

the **GREEN PAPER**

by



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Introduction



The Green Paper is a deep dive into children's opinions on everything from the environment to a flexitarian diet...

Welcome to Green Cuisine's 2022 Green Paper, which is based on research conducted with children aged 6 to 12 and their parents across the UK. We want to understand what is important to children during this period of exceptional global disruption and change, and find out how they feel about a range of subjects that could impact their futures and give them a voice to say what they want.

Our findings show how passionately many children care about the environment and the need to act to protect it, by taking action including recycling more materials, planting more trees, saving energy, driving electric cars, protecting bees and eating less meat. Our findings show that nine out of ten children like learning about how to protect the planet; and that they can act as mini-educators in the home, teaching parents things they didn't know before about the natural world and the food we eat.

It's fascinating to see what changes children say they would make if they were in charge of the country. Their love of nature and of their own families, and their concerns for the future of the planet also shine through. They would like more lessons about nature and more cookery lessons, for the good of their health and the planet – and who could fail to be touched by the suggestion that parents should only work one day a week and spend the rest of their time playing with their children?

However, our findings also highlight issues that children feel threaten their future health and happiness. A majority aren't sure where a whole range of foods come from, showing the distance separating many peoples' lives from the sources of the food they eat. Perhaps the most damning finding in our study is that two-thirds of children don't think adults are doing enough to protect the world from problems like climate change. And maybe the strongest reaction we uncovered is that 92% of children think that every single one of us need to take some responsibility for looking after the planet.

By telling us what they think and feel, these children are educating all of us, as well as their own parents. They are making us think about the way we live and what more we could do to make life better for everyone, young or old. I'm delighted that we have helped them to do that.

I hope you enjoy reading our report.

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Dr Elizabeth Kilbey
Consultant Clinical Child Psychologist

Key Findings

Our research found out...



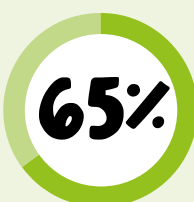
90%

of children say they like learning about how they can help protect the planet



47%

of children would eat less meat if it would help the planet, while 42% don't think they would notice if they ate less meat at home



65%

of children say they do know what climate change is



77%

of parents have learned things from their children



2 IN 3

don't think adults do enough to protect the world from problems like pollution



4 IN 5

children say we should recycle more, and 70% want to plant more trees to protect the planet



92%

of children say everyone should look after the planet



70%

of children say teachers are the people they listen to most about protecting the planet





Helping kids to understand where their food comes from

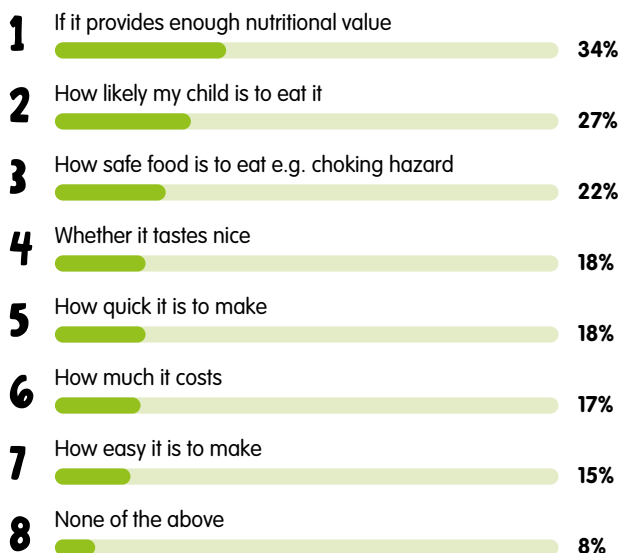


In this section we look at the questions we asked children and their parents about the food they eat. The findings not only confirm how important the subject of food is for most children, but also the importance to their parents of issues linked to what children eat. They show that there is much more work needed to help children understand where all of the different things they eat come from and that the food industry must focus on production of food that has a less harmful impact on the planet.

How do parents decide what to feed their kids?

We asked parents what helped them decide what food they give their children. Nutritional value is cited most often, by 34% of parents, followed by how likely it is that their child will eat the food (27%), how safe the food is (22%); and whether it tastes nice (18%).

