



# MOMENTS THAT MATTER

September 2025

POWERED BY

D·R·E·A·M



# MOMENTS THAT MATTER: BACK-TO-SCHOOL

## MOMENTS THAT MATTER

Moments that Matter is an event-based insight series which builds on the success of our famous insight calendar! Powered by **DREAM**, it aims to provide timely, actionable and thought-provoking insights to help generate ideas for event-specific campaigns.

### BACK 2025:

This research covers our parents' **attitudes towards the back-to-school shop, when they plan the shop and where they usually buy from**. It finishes by exploring **why newsbrands** are an ideal destination to engage parents.



# MOMENTS THAT MATTER: AGENDA



**HOW** DO PARENTS FEEL ABOUT THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOP?  
**WHERE** DO THEY PLAN TO DO THEIR SHOP?  
**WHAT** CONTENT DO THEY WANT TO SEE?



**HOW** TO CONNECT TO PARENTS ACROSS OUR PRINT, DIGITAL AND SOCIAL PORTFOLIO



**WHY** NEWSBRANDS ARE A PERFECT PLACE FOR ADVERTISING TO PARENTS



**HOW** OUR PARTNERSHIPS HAVE DELIVERED IN KEY SECTORS FOR PARENTS



**DOING MORE** WITH OUR DATA BY MAKING THE MOST OF OUR POWERFUL DMG::ID



THEMES THAT MATTER





# HOW MUCH IS SPENT ON THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOP?

THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOP IS WORTH AN ESTIMATED £1.2BN TO RETAILERS

## BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOP IN 2024

**£1.2bn**

EST. TOTAL SPEND

32% SCHOOL UNIFORM  
16% SPORTSWEAR  
16% COMPUTING  
13% BAGS  
9% STATIONARY

## PAST / FUTURE SPEND

vs. 2023

**-6%**

vs. 2022

**-5%**

## 2024 PARTICIPATION



Purchased items

## 2025 FORECAST



**MINTEL**

# ATTITUDES TOWARDS THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOP

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MORE PARENTS (51%) LOOK FORWARD TO THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOP THAN DREAD IT (12%). THE FEELING OF A 'FRESH START', 'SENSE OF PRIDE', 'SENSE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT' AND OF COURSE 'GETTING THE KIDS BACK TO SCHOOL' WERE THE MOST POPULAR SPONTANEOUS ANSWERS GIVEN. MOST OF THE DREAD WAS 'BASED ON COST' & 'NUMBER OF ITEMS' NEEDED.

■ I look forward to it a lot ■ I look forward to it a little bit ■ I feel neutral about it ■ I dread it a little bit ■ I dread it a lot

12%

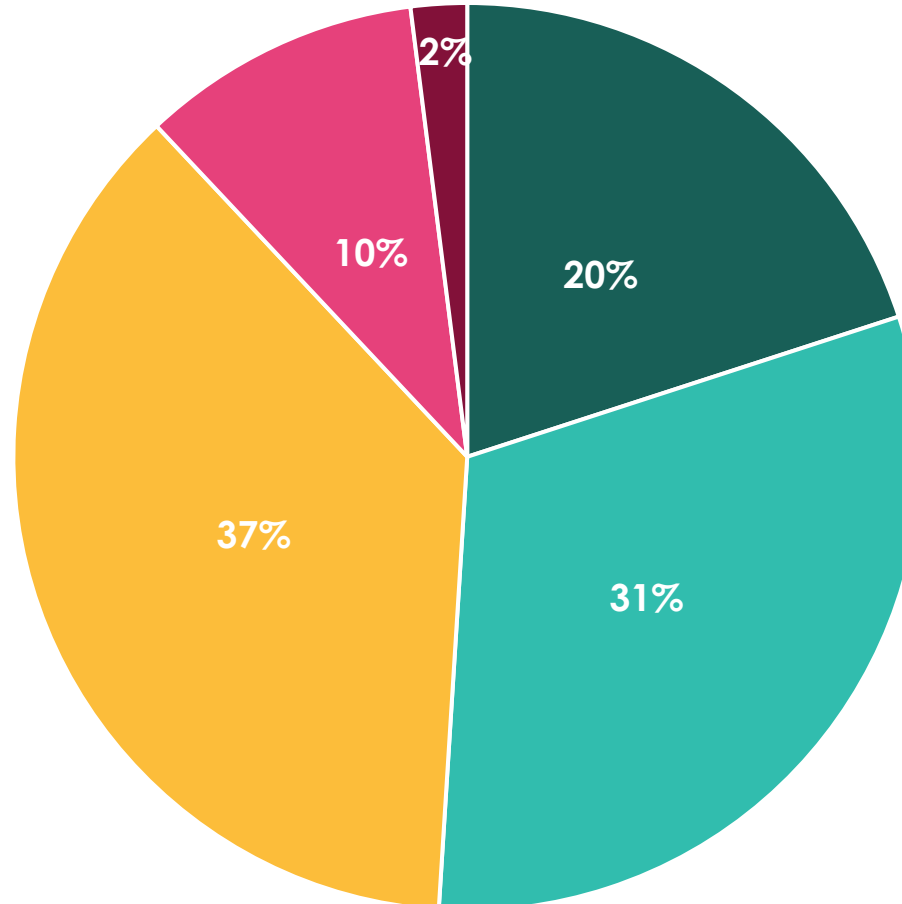
of parents don't look forward to the back-to-school shop

"The **prices** seem to be higher than ever."

"It's a **stressful time for my child** and I **worry about him** starting a new school setting."

"**What to buy** and the **costs of items.**"

"**Can never find shoes that the children want** and it's the end of the summer."



51%

of parents look forward to the back-to-school shop

"Because it feels like a **fresh start** getting new supplies clothes or gear helps **set the tone** for the year ahead. It's a mix of excitement and preparation that makes everything feel more real and motivating."

