

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SCHOOL FUNDRAISING





THE ONSET OF COVID-19

When schools returned from the Christmas break in **January 2020**, reports were emerging of a deadly virus in China. As life in the UK carried on as normal, not many could have predicted the path of events ahead of us.

As late as **early March**, the devastating impact that the virus would have on our lives still wasn't widely understood, never mind the impact on our hospitals, workplaces and schools.

The first 2 weeks in **March** saw events spiral quickly but Government policy was still to keep schools open. However, the announcement was made on **18th March** that schools would close for the foreseeable future, to all but vulnerable children and children of key workers.

Experts immediately warned of resulting issues such as:

- Missed exams
- Food poverty
- Mental health problems

However, few were able to predict the severe impact prolonged closures would have on **school fundraising**, and the knock on effect that would have on their activities.



HOW WERE SCHOOLS COPING PRIOR TO COVID-19?

- A 2018 survey found that 43% of primary schools were reliant on fundraising income to deliver statutory teaching activities*.
- According to Parentkind's Annual Member Survey** for 2019, 35% of parents volunteered with their PTA. According to their findings,

"Parents continue to report being asked to pay for things that used to be free, such as school clubs, concerts and sports days, while stretched school budgets are seeing money-saving measures normalised in many schools"

- According to 2019 analysis by the Institute for Fiscal Studies, Heads have faced a real terms cut of 8% in per pupil funding since 2010.

*Source: ['A bridge too far?'](#), by Alison Body, Canterbury Christ Church University, and Eddy Hogg, University of Kent.

**Source: [Parentkind annual member survey for 2019](#)

***Source: [IFS 2019 annual report on education spending in England](#)



**Between 2016 and 2018, the number of schools
who said they felt pressured to increase
fundraising income rose from 66% to 94%***

2016

66%



2018

94%



THE SURVEY

Due to a lack of available information about the impact of COVID-19 on school fundraising, Gatherwell Ltd* set about conducting a survey of the schools in our **Your School Lottery** network.

Your School Lottery works with around 1300 UK schools spanning all age ranges (predominantly Primary Schools). This was the cohort of our survey. We achieved a 25% response rate. Respondents included:

- Pre-schools
- Primary Schools
- Secondary Schools/Colleges
- Special Schools
- Combinations of the above



OBJECTIVES OF THE SURVEY

The objective of the survey was to address the lack of available data on the challenges facing school fundraisers as a result of COVID-19. We set out to answer the following questions:

- How has school fundraising income been affected by COVID-19?
- To what extent have schools been able to continue fundraising during lockdown?
- Do they expect the current fundraising challenges to continue in the next academic year?
- How does the change in fundraising income impact upon their school?

“It’s undoubtedly an extremely challenging and uncertain time for UK schools.

It is crucial for any organisation that supports schools with their fundraising to understand the scale and nature of the issues they are facing as a result of COVID-19.”

BEN SPEARE,
DIRECTOR OF GATHERWELL LTD

OVERVIEW OF THE RESULTS

Summary of the responses from 336 schools. A response rate of 25%.



94%

of schools said that COVID-19 had a 'somewhat negative' or 'very negative' impact on their fundraising.

72% said that impact was 'very negative'



98%

of schools reported having to cancel fundraising events as a result of COVID-19



80%

of schools stated that (apart from their lottery) they had been unable to continue ANY form of fundraising during the COVID-19 lockdown



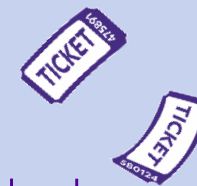
96%

of schools expect COVID-19 to continue affecting their ability to raise funds in the next academic year



80%

of schools said that their lottery had helped them to keep funds coming in during COVID-19





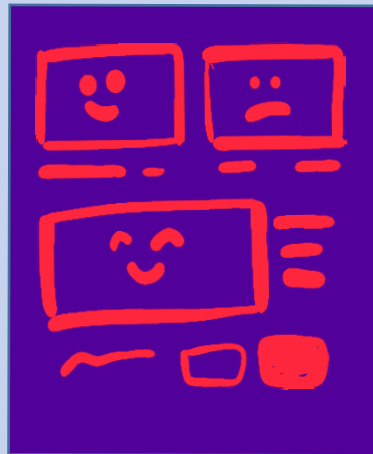
99%

99% of schools said they had raised less money as a result of the COVID-19 lockdown*



OUR FINDINGS

In Detail





METHODOLOGY



The survey was designed and conducted on [SurveyMonkey](#), utilising a modified version of a standard template for assessing the impact of COVID-19.

