



Press Release:

From phone bans to the Tooth Fairy: Karri Parent Survey captures the mood of SA school families in 2026

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SA parents want phones controlled at school and social media delayed until 16, Karri survey finds

Karri Parent Survey 2026 captures the views of 2,780 South African school parents on phones, social media, youth banking, education insurance and the Tooth Fairy.

Cape Town, South Africa – August 2026

A new parent survey by Karri has found that South African school parents are strongly in favour of tighter controls on children's phone use during the school day, with most also saying children should only access social media from the age of 16 or older.

The Karri Parent Survey 2026 was conducted via the Karri app in March and April 2026. A total of 2,780 parents responded, representing more than 4,751 school-going children across all nine provinces.

The findings show that 91% of respondents want controls on cell phones at school. Of these, 37% support a full ban, while 54% believe phones should be allowed at school but locked away during the day. Only 7% support unrestricted phone use at school.

Parents with younger children were more likely to support stricter rules, with close to half of respondents whose oldest school-going child is between five and 11 years old supporting an outright ban.

The survey also found that parents are cautious about social media access. Almost three quarters of respondents, 74%, said children should be 16 or older before getting access to a social media account, while 30% said children should wait until 18 or older.

The most common reasons parents gave for delaying social media access were maturity and readiness, safety and online dangers, and the possible impact on children's mental health.



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“Parents are not saying children should have no access to technology. What we are seeing is a strong call for clearer boundaries, especially during the school day and around social media,” said *Nastassja Janse van Rensburg, Head of Marketing* “The findings point to a very practical concern: parents want children to be connected, but not distracted, exposed or financially vulnerable.”

The survey also explored how parents think about children and money. When asked about their biggest concerns around youth banking, parents most often mentioned keeping money secure, fraud and scams, and overspending.

These concerns reflect a growing need for youth money tools that give children practical independence while allowing parents to keep appropriate oversight.

“Schools and parents are navigating a new reality where children are growing up with digital tools, digital payments and online platforms from a young age,” said *Nastassja Janse van Rensburg, Head of Marketing* “The challenge is not only access, but control, safety and education. Parents want solutions that help children build independence in a responsible way.”

Beyond technology and youth spending, the survey revealed a significant education protection gap. Three in four respondents said they do not currently have education insurance for their children.

While digital safety dominated the parent conversation, the education insurance finding highlights another area of concern for families: how education costs would be protected if a parent were no longer around.

The survey also included a lighter look at household money habits through the Karri Tooth Fairy Index. According to respondents, the average Tooth Fairy payment in South Africa is R46.95 per tooth in 2026, up from R44.26 in 2025.

The Tooth Fairy Index, modelled as a playful local measure of family spending habits, showed differences across provinces and offered a lighter snapshot of how parents are thinking about money at home.

The full Karri Parent Survey 2026 report includes additional findings, charts and methodology notes across phones at school, social media, youth banking, education insurance and Tooth Fairy payments.



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Key findings from the Karri Parent Survey 2026

91% of respondents want controls on phones at school.
37% support a full phone ban at school.
54% believe phones should be locked away during the school day.
74% say children should be 16 or older before getting social media accounts.
30% say children should be 18 or older before getting social media accounts.
75% of respondents do not currently have education insurance.
R46.95 is the average Tooth Fairy payment per tooth in 2026.

About the survey

The Karri Parent Survey 2026 was conducted in March and April 2026 via the Karri app. A total of 2,780 parents responded, representing more than 4,751 school-going children across all nine provinces.

Respondents are Karri app users and primarily represent urban, economically active households. Different respondents were served different questions at random, which resulted in sample size variations from question to question.

About Karri

Karri is a South African school fintech platform helping schools and families manage school payments, student spending and education-focused financial solutions. Karri's products include Collections, Karri Card and Karri Cover.

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