



## HALTON YOUTH SURVEY | Parent Information

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQ'S)



This question and answer sheet provides additional information including common questions and answers about the Halton Youth Survey.

#### Who is doing the survey?

The Halton Youth Survey (HYS) is being conducted by the Our Kids Network in partnership with the Halton District School Board and Halton Catholic District School Board. The Our Kids Network is a multi-sectoral collaborative working on behalf of children and youth in Halton. The Network represents Halton's commitment to the healthy development and well-being of all children in Halton communities' from prenatal to adolescence. The members of the Network are committed to working together to address the following vision and mission:



Vision: All Children Thrive!

Mission: To promote the healthy development, security and safety of all children, youth and families through neighbourhood collaboration, service integration and measuring results.



Our Kids Network Website: [www.ourkidsnetwork.ca](http://www.ourkidsnetwork.ca)

#### How is the information used?

Information from the HYS will be used to inform a number of Ministry of Education initiatives aimed at improving the overall success of Ontario's education system. The results of the survey will also be used to help identify key issues related to healthy adolescent development and to develop and evaluate health and education programs. In addition, the results from the questions will be included in future Our Kids Network Report Cards. The results from the survey will be aggregated with neighbouring schools to maintain the anonymity of the students that participated.

## What is the link to the Report Card?

A *Vision for Children in Halton Report Card* contains information on our children's well-being, the challenges they face, and the supports they have to overcome those challenges. The HYS covers topics such as the social environment, physical health, mental well-being, connectedness, and feelings of safety, use of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs, and involvement in criminal activity or participation in other risky activities. These indicators have been identified by members of the Our Kids Network as being the most important ways to measure how well Halton supports the development of children and youth.



The results from the survey feed into a data pool that provides

Halton-specific information for service providers, professionals and organizations. This information is reported in the Network's *A Vision for Children in Halton Report Card*, intended to be a tool for community-wide discussion about how to improve the well-being of our children. To access the 2008 Report Card visit our website at [www.ourkidsnetwork.ca](http://www.ourkidsnetwork.ca).

## How is it useful to schools?

Schools benefit by having access to local-level statistics. They can use the information to collaborate with neighbouring schools and local youth agencies to improve or develop school/community prevention initiatives and services. Monitoring behaviours among youth helps to improve programs and reduce risky behaviours. The information sheds light on some key questions such as:

- How much of a problem do we have?
- What is the nature of that problem?

## Who else asks these kinds of questions?

The questions that are asked on the HYS have mostly been taken from large Canadian and Ontario surveys. These survey questions have been created by some of the leading experts in adolescent development in Canada and have been rigorously tested for age appropriateness. The HYS is appropriate for youth aged 11 to 18 years. The survey draws questions from the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY) and from the Centre for Addictions and Mental Health's Ontario Student Drug Use Survey.

## Confidentiality

The findings will be reported in a way that ensures complete confidentiality of individual respondents. Information on the survey will never appear in any school record. Because we are interested in both the use and non-use of drugs, there is no assumption that students who complete the survey have ever used tobacco, alcohol, and other drugs or participated in other risky activities. Students do not write their name on the survey and neither students nor classes can ever be identified. The researchers will have no direct way to connect individual responses to any student.

## Does my child have to do it?

Survey instructions make clear that the survey is entirely confidential and voluntary. Students may decline to participate or may leave any items blank if they do participate. Students can also choose to quit the survey at any time. Each school will send parents a letter that provides information about the survey and lets them know their child is not required to participate.

## How do we know the information is correct?

Parents and schools sometimes wonder whether these types of self-report surveys produce accurate, valid results. This type of survey has been researched to assure adequate validity and reliability; however, all measurement methods are subject to limitations. Research has shown that as long as youth are assured that the survey is indeed confidential, most students will respond honestly.

## Why is participation important?

Although your child will not directly benefit from completing the survey, his/her answers – along with those of thousands of others – will provide valuable information that can be used to improve programs for youth. This survey is part of our on-going effort to measure our success and to make improvements in order to ensure all students are given the opportunity to succeed in our schools.



We believe this study is important and we hope you will allow your child to participate. We sincerely appreciate your cooperation. If you would like to receive more information about the study or survey, please contact:

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For more information about the Our Kids Network, please visit our website at [www.ourkidsnetwork.ca](http://www.ourkidsnetwork.ca)