What is most important when feeding your child?



What do children think about the food they eat?

As many parents know all too well, children like to have some control over the food they eat at meal times. Our research findings confirm this, with almost half the children surveyed (45%) saying they wish adults listened to their views about the food they eat.



45%

say they wish adults listened to their views about the food they eat



1 IN 3

have asked an adult if they could eat food that doesn't include meat

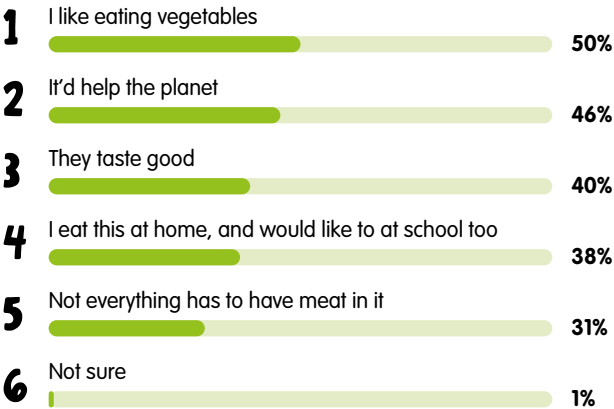
Our study also highlights the importance of environmental issues for many children, with almost half (47%) saying they would like to eat less meat if doing so would help the planet.

Almost nine out of ten of the children we spoke to currently eat meat as part of their diet. Among this group 42% say they don't think they would notice if they ate less meat for dinner at home. Just over one in three of all the children in our sample (34%) say they have asked an adult if they could eat food that doesn't include meat.

Food rules: what changes would kids make if they were in charge?

We asked children what rules around what they eat they would put in place if they were in charge of the country. The most popular (cited by 25%) is that they would be able to eat whatever they wanted for breakfast, lunch or dinner. Next came learning how to cook from an earlier age in the kitchen (24%). Other ‘rules’ included getting to choose where they eat; and more education about which foods are good and bad for them.

Why do you want more foods made with vegetables, instead of meat, in your school?

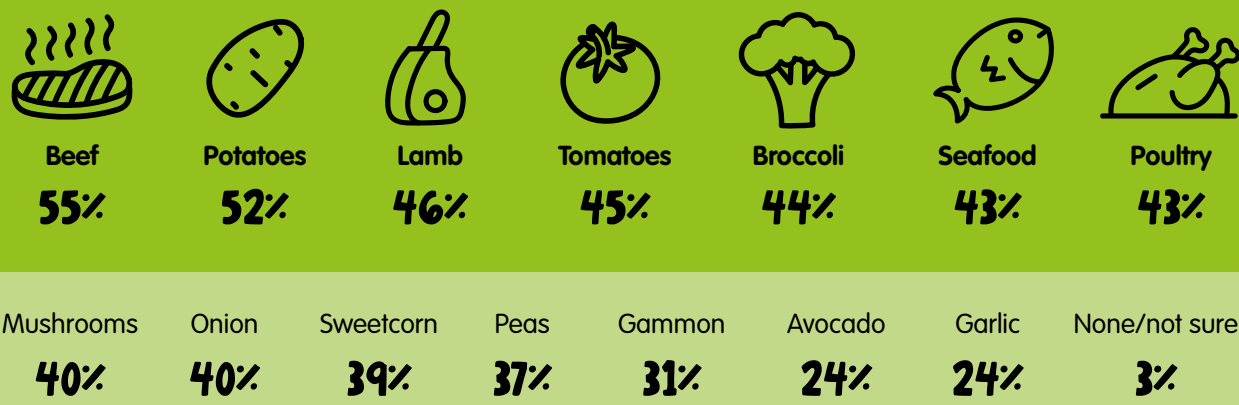


If you were in charge of the country, which of these rules would you make?

RULES

- 1 Whatever I want for breakfast/lunch/dinner 25%
- 2 Teach children how to cook from an earlier age in the kitchen 24%
- 3 Get to choose the meals I eat everyday 20%
- 4 Can eat my food in any order I want e.g., dessert first 20%
- 5 Don't have to eat dinner at the table if I want 19%
- 6 More education on which foods are good and bad for you 19%
- 7 Kids must be listened to for what they want for dinner 19%
- 8 Parents aren't allowed to tell kids what to eat 18%
- 9 Meat-free meals to be more freely available at schools 17%
- 10 Everyone eats a balance of meat and meat-free dinners 16%
- 11 None of these/I don't know 12%

Do you think you know where these foods are from?



