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Weekly Epidemiological Report on COVID-19 cases aged 0-18 years in Ireland Week 18, 2021

Health Protection Surveillance Centre, HPSC
COVID-19 Epidemiology Team, 10/05/2021

Dates to note:

- Week 18 2021 (2nd to 8th May 2021)
- Week 10 2020 (1st to 7th March 2020) – The beginning of the pandemic in Ireland
- Please see next slide for additional dates to note

Note: The epidemiological weeks in this report, run from Sunday to Saturday, please refer to the [surveillance resources](#) on the HPSC website for a complete list of epidemiological weeks with start and end dates.

Note: Data were extracted from the Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (CIDR) system on 10/05/2021 and are provisional and subject to ongoing review, validation and update. As a result, figures in this report may differ from previously published figures.

Summary of important dates for childcare facilities (CCFs) and schools

Also see Figures 1a and 1b for summary of key dates



Epidemiological Week*	Epi week start date	School and childcare facility closures/openings
Week 11, 2020	08/03/2020	All Schools and Childcare facilities close.
Week 27, 2020	29/06/2020	Childcare facilities re-open.
Week 35, 2020	23/08/2020	Schools re-open.
Week 52, 2020	20/12/2020	All schools close for on-site education. Childcare facilities continue with reduced capacity.
Week 6, 2021: Phased re-opening of schools commences	07/02/2021	Partial re-opening of special education schools.
Week 9, 2021	28/02/2021	Junior classes in primary school (junior infants to 2 nd class) and leaving certificate students in secondary school return. Childcare facilities return to full capacity.
Week 11, 2021	14/03/2021	The remaining primary school classes and 5 th year students in secondary school return.
Week 13, 2021	28/03/2021	All schools close for Easter holiday
Week 15, 2021	11/04/2021	All schools re-open after Easter holiday. The remaining secondary school classes return.

*Note: The epidemiological weeks in this report, run from Sunday to Saturday, please refer to the [surveillance resources](#) on the HPSC website for a complete list of epidemiological weeks with start and end dates.

1. Outbreak Definition

- There is a cluster/outbreak, with two or more cases of laboratory confirmed COVID-19 infection regardless of symptom status. This includes cases with symptoms and cases who are asymptomatic.

OR

- There is a cluster/outbreak, with two or more cases of illness with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection (as per the COVID-19 case definition), and at least one person is a confirmed case of COVID-19

The detection of a case or the declaration of an outbreak in a school or childcare facility does not of itself indicate that transmission occurred within the school or facility; clusters of cases may be detected within a particular setting despite exposure and transmission having occurred elsewhere

2. Age Breakdown

- Cases were broadly categorised by age groups that are associated with different school types: 0-4 years (pre-school), 5-12 years (primary school) and 13-18 years (secondary school). However, it is likely that there is some overlap in the ages of children attending all school types and children do not necessarily attend the school type indicated by their age grouping.

Between March 1st 2020 and May 8th 2021, a total of **252,808** confirmed COVID-19 cases were notified on CIDR:

- **8,242 (3%)** of these cases were pre-school aged children (aged 0-4 years)
- **14,327 (6%)** were primary school aged children (aged 5-12 years)
- **16,379 (6.5%)** were secondary school aged children (aged 13-18 years)
- **213,818 (85%)** were adults (aged over 18 years)
- Age was unknown for 42 cases

A total of **38,948** confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the 0-18 year old population represents **3.1%** of the 0-18 population in Ireland* and **15.4%** of all confirmed COVID-19 cases in Ireland reported between week 10 2020 and week 18 2021

**Age-specific population data were taken from Census 2016*

- Initially during the phased re-opening of schools, increases in the weekly incidence rate of COVID-19 cases in children aged 0-18 years, and in the number of outbreaks associated with CCFs and schools occurred.
 - These increases were not unexpected due to mass mobilisation of a significant proportion of the population.
 - Increases in the incidence among school aged children or declaration of outbreaks in a CCF or school does not of itself indicate that transmission occurred within the school or facility as exposure and transmission may have occurred elsewhere.
- Comparing the pre-Easter period and the period since the full reopening of schools after the Easter break*
 - the number of outbreaks notified per week (52 vs 43), and the number of cases linked to outbreaks associated with **CCFs** (387 vs 203) has decreased
 - the number of outbreaks notified per week (114 vs 120), and the number of cases linked to outbreaks (458 vs 498) associated with **schools** have increased slightly
 - the number of school outbreaks reported in week 18 was the highest number in a single week to date. However, the number of cases linked to outbreaks in week 18 does not exceed that seen in previous weeks. These trends will be closely monitored over the coming weeks.

*compares weeks 11-13 to weeks 16-18 to take account of the Easter break and a time lag of 1 week.

Weekly incidence rates of COVID-19 in children aged 0-18 years

- While there is week to week variation in the weekly incidence rate of COVID-19 by age-group, small initial increases in the weekly incidence rate of COVID-19 were noted during weeks 11-12 in children aged 0-4 years and 5-12 coinciding with the full reopening of childcare facilities and primary schools.
- During weeks 15-17, small increases in the weekly incidence rate were seen among children aged 13-18 years, coinciding with the full reopening of secondary schools.
- In week 18, the weekly incidence rate in each of these age groups is stable or decreased compared to week 17 and similar to that seen in the general population.
- Among children aged 13-18 years, the weekly incidence rate since the phased reopening of schools has not exceeded the highest weekly incidence rate seen during the 2020 September-December school term.

Outbreaks associated with childcare facilities (CCFs)

- CCFs fully re-opened in week 9.
 - While there was no increase in the number of outbreaks in week 9 or week 10, there was a small increase outbreaks in weeks 11-13.
 - This may be because more children returned to CCFs in week 11 alongside the full reopening of primary schools.
 - Since the Easter break, the number of outbreaks peaked in week 16 with 22 outbreaks notified, and have since declined in weeks 17 and 18.
- The number of cases linked to outbreaks in CCFs peaked in week 11. Since week 11 the number of cases linked to CCF outbreaks has declined, and remained steady during weeks 15-17, declining again in week 18.
- The size of outbreaks associated with CCFs is generally small
 - 21% of outbreaks associated with CCFs involved only two linked cases, while 77% involved fewer than 10 linked confirmed cases

