



Kids' Life and Times (KLT)

# Summary of Results

2025



# Background

Every year, ARK, a joint initiative between Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University, invites all Primary 7 (P7)-aged children (10/11 years old) from all schools in Northern Ireland to take part in the Kids' Life and Times (KLT) survey. KLT gives them the opportunity to share their opinions and experiences of school, health and wellbeing, their rights, and other important social issues.

This document provides a summary of some key findings from the 2025 survey. More detailed results on specific topics are freely available on the KLT website at [www.ark.ac.uk/klt](http://www.ark.ac.uk/klt).

The questions on mental health in the 2025 KLT survey were funded by the Northern Ireland Mental Health Champion, while the questions on respect were funded by a research project at Queen's University Belfast.

# Who took part in the 2025 KLT survey?

Of the 4191 children from 152 primary schools who responded to KLT:

- **50 per cent** were girls, **48 per cent** were boys and **2 per cent** selected 'neither' or 'do not want to say'.
- Using the Family Affluence Scale, **13 per cent** of respondents were categorised as low affluence, **53 per cent** as medium affluence and **34 per cent** as high affluence.
- **14 per cent** of KLT respondents said they had a long-term disability, illness, or medical condition.
- When asked to describe the place where they lived, **55 per cent** said in a city or town, while **32 per cent** said in a village or in the country and **13 per cent** were not sure.

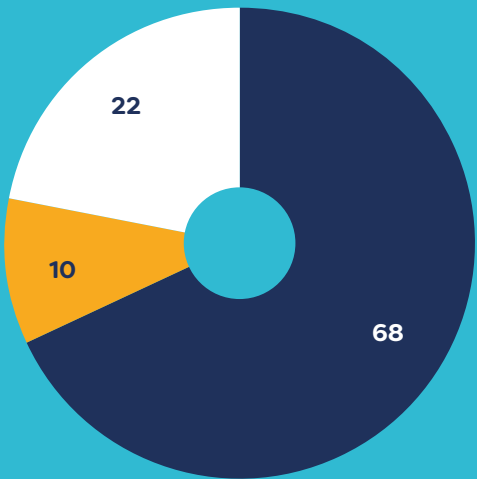


# Experiences of school

The majority of children (68%) said they had been mostly happy at primary school, 10 per cent were mostly unhappy and 22 per cent could not decide (Figure 1). More girls (73%) than boys (65%) said they had been mostly happy at school.

**Figure 1:**  
Would you say you were mostly happy or unhappy at school? (%)

Mostly happy Mostly unhappy I cannot decide

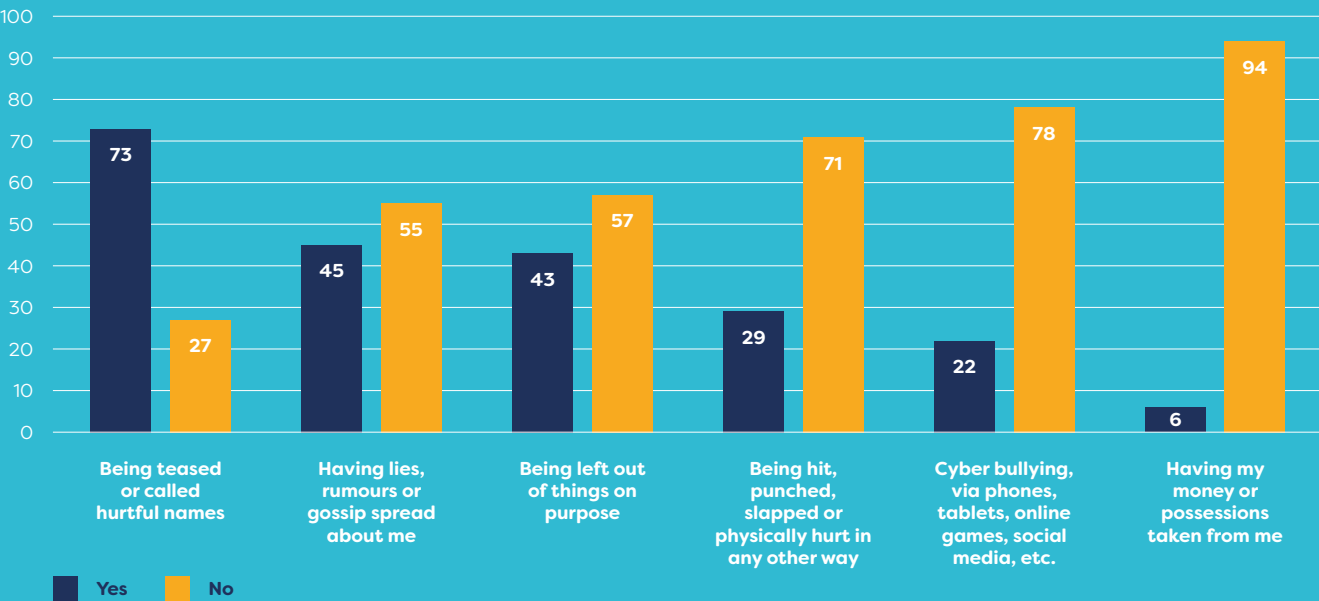


# Bullying

One third (33%) of P7 children said they had been bullied in school, 49 per cent had not been bullied and 19 per cent said they did not know. Slightly more girls (34%) than boys (31%) had experienced bullying. Of those who said they had been bullied, the most common type of bullying experienced was being teased or

called hurtful names (73%), followed by having lies, rumours or gossip spread about them (45%) (Figure 2). Approximately one fifth of children (22%) said they had experienced cyber bullying, through, for example, mobile phones, social media, or online games.

