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NAB Education Insights Special Report

Part 2: Life at school

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This year NAB Education again reached out to a large representative sample of Australian secondary school age students nationwide to better understand simply how they perceive their lives and the important role of our schools in supporting them. Over 400 young people contributed across all year levels including those from public schools, private independent schools and private Catholic schools. Part 1 explored student wellbeing. Encouragingly, students reported their overall wellbeing had improved over the past year, a growing number said they were coping better in managing their mental health and many also felt less lonely. But what about life while at school?

Students who enjoy school generally report better academic results, stronger attendance, and higher levels of engagement. They are also more likely to participate in peer-to-peer learning through seeking help, providing constructive feedback and collaborating. In part 2 we take a closer look at school life through the eyes of students, exploring issues such as problems and concerns, their perceptions as to how they are performing across the curriculum, what they believe makes a great teacher, the use of private tutors and how they feel about being 'streamed' based on ability and needs. We hope you enjoy reading this report and the insights it provides.

Key findings

- 1. Feeling good about school is important. Australian secondary school students on average report enjoying school a little more this year. Boys however continue to report much higher enjoyment than girls and around 1 in 4 continue to experience low levels of enjoyment. Enjoyment is lowest in year 10. Students that identified as LGBTQI+ enjoyed school far less than other students.**

This year enjoyment of school was rated highest by students attending Catholic schools, where it also increased. Interestingly, while students at Catholic schools scored their enjoyment highest, this group also had the highest number who scored enjoyment low (unchanged at 24%), slightly ahead of private independent schools (23% up from 21%). The share of students enjoying school was next highest at independent schools and was basically unchanged. Enjoyment was lowest among those attending public schools but increased a little. Students at boys only schools reported a big uplift in enjoyment while it fell for those attending girls only schools. We also noted a big increase at girls only schools with low enjoyment (27% up from 18%), but a very large decline in boys only schools (15% down from 35% in 2023). Boys in general

continue to report much higher enjoyment than girls. Over 1 in 4 (27%) girls overall said their enjoyment of school was low, compared to only 1 in 5 (19%) boys. Students that identified as LGBTQI+ said they enjoyed school far less than other students (1 in 3 or 34% scored their enjoyment low). By year level, enjoyment was lowest (and fell) for students in year 10 and highest in years 7-9 but also fell quite sharply. In contrast, students in year 11 and 12 enjoyed school a little more.

- 2. High school students face genuine challenges during what is a testing growth stage of their lives. When asked to share the biggest problem issues at their school, sexual harassment replaced pressure to try alcohol or drugs as their top concern. In fact, over 4 in 10 (up sharply on last year) believe this is an 'extremely big' problem.**

Bullying also continues to be highlighted as a serious (and growing) issue, followed by lack of student diversity, pressure to smoke or vape and religious bias, with all of these issues worse than last year. There was also a notable increase in student concern over their physical safety. Pressure to get good scores, to fit in or conform, and bias against gay, lesbian or transgender students were recognised as the least problematic issues at schools, and encouragingly somewhat less so than last year.

By school type, a much greater number of students at independent schools viewed sexual harassment, pressure to try drugs and alcohol, student physical safety and security, pressure to smoke or vape, verbal harassment and pressure to fit in or conform, as extremely big problems, and at coeducational schools, religious bias. Noticeably more students at boys only schools highlighted cyberbullying and pressure to fit in or conform, but at girls only schools, sexual harassment, physical bullying, pressure to try alcohol or drugs, pressure to smoke or vape and bias against LGBTQI+ students. Boy and girls were broadly aligned, except for cyberbullying which a bigger concern among boys.

3. How students see themselves can have an impact on their engagement and learning. When asked to rate themselves across the school curriculum, encouragingly students scored themselves highest in core subjects. More importantly, the number of students who scored themselves 'low' fell in most areas of the school curriculum or was largely unchanged.

Students scored themselves highest (and at relatively elevated levels) for Spelling and Maths & Numeracy. Moreover, they scored these better than last year. Students scored next highest for Sciences and Reading, Writing & Expression, with both higher than in 2023. It was also encouraging that students rated themselves higher in most other areas of the curriculum - Physical Education, Social Sciences and Languages. Technology (such as IT) were scored basically the same. However, there was a sharp fall in student self-assessment for The Arts (e.g., drama, dance & music) which also scored lowest of all areas of the curriculum.

Students at boys only schools scored themselves noticeably higher for Maths & Numeracy, but much lower for Languages and The Arts, while those at girls only schools somewhat lower for Technologies. Boys in general scored themselves much higher than girls in Technologies and Physical Education, and somewhat higher for Maths & Numeracy. But girls in general scored significantly higher for The Arts and Languages and somewhat higher for Reading, Writing & Expression and Spelling.

Most importantly, the share of students who scored themselves 'low' fell in most areas of the school curriculum or was largely unchanged. In core curriculum subjects, it was very pleasing to note much lower numbers of students that scored low for Reading, Writing & Expression (11% down sharply from 16% in 2023), Maths & Numeracy (also down significantly to 12% from 17%), Spelling (broadly unchanged at 13%) and Sciences (17% vs. 20% last year).

4. When students who scored themselves poorly in English, Mathematics or Science were asked why they thought they were struggling, the challenging nature of the work was a clear impediment, but so too was simply a lack of motivation and difficulty in concentrating.

More students said the work was too challenging in Mathematics (4 in 10) and Science (1 in 3) than English (1 in 5). Around twice as many students not performing well in Mathematics and Sciences were also struggling with the pace of learning in English (1 in 5 vs. 1 in 10). Difficulty listening, concentrating and sitting still was

somewhat more problematic in the Sciences (1 in 3 students) than in Mathematics and English (1 in 4). Also interesting was the fact significantly more students struggling in English believed they were not performing well because of pressure and high expectations, compared to Mathematics and Sciences - perhaps linked to the fact that English is the only subject that is compulsory through to the final year of high school.

5. There is a strong culture of 'streaming' students in Australia, with around 6 in 10 currently being streamed (1 in 2 because of higher academic potential and 1 in 10 because they need extra help). While many students are positive about the benefits and the impact on their overall experience at school, it is viewed much more favourably by those identified as having potential than those needing extra support.

Streaming was highest overall in years 7-9 (77%), stepping down in each subsequent year level (to 51% in year 12). Rates of streaming were broadly similar in private independent and public schools and a little less in Catholic schools. Interestingly, those being streamed because of higher academic potential was highest in public schools (53%) but also lowest for those needing extra help and support (7%). More students overall were streamed in boys only schools (69%). Noticeably more at boys only schools were streamed because they needed extra support (1 in 5). Slightly more girls overall (61%) were streamed than boys (57%), with somewhat more girls streamed based on higher academic ability (53% vs. 45%), and more boys because they needed extra help (12% vs. 8%).

The share of students who scored the benefits of streaming "high" was more than twice as great among those who were streamed due to their potential (44%) than those who needed extra help (21%). When asked if streaming impacted their experience of school, 1 in 2 (52%) said it made it better, particularly those at boys only schools (3 in 4 or 76%). Again, those who were streamed due to their academic ability reported a much better experience at school than those who needed extra help.



6. Private tutoring has become increasingly popular for students of all academic abilities and socio-economic backgrounds in recent years. Almost 3 in 10 (31%) students use private tutors outside of school, spending on average \$114 per week.

By school type, around 1 in 3 students at private Catholic and public schools use tutors, compared to 1 in 4 at private independent schools. By year level, private tutor usage was highest in year 11 (40%) and lowest by a significant margin among students in years 7-9 (18%). While the average weekly cost was estimated at \$114, it was almost twice as high among students at private Catholic (\$125) and public schools (\$117) than those at private independent schools (\$70), and also higher students at boys compared to girls only schools (\$90 vs. \$70). Average spend was significantly higher among students in years 7-9 (\$165) than in all other year levels.

7. When students were asked to share the qualities of their best teachers, topping the list again this year were those who were 'engaging, funny & creative' and 'didn't just sit back and lecture them'. Around 1 in 2 (50%) students identified this trait as most important (up slightly on last year).

Coming in second were teachers with a positive attitude, and those that build confidence and motivated them. Rounding out the top 5, were teachers who respected students, valued each person's ideas and opinions, treated them as an individual, were empathetic and understood what was going on in their life, understood that everyone learns differently and at different speeds and had a love of learning and a passion for the course material.

By school type, a much higher number of students at private independent schools said great teachers respected students, valued each person's ideas and opinions and explained how subjects applied to real life, hobbies, sports, future careers, etc., at private Catholic schools set high expectations for all students and encouraged them to be their best and at public schools those who were patient and didn't rush them and like children and enjoy teaching them. Noticeably more girls than boys said great teachers created a welcoming learning environment for all students, understood everyone learns differently and at different speeds and often changed their teaching methods to make learning more interesting, while more boys that they explained how subjects applied to real life, hobbies, sports, future careers, etc. Among LGBTQI+ students, great teachers treated them as an individual and were empathetic and understood what was going in their life, often changed their teaching methods to make learning more interesting and were prepared and organised, in their classrooms early and ready to teach.



Enjoyment of school

School is an integral part of life for teenagers. Not only do they impart knowledge and education, but schools also play a vital role in helping shape overall development by helping students build social, inter-personal and communication skills. Feeling good about school is important. Numerous studies have found the emotional state of students significantly impacts their learning experiences and outcomes. Students who enjoy school generally report better academic results, stronger attendance and higher levels of engagement. They are also more likely to engage in peer-to-peer learning as they are more likely to be comfortable seeking help, providing constructive feedback and collaborating with their peers.

Encouragingly, the 2024 NAB School Survey found students are enjoying school a little more than last year. When students were again asked how much they enjoyed all aspects of their school life (including friends, learning, sport etc.), they scored a higher 60.3 pts in 2024 (59.6 pts in 2023). It remains however of some concern that a large (and unchanged) number of students – around 1 in 4 or 23% – continue to report low levels of enjoyment at school (i.e. scored less than 40 pts). For these students, it is key for educators to build a positive school culture to help promote higher engagement.

Enjoyment of school varies across key groups. In 2024, it was rated highest by students at private Catholic schools, where it also rose to 62.0 pts (59.4 pts in 2023). It was next highest at private independent schools at a basically unchanged 61.3 pts (61.4 pts in 2023). It was lowest in public schools but increased a little to 59.5 pts (59.1 pts in 2023).

Students at boys only schools reported a big uplift in enjoyment in 2024 to 64.9 pts (57.5 pts in 2023). Enjoyment fell to 60.2 pts in girls only schools (61.9 pts in 2023) but improved a little in public schools to 59.5 pts (59.1 pts in 2023) but remained lowest overall. Boys in general continue to report much higher enjoyment than girls. But while boys scored an unchanged 62.7 pts in 2024, enjoyment increased for girls to 58.2 pts (56.7 pts in 2023). Students that identified as LGBTQI+ (53.0 pts) said they enjoyed school far less than students that did not (61.6 pts). By year level, enjoyment was lowest for students in year 10 and fell to 55.9 pts (56.8 pts in 2023), and highest in years 7-9 but also fell quite sharply to 61.9 pts (66.2 pts in 2023). In contrast, students in year 11 (61.5 up from 59.0 pts) and 12 (60.9 pts up from 59.2 pts) enjoyed school more.

Students at private Catholic schools scored their enjoyment of school highest, but also had the highest number who scored enjoyment low (unchanged at 24%, slightly ahead of private independent schools (23% up from 21%). We also noted a big increase at girls only schools with low enjoyment (27% up from 18%), but a very large decline in boys only schools (15% down from 35% in 2023). It was basically unchanged at coeducational schools (24%). Over 1 in 4 (27%) girls overall said their enjoyment of school was low, compared to only 1 in 5 (19%) boys. The number of students not enjoying school very much was well above average for LGBTQI+ students (1 in 3 or 34%). Students in year 10 (28%) had the highest number of students with low enjoyment, and in years 7-9 and 12 (21%) the lowest.



