

The **State of Selling** to Schools **2022**

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Introduction

At the end of 2020, we conducted our most in-depth education survey ever, capturing insights from over 2,600 teachers and school staff via social media and email channels.

The purpose of the survey was to learn from the state of selling to schools and how COVID-19 had impacted the sector to inform our response to the ongoing pandemic and the shifting needs of schools, pupils, teachers, and school staff.

One year on, and we're not out of the woods yet.

While the start of the new academic year in September 2021 held a renewed hope for some normality, by late December, cases of the Omicron variant were rising rapidly, Bett 2022 was postponed, and the start of 2022 once again became unpredictable.

Why read this report?

This year's report is even bigger!

With 3,210 responses from teachers and school staff, the report is designed to help you navigate this difficult edu-marketing period.

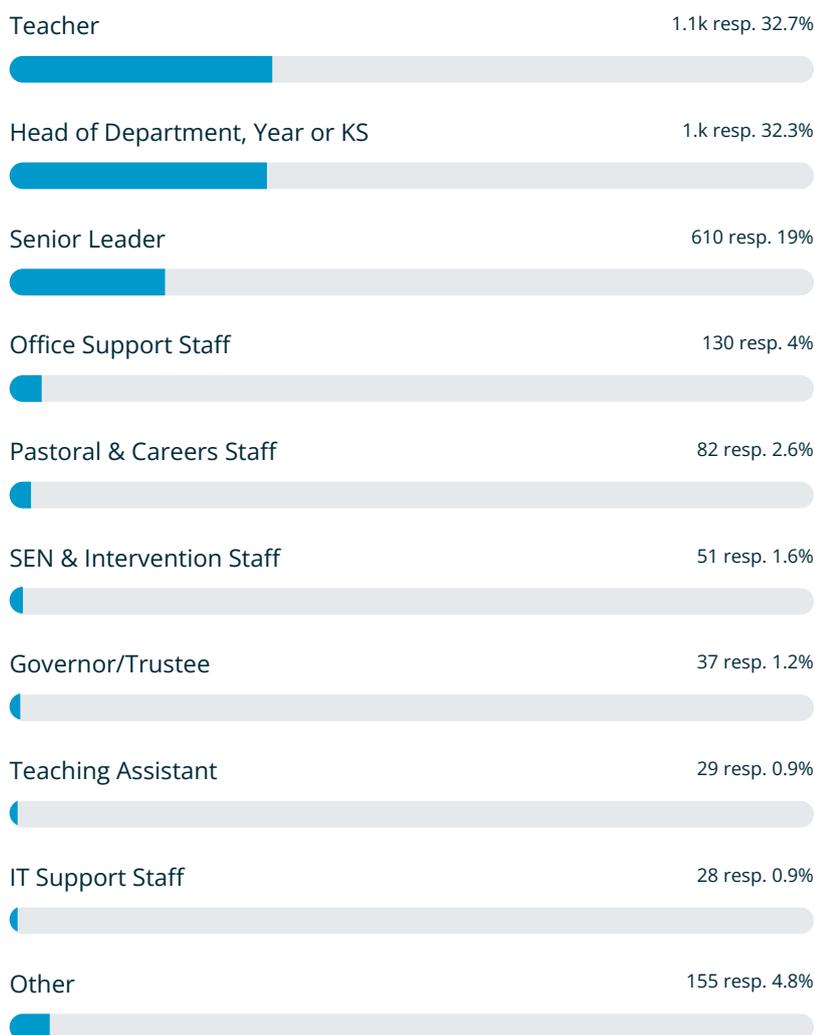
The report combines insights into schools' problems and priorities for the year ahead and draws comparisons with last year's survey results, where applicable, to help you shape your marketing strategy, solve schools' problems, and make more sales.



1. Who completed our survey?

Which best describes your role?

3210 out of 3210 people answered this question



Unlike national or domestic schools, international schools offer a wholly or partly English curriculum outside of English-speaking countries or an internationally oriented school within an English-speaking country.

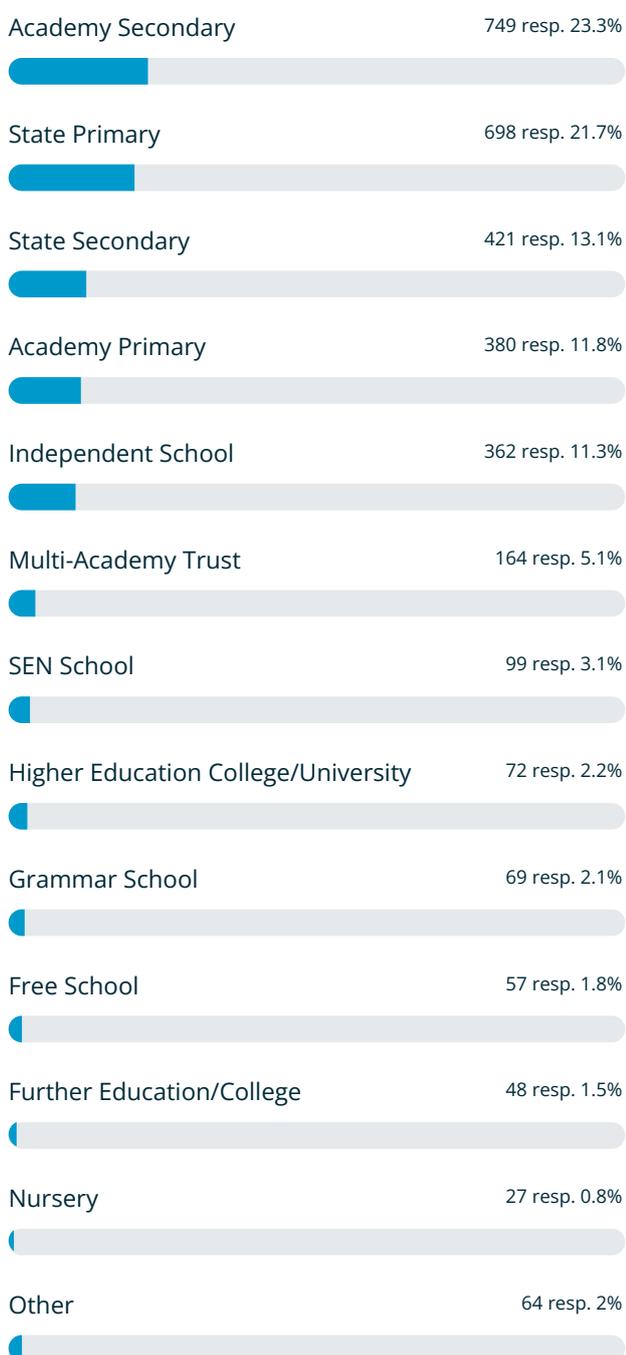
Typically international schools cater to students that are not nationals of the host country; these could be the children of staff working in business, international organisations, or foreign embassies, or as military personnel.

However, it's common for most students in some parts of the world to be local. These students are studying to pursue an education that will allow them to secure a coveted place at an English-speaking University.



Which type of establishment do you work in?

3210 out of 3210 people answered this question



As expected, the largest response came from Primary and Secondary establishments. With 1,170 responses from Secondary School staff (Academy and State School) and just behind, Primary School staff (Academy and State School) supplied 1,078 responses.

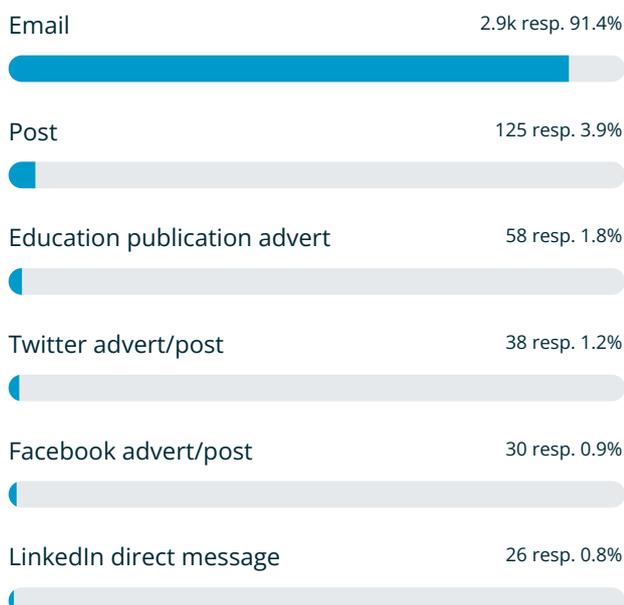
The wide range of survey responses received will give you a good overview of the thoughts and feelings of school staff working at every level and across a range of establishment types to help identify schools' very top priorities for 2022 and tailor your strategy design for maximum impact.

2. Communicating with schools

The crucial question for businesses is how to let teachers know what they're offering. We promoted the survey online via social media and email to ask the question:

Which method of receiving communications and offers from education businesses are you most likely to reply/react to?

3210 out of 3210 people answered this question



91.4% of teachers surveyed said that email was the method of communication from education businesses they were most likely to reply/react to.

This increased from 88.3% from last year.

Here at Sprint Education, we know the value of email marketing to the education sector over other methods of communication. Still, we were surprised to see such a definitive outcome for email communication.

We know that teachers have been spending more time online during the pandemic than they usually would and are [two times more likely to check their inboxes than usual](#).

Email communication is an effective but unobtrusive way to engage with teachers. We only ever email teachers work email accounts about products and services that will benefit their school.

The benefit of emailing work-only addresses is that teachers actively need to log into their work account. They will be expecting emails related to their job, and they will likely be in the right frame of mind to engage with this kind of content.

