

Proposed Letter to Notify Parents
To Be Sent by School

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Our school is participating in the Oregon Healthy Teens Survey (OHT), a paper and pencil survey sponsored by the Oregon Department of Education, Commission on Children and Families, and the Department of Human Services. The survey will gather information about health risk behaviors of high school and middle school students in grades 8 and 11. The survey includes questions about nutrition, physical activity, tobacco, alcohol, and drug use, personal safety and violence-related behavior, HIV knowledge, mental health, suicide, harassment, sexual risk behavior/attitudes, and interactions with peers, adults, school staff, and community members that influence youth well-being.

Completing the Oregon Healthy Teens Survey poses minimal risk to your child, who may feel embarrassed or uncomfortable answering the questions. Survey procedures have been designed to protect your child's privacy and allow for anonymous participation. While we encourage all selected students to participate, the decision to participate is voluntary. You may opt to send a refusal for your child's participation. Alternatively, your child will have the opportunity to refuse at the time of the survey. There will be no action against you or your child if your child does not participate.

If you do **not** wish your child to take this survey, return this form to the principal's office before the survey date of _____. You need only return this form if you **do not** wish your child to participate.

Please see the other side of this form for additional information. You can review the survey document at the principal's office before the survey date. The survey is also available on the Department of Human Services (DHS) website for you to review before the survey date at: <http://egov.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/chs/youthsurvey/index.shtml>.

If you have other specific questions about the survey, please feel free to call Renee Boyd at DHS-Health Services (971-673-1145).

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I have read and understand this form concerning the Oregon Healthy Teens Survey.

[] My child does **not** have my permission to participate in this survey.

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____

Signature of Parent or Guardian: _____

Telephone Number: (_____) _____ Date: _____

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SURVEY FACT SHEET

Q. What is the goal of Oregon Healthy Teens?

A. Oregon Healthy Teens is an anonymous survey that will provide schools, communities, and our state with a clearer picture of youth problems and strengths. This project will allow schools and communities to find out what prevention efforts are working and which need improvement, with a particular emphasis on tobacco prevention. Information will be gathered from parents, children, school staff, law enforcement staff, and community health representatives. Our goal is to do what the name says: give our teens the support they need to live healthy lives. Your family's involvement in this project is important in moving us toward this goal.

Q. Are sensitive questions asked?

A. Our goal is to reduce those behaviors among high school and middle school students, including sexual activity, that adversely affect their health. Some questions, such as those about sexual activity, mental health, suicide, harassment, tobacco, alcohol and other drug use, and weapon carrying may be considered sensitive. However, the only way to determine how adolescents put their health at risk in these areas is to ask such questions. In addition, asking sensitive questions can bring good news, such as recent Oregon Healthy Teens findings that show a reduction in sexual activity and tobacco use among Oregon teens. Questions are age appropriate and are presented in a straightforward and sensitive manner. Students can also choose to not answer any questions they feel are objectionable. *Please note: If parents inform us that they do not want their child(ren) to participate, students will not be given the option of participating in class.*

Q. How will my family's privacy be protected?

A. This survey is **anonymous**. Survey administration procedures are designed to protect student privacy and allow for anonymous participation. Students will not put their names or other identifying information on the questionnaires or answer sheets. When the surveys have been completed and collected, we will have **no identifying information** linking a questionnaire to an individual student or parent. Summary information across grade levels will be reported to the school district.

Q. Will any students be surveyed again to see how their behavior changes?

A. No. Although an individual student might participate again in future years, it will be impossible to track individual students who participate because no identifying information will be collected.