

# "How Are You?"

Year 11 Population Findings

Level of risk-taking behaviour  
and perception - December  
2019

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## 1.0 Introduction

Over the past three academic years Swindon Healthy Schools has surveyed students as they moved through secondary school from year 9 to year 11. The purpose of the anonymous, on-line surveys has been to gain insight to young peoples' behaviours in relation to a range of lifestyle choices and health related areas. In addition, there have been questions about their perceptions of the behaviour choices of their peer group.

Information gathered over the three surveys aims to identify the extent of behaviour and/or perception change as students get older. There has also been an opportunity to collect data on specific topic areas that may have come to light since the inception of this project. For example; the first two surveys included questions on illegal drug uses (other than cannabis) and the latest survey has included questions about gambling behaviour, support around exams and views on PSHE delivered in school.

In this most recent survey, there has been inclusion of some question to help indicate young people's experience of CSE and neglect and whether they know how to access support.

The information below was gathered during term 2 of the 2018/19 academic year and was open to all mainstream Swindon secondary schools with Year 11 students on roll.

## 2.0 Survey Sample

All Swindon secondary schools were contacted and asked to encourage their year 11 students to complete the “How Are You?” on-line survey. The response was fairly good, and much better than in the previous academic year where a very small sample was gathered

Seven schools participated and the gender split was:

- Boys 46 %
- Girls 50%
- Prefer not to say 4%

The majority of students (71%) were 16 years old at the time of completion with 29% being 16 years old.

The largest ethnicity was white British (72%), followed by Asian 13%, mixed race 4% and the remainder a mix of other European and “prefer not to say”.

**Table 2.1**

				% of year11 completing
<b>Year 11 students on roll in Swindon</b>	1991(May 2018)	<b>Students completing survey</b>	503	25%

A sample size of 467 enables us to assume with 95% confidence interval, that the results are within a range of + or – 4, if the data collected is to be applied to the wider population.

Seven of the 11 schools eligible to take part in the survey completed the survey with some or all of their year 11 students.

Returns from schools were as follows:

	% of Year 11 students in sample
School 1	114 (60%)
School 2	42 (24%)
School 3	87 (56%)
School 4	12 (0.4%)
School 5	126 (54%)
School 6	100 (83%)
School 7	20 (30%)

### 3.0 Key Swindon Population Findings:

#### Summary - Behaviour

- The number of Year 11 students choosing NOT to smoke is 96%
- The number not using E-cigarettes is 98%
- 95% do NOT use cannabis
- 81% never or rarely use alcohol
- 85% have NOT had sex
- 83% have NEVER gambled
- 56% eat breakfast 5 times per week or more.

#### Mental Health

##### Bullying & Deliberate Self-harm

- 90% have never or rarely experienced physical bullying
- 89% have never or rarely experienced on-line bullying
- 76% have never or rarely experienced verbal bullying
- 26% have deliberately self-harmed at some point
- 5% report that they are regularly self-harming

### General Happiness

- 74% of students strongly agreed/agreed that they were happy with life on most days.
- 58% strongly agreed/agreed that they were happy in school on most days.
- 89% strongly agreed/agreed that they had at least one friend they could turn to for support.
- 85% strongly agreed/agreed that they had a family member they could run to for advice and support
- 74% strongly agreed/agreed that they knew there were teachers in school who could offer advice and support.

### Exam Preparation and PSHE Provision in School

- 84% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they had been given good advice on exam preparation.
- 49% of students felt well prepared for their GCSEs
- 68% had made plans to help them with revision
- 53% strongly agreed/agreed that they knew strategies to help them manage stress and/or anxiety.

### How students rated PSHE

Students were asked to rate the PSHE they had received in relation to a range of topics. The rating scale was as follows; Excellent, Good, Ok, Poor, non-existent.

