

Swearing, uniform and mobile phones!

We're one step closer to opening up the country this week. Have you made any plans to invite a friend into your house or visit a pub without freezing to the bones?!

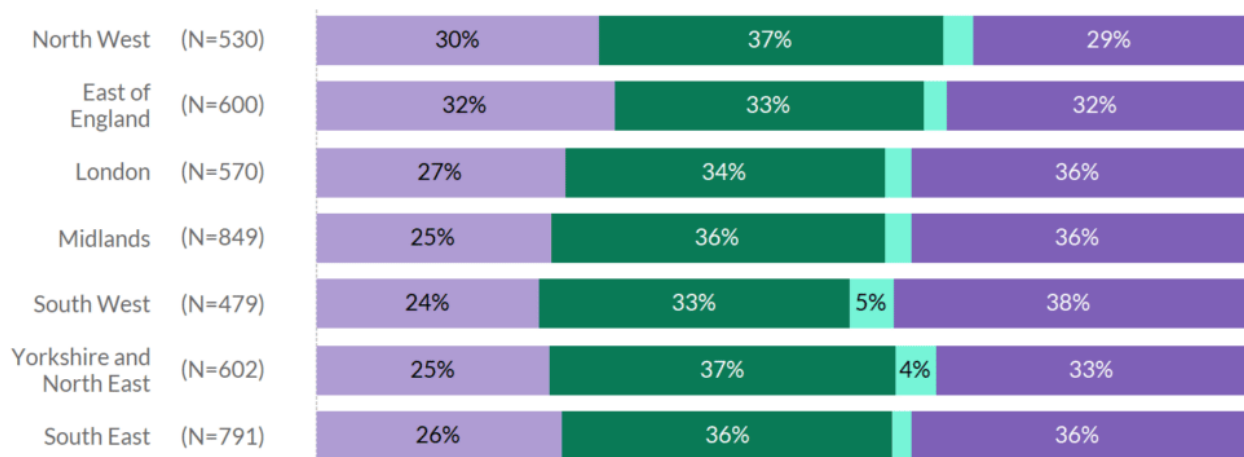
1. Keeping cautious on masks and tests

Masks and testing have been a daily feature of life in schools, particularly for secondary teachers, but it's now time to make difficult decisions about relaxing the rules.

For those in secondary schools, we asked if you would like to see masks kept in some way in your school. Just over a third of you said no. However, two-thirds want to keep them, and more than a quarter want to see masks continue to be worn even in the classroom.

Does it matter if you're an area with high rates of infections? Nope! And there were also no differences by age, so it's not a vaccine-related matter either.

From Monday, would you prefer your school to continue to require face coverings?



Question answered by 4,550 teachers on 12/05/2021 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

■ Yes, for students and staff in classroom ■ Yes, for students and staff in communal areas
■ Yes, but just for staff ■ No

Masks are one part of the protections. Another part is COVID-19 testing by teachers and

students. Only around two-thirds of you had completed a COVID-19 test at the start of the week (i.e. on Sunday or Monday). Which days do you test?!

Did you take a Covid-19 test today or yesterday?



