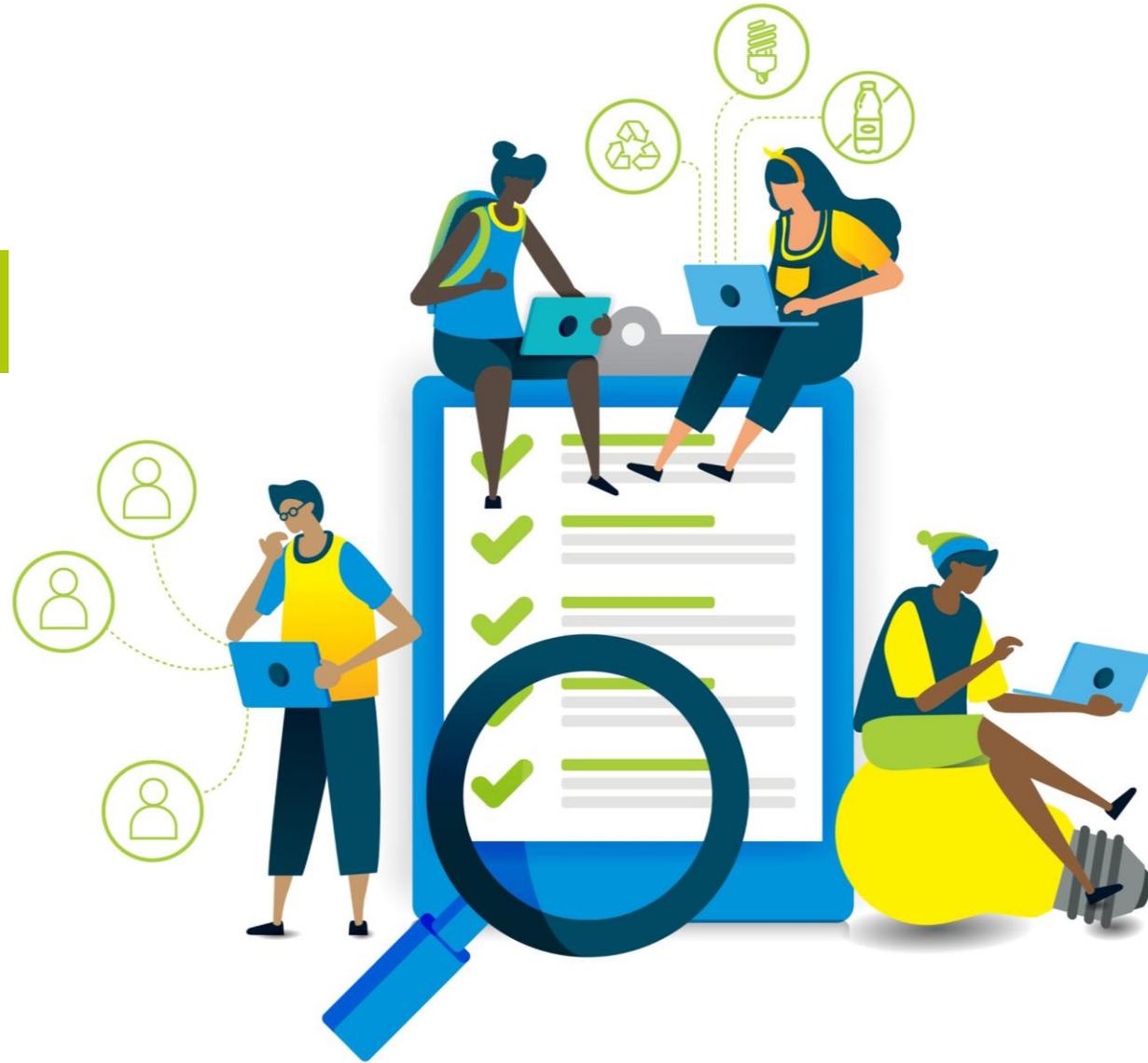


INSIGHT REPORT 2022

CLIMATE ACTION SURVEY



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What's it all about?



In your school you may be planning to deliver specific climate actions, such as trying to stop waste from the school canteen, reducing energy use, or influencing how people travel to school.

To successfully deliver these climate friendly actions you need to have the support of the whole school community - everybody has a part to play. If you are trying to reduce waste in the school canteen, for example, everyone will need to be aware of the changes you are planning (such as altering packaging or menus or dealing with leftovers) and why it is important to participate.

Students - and staff - have lots of different views of course, and there will be different activities that can help motivate them. It is therefore important to have a clear picture of these views and motivations, so that you can then provide the best options for them, to support climate-friendly choices. This is where your school's Climate Action Survey results come in.

Next steps:

- Such a lot of great information and understanding has come from your survey. An important follow-up activity is to **share what you have found out** so that everyone, from fellow students to the headteacher and governors, can hear the views of so many students. For example, listen to students from Lyndon School, Solihull being interviewed on the [radio here](#).
- InterClimate Network has funding to run **follow up workshops with your school**. Through these, we will work with you to use the survey insights to support your work on climate-friendly action. We will be in touch about the workshops but in the meantime if you have any questions please do get in touch: Schools@interclimate.org

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This section sets out the analysis for our top 5 survey insights.

