# Gay students in the US almost twice as likely to face abuse and violence as everyone else



Recent data shows an alarming disparity in experiences of sexual harassment and violence among LGBTQ+ students compared to their straight peers, particularly in educational settings. A report by the Office for Students highlights that nearly half (46.6%) of lesbian, gay, or bisexual students in higher education have faced sexual harassment, more than double the 21.7% reported by heterosexual students. These students are also more than twice as likely to experience sexual assault or violence, with 29.8% affected compared to 12% of heterosexual students.

These figures echo broader trends documented by health and civil rights organisations in the United States. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported that 9.4% of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students nationwide have been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property, markedly higher than 5.4% among heterosexual students. The disparity is especially pronounced among lesbian and bisexual female students, who experience a prevalence of 7.4%, compared to 3.6% for their heterosexual counterparts.

Additional CDC research paints an even grimmer picture for younger LGBTQ+ students, showing that 18% of lesbian, gay, and bisexual high school students report being physically forced to have sexual intercourse, compared with 5% of heterosexual students. Similarly, sexual dating violence affects 23% of LGB students versus 9% of heterosexual students, underscoring the heightened vulnerability of this group in their formative years.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) further emphasises the hostile environments many LGBTQ+ youths endure. In Massachusetts, nearly one-third of gay teens have been threatened with weapons at school, compared to 7% of heterosexual students. The pervasiveness of verbal abuse is stark, with over 90% of LGBT youth reporting hearing homophobic comments regularly, and nearly half experiencing sexual harassment.

National advocacy groups have characterised this pattern as a hidden crisis. The Center for American Progress notes that 73% of LGBT students report sexual harassment, contrasted with 61% of their non-LGBT peers, with contact sexual harassment reported by 44% of LGBT students versus 31% of non-LGBT students. The report also highlights a disturbing lifetime prevalence of rape, affecting nearly half of bisexual women and about one in eight lesbian women.

Studies also expose higher harassment rates among students with diverse gender and sexual identities. Research published in LGBT Health shows that 13.7% of genderqueer or nonconforming college students report harassment, a rate significantly higher than their cisgender peers. Students identifying with multiple sexual orientations also face elevated harassment rates, with 14.9% reporting such experiences—higher than all except lesbian and bisexual groups. Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/politics/office-for-students-students-higher-education-women-universities-b1249624.html> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/67/ss/ss6708a1.htm> - The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a report indicating that nationwide, 9.4% of gay, lesbian, and bisexual students had been threatened or injured with a weapon on school property, compared to 5.4% of heterosexual students. The prevalence was higher among gay, lesbian, and bisexual students than heterosexual students, with lesbian and bisexual female students experiencing a higher prevalence (7.4%) compared to heterosexual female students (3.6%).
3. <https://www.preventconnect.org/2016/08/lesbian-gay-and-bisexual-high-school-students-experience-high-rates-of-violence/> - A study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) found that lesbian, gay, and bisexual high school students experience significantly higher rates of violence compared to their heterosexual peers. Specifically, 18% of LGB students reported being physically forced to have sexual intercourse, compared to 5% of heterosexual students. Additionally, 23% of LGB students experienced sexual dating violence, compared to 9% of heterosexual students.
4. <https://www.aclu.org/documents/doing-math-what-numbers-say-about-harassment-gay-lesbian-bisexual-and-transgender-students> - The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) highlights that nearly one-third of gay teens in Massachusetts had been threatened with a weapon at school, compared to 7% of heterosexual students. Additionally, over 90% of LGBT youth reported hearing homophobic comments in their schools, with 61.1% reporting verbal harassment and 46.5% reporting sexual harassment.