

MDI ADMINISTRATION GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION

WHY THE MIDDLE YEARS MATTER

Experiences in the middle years, ages 10 to 13, have critical and long-lasting effects. They are powerful predictors of adolescent adjustment and future success. During this time, children are experiencing significant cognitive, social and emotional changes that establish their lifelong identity and set the stage for adolescence and adulthood. The overall health and well-being of children in their middle years affects their ability to concentrate and learn, develop and maintain friendships, and make thoughtful decisions. Early adolescent children have an increased awareness of themselves and others. During middle childhood they are developing ideas about how they may or may not "fit in" to their social and academic environments. These ideas have the power to either promote health and academic achievement or lead to negative outcomes such as depression and anxiety in adolescence and adulthood. Although middle childhood is a time of risk, it is also a time of opportunity. There is mounting evidence to suggest that positive relationships with adults and peers during this critical time act to increase a child's resiliency and success.

ABOUT THE MIDDLE YEARS DEVELOPMENT INSTRUMENT

The Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI) is a self-report questionnaire that asks children in Grades 4 to 8 about their thoughts, feelings and experiences in school and in the community. The MDI is not an assessment for individual children. Instead, it is a unique and comprehensive population-based measure that helps us gain a deeper understanding of children's health and well-being during middle childhood. Researchers at the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP) are using results from the MDI to understand the factors that promote children's social-emotional health and well-being. In addition, the MDI is being used across sectors and to support collaboration and inform policy and practice.

The MDI uses a strengths-based approach to assess five areas of development that are strongly linked to children's well-being, health and academic achievement. It focuses on highlighting the protective factors and assets that are known to support and optimize development in middle childhood. These areas are: *Social and Emotional Development, Physical Health and Well-Being, Connectedness, Use of Out-of-School Time and School Experiences*. Each of these dimensions is made up of several measures and each measure is made up of one or more questions.



WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN THE MDI PROJECT?

Your preparation and investment during survey administration are critical to ensuring that the information we collect about your students is valid and reliable. When administering the MDI with your students we ask that you pay careful attention to all necessary steps in the process.

IMPORTANT DATES

Mid-December (2 weeks prior to survey administration, excluding winter break)	Parent/Guardian Informed Passive Consent Letters sent home with students
January 12-March 12, 2027	Survey Administration

CONTACT INFORMATION

School / School District Contact

MDI Team

Kim Mascarenas
Project Lead
604-822-1310

Amanda Chao
Project Lead
604-822-3361

mdi@help.ubc.ca
1-888-908-4050



CHECKLIST

GENERAL PREPARATION BEFORE ADMINISTERING THE MDI (PAGES 7 - 13)

- ❑ Familiarize yourself with the Survey Administration Guide and the Instructional Survey.
- ❑ Confirm the date Parent/Guardian Informed Passive Consent Letters were sent home (must be at least 2 weeks before survey administration).
- ❑ Book the computer lab and/or set of mobile computers (tablets) for 45-60 minutes.
- ❑ Prepare an activity related to regular classroom activity for students that are not participating. The MDI is **voluntary** and no incentive can be provided for participation.
- ❑ Tell your students about the MDI a week before administering the survey. (see script on p.13)
- ❑ Inform the School Counsellor of the administration date, in case anything arises for a student and he/she wishes to talk further.
- ❑ If possible, ask a colleague to assist you day of, it is helpful to have a second adult in the classroom when administering the survey.
- ❑ Log in to the e-MDI website mdi.ubc.ca to
  - review your class list and add or remove students;
  - preview the survey; and
  - print student passwords.

tip:

Refer to The Guide section of this document for step-by-step instructions and images of the e-MDI website.

