

more
than
money



NAB Education Insights Special Report

**Part 2: School life - how young people
really feel about school.**

NAB Behavioural & Industry Economics
May 2023

Part 2 – School life – how young people really feel about school.

In Part 1 of this NAB Education Insight Series, we explored the wellbeing of young Australians. In part 2 we take a closer look at the school lives of students, including enjoyment, start & finish times, the school curriculum, skills attained, teachers and general problems & concerns, and how these can be best addressed. Once again, we have explored these issues through the eyes of both students (around 400 of them across years 7-12) and parents (around 500 across the country). Many adults refer to their school days as among the “best years of their lives”. But how do students feel, how do they believe they are performing?

Around 3 in 4 Australian high school students believe they are getting a better education than their parents. Over 1 in 4 greatly enjoy school, although boys and girls experience school differently. Boys in general enjoy school more than girls, scoring their knowledge of maths, technology and physical education much higher. Girls however believe they have a better grasp of English, the arts and languages. Boys in general also believe they are better prepared for the job market or to run/start a business. Perceptions also vary by type of school. Significantly more students at private independent schools for example, grade themselves highly across most areas of the curriculum. Irrespective of background, many believe they are poor at public speaking. Students believe the best teachers are engaging, funny, creative, have a positive attitude, build confidence and motivate them.

On average, students spend almost 5 hours in a typical day on their phones (on social media, messaging, etc.) – around double the time estimated by parents. Over 4 in 10 students believe later school start times would better support their learning – very few parents agree. Around 1 in 3 students believe sexual harassment, pressures to try drugs or alcohol and physical bullying are among the biggest problems at their school, along with lack of student diversity, pressure to smoke or “vape” (particularly for boys), racism and bias against gay, lesbian or transgender students or religion. Far fewer parents identified any of these issues as serious issues for their children.

We begin this report by addressing a very simple question – is school fun?

Overall, students scored their school life as ‘moderately’ enjoyable (59.6 pts out of 100), while parents think they are enjoying it much more (75.7 pts). Interestingly, while boys in general (62.7) said they enjoyed school more so than girls (56.7), students at girls-only schools (61.9) said they enjoyed school somewhat more than those at boys-only schools (57.5). Students in years 7-9 enjoyed school life somewhat more than older year groups. Parents were far more positive, particularly when their children were attending private independent schools (80.5 pts vs. parents of students at public or state schools at 73.9). By year level, parents also believe enjoyment is highest among students in year 12 (75.5 v 59.2 for students themselves). Almost 1 in 4 students scored their enjoyment ‘low’ (less than 40 pts), compared to just 4% of parents. This cohort was, however, noticeably higher at boys only schools (35%), and somewhat lower in girls only schools (18%).

How do students (and parents) think they’re performing at school?

Students scored lower than parents in all areas of the school curriculum. Students marked themselves highest for Spelling (a solid 71.9 pts out of 100). They rated themselves ‘quite’ high for Maths & Numeracy (68.0), but somewhat lower for Reading, Writing & Expression (64.7), Technologies (64.3), Sciences (63.9), Physical Education (61.6) and Social Sciences (60.8). Students rated themselves lowest for Languages (56.5) and the Arts (57.6). Parents rated their children’s Reading, Writing & Expression highest (74.7), closely followed by Spelling (74.4), Maths & Numeracy (73.8) and Technologies (73.6). Parents however also scored their children lowest for the Arts (68.3) and Languages (69.1), but still much higher than did their children.

A very large number of students scored their performance as 'low' (i.e. less than 40 pts) in all areas of the school curriculum - particularly the Arts (33%) and Languages (31%). Around 1 in 4 students also rated themselves 'low' for Physical Education (25%), Social Sciences (24%) and Technologies (22%). The number of parents who scored their children 'low' was highest for the Arts (12%), and lowest for Technologies (4%) and Reading, Writing & Expression (5%). Once again, there were some notable differences in responses by gender, year level and school type. For example, students attending boys only schools scored themselves much higher for Maths & Numeracy (75.8), as did boys in general (72.1 vs. 64.5 for girls), and in years 7-9 (74.9 vs. 64.6 for year 11).

How do students (and parents) score on key life skills?

For the most part, students scored themselves lower than did parents. Students marked themselves highest for being prepared for higher or further education (64.9), closely followed by general home skills such as cooking, cleaning laundry, etc. (64.6). They scored a little lower for money management (62.5), and supporting their physical health through diet, fitness etc. (60.6). Students felt they were most lacking in being prepared to run or start a business (45.9), supporting their own mental health through meditation, relaxation etc. (51.9), general handyman skills (53.4) and being prepared for the future job market (54.3).

Parents were somewhat more positive about children's abilities in all areas except general home skills where they were on par (66.4 pts parents; 64.6 students). Parents were most positive around supporting their physical health (72.3), being prepared for higher/further education (70.2). They scored children lowest for being prepared to run or start a business, but still significantly higher than students themselves (59.4 parents vs. 45.9). The biggest gap related to supporting mental health, where parents scored children much higher (68.4 parents vs. 51.9).

Many students scored themselves 'low' (i.e. less than 40 pts), particularly for being prepared to run or start a business where almost 1 in 2 rated their skills 'low'. Around 1 in 3 students also rated 'low' for supporting mental health, general handyman skills and being prepared for the future job market.

Variations were wide across different demographics. For example, students at private independent schools rated themselves noticeably more competent for general home skills, money management skills, supporting their physical health, general handyman skills and supporting their mental health. Students at public and state schools rated themselves much lower for being prepared for higher or further education and for preparedness for the future job market. Boys in general rated their life skills higher than



girls in all areas except general home skills, where girls scored higher (65.7 pts girls; 63.5 pts boys), and for money management skills (62.9 pts boys; 62.4 pts girls) and being prepared for further or higher education (65.5 pts boys; 64.9 pts girls) where they scored broadly on par. The gap in perceptions between boys and girls was largest (by some margin) for supporting their mental health (57.4 pts boys; 46.8 pts girls). Students at boys-only school rated their life skills higher than students at girls-only and coeducational schools for all life skills.

How do students (and parents) score relationships & general knowledge?

For the most part, students again scored themselves lower than did their parents. Students scored themselves highest (and quite high) for having respectful relationships (74.5 pts), ability to think for themselves (70.8), and ability to get along with people (70.0). Scores were somewhat lower for being organised, taking a leadership role, understanding global current affairs, Australia's culture and history post European settlement and Australia's indigenous culture and history. Students felt they were most lacking in public speaking (55.5) and the ability to concentrate (57.0). The biggest discrepancy in parental perceptions related to students' ability to concentrate, public speaking, and understanding Australia's culture and history post European settlement, where parents scored their children much higher.

Over 1 in 3 students scored themselves 'low' for public speaking. Around 1 in 4 also scored 'low' for their ability to concentrate, their understanding of Australia's indigenous culture and history, global current affairs, Australia's culture and history post European settlement, taking a leadership role and being organised. Only 1 in 10 rated 'low' for having respectful relationships, the ability to get along with people and think for themselves.

If students (and parents) were to set grades (A, B, C, D & E), for themselves what would they give?

In terms of the curriculum, around 1 in 4 students awarded themselves an “A” (excellent) for sciences and maths and around 1 in 5 for English, technologies and languages. Around 1 in 3 graded themselves “B” (very good) for maths and social sciences and 1 in 4 for languages and technologies. Conversely, around 1 in 5 students graded themselves across all areas of the curriculum “D” (fair) or “E” (poor), except technologies where it rose to almost 1 in 4. Most parents (around 2 in 3) awarded an “A” or “B” grade for English, technologies, sciences and maths, and somewhat less for languages. Around 1 in 10 parents did however also award “D” or “E” grade for all areas of the curriculum. Significantly more students at private independent schools graded themselves across all areas of the curriculum higher (except maths where they were broadly on par with public or state schools). A lot more boys in general graded themselves across all areas of the curriculum higher than girls, except the arts where a similar number rated “A” or “B”. Far fewer students awarded themselves an “A” for life skills.

What makes a great teacher?

Almost 1 in 2 students said the best teachers were those that were engaging, funny, creative and didn’t just sit back and lecture them. Around 4 in 10 said those that had a positive attitude, built confidence and motivated them, while 1 in 3 students said respecting students, valuing ideas and opinions, treating them as individuals, being empathetic and creating a welcoming learning environment were key. A large number also valued teachers who understood everyone learns differently and at different speeds, had a love of learning and passion for the course material, paid close attention to ensure each student was tracking where they needed to be, often changed their teaching methods to make learning more interesting, were prepared and organised, in their classrooms early and ready to teach and were patient and didn’t rush them. For most parents - around 3 in 10 - the number one quality was a positive attitude, building confidence and motivating their child.

How do students spend their time?

On average, students sleep 7.3 hours per night (parents believe 8.6 hrs). Students in years 7-9 (8.1 hrs) spent the most time asleep (vs. 7 hrs in year 12). In addition, students on average spend almost 5 hours in a typical day on their phones on social media, internet, messaging, etc. (113 mins vs. parental perceptions of 56.2 mins), on homework (85.8 mins vs. parents 54.5 mins) and helping around the home (40.5 mins vs. 27.3 mins). Perceptions were more aligned in one area - gaming (47.5 mins vs. 51.5 mins for parents).

Time on phones was somewhat higher for girls (125.3 mins vs. 101.7 mins for boys). There was also more time spent doing homework among students at private independent schools (102.3 mins) and year 12 students (101 mins). Students in coeducational schools spent more than twice as much time gaming (54.2 mins), than those at boys or girls only schools. Boys (68.9 mins) spent more than twice as much time on gaming as girls (28.0 mins).

Should school times change?

High schools in Australia typically start at 8.30 to 9.00 am. When students were asked what time, they would choose to start school to best help them learn, only 1 in 3 said they would choose to start at the current time. Over 4 in 10 would prefer to start later (at 9.30am, 22% or 10.00am, 22%), and 1 in 10 (10%) at 10.30am or later. Around 6 in 10 parents however thought current school start times worked best for their children. Only 1 in 4 parents would prefer their children start later at 9.30am (11%) or 10.00am (15%), and just 3% any time after this.

Are students getting a better education than their parents?

Around 3 in 4 students believe they are getting a better education than their parents and 1 in 2 parents agree. The number of parents who agree was somewhat higher in private Catholic schools and those with children attending girls only schools (around 6 in 10).

What are the key problems at school?

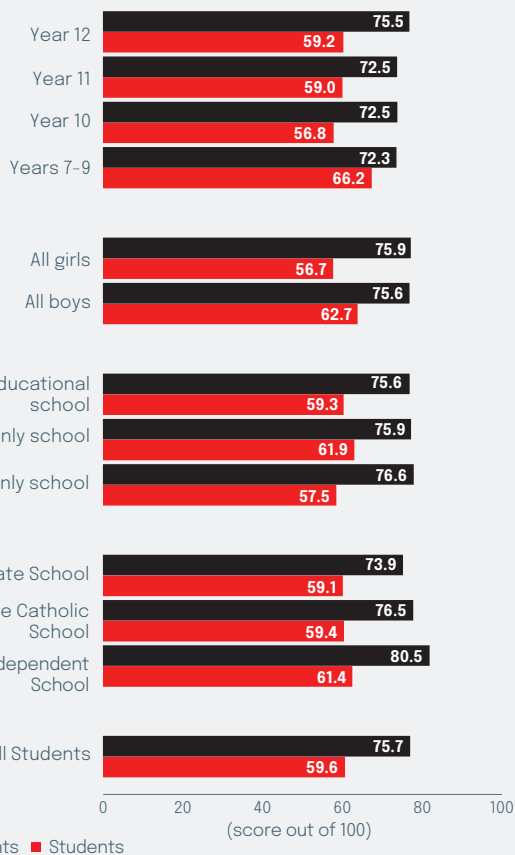
Around 1 in 3 students identified sexual harassment, pressures to try drugs or alcohol and physical bullying as an ‘extremely’ big problem at their school, and a further 3 in 10 cited lack of student diversity, pressure to smoke or “vape” (particularly boys), religious bias, racism and bias against gay, lesbian or transgender students. Around 1 in 5 also identified verbal harassment, pressure to get good test scores, pressure to fit in or conform, physical safety and security and 1 in 4 cyberbullying. Far fewer parents identified any of these issues as ‘extremely’ big problems at their children’s school, ranging from just 4% of all parents for bias against, gay lesbian or transgender students and physical safety and security of their children, to 10% for pressure to smoke or “vape”.

Students at girls only and coeducational schools said sexual harassment and lack of student diversity was more problematic at their school than at boys only schools. Students at boys only and coeducational schools however highlighted cyberbullying and religious bias as bigger issues, and boys only schools’ verbal harassment and pressure to conform. Boys in general highlighted pressure to smoke or “vape” as a much bigger issue than girls. By year level, key differences included pressure to try alcohol or drugs in years 7-9 and year 10 and cyberbullying in year 12.

School Life

School is an integral part of our children’s lives. Not only do they impart knowledge and education, but they also play an important role in helping shape their overall development, like helping to build social, inter-personal and communication skills. Many older people often refer to their school days as the some of the “best years of their life.” But do current students agree? NAB asked students how much they enjoyed all aspects of their school life, including friends, learning, sport etc. Parents were also asked how much they think their children enjoy school. The results are poles apart.

Chart 1: Enjoy School



Overall, students enjoy school life ‘moderately’, scoring 59.6 pts out of 100 (where 100 is ‘extremely’). But parents believe they are enjoying it much more, scoring 75.7 pts.

Student enjoyment was rated broadly similar by type of school. Interestingly, students at girls only schools (61.9 pts) enjoyed school life somewhat more than those at boys only schools (57.5 pts), but boys in general (62.7 pts) more so than girls (56.7 pts). Students in years 7-9 (66.2 pts) also enjoyed school life somewhat more than students in older year groups.

