

Is banter an excuse for bullying?

KS1: Can joking be bullying? & KS2: Can banter be bullying?

12th – 19th November 2021



72.19%

of Primary KS1 voters said **Yes**.



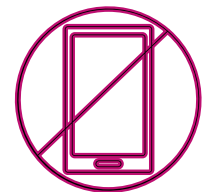
72.71%

of Primary KS2 voters said **Yes**.



75.59%

of Secondary voters said **No**.



76.41%

of 16+ & College voters said **No**.

In light of this year's *Anti-Bullying Week* theme of "One Kind Word", voters discussed banter and the impact this has on young people and our wider communities, as well as what we can do to tackle this.

The VoteTopic this week allowed our 11+ voters to share their opinions on the question: "Is banter an excuse for bullying?" while our younger voters discussed the question: "Can joking/ banter be bullying?". They reflected on when this kind of language crosses the line, where we see it at play in the real world, and what can be done to ensure no one uses it as an excuse for abuse or discrimination.

36,235 young people in the UK took part in this vote.

Sample of 36,235 voters

If you want more information of the exact split of the sample size across the different categories below, please contact us at ajie@votesforschools.com.

Please Note: The sample size featured reflects the number of pupils and students that cast their vote on this topic during the week in which this vote was held. This sample size therefore does not reflect the number of pupils and students who discussed this VoteTopic but did not get a chance to participate in the voting.

VoteTopic Overview:

Question Primary KS1:

"Can joking be bullying?"

Question Primary KS2:

"Can banter be bullying?"

Question Secondary:

"Is banter an excuse for bullying?"

Question Secondary 16+ & College:



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“Is banter an excuse for bullying?”

Grand Total

Primary KS1:

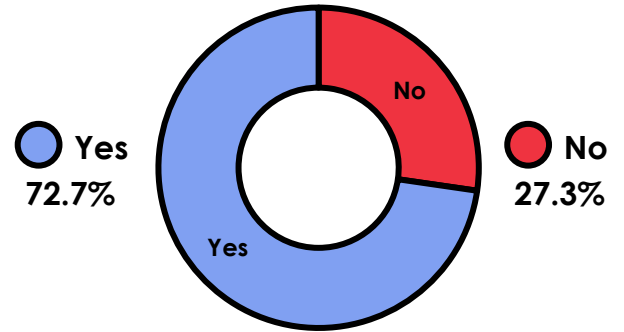
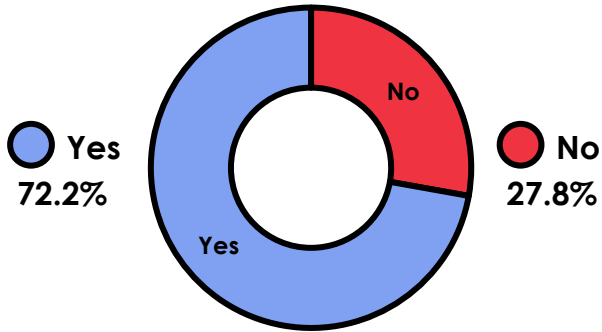
“Can joking be bullying?”

Yes 72.19%
No 27.81%

Primary KS2:

“Can banter be bullying?”

Yes 72.71%
No 27.29%



Secondary:

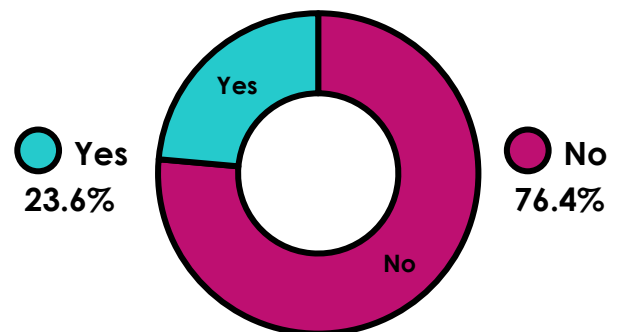
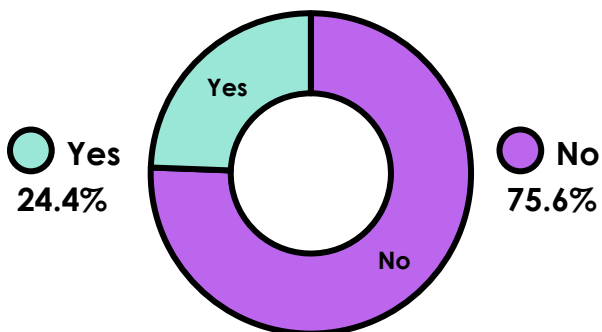
“Is banter an excuse for bullying?”

