


2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey results for the Fraser region

McCREARY CENTRE SOCIETY





We gratefully acknowledge that the data in this report was gathered on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Coast Salish and Nlaka'pamux Nations, and is home to 32 First Nations and 6 Métis Chartered Communities.

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Table of contents

KEY FINDINGS	1
INTRODUCTION	2
PROFILE OF YOUTH IN THE FRASER REGION	4
Family background	4
Racial identity	5
Religious affiliation	6
Time in Canada	6
Gender identity and sexual orientation	7
HOME LIFE	8
Language spoken at home	8
Caretaking responsibilities	9
Government care experience	9
Parental monitoring	10
Feeling safe	10
ECONOMIC WELL-BEING	11
Employment	11
Unstable housing	12
Material deprivation	12
Food security	13
PHYSICAL HEALTH	14
Health ratings	14
Sleep	14
Health conditions and disabilities	16
Injuries	16
Access to health care	17
Exercise	18
EATING BEHAVIOURS AND BODY IMAGE	20
Meals and snacks	20
Disordered eating	21
Body satisfaction	21

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING	22
Quality of life	22
Self-confidence and sense of competence	23
Hopefulness	23
Loneliness	23
Stress and despair	24
Self-harm and suicidality	24
Specific conditions	25
Access to mental health services	26
Accessing reliable mental health information	27
SEXUAL HEALTH	28
Sexual activity	28
Pregnancy involvement	29
Forced sexual activity	30
Protection against sexually transmitted infections	30
Sex education at school	30
Accessing reliable sexual health information	31
SUBSTANCE USE	32
Vaping	32
Smoking	33
Alcohol	35
Cannabis	36
Other substances	38
Reported reasons for using substances	39
Consequences of substance use	40
ADVERSE EXPERIENCES	42
Physical and sexual abuse	42
Sexual harassment	42
Dating violence	43
Discrimination	43
Other forms of victimization	45
Bereavement	45

SCHOOL EXPERIENCES	46
School connectedness	46
Absences	46
Education plans	47
School safety	48
RELATIONSHIPS AND CONNECTIONS	49
Friendships and dating relationships	49
Caring and supportive adults	49
Family connectedness	50
Community connectedness and sense of safety	51
Other types of connectedness	51
RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES	53
Extracurricular physical activity participation	53
Barriers to engaging in extracurricular physical activity	54
Swimming ability	55
Cultural and volunteer activities	55
Connection to activities	55
Gambling	56
Phone use	56
TOPICS YOUTH WANTED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT	57
RESOURCES	58

Key findings

Results from the 2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS) highlight the diverse backgrounds of youth (aged 12–19) in the Fraser region. For example, Fraser youth were more likely than youth across the province to identify as South Asian (25% vs. 13%), Southeast Asian (9% vs. 8%), and Middle Eastern (5% vs. 4%); and were less likely to identify as European (33% vs. 43%) and Indigenous (6% vs. 10%). Also, the majority of Fraser youth spoke a language other than English at home at least some of the time, including 35% who did so most of the time or always (vs. 26% across BC).

Results also showed:

- Compared to youth across BC, Fraser youth were more likely to live in multigenerational households and to have caretaking responsibilities for a relative on a typical school day (28% vs. 26% provincially).
- Many trends reflected those seen provincially, including a decrease in youth reporting positive mental health. For example, 62% of Fraser youth rated their mental health as good or excellent (vs. 74% in 2018 vs. 82% in 2013). There was also an increase in those who self-harmed in the past year (e.g., 21% vs. 16% in 2018).
- Also reflecting the provincial trend, fewer Fraser youth slept for at least 8 hours the night before taking the survey. There was an increase in those who missed school because they slept in, skipped breakfast on school days, and consumed energy drinks. For example, the percentage who drank energy drinks the day before taking the survey increased from 6% in 2018 to 13%.
- Compared to Fraser youth who participated in the BC AHS prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, youth in 2023 were less likely to feel connected to school and to their extracurricular activities. They were also less likely to feel safe at school and on public transit. However, the provincial decrease in youth feeling connected to community was not seen across the Fraser.
- Youth in the Fraser region were less likely to have engaged in sexual activity and substance use (including vaping, smoking, alcohol, and cannabis use) than youth across BC and in comparison to Fraser youth in previous survey years. However among those who engaged in sexual intercourse, the percentage who used a condom or other barrier the last time they had sex decreased (57% vs. 64% in 2018), and those who had tried tobacco and alcohol were more likely to have done so at a younger age (e.g., 26% drank alcohol before their 13th birthday vs. 21% in 2018 vs. 19% in 2013).
- There were some differences in health-promoting and health-risk behaviours across the Fraser region. For example, youth in Fraser East were the most likely to go to bed hungry at least sometimes (e.g., 10% vs. 8% of Fraser North youth), and to miss breakfast on school days (e.g., 34% vs. 27% of Fraser South). Fraser South youth were the most likely to experience racism (e.g., 19% vs. 15% in Fraser East). Those in Fraser North were the most likely to have eaten fruit, vegetables, and salad the day before taking the survey (89% vs. 85% in Fraser South vs. 83% in Fraser East).
- Males generally reported the most positive health and well-being. For example, they were the most likely to rate their health as good or excellent (81% vs. 69% of females vs. 46% of non-binary youth), and were the least likely to experience sexual harassment (e.g., 25% experienced verbal sexual harassment in the past 12 months vs. 46% of females vs. 56% of non-binary youth).
- Having access to supportive adults can be a protective factor for youth. Compared to 5 years earlier, Fraser youth were more likely to have supportive adults inside (75% vs. 70% in 2018) and outside (32% vs. 25%) their family they could talk to when they were having a serious problem.

Introduction

In spring 2023, around 38,500 young people aged 12–19 participated in the BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS) in 59 of BC's 60 school districts.

The survey was developed in consultation with young people, parents, and other experts in youth health. It was pilot-tested with diverse young people in communities across BC before being administered across the Fraser region by Public Health Nurses and nursing students from the University of the Fraser Valley.

This report was prepared for Fraser Health and shares data provided by students in Grades 7–12 in the region. Fraser students represented 42% of the total 2023 BC AHS sample.

Within the Fraser, around half (49%) of those sampled were in the Fraser South Health Service Delivery Area (HSDA), 34% were in Fraser North, and 17% were in Fraser East.

All 11 Fraser school districts participated in the 2023 BC AHS, as did students in Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique.

2023 BC AHS participating school districts

Fraser North	New Westminster, Burnaby, Maple Ridge-Pitt Meadows, Coquitlam, Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique
Fraser South	Langley, Surrey, Delta, Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique
Fraser East	Chilliwack, Abbotsford, Mission, Fraser-Cascade, Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique

Further details about the methodology for the 2023 BC AHS are available at: mcs.bc.ca/pdf/2023_bcabs_factsheet_methodology.pdf.

This report provides a health profile of youth (aged 12–19) in the Fraser region. A representative sample of youth in every grade was obtained and the age breakdown of participants is shown in the table below.

Age	
12 years old or younger	10%
13	17%
14	17%
15	17%
16	17%
17	16%
18 or older	6%

The report includes grade and gender comparisons. The terms 'male,' 'female,' and 'non-binary' are used to describe the three gender categories used in the analysis. These terms reflect the preference of BC youth who participated in discussions about terminology, and for whom the terms 'boys' and 'girls' did not resonate. Non-binary youth include those who did not identify as male or female or were not yet sure of their gender identity.

The report also includes comparisons to results across the province, as well as to regional results over the past decade. Some comparisons between the three Fraser HSDAs are presented. As with other comparisons between groups in the report, only statistically significant difference between the HSDAs are noted.

In some places within the report an example comparison is provided. For example, the text states, Fraser East youth were the most likely to have worked at a paid job during the school year (e.g., 32% vs. 23% of youth in Fraser South). The percentage for Fraser North is not provided to avoid confusion as it was not significantly different from Fraser South. The complete results for each HSDA are available at: mcs.bc.ca/about_bcabs.

Limitations

The 2023 BC AHS is considered representative of 97.6% of BC youth aged 12–19 who were attending mainstream schools in the province. However, it may not be representative of all youth in this age range. For example, the BC AHS does not include students who were absent on the day the survey was administered, had a health or learning challenge which prevented them from completing the survey, were attending independent schools, or were home-schooled.

Using this report

All reported comparisons and associations within the Fraser region and comparisons between the region and the province are statistically significant at $p < .01$. This means there is less than a 1% likelihood that the results occurred by chance. Any reported comparisons to previous survey years in the Fraser region are statistically significant at $p < .05$, which means there is less than a 5% likelihood these results occurred by chance.

Where it is not obvious, differences in tables or charts that are not statistically significant are noted.

Results are presented to the nearest rounded percentage, which may mean that they do not always total 100%.

The terms 'youth' and 'student' are used interchangeably to refer to BC AHS participants aged 12–19.

Quotes from youth in the Fraser region who participated in the 2023 BC AHS are included throughout the report. Photographs taken by Fraser youth as part of a BC AHS photovoice project are also included. To view the complete photovoice project, please visit mcs.bc.ca/pdf/2023_bcahs_photovoice.pdf.

To read the reports for Fraser North, Fraser South, and Fraser East, and to access other BC AHS reports, please visit mcs.bc.ca/about_bcahs.

Profile of youth in the Fraser region

Family background

The most common family background among youth in the Fraser region was European, followed by South Asian. The percentage who identified as European decreased over the past decade (from 46% in 2013, to 37% in 2018, to 33% in 2023), while the percentage who identified as South Asian increased (from 18%, to 21%, to 25%).

Fraser youth were more likely than those across BC to identify as South Asian (25% vs. 13% provincially), Southeast Asian (9% vs. 8%), and Middle Eastern (5% vs. 4%). They were less likely to identify as European (33% vs. 43%) and Indigenous (6% vs. 10%).

Family background		
	2013	2023
European	46%	33%
South Asian	18%	25%
East Asian	21%	19%
Southeast Asian	9%	9%
Indigenous	6%	6%
Latin American, South American, Central American	4%	5%
Middle Eastern	3%	5%
African	3%	4%
Australian, Pacific Islander	2%	2%
Caribbean	N/A	1%
Other	2%	3%
Don't know	5%	7%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Note: For 'East Asian', the difference between 2013 and 2023 was not statistically significant.

N/A: The response was not included in the 2013 BC AHS.

Within the Fraser region:

- Youth in Fraser East were the most likely to identify as European (e.g., 43% vs. 28% in Fraser South) and Indigenous (e.g., 12% vs. 5% of Fraser North youth).
- Youth in Fraser North were the most likely to identify as East Asian (e.g., 29% vs. 6% in Fraser East); Middle Eastern (e.g., 8% vs. 4% in Fraser South); and Latin, South, or Central American (8% vs. 4% in Fraser South and East).
- Youth in Fraser South were the most likely to identify as South Asian (e.g., 36% vs. 9% in Fraser North) and Australian, Pacific Islander (2% vs. 1% in Fraser North and East).

Indigenous youth

Overall, 6% of Fraser youth identified as Indigenous. Among Indigenous youth:

- 57% identified as First Nations, 40% as Métis, 3% as Inuit, and 7% as another Indigenous background (e.g., Native American; they could mark all that applied).
- 8% previously lived on reserve and 10% were currently living on reserve.
- 20% could speak at least a few words of an Indigenous language, including 3% who could have a conversation or were fluent. The percentage who could speak at least a few words increased from 8% in 2013.
- 6% identified as Two-Spirit.

In the Fraser region, 43% of Indigenous youth reported that a family member had been in residential school, including at least one of their parents (3%), grandparents (26%), and other relatives (26%). This is likely an under-representation as 37% of Indigenous youth did not know their family history of residential school.

An in-depth look at the health and well-being of Indigenous youth who completed the BC AHS will be published by McCreary's Young Indigenous Research Team (YIRT) in 2025.

Racial identity

Youth in the Fraser region most commonly identified their race as White and Asian. They were less likely than those across the province to identify as White and Indigenous, and were more likely to identify as Asian, Black, mixed race, and another background.

Racial identity		
	Fraser	BC
White	42%	57%
Asian	42%	31%
Black	4%	3%
Latin American/Hispanic	4%	4%
Indigenous	3%	6%
Mixed background	7%	6%
Other	9%	5%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied. Some youth of mixed racial backgrounds chose a single racial identity, while others selected more than one identity, and/or selected the option 'mixed background'.



Religious affiliation

Over a third of youth in the Fraser region did not identify with any religion (36%). This was lower than across BC (48% provincially). Compared to the province as a whole, youth in the Fraser region were more likely to identify as Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu.

Religious affiliation		
	Fraser	BC
Christian	26%	24%
Sikh	17%	8%
Muslim	6%	4%
Hindu	4%	2%
Buddhist	3%	3%
Traditional (Indigenous) spirituality	1%	2%
Jewish	1%	1%
Other	2%	2%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.
 Note: The difference between the Fraser region and BC for 'Christian' was not statistically significant.

Immigration		
	Fraser	BC
Born in Canada	73%	77%
Born abroad and now a permanent resident or Canadian citizen	16%	13%
Arrived in Canada as an international student	9%	8%
Arrived in Canada as a refugee	2%	2%

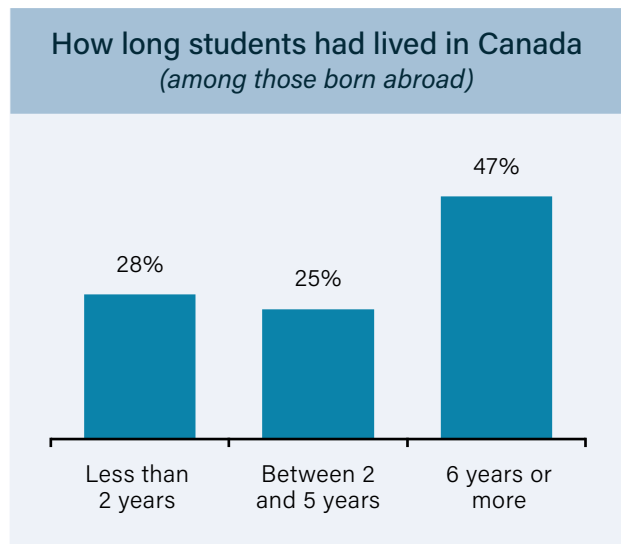
Note: The difference between Fraser and BC for 'arrived in Canada as an international student' was not statistically significant.
 Note: Fraser youth were more likely than those across BC to have 'arrived in Canada as a refugee.'

Within the Fraser region, Fraser North had the lowest percentage of students born in Canada (67% vs. 72% in Fraser South vs. 84% in Fraser East), and the highest percentage of international students (11% vs. 8% in Fraser South vs. 6% in Fraser East).

Among youth born abroad, 28% had been in Canada for less than 2 years (23% in Fraser South vs. 33% in Fraser North and East). The percentage of Fraser students who had been in Canada for under 2 years was similar to the provincial rate and higher than the local rate 5 and 10 years earlier (28% vs. 23% in 2018 vs. 19% in 2013).

Time in Canada

Almost three quarters (73%) of Fraser youth were born in Canada, which was lower than in previous survey years (e.g., 75% in 2018). Over the past decade, there was an increase in those who arrived in Canada as international students (from 4% in 2013, to 7% in 2018, to 9%), and as refugees (from 1% in 2013 and 2018, to 2%).



Gender identity and sexual orientation

“I would like to see schools doing more regarding LGBTQ+ people (examples: learning about different sexualities/genders, respect towards them, etc.)”

14-year-old youth

In the Fraser region, 50% of youth identified as male, 46% as female, and 4% as non-binary (an increase from 2% in 2018). For 95% of youth, their gender identity matched their sex assigned at birth (vs. 98% in 2018).

Reflecting the provincial pattern, there was a decrease over time in youth who identified as straight (e.g., 77% vs. 84% in 2018), and an increase in those who identified as a sexual minority (e.g., 2% identified as gay or lesbian vs. 1% in 2018).