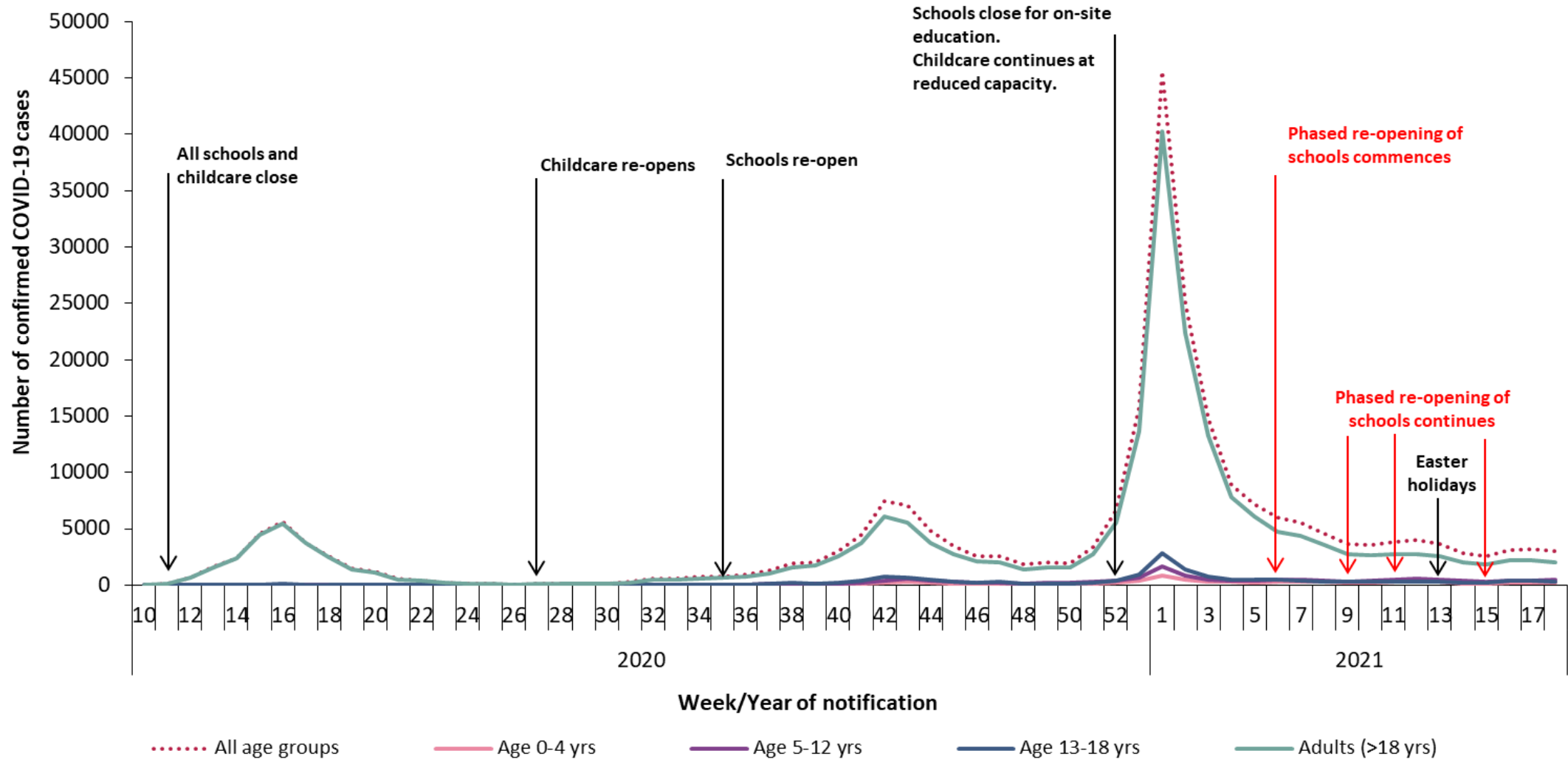
Outbreaks associated with schools

- The number of outbreaks associated with schools increased from week 10 alongside the phased re-opening of all primary and secondary schools.
 - There was a decrease in the number of outbreaks during weeks 14 and 15, reflecting the Easter break.
 - Since the Easter break and the full re-opening of secondary schools, the number of notified outbreaks has been as follows: 30 outbreaks notified in week 16, and 29 outbreaks notified in week 17 and peaking in week 18, with 61 outbreaks notified.
- While the number of outbreaks notified peaked in week 18, the number of cases linked to outbreaks associated with schools during week 18, did not exceed that seen in previous weeks. The number of cases linked to school outbreaks peaked in week 12.
- The size of outbreaks associated with schools is generally small
 - 33% of outbreaks associated with schools involved only two linked cases, while 92% involved fewer than 10 linked cases

Proportion of COVID-19 cases among children aged 0-18 which are linked to outbreaks associated with schools

- The proportion of COVID-19 cases in children aged 5-18 years which are linked to outbreaks associated with schools is small.
- Since the phased re-opening of schools (weeks 6-18), the proportion of all confirmed COVID-19 cases which are linked to outbreaks associated schools has been 14% among cases aged 5-12 and 6% among cases aged 13-18 years.
- This compares with the proportion seen in the September-December school term when the proportion of all confirmed COVID-19 cases which were linked to outbreaks associated with schools was 18% among cases aged 5-12, and 6% among cases aged 13-18 years.

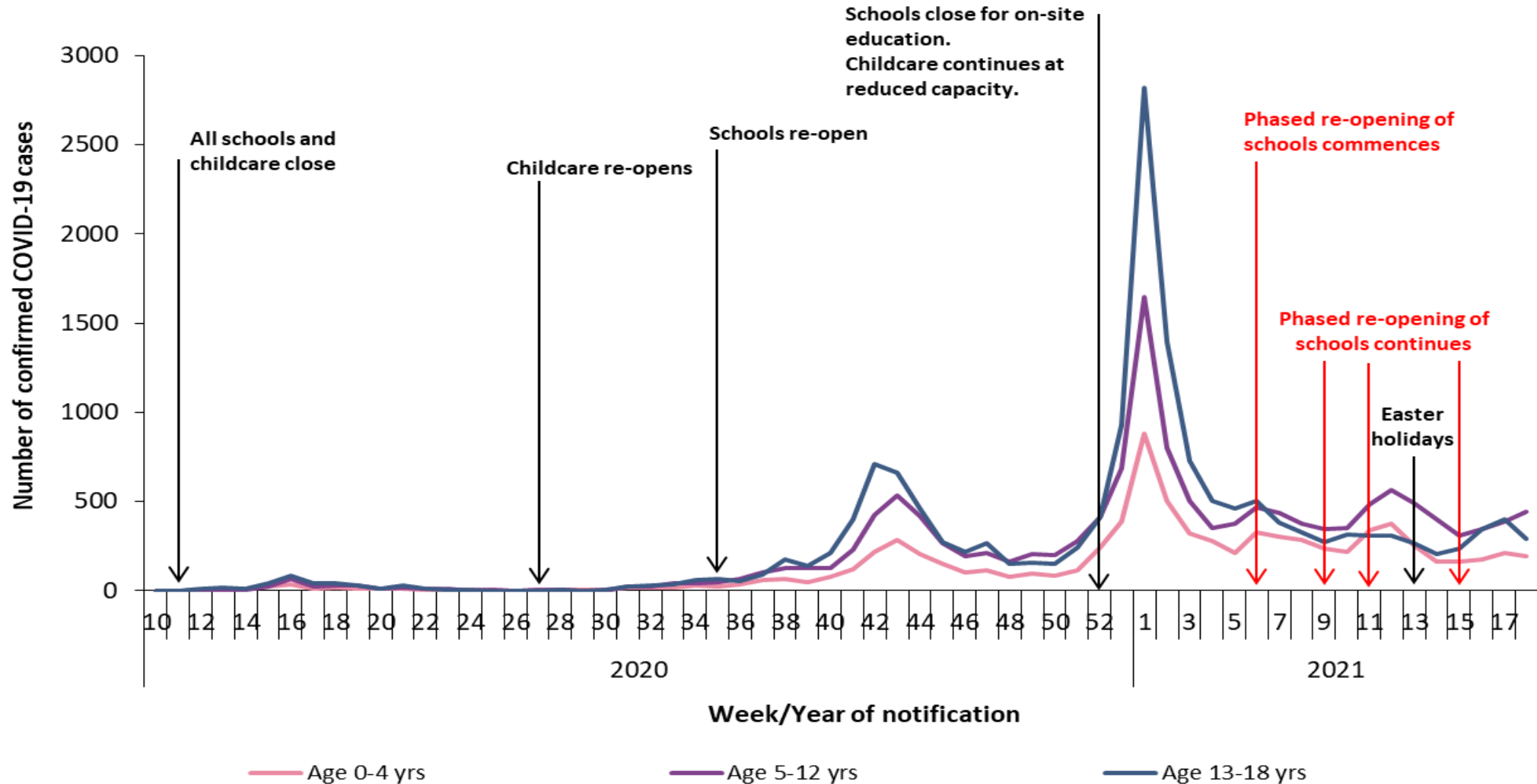
Number of confirmed COVID-19 cases across age groups, week 10 2020 - week 18 2021



Please note that school and CCF closures/reduction in capacity have reflected patterns of COVID-19 in the general population, rather than the number of cases in schools and CCFs.

Figure 1a: Number of confirmed COVID-19 cases by age group in Ireland between week 10, 2020 and week 18, 2021

Number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in children aged 0-18 years, week 10 2020 - week 18 2021



Please note that school and CCF closures/reduction in capacity have reflected patterns of COVID-19 in the general population, rather than the number of cases in schools and CCFs.

Figure 1b: Number of confirmed COVID-19 cases by age group in children aged 0-18 years in Ireland between week 10, 2020 and week 18, 2021

