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**Forest Oak School**  
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3<sup>rd</sup> May 2019

Dear *Colleague,*

Re: SMILE Research Project Permissions and Ethics; clarifications

We have had some queries from schools regarding whether they need to ask for permission from parents for a child's inclusion in the project. This letter is to clarify the situation and give you some templates should you need them.

In May 2018, all project schools returned a SMILE PROJECT RESPONSE FORM, this was signed and gave implied, informed consent for schools to take part as part of their general work.

If research work is whole school based, then it is considered part of the curriculum and no additional consents from parents or pupils are required. The pupil questionnaire is curriculum based and does not require separate permissions. Consent may be implied by the completion and return of survey questionnaires, removing the need for written consent from staff.

Permissions will be required if individuals are being used as part of a case study. The attached letter is an example for schools to use, feel free to adapt as you want. There is also an information sheet about the SMILE project to send with a consent letter for the purpose of gaining 'informed consent' and an example from Jo Egerton about video permissions.

This letter and additional examples and ethics guidance from Jo Egerton can be found on the SMILE research section of our website.

Yours sincerely

ISSY JERRARD  
WELLBEING LEAD  
FOREST OAK

AMANDA MORDEY OBE  
PRINCIPAL  
FOREST OAK & MERSTONE

**NOTE TO PARTNER SCHOOLS**

*Please feel free to amend these permissions documents to suit your parents/guardians, while keeping the essential information. They should be sent from your school. (NB where divorced parents share guardianship both parents will need to give consent).*

Dear Parents and carers

As you know, the wellbeing of our pupils and the whole community here at **school name** is extremely important to us.

Our school is currently involved in an exciting research project. The research aims to evaluate the 'SMILE' wellbeing approach. SMILE is an ethos based approach, developed and successfully used at Forest Oak, aimed at promoting positive wellbeing for both pupils and staff.

The Project involves **school name** as one of ten partner schools and takes place over two years. Activities are school based and part of normal curriculum and assessment arrangements.

As part of the evaluation we may use case studies, to share the school's work, please read the attached information sheet carefully and indicate below if you consent to this. Please return the attached consent form before **[deadline date]** to **teacher's name**. If you agree to his or her participation, the teacher and the project team may:

- Collect evidence from your son or daughter including their ideas and suggestions around SMILE and wellbeing
- Work with your son or daughter during related SMILE activities
- Observe him or her during the sessions
- Seek his or her views or preferences
- Any additional information required to complete the project.

Kind regards,

## SMILE Project

### School

### CONSENT FORM

Once you have read the information, please complete the following form:

	Please tick to show your response:	Yes	No
1	I understand the aims of the project, and agree that my son or daughter's outcomes can be used in a case study.		
2	I have received and understood the information explaining the project.		
3	I understand I may withdraw my son or daughter from this at any time, without prejudice.		
4	I understand that everything which is recorded shall remain confidential to the project, and that nothing will be reported in any way that could identify me or my son/daughter outside their school without my permission.		

If you would like to talk to someone further about the project, please tick here ☐

Son or daughter's name .....

School .....

I agree to my son or daughter taking part in the project as described in this letter.

Signature ..... Date .....

I am this son or daughter's parent/legal guardian ..... (please sign)

Print name .....

Please return this form to **teacher's name** at your son or daughter's school **deadline** Thank you.



## SMILE RESEARCH PROJECT INFORMATION SHEET

### What is the purpose of the study?

SMILE is an ethos based approach to supporting school community mental emotional health and wellbeing, developed by Forest Oak School. Based on the positive outcomes from the Forest Oak project, Barry Carpenter, Professor in Mental Health in Education, at Oxford Brookes University is overseeing the project which involves ten special and primary schools trialing the approach in their settings over 2 years.

### Why have I been invited to participate?

You have been invited to take part as your son or daughter is in one of the classes developing the SMILE approach at **school name**. All parents of pupils in the class are being invited.

