

Travel to School in Scotland

Hands Up Scotland Survey 2023:
National Summary Report

May 2024



About Sustrans

Sustrans is the charity making it easier for people to walk and cycle. We connect people and places, create liveable neighbourhoods, transform the school run and deliver a happier, healthier commute.

Join us on our journey. www.sustrans.org.uk

Document details	
Reference ID:	SUSR2268
Version:	2.0
Client:	Transport Scotland
Circulation Status:	External
Issue Date:	23rd May 2024
Author(s):	Matt Pearce, Isla Klose and Cameron Millar
Reviewed by:	Lisa Gallacher, Rory Mitchell, David Corner
Signed off by:	Lisa Gallacher
Accepted by:	Transport Scotland
Contact:	handsupscotland@sustrans.org.uk

Sustrans
1 Exchange Crescent
Conference Square
Edinburgh
EH3 8RA

© Sustrans May 2024
Registered Charity No. 326550 (England and Wales) SC039263 (Scotland)
VAT Registration No. 416740656

Cover photograph credit: J Bewley/Sustrans
© Sustrans, all rights reserved

Table of contents

- Executive Summary 1**
- 1 Introduction 3**
- 2 The National Summary Report 4**
- 3 Policy context for school travel in Scotland 5**
- 4 Other relevant data sources 9**
- 5 Survey design 10**
 - 5.1 Data collection 10
- 6 2023 Results 11**
 - 6.1 All school results 12
 - 6.2 Nursery results 14
 - 6.3 All state school comparison 15
 - 6.4 State and independent school comparison 17
 - 6.5 Response rates: schools 18
 - 6.6 Response rates: pupils 18
 - 6.7 Data tables: 2023 results 19
- 7 Trends in the 2014-2023 results 20**
 - 7.1 All school results 20
 - 7.2 Changes in mode share at local authority level 27
 - 7.3 Response rates 28
 - 7.4 Data tables: 2014-2023 results 31
- 8 Technical notes 32**
 - 8.1 Data collection 32
 - 8.2 Response rates 32
 - 8.3 School type 32
 - 8.4 Interpreting results 33
 - 8.5 Confidentiality 34
 - 8.6 Official Statistics Publication 34
 - 8.7 Enquiries 34
- Endnotes 35**

List of tables

Table 6-1: National response rates: number and proportion of schools responding to the survey, 2023.....	18
Table 6-2: National response rates: number of pupils responding to the survey by school type, and proportion of respondents from the total roll by each school type, 2023.....	18
Table 6-3: National travel categories: by school type, 2023	19
Table 6-4: National travel modes: by school type, 2023	19
Table 6-5: National travel modes: by school type and year group, 2023.	19
Table 7-1: National response rates: number of state and all schools (exc. nursery) responding to the survey, and state schools responding as a proportion of all state schools in Scotland, 2014-2023	28
Table 7-2: National response rates: number of state and all school pupils (exc. nursery) responding to the survey, and state school pupils responding as a proportion of all pupils in Scotland, 2014-2023	29
Table 7-3: Nursery participation: number of nursery schools and children responding to the survey, 2014-2023.	30
Table 7-4: National travel modes: all schools (exc. nursery), 2014-2023	29
Table 7-5: National travel categories: all schools (exc. nursery), 2014-2023.	29

List of charts

Chart 6-1: National travel modes: proportion of participating pupils travelling by different modes (all school pupil responses exc. nursery children), 2023.	12
Chart 6-2: National travel modes: pupil responses by school type, 2023.	13
Chart 6-3: National travel modes: proportion of participating nursery children travelling by different modes, 2023.	14
Chart 6-4: National travel modes: proportion of participating pupils travelling by different modes, by state school type (primary, secondary and SEN), 2023. ⁴⁴	15
Chart 6-5: National travel modes: proportion of participating pupils travelling by different modes, by state schools (exc. nursery) and independent schools, 2023.	17
Chart 7-1: National travel modes and categories: all schools (exc. nursery), 2014-2023	20
Chart 7-2: Active travel mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nursery), 2014-2023. ⁴⁰	21
Chart 7-3: Mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nursery) within the public sustainable travel category, 2014-2023. ⁴⁰	23
Chart 7-4: Mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nursery) within the multi-mode travel category, 2014-2023. ⁴⁰	24
Chart 7-5: Mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nursery) within the private motorised travel category, 2014-2023. ⁴⁰	25
Chart 7-6: Change in pupil travel mode share between 2022 and 2023 at the local authority level.	27
Chart 7-7: National response rates: number of responses from state school pupils and all school pupils (exc. nursery), 2014-2023. ⁴⁹	29

Executive Summary

The Hands Up Scotland Survey is an annual survey of school pupils and nursery children in Scotland. The survey is funded by Transport Scotland and is a joint project between Sustrans and Scottish local authorities. The survey has been designated an Official Statistic for Scotland by Parliamentary Order.

The survey is designed to provide reliable and up to date information on mode of travel to school in Scotland, both at national and local authority level as well as by school type and year group. The dataset informs and evidences school transport policies and initiatives.

The survey

The question posed to all school pupils and nursery children is, 'How do you normally travel to school?' with a choice of travel mode options.¹ The number of pupils present is recorded, and pupils are asked to raise their hand for one of the modes only. Each of these modes falls into one of four categories:

- **Active travel:** walking, cycling, and scootering or skating
- **Public sustainable travel:** bus
- **Multi-mode travel:** park & stride (driven part of the way by car and walk the rest)
- **Private motorised travel:** driven (car) and taxi.

Response rates

All 32 local authorities in Scotland participated in the survey in 2023. Trends in the data are analysed for the last ten years, with the baseline year in this report being 2014.

In 2023



443,271 school pupils and **39,889 nursery children** took part. **434,967** state school pupils participated, which equates to 61.6% of all state school pupils enrolled in Scotland.²

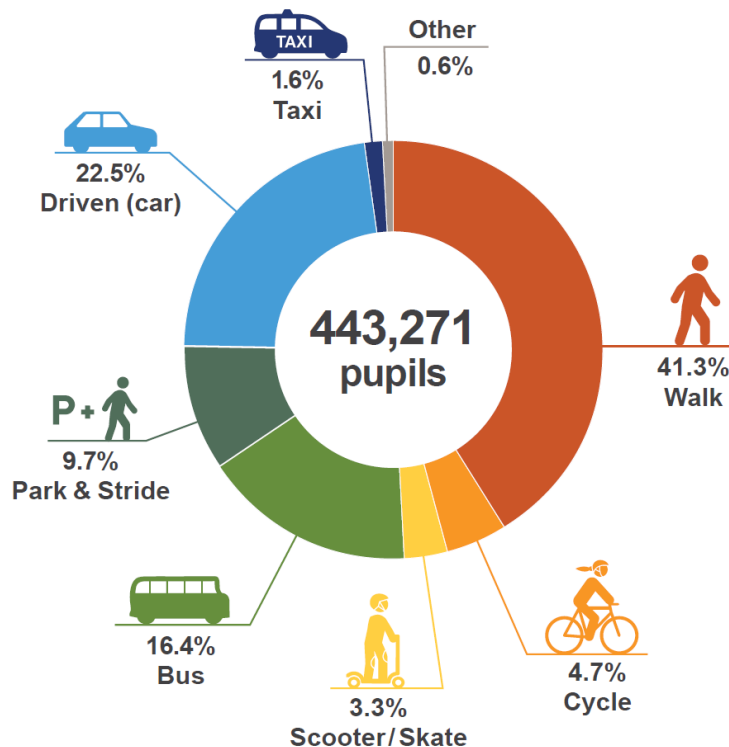
1,955 schools and **1,274 nurseries** took part. 1,938 state schools participated, which equates to 78.9% of all registered state schools in Scotland.

Between 2022 and 2023, there has been a 2.1 percentage point decrease in state school pupil response rate, from 63.7% to 61.6%. The total number of state schools responding to the survey has decreased from 1,952 in 2022 to 1,938 in 2023, and is the same as the pre-pandemic rate of 78.9% in 2019. Schools can return data for the whole school or broken down by class. In 2023, 71.8% of all registered state schools in Scotland returned data broken down by class. This is the second highest proportion of registered state schools returning data broken down by class since the survey began, with the highest proportion being 75.2% in 2017.

Active travel

Active travel to school has declined since 2022, but remains higher than the pre-pandemic levels of 2019.

49.3% of school pupils surveyed in 2023 said they normally travel to school in an active way, without any form of motorised transport. Active travel has consistently remained the most frequently reported mode of travel to school in Scotland. After a decreasing trend between 2014 and 2019, 2020 saw a 3.4 percentage point increase to 51.2%, making it the highest of the last ten survey years. Since then, levels have decreased year on year. Since 2022, levels have decreased by 0.1 percentage points to 49.3%. Walking to school decreased from 44.2% in 2014 to 41.3% in 2023. This is a decrease of 1.3 percentage points since 2022. Cycling and scootering or skating to school are at their highest levels of the last ten survey years, increasing from 3.4% in 2014 to 4.7% in 2023, for cycling, and from 2.8% in 2014 to 3.3% in 2023, for scootering or skating.



Multi-mode travel

9.7% of school pupils surveyed in 2023 said they normally park and stride to school.

Overall, the percentage of pupils travelling to school by park and stride has increased from 7.8% in 2014 to 9.7% in 2023.

Private motorised travel

Private motorised travel to school is at its lowest level since 2014.

24.0% of school pupils surveyed in 2023 said they normally travel to school using only a private motorised mode of transport, a 0.8 percentage point decrease since 2022.

The proportion of pupils being driven to school in a car showed an increasing trend from 2014 to 2019 where it reached a high of 23.8%. Since then it has fluctuated between 22.5% and 23.2%. Between 2022 and 2023 levels fell from 23.1% to 22.5%. Travel to school by taxi has remained stable, varying between 1.5% and 1.8%. In 2023 it remained the same as 2022 at 1.6%.

Public sustainable travel

16.4% of school pupils surveyed in 2023 said they normally travel to school by bus. This is the highest level since 2017.

Overall, the percentage of pupils travelling to school using the bus has decreased from 17.7% in 2014 to 16.4% in 2023.

1 Introduction

The Hands Up Scotland Survey is an annual survey of school pupils and nursery children in Scotland. The survey is funded by Transport Scotland and is a joint project between Sustrans and Scottish local authorities.

The specific aims of the survey are to:

- Meet central and local government needs for policy relevant data on mode of travel to school in Scotland³
- Be understandable and useful to stakeholders and so lead to a high level of use of the Hands Up Scotland Survey data
- Produce high quality data in accordance with the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice for Official Statistics.⁴

A Parliamentary Order designates Sustrans as an Official Statistics Provider⁵ as of 1st June 2012. The Hands Up Scotland Survey is guided by the three pillars laid out in the updated 2018 Code of Practice for Official Statistics, which are **'trustworthiness'**, **'quality'** and **'value'**. The primary aim of Official Statistics in Scotland is to provide an accurate, up-to-date, comprehensive and meaningful picture of the economy and society to support the formulation and monitoring of economic and social policies by government and others.⁶

The Hands Up Scotland Survey is designed to provide reliable annual information on mode of travel to school in Scotland, both nationally and at local authority level as well as by school type and year group.

2 The National Summary Report

The Hands Up Scotland Survey is conducted each September and has been running since 2008. Results are reported annually, with publication towards the end of the academic year.

This National Summary Report is designed to act as an introduction to the survey, presenting the results at a national level, as well as the policy context that the survey results can be used to evidence.

A shorter summary of key national level results for the Hands Up Scotland Survey 2023 is available in the form of an overview document. Supplementary National Results tables, including a breakdown of results at a local authority level and data collected from 2008 to 2023, are also available. These documents can be downloaded from Sustrans' website:

<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>

Each local authority also receives their results in a comprehensive range of tables, including breakdown by school. These local authority reports contain all data collected between 2008 and 2023.

Trends in the data are analysed for the last ten years, with the baseline year in this report being 2014.

The Sustrans' Hands Up Scotland Survey team can be contacted with feedback or enquiries.⁷ Where users wish to undertake more detailed analyses for a specific project and the national level documents do not provide the required information or format, a data request for local authority reports may be submitted to Sustrans' Hands Up Scotland Survey team.⁸

3 Policy context for school travel in Scotland

The Hands Up Scotland Survey is an important dataset for evidencing and informing decision making, policy and practice in a number of areas, including health, transport and the environment.

