



## BALANCE AND CONNECTION IN CENTRAL VANCOUVER ISLAND



## THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF OUR YOUTH



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# BALANCE AND CONNECTION IN CENTRAL VANCOUVER ISLAND: THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF OUR YOUTH

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ISBN: 978-1-926675-63-3

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The 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey was approved by the Behavioural Research Ethics Board, University of British Columbia, H17-01307.

Funding for the 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey was provided by BC Ministry of Children and Family Development, BC Ministry of Health, BC Responsible and Problem Gambling Program, and Office of the Representative for Children and Youth.

**Citation:** Jones, G., Thawer, Z., Mahdal, D., Forsyth, K., Poon, C., Peled, M., Smith, A., & McCreary Centre Society. (2020). *Balance and connection in Central Vancouver Island: The health and well-being of our youth*. Vancouver, BC: McCreary Centre Society.

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The 2018 BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS) would not have been possible without the support of the BC government, the five regional health authorities, the 58 participating school districts, many of the province's nursing schools, and the young people who call BC home.

We are also indebted to the school personnel, youth, parents, community agencies, health care professionals, and other experts in adolescent health who helped guide the development of the survey, and to the hundreds of youth who took part in pilot testing the survey instrument.

The BC AHS was administered in Central Vancouver Island by Public Health Nurses, Public Health Dietitians, and nursing students from Vancouver Island University. Their role in the survey was fundamental to its success. Not only did they reassure students that they could answer honestly because their answers would remain confidential, but they were also available to answer any questions that students had about their health.

Quotes from Central Vancouver Island youth who completed the 2018 BC AHS are included throughout the report.

## **Thank you to the 2018 BC AHS Central Vancouver Island coordinators and administrators:**

**Tracy Beaton**  
**Karyn Bernard**  
**Natasha Dumont**  
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**Erin Kenning**  
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# KEY FINDINGS

■ Central Vancouver Island youth are becoming increasingly diverse. Compared to five years earlier, there was a decrease in students who reported they were of European heritage (62% vs. 70% in 2013); and an increase in those who identified as Southeast Asian (5% vs. 2%) and Latin/South/Central American (5% vs. 3%). Over a third (37%) of local students spoke a language other than English at home at least some of the time.

■ Among local Indigenous students, 5% had parents who had been in residential school and around a third (32%) had grandparents who had attended.

■ Most students in Central Vancouver Island rated their health as good or excellent (80%). However, this was a local decrease from 86% in 2013. The percentage who rated their mental health as good or excellent also decreased (69% vs. 80% in 2013), and was lower than across the province (73%).

■ Reflecting results across the province, 50% of Central Vancouver Island students slept for at least eight hours on the night before completing the survey. This was a local decrease from 55% in 2013. Most students were engaging in online activities after their expected bedtime. For example, 26% were gaming and 70% were watching videos, checking social media, and doing other online activities.

■ As in 2013, Central Vancouver Island youth were more likely than their peers across the province to have experienced a concussion in the past year (17% vs. 13%). However, there was an increase locally in students who always wore a helmet when cycling (50% vs. 40% in 2013).

■ Compared to 2013, there was an increase in local students who reported they had Anxiety Disorder/panic attacks (23% vs. 9%), Depression (19% vs. 10%), and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD; 4% vs. 1%). Local females were more likely than males to report each of these conditions.

■ In the past year, 10% of males and 26% of females had cut or injured themselves on purpose without the intention of killing themselves. Also, 19% had seriously considered suicide (vs. 12% in 2013) and 5% had attempted suicide during this time period.

■ In the past year, 21% of Central Vancouver Island youth had not received mental health services that they felt they needed. This rate was comparable to the province as a whole, and a local increase from 11% in 2013.

■ Local youth were more likely than their peers across BC to have engaged in sexual activity. For example, 26% had ever had oral sex, compared to 22% provincially.

■ Among youth who had ever had sexual intercourse, 59% used a condom or other protection the last time they had sex, which was a decrease from 69% in 2013.

■ Provincially, there was a decrease in the percentage of youth who had smoked tobacco (e.g., cigarettes, cigars, or cigarillos). However, this was not the case locally, as 26% had tried smoking, which was similar to five years earlier and above the provincial rate (18%).

■ Local youth were more likely than youth across BC to have vaped with nicotine (26% vs. 21%) and smoked cigarettes (12% vs. 7%) in the past month.

■ Local youth were also more likely than their peers across BC to have tried alcohol (52% vs. 44%) and marijuana (33% vs. 25%), but were less likely to have done so than local youth a decade earlier.

■ The percentage of students who had met someone through the Internet who made them feel unsafe increased (21% vs. 14% in 2013). This increase was seen for both males (13% vs. 9%) and females (29% vs. 20%).

■ Most Central Vancouver Island youth felt connected to their families. Overall, 75% felt respected by their family, 72% felt that their family paid attention to them, 69% felt that their family had fun together, and 56% felt their family understood them. Also, 71% felt they had an adult inside their family they could talk to if they had a serious problem.

■ Most students also felt connected to their school. For example, they felt they were treated fairly by school staff (71%), their teachers cared about them (66%), they were part of their school (57%), they were happy to be at school (55%), and school staff other than teachers cared about them (52%). However, youth generally felt less safe at school than in previous years.

■ Reflecting the provincial picture and the local rate five years earlier, 67% of Central Vancouver Island youth felt there was an adult in their neighbourhood or community (outside their family or school) who really cared about them.

■ Locally, 31% of youth had an adult outside their family they could talk to if they had a serious problem. This was above the provincial rate (27%), and similar to the local rate five years earlier. Central Vancouver Island females were more likely to have such an adult in their lives than females across the province (35% vs. 30%), whereas rates for males were similar.

■ Most youth had friends who would disapprove of them engaging in health risk behaviours. However, local youth were less likely than their peers across the province to have friends who would disapprove if they used marijuana (49% vs. 55%) or got drunk (40% vs. 45%).

■ Central Vancouver Island youth generally felt positively about their quality of life. For example, most felt they had a good life (79%) and their life was going well (73%). Also, 68% felt quite a bit or very hopeful for their future.

■ The most common topic local students wanted to learn more about was mental health, including information about specific conditions, how to manage a mental health condition, and where and how to access mental health services.



# INTRODUCTION

## 2018 BC ADOLESCENT HEALTH SURVEY

The BC Adolescent Health Survey (BC AHS) is the most reliable, comprehensive survey of youth aged 12–19 in British Columbia. The survey has been completed every five years since 1992. In 2018, over 38,000 students in 58 of BC’s 60 school districts participated.

The 2018 BC AHS was developed in consultation with young people, parents, and other experts in youth health. It was extensively pilot tested before being administered by Public Health Nurses and nursing students; and locally also by Public Health Dietitians to students in mainstream public schools between February and June 2018.

A report of the provincial findings was released in March 2019 (*Balance and connection in BC*) and can be accessed at [www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca).

## REGIONAL REPORTS

This report is one of 16 regional reports of the BC AHS results. It shares data provided by students in Grades 7–12 in the Central Vancouver Island Health Service Delivery Area (HSDA).

Central Vancouver Island HSDA is comprised of four school districts: Nanaimo-Ladysmith (SD 68), Qualicum (SD 69), Alberni (SD 70), and Cowichan Valley (SD 79). All school districts in this region have participated in the survey since 1998, and three of the four have participated in all six waves of the survey. The Conseil scolaire francophone school district (SD 93) also participated in the survey for the first time, and accounted for 1% of the sample in this region.

In addition to the inclusion of SD 93, one school district changed consent procedures for the survey between 2013 and 2018. Additional analyses were conducted to assess if these changes may have affected the regional results. This did not appear to be the case.

This report focuses on the 2018 Central Vancouver Island results with relevant comparisons to the 2018 provincial results, as well as to local results in 2008 and 2013.



## A GUIDE TO THIS REPORT

This report is intended for a community audience, and therefore does not detail all aspects of the methodology, including analyses conducted and statistical testing applied. This information is available at [www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca) or by email from [mccreary@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:mccreary@mcs.bc.ca).

The report is divided into five main sections. The first provides background information about the young people who completed the survey, the second focuses on their health profile, the next section considers some potentially adverse experiences or challenges to growing up healthy, and precedes a section which looks at factors that can support young people to thrive. The final section offers Central Vancouver Island students' suggestions for health topics they would like to learn more about.

The 2018 BC AHS included many questions which have been asked on the BC AHS in previous years. This allowed us to report trends over time. The survey also included some new items which reflected the changing challenges and opportunities experienced by the province's young people. These items were deemed important to include by stakeholders who participated in consultations during the development of the survey.

Based on feedback about the 2013 BC AHS and through consultations during the development of the 2018 survey, one of the areas which was updated was gender identity. Following recommendations from Statistics Canada, the 2018 survey included two new questions: one about

sex/gender assigned at birth (what is listed on a student's original birth certificate, with an option of male or female) and one about current gender identity (which included the response options of male, female, neither male nor female, and not yet sure).

Previous versions of the BC AHS only included male and female options for gender. Therefore, in this report, trends are reported only for males and females (based on the question about sex/gender assigned at birth). For analyses conducted exclusively with the 2018 data, results are reported using the second question about current gender identity (male, female, and non-binary). Non-binary youth include those who identified as neither male nor female, as well as those who were not yet sure of their gender identity.

All reported comparisons and associations within Central Vancouver Island and to previous survey years which are included in this report are statistically significant at  $p < .05$ . This means there is up to a 5% likelihood these results occurred by chance. Comparisons between Central Vancouver Island and the province are statistically significant at  $p < .01$ , which means there is up to 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 than anticipated standard error, but is still within the releasable range.



## LIMITATIONS

When reading this report, it is important to remember that although it is considered representative of youth aged 12–19 who were attending mainstream schools in Central Vancouver Island, it does not capture the health picture of all young people in this age range. For example, those who were in alternative schools, independent schools, were home-schooled, were dealing with challenges which kept them out of school, or were absent on the day the survey was administered were not included.

Also, the survey was only administered on paper and in English, which excluded some youth with certain disabilities, and literacy or comprehension challenges.

Finally, the percentage of students in Central Vancouver Island who identified as non-binary was small (2%). Therefore, although non-binary youth were considered in all gendered analyses, it was often not possible to report the findings due to the risk of deductive disclosure or the possibility that the percentage estimate was unreliable.

## GLOSSARY

For readability, the following terms are used in this report:

❑ **Extreme sports** include activities such as back-country skiing and BMX.

❑ **Ideas listened to** refers to youth who reported that their ideas were listened to ‘quite a bit’ or ‘a lot’ in the activities that they were involved in.

❑ **Informal sports** are sports without a coach such as skateboarding and hiking.

❑ **Meaningful activities** are activities which youth indicated were ‘quite a bit’ or ‘very’ meaningful to them.

❑ **Non-binary** reflects youth who did not identify as either male or female or were not yet sure of their gender identity.

❑ **Organized sports** are sports with a coach, such as school teams and swimming lessons.

❑ **Phone** refers to a cell phone, smartphone, or other portable electronic communication device.

❑ **Sexting** refers to sending sexually explicit photographs or messages via a phone. It was also referred to on the survey as ‘sending nudes.’

❑ **Students** and **youth** are used interchangeably to refer to survey participants aged 12–19.

# YOUNG PEOPLE IN CENTRAL VANCOUVER ISLAND

## BACKGROUND

In 2018, Central Vancouver Island students most commonly reported that they were of European heritage (62%). This was a local decrease from 70% in 2013, but remained higher than across the province (46%).

Compared to five years earlier, local students were more likely to identify as Southeast Asian (5% vs. 2%) and Latin/South/Central American (5% vs. 3%), and were less likely to identify as Australian/Pacific Islander (2% vs. 3%).

## BIRTHPLACE & LANGUAGE

The percentage of Central Vancouver Island students born in Canada decreased over the past decade (87% vs. 93% in 2008), but remained above the provincial rate (79%).

Among students born abroad, 42% had been in Canada less than two years and 25% had been here between two and five years. Also, 5% were here as international students.

Thirty-seven percent of students spoke a language other than English at home, with 9% doing so most of the time. These rates were lower than across the province, where over half (53%) spoke another language at home, and 23% did so most of the time.

Family background		
	Central Vancouver Island	BC
European	62%	46%
Indigenous	14%	10%
East Asian	7%	18%
Southeast Asian	5%	8%
Latin/South/Central American	5%	5%
South Asian	3%	11%
African	2%	3%
Australian/Pacific Islander	2%	2%
West Asian	1%	3%
Don't know	16%	10%
Other	4%	4%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

Note: The majority of students who chose 'Other' indicated they were Canadian.

Note: The differences between Central Vancouver Island and BC were not statistically significant for Latin/South/Central American, African, Australian/Pacific Islander, or Other.

## INDIGENOUS YOUTH

Among the 14% of local students who identified as Indigenous, the majority were First Nations (64%), 31% were Métis, and the remainder identified as another Indigenous background (including Inuit).

Around 1 in 5 (19%) Indigenous youth currently lived on a First Nations reserve at least some of the time (including 15% who lived there all of the time). Also, 12% had previously lived on reserve.

Over a third (36%) of Indigenous students spoke at least a few words of an Indigenous language, including 6% who could speak at a conversational level.

Forty-five percent of Indigenous students reported that at least one member of their family had been in residential school. Relatives who had been in residential school included parents (5%), grandparents (32%), and/or other relatives (19%). However, this is likely an underestimation as 37% of local Indigenous students did not know their family history of residential school involvement.

Five percent of Indigenous youth identified as Two Spirit.

## GENDER IDENTITY & SEXUAL ORIENTATION

*"Our school should teach more about sexuality (including asexuality, because I am unsure)."*

Grade 8 student

A little over half (51%) of Central Vancouver Island students were female on their original birth certificate and 49% were male. For nearly all students (98%), their current gender identity corresponded with their sex at birth, whereas 2% were non-binary. The percentage of students who were transgender (e.g., female on their birth certificate and currently identify as male) was too small to report.

Most students in Central Vancouver Island identified their sexual orientation as straight. Males were more likely than females to identify as straight (89% vs. 73%), whereas females were more likely to identify as mostly straight (10% vs. 5% of males), bisexual (9% vs. 3%), and to indicate they were not yet sure of their sexual orientation (5% vs. 2%).

### Sexual orientation of Central Vancouver Island youth

Straight	80%
Mostly straight	8%
Bisexual	6%
Gay or lesbian	1%
Not sure yet	4%
Something other than those listed above	2%

Note: Among Central Vancouver Island students who identified a sexual orientation other than the options listed on the survey, the most common was pansexual.

## GOVERNMENT CARE

Students were asked if they had experienced different types of government care (through the BC Ministry of Children and Family Development or a delegated agency) or alternatives to care. In total, 3% had been in foster care, 3% had been on a kith and kin agreement, 1% had stayed in a group home, 1% had been in a custody centre, and 1% of those who were age eligible had been on a Youth Agreement.

## LIVING SITUATION

Most Central Vancouver Island youth lived with at least one parent (93%). Compared to five years earlier, they were more likely to report living with their parents, grandparents, siblings, or other related adults.

