

Insights from the Speaking Out Survey 2021



## **Acknowledgment of Country**

The Commissioner for Children and Young People proudly acknowledges and pays respects to the Traditional Custodians of the lands across Western Australia and acknowledges the Whadjuk people of the Noongar nation upon whose lands the Commissioner's office is located. She recognises the continuing connection to culture, lands, skies and waters, families and communities for all the Aboriginal peoples.

The Commissioner and her team also pay their respects to all Elders, past, present and emerging leaders. They recognise the knowledge, insights and capabilities of Aboriginal people, and pay respect to Aboriginal ways of knowing, being and doing.

## **A note about language**

For the purposes of this report, the term 'Aboriginal' encompasses Western Australia's diverse language groups and also recognises Torres Strait Islanders who live in Western Australia. The use of the term 'Aboriginal' in this way is not intended to imply equivalence between Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, though similarities do exist.

## **Suggested citation**

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## **Alternative formats**

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## Message from the Commissioner

The findings from the Speaking Out Survey 2021 provided significant insight into the views of over 16,000 children and young people from across Western Australia on their physical health, mental health, education, safety, community life and hopes for the future.



This report provides analysis of this data by education region, allowing for a regional comparison of children and young people's experiences and perspectives.

There are approximately 634,000 children and young people living in WA, with around 154,000 children and young people living in regional and remote areas.

While most of WA's children and young people told us in the 2021 survey that they are mentally and physically healthy, they feel loved and supported and that their basic material needs are being met, we know that there are pockets of significant disadvantage throughout all regions of WA.

Addressing the disparity in health and wellbeing of children and young people between regions requires targeted interventions and policies. These should focus on improving access to services, investments in infrastructure and strengthening community resources and support systems through partnerships between government and community organisations.

I would like to acknowledge the leadership and staff of the three education sectors, the Department of Education, Association of Independent Schools WA and Catholic Education WA for recognising the value of the Speaking Out Survey and continuing to support its administration through their schools.

I thank every young person who shared their views in the Speaking Out Survey 2021. Your time, your willingness to speak out and your trust in doing so are greatly appreciated. You have all provided invaluable feedback for the decision-makers of this state to improve the wellbeing of all children and young people.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading 'Jacqueline McGowan-Jones'. The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'J'.

**Jacqueline McGowan-Jones**

Commissioner for Children and Young People

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# Executive summary

## Introduction

This report presents the results of the Speaking Out Survey 2021 (SOS21) by education region. It provides a rare insight into the health and wellbeing of children and young people in the various regions across Western Australia (WA).

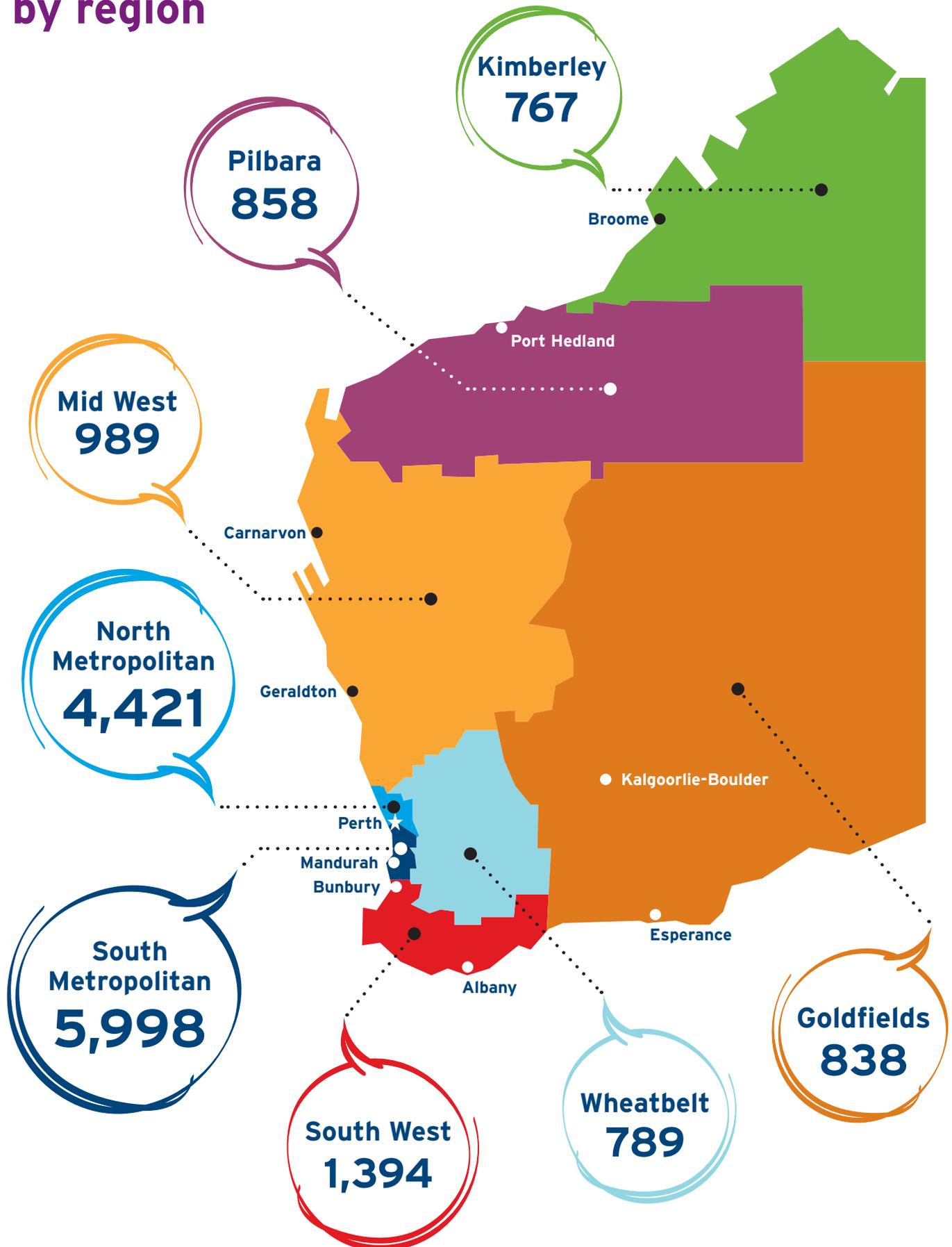
The aim of the Speaking Out Survey is to capture the views of a representative sample of children and young people in Years 4 to 12 across WA and develop a robust data source relating to the wellbeing of children and young people in our state. In 2021, a total of 16,532 Year 4 to Year 12 students from 94 schools across all regions of WA consented to participate.

The report [Speaking Out Survey 2021: The views of WA children and young people on their wellbeing – a summary report](#), published in November 2021, provides data for children and young people across WA.

This report summarises SOS21 results by education region as outlined in the following map.



# Student participation by region



## Key findings

For many survey questions, children and young people across the various regions reported similar responses. However, there are some differences which are highlighted throughout this report. Some key findings are:

- many children and young people in regional and remote locations do not have access to the level of outdoor or recreational facilities that are available in the Perth metropolitan area
- students in the Kimberley and Pilbara are much less likely to feel safe in their local area than students in other regions
- children and young people in the Goldfields and the Kimberley are more likely to report that they are missing out on material basics, with one in seven students (around 14%) in the Kimberley and Goldfields only sometimes or less having enough food to eat at home (all of WA: 9.6%)
- Aboriginal children and young people across the state are particularly affected by material disadvantage with around one in five Aboriginal children and young people in the Wheatbelt, Goldfields and the metropolitan area not always having enough food to eat at home.

The results in the report are structured according to the Commissioner's Wellbeing Monitoring Framework and its three interlinking domains of Healthy and connected, Learning and participating, and Safe and supported.

The following summarise the key findings with comparative data by region.



### The Commissioner's Wellbeing Monitoring Framework

1. Healthy and connected
2. Learning and participating
3. Safe and supported

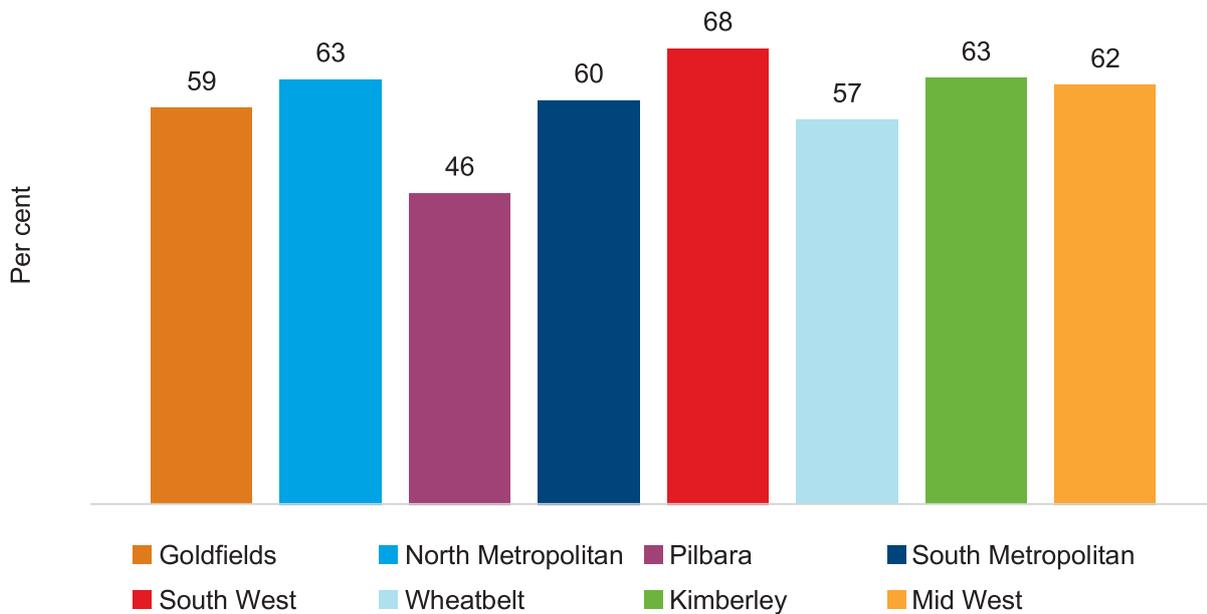
#### Healthy and connected

The majority (84.3%) of children and young people across the state reported their general health is good, very good or excellent. There is minimal difference in responses in regions across the state.

One area where there are differences across regions, is in the amount of physical exercise children and young people reported they were doing.

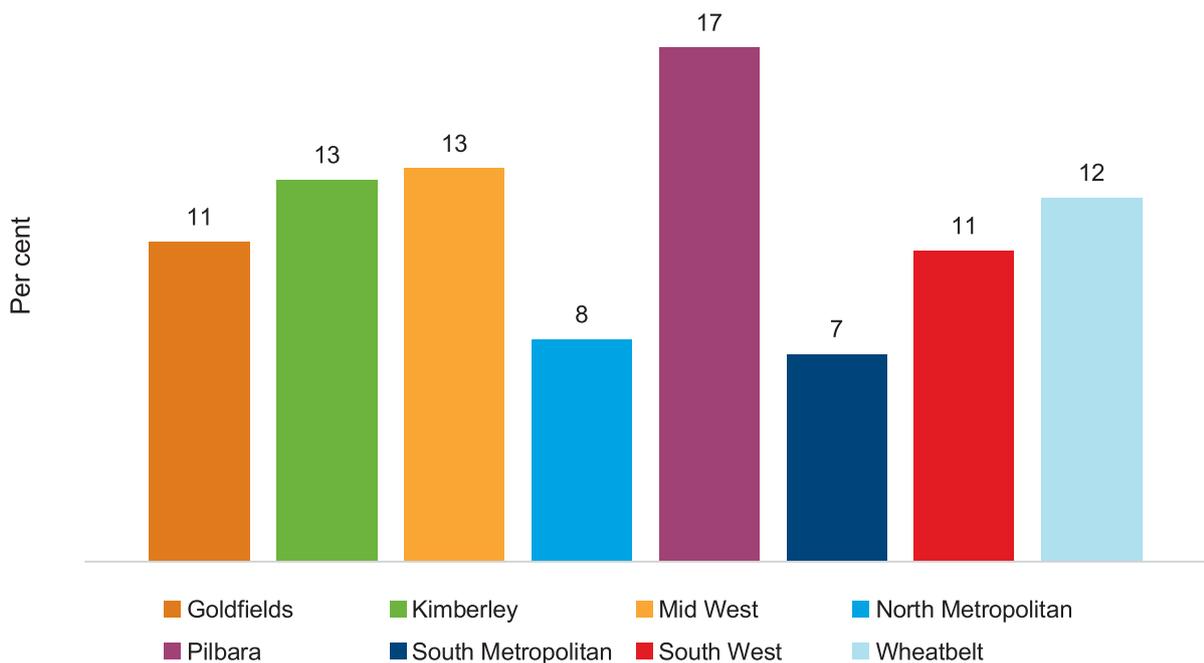
Secondary students in the South West were more likely to have done vigorous exercise in the previous week than in other regions across WA. Young people in the Pilbara were the least likely to have done vigorous exercise at least three times in the previous week.

**Proportion of secondary students reporting that in the previous seven days, they had done vigorous exercise at least three times**



In line with this result, young people in the Pilbara are also most likely to disagree that there are outdoor places to go to in their area, like parks, ovals or skate parks.

**Proportion of secondary students who disagree that there are outdoor places for them to go in their area, like parks, ovals or skate parks**

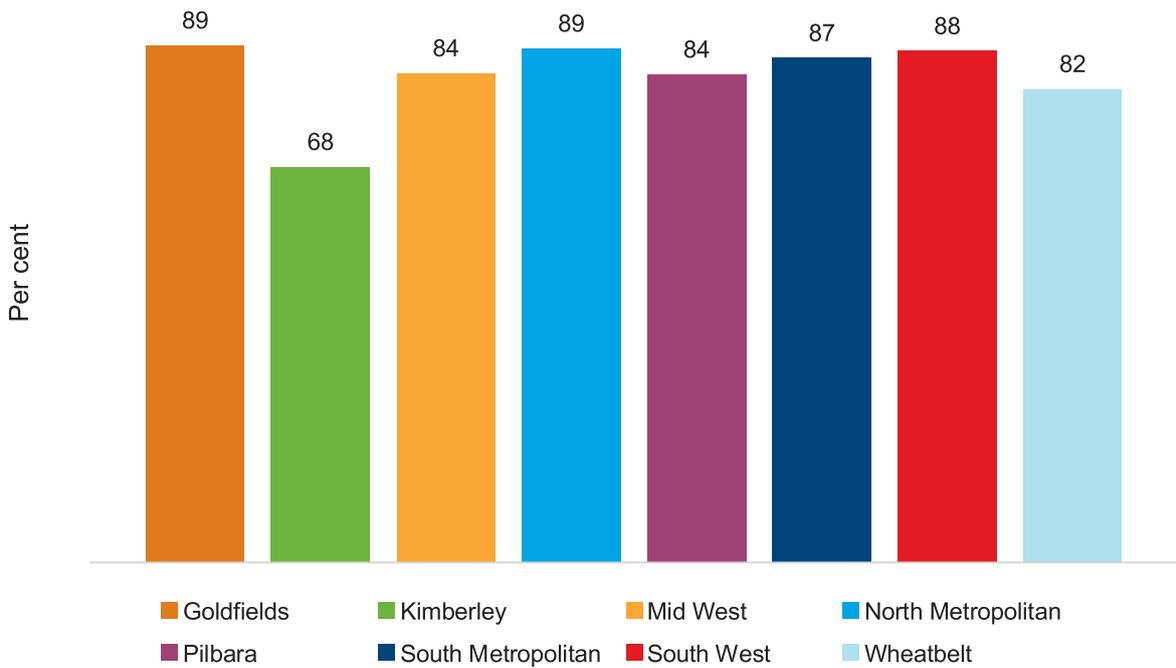


Green space and amenities which encourage children and young people to be active in their day-to-day lives are critical. All children and young people across WA should have access to community-based environments that provide space for accessible recreational activity, safe unstructured outdoor play and active transport options, such as bike paths.

Children and young people in regions across WA reported similar life satisfaction ratings and generally similar responses on other mental health related questions.

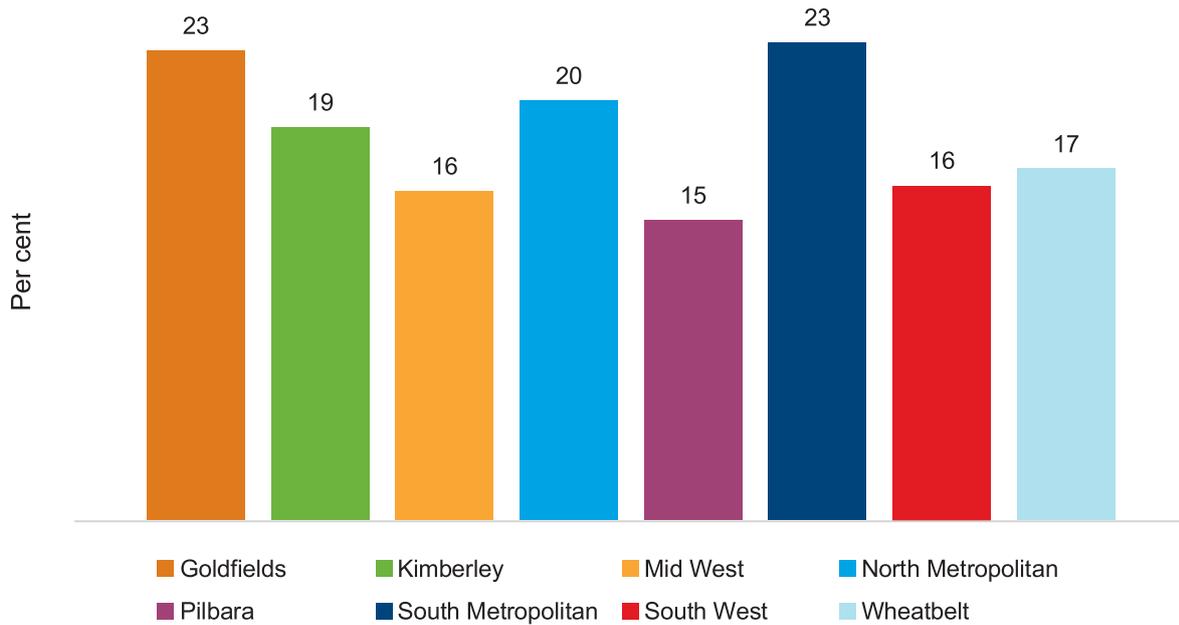
Year 9 to Year 12 students in the Kimberley and the Wheatbelt were less likely than their peers to report that school or study problems were a source of stress for them in the prior year.

**Proportion of Year 9 to Year 12 students reporting that school or study problems were a source of stress in the previous year**



Additionally, Year 9 to 12 students in the Mid West and the Pilbara are less likely than those across the state to report that COVID-19 was a source of stress in the previous year.

**Proportion of Year 9 to Year 12 students reporting that COVID-19 was a source of stress in the previous year**

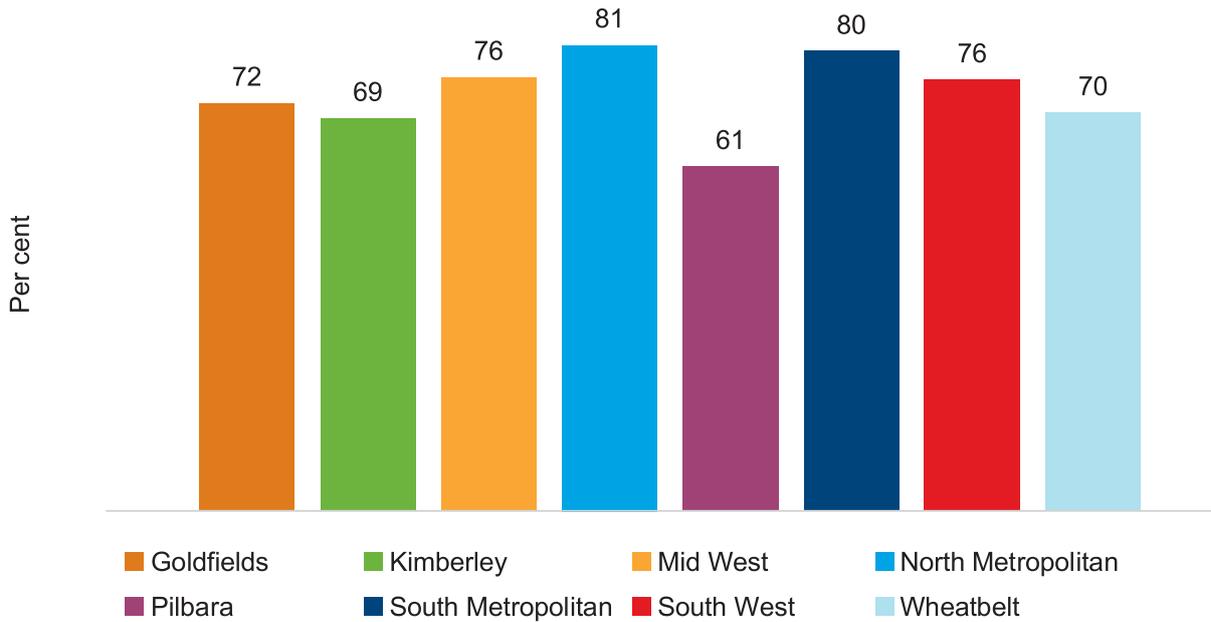


Feeling connected to your community and culture is critical for children and young people's health and wellbeing. It provides a positive sense of identity and belonging.

While most students across the state like where they live and feel connected, one in ten students in Years 4 to 6 in the Goldfields said they do not like where they live (9.6%) and do not feel like they belong in their community (10.9%). This is higher than the average across the state (6.0% and 4.7% respectively).

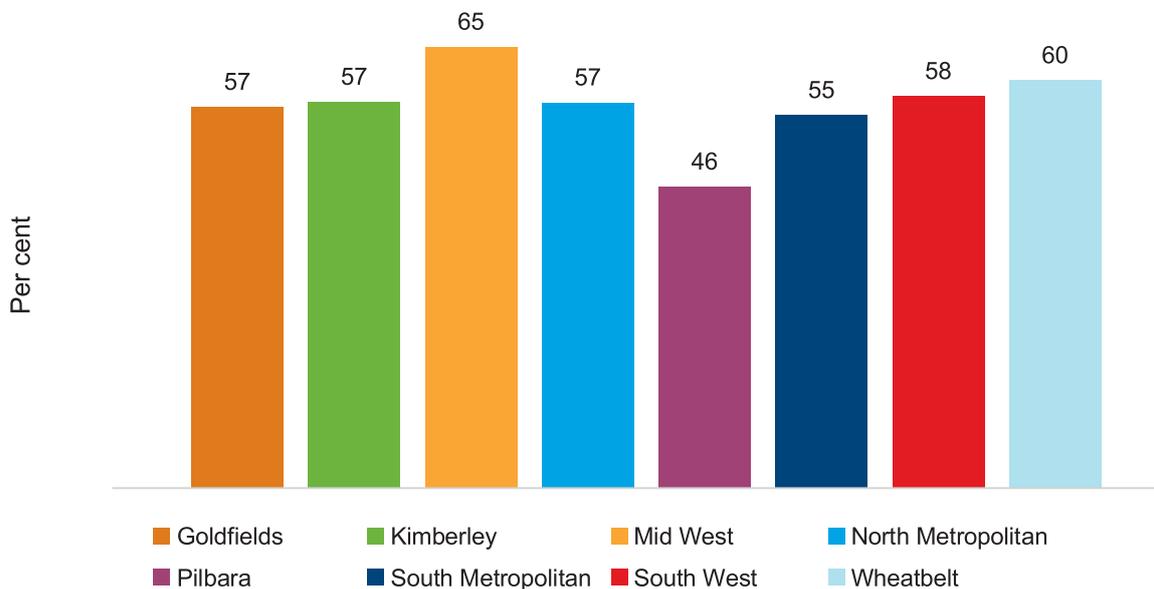
Perth (North and South Metropolitan) has the highest proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who like where they live, with around 80 per cent saying they like where they live.

**Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students who like where they live**



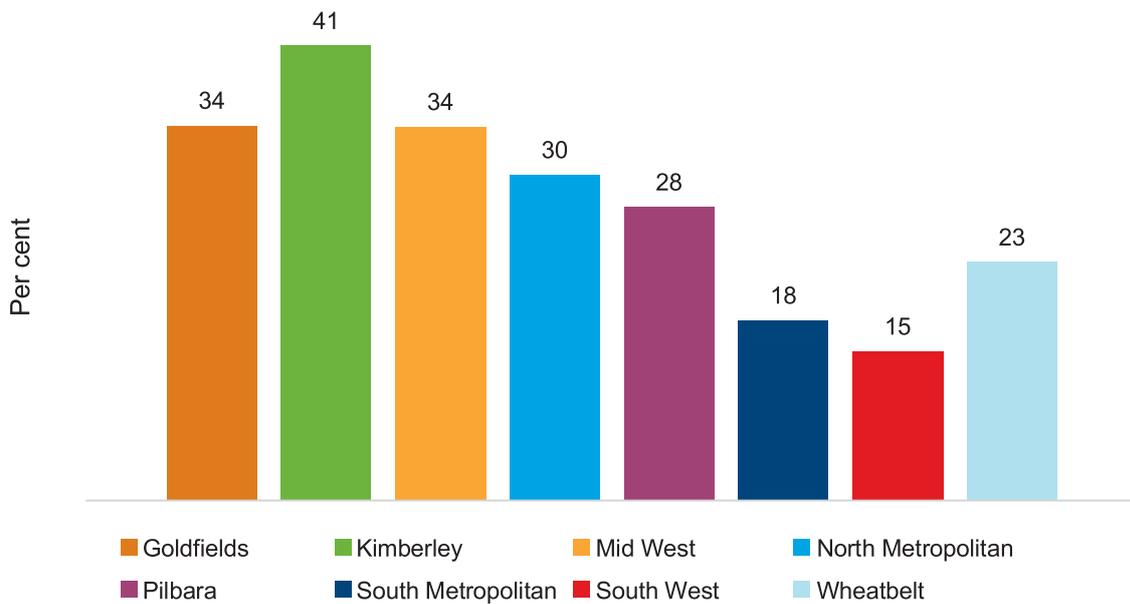
Secondary students in the Mid West are more likely than those across the state to feel like they belong in the community. Less than one-half of secondary students in the Pilbara feel like they belong in their community.

**Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students who feel like they belong in their community**



Over one-quarter (27.1%) of Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students across the state can talk a lot (10.0%) or some (17.1%) Aboriginal language(s). There is significant variation in regions across the state, with 41 per cent of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Kimberley being able to talk a lot or some Aboriginal language(s), compared to lower proportions in other regions across the state.

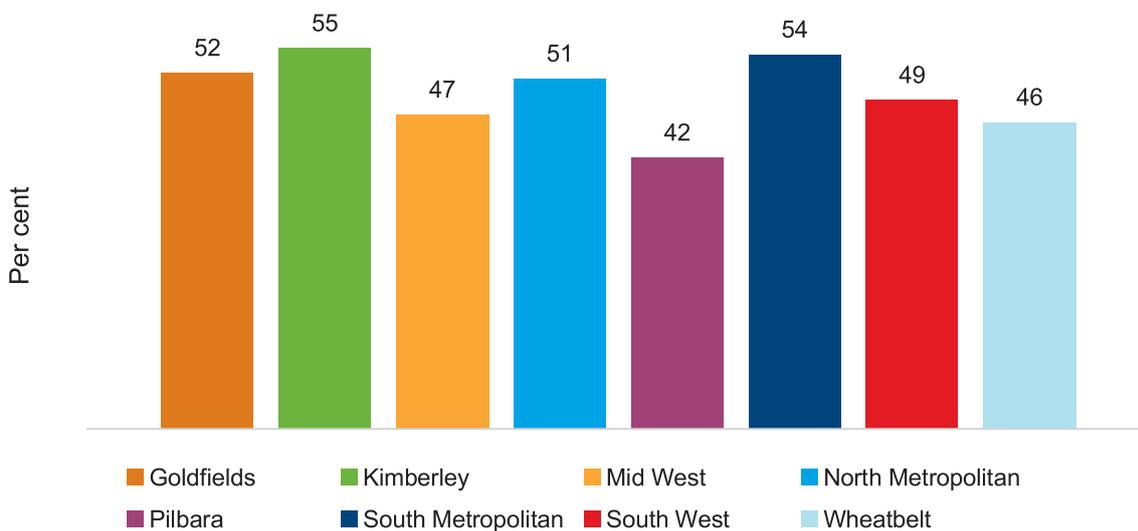
**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students who talk Aboriginal language(s) a lot or some**



**Learning and participating**

Most children and young people in WA reported that they like school, however there are differences across the state.

**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students who like school a lot or a bit**

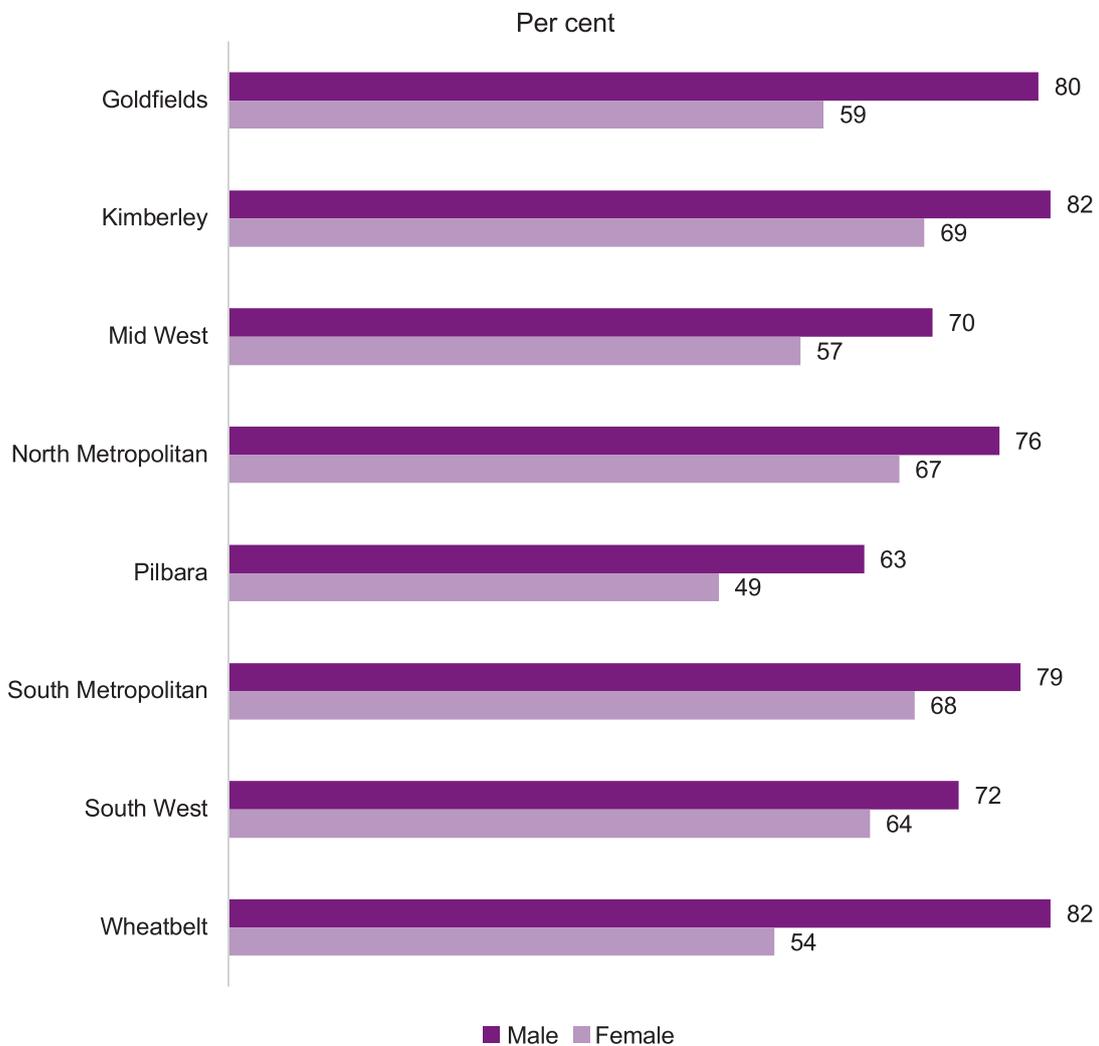


A high majority of students across the state (92.3%) believe that it is very or somewhat important to be at school every day. This was generally consistent across all regions. However, a significant minority (11.3%) of students in the South West reported that it is not very important to be at school every day (all of WA: 7.8%).

Most secondary students across WA feel that school is a place where they belong, however there are consistent gender differences.

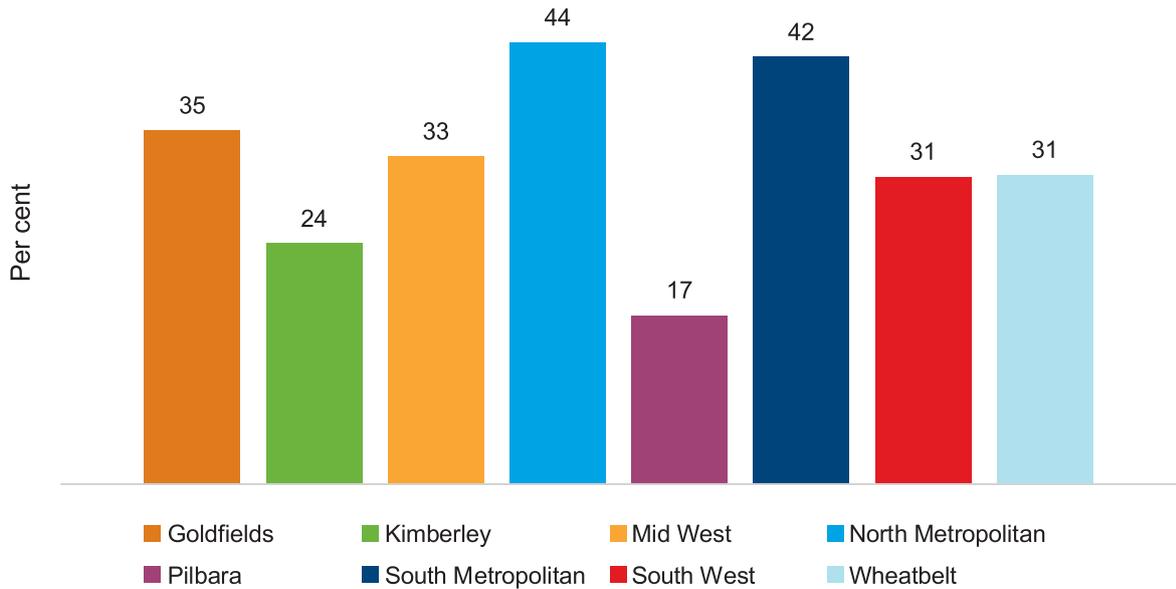
The gender percentage point gap is largest in the Wheatbelt.

**Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students who agree school is a place where they belong**



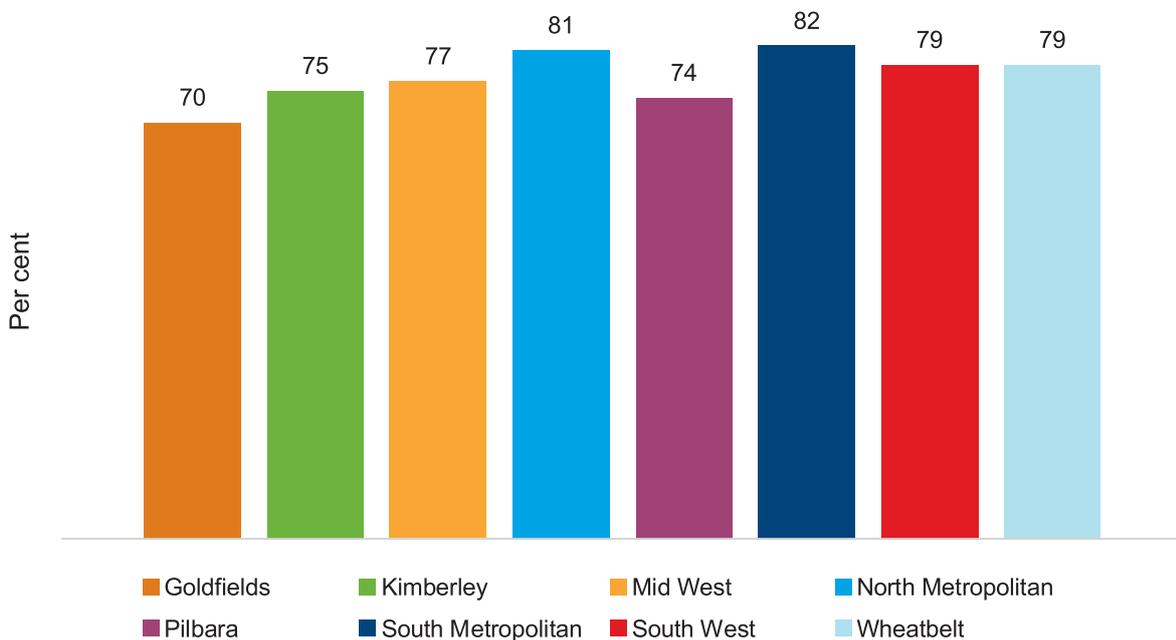
The proportion of students doing homework every day or almost every day differs greatly across the state. Secondary school students in the North and South Metropolitan regions are more likely than those across the state to report doing homework every day.

**Proportion of students in Year 7 to Year 12 doing homework every day or almost every day**



The majority of Year 4 to Year 12 students (77.9%) across WA feel safe at school all or most of the time. There are some regional differences. In particular, a lower proportion of Year 4 to Year 6 students in the Goldfields feel safe at school all or most of the time.

**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 6 students who feel safe at school all or most of the time**



Aboriginal students in remote areas are generally more likely than their non-Aboriginal peers and more likely than Aboriginal students in the metropolitan area to say that being at school every day is important to them and that they like learning.

At the same time, Aboriginal students across WA are much more likely to have been suspended from school than their non-Aboriginal peers (33.1% vs 13.0%). This is the case across all regions.

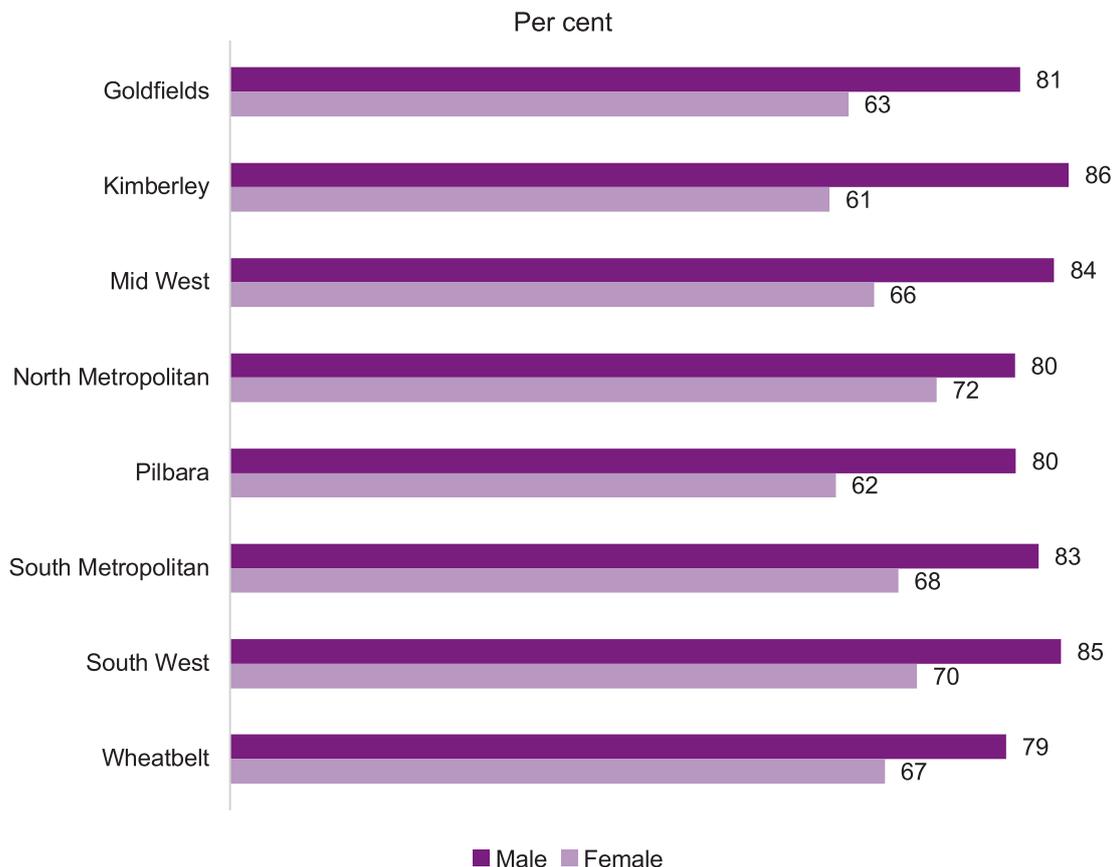
Aboriginal students across WA are also more than twice as likely to report that they had wagged school in the previous 12 months for a full day or more compared to non-Aboriginal students (34.5% compared to 13.7%).

### Safe and supported

Most (78.0%) Year 4 to Year 12 students across WA reported it is 'pretty much true' or 'very much true' that there is a parent or another adult at home who listens to them when they have something to say.

Responses are consistent across the regions, however, in secondary school gender differences are evident, particularly in the Kimberley.

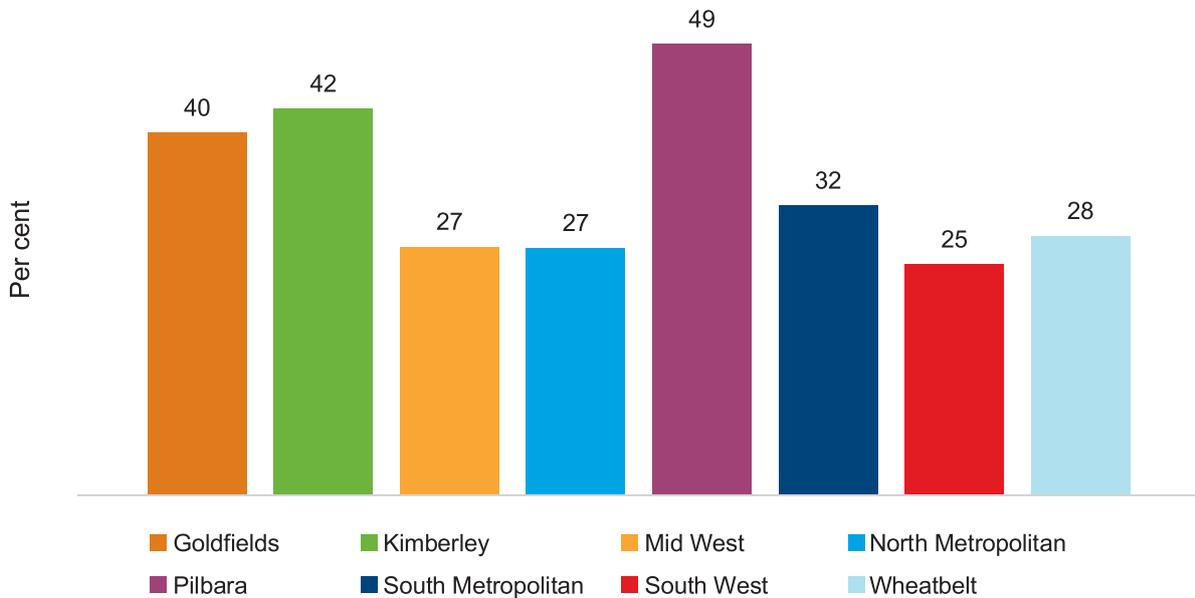
### Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting it is 'pretty much true' or 'very much true' that there is a parent or another adult at home who listens to them when they have something to say



The majority of children and young people across the state feel like they have enough friends and are good at making and keeping friends. However, children in Years 4 to 6 in the Goldfields are much less likely than those across other regions to feel like they had enough friends (71.7% vs 81.2%).

Students across each region reported similar levels of feeling safe at home, with most feeling safe all the time or most of the time. There are however differences in feeling safe in their local area, with students in the Kimberley, North Metropolitan and South Metropolitan regions more likely to feel safe only sometimes or less. These results are consistent across both primary and secondary school.

**Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting they feel safe in their local area only sometimes or less**



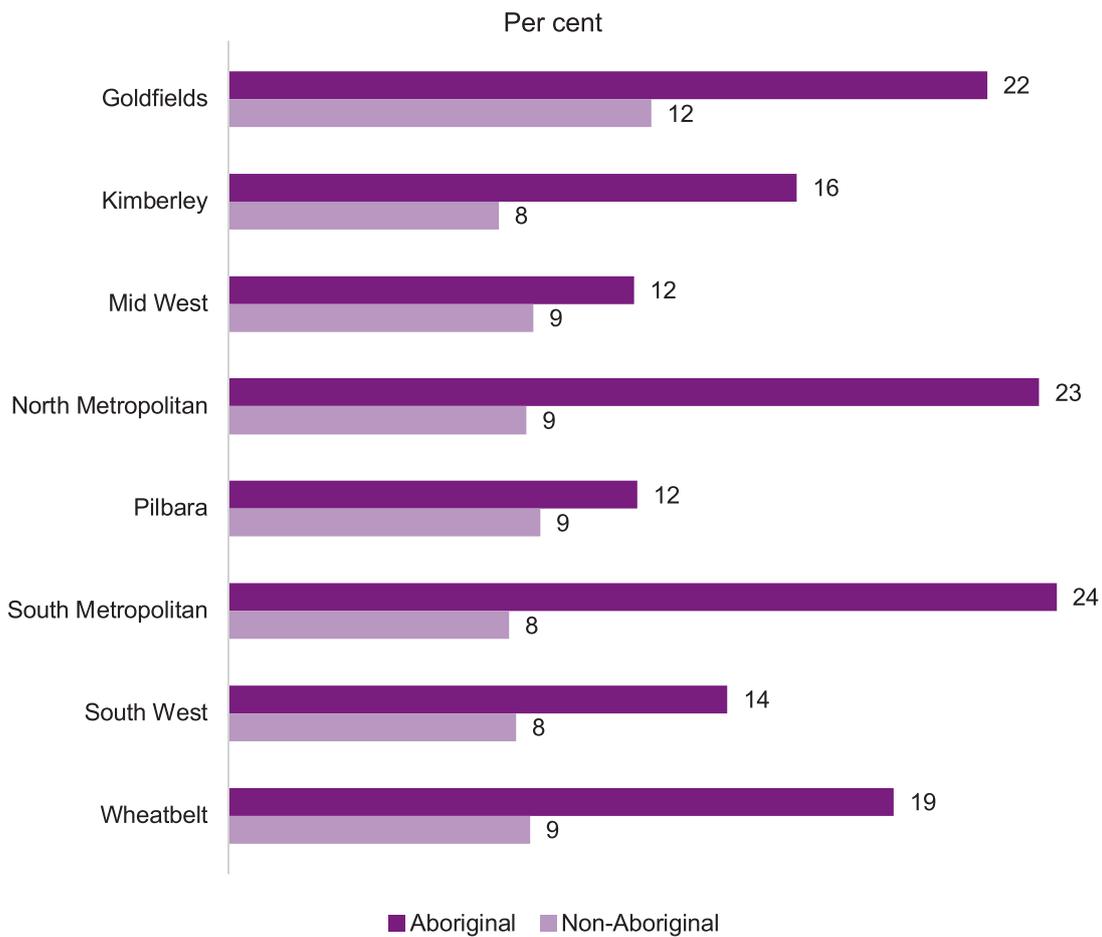
Overall, children and young people in regional and remote WA are more likely than those in metropolitan WA to report that they are missing out on material basics.

- One in seven students (around 14%) in the Kimberley and Goldfields only sometimes or less have enough food to eat at home (all of WA: 9.6%).
- A higher proportion of students in the Goldfields (17.6%), Kimberley (16.8%) and Pilbara (16.9%) do not have enough money to go on a school camp or excursion (all of WA: 9.8%).
- Almost one-third (29.8%) of secondary students in the Kimberley and one-quarter (26.4%) of secondary students in the Wheatbelt do not have their own laptop, tablet or computer (all of WA: 14.3%).

The majority of Aboriginal children and young people across the state feel safe and supported by their family and friends.

However, Aboriginal children and young people across the state are particularly affected by material disadvantage, with around one in five Aboriginal children and young people in a number of regions not having enough food to eat at home. Notably, the highest proportions of Aboriginal children and young people not having enough food at home are in the metropolitan area.

**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting that if they are hungry, there is enough food for them to eat at home only sometimes or never**



**Conclusion**

This report provides invaluable insights into the views and experiences of children and young people in regions across WA. The similarities and differences across the state highlights some key areas where services or developments at the community level can make a difference to children’s and young people’s lives.

The individual regional reports provide local government and non-government sectors with critical information needed to support and improve the wellbeing of children and young people living in their regions and communities. We would encourage all organisations to ask children and young people what they need in order to lead better lives and involve them in policy planning and service delivery.

# Introduction

The Commissioner for Children and Young People (the Commissioner) has a responsibility to monitor the wellbeing of children and young people under the age of 18 years across WA.

The Commissioner developed the first Speaking Out Survey in 2019 (SOS19) to address gaps in self-reported wellbeing data for children and young people. Designed as a triennial survey series, the aim of the Speaking Out Survey is to capture the views of a representative sample of children and young people in Years 4 to 12 in WA and develop a robust data source relating to the wellbeing of children and young people in our state.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Commissioner brought forward the planned second survey from 2022 to 2021. In 2021, a total of 16,532 Year 4 to Year 12 students from 94 schools in all regions of WA consented to participate.

The report [Speaking Out Survey 2021: The views of WA children and young people on their wellbeing – a summary report](#), published in November 2021, provides data which is representative of the views and experiences of children and young people across WA. It details the SOS21 results for most survey questions disaggregated by year group and gender. The summary report also includes results for Aboriginal children and young people across WA and children and young people living in metropolitan, regional and remote areas.

This report presents the results of SOS21 by education region. It provides a valuable insight into the health and wellbeing of children and young people in the various regions across WA.

## Number of students participating in the SOS21 survey by education region

Education region	Number of students
Goldfields	838
Kimberley	767
Mid West	989
North Metropolitan	4,421
Pilbara	858
South Metropolitan	5,998
South West	1,394
Wheatbelt	789
<b>Total</b>	<b>16,054*</b>

*\* This includes additional schools not part of the random selection process and is after incomplete responses have been removed.*

The results have been weighted to provide the best estimates for each region.

Each regional report provides some results for year groups, and male and female students. In line with the Commissioner's responsibility under the *Commissioner for Children and Young People Act 2006*, where the Commissioner is required to have special regard to the interests and needs of Aboriginal children and young people, each regional chapter also includes a section on Aboriginal children and young people in that region.

The survey asked participants whether they describe themselves as a girl, a boy or 'in another way'. Whilst the students who selected 'in another way' may identify as another gender (for example, non-binary, gender diverse or genderfluid), this cannot be assumed given the way in which this question was asked. Additionally, we know that these responses will not reflect many trans children and young people who identify as a boy or girl.

In this report we compare the responses of those children and young people who identified as a boy (male) to those who identified as a girl (female). It does not report on the views and experiences of children and young people who selected the option 'in another way'. Children and young people who selected 'in another way' in SOS21 will be the focus of an additional publication. In this report, when presenting a quotation from these students, in place of their gender identity we have stated: student who selected 'in another way'.

Participants in the Speaking Out Survey were asked open text questions about schoolwork stress, their mental health, feeling safe and their local community. These are questions on issues of concern for children and young people, therefore the responses are often children and young people explaining their worries and challenges. A total of 11,450 students provided at least one response to these open text questions. Refer to **Appendix A** for a list of the questions.

A selection of quotations is included in this report on the relevant topics. The quotations are generally unedited to ensure the voice of the child or young person is authentically presented. Editing has only been done where necessary for clarity, understanding or for confidentiality. In this instance any changes or omissions have been marked with square brackets or an ellipsis (...).

Indicative comparative data has also been provided for some key questions, including results for 'all of WA'. While similar, these results do not directly correspond to the representative SOS21 results in the Summary Report.<sup>1</sup> These regionally weighted 'all of WA' results have been used to ensure a consistent approach across the variables being reported. For a more detailed discussion of the methodology of SOS21 and how data is presented in this report, refer to **Appendix A**.

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<sup>1</sup> The sampling methodology for SOS21 did not require minimum representation for each education region. It was therefore anticipated that reliable estimates may not be possible for some regions, hence, additional schools were invited to participate in the survey who were not part of the random selection. The data in this report includes the results from these additional schools. These additional schools were not included in the estimates published in the SOS21 summary report.

# Goldfields



# Goldfields key findings



**Three in five (59.0%)** secondary school students reported they had exercised three or more times in the previous week (all of WA: 61.9%).



**A greater proportion of Aboriginal students** than non-Aboriginal students in the Goldfields reported they **strongly agree their school is a place where they feel happy** (Aboriginal: 41.5%; non-Aboriginal: 28.0%) and they like learning (Aboriginal: 48.6%; non-Aboriginal: 27.0%).

**One in three (30.1%)** secondary students reported **only eating fruit a few times a week or less** (all of WA: 24.8%). This is the highest proportion not eating fruit across the state.



**More than one-half (57.3%)** of Aboriginal Year 7 to Year 12 students reported they have been **suspended from school** (12.3% of non-Aboriginal students).



**A lower proportion** of primary school students **reported high life satisfaction** compared to students across the state (70.0% compared to 76.7%).

**Aboriginal students** in Years 4 to 12 are just as likely as non-Aboriginal students to **feel safe at home most of the time or all of the time** (Aboriginal: 87.9%; non-Aboriginal: 87.6%).



**One in ten (10.9%)** Year 4 to Year 6 students **reported that they do not feel they belong in their community** – almost double the proportion for the rest of WA (6.0%).

**Only 42.0 per cent** of students said their parents, or someone in their family, **ask about their schoolwork or homework often** (Years 4–6: 37.1%; Years 7–12: 41.0%). This is the equal lowest of all regions across WA (all of WA: 55.6%).



**Almost one in ten (8%)** female secondary school students in the Goldfields **never feel safe in their local area** (male – Goldfields: 2.1%; female – all of WA: 3.1%).

**One in five (21.9%)** Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students said there is **only sometimes or never enough food to eat at home** when they are hungry (non-Aboriginal: 12.2%).



## Overview

A total of 838 children and young people from Years 4 to 12 from three primary schools and four secondary schools in the Goldfields took part in the Speaking Out Survey 2021.

One-half (50.4%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students surveyed in the Goldfields identified as girls, 45.9 per cent identified as boys and 3.7 per cent selected the option that they identify 'in another way'.

Around one in eight participants (13.0%) reported being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This is a much greater proportion than in the Perth Southern (5.4%) or Northern (3.6%) metropolitan areas.

Of the students surveyed in the Goldfields, 94.1 per cent reported speaking English at home and 18.7 per cent reported (also) speaking other language(s) at home. The other languages spoken included Tagalog/Filipino, Afrikaans, Hindi, Maori and Aboriginal languages including Martu and Wangkatja.

Many students in the Goldfields liked doing the survey and felt that it provided them with an opportunity to have their say:

*“It was good! ❤️ I want to do it again sometime! ❤️ It made me feel safer! ❤️ Thank you! ❤️”*

*(female, 8 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“I like the survey because I could tell what I don't usually say. THANKS COMMISSIONER.”*

*(male, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I would just like to thank the government for actually hearing our voices and I hope that they put action to this.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**“ I really liked it I think it's a good way to get kids and teens to see that others feel the same and for them to tell what's happened in their eyes and how they feel without the feeling of being judged due to the no name things. 😊 🇲🇸 ”**

*(female, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“Cool and special for my culture.”*

*(male, 17 year-old, Aboriginal)*

# Healthy and connected

**“ Be more open and teach kids that it’s ok to have mental or emotional issues, help teach them where to go or what to do. Mental health is seen as a negative thing so people go see headspace or something in secret so they don’t get bullied. I want to teach them and show them that it’s ok and everyone is going through stuff as well. Make them feel included rather than isolated! ”**

*(female, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

## Physical health

Of the students surveyed in the Goldfields, 45.3 per cent reported that their health is very good or excellent (Years 4–6: 47.8%;

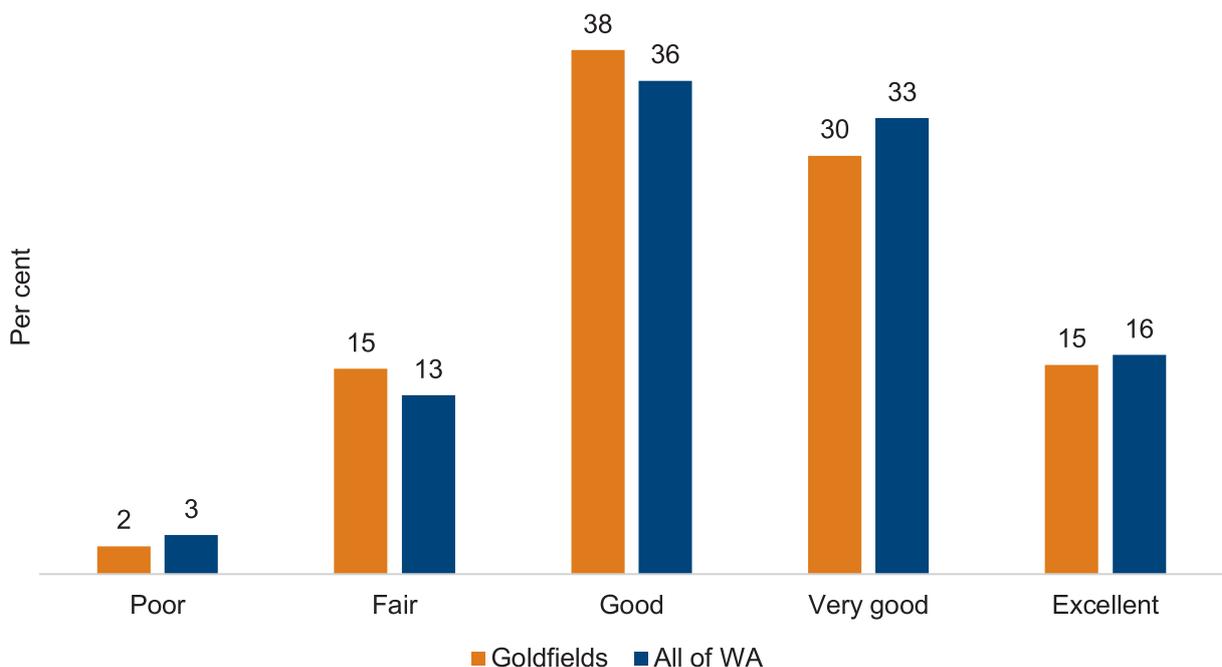
Years 7–12: 43.8%), while 16.8 per cent reported that their health is poor or fair (Years 4–6: 12.8%; Years 7–12: 19.2%).

Compared to students across the state, a slightly lower proportion of students in the Goldfields reported their health is very good or excellent.

One in five (19.4%) secondary students in the Goldfields reported having a long-term health problem, while one in ten (9.5%) reported having a long-term disability. The most commonly reported long-term health problems were asthma and anxiety/depression.

Over one-half (51.6%) of secondary students reported that physical activity, sport or exercise is ‘definitely’ an important part of their life, while three in five (59.0%) reported they had done vigorous exercise three or more times in the previous week. These results are consistent with the rest of the state.

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting their general health ratings



Of the students surveyed in the Goldfields:

- 42.3 per cent reported they care very much about eating healthy food (Years 4–6: 52.8%; Years 7–12: 36.3%) and 38.8 per cent reported they care some (Years 4–6: 30.7%; Years 7–12: 43.5%).
- One in three (30.1%) secondary students reported only eating fruit a few times a week or less (all of WA: 24.8%). This is the highest proportion not eating fruit across the state.
- 54.3 per cent reported they eat breakfast every day (Years 4–6: 70.2%; Years 7–12: 45.1%), while 9.2 per cent reported they never eat breakfast (Years 4–6: 3.0%; Years 7–12: 12.8%). The proportion who never eat breakfast is higher than for students across all of WA (6.1%).
- 62.8 per cent reported brushing their teeth twice or more the previous day (Years 4–6: 53.0%; Years 7–12: 68.5%) and 48.1 per cent reported having ever had a filling (Years 4–6: 34.3%; Years 7–12: 56.2%).

- 63.9 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students reported going to sleep on a school night before 9pm, while 46.5 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students reported going to sleep on a school night before 10pm.

Unless otherwise stated, these results are consistent with responses from students across WA.

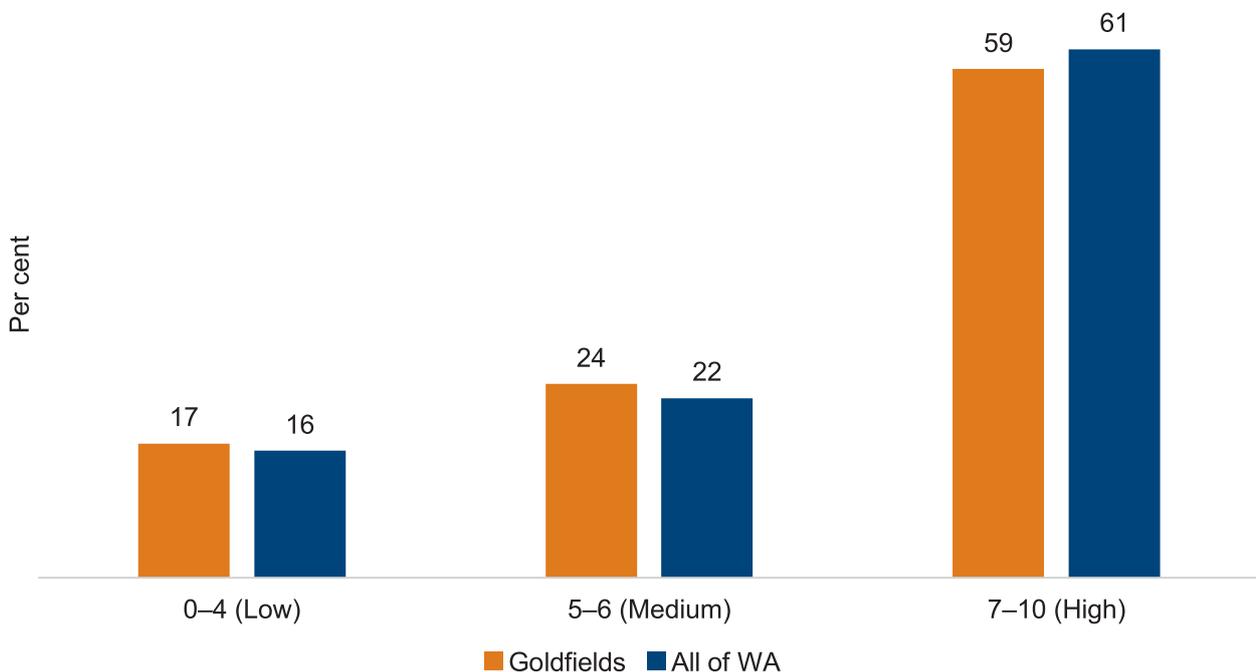
### Mental health

Of the students surveyed in the Goldfields, 6.8 is the mean life satisfaction (on a scale from 0 to 10). The mean life satisfaction across all of WA is 6.8.

Primary school students have a higher mean result than secondary students (Years 4–6: 7.3; Years 7–12: 6.4) – a result consistent across the state.

Three-fifths (59.2%) of students reported a high life satisfaction (7 to 10) (Years 4–6: 70.0%; Years 7–12: 52.8%), while 17.1 per cent reported a low life satisfaction (0 to 4) (Years 4–6: 13.4%; Years 7–12: 19.2%).

**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students rating their life satisfaction on a scale of from 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst possible life and 10 the best possible life, grouped responses**



Secondary students in the Goldfields reported similar life satisfaction to the rest of WA, however, a lower proportion of primary school students reported high life satisfaction compared to the rest of WA (70.0% compared to 76.7%).

More than one in eight (13.4%) primary school students in the Goldfields reported a low life satisfaction (0 to 4 out of 10) (all of WA: 7.9%).

Similarly, a greater proportion of Goldfields primary school students than those across WA strongly disagreed that they are happy with themselves (4.9% vs 1.6%) or that they feel good about themselves (5.5% vs 2.3%).

Female secondary students are more likely to report low life satisfaction than their male peers, with 26.8 per cent of female students reporting low life satisfaction (0 to 4) compared to 10.8 per cent of male students. This result is consistent with the rest of WA.

Of the students surveyed in the Goldfields:

- 28.5 per cent strongly agreed (Years 4–6: 47.9%; Years 7–12: 17.4%) and 48.3 per cent agreed (Years 4–6: 42.4%; Years 7–12: 51.6%) they were happy with themselves.
- 26.8 per cent strongly agreed (Years 4–6: 47.6%; Years 7–12: 15.2%) and 45.6 per cent agreed (Years 4–6: 37.5%; Years 7–12: 50.2%) they feel good about themselves.
- 20.9 per cent of secondary students strongly agreed and 46.6 per cent agreed they can deal with things that happen in their life.

These results are consistent with students across the state.

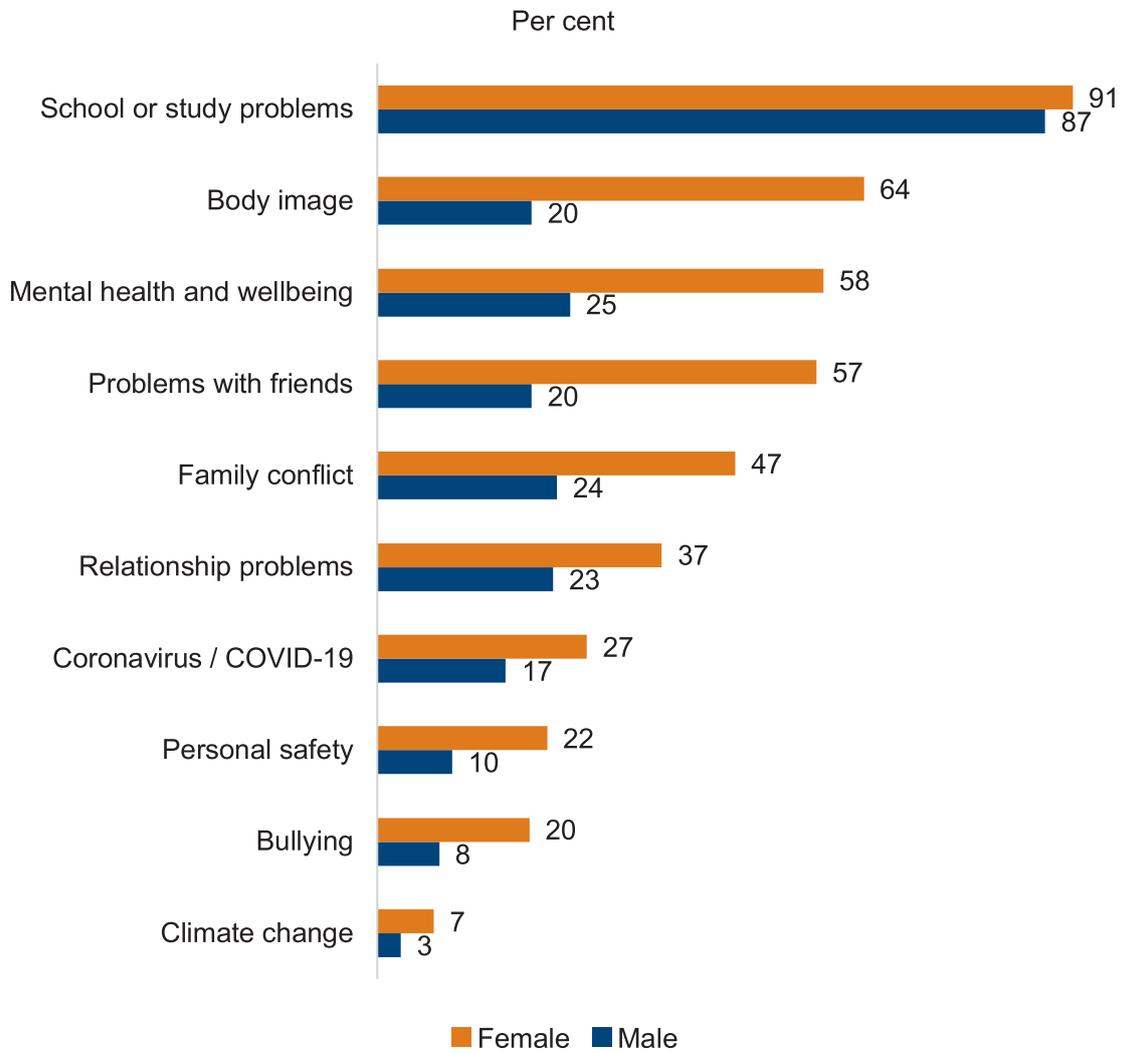
In Years 9 to 12, a lower proportion of students in the Goldfields reported they had felt sad, blue or depressed for two or more weeks in a row in the previous 12 months, compared to the rest of WA (53.8% compared to 59.2%). This is particularly true for male students in the Goldfields, with 40.4 per cent reporting they had felt this way compared to 47.3 per cent for males across the state.

Year 9 to Year 12 students were asked about sources of stress in the previous 12 months. School and study problems were most commonly reported followed by body image, mental health and wellbeing, and problems with friends.

There are gender differences in the responses, with greater proportions of female than male students reporting being affected by stress across all sources.



Proportion of Year 9 to Year 12 students reporting sources of stress in the previous year



Notably, female young people are around three times as likely as their male peers to report body image and problems with friends as stressors and more than twice as likely to report mental health and wellbeing and family conflict as stressors.

The gender differences are consistent with results across the rest of the state.

## Access to support for physical and mental health

Of the secondary students surveyed in the Goldfields:

- 63.8 per cent said they know where to get support in their school for stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries.
- 55.1 per cent said they know where to get support in their local area for stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries.

Compared to the rest of WA, secondary students in the Goldfields are less likely to report that they got help for problems with stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries in the previous 12 months (29.3% compared to 36.7%). This is particularly true of male students, with only 21.9 per cent reporting they had got help for these issues compared to 30.3 per cent for males across WA.

At the same time, female students in the Goldfields are more likely than male students to report that in the previous 12 months, there had been a time when they wanted or needed to see someone for their health but weren't able to (female: 28.5%; male: 14.7%). Of the students reporting this, the predominant reason given for not seeing someone regarding their health was due to feeling embarrassed or shame in doing so (female: 75.8%; male: 53.4%).

The most commonly used sources of support for secondary students in the Goldfields were parents (78.8%), friends including boyfriend or girlfriend (76.4%), other family (66.6%), school psychologist, school chaplain or school nurse (54.5%) and teachers (50.0%).

Of the students who had asked for help, 83.5 per cent found parents helpful, 78.4 per cent found other family helpful, while 69.0 per cent found a school psychologist, school chaplain or school nurse helpful. Compared to other regions in WA, young people in the Goldfields who used mental health services like Headspace are more likely to report them as helpful (79.6% compared to 70.8%).

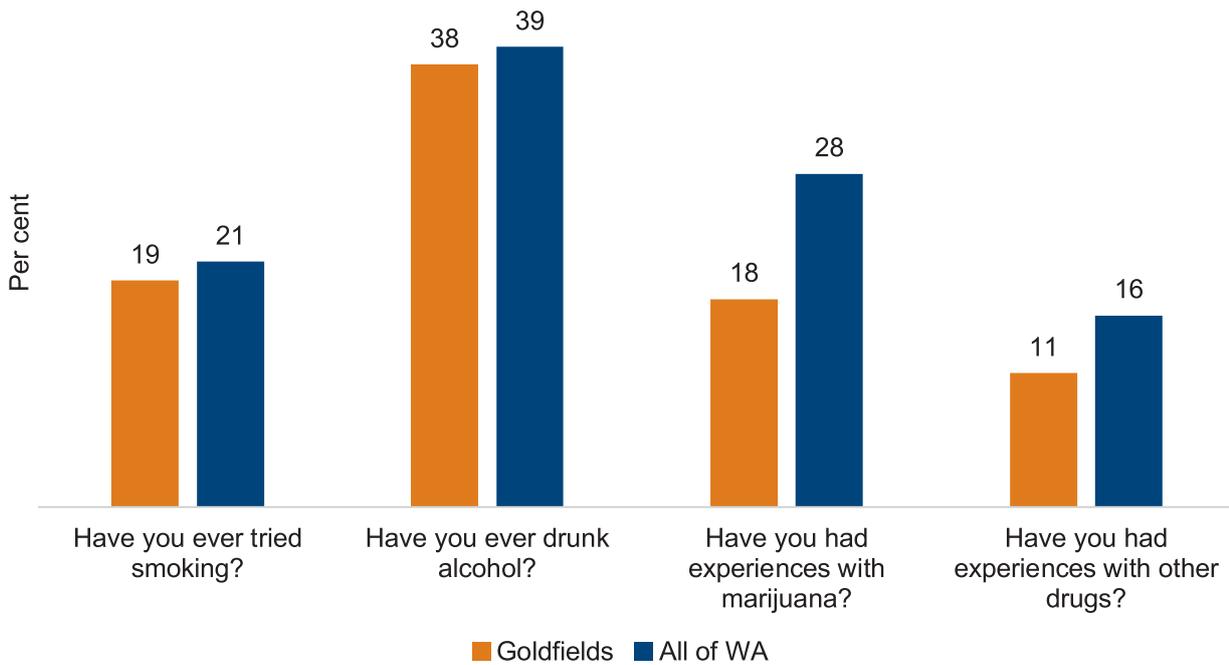
## Risk-taking and healthy behaviours

### Alcohol and other drugs

A similar proportion of young people in the Goldfields to the rest of the state have tried smoking or drinking alcohol (smoking: 19.3% vs 20.9%; alcohol: 37.7% vs 39.2%).

Year 9 to Year 12 students in the Goldfields are less likely than those across other regions in WA to have had experiences with marijuana or other drugs (marijuana: 17.7% vs 28.4%; other drugs: 11.4% vs 16.3%). (This is not necessarily using the drug themselves.)

**Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who responded ‘yes’ to the question on whether they have tried smoking or drinking, or had experiences with marijuana or other drugs (Years 9 to 12 only)**



*Note: The questions asked were: Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?; Have you ever drunk alcohol (more than just a few sips, like a full can of beer or a glass of wine)?; Have you ever had any experiences with marijuana?; Have you ever had any experiences with other drugs? Response options were: ‘No’, ‘Yes’ and ‘Prefer not to say’.*

In the Goldfields, a lower proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students stated that their friends use cigarettes (24.9%), use marijuana (26.4%) or use other drugs (15.6%) compared to results for the rest of the state (33.7%, 33.6% and 24.0% respectively).

More than three-quarters (76.9%) of secondary school students in the Goldfields thought people their age should not use any substances including cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana or other drugs.

Of the secondary students surveyed in the Goldfields:

- 67.0 per cent reported having learnt ‘some’ or ‘a lot’ about alcohol and 65.7 per cent had learnt about cigarettes/smoking at school. These proportions are broadly consistent with the rest of WA.
- 39.6 per cent said they had learnt ‘some’ or ‘a lot’ about marijuana and 43.7 per cent had learnt about other drugs, at school. These proportions are lower compared with the rest of WA (50.0% and 55.0% respectively).

Consistent with young people in the Goldfields reporting they have learnt less about marijuana at school, a higher proportion of students reported that they do not know enough or are not sure they know enough about the health impacts of marijuana and other drugs compared to the rest of WA (marijuana: 43.7% vs 35.6%; other drugs: 37.3% vs 30.2%).

### **Sexual health**

Over one-third (36.9%) of secondary students in the Goldfields reported that they have learnt nothing about pregnancy and contraception at school, with fewer than one in ten (9.0%) reporting they had learnt a lot on the topic (all of WA: nothing: 24.8%; a lot: 17.0%).

Consistent with this result, a greater proportion of young people in the Goldfields reported that they feel they do not know enough or are not sure they know enough about sexual health and ways to support their sexual health compared to all of WA (54.5% compared to 45.4%).

Further, one-half (49.9%) of secondary students in the Goldfields do not know or are unsure about where to go if they need help for something about their reproductive or sexual health. This is the highest proportion across the state.

In Years 9 to 12, 53.4 per cent of female students and 33.9 per cent of male students reported they had ever been sent unwanted sexual material, such as pornographic pictures, videos or words. This sexual material was overwhelmingly sent via social media platforms.

## **Problematic behaviours and emotions related to being online**

Of the students surveyed in the Goldfields:

- 35.5 per cent said they feel bothered 'fairly often' or 'very often' when they cannot be on the internet (Years 4–6: 29.0%; Years 7–12: 38.6%).
- 27.5 per cent said they feel bothered when they cannot play electronic games (Years 4–6: 28.9%; Years 7–12: 26.8%).
- 47.7 per cent of female secondary students said they feel bothered when they cannot use their mobile phone (male: 32.5%) and 21.3 per cent said they go without eating or sleeping either fairly often or very often because of their mobile phone (male: 9.8%).

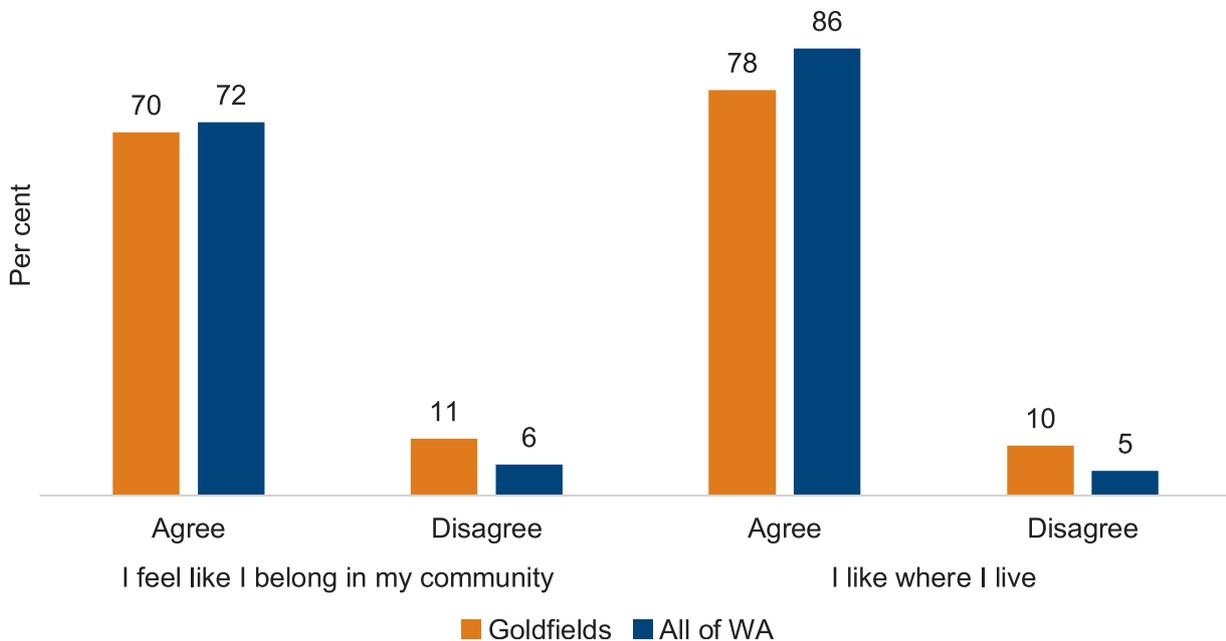
These results are consistent with those of students across WA.

## Connection to community

In Years 4 to 6, most students (69.8%) in the Goldfields reported feeling like they belong in their community, however, one in ten (10.9%) reported they do not feel they belong in their community – almost double the proportion for the rest of WA (6.0%).

Further, over three-quarters (77.9%) of Year 4 to Year 6 students in the Goldfields agreed they like where they live, which was also lower than the proportion for all of WA (86.0%).

### Proportion of children in Year 4 to Year 6 reporting whether they feel like they belong in their community or like where they live



Note: Percentages will not total to 100% as the response options 'I don't know' for Years 4 to 6 are omitted.

Almost three-quarters (71.7%) of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed they like where they live (all of WA: 79.3%).

The proportion of secondary students who reported they feel they belong in their community is 56.5 per cent. This proportion is the same as the rest of WA (56.5%).

Almost two-thirds (63.6%) of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that there are lots of fun things to do where they live, while 37.8 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.

Both these proportions are lower than for children and young people across WA (73.6% and 48.7% respectively).

Similarly, students in the Goldfields are less likely than those across WA to report that there are outdoor places for them to go in their area, like parks, ovals or skate parks (Years 4–6: 74.6% vs 84.1%; Years 7–12: 75.7% vs 83.7%).

Participants in the Goldfields also reported the following with respect to their community:

- 59.0 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that their neighbours are friendly, while 58.9 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.
- 59.3 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that when they go to the shops the people there are friendly, while 63.7 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.

These results are consistent with the rest of the state.

In regard to the activities that children and young people in the Goldfields do when they are not at school:

- 75.6 per cent said they spend time using the internet on a smartphone or computer every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 55.5%; Years 7–12: 87.0%).
- 64.9 per cent said they spend time hanging out with family every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 65.0%; Years 7–12: 64.8%).
- 34.5 per cent said they spend time being active outdoors outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 40.0%; Years 7–12: 31.4%). Only one-quarter (25.3%) of female students spend time being active outdoors every day or almost every day (male: 43.6%).
- One-third (33.2%) said they spend time practising or playing a sport outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 34.2%; Years 7–12: 32.6%). This is a lower proportion than students across WA (Years 4–6: 40.3%; Years 7–12: 38.4%).

- 33.3 per cent said they spend time hanging out with friends outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 28.0%; Years 7–12: 36.4%).

**“ The one thing I would change that involved my local area would be, having a lot of fun places I can go and hang out with friends. In Kalgoorlie we don’t have that many places to do stuff with friends, so a places where we can all get her together and have fun would be nice. ”**

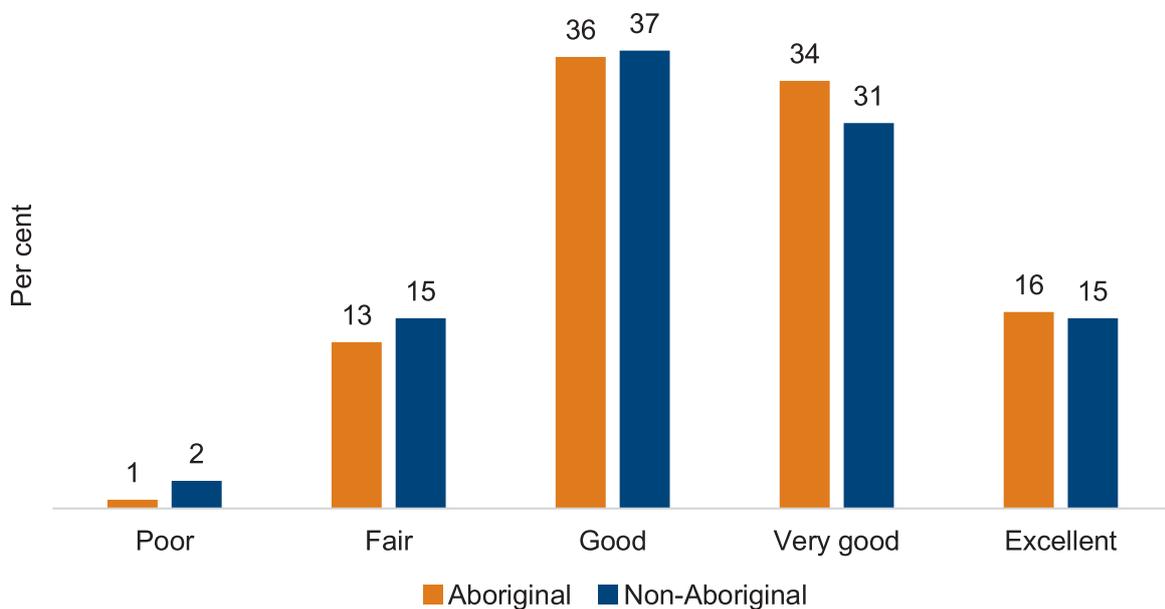
*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*



## Aboriginal children's and young people's views on feeling healthy and connected

One-half (49.9%) of Aboriginal students surveyed in the Goldfields rated their health as very good or excellent, slightly more than non-Aboriginal students (46.0%).

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting their general health ratings



Aboriginal students in the Goldfields are less likely to report having brushed their teeth the previous day compared to non-Aboriginal students (4.2% compared to 16.2%). They are also more likely to report they had a filling compared to non-Aboriginal students (56.0% compared to 47.2%).

One-half (49.8%) of Aboriginal students in the Goldfields reported that physical activity, sport or exercise was 'definitely' an important part of their life, consistent with non-Aboriginal students (51.3%). Over three-fifths reported they had done vigorous exercise three or more times in the previous week (61.6%).

Year 4 to Year 6 Aboriginal students reported similar life satisfaction to non-Aboriginal students, with more than two-thirds (69.7%) of Aboriginal students rating their life satisfaction as high (7–10), while Year 7 to Year 12 Aboriginal students are more likely to report a high life satisfaction compared to non-Aboriginal students (68.2% vs 48.9%).

Furthermore, greater proportions of Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students than non-Aboriginal students agreed with the statements 'I feel good about myself' (89.2% vs 67.1%) and 'I am happy with myself' (87.2% vs 72.9%).

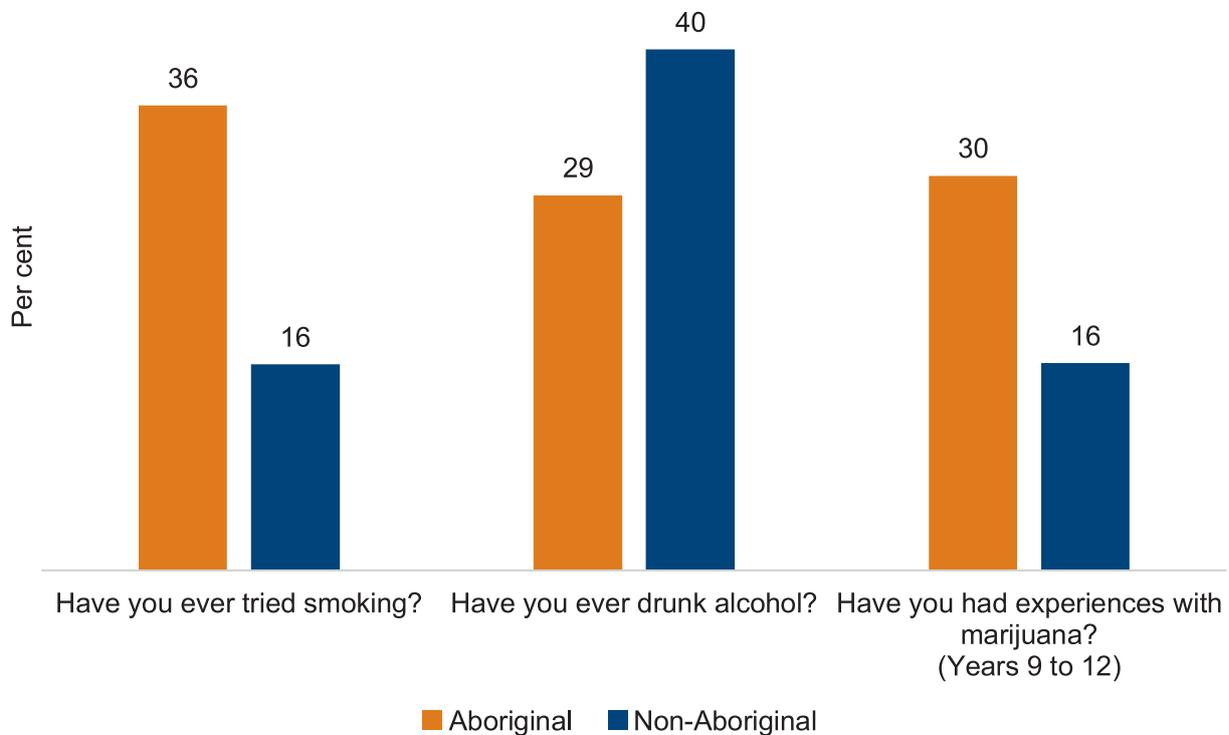
Over two-thirds (69.6%) of Aboriginal secondary students agreed that they can deal with things that happen in their life (non-Aboriginal: 66.2%).

The top three stressors reported by Year 9 to Year 12 Aboriginal students were school or study problems (76.9%), COVID-19 (46.7%) and relationship problems (32.0%). Notably, Aboriginal students in the Goldfields are more likely to report stress due to COVID-19 (non-Aboriginal: 17.6%) and less likely to report stress due to body image (Aboriginal: 27.1%; non-Aboriginal: 46.2%) as well as mental health and wellbeing (Aboriginal: 29.1%; non-Aboriginal: 45.0%).

Aboriginal secondary students in the Goldfields are less likely to have drunk alcohol than their non-Aboriginal peers (28.8% compared to 40.0%).

However, Aboriginal secondary students in the Goldfields are more likely than non-Aboriginal secondary students to have tried smoking. Those in Years 9 to 12 are more likely to have had experiences with marijuana than non-Aboriginal students (smoking: 35.7% vs 15.8%; marijuana: 30.3% vs 15.9%).

**Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who responded ‘yes’ to the question on whether they have tried smoking or drinking, or had experiences with marijuana or other drugs (Years 9 to 12 only)**



Note: The questions asked were: Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?; Have you ever drunk alcohol (more than just a few sips, like a full can of beer or a glass of wine)?; Have you ever had any experiences with marijuana?; Have you ever had any experiences with other drugs? Response options were: ‘No’, ‘Yes’ and ‘Prefer not to say’.

In terms of connection to culture and community, of the Aboriginal students in the Goldfields:

- 75.1 per cent said they know their family's country, and of these students 89.9 per cent said they spend time on their family's country.
- 34.3 per cent said they talk Aboriginal language 'some' or 'a lot'. Across WA, 27.1 per cent of Year 4 to Year 12 students reported they talk Aboriginal language 'some' or 'a lot'.
- 51.4 per cent said they do cultural or traditional activities with their family.

Most Aboriginal children (Years 4 to 6) in the Goldfields like where they live (71.9%) and feel like they belong in their community (63.3%). However, a substantial minority do not like where they live (13.7%) or feel like they belong (13.0%). Marginally lower proportions of non-Aboriginal children in the Goldfields do not like where they live (6.8%) or feel like they belong (10.1%).

Most Aboriginal young people in secondary school in the Goldfields like where they live (87.6%) and feel like they belong in their community (81.4%). These are higher proportions than non-Aboriginal young people in the Goldfields (68.6% and 51.2% respectively).

### What do children and young people in the Goldfields say about being healthy and connected?

Students were asked the following open text questions related to health and mental health:

- Thinking about mental health and other emotional worries, like stress, anxiety and depression, what are some of the ways families, communities, schools or adults in general could be more helpful?

- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with seeking help for health issues, including mental health worries?

#### Talking about mental health

*"I would like to get diagnosed for adhd but my parents think I'm just faking for attention, and sometimes I feel like I can't do anything, am absolutely worthless and just in the way."  
(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"I want to just be taken seriously when talking about my mental health as a femininity presenting, asexual, queer, member of the youth. I want serious help. I want someone to understand my struggles."  
(student who selected 'in another way', 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"How to act around/help/talk to/etc a friend going through something like that without having to tell them to get professional guidance?"  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"Create a more supportive environment and not lean on the masculinity side of things, such as allowing emotions to not be seen as 'weak' or 'unmanly'. Create a support group where men and women that suffer from mental health issues such as anxiety and depression have each other to support one another."  
(male, 17 year-old, Aboriginal)*

### Feeling anxiety, depression or sadness

*“The problem with most kids/teens now a days is that so many of us feel stressed 24/7, not good enough, tired, upset with school or social life and the anxiety hitting at full speed leaving us with nothing to do but let it take us over in silence. There are so many kids who feel alone or feel lonely and it leads them to get depression, unhealthy thoughts, feeling worthless and so much more. That’s how I feel and think many others do to from watching the way my friends and peers occasionally say or do things.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I’m not ok I have anxiety and depression I think I haven’t seen a doctor for it yet but I might need too it gets worse every day. My mom thinks it’s cause of the meds I take but I don’t think it is.”*

*(male, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I also require seeing someone about my mental health. Not often, but when things are hard, I like to get a check up to make sure I get back on track fine. I get somewhat anxiety being an aboriginal in a school system but I manage myself well, and set boundaries for myself.”*

*(male, 17 year-old, Aboriginal)*

### Talking about getting support

*“One time at school I reported a friend because he/she was telling me about their suicidal thoughts but the admin did nothing about this.”*

*(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I want schools to be a bit more open to help students if they need it.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“CAMHS is horrible. They told me I was too complex for them and needed to seek help elsewhere.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“The process in remote places is very slow and it can often be harmful for this that need urgent help. Many doctors etc often also don’t take children seriously and it can do more harm than good seeking help.”*

*(female, 17 year-old, undisclosed Aboriginal status)*

### Views on their local area

In total, 421 students from the Goldfields responded to the open text question: ‘If there was one thing you could change about your local area, what would it be?’ Of the students surveyed in the Goldfields, the top things that they would like to change in their local area were:

- More fun activities to do and places to hang out.
- Would like more, closer shops, a mall, movies, greater diversity.
- More, upgraded outdoor spaces or parks.
- People in the local area are nicer or more friendly.

*“Social activity for teenagers because there is nothing to do a high majority end up getting in trouble/kicked out of places.”*

*(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“In my area I would change the pubs because where I live there are a lot.”*  
(female, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“Have a better park and better pool and ovals.”*  
(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Having more activities for teenagers or kids to do on the weekends or holidays.”*  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“I would love to have some more things for young adults/teens to do. I would love for some nice clothing stores for your friends to go shopping instead of always online shopping and some nice water parks would be good something along those lines.”*  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“A place that lets you practice instruments.”*  
(male, 16 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“In my region I believe there aren't enough facilities for people to get free exercise... I believe if we had youth encouraging healthy habits and getting help more youth would because teenagers don't always listen to adults but they might listen to other teenagers.”*  
(male, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“I would recommend a more better youth support system especially for students attending school for afternoon activities. I would change the restrictions on alcohol in this community due to younger people getting their hands on it. A change would be a limited amount given to a person at one time.”*  
(male, 17 year-old, Aboriginal)

Consistent with comments from children and young people around the state, feeling unsafe in their local community is an issue:

*“That I can stop the drugs speeding cars and make the cummounty safe from drugs and speeding cars.”*  
(male, 11 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“People drinking and fighting around town.”*  
(male, 11 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“I wish there were less drunks gang teens and drugs.”*  
(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“The underlying racism and social divide.”*  
(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

# Learning and participating

**“ A lot of pressure to think about where you are going (what you’re doing after school). And if you want to go to uni, it’s like you have to dedicate your whole [life] to school and do perfect and get perfect grades, otherwise you won’t make it to uni. It’s like year 12 is make-or-break. ”**

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

## Attendance

Over one-half (53.9%) of students in the Goldfields said it is very important to them to be at school every day (Years 4–6: 64.2%; Years 7–12: 47.7%), while 39.2 per cent (Years 4–6: 28.3%; Years 7–12: 45.8%) said it is somewhat important. These results are consistent with student responses across the state.

Of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Goldfields, 59.7 per cent reported attending the same school since they started primary school or secondary school.

This result is consistent with results across the state (62.3%).

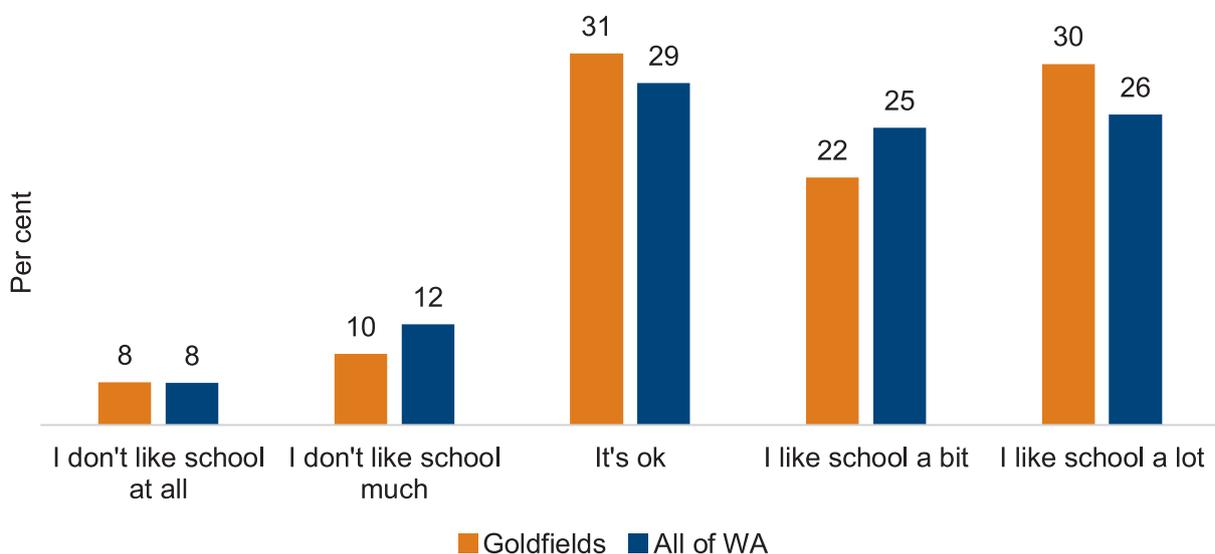
One-fifth (21.0%) of secondary students in the Goldfields reported they had waggged school for a full day or more in the previous 12 months (male: 22.7%; female: 19.0%), while 20.2 per cent reported they had ever been suspended (male: 28.2%; female: 12.3%). These results are consistent with results across WA.

When it comes to learning activities outside of school, more than one-third (34.1%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Goldfields spend time doing homework every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 32.3%; Years 7–12: 35.1%). A high proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Goldfields reported hardly ever or never doing homework (26.2% vs 16.0% for all of WA).

## Liking school and sense of belonging

Of the Year 4 to Year 12 students surveyed in the Goldfields, almost one-third (29.8%) reported liking school a lot (all of WA: 26.3%), 22.0 per cent like school a bit (all of WA: 25.4%), while 17.7 per cent reported they don’t like school much or at all (all of WA: 19.8%).

**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting how they feel about school**



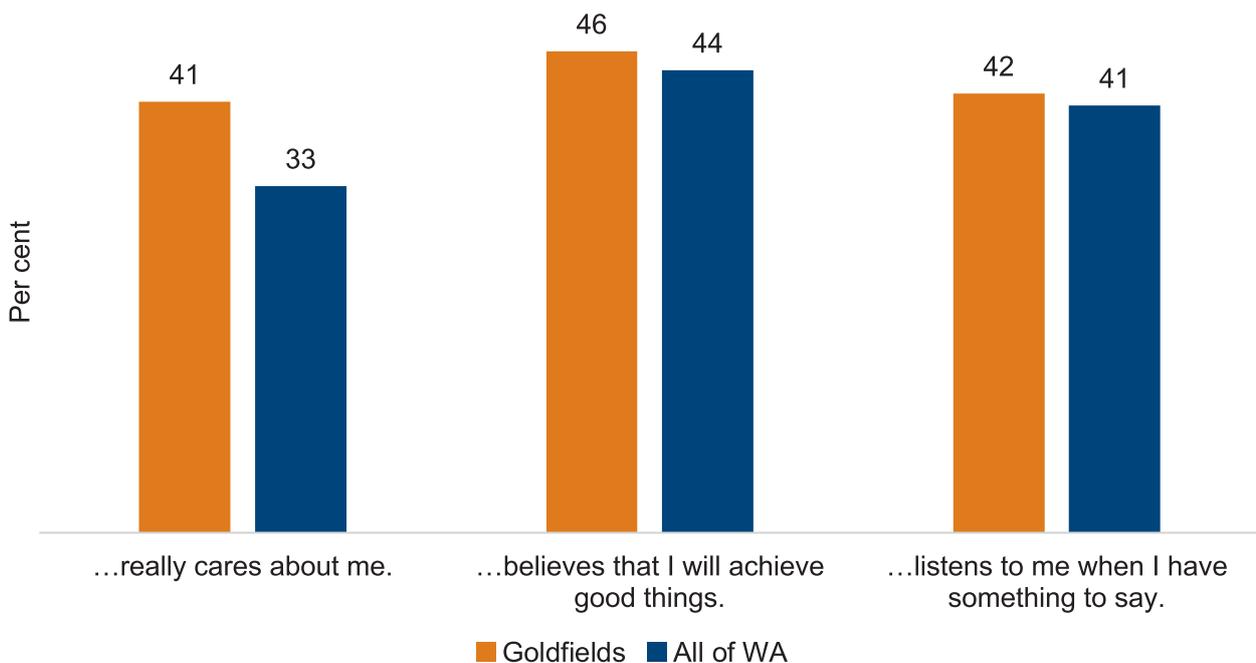
Most (69.0%) secondary students in the Goldfields agreed that their school is a place where they belong, however, a significant minority (30.9%) disagreed and do not feel this way. These results are similar to those across WA.

- 74.6 per cent agreed they feel happy at school (Years 4–6: 85.9%; Years 7–12: 67.9%), while 73.9 per cent agreed they like learning at school (Years 4–6: 84.4%; Years 7–12: 67.7%).
- 57.7 per cent said they usually get along with classmates (Years 4–6: 56.8%; Years 7–12: 58.2%), while 58.0 per cent said they usually get along with their teachers (Years 4–6: 70.6%; Years 7–12: 50.7%).
- 69.0 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed they feel they belong at their school (all of WA: 70.2%).

Over two-fifths of students in the Goldfields said it is ‘very much true’ that a teacher or another adult at their school really cares about them (41.4%), believes they will achieve good things (46.2%) and listens to them when they have something to say (42.2%). These proportions are higher than those for the rest of the state.

Less than one-half of students (42.0%) said their parents, or someone in their family, ask about their schoolwork or homework often (Years 4–6: 43.7%; Years 7–12: 41.0%). This is the equal lowest of all regions across WA (all of WA: 55.6%).

**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students responding ‘very much true’ when posed the statement: ‘At my school, there is a teacher or another adult who...’**



## Feeling safe at school

Of the students surveyed in the Goldfields, over one-third (35.8%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students said they feel safe at school all the time and 34.4 per cent said they feel safe at school most of the time (all of WA: 33.6% and 44.3% respectively). However, nearly one in ten (9.4%) reported that they feel safe at school a little bit of the time or never (all of WA: 7.5%).

These results suggest that students in the Goldfields are marginally more likely to feel less safe at school than students across WA.

The proportion of Goldfields students in Years 4 to 6 reporting that they feel safe all or most of the time is the lowest of those year groups across the state (70.0% vs 80.7%).

Female secondary students in the Goldfields are also much less likely than their male peers to feel safe at school all or most of the time (61.1% vs 81.2%).

Around two in five (39.4%) Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Goldfields have been bullied by students at their school; 10.0 per cent did not know whether they had been bullied; and 8.9 per cent 'preferred not to say'.

Primary school students in the Goldfields are more likely to have been bullied than their peers around WA. In primary school (Years 4 to 6), only one-third (32.9%) of students reported they had never been bullied compared to almost one-half (47.7%) of primary school students across WA. Results for secondary school students in the Goldfields are similar to those across the rest of WA.

In terms of the nature of the bullying, 37.5 per cent of students in Years 4 to 12 had been (traditionally) bullied (Years 4–6: 42.4%; Years 7–12: 34.6%), while 15.6 per cent had been cyberbullied (Years 4–6: 13.3%; Years 7–12: 17.0%). A relatively high proportion of primary

school students in the Goldfields reported they have been cyberbullied compared to those across the state (13.3% vs 7.9%).

Of the students who reported being bullied in the previous three months, students in the Goldfields are more likely than students from other regions to report being bullied on the way to or from school (43.5% vs 28.8%) and at home (51.5% vs 39.9%).

Two in five (39.0%) secondary students in the Goldfields who were bullied said they have been teased about their cultural background, the colour of their skin or their religion sometime in the previous three months (all of WA: 26.1%).

One in six (16.7%) Goldfields students in Years 4 to 12 reported they had missed school in the past because they were afraid someone might bully them (Years 4–6: 16.4%; Years 7–12: 16.9%). Female students are more likely than male students to have missed school in this circumstance (24.7% vs 8.9%).