ON THE DAY OF SURVEY ADMINISTRATION (PAGES 14–16)

- ❑ Log in to the e-MDI website mdi.ubc.ca.
- ❑ Prepare your computer lab or class set of laptops/tablets. Open browser to mdi.ubc.ca (Firefox, Chrome and Safari are preferred browsers).
- ❑ Plan to take about 15 minutes to get students logged on, this should not be included in the time to complete the survey.
- ❑ The survey is open and can be accessed weekdays during school hours. Students can use their passwords to login and complete the survey.
- ❑ Distribute student passwords and instruct students to visit mdi.ubc.ca and log in.
- ❑ Make headphones available for voiceover users.
- ❑ Provide work for students who are not participating.

IMPORTANT!

- ❑ Read the **Student Assent Script** out loud to make sure everyone understands that

  1. it is NOT a test;
  2. students can skip questions/stop/withdraw at any time; and
  3. the survey is confidential.

- ❑ Read the Instructions and Demographics questions and sample questions aloud from the Instructional Survey (page 3) or from "Preview Survey."
- ❑ Follow along with the survey online through the "Preview Survey" button (optional) or use the Instructional Survey.
- ❑ Collect passwords after the session. You can redistribute the passwords again if the survey is administered over two sessions.

AFTER SURVEY ADMINISTRATION (PAGE 17)

- ❑ Check your school / school district email to follow up with students who requested assistance.
- ❑ Complete the survey administrator feedback form (optional) bit.ly/mdi2026-27

For assistance, contact the MDI Team
Human Early Learning Partnership
mdi@help.ubc.ca
604-822-1310
1-888-908-4050



THE GUIDE

The MDI Administration Guide is designed to assist you as you complete the survey administration process. It should be used alongside the Instructional Survey. For further information or assistance please visit:
www.discovermdi.ca/mdi-administration

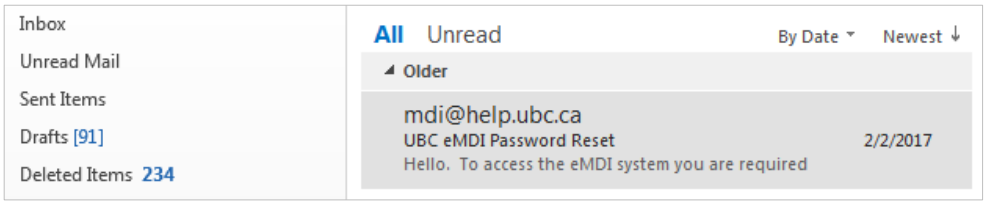
GENERAL PREPARATION BEFORE ADMINISTERING THE MDI

STEP 1 CHECK YOUR SCHOOL / SCHOOL DISTRICT EMAIL

You will receive an email from HELP MDI with a link that you can follow to create your own password and log on to the e-MDI. Your username will be your school / school district email address.

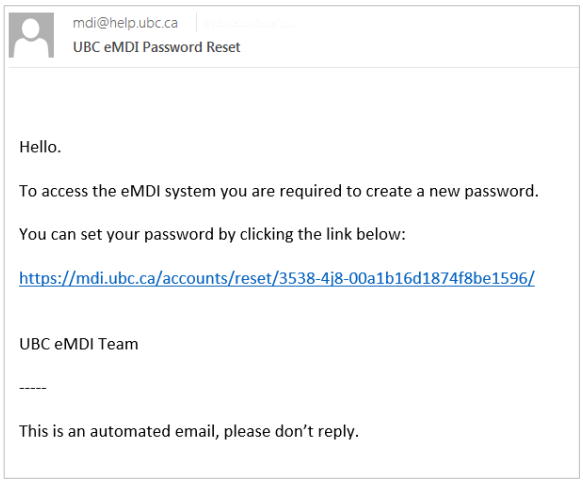
tip:

If your school / school district email address isn't working, check if you have any "alias" email addresses through the school / school district that may work instead (e.g., t.teacher@sd99.bc.ca and ted.teacher@sd99.bc.ca)



