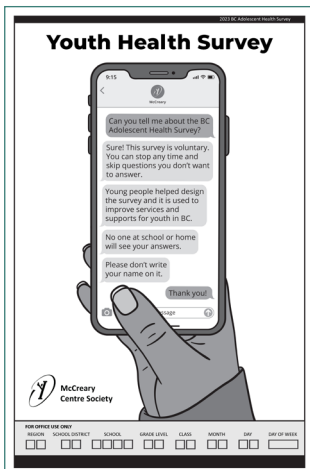




McCreary  
Centre Society

## Results from the 2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey



# SCHOOL DISTRICT 82: COAST MOUNTAINS

Photo: Upper Kitimat River, Kitimat, British Columbia, Canada.

# 2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey Results

## School District 82 – Coast Mountains

McCreary Centre Society

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## INTRODUCTION

Thank you to all the students and school district staff who supported the data collection for the 2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS). This report provides an overview of the findings from the 2023 survey for this district.

To accompany this report, we have created an infographic which shares some findings, highlights the role of protective factors, and compares a few 2023 results to results in 2018.

This report is the property of your school district and will not be released by McCreary to any other party, unless written permission is received from the school district. You may receive direct requests from the Ministry of Education, other government ministries, and public health agencies to access this report. It is the decision of the school district whether or not you release this information.

We have produced a provincial report using the data from this and the 58 other participating school districts, and will shortly begin the process of producing local Health Service Delivery Area (HSDA) reports. No direct comparisons between school districts will be released.

Your school district data cannot be directly compared to data from the provincial or regional reports, or to other school districts without additional statistical tests. Comparing data between survey years (e.g., between 2023 and 2018) also requires statistical testing. We would be happy to support you in conducting additional analysis of your data, if we are able to.

When reading the report please note that the 2023 BC AHS included some questions which students only answered if they had answered 'yes' to a screening question. For example, if they answered 'no' to the question 'Have you ever vaped', they would not answer the vaping specific questions that followed. In these cases, the tables are labelled to indicate this occurred (e.g., the table headline would include 'among students who had ever vaped').

If "NR" appears instead of a percentage this means that the percentage was not releasable due to the risk of deductive disclosure.

Due to rounding, percentages for a survey item may not always total 100%.

If you have any queries relating to this report or the BC AHS, please contact Karen ([karen@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:karen@mcs.bc.ca)) or Annie ([annie@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:annie@mcs.bc.ca)).

We would be happy to visit and share the survey findings with school administrators, students, and/or parents.

Finally, McCreary's Youth Action and Advisory Council offers grant funding up to \$750 for students who wish to deliver projects to address youth health issues identified in the 2023 BC AHS. For more details, please contact [yag@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:yag@mcs.bc.ca) or visit [https://www.mcs.bc.ca/youth\\_action\\_grants](https://www.mcs.bc.ca/youth_action_grants).

## STUDENTS IN SD 82 WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE BC AHS

Students in Grades 7–12 in this district participated in the 2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey. They provided demographic information such as age, race, and gender.

### Age

Age of survey participants	
12 or younger	10%
13 years	16%
14 years	16%
15 years	19%
16 years	19%
17 years	15%
18 years or older	6%

Note: Percentages do not total to 100% due to rounding.

### Gender identity and sexual orientation

In this school district, 53% of students identified as male, 40% as female, 3% as non-binary, and 4% were not yet sure of their gender identity. For 91% of students, their gender identity matched their sex assigned at birth.

The majority of students identified their sexual orientation as straight.

Sexual orientation	
Straight	70%
Mostly straight	6%
Bisexual or pansexual	15%
Gay or lesbian	3%
Asexual	2%
Not sure	3%
Other	NR

NR: The percentage could not be reported due to risk of deductive disclosure.

### Ethnic background

Students came from a range of backgrounds. The most common backgrounds were Indigenous and European.

Family background	
Indigenous	43%
African	3%
Caribbean	NR
European	41%
East Asian	2%
South Asian	2%
Southeast Asian	2%
Middle Eastern	NR
Latin American, South American, Central American	2%
Australian, Pacific Islander	1%
Other	4%
Don't know	17%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

NR: The percentage could not be reported due to risk of deductive disclosure.

### Indigenous students

Among Indigenous students:

- 90% identified as First Nations
- 10% identified as Métis.
- 21% had previously lived on reserve and 40% were currently living on reserve.
- 58% could speak at least a few words of an Indigenous language.
- 9% identified as Two-Spirit.

Indigenous students were also asked about their family history of residential school: 17% did not know their family history but 77% reported that a family member had been in residential school.



## Racial identity and religious affiliation

For the first time, the BC AHS asked students about their racial identity and religious affiliation.

Racial identity	
White	61%
Black	3%
Asian	4%
Indigenous	35%
Latin American/Hispanic	2%
Mixed race	6%
Other	2%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

Religious affiliation	
None	47%
Buddhist	1%
Christian	22%
Hindu	NR
Jewish	1%
Muslim	NR
Sikh	1%
Traditional (Indigenous) spirituality	11%
Don't know	16%
Other	3%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

NR: The percentage could not be reported due to risk of deductive disclosure.

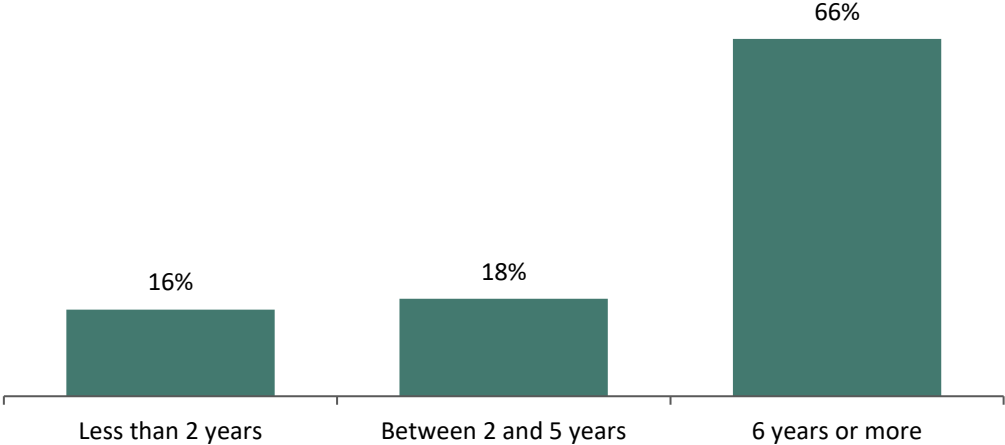
## Time in Canada

Most students in this school district were born in Canada.

Immigration	
Born in Canada	93%
Arrived in Canada as an international student	2%
Arrived in Canada as a refugee	1%
Born abroad and now a permanent resident or Canadian citizen	5%

Note: Percentages do not total to 100% due to rounding.

**How long students have lived in Canada  
(among those born abroad)**



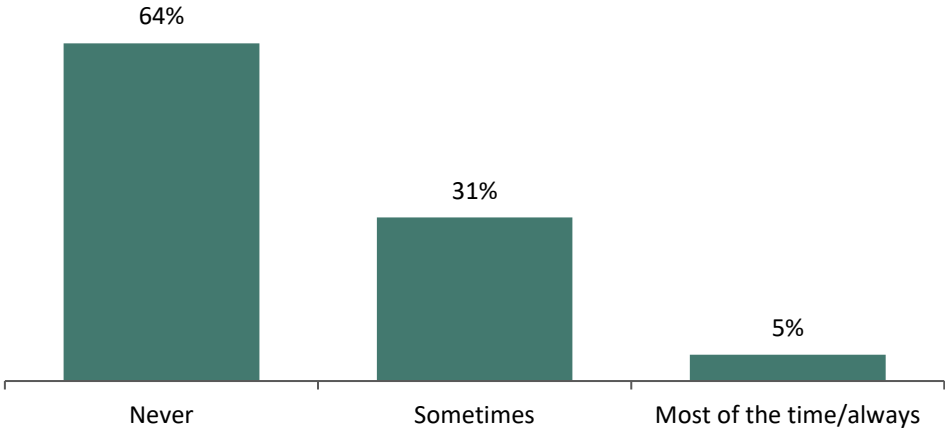
# HOME LIFE

Students in this school district reported a range of living situations.

