

Supporting the Health of Young People in Bedford

A summary report of the Health Related Behaviour Survey 2008

These results are the compilation of data collected from a sample of middle and high school pupils in Years 7-10 aged 12 to 15 in Bedford schools during the Summer term 2008. This work was commissioned by Bedfordshire County Council and the Bedfordshire Healthy Schools Team. A total of 1355 pupils took part in 14 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 and 2006, 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'.

Some schools opted to do the survey online, one advantage being they would be able to access their results more quickly, while some preferred to use the paper-based option. Completed paper questionnaires were then returned to the Schools Health Education Unit in Exeter for processing and combining with the online results.

1355 young people were involved in the survey:

School Year	Bedford		Central Bedfordshire		Total
	Year 7/8	Year 9/10	Year 8	Year 10	
Boys	172	142	274	75	663
Girls	160	147	281	104	692
Total	332	289	555	179	1355

Reference sample

Area data have been compared with a compilation of survey areas that have completed similar versions of the questionnaire. These areas include Brighton, Camden, Derbyshire, Ealing, East Sussex, Milton Keynes and Solihull.



**Schools
Health
Education
Unit**

For more details please contact
The Schools Health Education Unit
Tel: 01392 667272
www.sheu.org.uk

Topics include

Citizenship

Emotional Health and Well-being

Healthy Eating

Drugs, Alcohol and Tobacco

Sex and Relationships

Leisure and Physical Activity

Health and Education Partnership:



Bedfordshire Community Health Services



**Bedfordshire
county council**

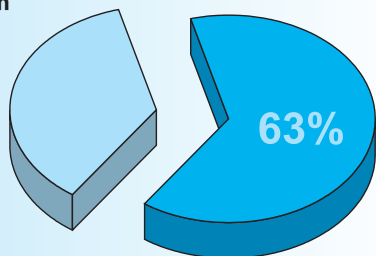
Bedford pupils in Year 8 (ages 12 to 13 years)

CITIZENSHIP

Background

60% of pupils describe themselves as white UK, 24% say Asian and 4% mixed.

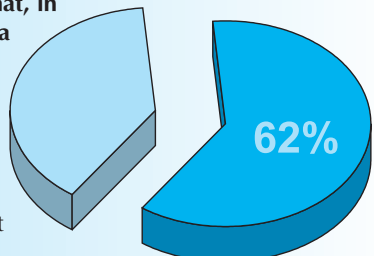
63% of all pupils live with both parents. 17% live only with their mother, 8% live with mother and stepfather.



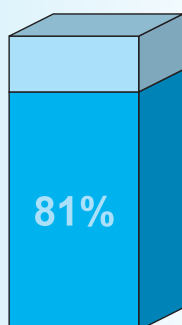
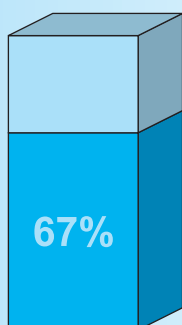
- 47% of boys and 51% of girls in the Bedford Year 8 sample spent time doing homework on the evening before the survey.
- 52% of pupils did no homework at all the night before the survey, 39% did up to an hour, and 9% did over an hour.
- 53% of pupils used the Internet after school the day before the survey, 20% used the computer to do homework.
- 39% of the girls and 30% of the boys cared for family members, on the evening before the survey.

EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

62% 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.
- 67% of pupils agreed with the statement that they were in control of their health. 81% agreed that if they took care of themselves they would stay healthy.



- 40% of girls and 36% of boys had high self-esteem scores.
- 62% 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 & tests	30%	Their looks	41%
Family	22%	Exams & tests	40%
Career	22%	Friends	28%
Health	20%	Family	27%

(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 tests a cause for concern?

