Importance of Consent and Confidentiality

It is vital for everyone involved in the survey administration process to be aware that parents and/or students have the right to choose not to participate (informed consent). This right might be violated if:

- Parents do not receive the parental consent letters in time to opt out their child.
- Students are not clearly informed that their participation is voluntary.

Documentation of parental opt-outs is very important. Teachers must be informed if a student’s parent has opted them out of the survey.

Teachers SHOULD NOT try to convince students to take the survey. This is a violation of their informed consent and could threaten the validity of the data.

Student anonymity is extremely important. If students feel that someone may see their answers, they are less likely to answer honestly. Please follow these steps to make sure student anonymity is protected:

- Ask teachers not to ‘wander’ around the classroom during administration.
- Have students put their own surveys into the return envelope.
- Limit clarification and explanation of questions to pronunciation and to the standard answers given, and reassure students that they can leave any questions they don’t understand blank.
- Be aware that the surveys do not contain skip patterns. This helps protect student confidentiality in that it should take each student approximately the same amount of time to complete the survey, regardless of how they answer the questions.