Parents were far more positive about their children’s school life experience in all groups. Parents of students at private independent schools however somewhat more positive (80.5 pts) than parents of students at public or state schools (73.9 pts), and for students in year 12 (75.5 pts) compared to other years.

Of some concern, almost 1 in 4 students scored their enjoyment of school life ‘low’ (scored less than 40 pts), compared to just 4% of parents. The number of students who scored their enjoyment low was, however, noticeably higher at boys only schools (35%), and somewhat lower in girls only schools (18%) and in years 7-9 (19%) and year 12 (20%).

Chart 2: Enjoy School (Students)

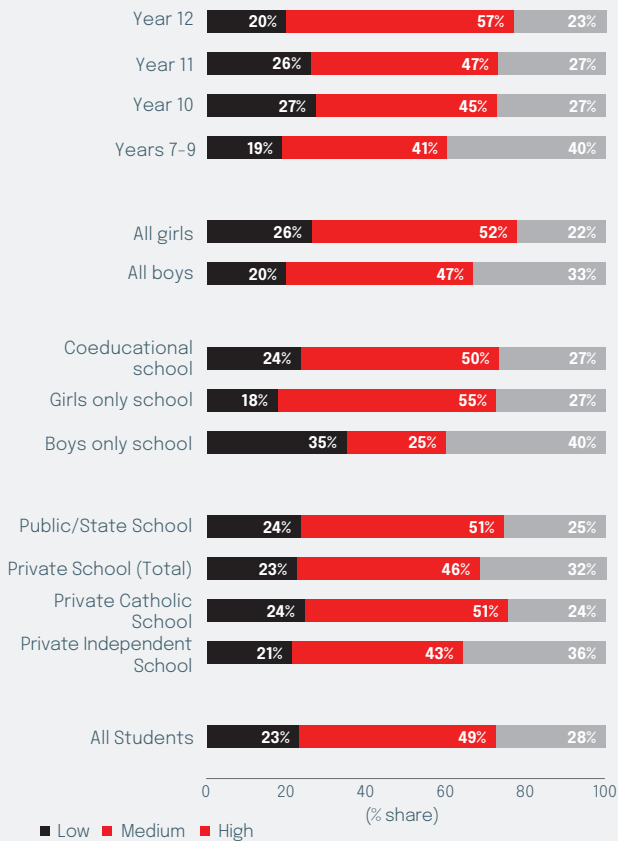
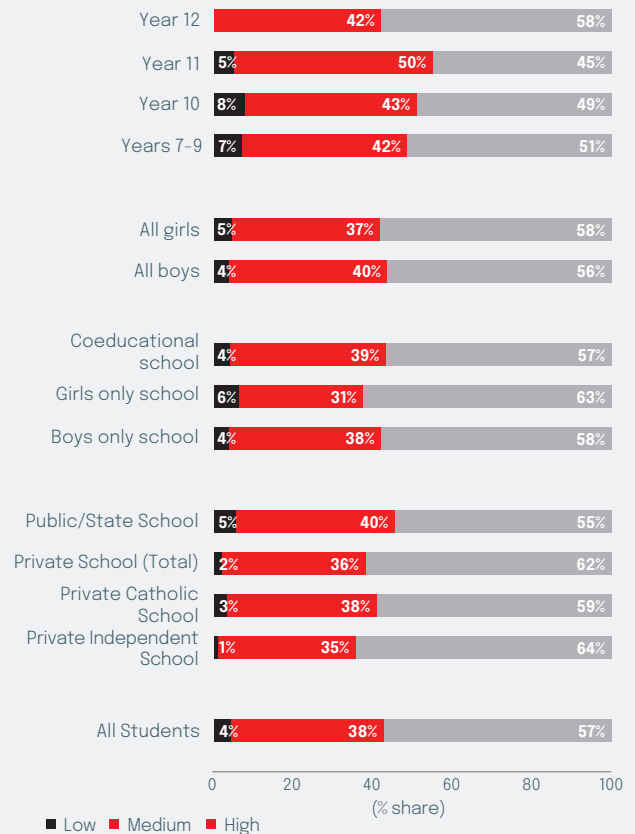


Chart 3: Enjoy School (Parents)



What do students like most about school & what do parents think they like?

Students

Socialising: “Just being with my friends and making memories” ... “The community that my classmates and I have formed.”

Studying: “The learning part. I enjoy and appreciate the fact that I’m able to get an education. There is so much to learn about the world, and it makes me so excited to think of all the things I have yet to learn.”

Teachers/Staff: “I love being surrounded by people who value education and want to do the best they can. Amazing to be surrounded by great teachers.”

Extracurricular Activities: “I enjoy participating in group sports the most, as it gets me active and gives me a break from intense sessions of learning or study. When doing sports I can rest my eyes by looking at further distances instead of staring at short distances between myself and a computer, the teacher at the front of the classroom, or down at my book or paper.”

Opportunities: “I like the pathways it opens up for you going into the workforce.”... “The opportunities it presents me to chase my goals.”

Schedule: “Flexibility of the timetable, and still being able to enjoy life outside of school, like meet up with friends etc.”

Food: “How there’s lunch and recess, which I can enjoy with my friends.”

Chart 4: Like Most About School (Students)

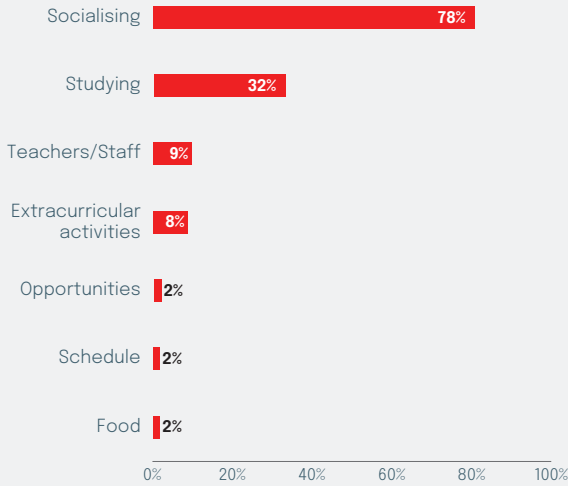
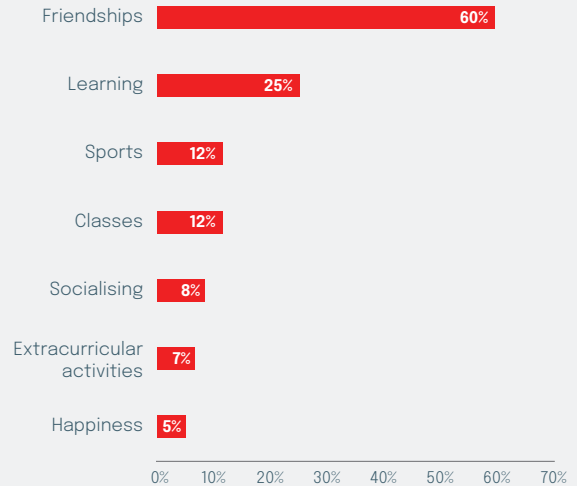


Chart 5: Like Most About School (Parents)



Parents

Friendships: ““Spending time with their friends the most.” ... “Meeting and chatting with friends.”

Learning: “He has always loved knowledge and it makes him feel good.”... “The range of subjects offered. The teachers are also very understanding and helpful.”... “Teachers are great, he likes the education style.”

Classes: “Enjoys certain classes, for example art and outdoor education.”... “Very involved in class activities and is always positive about school life.”... “The range of subjects offered.”

Sports: “Being challenged physically and academically.”... “The sports that he is involved with which really help his wellbeing.”

Socialising: “Socialising with his friends and girlfriend.”... “The camaraderie and social aspects.”... “The interactions with other kids, particularly after the pandemic.”

Extracurricular Activities: “Sport and outside of classroom activities.”

Happiness: “He always comes home happy after school.”... “She tells me she enjoys it.”

Time spent sleeping on activities & best time to start school

Adolescents are notorious for not getting enough sleep. There is ample research showing the teenage mind functions best when provided with between 9-9½ hours sleep per night. However, NAB’s survey found that on average, students sleep just 7.3 hours per night. The survey also found little difference in the amount of time spent sleeping by type of school attended or gender. By year level, however, students in years 7-9 (8.1 hrs) spent somewhat more time asleep than in years 11 (7.1 hrs) and 12 (7.0 hrs). Parents under-estimate how much time their children sleep - over an hour more than children actually do (8.6 hrs). Parents also over-estimate how much sleep their children get in all groups, particularly those with children at boys only schools (8.9 hrs) - **see chart 6.**



Chart 6: Average hours slept each night

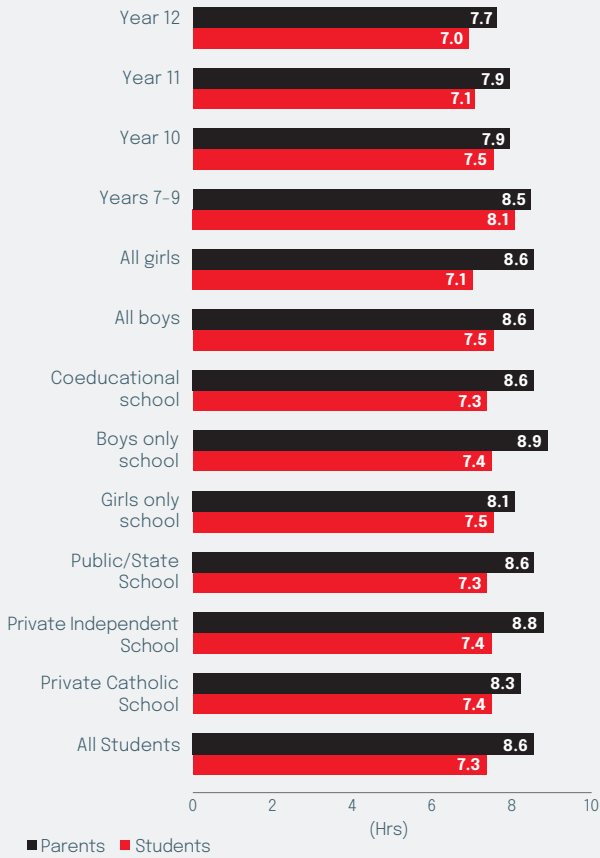
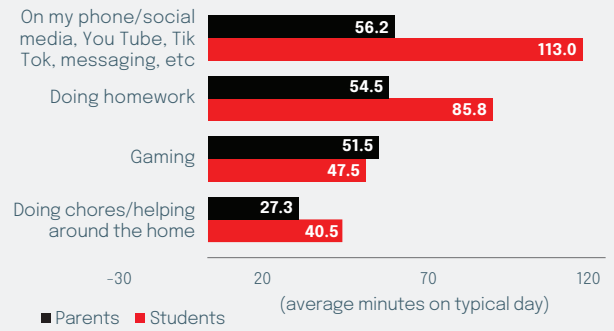


Chart 7: Time spent on Activities



There are several reasons teenagers may not be getting enough sleep. It may be biological (such as changing sleep requirements during adolescence). It may also reflect after-school obligations such as doing homework, helping out at home with chores, sports and socialising with friends which often happens during the evening.

Surveyed students on average said they spent almost 5 hours in a typical day on their phones, social media, YouTube, Tik Tok, messaging etc. (113 mins), doing homework (85.8 mins), gaming (47.5 mins) and doing chores or helping out around the home (40.5 mins).

Parents however, believe they were spending just over 3 hours in a typical day on these activities - phones, social media, YouTube, Tik Tok, messaging etc. (56.2 mins), doing homework (54.5 mins), gaming (51.5 mins) and doing chores or helping out around the home (27.3 mins). Interestingly, parental perceptions of the time spent gaming was the only area where parents thought their children spent more time than did their children.

Table 1 compares responses of students and parents across all student groups.



Table 1: Time spent on activities

	All Students	Private Indep. school	Private Catholic School	Public/State School	Boys only school	Girls only school	Coeducational school	All boys	All girls	Years 7-9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Students													
Phone/social media etc	113.0	102.1	122.1	114.9	78.0	114.6	115.0	101.7	125.3	105.5	116.5	113.8	113.6
Doing homework	85.8	102.3	78.7	81.9	83.3	93.5	84.4	81.3	91.7	79.7	76.9	79.4	101.0
Gaming	47.5	38.3	39.2	51.9	28.0	19.2	54.2	68.9	28.0	50.6	36.6	48.2	52.3
Chores/helping at home	40.5	44.5	40.9	39.2	36.4	33.9	42.0	39.4	40.9	44.7	44.7	34.2	41.8
Total (minutes)	286.8	287.1	280.9	287.9	225.7	261.2	295.7	291.3	285.8	280.5	274.7	275.7	308.7
Total (hours)	4.8	4.8	4.7	4.8	3.8	4.4	4.9	4.9	4.8	4.7	4.6	4.6	5.1
Parents													
Phone/social etc.	56.2	63.2	54.1	54.5	53.6	70.6	55.5	51.2	61.5	67.3	68.5	68.3	80.1
Doing homework	54.5	74.8	59.7	46.7	70.3	85.6	50.4	48.9	60.5	53.4	66.6	84.9	93.5
Gaming	51.5	48.7	49.1	53.1	64.2	53.8	49.9	58.9	43.4	55.6	42.5	57.7	38.3
Chores/helping at home	27.3	42.7	26.6	22.6	45.9	33.3	24.7	28.1	26.5	23.3	23.7	22.9	30.8
Total (minutes)	189.6	229.4	189.6	176.8	234.1	243.3	180.3	187.2	192.0	199.7	201.1	233.8	242.6
Total (hours)	3.2	3.8	3.2	2.9	3.9	4.1	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.9	4.0

Students spent the most amount of time on their phones & social media in all groups, except boys only schools where they spent most time doing homework (83.3 mins).

Time on phones & social media was however, somewhat higher for students at private Catholic schools (122.1 mins) than private independent schools (102.1 mins), and also somewhat higher for girls (125.3 mins) than boys (101.7 mins) in general.

