

# Supporting the Health of Young People in Mid and South Bedfordshire 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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For more details please contact  
**The Schools Health Education Unit**  
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Nationally Accredited Scheme

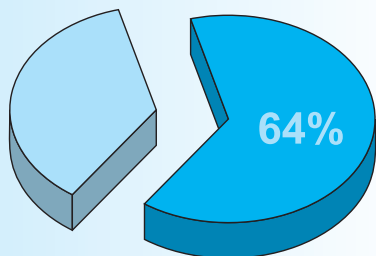
Bedfordshire **NHS**  
Primary Care Trust

# Mid & South Bedfordshire pupils in Year 8 (ages 12 to 13 years)

## CITIZENSHIP

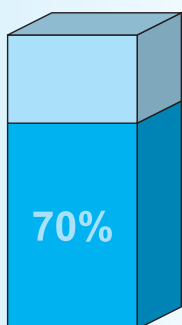
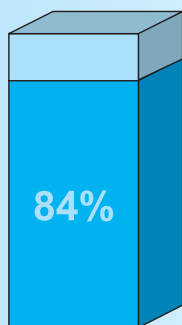
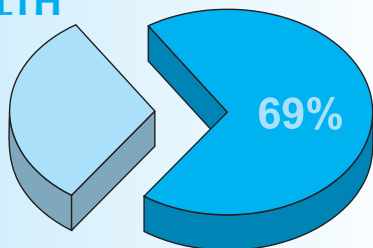
### Background

- 95% of pupils describe themselves as white UK, 2% say mixed.
- 64% of all pupils live with both parents.** 11% live only with their mother and 14% live with mother and stepfather.
- 67% of pupils did homework on the evening before the survey and 13% did more than an hour.
- 71% of pupils used the Internet after school the day before the survey; 36% used the computer to do homework.
- 64% of pupils use the Internet for finding out about hobbies and interests, 73% for chatting and 14% use it for help and advice.
- 31% of the girls and 25% of the boys cared for family members, on the evening 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 popular sources of support for boys and girls for most problems.
- 84% of boys and 70% of girls agreed with the statement "If I take care of myself, I'll stay healthy".**



- 31% of girls and 44% of boys had high self-esteem scores.
- 75% of pupils say they are 'never' afraid to go to school because of bullying. 2% say that they think others may fear going to school because of them.

- 68% of boys and 82% of girls 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	34%	Their looks	51%
Family problems	30%	Exams and tests	47%
Their looks	25%	Problems with friends	41%
Career problems	24%	Family problems	36%

(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?

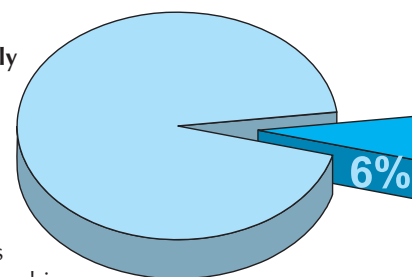
## HEALTHY EATING

- 7% of boys and 13% of girls reported having nothing to eat or drink for breakfast on the day of the survey.
- 3% of boys and 3% of the girls also reported having no lunch on the day before the survey.
- 36% of boys and 52% of girls say that they would like to lose weight.
- 12% of boys say they never consider their health when choosing what to eat.
- 5% of pupils reported that they had no portions of fruit or vegetables on the day before the survey; 27% said they had 5 or more portions.
- 27% of pupils eat crisps, 'on most days', 55% fresh fruit and 23% sweets or chocolate bars.
- 7% of girls and 10% of boys had no water to drink on the day before the survey. 33% of pupils had about a litre or more.

## DRUGS, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO

### Drugs

- 6% of pupils are 'fairly sure' or 'certain' that they know someone who takes drugs.**
- 4% of Year 8 boys and 2% of Year 8 girls have been offered cannabis. 2% of pupils have been offered other drugs.
- 6% of pupils reported that they had taken an illegal drug in the last year. 2% had taken one in the last month.
- The top four drugs thought to be most dangerous were:**



	Boys		Girls
Heroin	75%	Heroin	74%
Cocaine	57%	Cocaine	64%
Solvents	46%	Cannabis	56%
Cannabis	40%	Solvents	37%

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

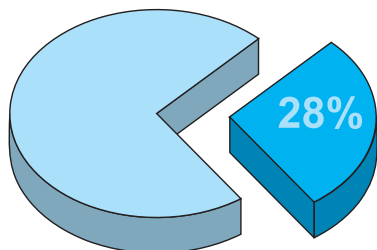
Boys		Girls	
Heroin	72%	Heroin	80%
Cannabis	69%	Cocaine	74%
Cocaine	69%	Cannabis	74%
Alcohol	50%	Alcohol	56%

