**Parent/ Carer/Guardian Letter or Email Re Focus Groups**

**[Researcher details/address]**

[School Address]

**Date:**

Dear Parent/Carer/Guardian

**Project overview**

The ultimate aim of the project is to develop more effective education and resources to encourage young people to use the internet safely and responsibly, encourage reporting and reduce levels of peer-based online sexual harassment.  We have already created resources for teenagers and for schools and now we are looking to create advice for parents/carers.

Your child’s school has agreed to allow us to approach parents/carers to take part in a group discussion about their concerns about this issue. We are therefore writing to ask whether you would be willing to take part in a focus group addressing cyberbullying, peer pressure, online relationships and harassment in young people. It will also examine parental/carer concerns about these issues and the support they feel they need to help their children stay safe online.

**If you are interested in taking part, or have any questions or queries about the project, please contact \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ at your child’s school.**

You will then be sent a more detailed information sheet about the study which will enable you to decide whether you would like to take part.

Thank you,

[Add name and contact details of those running the research]

If you would like further information on how you can keep your children safe online, please visit the following:

* **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Participant information sheet** (emailed to the potential participants prior to focus group and paper copy provided at start of session)

Dear parent/carer

Thank you for expressing an interest in participating in this study.

As we detailed in the initial recruitment email, we are looking for parents/carers to take part in a focus group discussion examining your concerns about young people’s online behaviour and experiences related to cyberbullying, peer pressure, online relationships and harassment. This will take place in a specific session at your child’s school in the next few weeks with 6-8 other parents. It will last approximately one hour.

**What is this project about?**

* It aims to tackle bullying, harassment and non-consensual sharing of images amongst children by developing a range of resource materials for schools and parents.
* We want to empower children to be able to recognise online harassment, and to have the knowledge and confidence on how and who to report it to.

**Who is collecting the data?**

* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
* \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

The project will be conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and has been approved by \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. The data from the focus group will be confidential and anonymous, and only the project researchers will have access to the recordings and transcripts.

**What sort of questions will be asked in the group discussion?**

The discussion will include questions about:

* Key issues that children face online, such as bullying, misunderstandings, and peer pressure,
* Ways in which children may ‘cross the line’, for example, taking or sharing photos without permission,
* How we can ensure they receive the help and support they need.

**If you feel that talking about this issue would cause you any distress, please do not participate. If any distress or concerns arise as a result of taking part, details of sources of support and information will be provided in the debrief at the end of the session.**

**Who can see my data and what will it be used for?**

* The focus group discussions will be recorded and transcribed, and only accessed by project researchers.
* Participation in this study is completely voluntary, and all data is completely confidential and anonymous.
* Any quotes from the transcripts of the group discussions used in any publications will be anonymous.
* It will not be possible to identify individuals from transcripts or individual quotes.
* The data will be held on a secure password protected database for five years, and only the project researchers will have access to it.
* All data will be stored and processed according to current Data Protection Legislation (e.g., \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_).

Whilst the researchers will maintain the anonymity and confidentially of all data and transcripts, it is not possible to guarantee that the other group members will not discuss the content of focus groups with others. ***Please do not talk about anything that you would not be happy with the other members of the group discussing outside of the session. Please also respect the privacy and confidentiality of others within the group.***

The results of the research will be combined and be published in reports, as well as informing the development of education and training resources for the parents/carers and young people. The overall results will also be used to write research papers, inform policy-makers and be disseminated using \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [name of your organisations] ’s communication channels (e.g., social media, website).

**Can I change my mind about taking part?**

* Yes. It is completely up to you whether you wish to take part in the group.
* You will also be free to leave the session by telling the researcher and without having to provide a reason.
* However, it will not be possible to remove any contributions made to the discussion up to the point you decided to leave the session from the transcription/analysis as a result of difficulties in identifying individuals.

**Who can I speak to if I have any concerns about this research study?**

If you wish to raise any concerns with somebody who is independent of the research team, please contact \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

Prior to the interview/focus group, a researcher will contact you via telephone or email to arrange a suitable date, time and location to meet.

If you are interested in taking part, or have any questions about the research, please contact \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ using the details below.

Many thanks

[Add name and contact details of those running the research]

**If you have concerns about the research and you wish to raise them with somebody who is independent of the research team, please contact \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

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| --- |
| **Focus group consent form** (provided to all participants with paper copy of information sheet prior to start of session).  **Please tick each of the following statements if you agree with them:** |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| I have read the information sheet and had the chance to ask questions. |  |
| I understand that taking part is voluntary, and that I can leave at any time during the focus group without giving a reason. I also understand that my contribution to that point cannot be removed. |  |
| I agree to the session being voice recorded to enable transcription. |  |
| I understand that the process of transcription will remove any information that could identify me or my contribution. |  |
| I agree to respect the confidentiality of the comments of the other participants in the focus group. |  |
| I agree to take part in this study. |  |

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Print Name | Date | Signature |
| Participant |  |  |  |

**Debrief sheet** (given immediately after the focus group)

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this study.

The aim of this research is to examine parent/carer perspectives on the issues that children face online (e.g., bullying, misunderstandings, and peer pressure), as well as their concerns about online safety, and ways we can ensure that parent/carers, teachers and young people get the help and support they need.

The results of the research will be combined and be published in reports, as well as informing the development of education and training resources for the project. The overall results will also be used to write research papers, inform policy-makers and be disseminated using \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ [name of your organisation]’s communication channels (e.g., social media, website).

Please be assured that the information you have provided is confidential. Any quotes used in reports or training resources will be anonymised and no-one will be able to be identified from them.

**Who can I talk to if taking part has made me feel upset or concerned that there might be a problem with something that is happening to my children online?**

If you are worried or upset because of anything discussed in the group, or if you are concerned about the online experiences of your children, please use the sources of help and support below. These organisations also provide further information on how you can keep your children safe online.

* **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**
* **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**You can also speak to the researcher now if you are worried or upset and would like some support, or** **contact your child’s teacher.**

**If you are concerned about your child being approached online or being asked for personal information, photos or videos of themselves, or to meet up, this can be reported to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**

**Find out how to report problems on social media and other places online at: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

If you would like any further information about the study or the project, please contact the researchers using the details below.

[Add name and contact details of those running the research]

**If you have concerns about the research and you wish to raise them with somebody who is independent of the research team, please contact \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**