

PARENT / CAREGIVER / GUARDIAN INFORMATION AND CONSENT LETTER

2024 Student Attitudes to School Survey

Dear Parent / Caregiver / Guardian,

This letter is to inform you about the 2024 Student Attitudes to School Survey (AtoSS), which will be administered to all government school students in Years 4 to 12.

About the survey

The AtoSS is a voluntary annual student survey offered by the Department of Education to assist schools and the department to gain an understanding of students' perceptions and experience of school. We value student voice as a means to improving student engagement, wellbeing and quality instruction and will be asking your child about their thoughts and feelings in relation to their school, their learning, peer relationships, resilience, bullying, health and wellbeing, physical activity, and life in general.

ORIMA Research Pty Ltd has been contracted by the department to administer the online survey and will provide support to schools throughout the survey period via a telephone hotline and email.

This year, the survey will be conducted at your school from 6th May until 14th June.

What are the benefits?

Young people enjoy having a say! This survey has been running for nearly 20 years and is invaluable in helping schools understand student views to plan programs and activities to improve your child's schooling experience. The survey responses also help the Department of Education understand how student's learning experiences can be improved.

What are the risks?

While we do not anticipate many risks of participation, some students may find some of the survey questions personal and sensitive in nature. Should you agree for your child to participate, they are still free to skip questions or to withdraw at any stage if the survey makes them upset or uncomfortable. A teacher will be present during the survey to support students.

The questions are selected from validated survey instruments used in Australia and around the world, are strength-based, and tailored for each year level group.

What will my child be asked to do?

Your child will be invited to complete the survey **online during class time** using a purpose built secure online survey tool. It is important to note that we are not in any way "testing" your child. Please note:

- Student participation in the survey is voluntary and students may withdraw at any time.
- The survey is available in a variety of different versions to enable all students to participate.
- The survey will take around 20-45 minutes to complete.

How is my child's confidentiality protected?

Your child will be provided with a unique login to complete the survey from their teacher. The student login is an assigned identifier that will be used by the department to link data for analysis and research purposes only. Identifiable information, such as student name or Victorian Student Number (VSN) is **not** used for linking datasets. Some student demographic data (i.e. year level, gender, age, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander status) is derived from department-held

administrative records and is linked to the individual student login ID during survey set up work to support survey administration.

ORIMA Research will only use student personal information for research purposes to facilitate the administration and data collection of the Attitudes to School Survey. To ensure the confidentiality of your child's responses is protected at all times, personally identifiable data will not be recorded in the survey response file that ORIMA Research provides to the department. All data is stored on servers located in Australia and access is restricted to staff who are working on the project.

All information collected about your child will be handled in accordance with the *Privacy Data and Protection Act 2014* (Vic), the *Health Records Act 2001* (Vic) and the *Public Records Act 1973* (Vic), as well as the Department's [Schools' Privacy Policy](#). Please note that consistent with the above legislation and our policy, there are instances where we may be required by law to share information provided by your child. For example, where there is a threat to your child's health and safety.

How will results be reported?

Aggregated state-wide survey data will be used to report on initiatives and may also be used in public discussions of issues relating to student engagement and wellbeing. An example of how survey data has been previously used includes reporting levels of student engagement in the Performance Summary in the Annual Report to the School Community.

The survey results will also be reported back to the school in aggregate form throughout the survey period. Data or results about individual students will not be shared with schools. All survey data that is made available in reports are for groups of students only so that no individual student can be identified. Where there are low numbers of students, the data will be suppressed so that the school cannot view the results for that group.

Your school may share the results of the survey with parents and carers.

Options for participation

Participation in this survey is **voluntary**. If you **do not** wish for your child to do the survey, please opt out via email to your school: mitchell.welsh@education.vic.gov.au before the survey commences on **Monday 27th May 2024**

Student personal information will be shared with ORIMA Research to facilitate survey preparations prior to this opt out process. If you opt your child out of participating, then your school will ensure that your child is not provided with access to the survey. Student details will be deleted by ORIMA Research at the conclusion of the survey.

If your school does not receive a Refusal of Consent email before the survey commencement date, as above, this will be taken as your consent for your child to participate in the 2024 Attitudes to School Survey. However, as noted above the survey is voluntary: even with your consent, your child can choose to skip questions or withdraw at any time.

Further information about this survey, including the questions your child will be asked to answer, please visit the department's [survey information page](#).

If you would like more information, please speak to your child's teacher, or contact the department at school.surveys@education.vic.gov.au.

Yours sincerely,

Department of Education, Victoria