

DATA POINT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NCES 2020-040 NOVEMBER 2019

Students' Perceptions of Bullying

The data used in this report come from the 2017 School Crime Supplement (SCS), a nationally representative sample survey of students ages 12 through 18 enrolled in public or private school for all or part of the school year (not homeschooled for all of the school year). The SCS is administered every other year to students as a supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). The SCS collects additional information from students in NCVS survey households about their experiences with being bullied.

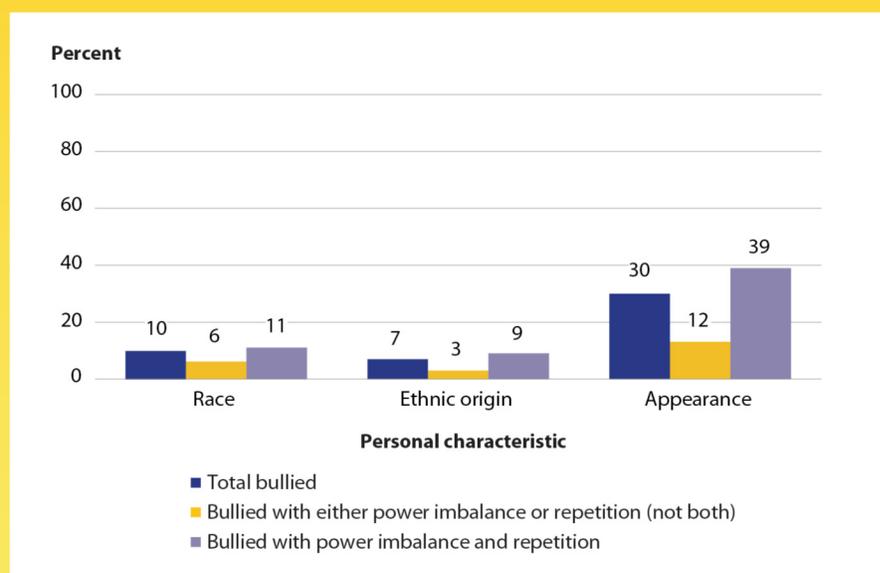
Since 2014, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the U.S. Department of Education have promoted the use of a uniform definition of bullying.¹ In 2015, the SCS was updated to include two components of bullying from the uniform definition (repetition and power imbalance). "Repetition" includes students who reported being bullied more than one day or more than once in a day, as well as students who thought the bullying would happen again. "Power imbalance" includes students who reported being bullied by someone who had more power or strength (e.g., someone bigger, more popular, with more money, influence, or more power in any other way) as well as students who reported being bullied by multiple students acting as a team or acting both alone and as a team.²

This report investigates the relationship between these components and the various personal characteristics that students believed to be related to the bullying they experienced. It further examines the relationship between bullying components and the negative effects of bullying on students' feelings about themselves, their schoolwork, and their relationships with family and friends.

Bullied students who perceived a power imbalance and who experienced repeated bullying reported that they were bullied because of their race, ethnic origin, or appearance at higher rates than bullied students who reported experiencing only one component of bullying (figure 1).

- More students reported being bullied about their appearance when being bullied with power imbalance and repetition (39 percent) than when being bullied with either component but not both (12 percent) or bullied overall (30 percent).
- Similarly, more students reported being bullied about their race and ethnic origin (11 percent and 9 percent, respectively) when bullied with both power imbalance and repetition than when bullied with either component but not both (6 percent and 3 percent, respectively).

FIGURE 1. Among students ages 12 through 18 who reported being bullied at school, percentage reporting perceived relationship of bullying to personal characteristics by bullying components: School year 2016–17



NOTE: Figure data include only students who reported being enrolled in grades 6 through 12 and not receiving any of their education through homeschooling during the school year reported. "Bullied" includes students who reported being made fun of, called names, or insulted; being the subject of rumors; being threatened with harm; being pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on; being pressured into doing things they did not want to do; being excluded from activities on purpose; and having property destroyed on purpose. "Repetition" includes students who reported being bullied more than one day or more than once in a day, as well as students who thought the bullying would happen again. "Power imbalance" includes students who reported being bullied by someone who had more power or strength (e.g., someone bigger, more popular, with more money, influence, or more power in any other way) as well as students who reported being bullied by multiple students acting as a team or acting both alone and as a team. The inclusion of students who reported being bullied by multiple students acting as a team, or acting both alone and as a team, as part of the definition of "power imbalance" is new for this report and differs from any reports including power imbalance estimates using the 2015 SCS data. "Total bullied" is based on respondents for whom data on bullying are available (98.5 percent of students) and includes students who reported being bullied with both repetition and power imbalance, bullied with either repetition or power imbalance, as well as bullied without repetition or power imbalance. Population size based on the 2017 SCS for all students meeting the age, grade, and school criteria is 25,023,000. Tabular data for percentages and their standard errors are available at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crime/crime_tables.asp. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017.

