

# SOUTH VANCOUVER ISLAND

2023 BC ADOLESCENT HEALTH SURVEY RESULTS

McCREARY CENTRE SOCIETY



We gratefully acknowledge that the data shared in this report was gathered on the traditional territories of the Coast Salish and Nuu-chah-nulth people, including the WSÁNEĆ Nation, Esquimalt Nation, Songhees Nation, T'Sou-ke Nation, Sc'ianew Nation, and Pacheedaht Nation. We also acknowledge the ancestral and continuing connection to this land of the Métis Nation.

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***Quotes from South Vancouver Island youth who participated in the BC AHS are included throughout the report. Photographs taken by South Vancouver Island 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](https://mcs.bc.ca/pdf/2023_bcahs_photovoice.pdf).***

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# Key findings

Results from the 2023 BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS) showed that youth aged 12–19 in South Vancouver Island were more likely than youth across BC to identify their heritage as European (68% vs. 59% provincially). However, the region is becoming increasingly diverse, with a greater percentage of youth born abroad and identifying as a gender and/or sexual minority than in previous survey years. Local results also showed:

- There were some changes in youth's living situations over the past 5 years. For example, there was a decrease in those who moved in the past 12 months (19% vs. 26% in 2018), and a rise in those who had caretaking responsibilities for a relative on a typical school day, such as a relative with a disability or a younger sibling (22% vs. 17%).
- The majority of youth rated their overall health and mental health positively. However, ratings were lower than 5 and 10 years earlier. For example, 58% rated their mental health as good or excellent, compared to 71% in 2018 and 80% in 2013.
- There were some gender differences in the health picture of South Vancouver Island youth. For example, 81% of males rated their overall health as good or excellent, compared to 69% of females and 44% of non-binary youth. Also, males were the most likely to rate their mental health as good or excellent, and the least likely to have experienced abuse and sexual harassment.
- Around a quarter of youth (26%) reported they had an anxiety disorder. This was higher than the provincial rate and the local rate 5 years earlier (both 22%). One in five South Vancouver Island youth indicated that they did not participate in extracurricular activities because they were too anxious. Also, local youth were more likely than those across BC to have missed school in the past month because of anxiety or other mental health challenges (25% vs. 22% provincially).
- The percentage of youth who slept for at least 8 hours the night before completing the survey continued to decrease (42% vs. 51% in 2018 vs. 55% in 2013). Also, 26% of youth had their sleep interrupted that night; and the majority engaged in activities after they were expected to be asleep (e.g., 64% were scrolling through social media).
- There was an increase in youth who experienced a concussion in the past year (17% vs. 13% in 2018), as well as a decrease among these youth in having received medical treatment for their most serious head injury (36% vs. 53% in 2018).
- Reflecting provincial results, local youth were less likely than those 5 years earlier to feel connected to their family and school (e.g., 54% felt like a part of their school vs. 60% in 2018), feel safe at school (65% vs. 77%), and plan to attend post-secondary (75% vs. 81%). They were also less likely than youth 5 years earlier to have three or more close friends in their school or community (70% vs. 82% in 2018).
- South Vancouver Island youth remained more likely than youth across BC to have tried tobacco, alcohol, and cannabis (e.g., 27% had ever used cannabis vs. 22% provincially). However, there was a local decrease in those who had tried alcohol (45% vs. 48% in 2018).
- Having supportive adults in their life can be a protective factor for youth. Youth were more likely than those 5 years earlier to have an adult to turn to when they had a serious problem. Locally, 75% had an adult inside their family they could turn to (vs. 71% in 2018), 37% had one outside their family (vs. 31%), and 28% had both (vs. 21%).



# Introduction

The 2023 BC AHS was completed by around 38,500 youth aged 12–19 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 by Public Health Nurses, allied health professionals, and nursing students to students in mainstream public schools in the spring of 2023.

This report is one of 16 regional reports of the 2023 BC AHS results. It shares data provided by students in Grades 7–12 in the South Vancouver Island Health Service Delivery Area (HSDA). South Vancouver Island HSDA is comprised of four school districts: Greater Victoria (SD 61), Sooke (SD 62), Saanich (SD 63), and Gulf Islands (SD 64). Three of the four school districts in this region have participated in all seven waves of the BC AHS; and the other has participated in the last six waves. South Vancouver Island students in Conseil scolaire francophone de la Colombie-Britannique (SD 93) have participated in the last two waves of the survey.

This report provides a health profile of youth (aged 12–19) in South Vancouver Island. It includes comparisons to results across the province, as well as to local results over the past decade. It also 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.

## *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 South Vancouver Island and to previous survey years are statistically significant at  $p < .05$ . This means there is less than a 5% likelihood these results occurred by chance. Comparisons between South Vancouver Island and the province are statistically significant at  $p < .01$ , which means there is less than a 1% likelihood that the results occurred by chance.

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

Any percentage that is marked with an asterisk (\*) should be interpreted with caution, as it has a higher standard error than others, but is still within the releasable range.

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

For more details about the BC AHS methodology and to read other BC AHS reports, visit [mcs.bc.ca/about\\_bcahs](https://mcs.bc.ca/about_bcahs).

# Profile of South Vancouver Island youth

Youth in South Vancouver Island made up 7% of the Grade 7–12 students who participated in the 2023 BC AHS.

## Family background

As in previous survey years, local youth most commonly identified their background as European. There were few changes over the past 5 years. However, there were some differences compared to a decade earlier. For example, there was a decrease in those who identified as European and increases in youth who identified as Latin, South, or Central American; Southeast Asian; African; and another background.

Compared to youth across BC, local youth were more likely to identify as European (59% vs. 43% provincially) and Latin, South, or Central American (7% vs. 5%). They were less likely to identify as East Asian (10% vs. 17%) and South Asian (4% vs. 13%).

Family background		
	2013	2023
European	68%	59%
East Asian	11%	10%
Indigenous	8%	9%
Latin American, South American, Central American	5%	7%
Southeast Asian	3%	6%
African	3%	4%
South Asian	4%	4%
Middle Eastern	2%	4%
Caribbean	N/A	2%
Australian, Pacific Islander	3%	1%
Other	2%	6%
Don't know	11%	15%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Note: The difference between 2013 and 2023 was not statistically significant for 'East Asian' and 'Indigenous.'

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



## Indigenous youth

Among local Indigenous youth:

- 65% identified as First Nations; 37% as Métis; and 5% as another Indigenous background, including Inuit (they could mark all that applied).
- 10% previously lived on reserve and 7% currently lived on reserve.
- 28% could speak at least a few words of an Indigenous language, which was an increase from 11% a decade earlier.
- 2% identified as Two-Spirit.

Indigenous youth were also asked about their family history of residential school. Locally, 53% reported that a family member had been in residential school, including at least one of their parents (5%), grandparents (32%), and other relatives (36%). This is likely an under-representation as 36% 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).

## Racial identity and religious affiliation

For the first time, the BC AHS asked youth about their racial identity. Compared to youth across BC, local youth were more likely to identify as White (75% vs. 57% provincially) and Latin American/Hispanic (6% vs. 4%). They were less likely to identify as Asian (16% vs. 31%) and Indigenous (4% vs. 6%).

Racial identity	
White	75%
Asian	16%
Mixed background	6%
Latin American/Hispanic	6%
Indigenous	4%
Black	4%
Other	2%

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'.

Youth were also asked about their religious affiliation. The majority of youth (60%) indicated they did not identify with a religion (vs. 48% provincially), and 8% did not know their religion. Christianity was the most common religious affiliation identified by local students.

Religious affiliation		
	South Vancouver Island	BC
Christian	21%	24%
Muslim	3%	4%
Buddhist	2%	3%
Traditional (Indigenous) spirituality	2%	2%
Jewish	1%	1%
Sikh	1%	8%
Hindu	1%	2%
Other	3%	2%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Note: The difference between South Vancouver Island and BC was not statistically significant for "other".

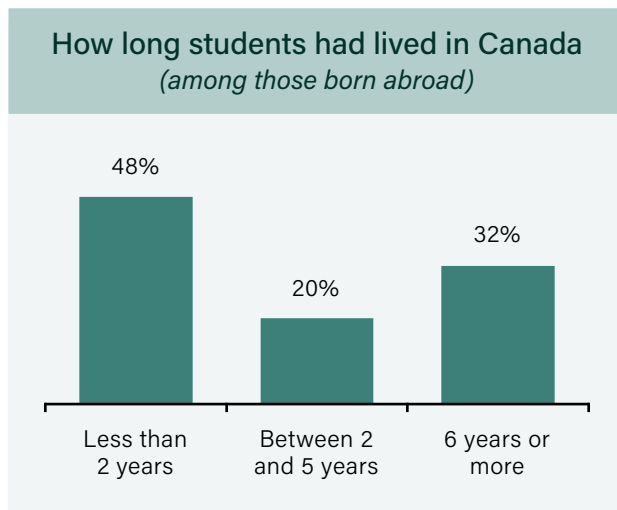
## Time in Canada

In South Vancouver Island, 77% of youth were born in Canada (vs. 84% in 2013). Comparable to 5 years earlier, 11% arrived in Canada as international students. This was an increase from 7% in 2013, and also higher than the provincial rate in 2023 (8%). The percentage of South Vancouver Island youth who arrived as refugees increased from less than 1% in 2018 to 1%.

Immigration	
Born in Canada	77%
Arrived in Canada as an international student	11%
Born abroad and now a permanent resident or Canadian citizen	10%
Arrived in Canada as a refugee	1%

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

Consistent with results over the past decade, 48% of youth born abroad had been in Canada for less than 2 years.



## Gender identity and sexual orientation

In this region, 49% of youth identified as male, 46% as female, and 5% as non-binary (an increase from 2% in 2018). For 93% of youth, their gender identity matched their sex assigned at birth (vs. 97% in 2018).

There was a decrease in the percentage of youth who identified as straight (e.g., 66% vs. 78% in 2018), and an increase in those who identified as a sexual minority (e.g., 3% identified as gay or lesbian vs. 2% in 2018). Males were the most likely to identify as straight (82% vs. 56% of females vs. 5% of non-binary youth).

Sexual orientation	
Straight	66%
Mostly straight	8%
Bisexual or pansexual	14%
Gay or lesbian	3%
Asexual	2%
Not sure	6%
Other	1%

An in-depth look at the health and well-being of gender and sexual minority youth in BC will be published in partnership with the Stigma and Resilience Among Vulnerable Youth Centre (SARAVYC). For more information, please visit [saravyc.ubc.ca](http://saravyc.ubc.ca).

# Home life

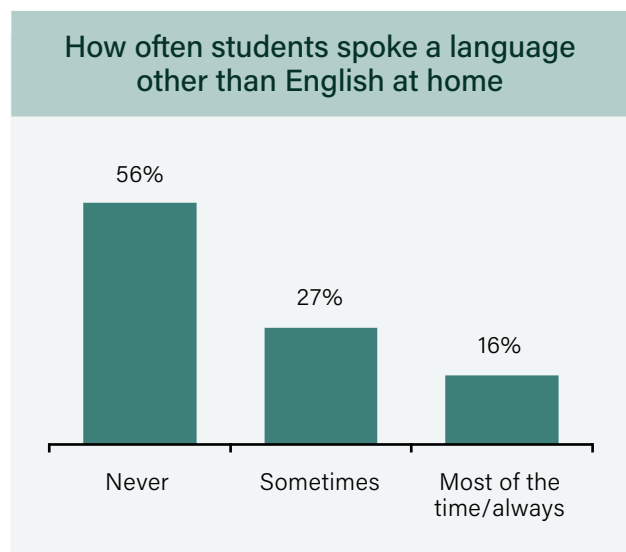
The majority of youth lived with one or both of their parents. There were no changes in who youth lived with over the past 5 years. However, they were more likely than youth 10 years earlier to live in households with their siblings or stepsiblings (65% vs. 53%), grandparents (9% vs. 5%), and adult relatives other than parents or grandparents (4% vs. 3%).

Who youth lived with most of the time	
Mother/stepmother	87%
Father/stepfather	77%
Two mothers or two fathers	1%
Sibling(s)/stepsibling(s)	65%
Grandparent(s)	9%
Foster parent(s)	<1%
Their own child or children	<1%
Other adults related to them	4%
Other adults not related to them	4%
Other children or youth	2%
Lived alone	<1%
Lived with both parents at different times	12%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

## Language spoken at home

In this region, 44% of youth spoke a language other than English at home at least some of the time, which was similar to local results in 2018, and lower than the provincial rate (54%).



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

## Caretaking responsibilities

*"[I am really good at] taking care of pets."*

13-year-old youth

On an average school day, youth were more likely than those 5 years earlier to take care of a relative such as one with a disability or their younger siblings (22% vs. 17% in 2018), and a pet or other animal (63% vs. 59%). Males were the least likely to have caretaking responsibilities for a relative (e.g., 18% vs. 25% of females).

## Parental monitoring

Youth were asked how much they felt their parents or guardians monitored what they were doing in their free time and online. Parents were more likely to know what youth were doing with their free time than their time online.

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%	17%	71%
Online	40%	22%	38%

Provincially, there was a decrease in parental monitoring compared to 2018. This was not the case locally, where rates remained consistent.

As might be expected, youth in higher grades were less likely to have their time online monitored by parents compared to those in lower grades. For example, 26% of Grade 11s reported their parents monitored their time online most or all of the time, compared to 36% of Grade 9s and 57% of Grade 7s.