**“ I wouldn't say I get bullied or anything because I think that would seem like I'm acting like a baby. But everyone usually calls me ugly for some reason, and because of that my self esteem has gone downhill. People that aren't my good friends are rude to me for no reason. I always try to act nice as I can but I don't know why people do this. ”**

*(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

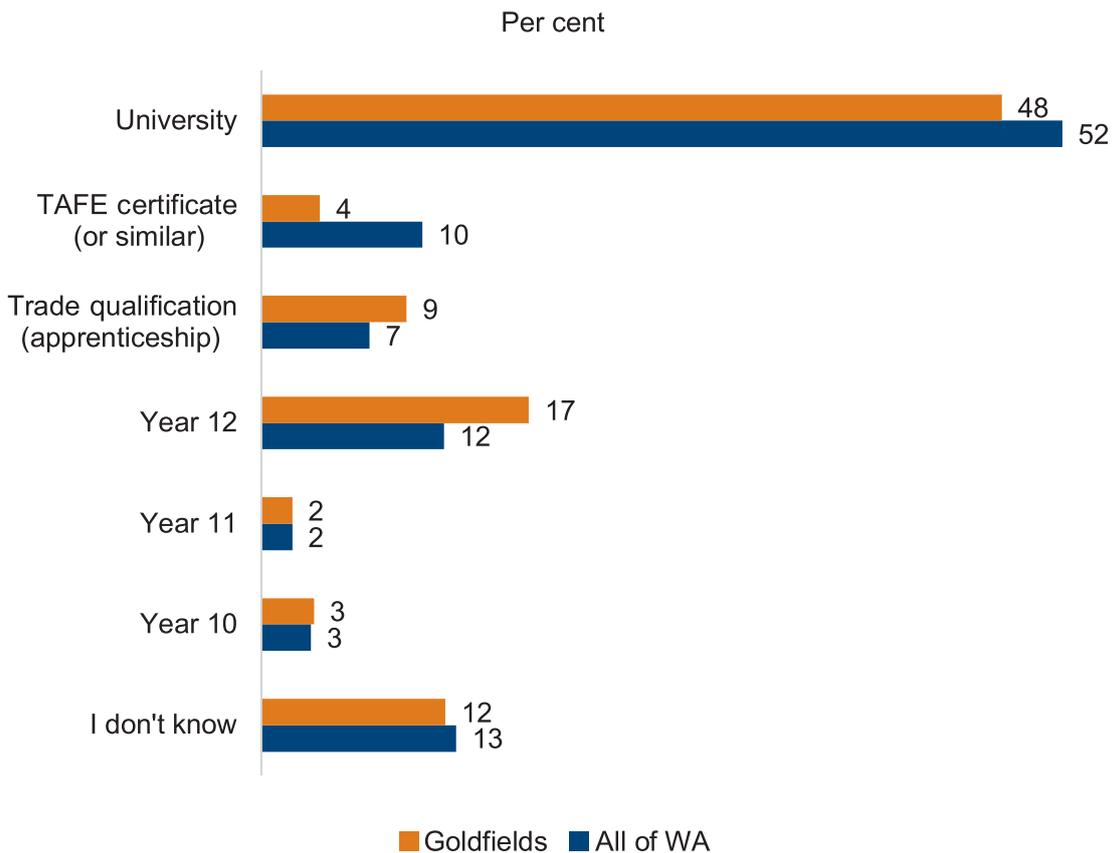
### Transition from school

Around one-half (47.9%) of secondary students in the Goldfields reported they want to attend university, while almost one quarter (22.7%) do not intend to go on to further study after secondary school. Secondary students in the Goldfields are also much less likely to report wanting to attend TAFE compared to students in other regions (3.8% compared to 10.4%).

Of the secondary students surveyed in the Goldfields:

- 63.9 per cent said it is ‘very much true’ or ‘pretty much true’ that at their school they are learning knowledge and skills that will help them in the future (all of WA: 61.4%).
- 35.8 per cent reported having a regular part-time job (all of WA: 28.0%).

### Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting highest level of education they would like to achieve (single choice only)



## Independence and autonomy

Of the secondary students surveyed in the Goldfields:

- 78.3 per cent said they are allowed to go to and from school on their own.
- 71.6 per cent said they are allowed to go places other than school on their own.
- 24.8 per cent said they are allowed to go out alone at night in their local area.
- 54.0 per cent said they are allowed to cycle on main roads without an adult.

These results are consistent with students across WA.

Female students are less likely than their male peers to be allowed to do all of these activities. Most notably, only 14.2 per cent of female students are allowed to go out alone in their local area at night, compared to 35.6 per cent of male students. While this proportion of male

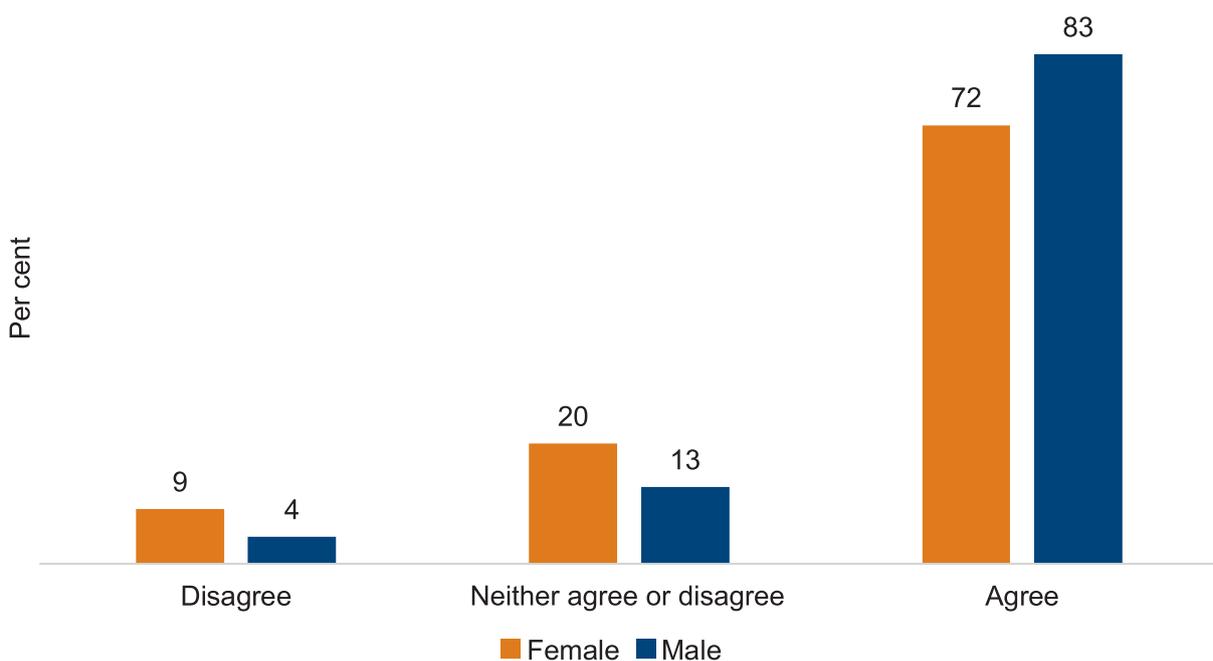
students is consistent with the results across WA, the proportion for female students is well below the results across WA (24.1%).

Most (76.7%) secondary students in the Goldfields reported they feel involved in making decisions about their life. Similar proportions agreed or strongly agreed that they get enough information to make decisions in their life (79.3%), and agreed or strongly agreed that they are given opportunities to weigh up decisions (77.6%).

Female students are less likely than male students to feel involved in making decisions, with 83.2 per cent of males compared to 71.6 per cent of females feeling involved.

This gender difference is consistent with results from across WA.

### Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students responding to the statement: I feel involved in making decisions in my life



### Aboriginal children's and young people's views on learning and participating

More than three in five (62.1%) Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Goldfields reported liking school, while 48.8 per cent reported that being at school every day is very important to them. These results are similar to non-Aboriginal students.

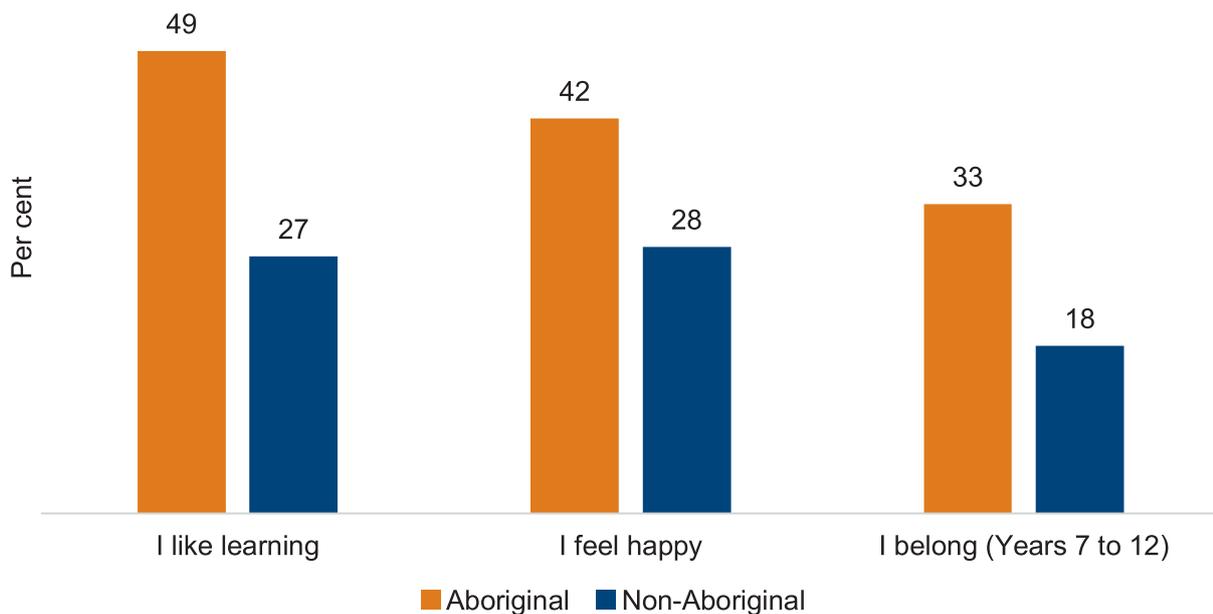
A greater proportion of Goldfields Aboriginal students than non-Aboriginal students

reported they strongly agree their school is a place where:

- they feel happy (Aboriginal: 41.5%; non-Aboriginal: 28.0%).
- they like learning (Aboriginal: 48.6%; non-Aboriginal: 27.0%).

Almost one-third (32.5%) of Goldfields Aboriginal students in secondary school strongly agreed that their school is a place where they belong (non-Aboriginal: 17.6%).

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students strongly agreeing that school is a place where they like learning, feel happy and belong



Aboriginal students in the Goldfields are more likely to have attended multiple schools since they started primary or secondary school: 40.2 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 Aboriginal students have attended three or more schools since they started primary school (non-Aboriginal: 23.8%); and 41.3 per cent of Aboriginal secondary students have attended three or more schools since they started secondary school (non-Aboriginal: 6.8%).

More than one-half (57.3%) of Year 7 to Year 12 Aboriginal students reported they have been suspended from school (been sent home for a few days for doing something wrong) (non-Aboriginal: 12.3%). Further, 42.4 per cent of Aboriginal students had wagged school in the previous 12 months for a full day or more, compared to 16.5 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.

A marginally higher proportion of Aboriginal students than non-Aboriginal students in the Goldfields feel safe at school all the time (Aboriginal: 45.2%; non-Aboriginal: 36.3%). Aboriginal students reported experiencing bullying by students at their school in similar proportions to non-Aboriginal students.

Aboriginal students are less likely than non-Aboriginal students to report 'usually' getting along with their teachers (43.3% compared to 63.3%); however, they are more likely than non-Aboriginal students to report it is 'very much true' that there is a teacher at school who really cares about them (65.2% compared to 34.5%).

While many secondary students in the Goldfields want to go to university (47.9%), Aboriginal students in the Goldfields are less likely than non-Aboriginal students to report they would like to go to university (15.9% compared to 56.3%) and more likely to say they do not intend to do any further study after secondary school (47.6% compared to 17.3%).

## What do children and young people in the Goldfields say about learning and participating?

### Talking about stress at school

The following responses are from secondary school students who were asked the open text question: 'The majority of secondary school students feel stressed by school work or study. What do you think are the main reasons for this?'

*"Assessments and tests are not spread out well. Sometimes we are not told of an assessment until it's due in a week. We need more time in class to work on assessments because not everyone has time at home to work on it constantly (people with lots of siblings and have to look after them or lots of after school activities or paid jobs)."*  
(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"Because school work is jammed down students throats. They are given multiple assessments at the same time while having multiple tests due the same day, all while being told to complete their school work to their 100% best ability and have their home work done and handed in on time. After all of these things are done it is after midnight, I haven't had dinner, nor showered and I won't get to sleep until after 3 leaving me with 4 hours to sleep just so that I can wake up at 7 and do it all over again whilst struggling with my own problems."*  
(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"The type of work we don't fell like is going to help us in life and is needed to be done at a high quantity in a short amount of time."*  
(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"We get so much put on to us with multiple test or assessments this week alone in the past 2 days I've done 3 assessments/test and I'm still going. I also think parents can put pressure onto kids to do well, although I can see it's to help them in the future it's hard sometimes and makes them stress more. I have fallen into that hole but I've taught myself how to look at it from my view rather than my parents or teachers, etc."*  
(female, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)

*"The main reason is the way schooling is set up in Australia. For example the ATAR system is so silly in my eyes. Your at school 6 hours a day already tired from school and you go home and are expected to do 1 hour of study per subject that's 12 hours gone. Next is if someone has a job for money and basic necessities on average that's 4 hours so that's 16 hours gone add 10 hours for sleep which is recommended for students that's 26 hours seeing that there is only 24 hours in a day we are burning our students out."*  
(male, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)



# Safe and Supported

**“I’m fine I love my home, my parents may be strict but I know it’s always for the right reasons.”**

*(female, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

## Supportive relationships

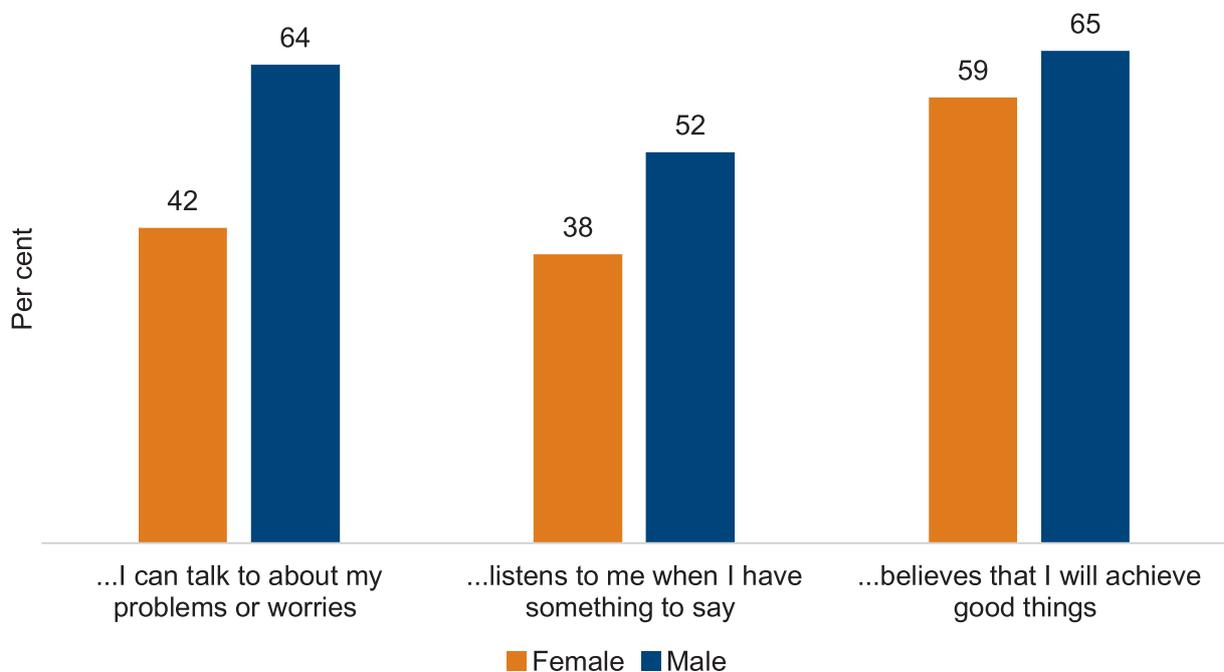
Just over one-half (52.3%) of children and young people in the Goldfields reported that it is ‘very much true’ they have a parent or other adult where they live who they can talk to about their problems. Secondary students are much less likely than primary school students to feel this way (47.5% compared to 60.6%).

The difference in results between Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 12 is consistent across WA.

- 44.5 per cent reported it is ‘very much true’ they live with a parent or another adult who listens when they have something to say (Years 4–6: 43.4%; Years 7–12: 45.2%).
- 61.5 per cent said it is ‘very much true’ they live with a parent or another adult who believes they will achieve good things (Years 4–6: 62.6%; Years 7–12: 60.8%).

Female secondary school students in the Goldfields are less likely to respond ‘very much true’ to the above questions compared to male students. This gender difference for secondary students is consistent with results across WA.

**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students responding ‘very much true’ to the statement: ‘Where I live, there is a parent or adult who...’**



However, the gender difference for Years 4 to 6 in the Goldfields is notable compared to other regions in WA, with less than one-half (47.5%) of female students reporting it is 'very much true' that they have a parent or other adult where they live who they can talk to about their problems (all of WA: 64.2%) compared to 74.0 per cent of males (all of WA: 65.1%).

Almost one-third (30.6%) of students in the Goldfields said their family gets along very well, while 40.7 per cent said their family gets along well.

Almost three-quarters (71.1%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Goldfields said if they were having any serious problems, there is an adult they would feel okay talking to (Years 4–6: 78.3%; Years 7–12: 66.9%). In Years 4

to 6, one in five (21.2%) of female students responded to this question that they are not sure (male: 6.7%).

Most children and young people in the Goldfields felt that they are very good at making friends (51.5%) and have enough friends (80.5%). However, again, primary school students in the Goldfields are less likely to think they have enough friends than those across the state (71.7% compared to 84.2%).

### Material basics

A high proportion (14.3%) of students in the Goldfields reported that they only sometimes or never have enough food to eat at home (Years 4–6: 16.9%; Years 7–12: 12.7%). This is a greater proportion than reported by children and young people across WA.

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting whether there is enough food to eat at home



Of the students surveyed in the Goldfields:

- Almost one in five (17.6%) reported that they do not have enough money in their family to afford school excursions and/or camps (Years 4–6: 26.1%; Years 7–12: 12.5%). This overall result is a lower proportion than reported by children and young people across WA (9.8%).
- Most students (84.1%) reported they have the right kind of clothes to fit in with other people their age (Years 4–6: 80.2%; Years 7–12: 86.4%).

Of the secondary students in the Goldfields, 96.3 per cent reported they have access to the internet at home, 88.3 per cent reported they have their own tablet, laptop or

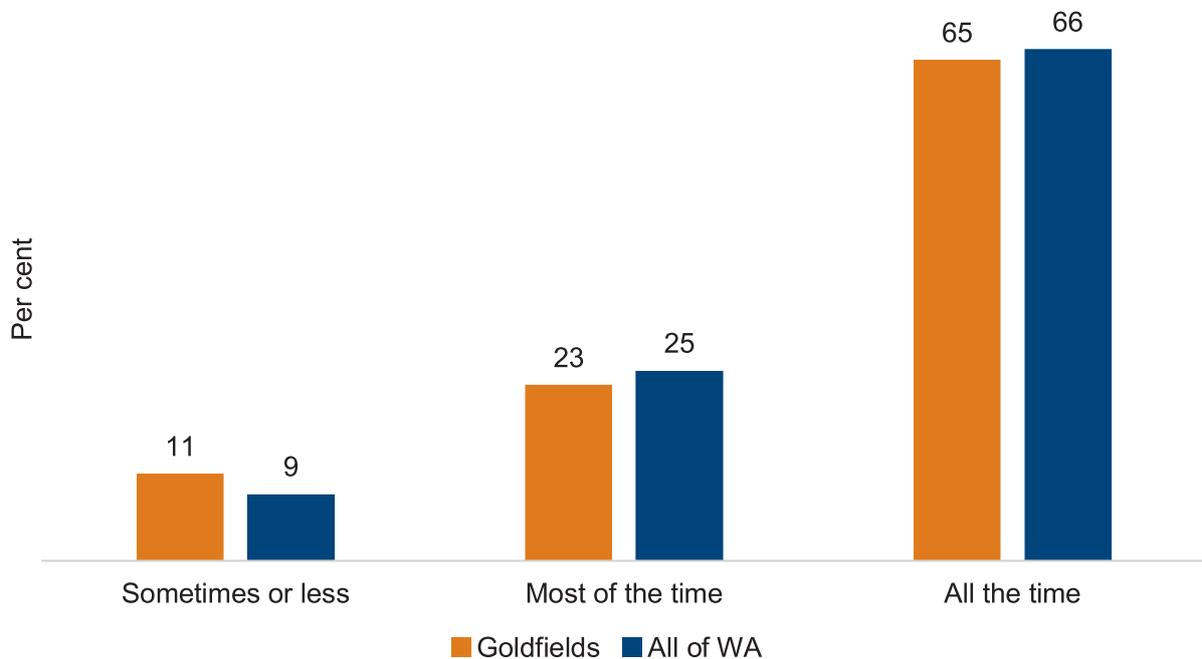
computer, while 91.0 per cent reported they have their own mobile phone. These results are consistent with the rest of WA.

### Safe in the home

Of the students surveyed in the Goldfields, 64.5 per cent said they feel safe at home all the time (Years 4–6: 69.0%; Years 7–12: 61.9%), while 22.7 per cent said they feel safe at home most of the time (Years 4–6: 16.9%; Years 7–12: 26.1%).

Compared to students across the state, a marginally higher proportion of students in the Goldfields reported feeling safe at home sometimes or less (11.2% compared to 8.6%).

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting how safe they feel at home



Of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Goldfields, nearly one-quarter (24.3%) said they are ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ worried that someone in their home or family will be fighting and 21.3 per cent were ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ worried that someone in their home or family will hurt somebody.

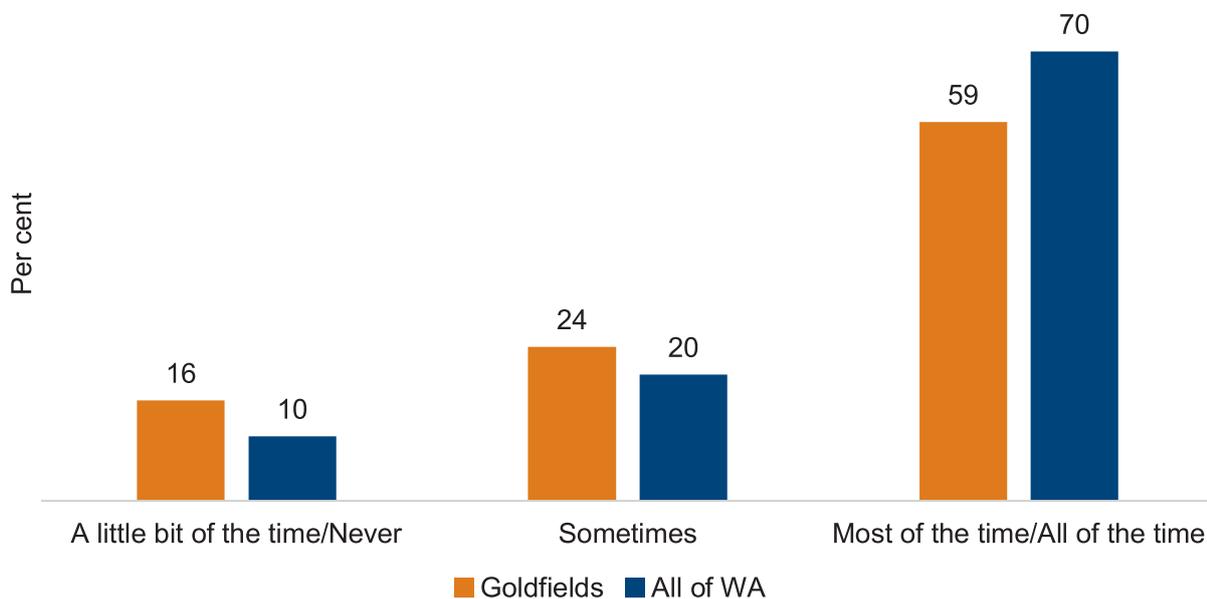
While the results for secondary students are consistent with the rest of WA, Year 4 to Year 6 students in the Goldfields are more likely to be worried ‘a lot’ that someone in their home or family will be fighting (18.6%) and that someone in their home or family will hurt somebody (19.9%) compared to the rest of WA (12.6% and 12.4% respectively).

Thirty per cent of secondary students in the Goldfields reported they had stayed away from home overnight because of a problem. This result is consistent with the rest of WA.

### Safe in the community

Of the students surveyed in the Goldfields, over one-quarter (26.0%) said they feel safe in their local area all the time (Years 4–6: 29.7%; Years 7–12: 23.9%), while 30.5 per cent said they feel safe in their local area most of the time (Years 4–6: 22.2%; Years 7–12: 35.1%).

### Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting how often they feel safe in their local area



Female secondary students in the Goldfields are less likely to feel safe all the time than male students (consistent with the results across WA), however the gender difference in the Goldfields is particularly stark (female: 12.4%; male: 35.5%).

Almost one in ten (8.1%) female secondary school students never feels safe in their local

area (male – Goldfields: 2.1%; female – all of WA: 3.1%).

Just under one-half (49.2%) of Year 9 to Year 12 students reported they had ever been hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose. Responses are similar for male and female students.

## Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

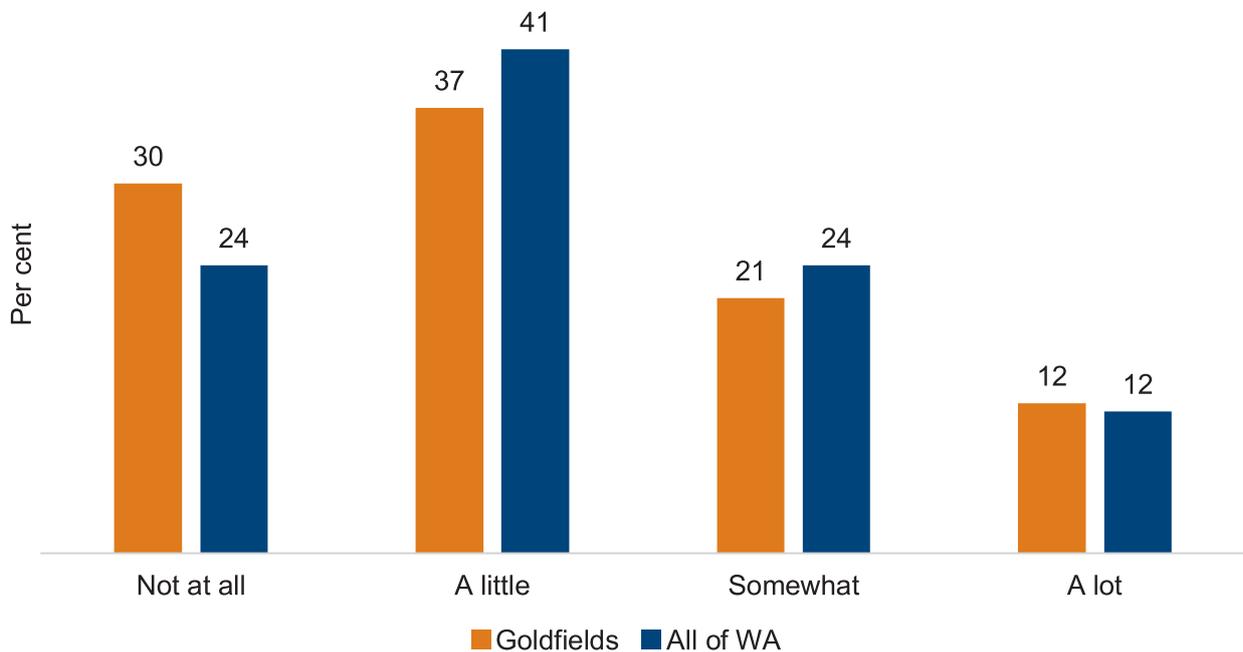
When asked about the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes to daily life, almost one-third (30.3%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Goldfields reported that the pandemic had affected their life in a bad way ‘not at all’ – this is a higher proportion than the rest of WA (23.6%). More than one in 10 (12.3%) reported it had affected them in a bad way ‘a lot’ (all of WA: 11.6%).

Of the students surveyed in the Goldfields:

- 55.2 per cent reported feeling very or somewhat relaxed when they think of COVID-19; 33.3 per cent reported feeling very or somewhat stressed/anxious.
- 48.7 per cent reported feeling worried if they missed school due to COVID-19 in the previous year.

More than one in five (22.7%) Year 9 to Year 12 students stated that the COVID-19 pandemic had been a source of stress to them in the previous year.

### Proportion of students responding to the question: ‘Thinking about the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes to daily life, how much has this affected your life in a bad way?’



## Aboriginal children's and young people's views on feeling safe and supported

### Supportive relationships

Most Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students in the Goldfields reported that it is 'very much true' that where they live there is a parent or another adult who:

- believes they will achieve good things (61.3%).
- they can talk to about their problems or worries (56.7%).

These results are consistent with non-Aboriginal students in the Goldfields.

Nearly one-quarter (24.0%) of Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students reported having moved home two or more times in the previous 12 months, compared to 9.6 per cent of non-Aboriginal students. Aboriginal families are often more mobile than non-Aboriginal families with various social and cultural factors influencing these patterns, including cultural norms and values regarding kinship and family obligations, and maintaining connections to Country.<sup>2</sup>

Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students are much more likely to report that their family gets along very badly (6.4%) compared to non-Aboriginal students (0.5%).

At the same time, Aboriginal students are more likely than non-Aboriginal students to feel that their siblings and other family members care about them a lot (siblings: 55.5% vs 43.3%; other family members: 67.4% vs 48.4%).

Similar proportions of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 were not worried that someone in their home or

family will be fighting (Aboriginal: 43.4%; non-Aboriginal: 46.3%). One-half (50.0%) of Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 were 'a little', 'somewhat' or 'a lot' worried that someone in their family would hurt somebody (non-Aboriginal: 41.3%).

More than one-half (58.0%) of Aboriginal students in the Goldfields were 'a little', 'somewhat' or 'a lot' worried that someone in their home would hurt themselves (non-Aboriginal: 44.3%).

### Material basics

Aboriginal students in the Goldfields are more likely to be experiencing some form of material disadvantage in comparison to their non-Aboriginal peers:

- One-quarter (26.3%) of Aboriginal secondary school students do not have their own tablet, laptop or computer, compared to 8.6 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.
- One in five (21.4%) of Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 do not have access to the internet at home (non-Aboriginal: 2.5%).
- One in five (22.1%) Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 do not have enough money in their family for them to go on a school excursion or camp (non-Aboriginal: 12.5%).

One in five (21.9%) of Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students said there was only sometimes or never enough food to eat at home when they are hungry (non-Aboriginal: 12.2%).

Aboriginal students are much more likely than non-Aboriginal students to report living in a house with seven people or more (36.0%) compared to non-Aboriginal students (8.3%). They are also more likely than non-Aboriginal students to report living in more than one home (32.2% vs 19.6%).

<sup>2</sup> Dockery AM & Colquhoun S 2012, *Mobility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: A literature review*, Curtin University.

### Feeling safe

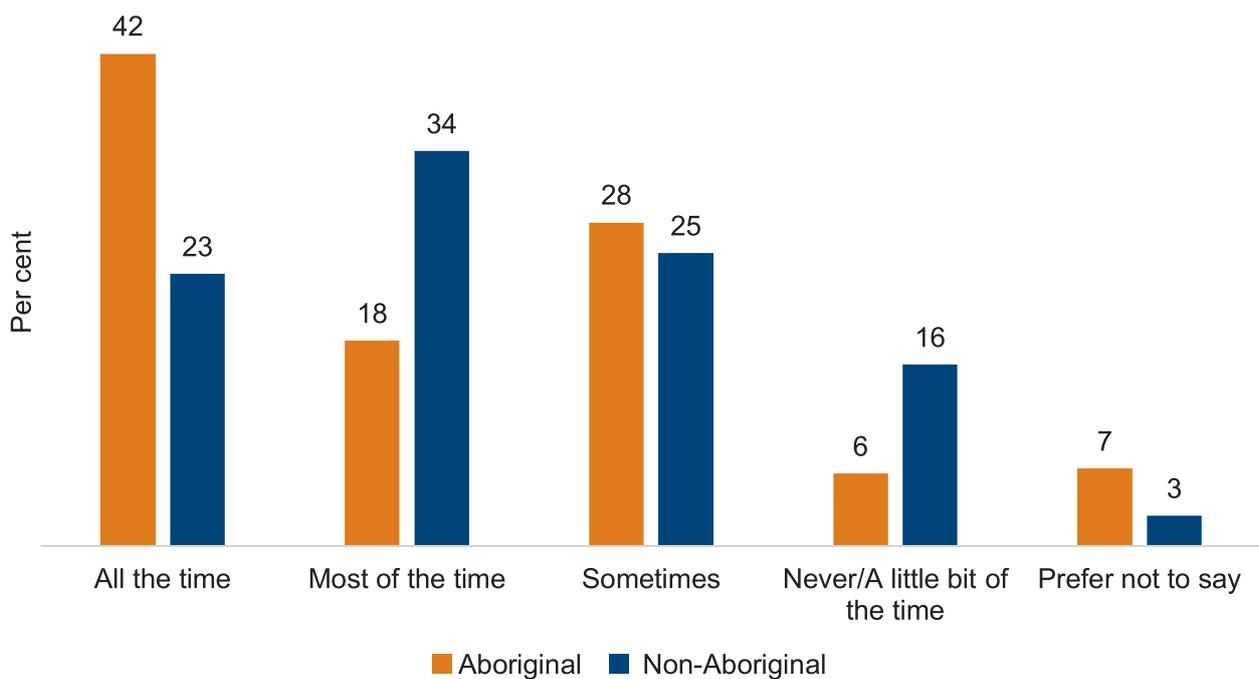
Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 are just as likely to feel safe at home most of the time or all of the time as non-Aboriginal students (Aboriginal: 87.9%; non-Aboriginal: 87.6%).

Aboriginal children and young people in the Goldfields are more likely to feel safe in their local area all the time (42.0%) compared to non-Aboriginal children and young people (23.2%).

**“ The people in my town, walking alone, staying in the car while mum and dad go into shop, walking alone at school, walking around town by myself. ”**

*(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

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



## What do children and young people in the Goldfields say about being safe and supported?

### Supportive relationships

*“I love my life if I needed help I have my mum and dad to help me.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“On my experience seeking health issue was never really a problem as I have a very supportive and helpful parents. When I have a hard time coping or I needed advice or I have made bad decisions, my parent was the only person that was able to help me get through it, without askin me “why did you do that”....”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Some time i get a bit of anxiety as I also stress about assignments and school some times. I know I can go to my family and friends for the help that I need if so. Also I know that I can go to teachers.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“If I ever do have any anxiety/stress I normally keep it to myself or pray about it. Sometimes I talk to my mum about any issues I have. I also talk to my youth pastors.”*

*(male, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### Adults should listen more, be more open and understanding

*“They could be a bit more understanding and understand what your saying.”*

*(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Be more considerate with what teens are going threw I know it's hard to believe or whatever but the generations have changed so much and it's sad how there are so many kids now that feel like they can't talk to adults cause they will get judged, compared, yelled at or something else.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Not be so hurtful with their words. Not be so demanding. Actually listen to what gets said and understand where I'm coming from, how I'm feeling, and what I'm trying to say.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I wish my parents understood how I feel.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“A child opinion is just as relevant as an adult.”*

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### Feeling unsafe

The following quotations were generally in response to the question: What are some of the things that make you feel unsafe?

*“Being alone in like a parks, house and dark areas!”*

*(male, 11 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“When somebody jump over our fence and steal something.”*

*(male, 11 year-old, undisclosed Aboriginal status)*

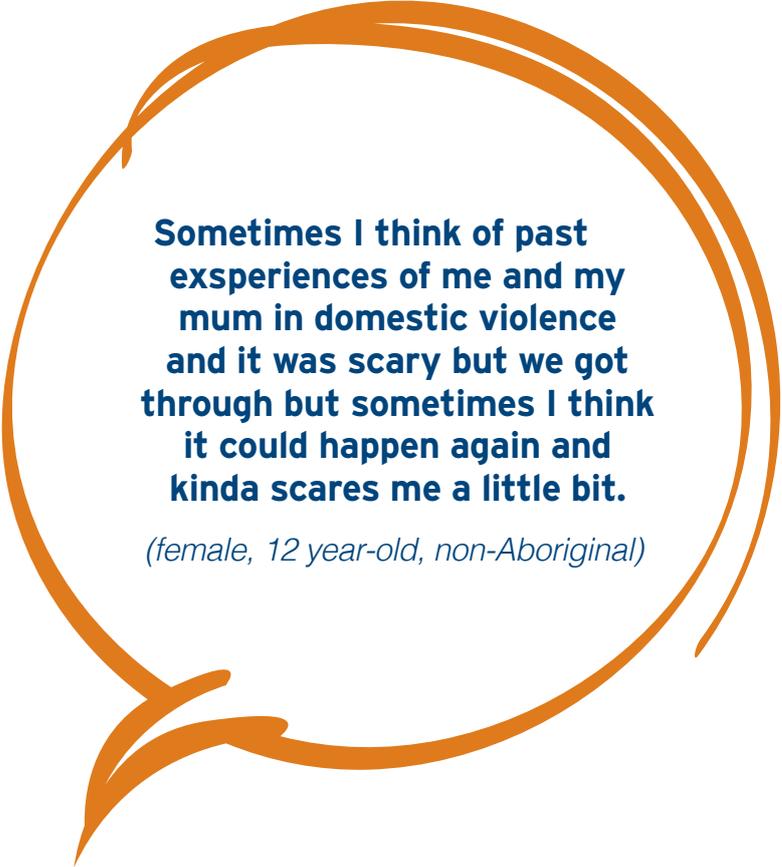
*“People in gangs bully me all of the time in public areas.”*

*(male, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I don’t have a good family because they always fight and my life is pretty stressing.”*  
*(male, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“When I’m walking and I get called at by older men driving or walking past.”*  
*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

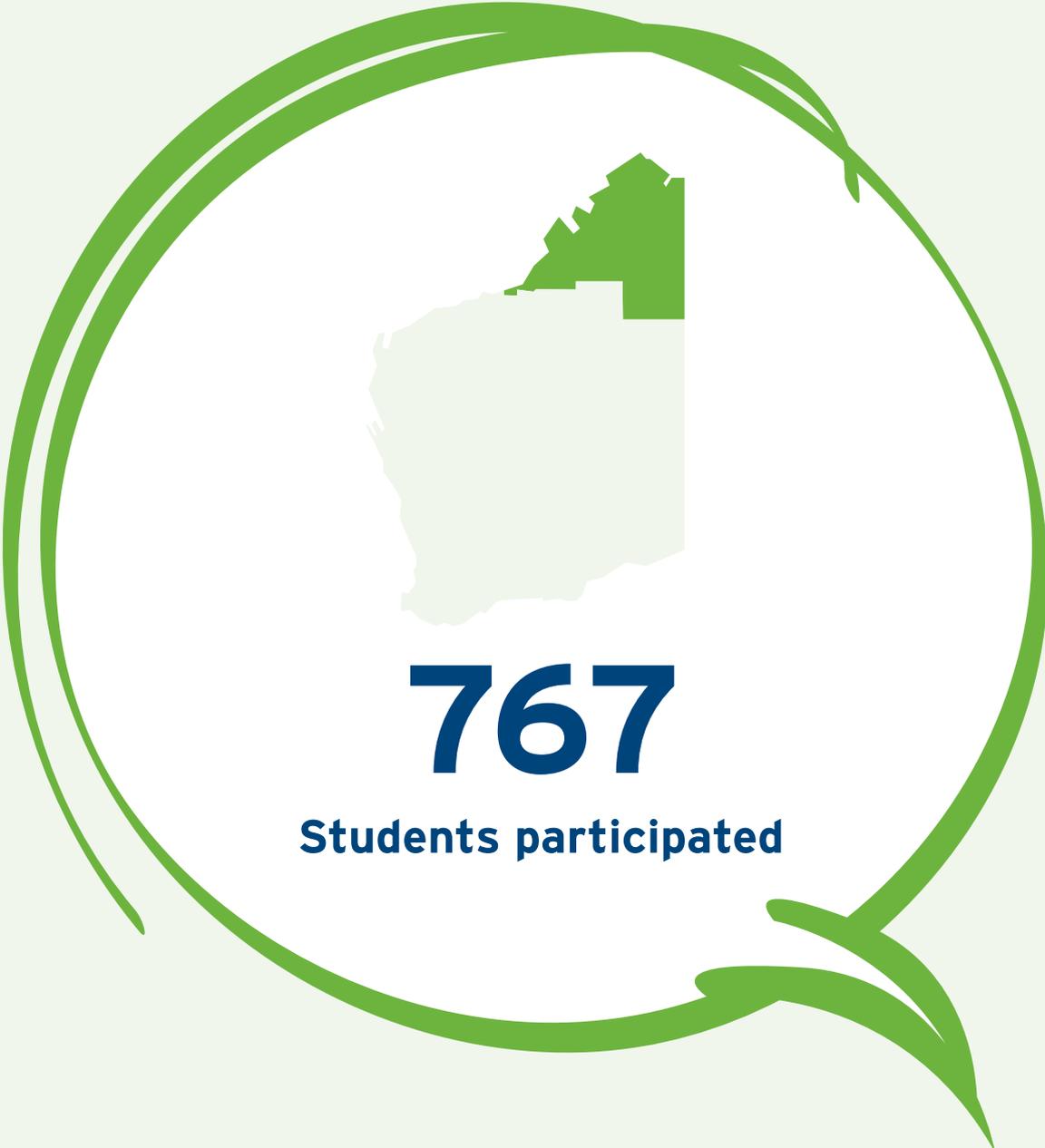
*“Being put into unsafe situations and environments, when people around me are on the influence of alcohol and drugs.”*  
*(male, 17 year-old, Aboriginal)*



**Sometimes I think of past experiences of me and my mum in domestic violence and it was scary but we got through but sometimes I think it could happen again and kinda scares me a little bit.**

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

# Kimberley



# Kimberley key findings



Compared to students across the state, a lower proportion of students in the Kimberley **reported their health is very good or excellent.**

In particular, **a lower proportion of Aboriginal students** than non-Aboriginal students in the Kimberley rated their **health as excellent/very good** (29.8% vs 56.4%).

**A greater proportion** of secondary students in the Kimberley compared to WA students overall reported that they **have done vigorous exercise seven or more times in the previous seven days** (29.1% compared to 19.8%).



**Students in the Kimberley are marginally more likely to report higher life satisfaction than students across the state** (67.4% compared to 61.4%).

Young people in the Kimberley are more likely than those across other regions in WA to have **tried smoking and had experiences with marijuana.**



Almost two-thirds (63.8%) of students in the Kimberley said it is **very important to them to be at school every day.** This is the highest proportion across all regions in WA (all of WA: 53.8%).



**Aboriginal students in the Kimberley have very positive attitudes towards school** with two-thirds (67.7%) reporting that attending school is very important to them (58.3% non-Aboriginal) and that **they like school a lot** (Aboriginal: 39.8%, non-Aboriginal: 19.6%).

**A higher proportion of students in the Kimberley** than students across WA do not **feel safe in their local area.**

**Three-quarters (77.3%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students reported that their family gets along very well or well.** This is consistent with the results across WA (76.1%).



Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 are just as likely to **feel safe at home most of the time or all of the time** as non-Aboriginal students (Aboriginal: 87.0%, non-Aboriginal: 90.4%).

A higher proportion of secondary students in the Kimberley than students across WA **do not feel safe in their local area all or most of the time** (56.3% vs 69.9%).



More than one-quarter (29.8%) of secondary students in the Kimberley reported that they **do not have their own tablet, laptop or computer** compared to one in ten (11.7%) secondary students across WA.

## Overview

A total of 767 children and young people across Years 4 to 12 from six primary schools and five secondary schools in the Kimberley took part in the Speaking Out Survey 2021.

One-half (52.8%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students surveyed in the Kimberley identified as girls, 44.9 per cent identified as boys and 2.3 per cent selected the option that they identify 'in another way'.

More than one-third (36.8%) of participants reported being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This is a much greater proportion than in the Perth Southern (5.4%) or Northern (3.6%) metropolitan areas.

Of the students surveyed in the Kimberley, 97.0 per cent reported speaking English at home and 13.8 per cent reported (also) speaking other language(s) at home. The other languages spoken included Tagalog/Filipino, German and Aboriginal languages including Aboriginal English, Yulparija and Yawuru.

Many students in the Kimberley liked doing the survey and felt that it provided them with an opportunity to have their say:

*“Good something get my mind off things I could explain myself freely so thank you 😊.”*

*(male, 9 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I like the survey because it ask me questions that made me calm.”*

*(male, 9 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“I really like how you feel you should talk to us children about asking questions instead of asking parent’s only.”*

*(female, 10 year-old, undisclosed Aboriginal status)*

*“I liked the survey and it was fun to answer questions anonymous and it was nice to speak out about everything.”*

*(female, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“It really helped me get a lot of things off my chest, without having to say stuff to a person face to face.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)*

**▲▲ I thought that the survey was fine and I also hope that teacher parents and adults take how their children or students are feeling and acting seriously as well as what we have to say because we shouldn't be kept silent. ▼▼**

*female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

# Healthy and connected

**More discussion in school about warning signs for mental health issues such as anxiety (earlier on in education) and healthy friendships (what is acceptable, what is not, warning signs for this). More places for young people to go that are safe so we have something to do that's positive.**

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

## Physical health

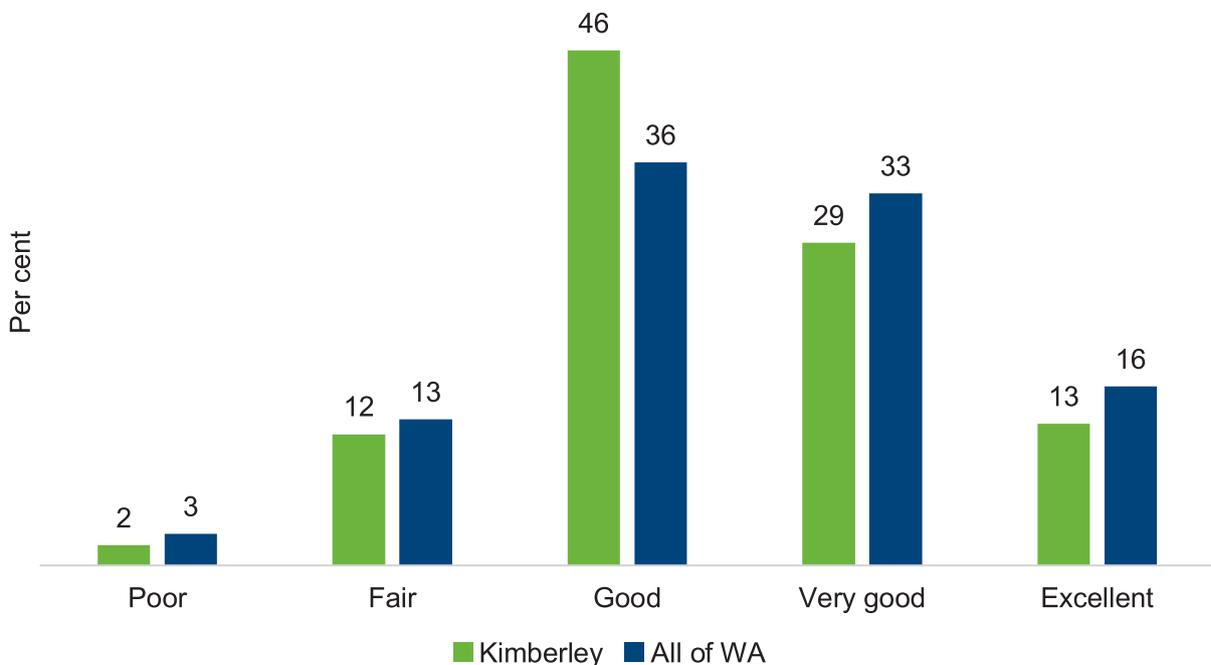
Of the students surveyed in the Kimberley, 41.0 per cent reported that their health is very

good or excellent (Years 4–6: 43.9%; Years 7–12: 39.1%), while 13.4 per cent reported that their health is poor or fair (Years 4–6: 8.6%; Years 7–12: 16.7%).

Compared to students across the state, a lower proportion of students in the Kimberley reported their health as very good or excellent.

One in five (21.0%) secondary students in the Kimberley reported having a long-term health problem, while 5.7 per cent reported having a long-term disability. The most commonly reported long-term health problems were asthma and anxiety/depression. The most commonly reported disabilities were ADHD, vision impairment and learning difficulties including dyslexia.

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting their general health ratings



With regard to eating regular meals, 15.4 per cent of students in the Kimberley reported that they never or hardly ever eat breakfast. Primary school students are less likely than secondary students to report they never or hardly ever eat breakfast (5.2% compared to 22.3%). Further, girls are more likely than boys to report they never or hardly ever eat breakfast in both primary school (girls: 8.1%; boys: 1.5%) and secondary school (girls: 26.5%; boys: 15.5%).

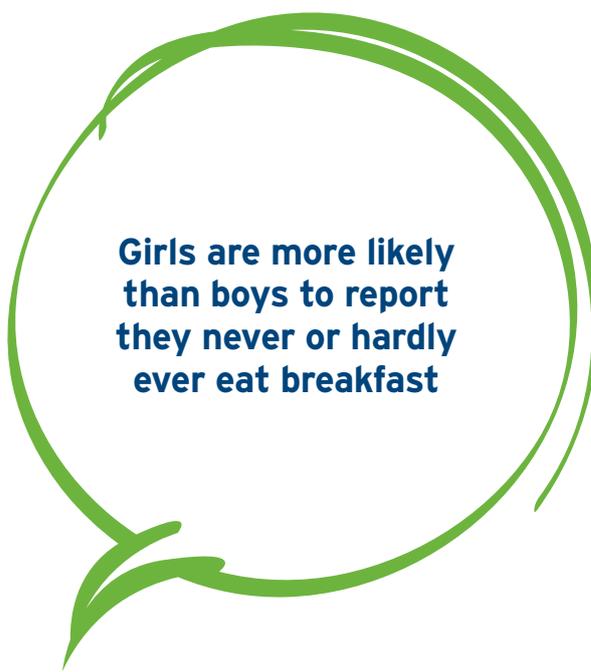
These results are consistent with results for students across WA.

A greater proportion of secondary students in the Kimberley compared to WA students overall reported that they had done vigorous exercise seven or more times in the previous seven days (29.1% compared to 19.8%). In particular, a higher proportion of girls in the Kimberley than girls in WA overall reported doing vigorous exercise seven or more times in the previous week (28.6% compared to 12.4%).

Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Kimberley also reported the following with respect to their physical health:

- 60.5 per cent reported brushing their teeth twice or more the previous day (Years 4–6: 57.4%; Years 7–12: 62.6%). One in ten (10.0%) Year 4 to Year 12 students reported they did not brush their teeth the previous day. This is the highest proportion across the state (all of WA: 4.5%).

- 45.0 per cent reported they care very much about eating healthy food (Years 4–6: 49.4%; Years 7–12: 42.3%) and 35.9 per cent reported they care some (Years 4–6: 31.4%; Years 7–12: 38.8%).
- Fewer than one in five (17.6%) secondary students reported only eating fruit a few times a week or less (all of WA: 24.8%). This is the lowest proportion across all regions.
- 41.4 per cent reported caring very much about how they look (Years 4–6: 40.0%; Years 7–12: 42.2%) and 30.2 per cent reported they care some (Years 4–6: 28.8%; Years 7–12: 31.0%).
- Three-quarters (77.2%) of Year 4 to Year 6 students reported going to sleep on a school night before 9pm, while 54.8 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students reported going to sleep on a school night before 10pm. These proportions are higher than the average across the state.



**Girls are more likely than boys to report they never or hardly ever eat breakfast**

## Mental health

Of the students surveyed in the Kimberley, 7.3 is the mean life satisfaction (on a scale from 0 to 10). The mean life satisfaction across all of WA is 6.8.

Primary school students have a higher mean result than secondary students (Years 4–6: 8.2; Years 7–12: 6.6).

Students in the Kimberley are marginally more likely to report higher life satisfaction than students across the state (67.4% compared to 61.4%).

Female secondary students are more than three times as likely to report low life satisfaction than their male peers, with 25.8 per cent of female students reporting low life satisfaction (0 to 4) compared to

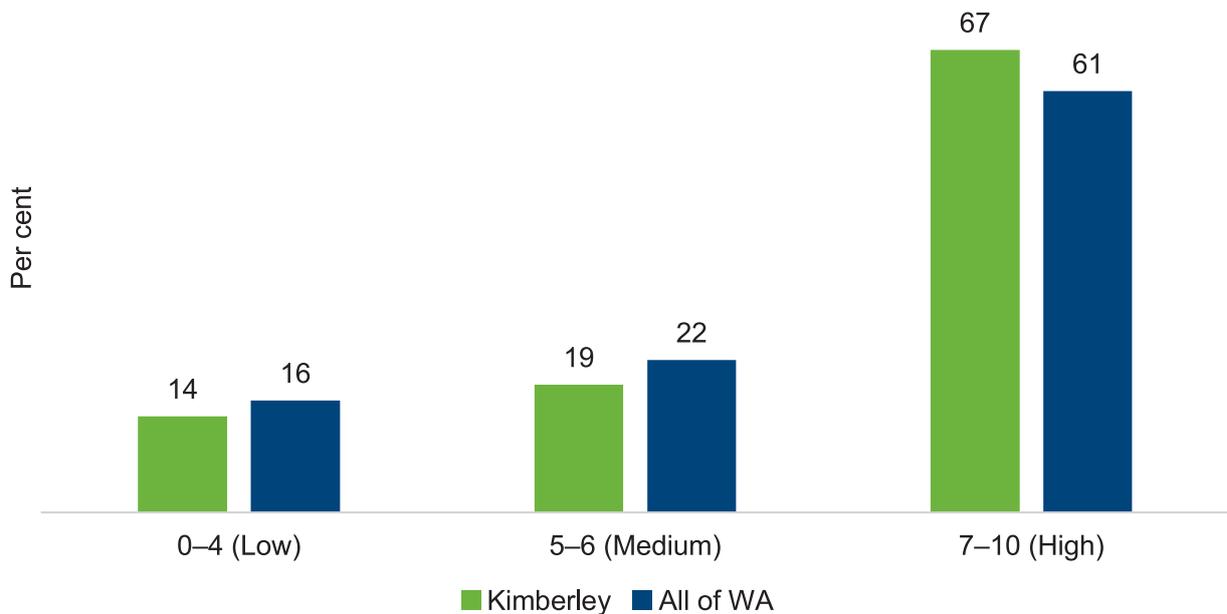
8.5 per cent of male students. This is similar to results for female young people across WA.

Male students in the Kimberley are significantly less likely than those across the state to report low life satisfaction (8.5% vs 13.4%).

Secondary school students in the Kimberley also reported:

- 44.9 per cent agreed and 23.1 strongly agreed that they feel good about themselves, while one-third disagreed (disagreed: 26.5%; strongly disagreed: 5.6%).
- 49.5 per cent agreed and 22.6 per cent strongly agreed that they can deal with things that happen in their life.

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students rating their life satisfaction on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is the worst possible life and 10 the best possible life



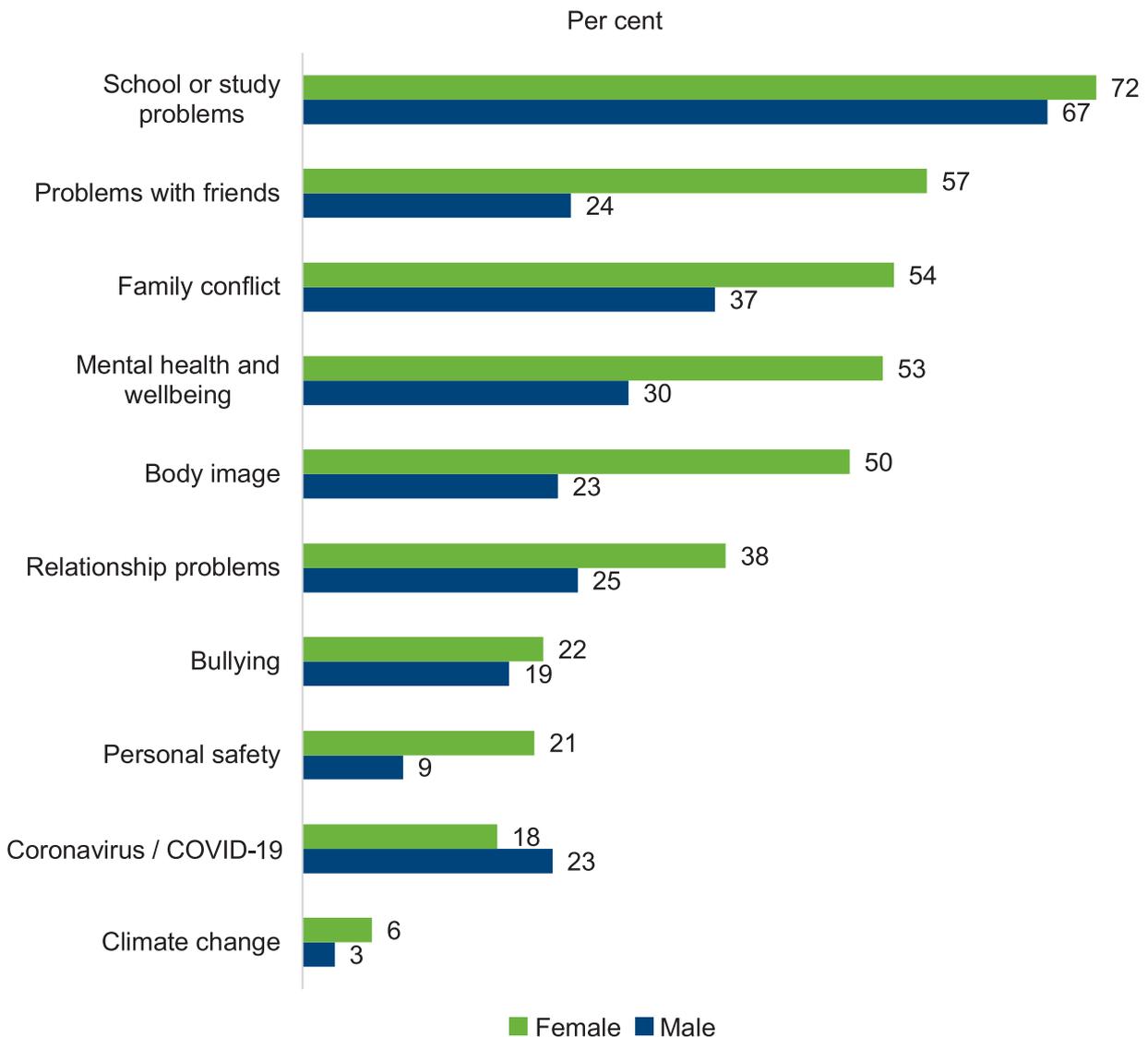
In Years 9 to 12, 61.2 per cent of students reported they had felt sad, blue or depressed for two or more weeks in a row in the previous 12 months (all of WA: 59.2%).

The Kimberley has the greatest gender gap across all regions for responses to this question, where 39.9 per cent of male Year 9 to Year 12 students reported feeling sad, blue and depressed for two or more weeks in a row in the previous 12 months, compared to 76.7 per cent of female students (all of WA – male: 47.3%; female: 68.7%).

Year 9 to Year 12 students were asked about sources of stress during the year. School and study problems were most commonly reported, with family conflict, mental health and problems with friends also rating highly.

There are gender differences in responses, with greater proportions of female students reporting being affected by stress across all sources except for coronavirus/COVID-19.

**Proportion of students reporting sources of stress in the previous 12 months**



## Access to support for physical and mental health

Of the secondary students surveyed in the Kimberley:

- 68.5 per cent said they know where to get support in their school for stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries.
- 64.0 per cent said they know where to get support in their local area for stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries.

Compared to the rest of WA, secondary students in the Kimberley are less likely to report they have got help for problems with stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries in the previous 12 months (28.4% compared to 36.7%). This is particularly true of male students, with only 21.5 per cent reporting they had got help for these issues compared to 30.3 per cent for males across WA.

The most commonly used sources of support for secondary students in the Kimberley were parents (84.5%), other family (71.4%), friends including boyfriend or girlfriend (66.6%), school psychologist, school chaplain or school nurse (57.7%) and teachers (55.4%).

Due to the high proportion of Aboriginal students in the Kimberley, 37.5 per cent of all students have contacted an Aboriginal health worker or medical service.

Of the students who had asked for help, 85.0 per cent found other family members helpful, 84.1 per cent found parents helpful, while 68.0 per cent found teachers helpful. Young people in the Kimberley are more likely than students across WA to have gone to other family members (not their parents) for support and to have found them helpful.

Female students are more likely than male students to report that in the previous 12 months, there had been a time when they wanted or needed to see someone for their health but weren't able to (female: 31.1%; male: 7.3%). Most female students (80.9%) who reported they were unable to see someone stated it was because they felt embarrassed or ashamed.

These results are consistent with those across WA.

**“ I have tried many of times but adults don't listen because they know my parents and think that the problems I have could not be from my family. ”**

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

## Risk-taking and healthy behaviours

Students in Years 7 to 12 were asked questions about alcohol, smoking and other drugs, and about sexual health. Some questions were only asked of students in Years 9 to 12.

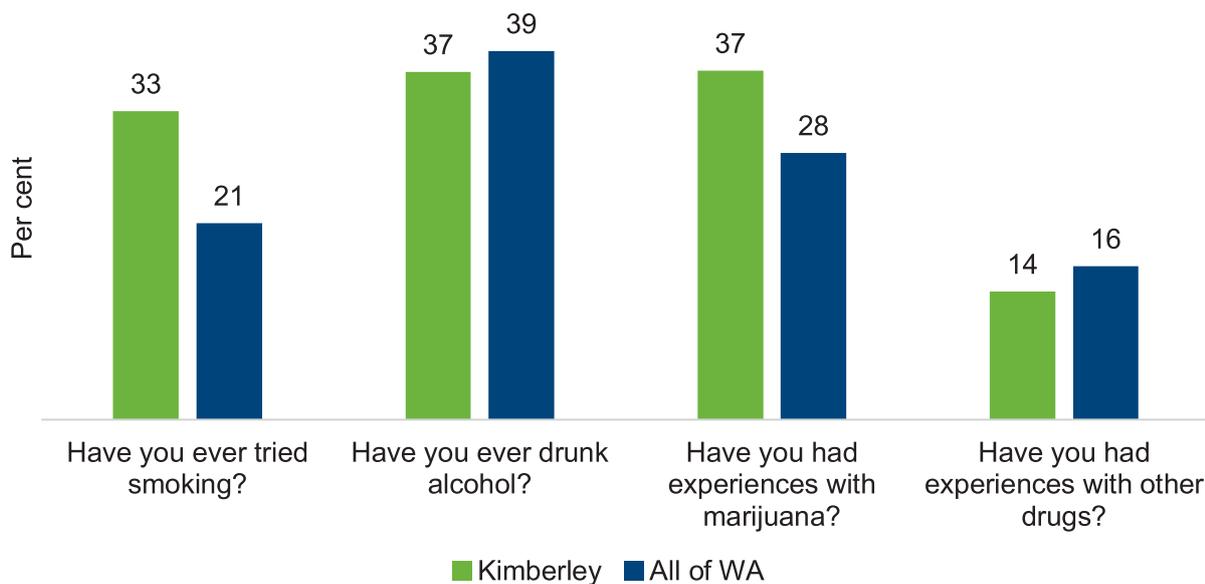
### Alcohol and other drugs

Young people in the Kimberley are more likely than those across other regions in WA

to have tried smoking or had experiences with marijuana (smoking: 32.8% vs 20.9%; marijuana: 37.1% vs 28.4%). (This is not necessarily using marijuana themselves).

A similar proportion of young people in the Kimberley compared to the rest of the state have tried drinking alcohol (37.0% vs 39.2%) or other drugs (13.6% vs 16.3%).

**Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who responded ‘yes’ to the question on whether they have tried smoking or drinking, or had experiences with marijuana or other drugs (Years 9 to 12 only)**



*Note: The questions asked were: Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?; Have you ever drunk alcohol (more than just a few sips, like a full can of beer or a glass of wine)?; Have you ever had any experiences with marijuana? Response options were: 'No', 'Yes' and 'Prefer not to say'.*

In the Kimberley, a high proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students stated that their friends use cigarettes (42.1%), drink alcohol (45.0%) or use marijuana (38.1%). These are marginally higher than the overall results for the state (33.7%, 44.1% and 33.6% respectively).

Of the secondary students surveyed in the Kimberley:

- 76.9 per cent reported having learnt 'some' or 'a lot' about alcohol and 77.3 per cent had learnt about cigarettes/smoking at school.
- 59.7 per cent said they had learnt 'some' or 'a lot' about marijuana and 64.3 per cent had learnt about other drugs at school.

More than one-third (36.5%) of students felt like they did not know or were not sure they knew enough about the health impacts of marijuana. This is similar to the responses from students across WA.

Three in 10 (29.8%) of students did not know or were not sure where to go if they needed help for something related to smoking, drinking or other drugs. This is consistent with WA responses overall (30.2%).

### Sexual health

One-quarter (23.9%) of female secondary school students in the Kimberley reported that they have learnt nothing about pregnancy and contraception at school (male: 15.3%), while 50.0 per cent reported they have learnt a lot or some (male: 62.2%).

Two in five (41.2%) female students in the Kimberley reported that they do not feel they know enough or are unsure they know enough about sexual health and ways to support their sexual health (male: 29.5%). Similarly, one-half (50.8%) of female students reported that they do not feel they know enough or are unsure they know enough about pregnancy and contraception (male: 37.6%). These results are consistent with those across the state.

Almost one-third (31.7%) of secondary students in the Kimberley do not know or are unsure about where to go if they need help for something related to their reproductive or sexual health (all of WA: 40.8%).

In Years 9 to 12, 52.6 per cent of female students and 20.7 per cent of male students reported they had ever been sent unwanted sexual material, such as pornographic pictures, videos or words. This sexual material was overwhelmingly sent via social media platforms.

### Problematic behaviours and emotions related to being online

Of the students surveyed in this region:

- 34.1 per cent said they feel bothered 'fairly often' or 'very often' when they cannot be on the internet (Years 4–6: 23.0%; Years 7–12: 39.1%).
- 28.8 per cent said they feel bothered when they cannot play electronic games (Years 4–6: 35.3%; Years 7–12: 25.8%).
- 27.3 per cent of male and 51.8 per cent of female secondary students said they feel bothered when they cannot use their mobile phone.
- 11.6 per cent of male and 19.4 per cent of female secondary students said they go without eating or sleeping either fairly often or very often because of their mobile phone.

These results are similar to the responses across WA.

### Connection to community

In Years 4 to 6, the proportion of students in the Kimberley who reported they like where they live is a significant majority (83.8%) – which is in line with their peers across WA.

In Years 7 to 12, the proportion of students who reported they like where they live is just over two-thirds (69.2%), below the WA average (79.3%). Moreover, Year 7 to Year 12 students are significantly more likely to disagree a lot that they like where they live compared to secondary students across WA (10.6% vs 4.0%).

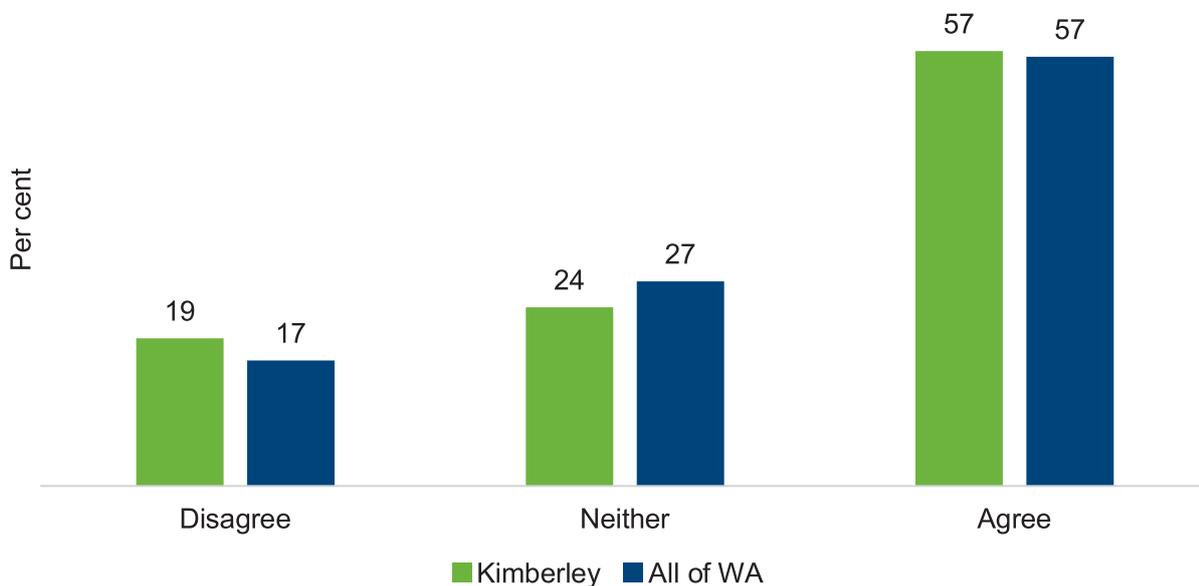
Most students in Years 4 to 6 feel like they belong in their community (74.7%), report

that there are fun things to do where they live (75.8%) and that there are outdoor places to go like parks or skate parks (75.6%). Around one in seven (13.5%) children in Years 4 to 6 disagrees that there are outdoor places to go like parks or skate parks – this is a lower proportion than across WA (7.0%).

In contrast, of the secondary students surveyed, just over one-half (57.2%) reported that they feel like they belong in their community, while almost one in five (19.4%) disagreed.

These results are consistent with the results across all of the state.

### Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students who feel like they belong in their community



Almost one-half (47.4%) of Year 7 to Year 12 students agree a lot and 29.2 per cent agree a bit that there are outdoor places to go in their area, like parks, ovals or skate parks. However, only one-quarter (25.8%) agree a lot that there are fun things to do where they live (19.9% agree a bit). One-third (34.7%) disagree with this statement.

In regard to the activities that children and young people in the Kimberley do when they are not at school:

- 64.1 per cent said they spend time hanging out with family every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 60.3%; Years 7–12: 66.5%).
- 62.3 per cent said they spend time using the internet on a smartphone or computer every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 39.0%; Years 7–12: 76.4%). This is lower than the overall WA responses (Years 4–6: 50.7%; Years 7–12: 90.6%).

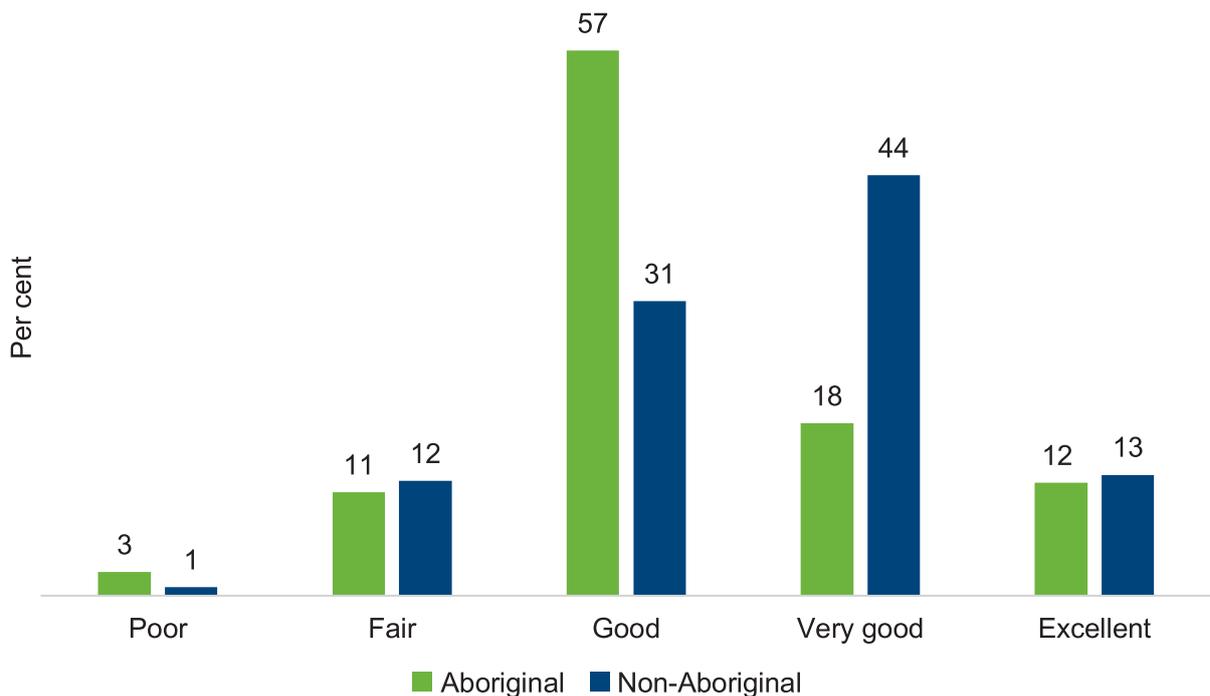
- 45.7 per cent said they spend time practising or playing a sport every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 44.9%; Years 7–12: 46.2%).
- 39.1 per cent said they spend time hanging out with friends every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 41.0%; Years 7–12: 37.8%).

### Aboriginal children’s and young people’s views on feeling healthy and connected

A lower proportion of Aboriginal students than non-Aboriginal students in the Kimberley rated their health as excellent/very good (29.8% vs 56.4%).

Almost all (96.4%) Aboriginal secondary students reported that physical activity, sport or exercise is ‘definitely’ or sort of an important part of their life compared to 85.1 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting their general health ratings



Further, a higher proportion of Aboriginal students than non-Aboriginal students reported they had done vigorous exercise seven or more times in the previous week (Aboriginal: 32.0%, non-Aboriginal: 25.7%).

Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students reported similar life satisfaction to non-Aboriginal students, with more than two-thirds (68.6%) of Aboriginal students rating their life satisfaction as high (7 to 10). Additionally, similar proportions of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students agree that they are able to do things as well as most other people (Aboriginal: 78.4%, non-Aboriginal: 76.6%).

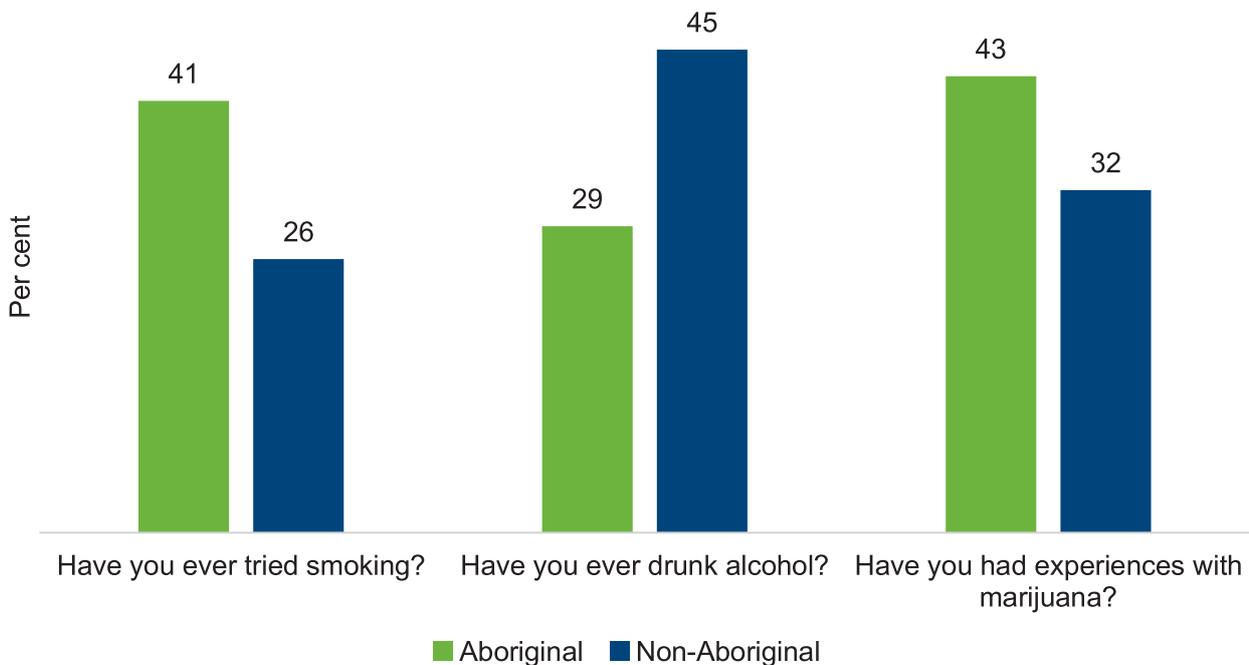
However, Aboriginal secondary students in the Kimberley are more likely to disagree that they can deal with things that happen in their life (Aboriginal: 12.8%, non-Aboriginal: 5.2%).

The top three stressors reported by Aboriginal secondary students were school or study problems (56.9%), family conflict (42.5%) and problems with friends (40.2%). Aboriginal students are less likely than non-Aboriginal students to report mental health and wellbeing as a source of stress (32.6% vs 49.3%).

Aboriginal secondary students are more likely than non-Aboriginal students to feel very often bothered when they could not use their mobile phone (32.6% compared to 14.8%).

Aboriginal secondary students in the Kimberley are more likely to have tried smoking and those in Years 9 to 12 are more likely to have had experiences with marijuana than non-Aboriginal students. However, Aboriginal students are less likely to have drunk alcohol.

**Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who have tried smoking or drinking, or had experiences with marijuana (Years 9 to 12 only)**



*Note: The questions asked were: Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?; Have you ever drunk alcohol (more than just a few sips, like a full can of beer or a glass of wine)?; Have you ever had any experiences with marijuana? Response options were: 'No', 'Yes' and 'Prefer not to say'.*

In terms of connection to culture and community, of the Aboriginal students in the Kimberley:

- 82.3 per cent said they know their family's country, and of these students 92.3 per cent said they spend time on their family's country. This is the highest proportion across the state.
- 41.0 per cent said they talk Aboriginal language some or a lot, which is the highest proportion across the state (all of WA: 27.1%).
- 69.4 per cent said they do cultural or traditional activities with their family.

Aboriginal children (Years 4 to 6) in the Kimberley are more likely than non-Aboriginal children to feel like they belong in their community (Aboriginal: 78.9%, non-Aboriginal: 66.2%).

Aboriginal secondary students are more likely than non-Aboriginal students to feel like they belong in their community (66.4% compared to 48.7%).

### **What do children and young people in the Kimberley say about being healthy and connected?**

Students were asked the following open text questions related to health and mental health:

- Thinking about mental health and other emotional worries, like stress, anxiety and depression, what are some of the ways families, communities, schools or adults in general could be more helpful?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with seeking help for health issues, including mental health worries?

### **Feeling anxiety, depression and sadness**

*"I have trouble fitting in, staying fit, being equal to others, i get teased for my size and looks, I have anxiety and depression."*

*(female, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*"My mum refuses to take me, my friends tease me for having anxiety and I feel like a party pooper."*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"Umm when I get a bit mad I cut myself sometimes."*

*(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*"There is no where I can go if I need help but I'm not really worth much so I don't care. 🙄"*

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**■ ■ If I feel down at school I don't want the teachers being nosey and constantly pressuring me to tell them I don't want my parents blaming my anxiety on my phone. ■ ■**

*(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

### Talking about mental health

*“Just checking up on how we feel more often and using our ideas more.”*  
(male, 11 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“It would help to have a more concerned family and teachers who actually help me.”*  
(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Take me fishing and hunting.”*  
(male, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“I want adults to stop thinking they’re always right. I’d also like them to stop invalidating kids problems. I’d also like them to realise that things aren’t the same as they were when they were kids, the world has changed. I’d also like them to stop brushing off kids mental health problems as “teenage angst”.”*  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

### Talking about getting support

*“I find it hard to talk to my parents [they] think my mental health is irrelevant.”*  
(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“I search up on YouTube or the internet how to cope with anxiety.”*  
(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Late last year I hit my rock bottom but by finally going to a councillor I’ve helped myself and my mental state.”*  
(male, 16 year-old, Aboriginal)

### Views on their local area

Three hundred and eight students from the Kimberley answered the free text question: ‘If there was one thing you could change about your local area, what would it be?’ Of the students surveyed in the Kimberley, the top things that they would like to change in their local area were:

- More fun activities to do and places to hang out.
- Make it safer.
- Would like more, closer shops, a mall, movies, greater diversity.
- More, upgraded outdoor spaces or parks.

*“We could have more indoor entertainment because in wet season it’s too hot to do anything outside and no one can swim at the beach because of the irukandji jellyfish.”*  
(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“More skate parks and places to practise sports Also fun things like bounce or rock climbing.”*  
(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“That there were more options to do things in town that are for everyone, not just sport. Not every Aussie kid wants to be a football player, you know.”*  
(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“A park and a swimming pool and cold water fountains.”*  
(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“Put a park and make sure there are no alcohol or cigarettes allowed in the park.”*  
(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“The fact that there’s nothing to really do after you’ve lived here for 8 years. I’m growing up and nothing in this place interests me anymore.”*  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Facilities for youths that are safe (eg in indoor bowling).”*  
(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Yes, I would like some more things to do when it’s hot it would be nice if there was a better shopping center or indoor movies, theme park, Timezone.”*  
(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

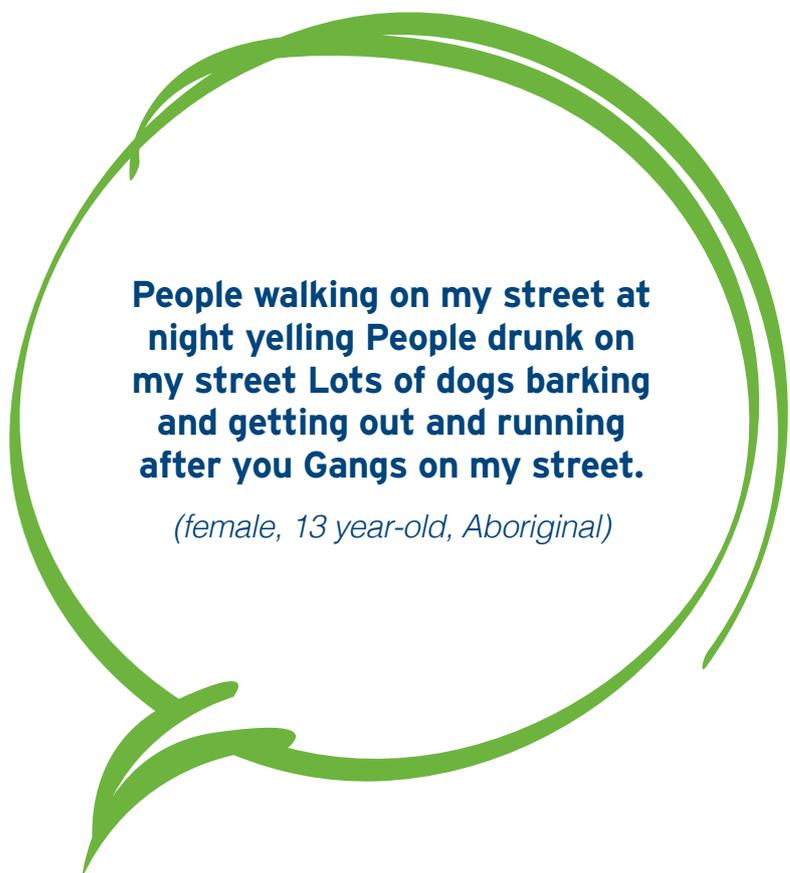
In comparison to the rest of WA, students from the Kimberley are more likely to mention safety as an issue in their local area.

*“The amount of kids that fight and shame people and think their the boss mostly in parks/public areas.”*  
(female, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“Not to have so much drugs around.”*  
(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“The crime, it used to be really safe and could do stuff without worrying, but now lots of things are limited with all the fighting and stealing.”*  
(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Overall, I would like to feel safer in my area and other places around Broome- especially at night.”*  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)



**People walking on my street at night yelling People drunk on my street Lots of dogs barking and getting out and running after you Gangs on my street.**

*(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

## Learning and participating

**“ Too much of the work is being given out at the same time, maybe the teachers can evenly distribute the homework throughout the terms. Homework is always due in the same week, given out in the same week and most students don’t have enough time to complete it. ”**

*(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

### Attendance

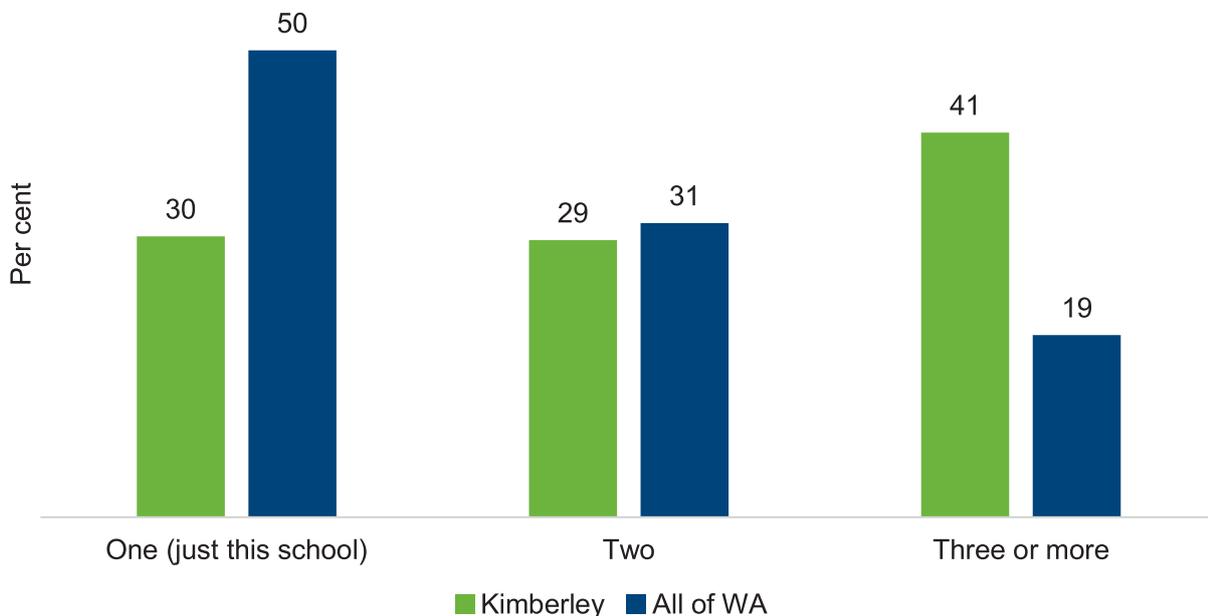
Almost two-thirds (63.8%) of students in the Kimberley said it is very important to them to be at school every day. This is the

highest proportion across all regions in WA (all of WA: 53.8%).

A very high 80.1 per cent of students in Years 4 to 6 said it is very important to them to be at school every day (all of WA: 64.5%). A lower proportion (52.7%) of students in Years 7 to 12 felt it is important to be at school every day, although this is still the highest proportion of all regions (all of WA: 48.0%).

At the same time, students in the Kimberley are more likely to have attended multiple schools since they started primary school or secondary school, with 40.8 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students having attended three or more schools since they started primary school (all of WA: 19.3%).

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 6 students reporting how many different schools they have gone to since they started primary school



Further, 30.5 per cent of secondary students in the Kimberley have wagged school in the previous 12 months. This is the highest proportion across all regions and nearly double the proportion of students who had wagged across WA (all of WA: 17.0%).

More than one-quarter (27.1%) of Year 7 to Year 12 students in the Kimberley have been suspended from school – again, almost double the proportion of students suspended across WA (17.1%).

When it comes to learning activities outside of school, only 22.6 per cent of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Kimberley reported doing homework every day or almost every day (all of WA: 43.1%). One-quarter (24.1%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Kimberley hardly ever or never spend time doing homework (all of WA: 16.1%). The low proportion of students doing homework every day or almost every day is consistent across both primary school (20.7%) and secondary school (23.9%).

### Liking school and sense of belonging

Students in the Kimberley are generally very positive about school.

Of the Year 4 to Year 12 students surveyed in the Kimberley, almost one-third (31.6%) reported they like school a lot (all of WA: 26.3%), 23.0 per cent like school a bit (all of WA: 25.4%), while 15.3 per cent reported they don't like school much or at all (all of WA: 19.8%).

Almost three-quarters (73.2%) of secondary students in the Kimberley feel like they belong in their school, which is similar to the overall WA result (70.2%).

Of the Year 4 to Year 12 students:

- 78.8 per cent agreed they feel happy at school (Years 4–6: 90.6%; Years 7–12: 70.7%).
- 79.4 per cent agreed they like learning at school (Years 4–6: 90.2%; Years 7–12: 73.0%). This is the highest proportion of positive responses of all regions (all of WA: 73.3%).
- 61.2 per cent said they usually get along with classmates (Years 4–6: 54.7%; Years 7–12: 65.5%).
- 56.6 per cent said they usually get along with their teachers (Years 4–6: 62.6%; Years 7–12: 52.4%).

Less than one-half of students (42.0%) said their parents, or someone in their family, ask about their schoolwork or homework often (Years 4–6: 36.8%; Years 7–12: 45.6%). This is the equal lowest of all regions across WA (all of WA: 55.6%).

### Feeling safe at school

Of the students surveyed in the Kimberley, one-third (33.2%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students said they feel safe at school all the time and 39.8 per cent said they feel safe at school most of the time. However, one in ten (10.5%) reported that they feel safe at school a little bit of the time or never. These results are similar to those across the state.

Around two in five (43.2%) Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Kimberley have been bullied by students at their school, 8.4 per cent did not know whether they had been bullied and 7.9 per cent 'preferred not to say'.

Female students are more likely than male students to report they have been bullied, with over one-half (53.8%) of female students in Years 4 to 6 reporting they have been (traditionally) bullied (male: 31.8%). This is higher than the response rate for female Year 4 to Year 6 students across WA (37.4%). In secondary school, 41.0 per cent of female students reported (traditional) bullying (male: 30.6%).

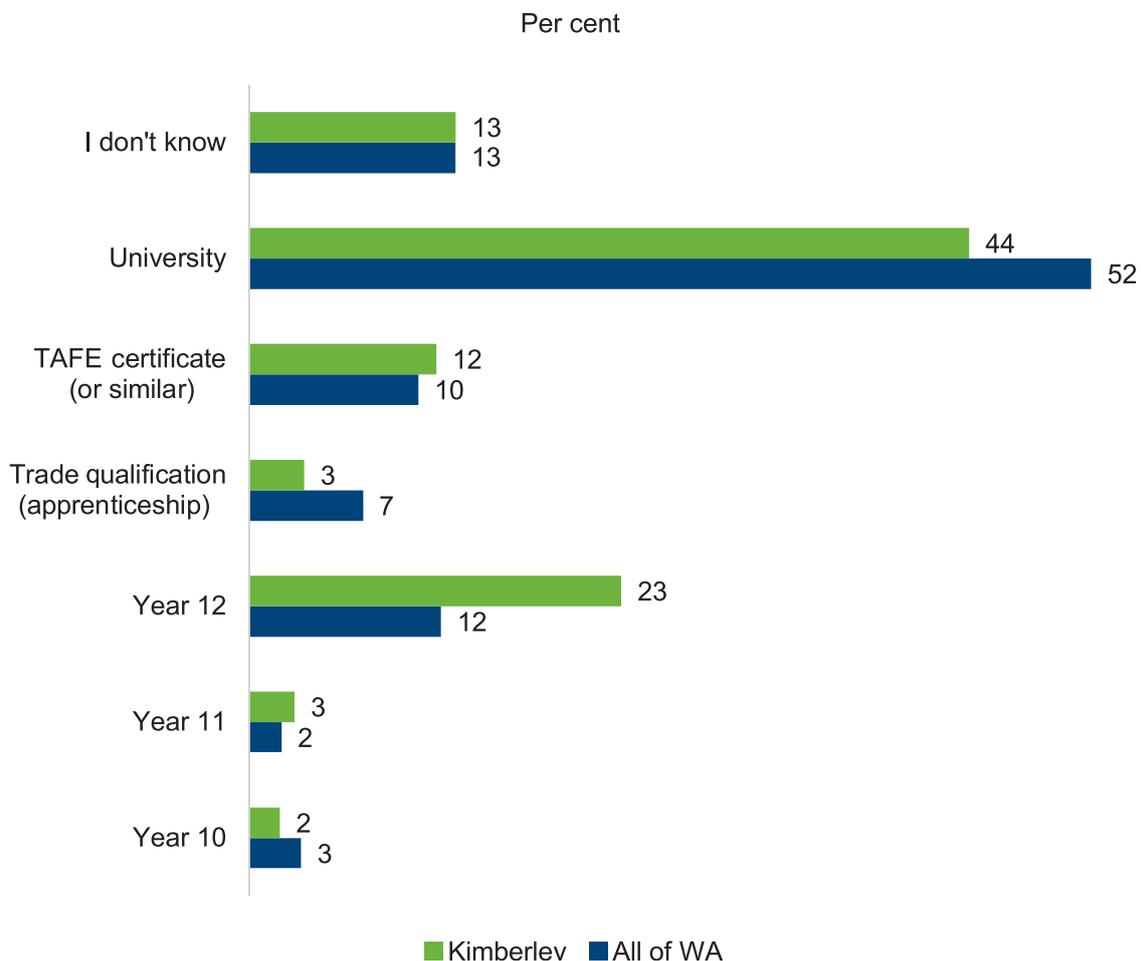
In secondary school, 21.4 per cent of female students and 8.9 per cent of male students reported they had been cyberbullied. These results are similar to those across WA.

In terms of the nature of the bullying, 37.1 per cent of those who were bullied said they have been teased about their cultural background, the colour of their skin or their religion sometime in the previous three months.

### Transition from school

While many secondary students in the Kimberley want to go to university (44.3%), it is a lower proportion of students than across the state more broadly (51.8%). Over one-quarter (27.6%) of students in the Kimberley do not intend to go on to further study after secondary school.

### Proportion of Year 7 to 12 students reporting highest level of education they would like to achieve (single choice only)



Of the Year 7 to Year 12 students surveyed in this region:

- 36.2 per cent reported having a regular part-time job in the last year (all of WA: 28.0%).
- 68.0 per cent said it is ‘very much true’ or ‘pretty much true’ that at their school they are learning knowledge and skills that will help them in the future (all of WA: 61.4%).

### Independence and autonomy

Young people in the Kimberley have similar levels of independence and autonomy to those across the state. Of the secondary students surveyed in the Kimberley:

- 80.3 per cent said they are allowed to go to and from school on their own (all of WA: 80.9%).

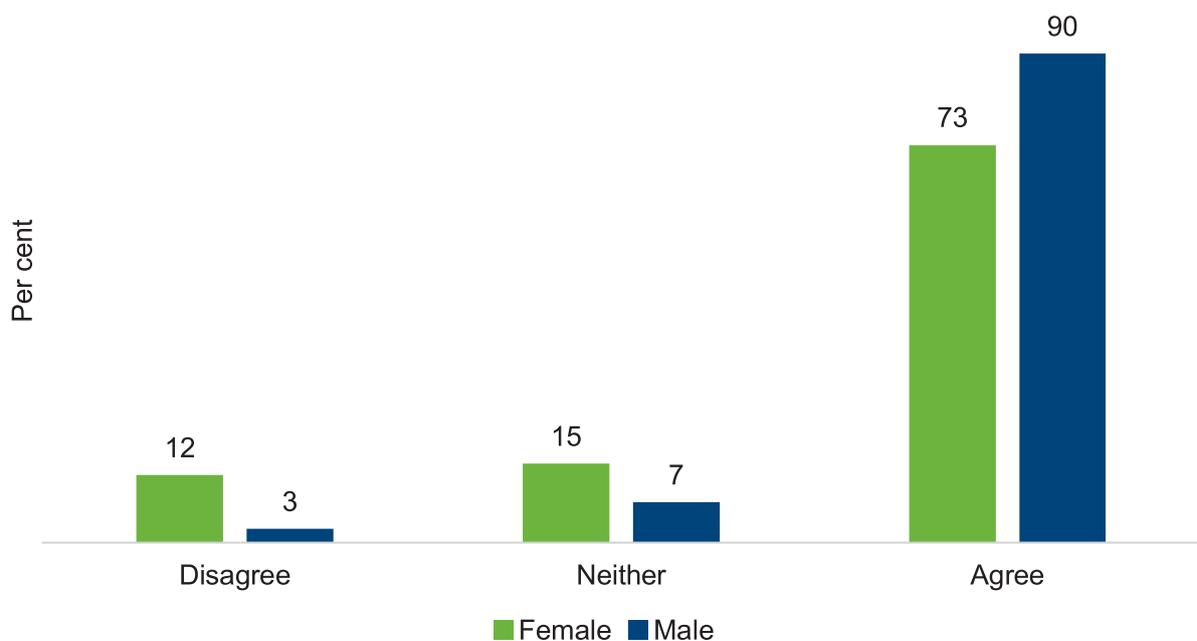
- 68.7 per cent said they are allowed to go places other than school on their own (all of WA: 76.0%).
- 27.2 per cent said they are allowed to go out alone at night in their local area (all of WA: 31.2%).

Female students are less likely to be allowed to do all of these activities. In particular, only 18.9 per cent of female students are allowed to go out at night, compared to 39.0 per cent of male students.

In terms of being able to make decisions about their own life, most (79.9%) young people in the Kimberley felt involved in making decisions about their life. However, female students are less likely than male students to feel this way.

This is consistent with the results across WA.

### Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students responding to the statement: ‘I feel involved in making decisions in my life’



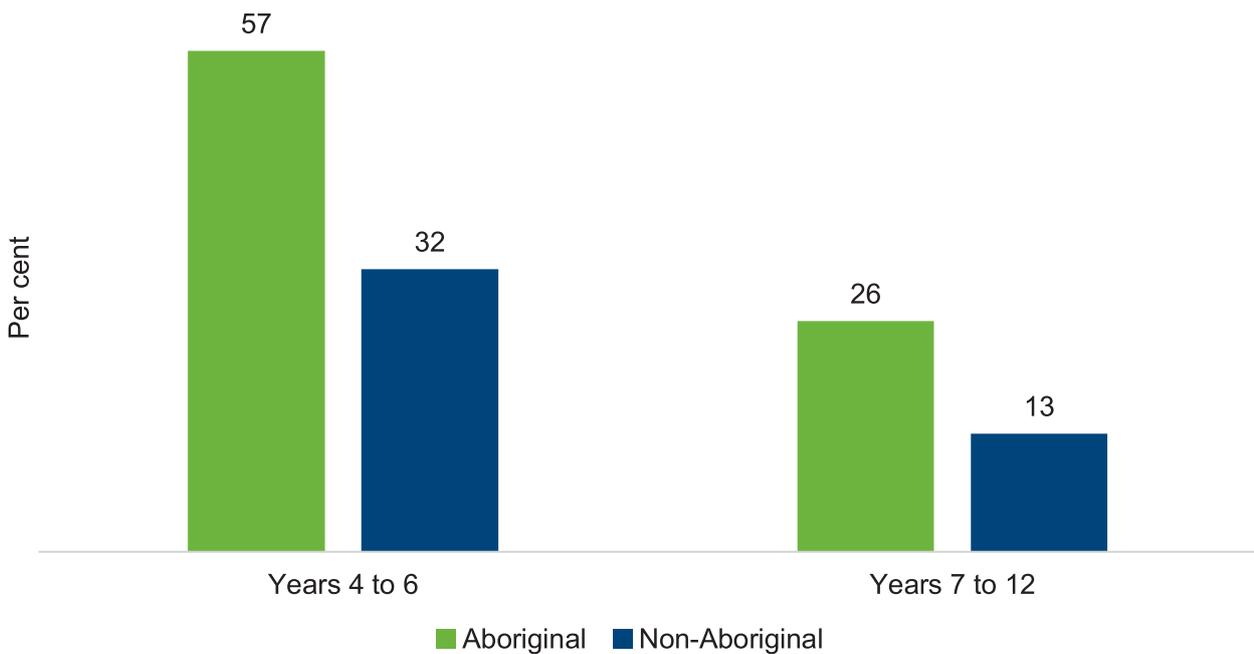
### Aboriginal children's and young people's views on learning and participating

Two-thirds (67.7%) of Aboriginal students in the Kimberley said it is very important to them to be at school every day (non-Aboriginal students: 58.3%).

Aboriginal children and young people are more likely to like school a lot than non-Aboriginal children and young people.

In Years 4 to 6, over one-half (56.9%) of Aboriginal students in the Kimberley reported liking school a lot, compared to 32.1 per cent of non-Aboriginal students. In secondary school, one-quarter (26.2%) of Aboriginal students said they like school a lot compared to 13.4 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.

#### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students who reported they like school 'a lot'



A high proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students agree that school is a place where they like learning (Years 4–6: 93.8%; Years 7–12: 74.8%).

However, Aboriginal students in the Kimberley are more likely to have attended multiple schools since they started primary school or secondary school, with 50.0 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 Aboriginal students having attended three or more schools since they

started primary school (non-Aboriginal: 27.2%) and 29.1 per cent of Aboriginal secondary students having attended three or more schools (non-Aboriginal: 9.2%).

In addition, 43.7 per cent of Aboriginal secondary school students in the Kimberley have wagged school in the previous 12 months for a full day or more, compared to 17.4 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.

Further, 41.2 per cent of Aboriginal Year 7 to Year 12 students reported they have been suspended from school (been sent home for a few days for doing something wrong) (12.9% of non-Aboriginal students).

A much higher proportion of Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students than non-Aboriginal students feel safe at school all the time (Aboriginal: 43.1%, non-Aboriginal: 19.2%), at the same time a higher proportion of Aboriginal students never feel safe at school (6.9% compared to 2.3%).

Aboriginal students experience bullying by students from their school in similar proportions to non-Aboriginal students with 43.8 per cent of Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 reporting some form of bullying, which is the same proportion as non-Aboriginal students.

Aboriginal students are less likely than non-Aboriginal students to get along with their teachers all the time (49.6% compared to 63.4%), however are more likely to report it is 'very much true' that there is a teacher at school who really cares about me (47.2% compared to 32.6%).

Aboriginal students in the Kimberley are less likely than non-Aboriginal students to report they would like to go to university (38.9% compared to 50.5%) and more likely to say they do not intend to do any further study after secondary school (31.6% compared to 23.2%).

Aboriginal secondary students in the Kimberley are less likely than non-Aboriginal students to have worked for pay in the previous 12 months (32.5% compared to 67.2%). In comparison, across WA, 50.5 per cent of Aboriginal secondary students worked for pay in the previous 12 months.

## What do children and young people in the Kimberley say about learning and participating?

The following responses are from secondary school students who were asked the open text question: 'The majority of secondary school students feel stressed by school work or study. What do you think are the main reasons for this?'