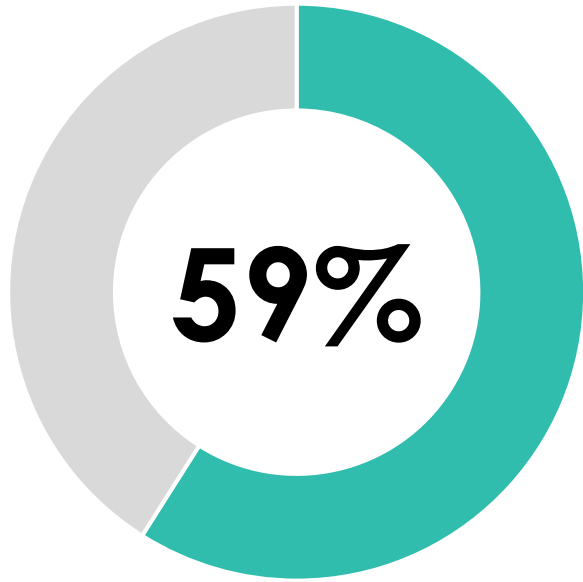
"I like the idea of fresh new things before the start of a new school year **plus it means the kids are going back to school!**"

"My child likes to get new stuff for back to school and **I enjoy shopping with them.**"

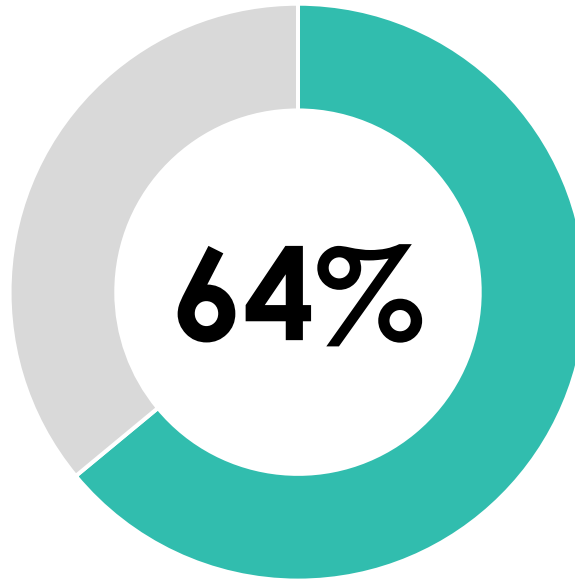
"It's a **fun day** with my girls."

# POSITIVE ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOP

3 IN 5 SAY THEY ENJOY THE **RITUAL** OF BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOPPING AND A FURTHER 2 IN 3 AGREE IT MOTIVATES THEIR CHILD / ME FOR THE YEAR AHEAD. INTERESTINGLY, 3 IN 5 SAY IT'S MAKES THEM FEEL NOSTALGIC WHEN SHOPPING FOR ITEMS FOR CHILDREN

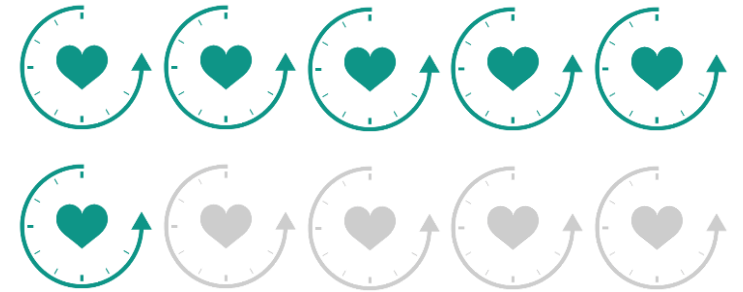


**I enjoy the ritual of  
back-to-school  
shopping**



**New school supplies  
motivates my child /  
me for the year ahead**

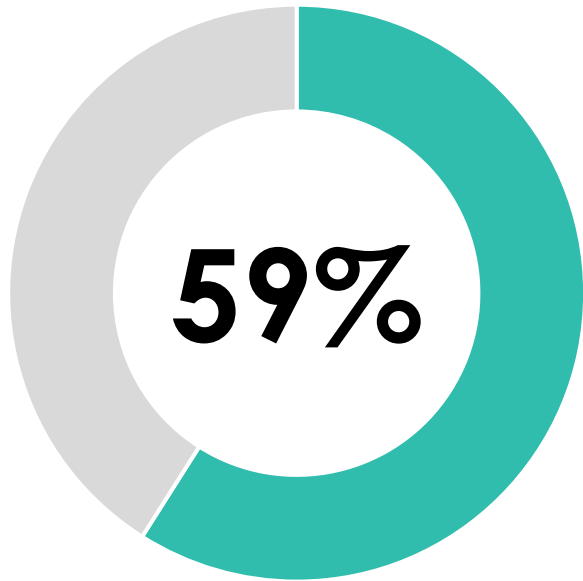
## LOOKING BACK...



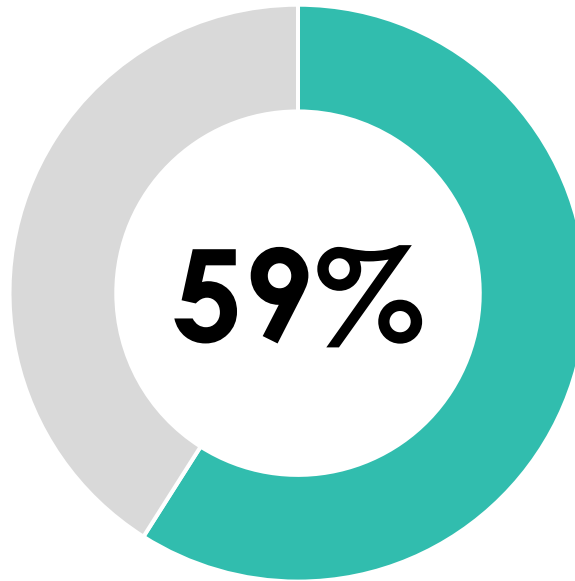
**61% agree that they "feel  
nostalgic when shopping for  
items for my child(ren)"**

# NEGATIVE ASSOCIATIONS WITH THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOP

3 IN 5 SAY THEY MENTAL LOAD OF REMEMBERING EVERYTHING CAN BE EXHAUSTING AND 2 IN 5 SAY THEY OFTEN LEAVE SOME OF THE SHOPPING TO THE LAST MINUTE. 59% SAY THE SHOP PUTS A STRAIN ON THEIR BUDGET.

