

Three-quarters of Canadian adults say they were bullied in school; half of today's parents say it's happened to their kids

89% of Canadians say bullying in school is a serious problem today; 75% say it will "never go away"

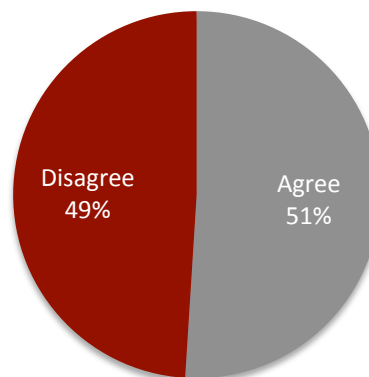
February 25, 2015 – Three-in-four Canadian adults report being bullied at least once when they were in school, while just about half of parents with children in school today say their kids have experienced it.

These are the findings of the most recent Angus Reid Institute online poll of Canadians measuring experience of bullying, the perceived seriousness of this issue, and how well or poorly Canadian schools are responding to bullying.

Key Findings:

- Nearly half (46%) of parents with kids currently in school say their child has been bullied
- Three-quarters (75%) of Canadian adults say they experienced bullying as a kid at school, at least once or twice, some much more often. One-in-three (33%) of those bullied most frequently say it has had a "lasting and serious impact" on them
- Canadians, including parents of kids in school, are split on how effectively schools are dealing with the problem

Schools in my province today respond effectively to bullying



METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey of 1511 randomly selected Canadian adults who are [Angus Reid Forum](#) panelists on February 18-19, 2015. For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size carries a margin of error of +/- 2.5%, 19 times out of 20.

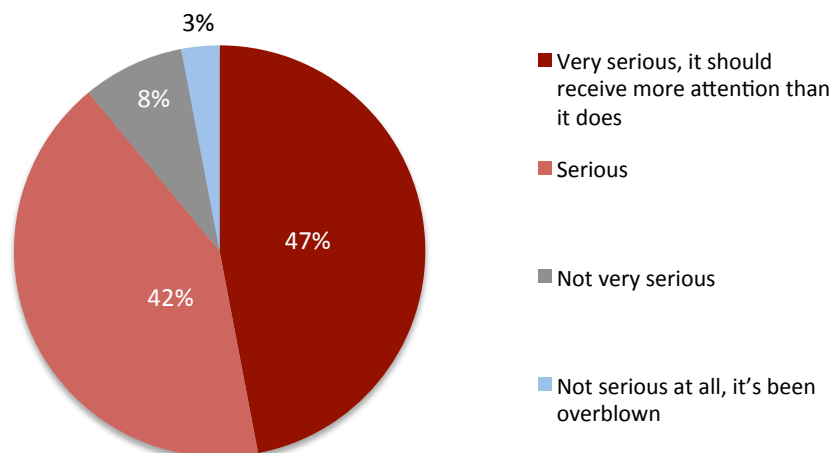
This survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed charts, tables and regional results are found at the end of this release.

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- Parents of children in school today are far more likely to say their child's bullying has been reported than is the case among those who said they were bullied as a child (70% versus only 15%)
- Today's parents also report a considerably more satisfactory outcome from the school's awareness: half of current parents said the school resolved or at least improved the situation, whereas adults looking back on their own experience are more likely to recall the school's awareness made no difference to the situation.

How serious a problem do you think bullying is in our schools today?



Definitions:

For the purposes of this survey, bullying at school was defined as: “acts or comments by one or more students that are intended to intimidate, offend or humiliate another student.”

How widespread was bullying in the past? And now?

The Angus Reid Institute poll results show a large majority of Canadian adults had at least a passing acquaintance with a bully during their time in school.

Three-quarters (75%) say they were bullied at some point between grades 1-12. Most respondents (51%) say it happened “once or twice” (22%) or “a few times” (29%). One-quarter (24%) said they experienced bullying regularly (13%), often (6%), or continuously (5%). The remaining one-quarter said they were not

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bullied (24%). Gender was not a significant factor in one's encounters with such intimidation. Results by age will be addressed later in our report.

