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Information Sheet

For your child to take part in the following research study:

How Does Mindfulness Affect Classroom Life?

We would like to invite your child to take part in our research study. Joining the study is voluntary. Before you decide we would like you to understand why the research is being done and what it would involve for your child. Contact details at the top of the page may be used if you would like to ask any further questions.



Who am I?

I am Katie Crompton, a PhD student at the University of Portsmouth, studying psychology. Previous to this, I was a primary school teacher in Hampshire and I am also trained to teach a mindfulness course called “Paws.b” which was developed by a company called “The Mindfulness in Schools Project” (MISP). MISP is currently the largest company in the UK offering mindfulness to schools.

What is the purpose of the study?

Mindfulness is a practice that helps train your attention to be more aware of what is actually happening, rather than worrying about what *has* happened or *might* happen. The teaching of mindfulness is becoming increasingly popular in schools, particularly as mental health and wellbeing is gaining more attention. In my PhD project I want to find out a little more about what effects mindfulness training may have on 7-11 year olds, particularly focusing on behaviours and attitudes in the classroom.

Why has my child been invited?

We are working with your school and one other in the New Forest area and hope to gather information from about 400 children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6. Your school has agreed to take part in this study and will be offering mindfulness lessons to your child, at some point in 2021, as part of their PSHE (Personal Social and Health Education) curriculum. The mindfulness course, “Paws.b” will be delivered by me, and I will also be teaching some of the regular PSHE lessons to your child between January and October 2021. Paws.b is a 12-week course, consisting of 1x 45-minute lesson per week and will take place in the normal PSHE lesson time. Your child’s class teacher has shown an interest in the study and will be present in all mindfulness and normal PSHE lessons. We would like as many children as possible from each class to take part in some data collection for our study. There are no specific requirements or reasons why your child has been invited.

What will be involved if my child takes part?

With your consent, we (my research team) would like to invite your child to complete a number of questionnaires at four different time points between January and October 2021 (July 2021 if your child is in Year 6). These questionnaires will be completed as a whole class in PSHE lesson time. The questionnaires will ask children how much they agree with statements such as:

“I could be feeling a certain way and then not realise it until later” or “It’s hard for me to pay attention to only one thing at a time”.

We hope to gather information on your child’s experience of mindfulness and find out about their attitudes and how they might behave in different situations. We may also observe the class as a whole in some of their normal lessons and make notes on the behaviours we observe.

We will also send out a short questionnaire to you, to complete at home and return to school once you have completed it. This questionnaire will help us gather extra information, so that we can consider the demographics and backgrounds of the children in our study. This questionnaire asks for information such as your child's gender, date of birth and ethnicity, as well as questions such as number of other children living at home and languages spoken at home. This questionnaire is voluntary and you do not have to complete every question if you would prefer not to.

Because this is something called a "Randomised Control Trial," half of the classes will take part in the mindfulness course from January to March and the other half will be offered the course later in the year. The classes will be randomly allocated to one of these two groups.

Does my child have to take part in the data collection?

No, taking part in this research is entirely voluntary. Although all children in your child's class will be taking part in the mindfulness course as part of the school's PSHE curriculum for 2021, it is up to you to decide if you want your child to take part in the data collection. If you agree for your child to take part, we will then ask you to sign the attached consent form, dated August 2020, version number, 1. Withdrawing your child from the mindfulness intervention altogether would need to be discussed with your child's class teacher.

What are the possible risks of taking part?

The questionnaires ask some questions about emotions, friendship and how your child feels in different situations. There is a chance that your child may feel sensitive about some of these questions.

With COVID 19 being a current risk to us all at this time we would like to ensure you that a risk assessment has been completed in order to complete this study in your child's school. The school have agreed that it is okay for our research team to spend time in school as long as the necessary precautions regarding safety measures are adhered to. This includes social distancing from pupils, wearing masks and cleaning hands on arrival with antibacterial soap. If government guidelines change between the time of writing this and the study commencing, updated measures will be taken.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

By agreeing to take part in this study your school is able to offer your child a mindfulness course for free, which ordinarily would be offered as a paid course. The course teaches simple self-care techniques such as breathing exercises which your child may choose to use in a time of need. Your child's participation will help us gather data around the effects of mindfulness and develop a deeper understanding into how it works.

What about my child's confidentiality?

To protect the identity of your child, any data collected will be made anonymous before it is used. This includes the information you give in the demographics questionnaire. We do this by giving every child's data a number. The raw data, which identifies your child (in the form of paper questionnaires), will be kept securely by myself in a locked storage box. Only myself and the research team will have access to this. The anonymized data will be analysed and the results may be presented to others at academic conferences, or published as a project report, academic dissertation or in academic journals or books. It could also be made available to any commissioner or funder of the research.

Before the intervention begins, your child's class teacher and myself will have a meeting about your child's class. This is a protective measure which will allow me to be sensitive to the specific needs of the class and adapt the intervention if necessary. Any child specific information will be anonymous, therefore protecting child confidentiality. For example, if there is a child in the class who has experienced a recent bereavement, it would be important for me to be aware of this, but I would not need to know which child had experienced this. Any class information passed on to me is strictly confidential and will not be shared with anyone else. The consent form also gives you, the parent, a chance to inform me of any information about your child, you feel I should be made aware of, relative to the intervention.

If at any point during the study a child discloses to me anything which may involve safeguarding, it is my duty to pass this information on to the safeguarding officer within the school.

What will happen if I don't want my child to carry on with the study?

As a volunteer, your child can stop any participation in data collection at any time, or withdraw from the study at any time before October 2021, without giving a reason. If you do withdraw your child from a study after some data have been collected you will be asked if you are content for the data collected thus far to be retained and included in the study. If you prefer, the data collected can be destroyed and not included in the study. Once the data analysis has commenced, (1st October 2021), it will not be possible for you to withdraw your anonymised data from the study.

Will I be able to see my child's results?

The results of the study will be sent out to all parents once analysis has taken place, however you will not be able to view your child's individual results. This is because the results will be made anonymous to protect your child's confidentiality.

What if there is a problem?

If you have a query, concern or complaint about any aspect of this study, in the first instance you should contact the researcher(s) if appropriate. Because I am a PhD student, there is also an academic member of staff listed as the supervisor whom you can contact. If there is a complaint, please contact the Supervisor with details of the complaint. The contact details for both myself and my supervisor are detailed at the top of each page.

If your concern or complaint is not resolved by myself or my supervisor, you should contact my Head of Department:

Head of Department: Dr Lucy Akehurst
Email: lucy.akehurst@port.ac.uk
Department of Psychology, Faculty of Science and Health
University of Portsmouth: 023 9284 8484

If the complaint remains unresolved, please contact:
The University Complaints Officer
023 9284 3642: complaintsadvise@port.ac.uk

Who is funding the research?

This research is being funded by the South Coast Doctoral Training Partnership. None of the researchers or study staff will receive any financial reward by conducting this study, other than their normal salary / bursary as a student of the University.

Who has reviewed the study?

Research involving human participants is reviewed by an ethics committee to ensure that the dignity and well-being of participants is respected. This study has been reviewed by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Science and Health and has been given favourable ethical opinion.

Thank you

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for considering volunteering your child for this research. If you do agree to participate, your consent will be sought; please see the accompanying consent form. You will then be given a copy of this information sheet and your signed consent form, to keep.

Katie Crompton



August 2020 (version 1)