

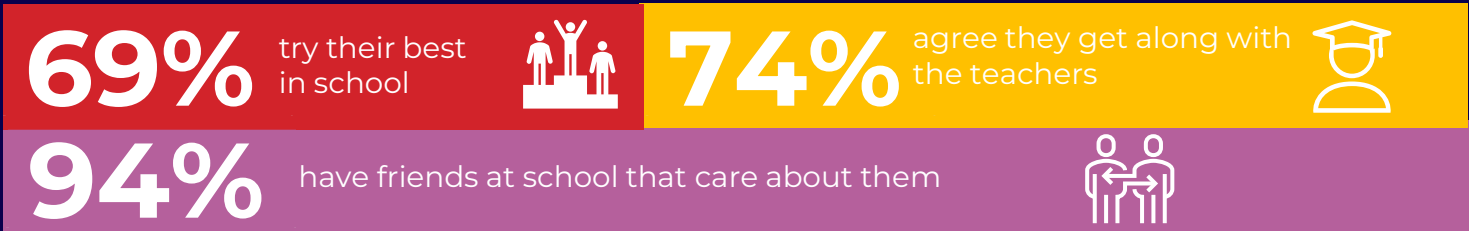


St. Ann's Secondary School

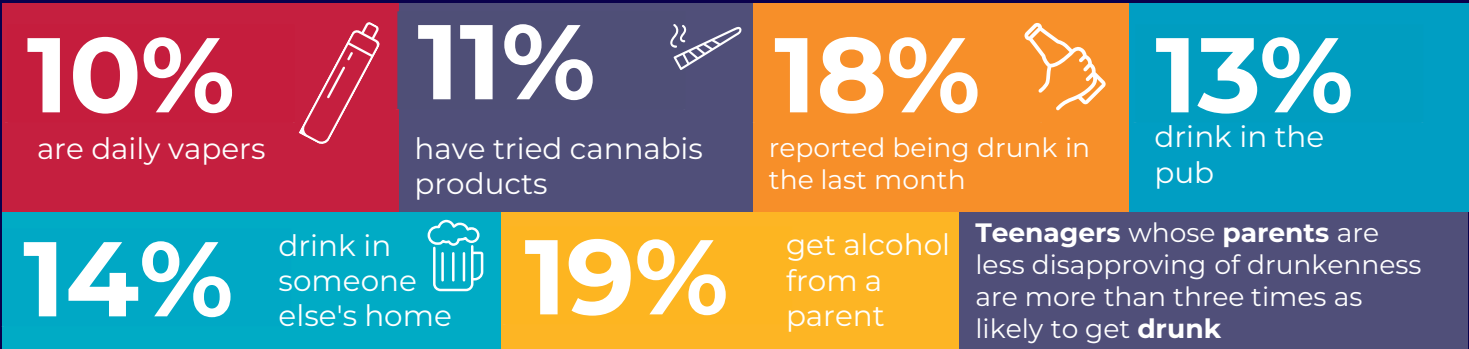
Planet Youth School Report

2024

SCHOOL



SUBSTANCE USE



PEER AND HOME LIFE



LEISURE TIME



SCREEN TIME AND ONLINE BEHAVIOUR



WELLBEING INDICATORS



SEXUAL HEALTH



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1

INTRODUCTION

Planet Youth School Report

All 80 post-primary schools and 10 Youthreach centres in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon participated in the fourth Planet Youth survey during November 2024 and a total of 6,500 pupils sat the survey at all ages.

The purpose of each biennial survey is to gather the data that informs the regional primary prevention project, but it is possible to generate local area-based reports and also individual reports for each school that participates and has more than 20 pupils involved.

These school reports are considered secondary to the overall project but hopefully they are a useful benefit to the schools for their participation in the surveys. The reports are comprehensive and provide data across many domains and topics. They can be used to support the delivery of the SPHE curricula in Junior and Senior Cycle. They provide additional useful information for other subject areas within the Wellbeing Framework for Practice. The reports can also be useful in other ways, such as school self-evaluation for wellbeing, school improvement plans, informing LAOS quality standards and statements of practice, provision mapping, and identifying DEIS action plans.

There are additional applications for the reports specified in the recommendations section, these are suggested in three areas: School Leadership and Management, Learning and Teaching, and Collaboration with Stakeholders.

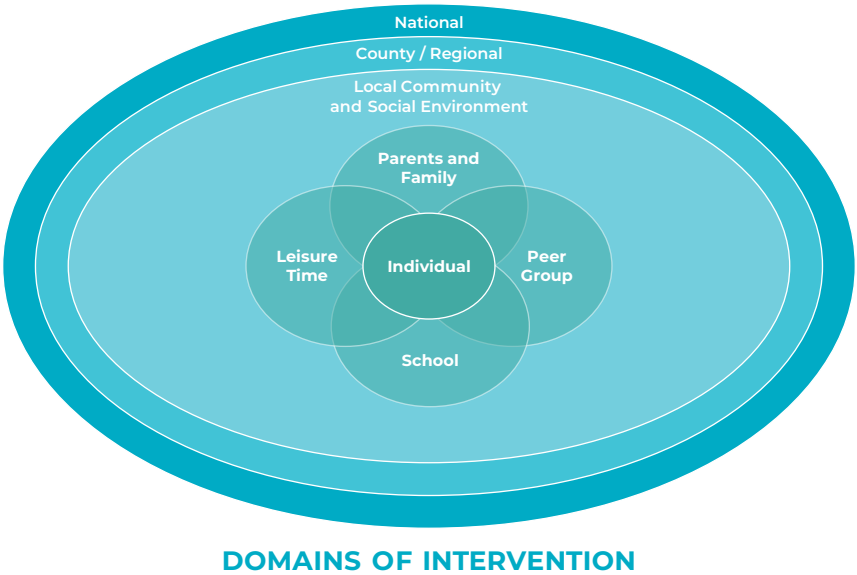
Planet Youth

Planet Youth is the local implementation, in Galway, Mayo and Roscommon, of the Icelandic Prevention Model (IPM). The IPM is an evidence based primary prevention model, developed by researchers, community workers and policy makers in Iceland.

The model's whole population approach offers an opportunity to improve health outcomes for young people in many areas of their lives. It works by isolating and directly targeting the risk and protective factors that determine their substance use behaviours and enhancing the social environment they are growing up in. By developing targeted interventions that seek to alter identified risk factors the problems associated with adolescent substance use can be reduced or prevented before they arise. Other health and life outcomes can be improved using the same preventative approach and utilising the Planet Youth data.

Data

The model relies on the data derived from biennial cross-sectional surveys that are conducted using the Planet Youth questionnaire. This comprehensive lifestyle questionnaire is administered to the 15 and 16 year olds in the target community. There are questions on their substance use, physical health, mental health, physical activity, family and school experience, internet use, bullying and many other categories. There are 80 primary questions in the current Planet Youth survey instrument, involving a total of 388 sub-questions and 1,816 variables, all of which can be examined and cross tabulated.



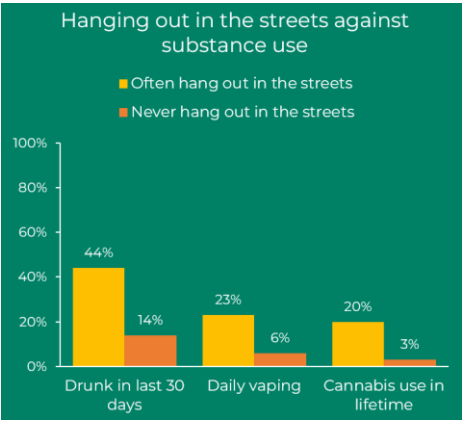
Risk and protective factors

The survey results provide the information for planning, selecting key factors requiring attention, designing suitable interventions and tracking trends and changes in young people’s behaviours and wellbeing over time. The main risk and protective factors lie within the domains outlined in the diagram above.

Demographics, Gender differences and Cross-Tabulations

There are all male, all female and co-educational schools in the region and some schools and centres have an older age profile of students than others.

Each school receives a report that shows their participating students profiled against the best regional comparison available, and this is based on their gender and age profile. The Gender Differences and Cross Tabulations sections show only the regional level data. The cross-tabulations shown are used to indicate the relationship between variables and they also highlight and examine the risk and protective factors in different domains. They help show factors that are working well and also those that seem to be working poorly, or that are unusual in some other way, and thus worthy of investigation.



How to interpret the Cross-Tabulations

Crosstabulation example: The yellow bar in this example shows the substance use behaviours of pupils who regularly hang out unsupervised, contrasted against the orange bar representing pupils who do not.

2

SURVEY

The Planet Youth International core questionnaire is a survey instrument that is used in many communities around the world.

Prior to the administration of this fourth Planet Youth survey, a national working group was established to standardise the Irish version of questionnaire being used across different sites around the country.

Additionally, a working group of school principals and school staff in the Western region assisted with the modification of the questionnaire and the addition of some new survey questions. This work was done to improve the content of the school reports and increase their utility to schools. The revisions will also allow the overall Planet Youth project, and its partner agencies, gain valuable insights that will help further the overall aim of the project in improving health outcomes for our young population. Some of the new and modified areas of questioning included:

- School attendance
- Pupils in carer roles
- Additional questions on screen use and phones in bedrooms
- Additional validated scales to examine mental wellbeing
- Help-seeking behaviour for mental health issues
- Attitudes to substance use
- Diet and body image

Irish language and Ukrainian language versions were also developed and made available on the survey platform.

Survey Methodology

The fourth of the Planet Youth surveys was conducted in November 2024. The pupils targeted for inclusion were primarily all those who had returned to school after completing the Junior Cycle in June 2024. The survey was administered online and all the 15 and 16 year-olds in the region were invited to participate. The sequence of events related to the administration of the survey are detailed below:

1. An ethical review was conducted and approval granted by the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland (RCPI).
2. Localisation and modification of the latest online survey instrument was completed via consultation with local agencies and youth groups. The survey was then set up on the Alchemer online survey platform.
3. A support services card was developed to be issued alongside the surveys to ensure participants had access to contact details of support services if required.
4. All students and parents were given copies of information about the survey and were invited to opt out if they so wished.
5. Support services cards and sample paper versions of the questionnaire were delivered to each school.
6. Each school appointed a coordinator for their in-house survey, and they all attended an online session to ensure consistency of the survey's online administration.

Growing up in the West – Planet Youth School Report

7. The surveys were conducted in November 2024 by the in-school coordinators using school devices. WRDATF staff visited 12 of the 90 schools in the region that had insufficient devices or internet access to conduct the survey themselves.
8. All final survey records were checked for quality, cleaned and parsed by Planet Youth in Reykjavik and the results and datasets were returned to Ireland in late January 2025.

The survey was conducted during class hours, taking approximately 40 minutes to complete. At the outset pupils were again informed of the purpose of the survey, and of the purpose of the support services card.

To ensure survey accuracy, some records were eliminated as part of the data cleansing process in Reykjavik. The criteria for elimination included insufficiently complete records, reporting the use of a fictitious drug or reporting to have tried some substance 40 times or more.



3

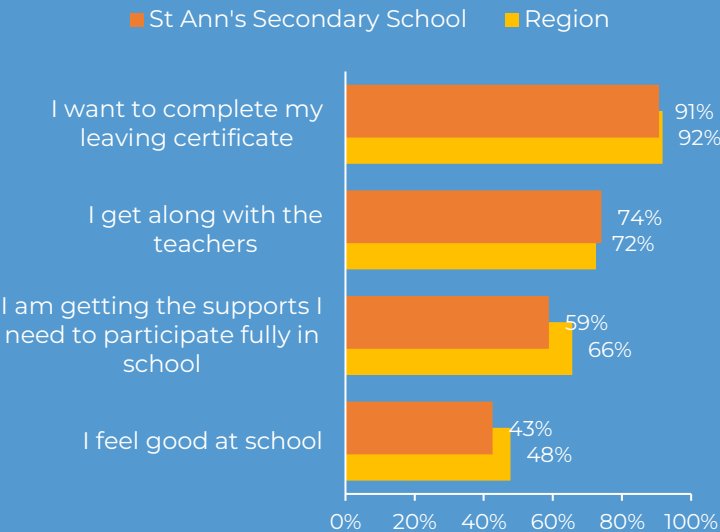
Survey Results

Participants - pupils in their post Junior Certificate year

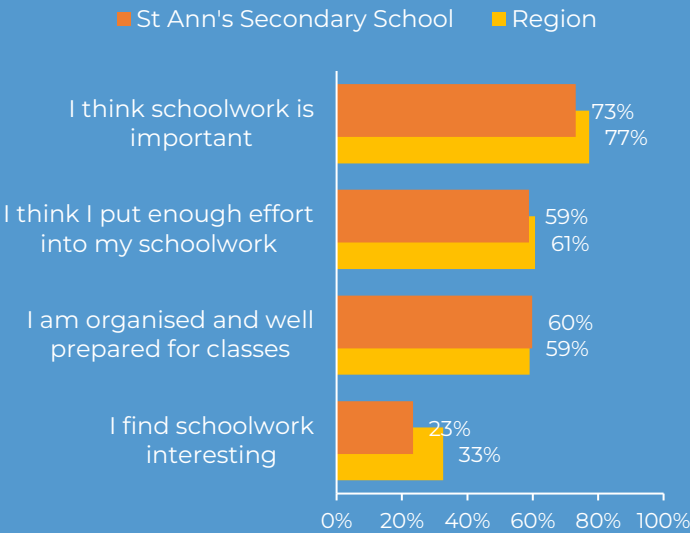
	Male	Female	Other / Prefer not to say	Total
St Ann's Secondary School	43	61	4	108
Region	2,244	2,129	125	4,498

School

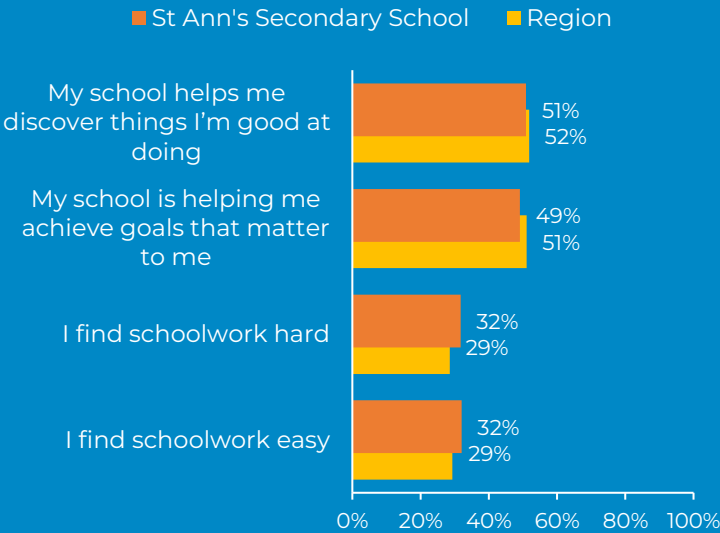
Pupils who agree or strongly agree with the following



