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## Student Support Services

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### 2021 YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR SURVEY

In order to better understand and address the health-related challenges affecting children and youth, Wilmington Public Schools is working with a coalition of cities and towns in Middlesex County to administer the 2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS). The survey is part of a larger effort to help increase the resiliency of young people by reducing high risk behaviors and promoting healthy behaviors. **Given the observed impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the welfare of students, it is essential to know how students are currently doing, so that we can best support them.**

The YRBS was developed in 1990 and is considered the primary source for comprehensive data on school-aged youth and young adult health practices and health risk behaviors. It has been administered in Wilmington Public Schools since 2015. The survey asks questions about physical activity and nutrition; tobacco, alcohol, and drug use; injury prevention; violence and bullying; mental health; connections with peers, adults, and the community; and sexual behaviors that could lead to sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. The survey data is used by federal, state, and local agencies and nongovernmental organizations to monitor the prevalence of risky health behaviors, assess general trends in health behaviors over time, examine the co-occurrence of health behaviors, and provide comparison data for geographies and subpopulations.

Since 2017, Middlesex League school districts have collaboratively administered the YRBS. This allows participating school districts and the region overall to better understand and respond to the health risks facing youth in their communities, as well as to promote information sharing and coordination across the school districts, health officials, and other community-based service providers.

Students will be asked to complete the survey during one of your child's regular class periods. The survey will be administered online and will take approximately 30-45 minutes to complete. Students will complete the survey as follows:

Wilmington High School & Wilmington Middle School:

Cohort A - March 25th, in-person

Cohort B - March 26th, in-person

Cohort C - March 25th or 26th, remotely

Cohort D - March 25th or 26th, in-person

Completing the survey will cause little or no risk to your child. The only potential risk is that some students might find certain questions to be sensitive. **For this reason, we ask that students who are completing the survey at home have a private space in which they can answer questions truthfully without distraction or input from other household members.**

We would like all students to take part in the survey, but the survey is completely voluntary. No action will be taken against the school, you, or your child if they opt not to take the survey. However, the more people who take the survey the more useful the data will be to the district. If a student chooses to participate, they can skip any questions they do not wish to answer and can stop taking the survey at any point without penalty. Average results for the school will be made public in the fall of 2021 and will be used to improve the health and overall well-being of children and youth in Wilmington, Middlesex County, and across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

The survey and the data collection process have been designed to protect your child's privacy. The survey is anonymous and students are asked to not put their names on the survey. Also, no student will ever be mentioned by name in a report of the results. Students can skip any questions they do not wish to answer and can stop taking the survey at any point without penalty.

**A link to a pre-recorded virtual caregiver program, to be accessible to view at your convenience, will premiere on March 19th. This program will provide you with an overview of the YRBS. Additionally, a copy of the survey will be available for you to review on March 19th on the school district website for parents who wish to preview the questions.** If you have additional questions about the YRBS, please contact Doreen Crowe at [Doreen.crowe@wpsk12.com](mailto:Doreen.crowe@wpsk12.com) or Christine Murray at [Christine.murray@wpsk12.com](mailto:Christine.murray@wpsk12.com). Any questions that we receive from parents and guardians will be included in a frequently asked questions (FAQ) document in the upcoming virtual caregiver program.

Please complete the attached form only if you **do not** want your child to take part in the survey, and return the form to the building principal no later than **MARCH 24<sup>th</sup>**. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Dr. Glenn A. Brand  
Superintendent of Schools

Doreen Crowe, MEd, BSN, RN  
Coordinator of Health Services

Christine Murray  
Coordinator of Behavioral Health

**RETURN THIS FORM TO THE BUILDING PRINCIPAL  
IF YOU DO NOT WANT  
YOUR CHILD TO TAKE THE YOUTH RISK BEHAVIOR  
SURVEY (YRBS)**

Please read the section below and check the box if you do not want your child to take part in the survey.

If you check the box “no” below, then sign this form and return it to the school **by MARCH 24<sup>TH</sup>**.

Please contact Doreen Crowe at [Doreen.crowe@wpsk12.com](mailto:Doreen.crowe@wpsk12.com) or 978-694-6060 x6614 or Christine Murray at [Christine.murray@wpsk12.com](mailto:Christine.murray@wpsk12.com) or 978-694-6032 x1102 if you have any questions.

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade (please circle):    6    7    8                      9    10    11    12

I have read this form and know what the survey is about.

**NO, my child may not take part in this survey.**

Parent's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_                      Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_