COVID-19 weekly incidence* rate across age groups, week 10 2020 - week 18 2021



*Age-specific population data were taken from Census 2016

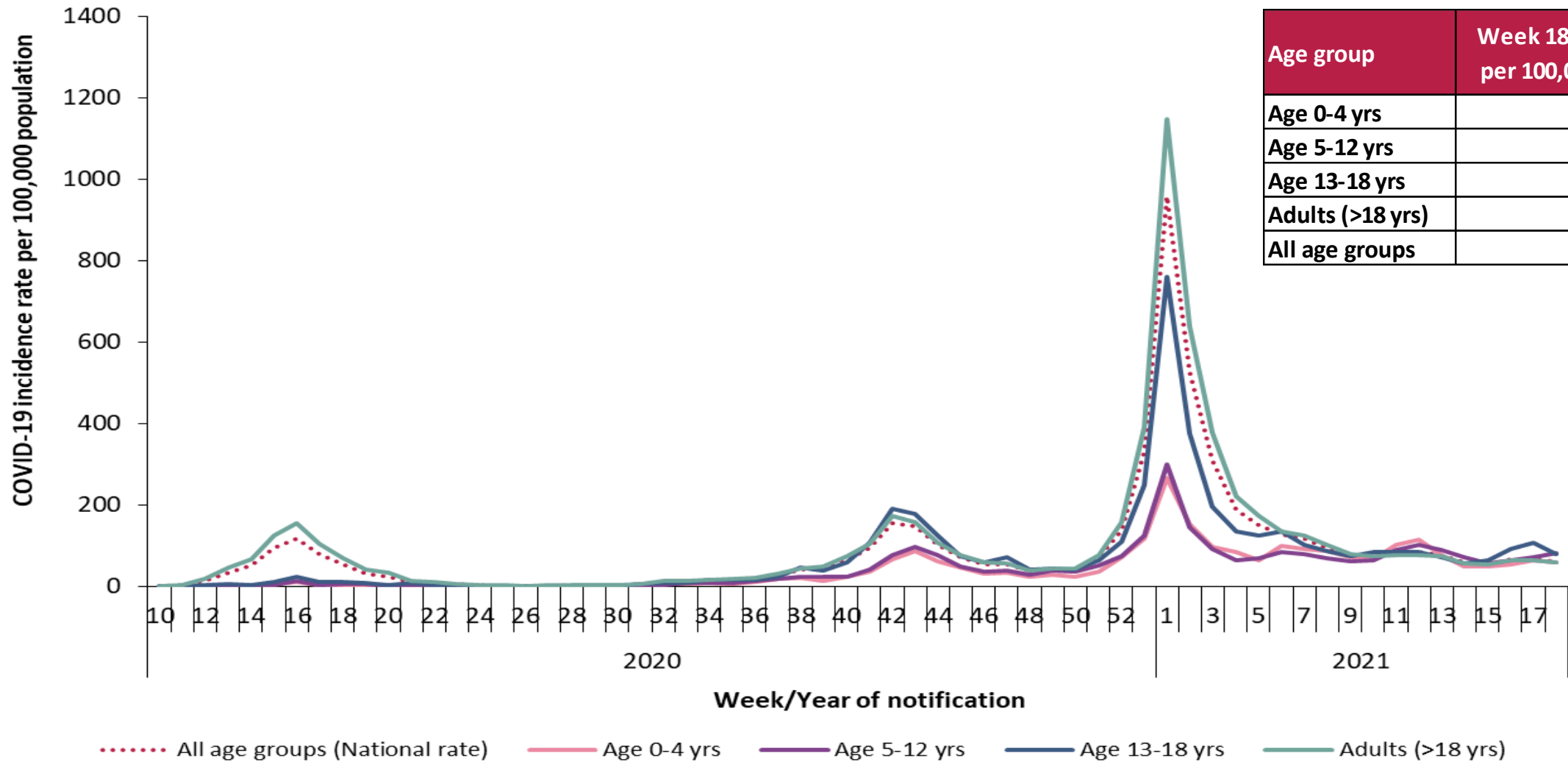


Figure 1c: Weekly age-specific incidence rates of confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100,000 population by age group in Ireland between week 10, 2020 and week 18, 2021

COVID-19 weekly incidence* rate in children aged 0-18 years, week 10 2020 - week 18 2021



*Age-specific population data were taken from Census 2016

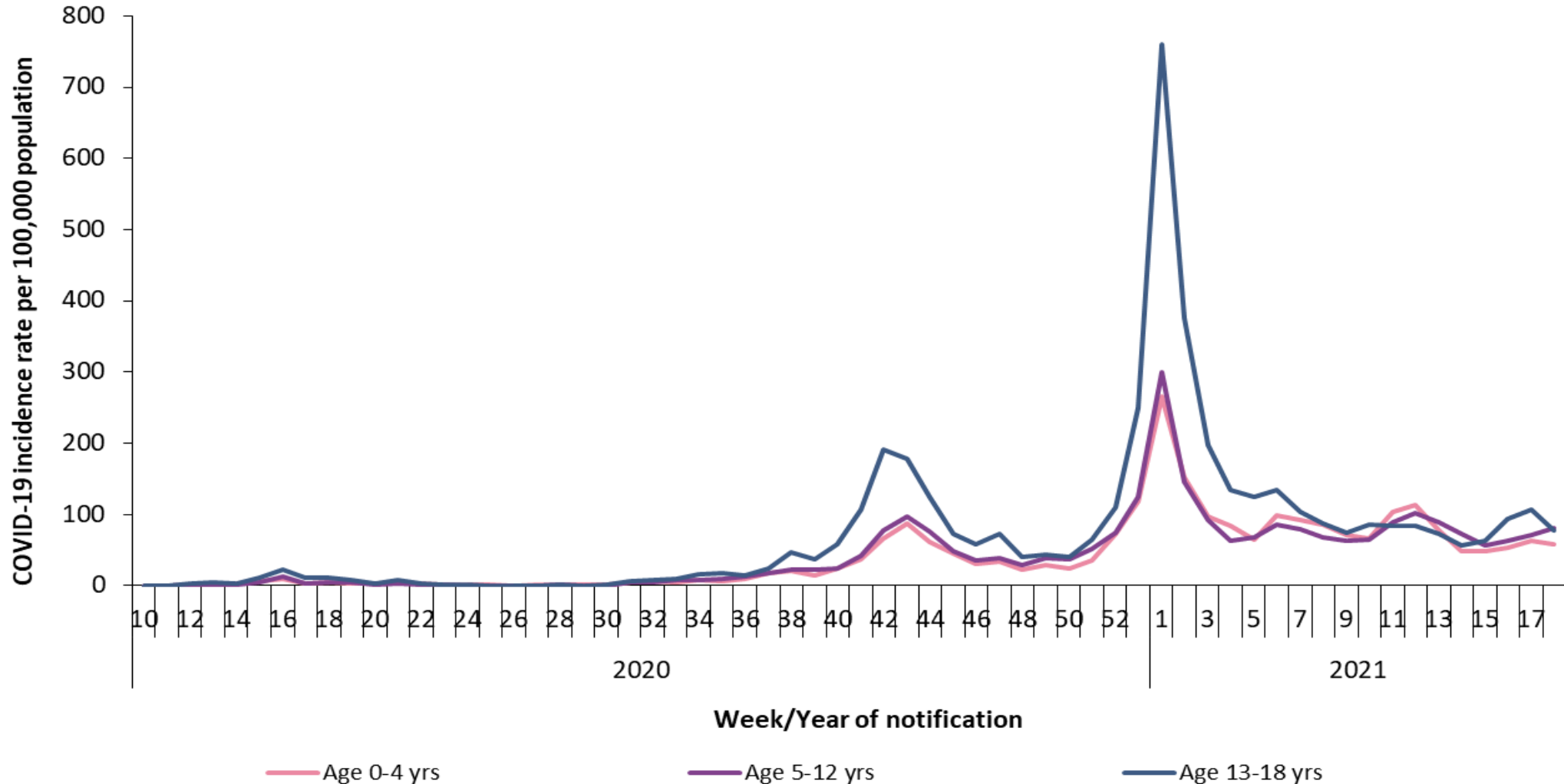
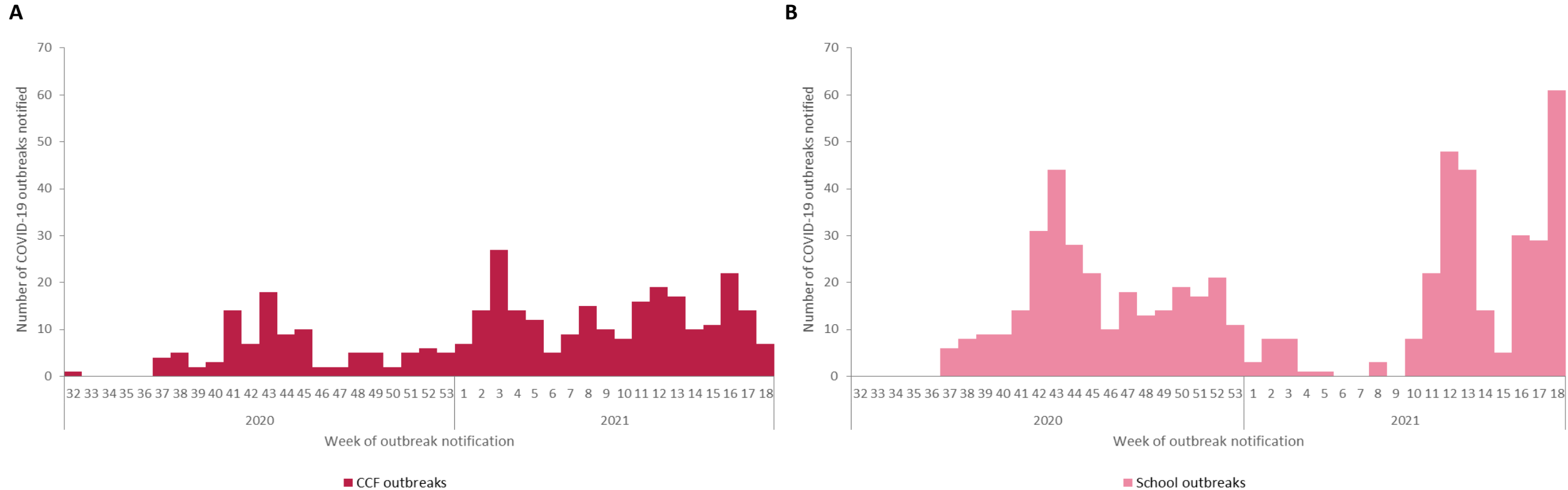


Figure 1d: Weekly age-specific incidence rates of confirmed COVID-19 cases per 100,000 population by age group in children aged 0-18 years only in Ireland between week 10, 2020 and week 18, 2021

Outbreaks associated with children and staff in childcare facilities and schools, week 32 2020 - week 18 2021



342 outbreaks associated with children and staff in CCFs and 579 outbreaks associated with children and staff in schools have been reported since week 32 2020.