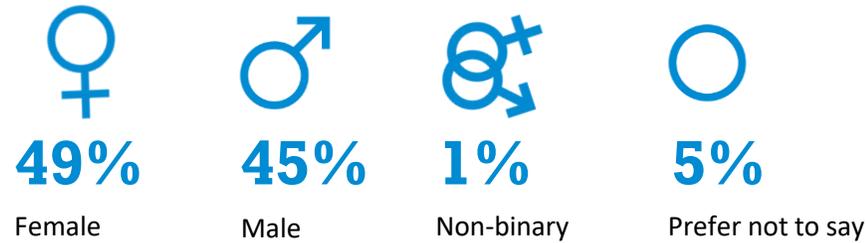
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Here we dive deeper into the data, further uncovering what students think and do around the climate crisis.

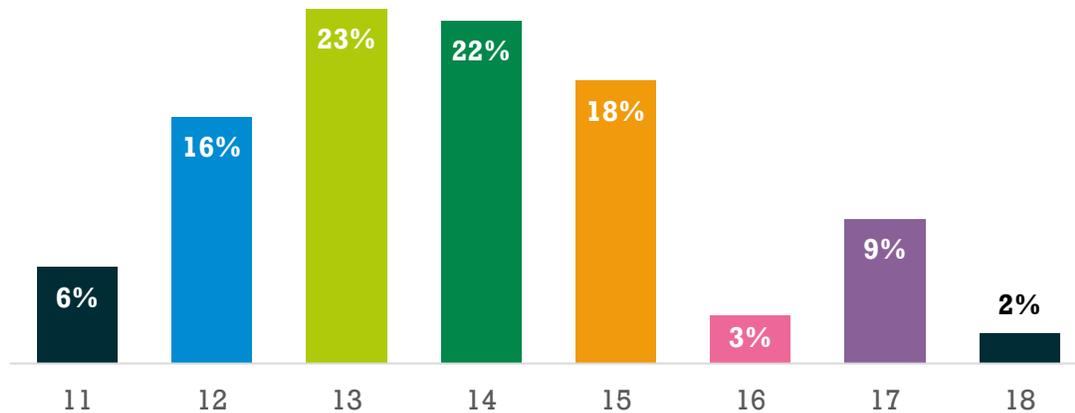
Who participated?

In total, 263 students out of 500 on roll responded to the Climate Action Survey, making up 53% of all students in school. This return rate of 1 in 2 students is a great response, with all age groups and ethnicities represented. This is the first indicator of how concerned and involved many students already are. We don't know about the views of the 47% that didn't complete the survey, of course, and they shouldn't be forgotten in the school's work on climate action.

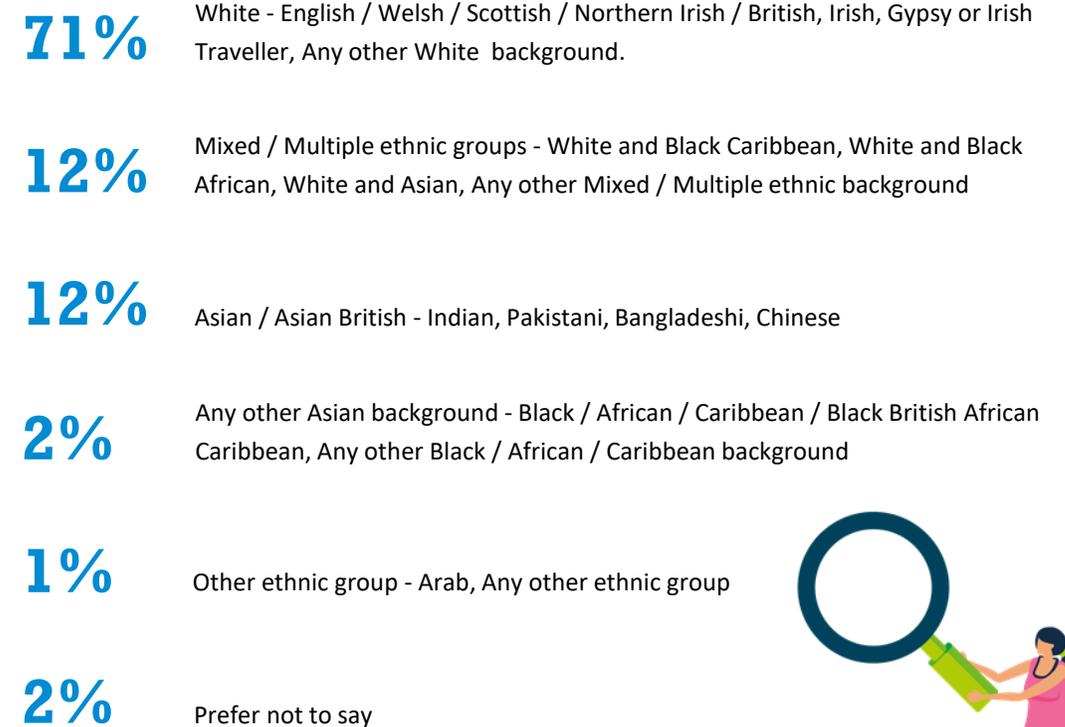
Gender Breakdown



Age breakdown



Ethnicity breakdown



Part 1

Key insights

In this section we set out the analysis for our top five insights from the Climate Action Survey.

