

# Will schools cope with a coronavirus closure? (Plus marker pens, staffroom sitting & other goodies)

## 1 Can schools keep teaching even if closed for quarantine? ■■

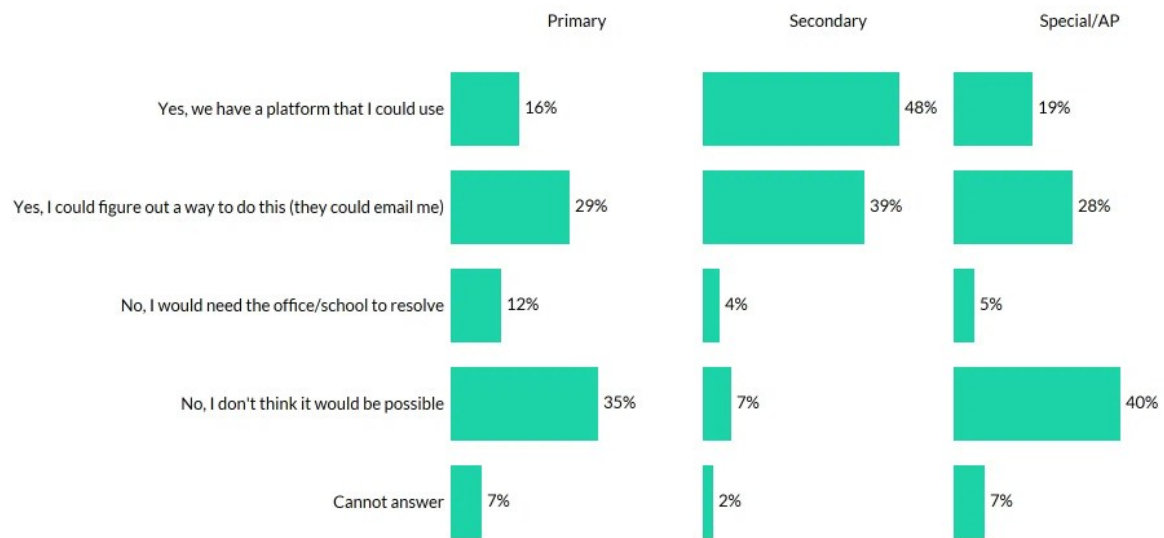
We've been meeting lots of senior leaders at conferences over the past week so we know temporary school closures are on your mind.

Schools often have to close as a result of poor weather or building issues or elections - we know that 9% of you have already had an unscheduled closure this year. However, closing schools for weeks - as has happened in Italy and east Asia - would be unprecedented.

Many of you wanted to know whether teachers could cope, so we asked three questions about how well you could support home learning.

First, we asked how easy it was for teachers to accept work completed by pupils at home. Almost all secondary teachers would know how to do this, either via an online platform or directly via email. But in primary schools, one-third of primary teachers didn't know how they would accept work from pupils working at home.

Think of the class you taught last today. Imagine school was suddenly closed for a time. Could YOU ACCEPT WORK remotely from that class?

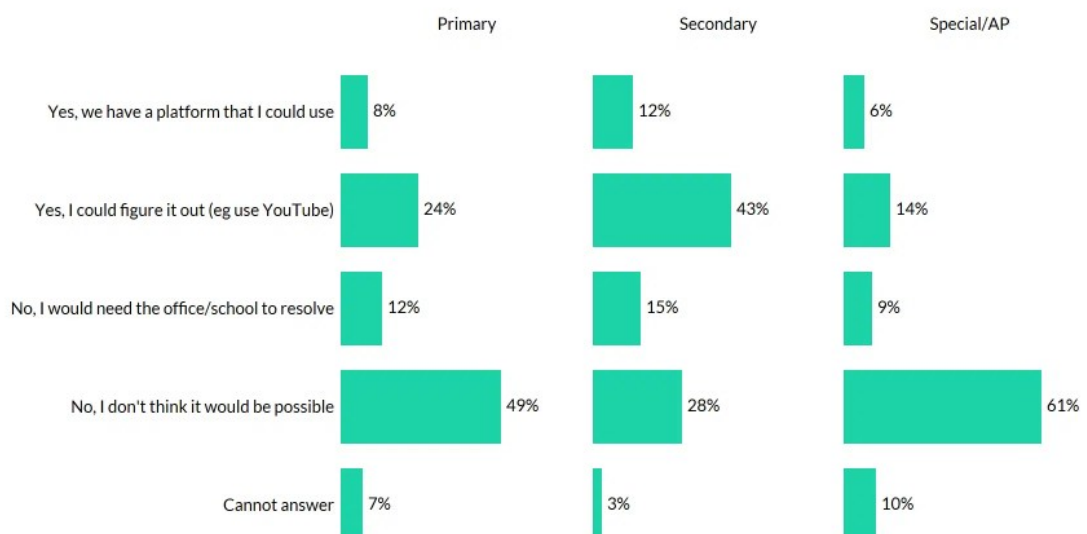


Question answered by 6,372 teachers on 03/03/2020

Next, we asked if you would be able to broadcast a video lesson? Few teachers felt their school had an existing platform with this capability, though many secondary teachers reckoned they could figure out how to do it.