Youth were asked if they had caretaking responsibilities on a typical school day. Locally, 19% looked after another relative (e.g., a relative with a disability or younger sibling), and 68% took care of a pet. Females were more likely than males to be caring for a relative (22% vs. 16%) or a pet (71% vs. 64%).

As in 2013, about a quarter (26%) of Central Vancouver Island students had moved from one home to another in the past year, including 7% who had moved three or more times. Also, 8% had run away from home and 7% had been kicked out in the past year.

Most students in Central Vancouver Island often or always felt safe inside their homes (93% vs. 96% in 2013), while 2% never or rarely felt safe there.

Who Central Vancouver Island youth live with most of the time			
	2013	2018	Change
Mother/Stepmother	82%	85%	↑
Father/Stepfather	68%	74%	↑
Two mothers or two fathers	1%	1%	—
Grandparent(s)	5%	8%	↑
Foster parent(s)	1%	1%	—
Sibling(s)/Step-sibling(s)	48%	66%	↑
Own child or own children	NR	NR	—
Other children or youth	2%	2%	—
Other related adult(s)	2%	4%	↑
Other unrelated adult(s)	3%	3%	—
Live alone	1%	NR	—
Live with both parents at different times	11%	10%	—

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

↑ Indicates there was a statistically significant increase from 2013 to 2018.



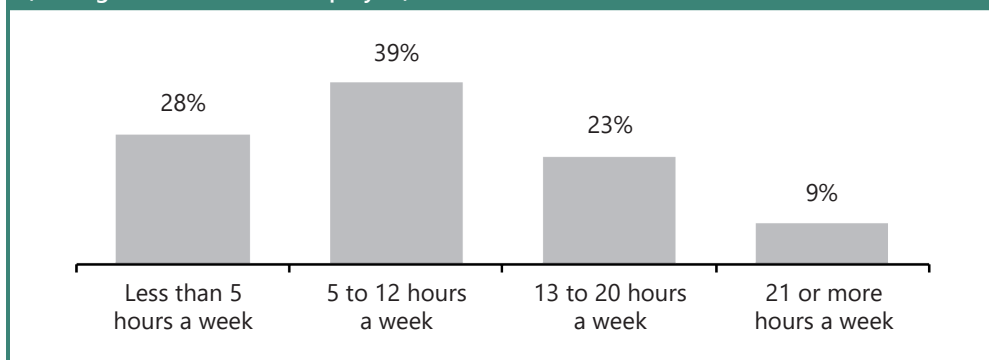
## EMPLOYMENT

Local students were more likely to have worked at a paid job during the past school year than their peers across BC (40% vs. 33%), and in comparison to local students in 2013 (35%).

## PHONE USE

Most students (94%) had a cell phone, smart-phone or other portable device. Students with a device most commonly used it to listen to music, communicate with friends they knew in person, and engage with social media.

Hours Central Vancouver Island youth spent working at a paid job during the school year (among those who were employed)



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

Central Vancouver Island students' phone use on their last school day (among those with a phone)

Listening to music	86%
Communicating with friends they know in person	84%
Using social media	83%
Communicating with parents/guardians	79%
Watching shows, movies, YouTube, etc.	72%
Finding information (other than health information)	64%
Doing homework	58%
Playing games	54%
Communicating with someone they know only online	25%
Finding health information	19%
Watching porn	11%
Sexting	5%
Gambling	3%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

# HEALTH PROFILE OF CENTRAL VANCOUVER ISLAND YOUTH

Results of the 2018 BC AHS showed that youth who reported eating healthily, getting plenty of exercise and getting enough sleep (including going offline at bedtime) not only reported better physical health but also reported better mental health than their peers.

## PHYSICAL HEALTH

Consistent with youth across the province, most students in Central Vancouver Island rated their health as good or excellent (80%). However, this was a local decrease from 86% in 2013.

Unlike in 2013 when there was no gender difference, males were more likely than females to rate their health as good or excellent (84% vs. 75%).

## HEALTH CONDITIONS & DISABILITIES

Similar to youth across BC and to local youth five years earlier, 31% of Central Vancouver Island youth indicated they had at least one health condition or disability.

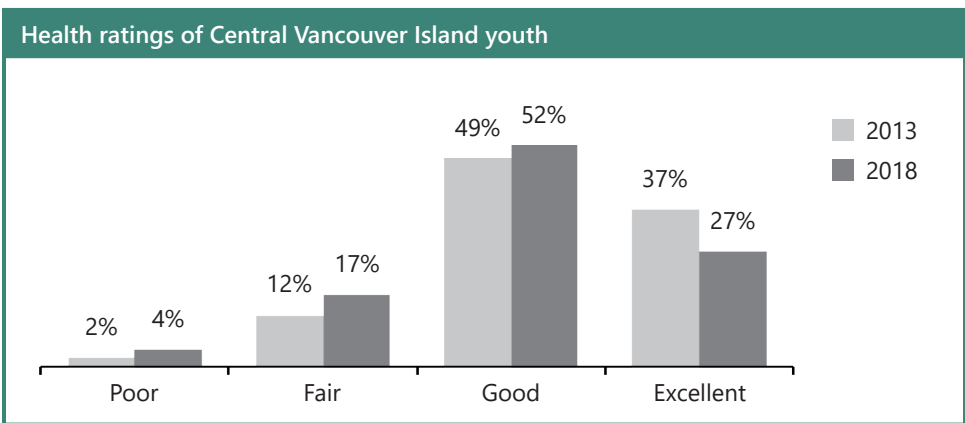
There was an increase in students who reported they had a mental health condition (18% vs. 12% in 2013). However, this increase was only seen among females (29% vs. 19%), while the percentage among males (7%) remained similar. The percentage of local students with a mental health condition was higher than across BC (18% vs. 15%).

Locally, 46% of students who had a health condition or disability reported that it prevented them from doing things their peers could do.

### Health conditions and disabilities reported by Central Vancouver Island youth

Mental health condition	18%
Long-term/chronic medical condition	8%
Learning disability	4%
Sensory disability	4%
Severe allergy requiring EpiPen	2%
Physical disability	1%
Other	2%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

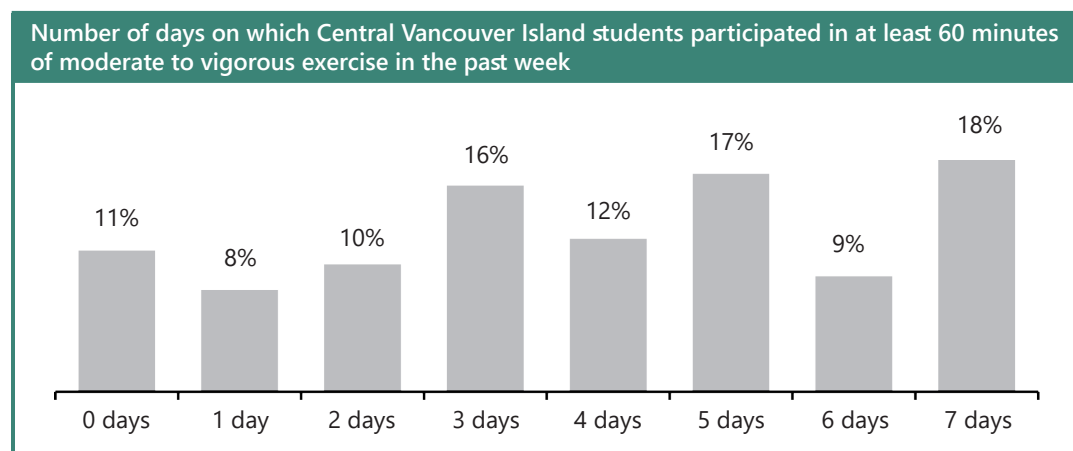


## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The Canadian Physical Activity and Sedentary Behaviour Guidelines state that children and youth aged 5–17 should complete at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous exercise every day. Reflecting the provincial picture and the local rate five years earlier, 18% of Central Vancouver Island youth aged 12–17 met these recommendations in the week before taking the survey.

Males aged 12–17 remained more likely than females to have exercised for 60 minutes every day in the past week (25% vs. 12%).

The Guidelines recommend that individuals aged 18 or older take part in 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity each week. Similar to the province and to local results in 2013, 56%\* of students aged 18 or older met this recommendation by participating in 60 minutes of exercise on at least three days in the past week, with no gender differences.



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

## SLEEP

Reflecting results across the province, 50% of Central Vancouver Island students slept for at least eight hours on the night before completing the survey (including 23% who slept nine or more hours), and 6% slept four hours or less. The percentage of local students who slept for at least eight hours decreased from 55% in 2013. Males were the most likely to have slept for at least eight hours (e.g., 54% vs. 47% of females).

Older students were less likely than younger ones to have slept for at least eight hours (e.g., 33% of 17-year-olds vs. 48% of 15-year-olds vs. 69% of 13-year-olds).

Students reported doing various activities after the time they were normally expected to be asleep. These included chatting or texting (60%), homework (44%), gaming (26%), and online activities other than gaming (e.g., watching videos, checking social media; 70%).

Males were more likely than females to be gaming after they were expected to be asleep (36% vs. 15%); while females were more likely to chat/text (65% vs. 55% of males), do homework (53% vs. 34%), and engage in online activities other than gaming (73% vs. 67%).

About four in ten students (42%) reported going offline after their expected bedtime (e.g., turning off their phone, putting it in silent mode, or putting it in another room).

On the day they completed the survey, 48% of Central Vancouver Island students had woken up feeling like they got enough rest. Students who reported going offline at night were more likely to wake up feeling rested (54% vs. 44% of those who did not go offline). This rose to 65% who felt rested if they went offline and did not engage in any other activities (e.g., homework) after their expected bedtime.



## ACCESS TO HEALTH CARE

Comparable to youth across BC, one in four (25%) local students reported they had not needed health care in the past year, and 4% had needed care but not accessed it.

Most students who had accessed health care had visited a family doctor. Students in this region were more likely to have visited a school wellness centre (4% vs. 2% across BC).

Where Central Vancouver Island youth got health care in the past year	
Family doctor	59%
Walk-in clinic	35%
Emergency room (ER)	17%
Counsellor/psychologist	13%
Nurse	10%
School wellness centre	4%
Youth clinic	4%
Traditional healer	1%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

When asked specifically about accessing medical care when they were physically sick or hurt in the past year, 58% of students reported they did not need this type of medical help, 34% got the help they needed, and 8% (4% of males vs. 12% of females) did not get the help they needed.

The percentage of students who missed out on needed medical care was similar to 2013 and lower than in 2008 (15%).

## DENTAL VISITS

Similar to five years earlier, most youth (85%) had been to the dentist in the past 12 months, while 8% had last visited between a year and two years ago, 6% had last been more than two years ago, and 2% had never been to the dentist.

One in ten (10%) students who had been to the dentist reported that their last visit had been for pain.

## NUTRITION

Provincially there was a slight decrease in the percentage of youth who ate fruit and vegetables on the day before completing the BC AHS. However, in Central Vancouver Island, the percentage remained similar to 2013 (94% in 2018) and higher than a decade earlier (92%).

Compared to five years earlier there was an increase in the percentage of youth who ate fast food (45% vs. 38% in 2013). Local youth also ate sweets (77%), traditional foods from their background (22%), food grown or caught by them or their family (18%); and drank water (97%), pop (36%) and energy drinks (6%).

Local youth were less likely than those across the province to have eaten traditional foods from their background (22% vs. 41%).

## MEALS

As was the case provincially, there was a decline in the percentage of Central Vancouver Island students who always ate breakfast on school days (46% vs. 51% in 2013) and a rise in the percentage who never ate breakfast (19% vs. 15%).

Among local students who ate breakfast, the majority ate at home, 10% got their breakfast on the way to school, and 7% got it at school.

The 2018 survey asked for the first time about eating lunch and dinner on school days. Locally, 57% always ate lunch while 6% never did, and 87% always ate dinner while 1% never did.

Males were more likely than females to always eat breakfast (53% vs. 41%), lunch (65% vs. 50%), and dinner (93% vs. 83%). Non-binary students were the least likely to always eat dinner (51%\*).

Comparable to youth across BC, 34% of local students ate three meals a day on school days.

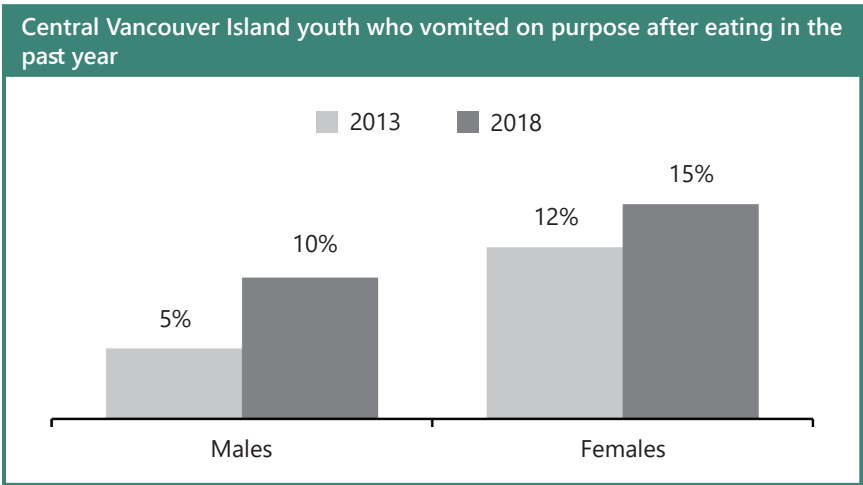
What Central Vancouver Island students ate or drank yesterday		
	Once or twice	Three or more times
Water	23%	74%
Fruit	58%	27%
Vegetables or green salad	61%	19%
Sweets (cookies, cake, candy, chocolate, etc.)	61%	16%
Fast food (pizza, hot dogs, burgers, chips, fries, etc.)	40%	5%
Pop	32%	4%
Traditional food from their background	16%	6%
Food grown/caught by them or their family	14%	4%
Energy drinks	5%	1%



EATING BEHAVIOURS

In the past year, 13% of Central Vancouver Island youth had vomited on purpose after eating (purged), including 2% who did so two to three times a month and 2% who did so at least weekly. Males were the least likely to have purged.

Reflecting the provincial trend, there was an increase in the percentage of local youth who reported they had vomited on purpose after eating in the past year (13% vs. 9% in 2013).



