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Monitoring the digitalisation of education from the students' perspective

Results of the five surveys 2020–2026

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Chantal Oggenfuss* & Stefan C. Wolter**

Abstract

Six years after the launch of the national monitoring of digitalisation, the fifth survey wave shows that the pandemic-induced surge in digitalisation in Swiss schools has come to an end. Internet access, computers and digital applications are now part of everyday school life, and developments have stabilised at a high level. At primary level, however, both school-related and private use is declining, including the use of social media. Differences between language regions remain consistently large across virtually all dimensions covered. For the second time, the monitoring also records the use of AI applications such as ChatGPT and DeepL, thereby providing a basis for systematically tracking their diffusion in future. Since the 2024 survey, the use of AI – unsurprisingly – has increased sharply both at school and at home for school-related purposes. What is striking, however, is that only in a small minority of cases does this use take place with teachers' support or guidance.

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1. Introduction

With the survey conducted in spring 2026, the fifth wave of the national “Monitoring the digitalisation of education from the students’ perspective”[1] is now available. The monitoring provides representative data on the availability and use of digital technologies from the perspective of students throughout Switzerland. It covers compulsory schooling and upper secondary education and thus, for the first time, provides a basis for systematically tracking developments in the digitalisation of education over a period of six years. The results of the previous surveys (2020, 2021, 2022 and 2024) were documented and analysed in four SCCRE Staff Papers. The present report summarises the results of the fifth survey, conducted in spring 2026, and allows developments to be compared across all five survey waves.

The starting point for this monitoring was the COVID-19 pandemic. When schools across the country closed in spring 2020, digital tools such as computers and tablets became essential almost overnight for maintaining teaching and learning. Until then, however, there had been no national surveys systematically recording either the availability of digital tools or their use in schools. To fill this gap, the Swiss Coordination Centre for Research in Education (SCCRE) and the market and opinion research institute gfs.bern launched the “Monitoring the digitalisation of education from the students’ perspective” in autumn 2020, with support from the Mercator Foundation and the Jacobs Foundation. On the basis of the results of this first survey, the Confederation and the cantons decided to continue the monitoring over the long term in order to observe developments in the digitalisation of education continuously and analyse them systematically.

2. Sample

For all surveys, the Federal Statistical Office drew an age-based sample of around 10,000 individuals from households with children and young people aged 8 to 18. The response rate was very high in all five surveys, ranging from 57% to 65%. A detailed

1 The "Monitoring the digitalisation of education from the students' perspective" is funded by the Swiss Conference of Cantonal Ministers of Education (EDK) and the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) as part of the Swiss education monitoring programme. The authors are also grateful for the support of the Federal Statistical Office for the sampling. The surveys in 2024 and 2026 were conducted by YouGov (formerly Link).

comparison of the analytical samples, i.e. the respondents, also shows a high degree of comparability over time.
In every survey, the overall population of students is very well represented with regard to characteristics such as migration background, parental education, language region and level of education. Thanks to the high response rate and the coverage of all educational levels, types of education and language regions, the study permits representative statements about Switzerland's entire student population. With an analytical sample of between 5,400 and 5,800 individuals per survey, precise estimates can be made for the overall population (sampling error: ±1.3 percentage points at a 95% confidence level).

As the sample includes children from the age of eight, the results for primary education mainly relate to students from Year 4 onwards. Children in the first two school years of the first cycle (kindergarten) and the first two years of primary school are therefore excluded or under-represented because of the sample design. Young people who, after completing compulsory schooling, attended a transitional programme or an interim school-based programme were excluded from the study too. The results for upper secondary education therefore relate exclusively to learners in vocational education and training (VET) and to students at Baccalaureate schools and upper-secondary specialised schools (FMS).

3. Surveys

The first survey took place in autumn 2020 and covered the period from the end of the summer holidays to the autumn holidays, when schools had returned to normal operation following the pandemic-related closures from March to May 2020. To capture possible dynamics associated with the exceptional situation caused by the pandemic, a second survey was conducted only six months later, in spring 2021. The third survey followed one year later, in spring 2022. The results of these three surveys suggested that a two-year cycle was sufficient to monitor developments in school digitalisation continuously. Accordingly, the fourth and fifth surveys were conducted in spring 2024 and spring 2026. To ensure comparability of content across the five surveys, largely identical questionnaires were used throughout.

Students in compulsory schooling and in upper secondary education were asked about the availability and use of digital devices and applications. For children under 14, parents

were asked in the invitation letter to assist their child in completing the questionnaire. The questions covered both the type and intensity of use in school and private contexts. Information was also collected on internet availability at home and at school and on attitudes towards learning with digital tools. The fourth survey included, for the first time, questions on the use of applications based on artificial intelligence (AI), including so-called large language models such as ChatGPT, translation tools such as DeepL, and image-generation applications. These had not yet been relevant in the first three surveys, as ChatGPT, for example, was not released until after the third survey at the end of 2022. The additional questions in the fifth survey take account of the rapid development of generative AI. The 2024 and 2026 surveys provide, for the first time, representative data for Switzerland as a whole documenting both the prevalence and development of the use of AI-based applications in school and out-of-school contexts.

To ensure that households with inadequate digital equipment were also covered, it proved essential to allow the survey to be completed either online or using a paper questionnaire. An online-only survey would have increased the risk of under-representing households with poor digital equipment. The results confirmed that the organisational and financial effort required to offer both survey modes (online and paper-and-pencil) was necessary to avoid sample selection bias. The proportion of questionnaires completed on paper rose across the surveys from around 12% to 16%. As the findings showed, such bias cannot be corrected solely by subsequently weighting responses according to participants' sociodemographic characteristics (see SCCRE Staff Paper No. 24).

The data collected include the main sociodemographic characteristics used as background and control variables in the multivariate analyses, alongside language region[2] and level of education. These include gender, deviation from the average age for the educational level attended, first language (language of instruction or another language), migration background, and the parents' highest educational qualification. As an additional proxy for socioeconomic status, information is used on whether the child has a room of their own at home. The results and statistical differences between the groups presented below are reported taking all these characteristics into account.

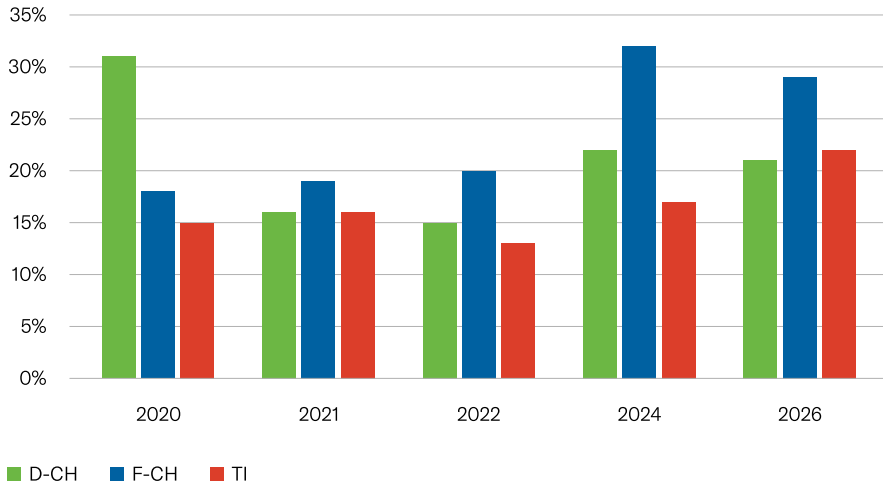
2 Bern and Grisons are assigned to German-speaking Switzerland; Fribourg and Valais to French-speaking Switzerland.

4. Private purchases of digital devices

The effect most clearly associated with the COVID-19 pandemic concerned private purchases of computers and other digital devices. In the first survey, 27% of respondents reported that they had purchased a computer (desktop, laptop or tablet) in spring 2020; when all digital devices were taken into account, the share of new purchases was 30%. In subsequent surveys this proportion fell markedly, to 17% in spring 2021. In 2024, the purchase rate increased again for the first time, mainly because of an increase in French-speaking Switzerland. In spring 2026, the proportion remained largely unchanged at 23%. Looking at the two-year periods (excluding the 2021 survey), the average six-monthly purchase rate for digital devices such as desktop computers, laptops and tablets in Switzerland is around 23%. This means that the average household purchases a new digital device for school-related purposes for each student approximately every two years.

The sharp decline between 2020 and 2021 in German-speaking Switzerland makes clear that the high figure in the first survey must have been a pandemic-related effect that was subsequently offset. From 2024 onwards, the purchase rate rose again and remained largely stable through 2026. By contrast, the sharp increase in the purchase rate in French-speaking Switzerland between 2022 and 2024, and the persistently high level in 2026, is less straightforward to explain. It may represent a catch-up effect, as the intensity of digital-tool use in French-speaking Switzerland was also below that of German-speaking Switzerland in the first surveys. In Ticino, by contrast, the purchase rate remained comparatively low throughout the observation period, although there was a slight increase in 2026. Differences between language regions in purchases of digital devices are also reflected in the intensity of their use.

