



Data insights

Students' views on their safety

A key finding in the inaugural Speaking Out Survey conducted with 4,912 WA students in 2019 was that many children and young people do not always feel safe at home, at school and in their community. The following data provides further analysis of this significant result.

Feeling safe at home

For all students, 63 per cent reported they felt safe at home all the time and 27 per cent felt safe most of the time, although nearly one-in-ten (9%) reported feeling safe at home only sometimes, a little bit of the time or never.

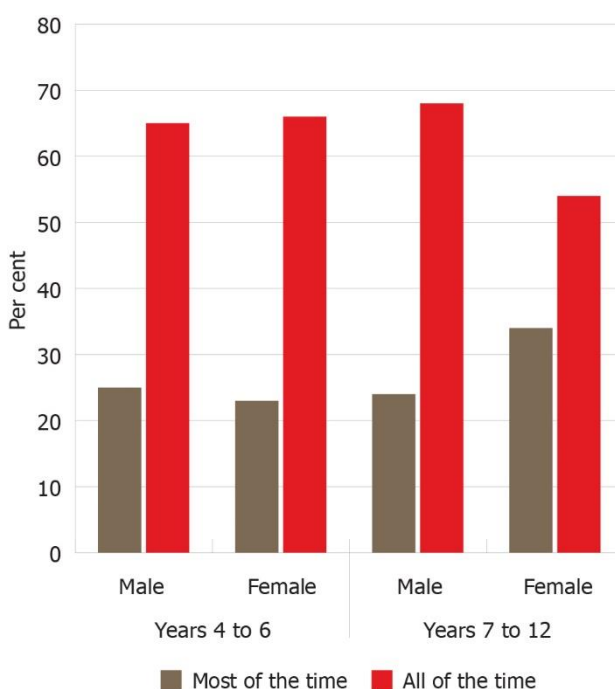
In high school, female respondents were significantly less likely than male respondents to report feeling safe all the time.

Only 54 per cent of female high school students always feel safe at home. This represents a significant decline from the proportion of Year 4 to Year 6 female students who feel safe at home all the time (66%).

Almost one-third of high school students (30%) reported they had ever stayed away from home overnight because of a problem and one-third (32%) of these students had done this more than once in the last 12 months.

High school students in remote areas were more likely to feel safe at home all the time compared to students in metropolitan and regional areas (69% compared to 61% and 62%, respectively).

Figure 1: Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting whether they feel safe at home



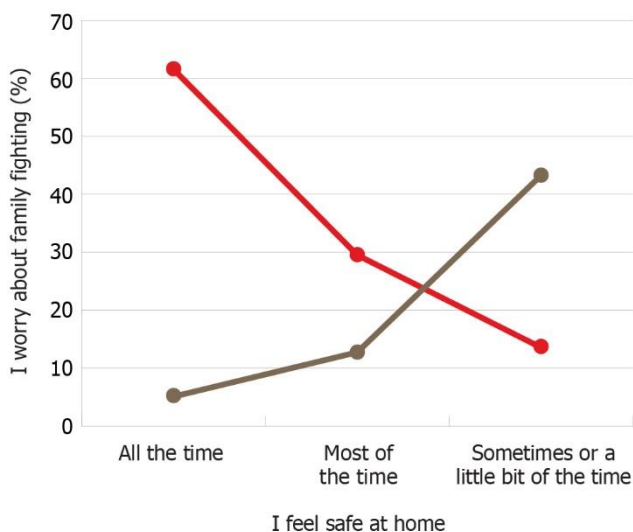
Note: Columns do not all add up to 100% as responses "I'd prefer not to say" and "Do not apply" were omitted from this figure.

Family worry

The safety and wellbeing of parents and family is an essential prerequisite for providing a dependable and supportive environment for children and young people.

Survey results found a significant relationship between children and young people feeling safe at home and worrying about someone in their home or family fighting.

Figure 2: Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting their level of worry about family fighting (a lot or not at all) grouped by how often they feel safe at home



Note: For the purposes of this graph, the responses "a little" and "somewhat" to "I worry about family fighting" have not been included.

Among high school students, more than one-half worry that someone in their family will be fighting and one-in-ten worry about this a lot. A much greater proportion of female than male high school students were worried that someone in their family will be fighting.

