

Hands Up Scotland Survey 2025: Overview

An Official Statistics Publication for Scotland - May 2026

The annual Hands Up Scotland Survey, now in its eighteenth year, is published by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust. The survey is funded by Transport Scotland and is designed to provide reliable and up to date information on mode of travel to school in Scotland.

The question posed to all school pupils and nursery children is, 'How do you normally travel to school?' with a choice of travel modes.

The travel modes are categorised as follows:

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

Over three-quarters (78.7%) of all state schools in Scotland (excluding nurseries) took part in the 2025 survey. Responses were received from over 440,000 school pupils and over 41,000 nursery children.

A full report detailing the national level findings and greater technical detail on the data collection is also available. This overview is an accompaniment to that report.

Key findings

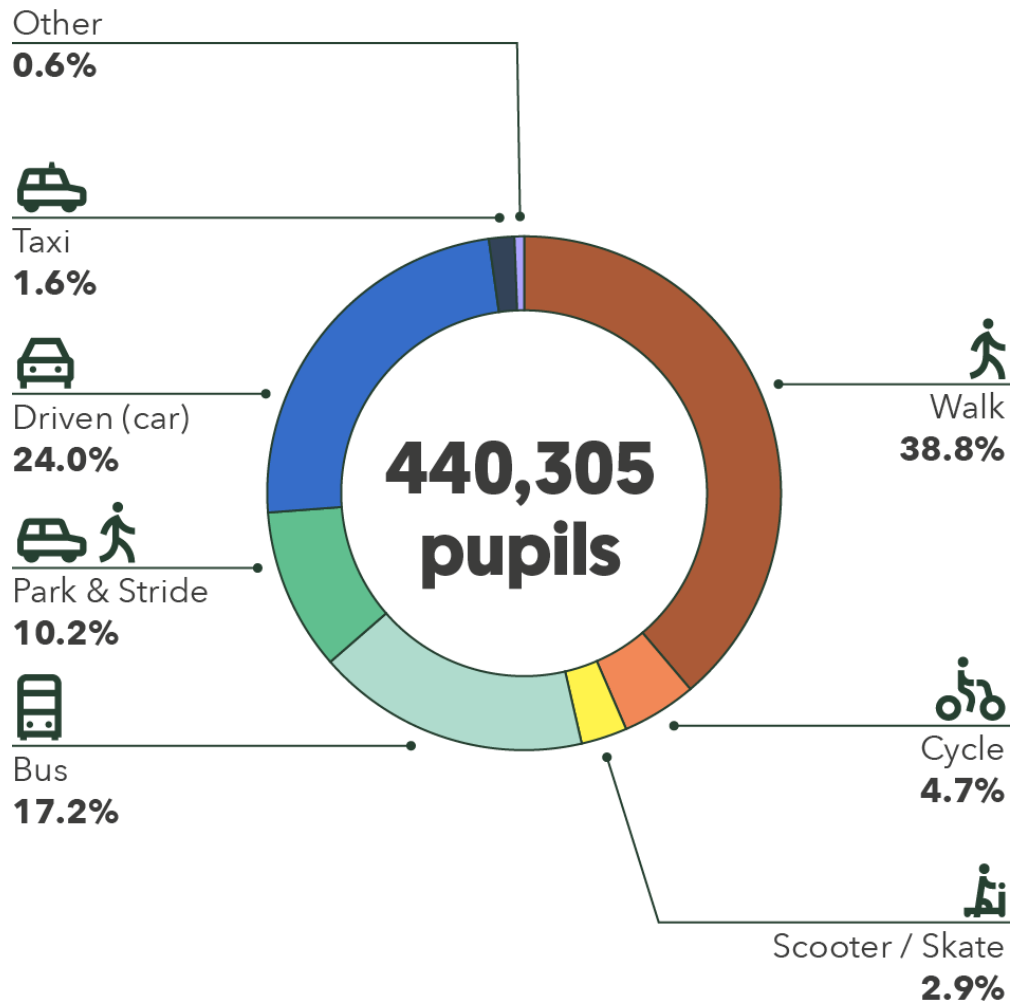
Active travel to school has declined since 2024 and is the lowest it has been since the survey began (2008).