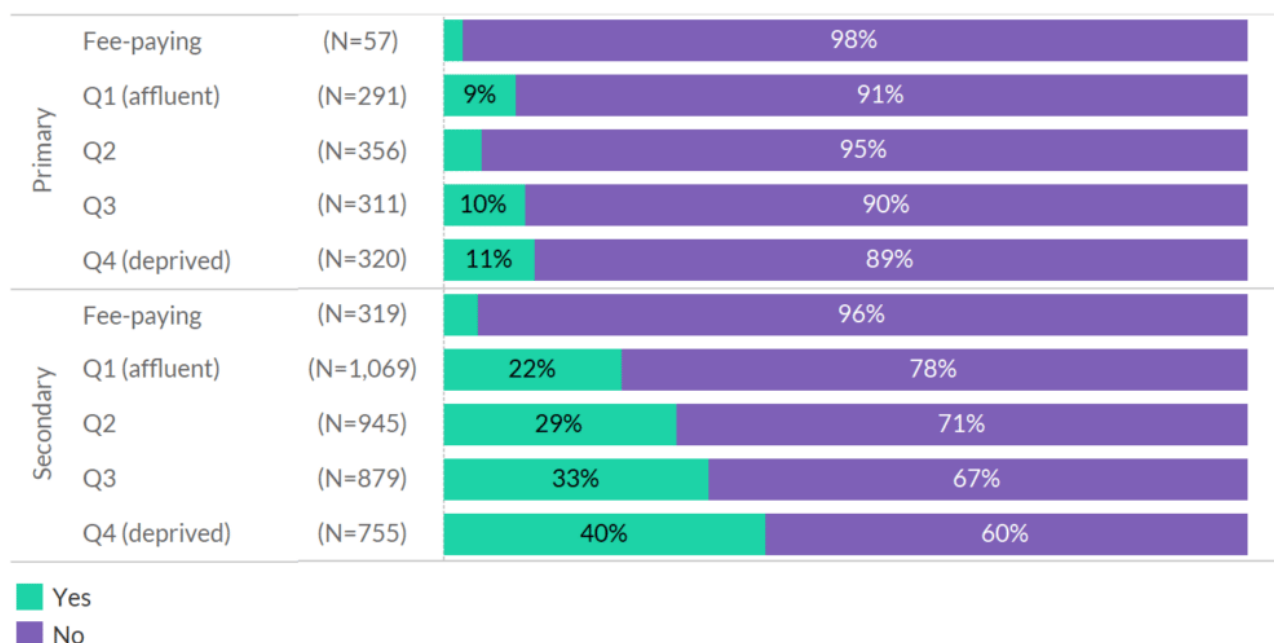
Question answered by 6,705 teachers on 10/05/2021 (results weighted to reflect national teacher and school demographics)

■ No
■ Yes

2. How do you handle this?

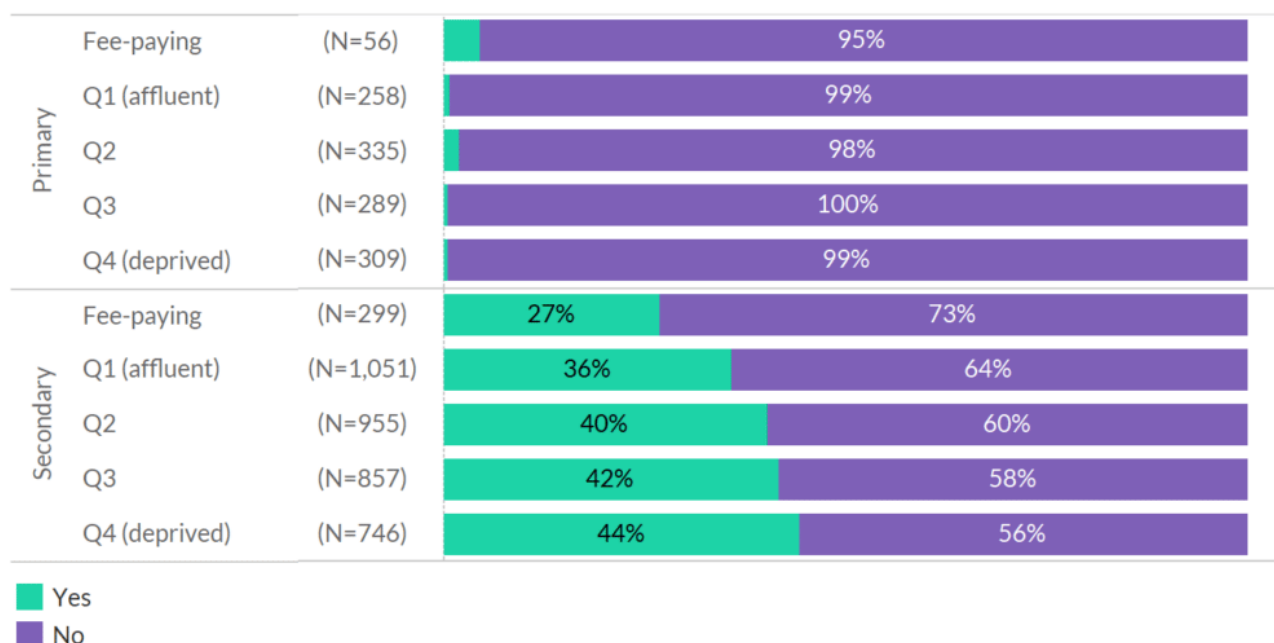
How was behaviour in school this week? This week we've been looking at the types of behaviours often mentioned in school behaviour policies – uniforms, mobiles and swearing! How these types of infractions occur across schools varies a great deal. Students swearing at another student is pretty unusual in primary schools and in any private schools. By contrast, 40% of you who teach in the highest FSM secondary school said there was swearing in your lesson that day.

