

#So.Me: Focus Groups Parent and Carers information sheet

Your child is being invited to take part in a research study.

Before you decide whether they can take part, it is important for you to understand why the research is happening and what it will involve. Please read the information below carefully. If anything is unclear or you would like more information, please contact us (see 'further information' section below).

Thank you for taking the time to read this. If after reading this you are happy for your child to take part, then complete and submit the consent form that follows this information.

Following the consent form you will also be asked to share some demographic information about your child. Your child will also be asked so questions about themselves, if they participate in the research (see 'what information will we collect about your child' section below).

Please ensure your child has read the young people's information (that follows this information) and is happy to participate.



About the research

Who will conduct the research?

Dr Margarita Panayiotou, Manchester Institute of Education, The University of Manchester, is leading the study. Dr Jo Hickman Dunne and Dr Louise Black will be facilitating the focus groups, alongside one of the three Young Co-Researchers working on the study – Molly, Lily and Pratyasha.

What is the purpose of the research?

Your child's school is involved in a project, #So.Me, to better understand young people's experiences of using social media.

The increased use of social media amongst young people has led to growing concerns about its impact on young people's mental health, wellbeing and levels of loneliness. We are therefore visiting some schools in Greater Manchester to speak to young people about how they use social media, the reasons they use it, and what aspects they consider could be problematic, risky or beneficial. This study is one part of the #So.Me project. You can find out more about it at www.so-me-study.org.

Who is being asked to take part?

We are writing to you because your child's school has signed up for us to visit and find out more about how young people use social media. The school has suggested that your child might be interested in speaking to us, as part of a group discussion (a 'focus group') with some other young people in their year group. We will visit your child's school to conduct this focus group in June or July 2023. The exact date will be confirmed by your child's school.

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Check

Members of the research team have undergone a Disclosure and Barring Service check at the Enhanced Disclosure level. This means that they have permission to work with and do research with children.

Will the research be published?

We will publish our findings in journals, blogs, conference presentations, doctoral student theses, and summary reports on websites and social media. Neither your child's name or school name will be used in any of the reports we write. We may use quotes from group discussions in these reports but we will only use quotes that make it very unlikely that your child will be identified.

Anonymising published data

We will write down the things said in our group discussions with young people, including any things that young people write down (on post-it notes), to create a document called a 'transcript'. We will remove all direct identifying information from the transcripts (such as the name of your child, their school and specific places) and give your child a pseudonym (an alternative name). This is known as pseudonymising the data. We will also remove any obvious 'indirect identifiers' (e.g. pieces of information that could be linked to your child or their school). We do this in order to make sure your child and their peers cannot be easily identified in the transcript by researchers who will access the data. In line with data protection definitions, it will not be possible for us to guarantee that the transcript is completely anonymised. This is because we cannot know all the contextual information that may identify a young person to people who may know them (e.g. if you as a parent had access to the data you may be able to identify your child from described memories or preferences). However, we stress that the risk of identification is extremely low as data will be stored in a such a way that only researchers can access it.

Data Archiving

The transcripts will be archived in UK Data Service. A data archive is a secure place where different types of materials are stored and looked after. The UK Data Service houses several thousand datasets and makes this material available for use in research and learning. Data Archives are very good places to keep data safe and secure, providing lasting access to data, and ensuring that the voices of young people are heard. This means that other researchers can also draw on these transcripts to better understand how adolescents engage with social media and answer their own questions about these experiences. Because we know that we cannot guarantee full anonymisation of the transcripts, they will be archived as 'safeguarded' data. This means people will require special permission to access them. Therefore, the risk of someone accessing the transcripts who may be able to identify your child is very low.

The transcripts will be archived in line with the publication of the results at the end of the study. We anticipate this to be by early Spring 2024.

What would my child's involvement be?

We will be running a focus group in your child's school with 6-8 students from the same year group. In this focus group discussion we will ask young people about how they use and interact with social media, including their favoured platforms and motivations for use. We will also ask their views on which aspects of social media they think can be problematic, potentially risky, or beneficial.

We will conduct the focus group at a time that is convenient for students and staff, during the school day. The focus group will last no longer than 1 hour and will take place in a private space, e.g. an empty classroom.

The focus groups will be audio-recorded, using a safe and encrypted Dictaphone, so that we are able to capture what everybody said in their own words. These recordings are essential to the study, and will be deleted at the end of the study. If your child feels uncomfortable with the recording process, they do not have to take part, and they will be free to stop at any time.

Your child will also be provided with post-it notes in case they want to write down any additional thoughts related to the conversations we have. This is to ensure that everyone's voice is heard. These notes will be safely stored and will not be linked to your child (they will be anonymous).

There is little risk attached to taking part. Sometimes, in rare circumstances a young person may feel upset when talking about their experiences of using social media. If this happens, we will pause the discussion and provide support as needed. The researchers and young person will then decide together whether it is appropriate to continue, and we will also provide guidance on further sources of support, including family, school, and agencies such as Childline to all those taking part.

Will I or my child be compensated (e.g., receive money or vouchers) for taking part?

If your child participates in this study, they will be compensated with a £15 voucher. We will also share a report with your child's school (in early 2024) that explains what we learnt through talking to your child and their peers from all the schools we visit. We will ask for this to be shared with you and your child to share the importance and contribution of their participation. You will also be able to access this report on the project's website www.so-me-study.org Your child's name or school will not be used in this report.

What happens if I do not want my child to take part or if I change my mind?