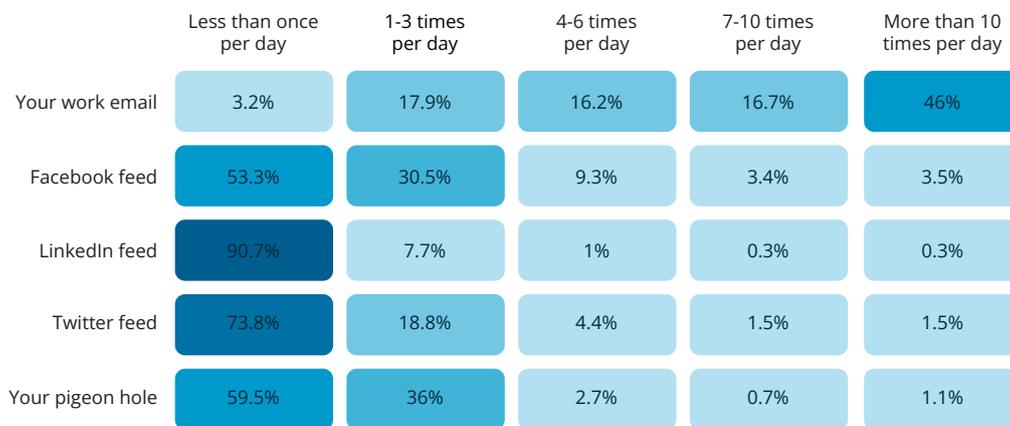
Emails are also quick to delete, and all emails sent by Sprint Education are simple to unsubscribe from – it just takes two clicks for a teacher to remove themselves from all our future communications.

The option to quickly opt-out isn't as simple for all the other communication methods listed, particularly social media.

While social media campaigns can be highly effective, it's clearly the least favoured method of communication for teachers, with communication via Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn receiving less than 3% of combined survey responses.

Social media is mostly used by people to connect with friends and family. Therefore, it's less likely that teachers will be as keen to engage with marketing messages when not in work mode.

How frequently do you check these social/communication tools each day?



The preference for email communication is made even more apparent here.

46% of teachers surveyed said they check their work email more than ten times a day.

Facebook is the second communication tool that teachers engage with most regularly, but it trails far behind email, with just 3.5% of teachers saying they check it more than ten times a day.

Delving deeper into our survey response stats, we can see an average of 8.3 inbox views per day and 2.7 Facebook views per day. That's 303% more email inbox views than Facebook views per day.





Applied across the whole UK sector, this equates to 5,291,400 more inbox logins than Facebook logins by UK teachers every day - 1.9 billion more over one academic year!

Of course, teachers will be checking their inboxes for work emails. They may not pay marketing emails the same level of attention they pay to a message from a colleague. However, if you can highlight how important your offer is concerning their day-to-day work, your email is bound to gain attention.

While 59.5% of teachers said they only check their pigeon-hole once a day, we need to remember that this is quite a different method of communication.

Checking a pigeon-hole once a day is not the same as scrolling a Twitter feed once a day. The power of something that can be held in the palm of your hand cannot be underestimated.

If your pigeon-hole mail captures the recipients' imagination, teachers are likely to engage with it on a far deeper level.

How likely are you to react positively to the following calls to action within a communication sent to you from an education service provider?

	Definitely not	Unlikely	Likely	Very likely	Definitely
Special offer/discount	5.9%	21.8%	58.6%	10.1%	3.7%
Free trial	5.3%	17.2%	57.3%	15.3%	4.9%
Software demo	8.1%	38.5%	44.9%	6.9%	1.6%
Free webinar	6.2%	25.2%	54%	11.2%	3.4%
Free guide/ebook to read	7.3%	27.1%	47.7%	13.8%	4.1%
Helpful blog article to read	8.8%	30.9%	47.1%	10.9%	2.2%
Free call to discuss solutions aligned with the...	23%	47.4%	24.1%	4.3%	1.1%
Read about another school's experience/successs	10.2%	31.7%	48%	8.2%	1.9%
Survey/competition	6.8%	24.9%	54.5%	10.9%	3%

The clear preference here was for a free trial or a free guide/ebook with 4.9% and 4.1%, respectively, saying they'd 'definitely' react positively to these offers.

These call to actions require no commitment from the teacher. They just offer them free value. When you're trying to reach new customers and capture their attention, you have to make engaging with your email worth their time.

If you're wondering what on earth you get out of giving away freebies, you can use this tactic to collect their contact details to contact them again at a later date. Offering helpful, free information helps you build good relationships with teachers and school staff, positioning yourself as a valuable, expert provider.



The offer of a free call to discuss solutions received a 'definitely not' from a huge 23% of surveyed teachers. While this call to action may be crucial for moving them along your sales funnel, it's important not to rush to this stage too quickly.

Ideally, you want to warm them up to your offer first by giving them an easy and enticing reason for them to engage, and keep the free call for later on in your strategy once they know it'll be worth their time.

The results on communicating with schools are conclusive – email is the preferred method of communication for teachers and school staff. Emails offer teachers a snapshot of the products or services they may need, saving them hours of research and time spent on Google.

However, teachers can decide whether to engage with them or not.

The key to them engaging in your outreach email is to offer them value for little commitment. Try a free trial or a free guide or ebook to get them interested. Once you've captured their attention and their contact details, any future emails offering a free call to discuss solutions will likely be met more positively.



3. Connecting with schools

Once you've been able to engage a teacher with your marketing, you need to know when and how to continue the conversation.

To help you make those all-important meetings happen, we asked the all-important questions.

When is the most convenient time for you to be able to connect with an education supplier?

	Before school	Lunch break	After school	Evening	Weekends	During school holidays	Anytime	Never
Phone call	11.1%	12%	56%	9.4%	1.8%	5.4%	8.4%	12.1%
Video call	8%	9.2%	55.5%	9.8%	1.6%	5.5%	7%	15.5%
Free webinar	6.2%	6.8%	59.2%	16.1%	4%	7%	12.1%	6.5%
Online training/workshop	5.7%	6.6%	59.7%	15.9%	3.9%	7.4%	13.4%	5.9%
Live training/workshop	5.5%	7.2%	59.4%	13.5%	3.5%	6.7%	12.7%	7.6%
EdTech demo	6.2%	7.8%	59.8%	12.2%	2.5%	5.9%	9.9%	9.8%

The overwhelming response here for every method of communication, from a phone call to a demo, was 'After School'.

Teachers have packed schedules from the second they arrive at school in the morning to the moment the final bell rings and pupils have left the grounds. Unsurprisingly, they feel that they can't give anything other than their pupils their attention during the school day.

However, their willingness to engage in the 'Evening' dropped sharply. 56% of surveyed teachers said that the most convenient time for a phone call would be 'After School', but only 9.4% said the most convenient time would be in the 'Evening'.

Therefore, there's a sweet spot between the usual daily lessons and the time that teachers consider the working day as done.

Although during COVID-19 restrictions there were staggered school hours, most schools start between 8:30 and 9 am and finish between 3 pm and 3:45.

The hours between 4 pm and 6 pm are likely to be the sweet spot between 'After School' and 'Evening', and, therefore, the best time for hosting webinars, meetings, demos, and workshops.



How much notice should be given by an education supplier for you to best consider their offer of...?

	1 week	2-4 weeks	1-3 months	4-6 months	7-12 months	1 year +
A free webinar	7.5%	47.8%	35.9%	4.5%	1.6%	2.7%
In-school training	2.2%	22.5%	50.8%	15.3%	5.3%	3.9%
External training day	1.5%	16%	47.7%	20.1%	9.7%	5%
Entering your school into a competition	4.6%	28.7%	47.9%	12.1%	3.7%	2.9%
A time to discuss you purchasing their education...	4.7%	31.6%	40.1%	13.3%	5.2%	5%
Carrying out a workshop/assembly at your school	1.8%	21.3%	52.9%	15.9%	4.4%	3.7%
Planning your next school trip(s)	1.3%	13.4%	40.9%	24%	12.7%	7.7%
Watch an EdTech/software demo	10.1%	40.6%	35.2%	7.7%	2.7%	3.7%

The vast majority of teachers said 1-3 months for offers that require more time commitment and preparation, such as planning a school trip, an external or internal training day, or a workshop or assembly in their school.

Entering their school in a competition also gained the most responses (47.9%) for 1-3 months of notice. For a whole-school competition, teachers would likely need to get the approval of multiple staff members and, potentially, parents. Smaller class competitions probably wouldn't require as much notice.

Teachers said that the offers that require less preparation, such as a free webinar or watching an EdTech demo, ideally need 2-4 weeks' notice.

When it comes to purchasing decisions, the vast majority of surveyed teachers (71%) said they'd require between 2 weeks and 3 months' notice. Again, most purchasing decisions will require the buy-in of more than one member of staff.

To ensure better relationships with teachers, you need to be mindful of their working patterns.

Your webinar could promise to reveal the secret to a guaranteed Outstanding Ofsted inspection, but if you scheduled it for 10am on a Tuesday in the middle of term time, most of your audience would have to miss it.

We all know that teachers are exceptionally busy, so give them plenty of time to make decisions.

This is where a strategy of at least three emails is vital rather than a single email. It's always best to alert your audience to your offer early, make sure they have all details, and finally follow them up with a reminder.