We also noted a much higher amount of time spent doing homework among students at private independent schools (102.3 mins) and year 12 students (101 mins). Students in coeducational schools spent more than twice as much time gaming (54.2 mins), than at boys or girls only schools, and boys in general (68.9 mins) more than twice as much time on gaming than girls (28.0 mins).

Overall, parents believe students across all groups spend less time on all these activities than students do themselves. The exceptions were gaming in all groups except coeducational schools, boys in general and year 12, doing chores among students at boys only schools, and doing homework in year 11 students.

Early school start times (high schools in Australia typically start from 8:30 to 9:00 am) means already sleep deprived students also need to wake up some time earlier to prepare for the day ahead (getting ready, having breakfast, travelling to school etc). This has raised debate (globally and within Australia) on whether schools should start at later times to allow students to rest.

When students were asked what time of day they would choose to start school to best help them learn, only 1 in 3 (36%) said they would choose to start at the current time (27% at 9.00am & 9% at 8.30am), and just 1 in 10 (11%) before 8.30am. In contrast, over 4 in 10 students would prefer to start later at 9.30am (22%) or 10.00am (22%), and 1 in 10 (10%) 10.30am or later.

Most parents - almost 6 in 10 (56%) - however thought current school start times were best for their children (22% at 8.30am & 34% at 9.00am). Around 15% also thought that starting before 8.30am would be ideal. In contrast, only 1 in 4 parents (26%) would prefer their children start later at 9.30am (11%) or 10.00am (15%), and just 3% any time after this.

Chart 8: Time You Would Choose to Start School to Best Help You Learn (Students)

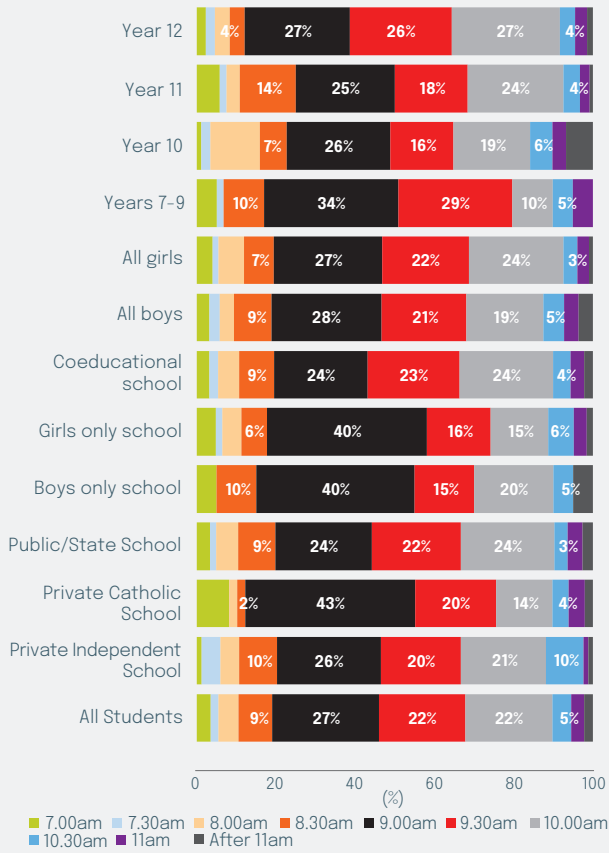


Chart 9: Time You Think Your Child Should Start School to Best Help Them Learn (Parents)

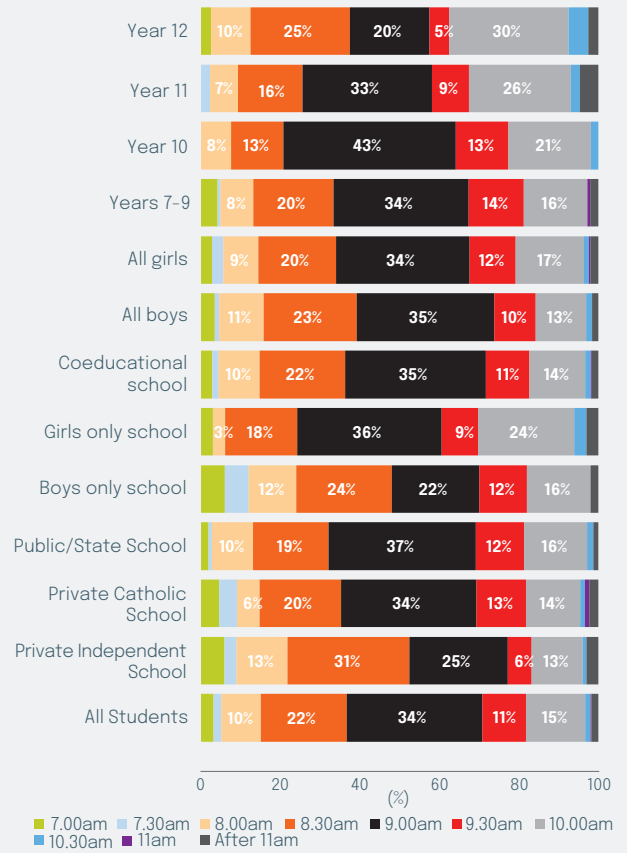


Table 2: Time you would choose to start school day

	All Students	Private Indep. school	Private Catholic School	Public/State School	Boys only school	Girls only school	Coeducational school	All boys	All girls	Years 7-9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Students													
7.00am	4%	1%	8%	3%	5%	5%	3%	3%	4%	5%	1%	6%	2%
7.30am	2%	5%	0%	1%	0%	2%	2%	3%	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%
8.00am	5%	5%	2%	6%	0%	5%	5%	4%	6%	0%	13%	3%	4%
8.30am	9%	10%	2%	9%	10%	6%	9%	9%	7%	10%	7%	14%	4%
9.00am	27%	26%	43%	24%	40%	40%	24%	28%	27%	34%	26%	25%	27%
9.30am	22%	20%	20%	22%	15%	16%	23%	21%	22%	29%	16%	18%	26%
10.00am	22%	21%	14%	24%	20%	15%	24%	19%	24%	10%	19%	24%	27%
10.30am	5%	10%	4%	3%	5%	6%	4%	5%	3%	5%	6%	4%	4%
11am	3%	1%	4%	4%	0%	3%	3%	4%	3%	5%	3%	3%	3%
Parents													
7.00am	3%	6%	5%	2%	6%	3%	3%	3%	3%	4%	0%	0%	3%
7.30am	2%	3%	5%	1%	6%	0%	2%	1%	3%	1%	0%	2%	0%
8.00am	10%	13%	6%	10%	12%	3%	10%	11%	9%	8%	8%	7%	10%
8.30am	22%	31%	20%	19%	24%	18%	22%	23%	20%	20%	13%	16%	25%
9.00am	34%	25%	34%	37%	22%	36%	35%	35%	34%	34%	43%	33%	20%
9.30am	11%	6%	13%	12%	12%	9%	11%	10%	12%	14%	13%	9%	5%
10.00am	15%	13%	14%	16%	16%	24%	14%	13%	17%	16%	21%	26%	30%
10.30am	1%	1%	1%	2%	0%	3%	1%	2%	1%	0%	2%	2%	5%
11am	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
After 11am	2%	3%	2%	1%	2%	3%	2%	2%	2%	2%	0%	5%	3%

Table 2 shows preferred start times in all groups. Students who thought current start times were ideal for them was somewhat higher in private Catholic (45%), boys (50%) and girls only (47%) schools, and in years 7-9 (44%). It was much lower for year 12 students (30%), where the combined number wanting to start at 9.30am or 10.00am was much higher (53%). Typically, just 1 in 10 students would prefer to start earlier than 8.30am in most groups, except year 10 (16%), boys only schools (5%) and years 7-9 (7%). In addition around 1 in 10 in most groups also thought starting at 10.30am or later would help, except in year 10 (16%).

Over 1 in 2 parents think current school starting times would best help their children learn in most groups, except in years 11 (49%) and 12 (45%) and at boys only schools (46%). The number who thought a 9.30am or 10.00am start would be best ranged from 19% at private independent schools to 35% in year 12. Very few parents in all groups thought starting after 10.00am would help, but significantly more thought starting before 8.30am would, particularly in boys only (24%) and private independent (22%) schools.

How students (and parents) rate themselves on the school curriculum, life skills, general skills & knowledge

Students and their parents were both asked to score themselves or their children on all areas of the school curriculum. Interestingly, students scored themselves lower than their parents did in all areas. Students marked themselves highest for English – spelling, scoring a solid 71.9 pts out of 100 (where 0 is extremely poor and 100 is excellent). They rated themselves ‘quite’ high for maths & numeracy (68.0 pts), but somewhat more moderately for English – reading, writing & expression (64.7 pts), technologies (64.3 pts), sciences (63.9 pts), physical education (61.6 pts) and social sciences (60.8 pts). Students rated themselves lowest for languages (56.5 pts) and the arts (57.6 pts).

Parents were however somewhat more positive about their children’s abilities in all these areas of the school curriculum. Parents rated their children’s English – reading, writing & expression highest (74.7 pts), closely followed by English – spelling (74.4 pts), maths & numeracy (73.8 pts) and technologies (73.6 pts). Parents however also scored their children lowest for the arts (68.3 pts) and languages (69.1 pts), but much higher than their children did.

Chart 10: Curriculum

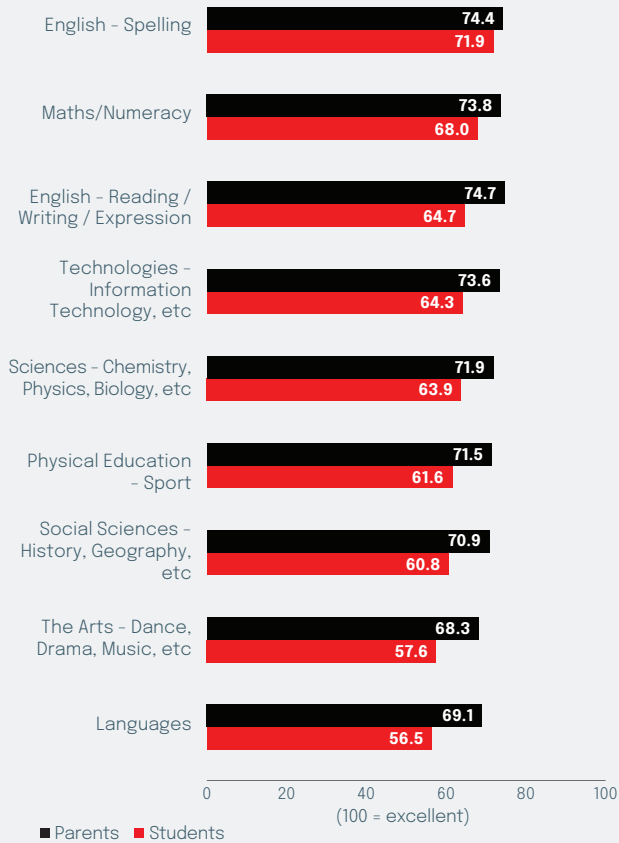
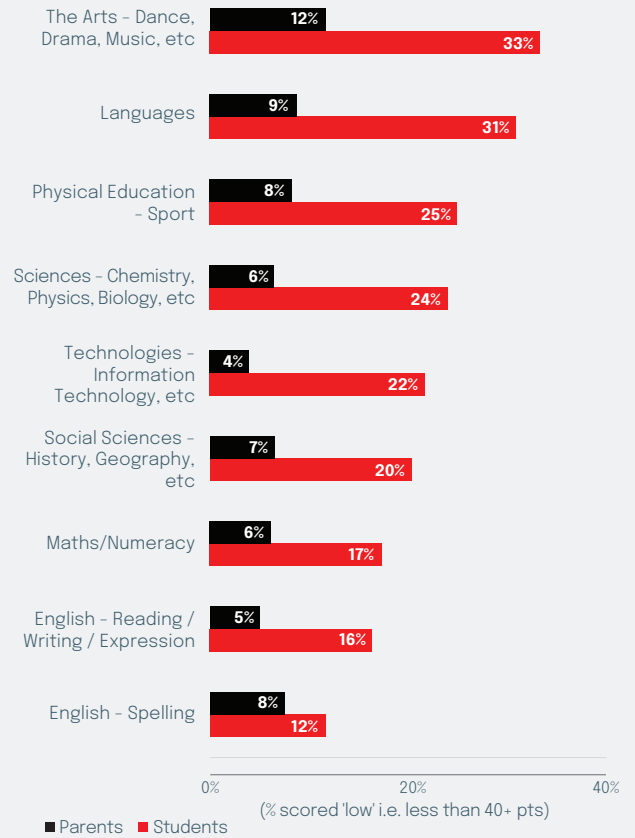


Chart 11: Curriculum



The survey also revealed a very large number of students that scored themselves 'low' (i.e. less than 40 pts) in areas of the school curriculum - particularly the arts (33%) and languages (31%). Around 1 in 4 students also rated themselves 'low' for physical education (25%), social sciences (24%) and technologies (22%). The least number of students who self rated areas of the curriculum 'low' were for English - spelling (12%), English - reading, writing & expression (16%) and maths & numeracy (17%).

The number of parents who scored their children 'low' across the school curriculum was highest for the arts (12%), and lowest for technologies (4%) and English - reading, writing & expression (5%) - see charts 10 & 11.