Who students lived with most of the time	
Mother/stepmother	83%
Father/stepfather	71%
Two mothers or two fathers	1%
Grandparent(s)	14%
Foster parent(s)	1%
Sibling(s)/stepsibling(s)	59%
Their own child or children	NR
Other children or youth	3%
Other adults related to them	4%
Other adults not related to them	2%
Lived alone	0%
Lived with both parents at different times	10%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.  
 NR: The percentage could not be reported due to risk of deductive disclosure.

## How often students speak a language other than English at home



## Caretaking responsibilities

On an average school day, 29% of students took care of a relative (e.g., a relative with a disability, or their younger siblings), and 75% took care of a pet or other animal.

## Government care experience

Students had experienced a variety of different types of government care (including through a delegated agency), as well as alternatives to government care, such as a Youth Agreement.

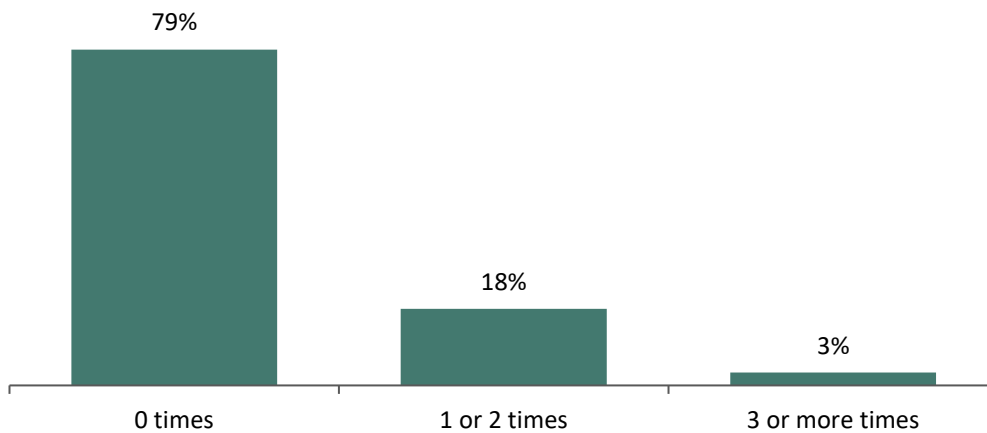
Types of care students had experienced	
Foster home	5%
Group home	3%
Youth Agreement	2%
Extended Family Program or Out of Care Order	6%
Custody centre/detention centre	2%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

## Unstable housing

In the past 12 months, 9% of students in this school district ran away from home, 7% were kicked out, and 3% were homeless.

**Times students moved in the past 12 months**



## Parental monitoring

Students were asked how much they felt their parents monitored what they were doing in their free time and online in the past 30 days. Parents were more likely to know what students were doing with their free time than their time online.

<b>How much students felt their parents knew what they were doing ...</b>			
	Never/ rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time/ always
With their free time	19%	18%	62%
Online	44%	19%	37%

Note: Percentages in each row may not total to 100% due to rounding.

## MATERIAL WELL-BEING

### Employment

During the school year, 41% of students worked at a paid job, including 4% who worked 21 or more hours a week.

<b>Students' reasons for working (among those who worked)</b>	
Needed the money	44%
Wanted spending money	62%
To contribute to family income	9%
To build their résumé	39%
To learn skills	42%
To save for school	39%
Other	8%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

### Material deprivation

In 2018, McCreary developed a 10-item Youth Deprivation Index with the help of 800 students across the province. In preparation for the 2023 BC AHS, over 500 students reviewed the Index to determine if it was still relevant. They confirmed that the 10 items still captured deprivation from a youth's perspective but they also indicated the need for the addition of an 11<sup>th</sup> item – personal hygiene products.

Most students had each of the items in the Index.

<b>Students who lacked but wished they had ...</b>	
Money to spend on themselves	15%
Clothes to fit in	5%
Access to transportation	4%
Smartphone	4%
Lunch for school/money to buy lunch	8%
Access to the Internet	NR
Space of their own to hang out in	7%
Equipment/clothes for extracurricular activities	4%
Money for school supplies, school trips, and extracurricular activities	5%
A quiet place to sleep	4%
Personal hygiene products (e.g., soap, deodorant)	NR

NR: The percentage could not be reported due to risk of deductive disclosure.

## Food security

In the past 12 months, 10% of students had cut the size of meals or skipped meals because there was not enough money for food. Also, 15% went to bed hungry at least sometimes because there was not enough money for food.

## SCHOOL EXPERIENCE

Students were asked how much they agreed with a series of statements about their school experience.

Students' feelings about their school experience			
	Disagreed/ Strongly disagreed	Neither agreed nor disagreed	Agreed/ Strongly agreed
Felt like a part of their school	20%	38%	41%
Happy to be at school	31%	32%	37%
Felt school staff treated them fairly	13%	29%	58%
Felt school staff expected them to do well	7%	21%	72%
Felt safe at school	18%	31%	51%
Felt teachers cared about them	14%	31%	56%
Felt other school staff cared about them	15%	40%	45%

Note: Percentages in each row may not total to 100% due to rounding.

## School absences

They were also asked about their reasons for missing school in the past 30 days.

Reasons for missing school in the past 30 days		
	Missed 1 or 2 days	Missed 3 or more days
Illness	35%	24%
Skipping	21%	12%
Bullying	6%	3%
Suspension	2%	2%
Family responsibilities	21%	11%
Work	2%	3%
Sleeping in	25%	15%
No transportation	10%	4%
Appointments	34%	10%
Own mental health (e.g., anxiety, depression)	18%	16%

## Education plans

The majority of youth planned to finish high school and pursue post-secondary education.

School plans	
Did not expect to finish high school	3%
Planned to finish high school but not go to post-secondary	10%
Planned to go to post-secondary	64%
Hadn't thought about it	16%
Didn't know	7%



## School safety

Students generally felt safe in different locations at their school, and getting to and from school. However, they were more likely to feel safe in supervised locations such as classrooms and libraries, than in less supervised spaces.

How often students felt safe			
	Never/rarely	Sometimes	Usually/always
Classrooms	8%	15%	77%
Washrooms	17%	22%	61%
Changing rooms	18%	16%	66%
Hallways and stairwells	11%	14%	75%
Library	7%	10%	83%
Cafeteria	11%	12%	76%
Outside on school grounds	12%	15%	73%
Getting to and from school	9%	12%	80%

Note: Percentages in each row may not total to 100% due to rounding.

## Sex education at school

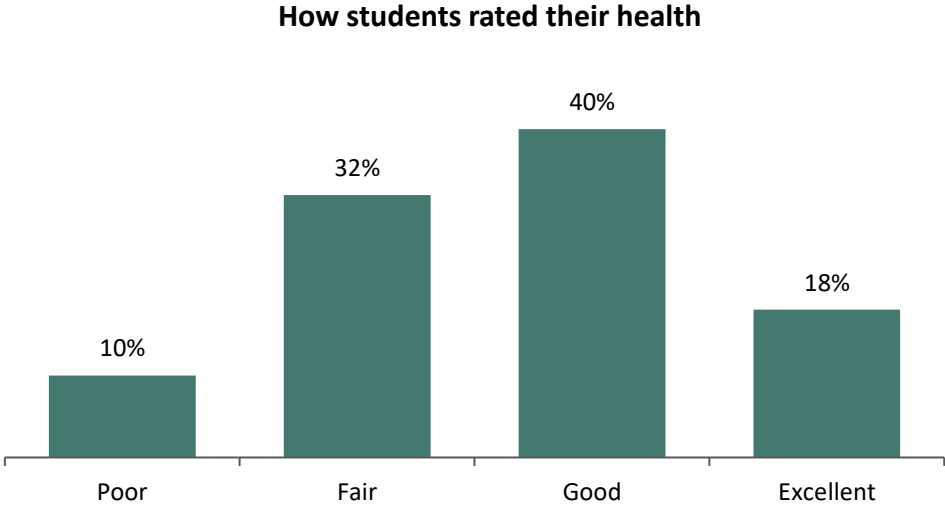
For the first time, the BC AHS asked students about their views on the sexual health education they received at school. Two thirds of students reported receiving sex education at school, including 38% who had found it helpful and 28% who had not found it helpful.