Sexual orientation	
Straight	77%
Mostly straight	5%
Bisexual or pansexual	8%
Gay or lesbian	2%
Asexual	2%
Not sure	5%
Other	<1%

There were some age and gender differences in how youth identified their sexual orientation. For example, 21% of youth in Grade 11 identified as a sexual minority, compared to 15% of Grade 8s. Males were the most likely to identify as straight (89% vs. 71% of females vs. 8% of non-binary youth).

An in-depth look at the health and well-being of gender minority youth in BC using data from the 2018 and 2023 BC AHS was published in partnership with SARAVYC and is available at: mcs.bc.ca/pdf/2024_gender_diverse_report.pdf.
A BC AHS report about sexual minority youth health will also be published.

Home life

“My parents argue a lot and are thinking about a divorce, which affects my mental health quite a bit.”

13-year-old youth

The majority of youth lived with one or both of their parents. However, there was a slight increase in those who lived with foster parents (1% vs. <1% in 2018).

The provincial increase over the past decade in youth living in multigenerational homes was also seen in the Fraser region. For example, 72% of Fraser youth lived with siblings or stepsiblings (vs. 63% in 2013), 18% lived with grandparents (vs. 11%), and 6% had other adult relatives living with them (vs. 4%).

Compared to the province, Fraser youth were more likely to live with their parents, grandparents, siblings or stepsiblings, and other related adults. They were less likely to live with an adult not related to them and with both parents at different times.

Who youth lived with most of the time

Mother/stepmother	90%
Father/stepfather	81%
Two mothers or two fathers	1%
Sibling(s)/stepsibling(s)	72%
Grandparent(s)	18%
Foster parent(s)	1%
Their own child or children	<1%
Other adults related to them	6%
Other adults not related to them	2%
Other children or youth	2%
Lived alone	<1%
Lived with both parents at different times	6%

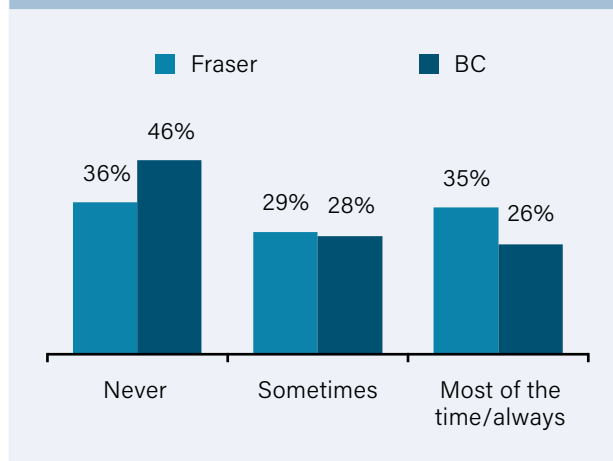
Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Language spoken at home

In the Fraser region, the majority of youth (64%) spoke a language other than English at home at least some of the time. Rates ranged from 49% in Fraser East to 69% in Fraser South.

Compared to the province as a whole, Fraser youth were more likely to speak a language other than English at home most or all of the time (35% vs. 26%). They were also more likely to do so than Fraser youth in previous survey years (35% vs. 32% in 2018 vs. 28% in 2013).

How often students spoke a language other than English at home



Note: The difference between Fraser and BC for 'sometimes' was not statistically significant.

Caretaking responsibilities

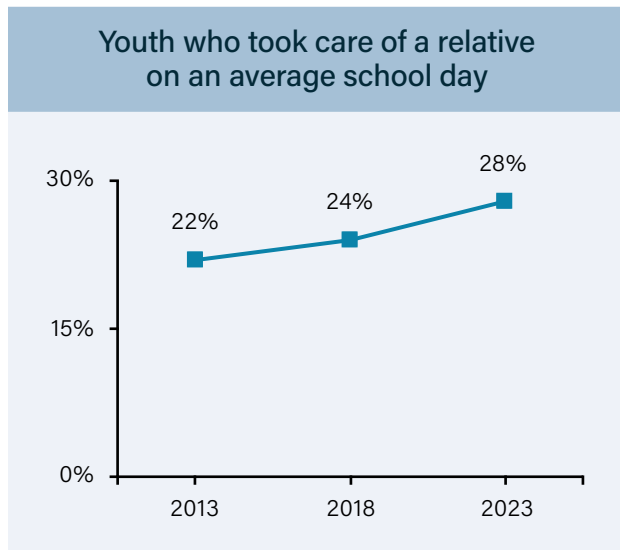
"I am really good at taking care of pets and family (whether it's needed or not)."

13-year-old youth

On an average school day, 28% of Fraser youth took care of a relative (e.g., a relative with a disability, or their younger siblings), which was higher than the rate across BC (26%).

Females were more likely than males to have caretaking responsibilities for a relative (31% vs. 26%), as were Fraser South youth in comparison to those in Fraser North (30% vs. 25%).

Youth in 2023 were more likely to have caretaking responsibilities for a relative than in previous survey years.



In the Fraser region, 47% of youth took care of a pet or other animal on an average school day. This was lower than the provincial rate (57%), but a local increase from 43% in 2018.

Government care experience

Youth had experienced various types of government care (including through an Indigenous Child and Family Service Agency), as well as alternatives to government care, such as a Youth Agreement.

Types of care youth had experienced		
	In the past year	Ever
Extended Family Program or Out of Care Order	1%	2%
Foster home	1%	2%
Group home	1%	2%
Youth Agreement	1%	1%
Custody centre/ detention centre	1%	1%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Fraser East youth were more likely than those in Fraser South to have been in the Extended Family Program (3% vs. 2%) and foster care (3% vs. 1%).

McCreary's Youth Research Academy (YRA) will be releasing a report considering the health and well-being of youth with care experience in 2025.

Parental monitoring

Provincially, there was a decline from 5 years earlier in youth who felt their parents or guardians monitored what the youth were doing in their free time and online. This was not the case in the Fraser region where rates remained similar to previous years.

In the past 30 days, how much youth felt their parents knew what they were doing ...

	Never/ rarely	Sometimes	Most of the time/always
With their free time	12%	16%	72%
Online	36%	21%	43%

As might be expected, youth in higher grades were less likely to have their time monitored by parents compared to those in lower grades. For example, 33% of Grade 11s felt their parents monitored their time online most or all of the time, compared to 44% of Grade 9s and 61% of Grade 7s.

Feeling safe

Most youth (93%) often or always felt safe in their home. However, 3% rarely or never felt safe there. Non-binary youth were the least likely to often or always feel safe in their home (79% vs. 93% of females vs. 95% of males).



Economic well-being

Employment

“I’m really good at my job. The customers look forward to me coming on shift and serving them!”

16-year-old youth

“[I’m really good at] budgeting money from my job. I work about 30 hours weekly.”

16-year-old youth

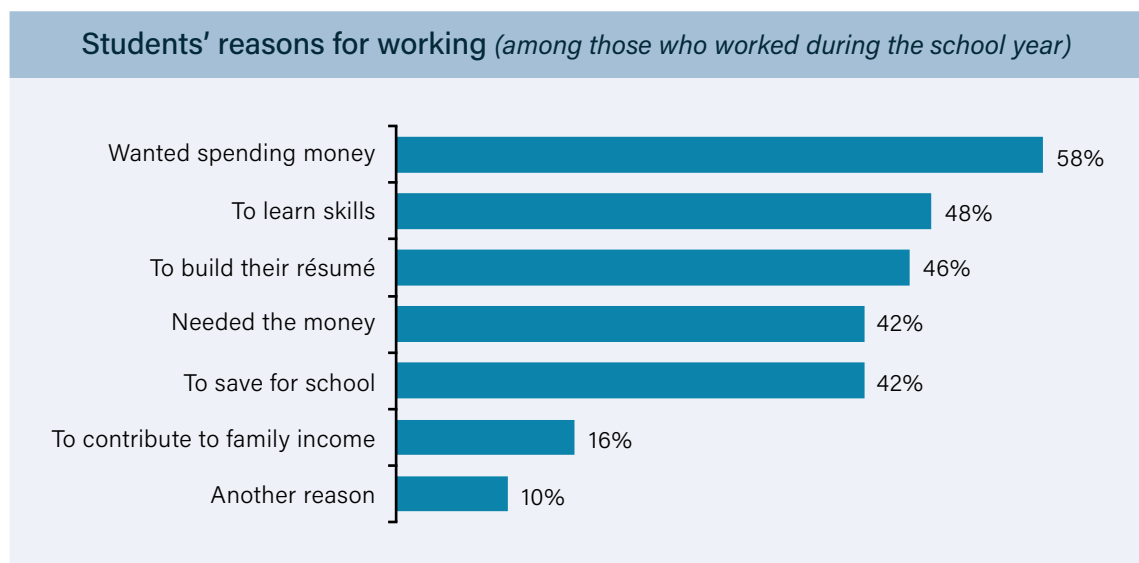
During the school year, 25% of students worked at a paid job, which was a decrease from 29% in 2018, and lower than the provincial rate (32% in 2023). Youth most commonly worked 5 to 12 hours a week (10%), while 8% worked less than 5 hours, 6% worked 13 to 20 hours, and 2% worked 21 or more hours each week.

Within the Fraser region, youth in Fraser East were the most likely to have worked at a paid job during the school year (e.g., 32% vs. 23% of youth in Fraser South).

As might be expected, youth in higher grades were more likely to have worked during the school year. For example, 51% of Grade 12s worked at a paid job, compared to 23% of Grade 10s and 11% of Grade 8s.

When asked about their main reasons for working, the majority of youth (58%) reported wanting spending money. However, 16% worked to contribute to their family’s income (vs. 12% provincially). Fraser youth were more likely than those across BC to work to learn skills (48% vs. 46%) and build their résumé (46% vs. 43%).

There were some differences within the Fraser region in youth’s reasons for working. For example, the percentage who worked because they needed the money ranged from 40% in Fraser South to 46% in Fraser East; and the percentage who worked to contribute towards the family income ranged from 13% in Fraser North to 18% in Fraser South.



Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Unstable housing

Reflecting the provincial trends, there was a decrease in Fraser youth who had run away (5% vs. 7% in 2018) and been kicked out of home (3% vs. 5% in 2018) in the past year.

Comparable to provincial results, 2% of Fraser youth had experienced homelessness in the past 12 months.

Also reflecting the provincial pattern, the percentage of Fraser youth who had moved in the past 12 months was lower than in previous years (17% vs. 25% in 2018 vs. 22% in 2013). The percentage who moved three or more times also decreased compared to previous survey years (e.g., 2% vs. 5% in 2018).

Material deprivation

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

Youth generally had each of the items in the Index. In 2023, 14% lacked but wished they had one item, 5% lacked two items, and 4% lacked three or more items. Youth in Fraser East were more likely than those in Fraser North to report they were deprived of at least two items (12% vs. 9%).

There were no changes from 5 years earlier in the percentage of youth who felt deprived of one or more of the material items. However, there were some changes in the specific items they felt deprived of. For example, youth in 2023 were more likely to report they lacked but wished they had money to spend on themselves (11% vs. 10% in 2018) and clothes to fit in (4% vs. 2%); and were less likely to feel deprived of a smartphone (4% vs. 6%) and access to transportation (3% vs. 4%).

Youth who lacked but wished they had ...	
Money to spend on themselves	11%
Space of their own to hang out in	7%
Lunch for school/money to buy lunch	4%
Clothes to fit in	4%
Smartphone	4%
Equipment/clothes for extracurricular activities	3%
Money for school supplies, school trips, and extracurricular activities	3%
Access to transportation	3%
A quiet place to sleep	2%
Access to the Internet	1%
Personal hygiene products (e.g., soap, deodorant)	1%

Food security

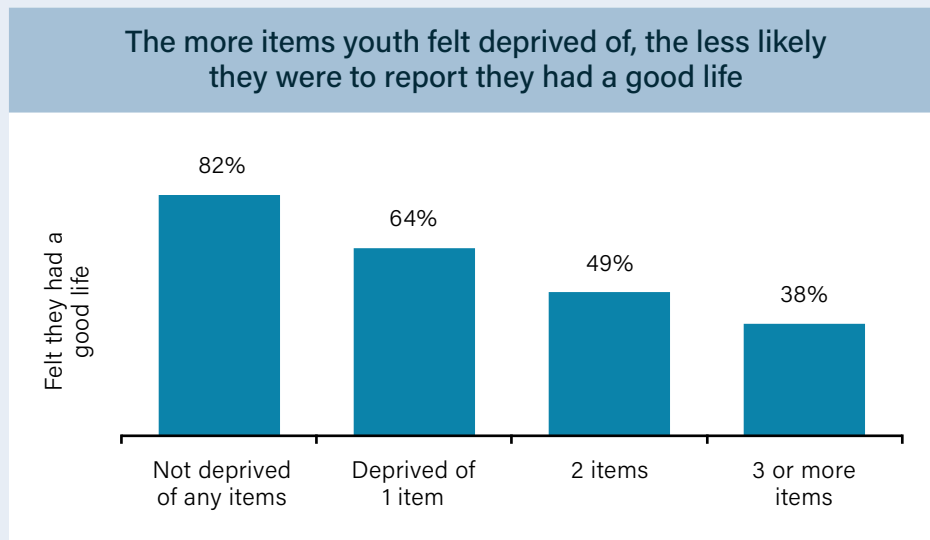
In the past 12 months, 5% of youth had cut the size of their meals or skipped meals because there was not enough money for food. Also, 8% went to bed hungry at least sometimes because there was not enough money for food. This included 1% who went to bed hungry often or always. The percentage of youth who went to bed hungry at least sometimes decreased from 5 years earlier (9% in 2018) but remained above the rate a decade earlier (6% in 2013).

Within the Fraser region, youth in Fraser East were the most likely to go to bed hungry at least sometimes (e.g., 10% vs. 8% of Fraser North youth).

The percentage of youth who had eaten food from a food bank the day before completing the survey (2%), was similar within the three Fraser HSDAs and to the provincial rate.

The importance of economic well-being

Youth who experience poorer economic well-being are less likely than their peers to report positive health. For example, the more items from the Youth Deprivation Index that youth felt deprived of, the less likely they were to report good or excellent mental health, hopefulness for their future, and satisfaction with their life.



Similarly, youth who went to bed hungry at least sometimes because there was not enough money for food were less likely than those who never went to bed hungry to report good or excellent overall health (47% vs. 76%), and were more likely to experience extreme stress in the past month (29% vs. 10%). They were also more likely to have used substances such as opioids, which can be an appetite suppressor (4% had used heroin, fentanyl, or other opioids vs. <1% of youth who never went to bed hungry), as well as to have vaped in the past month (66% vs. 50%; among those who ever vaped) and smoked in the past month (47% vs. 34%; among those who ever smoked).

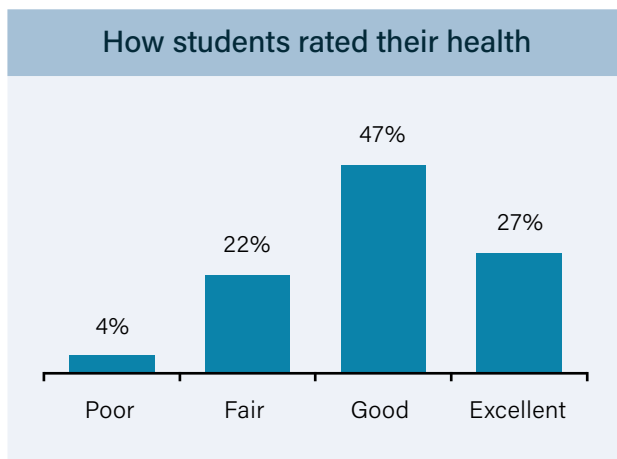
Physical health

"I want to be more physically healthy!"

15-year-old youth

Health ratings

Most youth (74%) rated their health as good or excellent. However, this was a decrease from 5 and 10 years earlier (81% in 2018 and 87% in 2013). Within the Fraser region, youth in Fraser East were the least likely to rate their health this positively (70% vs. 75% in Fraser South and Fraser North).