Chart 1: Enjoy school

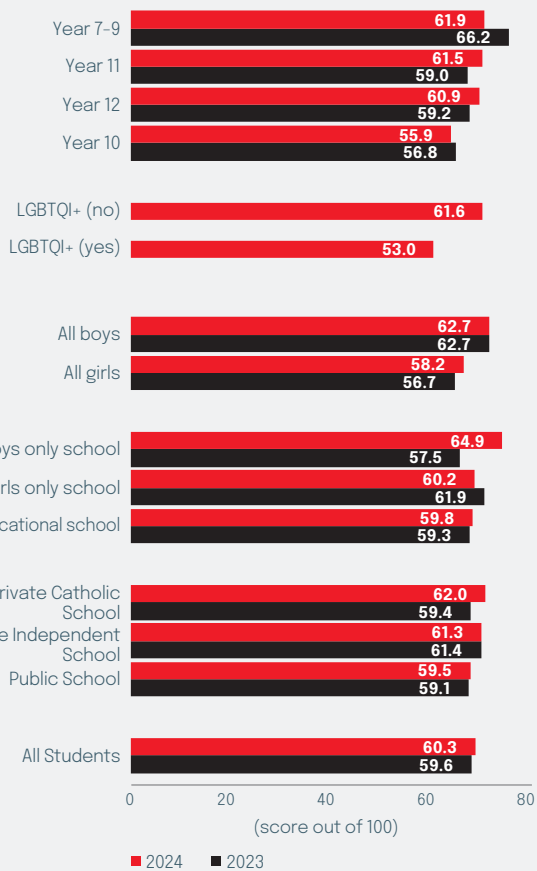
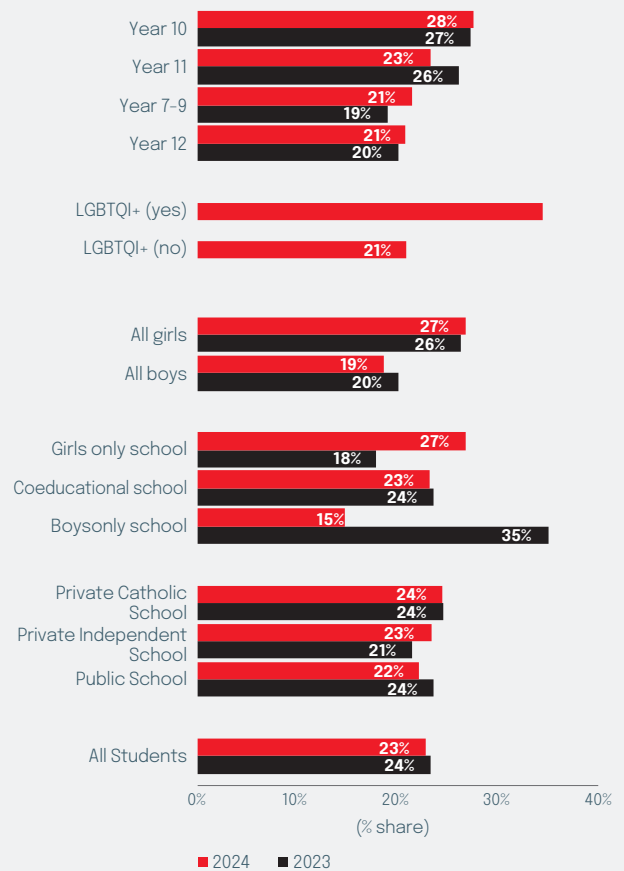


Chart 2: Enjoy school (% scored low)



Problems at school

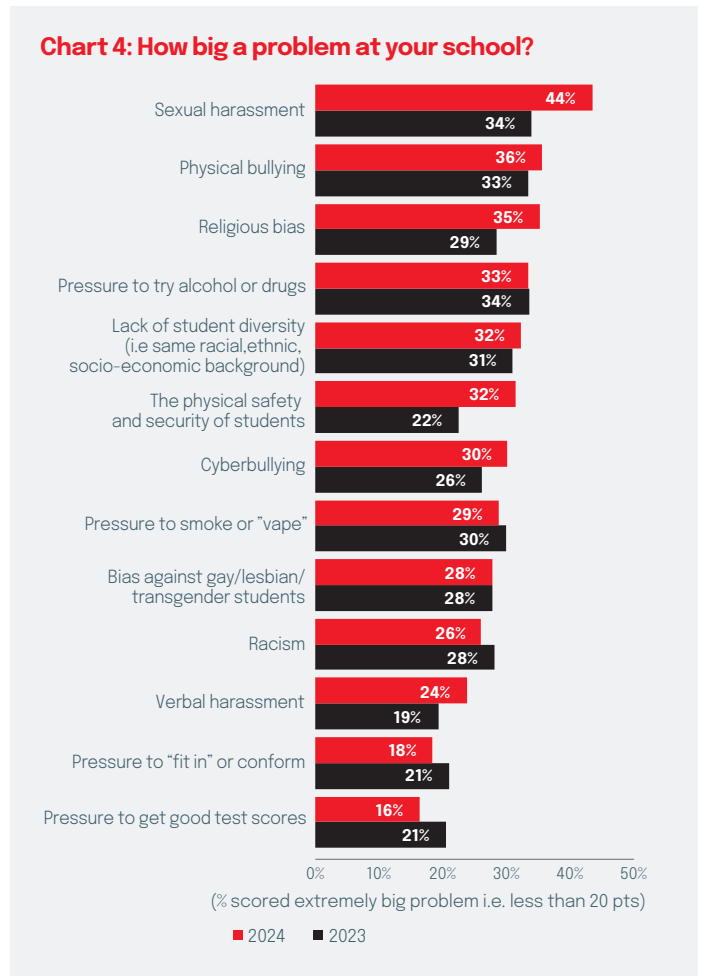
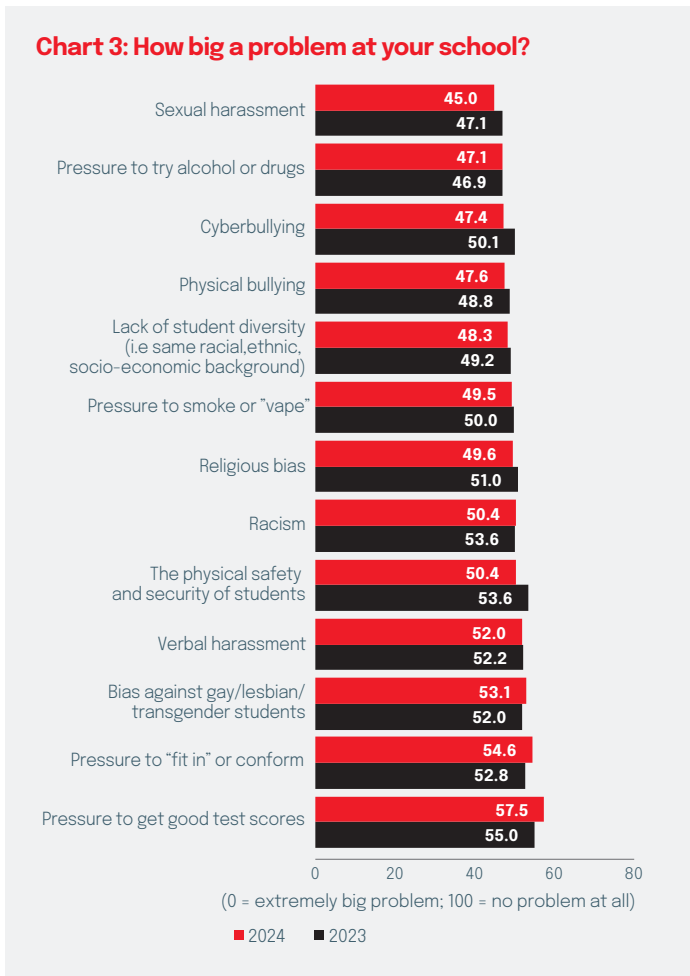
High school students face genuine challenges on daily basis during what is a testing growth stage of their lives. During these years, they are exposed to some powerful external and internal struggles. They go through and are expected to cope with hormonal changes, puberty, parental forces, school and work pressures. They also face common teenage challenges such as self-esteem and body image, stress, bullying, depression, cyber addiction, alcohol and smoking and peer pressure. These can proactively influence them to behave in certain ways, both positive and negative.

Negative behaviours are problematic in Australian schools. Recent research from the OECD found the disciplinary climate in schools in Australia was significantly worse than the OECD average, ahead of only New Zealand and Sweden. Australian students also felt less safe at school than the OECD average, behind only Poland, New Zealand, Hong Kong and the United States. On average, Australian school students are bullied at higher rates than other comparable English speaking countries, with relatively high levels of disruptions in the classroom, high levels of distraction due to digital resources like smartphones and apps and student truancy.

This year we again asked Australian students to highlight how big they thought these types of issues were at their school. The results may help provide insights around issues that may be influencing their enjoyment of school.

In the 2024 survey, sexual harassment replaced pressure to try alcohol or drugs as the biggest problem identified by students at their school. On average, students scored the extent sexual harassment was a problem at 45.0 pts (where 0 = an extremely big problem and 100 = no problem), and worse than in 2023 (47.1 pts). Pressure to try alcohol or drugs however scored a marginally better 47.1 pts (46.9 pts in 2023).





Bullying also continues to be highlighted as a serious (and growing) problem according to students. In 2024, they scored both the extent it was a problem at their school worse for cyberbullying (47.4 pts from 50.1 pts in 2023) and physical bullying (47.6 pts from 48.8 pts in 2023).

The next biggest problems were lack of student diversity (48.3 pts vs. 49.2 pts), pressure to smoke or vape (49.5 pts vs. 50 pts) and religious bias (49.6 pts vs. 49.6 pts), with all of these issues scoring worse than in the previous year. We also noted a relatively large increase in student concern about their physical safety, which was also scored worse (50.4 pts vs. 53.6 pts in 2023).

Pressure to get good scores (57.5 pts vs. 55.0 pts in 2023), pressure to fit in or conform (54.6 pts vs. 52.8 pts), and bias against gay, lesbian or transgender students (53.1 pts vs. 52.0 pts) were recognised as the least problematic issues at schools, and encouragingly also somewhat less so than in the previous survey.

Average scores continue to mask high numbers of students who think many of these issues are 'extremely big problems' (i.e. scored less than 20 pts). In particular, over 4 in 10 (44% and up sharply from 34% in 2023) highlighted sexual harassment as an extremely big problem, and around 1 in 3 physical bullying (36% up from 33% in 2023), religious bias (35% vs. 29%), pressure to try alcohol or drugs (33% vs. 34%), lack of student diversity

(32% vs. 31%), and physical safety and security of students (32% up sharply from 22%). We also noted somewhat higher numbers of students who thought cyberbullying (30% vs. 26% in 2023) and verbal harassment (24% vs. 19%) were extremely big problems at their school in the 2024 survey.



