

REPORT ON
THE 2017 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY
FOR STUDENTS IN GRADES 7 AND 8
FOR THE
CHELMSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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INTRODUCTION

The Chelmsford Public Schools contracted with Northeast Health Resources (NHR) to carry out the tabulation and an overview analysis of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey which had been implemented with students in grades 7 and 8. This survey was based on one developed specifically for middle school students at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia. The survey contains 68 questions. Students responded to questions which fall under general categories of risk behaviors including: safety, violence, suicide, tobacco use, alcohol use, illegal drug use, HIV/AIDS education, sexual behavior, dietary behavior and physical activity.

SURVEY PROCESS

It was agreed that the survey would be administered to all students in attendance from grades 7 and 8 on the agreed upon date. The survey was administered simultaneously to all students on February 3, 2017 by professional staff. Parents were informed in advance of the survey and given the option to exempt their child from the survey. Twenty-two students were withheld at parental request. Teachers were provided with written instructions which were read to all students before taking the survey.

Once all of the surveys were completed, they were gathered and tabulated. There were a total of 722 students who responded to the survey, 342 from grade 7, and 373 from grade 8. There were 362 females, 347 males, and 3 students who identified as transgender who responded to the survey. Seven students did not indicate their grade and ten students did not indicate their gender.

Of the 807 students enrolled in grades 7 and 8 on the date of survey administration, 722 participated in the survey. This constitutes a participation rate 89%.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Frequencies of responses are reported for all items in the survey, and cross-tabulations are provided for three demographic characteristics: grade, gender, and grade/gender. The results of the survey, including all cross-tabulations, are presented in percentages under separate cover. Please note that the data results were tabulated in percentages, rounded to the nearest tenth of one percent, and not all percentages will total exactly 100 due to rounding and no responses in some cases.

OVERVIEW OF MAJOR FINDINGS

There is much important and relevant information to be found in an analysis of the tabulations of the Youth Risk Behavior Survey as taken by students from the Chelmsford Public Schools. This is true when one looks at the tabulations of all students taken as a group, and is especially so when one looks at the cross-tabulations by grade and gender.

With students having responded to 68 questions, much can be said about the responses to each of those questions. However, it is not the intention here to discuss the results of each question. Rather, it is the intention of this report to highlight certain of the results and to offer comparisons by grade and gender. It is hoped that the following as well as a more detailed analysis of the results of this survey, will assist the Chelmsford Public Schools and their Health Advisory Committee in their on-going development of health education curriculum.

MIDDLE SCHOOL – GRADES 7 AND 8

SAFETY

- **1% of all respondents report “never” or “rarely” wearing a seatbelt when riding in a car.** There was no variation by grade or gender.
- **Nearly one respondent in four (23%) reports that they “never” or “rarely” wear a helmet when riding a bicycle.** The incidence of this behavior was higher in grade 8 (grade 7 – 19%, grade 8 – 26%) and among males (females – 21%, males – 24%).
- **5% of all respondents report having ridden in a car driven by someone who had been drinking alcohol at least once during the prior thirty days.** There was no variation by grade and very little variation by gender (females – 3%, males – 5%).
- **16% of all respondents report having been bullied electronically during the previous 12 months.** The incidence of this experience was slightly higher in grade 7 (grade 7 – 17%, grade 8 – 14%). Females (18%) report this experience more frequently than males (11%).
- **10% of all respondents report having sent or received sexually explicit messages or photos electronically (also called sexting) during the previous 12 months.** The incidence of this experience was higher in grade 8 (grade 7 – 8%, grade 8 – 12%) and among female respondents (females – 11%, males – 8%).

VIOLENCE-RELATED BEHAVIORS

- **7%** of all respondents **report having carried a weapon such as a gun, knife, or club during the previous 30 days.** Male respondents (11%) report doing so much more frequently than females (3%), (grade 7 – 5%, grade 8 – 9%). Further, **1% report doing so on school property** during the same time period.
- **4%** of all respondents **report having been threatened or injured by someone with a weapon at least once on school property during the previous 12 months.** The incidence of this experience was highest in grade 8 (grade 7 – 2%, grade 8 – 5%) and among males (females – 2%, males – 6%).
- **Nearly one respondent in four (24%) reports having been bullied on school property during the previous 12 months.** The incidence of being bullied on school property was higher in grade 7 (grade 7 – 27%, grade 8 – 22%) and among females (females – 27%, males – 21%).
- **One respondent in seven (14%) reports having hurt themselves on purpose (cuts, burns, bruises) at least once during the prior 12 months.** There was no variation by grade but higher among females (females – 18%, males – 9%).

