

OHYES! Frequently Asked Questions

Why should schools and students participate?

The Ohio Healthy Youth Environments Survey (OHYES!) is a free, voluntary, web-based survey to collect information that schools and communities can use to determine services and resources to reduce risk behaviors and create healthy and safe community, school and family environments. By implementing the OHYES!, districts and schools are allowing students to voice the risks that they perceive to their health and wellness, as well as their sense of resiliency to live healthy lives. Administering the OHYES! sends a clear message to students that their voice matters.

Which schools or students are eligible to participate?

OHYES! is available at no cost to all Ohio schools for grades 7-12.

How are students selected to participate?

Student participation is anonymous and voluntary. Superintendents and principals decide which grades participate and when schools administer the survey.

Are students required to participate?

Student participation is completely voluntary. Students can skip any questions they do not feel comfortable answering. Parents who do not want students to participate are required to complete the Opt Out form and mail it to the school or have the student return it to the school. A form must be filled out for each individual student.

Is parental consent required?

Ohio law requires parents be informed of school surveys. Parents will be sent a letter by their child's school notifying them of the survey and their option to opt out each child. This OHYES! process meets the legal requirements and is commonly known as "passive consent," because it minimizes administrative burden on the schools and maintains student confidentiality, while maintaining sufficient response rates.

How long is the survey?

The survey will be taken by computer during a class period or homeroom. The survey takes less than one period to complete including the instructions and answering the questions. Average completion time is about 20 minutes. Factors such as how the student answers (if skip patterns are employed based on responses), age, and reading level can affect how long the survey takes.

When and how frequently is the survey completed?

Schools may administer the OHYES! during regular school hours during the fall (September-December) of the school year. The OHYES! is available for annual administration to meet the local data needs of schools and communities.

Will students' names be used or linked to the surveys?

It is not possible to find out how individual students answer. The survey is anonymous. Students do not provide names, student ID number, or any other personal identifying information. Only a school-identifying number is used. It is not possible for surveyors to identify individual student responses. No one at the school will know how they answered any questions, including teachers or principals. Parents will also not know student responses. To protect student privacy, administrators follow protocols throughout the survey process (such as not walking around the classroom and looking at student responses).

Does the survey include personal questions?

All survey topics are chosen for their value in supporting resources and education that prevents unhealthy behaviors and promotes healthy behaviors. Questions include health behaviors and other serious issues affecting youth today such as unintentional and intentional injuries; physical activity and dietary behaviors; alcohol, tobacco, vaping, and other drug use; mental health and suicide; and related risk and protective factors. Students' answers may help identify areas of need that communities can address to help all youth be successful at school. An optional version of the survey includes items related to sexual orientation, sexual victimization, and sexual behavior; districts can decide to include a version of the survey without these sensitive questions. Youth always have the option of not answering questions that make them uncomfortable.

Does answering the survey influence students to try unhealthy behaviors?

There is no evidence that asking these questions will lead to an increase in the likelihood that youth will practice risky behaviors. The only way to determine if youth are at risk of certain topics and behaviors is to ask questions about these behaviors. To address the health problems among Ohio's youth, there must first be an understanding of their unique experiences and perspectives on all topics. OHYES! provide anonymous tools to gather this information.

How do students complete the OHYES!?

The OHYES! is a web-based application that requires a technology device (computer, laptop, Chromebook, iPad, etc.), an active internet connection and a compatible browser (Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Safari). Many districts issue personal technology devices directly to students. If students bring their personal technology devices to school on survey administration day, it will streamline the survey process as most students will not have to go to a computer lab to take the survey.

Is it possible to administer the OHYES! on a hybrid schedule?

The survey is available to all students who spend at least one day a week attending in-person classes. For school districts that are on a hybrid schedule and do not have all students attending on the same day, the OHYES! can be administered over several days so that all students who are attending in-person can participate.

What about our students receiving remote education? Can they still participate in the OHYES?

To protect student confidentiality, the survey can only be administered on school property. Students educated remotely or virtually are not eligible to participate.

How is the OHYES! similar or different than the Ohio Youth Risk Behavior Survey/Youth Tobacco Survey (YRBS/YTS)?

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey is a Centers for Disease Control (CDC)-supported surveillance system, administered nationally, in almost every state and in various tribes, territories, and large, urban school districts across the United States. The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) is in a cooperative agreement with the CDC to conduct the YRBS/YTS in Ohio every two years. This survey is conducted with a sample of high schools across the state. The CDC selects a sample middle schools and high schools, and 1-4 classrooms are randomly selected within each selected school. Ohio has participated in the YRBS since 1993 providing Ohio with important trend data and state-level results on Ohio's high school and middle school aged population. The YRBS/YTS state-level data allows for national comparisons and helps guide Ohio policy decisions. However, YRBS/YTS data is not available on the individual school district level and OHYES! was developed because local communities, districts, and schools wanted data specific to them. So, Education, Health and Mental Health and Addiction Services joined forces to provide this local survey tool.

What results are available?

Results are available for each school year. Reports for All-OHYES! participants and the Appalachian Region are available for public download and County and Behavioral Health Board reports are available where two or more school districts participated during a school-year. District- and school-level data are private. Superintendents and principals may request their own district- or building-level reports or may access their own data through the Ohio Department of Health Public Health Information Warehouse – Secure Gateway.