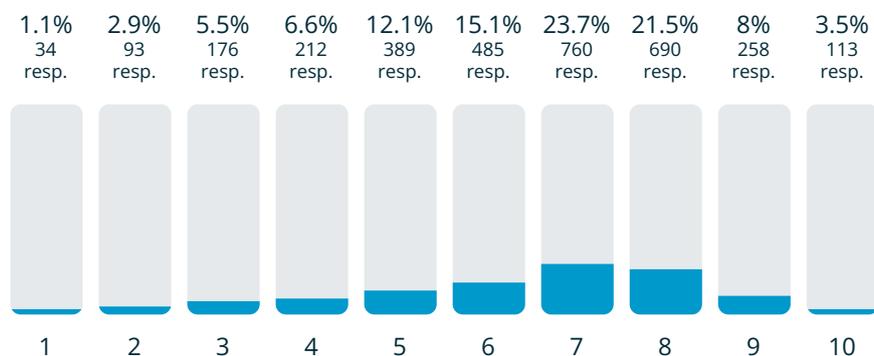


4. Staff wellbeing

At the end of 2020, an incredible 67.9% of school staff told us that supporting emotional and mental wellbeing was their top priority for 2021. So, checking in with staff again was of utmost importance. Did schools meet their goal of prioritising wellbeing? Did things get in the way? Or did they perhaps only focus on the wellbeing of their pupils?

How would you rank your stress level at the moment?

3210 out of 3210 people answered this question



An average of 6.5, although higher than you'd hope, is probably right where you'd expect, given the ongoing pressure on schools. But there is a positive – stress levels have decreased since 2020.

In our last survey, educators rated their stress levels at an average of 7.8 and estimated their pre-COVID stress levels to be at an average of 5.8. It's to be expected that teachers are more stressed than usual, given we're not out of the pandemic and education is yet to return fully to 'business as usual'. But, it's clear that staff have received more support over the last year, and schools are stepping up the mark to continue facilitating more positive, happier, healthier environments.

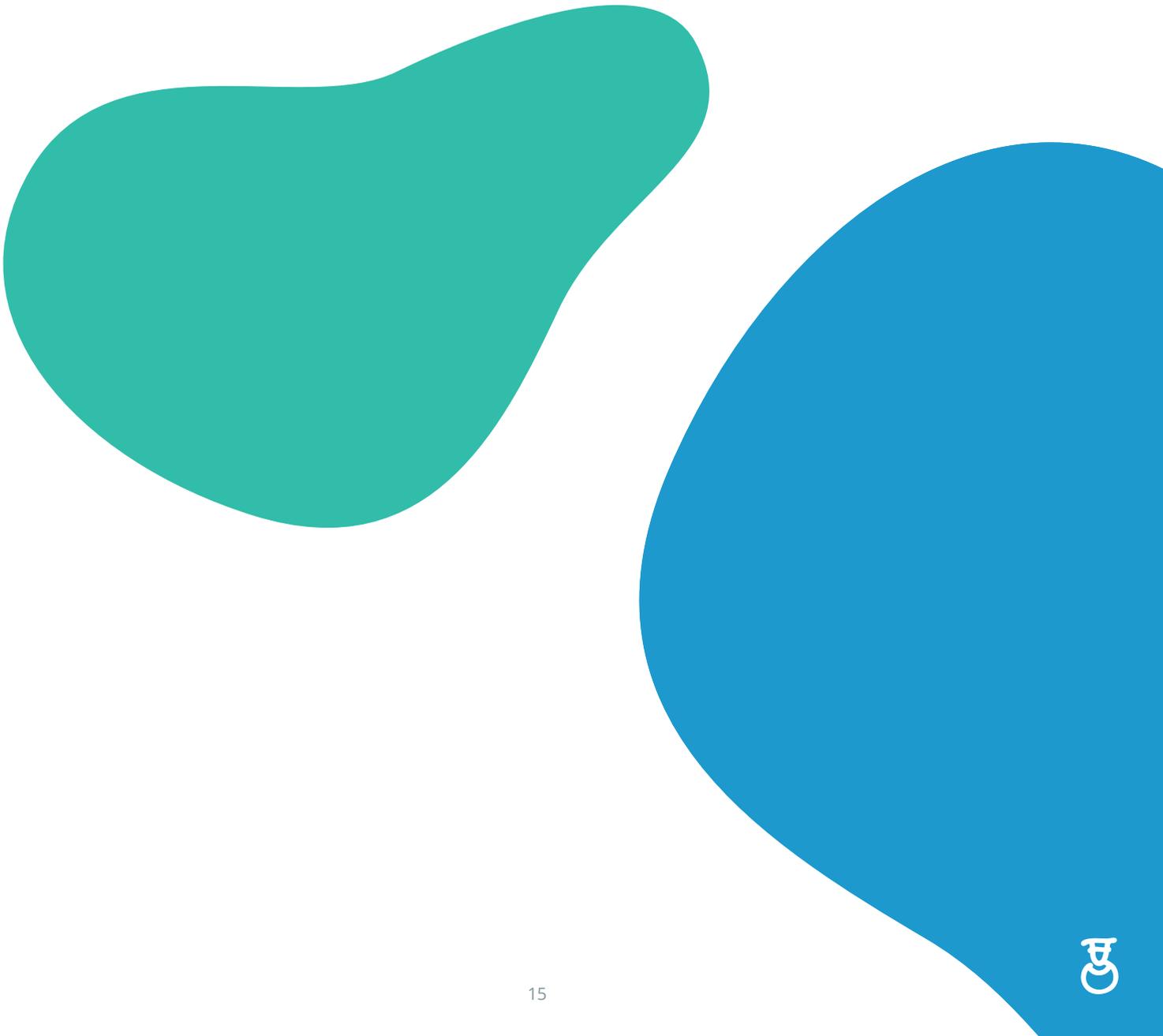
That said, there's still some work to be done to help teachers reduce their stress back to pre-COVID levels (or even lower), so there are plenty of opportunities for education businesses to help.



The impact of COVID-19 has been huge and teachers and school staff are shouldering much of the pressure. In response, the DfE and Ofsted have made staff wellbeing more of a focus – the DfE launched a staff wellbeing charter, and Ofsted now requires wellbeing to be tracked in an effort to improve it.

Even if your product or service isn't a staff wellbeing solution, if it makes teachers lives easier, make sure this is reflected in your marketing. For example, if you're offering cutting-edge classroom technology, try focusing on how the tech will make teachers' lives easier rather than overwhelming them with technical details.

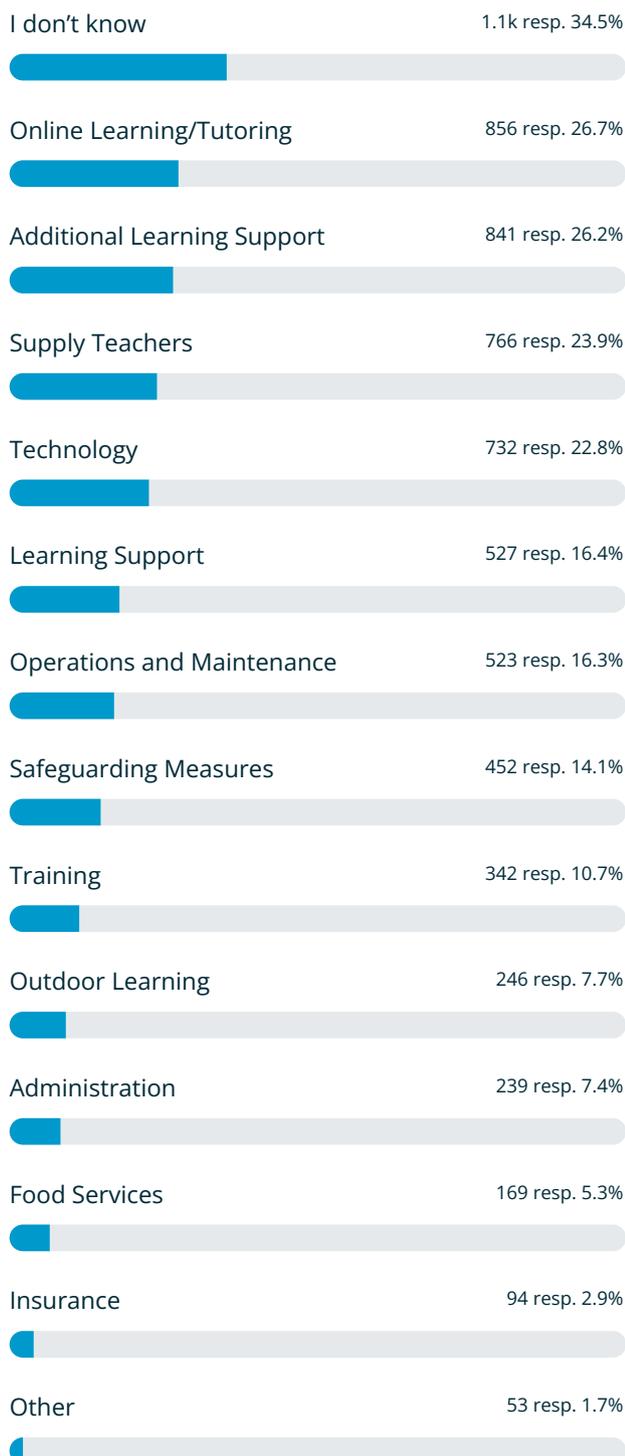
Let teachers know they're supported – go out of your way to offer bespoke training and ongoing support and schools will see the true value of your product or service.



5. 2021/2022 purchasing

While the results above give us a good overview of how to engage schools with your marketing efforts, this chapter will explain where they spent their budget over the last year and, crucially, what their priorities are for the year ahead.

In which area did your school increase its spending during 2021?



As predicted in last year's report, spending on online learning/tutoring grew in 2021, with 26.7% of our survey respondents reporting that their school increased spending on online learning/tutoring to tackle lost learning due to lockdowns.

The DfE published remote learning expectations in January 2021, stating that any remote learning provision should include both recorded and live direct teaching time.

It also specified that online video lessons did not necessarily have to be recorded by teaching staff at the school. This presented enormous opportunities for businesses in 2021, offering curriculum-linked video lessons.