### Do I have to take part?

Ofsted requires that Information and evidence about pupil emotional health and wellbeing is collected in schools as part of everyday assessments. However you do not have to agree to your child's information being shared as part of the research study

If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a form giving permission. You can decide you don't want your child's information to be part of the study at any time and you are free to withdraw without giving a reason. If you decide not to take part or withdraw your child at a later date this will have no impact on their marks, assessments or future studies.

### What will happen to me if I take part?

As part of the SMILE development at **school name**, every child and staff member is being asked to complete a wellbeing-in-school questionnaire, for some pupils this will be through in-school observation. It would be helpful to use this information as part of the research study.

### What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

There are not disadvantages or 'costs' involved in taking part in the study, including the time involved as this is part of your child's normal curriculum and assessment activity. We are asking for your permission to use evidence of this as the Oxford Brookes study. Any risks of sharing information are reduced by anonymising information collected.

### What are the possible benefits of taking part?

The study aims to improve **school name** provision of wellbeing support to pupils and staff currently at the school and to understand how pupils experiencing special needs can be supported better with their wellbeing and emotional and mental health. The benefits of taking part are that the study is being supervised and monitored by an external institution to ensure that methods are ethical.

### Will what I say in this study be kept confidential?

All information collected will be kept securely in line with **school name** data protection policy, [Forest Oak and Merstone's Data Protection Policy and Privacy notice & guidelines](#). Data generated by the study must be retained in accordance with the [University's Research Ethics Policies](#).

### What should I do if I want to take part?

Please read this information and tick and sign attached form.

### **What will happen to the results of the research study?**

The 2 year project findings will be shared in a written report by the SMILE research group.

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

Led by Barry Carpenter, Professor of Mental Health Education at Oxford Brookes University with Jo Egerton, Education writer and research consultant in collaboration with Forest Oak School, Solihull.

Professor Barry Carpenter, Oxford Brookes University Brookes

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Working Project Title:

**To Trial and Systematically Evaluate Through  
Teacher-led Enquiry, the Effectiveness of the  
SMILE Ethos Based Approach to Promote  
Positive Mental, Emotional Health and Wellbeing  
in School Communities.**

[Project name]  
[Lead organisation name]  
[Dates of project]

## PERMISSION FOR MY SON/DAUGHTER TO BE VIDEOED, AUDIO RECORDED OR PHOTOGRAPHED

During the course of the project, we would like to collect video, audio and still camera evidence to support the project findings around [Lead organisation/partner school] activities.

This letter is to ask for your permission to video or photograph your son or daughter over the course of the project. Any video or photographs we take of your son or daughter will be held securely in a locked cabinet or in a secure computer filing system in accordance with General Data Protection Regulations.

It will be seen only by the school, the Lead Organisation project team and their advisors. If, at a later date, we would like to use your son or daughter's photo in a report, article or presentation, we will ask for your permission to do so first.

You may withdraw your permission for your son or daughter to be videoed, audio recorded or photographed at any time without prejudice.

To give permission, please would you sign, date and return one copy of this form to [teacher's name] at your son/daughter's school, and keep the other for your own reference?

.....  
[Project name]

## PERMISSION FOR MY SON OR DAUGHTER TO BE VIDEOED OR PHOTOGRAPHED

I give/do not give (please delete unwanted words) my permission for my son/daughter's school to take still and video camera pictures of my son/daughter, or audio record him/her in the course of the above named project ( [Project dates] ) and share them with [lead project organisation and project participants].

I understand that:

- Any photographic or audio material taken will be held securely.
- Only my son/daughter's school and the [lead project organisation] will have access to the material.
- I will be asked for my permission if the project team want to show or print the video/still images or audio outside this group.
- I can withdraw my permission without prejudice.

Son/daughter's name ..... School. ....

Signature. .... Date. ....

I confirm that I am this child's legal guardian. .... (Please sign again)

Print name. ....

*Please return this form to [teacher's name] at your son/daughter's school. Thank you.*