



VOICE OF TAMARIKI

2025

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025 Voice of Tamariki (VoT) survey gathered insights from 7,951 students across 53 participating primary and intermediate schools across the Counties Manukau Region.

Boys	Girls	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Year 7	Year 8
3,969	3,982	1,623	1,787	1,891	1,393	1,464

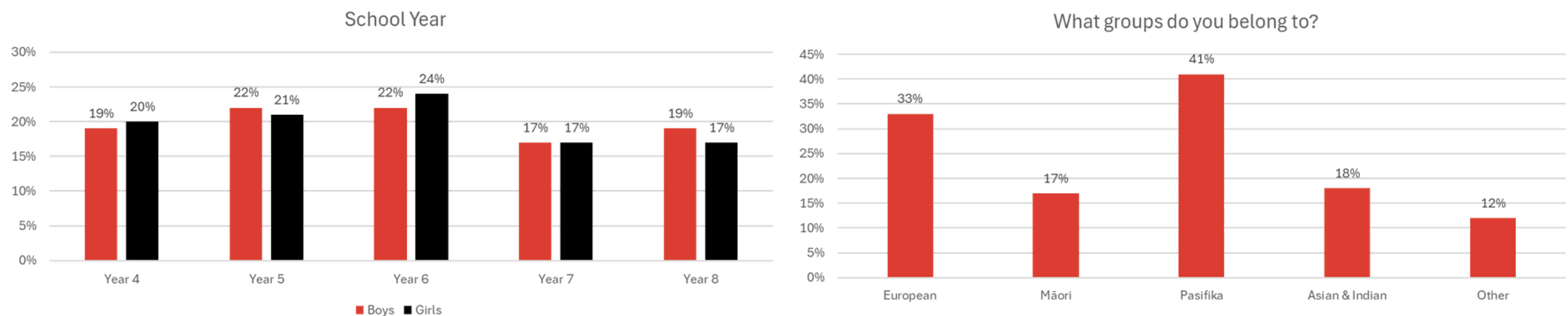
The survey, jointly run by Sport NZ and CLM Community Sport, aims to understand the physical activity experiences of tamariki, ensuring their voices shape future provision and improvement of physical activity opportunities.

Sport NZ’s purpose in leading the Voice of Tamariki survey is to elevate student voice nationally, ensuring the sector has high-quality insights to improve physical activity experiences, support Healthy Active Learning, and strengthen wellbeing outcomes through informed planning and action. Survey data is used to support schools, Regional Sports Trusts, and national partners in enhancing physical activity environments that meet the needs of all tamariki.

KEY TRENDS

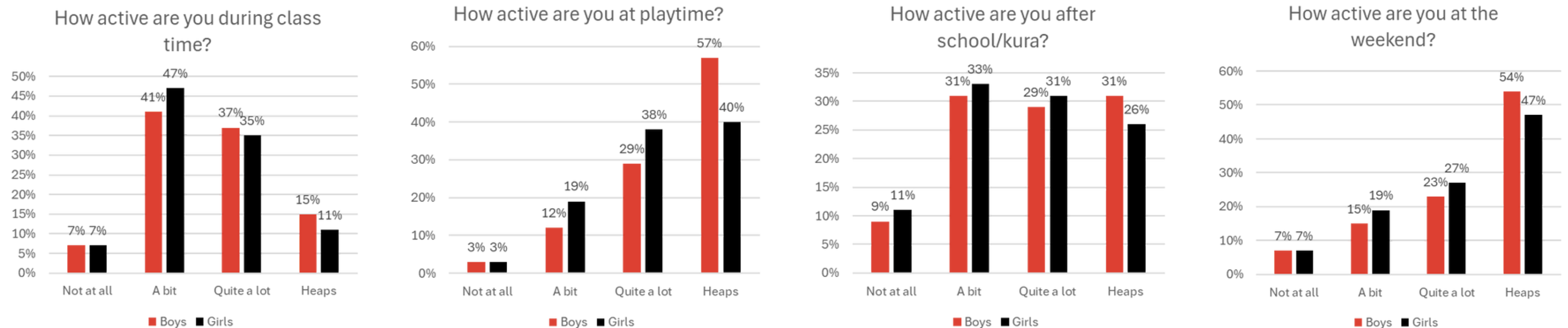
Key trends emerging from the data highlight that tamariki are most active during unstructured playtime and weekends, with social connection being the strongest driver of participation.