The Scottish Government has outlined its purpose as being to focus on creating a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increased wellbeing and sustainable and inclusive economic growth. It should also reduce inequalities and give equal importance to economic, environmental and social progress. This purpose is set out within the National Performance Framework for Scotland⁹.

The Hands Up Scotland Survey data provides information relevant to a number of outcomes in the National Performance Framework as evidenced below. The most relevant National Performance Framework outcomes are:

- We are healthy and active
- We live in communities that are inclusive, empowered, resilient and safe
- We value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment.

The Scottish Government’s Active Travel Outcomes Framework¹⁰ brings together the key policy approaches to improving the uptake of walking and cycling in Scotland for travel. The Active Travel Outcomes Framework draws on the *Long-Term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland 2030*¹¹. Developed in 2014, the long-term vision sets out an ambition that, by 2030, Scotland’s communities are shaped around people and place, enabling walking and cycling to be the most popular mode of travel for short, everyday journeys. The Active Travel Outcomes Framework also links into a number of National Performance Framework outcomes.

The Hands Up Scotland Survey serves as a critical dataset for evidencing progress against several of the objectives of the long-term vision, including ‘better health and safer travel for all’; ‘cutting carbon emissions and other pollution’, and ‘delivering liveable, more pleasant communities’.

3.1 Healthy and Active



The Hands Up Scotland Survey data can be used to investigate progress towards a number of health outcomes and indicators in the National Performance Framework and the Active Travel Outcomes Framework through evidencing active travel (walking, cycling, scootering or skating) to school.

Active travel for health and wellbeing

The 2018-19 Programme for Government set out the vision to build an Active Nation, boosting investment in walking and cycling, and putting active travel at the heart of transport planning. Active Nation actions include making Scottish towns and cities friendlier and safer spaces for pedestrians and



cyclists by increasing investment that supports active travel and delivering world-class active travel infrastructure, as well as delivering projects which help people benefit from new and existing walking and cycling routes. In 2018, the Scottish Government launched Scotland's Physical Activity Delivery Plan¹² detailing outcomes, actions and achievements in terms of the vision: 'A Scotland where more people are more active, more often.'

The Scottish Government's 2020 update on its *National Transport Strategy*¹³ highlights health and wellbeing improvement at one of its priorities, stating that Scotland's transport system should 'allow people to make active travel choices to improve their health and physical and mental wellbeing and seek to reduce health inequalities'.

The UK Chief Medical Officers' *Physical Activity Guidelines*¹⁴ recommends active travel as one way of making up the daily recommended 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for children.¹⁵

A More Active Scotland: Building a Legacy from the Commonwealth Games sets out a number of objectives around active travel to school.¹⁶ These include more children and students using active travel to get to their places of learning by 2019, and active travel as the norm for short, everyday journeys by 2024.

The *Curriculum for Excellence*¹⁷ also acknowledges the important contribution active travel such as walking and cycling plays in promoting good physical health and mental wellbeing. Health and Wellbeing is a cross-cutting theme across the Curriculum for Excellence with specific health and wellbeing experiences and outcomes on travelling safely.

Hands Up Scotland Survey data is being used to evidence the 'Active' indicator that forms part of the *Children and Young People's Profile*.¹⁸ The profile aims to measure progress against the SHANARRI¹⁹ indicators of wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland,²⁰ outlined in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*.²¹ SHANARRI indicators of wellbeing are part of the *Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)*²² approach of The Scottish Government. The GIRFEC approach is the Scottish Government's commitment to provide all children, young people and their families with the right support at the right time so that every child and young person can reach their potential. The SHANARRI indicator 'Active' states that children and young people should have opportunities to take part in activities such as play, recreation and sport, which contribute to healthy growth and development, at home, in school and in the community.

Promoting active travel to school

The Scottish Government's *National Walking Strategy*²³ uses evidence from the Hands Up Scotland Survey to demonstrate current rates of walking to school and highlights the importance of walking in improving performance, concentration and learning.

3.2 Inclusive, Empowered, Resilient and Safe Communities

The Hands Up Scotland Survey can also be used to inform place making and road safety interventions, and assist national government and local authorities to help communities flourish, become stronger, safer places to live, offering improved opportunities and a better quality of life.

Well-designed, sustainable places

The *Strategic Road Safety Plan (2016)*²⁴ sets out how Transport Scotland delivers road safety on the trunk road network. The policy is based on the assertion that death and injury is avoidable and unacceptable. As a trunk roads policy it is informed by *Designing Streets (2010)*²⁵, and the proximity of a trunk road to a school should provide additional rationale for design based on place and location, rather than a need to move vehicles.

*Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030*²⁶ targets a 60% reduction in fatal child casualties and 60% reduction in children seriously injured. Similarly the *Long Term Vision for Active Travel*¹ sets out a vision in which all schools have safe routes for pupils who are confident to walk or cycle to them. Data revealing trends in how children travel to school can inform school travel planning, place making, road safety improvements and targeted road safety improvements such as 20 miles per hour zones.

3.3 Value, Enjoy, Protect and Enhance our Environment

The Hands Up Scotland Survey can also be used to investigate progress towards the 'we value, enjoy, protect and enhance our environment' national outcome²⁷ through evidencing private motorised travel (car and taxi) to school.

Improving air quality

As stated in the *Cleaner Air for Scotland* strategy²⁸ published in November 2015, active travel is inextricably linked to improving air quality, reducing environmental noise and easing congestion. In addition, the strategy states that the promotion of public transport use over private motorised travel is key to reducing congestion and air pollution.



Reducing the number of car-related school trips and associated congestion (particularly related to the school run) can have a positive impact in terms of contributing to the reduction in emissions of atmospheric pollutants. These emissions not only cause poor air quality in the local area but also add to greenhouse gases that lead to global climate change.

Scottish Ministers have a duty to report on proposals and policies setting out specific measures for reducing greenhouse gas emissions under the *Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019*.²⁹ Levels of motorised travel have implications for greenhouse gas emissions, and Transport Scotland's updated *National Transport Strategy* recognises that transport is currently the largest contributor to Scottish carbon emissions and that 'this will be tackled through a range of actions including an ambition to phase out the need for new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2032, changing people's travel behaviour and managing demand'.³⁰

Levels of motorised travel also have implications for congestion, and the updated *National Transport Strategy* states ‘protecting our climate and improving lives’ as a core priority for transport in Scotland for the next 20 years. The Strategy sets out a modal hierarchy with walking, cycling, and then public transport priority modes to encourage as an alternative to car use.

4 Other relevant data sources

The Hands Up Scotland Survey is not directly comparable with any other relevant sources of National or Official Statistics in the UK.

The *Scottish Household Survey* also provides information on travel to school in Scotland³¹. The *Scottish Household Survey* typically receives responses from around 10,000 and 11,000 households per year, a smaller sample compared to the Hands Up Scotland Survey which typically receives between 400,000 and 500,000 school pupil responses per year. In addition, the scope of the *Scottish Household Survey* is broader, capturing a wide range of transport and travel information about adults and households, as well as reasons for the method of children's transport to school. A list of the main statistical publications in relation to transport in Scotland is available from the Transport Scotland website.³² The *Scottish Health Survey*³³ includes wider information on children's physical activity levels.

The *Pupil Level Annual School Census*³⁴ in England published data for usual mode of travel to school until 2011. Data was available at a school level and this question was made mandatory for schools with an approved School Travel Plan in January 2007. In 2011, the mandatory use of this question was discontinued. The *Health Survey for England*³⁵ includes wider information on children's physical activity levels.

Other sources of Official Statistics relating to travel to school in the UK include the *National Travel Survey*,³⁶ the *Travel Survey for Northern Ireland*,³⁷ and the *National Survey for Wales*.³⁸

5 Survey design

The Hands Up Scotland Survey is a joint project, managed by Sustrans and officers from each local authority in Scotland. The survey was first conducted in 2008 and has followed a consistent survey design and methodology since then.

Sustrans' Research and Monitoring Unit is responsible for producing survey participation guidance and forms, an email link for the online survey platform and distributing them to local authority officers. Local authority officers are then responsible for onward distribution to schools, and providing support where required.

5.1 Data collection

Data collection for the Hands Up Scotland Survey occurs annually in the second week of September. In 2023, data collection took place between the 11th and 15th of September. Data collection is conducted by school staff, as instructed by their local authority officer, with support from Sustrans.

All 32 local authorities in Scotland are invited to take part in the Hands Up Scotland Survey. The survey is designed to record information about any and all pupils enrolled in nursery, primary, secondary, SEN (Special Educational Needs) and independent schools in Scotland.

The question asked is, 'How do you normally travel to school?' with the following 8 response options:

- Walk
- Scooter/skate
- Park & stride
- Taxi
- Cycle
- Bus
- Driven (car)
- Other

The survey can be conducted on a class-by-class or whole-school basis. The number of pupils present is recorded, and pupils are asked to raise their hand for one of the response options only.

All pupils of primary and secondary school age are asked to respond to the Hands Up Scotland Survey themselves. Assistance may be provided to nursery children or SEN school pupils by a parent, guardian or member of school staff when responding to the survey, depending on the level of support required.

Since 2016, an online survey platform has been made available to schools, in addition to the provision of paper survey forms to local authority officers for manual data entry. The majority of local authorities opted to use the online survey platform.³⁹

School staff return completed paper survey forms to their local authority officer, who inputs data for each school before submitting responses to Sustrans. Results entered via the online survey platform are downloaded directly by Sustrans. Once all of the responses have been submitted, quality assurance, analysis and reporting are conducted by Sustrans' Research and Monitoring Unit.

6 2023 Results

This section of the report details the results from the 2023 Hands Up Scotland Survey. Annual results highlight the extent of variation in travel behaviour between different school types.

Care should be taken when interpreting results between school types due to considerable variation in pupil population size and response rate. For example, the category ‘all schools’ (443,271 pupils) includes primary (283,241 pupils), secondary (149,386 pupils), SEN (2,340 pupils) and independent (8,304 pupils) schools.

Nursery data is presented separately as the characteristics of nurseries are considered to be different to that of other school types. For example, nurseries have very different operating times compared to other school types (see technical note 8.3.3). A nursery can provide day care for children aged from a few weeks old to those about to start primary school, so the age range of pupils responding to the survey may vary from nursery to nursery. Nurseries contacted to participate in the survey are those registered in the Scotland Care Inspectorate as providing daycare of children services (including private, voluntary, health board and local authority nurseries). After school clubs, holiday clubs and childminding services are not invited to participate in the study to ensure results are not duplicated with primary school results. The category ‘all state schools’ (434,967 pupils) includes primary, secondary, and SEN schools only.

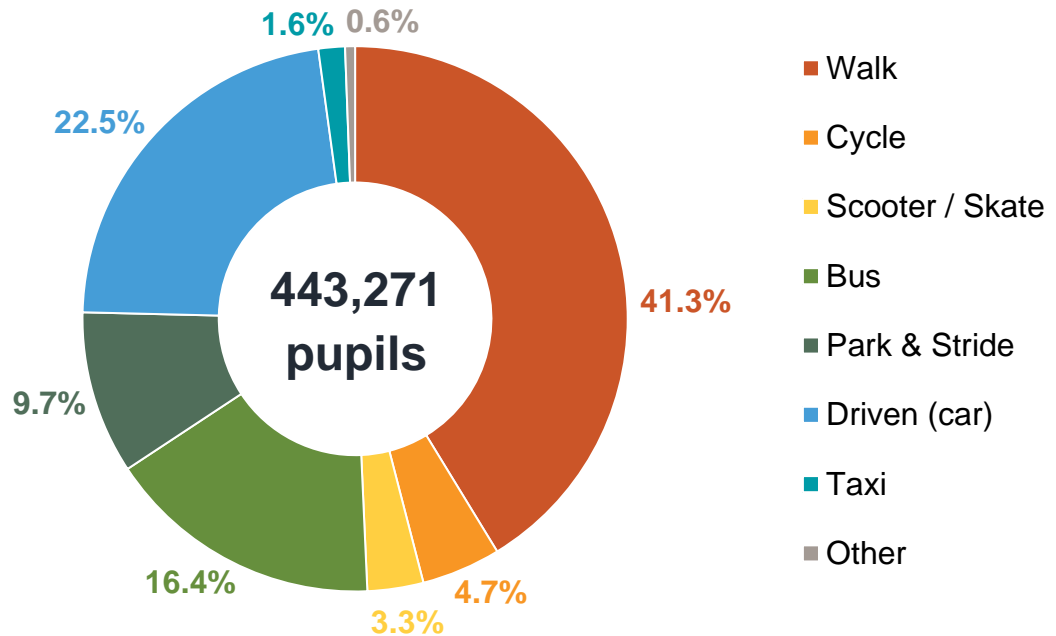
This report presents small percentage point changes, this is because a small percentage point change may relate to a sizeable number of pupils:

- The average number of state school responses over the past 5 years is 433,665 pupils. A 0.1 percentage point change in mode share is roughly equivalent to 434 pupils changing mode
- The average number of primary school pupils responding is 280,662 pupils over the past 5 years. A 0.1 percentage point shift for primary pupils is roughly equivalent of 281 pupils
- The average number of secondary pupils responding to the survey is 150,949. A 0.1 percentage point change is roughly equivalent to 151 pupils
- The average number of pupils from SEN schools responding to the survey is 2,053. A 0.1 percentage point change is roughly equivalent to 2 pupils.