Yes 24.41%
No 75.59%

Secondary 16+ & College:

“Is banter an excuse for bullying?”

Yes 23.59%
No 76.41%



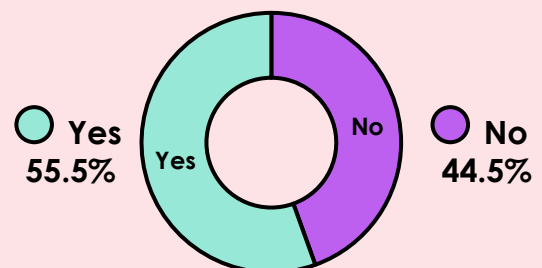
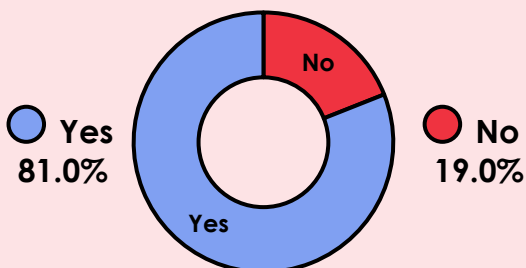
How does this compare to previous VoteTopics?

In November 2019, during the week of 08th – 15th November, we asked **Primary** and **Secondary students**: “Do you think it is possible to reduce bullying in your school?”

These were the results from 2019:

Primary

Secondary



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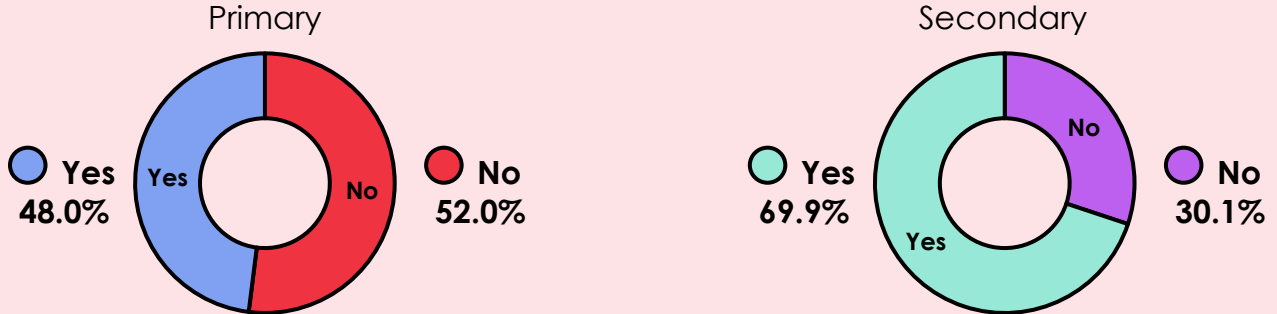


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How does this compare to previous VoteTopics?

In 2017, during the week of 10th – 17th November, we asked **Primary pupils** and **Secondary students**: “Are adults setting a bad example when it comes to bullying?”. These were the results in late 2017:



Gender

Primary KS1: “Can joking be bullying?”

	Yes	No
Female	73.25%	26.75%
Male	73.94%	26.06%
Diverse*	52.08%	47.92%

Primary KS2: “Can banter be bullying?”

	Yes	No
Female	76.75%	23.25%
Male	68.05%	31.95%
Diverse*	85.71%	14.29%

Secondary: “Is banter an excuse for bullying?”

