



Data snapshot

Students' views on their safety

The Commissioner's Speaking Out Survey 2021 (SOS21), conducted with 16,532 WA students, affirmed previous findings that many children and young people do not always feel safe at home, at school and in their community.

Feeling safe at home

The majority (65%) of Year 4 to 12 students reported they felt safe at home all the time and 25 per cent felt safe most of the time, however nearly one-in-ten (9%) reported feeling safe at home only sometimes, a little bit of the time or never.

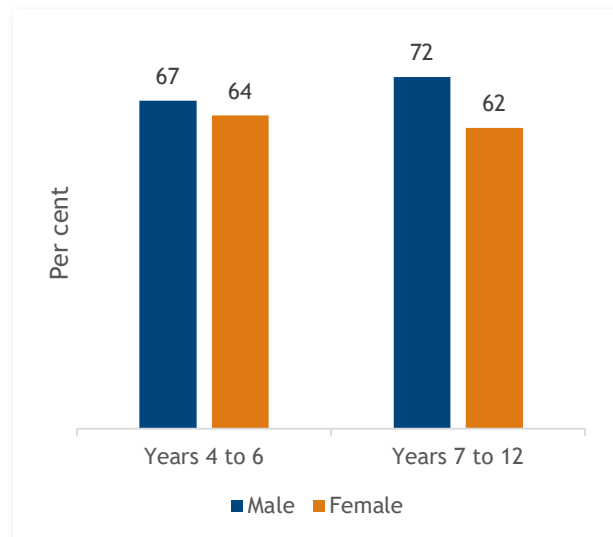
Overall perceptions of safety at home were consistent across Year 4 to 6 and Year 7 to 12 students.

Similar proportions of male and female Year 4 to Year 6 students report feeling safe at home all the time (67% vs 64%). However, in Years 7 to 12, female students were less likely than male students to report feeling safe at home all the time (62% vs 72%).

Over one-in-ten (11%) female high school students reported feeling safe at home only sometimes, a little bit of the time or never (male: 5%).

Further female high school students were more likely than their male peers to report having ever stayed away from home overnight because of a problem (32% vs 22%) and 44 per cent of these students had done this more than once in the last 12 months (male: 28%).

Figure 1: Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting feeling safe at home "All the time"



Family worry

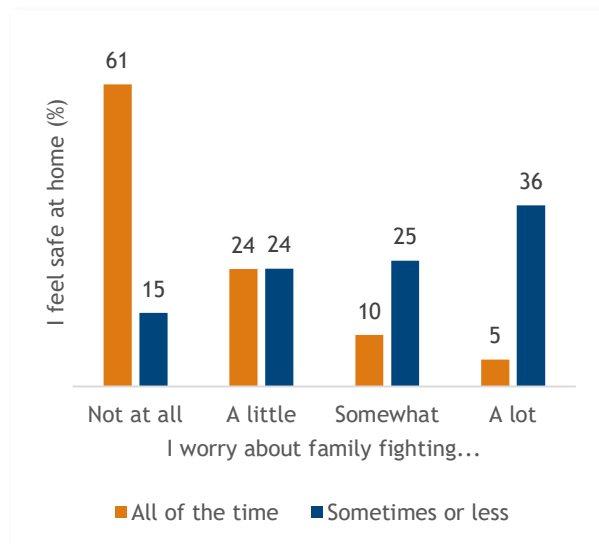
The safety and wellbeing of parents and family is an essential prerequisite for providing a dependable and supportive environment for children and young people.

More than one-half of Year 4 to Year 12 students worry that someone in their family will be fighting and over 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 (59% vs 42%).

Survey results show a strong association between worrying about family fighting and feeling safe at home. Of the students who reported feeling safe at home "all the time", the majority (61%) were "not at all" worried about their family fighting, 24 per cent were worried "a little", 10 per cent were "somewhat" worried and

5 per cent worried “a lot”. An inverse pattern of responses was observed for the students who reported feeling safe at home sometimes or less.

Figure 2: Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting how often they feel safe at home, grouped by their level of worry about family fighting



Note: For the purposes of this graph, the responses “Most of the time”, “Prefer not to say” and “I don’t know” to the question “How often do feel safe at home?” have not been included.

Worry about family fighting or that a family member will hurt themselves was also associated with decreased life satisfaction, increased stress, and lower levels of resilience, highlighting family conflict as particularly impactful.

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 in Years 4 to 12 feel safe at school, but one-in-five feel safe only sometimes or less.

In Years 4 to 6 similar proportions of male and female students reported feeling safe at school. However, results diverge for high school students with a greater proportion of female students reporting never feeling safe at school compared to their male peers (3% vs 2%).

For Years 4 to 12, regional and remote students were less likely to report feeling safe at school

than students in the metropolitan area, this was more pronounced for high school students.

Experiences of bullying

Students identified bullying as a significant safety concern at school.