The key findings from the 2025 survey are:

- In 2025, the percentage of school pupils travelling actively to school, either by walking, cycling, scootering or skating, is at 46.4%. This represents a continued decline since a 51.2% high in 2020, and is lower than the pre-pandemic levels of 2019 (47.8%)
- At 4.7%, cycling levels have risen by 0.8 percentage points (pp) since 2024. This is a return to 2023 levels, and the highest levels recorded since the survey began
- Walking rates fell for the fifth year in a row, by 1.0pp. At 38.8%, this is its lowest level since the survey began, but is still by far the most common way school pupils get to school
- At 2.9%, the percentage of pupils scootering or skating to school is in line with 2024 levels
- The proportion of pupils being driven to school has risen by 0.1pp to 24.0% in 2025. This is the highest it has been since the survey began
- Bus use has risen for the fifth year in a row, rising by 0.1pp to 17.2%. This is higher than pre-pandemic levels and is the highest level of the past 10 survey years.

National results 2025

Chart 1: National travel modes: proportion of participating pupils travelling by different modes (all school pupil responses exc. nursery children), 2025.¹



Active travel

46.4% (204,157 out of 440,305) of school pupils (state and independent schools combined) surveyed in 2025 said they normally travel to school in an active way, with walking as the most common mode of travel to school.

Public sustainable travel

17.2% of school pupils (75,907) in 2025 said they normally travel to school by bus.

Multi-mode travel

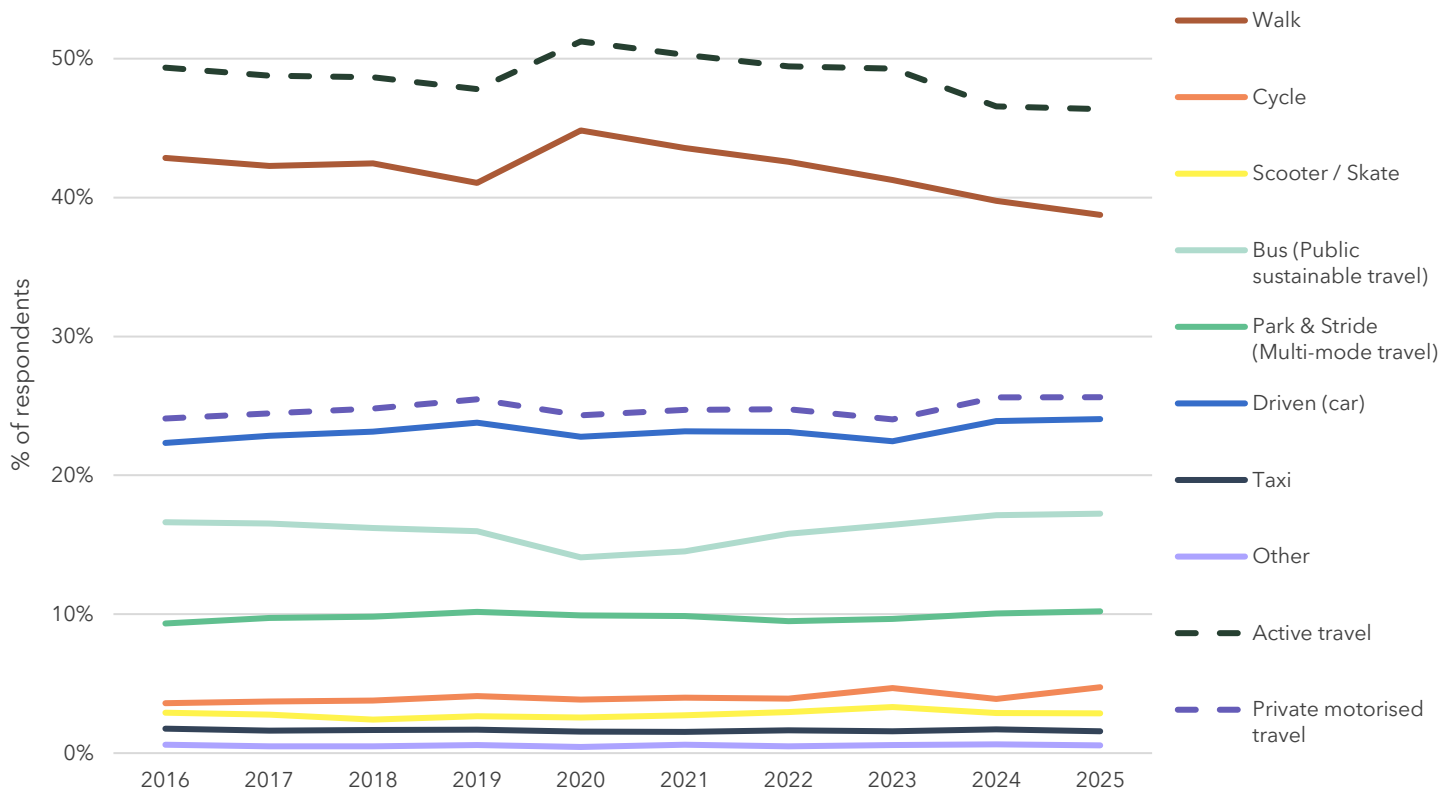
10.2% of school pupils (44,946) in 2025 said they normally park and stride to school.

