

Students in Summerhill Street Elementary School Bullying and School Safety — Elementary (2016/2017)



A safe school environment is critical for students' learning and well-being. Schools are safer when school staff, students, parents and community agencies work together to prevent bullying and exclusion. **Bullying** is when a person tries to hurt another person, and does it more than once. It can be physical, verbal, or social, and can also take place over the internet with emails or text messages. The bully usually has power over the person being bullied, such as when the bully is bigger physically or more popular. Sometimes a group of students will bully others. **Exclusion** is when students feel excluded or treated unfairly at school because of ethnic or cultural background, social class, religion, disability, or other perceived categorical boundary. Exclusion is a form of bullying, and often students that are excluded are victims of other forms of bullying. Students who are bullied are prone to experiencing low self esteem, anxiety, depression, and disaffection from school. In extreme cases bullying can lead to suicide.

Key Findings from the Research

- Twenty-two percent of Canadian students indicated they had been bullied in at least two ways during the previous four weeks. These results are based on data from over 30,000 students that completed the elementary *OurSCHOOL* survey in 2012. Verbal and social bullying were the most prevalent forms of bullying; about one-quarter of all students reported being bullied in these ways.
- Schools vary in their reported prevalence of moderate and severe bullying. In 2012, the average prevalence of moderate and severe bullying was 22%; however, it varied from 0% to 63% among elementary schools. One-half of all schools had a prevalence between 17% and 29%.
- There are several actions schools can take to prevent bullying and exclusion. School staff must be able to recognize different forms of bullying and be willing to step in when they observe a student being bullied.¹ Positive school policies and practices can make it safe for students to report bullying when it occurs and ensure that there are clear consequences for bullying that are consistently enforced. Schools can help equip students with appropriate strategies to deal with bullying and exclusion.²
- Bullying begins early. The *OurSCHOOL* survey data suggest that from grade 4 through to grade 9 the prevalence of bullying ranges from 21% to 28%. After grade 9, the prevalence declines, but only down to 19% by grades 11 and 12.
- Data from students can help school staff develop positive practices and policies.

Students from Summerhill Street Elementary School completed the *OurSCHOOL* survey which included questions about bullying, school safety and exclusion. This report summarizes their views.

1. The prevalence of school bullying

The literature distinguishes between bullies, victims and those who are both bullies and the victims of bullying.³ The percentage of students who report being victims of bullying is a useful school-level measure of the extent of bullying and its potential effects on youth. Students' reports of taking part in bullying and students' accounts of witnessing bullying are less useful as a school measure, because even a single incident of bullying may be seen or talked about by a wide range of students.

Overall, 51% of students in Summerhill Street Elementary School reported being a victim of bullying for at least one of the four types of bullying. In addition, *OurSCHOOL* classifies students as being moderate or severe victims. Figure 1 - shows the results for all students in Summerhill Street Elementary School, and separately for boys and girls, compared with the national average. Figure 2 indicates the types of bullying most often experienced by the students at Summerhill Street Elementary School. The results are based on students' reports of being victims of physical, social, verbal and cyber bullying in the previous 30 days.

Figure 1: Prevalence of bullying at Summerhill Street Elementary School

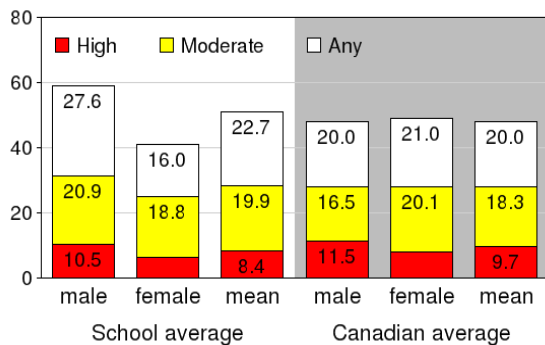
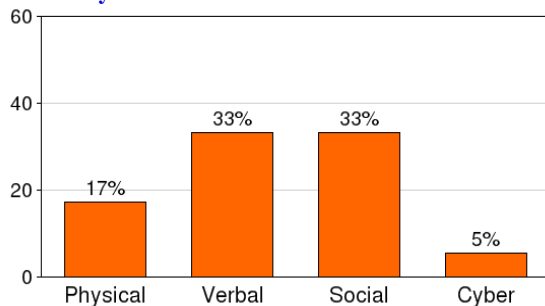