Last year, technology was at the top of the list, with a massive 40.2% of teachers telling us that their school increased spending in this area to support the introduction of remote teaching and learning. In 2021, spending on technology dropped to 22.8%.

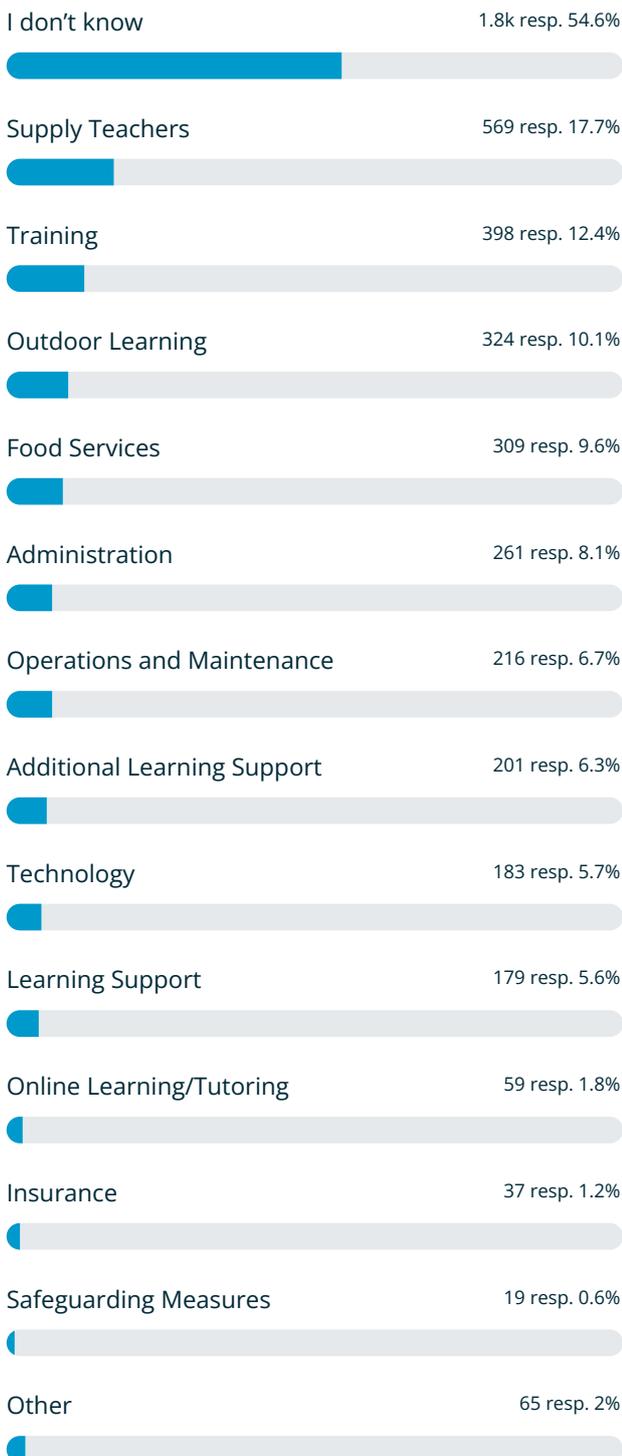
Why the decrease?

This isn't hugely surprising, given the considerable investment in laptops and tablets in 2020, supported by the government's scheme.

Technology is a long-term investment, particularly

in schools. So after a big year for the sector in 2020, schools were unlikely to keep up that level of investment into 2021.

In which area did your school decrease its spending during 2021?



Results from this question remain broadly consistent with last year's results. Last year, 24.6% of respondents reported a decrease in spending on supply teachers during 2020. In 2021, this dropped to 17.7% but still received the most responses in total to the question.

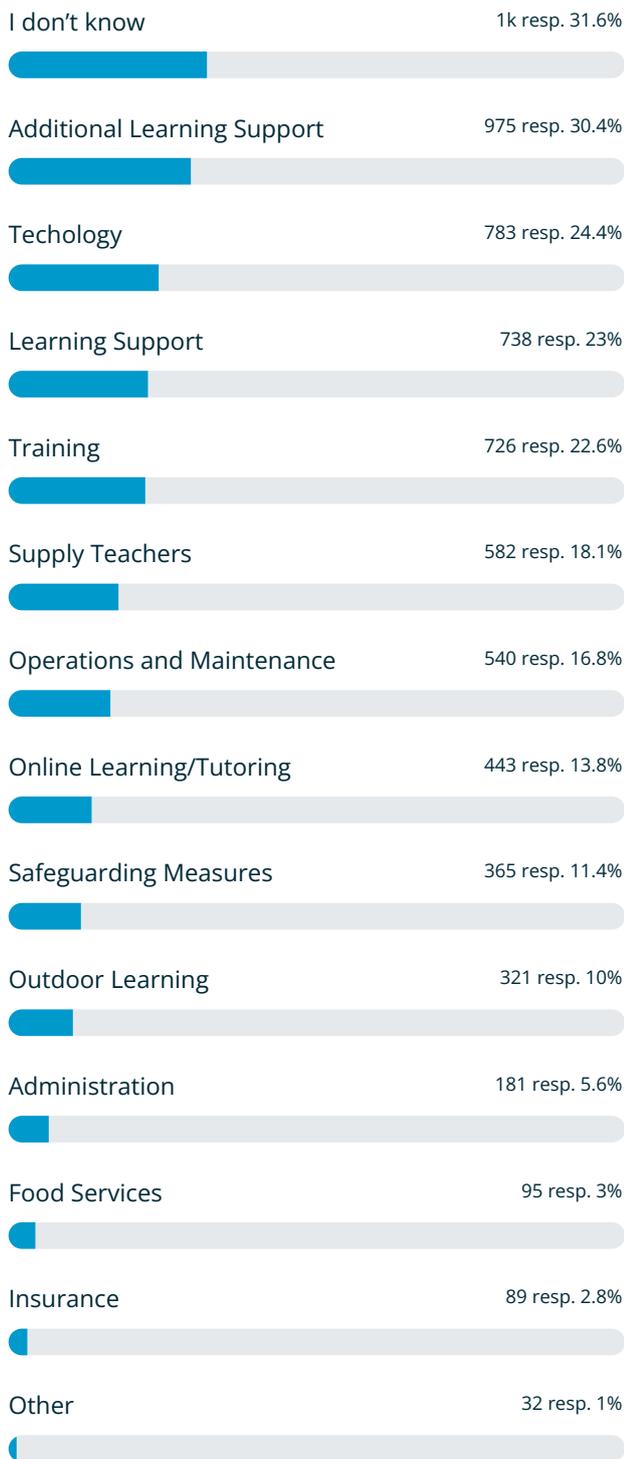
10.1% of respondents said they decreased spending on outdoor learning during 2021, down from 17.3% in 2020. 7.7% said they increased spending in this area, up from 4.2% in 2020, showing a positive increase following the easing of restrictions over the summer.

The starkest result from the two survey questions is the prioritisation of safeguarding measures, with just 0.06% saying they had decreased spending (the lowest reported decrease) and 14.1% reporting an increase in spending during 2021.

With increased social isolation, employment challenges, and financial pressures being felt by many families across the country, safeguarding is still a significant concern. Several high profile safeguarding cases have also come to light since the height of lockdown, keeping safeguarding in the mind of every school leader.

In which area do you predict your school will increase its spending during 2022?



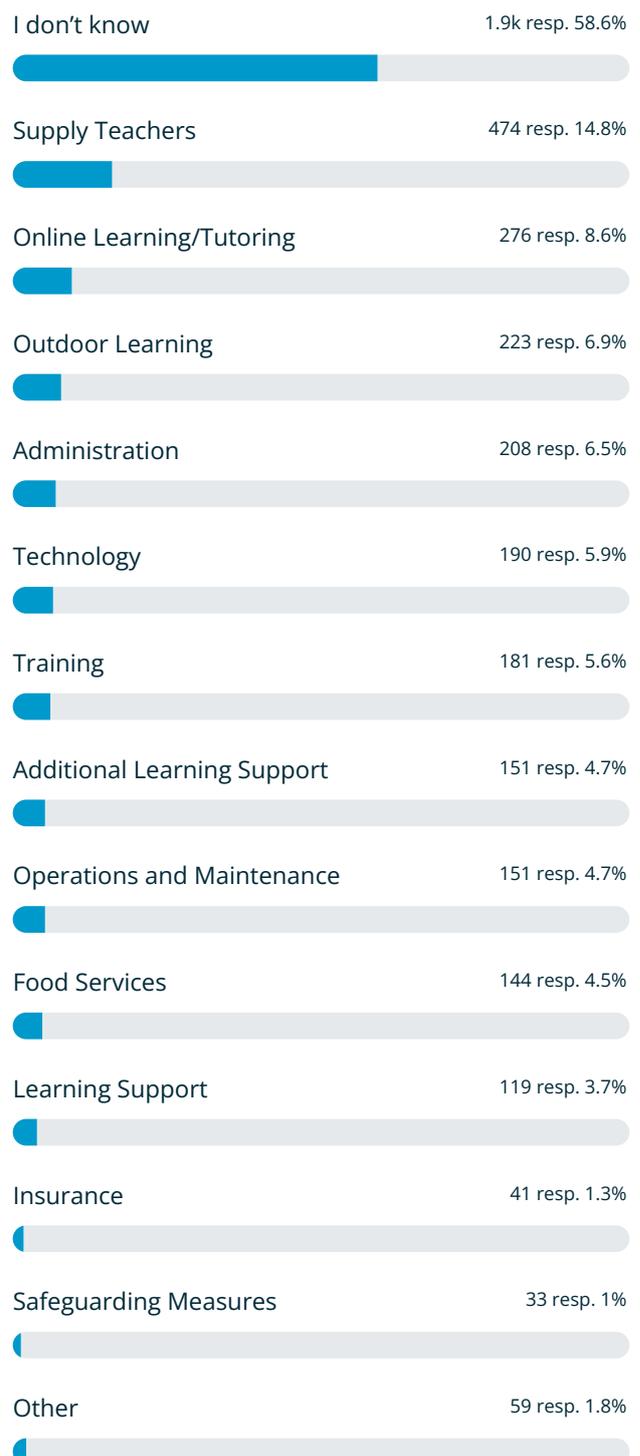


Unsurprisingly, additional learning support (30.4%) is where schools think they will increase spending in 2022. This reflects the government's focus on catch-up and the expectation that 2022 summer exams will go ahead as normal.

