



Dear parents and caregivers,

We are writing to invite your child to participate in the 2019 Mission Australia Youth Survey. This letter provides background to the Youth Survey and an overview of the methodology, as well as a consent form. Please read this information carefully and, if you are happy for your child to participate, please sign and return the enclosed consent form to your school as soon as possible.

#### What is the Mission Australia Youth Survey?

Now in its 18<sup>th</sup> year, the Mission Australia Youth Survey is Australia's largest annual survey of young people of its kind. With over 28,000 respondents in 2018, the Youth Survey offers important insights into the lives of young Australians and an understanding of their values, concerns, challenges and ambitions. It is an authoritative source of information that helps to equip schools, community organisations, governments and NGOs with evidence to support programs for young people in their transition into adulthood.

#### Why is my child being asked to take part and what they be asked to do?

The survey seeks to gather a range of insights into the lives of young people aged 15 to 19 across Australia. Your child is invited to complete an online questionnaire that will ask about some personal characteristics, some of their education, work, and social activities, as well as their experiences in social groups. There are a number of questions that ask about their personal wellbeing, as well as issues they might be personally concerned about or see as important in Australia.

The study will involve the completion of an online questionnaire that takes approximately 15 minutes to complete. The majority of questions require young people to check a box to indicate their response (such as yes/no questions or scales that rate the response from 1 to 5). There are a small number of questions that allow for free-text responses.

#### What will my child gain from being involved in this study?

Although they will not directly benefit from participating in this study, your child's participation in the survey will help Mission Australia to develop reports that are widely used by governments, community organisations, policy makers and NGOs across the country to develop programs that support young people in the future. Your child's school may also request a report based on school-level data. These reports may help your school to develop programs that respond the needs of your child and their peers.

#### Will my child be identifiable by being involved in this study?

All information that you provide will be treated in the strictest of confidence. The survey is conducted through SurveyGizmo, which is a survey tool based in the USA. Data provided through this survey is encrypted and transferred to SurveyGizmo's server in the USA. By completing this survey, participants agree to this transfer. All data will be stored securely on a password protected drive at Mission Australia, accessible only to the Research team.

Your child will not be identified in any reports resulting from the research. However, Mission Australia has a duty of care to the young people who take part in this study. If their response to the wellbeing question (Q24) indicates probable serious mental distress, we are ethically obliged by the ACT, NSW, NT, SA, TAS, QLD and VIC Departments of Education and Training and the Catholic Education Offices of Bathurst, Broken Bay, Canberra and Goulburn, Maitland-Newcastle, Parramatta, Sydney, the NT, Brisbane, Cairns, Rockhampton, Toowoomba, Townsville, SA, Tasmania, Ballarat, Melbourne, Sale, Sandhurst and WA to report identifiable information back to your school's principal. They may then wish to identify the student to offer support. Additionally, if any responses indicate risk of abuse, neglect or harm, we are legally obliged to report this information to your school principal and/or regulatory body. No other information about participants or their responses will be shared with the school principal.

We anticipate few risks from your child's involvement in this study. There is no contact between researchers and participants or parents. We have been careful to make sure that the questions in the survey cause little distress. We have built in information about sources of support (Kids Helpline and headspace) throughout the survey to make this information available for young people, should the questions cause anxiety. Participation is entirely voluntary. Participants are able to withdraw from the survey at any time. Their data will not be used if they choose to withdraw from the study.

How do my child and I agree to participate?

Participation is completely voluntary: it is you and your child's choice to take part or not. The decision to take part or not will be respected. Your decision will not affect your family's relationship with your school.

Your child does not have to agree if they do not want to. If they decide to take part and then change their mind, that is okay: they can withdraw from the project without consequence. To do this, they must simply exit the survey before completion. Your child's data will not be used if they choose to withdraw from the study; it will be removed and destroyed to protect their information.

Will I hear about the results of this project?

Yes, we anticipate that you will hear about the results of this project across news platforms and possibly through your school. Following its publication in late November, the *Mission Australia Youth Survey Report* is widely referenced across online, print and television media. Your child's involvement makes an important contribution to this report and shapes the way that social commentators, politicians, NGOs and community organisations advocate for young people across Australia.

Where can I get more information?

You can find out more about the Mission Australia Youth Survey by going to our website: [missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/research-impact-policy-advocacy/youth-survey](https://missionaustralia.com.au/what-we-do/research-impact-policy-advocacy/youth-survey). You can also contact the Research Team by emailing [youthsurvey@missionaustralia.com.au](mailto:youthsurvey@missionaustralia.com.au) or giving us a call at (08) 8218 2851. We will happily answer any questions you have about the Youth Survey.

Please see over the page for the consent form. If you and your child wish to participate, please sign the consent form and return it to your school as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Joann Fildes  
Head of Research and Evaluation  
Mission Australia

## 2019 Youth Survey Parent Consent Form

By signing below, I confirm that:

- ◆ I have read and understood the attached letter and Plain Language Statement about the project.
- ◆ I have taken up the invitation to ask any questions I may have had and am satisfied with the answers I received.
- ◆ I understand that participation in the project is entirely voluntarily.
- ◆ I am willing for my child to become involved in the project, as described.
- ◆ I have discussed with my child what it means to participate in this project. They have explicitly indicated a willingness to take part.
- ◆ I understand that both my child and I are free to withdraw from participation before the survey is completed without affecting our family's relationship with my child's teacher/s or the school.
- ◆ I understand that participation can be withdrawn prior to completion of the survey.
- ◆ I understand that, should my child reconsider participating in the survey, they can withdraw from the project without consequence.
- ◆ I give permission for the contribution that my child makes to this research to be published in reports, provided that my child and the school are not identified in any way.
- ◆ I understand that I can request a summary of findings after the research has been completed.

Please complete all fields and return to your school as soon as possible.

Name of Child:

---

Signature of Child:

---

Name of Parent/Carer:

---

Signature of Parent/Carer:

---

Date:

---