#### **The top-rated topics with students selecting excellent or good were:**

- Internet safety (59%)
- Sex education (57%)
- Relationships & Consent (54%)
- Careers (54%)
- Drugs (52%)

#### **The lowest scoring areas were:**

- Strategies to manage stress and anxiety (30%)
- Finance and budgeting (30%)
- LGBTQ+ and understanding sexuality (32%)
- Mental health (34%)

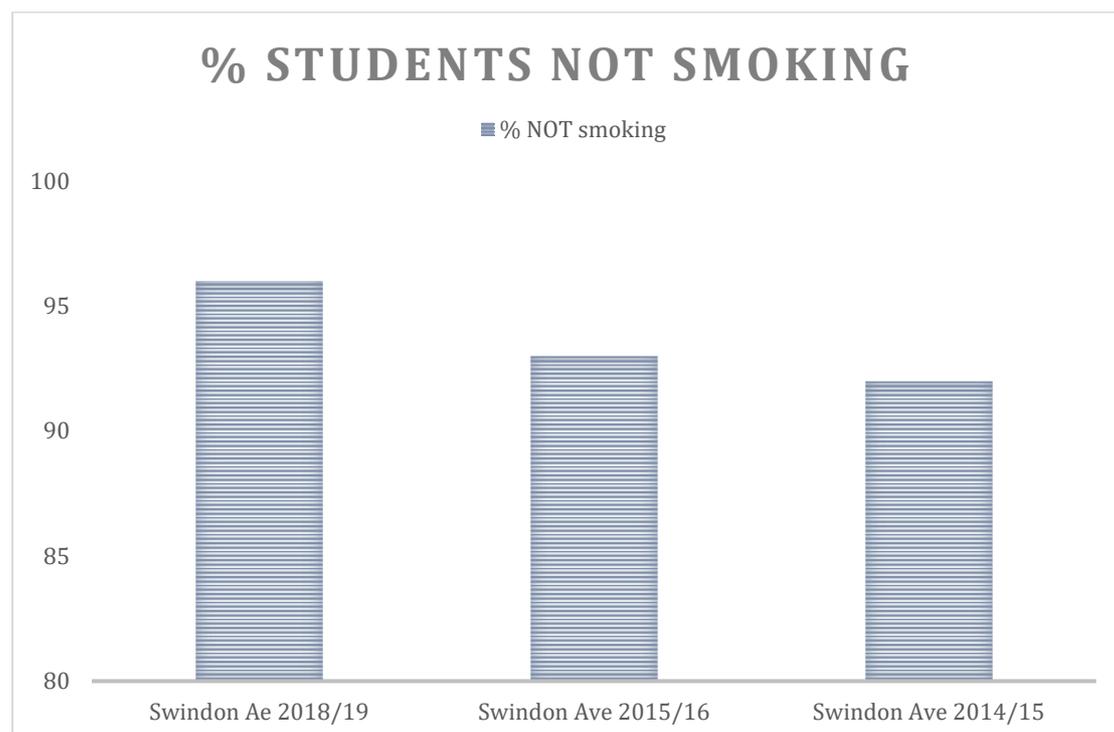
## 4.0 Data Analysis

The following charts will provide key findings across a range of behaviour choices, eating habits and mental health related questions.

