

# Travel to School in Scotland

**Hands Up Scotland Survey 2025:**  
National Summary Report

May 2026



## About Walk Wheel Cycle Trust

Walk Wheel Cycle Trust is the charity making it possible for everyone to walk, wheel and cycle. We work directly with communities to make change happen. Then we evidence the impact to influence policies to push those changes further.

Because people-powered movement changes everything. Our health. Our wellbeing. Our world.  
[www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk](http://www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk)

Document details	
<b>Reference ID:</b>	SUSR2458
<b>Version:</b>	1.0
<b>Client:</b>	Transport Scotland
<b>Circulation Status:</b>	External
<b>Issue Date:</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> May 2026
<b>Author(s):</b>	Matt Pearce, Natasha Bird, Isla Klose
<b>Reviewed by:</b>	Chloe Moore, Vicki Taylor
<b>Signed off by:</b>	Vicki Taylor
<b>Accepted by:</b>	Transport Scotland
<b>Contact:</b>	<a href="mailto:handsupscotland@walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk">handsupscotland@walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk</a>

Walk Wheel Cycle Trust  
1 Exchange Crescent  
Conference Square  
Edinburgh  
EH3 8RA

© Walk Wheel Cycle Trust May 2026  
Registered Charity No. 326550 (England and Wales) SC039263 (Scotland) and 20206824 (Republic of Ireland)  
VAT Registration No. 416740656

**Cover photograph credit:** Fiona McBain/Walk Wheel Cycle Trust  
© 2025, Fiona McBain, all rights reserved

# Table of contents

<b>Executive Summary .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1 Introduction.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2 The National Summary Report.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>3 Policy context for school travel in Scotland.....</b>	<b>5</b>
3.1 Healthy and Active .....	5
3.2 Inclusive, Empowered, Resilient and Safe Communities.....	6
3.3 Value, Enjoy, Protect and Enhance our Environment.....	7
<b>4 Other relevant data sources .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>5 Survey design.....</b>	<b>9</b>
5.1 Data collection.....	9
<b>6 2025 Results.....</b>	<b>10</b>
6.1 All school results.....	11
6.2 Nursery results .....	13
6.3 All state school comparison .....	14
6.4 State and independent school comparison.....	16
6.5 Response rates: schools .....	17
6.6 Response rates: pupils.....	17
6.7 Data tables: 2025 results .....	18
<b>7 Trends in the 2016-2025 results .....</b>	<b>19</b>
7.1 All school results.....	19
7.2 Changes in mode share at local authority level.....	26
7.3 Response rates.....	27
7.4 Data tables: 2016-2025 results .....	31
<b>8 Technical notes.....</b>	<b>32</b>
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
<b>Endnotes .....</b>	<b>35</b>

## List of tables

<b>Table 6-1:</b> National response rates: number and proportion of schools responding to the survey, 2025. ....	<b>17</b>
<b>Table 6-2:</b> 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, 2025. ....	<b>17</b>
<b>Table 6-3:</b> National travel categories: by school type, 2025. ....	<b>18</b>
<b>Table 6-4:</b> National travel modes: by school type, 2025. ....	<b>18</b>
<b>Table 6-5:</b> National travel modes: by school type and year group, 2025. ....	<b>18</b>
<b>Table 7-1:</b> 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, 2016-2025. ....	<b>27</b>
<b>Table 7-2:</b> 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, 2016-2025. ....	<b>28</b>
<b>Table 7-3:</b> Nursery participation: number of nursery schools and children responding to the survey, 2016-2025. ....	<b>30</b>
<b>Table 7-4:</b> National travel modes: all schools (exc. nursery), 2016-2025. ....	<b>31</b>
<b>Table 7-5:</b> National travel categories: all schools (exc. nursery), 2016-2025. ....	<b>31</b>

## List of charts

<b>Chart 6-1:</b> National travel modes: proportion of participating pupils travelling by different modes (all school pupil responses exc. nursery children), 2025.....	<b>11</b>
<b>Chart 6-2:</b> National travel modes: pupil responses by school type, 2025. ....	<b>12</b>
<b>Chart 6-3:</b> National travel modes: proportion of participating nursery children travelling by different modes, 2025. ....	<b>13</b>
<b>Chart 6-4:</b> National travel modes: proportion of participating pupils travelling by different modes, by state school type (primary, secondary and SEN), 2025. <sup>44</sup> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Chart 6-5:</b> National travel modes: proportion of participating pupils travelling by different modes, by state schools (exc. nursery) and independent schools, 2025. ....	<b>16</b>
<b>Chart 7-1:</b> National travel modes and categories: all schools (exc. nursery), 2016-2025 .....	<b>19</b>
<b>Chart 7-2:</b> Active travel mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nursery), 2016-2025. <sup>40</sup> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Chart 7-3:</b> Mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nursery) within the public sustainable travel category, 2016-2025. <sup>40</sup> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Chart 7-4:</b> Mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nursery) within the multi-mode travel category, 2016-2025. <sup>40</sup> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>Chart 7-5:</b> Mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nursery) within the private motorised travel category, 2016-2025. <sup>40</sup> .....	<b>24</b>
<b>Chart 7-6:</b> Change in pupil travel mode share between 2024 and 2025 at the local authority level. ....	<b>26</b>
<b>Chart 7-7:</b> National response rates: number of responses from state school pupils and all school pupils (exc. nursery), 2016-2025. <sup>49</sup> .....	<b>28</b>
<b>Chart 7-8:</b> National State school pupils: proportion of Scotland school pupil roll, and proportion of Hands Up Scotland Survey responses, from each state school type, 2016-2025. ....	<b>29</b>

## 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 Walk Wheel Cycle Trust 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.<sup>1</sup> The number of pupils present is recorded, and pupils are asked to raise their hand for one of the modes only. Each mode 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 2025. Trends in the data are analysed for the last 10 survey years, with the baseline year in this report being 2016.

In 2025



**482,124**

school and nursery children took part in the survey



**3,290**

schools and nurseries took part in the survey

**440,305 school pupils** and **41,819 nursery children** took part. **431,936** state school pupils participated, which equates to 62.1% of all state school pupils enrolled in Scotland.<sup>2</sup>

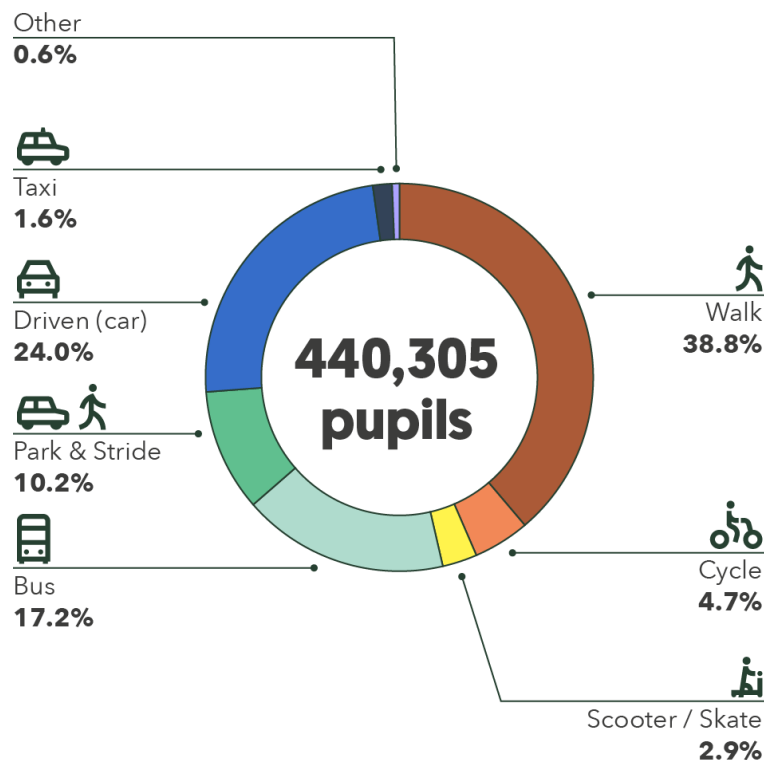
**1,934 schools** and **1,356 nurseries** took part. 1,915 state schools participated, which equates to 78.7% of all registered state schools in Scotland.

Between 2025 and 2026, there has been a 2.7 percentage point fall in state school pupil response rate, from 64.8% to 62.1%. The total number of state schools responding to the survey has fallen from 1,962 in 2024 to 1,915 in 2025. At 78.7% of state schools, this is a 1.5pp reduction from 2024, with rates fluctuating over the past 10 years. Schools can return data for the whole school or broken down by class. In 2025, 70.2% of all registered state schools in Scotland returned data broken down by class. This is a 3pp fall from 2024 levels, and is in line with 2019 levels, with levels fluctuating over the past 10 years between a low of 47.9% in 2016 and high of 75.2% the following year.

## Active travel

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

46.4% of school pupils surveyed in 2025 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 falling trend between 2016 and 2019, 2020 saw a 3.4 percentage point rise to 51.2%, making it the highest of the last 10 survey years. Since then, active travel levels have fallen year on year. Walking to school fell from 42.8% in 2016 to 38.8% in 2025. This is a fall of 1 percentage point since 2024. Cycling was at its highest recorded level in 2025, returning to the 2023 level of 4.7%. Scootering or skating was in line with the 2024 level, at 2.9%



## Multi-modal travel

**10.2% of school pupils surveyed in 2025 said they normally park and stride to school.**

Overall, the percentage of pupils travelling to school by park and stride has risen from 9.3% in 2016 to 10.2% in 2025. The highest levels recorded since the survey began (2008).

## Private motorised travel

**Private motorised travel remains at 2024 levels, matching the highest levels recorded since the survey began (2008).**

25.6% of school pupils surveyed in 2025 said they normally travel to school using only a private motorised mode of transport, in line with 2024 levels. The proportion of pupils being driven to school in a car showed a rising trend from 2016 to 2019 where it reached a mode share of 23.8%. From 2020 to 2024 it fluctuated between 22.5% and 23.9%. In 2025, the proportion of pupils being driven to school rose to 24.0%, the highest level recorded since the survey began. Travel to school by taxi has remained stable, varying between 1.5% and 1.8%. In 2025 it fell by 0.1pp to 1.6%.

## Public sustainable travel

**17.2% of school pupils surveyed in 2025 said they normally travel to school by bus. This is the highest level in the past 10 years.**

The percentage of pupils travelling to school using the bus fell from 16.6% in 2016 to 14.1% in 2020. Since then, bus use has risen year on year to 17.2% in 2025.