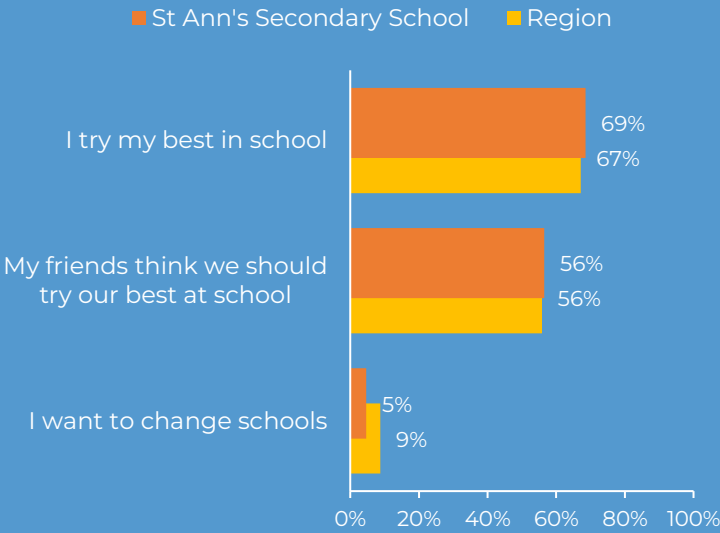
Pupils who agree or strongly agree with the following



Pupils who agree or strongly agree with the following



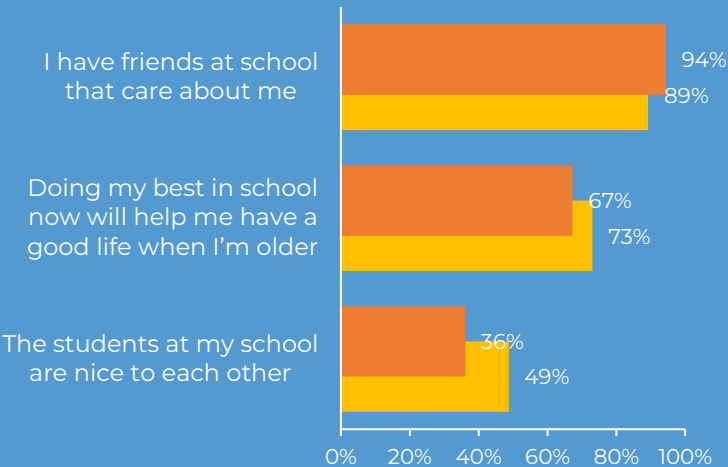
Pupils who agree or strongly agree with the following





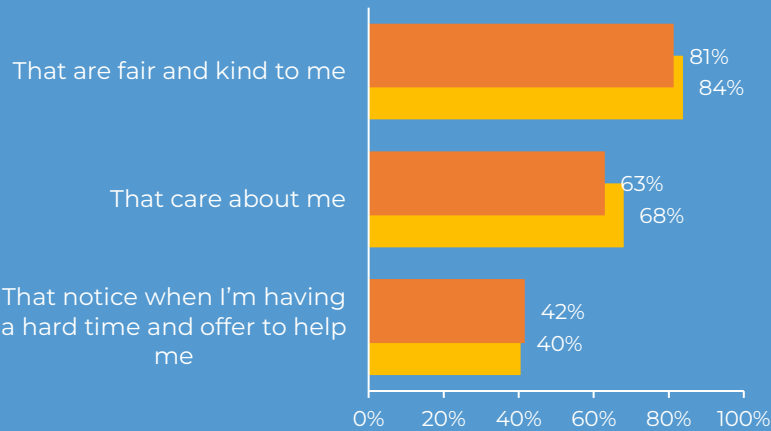
Pupils who agree or strongly agree with the following

St Ann's Secondary School Region



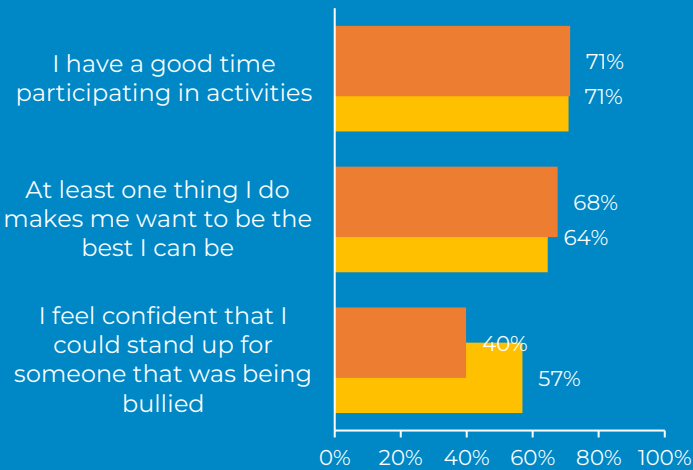
Pupils who agree or strongly agree with the following, there are adults at my school:

St Ann's Secondary School Region



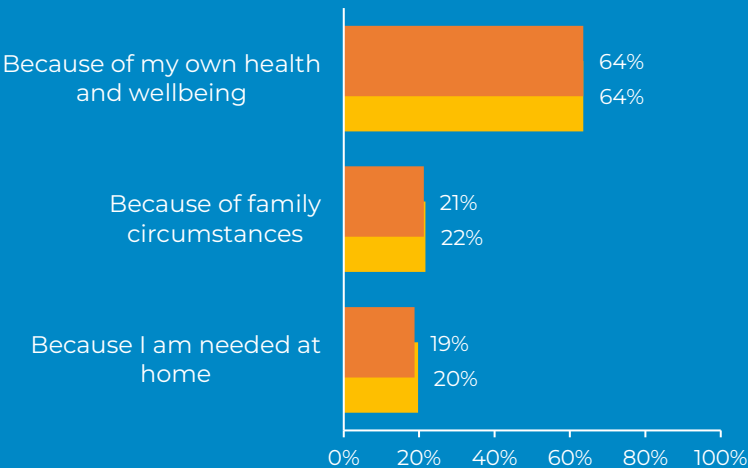
Pupils who agree or strongly agree with the following, at my school:

St Ann's Secondary School Region



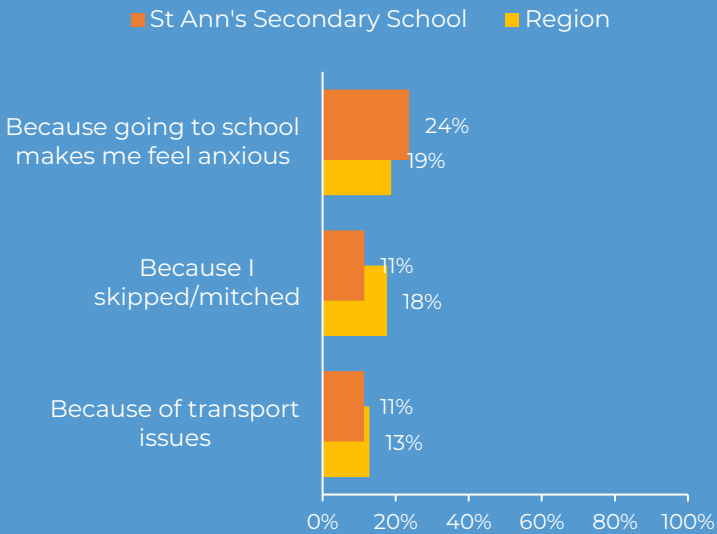
Pupils that have missed school once or more in the past 30 days

St Ann's Secondary School Region

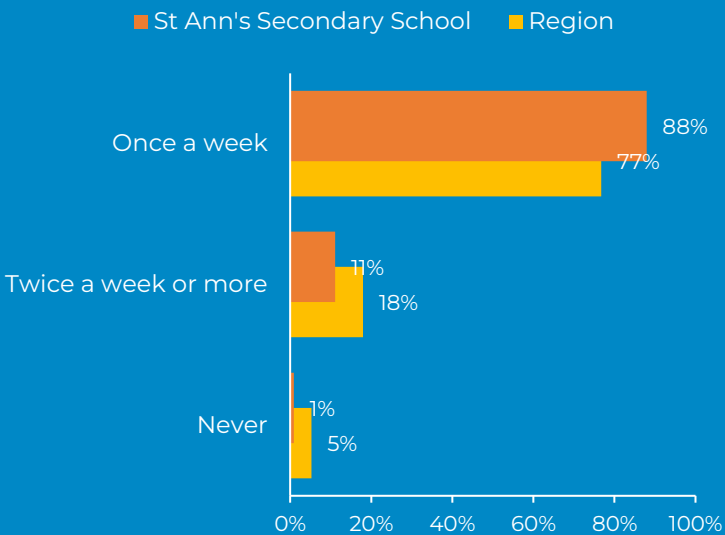




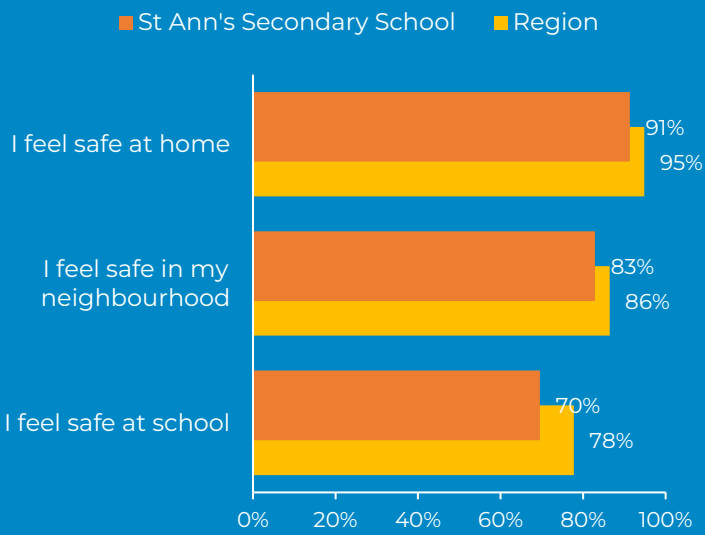
Pupils that have missed school one day or more in the past 30 days



How many times a week do you participate in P.E. in school?