Table 3: How students score themselves on the curriculum

	English (Spelling)	Maths/ Numeracy	English (Reading, Writing, Expression)	Technologies (Information Technology, etc.)	Sciences (Chemistry, Physics, Biology, etc.)	Physical Education (Sport)	Social Sciences (History, Geography, etc.)	The Arts (Dance, Drama, Music, etc.)	Languages
All Students	71.9	68.0	64.7	64.3	63.9	61.6	60.8	57.6	56.5
Private Independent School	67.0	68.1	64.3	62.2	60.4	61.3	61.9	62.3	61.6
Private Catholic School	75.8	68.2	65.7	64.9	64.5	64.5	60.9	51.1	58.1
Public/State School	72.8	67.9	64.6	64.8	64.9	61.1	60.4	57.3	54.6
Boys only school	73.7	75.8	74.2	63.1	65.3	62.0	76.1	52.5	56.4
Girls only school	73.3	68.9	64.0	65.0	65.7	62.6	64.0	60.0	66.1
Coeducational school	71.6	67.3	64.2	64.2	63.5	61.4	58.9	57.5	54.7
All boys	70.8	72.1	64.6	71.7	64.0	65.9	61.3	52.9	54.0
All girls	74.0	64.5	65.3	55.4	64.0	58.0	59.9	61.7	58.9
Years 7-9	74.8	74.9	66.6	70.8	67.0	67.5	69.1	62.5	62.6
Year 10	73.5	68.7	66.2	65.1	62.5	66.5	63.5	57.1	60.4
Year 11	67.7	64.6	63.2	59.5	62.1	57.9	55.4	52.7	49.2
Year 12	73.7	67.3	64.3	64.3	65.1	57.2	58.2	60.2	56.3



In terms of students' self-assessment of the curriculum, private Catholic schools scored much higher for English - spelling (75.8 pts) than private independent schools (67.0 pts), as did girls in general (74.0 pts), while those in year 11 scored much lower than other years (67.7 pts). Boys only schools scored much higher for maths & numeracy (75.8 pts), as did boys in general (72.1 pts) compared to girls (64.5 pts), and in years 7-9 (74.9 pts) compared to year 11 (64.6 pts). Students scored their English - reading, writing, expression broadly similar in all groups, except boys only schools (74.2 pts) where it was scored much higher than girls only and coeducational schools.

Boys in general (71.7 pts) and years 7-9 (70.8 pts) scored much higher for technologies, and students in year 11 much lower (59.5 pts). Year 7-9 students also scored relatively high for sciences (67.0 pts). Year 7-9 (67.5 pts) and year 10 (66.5 pts) students scored physical education much higher than students in years 11 (57.9 pts) and 12 (57.2 pts). When it came to social sciences, boys only schools (76.1 pts) scored much higher than coeducational schools (58.9 pts), as did students in years 7-9 (69.1 pts) compared to year 11 (55.4 pts). Year 11 students also scored much lower for the arts (52.7 pts) and languages (49.2 pts). Private independent schools scored much higher for arts (62.3 pts), particularly against private Catholic schools (52.5 pts). Girls in general (61.7 pts) scored the arts much higher than boys (52.9 pts). Students at girls only schools (66.1 pts) and girls in general (58.9 pts) also out-performed their peers for languages, while those in public and state schools under-performed (54.6 pts).

How can schools best support students in areas of the curriculum scored poorly (Students & Parents)

Tutoring: “After school tutoring lessons would be beneficial”... “Creating study classes, for challenging subjects, after school for free.”... “More opportunities for teacher help. Someone who can help set out a guide that will ensure I’m doing enough studying, and more information to understand upcoming exams.”

Learning approaches: “Give me more time to gain a deeper understanding of what we’re learning in that subject and more explanation.”... “Recognise I’m embarrassed and weak at this subject and support me instead of looking down on me.”... “The school can support more if they were slower-paced. Lessons are very fast and once you learn something it’s rare teachers will go over it again so it’s up to students to revise it on their own.”

Teachers: “Actually motivating us and not putting us down and comparing us to other students.”... “Allowing the opportunity to learn with different teachers. Over the years, some have made me love and want to study subjects, while others have just shut down my passions.”

Feedback: “It could really help for someone to identify any gaps in learning. I’m missing a lot of knowledge in English, and I didn’t know what those gaps were so I couldn’t improve.”

Subjects: “Promote more art based subjects. My school is mainly focused on science subjects and doesn’t put much emphasis on art subjects, thus not allowing students to try them out and find their true passion.”

Specific courses: “I wouldn’t want them to support me in the poor subjects, but support me more in my better subjects that I want to do.”

Assignments/testing: “By giving out less homework and running a homework club 2 days a week.”... “Not bombarding us with multiple exams and assignments within a small timeframe.”

Chart 12: School Support - Curriculum (Students)

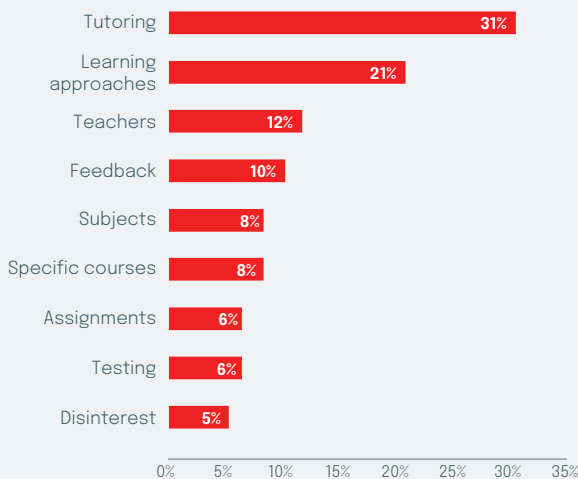
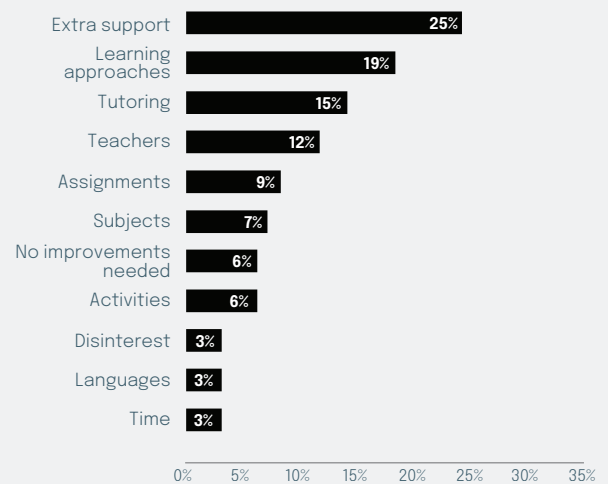


Chart 13: School Support - Curriculum (Parents)



Extra support: “More one on one time discussing what they’re doing wrong.”... “Maybe more support staff for the teachers.”... “Providing remedial lessons.”

Learning approaches: “Spend more time with them! My child can take a while to understand concepts and they move through the content too quickly. They then try to build on existing knowledge that she hasn’t grasped.”... “Offer subjects they actually want to do or offer classes that help in the real world.”

Tutoring: “More one-on-one coaching. After school or lunchtime tutoring.”

Teachers: “Teaching subjects in a more fun way keeping it interesting.”... “More caring, understanding teachers and more hands on learning.”

Assignments/subjects: “Give personal assignments aimed at what the students need to learn as weekend homework”... “Don’t force them to do subjects they don’t enjoy. Focus on their strengths so they can thrive.”

Activities: “It’s a selective girl’s school. They don’t have school sport. Their idea of PE is dance and netball. She plays basketball and AFL outside school for fun, but the school doesn’t promote those experiences. It’s very academically focused. They do a great job here, but they miss out by not having opportunities to play sport.”

Language: “Drop the subject. Language other than English is a joke and rort for overseas students to do better”. ... “My child could benefit from more English as a second language support.”

Students and their parents were both also asked to score themselves or their children on key life skills. For the most part, students again scored themselves lower than did their parents for all skills.

Students marked themselves highest for being prepared for higher or further education, scoring a somewhat moderate 64.9 pts out of 100 (where 0 is extremely poor and 100 is excellent), closely followed by general home skills such as cooking, cleaning laundry, etc. (64.6 pts). They scored more moderately for money management skills (62.5 pts), and supporting their physical health through diet, fitness etc. (60.6 pts).

Students felt they were most lacking life skills relating to being prepared to run or start a business (45.9 pts), supporting their own mental health through meditation, relaxation etc. (51.9 pts), general handyman skills (53.4 pts) and being prepared for the future job market (54.3 pts).

Parents were however somewhat more positive about their children’s abilities in all these life skills except general home skills where they scored basically on par (66.4 pts parents; 64.6 pts students). In the eyes of parents, their children’s life skills were also strongest in relation to supporting their physical health (72.3 pts), ahead of being prepared for higher or further education (70.2 pts).

Parents however also scored their children’s life skills lowest for being prepared to run or start a business, but significantly higher than did their children (59.4 pts parents; 45.9 pts students). The biggest gap in perceptions between parents and students related to supporting mental health, where parents scored their children much higher (68.4 pts parents; 51.9 pts students).



Chart 14: Life Skills

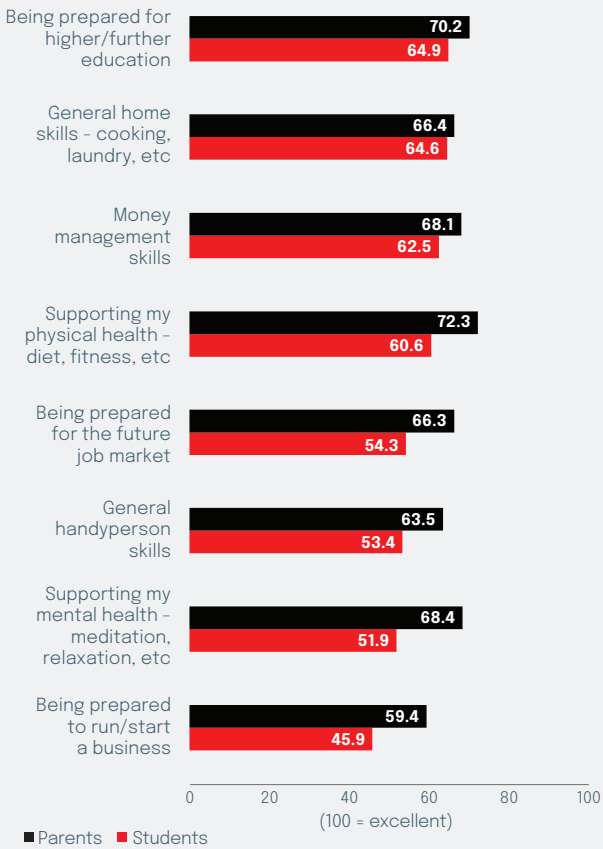
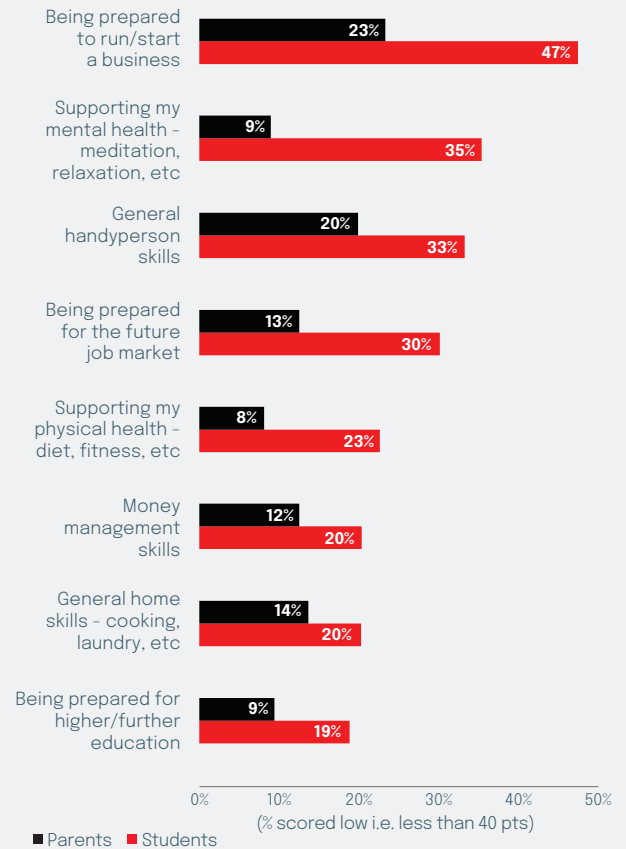


Chart 15: Life Skills



The survey also revealed a very large number of students that scored themselves 'low' (i.e. less than 40 pts) for some life skills, particularly being prepared to run or start a business where almost 1 in 2 (47%) students rated their skills 'low'. Around 1 in 3 students also rated 'low' for supporting mental health (35%), general handyperson skills (33%) and being prepared for the future job market (30%). The lowest number of students (though a still relatively high 1 in 5) that rated their life skills 'low' were in relation to being prepared for higher or further education (19%), general home skills (20%), and money management skills (20%).

The number of parents who scored their children 'low' across the school curriculum was also highest for being prepared to run or start a business (23%) and general handyperson skills (20%), and lowest for supporting their physical health (8%), mental health (9%) and being prepared for higher or further education (9%).



Table 4: How students score themselves on their life skills

	Being prepared for higher/ further education	General home skills - cooking, laundry, etc.	Money management skills	Supporting my physical health - diet, fitness, etc.	Being prepared for the future job market	General handyperson skills	Supporting my mental health - meditation, relaxation, etc.	Being prepared to run/start a business
All Students	64.9	64.6	62.5	60.6	54.3	53.4	51.9	45.9
Private Independent School	69.0	68.2	66.5	67.6	57.1	57.8	56.5	48.5
Private Catholic School	66.3	61.6	61.2	58.4	56.9	52.4	48.4	49.1
Public/State School	63.4	64.0	61.5	58.7	52.9	52.2	51.1	44.5
Boys only school	68.0	67.0	68.0	63.0	66.3	63.5	59.0	53.2
Girls only school	63.9	60.0	59.0	55.8	52.1	47.6	46.1	44.7
Coeducational school	65.0	65.3	62.8	61.3	54.0	53.9	52.6	45.6
All boys	65.5	63.5	62.9	65.2	57.2	57.7	57.4	49.6
All girls	64.6	65.7	62.4	56.5	52.0	49.8	46.8	42.8
Years 7-9	66.6	72.2	65.6	63.9	55.7	59.0	56.4	54.5
Year 10	63.4	65.9	64.9	64.7	56.8	55.4	49.7	49.1
Year 11	65.4	65.0	61.1	57.1	52.4	52.2	51.4	42.1
Year 12	65.0	60.0	60.9	59.5	53.8	50.8	51.9	43.3

In terms of students' self-assessment of their life skills by school type, students at private independent schools rated themselves noticeably more competent for general home skills (68.2 pts), money management skills (66.5 pts), supporting their physical health (67.6 pts), general handyperson skills (57.8 pts) and supporting their mental health (56.5 pts).