	Yes	No
Female	20.76%	79.24%
Male	27.64%	72.36%
Diverse*	26.78%	73.22%

16+ & College: “Is banter an excuse for bullying?”

	Yes	No
Female	20.76%	79.24%
Male	27.51%	72.49%
Diverse*	26.91%	73.09%

*Votes collected as “Diverse” include students that identify as gender diverse, as well as students that wish not to disclose or were not able to specify their gender.



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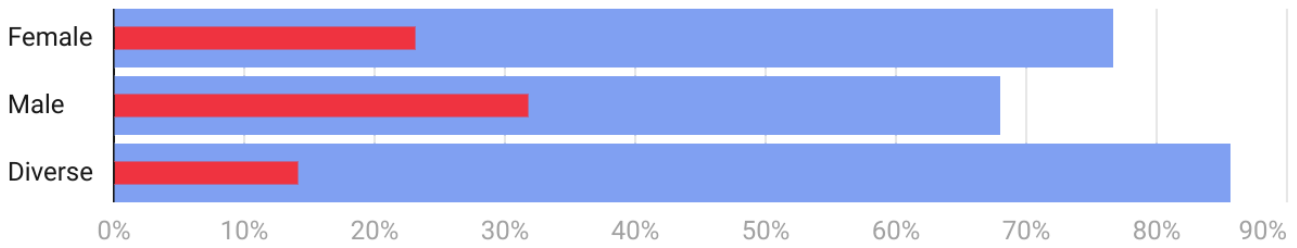
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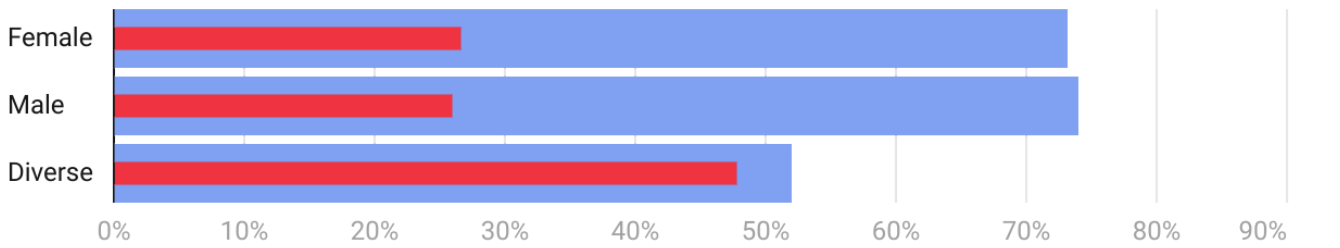
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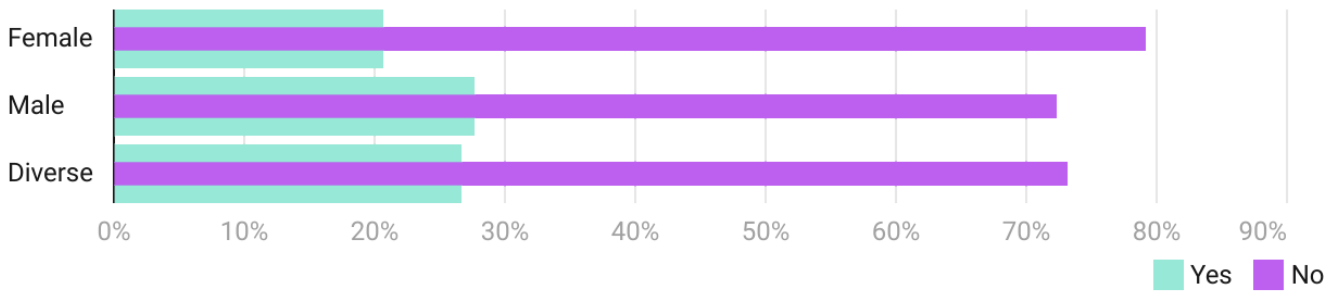
Primary KS1: "Can joking be bullying?"