While the government announced additional funding of £1 billion in June 2020 to support pupils to catch up on missed learning caused by

COVID-19, schools still have to make up the full cost of this intervention.

In which area do you predict your school will decrease its spending during 2022?



A massive 58.6% of respondents said they did not know what they would decrease spending on over the year ahead.

This hints a little at the mindset of teachers as we start the year. Teachers have had to manage an unpredictable few years, with government guidelines often changing overnight, exam process overhauled, and teachers developing mass testing capabilities within days. Due to Omicron, teachers likely expect an element of unpredictability to continue into the new year.

Another reading of this result is that teachers don't know where they'll be able to make savings.

Although the government committed to supporting schools with many of the unexpected costs of COVID-19 throughout the last year, with initiatives such as the COVID-19 workforce fund, schools are commonly reporting that they have had to use existing financial reserves before claiming money back.

Similarly to last year, school spending has largely been diverted from usual areas of spending to support the catch up on missed learning caused by COVID-19.

As we enter 2022, there is still much uncertainty about how the first term of the year will look due to the Omicron variant.

While some online learning may be a feature of the year ahead, there's little appetite for full school closures. Ministers have repeatedly expressed their desire to do all they can to avoid a complete lockdown, so if you rely on pupils and teachers being present in the classroom, don't despair. Again, the key this year will be to remain flexible to changing needs.

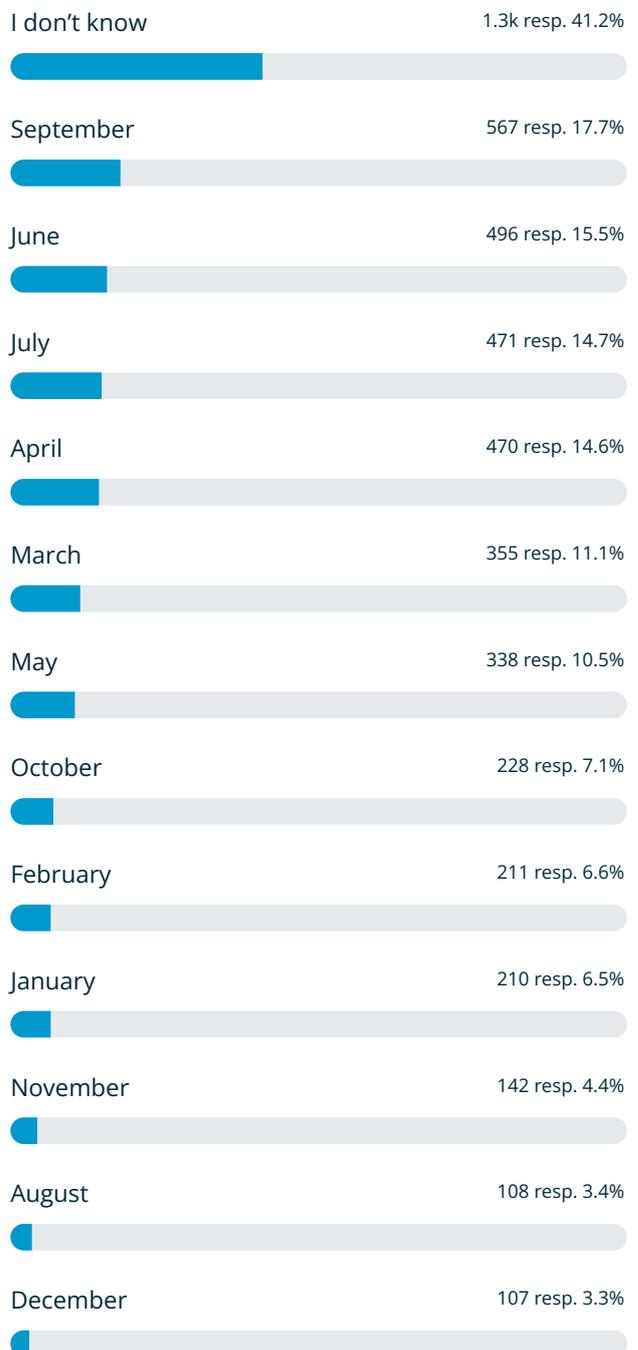
Rather than sitting back and seeing how things evolve, this is your opportunity to get ahead of the curve and let teachers know, through your communications, that your company will do everything it can to help them achieve their goals, despite the ongoing challenges COVID-19 brings.

6. Purchasing Decisions

For any education business, knowing when schools make their purchasing decisions, and the efforts that go into them, unlocks so much selling potential. If you know who to contact and when, you'll be getting the most out of your marketing efforts and making the very best use of your marketing budget, and so you will likely see a greater ROI.

Which months of the year are the “bigger” purchasing decisions generally agreed within your establishment?

3209 out of 3210 people answered this question (with multiple choice)



To help give you this information, we first asked schools when they make their “bigger” purchasing decisions. Smaller purchases needed throughout the year, such as textbooks or stationery, will be a more ad-hoc process. Larger purchases will require longer lead times to account for the decision-making process, plus, for some schools, approval by their MAT or local authority.

In this instance, a considerable chunk of school staff voted they didn't know – suggesting that such decisions are left to a few specific members of staff, such as the SMT or Year Heads, and admin staff or classroom teachers have far less involvement.

While that reinforces the point that it's vital to email the right member of staff with your offer, it's not the most helpful answer. Fortunately, the rest of the answers do highlight quite a clear pattern.

17.7% of schools make their big purchasing decisions right at the start of the new school year in September. Followed closely behind are the summer months, barring the summer holidays in August. That tells us a few things...

In the summer, you need to start your email strategy to build connections, lay the foundations of your

- offer, and start encouraging schools to consider working with you.

Avoid the summer holidays! Staff will be having some much-needed downtime, and while they may be in school for the odd

- day here and there to supervise ongoing projects, they aren't likely to be holding full-scale meetings to discuss your offer. Do them a favour and keep their inbox clear, and you'll be much more favourable when you do email them.

Most importantly, pull out all the stops in those first few weeks of September with an impactful, eye-popping email. Make sure you

- know the strategies to help your email land in their inbox at the right time, stand out amongst their other emails, and stay at the front of teachers' minds long after they've closed your email.

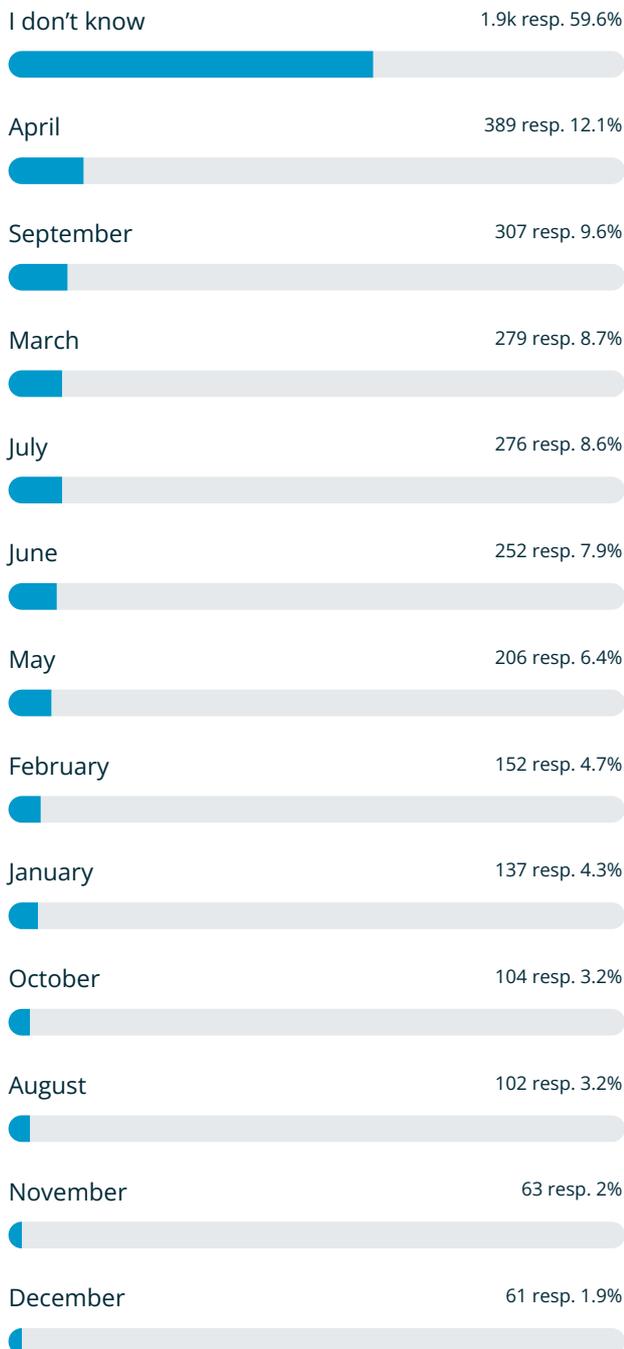
Of course, that's not to say the summer is the only time you should email schools. March and April also prove to be common answers,

although do bear in mind where the Easter holidays fall each year to make sure you're emailing schools at the best possible time. For lots of schools, the Easter holidays are a great time to start large-scale projects such as facility work to keep disruption to a minimum, so make sure you're taking advantage of the spring purchasing decisions as well as those in the summer.