### Talking about schoolwork stress

*"The pressure we are put on to get good grades, have friends, be quiet and be happy."*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"Because we don't really understand the work the teachers give us most of the time they have to repeat it so we can't understand."*

*(female, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*"I feel very stressed at school sometimes because I feel like if I'm not doing enough to please my parents they are gonna be disappointed in me."*

*(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*"Because teachers give students too much homework, they are also teaching students shit we won't ever use in life, teach us shit we could use like how to pay taxes, how to vote, how to buy a house, how to get a job."*

*(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"I think the main reason for this is that we all worried to fail a subject and that due to this we won't be able to get a job."*

*(female, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“They could be more helpful if they actually had a way of keeping a class a under control and giving those who are smarter options to learn more and have more access, we also need more entertainment provisions around so we aren’t just bored and there needs to be more order, but all of this is just an opinion.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“There is a lot of pressure for them to do well. Especially for the older years, getting into university via ATAR is a big expectation.”*

*(female, 16 year-old, Aboriginal)*

### **Feeling unsafe at school or being bullied**

*“I think the commissioner could try stop bullying other people on the internet and in real life because bullying is not good for anybody because it hurts their feelings and them self that’s why I would really appreciate if the commissioner would do that for me and the people around us.”*

*(female, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Girls threatening to bash you.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Some of the people in Broome can be quite scetchy or dodgy and there is a lot of bullying at school.”*

*(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“... help students who are getting bullied and not just brush them off, not force students to talk, help in the school yard if there’s a fight, listen to the students when they have a problem, not just say to everything “just give it a week it’ll blow over” actually communicate with the parents about things going on in school.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

### **Other comments on school**

*“Teach our culture.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“Provide a place like star but for other girls as well because at school our cultures feel separated.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“If I don’t feel like I have a connection with the teacher, I don’t feel encouraged to work harder and when I’m not interested in something it’s hard for me to focus, I usually don’t say the answer to some stuff even though I know it’s right, I’m scared it could be wrong and get laughed at.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“There should be more learning from year 6 about consent and what is right and wrong a few of my friends have been sexually assaulted.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“More support at school Educate student more about mental health and sexuality AND CONSENT More support in the community about mental health.”*

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

## Safe and Supported

**“ I have nothing else to say. Except that my family is low on money. And I’m suffering from not eating or sleeping much. And I’m extremely stressed about school work. ”**

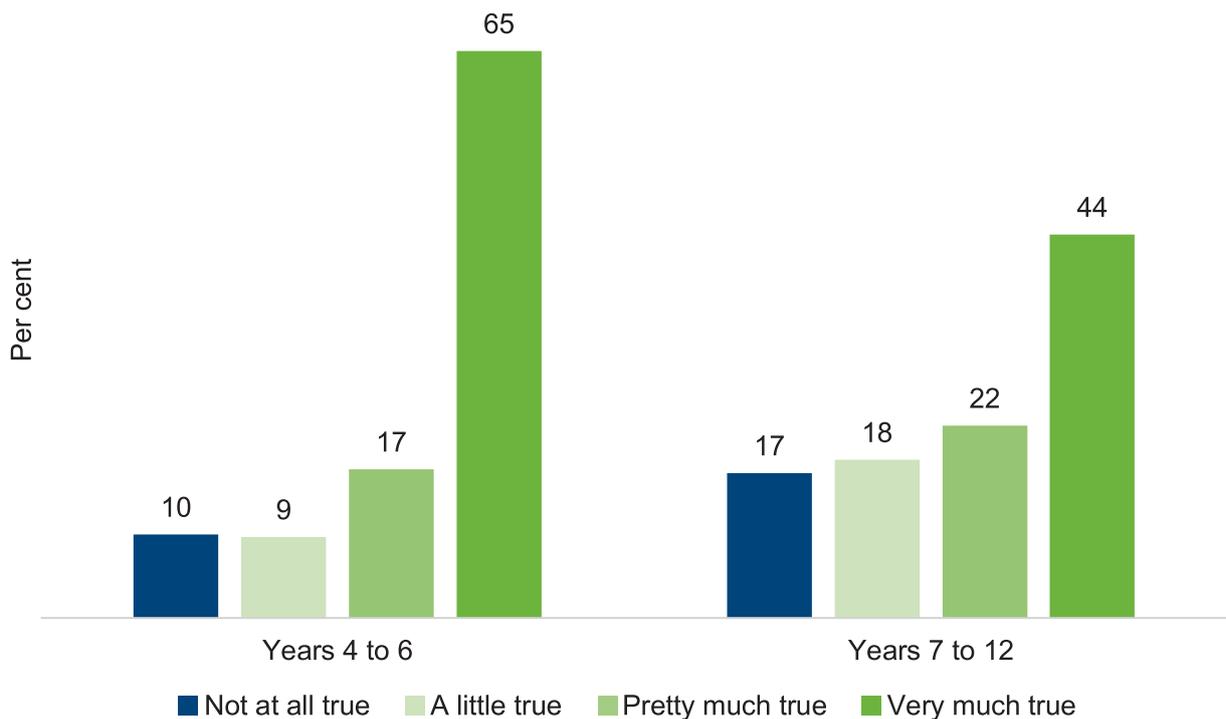
*(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

### Supportive relationships

The majority of children and young people in the Kimberley reported that they have a parent or other adult where they live who they can talk to about their problems. However, secondary students are much less likely than primary school students to feel this is ‘very much true’ (43.6% compared to 64.5%).

These results are consistent with the responses across WA.

**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students responding to the statement, ‘Where I live, there is a parent or adult who I can talk to about my problems’**



Further, of the Year 4 to Year 12 students surveyed in the Kimberley:

- 46.4 per cent reported it is ‘very much true’ they live with a parent or another adult who listens when they have something to say (Years 4–6: 51.2%; Years 7–12: 43.2%).
- A high proportion (15.0%) of secondary students reported it is not at all true that

they live with a parent or another adult who listens when they have something to say – this was the highest proportion reporting this in regions across the state (all of WA: 6.7%).

- 61.7 per cent said it is very much true they live with a parent or another adult who believes they will achieve good things (Years 4–6: 59.9%; Years 7–12: 62.8%).

Female secondary students in the Kimberley are much more likely than male secondary students to report that they do not live with a parent or other adult who listens to them when they have something to say (38.8% vs 14.4%) or whom they can talk to about their problems (43.5% vs 19.2%).

Three-quarters (77.3%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students reported that their family gets along very well or well (Years 4–6: 82.2%; Years 7–12: 74.0%). This is consistent with the results across WA (76.1%).

Most students (73.9%) in the Kimberley reported that if they were having serious problems, they have an adult they would feel okay talking to (Years 4–6: 80.0%; Years 7–12: 69.7%). Female secondary students are much less likely than their male peers to feel that they have an adult whom they would feel okay talking to (female: 65.5%; male: 79.1%).

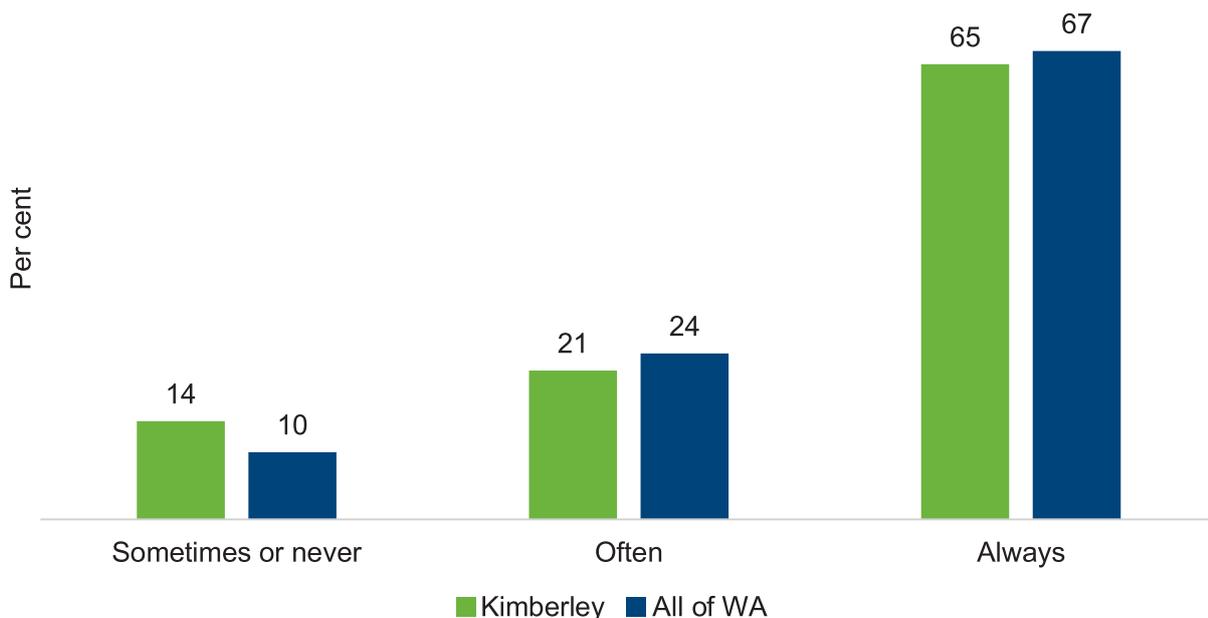
Most children and young people in the Kimberley felt that they are very good at making friends (54.5%) and have enough friends (86.9%).

### Material basics

Students in the Kimberley are more likely to be missing out on things than other students around the state.

In particular, 14.0 per cent said there is only sometimes or never enough food to eat at home (Years 4–6: 17.3%; Years 7–12: 11.7%). This is a higher proportion than reported by children and young people across WA (9.6%).

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting whether there is enough food to eat at home



Of the students surveyed in this region:

- 16.1 per cent have seven or more people living in their home (all of WA: 6.9% have seven or more people). It should be noted, it is principally Aboriginal children and young people reporting they have seven or more people living in their home (Aboriginal: 28.9%; non-Aboriginal: 2.9%).
- 80.0 per cent said they have their own bedroom (Years 4–6: 68.0%; Years 7–12: 88.0%).
- 7.3 per cent reported their family does not own a car used for family transport (Years 4–6: 14.4%; Years 7–12: 2.6%).

One in nine (11.0%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Kimberley does not have access to the internet at home, compared to 3.8 per cent of students across WA.

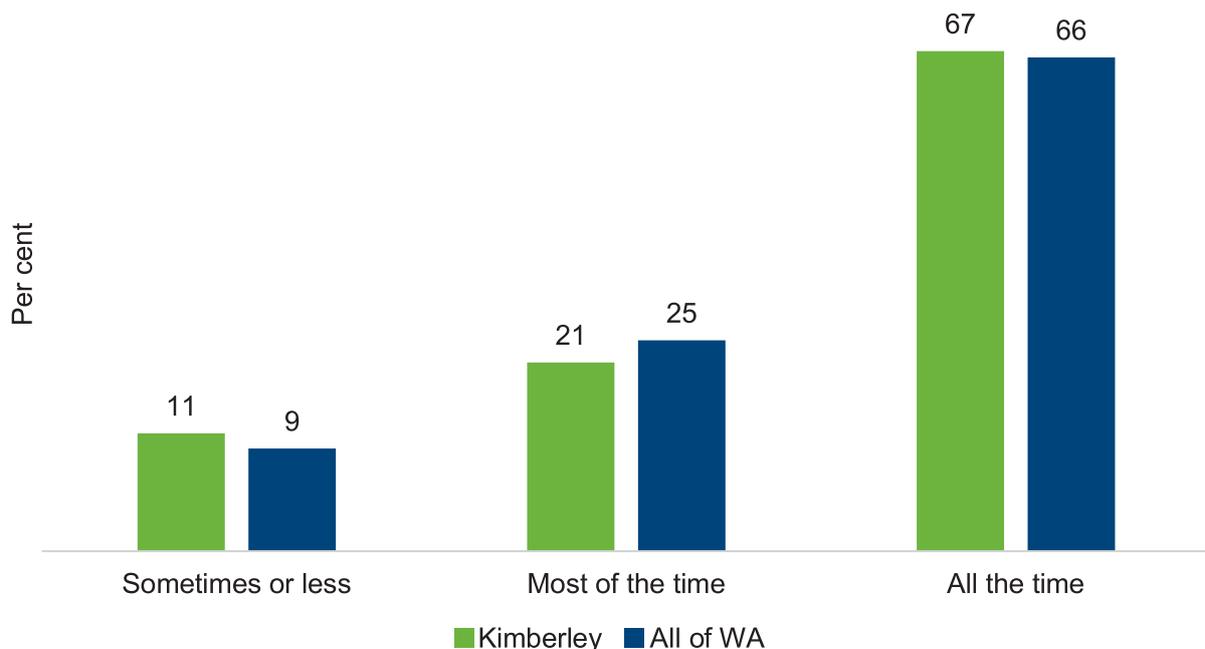
These results are principally because the Aboriginal students in the Kimberley are more likely to be living with economic disadvantage than non-Aboriginal students, as outlined below.

### Safe in the home

Of the students surveyed in the Kimberley, 66.8 per cent said they feel safe at home all the time (Years 4–6: 64.3%; Years 7–12: 68.3%), while 21.2 per cent said they feel safe at home most of the time (Years 4–6: 21.3%; Years 7–12: 21.1%).

These results are similar to the responses across the state.

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting how often they feel they feel safe at home



Of the students surveyed in the Kimberley:

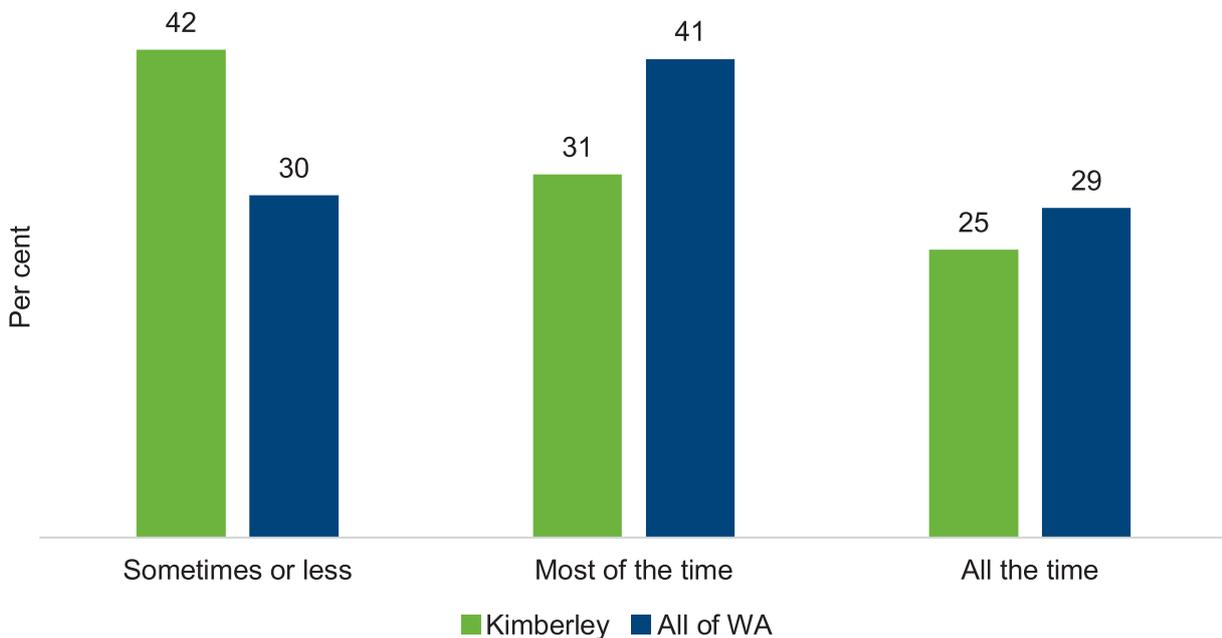
- 24.5 per cent said they are ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ worried that someone in their home or family will be fighting (Years 4–6: 30.1%; Years 7–12: 20.7%).
- 22.3 per cent said they are ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ worried that someone in their home or family will hurt somebody (Years 4–6: 25.6%; Years 7–12: 20.3%). This is a higher proportion than across WA (17.1%).
- 31.7 per cent of secondary students reported they had stayed away from home overnight because of a problem.

### Safe in the community

Of the students surveyed in this region, 29.0 per cent said they feel safe in their local area all the time (Years 4–6: 35.9%; Years 7–12: 24.9%), while 28.8% said they feel safe in their local area most of the time (Years 4–6: 24.6%; Years 7–12: 31.4%).

A higher proportion of secondary students in the Kimberley than students across WA do not feel safe in their local area all or most of the time (42.2% vs 29.6%).

### Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting how often they feel safe in their local area



Female secondary students are less likely to feel safe (consistent with the results across WA), however male students in the Kimberley are also significantly less likely to feel safe all or most of the time than male students across WA (Kimberley: 60.3%; all of WA: 75.8%).

A high proportion (42.8%) of young people in Years 9 to 12 in the Kimberley reported they have been hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose. This is similar to the overall WA result. The most reported places where this occurred are at home, at school and in the neighbourhood.

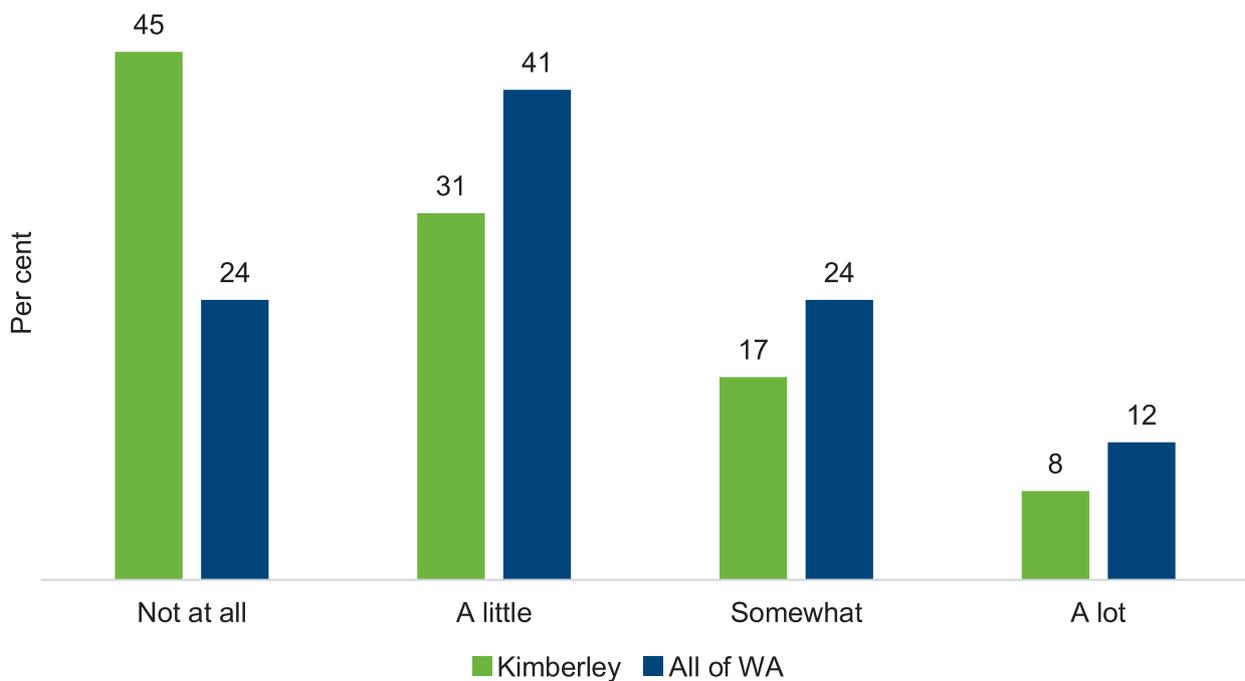
## Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

Of the Year 4 to Year 12 students surveyed in the Kimberley, when asked about the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes to daily life, most reported that the

pandemic had not affected their life in a bad way (not at all: 44.5%, a little: 30.9%).

Children and young people in the Kimberley reported being less affected than children and young people across the state.

### Proportion of students responding to the question: ‘Thinking about the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes to daily life, how much has this affected your life in a bad way?’



Of the students surveyed in the Kimberley:

- 27.7 per cent reported feeling very or somewhat stressed/anxious, while 45.4 per cent reported feeling very or somewhat relaxed when they thought of COVID-19.
- 43.4 per cent reported feeling worried if they missed school due to COVID-19 in the previous calendar year – 2020 (a little: 33.9%; a lot: 9.5%).

One in five (19.0%) of Year 9 to Year 12 students stated that the COVID-19 pandemic had been a source of stress to them in the previous year. This is consistent with the responses from young people across the state.

## Aboriginal children's and young people's views on feeling safe and supported

### Supportive relationships

Aboriginal young people in the Kimberley are less likely than non-Aboriginal young people to feel listened to by the parents or other adults they live with. One-quarter (26.2%) of Aboriginal secondary students reported it is not at all true that they live with a parent or another adult who listens when they have something to say compared to 3.9 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.

At the same time, a majority (67.6%) of Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students said that where they live, there is a parent or another adult they can talk to about their problems or worries and almost three-quarters (73.2%) said there is an adult they would feel okay talking to if they had serious problems.

Aboriginal students in the Kimberley are more likely than non-Aboriginal students to be worried a lot that someone in their home or family will be fighting (Aboriginal: 23.7%; non-Aboriginal: 6.8%). Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 are also much more likely to be worried a lot that someone in their family would hurt somebody (Aboriginal: 23.5%; non-Aboriginal: 5.2%) and to be worried a lot that someone in the home would hurt themselves (Aboriginal: 23.8%; non-Aboriginal: 6.0%).

However, Aboriginal young people are more likely than non-Aboriginal young people to feel that their siblings and other family members care about them a lot (siblings: 52.3% vs 40.6%; other family members: 60.5% vs 50.9%).

Forty per cent of Aboriginal children in Years 4 to 6 moved home two or more times in the previous 12 months, compared to 8.1 per cent of non-Aboriginal children this age. Aboriginal families are often more mobile than non-Aboriginal families with various social and cultural factors influencing these patterns including cultural norms and values regarding kinship and family obligations, and maintaining connections to Country.<sup>3</sup>

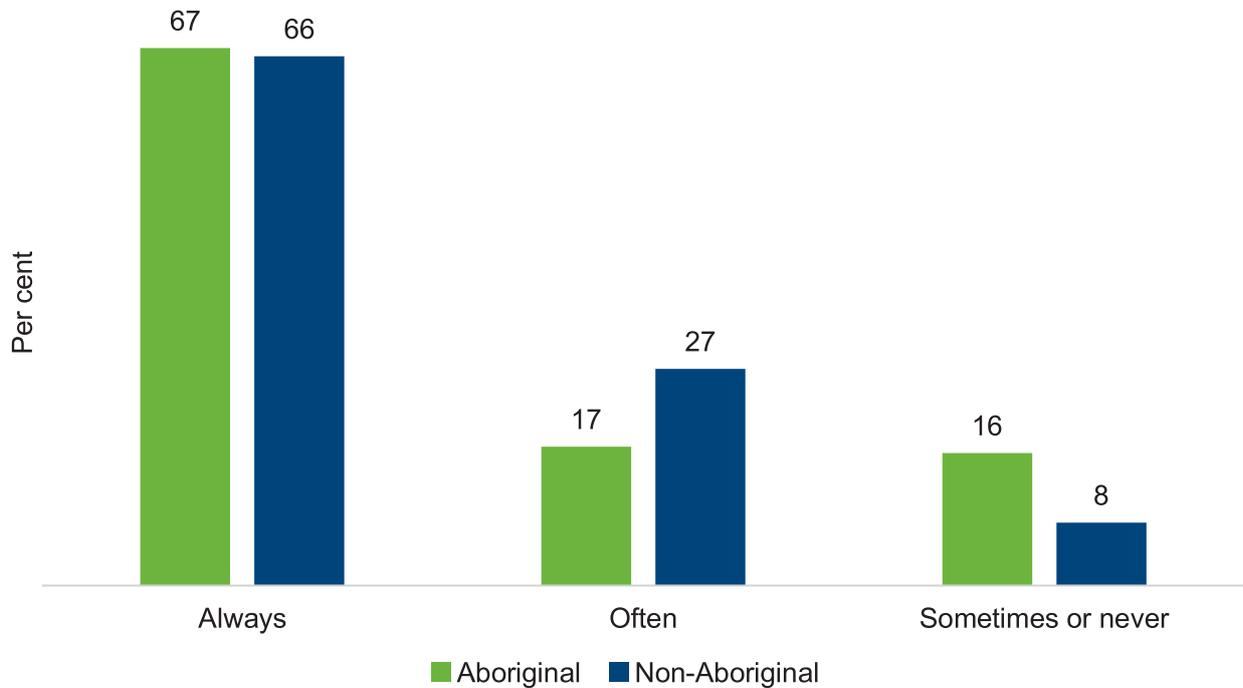
### Material basics

Aboriginal students in the Kimberley are more likely to be experiencing some form of material disadvantage in comparison to their non-Aboriginal peers:

- One in 10 (10.6%) Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students reported that their family does not have a car (non-Aboriginal: 1.4%).
- Almost one-quarter (23.1%) of Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 do not have enough money in their family for them to go on a school excursion or camp (non-Aboriginal: 9.6%).
- Two in five (41.6%) Aboriginal secondary school students do not have their own tablet, laptop or computer, compared to 18.4 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.
- One in five (16.1%) Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 does not have access to the internet at home (non-Aboriginal: 5.1%).
- One in five (16.4%) Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students said there is only sometimes or never enough food to eat at home when they are hungry (non-Aboriginal: 7.8%).

<sup>3</sup> Dockery AM & Colquhoun S 2012, [Mobility of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people: A literature review](#), Curtin University.

**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting whether there is enough food to eat at home when they are hungry**



A high proportion of Aboriginal students reported living in a house with seven people or more (28.9%) compared to a much lower proportion of non-Aboriginal students (2.9%).

**Aboriginal students in the Kimberley are more likely than non-Aboriginal students to be worried a lot that someone in their home or family will be fighting**

### Feeling safe

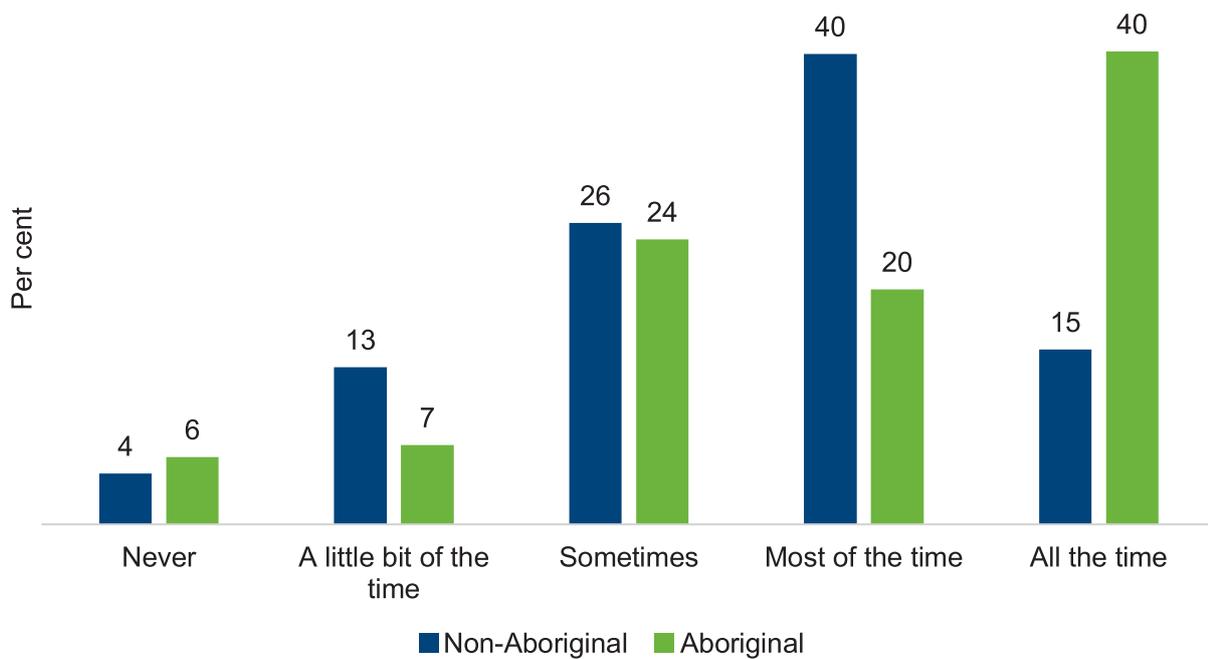
Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 are just as likely to feel safe at home most of the time or all of the time as non-Aboriginal students (Aboriginal: 87.0%, non-Aboriginal: 90.4%).

Aboriginal children and young people in the Kimberley are more likely to feel safe all the time in their local area than non-Aboriginal children and young people.

**“ All the crimes that are happening in this town and aren’t being dealt with e.g obberies car burnings mugged injured. ”**

*(male, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)*

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



## What do children and young people in the Kimberley say about being safe and supported?

### Supportive relationships

*“My parents are really helpful towards me they listen very well to me if i had a problem I would talk to them about it and they would listen to me about my problem and offer me the support I need.”*  
(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“No. I feel safe with my family and my friends. They help me a lot.”*  
(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“Talk to me. Actually listen to what I’m saying. Give GOOD advice. Say it so that I can understand.”*  
(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“I mainly to talk to my brother and parents about my issues at school, online or in public.”*  
(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“Having therapists at school or people who are good with students so we can talk to them when upset.”*  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“I think it’s important for family members to check in and teachers should be taught to notice when kids aren’t the same.”*  
(female, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)

### Feeling unsafe

The following statements were generally in response to the question: ‘What are some of the things that make you feel unsafe?’

*“Old men walking behind me for ten mins straight, and the dark.”*  
(female, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“Gangs, people getting into big arguments or fights and just sometimes randomly.”*  
(male, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“When people try to brake into our house. When mum and dad fight... When my parents fought with my grandfather.”*  
(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“People that walk around at night when they are drunk.”*  
(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)

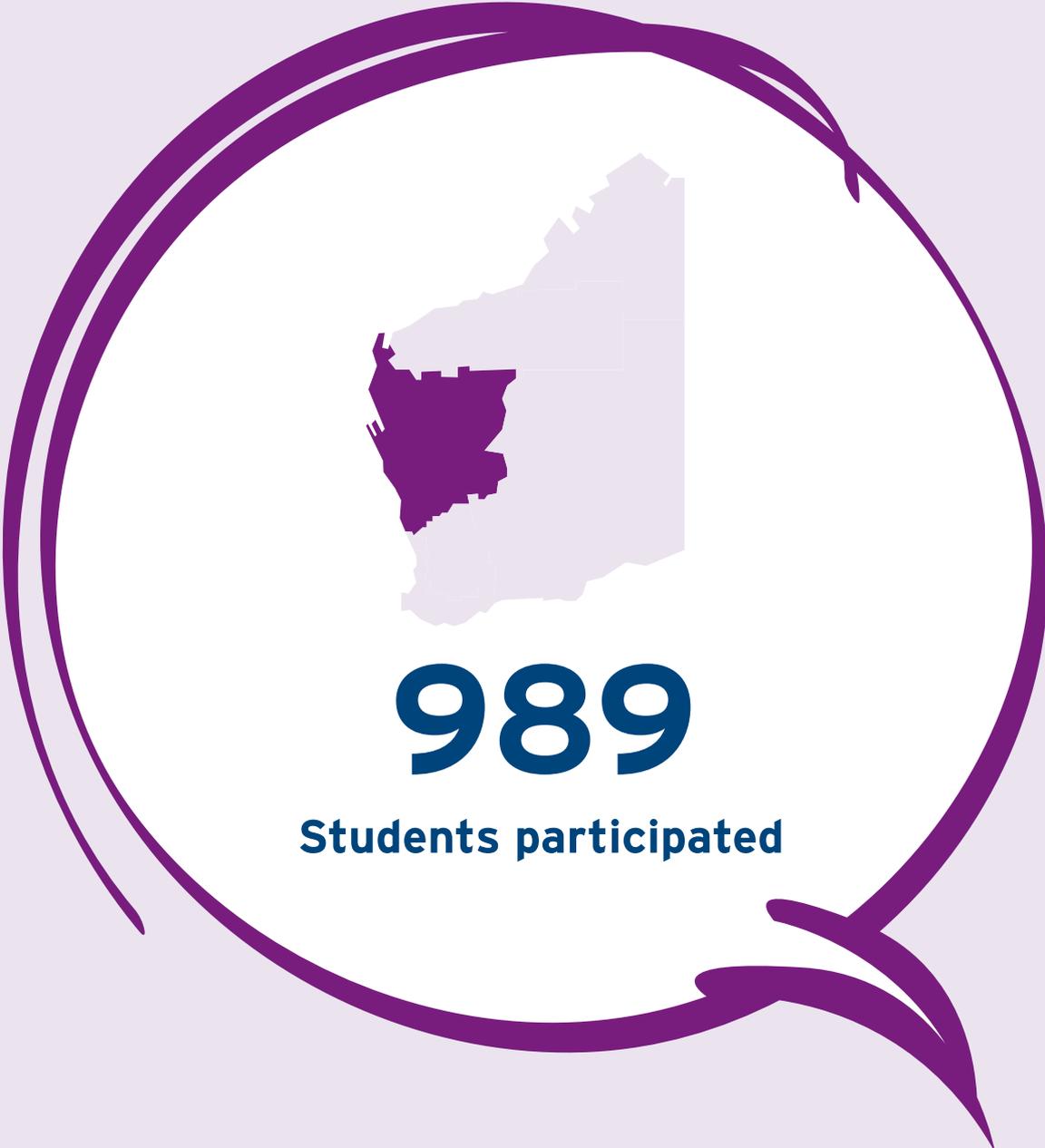
*“I would really like it if the boss person could make consequences for the young people who inflict violence on the other young people in the community. We do not feel safe going to school or going anywhere in Broome because we are afraid we might be beaten up or threatened. It needs to change because kids feeling unsafe is not good at my age... The recent bashing and violence in the area by girls my age to other girls makes me feels unsafe when I go out anywhere even with my parents.”*  
(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“I had a lot of break-ins in my area. Many cars were stolen. I would like to change that. Also my parents do not let my siblings and I go out of the house to go to parks or ride our bikes because we don’t know what could happen to us.”*  
(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“All the crimes that are happening in this town and aren’t being dealt with e.g obberies car burnings mugged injured.”*  
(male, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“All the people who walk around the town fighting people for no reason.”*  
(female, 16 year-old, Aboriginal)

# Mid West



# Mid West key findings

**A majority of students** in the Mid West **care very much about staying fit and being physically active** (60.3%). This is the highest proportion of all regions across the state (all of WA: 56.7%).



**Almost one-third (31.8%)** of female secondary students in the Mid West **reported low life satisfaction**. This is greater than their female peers across the state (25.5%) and a significantly larger proportion than their male peers in the Mid West (9.2%).

**58.0 per cent** of secondary students said they **know where to get support in their local area for stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries** (all of WA: 48.7%).

**A much higher proportion** of Mid West students **reported being active outdoors outside of school** every day or almost every day compared to the rest of the state (50.3% compared to 38.5% respectively).



**Aboriginal students** in Years 9 to 12 are **more likely to have had experiences with marijuana** than non-Aboriginal students (57.2% vs 24.5%).

**A relatively high proportion (14.5%)** of Year 4 to Year 6 students in the Mid West **do not like school** compared to students across the state (8.7%).

**Over two-fifths (43.6%)** of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Mid West **reported they had been bullied**, with approximately one-third of this bullying involving cyberbullying.



The proportion of **students planning to attend university is lower** than the rest of WA (34.3% vs 51.8%). Mid West male students are more likely than students across WA to intend to pursue trade qualifications (20.5% vs 12.4%).

Year 4 to Year 6 **Aboriginal students reported experiencing bullying** by students from their school in greater proportions than non-Aboriginal students (58.5% compared to 39.6%).

**Three-quarters (74.3%)** of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Mid West **said their family gets along very well or well** (Years 4–6: 79.2%; Years 7–12: 71.5%).



**Almost one-third (32.6%)** of female secondary students **reported feeling safe in their local area only sometimes or less** (compared to 19.4% for their male peers).

**Aboriginal students** in Years 4 to 12 are **just as likely to feel safe at home most of the time or all of the time** as non-Aboriginal students (Aboriginal: 91.9%, non-Aboriginal: 90.2%).



## Overview

A total of 989 students across Years 4 to 12 from seven primary schools and seven secondary schools in the Mid West took part in the Speaking Out Survey 2021.

One-half (47.6%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students surveyed in the Mid West identified as girls, 49.7 per cent identified as boys and 2.6 per cent selected the option that they identify 'in another way'.

Around one in eight (12.4%) participants reported being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This is a much greater proportion than in the Perth Southern (5.4%) or Northern (3.6%) metropolitan areas.

Of the students surveyed in the Mid West, 97.7 per cent reported speaking English at home and 9.0 per cent reported (also) speaking other language(s) at home. The other languages spoken included Indonesian, German, Vietnamese, Croatian and Filipino.

Many students in the Mid West liked doing the survey and felt that it provided them with an opportunity to have their say:

*"I recon that you did a great job!"*  
(male, 8 year-old, Aboriginal)

*"I liked it because it lets me express myself."*  
(student who selected 'in another way',  
9 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"I thought that this survey was very helpful because I don't usually speak about my issues."*  
(male, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"I really liked this survey because you can be truthful and tell people how you feel."*  
(male, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"This is a great and confidential survey. It's a great way to see how kids are feeling."*  
(female, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"I thought this survey was great, it gave us opportunity to share how we feel about many things."*  
(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)



**I think it is good because I could now express my feelings to you but now that has happened I feel much better and thank you for holding this survey and now I can express my feelings to my friends/ family. Thank you.**

*(female, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

▲▲ **People commit suicide because they feel like they don't belong. Racism, homophobia and sexism are some of the many troubles that students all over Western Australia experience, whether they be gay, non-binary, black or just living as a woman.▲▲**

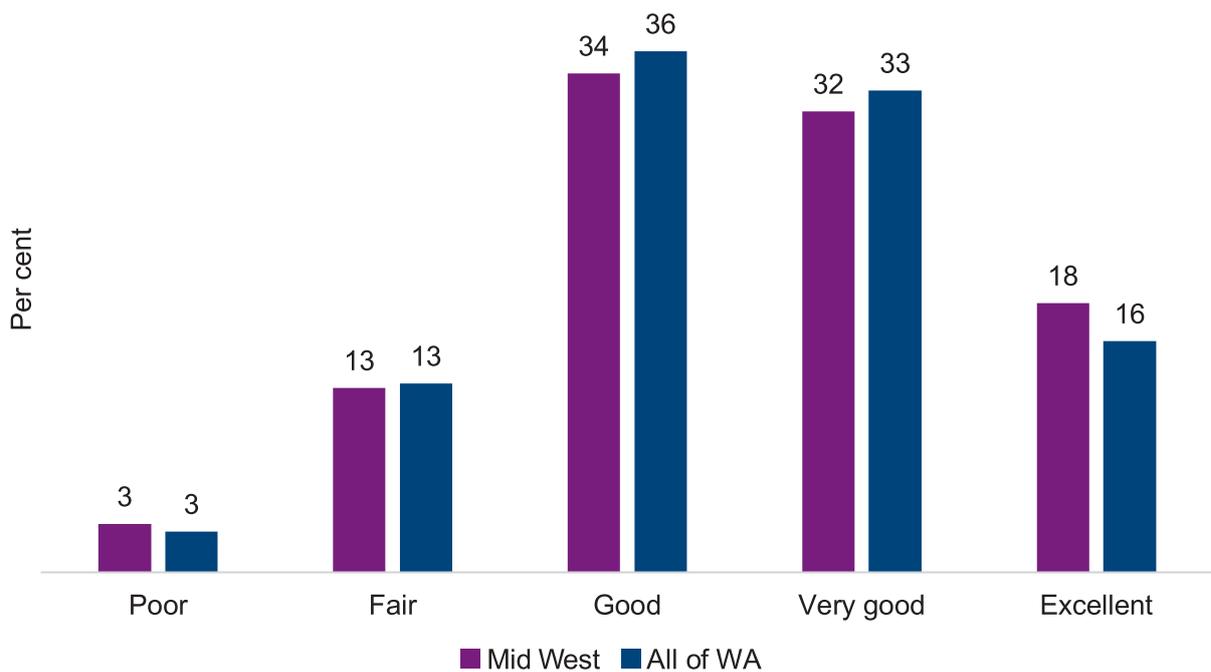
*(student who selected 'in another way', 12 year-old, Aboriginal)*

### Physical health

Of the students surveyed in the Mid West, one-half (49.9%) reported that their health is very good or excellent (Years 4–6: 59.1%; Years 7–12: 44.6%), while 15.9 per cent reported that their health is poor or fair (Years 4–6: 7.3%; Years 7–12: 21.0%).

These results are comparable to students across the state.

Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting their general health ratings



Over one-quarter (26.0%) of secondary students reported having a long-term health problem, while 11.6 per cent reported having a long-term disability. The most commonly reported long-term health problems were asthma and anxiety/depression.

Approximately two-fifths (43.3%) reported they care very much about eating healthy food (Years 4–6: 57.3%; Years 7–12: 35.1%). A majority of students in the Mid West care very much about staying fit and being physically active (60.3%); this is the highest proportion of all regions across the state (all of WA: 56.7%).

Over one-half (55.8%) of secondary students reported physical activity, sport or exercise is 'definitely' an important part of their life. One-fifth (21.9%) reported they had done vigorous exercise seven or more times in the previous week and 40.5 per cent reported they had done vigorous exercise three to six times in the previous week.

Female students in the Mid West are much less likely than their male peers to have done vigorous exercise three or more times in the previous week (53.2% vs 73.6%).

These responses are consistent with students across WA.

Students in the Mid West also reported the following with respect to their physical health:

- 65.1 per cent reported brushing their teeth twice or more the previous day (Years 4–6: 68.1%; Years 7–12: 63.3%).
- One in five (20.9%) secondary students reported only eating fruit a few times a week or less (all of WA: 24.8%).
- 52.3 per cent reported they eat breakfast every day (Years 4–6: 67.8%; Years 7–12: 43.3%), while 7.2 per cent reported they never eat breakfast (Years 4–6: 3.0%; Years 7–12: 9.7%).
- 71.2 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students reported going to sleep on a school night before 9pm, while 49.4 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students reported going to sleep on a school night before 10pm.

These results are comparable to students across the state.



### Mental health

Students in the Mid West reported similar life satisfaction to the rest of WA with 6.9 as the mean life satisfaction on a scale from 0 to 10 (all of WA: 6.8).

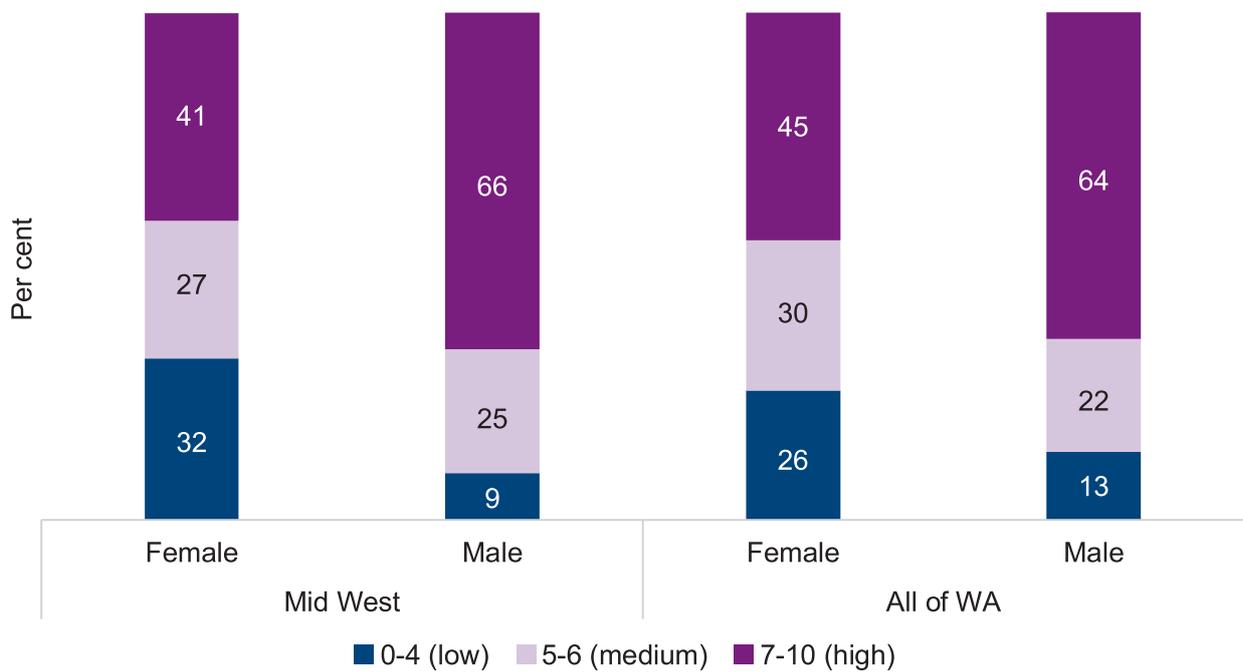
Primary school students had a higher mean result than secondary students (Years 4–6: 7.8; Years 7–12: 6.3) – a result consistent across the state.

Of the students surveyed, 61.3 per cent reported a high life satisfaction (7 to 10 out of 10) (Years 4–6: 76.9%; Years 7–12:

52.0%) and 16.7 per cent reported a low life satisfaction (0 to 4) (Years 4–6: 7.6%; Years 7–12: 22.0%). These results are consistent with those across WA.

Almost one-third (31.8%) of female secondary students in the Mid West reported low life satisfaction. This is greater than their female peers across the state (25.5%) and a significantly larger proportion than their male peers in the Mid West (9.2%).

**Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students rating their life satisfaction on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is the worst possible life and 10 the best possible life**



Of the students surveyed in the Mid West:

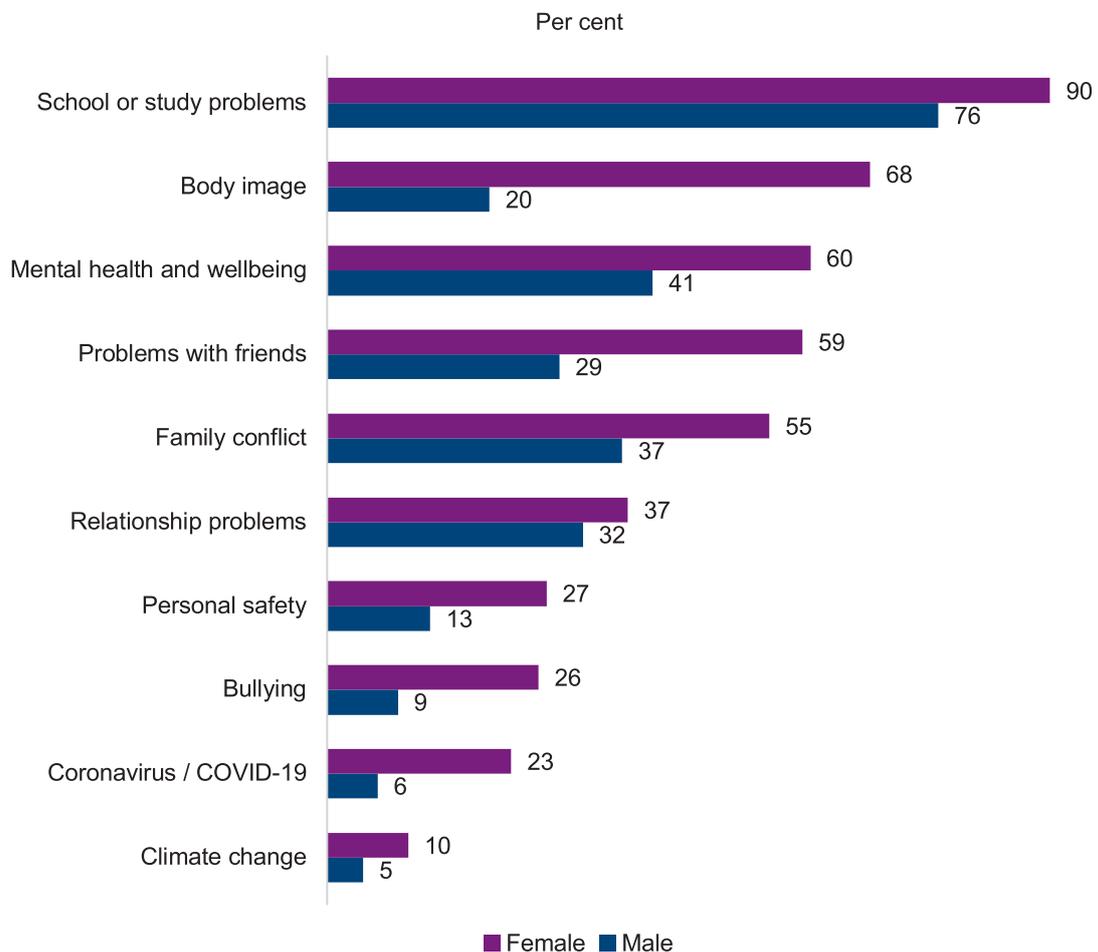
- 45.7 per cent agreed (Years 4–6: 45.2%; Years 7–12: 46.0%) and 28.7 per cent strongly agreed they are happy with themselves (Years 4–6: 45.1%; Years 7–12: 19.1%).
- 43.8 per cent agreed (Years 4–6: 42.9%; Years 7–12: 44.3%) and 29.1 per cent strongly agreed they feel good about themselves (Years 4–6: 45.8%; Years 7–12: 19.6%).
- 51.3 per cent of secondary students agreed and 19.3 per cent strongly agreed they can deal with things that happen in their life.

- In Years 9 to 12, 69.1 per cent reported they had felt sad, blue or depressed for two or more weeks in a row in the previous 12 months.

As with life satisfaction, these results are broadly consistent with the rest of WA.

Year 9 to Year 12 students were asked about sources of stress in the previous 12 months. School and study problems (84.4%) were most commonly reported, followed by mental health and wellbeing (52.7%), family conflict (48.4%), body image (48.7%) and problems with friends (47.5%).

**Proportion of students reporting sources of stress in the last 12 months by gender**



There are gender differences in the responses, with greater proportions of female students reporting being affected by stress across all sources.

Notably, female young people are more than three times as likely as male young people to report body image, bullying and COVID-19 as stressors. These gender differences are consistent with the rest of the state.

### Access to support for physical and mental health

Of the secondary students surveyed in the Mid West:

- 64.0 per cent said they know where to get support in their school for stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries (all of WA: 67.2%).
- 58.0 per cent said they know where to get support in their local area for stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries (all of WA: 48.7%).

Just under one-third of secondary students (32.2%) reported they had received help for problems with stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries in the previous 12 months. While the proportion of female secondary students reporting this (39.0%) is consistent with the rest of the WA (41.6%), male students in the Mid West are less likely to report this (Mid West males: 23.9%; WA males: 30.3%).

The most commonly used sources of support for students in the Mid West were parents (77.4%), friends including boyfriend or girlfriend (75.0%), other family (69.6%), teachers (61.1%), the school psychologist, school chaplain or school nurse (58.6%).

Students in the Mid West who had asked for help for emotional health worries are less likely to have accessed a doctor compared to the rest of WA (Mid West: 41.6%; WA: 49.3%), and they are more likely to have accessed mental health services like Headspace (Mid West: 50.5%; WA: 41.1%) or accessed websites as a source of help (Mid West: 43.2%; WA: 37.4%).

Of the students who had asked for help, 82.2 per cent found parents helpful, 78.3 per cent found other family helpful, 76.1 per cent found mental health services like Headspace helpful and 62.1 per cent found a school psychologist, school chaplain or school nurse helpful.

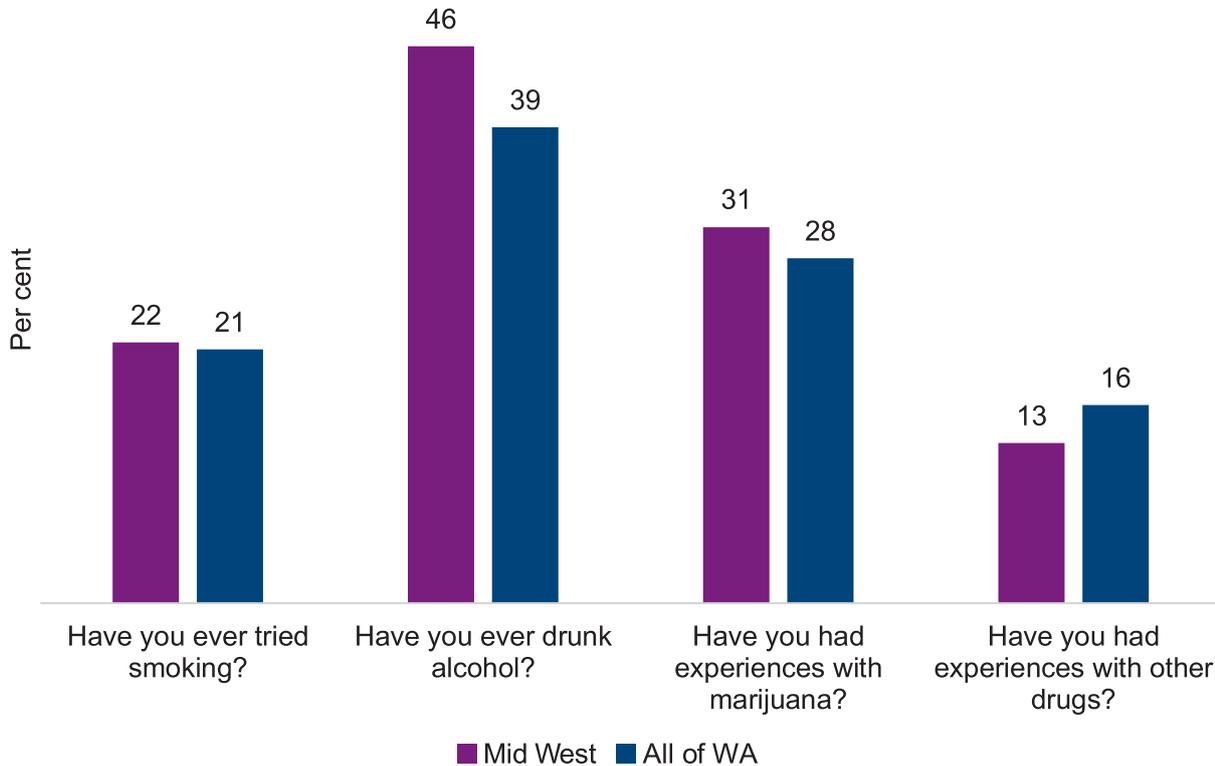
### Risk-taking and healthy behaviours

#### Alcohol and other drugs

A similar proportion of young people in the Mid West compared to the rest of the state have tried smoking (21.5% vs 20.9%), while a slightly higher proportion have tried alcohol (45.9% vs 39.2%).

Year 9 to Year 12 students in the Mid West reported having experiences with marijuana or other drugs (but not necessarily using the drug themselves) in similar proportions to the rest of the state (marijuana: 31.0% vs 28.4%, other drugs: 13.2% vs 16.3%).

**Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who responded ‘yes’ to the question on whether they have tried smoking or drinking, or had experiences with marijuana or other drugs (Years 9 to 12 only)**



*Note: The questions asked were: Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?; Have you ever drunk alcohol (more than just a few sips, like a full can of beer or a glass of wine)?; Have you ever had any experiences with marijuana?; Have you ever had any experiences with other drugs? Response options were: ‘No’, ‘Yes’ and ‘Prefer not to say’.*

Of the secondary students surveyed in the Mid West:

- 74.7 per cent reported having learnt ‘some’ or ‘a lot’ about alcohol and 68.4 per cent reported learning about cigarettes/smoking at school.
- 53.6 per cent said they had learnt ‘some’ or ‘a lot’ about marijuana and 60.7 per cent reported learning about other drugs at school.

- 74.2 per cent thought people their age should not use any substances including cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana or other drugs.

Most students in the Mid West feel like they know enough about the health impacts of alcohol (88.1%) and smoking (88.2%), however fewer feel like they know enough about the health impacts of marijuana (66.7%).

These results are broadly consistent with the rest of WA.

## Sexual health

Over one-half (50.6%) of secondary students in the Mid West reported that they have learnt nothing or a little bit about pregnancy and contraception at school, while 37.1 per cent reported they have learnt nothing or a little bit at school about sexual health and ways to support their sexual health.

Consistent with the above results, almost one-half (45.6%) reported they feel they don't know enough about sexual health and pregnancy or they aren't sure, with a similar number (46.8%) reporting they feel they don't know enough about pregnancy and contraception or they aren't sure.

More than one-third (38.4%) of secondary students in the Mid West do not know or are unsure about where to go if they needed help for something about their reproductive or sexual health.

In Years 9 to 12, 60.4 per cent of female students and 32.5 per cent of male students reported they had ever been sent unwanted sexual material, such as pornographic pictures, videos or words.

These results are consistent with results across WA.

## Problematic behaviours and emotions related to being online

Of the students surveyed in the Mid West:

- 32.8 per cent said they feel bothered 'fairly often' or 'very often' when they cannot be on the internet (Years 4–6: 28.1%; Years 7–12: 35.1%).
- 22.2 per cent said they feel bothered when they cannot play electronic games (Years 4–6: 24.7%; Years 7–12: 21.0%).
- 28.5 per cent of male and 46.7 per cent of female secondary students said they feel bothered when they cannot use their mobile phone.
- 9.1 per cent of male and 18.3 per cent of female secondary students said they go without eating or sleeping either fairly often or very often because of their mobile phone.

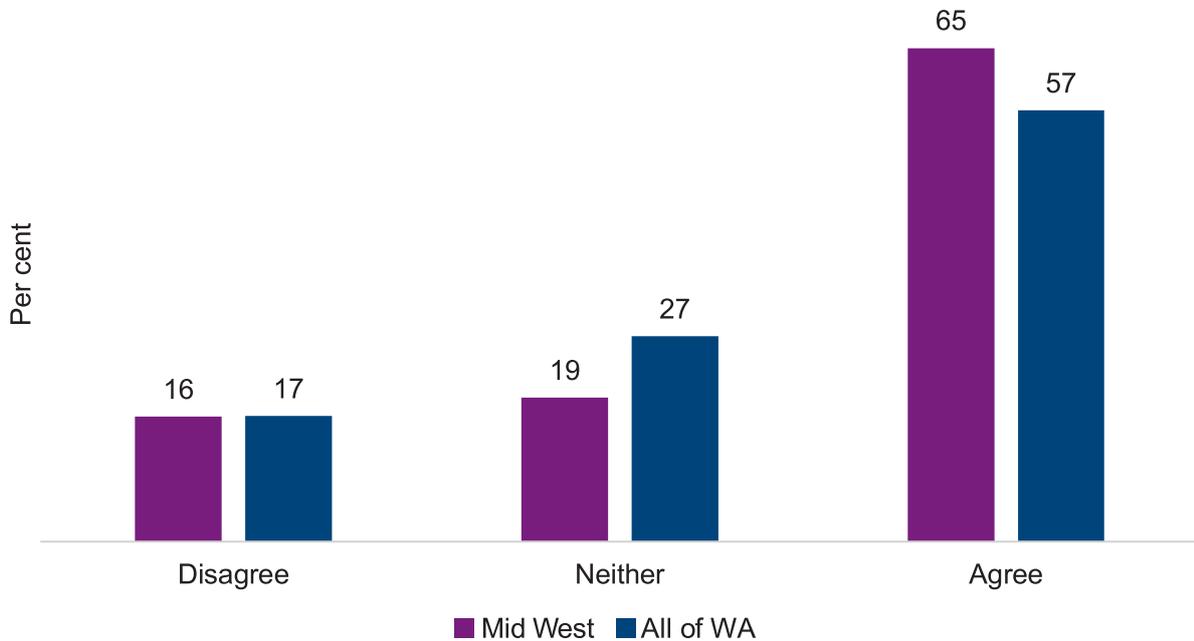
The above results, including the gender differences, are consistent with the rest of the state.

## Connection to community

Most Year 4 to Year 6 students (84.2%) and Year 7 to Year 12 students (76.0%) in the Mid West agreed they like where they live.

Students in the Mid West are marginally more likely than those across the state to feel like they belong in their community. Over three-quarters (76.4%) of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed and 64.7 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed they feel like they belong in their community.

**Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who feel like they belong in their community**



Participants in the Mid West also reported:

- 69.8 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that their neighbours are friendly, while 66.5 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.
- 63.3 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that when they go to the shops the people there are friendly, while 81.8 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.

For both questions Year 7 to Year 12 students in the Mid West are more likely than students across WA to agree a lot.

Most Year 4 to Year 6 students (76.2%) agreed that there are lots of fun things to do where they live, while just over one-half (52.2%) of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.

While these results are consistent with the rest of the state, when students were asked if there are outdoor places for them to go in their area, like parks, ovals or skate parks, Mid West students are less likely to agree than children and young people across WA (Years 4– 6: Mid West: 79.3%; WA: 84.1%; Years 7–12: Mid West 77.0%; WA 83.7%).

Despite this, a much higher proportion of Mid West students reported being active outdoors outside of school every day or almost every day compared to the rest of the state (50.3% compared to 38.5% respectively). This result is true across primary school and secondary school as well as for male and female students.

**Proportion of young people in Years 4 to 12 who reported being active outdoors outside of school every day or almost every day**



Two-fifths (39.3%) of students reported that they spend time hanging out with friends outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 34.7%; Years 7–12: 42.0%). These proportions are higher than for the rest of WA (Years 4–6: 30.1%; Years 7–12: 34.0%).

In terms of other activities outside of school, of the participants in the Mid West:

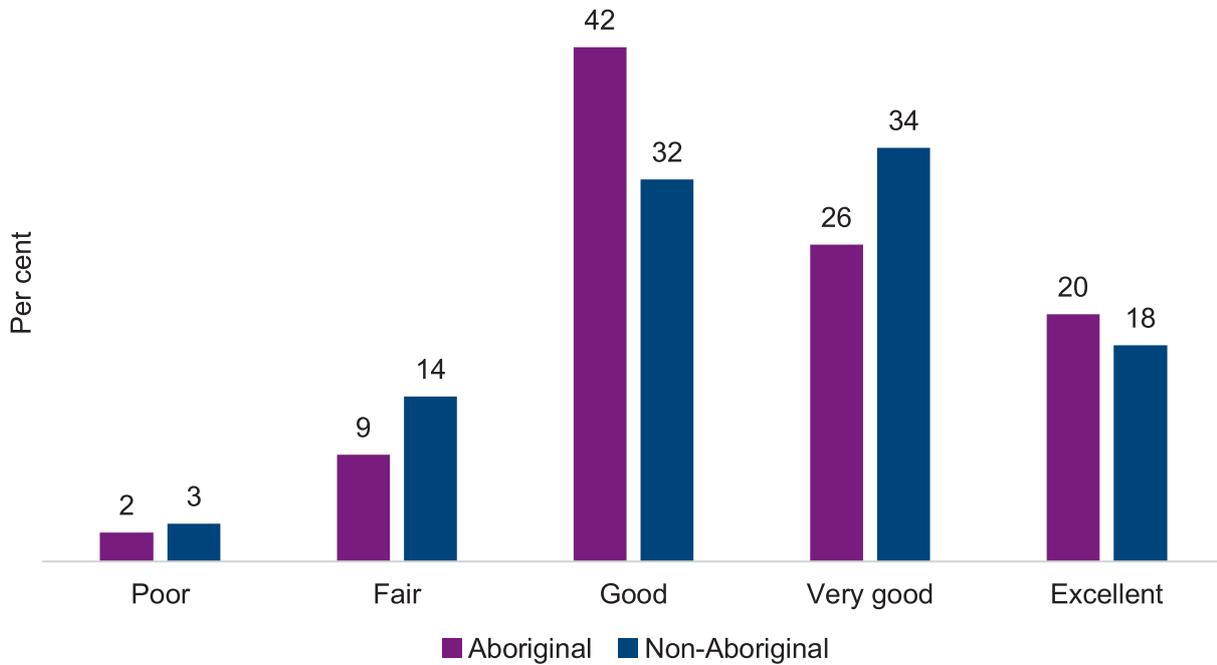
- 42.1 per cent said they spend time practising or playing a sport outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 46.1%; Years 7–12: 39.8%).
- 60.1 per cent male and 36.8 per cent female students reported playing games on a game console, computer or tablet every day or almost every day.

These results are consistent with those across the state.

**Aboriginal children’s and young people’s views on feeling healthy and connected**

Of the Aboriginal students surveyed in the Mid West, less than one-half (46.5%) rated their health as very good or excellent, marginally less than non-Aboriginal students (51.9%).

Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting their general health ratings



Nearly three-fifths (59.5%) of the Aboriginal secondary students in the Mid West reported that physical activity, sport or exercise was ‘definitely’ an important part of their life, slightly more than non-Aboriginal students (55.3%). However, only one-half (52.2%) reported they had done vigorous exercise three or more times in the previous week, compared to 64.9 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.

Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students in the Mid West reported high life satisfaction in similar proportions to non-Aboriginal students (7 to 10 out of 10) (63.0% compared to 61.7%).

Most Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students agreed with the statements:

- I feel good about myself (89.2%).
- I am able to do things as well as most people (77.9%).
- I am happy with myself (87.2%).

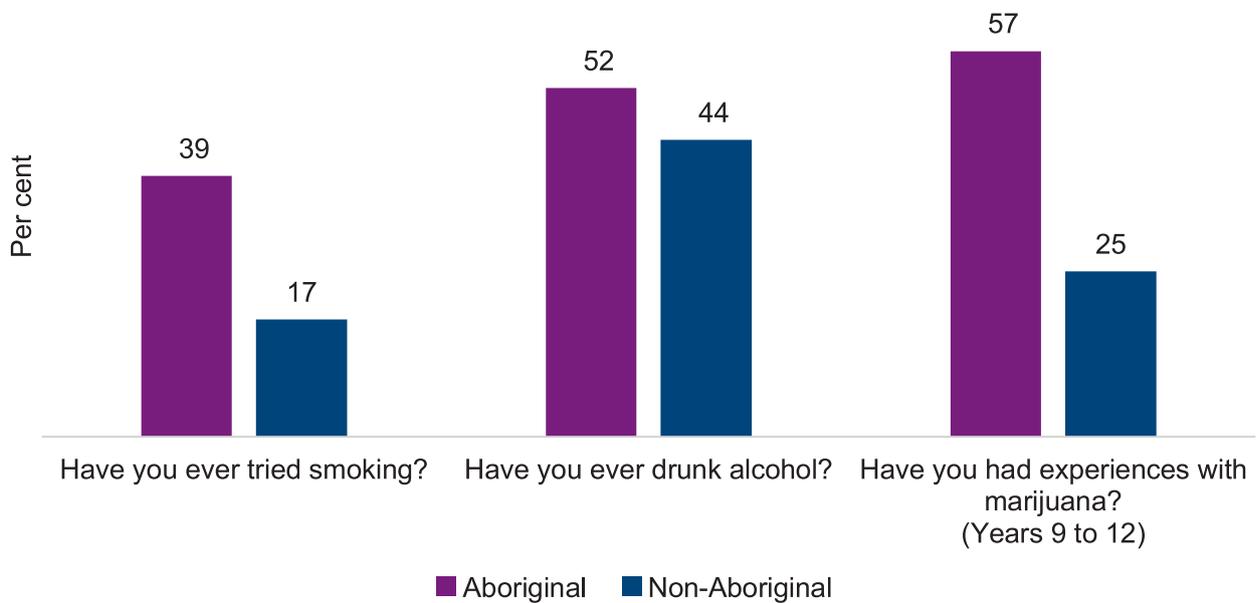
Results between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students are comparable for both the primary and secondary students surveyed.

The top three stressors reported by Aboriginal Year 9 to Year 12 students were school or study problems (83.5%), family conflict (54.5%) and problems with friends (36.4%).

Notably, Aboriginal students are less likely than non-Aboriginal students to be stressed due to mental health and wellbeing (Aboriginal: 34.9%; non-Aboriginal: 56.7%) or body image (Aboriginal: 32.8%; non-Aboriginal: 52.3%).

Aboriginal secondary students in the Mid West are more likely to have tried smoking and drunk alcohol than non-Aboriginal students (smoking: 38.7% vs 17.4%; alcohol: 51.7% vs 44.0%). Further, Aboriginal students in Years 9 to 12 are more likely to have had experiences with marijuana than non-Aboriginal students (57.2% vs 24.5%).

**Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who have tried smoking or drinking, or had experiences with marijuana (Years 9 to 12 only)**



*Note: The questions asked were: Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?; Have you ever drunk alcohol (more than just a few sips, like a full can of beer or a glass of wine)?; Have you ever had any experiences with marijuana?; Have you ever had any experiences with other drugs? Response options were: 'No', 'Yes' and 'Prefer not to say'.*

At the same time, a lower proportion of Aboriginal students felt that they know enough about the health impacts of smoking (Aboriginal: 79.6%, non-Aboriginal: 91.1%) or alcohol (Aboriginal: 80.3%, non-Aboriginal: 91.1%). Similar proportions of Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students felt they know enough about the health impacts of marijuana (Aboriginal: 66.9%, non-Aboriginal: 67.5%).

Aboriginal children (Years 4 to 6) in the Mid West are more likely than non-Aboriginal children to feel like they belong in their community (Aboriginal: 87.5%, non-Aboriginal: 75.8%). Two-thirds (67.3%) of Aboriginal secondary students in the Mid West feel like they belong in their community, which is consistent with their non-Aboriginal peers (64.4%).

In terms of connection to culture and community, of the Aboriginal students surveyed in the Mid West:

- 68.0 per cent said they know their family's country (all of WA: 69.6%), and of these students 90.1 per cent said they spend time on their family's country (all of WA: 77.4%).
- 34.2 per cent said they talk Aboriginal language some or a lot (all of WA: 27.1%).
- 52.8 per cent said they do cultural or traditional activities with their family (all of WA: 47.8%).

## What do children and young people in the Mid West say about being healthy and connected?

Students were asked the following open text questions related to health and mental health:

- Thinking about mental health and other emotional worries, like stress, anxiety and depression, what are some of the ways families, communities, schools or adults in general could be more helpful?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with seeking help for health issues, including mental health worries?

### Talking about mental health

*"I don't know who to talk to. It's like I feel like no one will listen or care, they will just tease me like they all ways do."*  
(female, 12 years-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"I think again the school needs to cover more on mental health as I and I'm sure other students suffer from self harm, anxiety and depression. It's a serious topic that is definitely not talked not talked about enough."*  
(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"Young people are often bombarded and weighs down with stress and somewhat over worked. Young people are often still growing and developing and schools should and need to recognise and adapt. Measures should be implemented to further accept and understand the issues many young people face every day."*  
(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"In Health I would love to learn more about developing positive mental health (not that I have mental health issues) and a healthy lifestyle."*  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"Not comparing the experiences and hardships of newer generations to past generations. E.g. "You kids these days are so soft, back when I was young life was much harder.." - Having access to and attending meetings/organised events where they [adults] can learn more about mental health and how to properly help young people who are struggling with mental health and stress."*  
(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"Talking to students and kids from a young age so there can learn about it early and not later on and have it simple enough for the younger kids to understand what your showing but complexed enough for the older kids to understand as well."*  
(male, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

### Feeling anxiety, depression or sadness

*"Sometimes I get a bit depressed because I don't have that many friends."*  
(male, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"I have a lot of insecurities that I try to talk to my parents about, but all they say is I'm overreacting and I need to get over it but it's not that simple. I want someone to talk to, someone to trust that won't judge me or be against me, if I asked for a therapist my parents wouldn't allow it and tell me to stop being so dramatic."*  
(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"I feel like I don't have many friends. The friends I do have don't seem to want to just talk to me, rather use me to talk to someone else. I normally feel left out. I have to stand outside the group if it's too big. I know 3 people who have depression, 3 who tried to cut them self's and when they told me I don't know what to say I just freeze."*  
(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"I don't know where to go, and am afraid that if I tell people why I need to get help they will be worried, I have a hard time eating and don't want to be in hospital for it so I keep quiet."*  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

### Talking about getting support

*“I felt like I couldn’t tell my parents how I really felt, so I couldn’t get the help I really needed.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I have gone to see my doctor and that helps with my anxiety.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“It was very hard to get my diagnosis for adhd and it was very difficult for my mental health, I felt like no one was there to help me and that no one wanted to see me get better and that I was “weird” for being like this.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I know nowhere that I put can go and try to seek help for about my mental health.”*

*(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Well I think I have depression but I’m too scared to tell my parents about my mental state I’m in or how I’m feeling, I’m scared they’ll just say it’s a “phase” that I’m going through.. I want help but I’m to scared to ask for it sometimes.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, undisclosed Aboriginal status)*

*“It’s hard to seek help for mental health when you feel that others have it much worse than you and that your feeling aren’t valid.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I am worried about therapists telling my parents.”*

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I’ve had a few unhelpful experiences with contacting organisations such as KidsHelpline. I know what they can do is limited but the conversations just ended up making me feel more hopeless.”*

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Our school services are overbooked and they don’t always remain as confidential as required. My parents aren’t really supportive of mental health concerns they think it’s quote unquote silly.”*

*(female, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### Views on their local area

In total, 330 students from the Mid West responded to the free text question: ‘If there was one thing you could change about your local area, what would it be?’ Of the students surveyed in the Mid West, the top things that they would like to change in their local area were:

- More fun activities to do and places to hang out.
- Would like more, closer shops, a mall, movies, greater diversity.
- More, upgraded outdoor spaces or parks.
- New more or better skate parks, bike trails.

*“More sports activities and sport ground areas for kids and the community. Being such a small town there are not to much activities to do and they need to encourage kids more to do sport! I know that people are encouraged but they don’t do sports.”*

*(female, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I would [like] there to be more after school sport activities like rugby, hockey and water polo. There are barley any sports here and i would like lots more. It would help socializing and making more friends, and keeping fit and heathy.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Create nurturing areas and facilities [where] youth and younger populations are able to gather and connect, creating bonds and friendships.”*

*(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Adding a local indoor sport facility.”*

*(male, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“That we had more places to go to hang out that were clean and not ruined.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I would change the parks to make them safer for everyone to use.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“To get a local swimming pool or a youth centre for the kids to paint watch movies and do fun activities.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“There are some people living on my street who frequently get drunk etc I would love for them to have some more support.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**■ ■ If there as one thing I could change it would be having access to more things to do after school and on the weekends as there isnt much to do around the town as it is quite unsafe with other little kids roamin around and the drug and alcohol community we have. ■ ■**

*(female, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Have something for young aboriginal kids to avoid crime and drug use.”*

*(female, 17 year-old, Aboriginal)*

A number of students in the Mid West talked about financial difficulties or wanting more things to do that are affordable or free.

*“...housing where I live isn't going well and there are a few house that are some sort of government houses or something and they have been closed for renovating but they aren't being renovated and people are having to leave because they have no where to live. ( sorry for the bad punctuation and stuff ).”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“An indoor basketball court that was available to the public for free.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“More places for teenagers to go. For example there used to be a bowling alley when I was a little kid, that isn't there anymore. It feels like there's nothing for us to do in town other then go to the beach and walk around shops, and that's especially hard when you don't have any money and can only look.”*

*(student who selected 'in another way', 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Have more fun things for kids to do. Cheaper things to do.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

## Learning and participating

**■ ■ Students have homework from many different subjects from school and it can be stressful to finish all this work considering the work is from various different subjects. Not every person can feel up to doing this amount of work considering they also have a life outside of school, so they may feel stressed or worried when they don't have time to finish which may cause them to stay up late at night to finish or study which is bad for their health. ■ ■**

*(student who selected 'in another way', 12 year-old, Aboriginal)*

Over one-fifth (22.3%) of secondary students in the Mid West reported they had waggged school for a full day or more in the previous 12 months (male: 25.5%; female: 18.9%), while 21.0 per cent reported they had been suspended from school (male: 29.2%; female: 12.7%).

When it comes to learning activities outside of school, more than one-third (38.4%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Mid West spend time doing homework every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 48.5%; Years 7–12: 32.5%).

These results are similar to those for children and young people across the state.

### Attendance

Over one-half (51.9%) of students in the Mid West said it is very important to them to be at school every day (Years 4–6: 62.6%; Years 7–12: 45.7%), while 38.6 per cent (Years 4–6: 32.2%; Years 7–12: 42.4%) said it is somewhat important.

Of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Mid West, 63.1 per cent reported attending the same school since they started primary school or secondary school (all of WA: 62.3%).

**More activities and involvement in things for the youth. Such as concerts, or things like water activities since I live close to the beach. As well as more places that you can find in the city.**

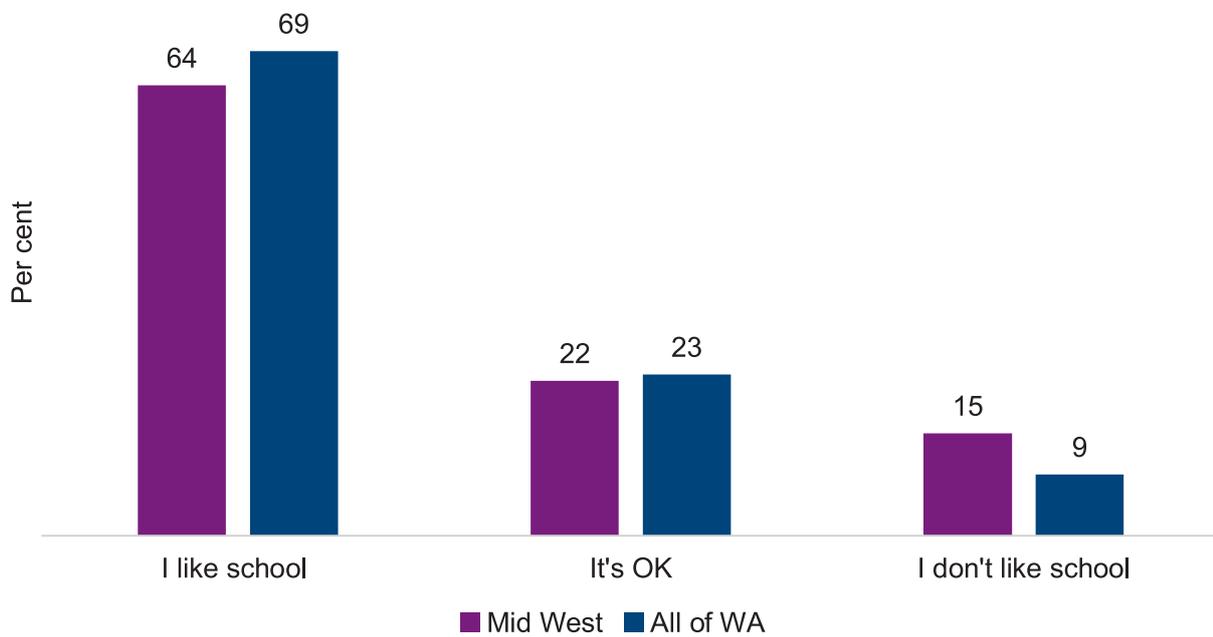
*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### Liking school and sense of belonging

Of the Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Mid West, almost one-quarter (23.4%) reported liking school a lot (all of WA: 26.3%), while 24.4 per cent reported they don't like school much or at all (all of WA: 19.8%).

A relatively high proportion (14.5%) of Year 4 to Year 6 students in the Mid West do not like school compared to students across the state (8.7%).

Proportion of Year 4 to Year 6 students reporting how they feel about school



Most (61.7%) secondary students agreed that their school is a place where they belong, however, more than one-third (38.3%) disagreed and do not feel this way (all of WA: agree: 70.2%; disagree: 29.8%).

Most students in the Mid West (70.5%) agreed they feel happy at school (Years 4–6: 88.4%; Years 7–12: 60.0%), while a similar proportion (68.0%) agreed they like learning at school (Years 4–6: 78.7%; Years 7–12: 61.9%).

Almost two-thirds (64.3%) said they usually get along with classmates (Years 4–6: 63.6%; Years 7–12: 64.6%), while 62.4 per cent said they usually get along with their teachers (Years 4–6: 72.8%; Years 7–12: 56.4%).

The majority of students in the Mid West reported it is ‘very much true’ or ‘pretty much

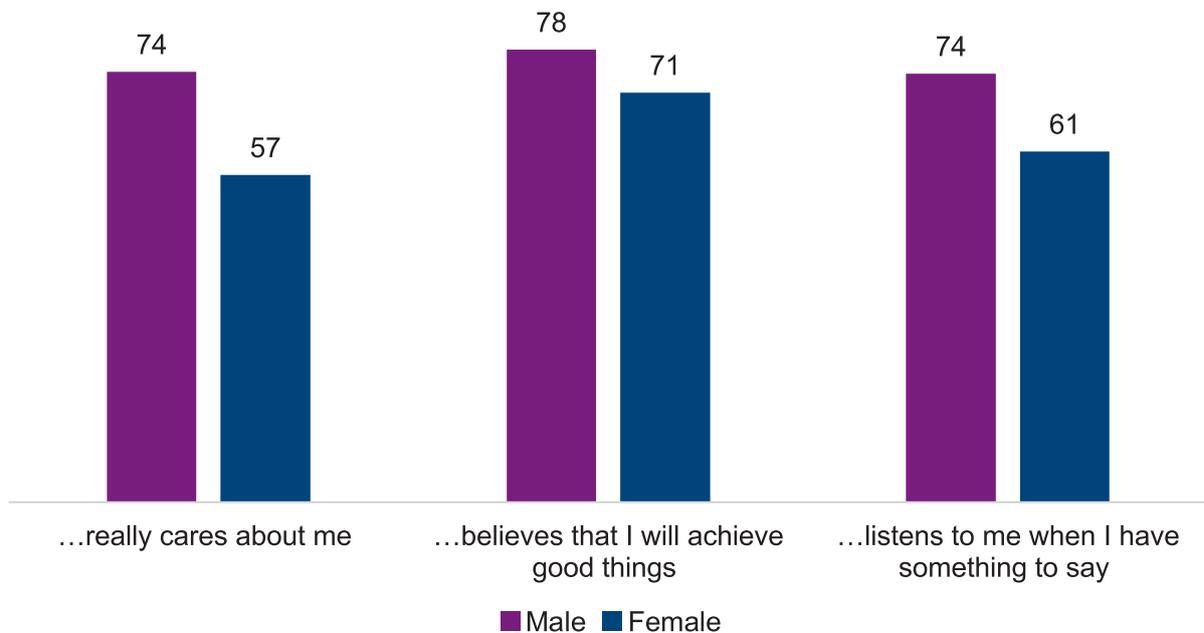
true’ there is a teacher or another adult in their school who:

- really cares about them (71.3%).
- believes they will achieve good things (79.0%).
- listens to them when they have something to say (73.2%).

Years 4 to Year 6 male and female students reported similarly on these statements, however when it comes to secondary students there is a gender difference. Male secondary students are more likely to agree with these statements compared to their female peers.

These results are consistent with the rest of WA.

**Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students responding ‘very much true’ or ‘pretty much true’ when posed the statement: ‘At my school, there is a teacher or another adult who...’**



Of the students surveyed in the Mid West:

- 34.2 per cent reported, if needed, they almost always get help from teachers in class (Years 4–6: 43.2%; Years 7–12: 28.9%), while 48.9 per cent reported they get it sometimes (Years 4–6: 45.1%; Years 7–12: 51.3%).
- 50.5 per cent said their parents often ask about schoolwork/homework (Years 4–6: 53.9%; Years 7–12: 48.5%).

These results are consistent with students' responses across WA.

### Feeling safe at school

Of the students surveyed in the Mid West, one-third (33.4%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students said they feel safe at school all the time and 41.6 per cent said they feel safe at school most of the time. However, 8.9 per cent reported that they feel safe at school only a little bit of the time or never. These results are consistent with results across WA.

While safety at school is comparable for male and female Year 4 to Year 6 students, female secondary students are less likely to feel safe at school all the time compared to their male peers (20.4% compared to 39.6%). This gender difference is consistent with results across the state.

Over two-fifths (43.6%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Mid West reported they had been bullied, with approximately one-third of this bullying involving cyberbullying.

Among students who reported having ever been bullied or cyberbullied (or both),

45.3 per cent reported this had happened in the previous three months. Of these students, 84.0 per cent reported being bullied at school, one-half (50.5%) reported the bullying occurring at home, while 30.0 per cent reported it happening on the way to or from school.

One-fifth (19.1%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students reported they had missed school in the past because they were afraid someone might bully them (Years 4–6: 16.9%; Years 7–12: 20.4%). Of these students, 54.1 per cent had missed school in the previous month due to fear of being bullied.

These results on bullying are similar to those across the rest of the state.

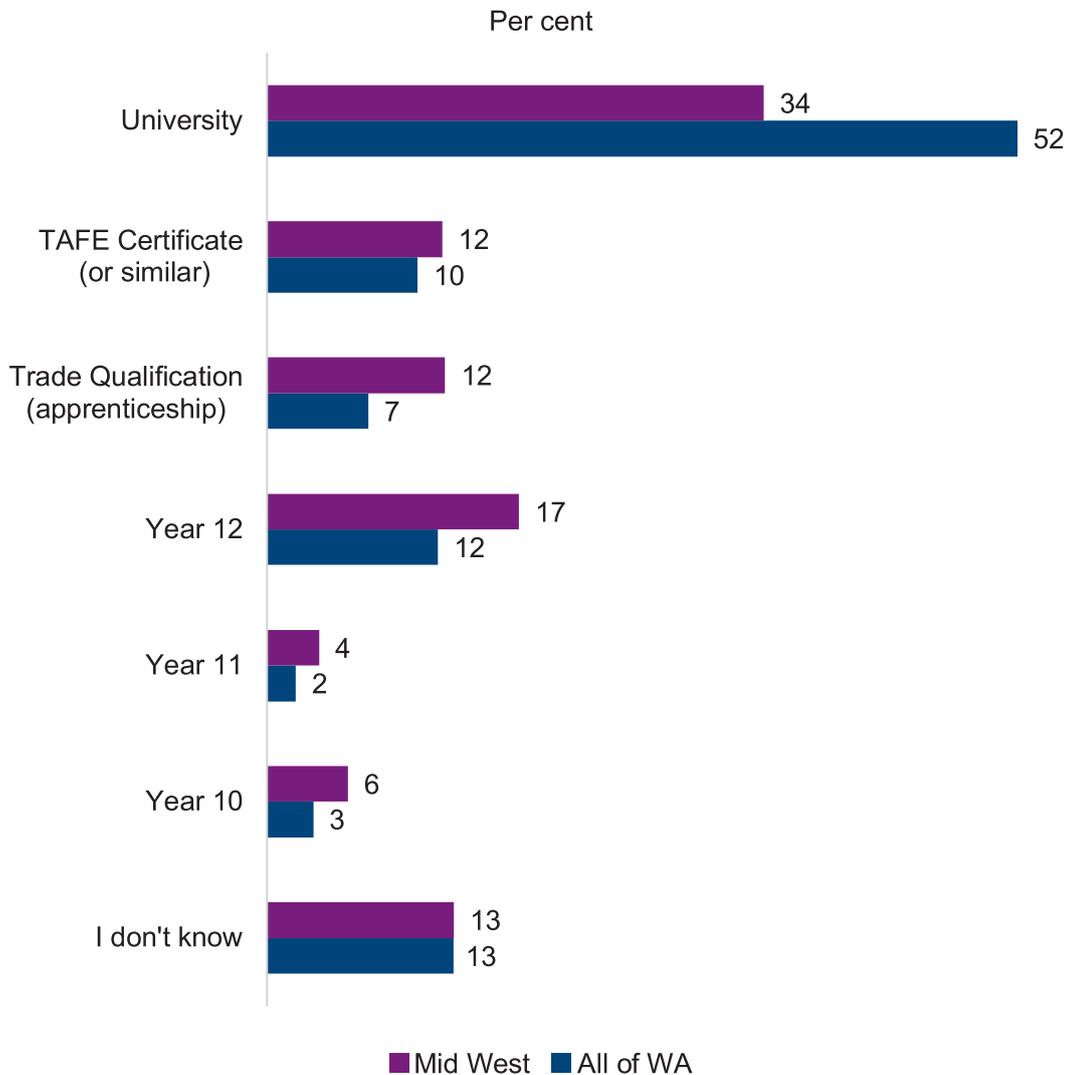
### Transition from school

Just over one-third (34.3%) of secondary students in the Mid West reported they want to attend university, while over one-quarter (26.6%) do not intend to go on to further study after secondary school. The proportion of students planning to attend university is lower than the rest of WA (51.8%).

Male students in the Mid West made up most of this difference with 20.7 per cent reporting they want to attend university compared to 45.8 per cent for the rest of WA (Mid West females: 47.0%; WA females: 58.2%).

At the same time, a higher proportion of Mid West male students than students in the rest of WA intend to pursue trade qualifications (20.5% vs 12.4%).

**Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting highest level of education they would like to achieve (single choice only)**



Of the secondary students surveyed in the Mid West, 61.8 per cent said it is 'very much true' or 'pretty much true' that at their school they are learning knowledge and skills that will help them in the future (all of WA: 61.4%).

A greater proportion of secondary students in the Mid West reported doing paid work in the previous 12 months. More than one-half

(57.5%) of secondary students had paid work in the previous 12-months (all of WA: 45.2%) and 40.0 per cent reported having a regular part-time job (all of WA: 28.0%).

## Independence and autonomy

Of the secondary students surveyed in the Mid West:

- 83.8 per cent said they are allowed to go to and from school on their own (all of WA: 80.9%).
- 83.0 per cent said they are allowed to go places other than school on their own (all of WA: 76.0%).
- 44.2 per cent said they are allowed to go out alone at night in their local area (all of WA: 31.2%).

Female students in the Mid West are more likely to be allowed to do things independently than female students across the state, however many are still more restricted than their male peers in the Mid West.

In terms of being able to make decisions, most young people in the Mid West reported positively, agreeing with the following statements in high proportions:

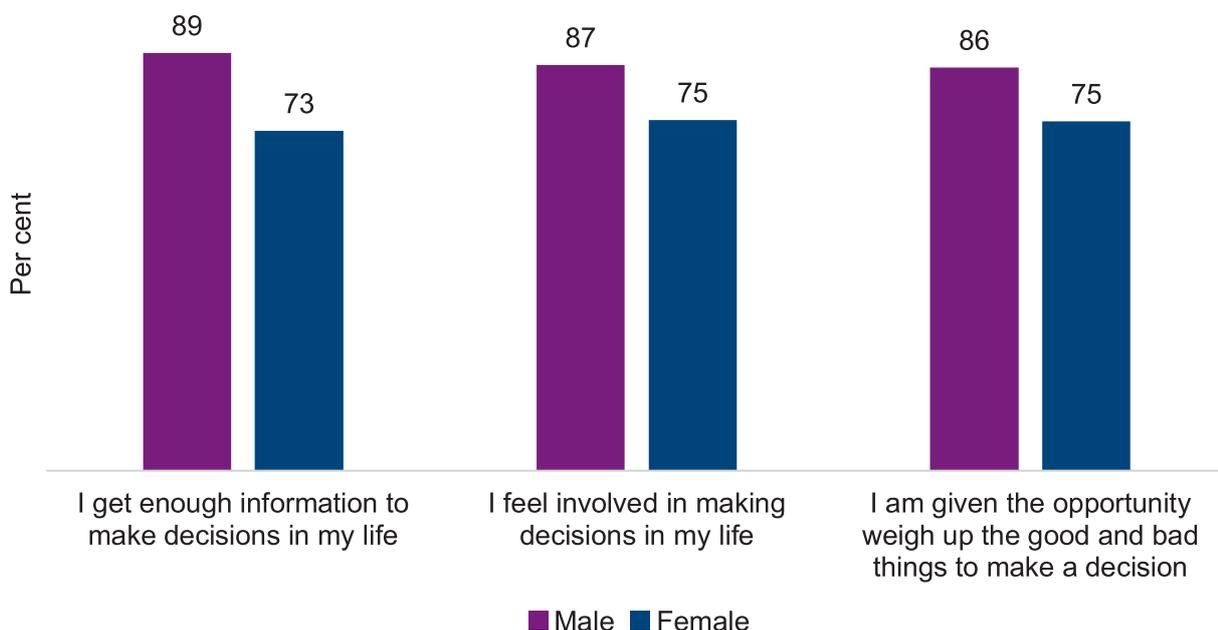
- getting enough information to make decisions in their life (79.1%).
- feeling involved in making decisions in their life (79.2%).
- being given the opportunity to weigh up the good and bad things to make a decision (79.3%).

These results are consistent with those across the state.

Female students are less likely to agree with these statements than male students. This is particularly evident when it comes to getting enough information to make decisions in their life with 72.5 per cent of females agreeing compared to 89.2 per cent of male students.

These gender differences are consistent with the results across WA.

### Proportion of secondary students agreeing they feel involved in making decisions in their life



### Aboriginal children's and young people's views on learning and participating

The majority (60.0%) of Aboriginal children and young people in the Mid West reported that being at school every day is very important to them (non-Aboriginal: 50.5%).

Aboriginal students in the Mid West are more likely than non-Aboriginal students to have attended multiple schools since they started primary school or secondary school. Almost one-half (45.9%) of Aboriginal primary school students have attended three or more schools compared to 18.9 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.

More than one-third (37.3%) of Aboriginal Year 7 to Year 12 students in the Mid West reported they have been suspended from school (been sent home for a few days for doing something wrong) (non-Aboriginal students: 16.9%). Aboriginal students in the Mid West are twice as likely to report that they had wagged school in the previous 12 months for a full day or more compared to non-Aboriginal students (39.7% compared to 18.2%).

Just less than one-half (47.8%) of Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Mid West reported liking school (non-Aboriginal: 47.1%). However, a majority of Aboriginal students reported feeling happy at school (71.0%) and liking learning (75.5%).

### Proportion of Year 4 to 12 students agreeing that school is a place where they like learning, feel happy, and belong (Year 7 to 12 only)



Most Aboriginal secondary students in the Mid West agreed their school is a place where they belong (63.2%). These results are consistent with those for non-Aboriginal students.

Just over one-half (61.5%) of Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students in the Mid West said they usually get along with their classmates, while 32.3 per cent said they sometimes get along with their classmates.

Most Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Mid West said that it is 'very much true' (39.8%) or 'pretty much true' (28.1%) that at school there is a teacher or another adult who listens to them when they have something to say. While one in four (42.5%) reported that if they need extra help they will almost always get it from their teachers (non-Aboriginal: 32.3%).

Two-thirds (69.8%) of Aboriginal students said that their parents, or someone in their family, often or sometimes ask about their schoolwork (Years 4–6: 72.4%; Years 7–12: 68.0%). This is lower than the responses from non-Aboriginal students (Years 4–12: 82.1%).

When it comes to feeling safe at school, Aboriginal students reported similarly to non-Aboriginal students with 75.6 per cent of Years 4 to 12 feeling safe all or most of the time (non-Aboriginal: 76.3%).

Year 4 to Year 6 Aboriginal students reported experiencing bullying by students from their school in greater proportions than non-Aboriginal students (58.5% compared to 39.6%). However, this is not the case for secondary students in the Mid West with Aboriginal students reporting fewer experiences of bullying than non-Aboriginal students (32.8% compared to 47.1%).

Aboriginal students in the Mid West are less likely than non-Aboriginal students to report they would like to go to university (17.7% compared to 39.3%). Concomitantly, Aboriginal students are more likely to say they do not intend to do any further study after secondary school (40.2% compared to 22.7%).

## What do children and young people in the Mid West say about learning and participating?

The following responses are from secondary school students who were asked the open text question: 'The majority of secondary school students feel stressed by school work or study. What do you think are the main reasons for this?'

### Talking about schoolwork stress

*"Because school is based on one type of learning, but people learn in all types of different ways, and the work just gets piled on and piled on, and it's not a voluntary thing, it's just 'you have to do it' and some people don't like it. Most people don't like it. Most schools aren't prepared to talk about it but they're all wrong, and putting students through mental distress doesn't 'make them stronger' or 'give them more experience' it's a terrible thing..."*  
(student who selected 'in another way', 12 year-old, Aboriginal)

*"They put to much pressure on us to do school work when we are having other problems in life, especially when the work is long and hard."*  
(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"We get all our assessments/assignments usually piled onto us in the same week."*  
(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"Pressure from home and the future. Like being told that I have to go to uni and get a good job even when I can't do math."*  
(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"I get stressed because I struggle with learning and I don't understand and I struggle to ask for help."*  
(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“They won’t be able to get it finished because of problems or work outside of school. Then they get punished for not doing it.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Schools don’t really care about our mental health, they only care about grades, etc.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Due to people having out of school commitments that they are following but also need to complete the large amount of homework given to them by the school, while still following their outer school commitments.”*

*(male, 16 year-old, Aboriginal)*

### **Other comments on school**

*“Most people can’t handle school work, or the homophobic things said, or the racist remarks thrown around, or just being a woman and called al, these disgusting things and having disgusting things done to you. The school system is failing. Do better and change it.”*

*(student who selected ‘in another way’, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“There is multiple bullies in this school who make me feel unsafe.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Teaching more about consent in relationships and about bullying.”*

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I found that there isn’t much resources around helping with being Transgender at a young age and not much information to young teenagers, people are often left to find out about it from the internet like I did. When it is talked about in schools, it’s often talked about from other students in a mocking way and schools aren’t reinforcing to teenagers that being Trans is okay.”*

*(student who selected ‘in another way’, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Well when I had problems with a teacher I got help from our local AEIO. From this day onwards I still have problems with him. But our AEIO has made sure I am still on task with school work and home. life :)”*

*(female, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

A number of students in a very remote area of the Mid West noted that doing schooling remotely (likely through the School of Isolated and Distant Education) is difficult.

*“Because we haft to do work online and it is hard to do work on a sheet, then scan it, then we haft to send it to them. And because the teachers are not with us, it’s hard to do the work without them here with us to help us with the work we haft to do.”*

*(female, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**▲▲ Because we don’t have actual face to face teachers and over email is hard to just point at a question and say what doesn’t make sense it takes time to both send a receive a reply We have a lot of work that grouped together. ▼▼**

*(female, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

# Safe and Supported

**▲▲ Listen to a kid and change his perspective about life, do not argue with them, try to listen to what they have to say, do not be political they can think what they want to think, never say man up or be more feminine, and agree to what they say. This will make them think that you're a good person/parent. ▲▲**

*(male, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

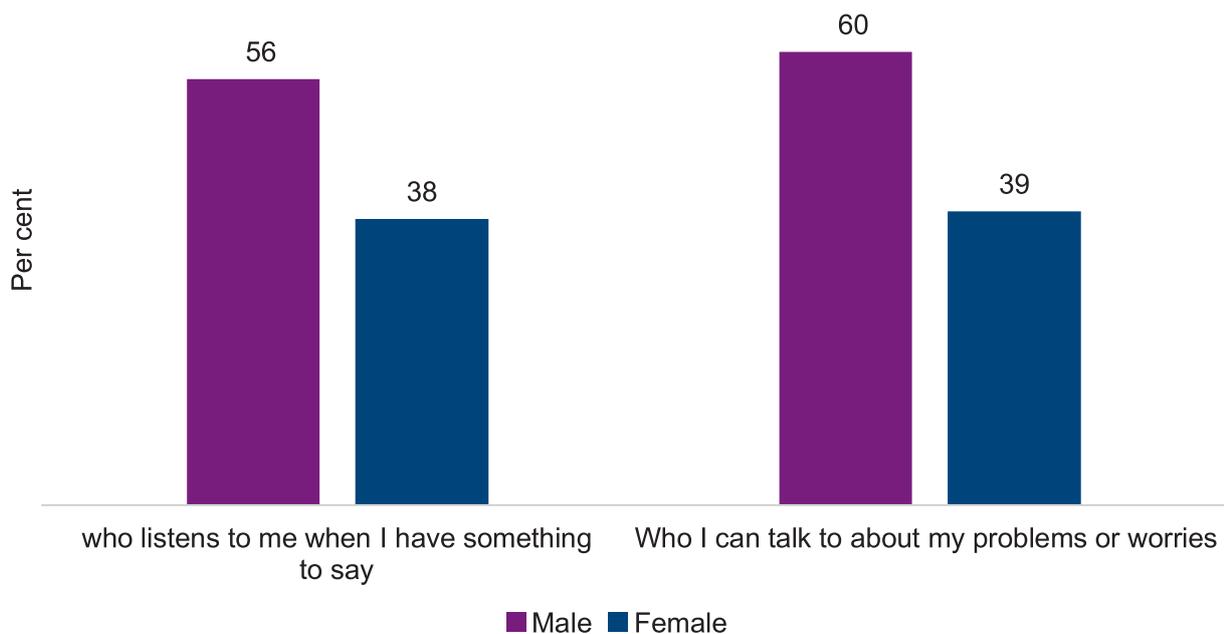
## Supportive relationships

Approximately one-half of the children and young people in the Mid West reported that it was 'very much true' that they live with a parent or other adult whom they can talk to about their problems or worries (55.1%) and who listens when they have something to say (48.5%).

Secondary students are much less likely to report that it is 'very much true' they live with a parent or other adult whom they can talk to about their problems or worries than primary school students (48.2% compared to 67.2%). The difference in results between Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 12 is consistent across WA.

For both questions, there are large gender differences among secondary. This result is consistent with the rest of WA.

**Proportion of Year 7 to 12 students responding 'very much true' to the statement: 'Where I live, there is a parent or adult who...'**



Three-quarters (74.4%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Mid West said their family gets along very well or well (Years 4–6: 79.2%; Years 7–12: 71.5%). This result is consistent with responses across WA.

Over one-quarter of students (25.9%) reported living in more than one home; this is a greater proportion than for the rest of WA (19.9%). Of the students who reported having a second home, 39.1 per cent reported living in this home one-half of the time (Years 4–6: 50.2%; Years 7–12: 31.9%).

Most children and young people in the Mid West felt that they are very good at making friends (51.4%) and have enough friends (79.6%). Female secondary school students in the Mid West are less likely to feel like they have enough friends in comparison to their male peers (76.9% and 87.1%).

### Material basics

Almost one in ten (9.7%) Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Mid West only sometimes or never have enough food to eat at home when they are hungry (all of WA: 9.6%).

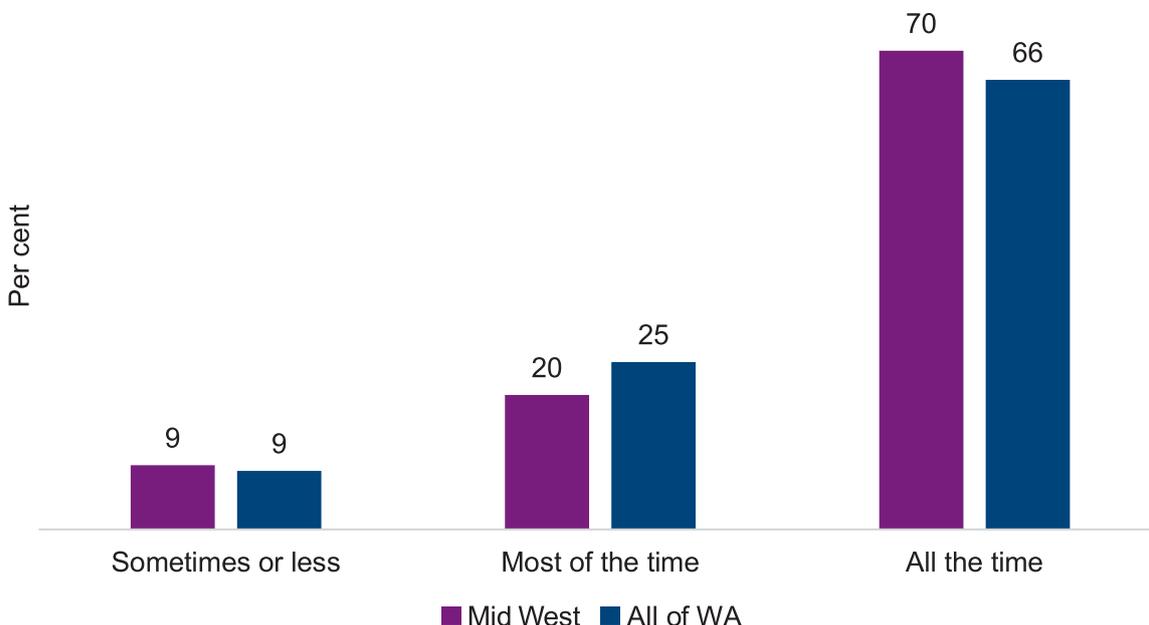
Of the students surveyed in the Mid West:

- 87.5 per cent reported they have their own bedroom (Years 4–6: 79.2%; Years 7–12: 92.3%).
- 91.1 per cent reported they have access to the internet at home, compared to 96.2 per cent for the rest of WA.
- One in ten (9.6%) secondary students in the Mid West do not have access to the internet at home, compared to 2.7 per cent across the rest of the state.
- 89.5 per cent of secondary students reported having their own mobile phone (all of WA: 91.7%).

### Safe in the home

Of the students surveyed in the Mid West, 70.1 per cent said they feel safe at home all the time (Years 4–6: 70.3%; Years 7–12: 70.0%), while 19.7 per cent said they feel safe at home most of the time (Years 4–6: 19.9%; Years 7–12: 19.5%). These results are similar to those across the state.

Proportion of Year 4 to 12 students reporting how often they feel safe at home



One-quarter (25.3%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students said they are ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ worried that someone in their home or family will be fighting (Years 4–6: 21.0%; Years 7–12: 27.7%), while 18.5 per cent said they are ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ worried that someone in their home or family will hurt somebody (Years 4–6: 20.7%; Years 7–12: 17.2%).

These results are consistent with the rest of WA.

One-third of secondary students (33.2%) reported they had stayed away from home overnight because of a problem (all of WA: 30.1%).

7–12: 32.7%), while 38.2 per cent said they feel safe in their local area most of the time (Years 4–6: 35.0%; Years 7–12: 39.9%).

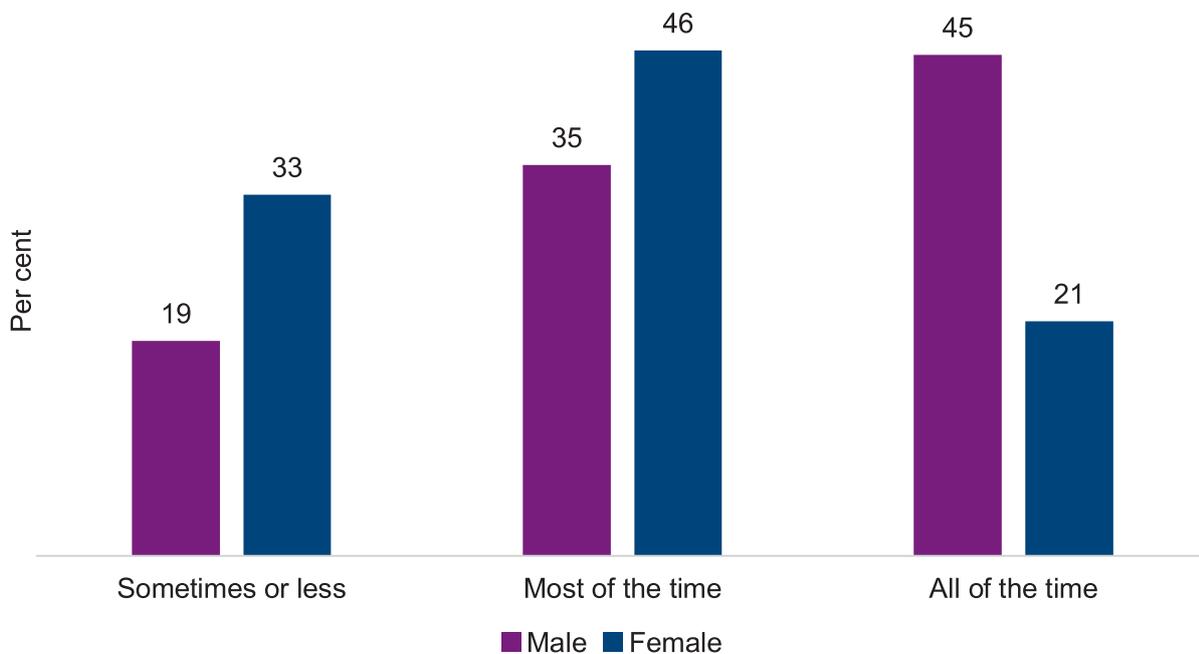
Results are broadly consistent for male and female students in Years 4 to 6, however for Year 7 to Year 12 students there are large gender differences. Female secondary students are half as likely to report feeling safe in their local area all the time compared to their male peers (21.2% vs 45.2%).