Students who received sex education were asked whether this education had met their needs:

- 78% felt the sex education they received had started at the right age for them.
- 81% felt it was relevant to their gender identity.
- 76% felt it was relevant to their sexual orientation.
- 49% felt it was relevant to any disability or health condition they had.
- 78% felt it was respectful of their culture/religion.

# PHYSICAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

The majority of students rated their health as good or excellent.



## Sleep

The night before completing the survey, 36% of students slept for at least eight hours. Most students were able to sleep undisturbed that night. However, 25% reported that their sleep was interrupted.

Hours that students slept the night before completing the survey	
4 hours or less	12%
5 hours	10%
6 hours	19%
7 hours	23%
8 hours	21%
9 hours or more	15%

Most students engaged in at least one activity after they were expected to be asleep, and 35% went offline (e.g., they put their phone on silent, turned it off, or put it in another room), including 4% who went offline exclusively and did not engage in any other activity.

Activities students were engaging in after they were expected to be asleep	
Chatting or texting	70%
Playing/watching esports	25%
Gaming (other than esports)	37%
Doing homework	39%
Scrolling through social media	77%
Doing other things online (e.g., watching videos)	76%

## Health conditions and disabilities

When asked about any health conditions and disabilities, students most commonly reported having a mental health condition.

Health conditions and disabilities	
A mental health condition (e.g., depression, bipolar disorder, eating disorder, OCD)	30%
A physical disability (e.g., cerebral palsy, use a wheelchair)	1%
Deaf or hard of hearing	4%
Blind or visual impairment which cannot be corrected with glasses/contact lenses	4%
A long-term/chronic medical condition	7%
A learning disability (e.g., dyslexia)	12%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

Students were also asked about some specific conditions and disabilities.

Specific conditions and disabilities	
FASD/FAS/FAE	2%
Autism Spectrum Disorder	4%
Depression	19%
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)	10%
Anxiety disorder	32%
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD/ADD)	24%
Eating disorder	12%
Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)	10%
Alcohol or other substance use addiction	13%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

Among students with a health condition or disability, around a third did not experience any barriers because of their condition, 44% had what they needed to overcome the barriers they experienced, and 22% did not have what they needed to overcome the barriers they faced.

## Injuries

In the past 12 months, 39% of students had been injured seriously enough to require medical attention. Also, 27% had experienced one or more concussions where they had lost consciousness, or were dazed, confused, or suffered a gap in memory during this time period.

Students who had experienced at least one concussion in the past 12 months were asked whether they had received medical treatment for their most serious head injury, and 41% indicated they had. They were also asked what they were doing when they got their concussion.

<b>How students got their most serious concussion in the past 12 months</b>	
Riding/driving in a motor vehicle	15%
Riding a bike	19%
Skateboarding	8%
Playing/training for organized sports	30%
Playing recreational sports (without a coach)	14%
Fighting with another person	14%
Using alcohol or other substances	18%
Working	11%
Other	25%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

### Access to health care

In the past 12 months, students had accessed a range of health care options. However, not all students got the care they needed.

<b>Where students got health care in the past 12 months</b>	
Did not need health care	25%
Did not get the health care they needed	4%
Family doctor	42%
Specialist (e.g., dermatologist, psychiatrist, etc.)	20%
Nurse	11%
Walk-in clinic	12%
School wellness centre	NR
Youth clinic	2%
Emergency Room (ER)	27%
Traditional healer	NR
Counsellor/psychologist	11%
Foundry centre/Foundry Virtual BC	5%
Other	5%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

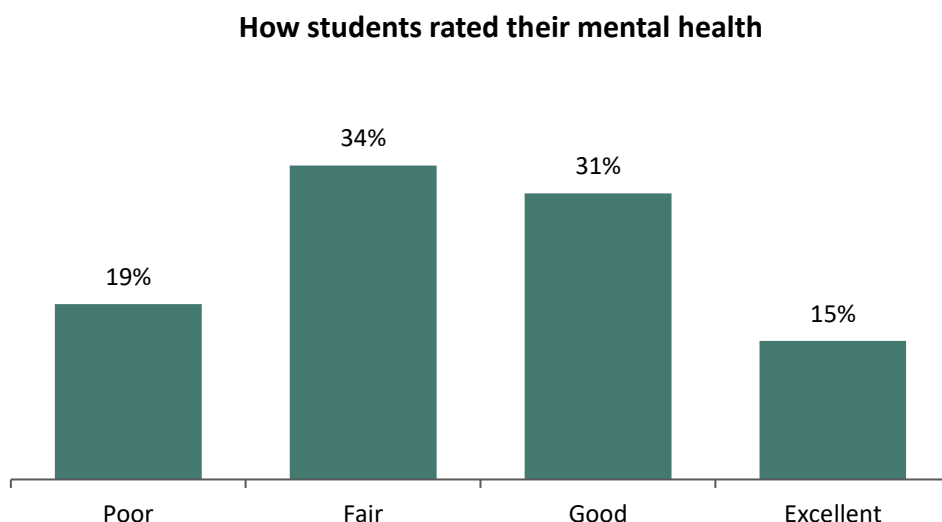
NR: The percentage could not be reported due to risk of deductive disclosure.

In the past 12 months, the majority of students had not needed medical treatment specifically because they were physically sick or hurt. Among those who needed medical help, 69% had received the treatment they needed, and 31% had not.

Most students had seen a dentist within the past two years, including 77% who had been within the past year. However, 9% had last been to the dentist more than two years ago, and 1% had never been to the dentist.

## MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Students were asked to rate their mental health.



Note: Percentages do not total to 100% due to rounding.

Students also rated their quality of life (subjective well-being).

How much students ...			
	Disagreed/ Strongly disagreed	Neither agreed nor disagreed	Agreed/ Strongly agreed
Felt their life was going well	17%	29%	54%
Wished they had a different life	50%	26%	24%
Felt they had a good life	10%	25%	65%
Had what they wanted in life	23%	30%	47%
Felt life was going just right	25%	34%	41%

Around 4 in 10 students (41%) felt good about themselves, and 69% could name something they were good at.

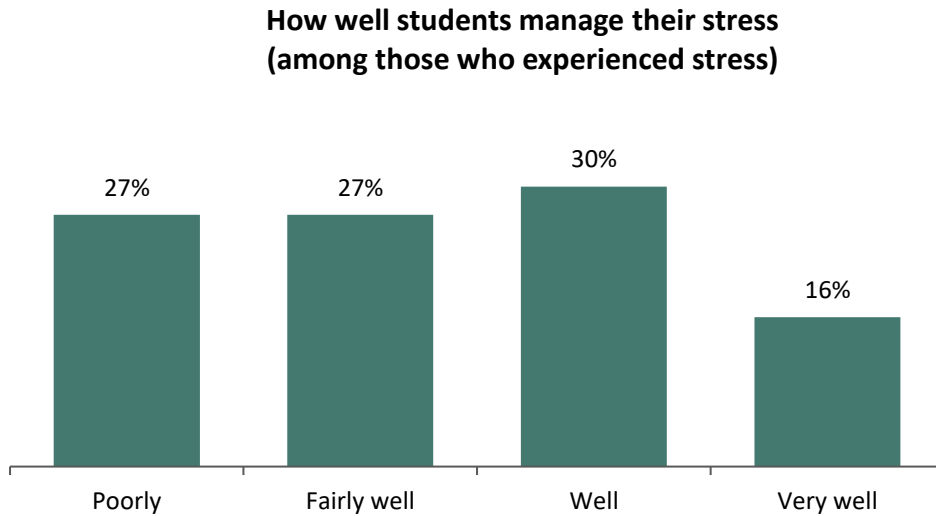
In the past month, most students experienced at least a little happiness, as well as stress and despair:

- 53% felt happy most or all of the time, and 2% never felt happy.
- 88% experienced at least a little stress, including 16% who were so stressed they could not function properly.
- 71% experienced some level of despair, including 11% who felt so sad, hopeless, or discouraged that they wondered if anything was worthwhile.