Students in our school....

- see climate change as a threat
- want more joined-up action
- are willing to act on climate change
- welcome inspiration and support
- believe schools can make action happen.

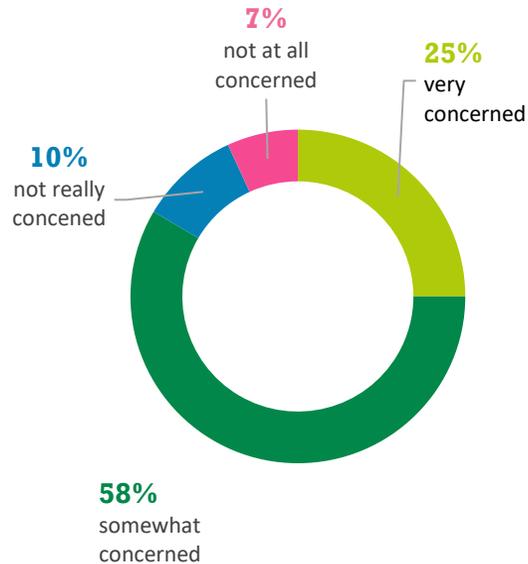


1. Students see climate change as a threat

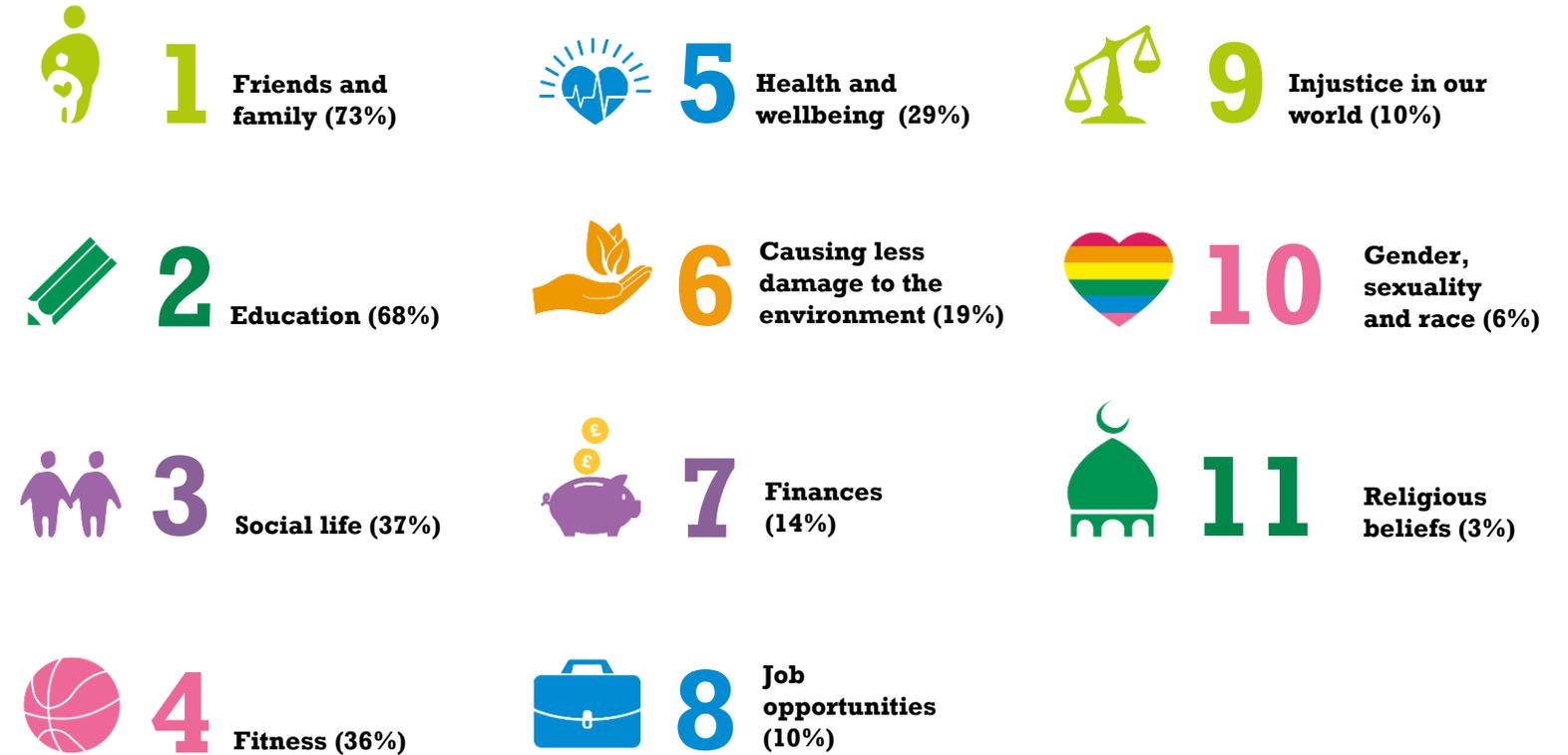
8 in 10 students (83%) expressed concern regarding climate change. The vast majority (over 8 in 10) believe climate change is happening now, that it is a global crisis, and that there is a human component to climate change. 6 in 10 (63%) students also recognised that their everyday choices have an impact on climate change, in either a positive or negative way. Yet whilst **82% said climate change will affect their life in the future** only 35% reported that it is already affecting their life now. As a result, the climate crisis is considered more of a distant threat. Overall, causing less damage to the environment was the 6th of 11 priorities. Many have more pressing priorities in their day-to-day life, notably friends and family and education.