Moreover, almost one-third (32.6%) of female secondary students reported feeling safe only sometimes or less (compared to 19.4% for their male peers).

### Safe in the community

Of the students surveyed in the Mid West, 31.9 per cent said they feel safe in their local area all the time (Years 4–6: 30.6%; Years

**Proportion of Year 7 to 12 students reporting how often they feel safe in their local area**



The gender difference in this question is consistent with the results for the rest of WA. However, male secondary students in the Mid West are much more likely than male students across WA to feel safe all the time in their local area (45.2% vs 36.4%).

Over two-fifths (44.2%) of Year 9 to Year 12 students reported they had ever been hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose (male: 50.6%; female: 37.8%). These results are consistent with those across the state.

Students who reported being hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose in the previous 12 months were also asked further questions about the nature and location of the incident.

Consistent with the rest of the state, male students in the Mid West are more likely to report being harmed by another child or young person (male: 83.2%; female: 31.5%), while female students are more likely to report being harmed by an adult (female: 56.2%; male: 20.8%).

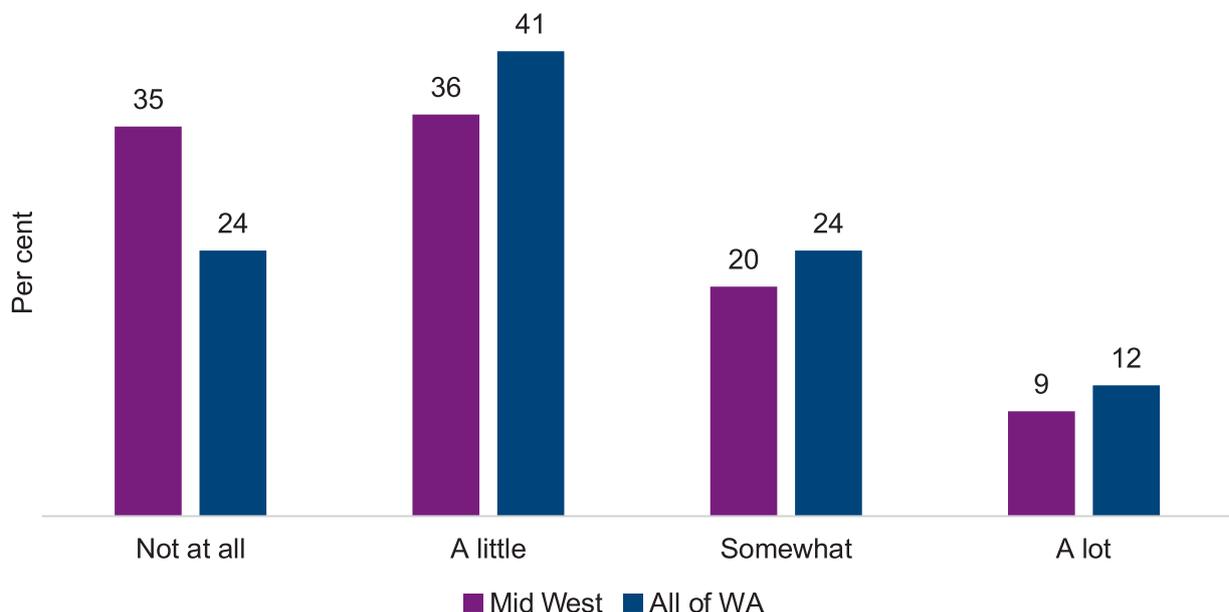
Of the students who reported being harmed, female students are more likely than male students to have been harmed at home (female: 80.3%; male: 26.3%), while male students are more likely to have been harmed at school (female: 40.5%; male: 67.6%).

Notably, students in the Mid West are more likely to report the incident took place while hanging out in a public place (e.g. in town, shops, sport centre) compared to students in the rest of WA (31.0% compared to 20.3%).

### Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

When asked about the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes to daily life, over one-third (34.6%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Mid West reported that the pandemic had not affected their life in a bad way at all – this is a higher proportion than the rest of WA (23.6%).

**Proportion of students responding to the question: ‘Thinking about the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes to daily life, how much has this affected your life in a bad way?’**



Consistent with this result, Mid West students are more likely than students across the state to report feeling not at all anxious or stressed when thinking about the COVID-19 pandemic (39.6% compared to 32.4%) and more likely to report feeling very relaxed about it (26.8% compared to 20.2%).

Moreover, Year 9 to Year 12 students in the Mid West are less likely to report the COVID-19 pandemic had been a source of stress to them in the previous year compared to students in the rest of the state (15.9% compared to 20.8%).

## Aboriginal children's and young people's views on feeling safe and supported

### Supportive relationships

Most Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students in the Mid West reported that it is 'very much true' or 'pretty much true' that where they live there is a parent or another adult who:

- believes they will achieve good things (85.1%).
- listens to them when they have something to say (75.0%).
- they can talk to about their problems or worries (72.3%).

These results are consistent with non-Aboriginal students in the Mid West.

In terms of family harmony, two-thirds (67.7%) of Aboriginal students reported that their family gets along well or very well, marginally less compared to non-Aboriginal students (76.5%).

Aboriginal students are more likely than non-Aboriginal students to feel that their siblings care about them a lot (53.4% compared to 44.7%).

Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 6 are more likely than non-Aboriginal students to be 'somewhat' or 'a lot' worried that someone in their home or family will be fighting (Aboriginal: 32.2%, non-Aboriginal: 18.7%). Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 6 are also more likely to be 'somewhat' or 'a lot' worried that someone in their home or family would hurt somebody (Aboriginal: 28.1%, non-Aboriginal: 19.7%) and more likely to be worried 'somewhat' or 'a lot' that someone in their home or family would hurt themselves (Aboriginal: 32.7%, non-Aboriginal: 22.8%).

Aboriginal secondary school students in the Mid-West are worried about these issues in similar proportions to non-Aboriginal secondary students.

### Material basics

Aboriginal students in the Mid West are marginally more likely to be experiencing some form of material disadvantage in comparison to their non-Aboriginal peers.

- One in 20 (5.3%) Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students reported that their family does not have a car (non-Aboriginal: 1.9%).
- One in six (17.0%) Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 does not have enough money in their family for them to go on a school excursion or camp (non-Aboriginal: 12.5%).
- One-quarter (26.7%) of Aboriginal secondary school students do not have their own tablet, laptop or computer, compared to 13.9 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.
- One in six (15.9%) Aboriginal secondary students does not have access to the internet at home (non-Aboriginal: 7.9%).

More than one in ten (11.7%) Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Mid West said there is only sometimes or never enough food to eat at home when they are hungry. This is marginally higher than non-Aboriginal children and young people in the Mid West (8.8%), however, it is also considerably lower than Aboriginal children and young people across the state (18.7%).

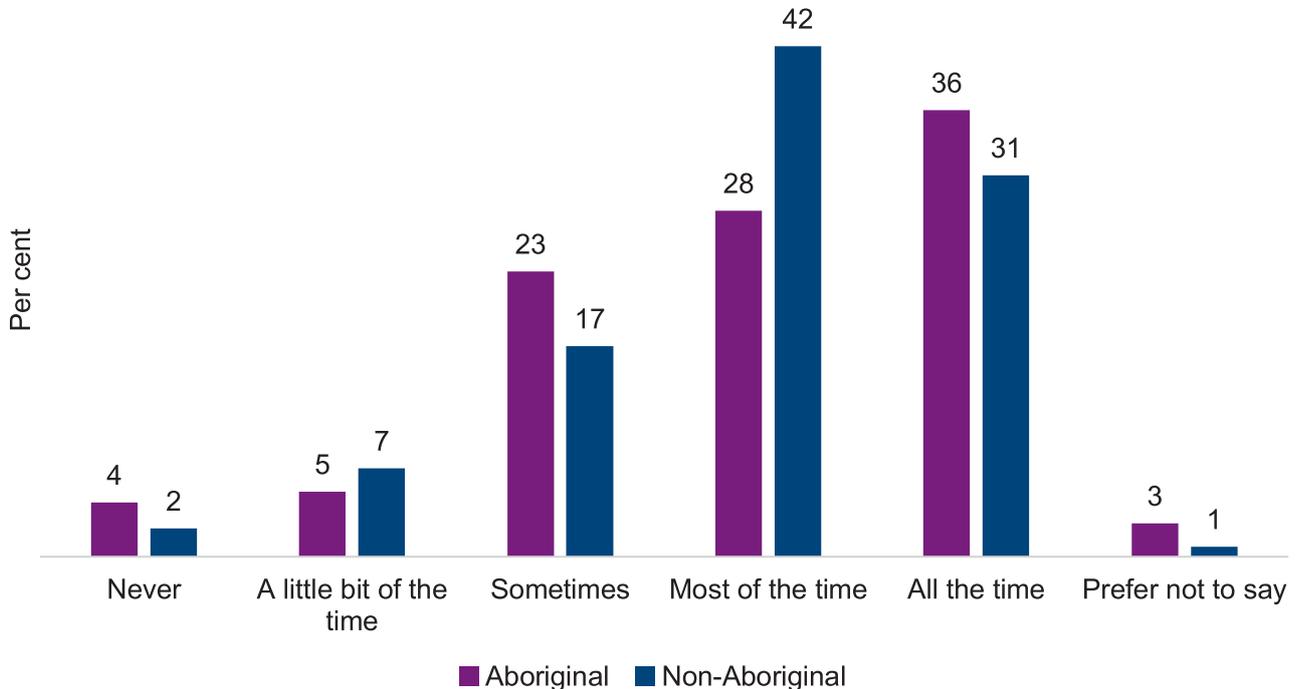
Aboriginal students in the Mid West are much more likely to report living in a primary household of seven people or more (21.0%) compared to non-Aboriginal students (5.8%). They are also more likely to report living in more than one home (40.5% compared to 22.6%).

**Feeling safe**

Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 are just as likely to feel safe at home most of the time or all of the time as non-Aboriginal students (Aboriginal: 91.9%, non-Aboriginal: 90.2%).

However, Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal children and young people in the Mid West reported feeling less safe in their local area most of the time or all of the time compared to non-Aboriginal children and young people (Aboriginal: 64.4%, non-Aboriginal: 72.5%).

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



## What do children and young people in the Mid West say about being safe and supported?

### Supportive relationships

*“My mum and dad have just Brocken up and it has been really hard for me because I’m sad.”*  
(female, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“I think that the school chapmen is good also the teachers and doctors.”*  
(female, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“Adults should try to be more understanding of teens because many adults don’t understand teens of this generation making it harder to express our feelings.”*  
(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Give the people strategies on how they could solve the problems on what’s going on in their life and maybe ask more questions about how they could have changed the situation if they were part of it or if they caused it and why they caused the situation in the first place But mostly just find strategies to help them work through on what they are going through.”*  
(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“They could try getting more involved in some people’s life and help more.”*  
(male, 16 year-old, Aboriginal)

### Feeling unsafe

The following statements were generally in response to the question: ‘What are some of the things that make you feel unsafe?’

*“Mum and dad fighting.”*  
(male, 9 year-old, undisclosed Aboriginal status)

*“We have got robbed before so I have a constant fear of that happening again my friends turning on me cause they have done that before and also bullies because when I was in year one I got bullied for that hole year of year one and i was just traumatised to go out to play we’re my bully was.”*  
(female, 9 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“People who are drunk and stuff like that.”*  
(female, 11 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“Strangers following me or coming near me coz I feel like something bad might happen to me every time someone walks past if I’m alone.”*  
(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Being at event that have alcohol and last most of the night, the drunk people make me fell a bit unsafe (e.g. Races, parties and meet ups/gatherings).”*  
(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“I don’t feel safe anywhere bully will hurt me.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Walking around at night be myself.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“Boys, males, especially when it’s dark.”*

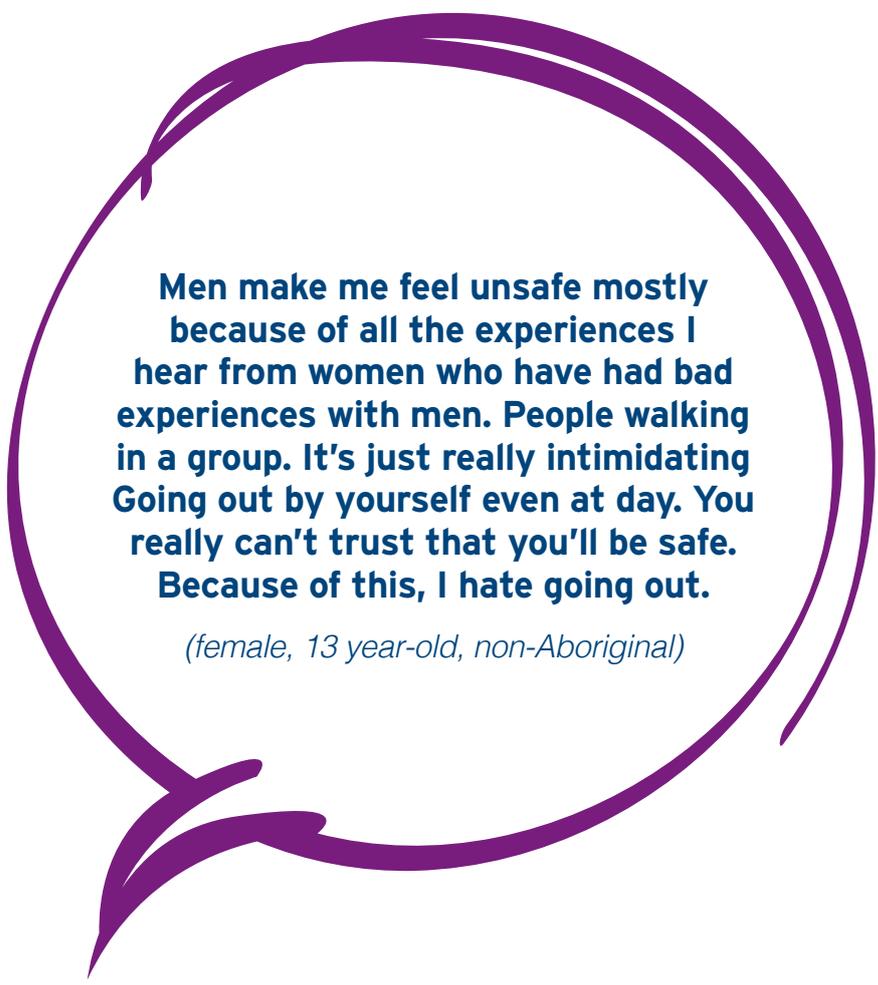
*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Because I live regionally, it is not safe for me as a young girl, to be out at night without an adult/large group I would love it if I could feel more safe on my own in my community...”*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Being around someone idk especially if it’s a man.”*

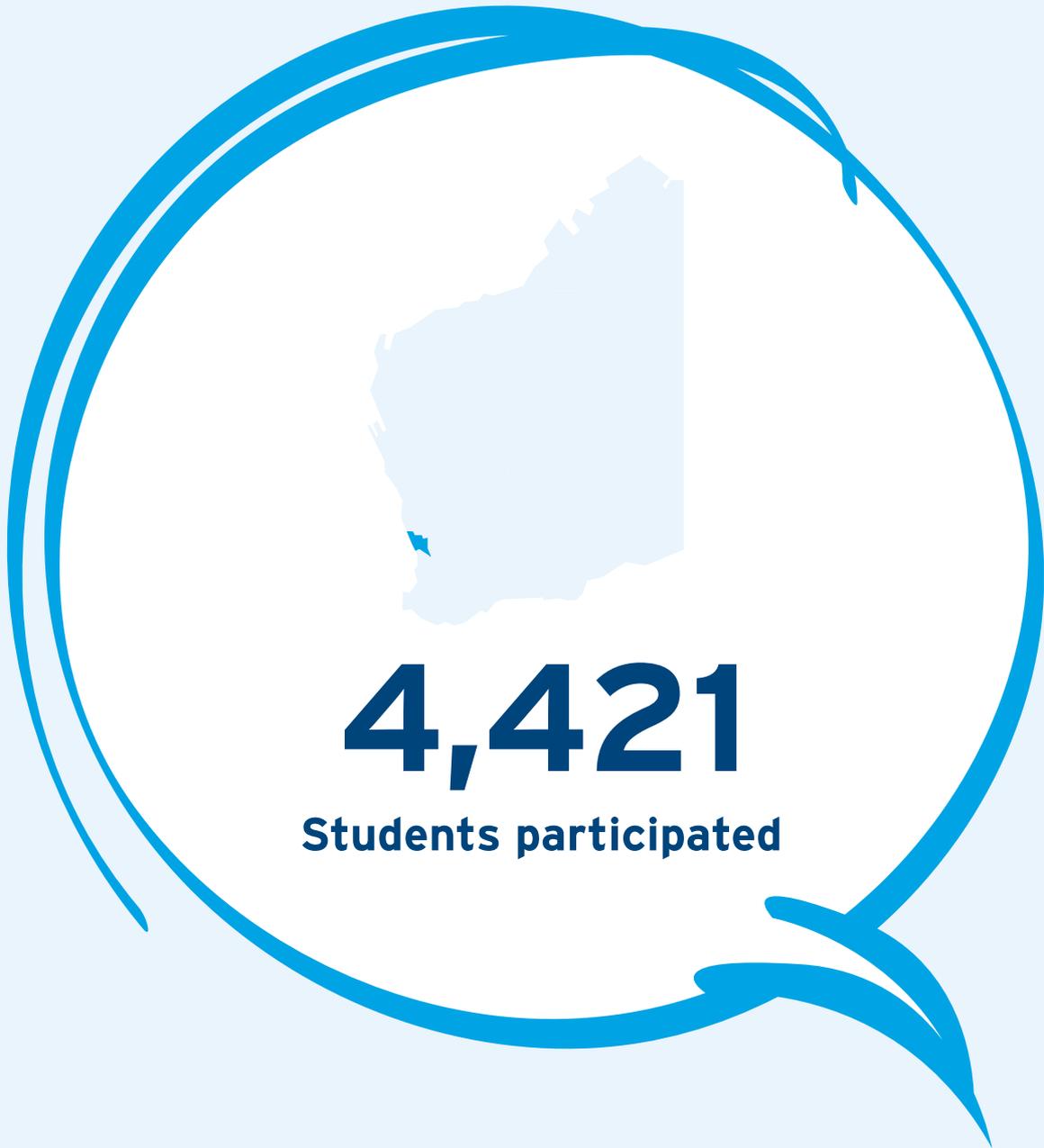
*(female, 16 year-old, Aboriginal)*



**Men make me feel unsafe mostly because of all the experiences I hear from women who have had bad experiences with men. People walking in a group. It’s just really intimidating Going out by yourself even at day. You really can’t trust that you’ll be safe. Because of this, I hate going out.**

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

# North Metropolitan



# North Metropolitan key findings

Of all Year 4 to Year 12 students surveyed in the North Metropolitan region, **49.1 per cent reported that their health is very good or excellent**, while 15.2 per cent reported that their health is poor or fair.



Of the Aboriginal students surveyed in the North Metropolitan region, **just over one-third (36.3%) rated their health as very good or excellent**; this is less than non-Aboriginal students (49.5%).

**Only one-half (52.6%)** of secondary students in the North Metropolitan region **reported a high life satisfaction** (7 to 10 out of 10), one-quarter (26.2%) reported medium life satisfaction (5 to 6) and one in five (21.3%) reported a low life satisfaction (0 to 4).



**One-fifth (19.5%)** of secondary students in the North Metropolitan region **reported they have tried smoking**, while two-fifths have tried alcohol (39.9%).



**More than one-third (38.1%)** of secondary students in the North Metropolitan region **do not know or are unsure about where to go if they needed help for something about their reproductive or sexual health**.



**Most (69.6%) secondary students** agree that their **school is a place where they belong**, however, a significant minority (30.3%) disagree and do not feel this way (disagree: 20.8%, strongly disagree: 9.5%).

**Almost one-quarter (23.3%)** of Aboriginal secondary students in the North Metropolitan region **strongly disagree that school is a place where they feel like they belong** (non-Aboriginal: 8.9%).

**Most students (82.4%)** in the North Metropolitan region **said they live in one home**, which is the highest proportion of regions across the state.



**Almost one-third (29.8%)** of female secondary students **feel safe in their local area only sometimes or less** (male: 21.2%).



**Aboriginal children and young people** in the North Metropolitan region are **more likely to be experiencing greater material disadvantage** than their non-Aboriginal peers and Aboriginal children and young people in other regions across the state.



**Almost one-quarter (23.4%)** of Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the North Metropolitan region said there is **only sometimes or never enough food to eat at home when they are hungry**.

## Overview

A total of 4,421 students across Years 4 to 12 from 12 primary schools and nine secondary schools in the North Metropolitan region took part in the Speaking Out Survey 2021.

Over one-half (57.8%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students surveyed in the North Metropolitan region identified as girls, 39.4 per cent identified as boys and 2.8 per cent selected the option that they identify 'in another way'.

In total, 3.6 per cent of participants reported being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Of the students surveyed in the North Metropolitan region, 95.3 per cent reported speaking English at home and 19.6 per cent reported (also) speaking other language(s) at home. The other languages spoken included Afrikaans, Indonesian, Chinese (including Cantonese/ Mandarin) and Tagalog/Filipino.

Many students in the North Metropolitan region enjoyed doing the survey and appreciated the opportunity to have their say:

*“Thank you for coming to the school and giving us a chance to speak up.”*

*(male, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**■ ■ I think it was good that I can share the answers to the questions provided and that people are asking what children have to say about these questions so that kids around the world know that their rights matter too. ■ ■**

*(female, 10 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“I think this is an amazing thing to do and I think you should do it with all ages because kids like to have a voice every once and a while.”*

*(female, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I like how this survey made kids feel the right to speak up about how things are going at home , school and their communities.*

*I love the thought of this survey. 🙌😊”*

*(female, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I loved this survey and felt completely comfortable with answering the questions.”*

*(female, 11 year-old, Aboriginal, 3984)*

*“I think this survey really made me think about things properly about my life.”*

*(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I think the survey was a good idea, and hopefully it will help to understand what young people are going through and how to help them through it.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Succinct but detailed, it was good.”*

*(male, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I think it was very good and respectful of our boundaries.”*

*(female, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

# Healthy and connected

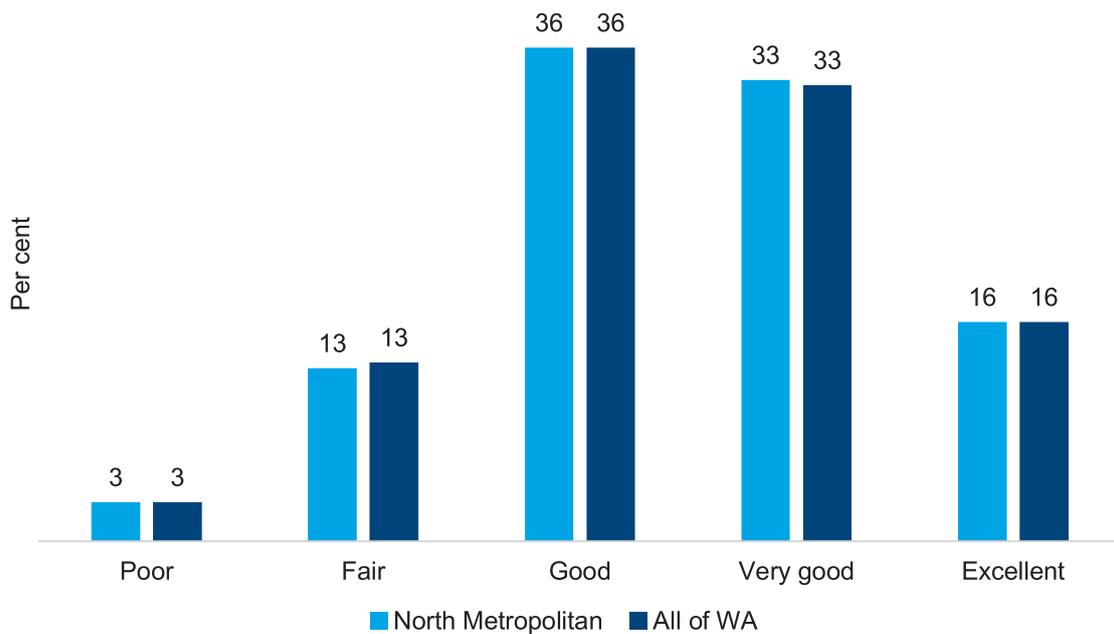
“ I have mild anxiety and stress. I used kids helpline when I needed them. They were great. Ever since my parents got divorced, which was about a year ago now. My anxiety started. Online websites really help me as they taking in my worries without judging or anything like that. ”

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

## Physical health

Of the students surveyed in the North Metropolitan region, 49.1 per cent reported that their health is very good or excellent (Years 4–6: 60.7%; Years 7–12: 43.5%), while 15.3 per cent reported that their health is poor or fair (Years 4–6: 7.9%; Years 7–12: 18.8%).

Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting their general health ratings



Just over one-quarter (26.3%) of secondary students reported they have a long-term health problem, while 12.0 per cent reported they have a disability. The most commonly reported disabilities were ADHD, dyslexia and having a visual impairment. The most commonly reported long-term health conditions were asthma, anxiety and depression.

Over one-half (54.0%) of secondary students reported physical activity, sport or exercise is ‘definitely’ an important part of their life. One in

five (18.9%) secondary students reported they had done vigorous exercise seven or more times in the previous week, while 44.3 per cent reported they had done vigorous exercise three to six times in the previous week.

Female students in the North Metropolitan region are much less likely than their male peers to have done vigorous exercise three or more times in the previous week (56.1% vs 73.8%).

Of the students surveyed in the North Metropolitan region:

- 42.7 per cent reported caring very much about how they look (Years 4–6: 32.1%; Years 7–12: 47.9%) and 29.6 per cent reported they care some (Years 4–6: 28.7%; Years 7–12: 30.1%).
- 37.9 per cent reported they care very much about eating healthy food (Years 4–6: 50.6%; Years 7–12: 31.7%) and 46.5 per cent reported they care some (Years 4–6: 41.3%; Years 7–12: 49.1%).
- Just less than one-quarter (23.7%) of secondary students reported only eating fruit a few times a week or less.
- 52.0 per cent reported they eat breakfast every day (Years 4–6: 72.0%; Years 7–12: 42.3%), while 6.6 per cent reported they never eat breakfast (Years 4–6: 1.1%; Years 7–12: 9.2%). Female students are much less likely to eat breakfast every day than their male peers (45.4% vs 62.0%).
- 69.8 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students reported going to sleep on a school night before 9pm, while 38.8 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students reported going to sleep on a school night before 10pm.
- 71.4 per cent reported brushing their teeth twice or more the previous day (Years 4–6: 75.5%; Years 7–12: 69.4%) and 44.8 per cent reported having ever had a filling (Years 4–6: 35.9%; Years 7–12: 49.2%).

These results are consistent with those across the state.

## Mental health

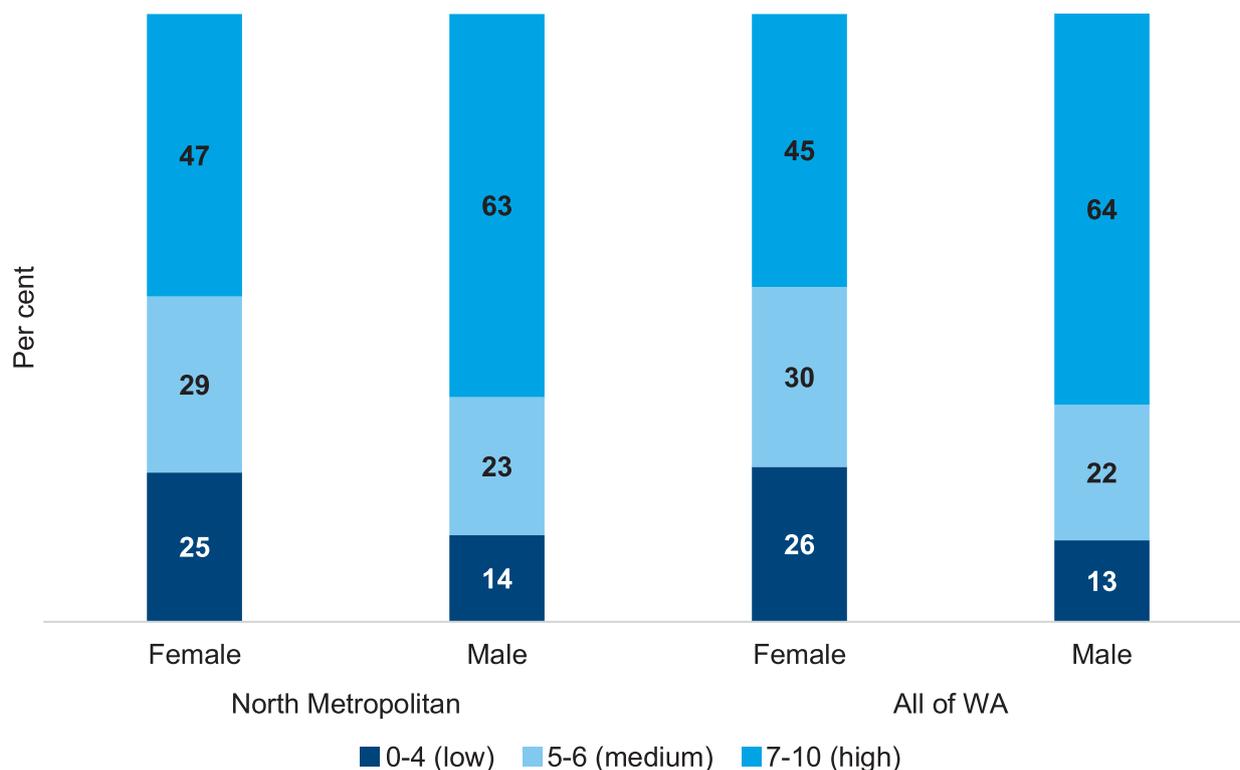
Of the students surveyed in the North Metropolitan region, 6.8 is the mean life satisfaction (on a scale from 0 to 10) (Years 4–6: 7.7; Years 7–12: 6.3). The mean life satisfaction across all of WA is 6.8.

Three-fifths (60.2%) of students reported a high life satisfaction (7 to 10 out of 10) (Years 4–6: 75.6%; Years 7–12: 52.6%) and 16.8 per cent reported a low life satisfaction (0 to 4) (Years 4–6: 7.8%; Years 7–12: 21.3%). Female students are much more likely to report low life satisfaction than their male peers.

These results are consistent with the rest of the state.



**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students rating their life satisfaction on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is the worst possible life and 10 the best possible life**



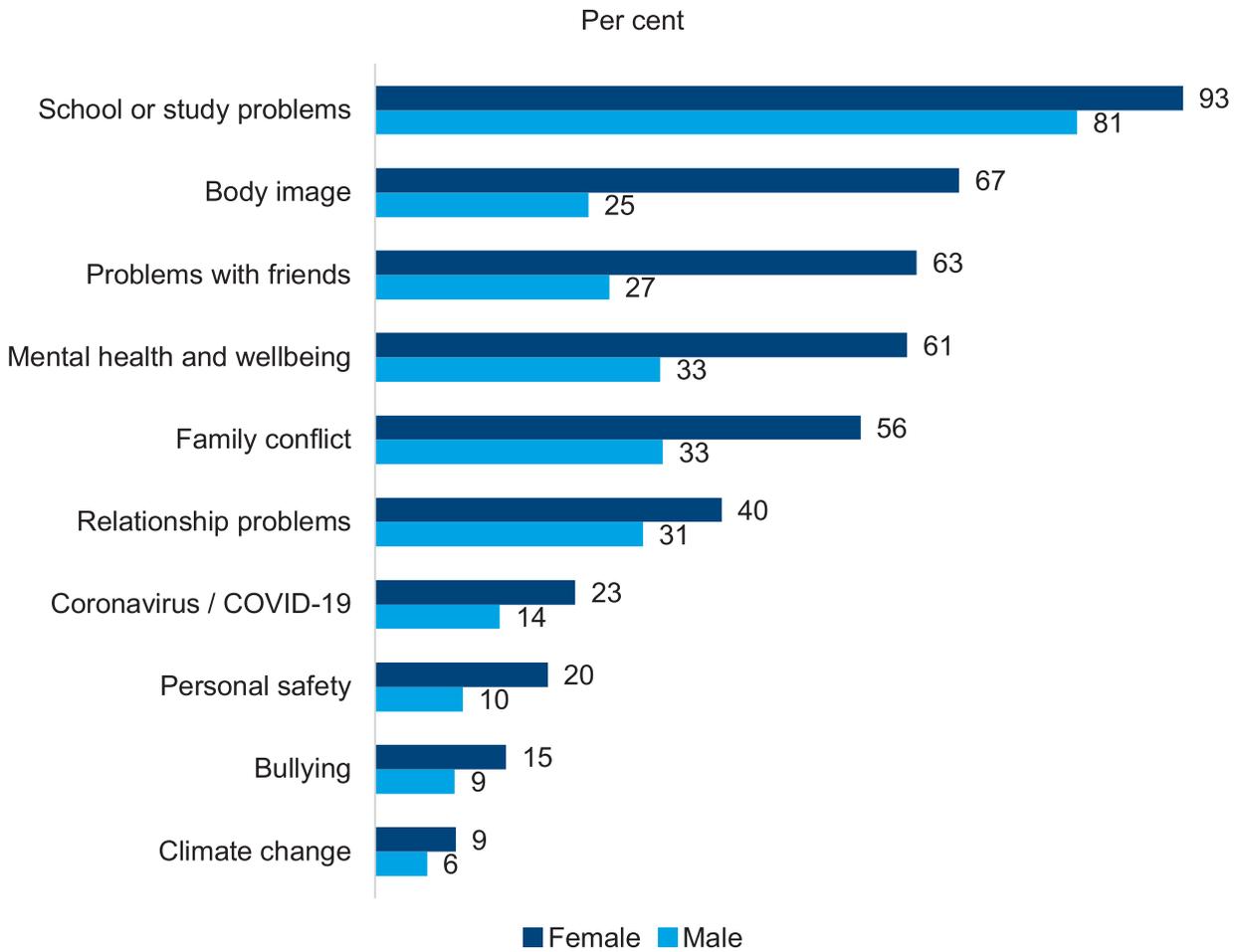
Of the students surveyed in the North Metropolitan region:

- 52.0 per cent agreed (Years 4–6: 47.9%; Years 7–12: 54.0%) and 25.3 per cent strongly agreed they are happy with themselves (Years 4–6: 44.6%; Years 7–12: 15.9%).
- 46.4 per cent agreed (Years 4–6: 40.0%; Years 7–12: 49.5%) and 28.0 per cent strongly agreed they feel good about themselves (Years 4–6: 50.0%; Years 7–12: 17.4%).
- 49.2 per cent of secondary students agreed and 20.7 per cent strongly agreed they can deal with things that happen in their life.
- In Years 9 to 12, 59.1 per cent of secondary students reported they had felt sad, blue or depressed for two or more weeks in a row in the previous 12 months. Female students are more likely to report this than their male peers (68.2% vs 45.2%).

Year 9 to Year 12 students were also asked about sources of stress in the previous 12 months. School and study problems (88.7%) were the most commonly reported source of stress, followed by mental health and wellbeing (51.3%), body image (50.9%) and problems with friends (48.5%).

There are also gender differences in the responses, with greater proportions of female students reporting being affected by stress across all sources.

Proportion of students reporting sources of stress in the previous 12 months



Notably, female young people are more than twice as likely as their male peers to report body image and problems with friends as stressors. These gender differences are consistent with the rest of the state.

**Access to support for physical and mental health**

Over two-thirds (68.1%) of secondary students in the North Metropolitan region said they know where to get support in their school for stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries, while 48.2 per cent said they know where to get support in their local area. More than one-half (60.1%) said they know where to get help online.

Over one-third (36.2%) reported they had received help for problems with stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries in the previous 12 months. Of these students, 39.1 per cent found a doctor or GP helpful, while 33.2 per cent reported they found a school psychologist or school nurse helpful.

The most commonly used sources of support for students in the North Metropolitan region were parents or someone who acts as a parent (83.2%), friends including boyfriends or girlfriends (70.2%), other family (62.9%), school psychologist, school chaplain or school nurse (51.4%) and doctor or GP (48.9%).

Of the students who had asked for help, 86.9 per cent found friends (including boyfriend or girlfriend) helpful, 81.1 per cent found parents helpful, 78.2 per cent found other family helpful, 76.5 per cent found a GP or doctor helpful and 64.3 per cent found a school psychologist, school chaplain or school nurse helpful.

More than one-quarter (26.3%) reported there had been a time in the previous 12 months when they had wanted or needed to see someone for their health but weren't able to. Female students are more likely to report this than their male peers (31.2% vs 17.9%).

Two-thirds (66.1%) of these students reported not seeing someone for their health due to feeling embarrassment or shame,

while 39.3 per cent reported they are unsure who to see or where to go.

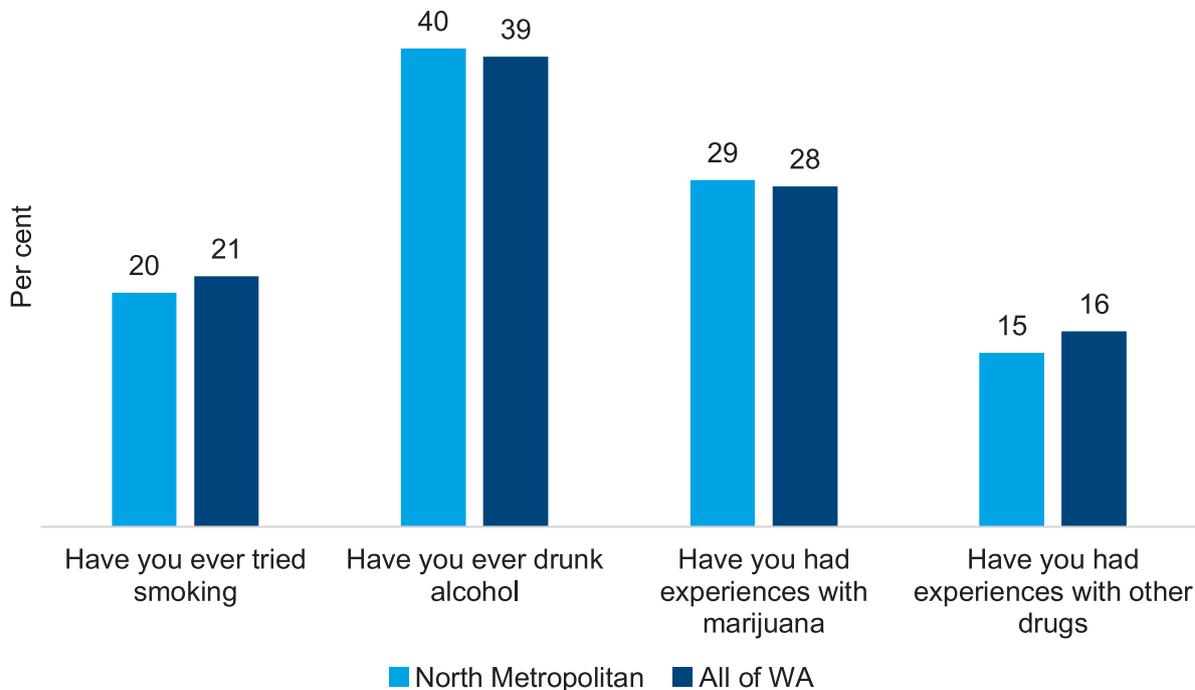
## Risk-taking and healthy behaviours

### Alcohol and other drugs

One-fifth (19.5%) of secondary students in the North Metropolitan region reported they have tried smoking, while two-fifths have tried alcohol (39.9%). Year 9 to Year 12 students were also asked if they had experiences with marijuana as well as other drugs. Over one-quarter (28.9%) reported they had experience with marijuana, while 14.5 per cent had experience with other drugs.

These results are relatively consistent with those across the state.

### Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who responded 'yes' to the whether they have tried smoking or drinking, or had experiences with marijuana or other drugs (Years 9 to 12 only)



Note: The questions asked were: Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?; Have you ever drunk alcohol (more than just a few sips, like a full can of beer or a glass of wine)?; Have you ever had any experiences with marijuana?; Have you ever had any experiences with other drugs? Response options were: 'No', 'Yes' and 'Prefer not to say'.

Of the secondary students surveyed in the North Metropolitan region:

- 68.7 per cent reported having learnt 'some' or 'a lot' about alcohol and 64.4 per cent had learnt about cigarettes/smoking at school (all of WA: 73.0% and 68.5% respectively).
- Only 46.1 per cent said they had learnt 'some' or 'a lot' about marijuana and 50.9 per cent had learnt 'some' or 'a lot' about other drugs at school (all of WA: 50.0% and 55.0%).
- 69.7 per cent thought people their age should not use any substances including cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana or other drugs (all of WA: 72.0%).

Most students in the North Metropolitan region feel like they know enough about the health impacts of alcohol (88.3%) and smoking (90.7%), however fewer feel like they know enough about the health impacts of marijuana (64.1%). These results are broadly consistent with the rest of WA.

## Sexual health

Just over one-half of secondary students (53.4%) in the North Metropolitan region reported they had learnt 'some' or 'a lot' about sexual health and ways to support their sexual health at school, while 47.9 per cent reported they had learnt 'some' or 'a lot' about pregnancy and contraception at school.

Consistent with the above results, 44.1 per cent reported they feel they don't know enough about sexual health and ways to support their sexual health or they aren't sure (female: 47.9%; male: 39.0%). A similar proportion (46.5%) reported they feel they don't know enough about pregnancy and contraception or they aren't sure (female: 46.3%; male: 47.0%).

More than one-third (38.1%) of secondary students in the North Metropolitan region do not know or are unsure about where to go if they needed help for something about their reproductive or sexual health.

In Years 9 to 12, 59.1 per cent of female students and 31.3 per cent of male students reported they had been sent unwanted sexual material, such as pornographic pictures, videos or words.

These results are consistent with those across the state.

## Problematic behaviours and emotions related to being online

Three in ten (30.2%) Year 4 to Year 12 students said they feel bothered 'fairly often' or 'very often' when they cannot be on the internet (Years 4–6: 24.4%; Years 7–12: 32.7%), while 22.2 per cent said they feel bothered 'fairly often' or 'very often' when they cannot play electronic games (Years 4–6: 25.0%; Years 7–12: 21.0%).

When it comes to mobile phone usage, over one-third (37.5%) of secondary school students feel bothered when they cannot use their mobile phone. Of these, 28.8 per cent of male and 44.2 per cent of female secondary students said they feel bothered 'fairly often' or 'very often' when they cannot use their mobile phone. Further, 8.1 per cent of male and 17.5 per cent of female secondary students said they go without eating or sleeping either fairly often or very often because of their mobile phone.

These results align with those for students across WA.

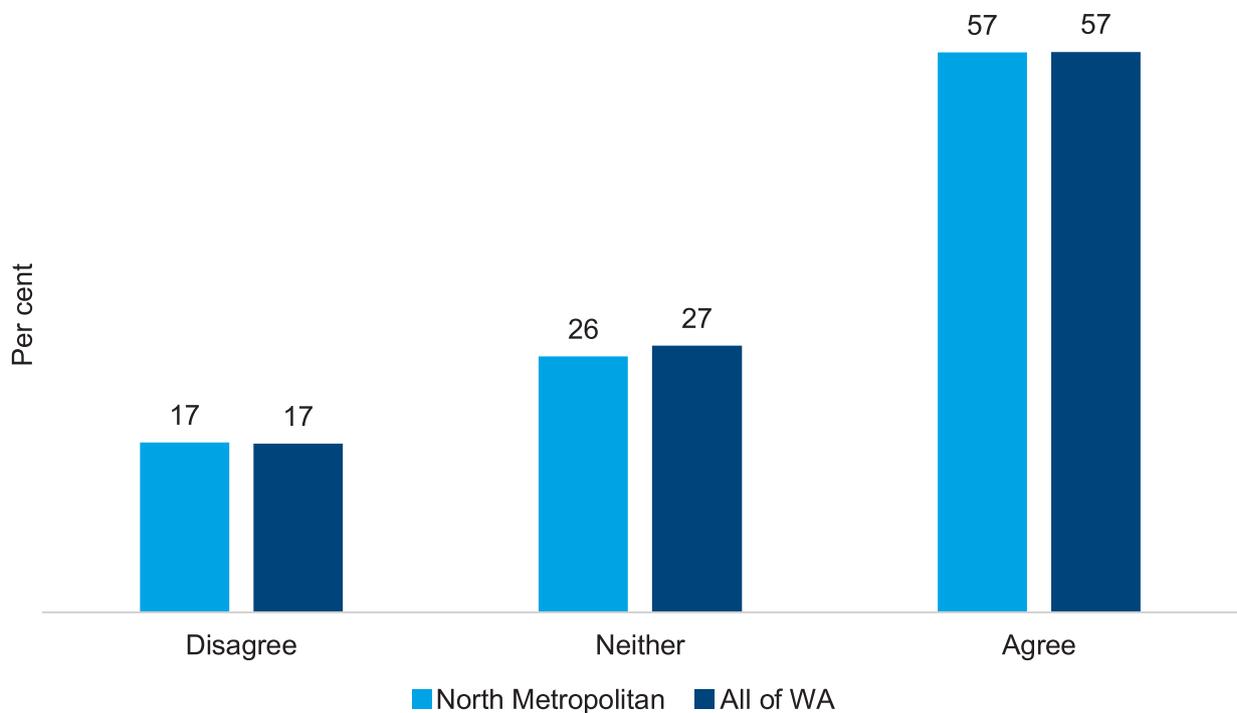
### Connection to community

Most Year 4 to Year 6 students (88.4%) and Year 7 to Year 12 students (81.3%) in the North Metropolitan region like where they live.

Further, seven in ten (71.2%) Year 4 to Year 6 students feel like they belong in their

community, while just over one-half (57.1%) of Year 7 to Year 12 students feel this way. Female secondary students are less likely to feel like they belong in their community than male students. These results are consistent with those across WA.

### Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who feel like they belong in their community



Of the students surveyed in the North Metropolitan region:

- 72.5 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that their neighbours are friendly, while 65.5 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.
- 57.8 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that when they go to the shops the people there are friendly, while 66.2 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.
- 74.9 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that there are lots of fun things to do where they live, while 49.2 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.

- 85.8 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that there are outdoor places for them to go in their area, like parks, ovals or skate parks, while 85.2 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.

These results are consistent with those across the state.

Less than one-half (40.3%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students are active outdoors (like going to the park, beach or bush, walking the dog, riding a bike or skateboard) outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 46.8%; Years 7–12: 37.2%).

Female secondary students are less active outdoors than their male peers (31.2% vs 46.1%).

Two in five students (Years 4–6: 42.2%; Years 7–12: 40.6%) in the North Metropolitan region said they spend time practising or playing a sport outside of school every day or almost every day. Similarly, female secondary students are less likely than their male peers to do this (34.4% vs 50.4%).

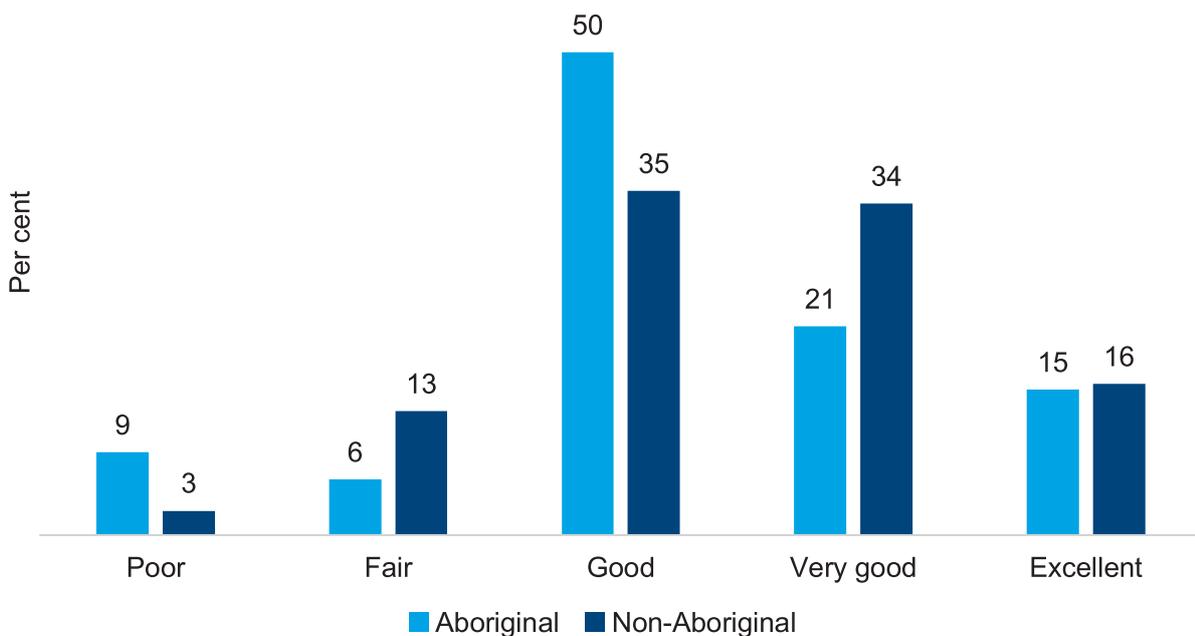
In terms of other activities outside of school, of the students surveyed in the North Metropolitan region:

- 32.2 per cent said they spend time hanging out with friends outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 30.1%; Years 7–12: 33.3%).
- 59.7 per cent of male and 34.6 per cent of female students reported playing games on a game console, computer or tablet every day or almost every day.

### Aboriginal children’s and young people’s views on feeling healthy and connected

Of the Aboriginal students surveyed in the North Metropolitan region, just over a third (36.3%) rated their health as very good or excellent; this is less than non-Aboriginal students (49.5%).

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting their general health ratings



Nearly three-fifths (56.5%) of the Aboriginal students in the North Metropolitan region reported that physical activity, sport or exercise is 'definitely' an important part of their life, slightly more than non-Aboriginal students (53.8%). Moreover, three-fifths (61.0%) reported they had done vigorous exercise three or more times in the past week, which is consistent with 63.1 per cent for non-Aboriginal students.

Just over one-half (52.3%) of Aboriginal students reported high life satisfaction compared to 60.7 per cent for non-Aboriginal students. Moreover, 24.1 per cent of Aboriginal students in the North Metropolitan region reported low life satisfaction compared to 16.3 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.

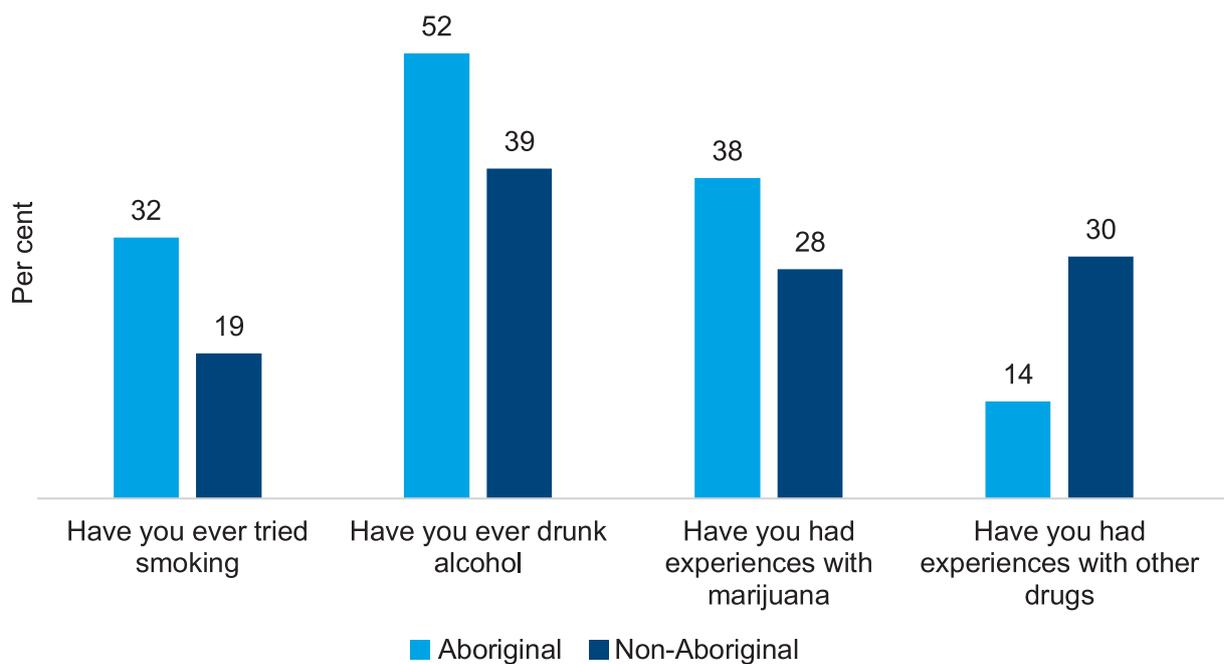
Notwithstanding the above result, most Aboriginal students agreed with the following statements:

- I feel good about myself (64.5%).
- I am able to do things as well as most people (73.0%).
- I am happy with myself (68.8%).

The top three stressors reported by Aboriginal Year 9 to Year 12 students were school or study problems (93.3%), mental health and wellbeing (65.8%), and family conflict (65.1%). Notably, compared to non-Aboriginal students, Aboriginal students in the North Metropolitan region were more likely to be stressed due to the COVID-19 pandemic (52.0% vs 19.3%), climate change (34.7% vs 8.2%) and bullying (35.2% vs 12.8%).

Aboriginal secondary students in the North Metropolitan region are more likely to have tried smoking and drunk alcohol than non-Aboriginal students (smoking: 31.7% vs 18.9%; alcohol: 52.1% vs 39.4%).

**Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who have tried smoking or drinking, or had experiences with marijuana or other drugs (Years 9 to 12 only)**



Note: The questions asked were: Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?; Have you ever drunk alcohol (more than just a few sips, like a full can of beer or a glass of wine)?; Have you ever had any experiences with marijuana?; Have you ever had any experiences with other drugs? Response options were: 'No', 'Yes' and 'Prefer not to say'.

Aboriginal Year 9 to Year 12 students are also marginally more likely to have had experiences with marijuana (38.3% vs 28.2%) and with other drugs (29.6% vs 13.6%).

In terms of connection to culture and community, of the Aboriginal students in the North Metropolitan region:

- more than one-third (35.5%) do not know or are unsure if they know their family's country, which is the equal highest proportion of all regions across WA.
- almost one-third (30.2%) said they talk Aboriginal language 'some' or 'a lot', while 45.5 per cent said they talk none.
- only one-third (34.3%) said they do cultural or traditional activities with their family (all of WA: 47.8%).

Of the students who did know their family's country, only 60.0 per cent said they spend time on their family's country (all of WA: 77.4%). This is the lowest proportion across the state.

One in five (21.2%) Aboriginal children (Years 4 to 6) in the Perth Metropolitan area does not feel like they belong in their community (non-Aboriginal: 5.2%). Almost two-thirds (62.6%) of Aboriginal secondary students do feel like they belong in their community, which is consistent with their non-Aboriginal peers (56.9%). However, a significant proportion (26.4%) do not feel like they belong in their community (non-Aboriginal: 16.7%). The remainder neither agree nor disagree (Aboriginal: 10.9%, non-Aboriginal: 26.3%).

Similarly, only 63.6 per cent of Aboriginal secondary students in the North Metropolitan region like where they live, compared to 82.0 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.

The North Metropolitan region has the highest proportion of Non-Aboriginal secondary students liking where they live, and the lowest proportion of Aboriginal students liking where they live.

## What do children and young people in the North Metropolitan region say about being healthy and connected?

Students were asked the following open text questions related to health and mental health:

- Thinking about mental health and other emotional worries, like stress, anxiety and depression, what are some of the ways families, communities, schools or adults in general could be more helpful?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with seeking help for health issues, including mental health worries?

### Talking about mental health

*“There was a time where my school really helped me when I was feeling down because of a bully once I told my parents and they got it to a teacher they fixed the problem straight away by getting me to talk to a well-being teacher that I could talk to and tell her all my problems it really helped me and made me feel a lot more better about myself and I didn't feel down anymore because I had her to talk to and not just my parents.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“I think young people should always be taken seriously by adults when they express concerns for their mental health, or talk about something important to them. Teenage girls, or just younger teenagers in general, are often made fun of for their interests which can make them afraid to try new things or aspects of identity, meaning they may miss out on this important part of growing up.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Perhaps be more open, as I feel like I will be criticised if I admit how I feel.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I find that we haven’t been educated enough about mental health at school. It is somewhat a taboo topic. I feel like my peers don’t know how common it is to struggle with your mental health. Less common mental health issues such a psychosis and bipolar disorder are not taught to us at all. I also reckon that we should be taught how to ask for help and how to react when someone tells us that they are in a really dark place. For example my friends told me she was feeling suicidal and I didn’t know what to do with that information. I also don’t tell anyone about my conditions because I’m afraid of being judged.”*

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### **Feeling anxiety, depression or sadness**

*“I’m a bit depressed but am to scared to show it to anybody.”*

*(male, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I have been really sad and worried about family members some of them have been really sick which makes me worry stress and very sad.”*

*(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Depression it hit me at a young age and it’s been affecting me ever since.”*

*(student who selected ‘in another way’, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“Because there aren’t enough things put in place to put peoples mental health first. It’s so hard to deal with and school is the last thing you should have to worry about when the biggest thing on your mind is your bad home life, bad life, everything going wrong, intrusive and horrible thoughts about yourself and ... having scars all over your body because you tried to kill the sadness.”*

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Music is a great release from the grip of anxiety, it puts me in a new world.”*

*(male, 16 year-old, undisclosed Aboriginal status)*

### **Talking about getting support**

*“When seeking help for depression it was always the same answer. ‘Your fine’ or ‘do you want a hug’. With my anxiety it was har to find help, people would say I was a weak person.”*

*(student who selected ‘in another way’, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Yeah, it’s just so expensive to go to therapy and it’s hard to talk about to parents.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Parents blew off any problems I believed I had, until I booked my own sessions to see psychologists and psychiatrists and I was diagnosed with clinical depression and anxiety.”*

*(male, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**▲▲ I think that lots of young people my age are experiencing mental health challenges but are either unsure of where to go or are ashamed of how seeking help would look to others like our family members, peers etc. and because we all know it’s so common to feel like this, we either just disregard it or invalidate our own emotions just because we know there are others that feel like this. ▼▼**

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### Views on their local area

In total, 1,446 students from the North Metropolitan region responded to the free text question: 'If there was one thing you could change about your local area, what would it be?' Of the students surveyed in this area, the top things that they would like to change in their local area were:

- More fun activities to do and places to hang out.
- More, upgraded outdoor spaces or parks.
- I wish I was closer to my friends, more friends, more young people.
- Would like more, closer shops, a mall, movies, greater diversity.

*“More mountain bike trails and jumps.”*  
(male, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“I would change my neighbour that lives next to me because he is really rude to my family and my culture.”*  
(female, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“There is nothing to do in my area. I just have to stay home everyday if I'm not going out because there's no where I can walk or ride my bike to. I would like there to be an oval and playground where I could hang out at. I would like to go outside and enjoy it, not just sit at home doing homework all day and everyday.”*  
(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“I have wrote letters to the council asking if they can build a skate park in Quinn's rocks because they don't have one there and I think it will be good because people that carny go all the way to butler or Clarkson can just go to the one in Quinn's.”*  
(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“More jumps for bikes and let us choose what to build.”*  
(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Build more establishments and fun places for teens because the majority of places are for toddlers or adults (park with sand and a swing saw). At a teen age, going out is very common and adding basketball hoops or soccer goals in my area would tremendously improve the percentage of who goes outside.”*  
(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“I would like to see more opportunities to meet the people in my community and to feel connected within the community. E.g. having Christmas light competitions, bake sales/ fundraisers or gatherings in the local park.”*  
(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

**▲▲ To get more things for us children and teenagers to do because there isn't enough that's why kids start experimenting with drugs is because we are bored there i s nothing better to do. ▼▼**

(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

## Learning and participating

**“ I feel as though upper school and ATAR are a major source of stress and anxiety, and there are ways to reduce this. I believe that the teaching practices in some classes are inadequate in preparing us for the tests and exams, mostly in Methods. We could achieve better with more structured and guided teaching rather than just being told to do book work and seek occasional assistance. ”**

*(male, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### Attendance

Just over one-half (51.7%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the North Metropolitan region said it is very important to them to be at school every day (Years 4–6: 62.9%; Years 7–12: 46.2%), while 40.5 per cent (Years 4–6: 33.1%; Years 7–12: 44.2%) said it is somewhat important.

Two-thirds (66.7%) of students reported they had attended the same school since beginning primary or secondary school, while the remaining third had attended multiple schools.

Of the secondary students surveyed, 15.5 per cent reported they had been suspended from

school, while 13.8 per cent reported they had wagged school in the previous 12 months.

Participants were asked whether it worried them if they missed school due to COVID-19. One-half (52.0%) of students responded, ‘No’, while 38.6 per cent said it worried them a little and 9.4 per cent said it worried them a lot.<sup>4</sup>

These results are similar to those across WA.

When it comes to learning activities outside of school, almost one-half (45.9%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the North Metropolitan region spend time doing homework every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 50.4%, Years 7–12: 43.8%). This is the highest proportion of regions across the state.

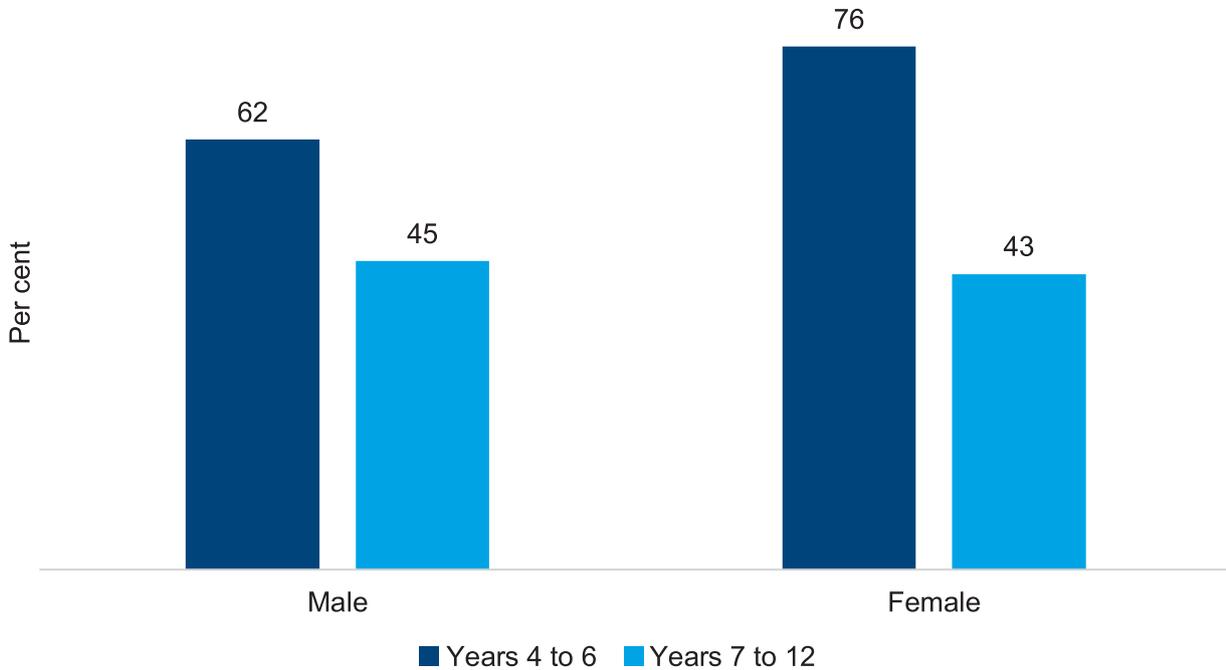
### Liking school and sense of belonging

Around one-quarter (25.5%) of students in the North Metropolitan region reported liking school a lot (Years 4–6: 43.4%; Years 7–12: 16.7%), and 25.7 per cent a bit (Years 4–6: 25.1%; Years 7–12: 26.0%).

In primary school, female students are more likely than male students to like school (female: 75.6%, male: 62.1%), however in secondary school male students are more likely to like school (female: 42.7%, male: 44.6%).

<sup>4</sup> It should be noted that in the 2021 school year when the survey was completed the State Government postponed the start of Term 1 by one week in the Perth Metropolitan area. Similarly, in 2020 there was one week where parents were encouraged to keep their children at home and do remote learning. Source: WA Department of Education, 2020-21 and 2021-22 Annual reports.

Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting they like school



These gender differences are consistent with those across the state.

Most (69.6%) secondary students agree that their school is a place where they belong, however, a significant minority (30.3%) do not feel this way (disagree: 20.8%; strongly disagree: 9.5%).

Female secondary students are more likely than male students to feel like they don't belong at school (33.4% vs 23.6%).

Most students (74.6%) agreed they feel happy at school (Years 4–6: 89.4%; Years 7–12: 67.3%), while 71.8 per cent agreed they like learning at school (Years 4–6: 85.8%; Years 7–12: 65.0%).

Seven in ten students (71.4%) said they usually get along with classmates (Years 4–6: 71.8%; Years 7–12: 71.2%), while 64.0 per cent said they usually get along with their teachers (Years 4–6: 78.1%; Years 7–12: 57.1%).

One-third (32.3%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students said that, if needed, they almost always get help from teachers in class (Years 4–6: 47.6%; Years 7–12: 24.8%), while 47.1 per cent reported they get it sometimes (Years 4–6: 42.2%; Years 7–12: 49.4%).

Around one in five (20.8%) secondary students said they almost never get the help that they need. This is the highest proportion of students not getting help of regions across WA.

Of the students surveyed in the North Metropolitan region:

- Three-quarters (74.7%) reported it is true there is a teacher or another adult in the school who believes the student will achieve good things (Years 4–6: 90.6%; Years 7–12: 66.9%).
- 66.4 per cent said it is true that a teacher or another adult at their school really cares about them (Years 4–6: 86.3%; Years 7–12: 56.7%).
- 58.8 per cent said their parents or someone in their family often ask about schoolwork/homework (Years 4–6: 60.6%; Years 7–12: 58.0%). These are the highest proportions across the state.

### Feeling safe at school

One-third (32.9%) of students in the North Metropolitan region said they feel safe at school all the time (Years 4–6: 41.7%; Years 7–12: 28.6%), while 45.9 per cent said they feel safe at school most of the time (Years 4–6: 39.7%; Years 7–12: 48.9%). These results are consistent with those across the state.

Over one-third (37.4%) reported they had been bullied or cyberbullied (or both) (Years 4–6: 37.6%; Years 7–12: 37.3%).

In terms of the nature of the bullying, 22.4 per cent reported they had been bullied, 2.6 per cent cyberbullied and 12.4 per cent both bullied and cyberbullied. Among students who reported having ever been bullied or cyberbullied (or both), 38.3 per cent reported this had happened in the previous three months.

Students in secondary school are much more likely to experience cyberbullying than those in primary school (18.1% vs 8.7%). Further, female secondary students are more likely to experience cyberbullying than male students (21.6% vs 12.9%).

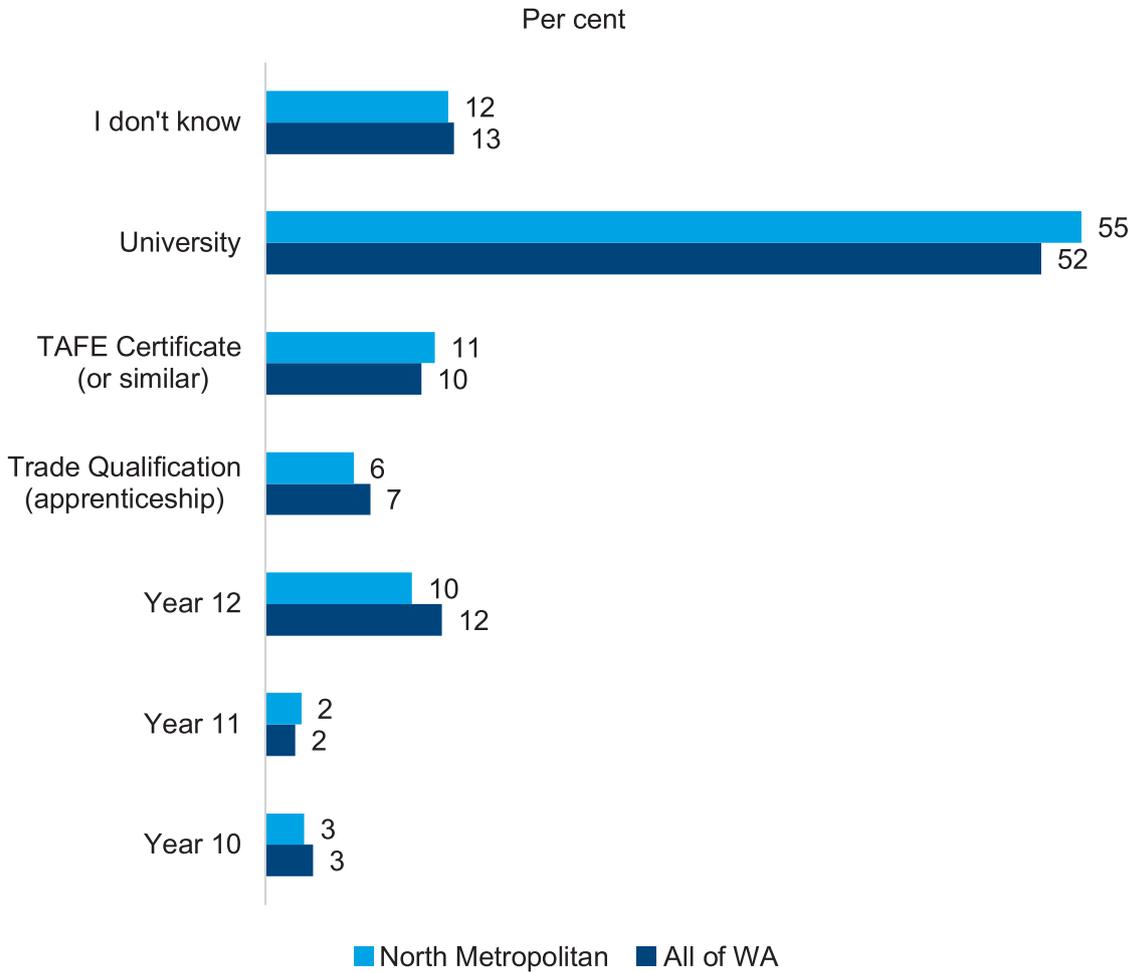
One in seven (15.0%) Year 4 to Year 12 students reported they had missed school in the past because they were afraid someone might bully them (Years 4–6: 12.2%; Years 7–12: 16.4%). Female students are more than twice as likely to report this as male students in primary school (15.5% vs 8.2%, respectively) and secondary school (21.0% vs 9.6%, respectively).

### Transition from school

Over one-half (54.5%) of secondary school students in the North Metropolitan region reported they want to attend university. This is the highest proportion of regions across the state.

A lower proportion of students in the North Metropolitan region than in other regions do not plan to go on to further study after secondary school (14.8% vs 17.0%).

**Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting highest level of education they would like to achieve (single choice only)**



One in six students (17.2%) planned to pursue a TAFE certificate or a trade qualification, while around one in eight (12.2%) reported not knowing the highest level of education they want to achieve.

The majority of students (59.0%) said it is ‘very much true’ or ‘pretty much true’ that at their school they are learning knowledge and skills that will help them in the future.

Over one-quarter (26.6%) of secondary students in the North Metropolitan region reported having a regular part-time job (all of WA: 28.0%).

A relatively high proportion of secondary school students in the North Metropolitan region had not done paid work in the previous year (56.8%), compared to, for example, 42.5 per cent of students in the Mid West or 38.8 per cent in the Wheatbelt.

Most young people reported working so they could have money of their own to spend on things they want (69.1%), while 10.8 per cent said it is to get skills and experience.

### Independence and autonomy

Of the secondary students surveyed in the North Metropolitan region:

- 80.6 per cent said they are allowed to go to and from school on their own.
- 76.3 per cent said they are allowed to go places other than school on their own.
- 30.8 per cent said they are allowed to go out alone at night in their local area.

Female young people are less likely to be allowed to do things than their male peers, including going out alone at night (25.4% vs 37.8%) or cycling on main roads without an adult (44.4% vs 60.7%).

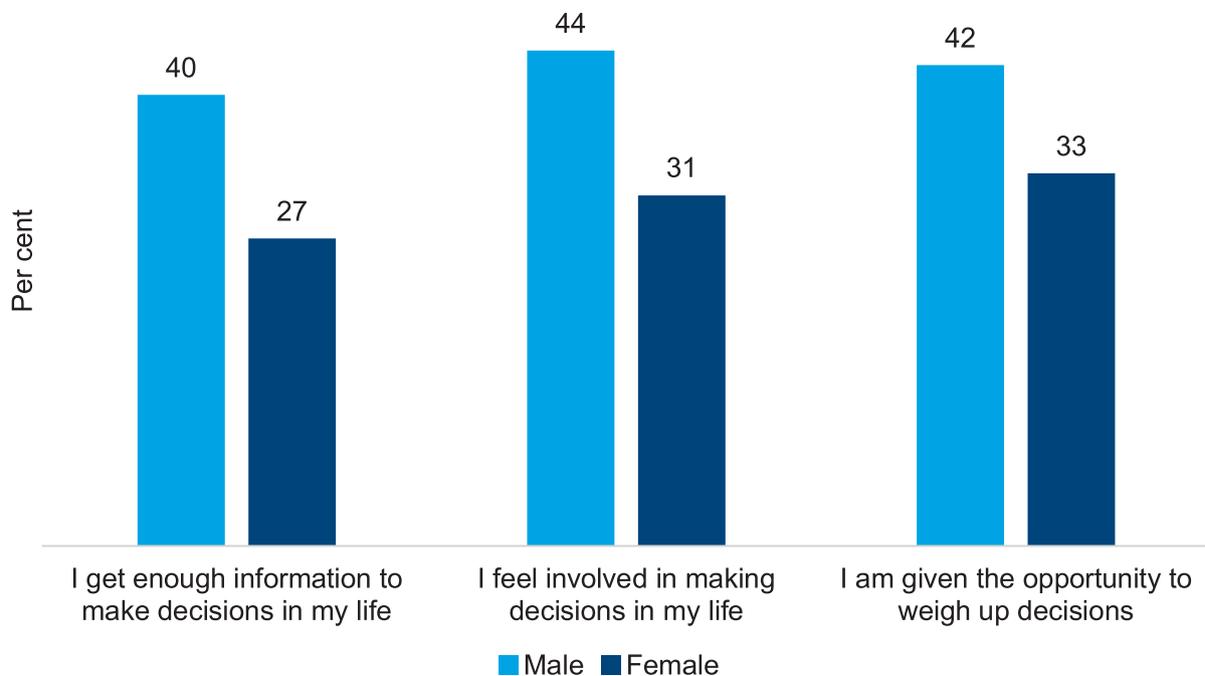
These results are similar to those across the state.

Most secondary students in the North Metropolitan region agreed that they get enough information to make decisions in their life (82.1%), feel involved in making decisions in their life (79.4%) and are given the opportunity to weigh up decisions (81.7%).

Notably, female students are less likely to strongly agree with all three statements.

This gender difference is consistent with results for the rest of the state.

### Proportion of students strongly agreeing with three statements regarding making decisions in their life



### Aboriginal children's and young people's views on learning and participating

Aboriginal students in the North Metropolitan region are less likely to like school than Aboriginal children and young people around the state, and their non-Aboriginal peers in the region.

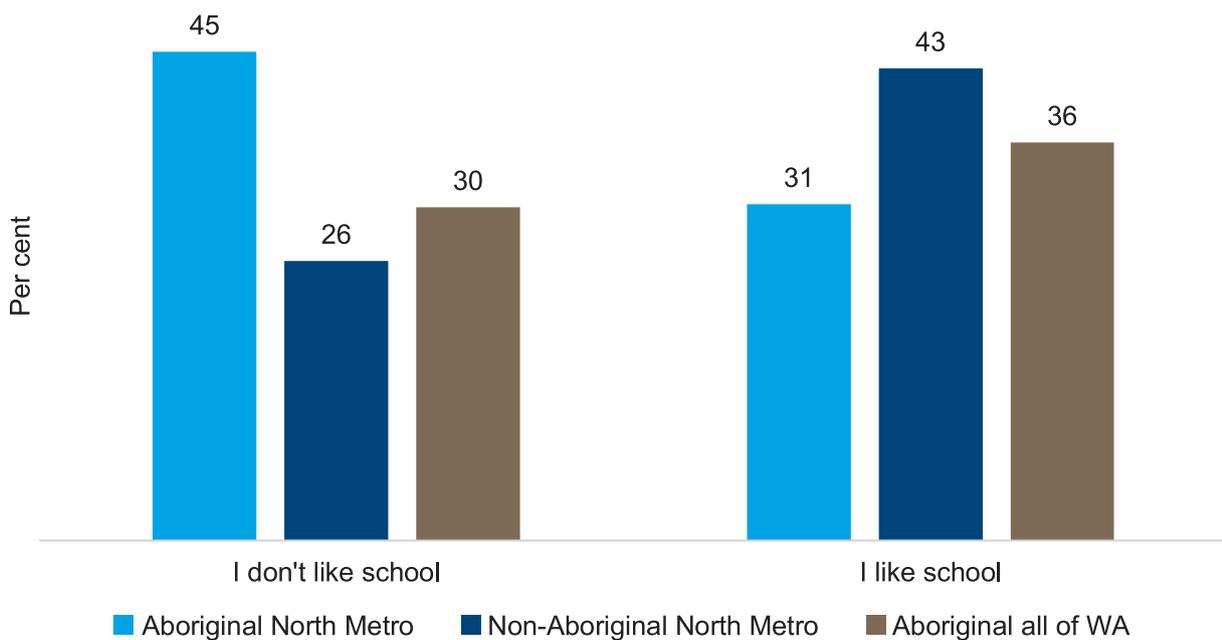
Over two-thirds (69.0%) of Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 6 students reported that being at school every day is very important to them, however only one-third (33.5%) of Aboriginal secondary students reported this (compared to 46.7 per cent for non-Aboriginal students).

Two-fifths (41.4%) of Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students in the North Metropolitan region reported liking school, compared to one-half (51.2%) of non-Aboriginal students in the region and 47.3 per cent of Aboriginal students around WA.

A much higher proportion of Aboriginal students don't like school (34.0%), compared to their non-Aboriginal peers in the North Metropolitan region (20.2%) and compared to Aboriginal students across the state (23.1%).

In particular, 44.6 per cent of Aboriginal secondary students in the North Metropolitan region reported that they don't like school, compared to 25.5 per cent of non-Aboriginal secondary students in the region and 30.4 per cent of Aboriginal secondary students across the state.

### Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting how they feel about school



Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students in the North Metropolitan region reported they agree their school is a place where they like learning (52.8%) and feel happy (63.3%). A majority (57.7%) of Aboriginal secondary students in the North Metropolitan region agreed their school is a place where they belong. These results are much lower than that for non-Aboriginal students (72.2%, 74.8% and 70.4% respectively).

Almost one-quarter (23.3%) of Aboriginal secondary students in the North Metropolitan region strongly disagree that school is a place where they feel like they belong (non-Aboriginal: 8.9%).

Just over one-half (62.5%) of Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students in the North Metropolitan region said they usually get along with their classmates, while 20.0 per cent said they sometimes get along with their classmates.

Most Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the North Metropolitan region said that it is 'very much true' (37.4%) or 'pretty much true' (24.3%) that at school there is a teacher or another adult who listens to them when they have something to say. While only one-quarter (26.8%) reported that if they need extra help they will almost always get it from their teachers (non-Aboriginal: 32.4%).

Aboriginal students in the North Metropolitan region are more likely to have attended multiple schools since they started primary school or secondary school. For example, 38.8 per cent of Aboriginal secondary students have attended more than one secondary school compared to 26.6 per cent for non-Aboriginal students.

When it comes to feeling safe at school, 70.8 per cent of Aboriginal students reported feeling safe all or most of the time (non-Aboriginal: 79.7%).

Aboriginal students in the North Metropolitan region are more likely to report experiences of bullying, cyberbullying or both from students at their school, with one-half (50.7%) reporting this compared to 37.1% for non-Aboriginal students. A high proportion of Aboriginal students have experienced cyberbullying compared to their non-Aboriginal peers (20.9% vs 14.8%).

Almost three-quarters of those Aboriginal secondary students who had been bullied in the previous three months were teased about their cultural background, the colour of their skin, or their religion (Aboriginal: 72.6%; non-Aboriginal: 18.4%).

Aboriginal students in the North Metropolitan region are much less likely to plan to go to university than non-Aboriginal students (24.5% vs 55.5%). One-third (32.0%) want to attend TAFE or pursue a trade qualification. Almost one-third (29.4%) of Aboriginal students in the North Metropolitan region do not plan to study further after secondary school (non-Aboriginal: 14.3%).

The majority (57.9%) of Aboriginal secondary students in the North Metropolitan region had done paid work in the past year (non-Aboriginal: 42.9%). One-quarter (23.2%) of Aboriginal students had a regular part-time job (non-Aboriginal: 26.8%) and another one-quarter (25.7%) worked sometimes during the school-term (non-Aboriginal: 9.6%).

## What do children and young people in the North Metropolitan region say about learning and participating?

### Talking about stress at school

The following responses are from secondary school students who were asked the open text question: 'The majority of secondary school students feel stressed by school work or study. What do you think are the main reasons for this?'

*"I think that students mainly get scared of disappointing someone like their parents or their teachers. They also get stressed out because they may have a particular goal or career that they want to achieve, so getting high results in that area would be extra important to them."*

*(female, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"We are pressured by teachers to do it then they ask why are you tired or why are you sleeping in class all because they gave the kid too much home work."*

*(female, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*"We have too much pressure put on us at once, and pressure to do we,, or live up to other people's expectations rather than setting our own goals.... It may seem like we're just lazy, or we don't know how to manage our time properly, but we do get stressed and we do have a lot of pressure out on us often at once. And sometimes we have other things going on in our lives or other activities such as sport, or earning money or babysitting our siblings if our parents have work. It takes time for these things, and we can't always multitask or rush them to get them done last minute."*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"There's too much pressure put on getting the highest marks and being the best when everyone's performance will always be different. You can't standardise learning and then expect everyone to feel like an individual."*

*(male, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**■ ■ Yes. I did ATAR and the reason I stopped was because of the amount of stress the school and teachers put onto you that you need this to get into uni and if you don't you're basically a failure. I wanted to spend my high school enjoying it and not being stressed out about handing things on time and actually have teachers that genuinely care about you and are not just there to work. It's upsetting how stressful and hard ATAR is in order to have the "succeed" label in society. It's sad. ■ ■**

*(female, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### Feeling unsafe at school

*"Some friends that I made in past years are now bullies and they tell on me and say that I did everything wrong when I've actually done nothing and it's starting to get really bad now."*

*(male, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"I feel unsafe when I get lost around the school and that people will make fun of me because I am in yr 7. I also feel unsafe around some teachers who are male. In the public I always feel unsafe or worried of what is going to happen next."*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Racism in the school is hard to cope with I’m Indian so people always call me stuff (curry muncher).”*

*(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“... me getting bullied at school.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“That people are mean they stick to cliques and people at school are judgemental I don’t feel safe around certain girls. I don’t feel safe around girls who drink and vape.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**■ ■ Cutting down bullying. It is serious and it has been affecting me for a very long time because I am different than everyone else. I am rarely happy at school because I would get physically abused everyday. I have no one to talk to and my only intention is to get through school with a good education but I always get bullied and can’t be happy. I drown out all this sadness from school bullying by playing video games. I hate my life extremely. ■ ■**

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Some teachers turn their heads away when they see a student get bullied.”*

*(male, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

## **Other comments on school**

*“I would like for people to be more educated on Australian history, cause it’s embarrassing to see how little people know and how much these things affect me.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“I’d like for my school to not be so sheltered. For them to include more life skills in the curriculum and to share more information on opportunities or events outside of school. To have more subjects that are physical skill so not just academic.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Schools preach supporting students but then when it comes to a student needing help they are more fixated on uniform or grades or the shoes you’re wearing. The system really lacks in supporting struggling students.”*

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“School needs to have a larger focus on teaching rather than getting certain mark. Exams are important but the purpose of school is learning and compulsory attendance and such a large focus on getting essays and assignments in is killing the love of learning all students start off with.”*

*(male, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

# Safe and Supported

**▲▲ Trusted friends have been a good source of help and understanding and support especially when they have the same struggles/problems. ▲▲**

*(male, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

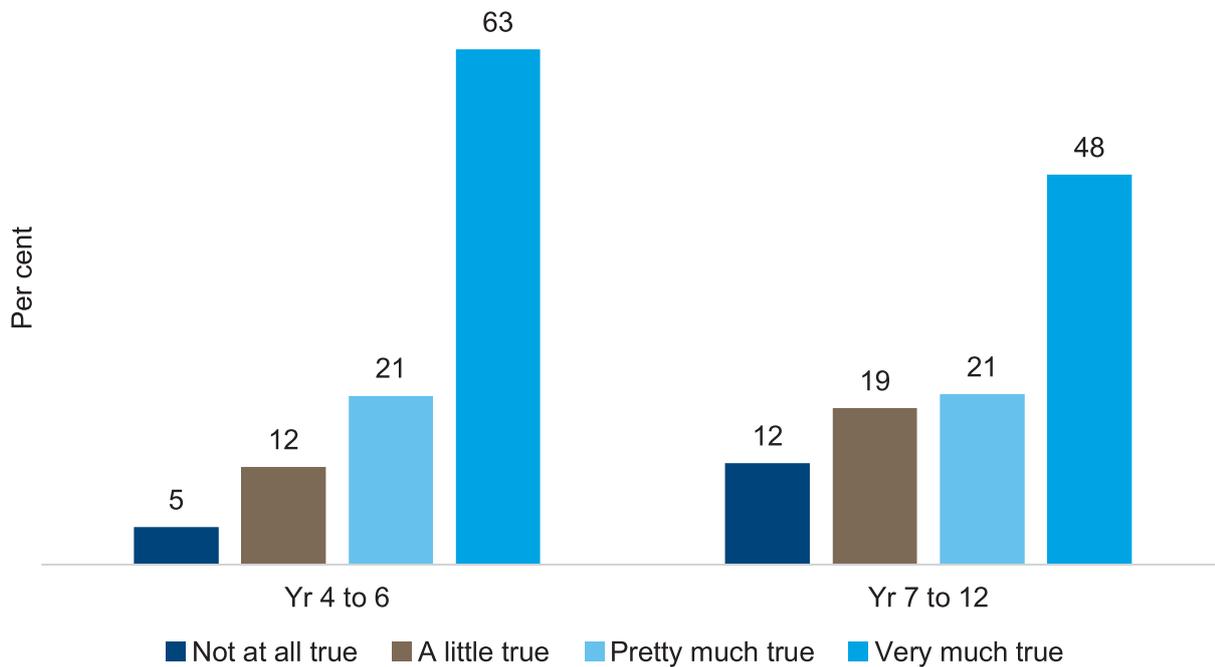
or 'pretty much true' (20.8%) that they live with a parent or another adult they can talk to about their problems or worries. At the same time, one in ten (9.9%) reported it is 'not at all true'.

Secondary students are less likely to report that this is 'very much true' compared to Year 4 to 6 students (47.6% vs 62.9%), and more than twice as likely to report 'not true at all' (12.4% vs 4.6%).

## Supportive relationships

Almost three-quarters (73.4%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the North Metropolitan region reported it is 'very much true' (52.6%)

**Proportion of Year 4 to 12 students responding to the statement: 'Where I live, there is a parent or adult who I can talk to about my problems'**



The difference in results between primary and secondary students is consistent with the rest of the state.

One-half (49.8%) of students reported it is 'very much true' they live with a parent or another adult who listens when they have something to say (Years 4–6: 55.2%; Years 7–12: 47.2%), while 67.8 per cent said it is 'very much true' they live with a parent or another adult who believes they will achieve good things (Years 4–6: 71.2%; Years 7–12: 66.1%).

Female secondary students in the North Metropolitan region are less likely than male secondary students to report that it is 'very much true' or 'pretty much true' that they live with a parent or other adult who listens to them when they have something to say (72.1% vs 80.1%) or whom they can talk to about their problems (65.2% vs 75.0%).

Most students (82.4%) said they live in one home, which is the highest proportion of regions across the state. Of the students who reported having a second home, 38.1 per cent reported living in this home one-half of the time (Years 4–6: 46.0%; Years 7–12: 33.9%).

Three-quarters (76.5%) reported their family gets along very well or well (Years 4–6: 81.2%; Years 7–12: 74.1%).

In terms of friendships, of the students surveyed in the North Metropolitan region:

53.2 per cent felt they are very good at making and keeping friends (Years 4–6: 60.2%; Years 7–12: 49.7%).

83.5 per cent reported they feel they have enough friends (Years 4–6: 84.4%; Years 7–12: 83.0%).

47.2 per cent said they feel their friends care about them a lot (Years 4–6: 56.7%; Years 7–12: 42.6%).

These results are consistent with those across the state.

## Material basics

Children and young people in the North Metropolitan region are generally less likely to be missing out on material items than other students around the state. However, there is still a significant minority of children and young people in this area who do not have access to certain material basics.

Two-thirds (66.5%) of students said that if they are hungry there is always enough food for them to eat at home, while 9.7 per cent said there is only sometimes or never enough food to eat at home (all of WA: 9.6%).

Most students reported having enough money in their family to afford school excursions and/or camps (91.4%) and reported having 'the right kind of clothes' to fit in with people their age (88.1%).

Of the students surveyed in the North Metropolitan region:

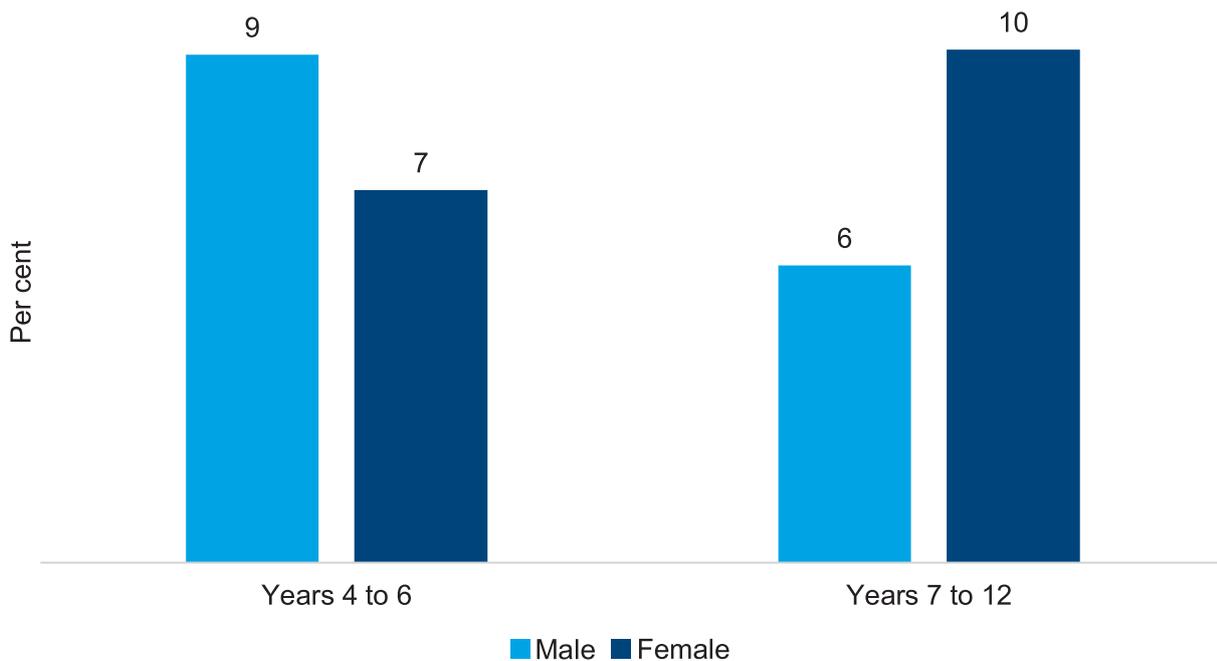
- 89.4 per cent said they have their own bedroom (Years 4–6: 82.3%; Years 7–12: 92.8%).
- 2.3 per cent reported their family does not own a car used for family transport (Years 4–6: 4.0%; Years 7–12: 1.4%).
- 97.3 per cent reported they have access to the internet at home (Years 4–6: 95.6%; Years 7–12: 98.2%).
- 94.0 per cent of secondary students reported having their own mobile phone and 87.7 per cent have their own tablet, laptop or computer.

### Safe in the home

Just under two-thirds (65.5%) of students in the North Metropolitan region said they feel safe at home all the time (Years 4–6: 64.6%; Years 7–12: 66.0%), while 25.0 per cent said they feel safe at home most of the time (Years 4–6: 25.6%; Years 7–12: 24.6%). Almost one in ten (8.8%) feels safe at home only sometimes or less.

In primary school (Years 4 to 6), male students are more likely than their female peers and sisters to not feel safe at home (9.4% vs 6.9%). However, in secondary school, female students are more likely than their male peers and brothers to not feel safe at home (9.5% vs 5.5%). These results are relatively consistent with those across the state.

Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting they feel safe at home sometimes or less



One-quarter (24.2%) of students said they were ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ worried that someone in their home or family will be fighting, while 15.7 per cent said they were ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ worried that someone in their home or family will hurt somebody.

Female secondary students are more likely to worry ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ about their family fighting than their male siblings and peers (29.3% vs 17.6%).

This gender difference is consistent across the state.

Just under one-third (31.4%) of secondary students reported they had stayed away from home overnight because of a problem.

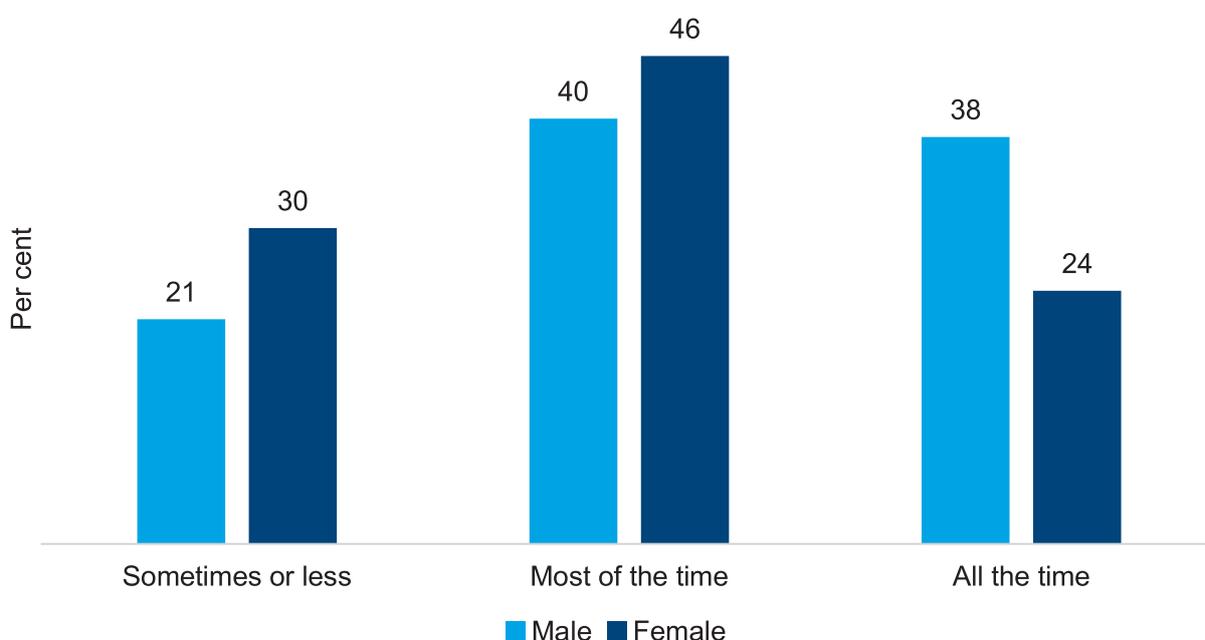
### Safe in the community

Just over one-quarter (28.6%) of students in the North Metropolitan region said they feel safe in their local area all the time (Years 4–6: 26.5%; Years 7–12: 29.6%), while 42.9 per cent said they feel safe in their local area most of the time (Years 4–6: 42.4%; Years 7–12: 43.1%).

These results are consistent with the rest of the state.

Female secondary students are much less likely to feel safe in their local area all the time compared to their male peers (23.9% vs 38.4%). Almost one-third (29.8%) of female secondary students feel safe in their local area only sometimes or less (male: 21.2%).

### Proportion of Year 7 to 12 students reporting how often they feel safe in their local area



Of Year 9 to Year 12 students, 40.4 per cent reported they had ever been hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose (female: 33.6%; male: 48.2%). Of these, 60.8 per cent occurred in the previous 12 months. Students who reported being hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose in the previous 12 months were also asked further questions about the nature and location of the incident.

Female students are more likely to report being harmed by an adult than male students (42.1% vs 21.2%), whereas male students

are much more likely to report being harmed by another child or young person (80.9% vs 55.4%).

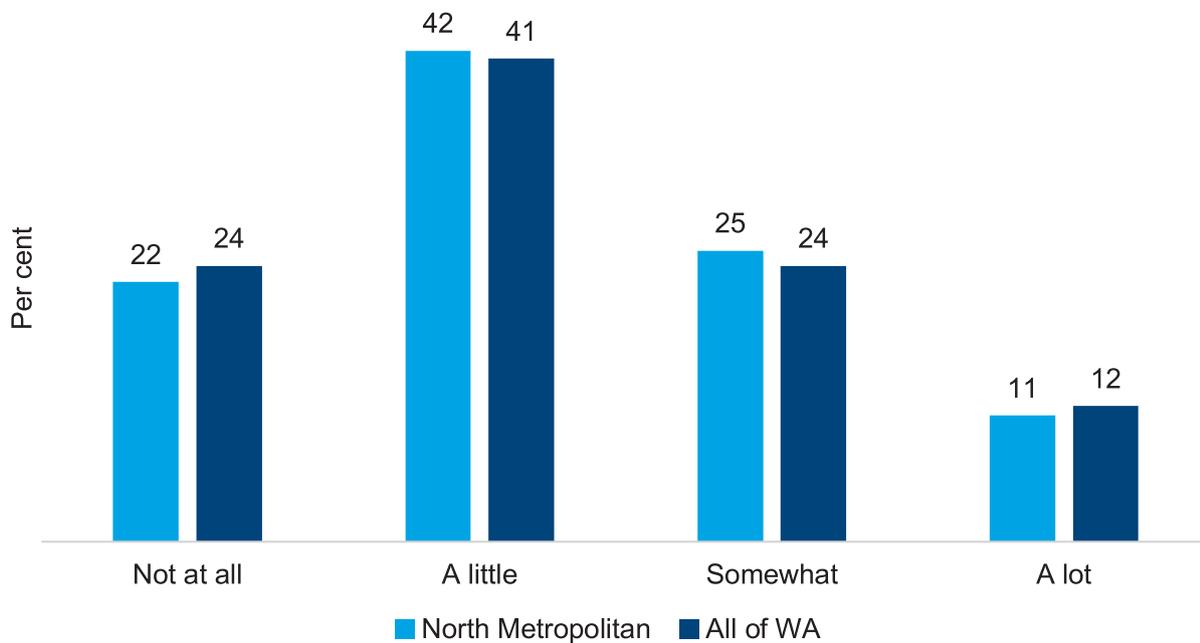
There are also differences in the locations of the incidents reported by males and females. Males reported the incident predominantly taking place at school (53.6%), followed by at home (36.2%); whereas, females reported the incident predominantly taking place at home (71.5%), followed by at school (35.2%).

## Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

When asked about the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes to daily life, just over one-third (35.7%) of students in the North Metropolitan region reported the pandemic affected their life in a bad way ‘a lot’ (10.8%)

or ‘somewhat’ (24.9%). Further, 22.2 per cent of students responded ‘not at all’ when posed this question.

### Proportion of students responding to the question: ‘Thinking about the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes to daily life, how much has this affected your life in a bad way?’



These results are consistent with the rest of the state.

One-fifth (20.3%) of Year 9 to Year 12 students reported the COVID-19 pandemic had been a source of stress to them in the previous year.

Of the students surveyed in the North Metropolitan region:

- 53.1 per cent reported feeling very or somewhat relaxed when they thought of COVID-19; 32.2 per cent reported feeling very or somewhat stressed/anxious.

- 48.0 per cent reported feeling worried if they missed school due to COVID-19 in the previous calendar year (2020).
- These results are similar to those across the state.

## Aboriginal children's and young people's views on feeling safe and supported

### Supportive relationships

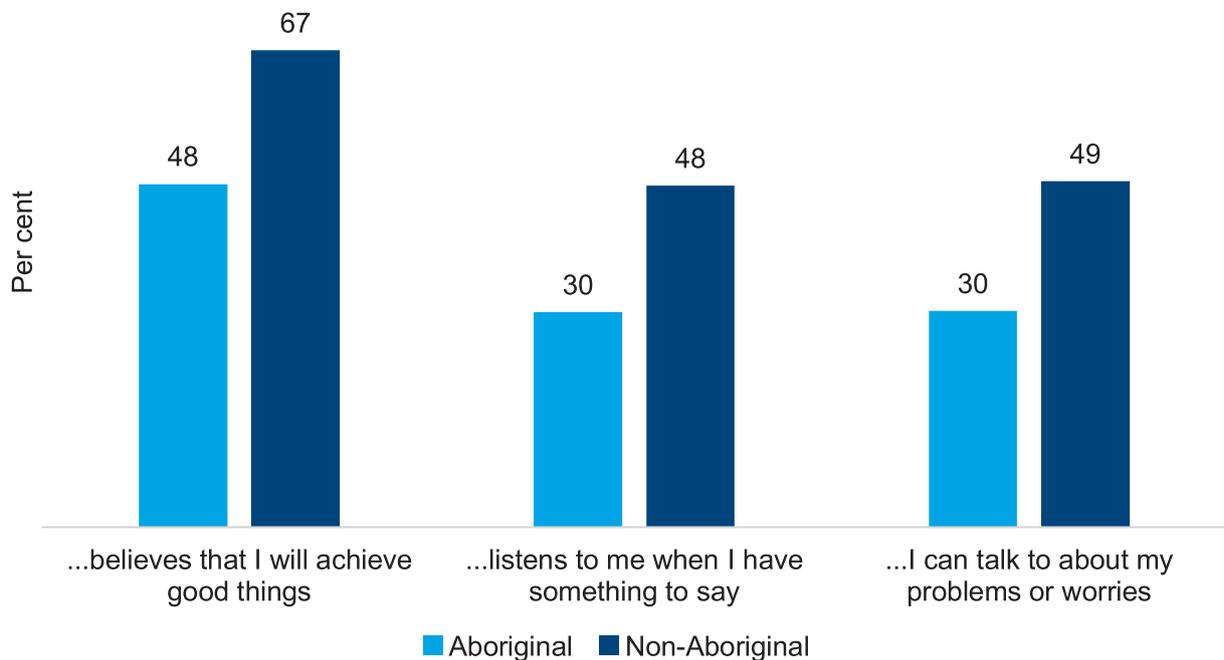
Most Year 4 to Year 6 Aboriginal students in the North Metropolitan region reported that it is 'very much true' that where they live there is a parent or another adult who:

- Believes they will achieve good things (74.4%).
- Listens to them when they have something to say (60.3%).
- They can talk to about their problems or worries (64.6%).

These results are consistent with non-Aboriginal students in the North Metropolitan region.

In contrast, Aboriginal secondary students reported 'very much true' in lower proportions across all three questions compared to non-Aboriginal students.

### Proportion of Year 7 to 12 students responding 'very much true' to the statement: 'Where I live, there is a parent or adult who...'



More than one in five (21.6%) Aboriginal secondary students in the North Metropolitan region reported that it is 'not at all true' that they live with a parent or adult who listens to them when they have something to say (non-Aboriginal: 6.6%).

In terms of family harmony, over two-thirds (68.9%) of Aboriginal students reported that their family gets along well or very well, slightly less compared to non-Aboriginal students (76.8%).

Compared to non-Aboriginal students, Aboriginal students in the North Metropolitan region are more likely to worry 'a lot' that someone in their home or family will be fighting (Aboriginal: 23.4%; non-Aboriginal: 9.8%), will hurt somebody (Aboriginal: 18.4%; non-Aboriginal: 7.2%) or will get arrested (Aboriginal: 15.8%; non-Aboriginal: 4.7%).

