

Resilient Youth: State of the Nation Report 2024



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands throughout Australia on which we work and live. We pay our respects to their Elders, past, present, and emerging. We acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples as Australia's First Peoples and honour the rich diversity of their ancient living Culture.

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OVERVIEW

Wellbeing refers to a state of mental, emotional, social, and physical health. A good state of wellbeing is critical for children and youth to thrive, and identifying the state of child and youth wellbeing in Australia provides an important tool for preventing and intervening in poor wellbeing outcomes.

For good wellbeing, children and youth need the resilience to cope with stressors in life. Resilience is a dynamic, context-dependent process where an individual positively adapts to challenging or adverse circumstances. It is a skill that can be learned, as well as strengthened, and is a powerful protective factor against poor wellbeing.

The Resilience Survey is an annual measure of the wellbeing and resilience of Australian school students administered in more than one thousand schools across every state and territory each year. The Resilience Survey is a proprietary instrument of Resilient Youth Australia (RYA). It is an anonymous online school-based survey that collects, analyses, and reports on the wellbeing of young people at a cohort level in terms of their mental health, learning mindset, coping strategies, hopefulness, life satisfaction, and resilience in addition to further risk and protective behaviours. The survey engages directly with children and youth aged 7 to 18 years, to capture unique, context-specific insights about aspects of their emotional and mental lives and behaviour that may not be visible to parents, carers, or teachers. At an individual school level, the Resilience Survey provides principals and staff with a detailed profile of the mental health and wellbeing of their students.

This is our fourth State of the Nation Report, which provides a summary of the findings of 149,114 Australian students who participated in the Resilience Survey between January 29, 2024, and July 1, 2024.

Several core measures were consistently collected between 2022, 2023, and 2024 and are reported here separately for each year to provide an indication of trends over time. A snapshot of measures that were new or modified after 2022, or which constitute secondary measures of wellbeing, are reported for primary and secondary school students for 2024 only.

The student responses summarised within this report demonstrate a significant need for attention and action regarding student mental health. Students consistently faced considerable challenges to their wellbeing in their experiences of depression and anxiety symptoms, and the challenges extended to how satisfied they felt about life and their levels of hopefulness and disengagement.

Importantly, in the face of such challenges to their wellbeing, students remained relatively resilient. A recommendation from this report is that programs targeting wellbeing are still needed, with results suggesting that schools provide a safe and engaging context for such program delivery. Programs should include components aimed at parents and teachers, in addition to the students themselves, and require adequate local resources and personnel for effective implementation. Unlike our reports from recent years, there was cause for cautious optimism when considering trends in wellbeing over time, with outcomes in 2024 often appearing to arrest or slightly reverse concerning declines in wellbeing observed in the previous years. However, concerning wellbeing outcomes persist, and as such the challenges presented to students are unlikely to remedy themselves by the natural change of circumstance in society, or by the current approaches in place. Both more carefully considered, and at-scale approaches are required to leverage the resilience of students and provide them with the systems and supports necessary to live a hopeful, healthy, and satisfied life.

RESEARCH CONTEXT

BACKGROUND

Data was collected using the Resilience Survey (Resilient Youth Australia). The Survey was administered by each participating school once a year using unique codes to allow school-based administration to students. The Resilience Survey is a student voice instrument, meaning that data is collected directly from students in a manner that ensures their privacy and confidentiality (i.e., their answers are not visible to parents, caregivers, and/or teachers). The survey is anonymous and non-identified, and responses are only reported in the aggregate. In this way, the Resilience Survey aims to elicit honest answers from students, empowering them to share responsibility for developing and enhancing their resilience, mental health, and broader wellbeing. Approval for the analyses undertaken in this report was granted by The University of Adelaide Human Research Ethics Psychology subcommittee (approval number 20/87).

PARTICIPANTS

In 2024, 149,114 students from 809 schools in Australia completed the Resilience Survey between January 29 and July 1 (the cut-off date for inclusion in this report). Students were on average 11.69 years old ($SD=2.54$; range=7 to 18 years), 48.0% of the students identified as male, 48.6% as female, and 3.4% self-reported as "Other" and/or preferred not to report gender identity (referred to as 'gender diverse' throughout this report). 77,160 (51.7%) of the students were in primary education (gender: 48.3% male, 48.3% female, 3.5% gender diverse; age: $M=9.68$, $SD=1.23$), and 71,954 (48.3%) were in secondary education (gender: 47.8% male, 48.9% female, 3.3% gender diverse; age: $M=13.85$, $SD=1.64$).

Students were represented across all states and territories, including 39.0% from Victoria, 23.6% from New South Wales, 18.9% from Queensland, 7.2% from South Australia, 6.6% from Western Australia, 2.3% from the Australian Capital Territory, 2.0% from Tasmania, and 0.4% from the Northern Territory. The majority of students (86.8%) were born in Australia. Students also listed all of the cultural backgrounds that best described them, with 77.5% of students identifying with a single culture, 19.1% with two different cultures, 2.7% with three different cultures, and 0.6% with four or more different cultures. The most prevalent cultures students identified were 73.2% Australian, 6.4% Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander, 15.0% Asian, and 10.9% European. 20.1% of students reported one or more cultural backgrounds different from those listed above. Since students could report more than one cultural background, the above cultural categories are not mutually exclusive.

The socioeconomic conditions of participants were measured using the Australian Bureau of Statistics Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas data¹. The postcode of the student's residential address was used to determine their corresponding Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage (IRSAD) score. Among those who reported a residential postcode with a corresponding IRSAD score ($n=138,082$), the cohort of students represented the full range of socioeconomic status (SES) in the general population of Australia (i.e., percentile ranks ranging from 1-100 as indicated by IRSAD), with a mean percentile rank

¹ Australian Bureau of Statistics. (2021). *Table 3: Postal Area (POA) Index of Relative Socio-economic Advantage and Disadvantage, 2021*, in Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA), Australia. ABS. <https://www.abs.gov.au/statistics/people/people-and-communities/socio-economic-indexes-areas-seifa-australia/latest-release>, accessed 8 February 2024.

of 55.58 (SD = 28.50). Within this report, IRSAD scores are classified as low (IRSAD deciles 1-3), middle (IRSAD deciles 4-7), and high (IRSAD deciles 8-10) SES. Among primary school students, 19.5% (n=13,695) resided in a low SES area, 40.9% (n=28,755) resided in a mid SES area, and 39.6% (n=27,818) resided in a high SES area. Among secondary school students, 27.2% (n=18,475) resided in a low SES area, 37.9% (n=25,679) resided in a mid SES area, and 34.9% (n=23,660) resided in a high SES area.

We also provide a snapshot of results from the 2024 survey relating to Australian regions classified according to geographical remoteness and population size as per the Modified Monash Model (MMM).² The MMM model includes 7 remoteness categories, though for this report we combined the MMM classifications for large, medium, and small rural towns (categories 3 to 5) to create a single “rural towns” category, and the remote and very remote classifications (categories 6 to 7) to create a single “remote” category. As such we report the following in the regional snapshots: remote, rural towns, regional centres (located within 20 km of a town with a population greater than 50,000), and metropolitan (metro; major cities accommodating 70% of the population).

A number of core measures have been consistently included in the previous 3 years of the Resilient Youth: State of the Nation Survey. For these measures, we provide comparisons in wellbeing over this period (i.e., 2022 to 2024) for different gender and grade grouping categories. In this report, results from previous years utilise data collected over the full calendar year, beyond the respective cut-off dates needed for the annual reports for those years (**2022**: primary student n=44,322, secondary student n=48,006; **2023**: primary student n=64,753, secondary student n=82,376). In this way, this report provides a convenient visualisation of trends over time for core measures of wellbeing in Australian students. Further details of the population characteristics and other outcomes from 2022 and 2023 are available in the previous annual reports, though some results may vary slightly from this report due to the extended samples used herein.

For previous annual reports, please visit <https://wildlabadelaide.org/reports>.

“ To further their wellbeing and resilience, young people in Australia
need to feel connected, protected, and respected.

~Resilient Youth Australia

”

² Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care (2023, 12 December). *Modified Monash Model*. <https://www.health.gov.au/topics/rural-health-workforce/classifications/mmm>

SURVEY MEASUREMENTS

Table 1. Measures included in this report.

Mental Wellbeing Factors	
Depression symptoms	Patient Health Questionnaire (PHQ-2), scores range from 2 to 8. Higher scores indicate worse symptoms. A score below 4 is considered 'healthy' or feeling good and functioning well. A score of 4 or 5 is considered 'borderline', or sometimes experiencing sadness, low mood, and withdrawn behaviour. A score of 6-8 is considered 'at risk' of depression, or low mood, and a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest that interferes with life.
Anxiety symptoms	General Anxiety Disorder (GAD-2), scores range from 2 to 8. Higher scores indicate worse symptoms. A score below 4 is considered 'healthy' or feeling positive with few worries. A score of 4 or 5 is considered 'borderline', or sometimes experiencing worries that prevent engagement in activities. A score of 6 to 8 is considered 'at risk' of an anxiety disorder, or having difficulty managing fears and worries, becoming overwhelmed by anxious thoughts.
Ability to Talk to Others	Single item: "I can talk about things if they upset me"; scores range from 1 to 4. Higher scores indicate a greater ability to speak openly about difficult things.
Hopefulness	
Hopefulness	The Children's Hope Scale (CHS). Scores range from 6 to 36. Higher scores indicate greater hope, or a greater sense of agency and ability to work towards a goal. Scores 6 to 18 indicate low hope, scores 19 to 27 indicate moderate hope, and scores 28 to 36 indicate high hope.
Life Satisfaction	
Life Satisfaction	Adapted from the Cantril Self-Anchoring Scale, scores range from 1 to 8, with students imagining each number as a rung on a ladder ranging from the worst possible life to the best possible life. Higher scores indicate greater overall life satisfaction. Scores 1 to 4 indicate struggling, scores 5 to 6 indicate doing OK, and scores 7 to 8 indicate thriving.
Ready to Learn	
Disengagement	The Coping Strategies Inventory (CSI) Avoidance sub-scale measures avoidant coping behaviour, or disengagement. Scores range from 4 to 16. Higher scores indicate greater disengagement.
Positive Learning Engagement	Single Items: "I try hard at school", "I care about my school", "I enjoy learning new things at school", "I am given useful jobs at school", "I have fun at school", and "I read for fun". Scores range from 1 to 4. Higher scores indicate greater engagement.

Table continues on next page.

Table 1. Measures included in this report (continued).

Connection to Nature	
Connection to Nature	Adapted from the Illustrated Inclusion of Nature of Self Scale. The graphic measure for this report depicts 5 different levels of a person's connection to nature. Students selected the image that best represented them with responses ranging from A (lowest connected/not connected) to E (highly connected to nature). Responses of "A/B", "C", and "D/E" were categorised as having a low, mid, or high connection to nature, respectively. Responses were also converted to numeric scores (i.e., A=1; E=5; etc.) for mean score comparisons between groups.
Healthy Behaviour	
Healthy Eating	Single item: "I eat healthy food". Scores range from 1-4. Higher scores indicate healthier eating.
Adequate Sleep	Single item: "I get at least 8 hours sleep most nights". Scores range from 1-4. Higher scores indicate better sleep.
Physically Active	Single item: "In a day, how often are you physically active for at least one hour". Scores range from 1-4. Higher scores indicate more activity.
Social Environment	
Family Support	Single items: "I get love and support from my family", "I have parents/carers who encourage me to do well", "I have a parent/carer who listens to me". Scores range from 1-4. Higher scores indicate greater support.
School Support	Single items: "I have a teacher at my school who cares about me", "I have at least one teacher who encourages me". Scores range from 1 to 4. Higher scores indicate greater support.
Peer Support	Single items: "I am good at keeping friends", "I have at least one good friend at school", and "I get along with people who are different from me". Scores range from 1 to 4. Higher scores indicate greater support.
Social Behaviour	Single items: "I trust my friends and they trust me"; "I forgive others who are mean to me"; "I give my time to help others". Scores range from 1-4. Higher scores indicate more pro-social behaviour.
Experience of Being Bullied	Single items: "In the last month I have been bullied at school", "In the last month I have been bullied online", "In the last month, I have been left out of a group of friends on purpose, ignored, or had rumours spread about me". Scores range from 1 to 4. Higher scores indicate more frequent bullying.
Concerns About and Threats of Violence*	Single items: "In the last month, I carried a weapon to protect myself", "In the last month I threatened to physically hurt someone". Scores range from 1 to 4. Lower scores indicate a greater frequency of weapon possession or threatening behaviour.
Sense of Safety at School	Single item: "I feel safe at school". Scores range from 1 to 4. Higher scores indicate a greater frequency of sense of safety.
Sense of Safety in the Home Environment	Single items: "I feel safe at home", "I feel safe in the area where I live". Scores range from 1 to 4. Higher scores indicate a greater frequency of feeling a sense of safety.

Table continues on next page.

Table 1. Measures included in this report (continued).

Risky Behaviour	
Smoke cigarettes or vape*	Single items: "I vape", "I smoke cigarettes". Scores range from 1 to 4. Lower scores indicate greater usage.
Alcohol or illicit drug use*	Single items: "I drink alcohol", "I use illegal drugs". Scores range from 1 to 4. Lower scores indicate greater usage.
Social Media Use*	Single item: "I spend more than 2 hours each day using social media." Scores range from 1 to 4. Higher scores indicate greater usage.

* Items only reported for secondary school students

PRIMARY SCHOOL

STUDENT WELLBEING

KEY RESULTS

DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY SYMPTOMS

1 in 3 students reported low depression and/or anxiety. 1 in 4 students were at high risk of depression and/or anxiety. Males reports the lowest depression and anxiety symptoms, followed by females, with gender diverse students reporting highest risk.



ABILITY TO TALK TO OTHERS

Almost half of students reported frequently being able to talk about upsetting things. 1 in 6 were never or rarely able to do so. Males reported greatest ability to talk to others, followed by females, then gender diverse students.



HOPEFULNESS

Around 1/4 of students reported high or low hopefulness, and half reported mid-range hopefulness. Males reported higher hopefulness than females, and gender diverse students reported the lowest hopefulness.



LIFE SATISFACTION

Nearly half of students were thriving, and 14% were struggling. Males reported slightly higher life satisfaction than females, and gender diverse students reported lower life satisfaction than both males and females.



READY TO LEARN

Students reported moderate disengagement, and half were at risk in their learning mindset (high anxiety and/or disengagement). However, most students reported frequently enjoying and engaging in learning.



HEALTHY BEHAVIOUR

8 in 10 students reported frequently eating healthy food and being physically active for at least 1 hour a day, and 7 in 10 reported frequently sleeping at least 8 hours a night.



SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

8 to 9 in 10 students frequently felt loved and supported by family, had a supportive parent, a supportive teacher, and at least one good friend at school. More than 1 in 3 experienced frequent (at least monthly) bullying.



SENSE OF SAFETY

Between 8 to 9 in 10 students frequently felt safe in their neighbourhood, home and school.



MENTAL WELLBEING

Students reported their depression and anxiety symptoms as an indication of mental wellbeing, with symptom severity categorised as low, mid, or high. Students also reported more positive measures of wellbeing: the ability to talk about things they find upsetting, hopefulness, and life satisfaction, the latter two of which were combined to form a measure of resilience.

DEPRESSION

On average, primary school student depression scores in 2024 were in the low range ($M=3.70$, $SD=1.66$) with around half (52.7%) of students reporting low symptom levels, around a third (32.1%) reporting mid-range symptom levels, and 15.1% reporting high symptom levels.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN DEPRESSION

The proportion of male, female, and gender diverse students reporting low, mid, and high levels of depression symptoms are illustrated in Figure 1. 14.4% of males, and a slightly but significantly higher proportion of females (15.1%) reported high-range symptom levels. Around 1 in 4 (25.7%) gender diverse students reported high depression symptom levels, which was a significantly higher proportion than that of male and female students.

Regarding mean scores, male ($M=3.67$, $SD=1.64$) and female ($M=3.69$, $SD=1.66$) primary school students reported similar mean depression scores, in the low range. The mean score for gender diverse students was in the mid-range ($M=4.29$, $SD=1.90$), and was significantly higher than those of males and females.

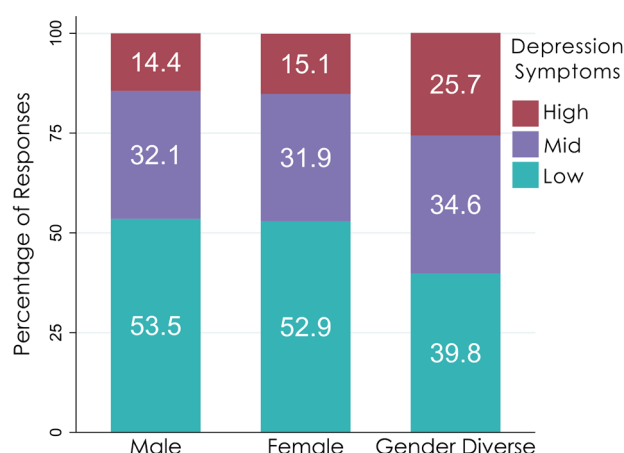


Figure 1. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse primary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of depression symptoms in 2024.

SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCES IN DEPRESSION

Depression symptom levels as reported by students living in low, mid, and high SES areas are illustrated in Figure 2. 17.9% of students in a low SES area, 15.4% in a mid SES area, and 12.3% living in a high SES area reported high depression symptoms. The proportion of students reporting high symptom levels was significantly more in low SES areas, and significantly less in high SES areas, relative to both other SES categories.

Although mean scores were in the low range for all three SES categories, students living in low SES areas ($M=3.84$, $SD=1.74$) reported significantly higher mean depression scores than students living in mid ($M=3.71$, $SD=1.67$) and high ($M=3.55$, $SD=1.57$) SES areas. Students in high SES areas reported the lowest mean depression symptom scores.

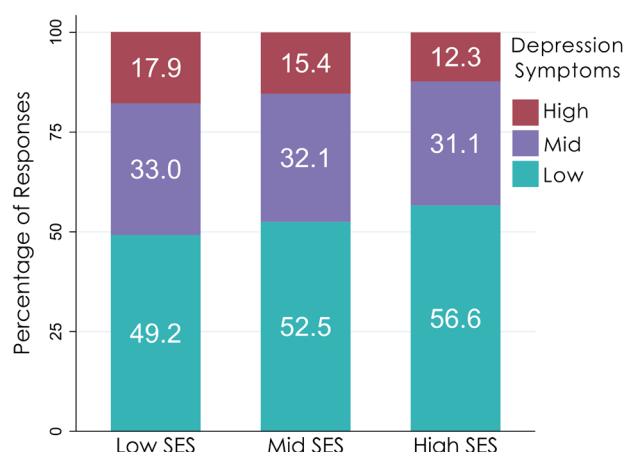


Figure 2. Proportion of students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting low, mid, and high levels of depression symptoms in 2024.

DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS OVER TIME

To provide an indication of depression symptom trajectories, the proportion of students reporting low, mid, and high symptom levels between 2022 and 2024 are reported below.

DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS OVER TIME FOR EACH GENDER

Across 2022 to 2024, mean primary school student depression scores for males and females were in the low range (**males:** 2022: M=3.62, SD=1.63; 2023: M=3.65, SD=1.64; 2024: M=3.67, SD=1.64; **females:** 2022: M=3.63, SD=1.63; 2023: M=3.70, SD=1.67; 2024: M=3.69, SD=1.66). Mean scores for **gender diverse** students were in the mid-range across all three years (2022: M=4.36, SD=1.91; 2023: M=4.41, SD=1.88; 2024: M=4.29, SD=1.90).

The proportion of students reporting low, mid, and high levels of depression symptoms from 2022 to 2024 is illustrated separately for each gender in Figure 3.

Among males, 13.7% to 14.4% reported high depression symptoms each year. This proportion increased significantly between 2022 and 2023 and then remained stable in 2024. The mean score also tended to be higher in 2023 than in 2022, and was similar in 2023 and 2024. The mean score was also slightly but significantly greater in 2024 than in 2022.

Among females, 13.9% to 15.4% reported high depression symptoms each year. The proportion of females with high symptom levels, and the mean depression scores, were similar in 2023 and 2024, and significantly greater than those in 2022.

Among gender diverse students, 25.7% to 27.8% reported high depression symptoms each year. There were no statistically significant differences in the proportion of gender diverse students reporting high symptom levels or the mean depression scores across the three years.

A significantly larger proportion of females than males reported high symptom levels in 2023 and 2024, and females also reported significantly higher mean scores than males in 2023. A larger proportion of gender diverse students reported high symptom levels and significantly higher mean scores than males and females across the three years.

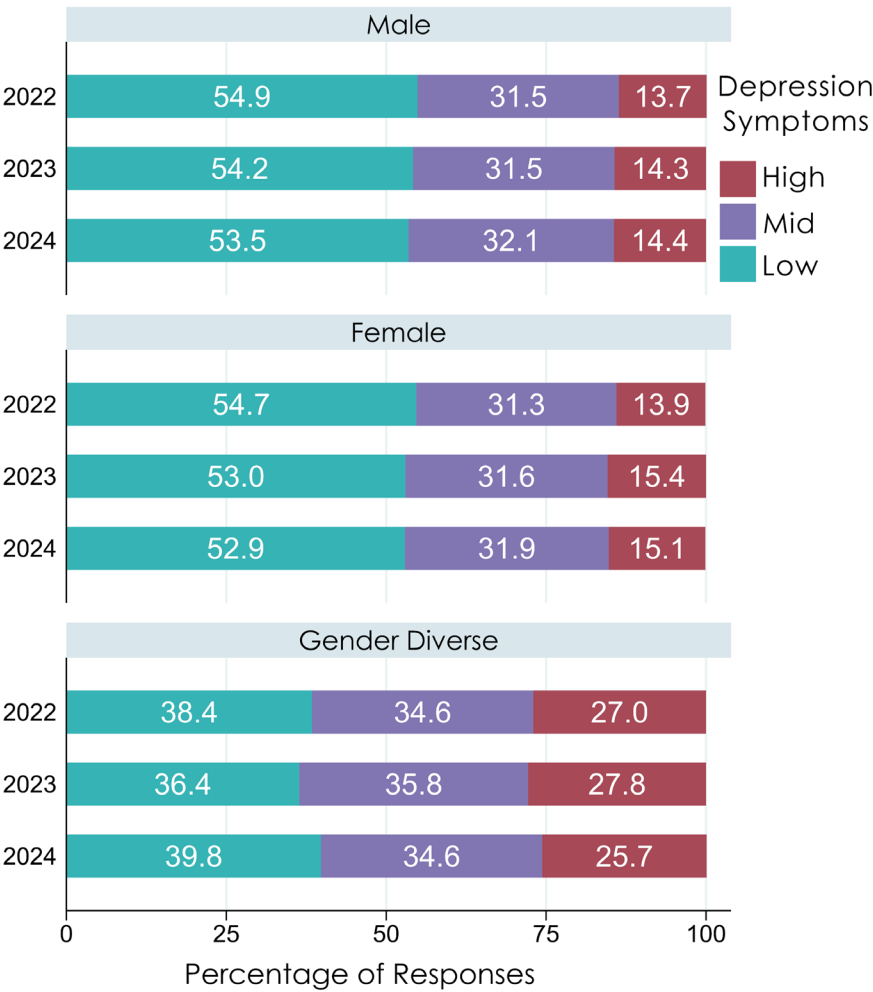


Figure 3. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse primary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of depression in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS OVER TIME FOR MIDDLE AND UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Across 2022 to 2024, mean primary school student depression scores for middle primary (grades 3-4) and upper primary (grades 5-6) were in the low range (**middle primary:** 2022: M=3.74, SD=1.67; 2023: M=3.79, SD=1.70; 2024: M=3.82, SD=1.70; **upper primary:** 2022: M=3.57, SD=1.62; 2023: M=3.62, SD=1.64; 2024: M=3.59, SD=1.62).

The proportion of students reporting low, mid, and high levels of depression symptoms from 2022 to 2024 is illustrated separately for middle and upper primary students in Figure 4.

Among middle primary students, 15.4% to 16.9% reported high depression symptoms each year. The proportion of middle primary students with high symptom levels increased significantly between 2022 and 2023 but was similar in 2023 and 2024. Mean depression scores were also similar in 2023 and 2024, both of which were significantly greater than in 2022.

Among upper primary students, 13.4% to 14.3% reported high depression symptoms each year. The proportion of upper primary students with high symptom levels, and the mean score, was significantly higher in 2023 than in 2022 and 2024. The proportions of students reporting high symptom levels, and the mean scores, were similar in 2022 and 2024.

Regarding middle and upper primary differences, the proportion of students with high symptom levels and the mean depression symptom scores were significantly *higher* in middle primary relative to upper primary across all three years.

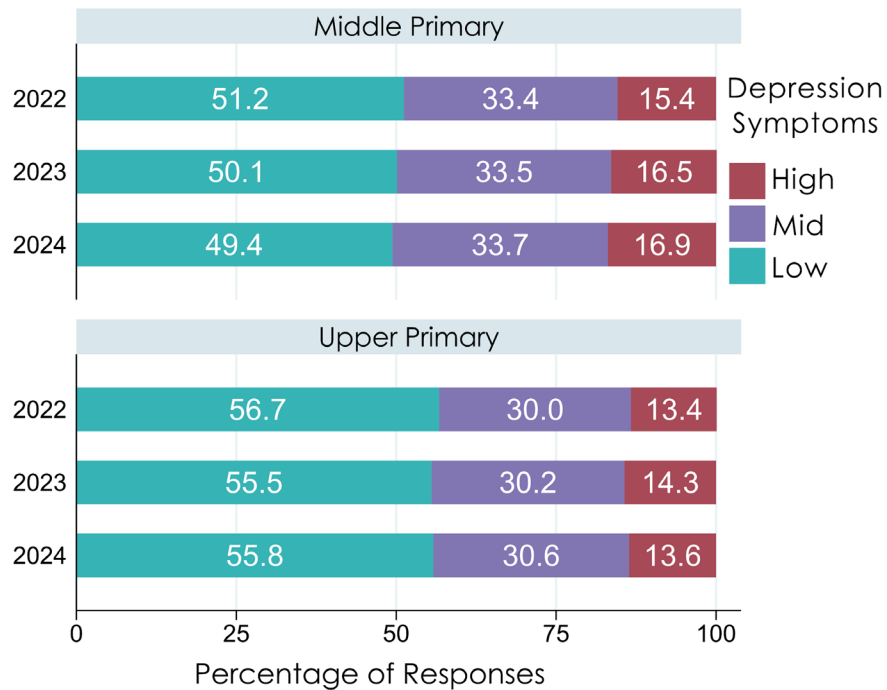


Figure 4. Proportion of middle (grades 3-4) and upper (grades 5-6) primary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of depression in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

ANXIETY

On average, primary school student anxiety scores in 2024 were in the low range ($M=3.85$, $SD=1.87$) with half (50.9%) of the students reporting low symptom levels, 28.7% of students reporting mid-range symptom levels, and 20.4% reporting high symptom levels.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ANXIETY

The proportion of male, female, and gender diverse students reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety symptoms in 2024 is illustrated in Figure 5. 16.8% of males, 23.1% of females, and 33.1% of gender diverse students reported high anxiety symptom levels in 2024. Comparisons between genders were all statistically significant, with the proportion of students reporting high symptom levels being smallest among males, and largest among gender diverse students.

Regarding mean scores, female primary school students ($M=4.01$, $SD=1.91$) reported mid-range mean anxiety scores, which were significantly higher than male students' mean score ($M=3.64$, $SD=1.78$) in the low range. Gender diverse students ($M=4.52$, $SD=2.10$) reported the highest mean anxiety scores, also in the mid-range.

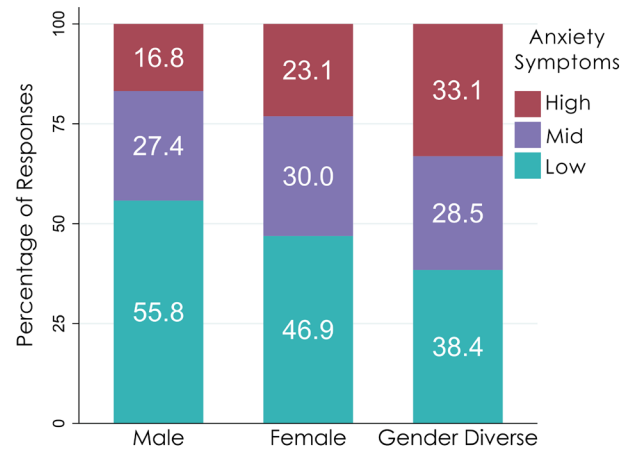


Figure 5. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse primary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety in 2024.

SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCES IN ANXIETY

Anxiety symptom levels as reported by students living in low, mid, and high SES areas are illustrated in Figure 6. A greater proportion of students living in low SES areas (22.8%) reported high anxiety symptom levels than those living in mid SES (21.1%) and high SES (17.5%) areas. A greater proportion of students in mid SES areas also reported high symptom levels relative to those in high SES areas.

Although mean scores were in the low range for all three SES categories, students living in low SES areas ($M=3.97$, $SD=1.93$) reported a significantly higher mean anxiety score than students living in mid ($M=3.87$, $SD=1.89$), and high ($M=3.71$, $SD=1.78$) SES areas. Students in high SES areas reported the lowest mean anxiety symptom score.

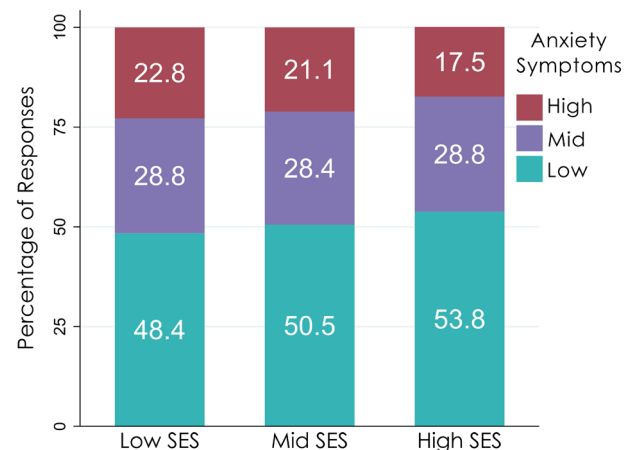


Figure 6. Proportion of primary school students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety in 2024.

ANXIETY SYMPTOMS OVER TIME

To provide an indication of anxiety symptom trajectories, the proportion of primary school students scoring in the low, mid, and high ranges between 2022 and 2024 are reported below.

ANXIETY SYMPTOMS OVER TIME FOR EACH GENDER

Across 2022 to 2024, male students' mean anxiety scores were in the low range (2022: M=3.66, SD=1.78; 2023: M=3.64, SD=1.78; 2024: M=3.64, SD=1.78). Among females, in 2022, the mean anxiety score was just below the mid-range cut-off, and in 2023 and 2024 they were in the mid-range (2022: M=3.99, SD=1.89; 2023: M=4.06, SD=1.93; 2024: M=4.01, SD=1.91). Mean scores for gender diverse students were in the mid-range for all three years (2022: M=4.60, SD=2.12; 2023: M=4.71, SD=2.13; 2024: M=4.52, SD=2.10).

Most notably, females consistently reported significantly higher symptom levels and a greater proportion reported high-level symptoms when compared to males across all three years. Gender diverse students reported higher symptom levels compared to both males and females each year. The proportion of students reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety symptoms from 2022 to 2024 is illustrated separately for each gender in Figure 7.

Among male students, 16.5% to 17.0% reported high anxiety symptoms each year. These proportions, and the mean scores, were statistically similar across the three years.

Among female students, 22.2% to 23.8% reported high anxiety symptoms each year. In 2023, the proportion of females reporting high symptom levels, and the mean score, were significantly higher than those in 2022. Mean scores and the proportion of students reporting high symptom levels then decreased slightly but significantly between 2023 and 2024.

Among gender diverse students, 33.1% to 37.4% reported high anxiety symptoms each year. The proportion of students reporting high symptoms was significantly greater in 2023 compared to 2022 and 2024, but similar between 2022 and 2024. The mean score was significantly lower in 2024 than in 2023.

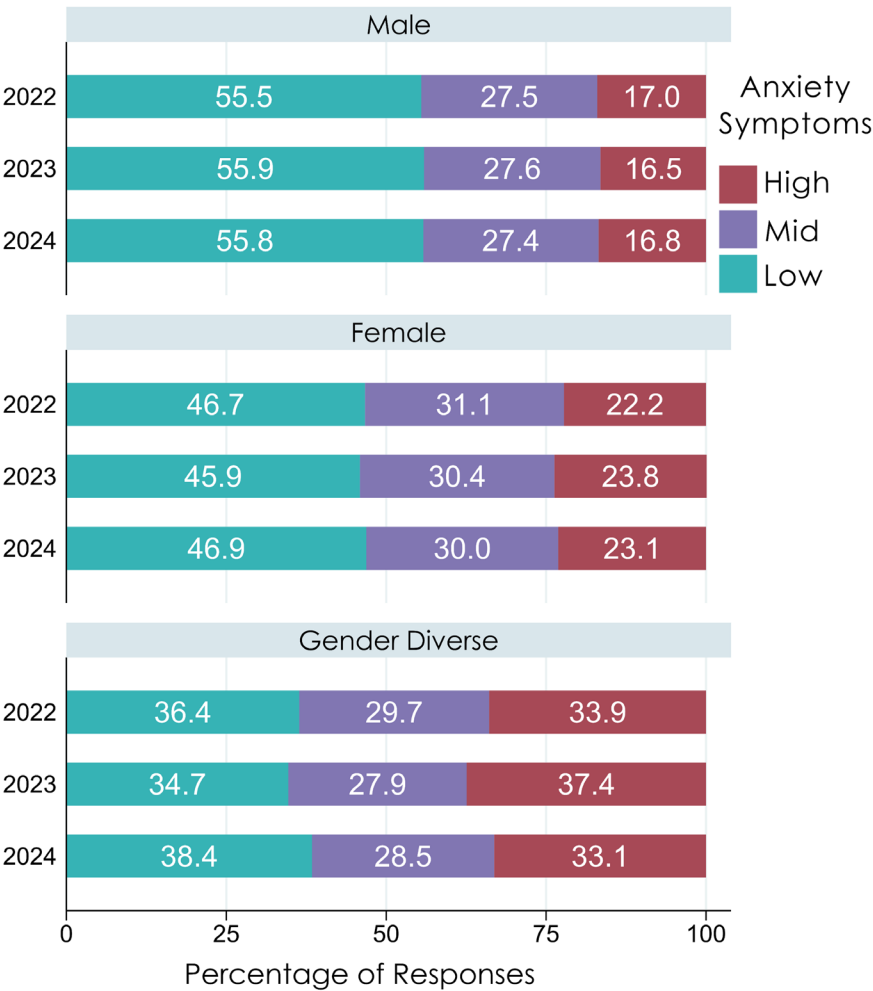


Figure 7. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse primary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety symptoms in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

ANXIETY SYMPTOMS OVER TIME FOR MIDDLE AND UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Across 2022 to 2024, mean primary school student anxiety scores for middle (grades 3-4) and upper primary (grades 5-6) students were in the low range (**middle primary**: 2022: M=3.87, SD=1.85; 2023: M=3.88, SD=1.87; 2024: M=3.90, SD=1.87; **upper primary**: 2022: M=3.84, SD=1.87; 2023: M=3.87, SD=1.90; 2024: M=3.80, SD=1.87).

The proportion of students reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety symptoms from 2022 to 2024 is illustrated separately for middle and upper primary students in Figure 8.

Among middle primary students, 20.1% to 21.1% reported high anxiety symptom levels each year. The proportion of middle primary students with high symptom levels, and the mean scores, were statistically similar across the three years.

Among upper primary students, 20.1% to 20.8% reported high anxiety symptom levels each year. In 2024, the proportion of upper primary students with high symptom levels, and the mean score, were slightly but significantly lower than those in 2023. The mean score in 2024 was also significantly lower than that in 2022, though the proportion of students reporting high symptom levels was statistically similar in these two years.

Regarding middle and upper primary differences, the proportion of students with high symptom levels, and the mean anxiety scores, were significantly *higher* in middle primary relative to upper primary in 2024, but similar in 2022 and 2023.

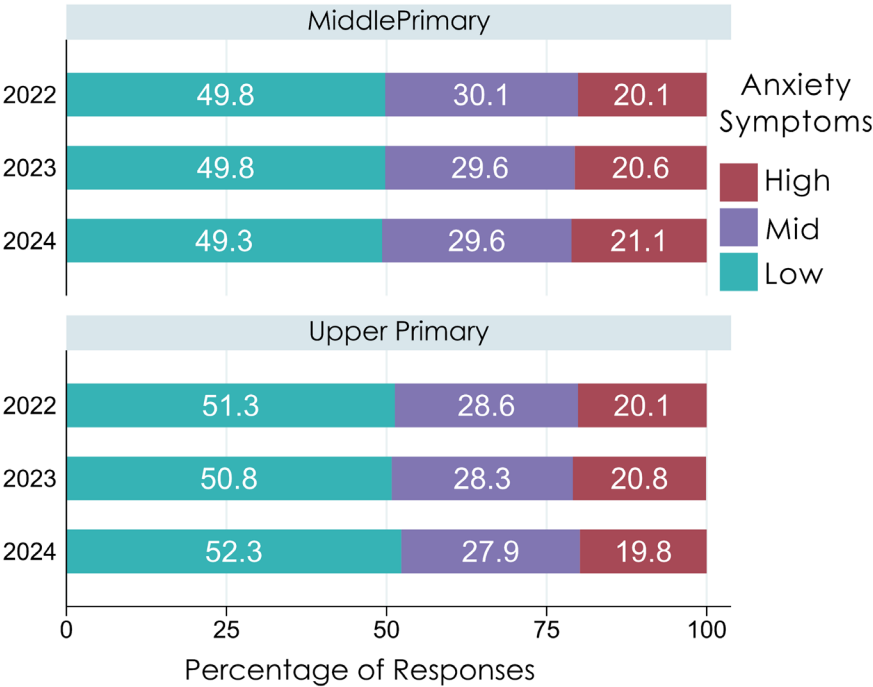


Figure 8. Proportion of middle (grades 3-4) and upper (grades 5-6) primary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

COMBINED DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

As an indication of the state of mental wellbeing, depression and anxiety categories were combined to represent different levels of risk among primary school students. Healthy students were represented as those reporting low depression and anxiety symptoms, borderline students as those with mid-range reports of depression, anxiety, or both, and students at high risk of mental wellbeing problems as those with high symptom levels of depression, anxiety, or both.

A graphical representation of student mental wellbeing in 2024 is shown in Figure 9. 37.5% of primary school students were of healthy mind (shaded in teal). 35.6% of students were in the borderline range for mental wellbeing, with mid-range symptoms of anxiety and/or depression (shaded in purple). **Around 1 in 4 students (26.9%) were in the high-risk categories for mental wellbeing (shaded in red), with 8.7% at high risk of both anxiety and depression.**

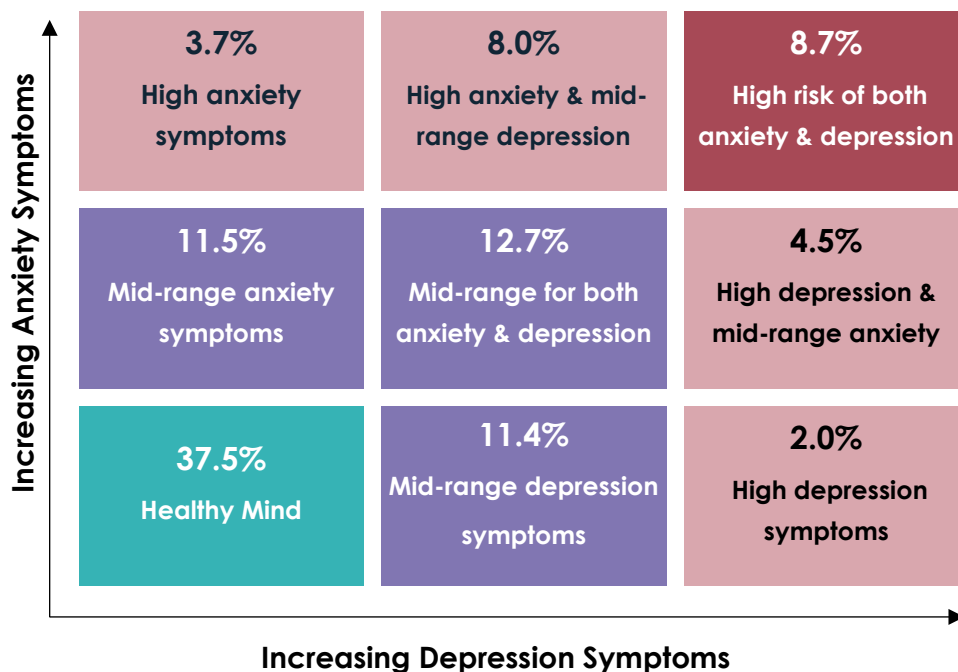


Figure 9. A graphical representation of student mental wellbeing during 2024, comprised of combinations of depression and anxiety symptoms.

ABILITY TO TALK TO OTHERS

The ability to talk to others about things that are upsetting may be an important facilitator for mental wellbeing. In 2024, on average students could “sometimes” talk to others ($M=2.50$, $SD=0.98$). Nearly half (47.2%) of primary school students reported that they were often or always able to talk to others. 36.7% of students were sometimes able to do this, and 16.1% of students never or rarely talked about things that upset them. This may mean that around half of students do not often feel able to talk about things that are upsetting to them when they would otherwise like to.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ABILITY TO TALK TO OTHERS

The proportion of male, female, and gender diverse students reporting different abilities to talk to others is illustrated in Figure 10. 16.0% of male and 15.4% of female students reported never or rarely being able to talk to others, though the proportion for females was slightly but significantly lower than that for males. 29.7% of gender diverse students reported never or rarely being able to talk to others - a significantly greater proportion than that of males and females.

Males ($M=2.52$, $SD=0.98$) reported a slightly but significantly higher ability to talk to others mean score than females ($M=2.50$, $SD=0.96$), with mean scores for both genders suggesting they were sometimes able to do this. The mean score for gender diverse students ($M=2.23$, $SD=1.05$) was significantly lower than that for males and females, although it also suggested that gender diverse students were sometimes able to talk to others on average.