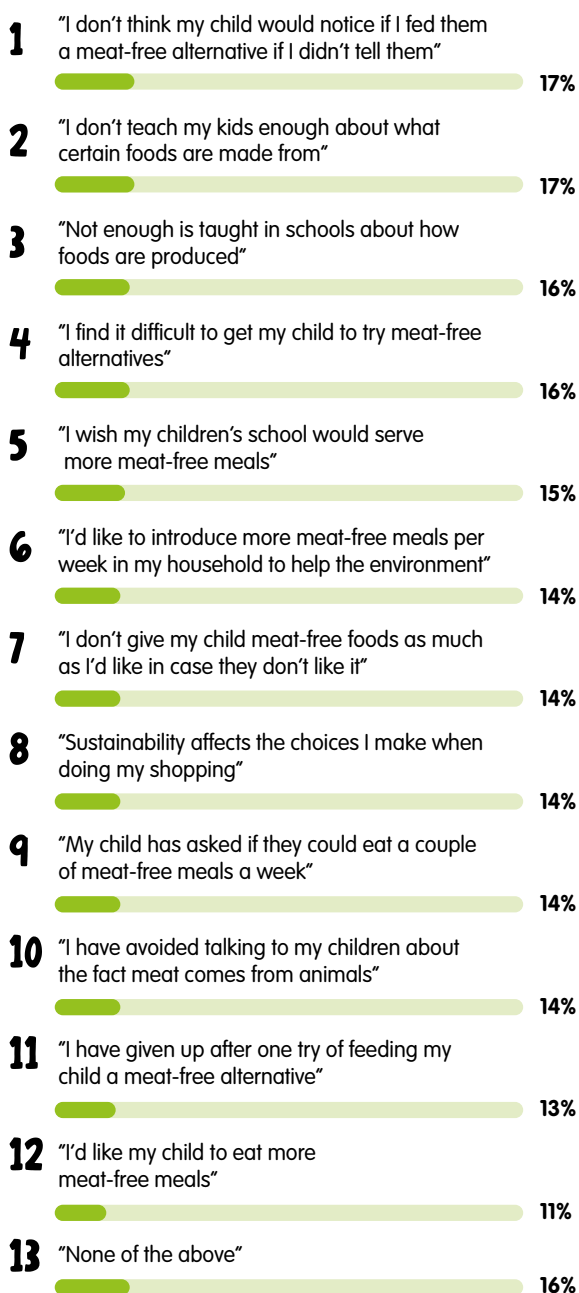
What do children know about where their food comes from?

Just over four in ten children (42%) say they think they know where different foods come from – but over a third (39%) say they don't know. When asked about 14 different foods, the one that children are most confident about is beef,

with just over half (55%) saying they know where it comes from. Potatoes (52%) are not far behind, but a majority of the children we surveyed are unsure about exactly where the other foods come from.

We also asked parents if they agree with a list of statements about what either teachers or themselves taught the children about where food comes from; and about their children eating meat-free foods at home or at school. The statements that parents are most likely to agree with include: 'I don't teach my kids enough about what certain foods are made from' and 'I don't think my child would notice if I fed them a meat-free alternative if I didn't tell them' (both cited by 17%); and 'Not enough is taught in schools about how foods are produced' (16%).

Which of the following statements do you agree with?