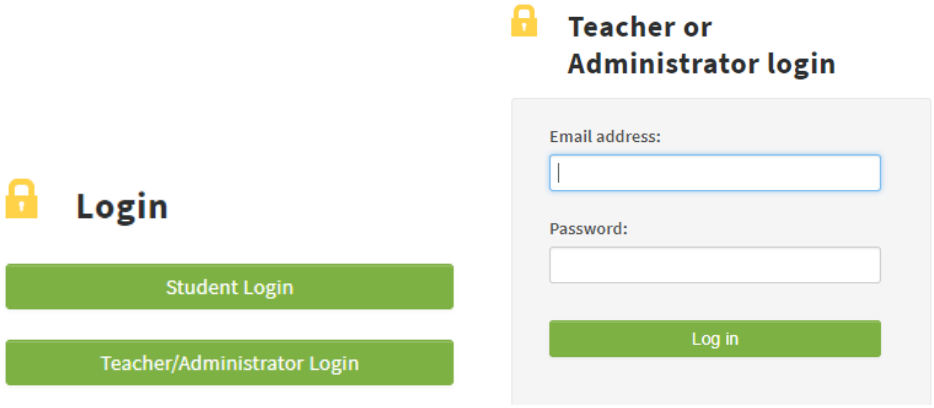
troubleshooting:

Didn't receive an email with a link to create your password? Contact the MDI Coordinator at mdi@help.ubc.ca



STEP 2 LOGIN TO THE E-MDI

Visit mdi.ubc.ca and click the Teacher/Administrator Login button. Please log in using your school / school district email address as your username and the password that you created in Step 1.



troubleshooting:

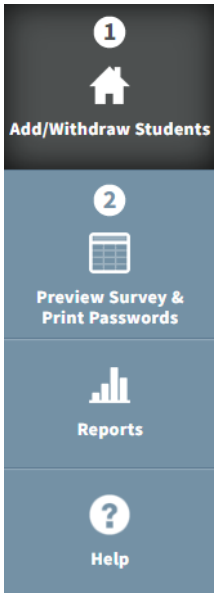
Forgot your password? Click the "forgotten your password" link to send yourself an email with a link to create a new password.

STEP 3 REVIEW YOUR CLASS LIST

Review your class list and add any students who are missing from the list but have been part of your class for more than 30 days (and had a parent/guardian informed passive consent information letter sent home). Remove any students who are not in your class or who have withdrawn from the study. Please track parent withdrawal forms to identify those students who have withdrawn.

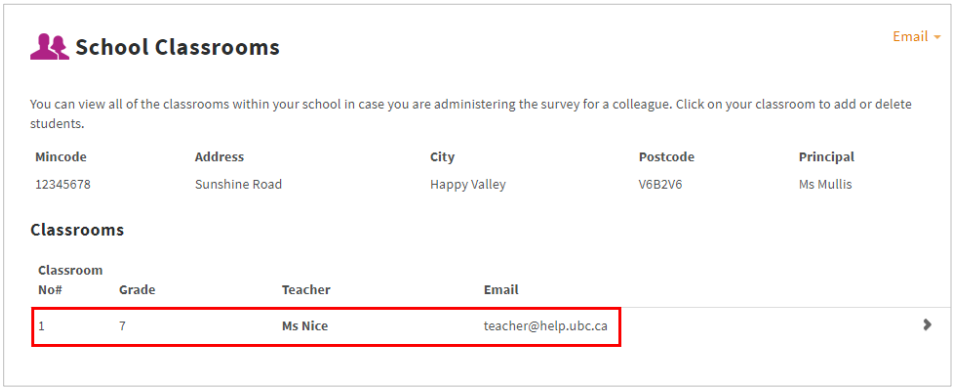
Select the "Add/Withdraw Students" button on the sidebar to

- review your class list;
- add students to your class list; and/or
- withdraw students from your class list

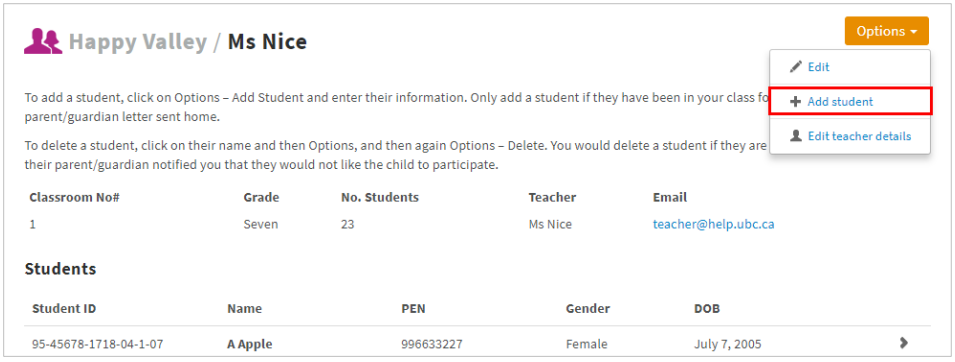


To add a student….

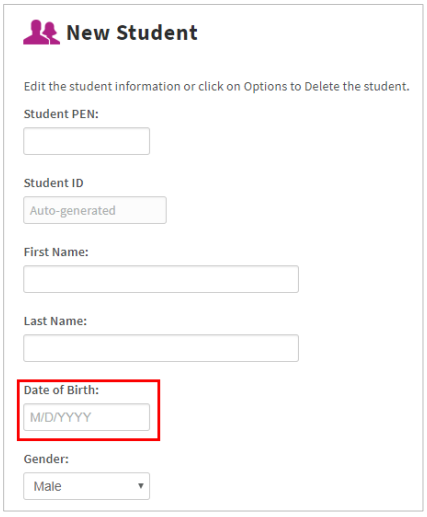
1. Select your Classroom.



2. Select "Options" → "Add Student"



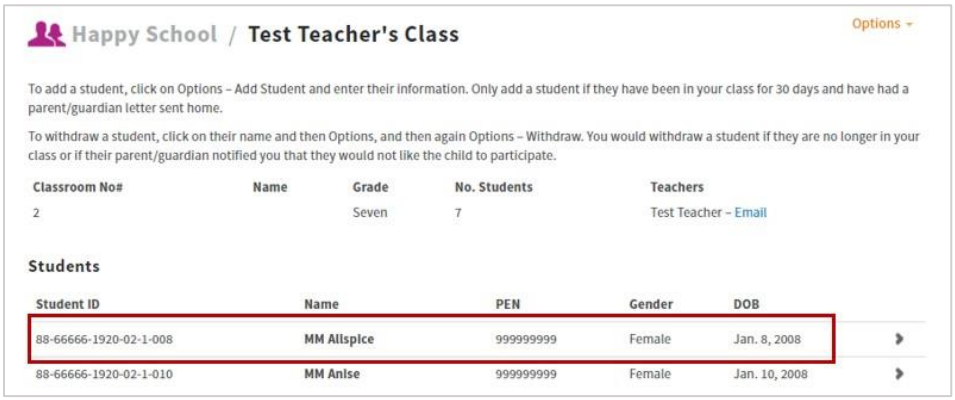
3. Add student's PEN number, name, birth date, gender and home postal code. Complete Aboriginal Status, Special Needs, English Language Learner, English as a Second Dialect, and French Immersion fields, if known.