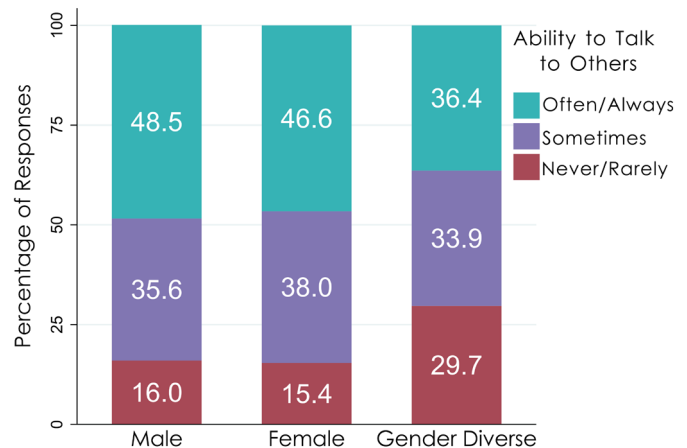


Figure 10. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse primary school students reporting being able to talk to others never/rarely, sometimes, and often/always, about things that upset them in 2024.

SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCES IN ABILITY TO TALK TO OTHERS

The proportion of students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting different abilities to talk to others is illustrated in Figure 11. A greater proportion of students living in low SES areas (17.8%) reported never or rarely being able to talk to others, relative to those living in mid (16.3%) or high (14.1%) SES areas. A greater proportion of students living in mid SES areas relative to those in high SES areas also reported infrequent ability to talk to others.

Mean scores for students in low ($M=2.50$, $SD=1.01$), mid ($M=2.51$, $SD=0.98$), and high ($M=2.52$, $SD=0.94$) SES areas were slightly but significantly different from each other, with students in low SES areas reporting the lowest mean ability to talk to others, and students in high SES areas reporting the highest. On average, students in each SES category reported *sometimes* being able to talk to others about things that were upsetting to them.

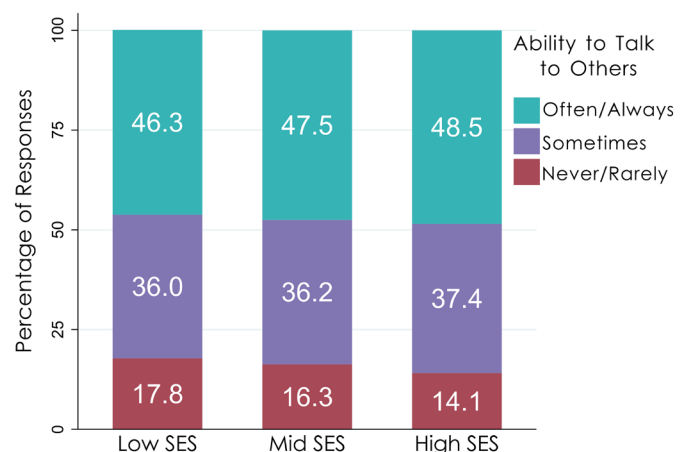


Figure 11. Proportion of students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting being able to talk to others never/rarely, sometimes, and often/always, about things that upset them in 2024.

ABILITY TO TALK TO OTHERS OVER TIME

To provide an indication of the trajectories of students' ability to talk to others about things that are upsetting to them, the proportions of students reporting different abilities to talk between 2022 and 2024 are reported below.

ABILITY TO TALK TO OTHERS OVER TIME FOR EACH GENDER

Across 2022 to 2024, mean scores indicated that primary school students in all gender categories were *sometimes* able to talk to others (**males:** 2022: M=2.50, SD=0.97; 2023: M=2.50, SD=0.98; 2024: M=2.52, SD=0.98; **females:** 2022: M=2.50, SD=0.96; 2023: M=2.47, SD=0.95; 2024: M=2.50, SD=0.96; **gender diverse:** 2022: M=2.17, SD=1.05; 2023: M=2.17, SD=1.04; 2024: M=2.23, SD=1.05).

The proportion of students reporting different abilities to talk to others in 2022 to 2024 is illustrated separately for each gender in Figure 12.

Among male students, 16.0% to 16.4% reported rarely being able to talk to others each year, and this proportion was similar across the three years. The mean ability to talk score was similar in 2022 and 2023, and slightly but significantly greater in 2024 than in 2023.

Among female students, 15.0% to 15.6% reported rarely being able to talk to others each year, and this proportion was similar across the three years. The mean ability to talk score was similar in 2022 and 2024, and both of these scores were slightly but significantly higher than in 2023.

Among gender diverse students, 29.7% to 32.4% reported rarely being able to talk to others each year. These proportions, and the yearly mean scores, were statistically similar across the three years.

Regarding gender differences, females and males reported similar mean scores in 2022, although a slightly but significantly higher proportion of males reported rare ability to talk. In 2023 and 2024, males reported a slightly but significantly higher mean score than females, though a significantly *greater* proportion of males than females reported rare ability to talk. A larger proportion of gender diverse students reported never/rarely being able to talk to others, and gender diverse students had the lowest mean scores across the three years.

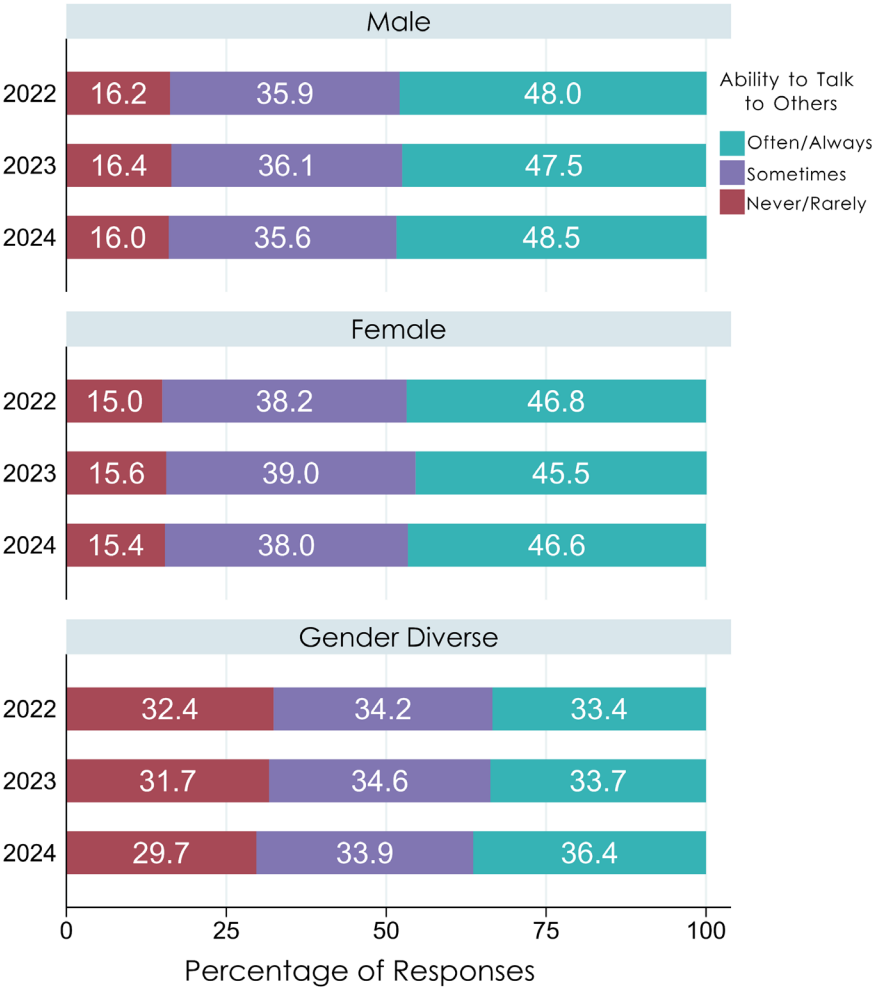


Figure 12. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse primary school students reporting being able to talk to others never/rarely, sometimes, and often/always, about things that upset them in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

ABILITY TO TALK OVER TIME FOR MIDDLE AND UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Across 2022 to 2024, mean scores indicated that students in middle (grades 3-4) and upper primary (grades 5-6) were sometimes able to talk to others about things that were upsetting to them (**middle primary**: 2022: $M=2.52$, $SD=0.98$; 2023: $M=2.49$, $SD=0.97$; 2024: $M=2.51$, $SD=0.98$; **upper primary**: 2022: $M=2.47$, $SD=0.96$; 2023: $M=2.46$, $SD=0.97$; 2024: $M=2.49$, $SD=0.97$).

The proportion of students reporting different abilities to talk to others in 2022 to 2024 is illustrated separately for middle and upper primary school students in Figure 13.

Among middle primary students, 15.5% to 15.7% reported rarely being able to talk to others each year, and this proportion was similar across the three years. The mean ability to talk score was similar in 2022 and 2024, and slightly but significantly lower in 2023 than in both other years.

Among upper primary students, 16.5% to 17.4% reported rarely being able to talk to others each year. This proportion was significantly higher in 2023 than in 2022 and was significantly lower in 2024 relative to 2023. Mean ability to talk scores were similar in 2022 and 2023, and slightly but significantly higher in 2024 than in both other years.

Regarding middle and upper primary school differences, the proportion of students reporting rarely being able to talk to others was significantly lower in middle primary relative to upper primary across all three years. Middle primary school students also reported slightly but significantly higher mean ability to talk to others across all three years.

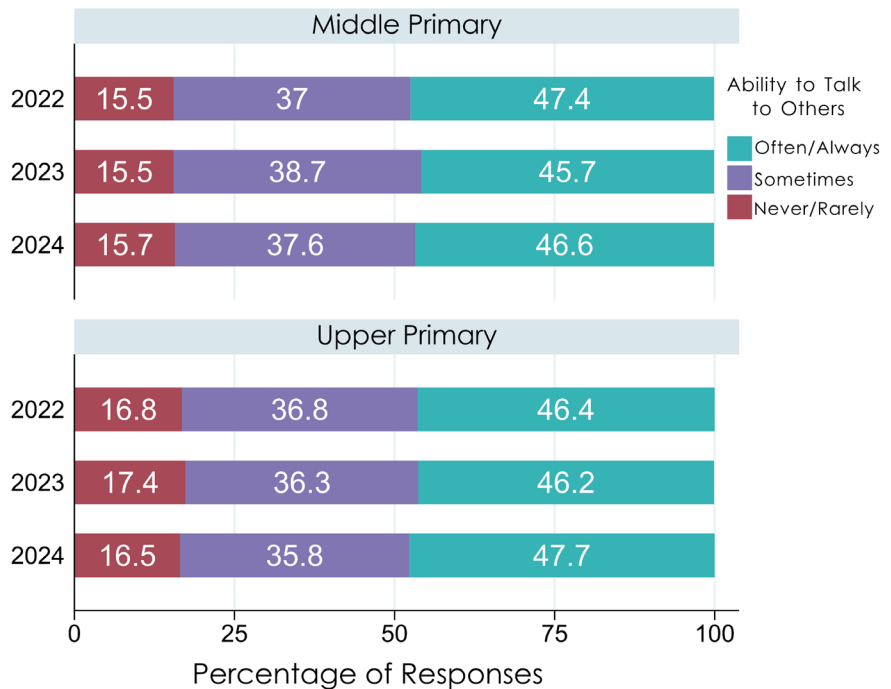


Figure 13. Proportion of middle (grades 3-4) and upper (grades 5-6) primary school students reporting being able to talk to others never/rarely, sometimes, and often/always, about things that upset them in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

HOPEFULNESS

The measure of hopefulness reflects a combination of a student's belief that they have what it takes to work towards a desired goal (often called 'agency') and can imagine different practical ways to achieve these goals (often called 'pathways').

Overall mean primary school student hopefulness scores in 2024 were in the mid-range ($M=23.19$, $SD=6.37$). Around a quarter of students reported high (26.8%) or low (24.1%) levels of hopefulness, and around half (49.1%) of students reported mid-range levels of hopefulness.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN HOPEFULNESS

The proportion of male, female, and gender diverse students reporting low, mid, and high levels of hopefulness in 2024 is illustrated in Figure 14. 21.6% of male, 25.7% of female, and 36.6% of gender diverse students reported low levels of hopefulness. Comparisons between genders were all statistically significant, with males representing the smallest proportion, and gender diverse students representing the greatest proportion of students with low levels of hopefulness.

Regarding mean scores, male ($M=23.62$, $SD=6.35$) primary school students reported slightly but significantly higher mean hopefulness scores than female ($M=22.91$, $SD=6.30$) students. Gender diverse ($M=21.04$, $SD=7.10$) students reported significantly lower mean hopefulness scores than males and females.

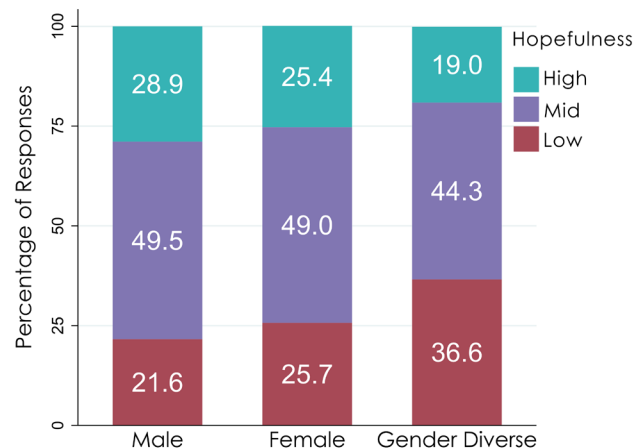


Figure 14. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse primary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of hopefulness in 2024.

SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCES IN HOPEFULNESS

The proportion of students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting low, mid, and high levels of hopefulness in 2024 is illustrated in Figure 15. A greater proportion of students living in low SES areas (27.8%) reported low hopefulness relative to those living in mid (25.3%) and high (19.6%) SES areas. A greater proportion of students in mid SES areas also reported low hopefulness relative to those in high SES areas.

Although mean scores were in the mid-range for all three SES categories, students living in low SES areas ($M=22.74$, $SD=6.76$) reported slightly but significantly lower mean hopefulness scores than students living in mid SES areas ($M=23.04$, $SD=6.38$). Students in high SES areas ($M=23.78$, $SD=6.03$) reported significantly higher mean hopefulness scores than those living in mid and low SES areas.

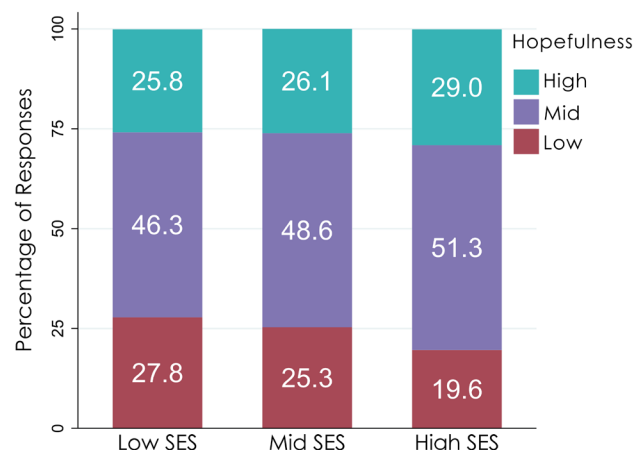


Figure 15. Proportion of students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting low, mid, and high levels of hopefulness in 2024.

HOPEFULNESS OVER TIME

To provide an indication of hopefulness trajectories, the proportion of students reporting low, mid, and high hopefulness between 2022 and 2024 are reported below.

HOPEFULNESS OVER TIME FOR EACH GENDER

Across 2022 to 2024, mean hopefulness scores for all gender categories were in the mid-range (**male:** 2022: M=23.81, SD=6.41; 2023: M=23.70, SD=6.31; 2024: M=23.62, SD=6.35; **female:** 2022: M=23.14, SD=6.25; 2023: M=22.87, SD=6.28; 2024: M=22.91, SD=6.30; **gender diverse:** 2022: M=20.91, SD=6.94; 2023: M=20.65, SD=7.12; 2024: M=21.04, SD=7.10).

The proportion of students reporting low, mid, and high levels of hopefulness in 2022 to 2024 is illustrated separately for each gender in Figure 16.

Among male students, 21.2% to 21.6% reported low hopefulness each year, and these proportions were statistically similar across the three years. The mean score in 2024 was slightly but significantly lower than the mean score in 2022, but similar to the 2023 mean score.

Among female students, 24.4% to 25.7% reported low hopefulness each year. The proportions of females reporting low hopefulness were similar in 2023 and 2024, both of which were higher than in 2022. Similarly, mean scores were not significantly different in 2023 and 2024, and both were significantly lower than in 2022.

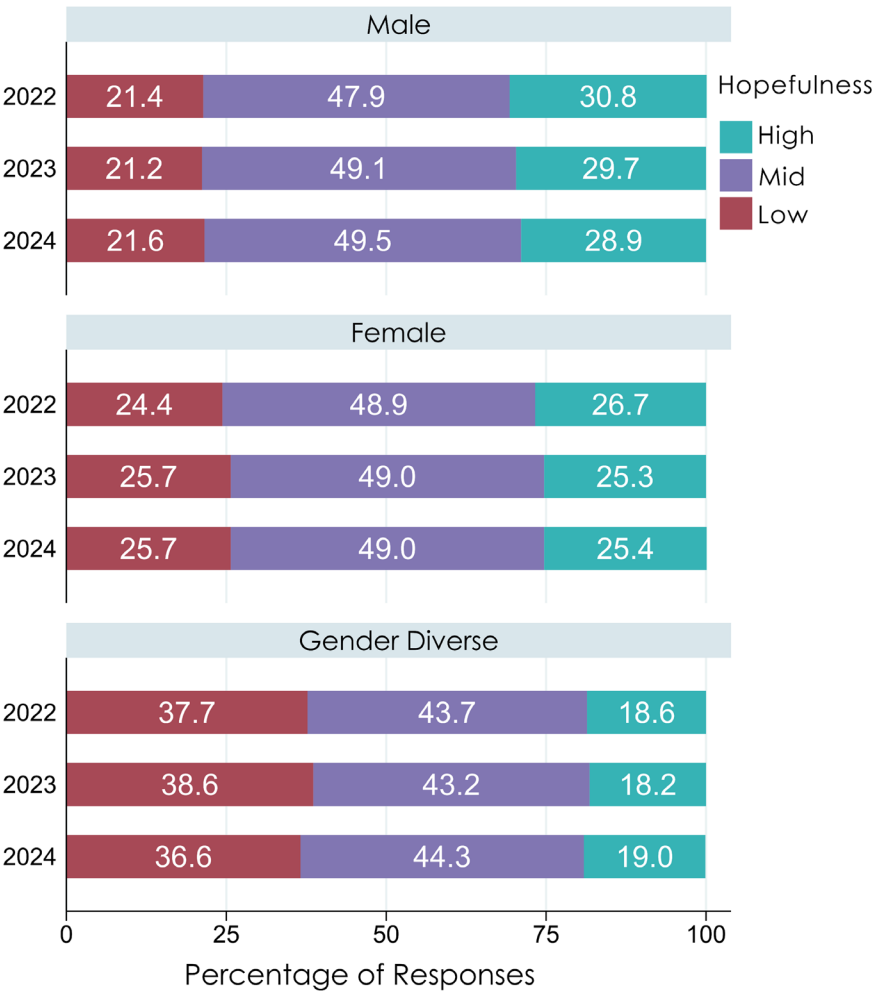


Figure 16. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse primary school students reporting low, mid, and high hopefulness in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

Among gender diverse students, 36.6% to 38.6% reported low hopefulness each year. The proportion of students reporting low hopefulness, and the mean scores, were statistically similar across the three years.

Regarding gender differences, all comparisons of mean scores and the proportion of students reporting low hopefulness were statistically significant across the three years, with gender diverse students reporting the lowest hopefulness, and females also reporting significantly lower hopefulness than males on these measures.

HOPEFULNESS OVER TIME FOR MIDDLE AND UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Across 2022 to 2024, mean primary school student hopefulness scores for middle primary (grades 3-4) and upper primary (grades 5-6) were in the mid-range (**middle primary**: 2022: $M=23.48$, $SD=6.42$; 2023: $M=23.39$, $SD=6.35$; 2024: $M=23.27$, $SD=6.45$; **upper primary**: 2022: $M=23.30$, $SD=6.35$; 2023: $M=23.01$, $SD=6.36$; 2024: $M=23.11$, $SD=6.30$).

The proportion of students reporting low, mid, and high hopefulness in 2022 to 2024 is illustrated separately for middle and upper primary school students in Figure 17.

Among middle primary students, 22.8% to 23.8% reported low hopefulness each year. The proportion of middle primary students with low hopefulness was similar between 2023 and 2022 and slightly but significantly higher in 2024 than in both previous years. Mean hopefulness scores were similar in 2022 and 2023, and slightly but significantly lower in 2024 than in both other years.

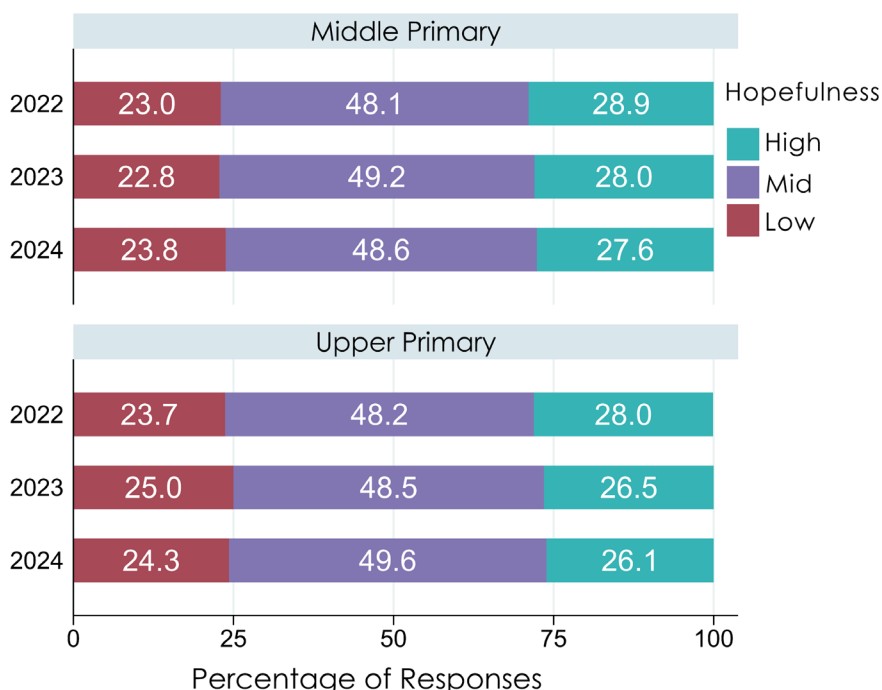


Figure 17. Proportion of middle (grades 3-4) and upper (grades 5-6) primary school students reporting low, mid, and high hopefulness in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

Among upper primary students, 23.7% to 25.0% reported low hopefulness each year. The proportion of upper primary students with low hopefulness was significantly higher in 2023 than in 2022 and 2024, and significantly higher in 2024 than in 2022. The mean score was significantly higher in 2022 than in 2023 and 2024, and similar in the latter two years.

Regarding middle and upper primary differences, the proportion of students with low hopefulness was significantly lower in middle primary relative to upper primary in 2023, and similar in 2022 and 2024. The mean hopefulness scores were slightly but significantly higher among middle relative to upper primary students in all three years.

LIFE SATISFACTION

To measure life satisfaction, students were asked to imagine a ladder where the top represents the best possible life, and the bottom represents the worst possible life. Responses were categorised as struggling (wellbeing that is at risk; red), doing OK (moderate wellbeing; purple), and thriving (wellbeing that is strong and consistent; teal).

In 2024, average primary school student life satisfaction scores were in the mid-range, where they considered themselves to be doing OK ($M=6.15$, $SD=1.53$). The proportion of students reporting that they were struggling, doing OK, and thriving is illustrated in Figure 18. Around 4 to 5 in 10 students believed themselves to be thriving (45%), 4 in 10 reported that they were doing OK (41.5%), and 13.5% reported themselves to be struggling.

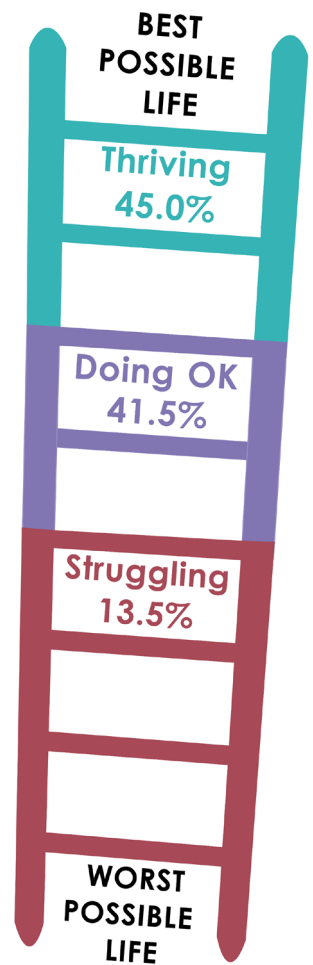


Figure 18. Proportion of primary school students reporting that they were struggling, doing OK, and thriving in 2024.



To improve our lives, primary students suggest we:

“encourage people to get up on their feet and be confident and just make the world a better place, honestly. People deserve to have more happiness than what they've already got”

– Year 4 student

“help others keep healthy and connect some time with nature and keep smiling”

– Year 4 student

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LIFE SATISFACTION

The proportion of male, female, and gender diverse students reporting that they were struggling, doing OK, and thriving in 2024 is illustrated in Figure 19. 12.5% of male, 13.6% of female, and 26.6% of gender diverse students reported that they were struggling. Comparisons between genders were all statistically significant, with males representing the smallest proportion, and gender diverse students representing the greatest proportion of students who were struggling in life.

Male ($M=6.20$, $SD=1.52$) primary school students also reported slightly but significantly higher life satisfaction than female ($M=6.14$, $SD=1.50$) students. Gender diverse ($M=5.55$, $SD=1.90$) students reported significantly lower mean life satisfaction than males and females.

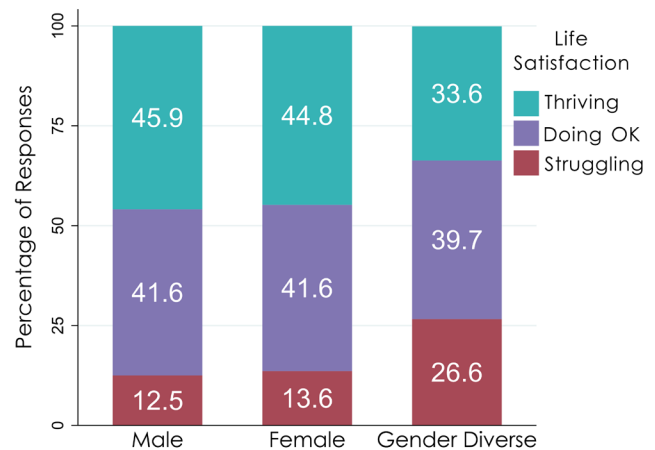


Figure 19. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse primary school students reporting that they were struggling, doing OK, and thriving in 2024.

SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCES IN LIFE SATISFACTION

The proportion of students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting that they were struggling, doing OK, and thriving in 2024 is illustrated in Figure 20. 14.9% of students living in a low SES area reported that they were struggling. A slightly but significantly smaller proportion of students (13.6%) living in a mid SES area reported this. 12.0% of students living in a high SES area reported themselves to be struggling, which was a significantly smaller proportion than that of students living in mid and low SES areas.

Although proportions were very similar across SES categories, a slightly but significantly *higher* proportion of students living in a low SES area (46.6%) reported themselves to be thriving relative to those living in a mid (45.4%) or a high (44.0%) SES area. The proportion of students living in a mid SES area reporting themselves to be thriving was also slightly but significantly higher than that of students living in a high SES area.

Importantly, mean life satisfaction did not vary by SES category, with students living in all three SES category areas reporting the same mean score (low SES: $M=6.16$, $SD=1.63$, mid SES: $M=6.16$, $SD=1.54$, high SES: $M=6.16$, $SD=1.43$), indicating that they were doing OK on average.

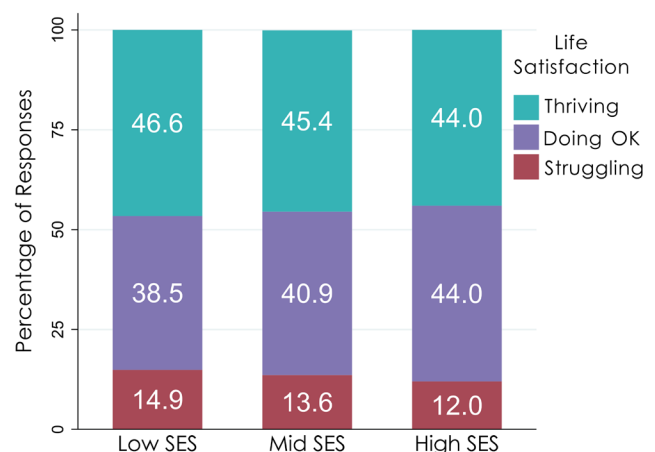


Figure 20. Proportion of primary school students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting that they were struggling, doing OK, and thriving in 2024.

LIFE SATISFACTION OVER TIME

To provide an indication of life satisfaction trajectories, the proportion of students reporting themselves to be struggling, doing OK, and thriving between 2022 and 2024 are reported below.

LIFE SATISFACTION OVER TIME FOR EACH GENDER

Across 2022 to 2024, mean life satisfaction scores for all gender categories were in the mid-range, where they considered themselves to be doing ok (**male:** 2022: M=6.22, SD=1.51; 2023: M=6.20, SD=1.53; 2024: M=6.20, SD=1.52; **female:** 2022: M=6.21, SD=1.47; 2023: M=6.14, SD=1.50; 2024: M=6.14, SD=1.50; **gender diverse:** 2022: M=5.48, SD=1.85; 2023: M=5.39, SD=1.91; 2024: M=5.55, SD=1.90).

The proportion of students reporting different levels of life satisfaction from 2022 to 2024 is illustrated separately for each gender in Figure 21.

Among males, 12.0% to 12.6% reported themselves to be struggling each year. This proportion was slightly but significantly higher in 2023 than in 2022. Mean scores were similar across the three years.

Among females, 12.0% to 13.6% reported themselves to be struggling each year. The proportions of females reporting low life satisfaction were similar in 2023 and 2024, both of which were higher than in 2022. Correspondingly, mean scores were not significantly different in 2023 and 2024, and both were significantly lower than in 2022.

Among gender diverse students, 26.6% to 29.2% reported themselves to be struggling each year, though this proportion was significantly lower in 2024 than in 2023. Mean scores were also similar across 2022 and 2023, and were slightly but significantly higher in 2024 than in 2023.

Regarding gender differences, in 2022 the proportion of males and females reporting themselves to be struggling, and the mean scores, were similar. In 2023 and 2024, a significantly greater proportion of females than males were struggling, and mean scores were significantly lower for females than for males. Across all three years, the proportion of gender diverse students reporting themselves to be struggling was significantly greater than that of males and females, and their mean scores were significantly lower than that of males and females.

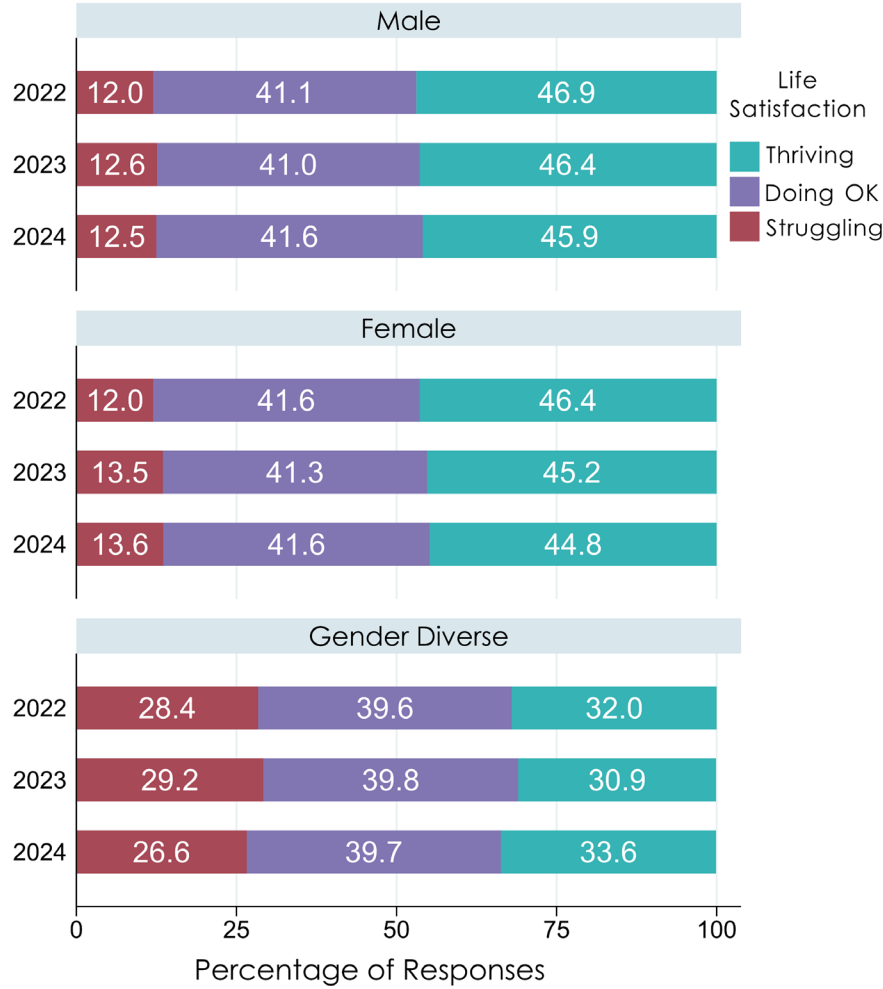


Figure 21. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse primary school students reporting themselves to be struggling, doing ok, and thriving in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

LIFE SATISFACTION OVER TIME FOR MIDDLE AND UPPER PRIMARY SCHOOL

Across 2022 to 2024, mean primary school student life satisfaction scores for middle primary (grades 3-4) and upper primary (grades 5-6) were in the mid-range, indicating that they were doing ok (**middle primary**: 2022: M=6.29, SD=1.58; 2023: M=6.23, SD=1.62; 2024: M=6.23, SD=1.60; **upper primary**: 2022: M=6.11, SD=1.44; 2023: M=6.07, SD=1.47; 2024: M=6.07, SD=1.46).

The proportion of students reporting themselves to be struggling, doing ok, and thriving in 2022 to 2024 is illustrated separately for middle and upper primary school students in Figure 22.

Among middle primary students, 12.1% to 13.4% reported themselves to be struggling each year. The proportion of middle primary students who were struggling was similar in 2023 and 2024, both of which were higher than in 2022. Mean life satisfaction scores were also similar in 2023 and 2024, both of which were slightly but significantly lower than in 2022.

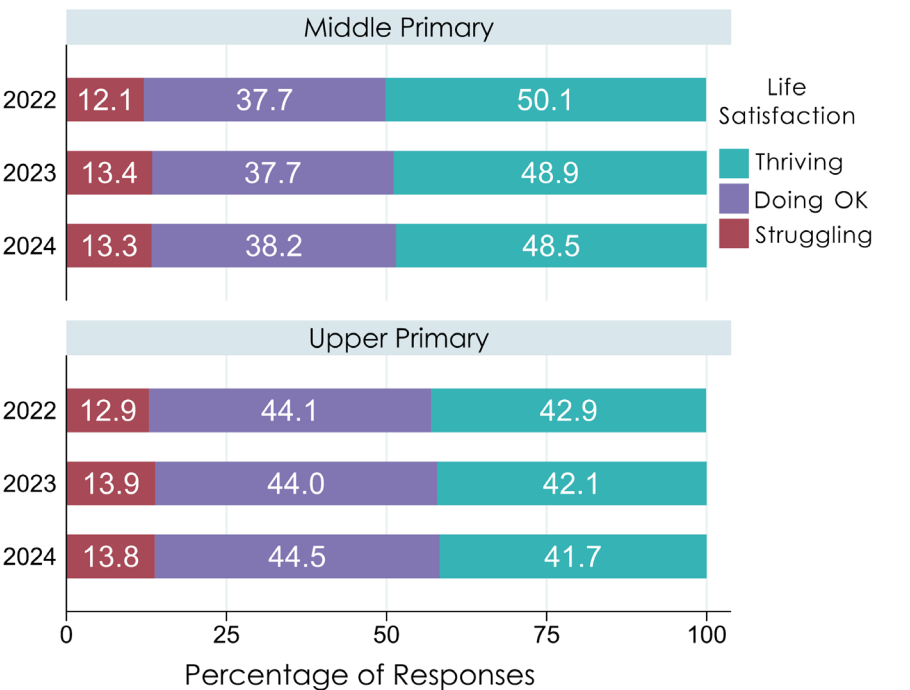


Figure 22. Proportion of middle (grades 3-4) and upper (grades 5-6) primary school students reporting themselves to be struggling, doing ok, and thriving in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

The trajectory among upper primary students was similar to that of middle primary students. 12.9% to 13.9% of students reported themselves to be struggling each year. The proportion of upper primary students who were struggling was similar in 2023 and 2024, both of which were higher than in 2022. Mean life satisfaction scores were also similar in 2023 and 2024, both of which were slightly but significantly lower than in 2022.

Regarding middle and upper primary differences, the proportion of students who were struggling was statistically similar between middle and upper primary students in 2023, and slightly but significantly higher among upper primary students in 2022 and 2024. The mean life satisfaction scores were slightly but significantly higher among middle relative to upper primary students in all three years.

COMBINED HOPEFULNESS AND LIFE SATISFACTION

As an indication of resilience, we combined student hopefulness and life satisfaction score categories. The concept of resilience refers to the ability to positively adapt to or recover from adverse experiences. The way that students perceive their environment, their coping strategies, and the presence of sufficient, quality social resources influence resilience - a skill that can be facilitated and developed.³

Resilient students were represented as those reporting high hopefulness and high (i.e., thriving) life satisfaction, borderline students as those with mid-range reports of hopefulness, life satisfaction (i.e., doing OK), or both, and students at high risk of low resilience as those with low levels of hope, life satisfaction (i.e., struggling with life), or both.

A graphical representation of student resilience in 2024 is shown in Figure 23. 17.9% of primary school students reported being resilient (shaded in teal) according to their hopefulness and life satisfaction scores. Around half (51.3%) of the students were in the borderline range for resilience, with mid-range levels of hope and/or life satisfaction (shaded in purple). **Around 3 in 10 students (30.8%) were in the high-risk categories for resilience (shaded in red), with 6.8% reporting low hope and struggling in life.**

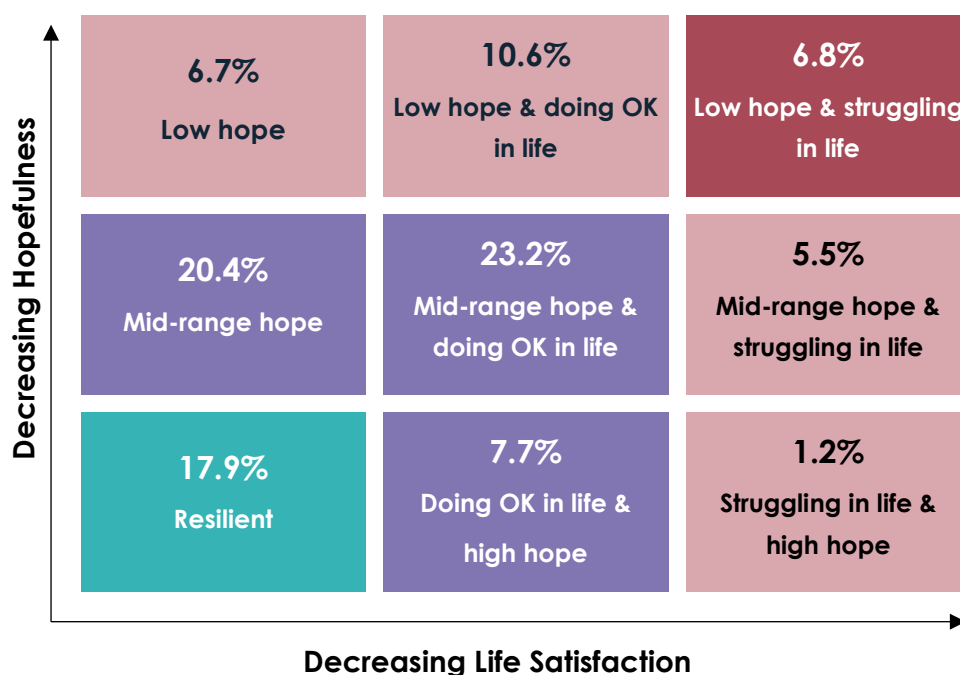


Figure 23. A graphical representation of primary school student resilience in 2024, comprised of combinations of hopefulness and life satisfaction score categories.

³ American Psychological Association (2024, August 29). *APA Dictionary of Psychology: resilience*. <https://dictionary.apa.org/resilience>

READY TO LEARN

Ready to learn factors explore domains that may influence disengagement, resilience building, and engagement in the classroom, which are each important in facilitating student wellbeing and learning.

DISENGAGEMENT

Disengagement reflects behaviour aimed at avoidance coping - avoiding thinking about, feeling, or doing difficult things as a coping mechanism. In 2024, the surveyed primary school students reported a mean disengagement score in the mid-range ($M=10.03$, $SD=2.40$), with 26.3% of students reporting low disengagement, 32.0% reporting mid-range levels of disengagement, and 41.8% reporting high disengagement.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN DISENGAGEMENT

The proportion of male, female, and gender diverse students reporting different levels of disengagement in 2024 is illustrated in Figure 24. 40.7% of males and 42.2% of females reported high disengagement, with the proportion of males slightly but significantly lower than that of females. Half (50.2%) of gender diverse students reported high disengagement, which was a significantly higher proportion than that of males and females.

Regarding mean scores, students of all gender categories reported mid-range disengagement, though males ($M=9.96$, $SD=2.33$) reported slightly but significantly lower mean disengagement than females ($M=10.05$, $SD=2.46$). Gender diverse students ($M=10.58$, $SD=2.47$) reported a significantly higher mean disengagement score than males and females.

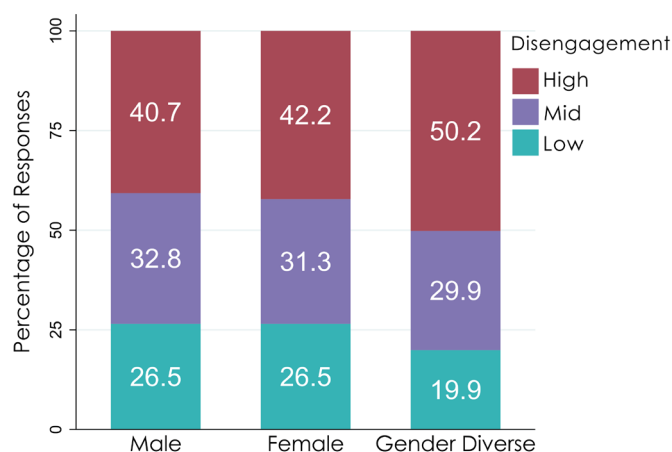


Figure 24. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse primary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of disengagement in 2024.

SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCES IN DISENGAGEMENT

The proportion of students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting different levels of disengagement is illustrated in Figure 25. Around 4 in 10 students in each SES category reported high disengagement, although the proportion of students living in high SES areas (40.0%) was slightly but significantly lower than that of students living in mid (42.1%) and low (42.9%) SES areas, of whom a similar proportion reported high disengagement.

Mean scores were in the mid-range for all three SES categories (low SES: $M=10.11$, $SD=2.42$; mid SES: $M=10.05$, $SD=2.42$; high SES: $M=9.91$, $SD=2.36$), however, mean scores differed slightly but significantly between categories. Students living in low SES areas reported the highest disengagement on average, and students living in high SES areas reported the lowest.

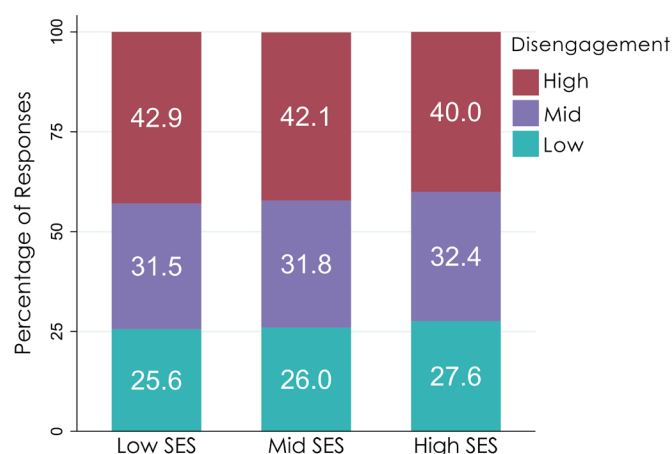


Figure 25. Proportion of students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting low, mid, and high levels of disengagement in 2024.

POSITIVE LEARNERS MINDSET

As an indication of student learning readiness, the positive learners mindset reports the combination of anxiety and disengagement symptoms to create a unique indicator of a student's readiness to learn in the classroom.

Readiness to learn was represented by low anxiety and low disengagement, borderline students as those with mid-range reports of anxiety, disengagement, or both, and students with an 'at risk' learners mindset as those reporting high levels of anxiety, disengagement, or both.

A graphical representation of positive learners mindset in 2024 is shown in Figure 26. 17.9% of primary school students reported readiness to learn (shaded in teal) according to their anxiety and disengagement scores. 32.1% of students were in the borderline range (shaded in purple). **Half of students (50.2%) had an 'at risk' learners mindset (shaded in red), with around 1 in 8 students (12.0%) reporting high anxiety and high disengagement.**

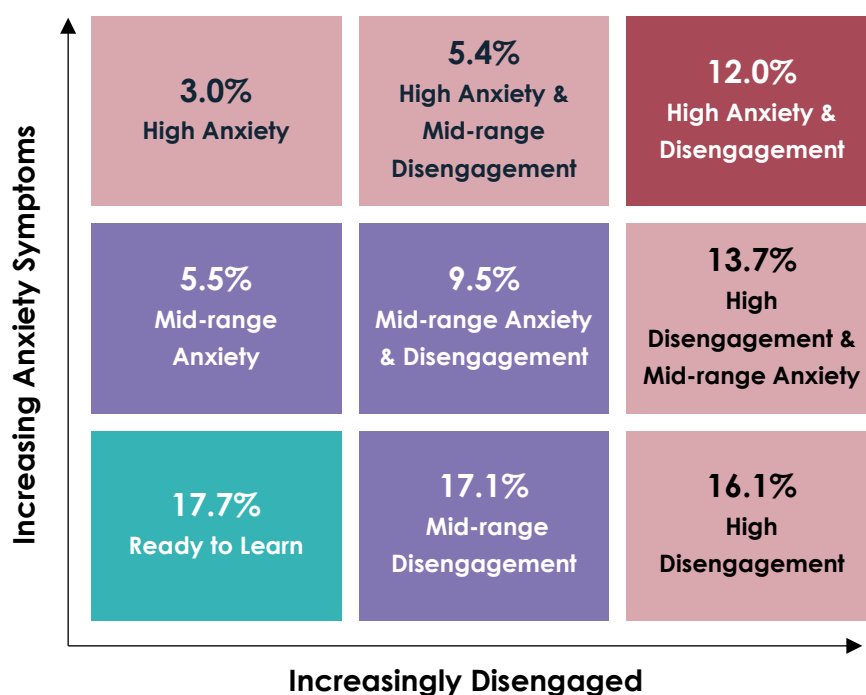


Figure 26. A graphical representation of positive learners mindset during 2024, comprised of combinations of anxiety and disengagement.

POSITIVE LEARNING ENGAGEMENT

Feeling engaged with learning is likely to influence school performance, student self-esteem, and respect for themselves and others, and have a positive impact on building resilience. Primary school students reported the frequency with which they experienced different aspects of learning engagement, and the results for 2024 are displayed in Figure 27 below.

All primary students were asked about each engagement activity, with the exception that only students in upper primary (grades 5-6) were asked if they enjoy learning new things at school.

When asked about activities that indicate engagement, the majority of students reported high levels (often/always) of engagement for most measures: trying hard at school (90%), caring about their school (84%), having fun at school (76%), enjoyment of learning (73%), and being given useful jobs at school (63%). Around half (52%) of the students reported often or always reading for fun, although 19% reported rarely reading for fun.

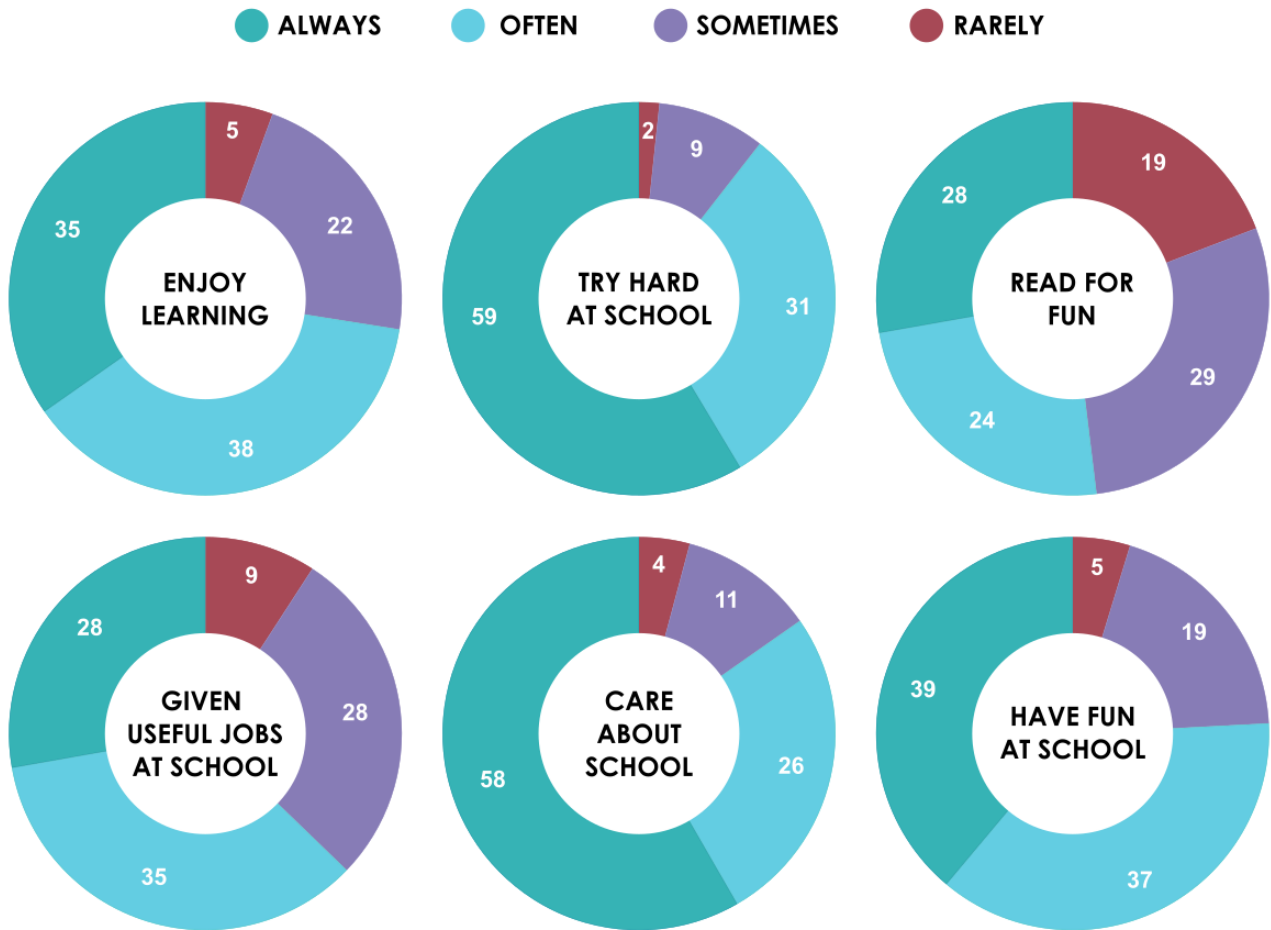


Figure 27. Primary school student percentage of responses for each aspect of learning engagement in 2024.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

The frequency with which primary students experienced the different aspects of learning engagement is reported separately for males, females, and gender diverse students in Table 2 below. A significantly smaller proportion of female than male and gender diverse students reported rarely or never enjoying learning, trying hard at school, being given useful jobs at school, caring about school, and having fun at school. A significantly greater proportion of gender diverse students than males and females reported rarely or never experiencing these aspects of engagement.

Similar proportions of male (24.0%) and gender diverse (25.1%) students reported rarely or never reading for fun, and a significantly smaller proportion of female (13.9%) students reported this. However, similar proportions of female (31.7%) and gender diverse (30.0%) students reported *always* reading for fun, both of which were significantly greater than the proportion of male students (23.8%) reporting this.

Table 2. Primary school students' percentage of responses for each aspect of learning engagement in 2024 by gender.

Learning Engagement	Male n=19,667	Female n=19,571	Gender Diverse n=1,185
Enjoy Learning			
Always	33.7%	36.0%	27.3%
Often	37.1%	39.0%	30.5%
Sometimes	22.9%	21.0%	25.5%
Rarely	6.3%	4.0%	16.6%
Try hard at school			
Always	52.4%	65.7%	47.7%
Often	34.8%	26.9%	32.4%
Sometimes	10.7%	6.4%	13.1%
Rarely	2.2%	0.9%	6.8%
Read for fun			
Always	23.8%	31.7%	30.0%
Often	22.7%	26.1%	19.9%
Sometimes	29.4%	28.4%	25.1%
Rarely	24.0%	13.9%	25.1%
Given useful jobs at school			
Always	26.6%	29.2%	20.5%
Often	33.8%	37.0%	29.9%
Sometimes	28.9%	26.7%	29.9%
Rarely	10.7%	7.1%	19.7%
Care about school			
Always	52.2%	65.5%	46.6%
Often	29.0%	23.8%	25.1%
Sometimes	13.2%	8.5%	16.7%
Rarely	5.5%	2.2%	11.7%
Have fun at School			
Always	38.9%	39.5%	31.4%
Often	35.9%	38.1%	31.3%
Sometimes	19.4%	19.0%	24.2%
Rarely	5.7%	3.4%	13.2%

CONNECTION TO NATURE

Feeling connected to nature has been associated with better individual wellbeing, mental health, and happiness, as well as positive environmental behaviour. A slightly modified version of the Illustrated Inclusion of Nature of Self Scale⁴ was included in the Survey. The Scale is a graphic measure depicting 5 different levels of a person's connection to nature (see Figure 28). Students selected the image that best represented them, and responses of "A/B", "C", and "D/E" were categorised as having a low, mid, or high connection to nature, respectively. Responses were also converted to numeric scores (i.e., A=1; E=5; etc.) for mean score comparisons between groups.

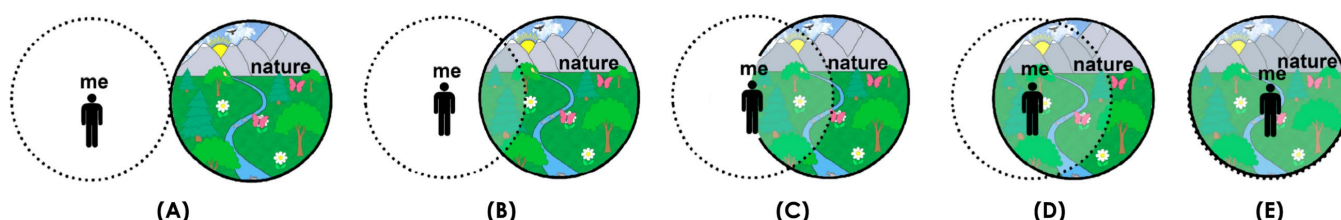


Figure 28. Modified Illustrated Inclusion of Nature in Self used to measure students' perceived connection to nature.

In 2024, primary school students mean connection to nature scores were within the mid-range ($M=3.64$, $SD=1.11$), with 15.2% of students reporting a low connection, 25.2% reporting mid-range levels of connection, and 59.6% reporting a high connection to nature.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN CONNECTION TO NATURE

The proportion of male, female, and gender diverse students reporting low, mid, and high connection to nature in 2024 is illustrated in Figure 29. The majority of students in all gender categories reported a high connection to nature, though a significantly higher proportion of females (63.6%) compared to males (55.8%) and gender diverse (56.9%) students reported this. The proportion of male and gender diverse students reporting a high connection was similar.

12.5% of female, 17.4% of male, and 21.2% of gender diverse students reported a low connection to nature. The proportion of females reporting a low connection was significantly lower than that of males and gender diverse students, and the proportion of males reporting a low connection was also significantly lower than that of gender diverse students.

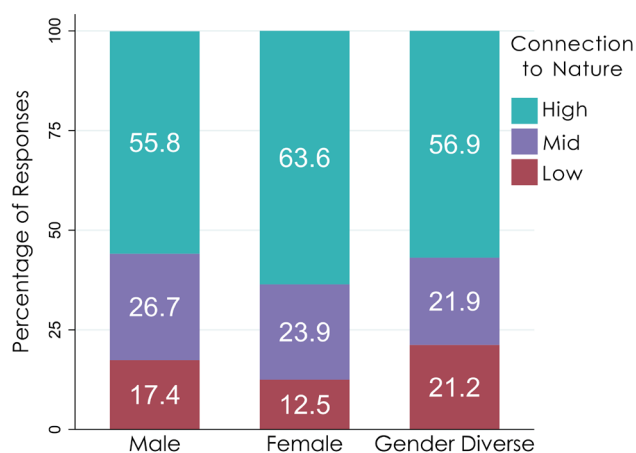


Figure 29. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse primary school students reporting low, mid, and high connection to nature in 2024.

In 2024, students of all gender categories reported a mid-range connection to nature on average, though females ($M=3.75$, $SD=1.06$) reported a significantly higher mean connection than males ($M=3.55$, $SD=1.14$) and gender diverse students ($M=3.54$, $SD=1.28$), the latter two reporting a similar connection to nature.

⁴ Kleespies, M. W., Braun, T., Dierkes, P. W., & Wenzel, V. (2021). Measuring connection to nature—a illustrated extension of the inclusion of nature in self scale. *Sustainability*, 13(4), 1761.

SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCES IN CONNECTION TO NATURE

The proportion of students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting low, mid, and high connection to nature is illustrated in Figure 30. The majority of students in all three SES categories reported a high connection to nature, with no significant differences between students living in low (60.2%), mid (59.9%), or high (59.5%) SES areas.

A slightly but significantly greater proportion of students living in low SES areas (16.6%) reported a low connection than those living in mid SES (15.3%) and high SES (13.5%) areas. A slightly but significantly greater proportion of students in mid SES areas also reported a low connection to nature relative to those living in high SES areas.

Mean connection to nature scores did not vary by SES, with students living in all three SES category areas reporting the same mean score (low SES: $M=3.65$, $SD=1.17$, mid SES: $M=3.65$, $SD=1.11$, high SES: $M=3.65$, $SD=1.04$), indicating mid-range levels of connection to nature on average.

STUDENT SCHOOL GRADE DIFFERENCES IN CONNECTION TO NATURE

The proportion of middle (grades 3-4) and upper primary (grades 5-6) students reporting low, mid, and high connection to nature in 2024 is illustrated in Figure 31. 64.9% of middle primary students reported a high connection to nature – significantly higher than that for upper primary (54.8%).

14.5% of middle primary students reported a low connection to nature, which was a slightly but significantly lower proportion than that for upper primary students (15.8%).

Regarding mean scores, students in middle and upper primary school reported a mid-range connection to nature, though middle primary students ($M=3.77$, $SD=1.16$) reported significantly higher connection than upper primary students ($M=3.53$, $SD=1.04$) on average.

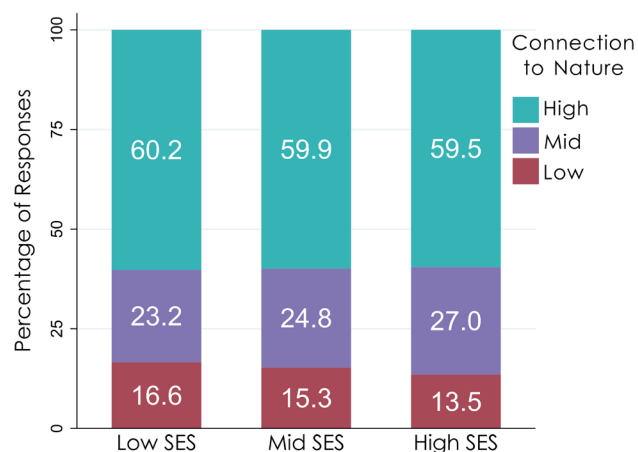


Figure 30. Proportion of primary students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting low, mid, and high connection to nature in 2024.

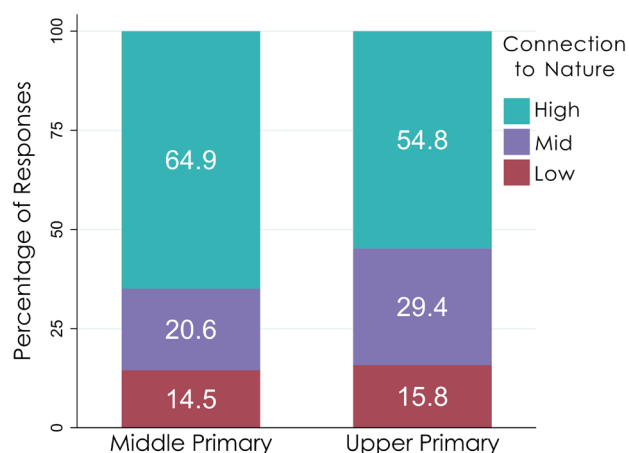


Figure 31. Proportion of students in middle (grades 3-4) and upper (grades 5-6) primary reporting low, mid, and high connection to nature in 2024.

HEALTHY BEHAVIOUR

The following are descriptive analyses based on single items from the 2024 survey relating to key physical protective factors of wellbeing.

HEALTHY EATING

The proportion of primary school students who reported that they eat healthy food is shown in Figure 32. 31.7% of students reported always eating healthy food, and 47.7% reported often eating healthy (combined often/always response = 79.4%). 20.6% reported healthy eating only a minority of the time (sometimes: 18.1%, rarely: 2.5%).

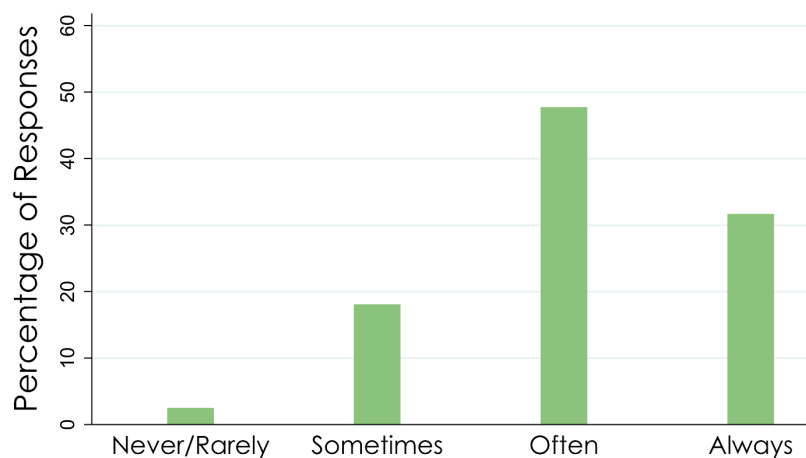


Figure 32. Percentage of primary school student responses relating to frequency of eating healthy food in 2024.

ADEQUATE SLEEP

The proportion of primary school students who reported that they sleep at least 8 hours most nights is shown in Figure 33. 39.0% of students reported always getting adequate sleep, and 30.0% reported adequate sleep often (combined often/always response = 69.0%). 31.1% of students reported adequate sleep only a minority of the time (sometimes: 21.9%, rarely: 9.2%).

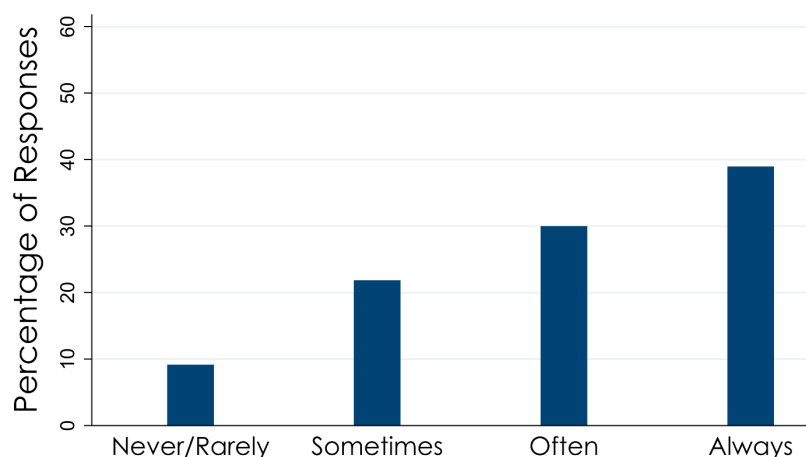


Figure 33. Percentage of primary school student responses relating to frequency of sleeping at least 8 hours most nights in 2024.

PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

The proportion of primary school students who reported that they are physically active for at least one hour each day is shown in Figure 34. The majority of students (59.5%) reported always being physically active and nearly a quarter (24.3% reported being physically active often (combined often/always response = 83.8%). 16.3% of students reported being physically active only a minority of the time (sometimes: 12.8%, rarely: 3.5%).

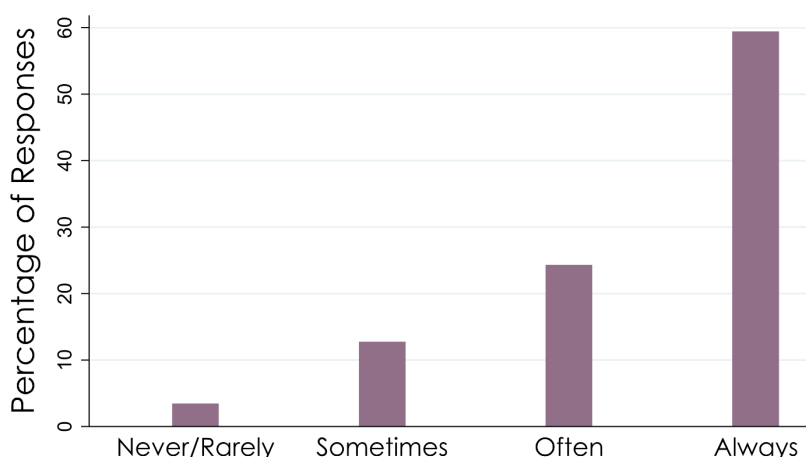


Figure 34. Percentage of primary school student responses relating to frequency of being physically active for at least 1 hour/day in 2024.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The following are descriptive analyses based on single items from the 2024 survey relating to aspects of primary school students' social environment, including social support, social behaviour, experiences of being bullied, and sense of safety. These aspects of students' social environment are essential for a sense of protection and resilience building and are important predictors of wellbeing.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

PERCEIVED FAMILY SUPPORT

The frequency with which primary school students reported feeling loved and supported by family (green), and having a parent who encourages them (blue) and listens to them (purple) is illustrated in Figure 35. Results suggest that the majority of students felt loved and supported most of the time (always: 69.5%, often: 20.7%, combined often/always = 90.2%). 9.9% of students felt loved and supported by family only a minority of the time (sometimes: 8.5%, rarely: 1.4%).

Similarly, the majority of students reported having a parent who encourages them to do well most of the time (always: 71.7%, often: 18.7%, combined often/always = 90.4%). 9.6% of students reported having a parent who encourages them only a minority of the time (sometimes: 7.6%, rarely: 2.0%).

A little over half (53.9%) of the students reported always having a parent who listens, and 28.9% reported having a parent who listens often (combined often/always response = 82.8%). 17.2% of students reported having a parent who listens only a minority of the time (sometimes: 14.0%, rarely: 3.2%).

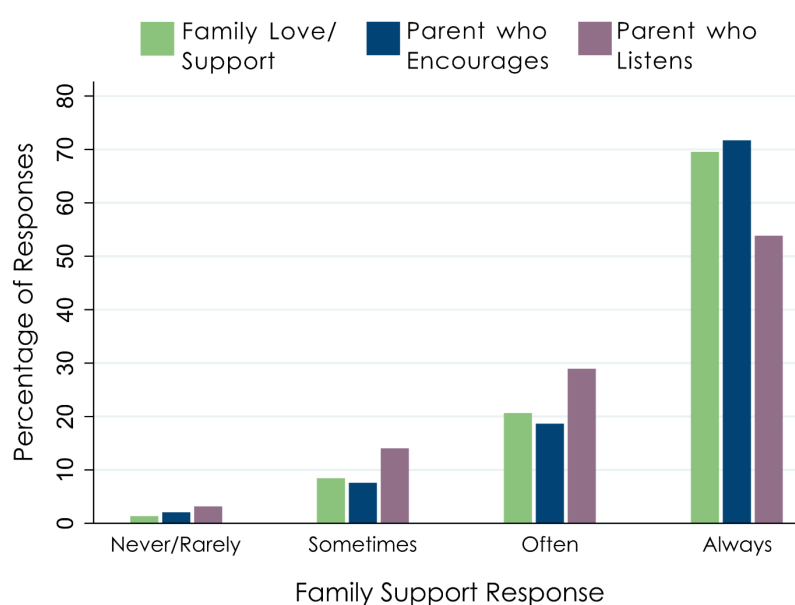


Figure 35. Percentage of primary school student responses relating to frequency of feeling loved and supported by family (green), having a parent who encourages them (blue) and listens to them (purple) in 2024.

PERCEIVED TEACHER SUPPORT

Primary school students reported the frequency with which they had a teacher at school who cares about them (Figure 36, green), and at least one teacher who encourages them (Figure 36, blue). 56.8% of students reported always having a teacher who cares, and nearly 28.2% reported often experiencing this (combined often/always response = 85.0%).

52.5% of students reported always having a teacher who encourages, and 28.5% often experienced this (combined often/always response = 81.0%).

15.0-19.1% of students reported teacher support only a minority of the time (**teacher who cares**: sometimes = 12.1%, rarely = 2.9%; **teacher who encourages**: sometimes = 14.4%, rarely = 4.7%).

PERCEIVED PEER SUPPORT

Students also reported their perceived peer support (Figure 37). Upper primary (grades 5-6) students reported their ability to keep friends, with 55.8% reporting always being good at keeping friends, and a further 30.2% often doing so (Figure 37, green, combined often/always response = 86.0%).

The majority of primary students reported always (76.2%) or often (14.3%) having at least one good friend at school (Figure 37, blue; combined often/always response = 90.5%).

35.8% of primary students reported always, and 37.6% often, getting along with people who are different from themselves (Figure 37, purple, combined often/always response = 73.4%).

These results suggest that the majority of primary school students experienced and engaged in these forms of peer support most of the time in 2024.

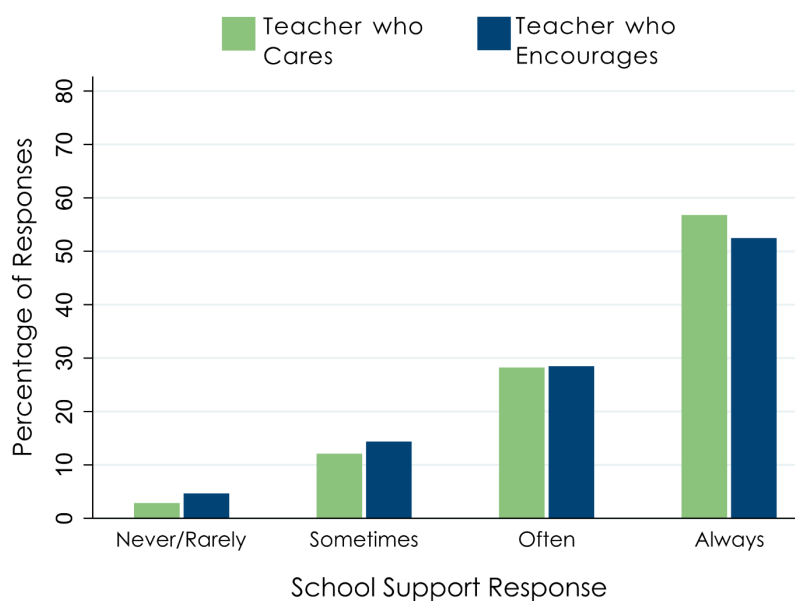


Figure 36. Percentage of primary school student responses for having a teacher who cares about (green) and who encourages (blue) them in 2024.

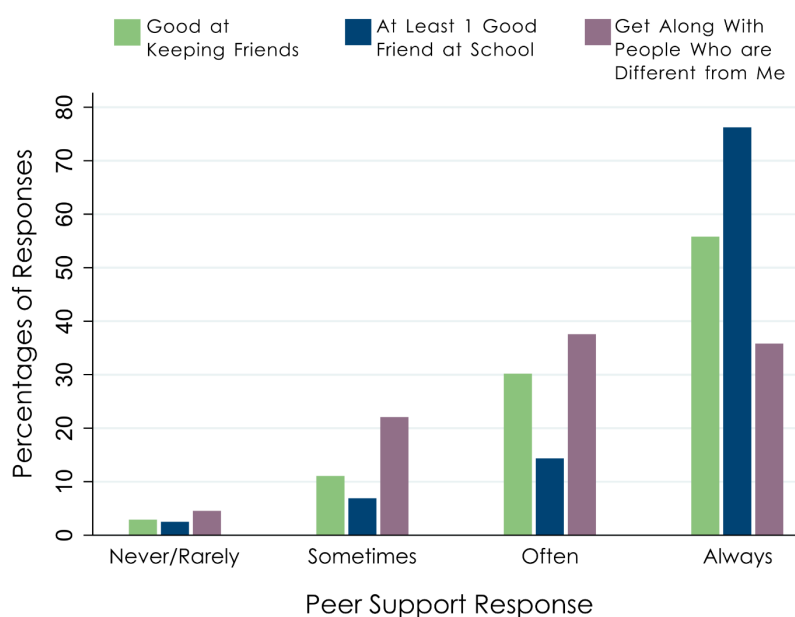


Figure 37. Percentage of primary school student responses for being good at keeping friends (green; upper primary only), having at least one good friend at school (blue), and getting along with those who are different from themselves (purple) in 2024.

RECIPROCAL TRUST

The proportion of primary school students who reported that they trust and are trusted by their friends is shown in Figure 38. 51.7% of the students reported always experiencing reciprocal trust, and 30.9% reported this often (combined often/always response = 82.6%). 17.4% of students reported reciprocal trust a minority of the time (sometimes: 14.2%, rarely: 3.2%).

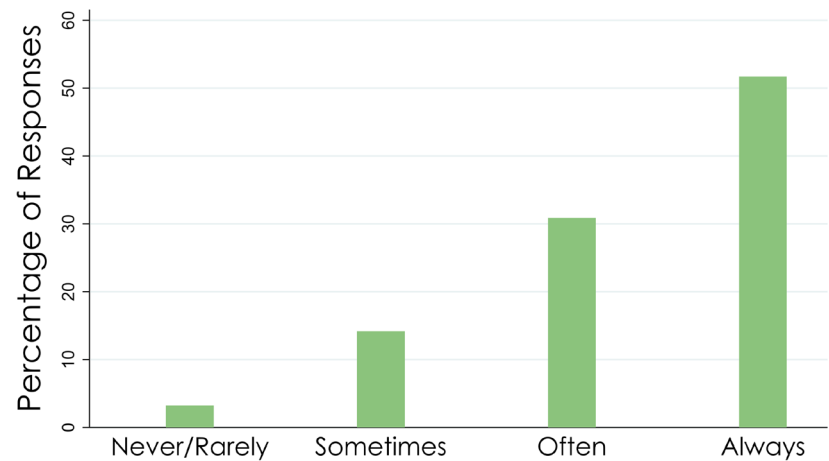


Figure 38. Percentage of primary school student responses relating to frequency of trusting and being trusted by friends in 2024.

FORGIVENESS

The proportion of primary school students who reported that they forgive others who are mean to them is shown in Figure 39. 27.3% of students always forgive others, and 33.9% do so often (combined often/always response = 61.2%). 38.9% of students forgive others only a minority of the time (sometimes: 27.8%, rarely: 11.1%).

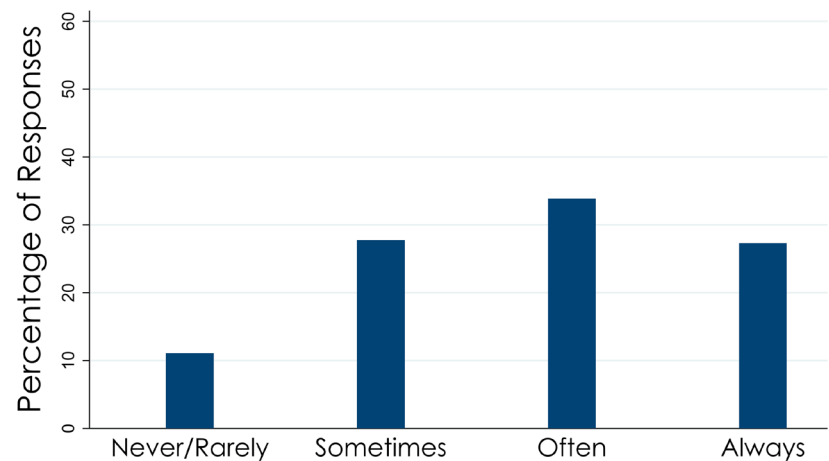


Figure 39. Percentage of primary school student responses relating to forgiving others who are mean to them in 2024.

HELPFULNESS

The proportion of primary school students who reported that they give their time to help others is shown in Figure 40. 32.8% of students are always helpful, and 41.8% are often so (combined often/always response = 74.6%). 25.4% of students reported giving their time to help others a minority of the time (sometimes: 22.4%, rarely: 3.0%).

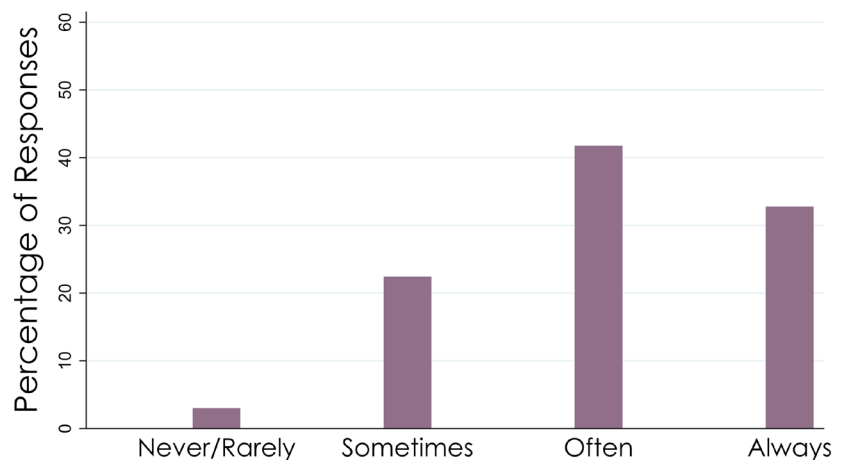


Figure 40. Percentage of primary school student responses relating to giving their time to help others in 2024.

EXPERIENCE OF BEING BULLIED

Primary school students' reports of being bullied in 2024 are illustrated in Figure 41.

The majority of primary students reported never being bullied at school (green, 64.5%), online (blue, 79.3%), or socially/emotionally such as by being deliberately left out or having rumours spread about them (purple, 62.6%).

However, a large proportion of students reported experiencing frequent bullying in 2024, from monthly to daily, at school (35.5%) and socially/emotionally (37.4%) (**at school:** monthly: 19.7%, weekly: 9.5%, daily: 6.3%; **socially/emotionally:** monthly: 22.5%, weekly: 9.4%, daily: 5.5%).

20.7% of students reported frequent bullying online (monthly: 11.5%, weekly: 5.4%, daily: 3.8%).

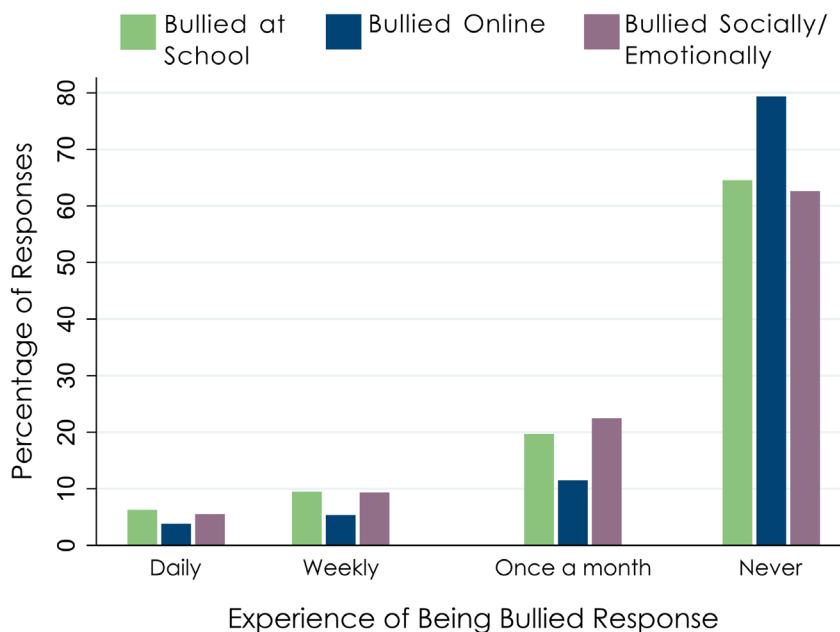


Figure 41. Percentage of primary school student responses for experience of being bullied at school (green), online (blue), and socially/emotionally (purple) in 2024.

SAFETY AT SCHOOL

The frequency with which primary school students reported feeling safe at school in 2024 is shown in Figure 42. 47.9% of the students reported always feeling safe in school, and 33.4% reported feeling safe often (combined often/always response = 81.3%). 18.7% reported feeling safe only a minority of the time (sometimes: 14.7%, never/rarely: 4.0%).

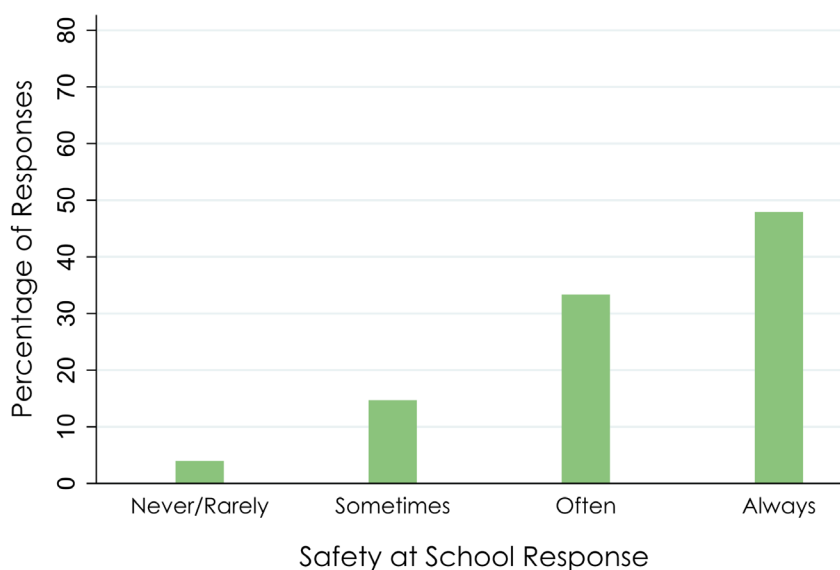


Figure 42. Percentage of primary school student responses relating to frequency of feeling safe at school in 2024.

SAFETY IN HOME ENVIRONMENT

The frequency with which primary school students reported feeling safe at home (blue) and in their neighbourhood (purple) is shown in Figure 43. Results suggest that the majority of students felt safe at home most of the time (always: 70.1%, often: 20.1%, combined often/always = 90.2%). 9.8% of students felt safe at home only a minority of the time (sometimes: 8.0%, never/rarely: 1.8%).

56.9% of students reported always feeling safe in their neighbourhood, and a further 28.2% reported often feeling safe (combined often/always response = 85.1%). 15.0% of students reported feeling safe only a minority of the time (sometimes: 12.0%, rarely: 3.0%).