How big a problem at your school 2024 (score)

	All Students	Private Indep. school	Private Catholic	Public School	Boys only school	Girls only school	Co-ed school	All boys	All girls	LGBTQI+ (yes)	LGBTQI+ (no)	Years 7-9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Sexual harassment	45.0	40.3	48.4	45.2	49.2	41.6	45.1	45.4	45.1	50.9	44.0	55.2	43.2	44.1	44.3
Pressure to try alcohol or drugs	47.1	40.3	53.3	47.1	50.6	42.2	47.5	45.3	48.8	48.3	47.0	51.9	43.3	46.2	48.0
Cyberbullying	47.4	46.2	51.0	46.5	44.6	49.4	47.4	45.7	49.4	52.3	46.7	49.5	45.4	47.3	47.4
Physical bullying	47.6	47.9	49.9	46.8	50.3	41.8	48.3	46.0	49.1	52.2	46.9	56.4	44.7	49.3	45.1
Lack of student diversity	48.3	45.8	55.9	46.5	48.4	53.5	47.4	46.0	50.8	54.1	47.4	55.6	48.7	44.6	49.2
Pressure to smoke or "vape"	49.5	40.6	52.1	51.3	55.8	39.6	50.5	49.4	49.5	48.1	49.7	56.9	45.7	48.5	49.6
Religious bias	49.6	54.3	51.5	47.3	51.8	47.3	49.7	46.4	52.6	55.6	48.5	57.6	42.1	50.4	50.1
Racism	50.4	45.3	50.3	51.9	50.8	47.7	50.8	50.6	49.9	62.3	48.5	49.7	52.2	52.1	48.0
Physical safety & security	50.4	48.0	53.5	50.0	50.8	48.0	50.8	50.3	50.7	49.8	50.5	54.2	47.9	50.8	50.3
Verbal harassment	52.0	47.1	51.8	53.6	53.2	50.2	52.2	52.0	52.1	55.9	51.4	55.7	53.5	51.6	50.5
Bias against LGBTQI+ students	53.1	56.2	58.5	50.4	55.7	51.8	53.0	50.9	55.3	60.9	51.6	72.4	46.1	54.5	49.7
Pressure to "fit in" or conform	54.6	52.1	56.9	54.6	52.1	56.4	54.6	52.2	57.1	58.2	54.0	62.9	52.8	55.0	52.7
Pressure to get good test scores	57.5	59.9	54.0	57.9	55.0	59.3	57.5	57.3	57.6	57.7	57.4	56.3	64.5	55.5	57.0

The table above highlights areas where student groups scored these issues significantly worse than their peers in 2024. Among the more obvious were pressure to try alcohol or drugs (53.3 pts) and lack of student diversity (55.9 pts) at private Catholic schools, pressure to smoke or vape at boys only schools (55.8 pts), student diversity at all girls schools (53.5 pts), bias against LGBTQI+ students (55.3 pts) and pressure to fit in and confirm (57.1 pts) according to all girls, racism (62.3 pts) and bias against LGBTQI+ students (60.9 pts) according to students who identify as LGBTQI+, sexual harassment (55.2 pts) and bias against LGBTQI+ students (72.4 pts) according to students in years 7-9 and pressure to get good test scores (64.5 pts) in year 10.

By school type, we noted a much higher number of students at private independent schools in 2024 who saw sexual harassment (53%), pressure to try drugs and alcohol (43%), student physical safety and security (41%), pressure to smoke or vape (39%), verbal harassment (29%) and pressure to fit in or conform (29%) as big problems, and at coeducational schools religious bias (38%).

Noticeably more students at boys only schools highlighted cyberbullying (35%) and pressure to fit in or conform (24%), but at girls only schools sexual harassment (53%), physical bullying (50%), pressure to try alcohol or drugs (51%), pressure to smoke or vape (42%) and bias against LGBTQI+ students (29%). Responses from boy and girls in general however were broadly aligned, except for cyberbullying which was an extremely big problem according to somewhat more boys (33% vs. 27%).

Interestingly, a much higher number of students that did not identify as LGBTQI+ said sexual harassment (45%), cyberbullying (31%), bias against LGBTQI+ students (29%) and racism (28%) were very big problems at their school than did students that did identify as LGBTQI+.

Important differences by year level included the much higher number of students in year 10 who pointed to religious bias (45%), in year 11 sexual harassment (50%) and pressure to get good test scores (21%) and in year 12 pressure to fit in or conform (23%) as very big problems.



How big a problem at your school 2024 (% scored “extremely” big)

	All Students	Private Indep. school	Private Catholic	Public School	Boys only school	Girls only school	Co-ed school	All boys	All girls	LGBTQI+ (yes)	LGBTQI+ (no)	Years 7-9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Sexual harassment	44%	53%	41%	42%	33%	53%	43%	42%	45%	34%	45%	29%	42%	50%	43%
Physical bullying	36%	40%	33%	35%	26%	50%	34%	36%	36%	31%	36%	28%	35%	35%	38%
Religious bias	35%	33%	31%	38%	24%	41%	36%	37%	34%	32%	36%	26%	43%	35%	35%
Pressure to try alcohol or drugs	33%	43%	30%	32%	31%	51%	31%	34%	34%	28%	34%	31%	37%	36%	31%
Lack of student diversity	32%	35%	24%	34%	30%	33%	33%	33%	32%	28%	33%	22%	31%	36%	32%
Physical safety & security	32%	41%	28%	30%	32%	39%	30%	32%	32%	27%	32%	26%	36%	32%	31%
Cyberbullying	30%	27%	25%	26%	35%	25%	30%	33%	27%	23%	31%	19%	30%	36%	29%
Pressure to smoke or “vape”	29%	39%	27%	26%	28%	42%	26%	29%	29%	25%	29%	23%	28%	29%	30%
Bias against LGBTQI+ students	28%	27%	23%	30%	22%	35%	27%	30%	26%	20%	29%	16%	32%	28%	29%
Racism	26%	29%	25%	25%	20%	29%	26%	27%	26%	13%	28%	26%	22%	26%	28%
Verbal harassment	24%	29%	21%	23%	21%	25%	24%	24%	24%	19%	25%	20%	21%	25%	26%
Pressure to “fit in” or conform	18%	25%	19%	16%	24%	17%	18%	19%	17%	14%	19%	8%	14%	19%	23%
Pressure to get good test scores	16%	13%	17%	17%	16%	18%	16%	16%	17%	14%	17%	15%	11%	21%	15%

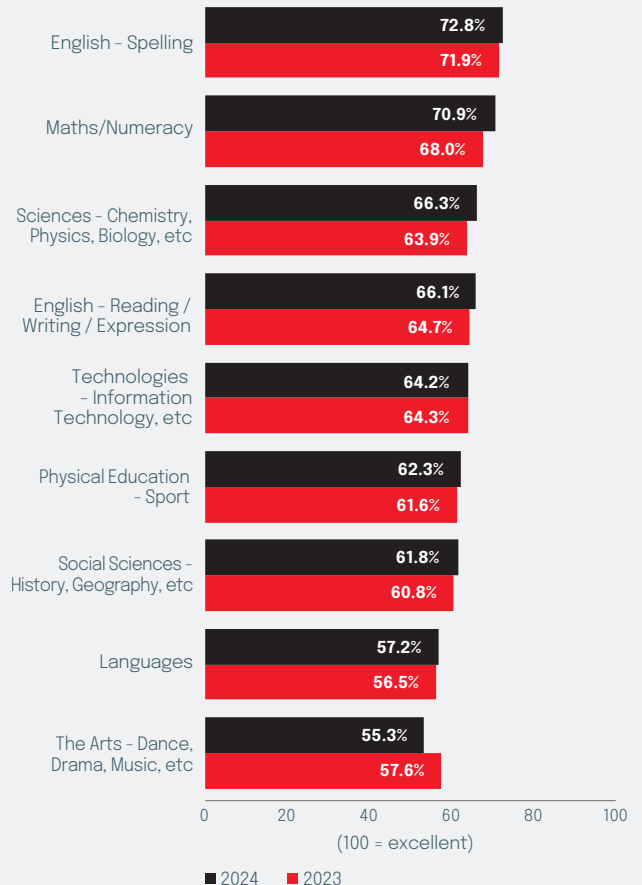
Student performance

The OECD’s Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) assesses the knowledge and skills of 15-year-old students in mathematics, science and reading. The latest results for 2022 show Australia regained its place in the international top 10 for the first time since 2003, with average 2022 results about the same as in the last PISA assessment in 2018. However, this largely reflected declines in other countries rather than local improvement. Over the longer term, the performance of Australian students has declined significantly in all three subjects.

How do Australian students rate themselves across the school curriculum? In this section, we ask them to score themselves on key components of the school curriculum, including mathematics & numeracy, English (reading, writing, expression & spelling), Sciences, Social Sciences, Technologies, The Arts, Languages and Physical Education. We also dive deeper and ask students who were not performing well in the 3 core components of the curriculum (Maths, English & sciences) why they thought they were not performing well.

Encouragingly, students overall scored themselves highest in the core components of the curriculum. They scored highest (and at relatively elevated levels) for Spelling (72.8 pts) and Maths & Numeracy (70.9 pts).

Chart 5: Curriculum – Student self scored



Curriculum: Student self-scored 2024 (score)

	All Students	Private Indep. school	Private Catholic	Public School	Boys only school	Girls only school	Co-ed school	All boys	All girls	LGBTQI+ (yes)	LGBTQI+ (no)	Years 7-9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
English (Spelling)	72.8	71.7	72.9	73.1	71.3	72.7	73.0	71.9	74.1	71.7	73.0	71.4	70.7	74.0	72.9
Maths/Numeracy	70.9	72.7	71.0	70.3	75.3	67.9	70.9	73.0	69.4	58.6	72.9	74.0	70.3	72.0	69.5
Sciences (Chem, Physics, Bio)	66.3	64.9	64.9	67.1	65.3	62.2	67.1	67.0	65.8	61.6	67.1	66.0	66.5	68.6	64.3
English (Reading, Writing)	66.1	67.7	68.0	65.1	65.3	66.0	66.3	63.9	68.4	65.2	66.3	71.7	65.7	65.4	65.2
Technologies (IT, etc.)	64.2	65.6	66.0	63.2	66.7	60.3	64.5	70.5	57.4	58.6	65.0	66.8	67.2	62.3	63.0
Physical Education (Sport)	62.3	64.9	62.7	61.3	63.3	62.7	62.1	65.3	59.1	46.3	64.6	63.8	63.3	65.8	58.3
Social Sciences (History, etc.)	61.8	60.8	66.1	60.9	62.6	63.0	61.5	61.4	62.8	55.6	62.7	61.8	66.5	63.1	58.1
Languages	57.2	57.4	53.5	58.2	49.3	59.4	57.9	53.6	61.2	53.3	57.7	58.1	63.3	55.4	55.4
The Arts (Dance, Drama, etc.)	53.3	49.4	55.7	53.7	42.6	51.5	54.9	48.5	57.3	58.9	52.3	53.8	57.6	53.0	51.0

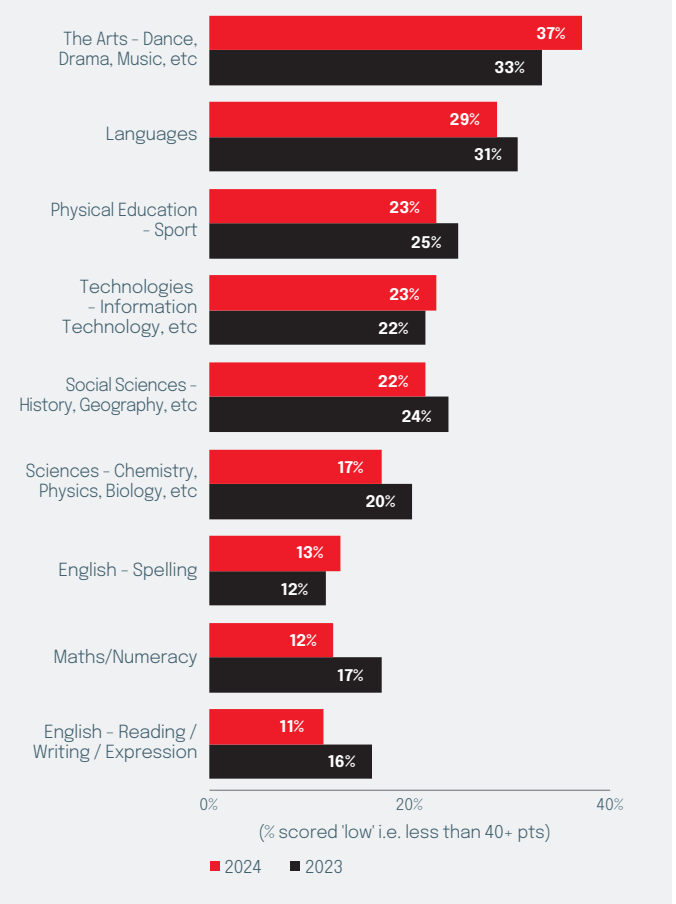
Moreover, they also scored their performance in these areas better than in 2023 (71.9 pts & 68.0 pts respectively). Students scored next highest for the Sciences (66.3 pts) and Reading, Writing & Expression (66.1 pts), with both components also scored higher than in 2023 (63.9 pts & 64.7 pts respectively).