Figure 1: Private purchase of computers by language region



Note: n_{2020} = 5,476, n_{2021} = 5,840, n_{2022} = 5,374, n_{2024} = 5,419, n_{2026} = 5,587; taking into account gender, educational level, deviation from the average age for that educational level, first language, migration background, parents' educational attainment, housing situation and survey method. 'Computer' includes desktop, laptop and tablet.

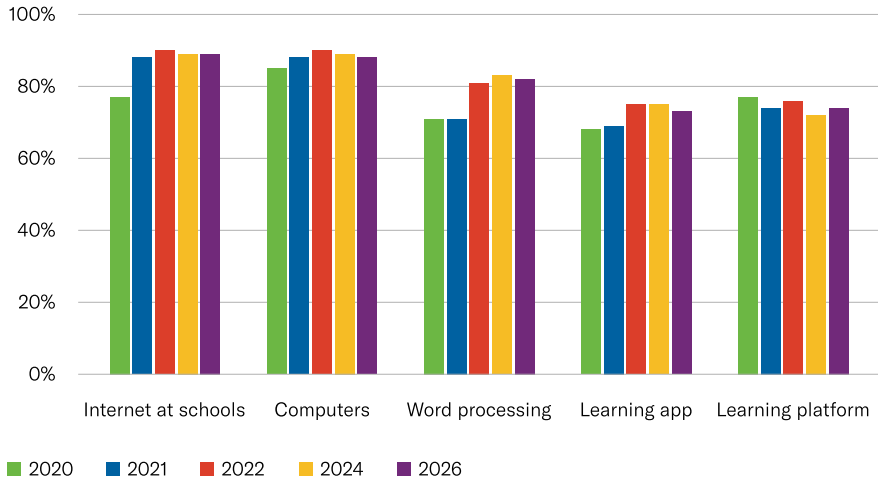
German-speaking Switzerland: a decline in 2020–2021 and an increase in 2022–2024 ($p < .01$ in each case), followed by no statistically significant changes. French-speaking Switzerland: an increase in 2022–2024 ($p < .01$), followed by no statistically significant changes. Ticino: no statistically significant changes.

5. The trend towards digitalisation is stabilising

After five surveys, it is apparent that the surge in school digitalisation between 2020 and 2022 has largely stabilised at a high level. While internet access at schools and the use of computers and word-processing software have changed little since then, learning apps show slight declines and learning platforms some fluctuations.

The students were asked whether they had access to the internet at school and whether they used computers (desktops, laptops or tablets) at school. They were also asked whether they used digital tools such as word processing programmes, learning apps and learning platforms, either at school or at home for school purposes.

Figure 2: Internet access at school and use of digital applications at or for school



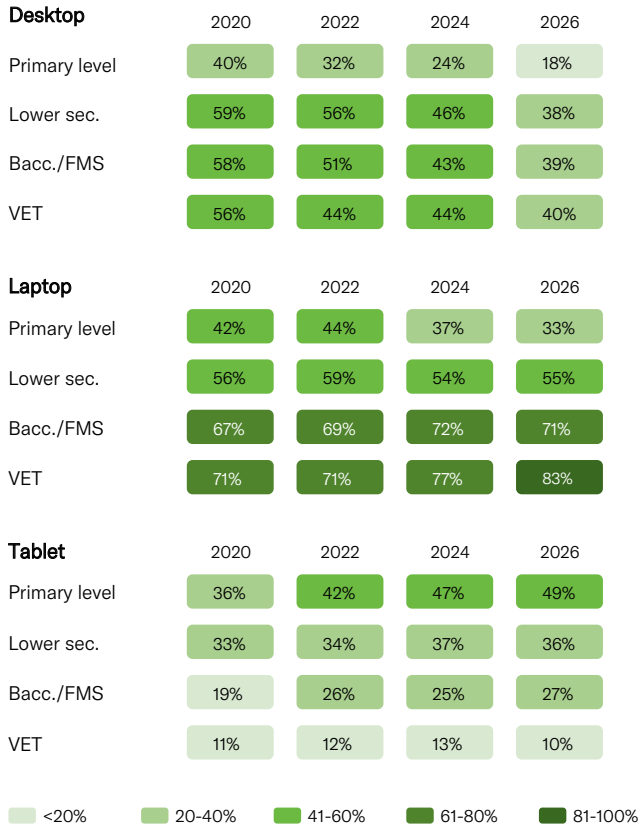
Note: n_{2020} = 5,476, n_{2021} = 5,840, n_{2022} = 5,374, n_{2024} = 5,419, n_{2026} = 5,587; taking into account gender, educational level, deviation from the average age for that educational level, first language, migration background, parents' educational attainment, housing situation, language region and survey method.

Internet access in schools, computer use, word processing (such as Office) and learning apps: statistically significant increase from 2020 to 2022 ($p < .001$ in each case). Internet access at schools and computer use: no statistically significant changes from 2022 onwards. Word processing: further increase from 2022 to 2024 ($p < .05$), no statistically significant changes between 2024 and 2026. Learning apps: a statistically significant decline between 2024 and 2026 ($p < .05$). Learning platforms: fluctuations throughout the entire observation period.

The monitoring of digitalisation also contains detailed information on the types of devices used in schools. The results show a clear shift towards mobile devices. While desktop computers have steadily lost importance at all educational levels since 2020, tablets have been used increasingly, particularly at primary level. In 2020, 40% of primary students still used desktop computers and 36% used tablets. By 2026, the proportion using desktops had fallen to 18%, while the proportion using tablets had risen to 49%. The increased use of mobile devices indicates, on the one hand, that more students can also use these devices at home and, on the other, that a larger proportion of devices for school use are purchased privately under bring-your-own-device (BYOD) arrangements, which is not possible for desktop computers used at school.

At higher educational levels, however, the laptop remained the most important working device. At Baccalaureate school/FMS, around two thirds of students were already using a laptop in 2020; by 2026 this proportion remained largely unchanged at around 70%. In VET, laptops became still more important and were used by more than 80% of learners in 2026.

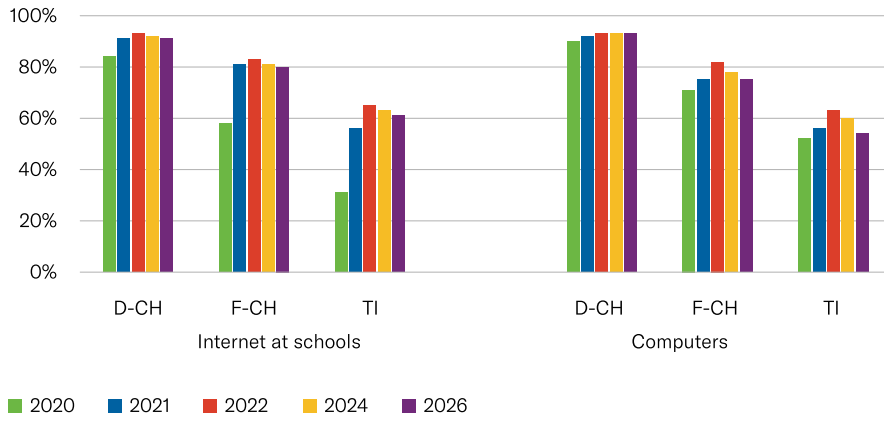
Figure 3: Use of desktops, laptops or tablets at school, by educational level



6. Differences between language regions

Differences between language regions in internet access at school and computer use at school remain clearly visible after five surveys. Although there were marked catch-up effects in French-speaking Switzerland and Ticino in 2021 and 2022, the proportion of students reporting internet access at school and computer use at school remains substantially higher in German-speaking Switzerland. Internet access at school in 2026 remained at a comparable level to the 2024 survey in all three language regions. Computer use, however, did not develop in the same way in all regions: while the proportions remained virtually unchanged in German-speaking Switzerland, they declined slightly in French-speaking Switzerland and Ticino. The differences between language regions therefore persist.

Figure 4: Internet access and computer use at school, by language region



Note: n_{2020} = 5,476, n_{2021} = 5,840, n_{2022} = 5,374, n_{2024} = 5,419, n_{2026} = 5,587; taking into account gender, educational level, deviation from the average age for the educational level, first language, migration background, parents' educational attainment, housing situation and survey method. 'Computer' includes desktop, laptop and tablet.