## Government care experience

Youth had experienced various types of government care (including through a delegated 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	2%	3%
Youth Agreement	2%	2%
Foster home	1%	2%
Group home	1%	2%
Custody centre/detention centre	1%	1%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

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



# Economic well-being

Economic well-being is a key component of young people's overall well-being. It can include access to employment opportunities, stable housing, nutritious meals, and material items.

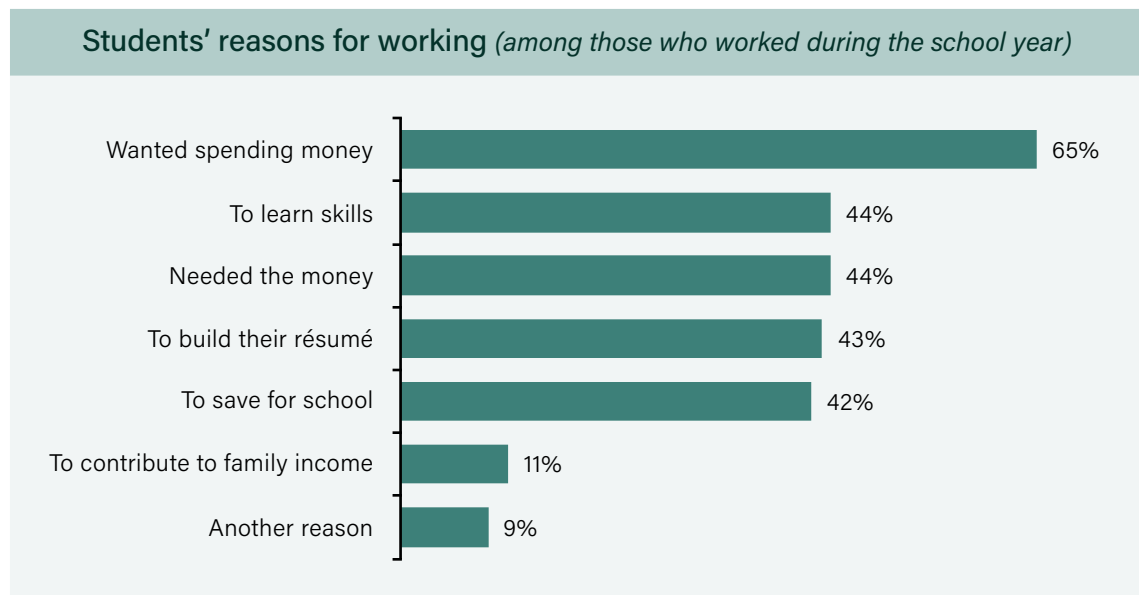
## Employment

*"I just did my food safe, so I can work now."*

14-year-old youth

Reflecting local rates in 2018, 39% of students worked at a paid job during the school year (vs. 32% in 2013). Youth most commonly worked 5 to 12 hours a week (16%), while 12% worked less than 5 hours, 9% worked 13 to 20 hours, and 2% worked 21 or more hours each week (with no gender differences).

When asked about their main reasons for working, most youth reported they wanted spending money. However, around 1 in 10 worked to contribute to their family's income.



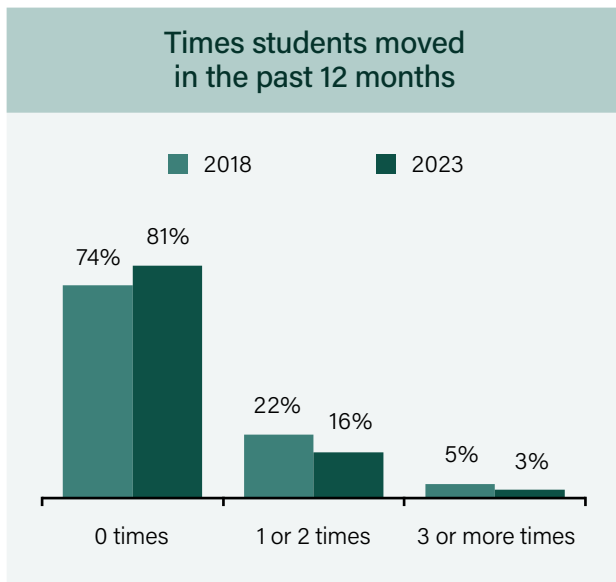
Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

## Unstable housing

Most youth (92%) 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 (e.g., 76% vs. 93% of males).

In the past 12 months, 7% of youth ran away from home (vs. 9% in 2018), and 4% were kicked out (vs. 6% in 2018). Also, 2% experienced homelessness during this time. These rates were all comparable to the provincial results.

Also reflective of the provincial results, there was a decrease in South Vancouver Island youth who moved in the past 12 months (19% vs. 26% in 2018).



Note: Percentages for 2018 do not total 100% due to rounding.

## 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 they also indicated the need for the addition of an 11<sup>th</sup> item—personal hygiene products.

Youth generally had each of the items in the Index. However, 14% lacked but wished they had at least one item, 5% lacked two items, and 3% lacked three or more items. These percentages were similar to 2018 (with and without the addition of the 11<sup>th</sup> item).

There were some changes in the specific items that youth felt deprived of. For example, there was an increase in youth who lacked but wished they had clothes to fit in (3% vs. 2% in 2018) and a quiet place to sleep (3% vs. 2%). There was a decrease in those who felt deprived of access to transportation (2% vs. 3%) and a smartphone (3% vs. 6%).

Youth who lacked but wished they had ...	
Money to spend on themselves	10%
Space of their own to hang out in	5%
Lunch for school/money to buy lunch	5%
Money for school supplies, school trips, and extracurricular activities	4%
Clothes to fit in	3%
A quiet place to sleep	3%
Smartphone	3%
Equipment/clothes for extracurricular activities	2%
Access to transportation	2%
Personal hygiene products (e.g., soap, deodorant)	1%
Access to the Internet	<1%



# Food security

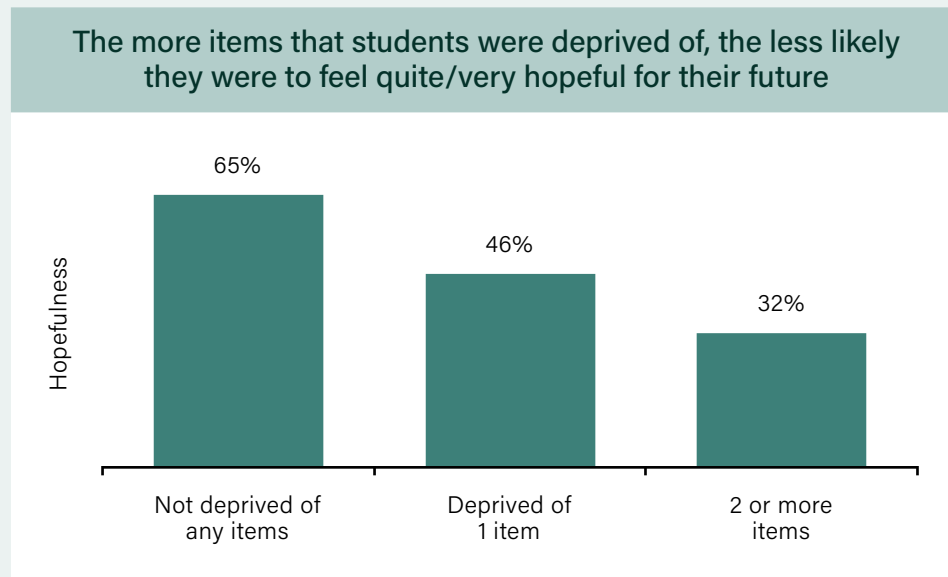
In the past 12 months, 7% of youth cut the size of their meals or skipped meals because there was not enough money for food.

Similar to local results over the past decade, 9% 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.

Comparable to the province as a whole, 2% of youth ate food from a food bank the day before completing the survey.

## Why is economic well-being important?

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 were deprived of, the less likely they were to report good or excellent mental health, satisfaction with their life, and hopefulness about their future.



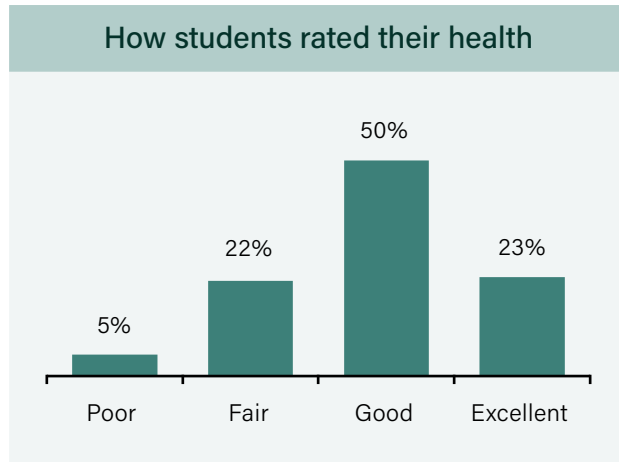
Similarly, youth who went to bed hungry at least sometimes because there was not enough money for food were less likely than those who never went to bed hungry to report good or excellent overall health (47% vs. 76%). They were also more likely to experience extreme stress in the past month (31% vs. 13%) and to have used substances such as opioids, which can be an appetite suppressor (3% used heroin, fentanyl, or other opioids vs. 1% of youth who never went to bed hungry).

# Physical health

During adolescence, young people begin to make their own decisions about their physical health, including sleep, nutrition, and physical activity. It is a time when they can learn to make healthy choices that can influence their behaviours into adulthood. It is also a time when they may take risks to their physical health, which can result in accidents and injuries.

## Health ratings

Most youth rated their health positively. However, there was a decrease over the past decade as 74% rated their health as good or excellent compared to 81% in 2018 and 89% in 2013. Males were the most likely to rate their health as good or excellent (81% vs. 69% of females vs. 44% of non-binary youth).

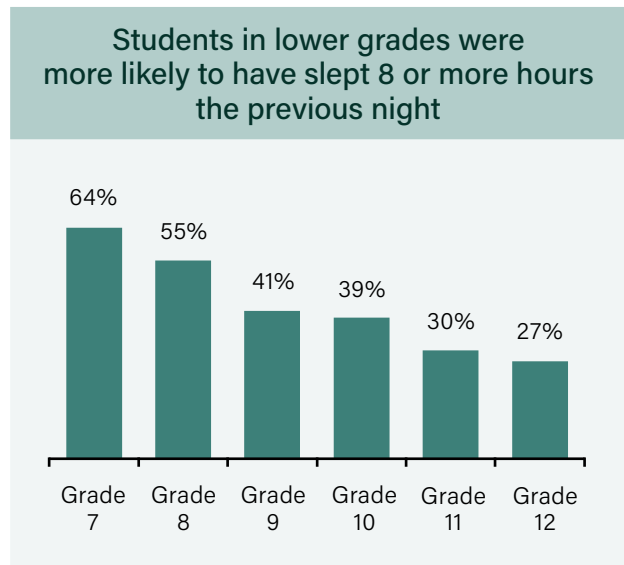


## Sleep

*"I often have a hard time falling asleep at night when going to bed. It usually seems to happen during the school week. Sometimes it takes me 3 to 4 hours to fall asleep."*

15-year-old youth

Reflecting the provincial picture, 42% of youth slept for at least 8 hours the night before completing the 2023 BC AHS, and 18% slept 5 hours or less. Youth were less likely to sleep for 8 or more hours than in previous survey years (42% vs. 51% in 2018 vs. 55% in 2013).



Note: The differences between Grades 9 and 10 and between Grades 11 and 12 were not statistically significant.

Most youth were able to sleep undisturbed the previous night. However, around a quarter (26%) reported that their sleep was interrupted.

As seen provincially, 1 in 10 youth (10%) went offline after they went to bed, and did not engage in any activities (e.g., they put their phone on silent, turned it off, or put it in another room). However, most students did engage in at least one activity after they were expected to be asleep. They were commonly scrolling through social media and chatting or texting.

Activities youth engaged in after they were expected to be asleep	
Scrolling through social media	64%
Chatting or texting	58%
Doing homework	47%
Gaming (other than esports)	27%
Playing/watching esports	17%
Doing other things online (e.g., watching videos)	65%

Females were the most likely to have been doing homework (e.g., 57% vs. 37% of males), and were the least likely to have been gaming (e.g., 16% vs. 36% of males). Males were the most likely to have been playing or watching esports (26% vs. 8% of female and non-binary youth), and least likely to be chatting or texting (50% vs. 66% of female and non-binary youth) and scrolling through social media (e.g., 57% vs. 68% of non-binary youth). Non-binary youth were the most likely to be doing other things online, like watching videos (e.g., 77% vs. 64% of females).

## Health conditions and disabilities

*“I have put off getting a prescription for an inhaler for my asthma.”*

15-year-old youth

Youth experienced a range of physical and cognitive 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 was lower than in previous survey years (6% vs. 10% in 2018 and 2013), while the percentage with a learning disability more than doubled (12% vs. 5% in 2018 and 2013).

Health conditions and disabilities	
A learning disability (e.g., dyslexia)	12%
A long-term/chronic medical condition	6%
Deaf or hard of hearing	2%
Blind or visual impairment which cannot be corrected with glasses/contact lenses	2%
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, around 3 in 10 did not experience any barriers because of their condition, 50% had what they needed to overcome the barriers they experienced, and 20% did not have what they needed. These percentages were similar to those reported provincially.

