



Drug use in adolescence: trends reported in 2022

Psychoactive substance use among middle school and high school students: results of the EnCLASS 2022 survey

*In a glimpse, OFDT, 2 p.
January 2024*

The National Adolescent Health and Substance Use Survey in Middle and High Schools (EnCLASS) is an online survey conducted in French schools by the EnCLASS association, the French Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, and the French School of Public Health (EHESP), in partnership with the Ministry of Education. Between March and June 2022, 9 566 middle school and high school students in France took part in the second edition of the survey, which helped to identify the school levels at which alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis use begin.

Alcohol, tobacco, and cannabis: a drop in the age of life-time use and a continuing decline in use

In 2022, experimentation with tobacco and alcohol, and to a lesser extent with cannabis, still begins in the first years of middle school, despite the significant drop in the age of initiation:

- 43.4% of middle school students said they had drunk alcohol in 2022, compared with 60% in 2018. In 6th grade, 26.9% had already drunk alcohol. This experimentation increases steadily throughout their time at school, and affects almost three quarters of students in 12th grade (73.9%).
- 11.4% of middle school students said they had smoked cigarettes in 2022, compared with 21.2% in 2018. In 6th grade, 4.6% of students experimented with tobacco, and this figure rises sharply when they enter high school, from 18.8% of 9th grade to 30.0% in 10th grade, a relative increase of 60%.
- 5.3% of 8 and 9th grade students said they had used cannabis in 2022, compared with 6.7% in

2018. The diffusion of cannabis increases significantly during the transition to high school, where 16.2% of students in 10th grade said they had already used cannabis, and almost one in three students in 12th grade (31.2%).

While tobacco and cannabis use continue to decline during adolescence, the consumption of alcoholic beverages remains widespread among teenagers in 2022.

Similarly, the relatively high level of heavy episodic drinking (HED¹), measured for the first time in 2022 among 8th and 9th grade students, reflects the specific role of alcohol among the youngest: HED affects 14.6% of 8th grade and 9th grade students. One in three high school students (34.5%) reported HED.

Perception of easy access to drugs increases with school level

Half of the 12th grade students believe that it would be very easy for them to obtain alcohol and cigarettes if they so wished (49.7% and 45.3% respectively), compared to 1 in 5 students in 9th grade (17.7% and 15.4% respectively).

Accessibility to cannabis is perceived to be much more difficult. At middle school, only 3.8% of 8th grade students and 6.8% of 9th grade students thought it would be very easy for them to obtain it, while 64.5% and 53.3% respectively said it would be impossible. From the start of high school, the feeling of accessibility increases significantly: 12.3% of high school students in 10th grade feel that it would be very easy for them to obtain cannabis, almost twice as many among 9th grade students.

Electronic cigarettes (“e-cigarettes”) use on the rise

The popularity of e-cigarettes, observed in recent years in the results of the ESCAPAD survey and the EnCLASS 2021 survey, is being confirmed, particularly among younger people:

- At middle school, daily use of e-cigarettes now affects 1.4% of middle school students, a prevalence equivalent to that of daily smoking.
- At high school, daily use of e-cigarettes continued to increase, from 2.8% in 2018 to 3.8% in 2022.

As a result, the use of e-cigarette continues to increase among students and, for the first time, is now more widespread than cigarette smoking.

¹ HED consists of drinking at least 5 glasses of alcohol on a single occasion in the month preceding the survey.

[**Download the above text in PDF**](#)

Further reading (in French)

Memo, [Les usages psychoactifs chez les collégiens et les lycéens](#) [Psychoactive use among middle and high school students], 17 p.