



School Health Promotion study 2023

Self-perceived well-being, health and safety of children and young people in Helsinki

Suvi Määttä

Statistics
2023:6

Helsinki

**City of Helsinki, City Executive Office,
Urban Research and Statistics Unit**

Inquiries

Suvi Määttä, tel. +358 40 588 7891
firstname.lastname@hel.fi

Publisher

City of Helsinki, City Executive Office,
Urban Research and Statistics Unit

Address

P.O.Box 550, 00099 City of Helsinki
(Työpajankatu 8)

Telephone

+359 9 310 43297

Internet

<https://kaupunkitieto.hel.fi/en>

Orders, distribution

+359 9 310 43297
kaupunkitieto@hel.fi

Photographs

Cover: Elisa Seppänen
Page 4: Linnanmäki
Page 7: Maarit Hohteri
Page 14: Shoot Haley
Page 20: © Jussi Hellsten / Helsinki Partners
Page 26: Maarit Hohteri
Page 28: Ants Vahter

Translation

Tuukka Taarluoto, Michael Nagler (proofreading)
Grano Language Services

Online

ISSN 2954-176X

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School Health Promotion study 2023

This statistical publication examines the well-being, health and safety of children and young people in Helsinki based on the results of the 2023 School Health Promotion study. The development of key indicators in Helsinki is compared primarily to the previous School Health Promotion studies carried out in 2017, 2019 and 2021. The results are examined by gender and level of education. Helsinki's results are compared to the whole country or the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

The publication is divided into four main sections. Each section is further divided into 2–6 pages, with the key indicators of the section

presented on the first page and the following page(s) providing more insight on the specific theme. At the end of the publication, key findings are summarised in the summary section. The precise definitions of the indicators examined in the publication are available on [the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare's website](#) (in Finnish).

In Helsinki, a total of 23,502 children and young people participated in the School Health Promotion study in spring 2023. The detailed respondent numbers by level of education are presented in Table 1. However, the numbers of respondents may also vary by question.

Table 1. Number of respondents and response rate of the School Health Promotion study by level of education in 2021 and 2023 in Helsinki

Level of education	Number of respondents in 2023	Response rate in 2023, %	Number of respondents in 2021	Response rate in 2021, %
Basic education grades 4 and 5	8,327	66	9,382	75
Basic education grades 8 and 9	7,425	62	7,452	64
General upper secondary (GUS) education years 1 and 2	6,543	64	6,058	62
Vocational education and training (VET) years 1 and 2	1,207	21	924	*

*In 2021, the response rate was not calculated for VET.

What is the School Health Promotion study?

- A study carried out every other year by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL).
- The study provides comprehensive, municipality-specific monitoring data on the self-perceived well-being, health, safety, studies and access to help of children and young people.
- Data for the study is collected via a questionnaire from the following four groups: pupils in the 4th–5th and 8th–9th grades of basic education and students in the 1st and 2nd year of general upper secondary (GUS) education and vocational education and training (VET). As regards GUS and VET, the survey is aimed at students under the age of 21 who are studying the youth curriculum or for an initial vocational qualification.
- The questionnaire form for pupils in 4th and 5th grade is shorter than that of the others, so for this level of education data is not available for all of the indicators. Some of the questions are also different in the questionnaire form for pupils in 4th and 5th grade.
- The results of the 2023 study were published on 21 September 2023.
- The results and more detailed indicator descriptions are freely available on the results service (in Finnish): <https://thl.fi/fi/tutkimus-ja-kehittaminen/tutkimukset-ja-hankkeet/kouluterveyskysely/kouluterveyskyselyn-tulokset>

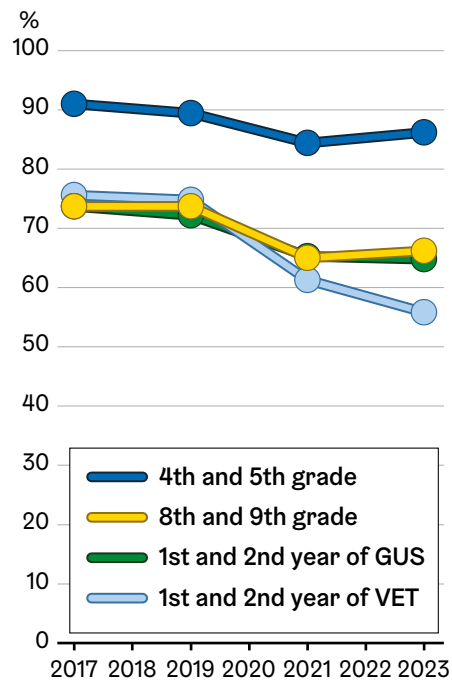

Satisfaction with life, hobbies and leisure time



Satisfaction with life, hobbies and leisure time

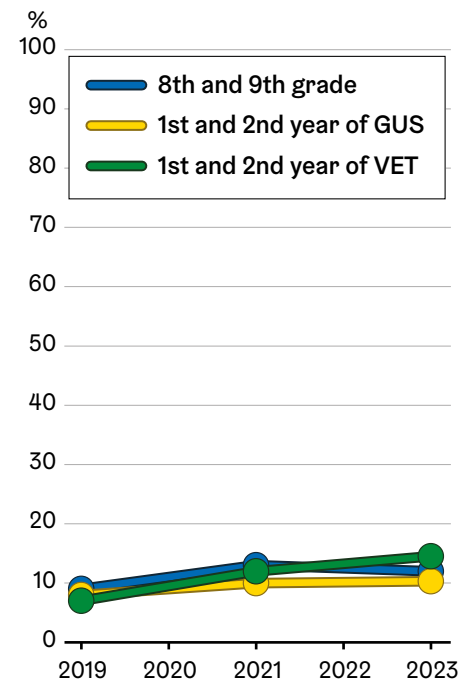

A large proportion of children and young people in Helsinki are satisfied with their lives. The majority have a weekly hobby. Engagement in art and culture hobbies and organised sport has increased. On the other hand, one in ten feel that their social inclusion is very poor.

Figure 1. Satisfaction with life by level of education in 2017–2023


More boys are satisfied with their lives than girls at all levels of education. In particular, the satisfaction with life of VET girls has clearly declined. In fact, the satisfaction with life of VET students in Helsinki is lower than in Finland on average or the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.


Figure 2. Those who feel that their social inclusion is very poor by level of education in 2019–2023





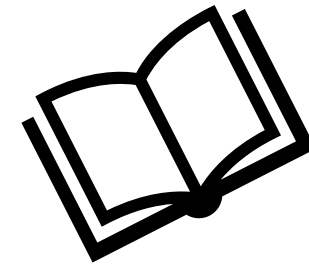
Feelings of very poor social inclusion are more common among girls than boys in all levels of education. In particular, as many as 20% of girls in VET consider their social inclusion to be very poor. In fact, feelings of very poor social inclusion are more common among VET students in Helsinki than in Finland on average or the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

Those who engage in a hobby at least once a week

8th and 9th grade 
96%
 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)

GUS 
96%
 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)

VET 
90%
 (-2.9 pp from 2021)



Satisfaction with life, hobbies and leisure time

4th and 5th graders who engage in a hobby at least one day a week

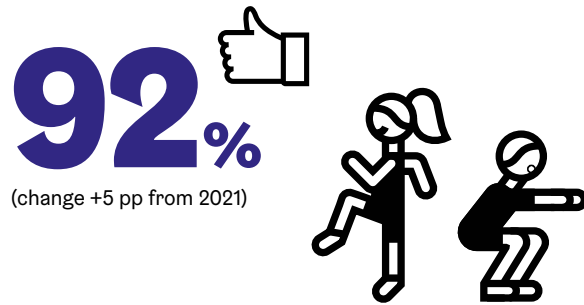
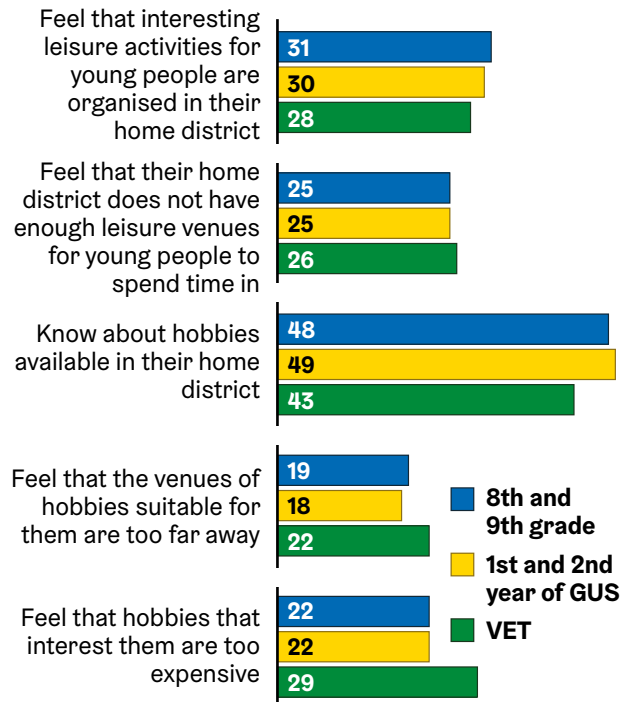


Figure 3. Recreational opportunities by level of education in 2023



What do the hobbies and leisure time of children and young people in Helsinki look like in 2023?