Due to rounding, row percentages may not always add up to 100%, and category totals may not always add up to the values presented for individual travel modes.

6.1 All school results

Chart 6-1: National travel modes: proportion of participating pupils travelling by different modes (all school pupil responses exc. nursery children), 2023.⁴⁰



Active travel

49.3% of pupils (218,447) across all schools⁴¹ surveyed in 2023 said they normally travel to school in an active way, without any form of motorised transport. Of the active modes, walking was the most frequent mode of travel with 41.3% of pupils (182,934) saying they normally walk to school. 4.7% of pupils (20,805) said they normally cycle to school and 3.3% (14,708) said they normally scooter or skate.

Public sustainable travel

16.4% of pupils (72,859) in 2023 said they normally travel to school by bus.

Multi-mode travel

9.7% of pupils (42,845) in 2023 said they normally park and stride to school.

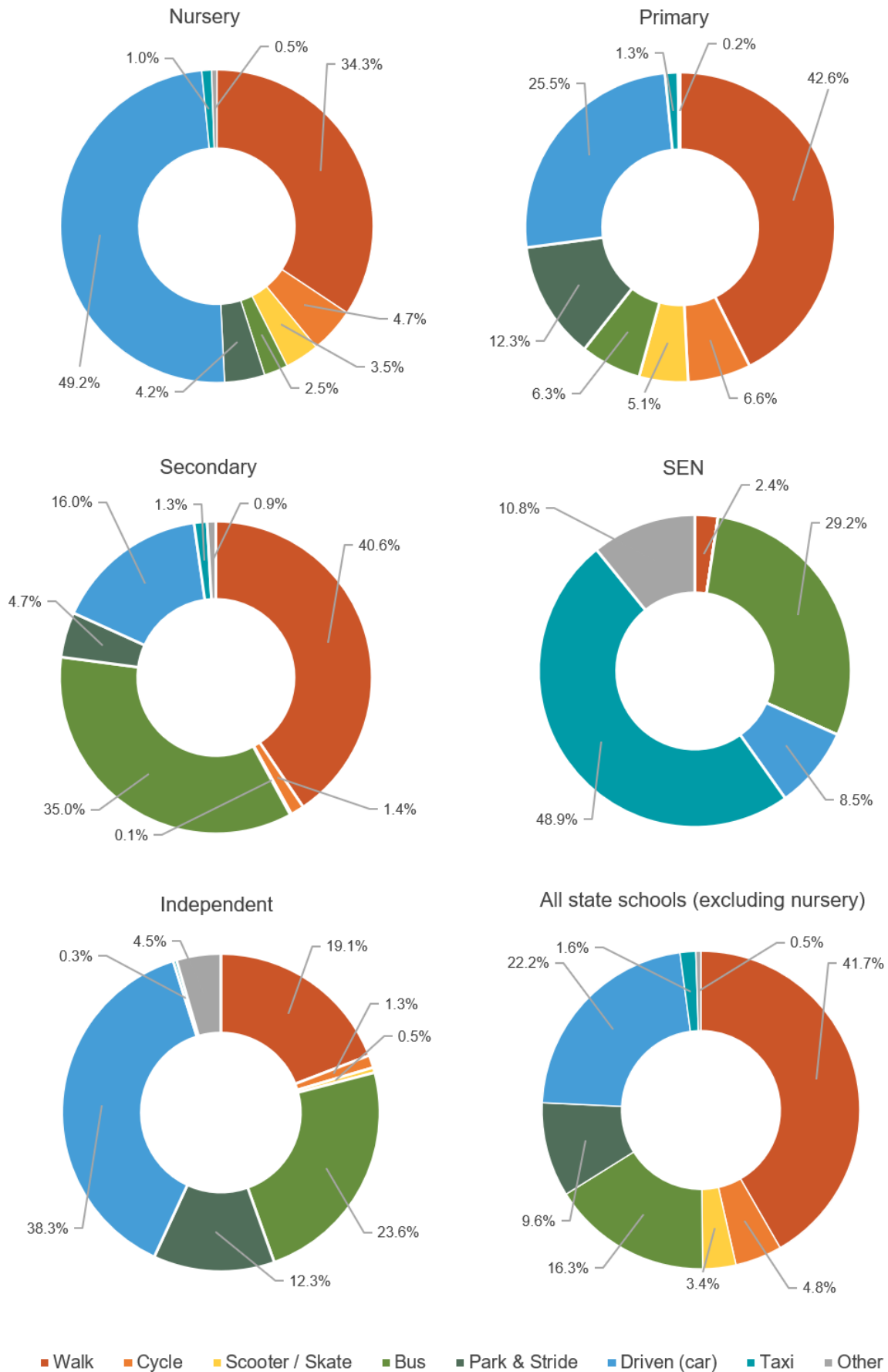
Private motorised travel

24.0% of pupils (106,512) in 2023 said they normally travel to school using only a private motorised mode of transport. 22.5% of pupils (99,525) said they are normally driven to school (in a private car), and 1.6% (6,987) normally travel to school by taxi.

Other

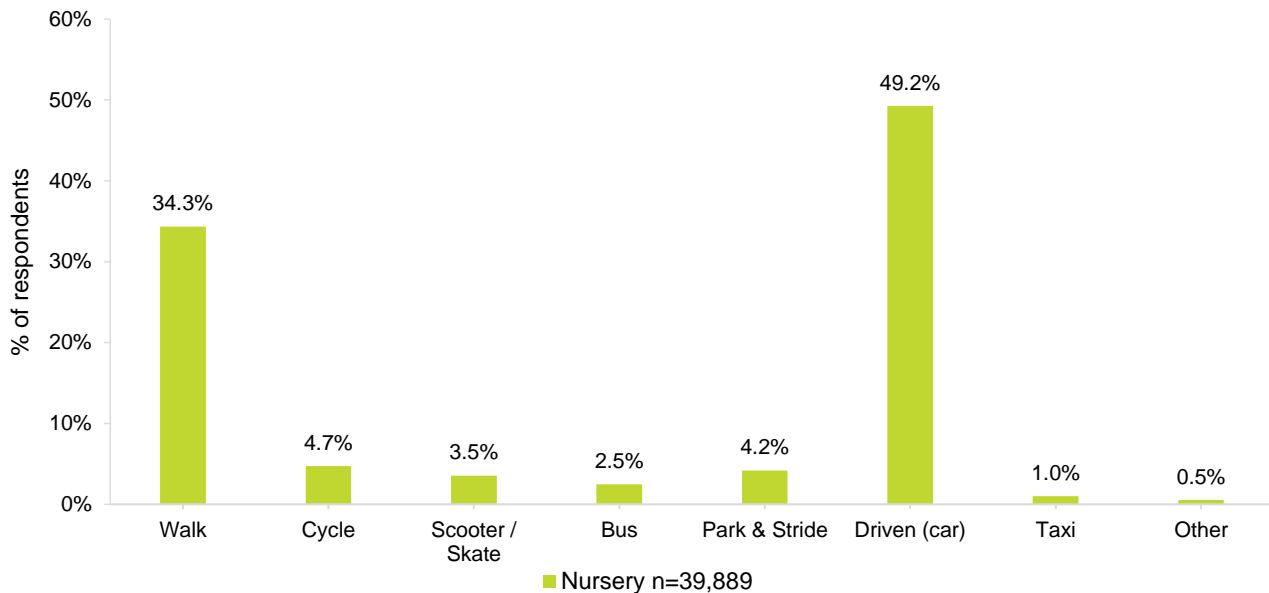
0.6% of pupils (2,608) indicated they travel to school by other means.⁴²

Chart 6-2: National travel modes: pupil responses by school type, 2023.⁴³



6.2 Nursery results

Chart 6-3: National travel modes: proportion of participating nursery children travelling by different modes, 2023. ⁴⁴



Active travel

42.6% of nursery children surveyed in 2023 said they normally travel to nursery in an active way, without any form of motorised transport. Of the active modes, walking was the most frequent mode, reported by 34.3% of nursery children. 4.7% of nursery children said they normally cycle to nursery, and 3.5% said they normally scooter or skate.

Public sustainable travel

2.5% of nursery children in 2023 said they normally travel to nursery by bus.

Multi-mode travel

4.2% of nursery children in 2023 said they normally park and stride to nursery.

Private motorised travel

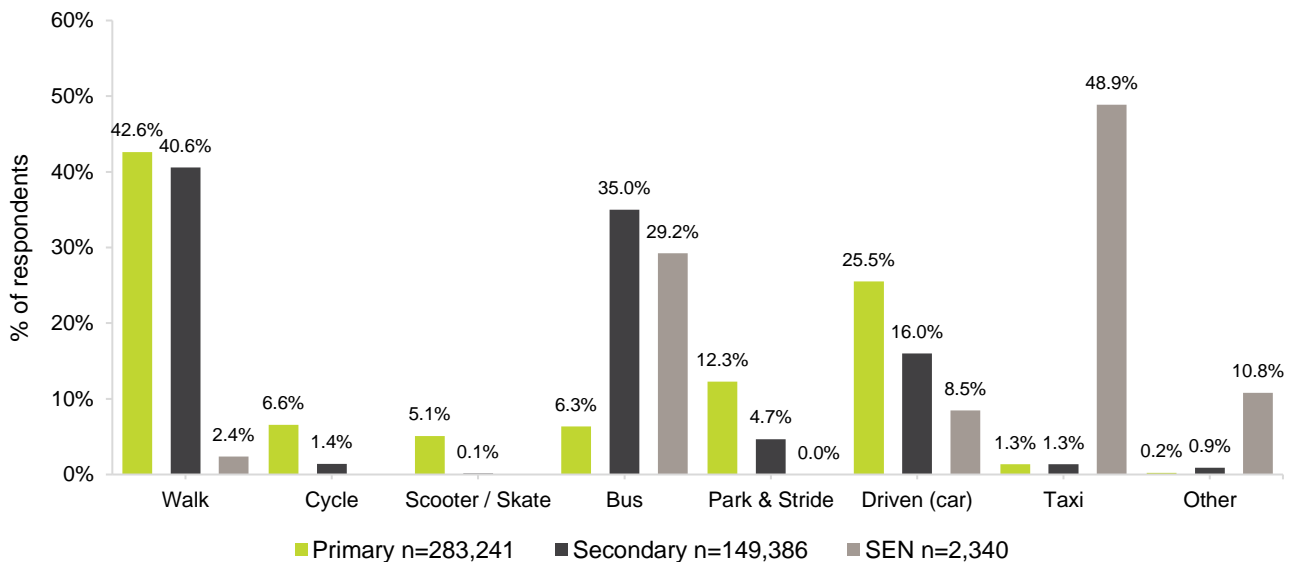
50.2% of nursery children in 2023 reported normally travelling to school by private motorised transport, 49.2% driven by car and 1.0% by taxi.

