

Dear Families,

The Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB) is committed to providing safe, caring and inclusive places for everyone. One way to find out how we are doing is to ask students in grades 4 to 12 to share their feedback using a survey called the Safe, Caring and Inclusive School Survey. WRDSB uses the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) as its Safe, Caring and Inclusive School Survey.



What is the student survey about?

The Ontario Ministry of Education requires all school boards to conduct voluntary school climate surveys on a regular basis. The Safe, Caring and Inclusive School survey meets the requirements of the Ontario Ministry of Education by engaging students in describing the current school climate.

The survey asks students about:

1. Social and emotional development, such as self-esteem, optimism, happiness and empathy;
2. Feelings of connectedness to school, family, friends, and communities;
3. School experiences;
4. Physical health and well-being; and
5. Time used after school hours, as well as students' wishes for after-school time.

When and how will the student survey happen?

Starting in April 2024, students in grades 4 to 12 will be invited to complete the survey during the school day. Students will do this online survey with staff supervision. Your child will receive an email with a link to the survey that includes 3 pieces of metadata to ensure data quality, but no identifying information. That metadata may include your student's school, grade, and whether or not they have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) but will not include information that could be used to identify individuals (e.g., name, student number).

Prior to starting the survey, staff will explain to the students that they will be asked questions about their lives inside and outside of school, and that the survey is not a test.

Your child can choose whether or not they want to complete the survey.

Students may skip any question they do not want to answer or can stop answering the survey altogether.

The following accommodations will be available for students:

- Languages - The MDI will be available online in multiple languages.
- Text to Speech - Online survey is compatible with Google Read & Write Extension.
- Support Staff – If a student has regular and recurring classroom supports to complete schoolwork and assessments, these supports should be available to assist the student to log onto their device, open the url link to the survey and/or orient themselves with the available accommodations (e.g., font size, Google Read&Write, Translation). Staff are asked to ensure that a students' privacy is maintained.

All students will receive information about who they can reach out to if they are upset after completing the survey and would like help.

Where can I get more information about the student survey?

View a PDF [grade 4-6 version](#) and [grade 7-12 version](#) of the Safe, Caring and Inclusive School (SCIS) survey.

View an online version of the Safe, Caring and Inclusive School (SCIS) survey including translations, click [here](#).

Information about the survey we are using as our Safe, Caring and Inclusive School survey, the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI), is online at www.earlylearning.ubc.ca/mdi

How is my child's privacy protected?

Your child's responses to the questions will be kept confidential and will be presented anonymously - only the WRDSB's Research and Evidence-Based Practice department will have access to the survey data and will create anonymous reports for schools and the school board

that use combined data. All results that appear in these anonymous reports will include data combined from at least 16 students.

During all analyses, we will follow standard practices to maintain confidentiality of your child's answers. No information from the survey will be added to your child's school record. No personal information that could identify your child will be reported on at any time or used in publications or public documents. In past years, school level aggregated data was provided in response to Freedom of Information requests. Again, no individual student information or identifiable data was provided to ensure student privacy.

All collected data will be stored in a secure, password-protected network drive at Qualtrics, the survey software company WRDSB uses, and on an encrypted server for 7 years.

How will the school and community benefit from the results of the student survey?

We will use the results of the survey to select activities to enhance school engagement, positive learning experience and academic success. The Safe, Caring and Inclusive School survey will not be used by WRDSB to rank schools, teachers, students, or classes in any way. Board level reports will be shared with the community. WRDSB will also share the summarized anonymous data with research partners from the University of British Columbia, Student Transportation Services Waterloo Region and may be shared with community partners. As well, the responses from WRDSB students and Waterloo Catholic District School Board students will be combined to create an overall Waterloo Region report through a data sharing agreement, where individual students, schools and/or Boards will not be identified. If you and/or your child choose not to participate, this will not affect their grades or other school outcomes in any way.

OPTING OUT YOUR CHILD FROM PARTICIPATING

BEFORE March 31, 2024: If you have any questions or concerns or do not wish for your child to participate, please complete [this form](#) OR contact your school principal no later than March 31.

AFTER March 31, 2024:: If you have not completed the form, there is an opportunity on the day the survey is completed in class for your child to indicate they do not wish to participate.

Thank you for your continued interest in our schools, and for helping us do our best to ensure a safe and respectful learning environment for everyone.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dana Liebermann". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial 'D'.

Dana Liebermann, Ph.D.
Executive Manager
Research and Organizational Transformation Department