

Student Bullying

In 2021–22, about 19 percent of students ages 12–18 reported being bullied during school, which was lower than the percentage who reported this in 2010–11 (28 percent). In 2021–22, among students who were bullied, 22 percent reported that the bullying happened online or by text.

The School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey collected data on bullying^{1,2} by asking students ages 12–18³ if they had been bullied during school.⁴ Students were also asked about the types and frequencies of bullying they had been subjected to, whether they thought the bullying was related to certain personal characteristics, where the bullying occurred, and about the negative effects of bullying. This indicator presents data on these topics related to bullying and examines differences across student subgroups, including by sex, race/ethnicity, grade level, school locale, and the control of student’s school (that is, whether the school was public or private).^{5,6}

Prevalence and Trends of Bullying by Student Characteristics

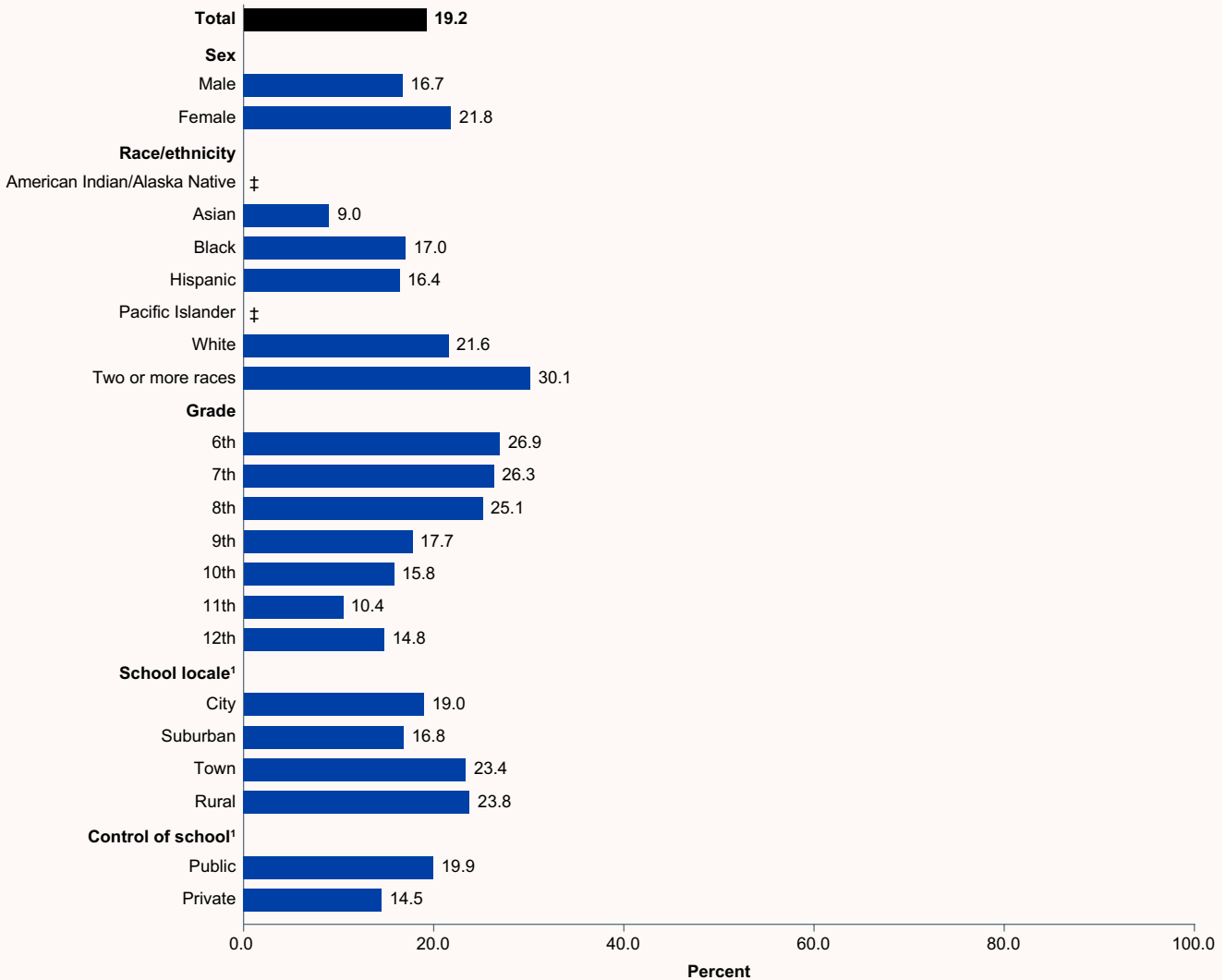
In 2021–22, about 19 percent of students ages 12–18 reported being bullied during school. Students’ reports of being bullied varied based on student and school characteristics.⁷ Specifically, the percentage of students who reported being bullied during school was

- higher for female students than for male students (22 vs. 17 percent);
- higher for students of Two or more races (30 percent) and White students (22 percent) than for Black students (17 percent) and Hispanic students (16 percent), which were all higher than the percentage for Asian students (9 percent);⁸
- higher for 6th-, 7th-, and 8th-graders (27, 26, and 25 percent, respectively) than for 9th-, 10th-, 11th-, and 12th-graders (18, 16, 10, and 15 percent, respectively);
- higher for students enrolled in schools in rural areas (24 percent) than for students enrolled in schools in cities (19 percent) and suburban areas (17 percent);
- higher for students enrolled in schools in towns (23 percent) than for students enrolled in schools in suburban areas; and
- higher for public school students than for private school students (20 vs. 15 percent).

