

NAB EDUCATION INSIGHTS

PART 3: HOW COMMON IS SWITCHING SCHOOLS IN THE PRIVATE SYSTEM & WHY DOES IT OCCUR?



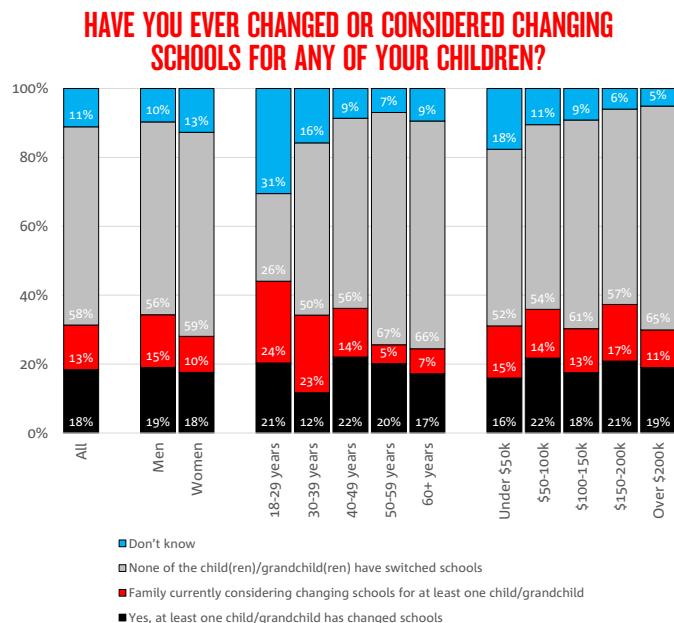
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ALMOST 1 IN 3 PRIVATE SCHOOL STUDENTS HAVE EITHER SWITCHED SCHOOLS OR ARE CONSIDERING DOING SO. MOST STAY IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

One of the bigger decisions a parent will make in regard to their children involves their education. A growing number of parents are choosing to educate their children privately. Predictions many would withdraw their children from private schools because of the financial pressures caused by COVID-19 have fallen flat, with enrolments actually increasing since the pandemic. By the time they reach secondary school, around 1 in 5 children will be educated in the private system.

In **Part 3** of this special **NAB Education Insight** series, over 1,000 parents and grandparents (who sent or are planning to send their children/grandchildren to a private school), share their views and experiences about switching schools. Almost 1 in 3 respondents had either switched or were considering changing schools for at least one of their children (8 in 10 to another private school). Switching was least common among high income households but is still quite common. Older Australians are least likely to consider switching from the private to the public system should a child change school. The top reasons for switching are: better alternatives; child's happiness & wellbeing; insufficient attention to individual student needs; and the quality of school facilities & teachers. Women are much more likely than men to switch schools because of a child's happiness/wellbeing, bullying & harassment, while men are more likely to do so due to financial issues such as fee increases.



Almost 6 in 10 (58%) of all respondents had not switched schools for any of their children. Almost 1 in 5 (18%) had, with 13% currently considering a change for at least one of their children.

Slightly more men (15%) than women (10%) were considering a switch, but slightly more women (59%) than men (56%) had a least one child that had switched schools.

Stability was highest in age groups over 50, where 2 in 3 said none of their children had changed schools. For those that did change, the number was lowest in the 30-39 group (12%) and well below the 40-49 group (22%). More people in the 18-29 and 30-39 age groups (around 1 in 4) were considering switching schools, compared to only 5% in the 50-59 group. Uncertainty was highest in the 18-29 group (31%).