### Material basics

Aboriginal students in the North Metropolitan region are more likely to be experiencing some form of material disadvantage in comparison to their non-Aboriginal peers.

- One in 10 (10.0%) of Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students reported that their family does not have a car (non-Aboriginal: 1.9%).
- More than one in eight (13.9%) Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 do not have enough money in their family for them to go on a school excursion or camp (non-Aboriginal: 7.9%).

- Almost one-third (30.6%) of Aboriginal secondary students do not have their own tablet, laptop or computer, compared to 11.6 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.
- One in ten (10.6%) Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 does not have access to the internet at home (non-Aboriginal: 2.3%).

Almost one-quarter (23.4%) of Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the North Metropolitan region said there is only sometimes or never enough food to eat at home when they are hungry. This is much higher than non-Aboriginal children and young people in the area (8.6%) and is also higher than Aboriginal children and young people across the state (18.7%).

Aboriginal students in the North Metropolitan region are more likely to report living in a primary household of seven people or more (16.6%) compared to non-Aboriginal students (6.2%).

### Feeling safe

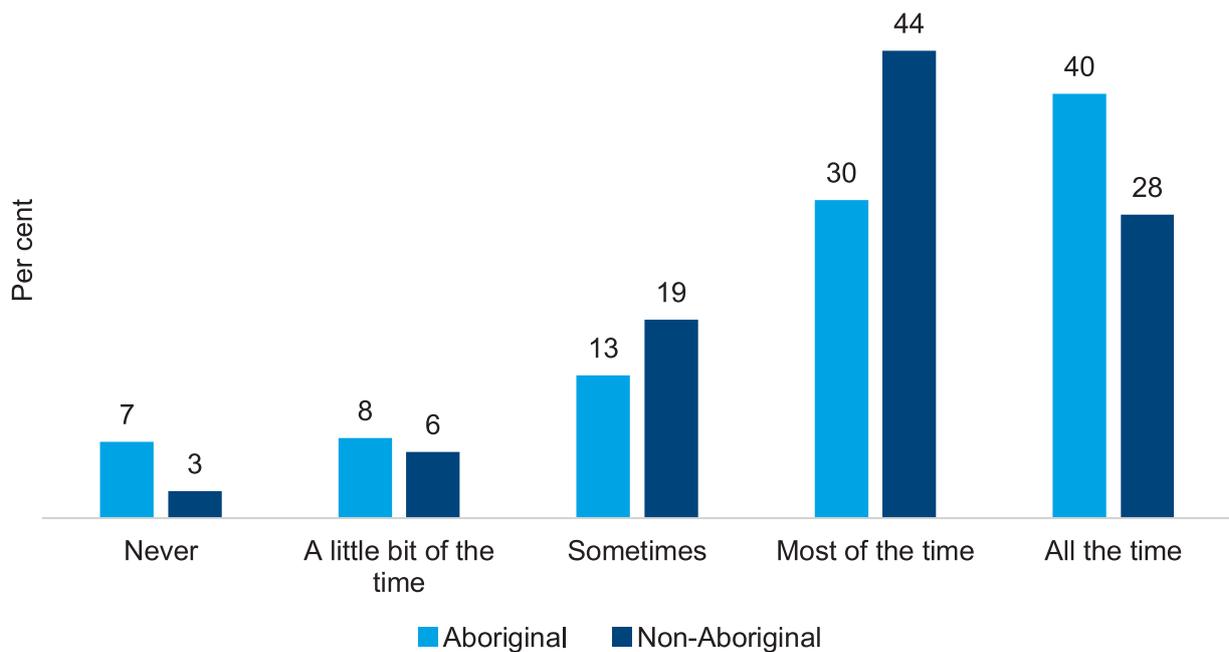
Most (81.5%) Aboriginal students feel safe at home most or all of the time, however, more than one in ten (11.7%) reported they never feel safe at home (non-Aboriginal: 91.1% and 0.9% respectively). Notably, 15.5 per cent of Aboriginal secondary students reported never feeling safe at home, compared to 4.2 per cent of primary school students.

When it comes to safety in their local community, 69.3 per cent of Aboriginal

children and young people in the North Metropolitan region reported feeling safe most or all of the time. This is consistent with non-Aboriginal students in the region (71.9%).

At the same time, a high proportion (7.1%) of Aboriginal students in the North Metropolitan region never feel safe in their local area (non-Aboriginal: 2.5%).

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



## What do children and young people in the North Metropolitan region say about being safe and supported?

### Supportive relationships

*“I would like adults to know that we all have feelings, so don’t yell at children because that won’t help with whatever they are trying to them.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“I think adults in general could be a little more understanding of the way kids feel, that they are still not fully matured therefore we struggle with things adults don’t. I think adults should be a bit considerate of that more.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Remind us that you aren’t a different species and that we can talk to you, Check up on us every now and then If we say nothings wrong and we look worried, push on.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“That kids do go through a hard time and don’t tell anyone and you should always check up on them.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

**▲▲ Be more open to our generation, as generations are different and values and customs are changing, don’t base everything off the generation you grew up in as it is not the same. ▼▼**

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Yelling at kids and treating them with anything less than equal respect is just damaging and ruining your relationships. If your not willing to have conversations with students and kids and just opt to pull the I told you so card, your just making life harder. Parents need to be taught these skills to reduce strain and stress on the students.”*

*(male, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### Feeling unsafe

The following statements were generally in response to the question: ‘What are some of the things that make you feel unsafe?’

*“My mum and dad fighting and my sister and mum fighting.”*

*(female, 9 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“My brother when he threatens to do something to me if I don’t give him something or tell my mum or dad something that he would prefer to keep a secret from them.”*

*(student who selected ‘in another way’, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I feel super safe at my home.”*

*(male, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Old dudes sitting out the front of their houses watching you walk down the street.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“...Feel unsafe around men that I don’t know and that stare at me and my friends.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Getting attacked by people at the train station.”*

*(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Public transport, being alone with older people(strangers), men. This is due to being followed and harassed by boys and men many times.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I have had an incident in the past on a bus where I never thought I could speak up about but I was sexually assaulted by three men and no one including the driver did anything about it. So I made it my priority to get my licence so I never would have to put myself in a position like that again.”*

*(female, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**▲▲ When I'm wearing an outfit that I liked and thought I looked good in, then men on the train or any where look at me as if I'm an objected with something they like the look of, I'm 17 and I have men my age and older (no age limit) looking at my breast like it is okay or have a man once again of any age touch my bum or stare at me or make a gross comment as I walk by or am near them... ▲▲**

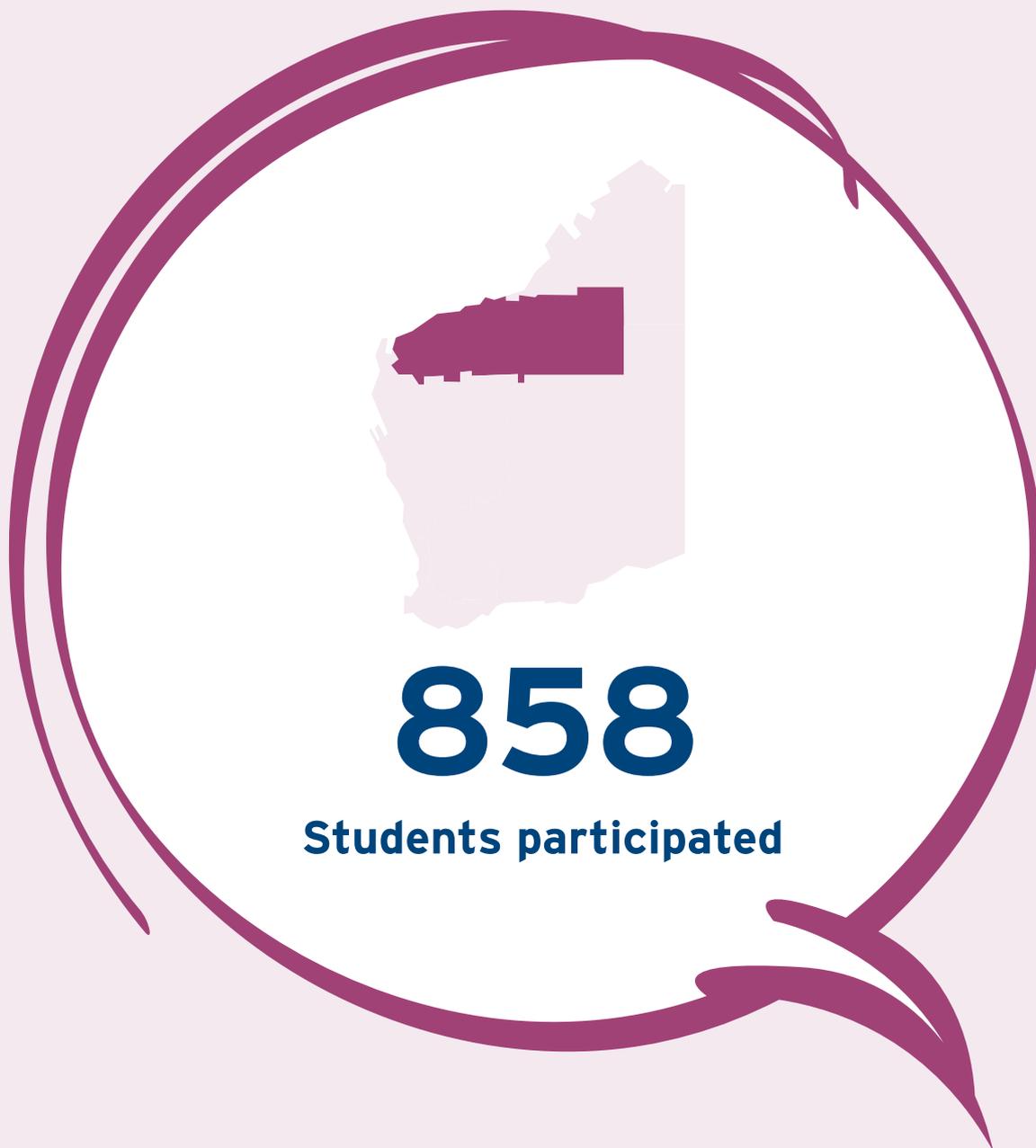
*(female, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*



**When my parents are screaming, when my dad is drunk, when my mom is angry for no reason.**

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

# Pilbara



# Pilbara key findings

**A lower proportion** of students in the Pilbara **reported their physical health is very good or excellent** than those across WA (41.6% vs 48.7%). Further, **Aboriginal students** in the Pilbara are **less likely to rate their health as very good or excellent**, compared to their non-Aboriginal peers (38.4% vs 42.3%).



The proportion of secondary students in the Pilbara reporting they **did not exercise in the previous week is more than double** that for the rest of the state (11.4% vs 5.3%). Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in the Pilbara reported similarly low levels of exercise.

Secondary students in the Pilbara are **more likely** than those across the state **to report playing games on a game console, computer or tablet every day or almost every day (57.5% vs 48.0%)**. This is the highest proportion of young people in regions across WA.



**A higher proportion** of young people in the Pilbara compared to the rest of the state **have tried smoking** (26.6% vs 20.9%) as well as alcohol (46.8% vs 39.2%).



Children and young people in the Pilbara reported broadly **similar ratings for their life satisfaction** to those across the rest of WA (mean life satisfaction: 6.9 vs 6.8).

Most Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students in the Pilbara reported they **agree their school is a place where they feel happy** (74.5%) and like learning (70.1%).



**Secondary students** in the Pilbara are much **more likely to have been suspended from school** than those across the state (30.9% vs 17.1%). This is the highest proportion of all regions across the state.



The proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students **planning to attend university (27.5%)** is almost one-half that for the rest of WA (51.8%) and is the **lowest proportion of the regions** across the state.

**Most students (80.7%)** in the Pilbara said their **family gets along very well or well**. In particular, secondary students in the Pilbara are more likely to report that their family gets along very well compared to the rest of the state (37.1% vs 30.3%).



Secondary students in the Pilbara are **more than twice as likely to disagree that they like where they live** compared to students in the rest of WA (23.9% vs 10.4%).



**Students in the Pilbara are also more likely** than those across the state **to feel unsafe in their local area**. One-half (49.3%) of secondary students in the Pilbara feel safe in their local area only sometimes or less (all of WA: 29.6%).

## Overview

A total of 858 students across Years 4 to 12 from six primary schools and three secondary schools in the Pilbara took part in the Speaking Out Survey 2021.

Just under one-half (47.4%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students surveyed in the Pilbara identified as girls, 49.2 per cent identified as boys and 3.4 per cent selected the option that they identify 'in another way'.

In total, 26.0 per cent of participants reported being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. This is a much greater proportion than in the South metropolitan (5.4%) or North metropolitan (3.6%) regions.

Of the students surveyed in the Pilbara, 96.4 per cent reported speaking English at home and 14.7 per cent reported (also) speaking other language(s) at home. The other languages spoken included Filipino/Tagalog, Maori, Thai and some Aboriginal language.

Many students in the Pilbara enjoyed doing the survey and appreciated the opportunity to have their say:

*"I thought that it felt like lifting lots of things from my shoulders. 🙌🙌"*  
(female, 8 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"I liked it it was great to let out stuff that I have been keeping to my self for a long time."*  
(female, 10 year-old, Aboriginal)

*"I found this survey very helpful because I got talk about how I felt."*  
(female, 10 year-old, Aboriginal)

*"Thank you for caring."*  
(female, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"It was good to tell people about how i felt about school home and even my physical activity."*  
(male, 11 year-old, Aboriginal)

*"I believe that this survey was beneficial for the many Australian children that can't vote. I hope this survey is useful."*  
(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

**▲▲ Thank you very much for creating this survey, I appreciate being able to speak my voice anonymously. ▼▼**

*(female, 14 year-old, undisclosed Aboriginal status)*

*"It was specific and straightforward."*  
(male, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"It was great, I was very honest."*  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

# Healthy and connected

**Have more local and accessible places for young people to go about their mental health without them feeling pressured to do so, or that they would be judged for doing so.**

*(female, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

## Physical health

Of the students surveyed in the Pilbara, 41.6 per cent reported that their health is very good or excellent (Years 4–6: 54.9%; Years 7–12: 32.3%), while 41.9 per cent reported that their health is good and 16.4 per cent that it is poor or fair (Years 4–6: 7.7%; Years 7–12: 22.6%).

These results are different from the rest of WA, with a lower proportion of students in the Pilbara reporting their physical health is

very good or excellent (41.6% vs 48.7%) and a correspondingly higher proportion reporting their physical health is good (41.9% vs 35.6%).

One-fifth (20.5%) of secondary students reported having a long-term health problem, while 10.8 per cent reported having a disability. Both of these proportions are lower than those for the rest of WA (25.4% and 11.7% respectively). The most commonly reported disabilities and/or long-term health problems were asthma, ADHD and having a visual impairment.

Approximately one-third (35.1%) of students reported they care very much about eating healthy food (Years 4–6: 48.9%; Years 7–12: 25.4%). Similarly, 36.4 per cent reported caring very much about how they look (Years 4–6: 31.2%; Years 7–12: 40.0%).

## Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting their general health ratings



Less than one-half (45.1%) of students in the Pilbara reported they eat breakfast every day (Years 4–6: 67.1%; Years 7–12: 29.5%), while 6.5 per cent reported they never eat breakfast (Years 4–6: 2.4%; Years 7–12: 9.5%).

A significantly lower proportion of secondary students eat breakfast every day compared to those across the state (29.5% vs 44.1%). A much lower proportion of male secondary students (37.4% vs 54.7%) and female secondary students (22.3% vs 35.5%) in the Pilbara eat breakfast every day compared to their counterparts around WA.

Compared to the rest of the state, a lower proportion of secondary students in the Pilbara reported physical activity, sport or exercise was 'definitely' an important part of their life (43.7% vs 53.0%). Similarly, a much lower proportion (46.3%) of secondary students in the Pilbara reported they had done vigorous exercise three or more times in the previous week, compared to 61.9 per cent for the rest of WA.

Further, the proportion of Pilbara students reporting they did not exercise in the previous week is more than double that for the rest of the state (11.4% vs 5.3%).

Of the students surveyed in the Pilbara:

- 67.1 per cent reported brushing their teeth twice or more the previous day (Years 4–6: 70.5%; Years 7–12: 64.7%) (all of WA: 68.9%).
- More than one-quarter (28.0%) of secondary students reported eating fruit only a few times a week or less.
- 81.4 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students reported going to sleep on a school night before 9pm, while 43.1 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students reported going to sleep on a school night before 10pm (all of WA: 71.0% and 40.6% respectively).

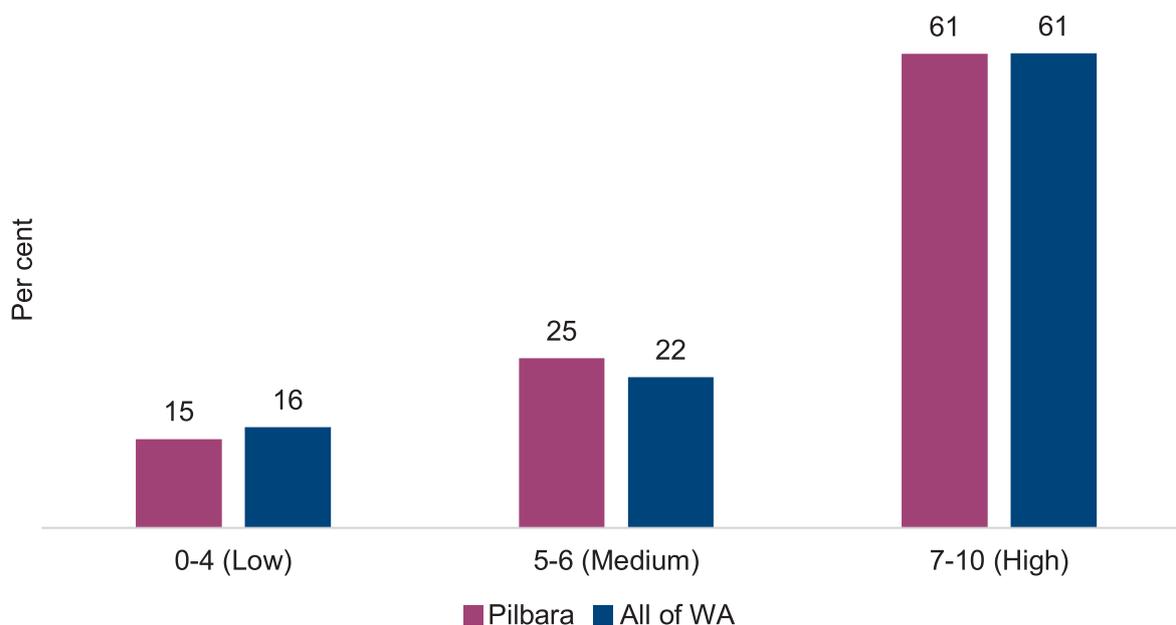
### Mental health

Of the students surveyed in the Pilbara, 6.9 is the mean life satisfaction (on a scale from 0 to 10). The mean life satisfaction across all of WA is 6.8.

Primary school students have a higher mean result than secondary students (Years 4–6: 7.7; Years 7–12: 6.3) – a result consistent across the state.

Three-fifths (60.6%) of students reported a high life satisfaction (7 to 10) (Years 4–6: 73.4%; Years 7–12: 51.4%) and 14.9 per cent reported a low life satisfaction (0 to 4) (Years 4–6: 9.2%; Years 7–12: 18.9%).

**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students rating their life satisfaction on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is the worst possible life and 10 the best possible life**



Overall reported life satisfaction in the Pilbara is broadly consistent with the results for the rest of WA, across both primary and secondary school. The only departure from this is that female secondary students in the Pilbara are less likely to report low life satisfaction scores (0 to 4) (18.8% vs 25.5%) and more likely to report medium scores (5 to 6) (35.7% vs 29.6%).

Of the students surveyed in the Pilbara:

- 51.9 per cent agreed (Years 4–6: 48.3%; Years 7–12: 54.4%) and 26.0 per cent strongly agreed they are happy with themselves (Years 4–6: 41.7%; Years 7–12: 15.0%).
- 46.4 per cent agreed (Years 4–6: 41.2%; Years 7–12: 49.9%) and 29.1 per cent strongly agreed that they feel good about themselves (Years 4–6: 46.0%; Years 7–12: 17.5%).
- 51.9 per cent of secondary students agreed and 20.4 per cent strongly agreed they can deal with things that happen in their life.

- In Years 9 to 12, 64.6 per cent reported they had felt sad, blue or depressed for two or more weeks in a row in the previous 12 months.

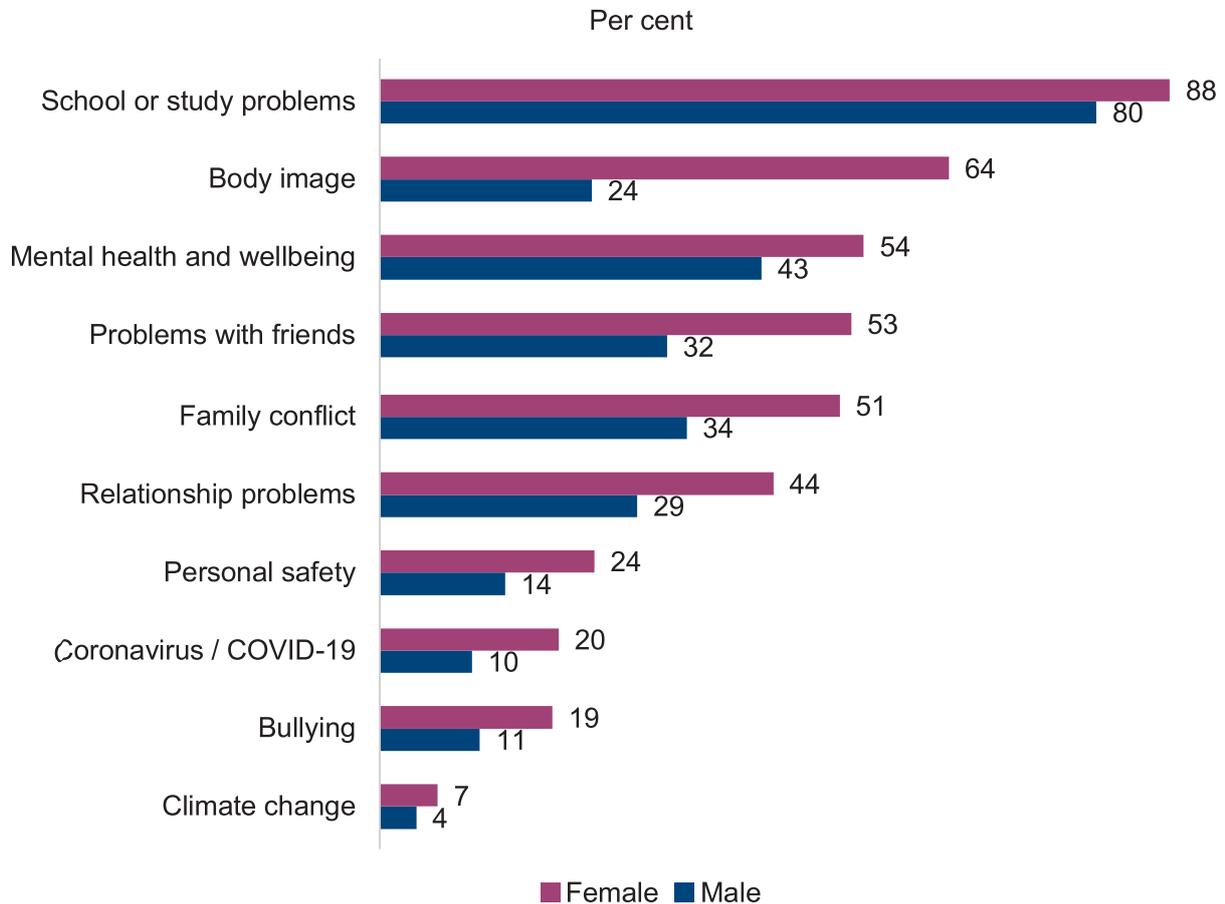
These results are consistent with those across the state.

Year 9 to Year 12 students were also asked about sources of stress in the previous 12 months. School and study problems (84.2%) were the most commonly reported source of stress, followed by mental health and wellbeing (48.8%), body image (44.6%) and problems with friends (42.7%). These results are broadly consistent with the rest of the state.

Notably, however, students in the Pilbara are less likely to report COVID-19 and climate change as sources of stress compared to the rest of the state.

There are also gender differences in the responses, with greater proportions of female students reporting being affected by stress across all sources.

**Proportion of students reporting sources of stress in the last 12 months by gender**



Notably, females are almost three times as likely to report body image and almost twice as likely to report bullying and COVID-19 as stressors.

These gender differences are consistent with the rest of the state.

**Access to support for physical and mental health**

Over two-thirds (67.6%) of secondary students in the Pilbara said they know where to get support for stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries in their school, and around one-half (53.8%) know where to get support in their local area.

These responses align with those across the state.

One-third (33.7%) reported they had received help for problems with stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries in the previous 12 months (all of WA: 36.7%).

The most commonly used sources of support for secondary students in the Pilbara were parents or someone who acts as a parent (86.7%), other family (74.7%), friends including boyfriend or girlfriend (68.6%), teachers (65.2%) and school psychologist, school chaplain or school nurse (61.7%). Due to the high proportion of Aboriginal students in the Pilbara, 31.7 per cent of all students have contacted an Aboriginal health worker or medical service.

Of the students who had asked for help, 86.0 per cent found their parents helpful, 85.8 per cent found other family helpful, 81.9 per cent found a mental health service like Headspace helpful and 81.2 per cent found a doctor or GP helpful.

Over one-fifth (22.7%) of secondary students reported that in the previous 12 months there had been a time when they wanted or needed to see someone for their health but were not able to (all of WA: 25.6%).

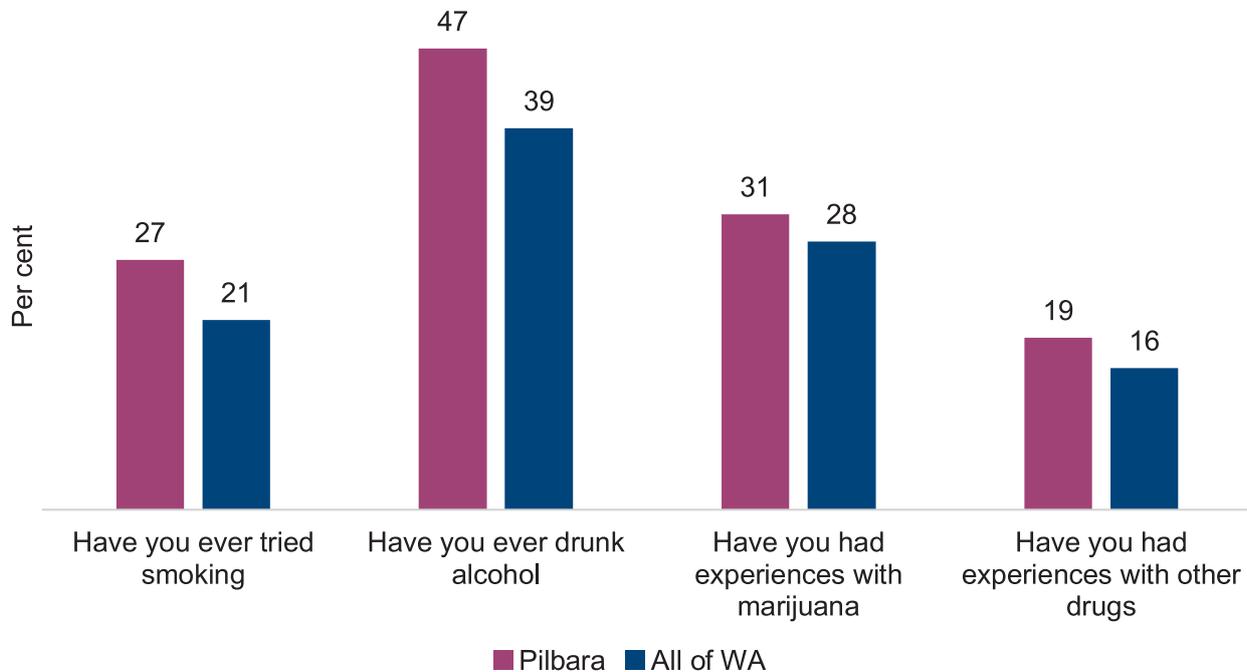
Among these students, over two-thirds (68.5%) cited shame or embarrassment as the reason for not seeing someone about their health. The next most cited reason was 'being unsure who to see or where to go' (34.2%), followed by lack of transport (17.6%).

## Risk-taking and healthy behaviours

### Alcohol and other drugs

A higher proportion of young people in the Pilbara compared to the rest of the state have tried smoking (26.6% vs 20.9% respectively) or drunk alcohol (46.8% vs 39.2% respectively). Year 9 to Year 12 students in the Pilbara report having experiences with marijuana or other drugs in slightly higher proportions to the rest of the state (marijuana: 31.0% vs 28.4%; other drugs: 19.2% vs 16.3%).

### Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who responded 'yes' to the question on whether they have tried smoking or drinking, or had experiences with marijuana or other drugs (Years 9 to 12 only)



Note: The questions asked were: Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?; Have you ever drunk alcohol (more than just a few sips, like a full can of beer or a glass of wine)?; Have you ever had any experiences with marijuana?; Have you ever had any experiences with other drugs? Response options were: 'No', 'Yes' and 'Prefer not to say'.

Of the secondary students surveyed in the Pilbara:

- 73.4 per cent reported having learnt 'some' or 'a lot' about alcohol and 66.4 per cent had learnt 'some' or 'a lot' about cigarettes/smoking at school.
- 53.2 per cent said they had learnt 'some' or 'a lot' about marijuana and 58.0 per cent had learnt 'some' or 'a lot' about other drugs at school.
- 71.3 per cent thought people their age should not use any substances including cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana or other drugs.

Most students in the Pilbara feel like they know enough about the health impacts of alcohol (87.7%) or smoking (86.7%), however fewer feel like they know enough about the health impacts of marijuana (65.4%).

These results are broadly consistent with the rest of WA.

### Sexual health

Almost two-thirds (65.7%) of secondary students in the Pilbara reported they had learnt 'some' or 'a lot' about sexual health and ways to support their sexual health at school.

Compared to the rest of WA, students in the Pilbara are more likely to report having learnt 'a lot' on the topic (27.1% compared 17.1% for WA). This result held true across male and female students but is particularly noteworthy for female students in the Pilbara who are almost twice as likely to report this compared to females in the rest of WA (31.3% vs 16.4%).

Consistent with above results, 58.9 per cent reported they had learnt 'some' or 'a lot' about pregnancy and contraception at school which, again, is higher than the proportion for rest of WA (46.5%).

Despite the higher proportions of students in the Pilbara reporting they had learnt a lot about these topics, 41.6 per cent reported they feel they don't know enough about sexual health or they aren't sure and almost one-half (48.2%) reported they feel they don't know enough about pregnancy and contraception or they aren't sure.

These results are consistent with those across the state.

One-third (34.9%) of secondary students in the Pilbara do not know or are unsure about where to go if they needed help for something about their reproductive or sexual health.

In Years 9 to 12, 63.2 per cent of female students and 30.0 per cent of male students reported they had ever been sent unwanted sexual material, such as pornographic pictures, videos or words (all of WA: 57.3% and 31.4% respectively).

### Problematic behaviours and emotions related to being online

Over one-third (34.9%) of students in the Pilbara said they feel bothered 'fairly often' or 'very often' when they cannot be on the internet (Years 4–6: 29.3%; Years 7–12: 38.2%).

While the results for Year 4 to Year 6 students in the Pilbara are on par with the rest of the state, Year 7 to Year 12 students are more likely than those across WA to report feeling bothered 'very often' when they cannot be on the internet (15.7% vs 9.9%). This result is true for male and female students in the Pilbara (male: 13.6% vs 8.6%; female: 17.0% vs 11.1%).

When it comes to electronic gaming, 28.9 per cent said they feel bothered 'fairly often' or 'very often' when they cannot play electronic games (Years 4–6: 26.9%; Years 7–12:

30.2%). Again, compared to the rest of WA, secondary students in the Pilbara are more likely to report feeling bothered 'very often' when they could not play electronic games (11.8% vs 7.9%).

Secondary students in the Pilbara are also more likely to report feeling bothered 'very often' (17.1%) and going without sleep (9.9%) due to mobile phone use compared to those across the rest of WA (12.7% and 5.5% respectively).

In general, female students across WA are more likely than male students to go without eating or sleeping due to their mobile phone 'fairly often' or 'very often' (17.3% vs 9.6%), however in the Pilbara, male students are just as likely as female students to report this (22.8% vs 22.8%).

Notably, secondary students in the Pilbara are more likely than those across the state to report playing games on a game console, computer or tablet every day or almost every day (57.5% vs 48.0%). This is the highest proportion of young people in regions across WA.

## Connection to community

Children and young people in the Pilbara are less likely to like where they live or feel like they belong than students in most other regions across the state.

Four-fifths (80.3%) of Year 4 to Year 6 students in the Pilbara agreed they like where they live, while 61.2 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed. Both these proportions are lower than those across the rest of the state (86.0% and 79.3% respectively).

Moreover, secondary students in the Pilbara are more than twice as likely to disagree that they like where they live compared to students in the rest of WA (23.9% compared to 10.4%).

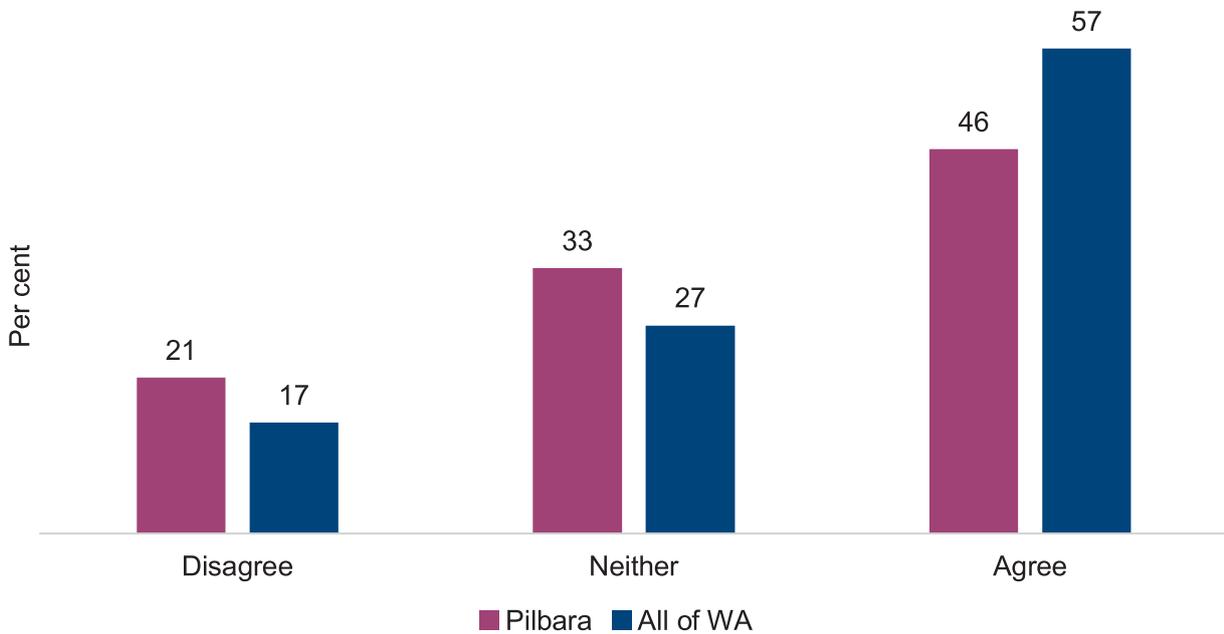
Just under two-thirds (65.0%) of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed they belong in their community, while 45.7 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed. The proportion for Year 4 to Year 6 students is consistent with the rest of WA, however the proportion for secondary students in the Pilbara is lower than the state (45.7% vs 56.5%).

This is the lowest proportion of secondary students feeling like they belong in their community of all regions across the state.

**■ ■ The community could provide more sporting opportunities because I find that sport is a way to escape the real world for awhile. The community could also try and keep children out of trouble and try and bring them all together. ■ ■**

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who feel like they belong in their community**



Most (71.8%) of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that their neighbours are friendly, while 57.9 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed (all of WA: 70.5% and 64.4% respectively).

Similarly, 57.2 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that when they go to the shops the people there are friendly, while 54.7 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed – lower compared to the rest of the state (66.0%).

Consistent with the above results on liking where they live and belonging, children and young people in the Pilbara are much less likely than their counterparts across WA to feel like there are fun things to do in their local area.

In Years 4 to 6, two-thirds (66.8%) of children agreed there are lots of fun things to do, while 18.2 per cent disagreed (all of WA: 73.6% and 9.9% respectively). While in secondary school, less than one-third (31.5%) of Pilbara students agreed that there are fun things to do (all of WA: 48.7%) and almost one-half (48.0%) disagreed (all of WA: 27.2%).

Secondary students in the Pilbara are also much less likely than students across the state to agree that there are outdoor places for them to go in their area, like parks, ovals or skate parks (70.2% vs 83.7%). Almost one-half (47.7%) of secondary students in the Pilbara agreed that there is nothing to do in their area (all of WA: 31.2%).

When it comes to activities outside of school, just under one-third (31.6%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Pilbara said they spend time practising or playing a sport outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 36.8%; Years 7–12: 28.0%). This is the lowest proportion across the state.

This is particularly the case for secondary students, with one in five (21.9%) secondary students saying they hardly ever or never spend time practising or playing a sport outside of school. The proportion of male secondary students in the Pilbara reporting this is significantly higher than for the rest of the state (22.8% vs 12.8%).

Two-thirds (65.9%) of male and 41.2 per cent of female students reported playing games on a game console, computer, or tablet every day or almost every day. Secondary students in the Pilbara are much more likely to report this than students in the rest of the state (57.5% compared to 48.0%).

In terms of other activities outside of school, of the students in the Pilbara:

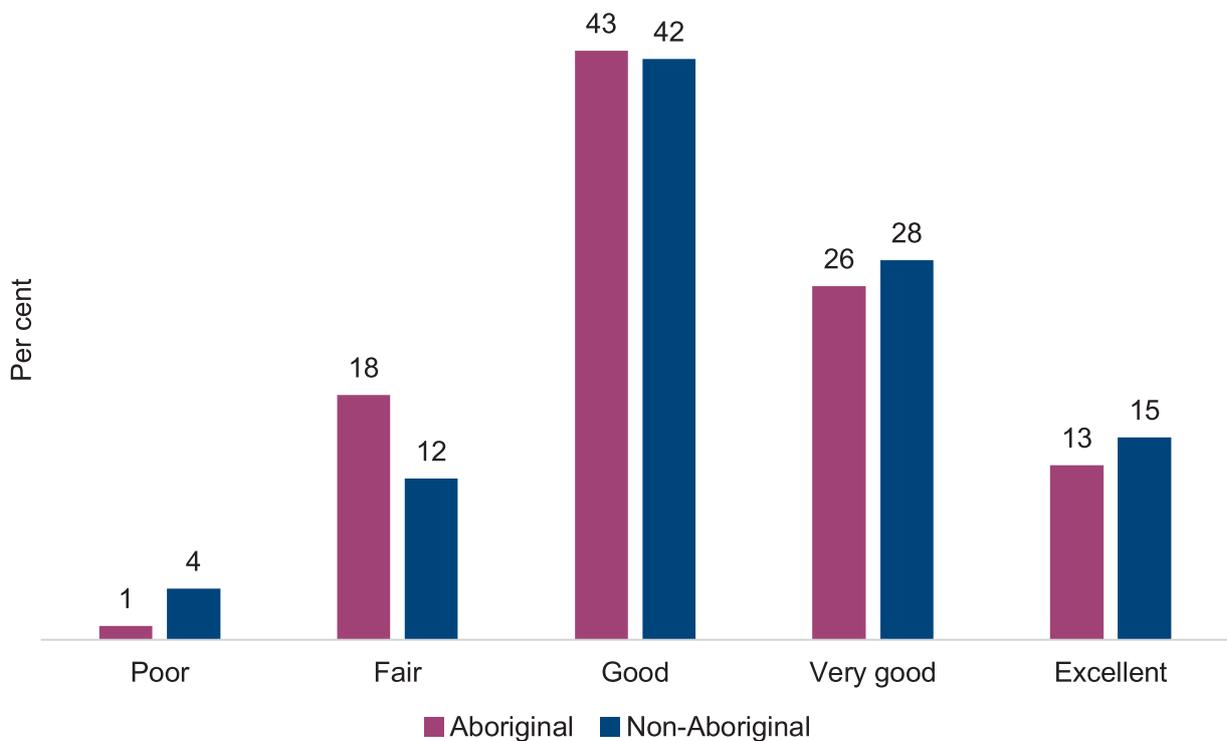
- 38.5 per cent said they spend time being active outdoors outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 45.3%; Years 7–12: 34.0%).
- 39.5 per cent said they spend time hanging out with friends outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 44.8%; Years 7–12: 35.9%).

- 53.8 per cent said they spend time helping out with housework outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 42.6%; Years 7–12: 61.4%).

### Aboriginal children’s and young people’s views on feeling healthy and connected

Just under two-fifths (38.4%) of the Aboriginal students in the Pilbara surveyed rated their health as very good or excellent. This is slightly below their non-Aboriginal peers (42.3%).

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting their general health ratings



Around two-fifths (42.4%) of the Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Pilbara reported that physical activity, sport or exercise is ‘definitely’ an important part of their life, consistent with non-Aboriginal students (44.7%). Moreover, a similar proportion (43.6%) reported they had done vigorous exercise three or more times in the past week, compared to 47.1 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.

Three in five (59.4%) Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students reported a high life satisfaction (non-Aboriginal: 60.7%).

Most Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 in the Pilbara agreed with the statements:

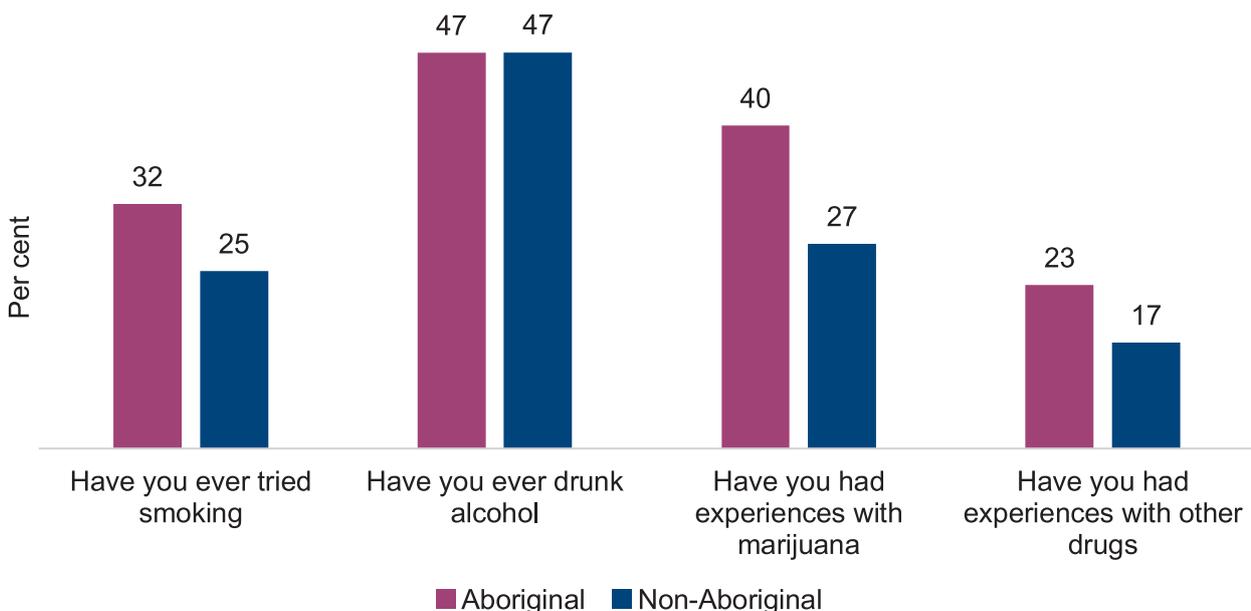
- I feel good about myself (75.2%)
- I am able to do things as well as most people (82.9%)
- I am happy with myself (78.2%).

Results between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students are comparable for both primary and secondary students surveyed.

The top three stressors reported by Aboriginal Year 9 to Year 12 students were school or study problems (78.1%), mental health and wellbeing (45.7%) and problems with friends (42.8%). Notably, Aboriginal students are less likely to be stressed due to body image than non-Aboriginal students (Aboriginal: 27.3%; non-Aboriginal: 53.5%).

Around a third (31.5%) of Aboriginal secondary students in the Pilbara have tried smoking; this is higher than non-Aboriginal students (24.6%). Just under one-half (47.1%) of Aboriginal secondary students have drunk alcohol; this is consistent with non-Aboriginal students (47.3%).

**Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who have tried smoking or drinking, or had experiences with marijuana or other drugs (Years 9 to 12 only)**



Note: The questions asked were: Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?; Have you ever drunk alcohol (more than just a few sips, like a full can of beer or a glass of wine)?; Have you ever had any experiences with marijuana?; Have you ever had any experiences with other drugs? Response options were: ‘No’, ‘Yes’ and ‘Prefer not to say’.

When it comes to Year 9 to Year 12 students, Aboriginal students are more likely to have had experiences with marijuana compared to non-Aboriginal students (39.6% vs 27.4%), and slightly more likely to have had experiences with other drugs (23.2% vs 17.3%).

Most Aboriginal students in the Pilbara feel like they know enough about the health effects of alcohol, smoking and other drugs, however a significant minority reported they do not think they know enough about smoking (10.0%) or marijuana (17.1%).

Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students are marginally more likely than their non-Aboriginal peers to report playing games on a game console, computer or tablet every day or almost every day (61.7% vs 51.8%).

In terms of connection to culture and community, of the Aboriginal students in the Pilbara:

- 72.7 per cent said they know their family's country (all of WA: 69.6%), and of these students 80.1 per cent said they spend time on their family's country (all of WA: 74.5%).
- 27.5 per cent said they talk Aboriginal language 'some' or 'a lot' (all of WA: 27.1%).
- 51.2 per cent said they do cultural or traditional activities with their family (all of WA: 47.8%).

Almost two-thirds (63.6%) of Aboriginal children (Years 4 to 6) in the Pilbara feel like they belong in their community (non-Aboriginal: 65.4%). A lower proportion of Aboriginal secondary students feel like they belong in their community (56.9%), however, this is a higher proportion than their non-Aboriginal peers (41.5%).

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students had similar views on whether there are fun things to do in their community or outdoor places to go, like parks and skate parks, with students in Years 4 to 6 more likely to agree than secondary students.

### **What do children and young people in the Pilbara say about being healthy and connected?**

Students were asked the following open text questions related to health and mental health:

- Thinking about mental health and other emotional worries, like stress, anxiety and depression, what are some of the ways families, communities, schools or adults in general could be more helpful?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with seeking help for health issues, including mental health worries?



## Talking about mental health

*“Maybe check up on kids more and how they’re feeling because of mental health issues or any other issues kids might have. Making sure kids are okay and to check up on kids who might be stressed. Be more aware of kids feelings and to not pressure them.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“One time, maybe a few months ago, I wanted to go to a therapist or something because I was worried about my mental health and I didn’t feel like asking my parents to see if we could go to one because I was too nervous to talk to them about it. They always ask me to talk to them about mental health stuff but I’m always too scared to bring it up.”*

*(student who selected ‘in another way’, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)*

**■ ■ Was always too scared to go the my mum and dad because we don’t really talk about feelings in our family as it is shown as being “weak” so I would keep it to myself and either talk my to mates about it or sometimes my Aunty who is always there and I feel comfortable talking to about everything. ■ ■**

*(female, 14 year-old, undisclosed Aboriginal status)*

*“Schools could maybe check ups on students every once and a while? I can’t really ask someone about my own mental health, and I’d like to have someone to talk to where I don’t have to go find them on my own, I’m not too confident.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

## Feeling anxiety, depression or sadness

*“Well I have a really big issue when it come to the way I see myself. Some days I will fell,so ugly and i will fell like crying and rarely any other days I feel like I’m good enough. I don’t want to tell my parents because I feel like they will just say that I’m pretending and I’ll get in trouble. I feel to ashamed to go and tell that school because it won’t just help for someone to tell me that I’m ‘pretty and not ugly’.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I struggle getting out of bed due to my mental health issue, I wish I could make better choices and give it a go, but I can’t do it on my own yet I certainly cannot vent or rant to someone, due to my trust issues...”*

*(student who selected ‘in another way’, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I over think a lot to the point we’re I have mental breakdowns often and I can take a normal thought and think about it until the the point were I panic and don’t know what the truth is or whether or not something is true or false I have trust issues and find it hard to talk to people about these type of things I am quiet at home and school and don’t like to talk a lot.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)*

## Talking about getting support

*“I have not been seeking any help because there isn’t really any help in Port Hedland.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“To my councillor, you were absolutely useless, you did not help me at all and I didn’t want to tell you the truth because you would call my parents and get other adults involved also it was a complete [waste] of my time.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“In our school we are told there are many places to go for help regarding health and wellbeing. Still the problems are being ignored, In some of my classes I still a lot of negativity but I see it being ignored. I would like that to change.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Other ways my family could be more helpful is to try and listen and not argue with me about my mental health problems and allow me to go to someone outside our family about my health because what is going on isn’t helping I get told that my mental health isn’t a thing or I am making things up or it is all in my head.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“Pregnancy help in young people I’ve personally had this kind of problem and it makes you feel sick wondering where you would get help... I believe plan b should be accessible to At least 14+ cause this day in age it’s happening then and more people would feel secure knowing that they are able to purchase it.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### Views on their local area

In total, 212 students from the Pilbara responded to the free text question: ‘If there was one thing you could change about your local area, what would it be?’ Of the students surveyed in the Pilbara, the top four comments made about their local area related to:

- More fun activities to do and places to hang out.
- Would like more, closer shops, a mall, movies, greater diversity.
- People in the local area are scary, not nice or friendly.
- New, more or better skate park, bike trails.

*“More things to do cause this town sucks and has rarely nothing in it.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“That there are places to cool down, not like the pool, but like a small water park for young people to go see each other, and that there is shade under hot places like the skatepark ,there is not a lot of places to go, all kids can really do, is ride around town (some kids don’t even have transportation!) or go to the shops for like five minutes or go to the skate park ( no shade! Remember that please!) or go to a friends place , but that doesn’t happen often, and there is also not many safe places for kids under age (like 1,2,3 ect ) to go with there parents, there is not a nice little safe and secure park for little kids to play without broken glass and ruined playgrounds...”*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Biking pump track decent size as well.”*

*(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“More shops to buy stuff.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Maybe more skateparks with shade so people can skate without getting the sun in your eyes.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**▲▲ I would make the pool slides a lot bigger and build a lollie shop in south so we don’t have to drive all the way to port and a deeper pool and a kfc and a bigger pool at the school (oh that rhymed) and that’s pretty much it so yeah bye) ▼▼**

*(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“To have more after school activities for children my age to go and participate in. And to also have more sporting opportunities for children.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“A more safety place for the lgbtq+, skin colours and religion. it can just be a area where we can hang out and talk about our life like it's a con-festival.”*

*(student who selected 'in another way', 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“We are in need of some kind of additional recreational facilities as the town is quite neglected even though it's a large amount of the state income.”*

*(male, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**▲▲ The town of Port Hedland/ South doesn't have much activities to keep us busy and other kids out of trouble. To be very honest I for one, have to make plans within my friend group to go out and drive until we find something to do, this is because we really have nothing to do. ▼▼**

*(female, 17 year-old, Aboriginal)*

Many students in the Pilbara said they would like their local area to be cleaner and safer and for there to be less crime.

*“The people to not steal.”*

*(male, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“I would change that when I go out the house I could go to the skate park with out getting bashed or punched and getting a better skate park.”*

*(male, 12 year-old, undisclosed Aboriginal status)*

*“Tidying up all of the rubbish and making it look nicer.”*

*(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“To not have drugos in my street.”*

*(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Le[ss] people drunk and less fights.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“There is so much crime going on in our local area and it is scary because sometimes it isn't safe to walk to school on my own. Our town used to be so safe where we could leave our houses unlocked and night and it would be perfectly safe, but now even if you lock your back gates entruders manage to break through them and steal things from our back yards, and steal and break into cars.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, undisclosed Aboriginal status)*

# Learning and participating

**“ Don’t force kids to do what the parents expect such as going to uni as many Kids aren’t interested in further education and wish to go into the work force or an apprenticeship such as myself. ”**

*(male, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

## Attendance

Just over one-half (54.9%) of the students in the Pilbara said it is very important to them to be at school every day (Years 4–6: 67.4%; Years 7–12: 45.8%), while 36.3 per cent (Years 4–6: 27.9%; Years 7–12: 42.5%) said it is somewhat important. These results are consistent with the responses of students across the state.

Female secondary students in the Pilbara are less likely to report thinking it is very important

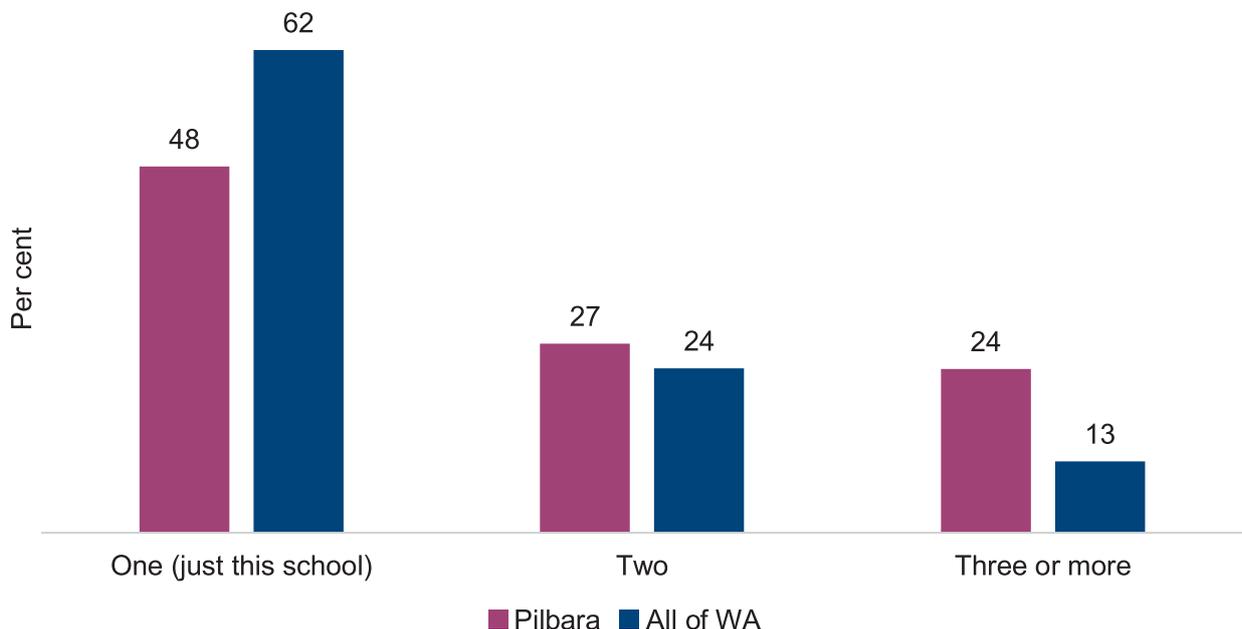
to be at school every day compared to female students elsewhere in WA (40.8% compared to 46.9%).

Almost one-third (30.9%) of secondary students in the Pilbara reported they had been suspended from school; this proportion is well above the rest of the state at 17.1 per cent. This is the highest proportion of all regions across the state.

Almost one-quarter (24.2%) of secondary students reported they had wagged school for a full day or more in the previous 12 months. Female secondary students in the Pilbara are more likely to report having wagged school compared to female students in the rest of WA (23.4% compared to 16.7%).

At the same time, students in the Pilbara are more likely than students in the rest of WA to have attended multiple schools, and almost twice as likely to have attended three or more schools (24.3% compared to 13.2%).

## Proportion of students reporting how many different schools they have gone to since they started primary or secondary school



When it comes to learning activities outside of school, just under one-third (30.8%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Pilbara hardly ever or never spend time doing homework (all of WA: 16.1%). In particular, more than one-third (36.5%) of secondary students in the Pilbara said they 'hardly ever' or 'never' do homework (all of WA: 16.2%). This is the highest proportion across the state.

### Liking school and sense of belonging

Most Year 4 to Year 6 students in the Pilbara reported liking school (62.5%), while only 28.0 per cent of secondary students reported liking school. This is well below the results for students across the rest of the state (42.8%).

Similarly, 44.1 per cent of secondary students in the Pilbara do not feel like they belong at their school (all of WA: 29.8%).

Consistent with the above results, most Year 4 to Year 6 students in the Pilbara reported feeling happy at school (88.0%) and liking learning at school (87.1%), while a much smaller proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reported the same (57.8% and 54.5% respectively). Again, the proportions observed for secondary students in the Pilbara are

below that of the rest of the state (feel happy: 66.9%; like learning: 66.2%).

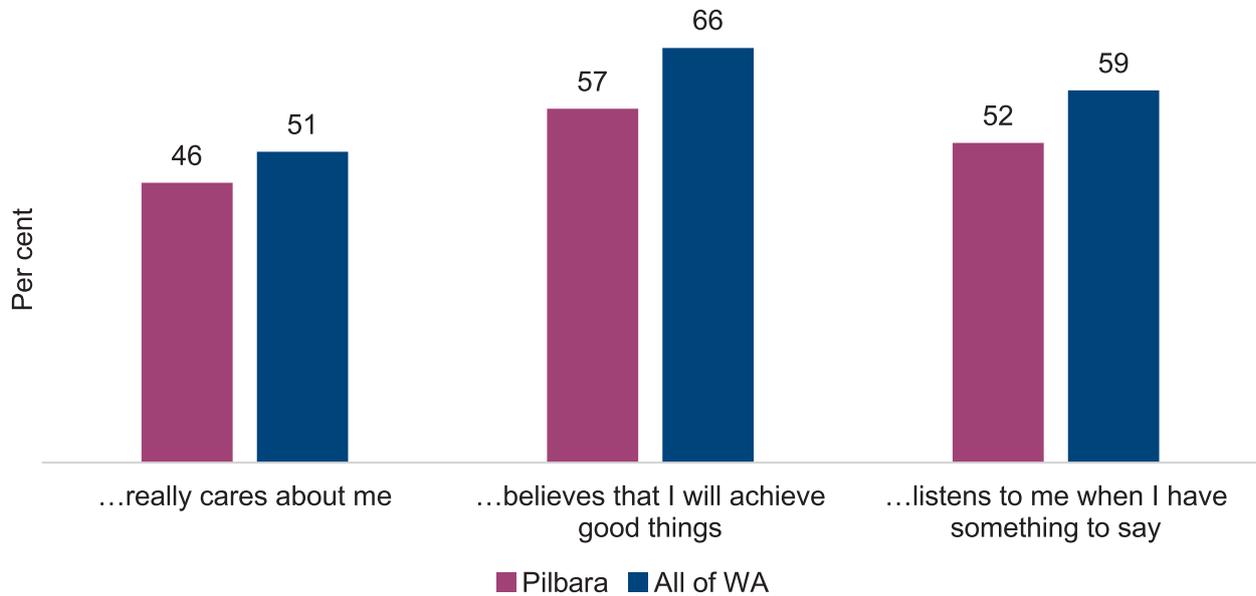
Three-fifths (59.6%) of students said they usually get along with classmates (Years 4–6: 59.0%; Years 7–12: 60.1%). For both Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 12 this proportion is below that of the rest of WA (Years 4–6: 68.4%; Years 7–12: 68.6%).

A similar proportion (59.7%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students reported they usually get along with their teachers, however there is a marked difference between primary school and secondary school (Years 4–6: 74.0%; Years 7–12: 49.3%). The proportion for Years 4 to 6 is in line with the rest of the state, however, the same is not true for secondary students (all of WA: 58.3%).

Compared to the rest of WA, lower proportions of Year 4 to Year 6 students in the Pilbara reported it is 'very much true' there is a teacher or another adult in their school who:

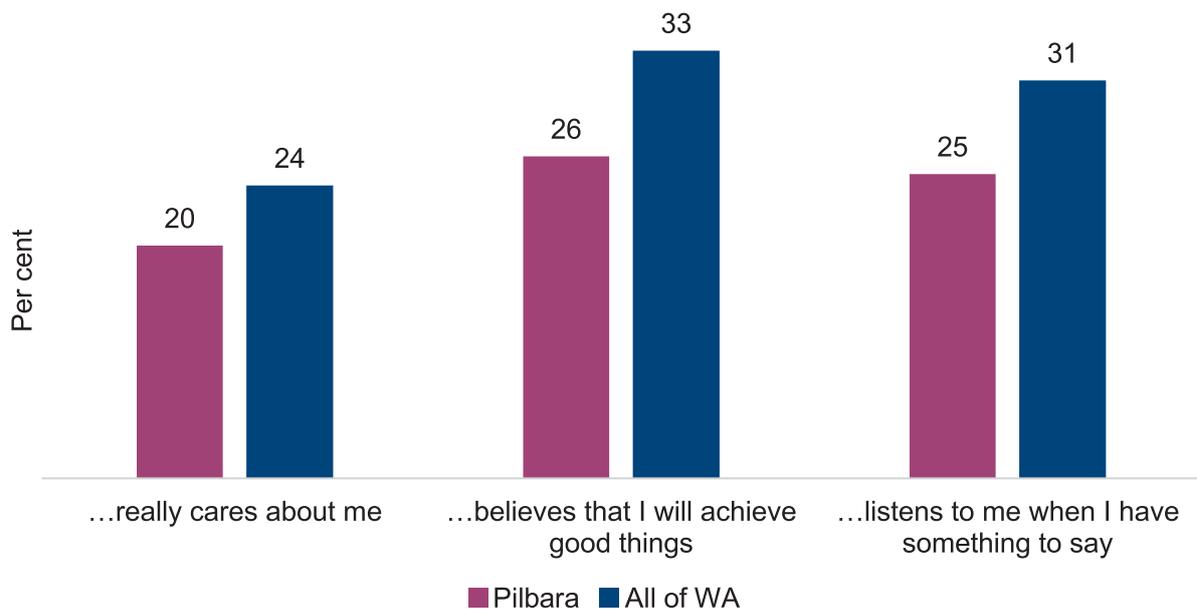
- really cares about them (46.1% vs 50.6%).
- believes they will achieve good things (56.8% vs 65.6%).
- listens to them when they have something to say (51.9% vs 59.4%).

**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 6 students responding ‘very much true’ when posed the statement: ‘At my school, there is a teacher or another adult who...’**



Secondary students in the Pilbara also responded ‘very much true’ to these questions in lower proportions relative to secondary students across WA.

**Proportion of Year 7 to 12 students responding ‘very much true’ when posed the statement: ‘At my school, there is a teacher or another adult who...’**



Over one-third (36.6%) of Year 4 to Year 6 students reported, if needed, they almost always get help from teachers in class; this is lower than students across the rest of the state (46.1%).

While for secondary students, only one in five (20.4%) said they almost always get help from teachers in class if they need it, which is lower than for students across the rest of the state (26.4%).

One-half (49.3%) of students in the Pilbara said their parents or someone in their family often ask about schoolwork/homework (Years 4–6: 51.0%; Years 7–12: 48.1%). The proportions for both Years 4 to 6 and Years 7 to 12 are lower than the proportions for the rest of WA (Years 4–6: 57.7%; Years 7–12: 54.5%).

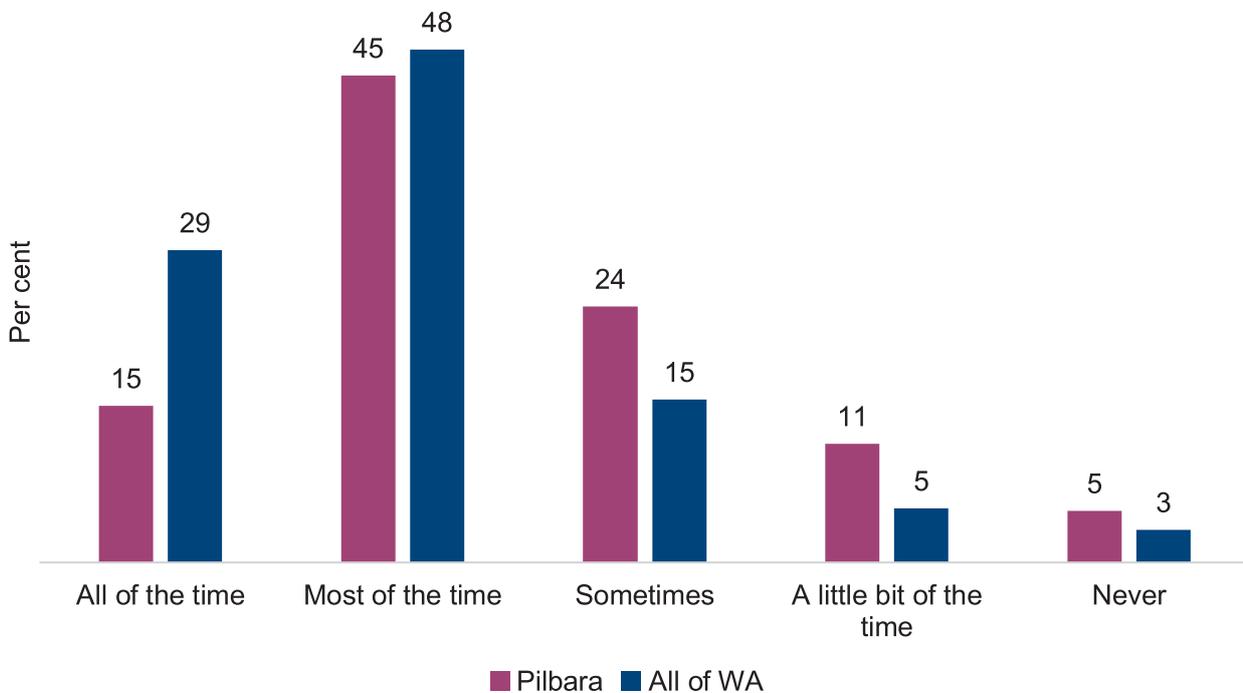
### Feeling safe at school

Just over two-fifths (40.8%) of Year 4 to Year 6 students in the Pilbara reported feeling safe at school all the time, while 33.1 per cent said they feel safe at school most of the time (all of WA: 42.2% and 38.5% respectively).

Less than one in six (14.5%) secondary students in the Pilbara reported feeling safe at school all the time – half as likely as secondary students in the rest of the state (28.9%).

Over one-third (38.5%) of secondary students reported feeling safe at school only sometimes or less. This includes more than two-fifths (44.7%) of female secondary students and one-third (33.0%) of male students.

### Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting how often they feel safe at school



More than one-third (38.3%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Pilbara reported they had been bullied, cyberbullied or both by students from their own school. Students in primary school (Years 4–6) are less likely to be bullied than those in secondary school (34.8% vs 40.7%). A greater proportion of secondary school students in the Pilbara have experienced bullying than those across the state (40.7% vs 36.5%).

Among students who reported having ever been bullied or cyberbullied (or both), 39.8 per cent reported this had happened in the previous three months (Years 4–6: 49.3%; Years 7–12: 34.1%). Of the secondary students who had been bullied in the previous three months, one-third (34.2%) reported that they were bullied several times a week or more at school (all of WA: 24.7%).

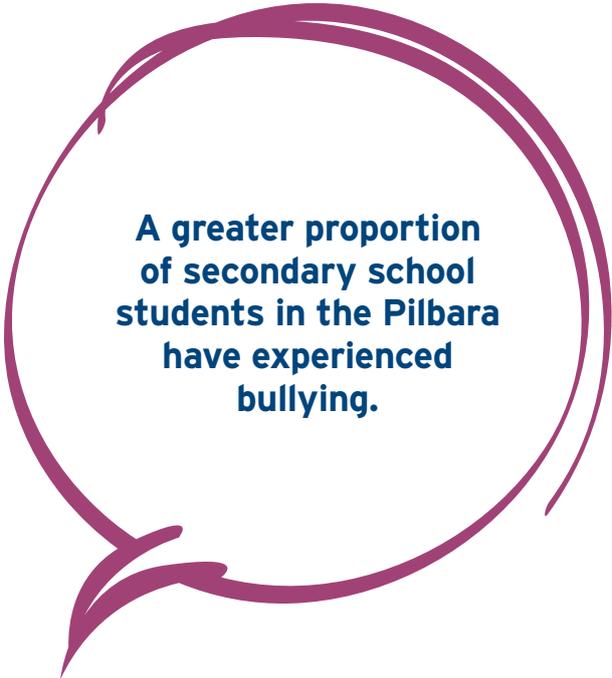
In terms of the nature of the bullying, 37.3 per cent of those secondary students who were bullied said they have been teased about their cultural background, the colour of their skin or their religion sometime in the previous three months (all of WA: 26.1%).

One in five (19.2%) students reported they had missed school in the past because they were afraid someone might bully them (Years 4–6: 18.7%; Years 7–12: 19.6%). This is consistent with students' experiences across the state.

## Transition from school

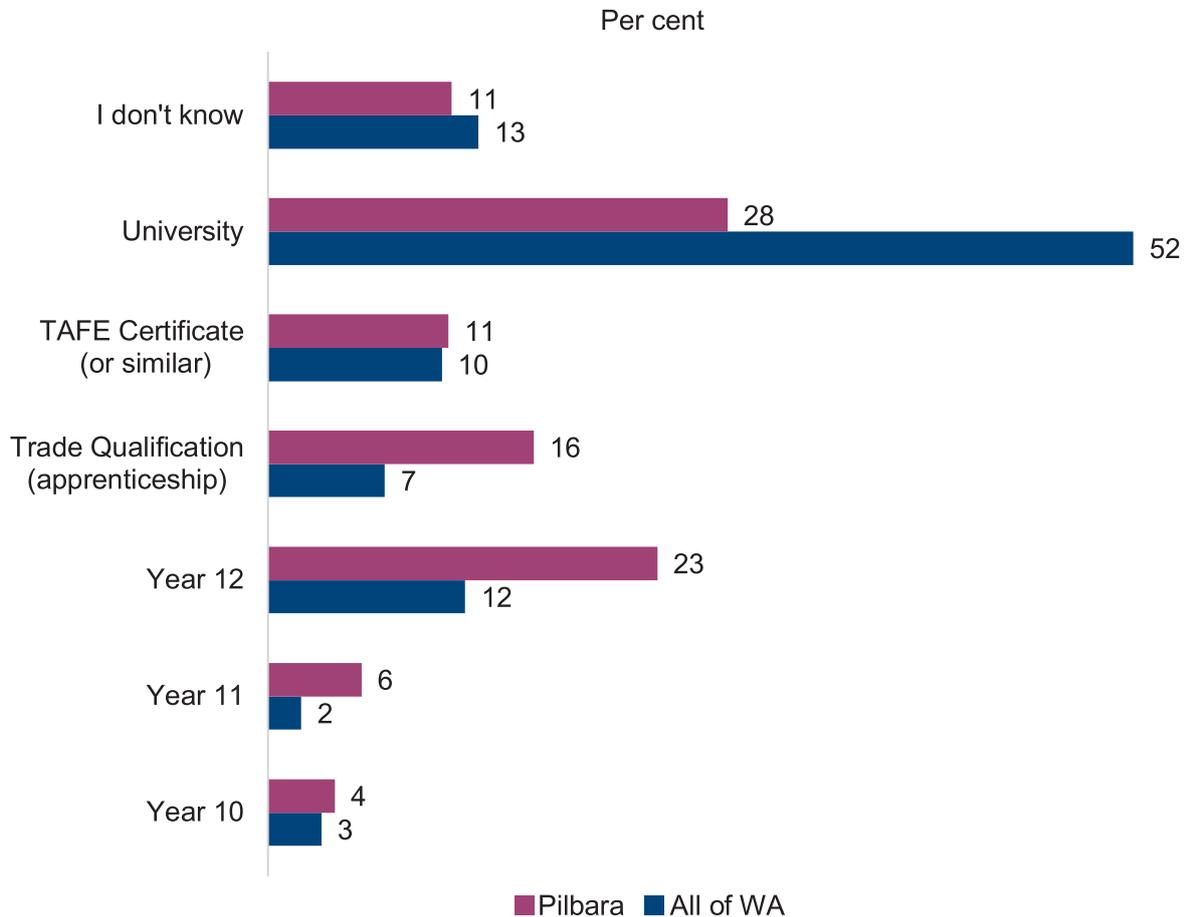
Just over one-quarter (27.5%) of secondary students in the Pilbara reported they want to attend university, while 32.9 per cent do not intend to go on to further study after secondary school. The proportion of students planning to attend university is almost one-half that for the rest of WA (51.8%) and is the lowest proportion of the regions across the state.

Conversely, a higher proportion of Pilbara secondary students intended to pursue trade qualifications (15.9%) compared to students across the rest of WA (7.0%). This is true across genders, with male students in the Pilbara almost twice as likely (23.0% vs 12.4%) and female students more than four times as likely (8.3% vs 1.9%) as students across WA to want to pursue a trade qualification.



**A greater proportion of secondary school students in the Pilbara have experienced bullying.**

**Proportion of Year 7 to 12 students reporting highest level of education they would like to achieve (single choice only)**



Notwithstanding the above result, most students (57.2%) said it is 'very much true' or 'pretty much true' that at their school they are learning knowledge and skills that will help them in the future (all of WA: 61.4%).

A relatively high proportion of secondary school students in the Pilbara have a regular part-time job (35.8% vs 28.0% for all of WA).

The majority reported working so they could have money of their own to spend on things they want (69.9%), while 9.6 per cent said it is to get skills and experience.

**Independence and autonomy**

Of the secondary students surveyed in the Pilbara:

- 84.2 per cent said they are allowed to go to and from school on their own (all of WA: 80.9%).
- 79.0 per cent said they are allowed to go places other than school on their own (all of WA: 76.0%).
- 30.2 per cent said they are allowed to go out alone at night in their local area (all of WA: 31.2%).

Female secondary students in the Pilbara are less likely to be allowed to go out alone at night in their local area than male secondary students (19.4% vs 41.8%). This is the highest percentage point gender gap across all regions.

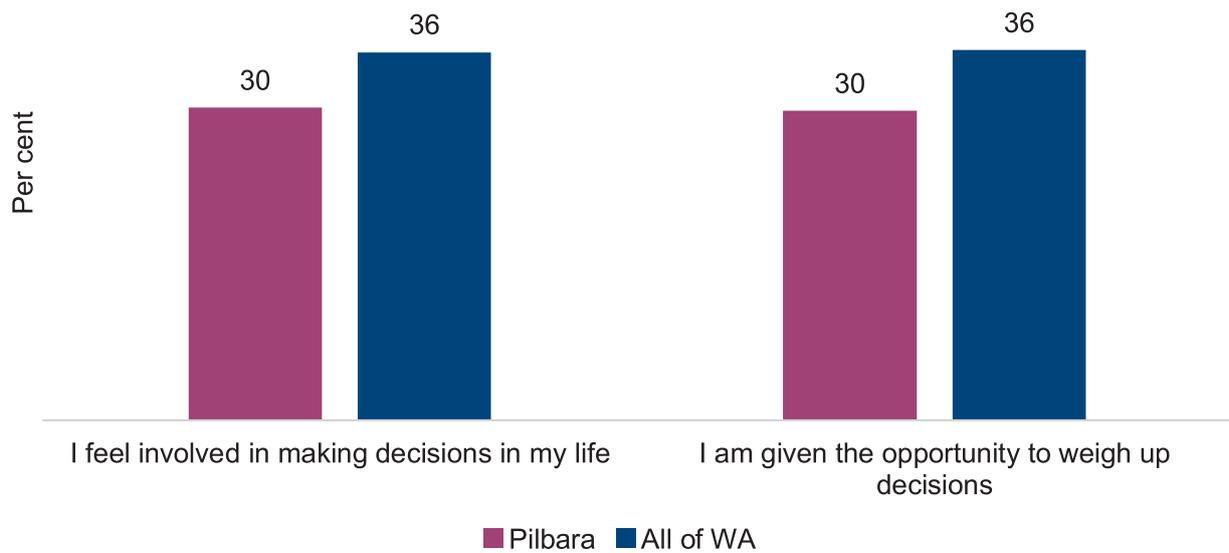
Most secondary students in the Pilbara region agreed that they get enough information to make decisions in their life (81.0%), feel involved in making decisions in their life (80.8%) and are given the opportunity to weigh up decisions (78.5%).

Just under one-third (32.5%) of secondary students in the Pilbara strongly agreed that they get enough information to make decisions in their life; this is consistent with the rest of WA (33.0%). However, students in the

Pilbara are less likely than students in the rest of the state to strongly agree when it comes to feeling involved in making decisions about their life (30.4% vs 35.8%) and being given opportunities to weigh up decisions (30.1% vs 36.0%).

Consistent with results around the state, female students in the Pilbara are less likely than male students to agree with these statements.

**Proportion of students strongly agreeing with two statements regarding making decisions in their life**



**Aboriginal children’s and young people’s views on learning and participating**

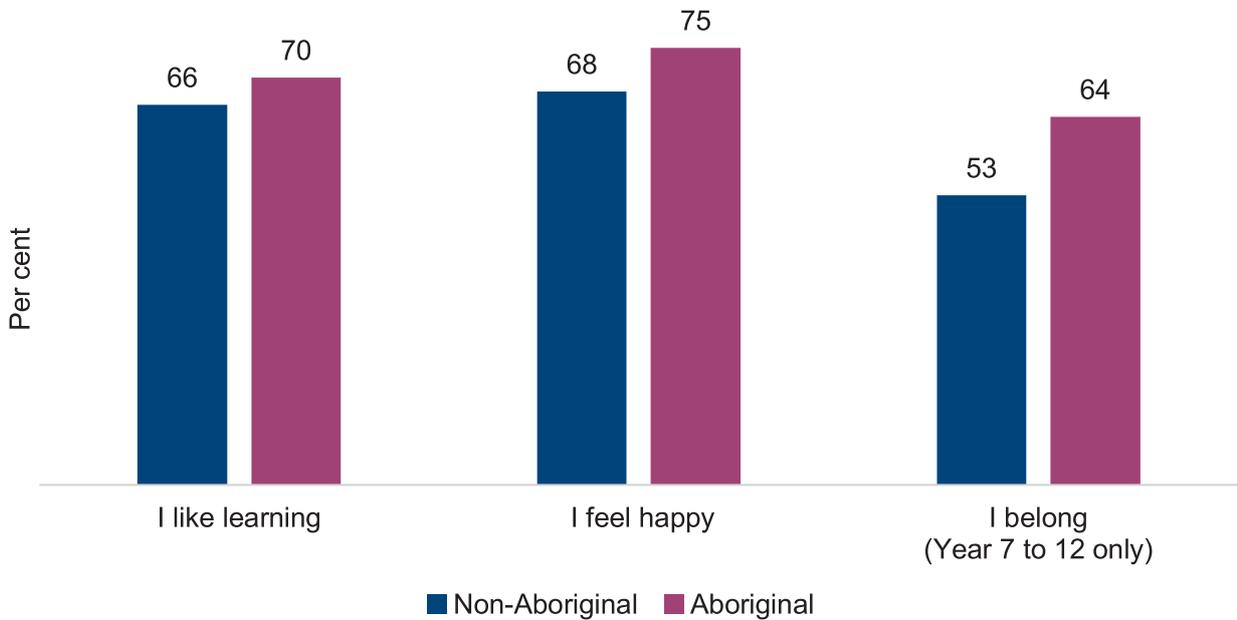
Aboriginal students in the Pilbara are generally more positive about school and learning than their non-Aboriginal peers.

The majority (63.4%) of Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Pilbara reported that being at school every day is very important to them (non-Aboriginal: 49.8%). At the same

time, a little less than one-half (46.7%) of these students reported liking school (non-Aboriginal: 40.2%).

Most Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students in the Pilbara reported they agree their school is a place where they feel happy (74.5%) and like learning (70.1%). Both these proportions are slightly higher than for non-Aboriginal students (68.0% and 66.0% respectively).

**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 Pilbara students agreeing that school is a place where they like learning, feel happy, and belong (Year 7 to 12 only)**



Additionally, Aboriginal secondary students in the Pilbara are more likely than non-Aboriginal students to agree their school is a place where they belong (64.2% vs 52.5%).

Aboriginal students in the Pilbara are more likely than non-Aboriginal students to have attended multiple schools since they started primary school or secondary school with 51.5 per cent of Aboriginal secondary students having attended multiple schools compared to 36.6 per cent for non-Aboriginal students.

Over one-third (39.7%) of Aboriginal Year 7 to Year 12 students reported they have been suspended from school (been sent home for a few days for doing something wrong) (non-Aboriginal students: 26.4%). Aboriginal secondary students in the Pilbara are also more likely to report that they had wagged school in the previous 12 months for a full day or more compared to non-Aboriginal students (34.1% compared to 19.5%).

Most Aboriginal students get along with their teachers 'usually' (55.4%) or 'sometimes' (38.6%) and two-thirds (66.8%) reported that it is 'very much true' or 'pretty much true' that there is a teacher or another adult at school who really cares about them. A relatively high proportion (15.2%) of Aboriginal students reported that this is 'not at all true' (non-Aboriginal students: 7.9%).

When it comes to feeling safe at school, 71.6 per cent of Aboriginal students reported feeling safe all or most of the time (non-Aboriginal: 63.7%).

Aboriginal students in the Pilbara reported experiencing bullying by students from their school in similar proportions to non-Aboriginal students (36.9% compared to 38.7%).

Around one in seven (15.2%) Aboriginal secondary students plans to go to university, while 43.6 per cent do not plan to study further after secondary school. Moreover, 30.4 per cent want to attend TAFE or pursue a trade qualification.

## What do children and young people in the Pilbara say about learning and participating?

### Talking about stress at school

The following responses are generally from secondary school students who were asked the open text question: 'The majority of secondary school students feel stressed by school work or study. What do you think are the main reasons for this?'

*"I think the main reason is that our parents are very harsh on wanting us to get good grades for a better life but they don't understand it's not as easy when you've got depression, Anxiety or anything like that and when they are like that it is probably more likely that the kid won't talk about their mental health and the teachers say if we don't do our homework we will get detention yes I understand that but sometimes we have a reason that we can not say and we may be introvert which makes it harder to say anything."*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"Because the stuff they give is hard and then if you have an assignment it stresses you out because you wanna pass and get it in on time."*

*(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*"School adds so much more pressure and stress on the kids when all they're trying to do is stay alive and get through the day. Some kids out age cannot even get up out of bed because their mental health is that bad. Adults and teachers just need to be more aware and understanding that we have much more important things to do than school."*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"I think the most important well being issue is having a job. This is the hardest challenge I am still trying to get over because I am juggling 5 training sessions a week for sport,*

*working everyday after school including a full day on Saturday, and then trying to figure out where to fit in school work..."*

*(female, 14 year-old, undisclosed Aboriginal status)*

*"Worrying about getting good grades."*

*(male, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*"I feel like they put to much pressure on us."*

*(female, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

### Other comments on school

*"Last time I was bullied online, I reported it to our teacher but they didn't do much. I wanted to move classes because I didn't feel comfortable around her but they kept saying that I should try to be friends with her, I did not want to. So since then, I feel like even if I report something happening to me, they will only try to solve it by "being friends."*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"For school, maybe call the people out that say slurs, homophobic, and racist comments, we hear them and it should not go unnoticed."*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"Teachers to take action against kids at school who cause trouble and constantly disrupt others instead of favouring them."*

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### Supportive relationships

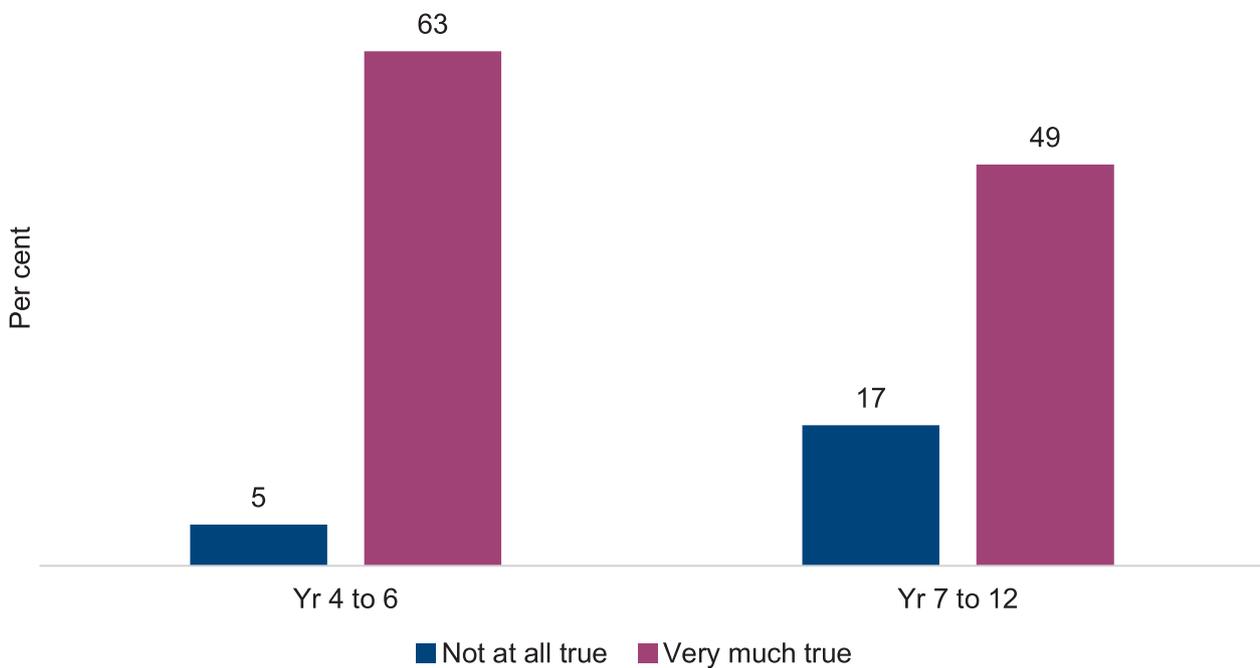
Almost three-quarters (73.9%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Pilbara reported that it is 'very much true' (54.3%) or 'pretty much true' (19.6%) that they live with a parent or another adult they can talk to about their problems or worries. However, more than one in ten (12.2%) reported that this is 'not at all true', with 17.1 per cent of secondary school students reporting this compared to 5.0 per cent of Year 4 to 6 students.

## Safe and Supported

▲▲ Just listen to what we have to say, don't assume, or start yelling, listening and giving some nice advice would be much appreciated. ▼▼

(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

Proportion of Year 4 to 12 students saying the statement, 'Where I live, there is a parent or adult who I can talk to about my problems', is 'very much true' or 'not at all true'



Note: Response options 'pretty much true' and 'a little true' have been omitted from this graph.

The difference in responses between Year 4 to Year 6 students and secondary students is consistent with the rest of WA.

Three in five students (59.7%) said it is 'very much true' they live with a parent or another adult who believes they will achieve good things (Years 4–6: 59.7%; Years 7–12: 59.8%). While the proportion for secondary students is on par with the rest of WA, the figure for Year 4 to Year 6 students is below the rest of the state (69.2%). This difference is predominantly attributable to Year 4 to Year 6 male students in the Pilbara (57.2% vs 69.9%).

Just under one-half (46.0%) of students in the Pilbara reported it is 'very much true' they live with a parent or another adult who listens when they have something to say (Years 4–6: 49.2%; Years 7–12: 43.8%).

Most students (80.7%) in the Pilbara said their family gets along very well or well (Years 4–6: 82.0%; Years 7–12: 79.7%). Notably, secondary students are more likely to report that their family gets along very well compared to the rest of the state (37.1% vs 30.3%).

Most students (79.1%) said they live in one home, while 20.9 per cent said they live in two or more homes. Of the students who reported having a second home, 40.6 per cent reported living in this home one-half of the time (Years 4–6: 45.7%; Years 7–12: 37.0%).

Around two-fifths (38.0%) said they moved house in the previous 12 months; this is a higher proportion than for the rest of the state (24.6%).

In terms of friendships, of the students surveyed in the Pilbara:

- 48.4 per cent felt they are very good at making and keeping friends (Years 4–6: 51.3%; Years 7–12: 46.5%). This is a lower proportion than students across the state (53.0%).
- 83.1 per cent reported they feel they have enough friends (Years 4–6: 79.5%; Years 7–12: 85.7%).

Around two-fifths (38.4%) of students in the Pilbara said they feel their friends care about them ‘a lot’; this is a lower proportion than for the rest of the state (45.8%). Female primary school students are much less likely than their counterparts across the state to feel their friends care about them (41.6% vs 57.4%), and similarly for male secondary students (29.4% vs 41.1%).

### Material basics

Around two-thirds (63.7%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Pilbara said that if they were hungry there is always enough food for them to eat at home, while 10.3 per cent said there is only sometimes or never enough food to eat at home. These responses are consistent with those across the state.

Most (83.1%) students reported having enough money in their family to afford school excursions and/or camps, however this is a lower proportion than for the rest of WA (90.2%).

Of the students surveyed in the Pilbara:

- 81.9 per cent said they have their own bedroom (Years 4–6: 72.2%; Years 7–12: 88.6%).
- 4.1 per cent reported their family does not own a car used for family transport (Years 4–6: 6.0%; Years 7–12: 2.7%).
- 95.1 per cent reported they have access to the internet at home (Years 4–6: 92.5%; Years 7–12: 96.8%).
- 91.9 per cent of secondary students reported having their own mobile phone.
- 86.4 per cent reported having ‘the right kind of clothes’ to fit in with people their age (Years 4–6: 87.5%; Years 7–12: 85.6%).

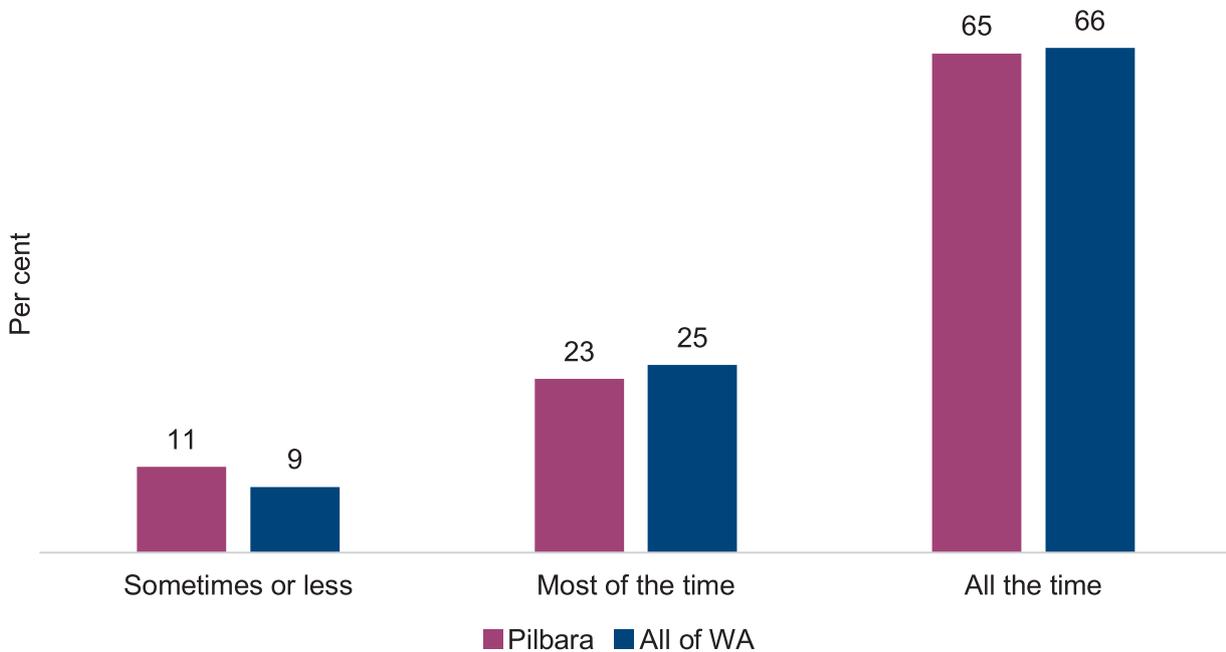
These results are consistent with the rest of the state.

### Safe in the home

Just under two-thirds (65.2%) of students in the Pilbara said they feel safe at home all the time (Years 4–6: 65.2%; Years 7–12: 65.2%), while 22.7 per cent said they feel safe at home most of the time (Years 4–6: 23.0%; Years 7–12: 22.5%).

These results are consistent with the rest of WA.

**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting how safe they feel at home**



At the same time, one-quarter (25.5%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students said they are ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ worried that someone in their home or family will be fighting (Years 4–6: 24.8%; Years 7–12: 25.9%). This result is consistent with the rest of the state.

Notwithstanding the above result, compared to the rest of the state, secondary students in the Pilbara are more likely to report being ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ worried that someone in their home or family will hurt somebody (Pilbara: 22.0%; All of WA: 15.4%) or hurt themselves (Pilbara: 22.2%; All of WA: 18.4%) or be arrested (Pilbara: 18.4%; All of WA: 11.6%).

Over one-third (35.0%) of secondary students reported they had stayed away from home overnight because of a problem, with 41.0 per cent of female young people reporting this (compared to 33.3% for the rest of the state).

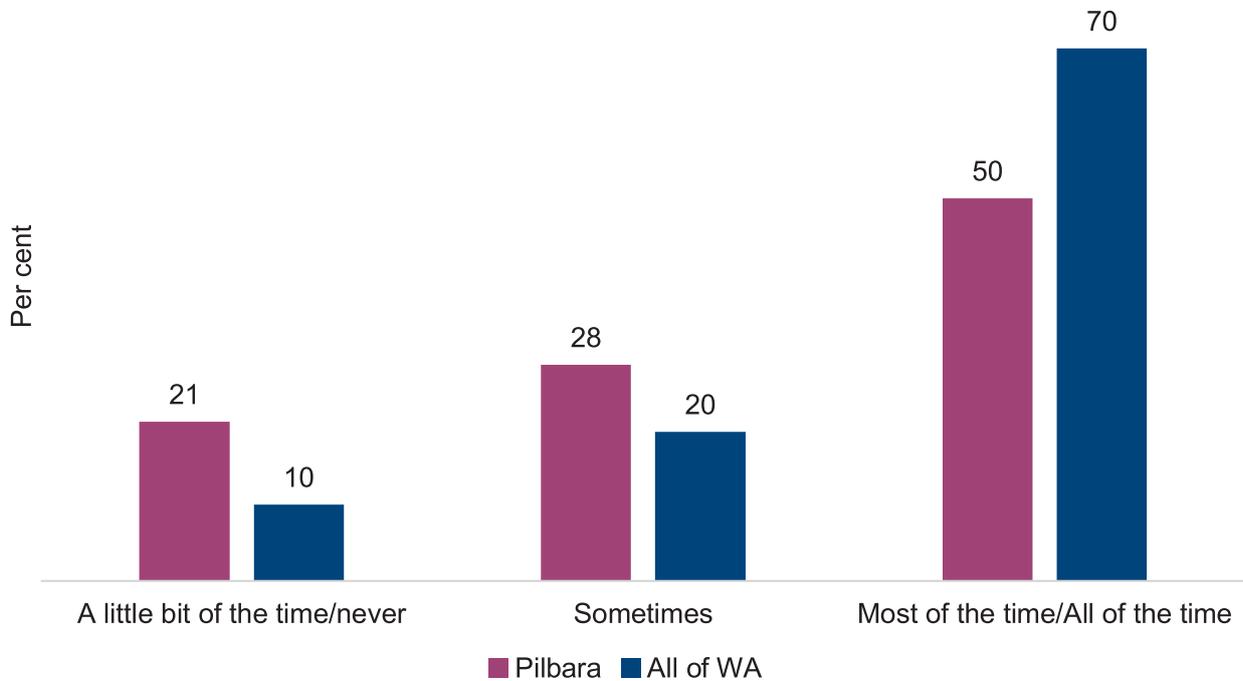
**Safe in the community**

A higher proportion of students in the Pilbara do not feel safe in their local area compared to students across WA.

Less than one-quarter (21.8%) of students in the Pilbara said they feel safe in their local area all the time (Years 4–6: 27.1%; Years 7–12: 18.2%), while 31.5 per cent said they feel safe in their local area most of the time (Years 4–6: 30.8%; Years 7–12: 32.0%).

One-half (49.3%) of secondary students in the Pilbara feel safe in their local area only sometimes or less (all of WA: 29.6%).

**Proportion of Year 7 to 12 students reporting how often they feel safe in their local area**



A high proportion of both male and female secondary students do not feel safe in their local area (feeling safe only sometimes or less: female: 56.5%; male: 41.5%).

Students in Years 9 to 12 in the Pilbara are more likely to report having been hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose than their counterparts across WA (49.8% vs 43.4%). Of these, 55.5 per cent occurred in the previous 12 months.

Students who reported being hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose in the previous 12 months were also asked further questions about the nature and location of the incident.

Compared to the rest of the state, male students in the Pilbara are more likely to report being harmed by an adult (53.2% vs 23.8%), as opposed to another child or young person (37.9% vs 80.7%). Female students in the

Pilbara reported being harmed by an adult 54.1 per cent of the time and by another child or young person 41.6 per cent of the time.

Young people who were hit or physically harmed in the Pilbara are less likely than those across the state to report this happened at school (25.7% vs 45.3%), while being marginally more likely to report it happened in the neighbourhood (26.1% vs 11.8%) or when hanging out in a public place (35.9% vs 20.3%).

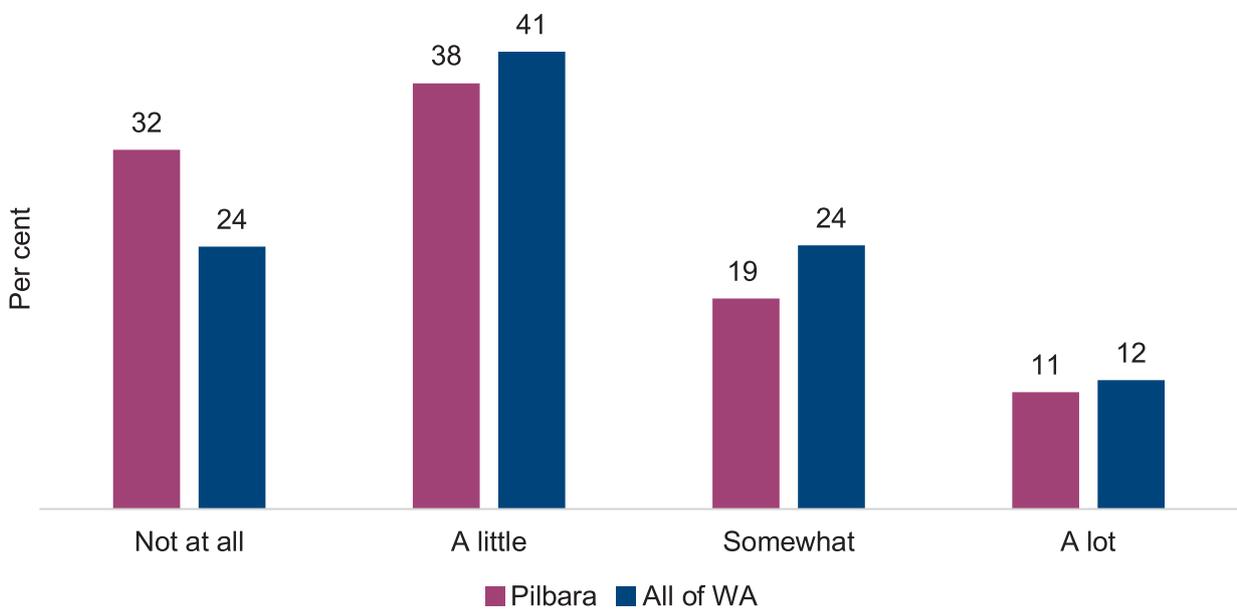
There are also differences in the locations of the incidents reported between male and female students. Male young people reported the incident predominantly taking place in their neighbourhood (43.1%) or in a public place (e.g. in town, shops, sports centre) (43.0%), whereas female young people reported the incident predominantly taking place at home (77.8%), followed by in a public place (27.6%).

## Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

When asked about the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes to daily life, less than one-third (29.4%) of students in the Pilbara reported the pandemic affected their

life in a bad way ‘a lot’ (10.5%) or ‘somewhat’ (18.9%). Further, 32.3 per cent of students responded ‘not at all’ when posed this question – this is a higher proportion than for the rest of the state (23.6%).

### Proportion of students responding to the question: ‘Thinking about the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes to daily life, how much has this affected your life in a bad way?’



Consistent with the above result, a lower proportion of Year 9 to Year 12 students in the Pilbara compared to the rest of the state reported the COVID-19 pandemic had been a source of stress to them in the previous year (14.5% vs 20.8%).

Of the students surveyed in the Pilbara region:

- 53.3 per cent reported feeling very or somewhat relaxed when they thought of COVID-19; 34.2 per cent reported feeling very or somewhat stressed/anxious.
- 43.1 per cent reported feeling worried if they missed school due to COVID-19 in the previous calendar year, 2020.

## Aboriginal children's and young people's views on feeling safe and supported

### Supportive relationships

Most (85.8%) Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Pilbara reported that their family gets along well or very well, slightly more compared to non-Aboriginal students (79.2%).

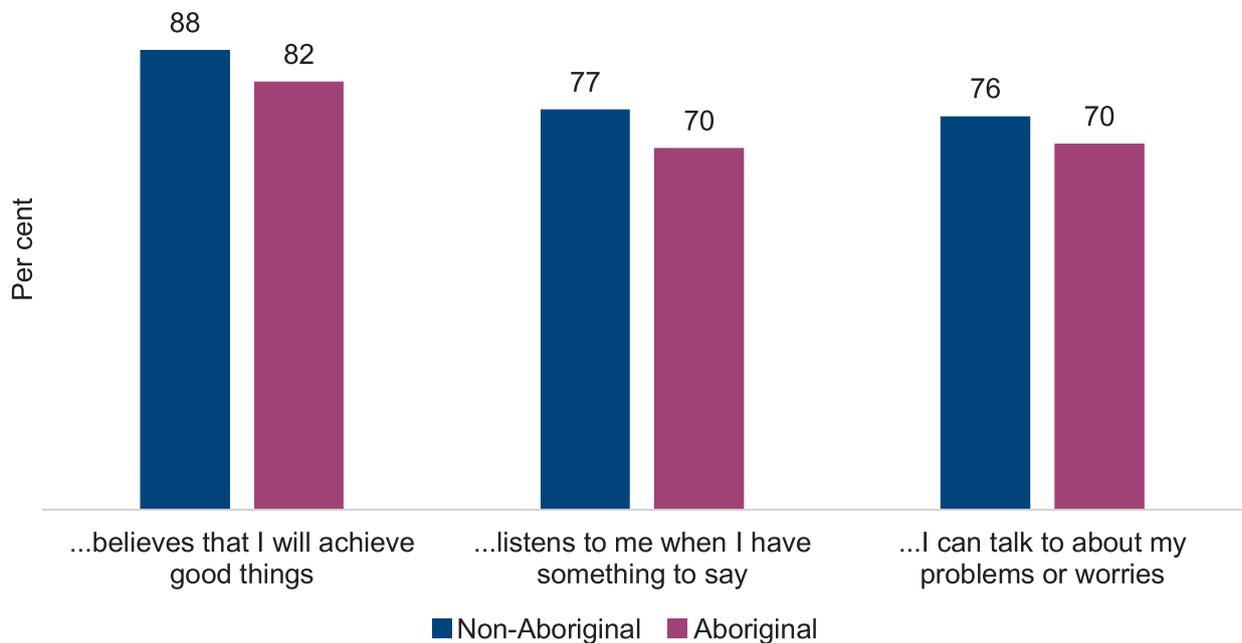
Most Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students in the Pilbara also reported that it is 'very much true' or 'pretty much true' that where they live there is a parent or another adult who:

- believes they will achieve good things (82.3%)
- listens to them when they have something to say (69.5%)
- they can talk to about their problems or worries (70.4%).

These results are marginally lower than those of their non-Aboriginal peers.

Most Aboriginal students feel that they are very good or okay at making and keeping friends (92.5%) and that they have enough friends (85.1%). These results are consistent with non-Aboriginal students.

**Proportion of Year 4 to 12 Pilbara students responding 'very much true' or 'pretty much true' to the statement: 'Where I live, there is a parent or adult who...'**



## Material basics

Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students in the Pilbara are more than three times as likely to report living in a primary household of seven people or more (21.9%) compared to their non-Aboriginal peers (6.8%).

Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Pilbara are marginally more likely to be experiencing some form of material disadvantage in comparison to their non-Aboriginal peers.

- More than one in ten (11.8%) Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Pilbara said there is only sometimes or never enough food to eat at home when they are hungry (non-Aboriginal: 9.0%).
- More than one in five (21.5%) Aboriginal students do not have enough money in their family for them to go on a school excursion or camp (non-Aboriginal: 14.6%).
- One in ten (10.7%) Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 does not have access to the internet at home (non-Aboriginal: 2.7%).

