

HBSC 2026

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Information for parents about the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study and recent findings on young people's health and wellbeing across Scotland



WHAT IS HBSC?



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Health Behaviour in School-Aged Children (HBSC) is a young person's health and wellbeing survey conducted every 4 years in Scotland since 1990.

It is funded by Public Health Scotland and is carried out by a research team at The University of Glasgow.

HBSC is also an international study in collaboration with the World Health Organisation that captures data from 50 countries across Europe, North America and Central Asia.

PREVIOUS FINDINGS



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2026 will be the 10th time the survey has been conducted in Scotland.

HBSC captures invaluable data on the health and wellbeing of adolescents every 4 years, highlighting key trends and experiences of young people growing up in Scotland.

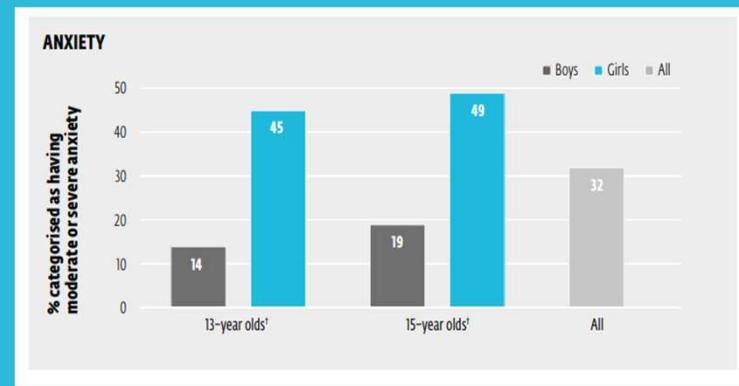
The next few slides highlight some of the important findings from the 2022 HBSC National report for Scotland.

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING



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- Reported bullying has risen from 8% in 2002 to 18% in 2022.
- 38% of young people in 2022 reported that COVID-19 had a negative impact on their mental health.
- The proportion of young people who report feeling confident has decreased from 72% in 1998 to 42% in 2022.
- Nearly 50% of all 15-year-old girls in 2022 reported experiencing feelings of severe or moderate anxiety over the last 2 weeks.



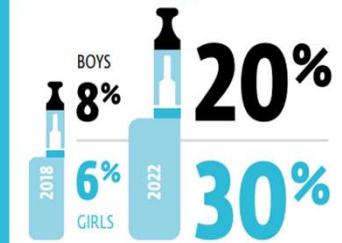
SUBSTANCE USE



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- Findings from the HBSC 2022 report showed that vaping is now more common than smoking.
- 1 in 5 reported having tried vapes at least once in their lifetime.
- Less than half of 15-year-olds said they had drunk alcohol in the last 30 days.
- In 2022, 32% of 15-year-old girls and 26% of 15-year-old boys said they had been drunk 2 or more times in their lifetime. This is the lowest level since 1990.

Between 2018 and 2022, there has been an increase in current vaping among 15-year-olds, particularly among girls.



WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF TAKING PART?



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The School Report

- Each school taking part in the HBSC survey will receive a confidential report providing aggregate (combined) data from their school.
- This data can be used to help schools make changes to improve the health and wellbeing of their pupils and give pupils more of a say in decisions that are made at school.

The Young Persons Report

- HBSC also produces a young persons report so they can better understand what issues affect other young people their age. This can be used in lessons at school to raise awareness of health issues affecting young people today, for example, bullying or vaping.
- It can also provide details of organisations that can provide help and support where needed.

Policy Implications

- In 2024, HBSC findings were cited in a joint statement by Public Health Scotland and Scottish Directors of Public Health, calling for action on youth smoking and vaping.