A consistent gender gap appears across activity levels, confidence, and enjoyment, with girls reporting lower confidence and lower enjoyment of structured activities. The findings also point to limited exposure to Māori culture within physical activity, along with a sizeable proportion of students (40–43%) feeling they do not get opportunities to participate in the activities they most enjoy. These trends present clear opportunities for schools to create more inclusive, equitable, and culturally responsive environments.



Highlights from the regional findings include strong enthusiasm for unstructured play, high value placed on social interaction, and the popularity of activities requiring minimal equipment such as running and tag. Structured school-based activities like PE remain important, with high mention rates, though enjoyment differs between boys and girls. The report also notes the importance of strengthening confidence-building opportunities, integrating Māori culture meaningfully, and redesigning structured activity spaces to prioritise fun, connection, and choice. By aligning programming with tamariki voice, schools and kura can significantly enhance engagement and wellbeing outcomes.

ACTIVITY LEVELS

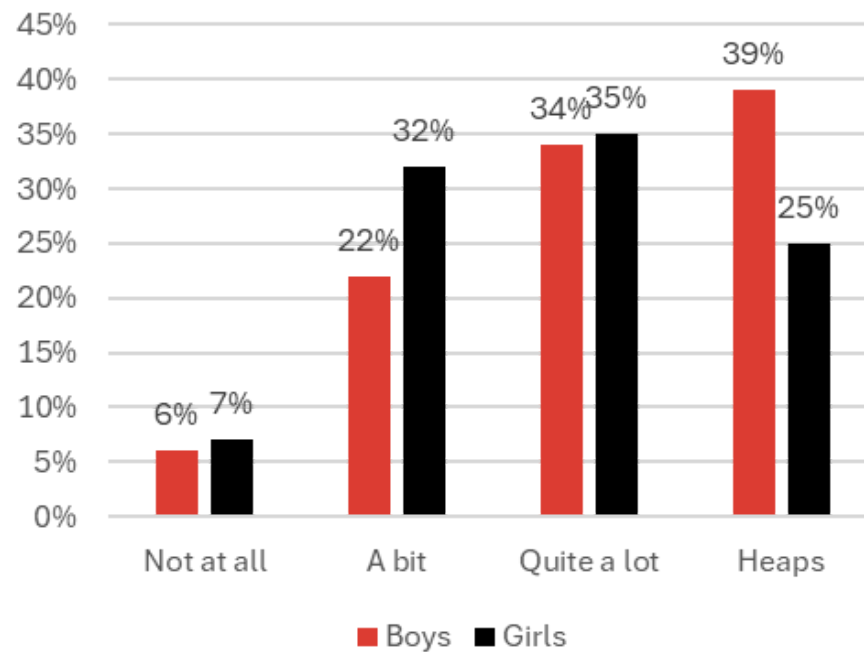


Students are most active during unstructured playtime and weekends. Boys show higher engagement during class, with 52% reporting being active "quite a lot" or "heaps" compared to 46% of girls. Playtime is the most active period for students, with 86% of boys and 78% of girls being active "quite a lot" or "heaps"

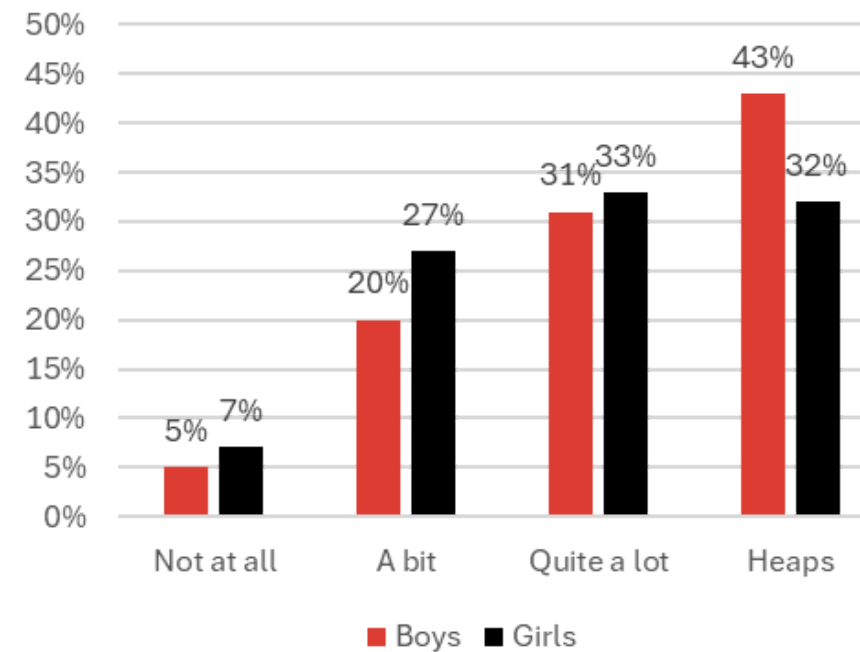
There's an opportunity to increase activity levels during class time, particularly for girls. The gender gap is most pronounced at playtime and weekends, where boys report higher activity levels.

