

# Common Sense Media | SurveyMonkey Poll: How Teens Are Coping and Connecting in the Time of the Coronavirus

## Key Findings

1. **Teens are worried about how the coronavirus will affect their families.** Sixty-one percent are worried they or someone in their family will be exposed to the virus, and 63% are worried about the effect it will have on their family's ability to make a living or earn money. Hispanic/Latino teenagers are especially worried about the financial effects: Nearly nine in 10 Hispanic/Latino teens say they're worried about the impact on their family's ability to make a living.
2. **The coronavirus pandemic is making many teens feel lonely.** About four in 10 teens (42%) feel "more lonely than usual" right now—nearly the same number as those who say they feel "about as lonely as usual" (43%). Just 15% say they feel "less lonely than usual." Girls are more likely than boys to say they feel more lonely than usual (49% vs. 36%).
3. **Texting and social media are providing social outlets for teens.** Sixty-five percent of teens report talking to friends or family via texting or social media more often than they usually do. More than a third (37%) have reached out to a friend or family member they haven't talked to in a while.
4. **But texting and social media with friends may not be enough.** About half of teens (48%) say they feel less connected than usual with their friends right now.
5. **The outbreak is bringing many families together.** Forty percent of teens say they feel more connected than usual with their families.
6. **Teens are connecting to others through a variety of means—even phone calls!** A majority (59%) of teens say they're connecting with family or friends who are outside their home at least once a day. The top ways to stay connected to people they can no longer see in person are texting (83%), phone calls (72%), social media (66%), and video chats (66%).

7. **The spread of the coronavirus has upended school for teens, with 95% of 13- to 17-year-olds in the U.S. reporting the cancellation of in-person classes at their schools.** Slightly more than half of teens who no longer attend school in person say they are worried about not being able to keep up with their schoolwork (56%) and their extracurricular activities (55%) while in-person school activities are canceled. Black and Hispanic/Latino teens are significantly more likely than White teens to be worried about keeping up with schoolwork. Girls are more likely than boys to say they're worried about keeping up with both schoolwork and extracurriculars.
8. **Many teens aren't connecting with their teachers.** Almost one in four teens (24%) say they're connecting with their teachers less than once a week. Forty-one percent haven't attended an online or virtual class since in-person school was cancelled.
9. **Finding space to do schoolwork is a challenge for many teens.** More than a quarter of teens (28%) say they lack a dedicated space where they can do schoolwork at home.
10. **Compared to pre-pandemic times, teens are looking to news organizations for information.** Almost half (47%) of teens say their knowledge of the coronavirus pandemic is primarily informed by news organizations, while 37% say they primarily get information from friends, family, or teachers, and just 11% say they learn the most from personalities or influencers online. By comparison, a June 2019 Common Sense Media/SurveyMonkey poll found that 33% of teens said their knowledge of current events was primarily informed by friends, family, or teachers, 31% by news organizations, and 31% by personalities or influencers online.

## Summary

The spread of the coronavirus has upended life for American teenagers, with 95% of 13- to 17-year-olds in the U.S. reporting the cancellation of in-person classes at their schools. Eight in 10 teens (80%) say they're following news about the coronavirus pandemic closely, and concern is high: Sixty-one percent are worried they or someone in their family will be exposed to the virus, and 63% are worried about the effect it will have on their family's ability to make a living or earn money.

Teenagers of color are more likely to say they're worried that they or someone in their family will be exposed to the virus and about the potential economic effect on their family. Hispanic/Latino teenagers are especially worried about the financial effects: Nearly nine in 10 Hispanic/Latino teens say they're worried about the impact on their family's ability to make a living.

How worried are you ...						
		Total	White	Black	Hispanic /Latino	Other
... that you or someone in your family will be exposed to the coronavirus?	Worried	61%	56%	71%	66%	63%
	Not worried	39%	44%	29%	33%	37%
... about the effect the coronavirus may have on your family's ability to make a living or earn money?	Worried	63%	53%	74%	87%	50%
	Not worried	36%	47%	26%	13%	50%

Just under half (47%) of teens say their knowledge of the coronavirus pandemic is primarily informed by news organizations, while 37% say they primarily get information from friends, family, or teachers, and just 11% say they learn the most from personalities or influencers online. That's quite a contrast from our June 2019 Common Sense Media/SurveyMonkey poll, in which 33% of teens said their knowledge of current events is primarily informed by friends, family, or teachers, 31% by news organizations, and 31% by personalities or influencers online.