An invitation to complete the survey was emailed to the 1322 schools and pre-schools who are members of [Your School Lottery](#). Email reminders were sent after 3 and 6 days. The survey was also promoted via the Your School Lottery Facebook page.

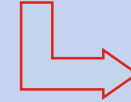
The survey was opened to responses on 6th July 2020 for 2 weeks. All responses were anonymous. No identifying data about the respondents was gathered except for the type of school they represent.

The survey comprised of 10 questions, 9 of which were multiple choice. One question asked for a written response. This was optional.

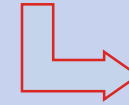
INSIGHTS



1322 SCHOOLS INVITED

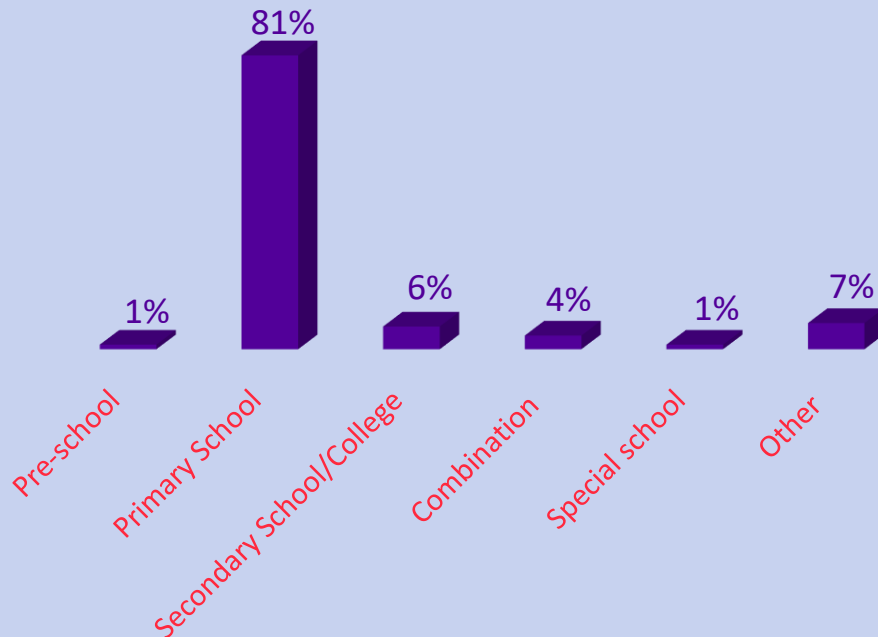


336 SCHOOLS RESPONDED



25% RESPONSE RATE

BREAKDOWN OF RESPONDING ESTABLISHMENTS:



- The survey received 336 responses over a 2 week period.
- The estimated time taken to complete the survey was 1 minute, 27 seconds. 97% of respondents completed the entire survey.
- In line with the composition of the mailing list, the responding establishments were predominantly Primary Schools (81%)
- A full breakdown of responding establishments is shown on the left

Q1

Has COVID-19 had a positive or negative impact on your school/PTA fundraising?

Answer choices...

- Very negative
- Somewhat negative
- Neither positive or negative
- Somewhat positive
- Very positive