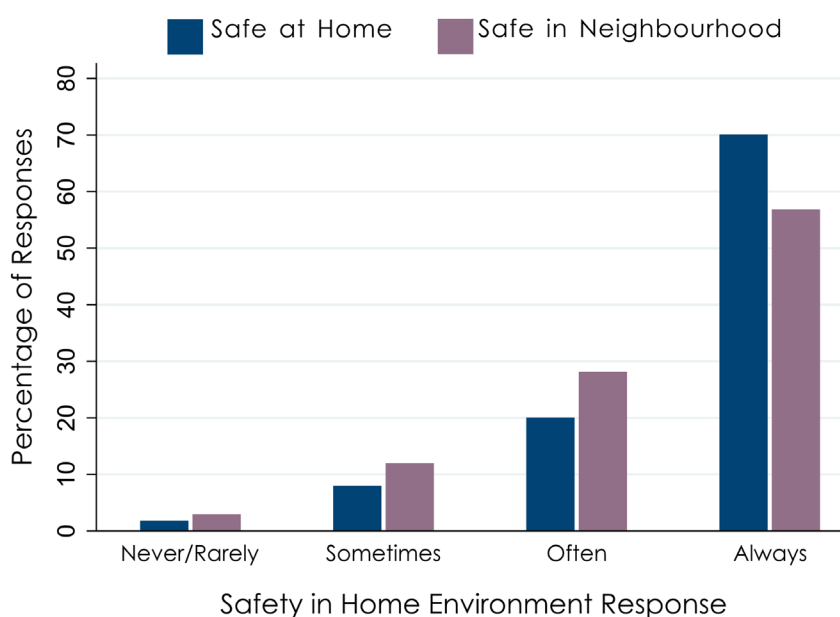


Figure 43. Percentage of primary school student responses relating to frequency of feeling safe at home (blue) and in their neighbourhood (purple) in 2024.

FIRST NATIONS SNAPSHOT



The following provides a snapshot of data from the 2024 survey relating specifically to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Of the primary students surveyed, 5.9% (n=4,580) identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. First Nations primary school students were on average 9.77 years old (SD=1.26), with 47.1% identifying as male, 47.8% as female, and 5.0% self-reporting as “Other” or preferring not to report their gender identity. Due to the small number (n=231) of students not identifying as male or female, all students are included in the overall results, and wellbeing comparisons are restricted to male and female students to avoid misrepresentations at a national level based on smaller sample sizes.

DEPRESSION

On average, depression scores in 2024 for all participating First Nations primary students were in the mid-range (M=4.04, SD=1.80), with 45.0% of students reporting low symptom levels, 33.7% reporting mid-range symptom levels, and 21.3% reporting high symptom levels.

MALE AND FEMALE DIFFERENCES IN DEPRESSION

The proportion of male and female students reporting low, mid, and high levels of depression is illustrated in Figure 44. Around 1 in 5 students reported high-range symptom levels, though a slightly but significantly smaller proportion of males (19.1%) than females (21.9%) reported this.

Males (M=3.94, SD=1.75) reported a slightly but significantly lower mean depression score than females (M=4.05, SD=1.79).

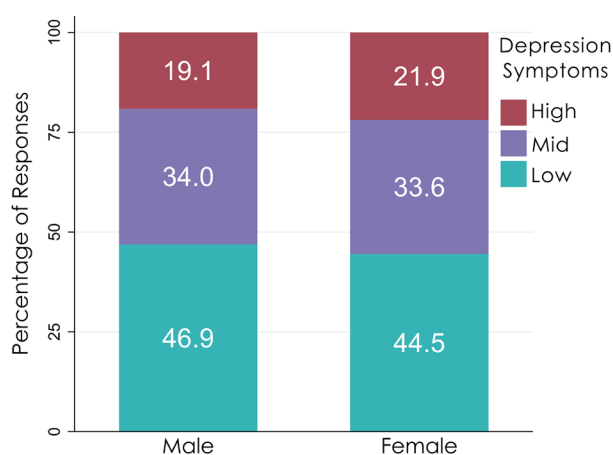


Figure 44. Proportion of male and female First Nations primary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of depression in 2024.

ANXIETY

On average, anxiety scores in 2024 for all participating First Nations primary school students were in the mid-range (M=4.24, SD=2.00), with 42.4% of students reporting low symptom levels, 30.0% reporting mid-range symptom levels, and 27.6% reporting high symptom levels.

MALE AND FEMALE DIFFERENCES IN ANXIETY

The proportion of male and female students reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety is illustrated in Figure 45. 30.3% of females and 23.0% of males reported high symptom levels, with the proportion of males significantly less than that of females.

Males (M=3.99, SD=1.92) also reported significantly lower mean anxiety scores than females (M=4.40, SD=2.03).

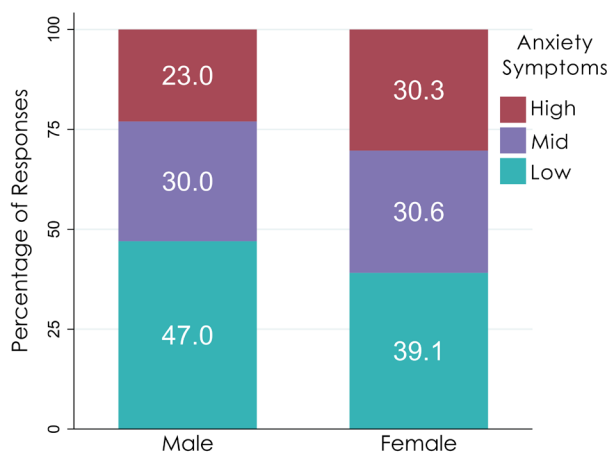


Figure 45. Proportion of male and female First Nations primary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety in 2024.

HOPEFULNESS

On average, hopefulness scores in 2024 for all participating First Nations primary school students were in the mid-range ($M=21.87$, $SD=6.97$), with around a third (33.4%) of students reporting low hopefulness, 44.1% reporting mid-range hopefulness, and 22.5% reporting high hopefulness.

MALE AND FEMALE DIFFERENCES IN HOPEFULNESS

The proportion of male and female students reporting low, mid, and high levels of hopefulness is illustrated in Figure 46. Around 1 in 3 students reported low hopefulness, though the proportion of males (30.6%) reporting this was slightly but significantly lower than that of females (34.4%).

Males ($M=22.33$, $SD=6.89$) reported slightly but significantly higher mean hopefulness scores than females ($M=21.71$, $SD=6.82$).

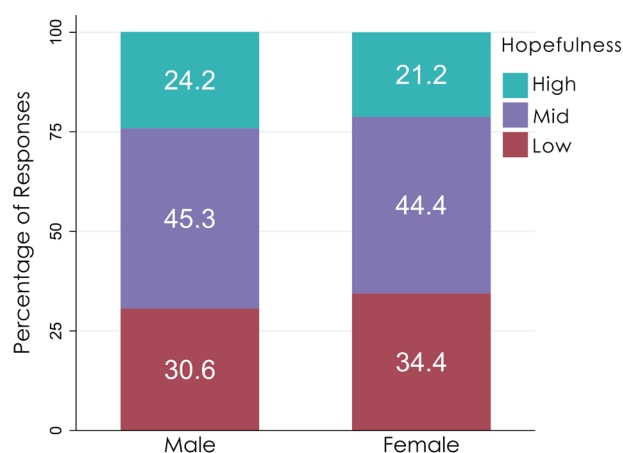


Figure 46. Proportion of male and female First Nations primary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of hopefulness in 2024.

LIFE SATISFACTION

On average, life satisfaction scores in 2024 for all participating First Nations primary school students were in the mid-range ($M=6.00$, $SD=1.79$), with 18.1% of students reporting they were struggling, 37.3% reporting they were doing OK, and 44.5% reporting they were thriving.

MALE AND FEMALE DIFFERENCES IN LIFE SATISFACTION

The proportion of male and female students reporting themselves to be struggling, doing OK, and thriving is illustrated in Figure 47. A similar proportion of males (16.4%) and females (17.8%) reported themselves to be struggling.

Males ($M=6.10$, $SD=1.73$) reported slightly but significantly higher mean life satisfaction scores than females ($M=5.99$, $SD=1.75$).



Figure 47. Proportion of male and female First Nations primary school students reporting themselves to be struggling, doing OK, and thriving in 2024.

DISENGAGEMENT

On average, disengagement scores in 2024 for all participating First Nations primary school students were in the mid-range ($M=10.32$, $SD=2.48$), with 23.3% of students reporting low disengagement, 30.5% reporting mid-range disengagement, and 46.2% reporting high disengagement.

MALE AND FEMALE DIFFERENCES IN DISENGAGEMENT

The proportion of male and female students reporting low, mid, and high levels of disengagement is illustrated in Figure 48. A similar proportion of males (44.7%) and females (46.7%) reported high disengagement.

Males ($M=10.21$, $SD=2.45$) reported slightly but significantly lower mean disengagement scores than females ($M=10.38$, $SD=2.49$).

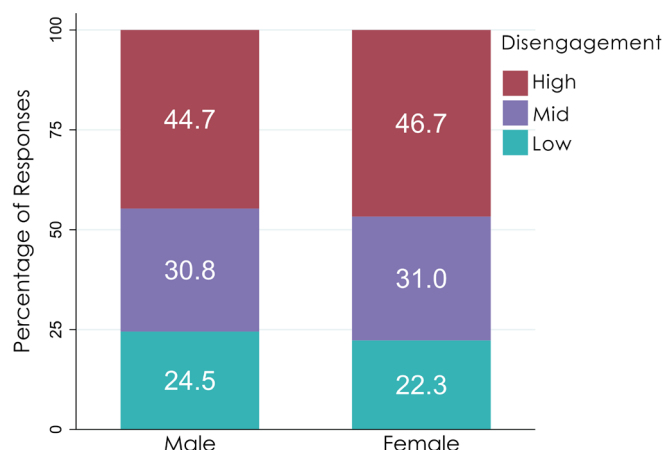


Figure 48. Proportion of male and female First Nations primary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of disengagement in 2024.

CONNECTION TO NATURE

On average, connection to nature scores in 2024 for all participating First Nations primary school students were in the mid-range ($M=3.67$, $SD=1.24$), with 17.9% of students reporting a low connection, 20.2% reporting a mid-range connection, and 62.0% reporting a high connection to nature.

MALE AND FEMALE DIFFERENCES IN CONNECTION TO NATURE

The proportion of male and female students reporting low, mid, and high connection to nature is illustrated in Figure 49. 19.7% of males and 14.8% of females reported a low connection to nature, with the proportion of males significantly greater than that of females.

Males ($M=3.59$, $SD=1.27$) also reported a significantly lower mean connection to nature score than females ($M=3.78$, $SD=1.18$).

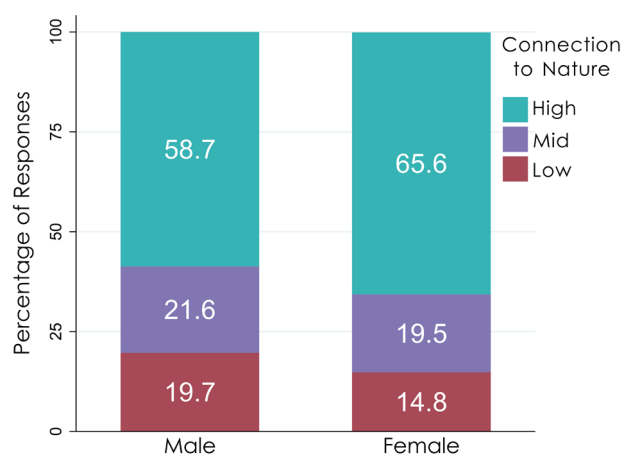


Figure 49. Proportion of male and female First Nations primary school students reporting low, mid, and high connection to nature in 2024.

REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

The following provides a snapshot of data from the 2024 survey relating to Australian regions classified according to geographical remoteness and population size as per the Modified Monash Model (MMM).⁵ We combined some MMM classifications to report the following regions: remote, rural towns, regional centres, and metropolitan (metro).

DEPRESSION

Depression symptom levels as reported by students living in different regions are illustrated in Figure 50. A similar proportion of students living in remote areas (16.8%), rural towns (16.7%), and regional centres (16.9%) reported high levels of depression symptoms. A significantly smaller proportion of students living in a metro region (13.5%) reported high symptom levels.

Although mean scores were in the low range for all regions, students living in metro areas ($M=3.61$, $SD=1.61$) reported significantly lower mean scores than students living in remote areas ($M=3.81$, $SD=1.74$), rural towns ($M=3.77$, $SD=1.71$), and regional centres ($M=3.80$, $SD=1.70$). Students in the latter three regions reported similar mean depression symptom scores.

ANXIETY

Anxiety symptom levels as reported by students living in different regions are illustrated in Figure 51. A similar proportion of students living in remote areas (20.4%), rural towns (22.0%), and regional centres (22.5%) reported high symptom levels. A significantly smaller proportion of students living in a metro region (18.9%), relative to those living in all other regional categories, reported high symptom levels.

Mean scores were in the low range for all regions (remote: $M=3.86$, $SD=1.85$; rural towns: $M=3.92$, $SD=1.91$; regional centre: $M=3.97$, $SD=1.90$; metro: $M=3.77$, $SD=1.83$). Metro mean scores were significantly lower than those in rural towns and regional centres. All other mean scores were statistically similar.

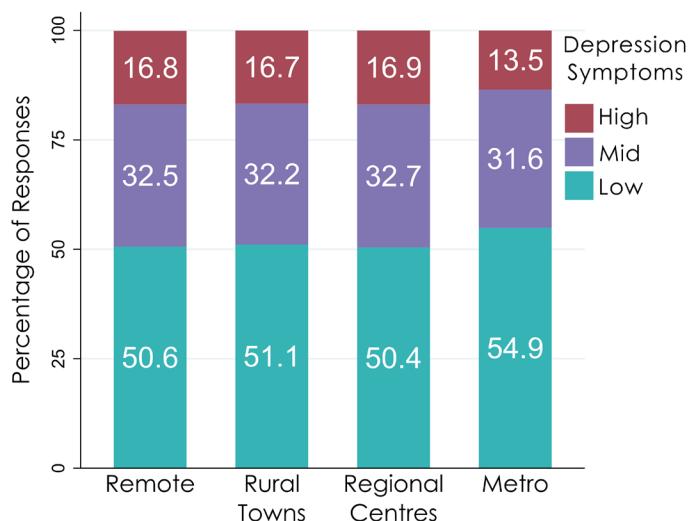


Figure 50. Proportion of primary school students living in remote, rural towns, regional centres, and metropolitan (metro) regions reporting low, mid, and high levels of depression in 2024.

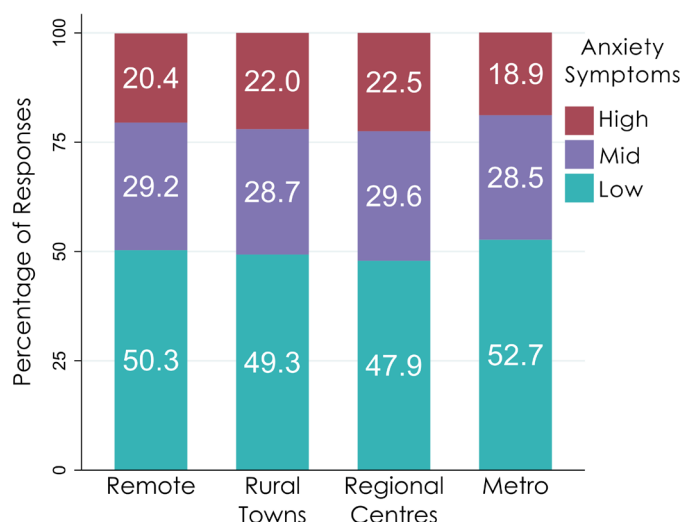


Figure 51. Proportion of primary school students living in remote, rural towns, regional centres, and metropolitan (metro) regions reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety in 2024.

⁵ Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care (2023, 12 December). *Modified Monash Model*. <https://www.health.gov.au/topics/rural-health-workforce/classifications/mmm>

HOPEFULNESS

Hopefulness levels as reported by students living in different regions are illustrated in Figure 52. A similar proportion of students living in remote areas (26.7%), rural towns (26.9%), and regional centres (27.1%) reported low hopefulness. A significantly smaller proportion of students living in metro regions (21.7%) reported low hopefulness.

Although mean scores were in the mid-range for all regions, students living in metro areas ($M=23.54$, $SD=6.19$) reported significantly higher mean scores than students living in remote areas ($M=22.84$, $SD=6.66$), rural towns ($M=22.80$, $SD=6.57$), and regional centres ($M=22.71$, $SD=6.42$). The mean scores for students living in the latter three regions were similar.

LIFE SATISFACTION

Life satisfaction as reported by students living in different regions is illustrated in Figure 53. A statistically similar proportion of students in remote (13.0%) and metro (12.5%) regions reported themselves to be struggling. Relative to those in metro regions, a significantly higher proportion of students living in rural towns (14.3%) and regional centres (15.0%) reported that they were struggling. The proportion of students who were struggling was similar between these latter two regions.

Mean scores suggested students were doing OK in each region (remote: $M=6.22$, $SD=1.60$; rural towns: $M=6.15$, $SD=1.59$; regional centres: $M=6.10$, $SD=1.58$; Metro: $M=6.17$, $SD=1.47$). Students living in regional centres reported slightly but significantly lower mean scores than those living in remote areas and metro areas. All other mean scores were statistically similar.

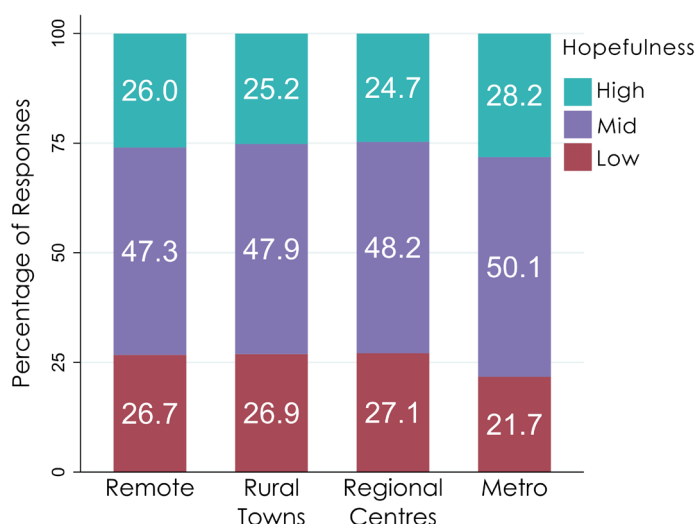


Figure 52. Proportion of primary school students living in remote, rural towns, regional centres, and metropolitan (metro) regions reporting low, mid, and high hopefulness in 2024.

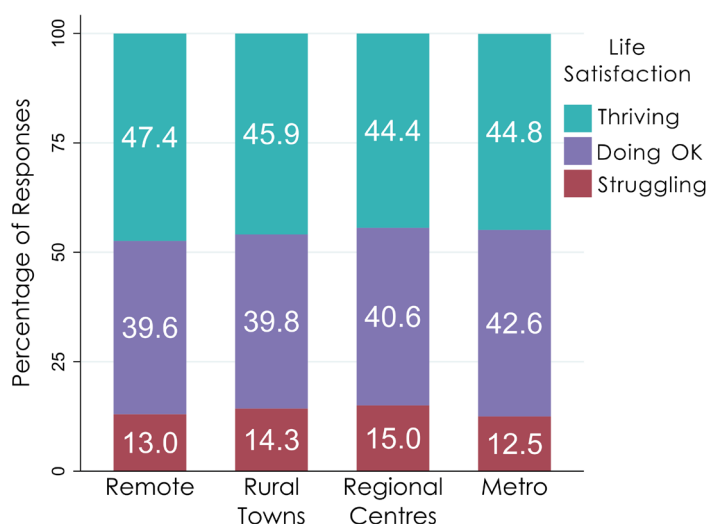


Figure 53. Proportion of primary school students living in remote, rural towns, regional centres, and metropolitan (metro) regions reporting themselves to be struggling, doing OK, and thriving in 2024.

DISENGAGEMENT

Disengagement levels as reported by students living in different regions is illustrated in Figure 54. Slightly more than 4 in 10 students in all regions reported high levels of disengagement, though the proportion of students in metro regions reporting this was significantly smaller than that of students in regional centres and in rural towns. The proportion of students reporting high disengagement was also significantly smaller among students in remote regions relative to those in regional centres (remote: 40.1%; rural towns: 42.0%; regional centres: 43.9%; metro: 40.9%).

Mean disengagement scores were in the mid-range for all regions, though mean scores for students living in remote ($M=9.93$, $SD=2.41$) and metro ($M=9.97$, $SD=2.39$) regions were significantly lower than those of students living in regional centres ($M=10.14$, $SD=2.42$). Mean scores for students living in metro regions were also significantly lower than those of students living in rural towns ($M=10.05$, $SD=2.41$).

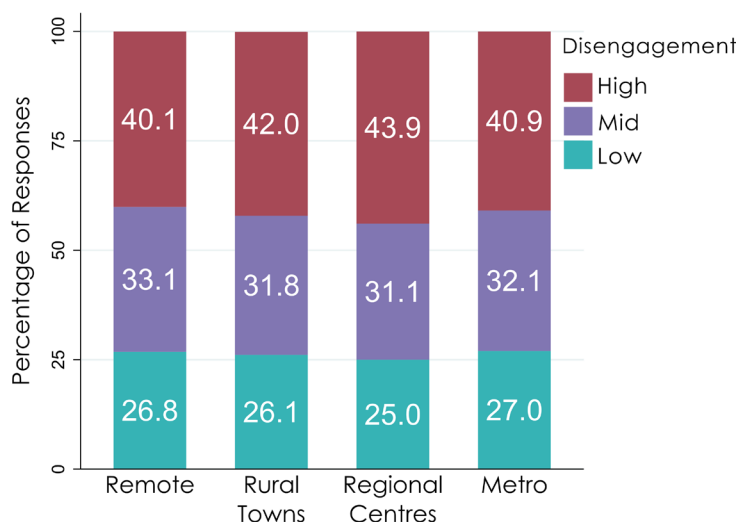


Figure 54. Proportion of primary school students living in remote, rural towns, regional centres, and metropolitan (metro) regions reporting low, mid, and high levels of disengagement in 2024.

CONNECTION TO NATURE

Connection to nature as reported by students living in different regions is illustrated in Figure 55. The proportion of students reporting a low connection was slightly but significantly different between regions. Students in remote areas (17.7%) represented the highest proportion of students with a low connection, followed by students in rural towns (15.6%), and then by students living in metro regions (14.6%). Students living in regional centres (13.5%) represented the lowest proportion of students reporting a low connection to nature.

The proportion of students living in metro regions (58.8%) reporting a high connection to nature was significantly *smaller* than that for students living in rural towns (61.7%) and regional centres (61.7%). The proportion of students reporting a high connection to nature was similar among students living in all non-metro regions.

Mean connection to nature scores were in the mid-range for all regions, though mean scores for students living in metro regions ($M=3.63$, $SD=1.07$) were significantly lower than those of students living in rural towns ($M=3.68$, $SD=1.15$) and regional centres ($M=3.72$, $SD=1.11$). Mean scores for students living in remote regions ($M=3.66$, $SD=1.22$) were statistically similar to all other regions.

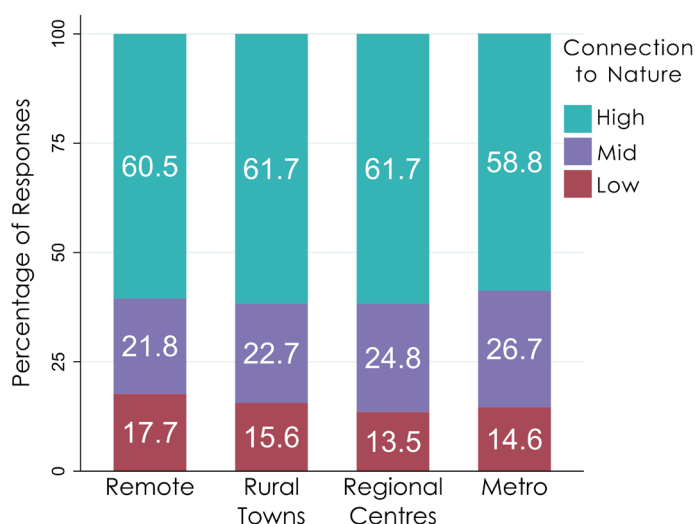


Figure 55. Proportion of primary school students living in remote, rural towns, regional centres, and metropolitan (metro) regions reporting low, mid, and high levels of connection to nature in 2024.

SECONDARY SCHOOL

STUDENT WELLBEING

KEY RESULTS

DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY SYMPTOMS

1 in 3 students were of healthy mind overall, and 1 in 3 students were at high risk of depression and/or anxiety. Depression and anxiety were highest for gender diverse students, then



females, with males having lowest symptoms.

ABILITY TO TALK TO OTHERS

Only 4 in 10 students reported frequently being able to talk about upsetting things. Gender diverse students reported lower ability than females and males, and females reported lower ability than males.



HOPEFULNESS

2 in 10 students reported high hopefulness, and 3 in 10 reported low hopefulness. Gender diverse students reported lower hopefulness than females and males, and females reported lower hopefulness than males.



LIFE SATISFACTION

Less than 3 in 10 students were thriving, and 2 in 10 were struggling. Gender diverse students reported significantly lower life satisfaction than females and males, and females reported slightly



lower life satisfaction than males.

READY TO LEARN

Students reported moderate disengagement, and just over half were at risk in their learning mindset (high anxiety and/or disengagement). However, most students reported



enjoying learning and having fun at school.

HEALTHY BEHAVIOUR

Around 8 in 10 students reported frequently eating healthy food and being physically active for at least 1 hour a day. Only 6 in 10 reported frequently sleeping at least 8 hours a night.



SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

8 to 9 in 10 students frequently felt loved and supported by family, had a parent who encouraged and listened to them, were good at keeping friends, and had at least one good friend. 6 to 7 in 10 students had a teacher who cared and encouraged them.



SENSE OF SAFETY

Close to 9 in 10 students frequently felt safe at home and in their neighbourhood. 7 in 10 frequently felt safe at school, though only 3 in 10 students *always* felt safe at school.



MENTAL WELLBEING

Students reported their depression and anxiety symptoms as an indication of mental wellbeing, with symptom severity categorised as low, mid, or high. Students also reported more positive measures of wellbeing: the ability to talk about things they find upsetting, hopefulness, and life satisfaction, the latter two of which were combined to form a measure of resilience.

DEPRESSION

On average, secondary school student depression scores in 2024 were in the low range ($M=3.80$, $SD=1.80$) with around half (52.0%) of students reporting low levels of symptoms, nearly a third (29.7%) reporting mid-range symptom levels, and 18.3% reporting high symptom levels.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN DEPRESSION

Depression symptoms as reported by male, female, and gender diverse students are illustrated in Figure 56. 13.2% of males, 21.7% of females, and 39.8% of gender diverse students reported high depression symptoms. Comparisons between genders were all statistically significant, with males representing the smallest proportion, and gender diverse students representing the greatest proportion of students reporting high symptoms.

The mean score for males was in the low range ($M=3.49$, $SD=1.67$), and was significantly lower than the mid-range female (4.03 , $SD=1.83$) and gender diverse ($M=4.90$, $SD=2.13$) student mean scores. The mean score for females was also significantly lower than that of gender diverse students.

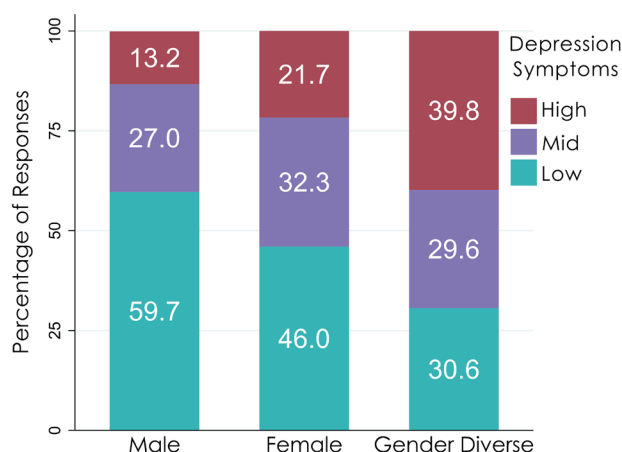


Figure 56. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse secondary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of depression in 2024.

SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCES IN DEPRESSION

Depression symptom levels as reported by students living in low, mid, and high SES areas are illustrated in Figure 57. 21.0% of students in a low SES area and 19.0% in a mid SES area reported high symptom levels, with the proportion among students in low SES areas being slightly but significantly greater than that of students in mid SES areas. 14.7% of students in a high SES area reported high symptom levels, which was significantly lower than that of students living in both low and mid SES areas.

Although mean scores were in the low range for all three SES categories, the mean depression score for students living in low SES areas ($M=3.96$, $SD=1.86$) was significantly higher than that of students living in mid ($M=3.83$, $SD=1.81$), and high ($M=3.62$, $SD=1.69$) SES areas. The mean score for students in mid SES areas was also significantly higher than that of students in a high SES area.

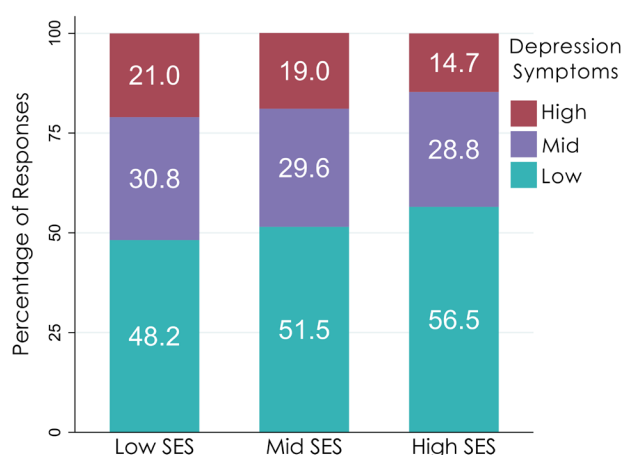


Figure 57. Proportion of students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting low, mid, and high levels of depression in 2024.

DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS OVER TIME

To provide an indication of depression symptom trajectories, the proportion of students scoring in the low, mid, and high ranges between 2022 and 2024 are reported below.

DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS OVER TIME FOR EACH GENDER

Across 2022 to 2024, mean secondary school student depression scores for males were in the low range (**male:** 2022: M=3.64, SD=1.71; 2023: M=3.60, SD=1.72; 2024: M=3.49, SD=1.67). Mean scores were in the mid-range for female and gender diverse students across the three years (**female:** 2022: M=4.25, SD=1.89; 2023: M=4.24, SD=1.88; 2024: M=4.03, SD=1.83; **gender diverse:** 2022: M=5.21, SD=2.07; 2023: M=5.16, SD=2.12; 2024: M=4.90, SD=2.13).

The proportion of students reporting low, mid, and high levels of depression symptoms from 2022 to 2024 is illustrated separately for each gender in Figure 58.

Among males, 13.2% to 15.3% reported high depression symptoms each year. The proportion of males with high symptom levels was similar in 2022 and 2023, but decreased significantly in 2024. The mean depression score decreased significantly each year.

Among females, 21.7% to 26.0% reported high depression symptoms each year. The proportion of females with high symptom levels, and the mean scores, were similar in 2022 and 2023, and decreased significantly in 2024.

Among gender diverse students, 39.8% to 45.8% reported high depression symptoms each year. The proportion of gender diverse students with high symptom levels, and the mean scores, were similar in 2022 and 2023 and decreased significantly in 2024.

Regarding gender differences, the proportion of students reporting high symptom levels, and the mean scores, were significantly higher among females compared to males across the three years. A greater proportion of gender diverse students reported high symptom levels, and greater mean scores, compared to both males and females each year.

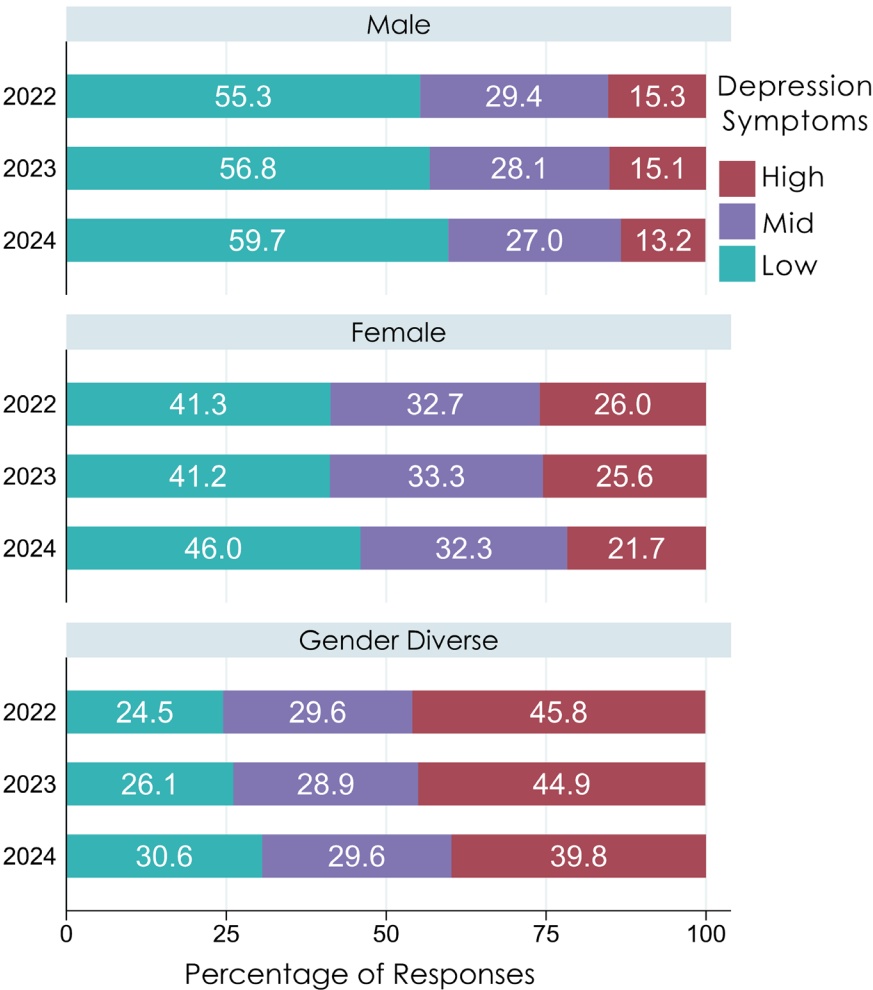


Figure 58. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse secondary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of depression in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

DEPRESSION SYMPTOMS OVER TIME FOR LOWER, MIDDLE, AND UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Across 2022 to 2024, mean secondary school student depression scores for **lower secondary** (grades 7-8) were in the low range (2022: M=3.79, SD=1.78; 2023: M=3.80, SD=1.79; 2024: M=3.66, SD=1.72). **Middle secondary** (grades 9-10) student mean scores were in the mid-range for 2022-2023, and in the low range for 2024 (2022: M=4.11, SD=1.89; 2023: M=4.03, SD=1.88; 2024: M=3.88, SD=1.84). Mean scores for **upper secondary** (grades 11-12) students were in the mid-range for all three years (2022: M=4.31, SD=1.92; 2023: M=4.24, SD=1.93; 2024: M=4.06, SD=1.89)

The proportion of students reporting low, mid, and high levels of depression symptoms in 2022 to 2024 is illustrated separately for lower to upper secondary school students in Figure 59.

Among lower secondary students, a similar proportion of students reported high depression symptom levels in 2022 (18.0%) and 2023 (18.3%). In 2024, a significantly smaller proportion of students (15.4%) reported high depression symptoms. Mean depression scores were also similar in 2022 and 2023, but decreased significantly in 2024 relative to both previous years.

Among middle secondary students, 19.8% to 23.8% reported high depression symptoms each year, with this proportion decreasing significantly each year. Mean depression scores also decreased significantly each year.

Among upper secondary students, 23.1% to 27.4% reported high depression symptoms each year. The proportion of upper secondary students with high symptom levels and the mean scores decreased significantly each year.

Regarding grade differences, the proportion of students with high symptom levels, and the mean depression scores, increased significantly across the grade groupings. Each year these measures were highest in upper secondary students, followed by middle secondary, then lower secondary students.

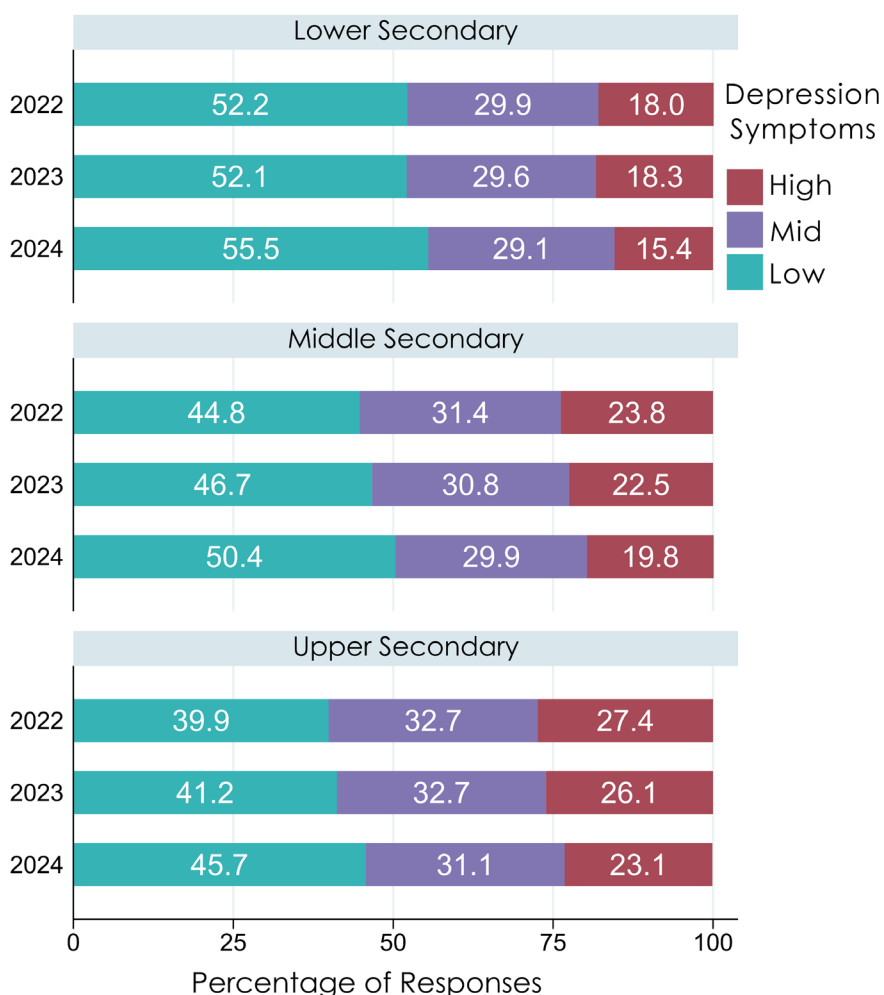


Figure 59. Proportion of lower (grades 7-8), middle (grades 9-10) and upper (grades 11-12) secondary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of depression symptoms in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

ANXIETY

On average, overall secondary school student anxiety scores in 2024 were in the mid-range ($M=4.24$, $SD=2.03$) with 42.5% of students reporting low symptom levels, 30.0% of students reporting mid-range symptom levels, and 27.5% reporting high symptom levels.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ANXIETY

The proportion of male, female, and gender diverse students reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety symptoms in 2024 is illustrated in Figure 60. 17.5% of males, 35.8% of females, and 48.7% of gender diverse students reported high anxiety symptom levels in 2024. Comparisons between genders were all statistically significant, with males representing the smallest, and gender diverse students representing the greatest proportion of students experiencing high symptom levels.

The mean score for males ($M=3.65$, $SD=1.83$) was in the low range and was significantly lower than the mean scores for female ($M=4.73$, $SD=2.03$) and gender diverse ($M=5.29$, $SD=2.24$) students, which were both in the mid-range. The mean score for females was also significantly lower than that for gender diverse students.

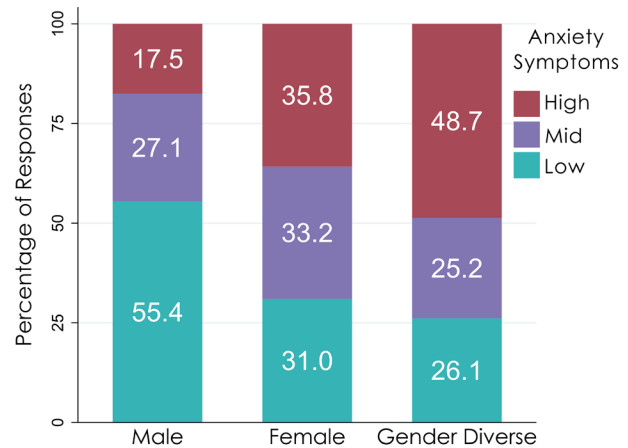


Figure 60. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse secondary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety symptoms in 2024.

SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCES IN ANXIETY

Anxiety symptom levels as reported by students living in low, mid, and high SES areas are illustrated in Figure 61. 29.7% of students living in low and 28.3% in mid SES areas reported high symptom levels, with the proportion among students living in a low SES area being slightly but significantly greater than that of students in a mid SES area. 24.5% of students living in high SES areas reported high symptom levels, which was a significantly smaller proportion than that of students living in low and mid SES areas.

Mean scores were in the mid-range for all three SES categories, though students living in low SES areas ($M=4.32$, $SD=2.07$) reported higher mean anxiety scores than students living in mid SES ($M=4.26$, $SD=2.04$), and high SES ($M=4.12$, $SD=1.95$) areas. Students in mid SES areas also reported significantly higher mean anxiety symptom scores than those living in high SES areas.

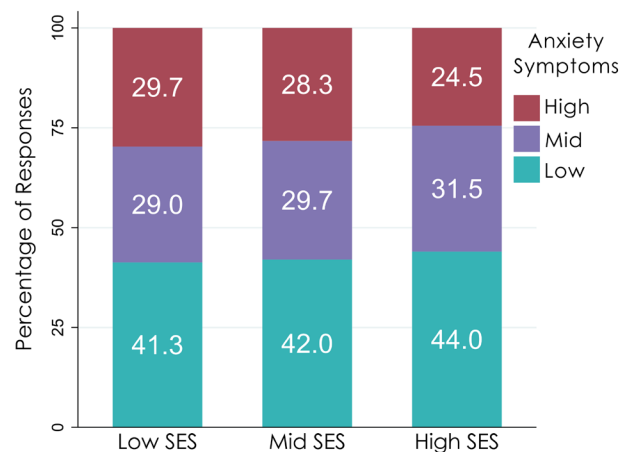


Figure 61. Proportion of secondary school students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety symptoms in 2024.

ANXIETY SYMPTOMS OVER TIME

To provide an indication of anxiety symptom trajectories, the proportion of students scoring in the low, mid, and high ranges between 2022 and 2024 are reported below.

ANXIETY SYMPTOMS OVER TIME FOR EACH GENDER

Across 2022 to 2024, mean secondary school student anxiety scores for **males** were in the low range (2022: M=3.82, SD=1.89; 2023: M=3.76, SD=1.88; 2024: M=3.65, SD=1.83) Mean scores were in the mid-range for female and gender diverse students across the three years (**female**: 2022: M=5.01, SD=2.05; 2023: M=4.96, SD=2.04; 2024: M=4.73, SD=2.03; **gender diverse**: 2022: M=5.60, SD=2.18; 2023: M=5.55, SD=2.20; 2024: M=5.29, SD=2.24).