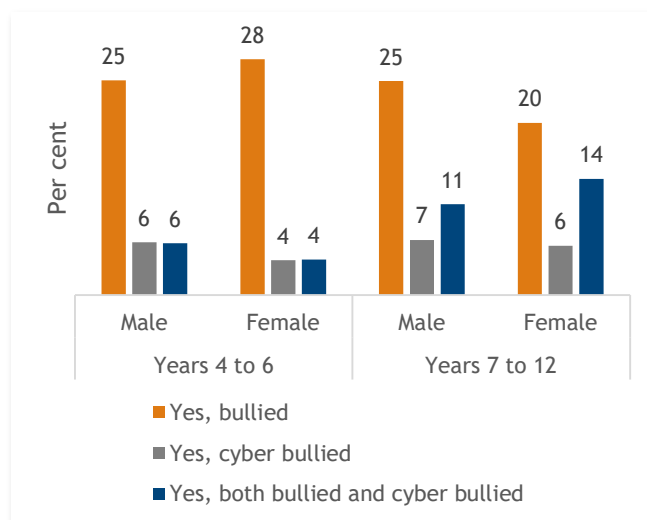
Over one-third (36%) of respondents said they have been bullied by students at their school and another 15 per cent said they “don’t know” or they would “prefer not to say”.

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 of bullying.

Of the students who reported being bullied in the previous three months, more than double the proportion of Year 7 to 12 students compared to Year 4 to 6 students reported experiencing both (traditional) bullying and cyberbullying (13% vs 5%).

This trend is most pronounced for female students, with three-times as many students experiencing bullying and cyberbullying in Years 7 to 12 compared to Years 4 to 6 (14% vs 4%).

Figure 3: Year 4 to Year 12 students who had been bullied in the last 3 months reporting on the nature of the bullying

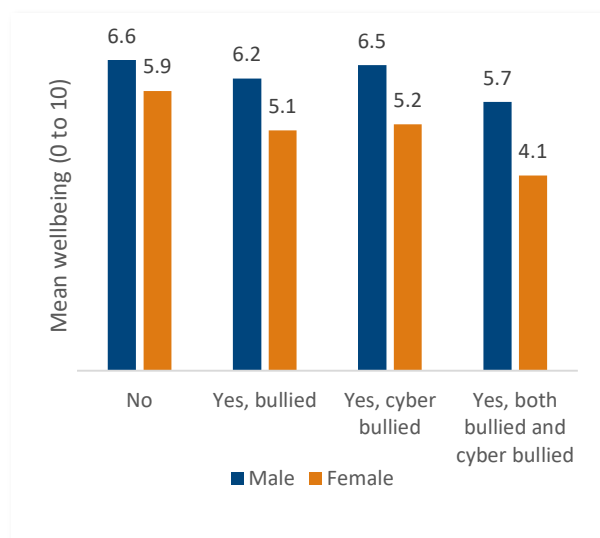


Female high school students who had been bullied in the previous three months were much more likely than male high school students to report being “sent nasty messages by email, mobile phone or on the internet” (60% vs 44%).

Female high school students were also nearly twice as likely to have ever missed school out of fear of being bullied (19%) compared to their male counterparts (10%).

In Years 7 to 12, the occurrence and type of bullying experienced was strongly associated with life satisfaction, especially for female students. That is, students who had not been bullied in the last 3 months reported a higher level of life satisfaction than those who had been bullied.

Figure 4: Year 7 to 12 differences in bullying and its association with average life satisfaction (0 to 10)



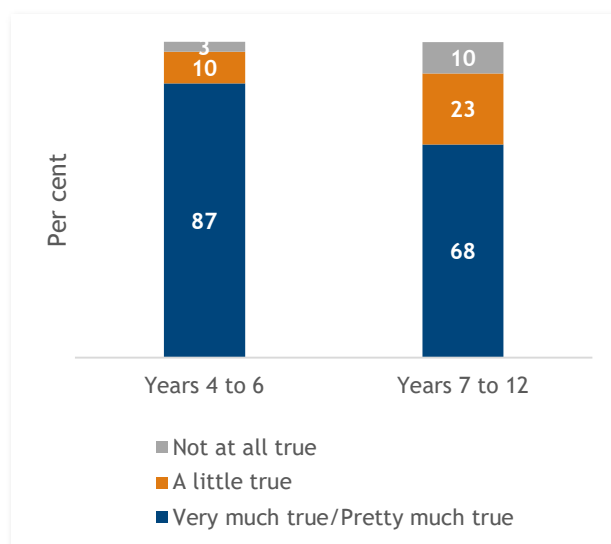
Relationships with teachers

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.

Analysis shows 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.

Students in Years 4 to 6 are more likely than those in Years 7 to 12 to report that it is very much true or pretty much true that there is a teacher or another adult at school who listens to them.

