



HBSC Scotland Survey 2026

Frequently Asked Questions for Teachers

What is the aim of the study?

The Health Behaviour in School-aged Children (HBSC) study is an international study conducted in collaboration with the World Health Organisation. Scotland has been involved since 1990, with surveys carried out every four years. The study 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. Over 50 countries and regions in Europe and North America are taking part in the 2026 survey round.

Who runs the study?

The 2026 Scotland study is funded by Public Health Scotland and carried out by researchers at the University of Glasgow.

Why has our school been chosen?

Your school was randomly selected to take part in this survey. We have requested permission from Directors of Education to approach schools across all 32 local authorities in order to achieve a nationally representative sample of Scottish school children. Your Director of Education and your headteacher have agreed for your school to take part.

Who will take part in the survey?

We are asking primary schools to invite one P7 class to participate. Secondary schools are asked to invite one S2 and S4 class to take part. Some schools may be asked for additional classes to participate but we will let you know if that is the case. Equally, some schools may request more than one class per year group to take part, that is fine too.

Do pupils have to take part?

No. It is up to pupils and their parents/carers to decide if the child takes part. We have provided Information Sheets to be distributed to pupils and their parents/carers to explain the study and to help them decide if they want to take part. The Information Sheets are in your school's survey pack. If pupils or their parent/carer decide not to take part, they are asked to return a form to the school to withdraw from the survey.



When do we need to take part by?

We would like all schools to complete the survey by the end of March 2026. If you think your school needs more time to take part, please get in touch with the HBS Scotland Team by emailing: shw-hbscscotland@glasgow.ac.uk

Is this survey the same as the Health and Wellbeing Census?

No, HBSC is a completely separate study. The last cycle of HBSC ran in 2022, which coincided with the Scottish Government Health and Wellbeing Census in schools, so there may be some confusion. HBSC is a long-standing international study, which has been running in Scotland for the last 30 years.

Where is my schools URL link?

Your URL link, unique school code and QR code has been emailed to all schools (even if you received some documents printed). If you cannot find this, please get in touch with the HBSC Scotland Team.

Why doesn't the survey link work?

In the first instance, please consult the technical troubleshooting advice on our website:
www.gla.ac.uk/hbscsurvey

What devices can be used to complete the survey?

The survey can be completed on any electronic device that is compatible with the link, such as on a mobile phone. However, we recommend the survey is completed on either a desktop, laptop or tablet.

Do I have to follow the instructions provided?

Yes. It is important that the survey is carried out according to the instructions provided to ensure the smooth running of the survey and also to adhere to the international study protocol and the ethical requirements of the study.

Can pupils complete the survey at home?

No. The survey has been designed for pupils to complete within the classroom. It should not be issued as homework. We recommend that it is completed in a PSE or in a health and wellbeing class.



What do schools receive in return?

As part of the [SHINE](#) network, subject to minimum numbers, we will provide all participating schools with a school report with their pupil data in aggregate form.

How do I receive my school level report?

Please complete the online response form so we know your school has finished data collection: [Class response form](#)

We will send out school reports during Autumn 2026.

Will the survey disrupt the students school schedule or learning?

We ask teachers to conduct the survey during PSE classes to minimise disruption to students learning and shouldn't take any longer to complete than one period.

What will happen to the data from my school?

All the information we collect from pupils and schools will be kept strictly confidential. To read what we will do with the data please see our Privacy Notice, which can be found here: [Privacy notice 2026](#)

How long does the survey take?

Between 30-40 minutes.

Can student's skip questions if they want to?

Yes, absolutely. Any and all participation is completely voluntary. If a student wants to skip any questions or stop doing the survey at any point that is totally fine. Students are able to move freely throughout the survey using the 'back' and 'next page' buttons and can go back and de-select their responses if they wish.

Does this study have ethical approval?

Yes, the 2026 HBSC Scotland survey has been approved by The College of Medical, Veterinary & Life Sciences Ethics Committee of the University of Glasgow (Application number 200240482).