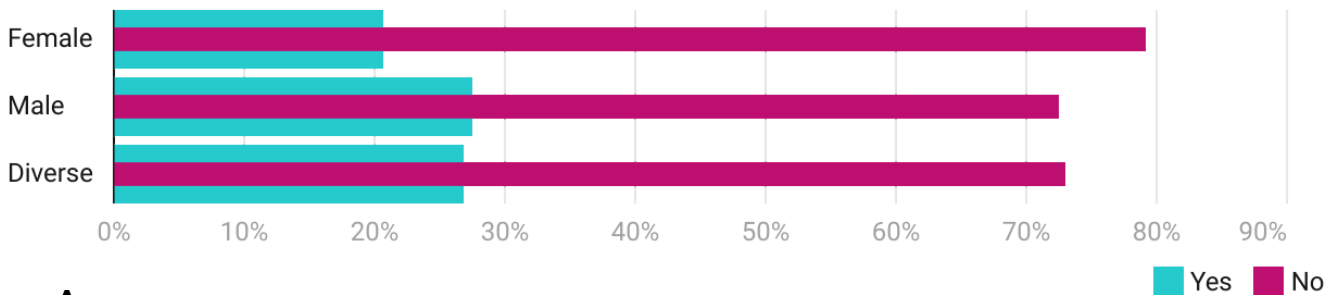
Primary KS2: "Can banter be bullying?"



Secondary: "Is banter an excuse for bullying?"



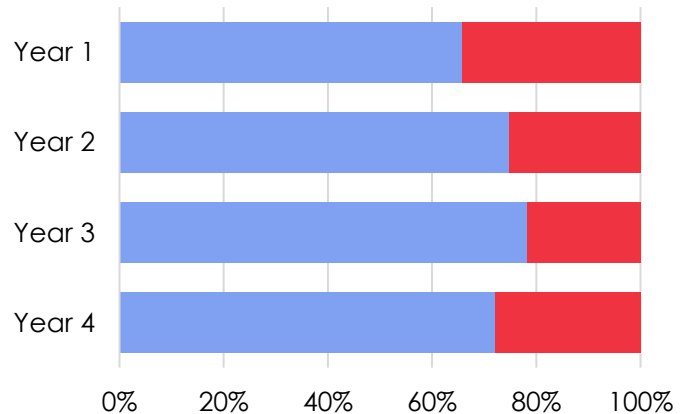
16+ & College: "Is banter an excuse for bullying?"



Age

Primary KS1: "Can joking be bullying?"

Year Group	Yes	No
Year 1	65.76%	34.24%
Year 2	74.85%	25.15%
Year 3	78.26%	21.74%
Year 4	72.09%	27.91%
Vertical Tutor Group	91.11%	8.89%



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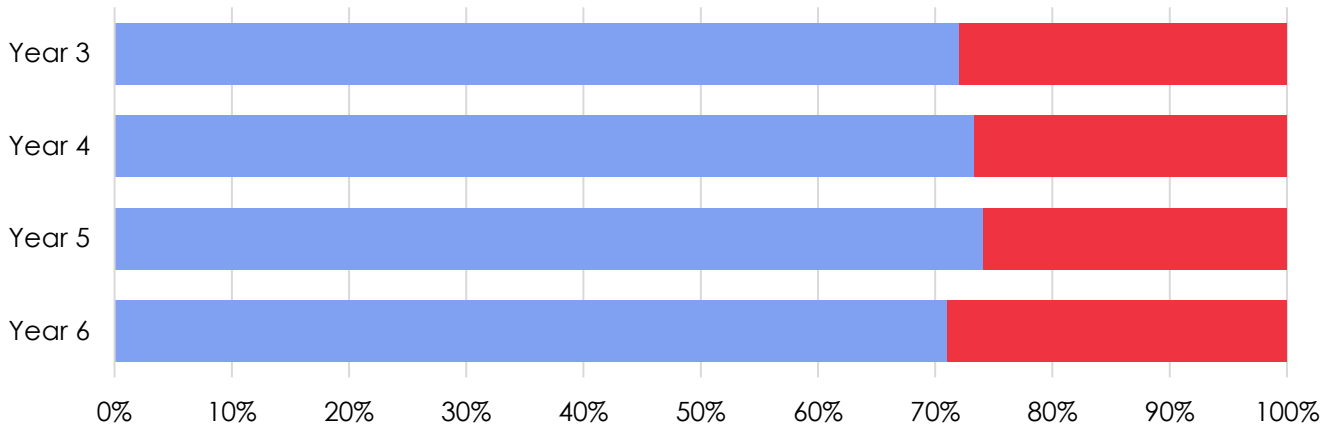