# Injuries

***“I’ve had several untreated concussions and I have long-term memory loss.”***

17-year-old youth

Similar to the provincial pattern, 33% of local youth had been injured seriously enough to need medical attention in the past 12 months (with no gender differences). This was an increase from 26% in 2018.

Youth were also asked specifically if they had experienced a concussion during this time (i.e., a head injury that was so serious they had lost consciousness, were dazed, confused, or suffered a gap in memory). In South Vancouver Island, 17% of youth experienced a concussion in the past 12 months. This was similar to the 2023 provincial rate and a local increase from 13% in 2018.

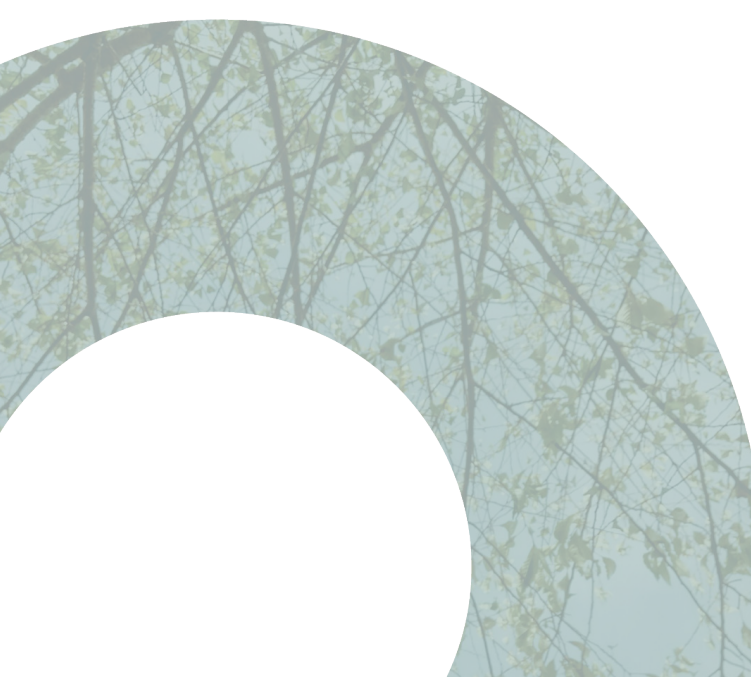
When asked what they were doing when they got their most serious concussion, youth most commonly reported they were playing or training for organized sports.

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)	14%
Using alcohol or other substances	12%
Riding a bike	8%
Fighting with another person	7%
Skateboarding	6%
Working	4%
Riding/driving in a motor vehicle	2%
Other	21%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Among youth who experienced a concussion in the past 12 months, 36% received medical treatment for their most serious head injury. This was similar to the 2023 provincial rate, but a local decrease from 53% in 2018.



# Access to health care

In the past 12 months, 23% of youth had not needed to access health care, with males the most likely to report not needing care (e.g., 29% vs. 18% of females). However, reflecting the picture 5 years earlier, 4% of youth reported that they had not been able to get the care they needed. Youth who accessed health care most commonly did so through a family doctor.

Where youth got health care in the past 12 months	
Family doctor	47%
Specialist (e.g., dermatologist, psychiatrist)	31%
Walk-in clinic	21%
Counsellor/psychologist	17%
Emergency room (ER)	15%
Nurse	8%
School wellness centre	3%
Youth clinic	2%
Foundry centre/Foundry Virtual BC	1%
Traditional healer	<1%
Other	5%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Compared to the province as a whole, local youth were more likely to indicate not getting the health care they needed in the past year (4% vs. 3%). They were specifically less likely to get their health care from a family doctor (47% vs. 54% provincially) and a walk-in clinic (21% vs. 24%), and were more likely to have gone to a counsellor or psychologist (17% vs. 12%).

There were some differences in where youth got their health care compared to 5 years earlier. For example, they were less likely to access a family doctor (47% vs. 54% in 2018), walk-in clinic (21% vs. 40%), school wellness centre (3% vs. 4%), youth clinic (2% vs. 5%), and traditional healer (<1% vs. 2%).

There were also some gender differences in where youth accessed care. For example, females were more likely than males to have accessed a family doctor (50% vs. 43%), specialist (33% vs. 29%), nurse (10% vs. 6%), and Foundry (1% vs. <1%). Non-binary youth were the most likely to have accessed a counsellor or psychologist (33% vs. 23% of females vs. 9% of males).

Youth were asked specifically if they had needed medical treatment in the past 12 months because they were physically sick or hurt. Locally, 59% had not needed treatment. Among those who had needed treatment, 79% got the care they needed.

In South Vancouver Island, 83% of youth had been to a dentist within the past 12 months, 11% last visited a dentist 12–24 months ago, and 5% had last been more than 2 years ago. The percentage who had never been to the dentist was lower than across BC (1% vs. 2% provincially).

# Exercise

Regular exercise is an important component of well-being. (Engagement in sports and other extracurricular physical activity is discussed in the **Recreational activities** section.)

Most South Vancouver Island youth (89%) got at least an hour of moderate to vigorous exercise in the past week, including 19% who exercised daily (similar to the province as a whole).

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

0 days	11%
1 day	6%
2 days	10%
3 days	14%
4 days	13%
5 days	16%
6 days	11%
All 7 days	19%

*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 youth aged 12–17, 19% engaged in 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise every day in the past week. This was similar to the rate 5 and 10 years earlier. Males were the most likely to exercise daily (e.g., 26% 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, with no gender differences.

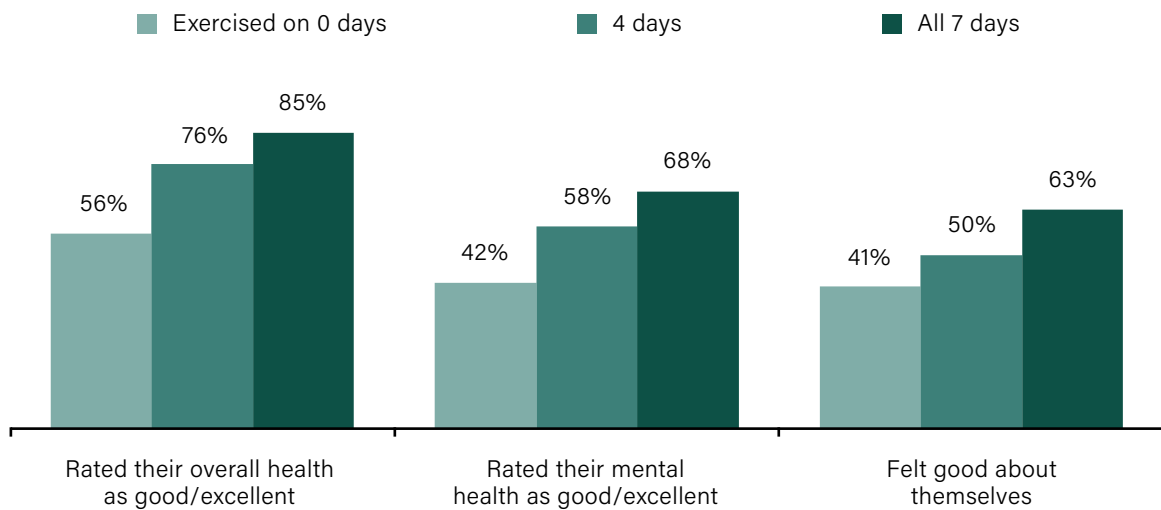
The majority of youth (89%) reported that they enjoyed exercising and being physically active at least somewhat, including 35% who enjoyed it very much.



## Why is physical health important?

Youth who engage in health-promoting behaviours are more likely to experience positive mental health and life satisfaction. For example, youth who slept for at least 8 hours the night before taking the survey were more likely to report good or excellent mental health (76% vs. 46% of those who slept fewer hours). Also, the more days on which youth exercised, the more likely they were to report positive health and well-being.

### The more days on which 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

Youth were asked about the meals and snacks they consumed on the day before taking the survey, and about where these came from.

Compared to 5 years earlier, the percentage of youth who ate fruit, vegetables, or salad decreased (87% vs. 94% in 2018), and the consumption of energy drinks increased (15% vs. 7% in 2018).

The percentage who ate fast food, traditional food from their background, and sweets were all similar to 5 years earlier.

South Vancouver Island youth were less likely than youth across BC to have consumed traditional food from their background (29% vs. 42%).

Ate or drank at least once yesterday		
	2013	2023
Fruit, vegetables, or salad	95%	87%
Sweets (cookies, cakes, candies, etc.)	78%	79%
Fast food (pizza, hot dogs, fries, etc.)	37%	45%
Traditional food from their background	25%	29%
Energy drinks	5%	15%

Note: The difference between 2013 and 2023 for 'sweets' was not statistically significant.

On the day before taking the survey, local youth most commonly reported eating food prepared by their parent or caregiver. However, they were more likely than those across BC to have eaten food they prepared themselves (66% vs. 62% provincially).

Source of students' meals and snacks yesterday	
Prepared by parent/caregiver	83%
Prepared themselves	66%
Restaurant, food court, or delivery service	33%
Taken home from a school food program	5%
Food bank	2%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

In South Vancouver Island, 4 in 5 youth ate dinner every day in the past week, and fewer ate breakfast and lunch this regularly.

Meals eaten in the past 7 days					
	0 days	1-2 days	3-4 days	5-6 days	All 7 days
Breakfast	13%	17%	14%	14%	42%
Lunch	5%	9%	15%	20%	51%
Dinner	1%	2%	5%	12%	80%



Reflecting the provincial picture there was a decrease in youth who ate breakfast on school days. Local youth were less likely than 5 years earlier to report they got their breakfast at home or at school. They were also less likely than youth across BC to eat breakfast at school (4% vs. 6% provincially).

Where youth got breakfast on school days		
	2018	2023
Didn't eat breakfast on school days	17%	28%
At home	78%	69%
On the way to school	8%	7%
At school	7%	4%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.  
 Note: The difference between 2018 and 2023 was not statistically significant for 'on the way to school'.

## Disordered eating

*"I just want to be normal again and to eat 3 meals a day without being insecure."*

14-year-old youth

In the past 30 days, 33% of youth worried that they had lost control of how much they ate.

In the past 12 months, 15% of youth vomited on purpose after eating (purged), including 2% who did so at least weekly (3% of females vs. 1% of males). The percentage who purged in the past year was similar to the percentage 5 years earlier and higher than a decade earlier (15% vs. 9% in 2013). There was no change over time in purging at least weekly.

## Body satisfaction

Youth were asked to rate how satisfied they were with how their body looked. Males were the most likely to rate their satisfaction as 4 or 5 out of 5 (47% vs. 31% of females vs. 20% of non-binary youth).



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

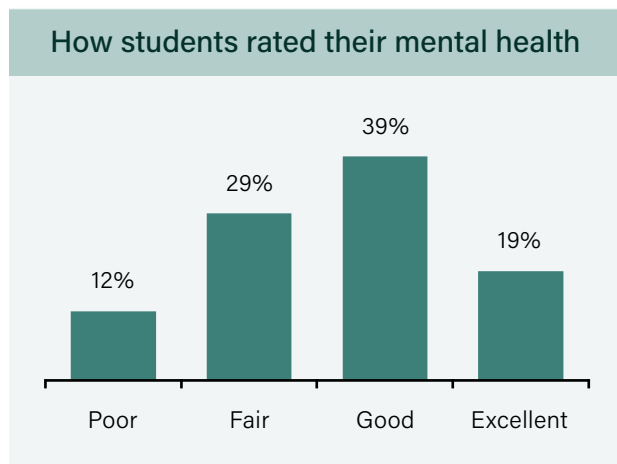
# Mental health and well-being

*“How do you cope with mental health in school? How do you do it alone? What could help as you struggle with these problems?”*

17-year-old youth

Mental health is a key component in healthy youth development, and includes psychological, social, and emotional well-being.

The majority of youth rated their mental health positively. However, there was a decrease in youth rating their mental health as good or excellent over the past decade (58% vs. 71% in 2018 vs. 80% in 2013). Males were the most likely to rate their mental health as good or excellent (71% vs. 50% of females vs. 16% of non-binary youth).



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

## Quality of life

The majority of youth reported positively on their quality of life, and a minority wished they had a different life. However, compared to 5 years earlier, youth were less likely to rate their quality of life positively.

Youth who agreed/strongly agreed ...		
	2018	2023
They had a good life	80%	77%
Their life was going well	74%	67%
They had what they wanted in life	59%	54%
Their life was going just right	57%	52%
They wished they had a different life	17%	19%

Note: The difference between 2018 and 2023 was not statistically significant for 'they wished they had a different life'.

The majority of youth (59%) felt happy most or all of the time in the past month, but 11% 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. 29% of non-binary youth).

The percentage of youth who felt happy most or all of the time decreased over the past decade (59% vs. 64% in 2018 vs. 69% in 2013).

