

Dear Parent/Legal Guardian:

Between September 27 and November 12, 2021, your student(s) in 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and/or 11<sup>th</sup> grade will be invited to join their classmates in completing the 2021 Iowa Youth Survey. Since 1975, Iowa students have filled out this questionnaire to provide important information about their behaviors, experiences, and beliefs. **Participation in the survey is anonymous and strictly voluntary. No student is required to fill out the questionnaire.** The survey will take one class period or approximately 40 minutes to complete.

### **Purpose of the Survey:**

The 2021 Iowa Youth Survey is directed by the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH). Your school system has agreed to administer the survey for 2021.

The purpose of the survey is to collect information from Iowa youth so we can better understand their behaviors, experiences, and beliefs about what makes them feel secure, strong, and safe in their communities, schools, and families. Students are asked about their experiences with and perceptions of many topics, such as:

- nutrition, exercise and sleep habits;
- youth mental health;
- pandemic impacts;
- alcohol, tobacco and other drugs;
- bullying, harassment and interpersonal violence;
- extracurricular activities and volunteering; and,
- school climate and adult support.

This information helps state planning agencies, schools, and local community task forces seek funding, set policy, and provide programs to improve the lives of Iowa's young people. Asking young people about their experiences and opinions is a valued part of these processes.

IDPH, in consultation with the Attorney General's Office, has developed a plan for making sure that the survey is voluntary and has parent approval. This plan is called a "passive consent" procedure and has three parts:

1. An Information Summary to give you basic information about the survey (below).
2. An opportunity for you to read the survey questions at your student's school or online at: <https://iowayouthsurvey.idph.state.ia.us/Announcements> before your student(s) volunteer to answer the questions.
3. An opportunity for you to provide written refusal if you **do not** want your student(s) to participate in the survey.

### **Part 1. The Information Summary**

#### *Parental Rights:*

- You have the right and the responsibility to be informed about what your child volunteers to participate in at school.
- You have the right to receive accurate information about the Iowa Youth Survey questionnaire so you can make decisions for your family.

### *Iowa Youth Survey Content:*

In order to plan for the health, wellbeing and safety of all children living in Iowa, it's important that we understand their lives and experiences. While some sensitive questions about alcohol, illegal drugs and violence may not apply to your student(s), these questions may be quite relevant to others. When we know the range of experiences and values that exist in our student population, we can better meet their needs. Your student(s) honest answers will help us reach that goal. We value your support.

### *Confidentiality:*

IDPH has measures in place to protect student confidentiality. All information collected will be anonymous. Students will not put names, birthdates, or student numbers on the survey. In publicly presented reports and reports delivered back to schools, no information about a question will be reported for a grade level if fewer than 11 students in that grade level at that school answer a question. IDPH may share the data collected through this survey to researchers or other organizations for the purpose of special studies and analyses only after the receiving entity signs an agreement with IDPH agreeing to maintain the confidentiality of all data received.

### *Compensation:*

There will be no compensation or reward for students participating in the survey.

### *Voluntary:*

- All students in 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 11<sup>th</sup> grades will be invited to complete the Iowa Youth Survey. Students will have the right to refuse to participate in the survey and to refuse to answer any questions on the survey. If students decide they want to change their mind and quit answering the survey at any time, they may do so.
- If, as a parent or legal guardian, you do not want your student(s) to participate, you must send the school the *Refusal of Consent* form provided at the end of this letter (Part 3). Your student(s) will be provided a neutral activity during the survey class period. There is no penalty for anyone who decides not to participate.

### *Risk:*

There is no direct risk involved in filling out the survey. Students may find some questions uncomfortable to answer. They may skip any question they do not wish to answer or stop completing the survey entirely at any point.

### *Benefits:*

There will be no direct benefits to the students the day of the survey. The data collected throughout the state will provide schools and communities with the information they need to provide programs that will support schools, communities and families in keeping their children safe and hopeful about their future. The data are vital for grant writing purposes and legislative decisions.

### *Questions:*

Questions regarding the Iowa Youth Survey are encouraged. Please contact your school principal, superintendent, or the Iowa Department of Public Health at [iowayouthsurvey@idph.iowa.gov](mailto:iowayouthsurvey@idph.iowa.gov).

**Part 2: Reviewing the Survey**

A copy of the Iowa Youth Survey will be available to preview at the school office and may also be viewed at: <https://iowayouthsurvey.idph.state.ia.us/Announcements>.

**Part 3: Refusal of Consent**

I have read the Information Summary provided. I understand that my student(s) participation in the survey is strictly *voluntary*. I also understand my right to review the survey online, at the school office and/or District Administration Office.

I **do not** want my student(s) listed below to participate in the 2021 Iowa Youth Survey. I understand that a neutral activity will be provided for them during the survey time and that there is no penalty for not participating. I understand that this refusal of consent needs to be received by the school system no later than September 13, 2021. Please return this form to the building principal.

Names of student(s) who **will not** participate in the 2021 Iowa Youth Survey:

(The school needs this information to be sure the student will not be in the survey area.)

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Student Name

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Grade

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Student Name

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Grade

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Student Name

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Grade

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Student Name

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Grade

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Student Name

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Grade

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Parent/Legal Guardian Signature

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Date