

Parental Opt-Out Form

Our school's participation in the 2025 Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) is crucial. For the past 34 years, the Montana Office of Public Instruction and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have sponsored this biennial survey, which plays a vital role in understanding and addressing students' health behaviors throughout Montana in grades 7 through 12. The survey will ask about unintentional injuries and violence, tobacco use, including vaping, alcohol and other drug use, sexual behaviors, nutrition and dietary behavior, and physical activity.

The YRBS, a credible survey, has not only been approved by state and local school officials but also garnered the support of many esteemed national organizations. These include the National Parent Teacher Association, American Association of School Superintendents, American Academy of Pediatrics, National Association of State Boards of Education, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Catholic Educational Association, National Education Association, and National School Boards Association. Their endorsement underscores the importance and reliability of this survey.

It's important to note that completing this survey poses little or no risk to your child. The only potential risk is that some students might find some questions sensitive. Survey procedures have been designed to protect your child's privacy and allow for anonymous participation. While all selected classes are expected to participate, the decision to do so is entirely voluntary under § 20-7-120, MCA. We want to assure you that there will be no action against you or your child if your child does not join, as it is your right as a parent to opt your child out of testing under § 40-6-7, MCA.

The high school survey may be viewed at the link below or a copy is in your school:

<https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/YRBS/2025%20MTH%20Questionnaire%20with%20cover.pdf?ver=2024-10-01-102917-357>

The survey for the 7th and 8th grade survey may be viewed at the link provided here or a copy is in your school: <https://opi.mt.gov/Portals/182/Page%20Files/YRBS/YRBS%20-%202025%20-%20%20Middle%20School%20Questionnaire.doc.pdf?ver=2024-10-01-102459-430>

Please read the information on the reverse side of this form. You only need to return this form if you do **not** give your child permission to take the survey. If you have any questions, please contact your schools office to reach the Youth Risk Survey Coordinator or Genie Zeeck, 406-444-3178, at OPI if you have further questions. Thank you for your cooperation.

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____

I have read and understand this form concerning the YRBS:

My child does **not** have my permission to participate.

Parent's Signature: _____

Telephone Number: _____ Date: _____

SURVEY FACT SHEET

Q. How will survey results be used?

A. The Office of Public Instruction and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will use the survey results to improve academic achievement and ensure that students do not engage in the risk behaviors assessed by the YRBS. It is critical to implement quality school district health policies, programs, and activities based on data about students' health risk behaviors.

Q. Are sensitive questions asked?

A. We understand that some questions may be sensitive. Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) are a significant health concern, and engaging in sexual intercourse can increase the risk of contracting an STD. To accurately assess the extent of risk among adolescents, it's crucial to ask questions about these behaviors. Additionally, sensitive topics such as suicide, tobacco, alcohol, drug use, and weapon carrying are also important to address. We present these questions straightforwardly and sensitively, recognizing their sensitive nature. If students feel uncomfortable answering a question, they can leave it blank.

Q. Will student participation be anonymous? Will student privacy be protected?

A. Yes. We've taken great care to ensure that survey administration procedures safeguard student privacy and enable anonymous participation. Students won't be required to include their names or identifying information on the surveys. We encourage you to peruse the anonymous testing procedure document on the OPI YRBS web page. Your support and understanding are invaluable to us as we work to create a safe and confidential environment for all participants.

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

A. Perhaps. A new sample of schools and students will be drawn for each biennial cycle. Rest assured, no identifying information will be collected, making it impossible to track participating students. It is possible that your student will be selected to share their valuable insights once again.

Q. How was my child selected?

A. Selection is based on class schedules, not student schedules, considering times of day when required classes occur so that more of the whole population of the high school is likely to be in attendance.

Q. How long will it take to fill out the questionnaire?

A. One class period is needed to complete the questionnaire containing multiple-choice questions. There is no physical test or exam involved.

Q. Does the survey have broad state and national support?

A. The survey is a result of a collective effort, supported by many major national, state, and local organizations. Co-sponsors of the Montana YRBS are the Montana Department of Public Health & Human Services, the Montana Board of Crime Control, the Montana Department of Transportation, the Billings Area Indian Health Services, the Montana Department of Justice, and county health departments. Nationally, the YRBS is a testament to the strength of collaboration, supported by the American Association of School Superintendents, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Catholic Educational Association, American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American School Health Association, Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, Council of Chief State School Officers, National Association of State Boards of Education, National Education Association, National Parent Teachers Association, National Education Association, National School Boards Association, National School Health Education Coalition, and the Society of State Directors of Health, Physical Education and Recreation, among others.