# 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 Walk Wheel Cycle Trust 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 Scotland<sup>3</sup>
- 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.<sup>4</sup>

A Parliamentary Order designates Walk Wheel Cycle Trust as an Official Statistics Provider<sup>5</sup> as of 1<sup>st</sup> June 2012. The Hands Up Scotland Survey is guided by the three pillars laid out in the updated 2025 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.<sup>6</sup>

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 2025 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 2025, are also available. These documents can be downloaded from Walk Wheel Cycle Trust's website:

<https://www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/our-blog/projects/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 2025.

Trends in the data are analysed for the last 10 years, with the baseline year in this report being 2016. Cases where a mode share value is at its highest, or lowest, level since the survey began, are also highlighted in this report.

The Walk Wheel Cycle Trust's Hands Up Scotland Survey team can be contacted with feedback or enquiries.<sup>7</sup> 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 Walk Wheel Cycle Trust's Hands Up Scotland Survey team.<sup>8</sup>

## 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.**

Under the previous *National Performance Framework (NPF)*<sup>9</sup> the Scottish Government outlined its purpose 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.

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

- 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 Framework<sup>10</sup> brings together the key policy approaches to improving the uptake of walking, wheeling and cycling in Scotland for travel. The Active Travel Outcomes Framework draws on the *Long-Term Vision for Active Travel in Scotland 2030*<sup>11</sup>. 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 linked 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 through evidencing active travel (walking, cycling, scootering or skating) to school.

#### Active travel for health and wellbeing

*Scotland's Population Health Framework 2025-2035*<sup>12</sup> sets out a long-term approach to improving Scotland's health and reducing health inequalities for the next decade. This includes taking action to support the creation of 'active environments, policies and opportunities across all places of learning' and 'prioritising active travel infrastructure and support and encouraging active travel behaviour'.



The Scottish Government's *National Transport Strategy 2*<sup>13</sup> highlights health and wellbeing improvement as 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*<sup>14</sup> recommend active travel as one way of making up the daily recommended 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for children.<sup>15</sup>

The *Curriculum for Excellence*<sup>16</sup> 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 outcomes in relation to 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*<sup>17</sup>. The profile aims to measure progress against the SHANARRI<sup>18</sup> indicators of wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland<sup>19</sup>, outlined in the *Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014*<sup>20</sup>. SHANARRI indicators of wellbeing are part of the *Getting It Right for Every Child (GIRFEC)*<sup>21</sup> 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.

## 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

*Scotland's Road Safety Framework to 2030*<sup>22</sup> targets a 60% reduction in fatal child casualties, and a 60% reduction in the number of children seriously injured, on Scotland's roads. Similarly the *Long Term Vision for Active Travel*<sup>11</sup> 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 outcome<sup>23</sup> through evidencing private motorised travel (car and taxi) to school.

#### Improving air quality



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. The *Clearer Air for Scotland 2*<sup>24</sup> strategy highlights this and outlines objectives to provide 'a transport system that facilitates active travel choices' and to apply 'constraints upon private vehicle use'.

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*.<sup>25</sup> Levels of motorised travel have implications for greenhouse gas emissions, and *Scotland's Climate Change Plan: 2026-2040*<sup>26</sup> shows that transport is currently the largest contributor to Scottish greenhouse gas emissions, and highlights that policies to 'reduce car use, such as free bus travel, investment in public and active transport, and local schemes' will be key to meeting future national, transport related, carbon budgets.

Levels of motorised travel also have implications for congestion, and *National Transport Strategy 2* 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.

*Strategic Transport Projects Review 2 (STPR2)*<sup>27</sup>, a set of recommendations around transport investment, in order to deliver National Transport Strategy priorities, puts forward a plan for investment to increase active travel to school. STPR2 recommends 'a comprehensive package of local infrastructure schemes such as reallocation of road space, improved crossing points, improved surfacing and lighting, and supported by traffic speed reduction measures and School Streets schemes where appropriate' and 'behaviour change measures to promote better driver behaviour around schools (such as safe parking and no engine idling initiatives) and to provide encouragement for pupils and their families to travel safely and actively.'.

## 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 Scotland<sup>28</sup>. 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.<sup>29</sup> The *Scottish Health Survey*<sup>30</sup> includes wider information on children's physical activity levels.

The *Pupil Level Annual School Census*<sup>31</sup> 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*<sup>32</sup> 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*,<sup>33</sup> the *Travel Survey for Northern Ireland*,<sup>34</sup> and the *National Survey for Wales*.<sup>35</sup>

## 5 Survey design

The Hands Up Scotland Survey is a joint project, managed by Walk Wheel Cycle Trust 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.

Walk Wheel Cycle Trust 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 2025, data collection took place between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> of September. Data collection is conducted by school staff, as instructed by their local authority officer, with support from Walk Wheel Cycle Trust.

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.<sup>36</sup>

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

## 6 2025 Results

This section of the report details the results from the 2025 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' (440,305 pupils) includes primary (266,036 pupils), secondary (163,259 pupils), SEN (2,641 pupils) and independent (8,369 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' (431,936 pupils) includes primary, secondary, and SEN schools only.

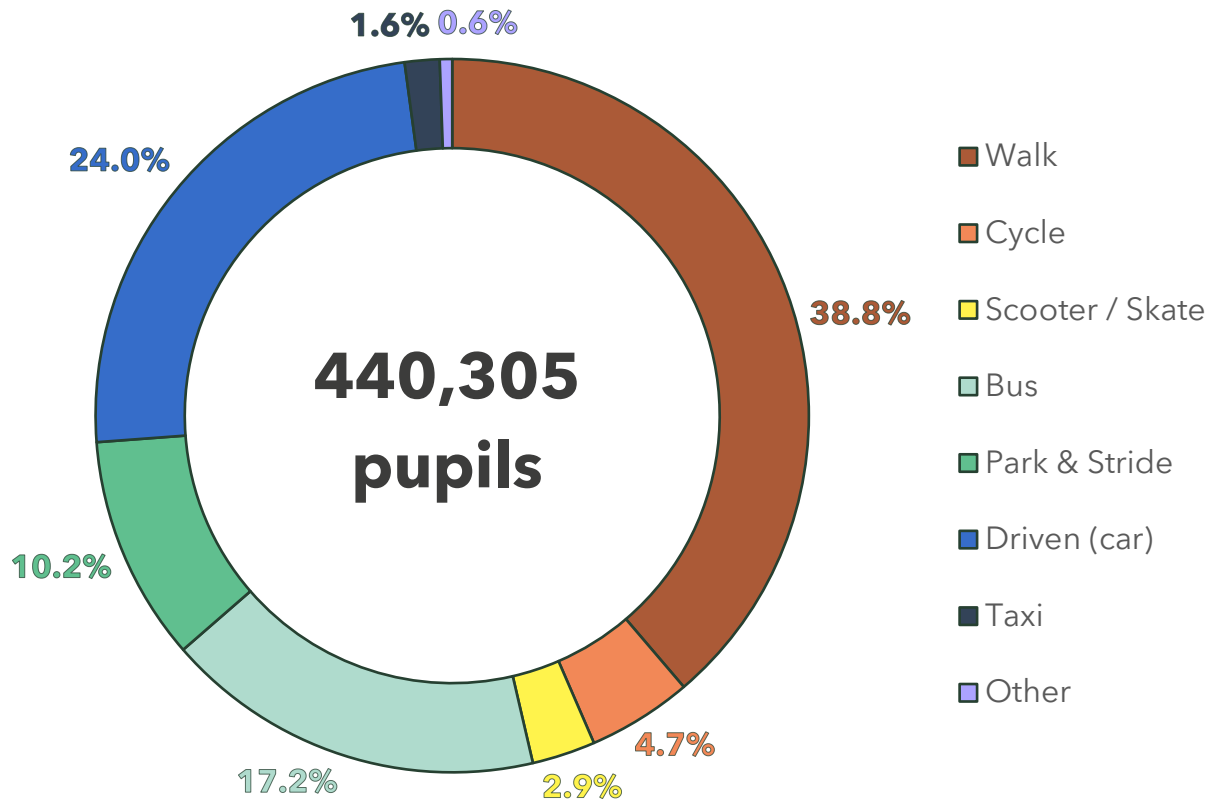
This report presents small percentage point changes, this is because a small percentage point change may relate to a sizeable number of pupils:

- The average number of state school responses over the past 5 years is 436,971 pupils. A 0.1 percentage point change in mode share is roughly equivalent to 437 pupils changing mode
- The average number of primary school pupils responding is 277,657 pupils over the past 5 years. A 0.1 percentage point shift for primary pupils is roughly equivalent to 278 pupils changing mode
- The average number of secondary pupils responding to the survey is 156,991. A 0.1 percentage point change is roughly equivalent to 157 pupils
- The average number of pupils from SEN schools responding to the survey is 2,324. 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), 2025.<sup>37</sup>**



### Active travel

46.4% of pupils (204,157) across all schools<sup>38</sup> surveyed in 2025 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 38.8% of pupils (170,628) saying they normally walk to school. 4.7% of pupils (20,890) said they normally cycle to school and 2.9% (12,639) said they normally scooter or skate.