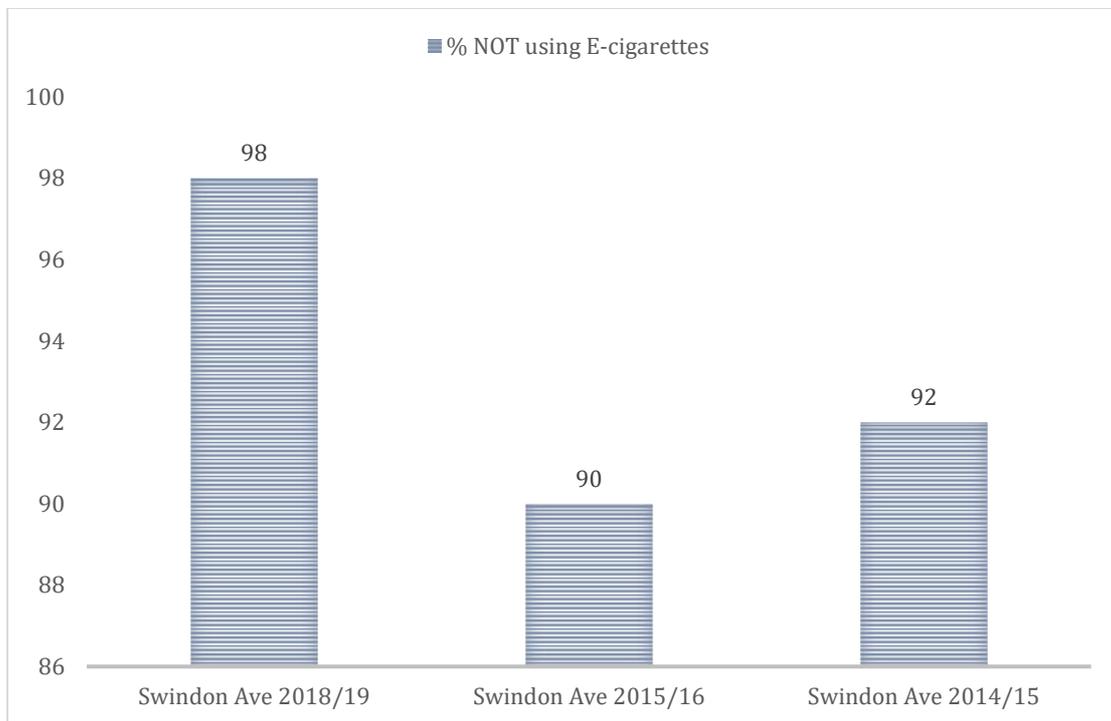
### 4.1 Behaviour Choices

The charts below display comparison figures over the past three academic years.