It is up to you to decide if you want your child to take part or not. If you decide that you do not want your child to take part, you do not need to do anything further. If you decide you are happy for them to take part, please complete the consent form that follows this information. We will also ask you to answer four questions about your child (please see '*What information will we collect about your child?*' section below).

It will not be possible to remove your child's data from the project once the focus group discussion has taken place, because their contributions will then form part of a wider dataset and removing it would affect the data of other young people. This does not affect your child's data protection rights, and your child will be able to leave the focus group at any time, without giving a reason, and without detriment to themselves.

Data protection and confidentiality

What information will we collect about your child?

For your child to participate in the focus group we need to collect information that could identify them, called "personal identifiable information". This includes the audio recording of our conversation as well as some information about them, such as their gender. Having this information means we can better understand the different voices included in the study, which is important for thinking about how our research is reflective of young people across the UK. Specifically, we will ask your child to share the following information with us:

- Age in years
- Gender
- Sexual identity
- Ethnicity

We will ask you share the following information about your child:

- Name
- Eligibility for free school meals
- Disability status
- English as an additional language status

Under what legal basis are you collecting this information?

We are collecting and storing personal identifiable information in accordance with UK data protection law. These state that we must have a legal basis (specific reason) for collecting your data. For this study, the specific reason is that it is “a public interest task” and “a process necessary for research purposes”.

What are my child’s rights in relation to the information you will collect?

Your child has several rights under data protection law regarding your personal information. For example, your child can request a copy of the information we hold about them. If you or your child would like to know more about these different rights or the way we use your child’s personal information to ensure we follow the law, please consult our Privacy Notice for Research Participants (<http://documents.manchester.ac.uk/display.aspx?DocID=37095>).

Will my child’s participation in the survey be confidential? Will their personal identifiable information be protected?

In accordance with data protection law, The University of Manchester is the Data Controller for this project. This means that we are responsible for making sure your personal information is kept secure, confidential, and used only in the way you have been told it will be used. All researchers are trained in how to use data responsibly, and your data will be looked after in the following ways:

- All information will be treated strictly confidentially. Only named members of the research team will access the identifiable data.*
- The recordings will be used to create transcripts, which will be completed by a University of Manchester approved supplier. This supplier will only receive audio recordings, with no data on names or demographic information, and these recordings will be transferred and handled in line with data protection requirements (i.e. shared in an encrypted format).
- The data will be pseudonymised once transcribed, shortly after recording, and any personal identifiable information will be removed from the final transcription.
- The post-it notes will be anonymous, and after securely scanned, the paper copies will be securely shredded at the University of Manchester.
- All data (audio data, transcripts, scanned post-it notes) will be stored on university encrypted, password-protected drives to ensure secure storage, to which only names members of the research team can access.
- Audio data will be deleted upon completion of data analysis (January 2024). Individual-level demographic data will be stored for 11-20 years, consistent with the Funder’s and University of Manchester’s Records Retention Schedule, after which time it will be destroyed. All data will be processed in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) law.
- If you agree for your child to take part in this study and with your permission, the transcript from the focus group your child participated in will be shared with other researchers through the UK Data Service. This is to support additional research, in accordance with The University of Manchester’s Research Privacy Notice (see above link). As already noted, the data will be pseudonymised and indirect identifiers will be removed. Whilst we cannot guarantee that your child will not be able to be identified through the transcript, the risk of your child being identified very low as the transcripts will be published with restricted access to researchers only.

*Please also note that individuals from The University of Manchester or other authorities may need to look at the data collected for this study to make sure the project is being carried out as planned. This

may involve looking at identifiable data. All individuals involved in monitoring the study will have a strict duty of confidentiality to you/your child as a participant.

Potential disclosures:

If, during the study, we have concerns about your child's safety or the safety of others, we will inform your child's school and follow their safeguarding procedure. In these circumstances we would need to break confidentiality.

Who has reviewed the research project?

The project has been reviewed and approved by The University of Manchester Research Ethics Committee (REF: 2023-16353-29538), and the funder, UK Research and Innovation (UKRI)/Medical Research Council (MRC).

Who is funding the research?

The project is funded by UKRI/MRC (Grant Ref: MR/X003094/1), a non-departmental public body sponsored the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT).



What if I have a complaint?

If you have a complaint, please direct these to members of the research team. Please contact either of the two leads for the project as follows:

Dr Margarita Panayiotou (overall study lead)

- Ellen Wilkinson Building, Manchester Institute of Education, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL
- Email: margarita.panayiotou@manchester.ac.uk
- Telephone: 0161 275 3404

Dr Jo Hickman Dunne (project manager)

- Ellen Wilkinson Building, Manchester Institute of Education, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL
- Email: jo.hickman-dunne@manchester.ac.uk

If you want to make a formal complaint to someone outside of the research team or if you are not satisfied with the response you have gained from the researchers in the first instance, then please contact:

The Research Ethics Manager

- Research Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, Manchester, M13 9PL
- Email: research.complaints@manchester.ac.uk
- Telephone: 0161 306 8089

If you wish to contact us about your child's data protection rights, please email dataprotection@manchester.ac.uk or write to The Information Governance Office, Christie Building, The University of Manchester, Oxford Road, M13 9PL and we will guide you through the process of carrying out your rights.

You also have a right to complain to the Information Commissioner's Office about complaints relating to your child's personal identifiable information:

Online: <https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/>

Telephone: 0303 123 1113

Further information

If you have any questions, you can email us at so.me@manchester.ac.uk or call us on 0161 275 3534

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet. If you would like your child to take part, please complete the consent form and demographic sheet in the next page.

Please ensure your child has read the young person's information sheet (in the following page)