Worry about family fighting or that a family member will move away or hurt themselves was related to decreased life satisfaction and feeling less safe at home. Worry about family fighting was also associated with increased stress and decreased happiness and resilience, highlighting family conflict as particularly impactful.

Students not feeling safe in the home was associated with other negative outcomes. In particular, all students who did not feel safe at home were more likely to report lower resilience and feel less happy with themselves. Further, high school students who did not feel safe at home were more likely to have felt sad or depressed for more than two weeks in a row in the last year.

Feeling safe at school

Feeling and being safe at school is essential for students to be ready and able to engage with learning. When students do not feel safe, it affects their behaviour and their feelings towards school and learning.

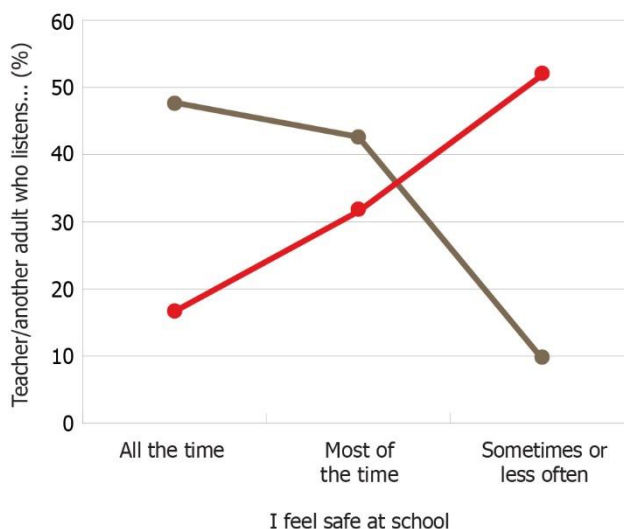
Most WA students feel safe at school but almost one-in-five feel safe only sometimes or less.

Female students were more likely to not feel safe at school than male students.

Positive relationships with teachers and other adults at school are critical for students to feel safe and secure in their learning environments and promote engagement with school and learning.

Survey results reveal a strong association between students who feel safe at school and those who feel there is a teacher or another adult who listens to them.

Figure 3: Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting on having a teacher/another adult who listens (very much true or not true at all) grouped by how often they feel safe at school



Note: For the purposes of this graph, the responses "pretty much true" and "a little true" to "Teacher/another adult who listens..." have not been included.



Experiences of bullying

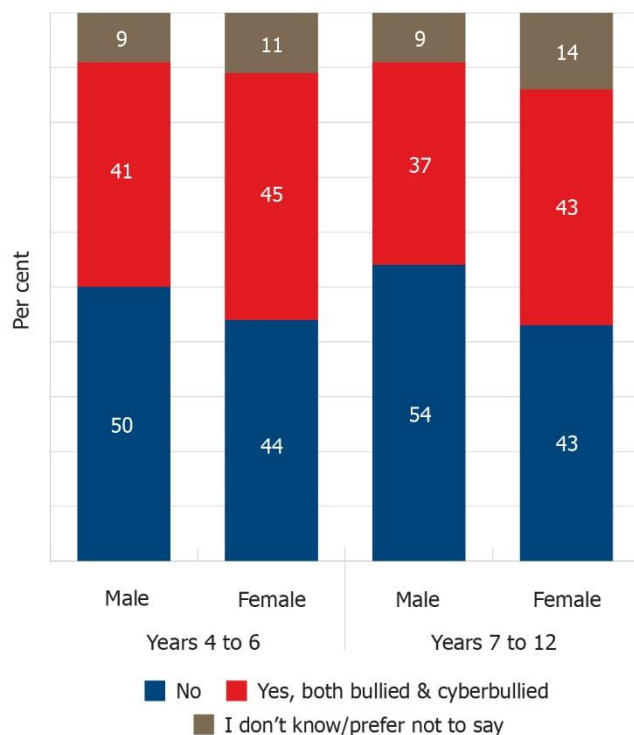
Students identified bullying as a significant safety concern at school.

One-half (53%) of respondents said they have been bullied by students at their school.

The proportion of students who report any kind of bullying against them does not change between primary and high school, however, there are changes in the type and degree of bullying. Students in high school experience twice as much bullying and cyberbullying both together (14%), while facing less bullying (without cyberbullying 24%) compared to students in primary school (bullying and cyberbullying 7%; bullying without cyberbullying 34%).