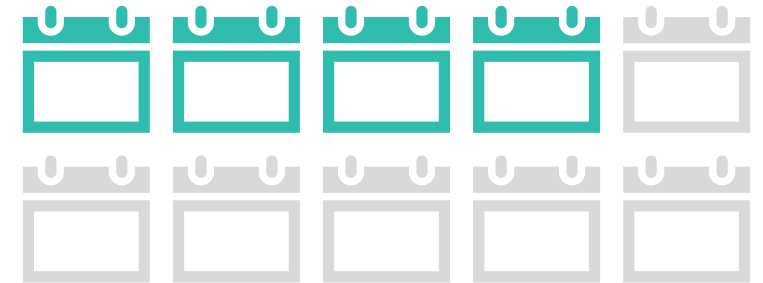


**Back-to-school shopping puts a strain on my budget**



**The mental load of remembering everything is exhausting**

## LAST MINUTE...

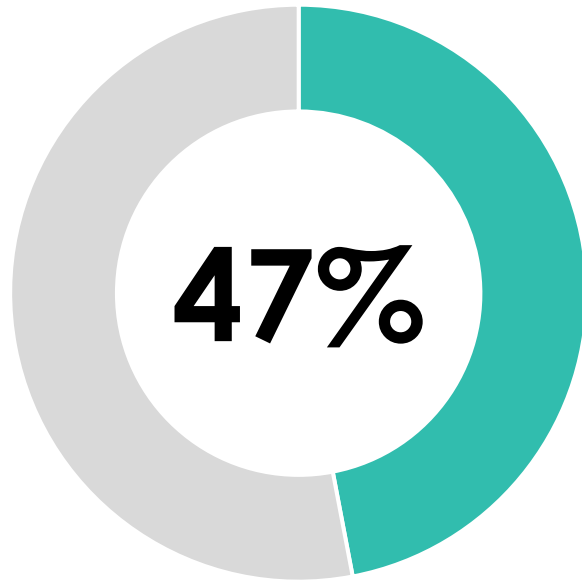


**42% agree that they "Often leave back-to-school shopping until the last minute"**

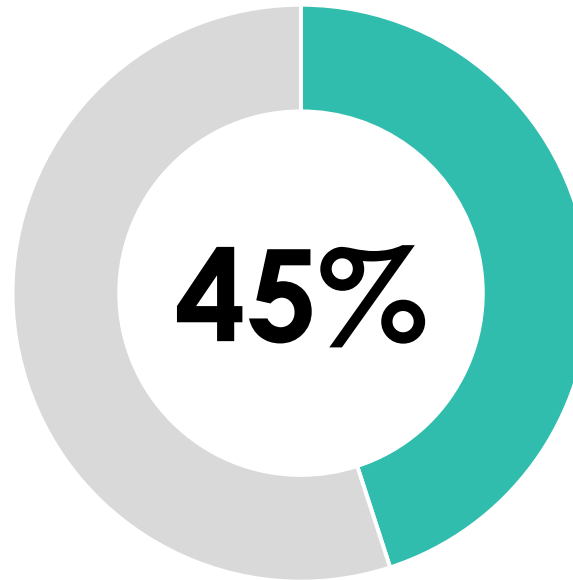


# ATTITUDES TOWARDS SECOND-HAND / UPCYCLING

1 IN 2 ARE OPEN TO BUYING SECOND-HAND PRODUCTS TO KEEP COSTS DOWN AND 44% HAVE UPCYCLED ITEMS.



**I am open to second-hand items to keep the costs down**



**I have upcycled old school items in order to save money**

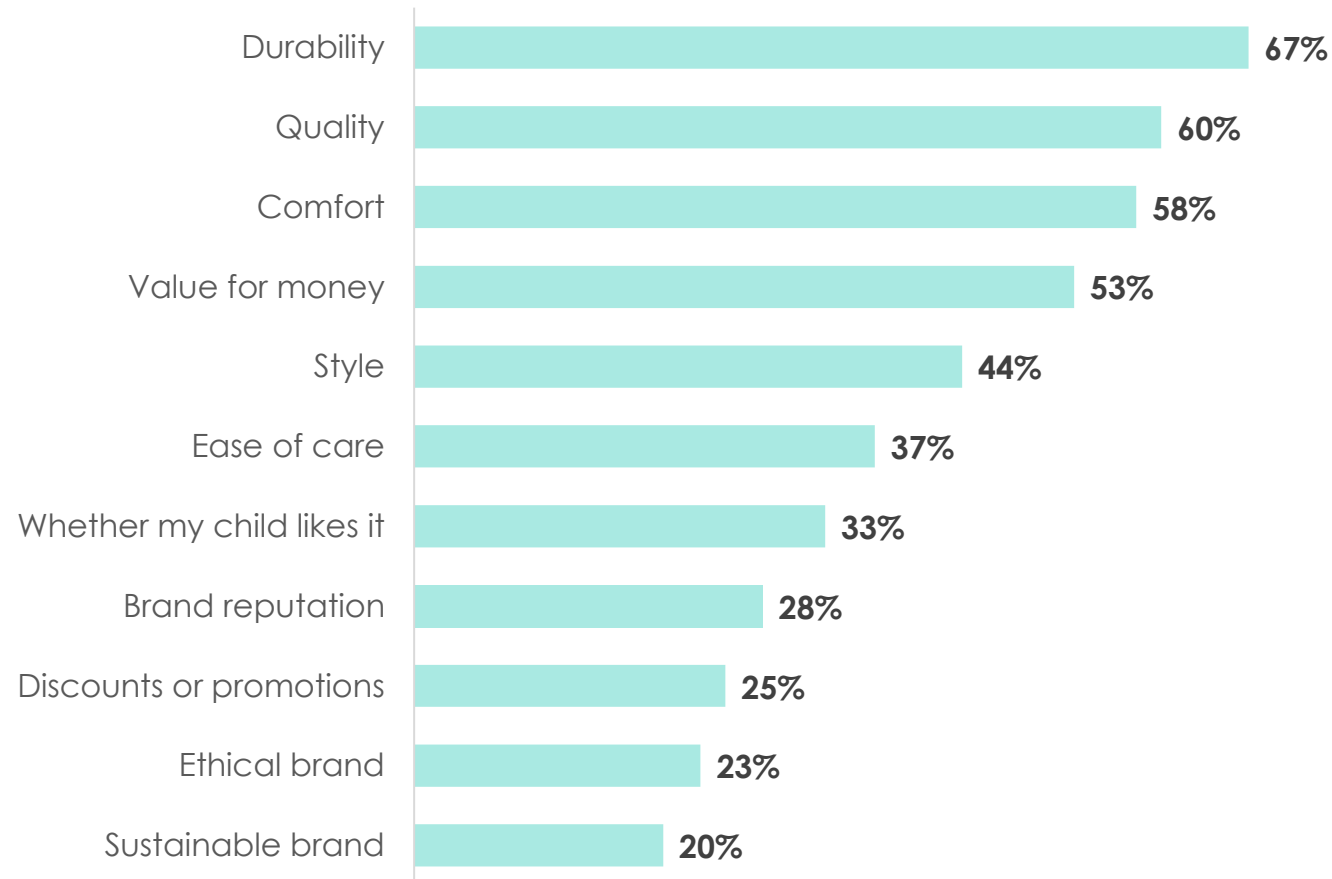


**More retailers are running second-hand initiatives like M&S's 'Shwop boxes' and have dedicated second-hand shops on platforms such as EBay**

# FACTORS MOST IMPORTANT WHEN PURCHASING BACK-TO-SCHOOL ITEMS

DURABILITY (67%), QUALITY (60%) AND COMFORT (58%) ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT FACTORS WHEN CHOOSING BACK-TO-SCHOOL ITEMS FOLLOWED BY VALUE FOR MONEY (53%) AND STYLE (44%).