HEALTHY EATING

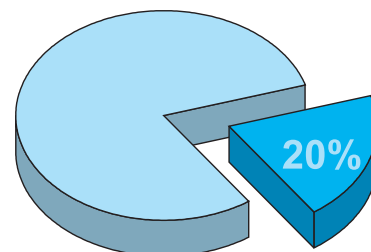
- 13% of girls and 10% of boys had nothing to eat or drink for breakfast on the day of the survey.
- 5% of boys and 12% of girls also reported having no lunch on the day before the survey.
- 32% of boys and 60% of girls say that they would like to lose weight.
- 10% of boys say they never consider their health when choosing what to eat.
- 9% of pupils said they had no fruit or vegetables on the day before the survey; 23% said they had 5 or more portions.
- 28% of pupils have crisps, 'on most days', 50% fresh fruit and 30% sweets or chocolate bars.
- 5% of the boys and 8% of the girls had no water to drink on the day of the survey. 33% had a litre or more.

Are five a day messages getting through to pupils?

DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

Drugs

20% of pupils are 'fairly sure' or 'certain' that they know someone who takes drugs.



- 8% of Year 8 boys and 6% of Year 8 girls have been offered cannabis.
- 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	61%	Heroin	73%
Cocaine	59%	Cocaine	65%
Solvents	31%	Cannabis	56%
Amphetamines	31%	Solvents	41%

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

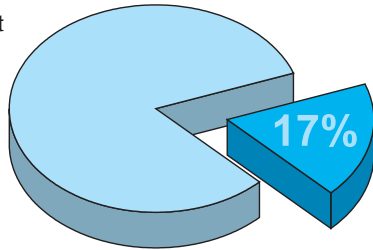
	Boys		Girls
Cocaine	61%	Heroin	73%
Heroin	59%	Cocaine	69%
Cannabis	57%	Cannabis	65%
Alcohol	48%	Alcohol	59%

- 48% of pupils correctly identified alcohol as the drug that kills most people in this country.

? Do young people appreciate the dangers of alcohol?

Alcohol

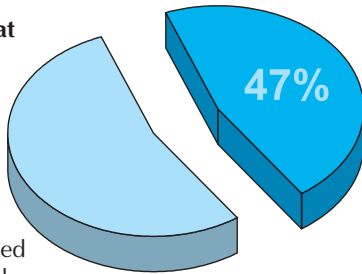
- 17% of pupils had at least one alcoholic drink in the week before the survey.



- Boys: 2% of Year 8 boys drank between 4 and 20 units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- Girls: 4% of Year 8 girls drank between 4 and 20 units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- 1% of Year 8 boys and 0% of the girls drank more than 20 units the previous week.
- 1% of pupils bought alcohol from an off-licence that should only sell to over-eighteens.

Tobacco

- 47% of pupils reported that they have a parent, sibling or friend who smokes on most days.



- 2% of boys and 4% of girls in Year 8 pupils reported that they smoke occasionally or regularly.
- 3% of pupils said that they used to smoke but don't now.

SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS

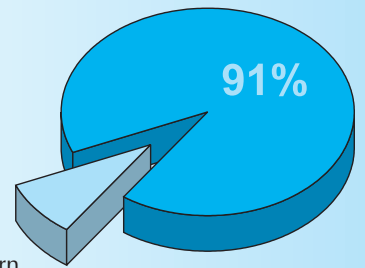
- When asked what was their main source of information about sex 78% of pupils said school lessons. 36% of the boys and 41% of the girls said their friends. 36% overall said their parents.
- When asked what **should be** their main source of information 25% of pupils said their friends. 79% said it should be school lessons and 49% said their parents, 58% said it should be the school nurse.
- 24% of pupils said they believed there was a special contraception and advice service for young people available locally, 64% said that they didn't know.
- 56% said that they knew where to get condoms free of charge.

? Do Year 8 pupils need to know what local services are available?

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.