tip:
Enter birthdate as MM/DD/YYYY

To withdraw/remove a student…

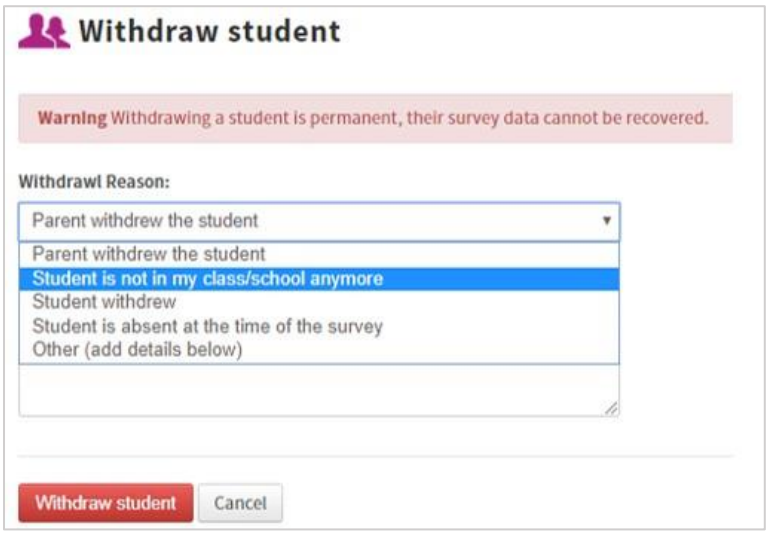
1. Select the student you would like to withdraw.



2. Select "Options" → "Withdraw"



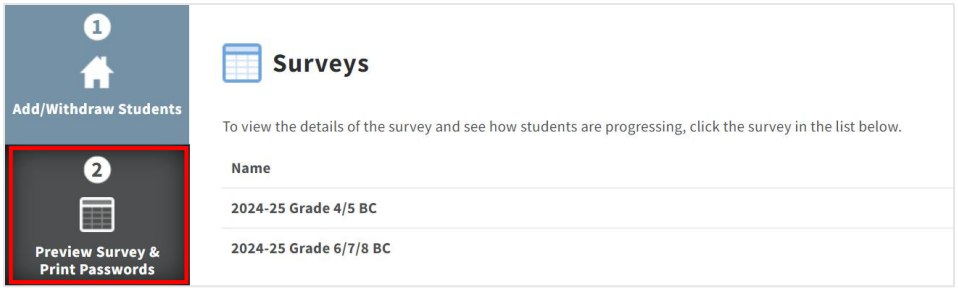
3. Select the reason for withdrawal from the drop down menu.



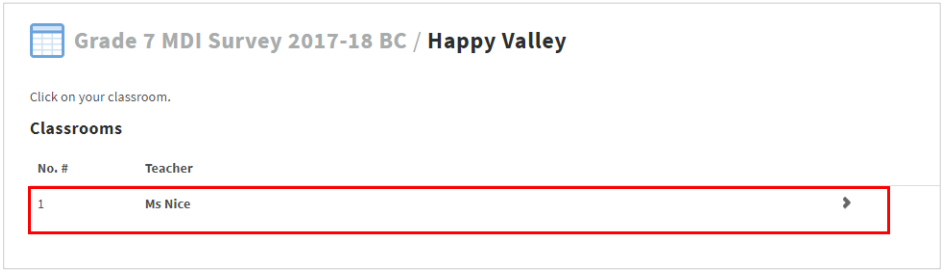
STEP 4 PRINT PASSWORDS

You can print off the page with your student usernames and passwords ahead of time. Cut the page into cards to distribute to students when you are ready to start the MDI survey. If you are administering the survey over more than one session, please collect the student passwords to redistribute at the next session.

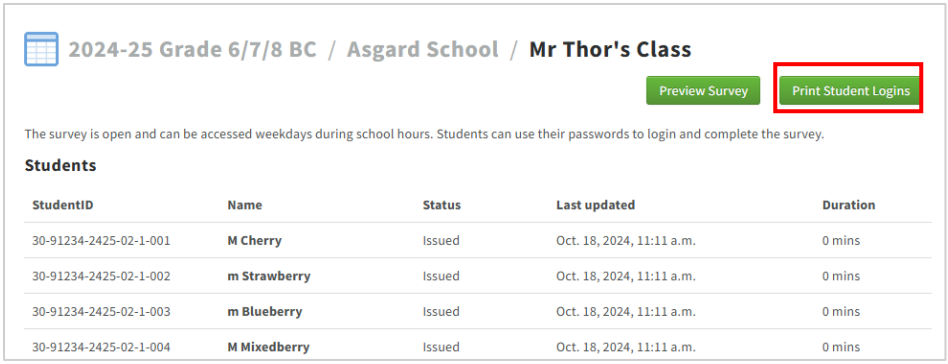
1. Select “Preview Survey & Print Passwords” on the side bar. Choose your grade.



