



Participant Information Sheet for Parents, Carers and Legal Guardians

We would like your child to take part in our research project on *Drugs, Social Media and Young People*.

It is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what participation will involve.

Please take time to read the following information carefully.

Title of Study: Drugs on Social Media and Young People

Department: UCL Jill Dando Institute of Security and Crime Science

Contact Details: uclsocialmediaproject@gmail.com You can email us if you have any questions on the research.

This study has been approved by the UCL Research Ethics Committee: Project ID number:
23897/001

Who are we?

Our names are Ashly Fuller, Prof. Shane Johnson, Dr. Marie Vasek and Dr. Enrico Mariconti. We are a group of researchers from University College London (UCL) that are interested in improving the security of social media platforms. We have partnered with the drug education charity Daniel Spargo-Mabbs Foundation (DSMF) and the Alcohol Education Trust (AET) to help us run this survey. They work with young people, families, teachers and professionals in schools, colleges and community groups. More information about them can be found here: <https://www.dsmfoundation.org.uk/>;

<https://alcoholeducationtrust.org/>

UCL Jill Dando Institute of
Security and Crime Science



DSM foundation
The drug education charity

**Alcohol
Education Trust**
Keeping young people
safe around alcohol

What is the project's purpose?

We want to find out more about the experiences of teenagers using social media, and how seeing drugs on such platforms might affect them. We want to make sure young people are safe around drugs, both online and offline. This will help us understand their experiences better, and to figure out whether we can do anything to make things safer.

Why has my child been chosen?

Their school has been selected to participate in this research because it has agreed to. Their class has been selected because they are 13 years old or above.

Does my child have to take part?

No. Taking part in the study is entirely voluntary. **If they do not want to participate, there will be no penalty.** If they do decide to take part, they can withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

What will happen if my child agrees to take part?

If they want to participate in this study, they will be asked to sign a consent form confirming they agree to take part in this study. As a parent or legal guardian, you can withhold your consent if you do not wish them to participate in the study by notifying the school. If they take part, they will then fill in a survey of 30 questions asking about their social media habits, whether they or someone they know have seen drugs advertised online and their reporting practices.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

It is possible that your child may feel uncomfortable answering some of the questions. In that case, they can:

- Choose not to answer that question. There will always be an option “*Prefer not to say*”
- Stop taking the survey and have a break
- Remember that the survey is **confidential**. Any information they will provide will be pseudonymised and not linked to the answers they give
- Remember that the purpose of this research is linked to subjects that are within the UK national educational curriculum [Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE)]. This does not mean they have to take the survey; it just means that it's okay to talk about these things at school

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

If they decide to participate, they will learn how to identify harmful behaviours online and how to report or find support if they have been affected by these behaviours. They will participate in a national research project led by a world-leading university and contribute to making social media a safer place.

Will my child taking part in this project be kept confidential?

All the information that we collect about your child during the research will be kept **strictly confidential**. **Your child will not be able to be identified** in any reports or publications because all the data they provide will be pseudonymised. **Pseudonymised** means that the answers they give will not be linked to

their name but given a number (eg. Participant N8354). They will be asked for their name and school name in the consent form: this is only for safeguarding purposes and will not be linked to their answers. No one except the research team will have access to their answers. **Their school, teachers and yourself as parents/legal guardians will NOT have access to their answers.**

Limits to confidentiality

If a participant takes our survey and says they are in danger, we have a duty to help them. In this case, we will have to breach confidentiality to identify which student is at risk and needs help. Their name and answers will **only** be linked in case there are reasons for us to believe they are in danger. In that case, we will notify relevant safeguarding staff in the school to help them or someone they know.

Circumstances that would make us believe this are for example:

- if they say they are having negative thoughts and want to self-harm
- if they are being threatened
- if they feel in danger
- if they are struggling with addiction.

What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results of the survey will be compiled in a report where all the data will be aggregated. Your child or their school will not be able to be identified in any report of publication. This report will be shared with DSMF, social media companies and other researchers. It is possible the media may be interested in this project and report about it. You and your child can have a copy of the published results by emailing the contact details provided in this form.

What if something goes wrong?

You can always reach us by email at: uclsocialmediaproject@gmail.com and ask us any questions about the research, voice your concerns or raise a complaint. If your child has changed their mind and wants to withdraw their answers, they can send us an email saying this and we will delete their answers.

You and your child can also find more information, help and advice about drugs at Frank by following this link: <https://www.talktofrank.com/> and general facts and advice for young people at: <https://life-stuff.org/>. They can also anonymously report a crime or access information and support around crime following this link: <https://www.fearless.org/>

Thank you for reading this information sheet and for considering allowing your child to take part in this research.