This trend is most pronounced for female students, with cyberbullying increasing approximately 2.5 times from primary school to high school.

Figure 4: Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting whether they had been bullied by students at their school

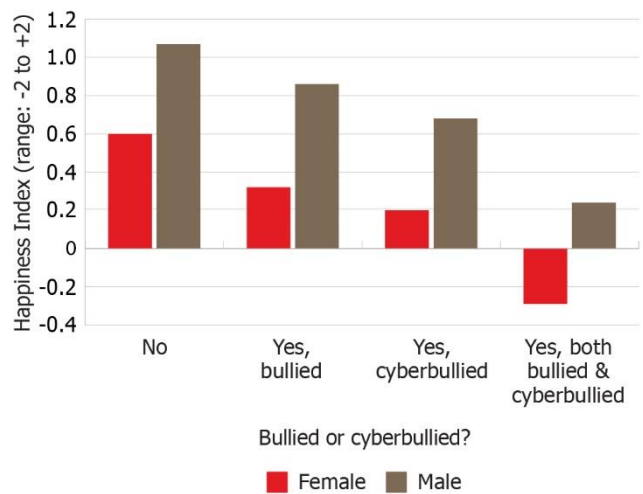


Female students in high school experience more bullying in the form of being ignored or left out of a group to hurt them (69%) compared to their male counterparts. They are also about

twice as likely to miss school out of fear of being bullied (21%) compared to male students (11%).

In high school, the occurrence and type of bullying experienced was related to lower happiness and prolonged sadness and depression, especially for female students. The strongest association was for both bullying and cyberbullying, followed by cyberbullying and then bullying.

Figure 5: Year 7 to 12 differences in bullying and its association with happiness



Feeling safe in the community

Survey results show that around two-thirds (69%) of students feel safe in their community or local area all or most of the time, while one-third (30%) feel safe only sometimes or less.

Fewer female students reported feeling safe in their local area compared to male students. Approximately 20 per cent of female high school students reported feeling safe in their community all the time, compared to 30 per cent of male students.

Almost 40 per cent (38%) of female high school students feel safe in their local area only sometimes or less (26% for male young people).

Overall, Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students had similar responses to feeling safe in their community, although a higher proportion of Aboriginal high school students than non-Aboriginal students felt safe all the time in their local area (34% compared to 24%).



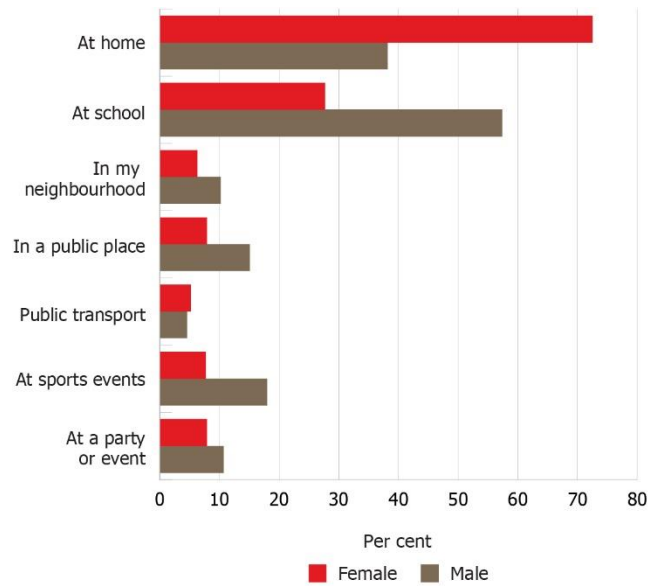
Experiencing violence

Year 9 to Year 12 students were also asked about experiencing physical violence. While proportions are high for both genders, male students are more likely to have been physically hit or harmed than female students (56% compared to 45%).

The location where this occurred is significantly different between genders. Male students are most likely to be physically harmed at school (57%), at home (38%), at sports events (18%) or hanging out in a public place (15%).

Of the students reporting they had been hit or physically harmed, female students were most likely to be physically harmed at home with almost three-quarters of respondents (72.5%) saying this.

Figure 6: Year 9 to Year 12 students reporting locations where they have been hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose



The full Speaking Out Survey report and Indicators of Wellbeing data are available at ccyp.wa.gov.au