# Self-confidence and sense of competence

***"[I am good at] video games, making YouTube videos, basketball, and more."***

12-year-old youth

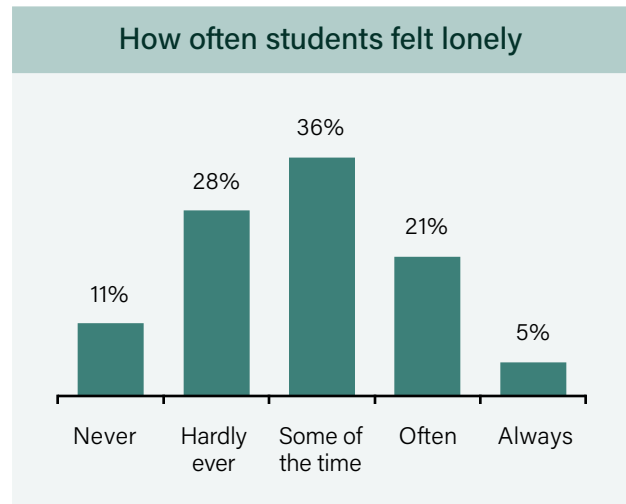
***"[I am good at] sympathizing with people and being caring and helpful and communicating with other people."***

16-year-old youth

Locally, 52% of youth felt good about themselves (vs. 58% in 2018), and 74% could identify something they were good at (vs. 78% in 2018). They commonly listed they were good at various sports and recreational activities (e.g., soccer, basketball); the arts (e.g., drawing, creative writing, music, dancing); school (including specific subjects such as math and science); relational skills (e.g., supporting others, making friends); cooking/baking; and gaming.

# Loneliness

For the first time, the BC AHS included a question about loneliness. Around a quarter of youth often or always felt lonely.



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



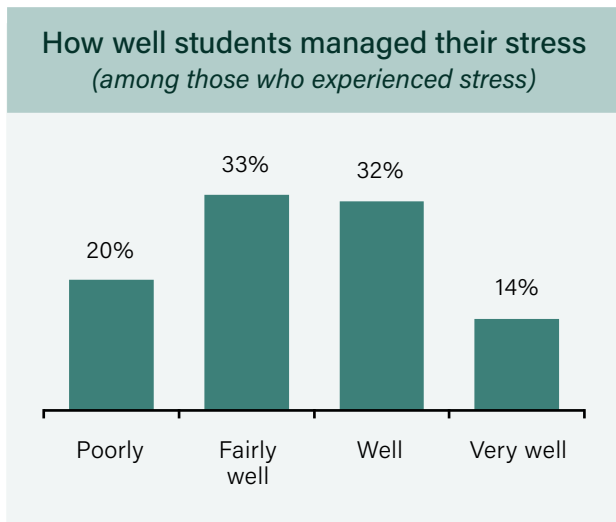
# Stress and despair

***"I want to learn more about stress from school and how to deal with it."***

15-year-old youth

Most youth (91%) experienced at least a little stress in the past month, including 14% who were so stressed they could not function properly. The percentage who experienced extreme stress was similar to 5 years earlier and higher than in 2013 (10%).

Reflecting the provincial trend, youth who experienced stress were less likely to feel they managed their stress well or very well (47% vs. 51% in 2018).

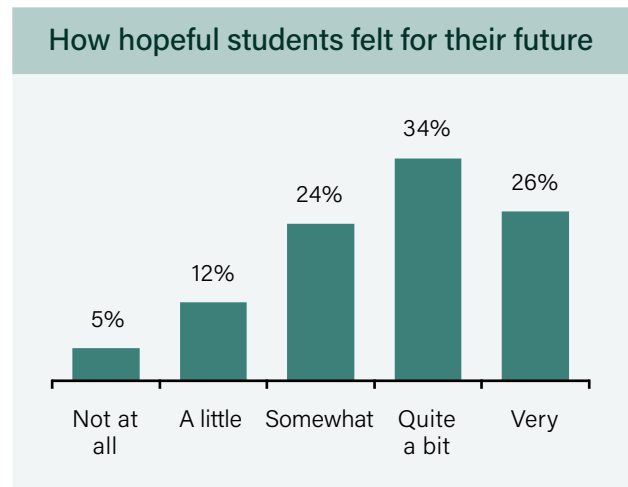


Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.

In the past month, 64% of youth experienced some level of despair, including 8% who felt so sad, hopeless, or discouraged that they wondered if anything was worthwhile. The percentage who experienced extreme despair was similar to previous survey years.

# Hopefulness

The majority of youth felt at least a little hopeful for their future. However, they were less likely to feel quite or very hopeful than youth 5 years earlier (59% vs. 67% in 2018).



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

# Self-harm and suicidality

*“I don't feel my highest sometimes, and I have thought about what it would be like to kill myself and how I would do it, but have never acted on it.”*

14-year-old youth

In the past year, 26% of youth cut or injured themselves on purpose without trying to kill themselves, including 20% who self-harmed on multiple occasions. The percentage who self-harmed increased over the past decade from 15% in 2013, to 19% in 2018, to 26%.

Non-binary youth were the most likely to have cut or injured themselves on purpose (58% vs. 34% of females vs. 15% of males).

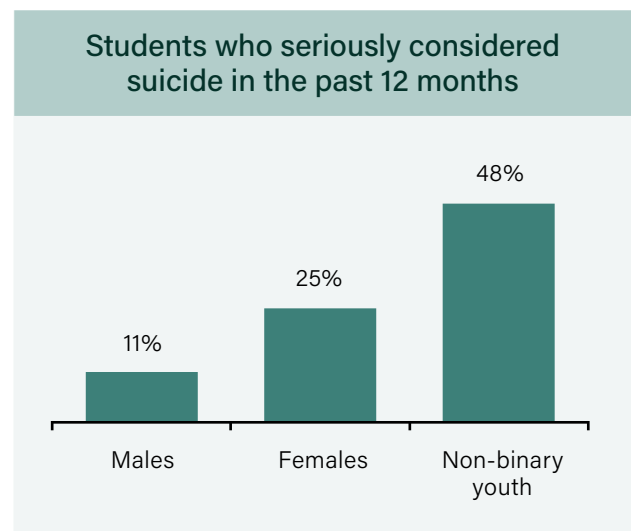
Youth also reported engaging in deliberate self-harm other than cutting in the past year.

Types of self-harm youth engaged in during the past 12 months (excluding cutting)	
Starved self	18%
Over-exercised or exercised while injured	12%
Used alcohol or other substances	10%
Made a medical situation worse	4%
Got into a physical fight	3%
Had unsafe sex	3%
Overused laxatives	1%
Overdosed	1%
Drove recklessly	1%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

In the past 12 months, 19% of youth seriously considered killing themselves, and 6% attempted suicide. Both these percentages were comparable to 5 years earlier and to the 2023 provincial results. However, the percentage who seriously considered suicide increased from 11% a decade earlier.

Males were the least likely to have considered or attempted suicide in the past year. For example, 14% of non-binary youth attempted suicide in the past year, compared to 3% of males.



Nearly a third of youth (32%) had a relative or close friend who attempted or died by suicide (vs. 29% across BC), including 14% who had this experience in the past year.

# Specific conditions

***“Is it bad that I feel guilty for having anxiety when I have loving parents?”***

12-year-old youth

***“I think it is important to ask how much the mental health conditions people have are affecting their school/social life. For me, I have such intense pressure on myself that I don't feel I can miss school even if I am having panic attacks all day or I am feeling horrible about myself (suicidal/self-harm urges).”***

17-year-old youth

Youth were asked about some specific conditions. Reflecting the provincial picture, South Vancouver Island youth most commonly reported having an anxiety disorder and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). There was an increase over time in youth who reported they had an anxiety disorder, ADHD, substance use addiction, and autism spectrum disorder.

Specific conditions		
	2018	2023
Anxiety disorder	22%	26%
Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD/ADD)	8%	21%
Depression	17%	16%
Eating disorder	N/A	9%
Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)	N/A	7%
Alcohol or other substance use addiction	3%	5%
Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)	3%	4%
Autism spectrum disorder	1%	4%
Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD/FAS/FAE)	<1%	<1%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Note: The differences between 2018 and 2023 for depression and PTSD were not statistically significant.

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

Compared to youth across BC, local youth were more likely to report an anxiety disorder (26% vs. 22% provincially) and ADHD (21% vs. 18%).

There were some gender differences in the conditions youth reported. For example, non-binary youth were the most likely to report having an anxiety disorder (56% vs. 39% of females vs. 11% of males), ADHD (42% vs. 21% of males vs. 17% of females), and autism spectrum disorder (13% vs. 5% of males vs. 2% of females). Males were the least likely to report having obsessive-compulsive disorder (e.g., 5% vs. 9% of females).

# Access to mental health services

*“If we could have a specialist come in to the school once a year and do a mental health check-in, I think that would help a lot.”*

13-year-old youth

In the past 12 months, 65% of youth had not felt that they needed to access mental health services, while 15% were able to access the services they needed, and 20% did not access the services they felt they needed.

The percentage of youth who missed out on needed mental health services was comparable to 5 years earlier, but higher than a decade earlier (11% in 2013).

Youth identified a variety of reasons for not accessing the mental health services they needed. They most commonly missed out because they did not want their parent or guardian to know and because they thought or hoped the problem would go away.

Among those who reported needing services, there was a decrease in those who missed out because they thought or hoped the problem would go away (50% vs. 61% in 2018), they were afraid of what they would be told (31% vs. 45%), and they were afraid that someone that they knew might see them (24% vs. 36%). There was an increase in those who missed out because they did not know where to go (42% vs. 35% in 2018), and because their parent or guardian would not take them (14% vs. 10% in 2018).

Reasons youth did not access mental health services in the past 12 months (among those who felt they needed these services)	
Didn't want parent/guardian to know	52%
Thought or hoped the problem would go away	50%
Didn't know where to go	42%
Too busy to go	38%
Worried their information wouldn't be kept confidential	36%
Afraid of what they would be told	31%
Didn't think they could afford it	25%
Afraid someone they knew might see them	24%
Had negative experience(s) before	19%
Parent/guardian wouldn't take them	14%
On a waiting list	9%
Had no transportation	7%
Couldn't go when it was open	4%
The service was not available in their community	2%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

## Virtual services

In the past 12 months, 18% of youth accessed virtual counselling or treatment for their mental health. This included 11% who preferred it to in-person counselling, and 7% who would have preferred to access in-person counselling. Males were the least likely to have accessed virtual services (e.g., 12% of males vs. 28% of non-binary youth).

# Accessing reliable mental health information

***"[I want to learn more about] mental health in school and reliable sources where you can seek info."***

14-year-old youth

***"I am like pretty confident that I have OCD (or something like it) but I don't know who to talk about it with."***

13-year-old youth

When asked where they went for reliable information on mental health, youth most commonly reported accessing a family member, followed by a friend or peer.

There were some gender differences in where youth went when they needed reliable information about mental health. For example, non-binary youth were the most likely to go to an online resource (39% vs. 27% of females vs. 21% of males), and were the least likely to go to a family member (e.g., 27% vs. 47% of males).

Males were the most likely to not go anywhere for mental health information (e.g., 33% vs. 21% of females). They were also least likely to access information from a mental health professional (e.g., 16% vs. 27% of non-binary youth) and a friend (e.g., 29% vs. 43% of females).

## Where youth accessed reliable information about mental health

A family member	44%
A friend/peer	36%
Website/online resource	25%
Mental health professional	20%
School staff	13%
Another source	2%
Did not know where to go	7%
Did not go anywhere for this information	27%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.





# Sexual health

***“In our school we have very little sexual health education. We have an hour-long workshop once a year which is not enough time to dive into such a wide topic. What we need in our school is a reoccurring program of sexual health to build the trust we need in order to open up these vulnerable topics.”***

17-year-old youth

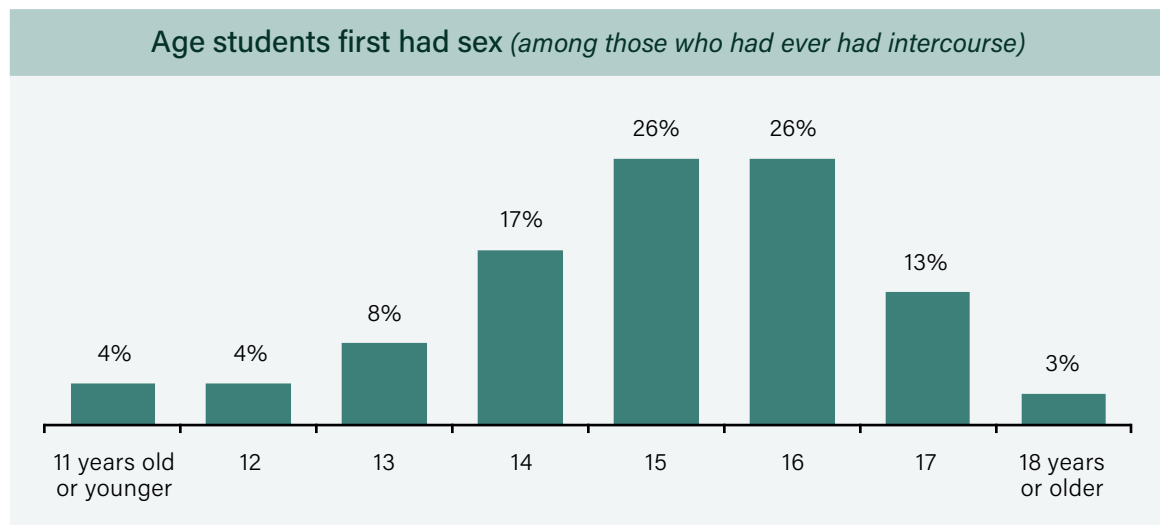
Adolescence is a time when young people can be supported to develop the knowledge and skills they need to avoid unwanted sexual activity, protect themselves if they become sexually active, and reduce the risk of a sexually transmitted infection or unwanted pregnancy.