The proportion of students reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety symptoms from 2022 to 2024 is illustrated for each gender in Figure 62.

Among male students, 17.5% to 20.2% reported high anxiety symptoms each year. The proportion of males with high symptom levels, and the mean anxiety scores, decreased significantly each year.

Among female students, 41.3% to 35.8% reported high anxiety symptoms each year. The proportion of females with high symptom levels, and the mean scores, decreased significantly each year.

Among gender diverse students, around half of the students (48.7% to 54.6%) reported high anxiety symptoms each year. The proportion of gender diverse students with high symptom levels, and the mean scores, were similar in 2022 and 2023 but decreased significantly in 2024.

Regarding gender differences, the proportion of students reporting high symptom levels, and the mean scores, were significantly higher among females than males across the three years. These values were also significantly higher among gender diverse students than among both males and females each year.

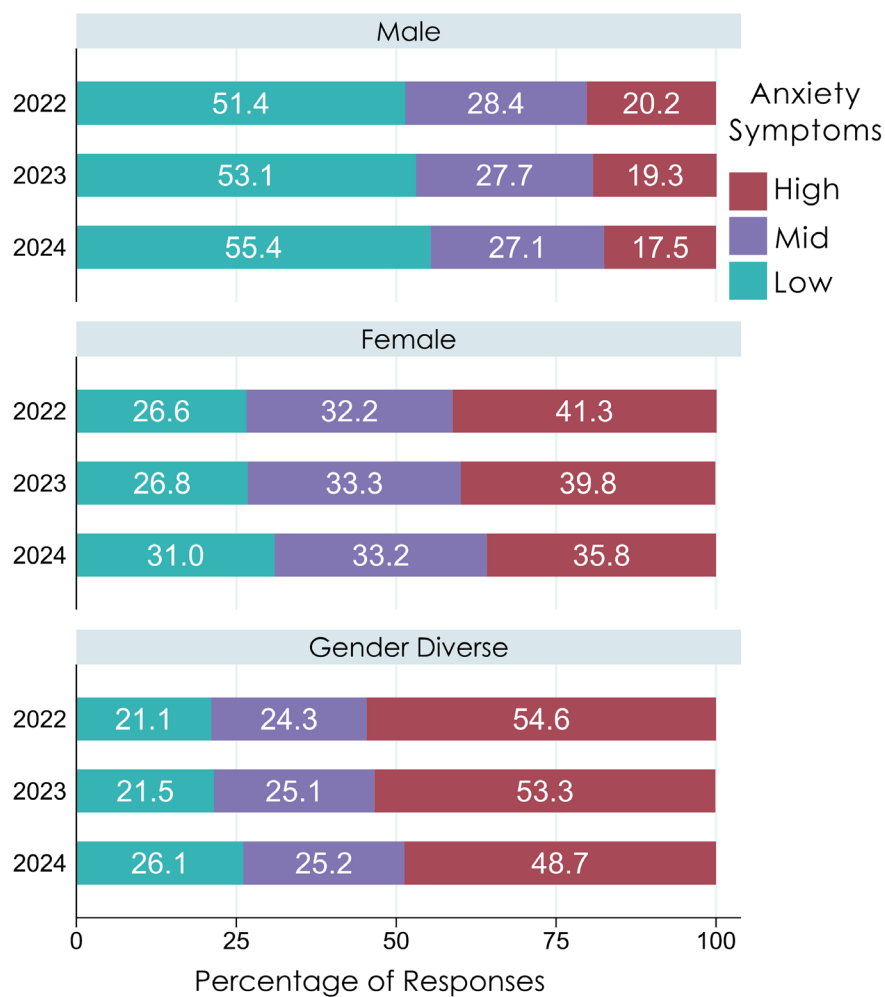


Figure 62. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse secondary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety symptoms in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

ANXIETY SYMPTOMS OVER TIME FOR LOWER, MIDDLE, AND UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Across 2022 to 2024, mean anxiety scores were in the mid-range for lower, (grades 7-8), middle (grades 9-10), and upper (grades 11-12) secondary school students (**lower secondary**: 2022: M=4.21, SD=2.02; 2023: M=4.19, SD=2.03; 2024: M=4.02, SD=1.97; **middle secondary**: 2022: M=4.60, SD=2.12; 2023: M=4.48, SD=2.08; 2024: M=4.33, SD=2.05; **upper secondary**: 2022: M=4.89, SD=2.08; 2023: M=4.81, SD=2.08; 2024: M=4.65, SD=2.06).

The proportion of students reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety symptoms in 2022 to 2024 is illustrated for lower to upper secondary school students in Figure 63.

Among lower secondary students, 23.7% to 27.1% reported high anxiety symptoms each year. The proportion of lower secondary students reporting high symptom levels, and the mean scores, were statistically similar in 2022 and 2023 and decreased significantly in 2024.

Among middle secondary students, 29.1% to 34.2% reported high anxiety symptoms each year, with this proportion decreasing significantly each year. Mean anxiety scores also decreased significantly each year.

Among upper secondary students, 34.7% to 39.2% reported

high anxiety symptoms each year. The proportion of upper secondary students with high symptom levels and the mean anxiety scores decreased significantly each year.

Regarding grade differences, the proportion of students with high symptom levels, and the mean anxiety scores, increased significantly across the grade groupings and were higher in middle relative to lower secondary, and in upper relative to middle and lower secondary students each year.

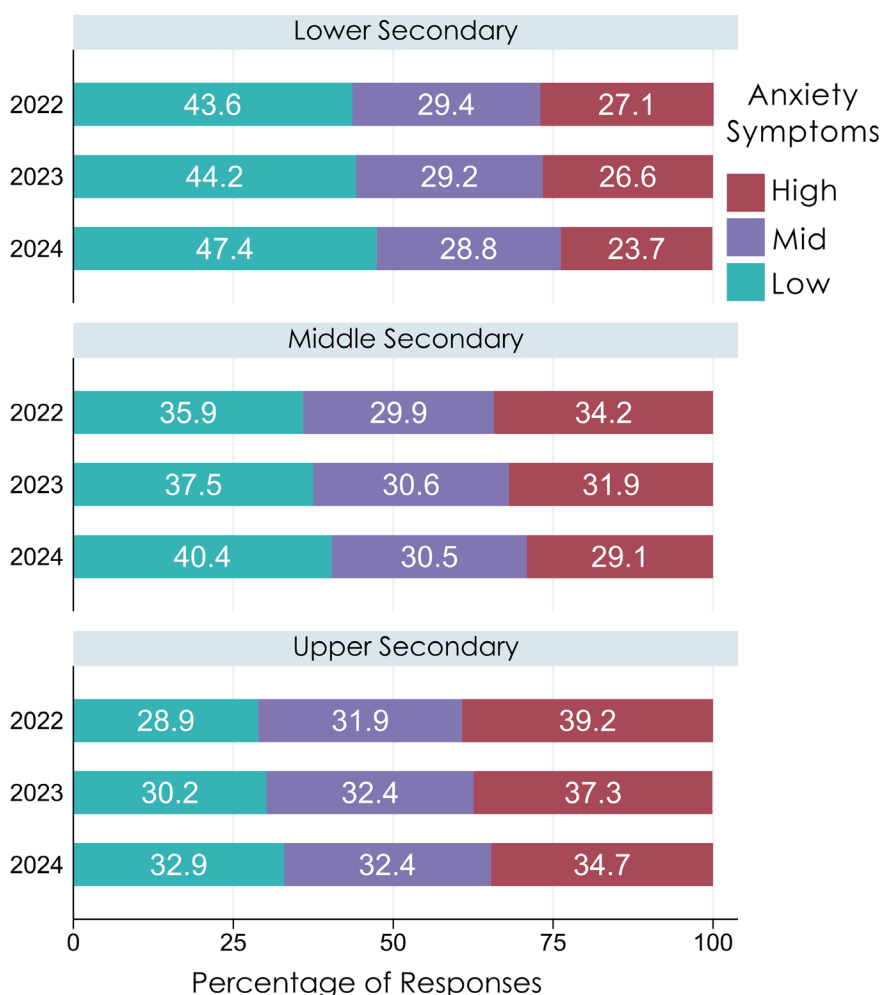


Figure 63. Proportion of lower (grades 7-8), middle (grades 9-10) and upper (grades 11-12) secondary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety symptoms in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

COMBINED DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

As an indication of the state of mental wellbeing, depression and anxiety categories were combined to represent the different levels of risk amongst secondary school students. Healthy students were represented as those reporting low depression and anxiety symptoms, borderline students as those with mid-range reports of depression, anxiety, or both, and students at high risk of mental wellbeing problems as those with high symptom levels of depression, anxiety, or both.

A graphical representation of student mental wellbeing in 2024 is shown in Figure 64. Around 1 in 3 (34.6%) secondary school students were of healthy mind (shaded in teal). 1 in 3 students (33.4%) were in the borderline range for mental wellbeing, with mid-range symptoms of anxiety and/or depression (shaded in purple). **Almost 1 in 3 students (31.9%) were in the high-risk categories for mental wellbeing (shaded in red), with 13.8% at high risk of both anxiety and depression.**

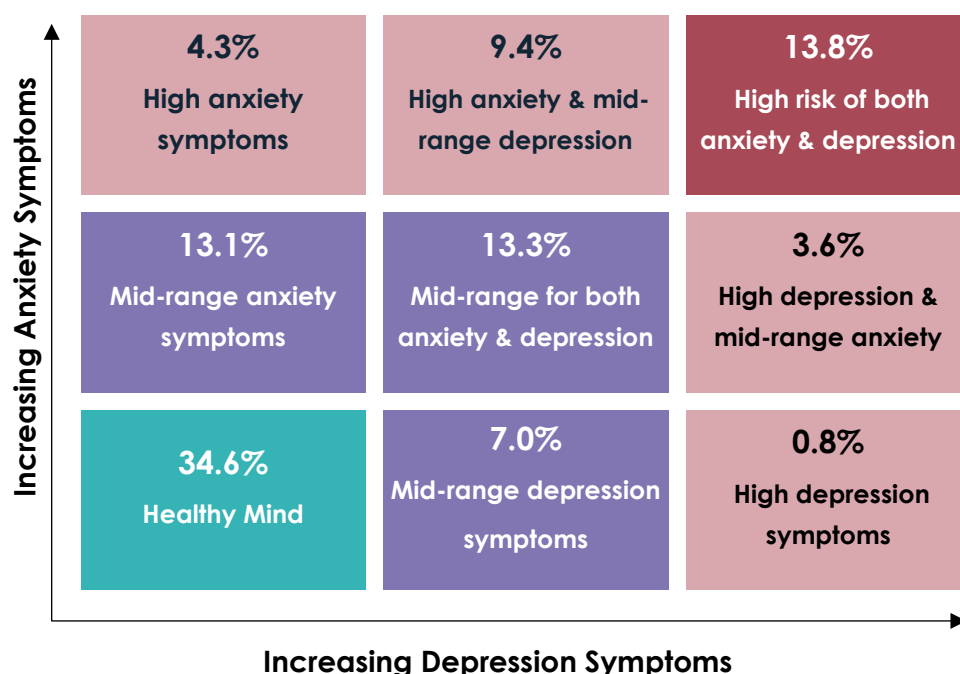


Figure 64. A graphical representation of secondary school student mental wellbeing during 2024, comprised of combinations of depression and anxiety symptoms.

ABILITY TO TALK TO OTHERS

The ability to talk to others about things that are upsetting may be an important facilitator for mental wellbeing. In 2024, on average, secondary school students could “sometimes” talk to others ($M=2.34$, $SD=0.99$). 41.0% of students reported that they were often or always able to talk to others. Just over a third (36.2%) of students were sometimes able to do this, and 22.8% of students never or rarely talked about things that upset them. This may mean that around 6 in 10 students do not often feel able to talk about things that are upsetting to them when they would otherwise like to.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN ABILITY TO TALK TO OTHERS

The proportion of male, female, and gender diverse students reporting different abilities to talk to others is illustrated in Figure 65. 20.4% of males, 24.1% of females, and 38.8% of gender diverse students reported never or rarely being able to talk to others. Comparisons between genders were all statistically significant, with males representing the smallest proportion, and gender diverse students representing the greatest proportion of students reporting this.

In 2024, male ($M=2.44$, $SD=1.01$) students reported a significantly higher average ability to talk to others than female ($M=2.26$, $SD=0.97$) and gender diverse ($M=2.02$, $SD=1.02$) students. The mean score for females was also significantly higher than that for gender diverse students, though mean scores for all gender categories all suggested students were *sometimes* able to talk to others about things that are upsetting to them.

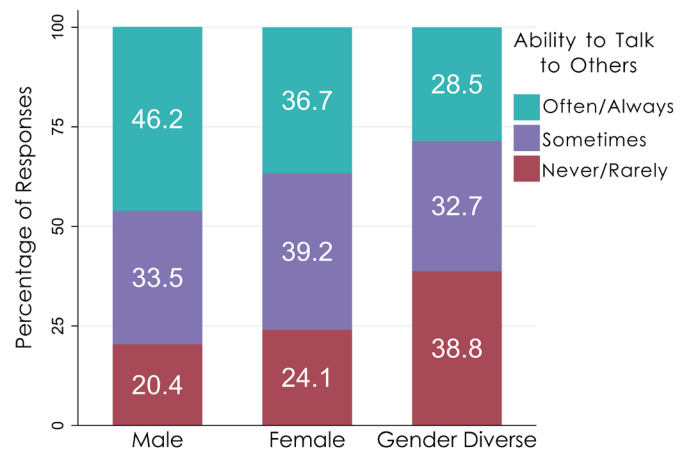


Figure 65. Proportion of secondary school students reporting being able to talk to others never/rarely, sometimes, and often/always, about things that upset them in 2024.

SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCES IN ABILITY TO TALK TO OTHERS

The proportion of students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting different abilities to talk to others is illustrated in Figure 66. A significantly greater proportion of students living in low SES areas (27.0%) reported never or rarely being able to talk to others, relative to those living in mid (23.9%) or high (17.6%) SES areas. A significantly greater proportion of students living in mid SES areas relative to those living in high SES areas also reported an infrequent ability to talk to others.

Secondary school students living in low SES areas ($M=2.24$, $SD=1.00$) reported significantly lower average ability to talk to others than those in mid ($M=2.30$, $SD=0.99$) and high ($M=2.46$, $SD=0.97$) SES areas. The mean score for students in a mid SES area was also significantly lower than that for students in a high SES area, though mean scores for all SES categories suggested students were *sometimes* able to talk to others about things that are upsetting to them.

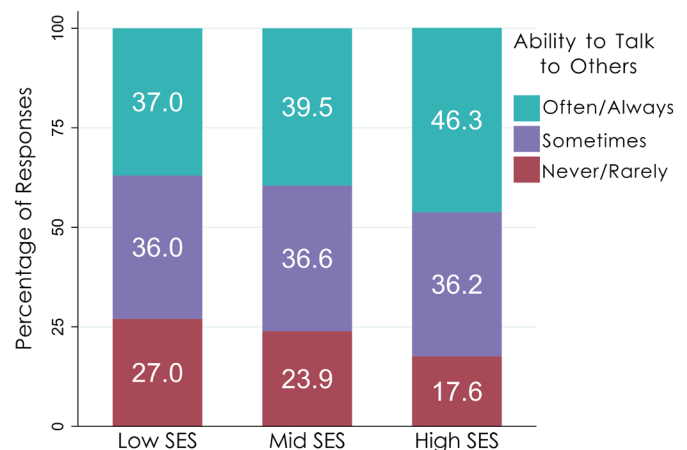


Figure 66. Proportion of secondary school students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting being able to talk to others never/rarely, sometimes, and often/always, about things that upset them in 2024.

ABILITY TO TALK TO OTHERS OVER TIME

To provide an indication of student trajectories, the proportion of students reporting never/rarely, sometimes, and often/always being able to talk to others between 2022 and 2024 is reported below.

ABILITY TO TALK TO OTHERS OVER TIME FOR EACH GENDER

Across 2022 to 2024, mean scores indicated that male and female secondary school students could, on average, *sometimes* talk to others (**male:** 2022: $M=2.40$, $SD=1.00$; 2023: $M=2.41$, $SD=1.01$; 2024: $M=2.44$, $SD=1.01$; **female:** 2022: $M=2.24$, $SD=0.96$; 2023: $M=2.24$, $SD=0.97$; 2024: $M=2.26$, $SD=0.97$). **Gender diverse** students were able to talk to others, on average, *rarely or never* in 2022 and 2023, and *sometimes* in 2024 (2022: $M=1.94$, $SD=1.00$; 2023: $M=1.90$, $SD=1.00$; 2024: $M=2.02$, $SD=1.02$).

The proportion of students reporting different abilities to talk to others in 2022 to 2024 is illustrated for each gender in Figure 67.

Among male students, 20.4% to 21.7% were never/rarely able to talk to others each year. This proportion was similar in 2022 and 2023 but was significantly lower in 2024 relative to 2023. Mean scores were significantly higher in 2024 than in 2022 and 2023.

Among female students, 24.1% to 24.8% were never/rarely able to talk to others each year. This proportion was similar in 2022 and 2023, and slightly but significantly lower in 2024 than in 2023. Mean scores were also similar in 2022 and 2023, and slightly but significantly higher in 2024 than in 2023.

Among gender diverse students, 38.8% to 44.5% were never/rarely able to talk to others each year. This proportion was similar in 2022 and 2023, and significantly lower in 2024 than in both previous years. Mean scores were also similar in 2022 and 2023, and significantly higher in 2024 than in both previous years.

Regarding gender differences, the proportion of students never/rarely talking to others was significantly higher among females than males each year, and significantly higher among gender diverse students than among males and females each year. Mean scores were significantly lower for gender diverse students than for females and males, and significantly lower for females than males.

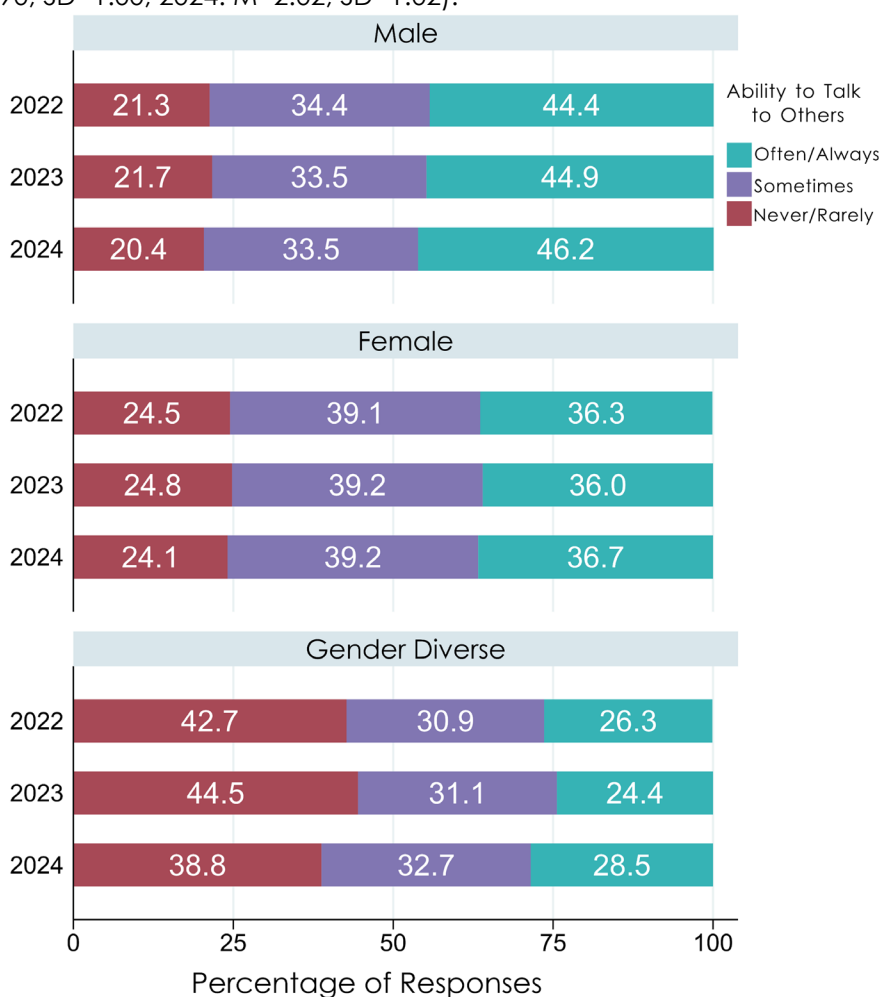


Figure 67. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse secondary school students reporting never/rarely, sometimes, and often/always being about to talk to others about things that are upsetting to them in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

ABILITY TO TALK TO OTHERS OVER TIME FOR LOWER, MIDDLE, AND UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Across 2022 to 2024, mean scores indicated that lower, (grades 7-8), middle (grades 9-10), and upper (grades 11-12) secondary school students could, on average, sometimes talk to others (**lower secondary**: 2022: M=2.30, SD=0.99; 2023: M=2.31, SD=0.99; 2024: M=2.35, SD=0.99; **middle secondary**: 2022: M=2.26, SD=0.98; 2023: M=2.27, SD=1.00; 2024: M=2.30, SD=1.00; **upper secondary**: 2022: M=2.36, SD=0.99; 2023: M=2.36, SD=1.00; 2024: M=2.38, SD=1.00).

The proportion of students reporting never/rarely, sometimes, and often/always being able to talk to others in 2022 to 2024 is illustrated separately for lower to upper secondary school students in Figure 68.

Among lower secondary students, 22.2% to 24.0% reported never/rarely being able to talk to others each year. The proportion of students reporting this was similar in 2022 and 2023, and significantly lower than both years in 2024. Mean scores were also similar in 2022 and 2023, and significantly higher in 2024.

Among middle secondary students, 24.5% to 25.7% reported never/rarely being able to talk to others each year. This proportion was similar in 2022 and 2023, and significantly lower in 2024 than in 2023. Mean scores were also similar in 2022 and 2023, and significantly higher in 2024 than in both previous years.

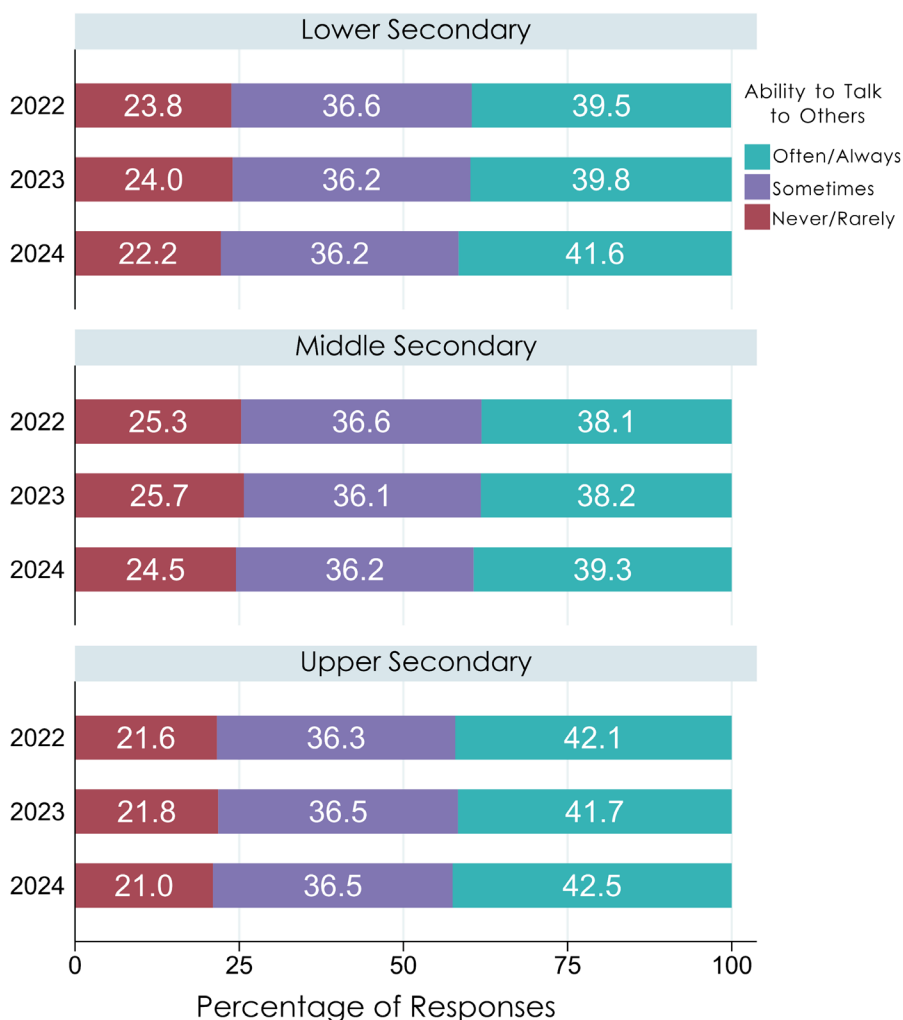


Figure 68. Proportion of lower (grades 7-8), middle (grades 9-10) and upper (grades 11-12) secondary school students never/rarely, sometimes, and often/always being about to talk to others about things that upset them in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

Among upper secondary students, 21.0% to 21.8% reported never/rarely being able to talk to others each year. These proportions, and the mean scores, were statistically similar across the three years.

Regarding grade differences, the proportion of students never/rarely talking to others was significantly higher among middle secondary compared to lower and upper secondary each year. It was also higher among lower compared to upper secondary students each year. Correspondingly, mean scores were significantly lower among middle relative to lower and upper secondary, and significantly lower among lower secondary relative to upper secondary each year. As such, middle secondary students consistently reported the lowest ability, and upper secondary students reported the highest ability to talk to others according to these measures.

HOPEFULNESS

The measure of hopefulness reflects a combination of the student's belief that they have what it takes to work towards a desired goal (often called 'agency') and can imagine different practical ways to achieve these goals (often called 'pathways').

On average, overall mean secondary school student hopefulness scores in 2024 were in the mid-range ($M=22.10$, $SD=6.56$). 22.4% of students reported high hopefulness, 46.8% reported mid-range hopefulness, and 30.8% of students reported low hopefulness.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN HOPEFULNESS

The proportion of male, female, and gender diverse students reporting low, mid, and high hopefulness in 2024 is illustrated in Figure 69. 24.7% of males, 35.5% of females, and 49.0% of gender diverse students reported low hopefulness. Comparisons of these proportions between genders were all statistically significant, with males representing the smallest and gender diverse students representing the greatest proportion of students with low hopefulness.

Although mean scores for all gender categories were in the mid-range, male ($M=23.21$, $SD=6.60$) secondary school students reported significantly higher mean hopefulness scores than female ($M=21.23$, $SD=6.25$) students. Gender diverse ($M=19.00$, $SD=7.50$) students reported significantly lower mean hopefulness scores than both males and females.

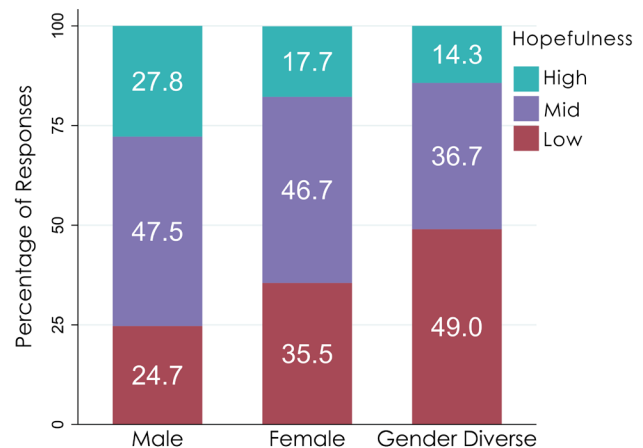


Figure 69. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse secondary school students reporting low, mid, and high hopefulness in 2024.

SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCES IN HOPEFULNESS

The proportion of students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting low, mid, and high hopefulness in 2024 is illustrated in Figure 70. 36.7% of students living in a low and 32.1% in a mid SES area reported low hopefulness. However, the proportion of students living in a low SES area and reporting low hopefulness was significantly greater than that of those living in a mid SES area. 23.3% of students living in a high SES area reported low hopefulness, which was a significantly smaller proportion than that of students living in both low and mid SES areas.

Although mean hopefulness scores were in the mid-range for all three SES categories, students living in low SES areas ($M=21.26$, $SD=6.72$) reported slightly but significantly lower mean hopefulness scores than students living in mid SES areas ($M=21.89$, $SD=6.53$). Students in high SES areas ($M=23.21$, $SD=6.22$) reported significantly higher mean hopefulness scores than those living in both mid and low SES areas.

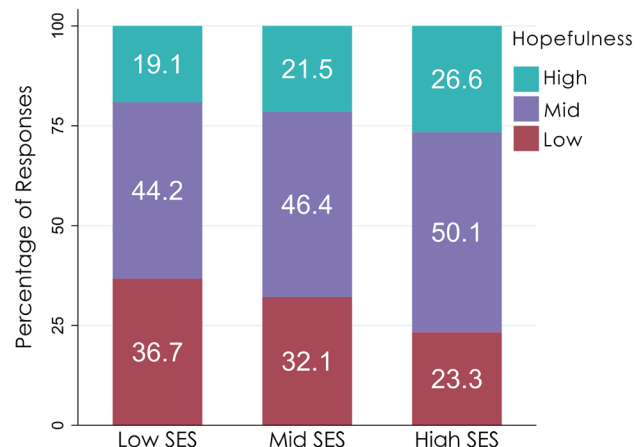


Figure 70. Proportion of students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting low, mid, and high hopefulness in 2024.

HOPEFULNESS OVER TIME

To provide an indication of hopefulness trajectories, the proportion of students scoring in the low, mid, and high score ranges between 2022 and 2024 are reported below.

HOPEFULNESS OVER TIME FOR EACH GENDER

Across 2022 to 2024, mean secondary school student hopefulness scores for males and females were in the mid-range (**male**: 2022: $M=23.14$, $SD=6.48$; 2023: $M=23.04$, $SD=6.59$; 2024: $M=23.21$, $SD=6.60$; **female**: 2022: $M=21.29$, $SD=6.19$; 2023: $M=21.06$, $SD=6.27$; 2024: $M=21.23$, $SD=6.25$). Mean scores for **gender diverse** students (2022: $M=18.52$, $SD=6.99$; 2023: $M=18.27$, $SD=7.23$; 2024: $M=19.00$, $SD=7.50$) were in the low range for 2022 and 2023, and just met the threshold for mid-range in 2024.

The proportion of students reporting low, mid, and high hopefulness in 2022 to 2024 is illustrated separately for each gender in Figure 71.

Among male students, 24.4% to 25.2% reported low hopefulness each year. This proportion was slightly but significantly higher in 2023 than in 2022. Mean scores were similar in 2022 and 2023, and increased slightly but significantly in 2024 relative to 2023.

Among female students, 34.7% to 36.7% reported low hopefulness each year. The proportion of females reporting this was significantly lower in 2022 than in both other years, but also significantly lower in 2024 than in 2023. Mean scores were significantly higher in 2022 and 2024 relative to 2023.

Among gender diverse students, 49.0% to 55.0% reported low hopefulness each year. This proportion was similar in 2022 and 2023, but significantly lower in 2024 compared to other years. Mean scores were also similar in 2022 and 2023, and significantly higher in 2024 than in 2023.

Regarding gender differences, the proportion of students reporting low hopefulness was significantly higher among females than males, and also higher among gender diverse students compared to both males and females each year. Females reported significantly lower mean scores than males each year, with gender diverse students reporting lower mean scores each year compared to both males and females.

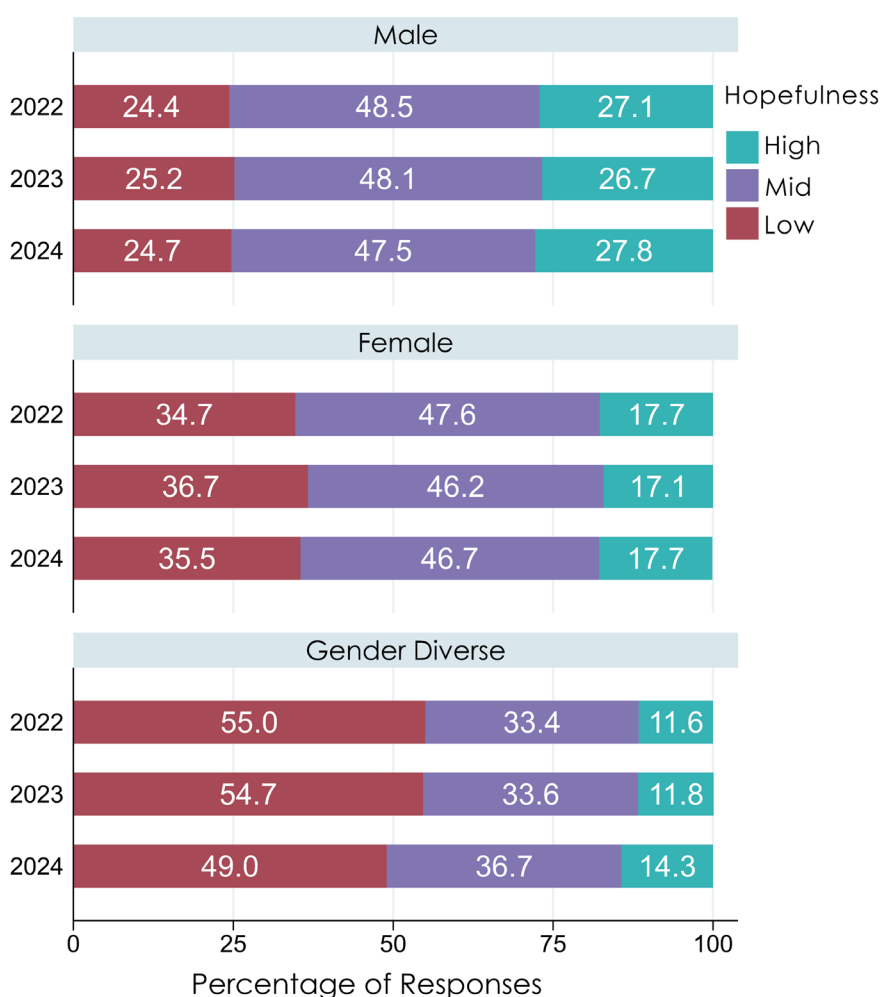


Figure 71. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse secondary school students reporting low, mid, and high hopefulness in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

HOPEFULNESS OVER TIME FOR LOWER, MIDDLE, AND UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Across 2022 to 2024, mean hopefulness scores were in the mid-range for lower, (grades 7-8), middle (grades 9-10), and upper (grades 11-12) secondary school students (**lower secondary**: 2022: M=22.29, SD=6.61; 2023: M=22.05, SD=6.69; 2024: M=22.25, SD=6.61; **middle secondary**: 2022: M=21.72, SD=6.48; 2023: M=21.66, SD=6.54; 2024: M=21.88, SD=6.55; **upper secondary**: 2022: M=21.95, SD=6.14; 2023: M=21.88, SD=6.38; 2024: M=22.14, SD=6.45).

The proportion of students reporting low, mid, and high hopefulness in 2022 to 2024 is illustrated separately for lower to upper secondary school students in Figure 72.

Among lower secondary students, 29.8% to 31.4% reported low hopefulness each year. The proportion of lower secondary reporting low hopefulness was less in 2022 and 2024 relative to 2023 (but similar between 2022 and 2024). Mean scores were significantly higher in 2022 and 2024 relative to 2023.

Among middle secondary students, 32.2% to 33.2% reported low hopefulness each year, with the proportion being slightly but significantly lower in 2024 than in 2023. Mean hopefulness scores were similar in 2022 and 2023, and slightly but significantly higher in 2024 than in 2023.

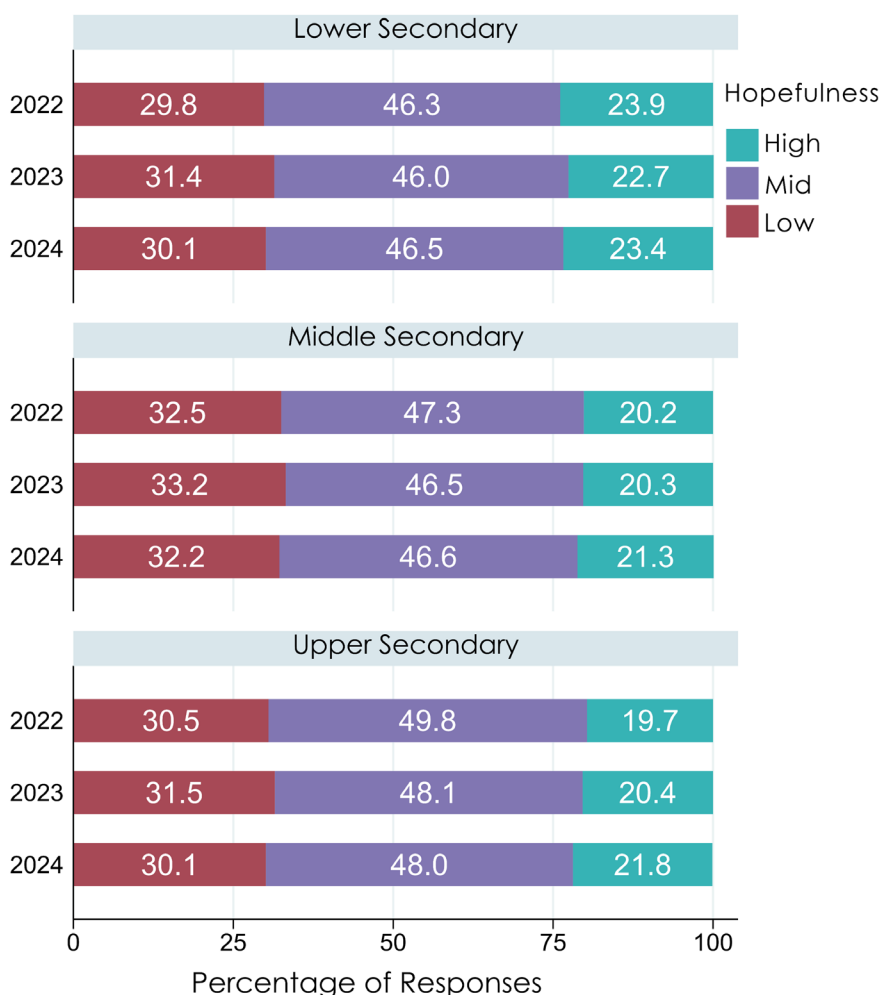


Figure 72. Proportion of lower (grades 7-8), middle (grades 9-10), and upper (grades 11-12) secondary school students reporting low, mid, and high hopefulness in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

Among upper secondary students, 30.1% to 31.5% reported low hopefulness each year. The proportion was significantly lower in 2024 than in 2023, but similar between all other years. Mean scores were slightly but significantly higher in 2024 than in 2023, and similar between all other years.

Regarding grade differences, the proportion of students reporting low hopefulness was significantly higher among middle secondary students than lower and upper secondary students, but similar among the latter two grade levels. In 2022 and 2023, lower secondary students reported significantly higher mean hopefulness than middle and upper secondary students. Upper secondary students also reported higher mean hopefulness than middle secondary students. In 2024, lower and upper secondary student mean scores were similar, and both were significantly higher than middle secondary students. As such, middle secondary students consistently reported the lowest hopefulness on these measures.

LIFE SATISFACTION

To measure life satisfaction, students were asked to imagine a ladder where the top represents the best possible life, and the bottom represents the worst possible life. Responses were categorised as struggling (wellbeing that is at risk; red), doing OK (moderate wellbeing; purple), and thriving (wellbeing that is strong and consistent; teal).

In 2024, average secondary school student life satisfaction scores were in the mid-range, where they considered themselves to be doing OK ($M=5.66$, $SD=1.45$). The proportion of students reporting that they were struggling, doing ok, and thriving is illustrated in Figure 73. Generally, around 3 in 10 students reported themselves to be thriving, half of the students reported that they were doing OK, and 2 in 10 reported themselves to be struggling.



To help others' wellbeing,
secondary students suggest we:

*“be more understanding and to
individually help young people”*

– Year 8 student

*“let them know that no matter what
happens, no matter how many bad
things happen in your life, it will get
better again and you can become
happy.”*

– Year 11 student

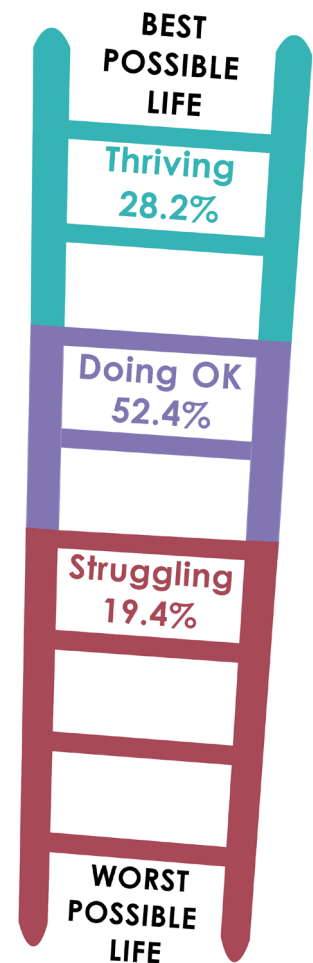


Figure 73. Proportion of secondary school students reporting that they were struggling, doing OK, and thriving in 2024.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN LIFE SATISFACTION

The proportion of male, female, and gender diverse students reporting that they were struggling, doing OK, and thriving in 2024 is illustrated in Figure 74. 15.5% of males, 21.8% of females, and 39.2% of gender diverse students reported that they were struggling. Comparisons between genders were all statistically significant, with males representing the smallest proportion, and gender diverse students representing the greatest proportion of students who were struggling in life.

Male ($M=5.84$, $SD=1.42$) and female ($M=5.54$, $SD=1.41$) secondary school students reported themselves to be doing OK on average, though the mean score for males was slightly but significantly higher than that for females. Gender diverse ($M=4.86$, $SD=1.96$) student mean scores were significantly lower than that for males and females and suggested that, on average, these students were struggling.

SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCES IN LIFE SATISFACTION

The proportion of students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting that they were struggling, doing OK, and thriving in 2024 is illustrated in Figure 75. 21.6% of students living in a low, and 20.0% in a mid SES area reported that they were struggling, though the proportion struggling among those living in a low SES area was slightly but significantly higher than that of those living in a mid SES area. 16.1% of students in a high SES area reported themselves to be struggling, which was a significantly smaller proportion than that of those living in low and mid SES areas.

