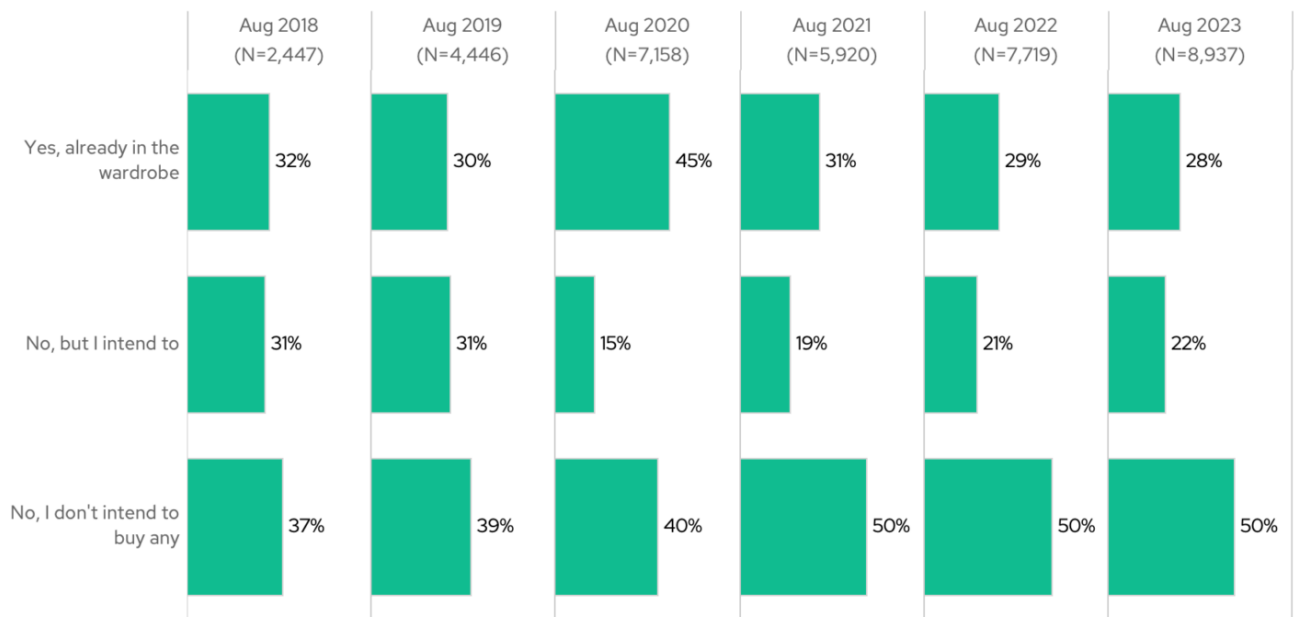
But it's interesting to note the pattern changes in how many people are buying new workwear.

Before the pandemic, around 30-32% teachers bought new clothes for the start of term. In August 2020, the number jumped: 45%. This was a year when household budgets typically did better: fewer costs, as you couldn't go anywhere, and the energy/rent bills weren't yet spiralling.

Since then the numbers have dropped and now just 28% of teachers bought new clothes and only 22% intended to - a much lower rate than in 2018.

Of course, this behaviour knocks on to the retailers, and to the high street coffee shops, previously filled with shoppers. It's an example of how small behaviours related to one industry can start to influence another.

Have you bought new work clothes ready for the start of term?



Teacher responses vary from 2,447 to 8,937, depending on date asked (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

The Big Politics Experiment

In another attempt to force politicians to listen to your views, you also took part in a LARGE experiment last week. For the first time ever we attempted a form of 'comparative judgement' in which everyone on Teacher Tapp was given different sets of questions requiring you to pick between two future education policies.