### ***Trying to stay connected while apart***

More than half (54%) of teens say they are "very much" practicing social distancing, 40% say they are doing so "somewhat," and only 6% say "not at all." About four in 10 teens (42%) feel "more lonely than usual" right now—nearly the same number as those who say they feel "about as lonely as usual" (43%). Just 15% say they feel "less lonely than usual."

Girls are more likely than boys to say they feel more lonely than usual (49% vs. 36%).

Large majorities of teens say they've stopped visiting public places such as restaurants, movie theaters, or concert venues (81%) and stopped meeting with close friends in person (68%). While 65% of teens report talking to friends or family via text or social media more often than they usually do, far fewer teens say they've taken more direct steps to increase their connections with others during this time, such as reaching out to a friend or family member they haven't talked to in a while (37%), providing emotional support online to others (21%), or posting information online about the coronavirus's effects (13%).

Black teens are the least likely to have made major changes to their behaviors, though a majority still say they have stopped going to public places and meeting with friends. Black teens also are more likely than others to say they've received emotional support online from others.

Have you done any of the following in response to the coronavirus? (Select all that apply.)					
	Total	White	Black	Hispanic /Latino	Other*
Stopped attending public places such as restaurants, movies, or concerts	81%	84%	67%	83%	83%
Stopped meeting with close friends in person	68%	72%	55%	66%	75%
Talked to friends or family through texting or social media more than you usually do	65%	67%	61%	62%	70%
Reached out to a friend or family member you haven't talked to in a while	37%	37%	40%	36%	33%
Provided emotional support online to others	21%	20%	17%	23%	27%
Received emotional support online from others	16%	14%	23%	18%	14%
Posted information online about the coronavirus's effects on your life or your family's life	13%	11%	12%	18%	11%
None of the above	6%	6%	11%	3%	4%

\*Respondents in the "other" category are included in the total sample but not in findings that are broken out by race (the cell sizes of each individual group in the "other" category are not large enough for us to examine differences between them).

About half (48%) say they feel less connected than usual with their friends right now, while 36% say they feel about as connected as usual, and 16% say they feel more connected than usual.

A majority (59%) of teens say they're connecting with family or friends who are outside their homes at least once a day. Texting (83%), phone calls (72%), social media (66%), and video chats (66%) are some of the ways teens are staying connected with people they can no longer see in person. Messenger apps (48%) and email (37%) are less popular.

On a positive note, 40% of teens say they feel more connected than usual with their families, while 52% feel about as connected as usual, and just 8% feel less connected than usual.

### ***Schooling from home is a concern***

Most teens whose in-person classes have been canceled say schoolwork is still being assigned while they are at home (86%).

Students in public school and private school are equally likely to say their in-person classes have been canceled, but while nearly all students in private school still have schoolwork being assigned remotely, fewer students in public school say the same (96% vs. 83%).

Slightly more than half of teens who no longer attend school in person say they are worried about not being able to keep up with their schoolwork (56%) and their extracurricular activities (55%) while in-person school activities are canceled. Girls are more likely than boys to say they're worried about keeping up with both schoolwork and extracurriculars. Black and Hispanic/Latino teens are significantly more likely than White teens to be worried about keeping up with schoolwork.

How worried are you about not being able to keep up with _____ while in-person school activities are canceled?								
		Total	Male	Female	White	Black	Other	Hispanic /Latino
Your schoolwork	Worried	56%	50%	61%	49%	66%	40%	70%
	Not worried	44%	50%	39%	51%	34%	59%	29%
Your extracurricular activities	Worried	55%	51%	59%	54%	53%	50%	62%
	Not worried	45%	49%	41%	46%	47%	49%	38%

Students in public school are nearly twice as likely as students in private school to worry about keeping up with their schoolwork (61% vs. 34%) while in-person activities are canceled. They're also significantly more likely to worry about not keeping up with extracurriculars (57% vs. 49%).