DIFFERENT WAYS OF BEING ACTIVE

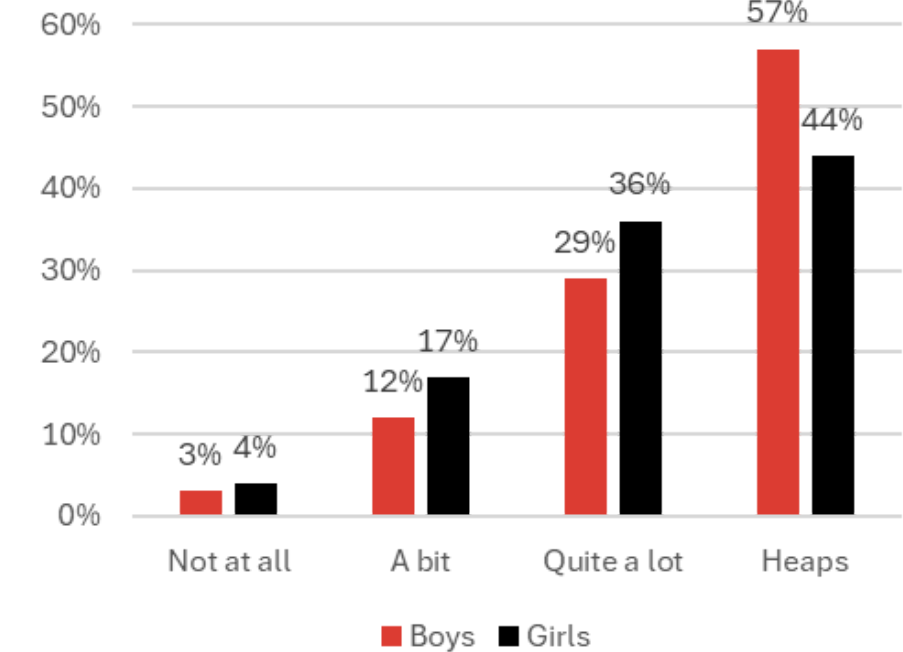
I enjoy being active at school/kura



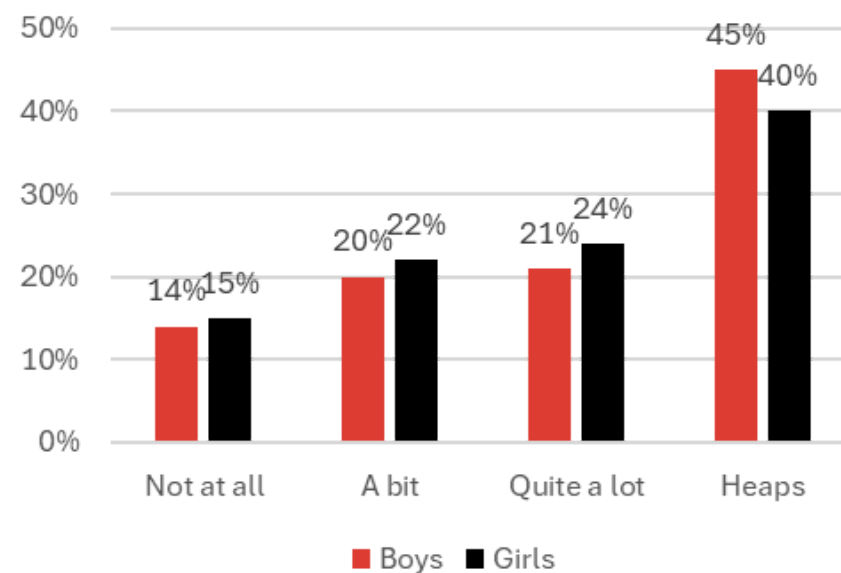
I enjoy being active with my class



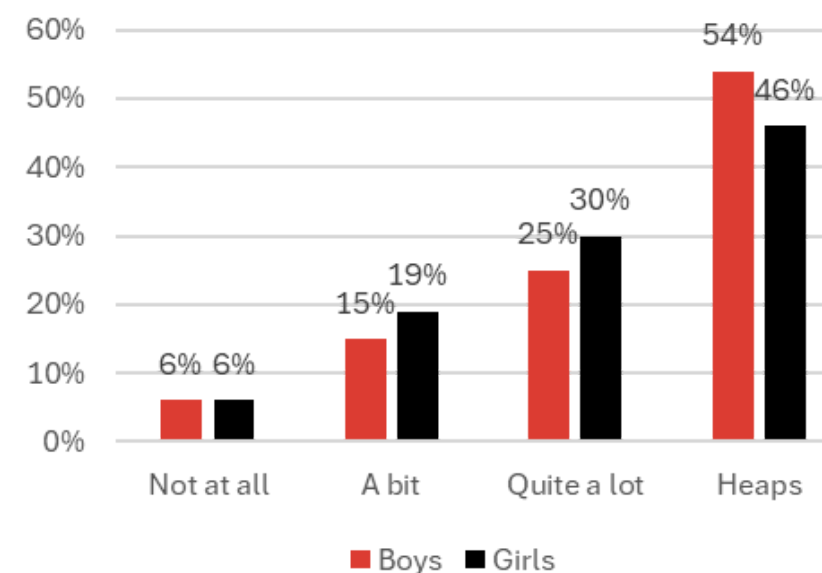
I enjoy being active at playtime



I enjoy being in a sports team or active club



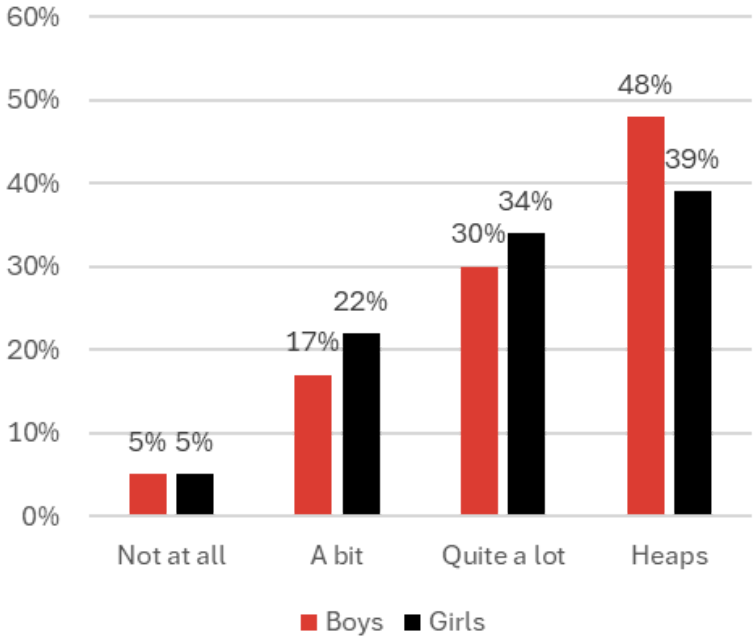
I enjoy being active at the weekend