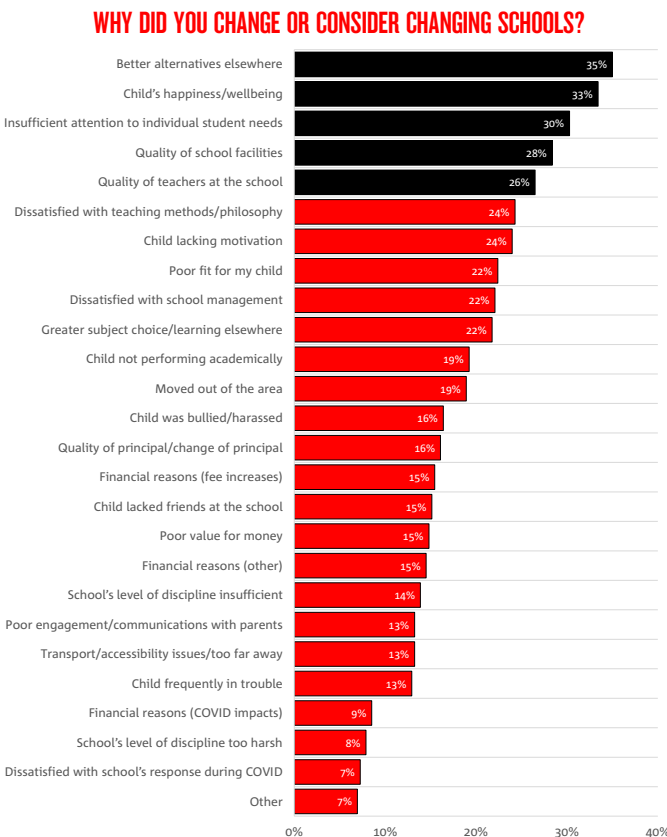
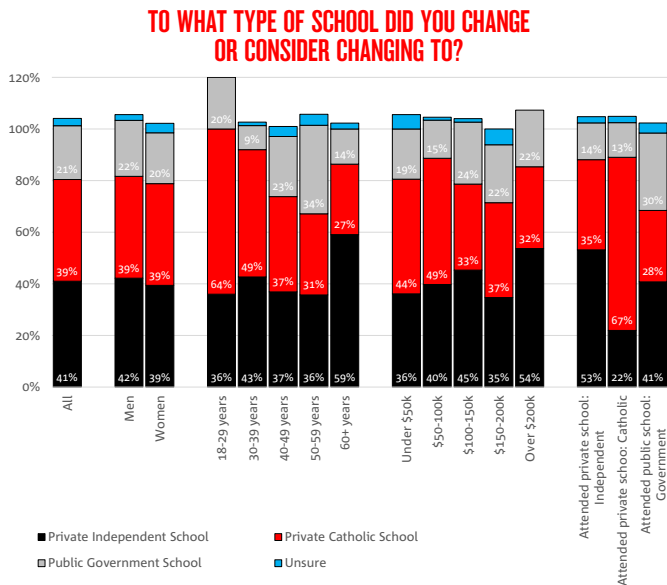
By income, change was largest in the \$50-100,000 p.a. group (22%) and lowest in the under \$50,000 p.a. group (16%). Around 2 in 3 (65%) in the highest income group had not switched schools, compared to 52% in the lowest income group, where uncertainty was also highest (18%). Respondents in the \$150-200,000 p.a. income group however were most likely to be considering a change (17%).

Most people who changed or were considering changing schools for their children switched to a private Independent (41%) or private Catholic (39%) school. Around half this number switched to a public Government school (21%).

Noticeably more Australians over 60 changed to a private Independent school (59%). Significantly more in the 18-29 group changed to a private Catholic school (49%) and in the 50-59 group to a public Government school (34%).

By income, most people who changed to a private Independent school were in the highest income group (54%), and those to a private Catholic school in the \$50-100,000 p.a. group (49%), who were also by far the least likely to have changed to a public Government school (15%).

Where people went to school seemed to influence the type of school they switched their children to. Among those who had themselves attended private Independent schools, 53% changed to a private Independent school, 35% to a private Catholic school and 14% a public Government school. Over 2 in 3 (67%) people who attended a private Catholic school and changed schools for their children sent them to a private Catholic school, just 22% to a private Independent school and 13% to a public Government school. Among those who attended a public Government school, 41% switched to a private Independent school, 30% to a public Government school and 28% to a private Catholic school.



Survey respondents who switched or considered switching schools for any of their children were also asked to select their top 5 reasons why.

Most (35%) saw better alternatives elsewhere, while 33% changed for their child's happiness and wellbeing, 30% because of insufficient attention to individual student needs, 28% because of the quality of school facilities and 26% because of the quality of teachers.

Other important drivers of change for around 1 in 4 people were dissatisfaction with teaching methods or philosophies (24%), lack of motivation on their child's part (24%), school was a poor fit for their child (22%), dissatisfaction with school management (22%) and greater subject choice or learning available elsewhere (22%).

Financial reasons arising from COVID (9%), harsh levels of school discipline (8%), dissatisfaction with the school's COVID response (7%) or other reasons such as moving or relocating (7%) were the least cited reasons.

The table below highlights the top 5 reasons by gender, age and income and where parents or grandparents themselves went to school.