SUICIDE

- **15%** of all respondents report having seriously thought about committing suicide during the prior 12 months, and **7%** report having made a plan to do so. The incidence of students reporting having seriously considered suicide varied little by grade but was higher among females (females – 18%, males – 10%).
- **4%** of all respondents report having tried to commit suicide during the previous 12 months. There was no variation by grade or gender.

TOBACCO USE

- **4%** of all respondents **report having ever tried cigarette smoking** (even one or two puffs) and **2% report having done so for the first time before the age of 12**. There was very little variation by grade or gender.
- **2%** of all respondents **report having smoked cigarettes on at least one occasion during the thirty days prior to the survey**.
- **5%** of all respondents **report having ever used an electronic cigarette (e-cigarette)** (grade 7 – 3%, grade 8 – 6%). There was no variation by gender.

ALCOHOL USE

- **11%** of all respondents **report having ever had a drink of alcohol, other than a few sips** (grade 7 – 7%, grade 8 – 13%). Males (14%) report doing so more frequently than female respondents (7%). Further, **4%** of all respondents **report having had their first drink of alcohol before the age of 12.**
- **5%** of all respondents **report having had a drink of alcohol at least once during the previous thirty days.** Respondents from grade 8 report doing so most frequently (grade 7 – 2%, grade 8 – 7%). There was no variation by gender.
- **3%** of all respondents **report having attended parties held in homes in their school district where alcohol use by teens is allowed, either occasionally or frequently during the previous 12 months.** There was little variation by grade (grade 7 – 2%, grade 8 – 4%) or gender.

ILLEGAL DRUG USE

- **4%** of all respondents **report having ever used marijuana**. There was little variation by grade (grade 7 – 2%, grade 8 – 5%) and no variation by gender. Further, 2% report using marijuana during the previous month.
- **4%** of all respondents **report having ever sniffed glue, breathed the contents of spray cans, or inhaled any paints or sprays to get high**. Respondents from grade 8 (5%) report doing so more frequently than those from grade 7 (2%). Further, **3% report using such inhalants to get high during the previous 30 days**.
- **One respondent in sixteen (6%) reports having ever used a prescription medication that was not prescribed by a doctor specifically for them**. There was no variation by grade or gender.
- **4%** of all respondents **report having been offered, sold, or given an illegal drug on school property during the prior 12 months**. The incidence of this experience was higher in grade 8 (grade 7 – 1%, grade 8 – 5%), (females – 4%, males – 2%).

HIV/AIDS EDUCATION

- **63% of all respondents report having ever been taught about AIDS or HIV infection in school.** The incidence of this experience was much higher in grade 8 (grade 7 – 49%, grade 8 – 76%) and among male respondents (females – 55%, males – 71%).
- **Two-thirds (68%) of all respondents report that they have not spoken with their parents or other adults in their family about sexuality or ways to prevent HIV infection, other STDs, or pregnancy during the previous 12 months.** The incidence of this experience was higher in grade 7 (grade 7 – 74%, grade 8 – 63%). There was no variation by gender.

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

- **4%** of all respondents **report having ever had sexual intercourse** (grade 7 – 3%, grade 8 – 5%), (females – 3%, males – 5%).
- **2%** of all respondents **report having had sexual intercourse with two or more people during their lives** (females – 1%, males – 2%).

