

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS: School Climate Staff Survey

What is it?

The *HCDSB School Climate Staff Survey* is an **anonymous online survey** that gives **all school staff** an opportunity to provide their input regarding their school's environment. It also fulfills the Ministry of Education requirement that all schools in Ontario implement a school climate survey for students, staff, and parents every two years. For the purpose of our survey, we have defined school climate as "the shared beliefs, values, and attitudes that shape interactions between students and adults and set the parameters of acceptable behaviour and norms for the school" (Wang & Degol, 2016, p. 316). The survey is adapted from other staff school climate surveys in the education literature that are reliable and valid and that identify areas that are known to affect student outcomes.

Who should complete the survey?

All school staff at every school are encouraged to complete this survey. This includes all educators, as well as all non-teaching staff and school administrators. If you work at more than one school, you are asked to answer about one school, though you may also fill out another survey for a different school if you wish.

Why is my participation important?

This is an opportunity for you to give your opinion on key areas related to student learning and school environment. Your response will provide the HCDSB with valuable information that will be used to inform future school improvement initiatives and potentially enhance the teaching and learning environment of your school.

By participating in this survey, school communities will obtain helpful information that can be used to promote safe and inclusive school environments. That said, **this survey is completely voluntary**. While you are encouraged to complete the survey, you will not be penalized in any way if you choose not to participate. You may also skip any question or select 'prefer not to answer', if provided (aside from the items at the beginning asking about panel, Family of Schools, school, and role).

What will I do?

You will be asked to participate in an anonymous and confidential online survey that should take approximately 15 minutes to complete. To access the survey, just click on the URL provided in the invitation email or on StaffNET. This survey asks you for your perceptions on key

areas that research has shown to be important to understanding school climate and have an impact on academic, behavioural, and psychological outcomes of students. You will thus be asked several questions related to **community** (e.g., relationships, connectedness), school **safety** (e.g., bullying), and **academic** climate (e.g., teaching/learning, leadership). We also included some well-being items and remote learning items (for staff who work with our virtual learners only).

Why do you ask demographic questions?

Some school-specific demographic questions are included on the survey to allow you to see items that are relevant to your role. We want to ensure that you can comment on aspects that are relevant to you.

Is my information kept private?

Yes. Your individual responses will remain private and confidential. All information will be used, disclosed, and retained in accordance with the *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*. Because the survey is anonymous, your responses will remain private, and no one will know who gave which answers. Data will be stored on a secure database that is only accessible by authorized HCDSB Research and Development Services staff. Reports will contain a summary of each question and do not identify any one respondent. Reporting will only be done at the school, Family of Schools, and/or Board level; individual data will not be shared. Results will also not be released in cases where demographics may lead to the ability to identify respondents.

What are you going to do with the information?

Responses will be used by the HCDSB to:

- Better understand the climate of schools from the staff perspective to nurture the learning environment that enables all students to thrive;
- Identify areas that could use improvement;
- Monitor and evaluate various HCDSB Strategic Plan goals and school improvement plans.

Findings will be shared in the form of reports or presentations. Please note that any information you provide is collected under the authority of the *Education Act* and will be used for educational and research purposes only.

Questions?

If you have further questions, please contact your School Principal or Dr. Lisa Collimore, Chief Officer, Research and Development Services, collimorel@hcdsb.org.