

# Understanding Parent Expectations and Concerns about Their Children Returning to School

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Findings from a Nationwide Survey of  
Public School Parents  
August 2021

Research conducted by:



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## National Online Parent Survey:

- Nationwide sample of **1,448 parents and guardians** with children in public school, grades K-12, including:
  - 672 elementary school parents
  - 309 middle school parents
  - 467 high school parents
  - 414 Black parents
  - 422 Hispanic parents representing a mix of acculturation levels
- Fielded July 23–August 8, 2021  
(NOTE: CDC's updated mask guidance released 7/27)
- Offered in both English and Spanish
- Data were weighted to be representative of public-school parents in the U.S.

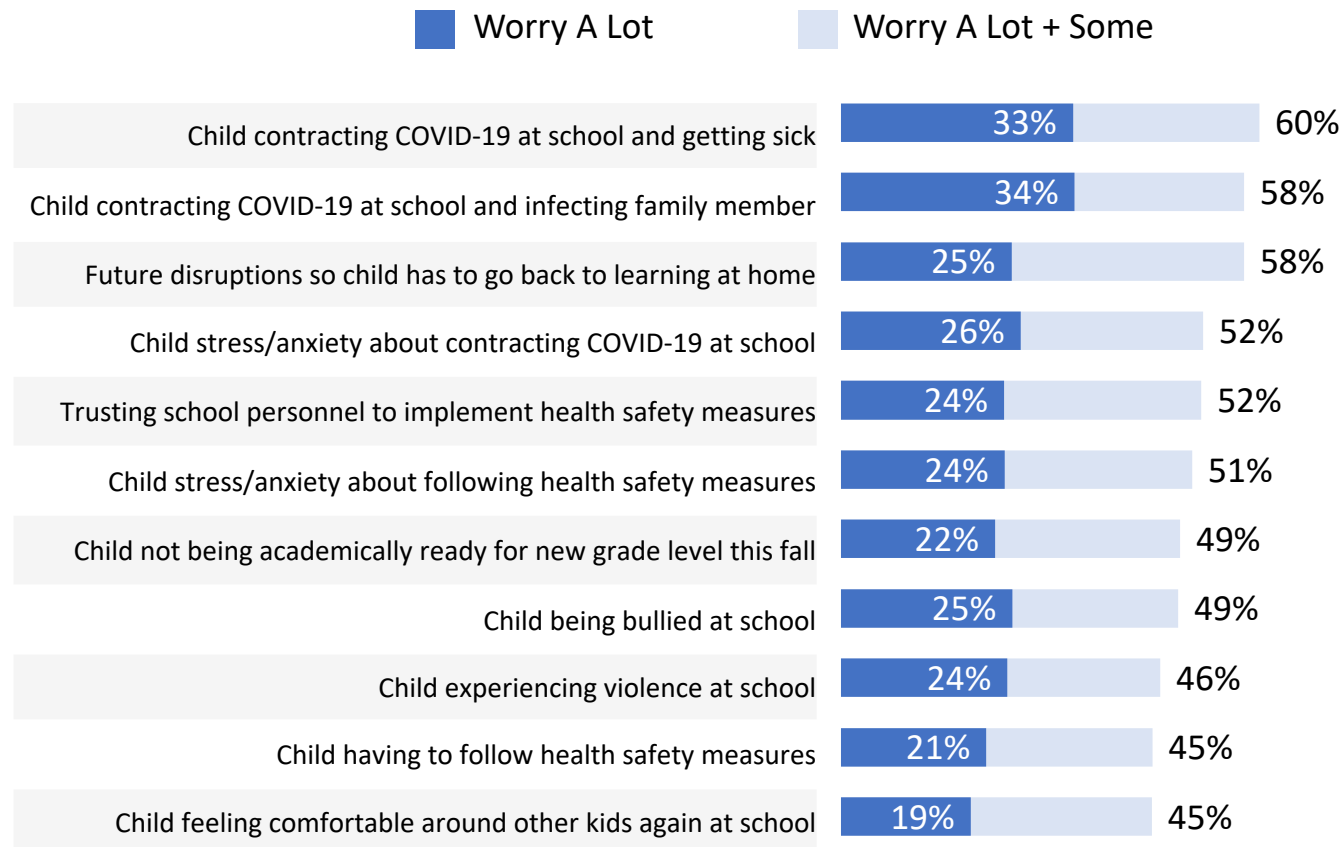


Throughout this report, **green/red** indicates statistically **higher/lower** differences between audiences.