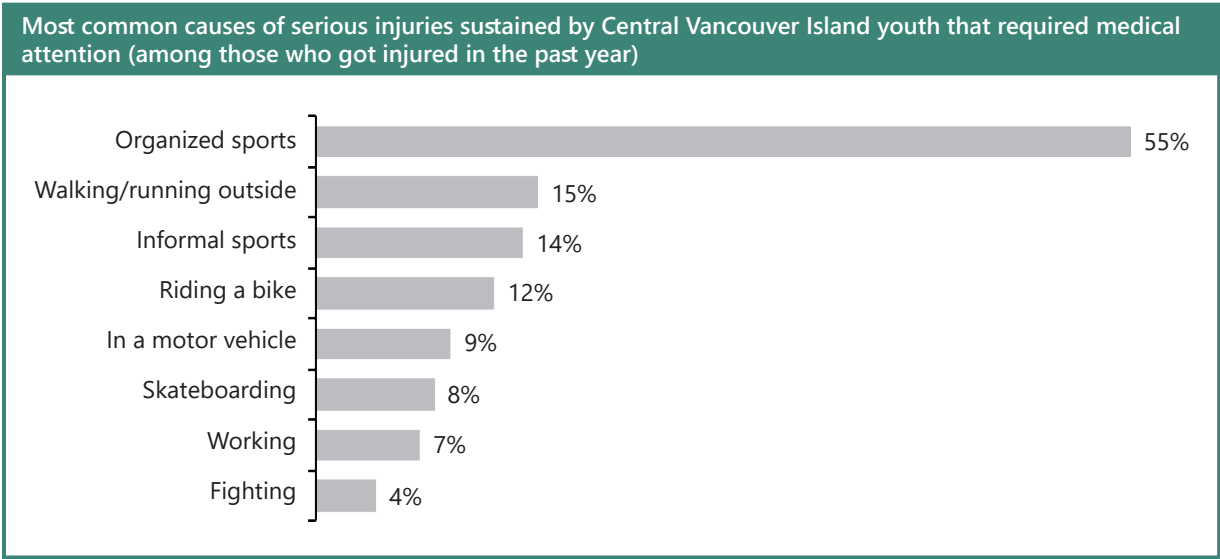
# INJURIES & INJURY PREVENTION

## INJURIES

Similar to their peers across the province and to local youth in 2013, 28% of Central Vancouver Island students were injured seriously enough to require medical attention in the past year. This included 6% who experienced two serious injuries and 4% who had three or more.

Unlike in previous years when males were more likely to be seriously injured, there was no such gender difference in 2018.

The most common cause of serious injury was playing or training for organized sports.



Note: Youth could choose more than one response.



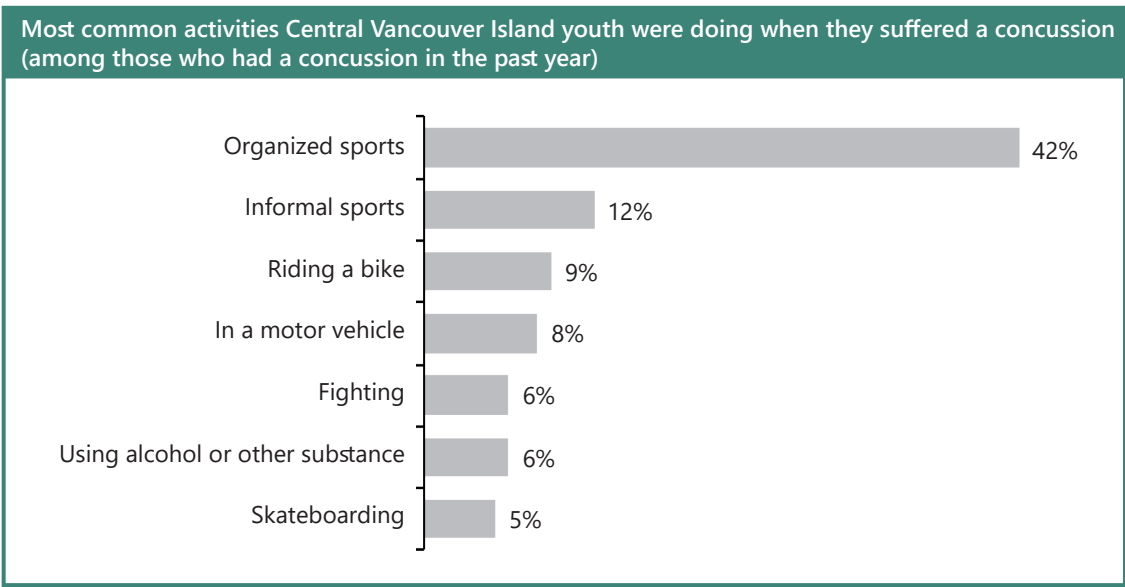
# CONCUSSIONS

As in 2013, Central Vancouver Island youth were more likely than their peers across the province to have experienced a concussion in the past year (17% vs. 13%), including 3% who suffered two concussions and 2% who suffered three or more.

Youth who had experienced a concussion typically reported multiple symptoms including headaches (77%); dizziness or balance problems (66%); feeling dazed, confused, or experiencing memory loss (46%); blurred vision (45%); ringing in their ears (44%); and loss of consciousness (24%).

As was the case with serious injuries and consistent with provincial results, the most common cause of concussion was playing or training for organized sports.

Around half (49%) of youth who experienced a concussion in the past year received medical treatment for their injury.



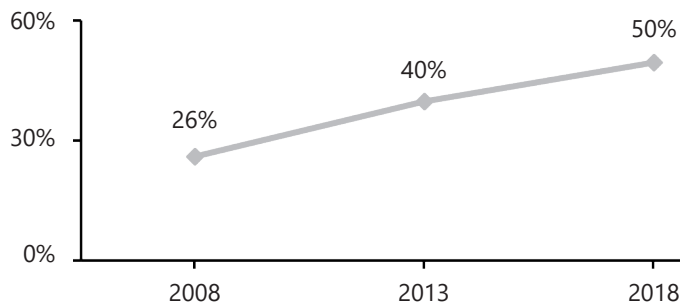
Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

## INJURY PREVENTION

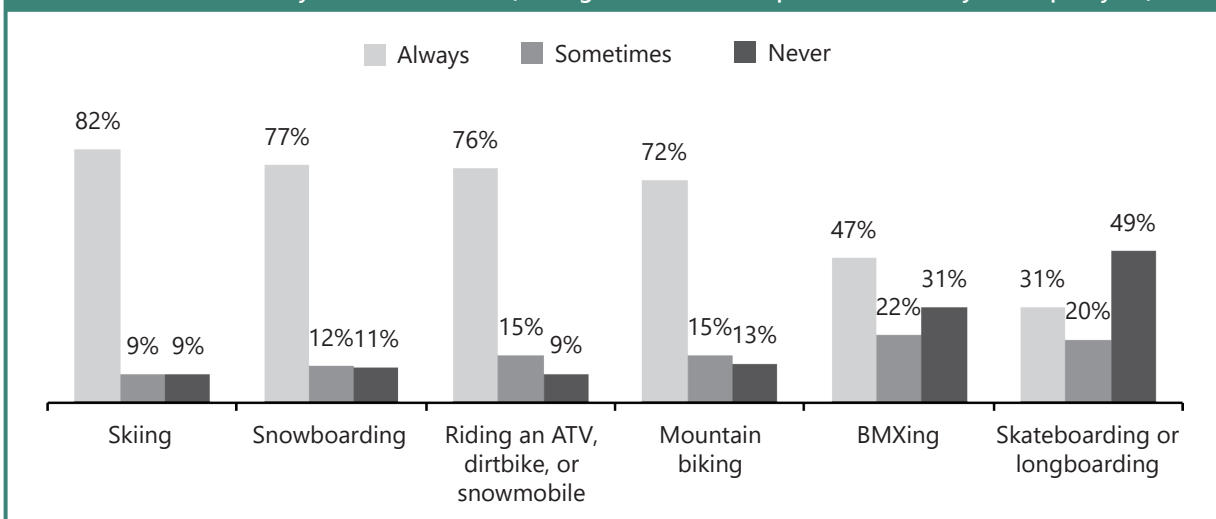
As in 2013, 75% of local youth always wore a seatbelt when riding in a motor vehicle, which was higher than a decade earlier (67%). There was also an increase in helmet use among local students who cycled.

Reflecting the picture across BC, local youth were more likely to wear a helmet in some activities with a risk of head injury than others. Local youth were more likely than their peers across BC to always wear a helmet when riding an ATV, dirt bike, or snowmobile (76% vs. 66% provincially).

Central Vancouver Island youth who always wore a helmet when cycling (among those who cycled in the past year)



Central Vancouver Island youth's helmet use (among those who took part in the activity in the past year)



Note: For skiing, snowboarding, and mountain biking, the differences between 'sometimes' and 'never' were not statistically significant.

## MENTAL HEALTH

*"There should be more talk more about mental things (i.e., anxiety, depression) because there needs to be more awareness."*

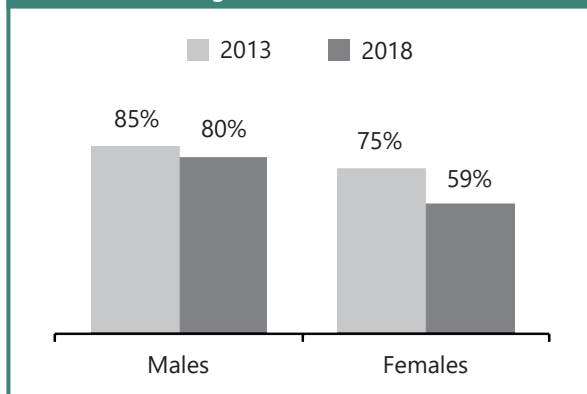
Grade 9 student

*"School makes my anxiety so bad."*

Grade 10 student

Local students were less likely to rate their mental health as good or excellent than youth across BC (69% vs. 73%), and were less likely to rate it positively than local youth five years earlier (69% vs. 80% in 2013). Males remained more likely than females to rate their mental health as good or excellent.

Central Vancouver Island youth who rated their mental health as good/excellent



## HAPPINESS

Overall, 62% of Central Vancouver Island students felt happy most or all of the time in the past month, and 12% rarely or never felt happy. The percentage of males who felt happy most or all the time was unchanged from 2013 (73%), but decreased for females (52% vs. 63% in 2013).

## STRESS & DESPAIR

Most youth in Central Vancouver Island (85%) experienced some level of stress in the month prior to taking the survey, including 14% who felt so stressed they could not function properly. As in previous years, females were more likely than males to experience this level of extreme stress.

Among students who experienced stress, 34% felt they managed it well and 17% managed it very well. However, 29% managed their stress only fairly well and 19% managed it poorly.

There was an increase in local students who felt some level of despair in the past month (57% vs. 47% in 2013), including 8% who felt so sad, hopeless, or discouraged that they were unable to function. As in previous years, males were less likely than females to experience this level of extreme despair (4% vs. 11%).

## MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

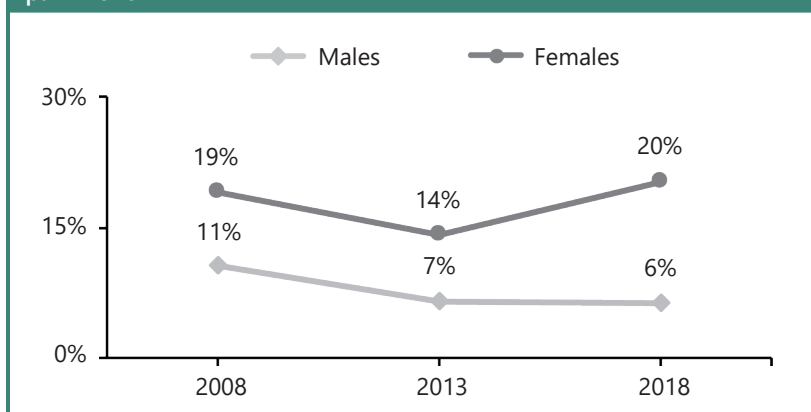
*"My family has a history of depression. There is a chance I have it but haven't been diagnosed."*

Grade 8 student

Compared to 2013, there was an increase in local students who reported having Anxiety Disorder/panic attacks (23% vs. 9%), Depression (19% vs. 10%), and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD; 4% vs. 1%). Also, 7% had Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), 1% had Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), and 1% had Asperger's or Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Local females were more likely than males to report they had Anxiety Disorder/panic attacks (37% vs. 9%), Depression (25% vs. 11%), and PTSD, while males were more likely to have ADHD (10% vs. 5% of females). Non-binary students were the most likely to report experiencing Depression (43%\*).

Central Vancouver Island youth who experienced extreme stress in the past month



Note: For males, the difference between 2013 and 2018 was not statistically significant nor was the difference for females between 2008 and 2018.

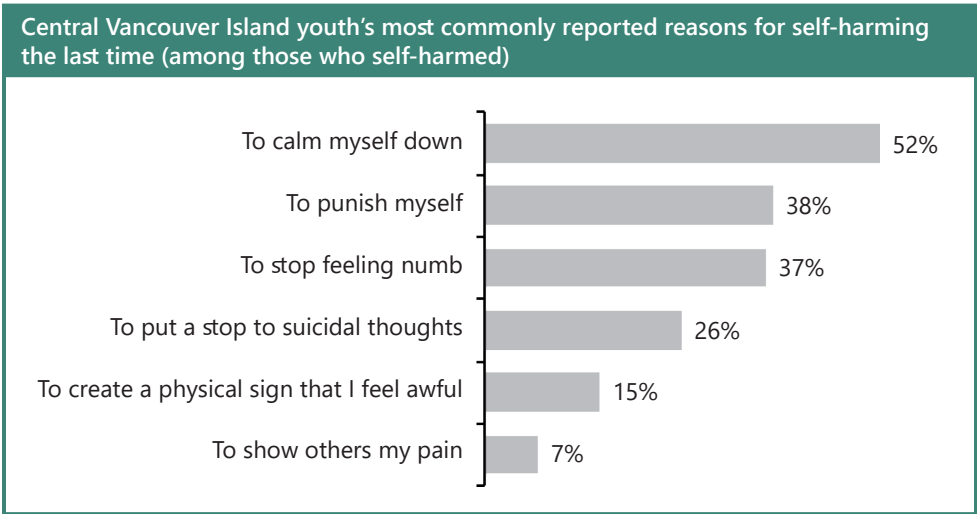


SELF-HARM & SUICIDALITY

In the past year, 10% of males, 26% of females, and 61%\* of non-binary youth had cut or injured themselves on purpose without the intention of killing themselves. The most common reason youth gave for self-harming the last time was to calm themselves down.

Almost 1 in 5 (19%) local students had seriously considered suicide in the past year, which was higher than in previous years (e.g., 12% in 2013). This increase was seen for both males (12% vs. 8% in 2013) and females (25% vs. 16%).

Similar to youth across BC and local youth five years earlier, 5% of Central Vancouver Island youth attempted suicide in the past year. Females remained more likely than males to have attempted suicide (7% vs. 2%).



Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

## MISSED OUT ON NEEDED MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

*"I want information on mental health services and where to go for help."*

Grade 12 student

In the past year, 21% of Central Vancouver Island youth had needed mental health services but did not receive them. This rate was comparable to the province as a whole, and a local increase from 11% in 2013.

Among students who did not access needed mental health services, the most common reasons included thinking or hoping the problem would go away and not wanting their parents to know. These were also the most common reasons in 2013.

Compared to five years earlier, local youth were more likely to report not accessing services because they were too busy to go (38% vs. 29% in 2013).

