

# Supporting the Health of Young People in Bedford June 2006

## A summary report of the Health Related Behaviour Survey

These results are the compilation of data collected from a sample of middle and upper school pupils in Years 8 and 10 aged 12 to 15 in Bedford schools during the Summer term 2006. This work was commissioned by Bedfordshire Primary Care Trust and was co-ordinated by the Bedfordshire Healthy Schools team. A total of 1137 pupils took part in 12 middle and upper schools. The resulting data have provided the local health and education partnership with sound information about young people's lifestyles and health-related behaviour.

This was a repeat of the survey that was conducted in 2004, which was the beginning of a longitudinal piece of work that will need to be repeated at 2-year intervals. This will enable comparisons and analyses of developing and ongoing trends, and will facilitate intervention programmes to be monitored and evaluated.

Teachers were briefed on how to collect the most reliable data and then pupils in schools anonymously completed the questionnaire.

The survey was conducted on a weekday (Tuesday-Friday) therefore the data will reflect this

for questions asking about 'the day or evening before'. Completed questionnaires were then returned to the Schools Health Education Unit in Exeter for processing.

### Topics include

Citizenship

Emotional Health and Well-being

Healthy Eating

Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco

Sex and Relationships

Leisure and Physical Activity

### 1137 young people were involved in the survey:

School Year	Bedford		Mid & South Bedfordshire		Total
	Year 8	Year 10	Year 8	Year 10	
Boys	111	188	177	92	568
Girls	114	193	174	88	569
Total	225	381	351	180	1137

### Reference sample

Area data have been compared with a compilation of survey areas that have completed similar versions of the questionnaire. These areas include Cambridgeshire, Dudley, Lambeth, Lewisham, North Yorkshire, Peterborough, Southwark and Wiltshire.



Schools  
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**The Schools Health Education Unit**  
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Nationally Accredited Scheme

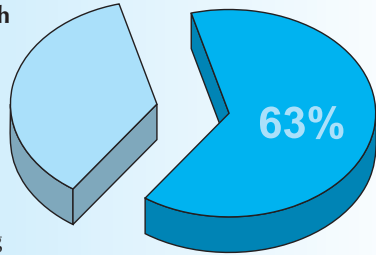
Bedfordshire **NHS**  
Primary Care Trust

# Bedford pupils in Year 8 (ages 12 to 13 years)

## CITIZENSHIP

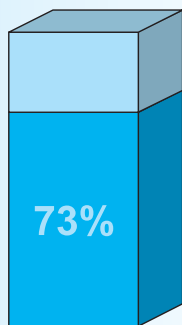
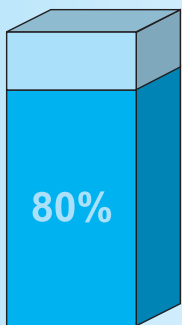
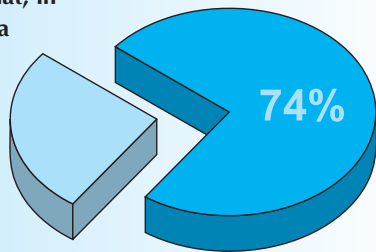
### Background

- 56% of pupils describe themselves as white UK, 32% say Asian and 5% mixed.
- 63% of all pupils live with both parents.** 16% live only with their mother and 11% live with mother and stepfather.
- 65% of pupils did homework on the evening before the survey and 17% did more than an hour.
- 60% of pupils used the Internet after school the day before the survey; 34% used the computer to do homework.
- 56% of pupils use the Internet for finding out about hobbies and interests, 65% for chatting and 16% use it for help and advice.
- 45% of the girls and 41% of the boys cared for family members, on the evening before the survey.



## EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

- 74% of pupils reported that, in general, they were 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' satisfied with their life:**
- Parents are the most popular sources of support for boys and girls for most problems.
- 80% of boys and 73% of girls agreed with the statement "If I take care of myself, I'll stay healthy".**



- 30% of girls and 44% of boys had high self-esteem scores.
- 77% of pupils say they are 'never' afraid to go to school because of bullying. 1% say that they think others may fear going to school because of them.

- 74% of Year 8 pupils reported that they worried about at least one of the problems listed in the questionnaire 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'.