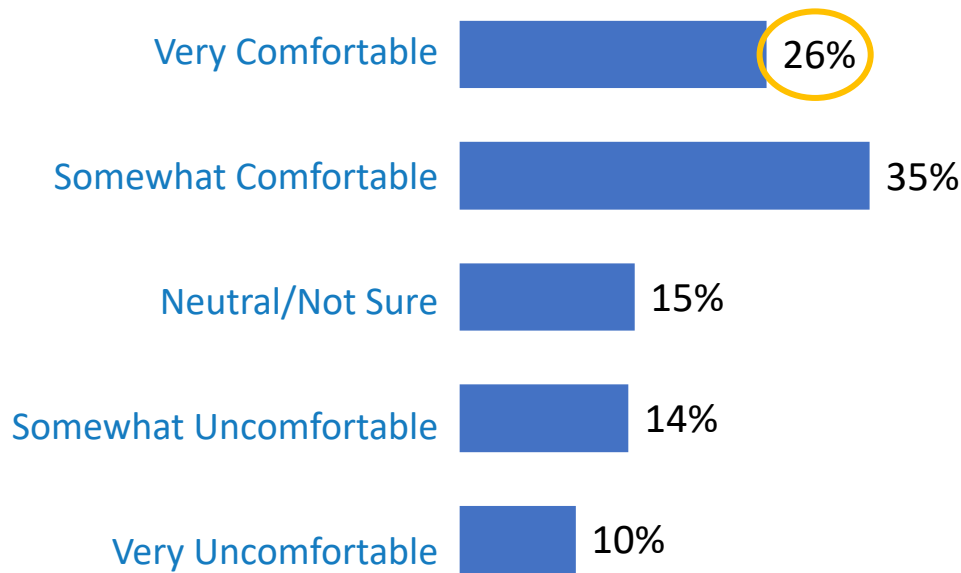
## Parents are most concerned about children contracting COVID at school and future disruptions resulting in a return to remote learning

- Concern about all measures increased after the new guidance was released by the CDC
- Significantly more Black and Hispanic parents worry about their child contracting COVID at school than white parents

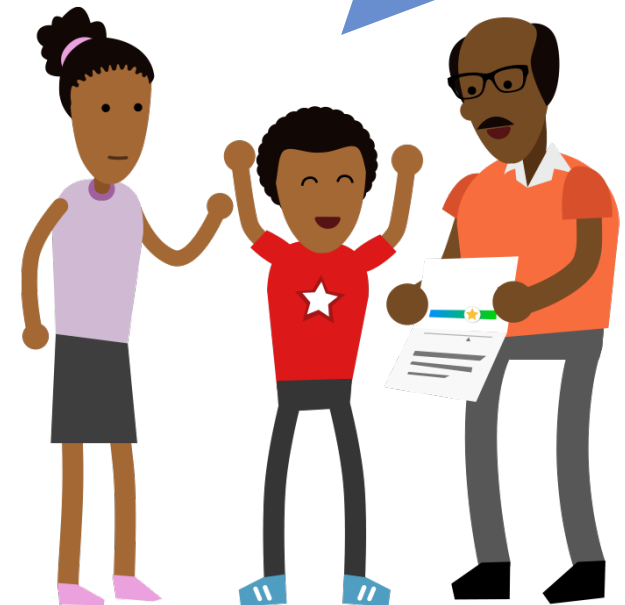


- White parents (65%) are significantly more comfortable than Black (55%) or Hispanic (53%) parents having their child return to school in-person

### How comfortable do you feel having your child return to school in-person in the fall?



"It feels like [many don't] understand the American school system. You can't have 3 feet and have everyone in the school building." - Black MD parent



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Half of parents want their children to return to school in-person this fall

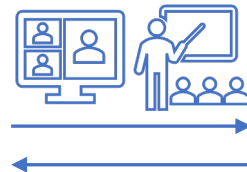
- Keep in mind, preference shifted slightly away from in-person after July 27
- White parents are more likely to prefer in-person learning than Hispanic and Black parents

