

# DATA POINT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
NCES 2020-041 NOVEMBER 2019

## Student Perceptions of School Discipline and the Presence of Gangs or Guns at School

The data used in this report come from the 2017 School Crime Supplement (SCS), a nationally representative sample survey of students ages 12 through 18 enrolled in public or private school for all or part of the school year (not homeschooled for all of the school year). The SCS is administered every other year to students as a supplement to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS). The SCS collects additional information from students about their perceptions or attitudes towards school discipline as well as information regarding their own behavior at school and their perceptions of unfavorable school conditions.

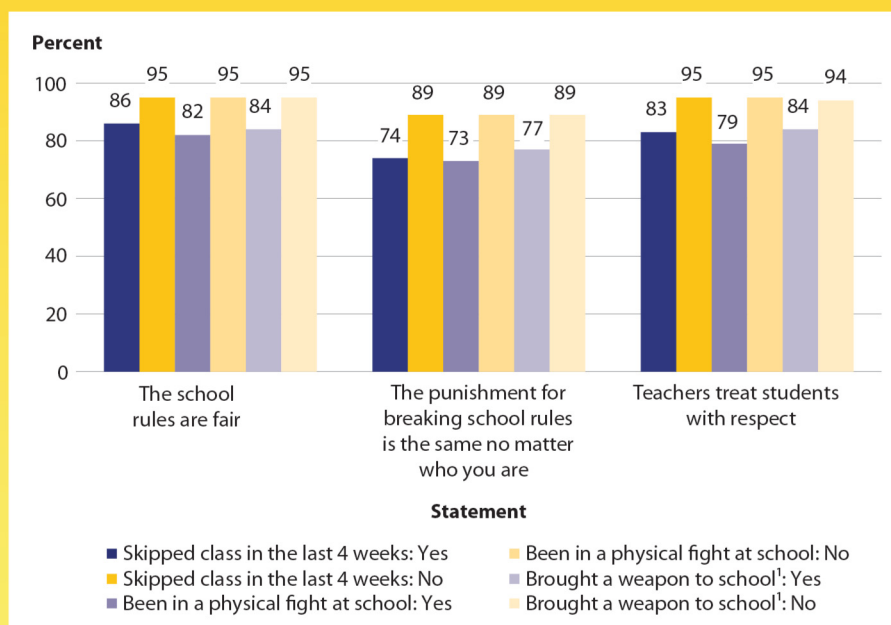
This report investigates the relationship between students' perceptions of school discipline and their own behavior as well as the relationship between students' perception of school discipline and unfavorable school conditions. As the findings presented below show reportable differences and not causal interactions, readers should be aware that additional factors may be involved in explaining discrepancies between students' views of school discipline.

**Students who reported they engaged in negative behaviors, for example, skipped class in the last 4 weeks, had been in a physical fight at school, or brought a weapon to school reported fewer positive views of school discipline than students who did not report these behaviors (figure 1).**

More specifically, a lower percentage of students who skipped class at least once in the last 4 weeks agreed that the school rules were fair (86 percent) and that the teachers treat students with respect (83 percent) compared to students who did not skip class at least once in the last 4 weeks (95 percent for each).

Additionally, fewer students who were in a physical fight at school or brought a weapon to school agreed that the punishment for breaking the school rules is the same no matter who you are (73 percent and 77 percent, respectively) compared to students who did not engage in these behaviors (89 percent for each).

**FIGURE 1. Percentage of students ages 12 through 18 who agree or strongly agree with statements about school discipline by student behaviors: School year 2016–17**



<sup>1</sup> Includes guns, knives, or objects that can be used as weapons.

NOTE: Data include only students who reported being enrolled in grades 6 through 12 and not receiving any of their education through homeschooling during the school year reported. Population size based on the 2017 School Crime Supplement for all students meeting the age, grade, and school criteria is 25,023,000. Tabular data for percentages and their standard errors are available at [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crime/crime\\_tables.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crime/crime_tables.asp).

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), 2017.