### Central Vancouver Island youth's most commonly reported reasons for not accessing mental health services in the past year (among those who felt they needed services)

Thought or hoped the problem would go away	66%
Didn't want parents to know	64%
Afraid of what I would be told	46%
Afraid someone I know might see me	44%
Didn't know where to go	42%
Too busy to go	38%
Didn't think I could afford it	24%
Had prior negative experience	18%
Parent/guardian would not take me	12%
Had no transportation	11%
Couldn't go when it was open	8%
On a waiting list	5%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.



# SEXUAL HEALTH

## ORAL SEX

Local students were more likely than their peers across BC to have engaged in oral sex. However, they were less likely to have done so than local students a decade earlier (26% vs. 33% in 2008).

Among students who ever had oral sex, 18% used a condom or other barrier/protection the last time they had oral sex, which was similar to local students in 2013.

## INTERCOURSE

Similar to local results over the past decade, 26% of youth had engaged in sex other than oral sex or masturbation. Central Vancouver Island youth were more likely to have had intercourse than their peers across BC.

Among youth who ever had intercourse, the most common ages for first doing so were 14, 15, and 16 years old. Provincially, the percentage of youth who waited until they were at least 15 years old increased. However, there was no such increase locally, as 62% of those who ever had sex waited until they were 15 to first do so, which was similar to 2013.

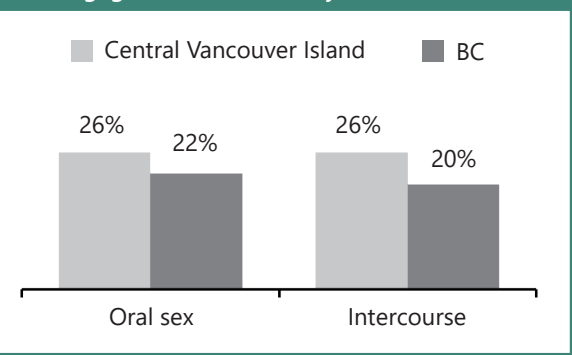
Over half of youth (55%) who ever had intercourse had one sexual partner in the past year, 19% had two partners, 21% had three or more partners, and 5% did not have intercourse in the past year.

Among youth who ever had intercourse, 59% used a condom or other barrier/protection the last time they had sex, which was a decrease from 69% in 2013. Males were more likely than females to have used protection (65% vs. 55%).

*"I have never had sexual education."*

Grade 10 student

Ever engaged in sexual activity



When asked specifically about what efforts they made to prevent pregnancy the last time they had sex, youth were less likely to have used a condom compared to previous years (e.g., 53% vs. 63% in 2013), and were more likely to have used an IUD. Also, 8% used withdrawal as their only contraceptive method.

One percent of youth had ever been involved in a pregnancy.

Most common methods Central Vancouver Island youth used to prevent pregnancy the last time they had intercourse (among those who ever had intercourse)

Condoms	53%
Birth control pills, birth control patch, Nuva Ring, or other method prescribed by doctor or nurse	51%
Withdrawal	44%
Emergency contraception	6%
IUD	3%
Depo Provera	2%
Not sure	3%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

## SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED INFECTIONS (STIs) & THE HPV VACCINE

*"[My partner] said that the chances of me getting an STD are very low but I feel uncomfortable until a doctor tells me."*

Grade 12 student

Reflecting the provincial picture, 1% of youth had been told by a doctor or nurse that they had an STI.

The HPV vaccines protect against infection from certain types of cancers, and have been available to girls in Grade 6 since 2008 and to boys in Grade 6 since September 2017. Locally, 28% of youth had been vaccinated (17% of youth who were assigned male on their birth certificates vs. 38% of females), and 56% (65% of males vs. 48% of females) did not know whether they had been vaccinated.

*"Sex ed only teaches about straight sex which leaves out a large part of our school."*

Grade 11 student

## USED PHONE TO SEXT OR WATCH PORNOGRAPHY

On their most recent school day, 5% of Central Vancouver Island students with a phone used it to engage in sexting (a decrease from 12% in 2013), and 11% used their device to watch pornography (asked for the first time on the 2018 survey).

Older youth were more likely than younger ones to use their phone to watch pornography. For example, 14% of youth aged 16 to 18 used their phone to watch pornography on their last school day, compared to 3% of those aged 13 or younger.

## REFUSAL SKILLS

*"I'm constantly asked for nudes. I never send or even ask."*

Grade 9 student

Most youth felt they were able to say 'no' if they were asked to engage in a sexual activity which they did not want to do.

Central Vancouver Island youth who felt they could say no if asked to ...

	Could say no	Could not say no	Not sure
Have sex with a new partner when didn't want to	92%	1%	7%
Have sex with a long-term partner when didn't want to	86%	3%	11%
Send nudes/sext	92%	2%	6%

## SUBSTANCE USE

### SMOKING, VAPING, & TOBACCO USE

Provincially, the decrease in the percentage of youth who had smoked tobacco (e.g., cigarettes, cigars, or cigarillos) which occurred between 2008 and 2013 continued in 2018. However, this was not the case locally, where rates were similar to five years earlier and remained above those seen across BC.

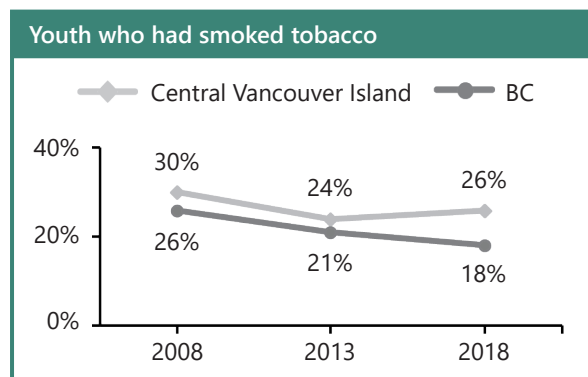
As in 2013, almost half (48%) of youth waited until they were at least 15 years old to first smoke.

Also similar to five years earlier, around half (48%) of Central Vancouver Island youth who had tried smoking had smoked in the past month, including 7% who smoked every day.

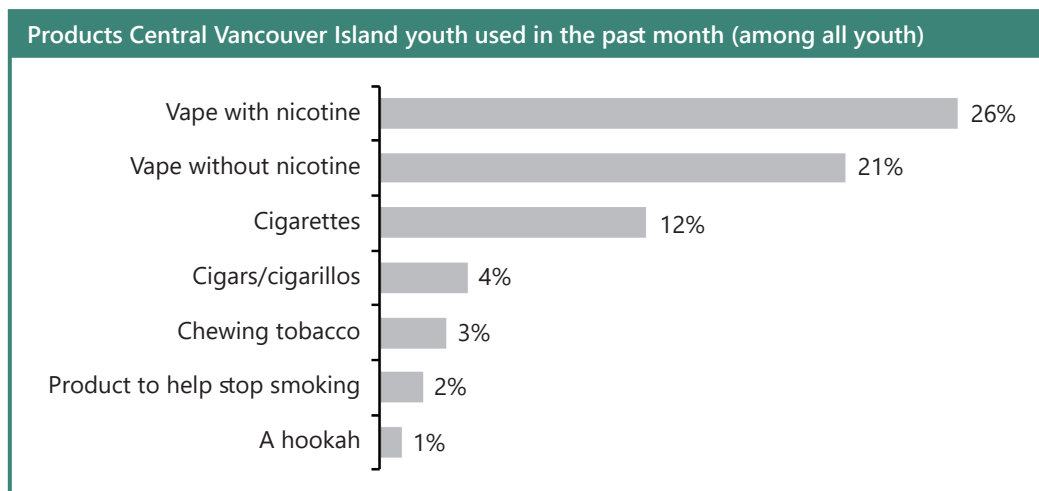
Reflecting the provincial pattern, the most common smoking products used by local students in the past month were a vape pen or stick with or without nicotine (31% of local students). Local youth were more likely than youth across BC to have vaped with nicotine (26% vs. 21%) and smoked cigarettes (12% vs. 7%), and were less likely to have used a hookah (1% vs. 2%).

There were some gender differences in the products youth used. For example, males were more likely than females to have smoked cigars (6% vs. 2%) and used a product to help them stop smoking (3% vs. 1%).

Vaping was originally developed as a tobacco cessation product. Among students who had smoked tobacco, 66% had vaped in the past month, including 59% who vaped with nicotine. Youth who had never smoked tobacco were also vaping, as 19% had vaped in the past month, including 14% who had vaped with nicotine.



Note: The difference between 2013 and 2018 in Central Vancouver Island was not statistically significant.



Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

ALCOHOL

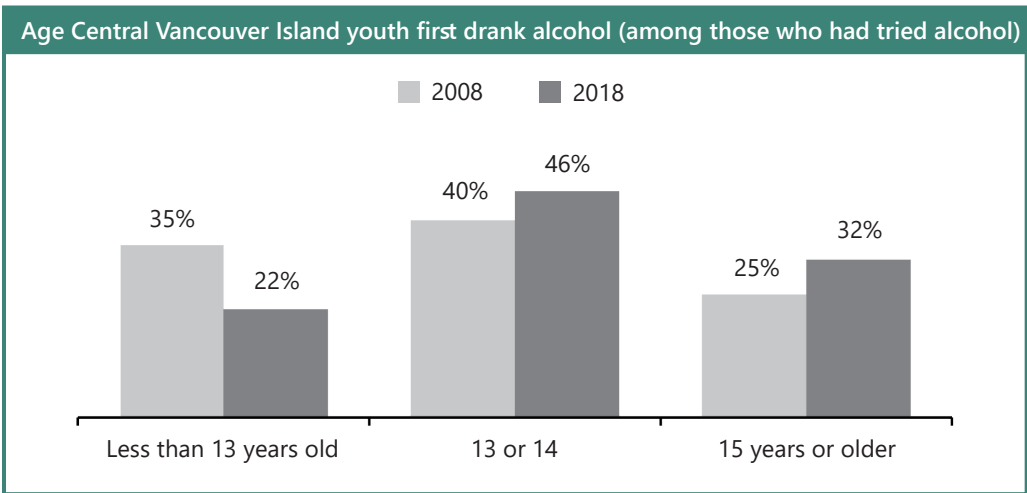
In Central Vancouver Island, 52% of youth had tried alcohol (vs. 44% provincially), which was similar to the local percentage in 2013 and lower than a decade earlier (64% in 2008). As in previous years, there were no gender differences in having tried alcohol.

The most common age for youth to have their first drink of alcohol was 14. Consistent with local results five years earlier and the 2018 provincial results, 32% of those who had tried alcohol waited until they were 15 or older to first drink.

Among youth who had tried alcohol, 64% had at least one drink in the past month, including 3% who drank alcohol on at least 10 days that month.

Reflecting the pattern across BC, 36% of youth who had tried alcohol drank on the Saturday before taking the survey. They most commonly drank liquor (26%); and fewer consumed coolers (22%), beer (19% vs. 25% in 2013), and wine (4% vs. 6% in 2013). Males were more likely than females to drink beer (28% vs. 11%), and were less likely to drink coolers (17% vs. 26%).

Among students who drank last Saturday, 44% mixed at least two different types of alcohol (e.g., drank liquor and coolers; vs. 66% in 2013), including 15% who mixed three or four types (vs. 27% in 2013).



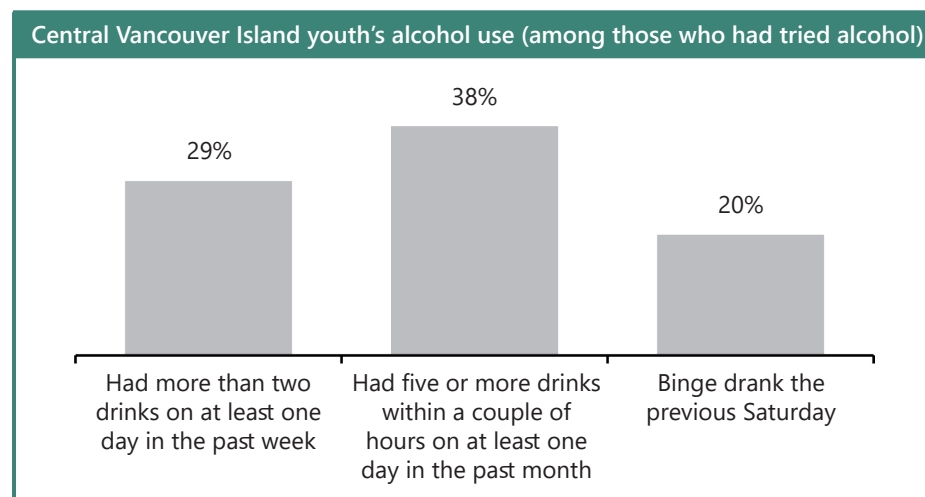


Canadian Low Risk Drinking Guidelines suggest not exceeding two drinks on any one occasion. However, among those who had tried alcohol, 29% of local students had more than two drinks at least once in the week before taking the survey, and 4% did so on at least three days that week.

In this report, binge drinking refers to males who consume four or more alcoholic drinks within a couple of hours and females who consume three or more. Among students who drank on the Saturday before taking the survey, 56% engaged in binge drinking, which was a decrease from 75% in 2013. This decrease was present for both males (53% vs. 79% in 2013) and females (59% vs. 71%).

Also, 38% of those who had tried alcohol consumed five or more drinks within a couple of hours at least once in the past month, including 4% who did so on six or more days (with no gender differences). The percentage of youth who engaged in this type of heavy drinking was similar to five years earlier and a decrease from 48% in 2008.

For the first time, the BC AHS asked youth where they got their alcohol the last time they drank. They most commonly got it from an adult.



Note: Binge drinking refers to males who consume four or more alcoholic drinks within a couple of hours and to females who consume three or more.

Where Central Vancouver Island youth got alcohol the last time (among those who had tried alcohol)	
Adult gave it to me	41%
At a party	32%
Gave someone money to buy it for me	27%
Youth gave it to me	15%
Took it without permission	13%
Bought it	7%
Exchanged something for it	1%
Made it	NR

NR: Not releasable due to the risk of deductive disclosure.

## MARIJUANA

The 2018 BC AHS was completed a month before marijuana was legalized for adults in Canada. A third (33%) of youth in Central Vancouver Island had ever used marijuana, with no gender differences. This was above the provincial rate (25%), and lower than local results a decade earlier (40%).

