



HBSC 2026 Scotland Survey 2026

Frequently asked questions for young people

What is the HBSC study?

The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study is an international research project involving over 50 countries from across Europe and North America, conducted with the World Health Organisation. Scotland has been involved since 1990 and surveys are carried out in schools every four years. It aims to better understand the health and wellbeing of young people, monitor changes in health and wellbeing over time, and to see how young people in Scotland are doing compared with those in other countries.

Who is running the HBSC Scotland survey?

HBSC is led by researchers from the University of Glasgow. In Scotland, the survey is funded by Public Health Scotland which is a national agency working to prevent disease and promote health and wellbeing among people living in Scotland.

Why have I been chosen to take part?

We are inviting 6000 pupils from P7, S2 and S4 all across Scotland to take part. Your school was randomly selected to participate.

Why should I take part?

The survey gives you the opportunity to share about the things that affect your health and wellbeing and your life in general. Your answers will show adults what life is really like for young people in Scotland today. What you say can help shape new ideas, activities and policies to make things better for young people.

What kinds of things does the survey ask about?

The survey includes questions about different aspects of young people's health and their lives in general. For example, physical activity and sport, eating habits, sleep, mental health, bullying, leisure activities, social media use and gaming. It also has some questions about family, friends and life at school. Some questions will ask about more personal things like smoking and drinking. For S4 pupils only there are a few questions about sexual health.

We ask about postcode so that we can learn more about the types of areas that young people live in and how these might affect their health.



We ask about date of birth so that we can calculate age. This is important so we can understand more about how young people's experiences and their health and wellbeing change as they get older.

All the answers are kept private and no-one will get into trouble because of what they say.

How long will it take?

The survey takes about 30-40 minutes to complete and can usually be done in one class period at school.

Do I need to take part?

No, it is totally up to you if you take part or not. If you choose not to take part, that's fine. You can also change your mind at any time. If you do not want to take part, just tell your parent/carer or your teacher.

Before you start the survey you be asked to select one of the following options:

- Yes, I am happy to take part in the survey
- No, I do not want to take part in the survey

Your answers will be saved as you go through the questionnaire. If you change your mind once you have answered a question, you can use the 'back' button at the bottom of the page to go back to check, change or remove your answers.

Closing the survey at any time will save all the answers you have given so far. If you want to remove any answers before you leave, you should click the 'back' and 'next' button to go through the survey and do this.

What if I don't want to answer a question?

That is ok. You can skip any questions you don't want to answer. You can also go back and de-select any of your previous answers.

Can my teacher or parents see what I wrote?

No, no-one will see your individual answers – not your teachers, parents, or friends.

Will anyone know it's me?

No. The survey does not ask for your name, and your answers are combined with the answers from thousands of other young people across Scotland. Nobody will be able to tell which ones are yours.



What happens to my answers?

The answers you give are sent directly to the research team at the University of Glasgow. The team follows strict rules to make sure the information is kept safe and confidential.

The research team will combine your answers with those from other pupils from across Scotland to look at the health issues affecting young people. This will help us understand more about how young people are doing in Scotland and what needs to be done to help improve young people's health.

Your school will get a report with the results from all pupils who took part at your school. These are combined together so that it is not possible to know who said what.

The results from everyone that took part across Scotland are written up into a report and this is shared with the Scottish Government and others who make decisions about how to improve young people's health and wellbeing.

We also combine your answers with answers from young people across all the countries which take part in the HBSC study. Researchers use this information to better understand young people's health in different countries.

You or your school will never be identifiable in any published reports or papers.

What do I do if I want to find out more?

If you want to find out more about the HBSC study you can visit the HBSC Scotland website: www.gla.ac.uk/hbscscotland or the HBSC international website: www.hbsc.org

You can contact the research team at the University of Glasgow directly by emailing shw-hbscscotland@glasgow.ac.uk