## Sexual activity

In this region, 20% of youth reported they had ever had oral sex (vs. 25% in 2018); and 20% had ever engaged in sexual intercourse (vs. 23% in 2018). Local youth were more likely than those across BC to have engaged in oral sex (17% provincially) and intercourse (16% provincially).

Among youth who had ever had sexual intercourse, 84% were sexually active in the past 12 months. This included 34% who had multiple partners during this time.

Among youth who had ever had intercourse, the most common ages to first do so were 15 and 16. Provincially, there was an increase in youth who first had sex at a very young age. However, this was not the case locally, as rates were comparable to previous years. Also locally, there were no gender differences in the age that youth first had intercourse.



Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.  
Note: Not all differences were statistically significant.

# Forced sex

When asked specifically if they had been forced into sexual activity against their will, 8% of students reported they had been forced into sexual activity by another youth and 1% by an adult. Males were the least likely to have been forced into sexual activity against their will (e.g., 3% vs. 12% of females).

# Protection against sexually transmitted infections

Reflecting the provincial picture, and consistent with local results over the past decade, 1% of South Vancouver Island youth had ever had a sexually transmitted infection.

Among youth who had engaged in oral sex, 15% used a condom or other barrier the last time they had oral sex, which was similar to 5 and 10 years earlier.

Youth were more likely to use protection during intercourse than oral sex, as 58% of those who had ever had intercourse used a condom or other barrier the last time they had intercourse (vs. 68% in 2013).

# Pregnancy involvement

Similar to local results over the past decade and to the 2023 provincial rate, 1% of South Vancouver Island youth had been pregnant or had got somebody pregnant. Also, 1% were unsure if they had been involved in a pregnancy.

Youth were asked if they or their partner had made any efforts to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex. As in previous survey years, condoms were the most commonly used method to prevent pregnancy (54% vs. 64% in 2013; among youth who ever had intercourse). Compared to 5 years earlier, there was an increase in the use of emergency contraception (11% vs. 6% in 2018) and an IUD (8% vs. 3%).

Over a quarter of youth who had ever had intercourse (29%) used withdrawal (an unreliable method to prevent pregnancy), which was a decrease from 41% in 2018. Provincially, there was an increase in the use of withdrawal as the only method youth used to prevent pregnancy. This was not the case locally where the percentage remained similar to previous survey years (8% in 2023).

Method(s) youth used to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex <i>(among those who had ever had intercourse)</i>	
Condoms	54%
Withdrawal	29%
Birth control pills, birth control patch, NuvaRing, or other method prescribed by a doctor or nurse	29%
Emergency contraception	11%
IUD	8%
Depo-Provera	1%
Not sure	5%
Did not try to prevent pregnancy	2%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

In South Vancouver Island, 10% of youth who had ever had sexual intercourse reported that the last time they did so was with a same sex partner.

## Sex education at school

*“I think it would be good if there was more education around emotions relating to sex and sexual health—knowing when you’re ready, talking about what you like and don’t like with a partner, knowing in what situations you might regret having sex.”*

16-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 South Vancouver Island, 88% of youth reported receiving sex education at school (vs. 80% across BC). This included 54% who found the sex education they received helpful and 34% who did not find it helpful.

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.
- 83% felt it had started at the right age for them.
- 78% felt it was relevant to their sexual orientation.
- 59% felt it was relevant to any disability or health condition they had.

Non-binary youth were least likely to feel the sex education they received was relevant to their gender identity (e.g., 54% vs. 87% of females) and their sexual orientation (40% vs. 77% of females vs. 83% of males).

## 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.

Where youth accessed reliable information about sexual health	
Parent/guardian	32%
A same-aged friend or peer	27%
Website/online resource	25%
Sexual health professional	17%
An older youth	14%
Family member other than parent/guardian	9%
School staff	6%
Adult outside their family	5%
Printed resource (e.g., book, brochure, poster)	4%
Pornography	3%
Professional other than a sexual health professional	3%
Did not know where to go	5%
Did not go anywhere	36%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

There were some gender differences in where youth went when they needed reliable sexual health information. For example, females were more likely than males to go to a same-aged peer (33% vs. 21%) and an older youth (17% vs. 11%), and were less likely to access pornography (2% vs. 4%). Non-binary youth were the most likely to go to a sexual health professional (29% vs. 19% of females vs. 14% of males) and access an online resource (39% vs. 26% of females vs. 22% of males). Males were the most likely to not go anywhere for this information (42% vs. 30% of female and non-binary youth).

# Substance use

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

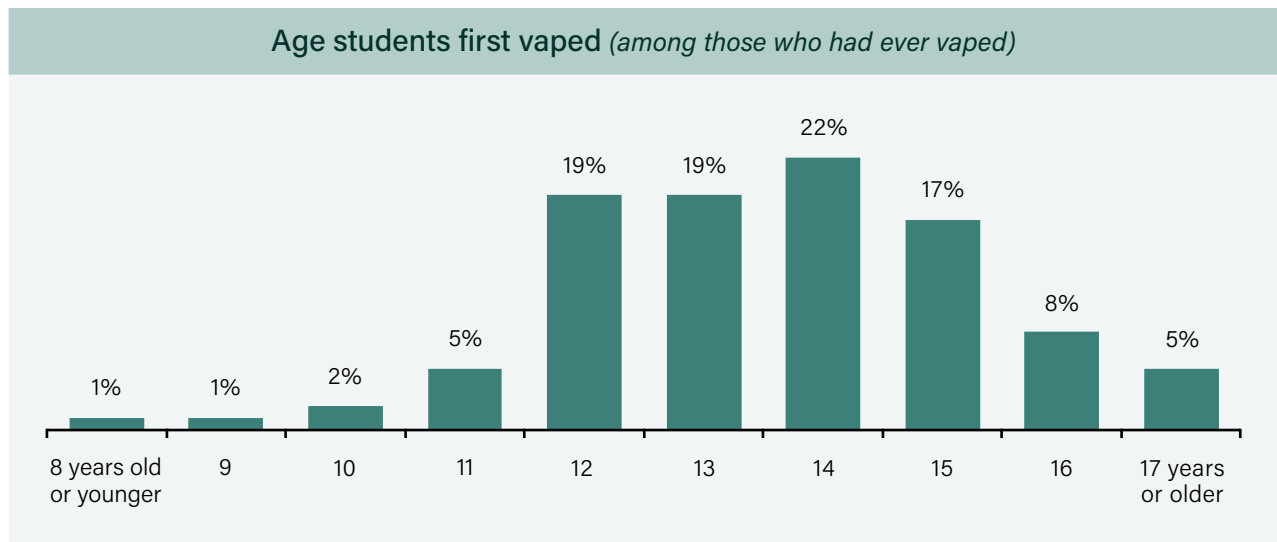
## Vaping

*"I really want to stop vaping but it's really hard when they are all around me and I don't know how to stop because whenever I am bored, I crave it and I feel sad without it."*

15-year-old youth

In South Vancouver Island, 29% of youth had ever vaped, which was comparable to the province as a whole. Also reflecting the provincial pattern, females were more likely than males to have ever vaped (34% vs. 24%).

The majority of youth who vaped (69%) first did so before their 15<sup>th</sup> birthday.



Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.  
Note: Not all differences were statistically significant.

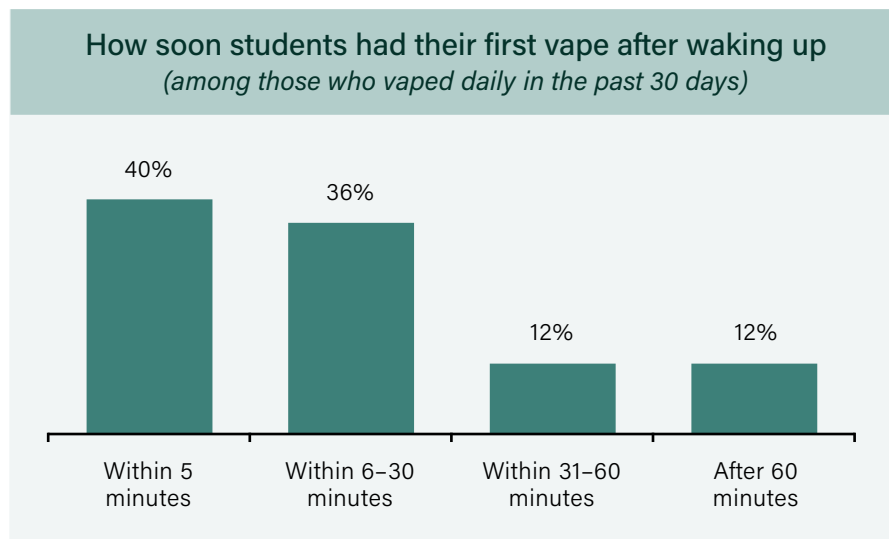
Reflecting the provincial picture, 57% of local youth who had tried vaping had vaped in the past 30 days.

Number of days youth vaped in the past 30 days <i>(among those who had ever vaped)</i>	
0 days	43%
1 or 2 days	16%
3 to 5 days	8%
6 to 9 days	3%
10 to 19 days	10%
20 to 29 days	8%
All 30 days	13%

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

Among youth who had vaped in the past 30 days, 5% 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

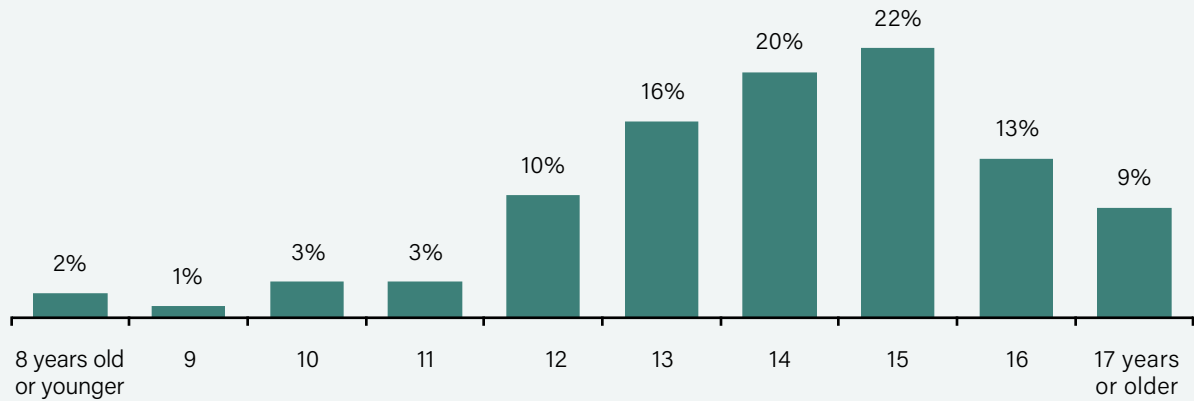
In 2023, 19% of youth had smoked tobacco, including 2% who smoked tobacco exclusively, and 17% who both smoked and vaped. Another 12% vaped exclusively.

Local youth were more likely to have smoked than youth across BC (19% vs. 15% provincially). Also, the provincial decrease in trying tobacco was not seen locally where smoking rates remained comparable over the past decade.

As with vaping, females were more likely than males to have tried smoking (22% vs. 17%).

Provincially, youth who had tried smoking first did so at a younger age than youth in previous survey years. However, locally, 44% of those who smoked waited until they were 15 or older to first do so, which was similar to the percentage 5 and 10 years earlier.

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



Note: Percentages do not total 100% due to rounding.  
 Note: Not all differences were statistically significant.

Among youth who had ever smoked, 42% smoked in the past 30 days, and 3% of these youth used a product to help them stop smoking during that time (excluding vapes).

Youth used a variety of tobacco products in the past month, including cigarettes (8%), cigars/cigarillos (2%), chewing tobacco (1% vs. 2% in 2018), and a hookah (1%).