It was also encouraging that students rated themselves higher in most other areas of the curriculum as well in 2024 - Physical Education (62.3 pts vs. 61.6 pts in 2023), Social Sciences (61.8 pts vs. 60.8 pts) and Languages (57.2 pts vs. 56.5 pts). Technology subjects such as IT were scored basically the same (64.2 pts vs. 64.3 pts). However, we noted a sharp fall in student self-assessment for The Arts such as drama, dance & music (53.3 pts vs. 45.7 pts) which also scored lowest of all areas of the curriculum.

Student scores did not vary much by type of school with few exceptions - students at private Catholic schools scored themselves much higher for Social Sciences (66.1 pts), but lower for languages (53.5 pts), and at private independent schools lower for The Arts (49.4 pts) than their peers.

Students at boys only schools scored noticeably higher for Maths & Numeracy (75.3 pts), but much lower for Languages (49.3 pts) and The Arts (42.6 pts), while those at girls only schools scored somewhat lower for Technologies (60.3 pts). Boys in general scored themselves much higher than girls in Technologies (70.5 pts vs. 57.4 pts) and Physical Education (65.3 pts vs. 59.1 pts), and somewhat higher for Maths & Numeracy (73.0 pts vs. 69.4 pts). But girls in general scored significantly higher for The Arts (57.3 vs. 48.5 pts) and Languages (61.2 pts vs. 53.6 pts), and somewhat higher for Reading, Writing & Expression (68.4 pts vs. 63.9 pts) and Spelling (74.1 pts vs. 71.9 pts).

Chart 6: Curriculum – self scored low



LGBTQI+ students self-scored lower in almost all areas of the curriculum than non LGBTQI+ students, particularly Physical Education (46.3 pts vs. 64.6 pts) and Maths & Numeracy (58.6 pts vs. 72.9 pts), with The Arts (58.9 pts vs. 52.3 pts) the only area they self-scored higher. It was also very interesting that students in Year 12 scored

themselves lowest in nearly all areas of the curriculum except English spelling and Technologies - see table above.

It was particularly encouraging to find the number of students who scored themselves 'low' (i.e. less than 40 pts) fell in most areas of the school curriculum or was largely unchanged with few exceptions in the 2024 survey.

Over 1 in 3 (37%) of all students scored low for The Arts in 2024 (up from 33% in 2023). Around 3 in 10 (29%) also scored low for Languages but down from 31% in 2023. Around 1 in 4 scored low for Physical Education (23% vs. 25%), Technology (23% vs. 22%) and Social Sciences (22% vs. 24%).

In core curriculum subjects, it was very pleasing to note much lower numbers of students that scored low for Reading, Writing & Expression (11% down sharply from 16% in 2023), Maths & Numeracy (also down significantly to 12% from 17%), Spelling (broadly unchanged at 13%) and Sciences (17% down somewhat from 20% last year).

Across student cohorts we did however identify much higher numbers of students that scored low across the curriculum than their peers. Among the more obvious were at private independent schools with The Arts (43%), boys only schools The Arts (52%) and Languages (48%), girls only schools Technologies (33%) and Sciences (24%), among all boys Languages (35%) and girls Technologies (32%) and Physical Education (28%), LGBTIQ+ students Physical Education (45%), Sciences (25%) and Maths & Numeracy (22%), and by year level in year 11 for Languages (34%) and Year 12 Physical Education (29%) - see table below.



Curriculum: Student self-scored 2024 (% scored low)

	All Students	Private Indep. school	Private Catholic	Public School	Boys only school	Girls only school	Co-ed school	All boys	All girls	LGBTIQ+ (yes)	LGBTIQ+ (no)	Years 7-9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
The Arts (Dance, Drama, etc.)	37%	43%	30%	38%	52%	44%	34%	40%	35%	34%	38%	35%	30%	38%	42%
Languages	29%	28%	31%	28%	48%	31%	26%	35%	22%	30%	29%	27%	21%	34%	29%
Technologies (IT, etc.)	23%	23%	19%	24%	21%	33%	21%	14%	32%	31%	22%	22%	20%	26%	22%
Physical Education (Sport)	23%	22%	20%	24%	18%	24%	23%	17%	28%	45%	20%	17%	21%	19%	29%
Social Sciences (History, etc.)	22%	26%	20%	21%	16%	21%	23%	20%	23%	32%	20%	23%	17%	18%	27%
Sciences (Chem, Physics, Bio)	17%	25%	19%	14%	18%	24%	16%	17%	17%	25%	16%	14%	17%	15%	20%
English (Spelling)	13%	17%	7%	14%	8%	13%	14%	14%	12%	17%	13%	12%	13%	12%	14%
Maths/Numeracy	12%	12%	13%	12%	10%	14%	12%	12%	12%	22%	11%	12%	13%	11%	14%
English (Reading, Writing)	11%	15%	9%	11%	13%	12%	11%	13%	10%	9%	12%	10%	10%	12%	12%

Reasons for not performing well in Mathematics & Numeracy: 2024

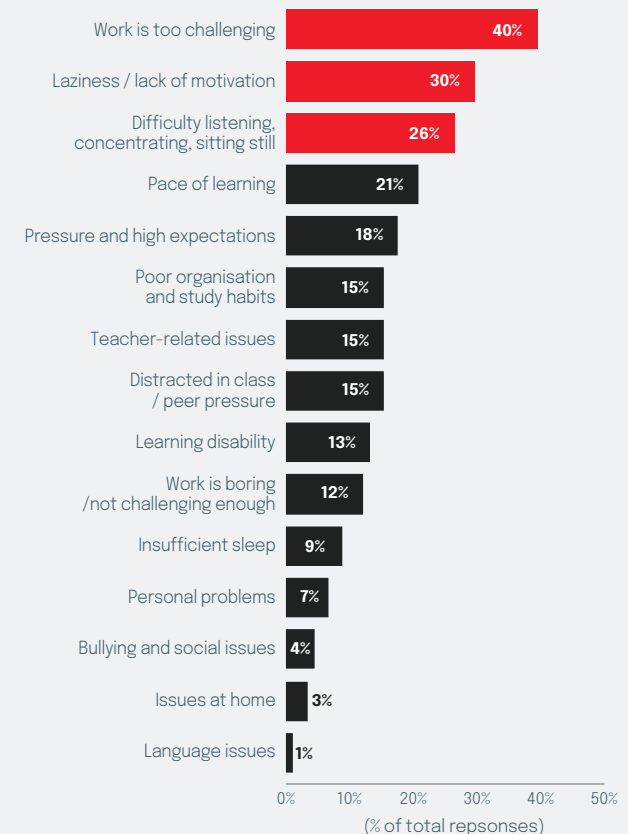
	All Students	Private Indep. school	Private Catholic	Public School	Boys only school	Girls only school	Co-ed school	All boys	All girls	LGBTQI+ (yes)	LGBTQI+ (no)	Years 7-9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Work is too challenging	40%	36%	44%	39%	50%	35%	40%	41%	41%	46%	37%	57%	33%	40%	39%
Laziness/lack of motivation	30%	21%	38%	30%	33%	29%	29%	27%	33%	18%	35%	29%	53%	12%	32%
Difficulty listening, etc.	26%	29%	19%	28%	0%	29%	28%	27%	27%	50%	16%	0%	27%	32%	27%
Pace of learning	21%	29%	25%	18%	17%	24%	21%	24%	20%	18%	22%	14%	13%	28%	20%
Pressure & high expectations	18%	29%	19%	15%	17%	12%	19%	11%	24%	14%	19%	0%	7%	24%	20%
Distracted in class/peers	15%	14%	0%	20%	0%	12%	18%	19%	10%	7%	19%	43%	0%	20%	14%
Teacher-related issues	15%	29%	25%	10%	17%	24%	13%	3%	24%	14%	16%	29%	7%	28%	9%
Poor organisation/study habits	15%	14%	0%	20%	0%	18%	16%	22%	10%	14%	16%	0%	20%	4%	23%
Learning disability	13%	7%	19%	13%	17%	12%	13%	16%	10%	11%	14%	14%	40%	4%	9%
Work boring/not challenging	12%	21%	6%	11%	0%	12%	13%	16%	8%	14%	11%	14%	27%	8%	9%
Insufficient sleep	9%	14%	0%	10%	17%	6%	9%	11%	8%	7%	10%	0%	0%	8%	14%
Personal problems	7%	14%	0%	7%	0%	12%	6%	3%	8%	11%	5%	14%	7%	12%	2%
Bullying and social issues	4%	0%	0%	7%	0%	6%	4%	3%	4%	7%	3%	0%	7%	8%	2%
Issues at home	3%	0%	0%	5%	0%	6%	3%	3%	2%	11%	0%	14%	0%	8%	0%
Language issues	1%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	1%	3%	0%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%	2%

According to the International Commission on Mathematical Instruction (ICMI), mathematics is a fundamental part of human thought and logic, and integral to attempts at understanding the world. Mathematics provides an effective way of building mental discipline and encourages logical reasoning and mental rigor. Mathematical knowledge also plays a critical role in understanding the contents of other school subjects such as science, social studies and even art and music. Mathematics is one of the core areas of the school curriculum, and widely recognised as one of the more difficult academic subjects they must take.

In the 2024 survey, we asked students who were not performing well in Mathematics to select up to 3 reasons why. According to 4 in 10 (40%) it was because work was too challenging. The next most common reason according to 3 in 10 (30%) was laziness or lack of motivation, and by 1 in 4 (26%) difficulty listening, concentrating or sitting still.

Around 1 in 5 students that were not performing struggled with the pace of learning (21%) and pressure & high expectations (18%), and 1 in 7 poor organisation & study habits (15%), teacher-related issues (15%) and class distractions & peer pressure (15%). Around 13% had a learning disability, and 12% found the work boring or not challenging. Language issues (1%), issues at home (3%), bullying & social issues (4%), personal problems (7%) and lack of sleep (9%) were the least common reasons given.