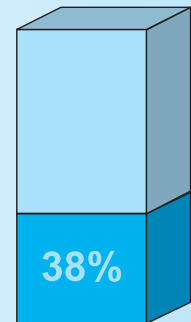
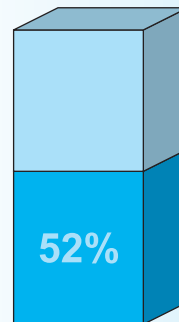
- 91% of pupils had been to the dentist in the past year.



- 17% of pupils said that they have asthma.
- 15% said that they never do anything to avoid sunburn.
- 19% 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.
- 12% of the boys and 8% 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

- 78% of pupils said they spent time watching television, after school, on the day before the survey.
- 43% met with friends, 54% of the boys and 37% of the girls played sport, on the evening before the survey.
- 68% of the boys played computer games, on the evening before the survey.
- 81% of pupils reported that they enjoyed physical activities 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'.
- 52% of the boys and 38% of the girls considered themselves 'fit' or 'very fit'.



- 51% of the boys and 44% 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	52%	Bike riding	34%
Bike riding	45%	Jogging	27%
Jogging	35%	Dancing	24%
Swimming	24%	Going for walks	23%

(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, volleyball and dancing. The boys' top answers were football, basketball and swimming.

? Is it possible to respond to these requests?

Gender differences amongst Bedford Year 8 pupils

- ↑ **More** Bedford Year 8 boys say that they are in charge of their health 72% of the boys compares with only 61% of the girls.
- ↑ **More** Bedford boys are happy with their weight 56% compares with 36% of girls saying the same. 60% of the girls say that they would like to lose weight compared with 32% of the boys saying the same.
- ↑ Girls in Bedford are **more likely** to eat fresh fruit and vegetables 'on most days' compared with the boys. They are also less likely to drink fizzy drinks 15% compared with 26% of boys 'on most days'.
- ↑ **More** girls than boys in Bedford were likely to rate drugs and alcohol as dangerous. 56% of girls rated cannabis as dangerous for example, compared with 46% of boys saying the same.
- ↓ Bedford boys are **less likely** to say that they think school lessons should be their main source of information about drugs. 69% of boys said this compared with 82% of girls.
- ↓ Bedford boys are **less likely** to say that they are worried about going to school because of bullying. 35% of girls said at least 'sometimes' compared with 25% of boys who said the same.
- ↑ **More** Bedford boys said that the Internet and TV, films were some of their main sources of information about sex. 34% of boys said the Internet compared with 11% of girls.
- ↑ After school the day before, boys were **more likely** to have spent time playing computer games and meeting friends and playing sport. Girls were **more likely** than boys to care for family members and pets and to have played a musical instrument.

Trend data: Differences between Bedford Year 8 pupils between 2008 and 2006

- ↑ 72% of boys in 2008 agreed that they were in charge of their health. In 2006, 60% of boys said this.
- ↑ In 2008 more girls said that they considered their health when making food choices. More girls also said that they wanted to lose weight.
- ↑ 20% of boys and 26% of girls in 2008 said they had at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables the day before the survey. In 2006 these figures were 15% and 21% respectively.
- ↑ 83% of boys in 2008 said that they had drunk no alcohol the previous week. In 2006, 73% of boys said this.
- ↑ In 2008 60% of boys and 52% of girls rated their lessons on Emotional Health and Well-being as 'quite' or 'very useful'. In 2006 these figures were 47% and 46% respectively.
- ↑ In 2008, 35% of Year 8 girls said that they feel afraid of going to school because of bullying at least 'sometimes'. In 2006 only 23% said this.
- ↑ 27% of Year 8 girls said that they knew about a local contraception and advice centre for young people. In 2006, 18% of girls knew of one local to them.
- ↓ Worrying about exams & tests has fallen from 45% to 35% between 2006 and 2008 for Year 8 pupils.