### The top four worries were:

	Boys		Girls
Exams and tests	41%	Exams and tests	49%
Family problems	31%	Their looks	40%
Their looks	28%	Family problems	32%
Career problems	26%	Problems with friends	29%

(The table shows the proportion of pupils who said they worried about the problems 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'.)

? Are these levels of worrying about school tests a cause for concern?

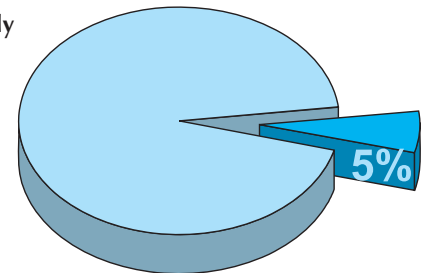
## HEALTHY EATING

- 10% of boys and 9% of girls reported having nothing to eat or drink for breakfast on the day of the survey.
- 7% of boys and 5% of the girls also reported having no lunch on the day before the survey.
- 36% of boys and 42% of girls say that they would like to lose weight.
- 12% of boys say they never consider their health when choosing what to eat.
- 8% of pupils reported that they had no portions of fruit or vegetables on the day before the survey; 24% said they had 5 or more portions.
- 32% of pupils eat crisps, 'on most days', 55% fresh fruit and 35% sweets or chocolate bars.
- 5% of girls and 4% of boys had no water to drink on the day before the survey. 37% of pupils had about a litre or more.

## DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

### Drugs

- 5% of pupils are 'fairly sure' or 'certain' that they know someone who takes drugs.**
- 3% of Year 8 boys and 4% of Year 8 girls have been offered cannabis. 3% of pupils have been offered other drugs.
- 4% of pupils reported that they had taken an illegal drug in the last year. 3% had taken one in the last month.
- The top four drugs thought to be most dangerous were:**



	Boys		Girls
Heroin	55%	Heroin	64%
Cocaine	52%	Cocaine	46%
Solvents	48%	Cannabis	46%
Cannabis	40%	Solvents	29%

**□ The top four drugs thought easy to get hooked on were:**

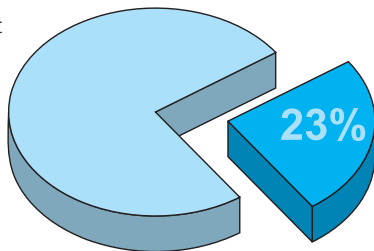
	Boys		Girls	
Cannabis	65%	Cocaine	64%	
Cocaine	63%	Heroin	61%	
Heroin	53%	Cannabis	60%	
Alcohol	50%	Alcohol	58%	

- 22% of pupils (more boys than girls) correctly identified alcohol as the drug that kills most people in this country.

**? Do young people appreciate the dangers of alcohol?**

**Alcohol**

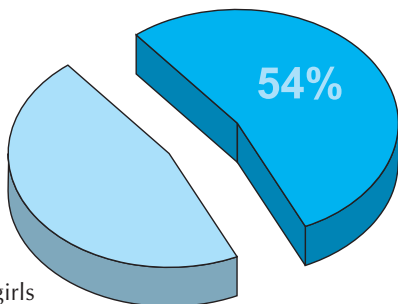
- **23% of pupils had at least one alcoholic drink in the week before the survey.**



- 12% of pupils drank on only one day, 11% drank on more than one day.
- 9% of pupils drank between 4 and 20 units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- 1% of Year 8 boys and 1% of Year 8 girls said they drank 21 or more units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- 0% of Year 8 pupils bought alcohol from an off-licence that should sell only to over-eighteens.

**Tobacco**

- **54% of pupils reported that they have a parent, sibling or friend who smokes on most days.**



- 1% of boys and 3% of girls in Year 8 reported that they smoke occasionally or regularly.
- 4% of pupils said that they used to smoke but don't now.

**SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS**

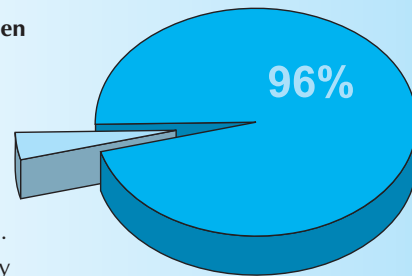
- When asked what was their main source of information about sex 63% of pupils said school lessons. 32% of the boys and 27% of the girls said their friends. 37% overall said their parents.
- When asked what **should be** their main source of information only 12% of pupils said their friends. 63% said it should be school lessons and 45% said their parents, 39% said it should be the school nurse.
- 20% of pupils said they believed there was a special contraception and advice service for young people available locally, 65% said that they didn't know.
- 49% of pupils said that they knew where to get condoms free of charge.

**? Are there implications here for the delivery of a coherent and progressive SRE programme in schools?**

**SAFETY**

- 48% of pupils said they were treated for an accident by a doctor or at a hospital within the last year. 16% of boys had an accident playing sport, 9% of girls had an accident at home.

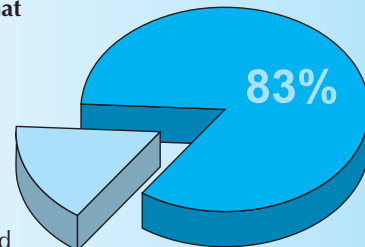
- **96% of pupils had been to the dentist in the past year.**



- 17% of pupils said that they have asthma.
- 14% of pupils say they never do anything to avoid sunburn.
- 20% of pupils rated the safety of their area, when going out after dark, as 'poor' or 'very poor'. 4% said this about going out during the day.
- 15% of the boys and 2% of the girls reported that they were fairly sure or certain that they had friends who carried weapons for protection when going out.
- 9% reported that they had been the victim of violence or aggression in the area where they live in the last 12 months.

**LEISURE AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

- 85% of pupils said they spent time watching television, after school, on the day before the survey.
- 51% met with friends, 64% of the boys and 46% of the girls played sport, on the evening before the survey.
- 58% of the boys played computer games, on the evening before the survey.
- **83% of pupils reported that they enjoyed physical activities 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'.**



- 54% of the boys and 39% of the girls considered themselves 'fit' or 'very fit'.
- 49% of the boys and 40% of the girls reported that they had exercised hard, three times or more, in the last week.
- **The top four physical activities were:**

	Boys		Girls	
Football	66%	Going for a walk	46%	
Bike riding	59%	Dancing	41%	
Cricket	42%	Bike riding	34%	
Jogging	38%	Rounders	31%	

*(The table shows the proportion of pupils who said they did these activities at least weekly).*

- When asked what activities they would like to do in school PE/games that they don't normally do, the girls' top answers were swimming, football, dancing and gymnastics. The boys' top answers were football, tennis and swimming.

## Gender differences amongst Bedford Year 8 pupils

- ↑ **More** Bedford Year 8 boys record levels of high self esteem than do girls in Year 8; 44% of the boys compared with only 30% of the girls.
- ↑ **More** Bedford Year 8 boys than girls are likely to say that they are satisfied with their life, 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'; 77% of boys compared with 72% of girls.
- ↑ **More** Bedford boys are happy with their weight 59% compares with 50% of girls saying the same. 42% of the girls say that they would like to lose weight compared with 36% of the boys saying the same.
- ↑ **More** Bedford boys than girls agreed with the statement 'If I take care of myself I'll stay healthy': 80% of boys compared with 73% of girls who said the same.
- ↑ **More** boys than girls are fairly sure or certain that they, or their friends, carry weapons for protection when going out. 15% of boys compared with 2% of girls who say the same.
- ↓ **Boys** in Bedford were **less likely** to eat fresh fruit and salad 'on most days' compared with the girls eating the same. They were also less likely, however, to eat sweets and chocolate bars 'on most days'. The girls were less likely than the boys to have sugar coated cereals and drink fizzy drinks.
- ↓ Bedford girls were **less likely** than boys to have ever tried smoking. 82% of girls said that they have never tried, compared with 78% of boys who said the same.
- ↓ 61% of boys in year 8 said that heroin is easy to get hooked on. This compares with 53% of girls who said the same.
- ↓ 48% of boys thought solvents are the most dangerous while 29% of girls thought the same.
- ↓ Bedford boys were less likely than girls to have cleaned their teeth twice or more; 78% compared with 86% of the girls saying the same.