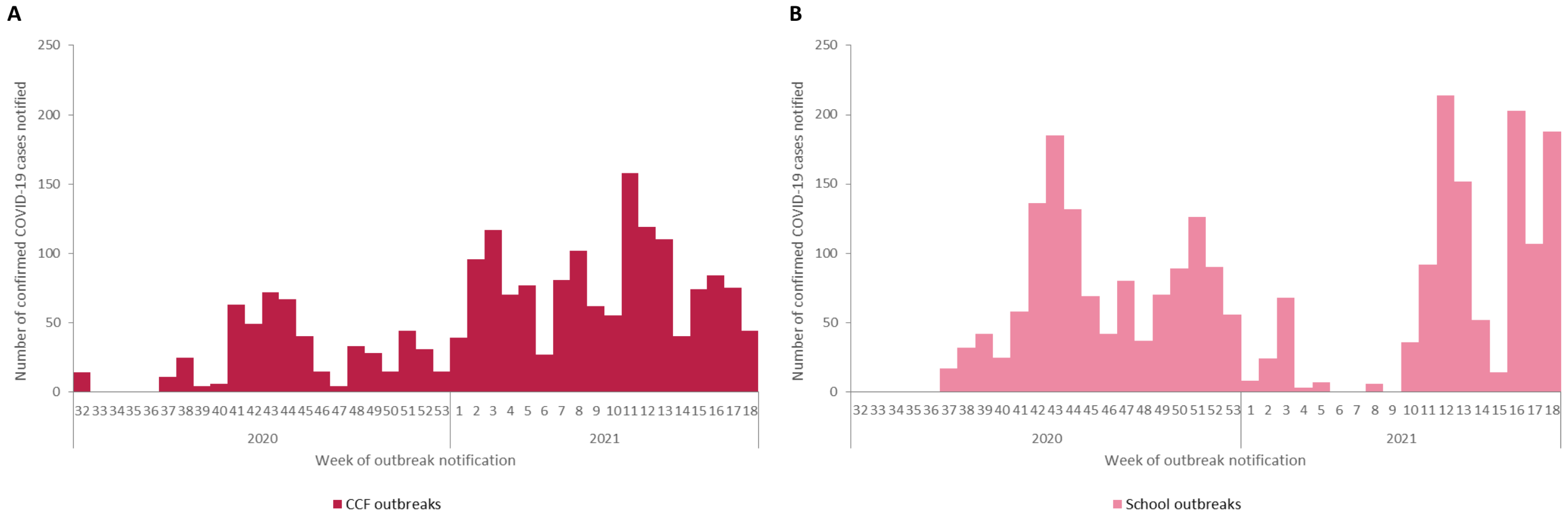
Please note: there were no outbreaks associated with childcare facilities or schools notified on CIDR prior to week 32 2020

Figure 2: Number of COVID-19 outbreaks associated with staff and children in **(A)** childcare facilities and **(B)** schools in Ireland between week 32, 2020 and week 18, 2021

Number of cases linked to outbreaks associated with children and staff in childcare facilities (CCFs) and schools, week 32 2020 - week 18 2021



1,966 confirmed COVID-19 cases linked to outbreaks associated with children and staff in CCFs and 2,460 confirmed COVID-19 cases linked to outbreaks associated with children and staff in schools have been notified since week 32 2020.



Please note: there were no outbreaks associated with childcare facilities or schools notified on CIDR prior to week 32 2020

Figure 3: Number of cases linked to COVID-19 outbreaks associated with staff and children in **(A)** childcare facilities and **(B)** schools in Ireland between week 32, 2020 and week 18, 2021

Outbreaks associated with children and staff in childcare facilities (CCFs) and schools since phased re-opening of schools commenced, week 6 - week 18 2021



163 outbreaks associated with children and staff in CCFs and 264 outbreaks associated with children and staff in schools have been reported since the phased re-opening of schools began in week 6 2021.

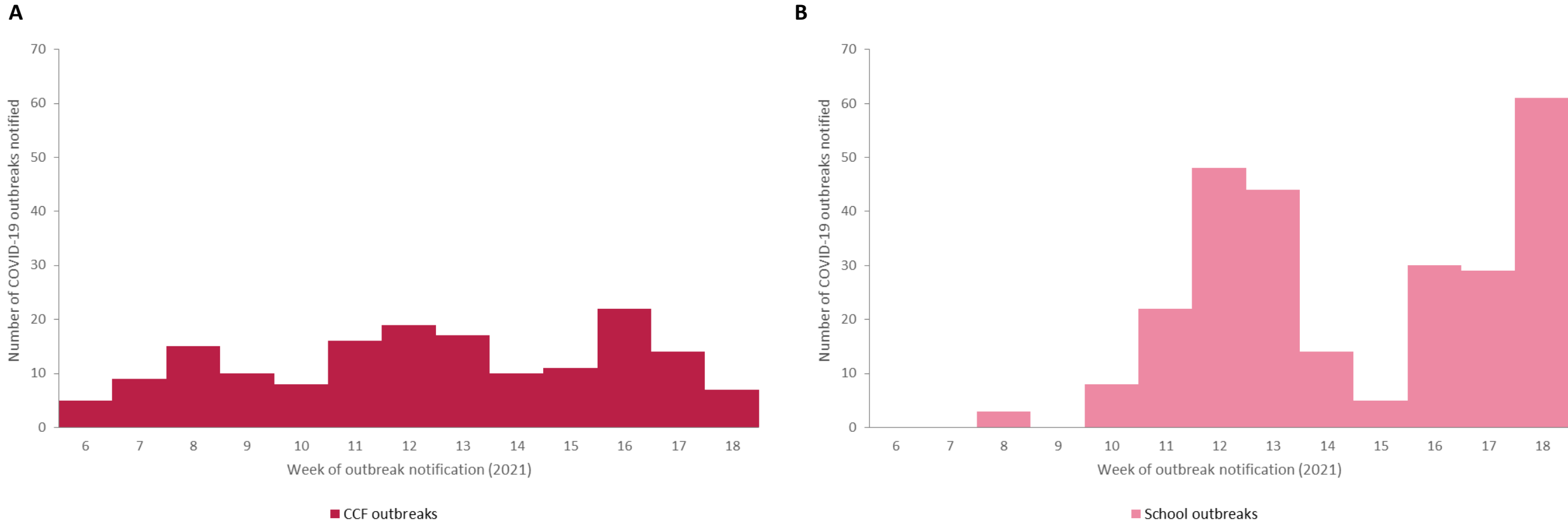
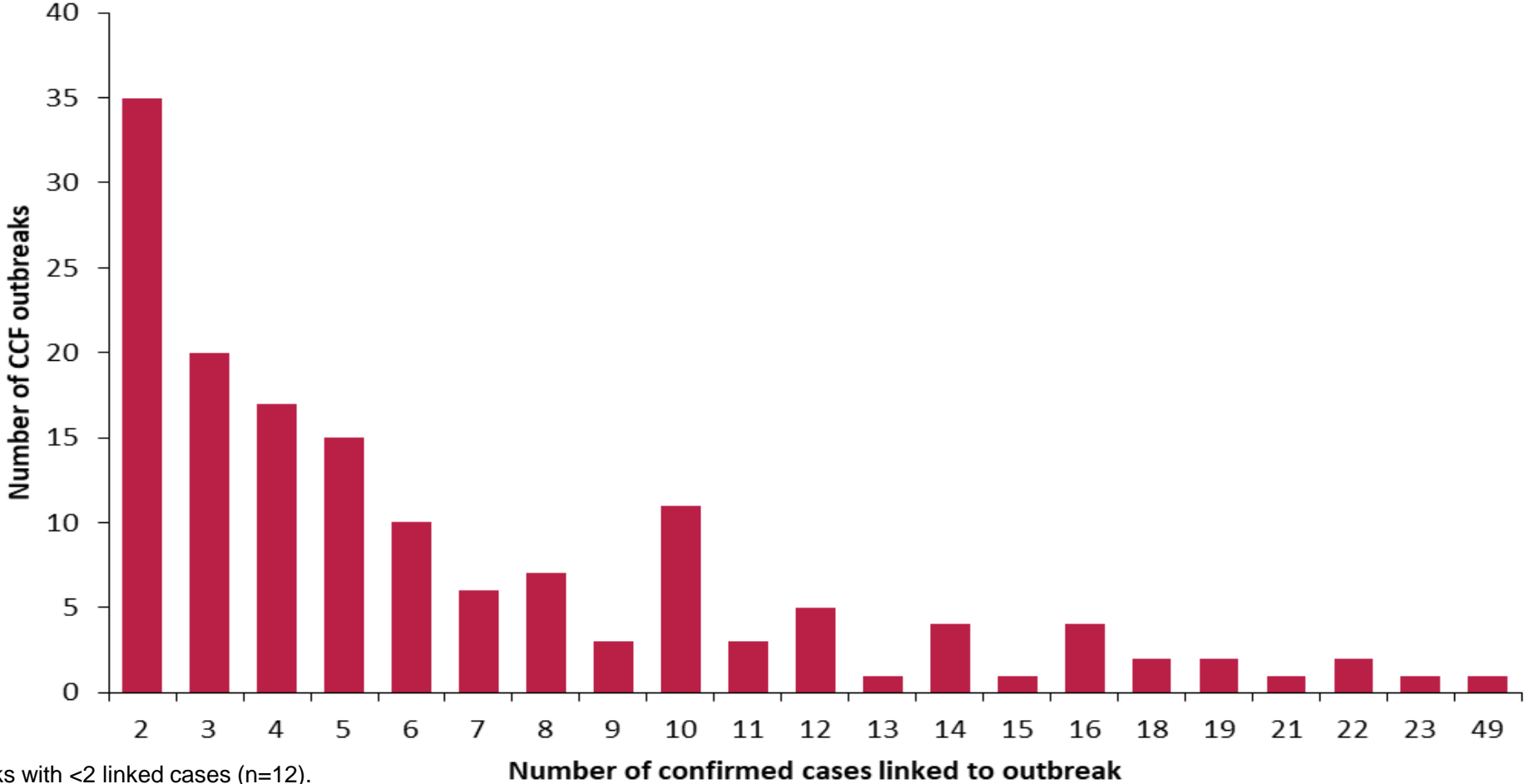