Students at public and state schools however rated themselves much lower for being prepared for higher or further education (63.4 pts) and for preparedness for the future job market (52.9 pts), and private Catholic schools for general home skills (61.6 pts) and supporting mental health (48.4 pts).

Students at boys only school rated their life skills higher than students at girls only and coeducational schools for all life skills. Girls only schools rated their life skills the lowest in all areas - particularly when comparing general handyperson skills (49.8 pts), being prepared for the future job market (52.1 pts) and supporting their mental health (46.1 pts).

Boys in general rated their life skills higher than girls in all areas except general home skills, where girls scored higher (65.7 pts girls; 63.5 pts boys), and for money management skills (62.9 pts boys; 62.4 pts girls) and being prepared for further or higher education (65.5 pts boys; 64.9 pts girls) where they scored broadly on par. The gap in perceptions between boys and girls was largest (by some margin) for supporting their mental health (57.4 pts boys; 46.8 pts girls).

We noted a much narrower range of opinions across year levels, except for general home skills (72.2 pts), supporting mental health (56.4 pts) and being prepared to run or start a business (54.5 pts), where students in years 7-9 scored these skills somewhat higher.



How can schools best support students in areas of life skills scored poorly (Students & Parents)

Courses at school: “Provide details and lessons regarding the sheer harshness of reality, and how to keep yourself composed.”... “Focus school more on helping us in the real world and not just maths and science.”

Resources/Skills: “Create a subject or add to the curriculum classes that provide information and teaches life skills like finance management, paying bills, taxes, etc.”... “More finance classes as it’s a major part of being an adult after school”... “Having more activities that can be applied at home.”

Health: “We need to bring sport back. They got rid of it back in grade 10. They also need to reduce the workload to make people less stressed.”... “Support classes, less emphasis on ‘you have to be good for sport’ and more teaching about sport/exercise to maintain physical wellbeing.”

Subjects: “Better counselling and courses that help mental and physical health.”... “I would love to have Home Economic classes.”

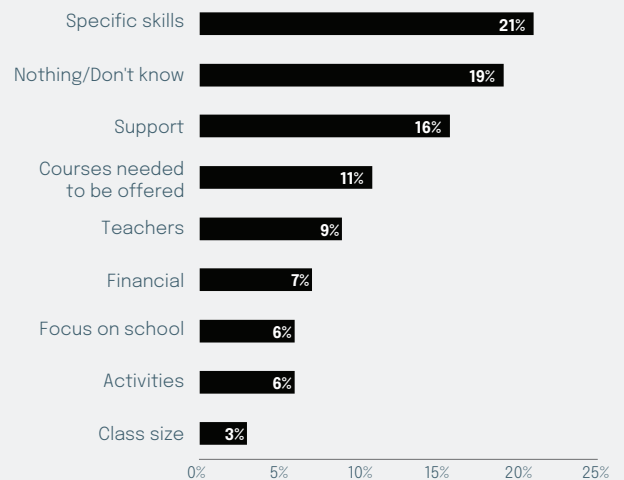
Teacher support: “I think it’s the teachers that make the biggest difference. Having teachers that care and that you can talk to about school and non-school related things”

Time management: “Allowing us time when needed to help our mind relax, breaks, etc.”... “My school can help by not holding all the tests within similar weeks for all my subjects. Maybe also hold meditation sessions during the days.”... “More opportunities for people to get help with studying, not in the afternoon because people also have things on.”

Chart 16: School Support - Life Skills (Students)



Chart 17: School Support - Life Skills (Parents)





Specific skills: “Teach kids about life!! How to open a bank account, do tax, not get sucked into credit card debt. Teach them about learning how to give/receive feedback.”... “Give equal importance to life skills not just academic, like writing a resume, how to cook, clean wash clothes, address an envelope, change a tyre etc.”

Support: “Individual counselling sessions, provide additional assistance via email, listen to them and support them and help them learn in their own way.”... “Introduce practical/life skills lessons and interaction with other people.”... “More day to day training for things that they will face in society when leaving school.”

Courses need to be offered: “By making them aware of their shortcomings and mentoring them to navigate their issues and problems.”... “Some additional time spent on these areas to grow their awareness would be very good.”

Teachers: “Customised plan or use different strategies, not just a one size fits all programs.”... “Smaller classes, better more specialised teachers.”

Financial: “Financial literacy and visits and links to universities.”... “I think every school could help with money management. There should be compulsory financial literacy classes.”

Activities: “Have occasional days/afternoons where they are taught handyman skills.”... “Some fun quizzes about the actual costs involved - and then compare to the actual published figures.”... “Inviting guest speakers to the school to speak to and with the students.”

Students and their parents were lastly asked to score themselves or their children on their general skills and knowledge. For the most part, students again scored themselves lower than did their parents.

Students scored themselves highest (and quite high) for having respectful relationships (74.5 pts), ability to think for themselves (70.8 pts), and ability to get along with people (70.0 pts). Their general skills & knowledge was scored somewhat lower for being organised (62.4 pts), taking a leadership role (61.6 pts), understanding global current affairs (60.1 pts), Australia’s culture and history post European settlement (59.9 pts) and Australia’s indigenous culture and history (59.2 pts). Students felt they were most lacking in general skills & knowledge when it came to public speaking (55.5 pts) and the ability to concentrate (57.0 pts).

Parents were again more positive about their children’s abilities in all these areas. Parents also rated their children’s general skills & knowledge highest for their ability to get along with people (78.0 pts), respectful relationships (77.5 pts), and ability to think for themselves (75.4 pts). Parents also scored their children lowest for public speaking skills (66.7 pts). The biggest discrepancy in perceptions related to students’ ability to concentrate, public speaking, and having an understanding of Australia’s culture and history post European settlement, where parents scored their children much higher.

Chart 18: General Skills & Knowledge

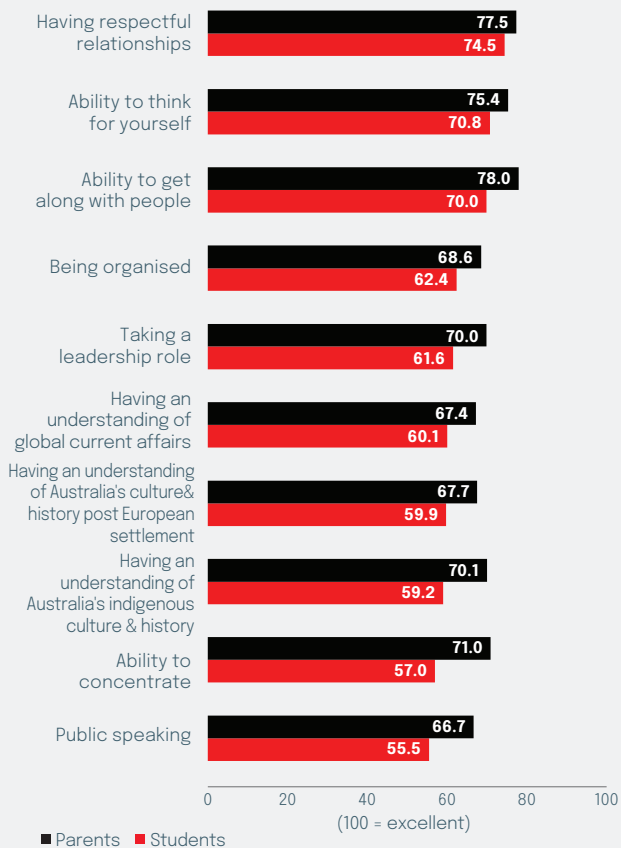
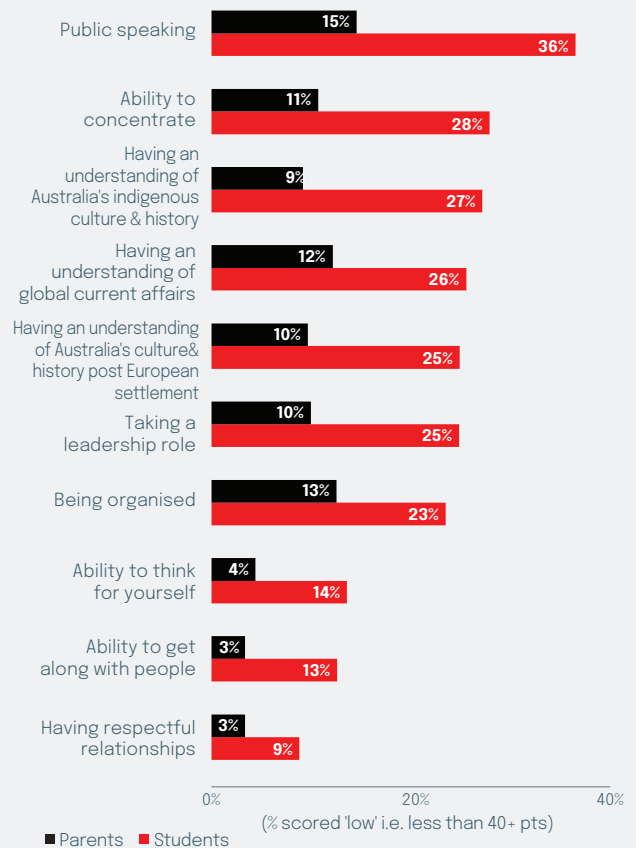


Chart 19: General Skills & Knowledge



The survey again revealed a very large number of students that scored themselves 'low' (i.e. less than 40 pts) in some areas of general skills & knowledge. This was most evident for public speaking where over 1 in 3 (36%) students scored their skills 'low'. A significant number of students - around 1 in 4 - also scored their skills 'low' for their ability to concentrate (28%), their understanding of Australia's indigenous culture and history (27%), global current affairs (26%), Australia's culture and history post European settlement (25%), taking a leadership role (25%) and being organised (23%).

Only 1 in 10 (9%) rated 'low' for having respectful relationships, 13% the ability to get along with people and 14% think for themselves.

The number of parents who scored their children 'low' across the school curriculum was much lower in all areas. It was highest for public speaking (15%), followed by being organised (13%) and having an understanding of global current affairs (12%). Very few parents scored their children 'low' for having respectful relationships (3%), ability to get along with people (3%) and think for themselves (4%).

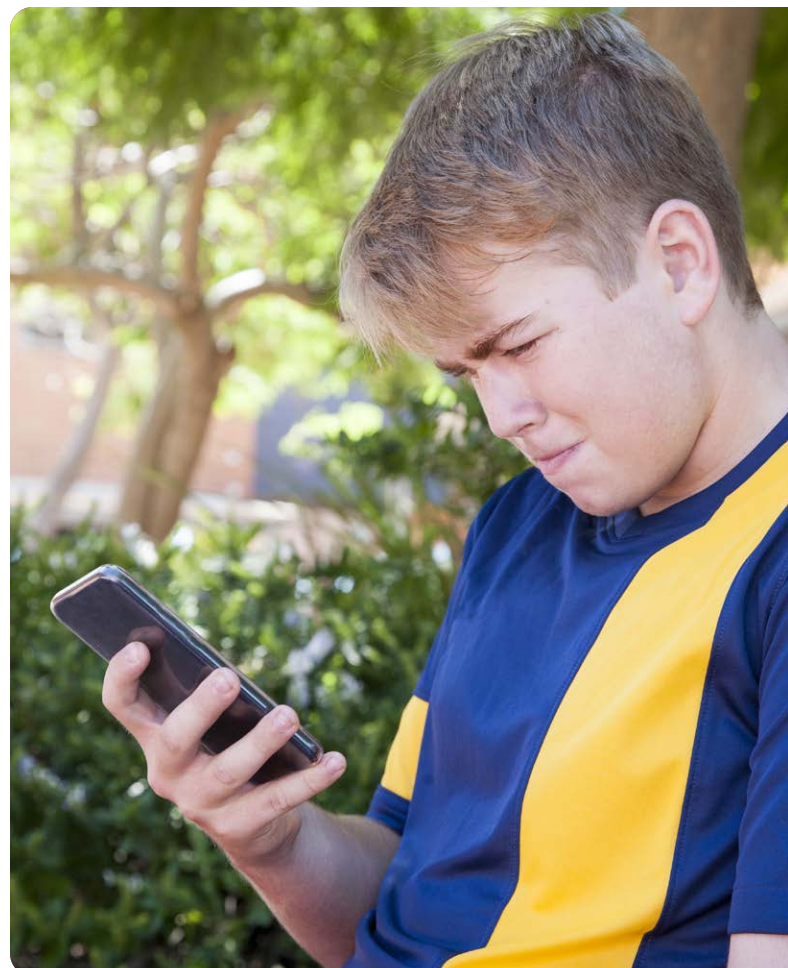


Table 5: How students score themselves on their general skills & knowledge

	Having respectful relationships	Ability to think for yourself	Ability to get along with people	Being organised	Taking a leadership role	Understanding of global current affairs	Understanding of culture & history post European settlement	Understanding of indigenous culture & history	Ability to concentrate	Public speaking
All Students	74.5	70.8	70.0	62.4	61.6	60.1	59.9	59.2	57.0	55.5
Private Independent School	73.1	73.9	70.4	66.0	64.9	60.6	59.5	61.1	59.2	58.8
Private Catholic School	76.1	70.2	74.5	67.6	61.1	61.9	62.7	64.9	61.4	57.3
Public/State School	74.6	70.0	69.1	60.3	60.7	59.6	59.5	57.5	55.5	54.1
Boys only school	75.5	73.0	69.5	69.5	71.1	58.0	58.4	52.1	68.0	59.0
Girls only school	76.6	73.4	72.9	66.0	62.3	63.3	65.6	65.6	62.3	54.8
Coeducational school	74.0	70.2	69.5	61.3	60.9	59.6	58.8	58.3	55.3	55.4
All boys	73.9	71.4	71.2	62.9	61.9	61.9	58.7	56.7	59.8	56.7
All girls	74.7	70.0	69.1	61.9	60.9	57.9	61.1	61.6	55.0	53.9
Years 7-9	77.5	71.2	74.9	68.3	65.9	63.5	68.3	68.6	65.3	55.6
Year 10	73.2	68.6	70.6	62.9	60.5	60.6	64.2	64.5	56.1	53.4
Year 11	75.2	71.1	68.7	61.6	62.6	59.7	56.1	55.6	55.9	55.2
Year 12	73.6	72.1	69.0	60.1	59.3	58.3	56.5	54.4	55.2	56.8

In terms of students' self-assessment of their general skills & knowledge, there were only modest differences across schools, except for being organised (60.3 pts), understanding Australia's indigenous culture and history (57.5 pts) and ability to concentrate (55.5 pts), which was scored noticeably lower by students at public and states schools, than at private independent or Catholic schools.