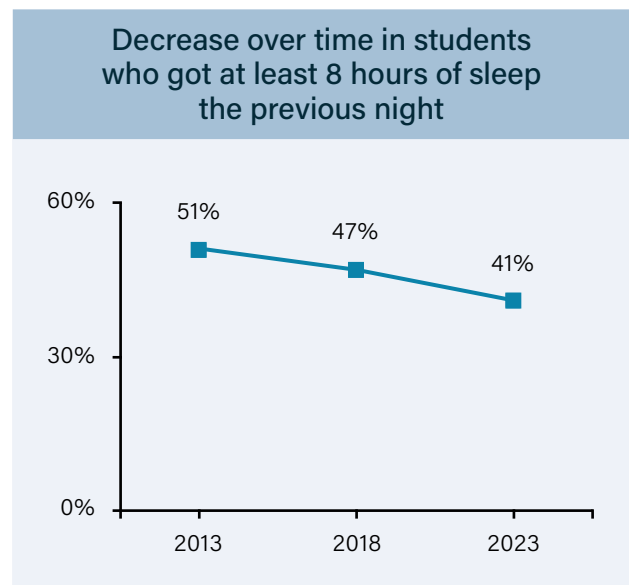
Reflecting the provincial pattern, males were the most likely to rate their health as good or excellent (81% vs. 69% of females vs. 46% of non-binary youth).

Sleep

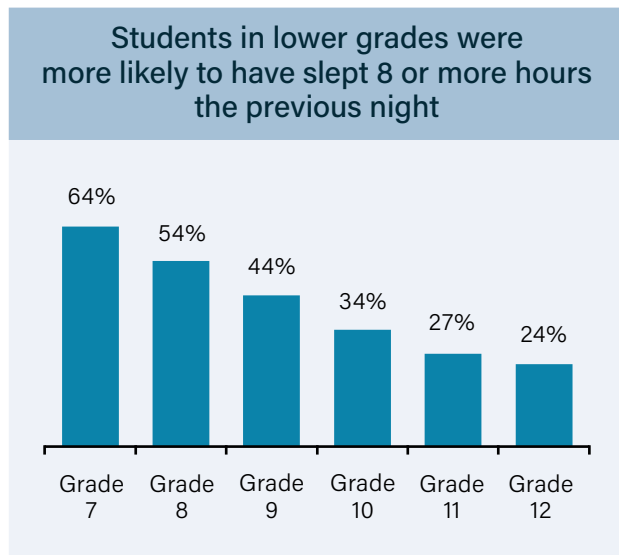
"How can I improve my sleep quality?"

17-year-old youth

Comparable to results across BC, 41% of youth slept for at least 8 hours the night before completing the 2023 BC AHS, and 18% slept for 5 hours or less. Youth were less likely to sleep for 8 or more hours than in previous survey years.



Youth in higher grades were the least likely to have slept 8 or more hours the night before taking the survey.



Note: The difference between Grade 11 and Grade 12 was not statistically significant.

Most youth were able to sleep undisturbed the previous night. However, a quarter (25%) reported that their sleep was interrupted.

Most students engaged in at least one activity after they were expected to be asleep, and 9% went offline and did not engage in any activities (e.g., they put their phone on silent, turned it off, or put it in another room when they went to bed). Males were more likely than females to go offline (10% vs. 8%).

Activities youth engaged in after they were expected to be asleep

Scrolling through social media	67%
Chatting or texting	60%
Doing homework	56%
Gaming (other than esports)	30%
Playing/watching esports	21%
Doing other things online (e.g., watching videos)	66%

There were some gender differences in the activities youth engaged in after they were expected to be asleep. For example, males were the most likely to play esports (32% vs. 16% of non-binary youth vs. 10% of females). Females were the most likely to scroll through social media (e.g., 74% vs. 67% of non-binary youth), chat or text (e.g., 67% vs. 54% of males), and do homework (64% vs. 56% of non-binary youth vs. 48% of males).



Health conditions and disabilities

(Mental health conditions are discussed in the [Mental health and well-being](#) section).

The percentage of youth who reported having a long-term or chronic medical condition continued to decrease in the Fraser region (6% vs. 8% in 2018 vs. 9% in 2013), and the percentage who reported having a learning disability increased (6% vs. 4% in 2018 vs. 3% in 2013). The percentage of students with a learning disability ranged from 5% in Fraser South to 8% in Fraser East.

Health conditions and disabilities	
A long-term/chronic medical condition	6%
A learning disability (e.g., dyslexia)	6%
Blind or visual impairment which cannot be corrected with glasses/contact lenses	1%
Deaf or hard of hearing	1%
A physical disability (e.g., cerebral palsy, use a wheelchair)	1%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Among youth with a health condition or disability, a third (33%) did not experience any barriers because of their condition, 49% had what they needed to overcome the barriers they faced, and 19% did not have what they needed to overcome these barriers. Results were similar between the three Fraser HSDAs, and in comparison to the province.

Injuries

"I have had 2 concussions in the last 12 months."

14-year-old youth

In the past 12 months, 30% of youth had been injured seriously enough to need medical attention. This was an increase from 24% in 2018 but lower than the provincial rate (33% in 2023).

There were no HSDA differences in injury rates within the Fraser region but there were gender differences, as males were more likely than females to have been seriously injured (33% vs. 27%) in the past year.

Fraser youth were less likely to have experienced a concussion in the past year than those across BC (12% vs. 15% provincially). Provincially, there was an increase in youth who reported they had experienced a concussion. However, this was not the case in this region, as concussion rates were similar to 5 years earlier and lower than 10 years earlier (15% in 2013).

Males and non-binary youth were more likely than females to have had a concussion in the past year (e.g., 13% of males vs. 11% of females).

When asked what they were doing when they got their concussion, youth most commonly reported they were playing or training for organized sports.



How youth got their most serious concussion in the past 12 months (among those who had been concussed)

Playing/training for organized sports	45%
Playing recreational sports (without a coach)	15%
Riding a bike	9%
Using alcohol or other substances	9%
Fighting with another person	8%
Riding/driving in a motor vehicle	6%
Working	5%
Skateboarding	5%
Other	20%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

There were some gender differences in how youth got their most serious concussion. For example, males were the most likely to have been concussed while playing organized sports (e.g., 49% vs. 41% of females) and were more likely than females to have been concussed while biking (12% vs. 5%). Females were twice as likely as males to have experienced their concussion while using substances (12% vs. 6%).

Among youth who had experienced a concussion in the past 12 months, 44% received medical treatment for their most serious head injury, which was similar to the provincial rate. Rates of receiving treatment were similar across all three Fraser HSDAs.

Access to health care

In the past 12 months, 22% of youth had not needed to access health care (26% of males vs. 18% of female and non-binary youth). Also, 2% reported they had not been able to get the care they needed (vs. 4% in 2018), with similar rates across each HSDA. Non-binary youth were the most likely to report not getting the care they needed (8% vs. 2% of females and males).

Youth who did access health care in the past year most commonly did so through a family doctor. However, they were less likely to access one than youth 5 years earlier (58% vs. 63% in 2018). They were also less likely to access a walk-in clinic (25% vs. 38%), emergency room (13% vs. 14%), and youth clinic (2% vs. 4%).

Where youth got health care in the past 12 months

Family doctor	58%
Specialist (e.g., dermatologist, psychiatrist)	31%
Walk-in clinic	25%
Emergency room (ER)	13%
Counsellor/psychologist	11%
Nurse	7%
Youth clinic	2%
School wellness centre	2%
Foundry centre/Foundry Virtual BC	1%
Traditional healer	1%
Other	3%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

In comparison to the province as a whole, Fraser youth were more likely to have received health care from a family doctor (58% vs. 54% provincially). They were less likely to have visited an emergency room (13% vs. 15%), a counsellor or psychologist (11% vs. 12%), and a nurse (7% vs. 9%).

Rates of accessing the emergency room were similar across the three Fraser HSDAs. However, there were some differences in other places where they accessed health care. For example, the percentage who accessed a family doctor ranged from 54% in Fraser North to 60% in Fraser South. Fraser North youth were the least likely to have accessed a nurse (6% vs. 8% in Fraser South and East), and youth in Fraser South were less likely than those in Fraser East to have accessed a counsellor or psychologist (10% vs. 12%) and Foundry (1% vs. 2%).

Youth were also asked specifically if they had needed medical treatment in the past 12 months because they were physically sick or hurt. The majority (63%) had not needed treatment, and among those who had needed treatment, most (83%) got the care they needed.

Most youth (83%) had been to a dentist within the past 12 months, 9% had last visited a dentist 12–24 months ago, and 6% had last been more than 2 years ago. Similar to the provincial rate, 2% of Fraser youth had never been to the dentist.

Within the Fraser region, Fraser North youth were the most likely to have been to the dentist in the past 12 months (e.g., 85% vs. 81% of Fraser East youth).

Exercise

“Going to the gym is the best thing ever. It gave me purpose, goals, and solved pretty much all of my mental health problems.”

17-year-old youth

(Engagement in sports and other extracurricular physical activity is discussed in the **Recreational activities** section.)

Most youth reported that they enjoyed exercising and being physically active at least somewhat (88%), including 34% who enjoyed exercising very much (45% of males vs. 25% of females vs. 15% of non-binary youth).

Youth were asked about their participation in physical activity sufficient to make them sweat, breathe hard, or ‘be out of breath.’ Most youth (87%) got at least an hour of this type of moderate to vigorous exercise in the past week, including 18% who did so every day.

Within the Fraser region, Fraser East youth were the most likely to exercise for at least an hour in the past week (90% vs. 87% in Fraser North and Fraser South). However, there were no HSDA differences in daily exercise.

Number of days in the past week youth got at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise

0 days	13%
1 day	7%
2 days	10%
3 days	14%
4 days	13%
5 days	17%
6 days	9%
All 7 days	18%

The latest Canadian guidelines for physical activity recommend that youth aged 12–17 do an hour of moderate to vigorous activity every day, and those aged 18 and older get at least 2.5 hours of this type of exercise per week.

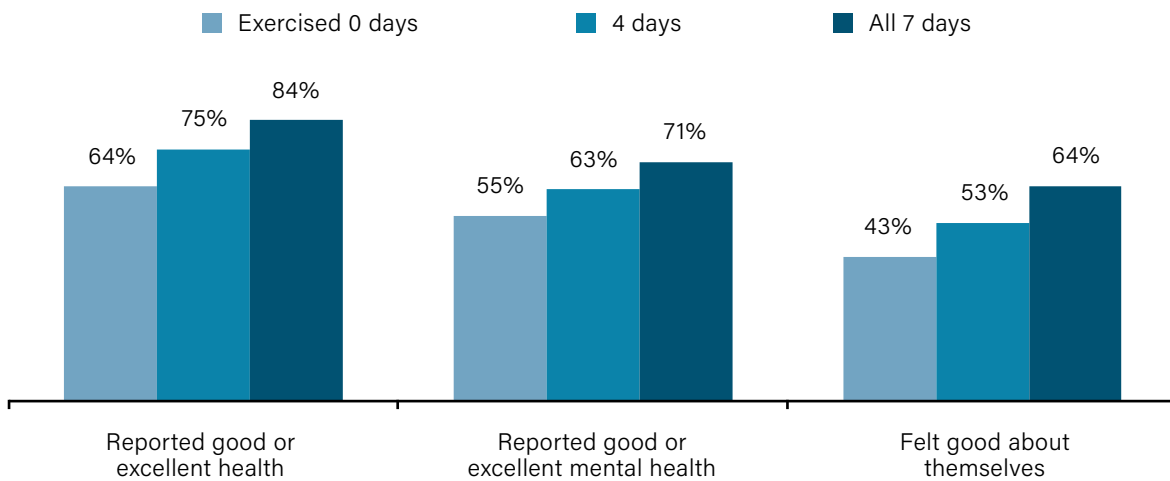
Among Fraser youth aged 12–17, 19% engaged in 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise daily in the past week. This was higher than the rate in 2018 (17%) and 2013 (16%). Males in this age group were the most likely to meet the physical activity guidelines (e.g., 25% vs. 13% of females).

Among youth aged 18 and older, 59% participated in 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise on at least 3 days in the past week. Males were more likely than females to meet the guidelines (68% vs. 52%).

The importance of engaging in health promoting behaviours

Youth who engage in health-promoting behaviours are more likely to experience positive mental health and life satisfaction. For example, those who slept for at least 8 hours the night before taking the 2023 BC AHS were more likely to report good or excellent mental health (78% vs. 51% who slept fewer hours). Also, the more regularly youth exercised the more likely they were to report positive health and well-being.

The more days students exercised in the past week, the more likely they were to report positive health and well-being



Note: Exercise refers to engaging in at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise.

Eating behaviours and body image

Meals and snacks

Compared to 5 years earlier, youth were less likely to have eaten fruit, vegetables, or salad, as well as fast food the day before completing the BC AHS. They were more likely to have eaten sweets.

Reflecting the provincial trend, the percentage who drank energy drinks more than doubled from 5 years earlier (13% vs. 6% in 2018). However, youth in the Fraser region were less likely to have had energy drinks than youth across BC (13% vs. 15%).

Youth in this region were more likely than those across BC to have eaten traditional food from their background (53% vs. 42% provincially).

Ate or drank at least once yesterday		
	2018	2023
Fruit, vegetables, or salad	93%	86%
Sweets (cookies, cakes, candies, etc.)	77%	79%
Fast food (pizza, hot dogs, fries, etc.)	49%	46%
Traditional food from their background	51%	53%
Energy drinks	6%	13%

Note: The difference between 2018 and 2023 for 'traditional food' was not statistically significant.

Within the Fraser region:

- Youth in Fraser North were the most likely to have eaten fruit, vegetables, or salad the day before taking the survey (89% vs. 85% in Fraser South vs. 83% in Fraser East).
- Youth in Fraser East were the most likely to have consumed fast food (e.g., 50% vs. 46% in Fraser South) and energy drinks (e.g., 16% vs. 13% in Fraser North), and were the least likely to have eaten traditional food from their background (e.g., 39% vs. 55% in Fraser North).

Most Fraser youth (84%) ate food prepared by their parent or caregiver the day before taking the survey. Percentages ranged from 82% in Fraser East to 86% in Fraser North.

Youth in Fraser East were the most likely to have eaten food they prepared themselves (e.g., 66% vs. 56% in Fraser South). Fraser South youth were the least likely to have eaten food from a restaurant, food court, or delivery service (e.g., 32% vs. 38% of Fraser North youth) and a school food program (3% vs. 5% in Fraser North and Fraser East).

Source of students' meals and snacks yesterday	
Prepared by parent/caregiver	84%
Prepared themselves	58%
Restaurant, food court, or delivery service	34%
Taken home from a school food program	4%
Food bank	2%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Around 8 in 10 Fraser youth ate dinner every day in the past week, but fewer ate breakfast and lunch daily. Within the Fraser region, youth in Fraser East were the least likely to eat breakfast daily (e.g., 39% vs. 45% in Fraser South), lunch (e.g., 52% vs. 62% in Fraser North), and dinner (e.g., 76% vs. 80% in Fraser South).

Meals eaten in the past 7 days					
	0 days	1-2 days	3-4 days	5-6 days	All 7 days
Breakfast	14%	16%	11%	14%	45%
Lunch	5%	8%	12%	16%	59%
Dinner	1%	2%	6%	12%	79%

When asked specifically about eating breakfast on school days, Fraser youth were less likely to eat breakfast than local youth 5 years earlier. They were specifically less likely to get their breakfast at home or on the way to school.

Where youth got breakfast on school days		
	2018	2023
Didn't eat breakfast on school days	18%	28%
At home	78%	70%
At school	6%	5%
On the way to school	7%	5%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.
 Note: For 'at school' the difference between 2018 and 2023 was not statistically significant.

Within the Fraser region, Fraser East youth were the most likely to not eat breakfast on school days (e.g., 34% vs. 27% in Fraser South), and the least likely to eat breakfast at home (e.g., 62% vs. 72% of Fraser North youth). Youth in Fraser South were the least likely to eat breakfast at school (4% vs. 6% in Fraser North and Fraser East).

Disordered eating

"I like to binge eat and I can't stop."