Are students concerned about climate change?



Student priorities: where does climate change fit?



2. Students want more joined-up action

A large majority of students are positive that there is a need for collective action on climate change, with many advocating in their detailed comments: how **everyone can work together to make the biggest difference**; and that we all, from large business to each individual, have a part to play. Many commented, however, that an individual's changes simply cannot address the crisis alone. **Almost 7 in 10 students have identified the Government as having most power to make a difference** and say change is needed in the way we live, both in policies and in practice. Many students felt that **governments and businesses have the most resources and have a responsibility to take action**.



Who do students believe has the most power to change the course of climate change for the better?

- 1 The Government (69%)**
- 2 Businesses and Corporations (47%)**
- 3 Every individual (47%)**
- 4 Schools and places of work (31%)**
- 5 Young people (30%)**
- 6 Fuel suppliers (29%)**
- 7 My community (18%)**
- 8 Families (4%)**
- 9 No-one (5%)**
- 10 Other (4%)**



Students were given the opportunity to openly respond in more detail and a sample is showcased here....



“If younger people get involved, then because they are younger, people might listen to them more as they have more time to make a difference.”

“I believe every individual can make a positive change but to start I feel big co-operations and factories need to start as they are big pollutants to the world.”

“I think it’s important that every individual does their bit but I think it’s also important that groups of people work together to make a difference.”

“Because everyone can do something, but especially the government, and we have also seen young people taking action.”

“Government - it is their job to make national changes.”

3. Students are willing to act on climate change

When asked whether students are already taking some action on climate change, a strong majority of **7 in 10 (70%) said yes**. There were some differences in levels of engagement in climate action, however, and here we have segmented the responses into broad groups. Under each heading, there is an overview of the motivations and views given by students for taking climate action. Further detail can be found in Table 4 (pg. 15) where open comments clearly highlighted a lack of time as a big barrier to action.



70% Acting

These students, who are already carrying out climate action:

- Are the most concerned about climate change and have it as a greater day-to-day priority than the other groups.
- Have a greater understanding of their own personal impact on climate change.
- Are **more aware of what they can do** to address the climate crisis than the other groups.
- Are much **more likely to have family that are taking action, and feel they have support from others:**
 - 75% of those acting also had family taking action. This is compared to those not yet acting, of whom 36% said their family took action.



11% Ready for action

These students, who are not yet carrying out any climate action:

- Are concerned with climate change, but do not feel as strongly as the acting group.
- Do not define their own personal impact as clearly as the 'acting' segment.
- **Say they would like to undertake climate action** but are either:
 - **unsure of what to do (56%);**
 - **have not gotten round to it yet (44%).**



16% Not yet ready for action

These students who are not yet carrying out any climate action:

- Are concerned with climate change but have a more **limited understanding of how climate change is affecting people** right now, and how our everyday choices are contributing to climate change.
- Say they are not acting because either:
 - **responsibility to take action lies with governments and big corporations, not individuals (36%);**
 - **they feel powerless to make a difference (24%);**
 - **they do not think individual actions will make a difference (40%).**



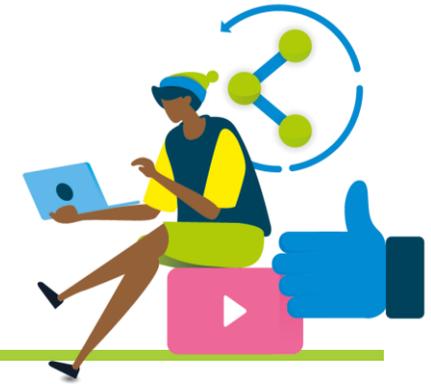
3% The sceptics

These students who are not yet carrying out any climate action:

- Are not concerned about climate change.
- **Say they are not acting because they do not believe in climate change.**

Continued.....Students are willing to act on climate change

Here we look further into the types of changes students are already making, or willing to make, to help tackle the climate crisis. Analysis reveals that **family plays a key role**: the majority of action by students is taking place in the home, with families having a big influence (reference Table 1 and 2, pg. 13 for details). Action in the home doesn't always translate to action in school, for instance of the 86% of students who are reducing their energy use, a massive 95% are doing so at home, while only 33% do at school. Importantly, there is a **clear willingness by those not yet undertaking specific actions to start doing so** (reference Table 3, pg.14 for details).

