



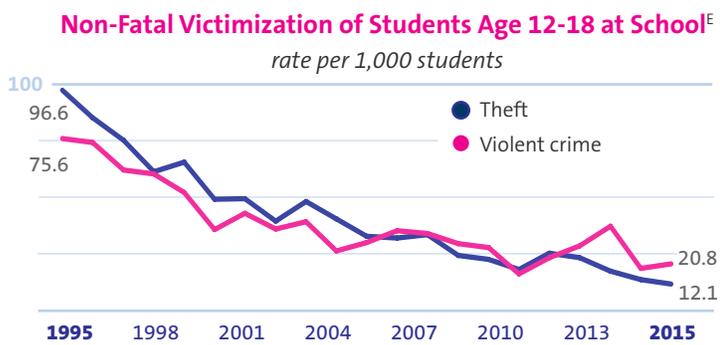
# School Victimization

Despite attention dedicated to high-profile incidents of violence at school, a majority of people at K – 12 institutions—including students, teachers, and other staff—do not experience or are not exposed to fatal or violent victimization. In fact, several school crime and youth violence surveys have suggested that **school victimization has declined since the 1990s**.<sup>A</sup> Respondents who do experience violent victimization report that they feel unsafe attending school,<sup>B</sup> that they feel depressed or suicidal,<sup>C</sup> and that they like school less.<sup>D</sup> Students who aren't exposed to violent victimization<sup>1</sup> may still be vulnerable to other forms of victimization, including bullying (online or in-person), exclusion from peer play, teasing, and other victimizing behaviors. These types of victimization may be more frequent and more difficult to capture.<sup>A</sup>

While the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the National Institute for Education Statistics routinely collect relevant and accurate information on child victimization, research has demonstrated that the number of victimizations occurring in school settings may be higher than reported.<sup>A</sup>

## CRIME TRENDS

Like other forms of victimization, **victimization of students between the ages of 12 and 18 has declined significantly** in the last 20 years. In 2015, the rate of all reported violent victimizations occurring at school was nearly 21 per 1,000 students, down from nearly 76 per 1,000 in 1995. The rate of reported theft occurring on school property decreased from 97 victimizations per 1,000 students, to 12.<sup>E</sup>



Between the 1995 and 2013 school years, the number of youth homicides occurring at school accounted for less than 3% of all youth homicides.<sup>F</sup> Apart from the high-profile nature of homicides occurring in schools, **most homicides of youth age 5 to 18 occur away from school**. Between July 2013 and June 2014, there were 1,053 homicides of students age 5 to 18. Of these, 12 were known to have occurred on school property.<sup>G</sup>

## DID YOU KNOW?

The **Early Childhood Longitudinal Study** found that the students they followed reported “sometimes or frequently” experiencing the following forms of peer victimization:<sup>G</sup>

- 43% reported being **teased**, made fun of, or called names.
- 46% reported they were the **subject of lies** or untrue stories.
- 32% reported that they were **pushed**, shoved, slapped, hit, or kicked by their peers.
- 34% reported being **excluded** from play on purpose.

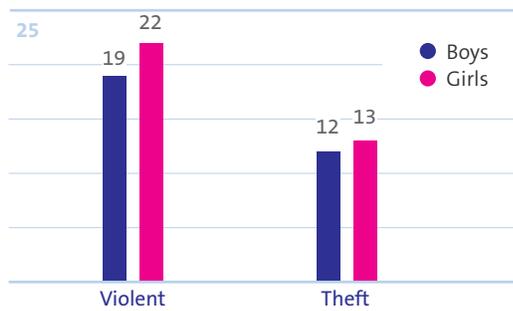
In the same study, **88% of the middle schools** reported that they had experienced at least one incident of **violence** during the 2013 – 2014 school year, compared to 78% of the **high schools** and 53% of the **elementary schools**.

Students who reported that they were frequently **victims of peer victimization had lower grades** in reading, mathematics, and science than their peers who reported they were sometimes victimized.

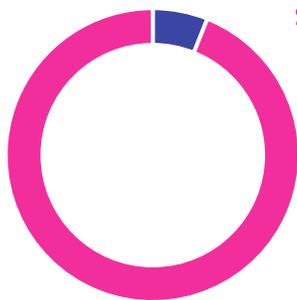
## CURRENT DATA ON SCHOOL VICTIMIZATION

In 2015, the rate of total known victimization occurring at school among boys ages 12 to 18 was 31 in every 1,000 students. For girls, the rate of total known victimization occurring at school was 35 in every 1,000 students. **The rate of violent victimization was 22 in every 1,000 students for girls and 19 for boys.**<sup>E</sup>

**Victimization of Students at School by Sex<sup>E</sup>**  
rate per 1,000 students



In 2015, **6% of students in grades 9–12 reported that they had been threatened or injured by a weapon on school property**, and just over 3% reported being threatened 2 or more times while on school property.<sup>G</sup>

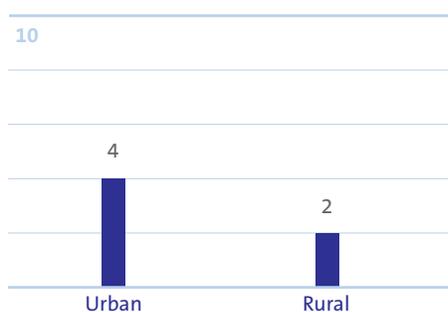


**Students Who Reported Being Threatened by a Weapon<sup>G</sup>**  
in grades 9–12

- Threatened at least once (6%)
- Never threatened (94%)

In 2015, **5% of students said that they were afraid of being attacked or harmed at school during the school year.** Students in urban areas were slightly more afraid (4%) of attack or harm at school compared to those in rural areas (2%).<sup>H</sup>

**Percentage of Students Reporting Fear of Attack or Harm<sup>H</sup>**  
by location



A sample of students in grades 9–12 found that a higher percentage of girls (37%) who identified as lesbian or bisexual reported that they were bullied while on school property compared to boys who identified as gay (26%). Similarly, a higher percentage of girls who identified as heterosexual (23%) reported that they were bullied while at school compared to heterosexual-identifying boys (15%). Unlike students who identified as heterosexual, gay, lesbian, or bisexual, a higher percentage of boys (32%) who reported that they were unsure of their sexual orientation were bullied on school property compared to girls (19%).<sup>G</sup>

**Students in Grades 9–12 Bullied on School Property<sup>G</sup>**  
by sex and sexual orientation



### NOTE

1 The National Crime Victimization Survey of the Bureau of Justice Statistics and the FBI's Uniform Crime Reporting Program categorize violent victimization, variously, as murder, non-negligent manslaughter, rape, sexual assault, aggravated assault, simple assault, and robbery.

### SOURCES

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- G L Musu-Gillette et al., "Indicators of School Crime and Safety: 2016," (Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education and Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2017), <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2017/2017064.pdf>
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