13-year-old youth

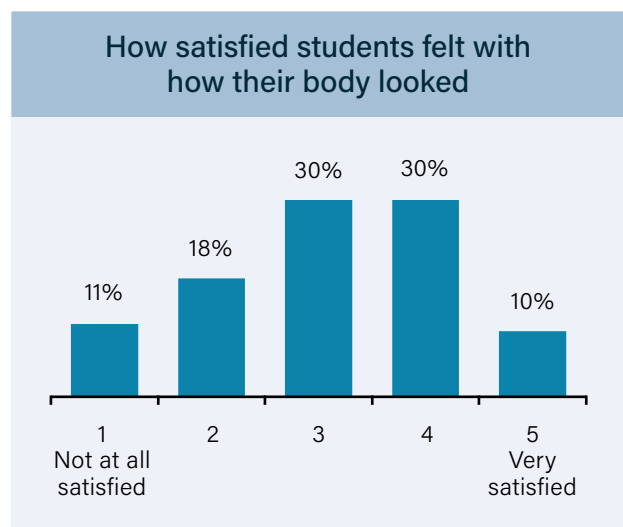
In the past 30 days, 32% of youth had worried that they had lost control of how much they ate.

In the past 12 months, 13% of youth had vomited on purpose (purged) after eating, which was similar to 2018 but higher than a decade earlier (7% in 2013). In 2023, 2% purged at least weekly, which was an increase from 1% in 2013 and 2018. Within the Fraser region, rates of purging ranged from 12% in Fraser North to 15% in Fraser East.

Female and non-binary youth were more likely than males to have purged in the past 12 months (e.g., 20% of non-binary youth vs. 10% of males), and non-binary youth were the most likely to have done so at least weekly (5% vs. 2% of females vs. 1% of males).

Body satisfaction

Males were the most likely to rate their body satisfaction positively (e.g., 48% rated their satisfaction a 4 or 5 out of 5 vs. 34% of females vs. 21% of non-binary youth).



Mental health and well-being

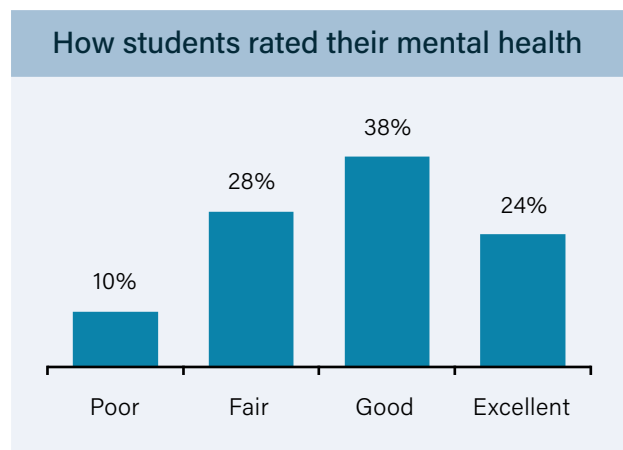
“It would be nice to have a curriculum that integrates mental health and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. This is especially applicable towards senior students. Anything that would help to destigmatize mental health in high schools would be valuable.”

17-year-old youth

“Mental health should be talked about more in workplaces and school.”

14-year-old youth

The majority of youth rated their mental health as good or excellent, with similar ratings in each HSDA. However, positive mental health ratings decreased over the past decade (62% vs. 74% in 2018 vs. 82% in 2013).



Males and younger youth were the most likely to rate their mental health positively. Around three quarters of males (74%) rated their mental health as good or excellent, compared to 52% of females and 26% of non-binary youth. Also, 74% of Grade 7s rated their mental health this positively, compared to 63% of Grade 9s and 56% of Grade 11s.

Quality of life

Youth generally indicated having a good life and that their life was going well, and a minority wished they had a different life. Results were similar across the three Fraser HSDAs. However, the percentage who rated their quality of life positively was lower than 5 years earlier.

Youth who agreed/strongly agreed ...		
	2018	2023
They had a good life	79%	76%
Their life was going well	72%	66%
They had what they wanted in life	60%	53%
Their life was going just right	59%	53%
They wished they had a different life	18%	20%

The majority of youth (60%) felt happy most or all of the time in the past month, but 10% rarely or never felt happy. Males were the most likely to report feeling happy most or all the time (69% vs. 53% of females vs. 27% of non-binary youth).

The percentage of youth who felt happy most or all of the time decreased over the past decade, from 68% in 2013, to 65% in 2018, to 60%.

Self-confidence and sense of competence

"[I am really good at] art, making friends, living in the moment."

15-year-old youth

"I'm pretty good at many sports, I'm an okay cook at home, also I'm decent at video games. I really like science in school, and socials since I learn so much."

13-year-old youth

"[I am really good at] cleaning, doing puzzles, word searches, sudoku, reading and listening to others."

17-year-old youth

"[I am really good at] softball, being a caring and kind person, loving all animals."

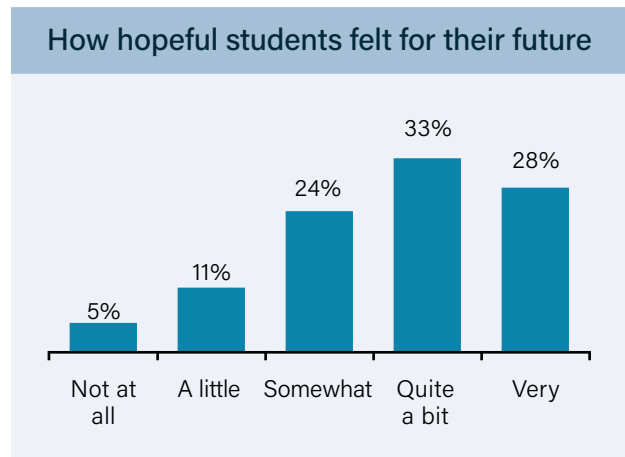
16-year-old youth

Locally, 53% of youth felt good about themselves (vs. 59% in 2018), and 73% could identify something they were good at. The percentage who could identify something they were good at was lower than in 2018 (73% vs. 79%), and ranged from 71% in Fraser North to 74% in Fraser South.

Youth who could identify something they were good at commonly listed being good at sports (e.g., volleyball, basketball, soccer, martial arts, track and field); the arts (e.g., drawing, painting, singing, playing an instrument, theatre, dance); school subjects (e.g., math, science, geography, art); relational skills (e.g., talking to people, making people laugh, taking care of others); cooking or baking; and playing video games.

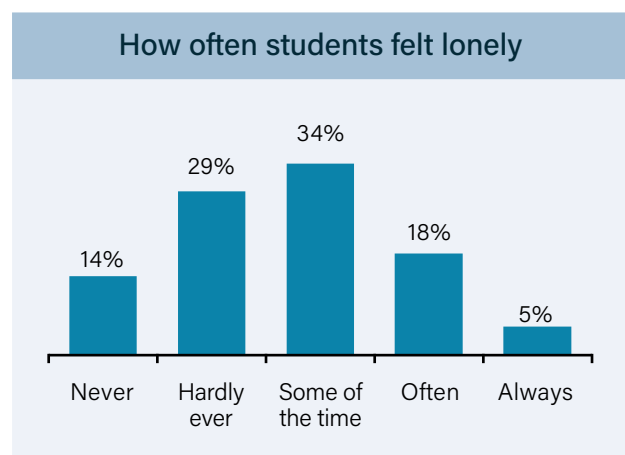
Hopefulness

The majority of youth (61%) felt quite or very hopeful for their future. This was a decrease from 66% in 2018. Within the Fraser region, rates of feeling hopeful ranged from 58% in Fraser North to 62% in Fraser South.



Loneliness

Just under a quarter of youth (23%) reported they often or always felt lonely, with similar rates across the Fraser region. Non-binary youth were the most likely to often or always feel lonely (51% vs. 27% of females vs. 17% of males).



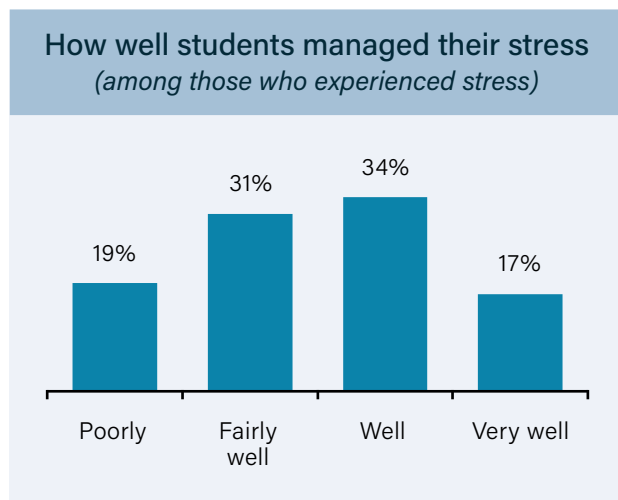
Stress and despair

"I am really calm in stressful situations."

17-year-old youth

Most youth (88%) experienced at least a little stress in the past month, including 12% who were so stressed they could not function properly. The percentage of youth who experienced extreme stress was similar to 5 years earlier and higher than in 2013 (9%).

Compared to 5 years earlier, youth who experienced stress were less likely to feel they managed their stress well or very well (50% vs. 55% in 2018).



In the past month, the majority of youth (62%) experienced some level of despair. Similar to previous years, this included 8% who felt so sad, hopeless, or discouraged that they wondered if anything was worthwhile.

Self-harm and suicidality

"Although I have mentioned being suicidal, that is not me anymore, only my past. My good friend helped me out of that hole."

14-year-old youth

In the past year, 21% of youth had cut or injured themselves on purpose without trying to kill themselves (including 14% who self-harmed on multiple occasions).

The percentage who had self-harmed was lower than the provincial rate (21% vs. 24% across BC) but higher than Fraser rates in previous survey years (15% in 2013 and 16% in 2018). Rates were similar within the three Fraser HSDAs.

Non-binary youth were the most likely to have intentionally cut or injured themselves in the past year (52% vs. 28% of females vs. 13% of males).

Youth also reported engaging in deliberate self-harm other than cutting in the past year.

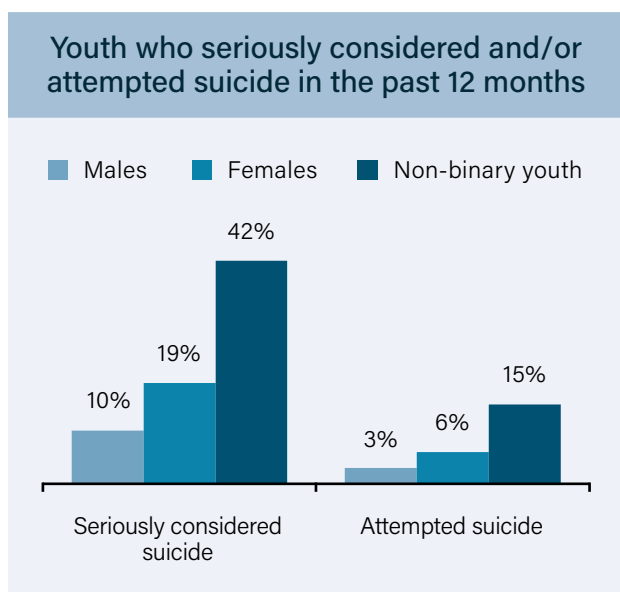
Types of self-harm youth engaged in during the past 12 months
(excluding cutting)

Starved self	15%
Over-exercised or exercised while injured	10%
Used alcohol or other substances	7%
Got into a physical fight	4%
Made a medical situation worse	4%
Had unsafe sex	2%
Drove recklessly	1%
Overdosed	1%
Overused laxatives	1%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Compared to the province as a whole, Fraser youth were less likely to have seriously considered suicide (16% vs. 18% across BC) and attempted suicide (4% vs. 5%) in the past year. Local rates were similar to 5 years earlier and across the region. However, Fraser youth were more likely to have considered suicide than those 10 years earlier (16% vs. 12% in 2013), and were less likely to have attempted suicide (4% vs. 6% in 2013).

Males were the least likely to have seriously considered or attempted suicide in the past year.



A quarter of youth (25%) had a relative or close friend who had attempted or died by suicide, including 12% who had this experience in the past year. Within the Fraser region, youth in Fraser East were the most likely to have had someone close to them attempt or die by suicide (e.g., 31% vs. 25% of Fraser South youth), and to have had this experience in the past year (15% vs. 11% in Fraser North and Fraser South).

Specific conditions

“My friend battles depression, anxiety, and anorexia so I think it’d be nice if we learned about it in school so people don’t make fun of her (which they do).”

13-year-old youth

“I would like to learn more about anxiety and how schools can aid youth to combat it.”

16-year-old youth

Reflecting the pattern across BC, there was an increase from 5 and 10 years earlier in youth who reported having most of the conditions they were asked about. They most commonly reported having an anxiety disorder.

Specific conditions	Specific conditions		
	2013	2018	2023
Anxiety disorder	8%	16%	19%
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD/ADD)	4%	6%	14%
Depression	9%	13%	12%
Eating disorder	N/A	N/A	6%
Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)	N/A	N/A	5%
Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	1%	2%	4%
Alcohol or other substance use addiction	1%	2%	3%
Autism spectrum disorder	1%	1%	3%
Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD/FAS/FAE)	<1%	<1%	<1%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.
N/A: The item was not asked on the 2013 and 2018 BC AHS.

Youth in Grades 7 and 8 were less likely than those in higher grades to report having an anxiety disorder (e.g., 16% of Grade 8s vs. 20% of Grade 10s and 11s), depression (e.g., 8% of Grade 7s vs. 14% of Grade 11s), and an alcohol or other substance use addiction (e.g., 1% of Grade 7s vs. 4% of Grade 10–12s).

Non-binary youth were the most likely to report having an anxiety disorder (44% vs. 28% of females vs. 8% of males), depression (35% vs. 15% of females vs. 7% of males), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (33% vs. 14% of males vs. 12% of females), an eating disorder (18% vs. 9% of females vs. 2% of males), autism spectrum disorder (17% vs. 3% of males vs. 1% of females), obsessive-compulsive disorder (11% vs. 6% of females vs. 4% of males), and post-traumatic stress disorder (10% vs. 5% of females vs. 2% of males). Females and non-binary youth were more likely than males to report a substance use addiction (e.g., 3% of females vs. 2% of males).

Access to mental health services

In the past 12 months, 73% of youth had not needed mental health services, 10% were able to access the services they needed, and 17% did not access services they felt they needed (42% of non-binary youth vs. 25% of females vs. 8% of males). Rates of missing out on needed services were similar across the Fraser region and compared to 5 years earlier, but were higher than in 2013 (11%).

Compared to 5 years earlier, youth who missed out on services were more likely to report this was because they did not think they could afford it, their parent or guardian would not take them, they had a previous negative experience, and they were on a waiting list. The most common reasons they missed out were because they did not want their parent or guardian to know and they thought or hoped the problem would go away. However, both of these rates were lower than in 2018.

Reasons youth did not access mental health services in the past 12 months (among those who felt they needed these services)		
	2018	2023
Didn't want parents/guardians to know	64%	61%
Thought or hoped the problem would go away	64%	54%
Didn't know where to go	48%	48%
Worried their information wouldn't be kept confidential	N/A	42%
Afraid of what they would be told	44%	36%
Too busy to go	34%	34%
Afraid someone they knew might see them	36%	32%
Didn't think they could afford it	22%	28%
Parent/guardian wouldn't take them	13%	21%
Had negative experience(s) before	11%	14%
Had no transportation	12%	11%
On a waiting list	5%	6%
Couldn't go when it was open	5%	3%
The service was not available in their community	2%	1%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

N/A: The item was not included in the 2018 BC AHS.

Note: For 'had no transportation,' 'couldn't go when it was open,' and 'the service was not available in their community,' the differences between 2018 and 2023 were not statistically significant.

There were some differences within the Fraser region in the reasons youth did not access needed mental health services. For example, Fraser East youth were more likely than those in Fraser North to have no transportation (14% vs. 8%), and were more likely than those in Fraser South to have had prior negative experiences (19% vs. 12%). Also, youth in Fraser South were more likely than those in Fraser North to not want their parent or guardian to know (64% vs. 56%), to worry their information would not be kept confidential (45% vs. 36%), and to be afraid someone they knew might see them (34% vs. 27%).

