



School communications: A parent's perspective

A survey of parent pain points with
school communications





Introduction

Parent engagement is critical, with studies from across the decades showing that parent involvement is positively associated with the educational success of students.

In a [recent survey](#), we found that the majority of schools were looking for more cooperation from parents when it came to engaging in their direct communications. However, most parents also had a strong desire to have more engagement with their schools.

Clearly, there's a balance to be struck; message frequency, channels and types of communications from schools all play their part. But what do parents want - and what works best from their perspective?

As part of a survey conducted by **ReachMoreParents** by Weduc, we sought to uncover what parents' current communications experience is with their child's school and what, ideally, they are looking for.

The following are five of the biggest takeaways for schools to take note of.

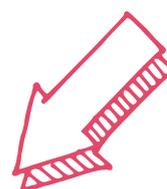
1. How engaged do parents currently feel?



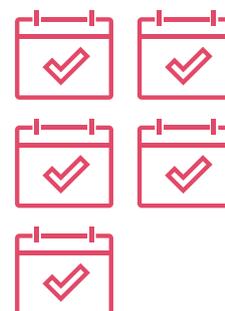
40% of parents say that they don't feel a high standard of engagement with their child's education

Worryingly, as many as 40% of parents say they don't feel a high level of engagement with their child's education. This is despite the fact 86% of parents would like that high level. In our recent survey of schools, 63% said they wanted more cooperation with parents, so there is clear willingness on both sides, but somewhere there is a breakdown causing too many parents to feel disengaged with their child's school and education.

2. What is causing high levels of disengagement?



When looking into why parents aren't feeling as engaged as they would like to be, it's clear that frequency of communication is playing a part. 85% of parents that feel engaged with their child's school believe the frequency of communication they receive is about right. But for those parents who aren't feeling engaged, only 34% say the same. This disparity clearly highlights a correlation between frequency of communication and engagement.



Parents that feel they are experiencing the high level of engagement they want, receive an average of five messages a week

When looking into the ideal number of engagements, on average, the parents that feel they are experiencing the high level of engagement they want, receive five messages a week from their child's school. In comparison, among the parents that don't feel engaged but would like to be, the most common number of messages they receive is just one.



Parents that don't feel engaged but would like to be, receive an average of one message a week.

Compounding the frequency of communication issue is the number of irrelevant messages parents are receiving. Of those parents who feel disengaged, only 18% say the communication they receive is either always or mostly relevant. The remaining parents are left to scan through messages and work out which require reading in full, and which don't. This involuntary filter worsens with each piece of irrelevant communication that's sent through until parents ultimately stop reading messages, and a sense of disengagement sets in. Of the parents that do feel engaged, 79% say the communication is always or mostly relevant, highlighting a clear correlation between relevant communication and engagement.

With many parents already feeling uninformed and disconnected, this can create a scenario of a significant number of pupils not getting the support they need at home.

3. What do parents have to say about the situation?

Below is a snapshot of the concerns among parents:

"Currently no ability to reply to messages received"

"It's not clear or concise. Everything is from the schools perspective with no accounting for working parents"

"It would be good to get alerts for essential information"

There is a clear frustration among parents that the communications they receive from schools is either irrelevant, incomplete or insufficient. The responses from schools in our previous survey echoed this sentiment, with one stating that their current communications with parents were "...terrible. Our parents are livid."

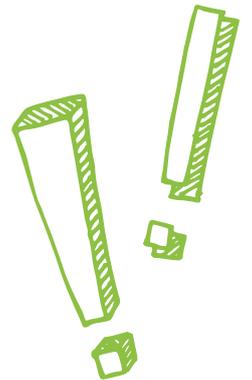
School communications remains an integral part of parent engagement and subsequently, the education of children, and getting it right requires prioritising.

4. Addressing the drop off from primary school to secondary

When considering the differences between school ages, 64% of primary school parents feel highly or very engaged, compared with a barely half (52%) of parents at secondary school level.

Looking into the reasons why there's a drop off, 69% of primary school parents believe the communications they receive are mostly or always relevant. However, just 56% of secondary school parents feel that the messages they receive are mostly or always relevant, highlighting a correlation with the trend of engagement dropping off as children move into secondary school.

Whilst there's a natural "hands off" approach to parent communications as students become more independent, parent engagement actually becomes even more important during this phase of children's lives as they take important exams such as GCSEs.

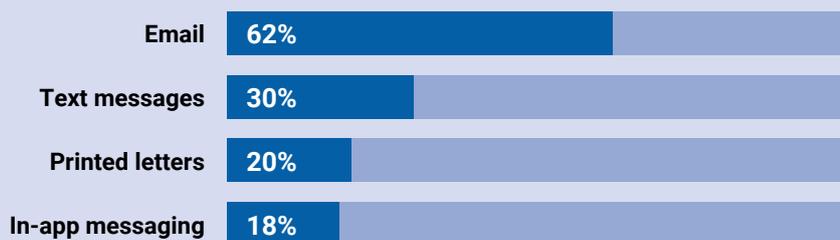


5. What channels are schools using to communicate with parents?

Parents say that the channels most often used by schools to communicate with them include emails (62%), text messages (30%) and letters (20%). Only 18% refer to the use of an app in their responses. Interestingly, for those parents who cited apps as the sole method of communication, 97% said they either always or mostly read the schools' communications. This is against an average of 90% across all communication methods, highlighting that the use of apps does boost a greater level of parental engagement for schools.

For any parent, it's crucial to feel reassured that if they need to respond to their child's school, they can do so quickly and easily. This is especially true where they are proactively being asked to get in contact by their school but are unable to interact due to poor systems.

The reality is it may only take one instance of a communication breakdown between a parent and the school for that parent's trust to waiver. Ensuring effective, efficient, and reliable communication is key for schools to support parents, and ultimately, their pupils.



The key takeaways

The survey findings provide a clear picture of the issue facing schools:

- Parents want to be engaged with their child's education, but frequency of communications is an issue, alongside the relevancy of messages
- Parent engagement is poorer among secondary school respondents, a critical time for children as they prepare for exams
- Traditional methods of communication remain the popular choice by schools (emails, letters), despite apps proving to be highly effective

Schools must address these frustrations head on. It's clear in-app messaging yields greater engagement from parents and provides a frictionless method of communication. Luckily, this technology is available for schools to meet the demands and needs of the modern parent.

[Find out how we can help you here.](#)



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