Did a student swear at another person in one of your lessons today?



Likewise, mobile phones simply aren't an issue in the majority of primary school lessons. (Perhaps because most primary schools take them in at the door). Again, the behaviour increases in secondary school depending on the level of deprivation.

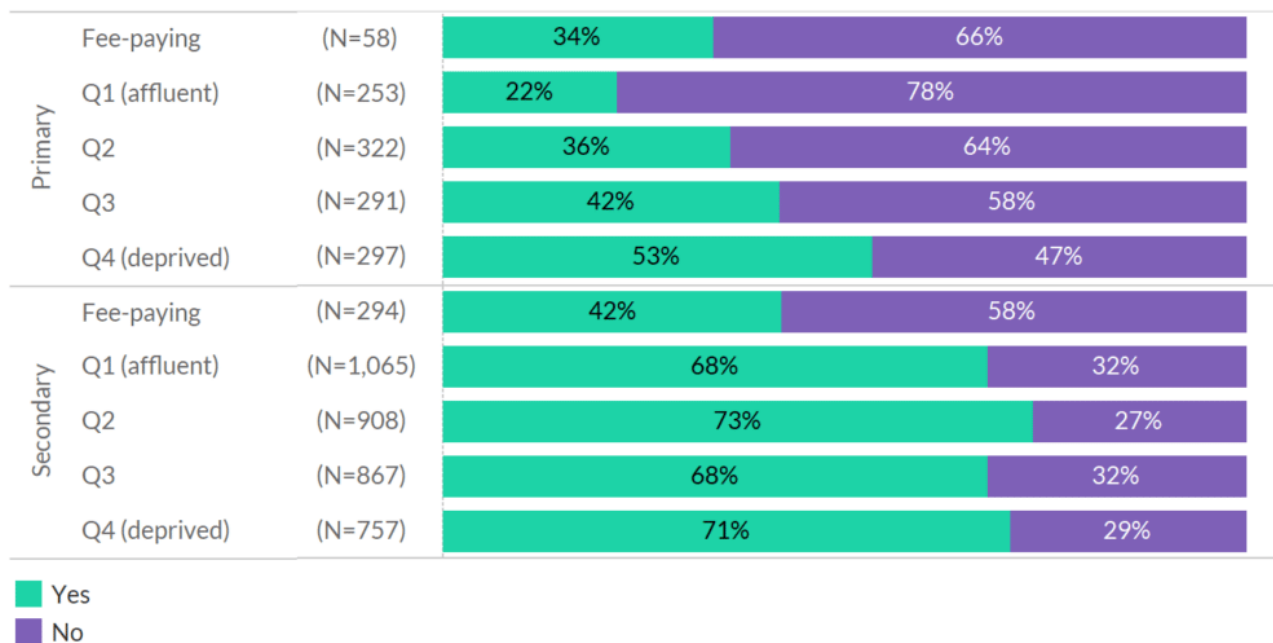
Did a student take out a mobile phone in one of your lessons today without permission?



Uniform mixes the picture up a little - with fee-paying primary schools having more issues than state primary schools with the wealthiest intakes. Given that state primary schools are less likely to feature blazers or ties, could this be the reason for the difference?

Several teachers got in touch on social media to point out that uniform infractions were often happening in their school at present because children have grown out of items but shop closures have made them hard to replace. Where families are struggling for cash, due to the loss of businesses or furlough, schools are also taking a more relaxed approach to uniform. Finally, there's the problem of schools having the windows open, and this spring is one of the chilliest on record for some time. (April was the third coldest since records began 🌨️)

