



Protecting Student Confidentiality and Anonymity

Ensuring Good Practice in Survey Administration and Protecting Student Confidentiality and Anonymity

Protecting students taking surveys involves avoiding pressure to participate and keeping their answers confidential. Staff should share their excitement about the survey and how it can be helpful to the school. However, staff should also emphasize to students that the survey is voluntary. Script for this is included in the Survey Day Checklist.

There are several ways to protect students and ensure their confidentiality and anonymity. One way OHYES! safeguards anonymity is by not collecting any personally identifying information. There are several things schools can do to protect students during surveys:

Tips

Proactive steps to protect confidentiality during survey administration include:

- Only students should take the survey
- Do not coach students during the survey (including giving students verbal or nonverbal cues, hints, suggestions, or paraphrasing or defining any part of the test)
- Do not give students additional time or rush them
- Students should not be passing notes, talking, or disturbing others
- Students should be looking only at their own computer, not at their neighbors
- Make sure students are seated with adequate spacing to foster privacy
- Do not watch students enter their responses

- Follow your school's policy on using cell phones or other handheld electronic devices for after survey completion
- Make sure no one takes photos of response screens during administration
- When determining how to administer the survey, students may feel more comfortable answering truthfully if their teacher is not the one supervising the survey. If possible have teachers switch classrooms or have another school staff member supervise.

Survey Irregularities

Sometimes irregularities occur during the survey (i.e., actions or events that may occur before, during, or after administration that may compromise the validity).

Some examples include:

- Loss of internet connectivity
- Fire alarm or other disturbance during surveying

Reporting Confidentiality Problems and Survey Irregularities

Confidentiality problems and survey irregularities must be reported immediately to the Survey Coordinator and OHYES! (info@ohyes.ohio.gov). Please provide the school IRN, school district IRN, and the date and time the survey was taken.