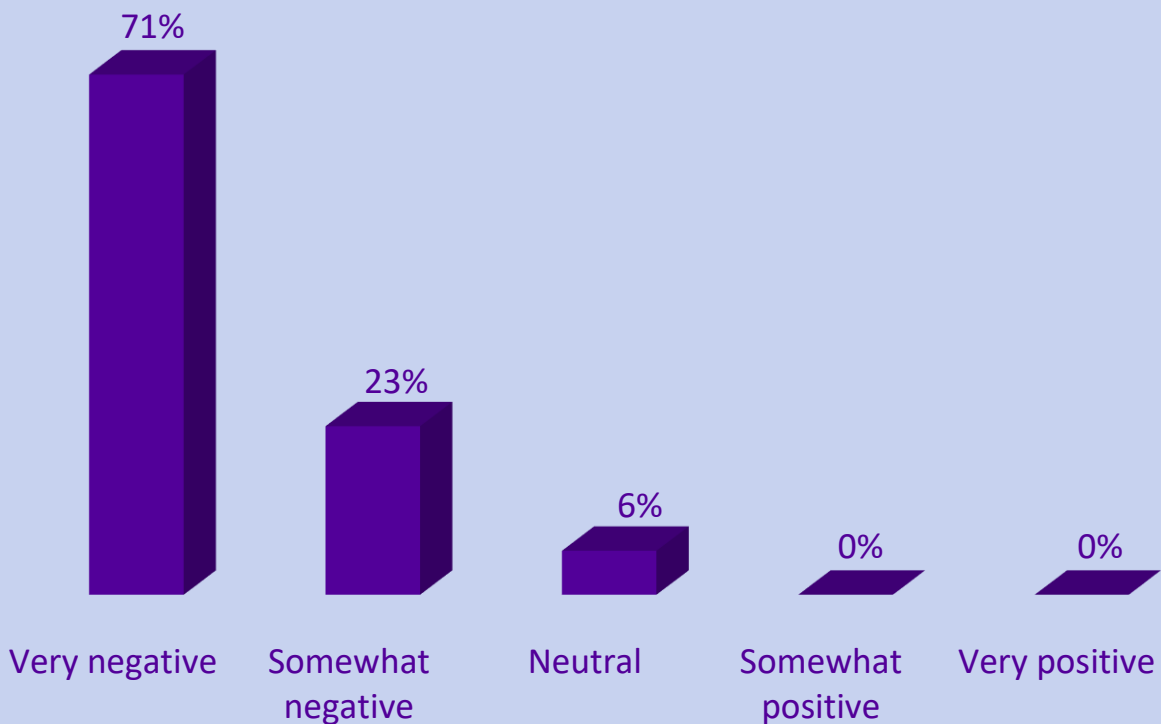


SCHOOLS SAID...

71% VERY NEGATIVE

23% SOMEWHAT NEGATIVE

"Our PTA raises around £12,000 per year. Because of coronavirus we have raised less than half of that, which will really affect what our school can buy."



Q2

Has your school been forced to cancel events as a result of COVID-19?

Answer choices...

- Yes
- No
- Unsure



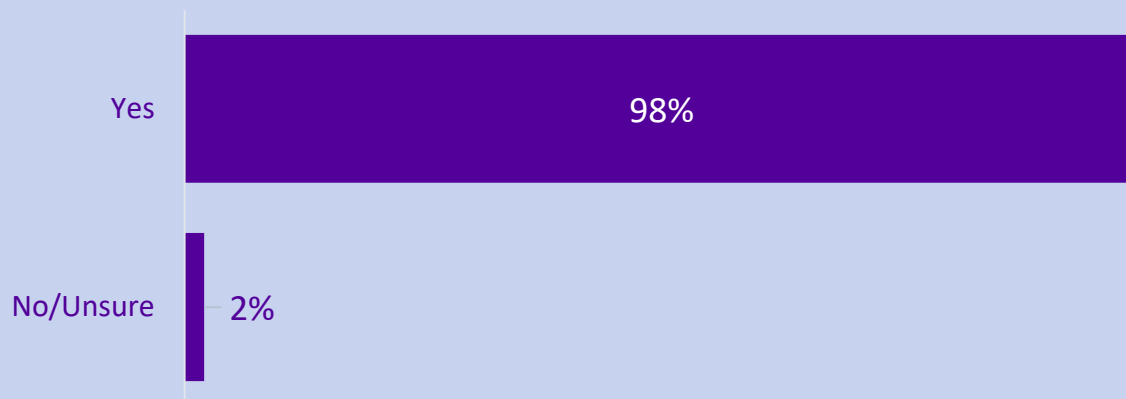
SCHOOLS SAID...

98% OF SCHOOLS HAVE BEEN FORCED TO CANCEL EVENTS

"We have missed 3 really good fundraising events that would have raised **£6-8k**"

"We normally raise around **£10K** from our summer events. This goes a long way towards funding many resources within the school."

"The summer fayre brings in over **£5k**, that was cancelled. Last year that money was used to buy iPads for the classes."



Q3

Apart from your lottery, have you been able to continue fundraising during the COVID-19 lockdown?

