**Aston Literacy Project: Reading and Vocabulary**

You are invited to take part in a research project. Two people from Aston University (called researchers) will come to your school and will work with Year 7 children who want to take part. We will then invite you to take part again in the summer term, and next autumn when you are in Year 8. This sheet is to help you decide if you want to take part. Please take time to read this. You can talk about it to others if you want. When we come to your school, you can ask us any questions before you decide. Thank you for your time.

Why are you doing this project?

We want to find out how reading helps you learn new words. We might find that being good at reading helps you learn words, even if you don’t read very often in your spare time. Or we might find that spending a lot of time reading helps you learn words, even if you find reading difficult.

Why have I been chosen?

You have been chosen to take part because you have taken part in the Aston Literacy Project before and your parents have given their permission for you to take part again. We came to your school before to do reading activities with children in your year group. We also checked how many words children knew when they first started school (their vocabulary). We want to work with you again so we can see how your reading has improved, and see how many new words you know now.

Do I have to take part?

This isn’t part of your school work and it is up to you whether you take part. You do not have to take part if you don’t want to and you can stop at any time.

What will happen to me if I take part?

If you want to take part, we will ask you to do some reading and vocabulary activities. These will take 1 hour in total. For some activities, we will ask you to read words out loud. For other activities you will look at a computer screen and wear headphones. In the activities you will be asked to do these things: read out loud; read silently then answer questions about what you have read; match words to pictures; tell us which books you have seen before; tell us about how many books you have at home, how much time you spend reading and what you think about reading. If your parents give their permission, we will also invite you to do a reading diary- this means we will ask you 5 questions a day for 7 days, asking about what you have read and for how long.

Are there any downsides to taking part?

Almost all children enjoy doing our activities. But some children get worried when they are asked to read hard words, or when they hear words that they don’t know. To help you feel better, we start with easier words and then get to the hard words later. We need to use hard words because we want to find out what is the hardest word you know. If you still feel worried or upset when doing the activities, you can stop at any time.

Some children worry about missing important lessons, or break time. We will only ask you to do the activities when your teacher says this is OK and we will stop before break time.

Some children worry that others will find out how well they did. We put all your scores onto a spreadsheet on a computer. To stop other people finding out how well you do, we don’t put your name next to your scores. Instead, we give you a number, and put this number next to your scores. We will keep your number a secret, and we won’t tell anyone at your school what your number is. Only the people at Aston University who are doing the project will know what your number is. At the end of the study, we will write reports saying what we found and we will show these reports to anyone who wants to see them. Your name will not be on any of these reports.

What are the upsides to taking part?

If you take part, you will help us work out how children learn new words. We might find that being good at reading helps you learn words, even if you don’t read very much in your spare time. If so, we will tell your teachers to help children improve their reading. Or we might find that spending a lot of time reading helps children learn words, even if they find reading difficult. If so, we will tell your teachers to help all children to spend lots of time reading at school and at home.

We will tell your teacher about how well your whole class did on our reading and vocabulary activities. We won’t show the score for any child on their own, but we will show how everyone did as a whole class. This will help your teacher see how well your class is doing on reading and vocabulary.

If you take part, we will give you a sticker chart, and a sticker when you finish each activity.

What happens when you have finished?

When we have finished working with all children, we will add everyone’s new scores to a spreadsheet that has old scores from earlier years too. We will then come back to your school in the summer term and again when you are in Year 8 and invite you to take part again. We will then look at the scores from all children together and try to work out how children learn new words. When we have done that, we will give your teacher a report about what we found. We will also give them a letter for you, telling you about what we found.

What if I want to stop?

If you want to stop doing the activities, then tell the researcher straight away and they will stop. If you are upset or worried about something, then tell the researcher straight away and they will go and get your teacher to help.

Has anyone checked it is OK to do the project?

This project has been checked by an *Ethics Committee* (a different group of people from Aston University). They have agreed this project is OK and it is safe to go ahead.

What if I have questions?

If you have a question you can ask one of the researchers who is working in your school, or you can ask your teacher and they will ask us for you. If you think of a question when you get home, ask your parent or carer to phone or email the person who is leading the project, **Dr. Laura Shapiro: L.R.Shapiro@aston.ac.uk, 0121 204 4052**.

What if something goes wrong?

If you are worried about anything that happened with this research project, tell your teacher, parent or carer and they can contact *the Director of Governance for the Life and Health Sciences Ethics Committee, Professor John Walter, on j.g.walter@aston.ac.uk or telephone 0121 204 4869.*