DIETARY BEHAVIOR

- While over half (**57%**) of all respondents **described themselves as being at about the right weight, 35% reported trying to lose weight and 12% were trying to gain weight.** Female respondents (43%) were more likely to be trying to lose weight (males - 26%).
- During the previous 30 days, in order to lose weight or to keep from gaining weight:
 - **56%** of all respondents **report having exercised** (females – 59%, males – 53%).
 - **31%** of all respondents **report eating less food, fewer calories, or foods low in fat** (females – 39%, males – 23%).
 - **5%** of all respondents **report having gone without eating for 24 hours or more** (females – 6%, males – 4%).
 - **1%** of all respondents **report having taken diet pills, powders, or liquids without a doctor’s advice** (females – 1%, males – 1%).
 - **3%** of all respondents **report having vomited or taken laxatives** (females – 3%, males – 2%).
- **30%** of all respondents **report eating breakfast on fewer than 5 days in the previous week.** 10% report not eating breakfast at all. The incidence of this experience was slightly higher in grade 8 (grade 7 -- 29%, grade 8 – 32%) and among female respondents (females – 34%, males – 25%).

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- **71%** of all respondents **report having exercised or participated in physical activity for at least 20 minutes that made them sweat and breathe hard on at least three occasions during the seven days prior to the survey.** The incidence of such regular exercise varied little by grade (grade 7 – 70%, grade 8 – 72%) and was higher among male respondents (females – 67%, males – 76%).
- **One respondent in seven (14%) reports that they watch television three or more hours per day on an average school day.** Respondents from grade 8 (16%) report doing so more frequently (grade 7 – 12%). There was no variation by gender.
- **40%** of all respondents **report that they get seven hours or less of sleep each night on average.** The incidence of this behavior was highest in grade 8 (grade 7 – 37%, grade 8 – 43%) and was higher among female respondents (females – 44%, males – 35%).

APPENDIX

TO THE REPORT ON THE

2017 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY

FOR THE

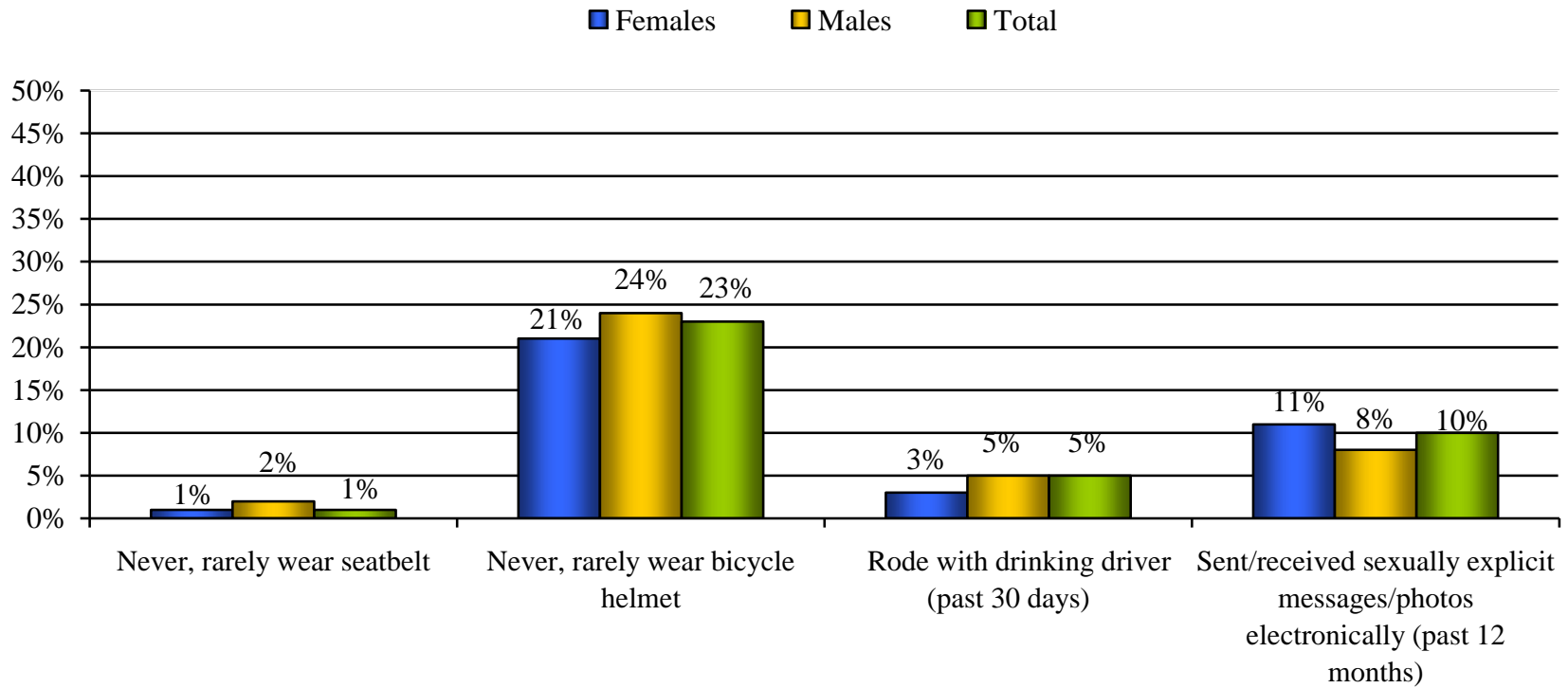
CHELMSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

MIDDLE SCHOOL

(GRADES 7 AND 8)

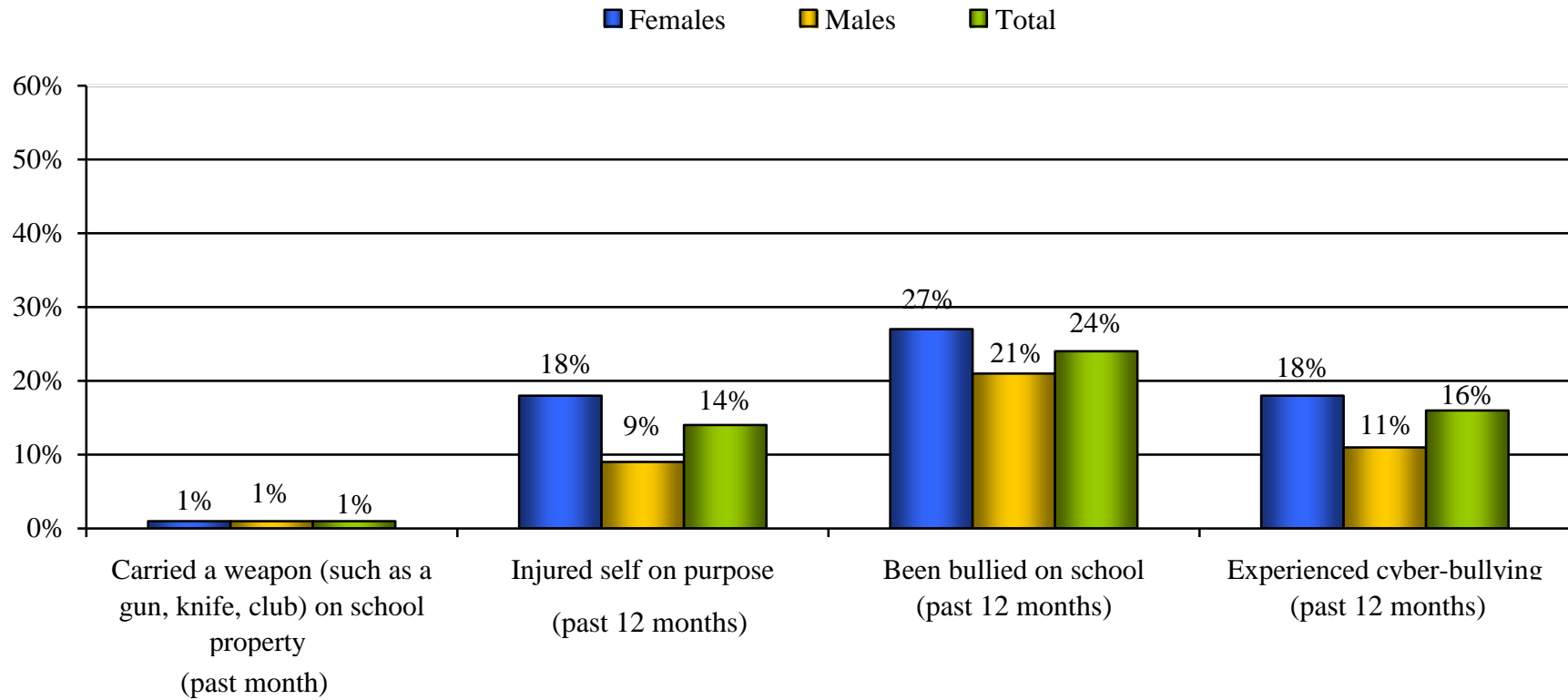
**CHELMSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2017 YRBS
MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 7 & 8 COMBINED)**

SAFETY



**CHELMSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2017 YRBS
MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 7 & 8 COMBINED)**

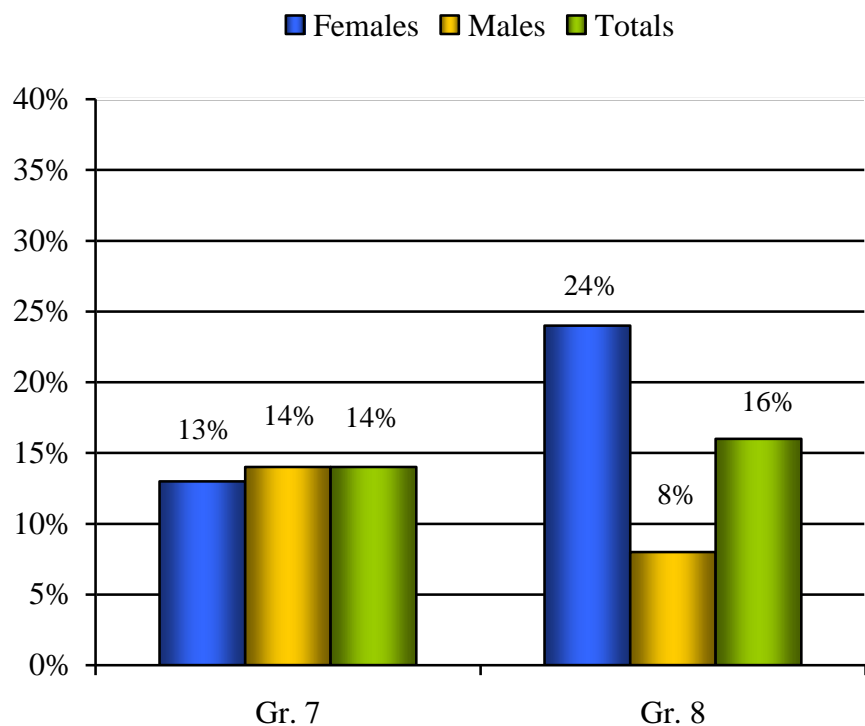
VIOLENCE-RELATED BEHAVIORS



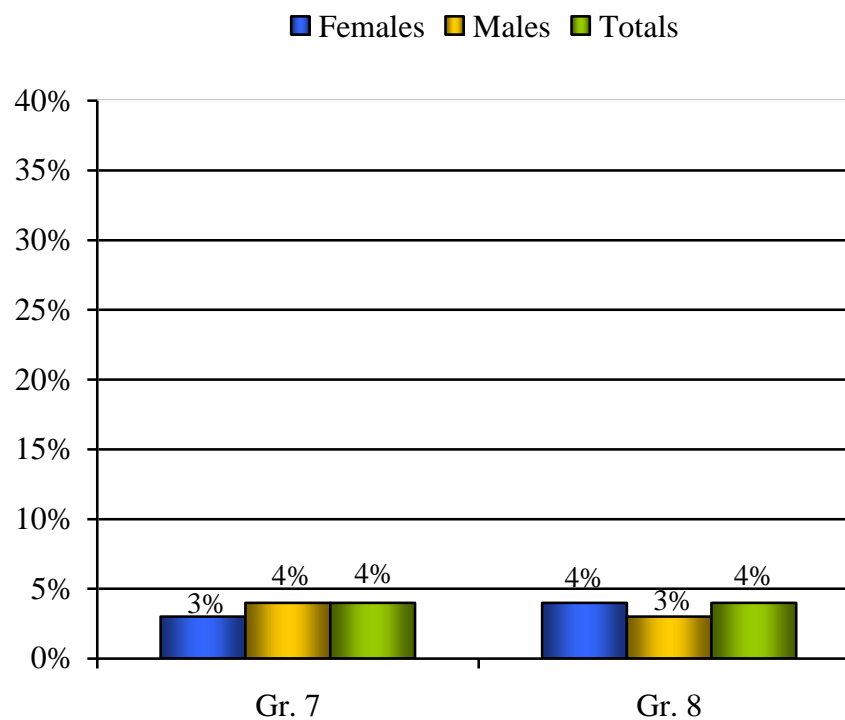
**CHELMSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2017 YRBS
MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 7 & 8)**