Students at boys only schools rated their general skills & knowledge much higher for taking on a leadership role (71.1 pts), ability to concentrate (68.0 pts) and public speaking (59.0 pts). Students at girls only schools however, scored much higher for having an understanding of global current affairs (63.3 pts), culture and history of Australia post European settlement (65.6 pts) and Australia's indigenous culture and history (65.6 pts). Students at coeducational schools however, scored much lower for being organised (61.3 pts) and ability to concentrate (55.3 pts).

Boys in general rated their skills noticeably higher for their understanding of global current affairs (61.9 pts boys; 57.9 pts girls) and ability to concentrate (59.8 pts boys; 55.0 pts girls), but girls somewhat higher for understanding Australia's indigenous culture and history (61.6 pts girls; 56.7 pts boys).

We also again noted a much narrower range of opinions across year levels, except for ability to get along with people (74.9 pts), being organised (68.3 pts) and ability to concentrate (65.3 pts), which was scored somewhat higher by students in years 7-9, and ability to think for themselves which was scored somewhat lower by students in year 10 (68.6 pts).

How can schools best support students in areas of general skills & knowledge scored poorly (Students & Parents)

Greater school focus: “Teaching us more about stuff outside of school. Like rather than doing maths 4 days a week have it 3 days and 1 day of future help or something.”

Culture: “I think my school can be more accepting and more diverse.”... “Use more variety like videos, speakers and interactive things to explain our history.”

Staff/teachers/teaching methods: “Helping students get organised by teaching them early rather than letting them get used to it after they have heaps of things to manage.”... “Maybe different ways to teach, such as hands on activities. PowerPoints and worksheets get boring and make me easily zone out.”

Support: “Ability to concentrate - reduce use of screens and technology a little. I think the accessibility

of distractions on my device can make concentration and focus a huuuge issue sometimes.”

Public speaking: “Teaching us how to speak publicly and allowing us to build our skills without being thrown into the deep end and out of our comfort zone. I think they should implement more public speaking opportunities without being graded that aren't petrifying for the average person or allow kids to express themselves and present something they are interested and passionate about.”

Current affairs: “Educate us more about it, school avoids nearly all topics of world events.”... “More education on global issues and indigenous history than just white Australian history.”... “Maybe putting up a daily news article on a topical event or something.”

Chart 20: School Support - General Skills & Knowledge (Students)

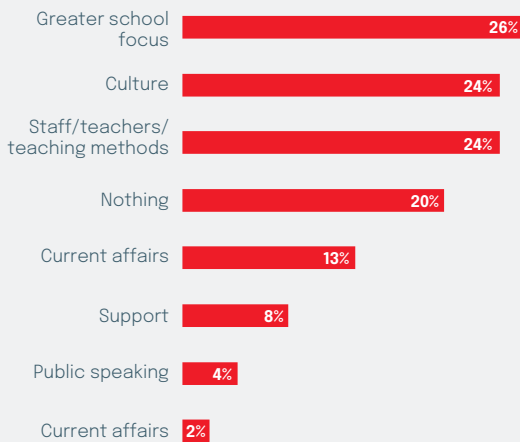
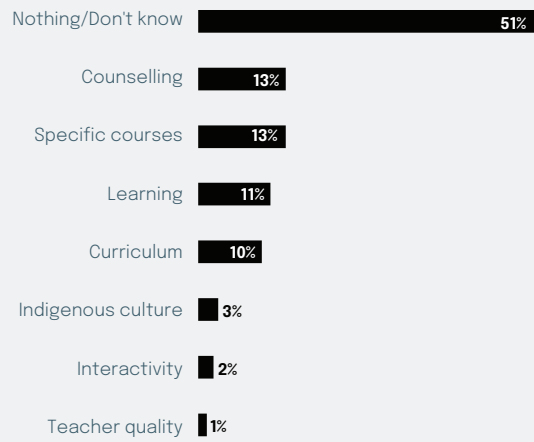


Chart 21: School Support - General Skills & Knowledge (Parents)



Counselling: “More support where needed. He has ADHD so finds it hard to focus”... “I think the school does enough to support her, she just doesn't accept the support.”... “They already support them as best they can at a special school.”

Specific courses: “More practice public speaking in front of groups. Start small in front of 2 or 3 classmates, and keep it growing - to build their confidence to speak up and to larger groups.”... “Teach them about organising and planning.”

Learning: “Experiential curriculum. More exposure is important. Learning should not stop inside the classroom.”... “Get out from behind the desk and out of book.”

Curriculum: “Have an organised curriculum that is accessible from home if the child is prevented from in person learning.”... “Less focus on uniform and more on learning.”... “More personalised sessions and workshops for them at school. School hours can be extended.”

Indigenous culture: “Engage with members of indigenous community so children are taught accurately about indigenous culture.”... “Get elders to tell stories of local area. Offer local dialect and story as an option.”... “They could talk less about First Nations and consider all to be Australian.”

Interactivity: “Building confidence through interactive sessions with the kids and teachers.”

Teacher quality: “Understanding, caring and engaged teachers.”

How students (and parents) grade their school on the curriculum, and teaching life skills

Students are often given the grades of A, B, C, D and E. In this section, students and parents grade their school on the curriculum, as well as teaching important life skills. In terms of the curriculum, around 1 in 4 students awarded an “A” (excellent) grade for sciences (24%) and maths (23%), and around 1 in 5 for English (21%), technologies and languages (20%).

Only 15% awarded an “A” grade for social sciences and 18% the arts. Around 1 in 3 graded their school “B” (very good) for maths (35%) and social sciences (34%), and 1 in 4 for languages (25%) and technologies (26%). In total, less than half of all students graded the curriculum at an “A” or “B” standard, with the exception of maths (58%) and sciences (54%).

Moreover, while the number who awarded a “C” (or good) grade ranged from 24% for maths to 36% for the arts, it was somewhat concerning that around 1 in 5 students graded all areas of the curriculum “D” (fair) or “E” (poor), except technologies where it climbed to almost 1 in 4 (23%).

Parents however rate the curriculum somewhat higher than students. Most (around 2 in 3) awarded an “A” or “B” grade for English (64%), technologies (63%), sciences (63%) and maths (61%), and somewhat less for languages (55%). Around 1 in 10 parents did however also award “D” or “E” grade for all areas of the curriculum.

Chart 22: Curriculum Graded (Students)

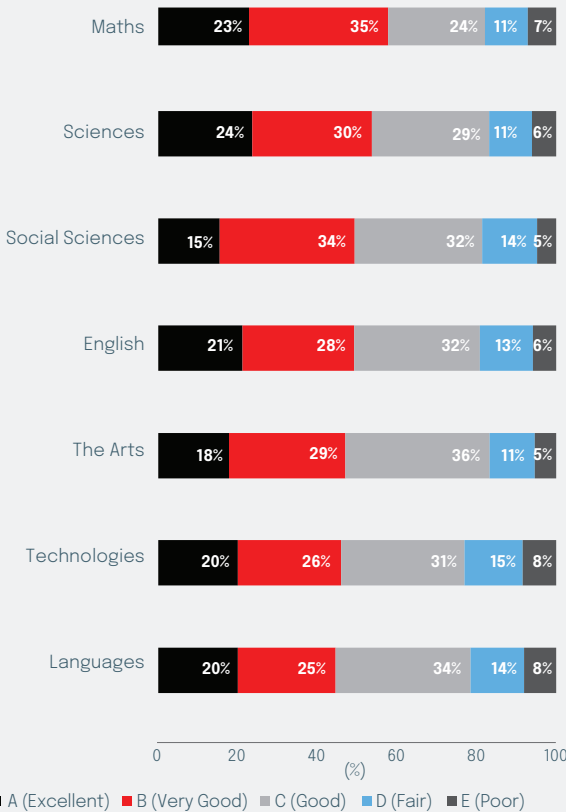


Chart 23: Curriculum Graded (Parents)

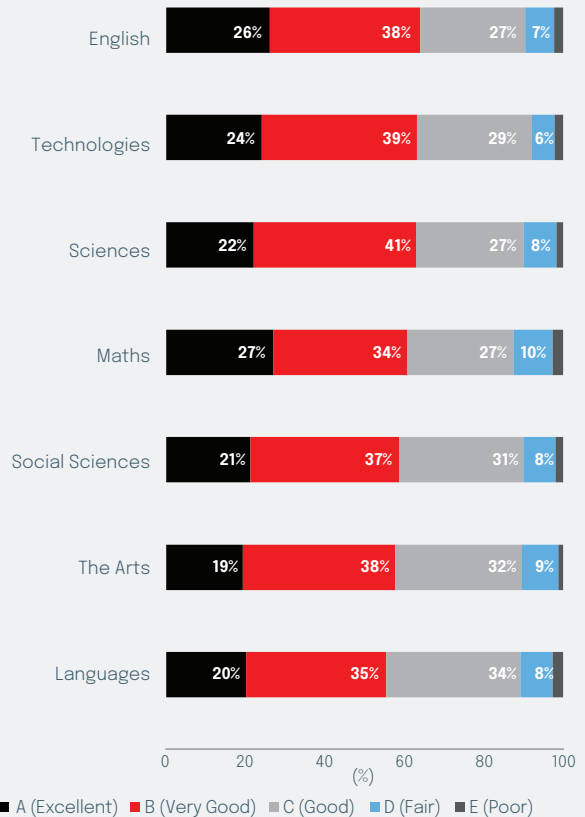


Table 6: Number of students who graded the curriculum “A” or “B”

	Maths	Sciences	Social Sciences	English	The arts	Technology	Languages
All Students	58%	54%	49%	49%	47%	46%	45%
Private Independent School	61%	61%	67%	56%	58%	55%	54%
Private Catholic School	48%	51%	34%	47%	40%	28%	32%
Public/State School	58%	52%	47%	48%	45%	47%	44%
Boys only school	55%	60%	63%	55%	47%	50%	53%
Girls only school	61%	57%	52%	45%	57%	49%	44%
Coeducational school	57%	53%	48%	50%	45%	45%	44%
All boys	64%	57%	54%	53%	46%	56%	48%
All girls	53%	51%	46%	46%	48%	35%	41%
Years 7-9	67%	62%	61%	49%	54%	47%	57%
Year 10	62%	46%	49%	49%	45%	45%	45%
Year 11	52%	53%	43%	49%	46%	40%	38%
Year 12	57%	55%	50%	50%	45%	52%	43%

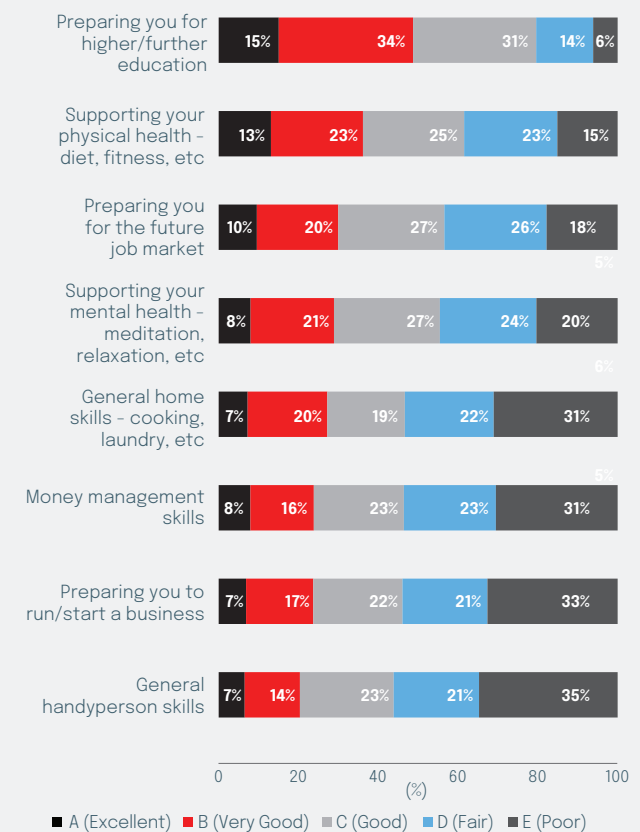
The number of students who graded the curriculum high did however vary considerably across student groups. By school type, significantly more students at private independent schools graded all areas of the curriculum higher than private Catholic and public or state schools (bar maths where they were broadly on par with public or state schools). Also apparent was the much lower number of students at private Catholic schools who awarded their school an “A” or “B” grade for technologies (28%), languages (32%), social sciences (34%) and maths (48%) than did students at private independent schools and state or public schools.