- 21% 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

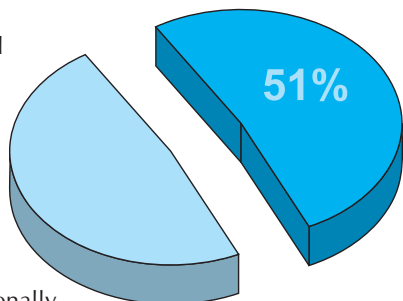
**28% of pupils had at least one alcoholic drink in the week before the survey.**



- 17% of pupils drank on only one day, 12% drank on more than one day.
- 12% of pupils drank between 4 and 20 units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- 0% of Year 8 pupils said they drank 21 or more units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- 1% of Year 8 pupils bought alcohol from an off-licence that should sell only to over-eighteens.
- Pre-mixed spirits, wine and beer were the most popular drinks.

### Tobacco

**51% of pupils reported that they have a parent, sibling or close friend who smokes on most days:**



- 3% of boys and 4% of girls in Year 8 reported that they smoke occasionally or regularly.
- 5% of pupils said that they used to smoke but don't now.

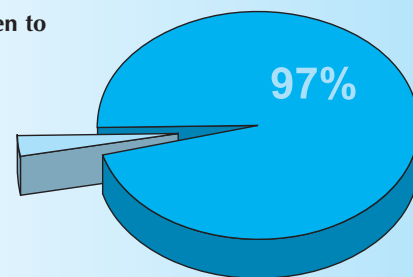
### SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS

- When asked what was their main source of information about sex 75% of pupils said school lessons. 17% of the boys and 29% of the girls said their friends. 38% overall said their parents.
- When asked what **should be** their main source of information only 10% of pupils said their friends. 74% said it should be school lessons and 50% said their parents, 19% said it should be an advice centre.
- 19% of pupils said they believed there was a special contraception and advice service for young people available locally, 68% said that they didn't know.
- 50% 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

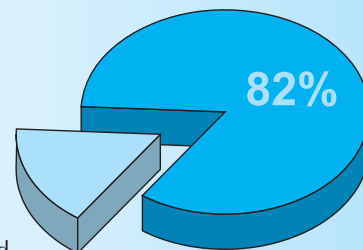
- 45% of pupils said they were treated for an accident by a doctor or at a hospital within the last year. 14% of boys had an accident playing sport, 8% of girls had an accident at home.
- 97% of pupils had been to the dentist in the past year**



- 18% of pupils said that they have asthma.
- 7% of pupils say they never do anything to avoid sunburn
- 17% 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.
- 13% of the boys and 9% of the girls reported that they were fairly sure or certain that they had friends who carried weapons for protection when going out.
- 8% 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

- 89% of pupils said they spent time watching television, after school, on the day before the survey.
- 52% met with friends, 60% of the boys and 33% of the girls played sport, on the evening before the survey.
- 73% of the boys played computer games, on the evening before the survey.
- 82% of pupils reported that they enjoyed physical activities 'quite a lot' or 'a lot'.**



- 59% of the boys and 47% 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	63%	Going for a walk	41%
Football	58%	Bike riding	36%
Cricket	33%	Dancing	33%
Jogging	32%	Jogging	32%

*(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, gymnastics and dancing. The boys' top answers were football, tennis and badminton.

## Gender differences amongst Mid and South Bedfordshire Year 8 pupils

- ↑ More Mid and South Bedfordshire Year 8 boys record levels of high self esteem than the girls in Year 8; 44% of the boys compared with only 31% of the girls.
- ↑ **More** Mid and South Bedfordshire boys than girls are happy with their weight:: 57% compared with 48% of girls saying the same. 52% of the girls said that they would like to lose weight compared with 36% of the boys saying the same.
- ↑ **More** Mid and South Bedfordshire boys than girls agreed with the statements that they were in charge of their health 30% of boys compared with 19% of girls who had a strong internal locus of control.
- ↓ **Boys** in Mid and South Bedfordshire were **less likely** than girls to eat fresh fruit, vegetables and salad 'on most days'. The girls were less likely than the boys to have pasta, meat and sugar coated cereals or drink fizzy drinks.
- ↓ Mid and South Bedfordshire boys were **less likely** than girls to have eaten a packed lunch the day before, they were more likely to have a cafeteria lunch than the girls were.
- ↓ Boys in Mid and South Bedfordshire were **less likely** than girls were to think that you can get hooked on drugs. 72% of boys said that it is easy to get hooked on heroin this compared with 80% of girls who said the same.
- ↓ Boys in Mid and South Bedfordshire were **less likely** to have **never smoked**: 76% compared with 82% of girls.
- ↓ Mid and South Bedfordshire boys were less likely to have cleaned their teeth twice or more: 79% compared with 86% of the girls saying the same.