Other

0.5% of nursery children in 2023 indicated they travel to nursery by other means.⁴²

6.3 All state school comparison

Chart 6-4: National travel modes: proportion of participating pupils travelling by different modes, by state school type (primary, secondary and SEN), 2023.⁴⁴



Active travel

In 2023, primary school pupils reported the highest level of active travel to school out of all school types, at 54.3%, followed by secondary school pupils at 42.1%. 42.6% of primary school pupils reported normally walking to school compared to 40.6% of secondary and 2.4% of SEN school pupils. 6.6% of primary school pupils reported normally cycling to school compared to 1.4% of secondary school pupils. 5.1% of primary school pupils reported normally scootering or skating to school compared to 0.1% of secondary school pupils.

Public sustainable travel

In 2023, secondary school pupils reported the highest levels of bus usage, at 35.0% of pupils, compared to 29.2% of SEN pupils and just 6.3% of primary school pupils.

Multi-mode travel

In 2023, 12.3% of primary school pupils reported park and stride as their usual mode of travelling to school, compared to 4.7% of secondary school pupils and 0.0% of SEN pupils.

Private motorised travel

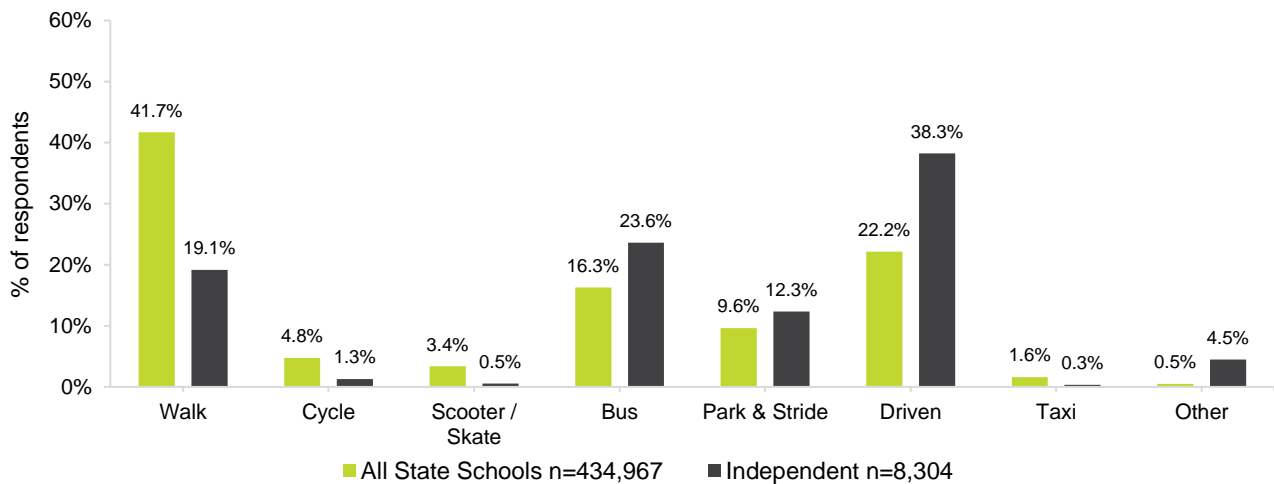
Secondary school pupils in 2023 reported the lowest levels of travel to school using private motorised transport of all school types, at 17.3%. This is less than the 26.9% of primary school pupils and 57.4% of SEN school pupils who reported normally doing so. 8.5% of SEN pupils are normally driven to school in a car, compared to 16.0% of secondary and 25.5% of primary school pupils. 48.9% of SEN pupils reported normally using a taxi to travel to school. Neither primary (1.3%) nor secondary (1.3%) school pupils reported high levels of normally using a taxi to travel to school in 2023.

Other

10.8% of SEN pupils indicated that they travel by other means. Primary and secondary pupils reported lower levels of travel by other means at 0.2% and 0.9%, respectively.⁴²

6.4 State and independent school comparison

Chart 6-5: National travel modes: proportion of participating pupils travelling by different modes, by state schools (exc. nursery) and independent schools, 2023.⁴⁵



Active travel

In 2023, state school pupils reported higher active travel levels compared to independent school pupils, with 49.8% of state school pupils either walking, cycling, scootering or skating, compared to 21.0% of independent school pupils. This trend is consistent among each active mode of travel. For state schools, 41.7%, 4.8% and 3.4% of pupils reported normally travelling to school by walking, cycling and scootering or skating, respectively, compared to 19.1%, 1.3% and 0.5% of independent school pupils.

Public sustainable travel

16.3% of state school pupils reported normally travelling to school by bus compared to 23.6% of independent school pupils.

Multi-mode travel

9.6% of state school pupils reported normally travelling to school using multiple modes, compared to 12.3% of independent school pupils.

Private motorised travel

23.8% of state school pupils normally travel to school using private motorised modes compared to 38.6% of independent school pupils. A higher proportion of independent school pupils normally travel to school by car (38.3%) than state school school pupils (22.2%). 1.6% of state school pupils reported normally travelling to school by taxi compared to 0.3% of independent school pupils.

Other

0.5% of state school pupils indicated that they travel by other means, compared to 4.5% of independent school pupils.

6.5 Response rates: schools

In 2023, a total of 3,229 schools and nurseries took part in the survey. All 32 local authorities in Scotland participated in the Hands Up Scotland Survey during the designated survey week (11th to 15th September 2022).

2,816 nurseries and 2,537 schools received the survey, either directly from their local authority officers (electronically) or via an email link sent by the online survey platform. The survey was sent to 2,452 state schools⁴⁶, representing 99.8% of all state schools in Scotland⁴⁷.

A total of 1,274 nurseries and 1,955 schools responded to the survey. 1,938 state schools took part, representing 79.0% of state schools receiving the survey and 78.9% of all state schools in Scotland.

Table 6-1: National response rates: number and proportion of schools responding to the survey, 2023.⁴⁸

School type	Number of schools which received survey	% of all schools in Scotland which received survey	Number of schools which returned data	% of schools receiving survey which returned data	% of all schools in Scotland which returned data
Nursery	2,816	N/A	1,274	45.2%	N/A
Primary	1,991	100.2%	1,649	82.8%	82.9%
Secondary	355	98.6%	253	71.3%	70.3%
SEN	106	98.1%	36	34.0%	33.3%
Independent	85	N/A	17	20.0%	N/A
All state schools (exc. nursery)	2,452	99.8%	1,938	79.0%	78.9%
All schools (exc. nursery)	2,537	N/A	1,955	77.1%	N/A

6.6 Response rates: pupils

Responses were received from 39,889 nursery children and 443,271 school pupils, amounting to 483,160 pupil responses overall. 434,967 state school pupils took part, which equates to 61.6% of all state school pupils enrolled in Scotland.

Table 6-2: National response rates: number of pupils responding to the survey by school type, and proportion of respondents from the total roll by each school type, 2023.⁴⁹

School type	Number of pupil respondents	% of Scottish state school roll
Nursery	39,889	N/A
Primary	283,241	73.6%
Secondary	149,386	47.7%
SEN	2,340	30.2%
Independent	8,304	N/A
All state schools (exc. nursery)	434,967	61.6%
All schools (exc. nursery)	443,271	N/A
All schools and nurseries	483,160	N/A

For further information on response rates, please see Technical Notes 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4.

6.7 Data tables: 2023 results

These data tables contain a more detailed breakdown of results presented throughout section 6.

Where a percentage represents a value of between one and four pupils, it has been suppressed to maintain anonymity of respondents and replaced with an asterisk (*). Where suppressed data is included in the mode category calculation, the value for that category has also been suppressed.

Table 6-3: National travel categories: by school type, 2023.⁴⁴

School type	Active	Public sustainable	Multi-mode	Private motorised	Other	Total
Nursery	42.6%	2.5%	4.2%	50.2%	0.5%	39,889
Primary	54.3%	6.3%	12.3%	26.9%	0.2%	283,241
Secondary	42.1%	35.0%	4.7%	17.3%	0.9%	149,386
SEN	*	29.2%	0.0%	57.4%	10.8%	2,340
Independent	21.0%	23.6%	12.3%	38.6%	4.5%	8,304

Table 6-4: National travel modes: by school type, 2023.⁴⁴

School type	Walk	Cycle	Scooter/ Skate	Bus	Park & Stride	Driven (car)	Taxi	Other	Total
Nursery	34.3%	4.7%	3.5%	2.5%	4.2%	49.2%	1.0%	0.5%	39,889
Primary	42.6%	6.6%	5.1%	6.3%	12.3%	25.5%	1.3%	0.2%	283,241
Secondary	40.6%	1.4%	0.1%	35.0%	4.7%	16.0%	1.3%	0.9%	149,386
SEN	2.4%	*	*	29.2%	0.0%	8.5%	48.9%	10.8%	2,340
Independent	19.1%	1.3%	0.5%	23.6%	12.3%	38.3%	0.3%	4.5%	8,304

Table 6-5: National travel modes: by school type and year group, 2023.⁵⁰

School Type Year Group	Walk	Cycle	Scooter /Skate	Bus	Park & Stride	Driven (car)	Taxi	Other	Total
Primary									
P1-4	39.9%	6.1%	5.9%	6.0%	12.5%	27.9%	1.4%	0.2%	145,709
P5-7	46.2%	7.1%	4.0%	6.8%	12.1%	22.3%	1.2%	0.2%	113,805
Secondary									
S1-3	39.6%	1.5%	0.1%	37.0%	5.0%	14.7%	1.3%	0.8%	77,859
S4-6	39.9%	1.1%	0.2%	35.1%	3.9%	17.6%	1.1%	1.1%	53,129
SEN									
P1-4	2.1	0.0%	0.0%	24.3%	0.0%	8.2%	49.9%	15.6%	437
P5-7	*	*	*	32.0%	0.0%	7.8%	43.7%	15.2%	309
S1-3	4.1%	*	0.0%	31.2%	*	8.7%	40.7%	15.2%	462
S4-6	4.9%	*	0.0%	38.4%	*	9.0%	34.5%	12.9%	411
Independent									
P1-4	14.3%	4.0%	2.1%	5.9%	17.4%	55.8%	*	*	1,398
P5-7	17.0%	1.1%	*	16.4%	17.9%	46.3%	*	0.7%	1,612
S1-3	14.8%	0.6%	*	32.5%	11.5%	33.8%	*	6.7%	2,384
S4-6	19.0%	0.7%	*	31.0%	9.0%	33.2%	*	6.8%	2,435