Almost one in five (18.6%) Aboriginal secondary students does not have their own tablet, laptop or computer, compared to 12.9 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.

## Feeling safe

The majority (84.4%) of Aboriginal children and young people in the Pilbara feel safe at home most or all of the time. This is marginally lower than the result for non-Aboriginal children and young people (89.6%).

Compared to non-Aboriginal students, Aboriginal students are more likely worry 'a lot' that someone in their home or family will hurt themselves (Aboriginal: 17.0%; non-Aboriginal: 11.7%) or hurt somebody (Aboriginal: 16.7%; non-Aboriginal: 8.0%), or for secondary students, are more likely to worry 'a lot' that someone in their family will get arrested (Aboriginal: 9.8%, non-Aboriginal: 4.9%).

When it comes to safety in their local area, 61.9 per cent of Aboriginal children and young people in the Pilbara reported feeling safe most or all of the time. This proportion is higher than their non-Aboriginal peers (50.2%).

## What do children and young people in the Pilbara say about being safe and supported?

### Supportive relationships

*"I'm worried about if my parents will break up and if they will die and Have no one to look after me and I get sent to a orphanage."  
(female, 10 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*"Adults if you see a kid down and walking alone crying ask them if they are okay."  
(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"... [I] would rather just tell my parents anything that's going on because they are really supportive."  
(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"Actually listen to you and not compare your troubles to their own and not dismiss it straight away."  
(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"Often the adults believe that whatever they say is right and don't understand how the person feels. As well helping them understand that how they feel is okay."  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"Listen to kids more, because ultimately if you're trying to help kids you can't make decisions without their input you don't know their feelings because you aren't them."  
(female, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

## Feeling unsafe

The following statements were generally in response to the question: 'What are some of the things that make you feel unsafe?'

*"When my dad gets mad at me and smaks me well I do so things that are wrong but I try to do my best sometimes I feel like I want to run away."*

*(female, 9 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"The sketchy people at night, there is some people at night who try to steal things like, bikes, motorbikes, scooters and other stuff."*

*(male, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"When people are at my house and drinking and I feel like they are going to hurt me and when I'm at my dads or mums friends house that I don't know."*

*(female, 10 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*"People who I don't know not being in my house and people who I don't know that are online when I'm playing games."*

*(female, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"When older men I don't know cross my path or look at me, I am very scared of sexual assault and I always warn my little sister to be safe."*

*(student who selected 'in another way', 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"When I'm at the shops it makes me feel unsafe and... when I go to the park I sometimes feel unsafe being around this boy he's creepy..."*

*(female, 10 year-old, undisclosed Aboriginal status)*

*"Feel anxious about people inside the house, afraid they will hit me."*

*(male, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*"Bully's that hit me and threaten to belt me..."*

*(male, 12 year-old, undisclosed Aboriginal status)*

*"The people in this town are rude, they always verbally and SEXUALLY harass me, and no one does anything about it."*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"When I'm home alone or when my brother has friends over."*

*(female, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*"People who go around beating up other people. People at school getting away with hurting me."*

*(female 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**▲▲ Ummm the people in the community I've been threatened numerous times and even had it cause me and my friend to get bashed. And no one does anything about it and it makes me feel unsafe. ▼▼**

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

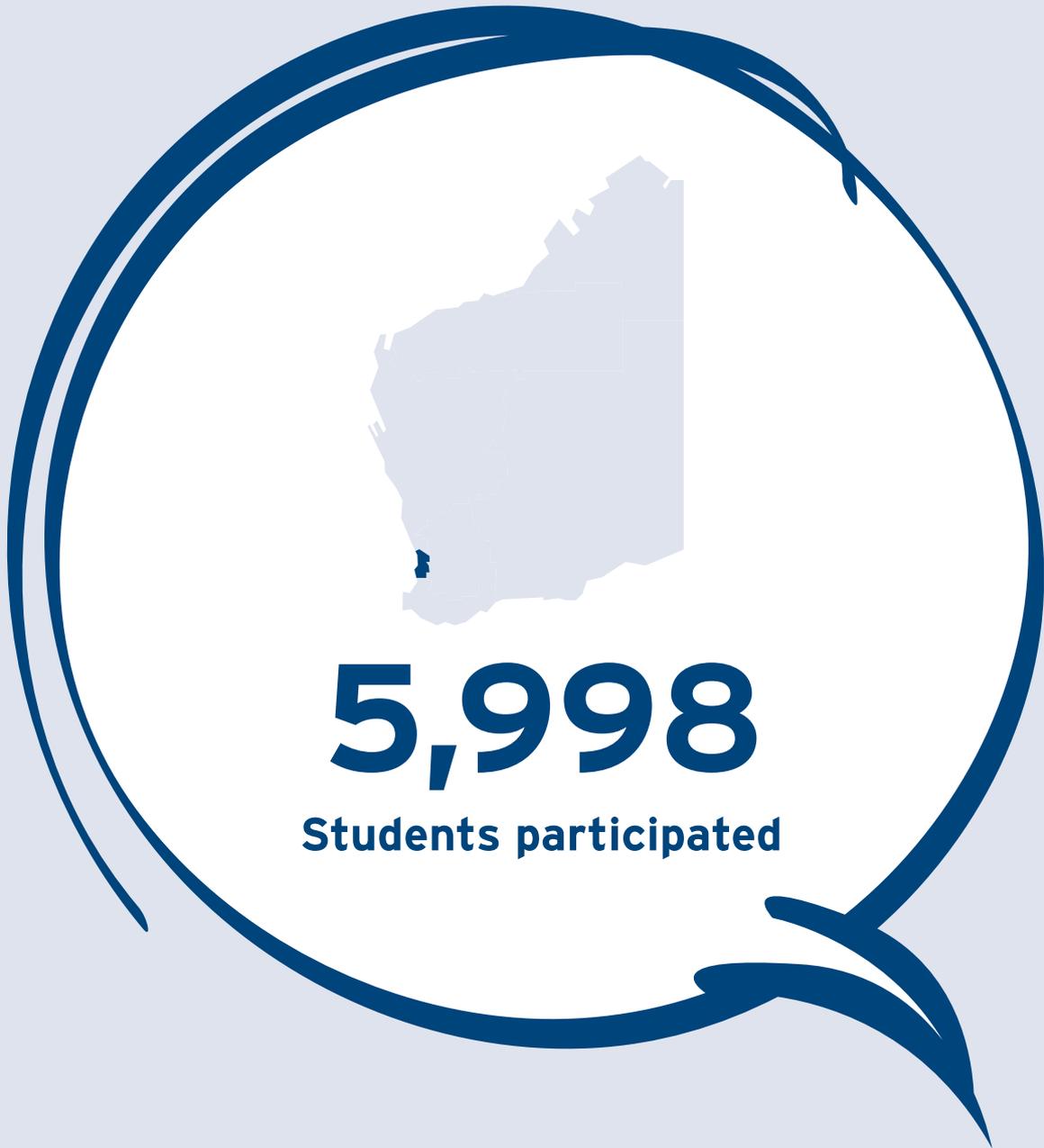
*"When family gets into arguments that are physical and yelling that leads to fighting and I've grown up with that my whole life."*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"When I get followed by men."*

*(female, 17 year-old, Aboriginal)*

# South Metropolitan



# South Metropolitan key findings

**Female secondary students** in the South Metropolitan region **are much less likely** than their male peers **to have done vigorous exercise three or more times in the previous seven days** (48.4% vs 70.9%).



**One in five (20.3%)** Aboriginal secondary students in the South Metropolitan region **strongly disagreed that school is a place where they like learning** (compared to 11.6% of non-Aboriginal secondary students).

**School and study problems (87.1%)** were the **most commonly reported sources of stress** for Year 9 to Year 12 students, followed by mental health and wellbeing (50.1%) and family conflict (45.6%).

**The majority (58.2%)** of secondary students in the South Metropolitan region **did not work for pay in the previous 12 months**. This is the highest proportion across the state.

**Only 44.8 per cent** of secondary students said they know where **to get support in their local area for stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries**.



**A large majority (90.8%)** of students in the South Metropolitan region **said they feel safe at home all or most of the time**.



This is the lowest response across all regions.

**One-quarter (24.7%)** of Year 4 to Year 12 students said they were 'somewhat' or 'a lot' **worried that someone in their home or family will be fighting**.



**Most Aboriginal students** in the South Metropolitan region agreed that they **feel good about themselves (76.6%)**, are able to do things as well as other people (73.9%) and are happy with themselves (80.0%).

Aboriginal children and young people in the South Metropolitan region are **much less likely to feel safe in their local area all the time or most of the time** than non-Aboriginal children and young people (55.4% vs 67.6%).



**Most Year 4 to Year 6 students** in the South Metropolitan region **said they like school (70.6%)**, while only 44.7 per cent of secondary students said they like school.



**Almost one-quarter (23.9%)** of Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the South Metropolitan region said there is **only sometimes or never enough food to eat at home when they are hungry** (non-Aboriginal: 8.1%).



**The majority (67.9%)** of Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 6 students in the South Metropolitan region reported that **being at school every day is very important to them**.

## Overview

A total of 5,998 students across Years 4 to 12 from 18 primary schools and 14 secondary schools in the South Metropolitan region took part in the Speaking Out Survey 2021.

Just under one-half (44.3%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students surveyed in the South Metropolitan region identified as girls, 52.3 per cent identified as boys and 3.4 per cent selected the option that they identify 'in another way'.

In total, 5.4 per cent of participants in the South Metropolitan region reported being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Of the students surveyed in the South Metropolitan region, 94.6 per cent reported speaking English at home and almost one-quarter (23.5%) reported (also) speaking other language(s) at home. This is the highest proportion of children and young people across the state speaking another language at home. Further, of these, 5.4 per cent reported they do not speak English at home.

The other languages spoken included Chinese languages (Mandarin, Cantonese), Filipino/Tagalog, Arabic, Indonesian, and various Indian sub-continent languages (Malayalam, Hindi, Tamil).

Students in the South Metropolitan region enjoyed doing the survey and appreciated the opportunity to have their say:

*"This survey is really good to get peoples feelings and I loved the questions please keep doing this it is great!" 😊*

*(male, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"I think this survey was a good idea to make sure everyone is safe/feels safe, I enjoyed this survey and it made me feel like someone was checking up on me. I found the questions easy to respond to and they were clear and simple." 😊*

*(female, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"I think it was a good idea to make this survey because you can see what people feel like their personal lives about school, at home and other places and to check if their mental health is good or not. See if they feel safe about going to school without worrying that they are gonna get bullied or get hurt. And how they think about COVID 19 to see if they are scared for it or not. I think that this survey is a amazing idea."*

*(female, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"I thought this survey was good and the questions where good I liked how there where options not to say if you didn't want to say it I liked how you didn't have to say your name or any details about you I give this survey a thumbs up and I will call the number if I need." 😊😊*

*(female, 11 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*"I really like this survey because now I know that someone is out there that wants to hear the thoughts of lots of children similar to me. I found the survey really interesting and enjoyed it. Thanks a lot Commissioner!"*

*(male, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"I like the fact that these people want to listen to what we have to say on these important matters, I feel very appreciated." Thank u :)*

*(student who selected 'in another way', 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*"I think this survey is a really good thing because it allows for young people voices to be heard. Which I think is important because it shows that we matter and have a say. I also think it's good because based on the results found things can change to better the well-being of you people."*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

## Healthy and connected

**“Don’t tell boys to toughen up when they have a problem and listen to people when they have issues.”**

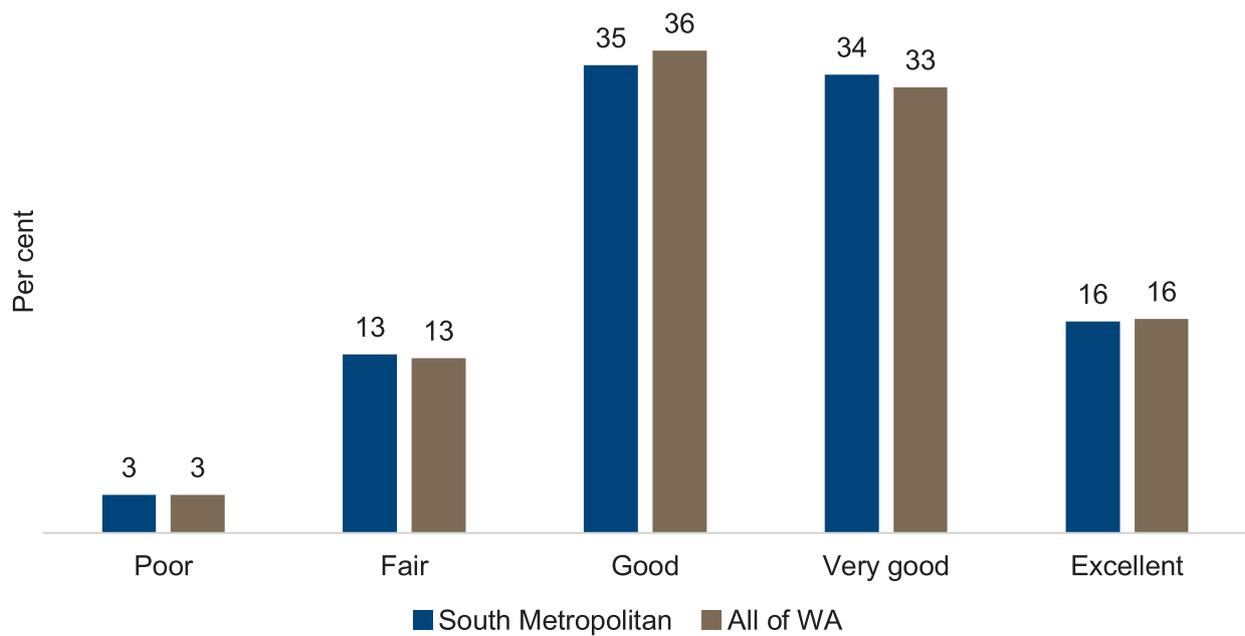
*(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### Physical health

Of the students surveyed in the South Metropolitan region, 49.4 per cent reported that their health is very good or excellent (Years 4–6: 59.5%; Years 7–12: 43.8%), while 16.0 per cent reported that their health is poor or fair (Years 4–6: 8.7%; Years 7–12: 20.2%).

These results are similar to those of students across the state.

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting their general health ratings



One-quarter (24.6%) of secondary students reported they have long-term health problems, while 11.3 per cent reported they have a long-term disability. These results are consistent with those across the state.

The most commonly reported disabilities and/or long-term health problems were asthma, anxiety and depression and visual impairments.

Over one-half (51.3%) of secondary students reported physical activity, sport or exercise was ‘definitely’ an important part of their life. One in five (20.1%) secondary students reported they had done vigorous exercise seven or more times in the previous week, while 40.0 per cent reported they had exercised three to six times in the previous week.

Female secondary students in the South Metropolitan region are much less likely than their male peers to have done vigorous exercise three or more times in the previous seven days (48.4% vs 70.9%).

These results are consistent with those across the WA.

Of the students surveyed in the South Metropolitan region:

- 40.2 per cent reported caring very much about how they look (Years 4–6: 31.4%; Years 7–12: 44.9%) and 30.9 per cent reported they care some (Years 4–6: 27.6%; Years 7–12: 32.8%).
- 37.4 per cent reported they care very much about eating healthy food (Years 4–6: 45.3%; Years 7–12: 33.1%) and 46.7 per cent reported they care some (Years 4–6: 43.4%; Years 7–12: 48.6%).
- One-quarter (26.0%) of secondary students reported eating fruit only a few times a week or less.
- 54.4 per cent reported they eat breakfast every day (Years 4–6: 70.5%; Years 7–12: 45.5%), while 5.6 per cent reported they never eat breakfast (Years 4–6: 1.6%; Years 7–12: 7.9%).
- Female secondary students are much less likely than their male peers to eat breakfast every day (67.1% vs 83.0%).
- Two-thirds (67.9%) reported brushing their teeth twice or more the previous day (Years 4–6: 69.3%; Years 7–12: 67.2%) and 43.2 per cent reported having ever had a filling (Years 4–6: 38.0%; Years 7–12: 46.2%).

- 69.5 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students reported going to sleep on a school night before 9pm, while 38.5 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students reported going to sleep on a school night before 10pm.

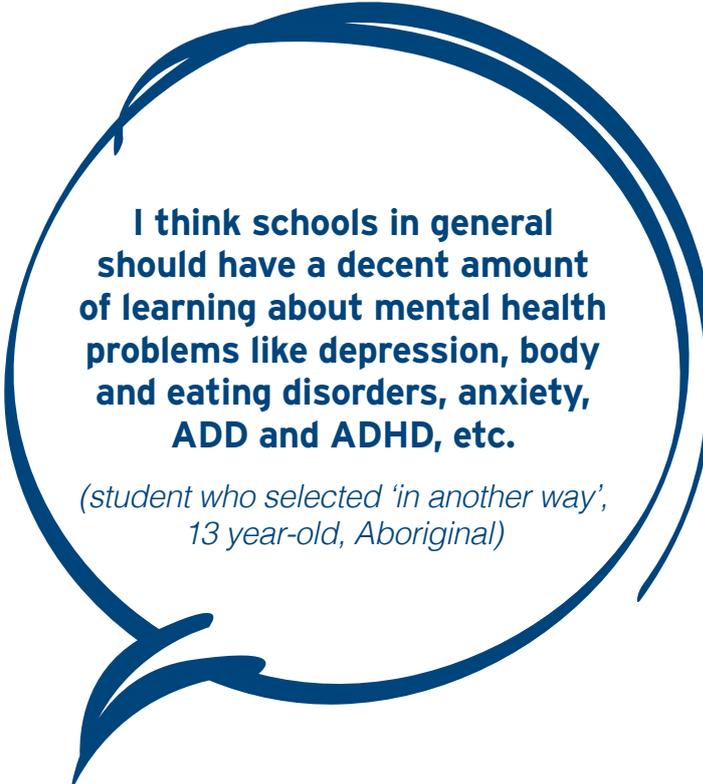
These results are consistent with those across the state.

## Mental health

Of the Year 4 to Year 12 students surveyed in the South Metropolitan region, 6.9 is the mean life satisfaction (on a scale from 0 to 10), (Years 4–6: 7.7; Years 7–12: 6.4). The mean life satisfaction across all of WA is 6.8.

More than three-fifths (62.6%) of students reported a high life satisfaction (7 to 10) (Years 4–6: 77.5%; Years 7–12: 54.2%) and 15.3 per cent reported a low life satisfaction (0 to 4) (Years 4–6: 8.2%; Years 7–12: 19.3%).

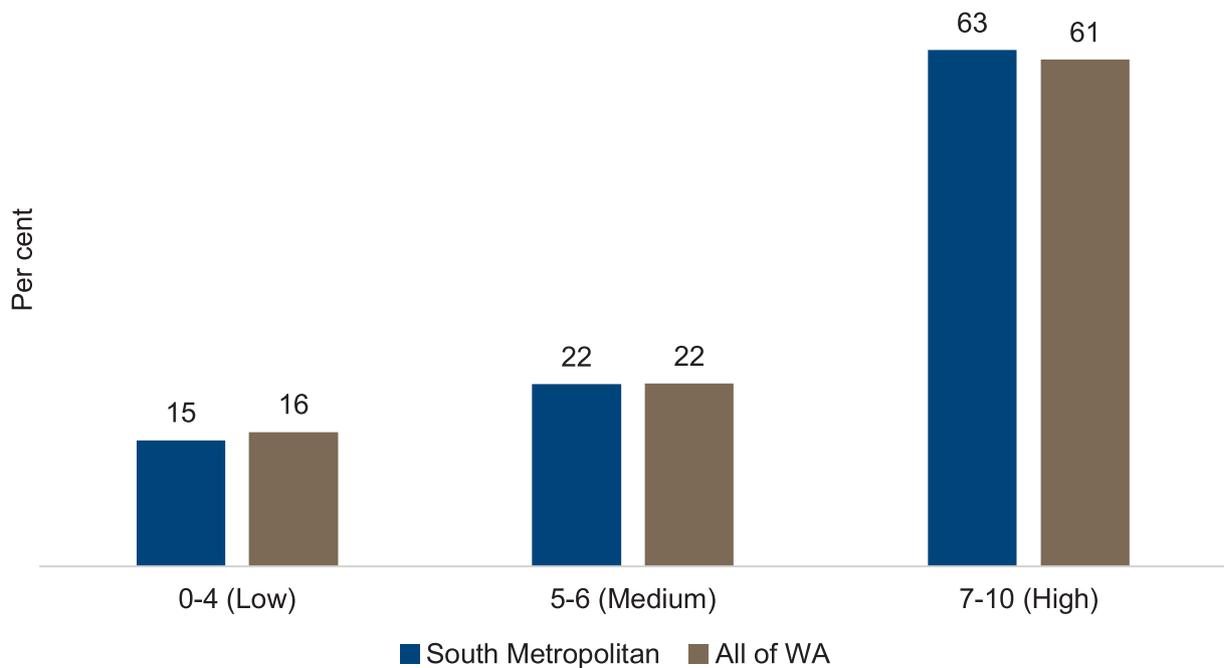
These results are consistent with the rest of the state.



**I think schools in general should have a decent amount of learning about mental health problems like depression, body and eating disorders, anxiety, ADD and ADHD, etc.**

*(student who selected 'in another way', 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students rating their life satisfaction on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is the worst possible life and 10 the best possible life**



Of the students surveyed in the South Metropolitan region:

- 49.7 per cent agreed (Years 4–6: 45.2%; Years 7–12: 52.1%) and 28.4 per cent strongly agreed they are happy with themselves (Years 4–6: 45.8%; Years 7–12: 18.7%).
- 45.7 per cent agreed (Years 4–6: 40.7%; Years 7–12: 48.5%) and 30.0 per cent strongly agreed they feel good about themselves (Years 4–6: 49.1%; Years 7–12: 19.5%).
- 49.7 per cent of secondary students agreed and 22.3 per cent strongly agreed they can deal with things that happen in their life.
- In Years 9 to 12, 58.1 per cent reported they had felt sad, blue or depressed for two or more weeks in a row in the previous 12 months.

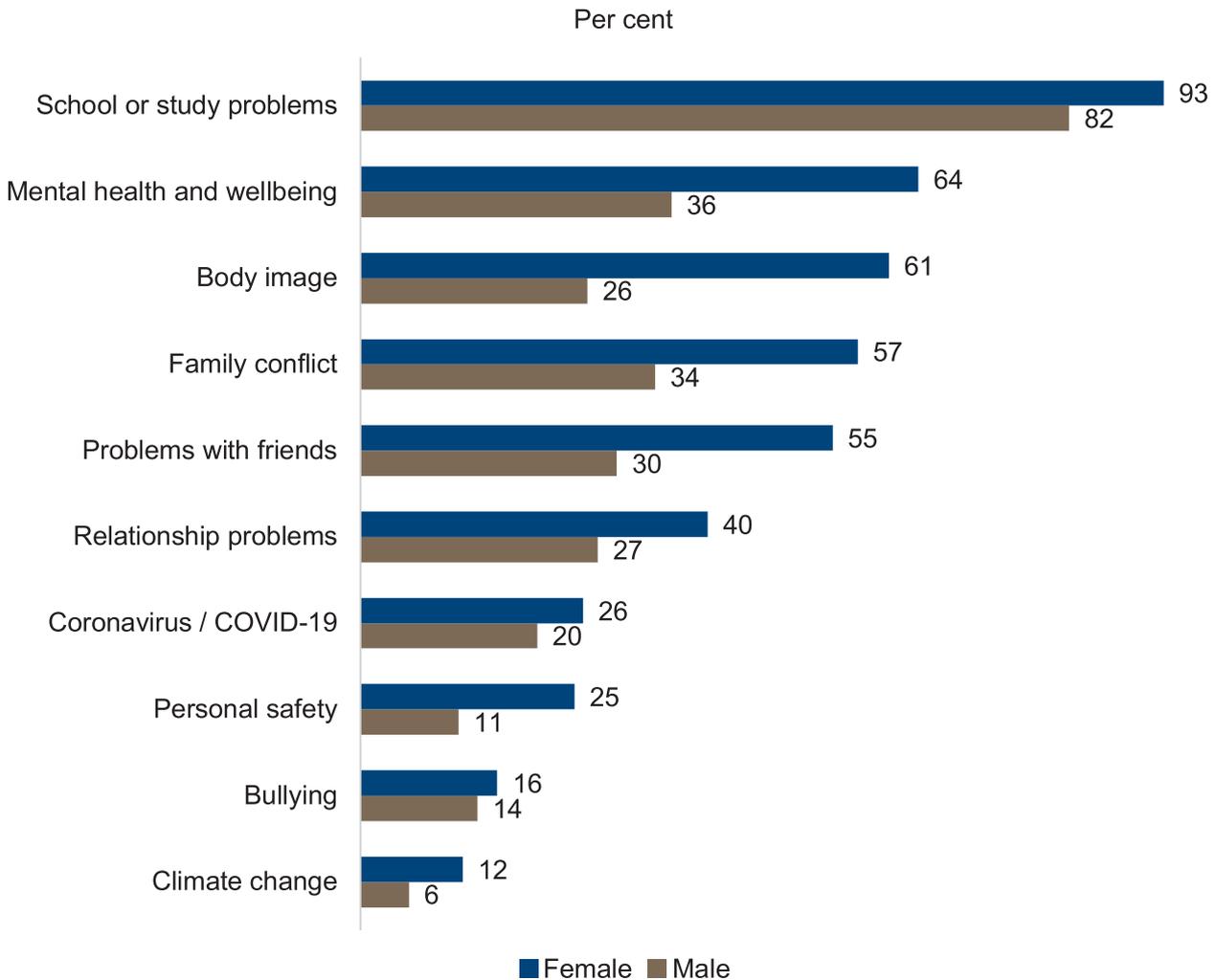
Female secondary students are much more likely than their male peers to report they are not happy with themselves (39.0% vs 19.1%), do not feel good about themselves (44.4% vs 20.3%) and that they are not able to do things as well as other people (27.8% vs 18.3%).

These results are consistent with the results for students across WA.

Year 9 to Year 12 students were also asked about sources of stress in the previous 12 months. School and study problems (87.1%) are the most commonly reported source of stress, followed by mental health and wellbeing (50.1%), family conflict (45.6%), body image (42.6%) and problems with friends (41.3%).

There are also gender differences in the responses, with greater proportions of female students reporting being affected by stress across all sources.

**Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting sources of stress in the last 12 months by gender**



Notably, females are more than twice as likely to report body image and personal safety as stressors compared to males.

These gender differences are consistent with the results across the state.

**Access to support for physical and mental health**

Two-thirds (66.6%) of secondary students said they know where to get support in their school for stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries. However, only 44.8 per cent said they know where to get

support in their local area for stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries. This is the lowest response across all regions.

Almost two-fifths (38.3%) of secondary students in the South Metropolitan region reported they had received help for problems with stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries in the previous 12 months (female: 45.3% and male: 31.6%).

One-quarter (25.0%) reported there had been a time in the previous 12 months when they had wanted or needed to see someone for their health but weren't able to.

Three-fifths (60.0%) of these students reported not seeing someone for their health due to feeling embarrassment or shame, while 36.7 per cent reported they were unsure who to see or where to go.

The most commonly used sources of support for secondary students in the South Metropolitan region were parents (or someone who acts as a parent) (82.3%), friends including boyfriend or girlfriend (68.2%), other family (66.1%), school psychologist, school chaplain or school nurse (53.6%) and doctor or GP (50.3%).

Of the students who had asked for help, 84.3 per cent found friends including a boyfriend or girlfriend helpful, 79.0 per cent found their parents helpful, 77.6 per cent found their other family helpful, and 75.3 per cent found a

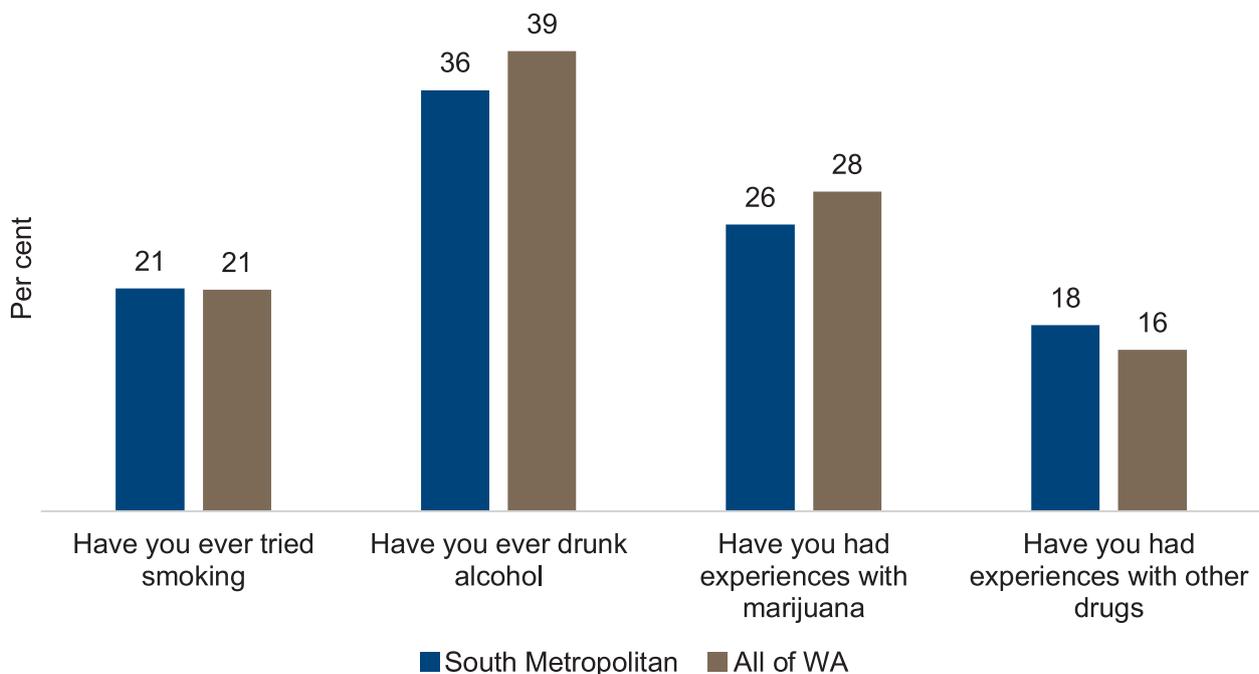
doctor or GP helpful and 62.8 per cent found a school psychologist, school chaplain or school nurse helpful.

## Risk-taking and healthy behaviours

### Alcohol and other drugs

One-fifth (21.0%) of secondary students in the South Metropolitan region reported they have tried smoking, while one-third have tried alcohol (36.2%). Year 9 to Year 12 students were also asked if they had experiences with marijuana or other drugs. Over one-quarter (25.9%) reported they had experiences with marijuana, while 18.2 per cent had experiences with other drugs.

**Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who responded ‘yes’ to the question on whether they have tried smoking or drinking, or had experiences with marijuana or other drugs (Years 9 to 12 only)**



Note: The questions asked were: Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?; Have you ever drunk alcohol (more than just a few sips, like a full can of beer or a glass of wine)?; Have you ever had any experiences with marijuana?; Have you ever had any experiences with other drugs? Response options were: ‘No’, ‘Yes’ and ‘Prefer not to say’.

Of the secondary students surveyed in the South Metropolitan region:

- 76.3 per cent reported having learnt 'some' or 'a lot' about alcohol and 72.4 per cent had learnt about cigarettes/smoking at school (all of WA: 73.0% and 68.5% respectively).
- 50.9 per cent said they had learnt 'some' or 'a lot' about marijuana and 55.7 per cent had learnt 'some' or 'a lot' about other drugs at school (all of WA: 50.0% and 55.0% respectively).
- 74.9 per cent thought people their age should not use any substances including cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana or other drugs (all of WA: 72.0%).

Most secondary students in the South Metropolitan region feel like they know enough about the health impacts of alcohol (88.1%) or smoking (90.3%), however fewer feel like they know enough about the health impacts of marijuana (63.6%). These results are broadly consistent with the rest of WA.

### Sexual health

Just over one-half (55.5%) of secondary students reported they had learnt 'a lot' or 'some' about sexual health and ways to support their sexual health at school, while 45.6 per cent reported they had learnt 'a lot' or 'some' about pregnancy and contraception at school.

One-quarter (24.6%) of Year 7 to Year 12 students in the South Metropolitan region said they had learnt nothing about pregnancy and contraception at school.

Female secondary students in the South Metropolitan region are less likely than their male peers to report they had learnt 'a lot' or 'some' about sexual health at school (48.0% vs 62.3%).

Consistent with the above results, almost one-

half (46.7%) of secondary students reported they feel they don't know enough about sexual health and ways to support their sexual health or they aren't sure (female: 52.1%; male: 42.9%). A similar proportion (52.9%) reported they feel they don't know enough about pregnancy and contraception or they aren't sure (female: 54.3%; male: 52.4%).

More than four in ten (43.2%) secondary students in the South Metropolitan region do not know or are unsure about where to go if they need help for something about their reproductive or sexual health (all of WA: 40.8%).

In Years 9 to 12, 53.6 per cent of female students and 31.6 per cent of male students reported they had ever been sent unwanted sexual material, such as pornographic pictures, videos or words (all of WA: 57.3% and 31.4% respectively).

### Problematic behaviours and emotions related to being online

One-third (33.9%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students said they feel bothered 'fairly often' or 'very often' when they cannot be on the internet (Years 4–6: 29.8%; Years 7–12: 35.8%), while 26.4 per cent said they feel bothered 'fairly often' or 'very often' when they cannot play electronic games (Years 4–6: 31.5%; Years 7–12: 24.2%).

When it comes to mobile phone usage, one-third (33.4%) of male and 45.4 per cent of female secondary students said they feel bothered 'fairly often' or 'very often' when they cannot use their mobile phone. Further, 10.5 per cent of male and 17.4 per cent of female secondary students said they go without eating or sleeping either fairly often or very often because of their mobile phone.

These results are consistent with those across the state.

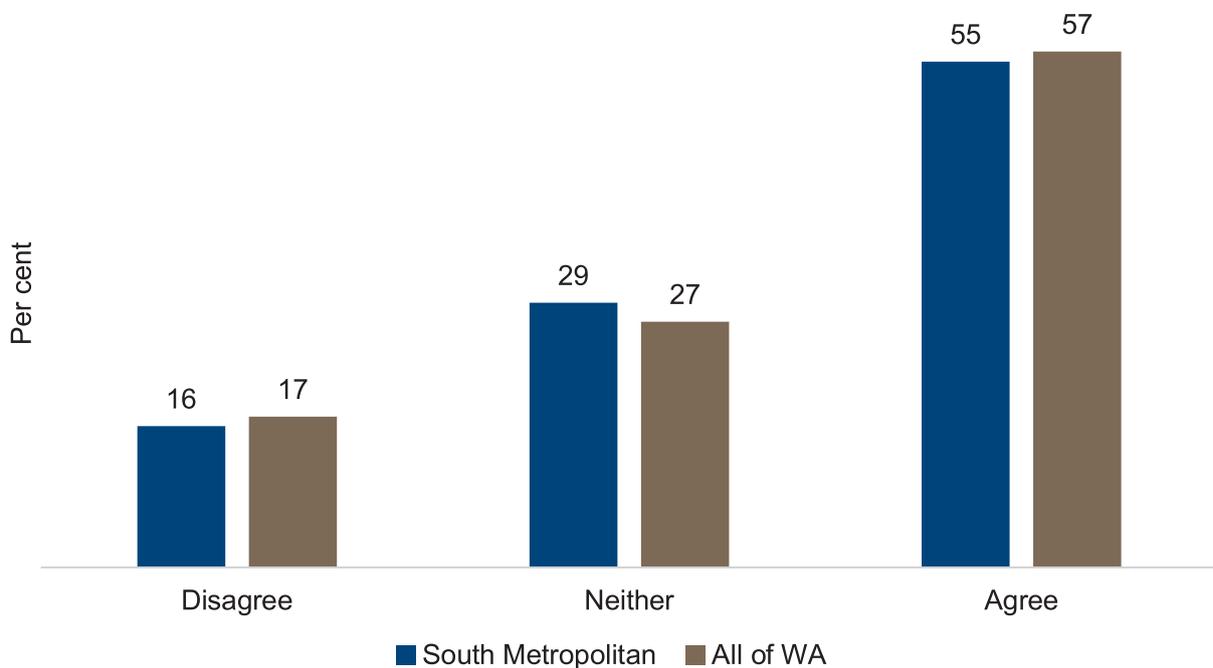
### Connection to community

Most (84.9%) Year 4 to Year 6 students in the South Metropolitan region agreed they like where they live and similarly, 80.3 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed (all of WA: 86.0% and 79.3% respectively).

Almost three-quarters (72.2%) of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed they belong in their community, while 55.4 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.

These results are consistent with those across WA.

### Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who feel like they belong in their community



Of the students surveyed in the South Metropolitan region:

- 70.2 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that their neighbours are friendly, while 63.9 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.
- 55.0 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that when they go to the shops the people there are friendly, while 64.3 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.
- 72.2 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that there are lots of fun things to do where they live, while 50.2 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.

- 85.6 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that there are outdoor places for them to go in their area, like parks, ovals or skate parks, while 85.1 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.

These results are consistent with the responses across all of WA.

In terms of other activities outside of school, of the students in the South Metropolitan region:

- 33.8 per cent said they spend time being active outdoors outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 37.7%; Years 7–12: 31.8%). This is the lowest result across all regions.

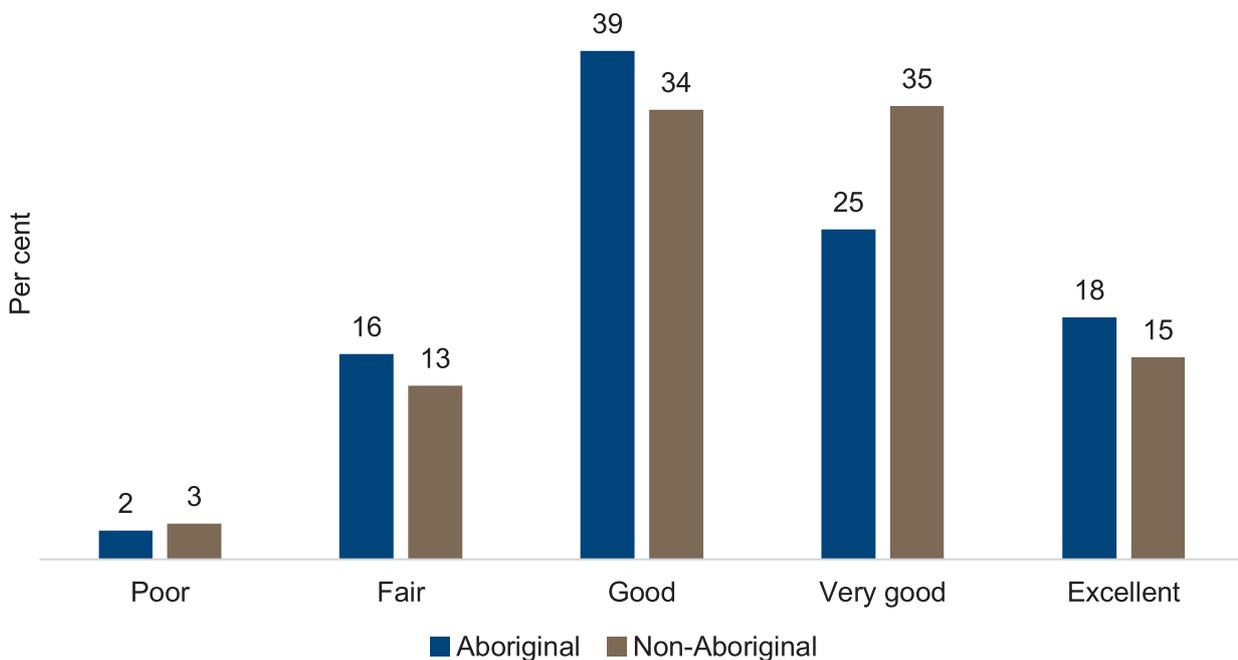
- 36.8 per cent said they spend time practising or playing a sport outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 38.9%; Years 7–12: 35.6%).
- 31.1 per cent said they spend time hanging out with friends outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 26.9%; Years 7–12: 33.4%).
- 57.6 per cent of male and 40.6 per cent of female students reported playing games on a game console, computer, or tablet every day or almost every day.

Unless otherwise stated, these results are consistent with those across the state.

### Aboriginal children’s and young people’s views on feeling healthy and connected

Of the Aboriginal students surveyed in the South Metropolitan region, 43.5 per cent rated their health as very good or excellent; this is less than non-Aboriginal students (49.9%).

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting their general health ratings



Nearly three-fifths (58.7%) of the Aboriginal students in the South Metropolitan region reported that physical activity, sport or exercise is ‘definitely’ an important part of their life, slightly more than non-Aboriginal students (51.0%). Further, over one-half (55.3%) reported they had done vigorous exercise three or more times in the previous

week, consistent with 60.5 per cent for non-Aboriginal students.

Three-fifths (61.1%) of Aboriginal students reported high life satisfaction, while 15.6 per cent reported a low life satisfaction. These results are consistent with those of non-Aboriginal students in the region.

Most Aboriginal students agreed with the following statements:

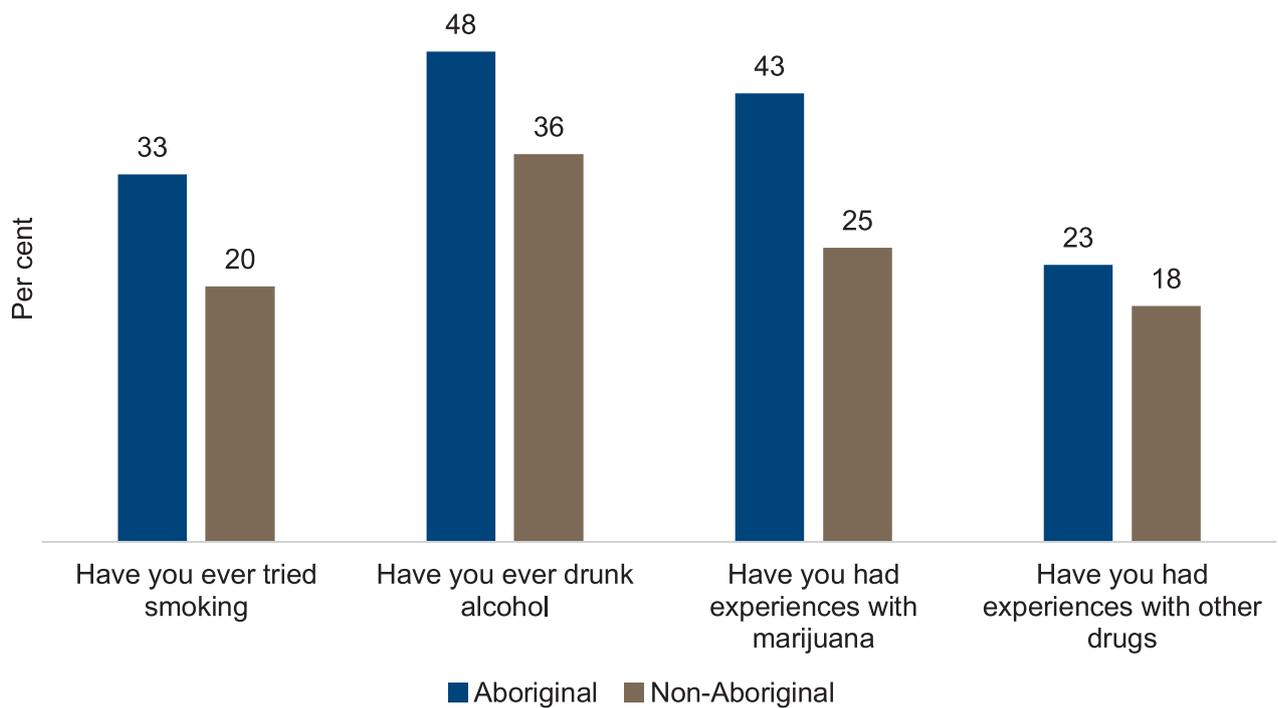
- I feel good about myself (76.6%).
- I am able to do things as well as most people (73.9%).
- I am happy with myself (80.0%).

The top three stressors reported by Aboriginal Year 9 to Year 12 students in the South Metropolitan region are school or study problems (82.1%), family conflict (50.1%) and

mental health and wellbeing (42.5%). Notably, compared to non-Aboriginal students, Aboriginal students are more likely to be stressed about personal safety (28.6% vs 18.1%) and less likely to be stressed by body image (33.9% vs 42.7%).

Aboriginal secondary students in the South Metropolitan region are more likely to have tried smoking and drunk alcohol than non-Aboriginal secondary students (smoking: 33.4% vs 20.4%; alcohol: 47.7% vs 35.8%).

**Proportion of students in Years 7 to 12 who have tried smoking or drinking, or had experiences with marijuana or other drugs (Years 9 to 12 only)**



*Note: The questions asked were: Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?; Have you ever drunk alcohol (more than just a few sips, like a full can of beer or a glass of wine)?; Have you ever had any experiences with marijuana?; Have you ever had any experiences with other drugs? Response options were: 'No', 'Yes' and 'Prefer not to say'.*

When it comes to Year 9 to Year 12 students, Aboriginal students are more likely to have had experiences with marijuana than non-Aboriginal students (42.8% vs 24.9%), and are as likely to have had experiences with other drugs (22.9% vs 18.1%).

In terms of connection to culture and community, of the Aboriginal students in the South Metropolitan region:

- 67.4 per cent said they know their family's country (all of WA: 69.6%), and of these students 77.0 per cent said they spend time on their family's country (all of WA: 77.4%).
- 18.0 per cent said they talk Aboriginal language 'some' or 'a lot' (all of WA: 27.1%) and 40.7 per cent said they talk none (all of WA: 37.1%).
- 46.9 per cent said they do cultural or traditional activities with their family (all of WA: 47.8%).

Aboriginal children and young people in the South Metropolitan region are much more likely to report they do cultural or traditional activities with their family than those in the North Metropolitan region (46.9% vs 34.3%).

Most Aboriginal children (Years 4 to 6) in the South Metropolitan region like where they live and feel like they belong in their community (85.4% and 73.8% respectively). This is consistent with their non-Aboriginal peers (86.1% and 72.7%). A lower proportion of Aboriginal secondary students like where they live and feel like they belong in their community (77.1% and 59.1% respectively), which is consistent with their non-Aboriginal peers (80.5% and 55.1%).

Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students in the South Metropolitan region had similar views on whether there are fun things to do in their community or outdoor places to go, like parks and skate parks, with students in Years 4 to 6 more likely to agree than secondary students.

## What do children and young people in the South Metropolitan region say about being healthy and connected?

Students were asked the following open text questions related to health and mental health:

- Thinking about mental health and other emotional worries, like stress, anxiety and depression, what are some of the ways families, communities, schools or adults in general could be more helpful?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with seeking help for health issues, including mental health worries?

### Talking about mental health

*"To teach people more about mental health earlier in life, because people do get mentally ill at a young age."*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"They could come together like once a month and talk or just even interact with the other families and ask how we and everyone else is doing."*

*(female, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*"Understanding that mental health issues are real, and that if a child says they aren't doing so well, they should listen and help instead of dismiss them. I think people should just spread more awareness because mental illness and mental health issues are on an increase and not listening to your children can make it worse."*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"Just try to actually listen to us and try not to invalidate our feelings or victim-blame us in any sort of manner."*

*(male, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Don’t make your children feel ashamed to be feeling these emotions. Their problems may not seem big to you but things halve change and we face new problems that you may not understand. Don’t judge before you understand.”*

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Adults in general could start talking about these topics and then students might open up and think they aren’t the alone.”*

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### **Feeling anxiety, depression or sadness**

*“I’m worried about my well-being in the future, I’ve been dealing with a lot of stress and anxiety. I’ve been having a few panic attacks too...”*

*(female, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I am quite sensitive to insults and criticism and I can sometimes hurt myself to rid myself of the pain.”*

*(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Sometimes I feel sad... notice.”*

*(student who selected ‘in another way’, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**▲▲ They could be more helpful by letting me be alone when I need to, not asking me if I’m okay when they see that I’m not, not to crowd me when they see something is wrong and to let me walk out when needed. ▼▼**

*(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“I feel as if all the things I am experiencing are all in my head and I make excuses for them saying I’m just tired or stressed when really I think it’s more than that and i can’t tell anyone about it because I feel they won’t believe me or think I’m just being sensitive and dramatic.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“I have never really had long term depression but my mind has gone through some dark places at times but I don’t reach out because I don’t want other people knowing about my pain so I put on a fake smile.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“There is such a stigma around men’s mental health. If I ever admit to being sad or reach out, it is used against me and feel weak, this is painful for me. Some days I feel like I might do something I regret.”*

*(male, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### **Talking about getting support**

*“It is hard to talk to my parents about and I feel like they don’t get it. When I say I think I might have depression they shut down the idea and say something stupid like it is hormones. I am not old enough to go to a doctor and see myself so I do not know how to get the right treatment.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“It’s very hard to reach out, in terms of mental health. Especially when you cannot even tell your own parents/guardians because you’re scared and ashamed of your own feelings and that you’ll be brushed off. I feel like my problems are not valid enough for someone to listen, it gets very hard when you’re out of options and there’s only yourself.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I feel like a school therapist would be nice, I know there are a lot of people in my school that struggle with mental health and anxiety and I think an actual therapist with the correct qualifications would help immense because some adults / parents don’t allow their children to get proper help.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I’ve also been to a GP and they’ve said I have ADHD but I have to go back there to get diagnosed, but my dad hasn’t been bothered to go get me diagnosed. And then I tell some of the teachers that I have ADHD so they know why I am acting this way and why I struggle with these things and the associate principle yells at me for it cause ‘if you haven’t been diagnosed, you do not have it.’”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Maybe when we tell the school something and we don’t want our parents to know. You shouldn’t tell them, why? Because we trusted you with this information and it annoys us and scares us when our parents want to talk to us about what we told you!!! I’m sorry but people need to fix this situation it makes us kids scared and not want to open up about anything.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“Yes! There are 5 year waiting times for public mental health places and that’s on emergency by the way, and all private ones are booked out not like my mum can afford the ridiculous prices anyways, she had to work 15 hour shifts for 2 weeks straight to afford a private and we can’t find any!” (student who selected ‘in another way’,*

*(15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“If schools had more people that students can talk to as sometimes the waiting list to see the school psych can be more than four weeks long. For adults to be more educated on mental health and the signs of bad mental health.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“...recognise that mental health comes in diff forms , introduce people that are friendly, experiences and diverse including educated people who know about mental health, stigmas around mental health, propers coping mechanisms and education and know gay and queer education.”*

*(male, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### **Views on their local area**

In total, 564 students from the South Metropolitan region responded to the free text question: ‘If there was one thing you could change about your local area, what would it be?’ Of the students surveyed in this region, the top things that they would like to change in their local area were:

- More, upgraded outdoor spaces or parks.
- More fun activities to do and places to hang out.
- Would like more, closer shops, a mall, movies, greater diversity.
- People in the local area are scary, not nice or friendly.

*“I would change the fact that there are not enough shops and parks nearby. Even tho there are parks nearby they are just old and not really fun.”*

*(female, 11 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“Maybe some swings at my local park area.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I just want to have a nice park where it’s just a lake lots of trees and a few benches.”*

*(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“There used to be a dirt bike track near where I live, but the school next door took it down. All the local boys I know miss it and wish there was another one we could ride.”*

*(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“The features of the park near our house. So many people have asked for changes there for so many years, but the government has not done anything yet. For example, there are no drinking fountains there but people exercise a lot.”*

*(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“To have less sketchy people around so my sisters and I could walk to the park and not have to be worried someone is following us.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Facilities and more colour. It has been 2 years since I moved to my area now. I used to live around Morley, and there, everything was like, colourful and lots of community facilities for children and young adults, even when there is an event of some sort, example Christmas, there would be posters around, shops giving out calendar, and many more fun stuff. But here where I live now, we don’t even get any type of festive vibes and just feels like the place is black and white. So, I would really like that to be changed.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Stop having racist people around my place.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“I would add a lot more foot paths for safer and easier access for school students walking or riding their bikes to and from school.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Have more areas for teenagers . I live in Rivertown and the areas they are really good if your a young child but if your a teenager the only places you can really hangout is maccas which is unhealthy and just not fun.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I would put in a park with a massive playground for the older ages (15-19) not something small and childish for little kids to play on. And it would have a huge flying fox, and heaps of swings. And a massive treehouse, that has heaps of rooms that kids can ‘rent’ and turn into a hang out space. It would have a massive chalk board wall, with buckets of chalk beside it.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Build a hub where teenagers could get together and just hangout and chill, or study or eat.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I would help all the homeless people, provide support for them and change the supply of drugs around here I would help the town avoid smoking crack or shooting up because it’s so sad to see people that can’t control themselves or off with the fairy’s because they are high on drugs.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“I’d like the park to be renovated, since my neighbourhood is close to primary and high schools, so there are lots of children who live there. I think it would be nice if they had access to a nicer playground and park to play with.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“To make more leisure outdoor areas where people can chill and hang out with benches, barbecues. To also maintain the facilities that are already running.”*

*(female, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

## Learning and participating

**▲▲ There is so much pressure on students to succeed, we are told of you fail now your entire life is decided. We are always compared and pitted against each other for the best marks. ▲▲**

*(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### Attendance

Over one-half (56.7%) of students in the South Metropolitan region said it is very important to them to be at school every day (Years 4–6: 67.4%; Years 7–12: 50.8%), while 36.6 per cent (Years 4–6: 29.2%; Years 7–12: 40.7%) said it is somewhat important.

Just over one in ten (11.2%) students in the South Metropolitan region said that if they missed school in 2020 due to COVID-19 that it worried them a lot, while 39.8 per cent said it worried them a little.<sup>5</sup>

Of the secondary students surveyed, 17.6 per cent reported they had been suspended from school. This is consistent with the results in the North Metropolitan region (15.5%) but lower than most other regions across WA (excluding the South West).

A similar proportion of secondary students (17.9%) reported they had waggged school in the previous 12 months. Female secondary students are just as likely as their male peers to wag school.

Around three-fifths (58.2%) of students reported they had attended the same school since beginning primary or secondary school, while the remainder had attended multiple schools.

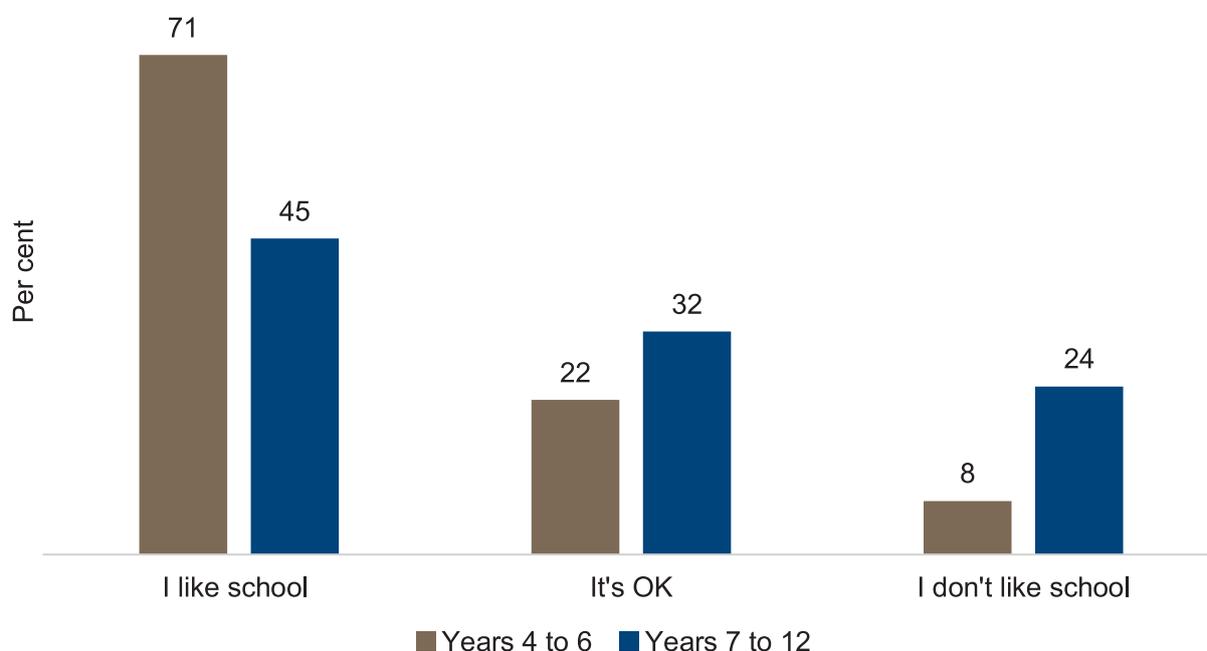
When it comes to learning activities outside of school, almost one-half (45.3%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the South Metropolitan region spend time doing homework every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 50.6%; Years 7–12: 42.4%). These results are similar to those for the North Metropolitan region but higher than all other regions.

### Liking school and sense of belonging

Most Year 4 to Year 6 students in the South Metropolitan region said they like school (70.6%), while only 44.7 per cent of secondary students said they like school.

<sup>5</sup> It should be noted that in the 2021 school year when the survey was completed the State Government postponed the start of Term 1 by one week in the Perth Metropolitan area. Similarly, in 2020 there was one week where parents were encouraged to keep their children at home and do remote learning. Source: WA Department of Education, 2020-21 and 2021-22 [Annual reports](#).

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting how they feel about school



At the same time, three-quarters (73.2%) of secondary students feel like they belong at their school. One-quarter (25.5%) of male secondary students strongly agree that they feel like they belong at school, compared to 15.8 per cent of female students.

Most students (76.6%) agreed they feel happy at school (Years 4–6: 91.4%; Years 7–12: 68.4%), with a similar proportion (75.7%) agreeing they like learning at school (Years 4–6: 88.5%; Years 7–12: 68.5%).

Two-thirds (67.6%) of students said they usually get along with classmates (Years 4–6: 67.5%; Years 7–12: 67.6%), with a similar proportion (66.1%) saying they usually get along with their teachers (Years 4–6: 77.0%; Years 7–12: 60.0%).

One-third (34.5%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students reported that if needed, they almost always get help from teachers in class (Years 4–6: 46.6%; Years 7–12: 27.7%), while 48.6 per cent reported they get it sometimes (Years 4–6: 42.0%; Years 7–12: 52.3%). Around one

in seven (15.2%) secondary students said they almost never get the help that they need.

Of the students surveyed in the South Metropolitan region:

- Four-fifths (80.1%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students reported it is 'pretty much' or 'very much' true there is a teacher or another adult in the school who believes they will achieve good things (Years 4–6: 92.1%; Years 7–12: 73.4%).
- 70.6 per cent said it is 'pretty much' or 'very much' true that a teacher or another adult at their school really cares about them (Years 4–6: 87.4%; Years 7–12: 61.2%).
- 54.5 per cent said their parents or someone in their family often ask about schoolwork/ homework (Years 4–6: 57.6%; Years 7–12: 52.8%).

These results are broadly consistent with those across the state.

## Feeling safe at school

Just over one-third (35.2%) of students said they feel safe at school all the time (Years 4–6: 43.5%; Years 7–12: 30.5%), while 43.4 per cent said they feel safe at school most of the time (Years 4–6: 38.6%; Years 7–12: 46.1%). These results are consistent with those across the state.

Over one-third (34.9%) reported they had been bullied or cyberbullied (or both) by students from their school. In terms of the nature of the bullying, 22.4 per cent had been bullied, 2.7 per cent had been cyberbullied, and 9.8 per cent had been both bullied and cyberbullied.

Among students who reported having ever been bullied or cyberbullied (or both), 39.9 per cent reported this had happened in the previous three months. Of these students, 84.3 per cent had been bullied at school and 54.9 per cent had been bullied online.

One in seven (14.3%) students reported they had missed school in the past because they were afraid someone might bully them (Years 4–6: 13.7%; Years 7–12: 14.7%). Female students are more likely to report this compared to male students (17.7% vs 10.2%).

These results are consistent with those across WA.

## Transition from school

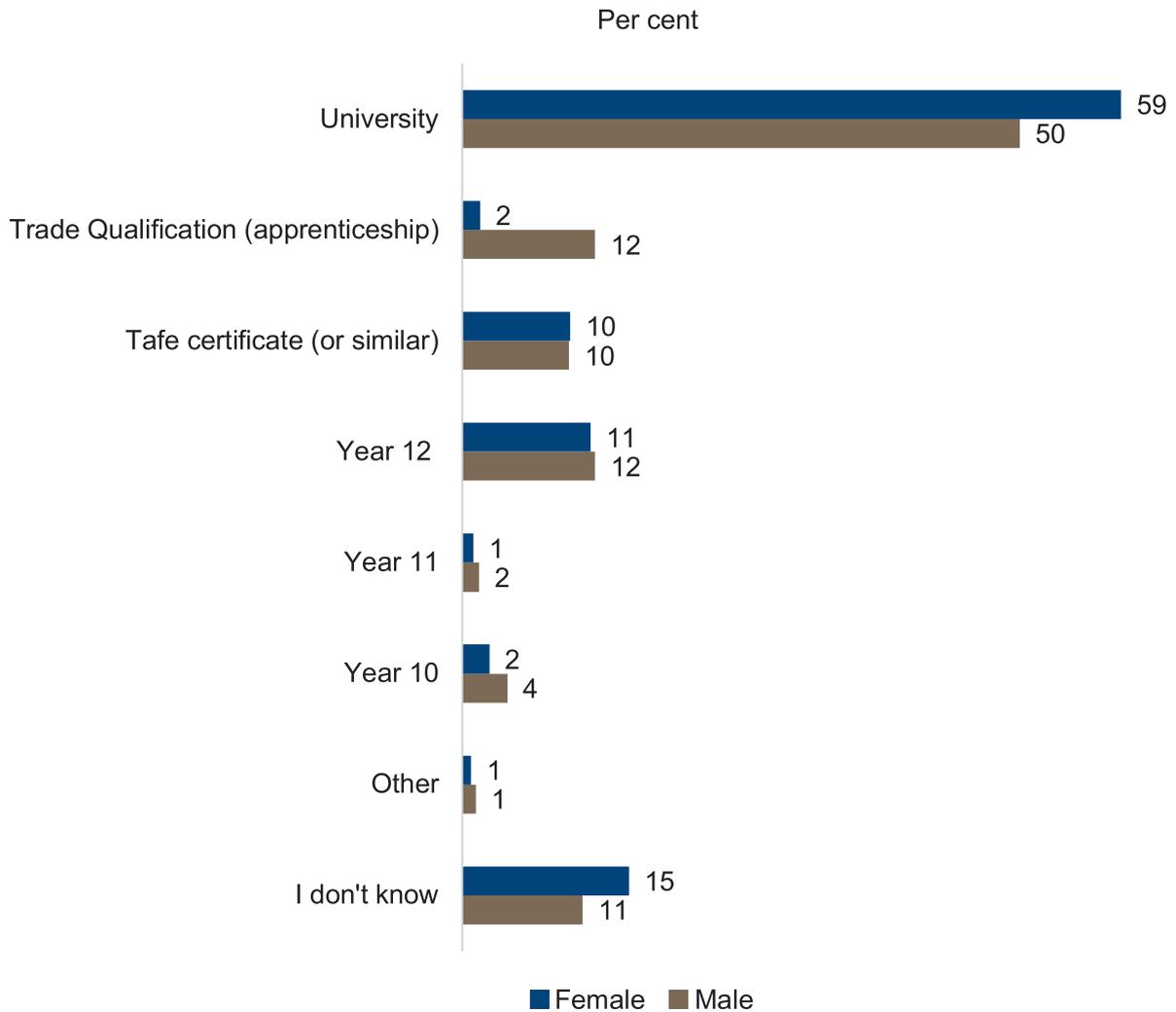
Over one-half (53.2%) of secondary students in the South Metropolitan region reported they want to attend university, while 16.2 per cent do not intend to go on to further study after secondary school.

Female secondary students in the South Metropolitan region are more likely than male secondary students to want to go to university, while male secondary students are much more likely to be planning to do a trade qualification.

**■ ■ I would like for transperth buses to be in my suburb as there are no form of public transport at all (Oakford, Western Australia 6121) We often have power outages and the internet is horrendous and I often struggle to complete homework and assignments due to the internet failures. ■ ■**

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**Proportion of Year 7 to 12 students reporting highest level of education they would like to achieve (single choice only)**



The majority of secondary students (63.5%) said it is 'very much true' or 'pretty much true' that at their school they are learning knowledge and skills that will help them in the future.

The majority (58.2%) of secondary students in the South Metropolitan region did not work for pay in the previous 12 months. This is the highest proportion across the state. Just under

one-quarter (24.3%) of secondary students in the South Metropolitan region reported having a regular part-time job. This is the lowest proportion across the state.

Most young people reported working so they could have money of their own to spend on things they want (64.4%), while 13.0 per cent said it is to get skills and experience.

## Independence and autonomy

Of the Year 7 to Year 12 students surveyed in the South Metropolitan region:

- 79.5 per cent said they are allowed to go to and from school on their own.
- 73.3 per cent said they are allowed to go places other than school on their own.
- 30.3 per cent said they are allowed to go out alone at night in their local area.

Female young people in the region are less likely to be allowed to do things on their own than their male peers, including going out alone at night (21.5% vs 36.7%) or cycling on main roads without an adult (40.2% vs 58.9%).

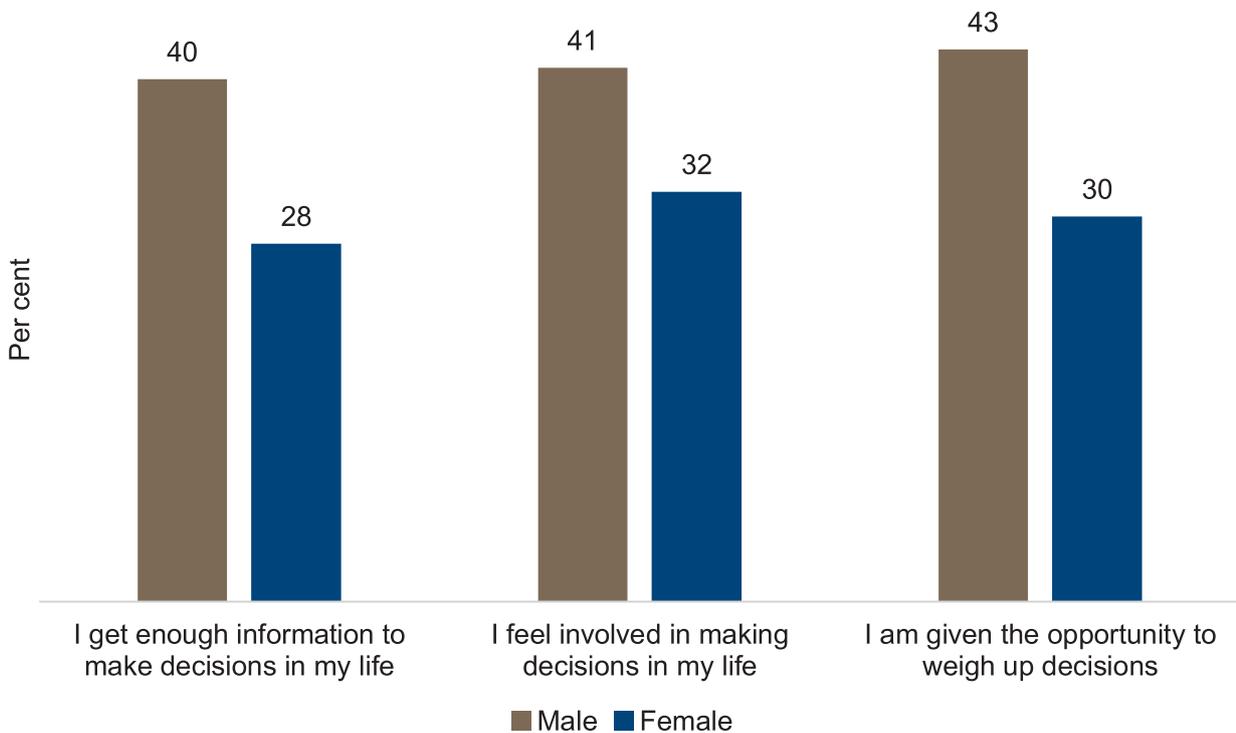
These results are similar to those across the state.

Most secondary students in the South Metropolitan region agreed that they get enough information to make decisions in their life (81.1%), feel involved in making decisions in their life (80.1%) and are given the opportunity to weigh up decisions (80.8%).

Notably, female students are less likely to strongly agree with all three statements compared to their male peers.

The gender difference is consistent with results for the rest of the state.

### Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting they strongly agree they feel involved in making decisions in their life



### Aboriginal children's and young people's views on learning and participating

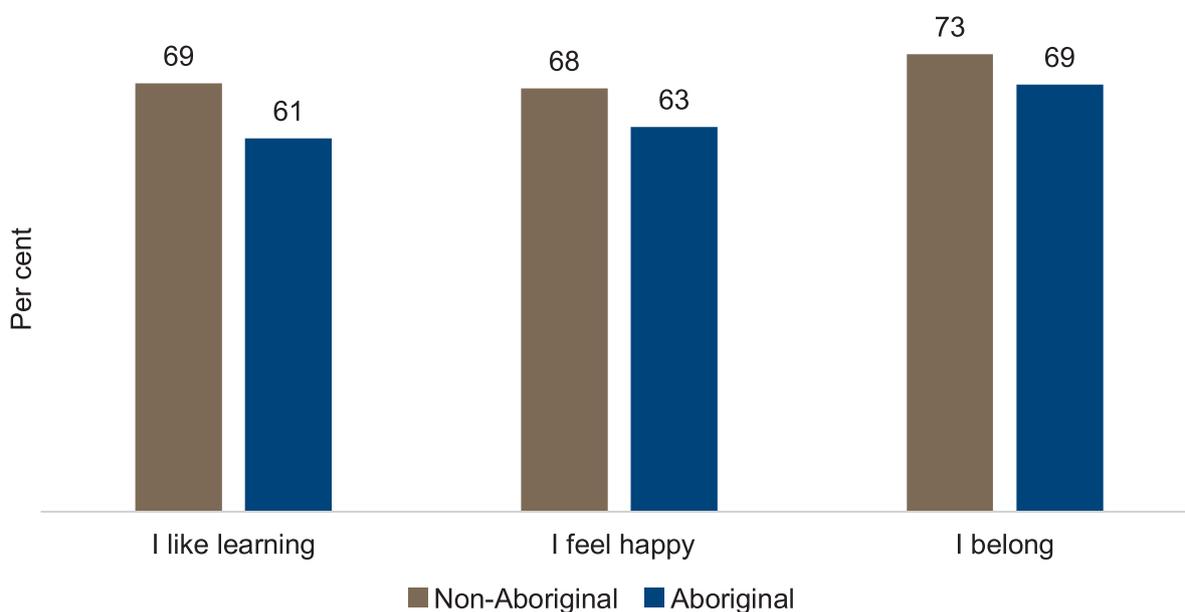
Aboriginal students in the South Metropolitan region are marginally less likely than their non-Aboriginal peers in the region to like school or feel happy there.

Two-thirds (67.9%) of Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 6 students in the South Metropolitan region reported that being at school every day is very important to them, however only one in four (40.4%) Aboriginal secondary students reported this (compared to 51.4 per cent for non-Aboriginal secondary students).

Just under one-half (47.8%) of Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students reported liking school, with 64.0 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students reporting this, and 38.0 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students.

Most Year 7 to Year 12 Aboriginal students in the South Metropolitan region reported they agree their school is a place where they like learning (60.9%) and where they feel happy (62.6%). However, both these proportions are lower than the proportion of non-Aboriginal students reporting the same (like learning: 69.1%; feel happy: 68.4%).

### Proportion of Year 7 to 12 students agreeing that school is a place where they like learning, feel happy, and belong



One in five (20.3%) Aboriginal secondary students in the South Metropolitan region strongly disagreed that school is a place where they like learning (compared to 11.6% of non-Aboriginal secondary students).

Aboriginal secondary students in the South Metropolitan region are also marginally less likely than their non-Aboriginal peers to agree

their school is a place where they belong (68.9% vs 73.4%).

Just over one-half (56.4%) of Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students in the South Metropolitan region said they usually get along with their classmates, while 33.6 per cent said they sometimes get along with their classmates.

Most Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students felt that it was 'very much true' (46.4%) or 'pretty much true' (24.4%) that at school there is a teacher or another adult who listened to them when they had something to say. Only one-third (33.5%) reported that if they need extra help they will almost always get it from their teachers (non-Aboriginal: 34.8%).

Two-thirds (65.7%) of Aboriginal students said that their parents or someone in their family 'sometimes' or 'often' asks about their schoolwork or homework (Years 4–6: 75.1%, Years 7–12: 60.0%). This is lower than the responses from non-Aboriginal students (Years 4–12: 83.7%).

Aboriginal students in the South Metropolitan region are more likely to have attended multiple schools since they started primary school or secondary school, with 41.0 per cent of Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 6 having three or more schools compared to 21.4 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.

More than one-third (36.1%) of Aboriginal secondary students reported they have been suspended from school (been sent

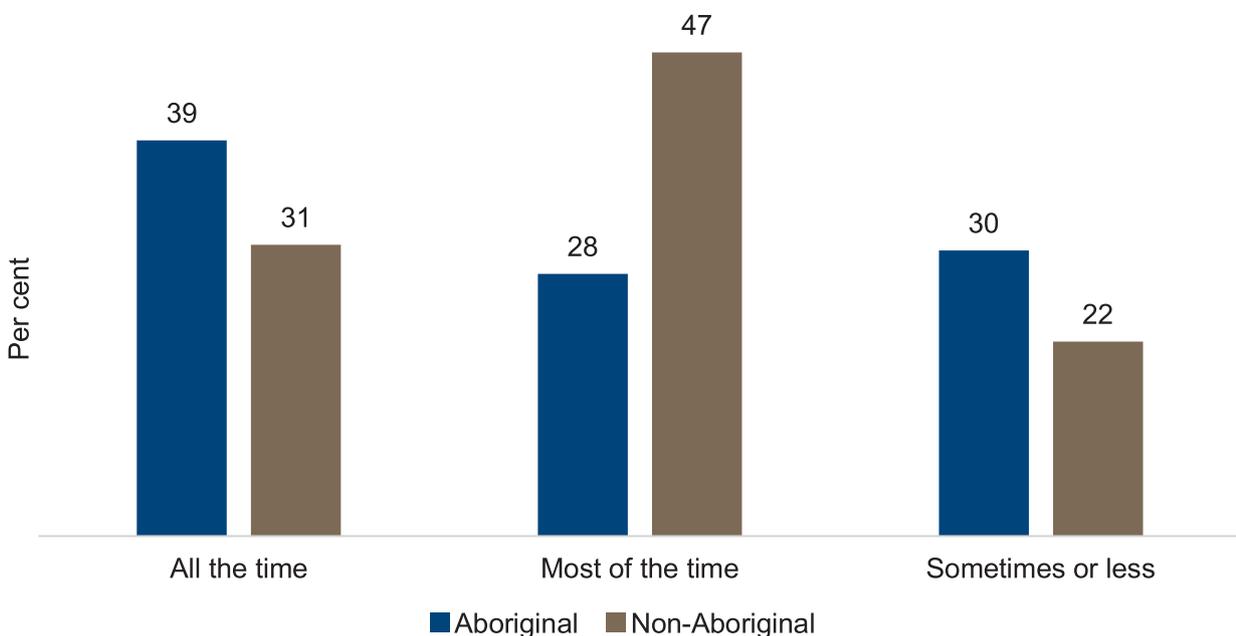
home for a few days for doing something wrong) (non-Aboriginal students: 16.4%). This difference is consistent with those across the state.

Aboriginal Year 7 to Year 12 students in the South Metropolitan region are also twice as likely to report that they had wagged school in the previous 12 months for a full day or more compared to non-Aboriginal students (34.7% compared to 16.9%).

When it comes to feeling safe at school, 70.2 per cent of Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students reported feeling safe all or most of the time, lower than the proportion for non-Aboriginal students (79.8%).

A greater proportion of Aboriginal secondary students than non-Aboriginal secondary students feel safe at school all the time (39.4% vs 30.5%). At the same time, a greater proportion of Aboriginal secondary students than non-Aboriginal secondary students feel safe at school only sometimes or less (30.0% vs 22.2%).

### Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting how often they feel safe at school



Aboriginal students in the South Metropolitan region reported experiencing bullying, cyberbullying or both by students from their school in similar proportions to non-Aboriginal students (38.4% compared to 34.4%).

A high proportion (40.0%) of Aboriginal secondary students in the South Metropolitan region who had experienced bullying in the previous three months said they were teased about their cultural background, the colour of their skin, or their religion at least once a week. The proportion of non-Aboriginal students reporting this is 11.0 per cent.

More than one in five (22.8%) Aboriginal students in Year 4 to Year 12 have missed school because they were afraid someone might bully them (non-Aboriginal: 13.4%).

Just under one-quarter (23.6%) of Aboriginal students plan to go to university, while 41.0 per cent do not plan to study further after secondary school. Further, 22.0 per cent want to attend TAFE or pursue a trade qualification.

Aboriginal students in the South Metropolitan region are just as likely as their non-Aboriginal peers to have had a paid job in the previous 12 months.

## What do children and young people in the South Metropolitan region say about learning and participating?

### Talking about stress at school

The following statements are from secondary school students who were asked the open text question: 'The majority of secondary school students feel stressed by school work or study. What do you think are the main reasons for this?'

*"Home work I get super stressed about homework. 😞"*

*(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"It becomes a lot to balance. Our bodies are changing and not just on the outside meaning that it's hard to keep up with our emotions and mentality. We become emotionally and physically tired and the more work you give us the more stressed we become, we have been built to think that we have to get straight As and to go to Uni and thinking about that is a lot of pressure."*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"Because our teacher push it on us and give us more stress if we don't complete the homework."*

*(male, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)*

**■ ■ I believe the main reason is because we have to balance several things at a time and ensure that it is done on time and is done to a high standard so we can make our parents proud. ■ ■**

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"Doing poorly in ATAR and thinking you won't ever get a job and might end up homeless."*

*(male, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"The super high standards of ATAR, I don't think it's healthy for students to compare themselves this much too each other. It also doesn't feel worth it, with all the bridging courses."*

*(male, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"Because some people have sports that they are very committed to and go till later at night like 8pm and are like 20 minutes away so they don't have time to do any homework if they don't want to stay up late cause then they will be more tired and get more homework."*

*(female, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Give more time for us to sleep. Most people I know come to school really tired. I stay up late at home because I have the energy, but school doesn’t consider how ‘young people’ function in day to day life. People also don’t pay attention to as much as they maybe should, such as mental health, but also homework. When I’m at school my brain is in work mode, out of school I forget about school and my work so that I can relax after the day.”*  
(student who selected ‘in another way’, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Teachers don’t give us enough time and expect us to not be busy with home life. Sometimes we are going through some hard things and we can’t just drop them for work.”*  
(female, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“Teachers don’t seem to realise the older we get the more school work we get given. They expect us to compete homework, have a job, maintain a social life and and try spend time with our family.”*  
(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

**▲▲ When coming home from school, adults want to relax and do their own thing - kids are no different, but when we arrive home, we’re met with a mountain of work, not only does this destroy our free time but leaves a lingering feeling of stress and anxiety in every student and a large amount makes it harder for them to begin the work. Kids shouldn’t be feeling this all the time. ▼▼**

(male, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“School goes for 7 hours and then we’re expected to do 2-3 hours of home work per night which is just shocking, we are kids we deserve a life and we shouldn’t have to feel this stressed at such a young age.”*  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“High workload if doing sport out of school and trying to keep up with the school work as well as training as well as having pressure to do good by your parents.”*  
(male, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)

A number of students, particularly female students, talked about feeling pressure from parents to do well.

*“For parents, to not put so much pressure on us to get good grades but to also care when you achieve well (congratulate them and show you are actually proud).”*  
(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“I also think that parents shouldn’t be so strict about test grades and put as much pressure on their children because this causes people to have a lot of pressure during their test which causes them to freak out and preform poorly and effect their health.”*  
(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“In my personal experience my stress and the burden placed upon my shoulders stems from the extremely high standards/ expectations my parents have of me. It’s transcended onto me after all these years where I feel worthless or useless if my grade is not an A or a 95% and above. Many sleepless nights where spent crying over what I’m doing wrong and this leads to burnouts and further mental health issues.”*  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Parents like to compare us with excelling students. There is always a limit to everyone’s academic capabilities, you can never exceed that.”*

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### **Other comments on school**

Many students in the South Metropolitan region provided their views and experiences on other aspects of school.

*“Schools need to fix their act up very fast regarding bullying and mental health. Right now in school, for example, a bully could punch you in the face. If a teacher found out, they’d most likely ask you to ‘apologise to each other’. This is absolutely the wrong thing to enforce, as it reinforces the bully’s toxic mindset that they will not get into trouble, and the victim will simply feel like telling an adult was useless.”*

*(student who selected ‘in another way’, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Schools, need to control the kids who like to be disruptive and ruin our learning as some teachers ignore them and let them get away with it all the time, and when they do one thing good they get praised for it when other kids do good all the time and never get anything good out of it.”*

*(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**■ ■ School needs to get better at supporting students needs and actually teaching, I love to learn but we aren’t taught to learn we are taught to remember for long enough that we pass a test. ■ ■**

*(student who selected ‘in another way’, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Focus more on the students and how they learn, the nurturing factor that teachers used to have is totally gone and sometimes teachers immediately pick on and target students that have done absolutely nothing wrong. Sometimes I think it’s racism and that some teachers punish the wrong students in situations that haven’t been entirely their fault. I feel they care more about the status of the school that the students and they just pile work on us and expect us to do well without even properly making sure that the students fully understand the topic.”*

*(female, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### **Having a voice and developing independence**

*“Kids have opinions too! We shouldn’t have to keep quiet just because you have been alive longer. It isn’t right to force someone to not speak up just because of their age.”*

*(student who selected ‘in another way’, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“That kids have feelings and opinions and to let them have a say.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“When my parents don’t let me go outside my house, I feel suffocated and lonely.”*

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

# Safe and Supported

▄▄ **Parents and other adults need to be more open minded. Due to current social issues being a lot different from what it used to be for them, sometimes it is hard for them to understand what we, young adults, are truly experiencing. Therefore, most of the times, it is very difficult to open up to family members, but rather it sometimes feel much better to open up to friends or other adults that is not a relative. ▄▄**

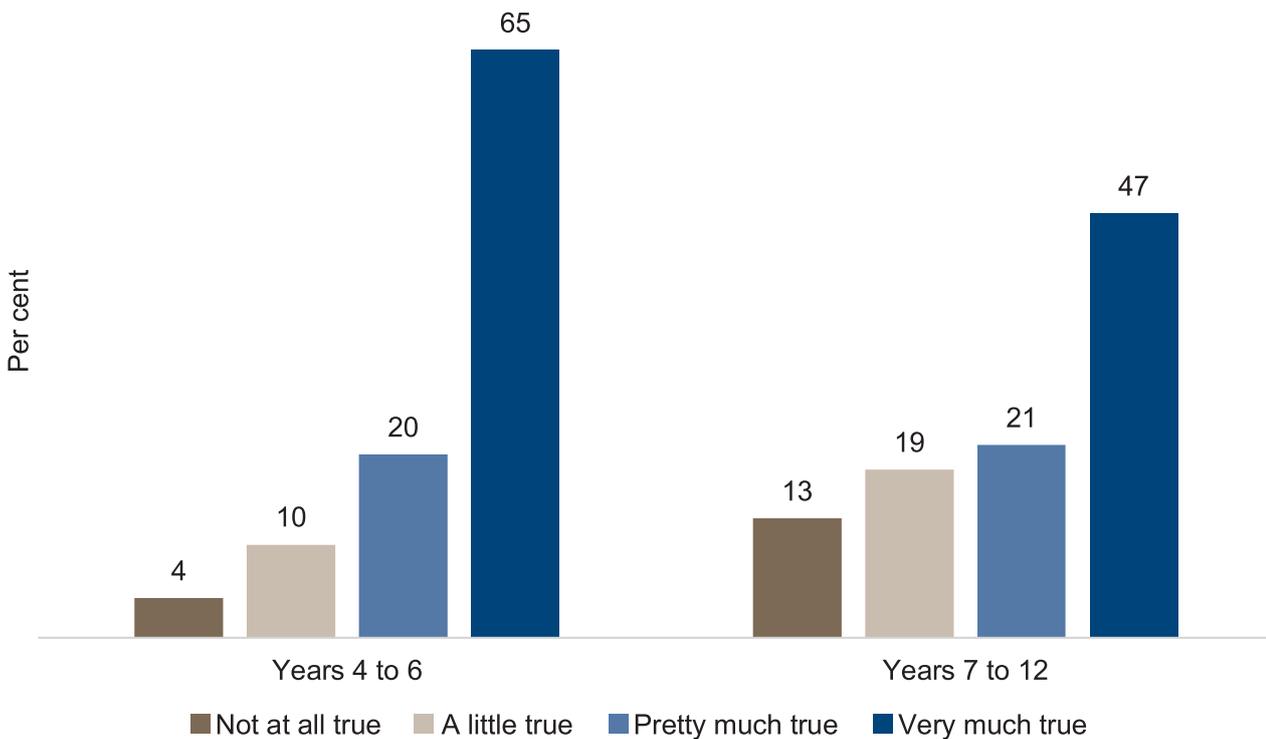
*(male, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

## Supportive relationships

Just over one-half (53.3%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the South Metropolitan region reported it is 'very much true' they live with a parent or another adult they can talk to about their problems or worries.

Secondary students are less likely to report 'very much true' compared to Year 4 to Year 6 students (46.9% vs 65.0%), and more than twice as likely to report 'not true at all' (13.2% vs 4.4%).

**Proportion of Year 4 to 12 students responding to the statement 'Where I live, there is a parent or adult who I can talk to about my problems'**



The difference in results between primary and secondary students is consistent with rest of the state.

Just under one-half (48.5%) of students reported it is 'very much true' they live with a parent or another adult who listens when they have something to say (Years 4–6: 52.4%; Years 7–12: 46.3%), while 64.6 per cent said it is 'very much true' they live with a parent or another adult who believes they will achieve good things (Years 4–6: 69.4%; Years 7–12: 62.0%).

Female secondary students in the South Metropolitan region are less likely than male secondary students to report that it is 'very much true' or 'pretty much true' that they live with a parent or other adult who listens to them when they have something to say (68.2% vs 82.5%) or whom they can talk to about their problems or worries (60.0% vs 75.5%).

Three-quarters (75.6%) of students said their family gets along very well or well (Years 4–6: 79.8%; Years 7–12: 73.3%).

Most (79.5%) students said they live in one home and 20.5 per cent said they live in two or more homes. Of the students who reported having a second home, 38.8 per cent reported living in this home half of the time (Years 4–6: 50.2%; Years 7–12: 31.8%).

In terms of friendships, of the students surveyed in the South Metropolitan region:

- 53.1 per cent felt they are very good at making and keeping friends (Years 4–6: 58.7%; Years 7–12: 50.0%).
- 83.5 per cent reported they feel they have enough friends (Years 4–6: 84.6%; Years 7–12: 82.9%).
- 45.4 per cent said they feel their friends care about them a lot (Years 4–6: 53.8%; Years 7–12: 40.7%).

These results are consistent with the rest of the state.

## Material basics

Children and young people in the South Metropolitan region are generally less likely to be missing out on material items than other students around the state. However, there is still a significant minority of children and young people in this area who do not have access to certain material basics.

Two-thirds (67.3%) of students in the South Metropolitan region said that if they were hungry there is always enough food for them to eat at home, while 9.3 per cent said there is only sometimes or never enough food to eat at home.

Most (90.4%) students reported having enough money in their family to afford school excursions and/or camps; 87.1 per cent reported having 'the right kind of clothes' to fit in with people their age.

Of the students surveyed in the South Metropolitan region:

- 86.7 per cent said they have their own bedroom (Years 4–6: 79.7%; Years 7–12: 90.6%).
- 3.1 per cent reported their family does not own a car used for family transport (Years 4–6: 4.7%; Years 7–12: 2.2%).
- 96.6 per cent reported they have access to the internet at home (Years 4–6: 94.9%; Years 7–12: 97.6%).
- 91.2 per cent of secondary students reported having their own mobile phone.

## Safe in the home

Two-thirds (66.5%) of students in the South Metropolitan region said they feel safe at home all the time (Years 4–6: 67.1%; Years 7–12: 66.2%), while 24.3 per cent said they feel safe at home most of the time (Years 4–6: 21.8%; Years 7–12: 25.6%).

These results are consistent with the rest of WA.

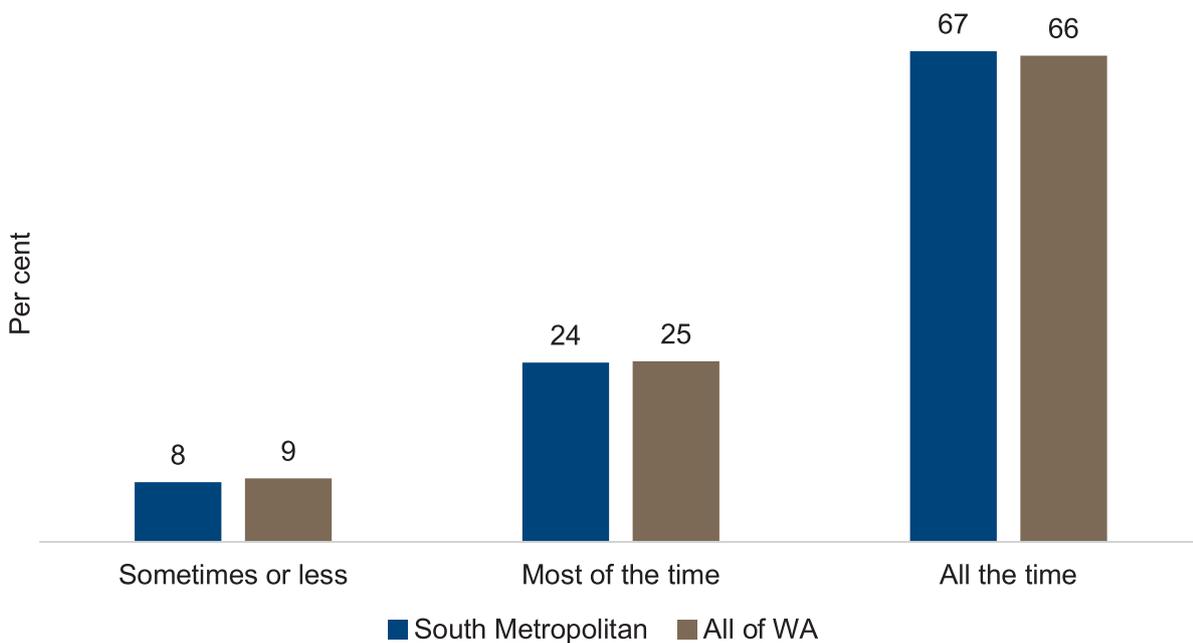
One-quarter (24.7%) said they are ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ worried that someone in their home or family will be fighting, while 17.8 per cent

said they are ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ worried that someone in their home or family will hurt somebody.

Female secondary students are more likely than male secondary students to be worried ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ that someone in their home or family would be fighting (31.3% vs 18.0%).

Just over one-quarter (27.9%) of secondary students reported they had stayed away from home overnight because of a problem.

### Proportion of Year 4 to 12 students reporting how safe they feel at home



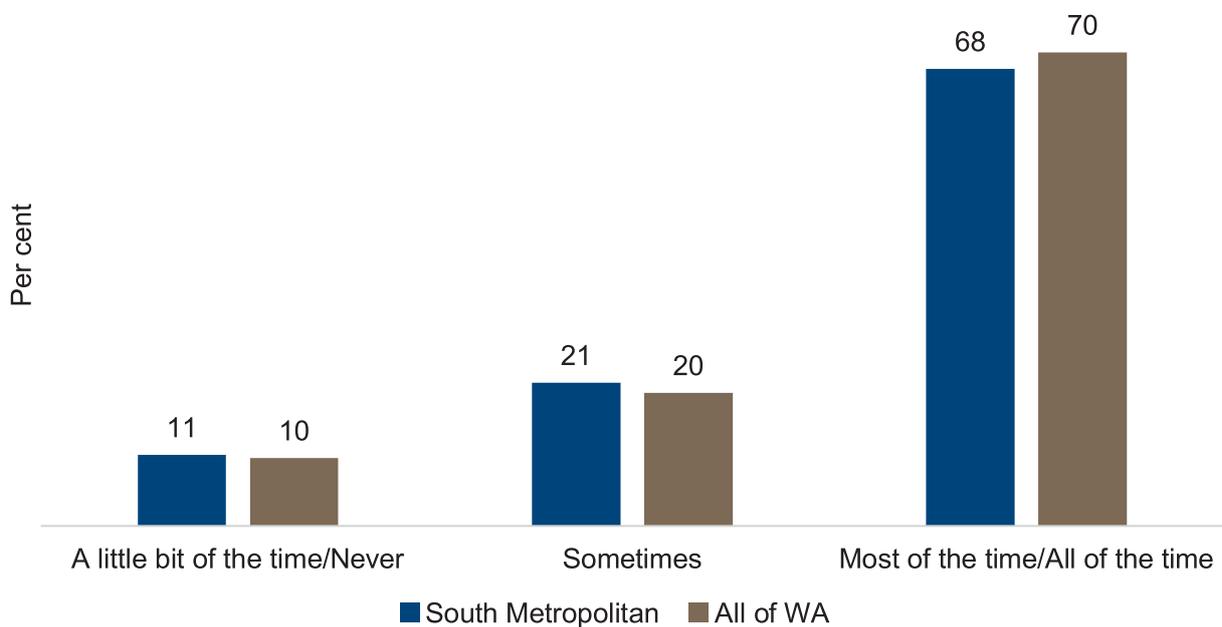
### Safe in the community

Just over one-quarter (26.7%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the South Metropolitan region said they feel safe in their local area all the time (Years 4–6: 25.7%; Years 7–12:

27.2%), while 39.8 per cent said they feel safe in their local area most of the time (Years 4–6: 39.0%; Years 7–12: 40.3%).

These results are consistent with the rest of the state.

#### Proportion of Year 7 to 12 students reporting how often they feel safe in their local area



Similar to the results across the state, female secondary students are less likely than their male peers to feel safe in their local area all the time or most of the time (62.3% vs 73.3%).

Of Year 9 to Year 12 students, 45.1 per cent reported they had ever been hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose (female: 35.7%; male: 50.9%). Of these, 58.2 per cent occurred in the previous 12 months. Students who reported being hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose in the previous 12 months were asked further questions about the nature and location of the incident.

Female students who had been hit or physically harmed are more likely to report being harmed by an adult than male students (56.5% vs 24.1%), whereas male students are more likely to report being harmed by another child or young person (80.7% vs 46.8%).

There are also differences in the locations of the incidents reported between male and female students. Male students reported the incident predominantly taking place at school (57.1%), followed by at home (30.9%), whereas female students reported the incident predominantly taking place at home (71.6%), followed by at school (23.0%).

These results are consistent with those across WA.

## Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

When asked about the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes to daily life, 36.6 per cent of students in the South Metropolitan region reported the pandemic affected their life in a bad way ‘a lot’ (13.4%) or ‘somewhat’ (23.2%). Further, 22.0 per cent of students responded ‘not at all’ when posed this question.

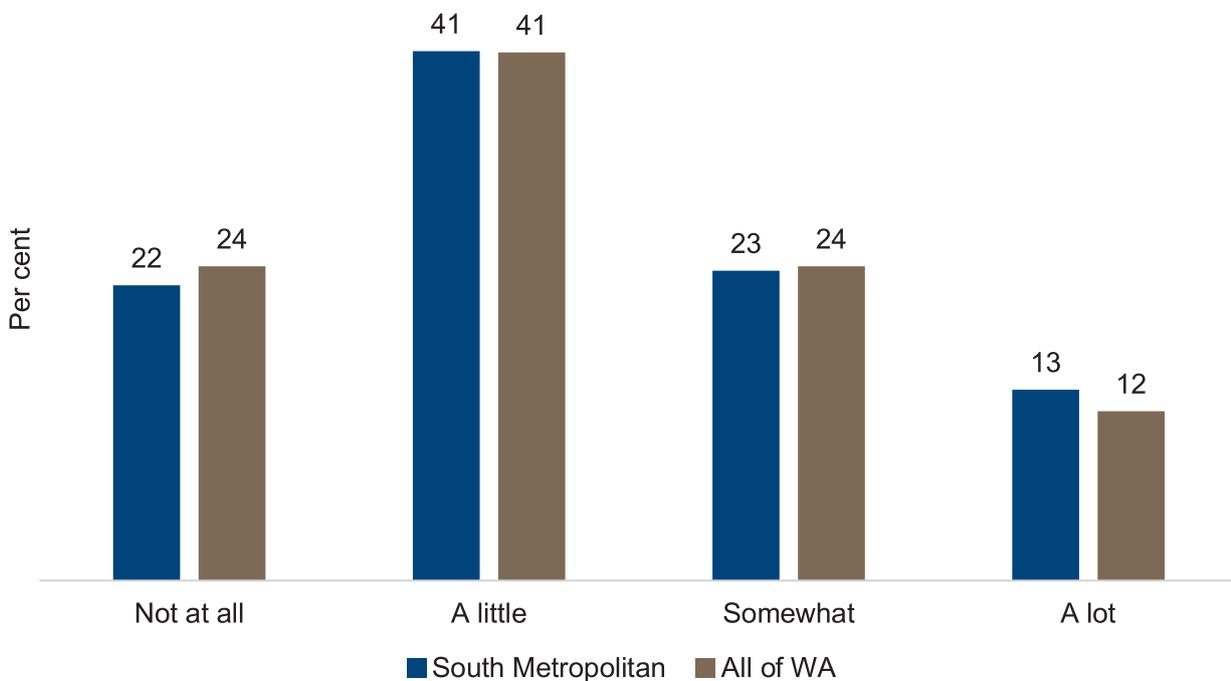
These results are consistent with the rest of the state.

Just under one-quarter (23.1%) of Year 9 to Year 12 students reported the COVID-19 pandemic had been a source of stress to them in the previous year. This is the highest proportion reporting this of all regions across the state.

In relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, of the students surveyed in the South Metropolitan region:

- 31.0 per cent reported feeling very or somewhat stressed/anxious, while 51.5 per cent reported feeling very or somewhat relaxed when they thought of COVID-19.
- 51.0 per cent reported feeling worried if they missed school due to COVID-19 in the previous calendar year – 2020.

### Proportion of students responding to the question: ‘Thinking about the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes to daily life, how much has this affected your life in a bad way?’



## Aboriginal children's and young people's views on feeling safe and supported

### Supportive relationships

Most Year 4 to Year 6 Aboriginal students in the South Metropolitan region reported that it is 'very much true' or 'pretty much true' that where they live there is a parent or another adult who:

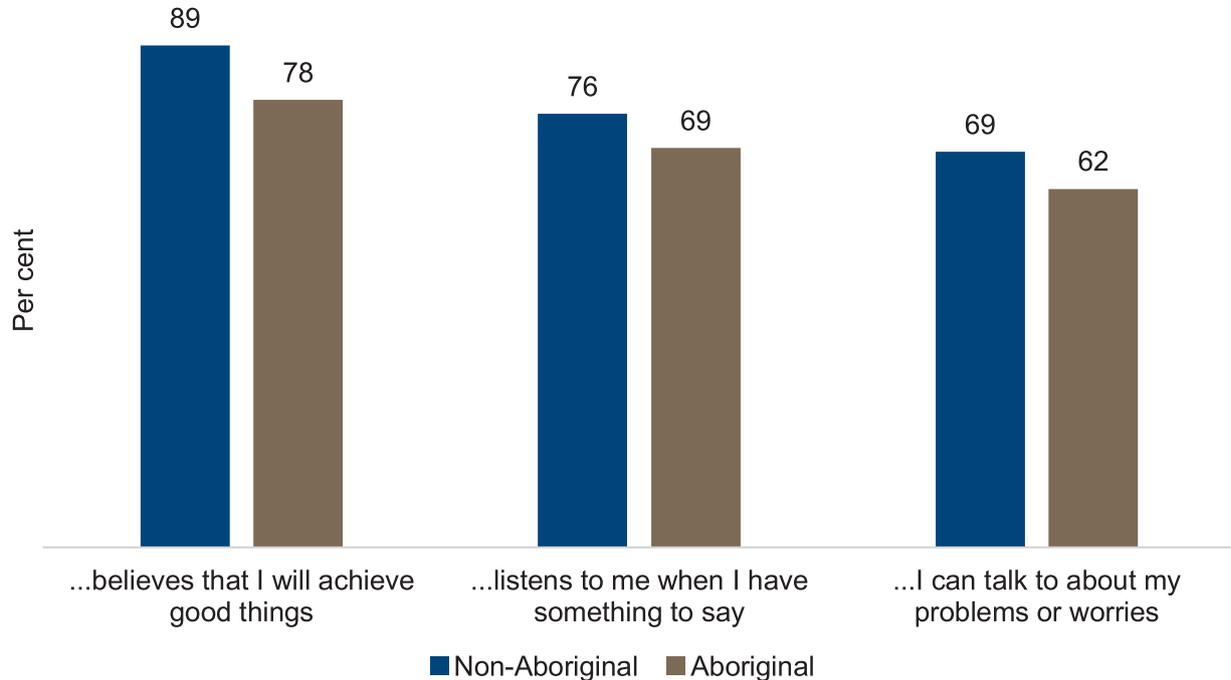
- believes they will achieve good things (91.0%).
- listens to them when they have something to say (81.9%).

- they can talk to about their problems or worries (83.0%).

These results are consistent with non-Aboriginal students in the South Metropolitan region.

However, the same is not true for Aboriginal secondary students who reported it is 'very much true' or 'pretty much true' in lower proportions across all three questions compared to their non-Aboriginal peers in the area.

### Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students responding 'very much true' or 'pretty much true' to the statement: 'Where I live, there is a parent or adult who...'



In terms of family harmony, over two-thirds (71.0%) of Aboriginal students in the South Metropolitan region reported that their family gets along well or very well, slightly lower than the proportion of non-Aboriginal students reporting the same (76.4%).

Aboriginal secondary students are more likely than non-Aboriginal secondary students to worry 'a lot' or 'somewhat' that someone in their home or family will be fighting (Aboriginal: 30.3%, non-Aboriginal: 24.5%), will hurt somebody (Aboriginal: 27.4%, non-Aboriginal: 15.5%) or will get arrested (Aboriginal: 31.0%, non-Aboriginal: 11.7%).

### Material basics

Aboriginal students in the South Metropolitan region are more likely to be experiencing some form of material disadvantage in comparison to their non-Aboriginal peers.

Almost one-quarter (23.9%) of Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the South Metropolitan region said there is only sometimes or never enough food to eat at home when they are hungry. This is much higher than non-Aboriginal children and young people in the region (8.1%) and is higher than the proportion of Aboriginal children and young people across the state (18.7%).

Aboriginal children and young people are also more likely than their non-Aboriginal peers to be missing out on many other material basics:

- Just under one in ten (7.7%) Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students reported that their family does not have a car (non-Aboriginal: 2.6%).
- 18.8 per cent of Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 do not have enough money in their family for them to go on a school excursion or camp (non-Aboriginal: 8.7%).

- Almost one-third (33.8%) of Aboriginal secondary students do not have their own tablet, laptop or computer, compared to 14.1 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.
- Almost one in ten (8.6%) Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 12 do not have access to the internet at home (non-Aboriginal: 3.1%).

Aboriginal students in the South Metropolitan region are more than twice as likely to report living in a primary household of seven people or more (20.9%) compared to non-Aboriginal students (7.6%).

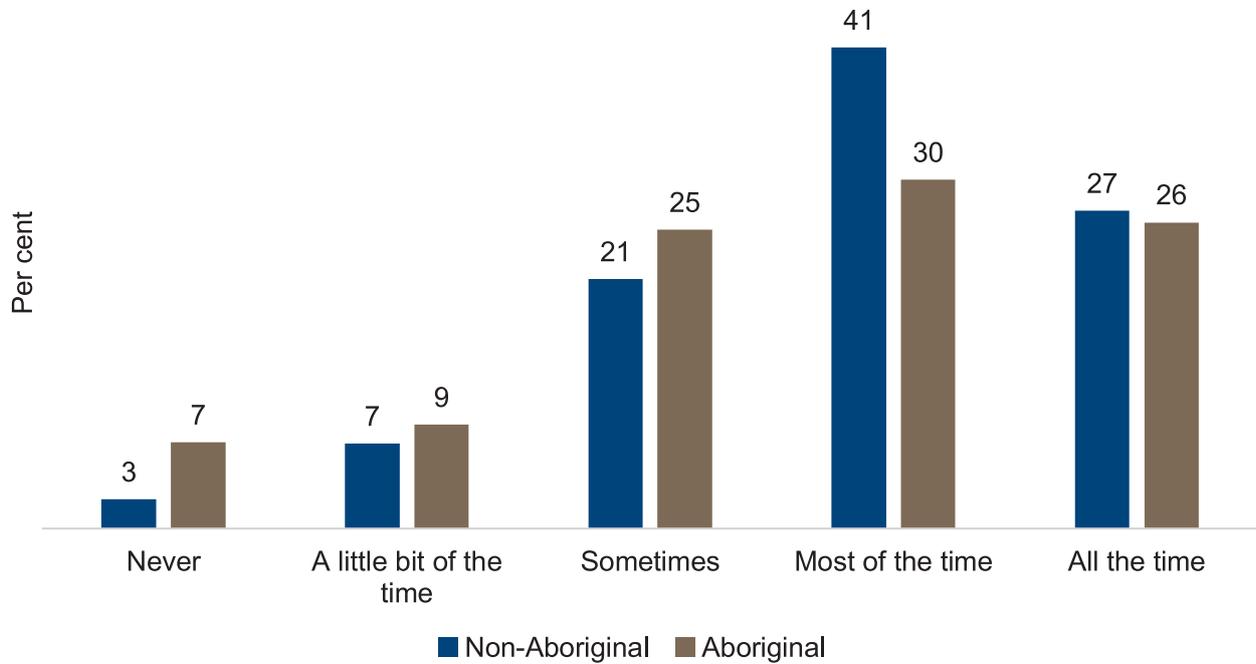
### Feeling safe

Most (85.0%) Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students feel safe at home most or all of the time; this is lower than the proportion of non-Aboriginal students reporting the same (91.4%).