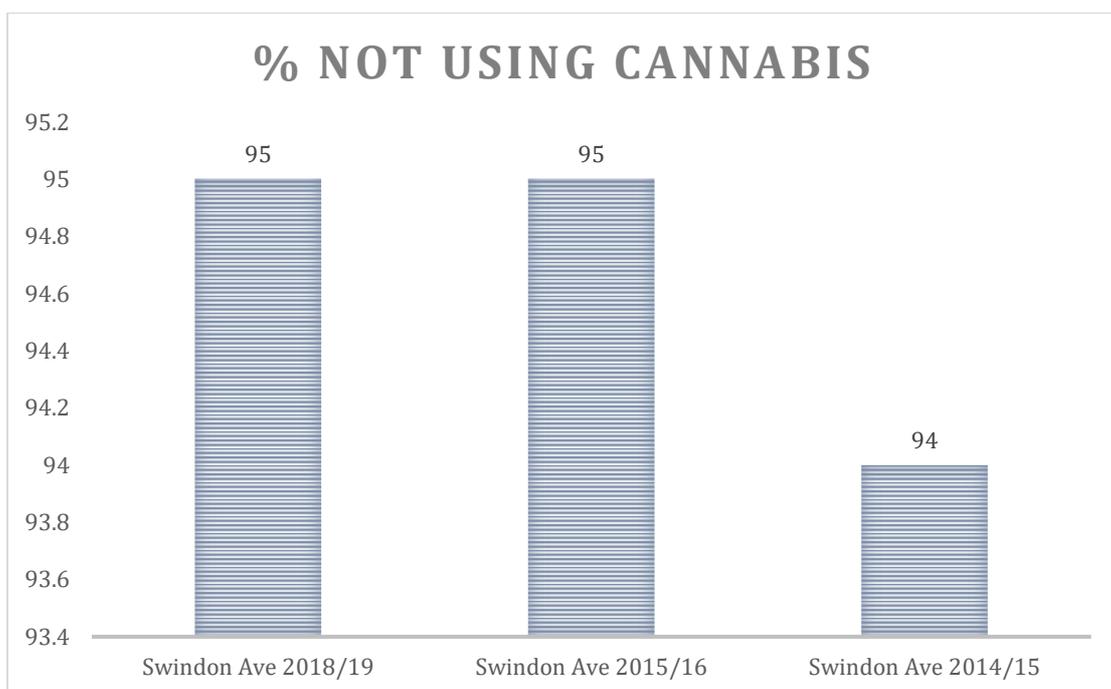
**Chart 4.1 Smoking**



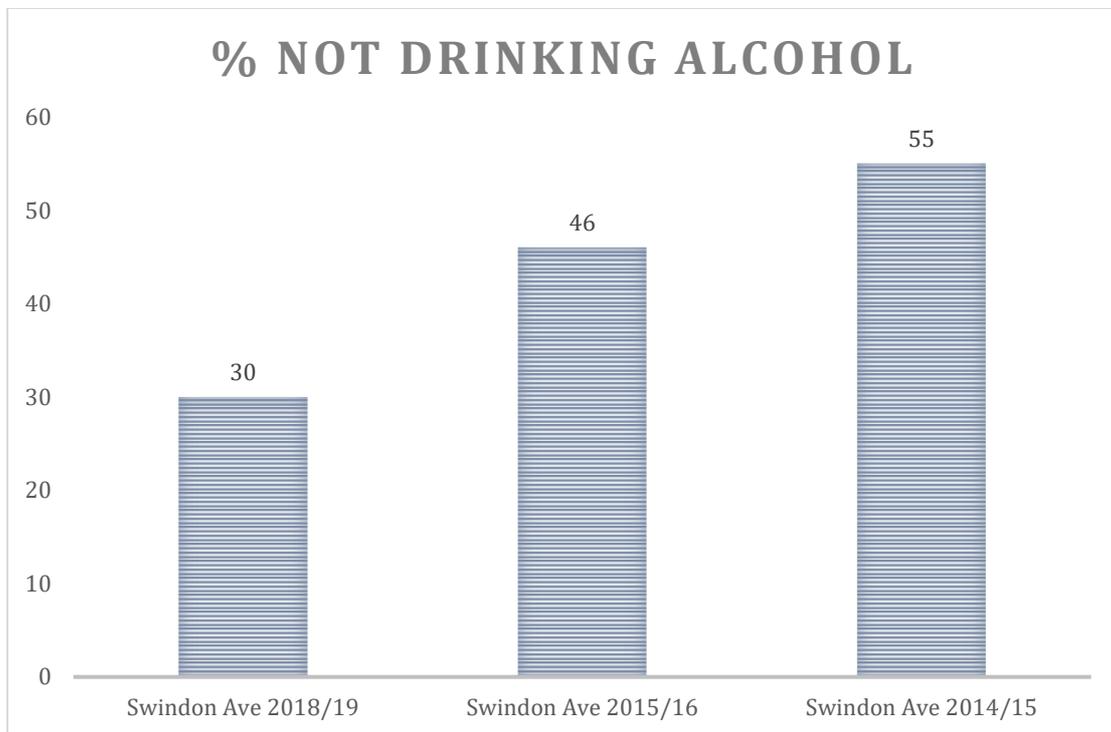
**Chart 4.2 E-cigarette use**



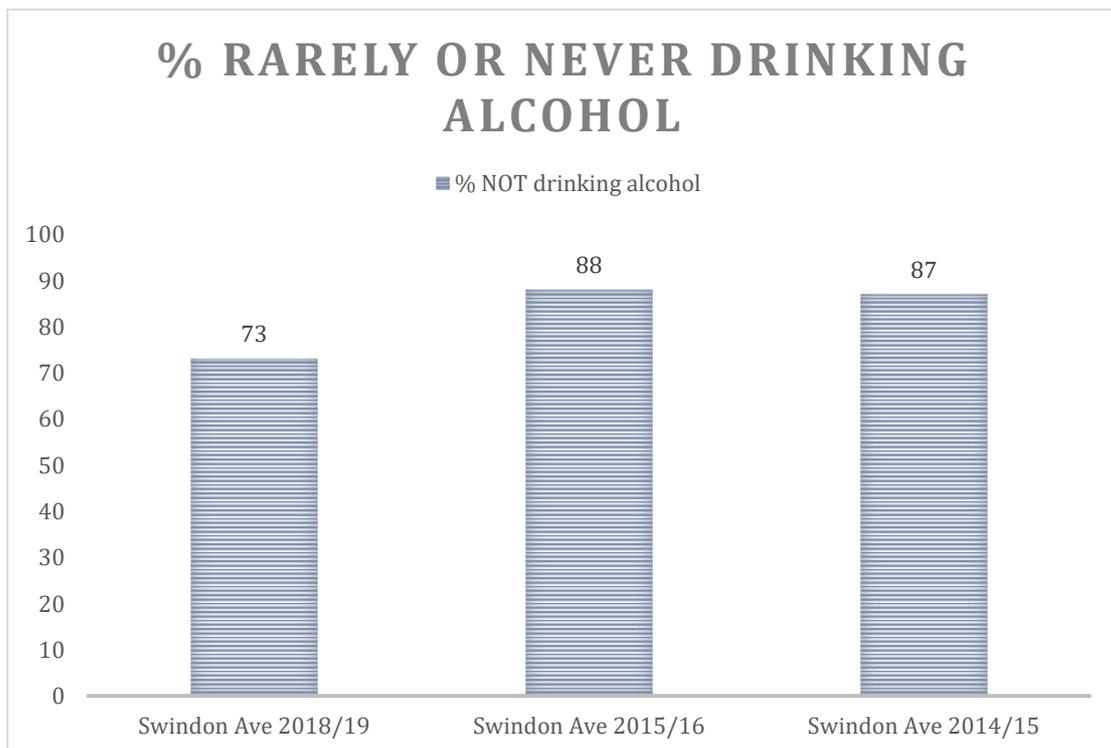
**Chart 4.3 Cannabis use**



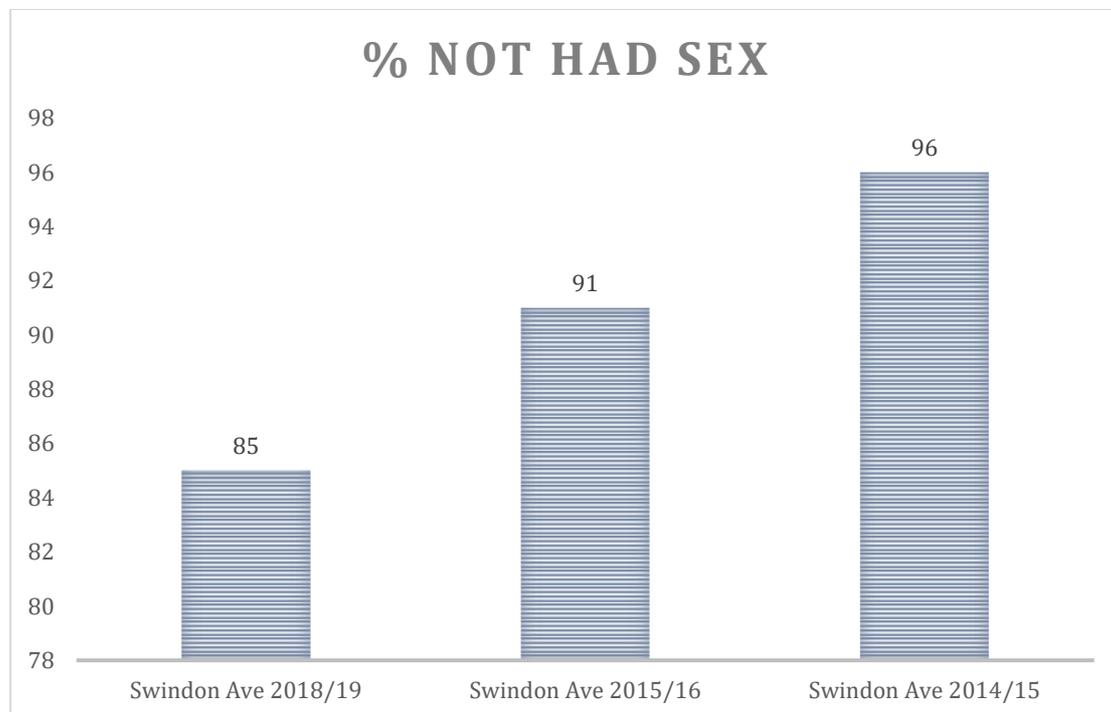
**Chart 4.6 Never using alcohol**



**Chart 4.7 Never or rarely drinking alcohol**



**Chart 4.8 Sex**



### Perception data

Perception around the behaviour of close friends was fairly accurate, but