## Trend data: Differences between Bedford Year 8 pupils between 2006 and 2004

- ↑ 74% of pupils in 2006 reported being satisfied with their lives; in 2004 this figure was 67%.
- ↑ More year 8 boys reported worrying about at least one problem listed in the questionnaire than did boys in 2004.
- ↑ 55% of pupils eat fresh fruit *on most days* in 2006, this figure was 43% in 2004. In addition, the figures for unhealthy food choices like crisps and sweets are lower in 2006 compared with 2004.
- ↑ Cannabis is seen to be a more dangerous drug and easier to get hooked on by pupils in the 2006 sample, compared with pupils saying the same in the 2004 sample.
- ↑ 68% of girls in 2006 said that school lessons were their main source of information about sex. In 2004, 58% of girls said this. 49% of girls in 2006 said that they knew where to get condoms free of charge; in 2004 39% said the same.
- ↓ Lower proportions of pupils in 2006 say they have been offered drugs or know a drug user compared with the 2004 data.
- ↓ Year 8 girls were less likely to have drunk alcohol in 2006; 18% compared with 23% in 2004 said that they drank alcohol the previous week.

## Differences between Bedford Year 8 pupils and SHEU wider databank figures

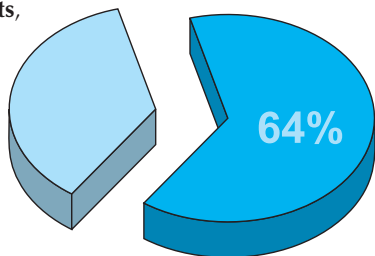
- ↑ 82% of Bedford girls said they are satisfied with their lives, this compared with 72% of girls in the wider SHEU data.
- ↑ 50% of Bedford girls said they were happy with their weight compared with 43% of girls in the wider SHEU data.
- ↑ Bedford boys were more likely to have drunk alcohol in the previous week, compared with boys in the wider sample.
- ↑ Bedford pupils were more likely to say that they **never drink alcohol** when compared with the wider sample.
- ↑ Bedford pupils were more likely to say that their lessons on Illegal drugs, sex and relationships were *quite or very useful* than pupils in the wider sample.
- ↓ Bedford pupils were less likely to say that they knew someone who uses drugs than pupils in the wider sample.
- ↓ Bedford girls were less likely to have smoked in the week before the survey than are girls in the wider sample.

# Bedford pupils in Year 10 (ages 14-15 years)

## CITIZENSHIP

### Background

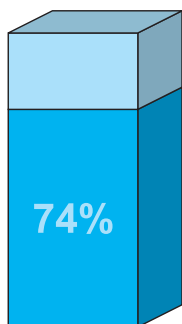
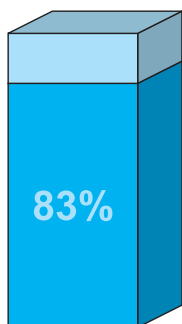
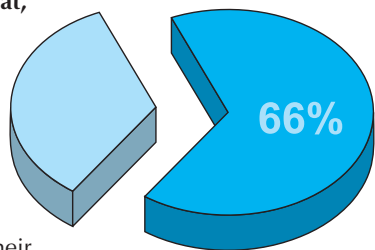
- 62% of pupils describe themselves as white UK. 6% said that they were white non-UK 18% describe themselves as Asian.
- 64% live with both parents,** 17% live only with their mother.
- 54% of pupils did homework on the evening before the survey and 18% did over an hour.
- 67% of pupils used the Internet after school the day before the survey. 34% used the computer to do homework.
- 64% of pupils say that they use the Internet for finding out about their hobbies & interests, 77% use it for chatting and 22% use it for help and advice.
- 82% of pupils are never supervised when they use the Internet.
- 31% of pupils cared for family members after school the day before the survey.



? How much support locally is there for 'Young carers'?

## EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

- 66% of pupils reported that, in general, they were 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' satisfied with their life.**
- Friends are the most popular sources of support for girls for problems around family, their looks and friendship issues.
- 64% of boys and 48% of girls had high self-esteem scores.
- 83% of boys and 74% of girls agreed with the statement "If I take care of myself I'll stay healthy".**



- 82% of pupils say they are 'never' afraid of going to school because of bullying. 3% say that they think others may fear going to school because of them.
- 73% of pupils reported that they worried about at least one of the problems listed in the questionnaire 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'

### The top four worries were:

Boys		Girls	
Exams and tests	40%	Exams and tests	60%
Family problems	29%	Their looks	44%
Career problems	27%	Family problems	40%
School-work problems	22%	Career problems	39%

(The table shows the proportion of pupils who said they worried about the problems 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'.)

## HEALTHY EATING

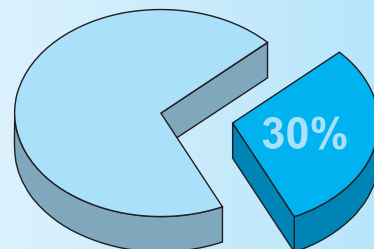
- 15% of boys and 20% of girls reported having nothing to eat or drink for breakfast on the day of the survey.
- 16% of boys and 26% of the girls also reported having no lunch on the day before the survey.
- 24% of boys and 57% of girls say that they would like to lose weight.
- 14% of boys say they never consider their health when choosing what to eat.
- 13% of pupils reported that they had no portions of fruit or vegetables on the day before the survey.
- 33% of pupils eat crisps, 'on most days', 45% fresh fruit and 40% sweets or chocolate bars.
- 13% of girls and 11% of boys had no water to drink on the day before the survey. 32% of pupils had about a litre or more.

? Do young people know where to get help if they are worried?

## DRUGS, ALCOHOL & TOBACCO

### Drugs

- 30% of pupils are 'fairly sure' or 'certain' that they know someone who takes illegal drugs.**
- 28% of Year 10 boys and 27% of Year 10 girls have been offered cannabis. 12% of pupils have been offered other drugs.
- 21% of pupils reported that they had taken an illegal drug in the last year. 16% had taken one in the last month.
- The top four drugs thought to be most dangerous were:**



Boys		Girls	
Heroin	71%	Heroin	71%
Cocaine	56%	Cocaine	59%
Solvents	44%	Solvents	36%
Amphetamines	27%	Amphetamines	33%

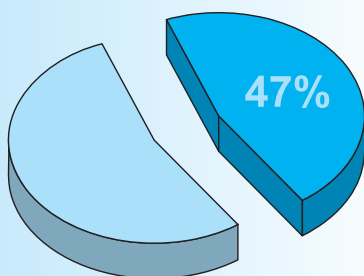
### The top four drugs thought easy to get hooked on were:

Boys		Girls	
Cocaine	69%	Cocaine	72%
Heroin	67%	Heroin	70%
Cannabis	53%	Cannabis	63%
Alcohol	48%	Alcohol	56%

- 35% of pupils (more boys than girls) correctly identified alcohol as the drug that kills most people in this country.

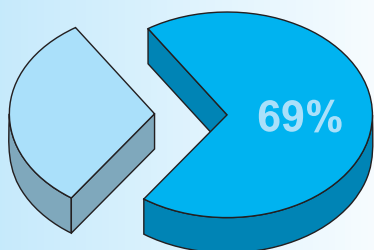
## Alcohol

- 47% of pupils had at least one alcoholic drink in the week before the survey.
- 23% of pupils drank on only one day, 24% drank on more than one day.
- 23% of pupils drank between 4 and 20 units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- 6% of Year 10 boys and 5% of Year 10 girls said they drank 21 or more units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- 11% of Year 10 pupils were able to buy alcohol from an off-licence that should sell only to over-eighteens.
- Pre-mixed spirits, beer and spirits were the most popular drinks.



## Tobacco

- 69% of pupils reported that they have a parent, sibling or friend who smokes on most days.
- 15% of boys reported that they smoke occasionally or regularly. 22% of girls reported that they smoke occasionally or regularly.
- 9% of pupils said that they used to smoke but don't now.



? Can anything be done to slow down or stop this progression in smoking? Can additional smoking prevention work be done with girls? How can parents, who may be smokers, help?

## SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS

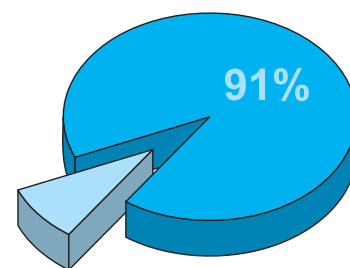
- When asked what was their main source of information about sex 57% of pupils said school lessons. 49% of the girls said their friends. 13% of the boys said the Internet and 10% of pupils said TV, films.
- When asked what **should** be their main source of information only 14% of pupils said their friends. 56% said it should be school lessons and 39% said their parents.
- 43% of Year 10 boys and 52% of Year 10 girls said they believed there was a special contraception and advice service for young people available locally, 49% of pupils said they didn't know.
- 74% of pupils said that they knew where to get condoms free of charge.

? Can young people's knowledge of contraception services be increased, particularly among the boys?

## SAFETY

- 45% of pupils said they were treated for an accident by a doctor or at a hospital within the last year. 20% of the boys had an accident playing sport, 6% of the girls had an accident at home.

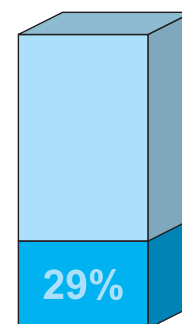
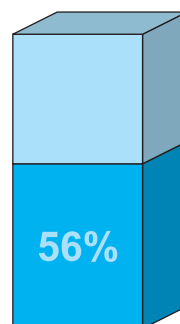
- 91% visited the dentist in the twelve months before the survey.



- 13% of pupils said that they have asthma. 20% of pupils say they never do anything to avoid sunburn.
- 28% of pupils rated the safety of their area, when going out after dark, as 'poor' or 'very poor'. 4% said this about going out during the day.
- 17% of pupils reported that they were fairly sure or certain that they had friends who carried weapons for protection when going out. When asked what weapons were carried, 14% of the boys reported 'weapon with blade'.
- 15% of boys and 17% of girls said that they had been the victim of violence or aggression in the last 12 months in the area where they lived.

## LEISURE AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- 87% of pupils said they spent time watching television, after school, on the day before the survey.
- 52% met with friends, 56% of the boys and 26% of the girls played sport, on the evening before the survey.
- 69% of the boys played computer games, on the evening before the survey.
- 77% of pupils reported that they enjoyed physical activities 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'.
- 56% of the boys and 29% of the girls considered themselves 'fit' or 'very fit'.



- 46% of the boys and 36% of the girls reported that they had exercised hard, three times or more, in the last week.

- The top four physical activities were:

	Boys		Girls
Bike riding	64%	Going for a walk	52%
Football	59%	Dancing	32%
Jogging	35%	Jogging	22%
Tennis	28%	Bike riding	19%

(The table shows the proportion of pupils who said they did these activities at least weekly).

- When asked what they would like to do in PE/Games sessions, the girls asked for swimming and football the boys – football, wrestling and boxing.

? What local facilities are available for youngsters to be active? What more can be done to encourage girls to be active?

## Gender differences amongst Bedford Year 10 pupils

- ↑ **More** Bedford Year 10 boys than girls said that they never consider their health when choosing what to eat: 14% of boys compared with 9% of girls for this question.
- ↑ Bedford Year 10 boys were **more likely** than girls to drink at least a litre of water during the day. 41% of boys drank at least a litre of water compared with only 24% of girls who said the same.
- ↓ Bedford Year 10 were **less likely** than girls to said that they are afraid of going to school because they might be bullied. 88% of boys said that they were 'never afraid', this compared with 76% of girls who said the same.
- ↓ Bedford Year 10 boys were **less likely** to worry about *exams and tests, the way they look, or problems with friends* than are girls of the same age.
- ↓ Bedford boys were **less likely** than girls to say that they smoked a cigarette in the last week. 21% of girls smoked last week compared with 15% of boys who said the same.
- ↓ Bedford Year 10 boys were **less likely** to say that know where they can get condoms free of charge. 69% of boys knew where to get free access to them compared with 78% of girls who said the same.
- ↓ Bedford Year 10 boys were **less likely than girls** to have read a book for enjoyment the evening before the survey. 11% of boys compared with 17% of girls who said they did homework the night before. They were **more** likely than the girls to have played sport, met with friends and played computer games.