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

0 days	58%
1 or 2 days	23%
3 to 5 days	7%
6 to 9 days	4%
10 to 19 days	3%
20 to 29 days	2%
All 30 days	3%



# Alcohol

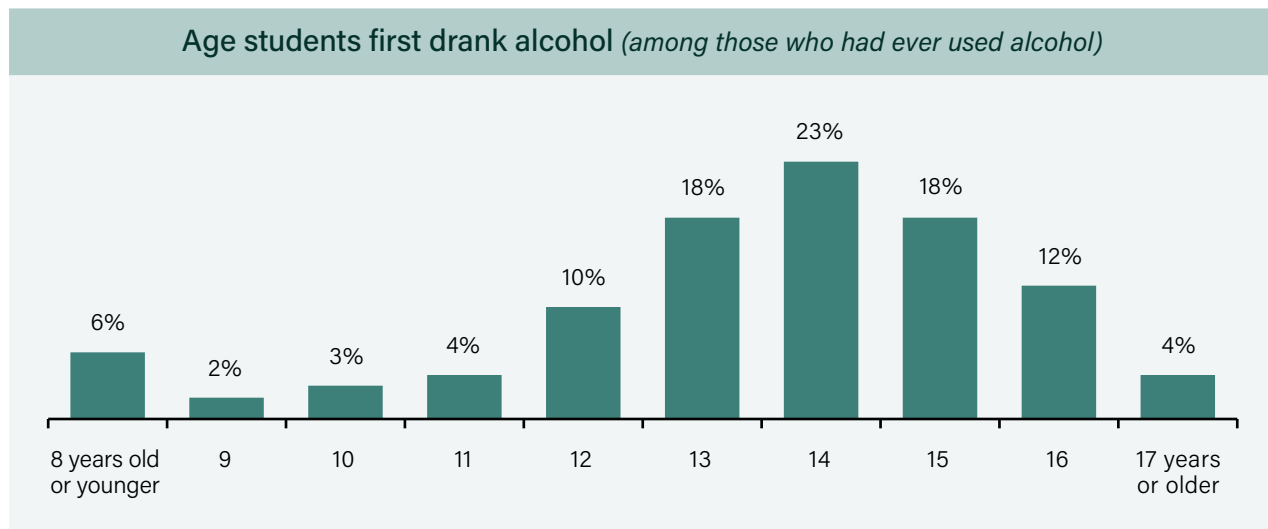
The Canadian Low Risk Drinking Guidelines recommend that youth do not drink until they are of legal drinking age. However, if they decide to drink, the guidelines suggest they should not drink alcohol more than once or twice a week, and should never have more than two drinks on any one occasion ([ccsa.ca/sites/default/files/2019-04/CCSA-Youth-and-Alcohol-Summary-2014-en.pdf](https://ccsa.ca/sites/default/files/2019-04/CCSA-Youth-and-Alcohol-Summary-2014-en.pdf)).

Reflecting the provincial trend, there was a decrease in South Vancouver Island youth who had tried alcohol (e.g., 45% vs. 48% in 2018). However, local youth remained more likely than those across BC to have tried alcohol (38% provincially in 2023). Females were more likely than males to have drunk alcohol (50% vs. 40%).

Comparable to 5 and 10 years earlier, 34% of youth who had tried alcohol waited until they were 15 or older to first do so. As with tobacco, this did not reflect the provincial trend where youth who had tried alcohol were more likely to first do so at a younger age.

Among youth who had ever used alcohol:

- 59% drank in the past month.
- 31% 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.
- 23% had more than two drinks on at least 1 day in the past week, including 4% who did so on 3 or more days.



Note: Not all differences were statistically significant.

Number of days youth drank alcohol in the past 30 days <i>(among those who had ever used alcohol)</i>	
0 days	41%
1 or 2 days	34%
3 to 5 days	14%
6 to 9 days	6%
10 to 19 days	4%
20 to 29 days	1%
All 30 days	1%

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

Three quarters of youth who had tried alcohol (75%) 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	70%
Coolers	42%
Beer	30%
Wine	14%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

# Cannabis

*Lower-risk cannabis use guidelines for youth were recently developed by researchers at the University of Victoria (Card et al., 2023: [uvic.ca/research/centres/cisur/assets/docs/youth-cannabis-guidelines.pdf](https://uvic.ca/research/centres/cisur/assets/docs/youth-cannabis-guidelines.pdf)). The researchers recommend youth consider waiting until they are older before using; “start low and go slow” with the amount of cannabis they consume; be aware of the source of their cannabis and what it might contain; and know the different health risks associated with the various modes of cannabis consumption.*

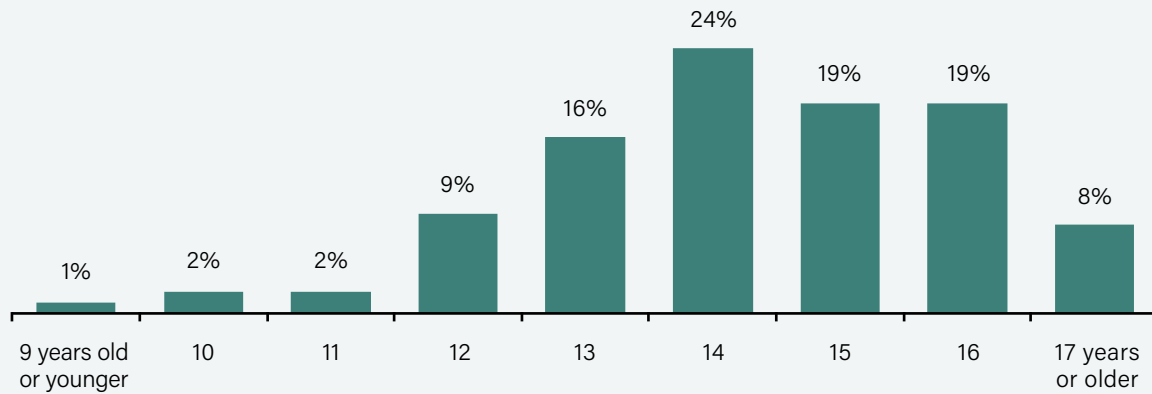
In South Vancouver Island, 27% of youth had tried cannabis, which was higher than the provincial rate (22%), and similar to local results 5 and 10 years earlier. Females were more likely than males to have tried cannabis (31% vs. 23%).

Among youth who had tried cannabis, 45% waited until they were 15 or older to first do so, which was similar to 5 years earlier, and an increase from a decade earlier (39% in 2013).





### 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:

- 60% used it in the past 30 days.
- 15% used it on 20 or more days that month.
- 30% 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	40%
1 or 2 days	26%
3 to 5 days	11%
6 to 9 days	5%
10 to 19 days	4%
20 to 29 days	6%
All 30 days	9%

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

Youth who had used cannabis were asked about all the ways they had consumed it the last time. Most of these youth smoked it (76%), 30% vaped it, 22% ate it, and 1% took it another way (such as 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	62%
Friend or family member gave it to them	33%
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%
Bought it from a website	2%
Someone they did not know gave it to them	2%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

# Other substances

In this region, 15% of youth had used substances other than alcohol and cannabis. As seen provincially, there was a local decrease in the use of ecstasy/MDMA (2% vs. 4% in 2018) and cocaine (2% vs. 3%). There was also a local decrease in the use of amphetamines (1% vs. 2% in 2018), and an increase in those who had tried ketamine/GHB (1% vs. <1%).

In comparison to youth across BC, local youth were more likely to have used hallucinogens other than mushrooms (4% vs. 2% provincially).

Substances youth had ever used	
Mushrooms	8%
More of their own prescription than prescribed	5%
Prescription pills without a doctor's consent (other than benzodiazepines)	4%
Hallucinogens (other than mushrooms)	4%
Inhalants	3%
Ecstasy/MDMA	2%
Cocaine	2%
Benzodiazepines without a doctor's consent (e.g., Xanax, Valium, Ativan)	2%
Ketamine, GHB	1%
Heroin, fentanyl, or other opioids	1%
Crystal meth	1%
Amphetamines	1%

# Reported reasons for using substances

Youth reported a variety of reasons for their most recent substance use. They most commonly used because they wanted to have fun, but some also used as a way to manage their emotions.

Reasons youth used substances the last time (among those who had used alcohol or other substances)	
Wanted to have fun	63%
Wanted to experiment	33%
Friends were doing it	31%
Because of stress	20%
Felt down or sad	19%
There was nothing else to do	10%
Because of an addiction	5%
To manage physical pain	5%
Thought it would help them focus	4%
Felt pressured into doing it/to fit in	2%
To change the effect of another substance	2%
Didn't mean to (e.g., drink was spiked)	1%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Among youth who had used substances, females were the most likely to report using the last time because they wanted to have fun (e.g., 71% vs. 56% of males) and because their friends were doing it (35% of females vs. 27% of males vs. 17% of non-binary youth). Female and non-binary youth were more likely than males to have used because of stress (e.g., 24% of females vs. 14% of males) and because they felt down or sad (e.g., 22% of females vs. 12% of males). Non-binary youth were the most likely to have used substances to help them focus (14% vs. 3% of males and females).

# Consequences of substance use

The majority of those who used substances in the past 12 months (56%) did not report any negative consequences (vs. 48% in 2018). 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	29%
Passed out	21%
Got injured	14%
Argued with family members	12%
School work or grades changed	9%
Damaged property	7%
Lost friends or broke up with a romantic partner	7%
Had sex when they didn't want to	7%
Got in trouble with police	5%
Got into a physical fight	4%
Overdosed	3%
Had to get medical treatment	1%

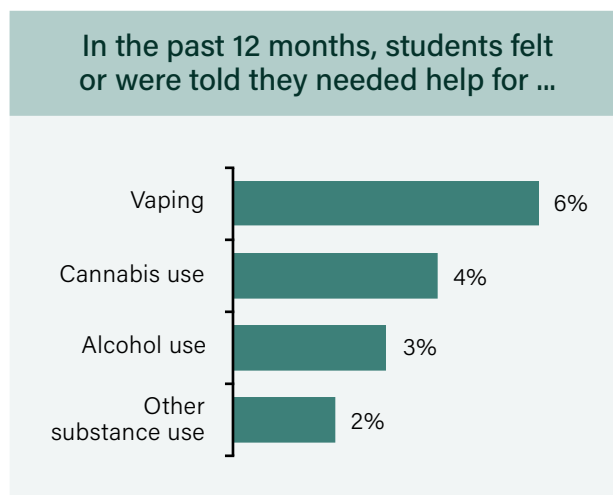
Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

There were some gender differences in reported consequences of substance use. For example, females were more likely than males to have been told they did something they could not remember (32% vs. 24%; among those who had used substances in the past year) and to have had sex when they did not want to (8% vs. 3%). Males were the most likely to have been in trouble with the police (e.g., 8% vs. 4% of females).

Comparable to 5 and 10 years earlier, 23% of youth who had ever had intercourse reported they had used alcohol or other substances before doing so the last time.

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 (18%), cannabis (13%), or other substances (5%).

Youth were asked if they felt or had been told that they needed help for their substance use in the past year. They were most likely to report needing help for their vaping. Females were the most likely to report needing help for vaping (e.g., 8% vs. 4% of males), and were more likely than males to identify needing help for their alcohol use (3% vs. 2%).

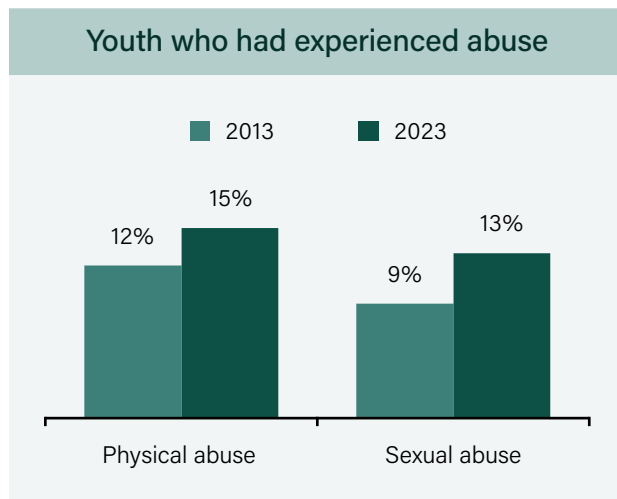


# Adverse experiences

Adverse experiences during childhood and adolescence can have a lasting negative impact on health and well-being into adulthood. Such experiences can include abuse, violence, harassment, discrimination, and bereavement.

## Physical and sexual abuse

Provincially, there was an increase in physical and sexual abuse rates over the past decade. Locally, rates were similar to 5 years earlier, but higher than in 2013.



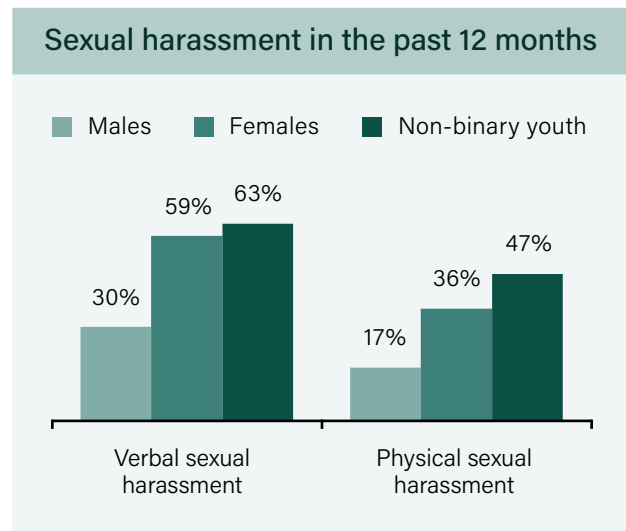
Non-binary youth were the most likely to report experiencing physical abuse (40% vs. 17% of females vs. 11% of males) and sexual abuse (28% vs. 19% of females vs. 5% of males).

## Sexual harassment

*"On my transportation to school I know several assaulters that I have to sit by or next to every day. That makes me feel very awful and powerless."*

16-year-old youth

In the past 12 months, 45% of youth experienced verbal sexual harassment (vs. 40% provincially), and 27% experienced physical sexual harassment. Males were the least likely to have experienced sexual harassment.



Note: The difference between females and non-binary youth was not statistically significant for verbal sexual harassment.

Verbal sexual harassment rates were higher than 5 and 10 years earlier (e.g., 45% vs. 41% in 2018). The rate of physical sexual harassment was comparable to 2018 and higher than in 2013 (20%).