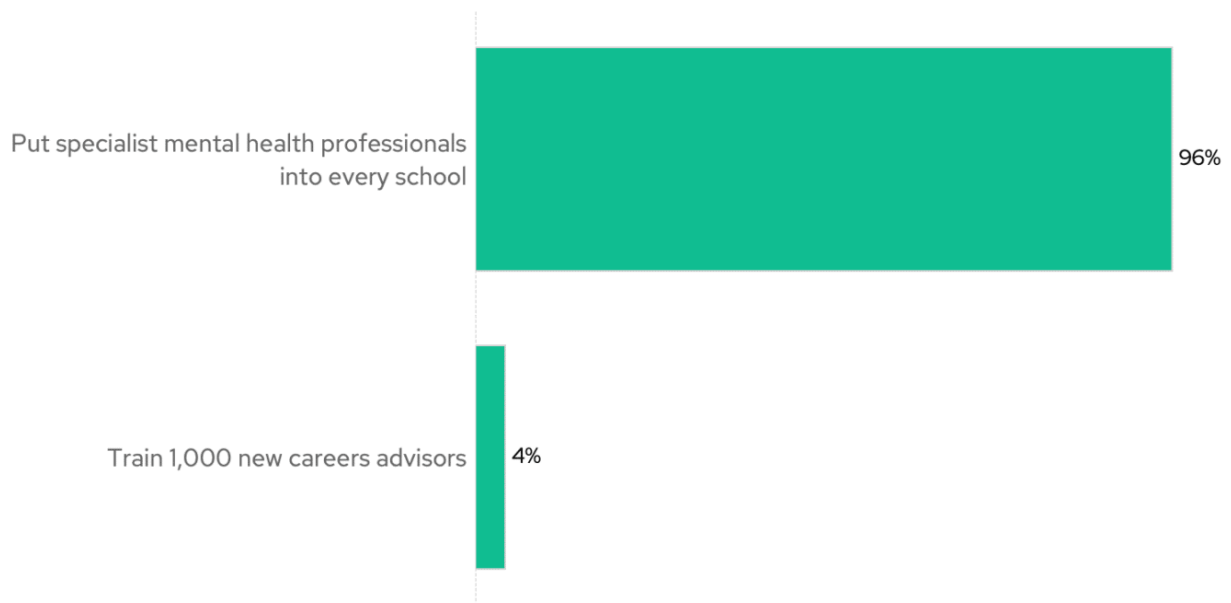
The theory of pairwise choices - (fancy name for picking between two things) - is that it's much easier for humans to do, compared to picking your favourite policy from among a long list. The downside is that pairwise comparing a long list of education policies (we had 16) means an individual would need to answer 110 different questions to have ranked everything.

However, because the Teacher Tapp panel is so large we can be more efficient. And instead of answering 110 questions, you only had to answer 10 each.

At present, we only have a list of planned policies from the Labour Party. So we could only use their policies FOR NOW. When we get more policies from other parties we will run the same thing again. And eventually we'll run a sort of mega-policy-off where we can pit them against each other to create the Ultimate Ultimate List of Education Policies.

As we are still calculating, we can't give away too many results yet but we will say that one question stood out as having the biggest disparity of all!

If the next government could only implement one of these policies, which would you choose?



Question answered by 1,031 teachers on 02/09/2023 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Subject Stereotypes

A Tapper asked us to look at subject stereotypes – and thousands of you wrote about them in droves.

Unfortunately the answers were... a bit stereotypical and also a little depressing. In essence, they mainly boiled down to:

Maths, Physics, Computing – for boys and hard

Arts, English, Psychology – for girls and easy

PE – for boys, and easy

Music – not useful

MFL – hard and not useful

History – boring

Geography – just about maps!

What we should have asked is how you help smash the stereotypes! That's one to watch out for the future, and we hope will have more inspiring answers,

Ups and Downs

On the rise

■ Making Lesson Resources: More of you spent time in the summer making lesson resources. UP to 39% from 33% last year, with secondary teachers leaping from 26% to 36%. (Was it all the rainy days?!)

Heading down

■ Private Schools: If you could afford to send your children to private schools, fewer of you would do so now compared to last year. Primary teachers dropped the most, from 47% to 41%.

And finally...

The most read tip this week was on: [Ofsted Framework Update: A Summary](#)

And here are the rest for your reference:

- [Top tips for starting with a new class](#)
- [Top tips for your first lesson](#)
- [A letter from the shore](#)
- [Childhood dreams](#)
- [How to decide if new initiatives are really a good idea](#)