Figure 4: Number of COVID-19 outbreaks associated with staff and children in **(A)** childcare facilities and **(B)** schools in Ireland between week 6, 2021 and week 18, 2021

Size of outbreaks associated with children and staff in childcare facilities (CCFs) since phased re-opening of schools commenced, week 6 - week 18 2021



77% of outbreaks associated with children and staff in CCFs involved fewer than 10 linked confirmed cases.



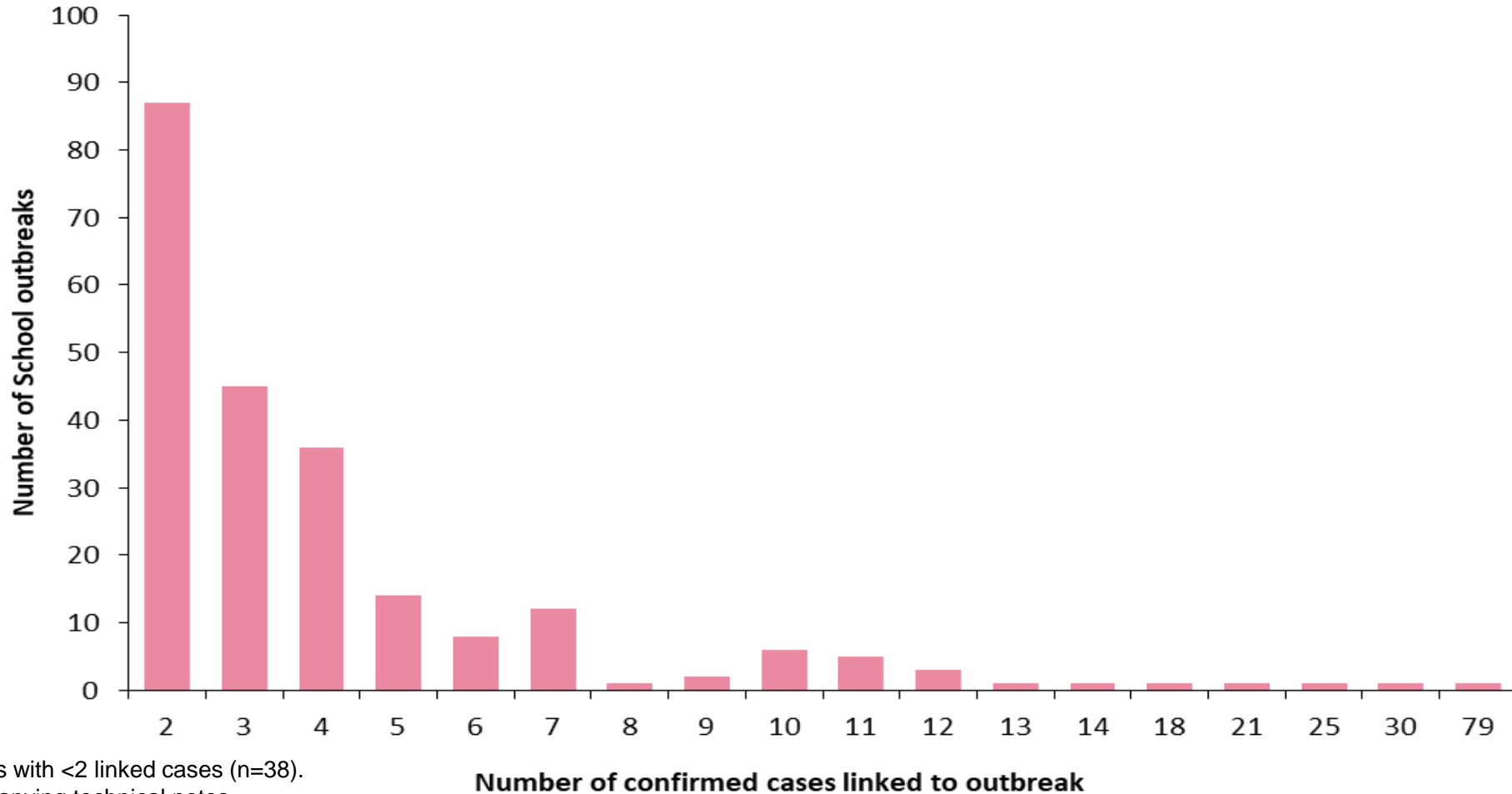
*Excludes outbreaks with <2 linked cases (n=12).
Please see accompanying technical notes.

Figure 5a: Number of COVID-19 outbreaks associated with staff and children in childcare facilities by the number of linked confirmed cases per outbreak in Ireland between week 6, 2021 and week 18, 2021

Size of outbreaks associated with children and staff in schools since phased re-opening of schools commenced, week 6 - week 18 2021



92% of outbreaks associated with children and staff in schools involved fewer than 10 linked confirmed cases.



*Excludes outbreaks with <2 linked cases (n=38).
Please see accompanying technical notes.

Figure 5b: Number of COVID-19 outbreaks associated with staff and children in schools by the number of linked confirmed cases per outbreak in Ireland between week 6, 2021 and week 18, 2021

Number of cases linked to outbreaks associated with children and staff in childcare facilities (CCFs) and schools since phased re-opening of schools commenced, week 6 - week 18 2021



1,031 confirmed COVID-19 cases linked to outbreaks associated with children and staff in CCFs and 1,064 confirmed COVID-19 cases linked to outbreaks associated with children and staff in schools have been notified since the phased re-opening of schools began in week 6 2021.

