

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS & YOUTH

Hello Parents and Guardians,

Our school will participate in the Healthy Youth Survey (HYS) this Fall. Youth in Washington State have been taking the HYS since 2002. The number of young people taking the survey has grown from only a few thousand to over 215,000 a year! The survey asks about how youth are doing, social relationships, mental health, substance use, risks for injury, and more.

Communities, districts, schools, and public health agencies use survey results to inform policies and programs designed to support youth well-being. The HYS is a meaningful way for youth to guide the future of our state. ***Your youth's participation is appreciated. Please share this information with your youth. Then talk about the survey and decide if your youth will participate.***

Need More Information?

If you have any questions about the purpose of the survey or survey procedures, please contact the Healthy Youth Survey Principal Investigator at (877) HYS-7111 or by email at healthy.youth@doh.wa.gov. More information about the Healthy Youth Survey can be found at: www.AskHYS.net

The Washington State Institutional Review Board has approved the procedures for the Healthy Youth Survey that are described in this letter. You can read more about this here: www.askhys.net/HYS2025 IRB Requirements

If you believe these procedures have not been followed, please call 1-800-583-8488. You do not have to leave your name. All messages will be returned.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: Who will be asked to take the survey?

A: Students in Grades 6, 8, 10, and 12 across Washington State and students in grades 7, 9, and 11, in small school districts.

Q: Is the survey voluntary?

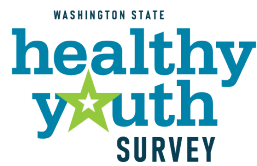
A: Yes! Youth taking the survey can skip questions and stop taking the survey at any time. If you do not want your youth to participate in the survey, you can call the school to excuse them. Youth can also tell their teacher that they do not want to take the survey.

Anyone not taking the survey will take part in a different activity, such as studying or reading in the library. There is no penalty for not taking part in the survey. Your youth's grades will not be affected.

Q: What questions are on the survey?

A: Survey questions come from surveys given across the nation and in Washington. Parents or guardians can review the questions at:

<https://www.askhys.net/Resources/Survey Questionnaires>.



Some topics include:

- Demographics, such as age, sex, race and ethnicity
- Feelings about school and community
- Relationships with parents, friends, and neighbors
- Physical activity and food access
- Health education
- Substance use
- Behaviors and feelings related to safety and violence
- Gender identity¹
- Sexual orientation (not for Grades 6 and 7)
- Sexual behavior and violence (not for Grades 6 and 7)²

Q Who has access to the survey results?

A: Individual-level responses are combined and summarized in reports for schools and districts and are made available to superintendents and principals. County, regional Educational Service Districts (ESD), and state reports are shared publicly on [AskHYS.net](https://askhys.net).

Datasets with individual responses are made available upon request to approved data users, like local health departments, and researchers, through a data sharing agreement process managed by the Department of Health.

Q: How is participant identity protected?

A: Confidentiality of individual HYS responses cannot be completely guaranteed. In the unlikely event that someone without authorization were to see individual survey results, some participants could potentially be identified using information like school, grade, race/ethnicity, and outside knowledge.

However, the HYS is always voluntary and there are steps we take to protect participant privacy and confidentiality including:

- Participants do not put their names on the survey, and there are no codes collected to match a survey to a participant.
- Participants take the survey on an electronic survey platform and responses are stored on a secure server with restricted access.

Q: How are the survey results used?

A: Schools, school districts, communities, and public health agencies use the results to understand Washington youth and to provide them with the services they need. Results are used for grant writing, program and policy planning and evaluation, and more.

The Healthy Youth Survey is sponsored by the following state agencies: Health Care Authority - Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery, Department of Health, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, and Liquor and Cannabis Board.

¹Only students in 8th grade and up will receive this question. Schools that want to can add a gender question designed for younger students to the 6th and 7th grade survey.

²Schools can request an exemption from asking sexual behavior and sexual violence questions.