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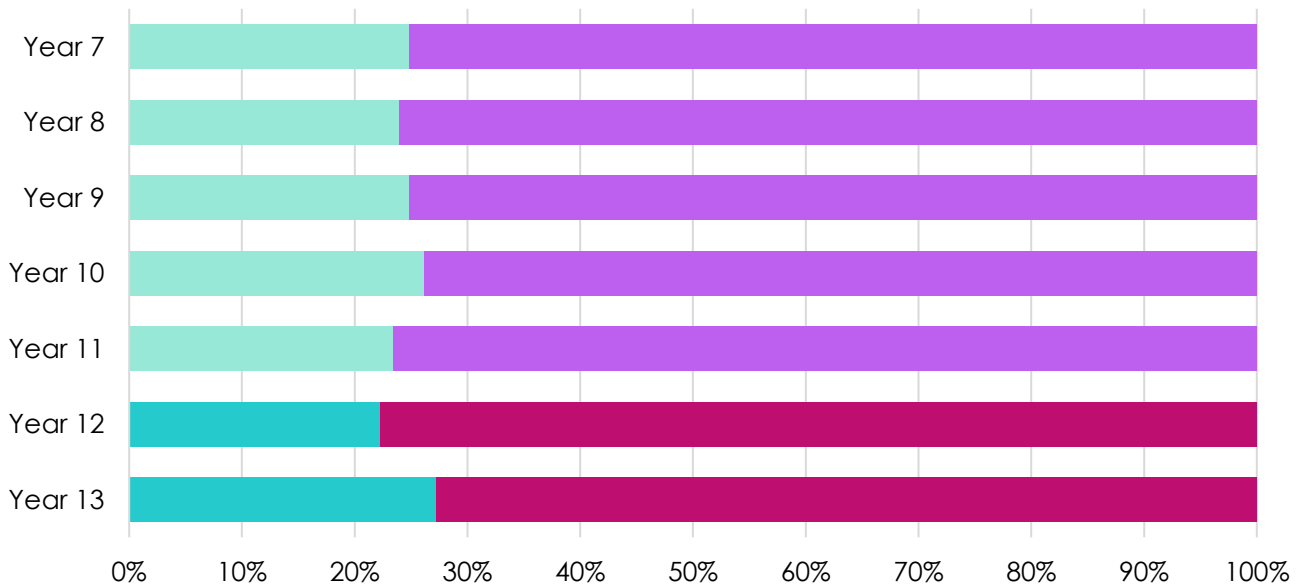
Primary KS2: "Can banter be bullying?"

Year Group	Yes	No
Year 3	72.10%	27.90%
Year 4	73.32%	26.68%
Year 5	74.09%	25.91%
Year 6	71.03%	28.97%
Vertical Tutor Group	72.73%	27.27%



Secondary, 16+ & College: "Is banter an excuse for bullying?"