# Dating violence

In the past 12 months, 44% of youth reported they had been in a dating relationship, which was comparable to the province as a whole. Among these youth, 8% experienced physical violence within that relationship (such as being hit, punched, or slapped). This was similar to local rates 5 and 10 years earlier.

Among youth who had been in a dating relationship in the past year, 13% reported that the person they dated had used social media to try to control, embarrass, or hurt them.

There were no gender differences in youth who experienced in-person or digital dating violence.

# Discrimination

***"Things like discrimination are things I worry about, but haven't experienced yet."***

17-year-old youth

Youth reported being discriminated against for a variety of reasons in the past year. Compared to 5 years earlier, there was an increase in the percentage of youth who experienced discrimination due to their gender or sex (16% vs. 10%) and sexual orientation (9% vs. 7%), and a decrease in discrimination because of how much money they or their family had (6% vs. 8% in 2018).

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

Physical appearance	22%
Weight	17%
Gender/sex	16%
Race, ethnicity, or skin colour	12%
Sexual orientation	9%
How much money they/their family had	6%
Religion	5%
Health condition	4%
Disability	4%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

A new question was added to the 2023 BC AHS asking where youth had experienced discrimination in the past year. In South Vancouver Island, youth most commonly reported experiencing discrimination at school, followed by online.

## Where youth experienced discrimination in the past 12 months

At school	25%
On social media/online	13%
On the street	8%
On public transit	5%
In extracurricular activities (e.g., sports)	5%
At work	4%
In store/restaurant	3%
In hospital or other health care setting	1%
Other	2%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

The majority of youth who experienced discrimination (65%) had this experience rarely. However, 7% experienced discrimination regularly in the past year.

## Other forms of victimization

***“I wish the school system was more educated about how bullying works in female relationships. The gossiping and mixed messages can really take a toll on your self-esteem and mental health.”***

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. Rates of being socially excluded (37%), teased to the point of extreme discomfort (37%), and physically attacked or assaulted (8%) were similar to 5 years earlier.

Non-binary and male youth were more likely than females to have been physically attacked or assaulted (e.g., 16% of non-binary youth vs. 5% of females). Males were the least likely to have been socially excluded (e.g., 26% vs. 49% of non-binary youth) and severely teased (30% vs. 42% of females vs. 56% of non-binary youth).

Comparable to 2018, 8% of youth reported they had perpetrated one of these forms of in-person victimization in the past 12 months.

Also comparable to 5 years earlier, 16% of youth reported they had been cyberbullied (including through texts and social media) in the past year. There was an increase in the percentage of youth who had perpetrated online victimization during this time frame (8% vs. 5% in 2018).

Males were the least likely to have been cyberbullied (12% of males vs. 18% of females vs. 30% of non-binary youth), while there were no gender differences in perpetrating online victimization.

## Bereavement

Almost three quarters of youth (73%) had experienced the death of someone close to them. Comparable to the province as a whole, South Vancouver Island youth were most commonly bereaved due to old age and to illness (other than COVID-19). The provincial increase in bereavement due to an overdose was not seen locally.

### Reasons someone close to them had died

Old age/natural death	49%
Illness (other than COVID-19)	48%
Accident	12%
Overdose	10%
Suicide	9%
COVID-19	6%
Violence	3%
Other	2%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.



# School experiences

***"[I am good at] sciences, math, technology, arts (piano, visual arts), languages, etc."***

18-year-old youth

***"In my school there are not enough gender-neutral washrooms, and I have missed out on a large portion of lessons because the one gender-neutral washroom was too far away."***

16-year-old youth

## School connectedness

Youth were asked how much they agreed with a series of statements about their school experience. Reflecting the provincial trend, local youth were less likely to feel connected to school and to feel safe there than those 5 years earlier.

Youth who agreed/strongly agreed they felt ...	Youth who agreed/strongly agreed they felt ...	
	2018	2023
School staff expected them to do well	79%	74%
School staff treated them fairly	72%	66%
Safe at school	77%	65%
Teachers cared about them	70%	64%
Like a part of the school	60%	54%
Happy to be at school	61%	53%
Other school staff cared about them	54%	48%

## Absences

Students were asked about their reasons for missing school in the past 30 days. The most common reason was illness. South Vancouver Island youth were more likely than those across BC to skip school (31% vs. 27% provincially), and to miss school because of their mental health (25% vs. 22%).

Reasons for missing school in the past 30 days	
Illness	48%
Appointments	42%
Skipping	31%
Own mental health (e.g., anxiety, depression)	25%
Sleeping in	25%
Family responsibilities	18%
No transportation	9%
Work	4%
Bullying	4%
Suspension	2%

## School safety

Youth generally felt safe at school, and getting to and from school. However, they were less likely to feel this way compared to 5 and 10 years earlier. Youth were more likely to feel safe in supervised locations, such as the library, than in less supervised spaces. Local youth were more likely than those across BC to feel safe in washrooms (72% vs. 68% provincially).

Locations where youth usually/always felt safe	Locations where youth usually/always felt safe		
	2013	2018	2023
Library	96%	95%	93%
Classrooms	95%	93%	88%
Getting to and from school	93%	91%	88%
Hallways and stairwells	92%	90%	85%
Cafeteria	93%	92%	85%
Outside on school grounds	90%	88%	84%
Changing rooms	89%	85%	74%
Washrooms	91%	87%	72%

Note: The differences between 2013 and 2018 were not statistically significant for 'cafeteria' and 'outside on school grounds'.

## Education plans

Three quarters of youth planned to pursue post-secondary education. However, the percentage planning to continue their education beyond high school decreased over the past decade (75% vs. 81% in 2018 vs. 85% in 2013). Females were the most likely to plan to go to post-secondary (e.g., 81% vs. 71% of males).

School plans	
Did not expect to finish high school	1%
Planned to finish high school but not go to post-secondary	6%
Planned to go to post-secondary (including university, college, trade school)	75%
Had not thought about it	10%
Did not know	8%

### *Why is feeling connected to school important?*

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 (26% vs. 42% of those who did not feel like a part of their school); and were more likely to rate their mental health as good or excellent (74% vs. 23%), feel quite or very hopeful about their future (74% vs. 28%), and plan to attend post-secondary (81% vs. 63%).



# Relationships and connections

Adolescence is a time when young people can learn how to develop and maintain safe and healthy relationships with peers, romantic partners, family members, caregivers, teachers, and adults in the community.

## Friendships and dating relationships

*“I think I’m good at helping others when they are in tough situations.”*

15-year-old youth

Most youth (94%) had at least one close friend in their school or community. However, they were less likely to have three or more of these friends than youth before the COVID-19 pandemic (70% vs. 82% in 2018). There were no changes in how many online friends they had whom they had never met in person (33% in 2023, including 14% who had three or more such friends).

In South Vancouver Island, 76% of youth reported they had friends who they could share their ups and downs with, and 73% reported that they got along with the people around them.

In the past 12 months, 9% of youth had dated someone online whom they had never met in person. This was comparable to the percentage in 2018.

## Caring and supportive adults

Similar to the province as a whole, most youth in South Vancouver Island (75%) had at least one adult in their neighbourhood or community (outside of their family and school) who they felt cared about them.

Youth were more likely than those 5 years earlier to have an adult to turn to when they had a serious problem. Locally, 75% had an adult inside their family they could turn to (vs. 71% in 2018), 37% had one outside their family (vs. 31%), and 28% had both (vs. 21%).

Most youth who felt they needed help with specific tasks had an adult who helped them.

Had an adult to help with tasks (among those who needed help)	
Making or getting to appointments	95%
Learning life skills (e.g., cooking, budgeting)	91%
Preparing for university, college, or trade school	88%
Getting a job	87%
Homework	83%

Among those who felt they needed help, non-binary youth were the least likely to have an adult to help with homework (e.g., 68% vs. 83% of females) and preparing for post-secondary (79% vs. 86% of females vs. 91% of males).

## Family connectedness

The majority of youth felt connected to their family. However, they were less likely than those 5 years earlier to feel their family respected them (73% vs. 77% in 2018) and understood them (54% vs. 60%).

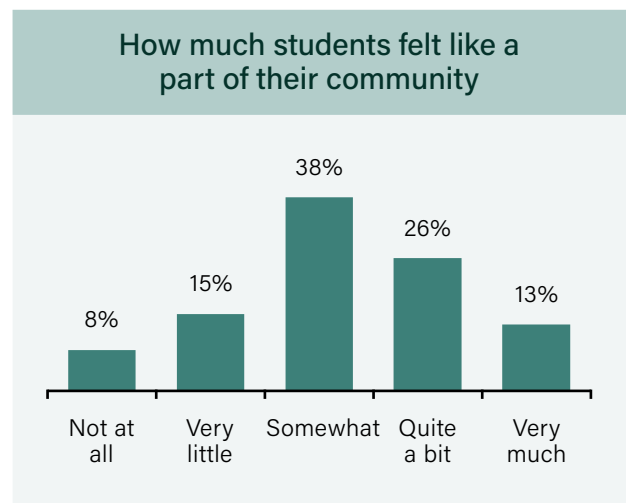
Youth who felt their family quite a bit/very much ...	
Paid attention to them	74%
Respected them	73%
Had fun together	70%
Understood them	54%

## Community connectedness and sense of safety

*"I live in a really safe neighbourhood, and I take the bus all the time, but I just hate it—it's so scary."*

12-year-old youth

Most youth felt at least a little connected to their community. Comparable to 5 and 10 years earlier, 39% of youth felt this way quite a bit or very much.



Similar to 5 years earlier but lower than a decade earlier, most youth often or always felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day (90% vs. 94% in 2013) and at night (68% vs. 71%). Also, 62% of those who used public transit often or always felt safe doing so (vs. 69% in 2013).

Youth in South Vancouver Island were more likely than those across BC to often or always feel safe in their neighbourhood at night (68% vs. 64% provincially) and on transit (62% vs. 54%; among those who used transit).

Males were the most likely to feel safe in their neighbourhood and on transit. For example, 93% of males often or always felt safe in their neighbourhood during the day, compared to 89% of females and 78% of non-binary youth.



# Other types of connectedness

## Spirituality

Reflecting provincial results, 51% of youth felt that spirituality was at least a little important to them, including 12% for whom it was very important.

## Connection to the land and nature

***“I would like to work on skills in nature such as building fires, survival knowledge, and food preparation.”***

13-year-old youth

The majority of youth felt connected to the land and nature at least sometimes (65% vs. 62% provincially), including 6% who always felt this way.

## Time to do the things they want

***“I’m good at loving and appreciating myself and the people around me, taking time for myself.”***

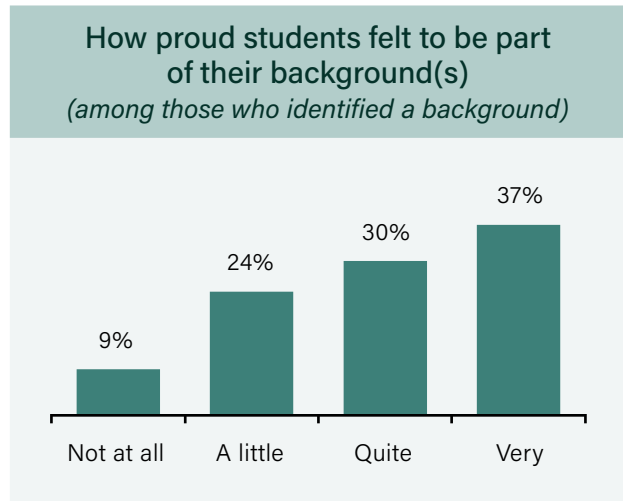
16-year-old youth

As in 2018, youth generally felt they spent the right amount of time with family, friends, on their own, and in nature.

How much time youth felt they had to do what they wanted ...			
	Not enough	Right amount	Too much
With family	20%	74%	6%
With friends	26%	70%	4%
On their own	22%	66%	12%
In nature	37%	60%	3%

## Cultural pride

Most youth felt at least a little proud to be part of the background(s) they identified with.



### Why are connections important?

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 about their future (63% vs. 48% 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 (52% vs. 42% of those who never or hardly ever felt connected).

# Recreational activities

Engagement in recreational activities can help young people to not only relax and build connections with peers who have similar interests, but also to identify their skills and interests, and develop their sense of autonomy.

## Swimming ability

***"[I am really good at] swimming, teaching swimming."***

15-year-old youth

For the first time, the BC AHS asked youth about their swimming ability. Local youth were more likely to be able to swim than those across BC. In South Vancouver Island, 68% reported they were confident swimmers (vs. 62% provincially), 26% could swim but not confidently (vs. 29%), and 5% could not swim at all (vs. 9%). There were no gender differences locally in swimming ability.

## Extracurricular physical activity

***"I am good at skateboarding and have been practicing the sport for years."***

17-year-old youth

Youth were asked about their participation in various types of physical activity over the past 12 months, including whether they did these activities at least weekly. Rates of at least weekly participation were comparable to 2018, but lower than 10 years earlier for informal sports (55% vs. 60% in 2013); organized sports (51% vs. 56%); and dance, yoga, or exercise classes (15% vs. 20%).