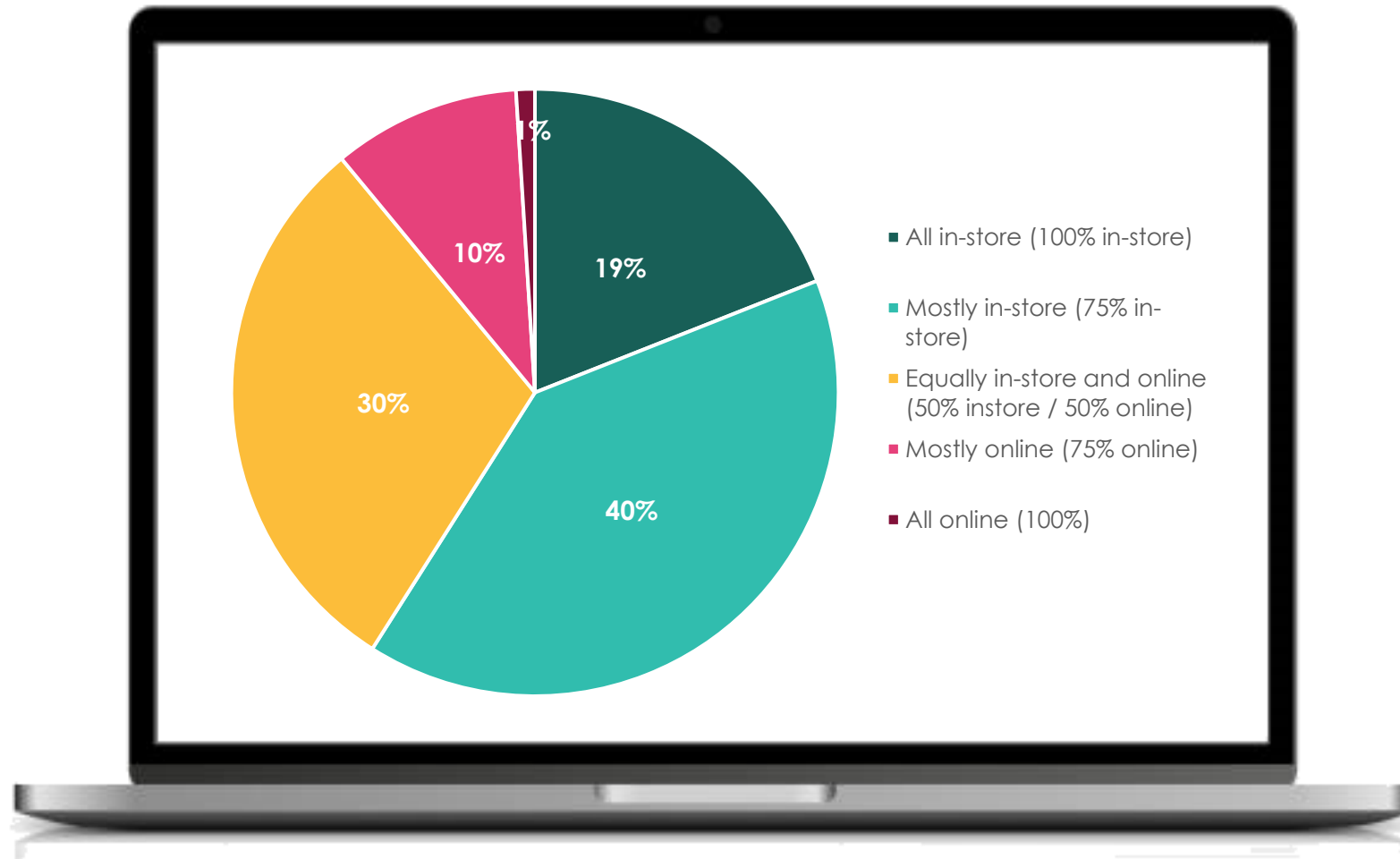
Factors most important when purchasing clothing / footwear / accessories / bags



# HOW AND WHERE THEY DO THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOP

# HOW DO THEY DO THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOP

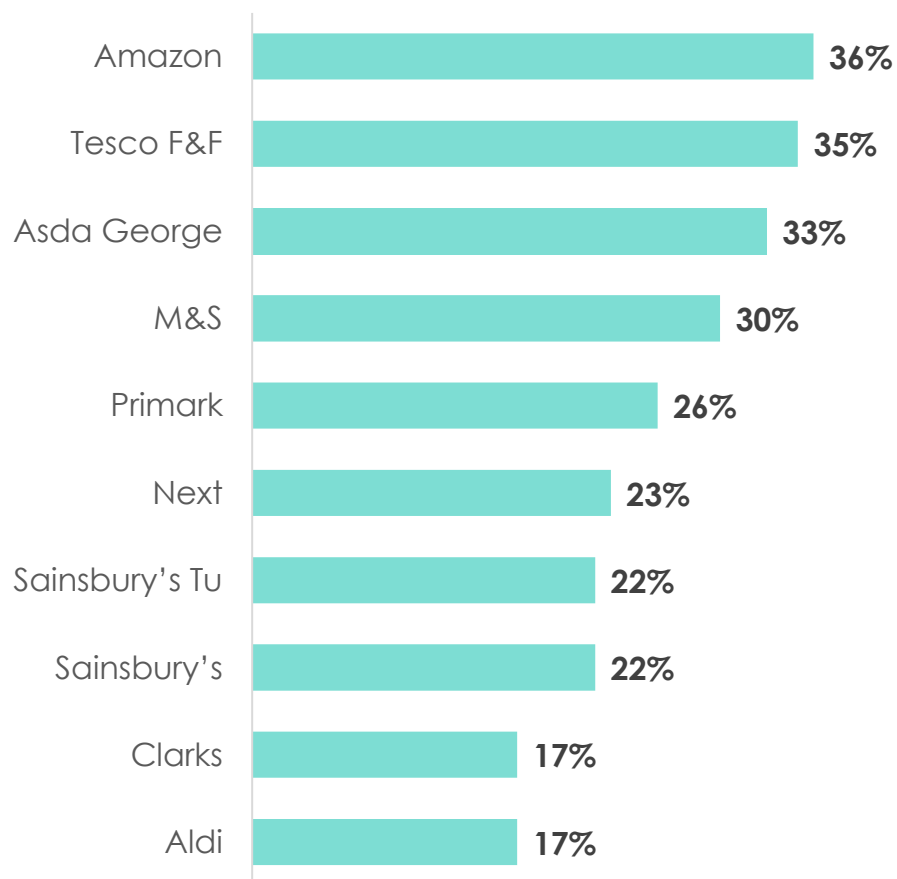
59% DO ALL OR MOST OF THE SHOPPING IN-STORE COMPARED TO 11% WHO DO ALL OR MOST ONLINE,  
90% DO PART OF THE SHOP IN-STORE WHEREAS 82% TO PART OF THE SHOP ONLINE