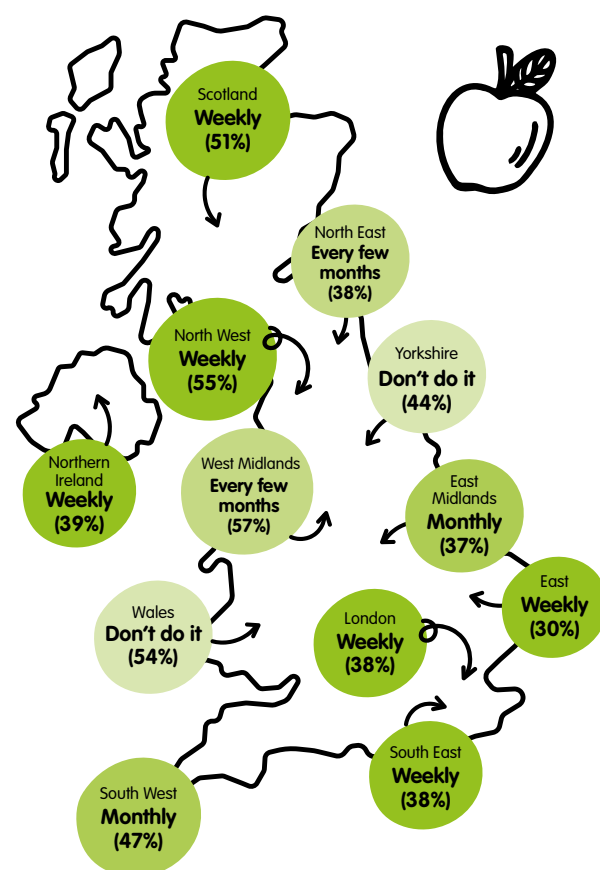


What do parents do to educate children about food?

One in three parents try to educate their children about the origins of the food they eat every week. Almost one in five (19%) do so every month, while 26% do so 'every few months'. Parents in North-West England are most likely to try to talk to children about where their food comes every week; while those in Northern Ireland, Scotland, the Yorkshire/Humber region of England and those in Wales are most likely to say they never try to do this.

In the next section, we show that education about food is not a one-way street: sometimes there are valuable lessons that parents can learn from their children.

How often do you try to educate your child on the origins of their food?



Section 2

education



How would children run schools if they were in charge?

This section of the report looks at how children get information about environmental issues, and at how many of them act as mini-educators in their own homes, teaching their parents things they didn't know before – and how children would change school if they were in charge.

How and where do children learn about protecting the planet?

Our research shows how deeply engaged children are with environmental issues, at school and at home. Nine out of ten children say they like learning about how they can help to protect the planet.



Nearly seven out of ten parents (68%) think they have less influence over their children's learning than teachers do and in many cases that appears to be true, with 70% of children saying they listen to their teachers talking about how to protect the planet. When we asked parents what they thought were the biggest influences on their children in relation to protecting the planet, their top five responses were:

Who parents think their children listen to:

- 1 Teachers (chosen by 68% of parents)
- 2 Parents (46%)
- 3 Family TV shows, such as David Attenborough documentaries (30%)
- 4 Kids TV shows, such as Blue Peter (29%)
- 5 Social media influencers (26%)

But we also asked children who they actually listen to about protecting the planet. Their top five choices were:

Who children say they actually listen to:

- 1 Teachers (chosen by 70% of children)
- 2 Family TV shows like David Attenborough's programmes (42%)
- 3 Kids TV shows like Blue Peter (32%)
- 4 Other children they know (22%)
- 5 Social media influencers (20%)

The most notable difference here must be that while nearly half of all parents interviewed felt that they had influence on how their children see environmental issues and protecting the planet, the children firmly disagree, with parents not even featuring in the top five influences listed by children. Another notable difference we saw between

children of different ages, is that while for the youngest children (aged 6 or 7) kids' TV shows are the second biggest influence, for those aged 10 to 12, kids TV falls back to fourth place, trailing teachers, family TV shows and social media influencers. Older children are also noticeably more aware of activists like Greta Thunberg.

Who do you listen to about protecting the planet?

