



Research linking physical education to improved thinking and learning in school

# PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARENTS / GUARDIANS

## OPTION TO 'OPT-OUT' OF YOUR CHILD'S DATA BEING STORED AND USED FOR THE 'FIT TO STUDY' RESEARCH PROJECT

This sheet tells you more about the 'Fit to Study' project and what is involved. Please take your time to read this information sheet and discuss it with your child. We also enclose a pupil information sheet for your child.

If you are happy for your child to take part in the 'Fit to Study' project you **do not need to do anything**. If you do NOT wish your child's data to be stored and used for research purposes, please complete the 'Opt-Out' form attached in the email.

If you have any questions, or if you would like more information, please get in touch using the details at the end of this document.

### What is the purpose of the project?

Can changing the nature of PE lessons help children do better at school? This is the key question that the 'Fit to Study' project is aiming to answer.

Physical exercise has been shown to have positive effects on the brain and to improve cognitive performance, both immediately and in the long-term. This project is being conducted to understand better how the content of school PE affects brain function and academic performance. A programme of activities for PE lessons has been developed by Oxford Brookes University (in collaboration with Oxfordshire Sport and Physical Activity) to try to optimise the benefit of PE for brain function. Staff from Oxford Brookes University will train PE teachers to deliver this programme.

Your child's school is taking part in this project, and we look forward to working with the pupils and teachers. The project will involve current Year 7 classes and will continue until these pupils reach the end of Year 8.

### Who is conducting the research?

A team of researchers at the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University will carry out research assessing the impact of the 'Fit to Study' programme on fitness, wellbeing, cognitive function and academic attainment.

NatCen Social Research have been commissioned by the project funders (Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and the Wellcome Trust) to conduct an Independent Evaluation of the 'Fit to Study' programme, including analysis of its impact on academic attainment.



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## Who is taking part?

100 state-funded secondary schools will take part in this project. Half of the schools recruited will continue with PE lessons as normal (Control Group) and half will implement a new programme (Intervention Group). Schools will be randomly assigned to a group and we will monitor all schools' progress equally. Your child may not notice any difference in their PE lessons.

## What are the benefits and risks from taking part in this study?

Participating schools will contribute to a valuable research project. Participation also presents an excellent opportunity for pupils to see science in action and to recognise the importance of physical wellbeing. By participating, schools are also helping to increase understanding of the importance of PE in the curriculum and this could potentially have a major influence on future education policy.

All schools will be given £500 at the end of the project as a thank-you for taking part.

There are no risks associated with participation. The participating pupils may sometimes be more physically active than they would usually be during PE lessons, but this will be within currently recommended levels. The research activities will not involve a medical checkup, but if a researcher happens to notice any evidence that a pupil might have a health problem (e.g. in the results of a fitness test), then a member of the research team will inform the pupil's school nurse/head teacher, who may recommend that the pupil's parent/guardian takes their child to the GP.

## Why is your permission being sought?

Your child and their classmates will all participate in the 'Fit to Study' project as part of their normal school-based activities. The project also involves researchers and teachers collecting information about your child (e.g. measurements of physical activities in PE lessons). We are writing to ask your permission to store these data about your child and to use them for research purposes.

## How will your child's data be used, and will the data generated during the project be kept confidential?

The data will be treated with the strictest confidence (subject to normal legal requirement). The information will be stored either in a secure digital form or in a locked filing cabinet. We may temporarily record data against pupils' names (e.g. when a teacher notes down fitness test scores) but once data is entered into our secure database it will be labeled with identifier codes and not with names. Any lists including pupil names will not be kept by the research team.

The research team will not store data about your child if you would prefer us not to. If you prefer us not to store your child's data you can return the opt-out form at the end of this sheet.

## Additional Studies

Within the 'Fit to Study' project we will run additional small studies which we may invite your child to participate in. Your child does not have to take part in any of those studies if you prefer them not to. We will send you further information on those studies if your child is invited to take part.

## What information will we collect?

We will ask pupils in your child's class to complete some assessments. These include: tests of physical fitness, tests of mental skills (such as memory and attention), and questionnaires (about their physical activity, sleep, mood, motivation and wellbeing). We will also measure pupils' height and weight. Your child's school may set some assessments as homework. The homework assessments would be set once at the beginning of the project and once at the end and would take no longer than 2 hours total on each occasion.

We may share the children's test results with their teachers at the end of the research project, but we will not share questionnaire responses. If you choose to opt-out your child will still take part in assessments delivered in class, as these will be part of normal school activities, but homework assessments would be optional. If you opt-out then we will not store your child's data for any of the assessments. At the end of the project, NatCen Social Research will also administer an academic attainment test. You will receive separate information about that assessment nearer the time.