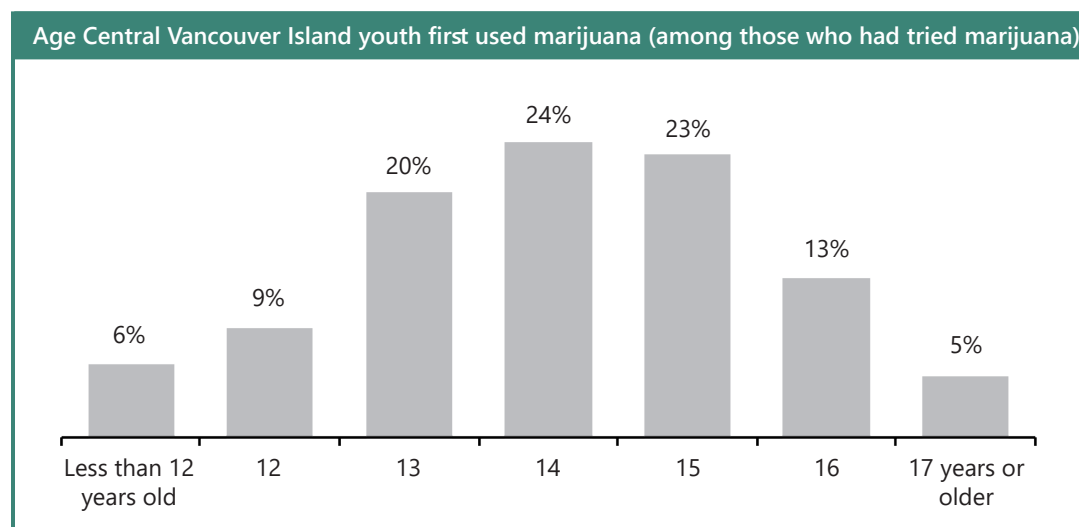
Local youth were also less likely than a decade earlier to first use marijuana before the age of 13 (15% vs. 26% in 2008).

Comparable to local youth over the past decade, 63% of those who had tried marijuana used it in the month before taking the survey. Also similar to 2013 but lower than a decade earlier, 24% of those who had used marijuana used it on at least six days in the past month (vs. 30% in 2008), including 12% who used it on 20 or more days.

Just over a third (34%) of youth who had tried marijuana had used it on the Saturday before taking the survey. Also, 6% of all Central Vancouver Island youth had used both alcohol and marijuana that day, which was similar to 2013 and a decrease from 13% in 2008.

When asked about all the ways they took marijuana the last time they used it, most students (89%) had smoked it, 15% ate it in a cooked recipe, and 5% took it another way such as using a topical oil or eating gummies.

One percent of local youth had been prescribed medical marijuana.



## USE OF SUBSTANCES OTHER THAN ALCOHOL & MARIJUANA

Similar to youth across BC, 19% of local youth had used at least one substance other than alcohol or marijuana. As was the case five years earlier, youth most commonly misused prescription pills without a doctor's consent.

There were decreases in the use of most substances. For example, compared to 2013, local youth were less likely to have used hallucinogens (3% vs. 5%) or ecstasy (3% vs. 5%).

The percentage of Central Vancouver Island youth who had injected an illegal drug was too small to report.

Central Vancouver Island youth who had used substances other than alcohol or marijuana		
	2008	2018
Prescription pills without a doctor's consent	16%	10%
Mushrooms	10%	7%
More of my own prescription than prescribed	NA	6%
Ecstasy/MDMA	7%	3%
Hallucinogens (excluding mushrooms, ecstasy/MDMA and ketamine)	7%	3%
Cocaine	5%	3%
Inhalants	5%	2%
Amphetamines (excluding ecstasy/MDMA and crystal meth)	4%	1%
Crystal meth	2%	NR
Heroin	2%	NR

NR: Not releasable due to the risk of deductive disclosure.

NA: Youth were not asked about their use of 'More of own prescription than prescribed' in 2008.

Note: The percentage of Central Vancouver Island youth who had used ketamine/GHB was too small to report.

CONSEQUENCES OF USE

Reflecting the pattern in 2013, 52% of youth who used alcohol or other substances reported negative consequences of their use in the past year. The most common was being told they did something they could not remember.

Twenty-three percent of youth who had ever had sex had used alcohol or other substances before the last time they had sex, which was similar to 2013 and lower than a decade earlier (33% in 2008).

In the past year, 6% of students felt or were told that they needed help for their substance use. Specifically, 4% needed help for their marijuana use, 3% for their alcohol use, and 2% for their use of other substances. Also, when asked about health conditions, 3% of youth indicated having an addiction to alcohol or another substance (which was similar to the provincial rate).

Consequences of substance use experienced by Central Vancouver Island youth in the past year (among those who used alcohol or other substances during that time)	
Was told I did something I couldn't remember	38%
Passed out	27%
Got injured	14%
Argued with family members	14%
School work or grades changed	11%
Lost friends or broke up with a girlfriend, boyfriend, or significant other	9%
Damaged property	8%
Got into a physical fight	7%
Had sex when I didn't want to	6%
Got into trouble with the police	5%
Overdosed	3%
Had to get medical treatment	2%
Used alcohol or drugs but none of these happened	48%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.



## DRIVING AFTER SUBSTANCE USE

*Rates of driving after substance use and being a passenger of a driver who had been using substances were similar to rates across BC and to local results in 2013 unless noted.*

Among youth who had tried alcohol, 7% had driven a vehicle after they had been drinking (vs. 12% in 2008), and 2% had done so in the past month (vs. 6% in 2008).

Also, 13% of local youth who had tried marijuana drove after using it (vs. 23% in 2008), and 4% of those who had used a substance other than alcohol or marijuana drove after using that substance.

Youth in Central Vancouver Island were more likely to drive after using marijuana than after drinking alcohol, but were more likely to be a passenger of a driver who had been using alcohol than one who had been using marijuana (22% vs. 19%).

Local students were more likely than youth across BC to have been a passenger in a vehicle with a driver who had used marijuana (19% vs. 13%), and to have had this experience in the past month (10% vs. 7%).

## REPORTED REASONS FOR USING

As in 2013, the most common reason youth gave for using substances the last time they did so was to have fun.

### Reasons Central Vancouver Island youth used substances the last time (among those who had used alcohol or other substances)

I wanted to have fun	68%
My friends were doing it	32%
I wanted to try it/experiment	31%
Because of stress	25%
I felt down or sad	20%
I felt like there was nothing else to do	10%
To manage physical pain	7%
Because of an addiction	4%
I was pressured into doing it	4%
I thought it would help me focus	3%
I didn't mean to do it	2%
To change the effects of some other drug	1%
Other	10%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

Note: Among youth who wrote 'Other' they commonly cited being at a party as the reason they had used substances.

## EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

BC AHS results show that participation in extracurricular activities can have many benefits, including an increased likelihood that youth will have access to a supportive adult outside their family, and will feel connected to their community. Engaging in regular physical activity (such as weekly organized or informal sports) is also linked to better mental health and better sleep patterns.

In the past year, 92% of Central Vancouver Island students participated in at least one extracurricular activity (such as sports, dance, clubs, art, or volunteering), including 82% who did so on at least a weekly basis.

Among youth who engaged in weekly extracurricular activities, 69% took part in two or more different types of activities (e.g., volunteering and organized sports), including 14% who participated in at least four different types of weekly activities.

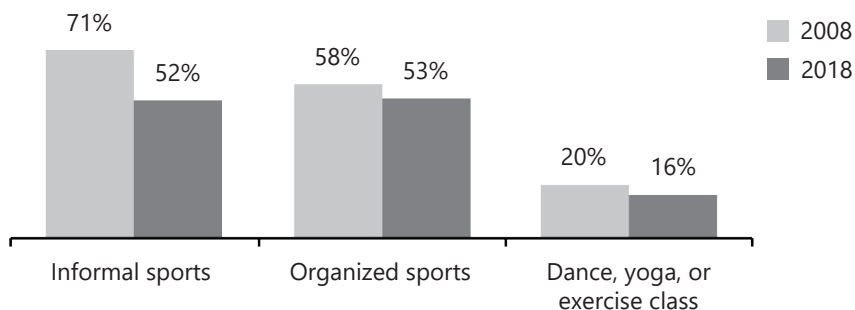
The most common extracurricular activities Central Vancouver Island youth engaged in over the past year were organized sports and informal sports.

Rates of engaging in weekly extracurricular activities were similar to five years earlier except there was a decrease in participation in informal sports (52% vs. 60% in 2013) and art, drama, singing, or music classes (22% vs. 26%).

Central Vancouver Island youth's participation in extracurricular activities in the past year				
	Never	Less than once a week	1 to 3 times a week	4 or more times a week
Informal sports	25%	23%	33%	19%
Organized sports	40%	7%	31%	22%
Volunteered without pay	60%	24%	13%	3%
Art/drama/singing/music (group or lessons)	70%	8%	15%	7%
Dance/yoga/exercise classes	76%	8%	10%	5%
Extreme sports	79%	11%	6%	5%
Cultural/traditional activities	79%	16%	4%	1%
Clubs/groups	85%	6%	9%	1%

Note: Percentages for each activity may not equal 100% due to rounding.

Central Vancouver Island youth who participated in physical activity at least weekly



As in 2013, males were more likely than females to participate weekly in informal sports (59% vs. 46%) and extreme sports (17% vs. 6%), and were less likely to participate weekly in art, drama, music, and singing groups and classes (17% vs. 26%); dance, yoga, and exercise classes (6% vs. 25%); and volunteer activities (11% vs. 20%).

Compared to youth across the province, Central Vancouver Island students were less likely to participate weekly in cultural or traditional activities (5% vs. 7%).

## BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

Students were asked about any barriers they had experienced to taking part in extracurricular activities in the past year. Consistent with youth across BC and local youth five years earlier, Central Vancouver Island youth's most commonly reported barrier was being too busy (46%).

There was a decrease from 2013 in the percentage of local youth who missed out on activities because they could not afford them (13% vs. 17%). Other barriers youth experienced included being too anxious or depressed (17% vs. 14% across BC), not being able to get there or get home (15%), the activity not being available in their community (15%), and being afraid they would be bullied (8%).

# GAMBLING

In BC, it is against the law for young people under the age of 19 to enter a gambling facility or participate in online or in-person gambling for money.

The BC AHS asked students if they had played a number of games of chance in the past year (including online gaming, cards/dice, sports betting, and lottery tickets/scratch cards), and, if so, whether they had played these games for money. Comparable to youth across BC, 65% (79% of males vs. 52% of females) of Central Vancouver Island students had played at least one of these games in the past year, including 23% who had done so for money.

## GAMBLING FOR MONEY

*All results in this section are among youth who gambled for money in the past year.*

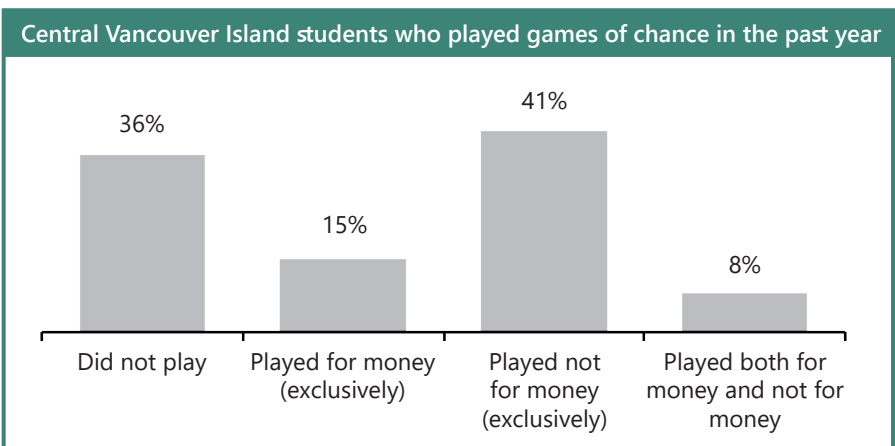
The most common ways students gambled for money was by buying lottery tickets or scratch cards (47%), including 3% who bought them on a weekly basis. Local youth also engaged in online gaming (34% in the past year); cards or dice in person (36%) and online (7%); and sports betting in person (28%) and online (9%).

Female students were less likely than males to have played cards or dice (in person and online), engaged in sports betting and online gaming (19% vs. 41%), and were more likely to have bought lottery tickets or scratch cards (68% vs. 37%).

Reflecting the provincial pattern, 17% of local youth who had gambled for money did so on at least a weekly basis over the past year, with online gaming the most popular weekly activity. For example, 12% participated in online gaming at least weekly compared to 4% who played cards or dice in person, 4% who engaged in sports betting in person and 3% who bought lottery tickets or scratch cards.

Among local students who had gambled for money in the past year and had access to a phone, 7% had used their device to gamble on the day before completing the survey.

In the past year, 3% of students who gambled for money felt or had been told they needed help for their gambling.



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



# RISKS TO HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

This section considers some of the adverse experiences which can have lasting negative effects on young people's health and well-being.

## POVERTY & DEPRIVATION

### GOING TO BED HUNGRY

Reflecting the provincial picture and local rates over the past decade, 11% of youth in Central Vancouver Island went to bed hungry at least sometimes because there was not enough money for food at home, including 1% who often or always went to bed hungry.

### DEPRIVATION

Going to bed hungry because there is not enough money for food is a measure of extreme poverty, and the BC AHS has previously struggled to get a reliable measure of other experiences of poverty and deprivation.

With the help of over 800 youth across BC, an Index of Deprivation was developed for the 2018 survey. The Index highlights the ten items BC youth felt were most important for them to have to feel like they belonged, and which if they did not have, could make them feel like they were missing out on things their peers had. The 2018 BC AHS asked youth if they had the ten items, and whether they wished they had them if they did not.

Central Vancouver Island youth who felt deprived of ...	
Money to spend on themselves	12%
Smartphone	8%
Space of their own to hang out in	6%
Lunch for school/money for lunch	5%
Money for school supplies, trips, and extracurricular activities	5%
Equipment/clothes for extracurricular activities	4%
Access to transportation	3%
A quiet place to sleep	3%
Clothes to fit in	2%
Access to the Internet	1%

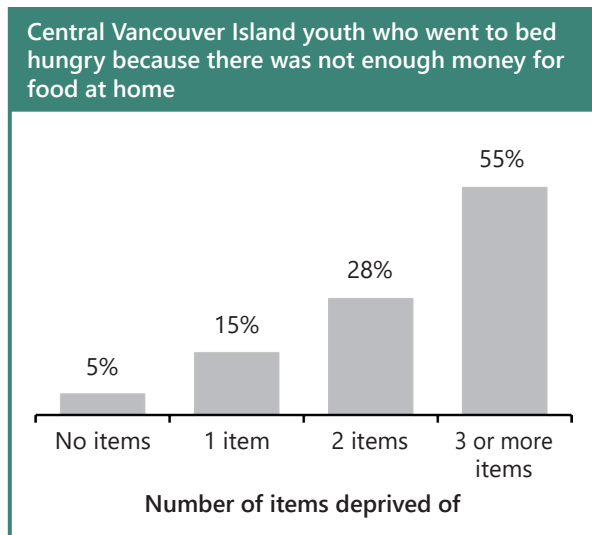
Most youth had all the items in the Index. For example, 96% of local youth had a quiet place to sleep, while 3% did not have this but wished they did, and 1% did not have this and did not want it or did not know if they wanted it.

Reflecting the provincial pattern, the most common item that youth reported wanting but not having was money to spend on themselves.

When the items were considered individually, there was a link between feeling deprived and potentially negative outcomes. For example, 78% of youth who did not have but wished for a quiet place to sleep had slept for less than eight hours on the night completing the survey, compared to 49% of those who had somewhere quiet to sleep.