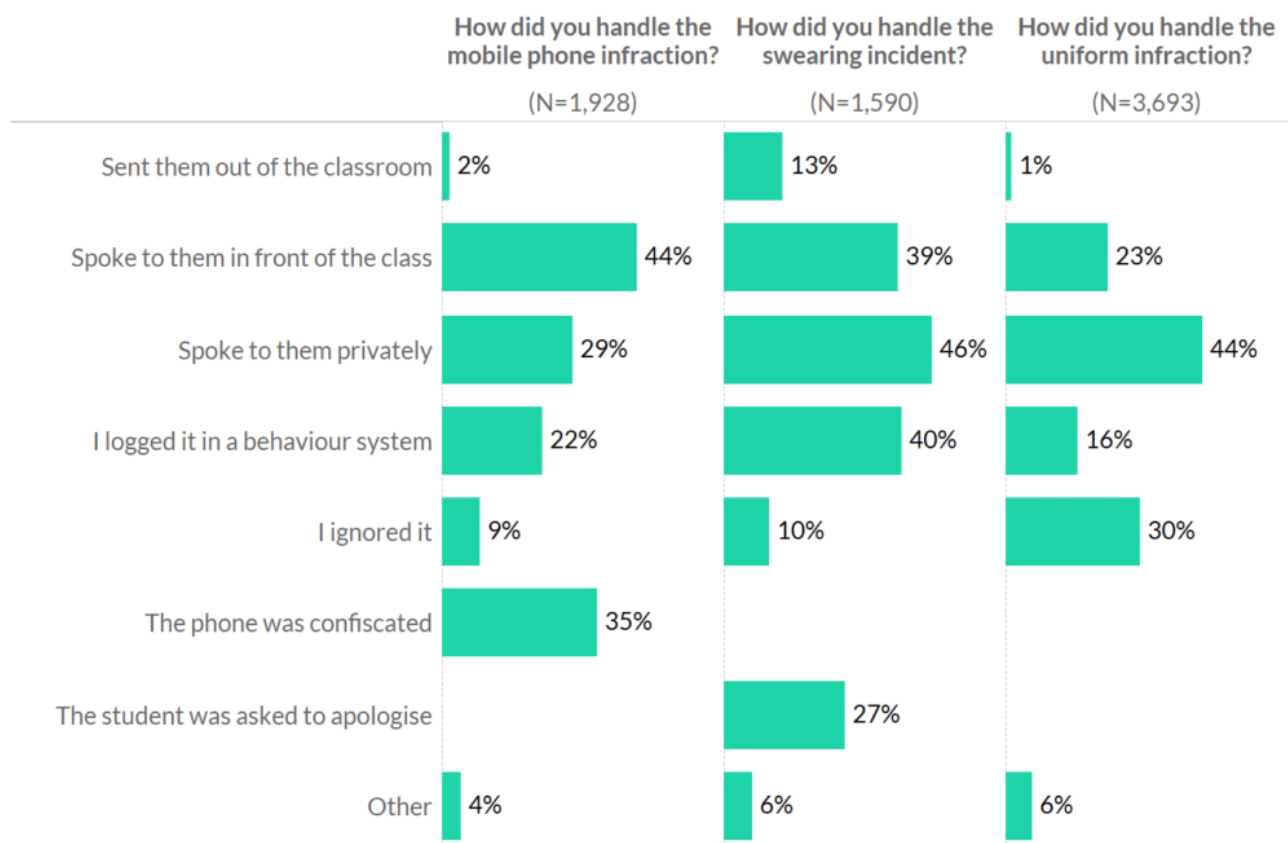
Was there a uniform infraction by a student in your classroom today?



What are the common sanctions for such behaviours? Uniform infractions were the least likely to have a behaviour log or public telling off. Indeed, 30% of teachers ignored the issue (with several writing to let us know that they didn't feel it was necessary to handle given it was covid-related).