- The majority of children and young people have a weekly hobby. In particular, the engagement in hobbies of 4th and 5th grade girls (92%) and boys (91%) has improved following the dip noted in the previous study. At other levels of education as well, the proportions of both girls and boys who engage in a hobby weekly were well over 90%, with the exception of girls in VET (87%), which decreased somewhat from the previous study.
- Engagement in supervised art and culture hobbies has increased, whereas engagement in independent art and culture hobbies is less common among GUS students and 8th and 9th graders than in 2021.
- Art and culture hobbies are more common among girls than boys.
- Independent and supervised art and culture hobbies are more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average. In particular, the proportion of VET students who engage in art hobbies is higher in Helsinki than the rest of Finland.
- Engagement in organised sport is more common than in 2021. The proportions of both girls and boys engaging in organised sport have increased at all levels of

education. Engagement in organised sport is more common among boys than girls.

- Engagement in independent exercise is slightly less common than in 2021. At all levels of education, girls, in particular, engage in independent exercise less often than before. Still, engagement in independent exercise is more common than engagement in organised sport
- Engagement in both organised sport and independent exercise is more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average. Especially among 8th and 9th graders, engagement in organised sport is significantly more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average.
- Perception of recreational opportunities has declined in parts. The proportion of respondents who are aware of recreational opportunities in their neighbourhood has decreased, whereas the proportion of those who find appealing hobbies to be too expensive has increased. The perception of hobby venues being located far away is also slightly more common than before. On the other hand, the proportion of young people who feel that interesting recreational activities are organised in their neighbourhood has not changed from 2021, and the proportion of those who feel that there are not enough hangouts for young people in their residential area has decreased.

Table 2. Engagement in hobbies in Helsinki by level of education in 2023, %

	4th and 5th grade	8th and 9th grade	GUS	VET
engage in art or culture hobbies weekly	79	55	63	46
engage in guided art or culture hobbies weekly	*	24	22	15
engage in independent art or culture hobbies weekly	*	32	38	29
engage in supervised sport weekly	*	61	41	28
engage in independent exercise weekly	*	74	74	64

*Not asked from this respondent group.

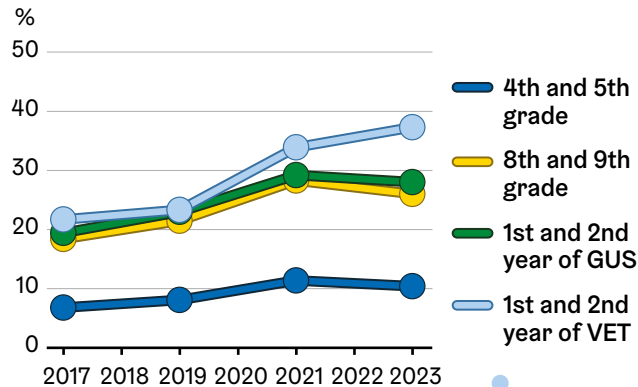
Self-perceived health, lifestyles and addictions



Self-perceived health, lifestyles and addictions

The majority of children and young people in Helsinki perceive their health as being good. The proportion of those who get at least one hour of physical activity a day has increased. Intoxicant use has not changed, but the use of electronic cigarettes has increased.

Figure 4. Those who consider their health average or poor by level of education in 2017–2023



A clearly higher proportion of girls consider their health to be average or poor than boys. Half of girls in VET consider their health to be at most average, while only about a quarter of boys feel this way. In GUS and 8th and 9th grade, 35% of girls and 17% of boys feel this way. A larger proportion of VET students consider their health to be at most average in Helsinki than in Finland on average or the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. The proportion of GUS students who feel this way is slightly higher than in Finland and the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, whereas the proportion of 8th and 9th graders who feel this way is the same.

A larger proportion of boys get at least one hour of physical activity per day than girls. The difference between genders is particularly clear in 4th and 5th grade, where 50% of boys but only 38% of girls get at least one hour of physical activity per day. In GUS, VET and 8th and 9th grade, the proportions of respondents who get at least one hour of physical activity per day are slightly higher in Helsinki than in Finland on average or the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, whereas in 4th and 5th grade the proportions are similar.

Figure 5. Those who get at least one hour of physical activity per day by level of education in 2017–2023

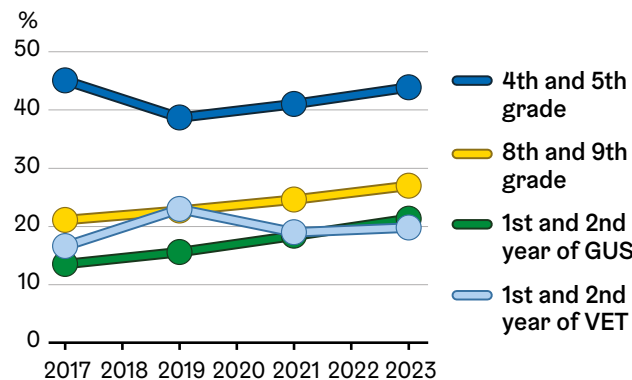
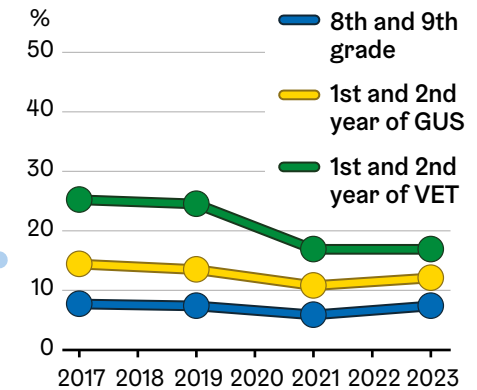


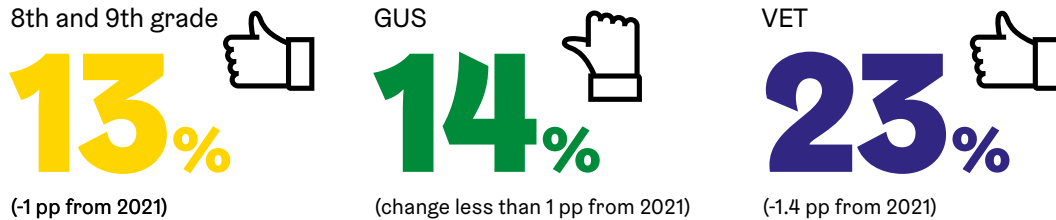
Figure 6. Concerning use of intoxicants or tobacco and nicotine products or gambling by level of education in 2017–2023



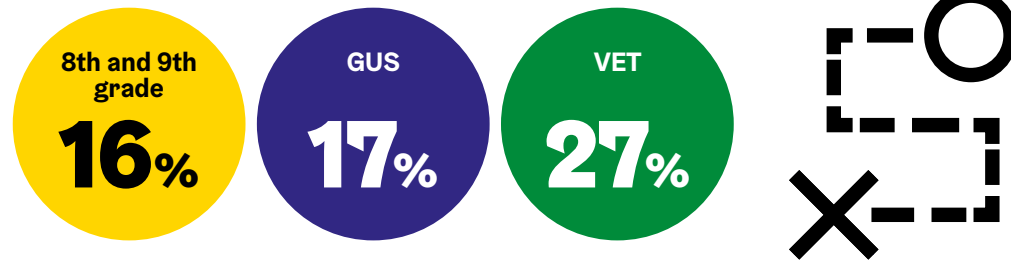
The use of intoxicants at a concerning level is more common among boys than girls in 8th and 9th grade and GUS, whereas in VET the situation is reversed. The concerning use of intoxicants is more common among GUS students in Helsinki than in Finland on average or the rest of the Metropolitan Area, whereas among VET students it is less common than in Finland on average or the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. The proportions of 8th and 9th graders are at the same level.

Self-perceived health, lifestyles and addictions

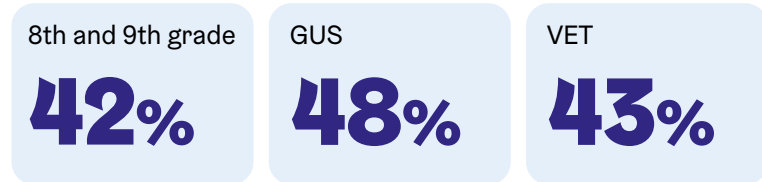
Self-reported overweight, %



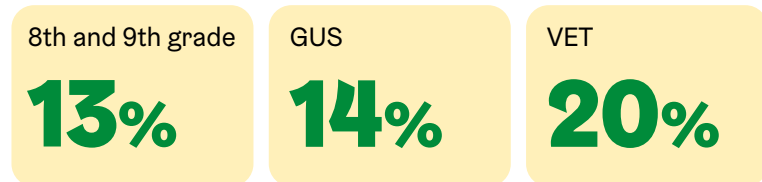
A lot of problems with concentration*



Tired and exhausted daily*



Wake up in the middle of the night daily*



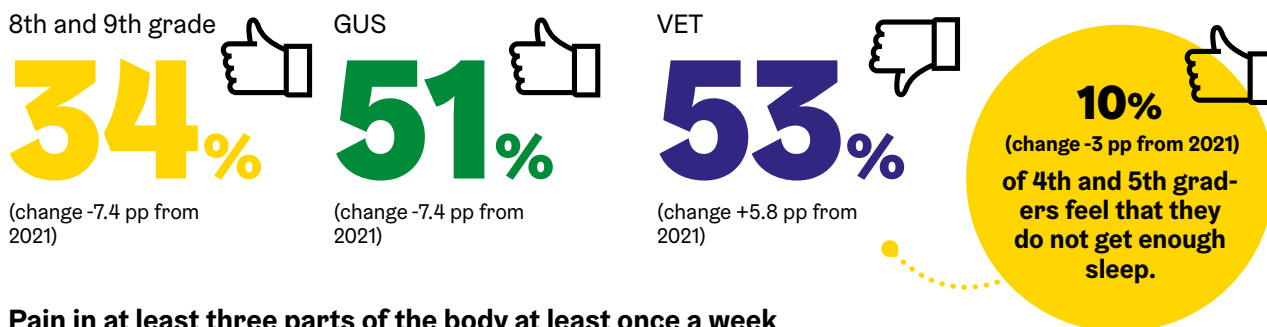
*Not asked from 4th and 5th graders.