SUICIDE

Seriously thought about killing yourself
(past 12 months)

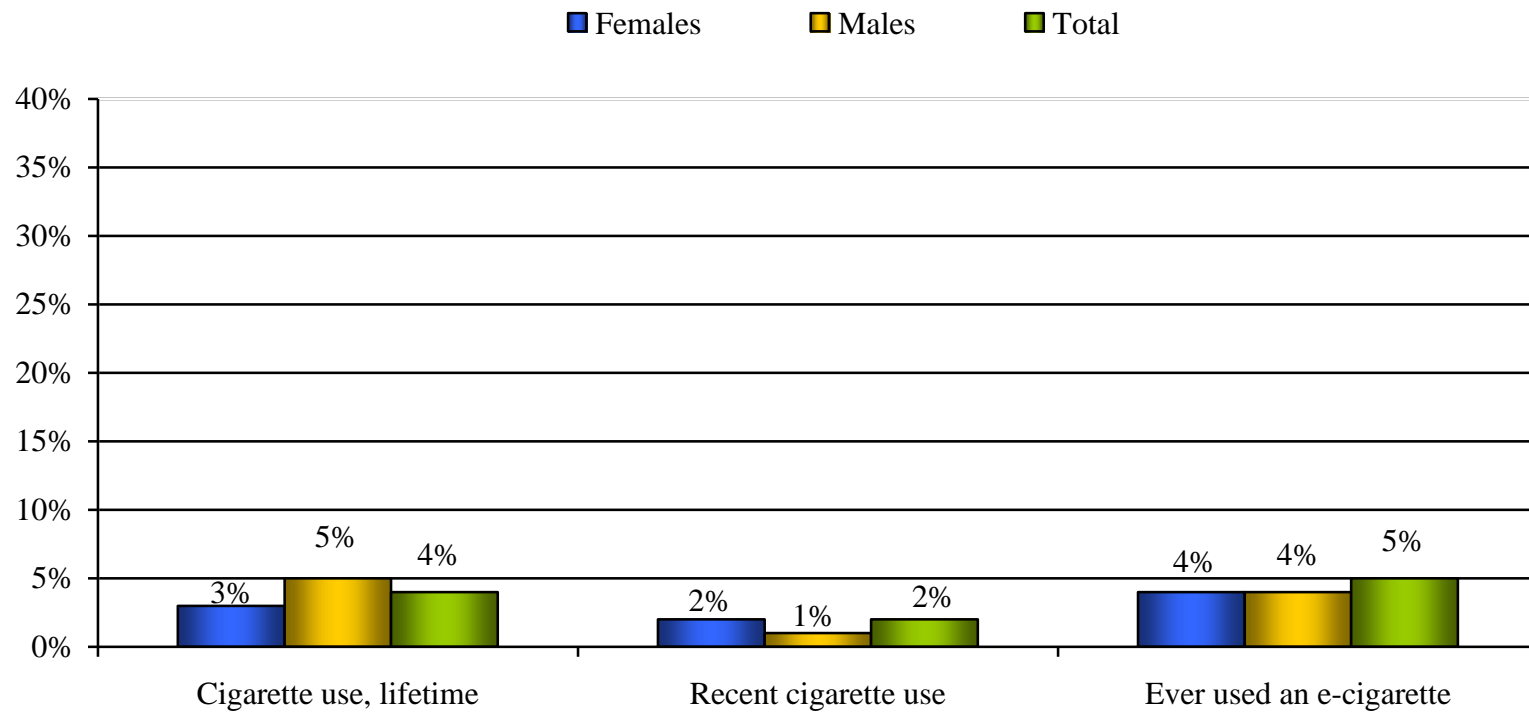


Tried to kill yourself
(past 12 months)



