

School Safety in California

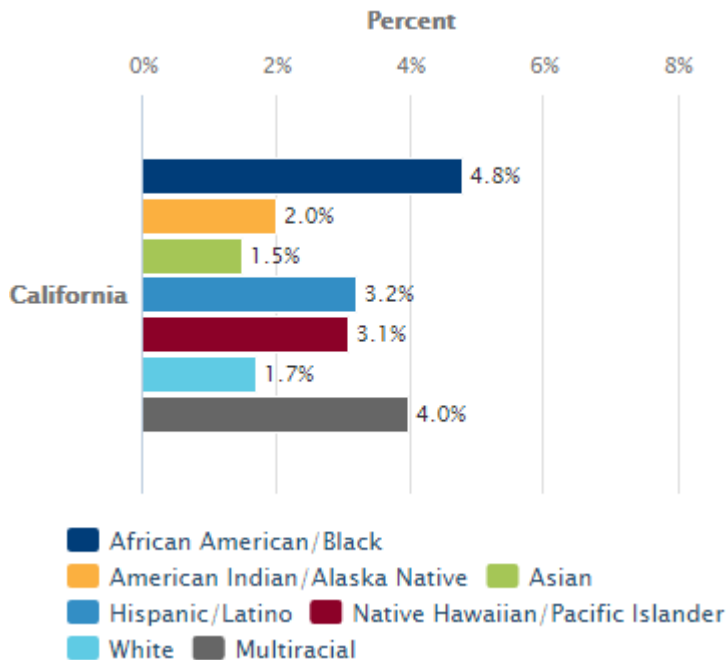
Students Who Feel Very Safe at School, by Gender: 2013-2015

California	Percent	
	Female	Male
Grade Level	Very safe	Very safe
7th Grade	17.3%	22.3%
9th Grade	13.6%	18.5%
11th Grade	18.6%	24.4%
Non-Traditional	17.5%	20.2%

Definition: Level of perceived school safety among public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs, by gender and grade level (e.g., in 2013-2015, an estimated 1.9% of female 9th graders in California felt very unsafe at school).

Data Source: WestEd, California Healthy Kids Survey. California Department of Education (Jul. 2017).

Students Who Physically Fought at School 4 or More Times in the Previous Year, by Race/Ethnicity: 2013-2015



Definition: Estimated percentage of public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs who were in physical fights at school in the previous year, by number of occasions and race/ethnicity (e.g., in 2013-2015, an estimated 3.2% of Hispanic/Latino students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs in California were in physical fights at school four or more times in the previous year).

Data Source: WestEd, California Healthy Kids Survey. California Department of Education (Jul. 2017).

Students Who Feel Very Unsafe at School, by Level of School

What It Is

On kidsdata.org, indicators of school safety are based on student reports regarding:

- Their perceived level of safety at school, from very safe to very unsafe
- The number of times in the previous year they were afraid of being beaten up, were in a physical fight, carried a gun, and carried a weapon other than a gun at school

Also available are data from school staff on the extent to which:

- Their school is a safe place for students and staff
- Physical fighting between students and student weapons possession are problems at school

Why This Topic Is Important

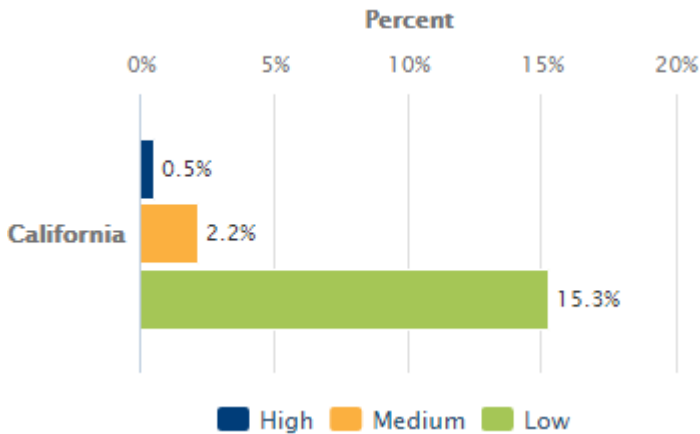
The safety and supportiveness of children's school environments play a crucial role in their development and academic success. When students feel safe and supported at school, they tend to have better school attendance and test scores, and they are less likely to engage in risky behaviors such as substance abuse and violence. Exposure to violence at school is associated with many negative outcomes for students, including depression, suicide, substance use, truancy, academic problems, and violent behavior. The fear of violence alone can affect students' development, concentration, and ability to learn.

School safety often is compromised by bullying and harassment, which affects more than a quarter of U.S. middle and high school students each year. In addition to the risk of physical injury, victims of bullying are at increased risk for emotional and physical health problems, as well as poor academic achievement. Any young person can be bullied, but certain groups are more likely to be victimized, such as LGBTQ youth, students with disabilities, and African American/black youth.

How Children Are Faring

According to 2013-2015 estimates, less than a quarter of California public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs felt very safe at school. Overall, boys were more likely to feel very safe at school than their female counterparts, as were students whose parents had higher levels of education. Among

Connectedness: 2013-2015



Definition: Level of perceived school safety among public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs, by level of school connectedness (e.g., in 2013-2015, an estimated 15.3% of California students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs with low levels of school connectedness felt very unsafe at school).

Data Source: WestEd, *California Healthy Kids Survey*. California Department of Education (Jul. 2017).

Students Who 4 or More Times in the Previous Year Feared Being Beaten Up, by Sexual Orientation: 2013-2015

California	Percent
Sexual Orientation	4 or More Times
Straight	2.7%
Gay / Lesbian / Bisexual	8.2%
Not Sure	4.9%

Definition: Estimated percentage of public school students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs who were afraid of being beaten up at school in the previous year, by number of occasions and by sexual orientation (e.g., in 2013-2015, an estimated 73.2% of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students in grades 7, 9, 11, and non-traditional programs in California had not been afraid of being beaten up at school in the previous year).

Data Source: WestEd, *California Healthy Kids Survey*. California Department of Education (Jul. 2017).

racial/ethnic groups with data, 23% of white youth statewide felt very safe at school, compared with 16% of their Asian peers. Estimates of feeling very unsafe at school were highest for American Indian/Alaska Native youth, at 6%.

Across measures, it is more common for gay, lesbian, and bisexual students and those with low levels of school connectedness to feel unsafe, fear victimization, and engage in violence-related risk behaviors when compared with other youth. For example, in 2013-2015, the percentage of gay, lesbian, and bisexual youth who on four or more occasions in the previous year were afraid of being beaten up at school was 8%, compared with 3% of straight youth. In the same period, an estimated 8% of students with low school connectedness were in four or more physical fights in the previous year, compared with 1% of students with high levels of connectedness.

Statewide in 2013-2015, an estimated 5% of students in non-traditional programs carried a gun at school at least once in the previous year, and 18% carried another type of weapon at least once. By comparison, 2% of students in traditional 11th grade carried a gun and 6% carried another type of weapon at school in the previous year. Across all student groups, less than 10% of youth carried a gun at school in the previous year and less than 20% carried a weapon other than a gun.

View references for this text and additional research on this topic:
<https://www.kidsdata.org/topic/70/school-safety/summary>



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