Around a third of students (33%) reported they felt lonely often or always, and 14% never felt lonely.

The majority of students also reported feeling at least somewhat hopeful for their future, with 48% feeling quite or very hopeful. However, 22% were not at all or only a little hopeful.

Students who experienced stress were asked how well felt that they handled their stress.



### Self-harm and suicidality

Students were asked about various forms of self-harm. In total, 35% had cut or injured themselves on purpose in the past 12 months without the intention of killing themselves, including 27% who had done so on multiple occasions.

<b>Types of self-harm students engaged in during the past 12 months, beyond cutting</b>	
Got into a physical fight	7%
Overdosed	4%
Used alcohol or other substances	20%
Drove recklessly	4%
Made a medical situation worse	6%
Had unsafe sex	7%
Over-exercised or exercised while injured	12%
Starved self	27%
Overused laxatives	1%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

In the past 12 months, 29% of students had seriously considered killing themselves, and 9% had attempted suicide. Also, 45% had a relative or close friend who had attempted suicide, including 24% who had this experience within the past 12 months.

## Bereavement

When asked whether someone close to them had died, 82% of students had had this experience.

Reasons someone close to them had died ...	
COVID-19	12%
Other illness	54%
Accident	19%
Old age/natural death	49%
Overdose	21%
Violence	7%
Suicide	17%
Other	3%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

## Access to mental health services

In the past 12 months, 64% of students had not felt that they needed mental health services, 13% were able to access the services they needed, and 23% did not access the services they needed.

Students offered a variety of reasons for not accessing the mental health services they needed.

Reasons students did not access mental health services in the past 12 months (among those who felt they needed these services)	
Didn't know where to go	48%
Had no transportation	17%
Didn't think they could afford it	22%
Couldn't go when it was open	6%
Parent/guardian wouldn't take them	17%
Afraid someone they knew might see them	32%
Worried their information would not be kept confidential	39%
Didn't want parent/guardian to know	50%
Afraid of what they would be told	45%
Thought or hoped the problem would go away	48%
The service was not available in their community	6%
On a waiting list	4%
Had negative experience(s) before	14%
Too busy to go	43%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

Students were asked about accessing professional counselling or treatment for their mental health over the phone, by email, or through video calling, as well as where they went for reliable information on mental health.

In the past 12 months, 16% of students had accessed virtual counselling or treatment for their mental health. This included 11% who preferred this to in-person counselling, and 5% who would have preferred to access in-person counselling.

<b>Where students go to access reliable information on mental health</b>	
A friend/peer	37%
A family member	37%
School staff	14%
Mental health professional	13%
Website/online resource	19%
Another source	1%
Don't know where to go for reliable information on mental health	9%
Don't go anywhere for this information	28%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.



## EATING BEHAVIOURS AND BODY IMAGE

### Food consumption

Students were asked about meals and snacks they had consumed on the day before taking the survey, and about where these came from (including food they took home from a school food program).

<b>Ate or drank at least once yesterday</b>	
Fruit, vegetables, and salad	79%
Sweets (cookies, cakes, candies, etc.)	75%
Fast food (pizza, hot dogs, fries, etc.)	51%
Traditional food from their background	29%
Energy drinks	30%

<b>Source of meals and snacks yesterday</b>	
Prepared themselves	62%
Prepared by parent/caregiver	80%
Restaurant, food court, or delivery service	36%
Food bank	4%
Taken home from a school food program	10%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

<b>Meals eaten in the past 7 days</b>					
	0 days	1-2 days	3-4 days	5-6 days	All 7 days
Breakfast	25%	22%	12%	10%	32%
Lunch	8%	16%	18%	18%	41%
Dinner	1%	3%	9%	16%	71%

Note: Percentages for each type of meal may not total to 100% due to rounding.

<b>Where students get breakfast on school days</b>	
Don't eat breakfast on school days	35%
At home	56%
At school	13%
On the way to school	7%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

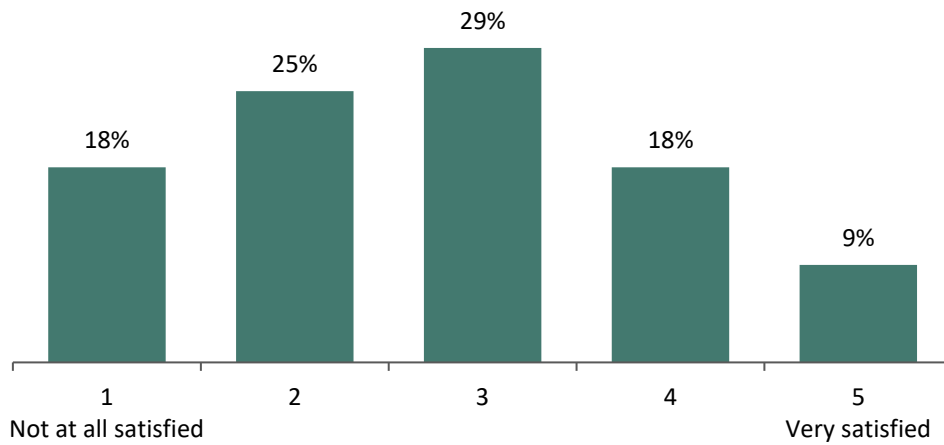
## Disordered eating and body image

In the past 30 days, 39% of students worried that they had lost control of how much they ate.

In the past 12 months, 24% of students had vomited on purpose after eating, including 3% who did so at least weekly.

Students were asked to rate how satisfied they were with how their body looked.

**How satisfied students felt with how their body looked**



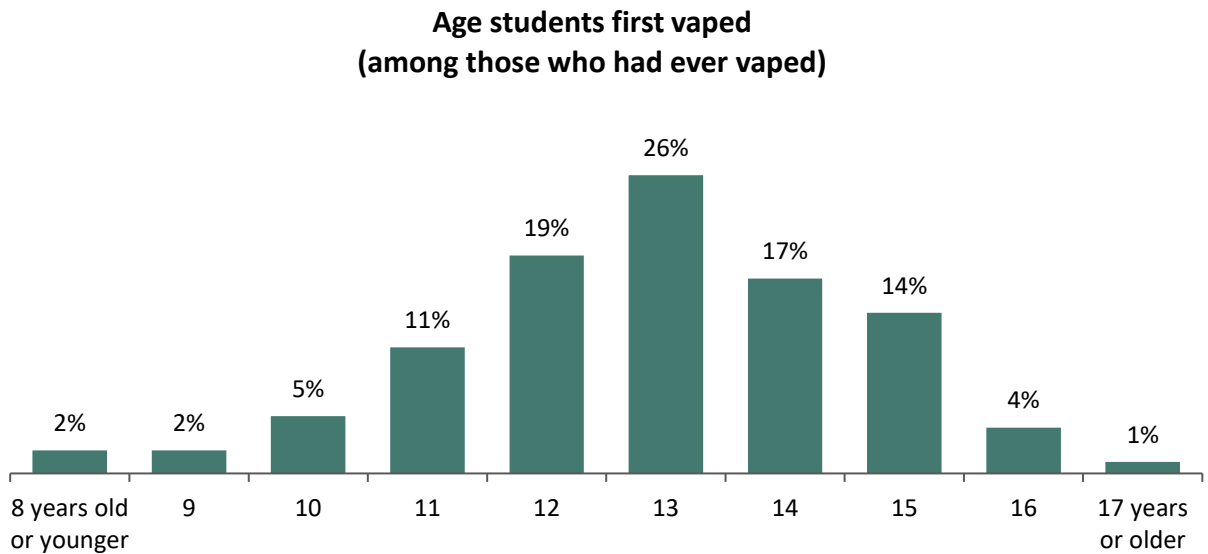
Note: Percentages do not total to 100% due to rounding.