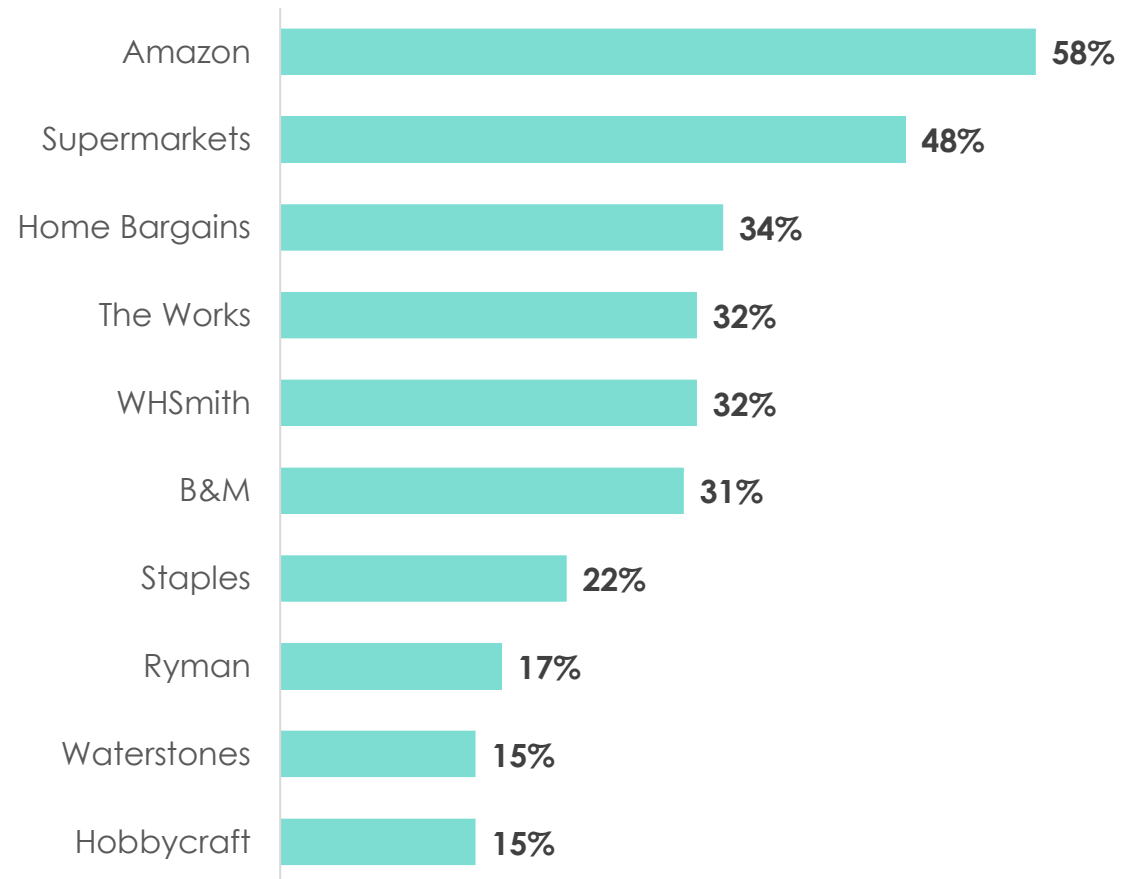
# TOP RETAILERS FOR THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOP

AMAZON TOPS THE CHARTS FOR BOTH CLOTHING/ACCESSORIES AND STATIONARY SHOPS, TESCO (35%) AND ASDA (33%) ARE SECOND AND THIRD RESPECTIVELY FOR CLOTHING/ACCESSORIES.