### Public sustainable travel

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

### Multi-mode travel

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

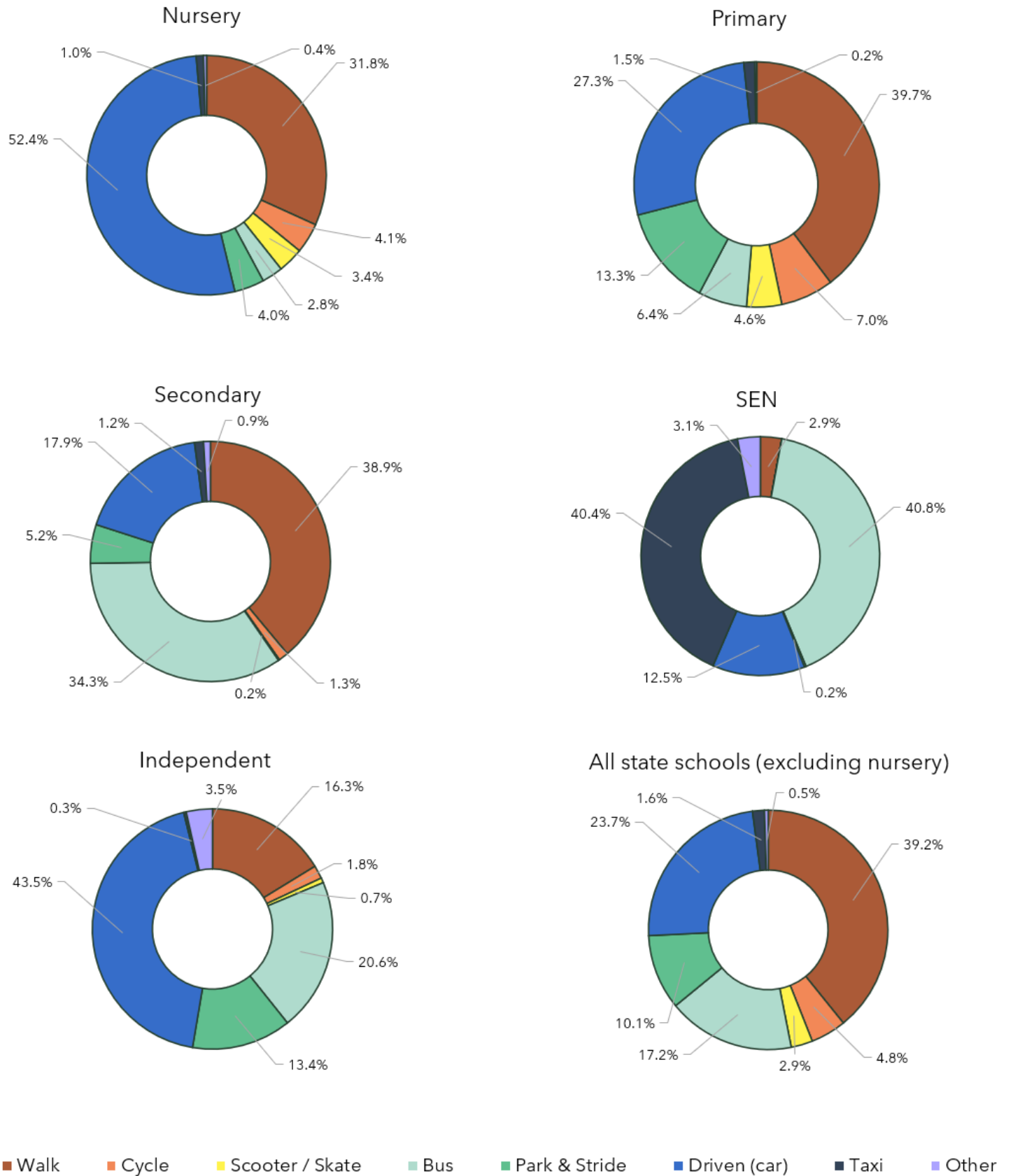
### Private motorised travel

25.6% of pupils (112,832) in 2025 said they normally travel to school using only a private motorised mode of transport. 24.0% of pupils (105,892) said they are normally driven to school (in a private car), and 1.6% (6,940) normally travel to school by taxi.

### Other

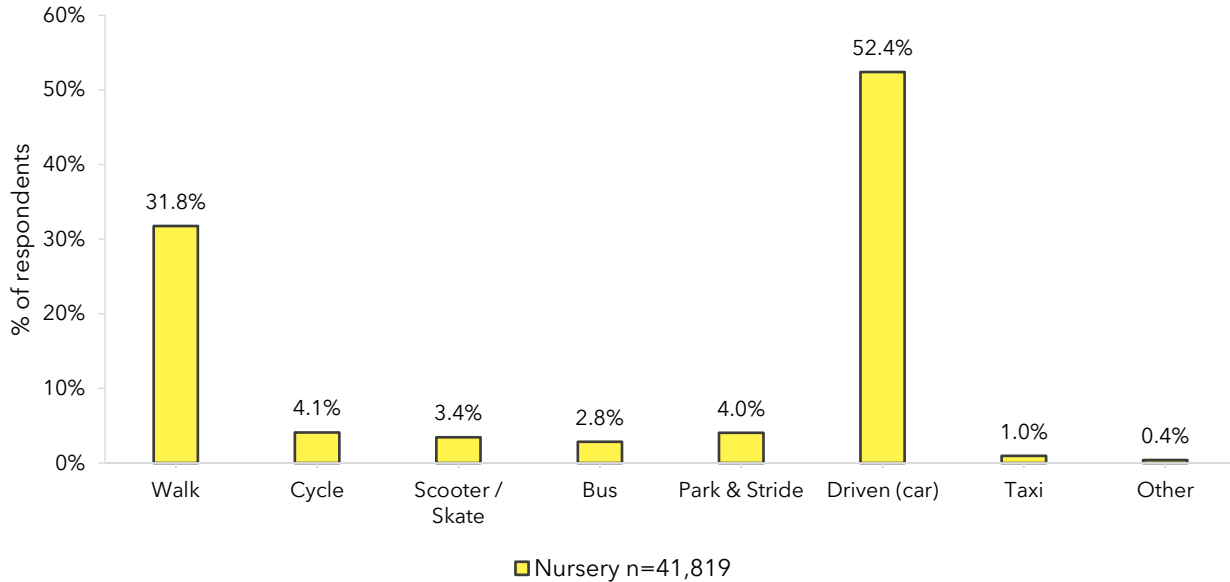
0.6% of pupils (2,463) indicated they travel to school by other means.<sup>39</sup>

**Chart 6-2: National travel modes: pupil responses by school type, 2025.<sup>40</sup>**



## 6.2 Nursery results

**Chart 6-3: National travel modes: proportion of participating nursery children travelling by different modes, 2025.**<sup>41</sup>



### Active travel

39.3% of nursery children surveyed in 2025 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 31.8% of nursery children. 4.1% of nursery children said they normally cycle to nursery, and 3.4% said they normally scooter or skate.

### Public sustainable travel

2.8% of nursery children in 2025 said they normally travel to nursery by bus.

### Multi-mode travel

4.0% of nursery children in 2025 said they normally park and stride to nursery.

### Private motorised travel

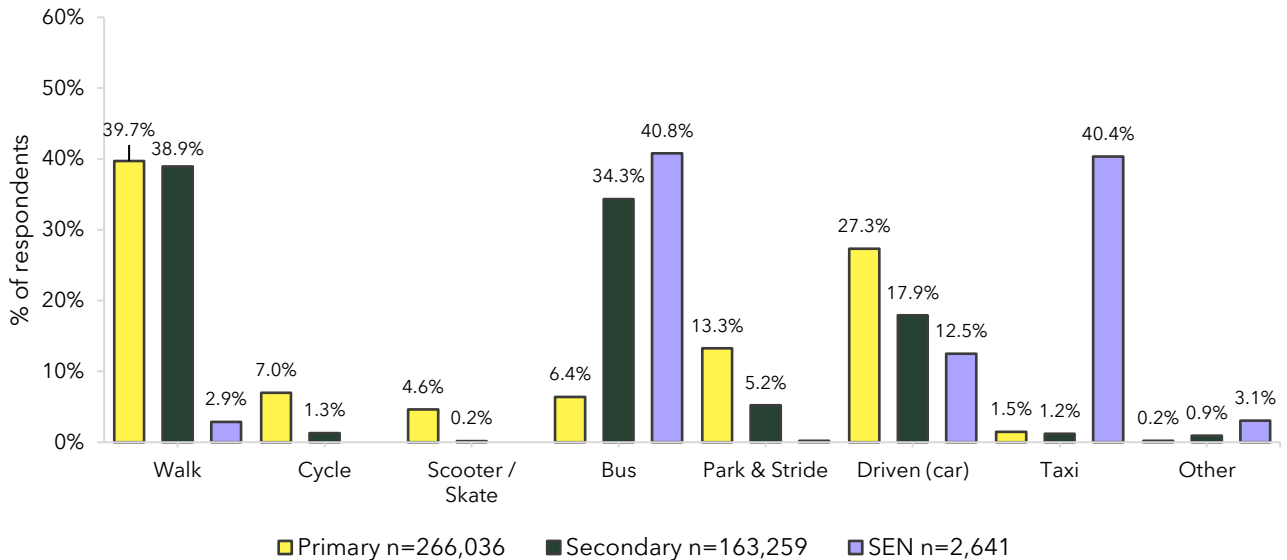
53.4% of nursery children in 2025 reported normally travelling to school by private motorised transport, 52.4% driven by car and 1.0% by taxi.

### Other

0.4% of nursery children in 2025 indicated they travel to nursery by other means.<sup>39</sup>

### 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), 2025.<sup>44</sup>**



#### Active travel

In 2025, primary school pupils reported the highest level of active travel to school out of all school types, at 51.3%, followed by secondary school pupils at 40.4%. 39.7% of primary school pupils reported normally walking to school compared to 38.9% of secondary and 2.9% of SEN school pupils. 7.0% of primary school pupils reported normally cycling to school compared to 1.3% of secondary school pupils. 4.6% of primary school pupils reported normally scootering or skating to school compared to 0.2% of secondary school pupils.

#### Public sustainable travel

In 2025, SEN pupils reported the highest levels of bus usage, at 40.8% of pupils, compared to 34.3% of secondary school pupils and just 6.4% of primary school pupils.

#### Multi-mode travel

In 2025, 13.3% of primary school pupils reported park and stride as their usual mode of travelling to school, compared to 5.2% of secondary school pupils and 0.2% of SEN pupils.