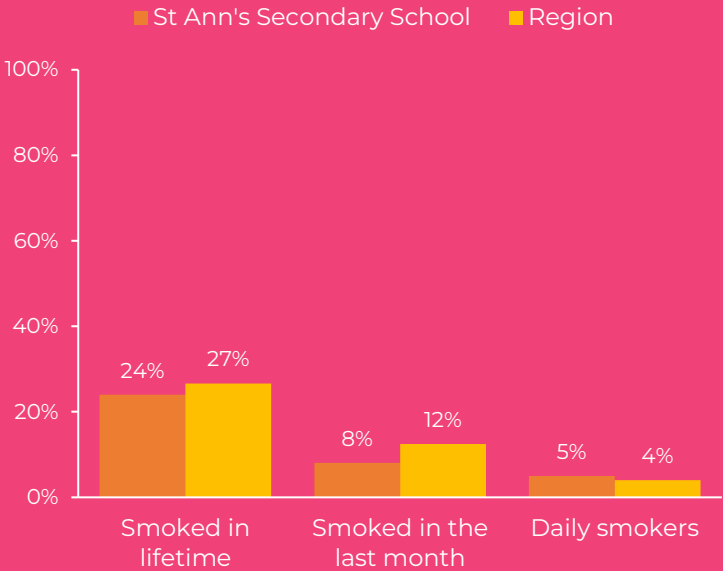


Pupils who say that the following often or very often applies to them

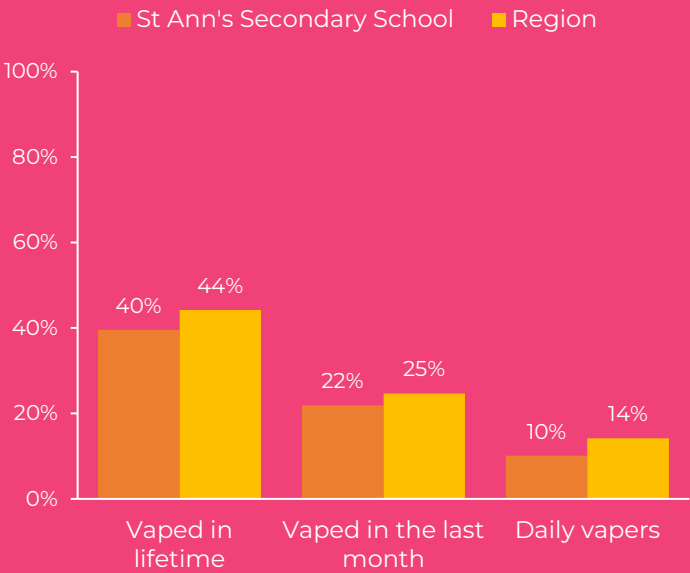


Substance Use

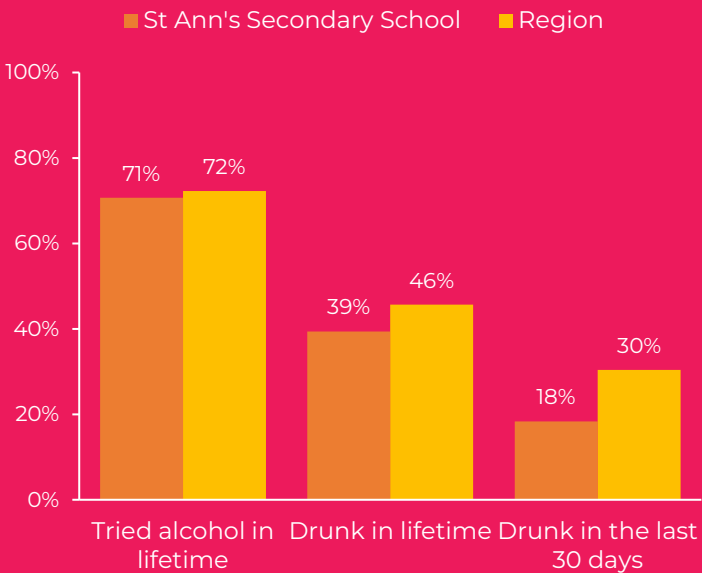
Substance Use - Cigarettes



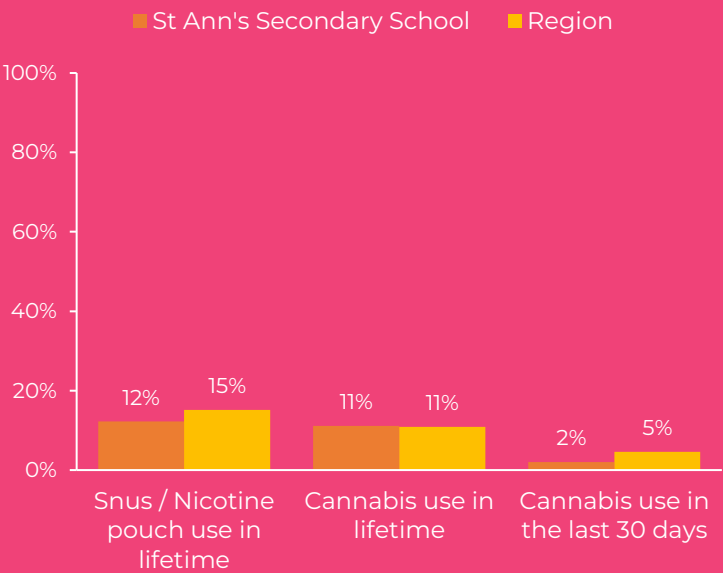
Substance Use - Vapes



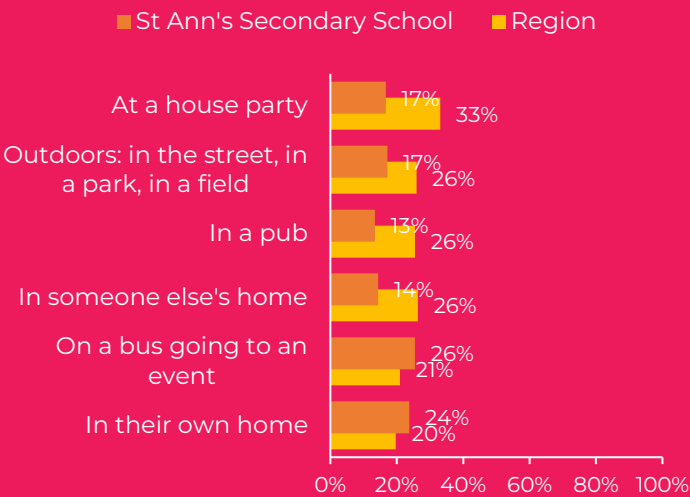
Substance Use - Alcohol



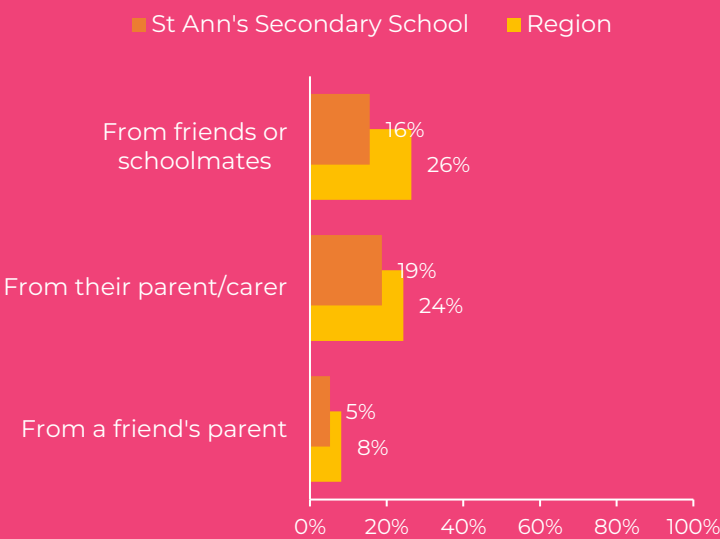
Other Substance Use



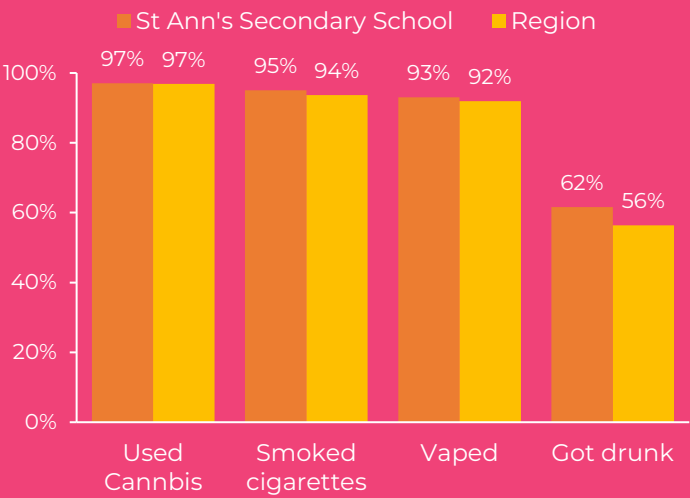
Pupils who sometimes or often drink alcohol in the following places



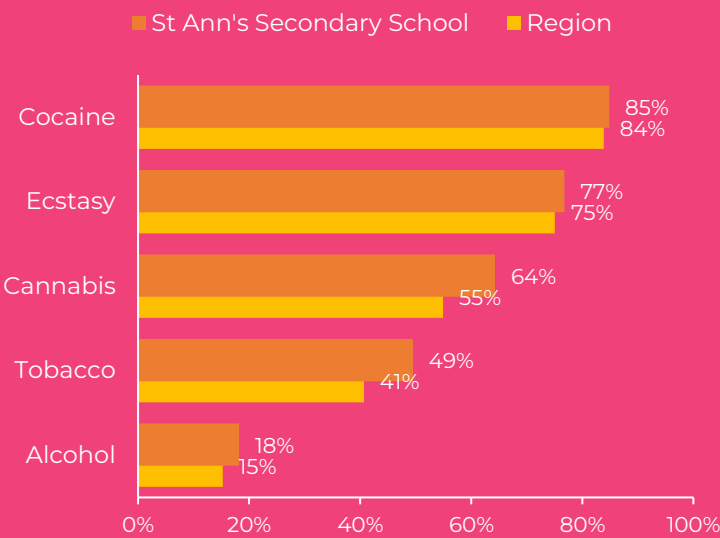
Pupils who sometimes or often get alcohol



Pupils who said their parents would be against it / totally against it if they



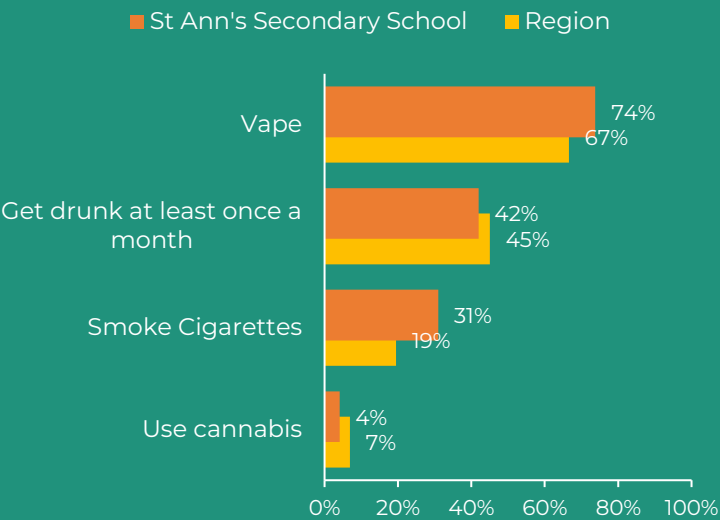
Pupils who think the following drugs are very harmful



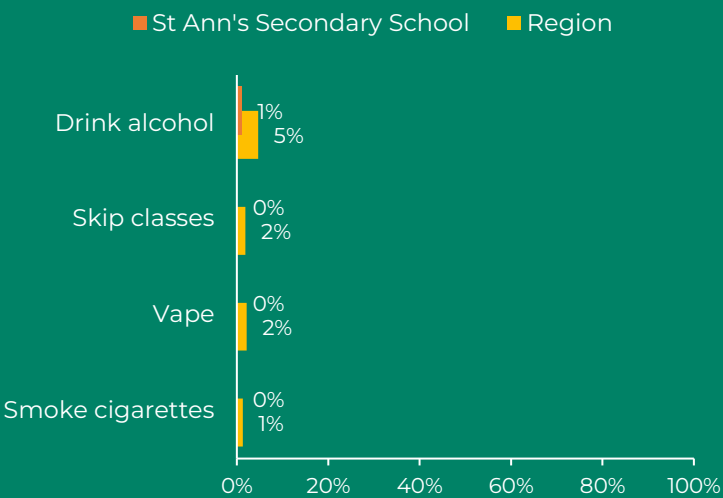
Peer & Home Life



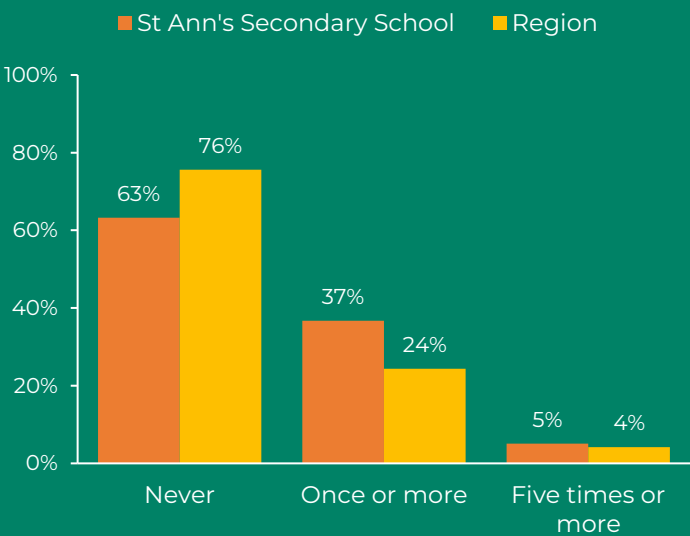
Pupils that think most or all of their peers



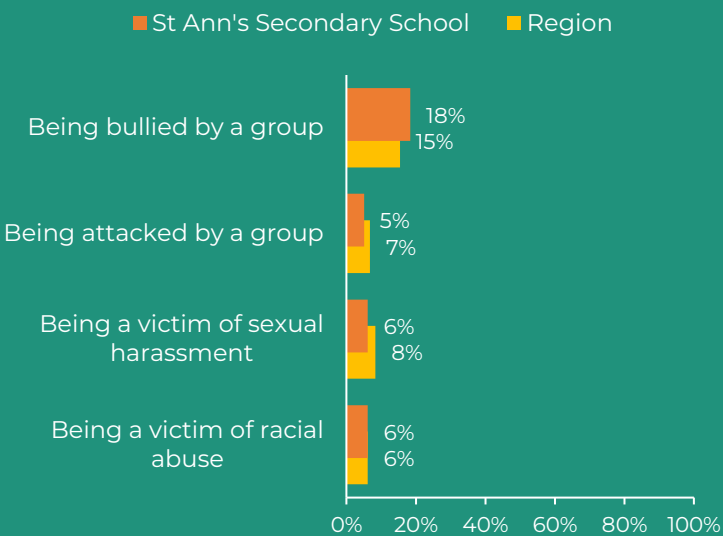
Pupils that agree or strongly agree, to be part of your friend group you need to



Pupils that report being bullied at school by someone in the last year

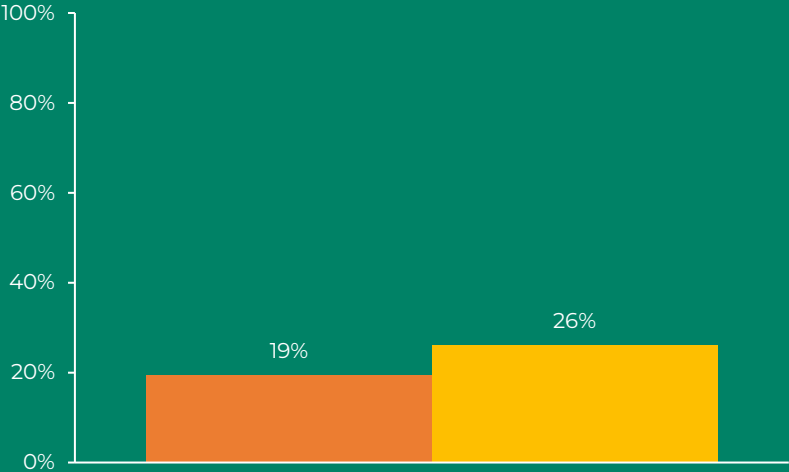


Pupils that report the following once or more in the last year



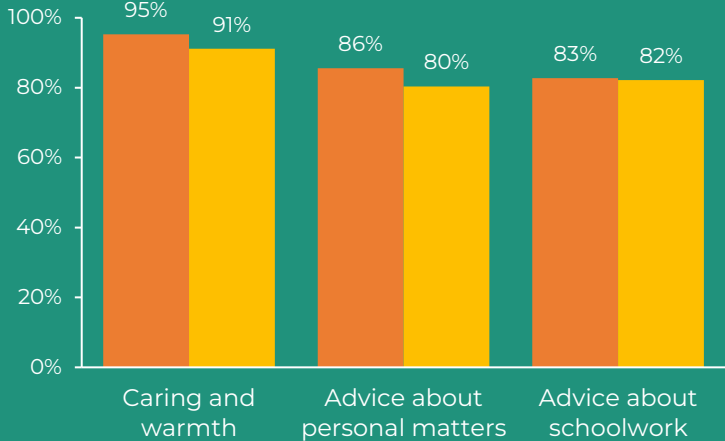
Pupils who provide care or support to a family member

St Ann's Secondary School Region



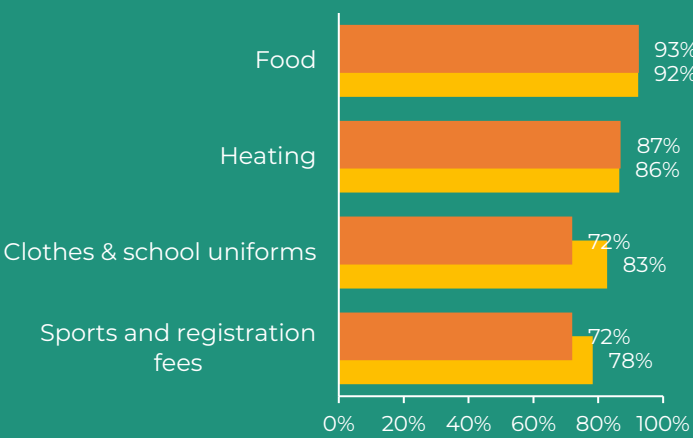
Pupils who said it's easy or very easy to receive the following from their parents/carers

St Ann's Secondary School Region



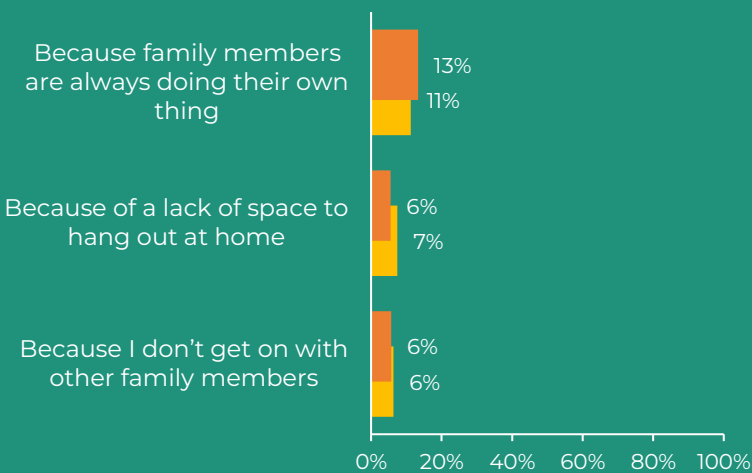
Pupils who said their parents/carers always have enough money to pay for the following

St Ann's Secondary School Region



Pupils who often or always spend time outside home

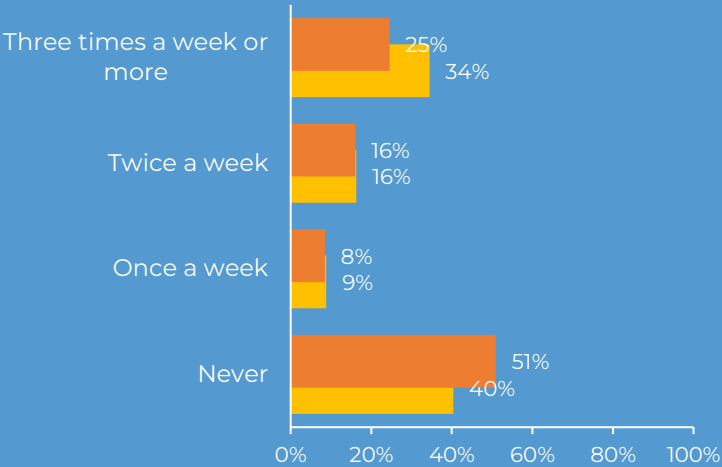
St Ann's Secondary School Region



Leisure Time

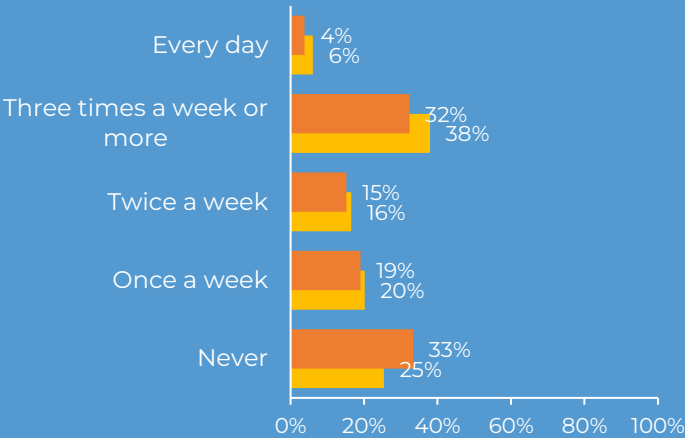
How many times a week do you play team sports (GAA, soccer, etc)

St Ann's Secondary School Region



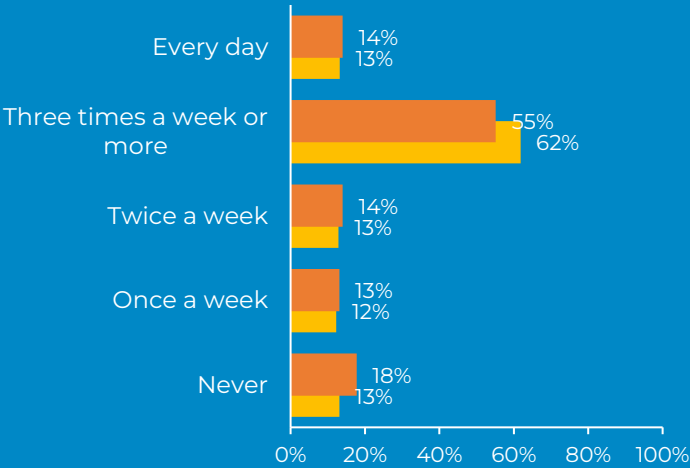
How many times a week do you participate in sports in school, apart from PE?