Figure 5: Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting there is a teacher or another adult as school who listens to them

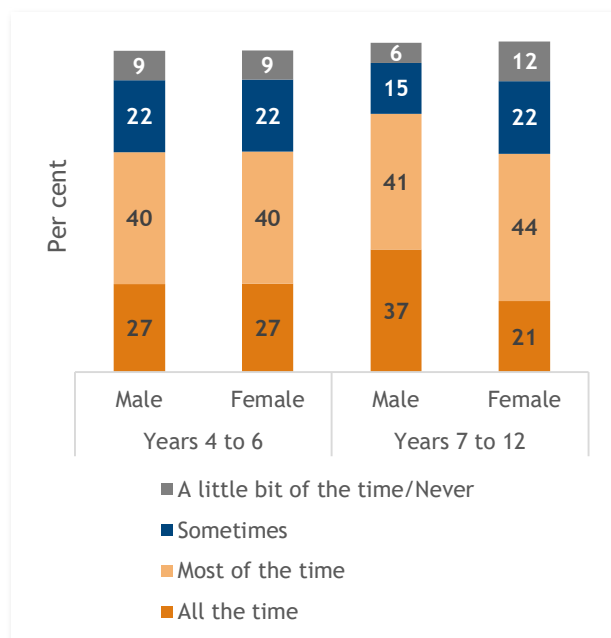


Feeling safe in the community

Survey results show that around two-thirds (69%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students feel safe in their community or local area all or most of the time, while one-third (29%) feel safe only sometimes or less.

Perceptions of safety in the community were the same for male and female students in Years 4 to 6 but diverged for high school students.

Figure 6: Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting how often they feel safe in their local area



Female high school students reported feeling safe in their local area only a little bit of the time or never, nearly twice as much as their male peers (12% vs 6%).

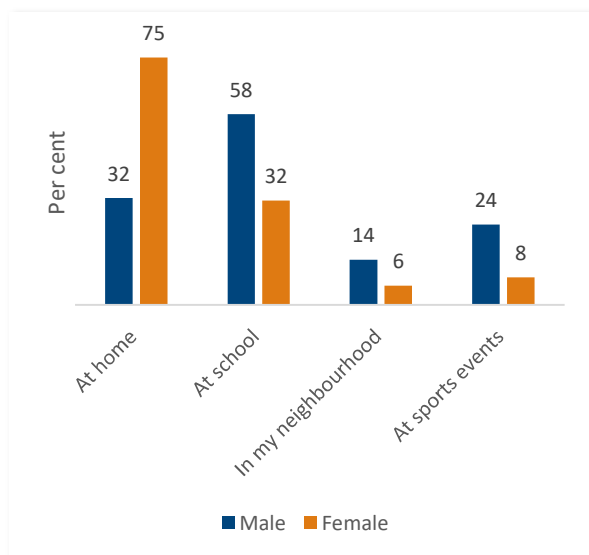
Results across regions were broadly consistent for Years 4 to 6 students. However, in Years 7 to 12, students in remote areas were less likely to feel safe in their local area than metropolitan and regional students – with 40 per cent reporting feeling safe only sometimes or less compared to 27 and 31 per cent, respectively.

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 (52% vs 36%).

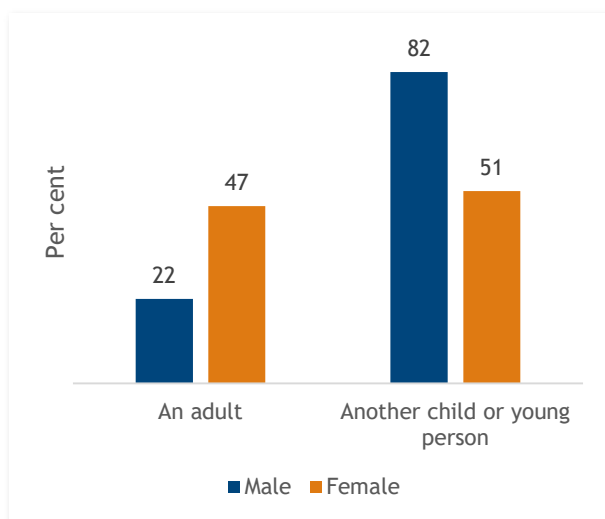
The location where this occurred differs between male and female students. Of the students reporting they had been hit or physically harmed, female students were more than twice as likely to be hit or physically harmed at home compared to male students (75% vs 32%). Whereas male students were more likely to report experiencing this sort of violence at school (58% vs 32%), in their neighbourhood (14% vs 6%) and at sports events (24% vs 8%).

Figure 7: Year 9 to Year 12 students reporting locations where they have been hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose



The perpetrator of the violence also differed between genders with female students who had been physically hit or harmed, more than twice as likely to report being harmed by an adult (47% vs 22%). Whereas male students were more likely to report the perpetrator was another child or young person (82% vs 51%).

Figure 8: Year 9 to Year 12 students reporting who they were hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose



The Speaking Out Survey is a large-scale representative survey of WA children and young people. The full Speaking Out Survey report and additional Indicators of Wellbeing data are available at ccyp.wa.gov.au.