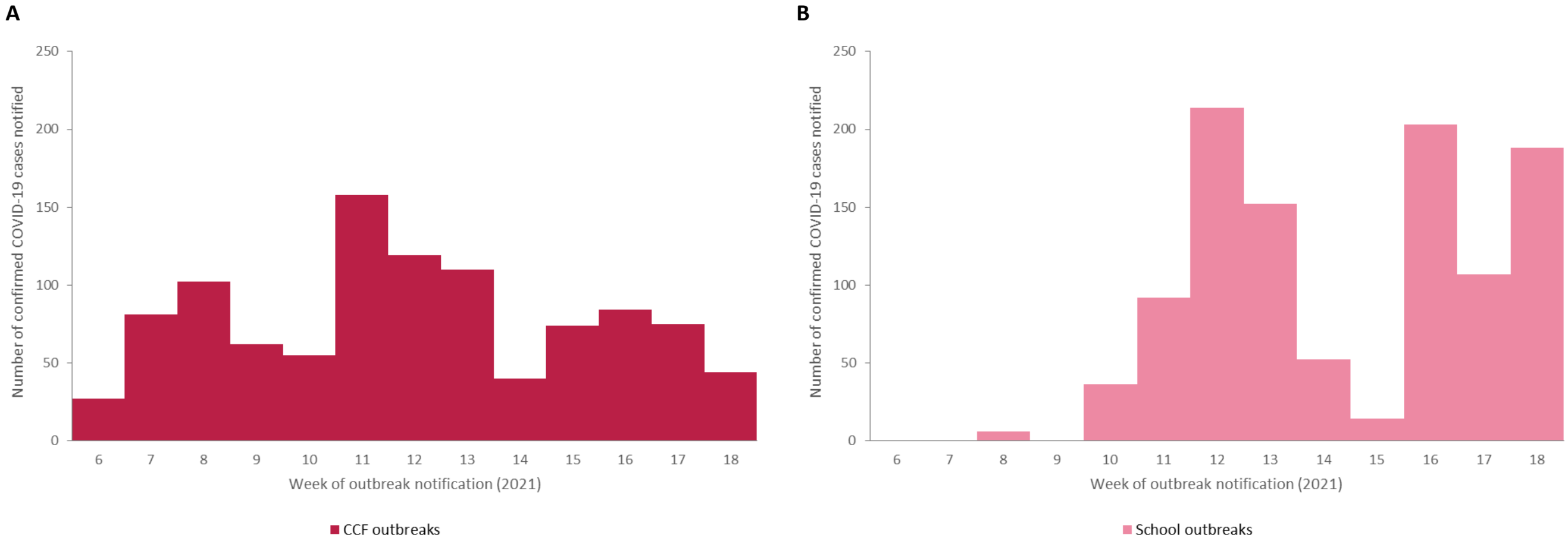
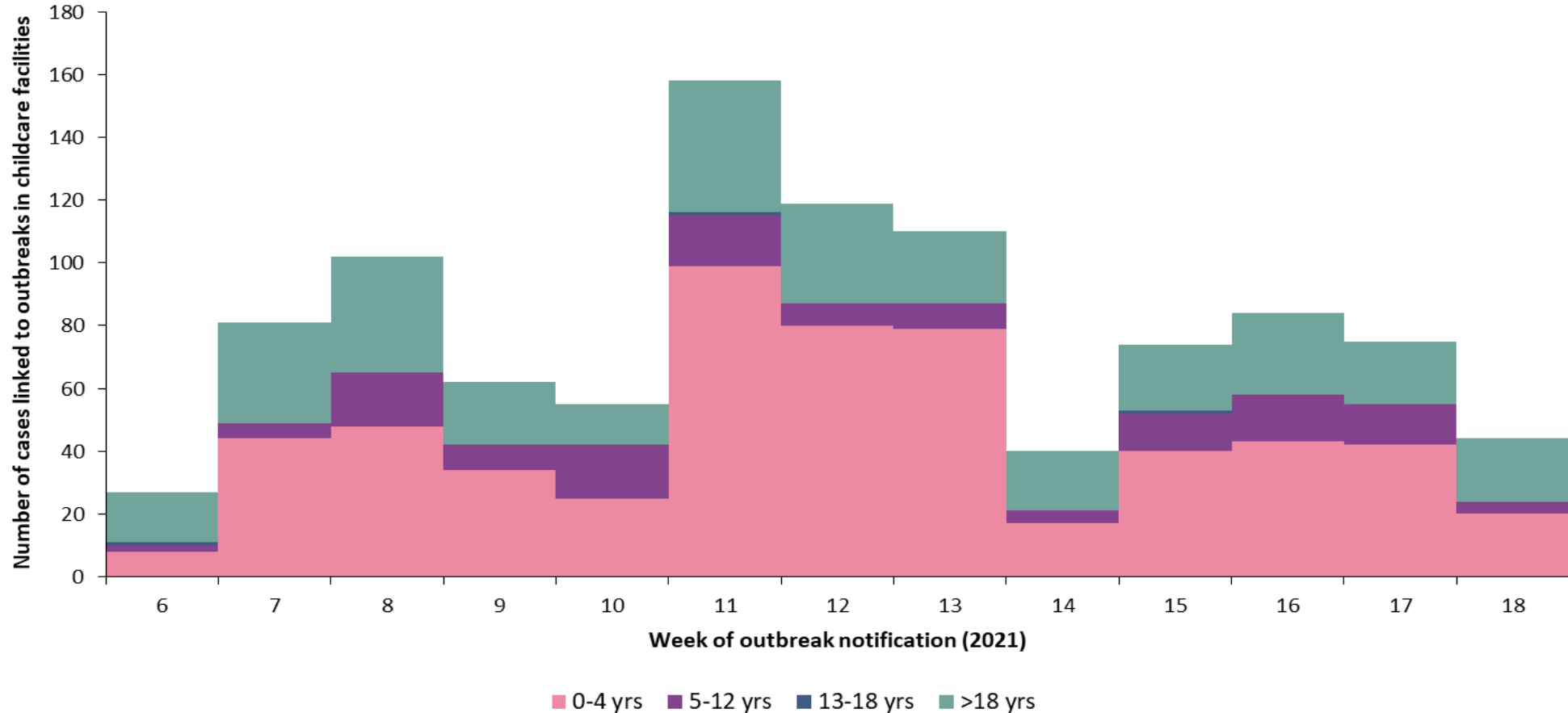


Figure 6: Number of cases linked to COVID-19 outbreaks associated with staff and children in **(A)** childcare facilities and **(B)** schools in Ireland between week 6, 2021 and week 18, 2021

Confirmed COVID-19 cases linked to outbreaks associated with childcare facilities by age group, week 6 - week 18 2021



Of cases linked to outbreaks associated with children and staff in CCFs since week 6 2021, 56% were aged 0-4 years, 12% were aged 5-12 years and 31% were aged over 18 years.



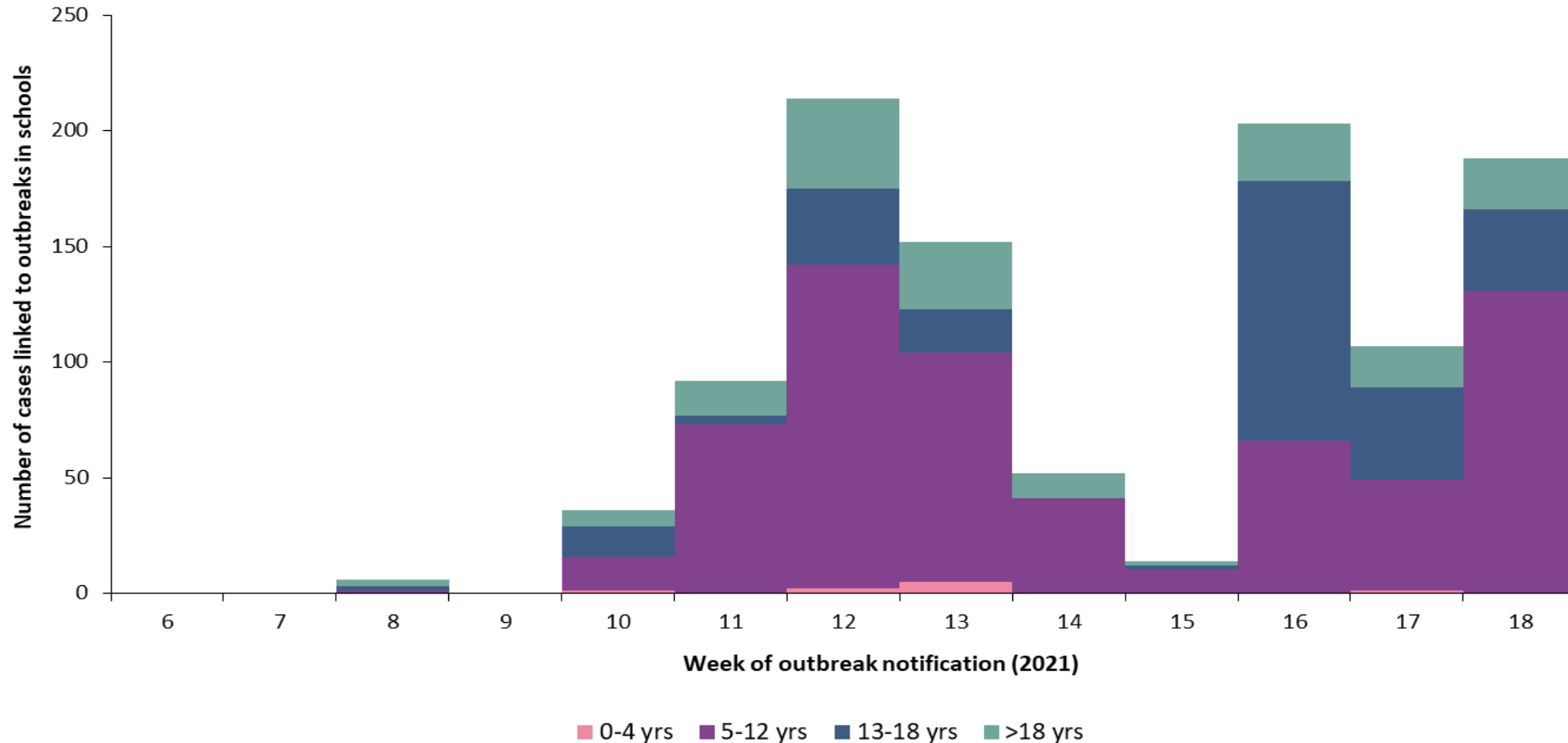
Cases aged 18 years and older are included where relevant because they were linked to outbreaks associated with childcare facilities and are likely to be staff members in these facilities. Please see accompanying technical notes for further information about age breakdown.