when it came to the wider peer group perception was much worse in terms of health choices. In all areas girls were perceived to be less likely to be engaged in the behaviour in question than boys, often by quite a large margin. The only area where wider peer group perceptions were more accurate than that of close friends was in relation to gambling.

The most significant over-perception was around smoking, and this has been a recurring theme in every year of the survey. Even amongst close friends there is a perception that more smoking is taking place than what is reported.

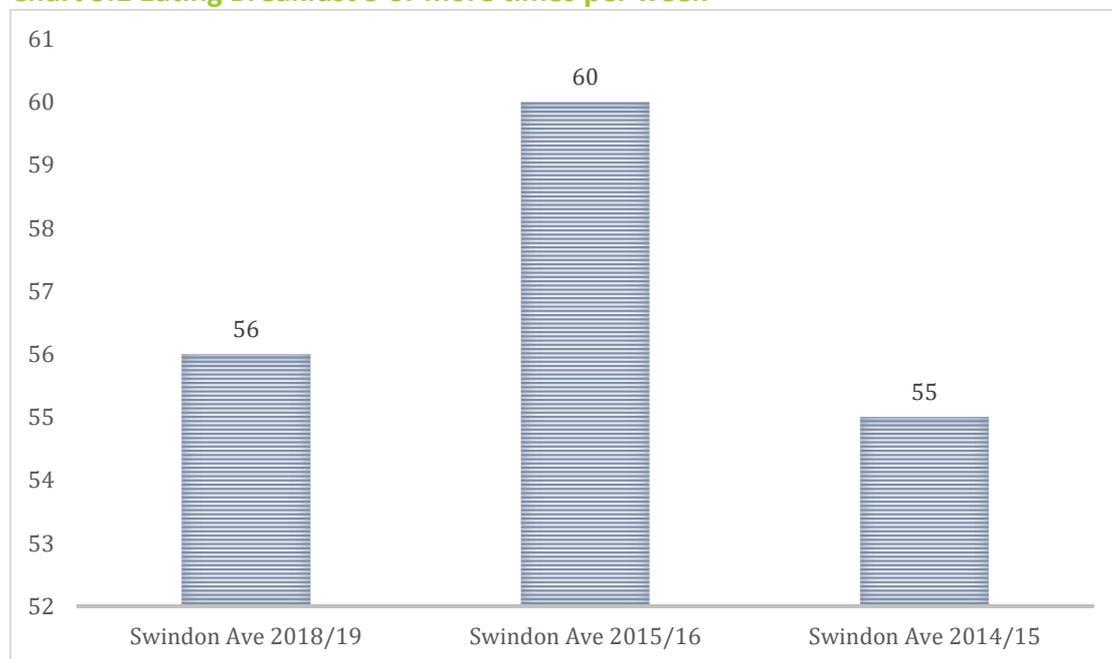
Alcohol use perception amongst close friends appears to be fairly accurate, however perception of alcohol use in the wider peer group is over-estimated. As in previous surveys, access to alcohol is most commonly via parents supplying alcohol, or students/friends taking alcohol from home.