Many students are not in frequent contact with their teachers or engaged in online schooling. Almost one in four teens (24%) say they're connecting with their teachers less than once a week. Students in private school report more frequent contact with their teachers and more communication related to school in general. Two-thirds (66%) of teens in private school say they're connecting with their teachers once a day or more, including 33% who connect a few times a day and 14% who connect once an hour or more. Among teens in public school, just 31% connect with their teachers once a day or more often, including 15% who connect a few times a day and just 2% who connect once an hour or more.

Percent of teens who report doing each of the following while in-person school activities are canceled ...			
	Total	Public school	Private school
Connecting with their teacher ... once a day or more	36%	31%	66%
... a few times a day	17%	15%	33%
... once an hour or more	4%	2%	14%
... less than once a week	24%	28%	4%
Having a dedicated space where they can do schoolwork at home	71%	71%	67%
Attended an online or virtual class	58%	53%	82%
Using email to stay connected to school	68%	68%	78%
Using a learning management system to stay connected to school	51%	50%	65%
Using video chat or videoconferencing to stay connected to school	47%	39%	88%
Using texts to stay connected to school	33%	33%	33%
Using social media to stay connected to school	25%	26%	23%
Using messenger apps to stay connected to school	22%	21%	24%
Using phone calls to stay connected to school	18%	19%	15%

While more than half of teens (58%) say they've attended an online or virtual class since the end of in-person classes, the rate is significantly higher among students in private school than students in public school (82% vs. 53%). However, 41% of teens haven't attended an online or virtual class since in-person school was canceled. Students in private school are also more likely than students in public school to say they're using video chat or videoconferencing (88% vs. 39%), email (78% vs. 68%), and learning management systems/course websites (65% vs. 50%) to stay connected to school.

Many students at home struggle to find space to do their schoolwork; though 71% of teens say they do have a dedicated space, more than one in four teens (28%) say they don't have a dedicated space to do their schoolwork.

The differences between students in private and public school are more drastic than differences by race/ethnicity or age.

Those students who have attended online or virtual classes are, surprisingly, just as worried about keeping up with their schoolwork and just as lonely as students who haven't attended online or virtual classes. However, they are a bit more likely to report feeling more connected than usual to their friends.

<b>How lonely would you say you feel right now?</b>			
	Total	Attended virtual or online classes	Haven't attended virtual or online classes
More lonely than usual	42%	42%	41%
About as lonely as usual	43%	43%	44%
Less lonely than usual	15%	14%	15%

<b>How worried are you about not being able to keep up with your schoolwork while in-person school activities are canceled?</b>			
	Total	Attended virtual or online classes	Haven't attended virtual or online classes
Net worried	56%	55%	56%
Net not worried	44%	44%	44%

<b>How connected would you say you feel to your friends right now?</b>			
	Total	Attended virtual or online classes	Haven't attended virtual or online classes
More connected than usual	16%	19%	13%
About as connected as usual	36%	34%	38%
Less connected than usual	48%	47%	49%

## Methodology

This [SurveyMonkey Audience](#) survey was conducted March 24 - April 1, 2020 among 849 teenagers ages 13-17 in the United States. Respondents for this survey were selected from more than two million people who take surveys on the SurveyMonkey platform each day. The modeled error estimate for the full sample is plus or minus 4.0 percentage points. Data have been weighted for age and sex using the Census Bureau's American Community Survey to reflect the demographic composition of the United States age 13-17.



## Toplines

How closely are you following news about the coronavirus?

	Total N=849
<b>NET closely</b>	<b>80%</b>
Very closely	28%
Somewhat closely	52%
<b>NET not closely</b>	<b>20%</b>
Not so closely	15%
Not closely at all	5%
No answer	0%

How worried are you that you or someone in your family will be exposed to the coronavirus?

	Total N=849
<b>NET worried</b>	<b>61%</b>
Very worried	26%
Somewhat worried	36%
<b>NET not worried</b>	<b>39%</b>
Not so worried	29%
Not worried at all	9%
No answer	0%

How worried are you about the effect the coronavirus may have on your family's ability to make a living or earn money?

	Total N=849
<b>NET worried</b>	<b>63%</b>
Very worried	31%
Somewhat worried	33%
<b>NET not worried</b>	<b>36%</b>
Not so worried	24%
Not worried at all	12%
No answer	0%

To what degree is your household practicing "social distancing"? Social distancing refers to household members staying home as much as possible to avoid possible spread of the virus.