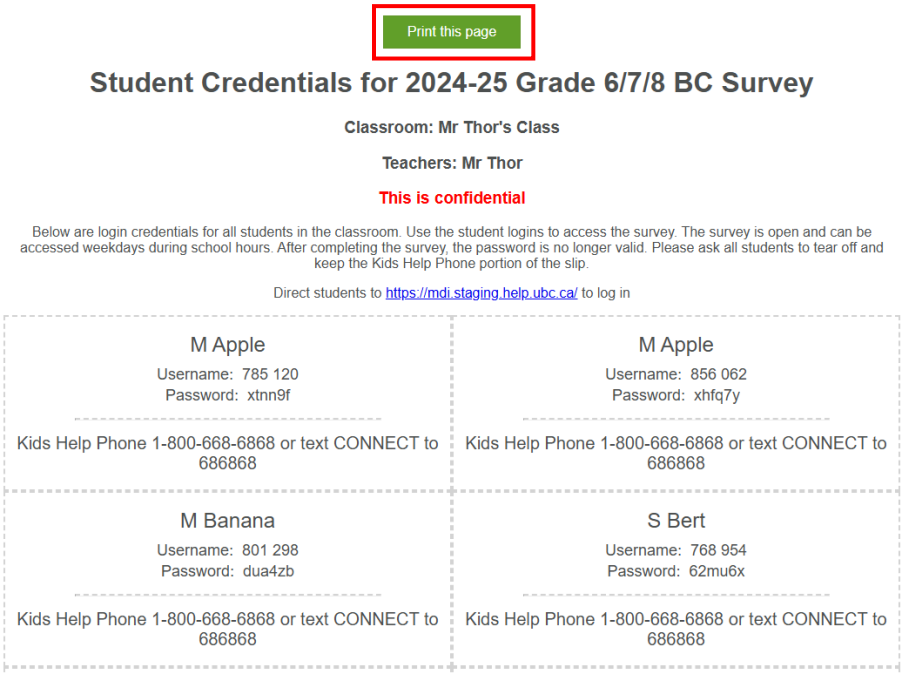
2. Select your classroom.



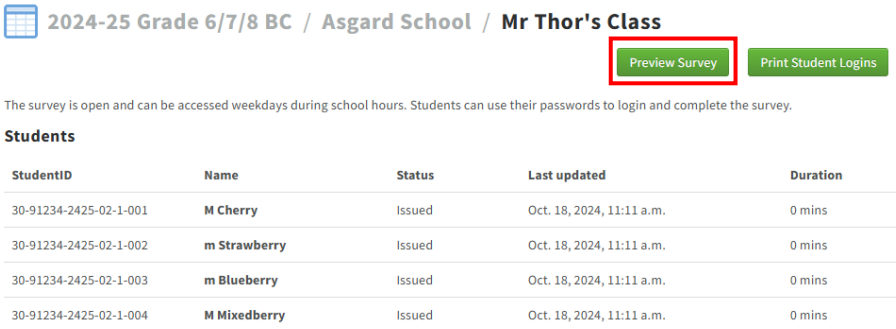
3. Select “Print Student Logins.”



4. Select “Print this page” and cut the paper into cards to hand out to your students.



5. To preview the MDI survey online click the “Preview Survey” button (opens in a new window).



STEP 5 ASK A COLLEAGUE TO JOIN YOU

Ask a colleague to assist you day of. We have heard from teachers that it is helpful, if possible, to have a second adult in the classroom when administering the survey.