A similar proportion of students living in a low (27.0%) or mid (27.7%) SES area reported themselves to be thriving. A significantly higher proportion (29.6%) of students living in a high SES area reported that they were thriving.

Although mean scores suggest that, on average, students in all three SES categories considered themselves to be doing OK, students living in high SES areas ($M=5.77$, $SD=1.35$) reported significantly higher mean life satisfaction than those living in mid and low SES areas. Students living in low SES areas ($M=5.58$, $SD=1.50$) also reported slightly but significantly lower mean scores than students living in mid SES areas ($M=5.63$, $SD=1.46$).

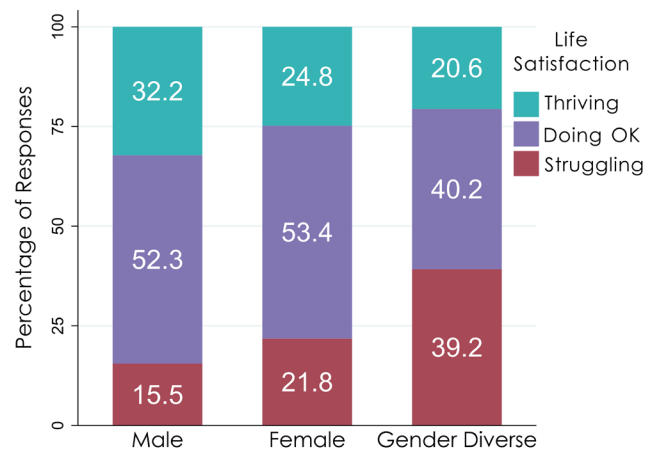


Figure 74. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse secondary school students reporting that they were struggling, doing OK, and thriving in 2024.

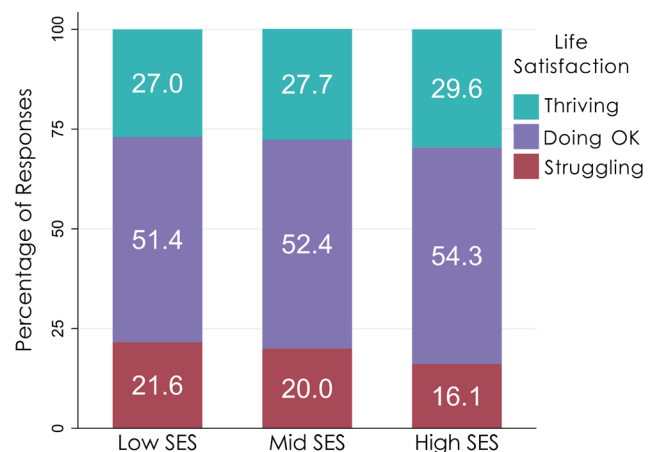


Figure 75. Proportion of secondary school students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting that they were struggling, doing OK, and thriving in 2024.

LIFE SATISFACTION OVER TIME

To provide an indication of life satisfaction trajectories, the proportion of students reporting themselves to be struggling, doing ok, and thriving between 2022 and 2024 are reported below.

LIFE SATISFACTION OVER TIME FOR EACH GENDER

Across 2022 to 2024, mean scores for males and females indicate these students were, on average, doing ok (**male:** 2022: $M=5.76$, $SD=1.44$; 2023: $M=5.74$, $SD=1.45$; 2024: $M=5.84$, $SD=1.42$; **female:** 2022: $M=5.45$, $SD=1.44$; 2023: $M=5.42$, $SD=1.44$; 2024: $M=5.54$, $SD=1.41$). **Gender diverse** students (2022: $M=4.68$, $SD=1.74$; 2023: $M=4.65$, $SD=1.86$; 2024: $M=4.86$, $SD=1.96$) were, on average, struggling across the three years.

The proportion of students reporting themselves to be struggling, doing ok, and thriving in 2022 to 2024 is illustrated separately for each gender in Figure 76.

Among male students, 15.5% to 17.6% reported themselves to be struggling each year. The proportion of males struggling was similar in 2022 and 2023 but decreased significantly in 2024. Mean scores were also similar in 2022 and 2023 but increased significantly in 2024.

Among female students, 21.8% to 24.5% reported themselves to be struggling each year. The proportion of females struggling was similar in 2022 and 2023 but decreased significantly in 2024. Mean scores were slightly but significantly lower in 2023 than in 2022, and significantly higher than both prior years in 2024.

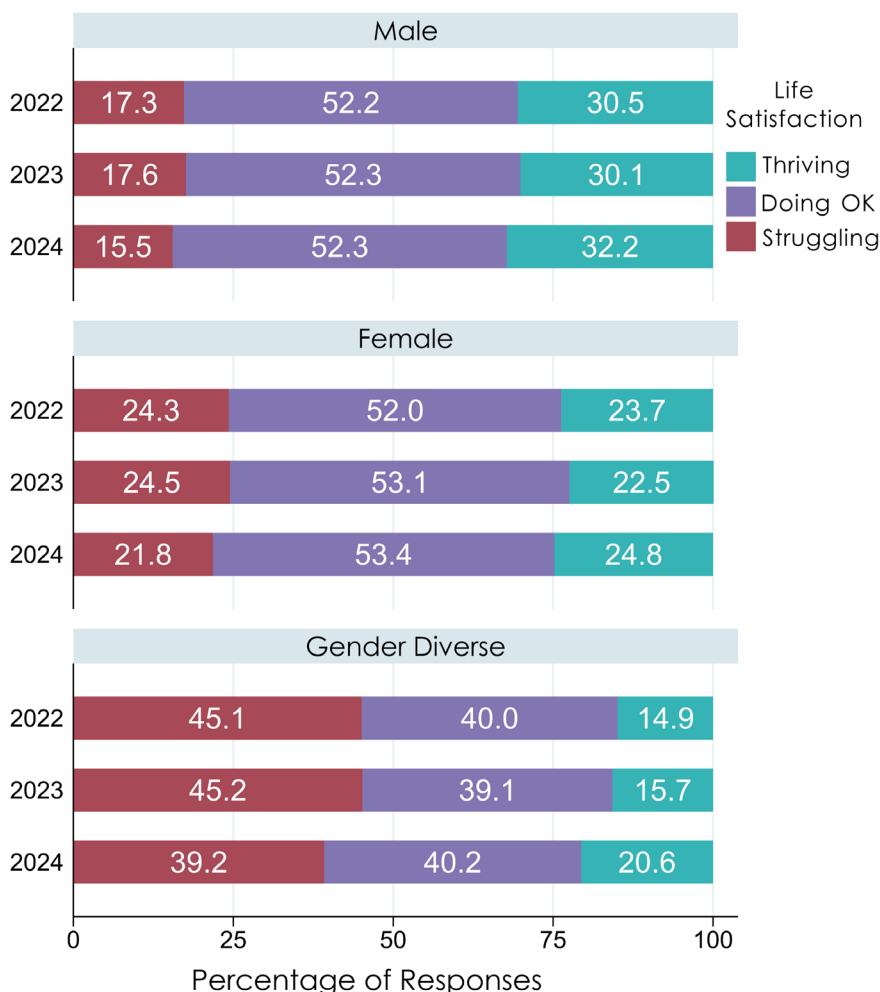


Figure 76. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse secondary school students reporting themselves to be struggling, doing ok, and thriving in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

Among gender diverse students, 39.2% to 45.2% reported themselves to be struggling each year. This proportion was similar in 2022 and 2023 but decreased significantly in 2024. Mean scores were also similar in 2022 and 2023 but increased significantly in 2024.

Regarding gender differences, the proportion of students reporting themselves to be struggling was significantly higher among females than males, and significantly higher among gender diverse students than among both males and females each year. Females reported significantly lower mean scores than males, with gender diverse students reporting the lowest mean scores each year.

LIFE SATISFACTION OVER TIME FOR LOWER, MIDDLE, AND UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL

Across 2022 to 2024, mean scores for lower (grades 7-8), middle (grades 9-10), and upper (grades 11-12) secondary school students indicated that students were, on average, doing ok (**lower secondary**: 2022: M=5.72, SD=1.48; 2023: M=5.69, SD=1.48; 2024: M=5.80, SD=1.45; **middle secondary**: 2022: M=5.45, SD=1.47; 2023: M=5.48, SD=1.47; 2024: M=5.56, SD=1.43; **upper secondary**: 2022: M=5.39, SD=1.46; 2023: M=5.33, SD=1.48; 2024: M=5.46, SD=1.47).

The proportion of students reporting themselves to be struggling, doing ok, and thriving in 2022 to 2024 is illustrated separately for lower to upper secondary school students in Figure 77.

Among lower secondary students, 17.3% to 19.6% reported themselves to be struggling each year. This proportion was similar in 2022 and 2023 but decreased significantly in 2024. Mean scores were also similar in 2022 and 2023 but increased significantly in 2024.

Among middle secondary students, 24.0% of students were struggling in 2022 and a slightly but significantly smaller proportion were struggling in 2023 (23.1%). A significantly smaller proportion (20.8%) reported this in 2024. Mean scores were similar in 2022 and 2023, but increased significantly in 2024.

Among upper secondary students, a similar proportion reported themselves to be struggling in 2022 (24.6%) and 2023 (25.4%). A significantly smaller proportion (22.2%) reported this in 2024. Mean life satisfaction scores decreased slightly but significantly from 2022 to 2023 but increased in 2024 such that they were significantly higher than in both previous years.

Regarding grade differences, in 2022 the proportion of students reporting themselves to be struggling was similar between middle and upper secondary students, both of which were higher than that of lower secondary students. In 2023 and 2024, students in lower secondary continued to report the lowest proportion of struggling students, however, the proportion of struggling students in upper secondary was higher compared to middle secondary. For all three years, mean scores decreased significantly across the grade groupings, with students in lower secondary reporting the highest mean scores, and students in upper secondary reporting the lowest mean life satisfaction.

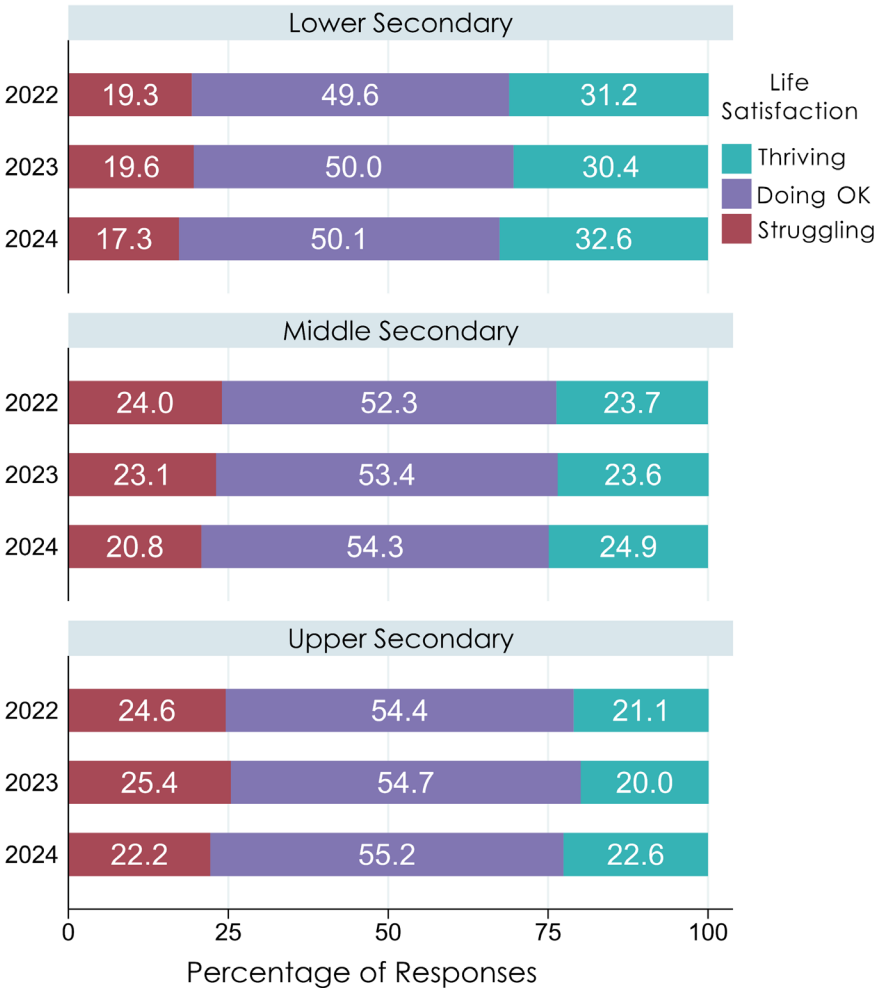


Figure 77. Proportion of lower (grades 7-8), middle (grades 9-10), and upper (grades 11-12) secondary school students reporting themselves to be struggling, doing ok, and thriving in 2022, 2023, and 2024.

COMBINED HOPEFULNESS AND LIFE SATISFACTION

As an indication of resilience, we combined student hopefulness and life satisfaction score categories. The concept of resilience refers to the ability to positively adapt to or recover from adverse experiences. The way that students perceive their environment, their coping strategies, and the presence of sufficient, quality social resources influence resilience, which is considered a skill that can be facilitated and developed.⁶

Resilient students were represented as those reporting high hopefulness and high (i.e., thriving) life satisfaction, borderline students as those with mid-range reports of hopefulness, life satisfaction (i.e., doing OK), or both, and students at high risk of low resilience as those with low levels of hope, life satisfaction (i.e., struggling with life), or both.

A graphical representation of student resilience in 2024 is shown in Figure 78. 12.2% of secondary school students reported resilience (shaded in teal) according to their hopefulness and life satisfaction scores. Around half (49.6%) of the students were in the borderline range for resilience, with mid-range levels of hope and/or life satisfaction (shaded in purple). **38.2% of students were in the high-risk categories for resilience (shaded in red), with 11.9% reporting low hope and struggling in life.**

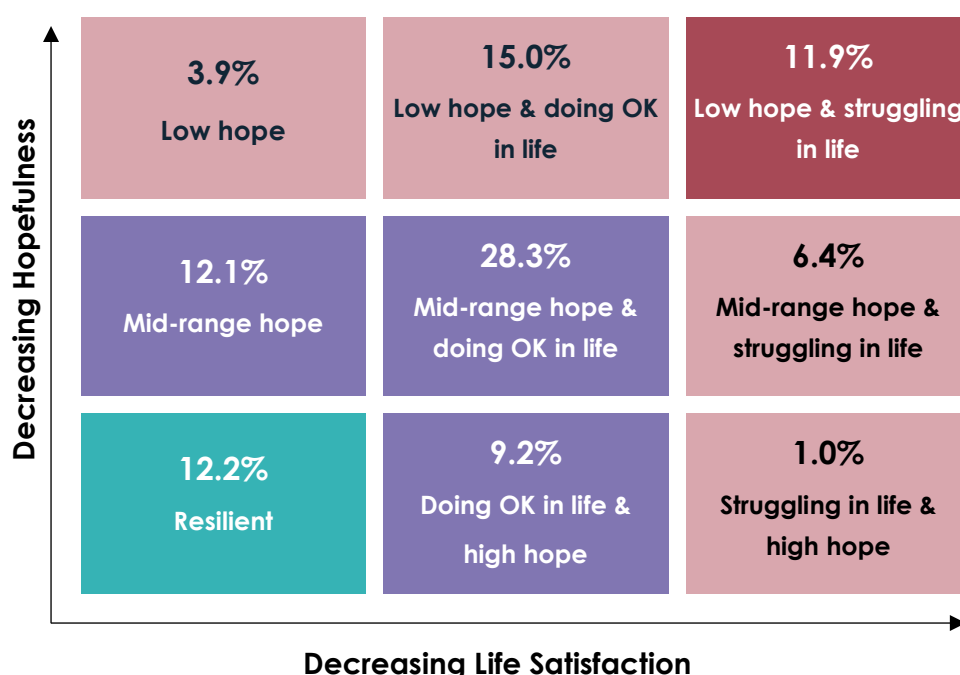


Figure 78. A graphical representation of secondary school student resilience in 2024, comprised of combinations of hopefulness and life satisfaction score categories.

⁶ American Psychological Association (2024, August 29). *APA Dictionary of Psychology: resilience*. <https://dictionary.apa.org/resilience>

READY TO LEARN

Being ready to learn considers factors that may influence disengagement, resilience building, and engagement with schooling, which are important in facilitating student wellbeing and learning.

DISENGAGEMENT

Disengagement reflects behaviour aimed at avoidance coping - avoiding thinking about, feeling, or doing difficult things as a coping mechanism. In 2024, the surveyed secondary school students reported mid-range ($M=10.26$, $SD=2.51$) mean disengagement scores, with around a quarter (24.7%) of students reporting low disengagement, 29.5% reporting mid-range levels of disengagement, and 45.8% reporting high disengagement.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN DISENGAGEMENT

The proportion of male, female, and gender diverse students reporting different levels of disengagement in 2024 is illustrated in Figure 79. A significantly smaller proportion of males (39.7%) reported high disengagement than females (51.0%), and gender diverse students (57.5%). The proportion of females reporting this was also significantly smaller than that of gender diverse students. Similar proportions of female (21.1%) and gender diverse (20.8%) students reported low disengagement, which were significantly less than that for males (28.6%).

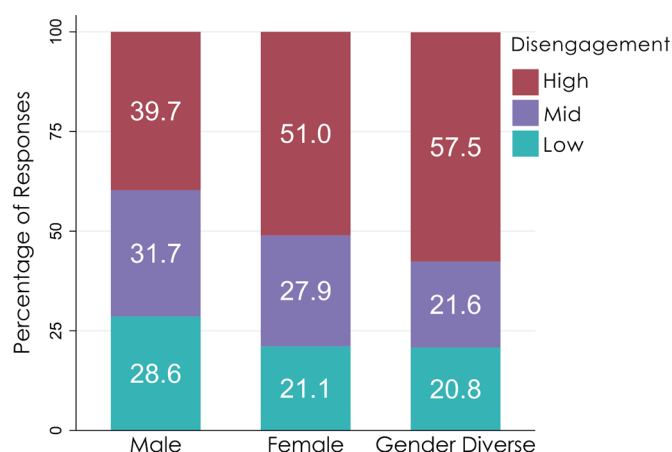


Figure 79. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse secondary school students reporting low, mid, and high disengagement in 2024.

Males ($M=9.90$, $SD=2.40$) reported the lowest mean disengagement, and females ($M=10.56$, $SD=2.55$) reported slightly but significantly lower mean disengagement than gender diverse ($M=10.96$, $SD=2.76$) students. Mean scores were in the mid-range for all gender categories.

SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCES IN DISENGAGEMENT

The proportion of students reporting different levels of disengagement by SES category is illustrated in Figure 80. Similar proportions of students living in low (48.3%) and mid (47.0%) SES areas reported high disengagement. A significantly smaller proportion (42.2%) of students living in a high SES area reported high disengagement.

Mean scores were in the mid-range for all three SES categories (low SES: $M=10.44$, $SD=2.55$; mid SES: $M=10.32$, $SD=2.53$; high SES: $M=10.04$, $SD=2.44$), although mean scores for students in each SES category differed from each other slightly but significantly. On average, students living in low SES areas reported the highest, and students living in high SES areas reported the lowest disengagement.

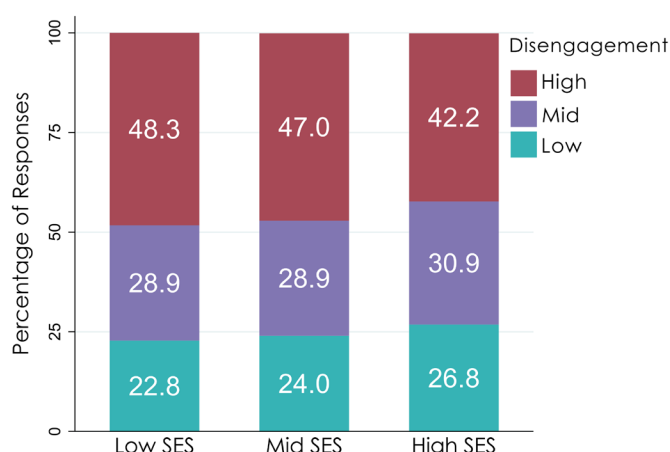


Figure 80. Proportion of students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting low, mid, and high disengagement in 2024.

POSITIVE LEARNERS MINDSET

As an indication of learning readiness, reports of anxiety and disengagement symptoms in 2024 were combined to create a unique indicator of student readiness to learn in the classroom, which we call the positive learners mindset.

Readiness to learn was represented by low anxiety and low disengagement, borderline students as those with mid-range reports of anxiety, disengagement, or both, and students with an 'at risk' learners mindset as those reporting high levels of anxiety, disengagement, or both.

A graphical representation of positive learners mindset in 2024 is shown in Figure 81. 16.4% of secondary school students reported readiness to learn (shaded in teal) according to their anxiety and disengagement scores. 28.8% of students were in the borderline range (shaded in purple). **Over half of the students (55.0%) had an 'at risk' learners mindset (shaded in red), with 18.4% reporting high anxiety and high disengagement.**

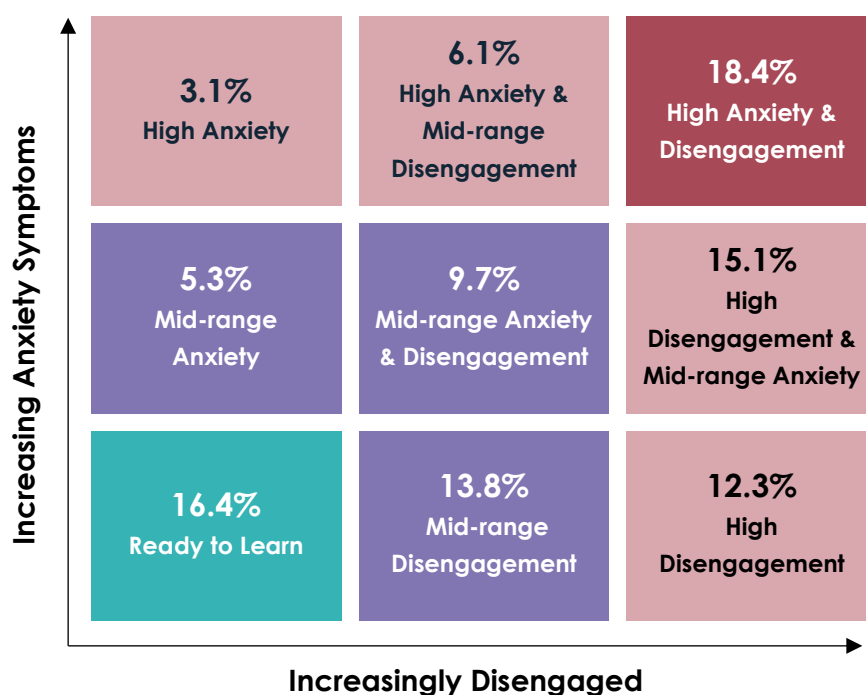


Figure 81. A graphical representation of positive learners mindset during 2024, comprised of combinations of anxiety and disengagement categories.

POSITIVE LEARNING ENGAGEMENT

Feeling engaged with learning is likely to influence school performance, student self-esteem, respect for themselves and others, and have a positive impact on building resilience. Secondary school student reports of the frequency with which they experienced different aspects of learning engagement in 2024 are displayed in Figure 82 below.

When asked about activities that foster engagement, the majority of students reported high levels (often/always) of engagement for: enjoyment of learning (59%), trying hard at school (77%), caring about their school (63%), and having fun at school (56%). Conversely, a minority of students (41%) reported frequently being given useful jobs at school, and 29% reported often or always reading for fun, with 43% rarely doing so.

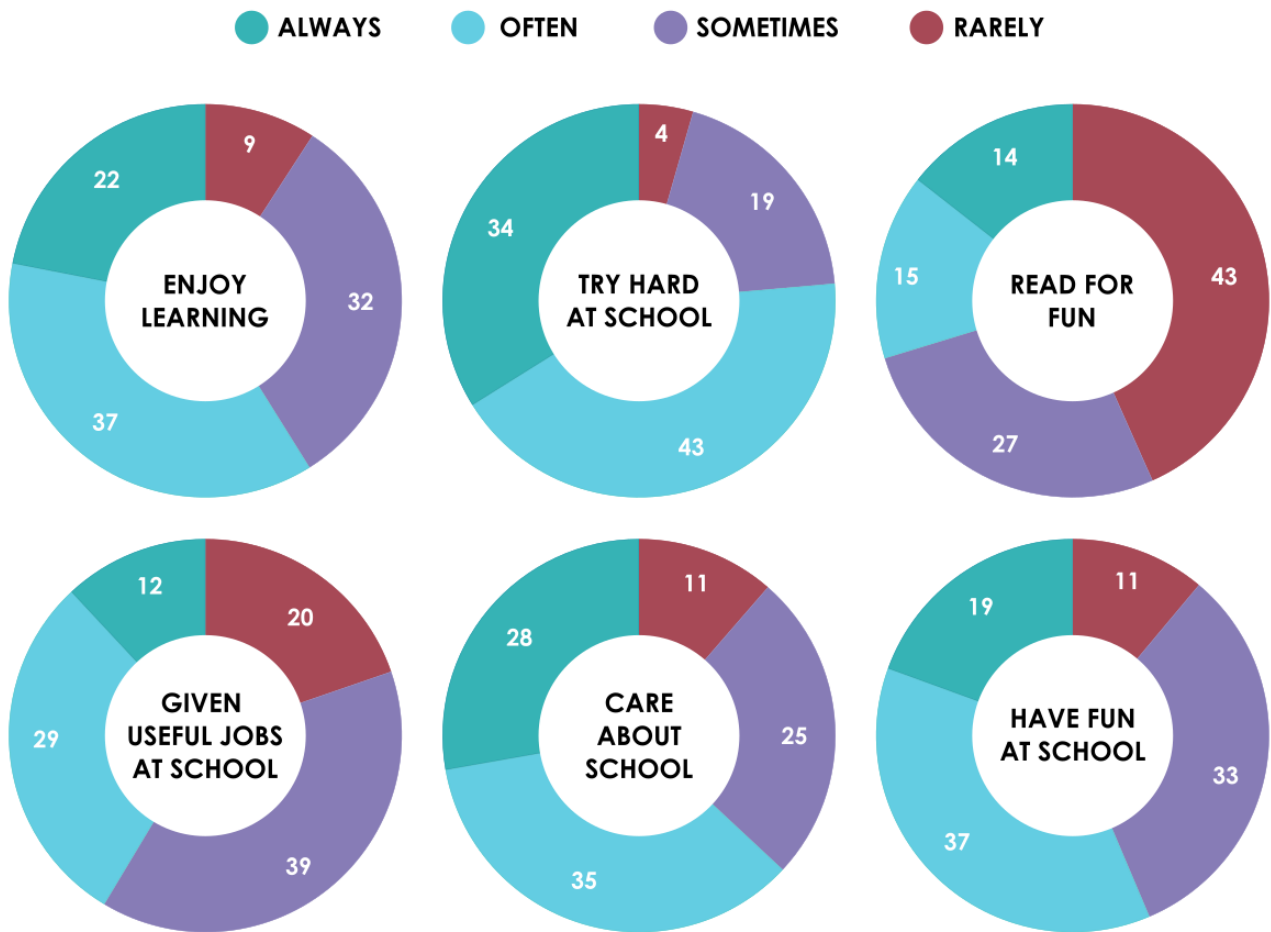


Figure 82. Secondary school student percentage of responses for each aspect of learning engagement in 2024.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT

The frequency of responses for different aspects of learning engagement is reported separately for males, females, and gender diverse students in Table 3 below. Regarding students indicating rare engagement, similar proportions of male and female students reported rarely enjoying learning and being given useful jobs at school. A slightly but significantly higher proportion of males than females reported rarely having fun at school, and a significantly higher proportion of males than females reported rarely trying hard at school and caring about school. A greater proportion of gender diverse students, relative to both males and females, reported rarely enjoying learning (male: 8.8%; female: 8.8%; gender diverse: 21.6%), trying hard at school (male: 5.0%; female: 3.0%; gender diverse: 15.8%), being given useful jobs at school (male: 19.3%; female: 18.9%; gender diverse: 35.7%), caring about school (male: 12.0%; female: 9.8%; gender diverse: 29.1%), and having fun at school (male: 10.4%; female: 10.8%; gender diverse: 25.5%).

A greater proportion of male students (50.0%) reported that they rarely read for fun relative to females (37.2%) and gender diverse students (40.5%). The proportion of gender diverse students reporting rarely reading for fun was significantly higher than that of female students. However, a significantly higher proportion of gender diverse students (21.5%) relative to female (17.7%) and male (10.5%) students reported *always* reading for fun.

Regarding frequent (always/almost always) engagement with the other elements of learning measured, a higher proportion of males than females and gender diverse students reported always enjoying learning (male: 23.5%; female: 20.6%; gender diverse: 18.8%), being given useful jobs at school (male: 14.2%; female: 10.2%; gender diverse: 9.3%), and having fun at school (male: 22.8%; female: 16.3%; gender diverse: 14.0%). Similar proportions of females and gender diverse students reported frequent engagement for being given useful jobs, and a higher proportion of females than gender diverse students reported always enjoying learning and always having fun at school. A higher proportion of females than males and gender diverse students reported always trying hard at school (male: 30.0%; female: 38.1%; gender diverse: 25.4%) and caring about school (males: 27.2%; female: 29.0%; gender diverse: 17.3%). A significantly higher proportion of males than gender diverse students reported always trying hard at and caring about school.

Table 3. Secondary school students' percentage of responses for each aspect of learning engagement in 2024 by gender.

Learning Engagement	Male n=34,383	Female n=35,173	Gender Diverse n=2,398
Enjoy Learning			
Always	23.5	20.6	18.8
Often	37.9	37.0	27.2
Sometimes	29.8	33.6	32.4
Rarely	8.8	8.8	21.6
Try hard at school			
Always	30.0	38.1	25.4
Often	44.1	41.6	35.8
Sometimes	20.9	17.3	23.0
Rarely	5.0	3.0	15.8
Read for fun			
Always	10.5	17.7	21.5
Often	13.4	17.0	17.9
Sometimes	26.2	28.1	20.1
Rarely	50.0	37.2	40.5
Given useful jobs at school			
Always	14.2	10.2	9.3
Often	30.3	28.9	19.1
Sometimes	36.1	42.1	35.8
Rarely	19.3	18.9	35.7
Care about school			
Always	27.2	29.0	17.3
Often	36.3	35.3	24.6
Sometimes	24.6	25.8	28.9
Rarely	12.0	9.8	29.1
Have fun at School			
Always	22.8	16.3	14.0
Often	37.6	36.9	27.7
Sometimes	29.3	35.9	32.8
Rarely	10.4	10.8	25.5

CONNECTION TO NATURE

Feeling connected to nature has been associated with better individual well-being, mental health, and happiness, as well as positive environmental behaviour. A slightly modified version of the Illustrated Inclusion of Nature of Self Scale was included in the Survey.⁷ For the Survey, the Scale was a graphic measure depicting 5 different levels of a person's connection to nature (see Figure 83). Students selected the image that best represented them, and responses of "A/B", "C", and "D/E" were categorised as having a low, mid, or high connection to nature, respectively. Responses were also converted to numeric scores (i.e., A=1; E=5; etc.) for mean score comparisons between groups.

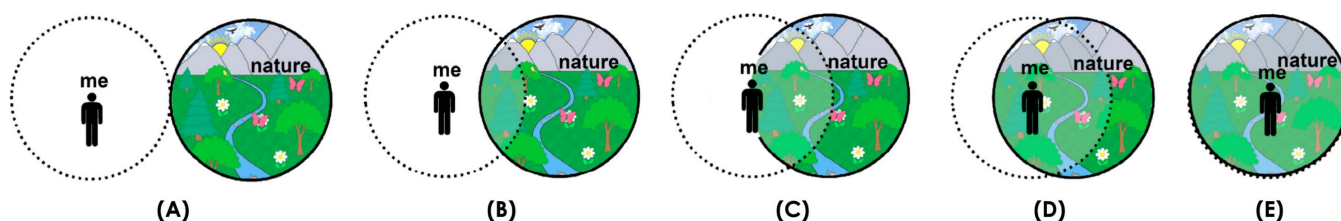


Figure 83. Modified Illustrated Inclusion of Nature in Self used to measure students' perceived connection to nature.

In 2024, the mean connection to nature score among secondary school students was within the mid-range ($M=3.18$, $SD=1.07$), with 25.7% of students reporting a low connection, 34.8% of students reporting mid-levels of connection, and 39.5% of students reporting a high connection to nature.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN CONNECTION TO NATURE

The proportion of male, female, and gender diverse students reporting low, mid, and high connection to nature in 2024 is illustrated in Figure 84. 24.8% of male and 25.8% of female students reported a low connection to nature, with the proportion of males being slightly but significantly lower than that of females. 36.9% of gender diverse students reported a low connection to nature, which was a significantly higher proportion than that of both male and female students.

A significantly higher proportion of males (41.4%) reported a high connection to nature relative to females (37.7%) and gender diverse students (37.3%), for whom a similar proportion reported a high connection to nature.

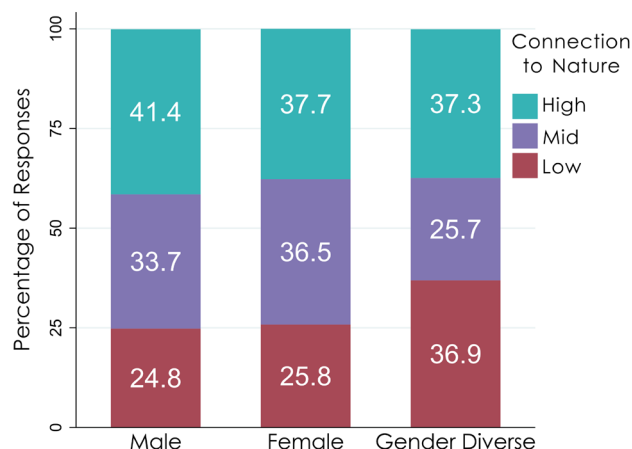


Figure 84. Proportion of male, female, and gender diverse secondary school students reporting low, mid, and high connection to nature in 2024.

In 2024, male ($M=3.21$, $SD=1.09$) and female ($M=3.15$, $SD=1.03$) students reported a mid-range connection to nature on average, though the mean score for males was slightly but significantly higher than that of females. The mean score for gender diverse students ($M=2.99$, $SD=1.30$) was just below the mid-range cut-off, in the low range, and was significantly lower than that of male and female students.

⁷ Kleespies, M. W., Braun, T., Dierkes, P. W., & Wenzel, V. (2021). Measuring connection to nature—a illustrated extension of the inclusion of nature in self scale. *Sustainability*, 13(4), 1761.

SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCES IN CONNECTION TO NATURE

The proportion of students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting low, mid, and high connection to nature is illustrated in Figure 85. Around 1 in 4 students reported a low connection to nature in each SES category, though the proportion of students reporting this was slightly but significantly higher for students living in a low SES area (26.7%) relative to those living in a mid (25.3%) or high (24.7%) SES area. A similar proportion of students living in the latter two SES categories reported a low connection to nature.

Around 4 in 10 students in all three SES categories reported a high connection to nature, though this proportion was slightly but significantly lower among students living in a high SES area (38.0%) relative to those in a low (40.6%) or mid (40.0%) SES area. A similar proportion of students living in the latter two SES categories reported a high connection to nature.

Mean connection to nature scores did not vary by SES, with students living in all three SES area categories reporting a mid-range connection to nature on average (low SES: $M=3.18$, $SD=1.10$, mid SES: $M=3.19$, $SD=1.07$, high SES: $M=3.17$, $SD=1.02$).

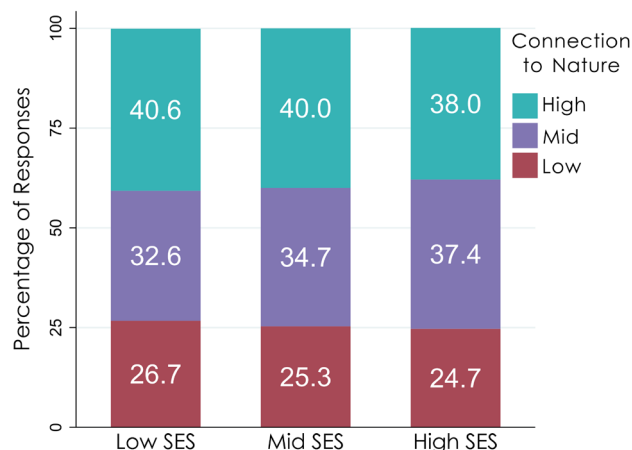


Figure 85. Proportion of students living in low, mid, and high SES areas reporting low, mid, and high connection to nature in 2024.

STUDENT SCHOOL GRADE DIFFERENCES IN CONNECTION TO NATURE

The proportion of lower (grades 7-8), middle (grades 9-10), and upper (grades 11-12) secondary school students reporting low, mid, and high connection to nature in 2024 is illustrated in Figure 86. 22.7% of lower secondary students reported a low connection to nature, which was significantly fewer than that for middle (27.8%) and upper (30.0%) secondary students. A smaller proportion of middle secondary students relative to upper secondary students reported a low connection to nature.

The proportion of students reporting a high connection to nature decreased significantly from lower (43.5%) to middle (36.3%) to upper (34.4%) secondary school grades.

Mean scores also decreased significantly across the secondary school grade groupings, from lower ($M=3.27$, $SD=1.06$), to middle ($M=3.11$, $SD=1.07$), to upper ($M=3.06$, $SD=1.09$) secondary school, though mean scores for all grade categories were within the mid-range.

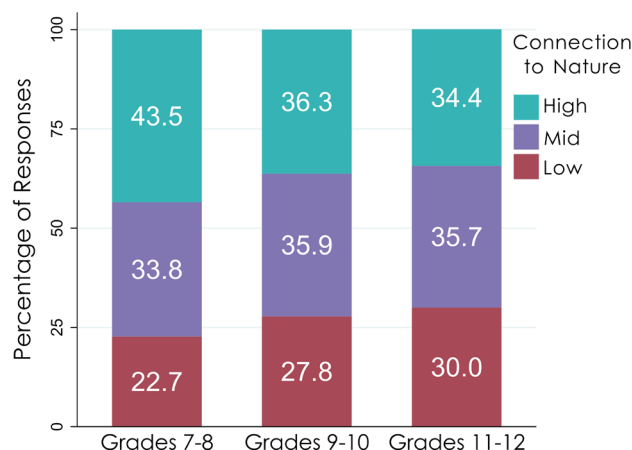


Figure 86. Proportion of students in lower (grades 7-8) middle (grades 9-10) and upper (grades 11-12) secondary school reporting low, mid, and high connection to nature in 2024.

HEALTHY BEHAVIOUR

The following are each descriptive analyses based on single items from the 2024 survey relating to key physical protective factors of wellbeing.

HEALTHY EATING

The proportion of secondary school students who reported that they eat healthy food is shown in Figure 87. 28.0% of students reported always eating healthy food, and around half (50.3%) reported often eating healthily (combined often/always response = 78.3%). 21.6% of students reported healthy eating only a minority of the time (sometimes: 18.5%, rarely: 3.1%).

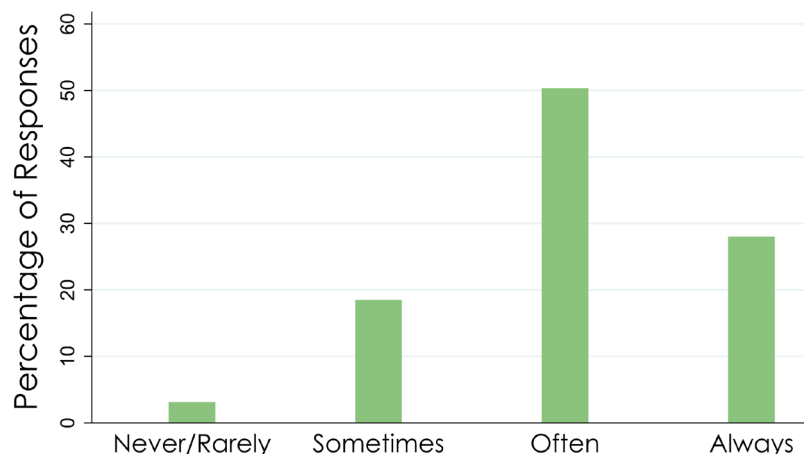


Figure 87. Percentage of secondary school student responses relating to frequency of eating healthy food in 2024.

ADEQUATE SLEEP

The proportion of secondary school students who reported that they sleep at least 8 hours most nights is shown in Figure 88. 27.3% of students reported always and 30.5% often getting adequate sleep (combined often/always response = 57.8%). 42.2% of students reported adequate sleep only a minority of the time (sometimes: 28.5%, rarely: 13.7%).

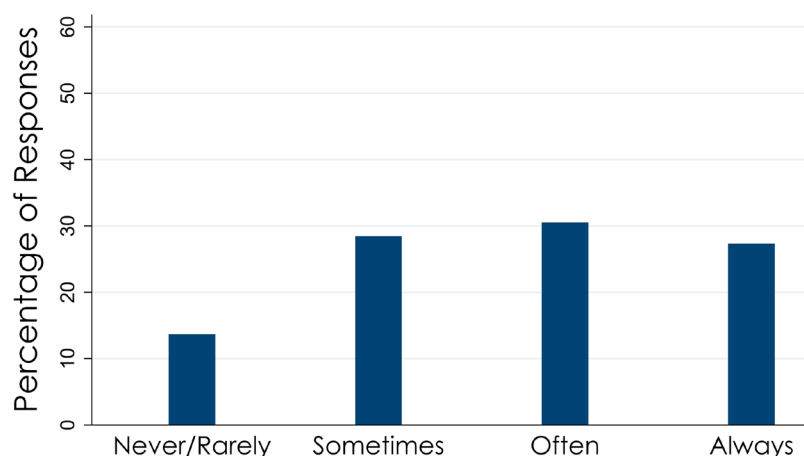


Figure 88. Percentage of secondary school student responses relating to frequency of sleeping at least 8 hours most nights in 2024.

PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

The proportion of secondary school students who reported that they are physically active for at least one hour each day is shown in Figure 89. Slightly less than half (48.2%) of students reported always being physically active and 28.5% reported being physically active often (combined often/always response = 76.7%). 23.4% of students reported being physically active only a minority of the time (sometimes: 18.3%, rarely: 5.1%).