Top Retailers For clothing / footwear / accessories / bags

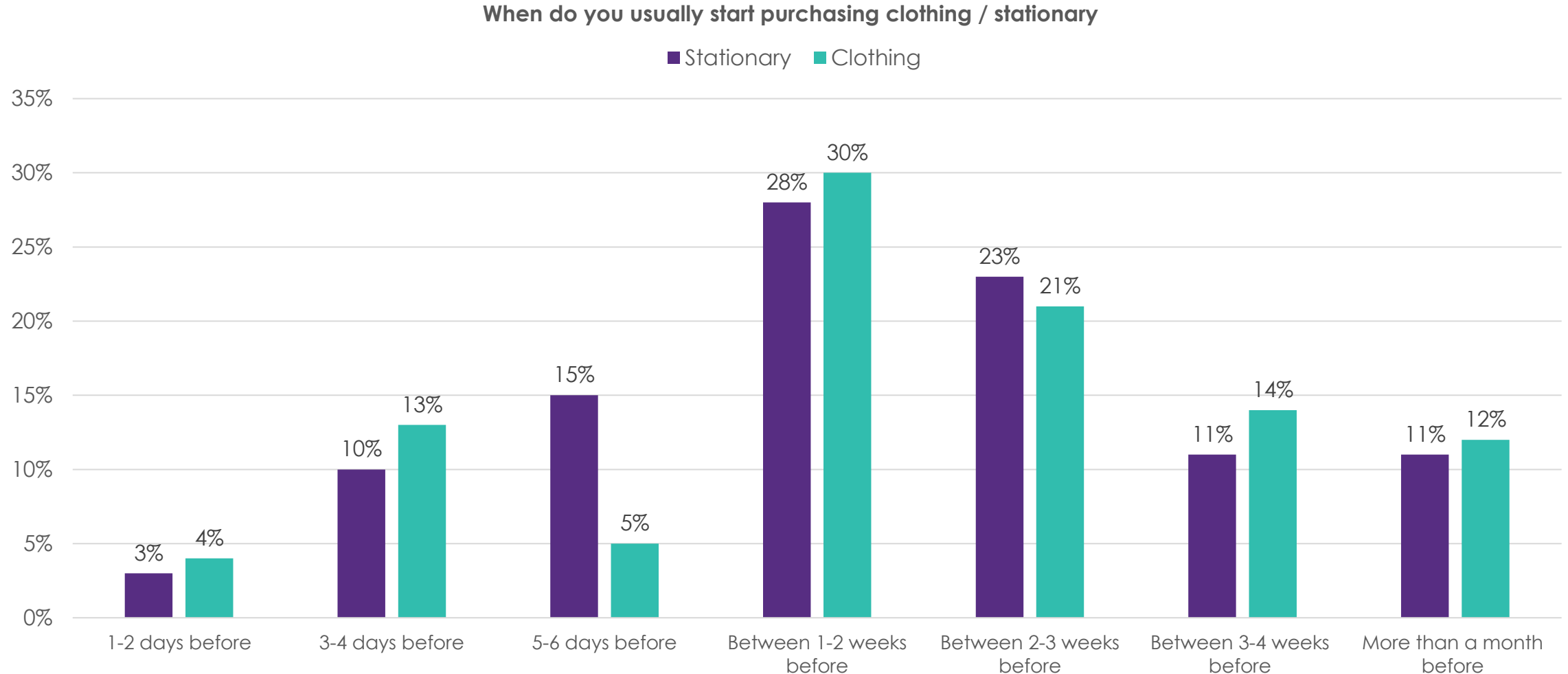


Top Retailers For school stationary / textbooks / study essentials from?



# WHEN DO OUR PARENTS NORMALLY START THE BACK-TO-SCHOOL SHOP?

THE AVERAGE PARENT STARTS THEIR CLOTHING SHOP 15 DAYS BEFORE THE KIDS RETURN AND THEIR STATIONARY SHOP 14 DAYS BEFORE. NEARLY 1 IN 2 (47%) START THEIR CLOTHING SHOP MORE THAN TWO WEEKS BEFORE AND 1 IN 4 MORE THAN THREE WEEKS BEFORE TERM.



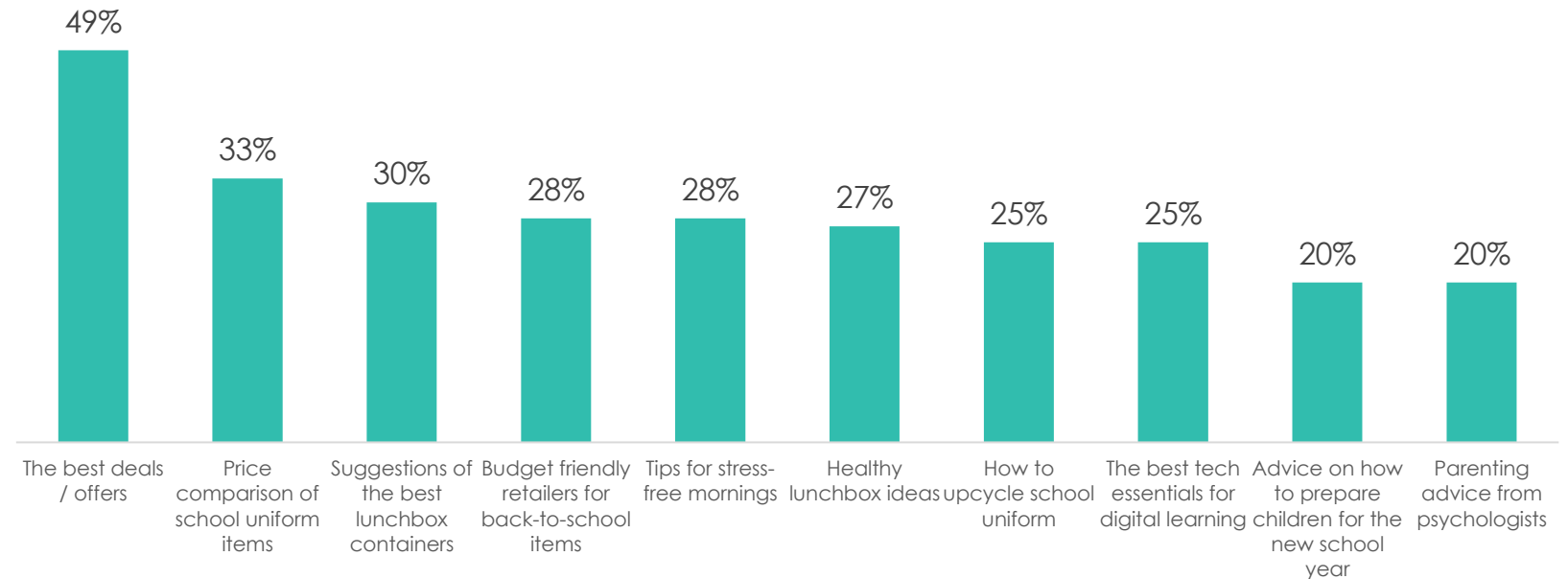
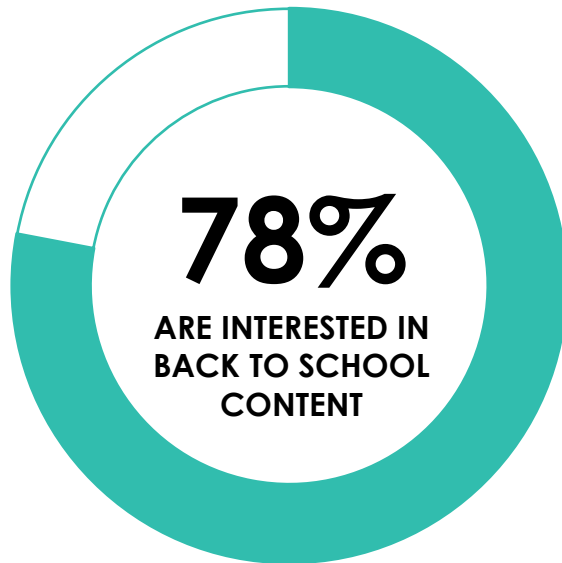


# BACK-TO-SCHOOL CONTENT

# WHAT BACK-TO-SCHOOL CONTENT ARE OUR FAMILIES INTERESTED IN?

PRICE-BASED CONTENT IS THE MOST IN-DEMAND FORM OF CONTENT THAT SHOWS 'THE BEST DEALS AND OFFERS' (49%) AND 'PRICE COMPARISONS ON SCHOOL UNIFORM ITEMS' (33%). OTHER POPULAR CONTENT IS AROUND LUNCHBOXES (33%) AND HOW TO UPCYCLE SCHOOL UNIFORMS (25%).