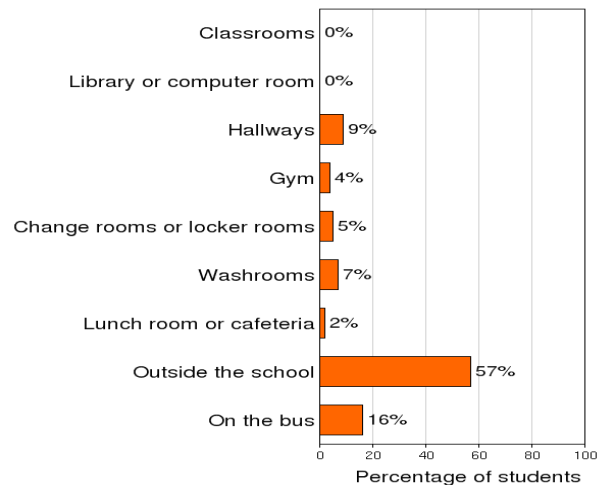
Figure 2: Bullying by Type at Summerhill Street Elementary School



2. Where and when bullying occurs

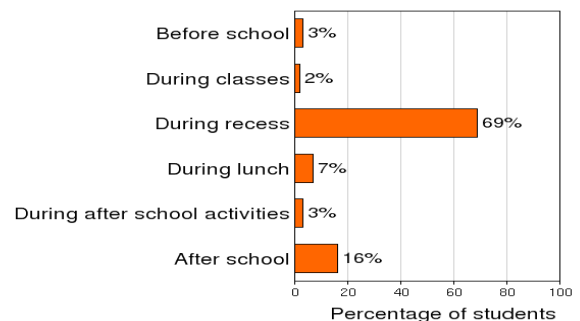
Bullying tends to occur most frequently in classrooms, hallways and the lunchroom, but this can vary among schools.⁴ Students quickly learn where the 'hot-spots' are, which tend to be places where there is inadequate supervision.⁵ Students at Summerhill Street Elementary School were asked where bullying happened most often in and near their school. The results are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Where bullying occurs at Summerhill Street Elementary School



The students at Summerhill Street Elementary School were also asked when bullying most often occurred. Figure 4 displays the results.

Figure 4: When bullying occurs at Summerhill Street Elementary School



3. How students respond to bullying

Students in Summerhill Street Elementary School who reported being bullied in the past four weeks were asked what they did the last time they were bullied. Figure 5 summarizes their responses.

Figure 5: How students respond when bullied at Summerhill Street Elementary School

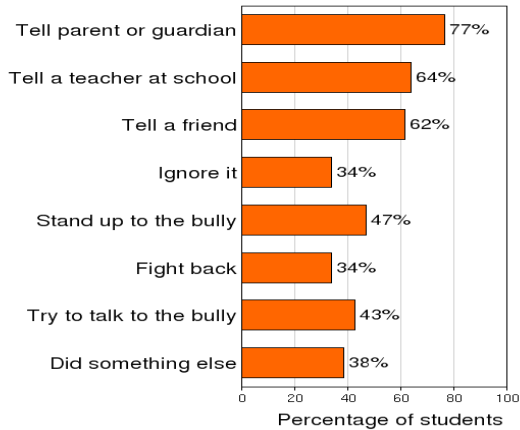
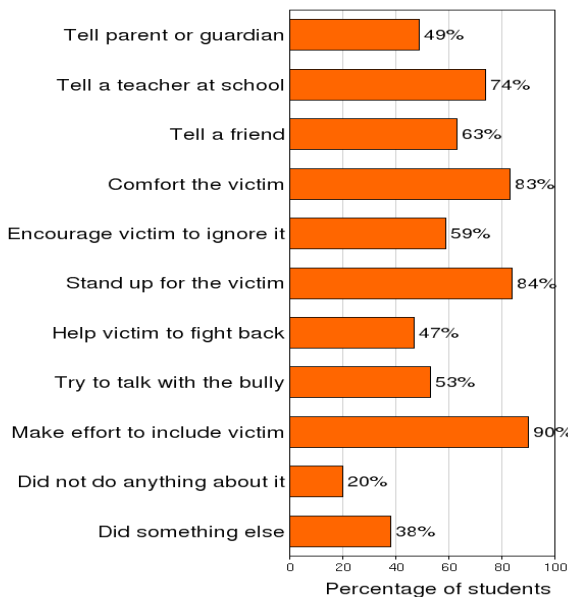


Figure 6 summarizes student responses when they saw or heard about a student being bullied.

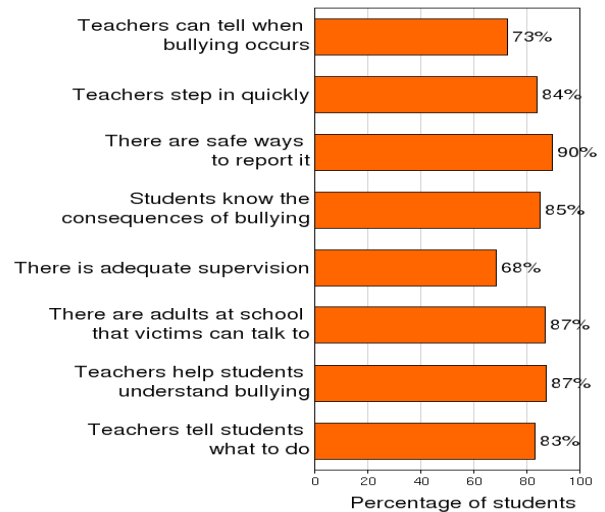
Figure 6: Response when others are bullied at Summerhill Street Elementary School



4. Measures to prevent bullying

School policies and practices can help prevent student bullying. Students at Summerhill Street Elementary School indicated the extent to which they felt certain anti-bullying measures were practiced in their school. Figure 7 shows the percentage of students that agreed or strongly agreed that these practices were evident in their school.