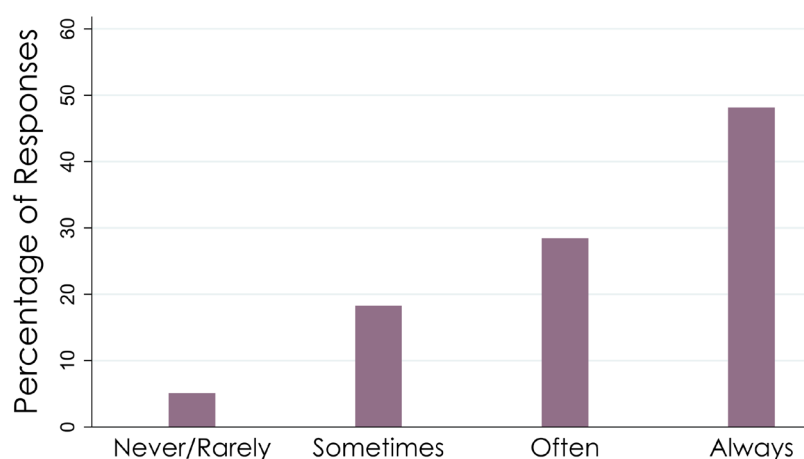


Figure 89. Percentage of secondary school student responses relating to frequency of being physically active for at least 1 hour a day in 2024.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

The following are descriptive analyses based on single items from the 2024 survey relating to aspects of secondary school student social environment, including social support, social behaviour, experiences of being bullied, concerns about and threats of violence, and sense of safety. These aspects of the social environment of students are essential for a sense of protection and resilience building and are important predictors of wellbeing.

SOCIAL SUPPORT

PERCEIVED FAMILY SUPPORT

The frequency with which secondary school students reported feeling loved and supported by family (green), and having a parent who encourages them (blue) and who listens to them (purple) is illustrated in Figure 90. The majority of students reported feeling loved and supported by family most of the time (always: 59.7%, often: 26.7%, combined often/always = 86.4%). 13.7% of students felt loved and supported by family only a minority of the time (sometimes: 11.5%, rarely: 2.2%).

Similarly, the majority of students reported having a parent who encourages them to do well most of the time (always: 64.0%, often: 24.0%, combined often/always = 88.0%). 12.0% of students reported having a parent who encourages them only a minority of the time (sometimes: 9.5%, rarely: 2.5%).

A little over half (52.3%) of the students reported always having a parent who listens, and 27.4% reported having a parent who listens often (combined often/always response = 79.7%). 20.3% of students reported having a parent who listens only a minority of the time (sometimes: 15.2%, rarely: 5.1%).

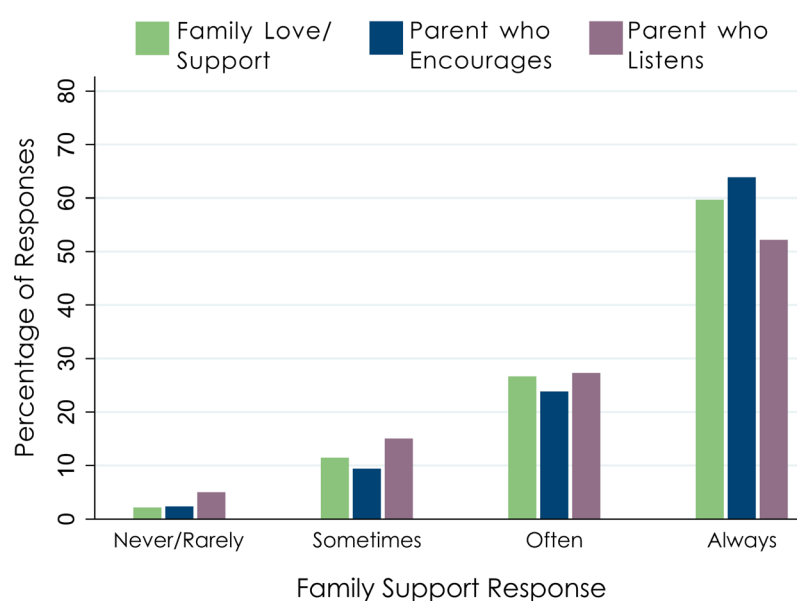


Figure 90. Percentage of secondary school student responses relating to frequency of feeling loved and supported by family (green), and having a parent who encourages them (blue) and who listens to them (purple) in 2024.

PERCEIVED TEACHER SUPPORT

Secondary school students reported the frequency with which they had a teacher at school who cares about them (Figure 91, green), and at least one teacher who encourages them (Figure 91, blue). 26.0% of students reported always having a teacher who cares, and 34.7% reported often experiencing this (combined often/always response = 60.7%).

32.9% of students reported always and 33.9% often having a teacher who encourages them (combined often/always response = 66.8%).

39.3% and 33.2% of students reported having a teacher who cares about or encourages them, respectively, a minority of the time (**teacher who cares**: sometimes = 28.1%, rarely = 11.2%; **teacher who encourages**: sometimes = 24.6%, rarely = 8.6%).

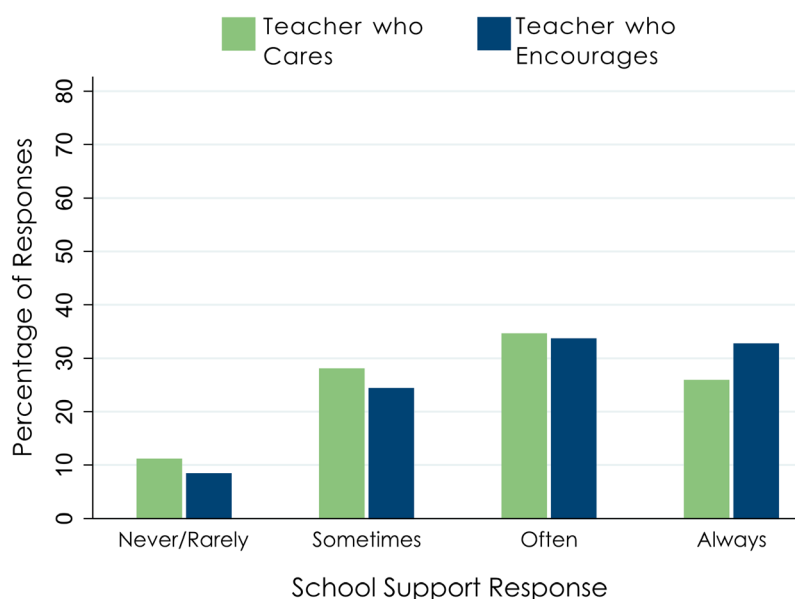


Figure 91. Percentage of secondary school student responses for having a teacher who cares about (green) and who encourages (blue) them in 2024.

PERCEIVED PEER SUPPORT

Secondary school students also reported their perceived peer support (Figure 92). Nearly half (49.0%) of students reported always being good at keeping friends, and a further 33.8% were often able to do this (Figure 92, green, combined often/always response = 82.8%).

The majority of students reported always (74.0%) or often (16.7%) having at least one good friend at school (Figure 92, blue; combined often/always response = 90.7%).

Students also reported always (33.2%) or often (40.1%) getting along with people who are different from themselves (Figure 92, purple, combined often/always response = 73.3%).

These results suggest that the majority of students experienced and engaged in these forms of peer support regularly in 2024.

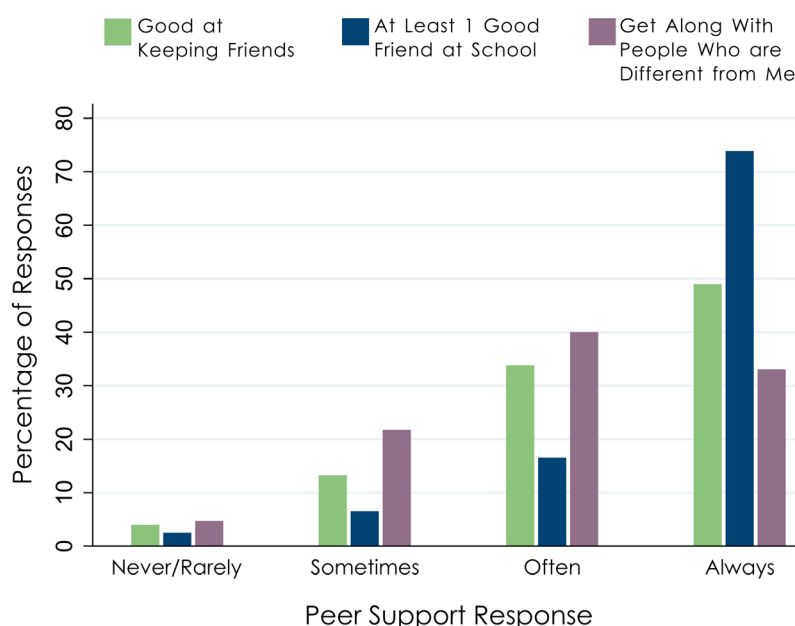


Figure 92. Percentage of secondary school student responses for being good at keeping friends (green), having at least one good friend at school (blue), and getting along with those who are different from themselves (purple) in 2024.

RECIPROCAL TRUST

The proportion of secondary school students who reported that they trust and are trusted by their friends is shown in Figure 93. 43.4% of students reported always experiencing reciprocal trust, and 37.2% reported reciprocal trust often (combined often/always response = 80.6%). 19.5% of students reported this only a minority of the time (sometimes: 15.6%, rarely: 3.9%).

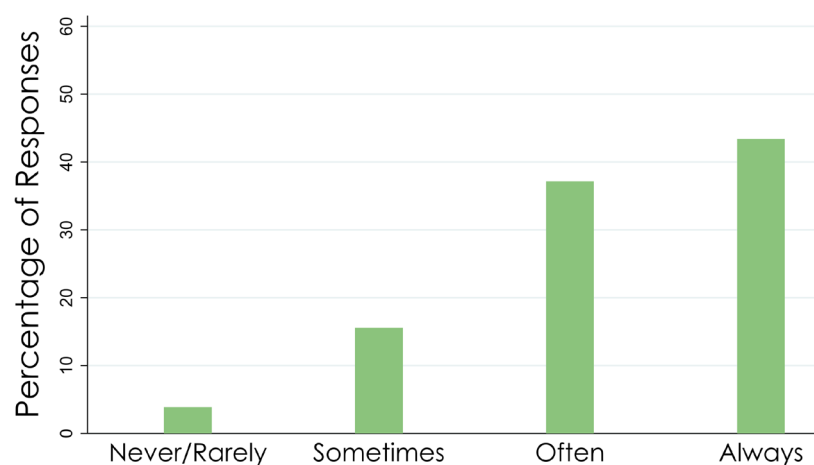


Figure 93. Percentage of secondary school student responses relating to frequency of trusting and being trusted by friends in 2024.

FORGIVENESS

The proportion of secondary school students who reported that they forgive others who are mean to them is shown in Figure 94. 18.4% of students always forgave others, and 32.9% did so often (combined often/always response = 51.3%). Almost half (48.8%) of students forgave others only a minority of the time (sometimes: 34.6%, rarely: 14.2%).

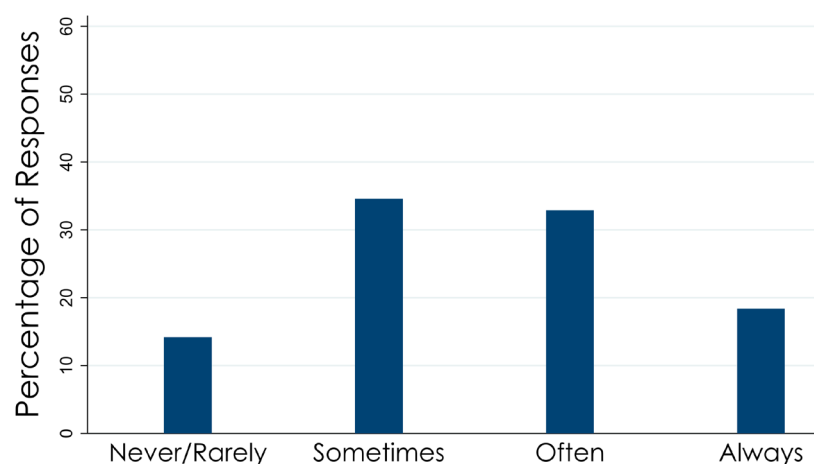


Figure 94. Percentage of secondary school student responses relating to forgiving others who are mean to them in 2024.

HELPFULNESS

The proportion of secondary school students who reported that they give their time to help others is shown in Figure 95. 20.1% of students were always helpful, and 43.7% were often so (combined often/always response = 63.8%). 36.1% of students reported giving their time to help others only a minority of the time (sometimes: 31.1%, rarely: 5.0%).

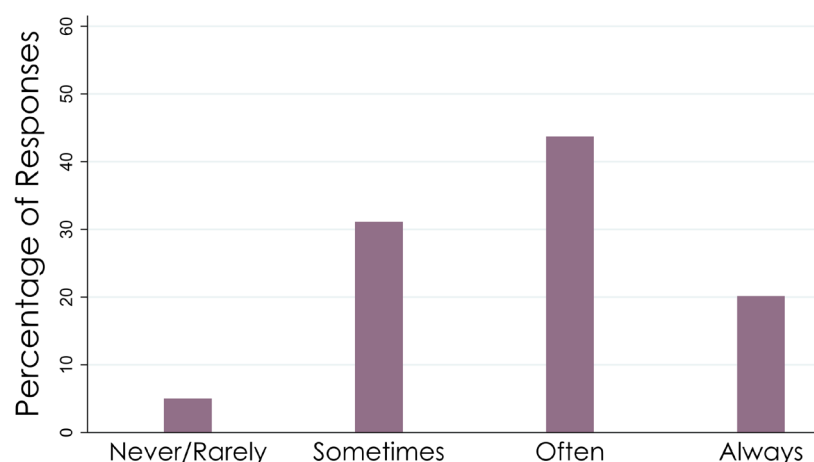


Figure 95. Percentage of secondary school student responses relating to giving their time to help others in 2024.

EXPERIENCE OF BEING BULLIED

Secondary school student reports of being bullied in 2024 are illustrated in Figure 96.

The majority of secondary school students reported never being bullied at school (green, 71.9%), online (blue, 83.4%), or socially/emotionally such as by being deliberately left out or having rumours spread about them (purple, 65.4%).

However, 28.1% of students reported experiencing frequent bullying at school, from monthly to daily (monthly: 15.6%, weekly: 7.0%, daily: 5.5%). 34.6% of students reported frequent social/emotional bullying (monthly: 21.3%, weekly: 8.0%, daily: 5.3%), and 16.6% of students reported frequent bullying online (monthly: 10.2%, weekly: 3.5%, daily: 2.9%).

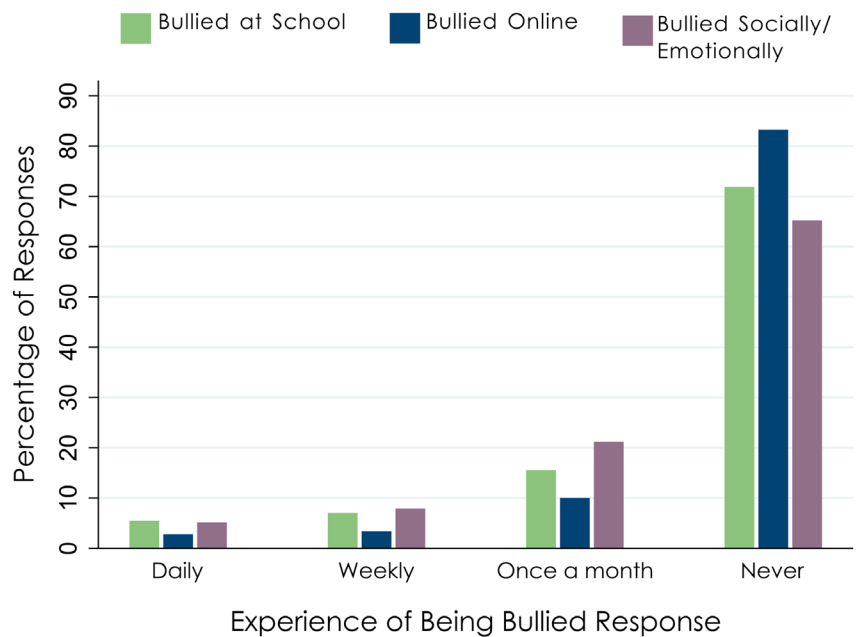


Figure 96. Percentage of secondary school student responses for experience of being bullied at school (green), online (blue), and socially/emotionally (purple) in 2024.

CONCERNS ABOUT & THREATS OF VIOLENCE

Secondary school students were asked about carrying a weapon in response to their concerns about violence, and their own threatening behaviour.

CARRIED WEAPON FOR PROTECTION

The frequency with which secondary school students had carried a weapon in the previous month to protect themselves is shown in Figure 97. The majority of students (85.8%) had never carried a weapon for protection in the last month. However, a significant minority (14.2%) had done so once (7.5%), weekly (2.4%), or daily (4.3%) in the last month.

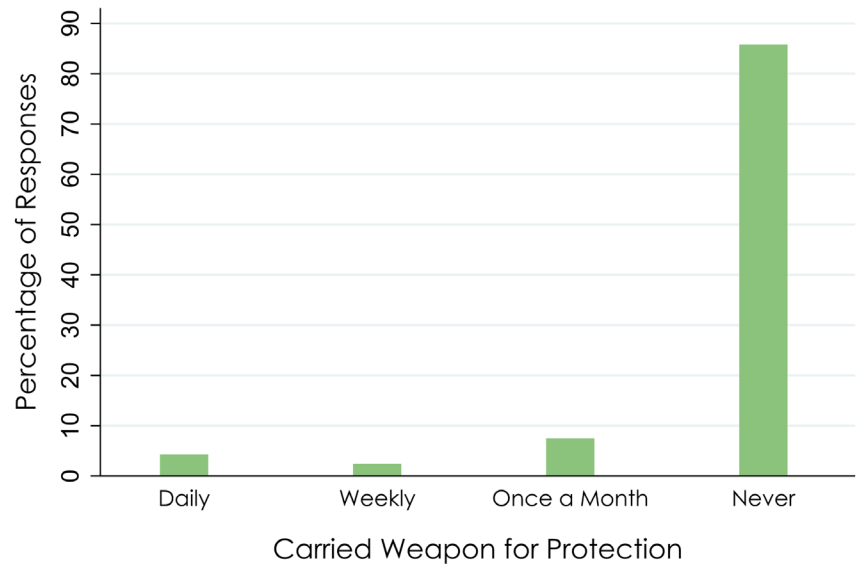


Figure 97. Percentage of secondary school student responses regarding the frequency with which they had carried a weapon to protect themselves in the last month in 2024.

THREATENING OTHERS

Secondary school students were also asked to report the frequency with which they had threatened to physically hurt someone in the last month (Figure 98). The majority of students (77.8%) had never threatened physical harm in the last month. However, a significant minority (22.2%) had threatened physical harm once (12.4%), weekly (4.5%), and daily (5.3%) in the last month.

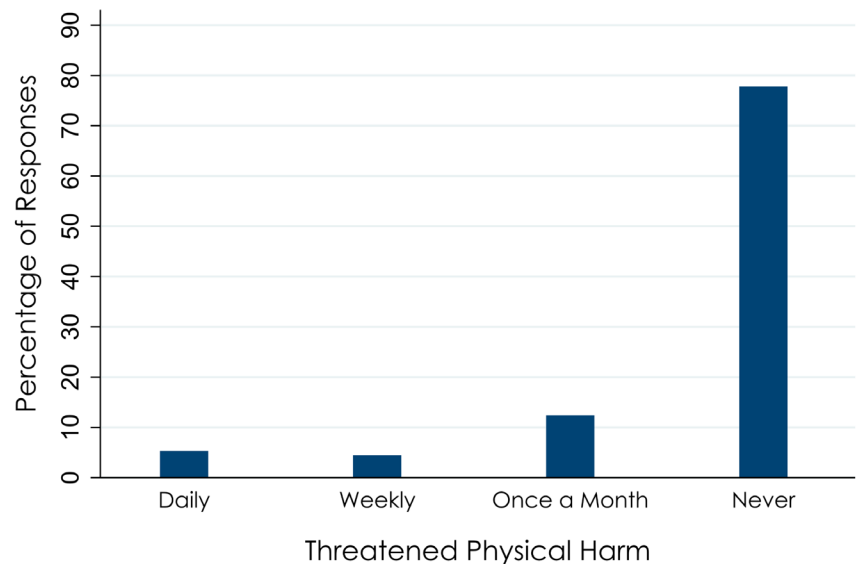


Figure 98. Percentage of secondary school student responses regarding the frequency with which they had threatened to physically hurt someone in the last month in 2024.

SAFETY AT SCHOOL

The frequency with which secondary school students reported feeling safe at school in 2024 is shown in Figure 99. 34.0% of students reported always feeling safe in school, and 39.1% reported feeling safe often (combined often/always response = 73.0%). 27.0% reported feeling safe only a minority of the time (sometimes: 20.3%, never/rarely: 6.7%).

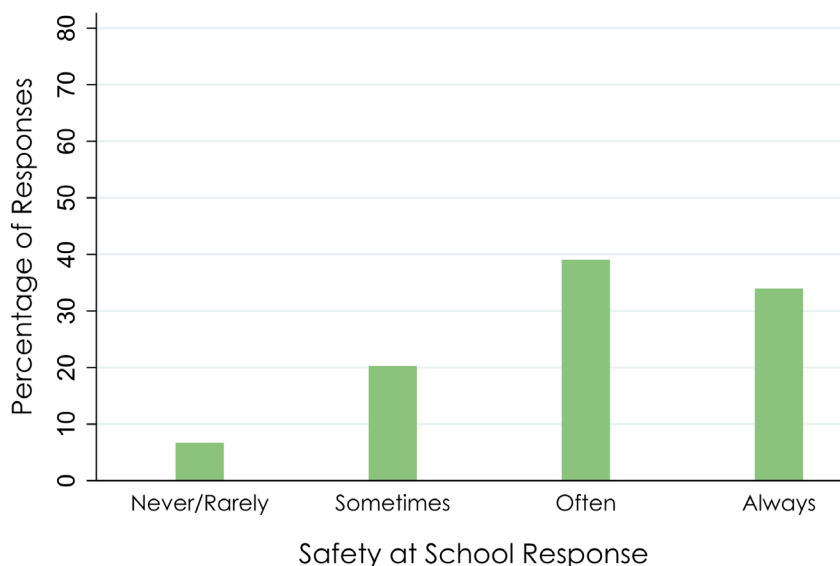


Figure 99. Percentage of secondary school student responses relating to frequency of feeling safe at school in 2024.

SAFETY IN HOME ENVIRONMENT

The frequency with which secondary school students reported feeling safe at home (blue) and in their neighbourhood (purple) is shown in Figure 100. Results suggest that the majority of students felt safe at home most of the time (always: 68.0%, often: 22.3%, combined often/always = 90.3%). 9.7% of students felt safe at home only a minority of the time (sometimes: 7.6%, never/rarely: 2.1%).

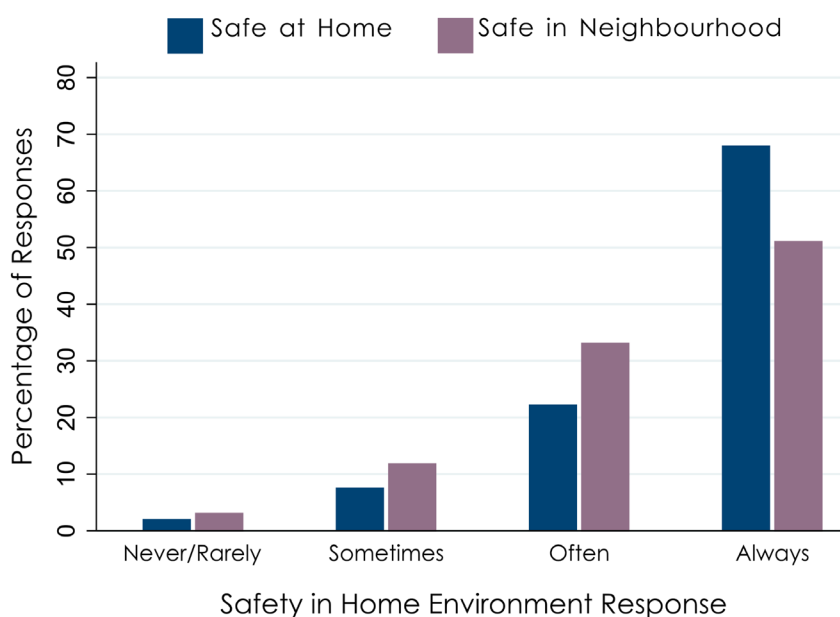


Figure 100. Percentage of secondary school student responses relating to frequency of feeling safe at home (blue) and in their neighbourhood (purple) in 2024.

Around half (51.3%) of the students reported always feeling safe in their neighbourhood, and a further 33.3% reported often feeling safe (combined often/always response = 84.6%). 15.4% of students reported feeling safe only a minority of the time (sometimes: 12.1%, never/rarely: 3.3%).

RISKY BEHAVIOURS








The following provides a summary of substance and social media use among secondary school students from 2024, as these pose real or potential (in the case of social media) risks to student health and mental wellbeing.

SUBSTANCE USE

All secondary students were asked about their use of vaping/e-cigarettes, cigarettes, alcohol, and illegal drugs. Response options included: never/rarely; sometimes; often; and almost always/always. For this report, responses of often and almost always/always were grouped and classified as frequent use.

Of the secondary students surveyed, 48.2% were in lower secondary (grades 7 to 8, n=34,707 students), 34.7% were in middle secondary (grades 9 to 10, n=24,948 students), and 17.1% were in upper secondary (grades 11 to 12, n=12,299 students). Responses are reported separately for these school grade groups in Table 4 below. Frequent substance use was reported by between 1% and 2% of lower secondary, between 4% and 8% of middle secondary, and between 6% and 16 % of upper secondary students.

Table 4. Frequency of substance use among lower, middle, and upper secondary students in 2024.

LOWER SECONDARY							
95%	Never or rarely vape	98%	Never or rarely smoke cigarettes	91%	Never or rarely drink alcohol	98%	Never or rarely use illegal drugs
							
2%	Often or always vape	1%	Often or always smoke cigarettes	2%	Often or always drink alcohol	2%	Often or always use illegal drugs
MIDDLE SECONDARY							
87%	Never or rarely vape	94%	Never or rarely smoke cigarettes	77%	Never or rarely drink alcohol	93%	Never or rarely use illegal drugs
							
7%	Often or always vape	4%	Often or always smoke cigarettes	8%	Often or always drink alcohol	4%	Often or always use illegal drugs
UPPER SECONDARY							
82%	Never or rarely vape	90%	Never or rarely smoke cigarettes	56%	Never or rarely drink alcohol	88%	Never or rarely use illegal drugs
							
11%	Often or always vape	6%	Often or always smoke cigarettes	16%	Often or always drink alcohol	7%	Often or always use illegal drugs

VAPING

Figure 101 illustrates the proportion of students reporting frequently (often or always) vaping/using e-cigarettes among students in lower (grades 7 to 8; green), middle (grades 9 to 10; blue), and upper (grades 11-12; purple) secondary school, for each gender category.

Among lower and middle secondary students, male and female students reported similar risk of vaping, both of which were significantly lower than the risk for gender diverse students (**lower secondary**: male: 2.1%, female: 2.0%, gender diverse: 8.6%; **middle secondary**: male: 6.8%, female 7.0%, gender diverse 17.2%). Among upper secondary students, females (9.7%) reported slightly but significantly lower risk than males (11.0%). Gender diverse students reported significantly greater risk than both females and males (30.8%).

The proportion of secondary school students frequently vaping increased significantly across the grade groupings for all gender categories. Among males and females, the risk of vaping was around 3.5 times higher among middle relative to lower secondary, and around 1.5 times higher among upper relative to middle secondary. The risk of frequent vaping was around 5 times higher among upper relative to lower secondary for males and females. Among gender diverse students, the risk of vaping nearly doubled from lower to middle to upper secondary and was 3.6 times higher among upper relative to lower secondary.

Among those who reported *sometimes* vaping (not depicted), males reported lower risk than females in all three grade groupings. Gender diverse students reported significantly higher risk than males and females in lower secondary, similar risk to males and females in middle secondary, and significantly lower risk than females but not males in upper secondary (sometimes vape: **lower secondary**: male: 2.3%, female: 3.4%, gender diverse: 4.7%; **middle secondary**: male: 4.2%, female: 6.4%, gender diverse: 5.3%; **upper secondary**: male: 6.2%, female: 7.8%, gender diverse 5.2%).

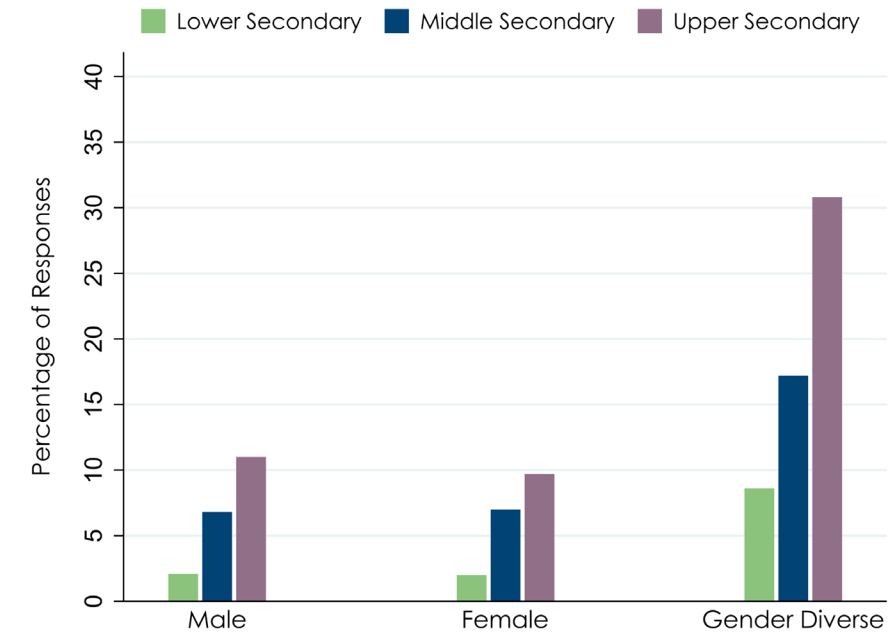


Figure 101. Percentage of students in 2024 reporting frequently (often or always) vaping among students in lower (grades 7-8; green), middle (grades 9-10; blue), and upper (grades 11-12; purple) secondary school, by gender.

CIGARETTE SMOKING

Figure 102 illustrates the proportion of students reporting frequently (often or always) smoking cigarettes among students in lower (grades 7 to 8; green), middle (grades 9 to 10; blue), and upper (grades 11-12; purple) secondary school, for each gender category.

Among all three grade groupings, female students reported significantly lower risk of frequent cigarette smoking than both male and gender diverse students. Male students also reported significantly lower risk than gender diverse students in all three grade groupings (**lower secondary**: male: 1.5%, female: 0.8%, gender diverse: 7.9%; **middle secondary**: male: 4.8%, female 2.3%, gender diverse 15.2%; **upper secondary**: male: 6.9%, female: 3.0%, gender diverse: 28.1%).

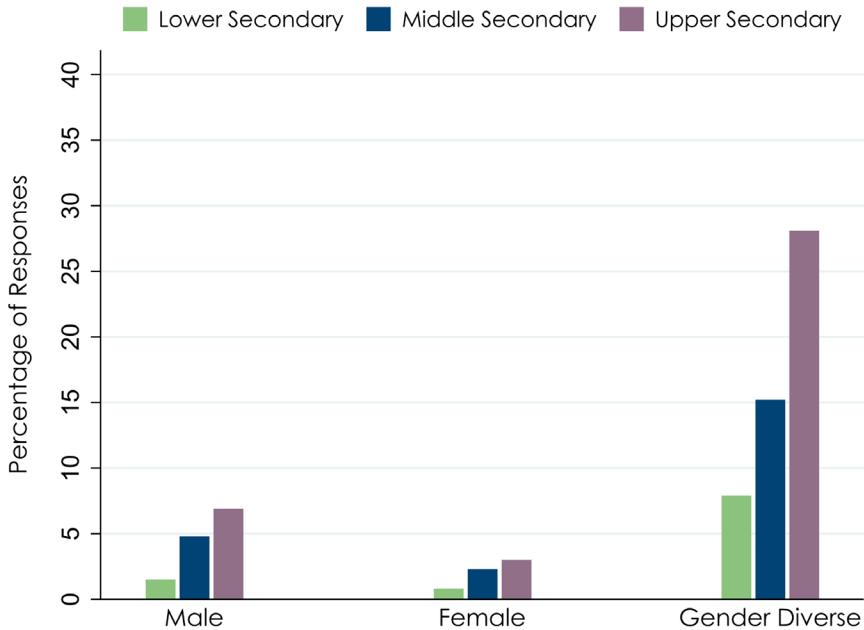


Figure 102. Percentage of students in 2024 reporting frequently (often or always) smoking cigarettes among students in lower (grades 7-8; green), middle (grades 9-10; blue), and upper (grades 11-12; purple) secondary school, by gender.

The proportion of secondary school students frequently smoking cigarettes increased significantly across all three grade groupings for males and females, being around 3 times higher among middle relative to lower secondary, and around 1.4 times higher among upper relative to middle secondary. The risk of frequent cigarette smoking was around 3 times higher among upper relative to lower secondary for males and females. Among gender diverse students, the risk of frequent cigarette smoking also increased significantly across all three grade groupings, nearly doubling from lower to middle to upper secondary. The risk of frequent cigarette smoking was 3.6 times higher among upper relative to lower secondary for gender diverse students.

Among those who reported *sometimes* smoking cigarettes (not depicted), male and female students reported similar risk in lower and upper secondary, and males reported significantly higher risk in middle secondary. Gender diverse students reported higher risk of sometimes smoking in lower and middle secondary, and similar risk in upper secondary relative to male and female students (sometimes smoke cigarettes: **lower secondary**: male: 0.8%, female: 0.7%, gender diverse: 2.7%; **middle secondary**: male: 2.3%, female: 2.7%, gender diverse: 3.7%; **upper secondary**: male: 4.5%, female: 4.2%, gender diverse: 3.5%).

ALCOHOL

Figure 103 illustrates the proportion of students reporting frequently (often or always) drinking alcohol among students in lower (grades 7 to 8; green), middle (grades 9 to 10; blue), and upper (grades 11-12; purple) secondary school, for each gender category.

Among all three grade groupings, female students reported significantly lower risk of frequently drinking alcohol than both male and gender diverse students. Male students also reported significantly lower risk than gender diverse students in all three grade groupings (**lower secondary**: male: 2.5%, female: 1.7%, gender diverse: 9.5%; **middle secondary**: male: 8.1%, female: 6.5%, gender diverse: 20.9%; **upper secondary**: male: 16.9%, female: 12.9%, gender diverse: 35.8%).

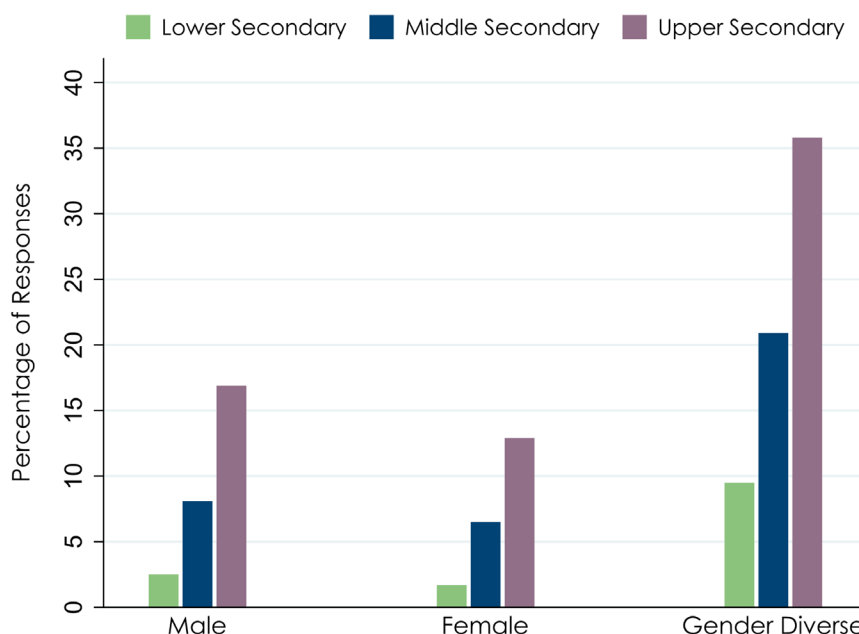


Figure 103. Percentage of students in 2024 reporting frequently (often or always) drinking alcohol among students in lower (grades 7-8; green), middle (grades 9-10; blue), and upper (grades 11-12; purple) secondary school, by gender.

The proportion of secondary school students frequently drinking alcohol increased significantly across all three grade groupings for all gender categories. Among males and females, the risk of frequently drinking alcohol more than tripled from lower to middle secondary, and approximately doubled from middle to upper secondary. The risk of frequently drinking alcohol was 7 to 8 times higher among upper relative to lower secondary males and females. Among gender diverse students, the risk of frequently drinking alcohol approximately doubled from lower to middle secondary and nearly doubled (was 1.7 times higher) among upper relative to middle secondary. The risk of frequently drinking alcohol was nearly 4 times higher in upper relative to lower secondary among gender diverse students.

Among those who reported *sometimes* drinking alcohol (not depicted), male and female students reported similar risk to each other, and lower risk than gender diverse students in lower secondary (male: 7.0%, female: 6.8%, gender diverse: 13.0%). In middle secondary, males reported significantly lower risk than females, and gender diverse students reported similar risk to that of males and females (male: 13.9%, female: 16.1%, gender diverse: 15.5%). In upper secondary, gender diverse students reported significantly lower risk of sometimes drinking alcohol than male and female students. Males also reported significantly lower risk than females (male: 25.6%, female: 31.4%, gender diverse: 18.3%).

ILLEGAL DRUGS

Figure 104 illustrates the proportion of students reporting frequently (often or always) using illegal drugs among students in lower (grades 7 to 8; green), middle (grades 9 to 10; blue), and upper (grades 11-12; purple) secondary school, for each gender category.

Among all three grade groupings, female students reported significantly lower risk of frequently using illegal drugs than both male and gender diverse students. Male students also reported significantly lower risk than gender diverse students in all three grade groupings

(lower secondary: male: 1.7%,

female: 0.8%, gender diverse: 8.3%; **middle secondary:** male: 5.4%, female 2.7%, gender diverse: 16.3%;

upper secondary: male: 8.1%, female: 3.5%, gender diverse: 28.7%).

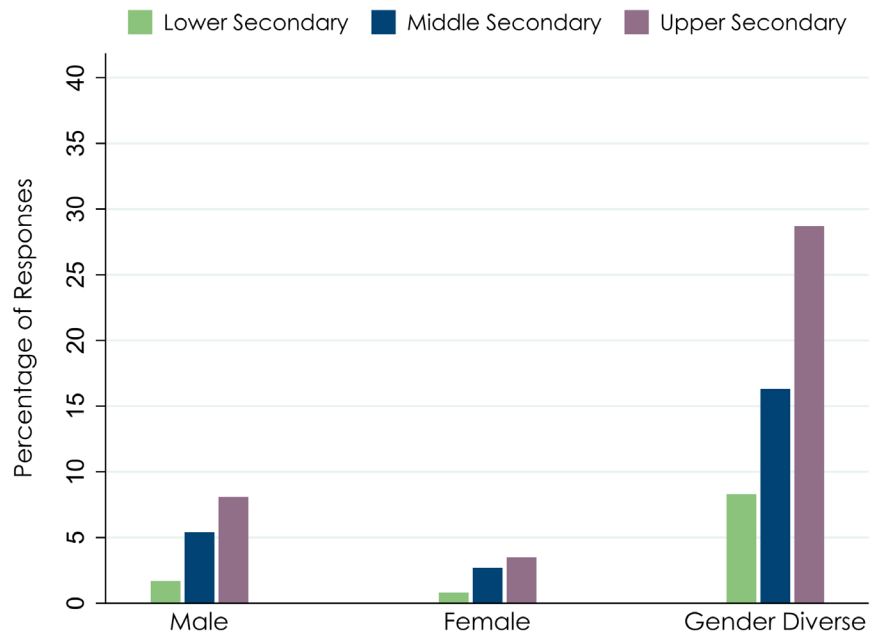


Figure 104. Percentage of students in 2024 reporting frequently (often or always) using illegal drugs among students in lower (grades 7-8; green), middle (grades 9-10; blue), and upper (grades 11-12; purple) secondary school, by gender.

The proportion of secondary school students frequently using illegal drugs increased significantly across all three grade groupings for all gender categories. Among males and females, the risk of frequently using illegal drugs more than tripled from lower to middle secondary and was around 1.5 times higher among upper relative to middle secondary. The risk of frequent illegal drug use was more than 4 times higher among upper relative to lower secondary for males and females. Among gender diverse students, the risk of frequent illegal drug use doubled from lower to middle secondary, and nearly doubled (was 1.8 times higher) from middle to upper secondary. The risk of frequent illegal drug use was 3.6 times higher among upper relative to lower secondary for gender diverse students.

Among those who reported *sometimes* using illegal drugs (not depicted), male and female students reported similar risk to each other, and significantly lower risk than gender diverse students, in lower and middle secondary (**lower secondary:** male: 0.9%, female: 0.7%, gender diverse: 3.2%; **middle secondary:** male: 2.6%, female: 2.8%, gender diverse: 4.4%). In upper secondary, all gender categories reported similar risk of sometimes using illegal drugs (male: 5.4%, female: 5.4%, gender diverse: 4.2%).

SOCIAL MEDIA USE

A random subset of secondary students (n=8,852) were asked about how frequently they used social media for **more than two hours** each day. Among these students, 48.9% were in lower secondary (grades 7 to 8, n=4,330), 34.0% were in middle secondary (grades 9 to 10, n=3,009), and 17.1% were in upper secondary (grades 11 to 12, n=1,513).

Response options for social media use over 2 hours in a day included: almost every day, 2 to 3 times a week, once a week, less than once a week, or not at all. For this report, responses of 'not at all' and 'less than once a week' were grouped and classified as rarely/never.

In lower secondary, 45.8% of students reported using social media for more than 2 hours almost every day, and 57.5% of middle and 59.3% of upper secondary students reported this frequent use. Regarding infrequent social media use, 23.9% of lower secondary students reported never or rarely using social media for more than 2 hours a day, whereas 14.4% of middle secondary and 12.2% of upper secondary students reported this.

GENDER DIFFERENCES IN SOCIAL MEDIA USE FOR DIFFERENT SCHOOL GRADES

Figure 105 illustrates the proportion of students who reported using social media for more than 2 hours a day, almost every day (frequent use), among students in lower (grades 7 to 8; green), middle (grades 9 to 10; blue), and upper (grades 11 to 12; purple) secondary school, for each gender category.