The same wasn't so true for primary teachers – half felt broadcasting a video lesson just wouldn't be possible.

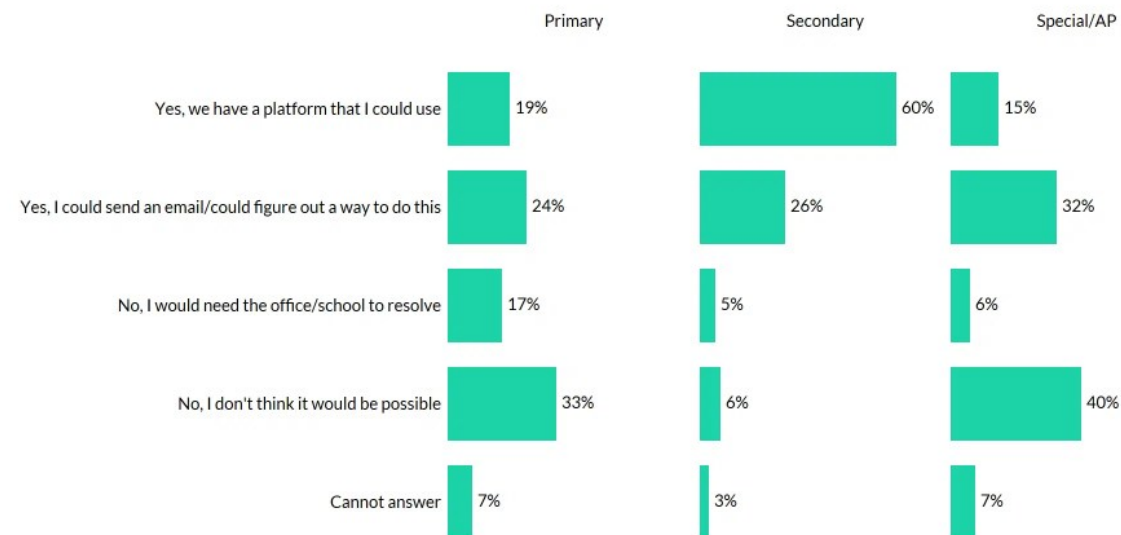
Think of the class you taught last today. Imagine school was suddenly closed for a time. Could YOU BROADCAST A VIDEO LESSON for that class to access?



Question answered by 6,372 teachers on 03/03/2020

Finally, we asked whether you could set (and as in send out or describe) work remotely. Nearly all secondary teachers thought they would be able to do this fairly easily, but, again, one-third of primary teachers didn't think it would be possible.

Think of the class you taught last today. Imagine school was suddenly closed for a time. Could YOU SET WORK remotely for that class to do?



Question answered by 6,372 teachers on 03/03/2020

While the secondary sector may be okay with closures, it looks like primary schools would struggle to cope. And that's not taking into account the fact that many teachers would also be simultaneously looking after children – around 20% of teachers have a child under the age of 8 at home.

The Guardian also carried [some of our results today](#) – great to see Teacher Tapp users informing the national media!

## 2. Who is in the staffroom?

Did you go to the staffroom today? If you are a science or arts/DT teacher in a secondary school then the answer is probably no. Presumably this is because these subject departments tend to have good lab facilities for making drinks and hanging out?!

Going to the staffroom is a great proxy for how much staff in a school spend time together, which in turn affects cultural cohesion and isolation. Teachers in private schools are the most likely to visit the staffroom during every lunch and break. Of course, we know from other Teacher Tapp questions that they also usually get a free lunch!

**Does your school have a main staffroom (where staff from all over the school can spend time)?**



Question answered by 5,767 teachers on 06/03/2020  
(results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

But we also know that private schools also still have traditional lunchtimes of 1 hour or more so there is time for extra-curricular clubs to run.

At the other end of the spectrum, those teaching in the highest FSM schools are least likely to hang out in the staffroom and we also know they have the shortest lunchtimes. The two things are likely linked. It is a shame, however, because staff room conversation can be an important way of teachers sharing knowledge about new teaching ideas, or information about pupil learning. It's also a great way to share the latest Teacher Tapp findings! (If you would like a poster for your staffroom, do print this one and stick it up!).