The survey's respondents also included parents. We asked these parents whether, as far as they know, their children are being or were ever bullied at school. Among parents whose children are *currently* in school, nearly half (46%) said yes, roughly the same proportion as those with kids already out of school.

What was the impact on those bullied most?

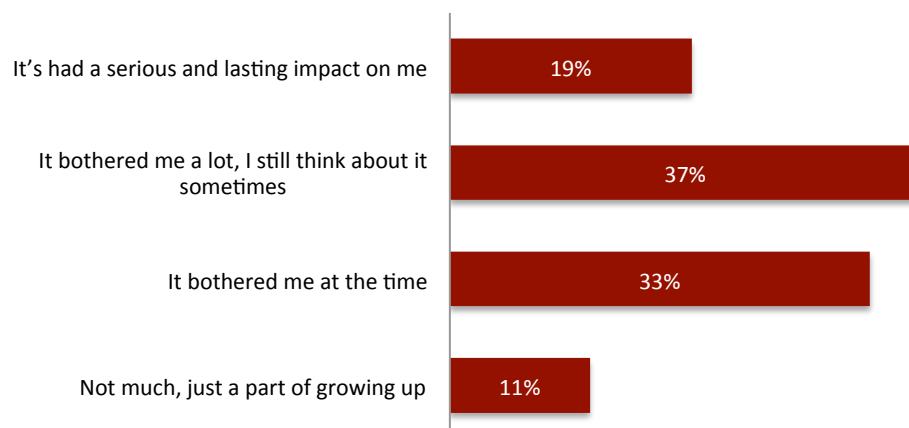
Today, more attention is paid in schools and the community about the impacts and effects of bullying on children and teenagers. Unsurprisingly, respondents to the survey who reported being bullied more often in the past also reported more severe long-term impacts on their lives today.

Among the one-quarter of Canadians for whom bullying was regular, happened often or was continuous:

- Only one in ten (11%) said it didn't bother them much, "was just a part of growing up"
- 33% say it bothered them at the time
- 37% say they still think about it
- 19% say the bullying has had a "serious and lasting impact" on them (and this figure rises to fully one-in-three of those bullied "often" or "continuously")

The severity of the personal impact of bullying is less among those bullied less frequently. Those who faced such intimidation just once or twice were five times as likely to say there was "not much" effect on them than those who were bullied often (50% versus 11%) (See detailed tables at the end of this release).

What was the impact bullying had on you? Adults bullied regularly, often or continuously as kids



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Bullying today: Overblown or Important?

Regardless of whether they themselves have been bullied or not, Canadians are unequivocal in how much gravity they give the issue of bullying in schools today. Fully nine-in-ten respondents (89%) say it's either "very serious" (47%) or "serious" (42%).

Those who say the issue is "very serious" are slightly more likely to be from Quebec (61% versus the national average of 47%) and to be women (55% versus 39% of men).

Further, there is little evidence of a "suck it up" mentality pervading Canadian public opinion on this issue. Asked to respond to this sentiment: *"We shouldn't go too overboard dealing with bullying, it's a part of growing up"*, fully three-quarters (72%) disagreed, four-in-ten (39%) strongly disagreed.

The situation in schools:

How effectively are schools responding to bullying?

Although there is little argument among Canadians on the seriousness of bullying in schools today, the general public is evenly split over whether schools in their own province are responding to the problem effectively, with half (51%) agreeing that schools are reacting well and half (49%) disagreeing.

Parents whose children were or are bullied in school are also split, with 49 per cent crediting schools in their province with an overall effective response and 51 per cent taking the opposite view.

From a regional standpoint, respondents in British Columbia are more likely to say schools are reacting appropriately well to bullying (57%), while those in Alberta are least confident in how effectively schools are dealing with the problem (47%).

Did reporting bullying make a difference in the past?

Of Canadian adults who recall being bullied back in their school days, just one-in-seven (15%) said this was reported to the school. The same number (15%) say the school was aware even if the bullying wasn't reported.