When does your establishment make routine/cyclical/contract renewal purchasing decisions?

3209 out of 3210 people answered this question (with multiple choice)



So, now we know when negotiations begin in schools, we need to know precisely when the final decision is made. The top answers are roughly what we expected – in March and April, falling around the Easter Holidays, and the summer months and September, falling around the summer holidays. While this may seem like quite a wide range, it would suggest schools don't need a very long time to make their decision – perhaps starting the process in March or April and then making the final decision before May. Alternatively, for very big purchases, such as building works or playground installations, this could operate on a tidy, roughly six-month schedule – starting the decision making progress in March and then making the final decision in September (or the other way around).



Either way, it reinforces what most education businesses likely already know – March/April and September are the key points of the year to ramp up school communications, on top of making sure you’re emailing the right staff member in charge.

Who decides what/when purchases are made for these areas within your establishment?

	Head	SMT	Bursar	Head of Dept.	Class Teacher	Local Authority	Governors	Multi-Academy Trust	I don't know
After school clubs	37.7%	31.7%	14.7%	28.6%	12.5%	0.8%	3.8%	0.8%	8.4%
CPD staff training	56%	54.7%	11.2%	12.8%	3.5%	1.2%	4.4%	2.3%	5.5%
EdTech	49.6%	42.1%	16%	13.9%	1.7%	1.7%	5.6%	2%	10.9%
Furniture	49.6%	27.9%	38.9%	7.7%	3.6%	1.5%	6.4%	2.1%	7.2%
Learning resources	39.8%	37.6%	14.8%	47.2%	20.2%	0.9%	3.1%	1.1%	5.5%
Premises (signage, buildings...)	56.9%	26.5%	36.9%	2.5%	0.6%	5.2%	12.5%	2.9%	7.5%
Pupil workshops	40.6%	41.8%	10.8%	34.9%	19.5%	0.8%	2.4%	0.8%	8.1%
Technology/ ICT	54.3%	43.2%	25.3%	20.5%	5.2%	1.9%	7.7%	2.3%	7%
Subject specific workshops	33.6%	30.7%	10.9%	50.7%	17.2%	0.7%	2.1%	0.7%	6.7%
Wellbeing & health	54.6%	54.8%	13.2%	13.4%	7.5%	1.7%	6.8%	1.4%	7.3%
Recruitment	74.8%	35.3%	20.2%	5.2%	0.9%	2.2%	12.7%	2.6%	6.8%
School trips	49.5%	42.5%	18.7%	35.6%	24.3%	1.4%	4.5%	0.9%	6.6%

To get the answer to that last query, we asked schools not only exactly who’s responsible for making these decisions, but what those decisions are. Of course, more than one staff member might make some of these decisions, so these answers will be the staff member who makes the final decision or has the greatest influence.

Across the board, it’s clear that the Head Teachers and members of the SMT have the largest say, with Department Heads having a few key responsibilities too. Going back to the decisions on “bigger” purchases, such as those for the premises, Head Teachers decide on 56.9% of purchases, compared to class teachers who make just 0.6% of facility purchase decisions.

It may be a surprise that class teachers are generally involved in fewer decisions. While they are engaged in the more obvious decisions, such as learning resources, workshops, and trips, this is only the case in no more than one-fifth of cases.

That's not to say they should be excluded from your communications – after all, classroom teachers will be one of the primary users or experiencers of many products and services.

It's important to get the benefit across to teachers on the ground so they can make the case to their department head and SMT department to look into the purchase.

While class teachers will often use your solution on a daily basis, the ultimate purchasing power lies further up the chain.

It's still vital though to connect with teaching staff with information, discounts, freebies, and anything else that'll help build a connection and sway their decision.

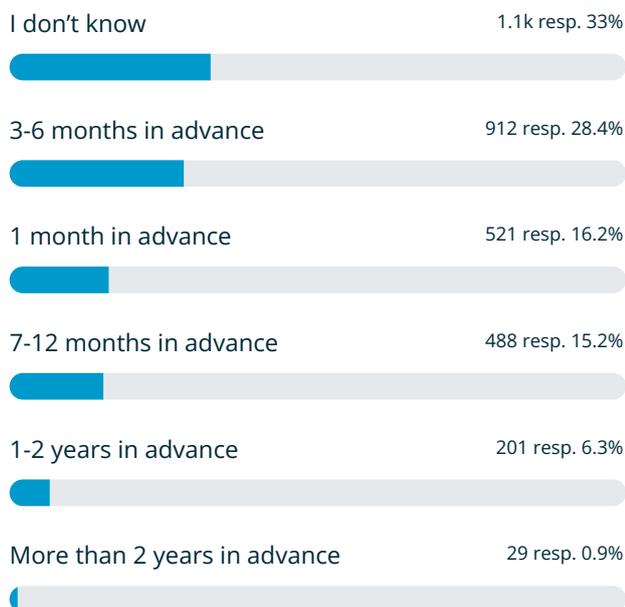


7. Fundraising

In 2020, schools told us that charity fundraising would be largely put to one side to focus on COVID recovery and deal with any guidelines that prevented fundraising events. While that was certainly the case, it didn't stop schools completely from doing their bit for some great causes in 2021.

How far in advance would your establishment typically make the decision on the charity/charities that it will fundraise for during your next fundraising event(s)?

3210 out of 3210 people answered this question



It's not uncommon for schools to choose charities to support early in the year. This allows them to lock in fundraising event dates ahead of new school terms and avoid any last-minute scheduling. And the stats show exactly that – almost a third of schools (28.4%) need 3-6 months' notice to choose a charity, with 15.2% needing up to a full year to make their decision.

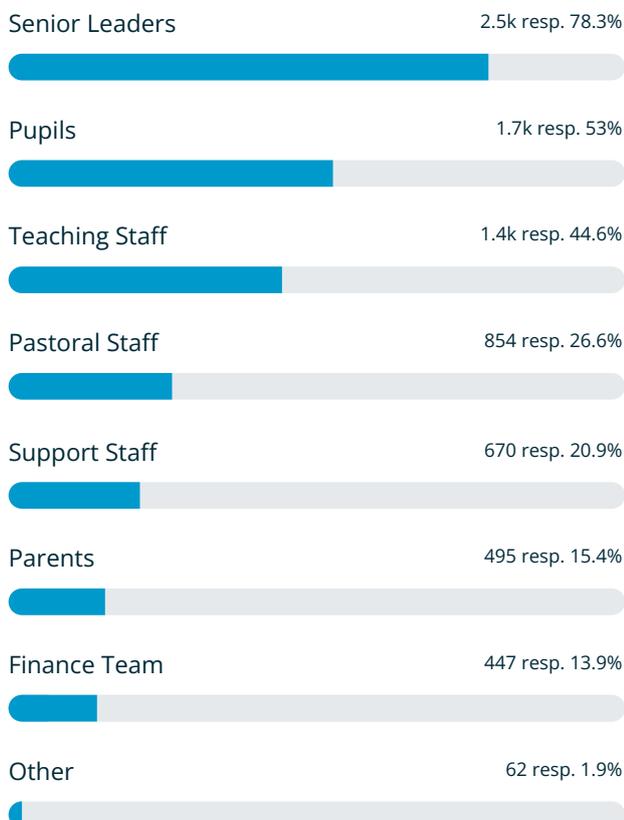
Surprisingly, a large number of schools said they didn't know. This could mean several things that charities would do well to look into – perhaps other staff are involved in fundraising events, or they've joined the school during the pandemic when fundraisers were off the table. Or, perhaps it means the school decides throughout the year on a more ad-hoc basis, as communications from charities filter through, so it's crucial charities stay positive and email schools throughout the year.

And all isn't lost if you're a charity running a last-minute event. A good 16.2% of schools only need one month to plan an event, which could result in incredible amounts of funds being generated for your charity.

Who is involved in the process of deciding which charity to raise funds for and managing the fundraising events?

To help answer our queries regarding the staff members responsible for charity fundraising, we asked schools, well, exactly that.

3210 out of 3210 people answered this question (with multiple choice)



Predictably, senior leaders are involved in the management of fundraising events in a significant number (78.3%) of schools, whether that's alone or with help from other staff members.

Incredibly, over half (53%) of all schools get pupils involved in the decision-making – which is greater than that of the teaching staff.

If you're a charity, there's a good chance you've been prioritising Senior Leaders all along with your email communications. But how much of your communications and events have been pupil-oriented?

