

**What exactly are principals and teachers being asked to do?**

**In Primary Schools:**

The classroom teacher will be asked to provide details on participating students in three areas:

1. Filling in student behaviour checklist - this takes no more than 7 to 10 minutes.
2. Administering a short vocabulary list and writing down the students responses - this may take up to 15 minutes.
3. Administering a pencil and paper non-verbal reasoning test - this should take no more than 7 to 10 minutes.

The principal will be asked to provide details on: the schools community setting, it's resources and educational environment; and each participating students academic performance, their attendance record and utilisation of special education and other school services.

**In High Schools:**

1. The student's English language teacher or literature teacher is asked to complete a student behaviour checklist - this takes no more than 7 to 10 minutes.
- 2.. A second teacher or year coordinator or form teacher/tutor is asked to administer a short vocabulary test and write down the student responses - this may take up to 15 minutes.
3. A brief non-verbal reasoning test - this should take no more than 7 to 10 minutes.

The principal will be asked to provide the same information requested from primary schools.

**Who do I talk to if I have any questions about completing the survey forms or if there are other issues that concern me?**

Due to the random household selection process, it may happen that you are asked to complete survey forms on more than one student. If this should occur, or if for other reasons there are difficulties in setting aside time to complete the forms, we may be able to arrange classroom teacher relief. Your principle can organise this with the research team.



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# WESTERN AUSTRALIAN ABORIGINAL CHILD HEALTH SURVEY



**Information for Teachers**

## **What is the purpose of the Aboriginal Child Health Survey?**

This is a survey of the health and well being of Western Australian Aboriginal children, adolescents and their families. It examines a broad range of community, family, education and health factors, relevant to children's development. The survey aims to describe the health status of young Aboriginal West Australian and to identify key factors which promote their social, emotional, academic and vocational competency.

## **Who will conduct the survey?**

The TVW Telethon Institute for Child Health Research, located at Princess Margaret Hospital will conduct the survey. A steering committee made up of key Aboriginal people has been established to facilitate and oversee the general operation of the survey.

## **What does the survey involve?**

A representation sample of about 1,800 Western Australian Aboriginal households with children from birth through to 17 years of age is being surveyed. These households are selected in a random process and the family's participation is voluntary.

**The Household Interview:** Parents are interviewed in their home by a trained interviewer about aspects of health, family life and use of public and private services. They are asked about each child's birth and development, health and illnesses, emotional and behavioural development. Adolescents are also asked (with assistance from a trained interviewer) to fill in a questionnaire about health, behaviour, family and school life, efforts to seek help for physical or health problems and access barriers to health care.

**The School Survey:** This stage of the survey collects information from the principal regarding the characteristics of the school and community setting, its student population, staffing and pastoral care arrangements. Teachers will be asked questions about individual students' academic and social skills and emotional and health behaviours.

**Consent:** At the time a family is enrolled in the study, permission is sought from parents for the research team to approach the child's school for information on the child's behaviour and skills at school.

**Confidentiality:** The Institute for Child Health Research is bound by national guidelines on the confidentiality of health information and the requirements of the Health Department of W.A. All information collected is maintained with the strictest confidentiality. Names and addresses are separated from the information that is recorded in the computer. No names or identifying information will ever be released.

## **How will the results of the survey be used?**

### **Effective Planning of Services:**

The information provided by the school, the children and their families will help identify: the types and rates of various health problems; unmet health needs; barriers to the treatment of health problems; the changing mental health needs of young people; the prevalence and impact of risk behaviours and the way in which young people are coping with the stresses they face today. This information will allow government and private organisations to plan more effectively, programs and services focused on the needs of Aboriginal children, adolescents and their families.

**Development of Prevention Programs and Policies:** The community pays for the social costs of poor health and it has a stake in promoting health through prevention. The design and evaluation of prevention programs and policies is dependent on a proper understanding of how problems develop and what makes them better or worse. This information is essential for the development of education and health policy to promote competence and the health and social development of young Aboriginal Western Australians.

## **Who developed the interviews and questions used in the survey?**

The interviews and questions were created by a panel of professionals and experts in health, education and welfare in close consultation with various Aboriginal communities and organisations. The planning of the survey has been done in collaboration with the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

## **Why are teachers being asked to help?**

Teachers are uniquely placed to provide information about student behaviour and academic and social development. The information you provide will complement the information obtained from parents, children and adolescents. Teachers are a particularly important source of information about competency and functioning. We also need your help to identify those children and adolescents whose health or behavioural difficulties may only be apparent at school.