Virtual services

In the past 12 months, 12% of youth accessed virtual counselling or treatment for their mental health (with similar rates in each HSDA). This included 8% who preferred it to in-person counselling and 4% who would have preferred to access in-person counselling. Non-binary youth were the most likely to have accessed virtual mental health services (27% vs. 15% of females vs. 8% of males).

Accessing reliable mental health information

“Being in the 2SLGBTQIA+/queer community has definitely affected my mental health and I wish we learned more about it.”

16-year-old youth

When asked where they went for reliable information about mental health, youth most commonly reported going to a family member, followed by a friend or peer. Youth in Fraser North were more likely than those in Fraser South to go to a mental health professional (16% vs. 13%), and Fraser South youth were more likely than those in Fraser East to go to a website or online resource (25% vs. 21%).

Where youth accessed reliable information about mental health

A family member	45%
A friend/peer	38%
Website/online resource	24%
Mental health professional	14%
School staff	14%
Another source	2%
Did not know where to go	8%
Did not go anywhere for this information	27%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

There were some gender differences in where youth accessed reliable mental health information. For example, non-binary youth were the most likely to go to a website (41% vs. 26% of females vs. 20% of males), mental health professional (24% vs. 15% of females vs. 13% of males), and to not know where to go for reliable mental health information (18% vs. 8% of females vs. 6% of males). Males were the most likely to not go anywhere for this information (e.g., 33% vs. 21% of females).

Sexual health

Sexual activity

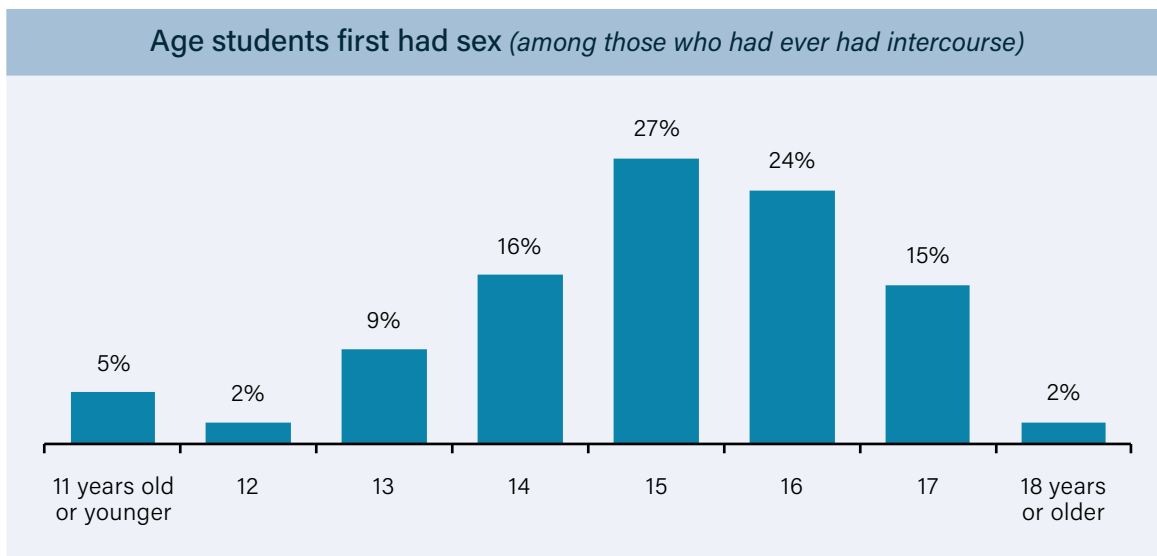
In the Fraser region, 14% of youth reported having had oral sex, which was lower than 5 years earlier (18% in 2018) and the 2023 provincial rate (17%).

Also, 13% had ever engaged in sex other than oral sex or masturbation, which was lower than in previous survey years (e.g., 16% in 2018) and to the provincial rate in 2023 (16%).

Within Fraser, youth in Fraser East were the most likely to have engaged in oral sex (e.g., 17% vs. 14% of Fraser North youth) and sexual intercourse (16% vs. 12% in Fraser North and South).

Among youth who had ever had sexual intercourse, 82% had been sexually active in the past 12 months. This included 29% who had multiple partners during this time.

Among youth who ever had intercourse, the most common ages for first doing so were 15 and 16. However, youth were more likely than 5 years earlier to have first had sexual intercourse before their 13th birthday (7% vs. 5% in 2018), and were less likely to have been 15 or older (67% vs. 73% in 2018). Non-binary youth were more likely than males and females to report they first had intercourse at age 12 or younger (25% vs. 7% of males).



Note: Not all differences were statistically significant.

Pregnancy involvement

Similar to Fraser results 5 years earlier and to the 2023 provincial rate, 1% of youth reported they had been pregnant or had caused a pregnancy. Also, 1% were unsure if they had been involved in a pregnancy.

Youth who had engaged in sexual intercourse were asked if they had made any efforts to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex. Condoms remained the most commonly used method to prevent pregnancy, but use decreased from a decade earlier (55% vs. 65% in 2013; among those who had ever had intercourse). Youth in Fraser North were more likely than those in Fraser South to use condoms the last time they had intercourse (63% vs. 51%).

Compared to 5 years earlier, there was an increase in youth who had used emergency contraception (12% vs. 8% in 2018; among those who had ever had intercourse) and IUDs (5% vs. 2%) as methods to prevent pregnancy, and a decrease in the use of prescribed birth control (28% vs. 39%).

Over 4 in 10 youth who had ever had intercourse (44%) used withdrawal (an unreliable method to prevent pregnancy), and 12% indicated withdrawal was the only method they used to prevent pregnancy. The percentage who used withdrawal exclusively was similar to 5 years earlier, but higher than in 2013 (8%).

Method(s) youth used to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex (among those who had ever had intercourse)

Condoms	55%
Withdrawal	44%
Birth control pills, birth control patch, NuvaRing, or other method prescribed by a doctor or nurse	28%
Emergency contraception	12%
IUD	5%
Depo-Provera	1%
Not sure	4%
Did not try to prevent pregnancy	3%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

In the Fraser region, 8% of youth who had ever had sexual intercourse reported that the last time they did so was with a same-sex partner.



Forced sexual activity

When asked if they had ever been forced into sexual activity against their will, 5% of students reported they had been forced into sexual activity by another youth, and 2% by an adult. Males were the least likely to report they had been forced into sexual activity (e.g., 3% vs. 10% of females).

Protection against sexually transmitted infections

“We need better sex education. I did not learn about basic things such as discharge or how to lower my chances of catching STIs during lesbian/oral sex.”

18-year-old youth

Comparable to Fraser results over the past decade and to the provincial rate in 2023, 1% of youth had ever had a sexually transmitted infection.

Among youth who had engaged in oral sex, 20% used a condom or other barrier the last time they had oral sex (vs. 16% in 2018 and 2013).

Youth were more likely to use protection during intercourse than oral sex, as 57% used a condom or other barrier the last time they had intercourse. However, this was a decrease from 64% in 2018 and 71% in 2013 (among those who had ever had intercourse). Rates of using protection were similar across the Fraser region.

Sex education at school

“I feel that the biggest place I’m lacking in terms of education, health, etc., would be in sexual health. The last time I learned about that subject was several years ago.”

17-year-old youth

For the first time, the BC AHS asked youth about their views on the sexual health education they received at school. In total, 75% of Fraser youth reported they received sex education at school, including 48% who found it helpful and 27% who had not found it helpful. The percentage who received sex education in school was lower than that across BC (80%). Within Fraser, Fraser North youth were more likely to have received sex education than those in Fraser South (79% vs. 74%).

Among youth who had received sex education at school, females were the most likely to have found it helpful (66% vs. 63% of males vs. 55% of non-binary youth).

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

- 85% felt the sex education they received was respectful of their culture/religion.
- 84% felt it was relevant to their gender identity.
- 82% felt it had started at the right age for them.
- 79% felt it was relevant to their sexual orientation.
- 58% felt it was relevant to any disability or health condition they had.

Accessing reliable sexual health information

Youth who wanted reliable information about sexual health commonly approached their parents and peers, and also looked to online resources for this information. Youth in Fraser South were less likely than those in Fraser North to approach their parent or guardian (27% vs. 32%), a sexual health professional (7% vs. 9%), and other professional (2% vs. 3%). They were more likely to go to an online resource than those in Fraser East (25% vs. 21%).

Where youth accessed reliable information about sexual health	
Parent/guardian	29%
A same-aged friend or peer	26%
Website/online resource	24%
An older youth	15%
Family member other than a parent	9%
School staff	8%
Sexual health professional	7%
Adult outside their family	5%
Pornography	4%
Printed resource (e.g., book, brochure, poster)	2%
Professional other than a sexual health professional	2%
Did not know where to go	6%
Did not go anywhere	40%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

There were some gender differences in where youth went for reliable sexual health information. For example:

- Non-binary youth were the most likely to access an online resource (34% vs. 25% of females vs. 22% of males), a printed resource (e.g., 7% vs. 3% of females), and to not know where to go for this information (e.g., 14% vs. 5% of males).
- Females were the most likely to approach a same-aged friend (e.g., 31% vs. 21% of males), an older youth (e.g., 18% vs. 13% of non-binary youth), and their parent or guardian (e.g., 33% vs. 26% of males). They were the least likely to access pornography for this information (e.g., 2% vs. 8% of non-binary youth).
- Males were the most likely to indicate not going anywhere for reliable information about sexual health (e.g., 45% vs. 34% of females).

The importance of reliable sexual health information and supplies

Having access to reliable sexual health information and supplies was associated with safer sexual practices. For example, among youth who had ever had intercourse, those who found the sex education they received at school helpful were more likely to have used a condom or other barrier the last time they had sex (60% vs. 50% of those who did not find it helpful). They were also less likely to access pornography for sexual health information (3% vs. 5%), and to not know where to go for this information (5% vs. 8%).

Substance use

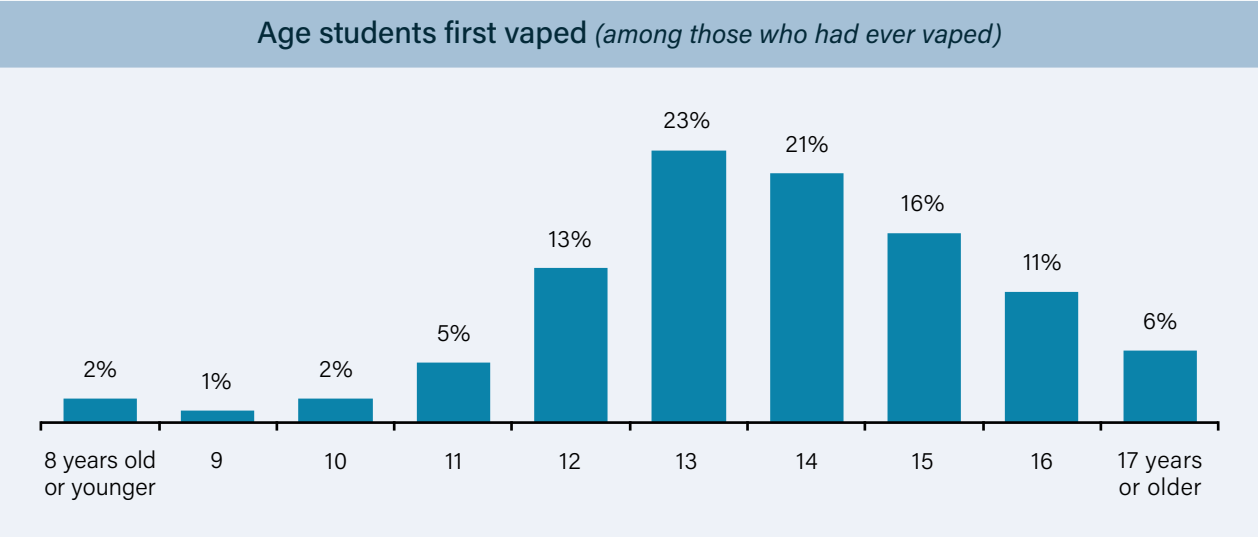
Vaping

"[I'd like to] learn more about vaping because it's a big issue among my peers."

16-year-old youth

In the Fraser, 20% of youth had ever vaped (vs. 26% provincially). Males were the least likely to have tried vaping (e.g., 17% vs. 23% of females). Within the Fraser region, youth in Fraser East were the most likely to have vaped (e.g., 25% vs. 20% in Fraser North).

The majority of those who vaped did so before their 15th birthday, and 32% first did so at age 15 or older.



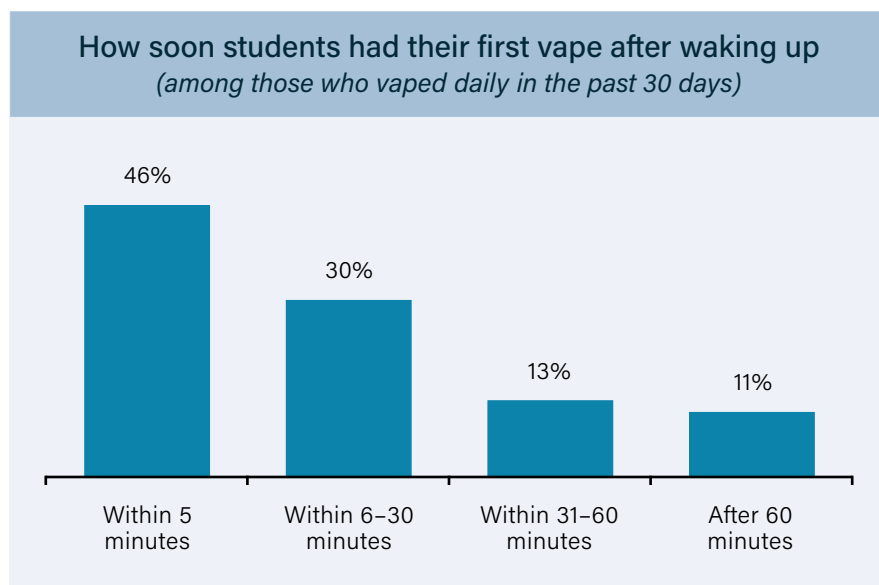
Note: Not all differences were statistically significant.

Among those who had tried vaping, 52% had vaped in the past 30 days (56% of females vs. 48% of males). Recent vaping rates were similar across the Fraser region.

Number of days youth vaped in the past 30 days <i>(among those who had ever vaped)</i>	
0 days	48%
1 or 2 days	16%
3 to 5 days	5%
6 to 9 days	4%
10 to 19 days	7%
20 to 29 days	7%
All 30 days	13%

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

Among youth who vaped daily, 76% vaped within 30 minutes of waking up.

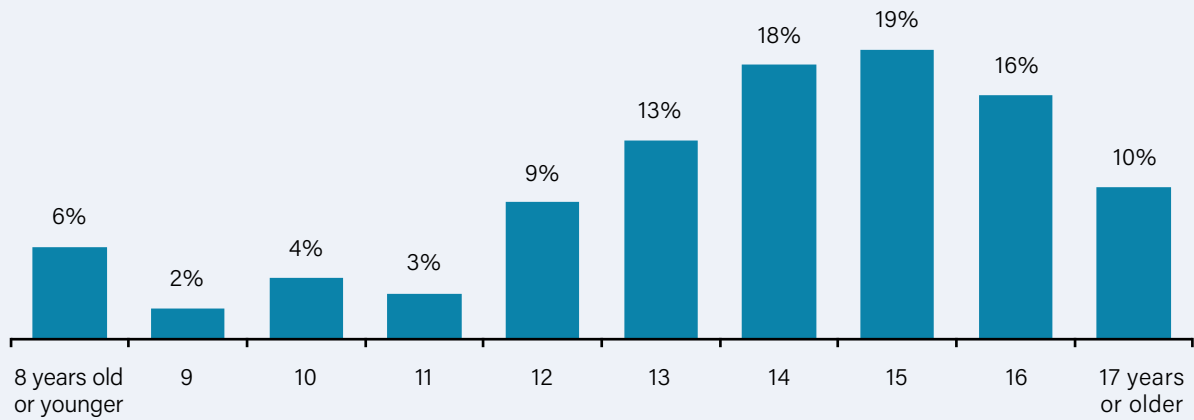


Smoking

In 2023, 10% of youth had smoked tobacco, including 2% who smoked tobacco exclusively and 8% who both smoked and vaped. Also, 12% of youth vaped exclusively. Fraser youth were less likely to have tried smoking than youth across the province as a whole (15% provincially), and in comparison to previous survey years (10% vs. 14% in 2018 vs. 17% in 2013). Within Fraser, those in Fraser South were the least likely to have smoked (e.g., 8% vs. 11% of Fraser North youth).