### Does your school have a main staffroom (where staff from all over the school can spend time)?



Question answered by 5,927 teachers on 06/03/2020  
(results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Teachers in private schools were also most likely to say they had the greatest influence over what is taught in their classroom. Of course, private school teachers do not need to follow the National Curriculum, and they also tend to be working in smaller schools, so shared planning might be less common.

### How much influence do you feel you have over what is taught in your classroom?



Question answered by 5,799 teachers on 07/03/2020  
(results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Given one of the big benefits of the academy system was supposed to be curriculum

autonomy, the following is also surprising!

How much influence do you feel you have over what is taught in your classroom?



A benefit of teaching subjects neglected by politicians, (i.e. those that aren't compulsory at KS4) is that teachers retain a great deal of autonomy over what goes on in their classroom, which is presumably why arts and D&T teachers feel they have the most freedom. By contrast, science departments have various logistical challenges, such as pre-organising lab experiments and collaborating across three subject areas, which in turn means they feel they have the least influence.

### How much influence do you feel you have over what is taught in your classroom?



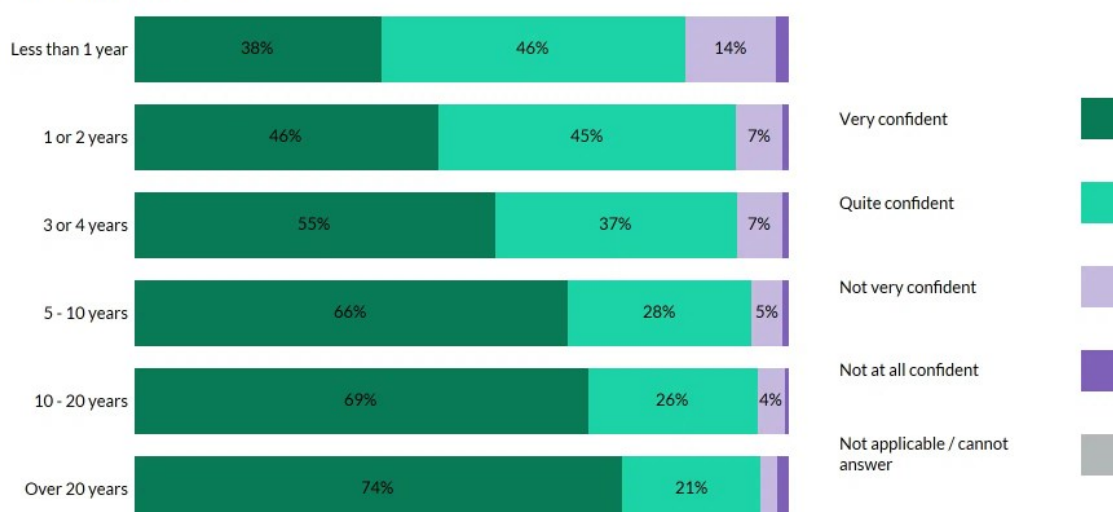
Question answered by 5,736 teachers on 07/03/2020  
(results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

## 3. How good is your subject knowledge?

Teaching is really difficult, especially when you start. Learning how to manage the zaniness of classroom behaviour is tough, but you also have to do that whilst becoming familiar with the exact content for each of the classes you teach.

That said, teachers are amazingly confident about the subject knowledge they teach. However, inexperienced teachers are far less confident than others. Given we know they are also struggling with behaviour at far higher rates than experienced teachers, this must be very nerve-wracking.

**In the last lesson you taught, how confident were you in your own subject knowledge BEFORE you started preparing for the lesson?**



Question answered by 5,688 teachers on 05/03/2020  
(results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

New teachers are also the least likely to say they have sufficient background knowledge for all the lessons on their timetable, this is despite being the closest to their own studies!

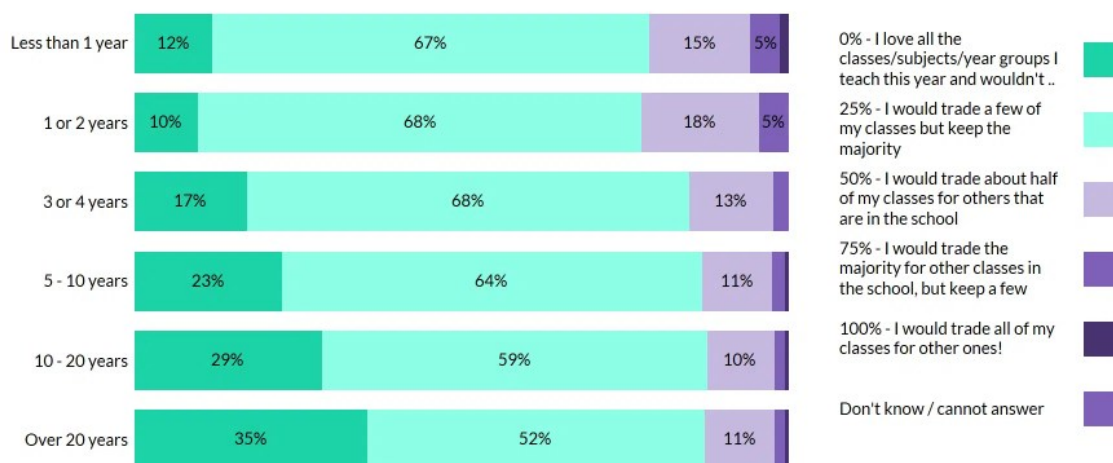
**I feel I have sufficient background knowledge to be able to deliver all lessons on my timetable**



