

Frequently Asked Questions: School Climate Parent/Guardian Survey

What is it?

The **HCDSB School Climate Parent/Guardian Survey** is an anonymous, online survey that gives parents/guardians an opportunity to provide their input on their child's school environment. It also fulfills the Ministry of Education [requirement](#) that all schools in Ontario implement a school climate survey for students, staff, and parents every two years. For the purpose of this survey, we have defined school climate as *"the shared beliefs, values, and attitudes that shape interactions between students and adults and set the parameters of acceptable behaviour and norms for the school"* (Wang & Degol, 2016, p. 316). The survey is adapted from other school climate surveys in the education literature that are reliable and valid and that they identify areas that are known to affect student outcomes.

Why is my participation important?

This is an opportunity to provide your opinion on things that matter to you at your child's school. Your responses will provide us with valuable information that will be used to inform school improvement initiatives and to enhance the teaching and learning environment of your child's school.

By participating in this survey, school communities will obtain helpful information from parents that can be used to promote safe and inclusive school environments. That said, **this survey is completely voluntary**. You are encouraged to complete the survey as this information will be used to help make your child's school a better place to learn, but if you choose not to participate, you will not be penalized in any way. Please note that you may skip any question you do not wish to answer (aside from the items at the beginning of the survey that ask about your child's school panel, school, and grade).

What will I do?

To complete this survey, you will receive the survey link and password via email. The survey should take you approximately 10-15 minutes to complete. This survey asks you for your perceptions on key areas that research has shown to be important to understanding school climate and have an impact on academic, behavioural, and psychological outcomes of students.

What if I have more than one child at the HCDSB?

We ask that you complete the survey with one child in mind. However, parents are more than welcome to complete a survey per child. If you wish to do so, simply re-visit the survey link provided, enter the same password and complete the survey again for each additional child.

Why do you ask demographic questions?

Demographic questions have been included on this survey to help us better understand our students and their families (e.g., language, ethnic/cultural origin, racial identity, religion). The wording of the questions and response options/formats complies with the Ministry of Education's Identity-based Data Census template, incorporating [Ontario's Anti-Racism Data Standards](#). Please note that the student survey does *not* currently include the same identity-based questions.

Is my information kept private?

Yes. Your individual responses will remain private and confidential. All information will be used, disclosed, and retained in accordance with the *Municipality of Freedom and Protection of Privacy Act*. Because the survey is anonymous, your responses will remain private, and no one will know who gave which answers. Data will be stored on a secure database that is only accessible by authorized Research and Development Services staff. Reports will contain a summary of each question and will not identify any one respondent. Reporting will only be done at the school, Family of Schools, and/or Board level; individual data will not be shared. Results will also not be released in cases that may lead to the ability to identify respondents.

What are you going to do with the information?

Responses will be used by the HCDSB to:

- Better understand the climate of schools from the parent/guardian perspective to nurture the learning environment that enables all students to thrive
- Identify areas that could use improvement;
- Monitor and evaluate various HCDSB Strategic Plan goals and school improvement plans.

Findings will be shared with school administrators and HCDSB staff in the form of reports or presentations. Please note that any information you provide is collected under the authority of the *Education Act* and will be used for educational and research purposes only.

Questions?

If you have further questions, please contact your child's Principal or Dr. Lisa Collimore, Chief Officer, Research and Development Services, research@hcdsb.org