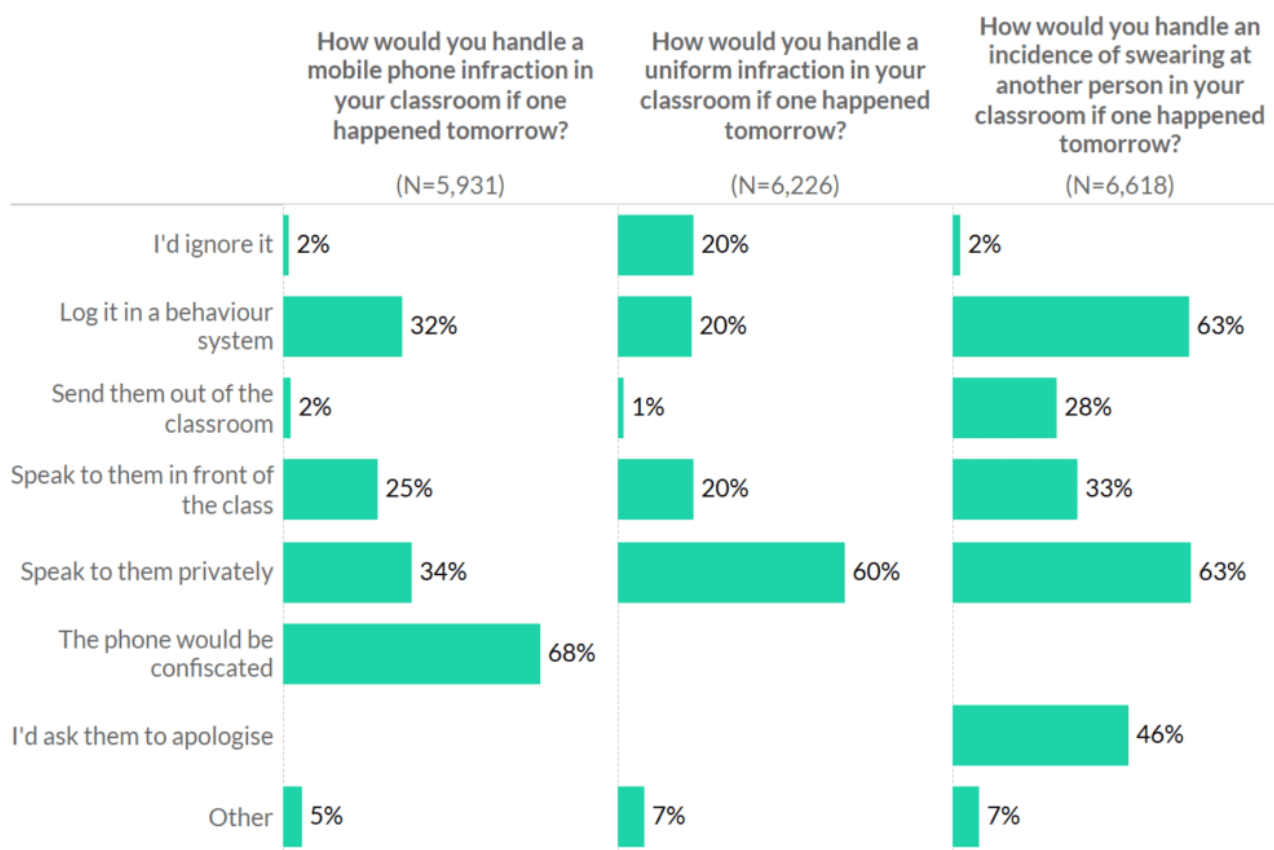
35% of teachers who saw a mobile phone out in their class confiscated it, and 22% logged it into an online behaviour system.

Swearing was the most serious offence, with 40% of those experiencing it logging it into the behaviour system. We wonder if it led to any follow up by anyone else?



An interesting quirk... we knew that some teachers wouldn't have experienced these problems at all. But, what was their best guess for how they would react if the situation occurred? And how different is it from what teachers who experienced the problem really did?

In the case of mobile phones, only 35% of teachers confiscated the phones, but 68% of teachers said they would confiscate one if they saw it. When it came to a swearing incident, 46% of teachers said they would ask the student to apologise. In reality, only 27% of teachers experiencing the situation actually did this.



Of course, the two groups are not the same. It could be that the teachers who are most ready to confiscate mobile phones also see fewer phones in their classroom because the students know their teachers are ready to do so. Alternatively, it could be that when we imagine students breaking a rule, we are more likely to imagine them maliciously doing so and therefore we think about more serious sanctions. For example, purposely not tucking their shirt in, as opposed to wearing trainers because they've twisted their ankle and shoes currently fit!

We will keep asking questions on these issues to dig more into the way teachers manage behaviour and school policies. Thank you for the comments you've shared with us on this topic so far, and please do let us know if there are any other questions we should be asking.

3. All those 'down-hearted questions'...

If you're wondering why we've been asking a series of questions about how you are feeling - it's because we are looking again at a series of measures that give an idea around general teacher wellbeing. We asked these questions last year and in the pre-pandemic times, so it's a good way to keep track of general happiness and wellbeing.

One of the theories in psychology is that life events can set us back or lift us a little, but that people generally have a 'set point' of happiness from which we vary only a little. Is that true for teachers? And where is that set point of happiness? You'll know as soon as we do!

Next week we will be asking more questions about workload and marking - especially with an

eye on those of you currently trying to mark hundreds of exam papers. What a nightmare! So please do keep tapping.

Finally, don't forget:

If you'd like a pack of posters/coasters to display in your school, to tell people about Teacher Tapp, then please fill in the form [here!](#)

Finally, we know you love the tips, so here are last weeks...

The most highly rated post of the week was:

[Six minute lesson prep](#)

Plus, the other reads from this week:

[Do or Do not - the doer effect](#)

[The ECF one term in](#)

[The power of by](#)

[Improving an imaginary school](#)

[Hidden lives of online learners](#)