

## Student Health Survey FAQs – Parents

### Why Should My Child Participate?

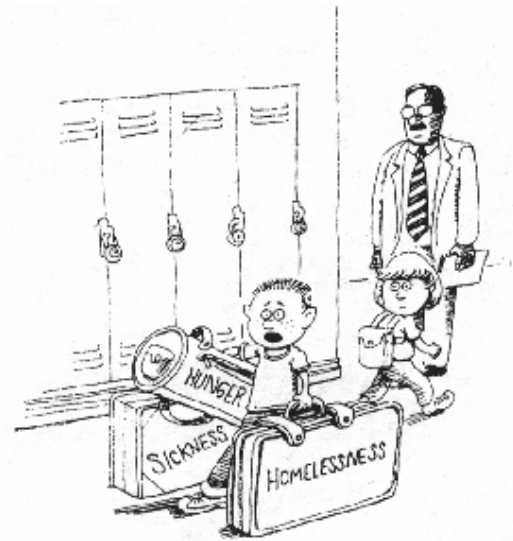
#### *Because Healthy Kids Learn Better.*

Good health is an essential educational tool.

No curriculum is brilliant enough to compensate for a hungry stomach or a distracted mind. Protective factors, such as supportive adults at school, lead to better health and education outcomes. Trauma, hunger, mental health challenges, bullying and lack of access to necessary medical care make it difficult for Oregon youth to reach their full potential.

Research shows that healthy students have better attendance, get higher grades and test scores and are less likely to skip school, drop out, or engage in risky behaviors.

The Student Health Survey (SHS) is the only source of statewide data that gives a snapshot of how students are doing physically, emotionally and socially.



*"Could someone help me with these?  
I'm late for math class."*

### Will anyone know my child's answers?

#### *No. Your child's privacy (and yours) are protected.*

The SHS is an anonymous and confidential survey. We do **not** ask for any identifying information, and it is not possible to link survey responses to a particular student, parent or family.

### Why should my child participate?

#### *Population-based data guides local policy discussions about issues that affect students' health, well-being and resilience.*

The Student Health Survey (SHS) enables schools and communities to know how many students are developing successfully and how many are having problems. Schools can then focus on improving outcomes for young people. It is an important tool that schools and communities can use to identify problems and measure progress towards addressing them.

### What if I don't want my child to participate?

**Fill out the bottom of the parental notification form and return it to the school office.**

We respect parents' decisions and have made it easy for you to opt your child out of the survey. Simply fill in the bottom of the parental notification form sent by the school, sign it, and return it to the school's front office. The school will make sure that your child does not take the survey.

### Do asking these questions put kids at risk?

**No. Research shows that asking youth about sensitive topics does NOT harm them<sup>1</sup> and does NOT get them to try it.**

The CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) states that there is **no evidence** that simply asking students about health risk behaviors encourages that behavior:

<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/data/yrbs/faq.htm#conducting>. The only way to determine if adolescents are at risk is to ask.

Some of the survey questions may be considered sensitive. Questions are age-appropriate and presented in a straightforward and sensitive manner. Students can choose not to answer any question that may make them uncomfortable.

### How can I see the questions you're asking?

**A copy of the questionnaire is available online, or at the front office.**

The SHS asks about resilience factors and risk behaviors that directly impact students' health and well-being, including:

- Support at school
- Community engagement
- Absenteeism
- Emerging public health issues, such as e-cigarette use
- Food insecurity, nutrition and physical activity
- Physical, emotional and mental health
- Injury prevention (impaired driving, suicide, the choking game and non-consensual sex)
- Sexual health relating to the prevention of unintended pregnancies and STIs
- Substance use (e-cigarettes, tobacco, alcohol, marijuana and prescription drug use)
- Demographics, including race, ethnicity, and sexual and gender identity, to assess health disparities.

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<sup>1</sup> Madelyn S. Gould, PhD, MPH; Frank A. Marrocco, PhD; Marjorie Kleinman, MS; et al. Evaluating Iatrogenic Risk of Youth Suicide Screening Programs A Randomized Controlled Trial; JAMA. 2005;293(13):1635-1643. doi:10.1001/jama.293.13.

There are separate questionnaires for 6th, 8th and 11th grade, which can be found on our website: <https://www.oregon.gov/oha/PH/BIRTHDEATHCERTIFICATES/SURVEYS/Pages/student-health-survey.aspx>

Schools should also have a hard copy of the questionnaires available in the front office.

**Who do I contact for more information?**

Have questions about the survey? Email [studenthealth.survey@odhs.oregon.gov](mailto:studenthealth.survey@odhs.oregon.gov) and we'll respond as quickly as we can.