How do children and young people in Helsinki feel about their health and lifestyles in 2023?

- The strong increase in the proportions of respondents who consider their health to be at most average has stopped. Still, a larger proportion of children and young people perceive their health as being at most average than before 2021. For example, the current proportion of 8th and 9th graders who consider their health to be at most average (26%) is 12 percentage points higher than in 2013.
- Self-reported overweight has hardly changed in recent years. The only change is seen in VET, where a larger proportion of boys but a smaller proportion of girls are overweight. The proportion of children and young people who are overweight is lower in Helsinki than in Finland on average.
- The proportion of VET students who do not consider their weight to be optimal – approximately half – has increased. The proportions of GUS students (35%) and 8th and 9th graders (40%) who feel this way are the same as in 2021.
- Problems with concentration have increased considerably. The change is particularly clear if we compare the current proportions to the figures from 2019, when approximately 10% of the respondents at all levels of education had difficulties with concentration. Concentration difficulties have become more common among both girls and boys, but they are much more common among girls at all levels of education.
- More than half of girls and approximately a third of boys feel tired and exhausted on a daily basis. In GUS and VET, the proportions of respondents who feel tired and exhausted every day are higher than in Finland on average.

Self-perceived health, lifestyles and addictions

Less than 8 hours of sleep on weekdays



Pain in at least three parts of the body at least once a week

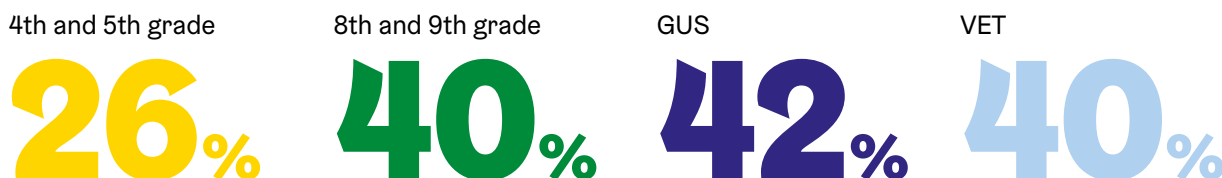


Table 3. Health-related habits and internet use by level of education in 2023, %

	4th and 5th grade	8th and 9th grade	GUS	VET
Brush their teeth less than twice a day	19	26	23	44
Get no more than one hour of strenuous exercise per week	*	25	29	42
Travel the whole way to school on a motor vehicle	*	5	5	9
Have often tried but failed to spend less time on the internet	37	38	38	30
Have often found themselves spending time on the internet even when they don't feel like it	26	43	49	41
Have often felt anxious when they have been unable to access the internet	15	19	17	22

*Not asked from this respondent group.

How do children and young people in Helsinki feel about their health and lifestyles in 2023?

- Compared to the previous study, a larger proportion of 8th and 9th graders and GUS students, both girls and boys, get at least 8 h of sleep on weekdays. Conversely, the sleeping rhythm of VET students has declined. Despite these partly positive changes, a larger proportion of GUS and VET students get less than 8 h of sleep per night in Helsinki than in Finland on average or the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.
- More than half of girls and approximately a quarter of boys in 8th and 9th grade, GUS and VET experience pain in at least three parts of the body every week. In 4th and 5th grade, approximately a quarter of both girls and boys experience pain in at least three parts of their bodies every week. Especially in GUS and VET, experiences of pain are more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average. This was the first time that questions about pain were asked this way, so the data cannot be compared to previous studies.
- Compared to 2021, a smaller proportion of respondents get NO MORE THAN one hour of strenuous exercise per week, but the proportions are still higher than in 2019 and 2017. A positive change can be seen especially among boys, whereas the proportions of girls are at the same level overall as in previous years.
- No changes have occurred in harmful internet use among neither girls or boys at any level of education compared to the previous study.

Self-perceived health, lifestyles and addictions

Meal rhythm by level of education

Do not eat breakfast every weekday

4th and 5th grade

27%

(no change from 2021)

8th and 9th grade

42%

(-1.5 pp from 2021)

GUS

43%

(+2.6 pp from 2021)

VET

60%

(+5.1 pp from 2021)

Do not eat school lunch every day

8th and 9th grade

44%

(no change from 2021)

GUS

40%

(+2 pp from 2021)

VET

53%

(-1.8 pp from 2021)

10%
of 4th and 5th graders eat all the components of a school lunch on every school day.

Table 4. School lunches..., %

	4th and 5th grade	8th and 9th grade	GUS	VET
are of good quality	47	38	57	69
taste good	47	36	53	64

Nutrition by level of education

Eat fruit, berries and vegetables on fewer than six days a week

8th and 9th grade

83%

GUS

83%

VET

93%

Drink energy drinks almost daily

8th and 9th grade

6%

GUS

6%

VET

13%



Consume sweets, chocolate, sugary soft drinks or sugary juice almost daily

8th and 9th grade

11%

GUS

11%

VET

13%

What else can be said about the eating habits and meal rhythm of children and young people in Helsinki?

- In terms of meal rhythm, the most notable change compared to 2021 is that a clearly larger proportion of girls in VET (67%) do not eat breakfast every weekday. Skipping school lunch at least once a week has also become more prevalent among girls in 8th and 9th grade. Skipping school lunch is more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average. Skipping breakfast at least once a week is also more common among GUS and VET students in Helsinki than in Finland on average.
- Fewer respondents are of the opinion that school lunches are of good quality and taste good. Still, the majority of respondents feel that enough food is served at school lunches, that school lunches are provided at a good time of the day and that enough time is given for eating school lunches. 4th and 5th graders in Helsinki are more critical of the quality and taste of school lunches than in Finland on average, but at other levels of education Helsinki's figures correspond to the national averages.
- The majority of respondents eat fruit, berries and vegetables on fewer than six days a week. Nevertheless, a positive change is noted among 8th and 9th graders; compared to 2017 (the previous measurement), a higher proportion of 8th and 9th graders now eat fruit, berries and vegetables on 6–7 days a week. The proportions of GUS and VET students who do so are the same as in 2017. In 8th and 9th grade and GUS, the almost daily eating of fruit, berries and vegetables is more common among girls than boys, whereas in VET there are no differences between the genders. The almost daily eating of vegetables, fruit and berries is more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average.
- The proportion of respondents who drink energy drinks daily has increased compared to 2017, which is when it was last asked about. The change can be explained by the higher proportion of girls who drink energy drinks, in particular. For example, the proportions of girls in GUS and 8th and 9th grade who drink energy drinks daily have increased from just under 2% to approximately 6%. The daily drinking of energy drinks is most common among girls in VET (16%). However, the daily drinking of energy drinks is no more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average or the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.
- The daily consumption of sugary products is as common as in 2017, but it has increased among girls and decreased among boys at all levels of education. The daily consumption of sugary products is somewhat more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average, but no more common than in the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

Self-perceived health, lifestyles and addictions

Alcohol consumption by level of education

Heavily drunk at least once a month

8th and 9th grade

9%

(change less than 1 pp from 2021)

GUS

19%

(+1.1 pp from 2021)

VET

18%

(-1.4 pp from 2021)



Alcohol abstinence

8th and 9th grade

71%

(change less than 1 pp from 2021)

GUS

38%

(+1.3 pp from 2021)

VET

46%

(+6 pp from 2021)



Table 5. Smoking, electronic cigarettes, nicotine pouches, snus and gambling by level of education in 2023, %

	8th and 9th grade	GUS	VET
Smoke every day	4 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)	4 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)	11 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)
Use an electronic cigarette every day	6 (+4.6 pp from 2021)	5 (+4.1 pp from 2021)	9 (+5.8 pp from 2021)
Use nicotine pouches occasionally or daily*	4	5	10
Use snus daily	2 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)	2 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)	6 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)
Gamble weekly	5 (+1.5 pp from 2021)	3 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)	8 (+3 pp from 2021)

*Asked for the first time.

What can be said about the experimentation with intoxicants and state of intoxicant use of children and young people in Helsinki in 2023?

- The use of many intoxicants has stabilised to the same, lower than before level. Smoking, snus use and alcohol consumption are less common among young people than 10 years ago, but have hardly changed since 2017.
- The only clear exception is the strong increase in the proportion of young people using electronic cigarettes on a daily basis, which is also reflected in the fact that more young people use tobacco products or an electronic cigarette on a daily basis. The increase in the use of electronic cigarettes is evident among both girls and boys at all levels of education.
- The use of electronic cigarettes has also increased among 4th and 5th graders: 4% of pupils in these grades have used a tobacco product or electronic cigarette at least once. This is the highest figure recorded since monitoring began in 2017, and it can be explained by the increase in the use of electronic cigarettes.
- Alcohol abstinence has become more common among GUS and VET students. On the other hand, binge drinking among girls in GUS and VET has returned to the previous level (approx. 20%) after the record-low figures recorded in the last study. A positive change is noted among boys in VET, of whom 16% get heavily drunk on a monthly basis. The proportion is 7 percentage points lower than in the previous study and approx. 2 percentage points lower than among boys in GUS. Binge drinking among both girls and boys in 8th and 9th grade has remained at the same level for a long time, whereas alcohol abstinence is at the same level as in 2021, which is still higher than before that.