## Given the choice, how would you like your child to attend school this fall?

50%  
In-Person



32%  
Hybrid



16%  
Remote/Virtual



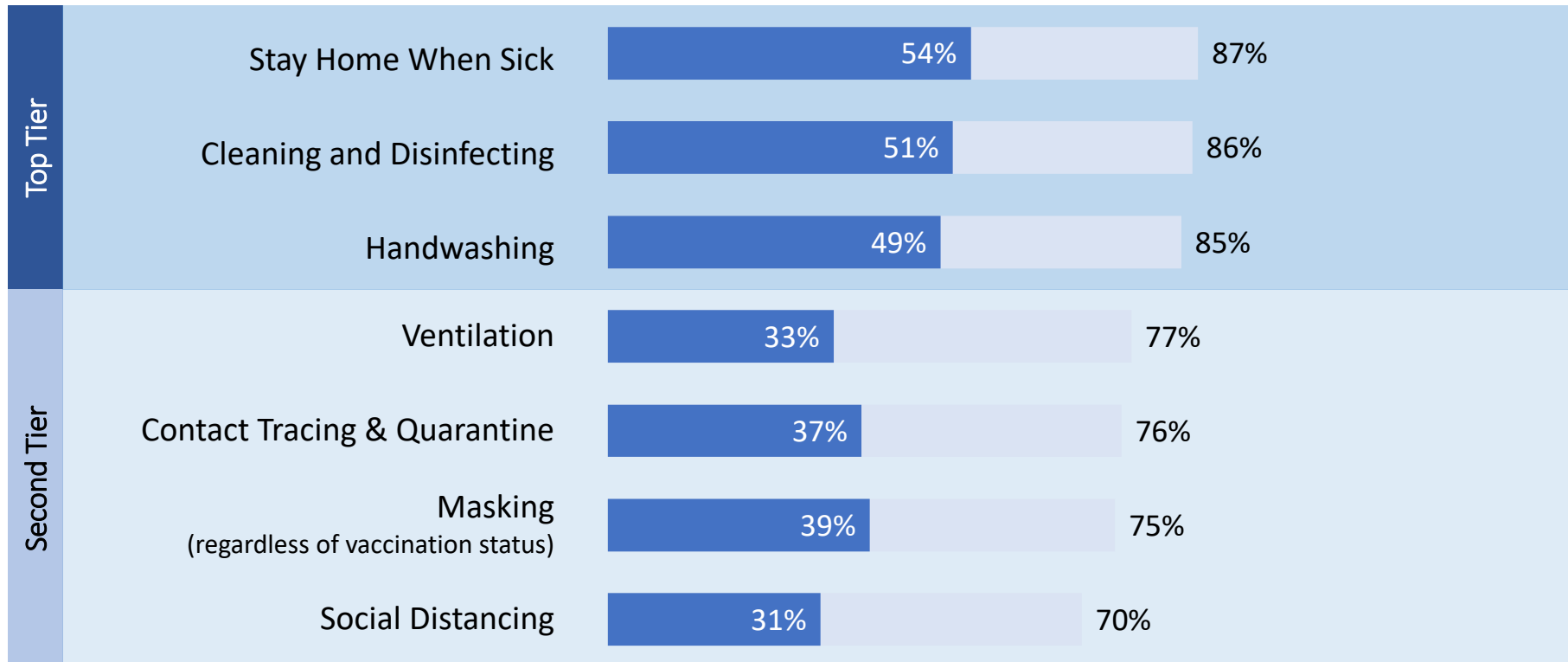
"[I'm feeling] anxious and nervous and knowing there's an unknown but seeing how happy [my daughter] is to be around other kids in a regular environment makes sending her back worth it." - White NC parent



- To keep children safe at school, parents rank highest recommendations that are not unique to COVID prevention