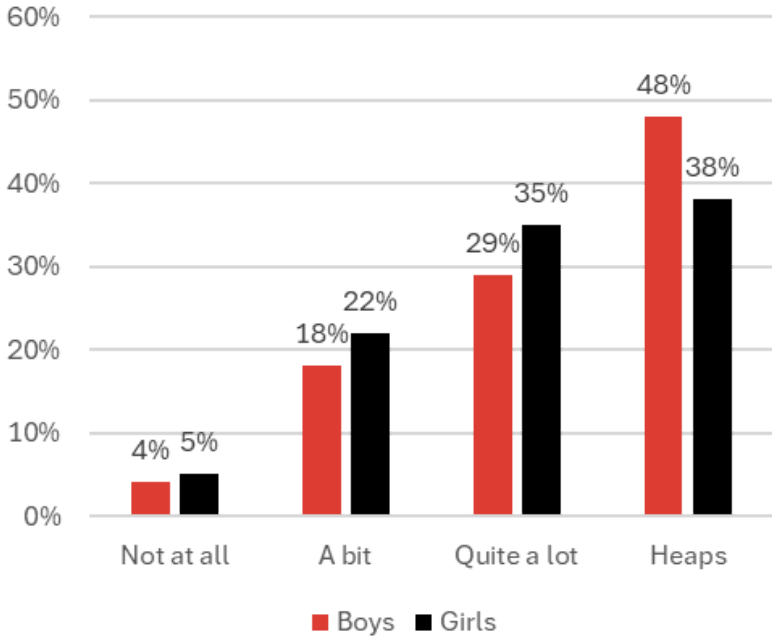
Unstructured playtime generates the highest enjoyment levels. Girls consistently report lower enjoyment across all structured activity settings, suggesting a need for more inclusive or diverse activity options. The relatively high "not at all" response for sports teams (14-15%) indicates that competitive or organised sports may not suit all students.