## 5.0 Eating habits, mental health, exam preparation and PSHE

Students were asked some general questions around eating habits, mental health, how supported they felt for GCSEs and views on the quality of PSHE they had experienced.

### 5.1 Eating habits

**Chart 5.1 Eating Breakfast 5 or more times per week**



Students were asked to indicate how frequently they ate breakfast with 5 or more times per week being compared across the three academic years. The data suggests that there has been little change in breakfast eating as students get older with around 50% of the secondary school age population regularly eating breakfast.

Self-reporting on how students rated their diets suggests that just under a quarter regard their diet as being healthy and balanced. A further 30% describe their diet as “not bad”, they eat fruit and vegetables and not too many sugary drinks and snacks. A further quarter report that they rarely eat 5 or more portions of fruit and vegetables and could improve. 15% of students agreed that they ate too many sugary drinks and snacks and skipped meals and 8% of students provided their own response ranging from infrequently eating meals to eating well but no fruit and some other examples.

There are a number of student who are likely to have some food-related health issues, ranging from considering themselves to be overweight to taking extreme measures to control weight. 15% of students reported that they were worried about their eating habits and 8% had seen a health specialist about their weight.

### 5.2 Mental Health

Most students, around three quarters, responded positively when asked how positively they viewed their lives. 89% had at least on supportive friend and/or family member (85%). In school 74% reported that there were teachers they could turn to for support and advice. However, only 58% reported that they were happy in school on most days.

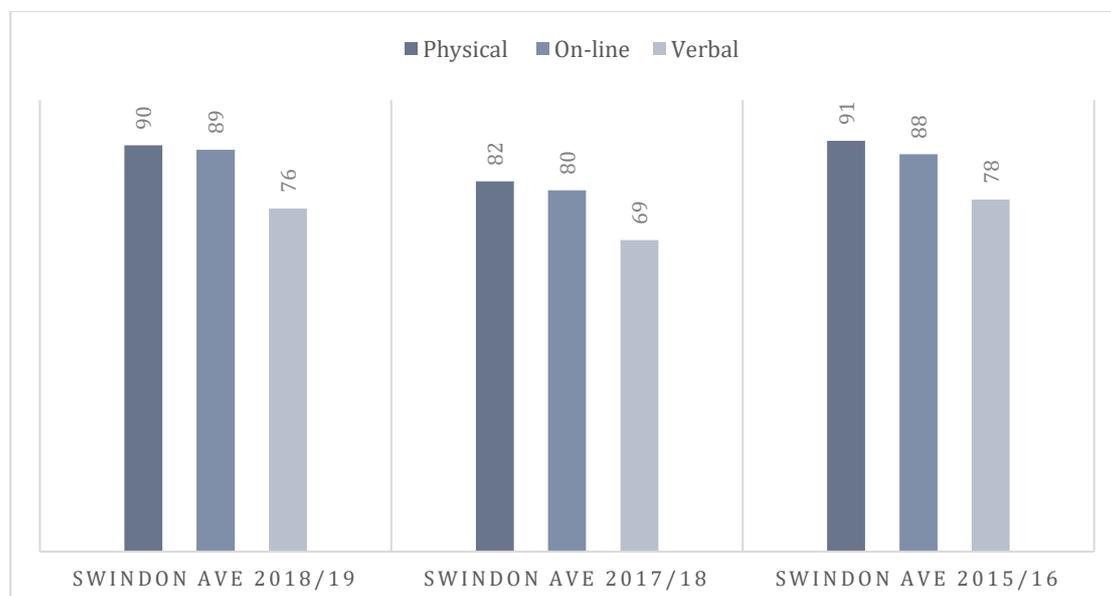
When looking at support around GCSEs, the feedback was generally positive, apart from in relation to having strategies to help manage stress and/or anxiety, where only 53% felt that they were equipped to manage stress and anxiety. This theme also arose as an area of weakness in relation to views on PSHE where information on mental health and stress and anxiety were rated poorly by students.