FIGURE 1.

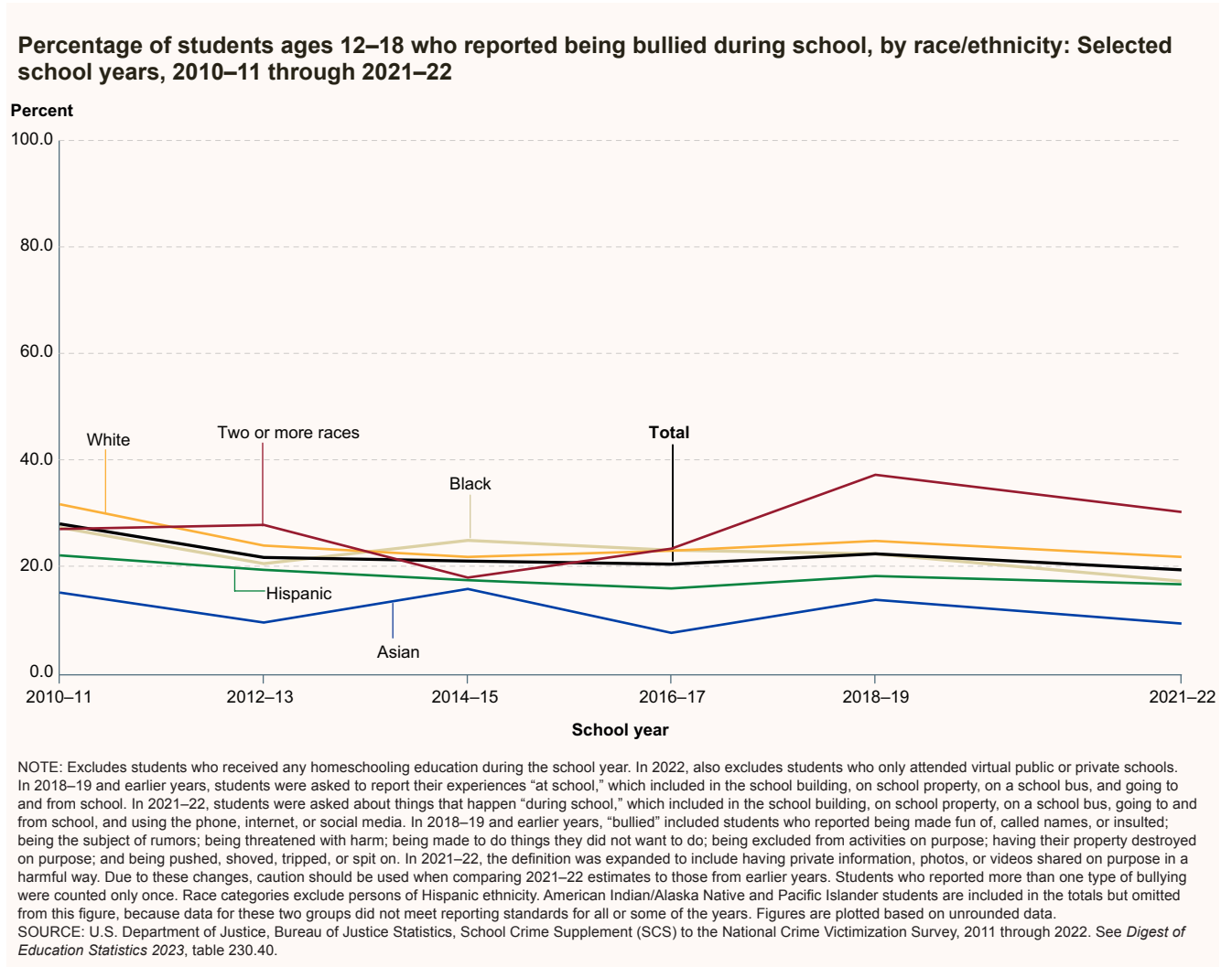
Percentage of students ages 12–18 who reported being bullied during school, by selected student and school characteristics: School year 2021–22

Student or school characteristic



‡ Reporting standards not met. Either there are too few cases for a reliable estimate or the coefficient of variation (CV) is 50 percent or greater.
¹ Excludes students with missing information about the school characteristic. In 2021–22, about 9 percent of sampled students were missing school locale data, and 8 percent were missing control of school data.
 NOTE: Excludes students who received any homeschooling education during the school year as well as students who only attended virtual public or private schools. Students were asked about things that happen “during school,” which included in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, going to and from school, and using the phone, internet, or social media. “Bullied” included students who reported being made fun of, called names, or insulted; being the subject of rumors; being threatened with harm; being made to do things they did not want to do; being excluded from activities on purpose; having their property destroyed on purpose; being pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on; and having private information, photos, or videos shared on purpose in a harmful way. Students who reported more than one type of bullying were counted only once. Race categories exclude persons of Hispanic ethnicity. Figures are plotted based on unrounded data.
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2022. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2023*, table 230.40.