Males reported significantly lower risk of frequent social media use than females across all three grade groupings. Male students also reported lower risk than gender diverse students in middle and upper secondary, and similar risk in lower

secondary. Female and gender diverse students reported similar risk of frequent social media use in middle and upper secondary, and females reported greater risk than gender diverse students in lower secondary (**lower secondary**: male: 39.9%, female: 51.8%, gender diverse: 43.1%; **middle secondary**: male: 49.3%, female: 64.8%, gender diverse: 61.9%; **upper secondary**: male: 51.2%, female: 64.9%, gender diverse: 72.1%).

The proportion of secondary school students frequently using social media increased significantly from lower to middle secondary and was similar between middle and upper secondary for all gender categories. Among males and females, the risk of frequently using social media was 1.3 times higher in upper secondary relative to lower secondary, and for gender diverse students it was 1.7 times higher.

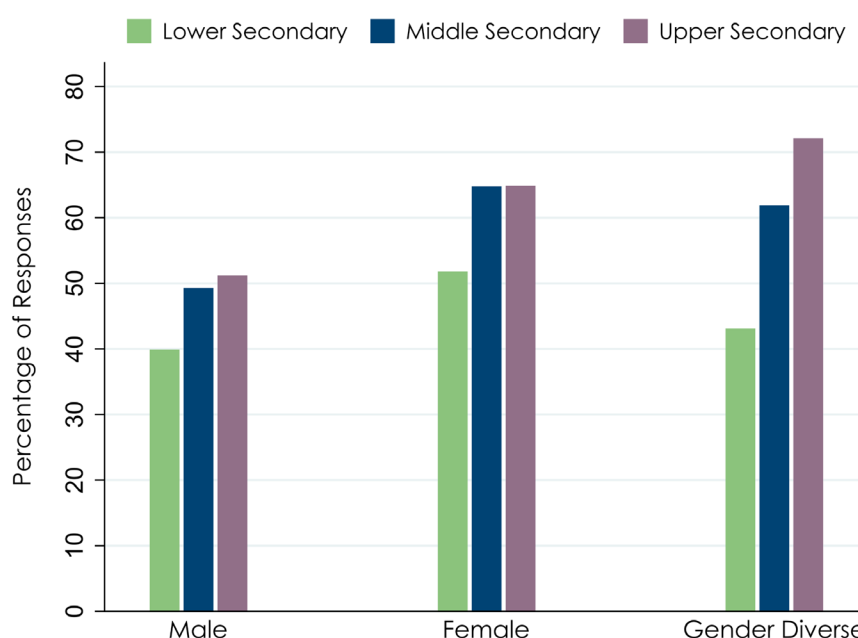


Figure 105. Percentage of students in 2024 reporting using social media for more than 2 hours a day, almost every day, among students in lower (grades 7-8; green), middle (grades 9-10; blue), and upper (grades 11-12; purple) secondary school, by gender.

FIRST NATIONS SNAPSHOT



The following provides a snapshot of data from the 2024 survey relating specifically to the wellbeing of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children.

Of the secondary students surveyed, 6.9% (n=4,960) identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. First Nations secondary students were on average 13.7 years old (SD=1.73), with 47.7% identifying as male, 45.8% as female, and 6.4% self-reporting as "Other" or preferring not to report their gender identity. Due to the relatively small number of students (n=318) not identifying as male or female, wellbeing comparisons are restricted to male and female students to avoid misrepresentations at a national level based on smaller sample sizes.

DEPRESSION

On average, depression scores in 2024 for all participating First Nations secondary students were in the mid-range (M=4.19, SD=2.00) with 44.1% of students reporting low symptom levels, 29.6% reporting mid-range symptom levels, and 26.4% reporting high symptom levels.

MALE AND FEMALE DIFFERENCES IN DEPRESSION

The proportion of male and female students reporting low, mid, and high depression symptoms is illustrated in Figure 106. A higher proportion of females (30.5%) than males (19.4%) reported high-range symptom levels.

Females (M=4.44, SD=1.96) also reported a significantly higher mean depression score than males (M=3.79, SD=1.90).

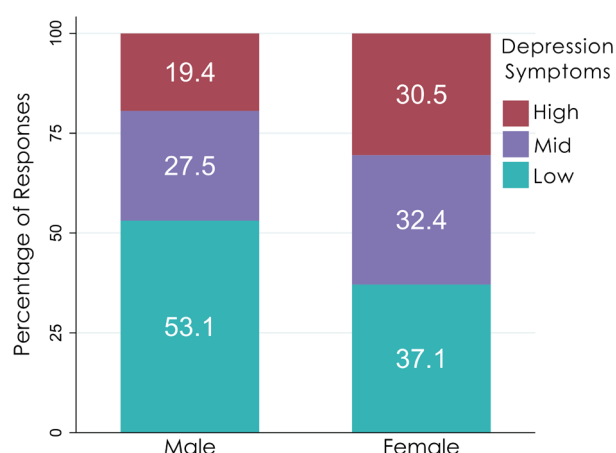


Figure 106. Proportion of male and female First Nations secondary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of depression symptoms in 2024.

ANXIETY

On average, anxiety scores in 2024 for all participating First Nations secondary school students were in the mid-range (M=4.48, SD=2.17) with 39.8% of students reporting low symptom levels, 26.2% reporting mid-range symptom levels, and 34.0% reporting high symptom levels.

MALE AND FEMALE DIFFERENCES IN ANXIETY

The proportion of male and female students reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety is illustrated in Figure 107. 41.9% of females and 23.2% of males reported high-range symptom levels, with the proportion of females significantly higher than that of males. Females (M=4.94, SD=2.10) also reported a significantly higher mean anxiety score than males (M=3.89, SD=2.03).

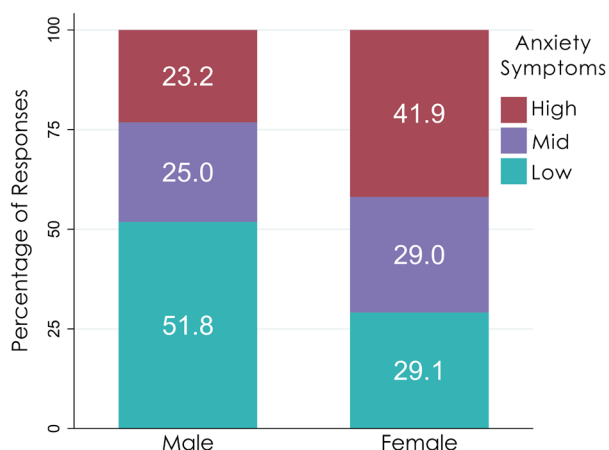


Figure 107. Proportion of male and female First Nations secondary school students reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety symptoms in 2024.

HOPEFULNESS

On average, hopefulness scores in 2024 for all participating First Nations secondary school students were in the mid-range ($M=20.17$, $SD=7.16$) with 44.1% of students reporting low hopefulness, 38.8% reporting mid-range hopefulness, and 17.1% reporting high hopefulness.

MALE AND FEMALE DIFFERENCES IN HOPEFULNESS

The proportion of male and female students reporting low, mid, and high hopefulness is illustrated in Figure 108. 36.3% of male students and around half (50.3%) of female students reported low hopefulness, with the proportion of females significantly higher than that of males.

Females ($M=19.20$, $SD=6.47$) also reported a significantly lower mean hopefulness score than males ($M=21.46$, $SD=7.31$).

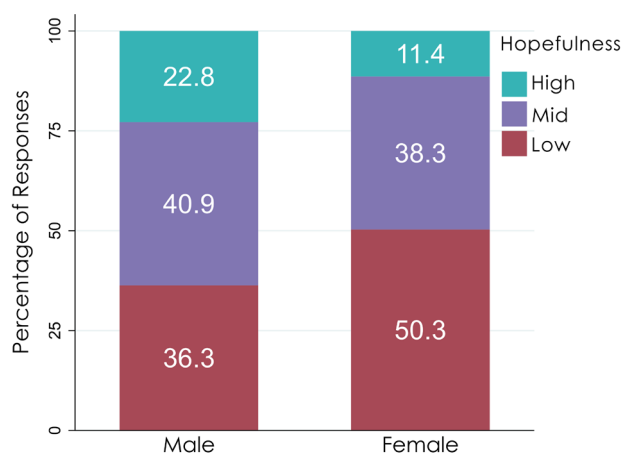


Figure 108. Proportion of male and female First Nations secondary school students reporting low, mid, and high hopefulness in 2024.

LIFE SATISFACTION

On average, life satisfaction scores in 2024 for all participating First Nations secondary school students were in the mid-range, suggesting students were doing OK on average ($M=5.49$, $SD=1.67$). Around a quarter of students reported that they were struggling (25.2%) or thriving (27.9%), and 46.8% reported that they were doing OK.

MALE AND FEMALE DIFFERENCES IN LIFE SATISFACTION

The proportion of male and female students reporting themselves to be struggling, doing OK, and thriving is illustrated in Figure 109. A greater proportion of females (28.1%) than males (19.6%) reported themselves to be struggling.

Females ($M=5.33$, $SD=1.55$) also reported a significantly lower mean life satisfaction score than males ($M=5.76$, $SD=1.61$).

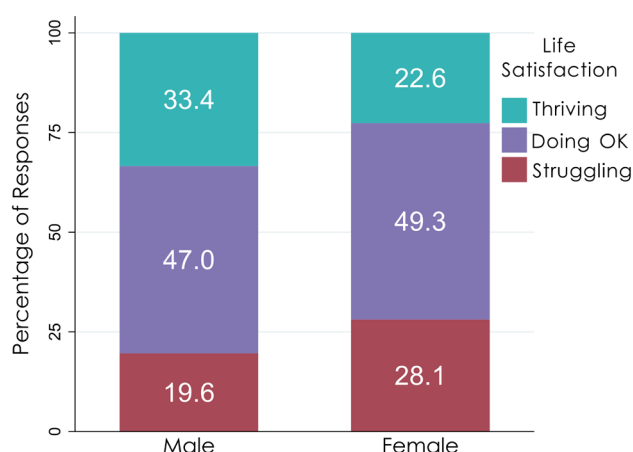


Figure 109. Proportion of male and female First Nations secondary school students reporting themselves to be struggling, doing OK, and thriving in 2024.

DISENGAGEMENT

On average, disengagement scores in 2024 for all participating First Nations secondary school students were in the mid-range ($M=10.48$, $SD=2.59$), with 23.4% of students reporting low and 27.7% reporting mid-range levels of disengagement, and nearly half (48.8%) of students reporting high disengagement.

MALE AND FEMALE DIFFERENCES IN DISENGAGEMENT

The proportion of male and female students reporting low, mid, and high disengagement is illustrated in Figure 110. 55.0% of females reported high disengagement. 42.6% of males reported high disengagement, which was a significantly smaller proportion than that of females.

Females ($M=10.84$, $SD=2.59$) reported a significantly higher mean disengagement score than males ($M=10.10$, $SD=2.50$).

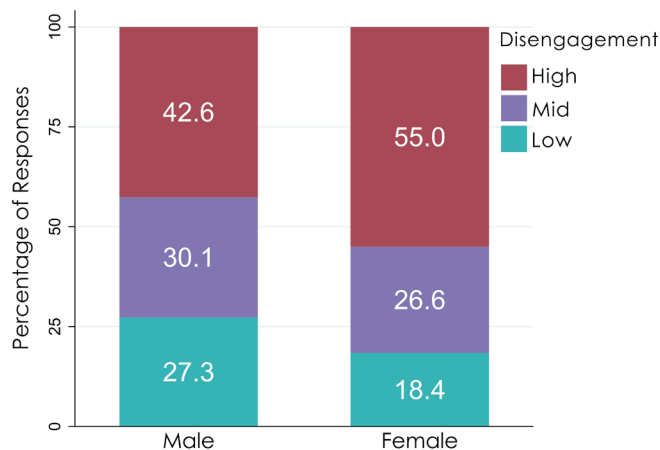


Figure 110. Proportion of male and female First Nations secondary school students reporting low, mid, and high disengagement in 2024.

CONNECTION TO NATURE

On average, connection to nature scores in 2024 for all participating First Nations secondary school students were in the mid-range ($M=3.29$, $SD=1.18$) with 24.2% of students reporting a low connection to nature, 30.1% of students reporting a mid-range connection to nature, and 45.7% students reporting a high connection to nature.

MALE AND FEMALE DIFFERENCES IN CONNECTION TO NATURE

The proportion of male and female students reporting low, mid, and high connection to nature is illustrated in Figure 111. A similar proportion of males (23.7%) and females (22.5%) reported a low connection to nature. A significantly higher proportion of males (48.6%) than females (43.0%) reported a high connection to nature.

Males ($M=3.34$, $SD=1.19$) and females ($M=3.28$, $SD=1.10$) reported similar connection to nature mean scores.

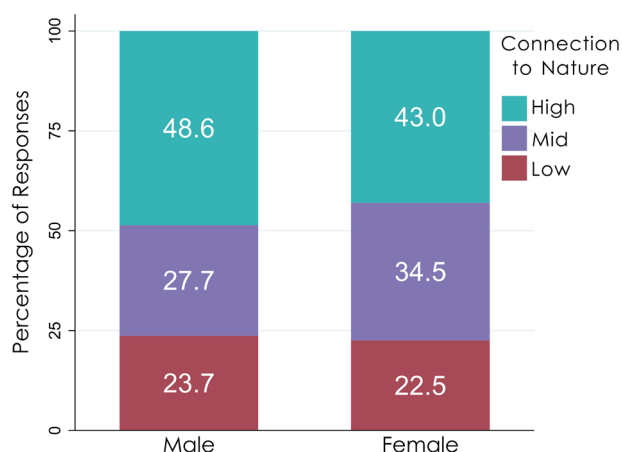


Figure 111. Proportion of male and female First Nations secondary school students reporting low, mid, and high connection to nature in 2024.

REGIONAL SNAPSHOT

The following provides a snapshot of data from the 2024 survey relating to Australian regions classified according to geographical remoteness and population size as per the Modified Monash Model (MMM).⁸ We combined the MMM classifications to report the following regions: remote, rural towns, regional centres, and metropolitan (metro).

DEPRESSION

Depression symptom levels as reported by students living in different regions are illustrated in Figure 112. A similar proportion of students living in remote areas (20.0%), rural towns (19.8%), and regional centres (19.9%) reported high depression symptom levels. A significantly smaller proportion of students living in metro regions (16.6%) reported this.

Although mean scores were in the low range for all regions, students living in metro areas ($M=3.73$, $SD=1.74$) reported a significantly lower mean depression score than students living in remote areas ($M=3.91$, $SD=1.86$), rural towns ($M=3.87$, $SD=1.84$), and regional centres ($M=3.85$, $SD=1.83$). Students in the latter three regions reported similar mean depression symptom scores.

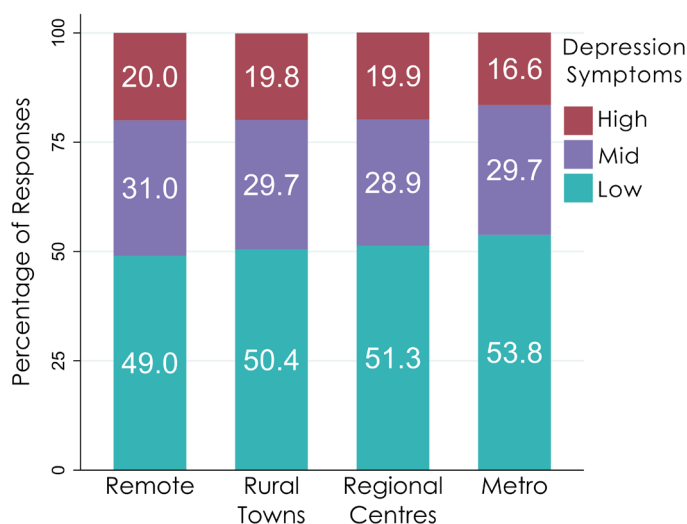


Figure 112. Proportion of secondary school students living in remote, rural towns, regional centres, and metropolitan (metro) regions reporting low, mid, and high levels of depression symptoms in 2024.

ANXIETY

Anxiety symptom levels as reported by students living in different regions are illustrated in Figure 113. A similar proportion of students living in remote areas (26.8%), rural towns (29.2%), and regional centres (29.5%) reported high symptom levels. The proportion of students living in metro regions (25.9%) reporting this was significantly lower than that of students living in rural towns and regional centres.

Mean scores were in the mid-range for all regions (remote: $M=4.17$, $SD=2.06$; rural town: $M=4.29$, $SD=2.07$; regional centre: $M=4.31$, $SD=2.06$; metro: $M=4.18$, $SD=1.98$). The metro mean anxiety score was significantly lower than that of rural towns and regional centres, and the mean remote area score was also significantly lower than that for regional centres.

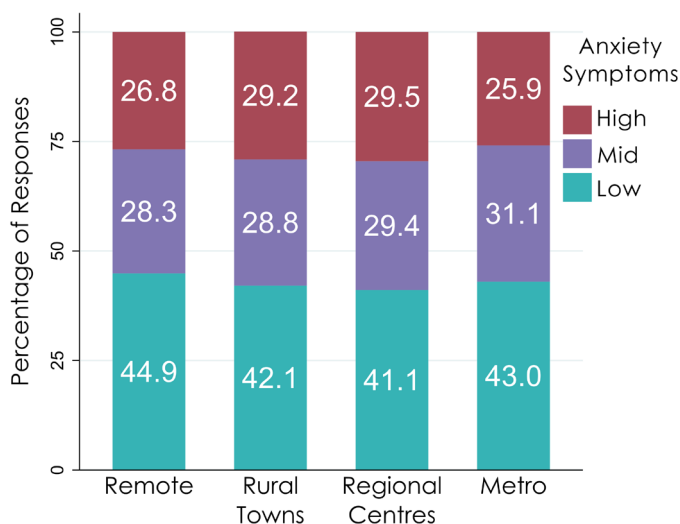


Figure 113. Proportion of secondary school students living in remote, rural towns, regional centres, and metropolitan (metro) regions reporting low, mid, and high levels of anxiety symptoms in 2024.

⁸ Australian Government Department of Health and Aged Care (2023, 12 December). *Modified Monash Model*. <https://www.health.gov.au/topics/rural-health-workforce/classifications/mmm>

HOPEFULNESS

Hopefulness levels as reported by students living in different regions are illustrated in Figure 114. A similar proportion of students living in remote areas (37.1%) and rural towns (34.9%) reported low hopefulness. A slightly but significantly smaller proportion of students living in regional centres (33.0%) reported this. A significantly smaller proportion of students living in a metro region (26.8%) relative to all other regions reported low hopefulness.

Although mean scores were in the mid-range for all regions, students living in metro areas ($M=22.66$, $SD=6.37$) reported a significantly higher mean score than students living in remote areas ($M=21.25$, $SD=6.86$), rural towns ($M=21.52$, $SD=6.70$), and regional centres ($M=21.74$, $SD=6.48$). Students in regional centres reported a slightly but significantly higher mean hope score than students living in remote areas. Students living in rural towns reported a similar hope score to those living in regional centres and remote areas.

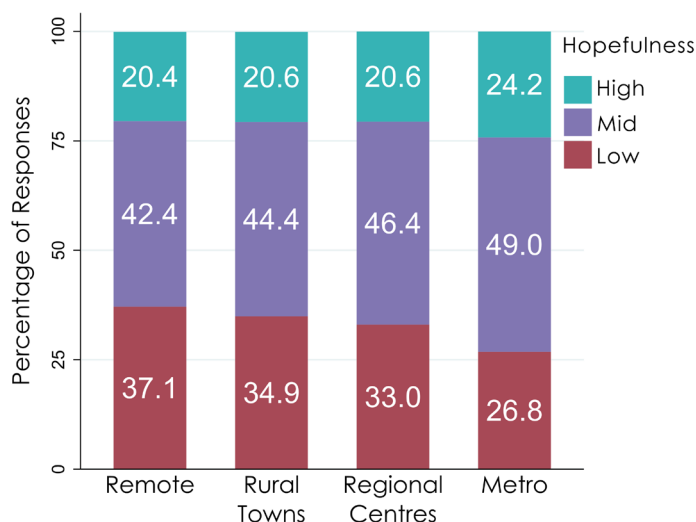


Figure 114. Proportion of secondary school students living in remote, rural towns, regional centres, and metropolitan (metro) regions reporting low, mid, and high hopefulness in 2024.

LIFE SATISFACTION

Life satisfaction as reported by students living in different regions is illustrated in Figure 115. A similar proportion of students in metro (18.2%) and remote (18.9%) regions reported that they were struggling. The proportion of students in rural towns (20.3%) and regional centres (19.6%) reporting this were similar to each other and significantly higher than that of students living in metro regions.

Mean scores suggested students were doing OK in each region (remote: $M=5.71$, $SD=1.62$; rural towns: $M=5.64$, $SD=1.50$; regional centres: $M=5.64$, $SD=1.42$; Metro: $M=5.68$, $SD=1.39$). Students living in rural towns reported slightly but significantly lower mean scores than those living in metro areas. All other mean scores were not statistically significantly different.

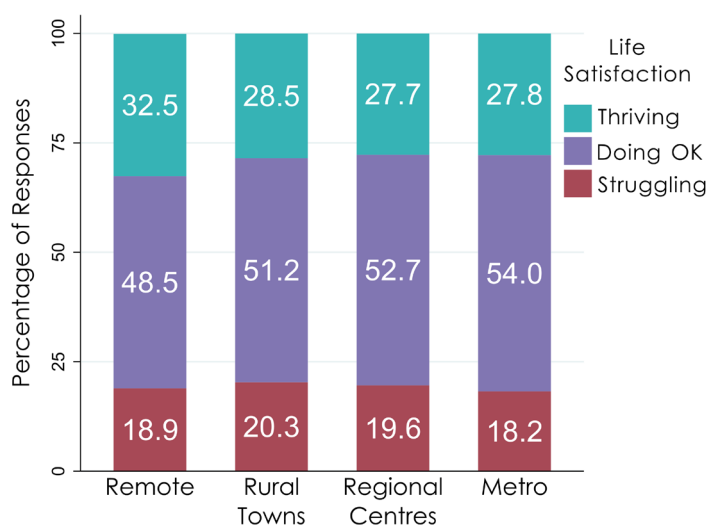


Figure 115. Proportion of secondary school students living in remote, rural towns, regional centres, and metropolitan (metro) regions reporting themselves to be struggling, doing OK, and thriving in 2024.

Disengagement

Disengagement as reported by students living in different regions is illustrated in Figure 116. The proportion of students reporting high disengagement in remote (43.4%) and metro (44.9%) regions were similar to each other and slightly but significantly lower than that of students in rural towns (46.6%) and regional centres (47.5%). A similar proportion of students living in these latter two regions reported high disengagement.

Mean disengagement scores were in the mid-range for all regions. The mean score for students living in metro (M=10.20, SD=2.47) regions was slightly but significantly lower than those of students living in regional centres (M=10.35, SD=2.53) and rural towns (M=10.34, SD=2.56), and the same as those living in remote regions (M=10.20, SD=2.47). Mean scores for students living in regional centres, rural towns, and remote areas were not statistically significantly different from each other.

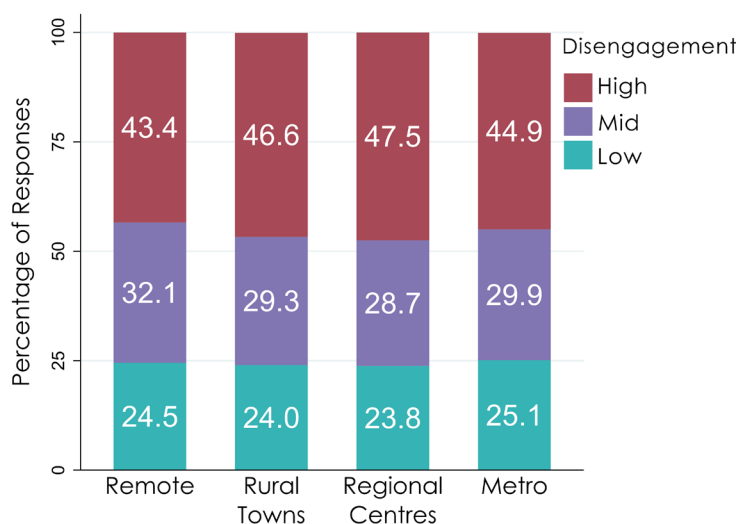


Figure 116. Proportion of secondary school students living in remote, rural towns, regional centres, and metropolitan (metro) regions reporting low, mid, and high disengagement in 2024.

Connection to Nature

Connection to nature as reported by students living in different regions is illustrated in Figure 117. A similar proportion of students living in remote regions (23.8%), and rural towns (23.4%) reported a low connection to nature. A slightly but significantly greater proportion of students living in regional centres (24.9%) relative to those living in rural towns reported this. A significantly greater proportion of students living in metro regions (26.7%), relative to students living in all other regions, reported a low connection to nature.

Mean connection to nature scores were in the mid-range for all regions, though the mean score for students living in metro regions (M=3.12, SD=1.03) was significantly lower than that of students living in regional centres (M=3.20, SD=1.06), rural towns (M=3.27, SD=1.09), and remote areas (M=3.33, SD=1.16). Students living in regional centres also reported significantly a lower mean score than those living in rural towns and remote areas, with the latter two reporting similar mean scores.

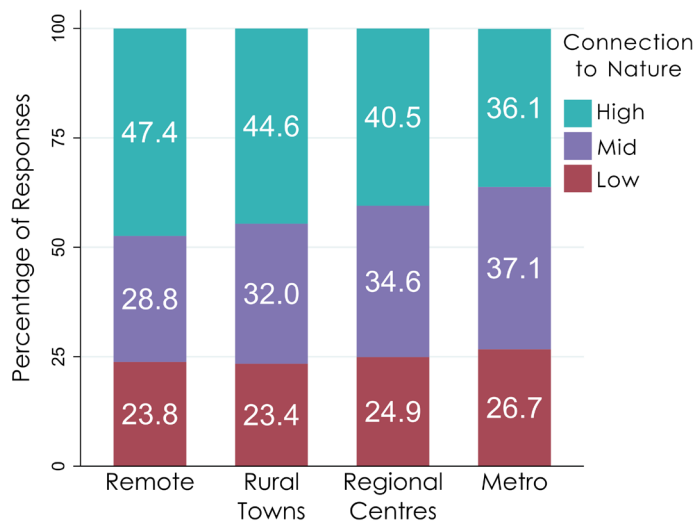


Figure 117. Proportion of secondary school students living in remote, rural towns, regional centres, and metropolitan (metro) regions reporting low, mid, and high connection to nature in 2024.

CONCLUSIONS

The Resilient Youth: State of the Nation Report 2024 provides an annual assessment of child and youth perspectives on many aspects of their wellbeing. The 2024 results from over 149,000 primary and secondary students in all states and territories identify key areas of strengths and deficits amongst Australia's children and youth. The scale of this report provides critical and current knowledge to help evaluate overall child and youth wellbeing in Australia, as well as guide policy and community practice.

MENTAL WELLBEING

Child and youth mental health remains a significant concern in Australia, with a large proportion of both primary and secondary school students reporting high symptoms of depression and anxiety. For primary school students, close to 15% reported high depression symptoms and around 20% reported high anxiety symptoms, with over a third of additional students reporting moderate symptoms on one or both measures. For secondary school students, just over 18% reported high depression symptoms, and around 27% reported high anxiety symptoms. As with primary students, an additional third of secondary students reported moderate symptoms of depression, anxiety, or both. When depression and anxiety symptom levels were combined, **just under one third of secondary students and slightly more than one quarter of primary students in Australia report high levels of depression, anxiety, or both.**

Positive measures of wellbeing, including the ability to talk about things they find upsetting, hopefulness, and life satisfaction, were also asked of students. Although the ability to talk to others may be an important facilitator for mental wellbeing, less than half of primary (47%) and secondary (41%) school students reported being able to frequently (often or always) do this. Regarding hopefulness, average primary and secondary school student hopefulness scores were considered moderate, with 27% of primary and 22% of secondary students reporting high hopefulness, and 24% of primary and 31% of secondary students reporting low hopefulness. For overall life satisfaction, on average students in both primary and secondary school considered themselves to be "doing OK", with 45% of primary school students and 28% of secondary school students reporting themselves to be thriving, compared to around 14% and 19% respectively reporting to struggle in life. Overall, 76% of primary school students reported moderate to high hopefulness, and 87% reported that they were doing OK or thriving in life. For secondary school students, 69% reported moderate to high hopefulness, and 81% reported that they were doing ok or thriving.

Hopefulness and life satisfaction scores were also combined to provide an indicator of student resilience – the ability to positively adapt to or recover from adverse experiences. Around 31% of primary and 38% of secondary school students were in the high-risk categories for resilience, reporting low hopefulness, life satisfaction (i.e., struggling), or both. This meant that around two-thirds of Australian students reported a moderate to high degree of resilience. **While a considerable proportion of children and youth were facing significant challenges to their mental health, many appeared to maintain a degree of hopefulness and life satisfaction and to retain a resilient mindset.**

WELLBEING OVER TIME

Since collating the Resilience Survey outcomes at a national level in 2019, a concerning trend has been the consistent year-on-year decline in student wellbeing in Australia. **An encouraging finding in the 2024 report is that for the first time since 2019,⁹ wellbeing has stopped declining across the range of measures and was found to be either consistent with 2023 outcomes or show a slight improvement.** This pattern was evident for both primary and secondary students, with the notable exception of hopefulness among middle primary students, who were at greater risk in 2024 than in 2022 and 2023.

Despite the positive change in the trajectory of outcomes in 2024 relative to previous years, some differences were found when comparing outcomes among students in different school grade levels. Middle primary (years 3 and 4) students reported more extreme outcomes compared to upper primary students (grades 5 and 6) between 2022 and 2024 – worse negative outcomes (such as depression and anxiety) but greater positive outcomes (such as hopefulness and life satisfaction). This may be related more to response tendencies on surveys in younger versus older children, but the consistent finding is worth noting. Amongst secondary students, outcomes tended to worsen significantly from lower (grades 7 and 8) to middle (grades 9 and 10) to upper (grades 11 and 12) secondary for depression and anxiety symptoms, and life satisfaction, with students in upper secondary reporting the poorest outcomes.

There is cause for cautious optimism that wellbeing outcomes appear to have remained constant or slightly but significantly improved in 2024 across all primary and secondary school grade groupings. This suggests that efforts to address child and youth wellbeing in Australia, social and environmental circumstances, or a combination of the two, are working to help curtail the continuous decline in wellbeing we have seen over recent years. However, it is important to recognise that there remains a considerable number of children and youth in Australia who would benefit from timely and effective support for their mental wellbeing, and that the trends observed in 2024 are as much a call to *continue* investment in such strategies, rather than reduce the attention on this issue.

Moreover, while the proportion of students reporting high adverse mental health symptoms, and low positive wellbeing outcomes is concerning, it is important to consider that a large proportion of students also report symptoms in the middle or moderate ranges for wellbeing outcomes. The extent of this means that most school students reported themselves to be in the extreme or moderate category for depression and anxiety, and moderate or high-risk category for life satisfaction and hopefulness. Of major concern is that any additional stressor on student wellbeing (such as experienced during Covid-19, regionally specific natural disasters, or the current cost of living crisis) could potentially push a considerable number of students from the moderate into the high-risk categories.

LEARNING ENGAGEMENT

Around 4 in 10 primary students and 4 to 5 in 10 secondary students reported high disengagement. A unique metric of each Resilient Youth report is the combination of reported disengagement and anxiety as a measure of learning readiness – called 'positive learners mindset'. In 2024, only 18% of primary school and 16% of secondary school students reported that they were 'ready to learn' (with low anxiety and low disengagement), while at least half of primary (50%) and secondary (55%) school students had an at-risk learning mindset (with high anxiety, disengagement, or both).

In contrast to the high general disengagement reported, the majority of students (73% to 90% of primary, and 56% to 77% of secondary) reported school to be a fun environment where they tried hard and

⁹ Santamaria, A., & Kohler, M. (2022) Resilient Youth: State of the Nation Report 2021. Adelaide: University of Adelaide.

enjoyed their learning. Consistent with previous years, the one area of particular concern regarding school learning was the proportion of students who read for fun. Among primary school students, only around half read frequently for fun, and among secondary school students, only 30% did so frequently.

CONNECTION TO NATURE

In 2024, we reported on students' connection to nature for the first time as a potentially important facilitator of student wellbeing, particularly in a context of environmental challenges. 6 in 10 (60%) primary school students reported a high connection to nature, and 15% reported a low connection. This connection declined in secondary school, with 4 in 10 (40%) students reporting a high connection and 26% reporting a low connection. Connection to nature appeared to peak in the middle primary years, decline more rapidly across the upper primary and lower secondary years, and continue to decline at a slower rate throughout middle and upper secondary years.



GENDER DIFFERENCES

Among primary and secondary school students, females reported less favourable mental wellbeing than males. Between 2022 and 2024, female primary school students generally reported poorer outcomes than males for depression symptoms, ability to talk to others, and life satisfaction, and consistently reported poorer outcomes for anxiety symptoms and hopefulness. In 2024, female primary school students also reported poorer outcomes for disengagement. Among secondary school students, females reported consistently poorer outcomes for all of these measures.

Among primary and secondary school students, the wellbeing of gender diverse students is highly concerning. 3 to 4 in 10 gender diverse primary school students and 4 to 5 in 10 gender diverse secondary school students consistently reported in the high-risk category for depression, anxiety, ability to talk to others, hopefulness, and life satisfaction from 2022 to 2024. This is a significantly higher rate than among both males and females, often at around twice the rate of males among primary school students, and at 2 to 3 times the rate of males among secondary students. Gender diverse students also reported the greatest risk for disengagement in 2024, and generally lower levels of engagement than male and female students except for reading for fun, which was of particular risk among male students.

The particularly poor outcomes among gender diverse students, as well as the high rates of anxiety and depression among all students, emphasise the need for policymakers, healthcare professionals, educators, and parents to be aware of the complexity of the risks different groups of students potentially face. **It is important to ensure that all students can access necessary support and that efforts are made to understand the unique needs of students identifying as male or female, or as neither of these when addressing wellbeing.**

SOCIOECONOMIC DIFFERENCES

Wellbeing outcomes generally followed the expected pattern across socioeconomic status (SES) categories among primary and secondary school students. Results for the majority of outcomes showed students in the lower SES categories reported progressively poorer average scores as well as a greater proportion of individuals in the highest risk categories for each outcome. Despite this trend across SES categories, average outcome scores for overall life satisfaction across SES categories were typically in the mid- or moderate range, suggesting that students on average considered themselves to be doing OK irrespective of SES. Overall, the general conclusion remains that those **students living in low SES areas reported the greatest risk regarding their wellbeing.**

FIRST NATIONS STUDENTS

As in previous reports, the responses from over 9,500 students who identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander were used to provide a snapshot of wellbeing amongst First Nations students. Of concern among this population, and largely consistent with the broader population, was the pattern of poorer wellbeing amongst female students compared to male students. Female primary and secondary students reported higher risk to wellbeing according to both mean scores and the proportion of students in the high-risk category for depression, anxiety, hopefulness, life satisfaction, and disengagement. Outcomes for connection to nature were the exception to this pattern, with male students reporting higher risk for low connection than females among primary school students, and male and female secondary students reporting similar risk. In all, and consistent with wellbeing reports from all Australian students, **reports among Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students suggest a high need for culturally appropriate strategies to support their mental wellbeing.**

In response to our consultation regarding culturally appropriate reporting of data, the Resilient Youth report has not traditionally made direct statistical comparisons of First Nations outcomes with non-First Nations outcomes. While this remains our practice, some of the potential differences in 2024 were considered important to informally highlight to draw attention to the ongoing need for consultation around how to better support the wellbeing of students identifying as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander. By considering proportions of students in the highest risk categories for a range of outcomes, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students appeared to be at elevated wellbeing risk for depression and anxiety symptoms, low hopefulness, and to a lesser extent low overall life satisfaction. In contrast, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students reported similar and sometimes higher connection to nature relative to all Australian students.

REGIONAL DIFFERENCES

Another new component of the Resilient Youth report in 2024 was the stratification of outcomes according to geographical remoteness and population size - reporting on the wellbeing of students living in remote regions, rural towns, regional centres, and metropolitan (metro) regions. Among primary students, wellbeing outcomes as measured by the proportion of students in the high-risk category and the average scores were similar among students living in remote areas, rural towns, and regional centres for depression and anxiety symptoms and hopefulness. However, outcomes for these measures were lower in these groups compared to primary students living in metro regions. Outcomes for life satisfaction and disengagement were similar among students living in remote and metro regions, however, were significantly lower among those in rural towns and regional centres relative to those in metro regions. In contrast, the average connection to nature was lower among primary students living in metro areas relative to those in rural towns and regional centres, and similar to those living in remote areas. The pattern of results among secondary students was similar to that of primary students except for hopefulness outcomes, which were best among students living in metro areas, and slightly better among students living in regional centres relative to those living in rural towns and remote areas. Overall, comparisons across regions show a general pattern of better outcomes for students in metro regions compared to other regions.



HEALTHY BEHAVIOUR

Most students reported frequent healthy eating and physical activity, with 7 to 8 in 10 students always or often eating healthily and frequently engaging in at least 1 hour of physical activity each day. **However, 7 in 10 primary students and only slightly more than half (58%) of secondary students reported frequently sleeping at least 8 hours on most nights.**

Among secondary students, additional questions about the use of vaping, cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption, or illegal drugs were asked, with most students reporting to never use these substances.

Among students in lower secondary, 1% to 2% reported frequent vaping, cigarette smoking, alcohol consumption, or illegal drug use. Among middle secondary students, 4% frequently smoked cigarettes or used illegal drugs, and 7% to 8% frequently vaped or drank alcohol. Among upper secondary students, 6% to 7% frequently smoked cigarettes or used illegal drugs, and 11% and 16% frequently vaped and drank alcohol respectively. The increased risk across the grade groupings from lower to middle to upper secondary was generally reflected among male, female, and gender diverse students. Gender diverse students reported much greater risk of frequent substance use than male and female students, with female students reporting the lowest risk of frequent use for all reported substances except for frequent vaping, for which they reported similar risk to male students among lower and middle secondary.

A random subset of secondary students were also asked about how frequently they used social media for more than two hours a day. **Just under half (46%) of lower secondary students used social media for more than 2 hours almost daily, and over half of middle (58%) and upper (59%) secondary students did so.** Generally, male students reported lower frequent social media use, and female and gender diverse students reported similar frequency of use.

SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT

Social and environmental conditions are important predictors of the wellbeing of students. **The vast majority of Australian students reported feeling supported and loved at home,** with only between 1 to 2 out of 10 reporting that parents infrequently listen, show love and support, or encourage them. Similarly, more than 80% of primary school students reported having a teacher who frequently cares about and encourages them. In contrast, only around 60% of secondary students reported this about their teachers.

When it comes to peer relationships, more than 90% of students reported having at least one good friend at school, although only 73% reported frequently getting along with someone different from themselves. More concerningly, **around 30% of students reported being bullied at school at least monthly.** Around 21% of primary school students also reported being bullied online monthly or more, which was surprisingly more than the 17% of secondary students who reported this. Similarly, around 22% of secondary students reported threatening to physically hurt someone at least once in the last month. While around 90% of students frequently felt safe at home and 84% frequently felt safe in their neighbourhood, 19% of primary students and 27% of secondary students said they did *not* feel safe at school most of the time.

FINAL COMMENTS

The Resilient Youth: State of the Nation Report 2024 provides a snapshot of wellbeing among students attending schools across Australia. This snapshot provides valuable and current information that can be used to support future strategic planning. The student responses summarised herein demonstrate a considerable need for attention and action regarding student mental health. Students consistently faced challenges to their wellbeing in their experiences of depression and anxiety symptoms, and these challenges extended to their levels of hopefulness and disengagement.

Importantly, in the face of such challenges to their wellbeing, students remained relatively satisfied in life and resilient. There was also cause for cautious optimism when considering trends in wellbeing over time, with outcomes in 2024 often appearing to arrest or reverse concerning declines in wellbeing observed across previous years. It will be critical to continue supporting student's resilience through active approaches to prevent renewed deterioration of wellbeing and to facilitate improvement into the future.

The imperative of this call to action is accentuated by the large proportion of primary school students reporting moderate to high risk for their mental wellbeing. Given the considerable deterioration of mental health and wellbeing symptoms reported by secondary students relative to primary students overall, a concerted effort to address wellbeing at an early age is likely to be an important strategy for the mitigation of youth mental health problems.

The findings in this report also provide a unique window into groups amongst the student population facing different levels of risk. It was clear throughout the report that for the most part female students are at slightly greater risk of poor wellbeing compared to males, and that gender diverse students, despite being a very small proportion of the population, are at considerably elevated wellbeing and health risk. Socioeconomic status (SES) generally demonstrated the expected trend of worse outcomes with lower SES ranking, however, changes across levels were often very small, and certainly not to the same extent as seen across different genders. The comparison across regions revealed slightly better outcomes for students living in metro areas versus those in regional towns, rural, and remote locations. Outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students also suggested a slightly higher proportion of students experiencing poor wellbeing outcomes overall, with the same general pattern of higher risk among female relative to male students in this group.

Additional concerns regarding student safety are also evident from this report, particularly in schools. A substantial proportion of students reported experiencing bullying, be it at school, online, or more generally. Among secondary students, a substantial number also reported threatening to hurt someone at least once in the previous month and carrying a weapon at least once in the previous month for protection. Among secondary students, a concerning number reported frequent substance use, with vaping and alcohol being the most widely reported of these. Frequent use for all substances increased across the secondary school grades, with rates often doubling or tripling between adjacent grade groups. It is important to address these risky behaviours and provide necessary support and interventions to promote healthier choices among students. Effective education around bullying and substance use remains a need in schools. Current initiatives to warn against and ban harmful substances among students will hopefully lead to reduced rates being reported in the future but are likely insufficient strategies on their own.

It is of note that since the Resilience Survey was administered in schools, children and youth at higher risk may not be well represented. Despite this, schools remain a good context for the delivery of programs targeting wellbeing. In addition to the students themselves, such programs should also include components aimed at parents and teachers, to help build awareness and skills around how to talk about and respond to concerns about wellbeing and mental health. Such programs need to be inclusive and culturally safe and require adequate local resources and personnel for effective implementation.

The wellbeing of Australian students remains an area of significant concern. However, the Resilient Youth: Student Wellbeing Report 2024 provides hope that the trajectory of continuing decline over recent years is altering its course. The immediate imperative is to continue with current and apply new at-scale approaches to combat poor wellbeing and learning engagement outcomes in our students, supporting their resilience, and creating a more hopeful, healthy, and happy generation.

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