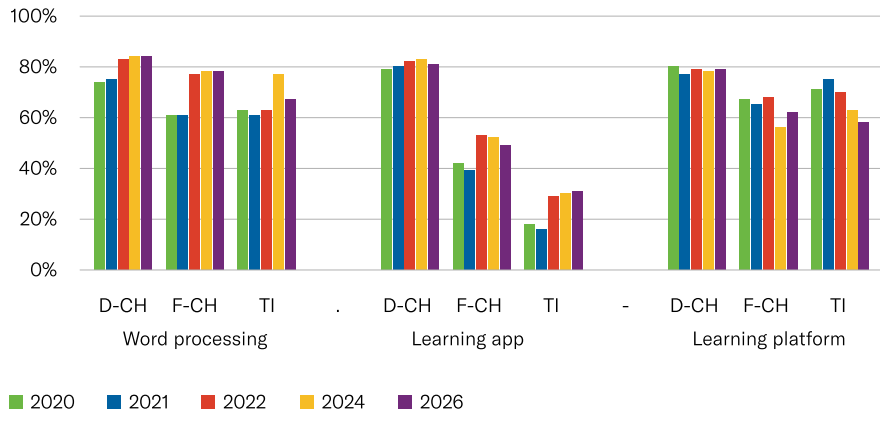
Internet access in schools: The language regions differed statistically significantly at all survey points in time ($p < .001$ in each case). German-speaking Switzerland: increase in 2020–2021 ($p < .001$), followed by no statistically significant changes. French-speaking Switzerland: increase in 2020–2021 ($p < .001$), followed by no statistically significant changes. Ticino: increase in 2020–2021 ($p < .001$), further increase in 2021–2022 ($p < .01$), followed by no statistically significant changes.

Computer use: The language regions differed statistically significantly at all survey time points ($p < .001$ in each case). German-speaking Switzerland: increase in 2020–2021 ($p < .01$), followed by no statistically significant changes. French-speaking Switzerland: increase in 2020–2021 ($p < .05$), increase in 2021–2022 ($p < .001$), decrease in 2022–2024 ($p < .05$). Ticino: increase in 2021–2022 ($p < .05$), decrease in 2024–2026 ($p < .05$).

Clear regional differences were also evident in 2026 in the use of digital tools at school or at home for school-related purposes. The largest changes in all three language regions occurred between 2020 and 2022. Thereafter, the use of word-processing software and learning apps remained largely stable overall. German-speaking Switzerland has the highest usage rates across all three applications. Differences are particularly pronounced for learning apps: in 2026, 81% of students in German-speaking Switzerland used learning apps, compared with 49% in French-speaking Switzerland and 31% in Ticino.

In German-speaking Switzerland, usage of the three applications largely stabilised at a high level following the changes during the COVID-19 pandemic (2020 to 2022). In French-speaking Switzerland, too, the proportions relating to word processing programmes and educational apps remained largely stable. In contrast, there were greater fluctuations in the use of learning platforms or digital learning environments. In Ticino, the use of word processing programmes remained largely stable overall, with a temporary increase in 2024. The use of educational apps also remained largely stable following the rise up to 2022. By contrast, the use of learning platforms or digital learning environments has declined steadily since 2021, reaching 58% in 2026 – the lowest figure recorded across all five surveys.

Figure 5: Use of digital applications at or for school, by language region



Note: n2020 = 5,476, n2021 = 5,840, n2022 = 5,374, n2024 = 5,419, n2026 = 5,587; taking into account gender, educational level, deviation from the average age for the educational level, first language, migration background, parents' educational attainment, housing situation and survey method. 'Computer' includes desktop, laptop and tablet.

Word processing: German-speaking Switzerland differed statistically significantly from the other language regions at all survey time points ($p < .001$). There were statistically significant differences between French-speaking Switzerland and Ticino in 2022 and 2026 ($p < .001$). German-speaking Switzerland and French-speaking Switzerland: a statistically significant increase in 2021–2022 ($p < .001$), followed by no statistically significant changes. Ticino: a statistically significant increase in 2022–2024 ($p < .001$), followed by a statistically significant decrease in 2024–2026 ($p < .001$).

Learning apps: The three linguistic regions differed statistically significantly from one another at all survey time points ($p < .001$). German-speaking Switzerland: statistically significant increase in 2021–2022 ($p < .05$), followed by no statistically significant changes. French-speaking Switzerland: a statistically significant increase in 2021–2022 ($p < .001$), followed by no statistically significant changes. Ticino: a statistically significant increase in 2021–2022 ($p < .001$), followed by no statistically significant changes.

Learning platform: With the exception of 2021, German-speaking Switzerland differed statistically significantly from the other language regions at all survey time points ($p < .001$); in 2021, there was a statistically significant difference compared with French-speaking Switzerland ($p < .001$). French-speaking Switzerland and Ticino differed statistically significantly in 2021 ($p < .001$) and 2024 ($p < .01$). German-speaking Switzerland: a statistically significant decline in 2020–2021 ($p = .001$), a statistically significant increase in 2021–2022 ($p < .05$), followed by no statistically significant changes. French-speaking Switzerland: no statistically significant changes in 2020–2022; a statistically significant decline in 2022–2024 ($p < .001$), a statistically significant increase in 2024–2026 ($p < .01$); a statistically significant decrease overall in 2020–2026 ($p < .05$). Ticino: no statistically significant change in 2020–2021; thereafter, a statistically significant decrease between all consecutive surveys ($p < .05$).

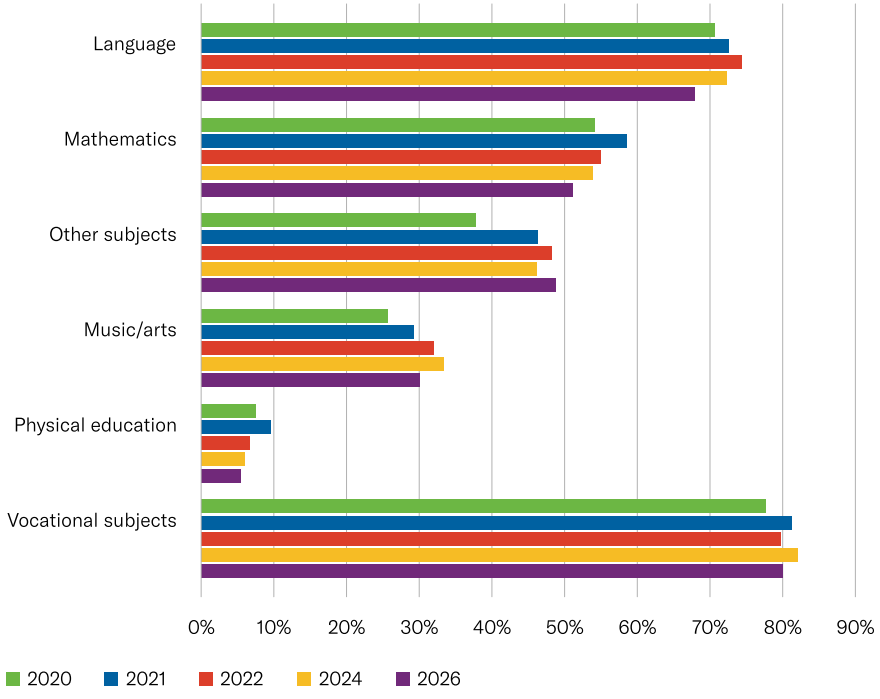
7. Use of digital tools in different school subjects

Across the different school subjects, there is no uniform trend in the use of digital tools in school. With the exception of the category 'other subjects', use declined again after an interim increase in all subject areas or, as in vocational subjects, remained largely unchanged in 2026. Overall, vocational subjects and language lessons consistently show substantially higher usage rates than all other subjects throughout the observation period. The differing developments by subject or subject area are discussed in more detail below.

In language lessons, the proportion of students reporting the use of digital tools was

already relatively high in 2020, at around 71%. This proportion increased between 2020 and 2022 before falling markedly again to 67% in 2026, below its 2020 level. In mathematics, the proportion initially rose to 59% between 2020 and 2021. It subsequently declined again and, at 51% in 2026, was also below its 2020 level. For 'other subjects', there was a marked increase between 2020 and 2021, from 38% to 46%. Use then remained largely stable before increasing slightly again between 2024 and 2026, reaching 49% in 2026. In music and arts subjects, use of digital tools rose from 26% to 32% between 2020 and 2022, remained largely stable until 2024 and then fell slightly to 30% by 2026. In physical education, the use of digital tools remained at a low level overall, as expected. After rising from 8% to 10% between 2020 and 2021, the proportion declined again and, at 5% in 2026, was below the 2020 level. The highest use of digital tools was found in vocational subjects, where it remained consistently high at around 78% to 82% throughout the observation period.

Figure 6: Use of digital tools by school subject, all educational levels



Note: Language, Math, other subjects, Music/Art, PE: n_{2020} = 5,222, n_{2021} = 5,588, n_{2022} = 5,120, n_{2024} = 5,419, n_{2026} = 5,587

Vocational subjects: vocational education only, n_{2020} = 617, n_{2021} = 433, n_{2022} = 552, n_{2024} = 526, n_{2026} = 527; taking into account gender, educational level, deviation from the average age for the educational level, first language, migration background, parents' educational attainment, housing situation and survey method.

Language: statistically significant increase in 2020–2022 ($p < .001$); statistically significant decline in 2022–2024 ($p < .05$) and 2024–2026 ($p < .001$); 2020–2026 also showed a statistically significant decline ($p < .01$).

Mathematics: statistically significant increase from 2020 to 2021 ($p < .001$); statistically significant decrease from 2021 to 2022 ($p = .001$) and from 2024 to 2026 ($p < .01$); also a statistically significant decrease from 2020 to 2026 ($p < .01$).