Self-perceived health, lifestyles and addictions

Figure 7. Use a tobacco product or electronic cigarette daily by level of education in 2017–2023

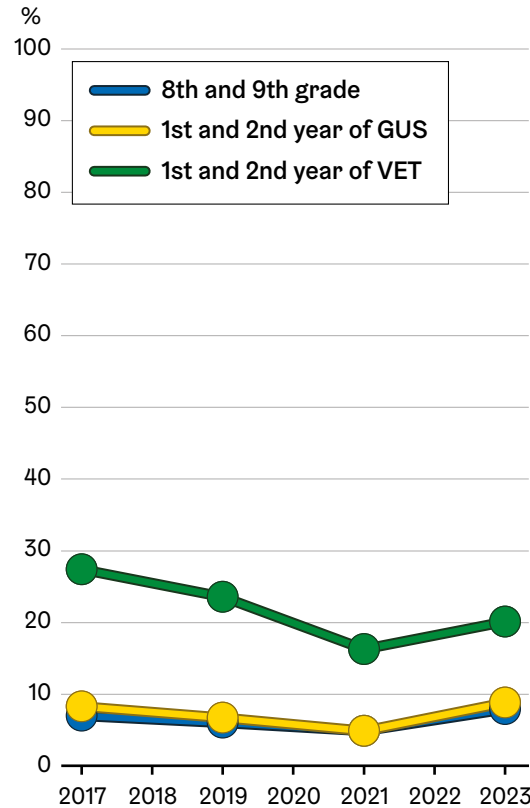
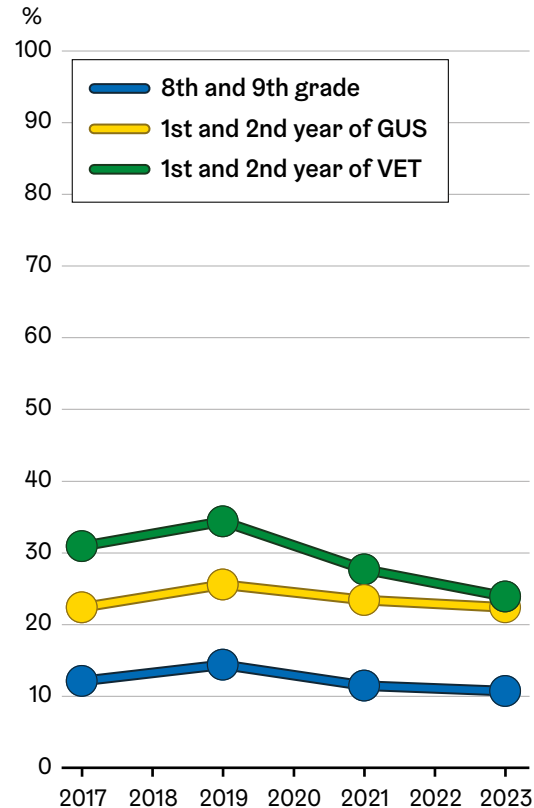


Figure 8. Tried illegal drugs at least once by level of education in 2017–2023



Tried cannabis at least twice

8th and 9th grade

7%

(change less than 1 pp from 2021)

GUS

16%

(change less than 1 pp from 2021)

VET

18%

(-2.5 pp from 2021)

What can be said about the experimentation with intoxicants and state of intoxicant use of children and young people in Helsinki in 2023?

- The proportions of daily smokers and snus users and of those who have tried cannabis are at the same levels as in previous years among both girls and boys at all levels of education. However, it is worth noting that snus use among girls in VET is no longer increasing, despite having done so for a long time. In addition, a slight downward trend can be seen in the portions of those who have tried cannabis at least twice.
- 59% of 8th and 9th graders, 70% of GUS students and 66% of VET students feel that it is easy to acquire drugs where they live. These proportions are higher than in Finland on average.
- Although experimentation with illegal drugs has not increased in Helsinki, it is still significantly more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average. Experimentation with drugs is more common among GUS students in Helsinki than in the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, but at other levels of education it is no more common in Helsinki than the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.
- As regards other intoxicants, the proportions of respondents who have tried cannabis and the proportion of GUS students who binge drink are particularly high in Helsinki compared to Finland on average or the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. On the other hand, snus use among VET students is less common in Helsinki than in Finland on average, and alcohol abstinence among VET students is more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average.



Mental well-being, social relationships and safe growth environment

Mental well-being, social relationships and safe growth environment

The majority of children and young people in Helsinki have at least one good friend. Loneliness is no longer increasing. Mental well-being challenges are common among girls and some indicators related to the safety of the growth environment have declined.

Figure 9. Moderate or severe anxiety by gender and level of education in 2017–2023

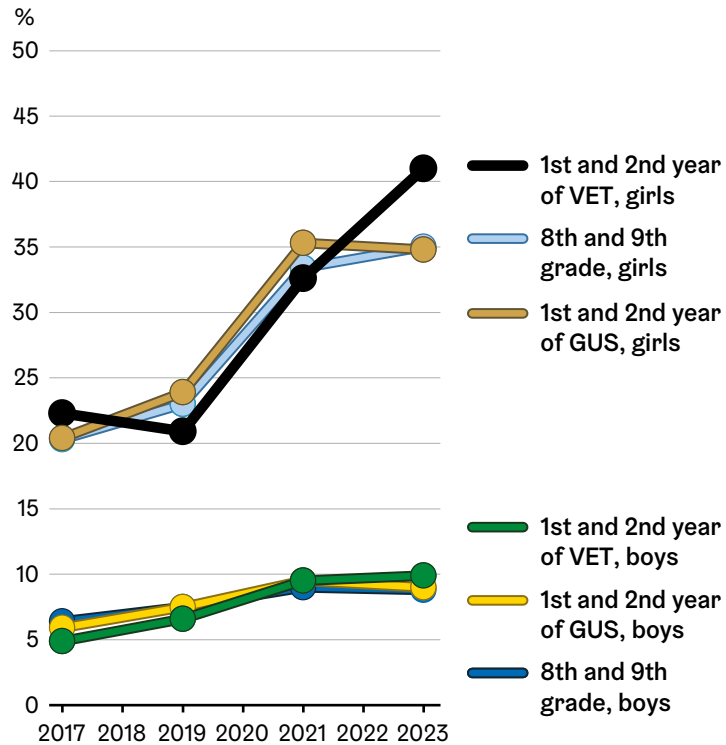
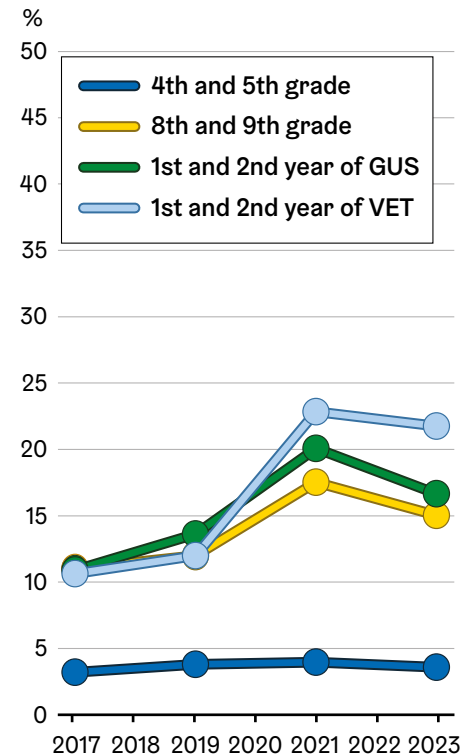


Figure 10. Loneliness by level of education in 2017–2023



Loneliness is more common among young girls than boys. Loneliness among young girls has decreased in recent years, while loneliness among boys has generally remained at the same level. In 4th and 5th grade, the differences between the genders are not as clear. In basic education and GUS, the loneliness of children and young people in Helsinki is at the same level as in Finland on average or the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area, whereas in VET, loneliness is more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average or in Vantaa, but at the same level as in Espoo.

Have been worried about their own mood during the past 12 months

8th and 9th grade

38%

(-2.2 pp from 2021)

GUS

48%

(-4.5 pp from 2021)

VET

41%

(-3.1 pp from 2021)

76% of 8th and 9th graders, 76% of GUS students and 84% of VET students who have been worried about their own mood have received support and help for mood-related issues from the adults at their school. These figures have remained at the same level at all levels of education in recent years.