## SUBSTANCE USE

Students were asked about their vaping and smoking, as well as their use of alcohol, cannabis, and other substances. They were also asked about their reasons for using substances and the consequences of their use.

### Vaping

In this school district, 48% of students had ever vaped.



The majority of students who had tried vaping, had vaped in the past 30 days.

<b>Number of days students vaped in the past 30 days (among those who had ever vaped)</b>	
0 days	38%
1 or 2 days	13%
3 to 5 days	6%
6 to 9 days	6%
10 to 19 days	6%
20 to 29 days	9%
All 30 days	22%

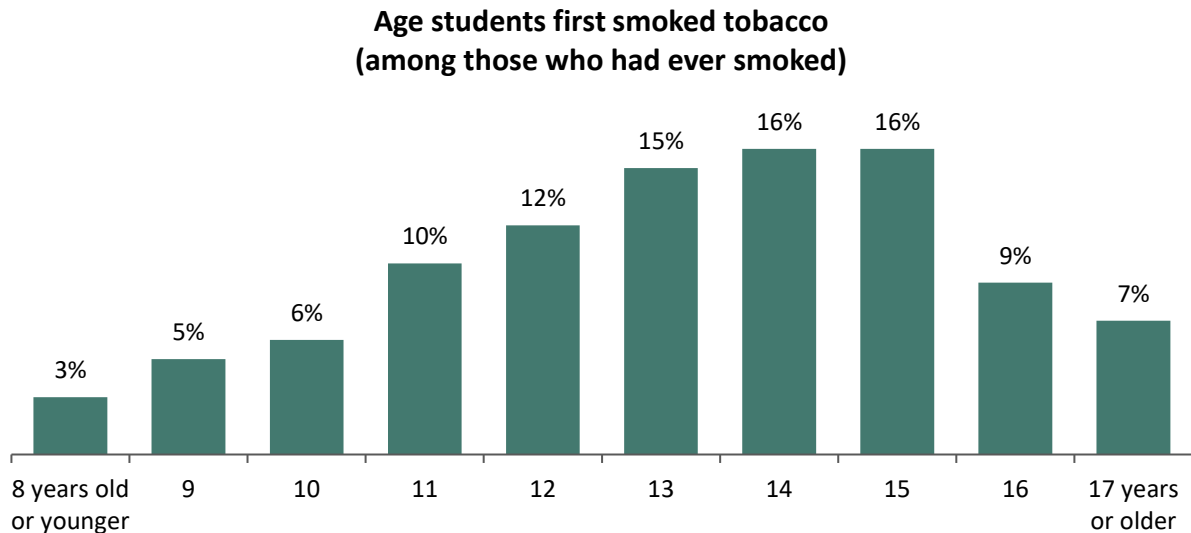
Students who vaped were asked how soon after waking up they had their first vape.

<b>How soon after waking up students had their first vape (among those who vaped every day in the past 30 days)</b>	
Within 5 minutes	49%
Within 6 to 30 minutes	27%
Within 31 to 60 minutes	10%
After 60 minutes	14%

Among students who had vaped in the past 30 days, 6% had used a product to help them stop vaping during this time.

### Smoking

Locally, 31% of students had smoked tobacco (excluding ceremonial tobacco).



Note: Percentages do not total to 100% due to rounding.

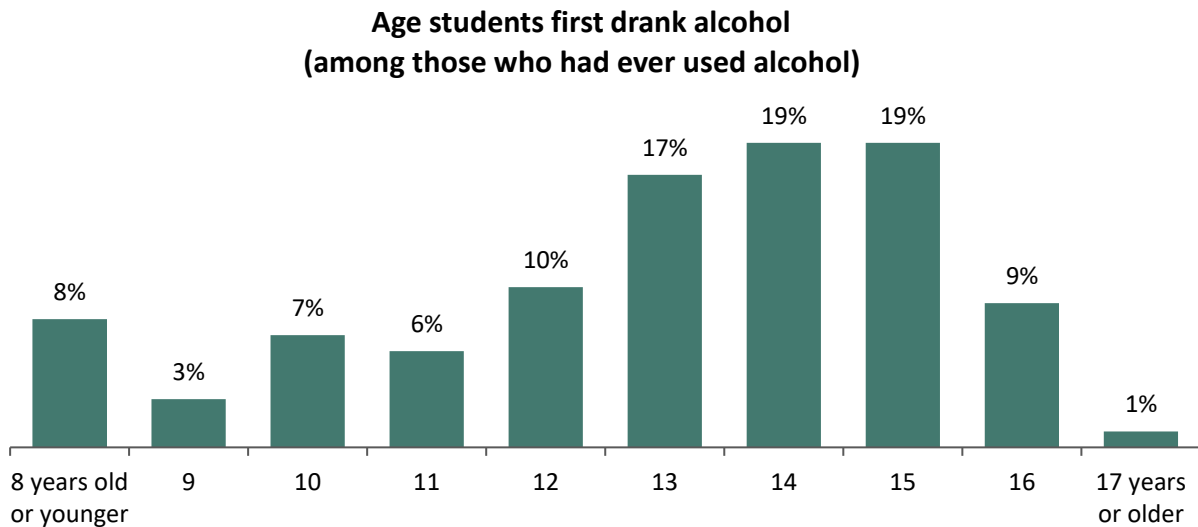
<b>Number of days students smoked in the past 30 days (among those who had ever smoked)</b>	
0 days	51%
1 or 2 days	25%
3 to 5 days	7%
6 to 9 days	9%
10 to 19 days	4%
20 to 29 days	3%
All 30 days	2%

Note: Percentages do not total to 100% due to rounding.

Among students who had smoked in the past 30 days, 18% had used a product to help them stop smoking during that time (excluding vapes).

## Alcohol

Students were more likely to have tried alcohol than to have smoked, as 51% of students had ever drunk alcohol (beyond just trying a few sips).



The Canadian Low Risk Drinking Guidelines recommend that youth do not drink until they are of legal drinking age. However, if they decide to drink, the guidelines suggest they should not drink alcohol more than once or twice a week, and that they should never have more than two drinks on any one occasion.

<b>Number of days students drank alcohol in the past 30 days (among those who had ever used alcohol)</b>	
0 days	37%
1 or 2 days	35%
3 to 5 days	15%
6 to 9 days	6%
10 to 19 days	4%
20 or more days	2%

Note: Percentages do not total to 100% due to rounding.

<b>Number of days students drank 5 or more drinks within a few hours in the past 30 days (among those who had ever used alcohol)</b>	
0 days	54%
1 or 2 days	29%
3 to 5 days	11%
6 to 9 days	3%
10 to 19 days	3%
20 or more days	NR

NR: The percentage could not be reported due to risk of deductive disclosure.

<b>Number of days students had more than 2 drinks in the past 7 days (among those who had ever used alcohol)</b>	
0 days	65%
1 day	20%
2 days	9%
3 or more days	6%

Students who had used alcohol were asked about the types of alcohol they had drunk on the Saturday before taking the survey.