FIGURE 2.



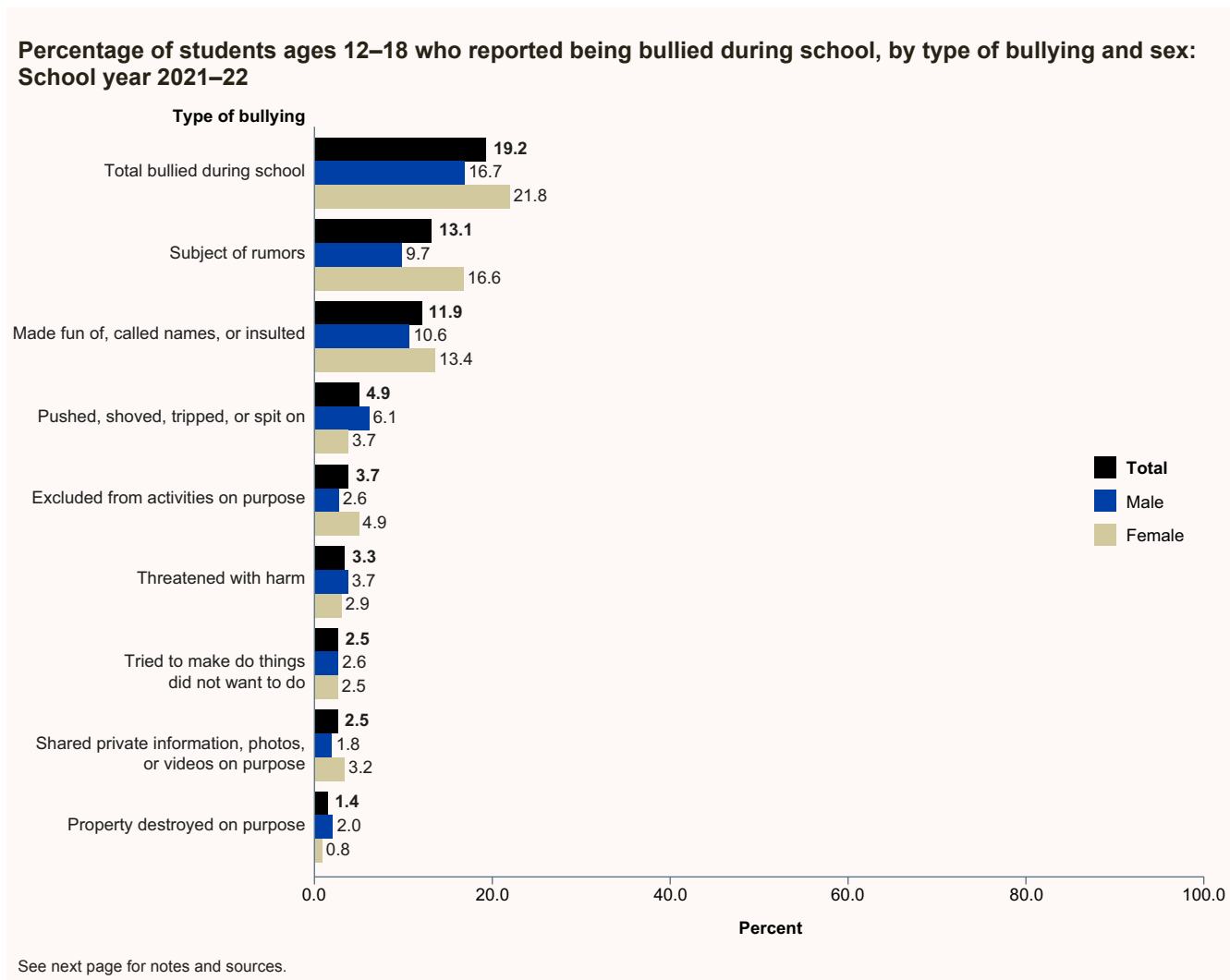
The total percentage of students ages 12-18 who reported being bullied during school was lower in 2021-22 (19 percent) than in 2018-19 or 2010-11 (22 and 28 percent, respectively), although there was no consistent trend throughout the period.⁹

The same pattern of a lower percentage of students reporting being bullied during school in 2021-22 than in 2010-11 is observed for many student subgroups, including by sex, race/ethnicity, grade level, and control of school (public or private).¹⁰ Specifically, lower percentages of students reported being bullied in 2021-22 than in 2010-11 for the following groups:

- male students (17 vs. 25 percent)
- female students (22 vs. 31 percent)
- Black students (17 vs. 27 percent)
- Hispanic students (16 vs. 22 percent)
- White students (22 vs. 31 percent)
- 6th-graders (27 vs. 37 percent)
- 8th-graders (25 vs. 31 percent)
- 9th-graders (18 vs. 26 percent)
- 10th-graders (16 vs. 28 percent)
- 11th-graders (10 vs. 24 percent)
- 12th-graders (15 vs. 22 percent)
- public school students (20 vs. 28 percent)
- private school students (15 vs. 21 percent)¹¹

Types of Bullying

FIGURE 3.



