



Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s):

Our school will be participating in the 2023-24 COMPASS survey. Researchers from the University of Waterloo will ask students to complete a 30-minute questionnaire about healthy eating, physical activity, sedentary behaviour, smoking, alcohol and drug-use, academic achievement, bullying and harassment, experiences of discrimination, and mental health. While your child(ren) will not benefit directly by participating, survey responses will help researchers gather details about youth health, and this information will be shared with our school to help improve school policies and practices related to health, which can benefit many students. Both the school board and our school have given approval to conduct the study. The survey is repeated once each year, following the same students. There are no known or anticipated risks to participation in this survey. If you would like to learn more about the COMPASS study, please visit the '[Information for Parents](#)' section of the COMPASS website.

How Your Child Can Participate

On Wednesday, March 27, 2024, students in grades 7 to 12 with parental permission **will be emailed a link** and asked to take part in the online survey. Students are free to refuse to participate or to withdraw from the survey at any time, without penalty. You are encouraged to talk with your child(ren) about the importance of completing this survey. The link will remain active for two weeks.

How To Withdraw Your Child

The COMPASS Survey uses an active information '[passive consent model](#)' which means that a letter (this one) that describes the nature of the study will be provided to parents/guardians. The parent/guardian is asked to contact the research team should they not want their child to participate. At any time during the consent process or during the data collection, an eligible student is allowed to decline to participate or withdraw from the study.

If you do not wish for your child to participate, please contact the COMPASS Research Coordinator, Namiko Huynh, at namiko.huynh@uwaterloo.ca or by phone at (519) 888-4567 ext. 40742 by 3:00pm on Tuesday, March 26, 2024. **Permission will be assumed unless you notify us otherwise.** In your email, please include:

- your child's name,
- your child's grade,
- the name of your child's school,
- the name of your child's school board

Confidentiality

Your child's name will not appear on the questionnaire at any time. Your child's identity is therefore entirely confidential and private. The researchers do not have access to personal information on the child answering the questionnaire. We will provide your child's school with a report that will include details on the health and

wellbeing of students in the school. The results of the study will only be reported at a summary level for a given group (e.g., the total percentage [%] of students at the school that met the physical activity guidelines).

Youth responses are anonymous. The first few questions of the questionnaire are used to create a unique code from non-identifying information provided by the student. In order to ensure anonymity, COMPASS does not collect the names and other information required to match codes to participants. This means that it is not possible to remove responses after completing and submitting the questionnaire. The school only receives the combined results and does not receive individual data with these codes. The research team does not have access to any names of students attending the school at any time. This strategy ensures total confidentiality and respondent anonymity, as well as the possibility for the researchers to link responses from one year to the next.

Data Retention

COMPASS is a national study led by the University of Waterloo. The survey data will be stored on secure servers at the University of Waterloo for a minimum of 7 years but it may be retained indefinitely. Data retention is used for a variety of purposes including university policy and scientific teams' research (e.g., tracking youth health trends over time). Only research staff will have access to the data. **It is not possible to identify individuals in the dataset because student names are not collected.**

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (REB#30118). If you have questions for the Board, contact the Office of Research Ethics, toll-free at 1-833-643-2379 (Canada and USA), 1-519-888-4440, or reb@uwaterloo.ca.

To view a copy of the survey questions or for more information about the COMPASS project, please visit www.compass.uwaterloo.ca, or contact COMPASS Research Coordinator, Namiko Huynh, at namiko.huynh@uwaterloo.ca.