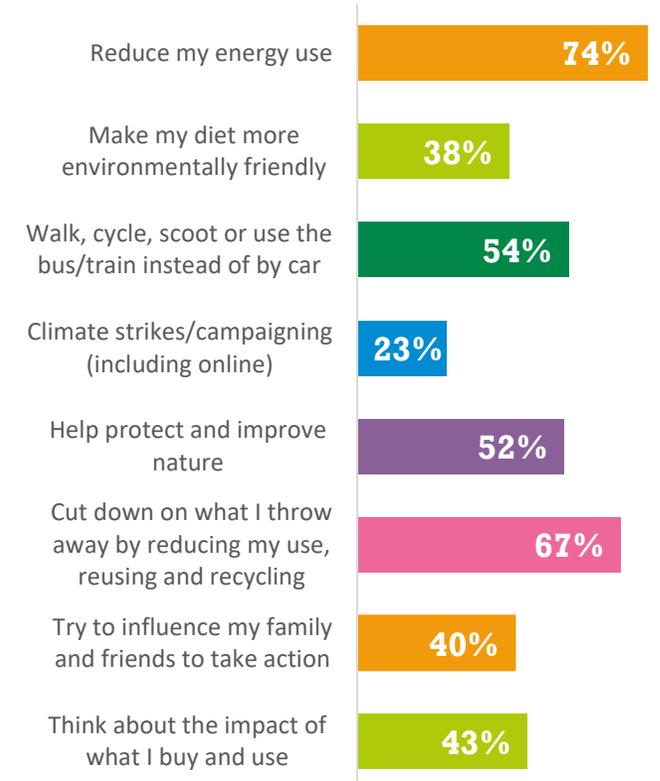


Of the 70% who are already taking action, what are they doing?



How willing are students to start actions?

Here are the total percentages and preferences for students who don't yet do the action but say they are willing to start.

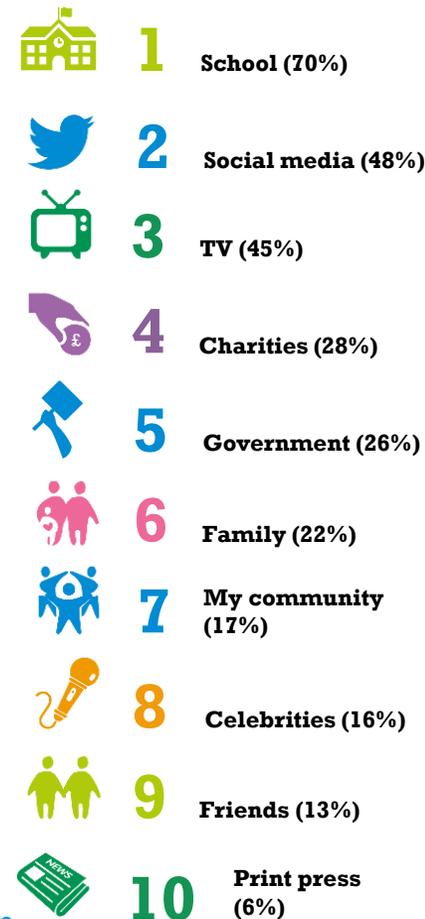


*Other actions included: helping animals, compacting single use plastics into plastic bottles, building flower beds out of the bottles and concrete, using an electric car to get to school, membership in eco club.

4. Students welcome inspiration and support

Lots of different influences are shown to impact students' views on, and involvement with, climate change. What is clear is that **school has a real impact on students – it is the most trusted source of information** and is where students hear about climate change the most. In the open comments, **15% of respondents specifically said that school had made a big difference** to what they think about climate change. **1 in 4 (27%) named well-known individuals**, such as David Attenborough or Greta Thunberg, who had influenced their thinking on climate change.

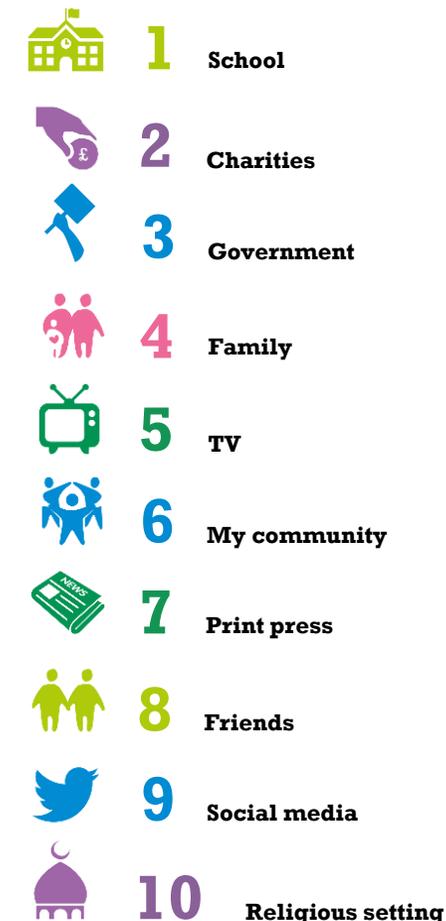
Where do students hear climate change talked about the most?



Who inspires students to get involved in climate action?



Which information sources do students trust?



Which information sources do students see as the most representative (age, gender, race)?



Continued.....Students welcome inspiration and support

Student comments show the importance of individual people in encouraging changes to how we think about climate change and inspiring action. The survey also showed a whole range of things that influence whether students are involved in climate action or not, from knowledge about what to do, to not having support from family, to feeling positive and motivated to act (reference Table 4 pg. 15). Here we have grouped these influences under four main headings.* **Addressing each of these areas is crucial to encouraging students to carry out further climate-friendly action.**



Students were given the opportunity to openly respond to who inspires them, a sample is showcased here....



