

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Information Leaflet

West Midlands **ActiVe** lifestyle and healthy **Eating** in **School** children study (**WAVES**)

A new study run by the University of Birmingham is available to selected schools and communities across the West Midlands. The study is about preventing obesity in children, through promoting a healthy diet and increasing levels of physical activity. The study is funded by the National Institute of Health Research's Health Technology Assessment programme.

Study aim: To definitively evaluate the effectiveness of a childhood obesity prevention programme that was developed in a previous study based in schools and communities in Birmingham.

The programme to be evaluated

This consists of several elements:

- Initiatives to increase the amount of daily physical activity children undertake in schools
- Healthy cooking sessions delivered to children and their parents in school
- Participation of children in the 'Villa Vitality' programme; a course of 3 sessions, run over 6 weeks by Aston Villa football club, involving physical activity opportunities and interactive learning sessions on healthy eating
- Provision of information to families that signpost local physical activity and leisure opportunities.

We plan to deliver the programme through schools throughout the West Midlands, and to measure its effectiveness by assessing children before and after the programme is delivered.

What the study involves

The study will target children who will be in year 1 at the start of the study. The main stages of the study are:

Stage 1

Year 1 children and parents in all participating schools will be asked to take part in the study through their school. The children will be assessed in several ways, including physical measurements such as height, weight and blood pressure, and a short interview to assess their sense of well-being. Food intake and physical activity levels will also be measured. In addition, parents will be asked to complete questionnaires.

Stage 2

The childhood obesity prevention programme will be introduced to half of the schools and communities participating in the study for one school year, when the children are in Year 2. These schools will be randomly selected from all schools who agree to participate. Measurements will be taken for all children, including schools who do not receive the programme, so that results can be compared between schools receiving and not receiving the programme.

Stage 3

The participating children and parents will be assessed in the same way as stage 1, after the intervention programme has finished, when the children are in Year 3. The assessments will also be repeated yearly for two years, to assess the longer term effectiveness of the programme.



The study will run over 5 years

Timing of the study

Direct involvement with the study is in two waves. Half (ie 25) of the schools (wave 1) begun their direct involvement last school year with Year 1 pupil and parent recruitment taking place from January to April 2011 (Spring term 2010/2011). Measurements were undertaken from May to July 2011 (Summer term 2010/2011). The obesity prevention programme is currently being delivered to the schools in wave 1 that have been randomly allocated to receive the intervention, now the measured pupils are in year 2. Follow up measures for children from both the intervention and control schools will be undertaken from September to December 2012, January to April 2014 and September to December 2014.

You are being invited to take part in wave 2. These schools will begin direct involvement in school year 2011/2012. Year 1 pupil and parent recruitment will take place from January to April 2012 (Spring term 2011/2012) with measurements from May to July 2012 (Summer term 2011/2012). For schools in wave 2 that are randomly allocated to receive the obesity prevention programme it will be delivered in the 2012/2013 school year when the measured pupils will be in year 2. Follow up measures for children from both the intervention and control wave 2 schools will be undertaken from September to December 2013 and January to April 2015.

What participating schools will be asked to do

All schools:

- Convene a meeting with all senior school staff that will be run by the research team and to which governors may also be invited.
- Facilitate distribution of consent letters to parents.
- Provide an appropriate venue for researchers to undertake measurements on and interview participating children.
- Provide some information on all children from the relevant year group, this information will include date of birth, gender, ethnicity and postcode. It is important for us to have some basic information on all children in your school who are eligible for the study, including those whose parents do not wish their children to be assessed, to enable us to look at whether there are any differences in these characteristics between children that are assessed and those who are not.
- Facilitate children coming out of class to be measured and interviewed.
- Facilitate research staff in completing a one day, food tick-list for children in school time and assist in sending the food diaries home overnight for parents/family members to complete.
- As part of the measurements, small physical activity monitors will be attached to the children's chest. Schools staff will not routinely have to put on or remove these, but need to be aware the children will be wearing them for a period of 5 days.
- Facilitate researchers attending to "observe" class sessions, and interviews with school staff.

For schools receiving the intervention programme:

- Identify staff to help with running the physical activity initiatives in school and the healthy cooking workshops, and facilitate the training of these staff (during teacher training days or other time). The training will be organised by the research team.
- Introduce the physical activity initiatives in school (initiatives will be tailored to suit the requirements of the school).
- Timetable one session per school term for the healthy cooking workshops for parents and children (in Year 2).
- Timetable sessions for attendance of Year 2 pupils at the 'Villa Vitality' programme (2 full days, and a two hour session).



- Facilitate the distribution of information to families signposting local leisure opportunities.

All schools will receive between £570 and £1140 as acknowledgement for their time and effort, dependent upon the year in which the school begins active involvement and whether or not they are allocated to receive the intervention.

Schools that are randomised to receive the intervention will have teaching materials provided, and school personnel trained to run, both cooking workshops and physical activity sessions in school. The children in intervention schools will also receive funded Villa Vitality sessions, cooking workshops and physical activity sessions as part of the study.

For schools who do not receive the intervention a variety of resources are being developed relating to science or Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) which will be offered to each school in addition to the financial acknowledgment.

Links to the Healthy Schools programme and Every Child Matters

This study links very closely with the core themes in the Healthy Schools programme, particularly healthy eating, physical activity, and emotional health and wellbeing, and also links in to the 'Every Child Matters' key outcomes, in particular being healthy.

Focus groups / interviews / associated studies

The research team will be running focus groups / interviews with staff in some schools and will also be undertaking some small associated studies. Should you agree to participate in the study you will be asked at a later date whether or not you would be happy for your school to participate in these focus groups / interviews and/or associated studies.

Study outcomes

All information will be kept confidential and no individual member of staff or child will be identified to anyone outside of the research team. At the end of the evaluation, we will be pleased to send you a summary of the research findings. We can also provide anonymised data on the children's measurements as a resource for teaching.

How to get involved

A member of the research team will contact you by telephone in the next few days to give you an opportunity to discuss the study in more detail. If at this stage you are willing to participate, your school will be recruited into the study.