Figure 7a: Number of confirmed COVID-19 cases linked to outbreaks associated with childcare facilities by age group in Ireland between week 6, 2021 and week 18, 2021

Confirmed COVID-19 cases linked to outbreaks associated with schools by age group, week 6 - week 18 2021



Of cases linked to outbreaks associated with children and staff in schools since week 6 2021, 1% were aged 0-4 years, 59% were aged 5-12 years, 24% were aged 13-18 years and 16% were aged over 18 years.



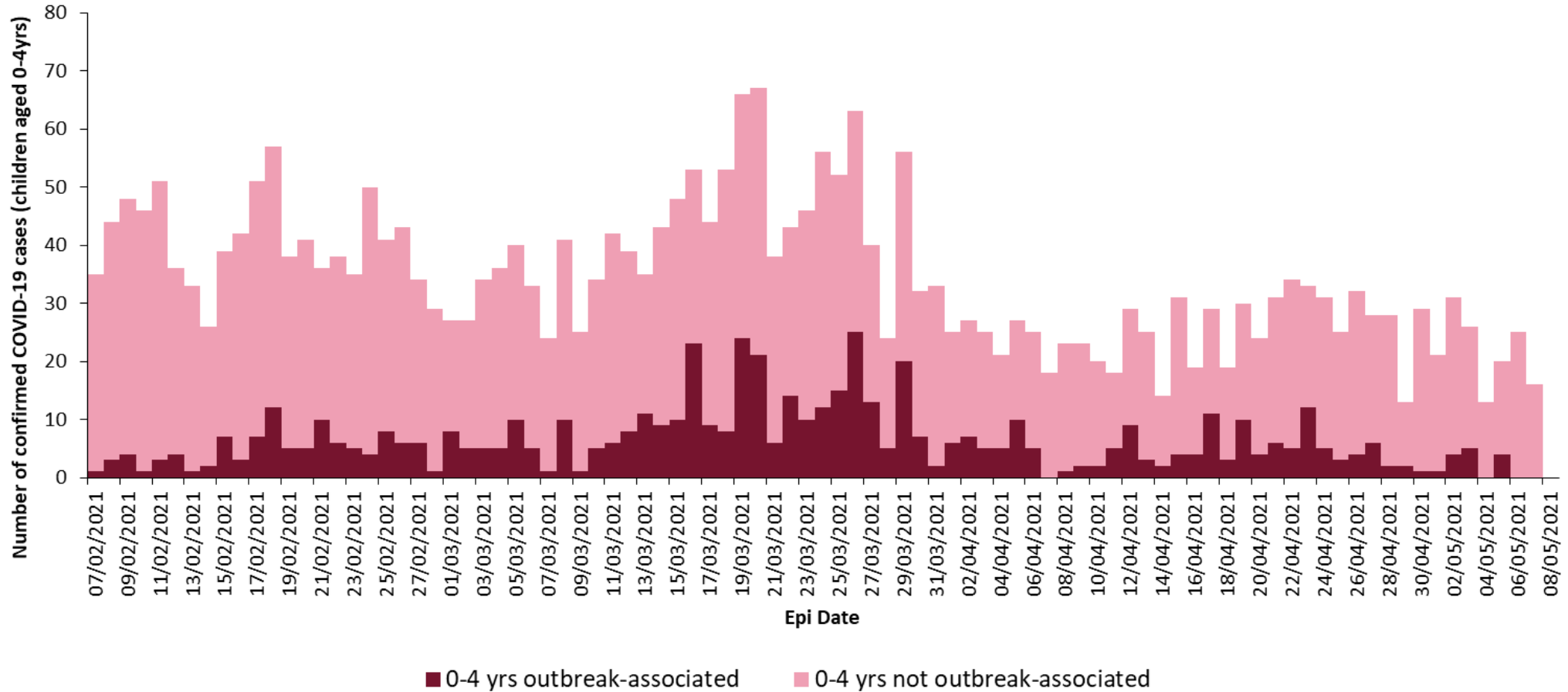
Cases aged over 18 years are included where relevant because they were linked to outbreaks associated with schools and may be staff members in these settings. Please see accompanying technical notes for further information about age breakdown.

Figure 7b: Number of confirmed COVID-19 cases linked to outbreaks associated with schools by age group in Ireland between week 6, 2021 and week 18, 2021

Confirmed COVID-19 cases in children aged 0-4 years since phased re-opening of schools commenced, week 6 - week 18 2021



Of cases aged 0-4 years that occurred since week 6 2021, 18% were linked to outbreaks associated with children and staff in CCFs and schools.



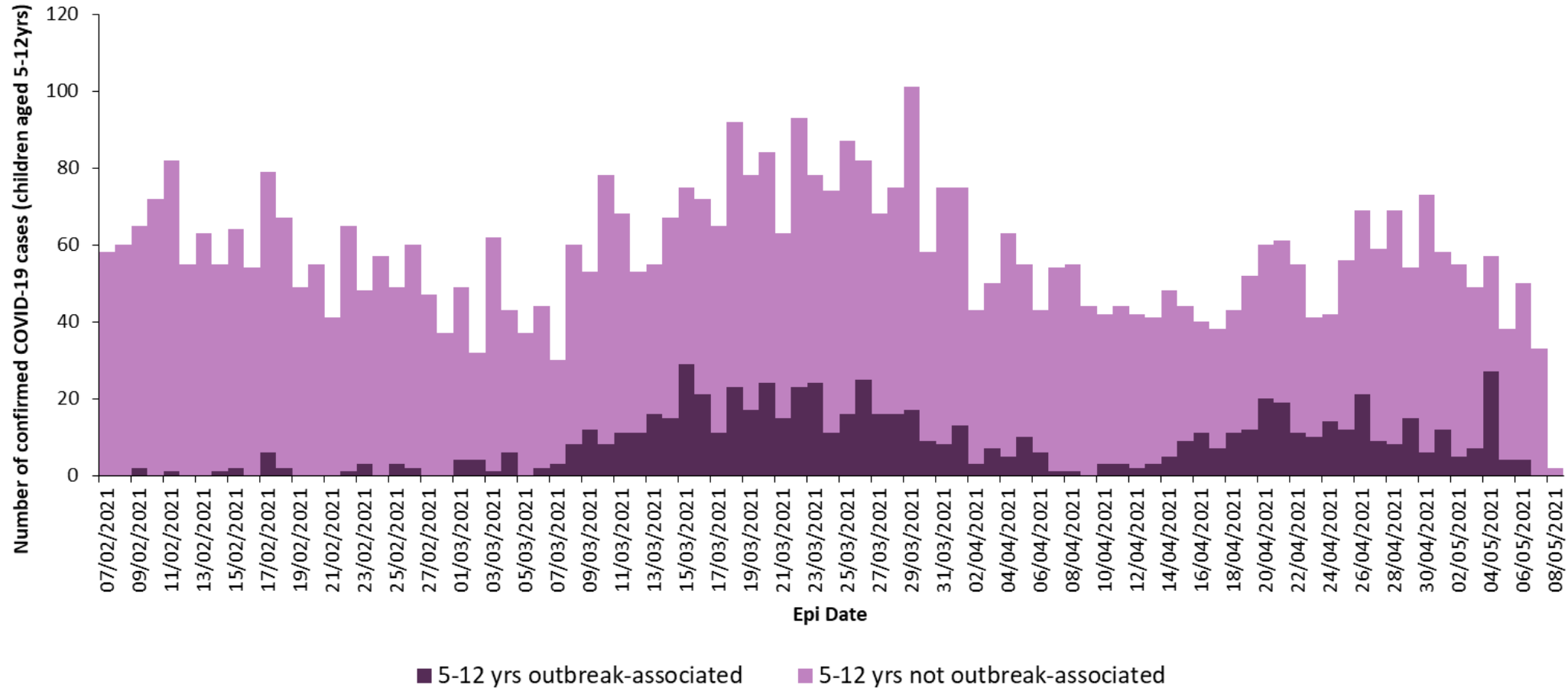
- “Outbreak-associated” refers to laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases linked to outbreak where outbreak location is “Childcare facility” or “School” on CIDR.
- “Not outbreak-associated” refers to laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases not linked to an outbreak on CIDR or linked to an outbreak where outbreak location on CIDR is not “Childcare facility” or “School”.