“David Attenborough because of how he’s not afraid to tell the world about the major impact that we have on the world and how inspirational his speeches were.”

“The scary realisation that my generation are supposed to save the world and the current generation/government are just leaving us to it instead of helping.”

“Greta Thunberg because she is young and has shown me that 1 person can make a difference.”

“Social media, I can see people my age actively making a difference by taking climate action such as litter picking in a coral reef.”

“A big difference for me is that I have started to understand more about it because all the information makes sense.”

“My family have made a difference by making me eat all my food, turning the lights off when I leave a room and turning off the tap.”

What do students need to enable action?



Opportunity

Students need more structures in place (especially more time) so that they have the opportunity to do things differently, and importantly that it becomes easier.



Knowledge

Students need to be clearer about the everyday actions that will make the most difference, and then have the skills to do them:

- **46% of all respondents were unsure of the individual actions they could take to help combat climate change.**



Community

Students need more support to undertake climate friendly activities. They need to see what others are doing, to learn from, and encourage each other.



Being positive

Students need to establish action as a priority that they ‘want’ to do, and feel positive and stay motivated because of the difference they are making.

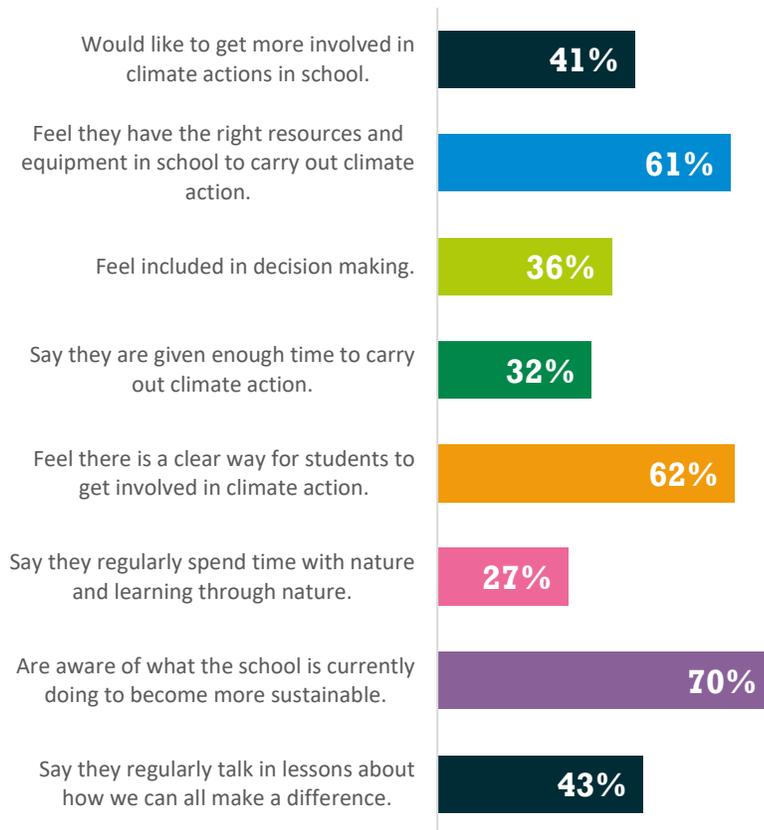


5. Students believe schools can make action happen

This insight shows how well the school is doing by: making students aware of what school is currently doing to become more sustainable; providing the right resources and equipment; and offering a clear way for students to get involved in climate action. There is, however, still more to be done – especially as **over 2 in 5 (41%) would like to get more involved**. **Over 2 in 3 students (68%) indicate there's not enough time for them to carry out action** and a similar number say they do not feel included in decision-making (64%). Just over 1 in 4 students say they regularly spend time with or learning through nature. There is a lot of support for many of the approaches for making school more sustainable and taken together, these survey results may well help to shape future plans.



How do students see climate action in school?



What do students say would motivate them to act in school?

We identified five approaches* that could be applied to make schools more sustainable. For each approach we asked respondents the extent to which they felt that this idea would motivate them to take climate action. Below are the top 5 choices selected, see Table 5 for the full list of results.



*You can find details of the approaches identified here: [Climate-Action-Survey-approaches-to-motivating-students.pdf](https://interclimate.org/Climate-Action-Survey-approaches-to-motivating-students.pdf) (interclimate.org)

Part 2

Dive into the data

Here we dive deeper into the survey information we analysed to outline the top 5 insights.

This data can support your school to further uncover what students think and do around the climate crisis.

You can use this knowledge to strategically guide your plans for positive change – encouraging more students to act on the climate crisis.



Students are willing to act on climate change

We asked the 70% of students who are already taking action ‘for each action that you ARE doing please let us know WHERE you are doing these actions’ and also ‘WHO you are doing these actions with.’ Going forward their responses will support you to focus in on, and encourage, specific actions within your school. It is noticeable that students are **not as much involved with organisations acting in or out of school**. Also, students reporting that they commonly **walk, cycle, scoot or use the bus/train with their friends** shows the potential for creating communities of support for active travelling.