Mental well-being, social relationships and safe growth environment

Table 6. Experienced mental well-being challenges by gender and level of education in 2023, %

	GIRLS			BOYS		
	8th and 9th grade	GUS	VET	8th and 9th grade	GUS	VET
Depression symptoms in the past two weeks	36 (-1 pp from 2021)	35 (-1.7 pp from 2021)	39 (+4.8 pp from 2021)	15 (no change from 2021)	16 (-1.4 pp from 2021)	16 (+1.7 pp from 2021)
Social anxiety	51 (+1.7 pp from 2021)	50 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)	55 (+9.7 pp from 2021)	21 (-1.2 pp from 2021)	24 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)	20 (+1.8 pp from 2021)
Risk of eating disorders	36 (+1.6 pp from 2021)	34 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)	44 (+9.6 pp from 2021)	11 (+2.1 pp from 2021)	7 (+1 pp from 2021)	12 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)

Figure 11. Mood-related problems and anxiety symptoms among 4th and 5th graders by gender in 2017–2023

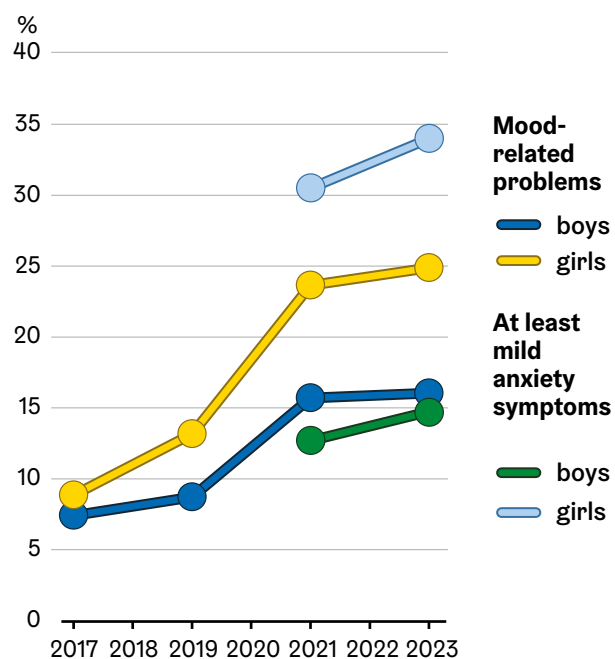
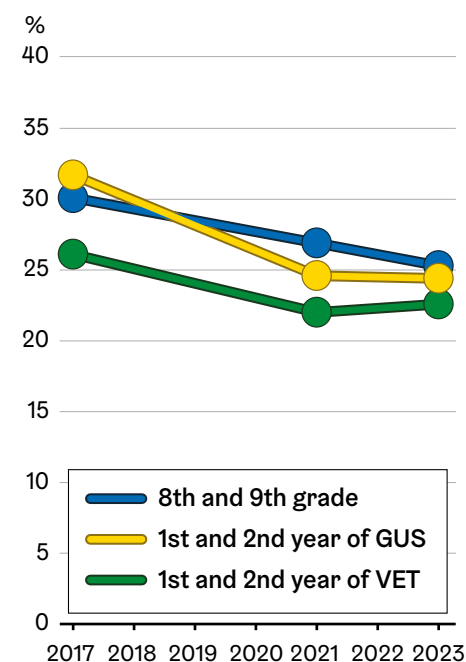


Figure 12. Experienced positive mental health in the past two weeks by level of education in 2017, 2021 and 2023

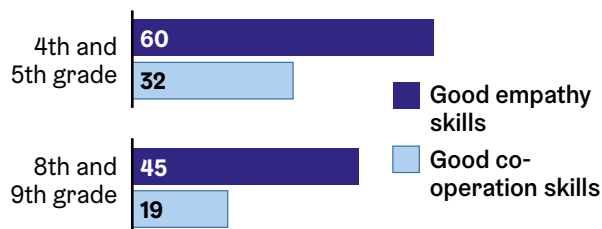


How are children and young people in Helsinki doing mentally in 2023?

- Experiences of mental well-being challenges are significantly more common among girls than boys, regardless of the level of education or indicator examined.
- Mental well-being challenges have increased more among girls than boys in recent years. The proportions of boys who have experienced mental well-being challenges have remained roughly the same in recent years, whereas the proportions of girls declined sharply between 2019 and 2021 and seem to still be declining in light of the most recent results.
- Mood-related problems and anxiety symptoms among 4th and 5th graders are at the same level in Helsinki as in Finland on average, but somewhat less common than in Espoo and Vantaa.
- At other levels of education, Helsinki is doing worse in terms of mental well-being figures than Finland on average. In particular, the proportions of GUS and VET students who have experienced mental well-being problems are notably higher than in Finland on average.

Mental well-being, social relationships and safe growth environment

Figure 13. Self-perceived good empathy or cooperation skills of basic education pupils in 2023



Able to discuss matters weighing on their mind with an adult at school, %

4th and 5th grade

56%

(+1.6 pp from 2021)

8th and 9th grade

44%

(+1.9 pp from 2021)

GUS

52%

(no change from 2021)

VET

48%

(-2.3 pp from 2021)

Table 7. Access to help and support for well-being, %

Have received help and support for well-being if necessary...	8th and 9th grade	GUS	VET
from a school nurse	80	81	80
from a school doctor	72	67	74
from a school psychologist	59	57	65
from a school social worker	68	65	70
from a teacher	75	80	80

Social relationships of 4th and 5th graders

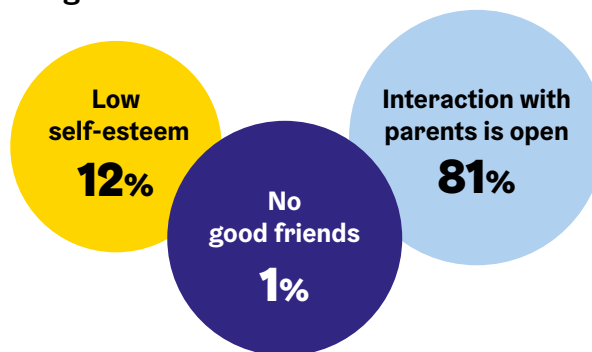
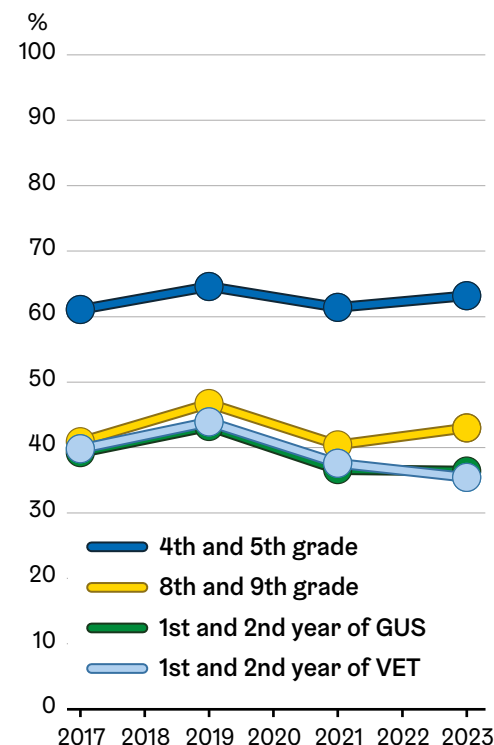


Figure 14. Good communication with parents by level of education in 2017–2023



How do children and young people in Helsinki feel about their social relationships in 2023?

- Following a dip in 2021, the proportions of basic education pupils who report good communication with their parents have improved somewhat, but the proportions of GUS and VET students have continued to decline. The proportions of boys are clearly higher than those of girls at all levels of education, and especially in basic education, the proportions of boys have also improved more in recent years. The proportions of GUS and VET students who report good communication with their parents are lower in Helsinki than in Finland on average, whereas the proportions of basic education pupils are higher than in Finland on average.
- Approximately one in ten respondents in 8th and 9th grade, GUS and VET do not have any close friends. The figures are at the same level as in previous years. The only clear change is that fewer girls in VET (7%) feel that they have no close friends. Lack of close friends is more common among boys than girls.
- The self-perceived empathy skills of girls are better than those of boys at basic education levels. Girls in 4th and 5th grade also perceive themselves as having better cooperation skills than boys, but in 8th and 9th grade, self-perceived cooperation skills are at the same level between the genders. At both of these levels of education, Helsinki's figures are better than those of Finland on average and Vantaa, but at the same level as in Espoo.
- There is a slight positive trend in the proportions of basic education pupils who are able to discuss issues weighing on their minds with an adult at school.
- Access to help and support for well-being provided by various student welfare services is at the same level as in 2021, but lower than in 2019 despite the high figures. A downward trend is noted in terms of school nurses in particular.

Mental well-being, social relationships and safe growth environment

Have experienced a physical threat during the past year



4th and 5th grade

18%

(+1.5 pp from 2021)

8th and 9th grade

20%

(+2.5 pp from 2021)

GUS

14%

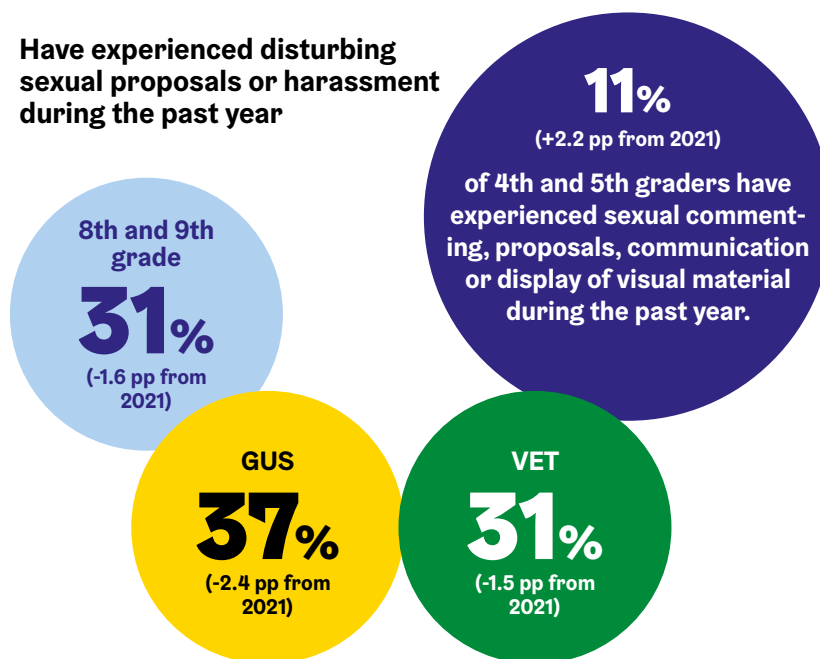
(change less than 1 pp from 2021)

VET

19%

(+1.1 pp from 2021)

Have experienced disturbing sexual proposals or harassment during the past year



How safe do children and young people in Helsinki perceive their growth environment to be in 2023?