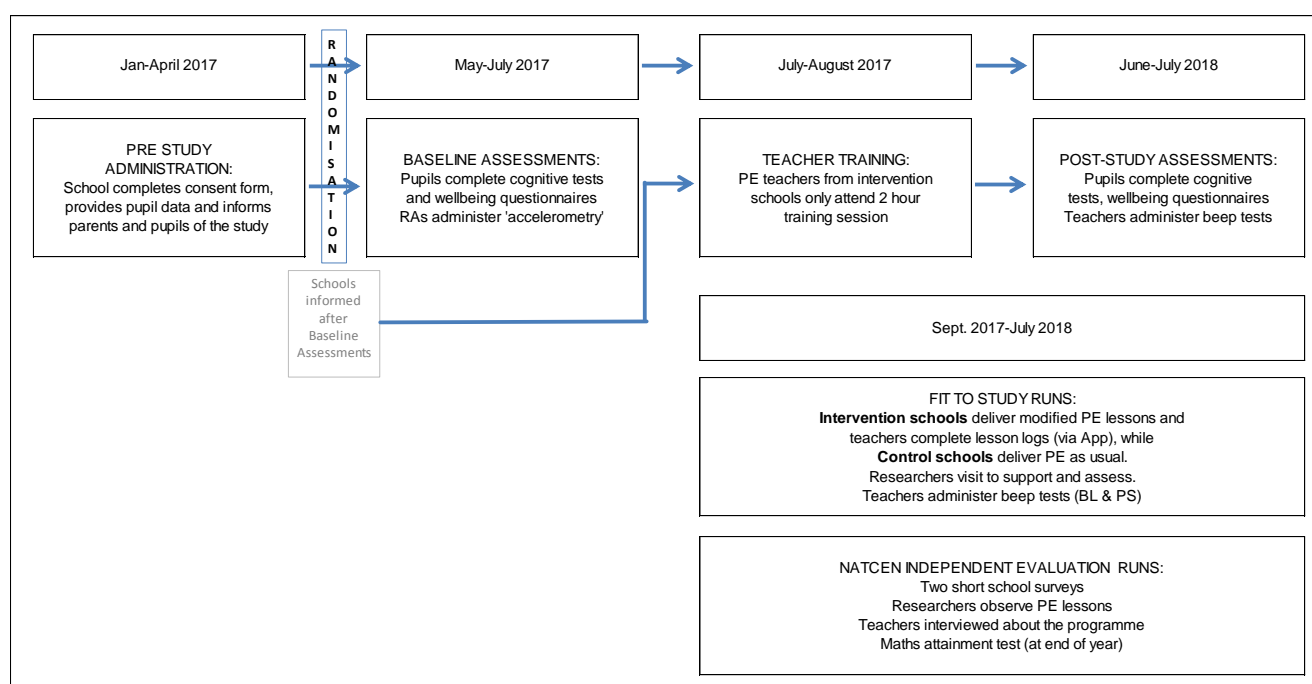


Figure 1: The Timeline and Key Tasks for the 'Fit to Study' Project

## Information about your child

We will ask your child's school to provide some background information about their pupils. This will include pupils' names, gender, date of birth, free school meal eligibility and Unique Pupil Numbers (UPNs). This information will allow us to explore the affect of 'Fit to Study' in different groups of children. The UPNs will be used to access Key Stage 2 tests results from the National Pupil Database. These will be linked to your child's 'Fit to Study' test scores.

## Who will see your child's information?

This information, along with the academic attainment test results, will be shared between the research team and NatCen Social Research. We will not share identifying information about pupils with any organisation or individual that is not involved in the project. Information will be used for research purposes only and no schools, parents or pupils will be identified in any reports.

Once the study is complete, we will remove personal details and store test results in the Education Endowment Foundation's archive form in the UK Data Archive. If you choose to opt-out we will not store any information about your child. If you do **not** opt-out now you may still choose to withdraw your child's data from the study at any time without giving a reason and without penalty.

We would be very happy to share any publications that may result from the data collection, on request.

### **What if you have questions?**

More detailed information about the study, including contact details for the research team, can be found on the next page.

**If you are happy with everything in this sheet you do not need to do anything. If you are unsure about anything, please contact the research team. If you do NOT want your child's data to be stored and used for research purposes, please fill in the Opt-Out Slip and return it to the school by the [date].**

### **Additional information:**

#### **Who is organising and funding the research?**

The research is funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and the Wellcome Trust. The National Foundation for Education Research (NFER) is inviting schools to participate in the research and gathering information from schools that sign up.

A research team at the University of Oxford and Oxford Brookes University is organising and conducting the research, along with collaborators within Oxfordshire Sport and Physical Activity.

NatCen Social Research (NatCen), an independent research organisation, has been commissioned by EEF to carry out an independent evaluation of 'Fit to Study'. Information about NatCen Social Research and their plans for the evaluation will be provided separately to parents and pupils. You can find out more about NatCen Social Research at [www.natcen.ac.uk](http://www.natcen.ac.uk)

#### **Who has reviewed this study?**

The 'Fit to Study' project is led by the University of Oxford. The University has strict ethical procedures on conducting research with young people. The 'Fit to Study' project, in which your child's school is participating, has been reviewed by, and received ethical clearance through, the Central University Research Ethics Committee (Registration No: R48879/RE001), and complies with the ethical requirements of Oxford Brookes University.

If you have a concern about any aspect of the project, you should contact the Principal Investigator, Prof. Heidi Johansen-Berg, through the Project Manager Nick Beale (contact details provided below).

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;  
[ethics@medsci.ox.ac.uk](mailto:ethics@medsci.ox.ac.uk) Address: Research Services, University of Oxford, Wellington  
Square, Oxford OX1 2JD

### **What is the National Pupil Database (NPD)?**

The NPD is a database, managed by the Department for Education (DfE), which holds information at individual pupil-level about children's education at different stages, including test and exam results for all children in the state sector in England, as well as non-maintained special schools, sixth form and Further Education (FE) colleges and (where available) independent schools. The NPD also holds information about pupils such as age, gender, free school meal entitlement and educational attainment.

### **Who can you contact for more information?**

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of this study, please contact the 'Fit to Study' Project Manager, Nick Beale ([fittostudy@brookes.ac.uk](mailto:fittostudy@brookes.ac.uk), 01865 482752, Address: Project Team – Fit to Study, OxINAHR, The Colonnade, Oxford Brookes University, Gipsy Lane Campus, Headington, Oxford, OX3 0BP).



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