



# Wellbeing Barometer 2023

Based on results as of 15 April 2023



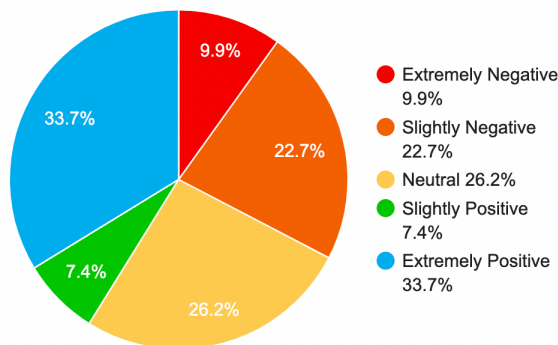
## Introduction

SchoolTV conducted a survey of 542 parents with children aged between 5-12 years of age (Primary School) to determine the state of mental health of their children in the last 12 months. The survey focused on various aspects of the child's life including their relationships, stress, anxiety, motivation, exercise, social media use, sleep, eating habits, and academic performance. This report summarises the findings of the survey and provides insights into the state of mental health of children.

## Key Findings

### Wellbeing Barometer 2023: Primary Survey

Average of 542 submissions



### Category Descriptions

**Extremely Negative**

The child's wellbeing is poor.

**Slightly Negative**

The child's wellbeing is fair.

**Neutral**

The child's wellbeing is good.

**Slightly Positive**

The child's wellbeing is very good.

**Extremely Positive**

The child's wellbeing is excellent.

## Relationships:

2.8% of the respondents reported an extremely negative change in their relationship with their child. A majority (57%) reported no change in their relationship, while 26.9% reported a positive change in their relationship with their child.

While it may seem counterintuitive, the finding that only 2.8% of respondents reported an extremely negative change in their relationship with their child, and most parents have a positive relationship with their children, can still raise some concerns. A positive relationship between parents and children is indeed essential for mental wellbeing. However, this data might also suggest that some parents may not be fully aware of their children's struggles or might overlook warning signs of mental health issues.

It is crucial for parents to maintain open and honest communication with their children, paying attention to any changes in behaviour or emotional states. A lack of awareness or understanding of their children's mental health needs can inadvertently hinder early intervention, prevention, and support efforts, ultimately impacting the children's overall wellbeing and development.

## Communication:

The survey found that only 3.3% of children never engaged in conversations about their concerns or worries with their parents. However, a significant number of children (42.4%) frequently or constantly engaged their parents in such conversations, indicating high levels of stress and anxiety.

The finding that 42.4% of children frequently or constantly engage their parents in conversations about their concerns or worries is a concern, as it indicates that a significant number of children are experiencing high levels of stress and anxiety. In today's fast-paced and increasingly competitive world, children and young people face numerous challenges and pressures, which can lead to mental health issues if not addressed promptly.

Open communication between parents and children is essential for early identification of these concerns and for providing the necessary support and guidance. When children frequently express their worries, it emphasises the importance of parents being proactive in fostering a supportive and understanding environment, enabling their children to discuss their feelings without fear or judgement. By doing so, parents can play a vital role in promoting mental wellbeing and ensuring that their children have the necessary tools and resources to cope with the challenges they face.

## Stress and Anxiety:

More than a quarter of the respondents (27.3%) reported that their children experienced high levels of stress or anxiety, with 21.2% reporting that their children frequently experienced stress or anxiety.

The finding that 27.3% of respondents' children experience high levels of stress or anxiety, with 21.2% facing these issues frequently, is a cause for concern. High levels of stress and anxiety in children can lead to a range of mental and physical health problems, including depression, sleep disturbances, and poor academic performance. Furthermore, prolonged exposure to stress can have long-lasting impacts on a child's emotional wellbeing and overall development. This highlights the need for parents to closely monitor their children's emotional state and seek professional help if necessary.

In addition, schools and communities should collaborate in providing a supportive environment for children, including access to mental health services, to address these concerns effectively. By acknowledging and addressing these issues early on, parents, schools, and communities can work together to ensure the long-term wellbeing of children and help them develop the resilience needed to navigate life's challenges.

