

2026 Face Equality Survey on Appearance-Related Experiences of Individuals with Facial Differences: Report Summary

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Appendix / Media Reference Material

I. Survey Overview

From December 2025 to March 2026, the Sunshine Social Welfare Foundation conducted the *2026 Survey on Appearance-Related Experiences of Individuals with Facial Differences* among its service users with burn injuries, oral cancer, and facial disfigurement / facial differences. A total of 239 valid questionnaires were collected, comprising 199 adults and 40 adolescents aged 13 to 17. This summary report focuses primarily on the adolescent data.

II. Data at a Glance: The Campus Reality for Adolescents

Key Findings	Data	Interpretation
Experienced unfriendly treatment due to appearance?	50.0%	Out of 40 adolescent respondents with facial differences, 20 have experienced unfriendly treatment due to their appearance.
Primary Settings	70.0% occur in schools or cram schools	Among adolescents who experienced unfriendly treatment, the highest proportion occurred during classes at school or cram schools—places where children spend the most time outside of their homes.
Primary Perpetrators	65.0% Classmates	Unfriendly behavior primarily stems from classmates, showing

Key Findings	Data	Interpretation
		that peer interaction is a high-priority area that needs addressing in schools.
Common Experiences (Multiple Choice)	* Uncomfortable staring: 50.0% * Appearance mocked/teased: 35.0% * Social exclusion: 30.0%	These figures represent multiple-choice responses, showing how many individuals among the affected adolescents selected each specific experience.
Immediate Feelings (Multiple Choice)	* Helplessness: 45.0% * Discomfort: 45.0%	Unfriendly experiences do not trigger a single emotion, but rather a mix of helplessness, discomfort, and the pressure of not knowing how to respond.
Coping Strategies	* 89.5% choose not to fight back verbally or physically * 65.0% pretend not to hear	Silence or not fighting back does not mean they are unaffected; it may be an attempt to avoid conflict, practice self-protection, or a result of not knowing how to respond.
Long-Term Impacts	* Lack of confidence: 77.8% * Relationships affected: 77.8% * Social withdrawal: 55.6%	These are multiple-choice results from "those who reported being affected," indicating that unfriendly experiences can ripple out into self-esteem and social participation.

***Data Interpretation Reminder:** Questions regarding unfriendly behaviors, settings, perpetrators, feelings, and impacts were multiple-choice. The percentages reflect the proportion of respondents who checked each option, which is why the total across options will not equal 100%.

III. Insight 1: Appearance-Related Unfriendliness is Concentrated on Campuses and Peer Interactions

Half of the adolescent respondents aged 13 to 17 have experienced unfriendly treatment due to their appearance. Looking closer at the settings, **70.0%** occurred in schools or cram schools, and **65.0%** of the actions came from classmates or peers. This

indicates that for adolescents with facial differences, school is not just a place for learning; it is also a daily arena where their physical differences are scrutinized, commented on, or even excluded.

This finding should not be downplayed as mere "kids teasing kids". Adolescence is a critical stage for building self-identity and peer relationships. When physical appearance becomes the focal point of peer evaluation, it forces children to endure appearance anxiety and social pressure prematurely.

IV. Insight 2: "Being Stared At" is No Small Matter—It Is an Indescribable, Unreportable Weight

Among adolescents who experienced unfriendliness, the most common experience was "feeling uncomfortable due to others staring" (50.0%), which ranked higher than being mocked (35.0%) or excluded (30.0%). This proves that appearance-related hostility does not always manifest as overt verbal abuse or physical conflict. The silent "microaggression" of a stare can feel even more invasive than verbal teasing.

For a child, a "stare" is highly ambiguous and incredibly difficult to "prove". When children feel uncomfortable, they often find it hard to seek help from teachers because "they keep looking at me" does not fit the typical definition of bullying. Yet, to the child, these eyes make them feel exposed in classrooms, hallways, playgrounds, or cram schools, keeping them in a state of constant social hypervigilance.

Furthermore, helplessness and discomfort were the highest-rated emotional responses (each at 45.0%). When 65% of the perpetrators are peers they see every single day in the closed environment of a school, prolonged exposure can lead to a sense of helplessness and disillusionment toward their environment and institutional support.