- Some of the indicators related to the safety of the growth environment have continued to decline. Experiences of discrimination and physical threat have become more common. In addition, experiences of physical and psychological violence caused by parents are more common than in 2019, albeit at the same level as in 2021.
- As regards disturbing sexual proposals and harassment, there are still clear differences between the genders. Despite a slight decrease, over half of girls in GUS and VET have experienced disturbing sexual proposals and harassment during the past year. The proportions of boys who have experienced harassment are just over 10%, though a slight increasing trend is noted. Disturbing sexual proposals and harassment are more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average, but mainly at the same level as in the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.
- Experiences of harassment in public spaces are more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average, although they have decreased slightly in Helsinki. The proportions at different levels of education range from 19% to 26% in Helsinki and from 14% to 17% in the whole of Finland. In particular, the proportion of VET students who have experienced harassment at school (6%) is higher in Helsinki than in Finland on average and the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

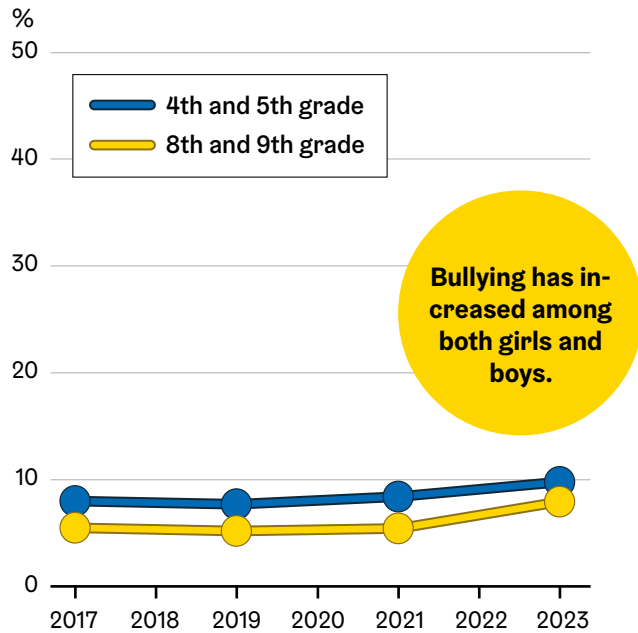
Table 8. Safety of the growth environment in Helsinki by level of education in 2023, %

Have experienced the following during the past year...	4th and 5th grade	8th and 9th grade	GUS	VET
Sexual violence	*	9 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)	10 (-1.8 pp from 2021)	13 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)
Discrimination at school or during leisure time	*	36 (+3.7 pp from 2021)	26 (+3 pp from 2021)	30 (+7 pp from 2021)
Psychological violence caused by parents	28 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)	33 (-1.9 pp from 2021)	36 (-1.3 pp from 2021)	28 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)
Physical violence caused by parents	16 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)	15 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)	10 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)	9 (+2.5 pp from 2021)

*Not asked from this respondent group.

Mental well-being, social relationships and safe growth environment

Figure 15. Bullied at school at least once a week in 2017–2023



How safe do children and young people in Helsinki perceive their growth environment to be in 2023?

- Experiences of physical threat are more common among boys than girls. The proportions of boys have also increased in recent years. This increase has been particularly sharp among boys in 8th and 9th grade, of whom 26% have experienced physical threat, compared to 20% in 2021. Experiences of physical threat are more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average.
- Experiences of discrimination are more common among girls than boys, but the difference between the genders is not as clear as with other safety-related indicators. Experiences of discrimination have become more common among girls and boys at all levels of education. They are most common among girls in 8th and 9th grade, of whom 40% have experienced discrimination in the past year. On the other hand, experiences of discrimination have increased the most among girls in VET, of whom 39% have experienced discrimination, an increase of 10 percentage points from 2021. Experiences of discrimination are more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average or elsewhere in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

- Experiences of psychological violence caused by parents are more common among girls than boys at all levels of education. The same is true for physical violence, with one exception: boys in 4th and 5th grade have experienced more physical violence caused by parents than girls have.
- More respondents experience weekly bullying at school. This change is noted at all levels of education. The proportion of GUS students experiencing weekly bullying has long remained at 1%, but has now increased to 2%. Similarly, the proportion of VET students has long remained at approximately 2%, but has now increased to 5%.
- Fewer, or 57%, of pupils in 4th and 5th grade who have been bullied or have participated in bullying report it to an adult at school. Of the pupils who have reported bullying, 22% feel that the bullying continued or got worse after they reported it. At other levels of education, the proportion of respondents who have reported bullying is lower, ranging between 15 and 30%.
- School bullying has also become common in Finland on average and elsewhere in the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

Studying and the school environment



Studying and the school environment

A large proportion of children and young people in Helsinki like going to school and feel that they are an important part of the school or class community. Perceived involvement or possibilities to influence matters at schools have improved.

Figure 16. Like going to school by level of education in 2017–2023

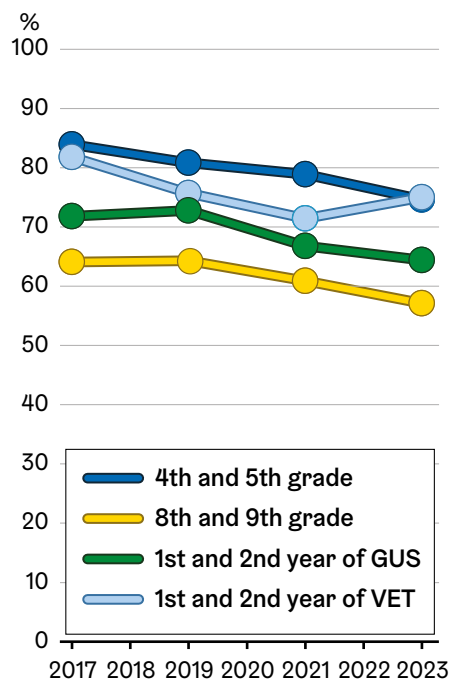
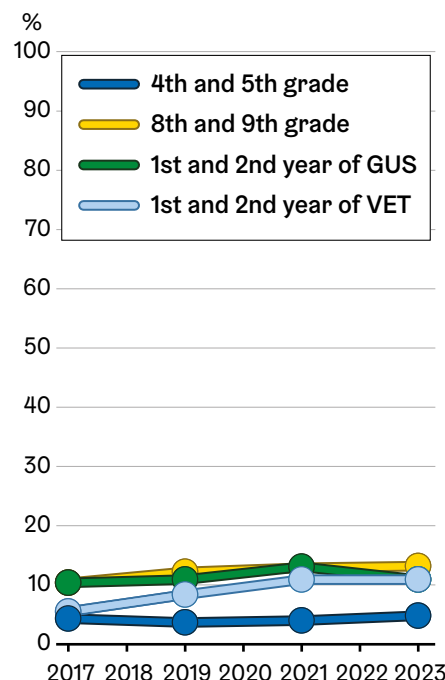
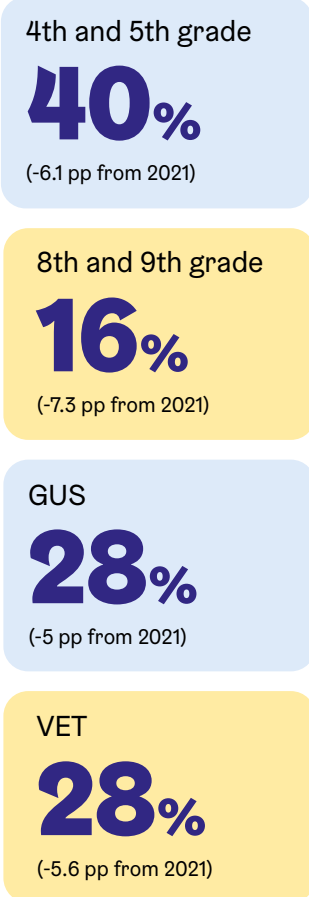


Figure 17. Do not feel that they are an important part of the school or class community by level of education in 2017–2023



Feel enthusiastic about their studies



Especially in 8th and 9th grade, GUS and VET, a larger proportion of boys than girls feel that they are an important part of the class or school community.

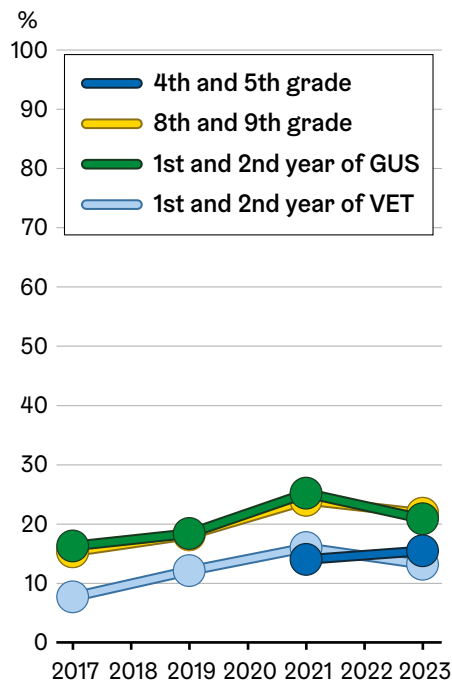
In 4th and 5th grade, there are hardly any differences between the genders in the feeling of being part of the community.