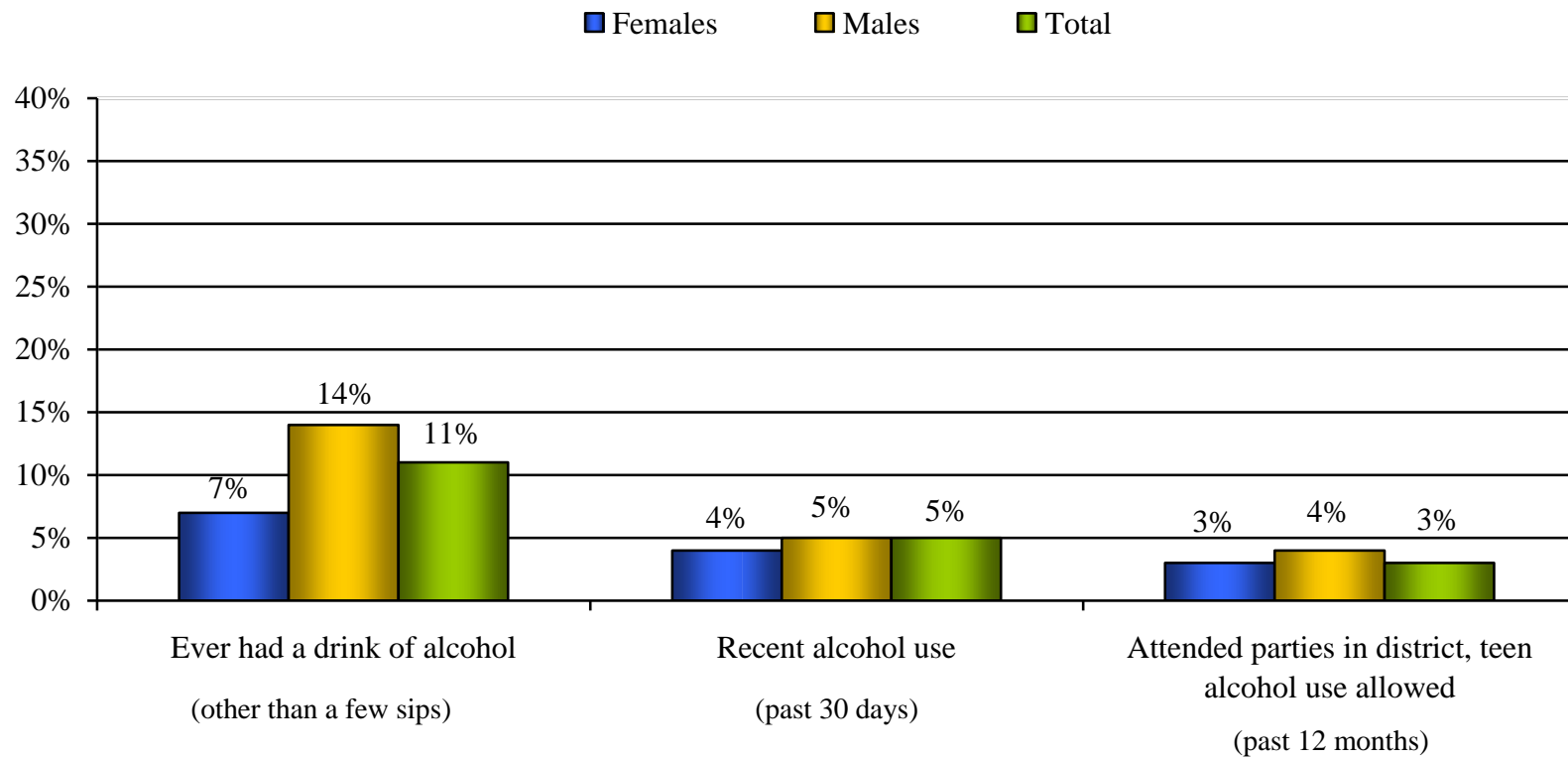
**CHELMSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2017 YRBS
MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 7 & 8 COMBINED)**