## Depression:

The survey found that only 5.4% of the respondents reported concerns that their children felt sad or depressed for extended periods of time. While the survey indicates that only 5.4% of respondents have concerns about their children feeling sad or depressed for extended periods, it is crucial not to overlook this finding. Although the majority of children may not be experiencing significant depression, the percentage of children struggling with such feelings is still a concern. Depression in children can have severe consequences, affecting their social, emotional, and academic development.

Moreover, it can lead to more serious mental health issues if left unaddressed. As a result, it is vital for parents to remain vigilant, closely monitor their children's moods, and seek professional help if necessary. Early intervention is key to providing appropriate support and helping children overcome emotional challenges, ensuring their overall wellbeing and future success.

## Self-Harm:

The finding that 7.2% of children engaged in self-harming behaviours is a significant concern because it indicates that a notable proportion of young people are experiencing substantial emotional distress or psychological pain. Self-harm is often a maladaptive coping mechanism used to manage overwhelming emotions or as a means of exerting control when an individual feels powerless. This behaviour not only puts the child's physical health and safety at risk but also signals underlying mental health issues that need to be addressed.

Additionally, self-harming behaviours can lead to a cycle of shame, isolation, and further emotional suffering, potentially exacerbating the problem and hindering a child's overall wellbeing and development.

## Mental Health Professionals:

The survey found that only 62.4% of the respondents reported that their children had never required help from a mental health professional is concerning because it implies that a substantial proportion of children (37.6%) may need professional assistance for their mental wellbeing. This highlights the prevalence of mental health challenges faced by young people today and emphasises the need for early intervention and support.

When mental health issues are not addressed promptly, they can escalate and have long-lasting consequences on a child's emotional, social, and academic development. The survey results underline the importance of parents, educators, and healthcare providers working collaboratively to identify, assess, and provide appropriate resources and interventions for children who may be struggling with their mental health.

Early action can help prevent more severe problems in the future and promote better mental health outcomes for young people.

## Motivation:

The survey found that 22.4% of the respondents reported that their children's motivation to study had slightly or extremely decreased. The finding that 22.4% of respondents reported a slight or extreme decrease in their children's motivation to study is a concern because it suggests that a significant number of children might be grappling with academic challenges or other factors impacting their motivation. A decline in motivation can have negative consequences on a child's learning, academic performance, and overall wellbeing.

It is crucial for parents to be aware of and address any issues that may be affecting their children's motivation to study, as early intervention can help mitigate potential long-term effects on their educational and personal growth. Parents, educators, and school support systems should collaborate to identify the root causes of decreased motivation, provide additional support where needed, and develop strategies to help children regain their enthusiasm and engagement in learning.

## Tutoring:

The survey found that 20.3% of the respondents reported that their children occasionally or frequently required additional tutoring to assist with their studies. This is a concern, as it suggests that a significant number of children might be facing difficulties with academic demands or other factors impacting their academic performance.

Struggles in academic performance can lead to increased stress, diminished self-confidence, and negative effects on overall wellbeing. It is crucial for parents to be proactive in identifying and addressing any issues that may be affecting their children's academic performance, providing additional support when necessary.

A collaborative approach involving parents, educators, and school support systems can help to identify the root causes of academic difficulties, offer tailored interventions, and create an environment that fosters academic success and personal growth for every child.

## Concern For The Future:

The survey found that a significant number of children (41%) were slightly concerned about the future of the world, while only 4.8% were extremely concerned. This is a concern because it indicates that a substantial portion of children are carrying some level of anxiety regarding global issues.

Although this concern might not be extreme, it can still contribute to stress and negatively impact their overall mental health and wellbeing. Parents play a critical role in providing emotional support and reassurance to their children, helping them navigate through these concerns and understand the complexities of the world.

Open discussions and age-appropriate conversations about global issues can help children feel more empowered and less anxious. Encouraging proactive involvement in activities that contribute to positive change can also help alleviate their concerns and foster a sense of agency and responsibility in their future.

## Belonging:

The survey found that 29.7% of respondents reported a slight or extreme decrease in their child's sense of belonging amongst peers. This is concerning, as a sense of belonging is a critical component of a child's social and emotional wellbeing. A lack of belonging can lead to feelings of isolation, loneliness, and increased vulnerability to mental health issues.