But, looking back, the large majority – 70 per cent – say they don't think their school was aware of the intimidating and humiliating acts or comments that bothered them. Respondents who were bullied more often and those who say their bullying experience had a lasting impact on them were more likely to say their school was aware (see detailed tables at the end of this report).

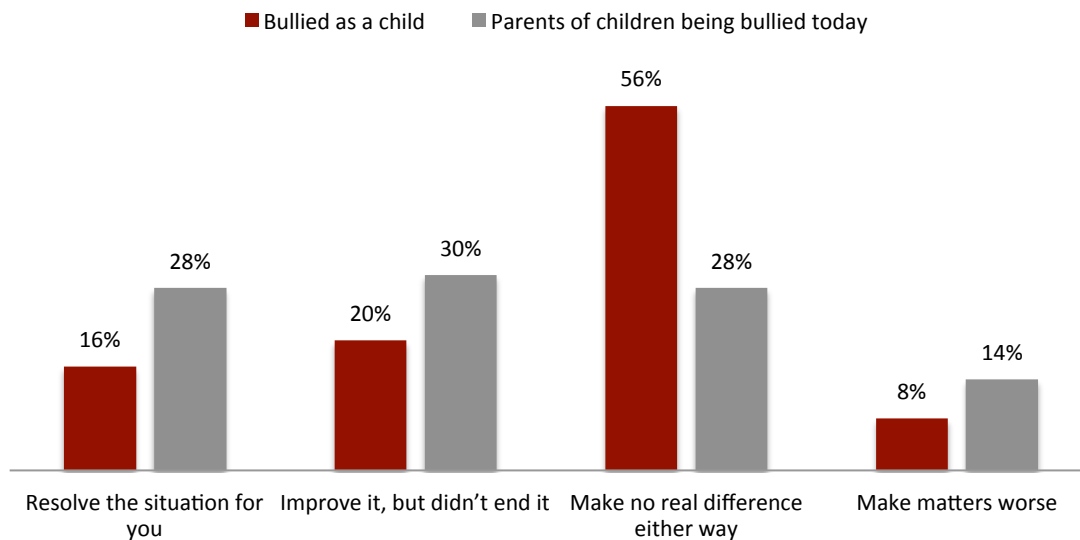
Even then, schools being alive to the toxic behavior did not necessarily mean an end to students' troubles:

- 56% said it made no real difference either way
- 20% said the school knowing improved the situation, but didn't end it
- 16% said the bullying stopped once the school knew what was going on
- 8% say the school knowing made matters worse

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School's overall response to bullying



Does reporting bullying make a difference now?

Times have changed. The perspective of parents today allows some hope that things have improved for bullied children in the ensuing decades.

The parents polled by the Angus Reid Institute were much more likely to say schools were aware of their children's bullying, either directly from reporting (59%) or indirectly (18%). Among parents of children *currently in school*, awareness from reporting is even higher (70%).

And while these parents say the school's awareness does not bring a permanent end to their children's bullying, the numbers are trending in a more encouraging direction:

- 28% of today's parents say it made no real difference either way
- 30% say it improved the situation but didn't end it
- 28% say the awareness of their children's school resolved the bullying
- Troublingly, 14% say the school's awareness only made matters worse

Is bullying getting worse?

The question of whether bullying is getting worse may be approached from two sets of measures; the first, public perceptions of the question. On this – the majority do think the situation is deteriorating. Asked to respond to the statement: *"the problem of school yard bullying was worse when I was a kid at school"*

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than it is today", seven-in-ten (70%) Canadians disagreed overall. That opinion is generally shared with parents who have children in school today and those who were themselves bullied on a regular basis.

Looking at the survey data on bullying experience across age groupings points to a similar conclusion. Respondents aged 55 and older were almost three times more likely to say they were not bullied as those aged 18-34 (36% versus 13%). Conversely, younger respondents (18-34) were twice as likely to say they were bullied regularly/often/continuously as those who were older (29% versus 15%).

It is also possible that another factor may be at play: the effects of time on people's memories and perceptions. It may well be that older respondents report less bullying because they were bullied less. It may also be that the subsequent decades have faded memories, lessened pain.

