UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

SMART Schools+: Social Media and Adolescent mental health – the impact of UK national policy Restrictions on social media use and menTal health

Hello again! Thank you for taking the time to read our previous flyer about taking part in an online survey and wearing activity monitoring watches. This information leaflet is all about taking part in a *focus group discussion*, and you have been given this leaflet because we would very much like you to consider taking part in this activity. For more information about the study, please visit our website https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/projects/smart-schools.

What will I be asked to do? We are asking you to take part in a confidential focus group discussion with 4-6 other pupils in your class, in which we will be asking you to discuss your social media use and the upcoming ban in more detail. Examples of topics you may be asked to discuss include;

- □ Your smartphone and social media use
- □ How you feel about the upcoming social media ban for under 16s
- □ Who you connect with socially, and how the social media ban will impact this.
- □ How you spend your leisure time

The aim of the focus group is to understand the wider factors that influence adolescent smartphone and social media use.

Why have I been asked to take part? We asked your teacher to select 6 pupils from your class to participate in a focus group, and you were one of the pupils that was selected.

When will I take part? You will be given time during the school day to complete the focus group. You will do this during lesson time and with a researcher from the study. The focus group will take place in classroom or open area within your school. The focus group will take approximately 60 minutes and will be voice recorded.

Do I have to take part? No. The choice to take part is up to you. You have been selected because your parents have already provided consent for you to take part. We will ask you for your assent to take part before you complete the focus group, by completing the attached form. You do not have to answer the questions if you do not want to.

Can I withdraw? Yes, you can withdraw yourself from the focus group, and stop participating at any moment should you wish, and you can leave the focus group. However, anything you do say during the focus group will remain in the study and be included in the reporting, as it is not possible to separate and remove individual participant data from a focus group discussion. An exception to this arrangement is if the group discussion raises a safeguarding concern, and the lead researcher will delete this section of the audio file before it is sent to transcription and used as data.

Could I be in any harm from taking part? We do not anticipate that the focus groups will cause you any harm. However, if you feel uncomfortable or upset for any reason, please inform a teacher in your school or your school wellbeing officer or your parent/carer.

Why should I take part? Your input may help to change national school policy on mobile phone use.

What will happen to the information I give you? We will keep information about you very safe and private for 10 years and then it will be destroyed. We will follow data protection law. We will write a report to share the findings of the study with other researchers and the public, but no-one will be able to identify you from the report. Only the researchers will know what you have said. If you would like to know more about your rights or how we use your information from focus groups, please read our Pupil Privacy Notice at birmingham.ac.uk/smart-schools, or discuss it with your parent/carer.

Will information be kept confidential? All information that is collected about you will be kept strictly confidential. Only the researchers and the other participants in the focus group will know what you have said, and *we will not share your individual responses with anyone outside of the research team*. However, we may alert a teacher in your school if you mention anything during the focus group that raises a safeguarding concern.

The researcher will record the focus group discussion, and all information will be stored electronically and securely. Your name will be removed from any reporting of the findings. Electronic files will be deleted from the system after ten years. For further information on how we store data, please read our full Pupil Participant Privacy Notice on our website birmingham.ac.uk/smart-schools.

What happens next? Please sign and return the assent form attached. For further information about the study, please visit our website https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/research/projects/smart-schools. If you have a question or would like to speak to someone, please contact by email on smartstudy@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

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Thank you for considering being involved in the SMART School Study