PHYSICAL LITERACY

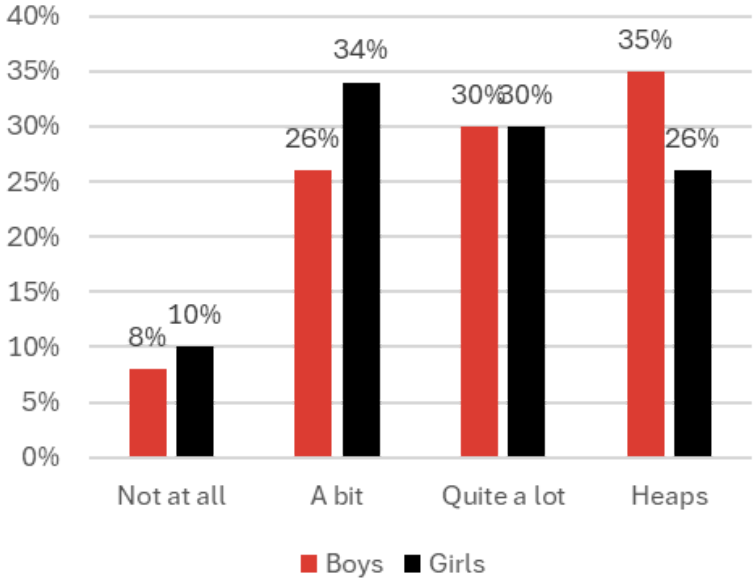
I want to be active



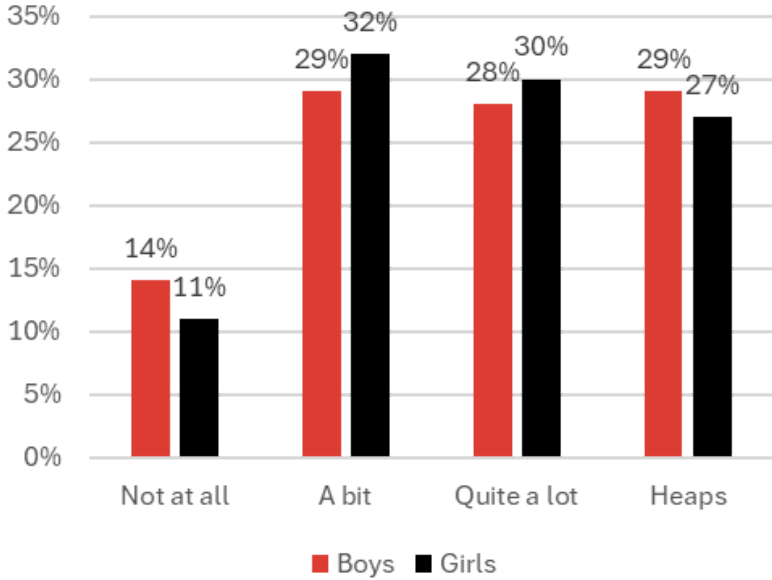
I enjoy being active



I feel confident to take part in lots of different physical activities



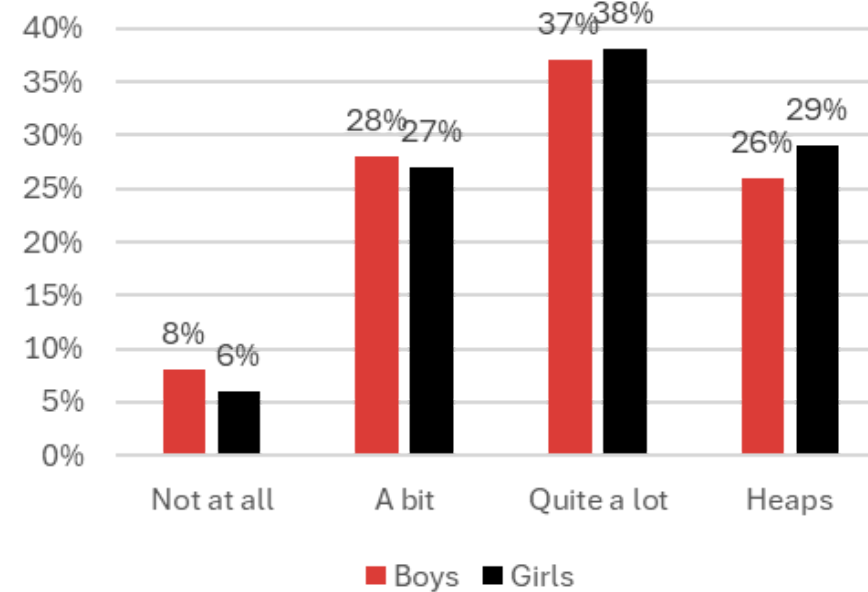
People in my life encourage me to be physically active



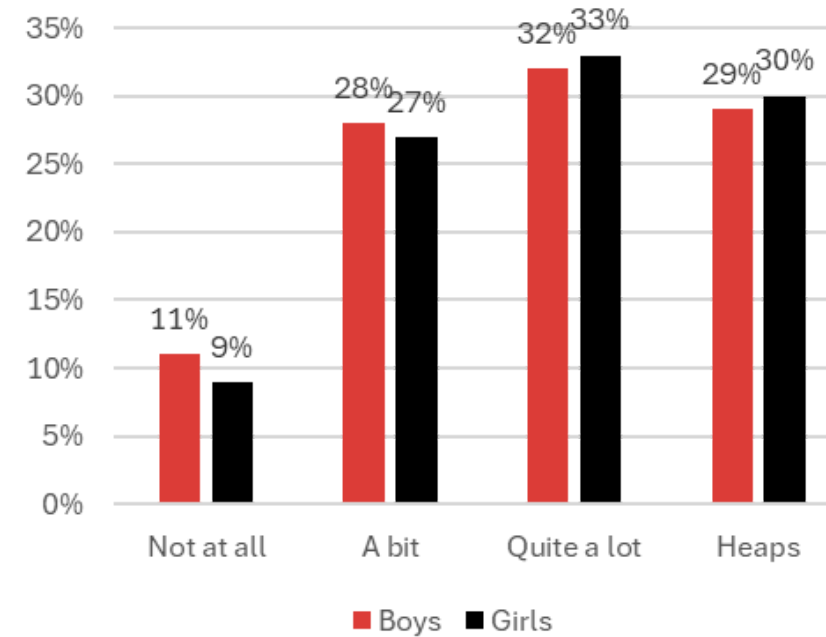
While desire and enjoyment of physical activity are high across both genders, confidence levels reveal a concerning gender gap that may inhibit girls' participation. The finding that 43% of students receive limited encouragement from people in their lives highlights a critical area for intervention. Building confidence, particularly for girls, and increasing encouragement from family, teachers, and peers could significantly enhance participation rates.