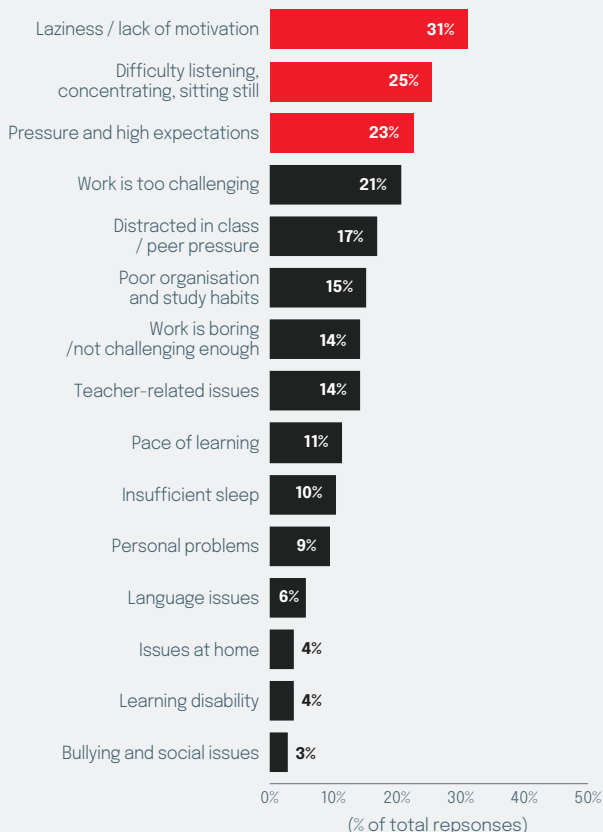
Chart 7: Reasons for not performing well in mathematics/numeracy



We did however note some large differences driving poor performance in different cohorts. By school type, a much higher number of students in private independent schools said they were not performing well because of pressure & high expectations (29%), boring or unchallenging work (21%), insufficient sleep (14%) and personal problems (14%), but in public schools class distractions & peer pressure (21%) and poor organisation & study habits (20%). Noticeably more students at all boys schools found the work too challenging (50%) or blamed lack of sleep (17%), in girls only schools teacher-related issues (24%) and coeducational schools being distracted in class & peer pressure (18%). Noticeably more boys in general were distracted in class or felt peer pressure (19%), had poor organisation & study habits (22%) or found the work boring or not challenging (17%). Noticeably more girls overall struggled with pressure & high expectations (24%), and a much higher number of LGBTQI+ students found it difficult listening, sitting still & concentrating in class (50%). By year level, more students in year 7-9 said the work was too challenging (57%), were distracted in class (43%) or had issues at home (14%), but in year 10 laziness or lack of motivation (53%), learning disability (40%) or found the work boring (27%). Insufficient sleep (14%) and poor study habits & organisation (23%) was a much bigger issue in year 12, and teacher-related issues in years 7-9 (29%) and 11 (28%).



Chart 8: Reasons for not performing well in English (reading, writing, expression)



The study of English is central to learning and development for Australian students. It is also a core component of the high school curriculum and a compulsory subject in all Australian high schools. But 1 in 10 high school students self-score themselves poorly in English. In the 2024 survey, we also asked these students to select up to 3 reasons why.

Topping the list according to 3 in 10 (31%) self-reported underperforming English students was laziness or lack of motivation. The next most common reasons according to around 1 in 4 was difficulty listening, concentrating or sitting still (25%) and pressure and high expectations (23%).

Around 1 in 5 students not performing well found the work too challenging (21%), with a significantly high number also impacted by distractions in class & peer pressure (17%), poor organisation & study habits (15%), said the work was boring and not challenging enough (14%) or had teacher-related issues (14%). Around 1 in 10 struggled with the pace of learning (11%), or were held back by insufficient sleep (10%) or personal problems (9%)

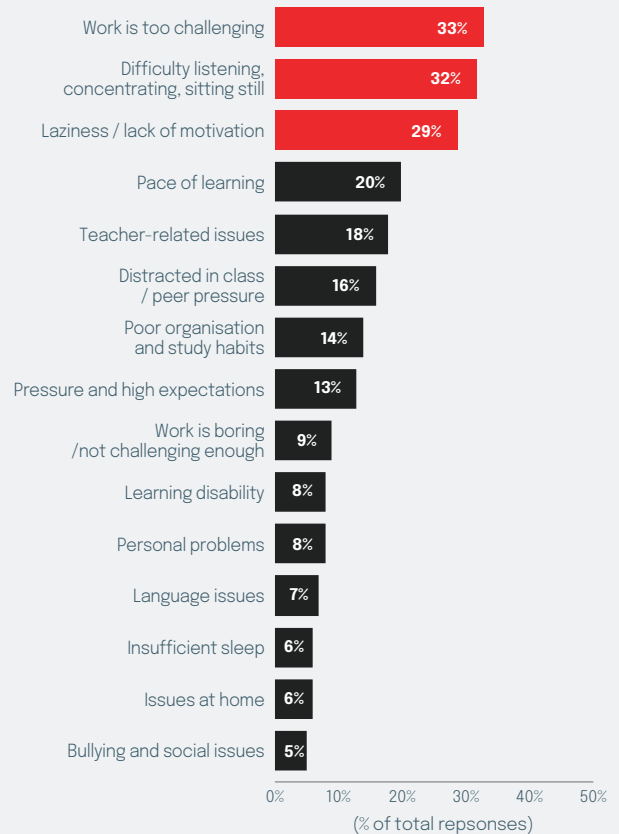
Bullying & social issues (3%), learning disability (4%), home issues (4%) and language issues (4%) where the least common reasons why students did not perform well in English.

Reasons for not performing well in English: 2024

	All Students	Private Indep. school	Private Catholic	Public School	Boys only school	Girls only school	Co-ed school	All boys	All girls	LGBTQI+ (yes)	LGBTQI+ (no)	Years 7-9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Laziness/lack of motivation	31%	40%	12%	33%	11%	47%	30%	32%	31%	7%	35%	44%	21%	39%	28%
Difficulty listening, etc.	25%	20%	18%	29%	0%	27%	28%	25%	29%	33%	24%	0%	32%	16%	34%
Pressure and high expectations	23%	5%	29%	26%	11%	13%	26%	26%	16%	33%	21%	44%	21%	10%	28%
Work is too challenging	21%	20%	29%	19%	22%	33%	18%	21%	22%	27%	20%	11%	16%	16%	28%
Distracted in class/peers	17%	20%	12%	17%	0%	20%	18%	16%	18%	20%	16%	33%	26%	23%	6%
Poor organisation/study habits	15%	20%	18%	13%	11%	27%	13%	11%	22%	13%	15%	0%	16%	19%	15%
Teacher-related issues	14%	20%	6%	14%	11%	20%	13%	11%	16%	13%	14%	22%	11%	13%	15%
Work boring/not challenging	14%	0%	6%	20%	0%	7%	17%	14%	16%	20%	13%	11%	5%	19%	15%
Pace of learning	11%	10%	24%	9%	22%	0%	12%	19%	2%	13%	11%	0%	16%	10%	13%
Insufficient sleep	10%	0%	18%	12%	0%	0%	13%	7%	13%	13%	10%	22%	16%	3%	11%
Personal problems	9%	5%	12%	10%	11%	7%	10%	12%	7%	7%	10%	11%	5%	10%	11%
Language issues	6%	10%	0%	6%	0%	0%	7%	4%	9%	0%	7%	0%	11%	3%	6%
Learning disability	4%	5%	12%	1%	11%	0%	4%	4%	2%	0%	4%	0%	5%	6%	2%
Issues at home	4%	5%	6%	3%	22%	0%	2%	7%	0%	13%	2%	11%	11%	0%	2%
Bullying and social issues	3%	10%	0%	1%	11%	0%	2%	5%	0%	0%	3%	22%	0%	0%	2%

Significantly more students at private independent schools did not perform well due to laziness & lack of motivation (40%), at private Catholic schools because it was too challenging (29%) and pace of learning (24%) and at public schools difficulty listening, sitting still & concentrating (29%). At all boys schools, pace of learning (22%) and issues at home (22%) were more problematic, at girls only schools laziness & lack of motivation (47%), challenging work (33%) and poor organisation & study habits (27%), and coeducational schools pressure & high expectations (26%) and lack of sleep (13%). More boys overall struggled with pressure & high expectations (26%) and pace of learning (19%), and girls poor organisation & study habits (22%). A much higher number of LGBTQI+ students found it difficult listening, sitting still & concentrating (33%), the work too challenging (33%) or had issues at home (13%). We also noted much higher numbers in year 7-9 struggling with pressure & high expectations (44%) and bullying (22%) and year 12 who found the work too challenging (28%).

Chart 9: Reasons for not performing well in science (chemistry, physics, biology etc.)



Science is a core part of the Australian curriculum and is compulsory until year 10. In senior years, Sciences subjects such as physics and chemistry are content-heavy and require a significant time commitment for study and revision. Almost 1 in 5 students self-scored low in Sciences in 2024. We asked those students to select up to 3 reasons why.

Reasons for not performing well in Science: 2024

	All Students	Private Indep. school	Private Catholic	Public School	Boys only school	Girls only school	Co-ed school	All boys	All girls	LGBTQI+ (yes)	LGBTQI+ (no)	Years 7-9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Work is too challenging	33%	43%	40%	25%	10%	29%	36%	34%	32%	21%	35%	17%	38%	28%	38%
Difficulty listening, etc.	32%	29%	40%	29%	20%	41%	31%	30%	34%	32%	32%	25%	44%	28%	31%
Laziness/lack of motivation	29%	29%	20%	33%	40%	12%	31%	28%	28%	47%	24%	50%	25%	20%	29%
Pace of learning	20%	19%	20%	20%	0%	18%	23%	17%	22%	21%	20%	17%	6%	8%	31%
Teacher-related issues	18%	14%	20%	18%	40%	12%	16%	26%	10%	26%	16%	42%	25%	20%	8%
Distracted in class/peer	16%	10%	20%	16%	0%	24%	16%	11%	22%	26%	13%	17%	31%	20%	8%
Poor organisation/study habits	14%	5%	16%	16%	10%	35%	9%	4%	24%	16%	13%	8%	6%	16%	17%
Pressure and high expectations	13%	10%	16%	13%	0%	6%	16%	13%	14%	5%	15%	8%	0%	8%	21%
Work boring/not challenging	9%	14%	4%	9%	0%	6%	11%	11%	8%	11%	9%	17%	6%	8%	8%
Personal problems	8%	14%	4%	7%	10%	12%	7%	2%	12%	11%	7%	8%	6%	20%	2%
Learning disability	8%	5%	8%	9%	10%	18%	5%	9%	6%	5%	9%	8%	13%	4%	8%
Language issues	7%	14%	0%	7%	20%	0%	7%	15%	0%	0%	9%	8%	6%	8%	6%
Issues at home	6%	10%	4%	5%	20%	0%	5%	9%	4%	0%	7%	0%	6%	12%	4%
Insufficient sleep	6%	0%	12%	5%	10%	0%	7%	6%	6%	5%	6%	0%	0%	8%	8%
Bullying and social issues	5%	10%	4%	4%	0%	0%	7%	9%	2%	11%	4%	8%	0%	0%	8%

Topping the list according to 1 in 3 (33%) students was because the work was too challenging. 1 in 3 (32%) also found it difficult listening, concentrating & sitting still, and 3 in 10 (29%) blamed laziness & lack of motivation (29%).

Around 1 in 5 were not performing well because of the pace of learning (20%) and teacher-related issues (18%). A high number also pointed to distractions in class & peer pressure (16%), poor organisation & study habits (14%) and pressure & high expectations (13%). Around 1 in 10 scored low because the work was boring & not challenging (9%), had learning disabilities (8%) or personal problems (8%). Bullying & social issues (5%), issues at home (6%), lack of sleep (6%) and language issues (7%) were the least common reasons why students did not perform well in Science.

A much higher number at private Catholic schools believed they were not performing well due to difficulty listening, concentrating or sitting still (40%), at boys only schools laziness or lack of motivation (40%), teacher-related issues (40%), language issues (20%) and issues at home (20%), at girls only schools difficulty listening, concentrating or sitting still (41%) and poor organisation & study habits (35%) and at coeducational schools because work was too challenging (36%). Noticeably more boys in general struggled because of teacher-related (26%) and language issues (15%) and girls being distracted in class (22%), poor organisation & study habits (24%) and personal

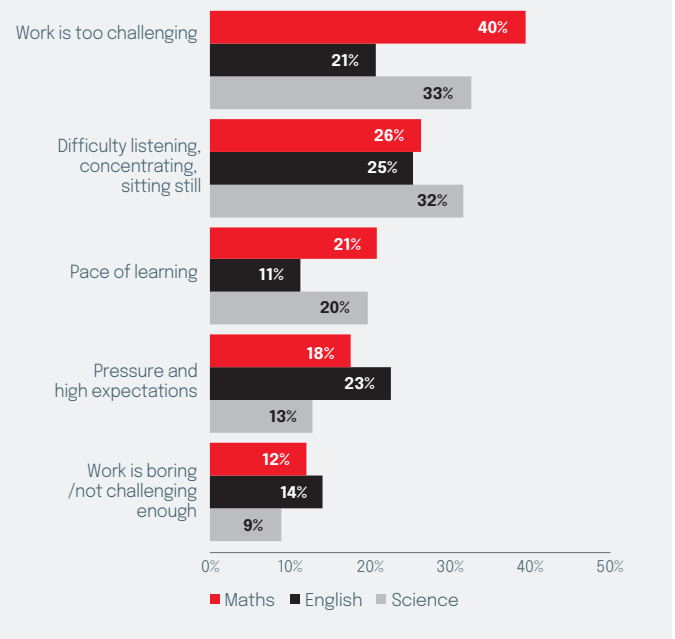
problems (12%). A much higher number of LGBTQI+ students said they were not doing well because of laziness & lack of motivation (47%), being distracted in class (26%) and bullying & social issues (11%). More students in years 7-9 cited laziness & lack of motivation (50%), teacher-related issues (42%) and boring work (17%), in year 10 difficulty listening, concentrating, or sitting still (44%) and being distracted in class (31%), and in year 12 the pace of learning (31%). Students in year 10 and 12 were also struggling more because the work was too challenging.