Year Group	Yes	No
Year 7	24.81%	75.19%
Year 8	23.91%	76.09%
Year 9	24.82%	75.18%
Year 10	26.16%	73.84%
Year 11	23.43%	76.57%
Year 12	22.30%	77.70%
Year 13	27.21%	72.79%
Vertical Tutor Group	21.23%	78.77%



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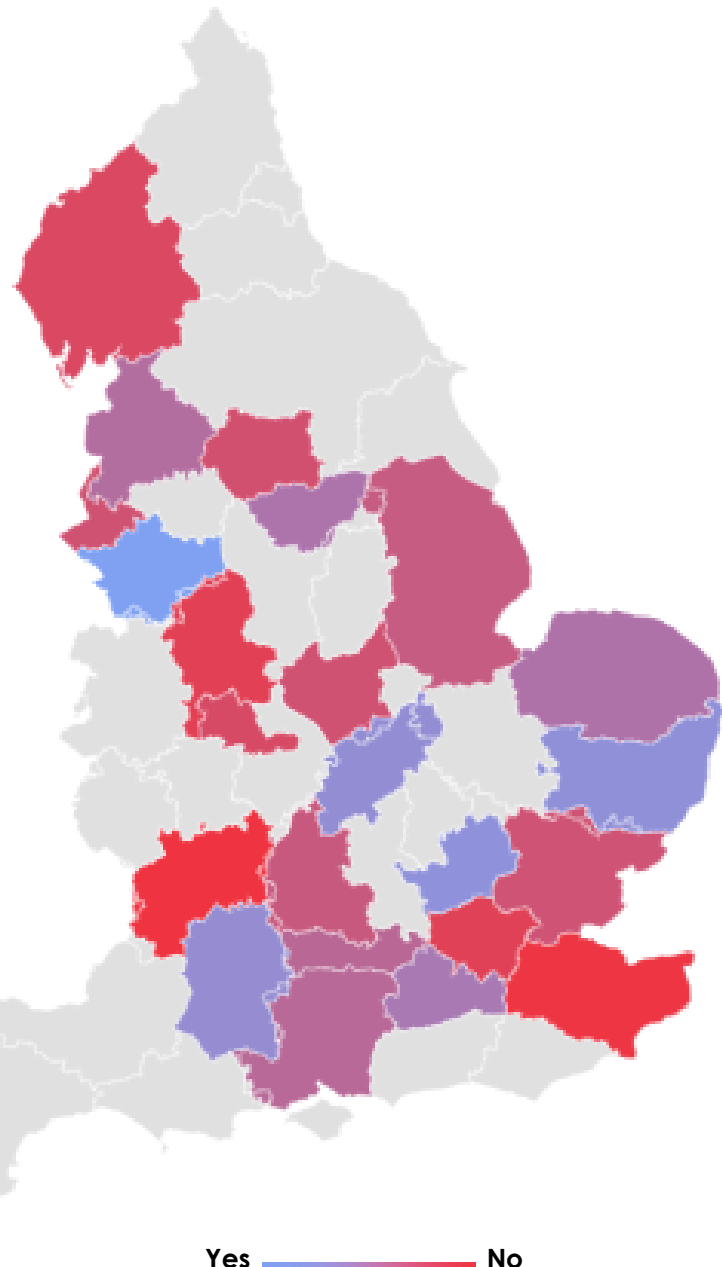
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Location

Primary KS1: "Can joking be bullying?"

	Yes	No
Cheshire	90.73%	9.27%
North Yorkshire	89.47%	10.53%
Hertfordshire	87.04%	12.96%
Suffolk	86.72%	13.28%
Northamptonshire	86.11%	13.89%
Wiltshire	85.71%	14.29%
Surrey	80.91%	19.09%
South Yorkshire	79.86%	20.14%
Norfolk	79.41%	20.59%
Lancashire	78.21%	21.79%
Hampshire	77.08%	22.92%
Berkshire	76.72%	23.28%
Lincolnshire	73.76%	26.24%
Oxfordshire	73.08%	26.92%
Essex	71.66%	28.34%
Merseyside	71.23%	28.77%
Leicestershire	71.23%	28.77%
West Yorkshire	70.83%	29.17%
London	70.07%	29.93%
West Midlands	69.39%	30.61%
Cumbria	68.83%	31.17%
Staffordshire	66.84%	33.16%
Devon*	66.67%	33.33%
Kent	64.14%	35.86%
Gloucestershire	63.64%	36.36%
Greater London	63.43%	36.57%
Durham*	47.83%	52.17%



Yes (max.91%)  No (max.52%)

*Regions with fewer than 25 votes are not displayed on the maps. These regions are marked with a * in the tables.