Figure 8a: Number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in children aged 0-4 years in Ireland between week 6, 2021 and week 18, 2021

Confirmed COVID-19 cases in children aged 5-12 years since phased re-opening of schools commenced, week 6 - week 18 2021



Of cases aged 5-12 years that occurred since week 6 2021, 14% were linked to outbreaks associated with children and staff in CCFs and schools.



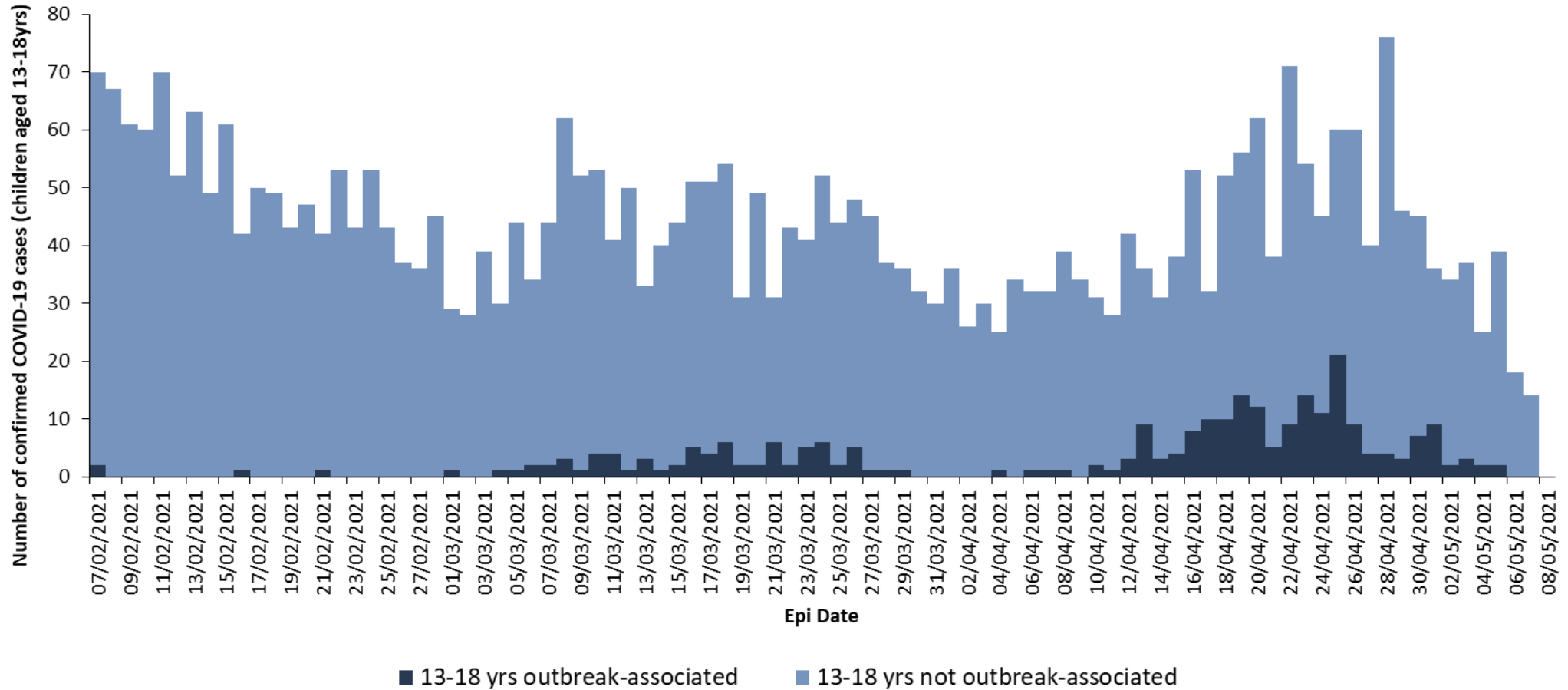
- “Outbreak-associated” refers to laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases linked to outbreak where outbreak location is “Childcare facility” or “School” on CIDR.
- “Not outbreak-associated” refers to laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases not linked to an outbreak on CIDR or linked to an outbreak where outbreak location on CIDR is not “Childcare facility” or “School”.

Figure 8b: Number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in children aged 5-12 years in Ireland between week 6, 2021 and week 18, 2021

Confirmed COVID-19 cases in children aged 13-18 years since phased re-opening of schools commenced, week 6 - week 18 2021



Of cases aged 13-18 years that occurred since week 6 2021, 6% were linked to outbreaks associated with children and staff in CCFs and schools.



- “Outbreak-associated” refers to laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases linked to outbreak where outbreak location is “Childcare facility” or “School” on CIDR.
- “Not outbreak-associated” refers to laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 cases not linked to an outbreak on CIDR or linked to an outbreak where outbreak location on CIDR is not “Childcare facility” or “School”.

Figure 8c: Number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in children aged 13-18 years in Ireland between week 6, 2021 and week 18, 2021

Week 18 Summary: Cases and outbreaks in current week and since phased re-opening of schools commenced, week 6 - week 18 2021



Confirmed COVID-19 cases: Age group	Week 18				Week 6 - Week 18			
	Number of confirmed cases	Proportion of all cases (%)	Number of cases linked to a school/CCF outbreak ¹	Proportion of cases linked to a school/CCF outbreak (%)	Number of confirmed cases	Proportion of all cases (%)	Number of cases linked to a school/CCF outbreak ¹	Proportion of cases linked to a school/CCF outbreak (%)
0-4 yrs	193	6.5	20	10.4	3,251	6.6	592	18.2
5-12 yrs	446	14.9	76	17.0	5,412	11.0	747	13.8
13-18 yrs	291	9.7	28	9.6	4,174	8.5	269	6.4
>18 yrs	2,058	68.9	18	0.9	36,553	74.0	471	1.3
Total	2,988	100.0	142	4.8	49,390	100.0	2079	4.2

Outbreaks: Outbreak Location	Week 18			Week 6 - Week 18		
	Number of outbreaks	Number of confirmed cases linked to outbreaks ²	Range in number of linked cases ³	Number of outbreaks	Number of confirmed cases linked to outbreaks ²	Range in number of linked cases ³
Childcare facility	7	44	2 - 18	163	1,031	0 - 49
School	61	188	0 - 18	264	1,064	0 - 79
Total	68	232	0 - 18	427	2,095	0 - 79

1. This number refers to cases notified in the indicated week and linked to any school/CCF outbreak – the outbreak may have been notified in a different week.
2. This number refers to the number of confirmed cases linked to the outbreaks that were notified in the indicated week – the cases may have been notified in a different week.
3. All confirmed cases may not yet have been linked to the outbreak on CIDR. Ranges in number of linked cases that contain “0” currently have no linked cases on CIDR.

Please refer to the Health Protection Surveillance (HPSC) website for specific reports on

- [14 Day report](#) epidemiology of COVID-19 in Ireland
- [Outbreaks/clusters](#) in Ireland COVID-19 weekly report
- [Weekly report](#) on the epidemiology of COVID-19 in Ireland
- [Schools and Childcare facilities COVID-19 mass testing](#) in Ireland weekly report

Acknowledgements

Sincere thanks are extended to all those who are participating in the collection of data and reporting of data used in these reports. This includes the HSE COVID-19 Contact Management Programme (CMP), staff in ICU units, notifying clinicians, laboratory staff, Departments of Public Health, nurses, surveillance scientists, microbiologists and administrative staff.

Report prepared by COVID-19 Epidemiology Team, HPSC

Technical Notes

1. Data Source

- Data are based on statutory notifications and were extracted from Computerised Infectious Disease Reporting (CIDR) system. Data are provisional and subject to ongoing review, validation and update. As a result, figures in this report may differ from previously published figures.

2. Epidemiological date

- Epidemiological date is based on the earliest of dates available on the case and taken from date of onset of symptoms, date of diagnosis, laboratory specimen collection date, laboratory received date, laboratory reported date or event creation date/notification date on CIDR. By using this date rather than event creation/notification date, adjusts for any delays in testing/notification.

3. Population data

- Population data were taken from Census 2016. Data were aggregated into the following age groups for the analysis: 0-4 years, 5-12 years, 13-18 years, >18 years.

4. Outbreak size

- The number of linked confirmed cases is based on laboratory confirmed cases linked to an outbreak in CIDR. The priority is to notify outbreaks to CIDR in a timely fashion and, while every effort is made to link cases to outbreaks as quickly as possible, there can sometimes be a delay in linking cases to the outbreak occasionally resulting in outbreaks with <2 linked cases. Data in CIDR are continuously reviewed and updated and this includes the identification and linking of outbreak-associated cases.