

## 2021 STUDENT HEALTH SURVEY PARENT OPT OUT FORM

In order to better understand and address the health-related challenges affecting children and youth, the City of Somerville's Public Schools and Health and Human Services Department are administering the 2021 Student Health Survey to both Middle and High School students, grades 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>. The survey is part of a larger effort to help increase the resiliency of young people by reducing high risk behaviors and promoting healthy behaviors. **Given the observed impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the welfare of students, it is essential to know how students are currently doing, so that we can best support them.**

The Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) or the Student Health Survey was developed in 1990 and is considered the primary source for comprehensive data on school-aged youth and young adult health practices and health risk behaviors. It has been administered in the City of Somerville's Public Schools since 2002. The survey asks questions about physical activity and nutrition; substance use; injury prevention; violence and bullying; mental health; connections with peers, adults, and the community; and sexual behaviors that could lead to sexually transmitted diseases and pregnancy. The survey data is used by federal, state, and local agencies and nongovernmental organizations to monitor the prevalence of risky health behaviors, assess general trends in health behaviors over time, examine the co-occurrence of health behaviors, and provide comparison data for geographies and subpopulations.

Somerville students will be asked to complete the 2021 Student Health Survey during one of your child's regular class periods *during the week of May 3, 2021*. The survey will be administered online and will take approximately 20 minutes to complete.

Completing the survey will cause little or no risk to your child. The only potential risk is that some students might find certain questions to be sensitive. **For this reason, we ask that students who are completing the survey at home have a private space in which they can answer questions truthfully without distraction or input from other household members.**

We would like all students to take part in the survey, but participating in the survey is voluntary. No action will be taken against the school, you, or your child if he/she opts not to take the survey. However, the more students who take the survey the more useful the data will be to the district. If a student chooses to participate, they can skip any questions they do not wish to answer and can stop taking the survey at any point without penalty.

The survey and the data collection process have been designed to protect your child's privacy. The survey is anonymous and students are asked to not put their names on the survey. Also, no student will ever be mentioned by name in a report of the results.

**A copy of the survey will be available from Wednesday, April 28, 2021 until Tuesday, May 4, 2021 for parents who wish to preview the survey. We will also share the survey during a virtual meeting on Monday, May 3, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. The Zoom link for the event is <http://bit.ly/StudentHealthSurvey21>.**

Please complete the form on the back of this letter if you **do not** want your child to take part in the survey, no later than **Monday, May 3, 2021**. Please contact Director of Student Services, Liz Doncaster at [edoncaster@k12.somerville.ma.us](mailto:edoncaster@k12.somerville.ma.us) or Prevention Services Manager, Matthew Mitchell at [mmitchell@somervillema.gov](mailto:mmitchell@somervillema.gov) with any questions.

**RETURN THIS FORM IF YOU DO NOT WANT  
YOUR CHILD TO TAKE THE SURVEY**

Please read the section below and check the box if you do not want your child to take part in the survey.

If you check the box “no” below, then sign this form and return it to the school **by Monday, May 3, 2021.**

Please contact Director of Student Services, Liz Doncaster at [edoncaster@k12.somerville.ma.us](mailto:edoncaster@k12.somerville.ma.us) or Prevention Services Manager, Matthew Mitchell at [mmitchell@somervillema.gov](mailto:mmitchell@somervillema.gov) if you have any questions.

Student’s name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grade (please circle):      5    6    7    8    9    10    11    12

I have read this form and know what the survey is about.

**NO, my child may not take part in this survey.**

Parent’s signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone number: \_\_\_\_\_