Other subjects: statistically significant increase in 2020–2021 ($p < .001$); no statistically significant changes in 2021–2022 and

2022–2024; a statistically significant increase in 2024–2026 ($p < .05$).

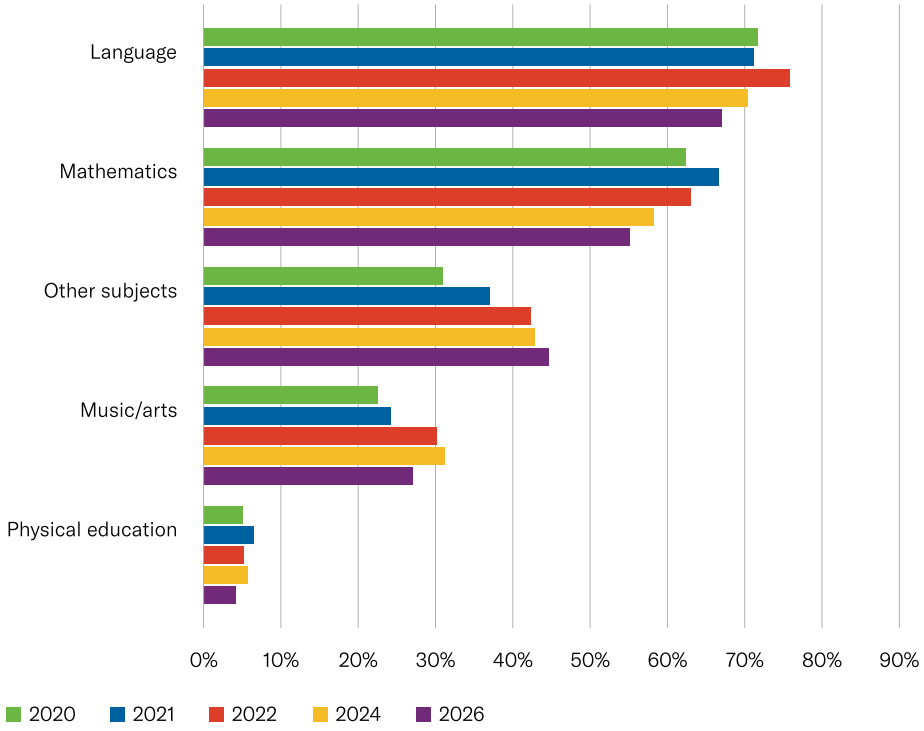
Music/arts: statistically significant increase in 2020–2021 ($p < .001$) and 2021–2022 ($p < .01$); no statistically significant change in 2022–2024; and a statistically significant decrease in 2024–2026 ($p = .001$).

Physical education: statistically significant increase in 2020–2021 ($p = .001$), a significant decrease in 2021–2022 ($p < .001$), and no statistically significant change in 2022–2024 and 2024–2026; 2020–2026: a statistically significant decrease ($p < .001$).

Vocational subjects: There were no statistically significant changes between the surveys.

Considering the use of digital tools by school subject for primary education only produces similar findings to those for all educational levels. Overall, the use of digital tools in language and mathematics lessons at primary level has declined markedly since 2022 and in 2026 was even below the 2020 level. By contrast, the use of digital tools in 'other subjects' increased substantially between 2020 and 2022 and subsequently remained largely stable at a higher level. At 45%, however, use was still well below that in language and mathematics lessons.

Figure 7: Use of digital tools at primary level, by school subject



Note: Primary level only, n_{2020} = 2,327, n_{2021} = 2,979, n_{2022} = 2,333, n_{2024} = 2,786, n_{2026} = 2,912; taking into account gender, educational level, deviation from the average age for the educational level, first language, migration background, parents' educational attainment, housing situation and survey method.

Language: statistically significant increase in 2021–2022 ($p < .001$); statistically significant decline in 2022–2024 ($p < .001$) and 2024–2026 ($p < .01$); 2020–2026 also showed a statistically significant decline ($p = .001$).

Mathematics: statistically significant increase in 2020–2021 ($p < .01$); statistically significant decrease in 2021–2022 ($p < .05$), 2022–2024 ($p = .001$) and 2024–2026 ($p < .05$); 2020–2026 also showed a statistically significant decline ($p < .001$).

Other subjects: statistically significant increases in 2020–2021 and 2021–2022 ($p < .001$ in each case), followed by no statistically significant changes.

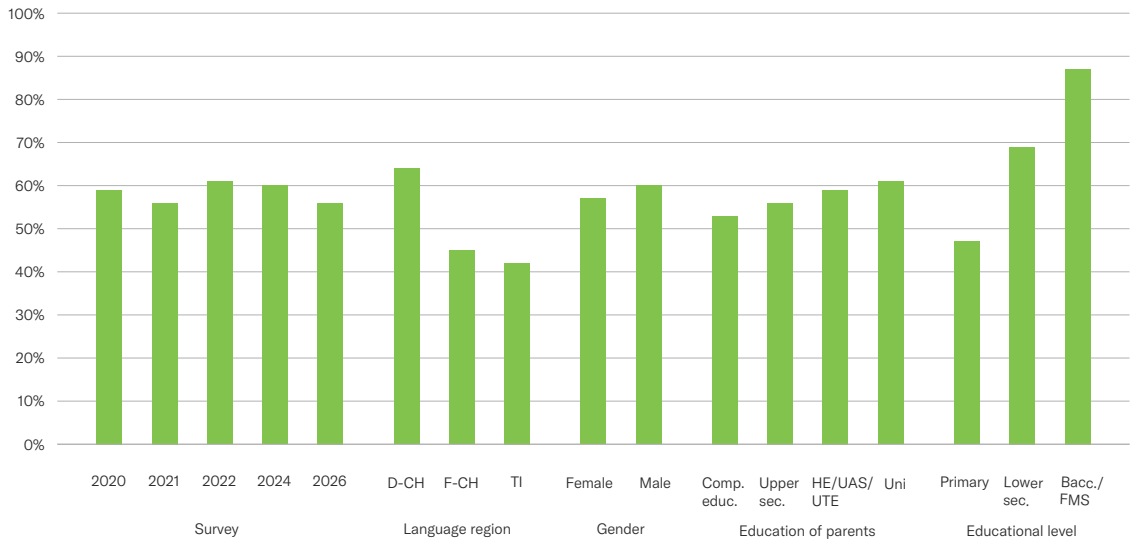
Music/arts: A statistically significant increase in 2021–2022 ($p < .001$); no statistically significant change in 2022–2024; a statistically significant decrease in 2024–2026 ($p = .001$).

Physical education: statistically significant increase in 2020–2021 ($p < .05$), followed by no statistically significant changes until 2024; statistically significant decrease in 2024–2026 ($p = .010$).

8. Frequency of computer use at school

The surveys also provide insights into the intensity of use, i.e. the frequency with which digital tools are used. Overall, there is no fundamental trend towards increasing daily computer use across the survey waves. After a higher proportion in 2022 and 2024, the share of students reporting daily computer use at school fell slightly again in 2026. Those reporting daily computer use at school are considerably more likely to come from German-speaking Switzerland and to attend lower secondary school or a Baccalaureate school/FMS. In addition, the proportion using computers daily increases with parents' level of education. VET learners are excluded from these analyses because they do not attend school every day.

Figure 8: Daily computer use at school



Note: excluding vocational training, n = 24,856; taking into account gender, educational level, deviation from the average age for that educational level, first language, migration background, parents' educational attainment, housing situation and survey method. 'Computer' includes desktop, laptop and tablet.

Surveys: 2021–2022: statistically significant increase ($p < .001$); 2024–2026: statistically significant decrease ($p < .001$); 2022–2026: also a statistically significant decrease ($p < .001$).

Language region: The three language regions differ statistically significantly from one another (German-speaking Switzerland vs. French-speaking Switzerland and Ticino: $p < .001$ in each case; French-speaking Switzerland vs. Ticino: $p < .01$).

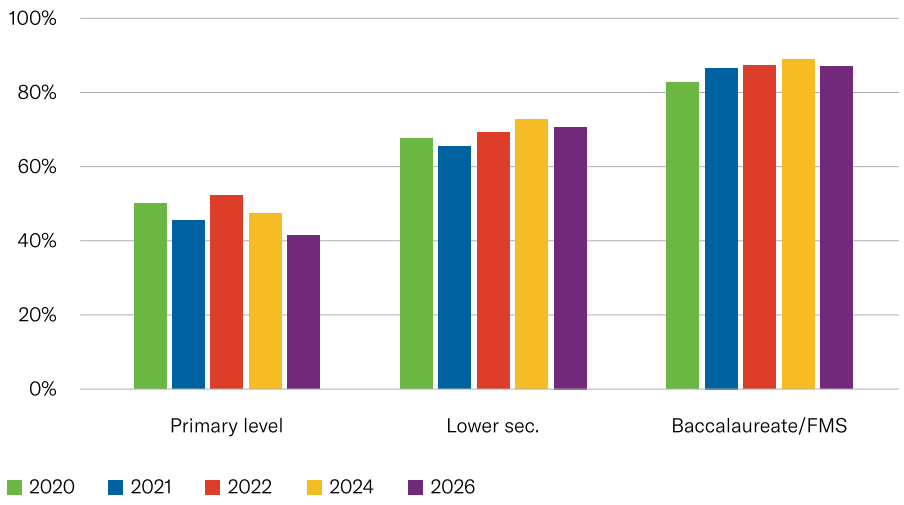
Gender: Men and women differ statistically significantly ($p < .01$).