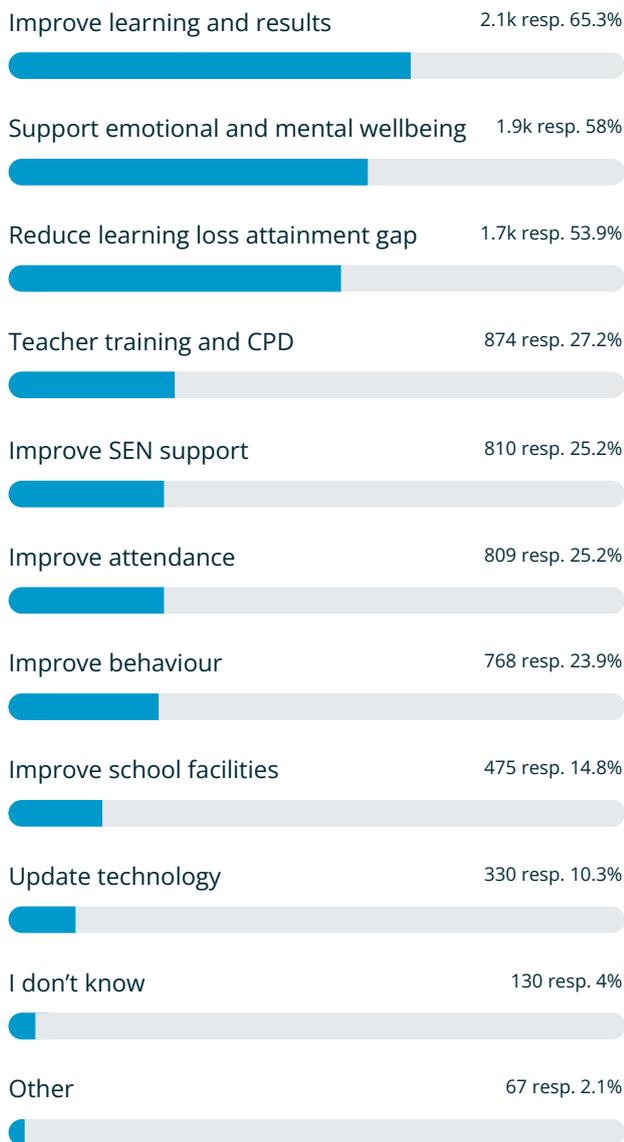
Although Senior Leaders will still have a significant say on the final decision, some schools may let pupils shortlist or even cast the final vote of which events to support and how to run them.

So, it's vital your emails, landing pages, and any other event marketing materials get across how fun and exciting the events are to win the youth vote, and don't solely focus on the 'grown-up stuff'!



8. Goals and priorities for 2022

What are your school's top priorities for 2022?



Last year, 67.9% stated that supporting emotional and mental wellbeing was their top priority. This year it's second on the list at 58%. It's still an area of major concern for teachers and school staff.

Since the first lockdown, various charities, schools, and parents have been speaking out about their concern for child mental health with experts warning of a looming mental health crisis due to COVID-19.

The isolation of remote learning and changes to

pupils' routine during the pandemic has had a huge impact on wellbeing. At home, there may also be a variety of reasons for a decline in children's mental health, as whole families are under increased employment and financial pressure. Children are also experiencing bereavement at an increased rate.

However, the wellbeing of school staff is also under pressure, so Senior Leaders have a difficult balancing act on their hands to support both school staff and pupils.

The biggest difference in priorities identified from our most recent survey results has been the increased desire to improve attainment and results, with 65.3% prioritising this, up from 61.8% last year.

Last year, reducing learning loss and the attainment gap came just ahead of improving attainment and results, which suggested that teachers were less concerned with hitting attainment criteria, specifically for tests and exams, and were simply trying to ensure that pupils did not fall too far behind – a more pupil-focused objective.

The shift in priorities this year towards attainment and results mirrors the government's focus on getting learning back to normal, the return of full Ofsted inspections, and the expectation that exams will take place as normal in 2022.

Improving SEN support is a priority for 25.2%, up from 21.5%. Providing adequate support for SEN pupils has been a massive challenge throughout the pandemic as SEN pupils generally require far more one-to-one, in-person support.

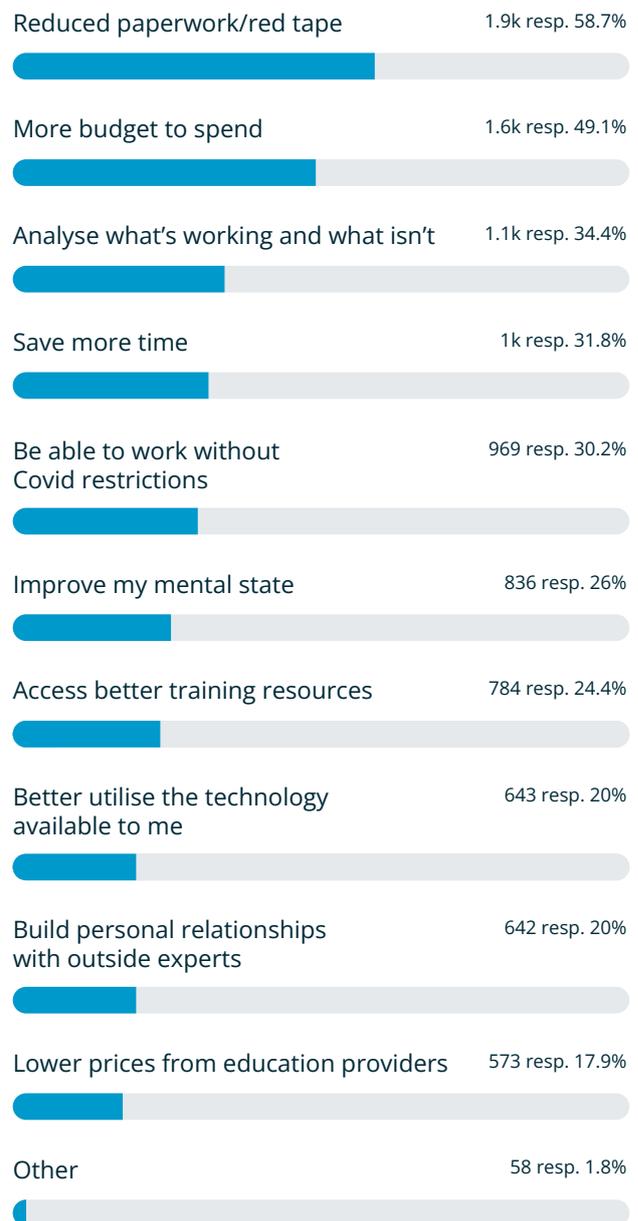
At the start of the autumn 2020 term, as pupils returned to the classroom, the government published data confirming that SEN pupils were less likely to return to school due to concerns about the spread of the virus.

The government's data showed that 81% of children in England with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) at state-funded schools were in attendance on 24 September 2020, compared with 88% of all children.

Unsurprisingly, improving SEN provision is a priority, given that the ongoing pandemic has so dramatically impacted these pupils' learning and lives.

Only 10% of respondents surveyed said they were making updating technology a priority for the year ahead. This may be because they already had to make this a far greater priority over the last two years to deliver extended periods of remote learning, and schools feel they are now up to date in this area.

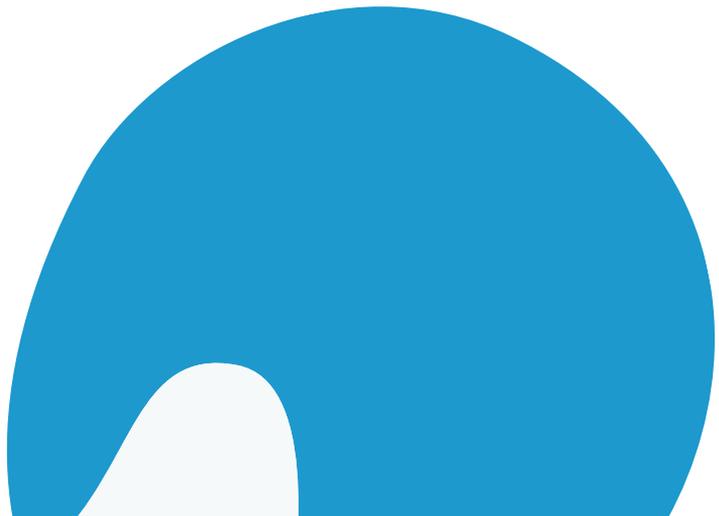
Which of the following do you feel could best help you achieve your goals in 2022?



Reducing paperwork received the highest response with 58.7% of surveyed teachers and school staff saying this is would help them achieve their goals in 2022. More budget to spend follows closely behind with 49.1%.

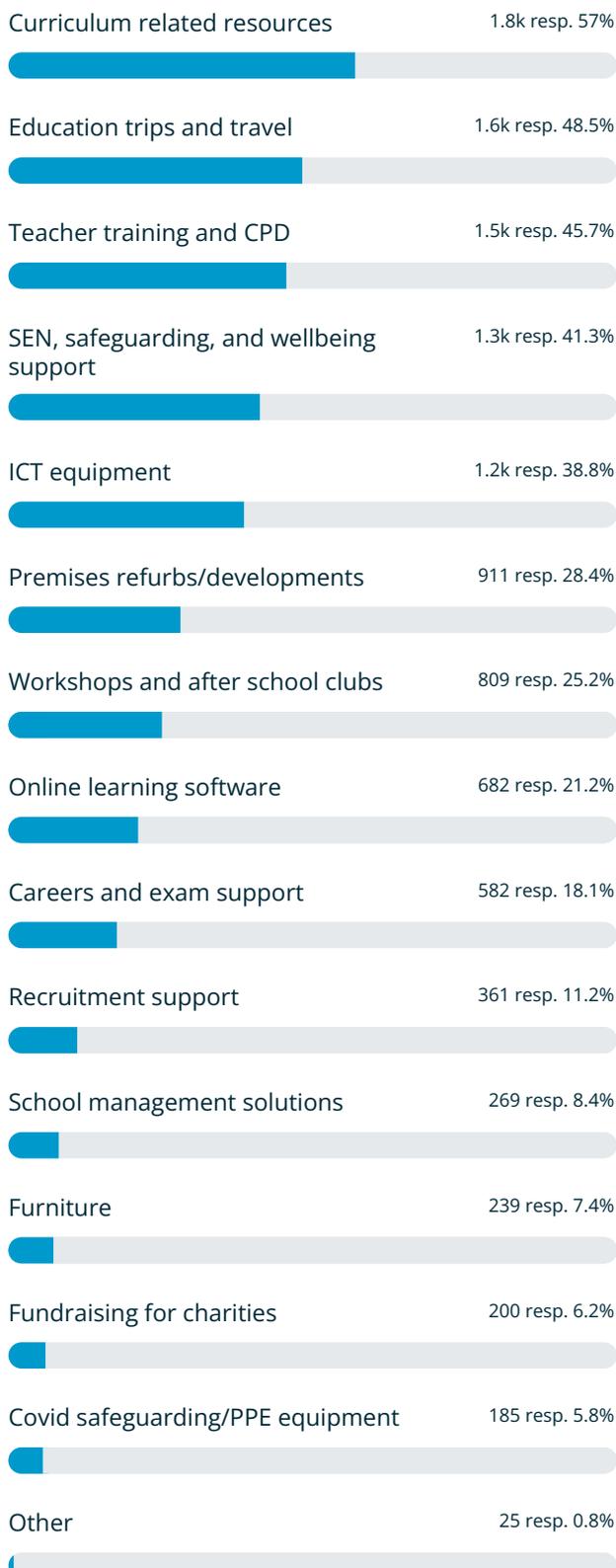
Last year, COVID-19 restrictions featured at the top of the list with 60.2%, with the reduction of paperwork behind with 45.4%.