Provincially, youth who had tried smoking were more likely to first do so at a young age. This was also the case among Fraser youth who had ever smoked, as 45% waited until they were 15 or older to first do so (vs. 50% in 2018). The percentage who first smoked at age 12 or younger increased from 19% in 2018 to 24%.

Age students first smoked tobacco (among those who had ever smoked)



Note: Not all differences were statistically significant.

In the Fraser region, 4% of all youth were current smokers (i.e., had smoked in the past 30 days). Among youth who had ever smoked, 36% smoked in the past 30 days, and 11% of these youth used a product to help them stop smoking during that time (excluding vapes).

The decrease in past month use of various tobacco products continued, including cigarettes (4% vs. 6% in 2018 vs. 8% in 2013), cigars/cigarillos (e.g., 2% vs. 3% in 2013), chewing tobacco (e.g., 1% vs. 2% in 2013), and a hookah (1% vs. 3% in 2018 vs. 4% in 2013).

Number of days youth smoked tobacco in the past 30 days (among those who had ever smoked)

0 days	64%
1 or 2 days	20%
3 to 5 days	6%
6 to 9 days	4%
10 to 19 days	3%
20 to 29 days	1%
All 30 days	2%



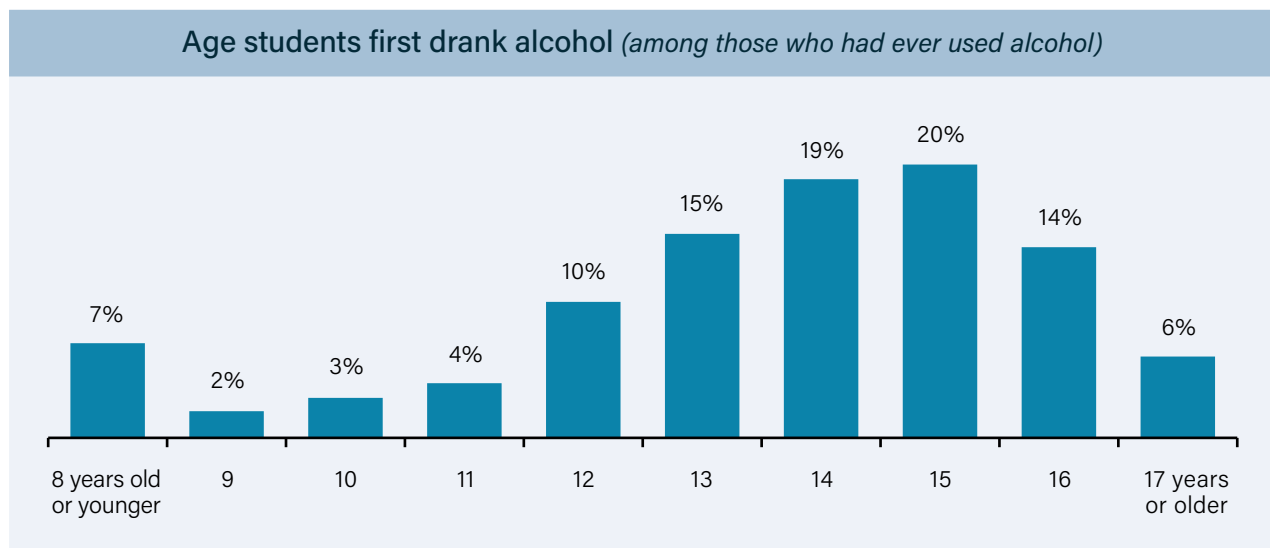
Alcohol

Fewer Fraser youth had tried alcohol (beyond a few sips) than in previous survey years (30% vs. 38% in 2013 and 2018), and in comparison to youth across BC (38% in 2023). Females were more likely to have tried alcohol than males (32% vs. 27%). Within the Fraser region, Fraser South youth were the least likely to have drunk alcohol (e.g., 27% vs. 35% of Fraser East youth).

Four in 10 youth who tried alcohol (40%) waited until they were 15 or older to first do so, which was a return to the rate in 2013 after an increase to 42% in 2018. Also, youth were more likely than in previous survey years to have first tried alcohol before their 13th birthday (26% vs. 21% in 2018 vs. 19% in 2013).

Among youth who had ever used alcohol:

- 55% drank in the past month.
- 29% had at least five drinks within a couple of hours on at least 1 day in the past month, including 1% who drank this heavily on 20 or more days.
- 22% had more than two drinks on at least 1 day in the past week, including 1% who did so daily.



Note: Not all differences were statistically significant.

Rates of recent and frequent alcohol use were similar across the three Fraser HSDAs.

Number of days youth drank alcohol in the past 30 days <i>(among those who had ever used alcohol)</i>	
0 days	45%
1 or 2 days	32%
3 to 5 days	13%
6 to 9 days	6%
10 to 19 days	2%
20 to 29 days	1%
All 30 days	1%

Most youth who had tried alcohol (73%) had not drunk last Saturday. Those who did drink that day most commonly drank liquor.

Types of alcohol youth drank last Saturday <i>(among those who drank that day)</i>	
Liquor	72%
Coolers	54%
Beer	31%
Wine	15%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Cannabis

“[I’d like to learn more about the] effects of weed and other common substances on youth health. Never learned about it in school and did my own research which is why I am trying to cut back.”

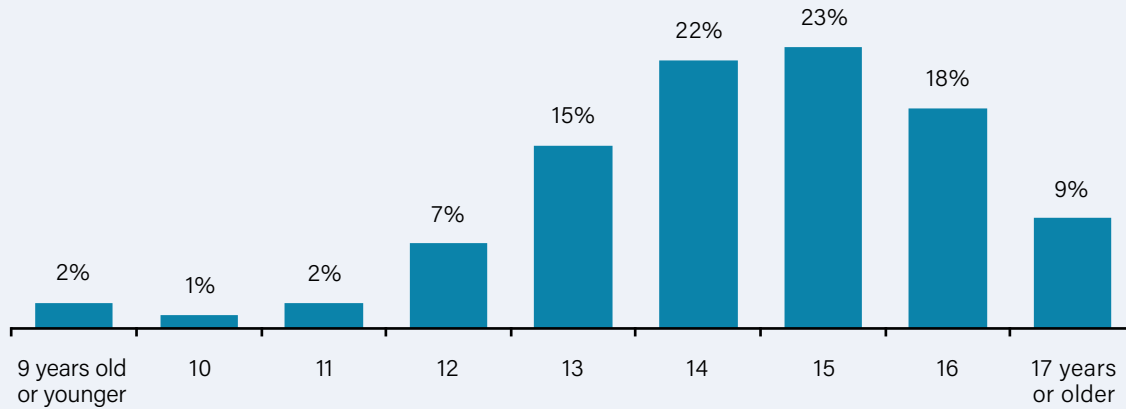
17-year-old youth

In the Fraser region, 15% of youth had ever used cannabis. This was a decrease from previous survey years (21% in 2013 and 2018), and lower than the 2023 provincial rate (22%). Within the Fraser region, youth in Fraser East were the most likely to have used cannabis (21% vs. 14% of Fraser North and South youth).

Females were more likely than males to have ever used cannabis (17% vs. 13%).

Among youth who had tried cannabis, 50% waited until they were 15 or older to first do so, which was similar to 5 and 10 years earlier.

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



Note: Not all differences were statistically significant.

Among youth who had tried cannabis:

- 59% used it in the past 30 days, including 14% who used it on 20 or more days.
- 32% used it on the Saturday before taking the survey.

Number of days youth used cannabis in the past 30 days (among those who had ever used cannabis)

0 days	41%
1 or 2 days	22%
3 to 5 days	10%
6 to 9 days	6%
10 to 19 days	7%
20 to 29 days	6%
All 30 days	8%

Youth who had used cannabis were asked about all the ways they consumed it the last time. Most had smoked it (70%), 35% vaped it, 24% ate it, and 1% took it another way (such as having a cannabis drink). They were also asked about their most recent source of cannabis, and had most commonly shared it among friends.

Most recent source of cannabis (among those who had ever used cannabis)

It was shared among a group of friends	59%
Friend or family member gave it to them	34%
Bought it from a friend or family member	15%
Bought it from a cannabis store	9%
Bought it from someone they did not know	7%
Someone they did not know gave it to them	4%
Bought it from a website	3%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

There were some age differences in where youth got their cannabis. For example, among youth who had used cannabis, those aged 15–18 were more than three times as likely as younger youth to have purchased it from a cannabis store (10% vs. 3%), and younger youth were more likely to have bought it from a stranger (12% of those aged 14 and younger bought their cannabis from a stranger vs. 5% of those aged 17 or 18).

Other substances

“I think in BC we need to educate more about drugs and the toxic drug crisis.”

12-year-old youth

Youth were asked about their lifetime use of a range of substances (excluding alcohol, cannabis, and nicotine). Twelve percent of Fraser youth had used at least one of these other substances (vs. 14% across BC).

Substances youth had ever used	
More of their own prescription than prescribed	6%
Mushrooms	4%
Prescription pills without a doctor’s consent (other than benzodiazepines)	4%
Hallucinogens (other than mushrooms)	2%
Cocaine	2%
Benzodiazepines without a doctor’s consent (e.g., Xanax, Valium, Ativan)	1%
Inhalants	1%
Ecstasy/MDMA	1%
Heroin, fentanyl, or other opioids	1%
Amphetamines	1%
Ketamine, GHB	1%
Crystal meth	1%

Reflecting the provincial pattern, there was a decrease from previous survey years in the use of ecstasy or MDMA (1% vs. 2% in 2018 vs. 3% in 2013) and cocaine (e.g., 2% vs. 3% in 2013). There was also a decrease in the use of hallucinogens other than mushrooms (e.g., under 2% vs. 2% in 2018). Rates of mushroom use were similar to 2018 but increased from 2013 (4% vs. 3%).

In comparison to youth across BC, youth in the Fraser region were less likely to have used mushrooms (4% vs. 6% provincially), other hallucinogens (under 2% vs. over 2%), benzodiazepines without a doctor’s consent (1% vs. 2%), inhalants (1% vs. 2%), and ecstasy or MDMA (1% vs. 2%).

There were no differences in rates of using these substances across the region, except Fraser South youth were more likely than those in Fraser North to have used more of their own prescription medication than prescribed (6% vs. 4%).



Reported reasons for using substances

Youth reported using substances for a variety of reasons, including to manage their emotions. Reported reasons for using were generally similar across the Fraser, with youth in each HSDA most commonly reporting they last used substances to have fun.

Among those who had used substances, youth in Fraser East were more likely than those in Fraser North to report using because there was nothing else to do (12% vs. 8%), and Fraser South youth were more likely than those in Fraser North to have used because they were stressed (24% vs. 19%).

Reasons youth used substances the last time *(among those who had used alcohol or other substances)*

Wanted to have fun	59%
Wanted to experiment	36%
Friends were doing it	30%
Because of stress	22%
Felt down or sad	20%
There was nothing else to do	10%
To manage physical pain	6%
Thought it would help them focus	6%
Because of an addiction	5%
Felt pressured into doing it/to fit in	3%
Didn't mean to (e.g., drink was spiked)	2%
To change the effect of another substance	2%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

There were some gender differences in the reasons youth used substances the last time. For example, among youth who had used substances:

- Females were the most likely to have used because their friends were doing it (e.g., 34% vs. 25% of males) and because they wanted to have fun (e.g., 65% vs. 52% of non-binary youth).
- Males were the least likely to have used because of stress (e.g., 16% vs. 27% of females), they felt sad or down (e.g., 14% vs. 28% of non-binary youth), and there was nothing else to do (e.g., 8% of males vs. 11% of females).
- Non-binary youth were more likely than males to have used substances because they felt pressured into doing it or to fit in (9% vs. 2%).

There were also some age differences. For example, among those who had used substances, around a third (32%) of Grade 11 and 12 students used substances the last time because their friends were doing it (vs. 14% of Grade 7s). Also, Grade 12s were the least likely to report using because they wanted to experiment (e.g., 30% vs. 40% of Grade 9s).

Consequences of substance use

The majority of those who had used substances in the past 12 months (57%) did not report any negative consequences of their use. The most commonly reported consequence was being told they did something they could not remember.

Consequences of substance use experienced in the past 12 months <i>(among youth who had used alcohol or other substances during this time)</i>	
Was told they did something they couldn't remember	26%
Passed out	21%
Argued with family members	11%
Got injured	11%
School work or grades changed	9%
Lost friends or broke up with a romantic partner	7%
Damaged property	6%
Had sex when they didn't want to	5%
Got into a physical fight	4%
Got in trouble with police	3%
Overdosed	2%
Had to get medical treatment	1%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Males were generally less likely than females to report various negative consequences of their substance use. However, they were more likely than females to have been in a physical fight while intoxicated (5% vs. 3%; among those who had used alcohol or other substances in the past year). Females were more likely than males to have been told they did something they could not remember (32% vs. 20%), passed out (25% vs. 16%), argued with family (15% vs. 7%), got injured (14% vs. 8%), had their school work or grades change (11% vs. 7%), and lost friends or broken up with a partner (9% vs. 5%). Non-binary youth were the most likely to have had sex when they did not want to (e.g., 13% vs. 5% of females).

Among youth who had ever had sexual intercourse, the percentage who reported using alcohol or other substances before having sex decreased from 23% in 2013 to 18% in 2023.

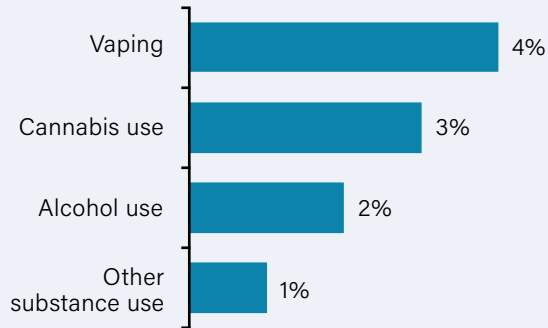
A small minority of youth had ever driven a vehicle after using alcohol (2%), cannabis (2%), or other substances (1%). A greater percentage had been a passenger in a vehicle with a driver who had been using alcohol (16%), cannabis (9%), or other substances (4%).

There were no differences within the Fraser region in youth who had driven after using substances. However, Fraser East youth were the most likely to have been a passenger in a car with a driver who had been using alcohol (20% vs. 16% in Fraser South vs. 13% in Fraser North), cannabis (e.g., 14% vs. 8% in Fraser South), and other substances (6% vs. 4% in Fraser South vs. 2% in Fraser North).

There were no differences within the Fraser region in rates of youth reporting that they felt or had been told they needed help for their substance use in the past year. Across the region, youth were most likely to report needing help for their vaping.

Males were the least likely to report needing help for their vaping (3% vs. 6% of female and non-binary youth) and alcohol use (e.g., 2% vs. 3% of females), and were less likely than females to need help for their cannabis use (2% vs. 3%). Non-binary youth were the most likely to report needing help for other substance use (4% vs. 1% of males and females).

In the past 12 months, students felt or were told they needed help for ...



Adverse experiences

"[I'd like to learn more about] the dangers of grooming online, whether by someone older or someone your age."

