

HBSC IRELAND

The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) is a research study conducted by an international network of research teams¹ in collaboration with the World Health Organisation (Europe) and co-ordinated by Professor Candace Currie of the University of Edinburgh. In 2006 HBSC Ireland surveyed 10,334 schoolchildren in Ireland from randomly selected schools throughout the country.

Further information is available at:
<http://www.hbsc.org>
<http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc/>



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HPRC
Health Promotion Research Centre



Office of the Minister for
Children and Youth Affairs
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Department of
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AN ROINN SLÁNTE AGUS LEANAÍ

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Summary

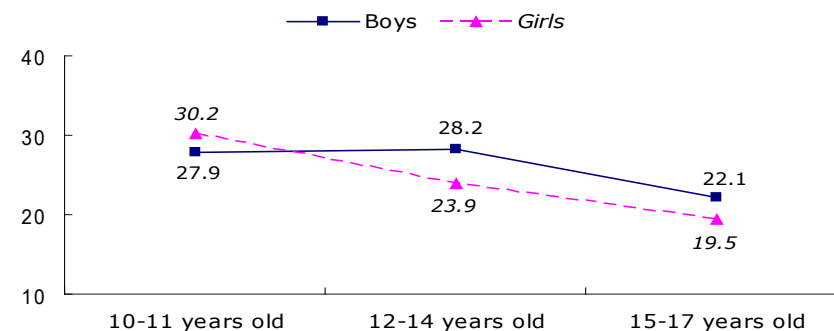
HBSC Ireland 2006 has found that 24.5% of schoolchildren in Ireland report having been bullied (25.6% of boys and 23.4% of girls). This figure has remained stable since 2002 (23.3%). The percentage of girls who have been bullied is higher among younger girls (30.2% of 10-11 year olds and 19.5% of 15-17 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 attention². 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 others³. High self-esteem has been identified as a possible mechanism to protect children and adolescents from involvement in bullying⁴.

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%).

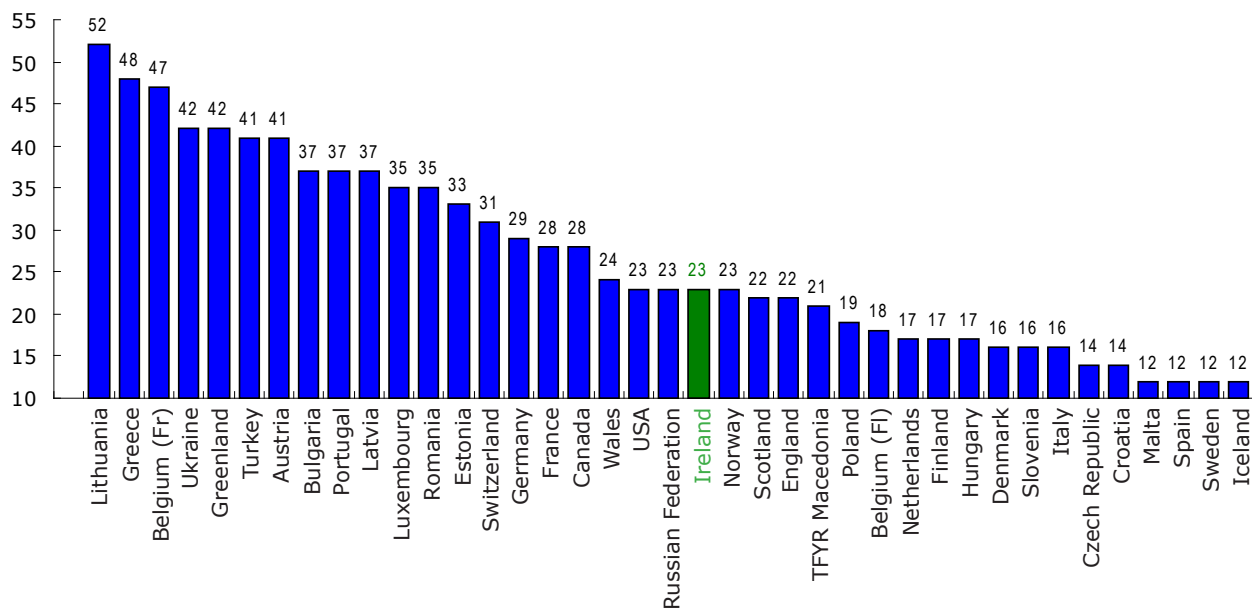


Percentage of children who have been bullied, by age and gender

Bullying behavior in context

- Children who have been bullied are less likely to live with both parents (78.9% vs. 81.0%) than those who have not.
- Children who have been bullied are less likely to report finding it easy to talk to their mother (74.8% vs. 82.1%) father (56.8% vs. 65.8%) and best friend (83.3% vs. 89.1%) than those who have not.
- Children who have been bullied are less likely to report spending four or more evenings a week out with friends (38.5% vs. 43.1%) than those who have not.
- Children who have been bullied are less likely to report liking school (64.3% vs. 69.3%) and more likely to report pressure from schoolwork (48.6% vs. 38.4%) than those who have not.
- Children who have been bullied are less likely to report excellent health (28.4% vs. 34.8%) and being happy with their lives (36.8% vs. 53.7%) than those who have not.
- Being bullied is not associated with social class.

...Bullying behaviour among schoolchildren in Ireland



Percentage of 15 year old children reporting they have been bullied, by country

International

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

1. Currie, C., Nic Gabhainn, S., Godeau, E., Roberts, C., Smith, R., Currie, D., Pickett, W., Richter, M., Morgan, A. & Barnekow, V. (eds.) (2008). *Inequalities in young people's health: HBSC international report from the 2005/2006 Survey*. Copenhagen: WHO Regional Office for Europe. (Health Policy for Children and Adolescents, No. 5).
2. Department of Education and Science (2004). *Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for Post-Primary Schools*. Dublin: Department of Education and Science.
3. Nation, M., Vieno, A., Perkins, D.P. & Santinello, M. (2008). Bullying in school and adolescent sense of empowerment: an analysis of relationships with parents, friends and teachers. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, 18, 211-232.
4. Moore, M. & Kirkham, C. (2001). Self-esteem and its relationship to bullying behaviour. *Aggressive Behaviour*, 27, 269-283.

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All factsheets and other HBSC publications and reports can be downloaded from our website: <http://www.nuigalway.ie/hbsc>

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