Furthermore, the fact that 17.5% of respondents were unsure or unaware of changes in their child's sense of belonging underscores the importance of fostering open communication between parents and children. Parents and educators need to collaborate in order to create a safe and inclusive environment that nurtures a sense of belonging among all children. This supportive atmosphere can contribute to positive mental health outcomes, helping children develop strong social connections and emotional resilience.

## Conclusion

Based on the survey data, it appears that the mental health of children between the ages of 5-12 is a significant concern for many parents. Several questions focused on the child's mental wellbeing, with results showing that a large percentage of children are experiencing stress, anxiety, and feelings of sadness or depression.

In question 3, 21.2% of parents reported that their child experiences frequent stress or anxiety, and 6.1% of parents reported that their child experiences constant stress or anxiety. Additionally, in question 4, 5.4% of parents reported that their child feels sad or depressed for extended periods of time, and 2.6% of parents reported that their child feels sad or depressed constantly.

These findings are concerning, as stress, anxiety, and depression can have significant impacts on a child's mental health and development. Furthermore, question 5 revealed that 7.2% of parents reported that their child engages in self-harming behaviours. This is an alarming statistic and highlights the importance of providing children with the support and resources they need to manage their mental health.

Interestingly, question 6 showed that 62.4% of parents reported that their child has not required help from a mental health professional. While this may suggest that the majority of children are not experiencing severe mental health issues, it is important to note that many parents may not recognise the signs of mental illness in their children or may be hesitant to seek help due to stigma or lack of resources.

The survey also touched on other aspects of children's lives, such as their academic performance, participation in extracurricular activities, and use of technology. While these factors may not directly impact a child's mental health, they can still have an indirect effect on their overall wellbeing. For example, question 11 revealed that 13.3% of parents reported that their child engages in less exercise than before, which could contribute to feelings of stress and anxiety.

In conclusion, the survey data suggests that the mental health of children between the ages of 5-12 is a significant concern for many parents. It is important for parents, schools, and healthcare providers to work together to identify and address any mental health issues that children may be experiencing. This may involve providing resources and support to children and their families, as well as implementing preventative measures to promote positive mental health outcomes.

## Suggestions for School Communities

Based on the Wellbeing Barometer Report 2023 - Primary, schools and their parent communities should take several actions to support children's mental health and wellbeing:

1

### Encourage Open Communication

Promote honest and open dialogue between parents and children to help identify and address any concerns or issues early on. Foster a safe space for children to express their feelings without fear of judgement.

2

### Provide Mental Health Resources:

Make mental health resources and support services accessible to children and their families. This could include in-school counsellors, workshops, or information sessions to raise awareness about mental health and wellbeing.

3

### Collaborate With Parents and Educators:

Establish a strong partnership between parents, educators, and school support systems to identify and address any issues affecting children's mental health, motivation, and academic performance.

4

### Create an Inclusive and Supportive Environment:

Work together to create a safe and inclusive school environment that fosters a sense of belonging among all children. Encourage peer support groups, mentorship programs, and team-building activities to promote positive mental health outcomes.

5

### Offer Tailored Interventions:

Identify the root causes of children's decreased motivation, academic struggles, or mental health challenges and provide personalised support and interventions to help them overcome these obstacles.

6

### Empower Children To Be Proactive:

Encourage children to take an active role in their mental health and wellbeing by providing them with coping strategies, resources, and tools to manage stress and anxiety.



7

**Promote a Healthy Lifestyle:**

Encourage children to engage in regular physical activity, maintain a balanced diet, and establish good sleep habits. Schools can provide extracurricular activities and programs that promote physical and mental wellbeing.

8

**Educate About Global Issues:**

Address children's concerns about the future of the world through age-appropriate conversations and education. Encourage proactive involvement in activities that contribute to positive change and help them feel empowered.

9

**Provide Additional Academic Support:**

Offer tutoring services, study groups, or other forms of academic assistance to help children who are struggling with their studies.

10

**Monitor and Address Self-Harming Behaviours:**

Implement monitoring systems to identify self-harming behaviours and provide immediate support and intervention for children at risk. Raise awareness among parents, educators, and students about the warning signs and consequences of self-harm and provide resources for prevention and treatment.

By implementing these actions, schools and parent communities can work together to promote better mental health and wellbeing for their children, helping them develop the resilience and emotional strength needed to navigate life's challenges.