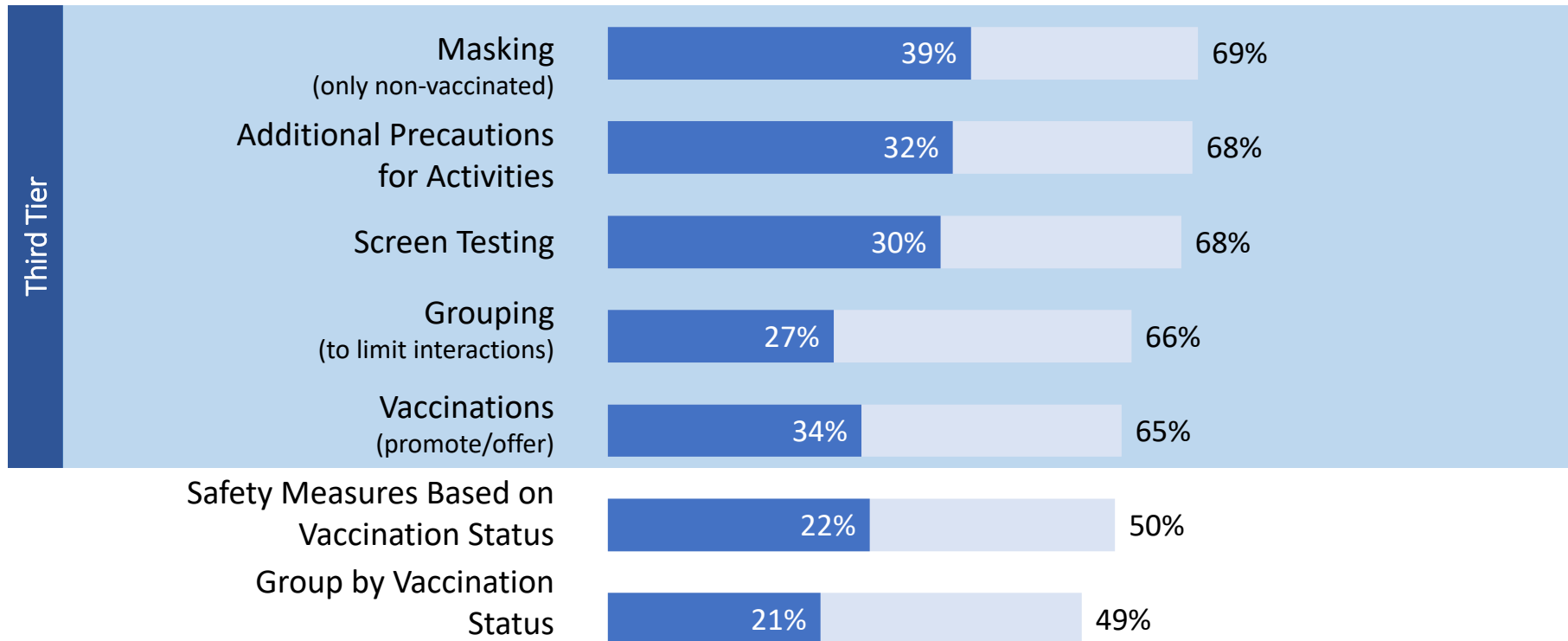
### How important is it for schools to put each recommendation in place when students return in the fall?

■ Most Important    ■ Most + Very Important

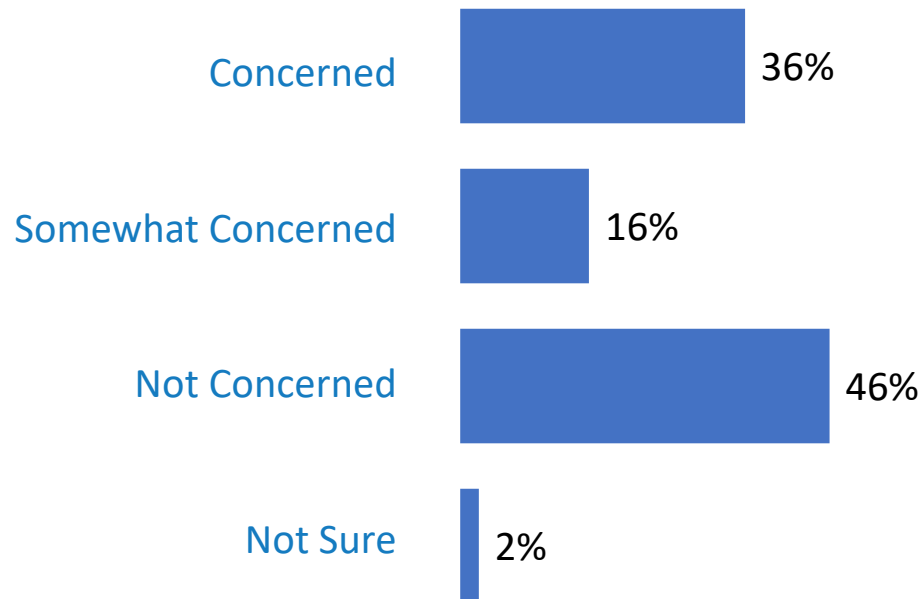


**How important is it for schools to put  
each recommendation in place when  
students return in the fall?**

■ Most Important    ■ Most + Very Important



**How concerned are you that your child will face bullying or exclusion because of their vaccination status?**



"If you ostracize unvaccinated kids in any way, that's gonna be a big thing. That's not gonna fly."  
- White TN parent







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