Parents' educational attainment: Compulsory schooling differs statistically significantly from HF/FH/PH and university ($p < .01$ in each case). Secondary level II differs statistically significantly from the two tertiary levels (higher vocational education/university of applied sciences/teacher training college: $p < .05$; university: $p < .001$). Higher vocational education/university of applied sciences/teacher training college and university differ statistically significantly ($p < .01$).

Level of education: All levels of education differ statistically significantly from one another ($p < .001$ in each case).

Daily usage rates differ substantially between primary education, lower secondary education, and Baccalaureate school/FMS at every survey wave. Within educational levels, there are some relevant changes. These are most pronounced at primary level, where the proportion of students using computers daily fell from 52% in 2022 to 41% in 2026. By contrast, in 2026, 68% of lower secondary students and 85% of students at Baccalaureate school/FMS reported daily computer use. At lower secondary level and at Baccalaureate school/FMS, daily computer use remained largely stable across the survey waves. For these two educational levels, therefore, there is no clear trend towards increasing daily computer use.

Figure 9: Daily use of computers at school by educational level



Note: excluding vocational training, n_{2020} = 4,835, n_{2021} = 5,381, n_{2022} = 4,799, n_{2024} = 4,847, n_{2026} = 4,994; taking into account gender, educational level, deviation from the average age for the educational level, first language, migration background, parents' educational attainment, housing situation and survey method. 'Computer' includes desktop, laptop and tablet.

Educational level: Primary level, lower Secondary and Baccalaureate school/FMS differ statistically significantly from one another at all survey time points ($p < .001$ in each case).

Primary level: statistically significant decline in 2022–2024 ($p = .001$), statistically significant decline in 2024–2026 ($p < .001$); 2020–2026 also showed a statistically significant decline ($p < .001$).

Lower secondary: 2020–2022 showed no statistically significant changes; 2022–2024 showed a statistically significant increase ($p < .05$); 2024–2026 showed no statistically significant change.

Baccalaureate school/FMS: no statistically significant change in 2020–2021; a statistically significant increase in 2021–2022 ($p < .05$); no statistically significant changes in 2022–2026.

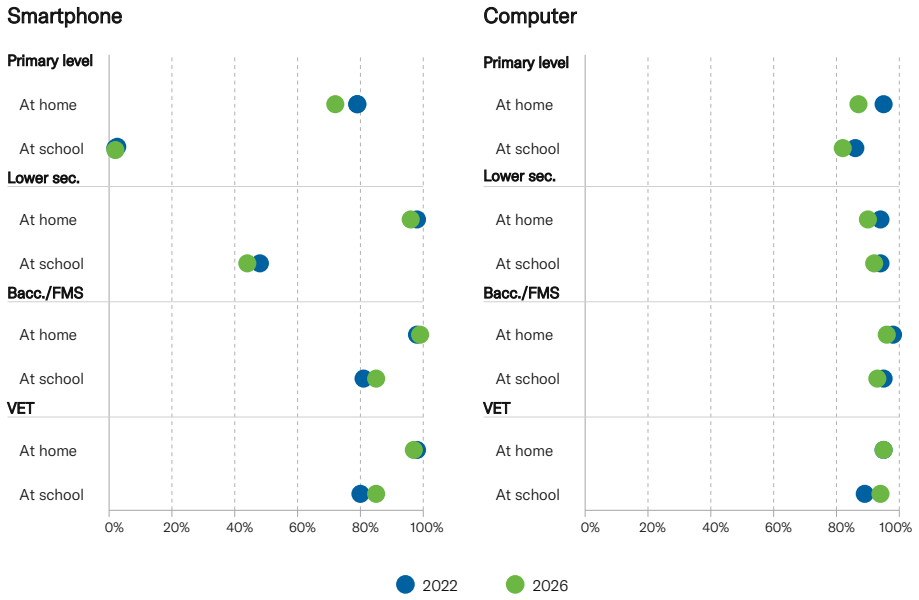
9. Use at home compared with use at school

The use of digital tools in schools is also the subject of critical debate, particularly with regard to its effects on students' learning behaviour. Various schools have therefore introduced tighter restrictions on smartphone use, or even banned smartphones, over

the past one to two years. The results of the present monitoring show that, following the digitalisation trend during the COVID-19 pandemic, the use of digital devices has largely stabilised since 2022 and has even declined slightly in some areas. A clear pattern emerges, however, when use at home is compared with use at school. Both computers and smartphones are used much more frequently at home than at school. Only the results from the 2022 to 2026 surveys are considered here in order to exclude pandemic-related changes in home use. The most pronounced difference is at primary level, particularly for smartphones. In both 2022 and 2026, only 2% of primary students used their smartphone at school, compared with 79% and 72%, respectively, at home. Although this difference decreases markedly at higher educational levels, it remains substantial. From lower secondary level onwards, virtually all students use a smartphone at home, while only around 45% at lower secondary level and around 85% at upper secondary level report using one at school. For computer use, the difference between school and home is much smaller than for smartphones. Across all educational levels and in both settings, the proportion of students using a computer ranges between 82% and 98%.

The most striking development when comparing the 2022 and 2026 surveys is found at primary and lower secondary levels. Here, the use of digital devices declined slightly in several areas. The clearest example is private smartphone use among primary students, which fell from 79% to 72%. Private and school computer use also declined slightly at primary and lower secondary levels. In addition, smartphone use at school fell at lower secondary level. This decline coincides with restrictions on smartphone use introduced at various schools, but the available data do not allow it to be attributed unambiguously to those restrictions.

Figure 10: Use at home and at school, by educational level



Note: Surveys from 2022 to 2026, n_{2022} = 5,374, n_{2024} = 5,419, n_{2026} = 5,587; taking into account gender, educational level, deviation from the average age for that educational level, first language, migration background, parents' educational attainment, housing situation and survey method. For clarity, the presentation is limited to the 2022 and 2026 surveys. The results of the 2024 survey do not yield any findings that differ in substance.

Computer use at home: In 2022, only Baccalaureate school/FMS differed statistically significantly from all other levels (primary level and lower secondary level: p = .001 in each case; vocational education: p < .05). In 2026, all levels differed statistically significantly from one another (p < .01), with the exception of Baccalaureate school/FMS and vocational education. Primary level and lower secondary level: a statistically significant decline from 2022 to 2026 (p < .001 in each case).

Computer use at school: In 2022, all levels differed statistically significantly from one another (p ≤ .001 in each case), with the exception of primary level and vocational education, as well as lower secondary level and Baccalaureate school/FMS. In 2026, only the primary level differed statistically significantly from all other levels (p < .001 in each case). Primary level and lower secondary level: statistically significant decline from 2022 to 2026 (p < .01); vocational education: a statistically significant increase (p < .05); Baccalaureate school/FMS: no statistically significant change.

Smartphone use at home: In 2022, only primary level differed statistically significantly from all other levels (p < .001 in each case). In 2026, with one exception (lower secondary – vocational education), all levels differed statistically significantly from one another (p < .001 in each case; Baccalaureate school/FMS – vocational education: p < .05). Primary and lower secondary level: statistically significant decline from 2022 to 2026 (p < .001 in each case); Baccalaureate school/FMS and vocational education: no statistically significant changes.

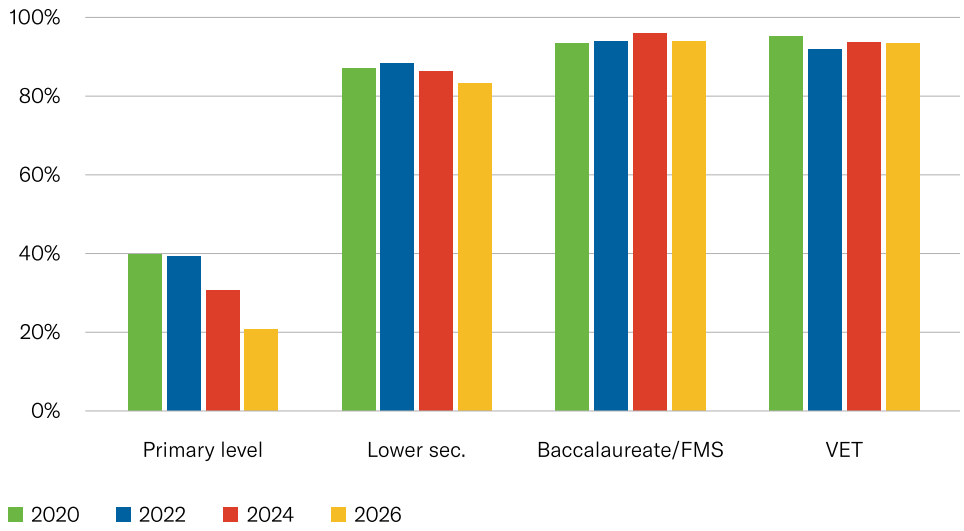
Smartphone use at school: In 2022 and 2026, with one exception (Baccalaureate school/FMS – vocational education), all levels differed statistically significantly from one another (p < .001 in each case). Lower secondary level: statistically significant decline from 2022 to 2026 (p < .05); primary level, Baccalaureate school/FMS and vocational education: no statistically significant changes.