TABLE 1: WHERE are students acting

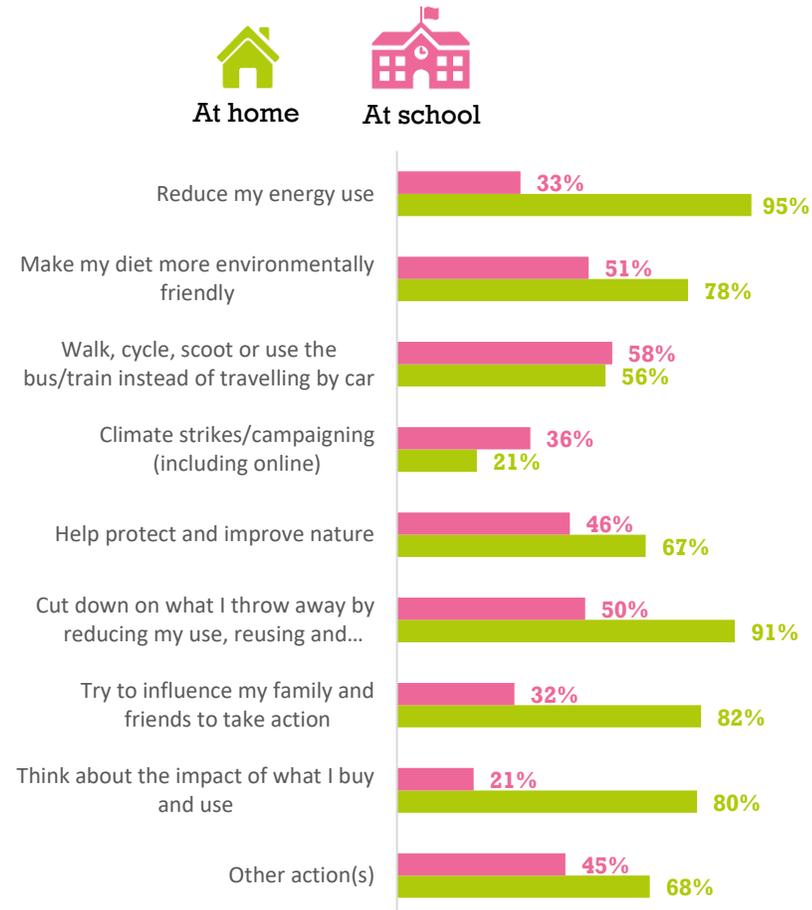


TABLE 2: WHO are students acting with

Action	Alone	Organisation in school	Organisation outside of school	With family	With friends	Other*
Reduce energy use	31%	16%	9%	80%	14%	3%
Make their diet more environmentally friendly	27%	21%	8%	58%	12%	8%
Walk, cycle, scoot or use the bus/train instead of travelling by car	42%	7%	4%	49%	44%	9%
Climate strikes/campaigning	13%	19%	13%	19%	18%	48%
Help protect and improve nature	35%	31%	15%	64%	23%	12%
Cut down on what they throw away by reducing use, reusing and recycling	38%	22%	12%	78%	13%	5%
Try to influence family and friends to take action	37%	12%	11%	46%	31%	16%
Think about the impact of what they buy and use	50%	12%	11%	60%	21%	8%
Other actions	36%	21%	18%	29%	14%	36%

*Other options included Helping animals, considering fossil fuels burnt

Students are willing to act on climate change

Column (h) shows the combined total of responses from those already taking the action (a), along with actions students said they would be willing to start doing (c, d and e). By looking at these combined totals it is possible to see the climate change actions that will have the support of the majority of students. The top actions (highlighted below) have emerged strongly through this survey, and may be a good place to start, for engagement that will have an impact on lifestyles.



TABLE 3: What climate actions are students already doing, and what would they be willing to start doing?

	Responses from the 70% of students who are already acting.			Of the 30% of students who are not yet acting, how willing would they be to start doing specific actions?				Combined total % of students who are doing an action combined with those willing to do an action (h)
	I do this (a)	I don't do this (b)	I don't do this yet but would like to (c)	Very willing to do this (d)	Slightly willing to do this (e)	Unsure (f)	I do not want to do this (g)	
 Reduce energy use	86%	7%	7%	37%	44%	4%	15%	89%
 Make their diet more environmentally friendly	41%	38%	21%	13%	30%	18%	39%	56%
 Walk, cycle, scoot or use the bus/train instead of travelling by car	51%	23%	26%	20%	34%	13%	34%	69%
 Climate strikes/campaigning	12%	67%	21%	1%	20%	21%	58%	29%
 Help protect and improve nature	31%	34%	34%	11%	44%	20%	24%	62%
 Cut down on what they throw away by reducing use, reusing and recycling	74%	9%	17%	25%	42%	18%	14%	83%
 Try to influence family and friends to take action	38%	40%	22%	10%	35%	30%	25%	55%
 Think about the impact of what they buy and use	50%	32%	19%	11%	38%	24%	27%	62%
 Other actions	35%	52%	12%					

Students welcome support and inspiration

This table provides further clues about barriers to action to inform your planning.* A lot of useful detail about why students are not undertaking certain climate actions was provided both by the group that is acting and those that are not yet acting on climate change. **Lack of time** is a major factor for both groups in some activities, i.e. to walk, cycle, scoot or use the bus/train. Many students also reported that not knowing how to do certain activities preventing them from taking action (**lack of knowledge**), i.e. not knowing how to protect and improve nature. Climate strikes and more environmentally friendly diets brought up mixed feelings for many ** and students were also honest about which actions are not as important for them.

