

School Coordinator Instructions

The *California Healthy Kids Survey* (CHKS) is a comprehensive youth health risk and resilience behavior data collection service available to all California districts. Sponsored by the California Department of Education (CDE), it consists of a comprehensive survey instrument that assesses all major areas of health-related behavior, as well as a full-service survey support system to help districts collect and use CHKS data to improve prevention and health programs. These instructions are designed for use by a school-site coordinator who organizes the survey effort at each school in cooperation with the district coordinator.

WHY CONDUCT THE SURVEY?

The CHKS was funded by CDE in response to widespread concerns expressed by school districts and county offices of education for help in complying with Title IV (Safe and Drug-free Schools and Communities) and TUPE (Tobacco Use Prevention Education) reporting, as well as monitoring health-risk behaviors in such areas as alcohol use, tobacco use, drug use, and violence. More generally, this survey grew out of CDE's commitment to promoting the safe, drug-free, and healthy development of the state's youth, a commitment central to improving student academic performance. In recognition of its importance, *CDE requires the CHKS for districts that receive Title IV funding or TUPE grants (or want to apply for them).*

YOUR SUPPORT IS ESSENTIAL!

Your assistance with the administration of the CHKS at your school is important and greatly appreciated. Every effort has been made to minimize the burden that survey participation places upon your school. These instructions have been created to help you in this endeavor. It is particularly important that you maintain standard procedures and obtain high levels of parent consent. Without your help, the results may not be useful and could hurt your district's efforts to meet its compliance requirements.

- » **The Importance of Standard Procedures.** A primary purpose of these instructions is to ensure that administration of the survey instrument is standardized in every classroom to the fullest extent possible. Standards help protect the confidentiality and anonymity of students. Standards also improve the quality of data, increase school and student response rates, and are essential for data comparability.
- » **The Importance of Monitoring Parent Consent.** We especially need you to encourage your students and their parents or guardians to sign and return the participation consent forms. Parents must send back a signed permission form indicating whether or not their child may participate. Only those students with written permission can participate. The great majority of parents will approve of participation. The challenge is getting the signed consent forms (whether or not consent is given) returned to the school. Low consent rates can result in incomplete, inaccurate, and biased data that jeopardize the survey results and your compliance to program assessment requirements.

STEP #1 – SELECT THE CLASSROOMS

The number of schools and classrooms surveyed will depend on the number of schools in your district and each school's enrollment. At a minimum, the survey will be administered to 5th-, 7th-, 9th-, and 11th-graders in comprehensive schools, and to *all students* (grades 7-12) in continuation, alternative, or other non-traditional schools. In most schools all students in each of these grade levels will be surveyed. In larger districts, a specific number of classrooms may be randomly selected from each school.

Your role in selecting the sample will be to work with the district coordinator to select the time period (for 5th grade) or required subject that will be used for testing, such as history, language arts, or health. In the cases where it is necessary to select a sample of classes for surveying, you will also be asked to submit class list information to your district coordinator.

STEP #2 – NOTIFY TEACHERS

Once you know which classrooms will be participating in the CHKS, you will need to notify the teachers. Teachers are instrumental in the critically important task of obtaining written parent permission, and in most cases administering the survey. Experience shows that teacher commitment is the most important influence on obtaining necessary consent and response rates. Please take the time to speak with the teachers to emphasize the survey's value and their importance in making the survey a success. Provide each with a copy of the *Teacher Instructions*, *Proctor Instructions*, and the survey.

STEP #3 – CONTACT PARENTS

Once you know which classrooms will be participating in the CHKS, you will need to contact parents and get their written permission for their child to participate in the CHKS. A letter must be sent to parents at the beginning of the school year describing the survey and their child's participation. Your district coordinator will provide you with the proper consent form. It describes the survey and all parent and pupil rights. This form can be modified to fit the needs of your school and should be altered to reflect any modules that are added to the required sections. It is available in Spanish and English.