10. Private use of social media in leisure time

The use of social media by children and young people is increasingly controversial internationally. In Australia, young people under 16 have not been permitted to hold social-media accounts since the end of 2025. These efforts focus particularly on possible effects on mental health, well-being, learning behaviour and social development. Since 2020, the monitoring of digitalisation has also systematically recorded students' private use of various digital applications. The results for private social-media use in

leisure time show clear differences between primary education and higher educational levels at every survey wave. The sharp decline at primary level is particularly striking. The proportion of primary students using social media in their leisure time almost halved, from around 40% in 2020 to around 20% in 2026. A decline is also evident at lower secondary level, from 87% to 83%, while use at upper secondary level remained stable at a very high level throughout the observation period.

Figure 11: Private use of social media in leisure time, by educational level



Note: n_{2020} = 5,476, n_{2021} = 5,840, n_{2022} = 5,374, n_{2024} = 5,419, n_{2026} = 5,587; taking into account gender, educational level, deviation from the average age for the educational level, first language, migration background, parents' educational attainment, housing situation and survey method.

Private use of social media: With one exception (Baccalaureate school/FMS – vocational education), the educational levels differed statistically significantly from one another at all survey points in time ($p < .001$ in each case).

Primary level: a continuous, statistically significant decline since 2022 (2022–2024 and 2024–2026: $p < .001$ in each case).

Lower secondary level: continuous, statistically significant decline since 2022 (2022–2024 and 2024–2026: $p < .001$ in each case).

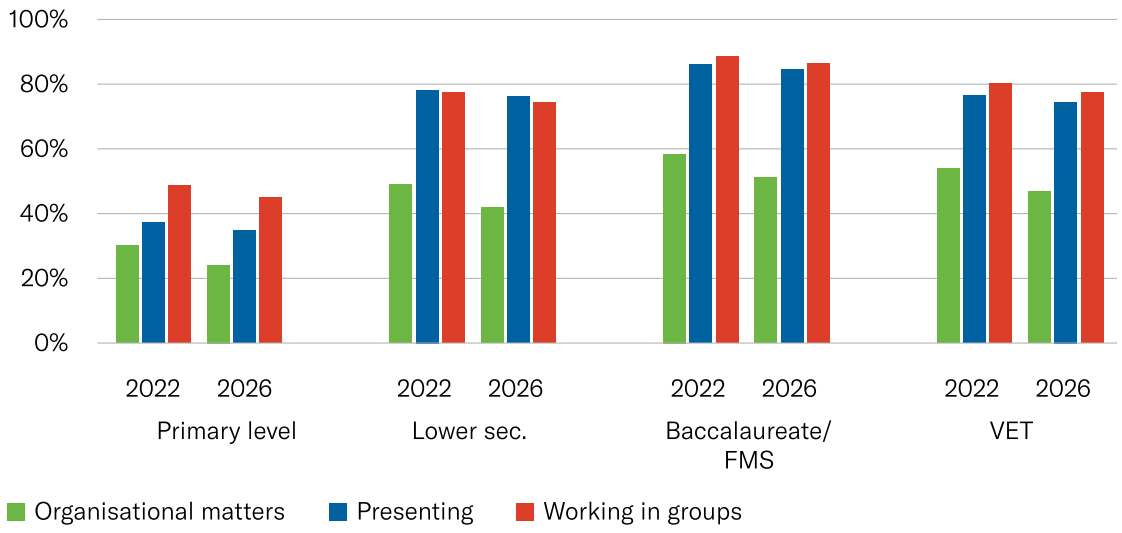
Baccalaureate school /FMS and vocational education: statistically significant increase in 2022–2024 ($p < .05$ in each case), and statistically significant decline in 2024–2026 ($p < .001$ in each case).

11. Type of use

Digital tools can be used both for organisational purposes and for actively completing classroom tasks. Around 30% of primary students report that digital communication with their teacher is mainly used for organisational purposes. This means that digital tools in exchanges between teachers and students were used primarily for organisational matters such as appointments or class information. At all educational levels, however, a larger proportion of students reported actively using digital tools for presentations

or group work. In 2026, for example, around 85% of students at baccalaureate and upper-secondary specialised schools (FMS) reported creating or giving presentations in digital form, for instance using PowerPoint. A similarly high proportion reported using digital applications for group collaboration.

Figure 12: Type of use of digital tools



Note: Surveys from 2022 to 2026, n_{2022} = 5,331, n_{2024} = 5,365, n_{2026} = 5,518; taking into account gender, educational level, deviation from the average age for that educational level, first language, migration background, parents' educational attainment, housing situation and survey method. For clarity, the presentation is limited to the 2022 and 2026 surveys. The results of the 2024 survey do not yield any findings that differ in substance.

Organisational tasks: The educational levels differed statistically significantly from one another in 2022 and 2026 ($p < .05$ in each case); statistically significant decline across all educational levels in 2022–2026 ($p < .001$ in each case).

Presenting: The educational levels differed statistically significantly from one another in 2022 and 2026 ($p < .001$ in each case); statistically significant decline across all educational levels in 2022–2026 ($p < .05$ in each case).

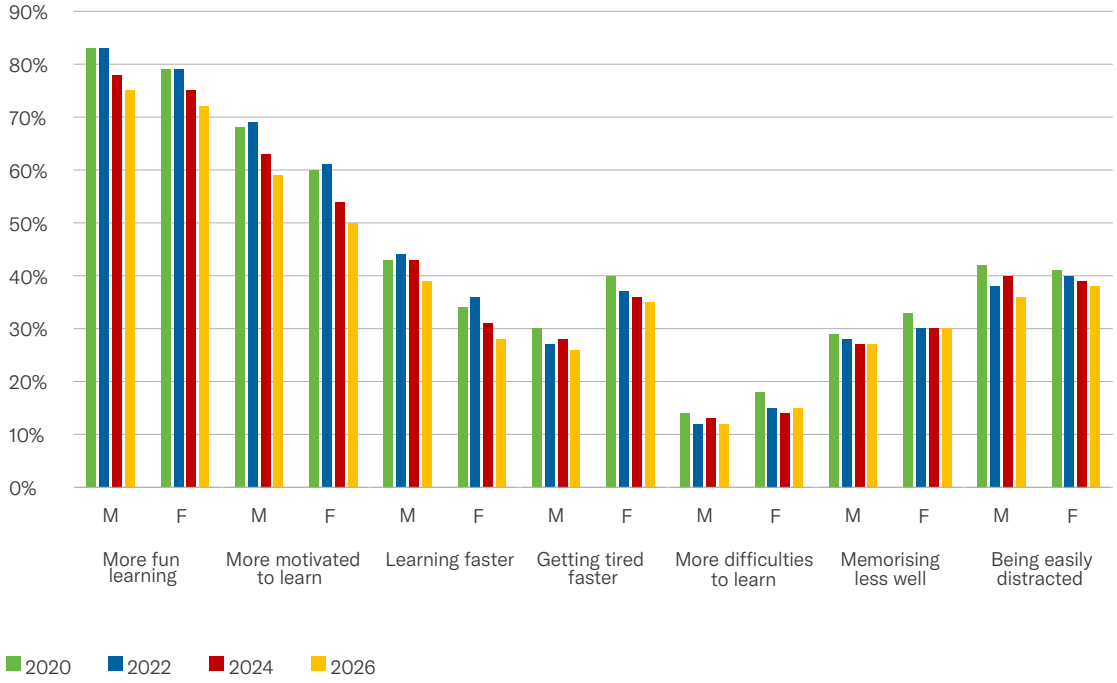
Working together in groups: The educational levels differed statistically significantly from one another in 2022 and 2026 ($p < .05$ in each case); statistically significant decline across all educational levels in 2022–2026 ($p < .001$ in each case).

12. Attitudes towards learning with digital tools

Students in Switzerland are generally positive about learning with digital tools when they compare it with conventional learning using books, paper and pen. Positive assessments such as 'more fun learning', 'more motivated to learn' and 'learning faster' have declined slightly, without a simultaneous increase in negative assessments such as 'more difficulties to learn', 'memorising less well', 'getting tired faster' or 'being easily distracted'.

Overall, the monitoring therefore yields three key findings regarding attitudes towards learning with digital tools. First, positive assessments of learning with digital tools declined slightly between 2022 and 2026, without negative assessments increasing at the same time. Second, subjectively perceived positive aspects of learning with digital tools continue to outweigh the negative aspects. Third, a stable gender difference is evident across all survey waves. Girls and young women assess learning with digital tools more critically overall than boys and young men: they agree less often with positive statements and more often with negative statements.