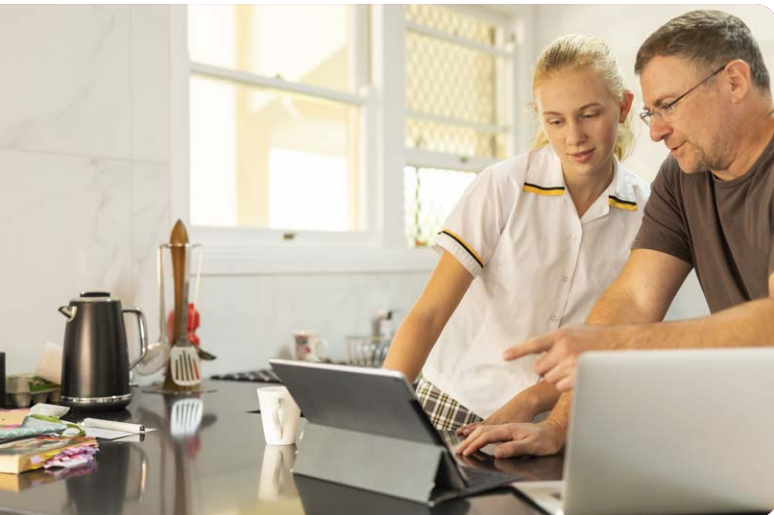
Significantly, students at boys only schools rated their schools much higher for social sciences (63%), particularly when compared to coeducational schools (48%), and for languages (53%). But a lot more students at girls only schools graded their school “A” or “B” (57%) for the arts.

A lot more boys in general graded all aspects of the school curriculum better than girls, except the arts where a similar number rated their school “A” or “B”.

By year level, key differences included the much higher number in years 7-9 who graded their school highly for sciences (62%), social sciences (61%), the arts (54%) and languages (57%), and in year 12 technologies (52%). We also noted a much lower number of students in year 11 who did so for maths (52%), social sciences (43%), technologies (40%) and languages (38%).

Chart 24: Teaching Life Skills Graded (Students)





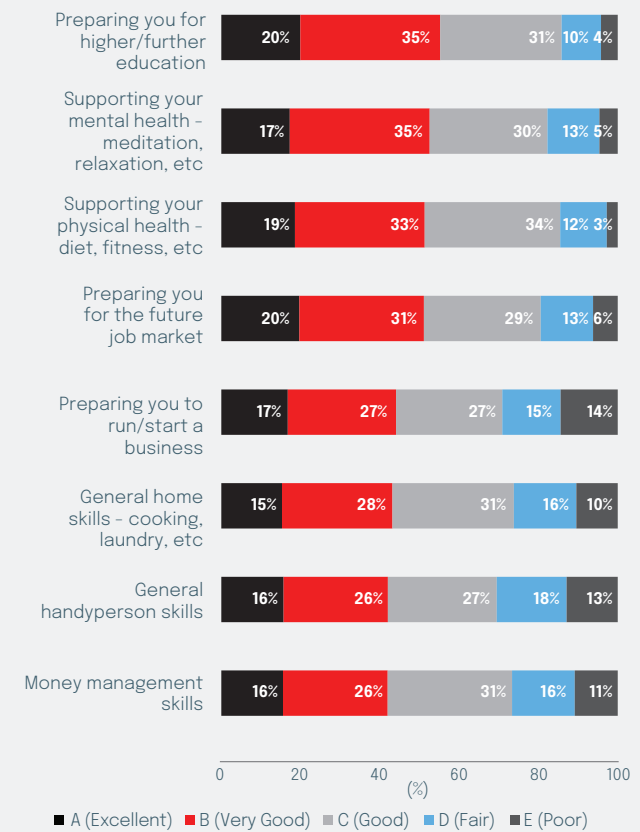
When considering key life skills, far fewer students awarded an “A” grade for all skills. Only 15% gave top marks for preparing them for higher or further education, and 13% for supporting their physical health. This fell to only 7% for general handy person skills, preparing to run or start a business and general home cooking skills. That said, 1 in 3 students did grade their school “B” or very good for preparing them for higher or further education, but this dropped off sharply for all other skills.

In total, just half of all surveyed school students graded their school “A” or “B” for preparing them for higher or further education (49%), around 1 in 3 (36%) supporting their physical health, around 3 in 10 preparing them for the future job market (30%), supporting their mental health (29%) and general home skills (27%). Only 1 in 4 graded their schools teaching high for money management skills and preparing them to run or start a business (24%), and only 1 in 5 general handy person skills (20%).

School performance was graded “E” or poor by around 1 in 3 students for general handy person skills (35%), preparing to run or start a business (35%), money management skills (31%) and general home skills (31%), and by around 1 in 5 for supporting mental health and preparing them for the future job market.

More parents graded life skills taught to their children by schools higher than students. Just over 1 in 2 awarded an “A” or “B” grade for preparing their students for higher or further education (55%), supporting their mental (53%) and physical (51%) health, and preparing them for the future job market (51%). Just over 4 in 10 graded them high for money management and general handyman skills (42%), general home skills (43%) and preparing them to run or start a business (43%), with over half of all parents scoring their schools “D” (fair) or “E” (poor) in these areas - **see chart 25.**

Chart 25: Teaching Life Skills Graded (Parents)



The number of students who graded their school “A” or “B” varied considerably across student groups. By school type, we observed a significantly lower number of students at private Catholic schools who graded their school “A” or “B” much lower for preparing them to run or start a business (15%), the future job market (22%) and for higher or future education (41%).

Significantly more students at boys only schools graded their schools higher for most life skills taught. Also apparent was the much lower number at girls only schools who graded their school “A” or “B” for general handy person skills (13%), and at coeducational schools preparing them to run or start a business (21%) and supporting physical health (33%). More boys in general graded all aspects of these skills taught at their school “A” or “B” than did girls, particularly supporting mental and physical health, general handy person skills, preparing to run or start a business and money management skills.

By year level, noticeably more students in years 7-9 than other year levels graded their schools excellent or very good for all skills, except preparing them for higher or further education. We also noted a much lower number of students who graded their school “A” or “B” for supporting mental health.

Table 7: Number of students who graded teaching life skills “A” or “B”

	Preparing you for the future for the job market	Money management skills	Preparing you to run/start a business	Preparing you for higher/ further education	General home skills - cooking, laundry, etc.	General handyperson skills	Supporting your physical health - diet, fitness, etc.	Supporting your mental health - meditation, relaxation, etc.
All Students	30%	24%	24%	49%	27%	20%	36%	29%
Private Independent School	35%	23%	25%	51%	30%	23%	40%	29%
Private Catholic School	22%	19%	15%	41%	33%	19%	33%	25%
Public/State School	30%	25%	25%	49%	25%	20%	36%	29%
Boys only school	32%	37%	42%	61%	32%	32%	58%	44%
Girls only school	33%	28%	29%	49%	32%	13%	43%	25%
Coeducational school	29%	22%	21%	48%	26%	21%	33%	29%
All boys	35%	30%	30%	54%	30%	27%	44%	37%
All girls	26%	18%	18%	44%	25%	14%	30%	22%
Years 7-9	40%	36%	31%	50%	40%	37%	49%	50%
Year 10	29%	27%	24%	48%	27%	17%	40%	17%
Year 11	29%	21%	24%	50%	25%	18%	33%	32%
Year 12	27%	18%	19%	47%	23%	17%	30%	24%

Top 5 things that made the best teachers

Teachers share a significant responsibility in preparing young people to lead successful and productive lives.

According to the Australian Institute for Teaching & School Leadership, the 7 standards that identify what is expected of teachers are: know students and how they learn; know the content and how to teach it; plan for and implement effective teaching and learning; create and maintain supportive and safe learning environments; assess, provide feedback and report on student learning; engage in professional learning; and engage professionally with colleagues, parents/carers and the community.

In this survey, we delve on this theme a little deeper, and explore what top 5 things made the best teachers great according to their students, and what were the top 5 things parents thought made the best teachers their child had at school great. The responses suggest what students valued most did not always correspond with what their parents valued.

Chart 26: Top 5 Things that Made the Best Teachers You had at School Great (Students)



Chart 27: Top 5 Things that Made the Best Teachers Your Child had at School Great (Parents)



For almost 1 in 2 (47%) students overall, the teacher was engaging, funny, creative and didn't just sit back and lecture them. The second most common trait according to 4 in 10 (41%) students was a teacher with a really positive attitude, built confidence and motivated them. Rounding out the top 5, around 1 in 3 students said the teacher respected students, valued each person's ideas and opinions (32%), treated them as an individual, was empathetic and understood what was going on in their life (32%), and created a welcoming learning environment for all students (31%).

For most parents - around 3 in 10 or 31% - the number one reason that made the best teachers was a really positive attitude, built confidence and motivated their child. Around 1 in 4 said the teacher understood that everyone learns differently and at different speeds (27%), liked children and enjoyed teaching them (27%), treated their child as an individual, was empathetic and understood what was going on in their life (26%) and were engaging, funny, creative and didn't just sit back and lecture them (25%).

A large number of students also valued teachers who understood everyone learns differently and at different speeds (30%), had a love of learning and passion for the course material (27%), paid close attention to ensure each student was tracking where they needed to be (24%), often changed their teaching methods to make learning more interesting (22%), were prepared and organised, in their classrooms early and ready to teach (22%) and were patient and didn't rush them (21%).

Many parents however also valued a teacher for creating a welcoming learning environment for all students (24%), were patient and didn't rush their children (21%), and respected students and valued each person's ideas and opinions (21%). Interestingly, liking children and enjoying teaching them was the only trait identified as making a teacher great by more parents than students (27% teachers; 20% students) - **see charts 26 & 27.**

While there were subtle differences across student groups, most identified the number one thing that made teachers great was being engaging, funny, creative and didn't just sit back and lecture - except by students in boys only schools (created a welcoming learning environment for all students), girls only schools (had a really positive attitude, built confidence and motivated them), and students in years 7-9 (understood everyone learns differently, and at different speeds).

For parents, what stood out most was the broadly similar number (around 1 in 3) that ranked having a really positive attitude, built confidence and motivated their children as the number one thing that made their child's teacher great in nearly student groups, but somewhat higher for parents of students in year 12 (almost 1 in 2 or 45%). The exceptions were parents of students in years 7-9 who most valued a teacher who understood everyone learns differently and at different speeds, and for year 10 parents who most valued a teacher who liked children and enjoyed teaching them.



Are students getting a better education than their parents?

Around 3 in 4 (74%) students believe they are getting a better education than their parents did. Less than 1 in 10 don't think they are, and around 1 in 5 (18%) are unsure.

The number of students who think they are getting a better education was somewhat higher in public and state schools (76%), compared to private independent (70%) and private Catholic (69%) schools. It was also better according to noticeably more students at coeducational (75%) and girls only schools (74%) than at boys only schools (65%).

Noticeably more students in year 12 also think they are getting a better education than their parents (82%), particularly when compared to students in year 10 (64%), where uncertainty was also somewhat higher than in any other group (30%).

Far fewer parents believe their children are getting a better education than they did - just under 1 in 2 (47%) think they are. Almost 3 in 10 (29%) believe they are not getting a better education, but 1 in 4 (24%) are unsure.

The number of parents who think their children are getting a better education was somewhat higher in private Catholic schools (59%), especially when compared to public



and state schools (44%). Children were also getting a better education according to significantly more parents of students at girls only schools (61%) than at boys only schools (40%), where almost 1 in 2 (46%) said they were not.

By year level, a lot more parents of year 12 students said their children were getting a better education than they did (63%), especially when compared to parents of years 7-9 and year 10 (47%) kids.

Chart 28: Do You Think You're Getting a Better Education Than Your Parents (Students)

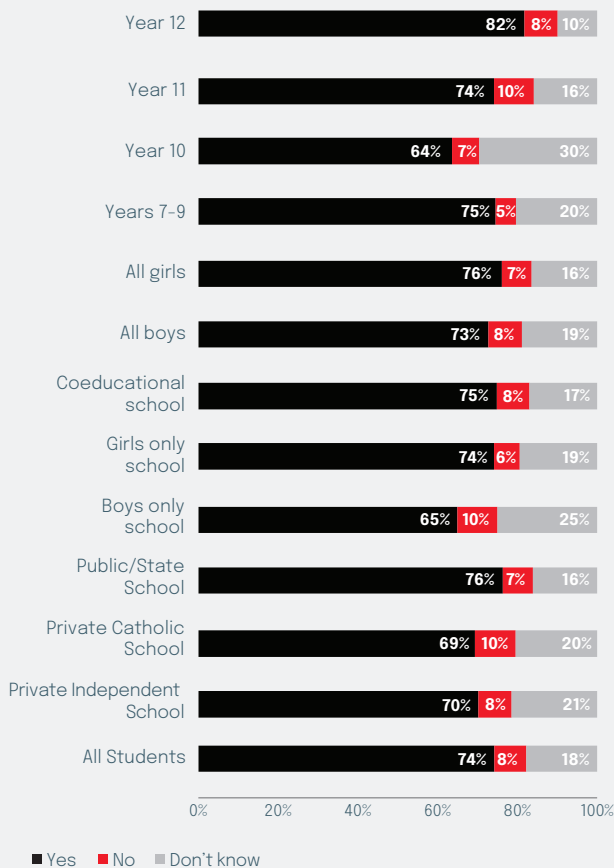
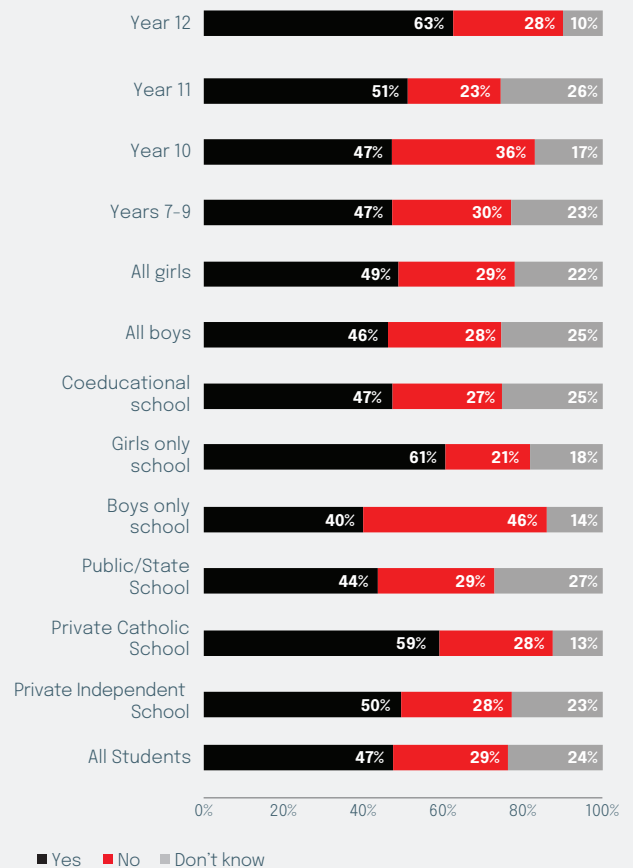


Chart 29: Do You Think Your Child is Getting a Better Education Than You Did (Parents)



“Problems” at school

Students at all schools are inevitably faced with challenges and problems in varying degrees. Peer pressure in particular can proactively influence them to behave in certain ways and at other times they may be just following along.