<b>Types of alcohol used last Saturday (among those who had ever used alcohol)</b>	
Did not drink last Saturday	60%
Beer	13%
Wine	3%
Coolers	26%
Liquor	25%

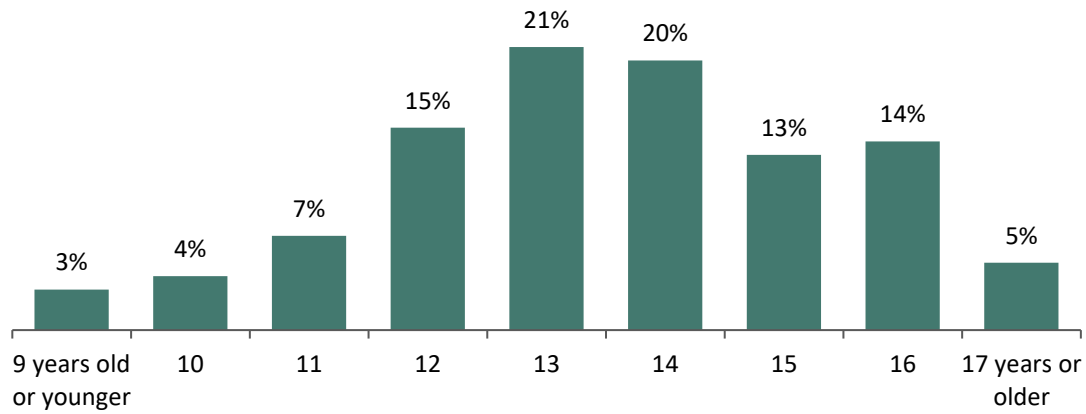
Note: Students could mark all that applied.

## Cannabis

Lower risk cannabis use guidelines for youth were recently developed by researchers at the University of Victoria (Card et al., 2023: <https://www.uvic.ca/research/centres/cisur/assets/docs/youth-cannabis-guidelines.pdf>). The researchers' suggestions included recommending youth consider waiting until they are older before using; "starting low and going slow" with the amount of cannabis they consume; being aware of the source of their cannabis and what it might contain; and knowing the different health risks associated with the various modes of cannabis consumption.

In this school district, 40% of students had ever used cannabis. Among those who used cannabis, 40% used it on the Saturday before taking the survey.

**Age students first used cannabis  
(among those who had ever used cannabis)**



Note: Percentages do not total to 100% due to rounding.

<b>Number of days students used cannabis in the past 30 days (among those who had ever used cannabis)</b>	
0 days	36%
1 or 2 days	20%
3 to 5 days	11%
6 to 9 days	5%
10 to 19 days	6%
20 to 29 days	7%
All 30 days	15%

Note: Percentages do not total to 100% due to rounding.

<b>Most recent method of cannabis use (among those who had ever used cannabis)</b>	
Smoked it	75%
Vaped it	38%
Ate it	25%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

<b>Most recent source of cannabis (among those who had ever used cannabis)</b>	
It was shared among a group of friends	59%
Friend or family member gave it to them	34%
Someone they did not know gave it to them	4%
Bought it from friend or family	17%
Bought it from someone they did not know	5%
Bought it from a website	6%
Bought it from a cannabis store	14%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

## Other substances

Students were asked about their lifetime use of other substances, including their misuse of prescription medications.

<b>Substances students had ever used</b>	
Benzodiazepines without a doctor's consent	3%
Other prescription pills without a doctor's consent	5%
Cocaine	3%
Ecstasy/MDMA	2%
Mushrooms	13%
Other hallucinogens	4%
Inhalants	2%
Amphetamines	NR
Crystal meth	1%
Heroin, fentanyl, or other opioids	2%
Ketamine, GHB	1%
More of their own prescription than prescribed	7%

NR: The percentage could not be reported due to risk of deductive disclosure.



## Reasons for using and consequences of substance use

Students reported using substances for a variety of reasons, including to manage their emotions.

<b>Reasons students used substances the last time (among those who had used alcohol or other substances)</b>	
Friends were doing it	28%
To manage physical pain	12%
Because of stress	34%
Thought it would help them focus	7%
Felt down or sad	31%
Wanted to have fun	62%
Wanted to experiment	25%
Felt pressured into doing it to fit in	5%
Didn't mean to (e.g., drink was spiked)	NR
There was nothing else to do	17%
To change the effect of another substance	5%
Because of an addiction	10%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

NR: The percentage could not be reported due to risk of deductive disclosure.

The majority of students (55%) had not used alcohol or other substances in the past 12 months, and around 4 in 10 of those who had used substances did not report any negative consequences.

<b>Consequences of substance use experienced in the past 12 months (among students who had used alcohol or other substances)</b>	
Passed out	31%
Got injured	24%
School work or grades changed	13%
Argued with family members	16%
Got into a physical fight	11%
Damaged property	10%
Lost friends or broke up with romantic partner	11%
Got in trouble with police	6%
Had to get medical treatment	4%
Had sex when they didn't want to	7%
Overdosed	3%
Was told they did something they couldn't remember	37%
Used alcohol or other substances but none of these happened	38%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

Most students had not mixed substance use with driving, and the majority had not been a passenger in a vehicle with a driver who had been using substances.

<b>Students who had ...</b>		
	Driven a vehicle after using	Been a passenger in a vehicle with a driver who had been using
Alcohol	3%	23%
Cannabis	7%	25%
Other substances	2%	6%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

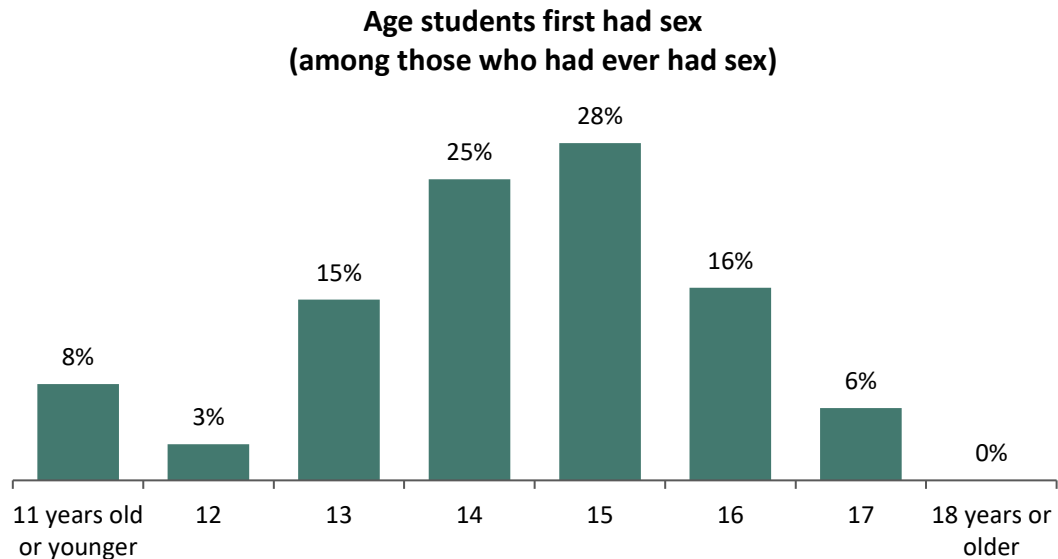
Students were asked whether they felt or had been told that they needed help for their substance use and other potentially addictive behaviours (gambling, gaming, and social media use). The most common area students needed help with was social media use.

<b>In the past 12 months, students felt or were told they needed help for ...</b>	
Vaping	13%
Alcohol use	7%
Cannabis use	10%
Other substance use	2%
Social media use	23%
Video gaming	15%
Gambling	2%

## SEXUAL HEALTH

In this school district, 24% of students had ever had oral sex, and 20% of these students had used a condom or other barrier the last time they had oral sex.

Also, 26% had ever had sexual intercourse, and 44% of these students had used a condom or other barrier/protection the last time they had intercourse.



Note: Percentages do not total to 100% due to rounding.

Among students who had ever had sexual intercourse, 78% had engaged in sexual intercourse within the past 12 months. Also, 35% reported they had used substances before they had sex the last time.

### Pregnancy involvement and prevention

Locally, 2% of students reported they had been pregnant or had gotten somebody pregnant, and 1% were unsure if they had been involved in a pregnancy.