NOTE: Excludes students who received any homeschooling education during the school year as well as students who only attended virtual public or private schools. "During school" included in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, going to and from school, and using the phone, internet, or social media. Students who reported experiencing more than one type of bullying during school were counted only once in the total for students bullied during school. Figures are plotted based on unrounded data.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2022. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2023*, table 230.45.

In 2021-22, the most common types of bullying reported by students ages 12-18 were

- being the subject of rumors (13 percent); and
- being made fun of, called names, or insulted (12 percent).

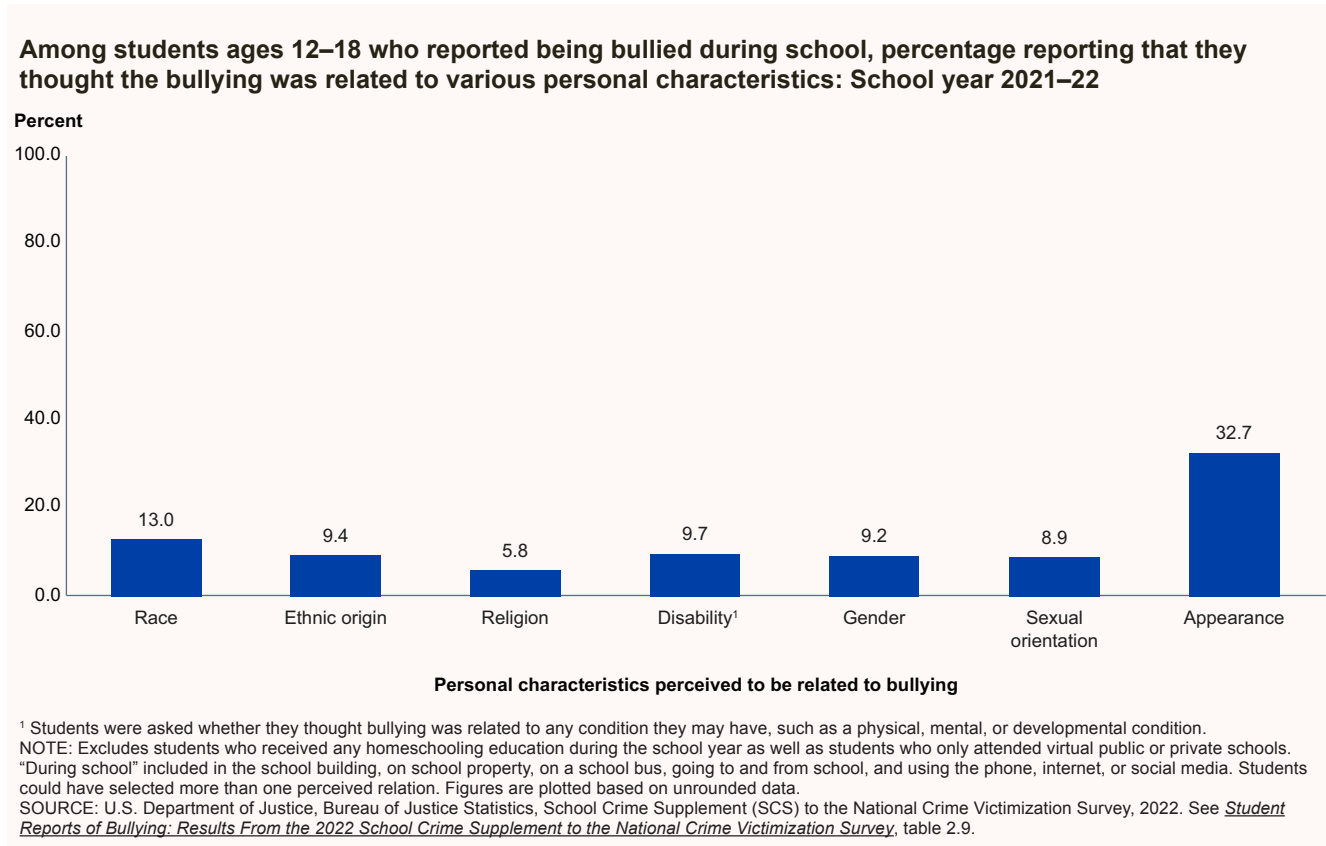
Other types of bullying were reported by between 1 and 5 percent of students, including

- being pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on (5 percent);
- being excluded from activities on purpose (4 percent);
- being threatened with harm (3 percent);
- having others try to make them do things they did not want to do (3 percent);
- having others share their private information, photos, or videos on purpose (3 percent); and
- having property destroyed by others on purpose (1 percent).