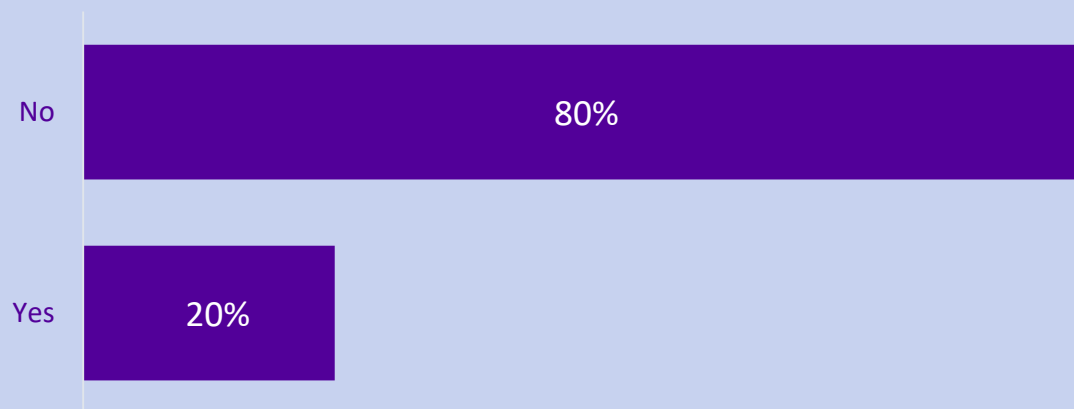
Answer choices...

- Yes
- No

SCHOOLS SAID...

80% OF THE SCHOOLS SURVEYED HAVE BEEN UNABLE TO CONTINUE FUNDRAISING

"Sadly we have missed out on a lot of fundraising this year which will stop the school being able to buy vital educational tools needed for the children."



Q4

Have you tried any new methods of fundraising as a result of COVID-19?

Answer choices...

- Yes
- No

SCHOOLS SAID...

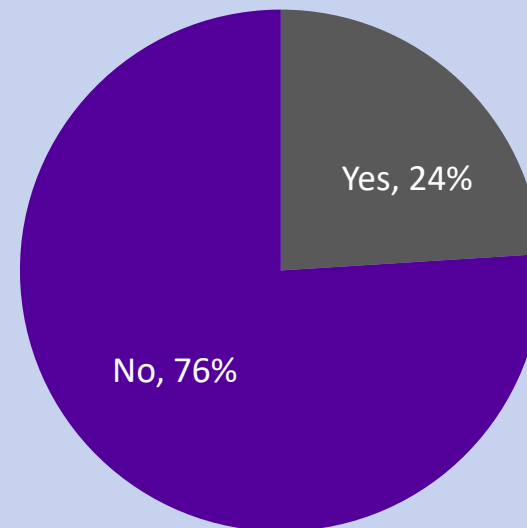
24% YES

76% NO

"We are trying to come up with ways to raise funds but this is proving difficult at this awful time."

"We have promoted the lottery and even reached out in our village monthly newsletter, as many families have left the school but still have links and would like to help."

"This is all a bit of a disaster really, but it may force some creativity too."



Q6 HOW WILL THE CHANGE IN FUNDRAISING INCOME AFFECT YOUR SCHOOL?

Our school went into administration and has permanently closed its senior department.

Very seriously as the school relies on the funding we generate.

Our fundraising was spent topping up a school struggling with budget cuts, and now it's even worse!

Less exciting, inclusive resources and experiences for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

We'll be less able to fund projects such as outdoor classrooms which are more needed than ever.

The children will go without equipment and educational resources.

School music lessons may now have to be cancelled.

Need to charge more for swimming lessons, no new equipment like planned, no subsidised trips - meaning **no** trips.

School trips will become too costly for parents, resources such as additional iPads, library books, outdoor equipment now all has to go on hold until we can raise funds.

Can't fund Christmas trips which we normally do to ensure that all children, regardless of economic background, get to feel special and festive.

As a small school of just 110 children we need every penny. We have also incurred additional expenses due to the Coronavirus lockdown (such as having to buy a shipping container to store excess furniture in the classrooms). The government have now said that they won't fund additional expenses due to the pandemic. We really are going to suffer financially this year.

We are a very small school of 48 children and every penny from PTA fundraising is vital as budgets are so tight in our county. The money we raise normally assists the school in so many ways and they really will suffer.

Q7

How do you think COVID-19 has affected the finances of your parents/community?