St Ann's Secondary School Region



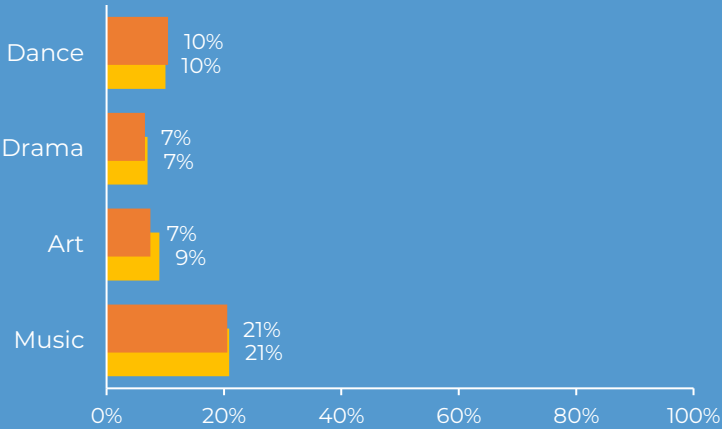
How many days do you do a total of 60 mins of physical activity?

St Ann's Secondary School Region

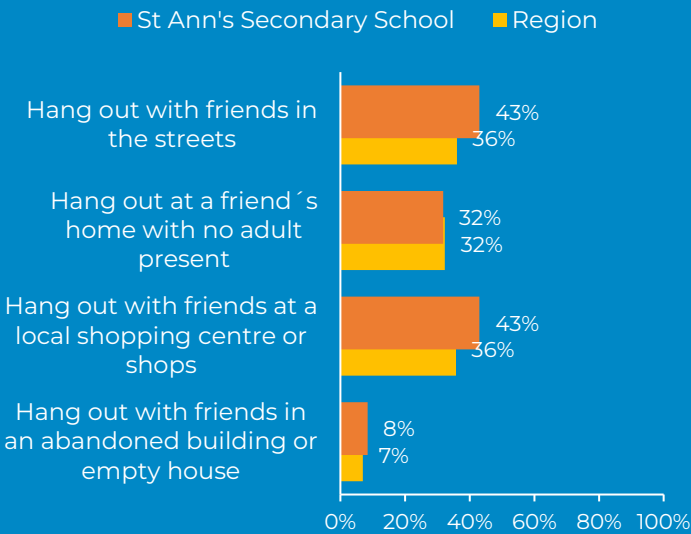


Pupils that participate once a week or more in the following supervised activities

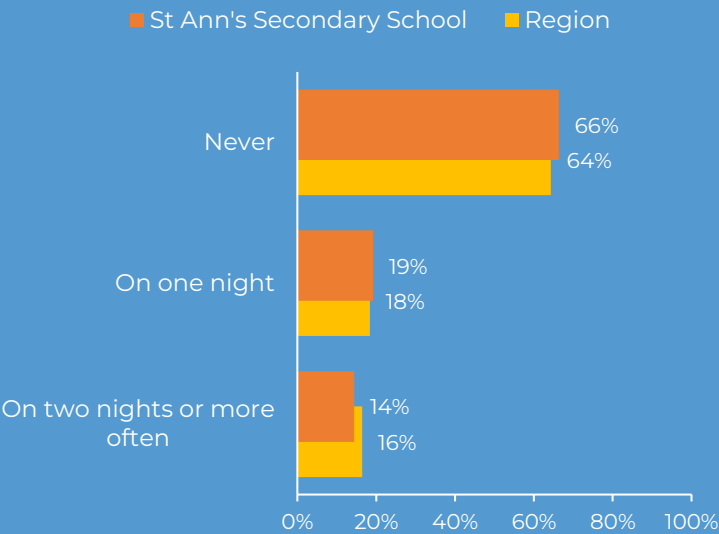
St Ann's Secondary School Region



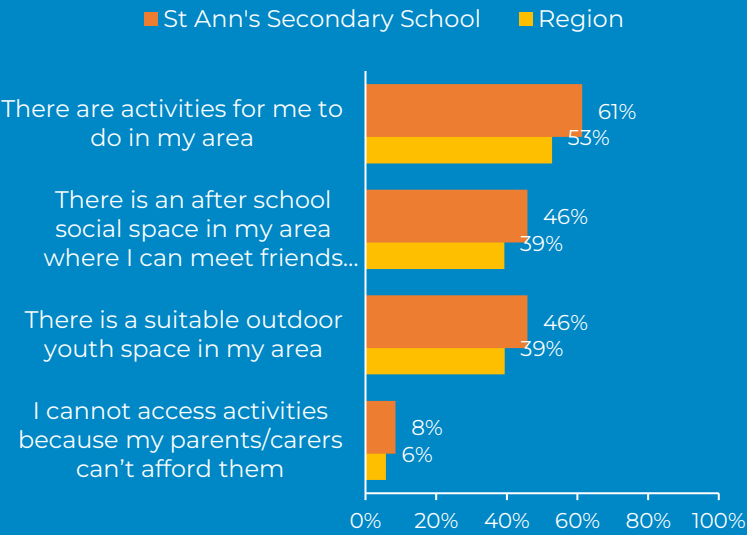
Pupils who do the following once a week or more



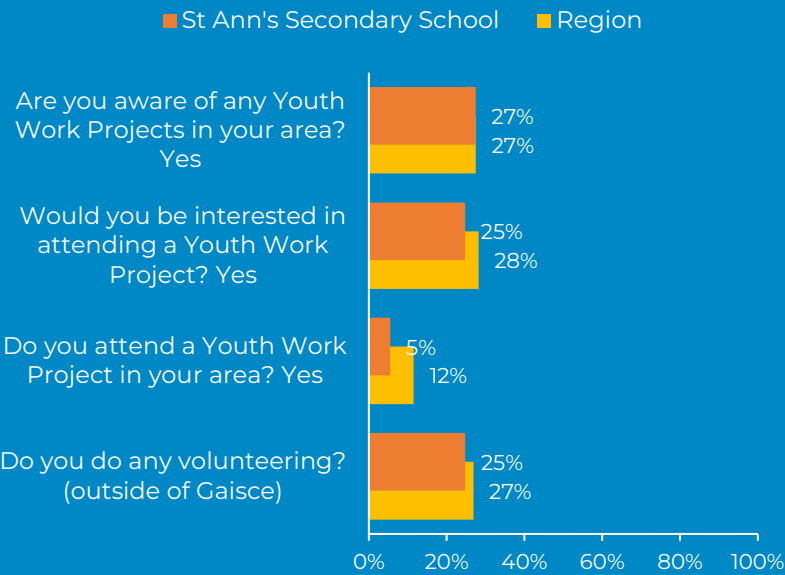
Pupils who reported being outside after midnight in the last week



Pupils who agree or strongly agree that:

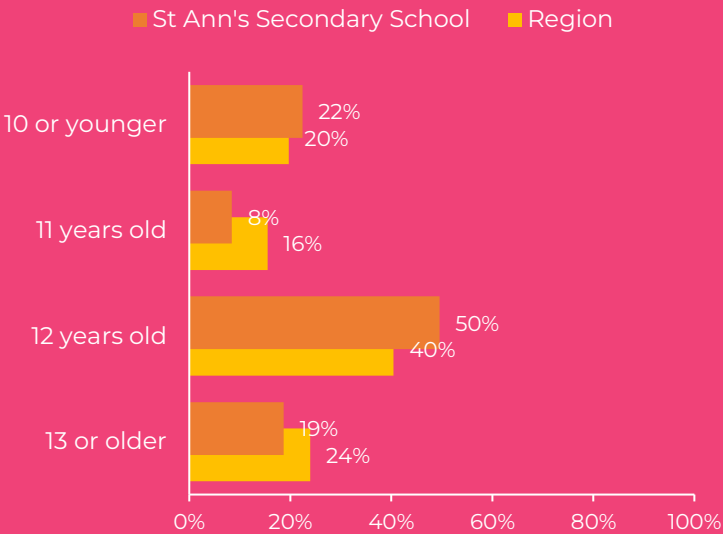


Youth Projects and Volunteering

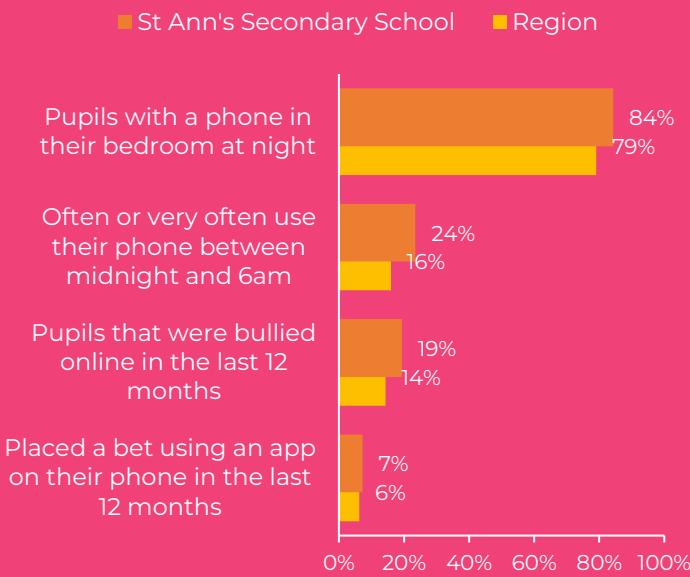


Screen Use and Online Behaviour

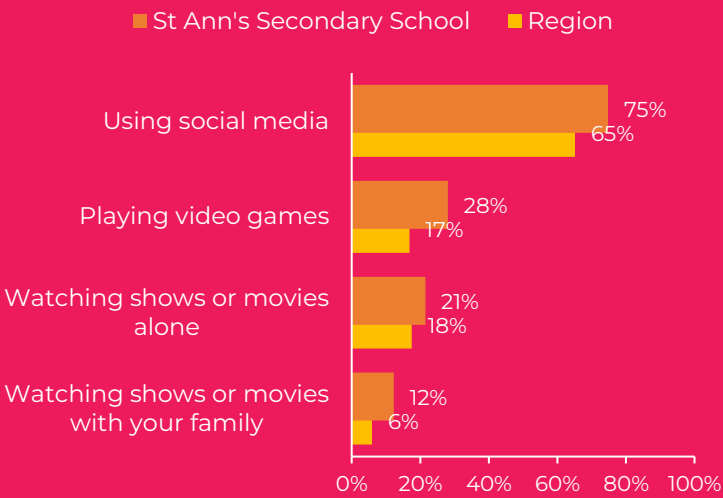
At what age did you get your first smartphone?



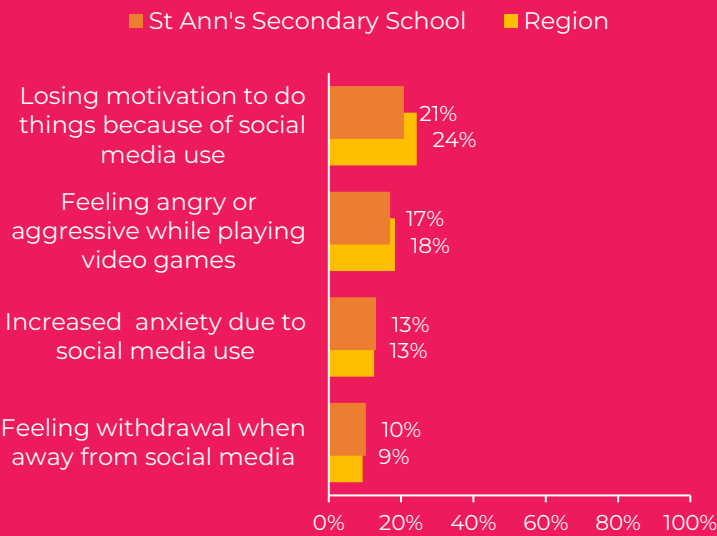
Online Activities



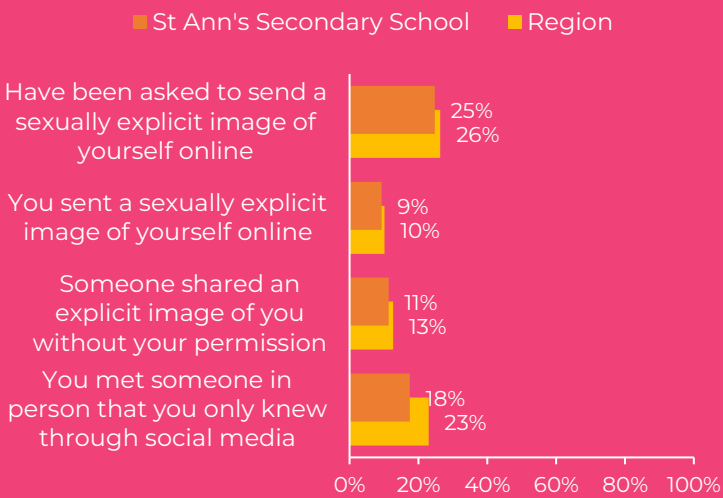
Pupils spending three hours or more each day on screens for the following