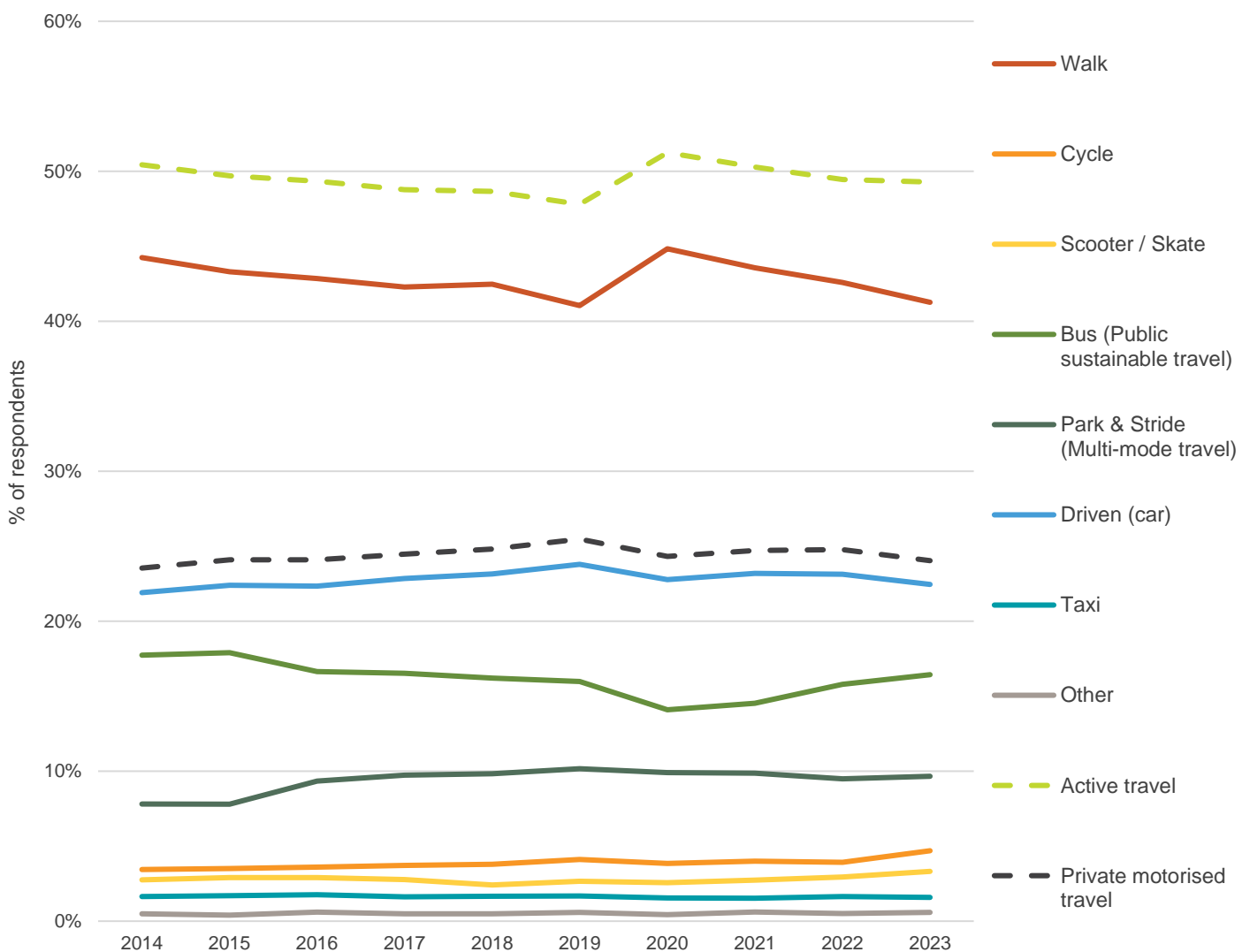
7 Trends in the 2014-2023 results

A number of factors may impact on travel behaviour from year to year (e.g. weather conditions, school mergers, closures and relocations) as well as policies and schemes introduced by central government, local government or individual schools. In 2020 and 2021, the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on schools was a substantial additional factor.

Percentage point (pp) change has been calculated based on the rounded figures presented in this summary report.⁵¹ Where the number of responses is low, care should be taken when interpreting results and fields with a small number of responses may see large changes in percentages between years.

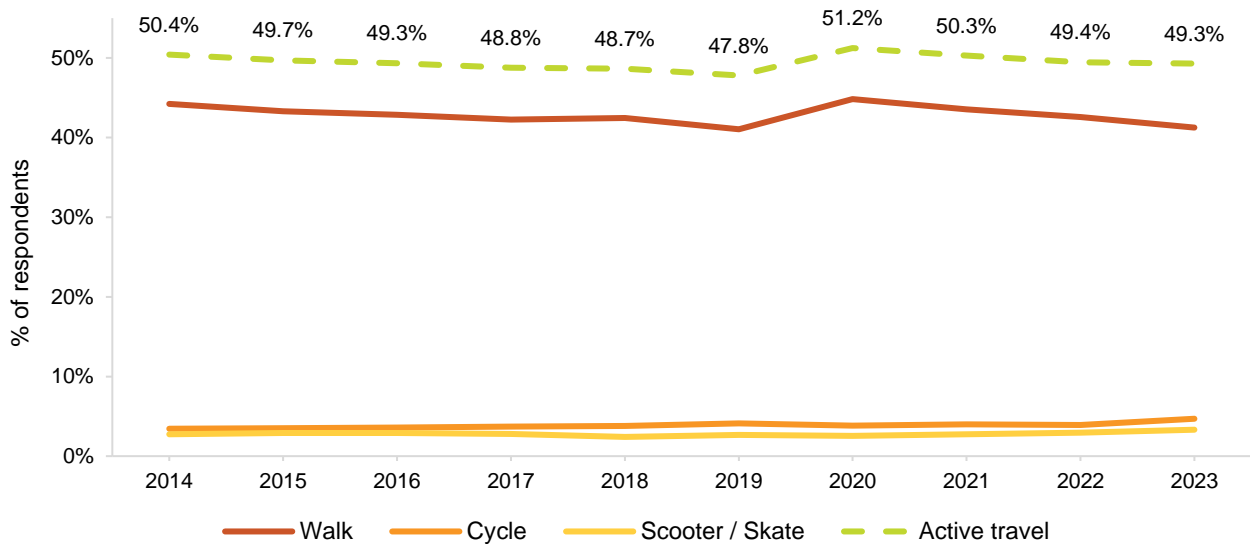
7.1 All school results

Chart 7-1: National travel modes and categories: all schools (exc. nursery), 2014-2023⁵²



Active travel

Chart 7-2: Active travel mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nursery), 2014-2023.⁴⁰



Since 2014, active travel to school has remained the **most frequently reported mode of travel to school** in Scotland.

In 2014, 50.4% of pupils in all schools (exc. nursery) reported travelling actively to school. This percentage has fluctuated, peaking at 51.2% in 2020. Active travel to school has since decreased. Between 2022 and 2023 it decreased by 0.1pp from 49.4% to 49.3%, though remains higher than the pre-pandemic levels of 2019 (47.8%).

- Active travel fell in nurseries and secondary schools in 2023, from 43.0% to 42.6%, and from 43.0% to 42.1%, respectively. For secondary schools this is the lowest annual level of the last ten survey years and for nurseries this is the third lowest
- In primary schools active travel increased by 0.2pp since 2022, to 54.3% in 2023. This is the same as in 2021 and the joint third highest of the last ten survey years
- Active travel in independent schools increased by the greatest percentage of all school types in 2023, with a 1.0pp increase to 21.0%. This is the second highest level of the last ten survey years.⁵³

Walking

After a sharp increase to 44.8% in 2020, walking has returned to similar levels to those recorded before the pandemic. In 2023 walking levels fell by 1.3pp from 42.6% in 2022 to 41.3%, the second lowest level of the past ten survey years.

- The number of nursery children walking has decreased from 35.6% in 2022 to 34.3% in 2023. This is the lowest level recorded in the past ten survey years
- Primary schools have seen a downward trend in walking since the sharp rise seen in 2020. Walking fell 44.2% in 2022, to 42.6% in 2023, a decrease of 1.6pp

- Walking levels in secondary schools and SEN schools have both decreased. Walking levels have fallen 0.8pp, to 40.6% in secondary schools, and 0.5pp, to 2.4% in SEN schools. This is the lowest level recorded in the past ten years for secondary schools, but the third highest for SEN schools
- Walking levels in independent schools have increased since 2022 by 1.2pp, to 19.1% in 2023. This is the highest level of the past ten survey years.

Cycling

The survey has recorded an increasing trend in cycling over the past ten survey years, from 3.4% in 2014 to a high of 4.7% in 2023. This is a 0.8 percentage point increase since 2022.

- Among nursery children, cycling levels have increased over the past ten survey years, from 3.6% in 2014 to 4.7% in 2022. This is the highest level of the past ten years
- Cycling levels among primary pupils have also increased over the past ten survey years, from 5.0% in 2014 to 6.6% in 2023. 2023 levels are 1.2pp higher than in 2022 and are the highest of the past ten survey years
- Independent schools saw an increasing trend between 2018 and 2020 reaching a high of 3.1% in 2021. However, this fell to 1.3% in 2022. In 2023, the levels remained at 1.3%. This is the lowest level recorded of the last ten years
- Cycling levels in secondary schools had seen an increasing trend in cycling over the past ten survey years. After a decrease in 2021 and 2022, levels increased by 0.1pp, to 1.4% in 2023.

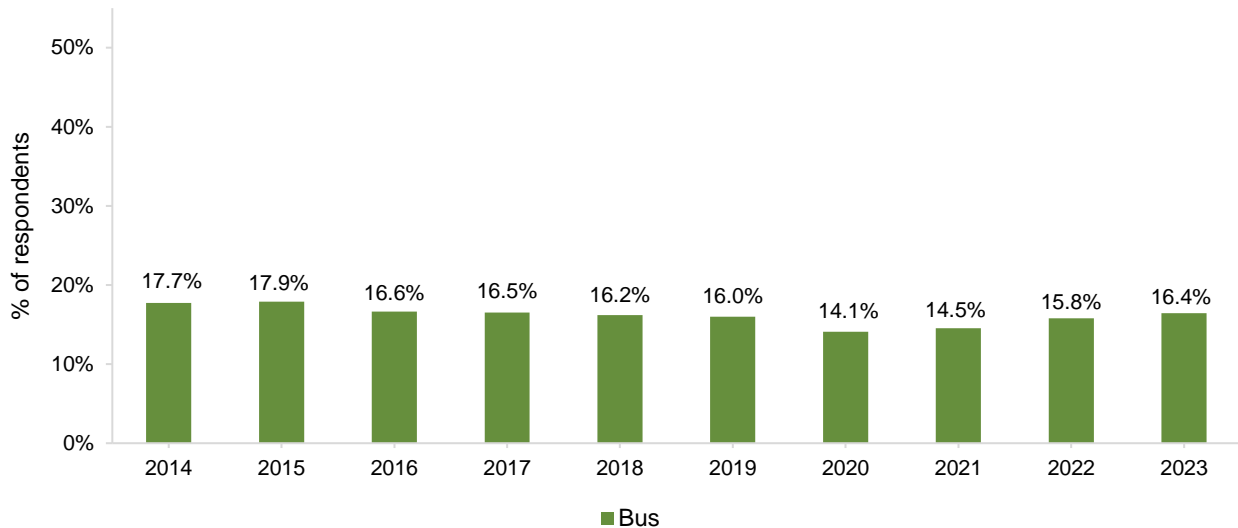
Scooter/skate

The percentage of pupils who say they normally scooter or skate to school has varied very little over the past 10 years. In 2023, levels increased by 0.4 pp to 3.3%. This is the highest level recorded in the last ten years and is 0.9 pp higher than the low of 2.4% recorded in 2018.

- Scootering or skating levels among nursery children have fluctuated over the past ten survey years. In 2023, levels stayed the same as 2022 at 3.5%
- In 2023, primary pupils saw a 0.6pp increase from 2022, up to 5.1%, the highest level over the past ten years
- Levels of scootering or skating among secondary pupils have remained consistent at 0.2% over the past nine survey years. However, in 2023 this decreased to 0.1%
- Scootering or skating levels among independent pupils have remained under 2.0%. In 2023, scootering or skating was at its lowest level of the past ten years at 0.5%, a decrease of 0.3pp compared to 2022.

Public sustainable travel

Chart 7-3: Mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nursery) within the public sustainable travel category, 2014-2023.⁴⁰

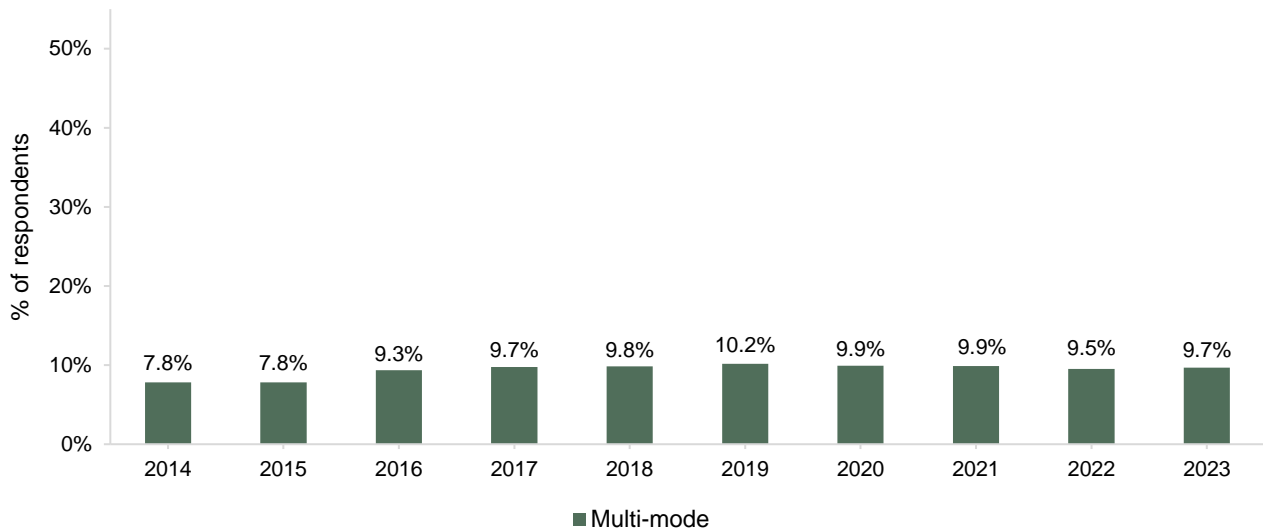


Overall, the proportion of pupils travelling to school by bus has decreased over the past ten survey years, from 17.7% in 2014 to 16.4% in 2023. However, bus use increased in 2023 for the third year in a row, increasing by 0.6pp from 15.8% in 2022.

