



ESPAD 2024 INFORMATION SHEET

What is this study about?

The European School Survey Project for Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) survey takes place every 4 years in some 40 European countries during the same time period and is based on a common set of questions and methodology. This series of studies began in 1995 following an initiative by the Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs (CAN) to connect with researchers in other European countries, including Ireland, with a view to conducting a common survey on the usage of e-cigarettes, tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, gambling, and gaming in the school-going population. There will be questions on each of these topics and students will answer by ticking the appropriate box from a list of options. It is expected that it will take one lesson period to complete the questionnaire (about 30-40 minutes). For the first time in Ireland, the ESPAD survey will be carried out online rather than by pen and paper as was previously done.

Why is this study important?

The most important goal of the ESPAD survey is to monitor trends in alcohol and other drug use among 15-16 year-olds and to compare trends between countries and groups of countries. This information is essential in planning future prevention initiatives. The rationale for school surveys is that students make up the age groups when onset of use is most likely to occur. In addition, school populations are more accessible than other groups.

Why was my child's school selected?

The study aims to gather information from young people born in 2008 (aged between 15 and 16yrs) who are currently in post-primary education. Post-primary schools across the country were randomly selected and invited to participate in the project.

What does participation involve?

If you and your child choose to get involved, your child will be asked to complete an online questionnaire during class time.

Does my child have to participate?

Absolutely not. Participation is 100% voluntary. No one will be included in any stage of the research whose parent/guardians have refused permission to participate or who themselves have refused permission. As we would like to collect information from as many Irish students as possible, we are taking an 'opt out' approach, which is approved nationally and internationally and commonly used in school surveys. A Statement of Non-Participation form is sent separately to each parent/guardian by the school principal. If you do not wish to give permission for your child to participate, please return the completed form to the school principal. Permission can be revoked at any stage of the process.

Confidentiality

All information that is gathered in this study remains 100% confidential. Each student will complete the questionnaire on an individual electronic device that nobody else has access to during the survey. Each student will be given a code for online access and the device's Internet Protocol (IP) address will not be stored or available after completion of the survey. No identifying data will be collected or stored. The anonymous data collected will be stored in a secure portal that can only be accessed by the Principal Investigators. No one will have access to the information gathered in this study aside from the researchers and it will only be used for research purposes. There will be no identifiable information stored in the computer at any stage during this research.

Who is conducting this study?



The Tobacco Free Research Institute Ireland (TFRI) is administering the survey on behalf of the Department of Health and the European School Survey Project for Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD).

ESPAD 2024 PLAIN LANGUAGE STATEMENT

ESPAD stands for European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs. It is an online survey of 16-year-olds carried out during school time. ESPAD takes place every 4 years in about 40 European countries, including Ireland. It collects information about use of alcohol, tobacco, drugs, gambling and gaming. This information is used to compare Ireland with other European countries and to look at changes over time within Ireland. It is also used by Government and health agencies to make policy and to suggest ways to protect young people from harm from these substances and activities. Participation in ESPAD is voluntary at all stages. No individual student or school can be linked to any of the information given in the survey.

CONTACT DETAILS FOR ESPAD 2024

Here are our contact details if you have any questions or would like any further information.

TobaccoFree Research Institute Ireland (TFRI)
FOCAS Institute, TU Dublin, Aungier St, Dublin 2
Email : tfri.tobaccoresearch@tudublin.ie

Tel M: 0868364337; L: 012601966

The Principal Researchers may be contacted also
Professor Luke Clancy, Email: Luke.Clancy@tudublin.ie; lclancy@tri.ie
Professor Joan Hanafin, Email: jhanafin@tri.ie

You will find further information about ESPAD on the TobaccoFree Research Institute Ireland on our Website: www.tri.ie

We'd like to thank you in advance for your participation and support. It is through research that we are able to learn about young people's perception of tobacco and other products and work towards improving the overall health of young people in Ireland through prevention and education. Without parents' time and permission, studies like this would be unable to proceed.