Pupils that have experienced the following often or very often



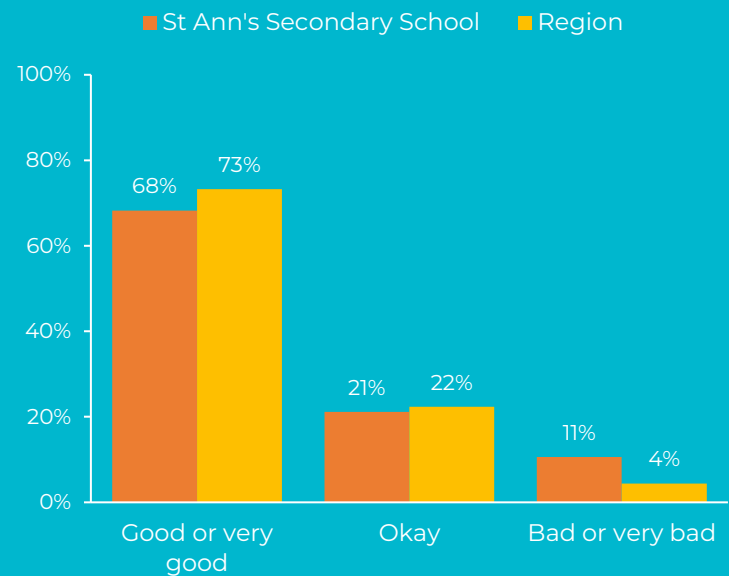
Pupils that report the following has happened once or more in their lifetime



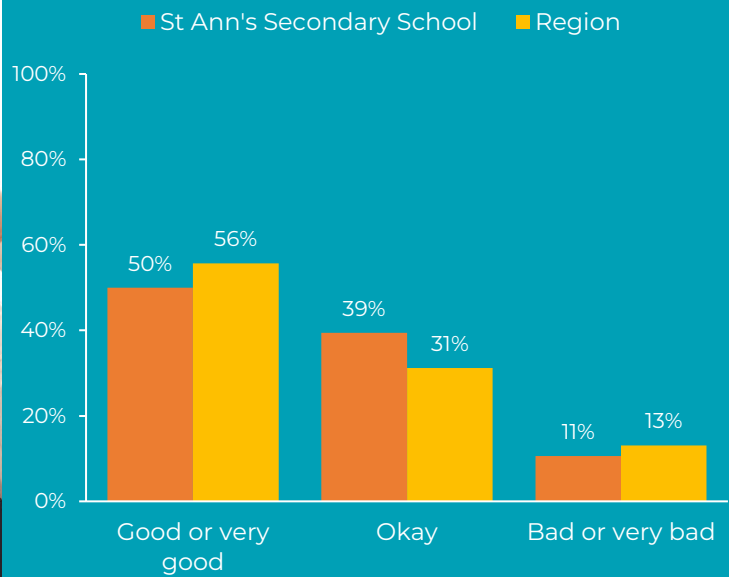
Wellbeing Indicators



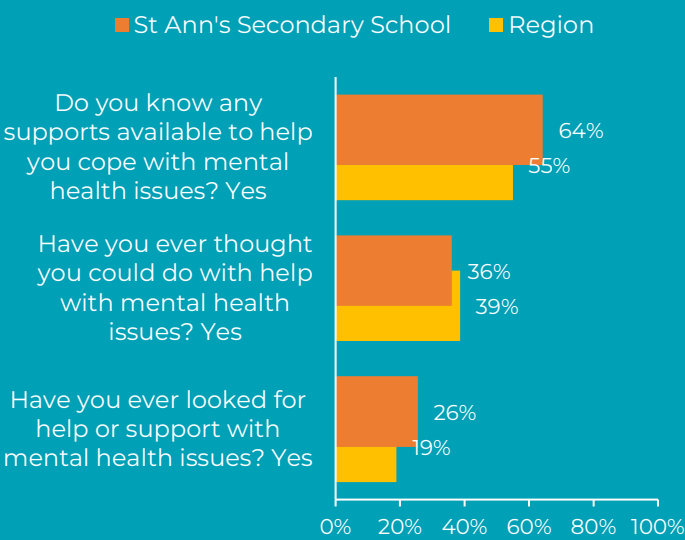
How pupils rate their physical health



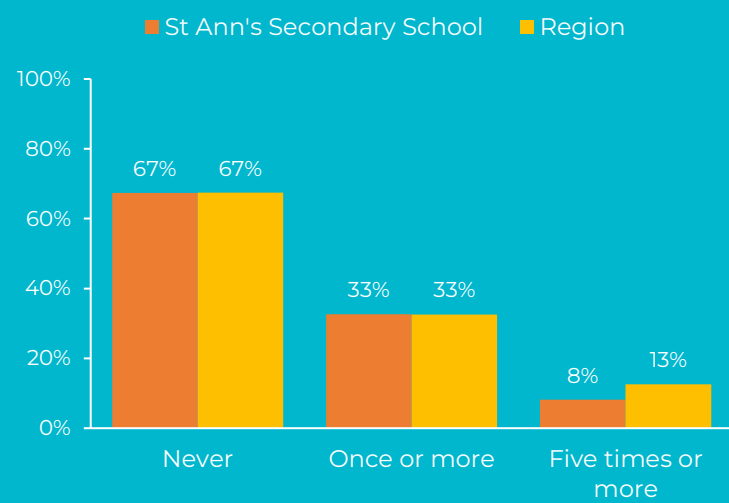
How pupils rate their mental health

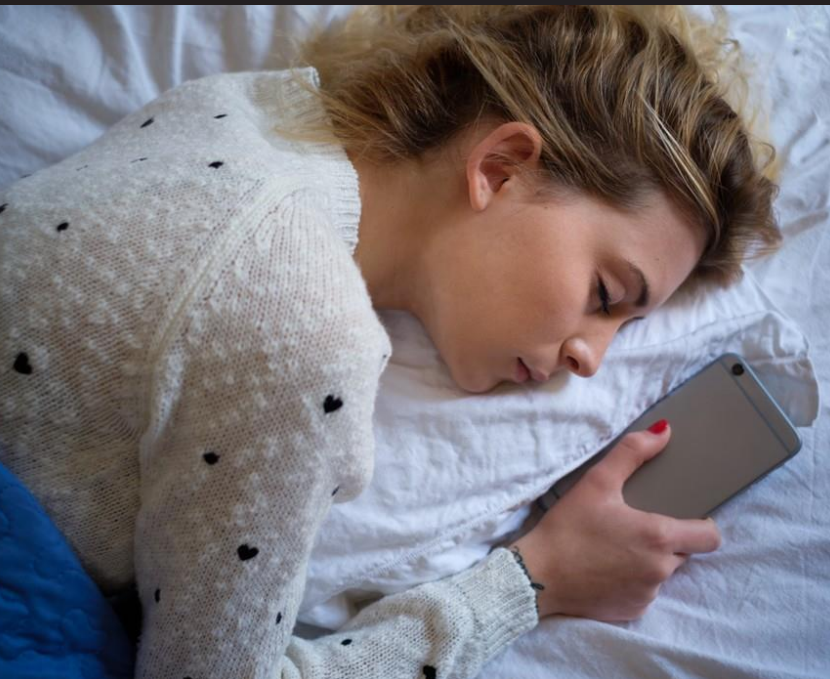


Help-seeking behaviour for mental health issues

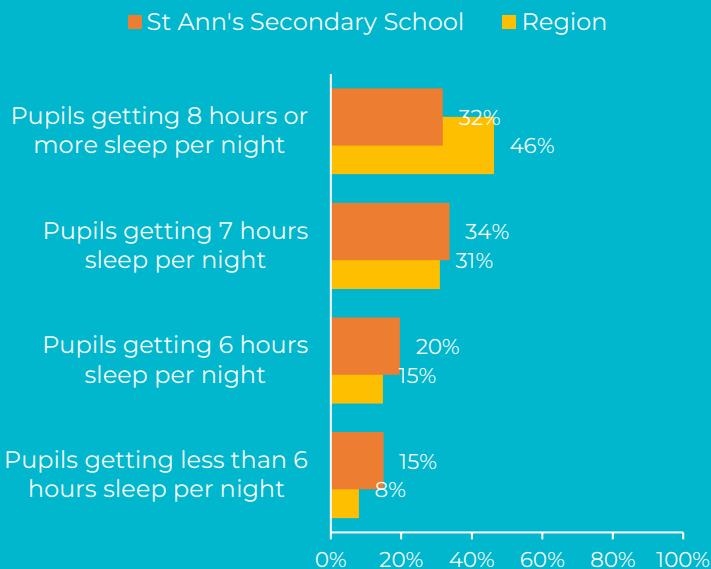


Pupils that reported harming themselves on purpose during their lifetime

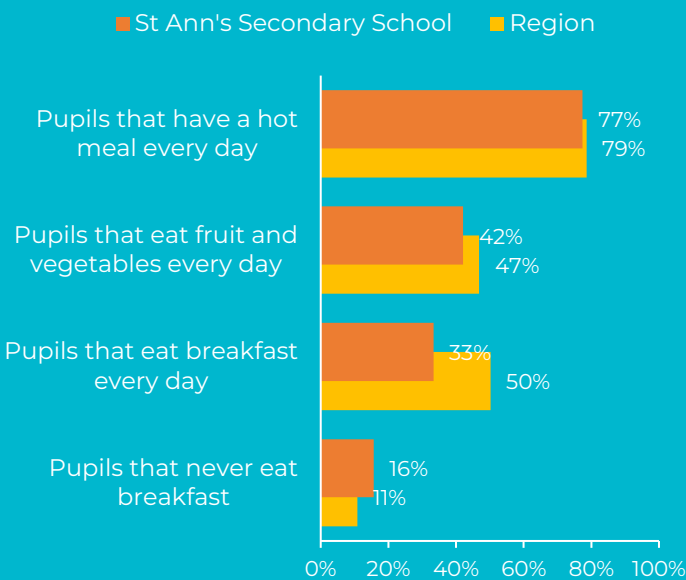




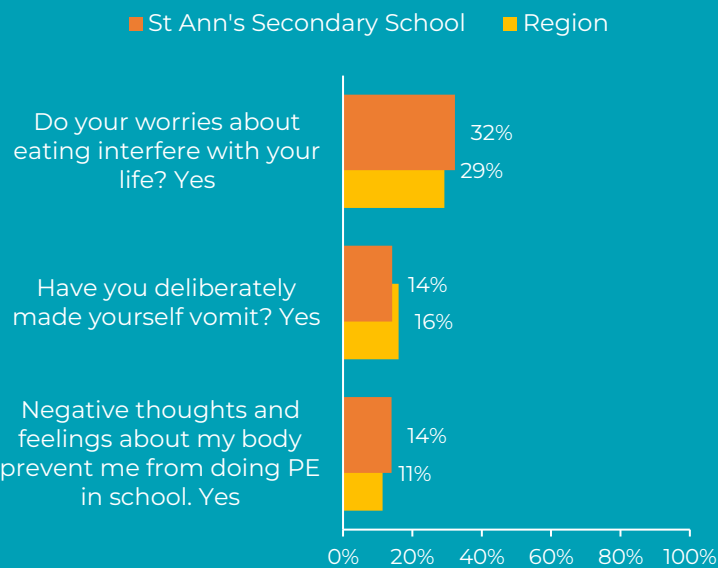
Amount of sleep



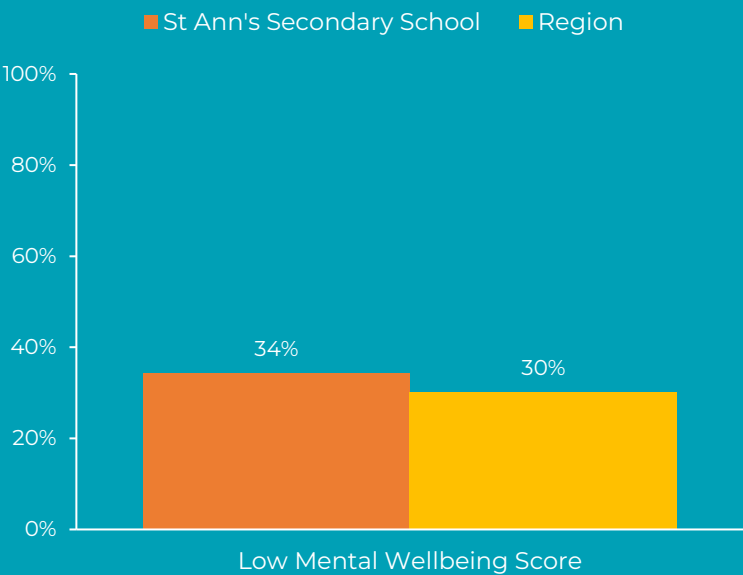
Diet



Body Image and Eating

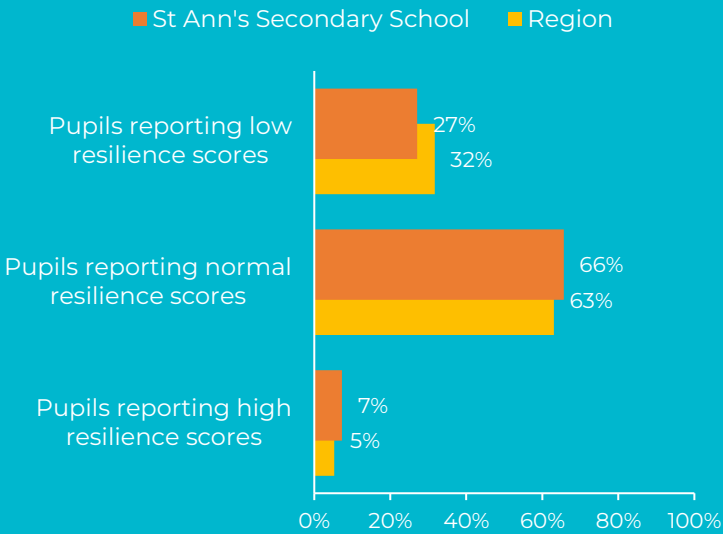


Mental Wellbeing Index - WHO5

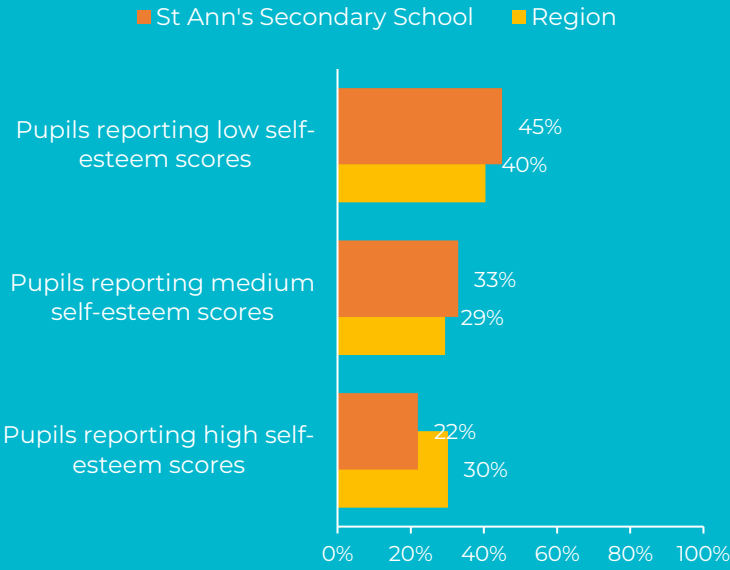




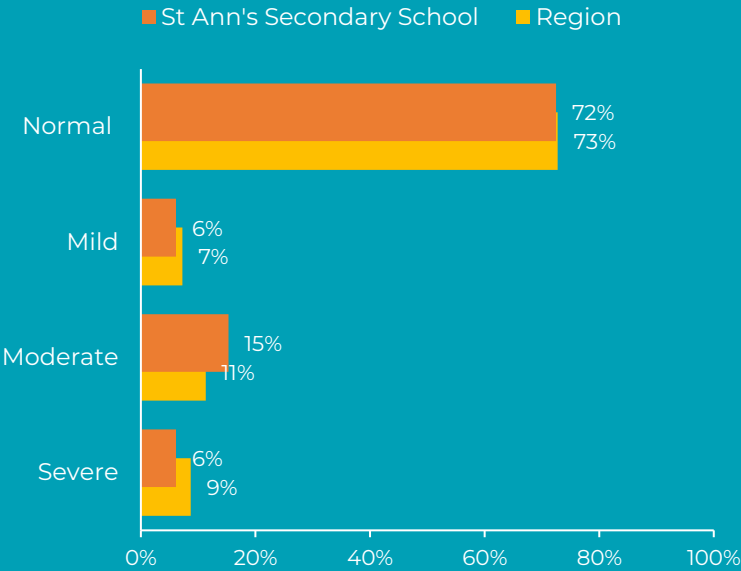
Resilience Scores - Brief Resilience Scale