Comparing the reasons why students were not performing well across these 3 core subjects highlights some interesting differences and similarities. In particular, a much higher number of students said the work was too challenging in Mathematics (40%) and Science (33%) than English (21%). This helps supports the widely held notion that mainstream English is considered to be “easier” than Mathematics and the Sciences in general. Building on this, around twice as many students not performing well in Mathematics and Science (around 1 in 5) were also struggling with the pace of learning than in English (1 in 10).

Difficulty listening, concentrating and sitting still was somewhat more problematic for students struggling in Science (1 in 3 students) than in Mathematics and English (1 in 4 students). Though somewhat fewer students not doing well in Science (9%) also found the work boring or not challenging enough than in English (14%) and Mathematics (12%).

Chart 10: Reasons for not performing well in Mathematics, English & Science



Also interesting was the fact significantly more students under achieving in English were not performing well because of pressure and high expectations (around 1 in 4 or 23%), compared to just 18% in Mathematics and 13% in Sciences - perhaps linked to the fact that English is the only subject that is compulsory through to the final year of high school.



Streaming

Streaming refers to a variety of approaches by which students are separated into classes based on ability. It usually involves grouping students into classes for all or most of their lessons so that a student is in the same group regardless of the subject being taught. The assumption is that it will be possible to teach more effectively or efficiently with a narrower range of student achievement in a class. There is a strong culture of setting and streaming in schools in Australia, but there is no official educational policy on streaming. Schools make local decisions about if and how to stream students. In this section, we explore how many students have been streamed, if they feel their learning has benefitted from being streamed and how it has impacted their experience of school.

More students said they were streamed than not in 2024. Around 6 in 10 (59%) were streamed - 1 in 2 (49%) placed in a group because of higher academic potential or ability and 1 in 10 (10%) because they need extra help and support. Around 4 in 10 (41%) were not streamed.

Streaming was more common in private independent (62%) and public schools (60%) than Catholic schools (55%). Those streamed because of higher academic potential was highest in public schools (53%) and lowest in private Catholic schools (40%), and those for extra help and support highest in Catholic schools (15%) and lowest in public schools (7%).

More students overall were streamed in boys only schools (69%), and somewhat less in coeducational schools (58%) and girls only schools (61%). Though 1 in 2 students in these schools were streamed based on higher academic potential and ability, noticeably more at boys only schools because they needed extra help and support (1 in 5 or 19%) - over twice as many than in coeducational schools (8%). Slightly more girls overall (61%) were streamed than boys (57%), with somewhat more girls streamed based on higher academic potential or ability (53% vs. 45%), and more boys because they need extra help and support (12% vs. 8%).

The survey also revealed a slightly higher number of LGBTQI+ students who had been streamed than non-LGBTQI+ students (61% vs. 59%). However, somewhat more LGBTQI+ students were streamed because of their academic potential and ability (54% vs. 49%) and fewer because they needed extra help and support (7% vs. 10%).

There was a clear correlation between the number of students that were streamed by year level. It was highest overall in years 7-9 (77%) and stepped down in each subsequent year level to 51% in year 12. This relationship also held true for the number of students who were streamed because of their academic potential or ability

- it was highest in years 7-9 (68%) and stepped down in each year level to 38% in year 12. In contrast, the number of students who indicated they were streamed because they needed extra help or support was highest in year 12 (13%) and basically similar in all other year levels ranging from 9% in year 7-9 to 7% in year 11.

Chart 11: Streamed in any classes (%)

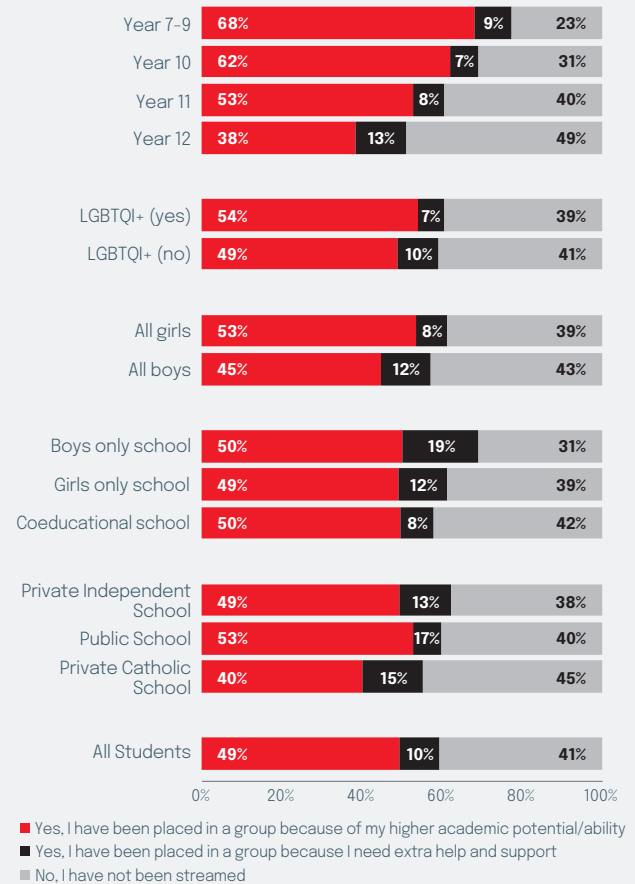
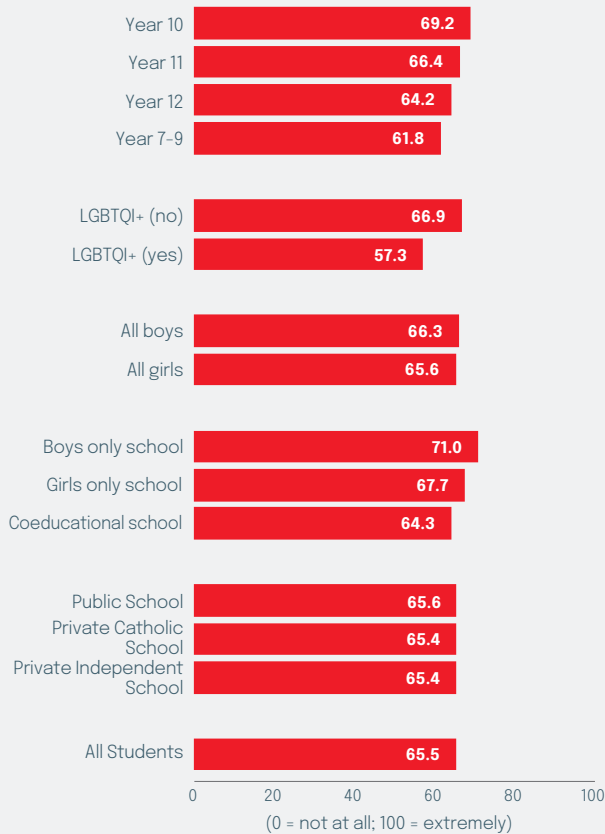


Chart 12: Extent your learning has benefitted from streaming



When streamed students were asked to rate the extent they believed that had benefitted from being streamed, they scored on average 66.5 pts (100 = extremely). The benefits were rated the same in public, private independent and private Catholic schools, but somewhat higher in boys only schools (71.0 pts) than in coeducational schools (64.3 pts). The benefit was assessed equally by boys and girls overall, but noticeably lower by LGBTQI+ students (57.3 pts). By year level, students in year 10 said they derived the highest benefit from being streamed (69.2 pts) and in 7-9 the least benefit (61.8 pts).

The average score does however mask a very high number of students - around 4 in 10 or 40% - who said they derived extremely high benefits (i.e. score 80+ pts) from being streamed. However, this ranged from 38% in public schools to 46% in private Catholic schools, 48% in boys only schools to 38% in coeducational schools, 43% of boys overall to 39% of girls, 27% of LGBTQI+ students to 43% of non-LGBTQI+ students, and from 29% in years 7-9 to 44% in year 11. At the same time 2 in 10 (20%) streamed students said the benefit to their learning was low (i.e. scored less than 40 pts), with this rising to 3 in 10 (30%) for LGBTQI+ students and around 1 in 4 in private Catholic schools (23%), in years 7-9 (24%) and for boys in general (3%) - see charts below.

Chart 13: Extent your learning has benefitted from streaming (scored "high")

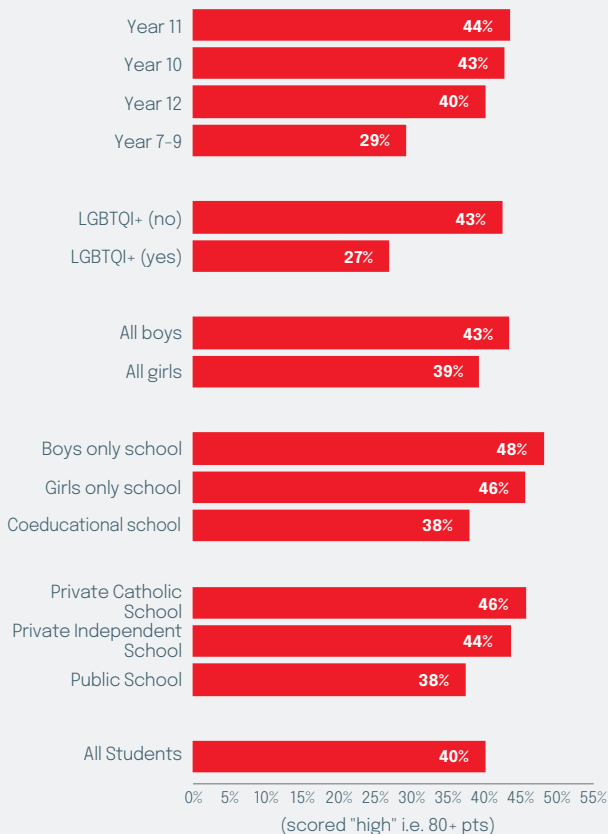
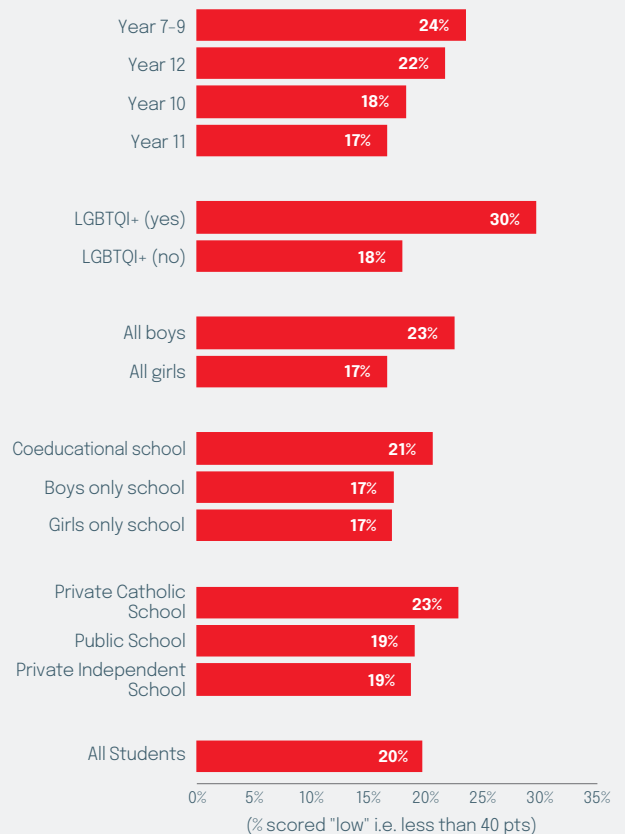


Chart 14: Extent your learning has benefitted from streaming (scored "low")



Arguments for streaming or separating students into ability or attainment groups is largely based on the assumption it enables teachers to stretch the most “able” students and support those who are “struggling”. Though this rationale is understandable, the evidence suggests streaming may exacerbate inequalities rather than reducing them. Indeed, research suggests that while there may be small achievement gains for higher attaining students, the impact on students in lower attaining groups is negative.