## Student Perceptions of School Discipline and the Presence of Gangs or Guns at School

### Students who reported seeing guns or the presence of gangs at school also reported fewer positive views of school discipline (figure 2).

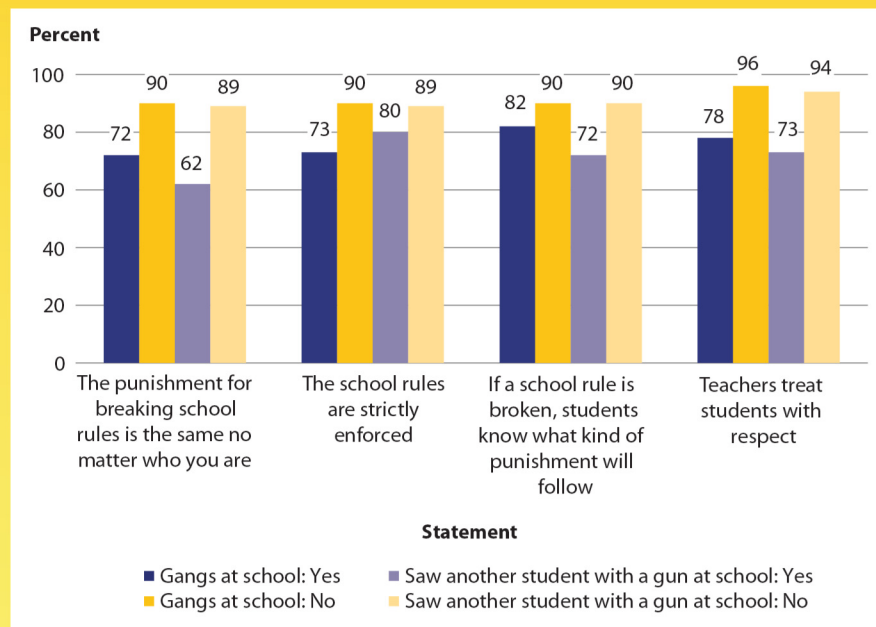
Fewer students who saw guns at school agreed that the punishment for breaking school rules is the same no matter who you are (62 percent) compared to students who did not see guns at school (89 percent).

Among students who reported having gangs at school, a lower percentage reported that school rules are strictly enforced (73 percent) and if a school rule is broken, students know what type of punishment will follow (82 percent), compared students who did not report having gangs at school (90 percent for each).

Finally, lower percentages of students who saw guns (73 percent) at school and students who reported having gangs at school (78 percent) agreed that teachers treat students with respect compared to the percentages of students who did not see guns at school (94 percent) or students who did not report gangs at school (96 percent).

For more information on school discipline and student behavior readers may also be interested in the 2018 *Indicators of School Crime and Safety* report, which is available for download on the NCES website at <https://nces.ed.gov/pubs2019/2019047.pdf>.

**FIGURE 2. Percentage of students ages 12 through 18 who agree or strongly agree with statements about school discipline by unfavorable school conditions: School year 2016–17**



NOTE: Data include only students who reported being enrolled in grades 6 through 12 and not receiving any of their education through homeschooling during the school year reported. Population size based on the 2017 School Crime Supplement for all students meeting the age, grade, and school criteria is 25,023,000. Tabular data for percentages and their standard errors are available at [http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crime/crime\\_tables.asp](http://nces.ed.gov/programs/crime/crime_tables.asp).  
SOURCE: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, School Crime Supplement (SCS) to the National Crime Victimization Survey (NCVS), 2017.

This National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) Data Point presents information on education topics of current interest. It was authored by Christina Yanez, Melissa Seldin, and Rebecca Mann of Synergy Enterprises, Inc. All estimates shown are based on samples and are subject to sampling variability. All differences discussed in this report are statistically significant at the .05 level

without adjustments for multiple comparisons. In the design, conduct, and data processing of NCES surveys, efforts are made to minimize the effects of nonsampling errors, such as item nonresponse, measurement error, data processing error, or other systematic error.