

2025 NYC School Survey Ethics Reference Guide

| ETHICAL SURVEY ADMINISTRATION (DOs) | UNETHICAL SURVEY ADMINISTRATION (DON'Ts) |
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| ENSURING RESPONDENTS' ABILITY TO TAKE THE SURVEY FREE FROM ANY OUTSIDE INFLUENCE | |
| DO encourage respondents to provide honest feedback that is free of any outside influence. | DON'T suggest that respondents put positive responses. DON'T speculate about possible consequences of survey scores (e.g., imply that respondents should put positive responses to attract students to apply to that school). |
| DO make clear to all respondents that they may skip any question they do not wish to answer. | DON'T make respondents feel they will be penalized for incomplete surveys or for not taking the survey. |
| DO provide directions for completing the survey and answer simple process questions. | DON'T influence respondents' interpretation of survey items. |
| DO provide translations support or explain the meaning of survey questions when asked. | DON'T complete the survey on behalf of respondents. DON'T misrepresent the meaning of survey questions in order to elicit more favorable responses. |
| MAINTAINING VOLUNTARY NATURE OF THE SURVEY | |
| DO offer reasonable and nominal incentives, if needed, to encourage respondents to participate. Examples of this include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • homework passes • free reading time • uniform-free day • pizza party | DON'T offer monetary-based incentives or use punitive measures such as withholding report cards, tutoring, or support to influence survey participation. |
| DO encourage parents, teachers and students to participate in the survey by publicizing the survey to the entire school community. | DON'T suggest to parents, teachers, and students that taking the survey is required. DON'T discourage participation by limiting communications and/or survey access. |
| DO designate a time and space for parents, teachers, and students to complete the survey if they wish. DO also communicate to respondents that they are allowed to complete the survey at another time or place during the survey administration if they prefer. | DON'T restrict the time and place in which parents, teachers, and students must complete the survey. |
| DO properly submit completed surveys materials for scoring. | DON'T withhold or dispose of completed survey materials for any reason, DON'T complete undistributed surveys or otherwise tamper or change completed surveys submitted to the school. |
| MAINTAINING THE CONFIDENTIAL NATURE OF THE SURVEY | |
| DO provide conditions that protect the confidentiality of respondents. DO distribute survey materials unmarked. | DON'T write or require respondents to write their names or any identifying information on survey materials or keep track of which respondents receive which access codes. |
| DO submit survey responses per submission guidelines for reviewing and scoring by the vendor employed by DOE. | DON'T review or monitor any survey responses or give the appearance of reviewing or monitoring survey responses during or after survey administration. DON'T ask or require respondents to share their responses at any time including assemblies and meetings during which the survey is discussed. |
| DO ask respondents to seal their own surveys in the envelopes provided before handing their surveys into the proctor. For online surveys, DO ensure that respondents are able to complete the survey in a confidential manner. | DON'T open survey envelopes after they have been sealed by respondents. DON'T engage in activities – such as walking around the computer lab or room while respondents are completing the survey or looking at their screens or paper surveys (except as needed for basic supervision of students) – that may impede respondents' ability to complete the survey confidentially. |