



## 2021 Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – For Parents/Guardians

### What is the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (HKCS)?

The survey collects anonymous information from students in 6<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades about health-related attitudes and behaviors, including: unintentional injuries and violence; mental health; school safety and physical fighting; tobacco and other substance use; physical activity and nutrition; sexual behaviors; basic demographic information such as age; and risk and protective factors. The survey is administered every two years to randomly selected schools. In 2019, about 100,000 students participated from over 500 middle and high schools.

### How do Colorado communities benefit from HKCS data?

- Provide state and regional estimates of a wide range of youth health behaviors.
- Track trends in behaviors at state, regional, and local levels over time.
- Increase public awareness about health and behavior issues that impact youth.
- Provide support for healthier learning environments through school health education policies and programs.
- Educate leaders to shape effective public policy.
- Bring funding into our state and local communities.
- Inform program planning and grant applications.

#### Some grants that utilize HKCS data:

- Drug Free Communities (DFC)
- Communities that Care (CTC)
- Chronic Disease Prevention Grants
- School Health Professionals Grant
- Bullying Prevention and Education Grant
- Comprehensive Sexual Health Education Grant
- State and local health foundation grants

### How will the HKCS benefit our school?

- Each school receives a report with its own results.
- Results can be used to support grant applications, needs assessments, and program planning to focus on prevention.

### Is participation confidential?

Yes, for both students and schools! Students do not put their name on the survey. Teachers follow protocols to protect confidentiality while the survey is being completed, such as not walking around the classroom or assisting a student while completing the survey. Individual data are never released, only summaries of combined data. Participating schools are not identified in any public release information. Districts and schools may share information with existing coalitions or committees (i.e. school accountability teams) at their own discretion.

### How long does the survey take?

A single class period, or typically about 45 minutes.



**Why does the HKCS ask about sensitive topics (like sex or drugs)?**

Information about these behaviors helps Colorado provide resources and education necessary to prevent unhealthy behaviors and promote healthy behaviors. Students who complete the survey are instructed beforehand that their answers are completely anonymous and that they may skip any questions they do not feel comfortable answering.

**Can answering the survey questions influence students to try unhealthy behaviors?**

There is no research evidence to suggest that health surveys influence youth behavior or experimentation in unhealthy behaviors. This holds true even after repeated administration of the questionnaire. It is reassuring to know that many health-related behaviors – including sexual behaviors, tobacco use, and some forms of violence – have declined since 1991, at the same time that youth survey activities have increased nationwide.

**Can I see a copy of the survey?**

Yes, there is a copy of the survey module(s) being administered online at [www.HealthyKidsColo.org](http://www.HealthyKidsColo.org).

**Do I need to give permission for the survey?**

Districts may vary in their policies about survey consent, so contact your district for questions regarding parent/guardian permission. Colorado law requires informed parental/guardian consent for surveying youth in schools. The requirement is met when parents/guardians are informed that their student has been asked to participate in a survey and given the option to opt the child out of participation. There is a copy of the parent/guardian consent form available online at [www.HealthyKidsColo.org](http://www.HealthyKidsColo.org). You should receive one if your child is in a selected classroom that will take the survey.

**Does my child have to participate?**

Participation in the survey is not required, but your child's participation is valuable in order to have high participation rates to obtain valid health information representing the whole student population in Colorado.

**Can I see the HKCS results?**

You may contact your school principal and request to see the results from them. Results will be shared with each school and district in the spring semester following an administration.

**If I have any further questions, whom can I contact?**

All additional questions or inquires can be sent via email to [CSPHSurveyTeam@CUAnschutz.edu](mailto:CSPHSurveyTeam@CUAnschutz.edu).