Consent forms may be given by the classroom teacher to each student to take home and/or mailed by the school. Mailing consent forms to parents may help ensure that a larger proportion of parents will have the opportunity to learn about the CHKS and to grant approval for their children to participate. In either case, it is essential to enthusiastically support the survey, to carefully monitor the return of the forms, and to contact parents as needed. Your goal is to obtain a 70% consent rate per grade; i.e., 70% of the students in each grade who were given consent forms return them to the school, whether or not permission is granted. You should also make a copy of the survey available in the school office for parents to view.

Please talk to your district coordinator for more ideas on how to increase the parent response rate. The *Guidebook for the California Healthy Kids Survey, Part I; Administration*, available at www.wested.org/chks, includes strategies for obtaining the desired response rates. If your consent return rate is less than 50% within one week of the scheduled administration date, we recommend you postpone it and call your district coordinator immediately.

A Parent Permission Log is provided in the *Teacher Instructions* to help teachers keep track of which students have returned parent consent forms and which ones have received permission.

STEP #4 – PREPARE FOR CLASSROOM ADMINISTRATION

Selecting Survey Administrators and/or Survey Proctors. Please discuss with the district coordinator the selection and training of the survey proctors. Proctors can be school staff, administrators, counselors, nurses, teachers, or outside consultants. If teachers are used, we recommend that they administer the survey in a classroom other than their own. Students may feel more comfortable and be more likely to provide honest and complete responses if the proctor is not the regular class teacher.

Training. Training the proctors is very important. If proctors are not fully prepared before the class meets, the students may not be able to complete the survey within the period. Make sure the proctors have instructions and materials well in advance, and hold a meeting to review and answer their questions.

Maintain Confidentiality. Both schools and students must feel confident that every reasonable effort has been made to protect their privacy. Ask all survey proctors to sign the Assurance of Confidentiality Agreement, found in the *Proctor Instructions*. This reinforces the proctor's obligation to protect student privacy, and can be shown to parents or administrators to demonstrate the commitment to confidentiality. They should also be trained to read the Introductory Script, also in the *Proctor Instructions*, to students before the survey. This assures that students know they will not be punished or rewarded for choosing to/not to participate.

One week before the survey. Contact each teacher and establish how close you are to meeting the 70% minimum return rate. If postpone the survey.

Two or three days before the survey. Distribute the following materials for each classroom:

- » Surveys and answer sheets for each student,
- » *Teacher Instructions*,
- » *Proctor Instructions*, including the Introductory Script and the Assurance of Confidentiality agreement,
- » Transmittal envelopes for completed surveys, and
- » #2 pencils.

STEP #5 – SCHEDULE MAKE-UP DATES

Make-up Dates. Because some students will be absent on even the most carefully selected administration date, you may want to schedule an alternate or make-up session for those students who may have missed the first survey administration. Conduct the make-up session using the same survey administration procedures and in a setting that will protect student privacy. *Do not conduct the makeup session unless three or more students are present.* As with the typical classroom, have students place their answer sheets in a separate transmittal envelope. Indicate on the exterior of the envelope that this was a make-up session.

STEP #6 – PREPARE AND RETURN MATERIALS

Survey Administrator/Proctor. After the survey is completed, the proctor should verify that all requested information for each classroom was provided on the transmittal envelope and turn the envelope(s) into the school coordinator along with all unused answer forms and other materials. **School Coordinator.** After you have confirmed that all information on the transmittal envelopes has been provided, and that envelopes, answer sheets, and materials from all the sampled classes have been received, bundle the envelopes together and send them to the district coordinator, along with a copy of the consent form used in the school. Keep the parent consent forms and confidentiality assurances at the

school in case any parents have concerns and need verification.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

If you would like more detailed information, please contact your district coordinator. In addition, CHKS staff can support you in your efforts to administer the CHKS. Please call us toll-free at 888.841.7536, or visit us online at www.wested.org/chks.