#### Private motorised travel

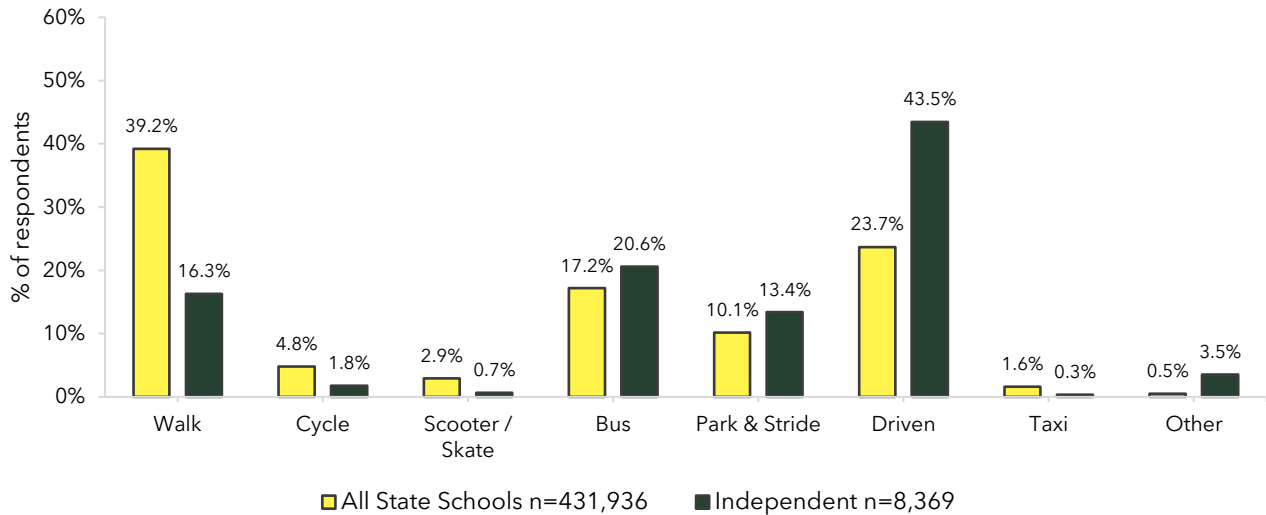
Secondary school pupils in 2025 reported the lowest levels of travel to school using private motorised transport of all school types, at 19.1%. This is lower than the 28.8% of primary school pupils and 52.9% of SEN school pupils who reported normally doing so. 12.5% of SEN pupils are normally driven to school in a car, compared to 17.9% of secondary and 27.3% of primary school pupils. 40.4% of SEN pupils reported normally using a taxi to travel to school. Neither primary (1.5%) nor secondary (1.2%) school pupils reported high levels of normally using a taxi to travel to school in 2025.

## **Other**

3.1% 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.<sup>39</sup>

## 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, 2025.<sup>42</sup>**



### Active travel

In 2025, state school pupils reported higher active travel levels compared to independent school pupils, with 46.9% of state school pupils either walking, cycling, scootering or skating, compared to 18.7% of independent school pupils. This trend is consistent among each active mode of travel. For state schools, 39.2%, 4.8% and 2.9% of pupils reported normally travelling to school by walking, cycling and scootering or skating, respectively, compared to 16.3%, 1.8% and 0.7% of independent school pupils.

### Public sustainable travel

17.2% of state school pupils reported normally travelling to school by bus, compared to 20.6% of independent school pupils.

### Multi-mode travel

10.1% of state school pupils reported normally travelling to school using multiple modes, compared to 13.4% of independent school pupils.

### Private motorised travel

25.3% of state school pupils normally travel to school using private motorised modes compared to 43.8% of independent school pupils. A higher proportion of independent school pupils are normally driven to school by car (43.5%) than state school pupils (23.7%). 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 3.5% of independent school pupils.

## 6.5 Response rates: schools

In 2025, a total of 3,290 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 (8<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> September 2025).

2,766 nurseries and 2,520 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 2,434 state schools<sup>43</sup>, representing 100.0% of all state schools in Scotland<sup>44</sup>.

A total of 1,356 nurseries and 1,934 schools responded to the survey. 1,915 state schools took part, representing 78.7% of state schools receiving the survey and 78.7% of all state schools in Scotland.

**Table 6-1: National response rates: number and proportion of schools responding to the survey, 2025.<sup>45</sup>**

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	2,766	N/A	1,356	49.0%	N/A
Primary	1,969	100.0%	1,596	81.1%	81.1%
Secondary	359	100.0%	274	76.3%	76.3%
SEN	106	100.0%	45	42.5%	42.5%
Independent	86	N/A	19	22.1%	N/A
<b>All state schools (exc. nursery)</b>	2,434	100.0%	1,915	78.7%	78.7%
<b>All schools (exc. nursery)</b>	2,520	N/A	1,934	76.7%	N/A

## 6.6 Response rates: pupils

Responses were received from 41,819 nursery children and 440,305 school pupils, amounting to 482,124 pupil responses overall. 431,936 state school pupils took part, which equates to 62.1% 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, 2025.<sup>46</sup>**

School type	Number of pupil respondents	% of Scottish state school roll
Nursery	41,819	N/A
Primary	266,036	71.5%
Secondary	163,259	51.7%
SEN	2,641	32.7%
Independent	8,369	N/A
<b>All state schools (exc. nursery)</b>	431,936	62.1%
<b>All schools (exc. nursery)</b>	440,305	N/A
<b>All schools and nurseries</b>	482,124	N/A

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

## 6.7 Data tables: 2025 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, 2025.<sup>44</sup>**

School type	Active	Public sustainable	Multi-mode	Private motorised	Other	Total
Nursery	39.3%	2.8%	4.0%	53.4%	0.4%	<b>41,819</b>
Primary	51.3%	6.4%	13.3%	28.8%	0.2%	<b>266,036</b>
Secondary	40.4%	34.3%	5.2%	19.1%	0.9%	<b>163,259</b>
SEN	*	40.8%	0.2%	52.9%	3.1%	<b>2,641</b>
Independent	18.7%	20.6%	13.4%	43.8%	3.5%	<b>8,369</b>

**Table 6-4: National travel modes: by school type, 2025.<sup>44</sup>**

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%	<b>41,819</b>
Primary	39.7%	7.0%	4.6%	6.4%	13.3%	27.3%	1.5%	0.2%	<b>266,036</b>
Secondary	38.9%	1.3%	0.2%	34.3%	5.2%	17.9%	1.2%	0.9%	<b>163,259</b>
SEN	2.9%	*	*	40.8%	0.2%	12.5%	40.4%	3.1%	<b>2,641</b>
Independent	16.3%	1.8%	0.7%	20.6%	13.4%	43.5%	0.3%	3.5%	<b>8,369</b>

**Table 6-5: National travel modes: by school type and year group, 2025.<sup>47</sup>**

School Type Year Group	Walk	Cycle	Scooter /Skate	Bus	Park & Stride	Driven (car)	Taxi	Other	Total
<b>Primary</b>									
P1-4	37.3%	6.2%	5.4%	6.1%	13.5%	29.7%	1.5%	0.2%	<b>137,925</b>
P5-7	43.0%	7.9%	3.7%	6.8%	12.9%	24.1%	1.4%	0.2%	<b>108,125</b>
<b>Secondary</b>									
S1-3	38.3%	1.6%	0.2%	35.3%	5.6%	16.9%	1.3%	0.9%	<b>73,516</b>
S4-6	38.7%	1.0%	0.1%	33.6%	4.6%	19.8%	1.2%	1.0%	<b>51,618</b>
<b>SEN</b>									
P1-4	1.4%	*	0.0%	35.0%	*	17.5%	42.7%	3.0%	<b>508</b>
P5-7	3.6%	*	*	38.8%	*	14.1%	38.1%	3.9%	<b>441</b>
S1-3	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	37.6%	0.0%	11.0%	45.2%	4.1%	<b>482</b>
S4-6	4.4%	0.0%	0.0%	39.7%	0.0%	7.1%	43.3%	5.5%	<b>524</b>
<b>Independent</b>									
P1-4	11.3%	3.4%	2.4%	5.6%	15.6%	61.3%	*	*	<b>1,231</b>
P5-7	15.3%	1.6%	*	10.7%	15.8%	54.1%	*	2.2%	<b>1,434</b>
S1-3	14.4%	*	*	27.6%	11.2%	38.9%	1.0%	5.7%	<b>1,274</b>
S4-6	16.9%	1.3%	0.4%	29.3%	9.8%	36.3%	0.4%	5.7%	<b>1,318</b>

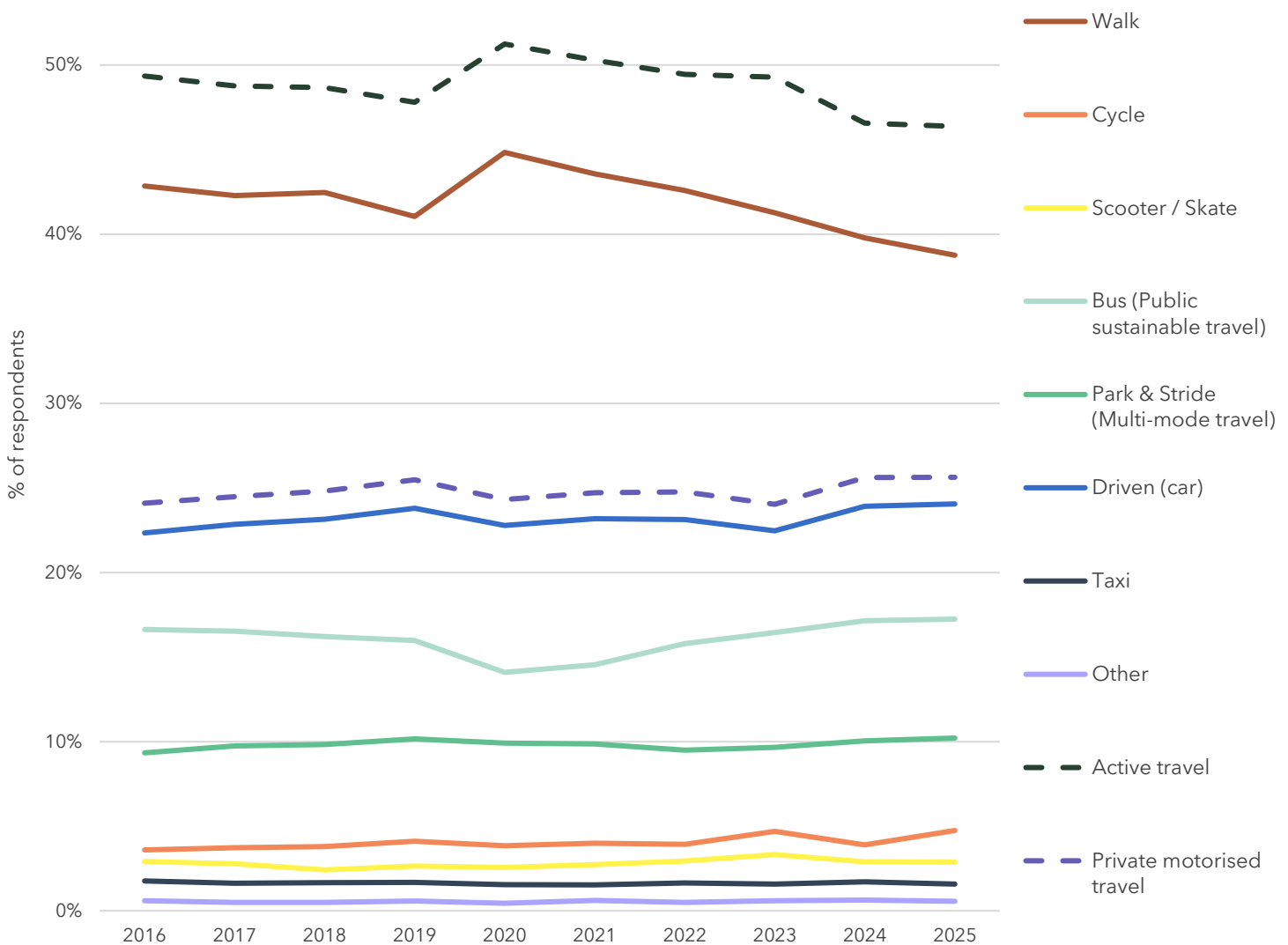
## 7 Trends in the 2016-2025 results

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.<sup>48</sup> 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.