Students who had engaged in sexual intercourse were asked if they had made any efforts to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex.

<b>Efforts students made to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex (among those who had ever had sex)</b>	
Did not try to prevent pregnancy	4%
Withdrawal	50%
Emergency contraception	6%
Condoms	41%
Birth control pills/patch/ring	25%
Depo-Provera	NR
IUD	9%
Last time they had sex was with a same-sex partner	8%
Not sure	5%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

NR: The percentage could not be reported due to risk of deductive disclosure.

### Sources of information about sexual health

Students who wanted reliable information about sexual health commonly approached their peers and family for this information. However, some also approached school staff and other in-person and online sources.

<b>Where students go to access reliable information about sexual health</b>	
A same-aged friend or peer	24%
An older youth	14%
Parent/guardian	27%
Other family member	7%
Adult outside their family	4%
Pornography	4%
School staff	5%
Sexual health professional	6%
Other professional	3%
Website/online resource	21%
Printed resource (e.g., book, brochure, poster)	2%
Did not know where to go	5%
Did not go anywhere	41%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

## SAFETY, VIOLENCE, HARASSMENT, AND ABUSE

The majority of students felt safe in their school, home, and community. (School safety is discussed in the 'School Experience' section.)

How often students felt safe			
	Never/rarely	Sometimes	Often/always
In their neighbourhood during the day	6%	13%	81%
In their neighbourhood at night	22%	23%	55%
Inside their home	4%	7%	89%
On transit (among those who used transit)	24%	29%	47%

During the past 12 months, 48% of students had experienced verbal sexual harassment, and 36% had experienced physical sexual harassment.

Students were also asked specifically if they had been forced into sexual activity against their will. Locally, 12% had been forced into sexual activity by another youth and 6% by an adult.

In their lifetime, 24% of students had been physically abused and 20% reported they had been sexually abused. The percentage of students who had experienced sexual abuse increased to 23% when experiences of forced sexual activity, and being the younger of an illegal age pairing the first time they had sex, were included.

### Dating violence

The majority of students who had been in a dating relationship in the past 12 months had not experienced physical or online abuse within that relationship. However, 12% of those who had been in a relationship reported they had experienced physical violence (such as being hit, punched, or slapped), and 21% reported that the person they dated had used social media to try to control, embarrass, or hurt them.

### Discrimination

In addition to asking about reasons youth might have experienced discrimination, new questions were added to the 2023 BC AHS to determine the locations and regularity of discrimination students experienced.

<b>Where students experienced discrimination in the past 12 months</b>	
At school	31%
On the street	8%
In store/restaurant	7%
At work	5%
On public transit	3%
In hospital or other health care setting	2%
On social media/online	19%
In extracurricular activities (e.g., sports)	6%
Other	2%

Note: Students could mark all that applied

<b>Reasons students perceived they had been discriminated against in the past 12 months</b>	
Race, ethnicity, or skin colour	20%
Religion	7%
Sexual orientation	11%
Gender/sex	18%
Disability	4%
Health condition	6%
Physical appearance	35%
How much money they/their family has	8%
Weight	27%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

The majority of students who had experienced discrimination had this experience rarely. However, 10% who had experienced discrimination in the past 12 months reported that it happened regularly.

## Victimization

Students were asked about their experiences of victimization as a victim and as a perpetrator in the past 12 months.

<b>In-person victimization experiences in the past 12 months while at school or on the way to/from school</b>	
<b>As victim</b>	
Teased to the point of feeling extreme discomfort	39%
Socially excluded	42%
Physically attacked or assaulted	13%
<b>As perpetrator</b>	
Teased, socially excluded, or physically attacked another youth	8%

In addition to in-person victimization, 25% of students reported they had been cyberbullied (including through texts and social media), and 11% had perpetrated online bullying.

## RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS

When asked whether they got along with the people around them, 68% of students agreed, 22% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 10% disagreed.

### Friendships

Most students had at least one close friend in their school or neighbourhood, and 68% had three or more such friends. Also, 25% had three or more close friends online whom they had never met in person.

The majority of students reported that they had friends whom they could share their ups and downs with (71%).

In this district, 16% of students had dated someone online in the past 12 months whom they had never met in person.

### Supportive adults

Youth were asked about the roles that adults played in their life. (Results for school-based adults are in the 'School Experience' section.)

- 76% had at least one adult in their neighbourhood or community (outside of their family and school) who they felt cared about them.
- 64% had an adult inside their family who they would feel comfortable talking to if they had a serious problem, and 34% had such an adult outside their family.

<b>Students who had an adult to help with ... (among those who needed help)</b>	
Homework	71%
Making/getting to appointments	94%
Preparing for university, college, or trade school	85%
Getting a job	86%
Learning life skills (e.g., cooking, budgeting)	89%

### Family connectedness

The majority of students felt connected to their family.

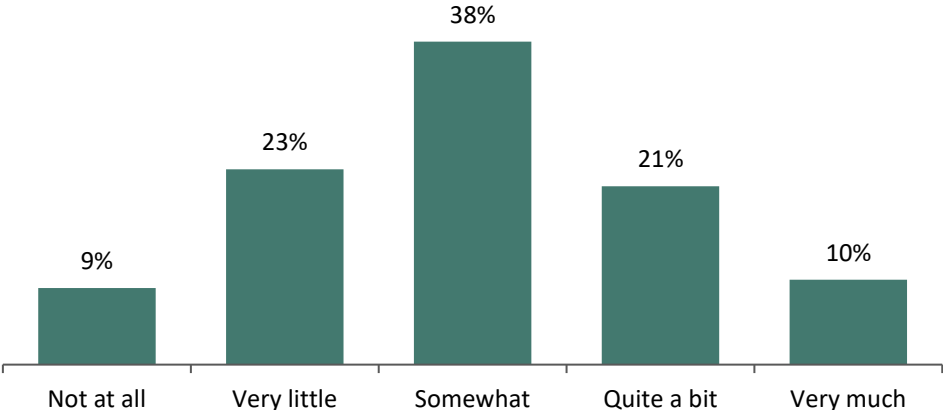
<b>How much students felt their family ...</b>			
	Not at all/ very little	Somewhat	Quite a bit/ very much
Understood them	29%	26%	45%
Had fun together	16%	22%	62%
Paid attention to them	14%	22%	63%
Respected them	17%	20%	63%

Note: Percentages in each row may not total to 100% due to rounding.

Community connectedness

Most students felt at least a little connected to their community.

How much students felt like a part of their community



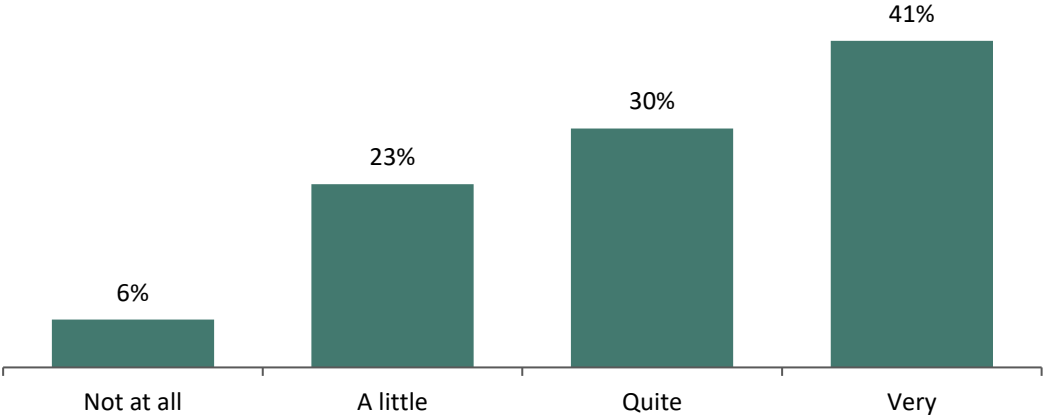
Note: Percentages do not total to 100% due to rounding.