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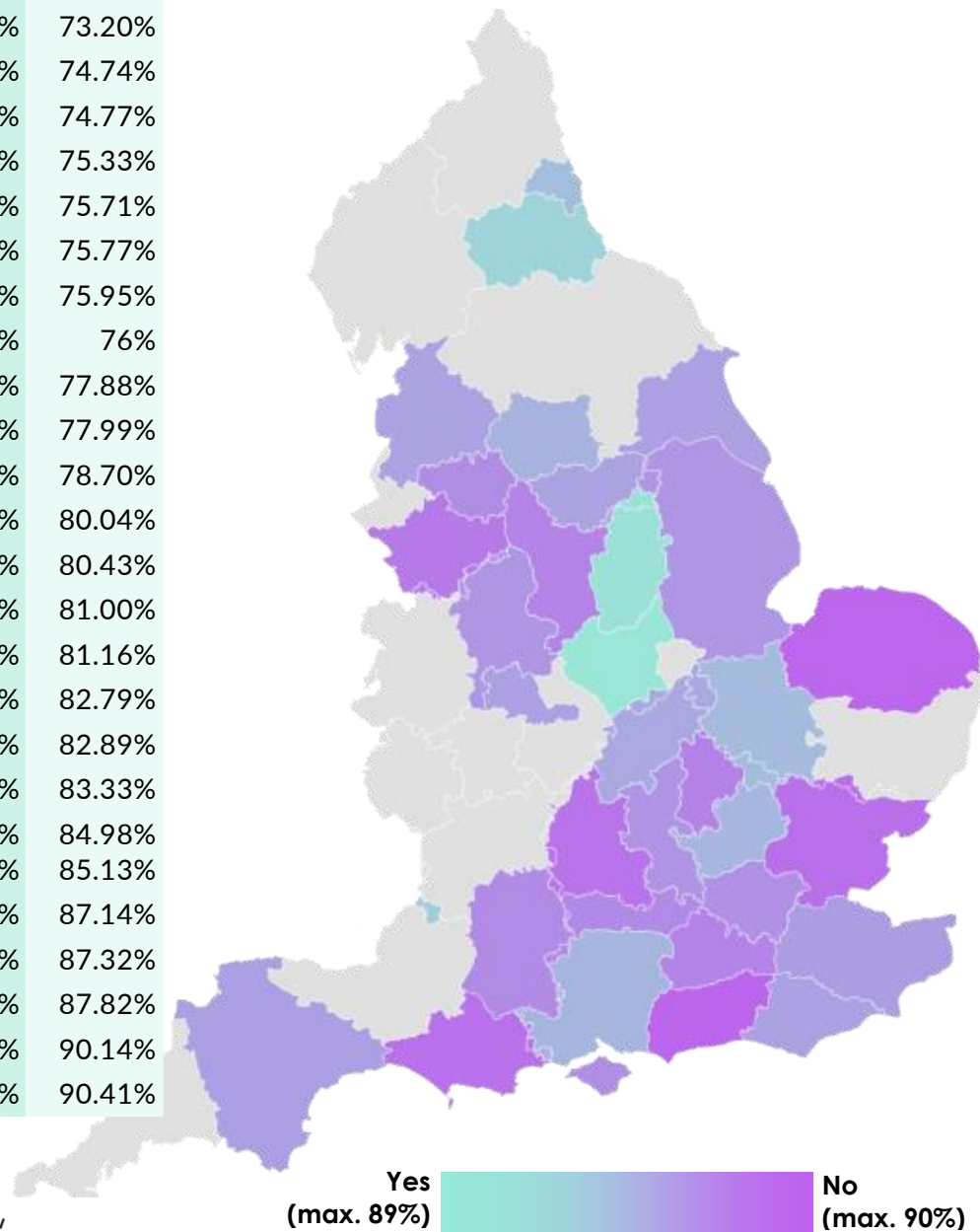


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Secondary, 16+ & College:
“Is banter an excuse for bullying?”