16-year-old youth

Physical and sexual abuse

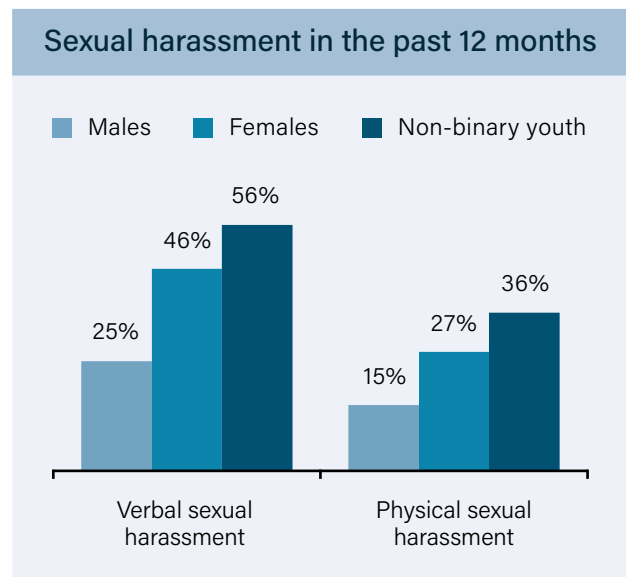
In their lifetime, 13% of youth had been physically abused, which was comparable to 5 and 10 years earlier. Also, 11% had been sexually abused, which was an increase from 10% in 2018 and 8% in 2013.

There were no differences across the Fraser region in rates of physical abuse. However, rates of sexual abuse ranged from 9% in Fraser North to 14% in Fraser East.

Males were the least likely to have experienced physical abuse (10% vs. 15% of females vs. 30% of non-binary youth) and sexual abuse (6% vs. 16% of females vs. 22% of non-binary youth).

Sexual harassment

In the past 12 months, 36% of youth had experienced verbal sexual harassment, which was similar to 2018 and lower than a decade earlier (38% in 2013). However, the rate of physical sexual harassment rose from 17% in 2013, to 20% in 2018, to 22%.



Older youth were generally more likely than younger ones to report they had experienced verbal sexual harassment (e.g., 40% of Grade 11s vs. 28% of Grade 7s) and physical sexual harassment (e.g., 29% of Grade 12s vs. 18% of Grade 8s) in the past 12 months.

Dating violence

In the past 12 months, 37% of youth reported they had been in a dating relationship. Among these youth, 8% had experienced physical violence within that relationship, such as being hit, punched, or slapped. Non-binary youth were the most likely to report experiencing this type of dating violence (17% vs. 8% of males vs. 7% of females).

The percentage of youth who experienced dating violence was similar to 2018 and higher than a decade earlier (5% in 2013). However, there was an increase from 5 years earlier in males who experienced dating violence (from 6% in 2018 to 8%).

Also in the past year, 12% of youth reported that the person they dated had used social media to try to control, embarrass, or hurt them. Males were less likely than females to have experienced this (10% vs. 14%).

Physical dating violence rates were similar across the Fraser region. However, digital abuse rates ranged from 10% in Fraser North to 14% in Fraser East.

Discrimination

"I faced discrimination in a previous school due to my health."

16-year-old youth

Provincially, there was an increase in youth who reported experiencing most forms of discrimination they were asked about. In the Fraser region, there was a rise in youth who reported they had been discriminated against on the grounds of their gender or sex (12% vs. 9% in 2018) and sexual orientation (6% vs. 5%) in the past year, and a decrease in discrimination due to family income (from 7% in 2018 to 5%). Rates of experiencing racism, and discrimination on the grounds of physical appearance and disability were unchanged.

Compared to the province as a whole, Fraser youth were less likely to report that they had experienced discrimination because of their gender or sex, sexual orientation, how much money they or their family had, and their health condition or disability. However, they were more likely to have experienced discrimination because of their race, ethnicity, or skin colour and because of their religious affiliation.

Reasons youth perceived they had been discriminated against in the past 12 months

	Fraser	BC
Physical appearance	24%	24%
Weight	18%	18%
Race, ethnicity, or skin colour	18%	15%
Gender/sex	12%	14%
Religion	8%	7%
Sexual orientation	6%	7%
How much money they/their family had	5%	6%
Health condition	4%	4%
Disability	3%	4%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Note: Fraser youth were less likely than those across BC to experience discrimination because of a health condition.

Within the Fraser region:

- Youth in Fraser South were the most likely to experience racism (e.g., 19% vs. 15% in Fraser East).
- Youth in Fraser North were the least likely to experience discrimination because of their religion (e.g., 6% vs. 10% of Fraser East youth) and their weight (e.g., 15% vs. 19% in Fraser South).
- Youth in Fraser East were the most likely to experience discrimination based on how much money they or their family had (7% vs. 5% in Fraser North and South).

Youth were asked about any locations where they experienced discrimination in the past year. They most commonly reported being discriminated against at school. Fraser North youth were the least likely to experience discrimination at school (e.g., 22% vs. 26% in Fraser South).

Where youth experienced discrimination in the past 12 months

At school	25%
On social media/online	12%
On the street	7%
In a store/restaurant	4%
In extracurricular activities (e.g., sports)	4%
On public transit	4%
At work	2%
In a hospital or other health care setting	1%
Other	2%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

The majority of youth who had experienced discrimination in the past year (65%) had this experience rarely. However, 6% experienced discrimination regularly.

Other forms of victimization

“I have Tourette’s syndrome which I am frequently bullied for.”

14-year-old youth

Youth were asked about their experiences of victimization at school and on the way to and from school in the past year. Compared to 5 years earlier, youth were less likely to have been socially excluded (35% vs. 37% in 2018) and to have been teased to the point of extreme discomfort (32% vs. 36%). The rate of being physically attacked or assaulted was similar to 5 years earlier (8% in 2023).

Non-binary youth were the most likely to have been severely teased in the past year (54% vs. 39% of females vs. 25% of males). Female and non-binary youth were more likely than males to have been excluded (e.g., 45% of females vs. 25% of males), while male and non-binary youth were more likely than females to have been physically attacked or assaulted (e.g., 13% of non-binary youth vs. 5% of females).

There was a decrease in youth who reported they had perpetrated any of these forms of victimization in the past 12 months (7% vs. 9% in 2018).

In the past year, 14% of youth reported they had been cyberbullied (including through texts and social media), which was similar to 5 years earlier. However, there was an increase in youth who reported perpetrating online victimization (7% vs. 5% in 2018).

Males were more likely than females to have perpetrated online victimization (8% vs. 6%), and were the least likely to have been cyberbullied (10% vs. 16% of females vs. 24% of non-binary youth).

Bereavement

The majority of youth (68%) had experienced bereavement. Compared to 5 years earlier, there was an increase in those who had lost someone to an overdose (7% vs. 5% in 2018).

Reasons someone close to them had died

Illness (other than COVID-19)	44%
Old age/natural death	43%
Accident	10%
Suicide	8%
COVID-19	7%
Overdose	7%
Violence	4%
Other	1%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Youth in Fraser East were the most likely to have experienced bereavement (e.g., 72% vs. 67% in Fraser North). Specifically, they were the most likely to have lost someone close to them as a result of an accident (e.g., 12% vs. 10% in Fraser South), an overdose (11% vs. 6% in Fraser North and Fraser South), and suicide (10% vs. 7% in the other two regions).

School experiences

School connectedness

Reflecting the provincial pattern, fewer Fraser youth reported positively on their experiences at school than youth 5 years earlier. An exception was feeling they were treated fairly by school staff, which decreased provincially but remained stable in the Fraser region.

Youth who agreed/strongly agreed they felt ...	2018 2023	
	School staff expected them to do well	79%
School staff treated them fairly	71%	70%
Safe at school	73%	64%
Teachers cared about them	67%	62%
Like a part of the school	61%	56%
Happy to be at school	62%	55%
Other school staff cared about them	51%	48%

Note: The difference between 2018 and 2023 was not significant for 'felt school staff treated them fairly.'

Grade 7 students were the most likely to feel like a part of their school (e.g., 68% vs. 51% of Grade 11s), to be happy at school (e.g., 64% vs. 52% of Grade 10s), and to feel their teachers and other school staff cared about them (e.g., 74% felt their teachers cared vs. 64% of Grade 12s). Students in Grades 7 and 12 were the most likely to feel safe at school (e.g., 70% of Grade 7s and 12s vs. 62% of Grade 10s).

Absences

Youth were asked about their reasons for missing school in the past 30 days. The most common reason was because of illness.

Reasons for missing school in the past 30 days	
Illness	47%
Appointments	36%
Skipping	24%
Sleeping in	23%
Own mental health (e.g., anxiety, depression)	19%
Family responsibilities	14%
No transportation	7%
Work	3%
Bullying	3%
Suspension	2%

Youth in higher grades were more likely to have skipped school (e.g., 33% of Grade 11s vs. 21% of Grade 9s vs. 8% of Grade 7s), as well as to have missed school due to their mental health (e.g., 23% of Grade 11s vs. 18% of Grade 9s vs. 12% of Grade 7s), work (e.g., 6% of Grade 12s vs. 2% of Grade 8s and 9s), and because they slept in (e.g., 32% of Grade 12s vs. 18% of Grade 8s). Youth in lower grades were more likely than those in higher grades to have missed school due to a suspension (2% of Grades 7–9 vs. 1% of Grades 10–12).

Within the Fraser region:

- Youth in Fraser East were the most likely to have missed school in the past 30 days. Specifically, they were the most likely to have missed school due to appointments (42% vs. 37% in Fraser South vs. 33% in Fraser North), skipping school (e.g., 29% vs. 23% in Fraser South), sleeping in (e.g., 28% vs. 21% in Fraser South), their mental health (24% vs. 18% in Fraser North and Fraser South), and family responsibilities (e.g., 19% vs. 13% in Fraser North).
- Fraser South youth were the least likely to have missed school because they did not have transportation (5% vs. 8% of Fraser North and East youth).

Education plans

Reflecting the provincial pattern, there was a decrease in youth who planned to finish high school and pursue post-secondary education (80% vs. 85% in 2018 vs. 89% in 2013). Within the Fraser region, the percentage of youth who planned to attend post-secondary ranged from 76% in Fraser East to 81% in Fraser South.

Females were the most likely to plan to attend post-secondary (86% vs. 76% of males vs. 60% of non-binary youth).

As might be anticipated, students in higher grades were more likely to plan to attend post-secondary than those in lower grades (e.g., 87% of Grade 12s vs. 74% of Grade 8s), while those in lower grades were more likely not to know or to have thought about their plans (e.g., 25% of Grade 7s had not thought about it vs. 10% of Grade 11s).

School plans	
Did not expect to finish high school	1%
Planned to finish high school but not go to post-secondary	5%
Planned to go to post-secondary	80%
Had not thought about it	9%
Didn't know	6%



School safety

Youth generally felt safe at school and getting to and from school. However, they were more likely to feel safe in supervised locations, such as classrooms and libraries, than in less supervised spaces. Youth were less likely than Fraser youth 5 and 10 years earlier to feel safe in all the locations they were asked about.

Locations where youth usually/always felt safe			
	2013	2018	2023
Library	96%	94%	92%
Classrooms	95%	93%	89%
Getting to and from school	89%	88%	86%
Cafeteria	91%	90%	85%
Hallways and stairwells	91%	89%	84%
Outside on school grounds	85%	85%	81%
Changing rooms	87%	85%	72%
Washrooms	88%	86%	68%

Non-binary youth were the least likely to feel safe in all locations (e.g., 74% felt safe in their classrooms vs. 87% of females vs. 91% of males). Males were the most likely to feel safe in most locations, except the washrooms, where females were most likely to feel safe (70% vs. 67% of males vs. 48% of non-binary youth); and the changing rooms, where the percentage of males and females who felt safe was comparable.

Youth in Grades 7 and 12 were more likely than those in the other grades to feel safe in the washrooms (e.g., 72% of Grade 12s vs. 64% of Grade 10s).

The importance of school connectedness

School connectedness can contribute to other aspects of well-being. For example, students who felt like a part of their school were less likely to skip classes in the past month (6% skipped on 3 or more days vs. 17% who did not feel like a part of their school), and to bully another youth in person (5% vs. 12%). Also, they were more likely to rate their mental health as good or excellent (76% vs. 31%), feel quite or very hopeful for their future (74% vs. 35%), and plan to attend post-secondary (85% vs. 67%).



Relationships and connections

Friendships and dating relationships

"[I would like to learn more about] how to maintain healthy friendships."

14-year-old youth

Compared to 5 years earlier, youth were less likely to have one or more in-person friends (94% vs. 96% in 2018), including three or more such friends (68% vs. 81%). They were more likely to have online friends whom they had never met in person (35% vs. 33% in 2018). There were no differences across the Fraser region in those who had friends in person and online.

Three quarters of youth (75%) reported they had friends whom they could share their ups and downs with, and the same percentage (75%) reported that they got along with the people around them.

In the past 12 months, 9% of Fraser youth had dated someone online whom they had never met in person (vs. 7% in 2018).

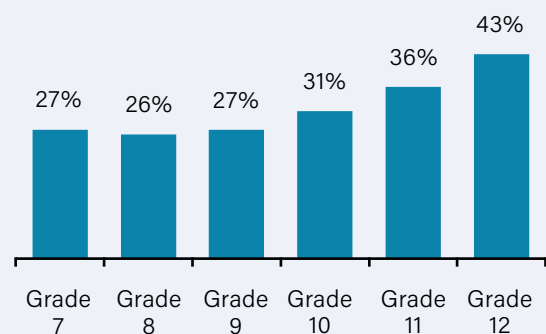
Caring and supportive adults

Most youth (71%) had at least one adult in their neighbourhood or community (outside of their family and school) who they felt cared about them (vs. 73% across BC).

Also, 75% had an adult inside their family they could talk to when they were having a serious problem (an increase from 70% in 2018), 32% had one outside their family (vs. 25% in 2018), and 25% had both (vs. 17% in 2018).

Youth in higher grades were more likely than those in lower grades to have an adult outside their family they felt they could talk to when they were having a serious problem.

Students who had an adult outside their family to turn to when they had a serious problem



Note: Not all differences between grades were statistically significant.

Most youth who felt they needed help with specific tasks had an adult who would help them. Non-binary youth were the least likely to have such an adult in their life. For example, 96% of males and females had an adult to help them with making and getting to appointments, compared to 91% of non-binary youth. Also, 92% of males and females had an adult to help them learn life skills, compared to 81% of non-binary youth.

Had an adult to help with tasks <i>(among those who needed help)</i>	
Making/getting to appointments	96%
Learning life skills (e.g., cooking, budgeting)	92%
Preparing for university, college, or trade school	88%
Getting a job	85%
Homework	81%

Family connectedness

The majority of youth felt connected to their family. However, there was a decrease in those who felt their family respected them (74% vs. 77% in 2018) and understood them (54% vs. 60%) quite a bit or very much.

Youth who felt their family quite a bit/very much ...	
Respected them	74%
Paid attention to them	74%
Had fun together	72%
Understood them	54%

Younger youth were generally more likely than older ones to feel connected to their family. For example, 66% of Grade 7s felt quite a bit or very much understood by their family compared to 49% of Grade 11s. Also, 77% of Grade 8s felt they had fun with their family, compared to 66% of Grade 12s.



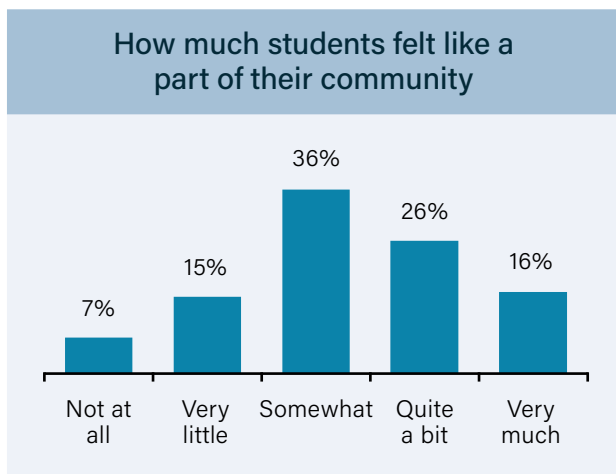
Community connectedness and sense of safety

"[I am really good at] helping others in my community."

15-year-old youth

Provincially, there was a decrease in youth feeling connected to their community. However, in the Fraser region 42% felt quite or very connected to their community, which was similar to the rate in 2018 and higher than a decade earlier (39% in 2013). Rates of feeling connected to community were similar across the three Fraser HSDAs.

Youth in lower grades were the most likely to feel connected to their community (e.g., 56% of Grade 7s felt quite or very connected vs. 48% of Grade 8s vs. 36% of Grade 11s).