- Bus use in primary and secondary schools has been decreasing over the past ten survey years. However, between 2022 and 2023, both school types reported an increase for the third year in a row, with primary schools at 6.3% (up 0.2pp) and secondary schools at 35.0% (up 2.0pp)
- Bus use in independent schools increased sharply between 2021 and 2022, from 14.1% to 23.7%. In 2023, bus use remained at a similar level, decreasing by 0.1pp to 23.6%
- Bus use among pupils attending SEN schools and children attending nurseries has varied over the past ten survey years. Bus use by children attending nurseries decreased in 2023, falling by 0.3pp to 2.5%. Bus use among pupils attending SEN schools increased by 2.7pp to 29.2%.

Multi-mode travel

Chart 7-4: Mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nursery) within the multi-mode travel category, 2014-2023.⁴⁰

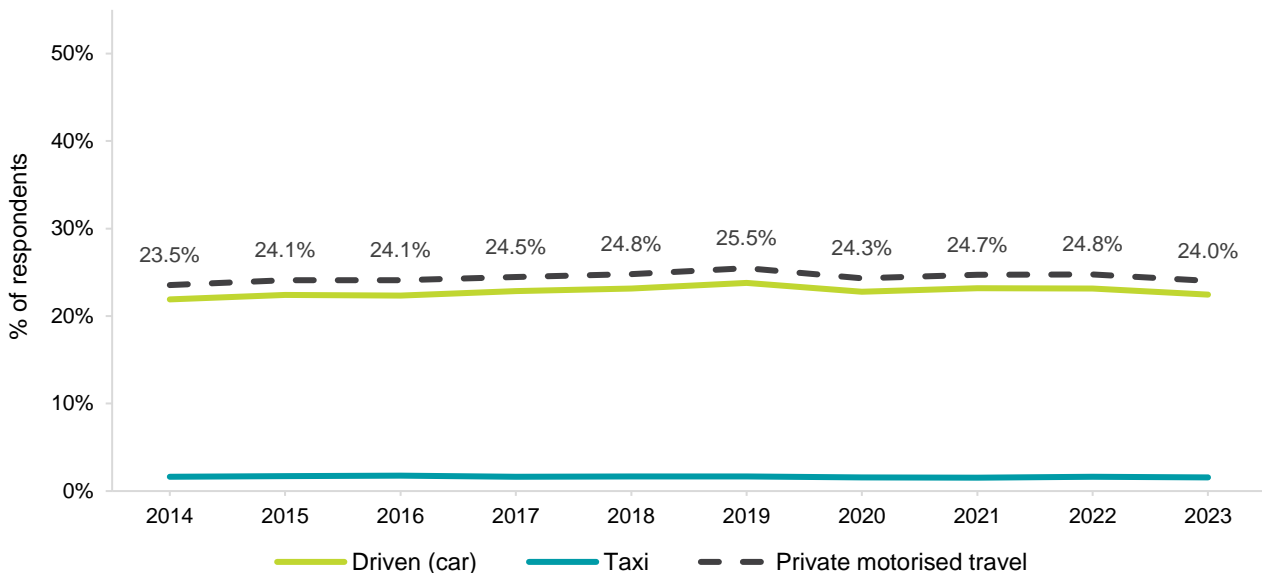


The proportion of pupils travelling to school by park and stride has shown an overall upward trend over the past ten survey years from 7.8% in 2014 to 9.7% in 2023. Levels have increased by 0.2pp since 2022, however, this is 0.5pp lower than the high recorded in 2019 (10.2%).

- Levels of park and stride among nursery children have fluctuated between a high of 4.5% (in 2016) and a low of 3.7% (in 2020) over the past ten survey years. In 2023, park and stride levels increased by 0.3pp, to 4.2%
- Following a steady increase in park and stride among primary school pupils, from 9.9% in 2014 to 13.1% in 2019, levels have slowly decreased. However a 0.5pp increase was recorded in 2023, from 11.8% in 2022 to 12.3% in 2023. This is the highest level since 2019
- Despite some fluctuations, there has been an overall increasing trend in the proportion of secondary pupils using park and stride since 2014. However, in 2023 levels decreased for the second year in a row, falling, 0.6pp from 5.3% to 4.7%. This is the fourth lowest level of the past ten survey years
- The proportion of independent school pupils using park and stride has fluctuated and was at its highest in 2020 at 23%. Since then, levels have dropped. Since 2022 levels have fallen by 1.0pp to 12.3%, the third lowest level in the past ten years and the lowest since 2015.

Private motorised travel

Chart 7-5: Mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nursery) within the private motorised travel category, 2014-2023.⁴⁰



Levels of pupils in all schools (exc. nursery) travelling to school using private motorised transport have fluctuated over the past ten years. In 2023, levels fell from 24.8 to 24.0, a decrease of 0.8pp.

- The proportion of children travelling to nursery using private motorised transport was at a high in 2021 (51.4%). This has fallen to 50.2% in 2023, but is at the third highest level of the past ten survey years
- Among primary school pupils, reported use of private motorised transport in 2023 fell by 1.0pp from 27.9% in 2022 to 26.9%. This is the lowest level of the past ten survey years
- Private motorised travel among secondary school pupils has increased from 15.8% in 2014 to 17.3% in 2023. 2023 saw a 0.4pp decrease on 2022 levels. This is the third year in a row that levels have fallen
- Between 2014 and 2023, levels of private motorised travel to independent schools have fluctuated. However, levels decreased from 40.7% in 2022 to 38.6%, the lowest level of the past ten survey years
- SEN school pupils reported the highest proportion of private motorised travel at 57.4% in 2023. This is a sharp decrease of 7.6pp since 2022.

Driven (car)

The proportion of pupils being driven to school has increased by 0.6pp from 21.9% in 2014 to 22.5% in 2023. From its highest point over the last ten survey years of 23.8% in 2019, it has dropped by 1.3pp. This is a 0.6pp decrease since 2022 (23.1%).

- The proportion of nursery children being driven to school has fluctuated. It reached its highest level of the last ten survey years in 2021 (50.5%). In 2023, 49.2% of nursery children were driven to school. This is a 0.4pp increase since 2022, and the third highest level recorded in this time period

- The proportion of primary pupils being driven to school decreased by 1.0 pp from 26.5% in 2022 to 25.5% in 2023. This is the lowest level of the past ten years
- The proportion of secondary pupils being driven to school has decreased between 2022 and 2023, down 0.4pp to 16.0%. This is the third annual decrease, following an increasing trend between 2013 and 2020
- For SEN schools and independent schools, levels of pupils being driven to school has fluctuated. The proportion of SEN and independent school pupils being driven to school have both decreased since 2022, down 6.0pp to 8.5% and 2.1pp to 38.3%, respectively.

Taxi

Taxi use has remained fairly consistent over the past ten survey years, typically ranging between 1.5% and 1.8%. In 2023, levels remained the same as 2022 at 1.6pp.

- The proportion of nursery children travelling to school by taxi has been low since 2014, with a high of 1.2% in 2016 and low of 0.6% in 2020. Since 2022, levels have remained at 1.0%
- In primary schools and independent schools, the proportion of pupils travelling to school by taxi were at their lowest level of the past ten survey years in 2023 at 1.3% and 0.3%, respectively. For independent schools this level was also recorded in 2022, 2014 and 2015. For primary schools, this is a 0.1pp decrease since 2022
- The proportion of secondary pupils travelling to school in a taxi has fluctuated since 2014. Levels have decreased by 0.1pp since 2022, to 1.3% in 2023. This level was also recorded in 2020 and 2014, and is the second lowest level recorded in the past ten survey years
- Taxi use in SEN schools has fluctuated substantially over the past ten survey years, with 2023 showing a fall of 1.6pp to 48.9% from 50.5% in 2022. This is 7.2pp lower than the highest recorded levels in 2017 (56.1%).

Other travel

The percentage of pupils in all schools (exc. nursery) travelling to school by other modes has remained consistent, varying only between 0.4% and 0.6% over the past ten survey years. In 2022 it was 0.6%, a 0.1pp increase since 2022.

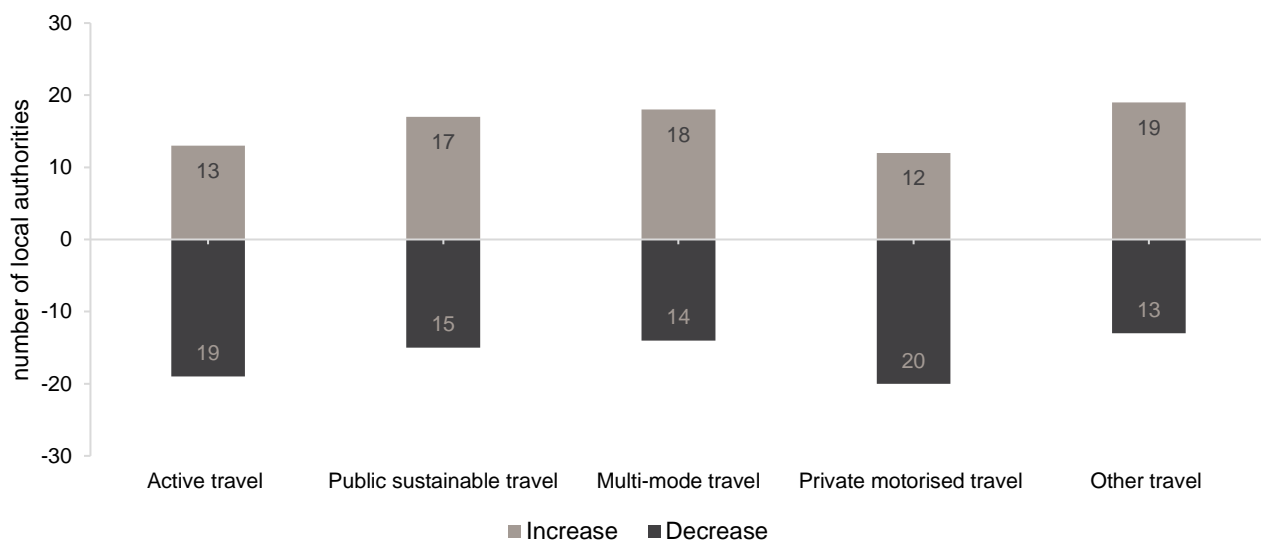
The percentage of pupils from independent schools travelling to school by other modes increased by 2.2pp from 2.3% in 2022 to 4.5% in 2023. This is the highest level recorded in the past ten years and is 0.7pp higher than the second highest level.

- The percentage of SEN pupils that reported travelling by other means has varied considerably over the last ten survey years, from a low of 3.9% in 2017 to a high of 15.9% in 2021. After a decrease of 10.7pp in 2022 to 5.2%, levels increased by 5.6pp to 10.8% in 2023. It is possible that 'other' in the context of SEN schools refers to local authority taxis or other transport provided by the local authority or school.

7.2 Changes in mode share at local authority level

The number of local authorities experiencing an increase or decrease in the proportion of pupils travelling by each mode type between 2022 and 2023 is shown below. The statistics below cover all 32 local authorities that responded in both 2022 and 2023. The full individual local authority results are not shown here. For more detailed information on individual local authority mode share, refer to table 3.1 onwards in the national excel summary report.⁵⁴

Chart 7-6: Change in pupil travel mode share between 2022 and 2023 at the local authority level.