**Figure 2:**  
Type of bullying experienced (%)

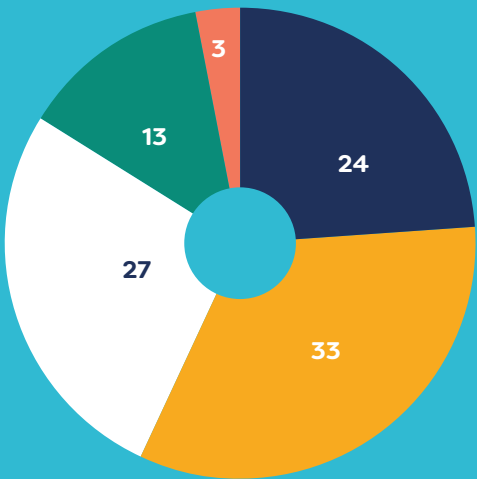


# Mental health

When asked about their mental health and wellbeing, one third (33%) of KLT respondents described it as very good, followed by 27 per cent as good, 24 per cent as excellent, 13 per cent as fair and 3 per cent as poor (Figure 3). More boys (26%) than girls (22%) said their mental health and wellbeing was excellent while slightly more girls (14%) than boys (12%) chose the option of fair.

**Figure 3:**  
Description of own mental health and wellbeing (%)

Excellent Very good Good Fair Poor



KLT respondents were asked to select one thing from a list that they thought the Northern Ireland Mental Health Champion should focus on in relation to children. As Table 1 demonstrates, the most preferred option was ‘making sure that children can get help and support from mental health services if they need it’ (27%) followed by ‘making sure that children learn about mental health and wellbeing in school’ (25%).

**Table 1:**  
Priorities of the Mental Health Champion in relation to children (%)

Mental Health Champion priority	%
Making sure that children can get help and support from mental health services if they need it	27
Making sure that children learn about mental health and wellbeing in school	25
Making sure that schools teach children about building healthy friendships and relationships	21
Looking at the effect of social media and the online environment on children’s mental health and wellbeing	11
Improving access to free activities/spaces in the local community	9
Something else	8

# Respect

The children responding to KLT were asked how much they agreed or disagreed with statements associated with respect (Table 2). Treating people with kindness (86% agree/strongly agree) and listening to other people’s ideas (86% agree/strongly agree) were the two options most children agreed with. Around three quarters of children (76%) also agreed or strongly agreed that respect means sticking up

for your friends. Except for ‘Going along with what people say or do even if you don’t think they are right’, all items had a strong majority of children who agreed. Around two-thirds (64%) of girls, but only 52 per cent of boys, felt that taking care of yourself was related to being respectful. More girls (71%) than boys (56%) agreed or strongly agreed that respect means thinking before acting.

Table 2: How much do you agree or disagree with the following statement about what respect means (%)

	Strongly agree/ agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Strongly disagree/ disagree	Don't know
Treating people with kindness	86	10	2	3
Listening to other people's ideas	86	8	3	4
Sticking up for your friends	76	14	5	5
Thinking before acting	63	18	10	9
Everyone is entitled to respect no matter what they say or do	60	18	14	9
Taking care of yourself	58	20	13	9
Going along with what people say or do even if you don't think they are right	26	22	43	10

KLT respondents were also asked how often they feel respected or disrespected in different places. As Table 3 shows, children generally reported that the level of respect they experienced was high across all locations,

with the exception of online spaces, where only 32 per cent said they always or mostly felt respected. The location in which children felt most respected was at the doctors or in hospital (89%).

Table 3: How often children feel respected or disrespected in certain places (%)

	Always/mostly respected	Always/mostly disrespected	Don't know
At the doctors or in hospital	89	3	8
At home	78	6	17
In their neighbourhood	74	7	18
In youth clubs/youth centres	73	6	21
In school	71	11	18
At sports clubs or playing fields	72	11	17
In shops	66	11	24
In public places, such as parks, leisure centres, or town/city centres	66	12	22
When using public transport, e.g., on a bus or train or when waiting for a bus or train	56	16	29
Online	32	42	26

