

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Please read this information carefully. If you are happy for your child to participate, please sign and return the parent consent form to your child's school as soon as possible.

What is the Mission Australia Youth Survey?

Now in its 25th year, the Mission Australia Youth Survey is Australia's largest annual survey of young people of its kind. With 17,155 respondents in 2025, the Youth Survey helps schools, community organisations, governments and policymakers gain an understanding of young people's values, concerns, challenges and ambitions.

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

The survey seeks to gather a range of insights into the experiences of young people aged 14 to 19 across Australia. The survey asks about sociodemographic information; issues of national importance; study and work; mental health and wellbeing; sources of support; community support and connections; housing and financial situation; social media; climate issues; as well as sources of stress across a range of topics such as body image, cost of living, school, and friends/family. The 2026 survey also includes additional questions about local community involvement and neighbourhood changes that could improve young people's lives.

Your child's participation in the Youth Survey supports Mission Australia's advocacy to governments, community organisations and policymakers to develop programs that support young people in need. Your child's school may also request a report based on school-level data. These reports may help your child's school develop programs that respond to the needs of your child and their peers.

Your child is invited to complete an online questionnaire. They will be asked to complete the questionnaire either in class or in their own time. The questionnaire takes approximately 20 minutes. Most questions require young people to check a box to indicate their response. A small number of questions allow for free-text responses.

Will my child be identifiable in this study?

All information your child provides will be treated in the strictest of confidence. The survey is conducted through Alchemer, which is a survey tool based in the USA. Data provided through this survey is encrypted and transferred to Alchemer'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 project research team.

Data we collect will be used to produce reports, publications and presentations, this includes retaining data for future use. In public reporting we only use national, state and/or

postcode-level results. Your child's answers to the survey will be kept confidential and your child will not be identified in any publicly available reports resulting from the study.

However, Mission Australia has a duty of care to the young people taking part in the Youth Survey. **If any of your child's answers to the free-text questions indicate that they might be unsafe or at any risk of harm, abuse or neglect, we are obliged by the Department of Education in your State/Territory, or your local Catholic Diocese, to alert your child's school Principal, or Child Protection Authority, and share identifiable information so the school can re-identify the student and help to make them safe as necessary.**

Additionally, if your child's responses indicate that they might be experiencing symptoms of psychological distress, we will inform your child's school Principal so they can provide your child support in accordance with the school's wellbeing policies.

Mission Australia's Youth Survey has gained Human Research Ethics Committee approval from the University of Melbourne.¹ 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, headspace, Lifeline, Qlife, Butterfly Foundation and 13YARN) throughout the survey to make this information available for young people, should the questions cause anxiety. Your child is welcome to skip a question if they feel uncomfortable answering it.

How do my child and I agree to participate?

Participation is completely voluntary: it is up to you and your child whether to take part in the survey. The decision to take part or not will be respected. Your decision will not affect your family's relationship with your school. If your child starts the survey and then changes their mind, they are welcome to stop at any time and exit the survey before selecting 'finish'. The research team will not use any of your child's responses in our reports if they choose not to complete the survey; your child's data will be removed and destroyed to protect their information.

Where can I get more information?

You can find out more about the Youth Survey by going to our website: missionaustralia.com.au/youthsurvey.

You can contact the Mission Australia Research & Insights Team by emailing youthsurvey@missionaustralia.com.au.

¹ University of Melbourne researchers involved in the Youth Survey: Dr Kate Filia, Prof Eoin Killackey, Dr Caroline Gao
The University of Melbourne's HREC can be contacted on Ph. 136 352