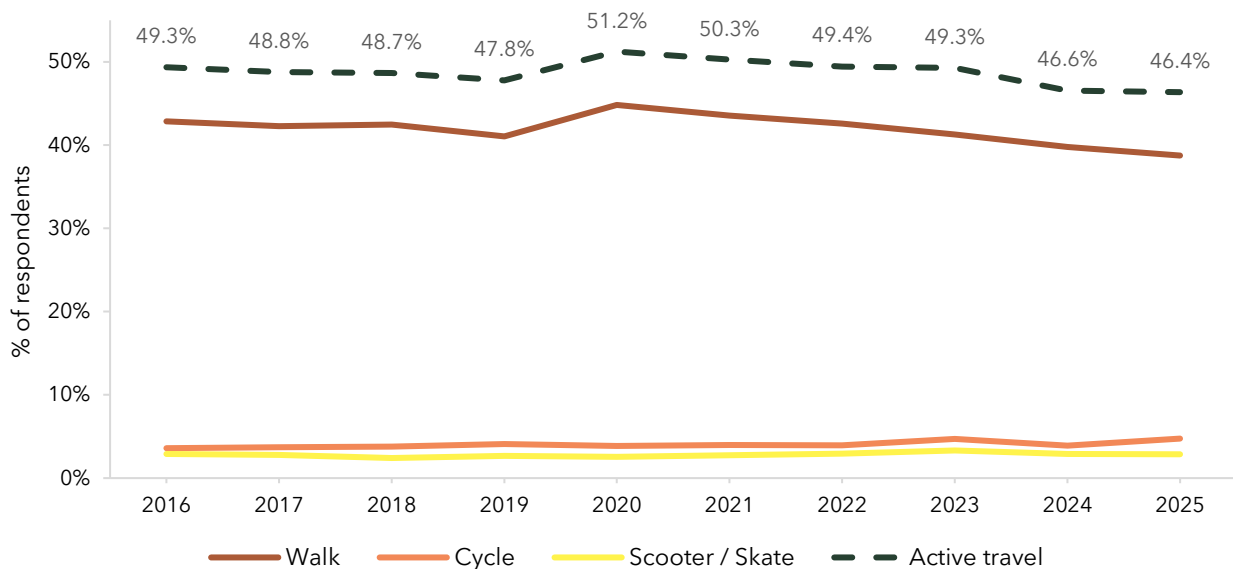
### 7.1 All school results

**Chart 7-1: National travel modes and categories: all schools (exc. nursery), 2016-2025<sup>49</sup>**



## Active travel

**Chart 7-2: Active travel mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nursery), 2016-2025.<sup>37</sup>**



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).

- Active travel fell in nurseries and primary schools, from 39.4% to 39.3% and 52.0% to 51.3% respectively. For nurseries, this is the lowest recorded level since the survey began, and for primaries, this matches the lowest level, last seen in 2019
- Active travel rose for secondary schools in 2025, to 40.4% from 39.4%, although this is still the second lowest level recorded since the survey began
- Active travel in independent schools has also fallen, from 19.3% to 18.7%, between 2024 and 2025.<sup>50</sup>

## Walking

After a sharp rise to 44.8% in 2020, walking to school has fallen to its lowest level since the survey began, falling from 39.8% in 2024 to 38.8% in 2025.

- The number of nursery children walking has fallen from 32.3% in 2024 to 31.8% in 2025, the lowest walking level since the survey began. This is a continuation of a longer term downward trend since 2020

- Primary schools have seen a downward trend in walking since the sharp rise seen in 2020. Walking fell from 41.7% in 2024 to 39.7% in 2025, a fall of 2pp, and the lowest level since the survey began
- Walking levels in secondary schools have risen by 0.9pp between 2024 and 2025 to 38.9%, bucking a downward trend since 2020, but is still the second lowest walking level since the survey began
- Walking levels in SEN schools have fallen from 3.9% to 2.9% in 2025. Despite this fall, this is the second highest level of walking recorded in SEN schools over the past 10 years
- Walking levels in independent schools have fallen since 2024, by 0.5pp, to 16.3% in 2025.

## Cycling

The survey had recorded a general rising trend in cycling over the past 10 survey years across all schools, from 3.6% in 2016, rising to its highest level of 4.7% in 2025. This represents a 0.8pp increase from 2024 and brings levels back in line with those recorded in 2023.

- Among nursery children, 4.1% normally cycled to nursery in 2025. This is a rise from 3.8% in 2024, its second highest level of the past 10 years, below 4.7% recorded in 2023
- Following a broad rise over the past 10 survey years, cycling levels among primary pupils reached a peak in 2025, at 7.0%. This is a 1.4pp rise from 2024, and the highest level recorded since the survey began
- Cycling levels in secondary schools have fluctuated over the past 10 survey years. After a decrease in 2024, cycling levels rose by 0.1pp to 1.3% in 2025
- 1.8% of pupils in independent schools normally cycled to school in 2025, a 0.1pp decline from 2024.

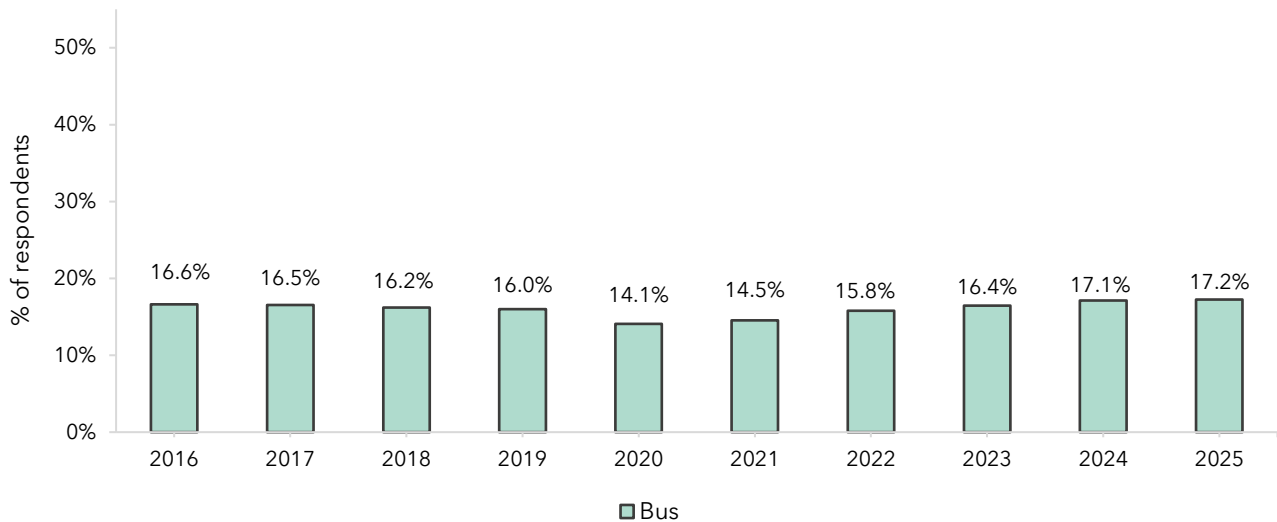
## Scooter/skate

The percentage of pupils who say they normally scooter or skate to school has varied very little over the past 10 years, generally varying between 2.4% and 2.9%, with the exception of 3.3% in 2023. Consistent with 2024 levels, 2.9% of pupils normally scooted or skated to school in 2025.

- Scootering or skating levels among nursery children have fluctuated over the past 10 survey years. In 2025, levels fell by 0.1pp from 2024, to 3.4%
- In 2025, primary pupil levels of scooting or skating remained at 4.6%, in line with 2024 and the second highest level of the past 10 years
- Levels of scootering or skating among secondary pupils in 2025 remained at 0.2%, the same as nine of the last 10 years. In 2023 this was 0.1%
- Scootering or skating levels among independent pupils have remained under 2.0%. In 2025, scootering or skating rose by 0.1pp compared to 2024 levels, to 0.7%.

## Public sustainable travel

**Chart 7-3: Mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nursery) within the public sustainable travel category, 2016-2025.<sup>37</sup>**

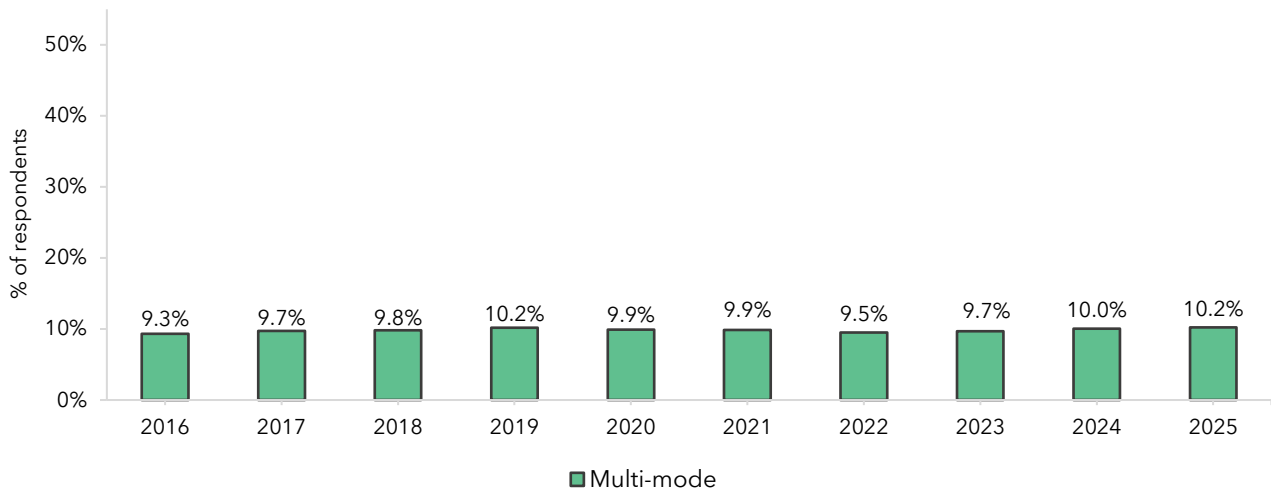


Overall, the proportion of pupils travelling to school by bus has risen over the past 10 survey years, from 16.6% in 2016 to 17.2% in 2025. In 2025, bus use rose for the fifth year in a row, rising by 0.1pp from 17.1% in 2024.