Reducing teacher workload has been on the government's priority list for many years. It was an important part of the DfE's teacher recruitment and retention strategy, published in January 2019.



While some gains may have been made since then, obviously the COVID-19 pandemic has had a considerable impact on workload, with teachers reporting in an earlier survey question that their stress levels increased significantly during 2020.

What types of products and services will provide the most value to your school in 2022?



There are big changes in the products and services that teachers and school staff are most interested in for 2022, indicating that teachers are hoping for a more normal year ahead.

Curriculum-related resources (57%), education trips and travel (48.5%), teacher training and CPD (45.7%), and SEN, safeguarding, and wellbeing support (41.3%) are the top priorities.

This marks a significant change from last year's results when ICT equipment (56.7%) and online learning software (49.2%) were the products and services that schools believed would be of most value to their school in 2021.

With 57% of teachers surveyed saying that curriculum-related resources will provide value for their school this year, there are huge opportunities for businesses who offer ready-to-use, quality resources that will save teachers' time and help them reduce the learning gap exacerbated by COVID-19.

It's good news too for providers of education trips and travel (48.5%), up from 17.2%.

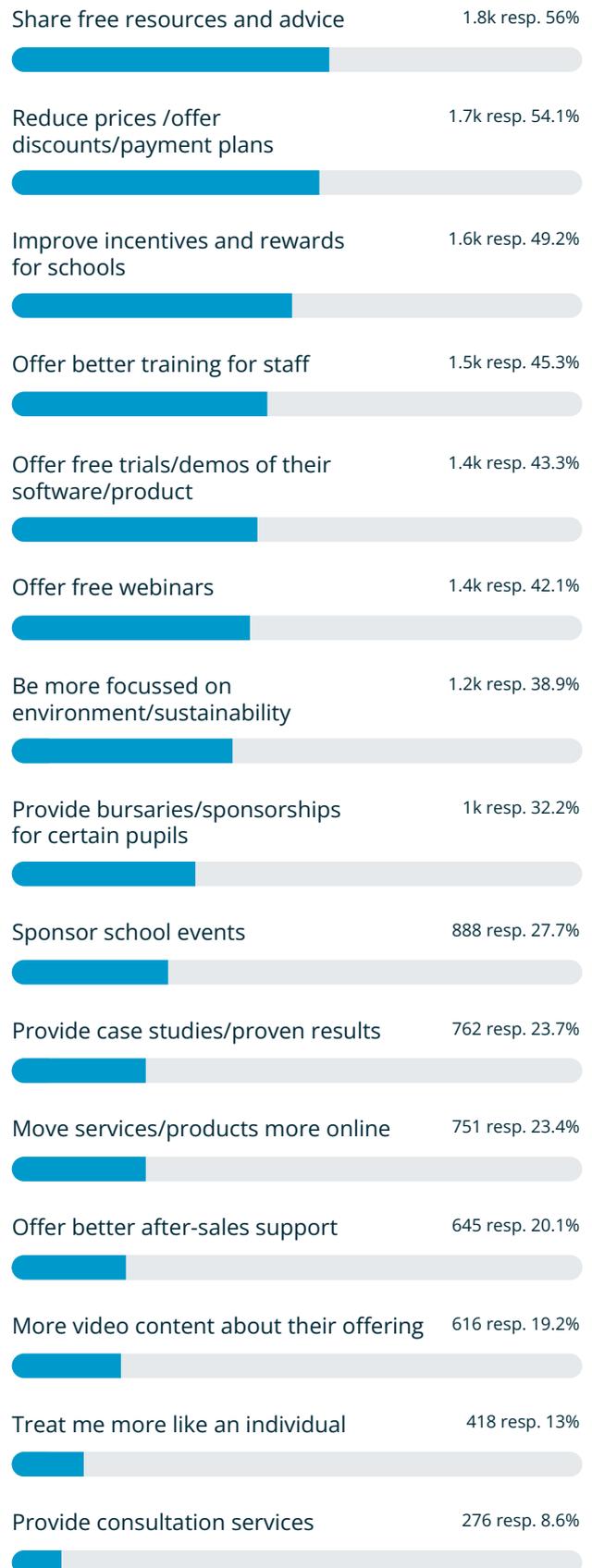


Providers of education trips and travel have suffered so much during the pandemic. It's good to see that the benefits of these activities have not been forgotten, and respondents expect trips and travel to provide the most value to them in the year ahead.

Another swing in opinion is related to COVID-19 safeguarding and PPE equipment, with just 5.9% stating it will provide the most value to them in the year ahead, crashing from 37.2% last year. Results for SEN, safeguarding, and wellbeing support (41.3% remained consistent with last year's results (40.3%).

How can education businesses support and serve schools in 2022?

3210 out of 3210 people answered this question (with multiple choice)



Next, we decided to ask them how businesses can help solve their problems, so you can tailor your marketing messages accordingly for the year ahead.

At the top of the list are free resources and advice. This is the quickest way to attract a teacher's attention. Offering free resources in exchange for their email address asks for very little commitment from teachers. The majority of teachers will also expect to give their email address for quality free resources, which allows you to build your qualified leads, contact them again, and build a relationship.

However, any free resource should be the same quality as a paid-for resource. Free resources are an opportunity to showcase the real value of your paid-for product or service, so they have to make the right impression. Sharing poor quality resources as freebies could do more harm than good in the long term. First impressions count!

Of course, not all businesses can offer free resources or advice. If that's you, then perhaps consider offering reduced prices or discounts. If that's not always possible, payment plans that help schools spread the cost of products or services are listed as the second-best way businesses can support schools (54.1%). This can be particularly useful for schools around the end of the financial year when they are often looking to spend leftover budget (to avoid local authorities clawing back surplus) and planning any major spending for the year ahead.

Improving incentives and rewards for schools is next on the list, with 49.2% of schools saying they'd be a great way for businesses like you to support them. This could include discounts or deals for long-term customers, but more specifically rewards such as free items with their order, free months on their subscription, or even a referral programme that could generate the school some extra

funds. There's a lot you could do here, so work out what your company can do – anything that'll save teachers time or money, or just give them something to look forward to – and get promoting!

Schools also desire better training, free demos, and online webinars. If you have important knowledge to share that would be of value to schools, offer a tailored, one-to-one demo to show them exactly how your product or service can work in their setting.

Putting in a calendar appointment in advance of a one-to-one demo can be daunting for teachers when their time is stretched, so it's important to communicate the benefits of a product or service before expecting a large number of teachers to make that time commitment.

Alternatively, offer a webinar rather than bespoke one-to-one advice to individuals. It requires less commitment from teachers – not every teacher who registers for a webinar will attend, but it offers a great opportunity to build trust in your product and service and position yourself as an expert in your field.

At the opposite end of the scale, only 8.6% of respondents selected consultation. With more and more companies opting for the friendly, personable approach, something as formal as a consultation might not seem as appealing now. But that doesn't mean you have to change your entire marketing plan. With a bit of a shift in purpose and content, a consultation can easily become a free demo or webinar, which is much more favourable with teaching staff.

More video content about the product/service is another surprising result with just 19.2% of respondents saying this would be a good way to support schools.



Although marketing experts regularly cite video content as the best way to engage an audience, this survey reinforces what we (at Sprint Education) have noted before about education audiences. Teachers are usually so busy they want to navigate to the information they are interested in as quickly as possible. Video content can often be a slow way for them to access that information.

There's no doubt that the pandemic has presented challenges for many education-focused businesses, but we hope the survey results in this chapter point towards a brighter future for many.

Schools are still here, and they're still looking for solutions. If you can tailor your marketing and make it crystal clear how you can help them achieve their priorities for 2022, schools will see your value.



9. What next?

We know from the responses regarding teachers' priorities for the year ahead, there are huge opportunities available to education businesses who choose to pursue them.

As 91.4% of teachers surveyed said that email was the method of communication from education businesses they were most likely to reply/react to, email marketing should be forming a key part of your strategy.

If you're not sure where to start and would like some advice, drop us a line.

We can manage every aspect of your next email campaign with our managed strategies plan, share our secrets about combining email and social media to great effect, and let you know all about how we've revolutionised edu-marketing with Campus.

What is Campus, you ask?

Campus is where all of your future education customers live!

You'll never need to search for teacher email addresses or school data again because Campus has all the data you'll ever need built-in and updated on a minute-by-minute basis.

Plus, its integrated email marketing tools, selling to schools features, and education insights module will give you the power to deliver edu-marketing direct to your target education audience, generate more leads, and empower you to sell more to schools.

Essentially... it's a total solution for any education business!

We look forward to hearing from you.



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