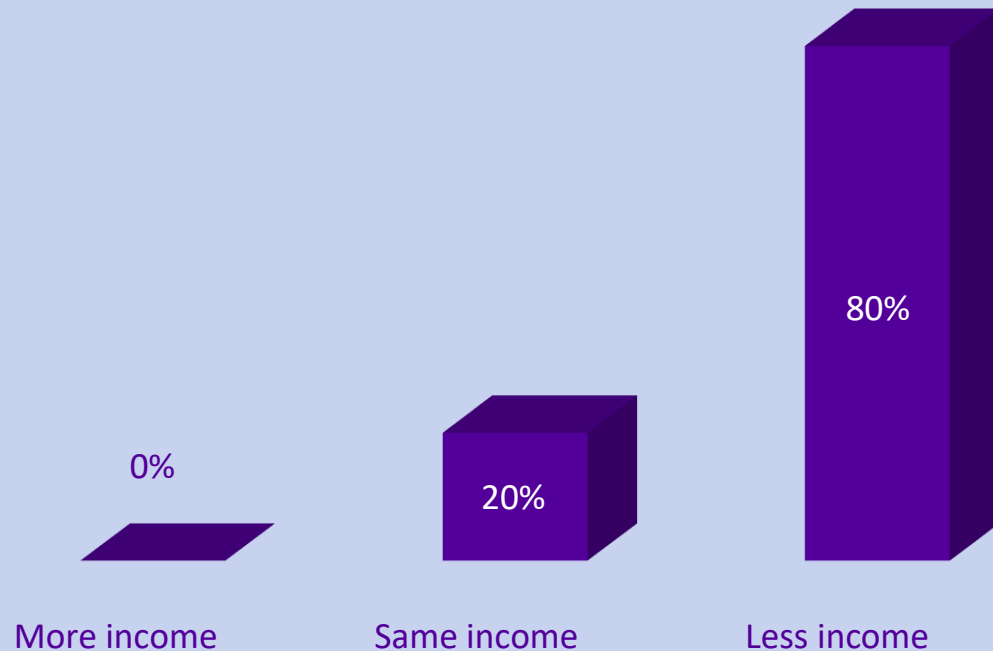
Answer choices...

- Less household income
- About the same household income
- More household income

SCHOOLS SAID...

80% SAID THEIR PARENTS/COMMUNITY HAVE **LESS HOUSEHOLD INCOME**

"We are a tiny school with 100 children. Many parents have been hit with redundancy so fundraising alongside home schooling and job hunting has been really difficult."



Q8

Do you expect COVID-19 to continue to affecting your fundraising next academic year?

Answer choices...

- Yes
- No



SCHOOLS SAID...

96% OF SCHOOLS EXPECT COVID-19 TO AFFECT THEIR FUNDRAISING NEXT YEAR

"It will put us back at least 12 months in completing projects."

"We are worried about limited fundraising next year which will have a huge impact on projects we have already started, as well as class budgets and books."

"The change will be felt more next academic year with cancellation of the Christmas Fayre looking likely. This is one of our big fundraisers."

Yes

96%

No

4%

Q9

Has Your School Lottery helped to keep funds coming in during COVID-19?

Answer choices...

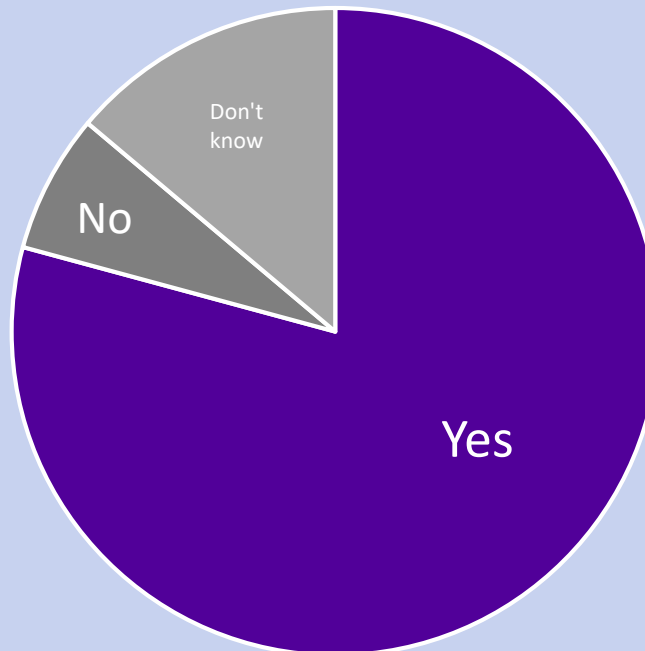
- Yes
- No
- Don't know

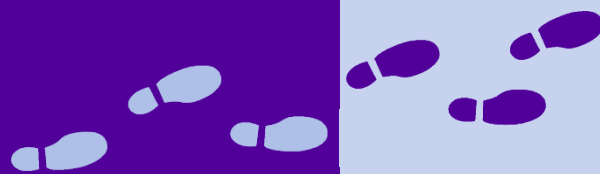
SCHOOLS SAID...