V. Insight 3: Not Fighting Back Does Not Mean Being Okay;

Silence is Often Self-Preservation

The survey shows that 89.5% of adolescents choose not to retaliate verbally or physically when facing appearance-related unfriendliness. Cross-analysis reveals that when dealing with "uncomfortable stares" or "being mocked," the most common response is to pretend not to hear. Retaliation scored the lowest across all behaviors.

When asked why, respondents shared reasons such as: *"We are all friends," "I didn't want to start a fight and draw attention," "I was afraid of making things awkward," "I didn't want to talk about it,"* and *"Speaking up doesn't change anything."* This shows that their silence

is a deliberate coping strategy built up over time to avoid conflict, maintain harmony, protect themselves, or simply because they feel explaining is futile—it is not an act of cowardice.

Therefore, an adolescent's silence should never be misinterpreted as "not caring" or "needing to be braver". It is far more accurate to understand that the child is assessing the situation, preventing conflict, protecting themselves, or struggling to articulate their discomfort. This serves as a reminder to educators: we cannot simply demand that the victims speak up or self-advocate; instead, the entire classroom and school environment must be equipped with the language and methods to understand and respond collectively.

vi. Insight 4: Unfriendly Experiences Take a Toll on Confidence, Relationships, and Future Ambitions

Among the adolescents who reported being negatively affected, **77.8%** felt a lack of confidence, **77.8%** felt their interpersonal relationships suffered, and **55.6%** experienced social withdrawal. These results reveal that appearance-targeted unfriendliness is not just a momentary unpleasantness; it reshapes how children view themselves, how they navigate peer groups, and whether they are willing to participate, express themselves, or try new things.

Alarming, **25.0%** of adolescents stated that they harbor anxieties about their facial differences when planning their future careers and lives. They expressed fears such as: *"I'm afraid I'm not good enough," "I'm scared of how people will look at me," "People will stare and wonder what's wrong with me,"* and *"People will exclude me."* This reminds us that when appearance-based judgment accumulates during developmental years, it doesn't just impact daily interactions—it restricts future choices, growth opportunities, and the imagination of what they can achieve.

vii. From Data to Solutions: Why We Need the "Aesthetic Detective" Elementary School Lesson Plans

The core takeaway from this adolescent data is clear: appearance-related hostility cannot be solved simply by "telling kids not to mock others." What truly needs addressing is how children learn to perceive appearance diversity, how they understand and describe differences, how they process their own curiosity, and how to prevent physical appearance from becoming a metric for judgment and exclusion in peer groups.

Direction of Educational Response	Connection to "Aesthetic Detective" DOCX
Moving from "Don't mock" to "Understand facial differences"	Guiding students to recognize human diversity and the various causes and realities behind facial differences, preventing them from automatically equating "different" with "negative."
Moving from "Staring" to "Learning how to look"	Leading students to reflect on how beauty standards are formed, and practicing describing appearance in a neutral, friendly manner.
Moving from "Individual bravery" to "Collective school response"	Providing teachers with actionable classroom tools so the entire class can build a shared language and framework for respecting differences.

Thus, the significance of the *"Aesthetic Detective"* elementary school lesson plans goes beyond providing standard textbook material. It translates Face Equality and diverse aesthetics into a learning journey that children can easily grasp, discuss, and practice in their everyday lives.

Qualitative Insights from Respondents: When asked what they most hope to see from society and the government, adolescents overwhelmingly called for: *"Stronger awareness campaigns and education," "Fair treatment," "Being treated just like anyone else," "Respecting and accepting everyone's differences,"* and *"Stopping people from looking at us with strange eyes."*

VIII. Conclusion: Creating a Future Not Defined by Appearance

This report is more than just cold percentages; it is a silent plea from countless adolescents with facial differences living under the weight of society's gaze. We call upon all sectors of society to make a collective commitment: to build an inclusive society where people are not judged or defined by how they look.

When we dismantle the constraints of a singular beauty standard and learn to look at every unique face with an open, ordinary mind, we do more than just protect the social safety of youth with facial differences—we create an environment where every single one of us can feel free to be ourselves. Let diverse aesthetics take root in our schools, and let the respect for differences become the warmest defining characteristic of Taiwan's society.