- Nursery children travelling to nursery by bus fell by 0.2pp since 2024, to 2.8% in 2025
- Following a 10 year low of 5.3% in 2020, bus use by primary school pupils has been generally rising. Levels in 2025 were at 6.4%, a 0.3% rise from 2024, and the second highest level of the last 10 years
- Bus use by secondary school pupils fell to 34.3% in 2025. This is a 0.7pp reduction compared to 2023 and 2024 levels
- Bus use in independent schools has fluctuated over the 10 year survey period, rising by 2pp from 2024 to 20.6% in 2025
- 2025 levels of bus use among pupils attending SEN schools are at a 10 year high of 40.8%. This is a sharp rise of 11.7pp from 2024 levels, where 29.1% normally travelled by bus.

## Multi-mode travel

**Chart 7-4: Mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nursery) within the multi-mode travel category, 2016-2025.<sup>37</sup>**

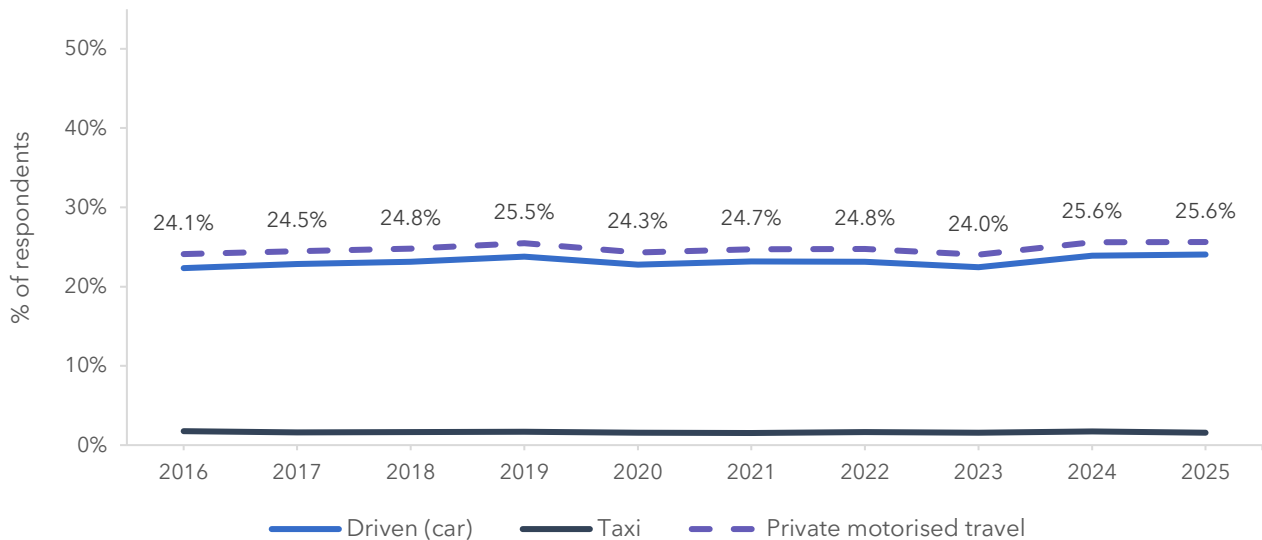


The proportion of pupils travelling to school by park and stride has broadly risen over the past 10 years, from 9.3% in 2016 to 10.2% in 2025. This is a 0.2pp rise from 2024 and is the joint highest level observed since the survey began, matching 2019 levels.

- 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 10 survey years. In 2025, park and stride levels rose by 0.1pp, to 4.0%
- Following a steady rise in park and stride among primary school pupils, from 11.7% in 2016 to 13.1% in 2019, levels slowly fell. 2025 shows a continuation of a rising trend in park and stride levels over the past couple of years. Park and stride levels in primary schools are at their highest since the survey began, at 13.3%
- Despite some fluctuations, there has been an overall rising trend in the proportion of secondary pupils using park and stride since 2016 (4.8%). After a fall in both 2022 and 2023, levels of park and stride continue to rise to 5.2% of secondary pupils in 2025, 0.2pp short of the high in 2021, and 0.1pp higher than 2024 levels
- The proportion of independent school pupils using park and stride has fluctuated and was at its highest in 2020 at 23.0%. Following a sharp fall to 9.3% in 2024, levels have risen by 4.1pp to 13.4% in 2025.

## Private motorised travel

**Chart 7-5: Mode share amongst participating pupils from all schools (exc. nursery) within the private motorised travel category, 2016-2025.<sup>37</sup>**



Levels of pupils in all schools 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 motorised transport use to travel to school since the survey began.

- Nursery school pupils reported the highest proportion of private motorised travel, of all the different school types, at 53.4%. It has risen by 0.1pp since 2024, following a sharp increase of 3.1pp between 2023 and 2024
- Use of private motorised transport among primary school pupils rose to 28.8% in 2025, from 28.5% in 2024. This is second highest level of the past 10 survey years
- Private motorised travel among secondary school pupils has risen from 16.2% of pupils from 2016 to 19.1% of pupils in 2025. While there has been a 0.3pp fall compared to 2024, it is still the second highest level since the survey began
- Between 2016 and 2025, private motorised travel among independent school pupils have fluctuated. Levels of private motorised transport fell from 48.3% in 2024 to 43.8% in 2025
- The proportion of SEN school pupils using private motorised travel has fluctuated over the last 10 years. Between 2024 and 2025, levels have fallen by 6.9pp, from 59.8% to 52.9%, a 10 year low.

### Driven (car)

The proportion of pupils being driven to school has risen from 23.9% in 2024 to 24.0% in 2025, and is now the highest it has been since the survey began. This rise is a general trend over the past 10 survey years, rising from 22.3% in 2016.

- The proportion of nursery children being driven to nursery in 2025 has remained the same as 2024, at 52.4%, and remains the highest since the survey began

- The proportion of primary pupils being driven to school has risen from 27.0% in 2024 to 27.3% in 2025. This is the second highest level of the past 10 survey years
- The proportion of secondary pupils being driven to school has fallen by 0.1pp from 2024 to 17.9% in 2025. This is the second highest level seen since the survey began
- For SEN schools, levels of pupils being driven to school has fluctuated over the past 10 survey years. Levels have risen by 1.9pp since 2024, from 10.6% to 12.5% in 2025
- Following a sharp rise to 47.9% in 2024, levels of independent school pupils being driven to school have fallen by 4.4pp to 43.5% in 2025.

## **Taxi**

Taxi use has remained fairly consistent over the past 10 survey years, typically ranging between 1.5% and 1.8%. In 2025, levels fell 0.1pp to 1.6%.

- The proportion of nursery children travelling to nursery by taxi has varied little over the last 10 survey years, except for a low of 0.6% in 2020. Since 2024, levels have risen 0.1pp to 1.0% in 2025
- In primary schools, the proportion of pupils travelling to school by taxi in 2025 have remained the same as 2024, at 1.5%
- The proportion of secondary pupils travelling to school in a taxi has fluctuated since 2016. In 2025, it fell by 0.1pp to 1.2%, its lowest level of the past 10 survey years and in line with 2017 and 2021 levels
- In independent schools, the proportion of pupils normally taking a taxi to school fell by 0.1pp to 0.3% in 2025, the lowest level recorded in the past 10 survey years, in line with 2022 and 2023 levels
- Taxi is consistently the most common mode of travel for SEN school pupils, but this was not the case in 2025, which saw bus as the most common mode of travel to school. In 2025, taxi was 40.4% of the mode share, an 8.8pp fall from 2024 levels, and the lowest level across the past 10 survey years.

## **Other travel**

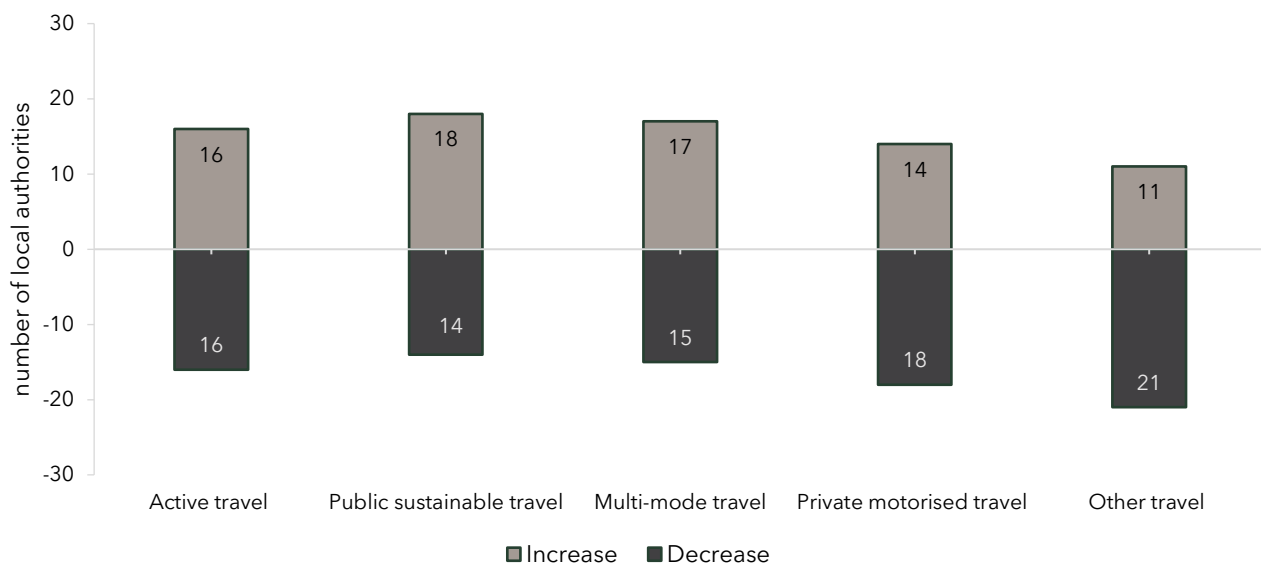
The percentage of pupils in all schools (exc. nursery) travelling to school by other modes has remained consistent, varying only between 0.4% and 0.6% over the past 10 survey years. In 2025 it was 0.6%, the same as the previous two years.