Private motorised travel

25.6% of school pupils (112,832) in 2025 said they normally travel to school using private motorised transport.

Trends in the 2016-2025 results - All schools

Chart 2: National travel modes and categories: all schools (exc. nursery), 2016-2025²



- Since 2016, active travel to school has remained the most frequently reported mode of travel to school in Scotland
- In 2016, 49.3% 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 fallen. Between 2024 and 2025 it fell by 0.2pp from 46.6% to 46.4%. Active travel to school is at its lowest level since the survey began (2008)
- Levels of pupils in all schools (exc. nursery) travelling to school using private motorised transport have fluctuated over the past 10 years. In 2025, levels remained at 25.6%, in line with 2024 levels. This is the highest level of private transport use to school since the survey began
- Overall, the proportion of pupils travelling to school (exc. nursery) by bus has risen over the past 10 survey years, from 16.6% in 2016 to 17.2% in 2025. In 2025, bus use rose for the fifth year in a row, rising by 0.1pp from 17.1 in 2024
- The proportion of pupils travelling to school by park and stride has broadly risen over the past 10 survey years from 9.3% in 2016 to 10.2% in 2025. This is a 0.2pp rise from 2024, and is the joint highest level observed since the survey began, matching 2019 levels.

Response rates

- A total of 1,934 schools took part in the 2025 survey. This represents 50 fewer schools than in 2024
- State school responses as a proportion of all state schools³ in Scotland were at 78.7% in 2025. This is a 1.5pp fall from the year before which saw the highest response level of the last 10 survey years, with a response rate of 80.2%
- Responses were received from 440,305 school pupils in 2025. This represents 21,422 fewer school pupils than in 2024
- 431,936 state school pupils took part in the 2025 survey, which equates to 62.1% of all state school pupils enrolled in Scotland. The number and proportion of state school pupils responding to the survey has fluctuated year by year, falling from a high of 466,956 (67.8%) in 2017 to 431,936 (62.1%) in 2025.

Key results tables

Table 1: National travel modes: by school type, 2025.⁴

School type	Walk	Cycle	Scooter/ Skate	Bus	Park & Stride	Driven (car)	Taxi	Other	Total
Nursery	31.8%	4.1%	3.4%	2.8%	4.0%	52.4%	1.0%	0.4%	41,819
Primary	39.7%	7.0%	4.6%	6.4%	13.3%	27.3%	1.5%	0.2%	266,036
Secondary	38.9%	1.3%	0.2%	34.3%	5.2%	17.9%	1.2%	0.9%	163,259
SEN	2.9%	*	*	40.8%	0.2%	12.5%	40.4%	3.1%	2,641
Independent	16.3%	1.8%	0.7%	20.6%	13.4%	43.5%	0.3%	3.5%	8,369
All state schools (exc. nursery)	39.2%	4.8%	2.9%	17.2%	10.1%	23.7%	1.6%	0.5%	431,936
All schools (exc. nursery)	38.8%	4.7%	2.9%	17.2%	10.2%	24.0%	1.6%	0.6%	440,305

Table 2: National travel modes: all schools (exc. nursery), 2016-2025.⁵

Year	Walk	Cycle	Scooter/ Skate	Bus	Park & Stride	Driven (car)	Taxi	Other	Total
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
2024	39.8%	3.9%	2.9%	17.1%	10.0%	23.9%	1.7%	0.6%	461,727
2025	38.8%	4.7%	2.9%	17.2%	10.2%	24.0%	1.6%	0.6%	440,305

Endnotes

¹ Table 2.1 in supplementary National Results Excel file available to download from:

<https://www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/our-blog/projects/hands-up-scotland-survey/>

² Active travel is the combination of Walk, Cycle and Scooter / Skate. Private motorised travel is the combination of Driven (car) and Taxi.

³ All state schools: primary, secondary and SEN schools in Scotland, excluding nursery.

⁴ Table 2.3 in supplementary National Results Excel file available to download from:

<https://www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/our-blog/projects/hands-up-scotland-survey/>

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