



# School Survey on Crime 2017

*On crime victimisation and participation in crime*



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**The Swedish National Council for Crime Prevention (Brå) –  
centre for knowledge about crime and crime prevention measures**

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This summary is included in the report School Survey on Crime 2017, which is available in Swedish at [www.bra.se/publikationer](http://www.bra.se/publikationer).

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# Summary

The overall purpose of the School Survey on Crime is to collect and analyse self-reported data from year-nine students regarding their exposure to crime and their participation in crime and other deviant behaviour. The results for the year are compared to the results from *School Survey on Crime 2015*.

The types of offences which are investigated differ somewhat in respect of exposure to crime and own participation in crime. In respect of the students' exposure to crime, questions were asked regarding exposure to various forms of theft offences, assault, threats, robbery, and sexual offences. In addition, exposure to offensive behaviour via the Internet and exposure to bullying were also investigated. In terms of participation in crime, questions were primarily asked regarding participation in theft offences, violent offences, vandalism, and narcotics offences. In addition, participation in certain other types of criminal behaviour were also investigated (such as break-ins, illegal file sharing, use of a false ID, or use of another person's ID). Certain other types of deviant behaviour, such as whether the student has been truant for an entire day and whether the student has consumed alcohol to the point of intoxication, were also investigated. The reference period in respect of both exposure and participation in crime is the most recent twelve months.

The survey was conducted among year-nine students at a selection of schools in Sweden. It comprises a printed survey which the students completed anonymously during school hours. A total of 4,268 students participated in this year's survey.

## **Slightly more than one-half of the students state that they were victims of an offence**

The results of the School Survey on Crime shows that slightly more than one-half (51 per cent) of the students state that they were victims of theft, assault, threats, robbery, or sexual offences at least once during the most recent twelve months. This is a somewhat higher percentage than in 2015, when 47 per cent stated that they were victims.

Taken as a whole, exposure to crime is approximately equally common among girls and boys, although the structure differs between the genders. Theft is the most common type of offence among boys, followed by assault, while the most common type of offence among girls is sexual offences, followed by theft. Aggravated assault and robbery appear to be the types of offences which students most commonly report to the police.

## **Criminal victimisation in the school environment is common**

In terms of the locations where the surveyed students state that they were exposed to crime, the results show that it often takes place in the school environment. The school environment is the most common crime scene for both minor and aggravated assault, as well as in respect of a large percentage of those who are exposed to offensive sexual behaviour and threats state that the incident occurred in the school environment.

### **Exposure via the Internet is a widespread problem**

A significant percentage of the students state that they were exposed to crime via the Internet and social media and, among those students who stated exposure to threat, it was most common for this to occur via the Internet and social media. There are, however, clear gender differences; approximately two out of five girls who were exposed to threat identified the Internet or social media as the crime scene, while the corresponding figure for boys is one out of five. Being exposed via the Internet is also common among those who were forced to perform some sexual act; a total of one out of five students state that the incident occurred via the Internet or social media.

Other unwanted incidents on the Internet, which do not necessarily constitute criminal offences, are also common among the students. For example, more than every fourth girl and almost every fifth boy state that they were exposed to offensive behaviour via the Internet, and approximately the same percentage have also been the victim of someone posting pictures or film clips of them that they do not want spread.

### **Clear correlation between exposure to bullying and exposure to crime**

Approximately four out of ten girls and three out of ten boys state that they were exposed to bullying. The results show a clear connection between exposure to bullying and exposure to crime, since assault, threat, robbery, violence, and sexual offences are significantly more common among those students who have experienced bullying, irrespective of whether it occurred infrequently, sometimes, or often. The pattern appears the same for both girls and boys, and appeared in 2015 as well.

### **Exposure to crime has significant consequences**

Among those students who state that they were exposed to crime, there was a significant percentage who avoided activities, places, or persons as a result of concern about being exposed to crime. Almost three out of four girls and approximately one-half of boys who state that they were exposed to threat state that they consciously avoided specific individuals. In addition, two out of three girls and two out of five boys who were exposed to sexual offences avoided certain places. In addition, a significant percentage of the girls who state that they were exposed to threat or assault also stated that they stayed out of school an entire day due to concern about being exposed to crime.

### **Certain groups of students state, more often, that they are victims of crime**

Certain tendencies appear in respect of specific groups of year-nine students who state that they have been victims of crimes. Generally, a greater percentage of students with a foreign background, students who live in apartments, and students with divorced/separated parents state that they are victims of various types of offences. Similarly, a greater percentage of students with parents lacking a university or college education and students who state that at least one of their parents is unemployed state that they are the victims of crime. The family's financial resources also appear to be significant in terms of crime victimisation, whereby students who state that their families have strained financial resources are more likely to state that they have been victims of crime when compared with other students.

### **Almost one-half of the students also participate in crime**

Just as is the case with exposure to crime, it is not uncommon for year-nine students to state that they participate in various types of offences or other deviant behaviours. Approximately one-half (49 per cent) of the students stated that they committed some offence (theft offence, violent offence, or vandalism, or experimented with narcotics) on at least one occasion during the most recent twelve months, which is the same level of 2015. The percentage is somewhat greater among boys than girls. Theft offences are most common among both boys and girls, and experimenting with narcotics is least common.

All four types of offences are somewhat more common among boys than girls, but the magnitude of the difference between the genders varies for the different types of offences. The greatest difference appears to occur in conjunction with violence and vandalism, while the smallest difference appears in conjunction with theft and narcotics offences. For all four types of offences, it is most common that those students who committed offences stated that they did so 1–2 times during the most recent twelve months.

### **Illegal file sharing and fare dodging are common**

Illegal file sharing and fare dodging<sup>1</sup> are the most common offences among the other criminal behaviour examined in the School Survey on Crime, but slightly more than one in five students have also driven a car or motorcycle without a driving licence. A significantly greater percentage of boys than girls state that they have engaged in illegal file sharing or driving a motor vehicle without a licence, while fare dodging is approximately equally common among girls and boys.

### **Gender, parents' educational level, and family situation are significant in respect of participation in crime**

There are several background factors which correlate with the risk of committing theft offences, violent offences, or vandalism, or experimenting with narcotics. The correlation is strongest for boys, students with divorced/separated parents, or students whose parents lack a university or college education, but the reliability of the correlation varies depending on the type of offence. For example, when compared with girls, boys have statistically established higher risk of committing a violent offence and vandalism, but not theft offences or narcotics offences.

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<sup>1</sup> "Fare dodging" in this survey means riding the bus, streetcar, underground, commuter train, or train without paying.