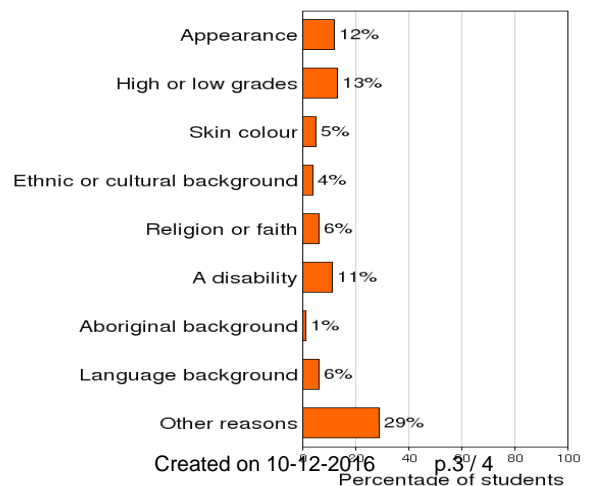
Figure 7: Measures to prevent bullying at Summerhill Street Elementary School



5. Students who feel excluded

Many students feel excluded by their peers because of their ethnic or cultural background, social class, religion, disability, or other perceived categorical boundaries. Figure 8 shows the percentage of students who felt excluded by other students for various reasons.

Figure 8: Reasons students feel excluded at Summerhill Street Elementary School



6. Feeling Safe at School

Students were asked whether they felt safe at school, and safe going to and from school. Overall, 5% of girls and 12.8% of boys in Summerhill Street Elementary School indicated that they did not feel safe at school. A further 13.8% of girls and 15.1% of boys indicated a neutral position, neither agreeing nor disagreeing that they felt safe at school. Figure 9 shows the percentage of students that felt safe at school.

Figure 9: Students who feel safe at Summerhill Street Elementary School

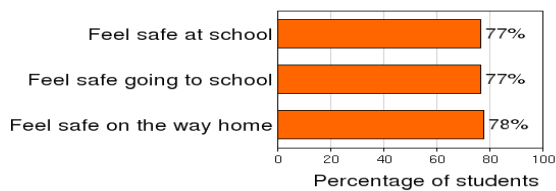
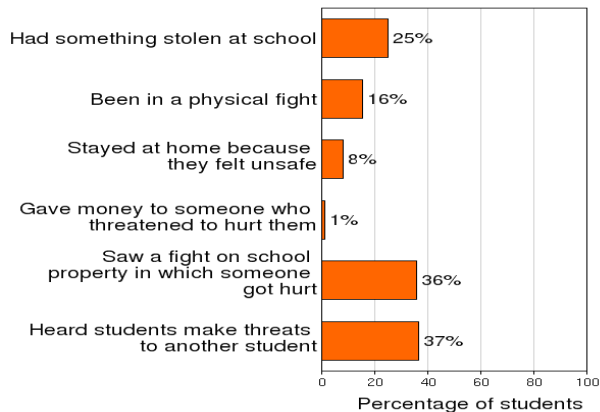


Figure 10 shows students' responses to six other questions concerning how safe they felt at school.

Figure 10: Indicators of an unsafe environment at Summerhill Street Elementary School



About *OurSCHOOL*

OurSCHOOL is an evaluation system that includes a dynamic web-based student survey, and optional teacher and parent surveys. The system provides leading indicators of student engagement and wellness, and the aspects of classroom and school learning climate that research has shown affect student engagement and learning outcomes. Please see www.thelearningbar.com for further information.

About this School Report

This report was prepared by Dr. J. Douglas Willms, Director of the Canadian Research Institute for Social Policy at the University of New Brunswick. It was based on data from 166 students at Summerhill Street Elementary School that completed the *OurSCHOOL* student survey in 2016. Schools can print this report free of charge for use in staff meetings and professional development activities. It can also be reproduced for distribution to parents.

References:

1. Pepler, D. J., Craig, W. M., Ziegler, S. & Charach, A. (1994). "An Evaluation of an Anti-Bullying Intervention in Toronto Schools". *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health*, 13(2): 95-110.
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4. Leff, S. S., Power, T. J., Costigan, T. E., & Manz, P. H. (2003). Assessing the climate of the playground and lunchroom: Implications for bullying prevention programming. *School Psychology Review*, 32, 418-430.
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