If a group of students had a higher overall rate of bullying than their peers, their reported rate for a specific type of bullying was generally higher than or not measurably different from the rate for their peers, but not lower. For instance, in 2021-22, the percentage of students ages 12-18 who reported being made fun of, called names, or insulted during school was

- higher for female students (13 percent) than for male students (11 percent);
- higher for students of Two or more races (24 percent) than for White (14 percent), Black (10 percent), and Hispanic (9 percent) students, which were all higher than the percentage for Asian (5 percent) students;
- higher for 6th-, 7th-, and 8th-graders (18, 21, and 16 percent, respectively) than for 9th-, 10th-, 11th-, and 12th-graders (10, 8, 6, and 7 percent, respectively);
- higher for students enrolled in schools in rural areas, towns, and cities (ranging from 13 to 15 percent) than for students enrolled in schools in suburban areas (10 percent); and
- higher for public school students than for private school students (13 vs. 8 percent).

However, there were some exceptions to this pattern. While a higher percentage of female students than of male students reported being bullied overall, male students generally reported a higher rate of physical harm to person or property. Specifically, a higher percentage of male students than of female students reported being pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on (6 vs. 4 percent) and having their property destroyed on purpose (2 vs. 1 percent).

Perceived Relationship of Bullying to Personal Characteristics**FIGURE 4.**

The SCS asked students ages 12-18 who reported being bullied during school to indicate whether they thought the bullying was related to various personal characteristics. Students could have selected more than one personal characteristic. In 2021-22, of students who reported being bullied during school,

- 33 percent reported that the bullying was related to their appearance;
- 13 percent reported that the bullying was related to their race;
- 10 percent reported that the bullying was related to their disability;¹²
- 9 percent each reported that the bullying was related to their ethnic origin,¹³ gender, or sexual orientation; and
- 6 percent reported that the bullying was related to their religion.

In 2021-22, there were some measurable differences by sex and race/ethnicity in students' reports of their perception of the relationship of the bullying they experienced to personal characteristics. Specifically, a higher percentage of female than of male students reported that they thought the bullying was related to their

- appearance (37 vs. 27 percent for female and male students);
- sexual orientation (13 vs. 4 percent for female and male students); and
- gender (13 vs. 5 percent for female and male students).

By race/ethnicity, the percentage of students who reported that they thought the bullying was related to their

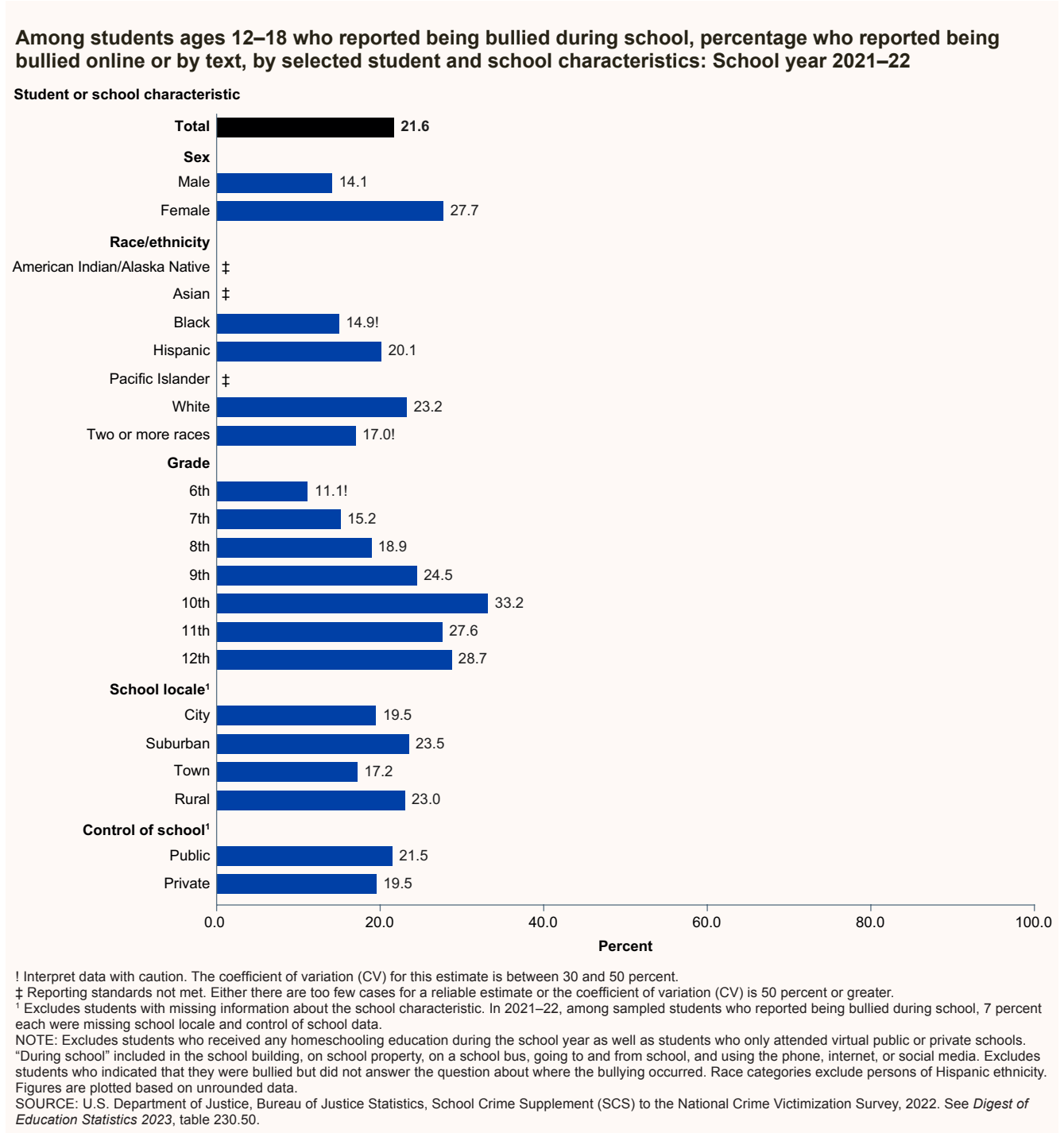
- race was higher for students of Two or more races (27 percent), Black students (26 percent), and Hispanic students (15 percent) than for White students (6 percent);
- ethnic origin was higher for Hispanic students than for White students (17 vs. 5 percent);
- appearance was higher for students of Two or more races (48 percent) than for Hispanic students (29 percent) and Black students (27 percent); and
- disability was higher for White students than for Hispanic students (12 vs. 7 percent).