ATTITUDE TOWARDS SCHOOL

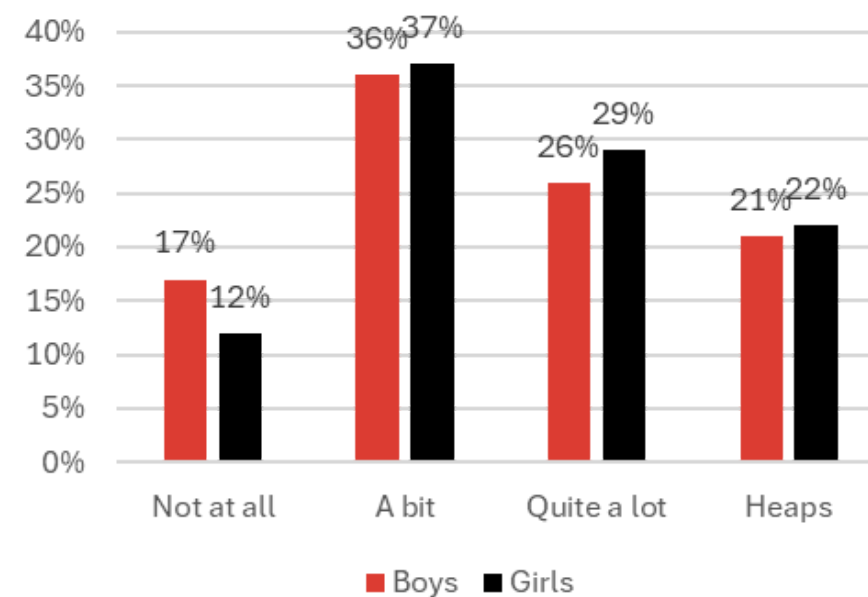
I am interested in what I am learning at school/kura



