

Parents Survey 2026

PE and School Sport Report

Youth Sport Trust / YouGov
2nd – 4th February 2026

About the PE & School Sport Report

The Youth Sport Trust is a children's charity founded in 1995 to harness the power of play and sport in children's education and development. Our vision is a future where every child enjoys the life-changing benefits of play and sport.

Not only is physical activity, PE, play and sport vital for the future health of the nation but it is also a critical tool to improve mental, social and emotional wellbeing and positive academic outcomes for young people.

To inform the annual Youth Sport Trust PE and School Sport Report, we commissioned YouGov Plc to conduct research into the current attitudes and views of the GB population, and parents specifically, on the importance of sport and play. This report provides a summary of the key findings from the parent's survey.



All figures in this report, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 4,465 adults of which 1,052 adults were parents of children aged 18 and under within Great Britain. Fieldwork was undertaken between 2nd – 4th February 2026. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all GB adults (aged 18+). All data in this report relates to the views of parents of children aged 18 or under, unless otherwise stated.

British parents recognise the benefits of sport and play

Almost all parents (97%) agree that sport and play helps young people in some way, in particular their physical health, mental wellbeing, life skills, confidence and social wellbeing.

92% 

of parents believe that sport and play are important parts of every young person's education and development.

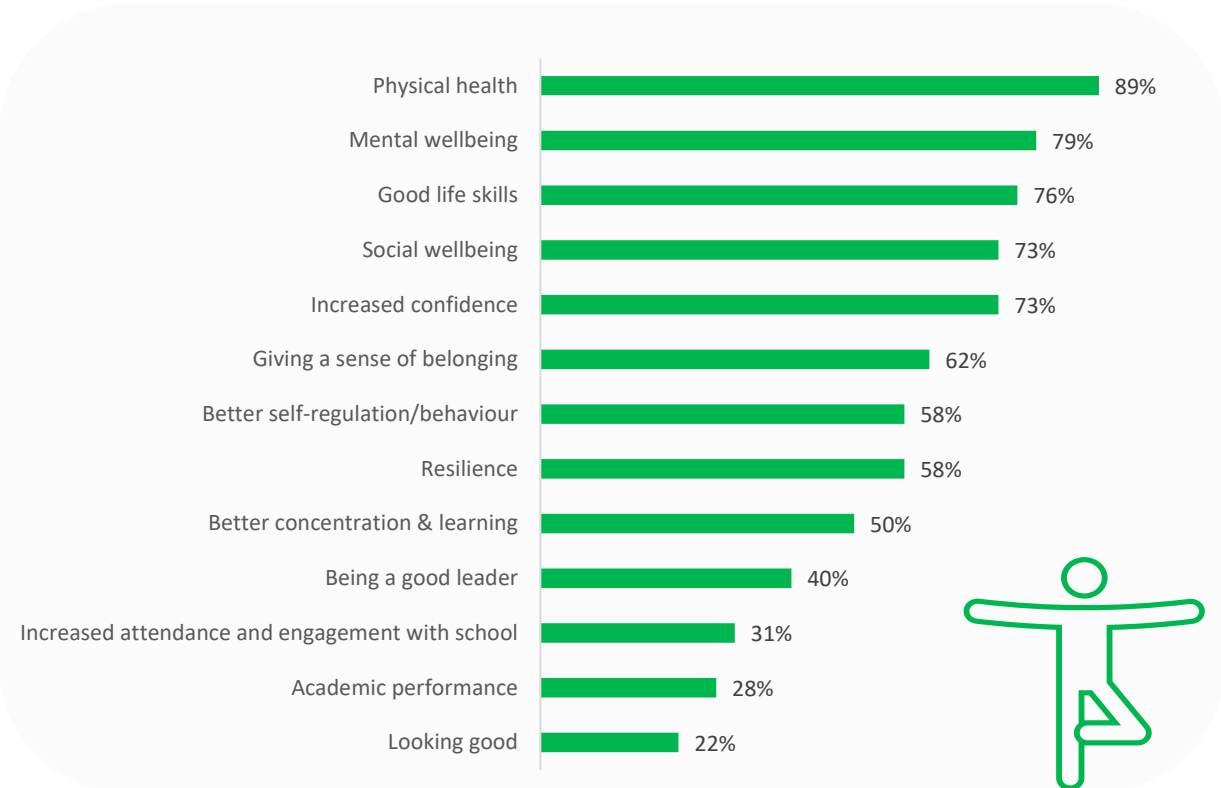
80% 

of parents say they encourage their children to be active and play sport.