Few measurable differences were observed by grade level and school locale in the percentages of students reporting that they thought the bullying was related to various personal characteristics.¹⁴

Bullying Online or by Text

In 2021-22, of the students ages 12-18 who reported being bullied during school, 22 percent reported being bullied online or by text. This was lower than the percentage who reported being bullied inside the classroom (39 percent) or in the hallway or stairwell (37 percent).

FIGURE 5.



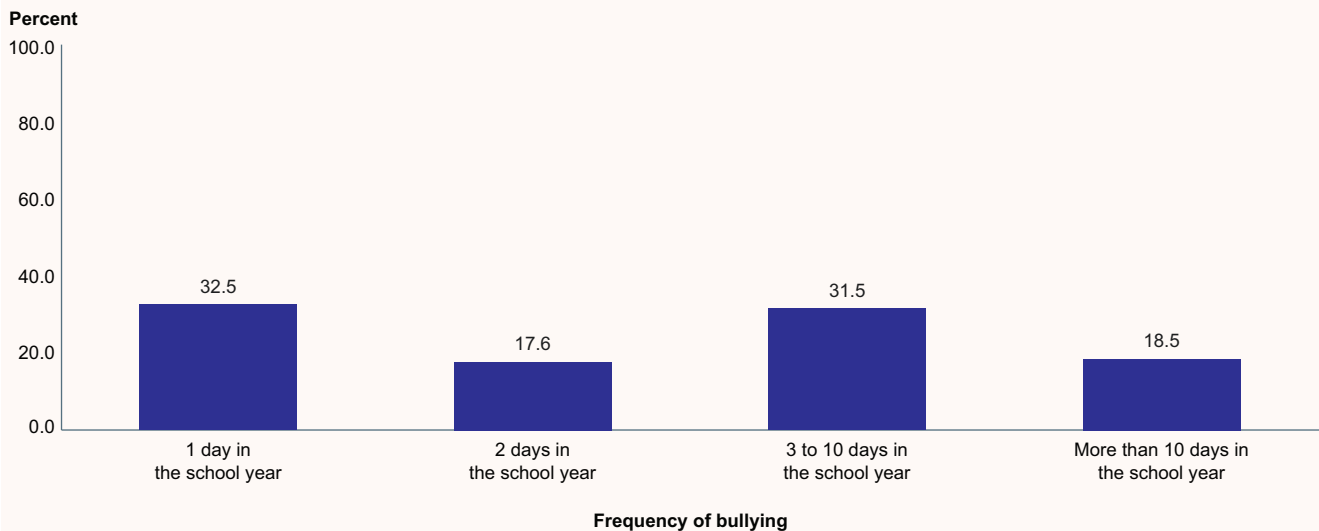
In 2021-22, among students who reported being bullied, the percentage who were bullied online or by text was

- higher for female students than for male students (28 vs. 14 percent);
- higher for 9th-, 10th-, 11th-, and 12th-graders (24, 33, 28, and 29 percent, respectively) than for 6th-graders (11 percent); and
- higher for 10th- and 12th-graders than for 7th-graders (15 percent).

Frequency of Bullying and Reporting to an Adult

FIGURE 6.

Among students ages 12–18 who reported being bullied during school, percentage reporting various frequencies of bullying: School year 2021–22



NOTE: Excludes students who received any homeschooling education during the school year as well as students who only attended virtual public or private schools. "During school" included in the school building, on school property, on the school bus, going to and from school, and using the phone, internet, or social media. Figures are plotted based on unrounded data. Detail may not sum to totals because of rounding in the data labels.
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2022. See *Digest of Education Statistics 2023*, table 230.60.