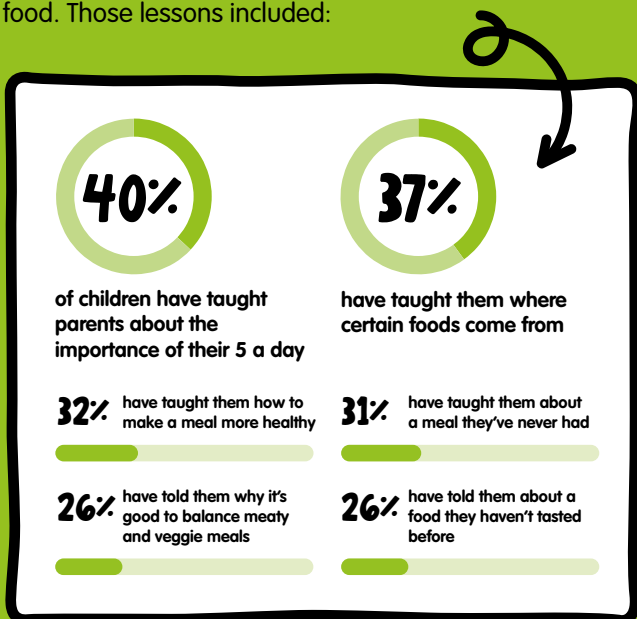
	Total	6-7	8-9	10-12
Teachers at your school	70%	76%	67%	68%
Family TV shows e.g. David Attenborough's shows like Blue Planet	42%	40%	38%	47%
Kid's TV shows e.g. Blue Peter	32%	41%	32%	25%
Other children you know	22%	18%	27%	20%
Social media influencers	20%	9%	18%	31%
Parents of your friends	16%	20%	12%	16%
Someone else	11%	14%	1%	10%
Activists e.g. Greta Thunberg	11%	7%	8%	17%
Not sure / No one	4%	1%	7%	4%

What do children teach their parents?

Our findings also show that children can act as mini-educators in a household.

More than three-quarters of parents (77%) say they have learned something new from their child. More than half (53%) say their child teaches them something at least once per month, including 25% who say this happens every week.

More than half of the children we asked (54%) say they have taught their parents things they did not know about food. Those lessons included:



Many children also say they have told their parents about ways to protect the environment that they have learned about at school. Those lessons include why littering is bad, why we should all use less plastic, the importance of trees and plants to the planet, what you can and can't recycle, and how to grow vegetables.

What have you learnt at school which you have told your parents about at home?





What would children change if they were in charge of education?

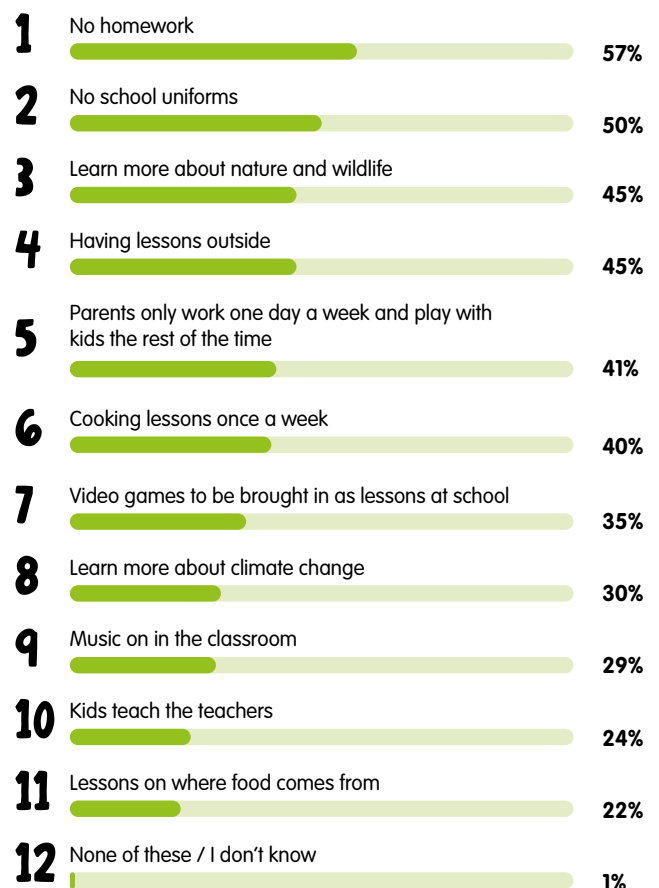
It's no surprise that children have lots of ideas about how they would change school rules if they were in charge. The most popular changes they would make would be to ban homework and school uniforms. But our findings also show how much they want to engage with the natural world – and with their parents.

Almost one in two children (45%) would like to have more lessons about nature and wildlife, while the same number would like more lessons outside. Four out of ten say they would like cooking lessons once a week.