Although bullying was defined in the questionnaire, older respondents may also simply have a different perspective on what constituted bullying based on behaviour that may have been considered "normal" in its day.

But will bullying ever go away?

Even though nine-in-ten (89%) Canadians agree (47% strongly) that "*kids who bully others need to be dealt with much more severely*", they are pessimistic about an end to the behaviour in schools. Three-quarters agree "*bullying is never going to go away, no matter what new policies or approaches are tried*". As much as Canadians see this as a serious issue requiring more attention, they also sadly, see the fight as an ongoing one.

The Angus Reid Institute (ARI) was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion polling organization established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating publicly accessible and impartial polls, research and analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.

Thinking about the issue of bullying at school, how serious a problem do you think this is in our schools today?							
(Unweighted Regional Bases)	Total (1511)	Region					
		BC (220)	AB (156)	SK/MB (111)	ON (555)	PQ (367)	ATL (102)
Very serious, it should receive more attention than it does	47%	38%	33%	41%	45%	61%	56%
Serious	42%	47%	52%	49%	43%	34%	35%
Not very serious	8%	12%	10%	9%	9%	4%	8%
Not serious at all, it's been overblown	3%	3%	5%	2%	3%	2%	1%

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Thinking about the issue of bullying at school, how serious a problem do you think this is in our schools today?

	Total (1511)	Gender		Age		
		Men (768)	Women (743)	18 – 34 (435)	35 – 54 (568)	55+ (508)
Very serious, it should receive more attention than it does	47%	39%	55%	45%	46%	50%
Serious	42%	46%	38%	44%	42%	41%
Not very serious	8%	11%	5%	7%	10%	6%
Not serious at all, it's been overblown	3%	4%	1%	3%	2%	3%

Thinking back now to when you were in school (grades 1 through 12), were you, yourself bullied? And, if so, how often did this happen?

(Unweighted Regional Bases)	Total (1511)	Region					
		BC (220)	AB (156)	SK/MB (111)	ON (555)	PQ (367)	ATL (102)
No, was not bullied	24%	20%	19%	22%	21%	33%	30%
Yes, once or twice	22%	25%	23%	23%	24%	16%	22%
Yes, a few times	29%	31%	29%	32%	29%	28%	29%
Yes, fairly regularly	13%	11%	15%	14%	14%	12%	9%
Yes, often	6%	6%	4%	5%	6%	6%	6%
Yes, it was continuous/ongoing	5%	7%	9%	4%	5%	4%	2%
Prefer not to say	1%	1%	1%	-	2%	1%	1%

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Thinking back now to when you were in school (grades 1 through 12), were you, yourself bullied? And, if so, how often did this happen?

	Total (1511)	Gender		Age		
		Men (768)	Women (743)	18 – 34 (435)	35 – 54 (568)	55+ (508)
No, was not bullied	24%	22%	26%	13%	22%	36%
Yes, once or twice	22%	23%	21%	25%	20%	21%
Yes, a few times	29%	30%	28%	30%	31%	27%
Yes, fairly regularly	13%	13%	13%	15%	13%	10%
Yes, often	6%	6%	5%	6%	6%	4%
Yes, it was continuous/ongoing	5%	5%	6%	8%	6%	1%
Prefer not to say	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%

Was your school aware of any of the bullying you experienced, or not?

(Base: those who were bullied)	Total (1131)	Region					
		BC (175)	AB (123)	SK/MB (88)	ON (436)	PQ (237)	ATL (72)
Yes, school was aware, it was reported	15%	16%	18%	12%	13%	14%	16%
Yes, school was aware, but it was not actually reported	15%	14%	19%	18%	16%	12%	14%
No, I don't think the school was aware	70%	70%	63%	70%	71%	73%	70%

Was your school aware of any of the bullying you experienced, or not?