When it comes to safety in the community, Aboriginal children and young people in the South Metropolitan region are much less likely to feel safe in their local area than non-Aboriginal children and young people.

Just over one-half (55.4%) of Aboriginal children and young people in the South Metropolitan region reported feeling safe in their local area most or all of the time (non-Aboriginal students: 67.6%). Moreover, Aboriginal students are almost three times as likely as non-Aboriginal students to report 'never' feeling safe in their local area (7.3% vs 2.5%).

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



**What do children and young people in the South Metropolitan region say about being safe and supported?**

**Supportive relationships**

*“With family, specifically parents, it’d help if you understood us before labelling us as disrespectful moody teenagers, just because you were us doesn’t mean you’re us right now, things have changed and you probably don’t remember what it’s like to be us. Also it’d help if you loved us and accepted us no matter what, the things you say impact us, we act like we don’t care but we do.”*  
 (female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“To pay more attention to your students/ children because they might not be telling you things that are bothering them.”*  
 (male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Parents should take time out of their day to check up on their child, think about others instead of just yourself. Don’t worry if you child is t like anyone of their siblings or family members and let them be themself. Understand and listen to you child when they have got something to say instead of jumping to conclusions and missing the whole point. Support your child or friend when they’re in need of someone to talk and to.”*  
 (female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Just listen and understand.”*  
 (male, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“That if your child or student looks unhappy there is something wrong even tho they tell you ever Is ok.”*  
 (female, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)

*"I would like some families to know that you don't always have to yell at your kids to discipline them or get mad at your kid for not listening, teenager or people about need more privacy than you give them, and yelling and being rude and mad to them could also badly effect their health. This includes talking in a way they see as anger. If you don't give your child privacy or always yell at them, they will start to hide things to you thinking hit will keep them safe from being yelled at."*  
(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

A number of students talked about finding their friends and family supportive.

*"I do not have anxiety but I have had a spike of it when there was a reason, I went to my mother for this and she helped me."*  
(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"I can talk to my friends and family."*  
(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"I spoke to my parents about my health and learning and ever since then, I've felt much better about myself and more comfortable with my health and in things I find hard." :)*  
(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

**■ ■ Having a caring family is very important, and love and bonding is quite essential for healthy mental health. I am blessed with that, but not everyone has it, so that is what I think causes poor mental health rates to increase exponentially. That issue should be focussed on. ■ ■**

(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"I get bad anxiety and sometimes I start to feel depressed so my mum got me to write in a... diary and just put down anything that comes in mind and helps me feel better."*  
(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"I feel very safe at school most of the time because I have a good group of friends who I like to hangout with."*  
(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

### **Feeling unsafe**

The following quotes were generally in response to the question: 'What are some of the things that make you feel unsafe?'

*"Some of the things that make me feel unsafe is being alone in public and hearing a family argument."*  
(female, 10 year-old, Aboriginal)

*"Mum and dad fighting."*  
(male, 10 year-old, Aboriginal)

*"There are people who smoke and do drugs around 150 meters from my house."*  
(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"When my step dad is drunk and starts yelling."*  
(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*"People that are highly drunk and abusive."*  
(female, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)

*"Men, when I'm at the shops or running by myself, there is usually always a man just staring at me or looking me up and down, and it makes me feel very unsafe and uncomfortable."*  
(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“No Older Kids Doing Drugs at the park, it makes me feel unsafe.”  
(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Certain people make me feel unsafe because I am a teenager whose female.”  
(female, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)*

**■ ■ My local area has rapists that catch the same bus as me in the mornings and afternoons, older men stare at me and my school mates while they are driving by and we are waiting for the bus. I get followed home by older men when I’m walking with my 2 y/o sister. So I don’t feel safe what so ever ■ ■**

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Walking in shopping centres alone or being in public and seeing a bunch of kids acting stupid or even drunk adults make me scared.”  
(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

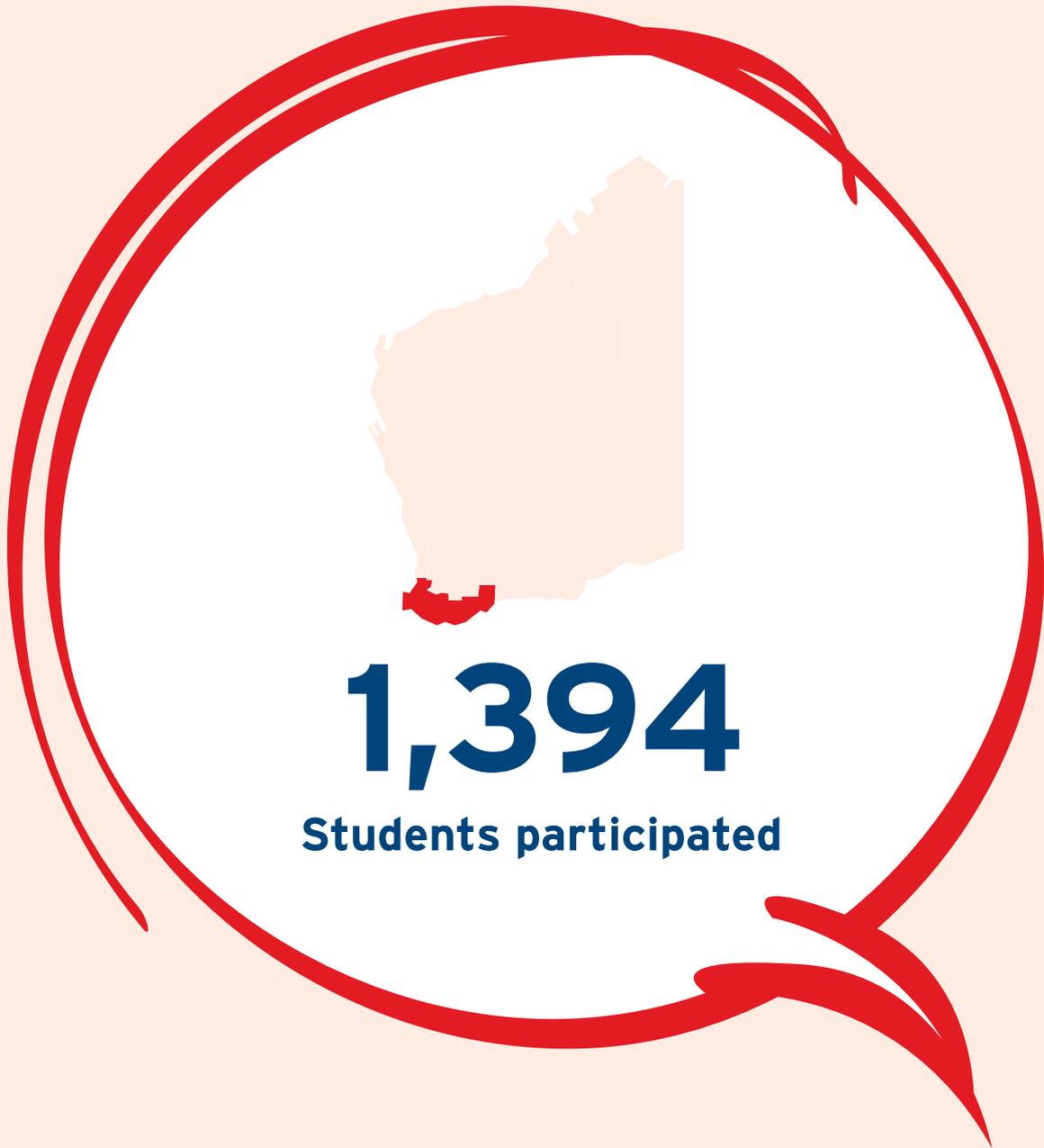
*“When I go to Perth there are lots of people on drugs who scream and yell which makes everyone around them uneasy, since there o unpredictable. It also makes Perth an unsafe place for teens especially when catching public transport.”  
(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I am a young girl, this means that I am automatically in danger when I am outside of my house. It doesn’t matter if I dress in a certain way, unwanted stares can always happen. Sometimes I feel unsafe in public because of the potential danger that comes with being around strangers, as a girl, I do not feel safe.”  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Men looking at me for what I’m wearing even if they are with their partners. I constantly feel their eyes on my body parts (legs, stomach, bum and chest) and it makes me feel so uncomfortable.”  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*



# South West



# South West key findings

**Two-thirds (67.8%)** of secondary students in the South West reported **they had done vigorous exercise three or more times in the previous week**. This is the highest proportion across all regions.



**Just over two-fifths (41.0%)** of Aboriginal students in the South West **rated their health as very good or excellent** which is a lower proportion than non-Aboriginal students (50.3%).

**A higher proportion of male** secondary students in the South West than those across the state **reported low life satisfaction** (0 to 4 out of 10) (19.3% vs 13.4%).



**Young people** in the South West are **more likely** than other students around the state **to go to a mental health service** like Headspace when they need help with mental health issues (53.0% vs 41.1%).

Year 9 to Year 12 students in the South West are **more likely to report having experiences with marijuana** compared to the rest of the state (36.4% vs 28.4%).

**Female secondary students** in the South West **are much less likely** than male students **to feel like they belong in their community** (53.4% vs 67.1%).

**Only, 15.4 per cent said they talk Aboriginal language 'some' or 'a lot'** (all of WA: 24.1%), while 64.4 per cent said they talk none (all of WA: 37.1%).

**More than one in ten (11.3%)** Year 4 to Year 12 students in the South West **said it is not very important to attend school every day**. This is the highest proportion saying it is not very important across WA regions.



**A very high 29.7 per cent** of Aboriginal secondary students **do not know the highest level of education they want to achieve** (non-Aboriginal: 13.2%).



**Secondary school students** in the South West are **much less likely** than students across the state to be worried a lot or somewhat **that someone in their home or family will hurt somebody else** (12.8% vs 15.4%).



**Over four-fifths (82.9%)** of Aboriginal students **reported that their family gets along well or very well**, marginally more than non-Aboriginal students (76.6%).

**More than one-quarter (27.6%)** of secondary students said if they were having serious problems **there is not an adult they would feel okay talking to**, or they weren't sure.

**One in five (20.4%)** Aboriginal students **does not have enough money in their family for them to go on a school excursion or camp** (non-Aboriginal: 8.7%).

## Overview

A total of 1,394 students across Years 4 to 12 from five primary schools and six secondary schools in the South West took part in the Speaking Out Survey 2021.

Just under one-half (53.7%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students surveyed in the South West identified as girls, 42.6 per cent identified as boys and 3.7 per cent selected the option that they identify 'in another way'.

In total, 5.3 per cent of participants reported being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Of the students surveyed in the South West region, 98.4 per cent reported speaking English at home and 9.2 per cent reported (also) speaking other language(s) at home; 1.6 per cent reported they do not speak English at home.

The other languages spoken included Filipino/Tagalog, Italian, Spanish, French and Japanese.

Students in the South West enjoyed doing the survey and appreciated the opportunity to have their say:

*“Thanks for doing this for us kids we don't really Get stuff like this thank you.”*

*(female, 8 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“I thought that I felt safe and didn't need to be embarrassed to what I say about myself. I really liked it because I actually get to say what has happened to me as well.”*

*(student who selected 'in another way', 9 year-old, undisclosed Aboriginal status)*

*“I liked the survey because it was really fun and something to do.”*

*(male, 11 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“Thank you so much for making this survey, it makes me feel heard. I hope this will help lots of teenagers around me who are struggling.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I enjoyed it, i found myself diving into what my true values and ambitions are a lot more than i normally would and it was a good form of self reflection.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**▲▲ I think this survey is a really good idea and could be really powerful and important. I think these surveys should be more common and are the only true way to understand young people and let them have their say. ▼▼**

*(male, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“This is a very good idea and I hope my results are concise and helpful.”*

*(male, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Solid, surprisingly I would recommend.”*

*(male, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

# Healthy and connected

▲▲ My family, and circle of friends and relevant adults are all very good at what they do, especially when it comes to mental health... however removing the stigma surrounding having a simple conversation about mental health would be helpful to everyone no matter what circumstance they are in. ▼▼

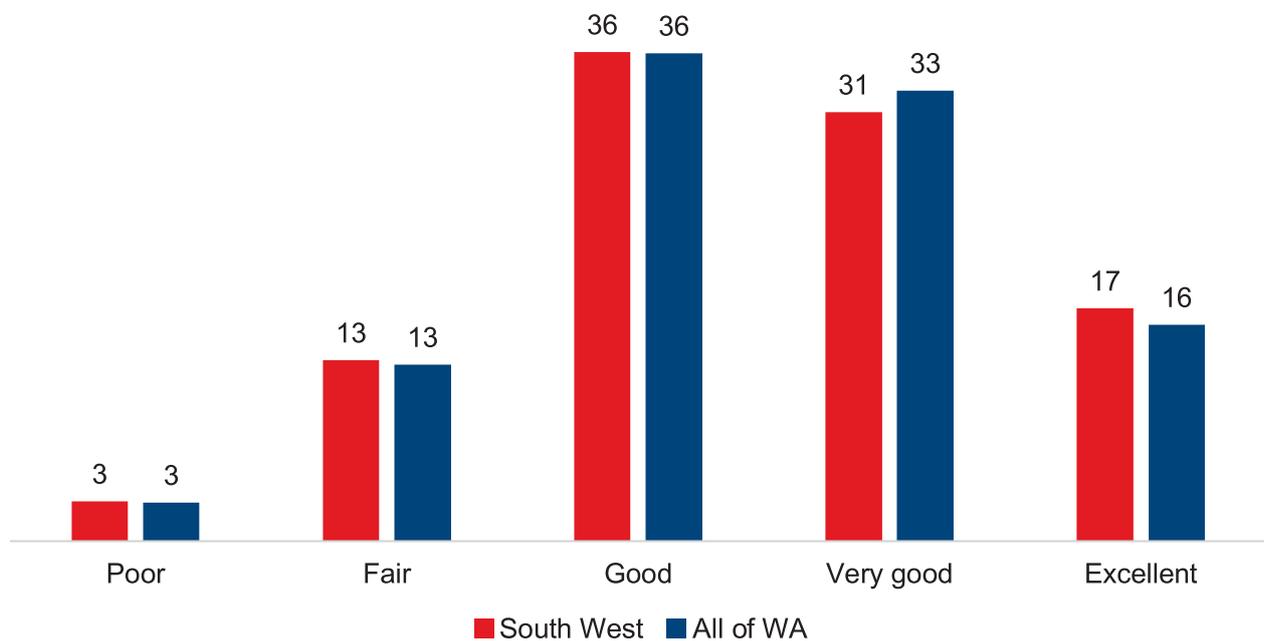
*(male, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

## Physical health

Of the Year 4 to Year 12 students surveyed in the South West, just under one-half (48.3%) reported that their health is very good or excellent (Years 4–6: 50.4%; Years 7–12: 47.2%), while 16.1 per cent reported that their health is poor or fair (Years 4–6: 6.4%; Years 7–12: 21.1%).

These results are consistent with the rest of the state.

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting their general health ratings



Over one-quarter (27.2%) of secondary students reported having a long-term health problem, while 13.1 per cent reported having a disability. These results are consistent with those across the state.

The most commonly reported disabilities and/or long-term health problems were asthma, anxiety and depression and visual impairments.

Over two-fifths (42.0%) of students reported they care very much about eating healthy food (Years 4–6: 51.9%; Years 7–12: 36.9%). More than one-half (55.8%) of secondary students reported eating fruit twice a day or more, while 60.8 per cent said they eat vegetables twice a day or more (all of WA: 52.2% and 53.7% respectively).

Over one-half (57.4%) of secondary students in the South West reported physical activity, sport or exercise is 'definitely' an important part of their life (all of WA: 53.0%).

Two-thirds (67.8%) of secondary students in the South West reported they had done vigorous exercise three or more times in the previous week. This is the highest proportion across all regions (all of WA: 61.9%). A higher proportion of female and male students in the South West than those across the state reported doing vigorous exercise three or more times in the previous week (male: 76.1% vs 72.0%; female: 61.4% vs 53.4%).

Of the students surveyed in the South West:

- 42.0% reported caring very much about how they look (Years 4–6: 32.2%; Years 7–12: 46.8%).
- 56.7 per cent reported they eat breakfast every day (Years 4–6: 74.3%; Years 7–12: 47.7%), while 18.6 per cent reported they hardly ever or never eat breakfast every day (Years 4–6: 5.7%; Years 7–12: 25.2%).
- 77.3 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students reported going to sleep on a school night before 9pm, while 49.0 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students reported going to sleep on a school night before 10pm.
- 68.5 per cent reported brushing their teeth twice or more the previous day (Years 4–6: 65.9%; Years 7–12: 69.8%) and 52.4 per cent reported having ever had a filling (Years 4–6: 42.3%; Years 7–12: 57.7%).

These results are consistent with the rest of the state.

## Mental health

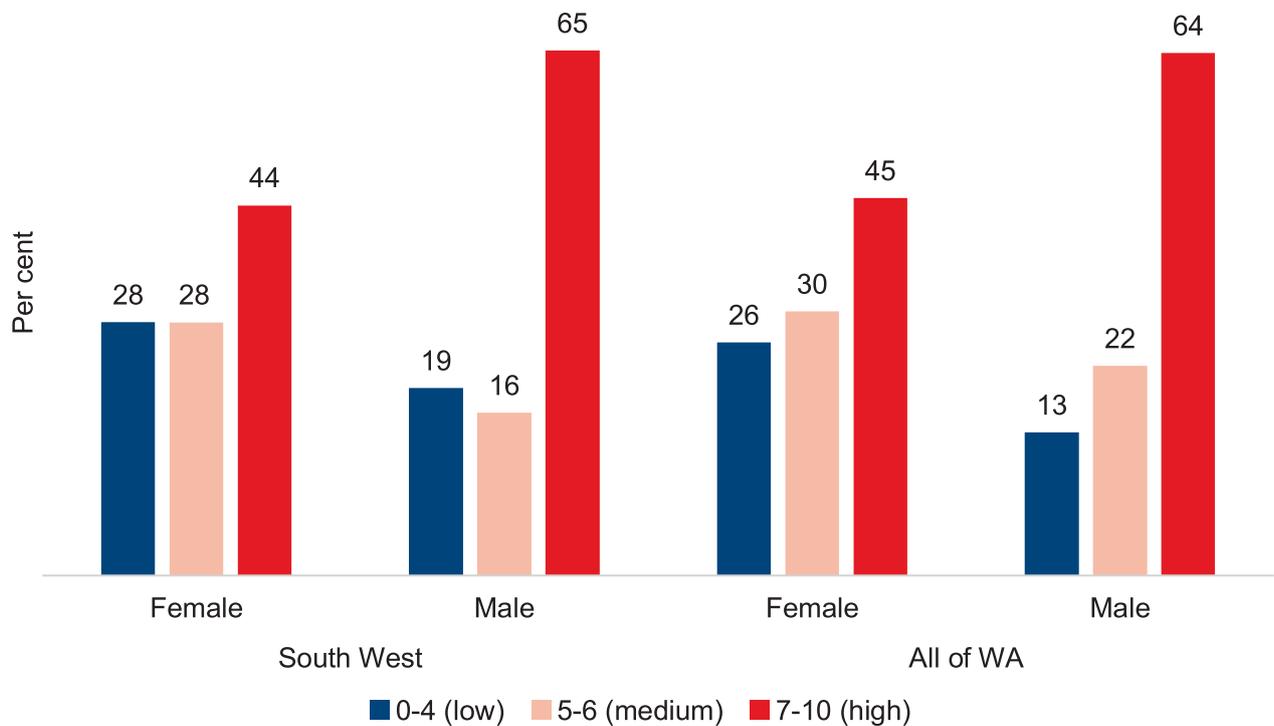
Of the students surveyed in the South West, 6.9 is the mean life satisfaction (on a scale from 0 to 10), (Years 4–6: 7.9; Years 7–12: 6.4). The mean life satisfaction across all of WA is 6.8.

Over three-fifths (61.3%) of students reported a high life satisfaction (7 to 10) (Years 4–6: 79.1%; Years 7–12: 52.0%), while 18.9 per cent reported a low life satisfaction (0 to 4) (Years 4–6: 6.2%; Years 7–12: 25.5%).

Overall reported life satisfaction in the South West is broadly consistent with the results for the rest of WA, across both primary and secondary school.

Similar to findings across WA, female secondary students in the South West are less likely than their male peers to rate their life satisfaction as high (43.9% vs 64.7%). At the same time, male secondary students in the South West are more likely than male students across the state to report low life satisfaction scores (19.3% vs 13.4%).

**Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students rating their life satisfaction on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is the worst possible life and 10 the best possible life**



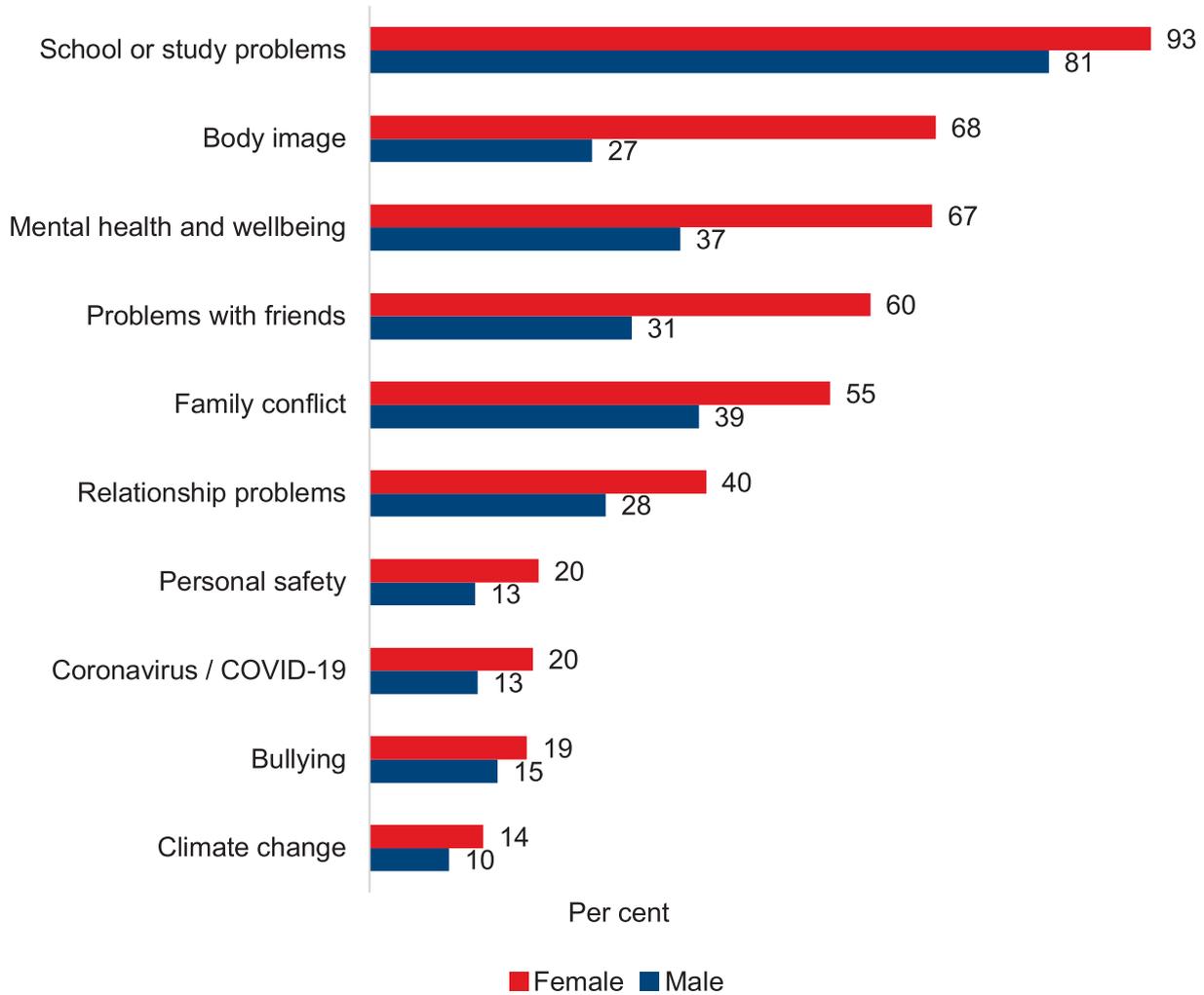
Of the students surveyed in the South West:

- 48.1 per cent agreed (Years 4–6: 45.9%; Years 7–12: 49.3%) and 27.1 per cent strongly agreed they are happy with themselves (Years 4–6: 46.5%; Years 7–12: 17.1%).
- 42.6 per cent agreed (Years 4–6: 38.4%; Years 7–12: 44.8%) and 29.5 per cent strongly agreed they feel good about themselves (Years 4–6: 52.2%; Years 7–12: 17.9%).
- 48.6 per cent of secondary students agreed and 20.4 per cent strongly agreed they can deal with things that happen in their life.
- In Years 9 to 12, 62.6 per cent reported they had felt sad, blue or depressed for two or more weeks in a row in the previous 12 months (all of WA: 59.2%).

These results are consistent with the rest of the state.

Year 9 to Year 12 students were also asked about sources of stress in the previous 12 months. School and study problems (88.3%) were the most commonly reported source of stress, followed by mental health and wellbeing (55.5%), body image (51.3%), problems with friends (48.3%) and family conflict (48.3%). There are marked gender differences in the responses, with greater proportions of female students reporting being affected by stress across all sources.

**Proportion of Year 9 to Year 12 students reporting sources of stress in the last 12 months by gender**



The gender differences in the South West are consistent with those for the rest of WA.

**Access to support for physical and mental health**

Over two-thirds (67.3%) of secondary students in the South West said they know where to get support in their school for stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries, while 59.4 per cent said they know where to get support in their local area. Notably, the proportion knowing where to get help in the local area is higher than for the rest of the state (all of WA: 48.7%).

In line with the rest of the state, just over one-third (36.6%) reported they had received help for any problems with stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries in the previous 12 months (female: 42.6% and male: 28.7%).

One-quarter (26.5%) reported there had been a time in the previous 12 months when they had wanted or needed to see someone for their health but weren't able to. Three-fifths (62.5%) of these students reported not seeing someone for their health due to feeling embarrassment or shame, while 39.6 per cent reported they were unsure who to see or where to go.

The most commonly used sources of support for secondary students in the South West were a parent or someone who acts as a parent (81.7%), friends including boyfriend or girlfriend (72.1%), other family (60.8%), school psychologist, school chaplain or school nurse (54.1%), mental health service like Headspace (53.0%) and doctor or GP (51.8%).

Notably, young people in the South West are more likely than other students around the state to go to a mental health service like Headspace (53.0% vs 41.1%). They are also less likely to go to a teacher for assistance than students across the state (40.4% vs 47.8%).

Of these students, 69.0 per cent found a mental health service (e.g. Headspace) helpful, 69.8 per cent found a doctor helpful and 62.4 per cent found a school psychologist, chaplain or school nurse helpful.

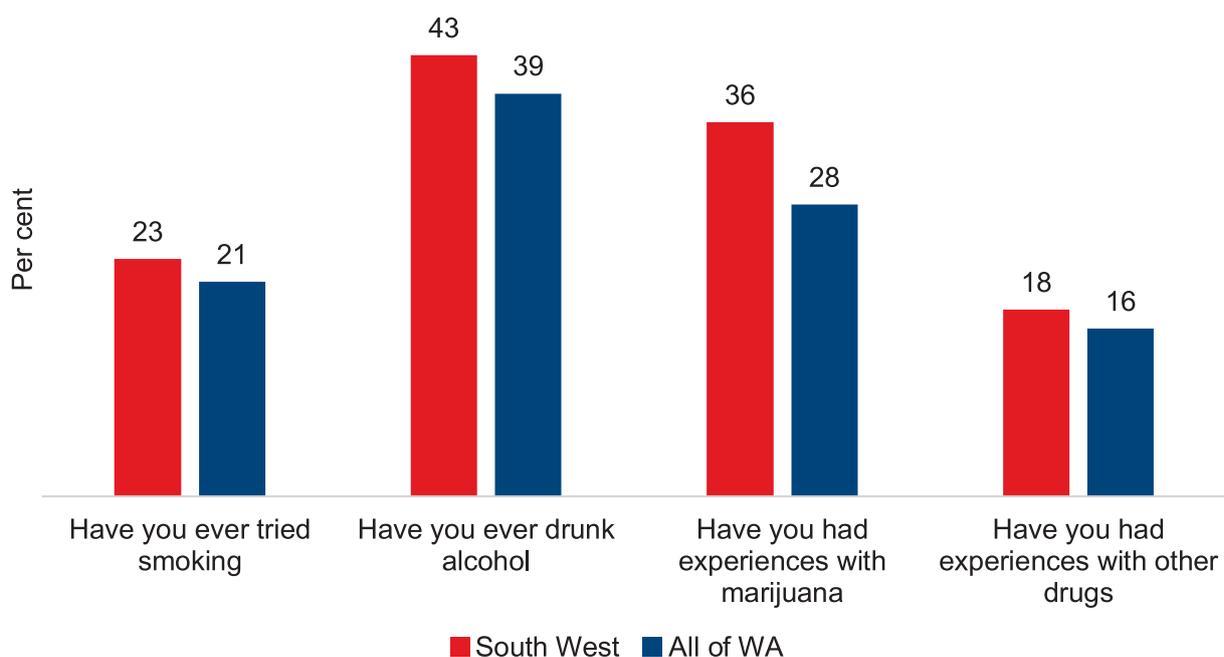
## Risk-taking and healthy behaviours

### Alcohol and other drugs

Just under one-quarter (23.1%) of Year 7 to Year 12 students in the South West have tried smoking, while 42.9 per cent have tried alcohol. These proportions are on par with the rest of WA (20.9% and 39.2% respectively).

Year 9 to Year 12 students in the South West are more likely to report having experiences with marijuana compared to the rest of the state (36.4% vs 28.4%), while they reported in the same proportions as WA students overall when it comes to other drugs (18.2% vs 16.3%).

**Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who responded ‘yes’ to the question on whether they have tried smoking or drinking, or had experiences with marijuana or other drugs (Years 9 to 12 only)**



Note: The questions asked were: Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?; Have you ever drunk alcohol (more than just a few sips, like a full can of beer or a glass of wine)?; Have you ever had any experiences with marijuana?; Have you ever had any experiences with other drugs? Response options were: ‘No’, ‘Yes’ and ‘Prefer not to say’.

Around seven in ten Year 7 to Year 12 students in the South West reported having learnt 'some' or 'a lot' about alcohol (75.8%) or cigarettes/smoking at school (67.7%). Notably, compared to the rest of WA, students in the South West are more likely to report learning at least a little bit or more about marijuana at school (58.5% vs 50.0%) or other drugs (64.7% vs 55.0%).

Over two-thirds (68.6%) of students thought people their age should not use any substances including cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana or other drugs.

### Sexual health

One-half (49.4%) of secondary students said they had learnt nothing or only a little bit about sexual health and ways to support their sexual health at school, while more than one-half (58.4%) said they have learnt nothing or a little bit about pregnancy or contraception.

Just under one-half (46.6%) of students reported they feel they don't know enough about sexual health and pregnancy or they aren't sure, while 50.9 per cent reported this regarding the topic of pregnancy and contraception.

Two-fifths (44.8%) of secondary students in the South West said that if they needed help for something, they did not know or were not sure where to go to access services regarding their reproductive or sexual health (all of WA: 40.8%).

In Years 9 to 12, 60.1 per cent of female students and 33.8 per cent of male students reported they had ever been sent unwanted sexual material, such as pornographic pictures, videos or words.

### Problematic behaviours and emotions related to being online

Just over one-third (32.0%) of students in the South West said they feel bothered 'fairly often' or 'very often' when they cannot be on the internet (Years 4–6: 25.4%; Years 7–12: 34.7%), while 22.7 per cent said they feel bothered when they cannot play electronic games (Years 4–6: 28.5%; Years 7–12: 20.3%).

When it comes to mobile phones, 29.4 per cent of male and 46.1 per cent of female secondary students said they feel bothered 'fairly often' or 'very often' when they cannot use their mobile phone. Further, 7.4 per cent of male and 14.1 per cent of female secondary students said they go without eating or sleeping either 'fairly often' or 'very often' because of their mobile phone.

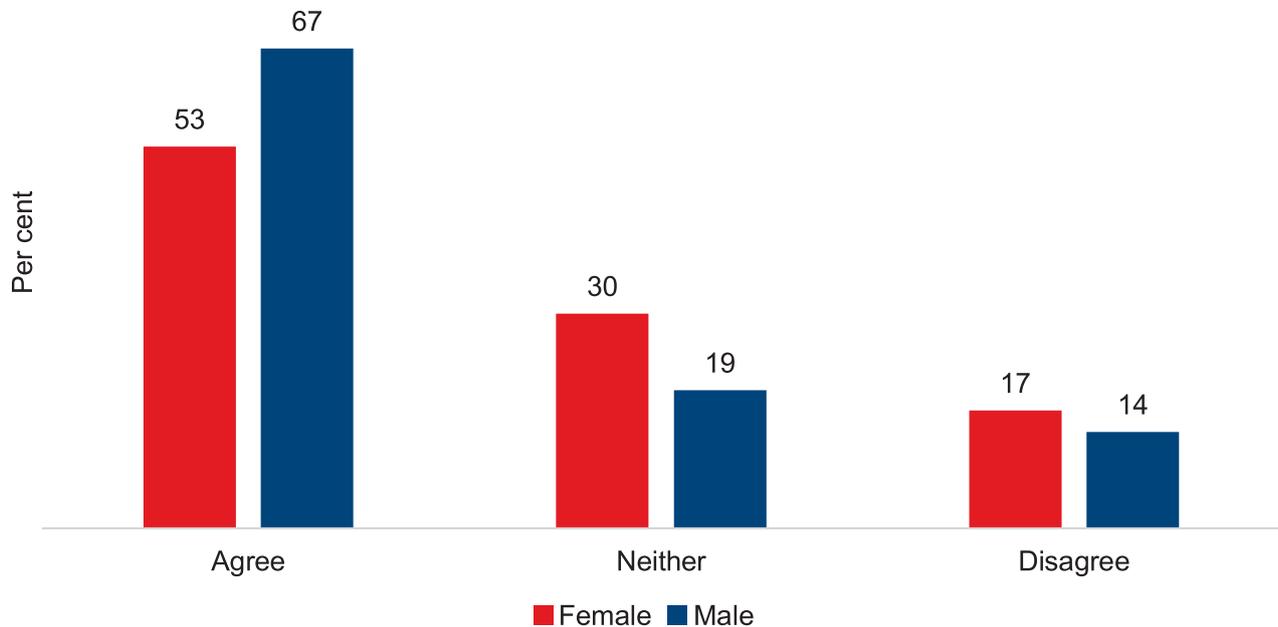
Notably, compared to male students in the rest of the state, male secondary students in the South West are more likely to 'never/almost never' feel bothered when they can't go on the internet (27.6% vs 21.6%), use their mobile phone (35.1% vs 26.1%) and are more likely to 'never/almost never' go without eating or sleeping because of their mobile phone (72.4% vs 68.4%).

### Connection to community

The majority (85.7%) of Year 4 to Year 6 students in the South West agreed they like where they live, while 75.6 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed. These results are similar to those across the state.

Most (71.5%) Year 4 to Year 6 students in the South West feel like they belong in their community, while 58.0 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed. Female secondary students are much less likely than male students to feel like they belong in their community (53.4% vs 67.1%).

**Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who feel like they belong in their community**



These results are consistent with the rest of the state.

Over three-quarters (76.3%) of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that there are lots of fun things to do where they live, while 46.3 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed. The difference between primary and secondary students is consistent with the rest of the state.

In terms of their community, of the students surveyed in the South West:

- 77.2 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that there are outdoor places for them to go in their area, like parks, ovals or skate parks, while 79.4 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.
- 64.8 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that their neighbours are friendly, while 64.0 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.
- 60.4 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that when they go to the shops the people there are friendly, while 69.2 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.

These results are consistent with the rest of the state.

When it comes to activities outside of school:

- Around one-half (46.0%) of students said they spend time being active outdoors outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 49.9%; Years 7–12: 44.1%).
- 41.3 per cent said they spend time practising or playing a sport outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 38.8%; Years 7–12: 42.6%).
- 35.8 per cent said they spend time hanging out with friends outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 37.0%; Years 7–12: 35.3%).
- 54.7 per cent male and 31.4 per cent female students reported playing games on a game console, computer or tablet every day or almost every day.

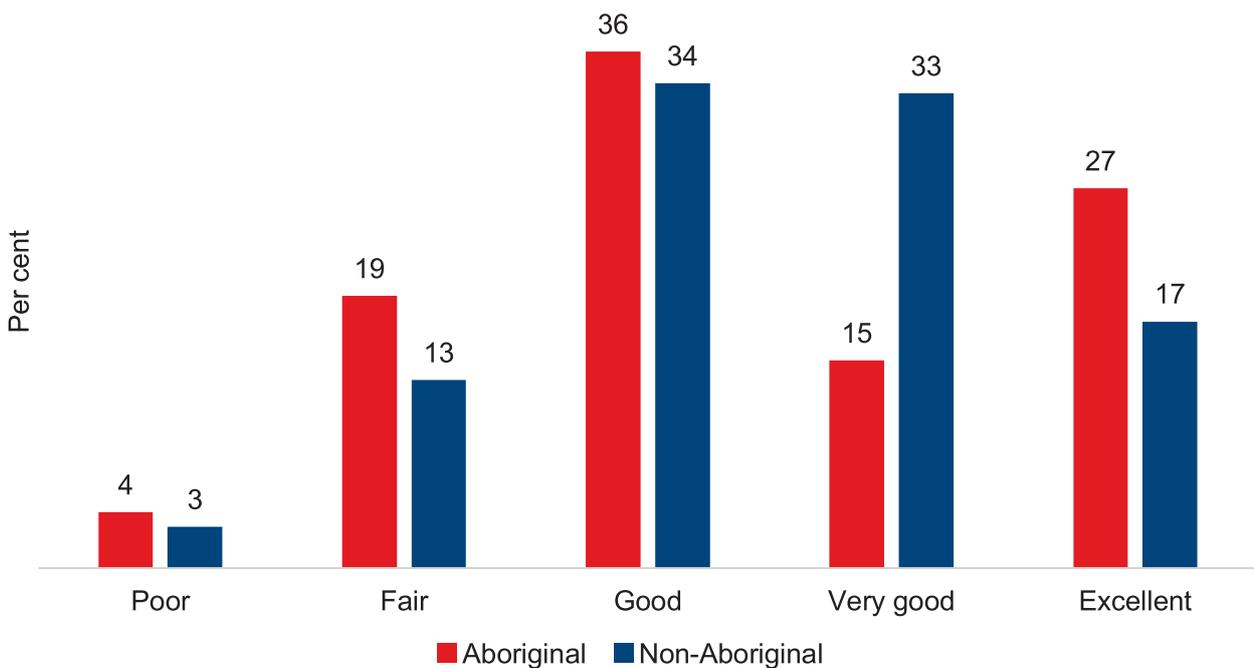
Less than one-third (30.5%) of secondary students said they spend time doing homework every day or almost every day. This is lower than the average across the state (40.5%).

### Aboriginal children's and young people's views on feeling healthy and connected

Just over two-fifths (41.0%) of Aboriginal students in the South West rated their health as very good or excellent which is a lower proportion than non-Aboriginal students (50.3%).

Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students are less likely than non-Aboriginal students to eat breakfast and lunch every day (breakfast: 38.3% vs 57.4%; lunch: 53.1% vs 64.0%). Aboriginal secondary students in the South West are also more likely than non-Aboriginal students to eat fruit never or only a few times a week (42.4% vs 23.0%) or eat vegetables never or only a few times a week (31.9% vs 12.8%).

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting their general health ratings



Aboriginal students reported similar interest and involvement in physical exercise as their non-Aboriginal peers. Nearly three-fifths (59.1%) of the Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the South West reported that physical activity, sport or exercise is 'definitely' an important part of their life, consistent with non-Aboriginal students (57.5%). Almost two-thirds (63.2%) of Aboriginal students reported they had done vigorous exercise three or more

times in the previous week, compared to 68.1 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.

One-half (50.9%) of Aboriginal students in the South West reported a high life satisfaction (7 to 10 out of 10) and almost one-quarter (23.7%) reported low life satisfaction (1 to 4 out of 10) (non-Aboriginal: 61.0% and 18.8% respectively).

Most Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students agreed with the statements:

- I feel good about myself (72.2%).
- I am able to do things as well as most people (70.5%).
- I am happy with myself (76.1%).

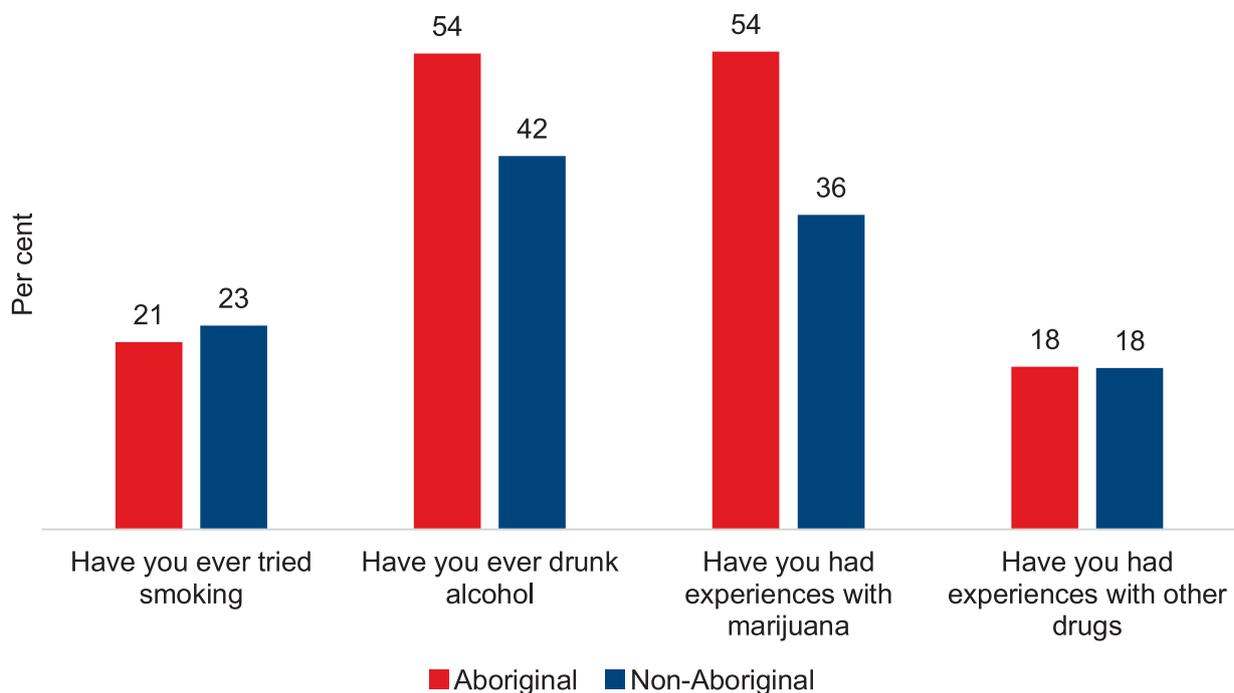
Results between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students are comparable for both primary and secondary students surveyed.

The top three stressors reported by Aboriginal Year 9 to Year 12 students were school or study problems (78.8%), mental health

and wellbeing (50.6%) and problems with friends (50.0%). Notably, Aboriginal students are less likely to be stressed due to body image compared to non-Aboriginal students (Aboriginal: 34.0%; non-Aboriginal: 51.8%).

One in five (21.2%) Aboriginal secondary students in the South West has tried smoking; this is consistent with non-Aboriginal students (23.1%), whereas over one-half (53.9%) of Aboriginal secondary students have drunk alcohol, compared to 42.3 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.

**Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who have tried smoking or drinking, or had experiences with marijuana or other drugs (Years 9 to 12 only)**



*Note: The questions asked were: Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?; Have you ever drunk alcohol (more than just a few sips, like a full can of beer or a glass of wine)?; Have you ever had any experiences with marijuana?; Have you ever had any experiences with other drugs? Response options were: 'No', 'Yes' and 'Prefer not to say'.*

When it comes to Year 9 to Year 12 students, Aboriginal students are more likely to have had experiences with marijuana as non-Aboriginal students (54.1% vs 35.6%), however are equally as likely to have had experiences with other drugs (18.4% vs 18.3%).

In terms of connection to culture and community, of the Aboriginal students surveyed in the South West:

- 64.7 per cent said they know their family's country (all of WA: 69.6%), and of these students 63.5 per cent said they spend time on their family's country (all of WA: 77.4%).
- 35.1 per cent said they do cultural or traditional activities with their family (all of WA: 47.8%).

A very low proportion of Aboriginal students in the South West reported speaking an Aboriginal language. Only 15.4 per cent said they talk Aboriginal language 'some' or 'a lot' (all of WA: 24.1%), while 64.4 per cent said they talk none (all of WA: 37.1%).

Most (78.1%) Aboriginal children (Years 4 to 6) in the South West feel like they belong in their community (non-Aboriginal: 74.1%). Just over one-half (54.2%) of Aboriginal secondary students feel like they belong in their community, which is consistent with their non-Aboriginal peers (58.6%).

## What do children and young people in the South West say about being healthy and connected?

Students were asked the following open text questions related to health and mental health:

- Thinking about mental health and other emotional worries, like stress, anxiety and depression, what are some of the ways families, communities, schools or adults in general could be more helpful?

- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with seeking help for health issues, including mental health worries?

### Talking about mental health

*"It's extremely hard to find a way to talk to somebody about mental health anonymously and with out people such as friends and family, especially parents, from knowing you talked to somebody."*

*(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"A lot of the time kids don't know what's going on and are confused. I think WA needs to work on locating kids that are struggling but hiding it and understanding how important diagnosis is to kids."*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"I feel like schools should be addressing and furthermore discussing mental health disorders because they never do, and I really depended on myself to find out what's wrong with me, also the school should keep information confidential, rather than telling other teachers, vice versa."*

*(female, 16 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*"Removing the stigmas surrounding mental health."*

*(male, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"I haven't tried reaching out to anyone outside and reaching for therapy on anything, it's hard when you can't find the time and that my parents don't really support me doing it, I'm scared honestly. I don't know."*

*(male 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"Just bring more awareness to the issues children and teens do face, and not let it go unrecognised or undermined."*

*(female, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### Feeling anxiety, depression or sadness

*“Well usually I cry everyday and night and I cry myself to sleep every night some times I cut myself when I bored but no ones knows about any of this.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I feel like people talk behind my back and say nasty stuff like fat shamed.”*

*(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I have very bad stress and anxiety and depression about the way I look and other things by being bullied and hurt by others.”*

*(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I have anxiety but idk how to tell people.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**■ ■ I had a lot of problems with self image, i felt i was ugly, skinny and gross. I starterer going to the gym and it helped me tremendously, i feel it should be promoter more in high schools across austrialia as it really was a life saver for me and some of my friends. ■ ■**

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Sometimes I feel like I’m not good enough and just makes me sad and I have no one to talk to...”*

*(female, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“I got admitted to hospital after attempting suicide and let out same day with no house to go to.”*

*(female, 16 year-old, Non-Aboriginal)*

### Talking about getting support

*“I would like the commissioner to know that kids that can’t afford therapy should be able to get it for a lower price or for free because they feel the need to express their feelings.”*

*(female, 11 year-old, undisclosed Aboriginal status)*

*“I have a friend who is struggling with depression/self harm, she has actively sought help but her parents have told her she is not allowed to get a therapist because she is “overreacting”. Nearly all of my queer friends have been suicidal and at school there is an enormous amount of openly displayed homophobic and transphobic comments made by students and even sometimes teachers. To be honest I would like to see a vast amount of more education for the general population about queer mental health.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I regularly experience anxiety, stress, depression and panic/anxiety attacks, yet my mother refuses to take me to the doctor because she thinks I’m overreacting, and I’m too young to feel this way. If there was a way to go to a doctor without parents knowledge this would be helpful.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Definitely make things more accessible for kids and teens with unsupportive parents, parents who don’t understand and try to control their children in a way that is seriously detrimental to a child’s mental well-being. Discrete so that children can feel safe in who they are talking to without fear of judgement, without the fear of parents finding out and stopping their kids from getting the medical/ mental help they need and are not receiving from their parents or guardians.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“There needs to be better ways to get diagnosed with mental health conditions without going through parents as people are often to embarrassed or brushed off by parents to get the services they need... Additionally adults, parents and the community need to be better informed and take more seriously mental health problems.”*  
(male, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Seeking help for a eating disorder is slow and a long wait when you need help.”*  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“I was supposed to receive a call from CAMHs and never got one. For a community advocating mental health, I feel like an inconvenience and a prop in a business. Nobody genuinely cares, the guy who sexually assaulted me got therapy but I didn’t.”*  
(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Sometimes it’s hard in rural areas because the therapists are not suitable for you and there are so few.”*  
(male, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

### Views on their local area

In total, 717 students from the South West responded to the free text question: ‘If there was one thing you could change about your local area, what would it be?’ Of the students surveyed in the South West, the top things that they would like to change in their local area were:

- More fun activities to do and places to hang out.
- Would like more, closer shops, a mall, movies, greater diversity.
- New or better skate parks, bike trails etc.
- More, upgraded outdoor spaces or parks.

*“More basketball courts around the place and more hang out spots with phone chargers.”*  
(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Something i would change in my local area is that there would be like a oval or something to do (park etc ).”*  
(female, 12 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“More places for young people to go (actually fun, not just what middle aged men think kids would find fun).”*  
(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“I wish there was a more diverse culture in Margaret River. I barely see any publicly queer or interesting people walking around town.”*  
(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“To create a better public transport system between the main town and the smaller “fringe towns” to increase accessibility and to encourage people to use their cars less.”*  
(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

**▲ more hang out places for teenagers. like yeah skateparks are cool and they are building a huge one and they think that that caters for everyone but it doesn’t, kids don’t like that or kids have disabilities that prevent them from doing that. maybe like a room with a range of activities for kids to do, but only a limited amount of people because someone get anxious in big crowds. ▼▼**

*(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Maybe more activities for teens. As we are a tourist town there isn’t much to do. Most food places serve alcohol so we aren’t allowed to enter. Not having a licence is also hard because going to the beach is the most popular thing to do in summer and without a car we have to find lifts which can get complicated. Street festivals are always good fun and maybe a few more food options for teens.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**▲▲ They need everything more, there are 27,000 people in the Capel shire and about 7000 of those are in the direct town of Capel. There are no high school, bar[el]y an[y] competitor shops, no young kids or teenage activities unless they are makeshift or pop up. The town needs a revamp, they’re spending money in the wrong places. ▼▼**

*(male, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Having something like a hang out spot for our age, like a diner. Or an arcade, bowling alley. Something fun.”*

*(female, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Pathways between towns or more public transport to get around easier.”*

*(female, 17 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“More entertaining places for teenagers to hang out and do activities without the risk of drug use and violence.”*

*(male, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

A number of students in the South West talked about wanting more things to do that don’t cost money or are affordable.

*“More public sporting venues that we don’t have to pay to get in. Things like parks with basketball courts or something like that.”*

*(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“More places for teens to hang out that are free because at parks there are always little kids and other places like movies cost money.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“It would just be more free things to do because money is not always an option people have so it’s would be good to have more facilities for younger people around my age.”*

*(male, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“More social hangouts for kids our age that don’t cost money.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

## Learning and participating

**▲▲ That we aren't robots. We go to school in the morning at 8:55, work all day except for our breaks. Come home and are expected to do an hour of study, along with our own home chores and out of school lives like sport or jobs. ▼▼**

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### Attendance

Most students (88.7%) in the South West said it is very or somewhat important for them to be at school every day (very important: 48.9%, somewhat important: 39.8%). Nevertheless, students in the South West are less likely than those across the state to think being at school is very important (Years 4–6: 56.4% vs 64.5%; Years 7–12: 44.9% vs 48.0%).

More than one in ten (11.3%) Year 4 to Year 12 students in the South West said it is not very important to attend school every day. This is the highest proportion saying it is not very important across WA regions.

One-fifth (20.0%) of secondary students reported they had wagged school for a full day or more in the previous year, while 14.3 per cent reported they had been suspended from school.

These results are consistent with the rest of WA.

### Liking school and sense of belonging

Around one-quarter (23.7%) of students in the South West reported liking school a lot (Years 4–6: 40.1%; Years 7–12: 15.2%), and 25.1 per cent likes school a bit (Years 4–6: 24.7%; Years 7–12: 25.3%). At the same time,

a relatively high proportion of students in both primary and secondary school reported that they don't like school at all compared to students across the state (Years 4–6: 6.0% vs 3.1%; Years 7–12: 13.1% vs 10.4%).

The majority (65.8%) of secondary students in the South West feel like they belong at their school. Over one in 10 (11.9%) strongly disagree that school is a place where they belong.

Most (70.3%) students in the South West agreed they feel happy at school (Years 4–6: 87.4%; Years 7–12: 61.6%), and 70.5 per cent agreed they like learning at school (Years 4–6: 81.8%; Years 7–12: 64.9%).

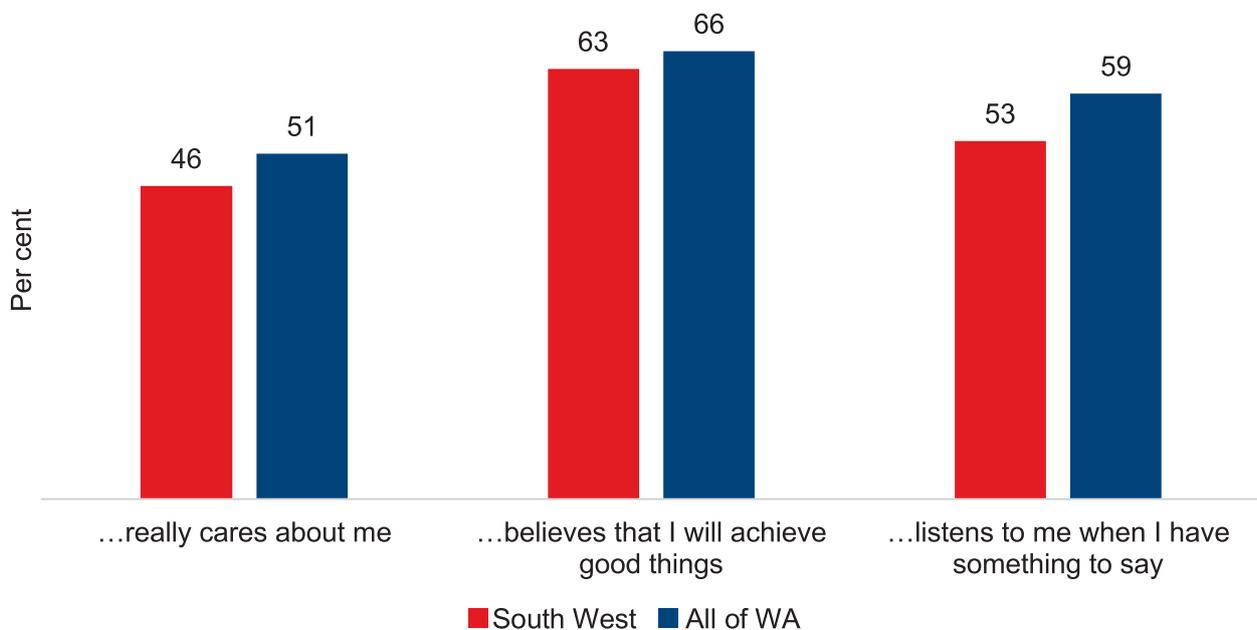
In terms of their relationships with others, over two-thirds (68.3%) of students in the South West said they usually get along with classmates (Years 4–6: 67.4%; Years 7–12: 68.7%), while 66.9 per cent said they usually get along with their teachers (Years 4–6: 77.0%; Years 7–12: 61.6%).

These results are consistent with the rest of WA.

Over three-quarters (76.0%) of students reported it is 'pretty much true' or 'very much true' there is a teacher or another adult in the school who believes the student will achieve good things (Years 4–6: 89.5%; Years 7–12: 69.0%), while 65.3 per cent said it is 'pretty much true' or 'very much true' true that a teacher or another adult at their school really cares about them (Years 4–6: 84.6%; Years 7–12: 55.2%).

Students in Years 4 to 6 are less likely than those across the state to report it is 'very much true' that a teacher cares about them or listens to them when they have something to say.

**Proportion of Year 4 to 6 students responding ‘very much true’ when posed the statement: ‘At my school, there is a teacher or another adult who...’**



Of the students surveyed in the South West:

- 33.7 per cent reported, if needed, they almost always get help from teachers in class (Years 4–6: 44.6%; Years 7–12: 28.1%), while 46.4 per cent reported they get it sometimes (Years 4–6: 44.7%; Years 7–12: 47.4%).
- 57.0 per cent said their parents often ask about schoolwork/homework (Years 4–6: 57.8%; Years 7–12: 56.6%).
- One-third (32.6%) of secondary students feel pressured by schoolwork ‘a lot’ (female: 38.8%, male: 23.1%).

These results are consistent with those across the state.

**Feeling safe at school**

Just under one-third (31.7%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the South West said they feel safe at school all the time (Years 4–6: 40.0%; Years 7–12: 27.3%), while 46.4 per cent said they feel safe at school most of the time (Years 4–6: 39.1%; Years 7–12: 50.3%).

One in five (20.7%) students said they feel safe at school only sometimes or less (Years 4–6: 19.1%; Years 7–12: 21.5%).

These results are consistent with those across WA.

Over one-third (36.8%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students reported they had been bullied, cyberbullied or both by students from their school (Years 4–6: 34.4%; Years 7–12: 38.1%).

Female students in secondary school are significantly more likely to have been bullied than their male peers (particularly cyberbullied). In Years 7 to 12, only 39.8 per cent of female students reported they had never been bullied, compared to 60.6 per cent of their male peers.

In terms of the nature of the bullying, students in the South West reported the following:

- 34.7 per cent had been (traditionally) bullied (Years 4–6: 32.9%; Years 7–12: 35.6%).
- 12.7 per cent had been cyberbullied (Years 4–6: 4.4%; Years 7–12: 17.1%).

Among students who reported having ever been bullied or cyberbullied (or both), 40.2 per cent reported this had happened in the previous three months while 17.1 per cent reported they had missed school in the past because they were afraid someone might bully them (female: 20.3%; male: 11.7%).

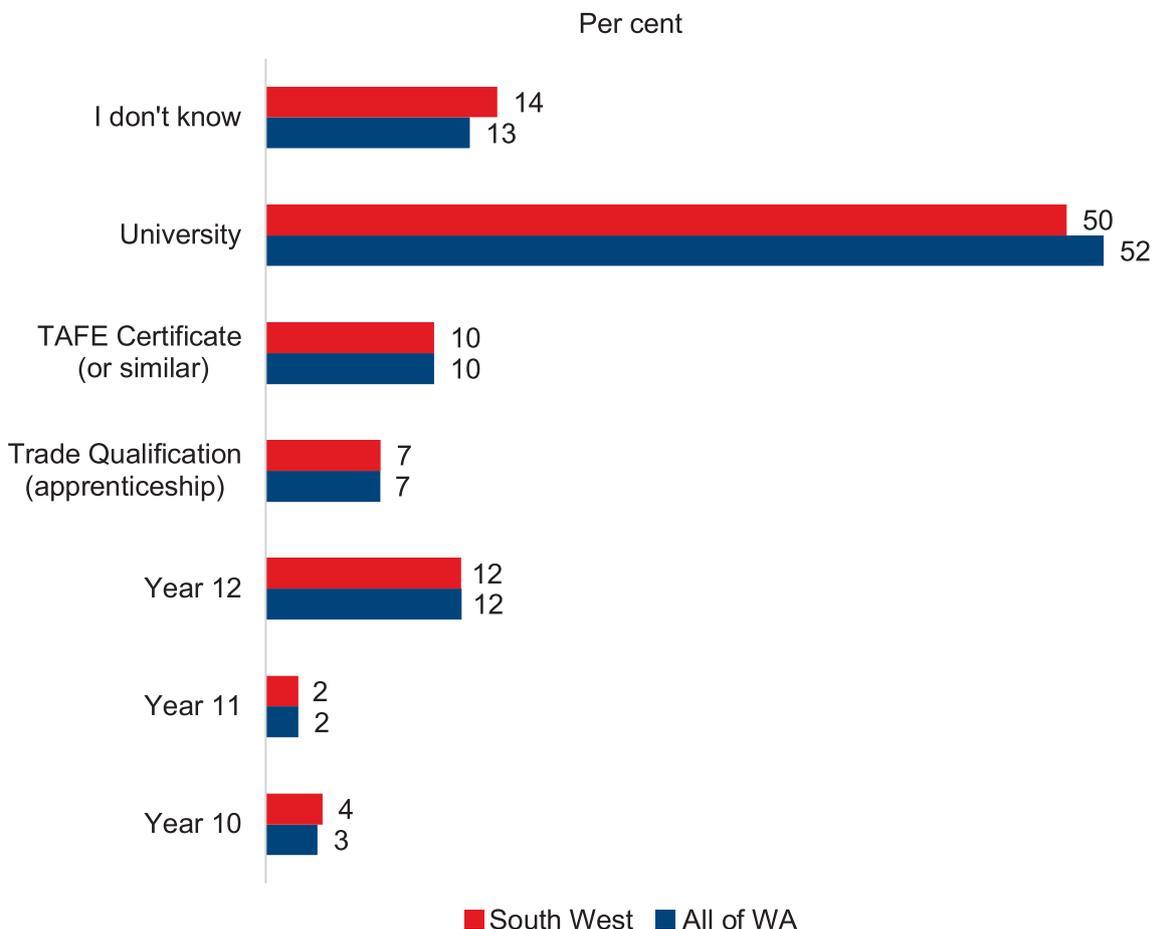
### Transition from school

One-half (49.5%) of secondary students in the South West reported they want to attend university, on par with the rest of WA (51.8%).

Just under one-fifth (17.8%) do not intend to go on to further study after secondary school, while a similar proportion (17.5%) planned to pursue further education at TAFE (or similar) or a trade qualification.

Most secondary students (61.1%) said it is 'very much true' or 'pretty much true' that at their school they are learning knowledge and skills that will help them in the future (all of WA: 61.4%).

### Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting highest level of education they would like to achieve (single choice only)



More than one-half (57.5%) of secondary students in the South West reported having a paid job sometime over the previous 12 months (all of WA: 45.2%). Over two-fifths (41.6%) of secondary students in the South West reported having a regular part-time job (all of WA: 28.0%). This is the highest proportion across the state.

The vast majority of students reported working so they could have money of their own to spend on things they want (72.3%), while 9.3 per cent said it is to get skills and experience.

### Independence and autonomy

Of the secondary students in the South West:

- 87.0 per cent said they are allowed to go to and from school on their own (all of WA: 80.9%).
- 84.7 per cent said they are allowed to go places other than school on their own (all of WA: 76.0%).
- 33.9 per cent said they are allowed to go out alone at night in their local area (all of WA: 31.2%).

Similar to the responses across the state, female young people are less likely than their male peers and brothers to be allowed to do these things. Yet, female young people in the South West are generally more likely than their female peers across the state to be allowed to go to and from school on their own, go to places other than school and cycle on main roads without an adult.

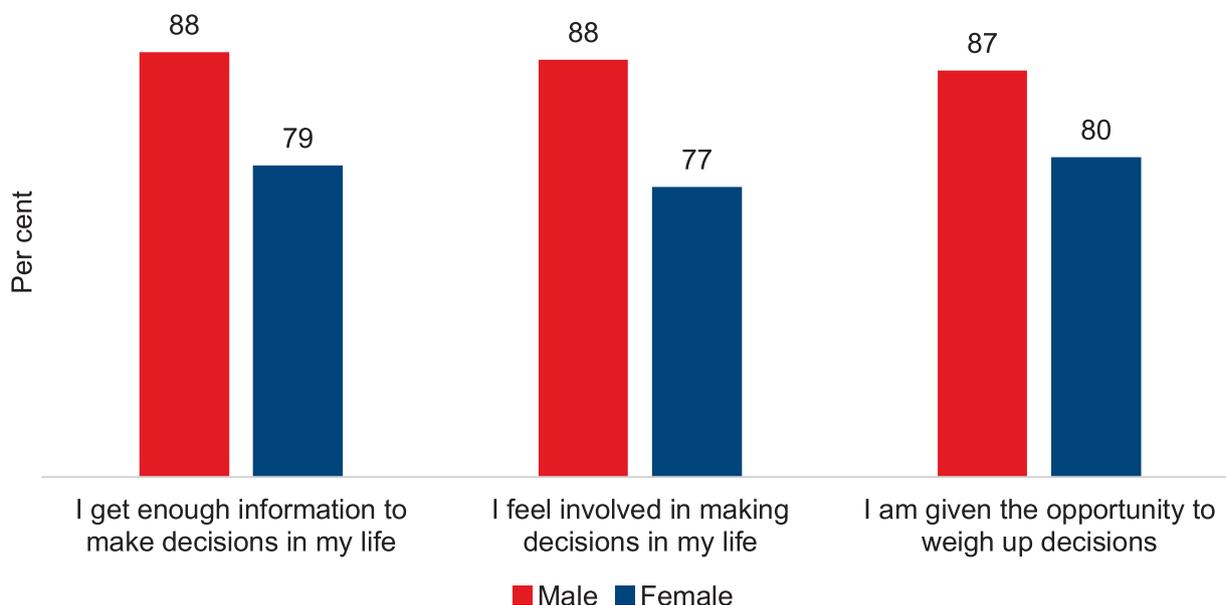
Most secondary students in the South West (81.9%) agreed or strongly agreed that they get enough information to make decisions in their life, feel involved in making decisions about their life (80.0%) and that they are given opportunities to weigh up decisions (81.7%).

These results are consistent with those across WA.

Male secondary students are more likely to agree with all three statements.

The gender difference is consistent with results for the rest of the state.

### Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreeing with three statements regarding making decisions in their life



### Aboriginal children's and young people's views on learning and participating

Less than one-half (40.4%) of Aboriginal students in the South West said that being at school every day is very important to them, while 41.0 per cent said it is somewhat important and 18.6 per cent said it is not very important.

Aboriginal students in the South West are more likely than their non-Aboriginal peers to have attended multiple schools since they started primary school or secondary school with one in five (20.6%) Aboriginal secondary students having attended three or more schools compared to one in ten (10.3%) non-Aboriginal students.

Aboriginal students are much more likely to have been suspended from school (been sent home for a few days for doing something wrong) than their non-Aboriginal peers (28.3%

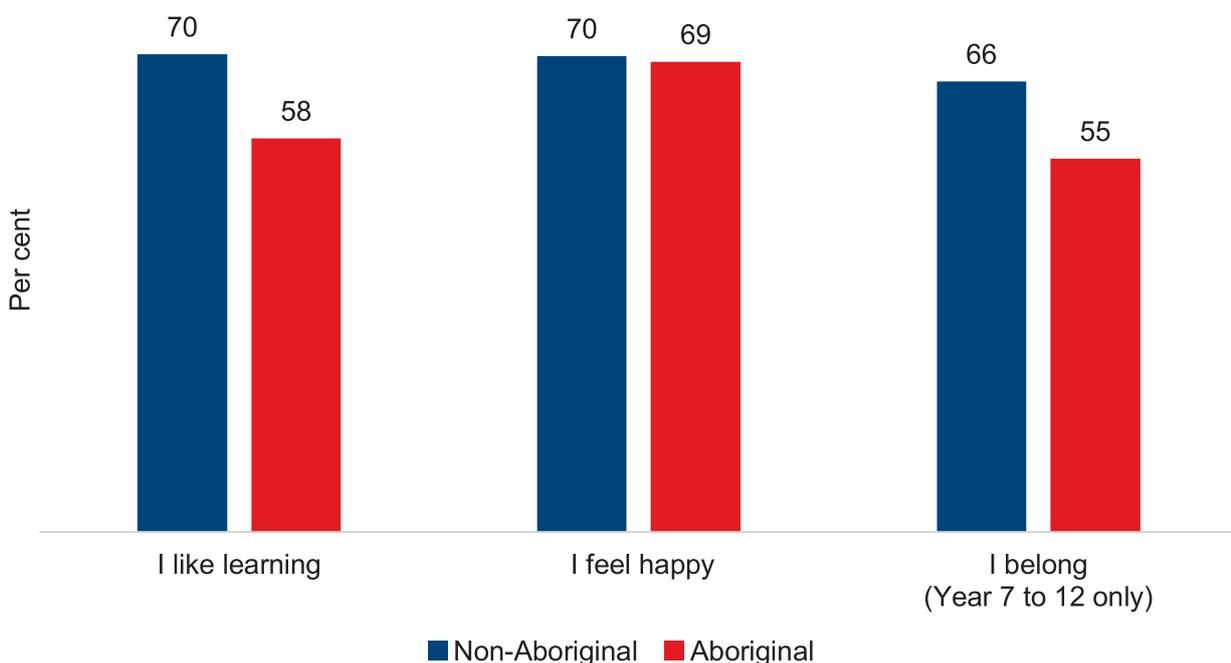
vs 13.5%). Furthermore, Aboriginal students in the South West are more than twice as likely to report that they had wagged school in the previous 12 months for a full day or more compared to non-Aboriginal students (48.6% compared to 18.5%).

Just over two-fifths (41.1%) of Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the South West reported liking school (non-Aboriginal: 48.5%).

Over two-thirds (69.2%) of Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students in the South West agree that their school is a place where they feel happy, which is consistent with non-Aboriginal students (70.0%). However, when it comes to liking learning, Aboriginal students are less likely to agree compared to non-Aboriginal students (57.9% vs 70.3%).

Further, Aboriginal secondary students in the South West are less likely than their non-Aboriginal peers to agree their school is a place where they belong (54.9% vs 66.3%).

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students agreeing that school is a place where they like learning, feel happy, and belong (Year 7 to 12 only)



Just over one-half (60.4%) of Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students in the South West said they usually get along with their classmates, while 27.5 per cent said they sometimes get along with their classmates.

Most (72.8%) Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the South West feel safe at school all or most of the time (non-Aboriginal: 78.7%). Around one in ten (11.0%) feel safe only a little bit of the time or never (non-Aboriginal: 6.0%).

Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the South West reported experiencing bullying by students from their school in similar proportions to non-Aboriginal students (39.2% compared to 36.5%).

Aboriginal students in the South West are much less likely than their non-Aboriginal peers to plan to go to university after secondary school (18.9% vs 51.2%). Some are planning to do a TAFE certificate (6.4%) or a trade qualification (11.9%), while a very high 29.7 per cent do not know the highest level of education they want to achieve (non-Aboriginal: 13.2%).

## What do children and young people in the South West say about learning and participating?

### Talking about stress at school

The following responses are from secondary school students who were asked the open text question: 'The majority of secondary school students feel stressed by school work or study. What do you think are the main reasons for this?'

*"It's quite difficult, school assigns so much assignments and coping with them + family issues + mental health is definitely a struggle."*

*(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"Probably all the school and homework because that gives me nightmares thinking about the stacks of homework I get and makes me stressed."*

*(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**It is crucial that students maintain a good work, life and school balance but sometimes it feels almost impossible to do so when you have so many other things going on. For example, I work at my parents shop everyday after school from 3-5 and on the weekends from 10-3. This makes me feel tired all the time and having a huge ton of homework and assignments to do after working these shifts is not the best. I want to be able to invest a good amount of time doing what I enjoy and actually getting enough rest. ▀ ▀**

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"Too much work and not enough assistance from teachers to do it."*

*(male, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*"People could be more understanding of the work load of atar and lower expectations of things not school related like helping in house."*

*(female, 16 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“The school system. The ATAR system as a whole is absolutely ridiculous. It is disgusting that 95% of people that I know have some type of mental illness. These mental illnesses are caused by the unnecessary stress that is caused by school.”*

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Not enough support, little communication between teachers leading to too many assignments on one day. Very little support in the class room. Unclear as to what we are meant to be doing.”*

*(female, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“There is so much of it and we are made to feel as if the rest of our lives depends on it.”*

*(male, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### **Other comments on school**

*“I think that there’s a problem with students using slurs at school and teachers ignoring it. It’s really hurtful to minorities in the classes.”*

*(student who selected ‘in another way’, 3 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Schools can be more helpful towards people getting bullied and teased.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“LGBTQI hate happens a lot at schools and is never addressed by teachers and it is hard as a student to speak up about it. Teachers who care about more than your homework would be helpful too.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“School needs to do better because it’s a literal hell hole for homophobia and racism and other forms of discrimination.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Being able to use headphones in class can help with adhd and help me concentrate.”*

*(male, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**▲▲ I feel pretty safe around these places except school but school will always feel unsafe because you cannot control what others do or think. ▼▼**

*(student who selected ‘in another way’, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Making mental health a reasonable excuse to be excused from school or work, making period cramps a reason to be excused from school as well, making the environment more friendly for members of the LGBT community and safer and more friendly for people of colour, serving punishments to those who are outwardly and openly discriminated, including: racist, homophobic, transphobic etc.”*

*(student who selected ‘in another way’, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“I want no school uniform for public schools they are not comfortable and kids can’t concentrate in class so I say don’t make kids wear something they aren’t comfortable with and if we have to go to school at least let us wear clothing of our choice.”*

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Being at school with someone who committed indecent assault to me and he was charged and arrested, but still the school has not removed him, therefore every time I see him I have a panic/anxiety attack. Makes me feel very unsafe.”*

*(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“And if there could be a large part in the curriculum dedicated to teaching us about disabilities and how to understand and treat people with said disabilities that would be really good.”*

*(male, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

## Safe and Supported

**“ Sometimes I get a little stressed when it comes to paying for class trips that are expensive because my mum is a single parent and she gets stressed with having to pay everything and I feel bad for wanting to go. ”**

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### Supportive relationships

More than three-quarters (78.3%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the South West reported it is ‘very much true’ or ‘pretty much true’ that they live with a parent or another adult who listens when they have something to say

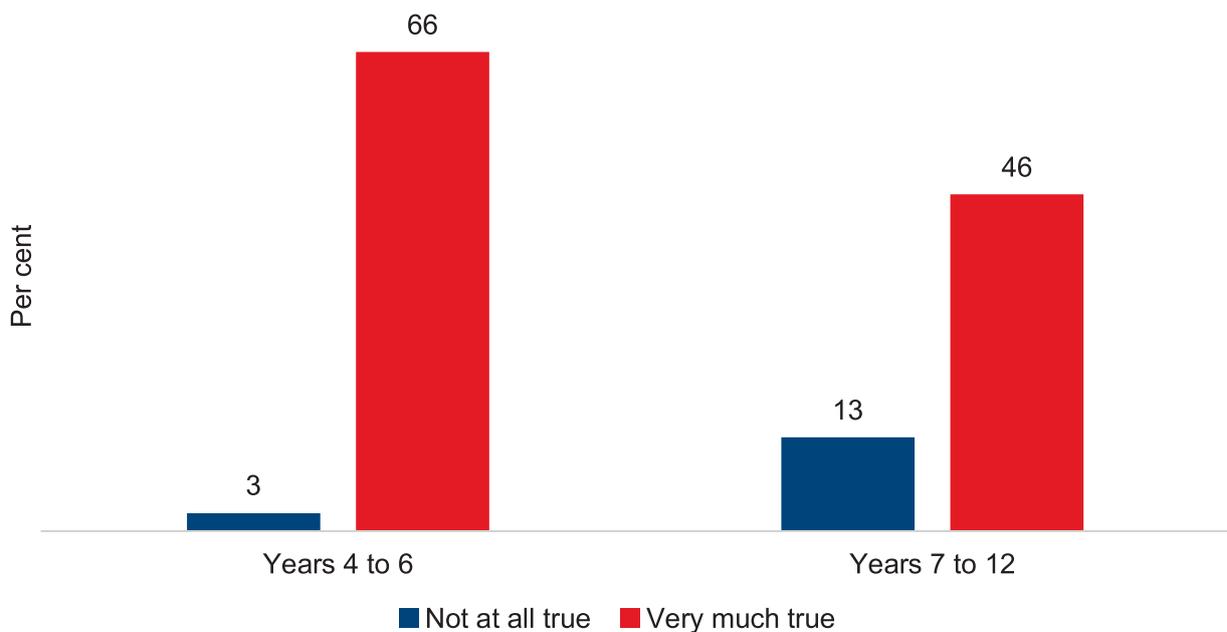
(Years 4–6: 83.2%; Years 7–12: 75.9%).

Two-thirds (67.0%) said it is ‘very much true’ they live with a parent or another adult who believes they will achieve good things (Years 4–6: 66.1%; Years 7–12: 67.4%).

Most (65.7%) Year 4 to Year 6 students reported it is ‘very much true’ they live with a parent or another adult they can talk to about their problems or worries, while 46.2 per cent of Year 7 to 12 students reported this. A low proportion (2.5%) of Year 4 to Year 6 students reported this statement is ‘not at all true’, while 12.9 per cent of secondary students said it is ‘not at all true’ they live with a parent or another adult they could talk to.

These results are consistent with those across WA.

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students responding to the statement: ‘Where I live, there is a parent or adult who I can talk to about my problems’



Note: Response options ‘pretty much true’ and ‘a little true’ have been omitted from this graph.

Over three-quarters (77.0%) of students in the South West said their family gets along very well or well (Years 4–6: 82.9%; Years 7–12: 73.9%).

Most (79.8%) Year 4 to Year 6 students in the South West said that if they were having serious problems there is an adult they would feel okay talking to. One in five (20.2%) Year 4 to Year 6 students said there is not an adult they would feel okay talking to or they weren't sure.

Similarly, just over two-thirds (68.6%) of secondary students said that if they were having serious problems there is an adult they would feel okay talking to. Almost one-third (31.4%) of secondary students said there is not an adult they would feel okay talking to or they weren't sure.

These results are consistent with the results across WA.

In terms of friendships, students in the South West reported:

- 54.0 per cent felt they are very good at making and keeping friends (Years 4–6: 59.7%; Years 7–12: 51.0%).
- 84.9 per cent reported they feel they have enough friends (Years 4–6: 88.4%; Years 7–12: 83.2%).
- 45.4 per cent said they feel their friends care about them a lot (Years 4–6: 52.6%; Years 7–12: 41.7%).

These results are consistent with those across the state.

### Material basics

Most students in the South West have the material basics they need, however, almost one in ten (9.1%) Year 4 to Year 12 students only sometimes or never has enough food to eat at home when they are hungry (all of WA: 9.6%).

Two-thirds (67.0%) of students said there is always enough food, and 23.9 per cent said there is often enough food. These results are consistent with those across WA.

Nine in ten students reported having enough money in their family to afford school excursions and/or camps (89.8%) and having 'the right kind of clothes' to fit in with people their age (89.6%).

A relatively high proportion of secondary students in the South West do not have their own mobile phone (13.1% vs 8.3% for all of WA). In particular, a lower proportion (82.8%) of male secondary students have their own mobile phone compared to male students across WA (90.7%) and their female peers in the South West (90.1%).

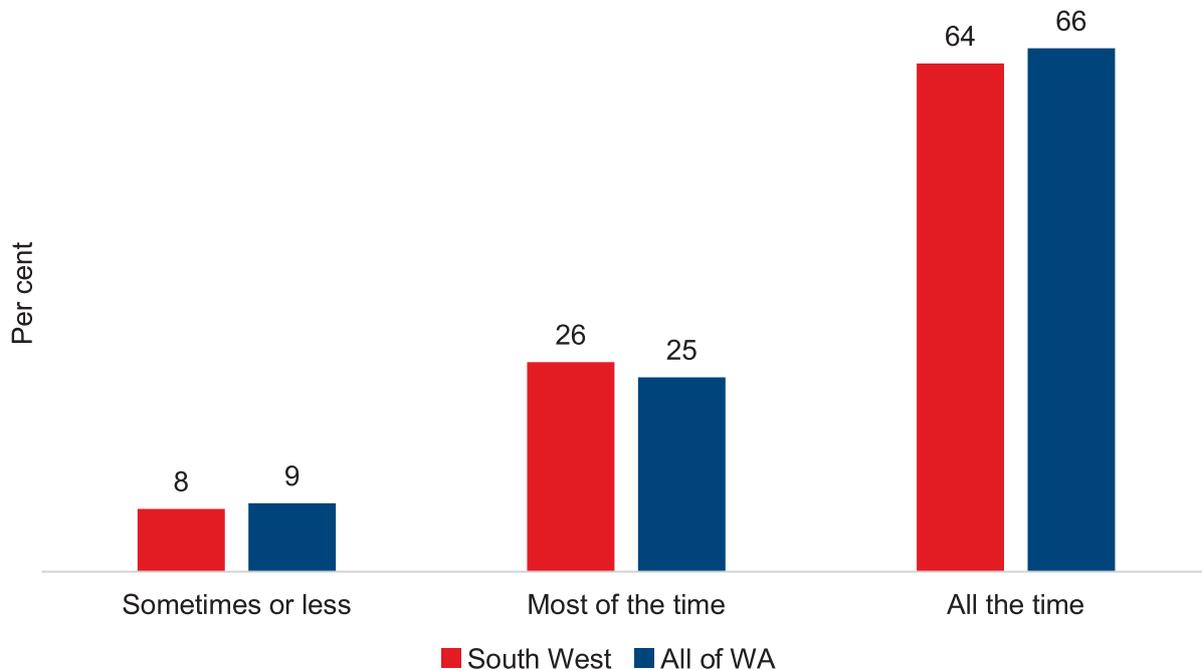
Students in Years 4 to 6 in the South West are also less likely than those across the state to have access to the internet at home (87.9% vs 94.0%), while secondary school students in the South West have comparable access to the internet at home as those across the state (97.0% vs 97.4%).

### Safe in the home

Just under two-thirds (64.0%) of students said they feel safe at home all the time (Years 4–6: 65.1%; Years 7–12: 63.5%), while 26.4 per cent said they feel safe at home most of the time (Years 4–6: 24.4%; Years 7–12: 27.5%).

These results are consistent with the rest of WA.

**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting how safe they feel at home**



Around one-quarter (23.7%) of students said they are ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ worried that someone in their home or family will be fighting (all of WA: 24.4%) and one in five (20.0%) is ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ worried that someone in their family would hurt themselves (all of WA: 21.9%).

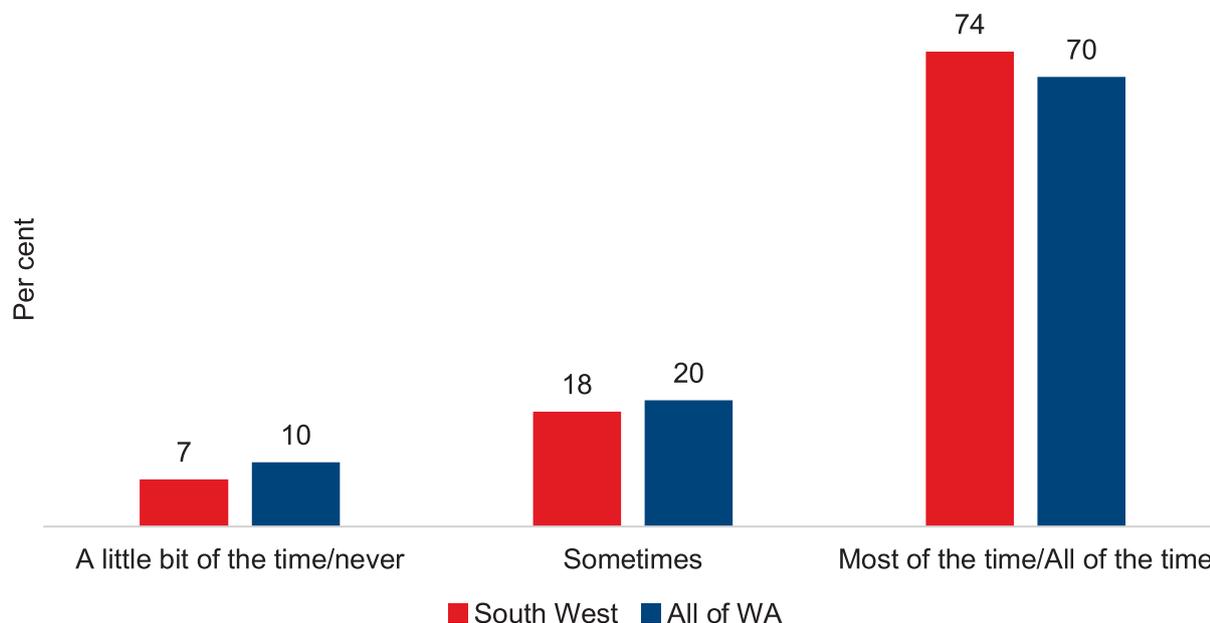
Secondary school students in the South West are much less likely than students across the state to be worried ‘a lot’ or ‘somewhat’ that someone in their home or family will hurt somebody else (12.8% vs 15.4%). In particular, three-quarters (74.8%) of secondary students are ‘not at all’ worried about this (all of WA: 69.1%).

Nearly one-third (31.6%) of secondary students reported they had stayed away from home overnight because of a problem.

**Safe in the community**

Three in ten (30.2%) students said they feel safe in their local area all the time (Years 4–6: 30.2%; Years 7–12: 30.2%), while 41.4 per cent said they feel safe in their local area most of the time (Years 4–6: 36.8%; Years 7–12: 43.7%).

**Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting how often they feel safe in their local area**



Female secondary students are much less likely to feel safe in their local area all the time than their male peers (21.6% vs 42.0%). One-third (32.1%) of female secondary students feel safe only sometimes or less compared to 15.2 per cent of male students.

These results are consistent with the rest of WA.

Of Year 9 to Year 12 students in the South West, 45.5 per cent reported they had ever been hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose (male: 60.9%; female: 34.8%). Male students in the South West are much more likely than male students across the state to report being hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose (60.9% vs 50.7%).

Students who reported being hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose in the previous 12 months were also asked further questions about the nature and location of the incident.

Most male secondary students in the South West reported being harmed by another child or young person (85.8%) and 25.4 per

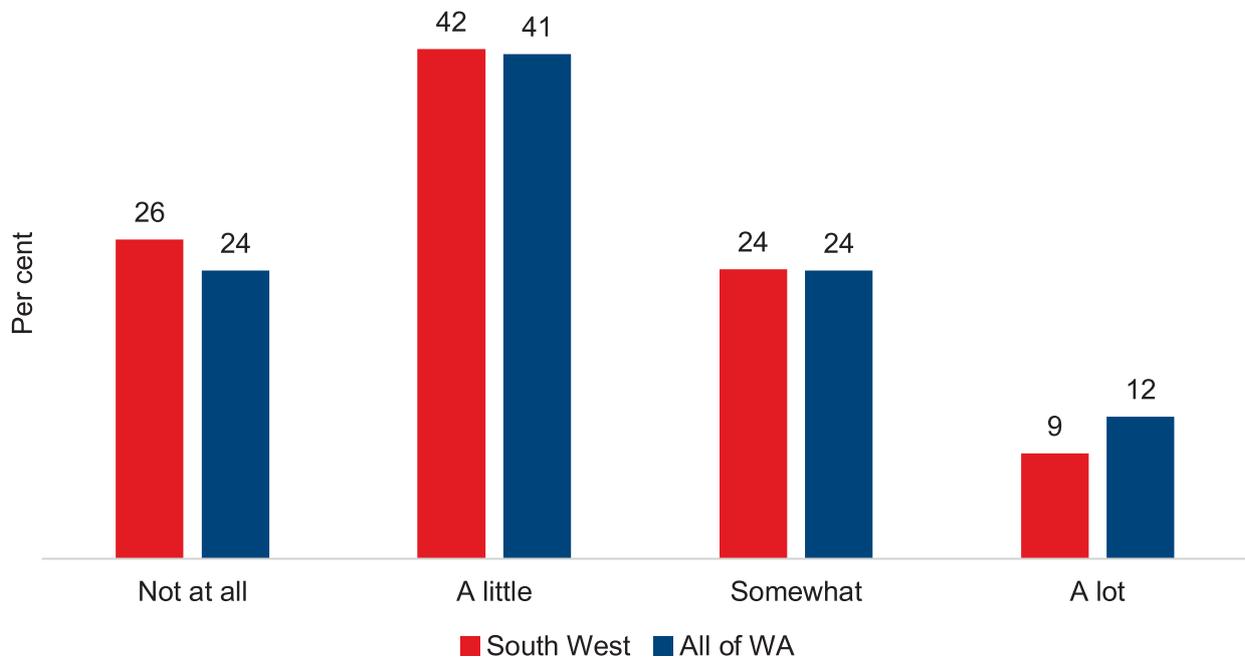
cent reported being harmed by an adult. In contrast, 56.4 per cent of female students reported being harmed by another child or young person and 45.7 per cent were harmed by an adult.

There are also differences in the locations of the incidents reported between male and female students. Male students reported the incident predominantly taking place at school (54.1%), followed by at home (37.2%) and in a public place (e.g. in town, shops, sports centre) (30.6%). Female students reported the incident predominantly taking place at home (73.2%), followed by at school (24.5%) and in a public place (14.2%).

**Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic**

When asked about the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes to daily life, 32.3 per cent of students in the South West reported the pandemic affected their life in a bad way ‘a lot’ (8.6%) or ‘somewhat’ (23.7%). Over one-quarter (26.1%) of students responded ‘not at all’ when posed this question.

**Proportion of students responding to the question: ‘Thinking about the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes to daily life, how much has this affected your life in a bad way?’**



Of Year 9 to Year 12 students, 16.2 per cent reported the COVID-19 pandemic had been a source of stress to them in the previous year (all of WA: 20.8%).

In relation to the COVID-19 pandemic, students in the South West also reported:

- 28.6 per cent reported feeling very or somewhat stressed/anxious (all of WA: 31.2%).
- 55.8 per cent reported feeling very or somewhat relaxed when they thought of COVID-19 (all of WA: 52.8%).
- 43.4 per cent reported feeling ‘a little’ or ‘a lot’ worried if they missed school due to COVID-19 in the previous calendar year – 2020 (all of WA: 48.5%).

the South West reported that it is ‘very much true’ that where they live there is a parent or another adult who:

- believes they will achieve good things (73.6%).
- listens to them when they have something to say (56.3%).
- they can talk to about their problems or worries (57.2%).

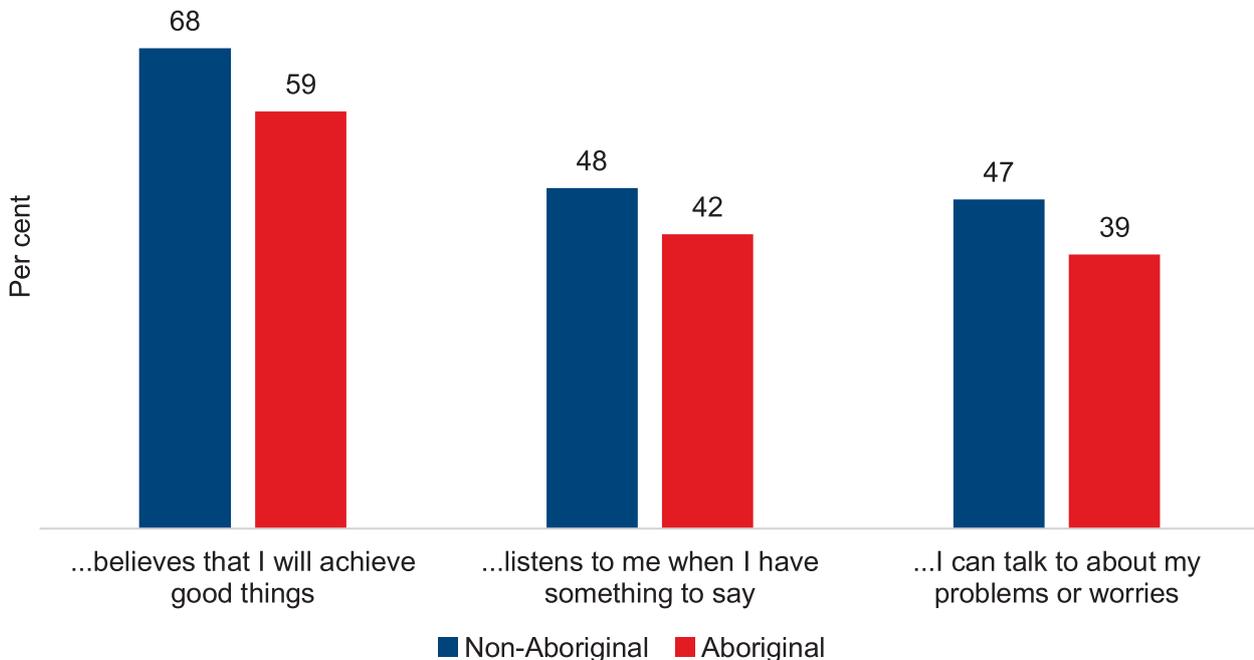
These results are consistent with non-Aboriginal students in the South West. However, the same is not true for Aboriginal secondary students who reported ‘very much true’ in lower proportions across all three questions compared to non-Aboriginal students.

**Aboriginal children’s and young people’s views on feeling safe and supported**

**Supportive relationships**

Most Year 4 to Year 6 Aboriginal students in

**Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students responding ‘very much true’ to the statement: ‘Where I live, there is a parent or adult who...’**



In terms of family harmony, over four-fifths (82.9%) of Aboriginal students reported that their family gets along well or very well, marginally more compared to non-Aboriginal students (76.6%).

Most Aboriginal students in the South West reported they are very good (56.7%) or okay at making friends (36.8%). Further, 80.4 per cent feel that they have enough friends and that their friends care about them a lot (48.2%) or some (30.8%).

**Material basics**

Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the South West are marginally more likely to be experiencing some form of material disadvantage in comparison to their non-Aboriginal peers.

- One in seven (14.4%) Aboriginal students reported there is only sometimes or less often enough food to eat at home when they are hungry (non-Aboriginal: 8.3%).

- One in ten (9.9%) Aboriginal students does not have a family car that is used for transport (non-Aboriginal: 2.6%).
- One in five (20.4%) Aboriginal students does not have enough money in their family for them to go on a school excursion or camp (non-Aboriginal: 8.7%).
- Over one in five (21.7%) Aboriginal secondary students do not have their own tablet, laptop or computer, compared to 13.3 per cent of non-Aboriginal students.

Aboriginal students are much more likely to report living in a primary household of six people or more (24.6%) compared to non-Aboriginal students (11.1%).

## Feeling safe

The majority (87.4%) of Aboriginal children and young people in the South West feel safe at home most or all of the time. This is marginally lower than the result for non-Aboriginal children and young people (92.2%).

Compared to non-Aboriginal students, Aboriginal students in the South West are more likely to worry a lot that someone in their home or family will be fighting (Aboriginal: 13.5%; non-Aboriginal: 8.9%) or hurt themselves (Aboriginal: 17.3%; non-Aboriginal: 8.1%) and Aboriginal secondary students are more likely to worry a lot that someone in their family will get arrested (Aboriginal: 11.3%; non-Aboriginal: 4.2%).

When it comes to safety in their local area, 75.1 per cent of Aboriginal children and young people in the South West reported feeling safe most or all of the time. This is consistent with non-Aboriginal students (72.9%).

## What do children and young people in the South West say about being safe and supported?

### Supportive relationships

*“I didn’t have any friends in primary school because I was different. I came to high school and found one friend who has been really nice to me, and treated me in such a way, that I am so grateful. After my terrible primary school experiences, I began to feel terrible about my self and even slightly suicidal at times, but my new high school friend treats me like an equal, to which I appreciate her friendship. She is my only friend, but she still makes me feel like I belong. I still don’t fully fit-in in school, but my new BFF makes me want to come to school.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**“I Personally, I just keep going because I look into the future, I know i have potential. This is because my mum and dad is so supportive and loving, and my mum really helps me set those goals, and she shows me how to get there. ”**

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Listen to your kids and don’t dismiss their emotions and don’t call them names and accept them.”*

*(student who selected ‘in another way’, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“I... have this one teacher that me and my friend always go to talk to about our problems and they are really good because I have grown and truest full relationship with them and she has helped me through a lot and sees my side of the story.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“Be there for them even if they don’t want your help.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Stop yelling and speak to us like humans.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“We have a lot going on that u don’t know about u need to take it easy and stop putting so much pressure on us.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“If they could just listen to us and not think, oh its just a teenager his problems are small.”  
(male, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Talk to me as if I’m on the same level as you not just some 15 year old cheeky boy who doesn’t know anything.  
(male, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### Feeling unsafe

The following statements were generally in response to the question: ‘What are some of the things that make you feel unsafe?’

*“I feel unsafe as a part of the LGBTQIA+ community in my conservative town. And feel unable to express myself for fear of getting verbally attacked.”  
(student who selected ‘in another way’, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I’m a girl, and I’m teenage, so I guess it’s kind of expected now for me to feel a little unsafe when I’m out. I guess people have the power to make me feel somewhat unsafe.”  
(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“People drinking around town and then coming to the skate park or just young people coming to the skate park drunk/on other drugs because you don’t know what could happen.”  
(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“My dad makes me feel unsafe at times because he gets angry easily.”  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**▲▲ I’d work on making it a safer community so I can feel safe to go on runs early in the morning or late in the afternoon. I find that there are many creepy people (mostly men) in the area and many of my friends and I constantly talk about feeling unsafe in the city, the streets, neighbourhoods, parks, shops , stores, and transport stations. Just to let you know: many young girls in this area clutch keys in case something happens, hold deodorant to spray in a predators eyes. Fix this. We want to be safe and not taught that we have to be careful. ▼▼**

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Please listen to our voices. We want to be heard. My friends and I are all scared or men we don’t know. Please fix this. Thanks.”  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“When I am on a form of public transport, in school, public, shops or anywhere and there are constantly people staring at me because I am my own person, confident, vocal and unique, in the best way possible that is not offensive or disrespectful. Most people see me normally, however, straight homophobic men, men who do not like gays, or men who conform to the stereotype of being straight meaning they will automatically hate, be violent toward of bully anyone who is not straight or popular. I feel as if I fall into that group and the men I face are very violent, threatening and make me feel judged and worthless.”*

*(male, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Prevalence of drugs and violence in my peers and others my age, and their family members.”*

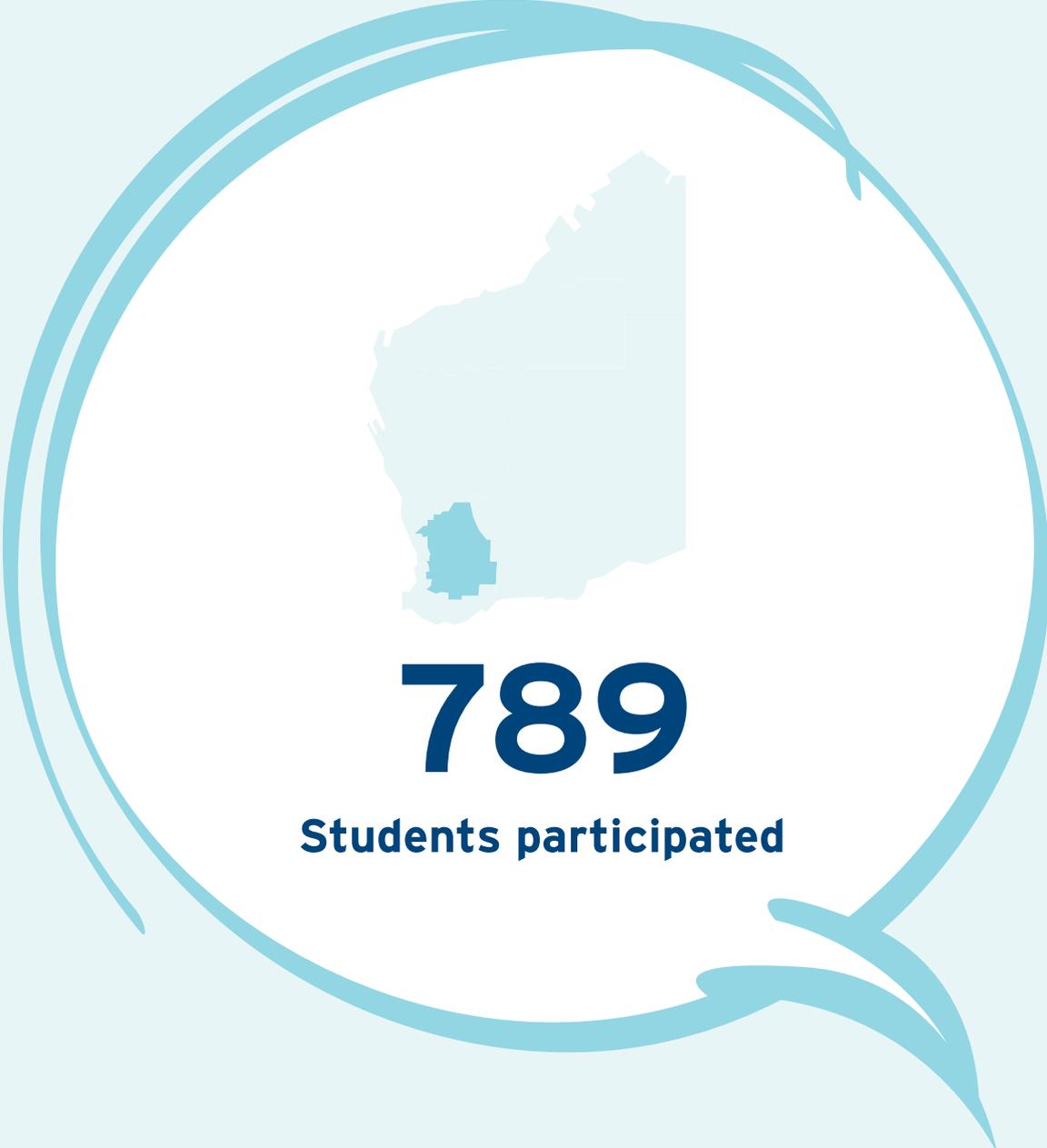
*(male, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*



**In town, students from school have followed me and my friends, thrown stuff at us, harassed us, verbally abused us and more.**

*(student who selected ‘in another way’,  
15 year-old, Aboriginal)*

# Wheatbelt



# Wheatbelt key findings

**84.1 per cent** of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Wheatbelt **reported their general health is good, very good or excellent.**



Of the Aboriginal students surveyed in the Wheatbelt, **just over a quarter (26.6%) rated their health as very good or excellent**; this is well below non-Aboriginal students (47.7%).

**Female secondary students** in the Wheatbelt are **more likely to report low life satisfaction** scores compared to female students across the rest of the state (32.6% vs 25.5%).



**One-half (50.8%)** of secondary students in the Wheatbelt **have tried alcohol**; this is a higher proportion compared to the rest of the state (39.2%).

**Female students** in the Wheatbelt are much more likely to **feel stressed about body image** than their male peers (63.6% vs 16.3%).

**Almost one-half (46.0%)** of female secondary students in the Wheatbelt **do not feel like they belong at school** (male: 18.5%).



**Young people** in the Wheatbelt are **more likely to go to a teacher for assistance** with emotional health worries than students across the state (59.7% vs 47.8%).

**Over one-quarter (26.6%)** of secondary students in the Wheatbelt **reported they had been suspended from school** (all of WA: 17.1%).

**Aboriginal secondary students** in the Wheatbelt **are more likely to have been suspended from school** than Aboriginal secondary students across the state (40.1% vs 33.1%).

**Only one-third (34.6%)** of secondary students in the Wheatbelt **have not been bullied by students at their school** (all of WA: 48.9%).



**Most (79.5%)** students in the Wheatbelt also reported that if they were having any serious problems, **there is an adult they would feel okay talking to**. This is the highest proportion of all regions across the state.

**Compared to the rest of WA**, secondary students in the Wheatbelt are **less likely to report having their own tablet, laptop or computer** (73.6% vs 85.8%).



**One in five (19.2%)** Aboriginal students in the Wheatbelt reported **there is only sometimes or less often enough food to eat at home when they are hungry** (non-Aboriginal: 8.7%).

## Overview

A total of 789 students across Years 4 to 12 from seven primary schools and seven secondary schools in the Wheatbelt took part in the Speaking Out Survey 2021.

Just under one-half (48.7%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students surveyed in the Wheatbelt identified as girls, 49.4 per cent identified as boys and 1.9 per cent selected the option that they identify 'in another way'.

In total, 10.9 per cent of participants reported being Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.