Negative peer pressure is often related to bullying behaviours, drinking alcohol, drug use, negative body image, harassment and the like, all of which can be harmful to student wellbeing. Pressure to do well at school can also have a negative influence for students. In this section we explore the extent such “problems” exist at schools according to both students and their parents.

Students say the pressure to try alcohol or drugs is the biggest problem at their school. On average, they scored the extent of the problem 46.9 pts out of 100 (where 0 = an extremely big problem and 100 = no problem). Sexual harassment (47.1 pts) was the next biggest problem, followed by physical bullying (48.8 pts), lack of student diversity (49.2 pts), pressure to smoke or “vape” (50.0 pts), cyberbullying (50.1 pts) and racism (50.2 pts). Least problematic was pressure to get good test scores (55.0 pts) - though still at worryingly high levels - followed by their physical safety and security (53.6 pts), pressure to

“fit in” or conform (52.8 pts), verbal harassment (52.2 pts), bias against gay, lesbian or transgender students (52.0 pts), and religious bias (51.0 pts).

Parents however believe the biggest problems at their children’s school were verbal harassment (66.0 pts), physical bullying (66.2 pts), cyberbullying (66.8 pts), pressure to “fit in” or conform (66.9 pts), pressure to get good test scores (67.0 pts), and pressure to smoke or “vape” (69.7 pts). However, they did not believe the extent of the problem was as severe than did students.

Moreover, the results revealed some very big differences in how problematic these issues are in the eyes of students compared to parents - particularly for sexual harassment (47.1 pts students; 72.2 pts parents), pressure to try alcohol or drugs (46.9 pts students; 71.2 pts parents), lack of student diversity (49.2 pts students; 72.1 pts parents), religious bias (51.0 pts students; 73.8 pts parents), bias against gay, lesbian or transgender students (52.0 pts students; 74.0 pts parents) and racism (50.2 pts students; 72.2 pts parents).

Chart 30: How Big a Problem at Your School?

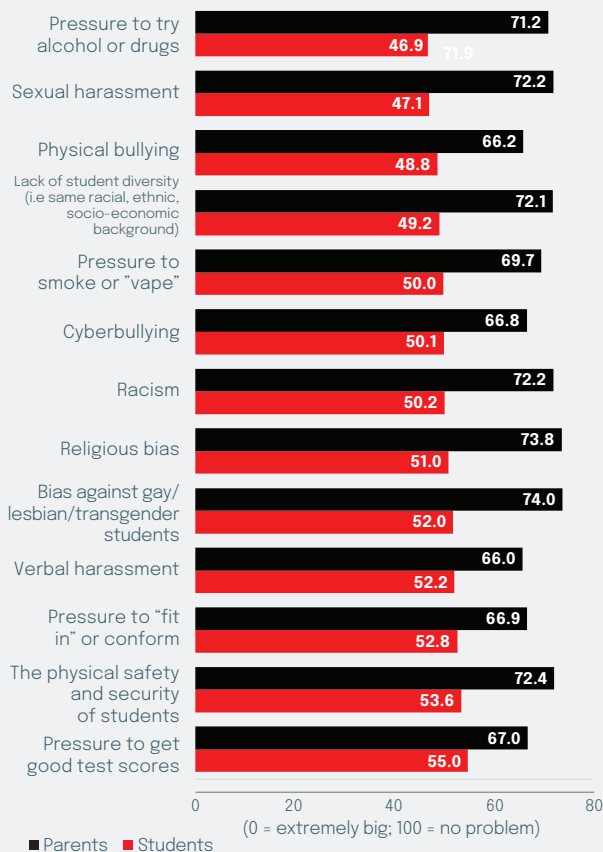
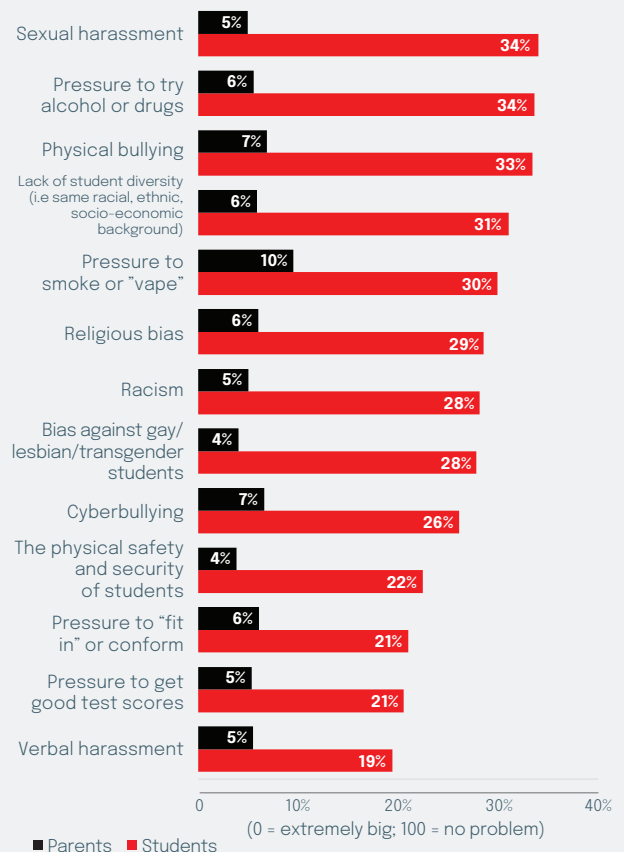


Chart 31: How Big a Problem at Your School?



Also of concern was the very high number of students who thought many of these problems were ‘extremely’ big (i.e. scored less than 20 pts). Around 1 in 3 students identified sexual harassment (34%), pressures to try drugs or alcohol (34%), and physical bullying (33%) as an ‘extremely’ big problem at their school, and a further 3 in 10 lack of student diversity (31%), pressure to smoke or “vape” (30%), religious bias (29%), racism (28%) and bias against gay, lesbian or transgender students (28%). Around 1 in 5 also identified verbal harassment (19%), pressure to

get good test scores (21%), pressure to fit in or conform (21%), physical safety and security (22%), and 1 in 4 cyberbullying (26%).

Far fewer parents identified any of these issues as ‘extremely’ big problems at their children’s school, ranging from just 4% of all parents for bias against, gay lesbian or transgender students and physical safety and security of their children, to 10% for pressure to smoke or “vape” - **see charts 30 & 31.**

Table 8: How big a problem at your school: score (students)

	Pressure to try alcohol or drugs	Sexual harassment	Physical bullying	Lack of student diversity	Pressure to smoke or vape	Cyberbullying	Racism	Religious bias	Bias against gay/ lesbian/ transgender students	Verbal harassment	Pressure to fit in or conform	The physical safety and security of students	Pressure to get good test score
All Students	46.9	47.1	48.8	49.2	50.0	50.1	50.2	51.0	52.0	52.2	52.8	53.6	55.0
Private Independent School	53.5	56.3	54.5	51.0	55.1	52.6	51.7	54.9	55.8	55.1	54.2	58.2	58.0
Private Catholic School	46.3	36.1	42.6	48.2	47.2	50.4	47.1	50.5	45.0	49.4	53.1	48.1	49.4
Public/State School	44.9	46.4	48.1	48.8	48.9	49.2	50.3	49.8	52.2	51.8	52.3	53.2	55.1
Boys only school	47.2	54.4	50.0	61.3	47.4	47.2	49.4	47.2	52.2	48.9	46.7	60.0	56.8
Girls only school	47.7	45.7	47.6	45.3	51.6	53.8	52.6	57.0	52.3	53.0	55.1	53.1	55.5
Coeducational school	46.8	46.9	49.0	49.2	49.8	49.5	49.8	50.0	51.9	52.2	52.7	53.3	54.8
All boys	45.6	45.7	50.5	47.0	47.1	49.4	48.0	50.6	53.3	52.3	51.8	54.7	56.1
All girls	48.9	49.0	47.1	50.2	53.9	51.1	52.7	51.3	51.5	52.3	54.2	53.1	54.4
Years 7-9	42.9	42.2	46.0	52.9	47.7	54.7	51.1	48.8	52.6	51.5	59.5	52.7	59.3
Year 10	42.9	49.3	47.2	48.9	49.7	50.3	48.1	51.4	51.6	51.6	49.6	53.6	57.1
Year 11	50.7	47.4	52.3	51.6	51.8	52.1	49.8	52.1	53.4	53.7	53.8	55.0	52.1
Year 12	48.4	48.0	48.0	45.4	49.8	46.2	52.1	50.4	50.5	51.4	50.9	52.8	54.7

Table 8 highlights areas where significantly more student groups scored these issues somewhat worse than their peers. By school type, this included sexual harassment, bias against gay, lesbian and transgender students, physical safety and pressure to get good test scores at private Catholic schools.

Students at girls only and coeducational schools said sexual harassment and lack of student diversity was more problematic at their school than at boys only schools. Students at boys only and coeducational schools however highlighted cyberbullying and religious bias as bigger issues, and boys only schools verbal harassment and pressure to conform.

Boys in general highlighted pressure to smoke or “vape” as a much bigger issue than girls.

By year level, key differences included pressure to try alcohol or drugs in years 7-9 and year 10, and cyberbullying in year 12.



Table 9: How big a problem at your children’s school: score (parents)

	Verbal harassment	Physical bullying	Cyberbullying	Pressure to fit in or conform	Pressure to get good test scores	Pressure to smoke or vape	Pressure to try alcohol or drugs	Lack of student diversity	Racism	Sexual harassment	The physical safety and security of students	Religious bias	Bias against gay/lesbian/transgender students
All Students	66.0	66.2	66.8	66.9	67.0	69.7	71.2	72.1	72.2	72.2	72.4	73.8	74.0
Private Independent School	71.8	69.9	71.7	68.4	68.9	71.1	74.7	71.2	74.6	76.7	77.0	76.0	77.5
Private Catholic School	66.9	65.4	67.3	68.4	69.7	70.9	73.1	77.9	75.0	73.8	73.4	73.2	74.9
Public/State School	63.7	65.1	64.9	66.0	65.5	68.9	69.3	70.8	70.5	70.0	70.5	73.2	72.5
Boys only school	71.3	71.0	71.8	70.9	67.3	67.2	73.0	69.4	71.2	73.5	73.5	73.8	74.0
Girls only school	72.9	73.3	72.5	65.5	73.9	73.5	73.3	71.3	78.3	76.9	80.0	76.6	73.8
Coeducational school	64.8	64.9	65.7	66.5	66.4	69.8	70.7	72.6	71.8	71.6	71.6	73.6	74.0
All boys	65.6	64.3	65.8	66.3	66.6	68.6	70.6	71.6	71.5	70.8	71.1	72.7	74.0
All girls	66.5	68.2	67.9	67.6	67.3	70.9	71.7	72.7	72.9	73.6	73.7	75.0	74.0
Years 7-9	63.6	64.4	63.5	64.3	66.7	63.6	67.6	72.1	70.5	70.2	67.7	71.7	71.4
Year 10	68.5	67.6	66.7	68.8	67.8	63.6	66.6	65.0	70.0	69.0	72.7	70.8	69.0
Year 11	66.1	74.1	66.7	67.9	63.3	66.7	68.8	77.0	74.8	72.6	74.0	73.8	77.7
Year 12	63.2	61.4	60.6	65.6	58.0	60.6	63.0	65.1	64.4	69.4	72.1	72.0	72.9

In terms of parent perceptions, racism was a bigger problem at public and state schools, verbal harassment, physical bullying and cyberbullying at coeducational schools, and the physical safety and security of students at boys only and coeducational schools.

By year level, noticeably more parents of year 12 students identified pressure to get good test scores and racism, and those in years 7-9 physical safety and security of students. Parents of year 10 and year 12 students also scored lack of diversity as a bigger problem at the children’s schools.



Contact the authors

Dean Pearson

Head of Behavioural & Industry Economics
Dean.Pearson@nab.com.au
+613 8634 2331

Robert De lure

Senior Economist - Behavioural & Industry Economics
Robert.De.lure@nab.com.au
+613 8634 4611

Important Notice

This document has been prepared by National Australia Bank Limited ABN 12 004 044 937 AFSL 230686 ("NAB"). The information contained in this document is gathered from multiple sources believed to be reliable as of the end of April 2023 and is intended to be of a general nature only. Any advice contained in this document has been prepared without taking into account your objectives, financial situation or needs. Before acting on any advice in this document, NAB recommends that you consider whether the advice is appropriate for your circumstances.

NAB recommends that you obtain and consider the relevant Product Disclosure Statement, Target Market Determination or other disclosure document, before making any decision about a product including whether to acquire or to continue to hold it (see [nab.com.au](https://www.nab.com.au)).

Please click [here](#) to view our disclaimer and terms of use.