(Base: those who were bullied)	Total (1131)	Gender		Age		
		Men (596)	Women (535)	18 – 34 (370)	35 – 54 (437)	55+ (324)
Yes, school was aware, it was reported	15%	17%	12%	22%	13%	8%
Yes, school was aware, but it was not actually reported	15%	17%	14%	19%	11%	16%
No, I don't think the school was aware	70%	67%	74%	59%	75%	76%

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Was your school aware of any of the bullying you experienced, or not?								
(Base: those who were bullied)	Total (1127)	Bullied as a kid						
		Once/ Twice (328)	A few times (444)	Regularly / Often (277)	It was continuous/ Ongoing (77)	Regularly (193)	Often/Continuous (161)	Regularly /Often/Continuous (354)
Yes, school was aware, it was reported	15%	11%	9%	19%	45%	17%	33%	24%
Yes, school was aware, but it was not actually reported	15%	11%	13%	20%	25%	19%	24%	21%
No, I don't think the school was aware	70%	78%	77%	61%	30%	63%	43%	54%

Was your school aware of any of the bullying you experienced, or not?						
(Base: those who were bullied)	Total (1131)	Have Kids				
		Yes, kids between K and G12 (191)	Have kids who finished since the year 2000 (187)	Have kids who finished before the year 2000 (146)	Kids younger than school-age (69)	Kids in School (Net) (490)
Yes, school is/was aware, it was reported	15%	13%	12%	11%	10%	12%
Yes, school is/was aware, but it was not actually reported	15%	12%	13%	12%	26%	13%
No, I don't think the school is/was aware	70%	75%	75%	77%	64%	75%

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Please think back to how the school responded to your bullying. (If there was more than one bullying experience your school as aware of, please refer to the one that stands out to you most.) Based on what you can recall, did your school's overall response to this bullying:

(Base: School was aware of bullying)	Total (333)	Region					
		BC (52)	AB (42)	SK/MB (27)	ON (128)	PQ (63)	ATL (21)
Resolve the situation for you	16%	17%	13%	23%	16%	14%	24%
Improve it, but didn't end it	20%	26%	21%	10%	17%	27%	15%
Make no real difference either way	56%	40%	62%	62%	58%	53%	61%
Make matters worse	8%	17%	4%	5%	9%	6%	-

Please think back to how the school responded to your bullying. (If there was more than one bullying experience your school as aware of, please refer to the one that stands out to you most.) Based on what you can recall, did your school's overall response to this bullying:

(Base: School was aware of bullying)	Total (333)	Gender		Age		
		Men (194)	Women (139)	18 – 34 (144)	35 – 54 (111)	55+ (78)
Resolve the situation for you	16%	17%	16%	19%	12%	17%
Improve it, but didn't end it	20%	20%	19%	26%	16%	15%
Make no real difference either way	56%	54%	58%	48%	62%	62%
Make matters worse	8%	9%	7%	7%	10%	6%

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Please think back to how the school responded to your bullying. (If there was more than one bullying experience your school as aware of, please refer to the one that stands out to you most.) Based on what you can recall, did your school's overall response to this bullying:

(Base: School was aware of bullying)	Total (333)	Bullied as a kid						
		Once/ Twice (71)	A few times (102)	Regularly / Often (109)	It was continuous/ Ongoing (51)	Regularly (72)	Often/Continuous (88)	Regularly /Often/Continuous (160)
Resolve the situation for you	16%	30%	24%	8%	1%	7%	5%	6%
Improve it, but didn't end it	20%	25%	22%	14%	21%	19%	14%	16%
Make no real difference either way	56%	41%	51%	70%	56%	66%	65%	65%
Make matters worse	8%	4%	3%	8%	21%	8%	16%	12%

Some cases of bullying are more serious than others. Overall, thinking back to the bullying you yourself experienced at school, what was the impact on you?

(Base: those who were bullied)	Total (1131)	Region					
		BC (175)	AB (123)	SK/MB (88)	ON (436)	PQ (237)	ATL (72)
Not much, just a part of growing up	27%	28%	35%	40%	28%	19%	27%
It bothered me at the time	45%	45%	41%	37%	44%	49%	52%
It bothered me a lot, I still think about it sometimes	21%	20%	18%	17%	19%	26%	17%
It's had a serious and lasting impact on me	7%	7%	7%	7%	9%	6%	4%

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(Base: those who were bullied)	Total (1131)	Gender		Age		
		Men (596)	Women (535)	18 – 34 (370)	35 – 54 (437)	55+ (324)
Not much, just a part of growing up	27%	35%	19%	24%	27%	31%
It bothered me at the time	45%	42%	47%	45%	46%	43%
It bothered me a lot, I still think about it sometimes	21%	16%	25%	23%	17%	23%
It's had a serious and lasting impact on me	7%	7%	8%	8%	10%	3%

Some cases of bullying are more serious than others. Overall, thinking back to the bullying you yourself experienced at school, what was the impact on you?