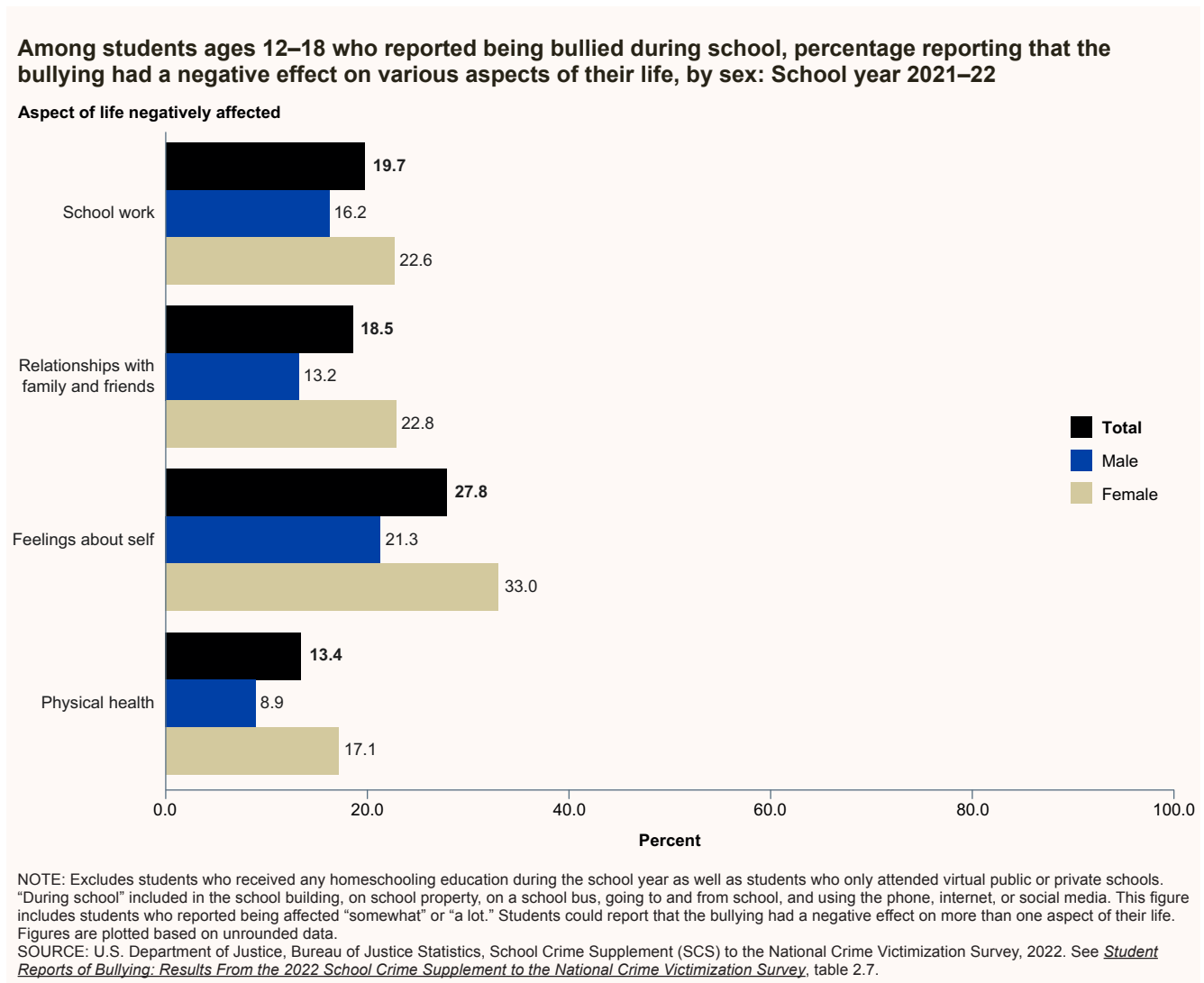
In 2021-22, among students ages 12-18 who reported being bullied during school,

- 32 percent indicated that they were bullied on 1 day in the school year;
- 18 percent indicated that they were bullied on 2 days in the school year;
- 31 percent indicated that they were bullied on 3 to 10 days in the school year; and
- 18 percent indicated that they were bullied on more than 10 days in the school year.

There were few measurable differences in the frequency of bullying reported by different subgroups of students. One exception was for grade level: the percentage of students who reported being bullied on more than 10 days during the school year was higher for 7th-graders (22 percent) and 8th-graders (25 percent) than for 11th-graders (11 percent) and 12th-graders (9 percent).

Among students ages 12-18 who reported being bullied during school in 2021-22, about 44 percent reported notifying an adult at school¹⁵ about the incident. The percentage of students who reported notifying an adult at school about the bullying incident was

- higher for Black students than for Hispanic students (52 vs. 36 percent);
- higher for 6th- and 7th-graders (62 and 57 percent, respectively) than for 8th- through 12th-graders (ranging from 32 to 41 percent); and
- higher for students who were bullied on more than 10 days in the school year (59 percent) than for students who were bullied less frequently in the school year (ranging from 36 to 47 percent).

Negative Effects of Bullying**FIGURE 7.**

Students who reported being bullied during school were asked the extent to which the bullying negatively affected four different dimensions of their school and personal lives. In this indicator, students who reported being affected "somewhat" or "a lot" were considered to have been negatively affected.¹⁶ In 2021–22, among students ages 12–18 who reported being bullied during school, negative effects were reported for students'

- feelings about themselves (28 percent);
- school work (20 percent);
- relationships with family and friends (18 percent); and
- physical health (13 percent).