## Trend data: Differences between Mid and South Bedfordshire Year 8 pupils between 2006 and 2004

- ↑ Pupils in the 2006 survey were **more likely** to have spent time the night before doing homework, using the Internet and using the computer for homework than pupils were in the 2004 survey.
- ↑ 69% of pupils in the 2006 survey said that they were satisfied with their lives compared with 59% saying the same in the 2004 sample.
- ↑ Pupils in the 2006 sample appear to be making healthier food choices compared with the 2004 sample. More report eating fresh fruit regularly (55% vs 44%), and vegetables (59% vs 45%) and less report having sweets and chocolates (23% vs 40%) on most days.
- ↑ 50% of pupils in 2006 said that they knew where to get condoms free of charge. In 2004, 31% of pupils said the same.
- ↑ 71% of boys in 2006 said that school lessons were their main source of information about sex; in 2004 this figure was 65%.
- ↓ 6% of pupils said that they knew someone who uses drugs in 2006, this compared with 25% saying the same in 2004.
- ↓ 28% of pupils had at least one alcoholic drink in the week before the survey in 2006, in 2004 this figure was 44%.

## Differences between Mid and South Bedfordshire Year 8 pupils and SHEU wider databank figures

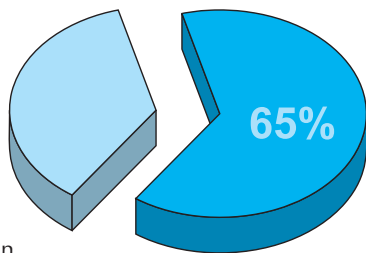
- ↑ Pupils in the Mid and South Bedfordshire survey were **more likely** to say that they eat vegetables and fresh fruit 'on most days' than pupils were in the wider sample.
- ↑ They were also more likely to drink water during the day and appear to be more aware of the '**5 a day**' messages. Higher percentages report eating portions of fruit and vegetables on a regular basis.
- ↑ Pupils in this survey were **more likely** to say that they ate a packed lunch compared with pupils in the wider sample.
- ↑ Year 8 boys in Mid and South Bedfordshire were more likely to have drunk alcohol in the past week compared with Year 8 boys saying the same in the wider sample.
- ↓ Boys in Year 8 were **less likely** to have smoked in the previous week compared with the same group in the wider sample.
- ↓ Pupils in the Mid and South Bedfordshire survey were **less likely** to say that they know someone who uses drugs compared with pupils saying the same in the wider survey.

# Mid & South Bedfordshire pupils in Year 10 (ages 14-15 years)

## CITIZENSHIP

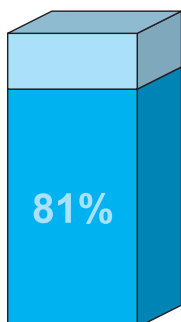
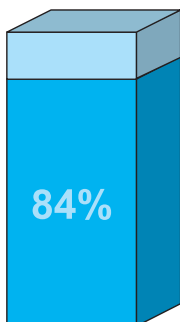
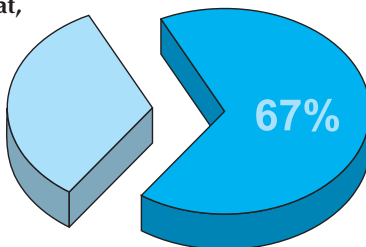
### Background

- 92% of pupils describe themselves as white UK. 4% said that they were mixed.
- 65% live with both parents, 10% live only with their mother.**
- 70% of pupils did homework on the evening before the survey and 23% did over an hour.
- 73% of pupils used the Internet after school the day before the survey. 54% used the computer to do homework.
- 74% of pupils say that they use the Internet for finding out about their hobbies & interests, 83% use it for chatting and 21% use it for help and advice.
- 88% of pupils are never supervised when they use the Internet.
- 20% of pupils cared for family members after school the day before the survey.



## EMOTIONAL HEALTH & WELL-BEING

- 67% 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.
- 62% of boys and 40% of girls had high self-esteem scores.
- 84% of boys and 81% of girls agreed with the statement "If I take care of myself I'll stay healthy".**



- 83% 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.
- 81% 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	48%	Their looks	69%
School-work problems	38%	Exams and tests	60%
Career problems	38%	School-work problems	47%
Their looks	29%	Family problems	40%

(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 20% of girls reported having nothing to eat or drink for breakfast on the day of the survey.
- 20% of boys and 32% of the girls also reported having no lunch on the day before the survey.
- 30% of boys and 62% of girls say that they would like to lose weight.

