LAKEWOOD CITY SCHOOLS

December 2025

Dear Families,

Lakewood City Schools students in grades 9-12 have been selected to participate in this year's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), sponsored by the Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods at Case Western Reserve University. This survey helps identify health prevention needs for young people in Cuyahoga County and has been conducted in our area since 2001.

About the Survey

Students will complete a one-time, 30-45 minute survey during the school day. The survey asks multiple-choice questions about health behaviors including:

- Nutrition and physical activity
- Safety and injury prevention
- Tobacco, alcohol, and substance use
- Sexual activity and other health risk behaviors

Privacy Protection

- Students will NOT write their names on the survey
- Individual responses are completely confidential
- No student or school will be identified in any reports
- Researchers will never know the names of participants
- Results are used only to help improve health programs for youth

Voluntary Participation

- Students may skip any question or stop at any time
- There are no penalties for not participating
- Participation will not affect grades or class standing
- Even with parent permission, students can choose not to participate

OPT-OUT PROCESS

If you agree to your child's participation, no action is needed.

If you DO NOT want your child to participate, please contact Dr. Merritt Waters, Coordinator of Student Wellness at **216-227-5593** or **merritt.waters@lakewoodcityschools.org** by Tuesday, December 9, 2025.

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The content below was provided by Case Western Reserve University and is required to be shared with parents/guardians. The information provided above contains all key information in a simplified format.

IRB NUMBER: IRB-2012-274
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 11/14/2025
IRB EFFECTIVE DATE: 11/14/2025
IRB EXPIRATION DATE: 8/27/2026

Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS)

PARENT OPT-OUT DOCUMENT

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Your child's school has been selected, along with at least 50 other schools in Cuyahoga County, to participate in this year's Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) sponsored by the Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods at Case Western Reserve University. The survey, which is described in this letter, will ask about the health behaviors of students in your child's school. The survey will ask questions about nutrition, physical activity, injuries, and tobacco, alcohol, sexual activity, and other health risk behaviors. Students will be asked to fill out a survey that takes about 30 to 45 minutes to complete. All answers for the survey questions are multiple choice responses.

If you agree to allow your child to participate in the survey, and your child agrees to participate as well, he/she will be asked to complete a one-time survey at school during the regular school day. Your child will be asked to complete the survey in either a paper and pencil or computer-based format based upon the request of the school principal. Your child will not enter his/her name on the survey and you will not learn about his/her responses. If you are interested in past findings of this survey, please visit our website at www.prchn.org/yrbs/.

The YRBS has been conducted in Cuyahoga County middle and high schools since 2001 to gather information from students themselves that will identify areas of health prevention and intervention for young people. Your student is being asked to participate in a research study about health behaviors among students their age. The survey has been carefully designed to **protect your child's privacy**. Students will be told not to put their names anywhere on the survey. Also, no school or student will ever be mentioned by name in a report of the results. The researchers will never know the name of any students—including those who participate and those who choose not to participate. A summary report may be shared with your students' school at the school's written request – but no one will ever be able to determine the answers of any individual student. The results of this survey will help other children in the future by collecting accurate, timely information on health risk behaviors among adolescents attending school in Cuyahoga County. We would like all selected students to take part in the survey. However, the survey is **voluntary**. No action will be taken against the school, you, or your child, if your child does not take part. Students can skip any question that they do not wish to answer. In addition, students may stop participating in the survey at any point.

Opportunity to Opt Out

I have read the above information. I understand that if I agree to my child's participation in the survey then I need to take no action. I understand that if I do not contact my child's school within the next 7 days then I am stating that I agree to my child's participation in this survey. I understand that if I do not want my child to participate in the survey then I should contact **Dr. Merritt Waters, Coordinator of Student Wellness at Taft Center for Innovation at merritt.waters@lakewoodcityschools.org or (216)227-5593 within the next 7 days**. I understand that if I have questions then I should contact the researchers listed below or my child's school. I understand that even if I allow my child to participate he/she will also be given the option to choose whether or not to complete the survey. However, if I contact my child's school and inform them that my child may not participate then he/she will not complete the survey.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact your child's teacher or school, or the Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods at Case Western Reserve University, (216) 368-5746.

The following are important items of interest:

- **Risks and Benefits to being in the Study**: There are no foreseeable risks or direct benefits to participation in this study. The only potential risk is that some students might find certain questions to be sensitive. Students will be instructed that they can skip any question they do not want to answer or stop at any time. In addition, your child will be given the opportunity to refuse to participate at all, even if you allow your child to complete the survey.
- **Compensation:** Neither you nor your child will receive any compensation for completing the surveys. Your child will not receive class credit for participation in the surveys. There will be no penalty for not completing the surveys.
- **Confidentiality: ALL** records of this research will be kept private. In any sort of report we might publish, we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify any individual students or schools. Research records will be kept in **locked files,** and access will be limited to the researchers and the University Review Board responsible for protecting human participants. All data will be stored on a secure, password protected server at the Prevention Research Center for Healthy Neighborhoods. The server is not accessible via the internet or the Case intranet. Access will be limited to the researchers, the University's Institutional Review Board responsible for protecting human subjects and the funding agency.
- **Voluntary Nature of the Study:** Your child's participation in the survey is completely voluntary. If you choose not to allow your child to participate in the survey, it will not affect your current or future relationship with your child's school or with Case Western Reserve University. There is no penalty or loss of benefits for not participating in this study. Participating, withdrawing or refusing to participate in the study will not affect your child's grades or class standing in any way. Due to the voluntary nature of this study even if you agree to allow your child to participate, he/she may refuse to participate at the time of the survey administration, may skip any questions he/she does not want to answer or may stop at any time.
- **Contacts and Questions:** The researchers conducting this study are Kristina Knight, Ph.D. and Joy Yala, M.P.H. If you have questions, concerns or complaints about the study, you may contact them at (216) 368-3122. If the researchers cannot be reached, or if you would like to talk to someone other than the researcher(s) about; (1) questions, concerns or complaints regarding this study, (2) research participant rights, (3) research-related injuries, or (4) other human subjects issues, please contact Case Western Reserve University's Institutional Review Board at (216) 368-6925 or write: Case Western Reserve University; Institutional Review Board; 10900 Euclid Ave.; Cleveland, OH 44106-7230. We ask that you keep this letter for your records.

CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY EST. 1826