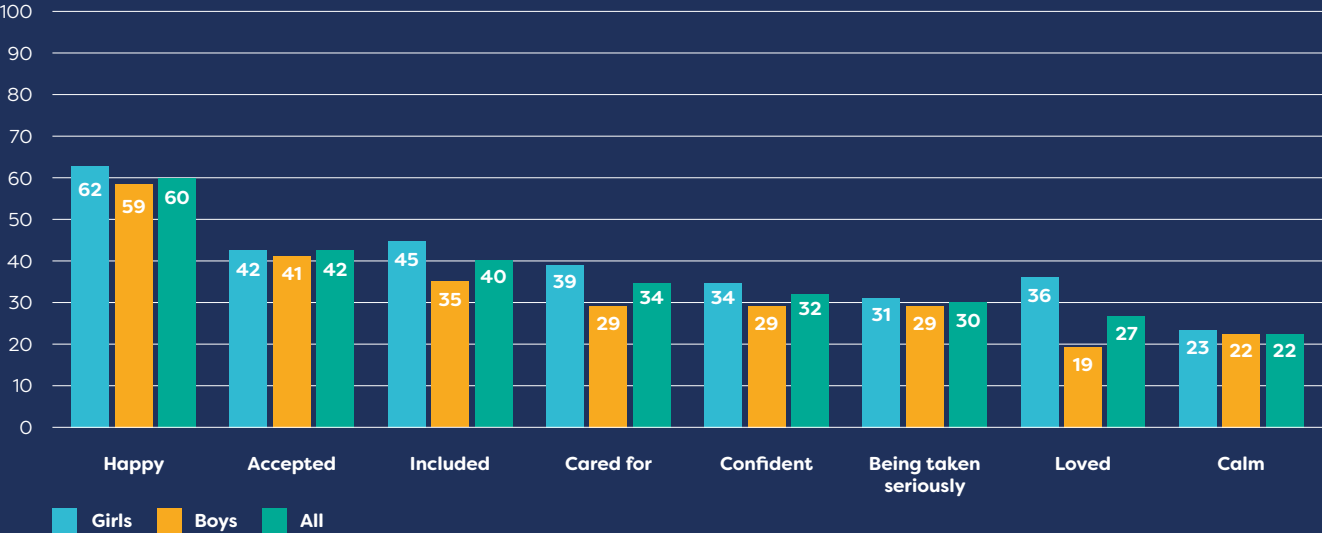
Children were asked about the feelings and emotions they associated with being respected (Figure 4). Of those who felt respected, the most commonly selected word was happy (60%),

followed by accepted (42%) and then included (40%). More girls (45%) than boys (35%) said that being respected made them feel included. Girls were also more likely than boys to say

that they felt loved (36% and 19% respectively) or cared for (39% and 29% respectively) when being respected. Overall, only small numbers

of children said that they did not care about being respected (6%) or that they felt people did not respect them (5%).

Figure 4: Feelings when other people respect you (%)



When asked about the feelings they associated with being disrespected, feeling annoyed (46%) was the main emotion associated with being disrespected, followed by feeling hurt (37%), sad (36%) or excluded (34%) (Figure 5). Nearly half of all girls (49%) compared to only around one

quarter of boys (24%) said they would feel hurt if they were disrespected. More boys (28%) than girls (14%) said they did not really care when they were disrespected. Overall, only a small number of respondents felt that they had never been disrespected (4%).

Figure 5: Feelings when other people do not respect you (%)



# Environment

Children were invited to list the first three words that came to mind when they were asked what they would like Northern Ireland’s environment to look like in the future. Figure 6 shows a

word cloud summary of the responses. ‘Clean’ (n=783), ‘green’ (n=356) and ‘happy’ (n=299) were the three most common responses.

Figure 6: What would you like Northern Ireland’s environment to look like in the future?



The government in Northern Ireland has a plan for improving the environment, with six key goals. KLT respondents were asked how important or unimportant they felt each of the six goals of the Northern Ireland Environmental Improvement Plan were (Table 4). Reflecting the word cloud, 94 per cent of the children selected ‘cleaner air, water and land’ as important or very important, making it the most important

goal. ‘Tackling climate change’ was the least important of the six goals, with four out of five (80%) respondents listing it as very important or important. Overall, girls were more likely than boys to believe that all of the goals were very important, with the exception of tackling climate change (57% of boys compared to 52% of girls).

Table 4: Importance or unimportance of NI Environmental Improvement plan goals (%)

	Very important / important	Neither important nor unimportant	Not very / not all important	Don't know
Cleaner air, water, and land	94	2	1	3
Healthy outdoor spaces that everyone can visit and enjoy	91	4	1	4
Making sure the land and the sea are not harmed when our food is produced	90	3	2	5
Reducing waste and recycling	88	4	2	6
Thriving nature and wildlife	87	5	2	7
Tackling climate change	80	6	2	12

# Word of the year

Every year, Oxford University Press asks children to choose their ‘word of the year’. Therefore, the 2025 KLT survey asked KLT respondents what they would choose as their word of the year for 2024. Figure 7 illustrates the results in a word

cloud. ‘Respect’ (n=235), ‘sigma’ – meaning ‘good’ or ‘cool’ – (n=203) and ‘happy’ (n=115) were the three most frequently mentioned responses.

Figure 7: Suggested word of the year for 2024



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