

QUESTIONNAIRES AND SURVEYS OF STUDENTS

Loudoun County Public Schools and other stakeholders will periodically utilize surveys and questionnaires to gather information from students on specific topics. The purpose of this policy is to establish the parameters for the types of information that may be sought and methods of gathering information in surveys and questionnaires of students.

A. Student Participation in Surveys

1. Anonymity. Survey data will be collected and stored in a manner that protects participant anonymity unless otherwise indicated in the survey form. Identifying information such as location, IP address, name, email address, or contact information will not be collected or recorded unless voluntarily submitted by the participant. The results of surveys will be stored using methods to protect the identity of the participants after completion. Unless required by federal or state law or regulation, school personnel administering any such questionnaire or survey shall not disclose personally identifiable information.

2. Voluntary Participation. Unless required by the division, the U.S. Department of Education, or the Commonwealth of Virginia, surveys conducted in LCPS will be voluntary. Any survey administered within LCPS will provide clear directions to the participants regarding their choice to not participate.

B. Student Surveys Conducted by External Researchers. Requests from individuals and organizations outside of LCPS to conduct research in LCPS including the distribution of surveys must be processed through the Research Office in the Division of Research, Assessment, and School Improvement. This requirement does not extend to action research studies and other data-collection activities conducted by Loudoun County Public Schools staff/employees for internal purposes.

1. Limits. The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee may limit the number of surveys approved at the Division level and encourage usage of existing survey data for research purposes. The Research Office may conduct an inventory of planned surveys to encourage alignment or consolidation of surveys or make survey results available to different offices.

2. Approval. The Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee may choose not to approve any survey. The decision to decline a survey cannot be appealed.

C. Commercial Use. No data collected from a questionnaire or survey shall be sold or shared for commercial gain.

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D. Parental Notification and Consent. In any case in which a questionnaire or survey requesting sexual information, mental health information, medical information, information on student health risk behaviors pursuant to Va. Code § 32.1-73.8, other information on controlled substance use, or any other information the Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee deems to be sensitive in nature is to be administered, notice shall be provided to the parent concerning the administration of such questionnaire or survey in writing not less than 30 days prior to its administration. The notice shall inform the parent regarding the nature and types of questions included in the questionnaire or survey, the purposes and age appropriateness of the survey, who will have access to such information, the steps that will be taken to protect student privacy, whether and how any findings or results will be disclosed, and procedures for opting out of the survey. Parents shall have the right to review the questionnaire or survey and to exempt their child from participating in the survey.

No questionnaire or survey requesting sexual information of a student shall be administered to any student in kindergarten through grade five and, unless required by federal or state law or regulation, school personnel administering any such questionnaire or survey shall not disclose personally identifiable information.

E. Additional Protections. Federal law provides no student shall be required, as part of any federally funded program, to submit to a survey, analysis, or evaluation that reveals information concerning:

1. political affiliations or beliefs of the student or the student's parent;
2. mental or psychological problems of the student or the student's family;
3. sex behavior or attitudes;
4. illegal, anti-social, self-incriminating, or demeaning behavior;
5. critical appraisals of other individuals with whom respondents have close family relationships;
6. legally recognized privileged or analogous relationships, such as those of lawyers, physicians, and ministers;
7. religious practices, affiliations, or beliefs of the student or student's parent; or
8. income (other than that required by law to determine eligibility for participation in a program or for receiving financial assistance under such program).

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Surveys, analyses and evaluations mentioned in statements 1-8 above, require the prior consent of the student (if the student is an adult or emancipated minor), or in the case of an unemancipated minor, require the prior written consent of the parent or guardian not less than 30 days prior to its administration.

All instructional materials, including teacher's manuals, films, tapes, or other supplementary material which will be used in connection with any survey, analysis, or evaluation as part of any federally funded program are available for inspection by the parents or guardians of the student.

[Former Policy 8-63]

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Legal Ref: Code of Virginia [§ 22.1-79.3](#); [20 U.S.C §1232h](#)