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

Informal sports (without a coach)	55%
Organized sports (with a coach)	51%
Exercise at a gym or rec centre	36%
Dance, yoga, or exercise classes with an instructor	15%
Exercise to an online video or online class	12%
Extreme sports (e.g., backcountry skiing, BMX)	10%

Males were the most likely to participate in at least weekly informal sports (61% vs. 52% of females vs. 32% of non-binary youth), exercise at a gym or rec centre (43% vs. 32% of females vs. 13% of non-binary youth), and extreme sports (e.g., 13% vs. 7% of females); and were least likely to take dance, yoga, or exercise classes (e.g., 7% vs. 24% of females). Non-binary youth were the least likely to participate at least weekly in organized sports (e.g., 34% vs. 50% of females).

Compared to the province as a whole, local youth were less likely to have participated in extreme sports at least weekly (10% vs. 12% provincially).

# Barriers to engaging in extracurricular physical activity

***“Because of the lack of inclusion and support for trans youth to do sports, I no longer am able to do team sports, and feel unwelcome at the gym, which has caused a decline in my mental health.”***

18-year-old youth

***“We don’t have enough hockey rinks and we need more.”***

14-year-old youth

In this region, 67% of youth reported experiencing barriers to engaging in extracurricular physical activity. The most commonly reported barrier was being too busy.

## Barriers youth experienced to participating in physical activity in the past 12 months

Too busy	42%
Was injured	25%
Too anxious/depressed	20%
Thought it was too competitive	19%
Worried about being bullied by another youth	12%
Couldn't get there or get home	12%
Didn't feel welcome	10%
Activity wasn't available in their community	9%
Couldn't afford it	8%
Parent/guardian would not allow them to	6%
Worried about being bullied by an adult	5%
Worried about catching something (e.g., COVID-19)	5%
Health needs/disability could not be accommodated	3%

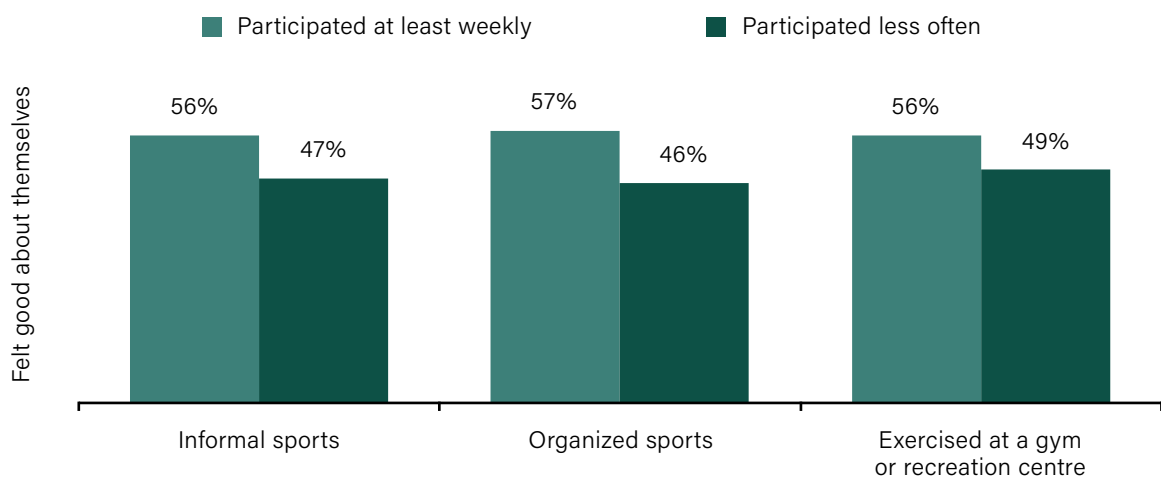
Note: Youth could mark all that applied.



## Why is physical activity important?

Youth who take part in 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. 67%) and mental health (63% vs. 52%). They were also more likely to report feeling good about themselves and to have got at least 8 hours sleep the night before taking the survey (46% vs. 38%).

### Youth who took part in at least weekly physical activity were more likely to feel good about themselves



# Cultural and volunteer activities

Local youth were less likely than those across BC to participate in cultural and volunteer activities. In the past 12 months, 38% took part in cultural or traditional activities (vs. 46% across BC), including 8% who participated at least weekly (vs. 13%). Also, 46% volunteered without pay during this time (vs. 51%), including 13% who volunteered at least once a week (vs. 19%).

## Connection to activities

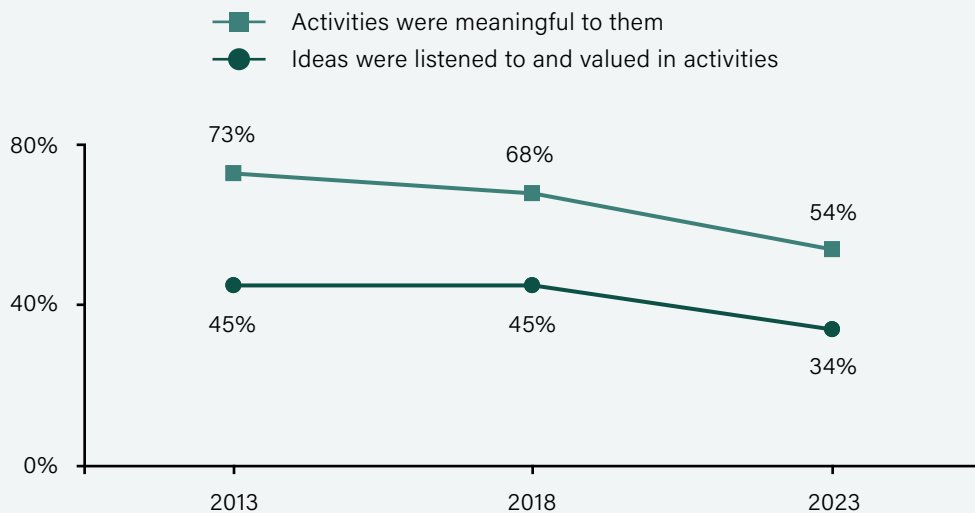
Most youth felt the activities they engaged in were at least somewhat meaningful to them, including 54% who felt this way quite a bit or a lot. About a third (34%) felt their ideas were listened to and valued quite a bit or a lot. Both of these rates were lower than in previous survey years.

### *Why is engagement in community activities important?*

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 connected to their community (52% vs. 37% of those who took part less often), as well as quite or very proud of their culture (86% vs. 64%).

Similarly, those who volunteered on a weekly basis were also more likely to feel connected to their community (51% vs. 36% of those who volunteered less often).

Decreases over time in students who felt quite a bit/a lot that their ...



# Gambling

*"I have a gambling addiction but it's chill cuz I am making big money."*

15-year-old youth

Youth were asked about different types of gambling. In the past 12 months, 35% gambled for money, 11% 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)	21%
Played cards/dice in person	13%
Played in a gaming tournament	8%
Streamed video games (e.g., Twitch)	7%
Bought lottery tickets/scratch cards	7%
Sports betting in person	6%
Played cards/dice online	5%
Sports betting online	3%

Youth were also asked whether they had bet for virtual credits within the past 30 days. A third (33%) did not play video games at all during this time, and 49% did not bet with virtual credits. However, 7% bet with virtual credits they purchased using real money, 12% bet with virtual credits they won or earned in a video game, and 6% bet for prizes.

In the past year, 1% of youth felt or had been told that their gambling had reached a point where they needed help, and 11% were at this point with their video gaming. These percentages were similar to those reported provincially.

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 share that I recently cut using social media and it has improved my mental health a lot."*

17-year-old youth

Most youth had a phone or tablet. They commonly used their device for scrolling through social media and connecting with friends and family.

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

Scrolling through social media	69%
Connecting with family and friends	64%
Gaming other than esports	23%
Playing/watching esports	14%
Watching porn	5%
Sexting	3%
Gambling	2%
None of these	14%

Note: Youth could mark all that applied.

Similar to youth across BC, 18% of local youth felt or had been told that their social media use had reached a point where they needed help in the past year.

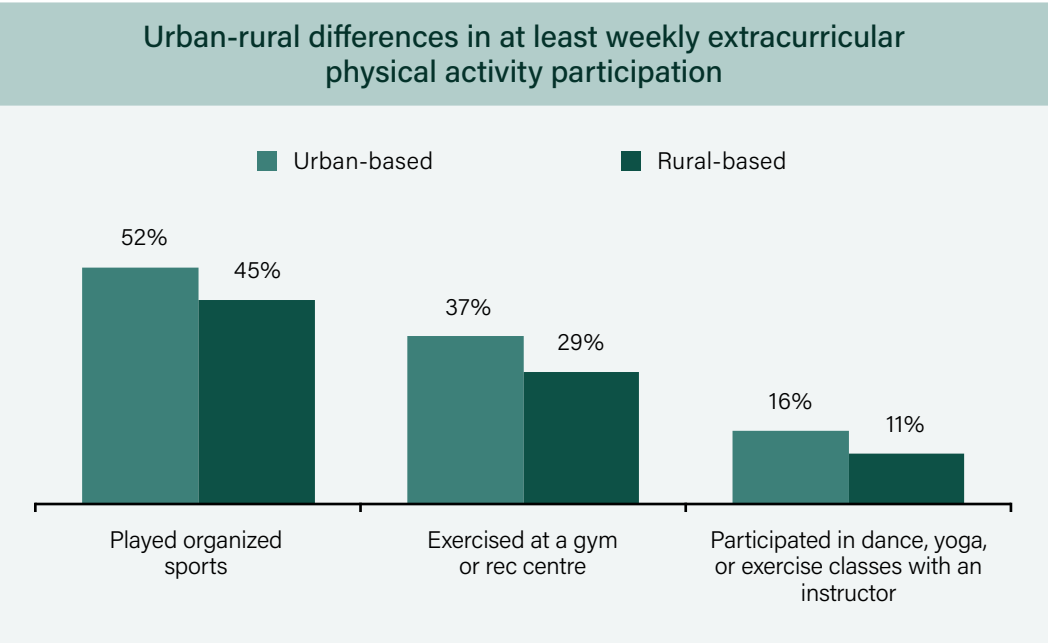
Compared to 5 years earlier, there was a decrease in the percentage of youth who used a phone on their last school day to watch pornography (from 13% in 2018 to 5%) and for sexting (from 6% to 3%).



# Urban-rural differences in health and well-being

In 2023, 87% of South Vancouver Island youth who participated in the BC AHS were at a school in an urban community and 13% were attending school in a rural community.

Health outcomes were generally similar between the two groups. However, rural-based youth were more likely to work during the school year (50% vs. 30%), often or always feel safe in their neighbourhood at night (74% vs. 67%), feel quite or very connected to their community (46% vs. 38%), and be able to swim (e.g., 3% could not swim at all vs. 6% of youth in urban schools). Rural-based youth were also more likely to have self-harmed in the past year (33% vs. 25%). They were less likely to plan to attend post-secondary education (68% vs. 76%) and to participate regularly in extracurricular physical activities over the past year.



# Topics youth wanted to learn more about

The final page of the survey offered youth the opportunity to share anything about their health which they had not been asked about, and to identify any topics they wanted to learn more about. In South Vancouver Island, 6% chose to provide a comment.

Youth most commonly wanted to learn more about mental health, including how to manage and understand mental health challenges, where to access mental health supports, and how to support others' mental health.

*"Stress and how it affects people's minds."*

13-year-old youth

*"I think there needs to be more education about how to support friends in mental health crises."*

17-year-old youth

*"Addiction and family problems."*

16-year-old youth

*"Eating disorders and body image is something that I would benefit from [learning more about], as well as many youth (including cis-males). Social media has created unrealistic expectations for our bodies, and we need to be educated about the fluidity of our bodies."*

17-year-old youth

Students also wanted to learn more about specific health conditions, including how to get tested, and access treatment and supports.

*"I want to get tested for BC learning disability."*

14-year-old youth

*"[I want to learn more about] ARFID, Binge Eating, and ADHD/Autism Spectrum."*

14-year-old youth

*"[I want to learn more about] precise sleeping illnesses and causes/treatments."*

17-year-old youth

Sexual health was another common topic students wanted to learn more about. This included wanting information that was reflective of different gender identities and sexual orientations.

*"Sexual health especially around periods."*

18-year-old youth

*"Sexual abuse/consent education and how to manage it."*

17-year-old youth

*"[I want to learn more about] gender/sexuality inclusive sex ed."*

16-year-old youth

Physical health information students wanted to learn more about included sleep hygiene, exercising, and healthy eating.

*"Eating habits outside of eating disorders."*

15-year-old youth

*"How physical disabilities can affect your life and ways to work around it."*

17-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](mailto: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 this region. To view the provincial results, and the latest reports, fact sheets, infographics, and other resources produced from the 2023 BC AHS, visit [mcs.bc.ca/about\\_bcahs](https://mcs.bc.ca/about_bcahs). Please also consider joining our community mailing list by emailing [mccreary@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:mccreary@mcs.bc.ca).

A video created by a group of young hip hop artists in Vancouver shares some of the comments provided by participants in the 2023 BC AHS, and is available at [youtube.com/user/McCrearyCentre](https://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](mailto: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 adult facilitators 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. Additional arts-based activities and a grant writing workshop are included in the toolkit. More information and the toolkit are available at [mcs.bc.ca/next\\_steps](https://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.

### Youth Action Grants (YAGs)

YAGs offer up to \$750 for youth-led projects that address findings from the BC AHS and seek to support or improve youth health. For more information on how youth can apply, please visit [mcs.bc.ca/youth\\_action\\_grants](https://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. Youth interested in these paid positions can contact [evelyn@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:evelyn@mcs.bc.ca).



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