Another touching suggestion as to how to improve their lives, made by 41% of children, is that parents should only work one day per week and play with kids the rest of the time.



What have you learnt at school which you have told your parents about at home?



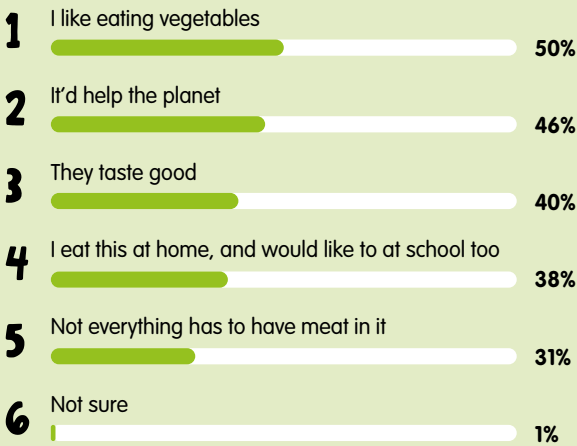
What would children like to do to protect the environment?

Children also have some strong ideas about what could be done to help protect the planet. Eight out of ten say we should all recycle more, seven out of ten suggest we should be planting more trees; while other popular ideas are linked to saving energy and water, using cars less; and protecting bees.

A concern about the future of the planet is also part of the reason why more than one in three children (37%) say they would like more food made with vegetables in their school, instead of meat. (A further 12% say this is already the case at their school.)

When we asked the children who want more foods made with vegetables at school why this is important to them, the most common reasons given are that they like those foods, because they taste really nice - and that eating more vegetables is good for the planet.

Why do you want more foods made with vegetables, instead of meat, in your school?



What do you think could help the planet?



80%

Recycle more



70%

Plant more trees



62%

Turning lights off when you leave a room

53% Use cars less



45% Use less water



26% Eat less meat



12% Ban Aeroplanes



45% Protect bees



40% Only buy what you need



13% Build less houses



2% Not sure





Section 3

LIFESTYLE

How can things change to make the world a better place?

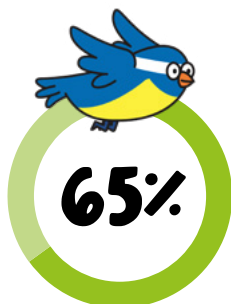


This section looks at wider views children have about the environment and at other things they believe need to change in order to make our world a better place.

How important do children think it is to protect the planet?

The natural environment is a hugely important issue for children and their parents. Almost two-thirds of children (65%) say they know what climate change is, while many parents clearly feel it is very important to participate with their children in activities that can help the environment: seven out of ten parents (70%) say they involve their child in recycling at home; while almost two-thirds (64%) say it's vital for children to learn why recycling is important.

More than nine out of ten children (95%) say they help to recycle the packaging their food comes in – and more than six out of ten (61%) say they have told an adult off for not recycling something that should have been recycled.



of children say adults don't do enough to protect the world from environmental problems like pollution

We also asked children if they think adults do enough to protect the world from environmental problems like pollution. Almost two-thirds (65%) say no – and eight out of ten also say they have seen physical signs of pollution themselves, such as rubbish in the street.

What changes would children make if they were in charge?

When we asked children what new 'rules' they would make to help protect the planet if they were in charge of the country, their concern for the natural world was obvious. Seven out of ten say they would make rules to protect all animals, 69% would plant more trees; and 51% say there should be lessons for everyone on how to protect the planet. More than one in three also wanted to see more use of bicycles, reuse of household items, more electric cars on the road – and children getting a say in government decisions around climate change.

If you were in charge of the country, which rules would you make?