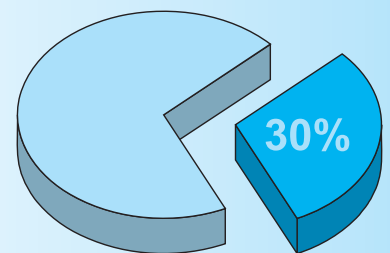
### ? How many Year 10 girls that are trying to lose weight are not eating breakfast or lunch?

- 12% of boys say they never consider their health when choosing what to eat.
- 11% 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', 43% fresh fruit and 36% sweets or chocolate bars.
- 5% of pupils had no water to drink on the day before the survey. 36% of pupils had about a litre or more.

## DRUGS, ALCOHOL & TOBACCO

### Drugs

- 30% of pupils are 'fairly sure' or 'certain' that they know someone who takes illegal drugs.**
- 24% of Year 10 boys and 37% of Year 10 girls have been offered cannabis. 20% of pupils have been offered other drugs.
- 24% of pupils reported that they had taken an illegal drug in the last year. 13% had taken one in the last month.
- The top four drugs thought to be most dangerous were:**



Boys		Girls	
Heroin	79%	Heroin	75%
Cocaine	61%	Cocaine	60%
Solvents	40%	Solvents	44%
Alcohol	26%	Amphetamines	33%

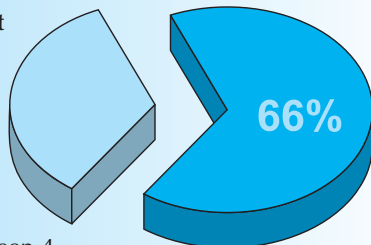
**The top four drugs thought easy to get hooked on were:**

	Boys		Girls	
Heroin	72%	Heroin	83%	
Cocaine	70%	Cocaine	78%	
Alcohol	54%	Cannabis	68%	
Cannabis	52%	Alcohol	60%	

- 46% of pupils (more boys than girls) correctly identified alcohol as the drug that kills most people in this country.

**Alcohol**

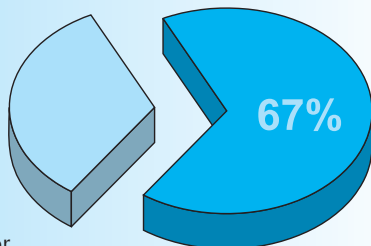
**66% of pupils had at least one alcoholic drink in the week before the survey.**



- 25% of pupils drank on only one day, 41% drank on more than one day.
- 39% of pupils drank between 4 and 20 units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- 27% of Year 10 boys and 13% of Year 10 girls said they drank 21 or more units of alcohol in the seven days before the survey.
- 14% 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**

**67% of pupils reported that they have a parent, sibling or close friend who smokes on most days:**



- 13% of boys reported that they smoke occasionally or regularly. 35% of girls reported that they smoke occasionally or regularly.
- 11% 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?**

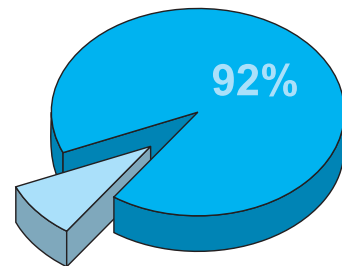
**SEX AND RELATIONSHIPS**

- When asked what was their main source of information about sex 42% of pupil said school lessons. 62% of the girls said their friends. 23% of the boys said the Internet and 21% said TV, films.
- When asked what **should** be their main source of information only 24% of pupils said their friends. 54% said it should be school lessons and 44% said their parents.
- 20% of Year 10 pupils said they believed there was a special contraception and advice service for young people available locally, 67% of pupils said they didn't know.
- 47% of pupils said that they knew where to get condoms free of charge.

**? Can young people's knowledge of contraception services be increased?**

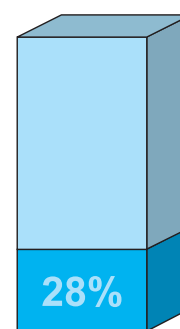
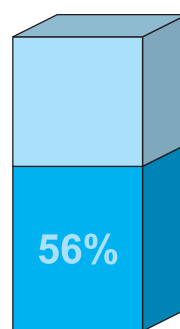
**SAFETY**