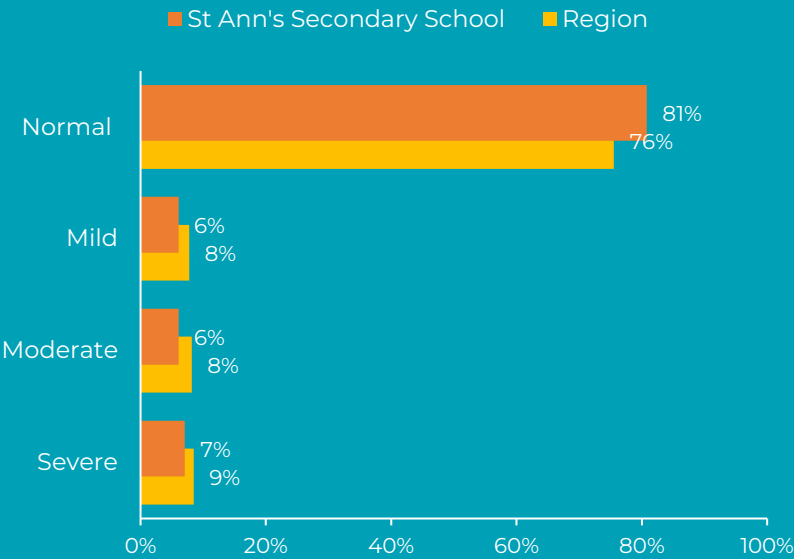
Self-esteem Scores - Rosenberg Scale



Anxiety Scores - DASS21-Y



Stress Scores - DASS21-Y

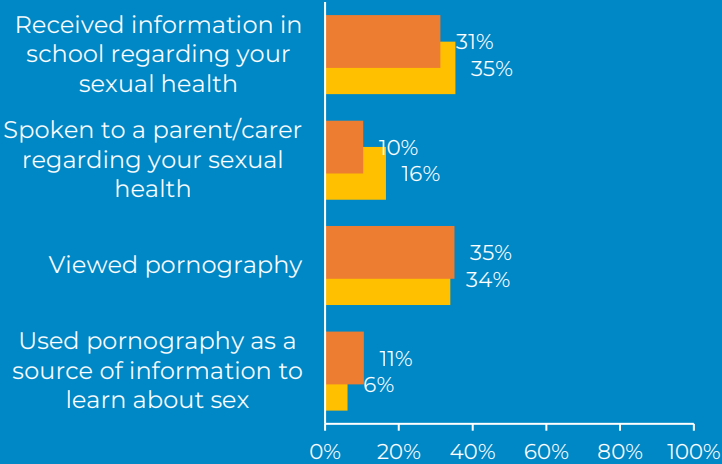


Sexual Health



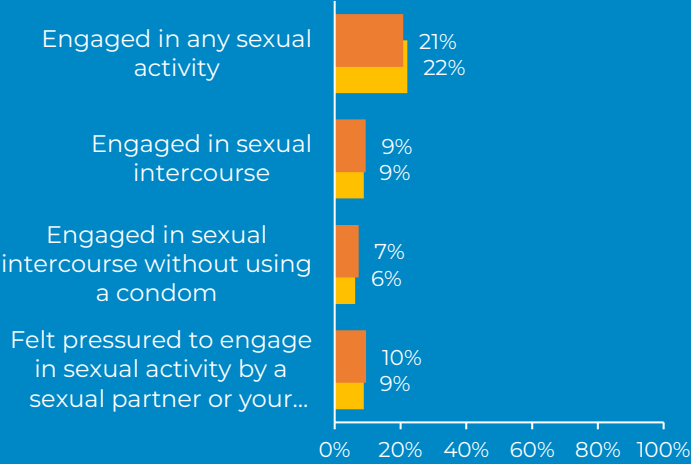
Pupils that report the following once or more in the last 12 months

St Ann's Secondary School Region



Pupils that report the following once or more in the last 12 months

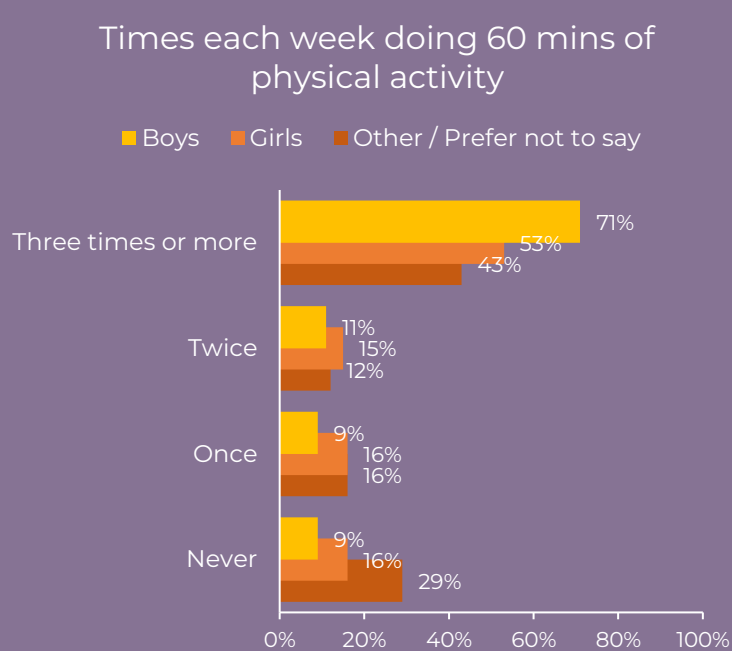
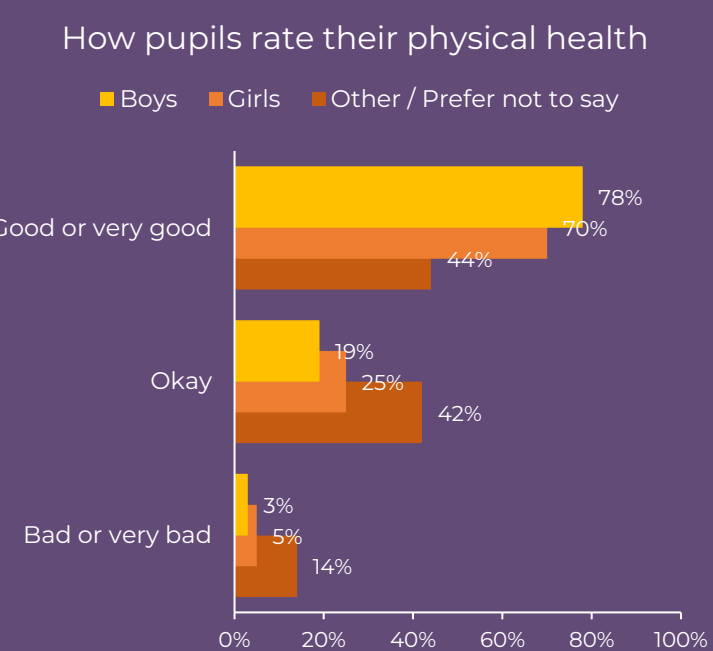
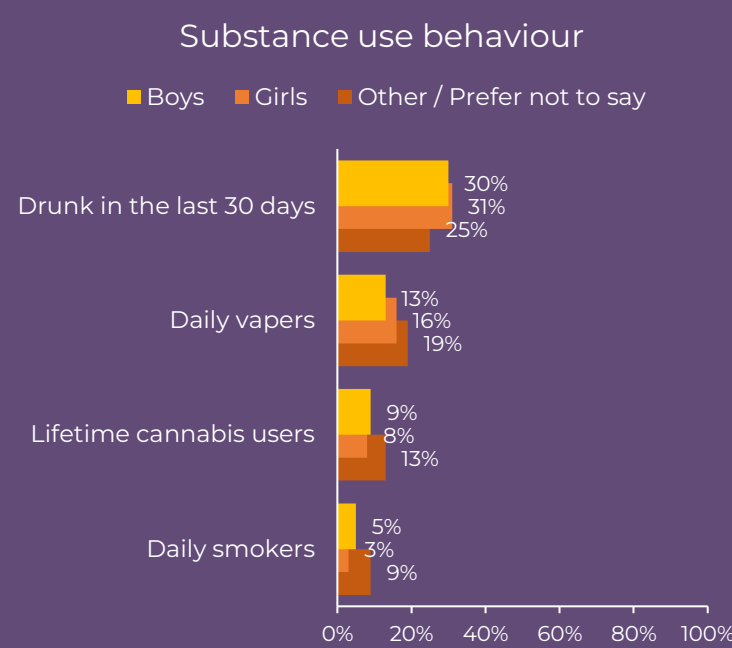
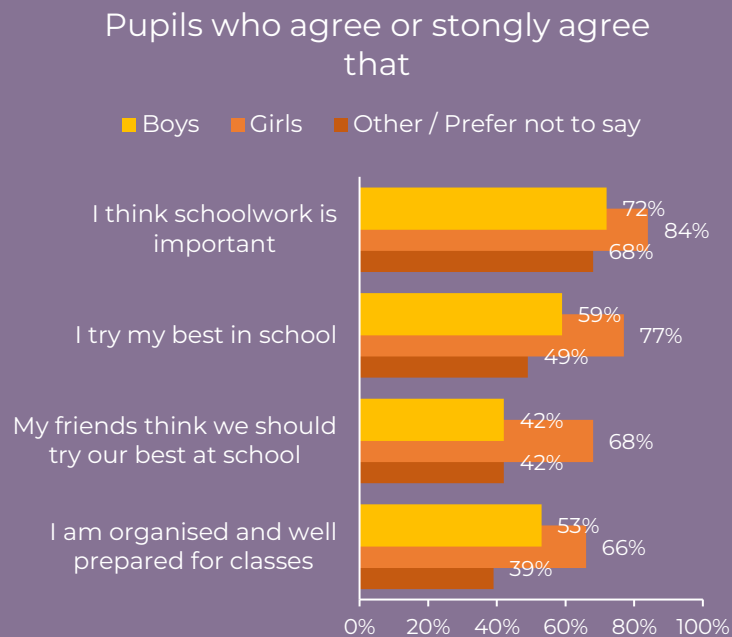
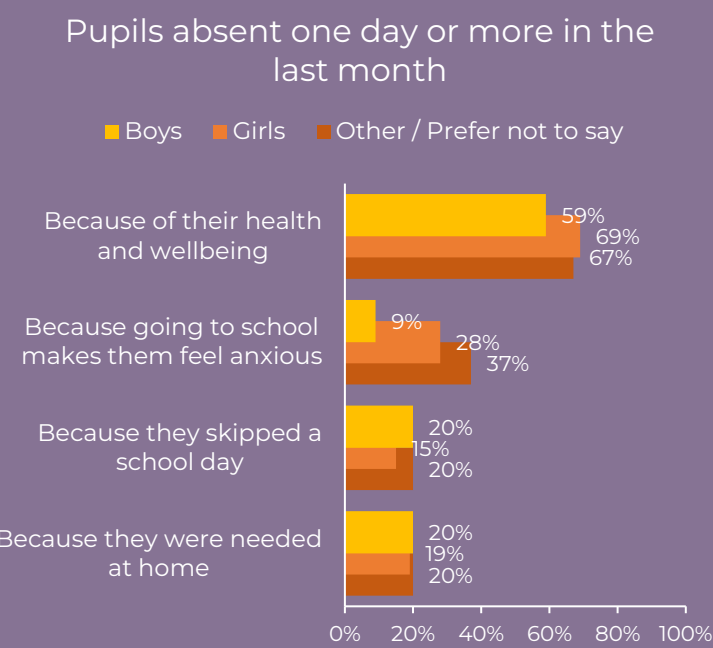
St Ann's Secondary School Region



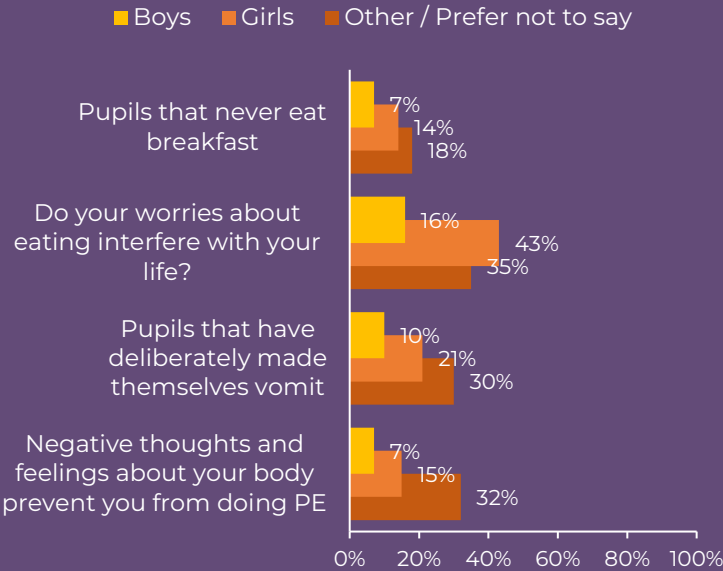
Gender Differences

The charts in this section are used to highlight some of the differences between what boys and girls reported in the survey. There is also collective information on the pupils who selected transgender, non-binary, other or prefer not to say.

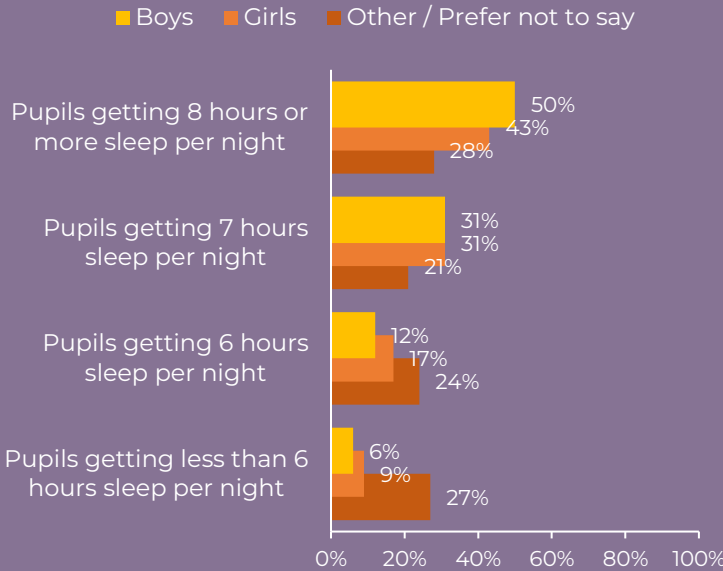
There is a combination of all-male, all-female and co-educational schools in the region and these charts are intended to be helpful when interpreting the reports.