Differences between Bedford Year 8 pupils and SHEU wider databank figures

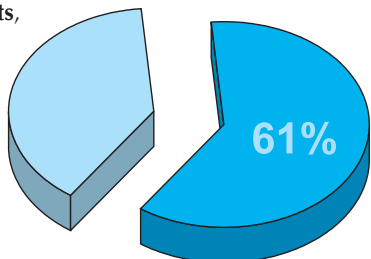
- ↑ Bedford Year 8 pupils are **more likely** to say that they have fresh fruit 'on most days' compared with pupils in the wider sample.
- ↑ Boys however are also **more likely** to say that they have fizzy drinks 'on most days' compared with boys in the wider sample.
- ↓ Bedford boys are **less likely** to say they know there is a local contraception and advice centre available locally for young people than are boys in the wider sample.
- ↓ Bedford pupils are **less likely** to describe themselves as 'fit' or 'very fit' when compared with pupils in the wider sample.
- ↓ Bedford girls are **less likely** to say they know someone who uses drugs than are girls in the wider sample.

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

CITIZENSHIP

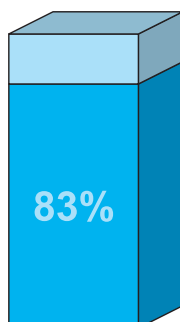
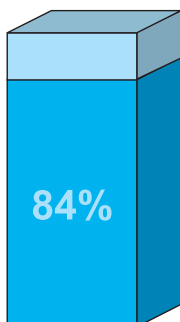
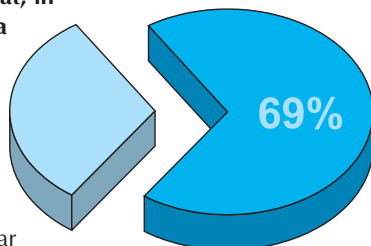
Background

- 49% of pupils describe themselves as white UK. 14% said that they were white non-UK 11% describe themselves as Asian.
- 61% live with both parents**, 20% live only with their mother.
- 39% of pupils did homework on the evening before the survey and 11% did over an hour.
- 73% of pupils used the Internet after school the day before the survey. 30% used the computer to do homework the night before.
- 77% of pupils say that they use the Internet for finding out about their hobbies & interests, 83% use it for chatting and 30% use it for help and advice.
- 81% of pupils are never supervised when they use the Internet.
- 28% of pupils cared for family members after school the day before the survey.



EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

- 69% of pupils reported that, in general, they were 'quite a lot' or 'a lot' satisfied with their life.**
- Parents are the most common source of support for boys but friends are the most popular sources of support girls for many of the problems they might have.
- 48% of boys and 40% of girls had high self-esteem scores.
- 84% of boys and 83% of girls agreed with the statement "If I take care of myself I'll stay healthy".**



- 84% of pupils say they are 'never' afraid of going to school because of bullying. 5% say that they think others may fear going to school because of them.
- 86% 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
Career	60%	Exams & tests	80%
Exams & tests	58%	Their looks	54%
Family	35%	Family	52%
Health	34%	Career	44%

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

HEALTHY EATING

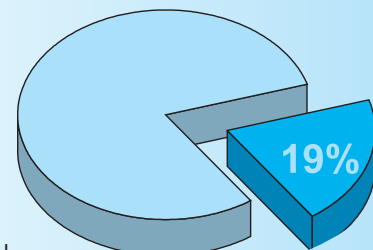
- 11% of boys and 25% of girls reported having nothing to eat or drink for breakfast on the day of the survey.
- 10% of boys and 15% of the girls also reported having no lunch on the day before the survey.
- 20% of boys and 55% of girls say that they would like to lose weight.
- 14% of boys say they never consider their health when choosing what to eat.
- 15% of pupils reported that they had no portions of fruit or vegetables on the day before the survey.
- 27% of pupils eat crisps, 'on most days', 37% fresh fruit and 39% sweets or chocolate bars.
- 18% of pupils had no water to drink on the day before the survey. 46% of boys and 20% of girls had about a litre or more.

? Is it a concern that girls are missing lunch? Is this an attempt to lose weight?