## Back to School – Topics of Interest



# THEMES THAT MATTER

# BACK-TO-SCHOOL: THEMES THAT MATTER

## PLAYING ON PARENT NOSTALGIA



THE STAT

**3 in 5** parents agree that they often feel nostalgic when shopping for items for their child(ren).

THE TRUTH

The back-to-school shop can be an emotional time for parents. With the pride of seeing their children grow up mixing with the nostalgia for their own childhood, which for many were simpler, happier times.

IMPLICATIONS

Many parents in 2025 went to school in the 90's and early 00's, both of which are on trend right now. Could brands mix the modern (through children's eyes) with the past (through their parents)? Nostalgic products and music will be key.

## THAT 'FINISHED FEELING'



**59%** parents enjoy the ritual of back-to-school shop, with **2 in 3** saying it sets the tone for the year ahead.

Let's face it, there is something extremely comforting about rituals. Many parents enjoy the ritual of the back-to-school shop but enjoy it even more when they are on top of it.

Brands can try to capture that 'finished feeling', helping parents feel on top of that back-to-school shop and hopefully freeing up space for some 'me-time'.

## THINGS THAT ARE BETTER THE SECOND TIME



**1 in 2** parents said that are open second-hand items to keep the costs down

Some things are better the second time around. With many lower income households struggling at the moment, many are either turning to / considering second-hand school clothing and upcycling.

Continue to reduce the stigma around second-hand and highlight cost-effective and fashionable ways that second-hand items can be upcycled and take on a new personality from what went before.

# BACK-TO-SCHOOL AT MAIL METRO MEDIA



# HOW TO REACH BACK-TO-SCHOOL AUDIENCES

MAIL METRO MEDIA REACHES 10M PARENTS AND 15M SUMMER HOLIDAY MAKERS

## MASS REACH OF PARENTS

**66%**  
(10.2M)

**OF ALL GB ADULTS REACHED  
BY MAIL METRO MEDIA**

## CROSS-PLATFORM OPPORTUNITIES

**METRO**

#1 NEWSPAPER FOR  
REACHING PARENTS  
EVERY MONTH  
(i105)

**Mail**Online

REACHING NEARLY HALF  
OF ALL BRITISH PARENTS  
EVERY MONTH  
(7.4M)

**TikTok**

OUR TIKTOK USERS ARE  
**+31% MORE LIKELY** TO  
HAVE CHILDREN IN THE  
HOUSEHOLD

## PURCHASING POWER

**15 MILLION**

Mail Metro Media readers have  
bought clothes/accessories for  
children in the last 12 months

**THAT'S 75%**

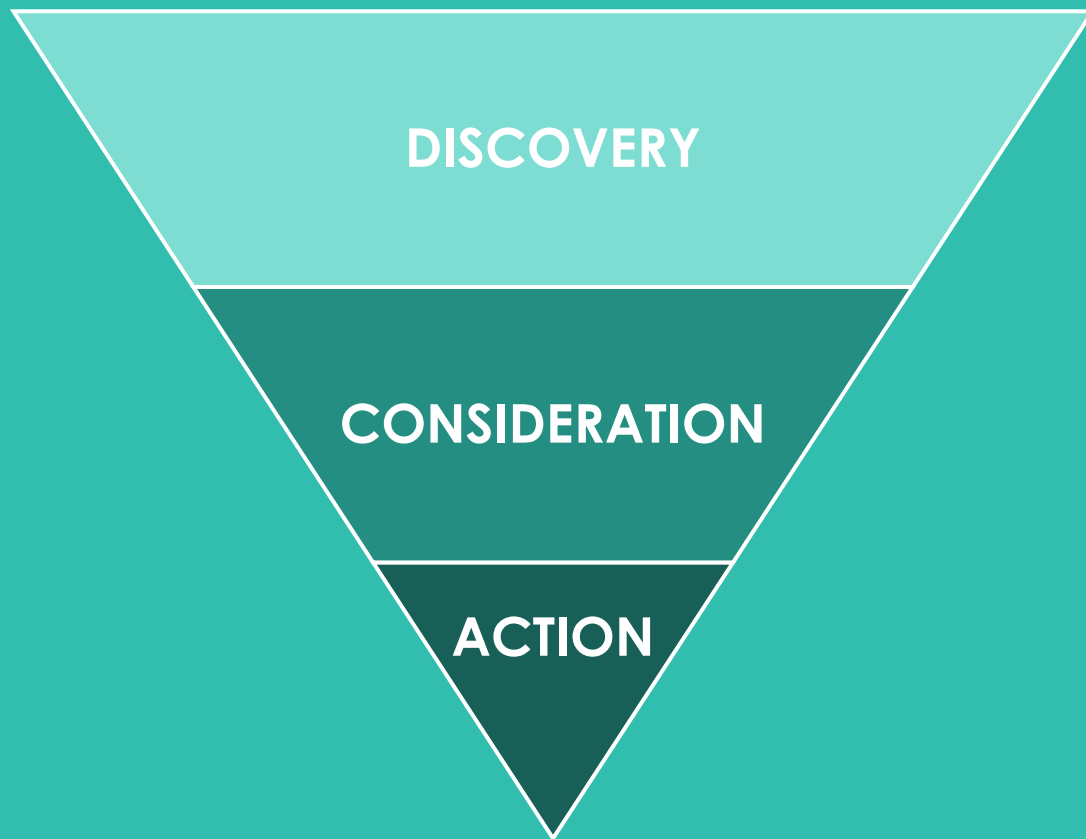
of all Brits that have bought  
clothes/accessories for children