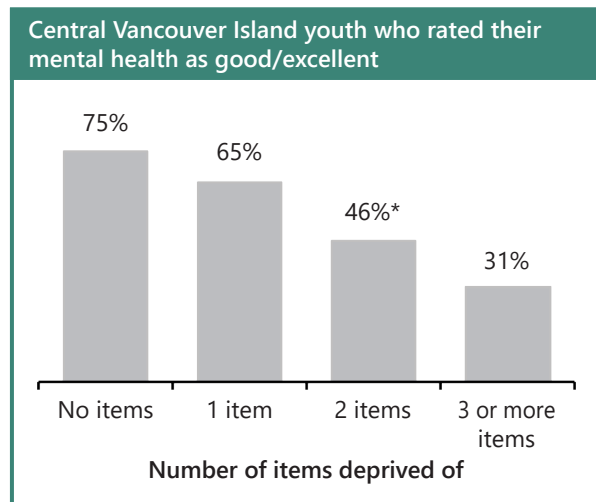
In Central Vancouver Island, over a quarter (27%) of youth reported they lacked but wished they had at least one of the items in the Index, including, 5% who lacked two items, 3% who lacked three items, 2% who lacked four items, and 1% who lacked five or more.

The more items youth reported not having but wishing they had, the more likely they were to go to bed hungry at least some of the time because there was not enough money for food at home.



The more items youth were deprived of, the less likely they were to feel connected to their school or community. For example, 24% of those who were deprived of three or more items reported feeling like part of their school, compared to 50% of those who were deprived of one item and 62% who were not deprived of any of the items in the Index.

Also, the more items youth were deprived of, the worse their health and well-being. For example, 84% of youth who had all the items in the Index reported good or excellent overall health, compared to 72% who lacked one item and 52% who lacked three or more of the items.



\*Percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than expected but still within the releasable range.

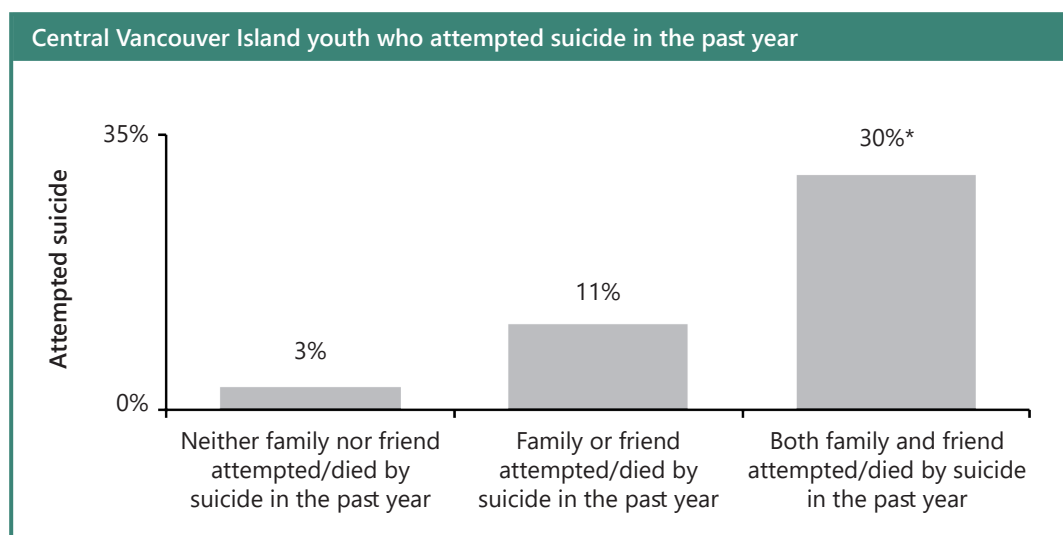
## LOSS & BEREAVEMENT

Three quarters (75%) of Central Vancouver Island students had experienced bereavement (vs. 71% provincially). Local students had most commonly lost someone close to them due to illness (49%) and old age (47%). Other reasons included accident (15%), suicide (10%), violence (4%), a fentanyl overdose (3%), and an overdose from a substance other than fentanyl (5%).

The BC AHS also asked participants if a family member or close friend had attempted or died by suicide, and if this experience had happened

within the past year. Locally, 41% of youth had a friend and/or family member attempt or die by suicide (vs. 36% provincially), and 22% had this experience in the past year. Specifically, 21% had a family member who had attempted or died by suicide (including 6% in the past year), and 32% had a close friend who had done so (18% in the past year).

Youth who had experienced a family member and/or close friend attempt or die by suicide were more likely to have attempted suicide themselves.



\*Percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than expected but still within the releasable range.

## VIOLENCE & DISCRIMINATION

### DATING VIOLENCE

In the past year, 48% of Central Vancouver Island students had been in a romantic relationship (compared to 43% provincially). Among these students, 7% had been the victim of physical violence within their relationship, with no gender differences. Rates of dating violence were similar to five years earlier for both males and females.

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The BC AHS asked youth if they had been the victim of unwanted sexual comments, jokes, or gestures; and if they had experienced another person touch, grab, pinch, or brush against them in a sexual way.

Males were less likely than females and non-binary students to have experienced verbal and/or physical sexual harassment. For example, 33% of males had been verbally and/or physically sexually harassed, compared to 63% of females.

*"Where are the resources for people who have been sexually harassed?"*

Grade 10 student

After decreasing for both males and females between 2008 and 2013, female rates of verbal (58% vs. 52% in 2013), and physical (38% vs. 31% in 2013) sexual harassment rose, while remaining comparable for males (29% reported verbal sexual harassment and 13% physical sexual harassment).

In the past year, local students were more likely than students across the province to have been verbally sexually harassed (44% vs. 39%) and physically sexually harassed (26% vs. 22%). However, when considered by gender, the higher rates were only seen among females, as 58% had been verbally sexually harassed (vs. 50% of females provincially) and 38% had been physically sexually harassed (vs. 31%), whereas local male rates of verbal and physical sexual harassment were similar to those across BC.



## PHYSICAL & SEXUAL ABUSE

Locally, 15% of youth reported they had been physically abused or mistreated, which was similar to the rate in 2013 and a decrease from 18% in 2008. Reflecting the provincial pattern, females and non-binary youth were more likely than males to have been physically abused (e.g., 19% of females vs. 11% of males).

Also, 13% of students had been sexually abused (20% of females vs. 5% of males). This represented a decrease for males from ten years earlier (7% in 2008), and was comparable for females.

## DISCRIMINATION

Reflecting the provincial pattern and local results in 2013, 39% of Central Vancouver Island youth reported experiencing at least one form of discrimination in the past year.

Local youth were less likely than those across BC to report experiencing discrimination on the basis of their race, ethnicity, or skin colour (11% vs. 14%). However, there was a local increase in experiencing this type of discrimination (from 8% in 2013), and in discrimination on the basis of gender or sex (9% vs. 6%).

Central Vancouver Island youth's perceived reasons for being discriminated against in the past year	
Physical appearance	24%
Weight	15%
Race, ethnicity, or skin colour	11%
Gender/sex	9%
Income or family income	8%
Sexual orientation (e.g., being or thought to be gay or lesbian)	7%
A disability	3%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.

## BULLYING

Reflecting the provincial picture, 56% of Central Vancouver Island students had been bullied at school or on the way to or from school in the past year. This included being socially excluded on purpose (54%), teased to the point that they felt bad or extremely uncomfortable (49% vs. 39% provincially), and being physically attacked (9%).

As in previous years, females were more likely than males to have been socially excluded (54% vs. 30%) and teased (49% vs. 31%). There were no gender differences in experiencing a physical assault.

Similar to youth across BC, 1 in 10 (10%) Central Vancouver Island youth reported they had teased, excluded, or physically attacked someone else at school or on the way to or from school in the past year.

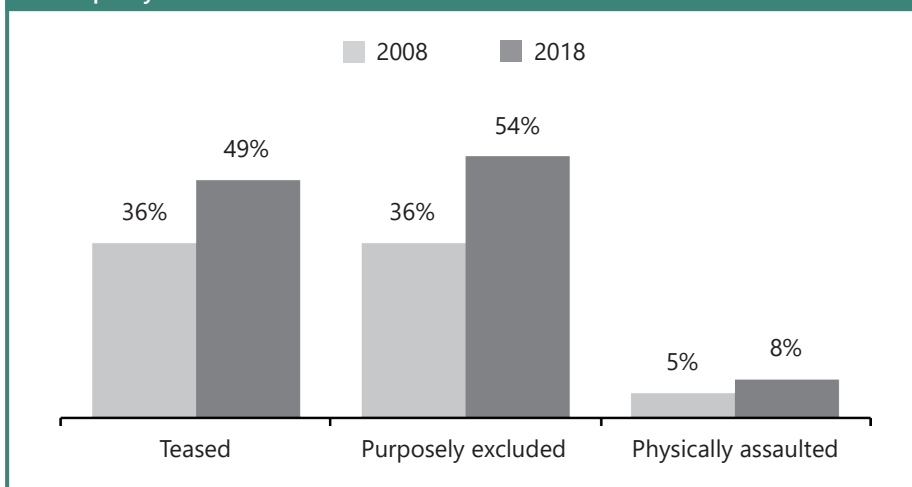
*"I hate hearing 'you're so gay' in the hallways (used as an insult)."*

Grade 9 student

*"I have been bullied multiple times. But the teachers at my school have done nothing. It makes me feel sad that this happens."*

Grade 7 student

Central Vancouver Island females who had been the victim of in-person bullying in the past year



## WEAPON CARRYING

In the month before taking the survey, 6% of students carried a weapon to school, including 1% who always carried a weapon.

Students who had been the victim of bullying were more likely to carry a weapon. For example, 20% of youth who had been physically attacked in the past year carried a weapon, compared to 5% who had not been attacked.

## INTERNET SAFETY

The percentage of students who had met someone through the Internet who made them feel unsafe increased (21% vs. 14% in 2013). This increase was seen for both males (13% vs. 9%) and females (29% vs. 20%). Local females were more likely than females across BC to have met someone online who made them feel unsafe (29% vs. 23% provincially).

The percentage of students who had been cyberbullied was unchanged from five years earlier (17%), and was higher than across BC (14%). As was the case five and ten years earlier, males were less likely than females to experience cyberbullying (12% vs. 22%).

In the past year, 7% of local students reported they had cyberbullied someone else, with no gender difference.



# SUPPORTING HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

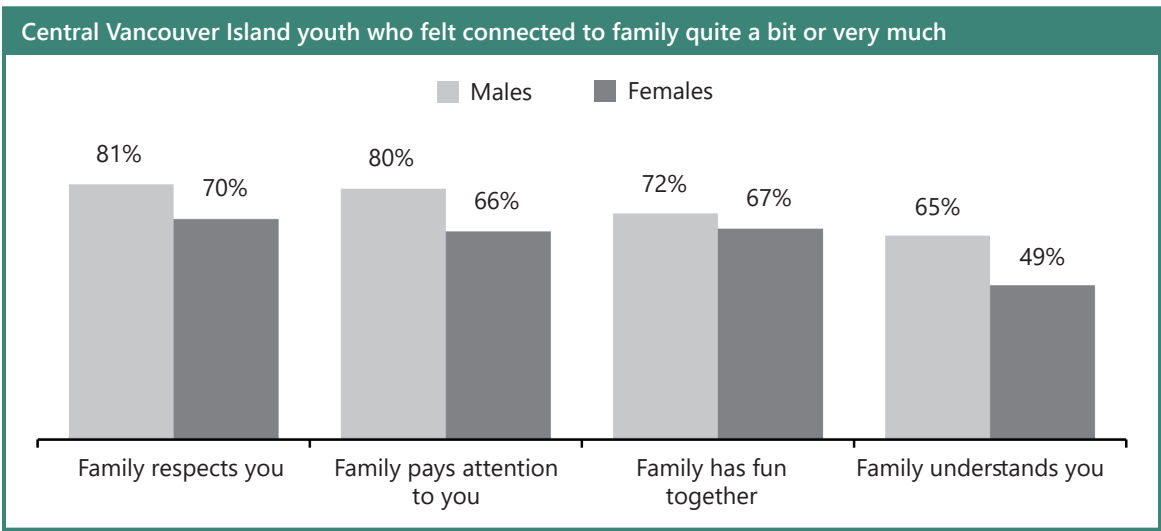
## FAMILY

BC AHS results show that family relationships are one of the most important protective factors in the lives of youth. For example, youth who report feeling connected to family, have supportive adults they can turn to within their family, and have parents or caregivers who know what they are doing in their free time and online report better overall health and better mental health than their peers without such positive family relationships.

Youth with positive family relationships are also less likely to engage in health risk behaviours (such as substance use or risky sexual behaviours), and are more likely to have the skills to refuse negative peer pressure or unwanted sexual activity.

Most Central Vancouver Island youth felt connected to their families. Overall, 75% felt respected by their family, 72% felt that their family paid attention to them, 69% felt that their family had fun together, and 56% felt their family understood them.

Non-binary students were less likely than their peers to feel that their families respected them (36%\*), paid attention to them (43%\*), or had fun together (45%\*).





## SUPPORTIVE FAMILY

Around 7 in 10 (71%) local students felt they had an adult inside their family they could talk to if they had a serious problem. Males were the most likely to feel this way and non-binary youth were the least likely (75% of males vs. 68% of females vs. 40%\* of non-binary youth).

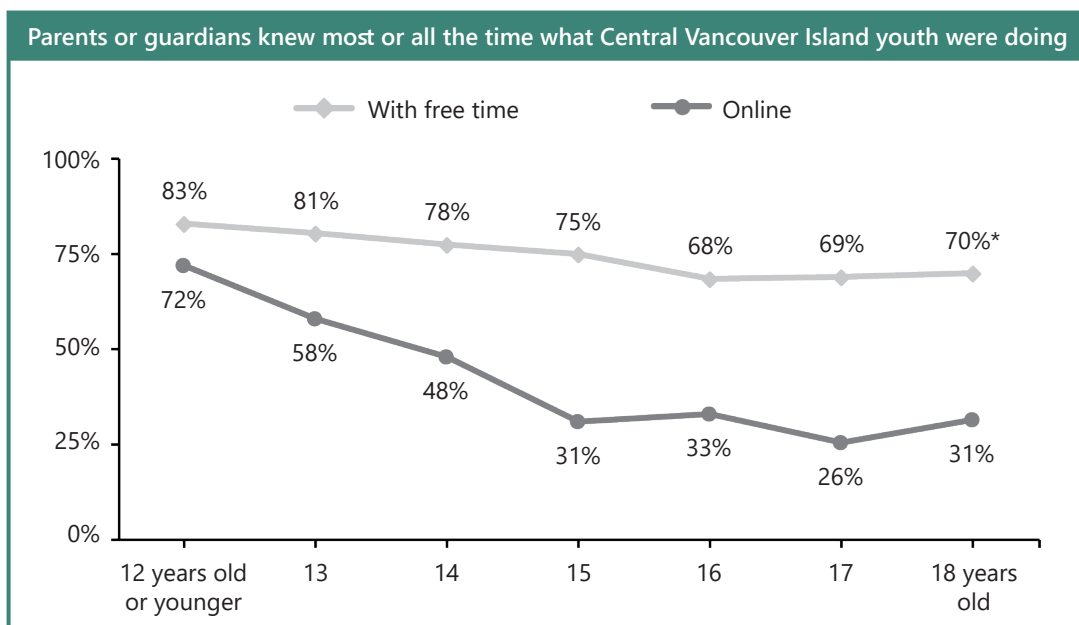
Reflecting local results in 2013, 71% of local students turned to a family member for help in the past year, with no gender differences. Among these youth, 93% found the support helpful.