TABLE 4: What is preventing climate action?

The question asked of those already undertaking some action was: "For each action that you ARE NOT doing please let us know what you feel is preventing you." For those not taking any action the questions was: 'For the action's that you may be willing to do please let us know what you feel is preventing you from getting started.'

		Don't have the right equipment	Don't know how to do this activity	Family and/or school are not supportive	Can't afford to do it	Don't have the time	It's not important to me	Other reason**	
	Reduce energy use	Acting	17%	21%	13%	6%	23%	13%	40%
		Not acting	16%	24%	6%	3%	41%	0%	43%
	Make their diet more environmentally friendly	Acting	5%	15%	18%	5%	11%	31%	36%
		Not acting	6%	14%	17%	6%	33%	0%	44%
	Walk, cycle, scoot or use the bus/train instead of by car	Acting	12%	11%	11%	5%	49%	7%	29%
		Not acting	10%	6%	11%	3%	50%	0%	44%
	Climate strikes/campaigning	Acting	6%	36%	9%	3%	44%	18%	18%
		Not acting	3%	16%	8%	5%	47%	0%	40%
	Help protect and improve nature	Acting	22%	29%	7%	6%	36%	7%	22%
		Not acting	10%	32%	5%	2%	40%	0%	28%
	Cut down on what they throw away	Acting	12%	20%	12%	12%	20%	14%	39%
		Not acting	7%	31%	5%	4%	29%	0%	42%
	Try to influence family and friends to take action	Acting	5%	23%	16%	4%	27%	19%	29%
		Not acting	5%	21%	11%	9%	33%	0%	44%
	Think about the impact of what they buy and use	Acting	10%	25%	8%	8%	27%	20%	32%
		Not acting	5%	19%	5%	3%	33%	0%	48%

*It's important to recognise that self-reported information has limitations. People are often biased when they report on their own experiences. For example, many are more likely to report experiences that are socially acceptable or preferred. Yet this data when used alongside other information e.g. Table 3 (reference pg.14) can create a more accurate picture of why students are not undertaking certain actions and provide clues about what may help to overcome these barriers.

Other reasons given included **distance: students were unable to travel on foot, cycling, scooting or use the bus/train because "I live too far" or "there are no buses that will come". **Emotional responses** were a key factors in preventing students from taking part in climate strikes: students were worried they would "get into trouble" and they were concerned about "skip(ping) any school". Other emotional responses included dislike, where climate strikes were seen as "boring" or "too long" and students saying they "don't like" diets that are more environmentally friendly or they "love meat". Some students simply cited **lack of desire** as the main reason they don't carry out certain actions, saying "I don't want to" or "I can't be bothered". Finally, many students said that **choices being out of their control** prevented them from doing certain actions, whether that was family members not wanting to go vegetarian or pescatarian or "it's also hard to make a separate meal just for me making it hard to be vegan".

Students believe schools can make things happen

We identified five approaches that could be applied to make secondary schools more sustainable. For each approach we asked respondents the extent to which they felt these approaches would motivate them to take climate action. In Part One we outlined the top 5 choices selected, and below we have provided the full list of results. We have highlighted in yellow the top three motivators under the first two column headings. Also highlighted are the approaches most likely to be ignored, shown in column 3.

TABLE 5: What do students say would motivate them to act in school?

	This would motivate me	This might motivate me	I would ignore this approach	Don't know
Policy and rules that ensure climate friendly behaviour				
Stronger school rules to ensure climate friendly behaviour by everyone, for instance about cutting energy use or food waste.	21%	47%	18%	14%
More opportunities for students to feed in and influence rules and targets, e.g. forums, elected eco-reps, anonymous suggestion boxes.	16%	49%	20%	15%
Greater engagement with students so they understand the rules and how they will help.	23%	49%	15%	13%
More positive communication around climate change				
Track results and showcase the positive impact of our actions, for instance how much energy or waste we have saved.	30%	45%	14%	12%
Linking climate action to other campaigns that make life better, such as improving your health.	23%	49%	14%	14%
Social influence				
Rewards and competitions to encourage action.	28%	44%	16%	11%
Access to more groups and activities to discuss and carry out action e.g. climate forums.	14%	43%	24%	19%
Hear from inspiring (local) people about the positive difference they are making.	18%	45%	20%	17%
More and better education about climate change and what action to take				
Sustainability taught across all subjects.	16%	47%	21%	16%
Careers guidance on 'green' skills and jobs that are going to be needed.	24%	39%	17%	20%
Structural changes that make it easier to do the right thing				
Install more equipment that make it easier to undertake action, e.g. more recycling bins around school.	30%	43%	15%	13%
Have student monitors, e.g. energy and recycling monitors.	20%	40%	24%	16%
Introduce changes that we are not really aware of e.g. mix more vegetarian options into the rest of the canteen menu.	29%	42%	15%	14%