Figure 13: Attitudes towards learning with digital tools, by gender



Note: n_{2020} = 5,224, n_{2021} = 5,603, n_{2022} = 5,143, n_{2024} = 5,362, n_{2026} = 5,519 (slight variations depending on the item); taking into account gender, educational level, deviation from the average age for the educational level, first language, migration background, parents' educational attainment, housing situation and survey method.

Gender differences: With a few exceptions, the differences are statistically significant ($p < .05$). Exceptions are 'More difficulties to learn' (2024), 'Memorising less well' (2022) and 'Being easily distracted' (at no survey point). Changes between survey points: Between 2022 and 2026, statistically significant declines were observed for both genders in 'More fun learning', 'More motivated to learn' and 'Learning faster' ($p < .01$ in each case). For the remaining aspects, there were no statistically significant changes between 2022 and 2026 for either gender.

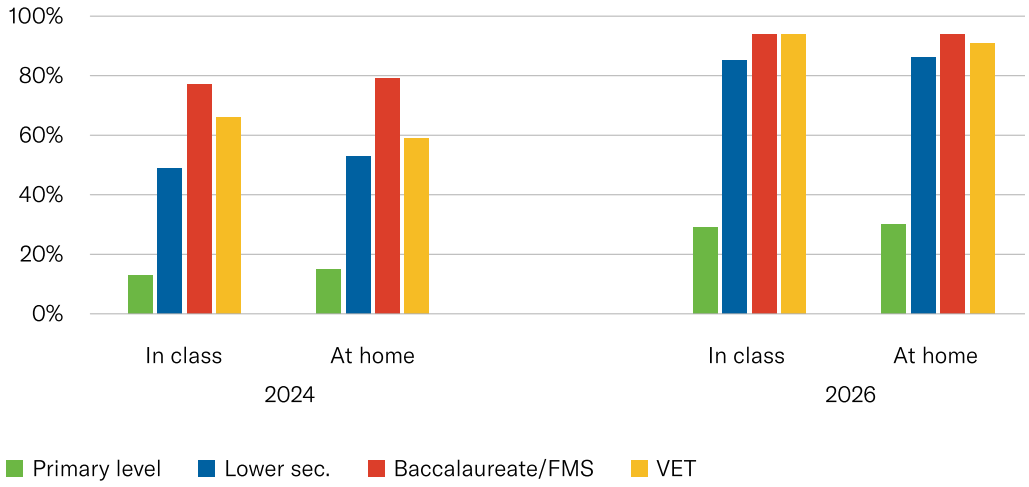
13. Artificial intelligence in lessons and at home for school-related tasks

In 2024, as part of the monitoring of digitalisation, children and young people were asked for the first time about their use of AI tools such as ChatGPT and other generative

language models, AI-based translation tools and image-generation applications, both in lessons and at home for school-related tasks. The 2026 survey now makes it possible to examine developments in the use of these applications systematically over a two-year period. These remain the first and, to date, only representative results for Switzerland showing how widespread the use of such AI applications is among 8- to 18-year-olds.

While only a comparatively small proportion of primary students used AI applications in lessons or at home for school-related tasks in 2026, the proportion increased markedly from lower secondary level onwards. In 2026, around 85% of lower secondary students and more than 90% of young people in Baccalaureate school/FMS and VET used generative AI in lessons or at home for school-related tasks, compared with around 30% at primary level. These differences also reflect more general differences between educational levels in the prevalence and use of digital devices in lessons. Between 2024 and 2026, the use of generative AI increased substantially at all educational levels, with particularly pronounced increases at primary level and in VET. Compared with generative AI, the use of AI-based translation tools remained largely stable. Image-generation applications were also used more frequently than in 2024, but their usage rates remained substantially lower at all educational levels than those of generative AI or translation tools. Within each educational level, use in lessons and use at home for school-related tasks are broadly similar.

Figure 14: Use of generative AI in lessons and at home for school-related tasks

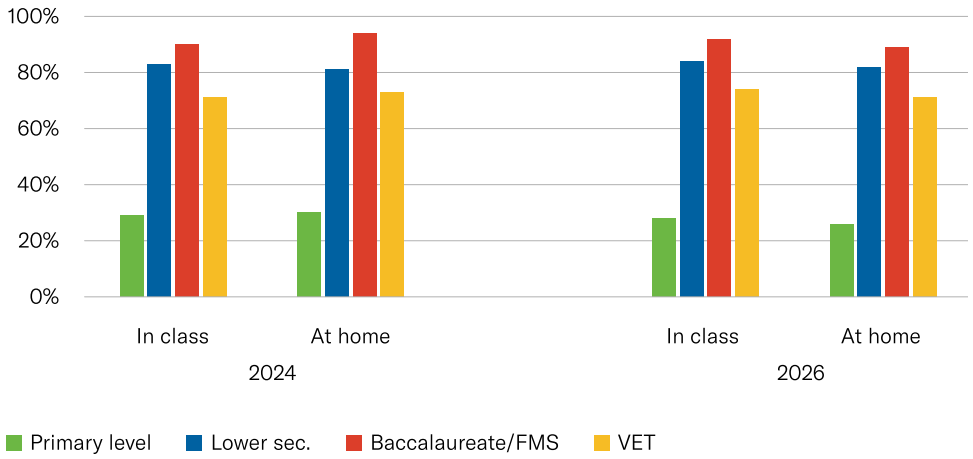


Note: n_{2024} = 5,396, n_{2026} = 5,551 (slight variation depending on the item); taking into account gender, educational level, deviation from the average age for that educational level, first language, migration background, parents' educational attainment, housing situation and survey method.

In the classroom: In 2024, all educational levels differed statistically significantly from one another ($p < .001$ in each case); in 2026, there were also statistically significant differences between all educational levels, with the exception of Baccalaureate school/FMS and vocational education. 2024–2026: statistically significant increase across all educational levels ($p < .001$ in each case).

At home: In 2024, all educational levels differed statistically significantly from one another, with the exception of lower secondary level and vocational education; in 2026, there were also statistically significant differences between all educational levels, with the exception of Baccalaureate school/FMS and vocational education. 2024–2026: statistically significant increase across all educational levels ($p < .001$ in each case).

Figure 15: Use of AI-based translation tools in lessons and at home for school-related tasks

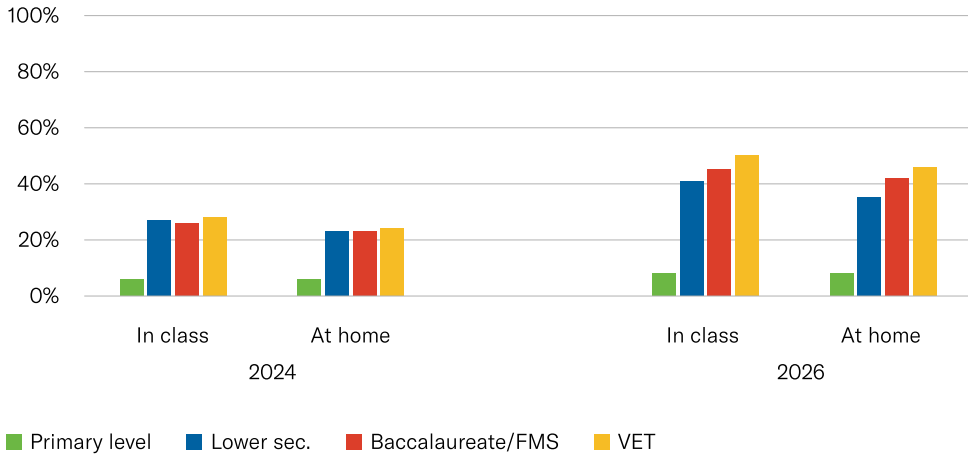


Note: n_{2024} = 5,394, n_{2026} = 5,545 (slight variation depending on the item); taking into account gender, educational level, deviation from the average age for that educational level, first language, migration background, parents' educational attainment, housing situation and survey method.

In the classroom: In 2024 and 2026, all educational levels differed statistically significantly from one another ($p < .01$ in each case). 2024–2026: no statistically significant change at any educational level.

At home: In 2024 and 2026, all educational levels differed statistically significantly from one another ($p < .001$ in each case). 2024–2026: statistically significant decline at primary level ($p < .01$) and Baccalaureate school/FMS ($p = .05$); no statistically significant change at lower secondary level or in vocational education.