(Base: those who were bullied)	Total (1131)	Bullied as a kid						
		Once/ Twice (328)	A few times (459)	Regularly / Often (271)	It was continuo us/ Ongoing (271)	Regularly (191)	Often/Co ntinuous (153)	Regularly /Often/Co ntinuous (344)
Not much, just a part of growing up	27%	50%	24%	13%	6%	15%	7%	11%
It bothered me at the time	45%	42%	56%	37%	20%	45%	20%	33%
It bothered me a lot, I still think about it sometimes	21%	8%	17%	38%	32%	33%	40%	37%
It's had a serious and lasting impact on me	7%	0%	3%	12%	43%	7%	33%	19%

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Do you now, or did you ever, have children of your own in school?							
(Unweighted Regional Bases)	Total (1511)	Region					
		BC (220)	AB (156)	SK/MB (111)	ON (555)	PQ (367)	ATL (102)
Yes, have kids currently in school between Kindergarten and Grade 12	16%	18%	17%	12%	17%	14%	17%
Have kids who finished school since the year 2000	18%	17%	17%	22%	22%	12%	21%
Have kids who finished school before the year 2000	16%	19%	16%	18%	16%	11%	20%
Kids still younger than school-age	5%	7%	6%	3%	3%	8%	1%
No, no kids in school	49%	43%	51%	52%	45%	56%	47%

Do you now, or did you ever, have children of your own in school?						
	Total (1511)	Gender		Age		
		Men (768)	Women (743)	18 – 34 (435)	35 – 54 (568)	55+ (508)
Yes, have kids currently in school between Kindergarten and Grade 12	16%	14%	18%	11%	32%	3%
Have kids who finished school since the year 2000	18%	18%	19%	2%	25%	25%
Have kids who finished school before the year 2000	16%	14%	17%	*	5%	40%
Kids still younger than school-age	5%	4%	6%	12%	4%	*
No, no kids in school	49%	52%	45%	76%	39%	36%

As far as you know, are or were any of your kids bullied at school?							
(Base: Has/had kids in school)	Total (697)	Region					
		BC (108)	AB (71)	SK/MB (52)	ON (279)	PQ (136)	ATL (59)
Yes	47%	52%	43%	47%	52%	40%	40%
No	53%	48%	57%	53%	48%	60%	60%

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As far as you know, are or were any of your kids bullied at school?						
(Base: Has/had kids in school)	Total (697)	Gender		Age		
		Men (333)	Women (364)	18 – 34 (50)	35 – 54 (323)	55+ (324)
Yes	47%	43%	51%	36%	51%	45%
No	53%	57%	49%	64%	49%	55%

Is or was your child's school aware of any of the bullying your child experienced, or not?							
(Base: Parents of kids who were bullied in school)	Total (329)	Region					
		BC (56)	AB (30)	SK/MB (26)	ON (142)	PQ (55)	ATL (20)
Yes, school is/was aware, it was reported	59%	56%	68%	42%	61%	59%	64%
Yes, school is/was aware, but it was not actually reported	18%	17%	17%	35%	16%	17%	20%
No, I don't think the school is/was aware	23%	27%	15%	24%	24%	24%	17%

Is or was your child's school aware of any of the bullying your child experienced, or not?						
(Base: Parents of kids who were bullied in school)	Total (329)	Gender		Age		
		Men (140)	Women (189)	18 – 34 (17)	35 – 54 (165)	55+ (147)
Yes, school is/was aware, it was reported	59%	56%	62%	63%	65%	53%
Yes, school is/was aware, but it was not actually reported	18%	22%	15%	18%	19%	16%
No, I don't think the school is/was aware	23%	22%	24%	19%	16%	31%

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Is or was your child's school aware of any of the bullying your child experienced, or not?