## MONITORING

Most students had parents (or guardians) who monitored their free time (75%), while 11% had parents who rarely or never did. Fewer youth had parents who knew what they were doing online (42%), and 39% reported their parents rarely or never monitored their time online.

Older youth were generally less likely to have parents who knew what they were doing in their free time and online.

When asked how much time they had to do the things they wanted with their family, most local students (73%) felt they had the right amount of time, and 20% felt they did not have enough time.



Note: Differences between ages were not statistically significant at every point.

\* Percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than expected but still within the releasable range.

# SCHOOL

School connectedness is consistently one of the strongest protective factors for BC youth. It is associated with positive academic and health-related outcomes, including positive mental health and reduced likelihood of risky substance use and risky sexual behaviour.

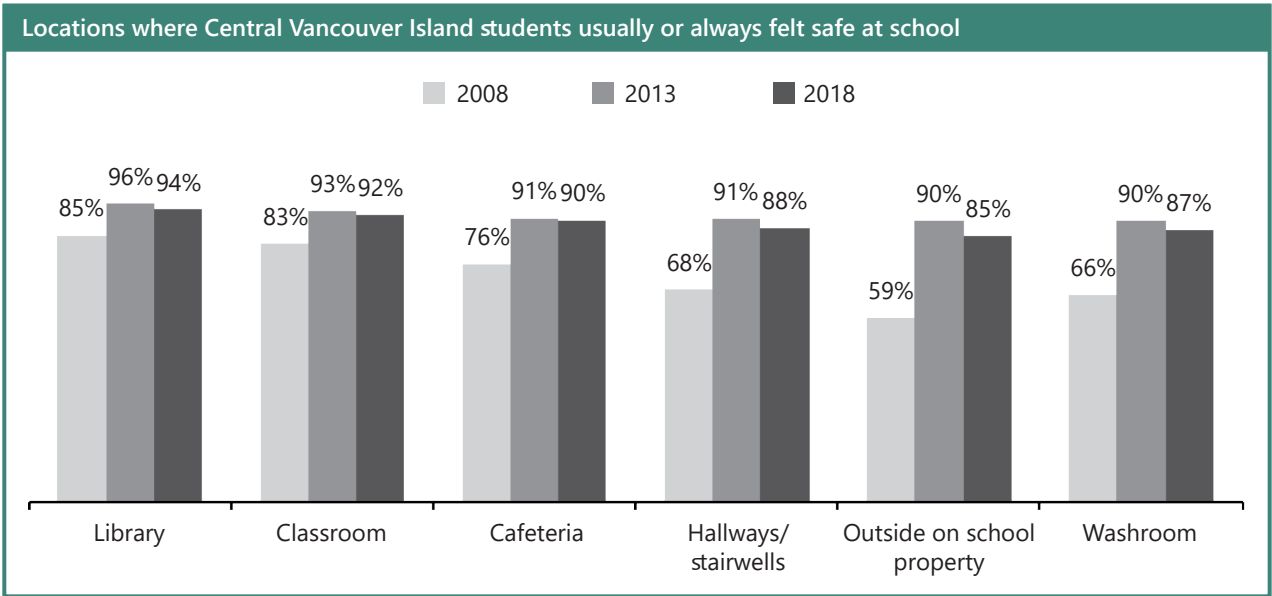
Most students in Central Vancouver Island felt that school staff expected them to do well (79%), they were treated fairly by school staff (71%), their teachers cared about them (66%), they were part of their school (57%), they were happy to be at school (55%), and school staff other than teachers cared about them (52%).

## SAFETY

Overall, 68% of youth always felt safe at school (vs. 73% across BC). This represented a decrease from 78% in 2013 and 73% in 2008. Males were the most likely to feel safe at school (e.g., 72% of males always felt safe vs. 65% of females).

Consistent with provincial findings and previous local results, Central Vancouver Island students felt safest in the library and classroom. However, compared to five years earlier, students felt less safe getting to and from school (88% vs. 92% in 2013), in the changing rooms (85% vs. 89%), as well as in the library, hallways, washrooms, and outside on school grounds.

As well as being more likely to feel safe at school generally, males were also more likely to feel safe in specific areas of the school. For example, 90% felt safe in the changing rooms (vs. 81% of females vs. 58%\* of non-binary youth).



Note: For classroom and cafeteria the differences between 2013 and 2018 were not statistically significant.

EDUCATION PLANS

Similar to five years earlier and to youth across BC, most Central Vancouver Island students planned to finish Grade 12 (86%) and go on to post-secondary (82%). Most youth who did not have a plan had not yet thought about it or were unsure if they would complete high school, and only 1% specifically did not plan to complete high school.

Reflecting the provincial picture, local females were the most likely to anticipate finishing high school (e.g., 89% vs. 83% of males) and continuing their formal education beyond high school (e.g., 86% vs. 78% of males).

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

In the past month, Central Vancouver Island students most commonly missed school because of illness or to attend appointments. Also, 31% skipped class that month (vs. 27% in 2013), including 11% who did so on three or more days.

Local females were more likely than males to miss school due to illness, appointments, skipping classes, mental health, school responsibilities, and bullying.

Local youth were more likely than their peers across BC to have missed school due to skipping classes (31% vs. 26%), mental health (19% vs. 15%), and family responsibilities (17% vs. 14%).

COMMUTE TO SCHOOL

Central Vancouver Island students most commonly got to school by car (49%), followed by taking the school bus or public transit (31%). Local youth were more likely to take the school bus or public transit than their peers across the province (23% provincially) and were less likely to use active transportation (walk/bike/skateboard) to get to school (19% vs. 29%).

Most Central Vancouver Island students (87%) had a commute to school that was less than 30 minutes, whereas 2% commuted for an hour or more.

Reasons Central Vancouver Island students missed classes in the past month	
Illness	42%
Appointments	38%
Skipping class	31%
Slept in	24%
Mental health (e.g., anxiety, depression)	19%
Other school responsibilities	18%
Family responsibilities	17%
Work	5%
No transportation	5%
Bullying	4%

Note: Youth could choose more than one response.



## COMMUNITY

Youth who feel connected to their community are more likely to feel safe in their neighbourhood, to have post-secondary aspirations, and to feel hopeful for the future; and they are less likely to engage in binge drinking and other health risk behaviours. They are also less likely to miss out on mental health services when they need them.

Having an adult in their community to turn to for support can be particularly helpful for youth without such an adult in their family.

Similar to youth across the province, 40% of students in Central Vancouver Island felt at least quite connected to their community, whereas 24% felt only a little or not at all connected.

In 2013, there was no gender difference in community connectedness. However, males were more likely than females to feel connected in 2018 (42% vs. 37%).

Reflecting the provincial picture and the local rate five years earlier, 67% of Central Vancouver Island youth felt there was an adult in their neighbourhood or community (outside their family or school) who really cared about them.

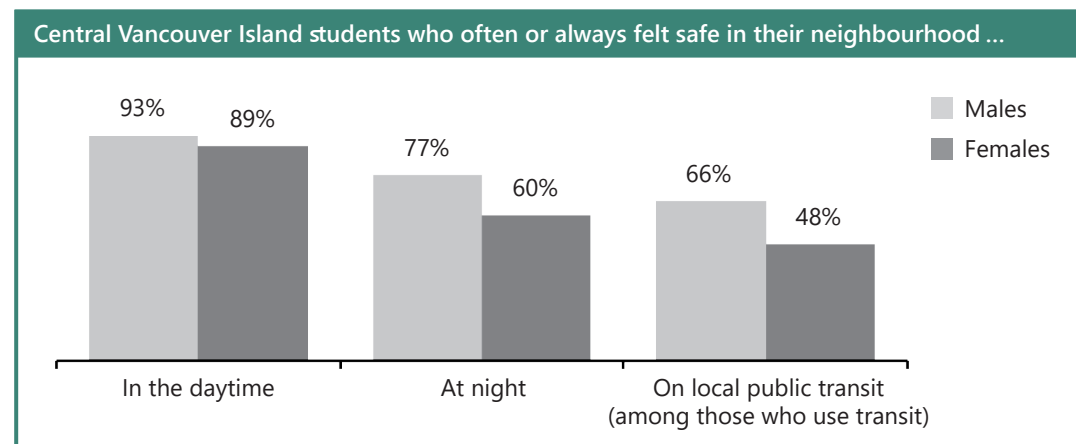
## SAFETY

The majority of local youth often or always felt safe in their neighbourhood in the daytime (91%) and at night (68%). As in 2013, females were less likely than males to feel safe in their neighbourhood at night (60% vs. 77%). In 2018, they were also less likely to feel safe in their neighbourhood during the day (89% of females vs. 93% of males).

Two thirds (68%) of local youth used public transit. Among these youth, 52% often or always felt safe on transit, and 14% never did. Males were more likely than females to feel safe on transit.

## RELATIONSHIP TO THE LAND/NATURE

For the first time, the BC AHS asked about feeling connected to the land or nature. A little under half (48%) of Central Vancouver Island students reported often or always feeling connected, whereas 37% sometimes felt this way, and 16% hardly ever or never felt connected.



# SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS

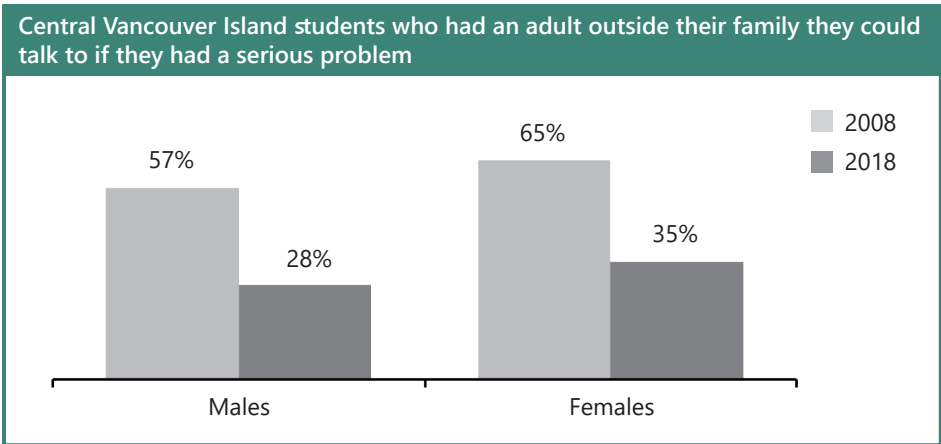
## SUPPORTIVE ADULTS

Locally, 31% of youth had an adult outside their family they could talk to if they had a serious problem. This was above the provincial rate (27%), and similar to the local rate five years earlier but below the local rate in 2008 (61%).

Reflecting the provincial picture, local females were more likely to have a supportive adult outside their family than males. Central Vancouver Island females were also more likely to have such an adult in their lives than females across the province (35% vs. 30%).

*"I just wish there were more resources and adults in my life who respected me and took the time to not just listen but try and understand how I am feeling."*  
Grade 11 student

Most youth in Central Vancouver Island had an adult who helped them with appointments, preparing for post-secondary, getting a job, and with homework. Local students were more likely than their peers across BC to have an adult who helped them find employment (73% vs. 69%).



Central Vancouver Island students who had an adult who helped them with ...			
	Yes	No	Don't need this
Getting to appointments	90%	5%	5%
Making appointments	90%	5%	5%
Preparing for post-secondary	77%	13%	9%
Getting a job	73%	13%	14%
Homework	65%	18%	17%

Note: Percentages for preparing for post-secondary do not total 100% due to rounding.

## ASKING ADULTS FOR HELP

Outside of family members and friends, Central Vancouver Island students most commonly approached a teacher for help. The majority found this experience helpful.

Adults outside their family whom Central Vancouver Island students approached for help and found helpful in the past year		
	Asked for help	Found helpful (among those who asked for help)
Teacher	53%	95%
Doctor	34%	91%
School counsellor	30%	85%
Sports coach	28%	95%
Friend's parent	24%	90%
School staff (other than teacher, counsellor, or Aboriginal Education Worker)	23%	86%
Nurse	16%	87%
Mental health counsellor	12%	74%
Youth worker	9%	82%
Aboriginal Education Worker <sup>†</sup>	7%	71%
Online community/online support group	6%	70%
Social worker	6%	65%
Telephone helpline	6%	49%
Indigenous Elder <sup>†</sup>	5%	75%
Spiritual leader	5%	73%

<sup>†</sup> Among Indigenous students, 16% had approached an Aboriginal Education Worker for help and 88% found this experience helpful, while 18% had approached an Elder of which 93% found this experience helpful.



## FRIENDS

The BC AHS has shown that having three or more in-person friends is associated with a number of positive outcomes, including positive mental health and a reduced likelihood of being bullied.

The survey results also show that if students have friends who disapprove of them engaging in certain health risk behaviours, they are less likely to engage in those behaviours.

The majority of students in Central Vancouver Island (95%) had at least one close friend in their school or neighbourhood, and 79% had three or more close friends (with no gender differences). Also, 37% had at least one close friend online whom they had never met in person, and 17% had three or more such friends. Male and non-binary students were at least twice as likely as females to have three or more online friends whom they had never met in person.

In the past year, 8% had dated someone they had met online and had never met in person, including 2% who had two or more such romantic partners.

### *Connecting with friends*

When asked how much time they had to do the things they wanted with friends, 67% felt they had the right amount of time, while 28% did not have enough time, and 5% had too much time. Female and non-binary youth were more likely than males to feel they had insufficient time with their friends as were older youth in comparison to younger ones. For example, 32% of 17-year-olds did not have enough time with their friends compared to 21% of 13-year-olds.

*"I am interested to learn more about how online relationships affect your life."*

Grade 10 student

### *Asking for help*

Reflecting the pattern across BC, 73% of local students had asked a friend they knew in person for help in the past year, and 93% of these students found this experience helpful. Also, 20% asked a friend they only knew online for help, and 83% of them found this helpful.

Females were more likely than males to have sought help from an in-person friend (79% vs. 66%). However, males were more likely to have found the friends they approached to be helpful (96% vs. 91% of females).

Non-binary youth were over twice as likely to ask a friend they knew exclusively online for help (50%\* vs. 19% of males and females). There was no gender difference in who found online friends helpful.