Figure 16: Use of AI image-generation tools in lessons and at home



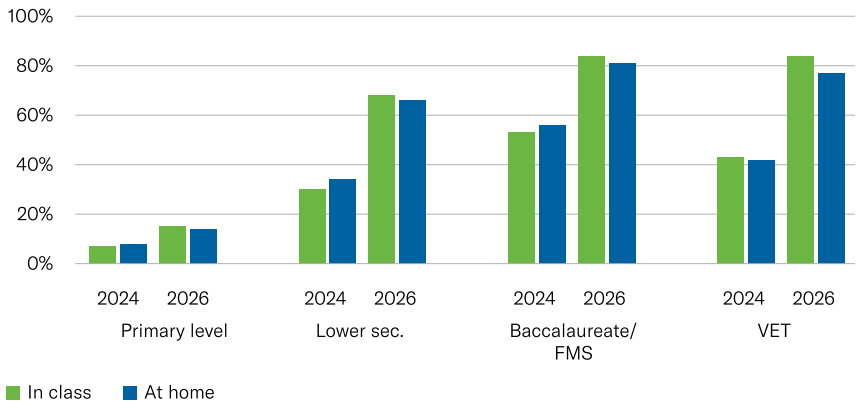
Note: n_{2024} = 5,391, n_{2026} = 5,539 (slight variation depending on the item); taking into account gender, educational level, deviation from the average age for that educational level, first language, migration background, parents' educational attainment, housing situation and survey method.

In the classroom: In 2024, primary level differed statistically significantly from all other educational levels ($p < .001$ in each case); there were no statistically significant differences between the remaining educational levels. In 2026, primary level differed statistically significantly from all other educational levels ($p < .001$ in each case); lower secondary level and vocational education also differed statistically significantly ($p < .01$); the remaining differences between educational levels were not statistically significant. 2024–2026: statistically significant increase across all educational levels (primary level: $p < .05$; other educational levels: $p < .001$ in each case).

At home: In 2024, primary level differed statistically significantly from all other educational levels ($p < .001$ in each case); there were no statistically significant differences between the remaining educational levels. In 2026, all educational levels differed statistically significantly from one another ($p < .001$ in each case), with the exception of Baccalaureate school/FMS and vocational education. 2024–2026: statistically significant increase across all educational levels (primary level: $p < .05$; other educational levels: $p < .001$ in each case).

Looking at frequency of use, i.e. the proportion of students using these AI-supported tools at least once a week or more often, the sharp increase in regular use of generative AI across all educational levels is striking. The increase is particularly pronounced at lower secondary level and in VET. At Baccalaureate school/FMS the increase is somewhat smaller, as regular use was already at a high level in 2024. By contrast, regular use of AI-based translation tools in lessons remained largely unchanged. At home for school-related tasks, there was a slight decline at primary level, lower secondary level and in Baccalaureate school/FMS, while use in VET did not change substantially. The slight decline in regular use of AI-based translation tools could indicate that such tasks are increasingly being carried out using generative AI applications. The available data, however, do not permit a firm conclusion on this point.

Figure 17: Frequency of generative AI use in lessons and at home for school-related tasks, at least once a week or more often

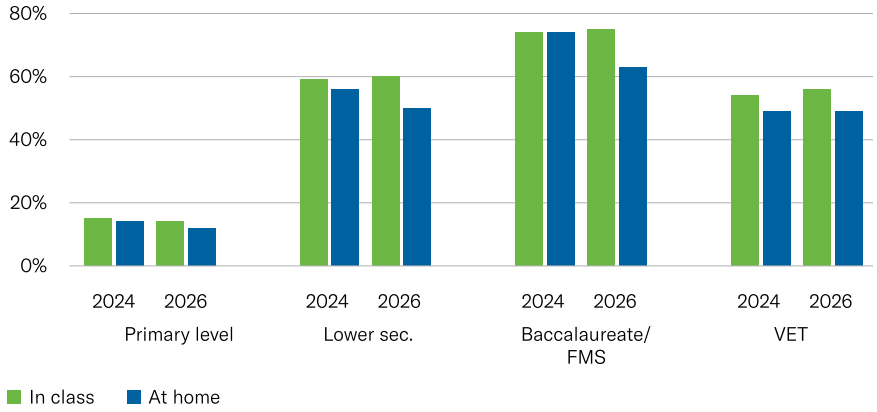


Note: n_{2024} = 5,396, n_{2026} = 5,551 (slight variation depending on the item); taking into account gender, educational level, deviation from the average age for the educational level, first language, migration background, parents' educational attainment, housing situation and survey method.

In the classroom: In 2024, all educational levels differed statistically significantly from one another ($p < .001$ in each case). In 2026, there were also statistically significant differences between all educational levels ($p < .001$ in each case), with the exception of Baccalaureate school/FMS and vocational education. 2024–2026: statistically significant increase across all educational levels ($p < .001$ in each case).

At home: In 2024, all educational levels differed statistically significantly from one another ($p < .01$ in each case), with the exception of lower secondary level and vocational education. In 2026, there were also statistically significant differences between all educational levels ($p < .001$ in each case), with the exception of Baccalaureate school/FMS and vocational education. 2024–2026: statistically significant increase across all educational levels ($p < .001$ in each case).

Figure 18: Frequency of use of AI-based translation tools in lessons and at home for school-related tasks, at least once a week or more often



Note: n_{2024} = 5,394, n_{2026} = 5,545 (slight variation depending on the item); taking into account gender, educational level, deviation from the average age for the educational level, first language, migration background, parents' educational attainment, housing situation and survey method.

In the classroom: In 2024 and 2026, all educational levels differed statistically significantly from one another ($p < .001$ in each case), with the exception of lower secondary level and vocational education. 2024–2026: no statistically significant change at any educational level.

At home: In 2024, all educational levels differed statistically significantly from one another ($p < .01$ in each case). In 2026, all educational levels differed statistically significantly from one another ($p < .001$ in each case), with the exception of lower secondary level and vocational education. 2024–2026: statistically significant decline at primary level ($p < .05$), lower secondary level ($p < .01$) and Baccalaureate school/FMS ($p < .001$); no statistically significant change in vocational education.

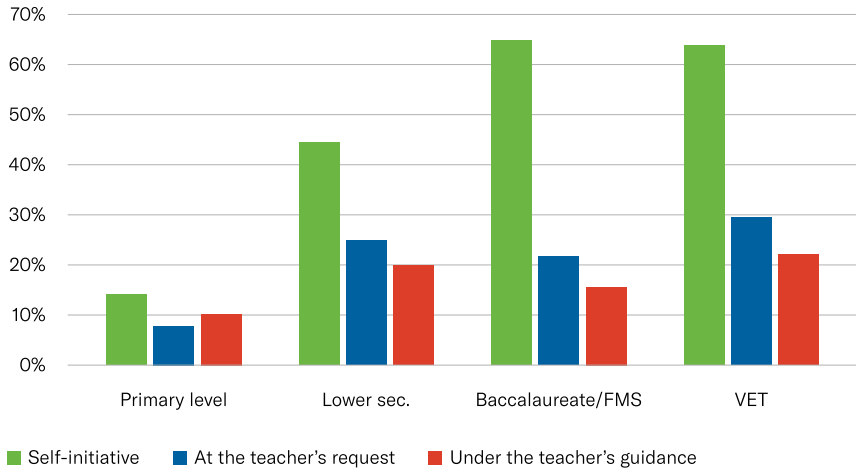
14. Students' own initiative in using AI in lessons

In addition to frequency of use, the survey recorded for the first time who initiates the use of generative AI in lessons. A distinction was made between students' own initiative, use at the teacher's request, and use under the teacher's guidance. For each of these forms, respondents reported how often it occurred (never, sometimes, often). The results show that the use of generative AI in lessons was predominantly initiated by students themselves. Overall, 45% report often using generative AI on their own initiative. By contrast, only 22% report frequent use at the teacher's request and 18% frequent use under the

teacher's guidance.

As the educational level increases, the proportion of students who frequently use generative AI on their own initiative rises markedly. While comparatively few primary students report frequently using generative AI such as ChatGPT in lessons on their own initiative, around two thirds of students at Baccalaureate school/FMS and learners in VET report doing so. Frequent use at the teacher's request or under the teacher's guidance is considerably less common. It is notable, however, that the proportion frequently using generative AI at the teacher's request or under the teacher's guidance is higher in VET than in Baccalaureate school/FMS.

Figure 19: Initiative in the use of generative AI in lessons, by educational level



Note: n_{2026} = 3,036; taking into account gender, educational level, deviation from the average age for that educational level, first language, migration background, parents' educational attainment, housing situation and survey method.

Self-initiative: Primary level differed statistically significantly from all other educational levels ($p < .001$ in each case). Lower secondary level differed statistically significantly from Baccalaureate school/FMS and vocational education ($p < .001$ in each case). There was no statistically significant difference between Baccalaureate school/FMS and vocational education.

At the teacher's request: Primary level differed statistically significantly from all other educational levels ($p < .001$ in each case). There was no statistically significant difference between lower secondary level and Baccalaureate school/FMS; vocational education differed statistically significantly from lower secondary level ($p < .05$) and from Baccalaureate school/FMS ($p < .01$).

Under the teacher's guidance: Primary level differed statistically significantly from all other educational levels ($p < .001$ in each case). Baccalaureate school/FMS differed statistically significantly from lower secondary level and vocational education ($p < .01$ in each case). There was no statistically significant difference between lower secondary level and vocational education.