- The percentage of pupils from independent schools travelling to school by other modes fell from 4.6% in 2024 to 3.5% in 2025. This is a 1.1pp fall from the highest level recorded in the past 10 years in 2024
- The percentage of SEN pupils that reported travelling by other means has varied considerably over the last 10 survey years, from a high of 15.9% in 2021 to a low of 3.1% in 2025. This is a 3.9pp fall from the proportion observed in 2024, of 7.0%.

## 7.2 Changes in mode share at local authority level

The number of local authorities experiencing a rise or fall in the proportion of pupils travelling by each mode type between 2024 and 2025 is shown below. The statistics below cover all 32 local authorities that responded in both 2024 and 2025. 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.<sup>51</sup>

**Chart 7-6: Change in pupil travel mode share between 2024 and 2025 at the local authority level.**



**Active travel:** There was a rise in active travel levels in 16 local authorities, and a fall in 16, between 2024 and 2025.

**Public sustainable travel:** There was a rise in public sustainable travel levels in 18 local authorities, and a fall in 14, between 2024 and 2025.

**Multi-mode travel:** There was a rise in multi-mode travel levels in 17 local authorities, and a fall in 15, between 2024 and 2025.

**Private motorised travel:** There was a rise in private motorised travel levels in 14 local authorities, and a fall in 18, between 2024 and 2025.

**Other travel:** There was a rise in other travel levels in 11 local authorities, and a fall in 21, between 2024 and 2025.

### 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 in 2015 and again from 2017 to 2025. 31 local authorities participated in 2016.

#### School responses (exc. nursery)

A total of 1,934 schools took part in this year's survey. This represents 50 fewer schools than in 2024.

The total number of state schools responding to the Hands Up Scotland Survey fell by 47 schools to 1,915. This is 159 more schools than in 2020, when the lowest response rate of the last 10 survey years was recorded.

State school responses as a proportion of all state schools in Scotland have fluctuated across the past 10 years between a low of 70.9% in 2020 and a high of 80.2% in 2024. In 2025, the response rate fell by 1.5pp to 78.7%.

**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, 2016-2025.<sup>45</sup>**

Year	Number of state schools responding	% of Scottish state schools	Number of schools responding
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
2024	1,962	80.2%	1,984
2025	1,915	78.7%	1,934

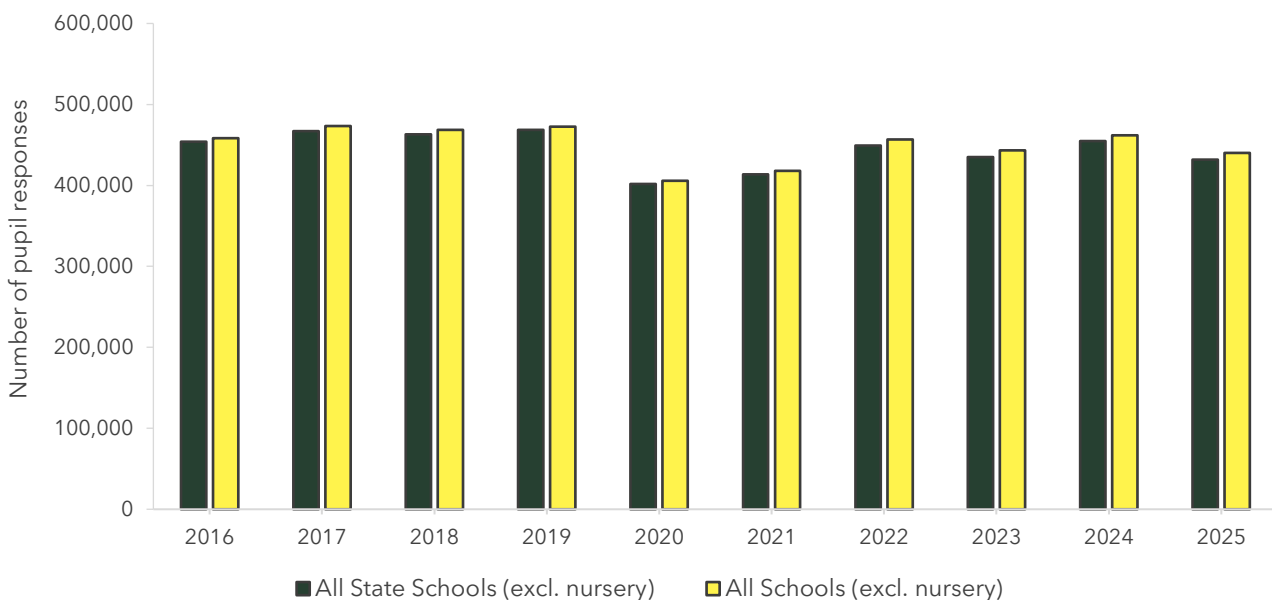
## Pupil responses

Responses were received from 440,305 school pupils in 2025. This represents 21,422 less school pupils than in 2024.

The total number of pupils from all schools (exc. nursery) responding to the Hands Up Scotland Survey has varied year by year, but has fallen from 458,145 in 2016 to 440,305 pupils in 2025. Of the past 10 survey years, the highest number of pupil responses was 473,160 in 2017, and the lowest number of responses was 405,917 in 2020.

431,936 state school pupils took part in the 2025 survey, which equates to 62.1% of all state school pupils enrolled in Scotland. This has fallen since 2024 when the state school participation was 454,959 (64.8%).

**Chart 7-7: National response rates: number of responses from state school pupils and all school pupils (exc. nursery), 2016-2025.<sup>46</sup>**



**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, 2016-2025.**

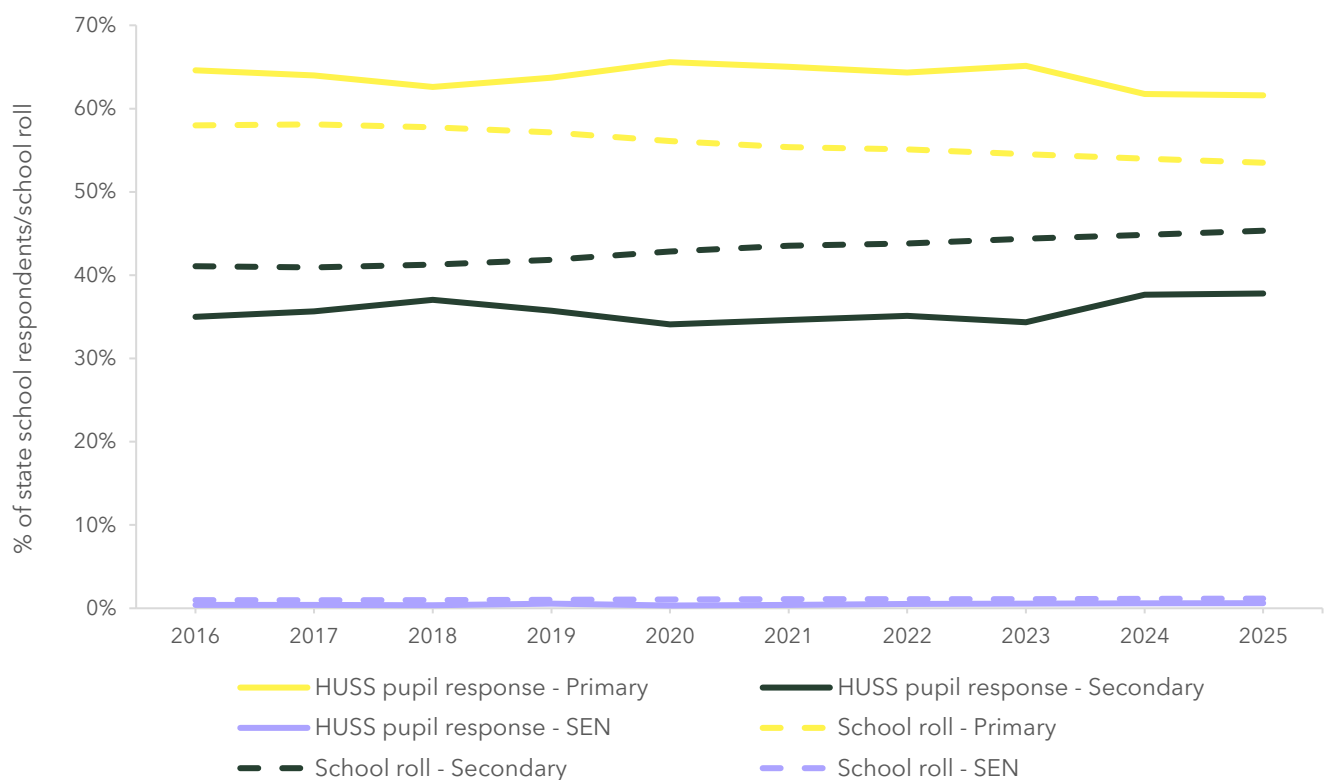
Year	Number of state school pupil respondents	% of Scottish state school roll	Number of school pupil respondents
2016	454,037	66.3%	458,145
2017	466,956	67.8%	473,160
2018	462,940	66.8%	468,537
2019	468,588	67.2%	472,617
2020	401,656	57.2%	405,917
2021	413,616	58.7%	418,147
2022	449,376	63.7%	456,695
2023	434,967	61.6%	443,271
2024	454,959	64.8%	461,727
2025	431,936	62.1%	440,305

The proportions of state school pupils that are in each of the three school types (primary, secondary and SEN)<sup>52</sup>, and the proportions of Hands Up Scotland Survey responses from each of those same school types<sup>53</sup>, differ.

Chart 7-8 shows that while the representation of pupils from different school types varies between years, there is consistent over-representation of primary school pupils, and under-representation of secondary school pupils, in the Hands Up Scotland Survey responses. This influences the complexion of results when summarised at the 'All schools' or 'All state schools' levels.

In 2025, these representation gaps show little change from 2024, after narrowing compared with 2023.

**Chart 7-8: National State school pupils: proportion of Scotland school pupil roll, and proportion of Hands Up Scotland Survey responses, from each state school type, 2016-2025.**



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 improve participation among nursery schools. The total number of nurseries responding to the Hands Up Scotland Survey rose from 452 in 2016 to 1,356 in 2025.

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. 2025 saw the second highest number of responses of the past 10 survey years, with 41,819 nursery children responding – a rise of 1,021 since 2024.