DRUGS, ALCOHOL & TOBACCO

Drugs

- 19% of pupils are 'fairly sure' or 'certain' that they know someone who takes illegal drugs.**
- 15% of Year 10 boys and 25% of Year 10 girls have been offered cannabis. 11% of pupils have been offered other drugs.
- 16% of pupils said that they had taken an illegal drug in the last year. 10% of pupils reported that they had taken an illegal drug in the last month.



The top four drugs thought to be most dangerous were:

	Boys		Girls
Heroin	81%	Heroin	84%
Cocaine	61%	Cocaine	58%
Solvents	34%	Amphetamines	31%
Alcohol	30%	Solvents	26%

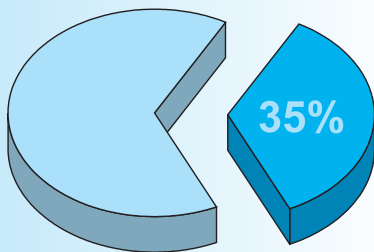
The top four drugs thought easy to get hooked on were:

	Boys		Girls
Heroin	66%	Cocaine	72%
Cocaine	64%	Heroin	72%
Cannabis	64%	Alcohol	59%
Alcohol	51%	Cannabis	57%

- 44% of pupils (more boys than girls) correctly identified alcohol as the drug that kills most people in this country.

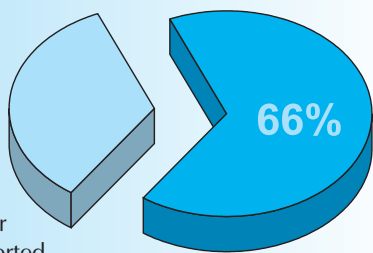
Alcohol

- 35% of pupils had at least one alcoholic drink in the week before the survey.
- 15% of pupils drank on only one day, 20% drank on more than one day.
- 11% of boys and 20% of girls drank between 4 and 20 units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- 3% of Year 10 boys and 2% of Year 10 girls said they drank 21 or more units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- 14% of Year 10 girls were able to buy alcohol from an off-licence that should sell only to over-eighteens.
- Spirits, Pre-mixed spirits and beer were the most popular drinks.



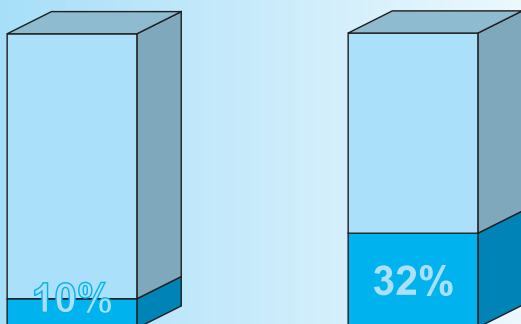
Tobacco

- 66% of pupils reported that they have a parent, sibling or friend who smokes on most days.
- 6% of boys reported that they smoke occasionally or regularly. 25% of girls reported that they smoke occasionally or regularly.
- 8% of pupils say that they smoke but would like to give up.



SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS

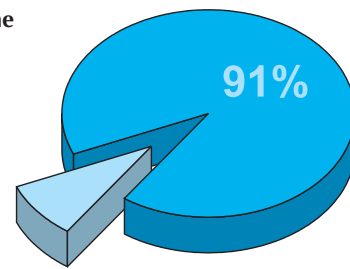
- When asked what was their main source of information about sex 53% of pupils said school lessons. 63% of the girls said their friends. 35% of the boys said the Internet and 25% of boys said TV, films.
- When asked what should be their main source of information only 19% of pupils said their friends. 56% said it should be school lessons and 45% said their parents.
- 10% of Year 10 boys and 32% of Year 10 girls said they believed there was a special contraception and advice service for young people available locally, 65% of pupils said they didn't know.