## Trend data: Differences between Bedford Year 10 pupils between 2006 and 2004

- ↑ 67% of pupils in 2006 used the Internet after school the day before the survey. In 2004 this figure was 54%.
- ↑ Higher proportions of pupils in 2006 (82%) say they are *Never* afraid to go to school because of bullying compared with 2004 (76%).
- ↑ Higher proportions of pupils in 2006 (57%) say that school lessons are their main source of information about sex compared with 2004 (44%). Higher proportions of pupils in 2006 are aware of local contraception and advice centres compared with pupils in 2004.
- ↑ Year 10 pupils were more likely to have drunk alcohol outside in a public place in the previous week in 2006; 21% compared with 13% who said the same in 2004.
- ↓ Lower proportions of pupils in 2006 report eating sweets and crisps *on most days* compared with pupils in 2004. More are eating fresh fruit 45% compared with 34% in 2004.
- ↓ Lower proportions of pupils in 2006 (30%) say that they know someone who uses drugs compared with 2004 (38%). Lower proportions also say they have been offered cannabis and other drugs in 2006.

## Differences between Bedford Year 10 pupils and SHEU wider databank figures

- ↑ Pupils in Bedford are more likely to record high self-esteem compared with the SHEU wider sample.
- ↑ Pupils in Bedford are more likely to have packed lunch at school than are those in the wider SHEU sample.
- ↑ Bedford pupils are more likely to say that they don't drink alcohol at all; 27% say this in Bedford compared with 19% in the wider sample.
- ↑ Bedford pupils are more likely to be aware of a special contraception and advice centre available to them locally, than are pupils in the wider survey who said the same.
- ↑ Bedford pupils are more likely to say that their lessons on Illegal drugs, sex and relationships are *quite or very useful* than are pupils saying the same in the wider sample.
- ↓ Bedford pupils are less likely to know someone who takes drugs, than are pupils in the wider survey who said the same.

# The Way Forward – over to you

The work was funded by Bedfordshire Primary Care Trust; Bedfordshire Drug Action Team; Bedfordshire LEA; Bedfordshire Teenage Pregnancy Strategy and the Bedfordshire Healthy Schools Scheme. As a result of their work we have excellent data to be used by schools, the Education Authority, the PCTs as well as other statutory and voluntary agencies that support the health of young people in the county. This work will inform action plans for joint working between and within organisations involved in improving the health and well being of pupils in schools.

## *Our thanks go to the staff and pupils involved:*

Biddenham Upper  
Harroden Middle  
Lincroft Middle  
Mark Rutherford Upper  
St. Thomas More RC Upper  
Westfield Middle

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Website: [www.healthy-schools.co.uk](http://www.healthy-schools.co.uk)

## Bedfordshire Healthy Schools Programme Current Priorities

Over the next 3 years, as part of the National Healthy Schools Programme, the Bedfordshire Healthy Schools Scheme will be working with all Bedfordshire schools to support them in achieving **National Healthy School Status**. It is the Government's intention (Department for Education and Skills and Department of Health) that, by December 2009, 75% of all schools will have achieved **National Healthy School Status**.

Schools will achieve **National Healthy School Status** by demonstrating that they are meeting standards and criteria in 4 Core Themes:

### **1. Personal, Social and Health Education, including Sex and Relationships Education and Drug Education (including Alcohol, Tobacco and Volatile Substance Misuse).**

PSHE provides pupils with the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes to make informed decisions about their lives.

### **2. Healthy Eating.**

Pupils have the confidence, skills and understanding to make healthy food choices. Healthy and nutritious food and drink is available across the school day.

### **3. Physical Activity.**

Pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to be physically active. They understand how physical activity can help them to be more healthy, and how physical activity can improve and be part of their everyday life.

### **4. Emotional Health and Well-being.**

Promoting positive emotional health and well-being to help pupils understand and express their feelings, and build confidence and emotional resilience and therefore their capacity to learn.

**For more information about *National Healthy School Status*, or any aspect of Healthy Schools, contact:**

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