**Table 7-3: Nursery participation: number of nursery schools and children responding to the survey, 2016-2025.<sup>54</sup>**

Year	Number of nurseries responding	Number of nursery children respondents
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
2024	1,318	40,798
2025	1,356	41,819

### Schools returning data by class

In 2025, 89.1% of schools returned data by class compared to a high of 95.0% in 2017, a 5.9pp fall. The proportion of schools returning data by class in 2025 is the third lowest of the last 10 survey years, although is much higher than 2016, when 62.9% of schools returned data by class.

Of the state primary and secondary schools that returned data, 91.2% and 79.9% returned data by class, respectively, in 2025<sup>55</sup>.

## 7.4 Data tables: 2016-2025 results

These data tables contain the full set of travel mode (and category) share values for the last 10 survey years for all schools (exc. nursery).

**Table 7-4: National travel modes: all schools (exc. nursery), 2016-2025.<sup>37</sup>**

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%	<b>458,145</b>
2017	42.3%	3.7%	2.8%	16.5%	9.7%	22.8%	1.6%	0.5%	<b>473,160</b>
2018	42.5%	3.8%	2.4%	16.2%	9.8%	23.1%	1.7%	0.5%	<b>468,537</b>
2019	41.0%	4.1%	2.7%	16.0%	10.2%	23.8%	1.7%	0.6%	<b>472,617</b>
2020	44.8%	3.8%	2.6%	14.1%	9.9%	22.8%	1.5%	0.4%	<b>405,917</b>
2021	43.6%	4.0%	2.7%	14.5%	9.9%	23.2%	1.5%	0.6%	<b>418,147</b>
2022	42.6%	3.9%	2.9%	15.8%	9.5%	23.1%	1.6%	0.5%	<b>456,695</b>
2023	41.3%	4.7%	3.3%	16.4%	9.7%	22.5%	1.6%	0.6%	<b>443,271</b>
2024	39.8%	3.9%	2.9%	17.1%	10.0%	23.9%	1.7%	0.6%	<b>461,727</b>
2025	38.8%	4.7%	2.9%	17.2%	10.2%	24.0%	1.6%	0.6%	<b>440,305</b>

**Table 7-5: National travel categories: all schools (exc. nursery), 2016-2025.**

Year	Active	Public sustainable	Multi-mode	Private motorised	Other	Total
2016	49.3%	16.6%	9.3%	24.1%	0.6%	<b>458,145</b>
2017	48.8%	16.5%	9.7%	24.5%	0.5%	<b>473,160</b>
2018	48.7%	16.2%	9.8%	24.8%	0.5%	<b>468,537</b>
2019	47.8%	16.0%	10.2%	25.5%	0.6%	<b>472,617</b>
2020	51.2%	14.1%	9.9%	24.3%	0.4%	<b>405,917</b>
2021	50.3%	14.5%	9.9%	24.7%	0.6%	<b>418,147</b>
2022	49.4%	15.8%	9.5%	24.8%	0.5%	<b>456,695</b>
2023	49.3%	16.4%	9.7%	24.0%	0.6%	<b>443,271</b>
2024	46.6%	17.1%	10.0%	25.6%	0.6%	<b>461,727</b>
2025	46.4%	17.2%	10.2%	25.6%	0.6%	<b>440,305</b>

## 8 Technical notes

### 8.1 Data collection

- 8.1.1 Hands Up Scotland Survey data is collected every year in September. In 2025, data collection took place between 8th and 12th September. Data from schools conducting the survey within a grace period of one 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 rise 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 Walk Wheel Cycle Trust's website at: <http://www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/our-blog/projects/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, Walk Wheel Cycle Trust Scotland offered a prize draw as an incentive for school participation.
- 8.4.7 In 2013, Walk Wheel Cycle Trust 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 rose 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 rise 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 Walk Wheel Cycle Trust's website, available at: <http://www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/our-blog/projects/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 Walk Wheel Cycle Trust 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 Walk Wheel Cycle Trust's media team at [Mediateam@walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk](mailto:Mediateam@walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk) or on 07833 057601.
- 8.7.2 Non-media enquiries about Hands Up Scotland Survey should be made to Walk Wheel Cycle Trust's Hands Up Scotland Survey team, Walk Wheel Cycle Trust Strategy, Impact and Evidence, 1 Exchange Crescent, Conference Square, Edinburgh, EH3 8RA or email: [HandsUpScotland@walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk](mailto:HandsUpScotland@walkwheelcycletrust.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.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/our-blog/projects/hands-up-scotland-survey/>
- 8.7.4 Walk Wheel Cycle Trust's Strategy Impact and Evidence team assesses the impacts of Walk Wheel Cycle Trust's 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.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/for-professionals/research-monitoring-and-evaluation/>

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> For more information regarding the Hands Up Scotland Survey questions, please refer to: <https://www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/our-blog/projects/hands-up-scotland-survey/>
- <sup>2</sup> For more information regarding response rates, please refer to section 7.3 (page 28).
- <sup>3</sup> For more information regarding the policy context, please refer to section 3 (page 5).
- <sup>4</sup> For more information on the UK Statistics Authority Code of Practice, please refer to: <https://code.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/the-code/>
- <sup>5</sup> 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.
- <sup>6</sup> For more information on Official Statistics in Scotland, please refer to: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/producing-official-statistics/>
- <sup>7</sup> Email: [HandsUpScotland@walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk](mailto:HandsUpScotland@walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk) / Telephone: 0131 346 1384
- <sup>8</sup> To submit a data request, please read the information and download the data request form at: <https://www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/our-blog/projects/hands-up-scotland-survey/>
- <sup>9</sup> For more information on the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework, please refer to: <http://nationalperformance.gov.scot>
- <sup>10</sup> For more information about Transport Scotland's Active Travel Outcomes Framework, please refer to: <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/active-travel-framework-1/>
- <sup>11</sup> 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>
- <sup>12</sup> For more information on 'Scotland's Population Health Framework 2025-2035', please refer to <https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-population-health-framework/documents/>
- <sup>13</sup> 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>
- <sup>14</sup> 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>
- <sup>15</sup> 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.
- <sup>16</sup> For more information on the 'Curriculum for Excellence' please refer to: <https://education.gov.scot/Documents/health-and-wellbeing-eo.pdf>
- <sup>17</sup> 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/>
- <sup>18</sup> The SHANARRI indicators of wellbeing of children and young people in Scotland are: 'Safe', 'Healthy', 'Achieving', 'Nurtured', 'Active', 'Respected', 'Responsible' and 'Included'.
- <sup>19</sup> For more information on the SHANARRI indicators, please refer to: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright/wellbeing>
- <sup>20</sup> 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>
- <sup>21</sup> For more information on the GIRFEC approach, please refer to: <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/People/Young-People/gettingitright>
- <sup>22</sup> 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/>
- <sup>23</sup> 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>
- <sup>24</sup> For more information on Cleaner Air for Scotland 2, please refer to: <https://www.gov.scot/publications/cleaner-air-scotland-2-towards-better-place-everyone/documents/>

- <sup>25</sup> 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/>
- <sup>26</sup> For more information on Scotland's Climate Change Plan: 2026-2040, please refer to:  
<https://www.gov.scot/publications/scotlands-climate-change-plan-2026-2040-annexes/>
- <sup>27</sup> For more information on Strategic Transport Projects Review 2, please refer to:  
<https://www.transport.gov.scot/media/52681/final-summary-report-28-december-2022-stpr2.pdf>
- <sup>28</sup> For more information on Travel to School as measured by the Scottish Household Survey, please refer to:  
<https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-household-survey-publications/>
- <sup>29</sup> 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=>
- <sup>30</sup> For more information on the Scottish Health Survey, please refer to:  
<https://www.gov.scot/collections/scottish-health-survey/>
- <sup>31</sup> For more information on the Pupil Level Annual School Census in England, please refer to:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/school-census>
- <sup>32</sup> 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>
- <sup>33</sup> For more information on the UK National Travel Survey, please refer to:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/national-travel-survey-statistics>
- <sup>34</sup> For more information on the Northern Ireland Travel Survey, please refer to:  
<https://www.infrastructure-ni.gov.uk/articles/travel-survey-northern-ireland>
- <sup>35</sup> For more information on travel data from the National Survey for Wales, please refer to:  
<https://gov.wales/national-survey-wales>
- <sup>36</sup> Clackmannanshire opted for manual entry of the 2025 Hands Up Scotland Survey data by local authority officers and did not use the online survey platform.
- <sup>37</sup> Table 2.1 in supplementary National Results Excel file available to download from:  
<https://www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/scotland/hands-up-scotland-survey>
- <sup>38</sup> All schools: primary, secondary, SEN and independent schools in Scotland, excluding nursery.
- <sup>39</sup> Other modes of travel may include local authority transport and train, among others.
- <sup>40</sup> 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.
- <sup>41</sup> 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/>
- <sup>42</sup> Table 2.2 and 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/>
- <sup>43</sup> All state schools: primary, secondary and SEN schools in Scotland, excluding nursery.
- <sup>44</sup> 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.
- <sup>45</sup> Table 1.3 in supplementary National Results Excel file available to download from:  
<https://www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/our-blog/projects/hands-up-scotland-survey/>
- <sup>46</sup> Table 1.1 in supplementary National Results Excel file available to download from:  
<https://www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/our-blog/projects/hands-up-scotland-survey/>
- <sup>47</sup> Table 2.4 in supplementary National Results Excel file available to download from:  
<https://www.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/our-blog/projects/hands-up-scotland-survey/>
- <sup>48</sup> For considerations relating to calculations of percentage point change, please see Technical Note 8.4.9.
- <sup>49</sup> Active travel is the combination of Walk, Cycle and Scooter / Skate. Private motorised travel is the combination of Driven (car) and Taxi.

<sup>50</sup> Specific values are not reported here due to there being several years of suppressed data for cycling and scooter/skate for SEN schools.

<sup>51</sup> Tables 3.1 onwards in supplementary National Results Excel file available to download from:

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

<sup>52</sup> Table 1.1b in Pupil census supplementary statistics, for pupil school roll numbers for proportion calculations, available to download from:

<https://www.gov.scot/publications/pupil-census-supplementary-statistics/>

<sup>53</sup> Table 1.1 in supplementary National Results Excel file, for pupil response numbers for proportion calculations, available to download from:

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

<sup>54</sup> Table 1.1 and Table 1.3 in supplementary National Results Excel file available to download from:

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

<sup>55</sup> 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.walkwheelcycletrust.org.uk/our-blog/projects/hands-up-scotland-survey/>