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

SAFETY

- 49% of pupils said they were treated for an accident by a doctor or at a hospital within the last year. 25% of the boys had an accident playing sport, 22% of the girls had an accident at home.
- 91% visited the dentist in the twelve months before the survey.
- 11% of pupils said that they have asthma. 25% of pupils say they never do anything to avoid sunburn.
- 27% 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.
- 11% 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, 6% of the boys reported 'weapon with blade'.
- 21% of boys and 13% of girls said that they had been the victim of violence or aggression in the last 12 months in the area where they lived.

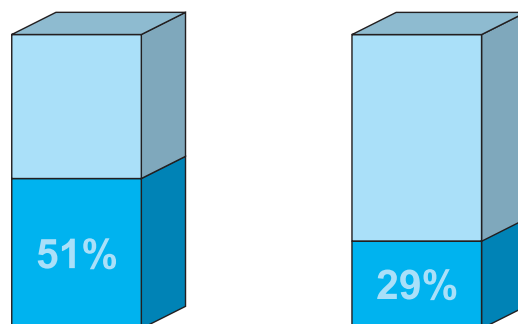


LEISURE

- The most common after school leisure activities on the day before the survey were watching television, listening to music, using the Internet and playing computer games.
- 19% of girls and 27% of boys spent more than 2 hours playing computer games after school on the evening before the survey.
- 96% had used the Internet at home in the last month and 97% at school. 80% say they are never supervised.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- 51% of the boys consider themselves 'fit' or 'very fit' compared with only 29% of the girls.



- 49% of boys and 27% of girls reported that they had exercised three times or more, in the week before the survey, which made them breathe harder.
- Outside school hours, soccer and bike riding were the most popular form of physical activity for the boys and, for the girls, it was dancing.
- When asked what they would like to do in PE/Games sessions, the girls asked for swimming and dancing the boys - football, tennis and badminton.

? 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 said that they were happy with their weight. 70% of boys compared with 40% of girls for this question.
- ↑ Food choices were fairly similar for Bedford pupils but boys were **more likely** to say that they had fizzy drinks 'on most days', 27% vs. 16%.
- ↑ Bedford Year 10 girls are **more likely** to say that they drank alcohol in the previous week 39% of girls compared with 30% of boys saying the same.
- ↑ Girls are **more likely** than boys to say that it is easy to get hooked on alcohol, 59% said this compared with 51% of boys.
- ↓ Bedford boys are **less likely** to say that they smoked a cigarette in the last week, 17% of girls smoked last week compared with 6% of boys who said the same.
- ↑ 19% of girls said that they had ever taken Cannabis. This compares with 11% of boys. 25% of girls had been offered Cannabis, 14% of boys said the same.
- ↑ 72% of girls rated their lessons on illegal drugs as 'quite' or 'very useful', 59% of boys said the same.
- ↑ 21% of boys said that they had been the victim of violence or aggression in the area where they lived, 13% of girls said the same.
- ↑ 49% of boys exercised hard at least 3 times in the previous week, only 27% of girls said the same.
- ↓ Boys in Year 10 were **less likely** than girls to worry about exams and tests and their looks, but **more likely** to worry about careers.

Trend data: Differences between Bedford Year 10 pupils between 2008 and 2006

- ↓ 15% of Year 10 girls said they had no lunch the day before the survey in 2008. In 2006 26% of girls said the same.
- ↑ Higher proportions of boys in 2008 (55%) say they have never smoked at all compared with 2006 (45%).
- ↑ In 2008, 70% of boys and 61% of girls said they had no alcohol in the previous week. In 2006, 59% of boys and 48% of girls said the same.
- ↑ 42% of girls in 2008 said that alcohol kills most people (from a list of drugs) in this country. In 2006, 28% of girls said this about alcohol.
- ↑ In 2008 21% of boys said that they had been the victim of violence or aggression in the area where they lived. This is higher than the 15% reported in 2006.
- ↑ General levels of worrying for the 2008 Year 10 sample appear to be higher than that seen in 2006. Particularly for exams and tests, career and family worries.