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Students who experienced bullying with power imbalance and repetition reported more negative effects than those who experienced bullying overall or bullying with only one component (figure 2).

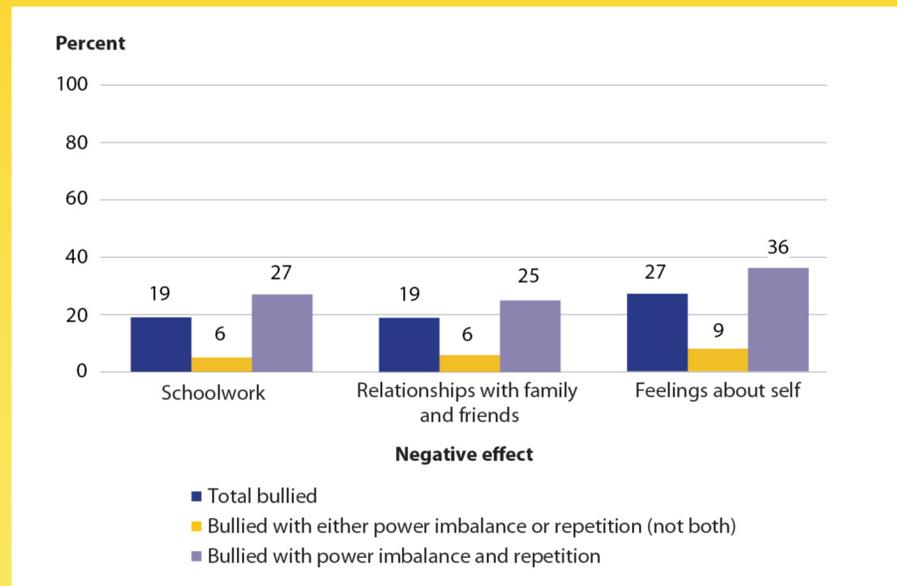
- Students who reported being bullied with both power imbalance and repetition also reported negative effects on how they felt about themselves (36 percent) and their schoolwork (27 percent) more than those who were bullied overall (19 percent and 27 percent, respectively).
- When compared to students who reported that they were bullied with either power imbalance or repetition, a higher percentage of students who reported they were bullied with both components reported negative effects on their school work (6 percent vs. 27 percent), relationship with friends or family (6 percent vs. 25 percent), and their views of themselves (9 percent vs. 36 percent).

Endnotes

¹ See Gladden, R.M., Vivolo-Kantor, A.M., Hamburger, M.E., and Lumpkin C.D. (2014). *Bullying Surveillance Among Youths: Uniform Definitions for Public Health and Recommended Data Elements, Version 1.0*. Atlanta, GA: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and U.S. Department of Education. Retrieved April 13, 2017, from <http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/bullying-definitions-final-a.pdf>.

² For the 2016–2017 school year, 20 percent of students reported being bullied at school in any way, 14 percent reported being bullied with repetition and power imbalance, and 5 percent reported being bullied with repetition or power imbalance.

FIGURE 2. Percentage of students ages 12 through 18 who reported being bullied at school, percentage reporting negative effects, by bullying components: School year 2016–17



NOTE: Figure data include only students who reported being enrolled in grades 6 through 12 and not receiving any of their education through homeschooling during the school year reported. "Bullied" includes students who reported being made fun of, called names, or insulted; being the subject of rumors; being threatened with harm; being pushed, shoved, tripped, or spit on; being pressured into doing things they did not want to do; being excluded from activities on purpose; and having property destroyed on purpose. "Repetition" includes students who reported being bullied more than one day or more than once in a day, as well as students who thought the bullying would happen again. "Power imbalance" includes students who reported being bullied by someone who had more power or strength (e.g., someone bigger, more popular, with more money, influence, or more power in any other way) as well as students who reported being bullied by multiple students acting as a team or acting both alone and as a team. "Negative effects" includes students who reported being affected "somewhat" or "a lot" when asked how much has bullying had a negative effect on them in this school year. "Total bullied" is based on respondents for whom data on bullying are available (98.5 percent of students) and includes students who reported being bullied with both repetition and power imbalance, bullied with either repetition or power imbalance, as well as bullied without repetition or power imbalance. Population size based on the 2017 SCS for all students meeting the age, grade, and school criteria is 25,023,000. Tabular data for percentages and their standard errors are available at http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crime/crime_tables.asp. SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey, 2017.

This National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Data Point presents information on education topics of current interest. It was authored by Christina Yanez, Melissa Seldin, and Rebecca Mann of Synergy Enterprises, Inc. All estimates shown are based on samples and are subject to sampling variability. All differences discussed in this report are statistically significant at the .05 level

without adjustments for multiple comparisons. In the design, conduct, and data processing of NCES surveys, efforts are made to minimize the effects of nonsampling errors, such as item nonresponse, measurement error, data processing error, or other systematic error.