Active travel: There was an increase in active travel levels in 13 local authorities, and a decrease in 19, between 2022 and 2023.

Public sustainable travel: There was an increase in public sustainable travel levels in 17 local authorities, and a decrease in 15, between 2022 and 2023.

Multi-mode travel: There was an increase in multi-mode travel levels in 18 local authorities, and a decrease in 14, between 2022 and 2023.

Private motorised travel: There was an increase in private motorised travel levels in 12 local authorities, and a decrease in 20, between 2022 and 2023.

Other travel: There was an increase in other travel levels in 19 local authorities, and a decrease in 13, between 2022 and 2023.

7.3 Response rates

Survey receipt and response rates as a percentage of all schools in Scotland and Scottish school roll are calculated using the Scottish Government Education Statistics. Data on both the number of schools and their pupil roll are available for state primary, secondary and SEN schools. Pupil roll numbers are not published for state nursery or independent schools in Scotland. It is therefore not possible to calculate receipt or response rates for nursery or independent school types.

Local authority participation

All 32 local authorities in Scotland participated in the Hands Up Scotland Survey between 2013 and 2015 and again from 2017 to 2023. 31 local authorities participated in 2016.

School responses (exc. nursery)

A total of 1,955 schools took part in this year’s survey. This represents 18 fewer schools than in 2022.

The total number of state schools responding to the Hands Up Scotland Survey decreased by 14 schools to 1,938. This is 182 more schools than in 2020, when the lowest response rate of the last ten survey years was recorded.

State school responses as a proportion of all state schools in Scotland were at their highest in 2015 at 81.1%. Since then levels have fluctuated between 70.9% and 79.3%.⁴⁶ In 2023, the state school response rate decreased from 79.3% in 2022 to 78.9%.

Table 7-1: National response rates: number of state and all schools (exc. nursery) responding to the survey, and state schools responding as a proportion of all state schools in Scotland, 2014-2023.⁴⁸

Year	Number of state schools responding	% of Scottish state schools	Number of schools responding
2014	2,036	80.5%	2,052
2015	2,045	81.1%	2,060
2016	1,923	76.0%	1,938
2017	1,989	79.1%	2,009
2018	1,917	76.5%	1,930
2019	1,968	78.9%	1,981
2020	1,756	70.9%	1,771
2021	1,861	75.3%	1,879
2022	1,952	79.3%	1,973
2023	1,938	78.9%	1,955

Pupil responses

Responses were received from 443,271 school pupils in 2023. This represents 13,424 fewer school pupils than in 2022.

The total number of pupils from all schools (exc. nursery) responding to the Hands Up Scotland Survey has varied year by year, but has decreased from 487,147 in 2014 to 443,271 pupils in 2023. Of the past ten survey years, the highest number of pupil responses was 487,147 in 2014, and the lowest number of responses was 405,917 in 2020.

434,967 state school pupils took part in the 2023 survey, which equates to 61.6% of all state school pupils enrolled in Scotland. The number and proportion of state school pupils responding to the survey follows a similar trend to the total number of pupils from all schools (exc. nursery), and has fluctuated year by year, decreasing from 480,155 (70.9%) in 2014 to 434,967 (61.6%) in 2023.

Chart 7-7: National response rates: number of responses from state school pupils and all school pupils (exc. nursery), 2014-2023.⁴⁹

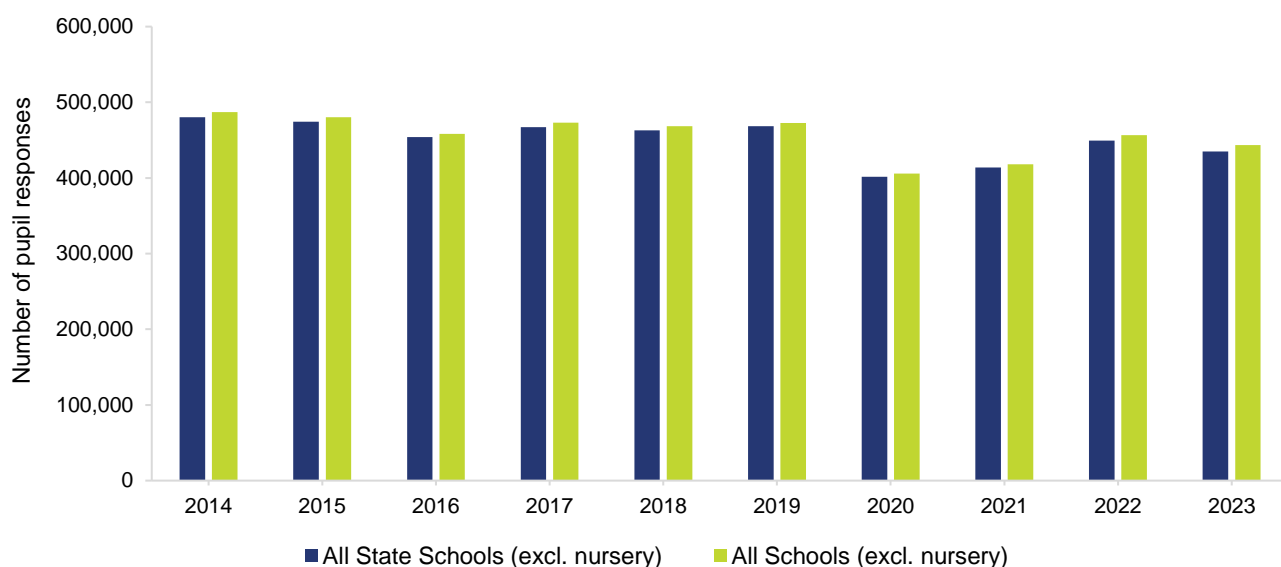


Table 7-2: National response rates: number of state and all school pupils (exc. nursery) responding to the survey, and state school pupils responding as a proportion of all pupils in Scotland, 2014-2023.

Year	Number of state school pupil respondents	% of Scottish state school roll	Number of school pupil respondents
2014	480,155	70.9%	487,147
2015	474,200	69.7%	480,161
2016	454,037	66.3%	458,145
2017	466,956	67.8%	473,160
2018	462,940	66.8%	468,537
2019	468,588	67.2%	472,617
2020	401,656	57.2%	405,917
2021	413,616	58.7%	418,147
2022	449,376	63.7%	456,695
2023	434,967	61.6%	443,271

For considerations relating to response rates, please see Technical Notes 8.2, 8.3 and 8.4.

Nursery schools responses

No nursery schools were approached to participate in the first Hands Up Scotland Survey in 2008. Since then, a concerted effort has been made to increase participation among nursery schools. The total number of nurseries responding to the Hands Up Scotland Survey increased from 539 in 2014 to 1,274 in 2023. The number of nurseries responding has decreased by 33 since 2022.

Since 2017, automated emails have been sent to nurseries and day care of children establishments, inviting them to participate in the survey and providing them with a link to access the survey.

The greatest number of nursery children responding was recorded in 2017, with 41,845 responses. 2023 saw the third highest number of responses of the past ten survey years, with 39,889 nursery children responding – a decrease of 1,056 since 2022.

Table 7-3: Nursery participation: number of nursery schools and children responding to the survey, 2014-2023.⁵⁵

Year	Number of nurseries responding	Number of nursery children respondents
2014	539	19,911
2015	590	21,398
2016	452	17,933
2017	1,225	41,845
2018	1,077	36,352
2019	1,128	35,552
2020	1,108	32,688
2021	1,274	37,071
2022	1,307	40,945
2023	1,274	39,889

Schools returning data by class

In 2023, 91.0% of schools returned data by class compared to a high of 95.0% in 2017, a 4.0pp decrease. However, the proportion of schools returning data by class in 2023 is still the third highest of the last ten survey years, and is much higher than the years prior to 2017, which varied between a low of 62.9% in 2016 and a high of 77.9% in 2015.

Of the state primary and secondary schools that returned data, 91.9% and 88.9% returned data by class, respectively, in 2023.⁵⁶

7.4 Data tables: 2014-2023 results

These data tables contain the full set of travel mode (and category) share values for the last ten survey years for all schools (exc. nursery).

Table 7-4: National travel modes: all schools (exc. nursery), 2014-2023.⁴⁰

Year	Walk	Cycle	Scooter /Skate	Bus	Park & Stride	Driven (car)	Taxi	Other	Total
2014	44.2%	3.4%	2.8%	17.7%	7.8%	21.9%	1.6%	0.5%	487,147
2015	43.3%	3.5%	2.9%	17.9%	7.8%	22.4%	1.7%	0.4%	480,161
2016	42.8%	3.6%	2.9%	16.6%	9.3%	22.3%	1.8%	0.6%	458,145
2017	42.3%	3.7%	2.8%	16.5%	9.7%	22.8%	1.6%	0.5%	473,160
2018	42.5%	3.8%	2.4%	16.2%	9.8%	23.1%	1.7%	0.5%	468,537
2019	41.0%	4.1%	2.7%	16.0%	10.2%	23.8%	1.7%	0.6%	472,617
2020	44.8%	3.8%	2.6%	14.1%	9.9%	22.8%	1.5%	0.4%	405,917
2021	43.6%	4.0%	2.7%	14.5%	9.9%	23.2%	1.5%	0.6%	418,147
2022	42.6%	3.9%	2.9%	15.8%	9.5%	23.1%	1.6%	0.5%	456,695
2023	41.3%	4.7%	3.3%	16.4%	9.7%	22.5%	1.6%	0.6%	443,271

Table 7-5: National travel categories: all schools (exc. nursery), 2014-2023.

Year	Active	Public sustainable	Multi-mode	Private motorised	Other	Total
2014	50.4%	17.7%	7.8%	23.5%	0.5%	487,147
2015	49.7%	17.9%	7.8%	24.1%	0.4%	480,161
2016	49.3%	16.6%	9.3%	24.1%	0.6%	458,145
2017	48.8%	16.5%	9.7%	24.5%	0.5%	473,160
2018	48.7%	16.2%	9.8%	24.8%	0.5%	468,537
2019	47.8%	16.0%	10.2%	25.5%	0.6%	472,617
2020	51.2%	14.1%	9.9%	24.3%	0.4%	405,917
2021	50.3%	14.5%	9.9%	24.7%	0.6%	418,147
2022	49.4%	15.8%	9.5%	24.8%	0.5%	456,695
2023	49.3%	16.4%	9.7%	24.0%	0.6%	443,271

8 Technical notes

8.1 Data collection

- 8.1.1 Hands Up Scotland Survey data is collected every year in September. In 2023, data collection took place between 11th and 15th September. Data from schools conducting the survey within a grace period of 1 week either side of the official survey date was accepted and included in the analysis.
- 8.1.2 This approach is designed to produce a large national dataset which can be used to examine information on mode of travel to school in detail at a national, local authority and school level as well as by school type and year group.
- 8.1.3 Pupils of primary and secondary school age are asked to respond to the Hands Up Scotland Survey themselves. Assistance may be provided to nursery children or SEN school pupils by a parent, guardian or member of school staff.

8.2 Response rates

- 8.2.1 There are limitations to the comparability of data between years and school types because whilst survey design and methodology have remained consistent, response rates have varied considerably between years and also between school types.
- 8.2.2 Survey receipt and response rates as a percentage of equivalent schools in Scotland and equivalent Scottish school roll are calculated using the Scottish Government Education Statistics. Data on both the number of schools and their pupil roll is available for state primary, secondary and SEN schools from the Scottish Government. Pupil roll numbers are not published for state nursery or independent schools in Scotland.
- 8.2.3 Survey receipt and response rates as a percentage of Scottish/local authority school roll and as a percentage of all schools in Scotland/local authority are calculated using Scottish Government Education Statistics. This is available only for state primary, secondary and SEN schools. It is therefore not possible to calculate receipt or response rates for nursery or independent school types.

8.3 School type

- 8.3.1 'All state schools' includes primary, secondary and SEN schools only.
- 8.3.2 'All schools' includes primary, secondary, SEN and independent schools only.
- 8.3.3 Nursery data is presented separately as the characteristics of nurseries are considered to be different to that of other school types. For example, some nursery children only attend mornings, afternoons, and part of the week, whereas those aged primary and up are in full time education. In addition to this, the number of nursery school respondents has more than quadrupled since data was first collected. This large increase in nursery pupils participating over a short space of time, had the potential to skew the national statistic in favour of nursery pupil travel and potentially present drastic changes in school travel modes over the years.