# NEWSBRANDS MATTER IN THE PARENTING PURCHASE JOURNEY

NEWSBRANDS HELP DRIVE DISCOVERY, UNDERSTANDING AND ACTION FOR PARENTS



NEWSBRANDS ARE A GOOD PLACE FOR BRANDS TO CATCH PARENTS' ATTENTION

57%

NEWSBRANDS ARE A GOOD PLACE TO FIND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHILD-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS / SERVICES

63%

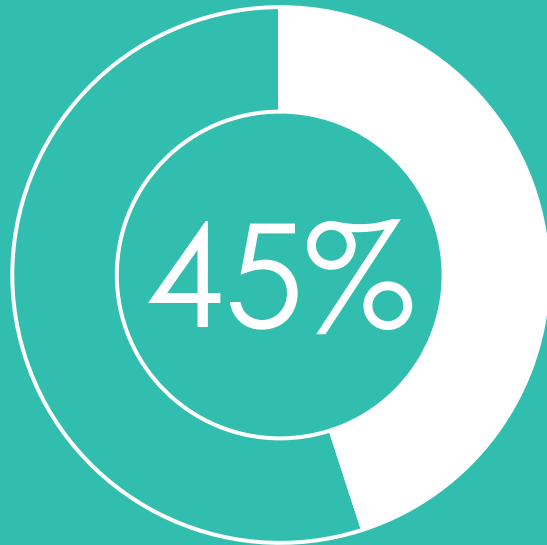
NEWSBRANDS HELPS ME DISCOVER SPECIAL OFFERS FOR CHILD-FRIENDLY PRODUCTS / SERVICES

64%



# OUR PARTNERSHIPS DELIVER RESULTS FOR CLIENTS

IN OUR THE FASHION AND SUPERMARKET CATEGORIES OUR PARTNERSHIPS DELIVER CUT-THROUGH, CONSIDERATION AND ACTION



AVERAGE PARTNERSHIP RECALL

**FASHION:** 45%

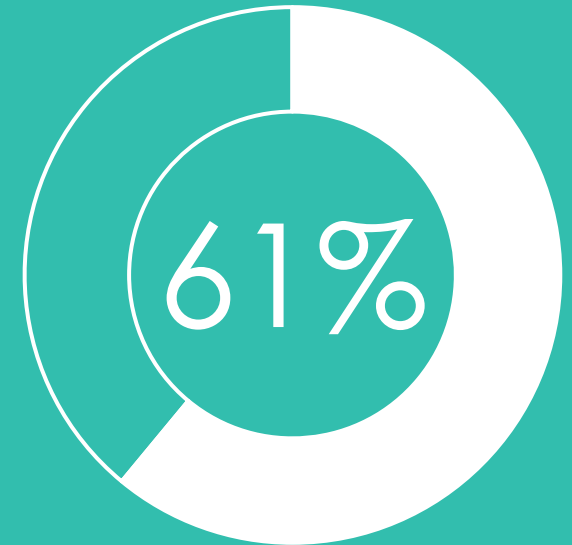
**SUPERMARKETS:** 45%



AVERAGE CONSIDERATION UPLIFT

**FASHION:** +75%

**SUPERMARKETS:** +54%



AVERAGE ACTION SCORE

**FASHION:** 77%

**SUPERMARKETS:** 58%



# ENGAGEMENT WITH OUR BACK-TO-SCHOOL CONTENT

THERE WERE 2 MILLION ARTICLE VIEWS ON OUR FATHER’S DAY CONTENT LAST YEAR, WITH THE TOP THEMES BEING ROYALS, TRIBUTES AND CELEBRITY DADS.

## Articles & Views



Back-to-School Articles



Article Views on Back-to-School

## Back-to-School Related Articles on MailOnline

Top Articles: Back-to-School Content	
1	Score big savings with Aldi's back to school special-buy's deals: Low prices on stationery lunch boxes and more
2	As Britain's summer holidays come to an end, can you guess who these legendary breakfast TV presenters are from their old back to school photos
3	The mum's ditching back to school drudgery to jet off on spa breaks - leaving their husbands to cope with the new term chaos alone
4	Kim Kardashian is praised by fans for sharing adorable down to earth snaps with all four of her kids as they head back to school
5	Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck reunite again for kids' back to school night in LA amid divorce - days after that tense lunch
6	Jessica Simpson shares rare snaps with all three children for the new school year 'I'm so very proud of y'all'
7	Parents hail mother's 'life changing' school uniform hack saying she 'saved them a lot of money'
8	'I asked my seven year old daughter to label her own school uniform' - The results weren't what I expected
9	Head back to school in style with up to £50 off Adidas sneakers tracksuits and more for the whole family during their huge sale
10	Parents switch to second-hand school uniforms as kitting child out for new year costs £422

## Top Digital Themes

BACK-TO-SCHOOL DEALS AND OFFERS

CELEBRITY FAMILY DYNAMICS & CELEBRATIONS OF NEW SCHOOL YEAR

TIPS ON SAVING MONEY

# BACK TO SCHOOL DATA STRATEGY

Targeting parents with children of school age requiring school uniform.



PARENTS	BARGAIN HUNTERS	POSTCODE AFFINITY	CHILD-CENTRIC	SUPERMARKET SHOPPERS	OUTCOMES
<p>Mail Metro Media reaches <b>72%</b> of parents with children aged 4-16.</p> <p>Parents with children aged 4-16 are <b>2x</b> more likely to be aged 35-54.</p>	<p>Parents with children of school age are <b>+41%</b> more likely to think it is important to look well dressed and are <b>+26%</b> more likely to seek fashion advice online.</p> <p>Adults who purchase childrenswear choose clothing based on price (<b>75%</b>), quality (<b>69%</b>), and range of sizes (<b>50%</b>).</p>	<p>Using geo targeting tools, we can target readers in postcodes that over-index for certain attributes e.g. parents to children of school age.</p> <p>We can also <b>target [INSERT BRAND]</b> stores selling school uniform.</p>	<p>Search traffic for school uniform peaks between June and September.</p> <p>When fashion ads are served alongside parenting content, CTRs can increase by <b>2.7x</b>!</p>	<p>The average parents spend on school uniform (including shoes) is <b>£130.36</b>. <b>4 in 5</b> parents are seeking weather-adaptive school uniform (e.g. removable linings or hoods).</p> <p><b>3 in 5</b> adults who purchase childrenswear have done so from a supermarket.</p>	<p>High value users who have engaged with <b>[INSERT BRAND]</b> editorial/commercial content, recent engagement with direct/programmatic <b>[INSERT BRAND]</b> advertising.</p>

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