Differences between Bedford Year 10 pupils and SHEU wider databank figures

- ↑ Boys in Bedford are **more likely** to be happy with their weight and **less likely** to want to lose weight compared with the SHEU sample.
- ↓ Girls in Bedford are **less likely** to say they eat fresh fruit and vegetables 'on most days' compared with girls in the wider sample.
- ↓ Bedford boys are **less likely** to have smoked in the previous week compared with boys in the wider sample. They are also **less likely** to say that they drank alcohol in the previous week.
- ↓ Pupils in Bedford are **less likely** to know someone who uses drugs. They are also **less likely** to have been offered drugs and Bedford boys are less likely to have ever used drugs compared with the wider sample.
- ↑ Girls in Bedford are **less likely** to say that they are afraid to go to school because of bullying compared with girls in the wider sample.

The Way Forward – over to you

The work was funded by Bedfordshire County Council and the Bedfordshire Healthy Schools Scheme. As a result of their work we now have excellent data to be used by schools, the Local Authority, the PCT 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 of the schools involved:

Abbey Middle; Biddenham Upper; Harrowden Middle; John Bunyan Upper; Lincroft Middle; St. Thomas More RC Upper and Westfield Middle

Bedfordshire Healthy Schools Programme

The Bedfordshire Healthy Schools Scheme is part of the National Healthy Schools Programme that is led by the Department of Health (DH) and the Department of Children Schools and Families (DCSF).

The Bedfordshire Healthy Schools Scheme provides a framework of support, training and quality assurance to assist schools with the process of self-review, target setting, action planning and development of health and education policy and practice across the whole school community. It aims to raise levels of achievement and improve the health and well-being of staff and young people.

The strategic priorities for the National Healthy Schools Programme are to:

- support children and young people in developing healthy behaviour
- help to raise pupil achievement
- help to reduce health inequalities
- promote social inclusion

The Healthy Schools Programme is a vehicle for local partners to deliver universal health and well-being education and support to children and young people. It can be viewed as the foundation stone of health and well-being provision in schools, where extended services provide the bridge between a healthy school and targeted support. Healthy Schools work contributes to all five ECM outcomes, four PSA targets, 54 National Indicators and is an important part of the OFSTED School Inspection Process.

The National Targets (DH and DCSF) for the Healthy Schools Programme are as follows:

1. 65% of all maintained schools to achieve *National Healthy School Status* by December 2008
2. 75% of all maintained schools to achieve *National Healthy School Status* by December 2009
3. 100% of all maintained schools participating in their local Healthy Schools Scheme by December 2009

These targets are a Performance Indicator in the Bedfordshire Local Area Agreement and a Key Performance Indicator in the B:DAT Young People's Drug/Alcohol Action Plan.

Priorities for 2008-2010

- To recruit the remaining 6 Bedfordshire schools onto the Healthy Schools Programme by December 2009.
- To ensure that 75% of Bedfordshire schools have achieved *National Healthy School Status* by December 2009.
- To support schools through the Re-Validation process, ensuring that they continue to enhance and develop their *National Healthy School Status*.
- To contribute to the improvement in the consistency of planning and delivery of PSHE in schools, particularly those achieving *National Healthy School Status*.
- To support the National Obesity Strategy and the National Child Measurement Programme to target schools for intervention strategies to contribute to reducing levels of obesity.
- To actively promote and support the School Food Trust's 'Million Meals' campaign to increase numbers of children/young people having school meals.
- To continue to strengthen and develop work around Physical Activity in schools.
- To work with the Local Authority's Behaviour & Attendance and PSHE Consultants to actively support schools in implementing the SEAL Programme in Bedfordshire.
- To strengthen and develop links with CAMH Services, to work towards a clear interface between CAMHS and the Emotional Health and Well-being Agenda in schools.
- To support schools and their communities in helping to reduce smoking rates for children.
- To work more closely with Extended Services Teams to support schools to maximise community services.

For further details and information on any aspect of the Bedfordshire Healthy Schools Programme:

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