**Bullying behaviour among schoolchildren in Ireland**

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**Summary**

HBSC Ireland 2006 has found that 24.5% of schoolchildren in Ireland report having been bullied (25.6% of boys and 23.4% of girls). This figure has remained stable since 2002 (23.3%). The percentage of girls who have been bullied is higher among younger girls (30.2% of 10-11 year olds and 19.5% of 15-17 year olds). Among boys having been bullied is most apparent among 12-14 year olds (28.2%). Children who have been bullied are less likely to live with both parents, find it easy to talk to their parents or best friend, spend evenings with friends, like school, have excellent health and be happy with their lives, and are more likely to report feeling pressured by schoolwork. Bullying in this factsheet refers to children who report being bullied at school once or more in the past couple of months.

**Why this topic?**

Schools in Ireland have highlighted bullying as an issue which requires particular attention. Bullying has been shown to be associated with emotional and behavior problems. Young people who are exposed to bullying report more negative health outcomes; this is also the case for those who bully others. High self-esteem has been identified as a possible mechanism to protect children and adolescents from involvement in bullying.

**Trends 2002-2006**

Overall the percentage of children who report having been bullied has remained stable since 2002 (23.3%). The number of boys who have been bullied has remained stable (26.4% to 25.6%) while there was a slight increase among girls (21% to 23.4%). The most pronounced increase is seen among girls aged 15-17 years old (15.8% to 19.5%).

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**Percentage of children who have been bullied, by age and gender**

- Boys: 30.2%, 28.2%, 22.1%
- Girls: 30.2%, 27.9%, 19.5%

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Further information is available at:

- [http://www.hbsc.org](http://www.hbsc.org)
- [http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc/](http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc/)
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Fifteen year old schoolchildren in Ireland (boys and girls together) are ranked 21st among 39 countries in Europe and North America with 23% reporting that they have been bullied. Overall 28% of 11 year olds (ranked 31st) and 27% of 13 year olds (ranked 29th) report having been bullied.

Implications

The percentage of children in Ireland who report having been bullied at least once in the past couple of months has remained stable since 1998. Ireland is mid-range in comparison to other European and North American countries. Younger girls and boys aged 12-14 years old are most likely to report being bullied. The findings indicate that communication with parents and peers and the school environment could act as protective factors against being bullied. The issue of bullying in schools across Ireland requires continued attention and support for addressing this behaviour.

References


This factsheet was prepared by Aoife Gavin, Siobhán O’Higgins, Graham Brennan, Pauline Clerkin, Aingeal de Róiste, Cílena Fitzpatrick, Colette Kelly, Michal Molcho, Larri Walker and Saoirse Nic Gabhainn.