	Yes	No
Greater London	88.89%	11.11%
Leicestershire	42.32%	57.68%
Nottinghamshire	40.83%	59.17%
Durham	37.50%	62.50%
Bristol	35.47%	64.53%
Tyne and Wear	32.24%	68%
Cambridgeshire	31.37%	68.63%
Hertfordshire	30.15%	69.85%
Hampshire	29.80%	70.20%
West Yorkshire	29.22%	70.78%
North Yorkshire	28.27%	71.73%
Northamptonshire	26.80%	73.20%
South Yorkshire	25.26%	74.74%
Lancashire	25.23%	74.77%
East Sussex	24.67%	75.33%
East Riding of Yorkshire	24.29%	75.71%
West Midlands	24.23%	75.77%
Devon	24.05%	75.95%
Kent	23.68%	76%
Staffordshire	22.12%	77.88%
Lincolnshire	22.01%	77.99%
Buckinghamshire	21.30%	78.70%
Isle of Wight	19.96%	80.04%
Greater Manchester	19.57%	80.43%
Wiltshire	19.00%	81.00%
Berkshire	18.84%	81.16%
Surrey	17.21%	82.79%
Derbyshire	17.11%	82.89%
Bedfordshire	16.67%	83.33%
London	15.02%	84.98%
Cheshire	14.87%	85.13%
Oxfordshire	12.86%	87.14%
Dorset	12.68%	87.32%
Essex	12.18%	87.82%
Norfolk	9.86%	90.14%
West Sussex	9.59%	90.41%



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Voter Comments - Primary KS1: "Can joking be bullying?" & Primary KS2: "Can banter be bullying?"

"I think yes because if you keep on joking it is very **easy** to go **over the line** and it can easily become bullying very **quickly** and **hurt** people's **feelings**."

Primary School, Hertfordshire

"Everyone needs to **choose** their **words kindly** and **wisely** as it can really **damage** one's **feelings**. People should take time in their day to be **kind** to others."

Primary School, West Midlands

"I think that banter can be bullying without you even **realising** how much it is **affecting someone** else. Also, the people who have come up with the jokes might laugh but it might make you feel **insecure and upset**."

Primary School, West Midlands

"No- It **depends** on what is being said in the banter. It should not be **targeted** about **one person** or include **unkind words**."

Primary School, West Midlands

"I think no because we don't always **mean** it and most of the time you will just have a **laugh**."

Primary School, Hertfordshire

"Banter is not bullying as it depends on how the person **feels** and how they **take the comments**. Most of the time bantering can be seen as a **joke** but sometimes the joke could **turn in to bullying**. Banter could turn **too personal**."

Primary School, West Midlands



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Voter Comments: "Is banter an excuse for bullying?"

"There can **never** be an **excuse** for bullying, **banter is fine**, but once it becomes **constant**, this is not an excuse for bullying."

Secondary School, Essex

"Banter is definitely used as a way of **getting away** with bullying someone without being **told off** for being a **bully**."

Secondary School, Northamptonshire

"It's just banter" is one of the most dangerous phrases out there. A lot of the time it's used to **excuse rude behaviour** and, because it uses social pressure to mark you out as an **outsider**, a Rainer-on-parades, a tiresome downer on a good time who can't take a joke, it's VERY effective at shutting you up and making you **feel small**."

Secondary School, West Midlands

"Banter should **not** be used with **people you don't know** or else it may come across as bullying."

College, Essex

"Banter is not bullying, it's just a **joke**. If banter is said by people you don't **trust**, you can take it the **wrong way**. Banter should **only be between close friends**. They know you and know what could **upset** you."

Secondary School, Lincolnshire

"Part of a **friendship** is having a **laugh** with them and making **fun** of them. If it goes too far, they need to **communicate** this, and then **apologies** can be made, and we can **move on**."

Secondary School, West Midlands

"It is about how banter is **intended**. **Normally harmless**. If the person who is the target of the banter tells the "banterer" that it is **hurtful** and the banter **doesn't stop**, then it turns to **bullying**."

Secondary School, Kent



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