(Base: Parents of kids who were bullied in school)	Total (329)	Have Kids				
		Yes, kids between K and G12 (108)	Have kids who finished since the year 2000 (141)	Have kids who finished before the year 2000 (103)	Kids younger than school-age (4)	Kids in School (Net)
Yes, school is/was aware, it was reported	59%	70%	59%	52%	51%	59%
Yes, school is/was aware, but it was not actually reported	18%	17%	21%	14%	27%	18%
No, I don't think the school is/was aware	23%	13%	21%	34%	23%	23%

Please think about how the school responded to your child's experience with bullying. (If there was more than one bullying experience the school was aware of, please think of the one that stands out to you most.) Based on what you can recall, did your child's school overall response to this bullying:

(Base: School was aware of kids bullied)	Total (254)	Region					
		BC (41)	AB (26)	SK/MB (20)	ON (109)	PQ (41)	ATL (17)
Resolve the situation	25%	39%	14%	19%	21%	38%	13%
Improve it, but didn't end it	26%	21%	29%	14%	29%	24%	35%
Make no real difference either way	38%	32%	34%	64%	38%	32%	47%
Make matters worse	11%	8%	23%	4%	12%	6%	5%

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(Base: School was aware of kids bullied)	Total (254)	Gender		Age		
		Men (109)	Women (145)	18 – 34 (14)	35 – 54 (139)	55+ (101)
Resolve the situation	25%	26%	24%	29%	25%	23%
Improve it, but didn't end it	26%	24%	28%	21%	32%	20%
Make no real difference either way	38%	42%	35%	23%	34%	47%
Make matters worse	11%	8%	12%	27%	9%	10%

Please think about how the school responded to your child's experience with bullying. (If there was more than one bullying experience the school was aware of, please think of the one that stands out to you most.) Based on what you can recall, did your child's school overall response to this bullying:

(Base: School was aware of kids bullied)	Total (254)	Have Kids				
		Yes, kids between K and G12 (95)	Have kids who finished since the year 2000 (113)	Have kids who finished before the year 2000 (67)	Kids younger than school-age (3)	Kids in School (Net) (254)
Resolve the situation	25%	28%	27%	19%	29%	25%
Improve it, but didn't end it	26%	30%	27%	15%	-	26%
Make no real difference either way	38%	28%	39%	50%	71%	38%
Make matters worse	11%	14%	7%	15%	-	11%

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Do you agree or disagree, strongly or moderately, with each of the following statements? [Summary of Agree]							
(Unweighted Regional Bases)	Total (1511)	Region					
		BC (220)	AB (156)	SK/MB (111)	ON (555)	PQ (367)	ATL (102)
Schools in my province today response effectively to bullying	51%	57%	47%	51%	48%	53%	53%
Kids who bully others need to be dealt with much more severely	89%	89%	87%	86%	89%	94%	82%
Bullying is never going to go away, no matter what new polices or approaches are tried	75%	80%	74%	77%	75%	74%	72%
We shouldn't go too overboard dealing with bullying – it's part of growing up	27%	27%	32%	22%	28%	27%	24%
The problem of school yard bullying was way worse when I was a kid at school than it is today	30%	30%	31%	28%	30%	32%	32%

Do you agree or disagree, strongly or moderately, with each of the following statements? [Summary of Agree]						
	Total (1511)	Gender		Age		
		Men (768)	Women (743)	18 – 34 (435)	35 – 54 (568)	55+ (508)
Schools in my province today response effectively to bullying	51%	50%	52%	48%	51%	53%
Kids who bully others need to be dealt with much more severely	89%	87%	91%	86%	90%	91%
Bullying is never going to go away, no matter what new polices or approaches are tried	75%	77%	73%	78%	75%	73%
We shouldn't go too overboard dealing with bullying – it's part of growing up	27%	36%	20%	33%	24%	27%
The problem of school yard bullying was way worse when I was a kid at school than it is today	30%	36%	25%	35%	31%	26%

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