- 52% 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, 10% of the girls had an accident at home.
- 92% of pupils had visited the dentist in the twelve months before the survey.**
- 18% of pupils said that they have asthma. 17% of pupils say they never do anything to avoid sunburn.
- 26% of pupils rated the safety of their area, when going out after dark, as 'poor' or 'very poor'. 6% said this about going out during the day.
- 16% 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, 13% of the girls reported 'weapon with blade'.
- 22% 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.
- 81% met with friends, 59% of the boys and 20% of the girls played sport, on the evening before the survey.
- 63% 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'.
- 63% of the boys and 21% of the girls considered themselves 'fit' or 'very fit'.
- 56% of the boys and 28% 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	62%	Going for a walk	45%	
Bike riding	53%	Dancing	32%	
Jogging	32%	Swimming	26%	
Swimming	20%	Jogging	18%	

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

- Outside school hours, soccer and bike riding were the most popular form of physical activity for the boys and, for the girls, it was going for a walk and dancing.

## Gender differences amongst Mid and South Bedfordshire Year 10 pupils

- ↑ Mid and South Bedfordshire Year 10 boys were more likely to drink at least a litre of water during the day: 47% of boys drank at least a litre of water compared with only 25% of girls who said the same.
- ↑ Mid and South Bedfordshire Year 10 boys were **more likely** to say that they have been the victim of violence or aggression in the area where they live in the last 12 months: 22% of boys compared with 17% of girls.
- ↓ Mid and South Bedfordshire boys were **more likely** to say that parents should be their main source of information about drugs: 44% of boys compared with 34% of girls who said that parents should be the main source.
- ↓ Mid and South Bedfordshire Year 10 boys were **less likely** to say that they were afraid of going to school because they might be bullied: 89% of boys say that they were 'never afraid', this compared with 77% of girls.
- ↓ Mid and South Bedfordshire Year 10 boys were **less likely** to worry about *exams and tests; the way they look; or problems with family and friends* when compared with the proportions of girls who worry.
- ↓ Mid and South Bedfordshire boys were **less likely** to say that they knew someone personally who took the drugs listed in the questionnaire: 21% of boys said that they didn't know anyone, this compared with 39% of girls.
- ↓ Mid and South Bedfordshire boys were **less likely** to say that they smoked a cigarette in the last week: 30% of girls smoked last week compared with 12% of boys who said the same.
- ↓ Mid and South Bedfordshire Year 10 boys were **less likely** to say that they know where they can get condoms free of charge: 30% of boys know where to get free access to them compared with 63% of girls.
- ↓ Mid and South Bedfordshire Year 10 boys were **less likely** to have done homework the evening before the survey compared with girls that said the same: 63% of boys compared with 72% 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 Mid and South Bedfordshire Year 10 pupils between 2006 and 2004

- ↑ Pupils in the 2006 survey were **more likely** to have spent time the night before doing homework and using the Internet than pupils were in the 2004 survey.
- ↑ Higher proportions of pupils in the 2006 survey recorded levels of high self-esteem compared with pupils in the 2004 sample.
- ↑ 30% of boys in 2006 say they would like to lose weight. This compared with 20% saying the same in 2004.
- ↑ Pupils in 2006 are making healthier food choices than pupils were in 2004: In 2006 14% of boys and 10% of girls had chips 'on most days', this compared with 26% and 15% respectively in 2004. In 2006 43% of boys and 44% of girls reported eating fresh fruit 'on most days', this compared with 30% and 35% respectively in 2004.
- ↑ More pupils drank alcohol the week before the 2006 survey than they did in 2004.
- ↓ 21% of pupils in 2006 said that they knew there was a specialist contraception and advice centre available for young people locally. In 2004, 29% of pupils said the same.

## Differences between Mid and South Bedfordshire Year 10 pupils and SHEU wider databank figures

- ↑ Year 10 girls in Mid and South Bedfordshire were **more likely** to say that they smoked in the last seven days, compared with girls who said the same in the wider sample.
- ↑ Pupils in Mid and South Bedfordshire were **more likely** to have drunk alcohol, than pupils in the wider sample. They are also likely to have drunk more water.
- ↑ Pupils in Mid and South Bedfordshire were **more likely** to rate their lessons on Illegal drugs and sex and relationships as *quite or very useful*, compared with pupils in the wider survey.
- ↑ Boys in Mid and South Bedfordshire were **less likely** to say that they have been offered drugs, than were pupils in the wider sample.
- ↓ **Smaller proportions** of pupils in the Mid and South Bedfordshire survey were aware of a special contraception and advice centre available to them locally, than were pupils in the wider survey.

# 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:*

Fullbrook Middle  
Henlow VC Middle  
Redborne Upper  
Robert Bloomfield Upper  
Samuel Whitbread Upper  
Woodland Middle.

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## 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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