



Relationships and Sex Education Study - Information for Parents/Carers

We are researchers from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM). We are working with your child's school to evaluate relationships and sex education in secondary schools in England.

As part of this, we will be inviting all year-8 students at your child's school to fill in a questionnaire. The data we collect will contribute to improving relationships and sex education for young people. If your child decides to take part, they will complete the questionnaire privately in a classroom or hall at school. The questionnaire should take about 45 minutes to complete. A trained researcher will be available to explain and answer any questions your child has about the questionnaire.

The questionnaire includes questions about participants': backgrounds; experiences of school; views on sex education; knowledge about sexual health; experiences of sexual harassment at school; sense of health and wellbeing; communicating with others about personal issues; and whether participants have had sexual intercourse. All students who are invited to participate will receive information about sources of advice and support both within and outside their school, should they want to speak to someone about relationships, sex or any issue they or someone they know are going through.

What your child tells us in the questionnaire will be treated as confidential and anonymous. Only approved researchers and authorities who check that the study is being carried out properly will be allowed to look at the information. All data will be stored in accordance with data protection laws, including the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The answers your child provides will be stored securely in our offices and uploaded on to a computer that only the research team can access. Students' names will not appear either on the questionnaire or in the database storing student answers to the questionnaire. These will instead have an individual identity code for each student. We will keep a list of student names and identity codes, but this list will be stored securely on a computer completely separately to student questionnaire answers. No single researcher will have access to both sets of data.

When we analyse the answers to the questionnaire and write reports based on the data we will look at the results from lots of participants together not individual answers, so no one will be able to identify students' personal responses. We are required to keep all data for 20 years, and then it will be destroyed. We may share data with other researchers but this will not include names or other information which could identify participants.

However, if a child reports that they have had sex before the age of 13 years or they write on the questionnaire that they have experienced any form of abuse, we will need to take action. In such instances a member of the research team would request access to the file containing student names and codes so that they can match the questionnaire to the student name. A member of the research team would then pass this information on to the school's safeguarding lead so that young person can be protected.



Your child will only fill in the questionnaire if they agree to. Your child will receive written and verbal information about the questionnaire and be able to ask questions before they decide whether or not to take part. If they choose to take part, they may stop taking part at any time or choose not to answer particular questions. There will be no negative consequences for your child not taking part.

If you are happy for your child to complete the questionnaire, you do NOT need to do anything.

If you are not happy for your child to take part, if you would like to ask any questions about this research before it takes place or if you would like to be sent a copy of the questionnaire, please contact the research team no later than **Friday 11th March** by calling or emailing Dr. Ruth Ponsford (telephone: 0207 958 8101 or email: ruth.ponsford@lshtm.ac.uk). Alternatively, you can tell the school directly that you do not want your child to participate by contacting Alex Mauger (telephone 01509 263 444). If you tell the study team or school that you do not want your child to participate, your child will not be asked to fill in a questionnaire on the day.

If you have any concerns or complaints about this research, please contact the research team (contact details above). If you would prefer to speak with someone outside of the research team regarding your concern or complaint, please contact Alex Mauger who is leading on the project for your child's school (telephone 01509 263 444).

You may also find the below information about organisations that provide help and advice for children, young people and parents useful.

- **NSPCC Childline** are also available on **0800 1111** 24 hours a day, every day of the year if you are concerned for any reason about a child you know.
- **Brook**: Provide help and advice about relationships and sex for under 25s: www.brook.org.uk.
- **Switchboard LGBT+ Helpline**: Provides information, support and referral services for lesbians, gay men and bisexual and trans people, and anyone considering issues around their sexuality or gender identity. Call 0300 330 0630 or visit <http://switchboard.lgbt/help/>
- **Rape Crisis**: Provides information on nearest services for people who have experienced sexual violence. Call 0808 802 9999 or visit their website www.rapecrisis.org.uk
- **Mind**: Offers advice and support for anyone experiencing a mental health problem. Call 0300 123 3393 or visit www.mind.org.uk
- **The Samaritans**: Someone to talk to, available 24 hours a day for confidential, non-judgmental support. Call 116 123 or visit www.samaritans.org

Many thanks for your time,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Bonell', written in a cursive style.

Professor Chris Bonell
London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine