



### **iSAM and the Online Pupil Survey**

An MRC Mental Health Data Pathfinder Project

University of Oxford Department of Psychiatry

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<https://www.psych.ox.ac.uk>

## **The Pathfinder iSAM Project and the Online Pupil Survey INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS / GUARDIANS**

Ethics Approval Reference: R62366/RE001

In partnership with researchers at the University of Oxford, your child's school has agreed to take part in a study investigating school pupils' health and well-being by asking pupils to log in anonymously to an online survey. We very much hope you would like your child to take part in this study, but before you decide, it is important that you understand why the study is being done and what it will involve.

### **What are we trying to find out?**

Adolescence is a critical period for the emergence of mental health problems. By asking school pupils to tell us how they experience school life and health-related issues, we hope to better understand what is happening to the mental health of pupils in Oxfordshire, and to inform schools and the local council how to provide pupils with the best support and guidance to keep them safe and happy. We also aim to gain insight into how adolescents view surveys like this, as part of a larger project called 'Pathfinder'. More information about this study and the larger project can be obtained by contacting the research team at: [Pathfinder.psych.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Pathfinder.psych.ox.ac.uk), putting 'Pupil Survey' in the subject header.

### **Why has my child been invited to take part?**

We are inviting your child to take part because they are aged between 8-18 years, currently in school year 4, 5, 6, 8, 10 or 12, and attending one of the participating schools or FE Colleges in Oxfordshire. We are inviting up to 10,000 young people to take part.

### **Does my child have to take part?**

No. You can ask questions about the study before deciding whether or not to allow your child to participate, and you can change your mind without giving a reason. If you do not want your child to take part in the research, you can complete the form below, and return it to your child's school, or notify the school by other means. Please be aware that once your child has completed the survey, we will not be able to identify them to exclude their data.

### **What will happen if my child takes part?**

During a designated school lesson of around 30 minutes, pupils will be invited to log in to the Online Pupils' Survey, anonymously, to answer around 200 questions on life-style and health-related issues. Some of the questions address sensitive areas such as risky behaviours (e.g. internet safety, alcohol, drugs), but there are different versions of the survey to ensure that the content is age-matched. At the end of the survey, appropriate advice and guidance is provided by links to the Childline website (<http://www.childline.org.uk>). The responses to the survey are anonymous, so nobody will be able to identify your child's answers to the questions, and the data will be stored on secure servers and transferred safely using encryption.

### **What are the advantages / disadvantages of taking part?**

One potential risk of this study is that your child will be asked questions about a topic that they know nothing or very little about, such as the risky behaviours associated with adolescence. To mitigate the risks, different versions of the survey have been designed to ensure that the questions are age-appropriate, and

schools and pupils are provided with useful links to websites offering suitable information and guidance. One of the aims of the survey is to advise schools on which topics pupils most require additional information to be fully aware of the dangers of specific situations and behaviours.

### **What happens to the data provided?**

The information you or your child provide as part of the study is the research data. Any research data from which you or your child can be identified is known as personal data. It does not include data where the identity has been removed (anonymous data). In this study the data will be anonymous at collection, so no personal data will be stored by the research team, and opt-out forms will be held by the school. The anonymous research data will be stored confidentially using a secure server. We would like your permission to use anonymised data in future studies, and to share data with other researchers (e.g. in online databases). All personal information that could identify you or your child will be removed or changed before information is shared with other researchers or results are made public. Responsible members of the University of Oxford may be given access to data for monitoring and/or audit of the study. All research data will be stored for at least 5 years after publication or public release of the work of the research. Summaries of our findings will be given to the school and will be available to interested families.

### **Who is conducting this research?**

The research project is organized by Mina Fazel and Karen Mansfield at the University of Oxford. Mina Fazel is a Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist and Associate Professor, and Karen Mansfield is a Research Scientist. The research is funded by the Medical Research Council (MRC). This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the University of Oxford's Central University Research Ethics Committee, [CUREC reference R62366/RE001].

### **What if there is a problem?**

If you have a concern about any aspect of this project, please speak to Karen Mansfield on 01865 618232, who will do her best to answer your query. The researcher should acknowledge your concern within 10 working days and give you an indication of how she intends to deal with it. If you remain unhappy or wish to make a formal complaint, please contact the Chair of the Research Ethics Committee at the University of Oxford who will seek to resolve the matter in a reasonably expeditious manner.

Chair, **Medical Sciences Inter-Divisional Research Ethics Committee**; Email: [ethics@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@medsci.ox.ac.uk);  
Address: Research Services, University of Oxford, Wellington Square, Oxford OX1 2JD

### **What should I do next?**

Please print and fill in the enclosed form (below) and return it to your child's class teacher, or notify your school, if you would **not** like your child to take part in this study. If you would like to discuss the research with someone beforehand (or if you have questions afterwards), please contact: Karen Mansfield, Department of Psychiatry, Warneford Hospital, Oxford, Tel 01865 618232, [Pathfinder@psych.ox.ac.uk](mailto:Pathfinder@psych.ox.ac.uk).

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**I, the undersigned, hereby DO NOT give permission for my child to take part in the study titled "The Pathfinder iSAM Project and the Online Pupils' Survey".**

Name of child: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of parent/guardian: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of researchers: Karen Mansfield and Mina Fazel