STEP 6 TELL YOUR STUDENTS ABOUT THE MDI

A week before the survey, introduce the MDI survey to your students with the following script: “To learn about children your age, our school has partnered with researchers at the University of British Columbia to invite students to take part in completing a questionnaire called the Middle Years Development Instrument (MDI). The MDI asks questions about how you think and feel about things in your life and about what you like to do. The MDI is voluntary. It is not a test, it is your choice to fill out the survey and all of your answers are confidential (private)”.

You could use this opportunity to talk to your students about the types of questions/topics on the MDI.

ON THE DAY OF SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

STEP 1 PREPARE THE COMPUTER LAB OR CLASSROOM

Prepare the computer lab or classroom for test conditions, separating students if possible.

The MDI survey can be accessed weekdays during school hours. Students can use their passwords to login and complete the survey. It works well on desktop computers, iPads or tablets. The best web browsers are up to date versions of Firefox, Safari and Chrome. Log in to the computers and open a web browser to the e-MDI website: mdi.ubc.ca.

An optional voiceover function is built into the survey. If students have headphones they can hear the questions read aloud by clicking on the speaker icon beside each question.

Prepare an activity related to regular classroom activity for students that are not participating. The MDI is **voluntary** and no incentive can be provided for participation.

STEP 2 DISTRIBUTE THE STUDENT PASSWORDS

If you have not already done so, cut the student passwords sheet into cards to distribute to the individual students. Ask students to enter their username and password and wait at the "Welcome Page."

Please note: Kids Help Phone contact detail is included on each student's log in information card.

STEP 3 ADMINISTER THE SURVEY

Refer to the Instructional Survey while administering the survey.

IMPORTANT!

Begin by **reading the Welcome Page and Student Assent Script out loud** to make sure that all students understand what is being asked of them. Advise students that they are able to skip questions or stop the survey at any time. To stop, they can log out or close the survey window. To withdraw their participation, they can click the "withdraw" button on any page and their answers will not be counted.

Next, begin the survey by reading **aloud** the questions of **the demographics section**: "Please tell us a bit about yourself" and the "Instructions" section, answering the sample questions together. After that, the students can read the questions on their own and request assistance as needed. If your students have headphones, they can click on the speaker icon to hear questions read aloud.

We have included a list of **INDIGENOUS NATIONS & LANGUAGES IN CANADA** at the end of the Instructional Surveys to aid you in assisting your students in responding to Questions 5-7 if your students identify as First Nations, Inuit or Métis.

You can move through the survey at the same time as your students by logging in to mdi.ubc.ca with your teacher/administrator password and clicking "Preview Survey and Print Passwords" on the left side bar. Select your grade and your classroom and click the green "Preview Survey" button.

tip:

While administering the survey, please remain neutral. If a student asks a question about any particular item that is confusing, please do not provide your own interpretation to the student, rather, re-read the question, directing it to the individual student (i.e., "What would you say to me if I said – *READ QUESTION* – ?").

STEP 4 MONITOR THE CLASSROOM

To ensure privacy and confidentiality, and to help students feel that their answers will be kept private, we ask that you do not look at students' responses while they complete the survey. Also, please discourage your students from looking at each other's responses. We encourage you to answer any questions students may have, but in order to ensure that we have the students' own responses, we ask that you not help children by prompting their responses.

STEP 5 ADMINISTERING THE SURVEY OVER MORE THAN ONE SESSION

To administer the survey over more than one session, you can use the same set of student passwords.