	Total N=849
Not at all	6%
Somewhat	40%
Very much	54%
No answer	0%

**Which, if any, are you using to stay connected with family/friends who you no longer see in person due to the coronavirus? (Select all that apply.)**

	Total N=849
Texts	83%
Phone calls	72%
Social media	66%
Video chat or video conferencing	66%
Messenger apps	48%
Email	37%
None of the above	2%
Other (please specify)	6%
No answer	1%

**How often are you connecting with family/friends who are outside your home?**

	Total N=849
Once an hour or more	14%
A few times a day	35%
Once a day	11%
A few times a week	20%
Once a week	9%
Less than once a week	12%
No answer	0%

**Have you done any of the following in response to the coronavirus? (Select all that apply.)**

	Total N=849
Stopped attending public places such as restaurants, movies, or concerts	81%
Stopped meeting with close friends in person	68%
Talked to friends or family through texting or social media more than you usually do	65%
Reached out to a friend or family member you haven't talked to in a while	37%
Provided emotional support online to others	21%
Received emotional support online from others	16%
Posted information online about the coronavirus' effects on your life or your family's life	13%
None of the above	2%
No answer	0%

**How connected would you say you feel to your friends right now?**

	Total N=849
More connected than usual	16%
About as connected as usual	36%
Less connected than usual	48%
No answer	0%

**How connected would you say you feel to your family right now?**

	Total N=849
More connected than usual	40%
About as connected as usual	52%
Less connected than usual	8%
No answer	0%

**How lonely would you say you feel right now?**

	Total N=849
More lonely than usual	42%
About as lonely as usual	43%
Less lonely than usual	15%
No answer	0%

**Which of the following best characterizes the type of school you attend?**

	Total N=849
Public school	76%
Private school	12%
Charter or magnet school	6%
Homeschool	4%
Other (please specify)	2%
No answer	0%

**Have in-person classes at your school been canceled due to the coronavirus outbreak?**

	Total N=849
Yes	95%
No	4%
No answer	1%

**Is schoolwork still being assigned while you are at home?**

	Total n=805
Yes	86%
No	14%
No answer	1%

**How worried are you about not being able to keep up with your schoolwork while in-person school activities are canceled?**

	Total N=805
<b>NET worried</b>	<b>56%</b>
Very worried	21%
Somewhat worried	35%
<b>NET not worried</b>	<b>44%</b>
Not so worried	24%
Not worried at all	20%
No answer	0%

**How worried are you about not being able to keep up with your extracurricular activities (e.g. athletics, student groups) while in-person school activities are canceled?**

	Total N=805
<b>NET worried</b>	<b>55%</b>
Very worried	30%
Somewhat worried	25%
<b>NET not worried</b>	<b>45%</b>
Not so worried	23%
Not worried at all	21%
No answer	0%

**How often are you connecting with family/friends who are outside your home?**

	Total N=805
Once an hour or more	4%
A few times a day	17%
Once a day	15%
A few times a week	28%
Once a week	11%
Less than once a week	24%
No answer	1%

**How often do you keep a regular schedule now that you are at home?**

	Total N=805
Every day	15%
Most days	29%
About half the time	21%
Rarely	21%
Never	13%
No answer	0%

**Do you have a dedicated space where you can do your schoolwork at home?**

	Total N=805
Yes	71%
No	28%
No answer	1%

**Have you attended an online class or virtual class while in-person school activities have been canceled?**

	Total N=805
Yes	58%
No	41%
No answer	0%

**Are you using any of the following to stay connected to school while in-person activities are canceled? (Select all that apply.)**

	Total N=805
Email	68%
Learning management system/course website	51%
Video chat or video conferencing	47%
Texts	33%
Social media	25%
Messenger apps	22%
Phone calls	18%
None of the above	6%
Other (please specify)	6%
No answer	2%

**My knowledge of the coronavirus is primarily informed by:**

	Total N=849
People I know in the real world, such as friends, family, or teachers	37%
Personalities/influencers, celebrities I follow on social media or YouTube	11%
News organizations	47%
None of the above	4%
No answer	0%

**Are you:**

	Total N=849
Male	51%
Female	49%

**Are you:**

White

54%

Black

14%

Hispanic

23%

Asian

6%

Other

4%

Total N=849