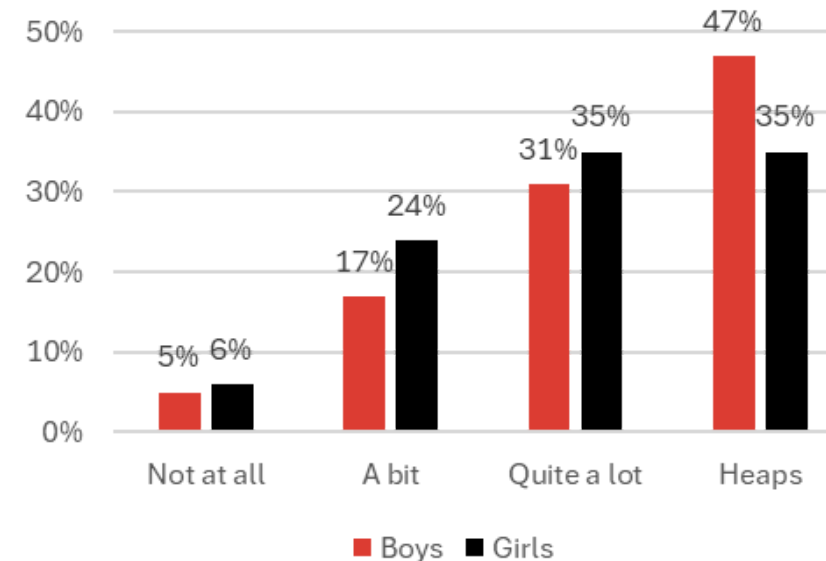
I feel like I belong at school/kura



I get chances to learn about Māori culture through being active

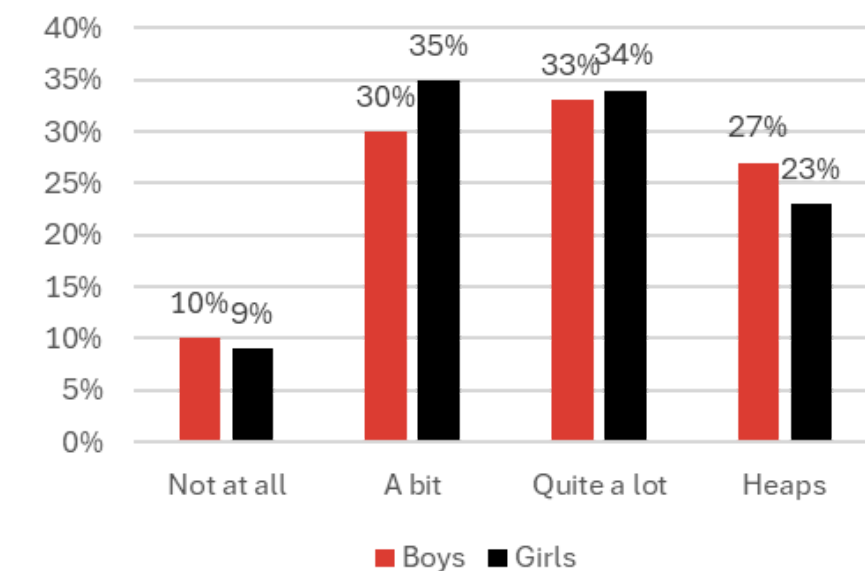


I feel included during physical activity in class time



While most students feel included during physical activities and maintain interest in learning, there are significant gaps in opportunity provision and cultural integration. The finding that 40-43% of students lack opportunities for their desired physical activities suggests a mismatch between programming and student interests. The limited integration of Māori culture through physical activity (53% of boys and 49% of girls received minimal exposure) represents a missed opportunity for culturally responsive teaching. The gender gap in inclusion warrants attention to ensure equitable experiences for all students.

I get chances to do the physical activities I want at school/kura



TOP 5 RESPONSES

“What I enjoy about being active”

AT SCHOOL

- 1. Playing with friends/socialising**
(3,160 mentions)
- 2. Playtime/breaks/recess**
(1,507 mentions)
- 3. PE (Physical Education)**
(1,307 mentions)
- 4. Running**
(1,144 mentions)
- 5. Football/Soccer**
(866 mentions)

AT HOME

- 1. Playing with friends/socialising**
(938 mentions)
- 2. Football/Soccer**
(603 mentions)
- 3. Running**
(541 mentions)
- 4. Gaming/Devices**
(533 mentions)
- 5. Biking/Cycling**
(527 mentions)

Data reveals enthusiastic students who love being active, particularly when social connection is prioritised. By addressing the confidence gap, expanding choices, integrating culture, and optimising both structured and unstructured opportunities, schools can create environments where all students thrive physically, socially, and culturally. The key is listening to student voice and ensuring programming reflects their interests while building the skills and confidence needed for lifelong physical activity.

REFLECTIONS ON THIS DATA

- Social connection is the dominant driver for students with playing with friends / socialising ranking number 1 both at school and outside school. Structured activities are also important with mentions of PE being very high at school, underscoring the role of organised sessions.
- Ball sports lead the popularity for students: football, basketball, netball, and volleyball are consistently popular.
- Low-resource, high-engagement games such as running and tag-style games (e.g. manhunt, octopus) feature prominently, suggesting activities that need minimal equipment are a hit.