72% 

of parents agree that pupil wellbeing is likely to be better in schools which prioritise sport, PE and physical activity. 63% of parents agree that there should be an agreed way for the wellbeing of children to be measured.

How does sport and play help young people?



3% Don't know / None of these / N/A – 1 don't think sport and play helps young people

Source: YST/YouGov Plc, 2nd-4th Feb (2026), PE and School Sport Survey, weighted and are representative of all GB parents of children aged 18 or under (aged 18+): Sample size: 1,052 adults.

Opportunities for increasing activity levels

The most popular interventions parents think schools could adopt to increase children's physical activity levels included providing a wide variety of sports / physical activity options during PE lessons, ensuring a minimum of 2 hours of PE per week and active breaktimes.

Which, if any, of the following initiatives would you support your child's school adopting with the aim of increasing activity levels?



Source: YST/YouGov Plc, 2nd-4th Feb (2026), PE and School Sport Survey, weighted and are representative of all GB parents of children aged 18 or under (aged 18+): Sample size: 1,052 adults.

8% Don't know / 2% None of the above

Balancing the demands of the digital age

Parents see digital devices and social media as barriers to physical activity and social wellbeing.



87% of parents

are concerned that young people are spending too much time sitting and not enough time being active.



86% of parents

are concerned that young people are spending too much time online and not enough time with each other in person.

- 78% of parents would support a ban on social media for under 16s.
 - 67% of parents agree that a ban on social media for under 16s would increase children's physical activity levels.
 - 28% of parents agree that they are concerned that one or more of their children is addicted to social media.
- 77% of parents agree that digital distractions mean their child is spending less time being active.
 - 46% of parents agree that a ban on phones at breaktime / lunchtime would encourage their child to be more physically active at break / lunchtime.
- 71% of parents agree that as a parent they are confident in their ability to support their child(ren) to balance time on screens and time being active.

Source: YST/YouGov Plc, 2nd-4th Feb (2026), PE and School Sport Survey, weighted and are representative of all GB parents of children aged 18 or under (aged 18+): Sample size: 1,052 adults.

British parents are unaware of activity guidelines

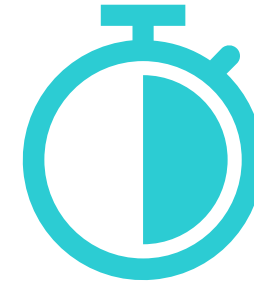
Most parents (82%) are concerned that young people are not getting enough physical activity. However, the majority are unaware of the Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines for young people.

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The **Chief Medical Officers (CMOs)** recommend that young people (aged 5-18) should be active, defined as participating in 'moderate-to-vigorous physical activity' (MVPA), for an average of **at least 60 minutes every day**.



Only **35%** of parents believe that children should be active for **at least 60 minutes** a day



Worryingly, **58%** of parents believe that children should be active for **30 minutes or less** a day

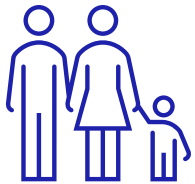
Source: YST/YouGov Plc, 2nd-4th Feb (2026), PE and School Sport Survey, weighted and are representative of all GB parents of children aged 18 or under (aged 18+): Sample size: 1,052 adults.

Schools have a role to play to support activity

Over half of British parents (51%) agree that their child's school plays a vital part in helping them to achieve 30 active minutes a day.



The **Government's Childhood Obesity Plan guidelines** recommend that children and young people should get **30 minutes** of their daily 60 minutes of physical activity **during the school day**.



Most parents seem to concur with the Childhood Obesity Plan, as **88%** of parents agree that schools should be ensuring that every pupil is active for **at least 30 minutes a day**.

Parents recognise the role schools can play in helping children be active...

- **51%** of parents agree that their child's school plays a vital part in helping them to achieve 30 active minutes a day.
- **47%** of parents believe their child(ren) should get more time for sport and play during the school day in the curriculum (i.e. during PE lessons).
- **39%** of parents believe there should be more time for sport and play after school in extra-curricular time.

...and are calling for a focus on PE and activity in schools

- **58%** of parents believe that their child enjoys PE at school.
- **86%** believe that schools should be providing at least 2 hours of PE a week and ensure every pupil is active for 30 minutes a day.
- **66%** of parents think primary schools should provide at least 30 minutes of physical activity a day, while **74%** of parents think secondary schools should provide this.
- **70%** of parents agree that PE should be a core subject on the national curriculum.

Source: YST/YouGov Plc, 2nd-4th Feb (2026), PE and School Sport Survey, weighted and are representative of all GB parents of children aged 18 or under (aged 18+): Sample size: 1,052 adults.



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