

**PARENT / GUARDIAN INFORMATION AND CONSENT LETTER****2020 Student Attitudes to School Survey**

Dear Parent / Guardian,

This letter is to inform you about the 2020 Student Attitudes to School Survey (AtoSS), that your child is invited to participate in.

**About the survey**

We value student voice as a means to improving student engagement, wellbeing and quality instruction and are conducting a survey to find out what your child thinks of your school.

The AtoSS is an annual student survey offered by the Department of Education and Training to assist schools in gaining an understanding of students' perceptions and experience of school.

**This year, the survey also includes some questions about student health and wellbeing and student perceptions of COVID-19.** Understanding health and wellbeing needs has always been important, but especially so this year, and the Department is providing this survey to allow schools to capture this information to support students. Students will be asked about their thoughts and feelings in relation to their school, family, friends, health (including mental health) and wellbeing, and bullying.

The health and wellbeing questions are taken from another Department survey called the Victorian Student Health and Wellbeing Survey (VSHAWS) that has been conducted with a sample of schools in Victoria since 2014. The questions about COVID-19 have been developed by or recommended by the Murdoch Children's Research Institute.

This year, the AtoSS will be conducted at your school over the period Wednesday 21 October to Friday 23 October.

**What are the risks?**

While we do not anticipate many risks of participation, some students may find the survey questions to be more personal and sensitive in nature this year. Should you agree for your child to participate, they are still free to skip questions or to withdraw at any stage if the survey makes them upset or uncomfortable.

**What are the benefits?**

In our experience, the majority of young people enjoy having the chance to have their say. Your school will use the survey results to plan programs and activities to improve your child's schooling experience.

**What will my child be asked to do?**

Your child will be invited to complete the survey **online during class time** using a purpose built secure online survey tool. It is important to note that we are not in any way "testing" your child. Please note:

- Student participation in the survey is voluntary and students may withdraw at any time.
- The survey will take around 30-40 minutes to complete.

**How is my child's confidentiality protected?**

Your child will be provided with a unique login to complete the survey from their teacher. The student login is an assigned identifier that may be used to link data for statistical and research purposes only.

Personally identifiable data will not be recorded in the survey response file. This ensures that the confidentiality of your child's responses is protected at all times.

#### How will results be reported?

The survey results will be reported back to the school in an aggregate form in term 4. All survey data that is made available in reports are for groups of students only so that no individual student can be identified. Data suppression rules are used for schools with low student numbers per year level.

#### Options for participation

Participation in this survey is **voluntary**. If you **do not** wish for your child to do the survey, please opt out via email to your school: [newlands.ps@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:newlands.ps@education.vic.gov.au). Please do so **before Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> October** stating that you wish to opt out of your child's participation.

If your school does not receive a Refusal of Consent email from yourself before the survey commencement date mentioned within this letter, it means that you give your consent for your child to participate in the 2020 Attitudes to School Survey.

A copy of the survey that we are asking your child to complete is available from your child's school. Please contact the administration office if you would like to see the survey before making your decision about whether you would like your child to participate.

If you would like more information, please speak to your child's teacher, or contact the Department at [attitudes.school.survey@education.vic.gov.au](mailto:attitudes.school.survey@education.vic.gov.au).

Yours sincerely,

The Department of Education and Training Victoria