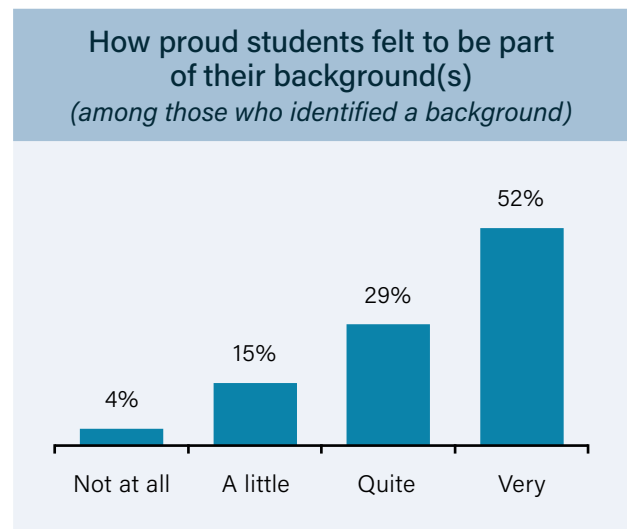
Most youth (90%) often or always felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day. Compared to 5 years earlier, youth were more likely to feel this level of safety at night (62% vs. 60% in 2018), and were less likely to feel this safe on public transit (52% vs. 56%; among those who used transit).

Also, Fraser youth were less likely than those across BC to often or always feel safe on public transit (52% vs. 54%; among those who used it). Rates of feeling safe on transit ranged from 47% in Fraser South to 59% in Fraser North.

Other types of connectedness

Cultural pride

Most youth (96%) felt at least a little proud to be part of the background(s) they identified with. Within the Fraser region, youth in Fraser South were the most likely to feel very proud of their background (e.g., 57% vs. 47% of youth in Fraser North).



Spirituality

The majority of youth (58%) felt that spirituality was at least a little important to them, including 17% for whom it was very important.

Connection to the land and nature

The majority of youth (61%) felt connected to the land and nature at least sometimes, including 5% who always felt this way.

Time to do the things they want

“I would like to learn more about time management because I feel like I don’t have enough time in the day to hold activities with friends and family without school or work getting in the way.”

14-year-old youth

Youth generally felt they spent the right amount of time with family, friends, on their own, and in nature. There was an increase in the percentage who felt they had the right amount of time with family (75% vs. 73% in 2018) and in nature (57% vs. 54%).

How much time youth felt they had to do what they wanted ...

	Not enough	Right amount	Too much
With family	18%	75%	7%
With friends	26%	68%	5%
On their own	20%	66%	14%
In nature	39%	57%	4%

Grade 7 and 8 students were the most likely to feel they spent the right amount of time with friends (e.g., 78% of Grade 7s vs. 68% of Grade 9s), alone (e.g., 74% of Grade 7s vs. 62% of Grade 11s), and in nature (e.g., 64% of Grade 8s vs. 56% of Grade 10s). Grade 11s and 12s were the least likely to feel they spent the right amount of time with family (e.g., 71% of Grade 11s vs. 80% of Grade 8s).

The importance of connections

Having positive and supportive connections to peers, family, and community promotes youth’s health and well-being. For example, youth who felt they had an adult in their neighbourhood who cared about them were more likely to feel quite or very hopeful for their future (65% vs. 50% of those who did not feel an adult cared).

Other types of connections were also important. For example, youth who often or always felt connected to the land or nature were more likely to feel they managed their stress well or very well (58% vs. 45% of those who never or hardly ever felt connected).

Recreational activities

Extracurricular physical activity participation

“[I am really good at] football, working out, dirt biking, snowboarding, and BMXing.”

12-year-old youth

Over the past decade, there was a decrease in at least weekly participation in informal sports (50% vs. 56% in 2013); organized sports (49% vs. 55%); and dance, yoga, or exercise classes (14% vs. 16% in 2018 vs. 18% in 2013). There was an increase in extreme sports participation (9% vs. 6% in 2018 vs. 8% in 2013).

Younger youth were more likely to take part in weekly organized sports (e.g., 56% of Grade 8s vs. 49% of Grade 10s vs. 38% of Grade 12s), whereas older youth were more likely to exercise at a gym or rec centre (e.g., 44% of Grade 11s vs. 36% of Grade 9s vs. 22% of Grade 7s).

Compared to the province as a whole, Fraser youth were less likely to take part in weekly informal sports (50% vs. 53% provincially) and extreme sports (9% vs. 12%).

Within the Fraser region:

- Fraser East youth were the least likely to participate in weekly organized sports (e.g., 44% vs. 50% in Fraser South).
- Fraser South youth were the least likely to participate in weekly extreme sports (7% vs. 10% in the other two regions).
- Fraser North youth were more likely than those in Fraser South to participate in weekly informal sports (52% vs. 48%).

Participated in sports and exercise at least weekly in the past 12 months

	Males	Females	Non-binary youth
Informal sports (without a coach)	58%	43%	30%
Organized sports (with a coach)	53%	46%	33%
Exercise at a gym or rec centre	46%	29%	16%
Dance, yoga, or exercise classes with an instructor	7%	21%	15%
Extreme sports (e.g., backcountry skiing, BMX)	11%	6%	4%
Exercise to an online video or online class	8%	18%	12%

Note: For 'extreme sports,' the difference between females and non-binary youth was not statistically significant. For 'exercise online,' the difference between males and non-binary youth was not statistically significant.

Barriers to engaging in extracurricular physical activity

“I fractured my wrist so I can’t do my sports for a month.”

12-year-old youth

“I want to make time to exercise more, but I feel too anxious to go on a run outside or go to a public gym. I often make time to exercise at home through videos.”

15-year-old youth

In the Fraser region, 62% of youth reported experiencing barriers to engaging in extracurricular physical activity in the past year. The most common barrier was being too busy.

The barriers youth experienced to participating in extracurricular physical activity were similar across the Fraser region, except Fraser East youth were the most likely to report they could not get there or get home (14% vs. 11% in Fraser North and South), and were more likely than those in Fraser South to report they could not afford to participate (10% vs. 8%), and that they were too anxious or depressed (19% vs. 14%).

Barriers youth reported experiencing to participating in physical activity in the past 12 months

Too busy	40%
Was injured	20%
Thought it was too competitive	17%
Too anxious/depressed	15%
Couldn't get there or get home	12%
Worried about being bullied by another youth	11%
Didn't feel welcome	9%
Couldn't afford it	9%
Parent/guardian would not allow them to	7%
Activity wasn't available in their community	7%
Worried about catching something (e.g., COVID-19)	6%
Worried about being bullied by an adult	4%
Health needs/disability could not be accommodated	2%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Overall, younger youth were less likely than older youth to report experiencing barriers to participation. For example, 25% of Grade 7s reported being too busy, compared to 51% of Grade 11s. Also, 10% of Grade 8s were too anxious or depressed, compared to 17% of Grade 10s and 22% of Grade 12s.

Swimming ability

In the Fraser region, 56% of youth reported they were a confident swimmer, 32% could swim but not confidently, and 12% could not swim at all (vs. 9% across BC). Females were more likely than males to report not being able to swim (13% vs. 10%).

Within the Fraser region, youth in Fraser South were the least likely to be confident swimmers (e.g., 53% vs. 60% of Fraser North youth), and the most likely to not be able to swim at all (15% vs. 12% in Fraser East vs. 8% in Fraser North).

The importance of extracurricular physical activity

Youth who take part in extracurricular physical activity on a regular basis are more likely to report positive health and well-being. For example, youth who participated in informal sports at least weekly were more likely than those who took part less often to report good or excellent overall health (80% vs. 68%) and mental health (67% vs. 56%).

Also, youth were more likely to get 8 or more hours of sleep the night before taking the survey if they participated in sports on a regular basis, including weekly organized sports (47% vs. 34% who took part less often), extreme sports (46% vs. 40%), and informal sports (43% vs. 37%).

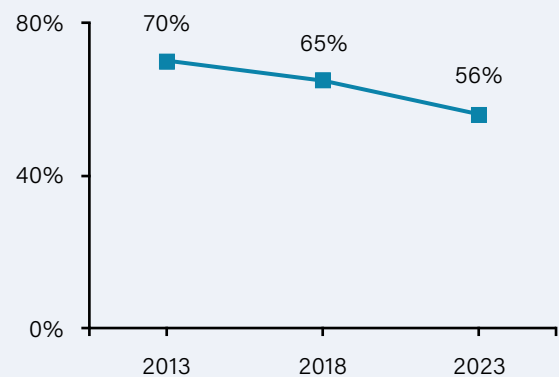
Cultural and volunteer activities

In the past 12 months, 51% of youth took part in cultural or traditional activities, including 17% who participated at least weekly. Also, 51% had volunteered without pay during this time, including 21% who volunteered at least once a week.

Connection to activities

Most youth felt the activities they engaged in were at least somewhat meaningful to them, including 56% who felt this way quite a bit or a lot. However, this percentage was lower than in previous survey years, as was the percentage who felt their ideas were listened to and valued quite a bit or a lot (e.g., 37% vs. 45% in 2018).

Decreases over time in students who felt quite a bit/a lot that their activities were meaningful to them



The importance of community engagement

Engagement in the community can help youth to feel connected and supported, and can contribute to positive well-being. For example, youth who took part in cultural or traditional activities on a weekly basis were more likely to feel quite or very connected to their community (58% vs. 38% who took part less often), as well as quite or very proud of their culture (94% vs. 78%) and good about themselves (59% vs. 52%).

Gambling

In the past 12 months, 32% of youth gambled for money, with rates ranging from 31% in Fraser South to 36% in Fraser East. Also, 13% gambled for something of value other than money, and 33% gambled 'just for fun.'

Ways that youth gambled for money in the past 12 months

Bought in-game items (e.g., loot boxes)	20%
Played cards/dice in person	10%
Played in a gaming tournament	9%
Bought lottery tickets/scratch cards	6%
Streamed video games (e.g., Twitch)	6%
Sports betting in person	6%
Played cards/dice online	4%
Sports betting online	4%

Gambling rates were similar to the province except youth in the Fraser region were less likely to have played cards or dice in person (10% vs. 11% across BC).

Youth were also asked about betting for virtual credits within the past 30 days. Just under a third (31%) did not play video games at all during this time, and half (50%) did not bet with virtual credits. However, 8% bet with virtual credits they purchased using real money, 13% bet with virtual credits they won or earned in a video game, and 6% bet for prizes.

Comparable to the provincial rate and across the Fraser, 1% of youth felt or had been told in the past year that their gambling had reached a point where they needed help, and 12% were at this point with their video gaming.

An in-depth look at the gambling behaviours of BC youth will be published using 2023 BC AHS data.

Phone use

"I would like to learn more about keeping ourselves safe on social media."

14-year-old youth

Most youth (97%) had a phone or tablet (99% of Grade 11s vs. 98% of Grade 9s vs. 92% of Grade 7s). They most commonly used their device to scroll through social media (74%).

Youth in Grades 11 and 12 were the most likely to have used their phone for scrolling through social media (e.g., 85% of Grade 11s and 12s vs. 65% of Grade 8s) and for gambling (e.g., 4% of Grade 11s vs. 2% of Grades 8–10).

Compared to 5 years earlier, local youth were less likely to have used their phone to watch pornography (5% vs. 12% in 2018) and for sexting (2% vs. 4%) the day before they took the survey.

What youth used a phone/tablet for on their last school day

Scrolling through social media	74%
Connecting with family and friends	65%
Gaming other than esports	26%
Playing/watching esports	19%
Watching pornography	5%
Gambling	2%
Sexting	2%
None of these	11%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Reflecting the provincial rate, 18% of Fraser youth felt or had been told that their social media use had reached a point where they needed help in the past year (19% in Fraser North vs. 16% in Fraser East).

Topics youth wanted to learn more about

In the Fraser region, 7% of youth identified health related topics they wanted to learn more about. One of the most common topics was mental health, including learning about specific mental health conditions and healthy ways to manage stress and improve well-being.

"I would probably want to learn more about mental health and what goes on in your brain."
14-year-old youth

"I hope there is a mental health care course, I want to learn about how to reduce stress and be happy."
16-year-old youth

"How to overcome depression or stress, how to not have the urge to hurt yourself, how to handle stress or overcome stress."
14-year-old youth

"Mental health and suicidal thoughts."
13-year-old youth

"I would like to learn more about managing stress and anxiety. What are the best ways to cope."
14-year-old youth

"More about eating disorders."
14-year-old youth

Another common topic that students wanted to learn more about was sexual health education, including contraception, protection from STIs, consent, and sex education for 2SLGBTQ+ youth.

"Queer representation in sex education."
15-year-old youth

"Where do I get plan B or birth control?"
14-year-old youth

"We need sex-ed classes to teach young kids about consent and things like that!"
16-year-old youth

"Sexual health and the menstrual cycle."
17-year-old youth

Other topics students wanted to learn more about included physical health, such as exercise, sleep, and nutrition; relationships; online safety; and life skills, such as First Aid and CPR.

"Lifestyle (exercise and sleep) and how it will affect studies in the long run."
15-year-old youth

"Eating habits. How to be happier with yourself and in your own body."
12-year-old youth

"More about body image because it's something I struggle with."
14-year-old youth

"Toxic relationships at a young age. How to get out of one, overcome the fear of leaving. How you can learn to trust again. Learning and healing."
14-year-old youth

"How to maintain healthy friendships, how to be comfortable with who you are."
14-year-old youth

"Security online and social media."
18-year-old youth

"I would like to learn more about gender, sexual orientation and youth services/programs. Also, basic first aid and CPR."
16-year-old youth

Resources

To request a presentation or workshop, and for further details about all the resources listed below, please email mccreary@mcs.bc.ca.

2023 BC AHS dissemination materials

The results presented in this report provide an overview of the 2023 BC AHS data for the Fraser region of BC. Provincial results and reports for the three Fraser HSDA regions are also available. To view the provincial results, and the latest reports, fact sheets, infographics, and other resources produced from the 2023 BC AHS, please visit: mcs.bc.ca/about_bcahs.

To view the Fraser North report: mcs.bc.ca/pdf/2023_bcahs_fraser_north.pdf.

To view the Fraser South report: mcs.bc.ca/pdf/2023_bcahs_fraser_south.pdf.

To view the Fraser East report: mcs.bc.ca/pdf/2023_bcahs_fraser_east.pdf.

PowerPoint presentations of each of the reports are also available for anyone to use.

A video created by a group of young hip hop artists in Vancouver (titled "Generations") shares some of the comments provided by participants in the 2023 BC AHS, and is available at youtube.com/user/McCrearyCentre.

Accessing the BC AHS data

Researchers from academic institutions and other partner agencies are encouraged to contact mccreary@mcs.bc.ca if they would like to apply to access the data, or to commission McCreary to conduct additional research projects with the data.

Engaging youth in the 2023 BC AHS results

Next Steps workshops

The Next Steps is an award-winning workshop series that supports youth to engage with the BC AHS data. A toolkit is available that provides facilitators (e.g., teachers, nurses, youth workers, and other adult supports) with a workshop template that can be used to share results of the survey with youth aged 12 to 19. It includes an introduction to the results, interactive activities to learn about risk and protective factors, and discussion questions to explore local youth health issues. For more information and to get a copy of the toolkit, email katie@mcs.bc.ca or visit mcs.bc.ca/next_steps.

Research Slam

The Research Slam program is a fast-paced weekend or week-long program which teaches youth basic community-based research skills, including ways to answer their research questions using BC AHS data. To learn when the next Research Slam is scheduled or to discuss bringing a Research Slam to your school or community contact mccreary@mcs.bc.ca.

Youth Action Grants (YAGs)

YAGs offer up to \$750 for youth-led projects that address findings from the BC AHS and that seek to support or improve youth health. For more information on how youth can apply, please visit mcs.bc.ca/youth_action_grants.

Youth Health Ambassadors (YHA)

The YHA are a team of school-aged youth across BC who facilitate conversations with their peers about youth health topics, and support the sharing of the BC AHS data. For more information or to join the YHA email evelyn@mcs.bc.ca.

To learn more about McCreary's current projects and to access additional resources, please consider joining our community mailing list by emailing mccreary@mcs.bc.ca.



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