- Screen time shows up outside school, mentions of devices are common, indicating many students balance physical activities with digital play.

SUMMARY

Opportunities for Strengthening PE and Physical Activity

. Increase Activity During Class Time

Challenge: Class time shows the lowest activity engagement, with nearly half of students reporting minimal activity.

Opportunities:

- Integrate movement breaks throughout academic lessons
- Use active teaching methods that incorporate physical movement
- Create cross-curricular connections that embed movement into math, literacy, and other core subjects

Close the Gender Confidence Gap

Challenge: Girls demonstrate significantly lower confidence in participating in diverse physical activities.

Opportunities:

- Develop girls-only activity sessions to build confidence in a supportive environment
- Create progression pathways that celebrate individual improvement rather than competition
- Teachers PLD in gender-responsive pedagogy for physical education

Enhance Structured PE Programmes

Challenge: Structured activities show lower enjoyment than unstructured play, particularly for girls.

Opportunities:

- Redesign PE curriculum to emphasise social connection and fun over competition
- Incorporate more cooperative games, team-building activities or diversity of activities away from the traditional
- Offer student choice within PE lessons

Integrate Māori Culture Through Physical Activity

Challenge: Over half of students receive minimal exposure to Māori culture through being active.

Opportunities:

- Incorporate traditional Māori games (ki-o-rahi, mau rākau) and integrate te reo Māori in PE
 - Connect physical activities to local iwi history and traditions
 - Develop units exploring the connection between physical activity and Māori concepts (mana, wairua, hauora)
- Design outdoor education experiences on land of local significance

Optimise Playtime and Breaks

Challenge: Playtime is highly valued but may not be maximised for all students.

Opportunities:

- Provide equipment for diverse interests during breaks
- Establish structured play options alongside free play
- Develop playground leadership programmes
- Conduct regular student voice surveys to identify interests

. Leverage Social Connection

Challenge: Social connection is the primary driver, yet structured activities don't always capitalise on this.

Opportunities:

- Design activities that prioritise social interaction and teamwork
- Implement partner and small group activities rather than large team formats
- Schedule collaborative challenges and house competitions