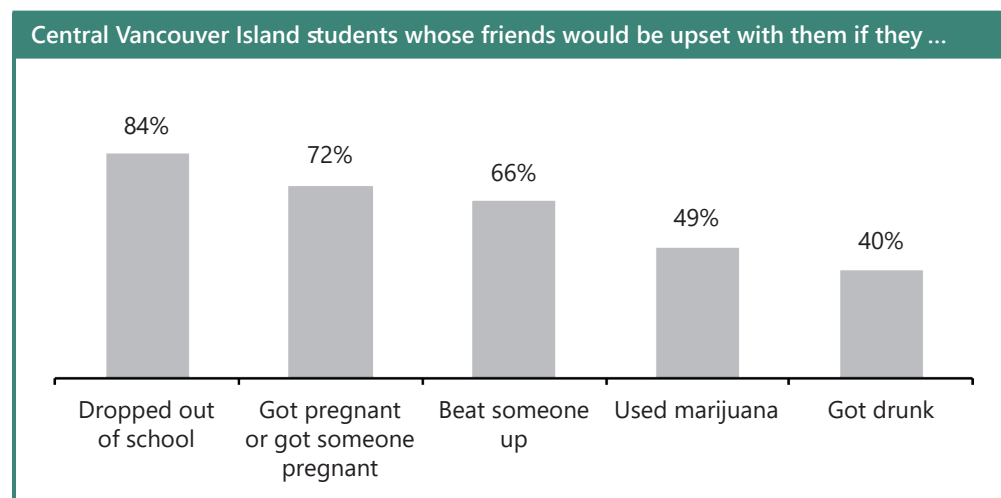
In the past year, 79% of students had a friend who had asked them for help, and most (95%) of these youth had felt able to help (with no gender differences).

### *Friends with prosocial attitudes*

Most Central Vancouver Island youth had friends who would disapprove of them engaging in health risk behaviours. Females were generally more likely than males to have friends with prosocial attitudes, including being upset if they beat someone up (77% vs. 54%), dropped out of school (86% vs. 81%), or were involved in a pregnancy (76% vs. 69%).

Local youth were less likely than their peers across the province to have friends who would disapprove if they used marijuana (49% vs. 55%) or got drunk (40% vs. 45%).

After an increase between 2008 and 2013 in local youth who reported they had friends with prosocial attitudes, there were decreases in youth who had friends who would be upset if they dropped out of school (84% vs. 88% in 2013), or were involved in a pregnancy (72% vs. 82%), and a return to 2008 rates.





# YOUNG PEOPLE'S STRENGTHS & RESILIENCY

## QUALITY OF LIFE & WELL-BEING

Central Vancouver Island youth generally felt positively about their quality of life. For example, most indicated they had a good life and their life was going well. Males were the most likely to rate their quality of life positively. For example, 12% of males wished they had a different life, compared to 20% of females and 40%\* of non-binary youth.

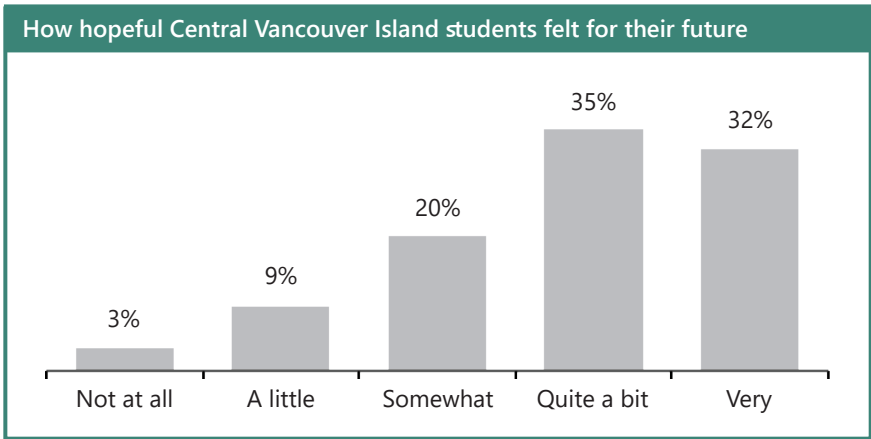
## HOPEFULNESS

Around two thirds (68%) of Central Vancouver Island students felt quite a bit or very hopeful for their future. Males were the most likely to feel this way (75% vs. 62% of females vs. 44%\* of non-binary youth).

Youth who felt hopeful were more likely than their peers to report positive mental health, including feeling happy, as well as lower rates of extreme stress and despair.

Quality of life and well-being of Central Vancouver Island youth			
	Agree/ Strongly agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree/ Strongly disagree
I have a good life	79%	16%	5%
My life is going well	73%	18%	9%
I have what I want in life	58%	26%	16%
My life is going just right	56%	27%	18%
I wish I had a different life	16%	23%	61%

Note: Percentages for 'My life is going just right' do not equal 100% due to rounding.



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

## PERSEVERANCE

For the first time, the BC AHS included a question about how often students pushed themselves to achieve their goals when things went wrong. Locally, 4% of students indicated that things had never gone wrong for them.

Among those who had experienced challenges or setbacks, 42% always pushed themselves to achieve their goals in these situations (with males the most likely to report doing so), whereas 6% never pushed themselves, and the rest sometimes pushed themselves.

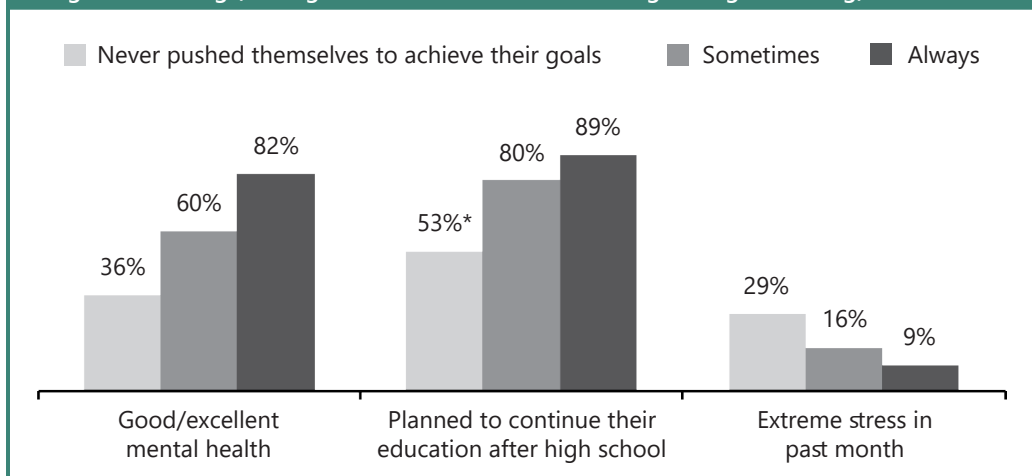
The more often Central Vancouver Island students persevered when faced with obstacles, the more likely they were to experience positive mental health and to have plans to pursue post-secondary education, and the less likely they were to experience extreme stress.

## FEELING SKILLED & CONFIDENT

As in 2013, 78% of Central Vancouver Island youth were able to name something they were really good at (such as sports, school work, art, and singing or playing a musical instrument).

The majority (57%) also usually felt good about themselves, with males the most likely to feel this way. Students who felt good about themselves were more likely than those who did not feel this way to feel hopeful for their future (88% vs. 29%).

How often Central Vancouver Island students pushed themselves to achieve their goals when things went wrong (among those who indicated that things had gone wrong)



\* Percentage should be interpreted with caution as the standard error was higher than expected but is still within the releasable range.



## UNSTRUCTURED TIME

Around two thirds (68%) of local youth felt they had the right amount of time to do what they wanted on their own, whereas 21% felt they did not have enough time, and the remainder felt they had too much time.

Students who felt they had the right amount of time on their own were more likely to report positive mental health and well-being. For example, they were more likely to feel happy in the past month (71% vs. 38% of those who felt they did not have enough time), and to feel their life was going well (81% vs. 53%); and they were less likely to experience extreme stress (9% vs. 29%).

Locally, 61% of youth felt they had the right amount of time to do what they wanted in nature, and 35% felt they did not have enough time. Youth who felt they had the right amount of time to spend in nature were more likely to feel connected to the land/nature (50% vs. 44% of those who felt they did not have enough time to spend in nature).

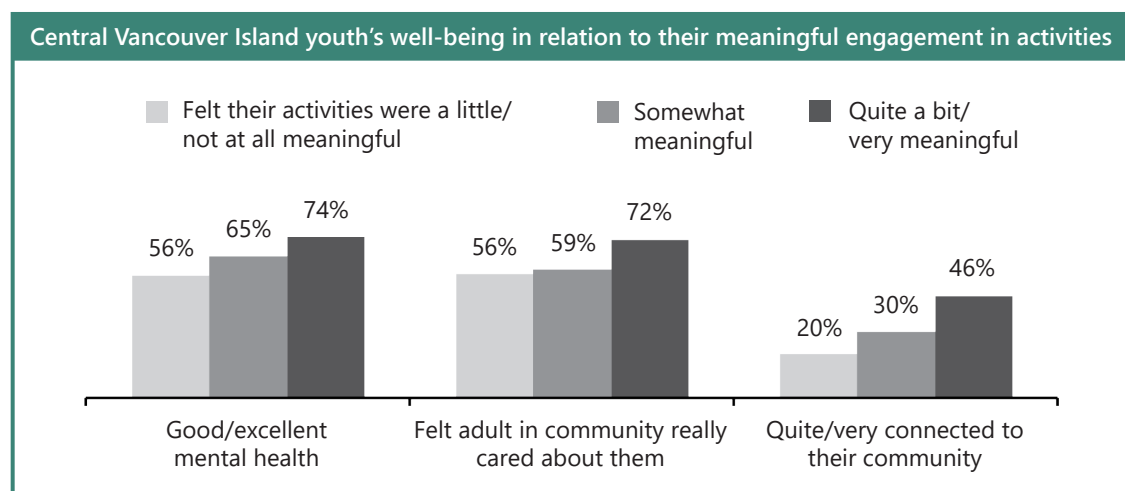
## SPIRITUALITY

Twelve percent of Central Vancouver Island students reported that spirituality was very important in their life, while 18% felt it was somewhat important, 17% a little important, and 42% felt it was not important to them. Also, 12% reported not knowing how important spirituality was in their life.

## MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT

In comparison to local youth in 2013, students were less likely to feel that the activities they were involved in were meaningful (67% vs. 73%). However, the percentage who felt that their ideas were listened to and acted upon in these activities remained stable (42%).

Central Vancouver Island youth who experienced meaningful engagement in their activities were more likely to report positive mental health, to feel an adult in their community cared about them, and to feel connected to their community.



Note: For 'felt adult in community really cared about them', the difference between 'a little/not at all meaningful' and 'somewhat meaningful' was not statistically significant.

# TOPICS CENTRAL VANCOUVER ISLAND YOUTH WOULD LIKE TO LEARN MORE ABOUT

The final question on the 2018 BC AHS was an open-ended question which asked youth if there were any topics which affected their health that they wanted to learn more about. Locally, 5% of students provided a comment and identified at least one health-related topic they would like to receive training about or see included in their school's curriculum.

Around two thirds (68%) of youth in Central Vancouver Island who responded to this question wanted to learn more about mental health.

Students most commonly wanted to learn more about specific conditions, how to manage a mental health condition, and where and how to access mental health services.

*"I want to learn more about the difference between being depressed or anxious and having a disorder, and how much of it stems from being a teenager and how much is life-long."*

Grade 10 student

*"How to deal with an anxiety attack."*

Grade 7 student

*"I want information on if my anxiety will go away if I use proper medicine?"*

Grade 8 student

*"[I want to learn about] the availability of mental health services in my community, especially ones that can be accessed like a walk-in clinic. Most of these services only assist those with addiction, meaning people struggling with mental health who are not suffering from addiction must seek for-profit clinics."*

Grade 11 student



Physical health and sexual health were also common topics youth wanted to learn more about, including information about various health conditions, how to adopt a healthy lifestyle, increased access to sexual health education, and training about consent.

Other topics Central Vancouver Island youth wanted to learn more about included accessing specialist support services, substance use, managing time and relationships online, and gender identity and sexual orientation.

*"[I want to learn about] the effects of physical disabilities like asthma."*

Grade 7 student

*"[I want information on] the effects of smoking [and] drinking and what it does at a young and old age."*

Grade 11 student

*"I want to learn to eat healthy on a budget."*

Grade 12 student

*"We should learn more about LGBTQ people and who to talk to if we have questions."*

Grade 8 student

*"We should be taught about sleeping and developing daily routines."*

Grade 11 student

*"Is vaping bad for you?"*

Grade 8 student

*"We need better sexual health education at our school."*

Grade 8 student

*"[I want to learn about] the effects of sexual assault/rape and the importance of consent and self-control."*

Grade 12 student

# McCREARY RESOURCES

## BC AHS PROVINCIAL & REGIONAL RESULTS



This report provides an overview of the BC Adolescent Health Survey results for youth in Central Vancouver Island Health Service Delivery Area. Provincial results and results for BC's other Health Service Delivery Areas are available at [www.mcs.bc.ca](http://www.mcs.bc.ca).

## ADDITIONAL PUBLICATIONS



A range of special topic reports and posters are being published using data from the 2018 BC AHS. These include an in-depth report about the health of Métis youth who completed the survey; a poster considering BC AHS results in the context of Canada's commitment to implementing the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); a youth-led investigation of substance use among BC youth; a vaping poster and helmet use poster created by youth; and an in-depth report about marijuana use among BC youth.

## PRESENTATIONS & WORKSHOPS



McCreary staff are available to present BC AHS findings for Central Vancouver Island, and to conduct workshops which explore how local stakeholders can utilize the results. For more information contact [mccreary@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:mccreary@mcs.bc.ca).

## ENGAGING YOUTH IN THE BC AHS RESULTS



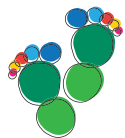
McCreary's Youth Advisory and Action Council (YAC) have created a youth-friendly poster of the key findings of the provincial report. Additional youth-friendly posters will be available on a range of topics, including substance use and mental health. The YAC have also created a workshop to share the results of the survey with their peers. To book a workshop contact [mccreary@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:mccreary@mcs.bc.ca).

## YOUTH ACTION GRANTS



The YAC distributed over \$87,000 in Youth Action Grants (YAGs) to youth in school districts that participated in the 2013 BC AHS (including Central Vancouver Island). The granting program for the 2018 BC AHS is now accepting applications from youth aged 12 to 19 who want to improve youth health in their school or community in one of the areas highlighted in the BC AHS. The YAC are also available to offer grant-writing workshops to young people who may be thinking of applying for a YAG. To book a workshop contact [mccreary@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:mccreary@mcs.bc.ca).

## BC AHS NEXT STEPS



McCreary is committed to returning the results of the 2018 BC AHS to young people in Central Vancouver Island. An interactive 'Next Steps' workshop is available to engage young people in a dialogue about the results and youth health in their community. Youth who participate in the workshops can receive funding and support to conduct youth health projects in their school or community. For more details or to book a workshop contact [mccreary@mcs.bc.ca](mailto:mccreary@mcs.bc.ca). A Next Steps curriculum toolkit is also available on our website for anyone wanting to conduct their own Next Steps.