80%

OF SCHOOLS SURVEYED SAID THAT THEIR LOTTERY HAD HELPED KEEP FUNDS COMING IN

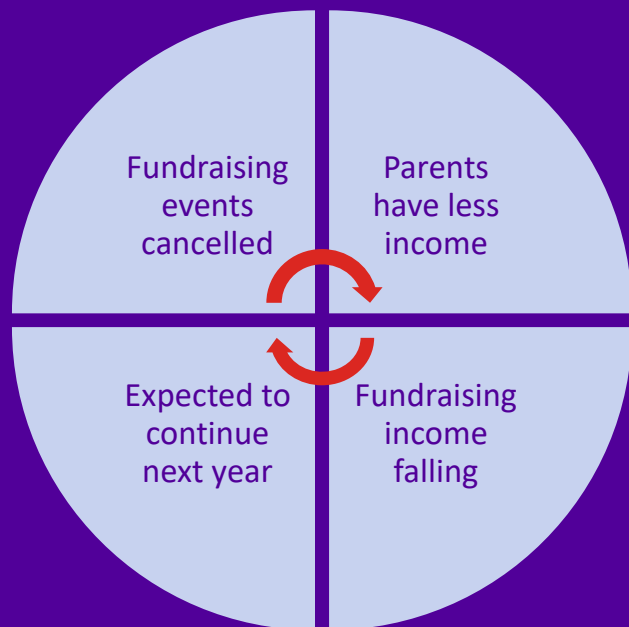
"Luckily, we set up the lottery earlier this year so at least we have had some money coming in. "





THE CONSEQUENCES

Given the survey findings (summarised below), it's reasonable to predict a very significant drop in the annual funds raised per pupil as a result of COVID-19.



"Funds are about **70 per cent down** from last year"
"We raise around £5000 a year. This year we have only raised £1800."

£59

Raised on average per pupil per year through school donations (2017/18)*

A drop of **10%** means UK schools would lose around £52m a year
A drop of **30%** means UK schools would lose around £156m a year

▼ 50% LESS = £260m LOSS

PRIMARY SCHOOLS

A 50% drop in donations to the average primary school would lead to a drop in annual income of

£8,319

SECONDARY SCHOOLS

A 50% drop in donations to the average secondary school would lead to a drop in annual income of

£28,467



REACTION

“The survey bears out the problems all PTAs have experienced through the lockdown and the knock-on impact this will have in terms of the money they have to spend.

Although this challenging situation is sure to continue for some time, PTAs are resilient and resourceful, and this comes through in the survey. I fully expect PTAs to develop strategies that adapt to this ‘new norm’ and increase their fundraising through services like **Your School Lottery.**”

RICHARD MANVILLE,
[PTA+](#)

THE FUTURE OF SCHOOL FUNDRAISING

"We're looking at new fundraising ideas where people don't have to meet."

"We're hopeful that at future events parents will be more generous in the knowledge that we have missed out on so much fundraising. Time will tell!"



With little prospect of widespread vaccinations this year, schools are already announcing their plans to combat COVID-19 for the academic year starting in September.

Although social distancing within schools is expected to be relaxed, we can still expect there to be certain limitations on 'normal' school activities, not least their ability to organise face-to-face events that generate income.

With a little thought and planning, it is possible for schools to mitigate against this drop in income by utilising alternative fundraising methods, especially virtual or online activities that exploit the power of digital and social media.

All of the schools surveyed have an online lottery with Your School Lottery. Of those who responded, 80% said that their lottery had helped them to continue fundraising despite COVID-19 (a further 12% responded 'Don't know').

Your School Lottery provides FREE fundraising lotteries for over 1300 schools, nurseries, colleges and multi-academy trusts throughout the UK.

WHAT SCHOOLS SAID ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL LOTTERY...







“The Lottery has definitely maintained an income stream for us, as we may need to manage our expectations for what we can raise while we cannot do events.”

“Although a few ticket sales dropped off through lockdown, it has been our saving grace for fundraising and it’s the first year of us signing up.”

“We anticipate we will be unable to provide any of our autumn/ winter events, so the lottery really has been a godsend!”

Easy to run, easy to join - essential in a large Secondary School when parents are not as hands on. We're giving it another push over the next few weeks

- FREE TO SET UP AND RUN!
- NO risk, NO admin – we take care of that
- Raise money online and through social media
- Year round income – even during school holidays

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