In 2021–22, across each of these four dimensions, a higher percentage of female students than of male students reported experiencing negative effects of bullying:

- feelings about self (33 vs. 21 percent)
- relationship with family and friends (23 vs. 13 percent)
- school work (23 vs. 16 percent)
- physical health (17 vs. 9 percent)

In addition, the percentage of students who reported that bullying had a negative effect on their relationship with family and friends was

- higher for White students (24 percent) than for Hispanic students (14 percent), students of Two or more races (8 percent), and Black students (5 percent);
- higher for 12th-graders (31 percent) than for 6th-graders (7 percent), 8th-graders (17 percent), and 9th-graders (18 percent); and
- higher for 7th-, 8th-, 9th-, and 10th-graders (19, 17, 18, and 21 percent, respectively) than for 6th-graders (7 percent).

Few other measurable differences were observed by student and school characteristics in the percentages of students reporting various negative effects of bullying.

Endnotes:

¹ In 2018-19 and earlier years, students were identified as having been bullied if they reported that another student had made fun of them, called them names, or insulted them; spread rumors about them; threatened them with harm; tried to make them do something they did not want to do; excluded them from activities on purpose; destroyed their property on purpose; or pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on them. In 2021-22, the definition of being bullied was expanded to include having private information, photos, or videos shared on purpose in a harmful way. In the total for students bullied during school, students who reported more than one type of bullying were counted only once.

² Readers should take note that different surveys and federal agencies may have different definitions of “bullying.” For instance, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines “bullying” as “any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths, who are not siblings or current dating partners, that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance, and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated” (see <https://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/youthviolence/bullyingresearch/fastfact.html> for details). However, the School Crime Supplement Survey (SCS), which is featured in this indicator and co-designed by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), has a broader definition for bullying that does not exclude bullying from siblings or romantic partners, bullying without a power imbalance, or bullying without repetition. For bullying data broken out by these additional dimensions, see *Student Reports of Bullying: Results From the 2022 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey*.

³ Includes only students who reported being enrolled in grades 6 through 12. Excludes students who received any homeschooling education during the school year. In 2021-22, also excludes students who only attended virtual public or private schools.

⁴ In 2018-19 and earlier years, students were asked to report their experiences “at school,” which included in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, and going to and from school. In 2021-22, students were asked about things that happen “during school,” which included in the school building, on school property, on a school bus, going to and from school, and using the phone, internet, or social media.

⁵ For general technical notes related to data analysis, data interpretation, rounding, and other considerations, please refer to the *Reader’s Guide*.

⁶ The 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS) also collected data on students in grades 9-12 who reported being bullied on school property. For state-level data on the percentage of students in grades 9-12 who reported being bullied on school property during the 12 months preceding the survey, see this [table in the YRBSS Youth Online Data Analysis Tool](#).

⁷ Analyses by school locale and control of school exclude students with missing information about the school characteristic. In 2021-22, about 9 percent of sampled students were missing school locale data, and 8 percent were missing data on school control.

⁸ In 2021-22, data for American Indian/Alaska Native and Pacific Islander students did not meet reporting standards.

⁹ Due to changes in the 2022 SCS survey (i.e., changes outlined in endnotes 1 and 4), caution should be used when comparing 2021-22 estimates with those from earlier years.

¹⁰ Data by school locale have only been available since 2014-15, so these subgroups are not reported.

¹¹ Data by control of school (public or private) for 2012-13 and prior years were based on school information provided by the respondent. Beginning in 2014-15, data were based on school information collected in the Common Core of Data and the Private School Universe Survey, which was appended to the School Crime Supplement data file; therefore, these data may not be entirely comparable with figures for earlier years.

¹² Students were asked whether they thought bullying was related to any condition they may have, such as a physical, mental, or developmental condition.

¹³ The survey specified “ethnic background or national origin—for example, people of Hispanic origin.” For more information, see <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/crime/pdf/student/SCSQ2022.pdf>.

¹⁴ Analyses by school control are not reported because estimates for private school generally did not meet reporting standards.

¹⁵ “Adult at school” refers to a teacher or other adult at school.

¹⁶ The survey included four response options: “not at all,” “not very much,” “somewhat,” and “a lot.” For more information, see <https://nces.ed.gov/programs/crime/pdf/student/SCSQ2022.pdf>.

Reference tables: *Digest of Education Statistics 2023*, tables 230.40, 230.45, 230.50, and 230.60; *Student Reports of Bullying: Results From the 2022 School Crime Supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey*, tables 2.7, 2.8, 2.9, and 2.10

Related indicators and resources: [Discipline Problems Reported by Public Schools](#); [Students’ Perceptions of Personal Safety at School and Away From School](#); [Students’ Reports of Gangs at School](#); [Students’ Reports of Hate-Related Words and Hate-Related Graffiti](#)

Glossary: [At/during school](#); [Bullied \(School Crime Supplement\)](#); [Locale codes](#); [Private school](#); [Public school or institution](#); [Racial/ethnic group](#)