TOBACCO USE



**CHELMSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2017 YRBS
MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 7 & 8 COMBINED)**

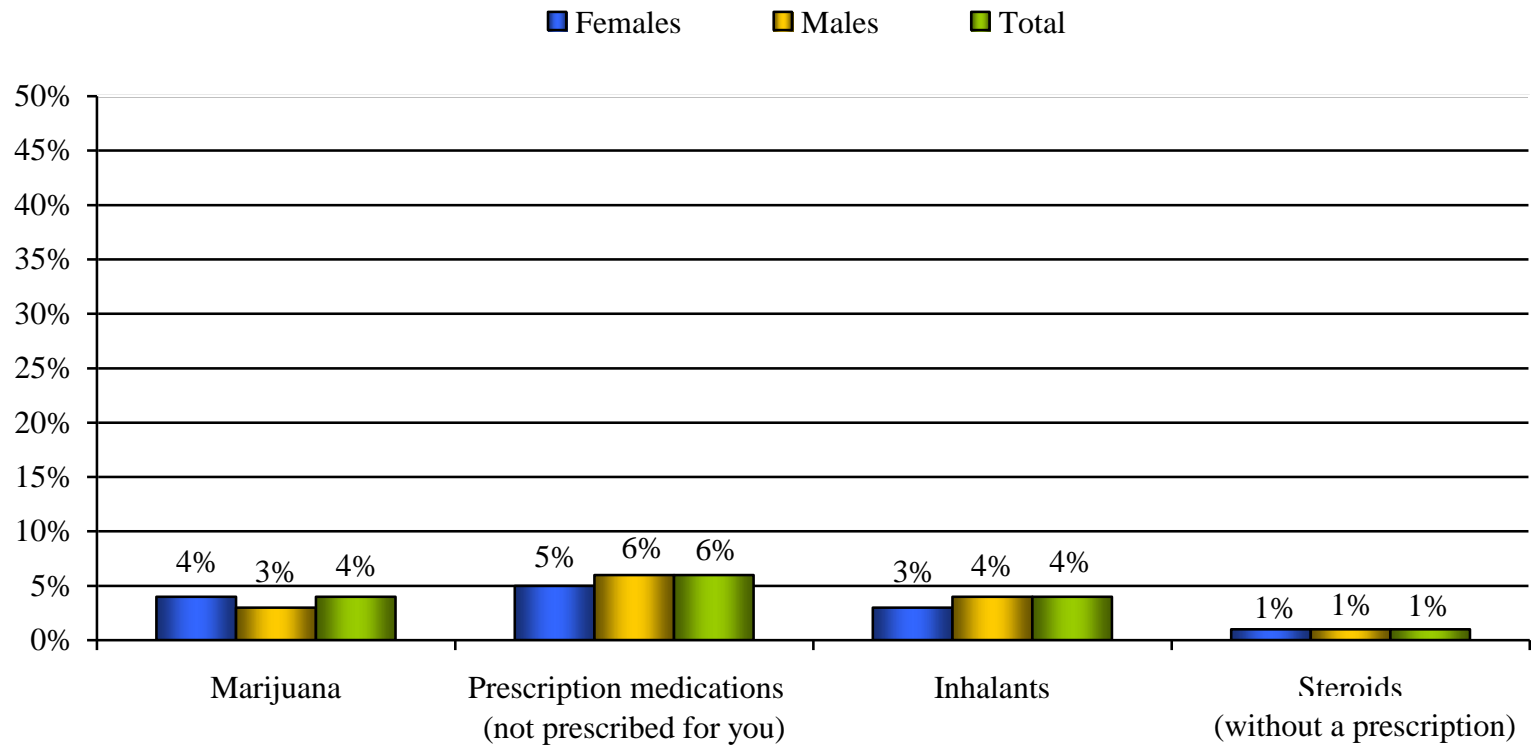
ALCOHOL USE



**CHELMSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2017 YRBS
MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 7 & 8 COMBINED)**

ILLEGAL DRUG USE

LIFETIME USE (EVER USED)



**CHELMSFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
2017 YRBS
MIDDLE SCHOOL (GRADES 7 & 8 COMBINED)**

SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