70%

Protecting all animals



69%

Planting more trees



51%

Lessons on how to protect the planet

43% Everyone would get free bicycles to reduce pollution

37% Reuse household items

36% Kids get a say in governmental decisions around climate change

35% Lights get turned off everywhere at bed time to save energy

34% Make all cars electric to reduce pollution

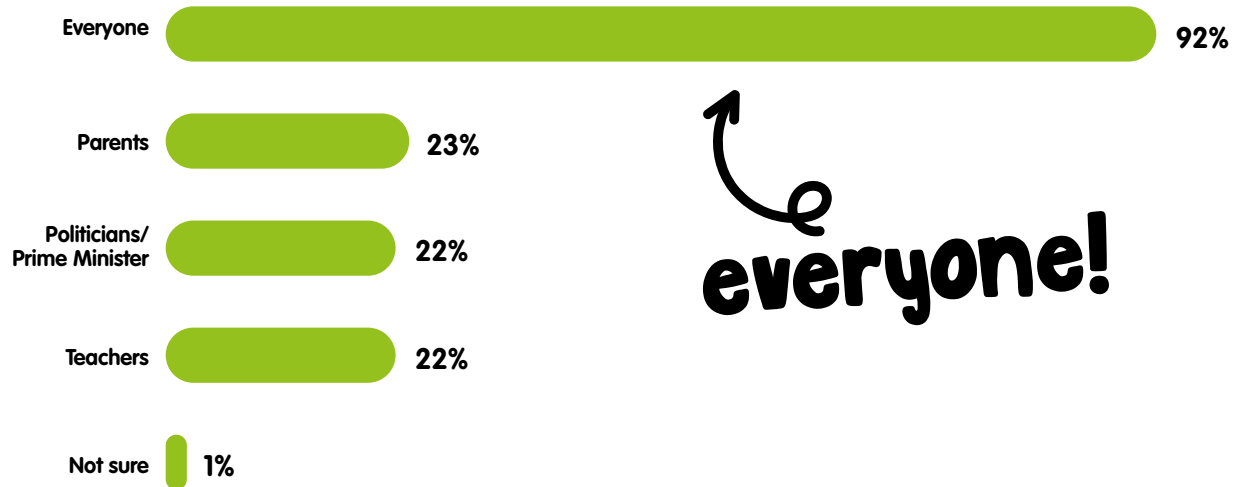
33% Throwing things that could be recycled in the bin would be illegal

12% Building less homes and roads

1% None of these/ I don't know

Who should be responsible for looking after the planet?

Finally, we asked children who should look after the planet. The vast majority say the answer is, everyone.



↻
everyone!



Conclusion

As every parent knows, children have wisdom beyond their years; and the answers that the children we have surveyed for this report should give everyone pause for thought. As well as showing us how much children care about – and enjoy learning about – protecting the planet, they show us that many children often teach their parents things they didn't know, both about how to reduce pollution and help tackle climate change, as well as about the food they eat as a family. But it may be that the most important message that comes out of these findings is that more than nine out of ten children think that everyone bears responsibility for looking after our planet.

Their words remind us of the scale of the problems that we all need to work together to solve. Although children can be mini-educators in their own families: we can all learn lessons from what the youngest members of our society are telling us about the world we live in and what we need to do to change it for the better.



Dr Elizabeth Kilbey
Consultant Clinical Child Psychologist



Methodology

This report is based on research commissioned by Green Cuisine in November 2022. OnePoll surveyed 500 children aged 6 to 12 and their parents, asking them a range of questions linked to subjects including the food they eat, their views on learning about the environment at school; and the changes they would make in relation to food, education and other aspects of daily life if they were in charge of the country.

OnePoll

About Green Cuisine

Birds Eye Green Cuisine is on a mission to make it easy for everyone to enjoy the benefits of plant-based as it is better for us and better for the planet too. That's why they've created products that are a perfect fit around busy schedules so it's easy to serve up a delicious meat-free meal that not only tastes good but does good too.

Trusted by families for decades, Birds Eye understands we all need to adapt to the world we live in and is excited to be one of the pioneers of the plant-based movement. They want to break down stigmas around plant-based food by making it tasty, affordable and easy for everyone to make simple swaps to reduce the amount of meat in their diets.



Green Cuisine is Europe's fastest growing frozen plant-based brand and is available across 14 markets. Launched in the UK as part of Birds Eye Ltd in 2019, its portfolio of tasty and nutritious plant protein and vegetarian foods aims to make plant-based eating accessible to all. From Fishless Fingers to Chicken free Dippers, Meat-free Burgers to Vegetable-packed Veggie Fingers, the range offers consumers meal choices that are versatile, easy to cook and enjoyable for all the family.

For more information, please see:
www.green-cuisine.com

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