8.4 Interpreting results

- 8.4.1 The aggregated national level results do not necessarily include the same pupils over time as the same local authorities/schools/pupils might not respond to the survey each year. The survey data is not weighted to take this into account. This may have implications for inter-year comparisons; particular caution should be applied when attempting to draw conclusions from small percentage point changes. For further information regarding school participation please refer to Table 1.5 *Local authority response rates: number of schools surveyed*, and Table 1.6 *Local authority response rates: number of schools returning data*, in the Hands Up Scotland Survey National Results data tables, available from Sustrans' website at: <http://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>
- 8.4.2 Where the number of responses is low (fewer than 100), care should be taken when interpreting results. Percentage statistics based on a small number of responses may see large annual fluctuations.
- 8.4.3 A number of variables may impact on travel behaviour from year to year (e.g. weather conditions, school mergers, closures and relocations) as well as policies and schemes introduced by central government, local government or individual schools. Therefore, caution should be applied when seeking to interpret annual variations.
- 8.4.4 As the Hands Up Scotland Survey is carried out over a one week period, weather conditions may differ considerably from year to year. It should be noted that weather conditions have an impact on travel choices and may influence pupil response to the survey, although the phrasing of the survey question aims to overcome this limitation as much as possible ('How do you normally travel to school?').
- 8.4.5 Due to rounding, row percentages may not always add up to 100.0%, and category totals may not always add up to the values presented for individual travel modes.
- 8.4.6 In 2008, the first year of the survey, Sustrans Scotland offered a prize draw as an incentive for school participation.
- 8.4.7 In 2013, Sustrans Scotland offered a prize draw as an incentive to receive responses from all year groups. Between 2012 and 2013, the percentage of state schools responding to the survey increased from 77.0% to 78.7%. However, it is not possible to ascertain whether a proportion of these schools were encouraged by the incentive or whether this increase in school responses was the continuation of an overall trend.
- 8.4.8 It is not possible to ascertain whether the survey mode options were read out in the same order in each school or class that participated between 2008 and 2015, as the mode options presented on the survey form were tabulated. The order of presentation was consistent between 2008 and 2012, and 2013 to 2015, but inconsistent between these two time periods. Since 2016, the modes have been listed, removing any ambiguity. It is not possible to ascertain whether any observed differences in mode share between these years were as a result of these changes, or other unrelated factors.
- 8.4.9 Percentage point changes have been calculated based on the rounded figures presented in this summary report. If users wish to calculate percentage point change based on unrounded figures, please refer to the relevant tables in the Hands Up Scotland Survey National Results data tables, available from Sustrans' website, available at: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>

8.5 Confidentiality

- 8.5.1 Where a percentage represents a value of between one and four pupils, the statistic has been suppressed to maintain anonymity of respondents and the figure is replaced with an asterisk (*). Where suppressed data is included in the mode category calculation, the value for that category has also been suppressed.

8.6 Official Statistics Publication

- 8.6.1 The Hands Up Scotland Survey has been designated an Official Statistic in Scotland by Parliamentary Order and is produced in line with the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice for Official Statistics. The code covers a range of measures, such as relevance, integrity, quality, accessibility, value for money and freedom from political influence.
- 8.6.2 A Parliamentary Order was passed designating Sustrans as Official Statistics Providers as of 1st June 2012. The primary aim of Official Statistics in Scotland is to provide an accurate, up-to-date, comprehensive and meaningful picture of the economy and society to support the formulation and monitoring of economic and social policies by government and others.
- 8.6.3 More information on the standards of Official Statistics in Scotland is available at: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/producing-official-statistics/>

8.7 Enquiries

- 8.7.1 For media enquiries relating to the information contained in this, or any other Hands Up Scotland Survey documents, please contact Sustrans' Press Office on 0131 346 3010 or email at press@sustrans.org.uk
- 8.7.2 Non-media enquiries about Hands Up Scotland Survey should be made to Sustrans' Hands Up Scotland Survey team, Sustrans Research & Monitoring Unit, 1 Exchange Crescent, Conference Square, Edinburgh, EH3 8RA or email: HandsUpScotland@sustrans.org.uk
- 8.7.3 Where users wish to undertake more detailed analyses for a specific project and these documents do not provide the required information or format, a data request may be submitted. To submit a data request, please read the information and download the data request form at: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>
- 8.7.4 Sustrans' Research and Monitoring Unit assesses the impacts of Sustrans' work and evaluates the interventions of partners and clients across the UK, including extensive work with schools and young people. More information is available at: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/for-professionals/research-monitoring-and-evaluation/>

Endnotes

- ¹ For more information regarding the Hands Up Scotland Survey questions, please refer to: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>
- ² For more information regarding response rates, please refer to section 7.3 (page 28).
- ³ For more information regarding the policy context, please refer to section 3 (page 5).
- ⁴ For more information on the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice, please refer to: <https://code.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/the-code/>
- ⁵ Official Statistics in Scotland are produced by the Scottish Government, Crown Bodies and a number of other public bodies named by Parliamentary Order in line with the UK Statistics Authority's Code of Practice for Official Statistics.
- ⁶ For more information on Official Statistics in Scotland, please refer to: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/producing-official-statistics/>
- ⁷ Email: HandsUpScotland@sustrans.org.uk / Telephone: 0131 346 1384
- ⁸ To submit a data request, please read the information and download the data request form at: <https://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>
- ⁹ For more information on the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework, please refer to: <http://nationalperformance.gov.scot>
- ¹⁰ For more information about Transport Scotland's Active Travel Outcomes Framework, please refer to: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/active-travel-framework-1/>
- ¹¹ For more information on Transport Scotland's 'A Long-Term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland 2030,' please refer to: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/33649/long-term-vision-for-active-travel-in-scotland-2030.pdf>
- ¹² For more information on Scotland's physical activity delivery plan, please refer to: <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/strategy-plan/2018/07/active-scotland-delivery-plan/documents/00537494-pdf/00537494-pdf/govscot%3Adocument/00537494.pdf>
- ¹³ For more information on Transport Scotland's National Transport Strategy and the National Transport Strategy 2 in detail, please refer to: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/national-transport-strategy/>; <https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/47052/national-transport-strategy.pdf>
- ¹⁴ For more information on The UK Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines, please refer to: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/physical-activity-guidelines-uk-chief-medical-officers-report>
- ¹⁵ The Hands Up Scotland Survey is not a direct measure of the achievement of the Chief Medical Officers' recommended level of physical activity, but may inform evidence of this in conjunction with other sources of data.
- ¹⁶ For more information on 'A more active Scotland: Building a Legacy from the Commonwealth Games,' please refer to: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0044/00444577.pdf>
- ¹⁷ For more information on the 'Curriculum for Excellence' please refer to: <https://education.gov.scot/Documents/health-and-wellbeing-eo.pdf>
- ¹⁸ For more information on the Children and Young People's Profile, please refer to: <https://www.scotpho.org.uk/population-groups/children-and-young-people/key-points/>
- ¹⁹ The SHANARRI indicators of wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland are: 'Safe', 'Healthy', 'Achieving', 'Nurtured', 'Active', 'Respected', 'Responsible' and 'Included'.
- ²⁰ For more information on the SHANARRI indicators, please refer to: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/wellbeing>
- ²¹ For more information on the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014, please refer to: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2014/8/section/96/enacted>
- ²² For more information on the GIRFEC approach, please refer to: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright>
- ²³ For more information on the Scottish Government's 'National Walking Strategy' please refer to: <http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0045/00452622.pdf>
- ²⁴ For more information on Transport Scotland's 'Strategic Road Safety Plan,' please refer to: https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/10323/ts_strategic_road_safety_plan_2016_digital_sep_2016.pdf
- ²⁵ For more information on 'Designing Streets' please refer to: <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2010/03/22120652/0>

- ²⁶ For more information on ‘Scotland’s Road Safety Framework to 2030’, please refer to:
<https://www.transport.gov.scot/news/scotland-s-road-safety-framework-to-2030/>
- ²⁷ For more information on the ‘Environment’ outcome in the Scottish Government’s National Performance Framework, please refer to: <https://nationalperformance.gov.scot/national-outcomes/national-outcomes/environment>
- ²⁸ For more information on the Scottish Government’s ‘Cleaner Air for Scotland strategy’, please refer to:
<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0048/00488493.pdf>
- ²⁹ For more information on the Climate Change (Emissions Reductions Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 and the Climate Change Plan: third report on proposals and policies 2018-2032 (RPP3) please refer to:
<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/asp/2019/15/contents/enacted;>
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-governments-climate-change-plan-third-report-proposals-policies-2018/>
- ³⁰ For more information on Transport Scotland’s National Transport Strategy priority ‘Takes Climate Action’, please refer to:
<https://www.transport.gov.scot/our-approach/national-transport-strategy/national-transport-strategy-takes-climate-action/>
- ³¹ For more information on Travel to School as measured by the Scottish Household Survey, please refer to:
<https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/50980/transport-and-travel-in-scotland-2020-results-from-the-scottish-household-survey-pdf-version.pdf>
- ³² A list of the main statistical publications in relation to transport in Scotland is available from the Transport Scotland website:
<https://www.transport.gov.scot/publications/?publicationtype=935905eb-0b3c-47ef-9687-075d7130f47b&q=>
- ³³ For more information on the Scottish Health Survey, please refer to:
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scottish-health-survey-2022-volume-1-main-report/>
- ³⁴ For more information on the Pupil Level Annual School Census in England, please refer to:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/school-census>
- ³⁵ For more information on the Health Survey for England, please refer to:
<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/health-survey-for-england>
- ³⁶ For more information on the UK National Travel Survey, please refer to:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics>
- ³⁷ For more information on the Northern Ireland Travel Survey, please refer to:
<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/travel-survey-northern-ireland>
- ³⁸ For more information on travel data from the National Survey for Wales, please refer to:
<https://gov.wales/national-survey-wales>
- ³⁹ Clackmannanshire, East Renfrewshire, Fife and Midlothian opted for manual entry of the 2023 Hands Up Scotland Survey data by local authority officers and did not use the online survey platform.
- ⁴⁰ Table 2.1 in supplementary National Results Excel file available to download from:
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>
- ⁴¹ All schools: primary, secondary, SEN and independent schools in Scotland, excluding nursery.
- ⁴² Other modes of travel may include local authority transport and train, among others.
- ⁴³ Values for SEN pupils have been suppressed for cycle and scooter/ skate and are therefore not presented here. Please see Technical Note 8.5.1.
- ⁴⁴ Table 2.3 in supplementary National Results Excel file available to download from:
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>
- ⁴⁵ Table 2.2 and Table 2.3 in supplementary National Results Excel file available to download from:
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>
- ⁴⁶ All state schools: primary, secondary and SEN schools in Scotland, excluding nursery.
- ⁴⁷ This percentage may be less or more than 100% due to variation in the number of schools listed in Scottish Government Education Statistics, between years. In addition, there are occasions on which a school may not be sent the survey by accident.
- ⁴⁸ Table 1.3 in supplementary National Results Excel file available to download from:
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>
- ⁴⁹ Table 1.1 in supplementary National Results Excel file available to download from:
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>
- ⁵⁰ Table 2.4 in supplementary National Results Excel file available to download from:
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>

- ⁵¹ For considerations relating to calculations of percentage point change, please see Technical Note 8.4.9.
- ⁵² Active travel is the combination of Walk, Cycle and Scooter / Skate. Private motorised travel is the combination of Driven (car) and Taxi.
- ⁵³ Specific values are are not reported here due to there being several years of suppressed data for cycling and scooter/skate for SEN schools
- ⁵⁴ Tables 3.1 onwards in supplementary National Results Excel file available to download from:
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>
- ⁵⁵ Table 1.1 and Table 1.3 in supplementary National Results Excel file available to download from:
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>
- ⁵⁶ Further details of data returned by class can be found in tables 1.4, 1.7, 2.4 and 3.4 in supplementary National Results Excel file available to download from:
<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>