Other types of connectedness

Cultural pride

Students were asked how proud they felt to be part of the background(s) they identified with.

How proud students felt to be part of their background(s) (among those who identified a background)





### *Spirituality*

The majority of students (55%) felt that spirituality was at least a little important to them, including 12% for whom it was very important.

### *Connection to the land/nature*

The majority of students felt connected to the land at least sometimes (63%), including 6% who always felt this way.

### *Time to do the things they want*

Students generally felt they got to spend the right amount of time with family, friends, on their own, and in nature.

<b>How much time students get with ...</b>			
	<b>Not enough</b>	<b>Right amount</b>	<b>Too much</b>
Family	21%	74%	5%
Friends	30%	66%	5%
On their own	23%	63%	14%
In nature	39%	57%	4%

Note: Percentages in each row may not total to 100% due to rounding.

## SPORTS, GAMBLING, AND OTHER LEISURE ACTIVITIES

### Participation in physical activity

Students were asked about their participation in a range of sports and exercise, including swimming. Locally, 9% of students reported they could not swim, 38% could swim but not confidently, and the remaining majority were confident swimmers.

<b>Participated in sports and exercise at least weekly in the past 12 months</b>	
Informal sports (without a coach)	52%
Organized sports (with a coach)	37%
Dance, yoga, or exercise classes with an instructor	8%
Extreme sports	16%
Exercise at a gym or rec centre	36%
Exercise to an online video or online class	9%

Youth aged 12-17 should participate in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise every day, and older youth should get at least 150 minutes a week. Most students in this district exercised for at least 60 minutes once a week or more.

<b>Number of days in the past week students got at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise</b>	
0 days	12%
1-2 days	17%
3-4 days	28%
5-6 days	20%
All 7 days	23%

The majority of students reported that they enjoyed exercising and being physically active at least somewhat (85%), including 31% who enjoyed exercising very much. However, students reported a number of barriers to participating in sports and exercise, with the most common being that they were too busy.

<b>Barriers students experienced to participating in sports and exercise in the past 12 months</b>	
Couldn't afford to	11%
Worried about being bullied by an adult	9%
Worried about being bullied by another youth	19%
Worried about catching something (e.g., COVID)	8%
Didn't feel welcome	18%
Thought it would be too competitive	20%
Couldn't get there or get home	15%
Was too busy	39%
Activity wasn't available in their community	15%
Too anxious/depressed	24%
Parents wouldn't allow it	9%
Health needs/disability could not be accommodated	5%
Was injured	24%

Note: Students could mark all that applied.

## Participation in cultural and volunteer activities

Students were asked about their engagement in their community outside of school, and specifically about their engagement in cultural activities and volunteering without pay. Over the past 12 months, 12% had engaged in cultural activities at least weekly, and 16% had volunteered this frequently.

## Connection to activities

Most students felt that the activities they engaged in were meaningful to them, including 43% who felt this way quite a bit or a lot. Also, 24% felt their ideas were listened to and valued quite a bit/a lot.

## Gambling

The BC AHS has always asked students about gambling. Additional questions were added to the 2023 BC AHS to capture students' online gambling behaviours, as this has become an issue of increasing concern in BC. In addition to gambling for money in the past 12 months, 14% of students gambled for something of value other than money, and 32% gambled 'just for fun'.

<b>Ways that students gambled for money in the past 12 months</b>	
Played cards/dice in person	12%
Played cards/dice online	7%
Sports betting in person	9%
Sports betting online	6%
Bought lottery tickets/scratch cards	7%
Played in a gaming tournament	10%
Streamed video games (e.g., Twitch)	10%
Bought in-game items (e.g., loot boxes)	26%

There is some concern in BC that betting for virtual credits within video games can lead to gambling for money, and potentially problematic gambling. Students were therefore asked whether they had bet for virtual credits within the past 30 days (they could mark all that applied):

- 32% had not played video games in the past 30 days.
- 9% had bet with virtual credits they purchased using real money.
- 14% had bet with virtual credits they had won or earned in a video game.
- 7% had bet for prizes.
- 46% had not bet with virtual credits.

**Phone use**

Most students (97%) in this school district had a phone or tablet, and used it for a variety of activities.

<b>What students used phone/tablet for on their last school day</b>	
Gambling	5%
Playing/watching esports	19%
Gaming other than esports	29%
Sexting	6%
Watching porn	9%
Connecting with family and friends	58%
Scrolling through social media	76%
None of these	10%

## TOPICS STUDENTS WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT

The final page of the survey offered students the opportunity to share anything about their health which they had not been asked about, and to identify any topics they would like to learn more about. In this district, 7% of students provided a comment and identified topics they wanted to learn more about.

One common topic that students wanted to learn more about was mental health, including wanting to learn about specific conditions, how to manage mental health challenges, where to access resources and how to support friends and family who might be struggling with their mental health.

*“How mental health takes a toll on the youth.”* – Male, aged 13

*“I honestly don’t know how to figure out if I have any mental health stuff like depression or adhd or stuff like that.”* – Female, aged 13

*“Mental illnesses and how to help other people who also have them.”* – Female, aged 16

*“I always wondered if reading certain things online can effect one’s mental health.”* – Non-binary youth, aged 18

Other topics students wanted to learn more about included information about SOGI education, sex education, Indigenous education, and general physical health.

*“My sexuality and gender.”* – Non-binary youth, aged 12

*“Residential schools, Indigenous heritage, queer identities, queer history, mental health disorders, physical disorders, medical malpractice and its affects, workplace discrimination.”* – Non-binary youth, aged 14

*“I would love to learn more about me, how the woman’s body works and how the men’s body works, and some sexual stuff because I want to know more... I’m at an age where I want to find stuff out.”* – Female, aged 12

*“Mental health and physical health.”* – Male, aged 16

## RESOURCES

As noted in the introduction to this report, if you have any questions or would like to request additional data or dissemination materials, please contact Karen at [karen@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:karen@mcs.bc.ca) or 604-291-1996, ext. 230. We would also be happy to visit and share the survey findings with school administrators, students, and/or parents.

### Additional 2023 BC AHS results

The school district reports and infographics are the first materials to be produced from the 2023 BC AHS findings. These reports are not made public unless specifically requested by the district. The first public report of the 2023 BC AHS data will be the provincial highlights report, and will share an overview of the combined results for all participating school districts. It will include youth health trends, gender and grade differences, emerging issues, and risk and protective factors for healthy development. The report will be released in early 2024. Regional reports, special topic reports, posters, and fact sheets will follow. All resources will be available at: <https://mcs.bc.ca/ahs>.

To ensure you receive notification of all upcoming releases, please consider joining our community mailing list. Please contact [mccreary@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:mccreary@mcs.bc.ca) to be added to the list.

### Next Steps workshop toolkit

The Next Steps workshop toolkit is a resource that provides facilitators (e.g., teachers, Public Health Nurses, youth workers, and other adult supports) with a workshop template that can be used to share results of the survey with young people aged 12 to 19 in British Columbia. It includes an introduction to the results, activities to learn about risk and protective factors, and discussion questions to explore youth health in your school or community.

McCreary staff are also available to facilitate the workshop. To learn more about the Next Steps, or for support to adapt this resource to meet the needs of your school district, please email [mccreary@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:mccreary@mcs.bc.ca).

### Youth Action Grants (YAGs)

YAGs are a project of McCreary Centre Society's Youth Advisory and Action Council (YAC). YAGs are available to BC youth (ages 12 to 19) in school districts that participated in the 2023 BC AHS. YAGs offer up to \$750 for projects which address findings from the BC AHS and which seek to support or improve youth health. For more information or to apply, please visit [https://mcs.bc.ca/youth\\_action\\_grants](https://mcs.bc.ca/youth_action_grants).

Application forms and information for students are available in English and French. For youth wanting additional support with the application process, the YAC offers a grant writing workshop – please contact [yag@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:yag@mcs.bc.ca).



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