ADOLESCENTS' EXPERIENCE OF SCHOOL

HBSC England 2022 data: Snapshot series
CHSS, University of Kent.
https://hbscengland.org/@HBSCEngland

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Adolescents' school experience and learning environment can influence their mental and physical health, and learning outcomes.

HBSC ENGLAND DATA SHOWED

- ➔ a rise in school related stress alongside a fall in protective factors, eg: safety
- ➔ significantly worse outcomes for girls
- ➔ English 11 year olds ranking poorly against their international peers
- ➔ outcomes decline after the age of 11
- ➔ significantly less classmate support among those from low income families
- ➔ better wellbeing and support among those reporting good school experiences

One of our student representatives advised:

*"By **prioritizing mental health** and **creating a supportive and inclusive environment** where **students can openly express their academic concerns and seek help**, schools can play a **crucial role in lessening stress** and improving students' overall well-being."*

THIS SHOWS THE URGENT NEED FOR

- ➔ **whole school-based interventions** to target high levels of school stress and create more supportive, inclusive and friendly environments for students
- ➔ **policy level support and funding** for sustainable outcomes

Youth café members also raised concerns about schoolwork pressure, the impact of Covid lockdowns and school safety.

*There is **too much pressure at school to do 'well'**. They focus more on your grades.*

*I can **imagine the pandemic having a big impact** – it was the only time that you had been **shown an alternative to being in school all day**, every day – so people have started **questioning how they felt in and out of school**.*

***So many young people don't feel safe in school** with adults, teachers present and in a place where they are supposed to be protected – **that's alarming**.*

KEY MESSAGES

Between 2014 and 2022…

↓ Feeling Safe in School, Liking School, School Belonging, Teacher Support and Classmate Support: all fell to their lowest levels
↑ Schoolwork Pressure: rose to the highest level since 2014

Girls reported significantly poorer experiences of school, particularly older girls

- ➔ 15 yr old girls reported the highest schoolwork pressure: 55%
- ➔ 13 & 15 yr old girls were the least likely to feel they belonged in their school (31%) and like school a lot (8%)
- ➔ 13 yr old girls were the least likely to feel safe at school (44%), report high teacher support (37%) and high classmate support (42%)

Adolescents from low income (low FAS) families reported worse outcomes for ***some*** items. However, low FAS boys reported stronger teacher support.

- ➔ significantly less classmate support: 47% vs 62% [low/high FAS]
- ➔ lower school belonging: 41% vs 52% [low/high FAS]
- ➔ lower school safety: 52% vs 61% [low/high FAS]
- ➔ greater teacher support [boys]: 60% vs 55% [low/high FAS boys]

Those reporting positive school experiences…

were **MORE LIKELY to report…**

- ➔ higher mental wellbeing & life satisfaction
- ➔ lower levels of multiple health complaints
- ➔ higher levels of family support

3 in 10 reported **high SCHOOWORK PRESSURE** (32%), *up from 17% in 2014.*

Pressure rose with age and was higher, with a steeper increase, among girls.

- ➔ *Girls reported significantly higher levels of schoolwork pressure at all ages.*
- ➔ *English 11 year olds reported the third highest levels of pressure internationally.*

6 in 10 reported **FEELING SAFE IN THEIR SCHOOL** (58%), *down from 82% in 2014.*

Feeling safe in school was lowest among 13 year olds, particularly low FAS girls.

- ➔ *32% of low FAS 13 yr old girls felt safe at school vs. 49% of their high FAS peers*
- ➔ *55% of low FAS 13 yr old boys felt safe vs. 65% of their high FAS peers*

5 in 10 reported **FEELING THAT THEY BELONGED IN THEIR SCHOOL** (47%), *down from 75% in 2014.*

In general, belonging declined after age 11, then stabilised at 13 years. But, among low FAS boys, belonging started low and remained relatively stable with age.

5.5 in 10 reported **high CLASSMATE SUPPORT** (55%), *down from 62% in 2018.*

Classmate support declined after age 11. The fall was steepest for low FAS girls:

- ➔ *from 49% reporting high classmate support aged 11 to 34% at 13 and 15 years.*

Boys and girls from low FAS families reported significantly less classmate support.