Table 9. Important part of the school community by level of education in 2023, %

	4th and 5th grade	8th and 9th grade	GUS	VET
Feel that they are an important part of the class community	57 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)	55 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)	53 (+1.1 pp from 2021)	57 (+1.9 pp from 2021)
Feel that they are an important part of the school community	41 (+3.5 pp from 2021)	39 (change less than 1 pp from 2021)	50 (+4.6 pp from 2021)	45 (+1.1 pp from 2021)

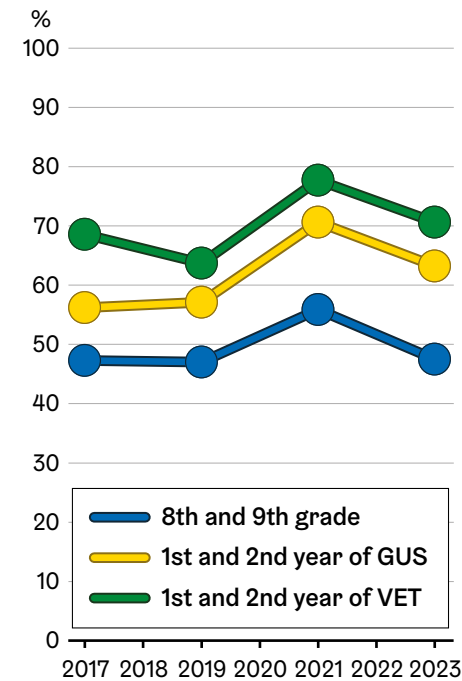
Studying and the school environment

Figure 18. School fatigue by level of education in 2017–2023*



*A different indicator is used for 4th and 5th grade than the other levels of education.

Figure 19. Caring and fair treatment received from teachers by level of education in 2017–2023



A lot of difficulties with reading, writing or counting

Difficulties with learning skills

4th and 5th grade

4%

(change less than 1 pp from 2021)

8th and 9th grade

40%

(change less than 1 pp from 2021)

GUS

50%

(-2.5 pp from 2021)

VET

49%

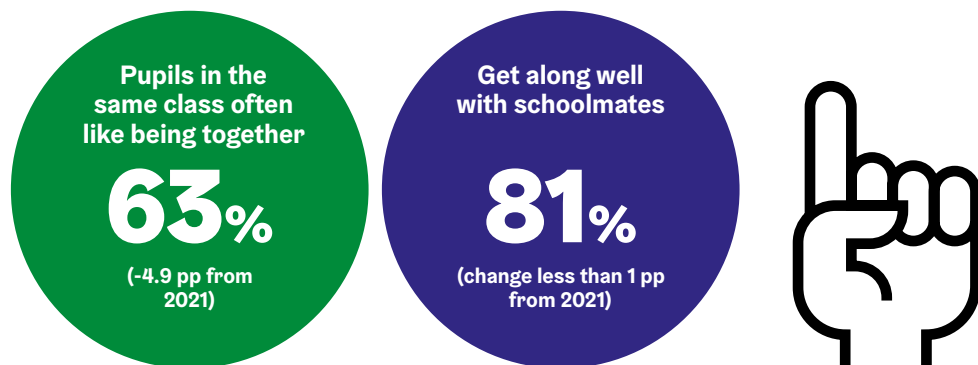
(change less than 1 pp from 2021)

How do children and young people in Helsinki feel about their schools and educational institutions in 2023?

- A positive trend can be seen in school fatigue, which has decreased in 8th and 9th grade, GUS and VET after having been increasing for a long time. Conversely, however, the proportion of 4th and 5th graders suffering from school fatigue is higher than in the previous study.
- The school fatigue indicator for 4th and 5th grade consists of five statements. When these individual statements are examined in more detail, the most notable change is that more boys (18%) and girls (16%) often feel like they are losing interest in school. Additionally, the proportion of boys (15%) who are wondering whether going to school has any meaning and the proportion of girls (12%) who often sleep poorly because of school matters have increased.
- At other levels of education, the school fatigue indicator consists of three statements. When these individual statements are examined in more detail, a clear positive change can be seen in that fewer respondents feel that they are often drowning in schoolwork. Despite this positive development, 45% of girls in GUS and 47% of girls in 8th and 9th grade often feel that they are drowning in schoolwork. Responses to the other statements are either at the same level as in the previous study or a few percentage points lower.
- Despite positive developments, school fatigue among GUS and VET students is more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average and the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. Among 8th and 9th graders, school fatigue is more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average, but less common than in the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area. Among 4th and 5th graders, school fatigue is at the same level as in Finland on average and the rest of the Helsinki Metropolitan Area.

Studying and the school environment

Perceived class atmosphere in 4th and 5th grade

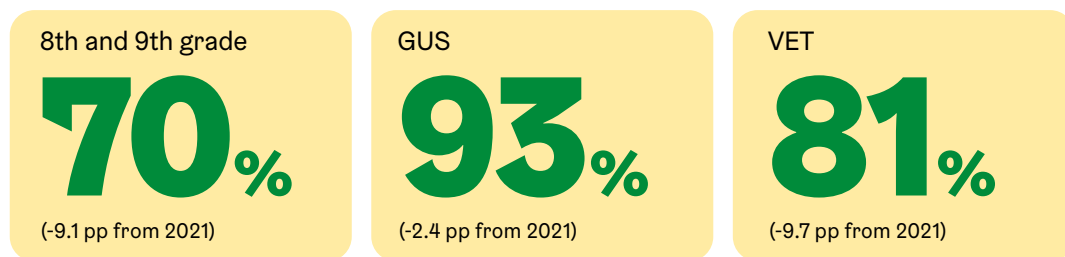


What 4th and 5th graders think about recess

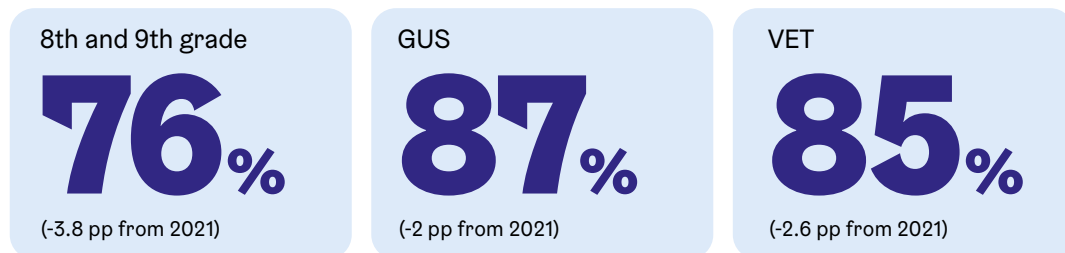


Class or group atmosphere by level of education

It's peaceful to work in my class/group



The students in my class like being together



- A large proportion of children and young people still feel that they are getting along well with other respondents and teachers at their schools and educational institutions, although the figures have declined from the previous study. However, the current proportions are at the same level or better than in 2019 or 2017. For example, in 8th and 9th grade and VET, the proportions of respondents who feel that it is peaceful to work in their class/group have clearly decreased from 2021, but they are still higher than in 2019 and 2017. The only exception to this is the proportion of 4th and 5th graders who feel that pupils in their class often like being together, which is now lower than before.
- Boys rate the atmosphere at their school or educational institution as better than girls at all levels of education.

Studying and the school environment

Table 10. Involvement or possibilities to influence matters at school by level of education in 2023*, %

	4th and 5th grade	8th and 9th grade	GUS	VET
common school rules	71	25	31	45
content of lessons/lesson arrangements	67	33	52	50
schoolwork planning		24	52	43
activities during recesses or breaks	67	28	35	58
school outdoor areas	49			
school facilities		23	30	42
school meals	54	23	26	38
school events	72	41	47	39

*The questions are formulated differently in the questionnaire for 4th and 5th graders compared to the ones for other levels of education.

Involvement in the planning of school matters

Good possibilities to influence things at school

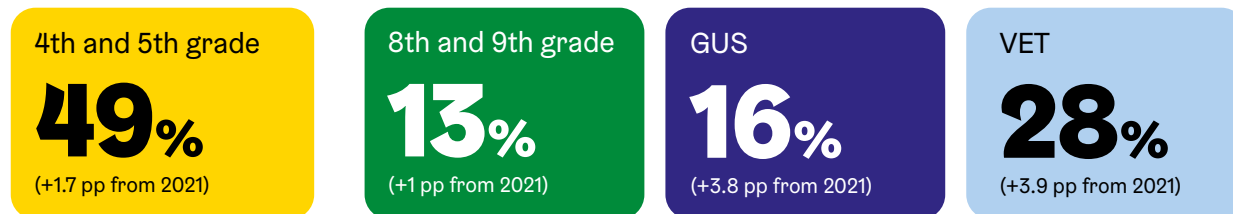
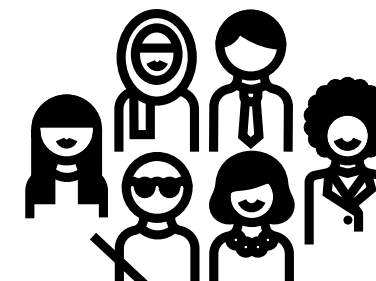


Table 11. Received help and support for learning and studying when needed by level of education in 2023, %

Received help and support when needed...	8th and 9th grade	GUS	VET
from their homeroom teacher	83	86	91
from some other teacher	79	83	87
from a study counsellor	84	89	83
from a special needs teacher	76	75	81

How do children and young people in Helsinki feel about their school environment in 2023?