Question answered by 5,951 teachers on 07/03/2020  
(results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

Insecure subject knowledge might therefore be one of the reasons why it is inexperienced teachers who are most keen to trade in some of their classes!

This is a fantasy timetable game. Suppose you have to teach the same number of lessons as you do now, but you can switch any of your current classes for a different class in any subject and/or year group you want. Approximately what % of your current timetable would you trade in this game?



Question answered by 4,126 teachers on 06/03/2020  
(results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

However, subject also really matters for teacher background knowledge. Maths and MFL teachers are far and away the most confident of their knowledge – potentially because these subjects are cumulative, and so it's rare for something to come up on the school syllabus which the teacher hasn't also studied at university. Humanities and English teachers, meanwhile, may never have looked at certain texts or periods which they now must teach. Spare a thought for primary teachers who also need to teach everything!

I feel I have sufficient background knowledge to be able to deliver all lessons on my timetable



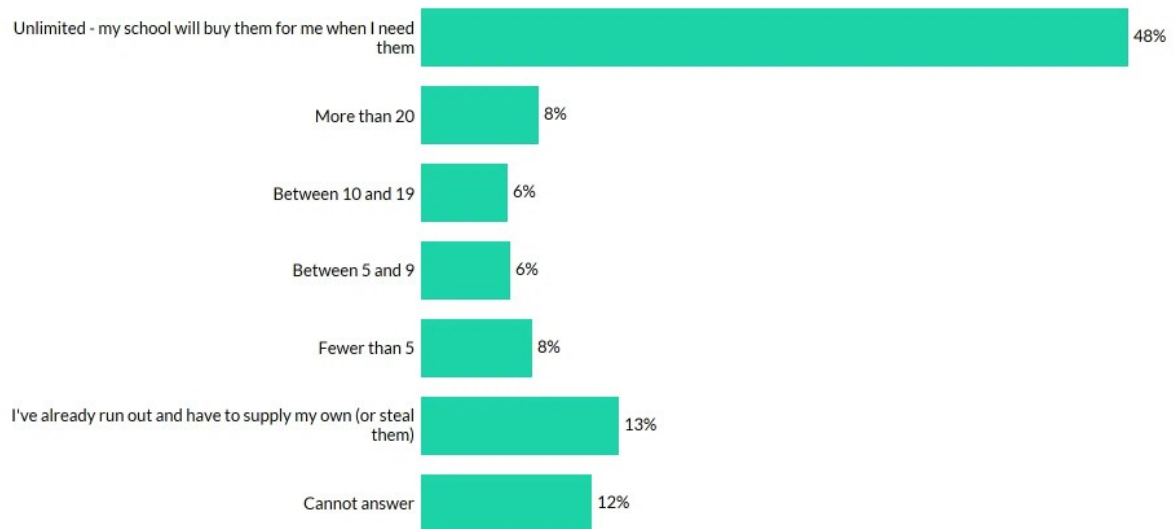
Question answered by 5,773 teachers on 07/03/2020  
(results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

## 4 And finally, marker pens...

Toilet paper may be the virus-related hot item in supermarkets at the moment, but how many marker pens do you currently have? Don't worry - there isn't a national shortage (yet!) - but we wanted to find out if your war chest of marker pens from September are still holding up?!

As it stands, 13% of you have completely run out of marker pens and are now begging, borrowing or stealing! A further 8% of you are clinging on with just 5 pens left - how long do you think they will go?

Back in September we asked how many marker pens your school gave you. Now we want to know: how many do you have left to last the year?



Question answered by 6,420 teachers on 02/03/2020  
(results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

On the upside, almost half of you are able to have an unlimited supply of pens. Although shhh... don't tell ministers, they will be after those in their cost-cutting efforts also!

5. Finally, finally, we know you love the daily tip reads so here are all of the ones from last week....

- [Creating independent thinkers and writers through socratic seminars](#)
- [What if they don't want to learn?](#)
- [Fun maths activities for very young children](#)
- [When is student choice a good idea?](#)
- [Is time up for teacher training days?](#)
- [Do you suffer from 'Mondayitis'?](#)