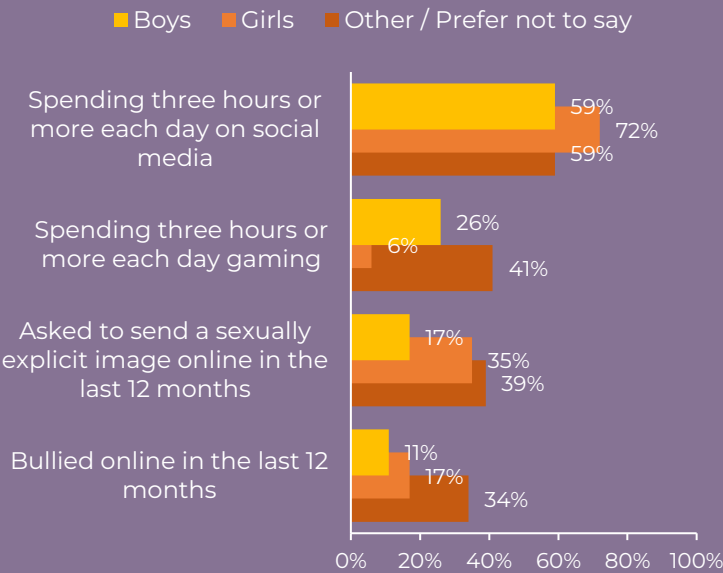
Eating and body image



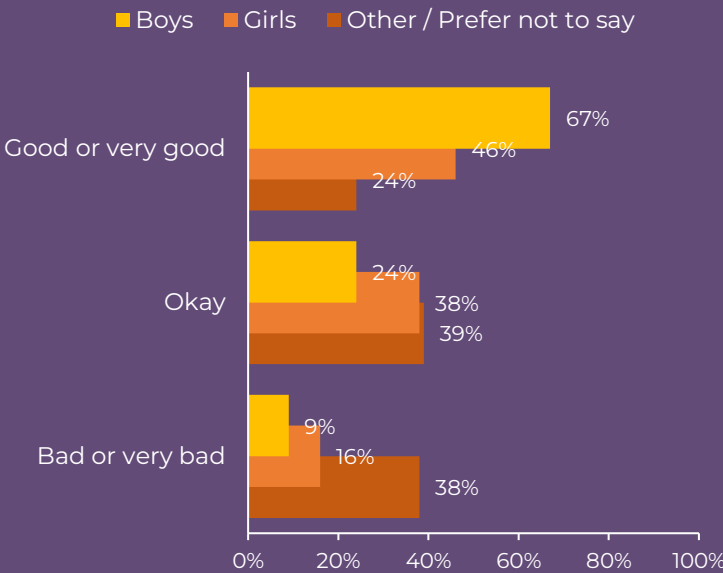
Amount of sleep



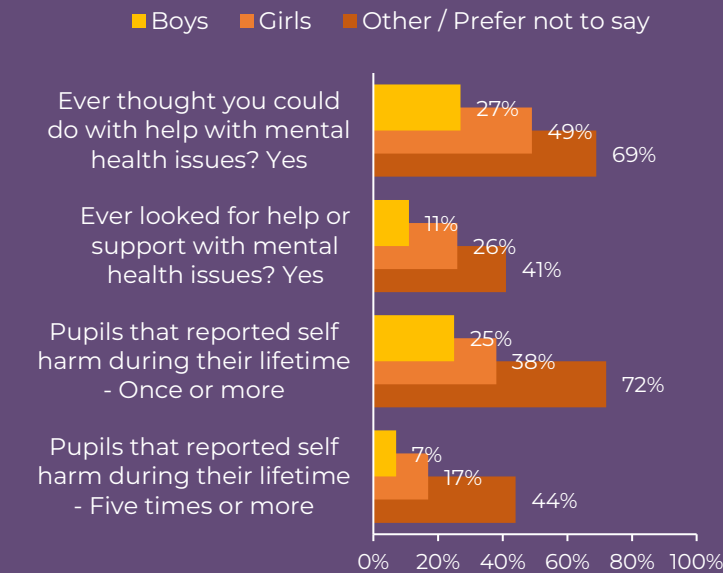
Screens and online behaviour



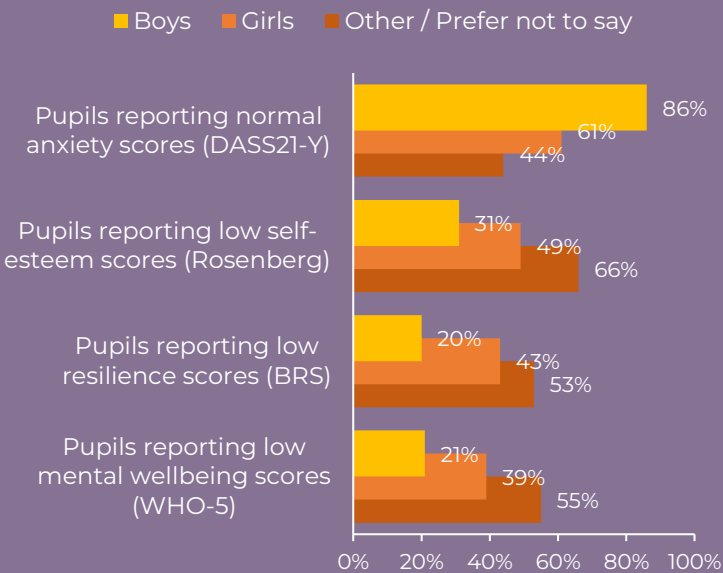
How pupils rate their mental health



Mental wellbeing



Mental wellbeing



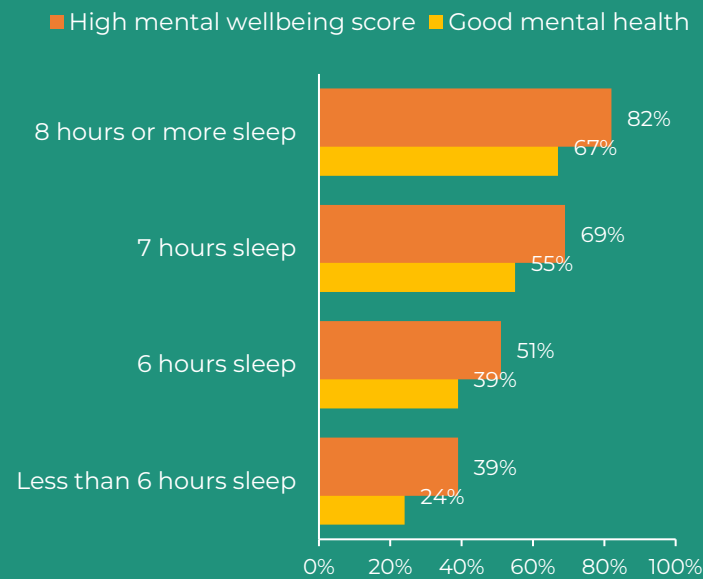
Cross Tabulations

The cross-tabulations shown in this section are used to indicate the relationship between one variable and another and examine the risk and protective factors in different domains. They help to identify patterns and trends of importance.

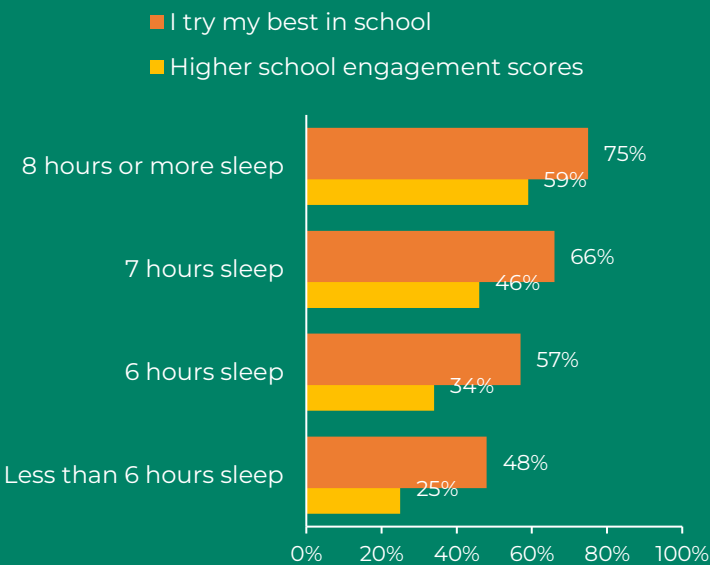
They can also highlight protective factors that are working well and also those that seem to be working poorly or that are unusual in some other way and so worthy of investigation.



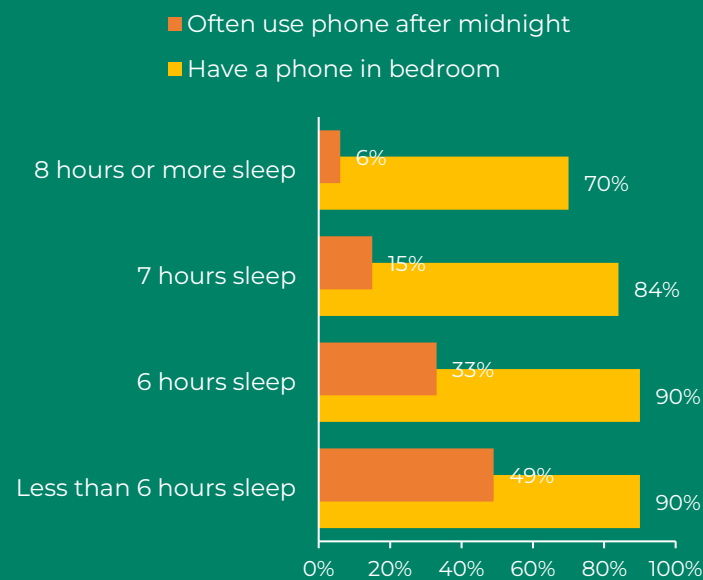
Wellbeing indicators against sleep



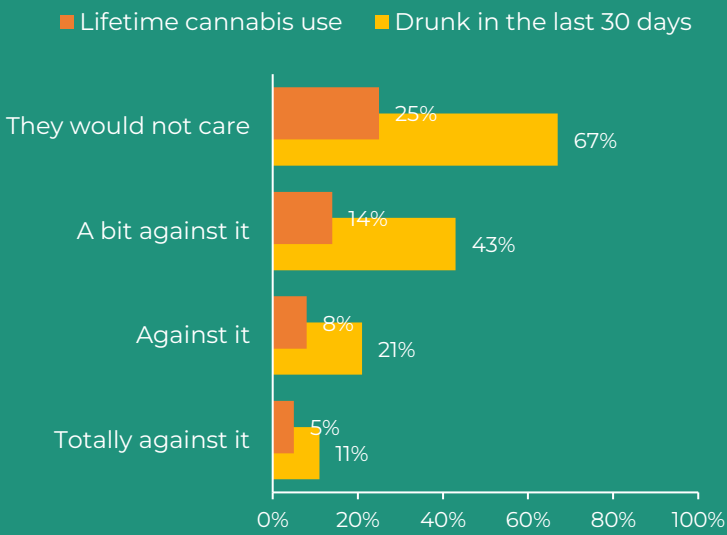
School engagement against sleep



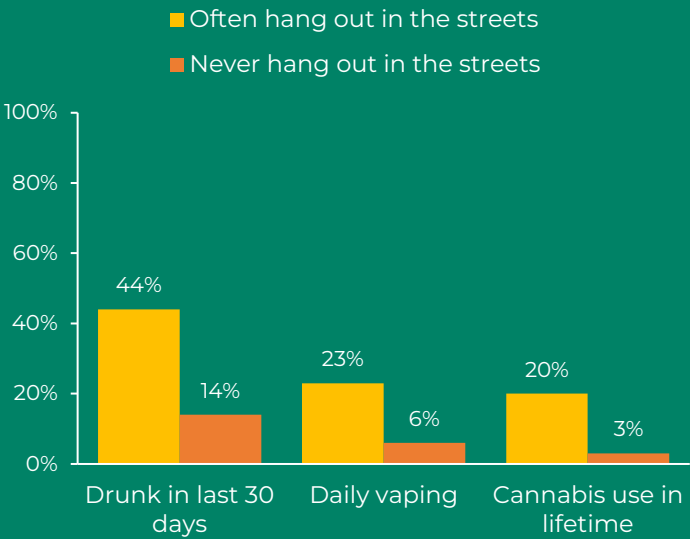
Phones at night against sleep



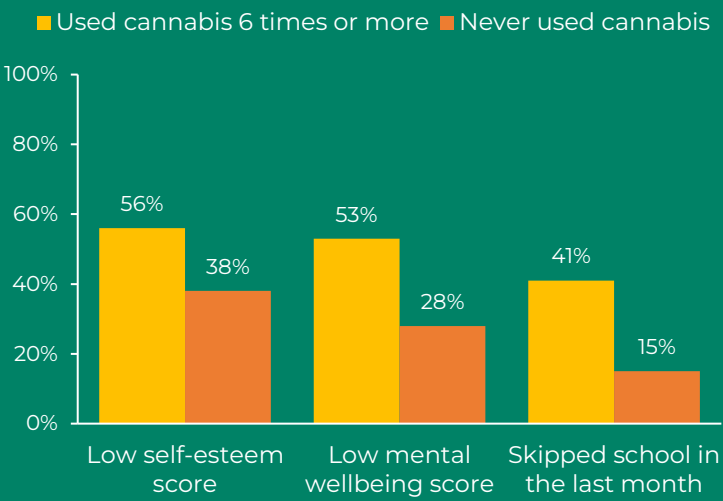
Substance use against perceived parental reaction to drunkenness



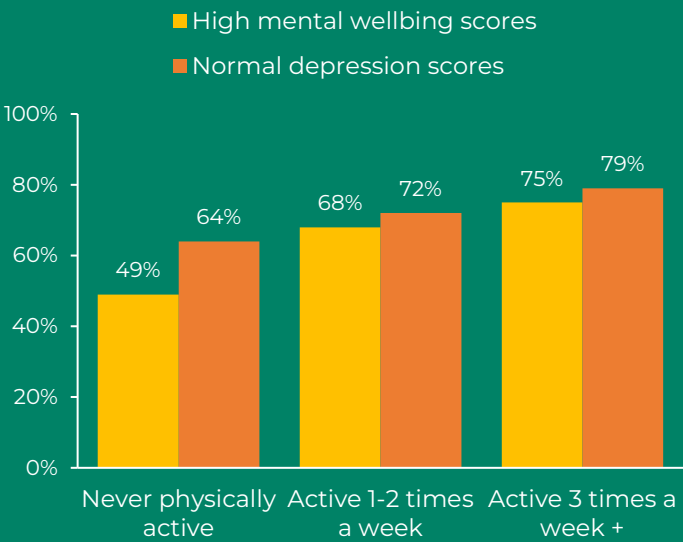
Hanging out in the streets against substance use



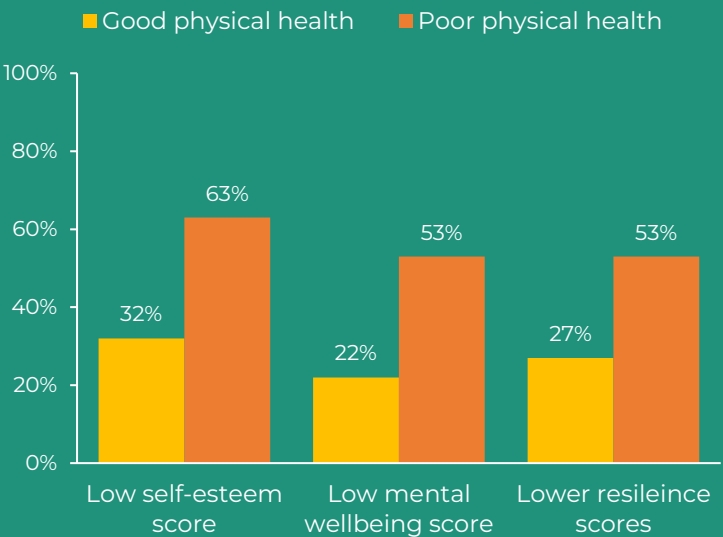
Cannabis use against self-esteem, mental wellbeing and skipping school