- Involvement or possibilities to influence matters at schools have improved at all levels of education. In GUS and VET, the figures are higher than they have ever been (since 2017). In basic education, the figures have improved slightly after dipping in the previous study. A larger proportion of boys than girls at all levels of education feel that their involvement and influence possibilities are good. In terms of the individual statements, the largest change is that a larger proportion of respondents at all levels of education feel that they have good involvement or influence possibilities in regard to school events.
- The proportion of VET students who feel that they have received help and support for learning and schoolwork when needed has increased. This is true for all the sources of help listed in the questionnaire. The proportions of GUS students who feel this way are roughly the same as before. In 8th and 9th grade, fewer respondents feel that they have received help and support for learning and schoolwork when needed from their homeroom teacher or other teachers.



Studying and the school environment

Absences due to illness at least monthly

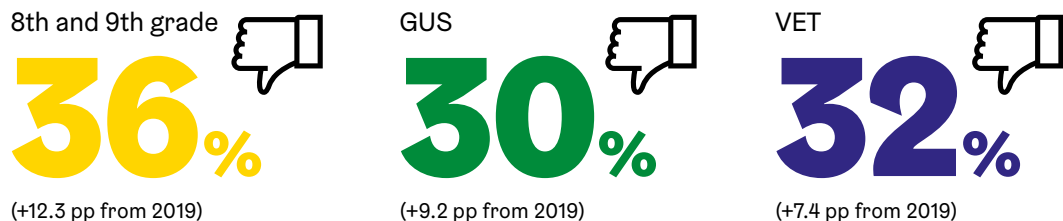
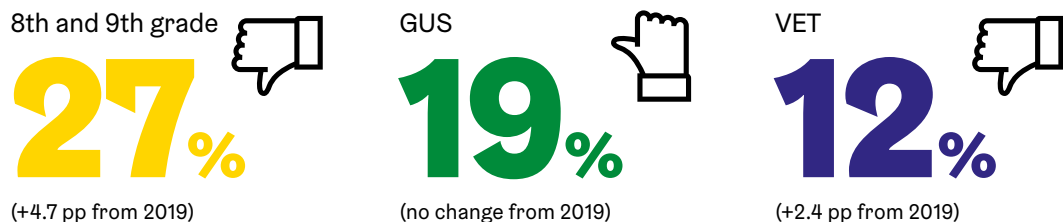


Table 12. School health examinations and access to school or student health care by level of education in 2023, %

	4th and 5th grade	8th and 9th grade	GUS	VET
The health examination is individual and discussion-oriented	41	55	62	59
Unable to see the school nurse despite trying	*	3	2	3
Unable to see the school social worker despite trying	*	2	1	2

*Not asked from this respondent group.

Bothered by the physical working conditions at school



How do children and young people in Helsinki feel about their school environment in 2023?

- Absences due to illness are more common among girls than boys, but they have become more common among both compared to 2019, when data on them was previously collected.
- A large proportion of respondents feel that it is easy to see school or student health care experts when needed. In spite of this, the proportions of respondents who feel this way are slightly lower than in the previous study, and conversely, the proportions of those who have been unable to access school or student health care services despite trying have increased slightly.
- A larger proportion of respondents in 8th and 9th grade and VET feel that the physical working conditions at their educational institution or school have bothered their studying compared to 2019, when this was last measured. Comparing the individual statements of the sum indicator and the changes in the responses to them reveals some differences between levels of education. The proportion of 8th and 9th graders who feel that they have been bothered by uncomfortable chairs, desks or other furniture a lot at their school has increased (25%), as has the proportion of 8th and 9th graders who feel that they have been bothered by poor toilet, changing room and shower facilities (35%). The aforementioned things were also highlighted by GUS students. In addition to these, the proportion of GUS students who feel that they have been bothered by excessively hot temperatures at school has increased (22%), but, on the other hand, the proportion of students who feel that they have been bothered by stuffy air has decreased (15%). In VET, the proportions of students who have been bothered by lighting (6%) and noise (11%) at their educational institution have increased the most.



Summary

Summary

Table 13. Self-perceived well-being, health and safety of children and young people in Helsinki based on the 2023 School Health Promotion study

Satisfaction with life, hobbies and leisure time	Self-perceived health, lifestyles and addictions	Mental well-being, social relationships and safe growth environment	Studying and the school environment
<p>Satisfaction with life</p> <p>A large proportion of respondents are satisfied with their lives. However, the satisfaction with life of VET students has decreased and is lower than in Finland on average.</p> <p>Hobbies and leisure time</p> <p>The proportion of 4th and 5th graders who have a weekly hobby has increased.</p> <p>Engagement in organised sport and supervised art and culture hobbies is generally more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average.</p> <p>However, perceived recreational opportunities have declined in parts.</p> <p>Social inclusion</p> <p>More than one in ten young people consider their social inclusion to be very poor. Self-perceived social inclusion is particularly poor among girls in VET.</p>	<p>Self-perceived health</p> <p>A large proportion of respondents feel that their health is good. However, the proportion of those who feel that their health is at best average has increased from 2019.</p> <p>Lifestyles</p> <p>The proportion of respondents who get at least one hour of physical activity per day is increasing. What is worrying is that the physical activity of girls is not increasing at the same rate as that of boys. The daily sleeping rhythm of some respondent groups has improved beyond the level of the previous study. In spite of this, nearly half of young people feel tired every day. Skipping breakfast or school lunch at least once a week has remained more common than before. The perceived quality and taste of school lunches have also declined. The daily consumption of energy drinks has increased.</p> <p>Use of intoxicants</p> <p>There have been no changes in the use of intoxicants in recent years, with the exception of the increasing use of electronic cigarettes. The intoxicant use of young people in Helsinki differs in many ways from national figures. For example, experimentation with illegal drugs or cannabis is much more common among young people in Helsinki than in Finland on average.</p>	<p>Social relationships</p> <p>The proportion of young people who feel lonely has not increased, but is still higher than in 2019 and before. The proportions of respondents in basic education who report good communication with their parents have recovered. The self-perceived cooperation and empathy skills of basic education respondents in Helsinki are better than in Finland on average.</p> <p>Mental well-being</p> <p>Experienced mental well-being challenges have remained more common than before, especially among girls. Mental well-being challenges among young people are more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average.</p> <p>Safety of the growth environment</p> <p>Indicators related to the safety of the growth environment are still at a lower level than before. A higher proportion of respondents have experienced discrimination or physical threats. More than half of young girls still experience harassment. Harassment experienced in public spaces, in particular, is more common in Helsinki than in Finland on average.</p>	<p>More respondents feel that they are an important part of their school or class community. Still, over a tenth of 8th and 9th graders, GUS students and VET students feel that they are not an important part of their school and class community.</p> <p>School fatigue, which has been increasing for a long time, is no longer increasing among GUS students, VET students and 8th and 9th graders. Conversely, the proportion of 4th and 5th graders experiencing school fatigue has increased from 2021.</p> <p>Perceived involvement or possibilities to influence matters at schools have improved.</p> <p>The majority of respondents feel that they receive support and help for well-being, studies and learning from adults at school when needed.</p> <p>Although the indicators related to school and class atmosphere and pleasantness are somewhat lower than before, the current figures are primarily better than in 2017 and 2019.</p>

The City of Helsinki makes comprehensive use of the results of the School Health Promotion study



The City of Helsinki makes comprehensive use of the results of the School Health Promotion study

City level

- Strategy work and monitoring
- Monitoring of the state and development of children and young people's well-being
- Management of well-being and health promotion (HYTE)



City divisions

- Knowledge-based service management
- Knowledge-based planning, implementation and monitoring of operations
- Processing of results in management groups and working communities
- Utilisation of results in project funding calls and needs-based resource allocation



Cross-sectoral working groups and networks

- Knowledge-based planning, implementation and monitoring of operations
- Processing of results in the HYTE steering group and HYTE networks
- Processing of results in networks that include organisations, THL, other municipalities, etc.



Schools, educational institutions and student welfare services

- Processing of school-specific results
- Knowledge-based planning, implementation and monitoring of operations
- Processing of results with children, young people and parents
- Processing of results in working communities



The City of Helsinki's School Health Promotion study working group

The content planning of this publication was contributed to by the City of Helsinki's School Health Promotion study working group. One of the key objectives of the group is to promote the usability of the School Health Promotion study in the City's operations on a broad scale.

City Executive Office

- Stina Högnabba, special planner
- Suvi Määttä, researcher

Education Division

- Petteri Lammi, assessment specialist
- Vesa Nevalainen, pupil welfare services manager
- Jukka Orava, assessment specialist
- Sanna Ranto, senior information planner
- Niclas Rönholm, chef för den grundläggande utbildningen
- Riina Ståhlberg, head of student welfare services
- Moa Thors, chef för den fria bildningen och gymnasieutbildningen

Culture and Leisure Division

- Martti Rasa, special planner

Social Services, Health Care and Rescue Services Division

- Eva Autio, project specialist
- Anne Röppänen, head nurse
- Tarja Saarinen, special planner
- Tuuli Samola, health promotions specialist
- Pia Valjakka, head nurse
- Mari Väistö, director of nursing

Contact information: firstname.lastname@hel.fi

More information (in Finnish): <https://hyte.hel.fi/kouluterveyskysely/>

The publications of the City of Helsinki Urban Research and Statistics Unit based on the School Health Promotion study can be found at www.hel.fi/kaupunkitieto using the search term "Kouluterveyskysely" (in Finnish).