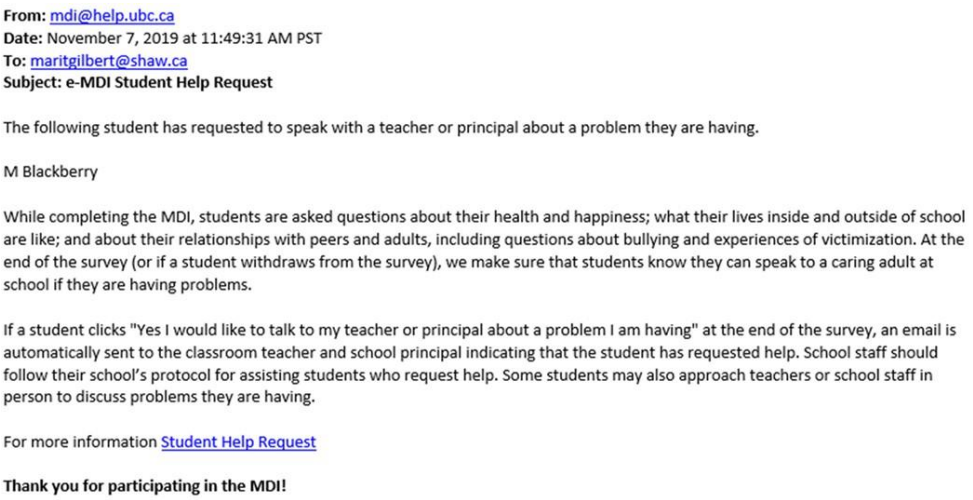
Please collect the student passwords to redistribute at the next session. If you need to print out a new sheet of passwords, follow the steps on pages 11-12. When the students log in again, the survey will be open to where they left off. After completing the survey, the password is no longer valid.

AFTER SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

STEP 1 FOLLOW-UP WITH STUDENT REQUESTS FOR HELP

IMPORTANT!

Check your school / school district email to see if any students requested help after finishing the MDI survey.



From: mdi@help.ubc.ca
Date: November 7, 2019 at 11:49:31 AM PST
To: maritgilbert@shaw.ca
Subject: e-MDI Student Help Request

The following student has requested to speak with a teacher or principal about a problem they are having.

M Blackberry

While completing the MDI, students are asked questions about their health and happiness; what their lives inside and outside of school are like; and about their relationships with peers and adults, including questions about bullying and experiences of victimization. At the end of the survey (or if a student withdraws from the survey), we make sure that students know they can speak to a caring adult at school if they are having problems.

If a student clicks "Yes I would like to talk to my teacher or principal about a problem I am having" at the end of the survey, an email is automatically sent to the classroom teacher and school principal indicating that the student has requested help. School staff should follow their school's protocol for assisting students who request help. Some students may also approach teachers or school staff in person to discuss problems they are having.

For more information Student Help Request

Thank you for participating in the MDI!

If any students have requested help with a problem, please follow your school's protocol for assisting students. We suggest communicating with the school counsellor(s) to utilize available school-based resources to address students' needs.

STEP 2 COMPLETE THE SURVEY ADMINISTRATOR FEEDBACK FORM

How did the MDI go? We'd love to hear from you! Please take the time to complete the Survey Administrator Feedback Form after administering the MDI survey to your students. The information gathered will help us to improve the survey and administration process. The form is optional.

bit.ly/mdi2026-27

THANK YOU

We would like to thank you for your time, interest and participation. Without you this project is not possible. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or need any assistance.



NOW WHAT?

MDI REPORTS

MDI results are summarized into maps and reports that communities, schools, school districts and governments can use to inform their work. Learning how children are currently faring across neighbourhoods and school districts means that supports and services can be tailored to families and children where and when they are needed.

MDI School Reports include information and data that are specific to your school and are released in April. Please watch for these reports. MDI School District Reports and updates to the MDI Data Dashboard are released in the spring. Watch HELP's blog, Twitter and Facebook for information about release dates for your district. In the meantime, please visit the MDI School District & Community Reports page on the HELP website to view the historical reports of participating districts.

DISCOVER MDI: A FIELD GUIDE

Discover MDI – the Field Guide for the Middle Years Development instrument (MDI) – provides an abundance of tools, practical strategies, and resources that assist in understanding and supporting children's well-being and positive development in the middle years. Discover MDI guides you on your journey with the

MDI—from understanding the MDI and its importance in middle childhood, to collecting, exploring, and sharing MDI data, to using MDI data to catalyze action to improve the mental health, well-being, and resilience of children in the middle years.