A similar pattern emerges when we break down responses from surveyed students streamed because of their higher academic potential or ability and those streamed because they needed extra help and support. When asked to score the extent their learning had benefitted, it was scored much higher by students streamed because of their higher academic potential or ability (67.5 pts) than those streamed because they need extra help and support (55.7 pts). Moreover, the number of students who scored the benefits from streaming “high” (i.e. scored 80+ pts) was more than twice as large among those streamed based on their academic potential or ability (44%) than because they need extra help and support (21%). In addition, twice as many students streamed because they need extra help and support (33%) also scored the extent it benefitted their learning “low” (i.e. less than 40 pts) than did students who were streamed based on their academic potential or ability (17%).

Does being streaming also impact students’ experience of school? When students were asked, around 1 in 2 (52%) overall said it made it better, but nearly 16% said it made their experience of school worse. On the positive side, we noted some interesting anomalies. In particular, being streamed made the experience of school better for significantly more students at boys only schools (3 in 4 or 76%), particularly when compared to students in years 7-9 and year 12 (47%). It was also a better experience for somewhat more students in year 11 (60%) and at private independent schools (58%).

At the other extreme, 3 in 10 (30%) LGBTQI+ students that were streamed said their experience of school was worse as a result. Around 1 in 5 streamed students at private Catholic schools (21%), in years 7-9 (21%) and girls in general (20%) also said it was worse. The number of students who said their school experience was worse as a result of being streamed was lowest by some margin at boys only schools (3%).

When we break down responses from surveyed students who have been streamed, into high and low, we again also found significant discrepancies in how streaming impacted their experience of school.



Chart 15: Extent your learning has benefitted from streaming

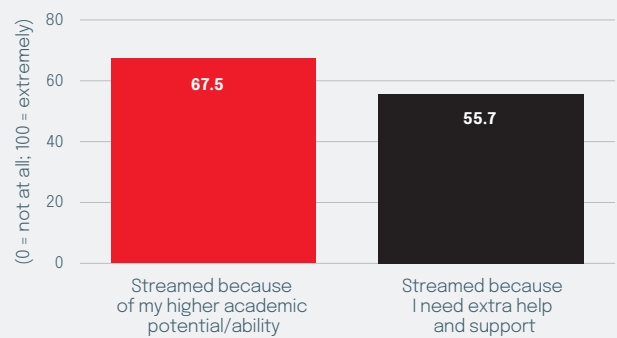


Chart 16: Extent your learning has benefitted from streaming

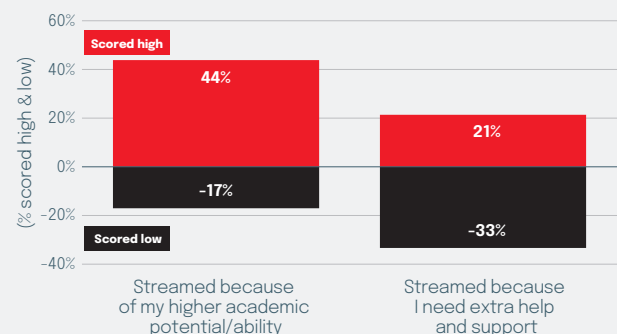
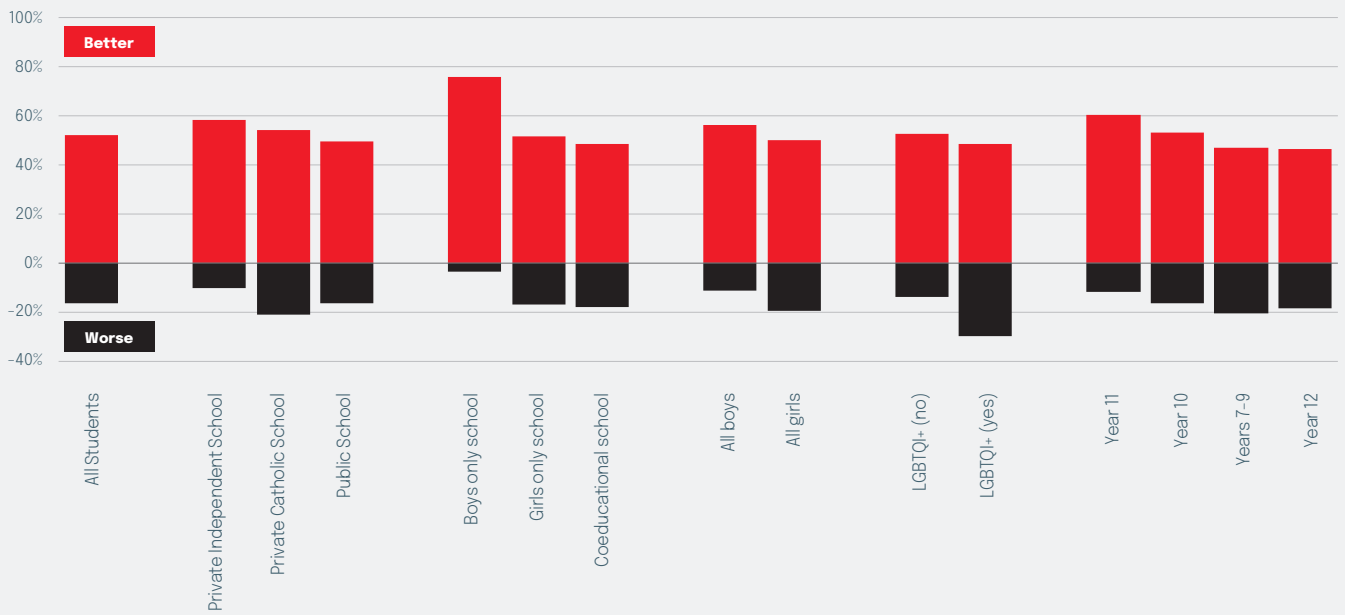


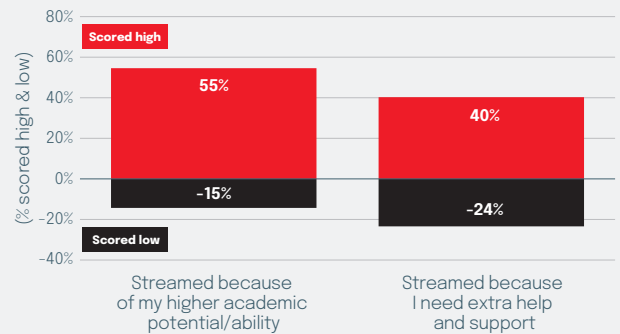
Chart 17: Streaming impact on experience of school



The share of students who scored the impact of streaming very positively was much greater among those students who were streamed due to their higher academic potential or ability (55%) compared to those because they needed extra help and support (40%).

The streaming impact on their experience of school was also scored low by significantly more students who were streamed because they need extra help and support (24%) than by students who were streamed based on their academic potential or ability (17%).

Chart 18: Extent your learning has benefited from streaming



Private tutors

Private tutoring has become an increasingly common and sought after resource for students of all academic abilities and socio-economic backgrounds in recent years as more parents recognise its benefits.

Several factors have influenced this trend, including the competitive nature of school admissions, the desire for more personalised learning experiences and growing academic expectations. In this section, we explore how many Australian high school students have private tutors outside of school for any subject, and how much students think tutors cost each week.

Overall, 3 in 10 (31%) students had private tutors outside of school, though this varied across monitored student cohorts. By school type, around 1 in 3 at private Catholic (33%) and public schools (32%) had tutors, compared to 1 in 4 at private independent schools (23%). The number with



private tutors was also much higher in girls (40%) and boys only (38%) schools than in coeducational schools (28%).

Somewhat more girls overall (34%) said they had private tutors than boys (28%), while fewer LGBTQI+ students (26%) had private tutors than non-LGBTQI+ students (32%). By year level, private tutor usage was highest in year 11 (40%) followed by year 10 (32%) and 12 (28%). It was lowest by a significant margin among students in years 7-9 (18%).

NAB's latest Consumer research finds that amid elevated stress around cost of living, consumers have become more sophisticated in how they approach saving to make ends meet and have doubled down on making targeted spending cutbacks, with reductions lifting in almost all areas.

Cutbacks remain most common for eating out at restaurants, treats such as coffee and snacks, entertainment, car journeys to save petrol, holidays and food delivery. Consumers however remain least inclined to cut spending on private school fees & tutors and their children's activities such as sport and hobbies etc.

In Australia, the cost of tutors can vary considerably with this influenced by the nature, level of specialisation, individualism, quality and characteristics of the tuition offered. According to Payscale data, tutors are paid an hourly pay of between \$19.82 and \$50.32, with the average rate being \$29.59. The Australian Tutoring Association estimate teacher-trained tutors typically charge in the range of \$40 to \$150 per hour.

When Australian high school students who said they had private tutors were asked to approximate their weekly cost, the average spend was \$114.

Weekly spend was however almost twice as high in private Catholic (\$125) and public schools (\$117) than in private independent schools (\$70), and also much higher in coeducational schools (\$139) than in boys (\$90) and girls (\$70) only schools. It was broadly similar for all boys (\$112) and girls (\$109). Average spend on private tutors was slightly higher for LGBTQI+ students (\$125), and significantly higher among students in years 7-9 (\$165) than in all other year levels.

Chart 19: Do you have private tutors outside of school for any subjects?