Of the students surveyed in the Wheatbelt, 99.0 per cent reported speaking English at home and only 6.5 per cent reported (also) speaking other language(s) at home. This is the lowest proportion of children and young people across the state speaking another language at home. Further, of these only 1.0 per cent reported they do not speak English at home.

Few students reported which other languages are spoken.

Students in the Wheatbelt enjoyed doing the survey and appreciated the opportunity to have their say:

*“Great some questions were a little to personal but but otherwise good.” 😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊😊*  
(female, 9 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“It was fun and very simple.”*  
(male, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“It was a great survey because of it making me share things about me and having a trust worthy survey and having fun while doing it I really liked it.”*  
(male, 10 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“I liked it because I could share some personal stuff that I don’t tell anyone.”*  
(male, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“I thought it was great and I liked speaking out.”*  
(female, 10 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“This survey was good cos it made me realise some things.”*  
(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“I think it’s a great idea to do this.”*  
(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

**▲▲ I think it was a great survey and it could be helpful to others. I don’t like talking about my problems or emotions very much. I’ve always had to go through things alone because I had no one who was there for me when I needed someone. ▼▼**

(female, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“I like this it’s a good way to help understand younger people.” 👍👍*  
(female, 17 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

# Healthy and connected

**“Well for months I was really sad, confused, angry, upset and felt unwanted and I did self harm and didn’t tell anyone because I thought I could manage on my own and I was ashamed to tell anyone my problems in case they would judge me for it.”**

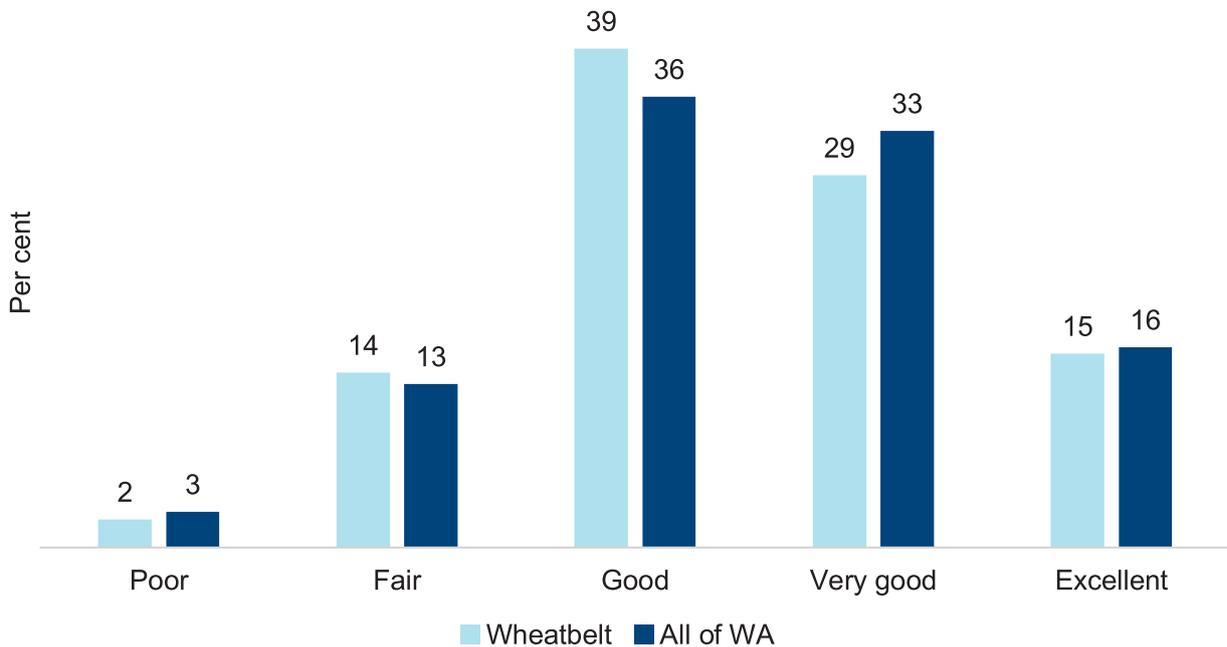
*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

## Physical health

Of the students surveyed in the Wheatbelt, 44.7 per cent reported that their health is very good or excellent (Years 4–6: 51.5%; Years 7–12: 40.3%), while 16.0 per cent reported that their health is poor or fair (Years 4–6: 7.6%; Years 7–12: 21.3%).

These results are broadly consistent with the rest of the state, with the exception that there is a slightly lower proportion of students in the Wheatbelt reporting their physical health is very good (29.4% vs 32.9%), and a correspondingly higher proportion reporting it is good (39.4% vs 35.6%).

Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting their general health ratings



Over one-quarter (28.1%) of secondary students have a long-term health problem, while 14.6 per cent reported having have a disability.

Approximately one-third (34.1%) reported they care very much about eating healthy food

(Years 4–6: 51.5%; Years 7–12: 23.3%). While the proportion for Year 4 to Year 6 students is consistent with the rest of the state, the proportion for secondary students is below the rest of WA (32.8%).

One-half (49.2%) of secondary students reported physical activity, sport or exercise is 'definitely' an important part of their life. Notably, almost one-fifth (18.8%) of male students in the Wheatbelt answered 'not really' to this question, which is higher compared to the rest of WA (12.1%). Conversely, female students in the Wheatbelt are less likely to answer 'not really' compared to rest of WA (9.8% vs 15.9%).

Of secondary students in the Wheatbelt, 57.2 per cent reported they had done vigorous exercise three or more times in the previous week (all of WA: 61.9%). A lower proportion of male secondary students than their male peers across the state had done vigorous exercise three times or more in the previous week (62.9% vs 72.0%)

Students in the Wheatbelt are less likely than those across the state to care 'very much' about how they look (30.8% vs 41.2%) or to care 'very much' about staying fit and being physically active (50.8% vs 56.7%).

Of the students surveyed in the Wheatbelt:

- 62.9 per cent reported brushing their teeth twice or more the previous day (Years 4–6: 68.2%; Years 7–12: 59.5%).
- 55.3 per cent reported they eat breakfast every day (Years 4–6: 75.0%; Years 7–12: 43.1%), while 5.9 per cent reported they never eat breakfast (Years 4–6: 1.1%; Years 7–12: 8.8%).
- 81.3 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students reported going to sleep on a school night before 9pm, while 47.6 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students reported going to sleep on a school night before 10pm.

These results are consistent with those across WA.

## Mental health

Of the students surveyed in the Wheatbelt, 6.9 is the mean life satisfaction (on a scale from 0 to 10). The mean life satisfaction across all of WA is 6.8.

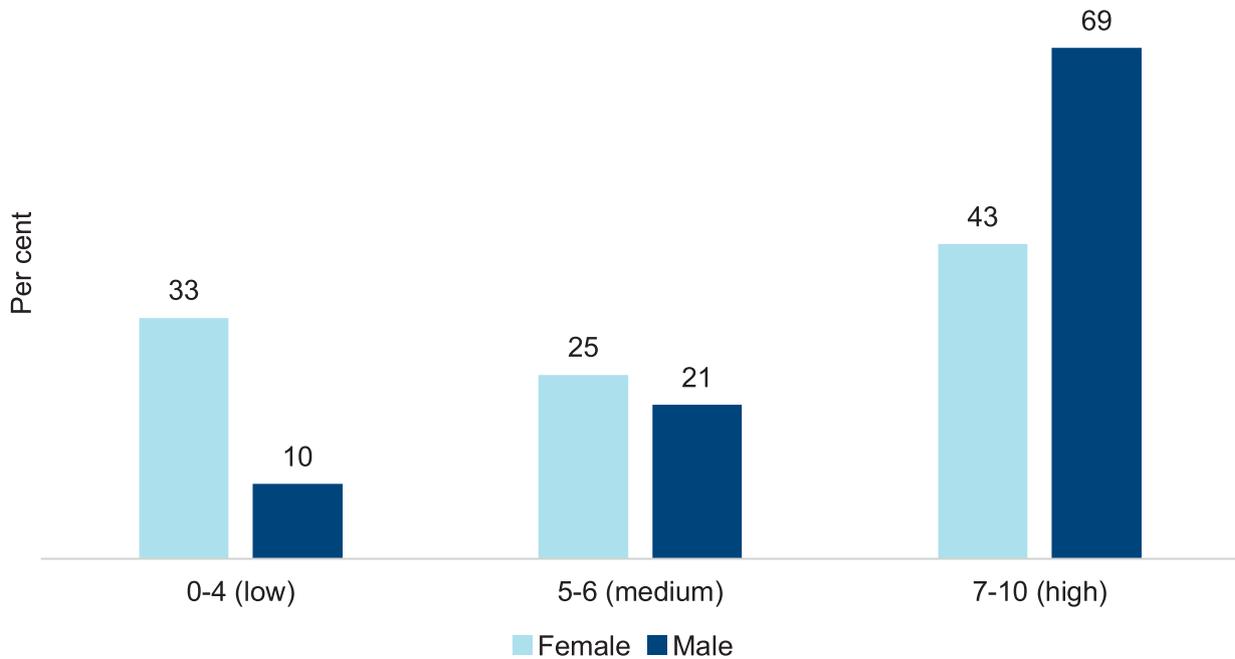
Primary school students have a higher mean life satisfaction than secondary students (Years 4–6: 7.8; Years 7–12: 6.3) – a result consistent across the state.

Overall reported life satisfaction in the Wheatbelt is consistent with the results for the rest of WA, across year levels. Almost two-thirds (63.5%) reported a high life satisfaction (7 to 10) (Years 4–6: 78.4%; Years 7–12: 54.2%) and 16.1 per cent reported a low life satisfaction (0 to 4) (Years 4–6: 5.3%; Years 7–12: 22.8%).

However, the gender gap between male secondary students in the Wheatbelt reporting high life satisfaction (69.1%) and female secondary students (42.6%) reporting the same is the highest in the state.

Further, one-third (32.6%) of female secondary students in the Wheatbelt reported low life satisfaction, which is greater than the proportion of female students across the rest of the state (25.5%).

**Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students rating their life satisfaction on a scale of 0 to 10 where 0 is the worst possible life and 10 the best possible life**



Most students (79.0%) agreed they are happy with themselves (Years 4–6: 94.2%; Years 7–12: 69.5%). Consistent with the above results, female secondary students are more likely to strongly disagree that they are happy with themselves compared to the rest of the state (15.3% vs 8.4%).

Students in the Wheatbelt also reported:

- 45.8 per cent agreed (Years 4–6: 40.1%; Years 7–12: 49.2%) and 30.3 per cent strongly agreed they feel good about themselves (Years 4–6: 51.8%; Years 7–12: 17.2%).
- 48.1 per cent of secondary students agreed and 18.4 per cent strongly agreed they can deal with things that happen in their life.

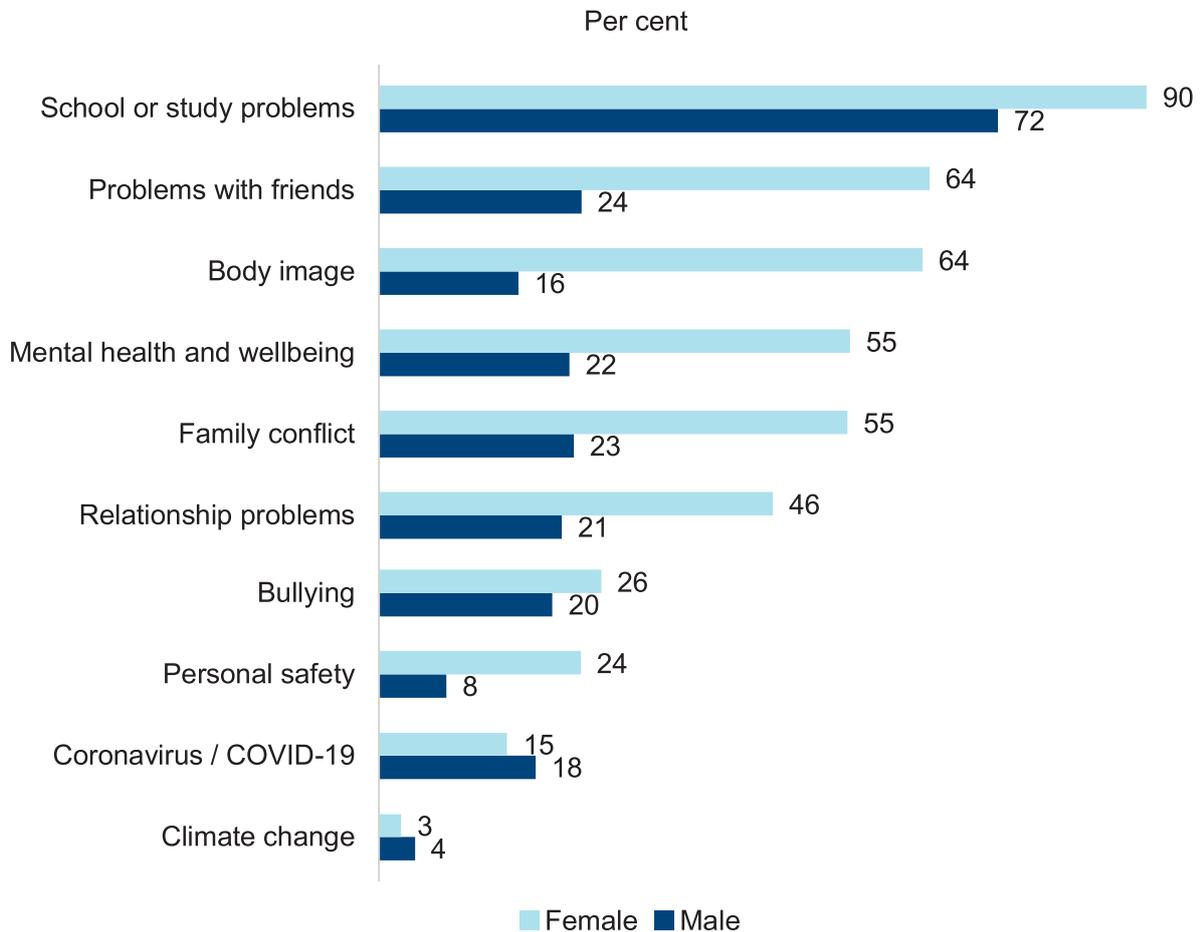
In Years 9 to 12, 53.3 per cent reported they had felt sad, blue or depressed for two or more weeks in a row in the previous 12 months. This proportion is slightly lower than for the rest of the state (59.2%).

Year 9 to Year 12 students were also asked about sources of stress in the previous 12 months. School and study problems (81.7%) were the most commonly reported source of stress, followed by problems with friends (44.6%), body image (41.1%) and mental health and wellbeing (40.4%).

Notably, compared to the rest of WA, students in the Wheatbelt are less likely to report mental health and wellbeing (50.7% vs 40.4%) and climate change as a source of stress (9.2% vs 3.8%). They are more likely to report bullying as a source of stress than their peers in the rest of WA (23.5% vs 15.0%).

There are also gender differences in the responses, with greater proportions of female students reporting being affected by stress across almost all sources.

Proportion of Year 9 to Year 12 students reporting sources of stress in the last 12 months



The gender differences are consistent with the rest of the state.

Of note, male students in the Wheatbelt are less likely to be worried about family conflict than other male students across the state (22.8% vs 33.9%), while female students are just as likely to be stressed by this as their counterparts across the state (54.8% vs 56.0%).

**Access to support for physical and mental health**

One-quarter (26.0%) of secondary students reported there had been a time in the previous 12 months when they had wanted or needed to see someone for their health but weren't

able to. Two-thirds (68.6%) of these students reported not seeing someone for their health due to feeling embarrassment or shame, while 34.7 per cent reported they were unsure who to see or where to go.

Just under two-thirds (65.0%) of secondary students in the Wheatbelt said they know where to get support in their school for stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries, while 50.3 per cent said they know where to get support in their local area.

Over one-third (35.0%) of secondary students reported they had received help for any problems with stress, anxiety, depression or other emotional health worries in the previous 12 months.

The most commonly used sources of support for secondary students in the Wheatbelt were parents (84.4%), other family (72.2%), friends including boyfriend or girlfriend (71.9%), school psychologist, school chaplain or school nurse (59.9%), teacher (59.7%), mental health service like Headspace (42.2%) and doctor or GP (38.5%).

Notably, young people in the Wheatbelt are more likely to go to a teacher for assistance than students across the state (59.7% vs 47.8%).

Of these students, 68.0 per cent found a teacher helpful and 76.5 per cent found a school psychologist, chaplain or school nurse

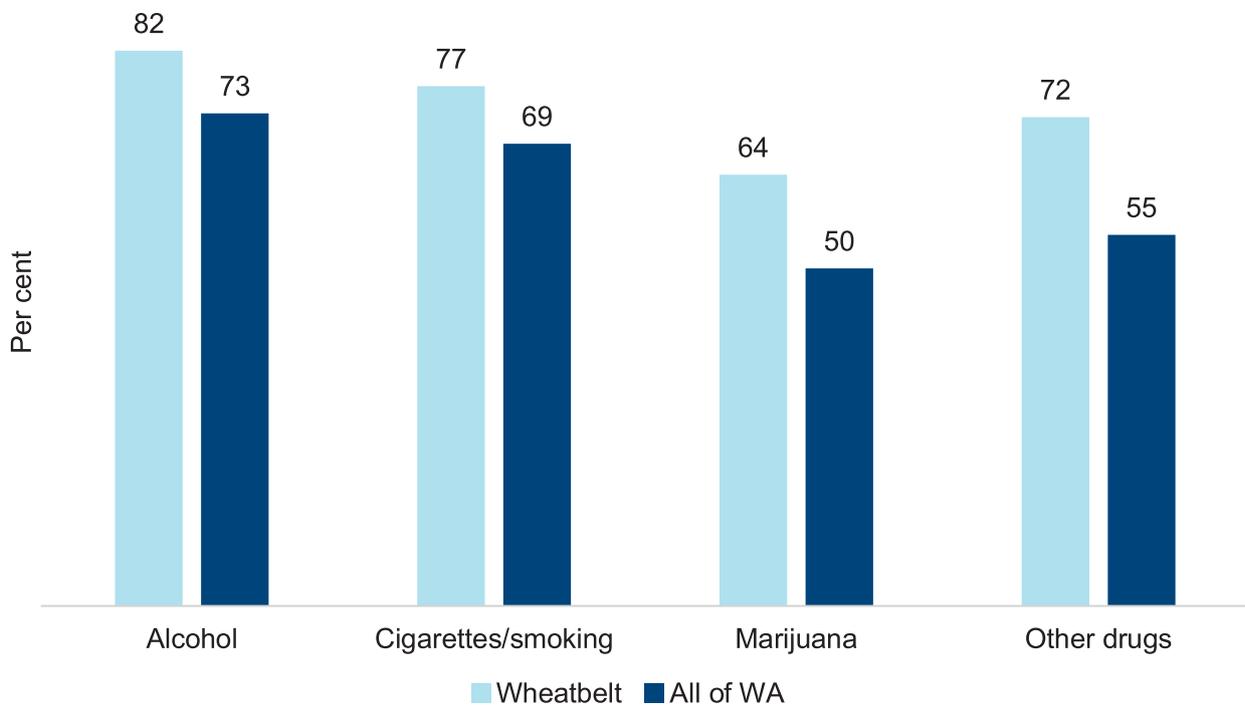
helpful and 67.6 per cent found a mental health service like Headspace helpful.

### Risk-taking and healthy behaviours

#### Alcohol and other drugs

Most students in the Wheatbelt reported learning about alcohol or other drugs at school, with students reported learning ‘some’ or ‘a lot’ about cigarettes/smoking (77.0%), alcohol (82.3%), marijuana (63.9%) or other drugs (72.4%). These proportions are higher than the rest of the state.

**Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 reporting they have learnt ‘some’ or ‘a lot’ about various substances at school**

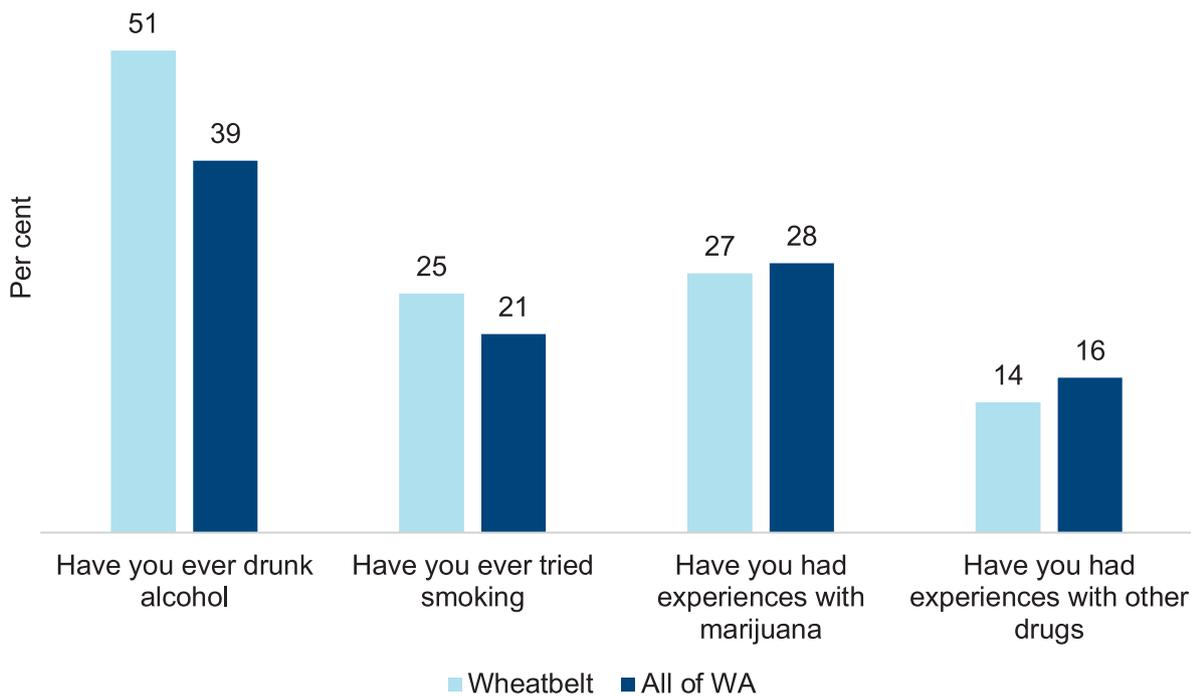


When it comes to alcohol and other drug usage, one-half (50.8%) of secondary students in the Wheatbelt reported they had tried alcohol; this is a higher proportion compared to the rest of the state (39.2%). One-quarter (25.2%) reported they have tried smoking, which is a slightly higher proportion than the rest of WA (20.9%).

While all secondary students were asked about how much they had learnt about

marijuana and other drugs, only Year 9 to 12 students were asked about experiences with these substances. Year 9 to Year 12 students in the Wheatbelt reported having experiences with marijuana or other drugs in similar proportions to the rest of the state (marijuana: 27.3% vs 28.4%; other drugs: 13.7% vs 16.3%).

**Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who responded ‘yes’ to the question on whether they have tried smoking or drinking, or had experiences with marijuana or other drugs (Years 9 to 12 only)**



*Note: The questions asked were: Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?; Have you ever drunk alcohol (more than just a few sips, like a full can of beer or a glass of wine)?; Have you ever had any experiences with marijuana?; Have you ever had any experiences with other drugs? Response options were: ‘No’, ‘Yes’ and ‘Prefer not to say’.*

Seven in ten (70.5%) students in the Wheatbelt thought people their age should not use any substances including cigarettes, alcohol, marijuana or other drugs (all of WA: 72.0%).

### Sexual health

Sixty per cent (60.0%) of secondary students in the Wheatbelt reported they had learnt 'a lot' or 'some' at school about sexual health and ways to support their sexual health and 50.8 per cent reported they had learnt 'a lot' or 'some' about pregnancy and contraception at school (all of WA: 54.6% and 46.5% respectively). Further, the Wheatbelt had only 5.9 per cent of students report they had not received sexual health education at school; this is less than one-half the proportion for the rest of WA (12.4%).

Notwithstanding the above result, around one-half (45.5%) reported feeling they don't know enough about sexual health and pregnancy or they aren't sure, while 50.2 per cent reported feel they don't know enough about pregnancy and contraception or they aren't sure. These results are consistent with responses across the state.

More than one-third (35.1%) of secondary students in the Wheatbelt do not know or are unsure about where to go if they needed help for something about their reproductive or sexual health.

In Years 9 to 12, 59.3 per cent of female students and 19.0 per cent of male students reported they had ever been sent unwanted sexual material, such as pornographic pictures, videos or words. For male students, this was a much lower proportion than for secondary male students across the state (31.4%).

### Problematic behaviours and emotions related to being online

Around one-quarter of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Wheatbelt said they feel bothered 'fairly often' or 'very often' when they cannot be on the internet (24.0%). This is the lowest proportion across the state (all of WA: 32.1%).

One in five (21.2%) said they feel bothered when they cannot play electronic games (all of WA: 24.3%).

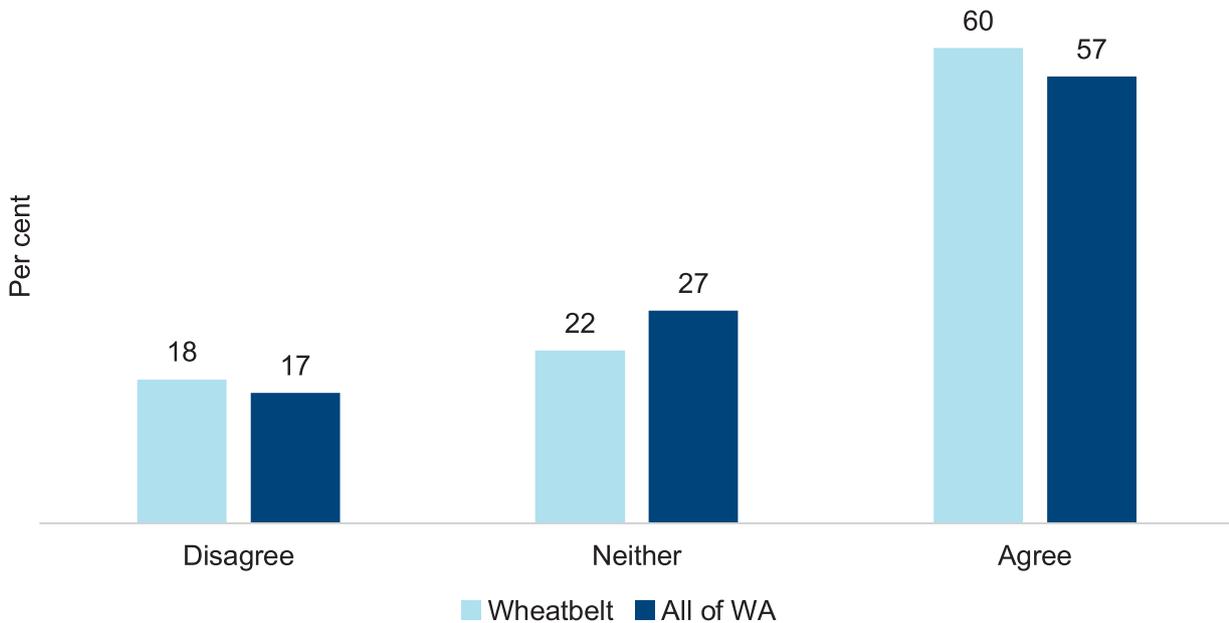
Of secondary students, just over one-quarter (26.1%) of male and 40.9 per cent of female said they feel bothered when they cannot use their mobile phone. Both these proportions are less than those for the rest of the state (male: 31.0%; female: 45.1%).

At the same time, 12.2 per cent of male and 18.3 per cent of female secondary students said they go without eating or sleeping either fairly often or very often because of their mobile phone. These proportions are commensurate with those across the state (9.6% and 17.3% respectively).

### Connection to community

Over three-quarters (76.4%) of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed they belong in their community, while 60.1 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed. These results are consistent with those across the state.

**Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who feel like they belong in their community**



However, female secondary students in the Wheatbelt are much more likely than their male peers to disagree a lot that they belong in their community (13.3% vs 4.3%). They are also much more likely than female students across the state to disagree a lot that they feel like they belong in their community (13.3% vs 6.2%).

Most Year 4 to Year 6 students (85.4%) agreed they like where they live, which is consistent with the rest of the state (86.0%). However, only seven in ten (70.1%) Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed they like where they live; this is lower than the result for the rest of WA (79.3%).

A relatively high proportion (17.5%) of secondary students in the Wheatbelt disagreed that they like where they live (all of WA: 10.4%).

Consistent with the above result, Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that there are lots

of fun things to do where they live in similar proportion to the rest of the state (77.4% vs 73.6%), while Year 7 to Year 12 students are less likely to agree (42.0% vs 48.7%).

Further, female secondary students are almost twice as likely to disagree a lot with the statement compared to female students across the rest of WA (20.1% vs 10.8%). They are also more likely than their male peers to disagree a lot that there are fun things to do where they live (20.1% vs 12.4%).

When asked if there are outdoor places for them to go in their area, like parks, ovals or skate parks, 82.0 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed, while 77.9 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed. The proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students who agreed a lot with this statement is lower than result for the rest of the state (46.0% vs 55.6%).

Again, female secondary students are the predominant reason for this disparity with

almost three times the proportion disagreeing a lot with this statement compared with female students across the rest of the state (8.8% vs 3.3%).

In terms of their community, students in the Wheatbelt also reported:

- 75.5 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that their neighbours are friendly, while 64.3 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed.
- 79.8 per cent of Year 4 to Year 6 students agreed that when they go to the shops the people there are friendly, while 82.0 per cent of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreed. This is the highest proportion of secondary students agreeing across the state.

When it comes to activities outside of school, almost two-fifths (38.7%) said they spend time practising or playing a sport outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 41.6%; Years 7–12: 36.9%). Notably, male secondary students are much more likely to report hardly ever or never doing this compared to the rest of WA (20.8% vs 12.8%).

Just under one-half (46.8%) of students said they spend time being active outdoors outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 49.1%; Years 7–12: 45.3%). Secondary students in the Wheatbelt are much more likely to report this compared to the rest of the state (36.0%). This is principally because female students are much more likely to be active outdoors on a daily basis than female students

across the state (45.8% vs 29.2%).

At the same time, secondary students in the Wheatbelt are less likely to spend time using the internet on a daily basis outside of school than students across the state (79.6% vs 90.6%).

In terms of activities outside of school, of the students surveyed in the Wheatbelt:

- 38.3 per cent said they spend time hanging out with friends outside of school every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 34.3%; Years 7–12: 40.8%).
- 32.4 per cent said they spend time doing homework every day or almost every day (Years 4–6: 35.1%; Years 7–12: 30.7%).
- 52.9 per cent male and 29.8 per cent female students reported playing games on a game console, computer or tablet every day or almost every day.

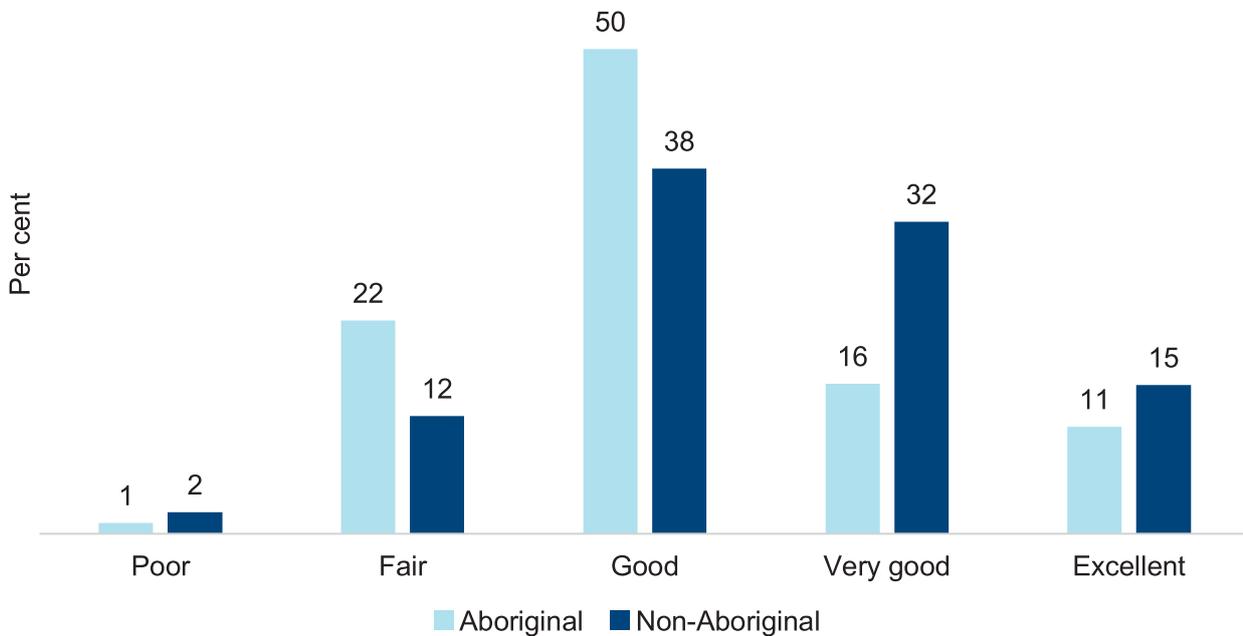
These results are consistent with those across the state.

### **Aboriginal children's and young people's views on feeling healthy and connected**

Of the Aboriginal students surveyed in the Wheatbelt, just over a quarter (26.6%) rated their health as very good or excellent; this is well below non-Aboriginal students (47.7%).

Further, almost one-quarter (23.2%) rated their health as only fair or poor.

Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting their general health ratings



Just over two-fifths (43.3%) of the Aboriginal students in the Wheatbelt reported that physical activity, sport or exercise is ‘definitely’ an important part of their life, slightly less than non-Aboriginal students (50.2%). Moreover, less than two-fifths (43.3%) reported they had done vigorous exercise three or more times in the previous week (non-Aboriginal: 59.0%).

More than three-fifths (62.1%) of Aboriginal students reported high life satisfaction, consistent with non-Aboriginal students (64.2%). However, over one-fifth (21.3%) of Aboriginal students in the Wheatbelt reported low life satisfaction; this is higher than their non-Aboriginal peers (14.9%).

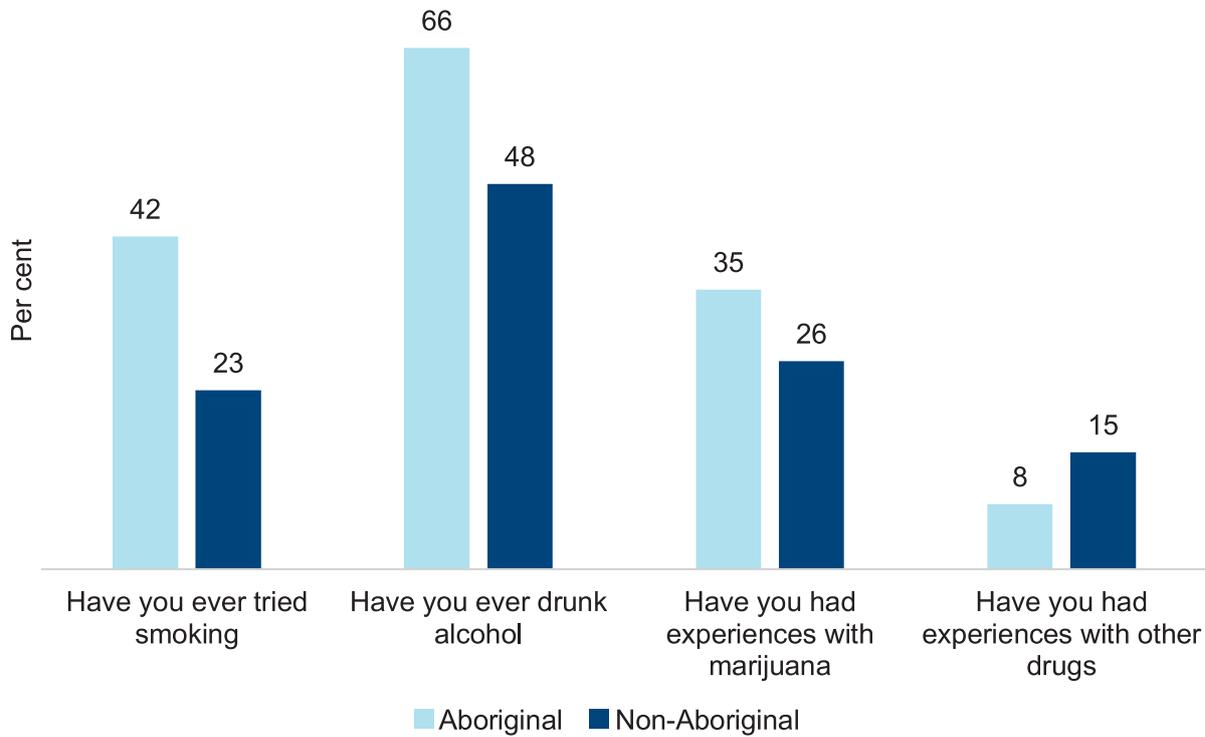
Notwithstanding the above result, most Aboriginal students agreed with the following statements:

- I feel good about myself (69.1%)
- I am able to do things as well as most people (67.2%)
- I am happy with myself (72.0%).

The top three stressors reported by Aboriginal Year 9 to Year 12 students were school or study problems (79.4%), body image (49.7%) and problems with friends (43.1%). These results are consistent with those of non-Aboriginal students in the Wheatbelt.

Aboriginal secondary students in the Wheatbelt are much more likely to have tried smoking and drunk alcohol compared to non-Aboriginal students (smoking: 41.8% vs 22.5%; alcohol: 65.5% vs 48.4%).

**Proportion of young people in Years 7 to 12 who have tried smoking or drinking, or had experiences with marijuana or other drugs (Years 9 to 12 only)**



*Note: The questions asked were: Have you ever tried cigarette smoking, even one or two puffs?; Have you ever drunk alcohol (more than just a few sips, like a full can of beer or a glass of wine)?; Have you ever had any experiences with marijuana?; Have you ever had any experiences with other drugs? Response options were: 'No', 'Yes' and 'Prefer not to say'.*

Aboriginal Year 9 to Year 12 students are slightly more likely to have had experiences with marijuana (35.1% vs 26.1%) and slightly less likely to have had experiences with other drugs (8.2% vs 14.7%).

In terms of connection to culture and community, of the Aboriginal students in the Wheatbelt:

- 64.5 per cent said they know their family’s country (all of WA: 69.6%), and of these students 73.9 per cent said they spend time on their family’s country (all of WA: 77.4%).
- 22.9 per cent said they talk Aboriginal language ‘some’ or ‘a lot’ (all of WA: 27.1%).

- 50.4 per cent said they do cultural or traditional activities with their family (all of WA: 47.8%).

Three-quarters (76.7%) of Aboriginal children (Years 4 to 6) in the Wheatbelt feel like they belong in their community. Similarly, three-quarters (75.4%) of Aboriginal secondary students in the Wheatbelt feel like they belong in their community, which is a greater proportion than their non-Aboriginal peers (58.0%).

## What do children and young people in the Wheatbelt say about being healthy and connected?

Students were asked the following open text questions related to health and mental health:

- Thinking about mental health and other emotional worries, like stress, anxiety and depression, what are some of the ways families, communities, schools or adults in general could be more helpful?
- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with seeking help for health issues, including mental health worries?

### Talking about mental health

*“They could actually listen to what you have to say instead of assuming things.”*  
(male, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“It is always the best to talk to someone close to you with these problems I spoke to my older brother and parents but you can talk to some friends if you think they won't tell anyone.”*  
(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Ask more question and let people know that you are there for them. make sure your ignorance doesn't blind you from the fact that teens can feel anxious and depressed.”*  
(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Our school needs to hire people that students can talk to at the moment there isn't any I think family members should ask more about young people's well-being.”*  
(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“If they just say are you ok today and just talk to me like they care.”*  
(male, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“I've actually struggled a lot with anxiety and stress but I didn't know who to run to because for me I like to keep my thoughts to myself and for me it's really hard to express my thoughts to family and friends because I don't know if they will help me and I don't know what they were say but personally for I think my best idea is just to keep my thoughts to myself because I get a lot of anxiety and stress a lot when I'm really open to people about my feelings.”*  
(female, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“Being more understanding of where I come from, how I can be in the situations I'm in whilst having a really good home life, understanding my mental health in general.”*  
(female, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

### Feeling anxiety, depression or sadness

*“I have got really badly bullied so I started self harming myself.”*  
(female, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

**▲▲ I talk to my mum a lot about my anxiety problems and a lot has happened in my life like we have moved a lot and we had some problems with my mums boyfriend that had an impact on my life and I feel as my anxiety is hard to control in terms of helping me overcome my anxiety and in a lot of situations I can't handle I have anxiety attacks and that also has an impact on my ability to overcome my fears and I have struggled a lot. ▼▼**

(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Social media has a big effect on mental health within the youth now. It can be good and bad. Social media is good to keep up with friends, know what’s happening around the world and overall have fun. But it can also be used for cyber bullying and hate. Everyone should be able to have someone to [talk to] mental health issues about, but some people don’t, and I am grateful I do. Some kids I know do cope with drugs and alcohol, which is not something anyone my age should have to resort to.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### Talking about getting support

*“I feel that psychiatrists do not keep many things confidential as they have told my mum and school members things they shouldn’t have.”*

*(female, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“When I was in primary school I got stressed out by things so my school and mum got a chaplain to talk to me and it helped out a lot. I think the teachers should ask us how our weekend was and if something bad happened they could maybe help and just ask us how we’re going before school starts.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, undisclosed Aboriginal status)*

*“My father does not believe in depression and anxiety or any other mental problem so would not allow me to receive medical help even if I had sought it out.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“I found it hard trying to ask for help I felt like a burden, no counseling or anyone helped and I could never really find someone I felt safe talking to.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Stop calling people attention seekers for struggling with mental health.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“As a male it was very hard for me to speak out about my mental health issues because I was ashamed. As a male I should just suck it up and quit being a wuss.”*

*(male, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### Views on their local area

In total, 252 students from the Wheatbelt responded to the free text question: ‘If there was one thing you could change about your local area, what would it be?’ Of the students surveyed in the Wheatbelt, the top things that they would like to change in their local area were:

- More fun activities to do and places to hang out.
- Would like more, closer shops, a mall, movies, greater diversity.
- New, more or upgraded skate parks, bike trails.
- More, upgraded outdoor spaces or parks.

*“A mountain bike trail and a water slide at our local pool.”*

*(male, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**▲▲ If I were to chance something in my local area it would be I would add a giant public pool for summer. ▼▼**

*(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“It would be to have more places for kids to go and more shops to buy from like a clothes store and woolies and stuff like that.”*  
(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“I would change how much plastic we use all the times. And more trees and plants and things to make the community look better. I think we should have more weekend activity sort of things. More than we usually do.”*  
(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Maybe more family out going places and more things to do with friends and places to hang out.”*  
(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“Foot paths into town so I don’t have to ride on the road which would make it less dangerous.”*  
(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“More things to do for the older teens!”*  
(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“More parks, maybe a entertainment centre like play zone or Sci-Teck.”*  
(male, 14 year-old, undisclosed Aboriginal status)

*“If I had the choice to help my community is by actively helping kids and plan more activities for our kids to do.”*  
(female, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“I would try have more open space areas for students because in our area the places where we can meet up with friends usually close the same time our school ends so therefore there aren’t many enclosed spaces for us to hang out.”*  
(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Add a space where teens could hang out without too much supervision so that we could gossip, nothing bad or any drugs and stuff just like having a place to have a private teenage conversation that we wouldn’t usually talk about with family or adults and have some fun.”*  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

*“Add a big skate park for the kids around my local area.”*  
(male, 15 year-old, Aboriginal)

*“To have more youth activities for teenagers, like a youth club that meets more than once a week, or to have more sport activities available to teenagers.”*  
(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

**■ ■ More areas for teenagers too go seeing as they don’t really have a lot to do in the area that they can actually enjoy ... and more housing areas for teenagers to live when they come of age... ■ ■**

(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)

# Learning and participating

**■ ■ The overload of school work we have as well as trying to be positive with other things we have going on as well as our mental health problems. Teachers expect us to do extra curricular activities. Have fun. Spend time with family, talk to our friends online and still have time for homework. ■ ■**

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

## Attendance

Over one-half (52.2%) of students in the Wheatbelt said it is very important to them to be at school every day (Years 4–6: 61.6%; Years 7–12: 46.2%), while 37.6 per cent (Years 4–6: 31.8%; Years 7–12: 41.3%) said it is somewhat important.

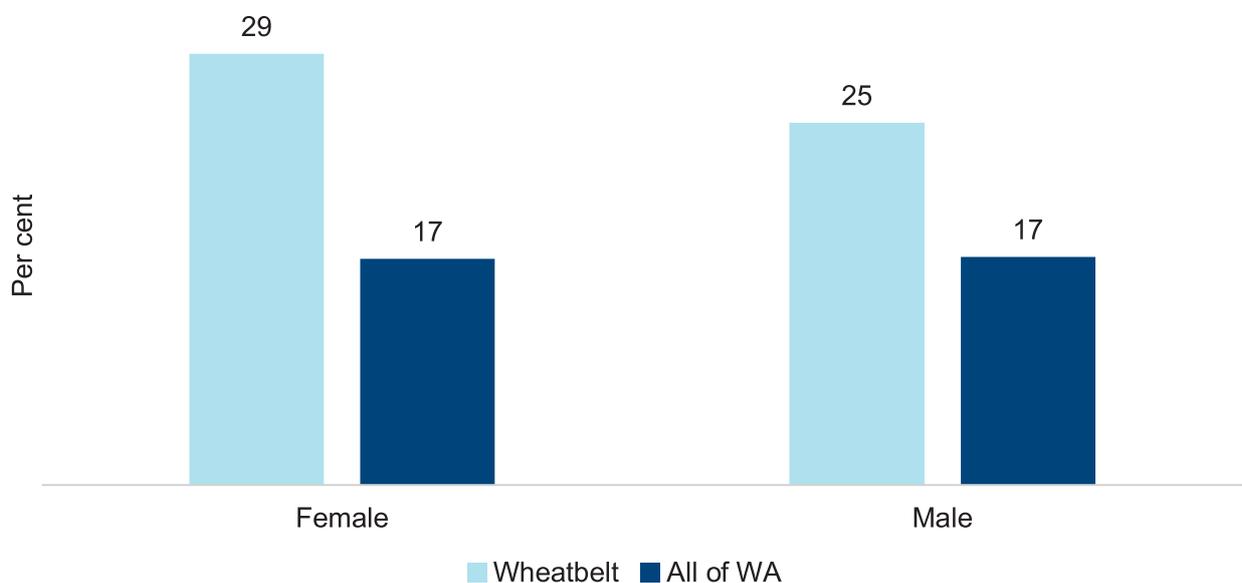
These results are consistent with those across the state, except for female secondary

students who are more likely than their female peers around WA to say that attending school every day is not very important (15.9% vs 9.5%). They are also twice as likely to say this as their male peers in the Wheatbelt (7.4%).

Over one-quarter (26.6%) of secondary students in the Wheatbelt reported they had been suspended from school (all of WA: 17.1%). Female students in the Wheatbelt are twice as likely as their female peers around the state to have been suspended from school (21.8% vs 10.2%).

More than one-quarter (27.2%) of secondary students in the Wheatbelt reported they had waggged school in the previous 12 months for a full day or more; this is a higher proportion than for the rest of WA (17.0%). Again, female secondary students are more likely than female students across the state to have waggged school in the previous 12 months (29.2% vs 16.7%).

## Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting they have waggged school for a full day or more in the past 12 months



## Liking school and sense of belonging

Just under one-half (46.3%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Wheatbelt reported liking school a lot or a bit (Years 4–6: 60.9%; Years 7–12: 37.1%), while one in ten (10.1%) reported not liking school at all (Years 4–6: 3.3%; Years 7–12: 14.5%).

Three-quarters (75.5%) agreed they feel happy at school (Years 4–6: 90.3%; Years 7–12: 65.9%), while a similar proportion (74.1%) agreed they like learning at school (Years 4–6: 86.5%; Years 7–12: 66.4%).

Two-thirds (66.2%) of secondary students reported that school is a place where they belong.

These results are similar to those across the state.

However, female secondary students in the Wheatbelt are much less likely to be positive about school than their male peers. Female secondary students in the Wheatbelt are much more likely than their male peers to report not liking school (34.7% vs 21.7%). They are also more likely to strongly disagree that school is a place where they belong (19.3% vs 5.9%).

Almost one-half (46.0%) of female secondary students in the Wheatbelt do not feel like school is a place where they belong (male: 18.5%).

Around two-thirds (63.6%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students said they usually get along with classmates (Years 4–6: 70.1%; Years 7–12: 59.6%). Just over one-half (53.4%) of female secondary students reported they usually get along with their classmates, this was a lower proportion than their male peers in the Wheatbelt (67.4%) or female students across the state (66.5%).

A similar proportion (64.6%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students said they usually get along with their teachers (Years 4–6: 77.0%; Years 7–12: 56.8%).

Most (81.0%) reported it is true there is a teacher or another adult in the school who believes the student will achieve good things (Years 4–6: 91.7%; Years 7–12: 74.3%), while 72.2 per cent said it is true that a teacher or another adult at their school really cares about them (Years 4–6: 86.5%; Years 7–12: 63.2%).

Just under one-third (32.2%) reported, if needed, they almost always get help from teachers in class (Years 4–6: 44.5%; Years 7–12: 24.4%), while 47.2 per cent reported they get it sometimes (Years 4–6: 40.7%; Years 7–12: 51.4%).

These results are consistent with those across the state.

Compared to the rest of WA, students in the Wheatbelt are less likely to report that their family often asks about schoolwork (42.9% vs 55.6%). This is particularly the case for secondary students (37.9% vs 54.5%).

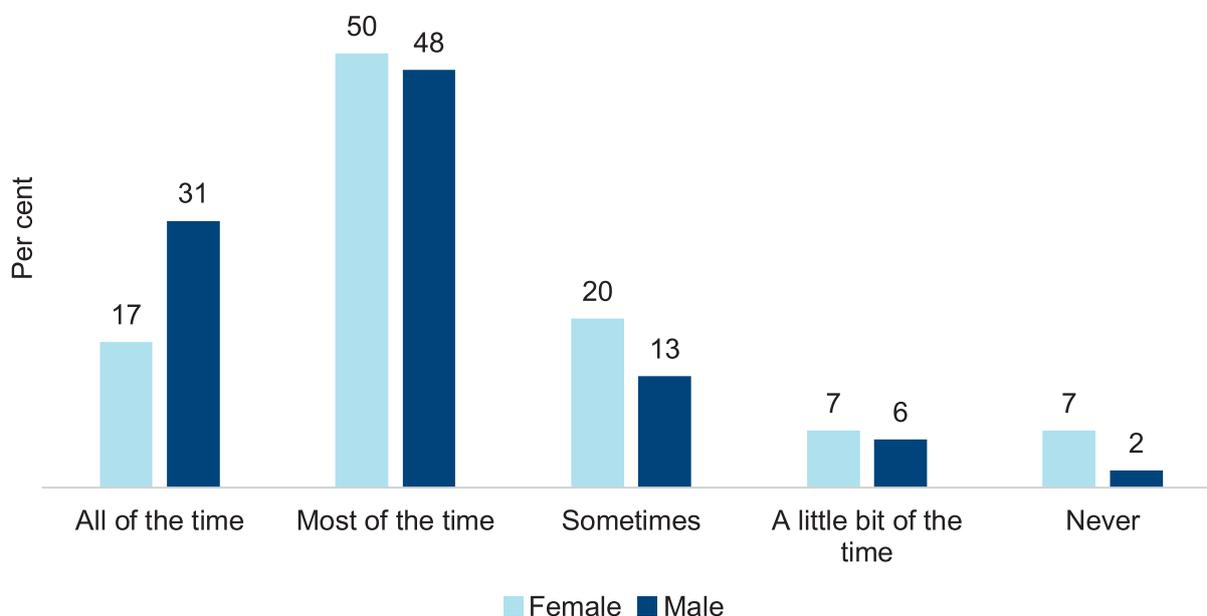
Further, secondary students in the Wheatbelt are less likely than those across WA to report feeling pressured 'a lot' by the schoolwork they have to do (22.9% vs 31.8%). Consistent with results across the state, female students are more likely to feel pressured 'a lot' than their male peers (26.9% vs 15.4%), although less likely to feel this way than female students across the state (38.2%).

## Feeling safe at school

Three in ten students (30.1%) in the Wheatbelt said they feel safe at school all the time (Years 4–6: 40.7%; Years 7–12: 23.2%), while 45.0 per cent said they feel safe at school most of the time (Years 4–6: 38.4%; Years 7–12: 49.2%).

One-third (32.8%) of female secondary students feel safe at school only sometimes or less (male: 20.5%). These results are broadly consistent with those across the state (25.6% vs 18.8%, respectively).

## Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting how often they feel safe at school



One-half (50.0%) of primary school students in the Wheatbelt reported that they had never been bullied, while 33.8 per cent said they had been (traditionally) bullied and 6.0 per cent said they had been cyberbullied. These results are consistent with those across the state.

Secondary students in the Wheatbelt are more likely to have been bullied by students from their school than their peers across WA.

Only one-third (34.6%) of secondary students in the Wheatbelt have not been bullied, cyberbullied or both by students from their school (all of WA: 48.9%). One-half (50.4%) have been (traditionally) bullied, while 22.2 per cent have been cyberbullied (all of WA: 33.6% and 16.9% respectively).

Almost two-thirds (63.6%) of female secondary students in the Wheatbelt reported having been bullied, cyberbullied or both (all of WA: 40.0%). This includes 59.3 per cent of students who have been (traditionally) bullied, which is a much greater proportion than female secondary students across WA (36.3%).

Among students who reported having ever been bullied or cyberbullied (or both), 45.7 per cent reported this happened in the previous three months (Years 4–6: 36.9%; Years 7–12: 49.5%).

Over one-fifth (22.6%) of secondary students reported they had missed school in the past because they were afraid someone might bully them; this is higher than the proportion for the rest of the state (16.2%). This difference is particularly evident for female secondary students (31.6% compared to 21.4%).

Consistent with the above results, compared to the rest of the state, a higher proportion of secondary students in the Wheatbelt reported they had bullied other students from their school (21.9% vs 13.4%). Again, this difference is particularly evident for female students – with Wheatbelt female secondary students more than twice as likely to have bullied other students than female students around the rest of the state (24.1% vs 12.6%).

### Transition from school

One-third (32.4%) of secondary students in the Wheatbelt do not want to go on to further education after they leave school (all of WA: 17.0%). A particularly high proportion of male students reported this (male: 42.3%, female: 23.7%).

Just under one-third (32.1%) of secondary students in the Wheatbelt reported they want to attend university; this is lower compared to that for the rest of WA (51.8%). Consistent with this, a higher proportion of Wheatbelt students than those across the state intend to pursue trade qualifications (12.4% vs 7.0%).

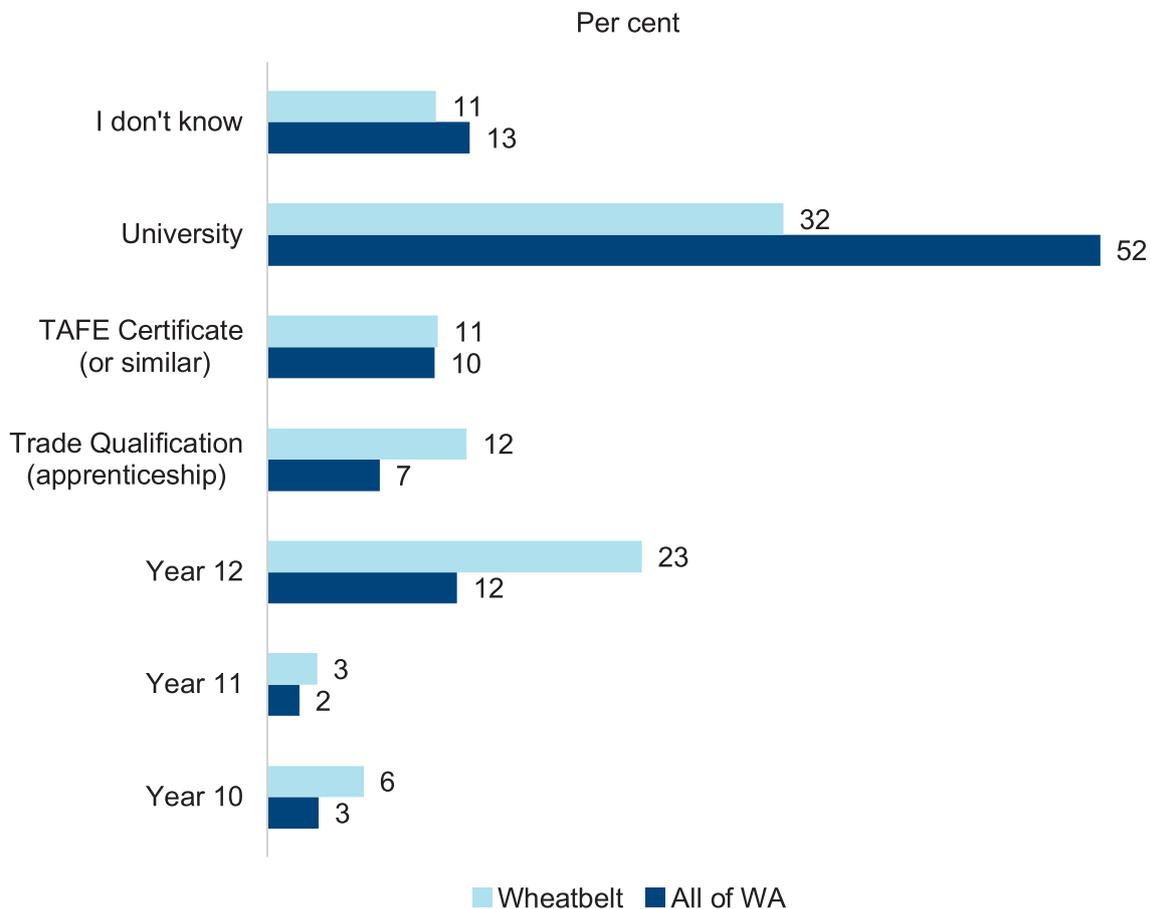
Male students in the Wheatbelt are much less likely than female students to be planning to

go to university (17.8% vs 43.7%). This is the lower proportion of male students wanting to go to university across WA (all of WA: 45.8%).

Despite the above result, two-thirds (66.3%) of secondary students said it is ‘very much true’ or ‘pretty much true’ that at their school they are learning knowledge and skills that will help them in the future (all of WA: 61.4%).

Most secondary students (61.2%) in the Wheatbelt reported working for money in the previous 12 months; this is the highest proportion of regions across the state (45.2%). A high proportion of students in the Wheatbelt do paid work during the school holidays (27.1% vs 13.8%).

### Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students reporting highest level of education they would like to achieve (single choice only)



Gender differences exist in the type of work secondary students in the Wheatbelt have done. More than one-third (36.9%) of female secondary students have a regular part-time job (male: 25.0%), while more than one-third (34.7%) of male students have done paid work in the school holidays (female: 21.2%).

### Independence and autonomy

Most (79.5%) secondary school students in the Wheatbelt said they are allowed to go to and from school on their own and places other than school on their own (78.2%). Over one-third (36.7%) said they are allowed to go out alone at night in their local area.

Most students (77.3%) agreed that they get enough information to make decisions in their life, while a similar proportion agreed that they feel involved in making decisions about their life (74.4%) and are given opportunities to weigh up decisions (76.1%).

Female students in the Wheatbelt are less likely than their male peers to agree with all

three statements regarding making decisions in their life.

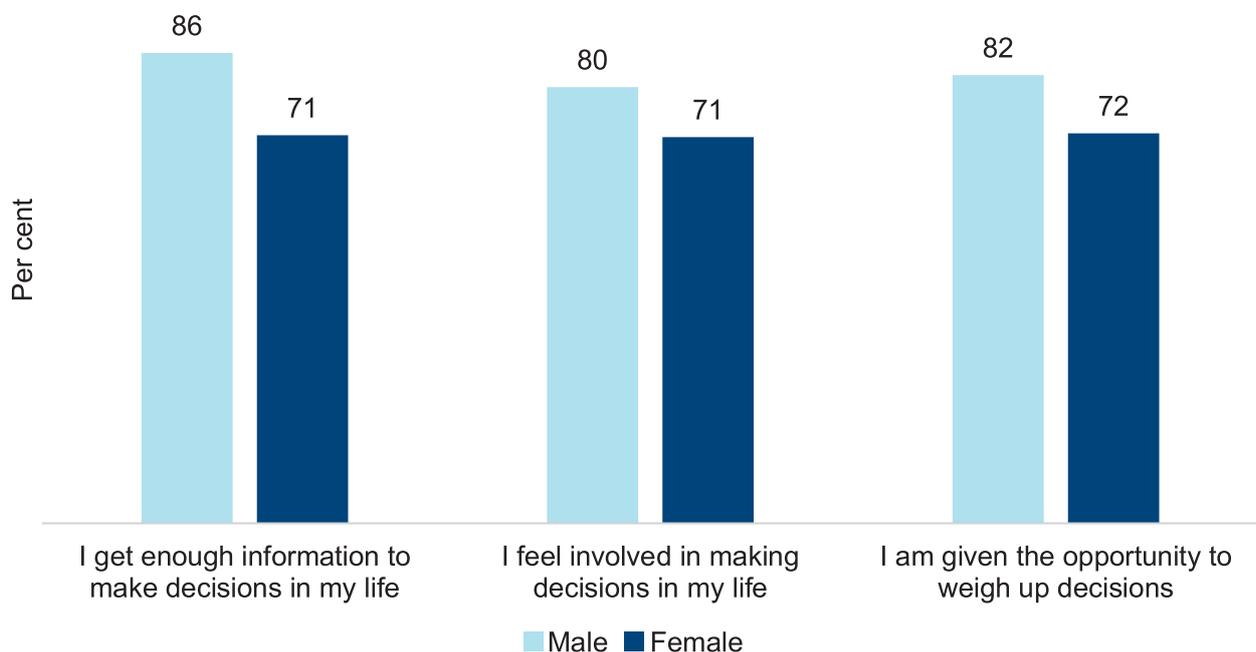
These results are consistent with the rest of the state.

### Aboriginal children’s and young people’s views on learning and participating

More than three-fifths (61.3%) of Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 6 students reported that being at school every day is very important to them, however only 41.8 per cent of Aboriginal secondary students reported this (compared to 47.8 per cent for non-Aboriginal students).

Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Wheatbelt are more likely than their non-Aboriginal peers to have attended multiple schools since they started primary school or secondary school with 21.4 per cent of Aboriginal secondary students having attended three or more schools compared to 13.5 per cent for non-Aboriginal students.

### Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreeing with three statements regarding making decisions in their life



Four in ten (40.1%) Aboriginal Year 7 to Year 12 students reported they have been suspended from school (been sent home for a few days for doing something wrong) (non-Aboriginal students: 24.3%). Aboriginal secondary students in the Wheatbelt are more likely to have been suspended from school than Aboriginal secondary students across the state (40.1% vs 33.1%).

Aboriginal secondary students in the Wheatbelt are nearly twice as likely to report that they had wagged school in the previous 12 months for a full day or more compared to non-Aboriginal students (46.6% compared to 24.1%).

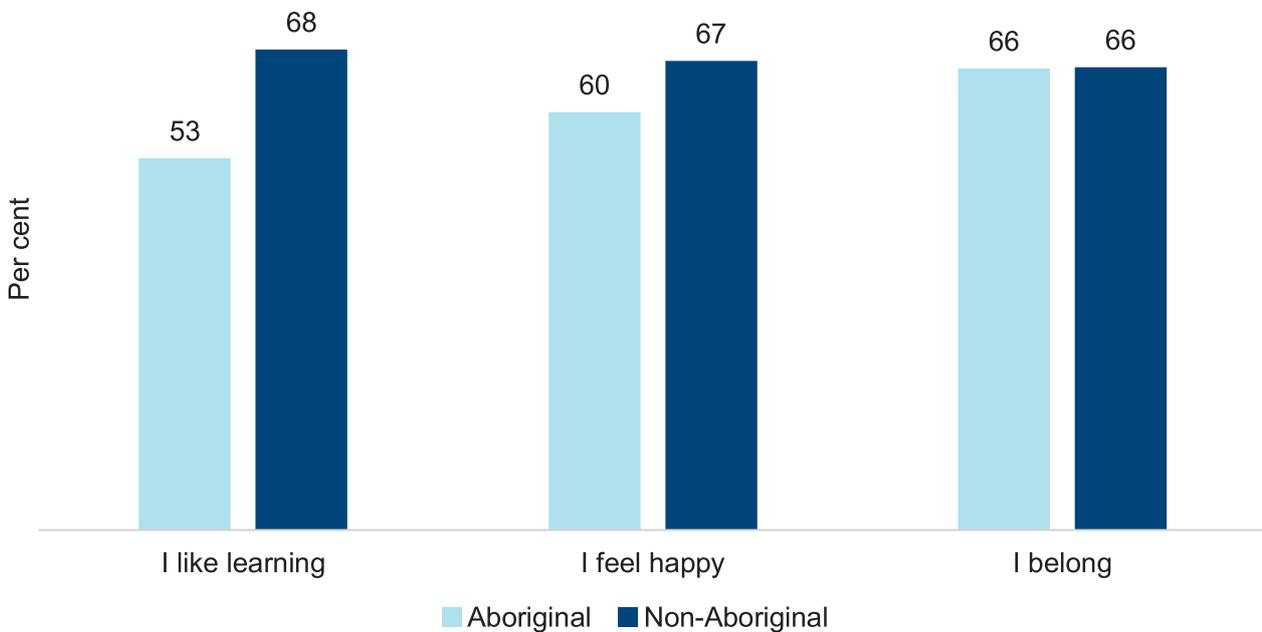
Aboriginal students in Years 4 to 6 are more likely to like school than their non-

Aboriginal peers (70.7% vs 59.9%), however in secondary school Aboriginal students are much less likely than their non-Aboriginal peers to like school (23.4% vs 40.4%).

Most Year 4 to Year 12 Aboriginal students in the Wheatbelt reported they agree their school is a place where they like learning (66.7%) and feel happy (70.3%). These proportions are lower than those for non-Aboriginal students (74.7% and 76.1% respectively).

Two-thirds (65.9%) of Aboriginal secondary students agreed their school is a place where they belong consistent with non-Aboriginal students (65.7%), however a lower proportion of Aboriginal students than non-Aboriginal students feel happy or like learning in secondary school.

### Proportion of Year 7 to Year 12 students agreeing that school is a place where they like learning, feel happy, and belong



When it comes to feeling safe at school, seven in ten (70.0%) Aboriginal students reported feeling safe all or most of the time (non-Aboriginal: 75.8%).

Aboriginal students in the Wheatbelt are less likely to experience bullying from students at their school than their non-Aboriginal peers (33.9% compared to 48.7%).

Of the students who had been bullied in the previous three months, one-third (33.9%) of Aboriginal secondary students had been teased about their cultural background, colour of their skin or their religion compared to 23.2 per cent of their non-Aboriginal peers.

One-half (49.1%) of Aboriginal secondary students do not want to go on to further education after they leave school (non-Aboriginal: 28.7%). One in three (29.0%) Aboriginal secondary students want to attend TAFE or pursue a trade qualification and 13.0 per cent want to go to university.

Most Aboriginal secondary students are allowed to go to school on their own (78.6%), go to places other than school on their own (71.5%), while one-half (49.9%) are allowed to go out alone at night in their local area.

Aboriginal Year 7 to Year 12 students in the Wheatbelt are just as likely as their non-Aboriginal peers to have had a paid job in the previous 12 months (63.5% and 61.2% respectively).

### **What do children and young people in the Wheatbelt say about learning and participating?**

#### **Talking about stress at school**

The following responses are from secondary school students who were asked the open text question: 'The majority of secondary school students feel stressed by school work or study. What do you think are the main reasons for this?'

*"They could try understand that we hate school and don't always do well in it, not because we are lazy, but we are over worked and stressed. They do not understand the amount of homework, assignments and tests we must study for, as well as situations that could be going on at home."*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*"School doesn't seem to be a place where you learn anymore, it's been about getting the highest grades. It's been like hell, only adding piles of stress and worry in your life. Please do something."*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**■ ■ The main reasons are the expectations from others, from my personal experience everyone expects me to do so well in my classes therefore I must do well in them otherwise I would disappoint them. The expectations they have had for me is so high that sometimes it gets too stressful and I feel like it's too much. Also the pressure of getting high marks in order to do what I want in the future without the teachers considering that we have other classes to study for and that we cannot do all of to our assignments all at once. ■ ■**

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Teachers expecting people to know everything and not helping. Too much work in classes.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“My grades, teachers, parents telling me off for not getting high grades.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**■ ■ I think it's mainly because when you are in the final year of schooling you get assessments after assessments constantly and not having much time to be able to write up notes or anything like that. ■ ■**

*(male, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Young people want to still be able to do things they were doing before like sports activities and hanging out with friends but with so much homework they start to feel left out and left behind.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“For parents, school is not the same as when they were once there. Times have changed.”*

*(male, 16 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

### **Other comments on learning and participating**

*“I really just need some help because I get really stressed in school with the loudness 🗣️ of the classroom 🏫 and the teacher yelling and people swearing 🗣️ at other people.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Let children make more if their own decisions in life and don't force them to do things they don't want to do.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Sometimes at school there's a lot of noisy and when we ask them to stop they don't. We have a teacher that you go to if you need help, I have only been there to say that the people in my class are really loud and annoying and sometimes I can't deal with it.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*



**I get bullied at school all the time.**

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

# Safe and Supported

**/// Listen more and be able to give advice when needed. Be more supportive of young people and their decisions. Listen to the issue and try to help as much as possible but sometimes it is best to just let them decide what to do, while other times they need the support and options being given to them. ///**

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

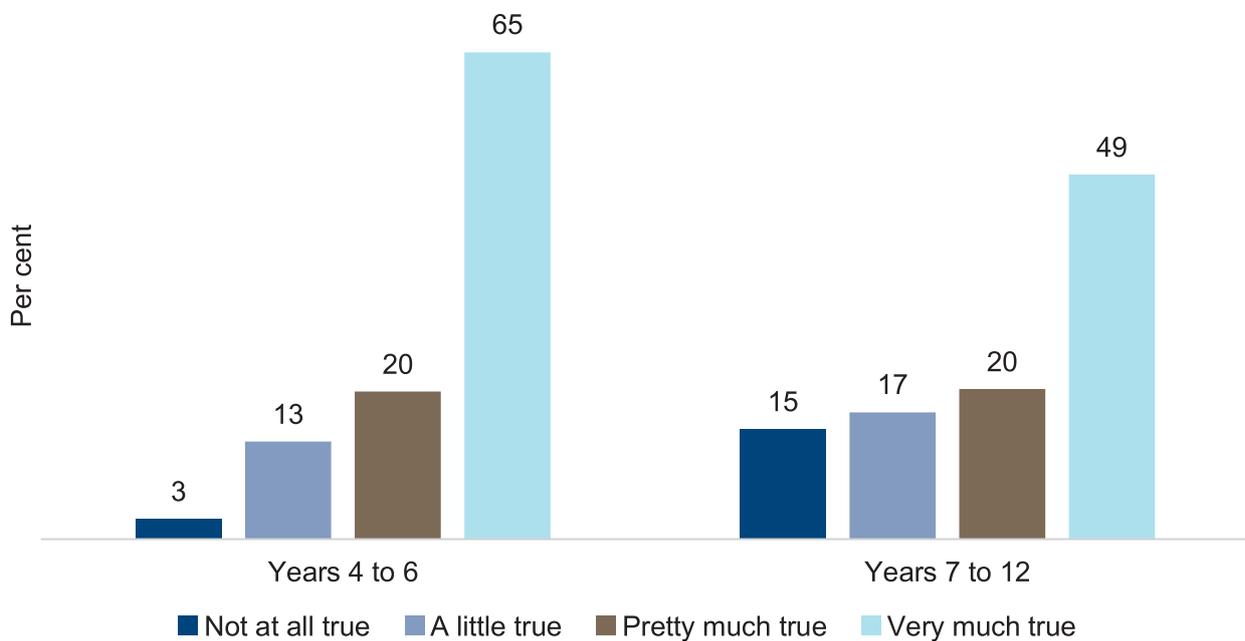
## Supportive relationships

Most Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Wheatbelt reported that it is ‘very much true’ (54.6%) or ‘pretty much true’ (19.8%) that they live with a parent or another adult they can talk to about their problems or worries.

Secondary students are less likely to report ‘very much true’ compared to Year 4 to Year 6 students (48.5% vs 64.8%), and more likely to report ‘not true at all’ (14.7% vs 2.7%).

These results are consistent with rest of the state.

**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students responding to the statement: ‘Where I live, there is a parent or adult who I can talk to about my problems’**



Just under one-half (45.6%) of students reported it is 'very much true' they live with a parent or another adult who listens when they have something to say (Years 4–6: 48.0%; Years 7–12: 44.2%). Three-fifths (60.4%) said it is 'very much true' they live with a parent or another adult who believes they will achieve good things (Years 4–6: 64.4%; Years 7–12: 58.0%).

Most (79.5%) students in the Wheatbelt also reported that if they were having any serious problems, there is an adult they would feel okay talking to (Years 4–6: 84.5%; Years 7–12: 76.4%). This is the highest proportion of all regions across the state.

Three-quarters (76.1%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students said that their family gets along very well or well (Years 4–6: 82.0%; Years 7–12: 72.5%). Similar to results across WA, female secondary students are less likely than their male peers and siblings to report that their family gets along well (67.4% vs 80.4%).

Over one-quarter (26.3%) of secondary students in the Wheatbelt reported living in two homes or more; this is a higher proportion than for the rest of the state (19.2%).

In terms of friendships, of the students surveyed in the Wheatbelt:

- 49.1 per cent said they feel they are very good at making and keeping friends (Years 4–6: 56.8%; Years 7–12: 44.3%).
- 81.4 per cent said they feel they have enough friends (Years 4–6: 81.8%; Years 7–12: 81.2%).
- 42.2 per cent said they feel their friends care about them a lot (Years 4–6: 51.7%; Years 7–12: 36.2%).

These results are consistent with those across the state.

## Material basics

Most Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Wheatbelt have the material basics they need, however, one in ten (10.8%) students only sometimes or never has enough food to eat at home when they are hungry (all of WA: 9.6%).

Most students (83.5%) reported they have their own bedroom (Years 4–6: 77.0%; Years 7–12: 87.5%).

Compared to the rest of WA, secondary students in the Wheatbelt are less likely to report having their own tablet, laptop or computer (73.6% vs 85.8%) as well as access to the internet at home (91.7% vs 97.4%).

Students in the Wheatbelt also reported:

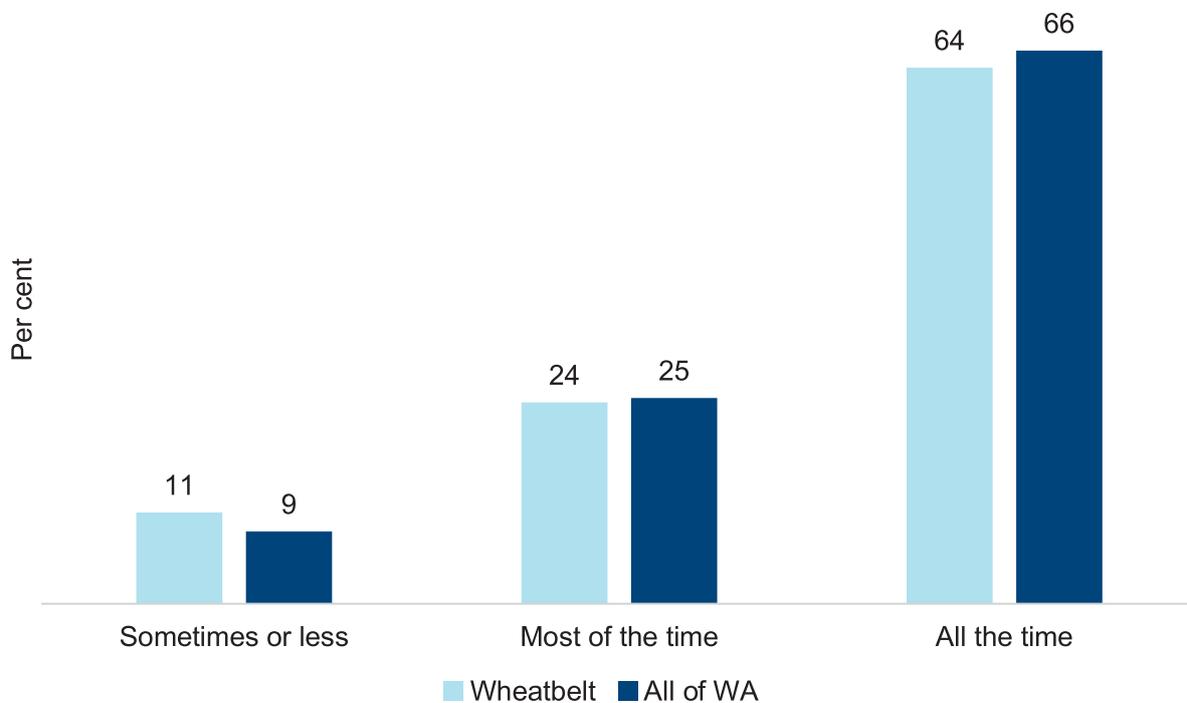
- 86.5 per cent of secondary students reported having their own mobile phone.
- 88.4 per cent reported having enough money in their family to afford school excursions and/or camps (Years 4–6: 87.5%; Years 7–12: 88.9%).
- 88.2 per cent reported having 'the right kind of clothes' to fit in with people their age (Years 4–6: 91.1%; Years 7–12: 86.5%).
- 4.2 per cent reported their family does not own a car used for family transport (Years 4–6: 5.9%; Years 7–12: 3.1%).

These results are consistent with the rest of the state.

## Safe in the home

Just under two-thirds (63.9%) of students in the Wheatbelt said they feel safe at home all the time (Years 4–6: 68.6%; Years 7–12: 60.9%), while 24.0 per cent said they feel safe at home most of the time (Years 4–6: 21.1%; Years 7–12: 25.9%).

### Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students reporting how safe they feel at home



Female Year 7 to Year 12 students are less likely to feel safe at home all the time, compared to their male peers (53.5% vs 70.4%).

These results are consistent with the rest of the state.

Of the students surveyed in the Wheatbelt:

- 22.9 per cent said they are ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ worried that someone in their home or family will be fighting (all of WA: 24.4%).
- 19.6 per cent said they are ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ worried that someone in their home or family will hurt somebody (all of WA: 17.1%).

Female secondary students in the Wheatbelt are more likely than their male peers and siblings to be worried ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ that someone in their family will be fighting (31.7% vs 15.0%).

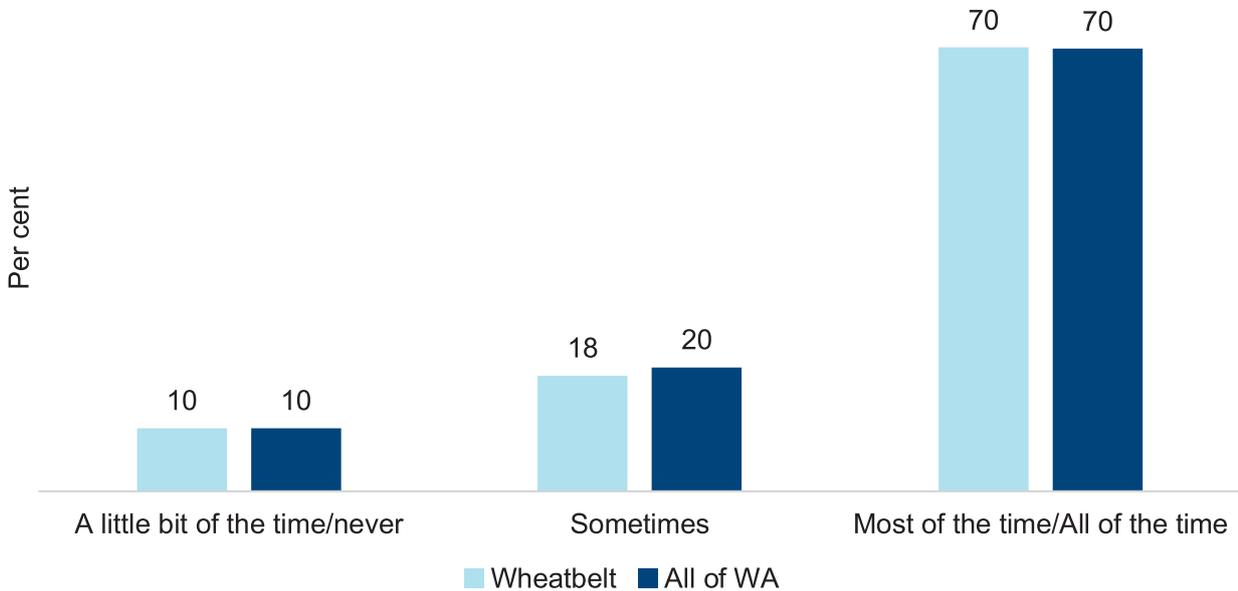
One-third (34.1%) of secondary students reported they had stayed away from home overnight because of a problem. Female secondary students are much more likely to report this than male secondary students (40.5% vs 26.6%).

### Safe in the community

Most Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Wheatbelt reported they feel safe in their local area either all the time (31.4%) or most of the time (39.4%).

Responses are similar across primary and secondary school, with just around seven in ten saying they feel safe in their local area all the time or most of the time (Years 4–6: 72.0%; Years 7–12: 70.1%).

**Proportion of Year 7 to 12 students reporting how often they feel safe in their local area**



Female secondary students are less likely than their male peers to feel safe in their local area all the time (24.7% vs 41.3%).

These results are consistent with the rest of the state.

Almost one-half (48.4%) of Year 9 to Year 12 students reported they had ever been hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose. Female Year 9 to Year 12 students in the Wheatbelt are more likely to report this than those in the rest of WA (47.8% vs 35.3%).

Of the students who reported ever being hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose, 60.3 per cent reported that it occurred in the previous 12 months. Students who reported being hit or physically harmed by someone on purpose in the previous 12 months were also asked further questions about the nature and location of the incident.

Of these students, 71.7 per cent of male students reported the incident(s) involved another child or young person, while 43.8 per cent reported incidents involving an adult. Of

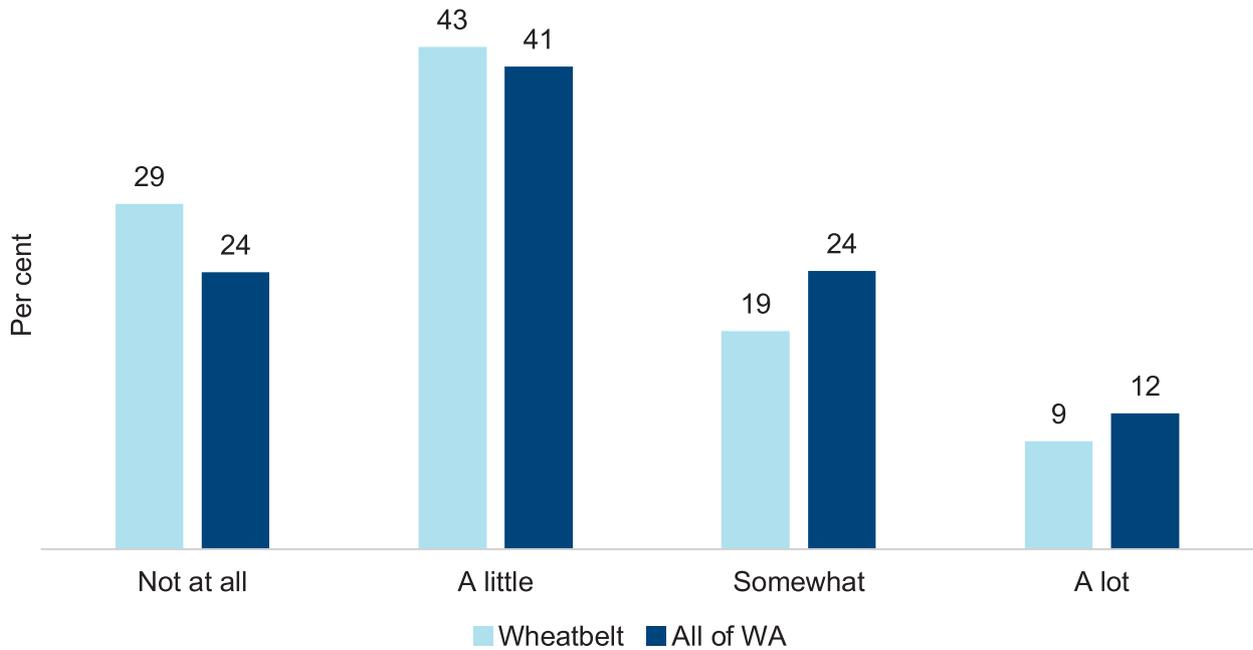
the female students, 61.6 per cent reported the incident(s) involved another child or young person, while 53.8 per cent of the incidents involved an adult. These results are consistent with the rest of the state.

There are also differences in the locations of the incidents reported between male and female young people. Male young people reported the incident predominantly taking place at their school (59.9%) or in a public place (e.g. in town, shops, sports centre) (28.9%). Female young people reported the incident predominantly taking place at home (79.5%), followed by at school (33.9%).

**Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic**

When asked about the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes to daily life, just over one-quarter (27.8%) of students in the Wheatbelt reported the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes to daily life affected their life in a bad way ‘a lot’ (9.2%) or ‘somewhat’ (18.6%).

**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students responding to the question: ‘Thinking about the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting changes to daily life, how much has this affected your life in a bad way?’**



Consistent with the above results, three-fifths (57.3%) of students reported feeling very or somewhat relaxed when they thought of COVID-19, and 29.0 per cent reported feeling very or somewhat stressed/anxious.

Less than one-half (44.8%) of Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Wheatbelt also reported feeling a lot or a little worried if they missed school due to COVID-19 in the previous calendar year – 2020 (all of WA: 48.5%).

Of Year 9 to Year 12 students, 17.0 per cent reported the COVID-19 pandemic had been a source of stress to them in the previous year (all of WA: 20.8%).

**Aboriginal children’s and young people’s views on feeling safe and supported**

**Supportive relationships**

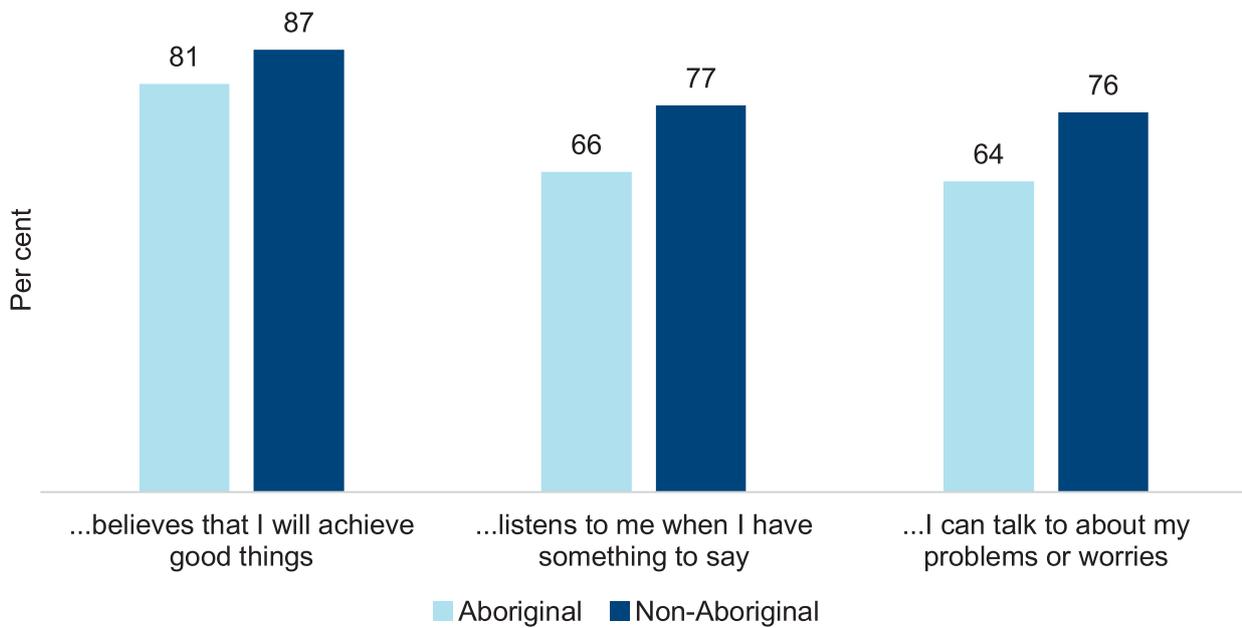
Most Aboriginal students in the Wheatbelt report that it is ‘very much true’ or ‘pretty

much true’ that where they live there is a parent or another adult who:

- believes they will achieve good things (81.2%)
- listens to them when they have something to say (65.6%)
- they can talk to about their problems or worries (64.0%).

Aboriginal students in the Wheatbelt are marginally less likely than non-Aboriginal students to respond ‘very much true’ or ‘pretty much true’ to these statements.

**Proportion of Year 4 to Year 12 students responding ‘very much true’ or ‘pretty much true’ to the statement: ‘Where I live, there is a parent or adult who...’**



Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students are more likely than their non-Aboriginal peers to say that their brothers or sisters care about them a lot (52.4% vs 40.6%).

Most (79.9%) Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Wheatbelt reported that if they were having any serious problems there is an adult they would feel okay talking to (non-Aboriginal: 80.1%).

In terms of family harmony, three-quarters (75.7%) of Aboriginal students reported that their family gets along well or very well; this is consistent with non-Aboriginal students (76.3%).

In terms of friendships, most Aboriginal students in the Wheatbelt reported that:

- they are very good (48.3%) or okay (39.5%) at making and keeping friends
- they have enough friends (79.3%)
- their friends care about them a lot (51.3%) or some (39.2%).

**Material basics**

Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Wheatbelt are more likely to be experiencing some form of material disadvantage in comparison to their non-Aboriginal peers.

- One in five (19.2%) Aboriginal students reported there is only sometimes or less often enough food to eat at home when they are hungry (non-Aboriginal: 8.7%).
- Almost one in ten (8.8%) Aboriginal students does not have a family car that is used for transport (non-Aboriginal: 3.2%).
- Almost one in five (18.2%) Aboriginal students does not have enough money in their family for them to go on a school excursion or camp (non-Aboriginal: 10.1%).

A very high, four in ten (43.7%) Aboriginal secondary students in the Wheatbelt do not have their own tablet, laptop or computer, compared to 24.0 per cent of non-Aboriginal students. In contrast, 27.5 per cent of

Aboriginal secondary students across the state do not have their own device (non-Aboriginal: 10.2%).

Aboriginal students in the Wheatbelt reported similar levels of access to the internet at home as their non-Aboriginal peers (90.8% and 91.8% respectively).

One-quarter (23.8%) of Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Wheatbelt reported living in a primary household of seven people or more (non-Aboriginal: 6.9%).

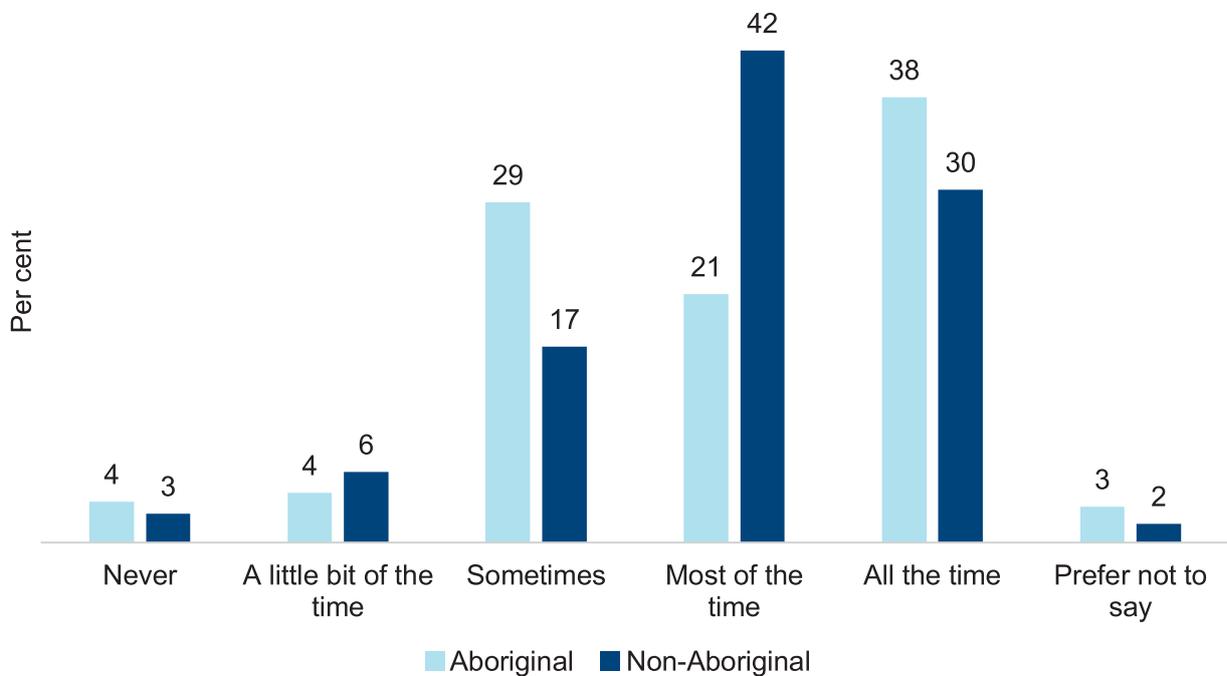
**Feeling unsafe**

Most (83.3%) Aboriginal students feel safe at home most or all of the time. This is marginally lower than the proportion of non-Aboriginal students (89.6%).

Around one-quarter of Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students are ‘somewhat’ or ‘a lot’ worried that someone in their home or family will be fighting (23.1%), will hurt somebody (26.5%) or will hurt themselves (28.6%) (non-Aboriginal: 23.2%, 18.6%, 20.7%, respectively).

When it comes to safety in the community, Aboriginal Year 4 to Year 12 students in the Wheatbelt were less likely than their non-Aboriginal peers to feel safe in their local area ‘all of the time’ or ‘most of the time’ (Aboriginal: 59.8%, non-Aboriginal: 72.8%). Over one-third (37.1%) of Aboriginal students feel safe in their local area only sometimes or less (non-Aboriginal: 25.5%).

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



## What do children and young people in the Wheatbelt say about feeling safe and supported?

### Supportive relationships

*“Actually listening and paying attention to their kid, having time for their kid, not interrupting their kid when they talk and no taking out anger on there kid.”*

*(student who selected ‘in another way’, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“My parents are divorced and my dad favours my brother which kinda makes me feel unloved.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Maybe take the time to see where y our kid are at or check up if there not depressed or anything.”*

*(male, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Just to keep reminding people that they are here for them and that they can talk to you about anything without any judgment.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

**▲▲ My parents are very helpful, and I feel completely safe talking with either of them about nearly everything. ▼▼**

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Kids don’t tell you how they are feeling because they feel like they are just overreacting because of the ways adults respond.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Pay more attention to your kids find free time and talk to the them pleaseeee.”*

*(male, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“That when I “talk back” I’m just explaining my view and aren’t try ping to argue.”*

*(female, 16 year-old, Aboriginal)*

### Feeling unsafe

The following quotes were generally in response to the question: ‘What are some of the things that make you feel unsafe?’

*“If a robber comes in the house that will take me away from nan.”*

*(male, 10 year-old, Aboriginal)*

**▲▲ At school I get bullied and become insecure but my friend are there for me at home me brother teases me. ▼▼**

*(female, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“When my mum and dad sometimes argue but that happens rairly When my dad gets angry.”*

*(female, 11 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“When my parents are mad, or drunk.”*

*(female, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Well when my parents aren’t home but my brother is ands he is in a bad mood.”*

*(male, 12 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“People walking around on the streets - especially men, Going on my own in a public place at night or sunset.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“My dad when he is angry at me Walking around town and a creepy black van slows down behind you.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

**■ ■ When people stare at me, when people talk to me that I don't know, people smile at me that I don't know, old men, walking the streets by myself, being alone on the streets or public transport. ■ ■**

*(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“I feel more safe at home and hate being in public due to strangers and people who are scary.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

*“When people have drinks and drugs sitting right next to you in the train and they keep looking at you when you want some on public transport in Perth.”*

*(female, 13 year-old, Aboriginal)*

**Mum and stepdad arguing all the time, stepbrother ignoring me, little sisters not talking to me much.**

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“Parents play a big factor in the feeling of being safe for youth. I personally feel unsafe if anyone in my household argues to an excessive point. I think it is important that parents know what situations make their children feel safe and unsafe.”*

*(female, 14 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*

*“When people comment on things about me like my appearance.”*

*(female, 15 year-old, non-Aboriginal)*



## Conclusion

This report provides a critical insight into the views and experiences of children and young people in regions across WA. The similarities and differences across the state highlights some key areas where services or developments at the community level can make a difference to children and young people's lives.

Many children and young people in regional and remote locations drew attention to not having access to recreational facilities that are available in the Perth metropolitan area. All children and young people across WA should have access to community-based environments that provide space for safe and accessible recreational activity. It is essential that government and non-government sectors work together to build community spaces and activities which support children and young people's healthy development.

Children and young people across the state were often not asking for much, perhaps a better bike trail, some shade or a water fountain at their local park or a safe space to hang out.

### ■ ■ A better park? There's only one small oval, basically grass. ■ ■

*(15 year-old, Pilbara)*

*“Add a big park with playground that doesn't get needles on the ground.”*

*(11 year-old, Goldfields)*

*“Add lights to my local basketball court.”*

*(14 year-old, South Metropolitan)*

There are also clear differences in terms of feeling safe, with students in the Kimberley and Pilbara much less likely to feel safe in their local area than students in other regions. A high proportion of female secondary students in all regions across the state do not feel safe in their local area.

The children and young people who raised safety in their local area as an issue often wanted better lighting, footpaths and also safer places for them to hang out in the community.

### ■ ■ Making more parks and spaces to connect for kids that are safe and secure. ■ ■

*(12 year-old, North Metropolitan)*

*“To add more lights on the sidewalks, because when I am walking home at night it's scary.”*

*(13 year-old, Goldfields)*

*“More places for young people to go that are safe so we have something to do that's positive.”*

*(16 year-old, Kimberley)*

In terms of material disadvantage, children and young people in the Goldfields and the Kimberley are more likely to report that they are missing out on material basics, with one in seven students (around 14%) in the Kimberley and Goldfields only sometimes or less having enough food to eat at home (all of WA: 9.6%). Almost one-third (29.8%) of secondary students in the Kimberley and one-quarter (26.4%) of secondary students in the Wheatbelt do not have their own laptop, tablet or computer.

Aboriginal children and young people across the state are particularly affected by material disadvantage with around one in five Aboriginal children and young people in the Wheatbelt, Goldfields and metropolitan area not always having enough food to eat at home. Critically, the highest proportions of Aboriginal children and young people not always having enough food at home are in the metropolitan area.

Most children and young people across WA like school and believe that it is important to go to school. However, many students do not feel like they belong at school, particularly female secondary students.

**Most children and young people across WA like school and believe that it is important to go to school.**

Results also show that the proportion of students doing homework every day or almost every day differs greatly across the state with students in the metropolitan area more likely to be doing homework every day or almost every day. In line with this, secondary students in the metropolitan area (and the South West) are more likely to report feeling very pressured by their schoolwork.

Children and young people have differing needs, experiences and perspectives to those of adults and they should be supported to share their views and be involved in finding solutions to local challenges.

The aim in producing more detailed individual regional chapters is to provide government and non-government sectors with the information and incentive to determine how they could further support children and young people in their regions and communities to lead healthy and happy lives. It is recommended that, in addition to heeding the views of the children and young people in the Speaking Out Survey, organisations also ask children and young people what they need to lead better lives and involve them in designing solutions.



# Appendix A Methodology

## Speaking Out Survey 2021

In SOS21, a total of 16,532 Year 4 to Year 12 students from 94 schools in all regions of WA consented to participate.

The SOS21 sampling approach included randomly selecting schools stratified by sector (government, Catholic, independent) and by remoteness classification (major cities, inner/outer regional and remote/very remote). Student responses were weighted so that survey results are representative of the population of WA students enrolled in Years 4 to 6 and 7 to 12 by remoteness classification.

SOS21 is fully representative and has a significantly larger sample size than SOS19, allowing for reliable disaggregation of data.

Aboriginal students are represented in the main sample proportionate to their population in WA. In total, 1,145 or 8.4 per cent of participating students identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

For further information on the survey methodology of SOS21 refer to the [Speaking Out Survey 2021: The views of WA children and young people on their wellbeing – a summary report](#).

## How are results reported by region?

The sampling methodology for SOS21 did not require minimum representation for each education region, and as a result some of the smaller regions had fewer participating schools. It was therefore anticipated that reliable estimates may not be possible for some regions, hence, additional schools were invited to participate in the survey who were not part of the random selection. The data in this report include the results from these additional schools.

These additional schools were not included in the estimates published in the SOS21 summary report. Overall, 15 additional schools participated in the child survey (Years 4 to 6) and 12 in the youth survey (Years 7 to 12). Many of the additional schools had been randomly selected for either the child survey or the youth survey and it was decided to include the non-selected group (child or youth) to have a chance to answer the survey.

In total, 1,488 or 9.1 per cent of participating students identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

For these reasons, a regional weighting process was completed on the full sample, including the additional schools, to provide the best estimates for regional results.

## Are the results representative of students in the regions?

No, the percentages reported herein are weighted estimates of the total proportion of students in each region who would answer a particular question in a particular way. For smaller regions with smaller samples, the lack of randomly selected schools (and therefore students) means that these regions effectively have a convenience sample, not a representative one.

Thus, these estimates are not representative and should be interpreted as indicative only.

In this report, results for 'All of WA' are also provided for some comparison. These results are based on the full sample (with additional schools) and the regional weightings. While similar, these results do not directly correspond to the representative SOS21 results in the Summary Report. These regionally weighted 'All of WA' results have been used to ensure a consistent approach across the variables being reported.

## Estimate calculations

It should be noted that not all students answered all questions. This could be due to students skipping questions, not getting through all questions or that the students did not receive 'masked' question(s) due to the branching logic of the survey – masked questions are follow-up questions that are only received by a student if they answer certain questions in a particular way.

The percentages presented in this report represent the proportion of students who answered a particular question in a particular way. They are calculated as follows:

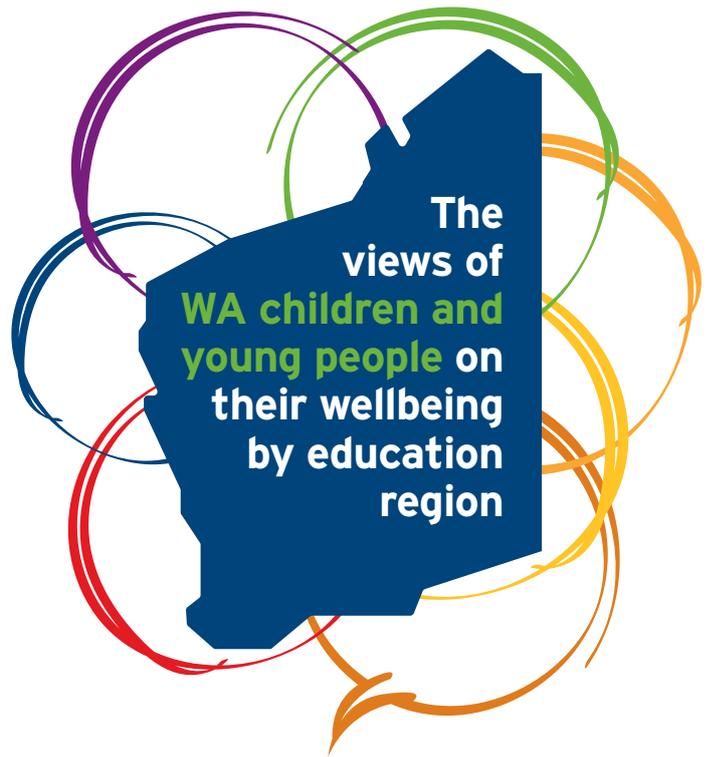
$$\frac{\text{N students answering X to question Y}}{\text{N students who provided a response to question Y}}$$

i.e. 'NAs' for the particular question are removed from denominator before calculating proportion.

## Qualitative responses

Participants in the Speaking Out Survey were asked the following open text questions during the survey:

- Is there anything else you would like to share about your experiences with seeking help for health issues including mental health worries?
- Thinking about mental health and other emotional worries like stress, anxiety or depression, what are some of the ways families, communities, schools or adults in general could be more helpful?
- Thinking about personal safety and feeling safe at home, school or in the community, what are some of things you would like families, schools, or adults in general to know?
- What are some of the things that make you feel unsafe? (for those who responded they felt unsafe).
- The majority of secondary school students feel stressed by school work or study. What do you think are the main reasons for this?
- If there was one thing you could change about your local area, what would it be?
- Please tell us what you thought about this survey or would like the Commissioner to know.



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