PSHE was generally rated quite positively other than in relation to mental health, managing personal finance and LGBTQ+ information.

### 5.3 Deliberate Self Harm

A significant minority (26%) of students reported that they had deliberately self-harmed at some point, however, the number regularly self-harming is much smaller (5%). This group of students report self-harming “most weeks” 2% or “most days” 3%

### 5.4 Bullying



Students were asked about their experiences of bullying categorised by physical, on-line and verbal bullying.

Latest bullying data is very much in line with the 2015/16 data where a large sample size was available. We can infer from this data that bullying does not appear to increase as students get older, and in line with findings from younger students, it is verbal bullying that is the most common form of bullying.

All forms of bullying appeared to be worse in the 2017/18 sample, however, given the small number of respondents and the majority coming from the same school it would be unwise to infer much from this data. In the previous surveys there were fairly large differences across schools when looking at bullying data. However, when considered alongside the comments on mental health these results may be useful in identifying an area of weakness in a particular school.

### 5.5 Child Sexual Exploitation

The 2018/19 survey attempted to take some tentative steps to identify some of the markers that would indicate exploitation of children. A number of questions were asked in relation to knowledge of others who may have been coerced into doing something they didn't want to do, or were spending time with older people who were not family members. The table below provides the results, with figures being low as expected.

Perhaps, the most useful part of this question was around knowledge of what to do if students had concerns and only 58% reported that they would know where to seek help.

<b>Do you know someone who</b>	<b>YES</b>
Has had nowhere to sleep at night	18%
Has been forced to do something they didn't want to do	34%
Has gone on an extended holiday	10%
Spends a lot of time with older people who are not family members	23%

The questions are not particularly clear and are open to interpretation.

## 6.0 Conclusion & Next Steps

- The survey results are on the whole positive, and the sample size allows for a reasonable degree of confidence in the accuracy of the data at a Swindon wide level. Interesting findings include:
- Misperception around smoking appears to be persistent despite falling smoking rates generally, only 4% of Year 11 students choosing to smoke.
- E-cigarette use is very low, and we can assume with a level of confidence that students are not using E-cigarettes as an alternative to smoking.
- Mental health requires more focus alongside personal finance and LGBTQ+ as part of a comprehensive PSHE programme
- Bullying levels are generally low, however, verbal bullying is experienced by more students than any other form.
- Cannabis use is a little higher than cigarette use but still very low in the 16 and under age-group.
- Most students have tried alcohol by year 11, however, most are consuming alcohol infrequently.

### **Areas to feedback to schools**

On-going smoking prevention work in Swindon alongside legislative changes and societal attitudes appears to have led to the number of young people choosing to smoke declining rapidly in Swindon over recent years. Adult smoking rates are above the England average; however, young peoples' smoking rates are slightly below the UK average. Despite this, perception of the number of people smoking remains persistently high.

The impact of early messaging to students in order to inform them about life-style choices would appear to be useful and schools clearly are an ideal setting for maximum reach.

Latest research has indicated food choices as a major contributor to future ill health (even more so than smoking) and this may be an area for consideration going forward.

Mental health awareness and supportive strategies are also areas where more can be done and is an area where students consistently report that they have received

little input. This could well link with work around verbal bullying and a good focus for the Swindon Healthy Schools Mental Health Award.

The findings and the survey in general provide strong evidence for schools around consultation with young people. This will be increasingly important from September 2020 when RSHE statutory guidance is in place. In addition, the new Ofsted framework with a stronger focus on Personal Development can also be supported where schools use the survey results to tailor their PSHE delivery to the needs of their setting.

**NOTE:** *Swindon findings are in line with the national WAY (what about youth) survey that was completed a few years ago, although there are some additional areas covered in the How Are You? Survey. This is further evidence that responses are reliable and can be interpreted with a degree of confidence.*