WHY DID YOU CHANGE OR CONSIDER CHANGING SCHOOLS: GENDER, AGE, INCOME & SCHOOL ATTENDED

	Men	Women	18-29 years	30-39 years	40-49 years	50-59 years	60+ years	Under \$50k	\$50-100k	\$100-150k	\$150-200k	Over \$200k	Att. Private Independent	Att. Private Catholic	Att. Public Government
Better alternatives elsewhere	33%	38%	32%	36%	33%	40%	32%	33%	31%	32%	35%	49%	31%	37%	39%
Child's happiness/wellbeing	26%	43%	16%	25%	32%	39%	52%	33%	27%	33%	29%	44%	24%	26%	45%
Insuff. attention to ind. student needs	29%	32%	28%	23%	33%	30%	39%	22%	24%	27%	24%	59%	27%	26%	35%
Quality of school facilities	29%	27%	24%	31%	29%	24%	32%	25%	18%	33%	35%	32%	27%	34%	29%
Quality of teachers at the school	29%	23%	16%	23%	26%	33%	30%	17%	26%	29%	31%	22%	24%	26%	28%
Dissatisfied with teaching methods/philos.	27%	21%	28%	23%	17%	31%	30%	36%	20%	23%	24%	27%	20%	22%	27%
Child lacking motivation	26%	22%	24%	25%	25%	21%	23%	22%	28%	20%	22%	32%	25%	24%	23%
Poor fit for my child	21%	24%	12%	16%	17%	37%	30%	22%	23%	27%	10%	29%	21%	23%	25%
Dissatisfied with school management	21%	24%	16%	13%	33%	24%	11%	19%	14%	29%	24%	24%	17%	22%	29%
Greater subject choice/learning elsewhere	22%	22%	16%	12%	24%	21%	36%	25%	14%	21%	18%	34%	21%	18%	25%
Child not performing academically	22%	16%	16%	24%	16%	21%	18%	22%	25%	15%	22%	12%	18%	23%	20%
Moved out of the area	21%	17%	28%	23%	18%	13%	18%	28%	25%	11%	12%	20%	17%	20%	18%
Child was bullied/harassed	13%	21%	16%	13%	15%	26%	11%	19%	13%	20%	16%	12%	17%	17%	15%
Quality of principal/change of principal	17%	15%	8%	20%	17%	13%	16%	19%	13%	21%	20%	7%	16%	17%	18%
Financial reasons (fee increases)	21%	9%	32%	29%	12%	7%	5%	17%	18%	12%	16%	15%	22%	24%	2%
Child lacked friends at the school	15%	15%	24%	21%	14%	11%	9%	11%	28%	15%	8%	5%	16%	15%	15%
Poor value for money	14%	15%	28%	13%	19%	10%	7%	19%	15%	16%	18%	7%	17%	18%	12%
Financial reasons (other)	16%	12%	24%	9%	19%	11%	11%	14%	17%	16%	12%	12%	15%	12%	13%
School's level of discipline insufficient	16%	11%	20%	19%	16%	9%	7%	25%	14%	13%	10%	12%	19%	13%	12%
Transport/accessibility issues/too far away	12%	15%	20%	12%	13%	9%	20%	8%	19%	11%	14%	10%	13%	13%	12%
Poor engagement/comms. with parents	13%	14%	12%	15%	11%	16%	14%	14%	8%	16%	14%	12%	8%	17%	12%
Child frequently in trouble	14%	12%	8%	20%	8%	14%	14%	19%	16%	9%	18%	5%	16%	17%	8%
Financial reasons (COVID impacts)	12%	4%	20%	13%	10%	3%	0%	11%	10%	11%	8%	2%	17%	6%	1%
School's level of discipline too harsh	8%	7%	16%	9%	9%	6%	2%	3%	10%	9%	8%	5%	12%	12%	2%
Dissatisfied with school's COVID response	6%	9%	16%	11%	8%	3%	2%	8%	13%	4%	6%	5%	8%	10%	6%
Other	6%	9%	0%	1%	8%	13%	9%	6%	3%	7%	10%	7%	5%	7%	8%

By gender, key differences included a much higher number of women than men who cited their children's happiness or wellbeing (43% women; 26% men) and being bullied or harassed (21% women; 13% men), and higher number of men citing financial reasons due to fee increases (21% men; 9% women).

By age, noticeably more respondents in the 18-29 group said it was because they moved out of the area (28%) or financial reasons due to fee increases (32%). The 30-39 group were the only age group where a lack of motivation on their children's part made the top 5 (25%), the 40-49 group dissatisfaction with school management (33%) and the highest income group greater subject choice or learning available elsewhere (36%). The 50-59 group was the only group to include quality of teachers at the school (33%) and poor fit for their child (37%) in their top 5. Other findings by age included a sharply higher number in the highest income group citing their child's happiness or wellbeing (52%) than in the 18-29 group (18%) and bullying and harassment in the 50-59 age group (26%).

By income, better alternatives elsewhere and their child's happiness were listed in the top 5 in all income groups, with most (except the \$50-100,000 p.a. group) also including the quality of school facilities in their top 5. The lowest income group were the only group to cite moving (28%) and level of discipline at their school (25%) in their top 5, and the \$50-100,00 p.a. group because their child lacked friends (28%). We also noted a significantly higher number in the highest income group who singled out insufficient attention to individual child's needs (59%) and better alternatives elsewhere (49%) than in other income groups, and dissatisfaction with teaching methods or philosophies in the under \$50,000 p.a. group (36%).

The main reasons for changing schools aligned more closely according to where parents or grandparents attended school. The key differences were for those who had attended a private Independent school where a lack of motivation from their child was listed in the top 5 reasons (25%), and for those that attended a public Government school where dissatisfaction with school management (29%) made the top 5. Also apparent was the much higher number who had attended a public Government school who cited their child's happiness or wellbeing (45%), and from those that attended a private Independent school who pointed to financial reasons arising from COVID-19 (17%).

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