**Information about the Net4health project for parents and carers**

We would like your child to help us with our research study, Net4health. This information sheet will tell you more about the research so you can discuss the study with your child. Please contact us if you have any questions.

# What is Net4health and why are we doing this research?

Net4health is a study aiming to look at changes in young peoples’ health and friendship networks in Scotland over the last 25 years. We want to find out:

* How healthy and happy are secondary school pupils?
* What things are most important for young people’s health and wellbeing?
* What influence do friendships, families, and school have on young people’s health?

This information will help us to promote and maintain positive health and wellbeing in your child’s school, and inform health improvement policies and initiatives across the UK.

# Why has my child been asked to take part?

Your child’s school has agreed to take part in this study. All S2 and S4 pupils in your child’s school have been asked to take part in the study.

# What will my child be asked to do?

During school hours, we will ask your child, along with their classmates, to complete a survey using a computer or mobile phone. This survey will ask questions about their health and wellbeing, peers and friendships, clubs and activities, family life and school. This session should take no more than 40 minutes.

Some pupils will be invited to participate in an audio-recorded one-to-one interview with a researcher to talk about their social interactions in more detail. These interviews will be completed during school hours and should last approximately 40 minutes.

One year after the first survey, we will repeat the survey and interviews to see how things have changed. We will send out more information at that time.

# Does my child have to take part?

No. Your child can decide if they want to take part or not, and you can help your child decide. Your child can choose to stop taking part at any time.

In line with the Children (Scotland) Act 2020, we accept that young people can reach a decision and express their own views on whether or not to take part in the study. If you believe that your child is not in a position to decide to opt out for themselves and would prefer they did not take part, please let us know by completing the attached ‘opt-out’ form, and returning it to the school.

**What if my child changes their mind?**

Your child is free to stop taking part in the study and does not have to give a reason why. They can skip over or stop answering questions in the survey, or can take part in the survey but not an interview. There will only be one or two survey days in each school, so your child cannot choose to take part after the planned visit.

**What will happen to the information my child gives?**

All names and identifying information will be securely stored. Nobody - apart from the research team who will make the data anonymous, or people whose job it is to check research projects – will have access to the names of study participants.

The research team will receive information directly from the school, including personal information (your child’s name), and some school information (your child’s subjects). We use the names to create anonymous ID codes to make the survey more secure and anonymously analyse the data. Your child can also choose to let the research team access other data about them, so that your child doesn’t need to answer as many questions. We will ask for permission to find out ethnicity, free school meal eligibility, social care contact, and number of days off sick.

It won’t be possible to see the names of the schools or the pupils that took part in the anonymised data. There will be strict conditions for access to the dataset, and it will only be used for genuine health and social research & teaching.

The team will produce a school health and wellbeing report, so that the school can plan for ways to improve student health, wellbeing, grades and the overall school experience. We will also prepare scientific research papers studying how health in schools has changed over the last 20 years, by comparing this study to older school studies.

If your child tells us that there is an immediate risk of harm to them or others, we will contact someone to help (e.g. a teacher, police, or ambulance). This is the only time we would share personal information about a study participant.

**What’s the benefit for your child?**

Young people often enjoy taking part in research and answering questions can encourage people to think about and discuss the topic with their friends and family.

Your child’s school will use the findings of the study to develop plans to improve the health, wellbeing and positive development of your child and other students at the school.

**Who is responsible for Net4health?**

Researchers from the University of Glasgow have designed and will deliver the study. The study is funded by the MRC/CSO Social and Public Health Sciences Unit and approved by the University of Glasgow, College of Medical, Veterinary & Life Sciences Ethics Committee.

**Thank you for reading. If you would like more information, please contact:**

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**Net4health Opt-Out Form - Parents/Carers**

If you **DO NOT** want your child to take part in either the survey or the interview, and you feel they are not in a position to make their own decision on participating, please complete the form below and return to the school.

Please put your initials in each box if you **do not** want your child to take part.

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| --- | --- |
| I have read and understood the Net4health Information and know that I can ask questions of the researcher and teacher named in the information sheet |  |
| I understand why my child has been asked to take part and what they have been asked to do. |  |
| I understand that my child will be given the opportunity to decide to take part for themselves when the research team visit the school |  |
| I **DO NOT** give my permission for my child to take part in the survey |  |
| I **DO NOT** give my permission for my child to be asked to take part in a one-to-one interview |  |

*You do not need to give a reason for withdrawing your child from the study but if you wish to give a reason please write below.*

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|  |

Your name (please print) Your child’s name (please print)

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Your signature Today’s date

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Please give this slip to your child to return to their teacher if you **do not** want your child to take part.