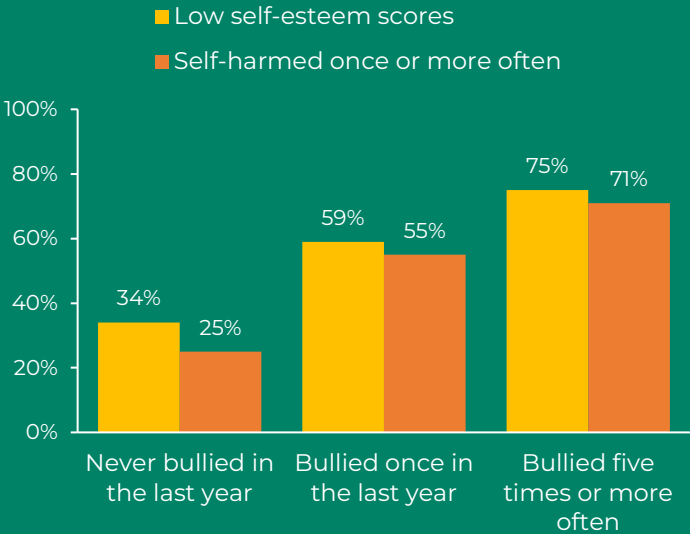
Wellbeing indicators against physical activity



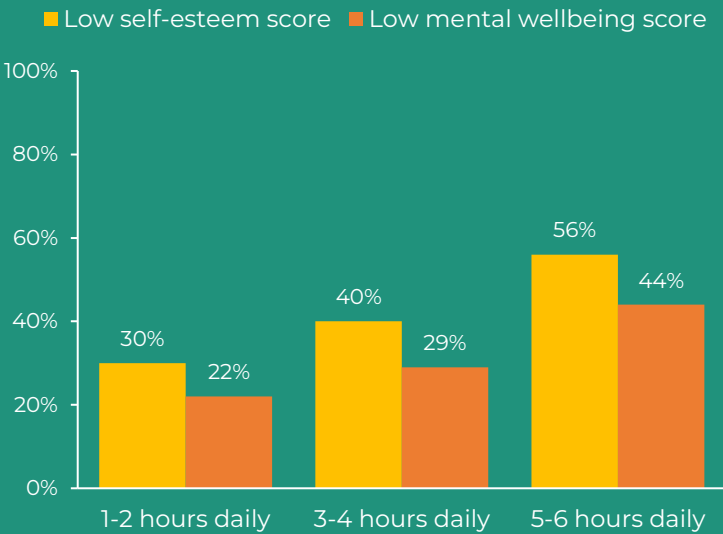
Wellbeing indicators against physical activity



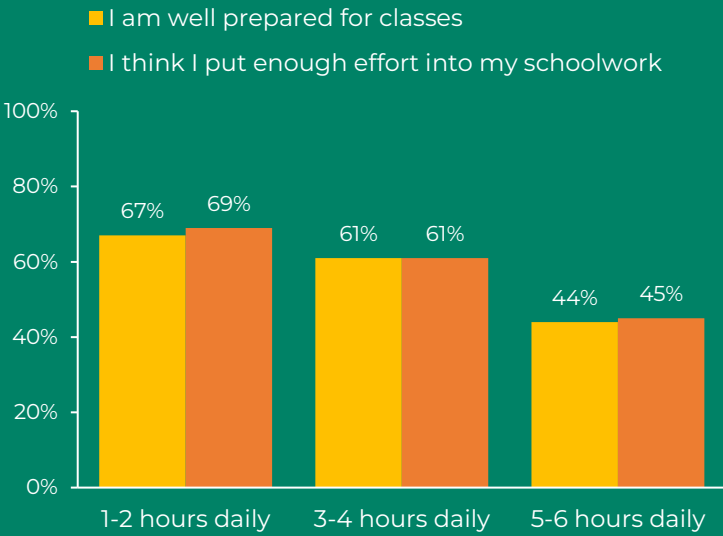
Self-esteem and self-harm against bullying



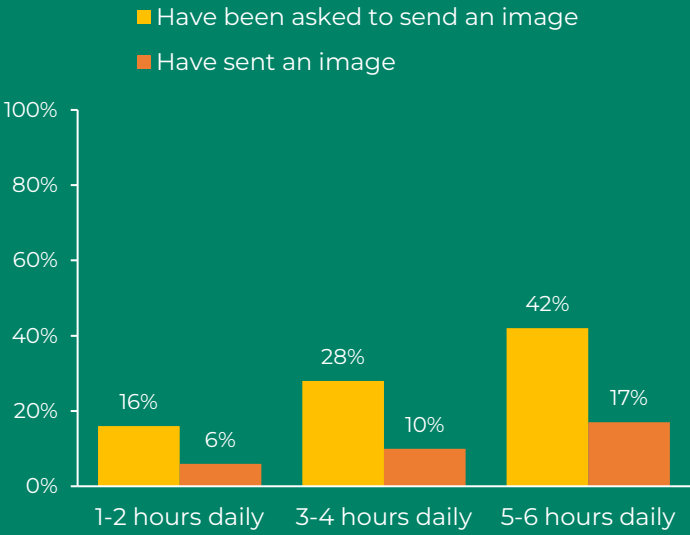
Wellbeing indicators against time on social media



Schoolwork against time on social media



Sending sexually explicit images against time on social media





4

Regional Summary

School Experience

The 2024 Planet Youth survey highlights the very positive school experience for pupils across the region. Most of our young people report being happy and safe, getting on with their teachers and peers, and trying their best in school. Encouragingly, 66% of pupils agree that they receive the supports they need to participate fully in school and 92% report they want to complete their Leaving Certificate. Curriculum engagement remains a challenge, with only 33% of pupils agreeing they find schoolwork interesting. The new attendance question highlighted that 64% of pupils missed school due to health issues and 19% cited anxiety as a cause of non-attendance.

Mental Wellbeing

Two new measures introduced into the 2024 survey help to provide a more detailed picture of pupil wellbeing. These are the WHO-5 Wellbeing Index¹ and the DASS21-Y². The DASS21-Y gives indicative scores for depression, for anxiety, and for stress, and these show that around 25% of pupils report outside the normal range, with around 9% showing as severe. Separately, 30% of pupils scored below the WHO-5 threshold for poor mental wellbeing. The Brief Resilience Scale³ and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale⁴ show similar numbers of young people reporting low scores.

Sleep

The survey highlights ongoing concerns related to the insufficient amount of sleep pupils are getting. This is likely to have a significant bearing on their overall wellbeing. The number of pupils reporting the recommended 8 or more hours of sleep per night stands at 46%. This lack of sleep can be correlated directly with overuse of screens and with having phones in their bedroom at night. On top of the mental wellbeing concerns, sleep deficit can impact on physical wellbeing and academic performance. It should be noted that there are some marginal improvements from 2022 in this area. Only 43% of pupils were sleeping the correct amount at the time of the last survey. The number of pupils with phones in their bedrooms at night has gone from 83% in 2022 to 80% in 2024.

Substance Use

Cannabis and cigarette use have been declining in recent years. However, vaping is a significant issue with 25% of pupils reporting use in the last month. Nicotine pouch use has become a concern, with 15% of pupils reporting lifetime use. Alcohol use, and in particular drunkenness, remains the most significant substance use issue. There has been a marginal but steady decline in lifetime alcohol use across the four Planet Youth surveys to date, from 77% to 72%, but the drunk in the last 30 days metric has not reduced. It stands at 31% at the time of the November 2024 survey.

Leisure Time

The prevention model specifies unsupervised leisure time, or idle time, as a significant risk factor for substance use, and this is clearly borne out in the data. 32% of pupils reported being outside after midnight in the last week and 36% reported regularly hanging out in the streets or being unsupervised at a friend's house. These pupils have substantially higher substance use rates than their peers.

Parental Influence

Parents and parental attitudes continue to play a vital protective role. Whilst the regional figures on child-parent relationships are very encouraging, there are concerns related to parental attitudes to alcohol in particular. 24% of pupils regularly get alcohol from their parents and these pupils are getting drunk at three times the rate of pupils that get their alcohol elsewhere. Only 56% of pupils reported their parents would be against, or totally against, them getting drunk. This figure was at 72% at the time of the first survey in 2018 and has been declining since.

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Conclusion

The 2024 Planet Youth survey provides a comprehensive overview of the lives of our young people and sheds light onto both encouraging trends and areas that require attention. On a positive note, collectively our young people are doing very well. They report being happy and safe in their homes, in their communities and in their schools. School engagement is high, pupils report that doing well in school is important and they also report getting on very well with their teachers. Most pupils identify that there are supportive adults in their school. This presence of a supportive adult is well understood as an important protective factor and should be celebrated and nurtured.

Regionally, cannabis use rates and cigarette use rates are down. However, rates of binge drinking remain high and new challenges have emerged, particularly the rise in vaping and an increased use of nicotine pouches. These changes highlight the need for ongoing community-based prevention efforts and also the importance of health education in schools. The consistent delivery of the evidence-based substance use modules in SPHE, such as Making Healthy Choices and Know the Score, will provide pupils with the knowledge to make informed decisions in this area.

The latest findings reveal once again a lack of sufficient sleep and the close relationship between sleep and wellbeing. This issue appears to be exacerbated by excessive screen use and the presence of phones in bedrooms. Mental and physical health are closely correlated to sleep, and this applies also to schoolwork and to school engagement also. These relationships are well demonstrated in the cross-tabulations within the report. The topic of sleep has neither an emphasis nor a dedicated module within SPHE. This deficit will hopefully be addressed at national level soon. In the interim, there are locally developed sleep resources for pupils, and their parents, on the Planet Youth and The Facts websites. These can be utilised to promote the importance of sleep and help address deficits in sleep hygiene.

Around 30% of pupils reported poorly in the areas of mental wellbeing and self-esteem. This finding, together with the high prevalence of self-harm, suggests a need for further fostering resilience in our young people. Wellbeing initiatives designed to strengthen coping skills, such as the MindOut Programme, should be considered for inclusion in both Junior and Senior Cycle wellbeing.

As we consider the survey findings, it is evident that a multi-faceted approach is needed to address some of the challenges our young people face. Whilst education and school-based initiatives have their role to play, parental support and wider community engagement are needed also. The Planet Youth primary prevention model provides the opportunity to engage many of the stakeholders and also the data to inform interventions that support these efforts.

Some of these interventions can be delivered within the current practice of schools and others need active parental engagement and participation. We hope, in any event, that you find the report useful and that your school can consider the recommendations listed.

The overall purpose of the Planet Youth project is to adapt the Icelandic Primary Prevention Model for use in Ireland and improve health outcomes for our young population. The project was evaluated as promising at the end of its initial 2018-2022 pilot implementation. It is now in its second phase, which will include the school-based surveys in 2024, 2026 and 2028.

It is important to note that there is no onus upon any school to adopt any of the recommendations in the report or participate further in the Planet Youth project beyond simply accommodating the biennial Planet Youth surveys. Your support with these surveys is greatly appreciated.

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Recommendations

The Planet Youth project and survey findings can be used by schools in the following ways:

School Leadership and Management

1. To inform school self-evaluation and school improvement plans as outlined in the [Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice](#) and [School Self-Evaluation: Next Steps](#) documents.
2. To support policy development and policy review.
3. To help pastoral care teams identify strengths and deficits in student support.

Learning and Teaching

1. To support implementation of the [Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines](#)
 - In planning units of wellbeing learning
 - Using the data to support student reflection
 - in planning the use of guest speakers or external facilitators
2. To support the delivery of wellbeing curricula in Senior Cycle.
3. Utilise [The Facts](#) website to inform and support the delivery of modules in both Junior and Senior Cycle SPHE.
4. Deliver [The Importance of Sleep](#) teaching module within Junior Cycle wellbeing hours or as part of a wellbeing week.

Collaboration With Stakeholders

1. Distribute the Planet Youth [Guidelines for Parents](#) booklet to the incoming first year parents.
2. Consider incorporating the Planet Youth key prevention messaging as part of first-year parent information evenings.
3. Highlight the Planet Youth [Step Up](#) school transition website if hosting sixth class parent information sessions.
4. Use the Planet Youth data and resources to promote partnership and strengthen engagement with parents and with local agencies (HSCL, SCP, HSE, Tusla, Youth Services).

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How schools have used previous reports

Some short examples of ways that schools have utilised previous reports include:

School leadership and management

“We used our school report to identify an area of focus for the school improvement aspect of our DEIS plan.”

“We have used the reports to help inform school policies.”

“We have used reports for school self-evaluation and school improvement planning; identifying the issues of *sense of belonging* and one good adult as areas of focus.”

“The report has helped in shaping and refining our wellbeing initiatives. The data highlighted that 58% of our students were not receiving the recommended amount of sleep. This insight directly informed our *Sleep Better, Be Better* initiative.”

“By integrating the data into our wellbeing strategy, we have created a more informed, proactive approach to supporting student health and academic success.”

“Data from the Planet Youth survey was used in supporting our ETBI Provision Mapping process.”

“Data from the report has informed our planning for upcoming year groups.”

Learning and Teaching

“We used the data in SPHE & RSE curriculum development, in particular to inform teaching on substance use, relationships, and digital wellbeing.”

“A sleep awareness programme was introduced in our school to tackle poor sleep habits.”

“The report helped us when selecting guest speakers and interventions (e.g., on vaping, mental health).”

“The report has equipped us with data which conveys the broader context of students' lives and the influences on their capacity to engage in learning.”

Collaboration with stakeholders

“Our report's findings were shared with parents and follow-up information sessions were used to foster a collaborative approach in addressing sleep hygiene at home.”

“We used the report for information sharing with staff, with parents and as part of our student support team.”

“Our data was used to support a funding application for additional psychotherapy hours.”

8

Acknowledgements

Thank you once again to the principals of all 90 post primary schools and Youthreach Centres in the region for facilitating the survey.

A huge thank you goes to the staff that acted as the survey coordinators in the schools and centres. It was a big undertaking, and the survey could not have happened without you.

Additionally, we would like to thank the principals and school staff members that contributed to the design of the latest survey and the content of these new reports. Your support and assistance has helped in bringing Planet Youth to where it is today.

Thanks go to the services who kindly offered additional support and care to participants if required, namely Childline, Pieta House, Galway Rape Crisis Centre and Jigsaw.

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A special acknowledgement to Professor Diarmuid O'Donovan and to HSE Public Health for assistance throughout and with the application to the Ethical Review Committee of the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland.

9

Links and References

[Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice](#)

[School Self-Evaluation: Next Steps](#)

[Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines](#)

The [Planet Youth](#) website

The [The Facts](#) SPHE website

The [Step Up](#) website – national to post-primary school transition

The [Importance of Sleep](#) – a three lesson teaching module

¹ The [WHO-5 Wellbeing Index](#) (WHO-5).

² The [Depression Anxiety Stress Scales](#) (DASS21-Y).

³ The [Brief Resilience Scale](#) (BRS).

⁴ The [Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale](#) (RSES).



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