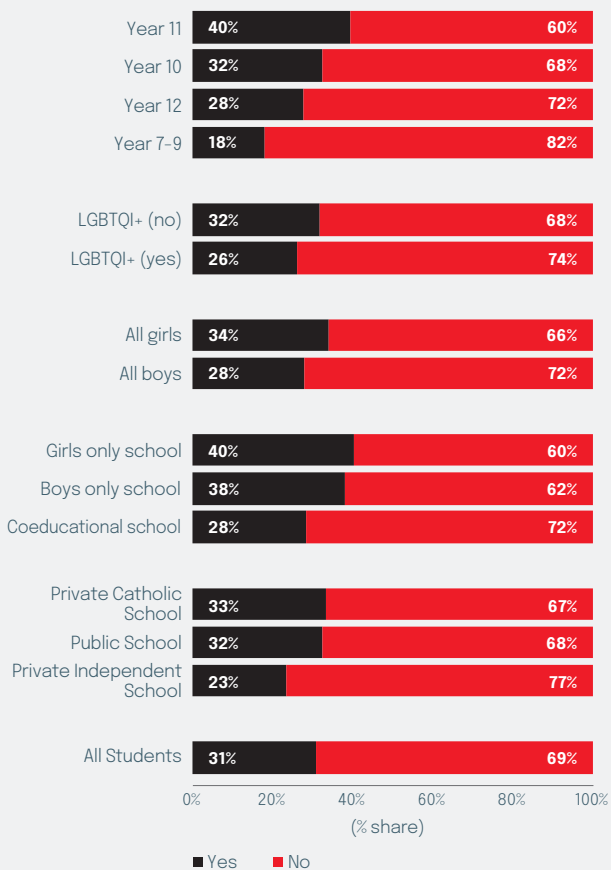
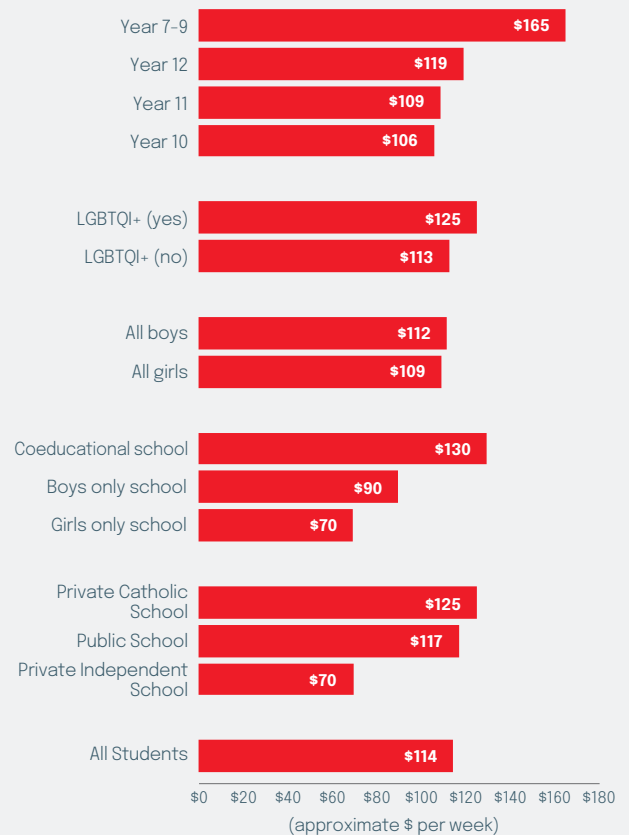


Chart 20: Cost of private tutors per week (\$)



What do students believe makes a great teacher?

As well as teaching, testing, and assessing students, our teachers also work to inspire and support students. They share a significant responsibility in helping to prepare to lead successful and productive lives. But what makes the best teachers? In this section, we asked students to think about the best teachers they have had at school and select the top 5 things that made them great.

A teacher that was engaging, funny creative and didn't just sit back and lecture them continues to be seen as the most important trait for a great teacher by 1 in 2 (50%) students overall (up from 47% in 2023). The second most common trait according to 38% of students was a teacher with a really positive attitude, one that built their confidence and motivated them (41% in 2023). Rounding out the top 5, around 3 in 10 said a teacher that respected students, valued each person's ideas and opinions (29% vs. 32% in 2023), treated them as an individual, were empathetic and understood what was going on in their lives (28% vs. 32%), someone that understood everyone learns differently and at different speeds (27% vs. 30%) and

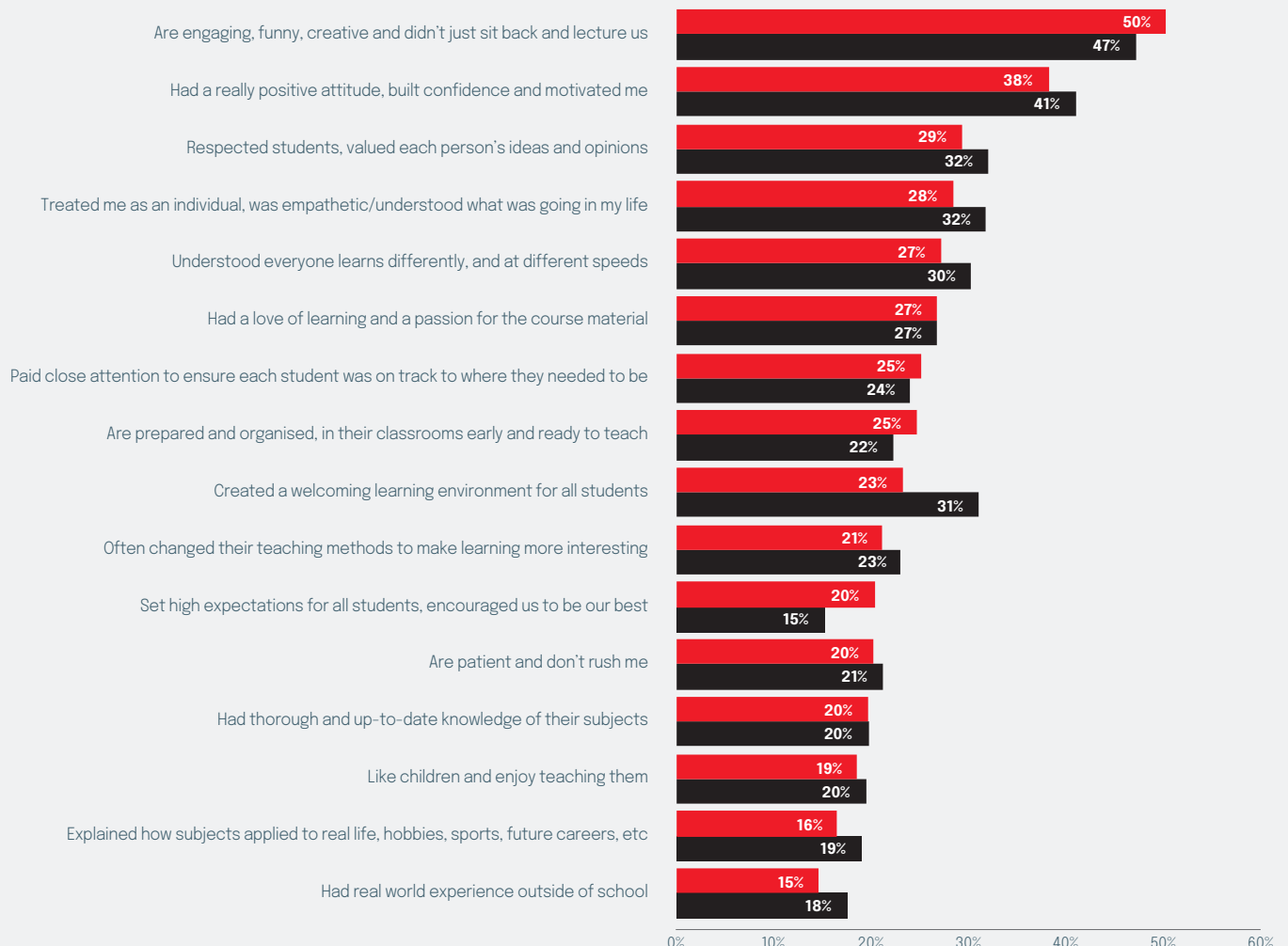
those that had a love of learning and a passion for the course material (unchanged at 27%).

Real world experience outside of school (15% vs. 18%), being able to explain how subjects applied to real life, hobbies, sports, future careers etc. (16% vs. 19%) and teachers that like children and enjoy teaching them (19% vs. 20%) were qualities that made teachers great according to the lowest number of students.

The 2024 survey also recorded a large drop in the number of students who said great teachers created a welcoming learning environment for all students (23% down from 31%), but also a significant increase in the number who said great teachers set high expectations for all students and encouraged them to be their best (20% up from 15%).

By school type, we did however note a much higher number of students at private independent schools who said great teachers respected students, valued each person's ideas and opinions (36%) and explained how subjects applied to real life, hobbies, sports, future careers, etc. (27%), at private Catholic schools set high

Chart 21: Top 5 things that made the best teachers you had at school great



expectations for all students and encouraged them to be their best (23%) and at public schools who were patient and didn't rush them (23%) and like children and enjoy teaching them (23%).

Noticeably more students at girls only said great teachers understood everyone learns differently, and at different speeds (44%) and paid close attention to ensure each student was on track to where they needed to be (37%),

Top 5 things that made the best teachers you had at school great: 2024

	All Students	Private Indep. school	Private Catholic	Public School	Boys only school	Girls only school	Co-ed school	All boys	All girls	LGBTQI+ (yes)	LGBTQI+ (no)	Years 7-9	Year 10	Year 11	Year 12
Are engaging, funny, creative and didn't just sit back and lecture us	50%	55%	47%	50%	40%	53%	51%	49%	51%	57%	49%	45%	51%	43%	56%
Had a really positive attitude, built confidence and motivated me	38%	34%	44%	38%	31%	32%	40%	40%	38%	34%	39%	34%	35%	36%	42%
Respected students, valued each person's ideas and opinions	29%	36%	28%	28%	29%	28%	30%	31%	28%	30%	29%	23%	24%	32%	32%
Treated me as an individual, was empathetic/understood what was going in my life	28%	36%	29%	26%	26%	30%	28%	27%	30%	36%	27%	14%	23%	33%	31%
Created a welcoming learning environment for all students	23%	21%	30%	28%	12%	26%	29%	21%	33%	28%	27%	27%	31%	16%	33%
Understood everyone learns differently, and at different speeds	27%	25%	29%	27%	19%	44%	25%	21%	31%	33%	26%	27%	24%	26%	29%
Had a love of learning and a passion for the course material	27%	27%	20%	26%	19%	28%	25%	25%	26%	18%	26%	23%	32%	24%	24%
Paid close attention to ensure each student was on track to where they needed to be	25%	22%	22%	26%	21%	37%	23%	21%	28%	18%	26%	30%	18%	23%	27%
Often changed their teaching methods to make learning more interesting	21%	27%	24%	22%	17%	19%	25%	19%	28%	30%	22%	25%	23%	22%	24%
Are prepared and organised, in their classrooms early and ready to teach	25%	21%	23%	21%	17%	28%	20%	20%	22%	31%	19%	32%	17%	19%	22%
Are patient and don't rush me	20%	18%	16%	23%	26%	18%	20%	21%	20%	20%	21%	16%	17%	24%	21%
Had thorough and up-to-date knowledge of their subjects	20%	21%	17%	21%	24%	16%	20%	22%	19%	26%	19%	25%	20%	22%	18%
Like children and enjoy teaching them	19%	17%	13%	23%	26%	26%	18%	17%	22%	20%	20%	14%	23%	18%	22%
Explained how subjects applied to real life, hobbies, sports, future careers, etc	16%	27%	15%	17%	29%	23%	17%	21%	15%	18%	19%	27%	24%	18%	15%
Had real world experience outside of school	15%	17%	17%	16%	17%	14%	17%	16%	16%	11%	17%	16%	11%	22%	14%
Set high expectations for all students, encouraged us to be our best	20%	10%	23%	13%	17%	11%	15%	13%	16%	15%	15%	7%	10%	20%	14%

and at coeducational schools had a really positive attitude, built confidence and motivated them (40%).

Noticeably more girls than boys overall also said great teachers created a welcoming learning environment for all students (33% vs. 21%), understood everyone learns differently and at different speeds (31% vs. 21%) and often changed their teaching methods to make learning more interesting (28% vs. 19%), but somewhat more boys that they explained how subjects applied to real life, hobbies, sports, future careers, etc. (21% vs. 15%).

Among LGBTQI+ students, great teachers were those who treated them as an individual and were empathetic and understood what was going in their life (36%), a teachers who often changed their methods to make learning more interesting (30%) and who were prepared and organised, in their classrooms early and ready to teach (31%).

By year level, key differences in what made great teachers included the higher number of students in years 11 & 12 who said they valued a teacher most that respected students and valued each person's ideas and opinions (32%), and treated them as individuals, were empathetic and understood what was going in their life (33% & 31% respectively), and in years 7-9 that paid close attention to ensure each student was on track to where they needed to be (30%) and often changed their teaching methods to make learning more interesting (32%).



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